



# Town of Biscoe CERRI Report and Economic Resiliency Report 2022



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# Acknowledgments

A local work group was created to guide the CERRI process. This work group developed a plan of work for economic resiliency and support in Biscoe. This committee was made up of local leaders, business owners and workers, town staff and regional partners.

The role of the work group was to vet information presented, encourage the Biscoe community to participate in community and business surveys, provide stakeholders to interview for more in-depth views of town, and review this report. This group also developed the Plan of Work and vision statement to create and support a strong local economy in Biscoe. The work group will see the Plan of Work through by implementing the objectives and tasks to build a strong and resilient Biscoe economy.

This project would not be possible without the people involved.

## **Biscoe Work Group Members**

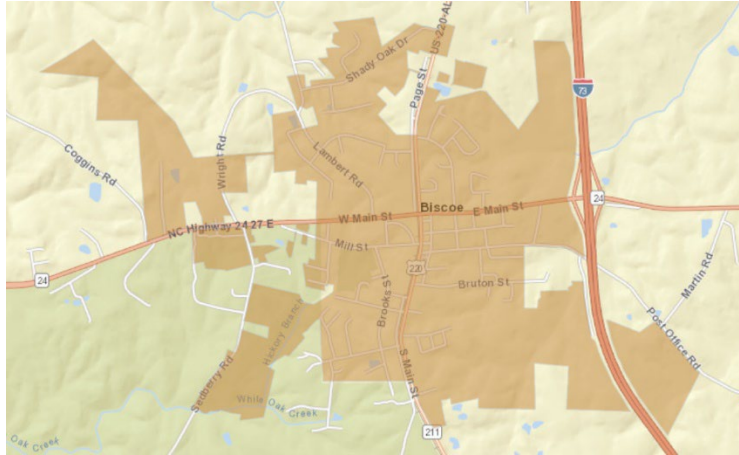
|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Andrew Garner   | Montgomery County Community College     |
| Savannah Heath  | Montgomery County Economic Development  |
| Lashaunda Ryan  | Former Town Commissioner                |
| Kelle Johnson   | Planning Board                          |
| Jack Cagle      | Montgomery County School Administration |
| David Putnam    | Piedmont Triad Regional Council         |
| Frankie Maness  | Montgomery County Manager               |
| Mya Ellis       | Town of Biscoe Intern                   |
| Brandon Holland | Biscoe Town Manager                     |
| Katherine Lucas | NC Hometown Strong                      |

## **Main Street and Rural Planning Center Staff:**

Grace Lawrence, Sandhills Community Economic Development Planner

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# Executive Summary



*Figure 1 Biscoe Town Boundaries NC Commerce GIS*

In the summer of 2020, the Main Street and Rural Planning Program at the North Carolina Department of Commerce and the NC Business and Technology Development Center conducted a survey in all 100 counties to gauge the impacts of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Over 1200 businesses in 275 communities responded.

Figure 2 below highlights some of the concerns businesses had in the Sandhills region – business closure, keeping workers and clients safe, cash flow, supply issues. Figure 3 outlines the top types of training and technical assistance these businesses felt were needed. The pivot to alternative ways to keep and attract customers is shown in the request for ecommerce and social media training. Business continuity was also a top training request. Financial planning and assistance were other interests.

