Believe Greater Dalton

Community Assessment & Strategic Plan

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Believe Greater Dalton

Background & History

Believe Greater Dalton (BGD) is a five-year strategic plan for the community led by the Greater Dalton Chamber of Commerce. The effort began in 2016, when over 2,200 citizens of Dalton/Whitfield County responded to a survey to let us know what they thought of the community.

Six strategies emerged from the research as foundational to our community's vision for the future.

Economic Development   **Community Pride**   **Housing**

Downtown District   **Education**   **Entrepreneurship**

These six strategies have provided a framework for the community's collaborative initiatives and investments over the last five years. Through implementation, the community has worked to transition a plan into **a movement**.

Believe Greater Dalton: Strategic Planning (2021)

Process Objectives

Following successful implementation of many BGD Strategic Plan (2016) recommendations, BGD leadership convened a process from September – December 2021 to aid the continued evolution of the BGD *strategic plan* into a sustained *strategic movement*. This process supports various objectives:

- ✓ Engage residents and businesses to identify their wants and needs
- ✓ Evaluate progress and assess performance relative to our competition
- ✓ Update the BGD strategic framework that guides our initiatives and investments
- ✓ Identify potential new initiatives and investments that support the evolution of BGD
- ✓ Aid the seamless transition into effective implementation and fundraising

Process Overview

1. Engagement

- Planning Committee
- Interviews
- Resident Survey

2. Assessment

- SWOTs
- Strategic Questions
- Competitive Benchmarks

3. Planning

- Strategic Plan
- Implementation Guidelines

4. Support

- Governance
- Operations
- Communications
- Fundraising

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Believe Greater Dalton: Community Input (2021)

Resident Survey

4,534 resident responses

...up from **2,220** responses to the initial Believe Greater Dalton survey (2016)

- ✓ Bilingual survey (English and Spanish) open for three weeks in September 2021
- ✓ Question logic and branching used to present specific questions to certain groups (e.g., students, entrepreneurs, former residents, etc.)
- ✓ Complete survey results available in Appendix A

Stakeholder Interviews

25 interviews with community and business leaders

Believe Greater Dalton Planning Committee

35 representatives of the public, private, and nonprofit sectors
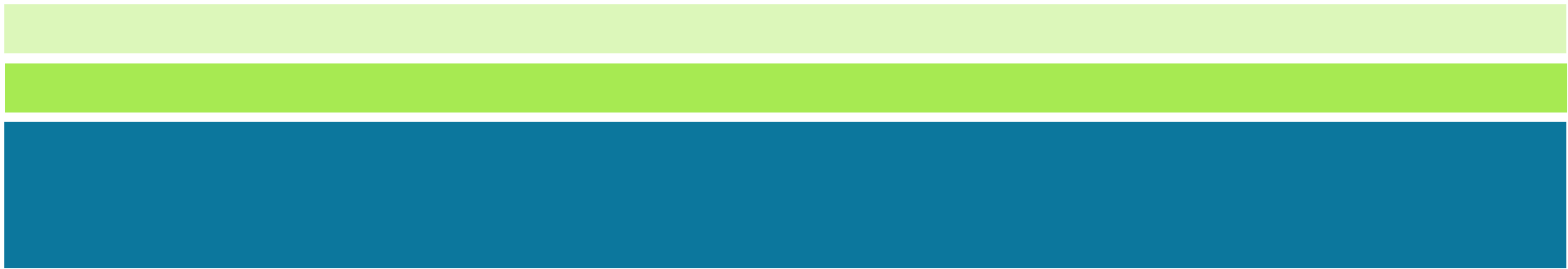
Community Assessment

Community Assessment

Objectives

- ✓ Identify the **opportunities and threats** confronting Greater Dalton today
- ✓ Illustrate where the community made **progress over time** and where it has fallen behind
- ✓ Articulate where **residents want to see improvement** and where **stakeholders expect a return**

Approach and Methods

- ✓ Information presented **clearly, concisely and visually** to inform decision-making
- ✓ Key themes and **common questions** from the input phase frame the analysis
- ✓ Performance compared to **peer communities** that we compete with jobs and residents
- ✓ Appendices include complete **survey results, technical information and data sources**

Peer Communities

- ✓ Cartersville, GA (Bartow County)
- ✓ Cleveland, TN (Bradley County)
- ✓ Gainesville, GA (Hall County)
- ✓ United States
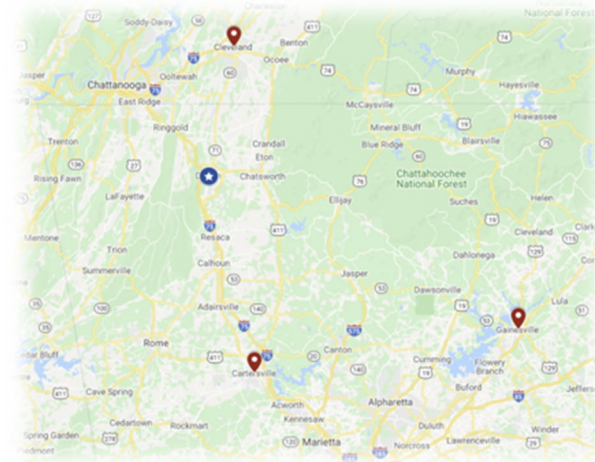
Population Dynamics: Growth & Change

*Has our population growth recovered following a period of stagnation in the early 2010s?*

Observations: Following decades of steady and strong population growth, Whitfield County's population stagnated in the last decade, adding just 265 residents (0.3%). By comparison, its peers and competition for talent in the surrounding region continue to grow rapidly. Bartow, Hall, and Bradley Counties all experienced population growth rates that exceeded the U.S. average for the decade (7.4%). The Great Recession marks a clear turning point in the community's growth trajectory. The sluggish growth observed in the initial [Believe Greater Dalton Community Assessment (2016)](#) has persisted, and the conclusions from that Assessment are still relevant today; absent a reversal of these trends, this stagnation and the "brain drain" that characterizes it could place a significant strain on the community's workforce, tax base, and future prosperity.

Population Change (2010 – 2020)

	Pop. (2010)	Pop. (2020)*	Net Change	% Change
Whitfield	102,599	102,864	265	0.3%
Bartow	100,157	108,901	8,744	8.7%
Hall	179,684	203,136	23,452	13.1%
Bradley	98,963	108,620	9,657	9.8%
U.S.	308,745,538	331,449,281	22,703,743	7.4%

*Preliminary 2020 Decennial Estimates

Population Index (2010 Population = 100)
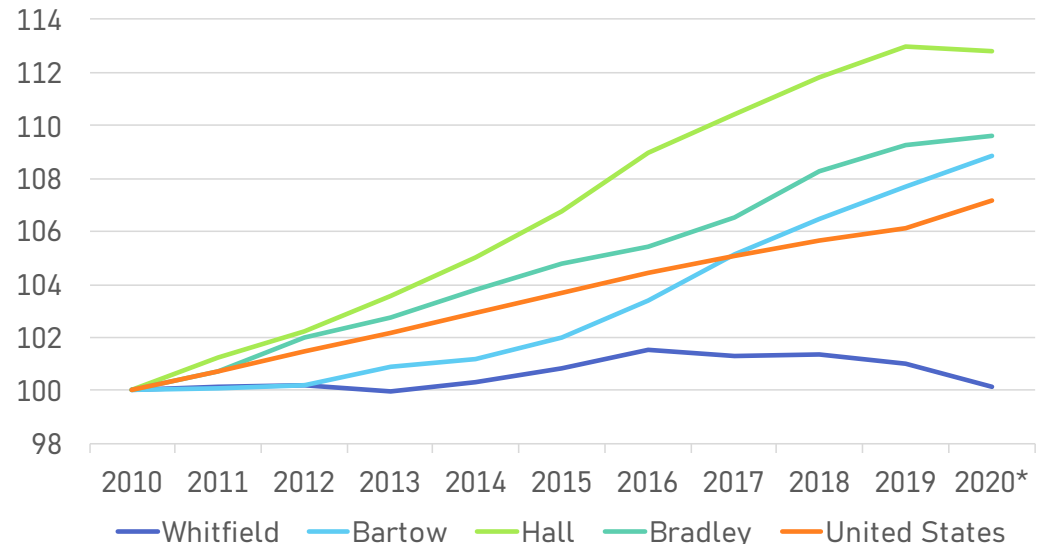
Population Dynamics: Age Composition

What do trends in our age composition suggest about our community's appeal?
Are families and children leaving? Do we have a sustainable workforce?

Observations: **The stagnation of Dalton-Whitfield's population can be attributed to an eroding relative appeal to families. The preferences of people are revealed by their movements and the data illustrate that families are leaving.** Between 2010 and 2020, the community lost more than 2,000 residents between the ages of 30 and 49, and more than 2,500 residents under the age of 18. This loss of young workers and families to surrounding communities impacts long-term population growth as it suppresses the community's future natural growth. Further, it has eroded the community's advantage with respect to workforce sustainability; 25-44 year-olds have declined as a share of the community's population while growing nationwide.

Index, Population by Age, Whitfield County (2010 = 100)
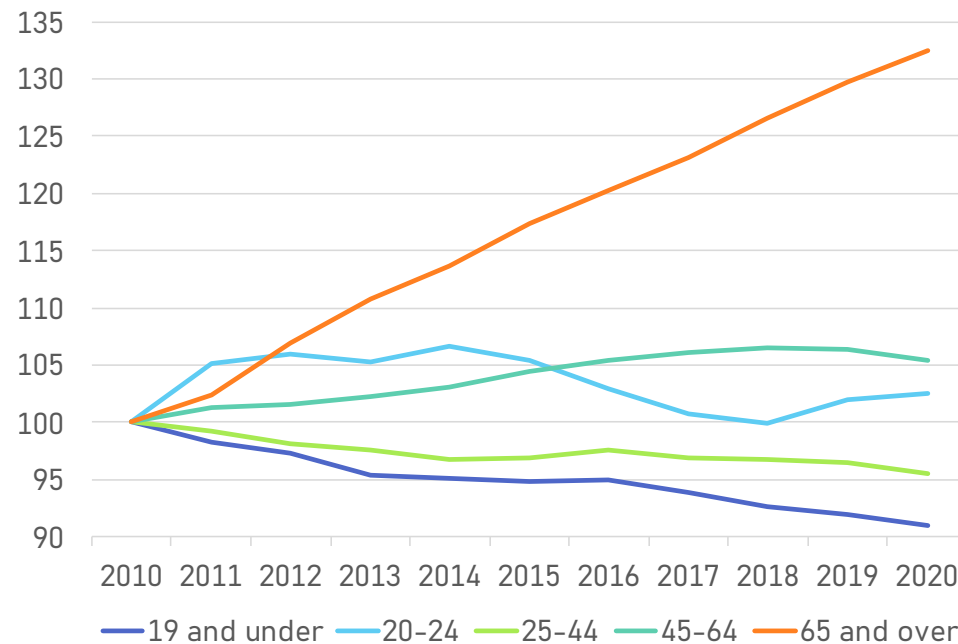
Change in Age Composition (2010 – 2020)
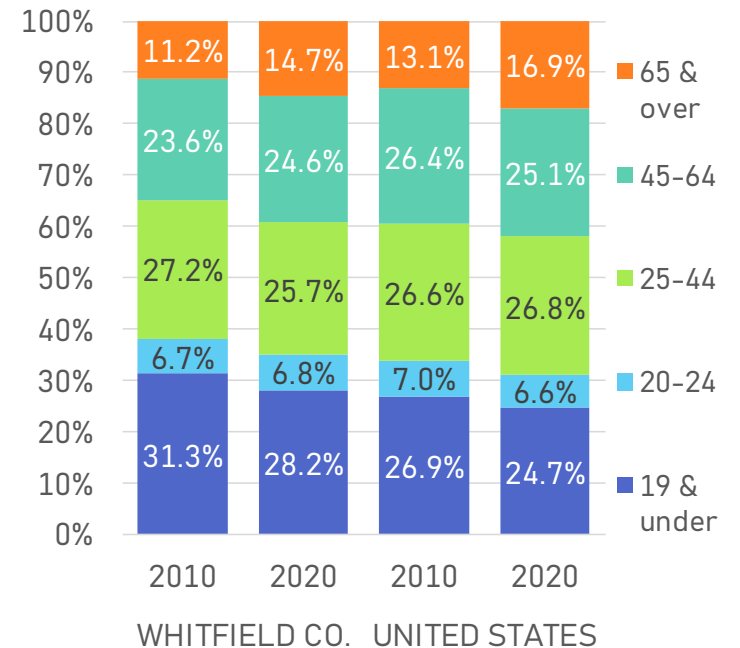
Population Dynamics: Net Migration

What about migration trends? Have we gained or lost ground relative to our competition?
What do they suggest about our community's future and its growth trajectory?

Net Migration (2012 – 2019)

Chart values by year:
- 2012: −546
- 2013: −688
- 2014: −507
- 2015: −117
- 2016: 109
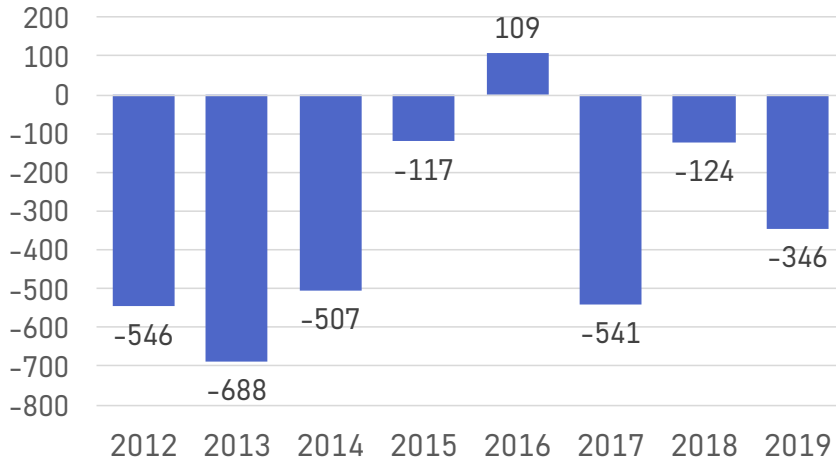- 2017: −541
- 2018: −124
- 2019: −346

Net Migration Trends: Neighboring Counties

County	2009–2014	2014–2019
Hamilton County, TN	−419	−263
Catoosa County, GA	230	−232
Gordon County, GA	−305	−151
Murray County, GA	68	−101
Bradley County, TN	−192	−47
Walker County, GA	185	−39
Total (Neighbors)	**−433**	**−833**

Observations: Net out-migration has persisted in recent years and the community is losing ground to its neighbors; **Whitfield now sends more residents to Catoosa, Murray and Walker Counties than it gains, a reversal in migration relationships that have historically existed in the larger region.** And relative to other competitors for jobs and talent, those who are moving into the county are considerably less well-educated. Additionally, our in-migrants from other parts of the country are less educated than our existing residents.

In-Migrant Educational Attainment (2019)

	No HS diploma	HS diploma or GED	Some college/Associate's	Bachelor's or above
Whitfield	26%	35%	23%	17%
Bartow	12%	31%	44%	13%
Hall	17%	21%	32%	31%
Bradley	15%	31%	28%	26%

Population Dynamics: Diversity & Inclusion

Are we diversifying faster than the United States?

Observations: The diversification of the United States population and, more notably, widening gaps in socioeconomic outcomes have prompted a variety of responses within communities and businesses. There is evidence across the country that companies are prioritizing access to diverse workforces to support varied corporate objectives. **Dalton-Whitfield's Hispanic population is driving the community's diversification at a rate that exceeds the average American community, and issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are clearly top of mind among its residents and leadership. Diversity can be an asset to the community if embraced and celebrated.**

The Diversification of the United States

In 2020, nonwhites and Hispanics represented the majority of those aged 16 and under for the first time in our nation's history.

Our communities' adult populations are projected to reach **"majority-minority"** status at varied dates:

Georgia	**2024**
Whitfield County	**2031**
United States	**2045**

Change in Racial & Ethnic Composition (2010 – 2020)

		White, Non-Hispanic	Hispanic	Black, Non-Hispanic	Asian, Non-Hispanic	Other Races/Ethnicities
WHITFIELD COUNTY	2010	62%	32%	4%		
	2020	57%	37%	4%		
UNITED STATES	2010	64%	16%	12%	5%	
	2020	60%	19%	13%	6%	

■ White, Non-Hispanic ■ Hispanic ■ Black, Non-Hispanic ■ Asian, Non-Hispanic ■ Other Races/Ethnicities

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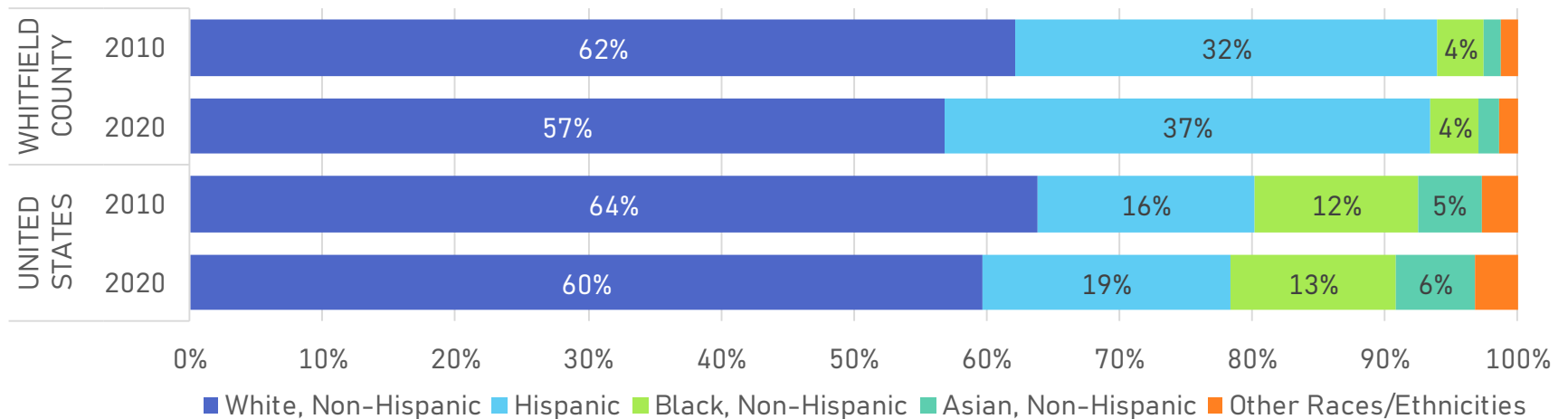
Population Dynamics: Diversity & Inclusion

Do residents feel like we are more inclusive community today than five years ago?

Observations: **Over the course of the last five years, resident perceptions of the community's inclusivity have improved; 64% of residents agreed that Dalton–Whitfield has become a more inclusive place as compared to just 8% that disagreed.** Yet Planning Committee members, interviewees and survey respondents all emphasized that the community remains divided along racial and ethnic lines. They suggested that proactive efforts supporting inclusion and unity must emerge as even greater priorities in the years ahead. Community engagement and leadership representation were frequently–mentioned themes deserving intentional investment and intervention.
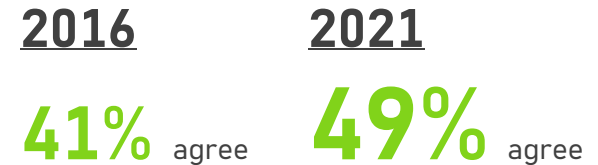
Believe Greater Dalton Survey (2021)
"Greater Dalton is an inclusive place."

2016
41% agree

2021
49% agree

64% feel that Greater Dalton became a **more inclusive** community in the last five years (2016 – 2021).

