



ERWIN

CREATING OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMIES

STRATEGIC PLAN

2025 - 2030



Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	1
Executive Summary	3
Background	4
○ Economic Impact	4
○ Outdoor Recreation Participation.....	5
Setting	5
○ Economic Impact -Visitor Spending Harnett County	6
○ Demographics	7
Existing Plan Review	8
Planning Process	10
○ Situational Analysis	11
○ Local Work Group Establishment and Involvement.....	11
○ Asset Mapping	12
○ Public Engagement	12
○ Economic Positioning Statement & Development	13
○ CORE Strategic Plan Adoption	13
CORE Strategy and Implementation Plan	14
Plan Implementation, Monitoring, and Evaluation	18
Appendix	(Separate Document)

Acknowledgments

The Creating Outdoor Recreation Economies (CORE) program is made possible by a U.S. Economic Development Administration State Tourism Grant, which awarded \$6 Million to the State of North Carolina's Supporting and Strengthening Resiliency in North Carolina's Travel, Tourism, and Outdoor Recreation Sectors Initiative. As a component of this Initiative, the North Carolina Department of Commerce's Rural Economic Development Division (REDD) developed the CORE program. The CORE program offers strategic planning and technical assistance to help rural communities leverage North Carolina's abundant outdoor recreation assets to bolster local economic vitality.

The REDD announced the technical assistance program offering Outdoor Recreation Economy Strategic Planning and Asset Development services in late 2022. Communities from across the state applied to engage with strategic planning services and 34 local governments were accepted to participate. Main Street & Rural Planning (MS&RP) staff, who is responsible for facilitating strategic economic development planning and implementation services, worked with local government staff to communicate the goals of the program, identify local opportunities, and assemble a planning work group.



**NC DEPARTMENT
of COMMERCE**
RURAL ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT



FRONT PORCH FRIENDS

This plan was prepared by the North Carolina Department of Commerce, Rural Planning Program, using Federal funds under award 04-79-07689 from the Economic Development Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce. The statements, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Economic Development Administration or the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Erwin Board of Commissioners

Randy L. Baker, *Mayor*
Ricky Blackmon, *Mayor Pro Tem*
Charles L. Byrd
Alvester L. McKoy
Timothy D. Marbell
David L. Nelson
Billy Turnage

Snow Bowden, *Town Manager*

Erwin Outdoor Recreation Economy Planning Committee

Randy Baker, *Mayor, Town of Erwin*
Snow Bowden, *Town Manager, Erwin*
Carl Davis, *Director, Harnett County Recreation*
Dylan Eure, *Planner, Town of Erwin*
Lauren Evans, *Town Clerk, Town of Erwin*
Justin Hembree, *Executive Director, Mid-Carolina Regional Council*
Wesley Johnson, *Erwin Mill Representative/ Tourism Board Member*
Jay Sikes, *Assistant Director, Harnett County Development Services/Planning Services*
Angie Stewart, *Economic Developer, Harnett County*
Frank Toth, *President, Erwin Chamber of Commerce*
Don Wilson, *Athletic Director, Town of Erwin*
Samantha Wullenwaber, *Deputy Executive Director, Mid-Carolina Regional Council*

N.C. Department of Commerce, Rural Economic Development Division Staff:

Michael Dougherty, *Downtown Development Specialist*
Glen Locascio, *GIS Specialist*
David McRae, *Appalachian Regional Commission Assistant Program Manager*
Bruce Naegelen, *Community Economic Development, North Central Region*
Karen C. Smith, *AICP, NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center, Rural Planning Program Manager*

Plan Adoption

Erwin Board of Commissioners – March 6, 2025

Executive Summary

Through CORE, the Town of Erwin collaborated with N.C. Department of Commerce, Rural Economic Development Division staff members and local stakeholders through a strategic planning process to identify and develop outdoor recreation assets that present economic growth opportunities. Strategy development focused on leveraging outdoor recreation assets to increase tourism, encourage small business development, enhance quality of life for residents, plan for outdoor recreation asset and infrastructure development, and position communities to grow and attract outdoor gear manufacturing industries. The planning process was tailored to meet the specific needs, goals, and opportunities that local stakeholders identified.

The plan proposes strategies, goals, objectives, and actions that communities can take to increase economic vitality by leveraging outdoor recreation. For the purposes of this strategic planning program outdoor recreation is defined as all recreational activities undertaken for leisure that occur outdoors with an emphasis on those activities that involve some level of intentional physical exertion and occur in nature-based environments. Furthermore, other community assets and economic institutions that benefit from or complement the outdoor recreation economy are addressed in the plan.

The plan provides a total of 21 recommended objectives under 4 priority areas, or strategies. These strategies, identified by the local work group, are:

Strategy 1: Getting Back to the Simple Life

Strategy 2: Activating the Cape Fear and Black Rivers

Strategy 3: Accessing Trails for Health, Wealth, and Fun

Strategy 4: Active Downtown

These recommendations will serve as guideposts for Erwin as it considers future development efforts and will work in collaboration with other planning efforts undertaken by the county, municipalities, and related jurisdictions.

Background

There is a long tradition of outdoor recreation in North Carolina. From the mountains to the coast and everywhere in between there are incredible landscapes and unique places to pursue a wide variety of outdoor recreation activities. Participation in these activities generates a large economic impact. In recent years statistics show that participation in outdoor recreation is increasing, particularly in the wake of COVID-19. Continued growth in participation leads to the opportunity for the increased economic impact of outdoor recreation, particularly in rural locations where many of the state's outdoor recreation assets are located. Also, there is great potential to expose and engage people that have historically not participated in outdoor recreation activities at the same rate as others. It is important for all individuals to have the opportunity and access to enjoy recreational pursuits, and to have an opportunity to benefit economically from outdoor recreation. These factors, combined with other on-going outdoor recreation initiatives across the state, make it an ideal time to think critically about how this sector can continue to be leveraged to benefit local economies.

Economic Impact

Outdoor recreation activity and associated expenditures generate a large economic impact. This is a broad economic sector that comprises a diverse range of industries including manufacturing, retail, arts, entertainment, and recreation, as well as many supporting activities such as construction, travel and tourism, accommodation, and food service and many more.

According to the U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis' Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account, nationwide, in 2023, the outdoor recreation economy represented \$639.5 billion in current-dollar gross domestic product (GDP), or 2.3 percent of the United States' total GDP. "Inflation-adjusted ("real") GDP for the outdoor recreation economy increased 3.6 percent in 2023, compared with a 2.9 percent increase for the overall U.S. economy, reflecting a deceleration from the increase in outdoor recreation of 10.2 percent in 2022. Real gross output for the outdoor recreation economy increased 3.2 percent, while outdoor recreation compensation increased 9.0 percent, and employment increased 3.3 percent." Overall employment in the outdoor recreation industry increased in 49 out of 50 states during 2023.

At the state level, outdoor recreation contributed \$16.1 billion in total value-added economic impact to North Carolina's GDP. North Carolina ranked as the 11th highest state nationally in "Total outdoor recreation value added of current-dollar gross domestic product" in 2023. This included employment for over 145,000 individuals that resulted in over \$7.7 billion in total compensation. Employment in key industries within the outdoor recreation sector includes

6,930 in manufacturing, 2,439 in retail, 30,082 in accommodation and food service, and over 29,917 in arts, entertainment, and recreation.¹

Outdoor Recreation Participation

According to the 2022 Outdoor Industry Association ‘Outdoor Participation Trends Report’, “outdoor participation continues to grow at record levels. More than half (54%) of Americans ages 6 and over participated in at least one outdoor activity in 2021, and the outdoor recreation participant base grew 2.2% in 2021 to 164.2M participants. This growing number of outdoor participants, however, did not fundamentally alter long-term declines in high frequency or ‘core’ outdoor participation.”²

Studies show that approximately 56% of North Carolinians participate in some form of outdoor recreation each year³. This includes more than 20.1 million visitors to North Carolina state parks in 2023. This is a 4% increase, representing more than 755,000 visitors, from 2022.⁴ Many parks, national forests, and other public recreation areas report increased visitation as well. These numbers represent a solid base of individuals participating in outdoor recreation and contributing to associated economic activity. But there is still room to engage more individuals and continue to increase participation in outdoor recreation, particularly among populations that have not historically participated in outdoor recreation at levels comparable to others. Also, people increasingly want outdoor recreation opportunities that are convenient to where they live so they can participate on a regular basis without the need to travel long distances.^{5 6}

Setting

The Town of Erwin is near the southeast corner of Harnett County. The Town was established in the Sandhills of North Carolina in 1855. The town’s history stretches back to colonial times through its connections to the nearby colonial settlement of Averagesboro. Timber rafters would travel along the Cape Fear River and stop for the night in the area.⁷ In 1902, the Duke family built the Erwin Cotton Mill, and the new town was named "Duke" after the founding shareholders. In 1925, the name was changed to "Erwin" because of the founding of Duke

¹ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis. Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account, U.S. and States, 2023.

<https://www.bea.gov/data/special-topics/outdoor-recreation>

² Outdoor Industry Association. 2023 Outdoor Participation Trends Report. <https://outdoorindustry.org/resource/2023-outdoor-participation-trends-report/>

³ The Citizen-Times. North Carolina outdoor recreation is a \$28 billion industry, poised for further growth. October 11th, 2019.

<https://www.citizen-times.com/story/news/2019/10/11/outdoor-economy-conference-asheville-highlights-28-billion-industry/3923846002/>

⁴ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis. Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account, U.S. and States, 2022.

<https://www.bea.gov/data/special-topics/outdoor-recreation>

⁵ Headwaters Economics. Recreation Counties Attracting New Residents and Higher Incomes. <https://headwaterseconomics.org/economic-development/trends-performance/recreation-counties-attract/>

⁶ Outdoor Foundation. 2023 Outdoor Participation Trends Report. <https://outdoorindustry.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/2022-Outdoor-Participation-Trends-Report.pdf>

⁷ *Town of Erwin Land Use Plan 2023, Community Assessment: Introduction, History*

University in Durham. The mill was the engine that powered Erwin until its closing in 2000. Even today, Erwin is still referred to as the “*Denim Capital of the World*” for the vast quantities of raw denim the mill produced for well over half a century.⁸ Downtown Erwin is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and the Erwin Commercial Historic District remains intact and includes eleven contributing commercial buildings that are representative of the design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and historic character of the downtown.⁹

Erwin has a total area of 4.23 square miles of which less than 1% is water. The Cape Fear River forms part of the Town’s western boundary. Erwin has a certified population of 4,631 as of July 1, 2022. Located just four miles west of Interstate 95, Erwin is bisected by three major routes: NC 55, US 421, and NC 217.

The fastest growth is currently in the northern part of Harnett County. The southwest part of the County is seeing increased residential growth, and even commercial demand in key areas due to growth streaming out of the Fayetteville-Cumberland market.¹⁰

The eastern portion of the County near Dunn and Erwin is also seeing demand but has not seen growth yet like the other parts of the County. However, growth is likely not far off and will be coming in at increased levels. Recent announcements along I-95 including a 500K square foot speculative industrial building in Benson and the growth continuing to stream out of Johnston County are putting pressure on the eastern Harnett municipalities.¹¹

Economic Impact – Visitor Spending Harnett County

Harnett County ranked 47th (\$118M) statewide, but 5th in the region (\$118M) for Visitor Spending¹² in 2022. That’s behind Moore (\$759M), Cumberland (\$667M), Johnston (\$285M) counties and ahead of Lee (\$96M), Chatham (\$76M) and Sampson (\$63M).

The breakdown includes Lodging: \$21.41M (*includes 2nd home spending*); Food & Beverage: \$40.74M; Recreation: \$16.25M; Retail: \$9.04M; and Transport: \$31.19M (*includes ground and air transportation*). Airbnb shared a breakdown of total Host income in rural NC counties, and in Harnett County the approximate income was \$1,051,000.¹³

⁸ Discover Erwin, www.erwin-nc.org/discover-erwin

⁹ Town of Erwin Land Use Plan 2023, Community Assessment: Introduction, History

¹⁰ Harnett County Economic Development Office, June 2022

¹¹ Harnett County Economic Development Office, June 2022

¹² VisitNC Data 2022 <https://partners.visitnc.com/>

¹³ According to internal Airbnb data for the time period of January 1, 2022 – December 31, 2022 within NC rural counties as defined by the NC Rural Center.