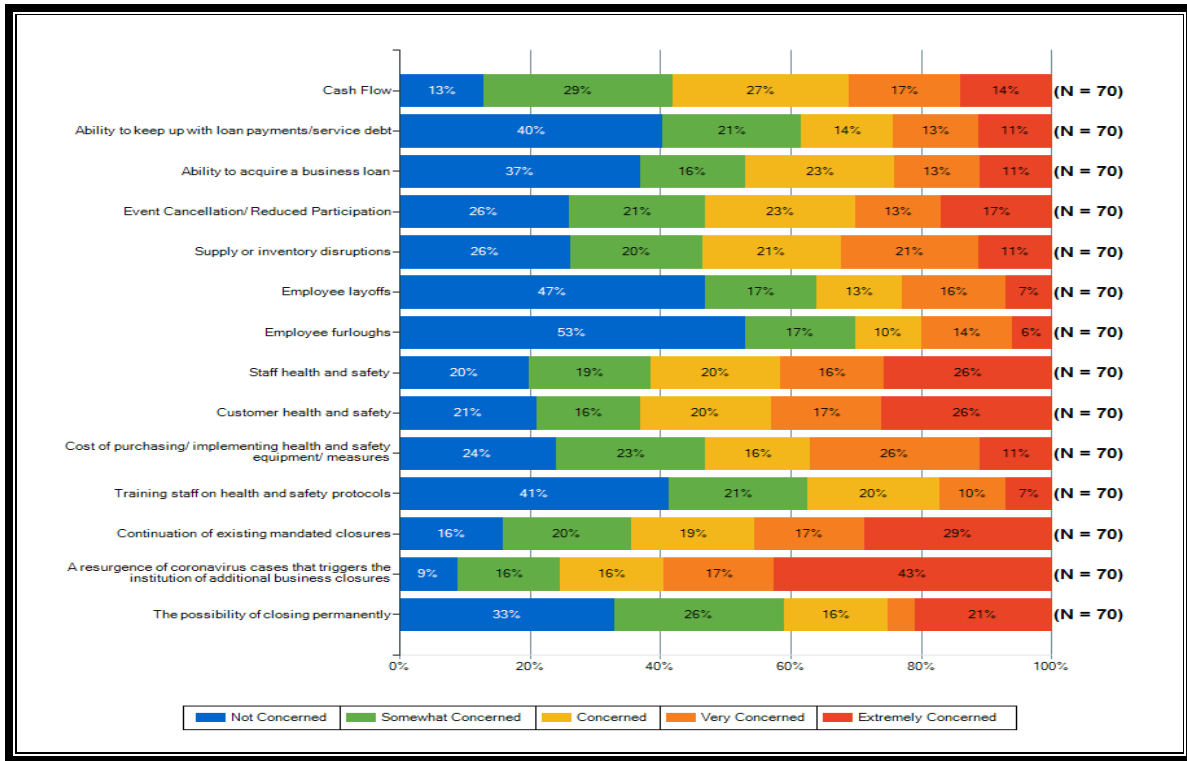


Figure 2 MSRP Sandhills Small Business Survey 2020

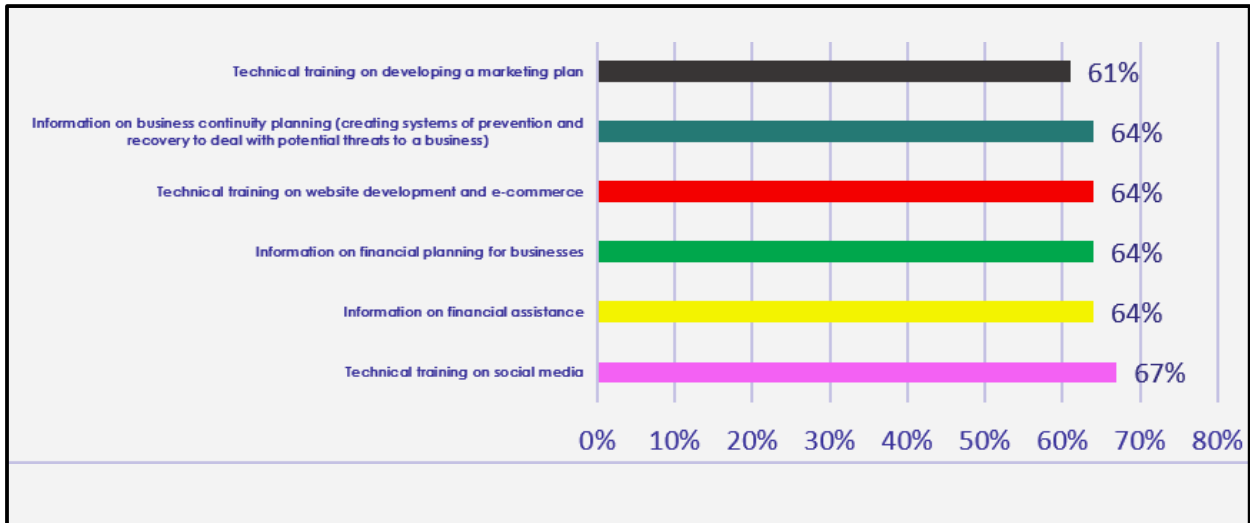


Figure 3 MSRP Sandhills Small Business Survey 2020

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Results of the survey spurred the creation of the Community Economic Recovery and Resiliency Initiative (CERRI). The survey revealed a need to create a recovery plan that local governments and communities could implement that would support the local economy. This support can ensure Biscoe's economy is able to weather and bounce back from other disruptions – fire, flood, hurricane or another pandemic. The CERRI process can provide the framework for the Plan of Work developed by the Biscoe work group.

This CERRI report includes a general economic data review as well as an economic resiliency assessment to help Biscoe understand the structure of its local economy. Surveys and interviews were conducted to help flesh out this report and provide more information to shape the Plan of Work. The pandemic has shown that this resiliency is extremely important in the economies of small towns.

Resiliency includes business diversity that requires diverse skillsets. A workforce with access to jobs can build financial cushions for unstable times and can keep the workers in the workforce. This can also allow that money to recirculate in the local economy. All are important components to consider for economic resiliency.

Biscoe is one of the 22 communities that is participating in CERRI this year.

Key takeaways from the analysis in this report are:

- Biscoe's median income level is lower than county, state and national median income levels.
- Biscoe has more than double the percentage of blue-collar civilian labor force workers than the state and nation. The white-collar local labor force participation rates are lower than the North Carolina and United States' white-collar rates.
- Biscoe zip code has a lower number of millennials than the national average and a higher number of people near retirement age compared to the nation. This shows a potential lag in workers in their prime working career who could take over positions of those retiring.
- Unemployment rates in Montgomery County trended higher than the unemployment rates of North Carolina and the country but now are on par with the state and national unemployment rate.
- More people enter Biscoe to work than leave it to work (a surplus of 1,459).
- The top employers in Biscoe are:
  - Grede Manufacturing (380 employees)
  - Wal-Mart (152 employees)
  - Carolina Dairy (125 employees)
  - Autumn Care of Biscoe (116 employees)
  - Kellum Properties LLC (95 employees)

- 
- The largest industries in Biscoe's Zip Code are:
    - Manufacturing
    - Retail – including supercenters
    - Healthcare – nursing care facilities
  - 25% of the businesses in Biscoe had 20 employees or less in 2021
  - The top growing industries in Biscoe's Zip Code over the past 5 years were:
    - Healthcare
    - Construction
    - Accommodations and Food Services

# Planning Process

A series of meetings were held from February to June 2022 with a work group to determine actions that could strengthen and grow local businesses in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Each meeting focused on specific information and data that would form those actions -a review of economic data collected by Rural Planning; a SWOT analysis; interviews with local stakeholders; and development of a vision statement and work plan.

The work plan and the work group are not static. The current work group elected to focus on a plan of work for the next five years. As time passes, these tasks may be modified. The work group may evolve to new and different members with skills and expertise to achieve the tasks in the plan. This is necessary to allow for growth and make sure the best people are involved to complete the work.

| <b>NC Rural Planning Biscoe<br/>CERRI Work Group Meeting Process</b> |   |
|--|---|
| Pre-meeting  | Establish work group<br>Community/Town Tour   |
| February 17, 2022  | Introduce CERRI and roles of work group<br>Present work group’s SWOT analysis and discuss<br>Review and present economic data and analysis<br>Review format of work plan and report<br>Stakeholder interviews |
| March 24, 2022   | Present work group’s SWOT analysis and discuss<br>Present stakeholder interview results<br>Business Survey questions reviewed and discussion on how to distribute<br>Review Asset analysis to complete        |
| April 21, 2022   | Present summary of Community Survey findings – if done<br>Review asset analysis- Natural, Governmental, Social and discuss<br>Develop Economic Vision Statement   |
| July 7, 2022   | Present draft Work Plan and Report to work group<br>Review draft recommendations – assign recommendations to parties responsible and identify resources to implement recommendations                          |
| One year later   | Review plan accomplishments and update as needed.   |



# Analysis and Recommendations

Analysis of various current data sources yields interesting findings about the Biscoe and Montgomery County economy and its position in the regional economy. Rural communities like Biscoe are difficult to examine since much information is offered only at the County level. Some data in this report covers the Biscoe zip code, the Town of Biscoe or drive times measured from the Town Hall in one-, three- and five-mile radii (Map 1).

Map 2 indicates where the city limits of Biscoe (in black) are situated, compared to Biscoe' zip code of 27209 (in red) and Montgomery County's boundary (in grey). To put this in perspective, Montgomery County has a land area of 501.16 square miles, Biscoe zip code 27209 has an area of 43.18 square miles, and the town limits of Biscoe include 2.68 square miles. The unit of government (town, zip code, or county) will be specified with each data variable.

Surveys and interviews were also conducted in the area to glean insight into specific challenges, opportunities and trends in Biscoe. Surveys of the local government and local businesses were administered. The work group was also surveyed. Telephone interviews were carried out with community stakeholders identified by the work group.

While there may be some variations in the numbers, data in this report is primarily used to show the general situations in Biscoe. The survey results and interviews provide additional context for the report and recommendations. Work Group involvement is critical to vet the data and understand what it means for the future.

## Sources of Information:

- ESRI Business Analyst-Demographics  
[www.esri.com](http://www.esri.com)
- EMSI Economic Modeling Data  
[www.economicmodeling.com](http://www.economicmodeling.com)
- St. Louis Federal Reserve Federal Reserve Economic Data:  
<https://fred.stlouisfed.org/>
- US Census Biscoe Profile 2020:  
<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=biscoe%20nc&tid=DECENNIALPL2020.P1>
- AccessNC:  
<https://accessnc.ncommerce.com/>
- Policy Map:  
<https://www.policymap.com/>
- NC Housing Coalition:  
<https://nchousing.org/>
- US Census On the Map:  
<https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>
- ACS US Census 5Year Estimates:  
<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/profile?q=1600000US3706000>
- US Census Quick Facts Montgomery County:  
<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/Montgomerycountynorthcarolina/PST045219>
- US Census American Community Survey 2019 Biscoe NC:  
<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=biscoe%20nc&g=0400000US37>
- NC Department of Agriculture Ag Statistics:  
[http://www.ncagr.gov/stats/co\\_data/index.htm](http://www.ncagr.gov/stats/co_data/index.htm)
- NC State University 2018 Montgomery County Forestry Contributions:  
<https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/montgomery-county-forestry-impacts-2018>

Disclaimer: This report was prepared by the NC Main Street and Rural Planning Center Rural Planning Program (RRP). Information contained in this report is primarily EMSI and checked against sources above. Every effort is made to ensure the information contained within is accurate. However, no warranty is made about the accuracy of this report by the RRP or its sources.