Survey respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they agree or disagree with various statements:

"Opportunities, communities, and networks in Greater Dalton are accessible and open to a diverse range of people and cultures."

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
White		8%	23%	50%	16%
Non-White	6%	16%	38%	32%	8%

■ Strongly disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neutral ■ Agree ■ Strongly agree
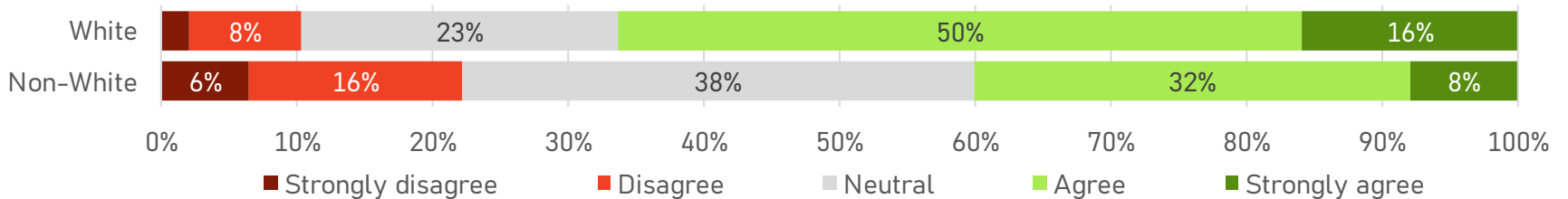
"Greater Dalton has become a more inclusive community in the last five years."

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
White		5%	27%	47%	19%
Non-White		6%	32%	46%	12%

■ Strongly disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neutral ■ Agree ■ Strongly agree

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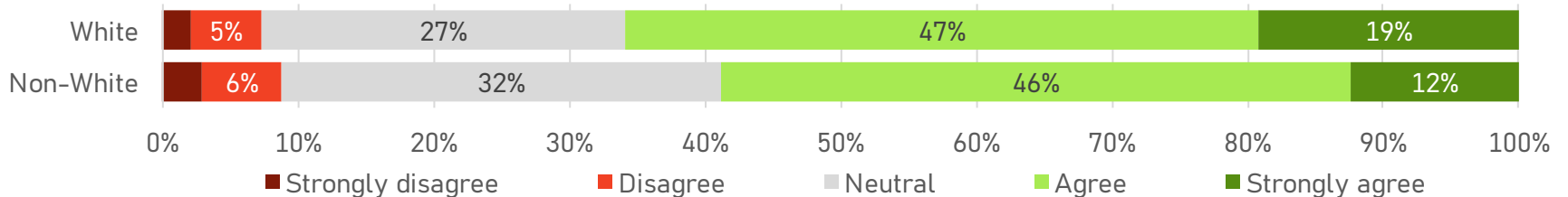
Population Dynamics: Educational Attainment

Have we closed the gap with the competition in terms of adult educational attainment?
What do the trends imply for our future competitiveness and prosperity?

Educational Attainment, Ages 25+ (2019)
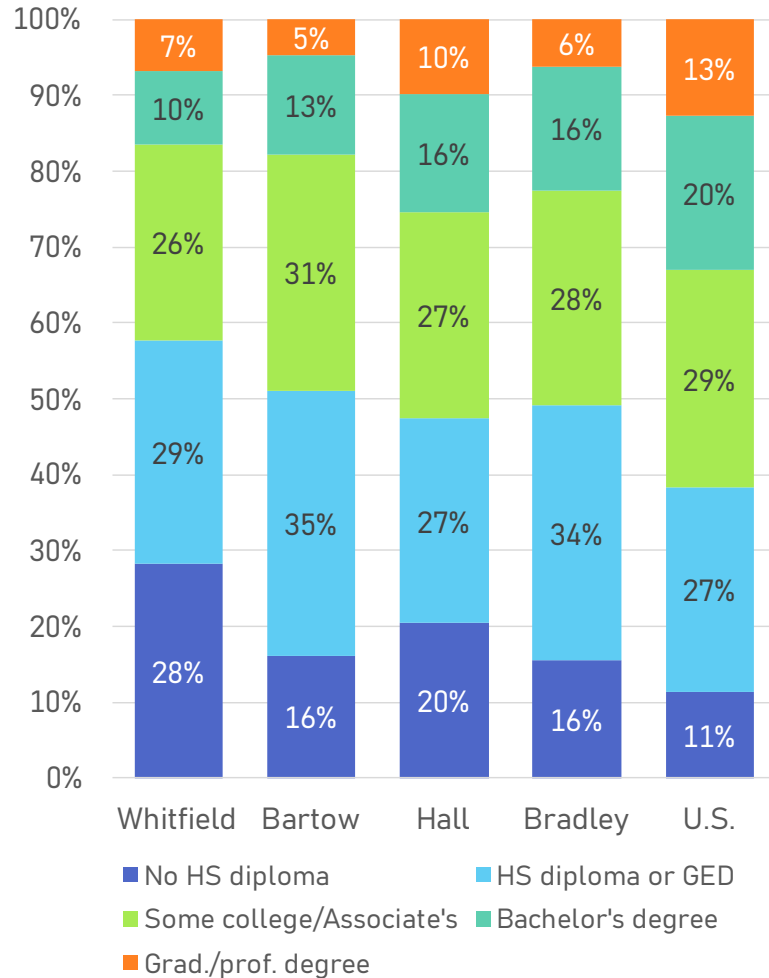
Observations: Over the course of the last five years, the community has started to close a sizeable gap with the average American community in the percentage of its adult population with no high school diploma. However, the gap is widening at the other end of the spectrum and the community remains at a considerable disadvantage relative to its peers and competition. When compared to counties with 65,000 or more residents (those covered annually by the Census' American Community Survey), the area remains in the 2nd percentile in terms of the share with no high school diploma and has slipped from the 9th to the 6th percentile in terms of bachelor's degree attainment.

Change in Educational Attainment (2014 – 2019)
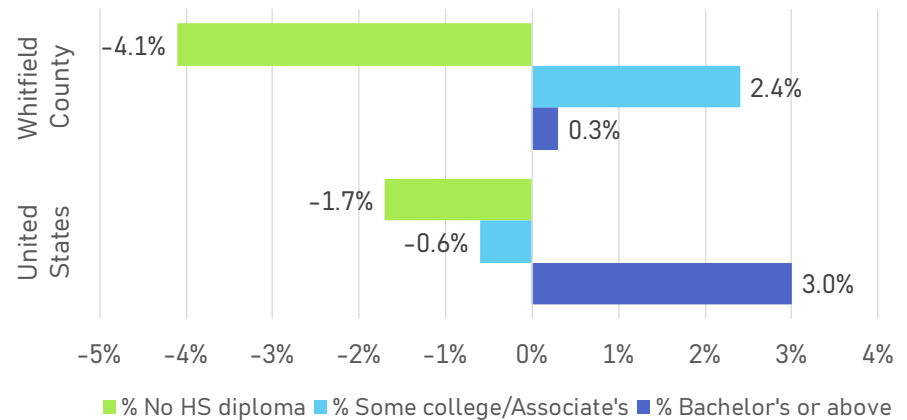
Population Dynamics: Incomes & Poverty

Have we effectively reduced poverty rates? Have we effectively reduced socioeconomic disparities?

Observations: The Community Assessment (2016) observed: *"Poverty represents a serious threat to long-term community success and individual outcomes. Research suggests that children who grow up in poverty will be at an increased risk to struggle academically, socially, and economically over their lifetime."* **In the last five years, the community has experienced tremendous reductions in poverty. Gaps in poverty between Whitfield County and the U.S. have been closed significantly while household incomes grew more rapidly. Further, disparities in income along racial and ethnic lines were reduced considerably during a time when they grew nationwide. These are remarkable stories that should be celebrated in the community.**

Change in Poverty Rates (2014 – 2019)

■ 2014
■ 2019

TOTAL POVERTY
- Whitfield: 20.7% (2014), 12.7% (2019)
- U.S.: 15.5% (2014), 12.3% (2019)

CHILD POVERTY
- Whitfield: 28.4% (2014), 17.6% (2019)
- U.S.: 21.7% (2014), 16.8% (2019)
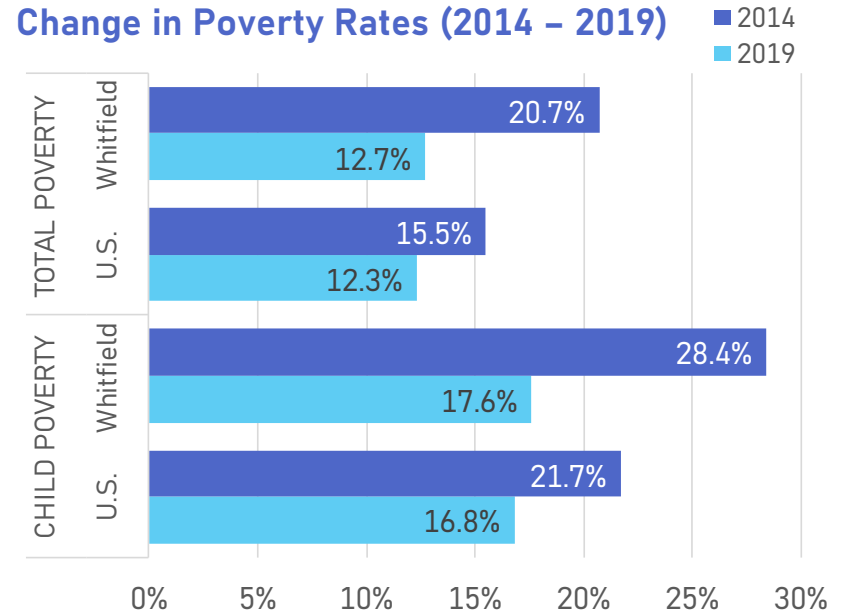
Disparities in Median Household Income by Race & Ethnicity (2014 – 2019)

	WHITFIELD COUNTY			UNITED STATES		
	2014	2019	Change	2014	2019	Change
All Households	$40,081	$48,623	21.3%	$53,482	$62,843	17.5%
White, Non-Hispanic	$42,470	$49,415	16.4%	$58,847	$68,785	16.9%
Black, Non-Hispanic	$26,405	$38,404	45.4%	$35,600	$41,935	17.8%
Hispanic	$36,722	$47,955	30.6%	$42,396	$51,811	22.2%
White-Black Gap	$16,065	$11,011	-$5,054	$23,247	$26,850	$3,603
White-Hispanic Gap	$5,748	$1,460	-$4,288	$16,451	$16,974	$523

Economic & Workforce Trends: Job Creation

If population growth has stagnated, what about job growth?

Observations: Dalton–Whitfield's job growth – or lack thereof – mirrors its population growth. **The community has stagnated economically for more than a decade; proactive investment and intentional intervention are critical. Decline is no longer imminent; it is evident.** Job growth and economic diversification are demand drivers for housing, retail and other desired investment in the community.

Job Growth (2010 – 2020)

	2010	2020	Net Chg.	% Chg.
Whitfield Co., GA	57,099	57,761	662	1.2%
Bartow Co., GA	34,616	44,057	9,441	27.3%
Hall Co., GA	76,921	96,822	19,901	25.9%
Bradley Co., TN	40,099	50,700	10,601	26.4%
United States	146,054,554	158,256,721	12,202,167	8.4%

Index, Job Growth (2009 = 100)

Believe Greater Dalton Student & Youth Survey (2021)
"I would be more likely to stay in Dalton–Whitfield as an adult if…"

Economic & Workforce Trends: Sector Composition

Has our economy diversified? Which sectors are growing, and which are contributing to our decline?

Observations: Although little overall growth was experienced, some notable changes to economic composition occurred in the last decade. Growth in various local services and amenities (health care, food services, and arts and entertainment) was cancelled out by retail job losses. Growth in manufacturing and wholesale trade was cancelled out by losses in transportation. And growth in traditionally "white-collar" sectors (professional services, finance and insurance, and management of companies) trailed the national rate of growth. **As a result, employment in Dalton–Whitfield has become more concentrated in manufacturing in the last decade. Economic diversity supports economic resilience and enhances attractiveness to current and future generations.**

Employment by Sector, Whitfield County and United States (2010 – 2020)

	WHITFIELD COUNTY				UNITED STATES
	Jobs (2020)	LQ (2020)	Net Job Growth (2010 –2020)	% Job Growth (2010 – 2020)	% Job Growth (2010 – 2020)
Manufacturing	19,133	4.24	565	3%	5%
Government	5,852	0.66	−67	−1%	−2%
Health Care and Social Assistance	5,719	0.76	1,503	36%	19%
Retail Trade	5,321	0.94	−1,507	−22%	1%
Wholesale Trade	3,294	1.56	168	5%	2%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	3,256	0.83	344	12%	24%
Accommodation and Food Services	3,140	0.76	326	12%	0%
Transportation and Warehousing	3,043	1.30	−912	−23%	40%
All Other Services and Sectors	2,996	0.43	−49	−2%	4%
Administrative and Support Services	2,727	0.78	277	11%	14%
Construction	1,656	0.49	410	33%	23%
Finance and Insurance	788	0.32	56	8%	11%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	444	0.52	−168	−27%	25%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	274	0.33	24	10%	−5%
Agriculture, Forestry, etc.	70	0.10	−304	−81%	1%
Total, all sectors	**57,761**		**662**	**1%**	**8%**

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Economic & Workforce Trends: Labor Sheds & Commuting

From the perspective of a company, what kind of workforce is accessible within our labor shed?

Observations: Throughout the early 2000s, a variety of workforce and quality of life factors began to rise in the rankings of site selection criteria: those factors that drive corporate locations decisions. In recent years, the availability of skilled labor has consistently ranked as the top location factor, bolstered by exceptionally low unemployment across the country. From the perspective of an existing or potential future employer, workforce availability is drawn from a larger labor shed. **When examining the attributes of these larger labor sheds that are accessible from our competition for corporate investment, our identity and presumed advantage as a production-oriented manufacturing center erodes. Much of our competition is able promote their access to a sizeable workforce in various occupations that resides in Metro Atlanta.**

Workforce Availability by Labor Shed: 45 Minute Drive Time (2020)*

	Whitfield	Bartow	Hall	Bradley
Total Workforce Availability (45 Minute Drive Time)	**468,336**	**1,053,319**	**1,263,877**	**405,889**
Workforce Availability: Select Occupations				
Office and Administrative Support	59,131	132,510	159,238	52,818
Production	57,117	66,895	68,123	49,839
Transportation and Material Moving	52,515	90,560	106,370	46,252
Sales and Related	42,798	108,203	135,364	35,664
Food Preparation and Serving Related	35,633	72,264	81,507	30,436
Management	27,255	79,410	98,029	23,694
Business and Financial Operations	19,828	78,997	96,830	16,685
Healthare	42,929	82,796	97,285	36,598
Computer and Mathematical	8,313	47,164	60,871	6,690
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	6,865	26,708	31,830	5,739
Architecture and Engineering	5,727	17,168	20,595	5,431
Life, Physical, and Social Science	2,694	7,630	9,747	2,437
Legal	2,684	12,908	15,108	2,264
Unemployed (July 2021)	**19,544**	**62,209**	**63,943**	**19,357**
Unemployment Rate (July 2021)	3.6%	3.2%	3.1%	4.1%
Population (45 Minute Drive Time)	**1,058,952**	**2,272,321**	**2,749,188**	**896,586**

Labor sheds capture all workers that reside in zip codes that are accessible within a 45-minute drive time from the most central Interstate exit in each county.

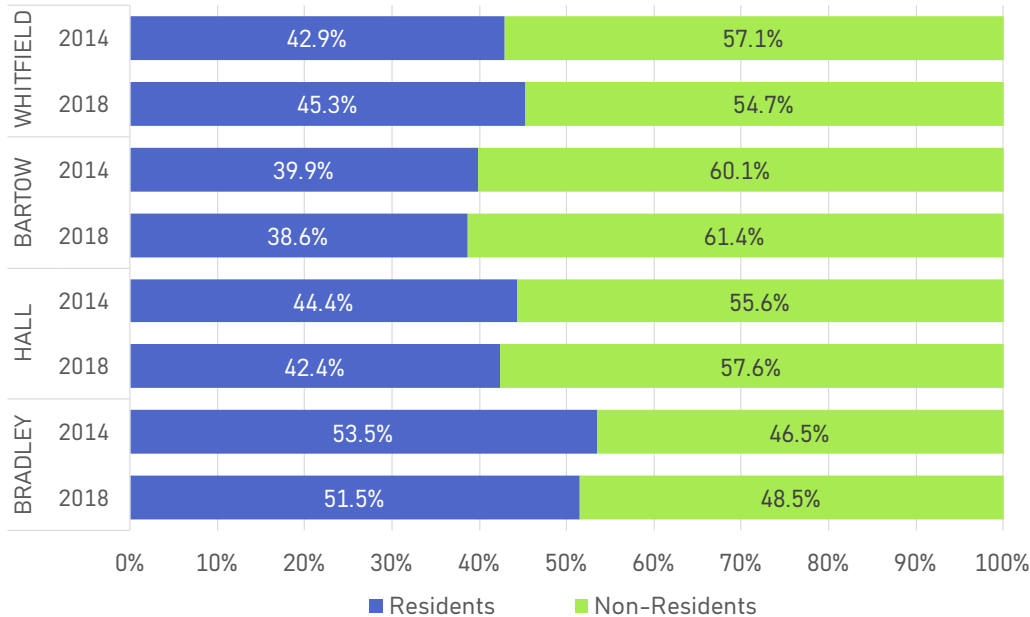*Area Development*, **Most Important Site Location Factors, 2020 (chg. since 2010)**

1. Availability of skilled labor (+2)
2. Highway accessibility (−1)
3. Energy availability and costs (+5)
4. Quality of life (NR)
5. Labor costs (−3)
6. Occupancy or construction costs (−1)
7. Corporate tax rate (−3)
8. Tax exemptions (−1)
9. State and local incentives (−3)
10. Transportation costs (NR)

Economic & Workforce Trends: Labor Sheds & Commuting

Have we reduced the share of high-paying jobs that are filled by non-residents?

% of Jobs in Whitfield Co. Held by Residents & Non-Residents (2014 – 2018)

	Residents	Non-Residents
WHITFIELD 2014	42.9%	57.1%
WHITFIELD 2018	45.3%	54.7%
BARTOW 2014	39.9%	60.1%
BARTOW 2018	38.6%	61.4%
HALL 2014	44.4%	55.6%
HALL 2018	42.4%	57.6%
BRADLEY 2014	53.5%	46.5%
BRADLEY 2018	51.5%	48.5%

■ Residents   ■ Non-Residents

Observations: From 2014-2018, Dalton-Whitfield was the only community within its peer set (Bartow, Hall and Bradley) to effectively increase the share of jobs filled by residents. On the one hand, this is a positive finding illustrating that the community is making progress on retaining its workers. However, on the other hand, this improvement reflects very little net change or churn in a community characterized by relative stagnation.