Demographics – Erwin

The population in Erwin is estimated to have changed from 4,542 to 4,631 resulting in a 1.95% growth rate between 2020 and 2023. By 2028, Erwin's population is projected to grow by 1.96%.¹⁴ *Within the 3-mile Primary Trade Area (PTA) of Erwin Town Hall, the population is estimated to have changed from 8,751 to 8,870, resulting in a growth of 1.4% between 2020 and 2023. Over the next five years, the population is projected to grow by 1.9%.¹⁵*

16

Erwin's median age in 2023 was 43.7. In 2028, the median age is expected to be 44. *The median age is a little younger in the 3-mile PTA, at 41.5. Five years from now the median age is projected to be 42.*

Of Erwin's 2023 estimated population, 63% are White Alone, 17.7% are Black or African American, 14.4% are Hispanic or Latino, 1.2% are American Indian, 0.3% are Asian Alone. *Of the 3-mile PTA's estimated population, 63.7% are White Alone, 20.4% are Black or African American, 13.6% are Hispanic or Latino, 1.8% are American Indian, 0.5% are Asian Alone.*

In Erwin, it's estimated that 3.8% of the population aged 25+ have earned a graduate or professional degree, 8.5% have earned a bachelor's degree, 20.1% have some college, but no degree. 42.8% have a high school diploma or equivalent. *Currently, it's estimated that 3.1% of the population aged 25+ in the 3-mile PTA have earned a graduate or professional degree, 9% have earned a bachelor's degree, 21.5% have some college, but no degree. 39.4% have a high school diploma or equivalent.*

Median household income in Erwin in 2023 was \$47,887 and projected to increase to \$54,584 by 2028. Average household income was estimated to be \$62,278 in 2023 and is projected to increase to \$73,120 in 2028. Per capita income was \$25,129 in 2023 and projected to increase to \$29,564 in 2028. Median disposable income for 2023 was \$39,550 and Average disposable income was \$49,496. *The average household income in the 3-mile PTA is estimated to be \$60,819.8 for 2023 and is projected to increase to \$70,340.6 in 2028. The median household income is \$45,508.*

Employment status for the civilian population age 16 and over is 43.4% white collar, 17.9% services, and 38.8% blue collar, with an April 2024 unemployment rate of 3.7%.¹⁷

¹⁴ Esri Community Profile - Forecasts for 2023 and 2028 US Census Bureau 2000 and 2010 decennial Census data converted by Esri into 2020 geography

¹⁵ Claritas Pop-Facts® Premier 2023 (Italics)

¹⁶ Esri forecasts for 2023 and 2028. U.S. Census Bureau 2000 and 2010 decennial Census data converted by Esri into 2020 geography November 2023

¹⁷ U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, not seasonally adjusted

Retail Snapshot¹⁸ shows a Total Retail Gap of \$4,636,699 within 1-mile and \$3,132,474 within 3-miles from downtown Erwin. The retail gap shows potential category opportunities in Electronics Stores, Pharmacies and Drug Stores, Family Clothing Stores, and Drinking Places. The complete Retail Analysis can be found in the Appendix.

Existing Plans Review

To complement and build upon subsequent community planning efforts, staff assembled and reviewed other relevant plans and documents. This review provides valuable insight and helps avoid duplication or contradictions of past planning proposals. The following documents were reviewed and considered during the CORE planning process.

Town of Erwin Land Use Plan 2023

Two of the four goals and several recommendations in the 2023 Town of Erwin Land Use Plan relate to Outdoor Recreation. **Goal 3-Transportation, Infrastructure, and Services:** Enhance existing infrastructure and services while providing safe and efficient multi-modal transportation. *TIS 1: Prioritize Pedestrian Movements*¹⁹ recommends annual budgeting for sidewalk repairs, connections, and crossing improvements (1.2) and to apply for a NCDOT Bicycle & Pedestrian Planning Grant (1.3). *TIS 2: Maintain and Enhance the Dunn-Erwin Trail – “Maintaining the trail and improving access points, furnishings, and encouraging usage is a priority for the Town.”* Recommendation 2.1: *Inventory facilities along the trail and develop a formal maintenance plan in cooperation with the trail Committee and Erwin Public Works* and 2.2: *Consider trail updates that may include benches, additional parking and access points, lighting at key locations, safety call boxes, signage, art installations and/or landscaping.* **Goal 4 - Parks and Natural Resources:** Provide equitable access to parks and natural areas while continuing to increase opportunities to access the Cape Fear River and the Dunn-Erwin Trail. PNR 3 recommends *Coordinating with Harnett County on improving recreational access in under-served areas of the ETJ, Development of a future nature park on the Black River and providing additional access points along the Cape Fear River.*

While not directly related to Outdoor Recreation itself, these are some of the adjacent actions/recommendations in the Erwin Land Use Plan that help create the *economy* of Outdoor Recreation in a community. **Goal 2-Economic Development:** Promote the Town of Erwin to attract businesses and investment that increases the tax base and creates local jobs. Specifically, **ED 1:** Encourage the redevelopment of the Mill Property²⁰, and **ED 3:** Continue to work with the Harnett County Economic Development Commission and areas Chambers of

¹⁸ Claritas, LLC 2023 – Retail Market Power®2023 Estimates and 2028 Projections. Environics Analytics | U.S. Census Bureau | U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics | Data Axle | 1/3-mile center from 100 W. F Street, Erwin NC 28339

¹⁹ Town of Erwin Land Use Plan, Transportation, Infrastructure, and Services, Goal 3, TIS 1 & 2, page 56

²⁰ Town of Erwin Land Use Plan, Parks & Natural Resources, Goal 4, ED 1, 1.2, page 54

Commerce to market sites with the town for Economic Development. **ED 4:** Evaluate ways to increase investment downtown, and **ED 5:** Implement the Community Economic Recovery & Resiliency Initiative (CERRI) Implementation Plan. And **Goal 4-Parks and natural resources PNR 2:** Create formalized public space downtown for events²¹.

2023 Brand & Image Position -Dunn & Harnett County (Survey)

This survey was designed to measure the individual brand and image of Harnett County, key attributes/perceptions, including strengths and weaknesses, and to profile visitors and travel behavior. The online survey was conducted with approximately 400 demographically representative respondents between June 16-June 29, 2023. Relevant highlights include: 60% prefer curated itineraries and travel off the beaten path; The average visitor stays 2.7 nights (*schedule/participate in activities for 2–3-night stays*) and 27% of trips include children. (*babysitters for weekend getaways for millennials*). Market to in-state visitors; Harnett County is a place to be inspired with beautiful scenery and active outdoor recreation; friendly & relaxed; Compared to nearby areas, Harnett is a top attribute performer for being relaxed, adventurous and vibrant. Although 41% of trips of those surveyed are leisure trips, leisure travelers tend to stay slightly longer in the destination and stay at paid accommodations. Visitors to Harnett County are more likely to have children, tend to skew younger (43% are millennials), are employed full-time, and are more diverse than the control group of travelers²²

Southeastern Economic Development Commission (SEDC) – Economic Development District (EDD) Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2022-2027 (CEDS)

Erwin is located within the Southeastern Economic Development District (EDD). The SEDC Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) identified two of six goals in the Action Plan as related to Outdoor Recreation. Goal 2, “Build on competitive advantages while supporting a resilient business environment,” and Goal 4, “*Support of our diverse communities.*” Recommendations include, in Goal 2, promote the region’s natural heritage and cultural resources; Goal 4 revitalize downtowns across the area with several related recommendations.

Erwin Community Economic Recovery & Resiliency Initiative (CERRI) 2022-2027

This report, developed by the NC Main Street & Rural Planning Program in NC Department of Commerce is intended to offer guidance to county and local leaders in Erwin on expanding and improving support structures for local small business owners and boosting the local economy in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. This document is meant to complement and build on other local planning efforts. Several recommendations are relevant to CORE planning: **2.2:** Encourage Redevelopment of the Erwin Mill Property, **2.3:** Research & Apply for

²¹ Town of Erwin Land Use Plan, Parks & Natural Resources, Goal 4: PNR 2 & 3, page 60

²² 2023 Brand & Imaging Position – Dunn & Harnett County, SmartInsights, page 19

Bicycle/Pedestrian Planning Grants²³ [Note: The Town of Erwin has been awarded a multimodal grant from NCDOT for an Accelerated Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan. The Town Board approved a contract with Stantec Group in **November/December 2024**.] **2.4:** Update Existing Wayfinding Signage System; **2.5:** Expand Sidewalk Connectivity Between Residential, Commercial Districts, and Recreational Areas.

East Coast Greenway State Trail Plan: 2022-2027

The East Coast Greenway in Erwin is about 0.7 miles from NC 217 crossing the Cape Fear River merging with the Cape Fear Run Bike Path, Rail Trail Connector and Dunn-Erwin Rail Trail through downtown Erwin and connecting with Dunn. It would also connect with the proposed Erwin to Coats Trail.

Harnett County Bicycle, Pedestrian & Greenway Plan 2021

Harnett County completed a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan in 2021 setting the stage for implementation of a County-wide multi-use trail system. The trails will link parks, schools, municipalities, cultural points of interest, and residential areas with Harnett County. Further, the plan is designed to connect to surrounding counties. Existing Resources & Existing Plans Map²⁴ shows the convergence of current and future trails in Erwin; a Priority Project is the Coats to Dunn-Erwin Rail Trail, a 3-lane road and Sidepaths²⁵ which could have positive economic impacts in Erwin, but is in Harnett County; Infrastructure recommendations are made for the East Coast Greenway,²⁶ NC Bike Route 5 (Cape Fear Run)²⁷ Cape Fear River Trail,²⁸ Cape Fear River Bridges (Erwin),²⁹ all of which impact Erwin. The Long-term Vision map³⁰ shows all existing and proposed trails, bike routes, and shared use path types, which cluster in Erwin.

Planning Process

Under the REDD, MS&RP Center staff facilitates the CORE strategic planning process with participation from the local government and an established local work group. This work group is comprised of individuals who have a vested interest in leveraging outdoor recreation to enhance economic development. The planning process employs established planning methods, including presenting economic and associated data, asset mapping, economic driver

²³ *Erwin Community Economic Recovery & Resiliency Initiative, Implementation Plan, Strategy 2: Improve Quality of Life for All Residents of Erwin, Action 2.3, page 3*

²⁴ *Harnett County Bicycle, Pedestrian & Greenway Plan 2021; Existing Resources, Chapter 1: Introduction, Page 6*

²⁵ *Harnett County Bicycle, Pedestrian & Greenway Plan 2021; Priority Project Checklist, Chapter 3: Recommendations, page 44 & Proposed Trail Cross-sections, page 58, Phasing: Short Term Action Steps (infrastructure); Chapter 4: Implementation, page 76*

²⁶ *Ibid, Long-Term Vision (infrastructure), Page 86*

²⁷ *Ibid, Long-Term Vision (infrastructure), Page 86*

²⁸ *Ibid, Long-Term Vision (infrastructure), Page 86*

²⁹ *Ibid, Long-Term Vision (infrastructure), Page 87*

³⁰ *Ibid, Long-Term Vision Map, page 89*

identification, SWOT analysis, stakeholder interviews, business questionnaires, local work group discussions, and more. The planning process was tailored to meet the specific needs, goals, and opportunities that local stakeholders identified.

Situational Analysis

REDD Staff met with Town Manager Snow Bowden following receipt of an initial application for participation in the *Creating Outdoor Recreation Economies (CORE)* on November 14, 2022. A Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) and Resolution for the Erwin CORE Strategic Plan was developed by REDD staff and adopted by the Erwin Board of Commissioners at their meeting on August 28, 2023. REDD staff was given a tour of the Town's outdoor recreation assets in September 2023.