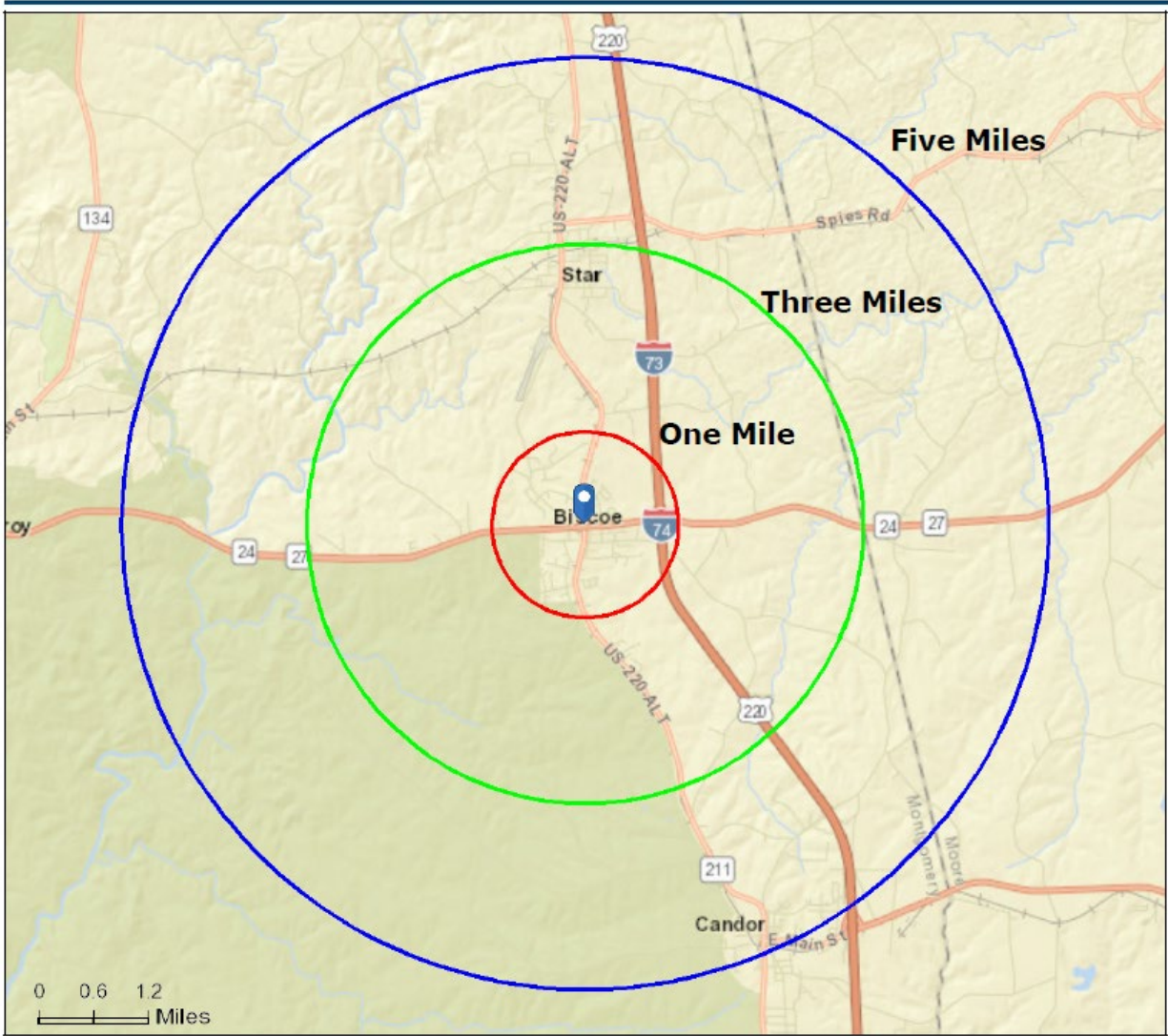
Limitations of this data are to be expected, given RRP use of different data sources and each data source's collection and classification methods.



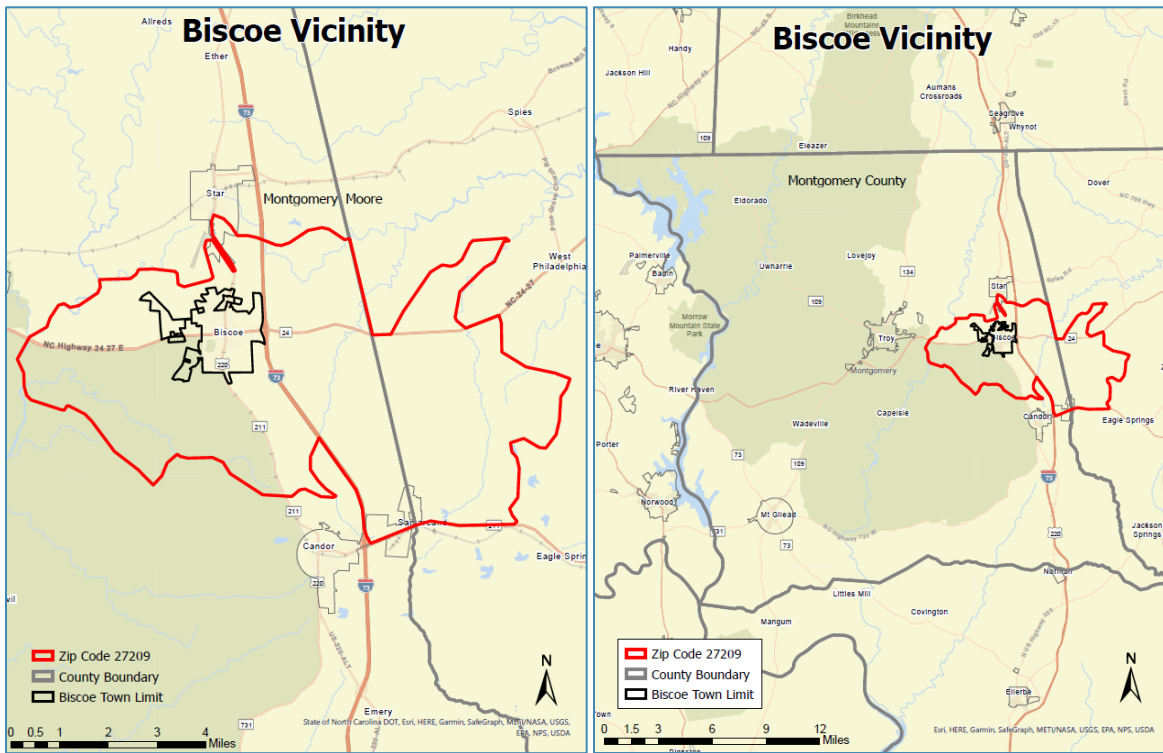
## Site Details Map

110 N Main St, Biscoe, North Carolina, 27209  
Rings: 1, 3, 5 mile radii

Site Details Map  
Latitude: 35.35999  
Longitude: -79.77982



Map 1 Biscoe Radii Source: ESRI Business Analyst



Map 2 Biscoe, Zip Code and County Boundaries Source: NC Commerce GIS

# Surveys and Interviews

Surveys and interviews provide more details and observations into the realities that the businesses and town citizens see. This information shaped the recommendations and plan of work for the CERRI work group. The work group provided support for these tools in participation, distribution, promotion and names of individuals to interview in the community.