% of Jobs in Whitfield Paying > $40,000 Held by Non-Residents (2014 – 2018)

<u>2014</u>	<u>2018</u>
61.6%	**59.9%**

Observation: The community focused on this finding from the Community Assessment (2016), as it supported input suggesting that the area struggled to retain middle- and higher-income families. Since that time, **the community has effectively reduced the share of higher-paying jobs that are by filled non-residents. For perspective, our in-state competition (including Bartow and Hall Counties) experience similar commuting dynamics related to these jobs.**
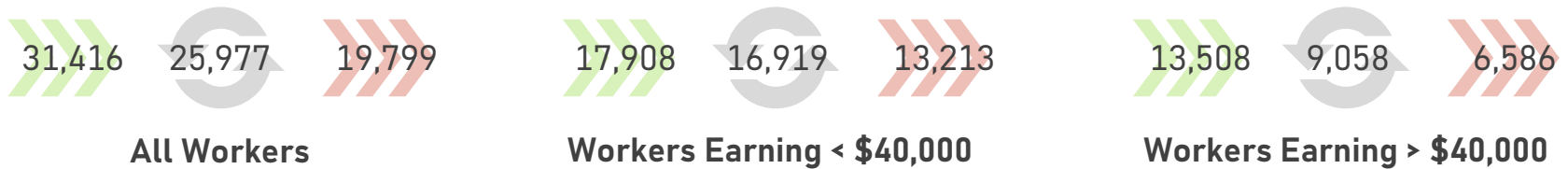
% of Jobs Paying > $40,000 Held by Non-Residents (2018)

Bradley County, TN	47.6%
Hall County, GA	59.8%
Whitfield County, GA	**59.9%**
Bartow County, GA	63.0%

Economic & Workforce Trends: Labor Sheds & Commuting

What about the jobs that our residents fill? To what degree are they leaving the county for work?

Commuting Trends: Inflow & Outflow of Workers by Annual Earnings (2018)

31,416   25,977   19,799   17,908   16,919   13,213   13,508   9,058   6,586

All Workers   **Workers Earning < $40,000**   **Workers Earning > $40,000**

Observations: **The often-cited "62 percent" (% of jobs paying $40,000 or more that are filled by non-residents in 2014) only examines one half of the commuting equation:** *jobs located in Whitfield County*. Although significantly more workers commute into our county each day for work (31,416 in 2018), a large number leave our county each day in pursuit of employment (19,799 in 2018). While much attention was paid to "the 62%" in 2014 (now 60% or 13,508 non-residents working in the county and earning above $40,000), **consideration and attention should also be paid to the opposite side of the equation: the percentage of** *residents* **earning $40,000 or more that** *leave* **the county each day for work (42%, 6,586 residents)**.

Furthermore, while there is merit to focusing on the retention and attraction of higher income workers and households, the community shouldn't limit its view to those earning $40,000 or more. Although there are 13,508 non-residents earnings $40,000 or more that work in Whitfield County, **there are 3,500 more non-residents earning less than $40,000 that are commuting into the county for work each day (17,908).**

These trends illustrate the dynamism of regional labor sheds, and the interdependence of local economies within these regional labor sheds.

Economic & Workforce Trends: Labor Sheds & Commuting

From the perspective of a resident, what kind of jobs are accessible in our labor shed?

Observations: From the perspective of a resident (as compared to a company), labor sheds take on different meaning; they illustrate the magnitude and variety of jobs that are accessible to residents within a reasonable commute. **Accessibility to one's job is a critical residential location factor for working individuals and especially dual-income households.** Although Dalton–Whitfield compares favorably with Bradley County – as both communities can reasonably access the urban core of the Chattanooga metro – **the community lies at a considerable disadvantage in terms of access to jobs in traditionally "white-collar" sectors (professional and technical services, information, finance and insurance, management of companies, etc.).**

Job Accessibility by Labor Shed (2020)*

	Whitfield	Bartow	Hall	Bradley
Total Number of Jobs Accessible (45 Minute Drive Time)	**487,928**	**1,284,549**	**1,595,522**	**417,801**
Job Accessibility: Select Industries				
Manufacturing	88,128	97,295	92,227	71,690
Government	64,110	127,758	154,564	54,756
Retail Trade	51,163	112,619	151,070	43,026
Health Care and Social Assistance	50,952	145,919	173,941	43,221
Accommodation and Food Services	39,110	96,422	107,782	32,360
Administrative and Support Services	30,786	101,912	131,001	26,618
Transportation and Warehousing	28,128	42,252	44,433	28,296
Construction	24,016	65,702	80,998	20,874
Finance and Insurance	19,757	68,477	97,824	18,367
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	17,833	128,072	165,377	15,593
Wholesale Trade	16,627	51,561	78,689	12,280
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	4,934	18,695	23,131	4,408
Information	3,618	52,405	71,242	3,012
Management of Companies and Enterprises	3,029	42,771	53,762	2,849
Agriculture, Forestry, etc.	2,521	1,788	3,861	2,600

Labor sheds capture all jobs located within zip codes that are accessible within a 45-minute drive time from the most central Interstate exit in each county.

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Economic & Workforce Trends: Residential Relocation

Why did former residents leave our community? Why are current residents considering leaving?

Observations: **The pursuit of new job opportunities was – by far – the most frequently cited reason for recent or potential future relocation by survey respondents.** Proximity to various amenities and the pursuit of different or more affordable housing were also frequently cited, validating other forms of public input. Interestingly, and perhaps most positively, access to different schools (public or private) was *not* among the most common factors, countering other forms of public input.

Believe Greater Dalton Survey (2021): *"Please share the primary reasons that that led to your choice to relocate from Dalton–Whitfield County (check all that apply)."*
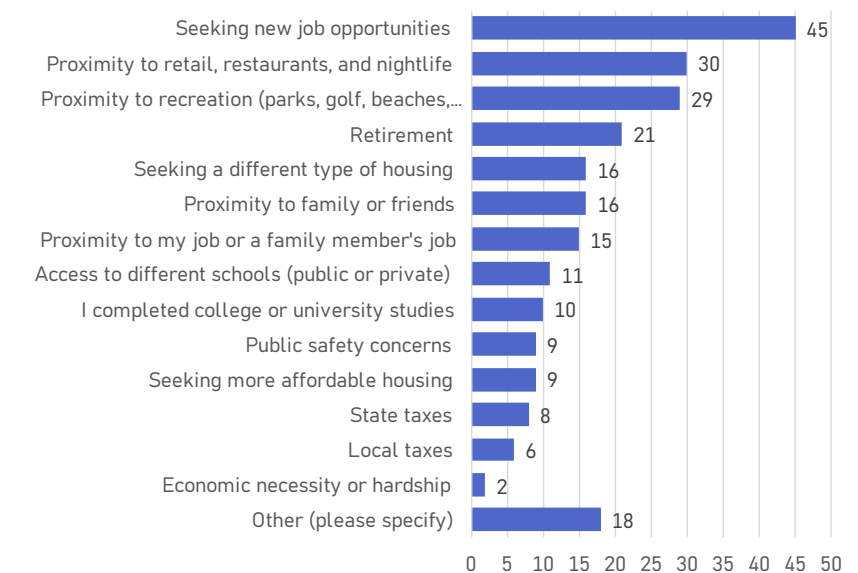
Question was presented to **46 adult survey respondents** who indicated that they do not currently live, work or attend school in Dalton–Whitfield but previously did so within the last five years.

Reason	Value
Seeking new job opportunities	14
Seeking more affordable housing	8
Proximity to my job or a family member's job	7
Proximity to family or friends	6
Proximity to recreation (parks, golf, beaches,…	3
Retirement	2
I completed college or university studies	2
State taxes	2
Economic necessity or hardship	2
Proximity to retail, restaurants, and nightlife	2
Seeking a different type of housing	1
Access to different schools (public or private)	1
Local taxes	0
Public safety concerns	0
Other (please specify)	16

Other: Politics, government, and leadership (5), seeking new job opportunities (4), proximity to amenities (3), inclusion and tolerance (2), "boring" (2), school quality (2)

Believe Greater Dalton Survey (2021): *"Please share the primary reasons that will influence your choice to relocate in the next five years (check all that apply)."*

Question was presented to **115 adult survey respondents** who indicated that they were unlikely to continue to reside in Dalton–Whitfield County five years from now.

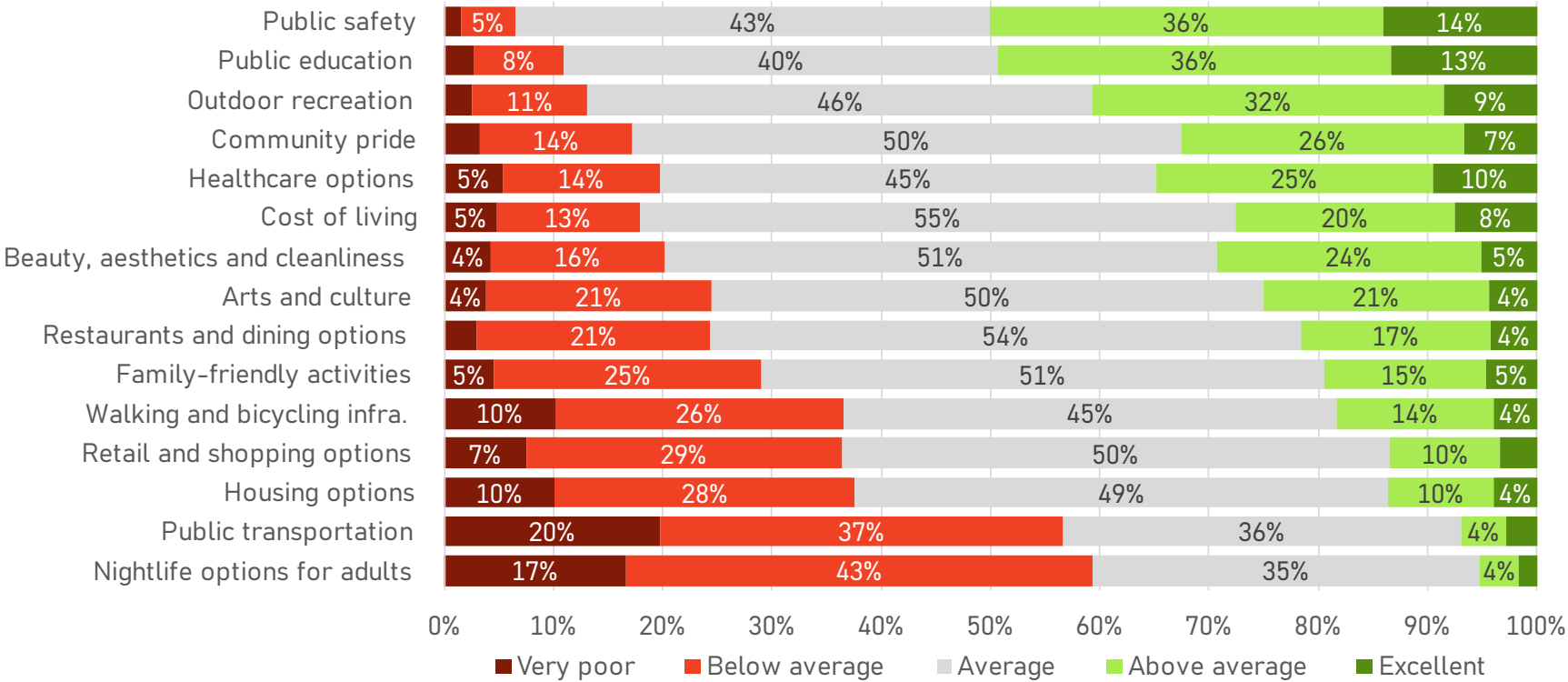| Reason	Value
Seeking new job opportunities	45
Proximity to retail, restaurants, and nightlife	30
Proximity to recreation (parks, golf, beaches,…	29
Retirement	21
Seeking a different type of housing	16
Proximity to family or friends	16
Proximity to my job or a family member's job	15
Access to different schools (public or private)	11
I completed college or university studies	10
Public safety concerns	9
Seeking more affordable housing	9
State taxes	8
Local taxes	6
Economic necessity or hardship	2
Other (please specify)	18

Other: Working from home (7), proximity to my job (3), seeking new job opportunities (2), seeking more affordable housing (1), seeking a different type of housing (1)

Quality of Life: Resident Evaluations

What do residents think about various attributes of our quality of life? Have perceptions improved?

Observations: Relative to other attributes of the community's quality of life, survey respondents have the most positive perceptions of the community's public safety and public education system. **Although various amenities receive relatively negative evaluations, perceptions of these amenities have improved greatly over time. Since 2016, the percentage of residents evaluating the following amenities as "below average" or "very poor" has declined considerably: retail and shopping options (–27%), nightlife options for adults (–25%), restaurants and dining options (–24%), and arts and culture (–20%). Housing options were the only quality of life attribute to receive less favorable evaluations from residents in 2021 than in 2016.**

Believe Greater Dalton Survey (2021): *"Please evaluate the quality and attractiveness of the following attributes of the community's quality of life to your happiness and satisfaction as a resident or worker in Dalton–Whitfield."*

Attribute	Very poor	Below average	Average	Above average	Excellent
Public safety		5%	43%	36%	14%
Public education		8%	40%	36%	13%
Outdoor recreation		11%	46%	32%	9%
Community pride		14%	50%	26%	7%
Healthcare options	5%	14%	45%	25%	10%
Cost of living	5%	13%	55%	20%	8%
Beauty, aesthetics and cleanliness	4%	16%	51%	24%	5%
Arts and culture	4%	21%	50%	21%	4%
Restaurants and dining options		21%	54%	17%	4%
Family-friendly activities	5%	25%	51%	15%	5%
Walking and bicycling infra.	10%	26%	45%	14%	4%
Retail and shopping options	7%	29%	50%	10%	
Housing options	10%	28%	49%	10%	4%
Public transportation	20%	37%	36%		4%
Nightlife options for adults	17%	43%	35%	4%	

Quality of Life: Public Education

Have we improved student performance? How do parents feel about the education experience?

Observations: A variety of data points support varied conclusions about improvements in the community's school systems. **The community has made notable progress in 3rd grade reading proficiency and graduation rates for English Language Learners. Among the concerns are a variety graduate outcomes.** The Believe Greater Dalton Education Reports provide additional detail and valuable analysis. The Survey Appendix includes additional detail on resident perceptions of public education by district. When examining changes over time, parental evaluations of education attributes (e.g., college and career counseling, after–school programs, etc.) have deteriorated across the board between 2016 and 2021 in both districts.

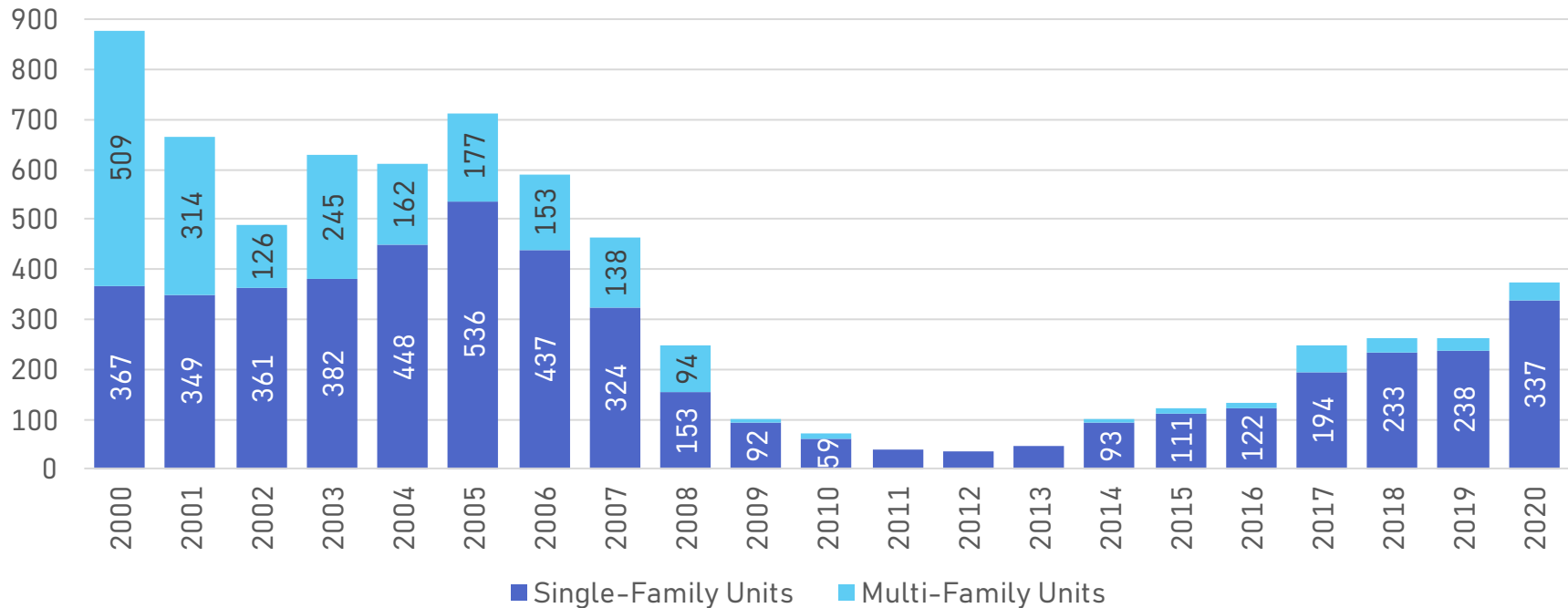## Student Performance and Outcomes by District (13/14 – 18/19)

	Dalton Public Schools			Whitfield County Schools			Georgia		
Enrollment Trends									
	2014	**2019**	**Change**	**2014**	**2019**	**Change**	**2014**	**2019**	**Change**
Enrollment	8,009	8,097	1%	14,239	13,533	–5%	1,859,743	1,890,361	2%
% English Language Learner	23%	28%	5%	19%	22%	3%	7%	10%	3%
% Economically Disadvantaged	81%	76%	–5%	72%	69%	–3%	62%	60%	–2%
Reading Proficiency									
	2015	**2019**	**Change**	**2015**	**2019**	**Change**	**2015**	**2019**	**Change**
3rd Grade English Proficiency	24%	33%	9%	29%	43%	14%	37%	42%	5%
8th Grade English Proficiency	34%	36%	3%	32%	46%	14%	39%	47%	8%
Graduation Rates									
	2014	**2019**	**Change**	**2014**	**2019**	**Change**	**2014**	**2019**	**Change**
Graduation Rate, All Students	70%	82%	11%	70%	80%	11%	73%	82%	9%
English Language Learners	50%	59%	9%	35%	75%	40%	44%	59%	15%
Economically Disadvantaged	76%	67%	–9%	88%	66%	–22%	63%	77%	15%
Graduate Outcomes (Year After Graduation)									
	2014	**2019**	**Change**	**2014**	**2019**	**Change**	**2014**	**2019**	**Change**
Working	23%	32%	8%	30%	37%	7%	20%	27%	6%
Unknown	12%	16%	4%	13%	13%	1%	12%	13%	1%
Postsecondary Enrolled	65%	53%	–12%	57%	50%	–7%	68%	60%	–8%
% Required Remediation, English	12%	26%	14%	10%	20%	9%	11%	11%	–1%
% Required Remediation, Math	29%	42%	12%	34%	33%	–1%	21%	19%	–2%

Quality of Life: Housing

Have we made any progress with our housing shortage?

Observations: The area's housing shortage was the most frequently mentioned challenge confronting the community by interviewees and survey respondents., and there is consensus among the community's leadership that little progress has been made in recent years. **The relationship between building permits and job creation cited in the** Believe Greater Dalton Housing Strategy (2018) **is evident in the data covering the community's permitting activity and job creation. Simply put, a stagnant economy with little to no population and job growth failed to compel new development. As a result, an aging housing stock has aged even further. There are signs that the market is beginning to recognize** *opportunity***, but the community must also recognize the** *need* **and invest more heavily in ways that its peers and competitors are investing to encourage desired job creation and development.**

Single-Family & Multi-Family Building Permits Issued (2000 – 2020)

Legend: ■ Single-Family Units ■ Multi-Family Units

Year	Single-Family Units	Multi-Family Units
2000	367	509
2001	349	314
2002	361	126
2003	382	245
2004	448	162
2005	536	177
2006	437	153
2007	324	138
2008	153	94
2009	92	
2010	59	
2011		
2012		
2013		
2014	93	
2015	111	
2016	122	
2017	194	
2018	233	
2019	238	
2020	337	

Resident Perspectives: Community Pride

Are we proud of our community? Would we recommend it to a friend or a colleague?