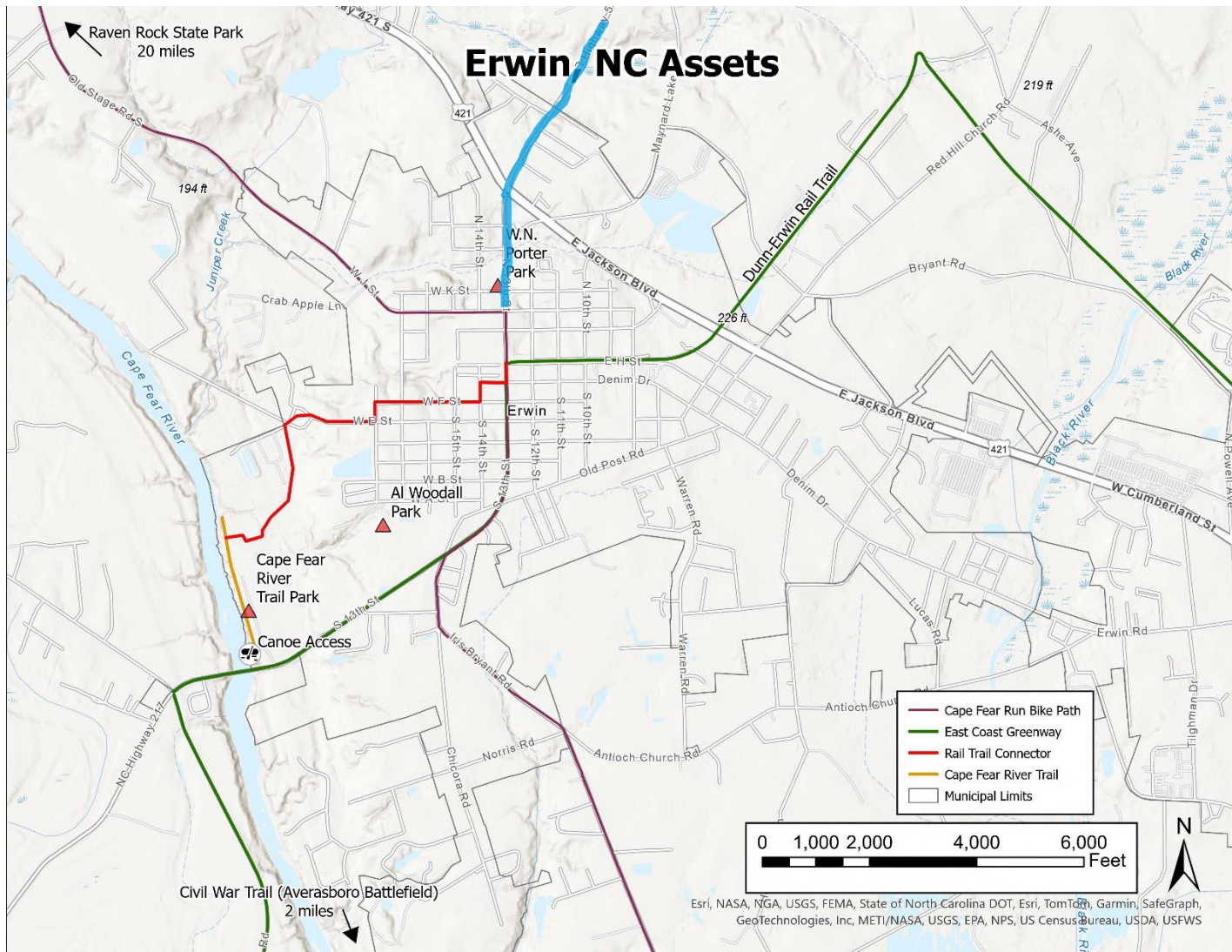
Local Work Group Establishment and Involvement

Community members with an interest in Outdoor Recreation were asked to participate in the local work group. Beginning October 2023, the Rural Planning team met with the local work group for a series of **six** sessions to gather and share information and ideas. The local work group was comprised of business owners, residents, and staff from: Erwin Parks & Recreation, Harnett Parks & Recreation, Harnett County Economic Development, Mid-Carolina Council of Governments, Erwin's Mayor, Town Manager, Town Planner, and Town Clerk. Other participants included a Harnett County Tourism Board member, and Director of the Triangle Trails Initiative. During these sessions the work group reviewed data collected by REDD staff, completed a Work Group survey, SWOT analysis, economic positioning statement and established goals and strategies for the Implementation Plan.

The local work group will be encouraged to remain as a unit to assist the Town to implement the strategic plan. **The Town of Erwin Board of Commissioners is encouraged to adopt the existing work group as a standing or ad hoc Outdoor Recreation Committee of the Town of Erwin.**

Asset Mapping

The Erwin Outdoor Recreation Asset map highlights publicly controlled properties in Erwin at the Federal, State, and local levels, as well as major trails and waterways.



Public Engagement

An online survey was used to receive input from our CORE Work Group, town commissioners and others, as well as six 2-hour meetings to gather and discuss information, develop the economic positioning statement, strategies, and the Implementation Plan. Results from the online stakeholder survey are included in the Appendix.

Economic Positioning Statement

A community economic positioning/vision statement provides a forward-looking strategic framework to help guide local government and the community make disciplined, tactical, and incremental decisions on community issues as they arise. The local work group was led through an exercise to develop an Outdoor Recreation Economic Positioning Statement for the Town of Erwin.

The CORE work group met several times to develop the proposed economic positioning statement, first by creating individual statements, identifying key words, phrases, and developing a draft statement. A final statement was crafted by the group and recommended the Town of Erwin Board of Commissioners adopt the following statement:

Erwin is the destination for those seeking to get back to the simple life where they can enjoy recreating on the Cape Fear and Black Rivers, and where all trails converge leading to historic Downtown.

Plan Review and Adoption

The Erwin CORE Strategic & Implementation Plan was reviewed by members of the CORE Local Work Group on November 6, 2024. They recommended to the Erwin Board of Commissioners that the plan be considered for adoption. The Erwin Board of Commissioners received the report and presentation by REDD staff during their workshop meeting on February 24, 2025 and adopted during their regular meeting on March 6, 2025.

Erwin CORE Implementation Plan 2025-2030

Outdoor Recreation Economic Positioning Vision

Erwin is the destination for those seeking to get back to the simple life. Where they can enjoy recreating on the Cape Fear and Black Rivers, and where all trails converge leading to historic Downtown.

Strategy 1: Getting Back to the Simple Life

Strategy 2: Activating the Cape Fear & Black Rivers

Strategy 3: Accessing Trails for Health, Wealth, and Fun

Strategy 4: Active Downtown

Strategy 1: Getting Back to the Simple Life

Goal 1: Improve Quality of Life for Erwin Residents: Health & Wellness

Objective 1.1: Maintain a (work) group that meets regularly and is dedicated to advancing the goals of this plan.

Actions/Projects:

1. Develop a local alliance of stakeholders that are invested in the outdoor recreation space, particularly local businesses, to increase networking and support within this sector

Objective 1.2: Update existing Erwin Parks & Recreation Master Plan. and incorporate priorities/recommendations within the Erwin CORE plan.

Actions/Projects:

1. Engage with future county-wide parks and recreation master planning efforts to ensure Erwin's priorities are given consideration for inclusion.
2. Attract additional leisure businesses (i.e. putt-putt golf, disc golf, etc.)

Objective 1.3: Improve resident engagement and participation in outdoor activities

Actions/Projects:

1. Form task force with local and regional partners to identify and increase youth outdoor recreation opportunities
2. Encourage civic groups, senior centers, etc. to promote & utilize county outdoor recreation opportunities in partnership with the Erwin Parks and Recreation and local outdoor recreation-oriented businesses
3. Research and engage with existing outdoor youth organizations such as NC Youth Outdoor Engagement Commission, Need More Outdoors, Great Outdoors University, Great Trails NC, North Carolina Interscholastic Cycling Club

Objective 1.4: Earmark annual funds to repair and improve walkability and accessibility of sidewalks³¹ and trails throughout Erwin

Actions/Projects:

1. Apply for Bicycle/Pedestrian Planning Grants (*CERRI, Erwin LUP page 56*)
2. Action 1.3.2: Expand sidewalk connectivity between residential and downtown and other commercial districts and recreational areas. (*CERRI*)

Objective 1.5: Update & provide uniformity to existing/future wayfinding signage townwide including from US 421. (*Land Use Plan/CERRI*)

Actions/Projects:

1. Inventory existing wayfinding signage
2. Identify locations for future wayfinding signage

Strategy 2: Activating the Cape Fear & Black Rivers

Goal 2: Develop outdoor economic & recreational opportunities (*safe, enjoyable use of rivers*)

Objective 2.1: Improve ramp and accessibility at Cape Fear River Trail Park

Actions/Projects:

1. Partner with Harnett County, and others, to determine and implement improvements at the county-owned park.

Objective 2.2: Create at least 1 new public access to Cape Fear River by 2029 (*LUP Goal 4 pg. 60*)

Actions/Projects:

1. Research areas in or adjacent to Town of Erwin.

Objective 2.3: Support increased navigability of the Black River from Erwin toward Rhodes Pond

Action/Projects:

1. Map access to usable portions of the river
2. In coordination with Harnett County, develop a nature park on the Black River. (*LUP Goal 4*)
3. Partner with river organizations (i.e. River Keeper) and businesses

Objective 2.4: Support and engage with partners to develop a regional Blueway along the Cape Fear River from Raven Rock State Park to Elizabethtown in Bladen County.

Action/Projects:

1. Collaborate with regional planning organizations including FAMPO to support Blueway planning efforts.

Objective 2.5: Connect Cape Fear River Trail downstream from Lillington to Erwin and to Fayetteville. (*Harnett Bike, Ped, Greenway Plan -page 86*)

Action/Project:

1. Work with property owners on voluntary alignment opportunities for trail development along Cape Fear River.

31

Objective 2.6: Extend use of Cape Fear River Bridge (page 87)

Action/Projects:

1. Work with NCDOT on extending paved shoulder or constructing a side path on either side of the NC 217 bridge to Cape Fear River Trail Park to the east and Beaver Dam Rd to the west.

Objective 2.7: Construction of Coats to Dunn-Erwin Rail Trail.

Action/Projects:

1. Encourage and support efforts by Harnett County to allocate and acquire property for the trail extension.

Goal 3: Accessing Trails for Health, Wealth, and Fun

Objective 3.1: Increase participation and use of trails and outdoor recreation assets in Erwin by 5% annually

Actions/Projects:

1. Develop method for tracking usage of all outdoor assets
2. Promote existing & future outdoor recreation amenities in Erwin
3. Develop programs for all age groups and populations– especially young people

Objective 3.2: Maintain and enhance the Dunn-Erwin Trail (*Erwin LUP-TIS 2.2.2*)

Actions/Projects:

1. Develop plan for trail updates to include restroom, benches, additional parking and access points, lighting at key locations, safety call boxes, signage, art installations and/or landscaping.

Goal 4: Develop/Embrace Trail Safety-Outdoor Recreation Protocols and Practices

Objective 4.1: Improve trail accessibility for First Responders

Actions/Projects:

1. Install distance markers on all trails, including the Cape Fear River Trail
2. Install signage for public safety

Objective 4.2: Water & Trail Safety Education Programs

Action/Projects:

1. Review and utilize existing programs through Outdoor NC

Objective 4.3: Adopt “Trail Town” stewardship program objectives

Action/Projects:

1. Utilize objectives, eligibility guidelines, and stewardship designation activities as guiding principles/factors

Objective 4.4: Consider becoming a designated “Trail Town” stewardship program

Action/Projects:

1. Discuss with Harnett County Tourism about process

Strategy 3: Active Downtown

Goal 5: Position downtown Erwin as the center of cultural events and outdoor recreational activities

Objective 5.1: Improve economic impacts of existing in-town and town-sponsored festivals, cultural & historical events, and tours by 5% annually.

Action/Projects:

1. Coordinate with event coordinators to establish baseline attendance and current economic impacts
2. Encourage event organizers to develop growth strategies for each event/festival
3. Review impacts annually and make changes accordingly
4. Add outdoor recreation-oriented activities (bike ride, paddling activity, youth fishing exhibition, etc.) into an existing festival of event as appropriate
5. Encourage at least 1 business to sponsor a and/or host a recurring (weekly, monthly, etc.) activity such as a run club, group cycling outing, or a walking group.
6. Develop workshop(s) to teach businesses to capitalize on events and activities

Objective 5.2: Encourage entrepreneurs to start businesses in Erwin

Action/Projects:

1. Inventory all commercial buildings, businesses and property
2. Identify existing outdoor recreation businesses, expansion opportunities, and available buildings
3. Encourage development of outdoor recreation manufacturing and other complementary uses in downtown to Central Carolina Industrial Park (aka Erwin Mill) (*CERRI, LUP*)
4. Create at least quarterly outdoor recreation pop-up event with biking, hiking, boating, and fishing business vendors
5. Attract and support development of a downtown brewery

Objective 5.3: Create a formalized public space downtown for events (*LUP Goal 4*)

Action/Projects:

1. Study potential ways to formalize a public space to be used for town events – even by formal agreements with property owners and/or improvements to town-owned property

Plan Implementation, Monitoring, and Evaluation

The Town of Erwin will be responsible for monitoring, evaluation, and reporting accomplishments on the objectives of this plan to the Rural Economic Development Division.