## *SWOT Analysis*

To provide additional information and a framework for the work group’s plan of work, interviews and surveys were conducted with different audiences. The work group completed a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis. Table 1 highlights the some of the top items in each category.

| Strengths   | Weaknesses   |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Location in central part of state</li> <li>2. Interstate 74 and NC Highway 26</li> <li>3. Transportation</li> <li>4. Biscoe Park</li> <li>5. Opportunity to expand existing businesses</li> <li>6. Core services are available</li> <li>7. Environmental strengths</li> </ol>     | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Appearance -zoning/code enforcement</li> <li>2. No downtown</li> <li>3. Little to no residential growth</li> <li>4. Little to no entertainment opportunities</li> <li>5. No vision</li> <li>6. Loss of day-to-day service providers – plumbing, daycare</li> </ol> |
| Opportunities   | Threats  |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. New business recruitment</li> <li>2. Available land for business and industry recruitment/expansion</li> <li>3. Residential development</li> <li>4. Connections to environmental strengths</li> <li>5. Focus on regionalization</li> <li>6. Develop volunteers/leaders</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lack of housing options</li> <li>2. Youth leaving the area</li> <li>3. Work ethic and labor force lacking</li> <li>4. Population and resources are going elsewhere</li> <li>5. Quality of life amenities are not in Biscoe</li> </ol>                              |

*Table 1 Biscoe SWOT Analysis*



### **Local Government Survey**

The local government was surveyed to determine what services the town currently provides for the small business community. The categories were Information and Resources, Communication and Support, and Regulatory. This survey was completed by town staff and the results are listed below in Table 2. These survey responses can guide the town in its

interactions and support of the local businesses in town.

| <b>Information and Resources</b>  |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Currently Provided</b>   | <b>Not Currently Provided</b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Updated website and local social media</li> <li>✓ Updated list of local businesses</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Grants or assistance for businesses</li> <li>○ Wayfinding signs</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Communication and Support</b>  |  |
| <b>Currently Provided</b>   | <b>Not Currently Provided</b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Provides permitting and zoning information</li> <li>✓ Identifies small business expansion</li> <li>✓ Shop local campaign via social media</li> </ul>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Seek policy input from business community</li> <li>○ Celebrates small business and entrepreneurial successes</li> </ul> |
| <b>Regulatory Environment</b>   |  |
| <b>Currently Provided</b>   | <b>Not Currently Provided</b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Referral relationship with county agencies for business openings</li> <li>✓ Provide information about partnerships with the Montgomery County Community College</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide multi-department review of new business openings</li> </ul>   |

*Table 2 Biscoe Local Government Survey*

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## *Stakeholder Interviews*

The CERRI work group identified stakeholders in the communities for telephone interviews. These stakeholders were residents, business/property owners and those who worked in town. Telephone interviews were conducted over several weeks in February.

The stakeholders lived mainly in Biscoe and most had been connected to Vass for eleven years or more. There were a variety of ages represented in the interviews. The majority were 50 years old or older and 40% were 19 years to 49 years old.

The top three issues facing Vass according to the stakeholders were:

- Adequate housing
- Town communication with citizens
- Job creation/business

Those who were interviewed felt that Biscoe was doing well in general, along with its pandemic response and the local government leadership. Forty percent, however, felt that Biscoe was not doing well with economic development. The stakeholders identified small business development, industrial recruitment and housing stock quality as the top issues the town should focus on in the next five years. Entertainment opportunities were identified as quality of life amenities missing in Vass.

Typical of small-town life, almost 100% of interviewees got their information about Vass via word of mouth. This can be a double-edged sword – the information must be correct or miscommunication will rule. The Montgomery Herald and the town's social media pages were also listed as sources of information about the Town of Vass.

Most of those interviewed felt that the pandemic did not change the town. It was noted that some small businesses are still struggling to get back to where they were before the pandemic. There was concern that the pandemic increased isolation and lack of socialization, especially among the elderly. Community events were cited as ways to bring people back together and increase social interactions.

The work group elected not to conduct business surveys. The group knew that most businesses had been surveyed repeatedly and worried about response fatigue.



## Economic Data

The town of Biscoe was originally established as a railroad town named Filo in Montgomery County. In 1895, the name was changed to Biscoe for a lumber commission merchant in town. The railroad and lumber were major industries for the town.

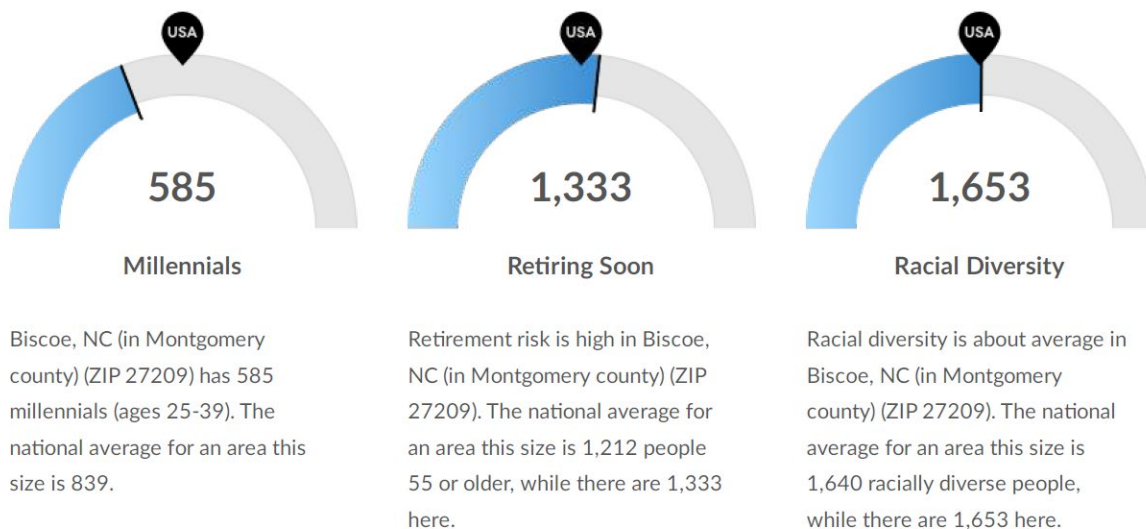
Biscoe is unique in its make-up and its location. Interstate Highway 74 is a four-lane highway with one exit at Biscoe and another in Star, which is less than 3 miles away. North Carolina State Highway 26 bisects the town. The Aberdeen Carolina and Western Railroad lines run through the middle of town and reaches Charlotte to Aberdeen with connections to CSX and Norfolk Southern railroads. The railway also serves a proposed mega site located between Highway 24 and Spies Road.

As noted above, data presented will designate the level of the information – town, county or drive time data. This is to present a general snapshot of Biscoe and the surrounding area. The information here can be used to develop goals and actions for the work group to support local businesses. The following analysis and data represent a detailed look at what drives Biscoe's work force and economy.

## Demographics

Biscoe officially had a population of 1,848 within the town limits in 2020<sup>i</sup>. According to ESRI Business Analyst, the population was 2,206 within a one-mile radius of town hall in 2021. The median age was 35.2 in Biscoe within that one-mile radius. The median age increased to 36.8 and 37.5 in the three- and five-mile radii and the population also increased to 4,902 and 8,356 for those same radii.