Observations: Community pride has been a focus of Believe Greater Dalton since the Community Assessment (2016) identified self-image as an area of concern. **Input participants feel that the community is making progress and survey respondents provided more favorable evaluations of various quality of life attributes than in 2016. But overall, resident perceptions of the community are very unfavorable and leave room for improvement.** The Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a new metric that the community can use to track changes in image and perceptions over time.

Net Promoter Score (NPS)

Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a measure of **customer loyalty** and **brand strength** used by companies and communities to measure the likelihood that a customer will recommend a product or place on a scale of zero (0) to ten (10).

Respondents are classified as Detractors (0-6), Passives (7-8), or Promoters (9-10).

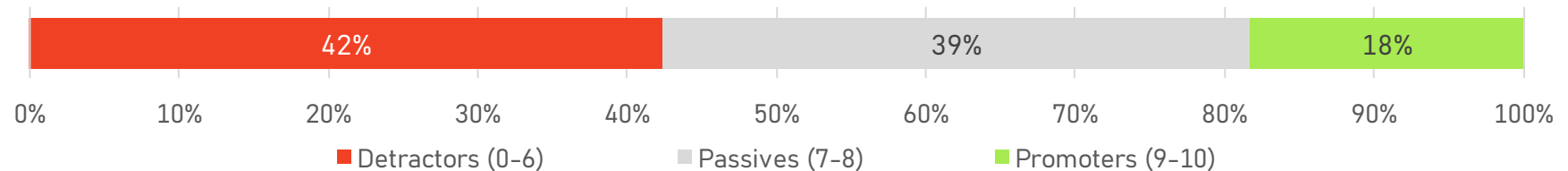**Net Promoter Score (NPS) = % Promoters – % Detractors**

High NPS: Costco (79), USAA (78), Netflix (77), Samsung (67), John Deere (54), Apple (47)
Low NPS: Bank of America (–24), Facebook (–21), Comcast (–9), McDonalds (–8), Disney (–7)
Communities are beginning to use NPS to track resident pride, perceptions and self-image.

Net Promoter Score (NPS): *"On a scale of 0 to 10, how likely are you to recommend Dalton-Whitfield County to a friend or colleague as a great place to live?"*

Scale: 0 = not at all likely; 10 = extremely likely

42%	39%	18%

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%   60%   70%   80%   90%   100%

■ Detractors (0–6)　　■ Passives (7–8)　　■ Promoters (9–10)
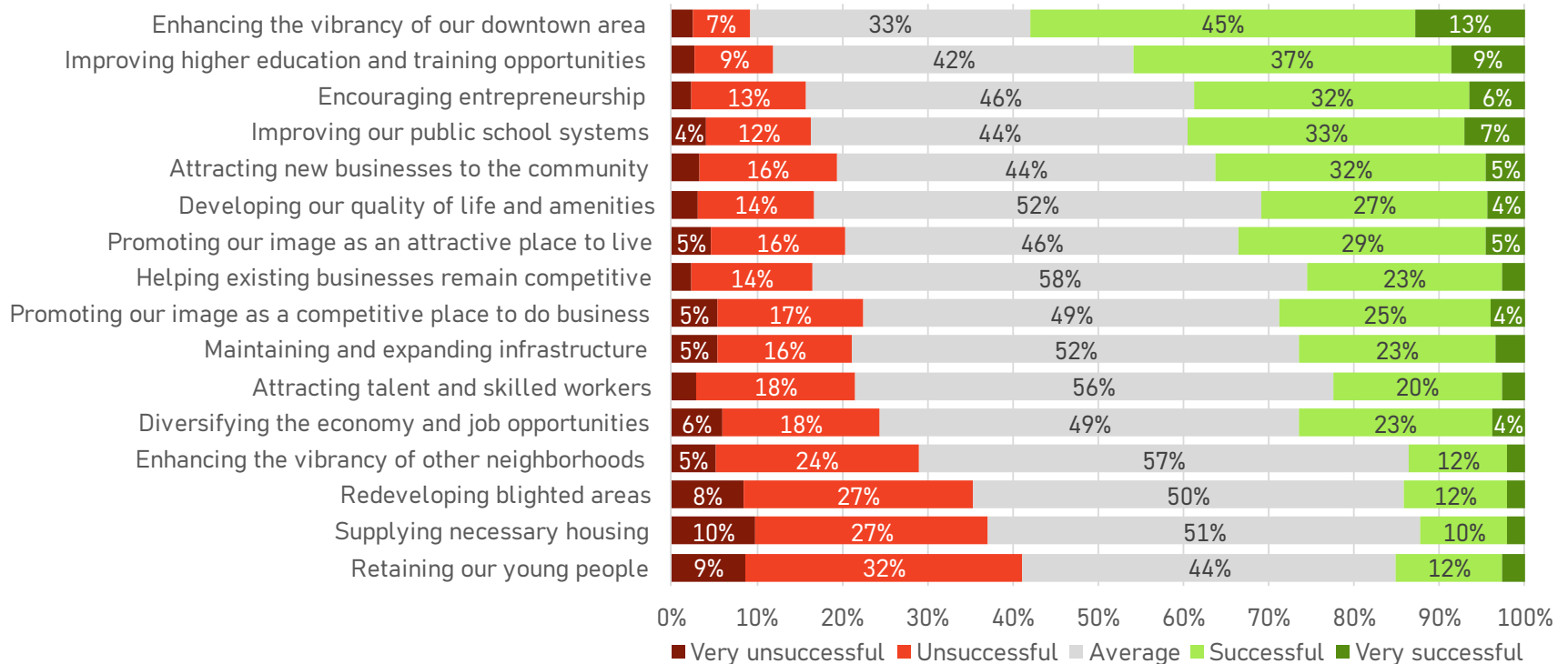
Net Promoter Score (NPS) = –24

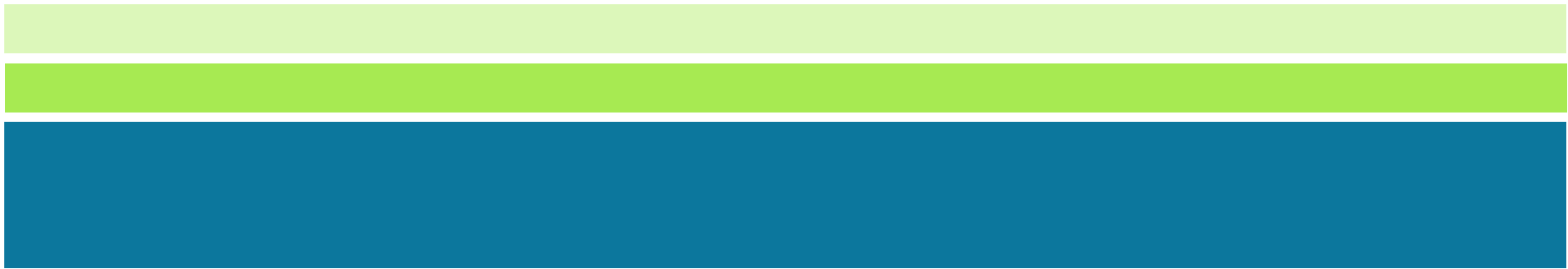# Resident Perspectives: Community & Economic Outcomes

Where do we feel we have made progress as a community in recent years?

Observations: Planning Committee members kicked off the planning process by discussing areas in which the community has made progress and areas in which work remains. **There was consensus – perhaps unanimity – that downtown represented the most notable area of progress; housing the most persistent challenge with little discernable progress. Residents responding to the survey agree. They also validate Planning Committee members' suggestions that redevelopment and blight – particularly in areas outside of downtown – deserve heightened attention.** And they call attention to the need to retain the community's young people and the need for diverse job opportunities, two topics that are clearly interrelated based on youth survey results.

Believe Greater Dalton Survey (2021): *"Please indicate the degree to which you feel the community has been successful in supporting the following community attributes and economic outcomes in the last five years."*

Attribute	Very unsuccessful	Unsuccessful	Average	Successful	Very successful
Enhancing the vibrancy of our downtown area		7%	33%	45%	13%
Improving higher education and training opportunities		9%	42%	37%	9%
Encouraging entrepreneurship		13%	46%	32%	6%
Improving our public school systems	4%	12%	44%	33%	7%
Attracting new businesses to the community		16%	44%	32%	5%
Developing our quality of life and amenities		14%	52%	27%	4%
Promoting our image as an attractive place to live	5%	16%	46%	29%	5%
Helping existing businesses remain competitive		14%	58%	23%	
Promoting our image as a competitive place to do business	5%	17%	49%	25%	4%
Maintaining and expanding infrastructure	5%	16%	52%	23%	
Attracting talent and skilled workers		18%	56%	20%	
Diversifying the economy and job opportunities	6%	18%	49%	23%	4%
Enhancing the vibrancy of other neighborhoods	5%	24%	57%	12%	
Redeveloping blighted areas	8%	27%	50%	12%	
Supplying necessary housing	10%	27%	51%	10%	
Retaining our young people	9%	32%	44%	12%	

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Resident Perspectives: Vision for the Future

What do our residents want to see different about our community in ten years?

Believe Greater Dalton Survey (2021): *"Imagine that you left Dalton–Whitfield County and didn't return for ten years. What would you want to see different about the community when you return in 2031?"*

Strategic Plan

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Believe Greater Dalton: Critical Challenges

The **Believe Greater Dalton Community Assessment** highlighted some remarkable recent successes, from significant poverty reductions to consistent improvement in resident perceptions of quality of life. However, a variety of persistent challenges remain that inhibit our ability to provide a better future for all.

Housing

Although the economy has improved in recent years, there has been little to no population growth. The need to support sufficient new residential development remains among our most frequently cited challenges by residents and businesses.

Education

Although our school systems have made progress and parental perceptions reflect this improvement, the quality of public education is widely cited alongside housing as the greatest inhibitor to community attractiveness and growth.

Economic Development

Greater Dalton has added jobs and industry in the past decade but has been challenged to outpace the streamlining of our current industrial base. Proactive investment and intentional intervention are critical. Quality job growth and economic diversification are demand drivers for housing, retail and other desired investment in the community.

Revitalization

Residents and community leaders cited downtown's revitalization as the most obvious improvement in recent years. And while they wish to see this progress continue, there is a need to focus more intently on the redevelopment in other parts of the community.

Engagement & Unity

A perceived lack of inclusion within a diverse community impacts our unity and inhibits our shared belief that Greater Dalton is a place for all. A continued commitment to engagement and inclusion are necessary.

Community Pride

The resident survey revealed that community pride is improving in certain ways but, on average, our residents' self-image and perception is a significant inhibitor to our talent retention and attraction.

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Believe Greater Dalton: Strategic Framework

Our Purpose

Believe Greater Dalton (or simply "Believe") is a collaborative, strategic initiative that exists to advance our community's belief in and commitment to a better future for all.

Our Strategies

Every five years we realign our strategies to meet the community's needs and opportunities. Beginning in 2023, our initiatives and investments will focus on **Housing, Revitalization, Education, Economic Development,** and **Engagement & Unity.** Our sixth area of focus – **Community Pride** – is an enduring strategic priority for Believe Greater Dalton that is influenced by our success in the other five areas.

Our Roles

1. We ***provide leadership*** on critical community issues.
2. We ***promote teamwork*** among community partners.
3. We ***deliver resources*** to help kickstart new initiatives.
4. We ***celebrate success*** across our community.
5. We ***measure results*** to ensure accountability.

Housing

Engagement & Unity

Community Pride

Revitalization

Education

Economic Development
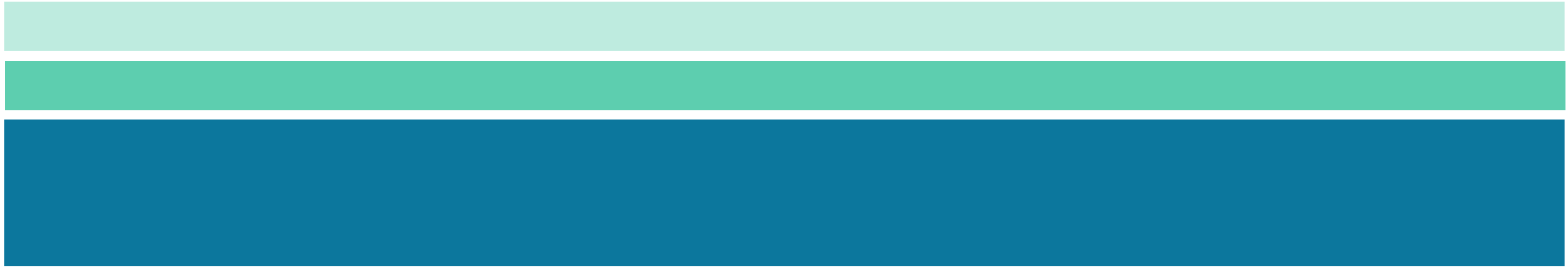
Housing

Our Belief: *Greater Dalton will offer appealing and market relevant housing that helps attract and retain workers, families and future generations.*

Objectives

- o Encourage construction of high-quality for-sale and rental housing at various price points.

- o Ensure an adequate supply of quality housing for the workforce in our community.

- o Support the redevelopment of our existing housing stock.

- o Align housing initiatives with revitalization objectives.

Outcomes

Single-family housing inventory, months of supply (by price range, if available): **3-6 months**

Multi-family units, market rate and workforce (or issued building permits): **800 (160 annual average)**

Expansion of sewer and broadband into areas that aid housing development: **miles per year (variable)**

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Housing

Priority Initiative

Understand the workforce needs and engage the business community in housing development and real estate investment opportunities.

A relative lack of attractive housing at various price points has persistently been cited by businesses as one of if not the primary barriers to talent attraction and retention. This reality was recognized in the initial Believe Greater Dalton Community Assessment (2016). The resulting Strategic Plan (2017) and Housing Strategy (2018) identified a variety of ways in which the business community can actively support Dalton–Whitfield's housing objectives. In the years ahead, we will demonstrate consistency and commitment to key tactics outlined in the Housing Strategy, as well as new tactics, that can help elevate the business community's engagement and investment in housing solutions. These include but are not limited to:

o **Capitalizing the Flooring Capital Development Corporation (FCDC)** to incentivize desirable developments.

o **Studying successful examples of housing development by local employers** in varied communities including Dalton–Whitfield.

o **Advocating for greater direct investment from local employers** in Greater Dalton's housing market.

o **Helping employers and/or property owners evaluate the potential return** on development opportunities.

o **Updating relevant market research** such as the conditions examined in the Housing Strategy (2018) to inform current initiatives and potential investments.

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Priority Initiative

Help identify and advance transformative residential development opportunities.

Throughout the public input process, there was a recognition that the community has a long way to go to fill the gaps that were identified in the community's housing market in the Housing Strategy (2018). Specifically, it was identified that the community can support at least 150 new owner households and at least 90 new rental units each year; Believe Greater Dalton can and should seek to accelerate the rate at which the community meets these needs and closes gaps. A variety of tactics can help us do so, including but not limited to:

o **Working with partners to identify a list of high-priority properties** that are suitable for transformative redevelopment and/or greenfield development.

o **Studying successful public-private partnerships** in surrounding communities that have helped advance community housing objectives.

o **Advocating for the public acquisition of desirable sites** that can be competitively bid for residential or mixed-use developments that align with housing and revitalization objectives.

o **Providing limited resource support via Flooring Capital Development Corporation (FCDC) or other mechanisms** to help advance specific projects that align with the community's housing and revitalization objectives.

o **Supporting rezoning that helps advance transformative developments**, such as efforts to "pre-emptively rezone targeted development areas to higher-density uses" as recommended in the Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan (2018 – 2022), and efforts to "create higher-density by-right multifamily zones" as recommended in the Housing Strategy (2018).

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Priority Initiative

Support the expansion of sewer and broadband to facilitate quality development that is aligned with land use plans.

Greater Dalton's ability to provide necessary housing depends on its ability to provide necessary infrastructure. Water and wastewater service extension to targeted development areas is essential. The Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan (2018 –2022) recognized this reality as it noted that residents "settle for housing that doesn't meet their needs" and advocated for "expansion of sewer services to include currently underserved, developed areas and to areas where growth is planned." The Plan also recognized a need to "promote and invest into efforts to improve accessibility to high–speed broadband for both commercial and residential users in areas of low population density." Believe Greater Dalton can support partners in their infrastructure extension efforts in a variety of ways:

o **Advocating for voter referenda that enable new revenues** to support critical infrastructure extension.

o **Helping partners identify and pursue funding that can help advance projects providing internet connectivity** to underserved areas of the community.

o **Helping partners identify and pursue funding that can help advance planned sewer projects** in targeted undeveloped areas.

Case Studies

Public Land Disposition Strategy (Raleigh, North Carolina)

In 2017, the City of Raleigh developed a Downtown Land Disposition Strategy to identify ways to repurpose eleven underutilized but increasingly valuable public-owned parcels. In May of 2021, City Council approved a series of rezoning requests for multiple city-owned parcels downtown. City staff recommended changes to permit up to 12 stories of development at four adjoining properties in the heart of downtown that were previously zoned to allow just three stories of development; rezoning is expected to significantly increase the value of the parcel with sale proceeds supporting a future affordable housing project. In another project (the Lane-Idlewild property) driven by the Land Disposition Strategy, the City conducted a competitive bidding process for the opportunity to create affordable housing project on a 1.1-acre site that the City would sell for $1 (one dollar) to the winning developer. The process received 34 competitive bids. The winning bid from the Raleigh Area Land Trust will provide 17 cottage court units, with all units to be sold to buyers making significantly below the median area income (50-80% of AMI).

104 Trinity (Atlanta, Georgia)

In 2021, the City of Atlanta awarded a 99-year ground lease to a team to create 186 affordable units on city-owned land adjacent to City Hall, consistent with recommendations to repurpose public lands. The project leverages existing parking and will provide essential ground-floor services for residents.

Revitalization

Our Belief: *Greater Dalton will be a vibrant community with thriving and diverse neighborhoods, districts and corridors.*

Objectives

o Maintain momentum in downtown revitalization with intentional investment and continued implementation of the downtown master plan.

o Accelerate the redevelopment of neighborhoods and corridors outside of downtown.

o Advance public–private partnerships that support redevelopment projects.

o Beautify our community in ways that strengthen community pride and unity.

o Align revitalization initiatives with housing and economic development objectives.

Outcomes

% of residents evaluating aesthetics and cleanliness as "above average" or "excellent" (BGD Survey): **40%**

% of housing units that are owner-occupied: **TBD**

Priority Initiative

Raise awareness and advocate for the utilization of redevelopment tools such as tax allocation districts (TADs) and community improvement districts (CIDs).

A variety of redevelopment tools and incentives are widely used across the state of Georgia in competing communities to help advance revitalization objectives. Many of these tools – development authority powers, tax allocation districts (TAD, also known as tax increment financing or TIF), community improvement districts (CIDs) and others – are underutilized in Greater Dalton relative to peer communities. Believe Greater Dalton can serve as a united advocate for the proactive utilization of tools that can help advance our revitalization objectives, from redevelopment to blight removal to beautification. In doing so, Believe Greater Dalton can help the community implement recommendations from the Housing Strategy (2018), the Downtown Master Plan (2018), the City of Dalton Redevelopment Plan (2020), and the Whitfield County Joint Comprehensive Plan (2018 – 2022).

- o **Educating partners and property owners about community improvement districts (CIDs)**, their potential benefits, and their ability to support the unique needs and interests of property owners in different districts.

- o **Supporting ballot initiatives for new public financing tools** that aid countywide revitalization.

- o **Advocating for the utilization of the Downtown Dalton Development Authority's (DDDA) enabled powers** to incentivize and finance desirable downtown redevelopment.