Plan Implementation

Maintaining a dedicated group to follow through after the planning process to begin addressing goals and objectives outlined in this plan is critical to attaining the potential economic impact of these strategies. This could be the same work group that helped develop this plan, or another similar group that is representative of the community and can advance the goals of this plan. The sustained presence of such a group builds ‘social capital’ within the group that improves their ability to work together and effectively address common goals. Furthermore, a dedicated group ensures continuity from planning stage through implementation, provides accountability to ensure that objectives are being met, and allows the community to react and respond quickly when an opportunity is presented. But this group should not be the sole entity responsible for implementing all the goals of the plan. Instead, the group should function as a convener and point of contact to connect to other individuals, organizations, and resources to help the broader community achieve these goals. Maintaining a regular meeting schedule will also help increase the effectiveness of the group, and the plan.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Regular monitoring and evaluation to review progress on the goals, objectives, and action steps in this plan, via regular review sessions with the Strategic Planning team and other community stakeholders, is critical to ensuring it remains a viable, living document. REDD staff will periodically communicate and provide assistance as needed to help advance the goals and document the outcomes of the plan.

For APPENDIX Please See Separate Document



APPENDIX





Town of Erwin
Creating Outdoor Recreation Economies
CORE 2025-2030

Adopted: March 6, 2025

APPENDIX

NC MS&RP Outdoor Recreation Funding Resources	Page 1
Erwin Retail Marketplace Snapshot	Page 8
- Tapestry Segmentation	Page 14
- Walk Score	Page 20
- Summary & Recommendations	Page 20
Map – Erwin CORE Assets	Page 23
Economic Drivers, Assets, SWOT	Page 24
Survey – Work Group Results	Page 31

**NORTH CAROLINA MAIN STREET AND RURAL PLANNING CENTER
POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES AND RESOURCES
FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION AND OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
(Revised January 2023)**

*** The NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center recommends contacting listed entities directly for more information about their programs. The inclusion of a program on the list is not an endorsement by the NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center. ***

Program	Purpose/Description	Grants/Resources	Match	Website/Contact
NC Land & Water Fund	These grants have been used in all 100 N.C. counties to help ensure clean drinking water, protect natural habitat and preserve our unique natural and cultural resources for future generations.	Grants – Funding Amounts Vary	Not Specified	https://nclwf.nc.gov/apply
North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF)	Awards matching grants to local governments for parks, public beach access, and improvements in state parks. The statewide program helps local governments reach their park and public access goals to improve the quality of life in their communities.	Grants - The North Carolina General Assembly funds PARTF each year at different levels.	1:1 Match for Local Government Projects; Funds also available for NC State Parks projects and the Coastal and Estuarine Water Beach Access Program	https://www.ncparks.gov/more-about-us/parks-recreation-trust-fund/parks-and-recreation-trust-fund
NCDNCR, Division of Parks and Recreation - Recreational Trails Program Grant	The intent of the RTP is to help fund trails and trail-related recreational needs at the State level for projects that are construction ready for grant funding.	Grants – past grant amounts awarded between \$10k-\$100k	Past years have required a 25% Match of RTP Funds Received	https://trails.nc.gov/trail-grants/apply-grant

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) - America the Beautiful Challenge	Intended to streamline grant funding opportunities for new conservation and restoration projects around the U.S., the America the Beautiful Challenge consolidates funding from multiple federal agencies and the private sector to enable applicants to conceive and develop large-scale projects that address shared funder priorities and span public and private lands.	Grants - Approximately \$85 million	Non-federal match helps demonstrate broad support for the project and may be required by the federal funding requirements. Dependent of federal agency funding.	https://www.nfwf.org/programs/america-beautiful-challenge
Program	Purpose/Description	Grants/Resources	Match	Website/Contact
U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)	Provides funds to the States to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both nonmotorized and motorized recreational trail uses.	Grants – Funding Amounts Vary	Not Specified	https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/
National Forest Foundation Matching Awards Program	The MAP program supports action-oriented projects that enhance outdoor experiences, forest and ecosystem health, and engage local communities in caring for their public lands.	Grants – Funding Amounts Vary	1:1 nonfederal cash match	https://www.nationalforests.org/grant-programs/map

US Fish & Wildlife Service - Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration (WSFR) Program	Programs that distribute funding annually to state agencies and Tribes to manage fish, wildlife, and habitats, evaluate and enhance species of greatest conservation need, and provide recreational opportunities for fishing, hunting, shooting, and boating. Local governments and orgs. may have to partner with state agencies to access these funds.	Grants – Funding Amounts Vary	Not Specified	https://www.fws.gov/program/wildlife-and-sport-fish-restoration
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation – Acres for America	Walmart’s Acres for America program stands today as the leading public-private land conservation partnership in the United States. The partnership began in 2005, when Walmart and NFWF joined forces to establish Acres for America as a groundbreaking effort to support and catalyze the conservation of lands and wildlife habitat of national significance, and to benefit local communities and local economies.	Grants – Funding Amounts Vary	All grant awards require a minimum 1:1 match of cash or contributed goods and services.	https://www.nfwf.org/programs/acres-america
Program	Purpose/Description	Grants/Resources	Match	Website/Contact

Outdoor Heritage NC - North Carolina Schools Go Outside (GO) Grant	Created to address the main barrier to getting kids outside during the school day – funding. Qualifying for grants require instructors demonstrate how the experience will address topics currently being taught in class and that the experience meets the goals of the Outdoor Heritage Trust Fund plan.	Grants – Funding Amounts Vary	Not Specified	https://www.outdoorheritage.nc.gov/grants/ For questions, contact ohac.grants@nc.gov
Department of Natural and Cultural Resources - The Land and Water Conservation Fund	The LWCF provides matching grants to local governments to assist with public park and recreation projects. LWCF grants can be used to acquire land for a public park; to develop outdoor recreation and support facilities; or a combination of both. A project must be located on a single site.	Grants – Funding Amounts Vary	An applicant must match the grant with a minimum of 50 percent.	https://www.ncparks.gov/about-us/grants/land-and-water-conservation-fund
Department of Natural and Cultural Resources - Accessibility for Parks Grant	Can be used to build accessible facilities or adapt existing facilities that meet the unique needs of children and veterans with physical and developmental disabilities.	Local governments can request a maximum of \$500,000 with each application.	An applicant must match the grant with \$1 of local funds for every \$5 of grant funds. The value of in-kind services, such as volunteer work,	https://www.ncparks.gov/about-us/grants/accessibility-parks-grant

			cannot be used as part of the match.	
Department of Natural and Cultural Resources - Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program	<p>The purpose of the program is to provide grants to acquire and/or develop public lands for outdoor recreation purposes consistent with the purposes of LWCF, but with the further specific goals of funding projects that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are located within or serve an Urbanized Area (population of 50,000 or more) as designated by the Census Bureau from the 2010 Census; and • Are in, or are directly accessible to, neighborhoods or communities that are underserved in terms of parks and recreation resources and where there are significant 	Grants – Funding Amounts Vary	ORLP grant projects must be cost-shared with non-federal funds at a minimum ratio of 1:1.	https://www.ncparks.gov/about-us/grants/outdoor-recreation-legacy-partnership-program

	populations of people who are economically disadvantaged.			
NCDOT - IMD Feasibility Studies Program	Feasibility studies for eligible project types including paved trails, greenways, shared-use paths, sidepaths, and sidewalks.	Grant – Funding Amounts Vary	A local match is not required; however, it may be a factor to consider for a competitive grant cycle.	https://connect.ncdot.gov/municipalities/PlanningGrants/Pages/IMD-Feasibility-Studies-Program.aspx
Athletic Brewing Co. – Two for the Trails	ABC donates 2% of sales to protect and restore trails, and other projects that enhance access to the outdoors. Any registered LLC eligible, with preference given to 501(c)(3) non-profits.	Grant – Funding Amounts Vary	Not specified	https://athleticbrewing.com/pages/two-for-the-trails
Fox Factory Trail Trust	Provide grants to organizations helping to preserve the places we love to play. The goal is to bring together diverse communities to build, maintain, and expand access to trails for both mountain biking and power sports. 501(c)(3) Non-Profits eligible.	Grant – Funding Amounts Vary	Not Specified	https://www.trailtrust.com/
NCDEQ – Water Resources	This program provides cost-share grants and technical assistance to	Grant – Funding Amounts Vary depending on	50 percent matching limit	https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/water-resources/water-resources-grants/water-resources-development-grant-program

Development Grant Program	local governments in NC. Applications for grants are accepted for 7 eligible project types: general navigation, recreational navigation, water management, stream restoration, water-based recreation, Natural Resources Conservation Service Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) stream restoration projects and feasibility/engineering studies.	project type - \$200,000 maximum recommended for "State & Local Projects"		

In addition to the above list, the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable (ORR) in partnership with Oregon State University has compiled a list of national outdoor recreation funding and technical assistance resources. Some resources may be duplicated between the MS&RP and ORR resource guides. The inclusion of a program on the list is not an endorsement by the NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center. This list of resources is available via the below link:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Ucp7AQQQTHa8x0eWYL-ID53AvJU628dE/view>



Downtown Erwin Retail Marketplace Snapshot-October of 2023

The purpose of this report is to give Downtown Erwin the baseline information for a better understanding of its current market. The NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center Staff studied the retail marketplace data within a 1- and 3-mile radii to the downtown area. The retail leakage analysis examines the quantitative aspects of the retail opportunities.

By reviewing the retail gap, we can:

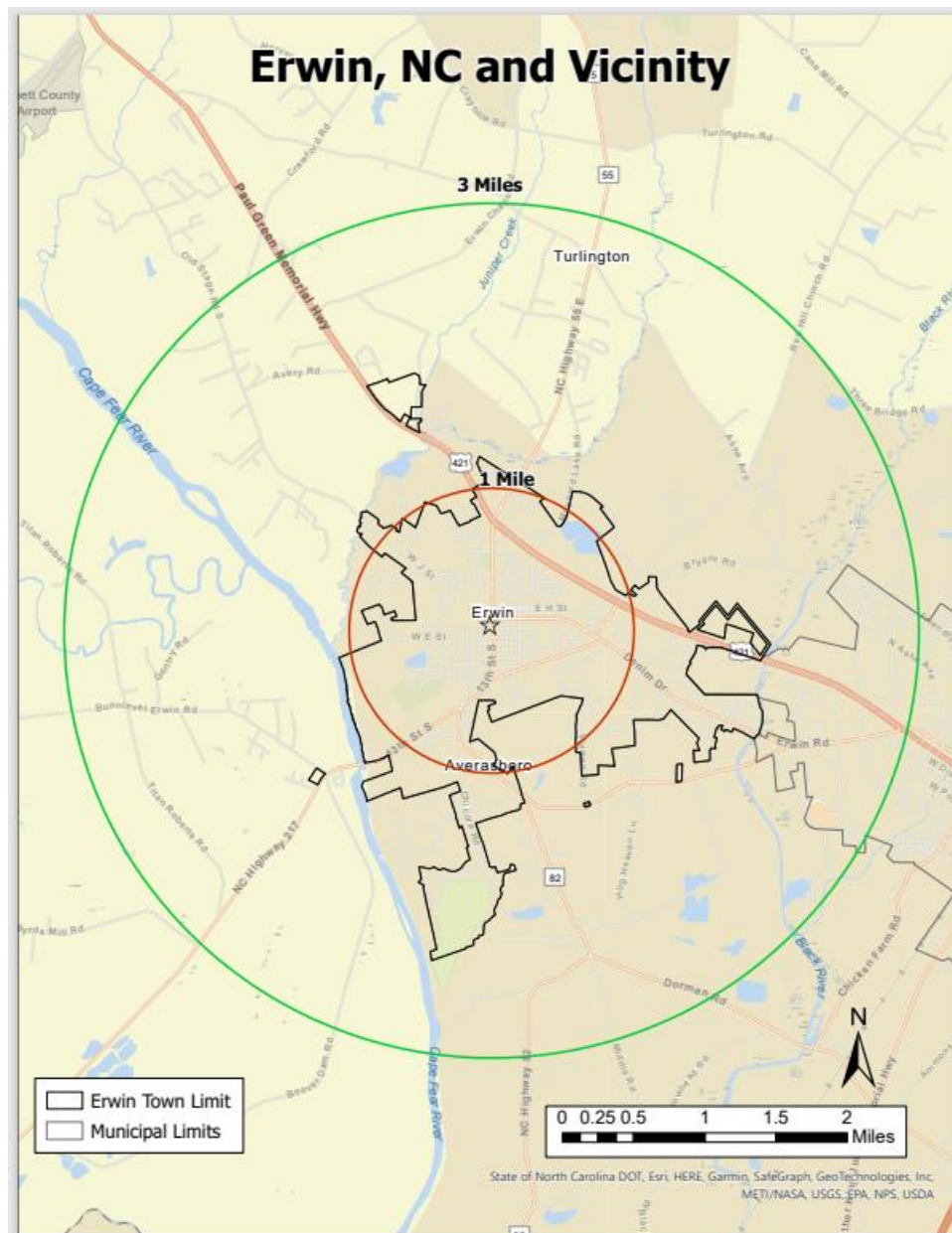
- Understand how well the retail needs of residents are being met.
- Uncover unmet demand and possible opportunities.
- Understand the strengths and weaknesses of the local retail sector.