In contrast, there are fewer millennials in the Biscoe zip code area and the zip code area has a large section of the population approaching retirement. This could present a situation that few people in the prime of their work careers are poised to take over for those retiring. This zip code area, however, is on par with other communities in the country for racial diversity. This can be attractive to young people and entrepreneurs (Figure 3).



*Figure 3 Population Demographics EMSI 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2021*

In the one-, three-, and five-mile radii from town hall, however, a different picture was painted. Within one, three and five miles of town hall, the largest age group was made up of boys 0-9 years old. (Figure 4). This can present opportunities to create a town that has a young population to grow and develop a workforce poised to fill those positions of retirees.





Figure 4 Age Pyramid Source: ESRI 2021

The population decreased in the Biscoe zip code area over the past six years but it is expected to increase by 0.8% between 2020 to 2025 (Table 4).

| <b>Timeframe</b> | <b>Population</b> |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 2015             | 4,084             |
| 2016             | 4,354             |
| 2017             | 4,101             |
| 2018             | 4,039             |
| 2019             | 4,078             |
| 2020             | 4,071             |
| 2021             | 4,079             |
| 2022             | 4,086             |
| 2023             | 4,093             |
| 2024             | 4,099             |
| 2025             | 4,103             |

*Table 4 Biscoe Zip Code Area Population Growth EMSI 3Q 2021*

## Income

Income in the Biscoe area was generally below the county, state and national averages in 2021 (Figure 5). These income levels increased with the distance from town hall. This information can be used to determine what improvements could be made in income levels in the future.

| <b>2021</b>                     | <b>1-mile</b> | <b>3-miles</b> | <b>5-miles</b> | <b>Montgomery Co</b> | <b>NC</b> | <b>US</b> |
|---------------------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>Median Household Income</b>  | \$43,492      | \$45,165       | \$44,534       | \$53,551             | \$56,585  | \$60,730  |
| <b>Average Household Income</b> | \$65,953      | \$63,543       | \$59,713       | \$73,315             | \$80,263  | \$92,435  |
| <b>Per Capita Income</b>        | \$21,988      | \$22,498       | \$21,865       | \$28,189             | \$31,659  | \$35,106  |

*Figure 5 Median, Average and Per Capita Income Source: EMSI 2021*

## Labor Force

Income is tied to jobs. A look at the labor force in Biscoe and the radii from town hall shows the town and the county had a higher blue collar labor force than the state or the country in 2021 (Figure 6). This is reflective of the strong manufacturing base the town has. The area around town also had a higher services labor force than the county and state. White collar labor force could be targeted for recruitment to provide needed professional services.

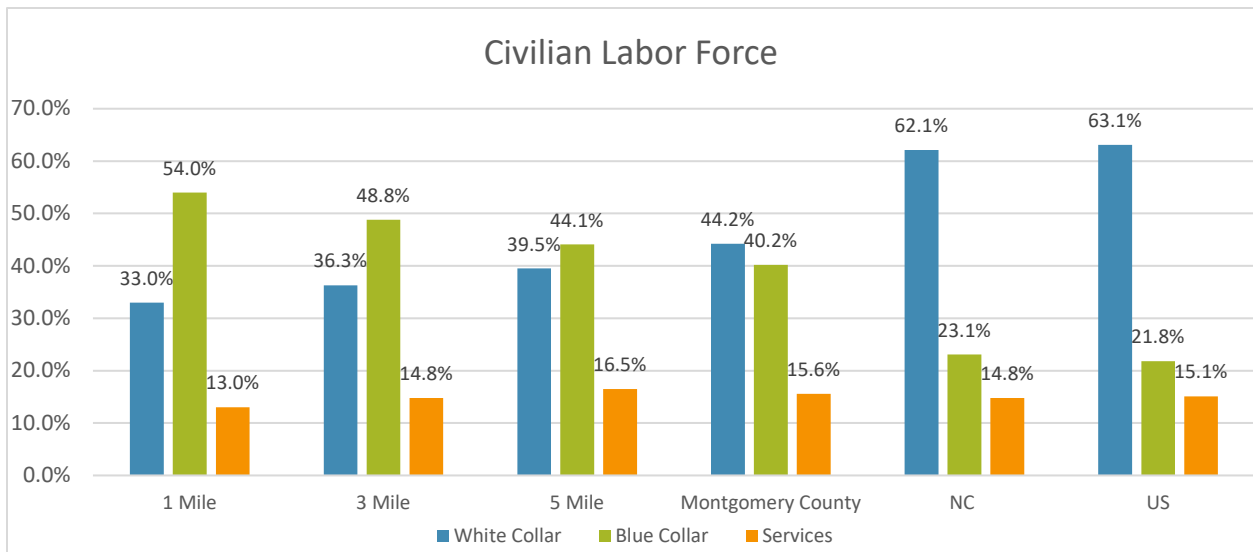


Figure 6 Civilian Labor Force Source: EMSI 2021

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## Education Attainment

Educational attainment is highly correlated with measures of regional economic prosperity. Rural counties with the lowest levels of educational attainment face higher poverty, child poverty, unemployment, and population loss than other rural counties. In addition to higher poverty rates, rural counties with low levels of educational attainment tend to have high unemployment rates<sup>ii</sup>.



In Table 6 below, the Biscoe zip code had a higher rate of high school graduates than the county and the state. The zip code area, however, had a higher rate of those with some high school education but no diploma. A targeted effort to provide training and education to address workforce needs could be explored.

| <b>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR POPULATION 25 YEARS AND OVER</b> | <b>Biscoe Zip Code Area</b> | <b>NC</b> | <b>US</b> |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Less than 9th grade  | 6.2%                        | 4.2%      | 4.8%      |
| 9th to 12th grade, no diploma                                  | 29.7%                       | 7.2%      | 6.6%      |
| High school graduate (includes equivalency)                    | 28.4%                       | 25.6%     | 26.9%     |
| Some college, no degree  | 11.9%                       | 20.6%     | 20.0%     |
| Associate's degree   | 7.0%                        | 10.1%     | 8.6%      |
| Bachelor's degree  | 13.0%                       | 20.5%     | 20.3%     |
| Graduate or professional degree                                | 3.8%                        | 11.8%     | 12.8%     |
| High school graduate or higher                                 | 64.1%                       | 88.6%     | 88.6%     |
| Bachelor's degree or higher                                    | 16.8%                       | 32.3%     | 33.1%     |

*Table 5 Educational Attainment 2019 Source: US Census ACS Survey*

## Unemployment

Unemployment in Montgomery County had a downwards trend from 2010 to 2020. The county mirrored the state and the nation with the ups and downs of unemployment – especially during the recovery after the Great Recession. Between January and March 2020, the pandemic caused a spike in unemployment according to Federal Reserve. In December 2021, however, the unemployment rate for the county was 3% which was last seen in December 2019 (Figure 7).

ESRI data showed that Biscoe’s unemployment rate was higher than the county’s rate. Within a one-mile radius of town hall, unemployment was 4.5% in 2021. In a three-mile radius, the numbers went up to 5.8% and at the five-mile radius, unemployment rose to 6.3%.