- o **Encouraging the aggressive utilization of existing TADs and their financing mechanisms** to aid redevelopment.

- o **Working with partners to develop and market new incentives and formal packages for redevelopment projects** in downtown and other parts of the county, expanding upon recommendations in the Downtown Master Plan.

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Priority Initiative

Work with property owners and local government to advance new solutions and public-private partnerships that remove blight and boost neighborhood appeal across the entire community.

Believe Greater Dalton and its community partners have created momentum in Downtown Dalton's revitalization in recent years. The visibility of downtown's improvement was frequently cited in the resident survey; residents are proud of this progress and wish to see it replicated in other parts of the county. Nearly 60% of residents felt the community had been successful enhancing the vibrancy of the downtown area in the last five years but just 14% felt that the community had been successful in enhancing the vibrancy of other neighborhoods. In the years ahead, Believe Greater Dalton can help the community maintain its progress downtown while accelerating its collective commitment to the revitalization of other parts of the community.

- o **Working with partners in North Dalton to assess the viability of a public-private partnership to address blight.**

- o **Organizing "clean up" week(s)** with relevant partners to facilitate trash and debris removal.

- o **Helping raise awareness among property owners of existing programs** (e.g., city tear down) via marketing.

- o **Organizing a new program that establishes neighborhood design standards or guidelines** in partnership with property owners and governments, extending recommendations from the Downtown Master Plan countywide.

- o **Helping identify and approach targeted sites, known problems, and other blighted properties.**

- o **Working with local governments to help each other** with successful blight removal or code enforcement tactics.

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Priority Initiative

Introduce beautification projects that support our belief in a vibrant community.

As Greater Dalton works to improve our residents' pride in the place they call home, aesthetics matter. Research by the Knight Foundation and Gallup (the Soul of the Community project) has illustrated that community attachment is driven most heavily by three factors: social offerings, openness and welcomeness, and beauty and aesthetics. Impressions also matter as we attempt to compete for workers and corporate investments that are critical to our growth and prosperity. Believe Greater Dalton can aid community beautification through leadership, resource support and other means, including:

- o **Securing funding and support for landscaping at interstate interchanges and major intersections** from corporate sponsors, community partners, and/or volunteers.

- o **Pursuing grant monies or providing limited resource support for public art** embracing our diverse community.

- o **Helping local governments establish design standards for gateway corridors** and educating property owners.

- o **Helping local governments and property owners identify potential sites for greenspace conversion** (blighted properties, publicly-owned lands, parklets, etc.).

- o **Providing small, matching grants for public art, landscaping, and other beautification projects** undertaken by property owners that align with revitalization objectives and enhance the appeal of properties or greenspaces.

- o **Aiding local governments and/or DDDA with evaluation and development of a façade ordinance** and associated incentives to improve aesthetics in commercial district(s), consistent with the Downtown Master Plan (2018).

Case Studies

5x5 Program (Macon, Georgia)

The 5×5 Program supports neighborhood revitalization by targeting and aligning services within a five-block area for five weeks. The program rotates throughout the year, concentrating services in varied neighborhoods in each district of Macon-Bibb County. Neighborhood needs are identified through dialogue with residents, neighborhood organizations, and community leaders. Several agencies, including public works, parks and beautification, engineering, and many others develop and execute a plan to concentrate services (sidewalk repair, graffiti removal, streetlight installation, grass cutting, blight removal) in the five-block area. Other organizations joined the effort over time to increase the impact of concentrated services, including Macon Area Habitat for Humanity, the Macon Water Authority, Rebuilding Macon, and the Bibb County Sheriff's Office.

Revenue Bond Financing, Downtown Development Authorities (Various Statewide)

Each year, multiple downtown development authorities in the State of Georgia utilize their enabled powers to issue debt to help finance a variety of projects (housing, public building, parks, infrastructure, etc.) advancing revitalization objectives. Powder Springs is simply one of many examples. The Council approved a partnership with the Downtown Development Authority in early 2021, which allows the authority to acquire properties targeted by the city using up to $10.3 million in revenue bonds. The city expressed an intent to buy property and enter into public-private partnerships with developers interested in advancing community objectives (residences, retail space and an office building). Just a few months later in min-2021, the Powder Springs DDA agreed to terms with Novare Group to purchase 6.3 acres of downtown property for $3.5 million to develop 221 apartments and add nearly 5,000 square feet of new commercial space downtown. Complete inventories of annual debt issuances (2020 and 2021) are available from Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

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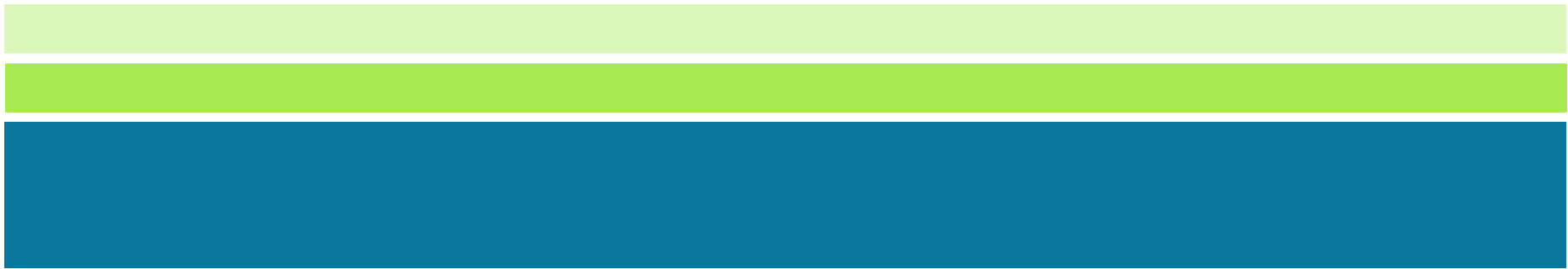
Education

Education

Our Belief: *Greater Dalton's education system will enhance our appeal to families by steadily improving outcomes for students.*

Objectives

○ Improve outcomes in third grade reading proficiency and college and career readiness.

○ Reduce disparities in key outcomes for disadvantaged student populations.

○ Drive school district innovation through business and higher education partnership.

○ Nurture parental and community engagement in schools and student engagement in the community.

○ Improve perceptions of school quality, both internally and externally.

Outcomes

Third grade reading, % of students proficient Levels 3 & 4 (2027): **60%**

College and career readiness (2027): **varied***

*Annual measurement will track post-secondary enrollment, dual enrollment, students entering college without needing remediation, end of pathway assessments (EOPA) and associated credentials, and work-based learning program completion.

Education

Priority Initiative

Unify the community and its education conversations around shared objectives and key outcomes.

The Believe Greater Dalton Community Assessment (2021) confirmed that the community and its public school system have made progress in improving student outcomes in a variety of areas. However, businesses and residents remain concerned that school quality inhibits community growth. Believe Greater Dalton and the community's education partners have identified key outcomes around which they wish to unify the community: **third grade reading proficiency** and **college and career readiness**. Progress is being made on these outcomes, but we hope and expect to accelerate that progress. Moving forward, Believe Greater Dalton can leverage its roles to help unify the community in support of these outcomes and the district plans that help advance their attainment: the Dalton Public Schools (DPS) Strategic Plan, 2019 – 2024 and the Whitfield County Schools (WCS) Strategic Plan, 2021- 2024. This could include:

- **Publishing an annual education report** inclusive of both community level data and individual school system data.

- **Helping stakeholders understand how education data is calculated and communicated**, locally and statewide.

- **Working with DPS and WCS to help align district-level strategic planning in 2024** around shared objectives and key outcomes; the DPS five-year plan and WCS three-year plan require updates at the end of 2024.

- **Helping education partners identify and pursue funding opportunities** to support programs targeting shared objectives and key outcomes.

- **Working with education partners to coordinate volunteer initiatives** that involve parents and support students in in ways that aid college and career readiness and align with district plans and programs.

Education

Priority Initiative

Identify and advance solutions to address the relationships between education outcomes and the issues of housing and food insecurity in Greater Dalton.

Believe Greater Dalton and its education partners have recognized that many of the community's challenges are interrelated and complex; that certain economic conditions – notably housing instability and food insecurity – impact a variety of educational outcomes from test scores to attendance to graduation. It is now time for us to come together to accelerate existing efforts and advance new solutions that improve residential stability and food security for our students and their families. Believe Greater Dalton can leverage its roles in a variety of ways to catalyze these efforts:

o **Convening relevant partners with consistency to identify and advance solutions**.

o **Inventorying existing resources, programs, and services** that seek to strengthen food security and provide housing stability for students and their families.

o **Identifying gaps in existing resources, programs, and services**.

o **Studying best practices** that could potentially be emulated to fill identified gaps.

o **Helping partners identify relevant solutions** that align with their missions and strategic plans.

o **Helping partners identify and pursue funding** to start and/or sustain solutions.

o **Encouraging integration and funding of new solutions by DPS and WCS school district plans** that are to be updated and approved in 2024 by ensuring that relevant new solutions are identified by the end of 2023.

Priority Initiative

Evaluate the areas of our community where students are disadvantaged and provide support for out-of-school-time (OST) programs or wraparound services.

Believe Greater Dalton and its education partners have recognized that students in our community may be economically or otherwise disadvantaged in ways that inhibit their educational progress relative to their peers. With targeted and focused strategies, we can help eliminate certain disadvantages and improve the economic prospects for students, families and generations to come. Believe Greater Dalton can support its partners across the community in a variety of ways that align with our roles and our education objectives:

- o **Convening relevant partners to study the areas of the community where students are disadvantaged.**

- o **Communicating findings to the community** in alignment with the annual education report.

- o **Inventorying existing and relevant out-of-school-time (OST) programs and wraparound services.**

- o **Helping partners identify appropriate adjustments** to existing programs and services based on findings.

- o **Identifying potential new programs or services** that could meet identified gaps.

- o **Working with partners to identify and secure funding** to start or sustain programs or services.

Case Studies

Learn4Life Annual Report (Atlanta, Georgia)

Learn4Life is Metro Atlanta's cradle-to-career regional education partnership with three key roles: engaging education, business and community partners; aligning educational efforts and resources; and analyzing data and measuring progress to help focus resources. The Learn4Life Leadership Council identified six key indicators to continuously measure student progress across districts and along the cradle-to-career continuum. The partnership produces an annual report (2020 and 2021) that illustrates progress towards these six outcomes.

Chamber Education Report (Nashville, Tennessee)

The Nashville Chamber has invested heavily in staff research expertise for decades, supporting a variety of objectives and producing numerous high-quality publications each year. For nearly thirty years the Chamber has produced an Education Report (formerly known as the Education Report Card). A committee of community and education leaders helps guide the staff's research each year, resulting in a "data-driven framework for action and recommendations to support, drive, and assist Metro Nashville Public Schools." The 2021 Education Report is available here.

Economic Development

Economic Development

Our Belief: *Greater Dalton will grow well-paying jobs that align with resident needs and support our long-term prosperity.*

Objectives

o Promote growth in quality jobs that facilitate diversification and raise standards of living.

o Help entrepreneurs and existing employers overcome barriers to growth in Greater Dalton.

o Proactively prepare new industrial sites and buildings to compete effectively for investments.

o Change the perception among site selectors that Greater Dalton is closed for new business.

o Align economic development initiatives with housing and revitalization objectives to support population growth.

Outcomes

Capital investment, annual (new job-creating projects): **$65 million**

Net job creation, annual (new projects w/ wages greater than the county average of $45,850): **250**

Number of businesses and entrepreneurs assisted at DIA (annual): **125**

New jobs created by DIA-assisted businesses and entrepreneurs (annual average): **25**

Economic Development

Priority Initiative

Provide support for targeted corporate recruitment and retail attraction strategies that enhance standards of living and quality of life.

The Believe Greater Dalton Community Assessment (2021) illustrated that the community has stagnated economically for more than a decade. In order to meet the needs of our existing residents – nearly 20,000 residents leave the county for work each day – and support our continued attractiveness to families, we will recommit as a community to targeted corporate recruitment and retail attraction bringing quality jobs and amenities to our residents. Believe Greater Dalton can do so in a variety of ways that are consistent with its roles, including but not limited to:

o **Providing dedicated financial resources** for the implementation of new or enhanced targeted corporate recruitment and retail attraction tactics by the Dalton–Whitfield Joint Development Authority (JDA).

o **Demonstrating collective leadership and advocacy throughout the community** with respect to the importance of proactive investment in targeted corporate recruitment and retail attraction.

o **Surveying residents employed outside of the community to understand their employment** (occupation, industry, wages, etc.) and optimize targeted corporate recruitment tactics to meet their needs and align with their skills.

o **Advocating for the use of available, sensible incentives that will help the community compete for quality jobs.**

Economic Development

Priority Initiative

Advance commitment to the identification, acquisition and preparation of competitive sites and buildings to compete for targeted corporate relocations and support existing industry expansions.

In order to reverse our economic decline and successfully attract high-quality economic development *projects* that provide quality jobs for our residents, we must invest more proactively in economic development *product*: sites and buildings. Our competition is aggressive in their efforts to bring new product to market, and stakeholder input suggests that the community regularly turns away high-quality projects providing jobs that pay wages above the county average due simply to a lack of available sites and buildings (particularly sites larger than 20 acres and buildings greater than 100,000 square feet).

- o **Building consensus and commitment among public and private stakeholders** to invest in new product.

- o **Working with partners to identify a list of highest-priority, highest-value properties** for consideration for future industrial site development and/or speculative building development.

- o **Encouraging private landowners to evaluate marketability and make valuable properties available. Encouraging local governments and development authorities to** proactively acquire identified properties that support economic development objectives.

- o **Providing resource support to help partners evaluate, prepare and/or market new product** (e.g., economic and fiscal impact studies, grants for engineering or environmental studies).

Priority Initiative

Provide support to the Dalton Innovation Accelerator (DIA) to help it evaluate new opportunities and reach the next level of operational maturity.

The opening of the Dalton Innovation Accelerator (DIA) was a key priority from the Believe Greater Dalton Strategic Plan (2017). Commitment to this initial investment is critical; entrepreneur centers like DIA often take many years to achieve operational stability and begin demonstrating clear economic outcomes from the businesses that they've assisted. In the years ahead, we will help DIA maintain momentum and achieve long-term self-sufficiency by providing appropriate support for activities that align with the community's economic development objectives:

o   **Providing near-term resource assistance to aid development of DIA's incubation program.**

o   **Working with DIA and potential investors to evaluate properties that could help increase attractiveness** of working with and locating at DIA (office and flex space).

o   **Working with DIA and potential investors to evaluate the viability of capitalizing a venture fund** to help increase the attractiveness of working with and locating at DIA.

o   **Facilitating research, feasibility and/or strategic planning associated with launching a food-based incubator.**

Economic Development

Case Studies

Engineering and Site Preparation, Team NEO RightSites Council (Northeast Ohio)

Team NEO maintains a partnership of professionals in construction, real estate, engineering, utilities and other related fields that work with economic development professionals to assess sites and help communities and/or property owners prepare them for development. The RightSites Council has partnered with a local engineering firm to complete conceptual site plans.

Duke Energy Indiana Site Readiness Evaluations (Indiana)

Duke Energy's Site Readiness Program works with local economic development partners throughout the state of Indiana to identify industrial sites and evaluate their readiness and preparedness for industrial development. Duke Energy provides technical assistance through partnerships with Site Selection Group (SSG) and local engineering firms who provide evaluations and recommendations. Duke Energy then provides small grants (typically between $10,000 and $25,000) to local economic development organizations (LEDOs) to implement the recommendations. Duke has worked with LEDOs to identify and prioritize private properties that are not currently on the market and/or not currently marketable.

Engagement & Unity

Engagement & Unity

Our Belief: *Greater Dalton will be a unified community where everyone feels welcomed, included and engaged in the place they call home.*

Objectives

- o Promote intentional inclusivity in our businesses, organizations and institutions.
- o Strengthen community attachment and engagement through shared experiences.

Outcomes

% of residents that agree that *"Greater Dalton is an inclusive place"* (BGD Survey)*: **60%**

*Resident perceptions would be cross-tabulated and measured by race, ethnicity and age as well.

Engagement & Unity

Priority Initiative

Promote diversity in civic engagement throughout the community.

In addition to openness and welcomeness, and beauty and aesthetics, social offerings were among the top three factors contributing to community attachment according to the Soul of the Community project. Community events are a fundamental social offering but like much else across the community, access to and participation in these events varies by age, location, race/ethnicity, language, socioeconomic status, and a variety of other factors. The same is true for a variety of other opportunities to help bring our community together. Believe Greater Dalton can help advance engagement and unity by promoting greater diversity in participation in a variety of ways that align with its roles:

- **Identifying ten (10) existing community events** to support, promote, and encourage a more diverse level of participation around our community.

- **Convening sponsors and promoters of identified events** to understand current community engagement and promotion tactics, as well as any data on prior attendance and attendee attributes.

- **Providing limited resource support for identified events** to aid engagement and attractiveness that elevates diversity in participation.

- **Promoting events using various media and communications channels** and creative engagement tactics.

- **Evaluating the viability of alternative locations throughout Greater Dalton** that may enhance access and participation from diverse populations.

- **Supporting education partners in efforts to advance parental engagement.**

- **Providing resource support for youth organizations** interested in community service projects.

- **Supporting efforts that provide inclusive new leadership opportunities** (e.g., Hispanic Advisory & Engagement Committee).

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Engagement & Unity

Priority Initiative

Develop and share a best practices operational toolkit with practical tips and resources that can be used to advance organizational inclusivity objectives.

Rising socioeconomic gaps along racial and ethnic lines and the continued diversification of the American population are among many factors that have appropriately elevated diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) to the forefront of many corporate and community conversations. Although many organizations and employers have worked individually to advance inclusivity to varying degrees, we must encourage all to be thoughtful and intentional in helping create a more inclusive community and economy for all residents. Although we have improved resident perceptions of inclusivity in recent years, a majority of residents (51%) disagree with the statement that "Greater Dalton is an inclusive place." Believe Greater Dalton can help the community advance inclusivity objectives by:

o **Convening relevant stakeholders to guide development of an operational toolkit** for employers to include practical tips and resources that organizations can use to engage different audiences.

o **Identifying existing policies and practices implemented by local employers that could serve as guidance.**

o **Studying national best practices** in the form of community inclusivity and/or organizational inclusivity policies.

o **Encouraging participation by employers** through advocacy, marketing, and communications.

o **Leading by example via adoption of new policies, procedures or programs** by Believe Greater Dalton partners.

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Engagement & Unity

Priority Initiative

Provide support for cultural competency workshops and encourage participation from employers and institutions throughout Greater Dalton.

Throughout the stakeholder input phase, many residents and community leaders suggested that the "unity" was missing from our comm*unity*; that Greater Dalton can, at times, seem and feel like two communities. Cultural competency – the ability to effectively interact with, appreciate, and understand people from different cultures or beliefs systems than your own – is a critical leadership attribute in communities and organizations that seek to advance inclusivity and promote unity. Believe Greater Dalton can advance cultural competence and in turn, support our belief and objectives related to Engagement & Unity by:

o **Examining the history of cultural competence training and related efforts** in Greater Dalton today.

o **Evaluating resources and potential providers** of facilitation and training services.

o **Host workshops or seminars at no charge** to participants

o **Help employers develop custom workshops to deploy within their workplace** and which suit their specific needs

Case Studies

MOSAIC (Tulsa, Oklahoma)

MOSAIC is the Tulsa Regional Chamber's diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) collaborative. Founded in 2011, MOSAIC emerged as a model for other chamber-led business partnerships advancing DEI across the country. MOSAIC and its member companies meet regularly, engage in training, share best practices, support supplier diversity, and recognize success towards inclusivity objectives among a variety of other programs and activities. MOSAIC produces an annual Regional Inclusion Report and recognizes the region's Most Inclusive Workplaces. It also provides employers with a confidential inclusive workplace evaluation (the Inclusive Workplace Index).