When consumers spend their dollars outside the specific radii of Downtown Erwin this is known as “Retail Gap” throughout this report. Retail Gap or leakage indicates an **unmet demand in the trade area**. This suggests the possibility the community can support additional retail for those business categories. Residents within the specified primary trade areas are purchasing products outside that area indicating opportunity to capture those dollars within the downtown district.

There are also categories for which Downtown Erwin is exceeding the local market demand. Those are measured as red numbers on the below report. For the 1 and 3-mile radii information, this means that Downtown Erwin is exceeding its market potential in these categories. This retail surplus means the community’s trade area is capturing local market plus attracting non-local shoppers. Surplus means the community has possibly developed strong clusters of retail that have broad geographical appeal.

You can also seek additional retail market data that Harnett County Economic Development or the Mid-Carolina Council of Governments can provide. This report is based on the data collected and should serve as a starting point for your economic vitality efforts.

We highly encourage you to couple this report with consumer surveys to get a complete understanding of the Downtown Erwin potential. The NC Main Street and Rural Planning Center can share examples of consumer surveys and assist with this process as needed.



The above Harnett County map outlines the two trade areas within a 1- and 3-mile radii of downtown. Defining the downtown trade area is critical in determining retail opportunities for the downtown market. The NC Main Street & Rural Center staff only reviewed the data within

these two segments. Downtown Erwin should be targeting residents within these two areas. The goal is to capture the retail sales volume leaking to neighboring communities, such as Dunn. The chart below shows total industry summaries for the 1- and 3-mile downtown. It details the total retail sales gap, potential 10% capture and retail square footage needed to attract this sales volume.

The sales per square foot column in the charts is the average number based on recent research across the state. Typically, restaurant annual retail sales are higher than \$300 per square foot. There are variables that impact this number such as building owned versus rented, rental rates either higher or lower as well as overall expenses, such as employee wages, insurance, utilities, etc. **Surplus is shown as a red number and retail gap is shown as a black number.**

Distance	Total Retail Gap	10% Capture	Sales/SF	S.F. Needed
1-mile radius	\$4,636,699	\$463,670	\$300	1,546
3-mile radius	\$3,132,474	\$313,247	\$300	1,044

The above chart shows the aggregate number of potential sales within the 1-and 3-mile radii to Downtown Erwin. Below you will see these numbers broken down by retail category.

1-Mile Radius around Downtown

Erwin				
Primary Trade Area 1-mile around downtown		DOWNTOWN POTENTIAL		
Business Type	Retail Gap	10% of Retail Gap	Sales/SF	SF
		10%	\$300	Needed
Electronics Stores	\$ 516,836	\$ 51,684	\$ 300	172
Beer, Wine and Liquor Stores	\$ 526,844	\$ 52,684	\$ 300	176
Pharmacies and Drug Stores	\$ 1,013,080	\$ 101,308	\$ 300	338
Family Clothing Stores	\$ 693,491	\$ 69,349	\$ 300	231
Full Service Restaurants	\$ 1,886,448	\$ 188,645	\$ 300	629
Total Gap	\$ 4,636,699	\$ 463,670	\$ 300	1,546

3-Mile Radius around Downtown

Erwin				
Primary Trade Area 3-mile radius around downtown		DOWNTOWN POTENTIAL		
Business Type	Retail Gap	10% of Retail Gap	Sales/SF	SF
		10%	\$300	Needed
Electronics Stores	\$ 739,116	\$ 73,912	\$ 300	246
Pharmacies and Drug Stores	\$ 538,946	\$ 53,895	\$ 300	180
Family Clothing Stores	\$ 1,328,571	\$ 132,857	\$ 300	443
Drinking Places	\$ 525,841	\$ 52,584	\$ 300	175
Total Gap	\$ 3,132,474	\$ 313,247	\$ 300	1,044

1-Mile Radius Retail Surplus

Category	Retail Surplus
Furniture Stores	\$ 599,696
Home Furnishing Stores	\$ 216,517
Home Centers	\$ 8,448,542
Grocery Stores	\$ 3,070,283
Department Stores	\$ 2,063,480
Limited-Service Restaurants	\$ 1,111,357
Total	\$ 15,509,875

3-Mile Radius Retail Surplus

Category	Retail Surplus
Furniture Stores	\$ 3,673,108
Home Furnishing Stores	\$ 2,051,066
Appliance Stores	\$ 328,758
Home Centers	\$ 9,299,950
Paint and Wallpaper Stores	\$ 906,632
Nursery, and Garden Supply Stores	\$ 1,138,776
Grocery Stores	\$ 9,284,244
Specialty Food Stores	\$ 481,407
Beer, Wine, and Liquor Stores	\$ 913,522
Book Stores	\$ 667,996
Department Stores	\$ 6,379,712
Limited-Service Restaurants	\$ 3,553,953
Total	\$ 38,679,124

The retail surpluses confirm that Downtown Erwin is attracting a disproportionate amount of retail sales in these categories and potential exists to attract additional retail and restaurant establishments to take advantage of the additional business potential.

Below are two tables showing the projected sales growth in different commercial categories. This information can help your recruitment process.

1-Mile Radius Measurement

Erwin Demand Growth by Retail Store Types				
Primary Trade Area: 1 Mile Radius				Compound
Business Type	2023	2028	Growth	Growth
	Demand	Demand	\$	Rate (%)
Furniture Stores	\$ 635,334	\$ 708,009	\$ 72,676	2
Electronics Stores	\$ 604,765	\$ 688,730	\$ 83,965	3
Home Centers	\$ 1,814,266	\$ 2,174,631	\$ 360,365	4
Grocery Stores	\$ 5,931,554	\$ 6,729,318	\$ 797,764	3
Beer, Wine and Liquor Stores	\$ 526,844	\$ 603,813	\$ 76,969	3
Pharmacies and Drug Stores	\$ 2,537,722	\$ 2,819,421	\$ 281,699	2
Full Service Restaurants	\$ 2,719,230	\$ 3,172,974	\$ 453,744	3
Limited Service Restaurants	\$ 2,307,244	\$ 2,671,737	\$ 364,494	3
Total Sales	\$ 17,076,959	\$ 19,568,633	\$ 2,491,676	

Note: The compound annual growth rate (CAGR) is the annualized average rate of revenue growth between two given years, assuming growth takes place at an exponentially compounded rate. The most important factor in both charts is the amount of projected growth per category.

3-Mile Radius Measurement

Erwin Demand Growth by Retail Store Types				
Primary Trade Area 3 Mile Radius		DOWNTOWN POTENTIAL		Compound
Business Type	2023	2028	Growth	Growth
	Demand	Demand	\$	Rate (%)
Furniture Stores	\$ 1,595,363	\$ 1,788,904	\$ 193,541	2
Home Furnishings Stores	\$ 1,138,821	\$ 1,301,112	\$ 162,291	3
Electronics Stores	\$ 1,548,991	\$ 1,752,330	\$ 203,339	3
Home Centers	\$ 4,627,817	\$ 5,511,208	\$ 883,391	4
Paint and Wallpaper Stores	\$ 321,728	\$ 436,467	\$ 114,739	6
Hardware Stores	\$ 680,136	\$ 811,706	\$ 131,570	4
Nursery, Garden and Farm Supply Stores	\$ 862,690	\$ 1,002,588	\$ 139,898	3
Grocery Stores	\$ 15,224,916	\$ 17,197,507	\$ 1,972,591	3
Specialty Food Stores	\$ 458,302	\$ 518,628	\$ 60,326	3
Beer, Wine and Liquor Stores	\$ 1,341,271	\$ 1,537,543	\$ 196,272	3
Pharmacies and Drug Stores	\$ 6,478,246	\$ 7,162,567	\$ 684,321	2
Sporting Goods Stores	\$ 931,539	\$ 1,009,800	\$ 78,261	2
Pet and Pet Supply Stores	\$ 452,123	\$ 533,509	\$ 81,386	3
Drinking Places	\$ 525,841	\$ 631,249	\$ 105,408	4
Full Service Restaurants	\$ 6,906,231	\$ 8,021,003	\$ 1,114,772	3
Limited Service Restaurants	\$ 5,888,401	\$ 6,783,089	\$ 894,688	3
Total Sales	\$ 48,982,416	\$ 55,999,210	\$ 7,026,794	

Note: The compound annual growth rate (CAGR) is the annualized average rate of revenue growth between two given years, assuming growth takes place at an exponentially compounded rate. The most important factor in both charts is the amount of projected growth per category.

1-Mile Radius Income Distribution (Similar to the 3-mile radius income distribution)

HOUSEHOLD INCOME



Median Household Income

\$46,587

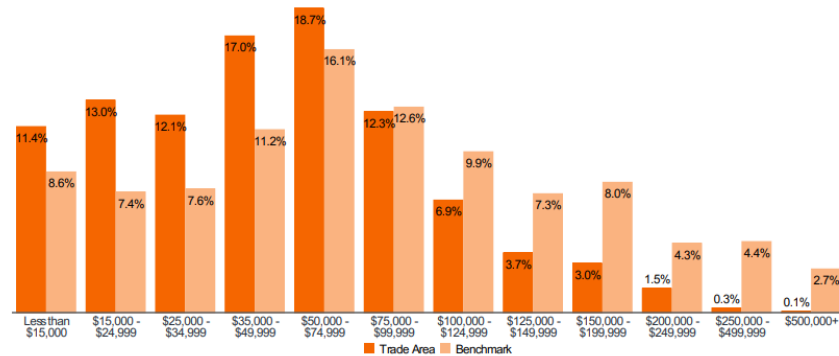
Index:64

Average Household Income

\$59,964

Index:57

HOUSEHOLD INCOME DISTRIBUTION



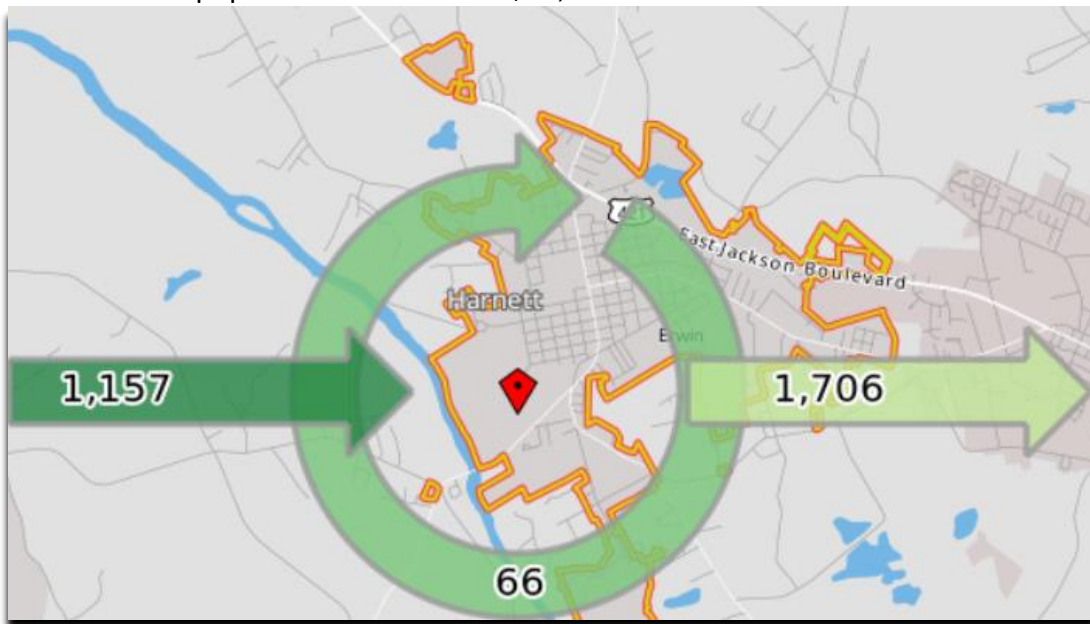
Benchmark:USA

© 2023 Claritas, LLC. All rights reserved. Source: ©Claritas, LLC 2023.
(<https://claritas.easpollight.com/Spotlight/About/3/2023>)

*Ranked by percent composition

Index Colors: <80 80 - 110 110+

- \$46,587 Median Household Income
- \$59,964 Average Household Income
- \$50,000-\$74,999 Highest income distribution
- 53.5% of the population earns below \$50,000.
- 46.5% of the population earns above \$50,000.