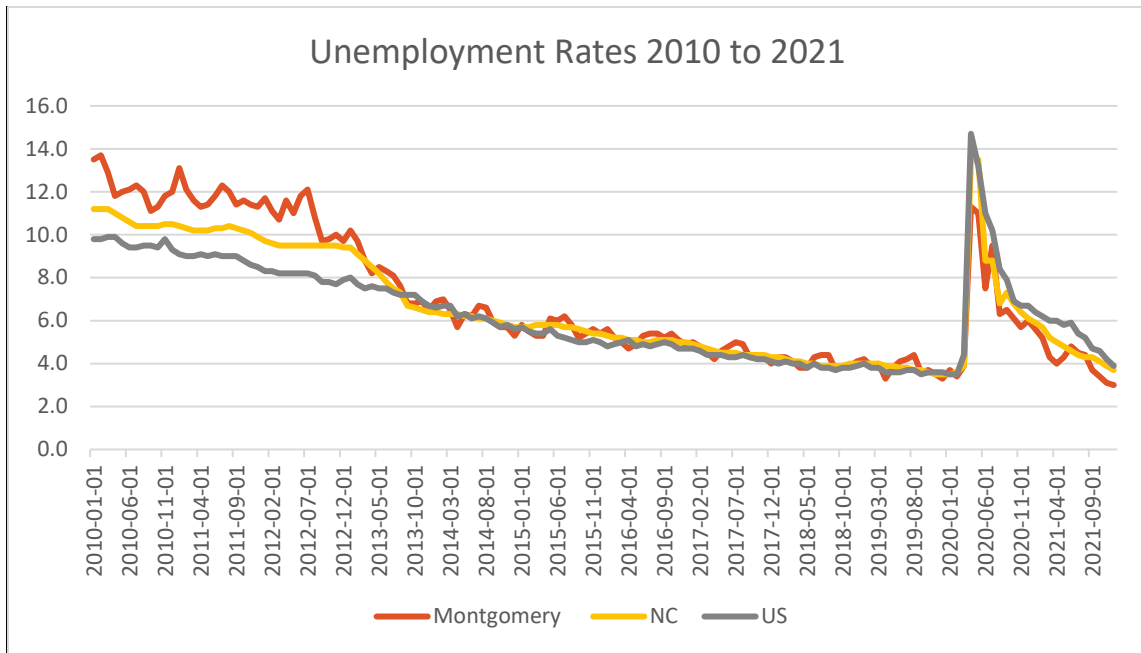
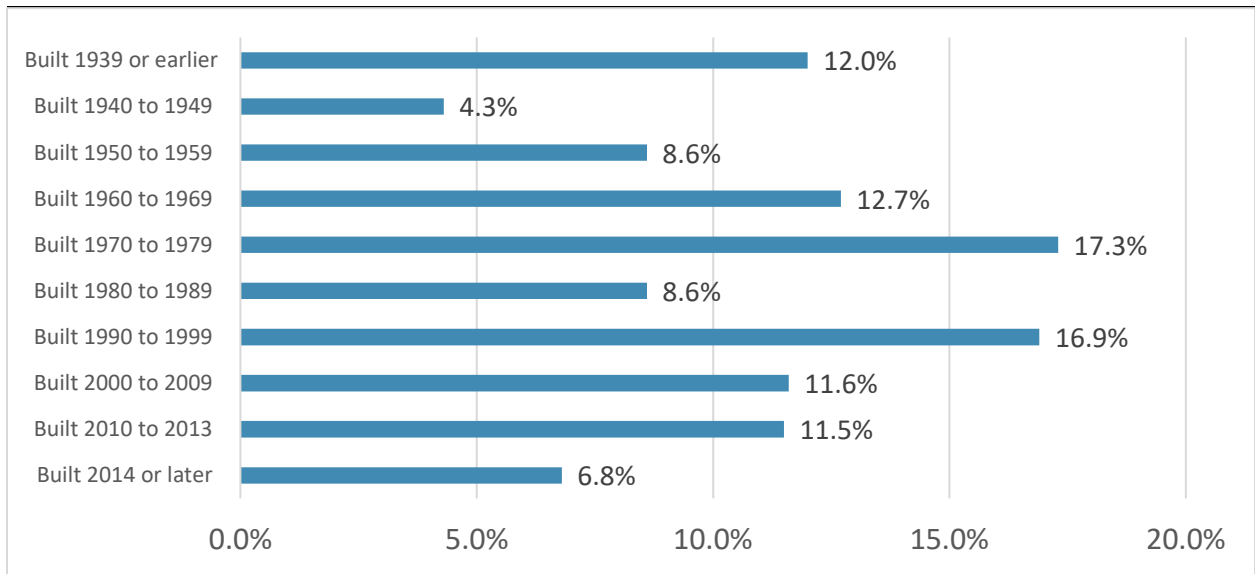


Figure 7 Unemployment Rates 2010-2021 Source: St. Louis Federal Reserve

## Housing

Housing continues to be an issue that faces all parts of the state. In Biscoe, it is especially acute since the housing stock is old. According to data collected in 2019, 12% of the housing stock in Biscoe was built before 1940. Between 1940 and 1989, over 51% of the houses in town were built. Since 2000, only one third of the housing stock in town has been built (Figure 8).



*Figure 8 Biscoe Housing Stock Age Source ESRI ACS Housing Summary 2019*

According to the North Carolina Housing Coalition, many people in Montgomery County are cost burdened which means these citizens spend more than one third of their income for housing. In Montgomery County, 37% of renters struggled to pay rent and 17% of homeowners had difficulty with mortgage payments in 2021<sup>iii</sup>. Rent increased 39.9% from 2000 to 2019 while the median household income increased only 9.5% reported in Policy Map’s Local Housing Solutions report from December 2021.

According to Policy Map, almost 40% of population in Biscoe rented in 2019. This was higher than North Carolina – 34.8% - and the United State – 36%. Biscoe homeownership rates were lower than the state and the country in 2019 (Figure 9).