DEI Resource Guides for Employers (Various Chambers of Commerce Nationwide)

In addition to various programs and initiatives that have compelled the business community to make commitments to advancing DEI regionally, chambers of commerce across the country have also provided their members with a variety of different resources to help support their individual corporate DEI efforts. Examples include guides and toolkits from the Charleston, Quad Cities, and Louisville chambers.

Resources for Chambers of Commerce

The Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE) has a variety of additional resources and case studies available for its members related to the topics of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
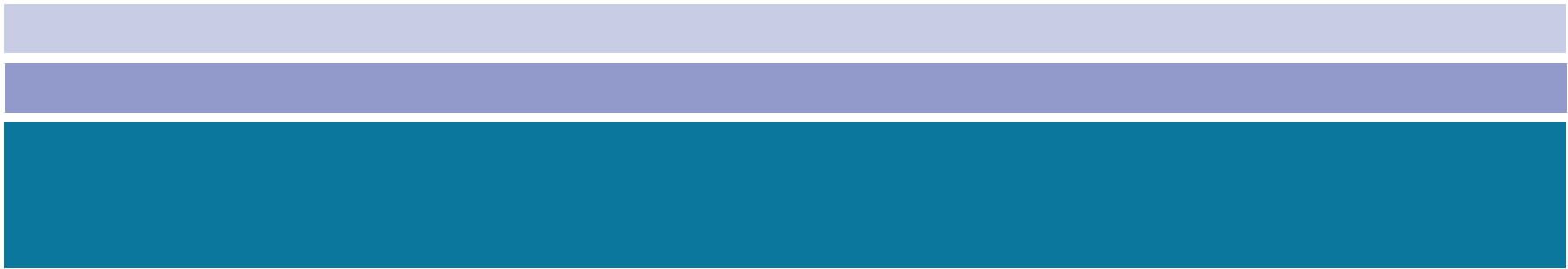
Community Pride

Community Pride

Our Belief: *Greater Dalton will be a place where residents from diverse backgrounds are proud to live, work and do business.*

Objectives

- Elevate pride among all residents throughout our community.

- Enable our residents to be positive ambassadors for Greater Dalton.

- Align priorities with Engagement & Unity objectives.

Outcomes

Net Promoter Score (NPS)*: **+1**

*Net promoter score would be cross-tabulated and measured by race, ethnicity and age as well.

Community Pride

Priority Initiative

Invest in media and communications efforts that elevate community pride and amplify our successes as a community.

Community pride has been a focus of Believe Greater Dalton since the Community Assessment (2016) identified self-image as an area of concern. More than 4,500 residents responding to the community survey (2021) suggested that the community is making progress but overall, resident perceptions and measures of pride leave room for improvement. Although pride is an outcome that is influenced by our success in other areas (e.g., education, revitalization, etc.), pride is also a strategic issue for our community that inhibits our ability to effectively attract and retain talent. Furthermore, pride is something that we should all feel, and our efforts to promote pride must be intentionally mindful of our Engagement & Unity objectives. Believe Greater Dalton can provide leadership and resources to amplify pride and measure results in various ways:

o **Investing in new media** that communicates success and tells positive stories in a compelling way.

o **Engaging the under-represented parts of our community** to understand and amplify their sources of pride.

o **Providing resource support for events, activities, and initiatives** that celebrate the community and amplify pride.

o **Demonstrating commitment to recently-developed branding and marketing campaigns** for the community.

o **Developing resources that can be used by residents, employers, and partners** that wish to serve as ambassadors for Greater Dalton and/or helping employers and partners formalize ambassador programs.

Community Pride

Priority Initiative

Conduct annual surveys of resident perceptions to evaluate our progress.

Believe Greater Dalton has measured resident perceptions in both 2016 and 2021, with the 2021 survey introducing a new question and associated metric (Net Promoter Score) to help gauge resident pride. The Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a measure of customer loyalty and brand strength that is commonly used by companies and communities. In 2021, the community survey revealed that we have considerably more detractors than promoters (NPS = –21), a trend we hope to reverse with intentional investment over time. Other communities have raised awareness about the importance of resident pride in their communities while measuring progress using annual surveys to track changes in NPS over time (Case Study: Topeka, Kansas). Believe Greater Dalton can provide similar leadership in tracking performance over time by:

- o **Designing an annual survey questionnaire** that is bilingual and which can be cross–tabulated to measure NPS.

- o **Deploying, promoting, and incentivizing participation** in the annual survey.

- o **Communicating survey results to the public** via press releases, social media, events, or other means.

Case Studies

Net Promoter Score (NPS) Survey, Greater Topeka Partnership (Topeka, Kansas)

Since 2017, the Greater Topeka Partnership has utilized a community satisfaction survey to measure and track progress in its Net Promoter Score (NPS). Each year nearly 2,000 residents of Topeka–Shawnee County (population 179.000) respond to the survey. In 2017 (the first year of the survey), Topeka's NPS was negative 46.5, a remarkably low figure the community had few active promoters and many detractors. Since 2017, the total number of people with a positive view of the city has risen steadily. By 2021, the community's Net Promoter Score had increased by 19 percentage points, or 40% overall.
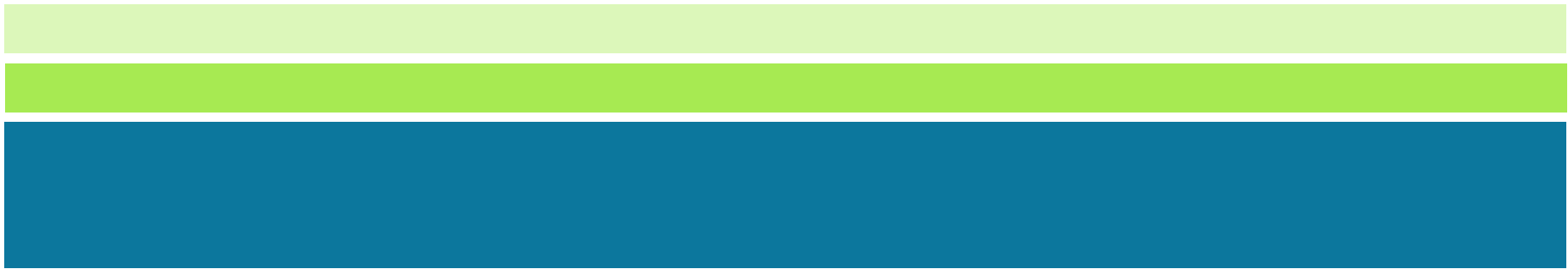
Implementation Guidelines

Governance

Believe Greater Dalton has historically been governed by a series of committees that align with and support the various strategies within the Plan. These committees were designed with the intent that volunteers would work with organizational leadership from relevant partners to help drive day-to-day implementation. These committees have varied in their operations over time; some have essentially dissolved with little activity in recent years while others have met more consistently to keep initiatives and conversations alive. While these committees and the Believe Greater Dalton co-chairs have helped guide implementation and investments, the fiduciary responsibility and oversight for Believe's resources is shared by the boards of directors of the Community Foundation of Northwest Georgia (where funds are collected) and the Greater Dalton Chamber of Commerce and its associated Foundation (where funds are disbursed and expended).

Moving forward, a single Believe Greater Dalton Board of Advisors ("Believe Board") should be formed to provide more formal and consistent governance of the Believe Greater Dalton movement and its resource deployment. Specifically, the Believe Board would include the following individuals: two co-chairs to provide leadership for the overall effort, chair(s) for each of the six strategic areas of focus, the chair or chair-elect of the Greater Dalton Chamber of Commerce, the President & CEO of the Greater Dalton Chamber of Commerce, and the Executive Director of Believe Greater Dalton. Other Believe Greater Dalton staff would also serve as non-voting members. The Believe Board could be empowered by the Greater Dalton Chamber of Commerce and its board of directors to serve as fiduciaries and provide governance for the Believe movement.

The Believe Board could potentially meet quarterly. Throughout the year and between meetings, chairpersons would work with Believe staff to guide implementation of their strategy's priorities, convening ad hoc or standing work groups of organizational partners, specific investors and relevant stakeholders to advance specific priorities and tactics. These ad hoc groups may vary in size or purpose; they may convene and dissolve with intentionality as needed.

Staffing & Operations

At present, Believe Greater Dalton is supported by multiple staff members including a Project Manager, Education Partnerships Director, and Marketing Director. As an initiative of the Greater Dalton Chamber of Commerce, all staff members are Chamber employees. Believe Greater Dalton has also provided resource support to the Dalton Innovation Accelerator (DIA) in support of DIA's Executive Director. Other staff members from the Chamber and numerous partner organizations also provide support for the movement but their positions are not directly supported by Believe Greater Dalton resources and the Believe annual budget.

Moving forward, the Believe Greater Dalton movement should be guided by an Executive Director empowered by the Believe Board and the Chamber President & CEO to oversee the Believe budget; in this regard, the Executive Director of Believe provides oversight for the Believe budget in a manner akin to a departmental budget. Working with the Believe Board, the Executive Director would be empowered to develop and maintain an appropriate team of paid staff that could evolve over time to help advance specific strategies, priorities, and tactics. Team members would support the Executive Director as Chamber employees; alternatively, some necessary staff capacity at partner organizations could be enabled with Believe resources when appropriate and aligned with the Strategic Plan.

Each of the six Believe strategies (Housing, Education, Community Engagement, etc.) would ideally be supported by a dedicated staff member of the Believe team. This staff capacity could be provided part-time or full-time and Believe staff members could potentially be responsible for supporting multiple strategies. Financial resources could also be provided to appropriate partners to enable staff capacity in support of the Believe movement. These staff leaders would work alongside the co-chairs for their strategy throughout the year to advance priorities in partnership with other stakeholders and would help provide stability and sustainability to implementation over time. *A few key gaps are evident in existing staff resources to aid strategy activation; most notably, staff resources may need to be developed or augmented to support the fulfilment of housing and revitalization objectives (e.g., FCDC Director, Urban Planner).*

Financial Resources & Fundraising

A fundraising effort solicited $2 million ($400,000 annually) in financial commitments from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors to support implementation of the Believe Greater Dalton Strategic Plan (2017) over five years. As Believe transitions into the implementation of its new Strategic Plan in 2023, the movement will need to be sustained by a similar fundraising endeavor.

Believe Greater Dalton and its partners in implementation have demonstrated some important results in recent years. A Housing Plan and the Flooring Capital Development Corporation (FCDC) were created to address housing needs. A Downtown Master Plan was created, revitalization accelerated, and doors opened to the Dalton Innovation Accelerator (DIA). New community branding was launched, the "People of Dalton" were highlighted, and events like Gratefull Dalton helped elevate pride and bring our community together. These accomplishments should be celebrated but it is evident from the research and the input that the community needs **continued commitment** and **accelerated investment**.

A successful fundraising campaign targeting $3 million ($600,000 annually) would effectively resource the Strategic Plan for the next five years while also demonstrating the commitment and *belief* of Greater Dalton's business and philanthropic community. A minimum of $2.3 million ($500,000 annually) is required to simply keep pace with inflation (2.8% annual) and the level of expenditure from our last five years. In order to enable any additional staff capacity, merit–based salary increases, or new discretionary monies to support the implementation of strategic priorities, considerable new monies will need to be raised.

A successful fundraising endeavor can be supported by a small group of committed volunteers from the business community comprising a **Fundraising Committee.** These volunteers would work with Believe leadership to develop and implement a fundraising plan; identifying and qualifying prospective investors and making targeted outreach to solicit financial commitments. This group should be willing to lead by example and to dedicate time to solicit pledges.

All Believe Greater Dalton investors would be invited to join the **Investors Council**, a group that receives frequent communication and meets annually to celebrate accomplishments and review plans for the year ahead.

Performance Measurement

Believe Greater Dalton seeks to influence a variety of interrelated objectives across six strategic areas of focus. A series of outcomes related to these objectives have been defined throughout this Strategic Plan. These outcomes (listed below) would be measured and communicated annually to all investors in the form of a **Believe Greater Dalton annual report**.

- o Single-family housing inventory, monthly of supply (by price range, if available): **3-6 months**
- o Multi-family units, market rate and workforce (or issued building permits): **800 (160 annual average)**
- o Expansion of sewer and broadband into areas that aid housing development: **miles per year (variable)**
- o % of residents evaluating aesthetics and cleanliness as "above average" or "excellent" (BGD Survey): **40%**
- o % of housing units that are owner-occupied: **TBD**
- o Third grade reading, % of students proficient Levels 3 & 4 (2027): **60%**
- o College and career readiness (2027): **multiple (see Education section)**
- o Capital investment, annual (new job-creating projects): **$65 million**
- o Net job creation, annual (new projects w/ wages greater than the county average of $45,850): **250**
- o Number of businesses and entrepreneurs assisted at DIA (annual): **125**
- o New jobs created by DIA-assisted businesses and entrepreneurs (annual average): **25**
- o % of residents that agree that "Greater Dalton is an inclusive place" (BGD Survey)*: **60%**
- o Net Promoter Score (NPS)*: **+1**

In addition to these metrics which relate to individual strategies, **four primary outcomes** would be measured in terms of performance relative to our competition: **population growth, net migration, job growth, and median household income**.

Appendix A

Survey Results

Believe Greater Dalton Community Survey: Overview

4,534 respondents

…up from **2,220** respondents to the initial Believe Greater Dalton survey (2016)

Purpose: Maximize engagement from residents and workers in Dalton–Whitfield County while soliciting input regarding community competitiveness and vision for the future.

Approach and Methodology:

- ✓ Bilingual survey instrument (English and Spanish)
- ✓ Question logic and branching used to present specific questions to certain groups (e.g., students, entrepreneurs, former residents, etc.)

"Are you currently a middle or high school student that lives in Dalton or Whitfield County?"
Students/youth were presented a separate survey; remaining questions limited to non–students aged 18 or older.

24% (1,098)	76% (3,436)

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

■ Yes ■ No
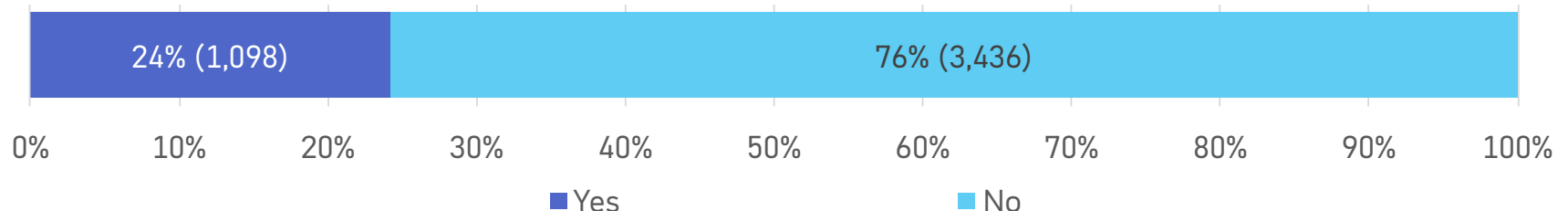
Survey Demographics

Middle and high school students were presented a separate set of questions, the results of which are presented on the pages entitled "Student & Youth Survey" that follow.

The remaining, primary survey questions were presented to non–students aged 18 or older.

"What is your age?"

7%	19%	26%	24%	17%	7%

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%   60%   70%   80%   90%   100%

- ■ 18–24   ■ 25–34   ■ 35–44   ■ 45–54   ■ 55–64   ■ 65+
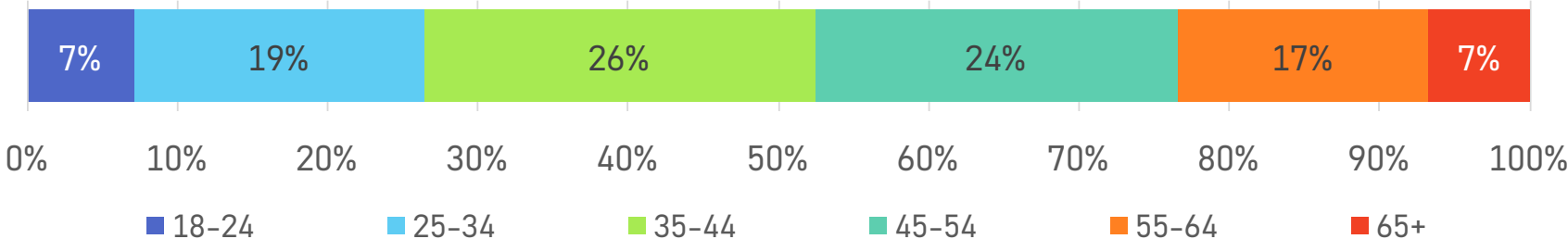
"What is your race/ethnicity?"

77%	16%	2%		3%

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%   60%   70%   80%   90%   100%

- ■ White or Caucasian (not Hispanic)   ■ Hispanic or Latino
- ■ Black or African American (not Hispanic)   ■ Other race of ethnicity
- ■ Prefer not to answer
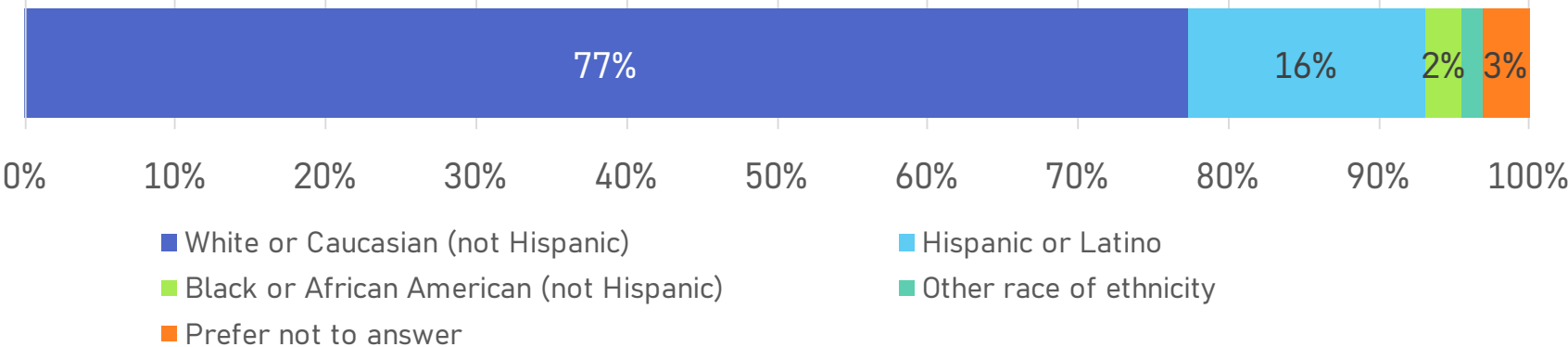
Reasons for Recent Relocation

"Please share with us the primary reasons that that led to your choice to relocate from Dalton–Whitfield County (check all that apply)."