(U.S. Census on the Map)

- 1,157 workers commute into Erwin daily.
- 66 workers live and work in Erwin daily.
- 1,706 workers leave Erwin daily for employment.
- 1,223 workers commute into and live and work in Erwin daily.
 - 26.9% of the Erwin population. These are potential consumers.

The above data can be used to help recruit businesses to Downtown Erwin to meet the unmet potential and reduce the retail gap or leakage. The priorities are to first retain, then expand and finally to recruit new businesses. The categories that show the most potential should be focused on first, especially within the 3-mile radius of downtown. This data can help existing businesses realize there may be potential to expand to capture additional retail sales.

Tapestry Segmentation identified by ESRI On-Line Business Analyst

We find that studying the Tapestry Segments helps to identify a retail mix based on demographics that could enhance the shopping experience. Tapestry Segmentations provide detailed descriptions of America's neighborhoods. U.S. residential areas are divided into 67 distinctive segments based on their socioeconomic and demographic composition, then further classifies the segments into LifeMode and Urbanization Groups. Each radius has numerous LifeMode groups for a total of 100%. The detailed information can give Downtown Erwin a sense of who its customer is and insight into how to market to and what types of products to possibly add to existing inventory. By diving deeper into each Tapestry Segment's LifeMode and Urbanization Group there may be an entirely new business that could emerge and possibly be a good fit for downtown.

The information provided reflects the U.S. characteristics. The table below shows the top three segments for each category with brief descriptions. Detailed descriptions are obtained by going to the raw ESRI data's Tapestry information and clicking on each segment for the specific drive times. Visit <http://doc.arcgis.com/en/esri-demographics/data/tapestry-segmentation>

Top 3 Tapestries for each location

Total Community		1-mile radius		3-mile radius	
Southern Satellites	38.1%	Midlife Constants	42.0%	Southern Satellites	43.6%
Mid-life Constants	34.0%	Heartland Communities	35.3%	Mid-life Constants	19.4%
Heartland Communities	27.9%	Southern Satellites	22.8%	Heartland Communities	14.9%

Southern Satellites is the top segment of those living within the entire Erwin community, the third largest segment of those living within a 1-mile radius of town and the top segment of those living within 3 miles of town. Midlife Constants is the second largest segment of those living within the entire Erwin community, the first segment of those living within a 1-mile radius of town and the second largest segment of those living within a 3-mile radius of town. Heartland Communities is the third largest segment of those living within the entire Erwin community, the second largest segment of those living within 1 mile of town and the third largest segment of those living within a 3-mile radius of town. Each of these segments will be addressed below:

Southern Satellites	Total Households (U.S.)	\$3,856,800
	Average Household Size	2.67
	Median Age	40.3

Average HH Income \$47,800

WHO ARE WE?

Southern Satellites is the second largest market found in rural settlements but within metropolitan areas located primarily in the South. This market is typically slightly older, settled married-couple families, who own their homes. Two-thirds of the homes are single-family structures; almost a third are mobile homes. Median household income and home value are below average. Workers are employed in a variety of industries, such as manufacturing, health care, retail trade, and construction, with higher proportions in mining and agriculture than the US. Residents enjoy country living, preferring outdoor activities and DIY home projects.

SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- Education: almost 40% have a high school diploma only; 45% have college education.
- Labor force participation rate is 59.1%, slightly lower than the US.
- These consumers are more concerned about cost rather than quality or brand loyalty.
- They tend to be somewhat late in adapting to technology.
- They obtain a disproportionate amount of their information from TV, compared to other media.

Mid-Life Constants	Total Households (U.S.)	3,068,400
	Average Household Size	2.31
	Median Age	47.0
	Average HH Income	\$53,200

WHO ARE WE?

Midlife Constants residents are seniors, at or approaching retirement, with below-average labor force participation and below-average net worth. Although located in predominantly metropolitan areas, they live outside the central cities, in smaller communities. Their lifestyle is more country than urban. They are generous but not spendthrifts.

SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- Education: 63% have a high school diploma or some college.
- At 31%, the labor force participation rate is low in this market.
- Almost 42% of households are receiving Social Security; 27% also receive retirement income.
- Traditional, not trendy; opt for convenience and comfort not cutting edge. Technology has its uses, but the bells and whistles are a bother.
- Attentive to price, but not at the expense of quality, they prefer to buy American and natural products.
- Radio and newspapers are the media of choice (after television.)

Heartland Communities	Total Households (U.S.)	2,850,600
	Average Household Size	2.39
	Median Age	42.3
	Average HH Income	\$42,400

WHO ARE WE?

Well settled and close-knit, Heartland Communities residents are semirural and semiretired. These older householders are primarily homeowners, and many have paid off their mortgages. Their children have moved away, but they have no plans to leave their homes. Their hearts are with the country; they embrace the slower pace of life here but actively participate in outdoor activities and community events. Traditional and patriotic, these residents support their local businesses, always buy American, and favor domestic driving vacations over foreign plane trips.

SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- Retirees in this market depress the average labor force participation rate to less than 60%. More workers are white collar than blue collar; more skilled than unskilled.
- The rural economy of this market provides employment in the manufacturing, construction, utilities, health-care, and agriculture industries.
- These are budget-savvy consumers; they stick to brands they grew up with and know the price of goods they purchase. Buying American is important.
- Daily life is busy but routine. Working on the weekends is not uncommon.
- Residents trust TV and newspapers more than any other media.
- Skeptical about their financial future, they stick to community banks and low-risk investments.

AARP Livability Index

The AARP Livability Index for Downtown Erwin is 46 on a scale ranging from 0 to 100. The higher the score the more livable the community. Erwin ranks below average on this scale. It is important to consider the different index categories, such as health, environment, neighborhood, and opportunity to help you determine what needs to be done to improve this score. Some areas of particular interest include:

The positive.....

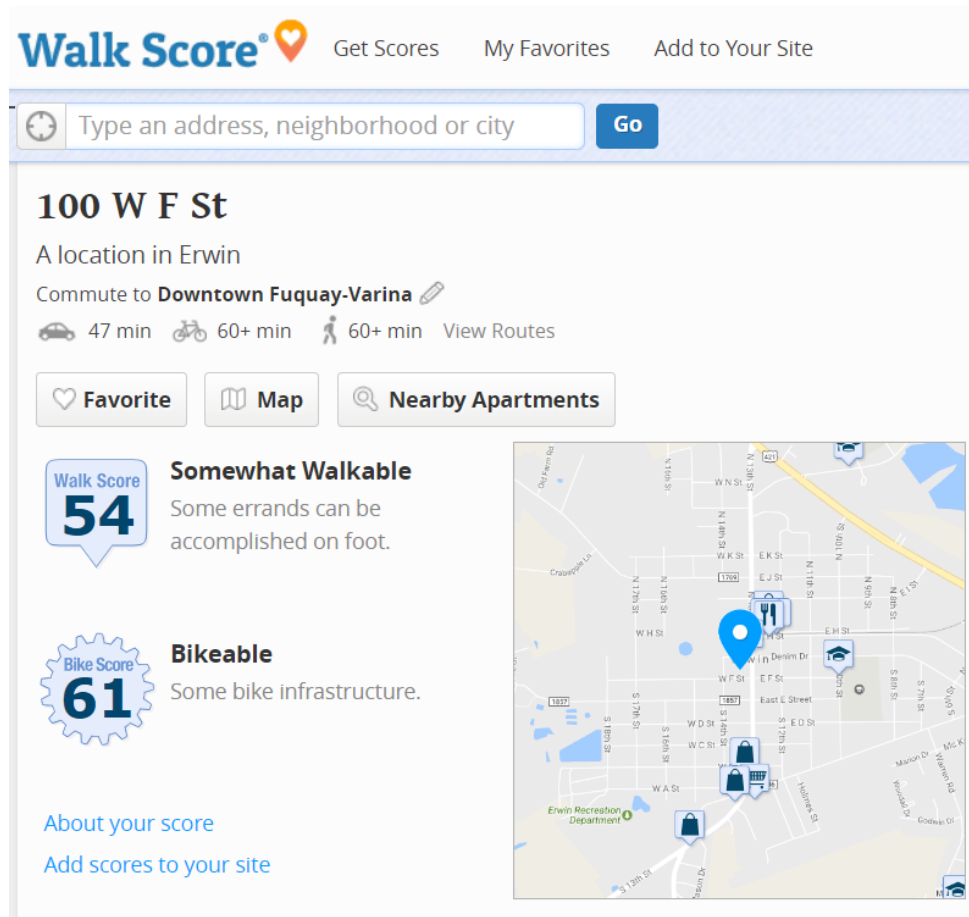
<u>Category</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2022 Median U.S. Neighborhood</u>
Housing (51 out of 100)		
Zero-Step Entrances	50.1%	50.1%
Housing Costs (Costs per month)	\$743	\$1,057
Housing Cost Burden	13.8%	16.3%
Availability of subsidized housing (Units per 10,000)	0	0
Neighborhoods (51 out of 100)		
Access to Grocery Stores & Farmer's Mkts (# of stores or markets)	0	0.0

<u>Category</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2022 Median U.S. Neighborhood</u>
Neighborhoods (51 out of 100)		
Access to parks	2	1
Access to libraries	1	0
Access to Jobs by Transit	0	0
Diversity of Destinations (Index from 0 to 1)	0.79	0.65
Transportation (46 out of 100)		
Frequency of local transit (Buses and trains per hour)	0	0
Walk Trips (Trips per household per day)	0.73	0.73
Congestion (Hours per person per year)	2.5	25.5
Environment (65 out of 100)		
Drinking Water Quality (% of people exposed to violation)	0%	0%
Local Industrial Pollution (ORSE score from 0 to 9,070)	0	0.00
Near-roadway pollution (% of people exposed to violations)	0.00%	0.00%
Engagement (38 out of 100)		
Broadband cost and speed (% of residents who have high speed and competitively priced internet)	96.4%	93.7%
Opportunity for Civic Involvement (Number of organizations per 10,000 ppl.)	7.1	1.18
Social Involvement Index (Index 0 to 2.5)	0.96	0.96

<u>Category</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2022 Median U.S. Neighborhood</u>
Opportunity (52 out of 100)		
Income inequality (Index from 0 to 1)	0.41	0.46
Age Diversity (Index 0 to 1)	0.95	0.85
The negative.....		
Housing (51 out of 100)		
Availability of multi-family housing (% of units multi-family)	2.2%	18%
Neighborhood (51 out of 100)		
Access to jobs by auto	9,198	44,198
Activity Density (Jobs and people per sq. mile)	651	3,056
Crime rate (Crimes per 10,000 people)	302	217.4
Vacancy rate (% of units vacant)	10%	8.6%
Transportation (46 out of 100)		
ADA-accessible stations and vehicles (% of stations and vehicles accessible)	82.5%	82.9%
Household transportation costs (Costs per year)	\$16,542	\$15,331
Speed limits (Miles per hour)	31	28.0
Crash rate (Fatal crashes per 100,000 people per year)	13.8	7.7
Environment (65 out of 100)		
Regional air quality (Unhealthy air quality days per year)	4.4	4.37

<u>Category</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2022 Median U.S. Neighborhood</u>
Health (21 out of 100)		
Smoking prevalence (% of pop. who smoke)	22.5%	18%
Obesity prevalence (% of adults who are obese)	36.3%	32.2%
Access to exercise equipment (% of people who have access)	55.5%	90.1%
Healthcare Professional Shortage Areas (Index 0 to 26)	11	0
Preventable hospitalization rate (% of preventable hospitalizations per 1,000 patients)	128.7	48.5%
Patient satisfactions (% of patients satisfied)	71.3%	71.8%
Engagement (38 out of 100)		
Voting Rate (% of people who vote)	59.4%	61.9%
Cultural, Arts and Entertainment Institutions (Institutions per 100 people)	0.1	8.01
Opportunity (52 out of 100)		
Jobs per worker (Jobs per worker)	0.48	0.80
High school graduation rate (% of students who graduate)	87.0%	88.5%

Walkscore



Visit <https://www.walkscore.com> for more information.