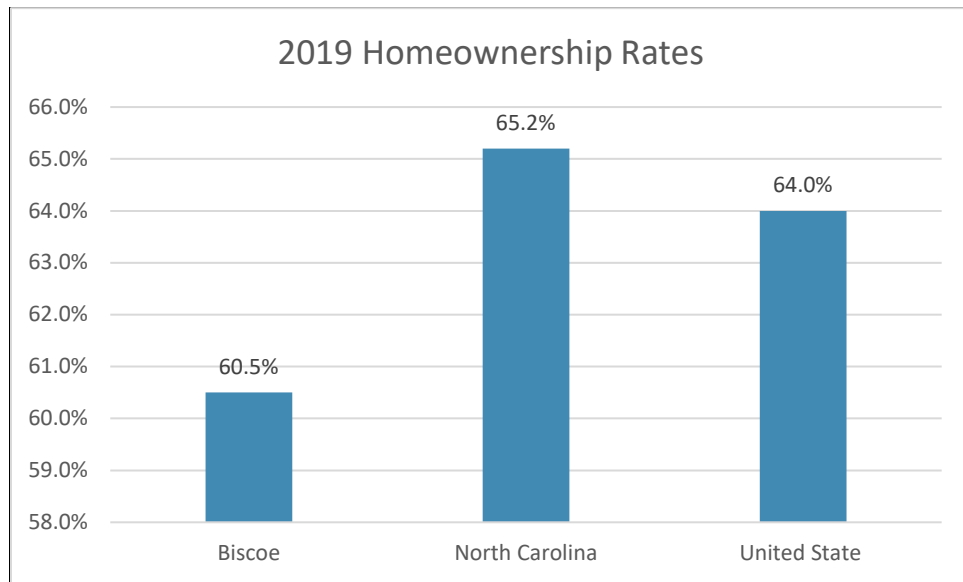


Figure 9 Homeownership Rate Source: Policy Map

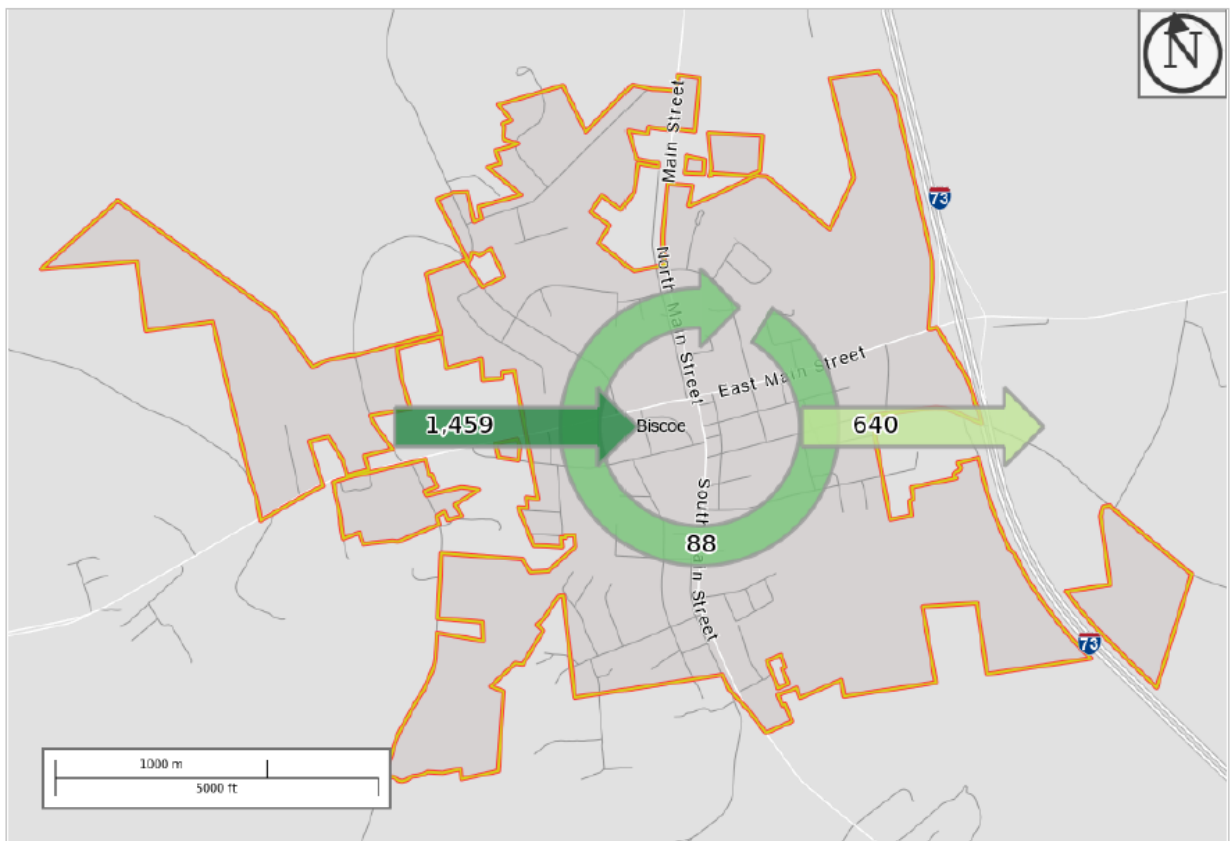
In the past 20 years, there have been few new houses built in town and there is very little inventory for those that can afford to rent or buy. This affects workforce as well as the perception of Biscoe. It is difficult to recruit employees if there is limited housing available. Some communities, such as Burke County, have had success with housing need assessments. Partnerships across the county may make an assessment worthwhile to pursue.

## Inflow/Outflow

According to the US Census, over 1,400 people came to Biscoe to work in 2019. There were 640 workers who left Biscoe to go to work and 88 people who lived and worked in town (Figure 10). All told, more people come into Biscoe to work than those that live in Biscoe. Along with the housing issue, Biscoe can look at what it can do to draw those 1, 459 workers to stay in town and spend money.

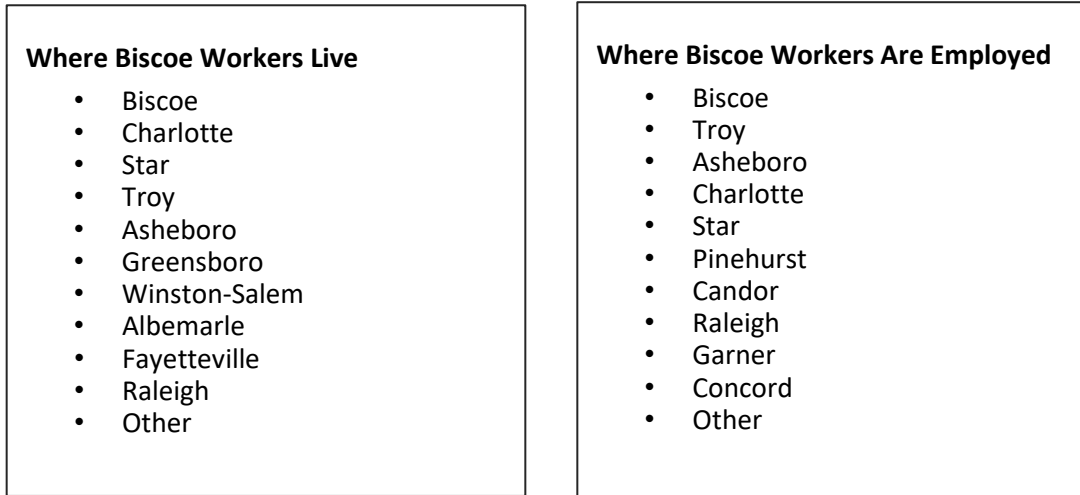


**Inflow/Outflow Counts of All Jobs for Selection Area in 2019**  
**All Workers**



*Figure 10 Inflow/Outflow Source US Census On The Map 2019*

Where do those workers that leave town go to work? Where do those workers who come to town to work live? Figure 11 shows that most went to or from communities close by – Troy, Asheboro, Pinehurst. But many traveled to or from Charlotte, Greensboro, Raleigh or Fayetteville. The question to ask is what can Biscoe do to attract those folks to live and work in town?



*Figure 11 Where Biscoe Workers Live and Are Employed Source: US Census On the Map 2019*

## Largest Industries

In the Biscoe zip code area, the largest industries were manufacturing, retail, health care and food services in 2021 (Figure 12). In the chart below, the grey bar indicated the national average for towns the size of Biscoe. Biscoe exceeded the national average in those top industries. Where there is a gap between the grey bar and blue line could be potential industries to attract to town such as construction, wholesale trade, administrative/support and waste management/remediation services.