Question was presented to **46 respondents** who indicated that they do not currently live, work, or attend school in Dalton or Whitfield County but previously did so within the last five years.
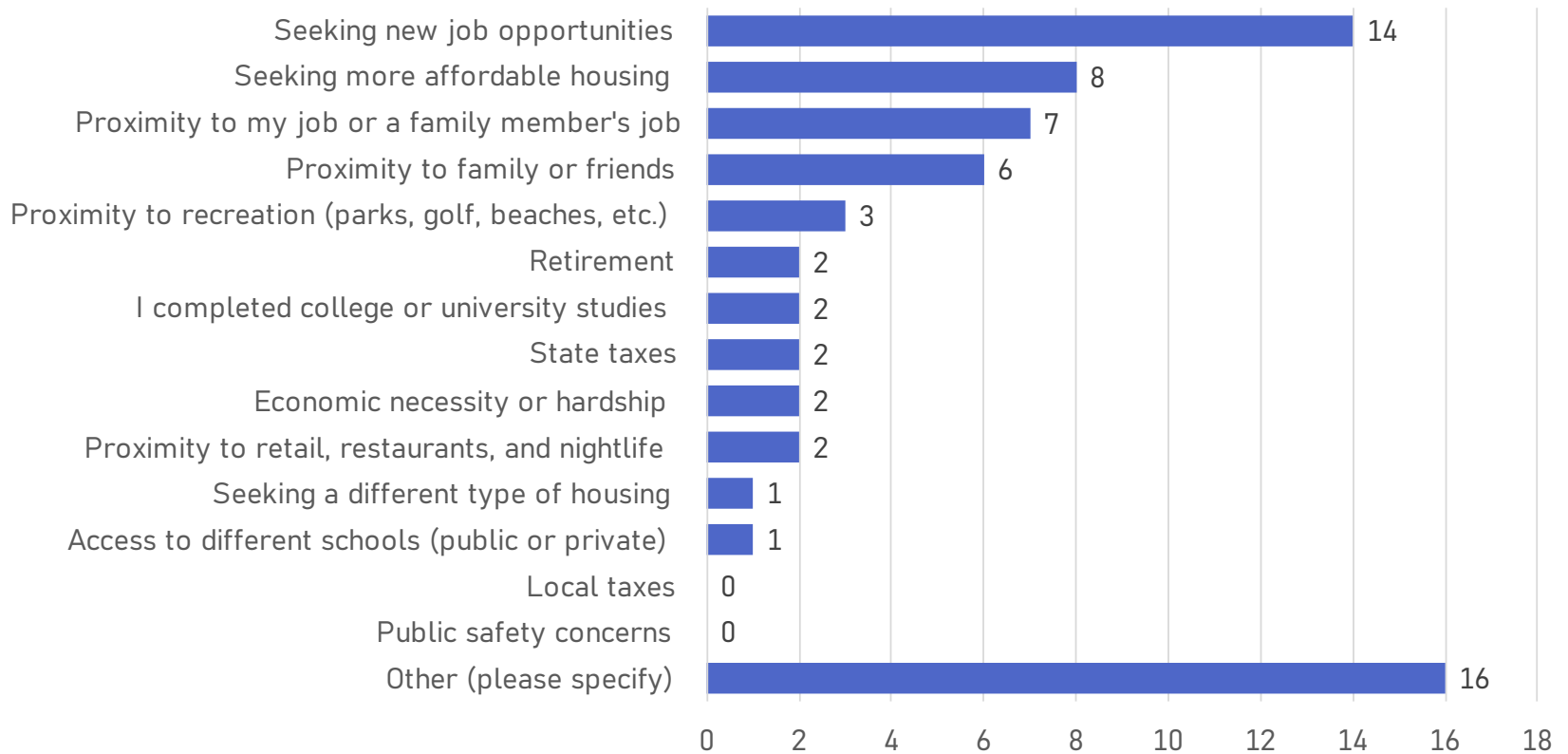
Reason	Count
Seeking new job opportunities	14
Seeking more affordable housing	8
Proximity to my job or a family member's job	7
Proximity to family or friends	6
Proximity to recreation (parks, golf, beaches, etc.)	3
Retirement	2
I completed college or university studies	2
State taxes	2
Economic necessity or hardship	2
Proximity to retail, restaurants, and nightlife	2
Seeking a different type of housing	1
Access to different schools (public or private)	1
Local taxes	0
Public safety concerns	0
Other (please specify)	16

Other: Working from home (7), proximity to my job (3), seeking new job opportunities (2), seeking more affordable housing (1), seeking a different type of housing (1)

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Reasons for Potential Future Relocation

"Please share with us the primary reasons that you feel will influence your choice to relocate from Dalton–Whitfield County in the next five years (check all that apply)."

Question was presented to **115 respondents** who indicated that they were unlikely to continue to reside in Dalton–Whitfield County five years from now.

Reason	Count
Seeking new job opportunities	45
Proximity to retail, restaurants, and nightlife	30
Proximity to recreation (parks, golf, beaches, etc.)	29
Retirement	21
Seeking a different type of housing	16
Proximity to family or friends	16
Proximity to my job or a family member's job	15
Access to different schools (public or private)	11
I completed college or university studies	10
Public safety concerns	9
Seeking more affordable housing	9
State taxes	8
Local taxes	6
Economic necessity or hardship	2
Other (please specify)	18

Other: Politics, government, and leadership (5), seeking new job opportunities (4), proximity to amenities (3), inclusion and tolerance (2), "boring" (2), school quality (2)

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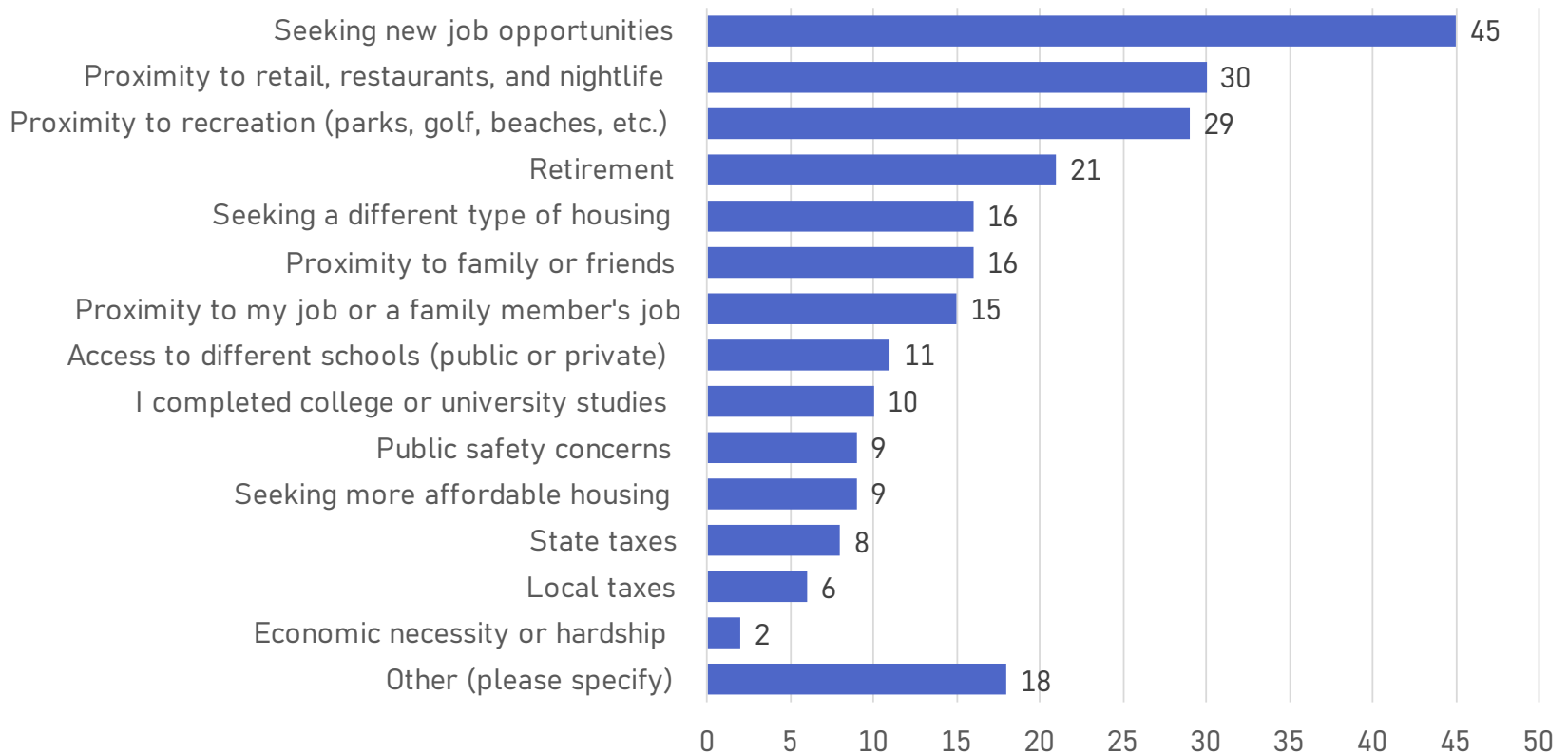
Quality of Life

"Please evaluate the quality and attractiveness of the following attributes of the community's quality of life to your happiness and satisfaction as a resident or worker in Dalton–Whitfield."

Attribute	Very poor	Below average	Average	Above average	Excellent
Public safety		5%	43%	36%	14%
Public education	8%		40%	36%	13%
Outdoor recreation	11%		46%	32%	9%
Community pride		14%	50%	26%	7%
Healthcare options	5%	14%	45%	25%	10%
Cost of living	5%	13%	55%	20%	8%
Beauty, aesthetics and cleanliness	4%	16%	51%	24%	5%
Arts and culture	4%	21%	50%	21%	4%
Restaurants and dining options		21%	54%	17%	4%
Family-friendly activities	5%	25%	51%	15%	5%
Walking and bicycling infra.	10%	26%	45%	14%	4%
Retail and shopping options	7%	29%	50%	10%	
Housing options	10%	28%	49%	10%	4%
Public transportation	20%	37%	36%	4%	
Nightlife options for adults	17%	43%	35%	4%	

Legend: ■ Very poor ■ Below average ■ Average ■ Above average ■ Excellent

Quality of Life

Adult respondents were asked to evaluate the importance and the quality/attractiveness of various quality of life attributes to their happiness as a resident or worker in Dalton–Whitfield County.
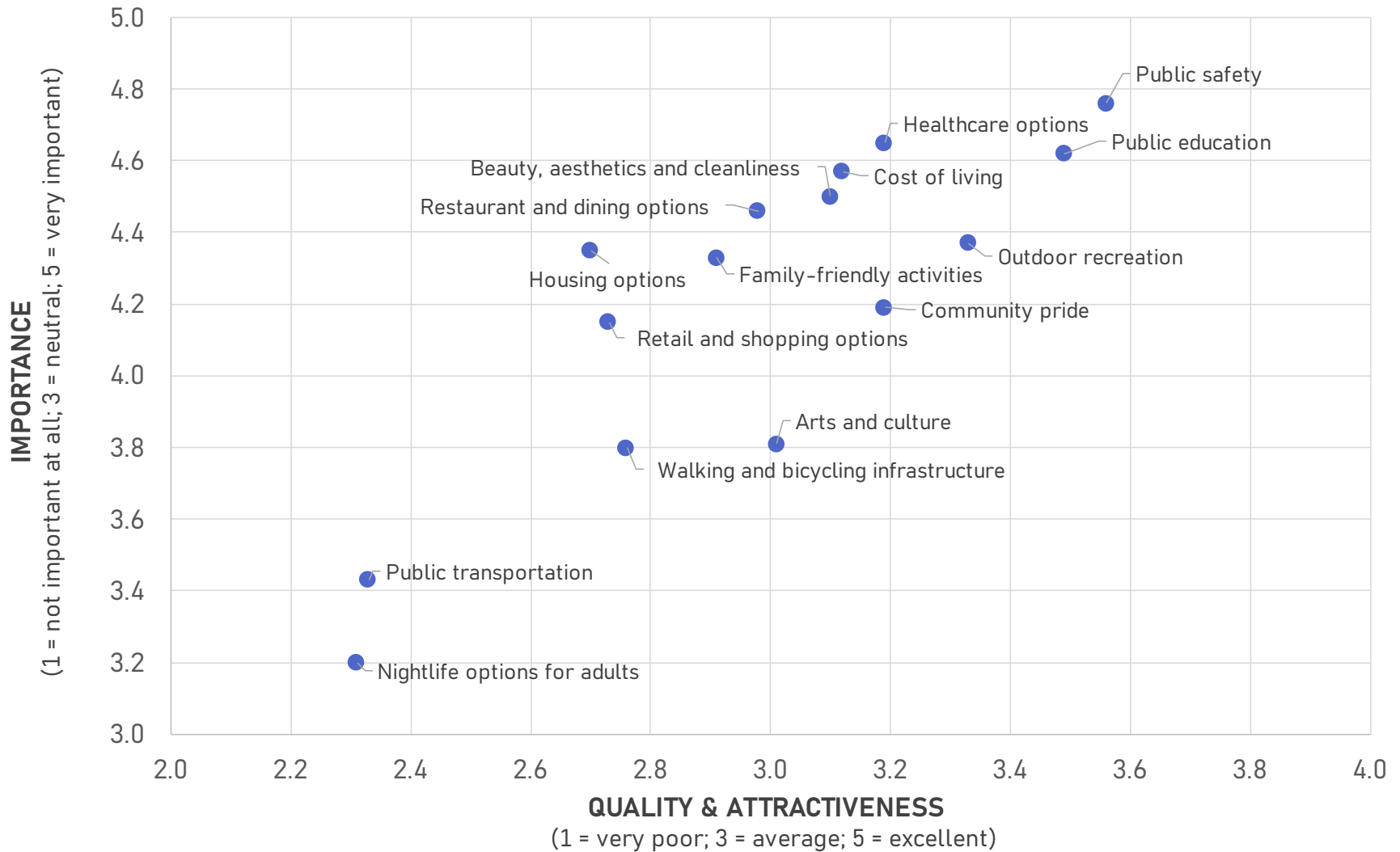
Community Attributes & Economic Outcomes

"Please indicate the degree to which you feel the community has been successful in supporting the following community attributes and economic outcomes in the last five years."

Attribute	Very unsuccessful	Unsuccessful	Average	Successful	Very successful
Enhancing the vibrancy of our downtown area		7%	33%	45%	13%
Improving higher education and training opportunities		9%	42%	37%	9%
Encouraging entrepreneurship		13%	46%	32%	6%
Improving our public school systems	4%	12%	44%	33%	7%
Attracting new businesses to the community		16%	44%	32%	5%
Developing our quality of life and amenities		14%	52%	27%	4%
Promoting our image as an attractive place to live	5%	16%	46%	29%	5%
Helping existing businesses remain competitive		14%	58%	23%	
Promoting our image as a competitive place to do business	5%	17%	49%	25%	4%
Maintaining and expanding infrastructure	5%	16%	52%	23%	
Attracting talent and skilled workers		18%	56%	20%	
Diversifying the economy and job opportunities	6%	18%	49%	23%	4%
Enhancing the vibrancy of other neighborhoods	5%	24%	57%	12%	
Redeveloping blighted areas	8%	27%	50%	12%	
Supplying necessary housing	10%	27%	51%	10%	
Retaining our young people	9%	32%	44%	12%	

Legend: ■ Very unsuccessful ■ Unsuccessful ■ Average ■ Successful ■ Very successful

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Entrepreneurship & Small Business Climate

Business owners and entrepreneurs were asked to evaluate the importance and the competitiveness of various attributes of the community's small business climate.

A total of **352 respondents** self-identified as business owners or entrepreneurs.
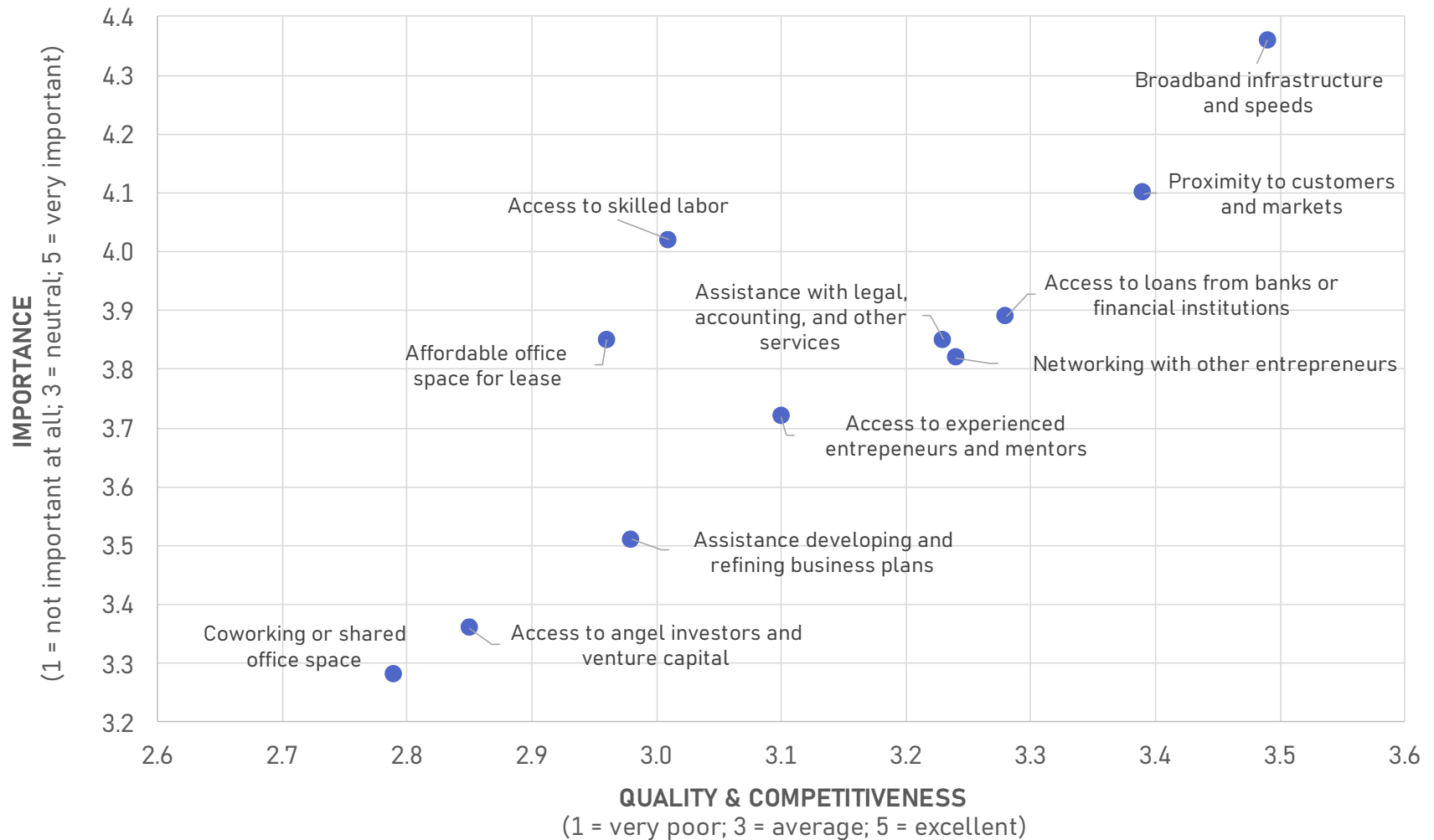
Community Pride

Net Promoter Score (NPS)

Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a measure of **customer loyalty** and **brand strength** used by companies and communities to measure the likelihood that a customer will recommend a product or place on a scale of zero (0) to ten (10).

Respondents are classified as Detractors (0–6), Passives (7–8), or Promoters (9–10).