Summary and Recommendations

1. Retail Gap

At both the 1-mile and 3-mile radii, retail gaps are seen in electronics, pharmacies and drug stores, and family clothing. At just the 1-mile radius, a retail gap is seen in beer, wine, and liquor, while at just the 3-mile radius, a retail gap is seen in drinking places.

2. Retail Surplus

At both the 1-mile and 3-mile radii, retail surpluses are seen in furniture, home furnishings, home centers, groceries, department stores and limited-service restaurants. At just the 3-mile radius, retail surpluses are seen in appliances, paint and wallpaper stores, nursery, garden and farm supply stores, specialty food stores, beer, wine and liquor stores and book stores.

Baker's Family Furniture Mart and Aaron's contribute to the furniture and home furnishings surpluses, Carlie C's and Wal-Mart SuperCenter contribute to the pharmacy surpluses, Lowe's Home Improvement produces the home centers surpluses, Wal-Mart SuperCenter and Burke's

Outlet contribute to the department store surpluses. Wendy's, Zaxby's, Hardees and Subway contribute to the limited-service restaurant surpluses.

3. Intersection of Retail Gaps and Projected Sales Growth

These categories show both retail gaps and projected sales growth:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Retail Gaps</u>		<u>Projected Growth</u>	
	<u>1-mile radius</u>	<u>3-mile radius</u>	<u>1-mile radius</u>	<u>3-mile radius</u>
Electronics	\$ 516,836	\$739,116	\$ 72,676	\$ 203,339
Beer, Wine and Liquor	\$ 526,844	-----	\$ 76,969	\$ 196,272
Pharmacies	\$1,013,080	\$538,946	\$ 281,699	\$ 684,321
Family Clothing	\$ 693,491	\$1,328,571	\$-----	\$-----
Full-Service Rest.	\$1,886,448	\$-----	\$ 453,744	\$1,114,772
Drinking Places	\$-----	\$525,841	\$-----	\$ 105,408

For recruiting purposes, those categories that show both retail sales potential and projected growth, will give a potential business operator more confidence in the market sales potential for their products.

4. Walkability and Bikeability

The Downtown Erwin Walkscore of 54 is above average. Concerning bikeability, Downtown scores 61, which is also above average. You will want to work with the local NCDOT division to incorporate bike lanes into their streets in downtown as well as those controlled by the Town of Erwin.

According to a study by real estate advising company Robert Charles Lesser & Co., homebuyers are increasingly looking for green space and trail systems for walking, running, and biking. In fact, green space and trail systems were the No. 1 and No. 2 desirable community features in this referenced article---Source: New Home Source:

<https://www.newhomesource.com/learn/top-community-amenities/>

The list is below:

Parks and green spaces

Paved trail systems for walking, jogging, biking, etc.

Note that in addition to the walking and biking trail amenities, the #3 amenity that new homeowners want is:

Main street village centers with retail services and cafes for gathering and socializing.

Downtown Erwin fits the #3 desired community amenity and will want to see ways to increase walkability and biking options to meet consumer demands.

5. Redevelopment and Business Recruitment

Former Main Street Director Diane Young created the Downtown Directors' Guide to Working with Development Projects--<https://www.ncmainstreetandplanning.com/economic-vitality>-- an invaluable resource for downtown revitalization. Hilary Greenberg of Greenberg Development Services created business recruitment and retention guides that are also available on the NC Main Street and Rural Planning Center web site. These guides are recommended for Pembroke's redevelopment, recruitment, and retention efforts.

There is additional Claritas retail data to support your retail recruitment efforts.

If you have any questions concerning the above information, do not hesitate to contact Downtown Development Specialist Mike Dougherty at mike.dougherty@commerce.nc.gov or 919-817-7086.

Sources: Claritas Retail Data

<http://doc.arcgis.com/en/esri-demographics/data/tapestry-segmentation>

Livabilityindex.aarp.org

Harnett County map—Glen Locascio, NC Department of Commerce

Erwin, NC Assets

Raven Rock State Park
20 miles

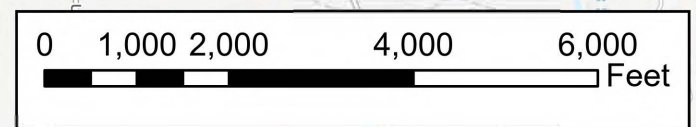
Potential Access to Cape Fear River
by Harnett Regional Jetport 3.2 miles

US Wildlife Access to
Cape Fear River 5.5 miles

Proposed Erwin to Coats Trail

Black River
Rhodes Po
6.5 Miles

Civil War Trail (Averasboro Battlefield)
2 miles



Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, FEMA, State of North Carolina DOT, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA, USFWS

Economic Drivers

5k Runs/Races on Rail Trail

Nutcracker Run in December

Denim Days (2,000+ attendance)

Cape Fear River & Park (put out at Park)

Rail Trail Users - 200 per day - counter system?

Statewide Bike Ride (every so often)

Tournaments - Baseball 9-14 yr olds

Tournaments - Softball

Chicora Golf Course

Community Assets	Natural Assets
Dunn-Erwin Rail Trail (greenway)	Black River
Canoe Access to Cape Fear River	Cape Fear River
Cape Fear River Park	Cape Fear River Park
Cape Fear Walking Trail	Cape Fear Walking Trail
East Coast Greenway Trail	Dunn-Erwin Rail Trail
Mountain to Sea Trail	Erwin is one of two places to cross Cape Fear River in Harnett County
NC Bicycle Route	Park - Al Woodall Park
	Park - W.N. Porter Park
	Raven Rock State Park (20 miles)

Institutional Assets	Human Resource Assets
Aversboro Battlefield Commission	5k Runs/Races on Rail Trail
Campbell University (Buies Creek)	Cape Fear River & Park (put out at Park)
Carolina Wetlands Association	Christmas Parade (1st Mon December)
Central Carolina Community College	Denim Days (1st Saturday September)
Dunn Tourism Authority	Denim Days (2,000+ attendance)
Dunn-Erwin Trail Board	Erwin Wilderness Challenge (off & on event)
Erwin Board of Commissioners	Movie Nights
Erwin Chamber of Commerce	Nutcracker Run in December
Erwin Elementary School	Rail Trail Users - 200 per day - counter system?
Erwin Historical Society	Senior Games
Erwin Parks & Recreation Department	Summer Concerts
Fort Liberty	
Harnett County Board of Commissioners	
Harnett County Economic Development Commission	
Harnett Soil & Water	
Mid-Carolina Council	
Visit Harnett NC (District H Tourism Authority)	

Cultural Assets
Golf cart community
Historic District
History Museum (Historic Society)

SWOT

[illegible]

SWOT

Opportunities - External	Threats - External
Athletic store	Environmental issues like flooding
ATV Park (Linden) (13-15 miles from Erwin)	Potential private development of prime outdoor rec-adjacent properties
ATV/Off Road Vehicle	Property development happening before preferred guidance/ordinances are in place. <i>i.e. requiring greenway easements, etc.</i>
BIKE SHOP!	Swimming in Cape Fear River not recommended - educational signs might be needed
Bike shop/rentals	
Black River to Rhodes Pond connectivity	
Campbell University - leverage students - large number living in Coats apartments - availability	
Camping	
Collaboration between Public/Private/Non-Profit entities/partners	
Create activities for "game weekends" at Campbell and other entities	
Creation of Blueways	
Disc golf	
Dr. Brad Creed John Bartlett , President, Campbell University	
Easier access to river and trail	
Equipment rental	
Equipment rentals would thrive in Erwin	
Fort Liberty market	
Harnett County funds most costs for maintenance/expansion of Rail Trail and River Park/Trail	
Harnett Regional Airport	
Historic Walking and Bike Trails	
Indigo Room (downtown venue) Fraternities from Campbell use it	
Kayak/Boat shop and rentals	
Lack of ride-sharing (Uber) and local transportation	
Land Conservancy/Land easements	
Large Mines/Gravel Pits	
Mill property development "Millside" to include: Brewery, Retail, Foodhall "Eatertainment", Mfg,	
More activity options	
More shopping opportunities	
Mountain biking	
New Sporting Events	
Old Ferry Dock signage	
Old Ferry Docks/Lines? May not be usable but may be worth a look	
Outfitter store	
Park Expansions	
Rail Trail Expansion to Coats to Campbell U to Lillington	
Raven Rock State Park often closes gates early in the day due to capacity - how to exploit overflow?	
Regional Tourism Outdoor Recreation is this a current strategy or project?	
Reservoir fishing? (Harnett Regional Water)	
Retail shop specific to the rail trail	
Running shoes and attire	
Sidewalk expansion/Improvement (grant seeking underway)	
Three Rivers Land Trust (Check with Wesley Johnson for contacts)	
Wayfinding & Conformity of signage	

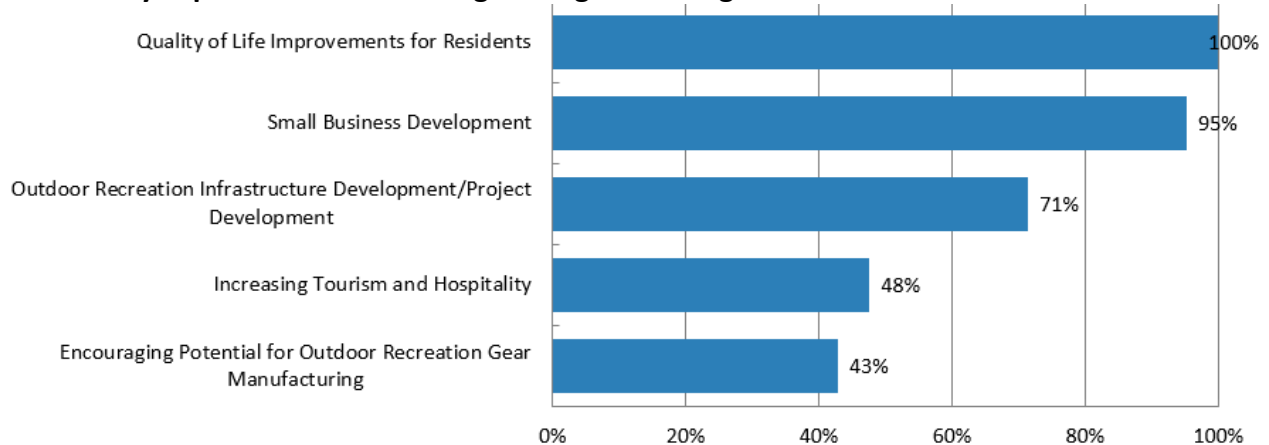
Unique Identifier
A rich history
Al Woodall Park
Averasboro/Erwin/Dunn development history - involves Coharie Tribe, Colonists and civil war
Cape Fear River
Dunn-Erwin Rail Trail
Dunn-Erwin Rail Trail is unique stretching from Dunn, to Erwin, to Harnett County.
Erwin started out as Duke
Historic Downtown – Mill
Mill Lawn

Erwin

CORE Primary Planning Group Questionnaire Results

02/15/24 – 10 Responses

1. Primary Topics to Address During Strategic Planning Process



2. What are the most significant outdoor recreation assets (parks, trails, bodies of water, other) in your community.

Al Woodall Park
Averasboro Civil War Battlefield
Black River
Cape Fear River
Cape Fear River Park
Cape Fear Walking Trail
Dunn-Erwin Rail Trail
Raven Rock State Park (20 miles)
Rhodes Pond
W.N. Porter Park

3. What outdoor recreation activities are most common in your community?

Hiking/Walking	100%
Canoeing/Kayaking	90%
Fishing	70%
Hunting	70%
Road Cycling (and other leisure biking)	40%
Birdwatching/Nature Viewing	30%
Horseback Riding/Equestrian	30%
ATV/Off-Road Vehicle Activity	30%
Motorized Boating	20%
Camping (RV, Tent, etc.)	10%
Disc Golf	0%