Net Promoter Score (NPS) = % Promoters – % Detractors

High NPS: Costco (79), USAA (78), Netflix (77), Samsung (67), John Deere (54), Apple (47)
Low NPS: Bank of America (–24), Facebook (–21), Comcast (–9), McDonalds (–8), Disney (–7)

Net Promoter Score (NPS): *"On a scale of 0 to 10, how likely are you to recommend Dalton–Whitfield County to a friend or colleague as a great place to live?"*

Scale: 0 = not at all likely; 10 = extremely likely

42%	39%	18%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

■ Detractors (0–6)   ■ Passives (7–8)   ■ Promoters (9–10)
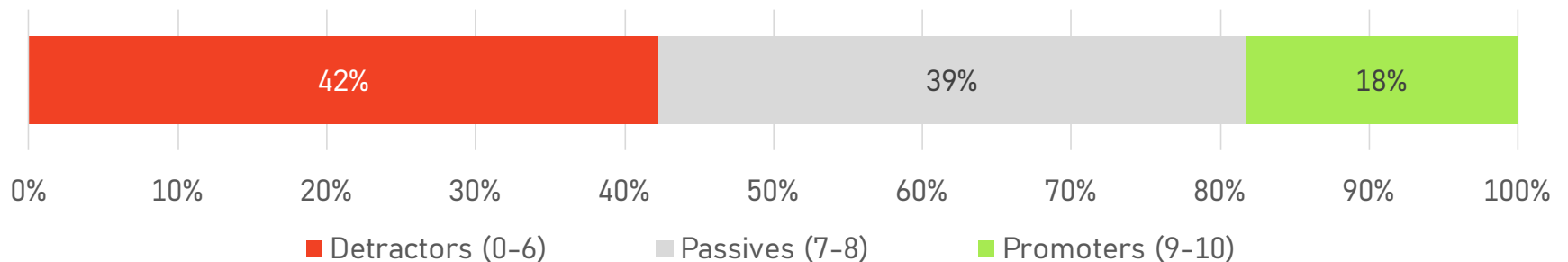
Net Promoter Score (NPS) = –24

Community Pride

Net Promoter Score (NPS): Cross–Tabulations by Age

	Detractors (0–6)	Passives (7–8)	Promoters (9–10)	
Middle & High School Students	50%	27%	23%	NPS = **–27**
18–24	55%	30%	14%	NPS = **–41**
25–34	45%	38%	17%	NPS = **–28**
35–44	40%	43%	16%	NPS = **–24**
45–54	43%	38%	19%	NPS = **–24**
55–64	41%	40%	19%	NPS = **–24**
65+	34%	39%	27%	NPS = **–7**

Legend: ■ Detractors (0–6) ■ Passives (7–8) ■ Promoters (9–10)
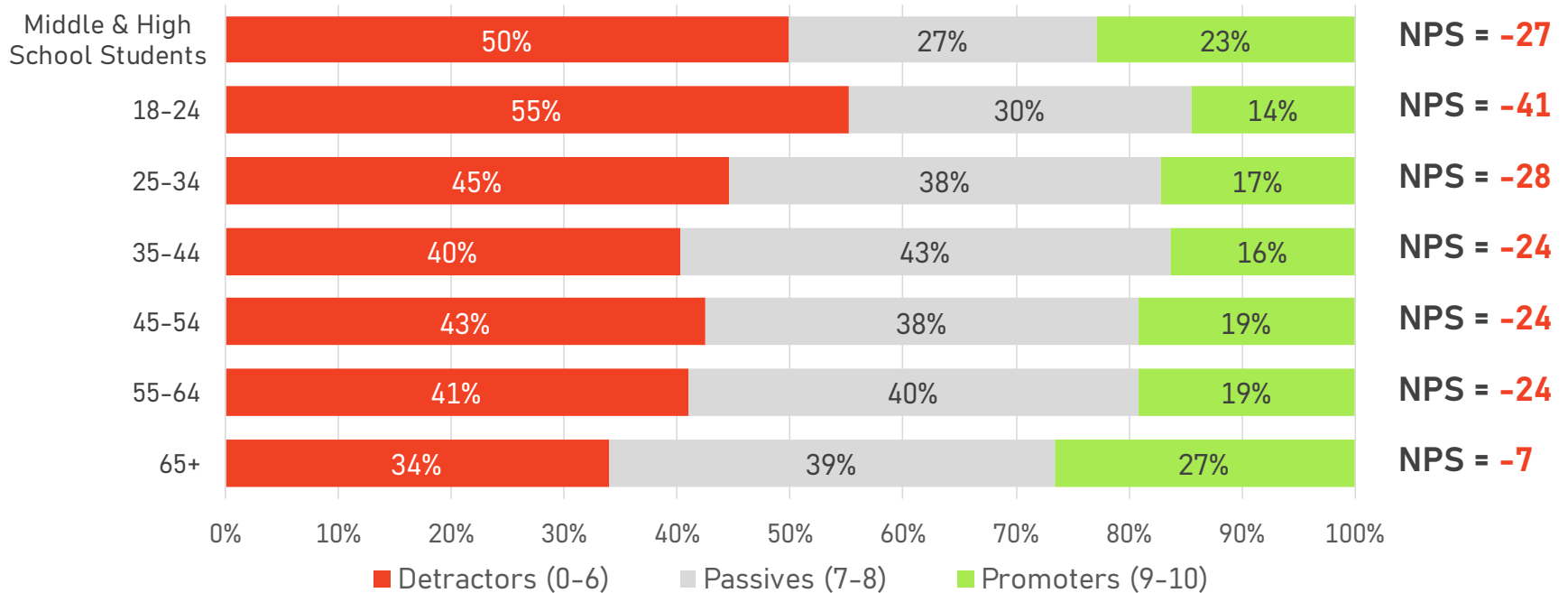
Net Promoter Score (NPS): Cross–Tabulations by Race/Ethnicity

	Detractors (0–6)	Passives (7–8)	Promoters (9–10)	
White, not Hispanic	42%	40%	18%	NPS = **–24**
Hispanic or Latino	42%	38%	20%	NPS = **–21**
Black or African American	54%	28%	18%	NPS = **–36**

Legend: ■ Detractors (0–6) ■ Passives (7–8) ■ Promoters (9–10)
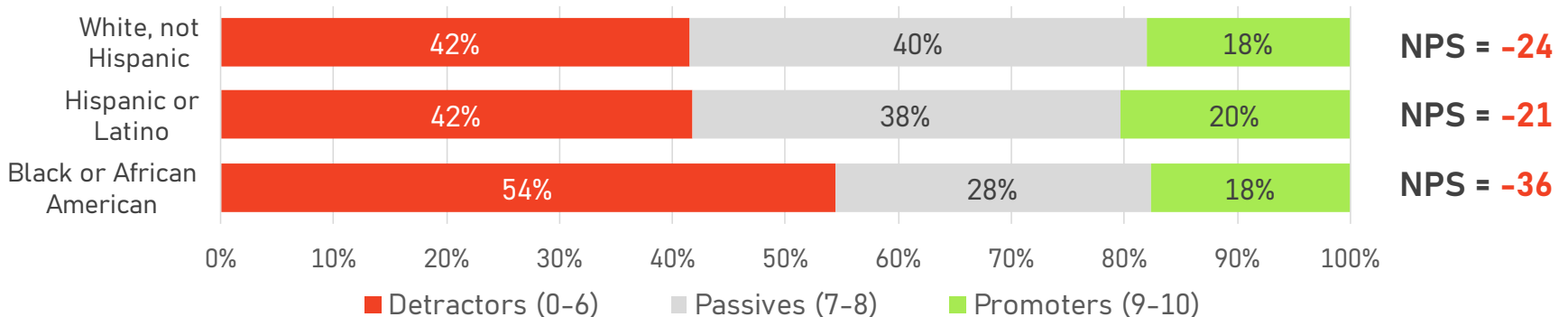
Dalton Public Schools (DPS) & Whitfield County Schools

A total of **581 respondents** indicated that they were parents of guardians of a child or children enrolled in Dalton Public Schools (DPS) during the last five years and were asked to indicate if they **agree** or **disagree** with the following statements about DPS.

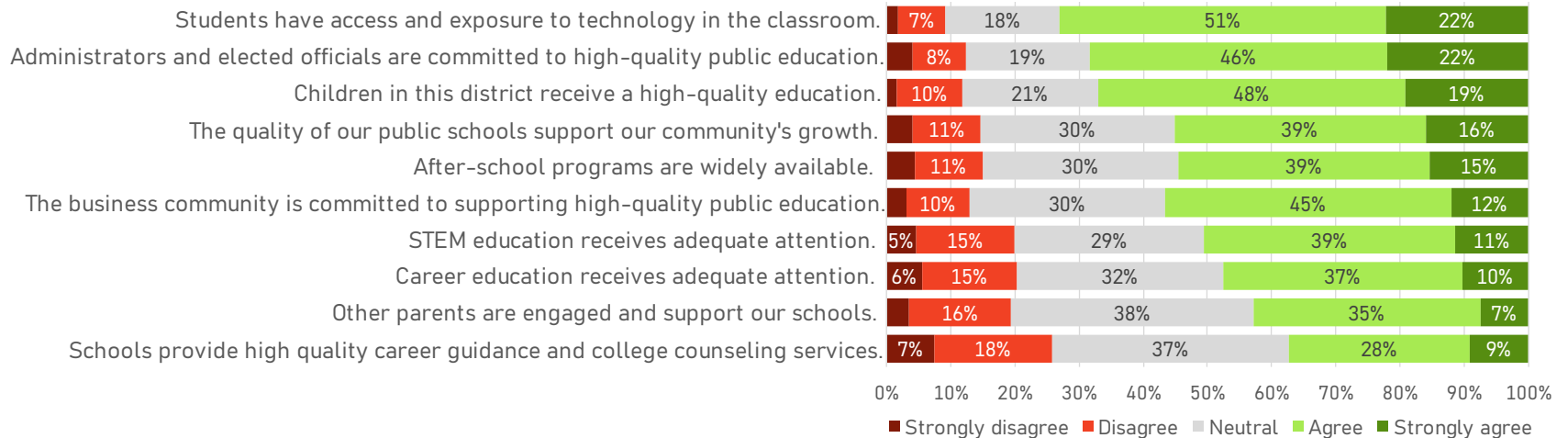| Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Students have access and exposure to technology in the classroom.			10%	45%	43%
Children in this district receive a high-quality education.		6%	17%	47%	28%
Administrators and elected officials are committed to high-quality public education.		7%	19%	46%	25%
STEM education receives adequate attention.		8%	22%	45%	22%
The business community is committed to supporting high-quality public education.		8%	26%	45%	20%
The quality of our public schools support our community's growth.		11%	23%	42%	22%
After-school programs are widely available.	5%	11%	24%	44%	17%
Other parents are engaged and support our schools.		14%	28%	42%	13%
Career education receives adequate attention.		12%	33%	38%	14%
Schools provide high quality career guidance and college counseling services.	6%	15%	38%	32%	9%

A total of **558 respondents** indicated that they were parents of guardians of a child or children enrolled in Whitfield County (WCS) during the last five years and were asked to indicate if they **agree** or **disagree** with the following statements about WCS.

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Students have access and exposure to technology in the classroom.		7%	18%	51%	22%
Administrators and elected officials are committed to high-quality public education.		8%	19%	46%	22%
Children in this district receive a high-quality education.		10%	21%	48%	19%
The quality of our public schools support our community's growth.		11%	30%	39%	16%
After-school programs are widely available.		11%	30%	39%	15%
The business community is committed to supporting high-quality public education.		10%	30%	45%	12%
STEM education receives adequate attention.	5%	15%	29%	39%	11%
Career education receives adequate attention.	6%	15%	32%	37%	10%
Other parents are engaged and support our schools.		16%	38%	35%	7%
Schools provide high quality career guidance and college counseling services.	7%	18%	37%	28%	9%

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Community Strengths & Assets

"What do you think are the community's greatest strengths or assets as a place to live and work?"

Community Weaknesses & Challenges

"What do you think are the community's greatest weaknesses or challenges as a place to live and work?"

Community Vision

"Imagine that you left Dalton–Whitfield County tomorrow and didn't return for ten years. What would you want to see different about the community when you return in 2031?"

Student & Youth Survey

A total of 1,098 middle and high school students in Dalton–Whitfield County responded to the survey.
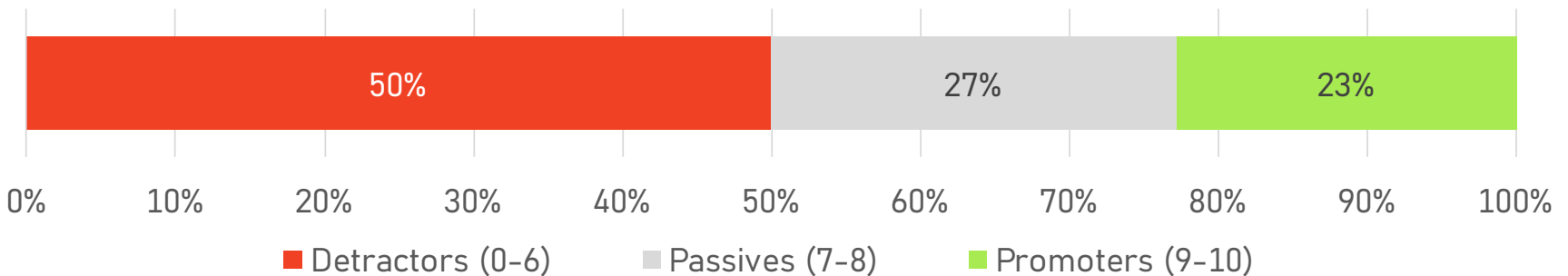
"On a scale of 0 to 10, how likely are you to consider living in Dalton–Whitfield County when you finish school or when you are an adult?"

Scale: 0 = I would never live here!; 10 = I would definitely live here!

3%	4%	4%	6%	11%	19%	9%	8%	12%	9%	14%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

■0 ■1 ■2 ■3 ■4 ■5 ■6 ■7 ■8 ■9 ■10
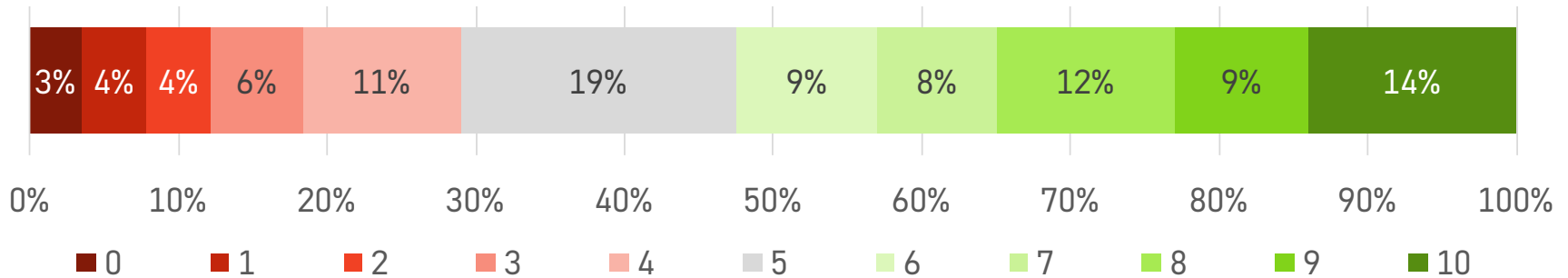
Net Promoter Score: *"On a scale of 0 to 10, how likely are you to recommend Dalton–Whitfield County to a friend as a great place to live?"*

Scale: 0 = not at all likely; 10 = extremely likely

50%	27%	23%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

■ Detractors (0–6)   ■ Passives (7–8)   ■ Promoters (9–10)

Net Promoter Score (NPS) = % Promoters – % Detractors

NPS (Students) = –27

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Student & Youth Survey

"I would be more likely to stay in Dalton–Whitfield County as an adult if…"

Student & Youth Survey

"Please describe Dalton–Whitfield County in one or two words."

Appendix B

Data Sources & Technical Information

Data Sources & Technical Definitions

Population Dynamics: Growth & Change

- o **Population Change (2010 – 2020):** Total population; U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census Estimates

- o **Population Index (2010 Population = 100):** Index of total population change, 2010 population levels indexed to a value of 100; Emsi

Population Dynamics: Age Composition

- o **Index, Population by Age, Whitfield (2010 = 100):** Index of population by age cohort, 2010 population levels by cohort indexed to a value of 100; Emsi

- o **Change in Age Composition (2010 – 2020):** Percentage of population by age cohort; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Population Dynamics: Net Migration

- o **Net Migration (2012 – 2019):** Number of in-migrants to Whitfield County minus number of out-migrants leaving Whitfield County (number of exemptions); Internal Revenue Service, SOI Tax Stats

- o **Net Migration Trends: Neighboring Counties:** Number of in-migrants to Whitfield County minus number of out-migrants leaving Whitfield County (number of exemptions) by county-to-county flows, 2009-2014 and 2014-2019; Internal Revenue Service, SOI Tax Stats

- o **In-Migrant Educational Attainment:** Educational attainment levels of all adult in-migrants (2019); U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Population Dynamics: Diversity & Inclusion

- o **The Diversification of the United States:** Population projections; U.S. Census Bureau and Emsi

- o **Change in Racial & Ethnic Composition (2010 – 2020):** Percentage of population by race/ethnicity; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Population Dynamics: Educational Attainment

- o **Educational Attainment, Ages 25+ (2019):** Percentage of population by educational attainment, adults ages 25 and over; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Data Sources & Technical Definitions

Population Dynamics: Incomes & Poverty

o **Change in Poverty Rates (2014 – 2019):** Total poverty rate and child (0-17) poverty rate; U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates

o **Disparities in Median Household Income by Race & Ethnicity (2014 – 2019):** Median household income by race and ethnicity; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Economic & Workforce Trends: Job Creation

o **Job Growth (2010 – 2020):** Total job growth (employment by place of establishment); Emsi

o **Index, Job Growth (2009 = 100):** Index of job growth (employment by place of establishment), 2009 job levels indexed to a value of 100; Emsi

Economic & Workforce Trends: Sector Composition

o **Employment by Sector, Whitfield County and United States (2010 – 2020):** Jobs (employment by place of establishment, location quotient (LQ; share of jobs in a given industry in a given community divided by that same industry's share of jobs nationwide); Emsi

Economic & Workforce Trends: Labor Sheds & Commuting

o **Workforce Availability by Labor Shed: 45 Minute Drive Time (2020):** Resident employment (employment by place of residence) by occupation within a 45-minute drive-time (zip codes) from the most central Interstate exit in each county; Emsi

o ***Area Development*, Most Important Site Location Factors, 2020 (chg. since 2010:** Ranking, most important site location factors; *Area Development*, 25th Annual Corporate Survey, 35th Annual Corporate Survey

o **% of Jobs in Whitfield County Held by Residents & Non-Residents (2014 – 2018):** Percentage of all jobs located in Whitfield County that are held by residents and non-residents; U.S. Census Bureau, Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics (LEHD), Census OnTheMap

o **% of Jobs in Whitfield Paying > $40,000 Held by Non-Residents (2014 – 2018):** Percentage of all jobs that pay $40,000 or above that are held by non-residents; U.S. Census Bureau, Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics (LEHD), Census OnTheMap

o **% of Jobs Paying > $40,000 Held by Non-Residents (2018):** Percentage of all jobs that pay $40,000 or above that are held by non-residents; U.S. Census Bureau, Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics (LEHD), Census OnTheMap

Data Sources & Technical Definitions

Economic & Workforce Trends: Labor Sheds & Commuting

o **Commuting Trends: Inflow & Outflow of Workers by Annual Earnings (2018):** Percentage of all jobs that pay $40,000 or above that are held by non-residents; U.S. Census Bureau, Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics (LEHD), Census OnTheMap

o **Job Accessibility by Labor Shed (2020):** Jobs (employment by place of establishment) by industry sector within a 45-minute drive-time (zip codes) from the most central Interstate exit in each county; Emsi

Quality of Life: Public Education

o **Student Performance & Outcomes by District (13/14 – 18/19):** Various education statistics; Governor's Office of Student Achievement

o **Single-Family & Multi-Family Building Permits (2000 – 2020):** Various education statistics; U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD), State of the Cities Data System (SOCDS) Building Permits Database

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