4. What outdoor recreation activities are not available in your community that you would like to have available?

Camping (RV/Tent/Etc.)	70%
Mountain Biking	70%
Disc Golf	60%
ATV/Off Road Vehicle	40%
Motorized Boating	40%
Horseback Riding/Equestrian	30%
Road Cycling and Leisure	10%
Birdwatching/Nature Viewing	10%

5. In your view, which outdoor recreation activities provide the most economic impact, or have the potential to provide increased economic impact, in your community? (List 3)

Boating
Canoeing & Kayaking
Cape Fear River
Concert Venues
Cycling
Disc Golf
Dunn-Erwin Rail Trail
Flea/Farmers Market-type things
Organized Sporting Tournaments
Walking & Riding Trails
Walking/Hiking
Camping
Connectivity to trails & downtown

6. When thinking about outdoor recreation in your community, what improvements are needed to enhance outdoor recreation assets/infrastructure? *List needed improvements from most impactful to least impactful: For example: Is there an existing trail or water access point that needs parking/trailhead improvements? Is there an existing trail or park that could be better connected to the downtown business district? Is their adequate public access to local bodies of water?*

Access/Amenities
Easier & inviting access at drop off to the river and rail trail
More knowledge about what we have to offer
We need something to keep people in Erwin. The Cape Fear River brings them here and then they turn around and go back to where they came from. We need come sort of camping in Erwin. Raven Rock is great but that is in the County and not specific to Erwin.
Disc golf course
More security for the Dunn-Erwin Rail Trail
More trails connecting to attractions
Access to slow moving open water (i.e. Black River)
Cape Fear River Trail but not a significant trail
Parks in town are ok, but not the greatest for children

7. Rank the importance of benefits to be gained from your community's outdoor recreation assets and experiences. Please select the level of importance for each topic area.

Topic	Less Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Most Important	Combined*
Greater quality of life and amenities for residents			10%	90%	100
Attracting new business or industry	10%		40%	50%	90
Encouraging local entrepreneurship around outdoor recreation-related businesses		10%	60%	30%	90
Increasing revenue for existing businesses	10%	10%	70%	10%	80
Increased non-traditional overnight lodging options (Airbnb; Campgrounds)	10%	30%	40%	20%	60
Increased traditional overnight lodging options	10%	40%	20%	30%	50
Workforce development to prepare individuals to work in outdoor recreation		60%	20%	20%	40

**Combined Most Important & Important*

8. What are the local features that make your community unique? *These could be related to outdoor recreation such as unique geographic features, activities available that are not available elsewhere. Or, cultural or historical in nature such as a quaint downtown, important local history, an annual festival or event, a famous person from the area, etc. List all that apply:*

A rich history
Al Woodall Park
Cape Fear River
Denim Days Festival
Dunn-Erwin Rail Trail
Flanked by Cape Fear River and Black River, we're historically relevant from time of Native Americans through to Colonial and Civil War era. Fishing and kayaking opportunities in tandem with historical information is a gold mine.
Historic Downtown - Mill
Mill Lawn
Rail Trail is unique stretching from Dunn, to Erwin, to Harnett County. It could be so great, but safety is such an issue on the Trail.
Residents that have deep roots and are passionate about the community
Since we are on the Cape Fear we could really take advantage of this by developing the area around it and having an inviting space for residents and visitors to go and visit the river.
The historical nature of the denim factory in town is great but it is currently a large eye-sore. The proximity to the Cape Fear River and the historical nature of the downtown area.

9. Are there any other improvements that could be made locally to enhance the quality, accessibility, or otherwise improve the experience of residents' and visitors' ability to engage in outdoor recreation within your community?

Athletic store
Bike shop/rentals
Develop tour guides
Easier access to river and trail
Historic Walking and Bike Trails
Kayak/Boat shop and rentals
More activity options
More attractive downtown area
More shopping opportunities
More signage, and more coverage of local events reaching out to a larger audience.
More special events to bring community together
New Sporting Events
Park Expansions
Retail shop specific to the rail trail
Running shoes and attire
Signage and Advertising materials (Short form videos)
There is nothing at the Cape Fear River park to bring people there. There is a 'boat ramp' that isn't highly functional and the area is not well kept.

10. When thinking about general tourism in your community what are the main tourist attractions? *These could be outdoor recreation related, or other attractions such as historical sites, museums, restaurants, art, etc. Please list all that apply:*

Al Woodall Park with the splash pad and ball fields
Averasboro Battlefield
Cape Fear River
Denim Days
Erwin has a museum that explains the history of the town when it was the township of Duke which is pretty cool.
Erwin History Room/Museum
Historical related events
Park related activities
River Trail
Sporting events
The (Dunn-Erwin) Rail Trail, and the Cape Fear River.
There is not a lot to choose from for restaurants besides fast food
There's not much here in the Erwin area, but Dunn has some interesting tourist sites. We only have the Historical Society and Averasboro Battlefield. Both need more funding and staff.
To be personal, I lived in Lillington and Linden for a total of 10 years. If it wasn't for our church (FBCE) and Walmart, I would never venture into town
Trails & River

11. When thinking about general tourism in your community, what are the first two activities that come to mind?

Biking
Canoeing
Cape Fear River
Cape Fear River Trail Park
Denim Days
Kayaking on Cape Fear
Sporting Events At The Park
Tubing down the Cape Fear River
Walking on the Dunn-Erwin Rail Trail

12. When thinking about general tourism in your community, what are the first two potential issues/problems that come to mind?

Access to the river and trail
Accessibility
Areas are not well lit or populated with litter everywhere
False local reputation
Lack of activities
Lack of facilities
Lack of lodging
Lack of marketing
Lack of Restaurants
Lack of stores
Lack of things to do
No big attractions
No entertainment
Options for safe overnight lodging
Safety & Cleanliness
Security

13. Do you believe that tourism is an important part of the community's economy? *(Select one option)*

YES – 50%

NO – 30%

Not Sure – 20%

14. Is tourism generally viewed favorably within the community? *In the question below please describe why or why not?*

Not Sure – 50%

YES – 30%

NO – 20%

15. As a follow up to the question above, please describe why tourism is or is not viewed favorably within the community.

Erwin is a small town where everyone knows everyone. The town can put money into tourism but it would be much better spent on the citizens that are already here as well as the current infrastructure.
I feel that many people in Erwin would encourage growth and tourism in Town.
Lack of community involvement
Laid back atmosphere
More visitors equal more business
Never heard anyone mention it
No one speaks of it because it has not been a factor considered in the past
Some feel that any type of growth would stunt the community from the "Small Town Feel"
There are not a lot of overnight lodging options
There are not many things to do here
We don't have much, so I don't think it could be seen as unfavorable.

16. Should your community leaders take active steps to increase tourism within your community? *In the question below please describe why or why not?*

YES – 80%

NO – 10%

Not Sure – 10%

17. As a follow-up to the question above, please describe why community leaders should or should not actively try to increase tourism.

Actively support the funding of outdoor beautification and recreational activity.
Additional revenue dollars
Erwin could try and partner with Visit Harnett and Dunn Tourism
Funds would be best allocated to what the town already offers rather than bringing 'tourism' that frankly will most likely never kick off in a small town like this.
Help provide commerce and enhance the quality of life for the citizens
Increased revenues in Town are needed and would be good for everyone in Town
Make the community more attractive for businesses which will also increase the citizens quality of life
Our community needs visitors and new residents to inspire growth and prosperity.
This is a great place to live but there are several small towns around that do not have the horsepower to attract a lot of people to visit, it's better suited as a great place to live but pulling in outside people just to visit is not that important to me. Don't get me wrong there is no place in the world I would rather live than here

18. Do you feel that your community is an attractive, welcoming, and desirable place for visitors/tourists?

YES – 70%

Not Sure – 20%

NO – 10%

19. Based on your response above, why do you feel your community is or is not an attractive, welcoming, and desirable place for visitors?

Historical factors
I do feel that we are welcoming and desirable but attractive is a strong word. Our main attractions are the Rail Trail and Cape Fear River, if you are not into athletic activities, there really is not anything for you. No restaurants or stores. Nothing for kids to do to attract young families.
Natural resources - cape fear river
Scenic beauty
Kind people
Can drive golf carts around town
It is Classic small-town life.
There are no attractions to bring tourists in
There are houses and businesses in need of uplift to fully show a vibrant, up-and-coming feel.
Is it attractive and welcoming? Yes. Is it desirable? I think that goes a bit far. I don't foresee someone taking the exit off of I-95 to come 'visit Erwin'. Erwin is a fantastic community. However, focusing on tourism is a big step in the wrong direction.

20. What type of improvements could help increase tourism within your community? (Select all that apply):

Downtown revitalization/improvements	90%
Increased promotion and marketing of existing attractions	80%
More local attractions	70%
Improvements to existing attractions	70%
More traditional hotels or lodging	40%
More Air BnB/Short term rental options	30%
Dedicated staff/personnel to advocate for tourism-based opportunities	10%
Other (please specify)	0%

21. Are there any existing outdoor recreation related businesses in or near your community (retail shops, guides, bike shops, manufacturing companies, etc.)? List all that apply:

A running store in downtown Dunn
In Dunn and Lillington NC
Nearest one that comes to mind is in Lillington / Broken Paddle
None in the community

22. Are there any other existing businesses in or near your community that depend on, or benefit from, people engaging in outdoor recreation activities? *(Hospitality businesses that cater to outdoor recreation participants, restaurants, breweries, lodging, etc.)? List all that apply:*

All the restaurants would likely benefit, especially Burney's and the Pizza House.
Businesses that benefit from Cape Fear River are in Lillington. Which, obviously makes sense because the size of the river and the access to the water is much greater.
In Dunn and Lillington NC
None come to mind
Working on that as we speak

23. Are there any additional business types or needed services *(such as a bike shop, tackle shop, guide service, equipment rental, etc.)* **to support outdoor recreation in the community? If so, please describe.**

All that are mentioned are needed
BIKE SHOP!
Equipment rentals would thrive in Erwin
Fitness shops
Kayak rentals
Outfitter store
Tackle shop

24. Are the business assistance resources available in your community adequate to support the needs of existing businesses and prospective entrepreneurs?

Not Sure – 78%

NO – 11%

YES – 11%

25. If yes, what business assistance resources are available?

Small Business center
Central Carolina Community College
Local Chambers of Commerce
Harnett County Chamber of Commerce

26. If not, what could be done to improve the resources and support available for existing businesses and prospective entrepreneurs?

More business resources with the Chamber
--

27. Is improving quality of life for residents an economic development strategy within your community?

YES – 78%

Not Sure – 22%

NO – 0%

28. Is it common for individuals in your community to participate in outdoor recreation activities to improve their health?

YES – 56%

Not Sure – 33%

NO – 17%

29. If you answered no, please explain why, in your opinion, individuals do not participate in outdoor recreation to benefit their health?

Not sure

30. Do you feel that all members of your community have easy access to places where they can participate in outdoor recreation?

YES – 56%

NO – 22%

Not Sure – 22%

31. If not, what could be done to increase access and accessibility to outdoor recreation for more members of the community? Are there specific populations that do not have easy access to outdoor recreation assets?

Advertising
Beautification
Signage

32. Are there sufficient opportunities for youth to participate in outdoor recreation activities?

YES – 78%

NO – 22%

Not Sure – 0%

33. If not, what could be done to encourage more youth participation in outdoor recreation activities?

Youth tailored events

Please Enter the Following Information:

Full Name	Lauren Evans	Town of Erwin
Email Address	levans@erwin-nc.org	

Full Name	Tim Marbell	
Email Address	timmarbell@yahoo.com	Marbells Guns and Ammo

Full Name	MacDonald Snow Bowden Jr.
-----------	---------------------------

Email Address	townmanager@erwin-nc.org	Town Manger/ Town of Erwin, NC
---------------	--------------------------	-----------------------------------

Full Name	Dylan Eure	
Email Address	Deure@erwin-nc.org	Town of Erwin

Full Name	Frank Toth	
Email Address	frankt19851976@gmail.com	Erwin Area Chamber of Commerce

Full Name	Wesley Johnson
Email Address	wesley@themillside.com

The Millside / Central Carolina Industrial Park

Full Name	Pamela Collins
Email Address	contact@erwinchamber.org

Erwin Area Chamber of Commerce