### Largest Industries

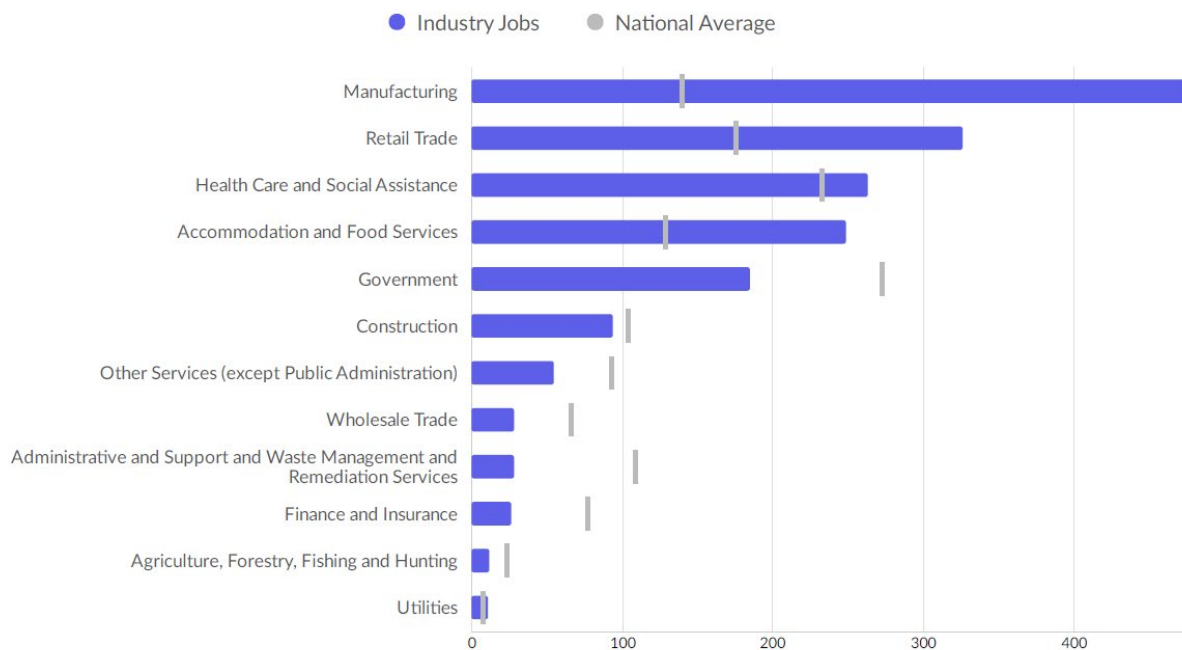


Figure 12 Largest Industries Source: EMSI 3rd Q 2021

Table 7 outlines the changes in jobs between 2020 and 2021 in the zip code area. The top increases were in food services, which increased 5.6%, and administrative services, which increased 8.3%, in that time. The largest loss was in furniture manufacturing which went down 8.6%.

| Description                                 | 2021 Jobs | 2020 Jobs | Avg. Earnings Per Job |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------------------|
| Wood Product Manufacturing                  | 1,023     | 1,007     | \$82,853              |
| Local Government                            | 974       | 995       | \$54,579              |
| State Government                            | 525       | 542       | \$55,078              |
| Administrative and Support Services         | 495       | 457       | \$33,730              |
| Food Services and Drinking Places           | 479       | 452       | \$15,188              |
| Ambulatory Health Care Services             | 462       | 440       | \$44,879              |
| Furniture and Related Product Manufacturing | 439       | 477       | \$38,417              |
| Nursing and Residential Care Facilities     | 361       | 356       | \$50,053              |
| Specialty Trade Contractors                 | 333       | 334       | \$42,240              |
| Repair and Maintenance                      | 292       | 277       | \$34,242              |

*Table 7 Top Industries Jobs Biscoe Zip Code Source: EMSI 3rd Q 2021*

## Largest Occupations

The largest occupations in the Biscoe zip code reflected the large blue-collar workforce in 2021. Production, sales, food preparation and transportation were among the leading occupations in the area. The gaps between the blue line and grey bars identify potential recruitment targets (Figure 13).

### Largest Occupations

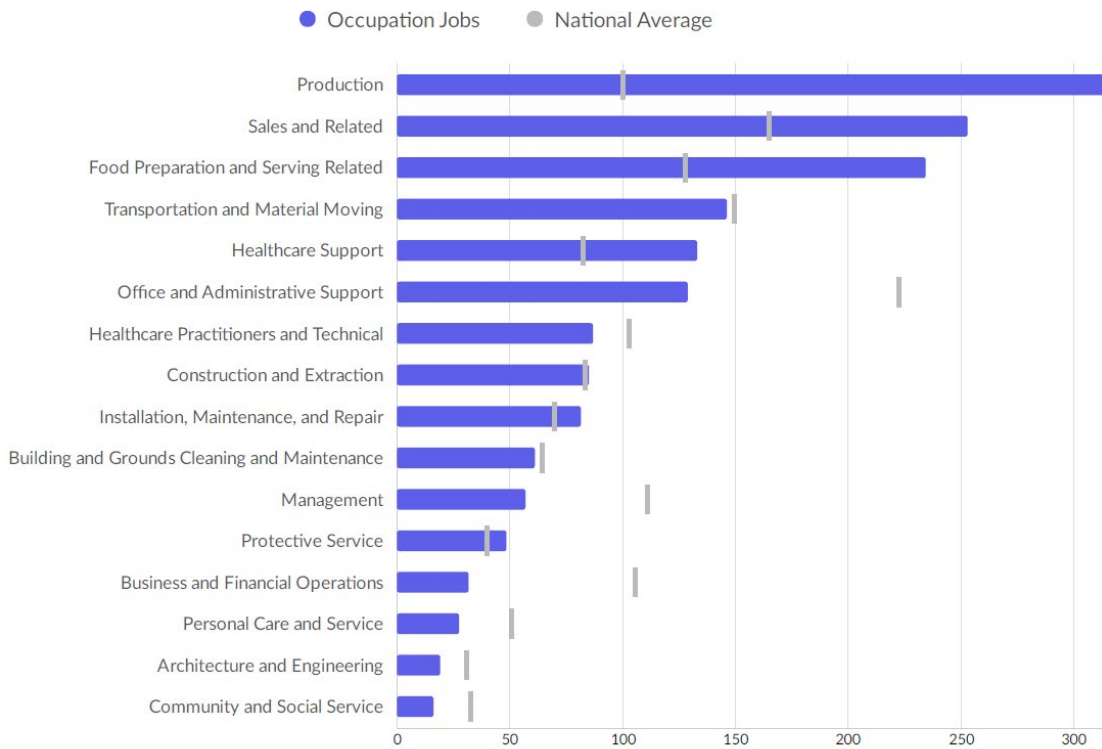


Figure 13 Largest Occupations Biscoe Zip Code Source: EMSI 3rd Q 2021

Table 8 below highlights the largest occupations in the Biscoe zip code area and their median hourly earnings. Healthcare support occupations grew 6% and healthcare practitioner occupations grew 5% between 2000 and 2001. Production occupations dropped 5% and installation/maintenance/repair occupations dropped 3% in that same time. The median hourly earnings can provide an idea of what types of occupations to attract that have higher earning jobs in the area.

| <b>Largest Ranked Occupations in Biscoe Zip Code</b>      | <b>2020 Jobs</b> | <b>2021 Jobs</b> | <b>% Change</b> | <b>2020 Median Hourly Earnings</b> |
|---|------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| Production Occupations                                    | 315              | 300              | (5%)            | \$16.67                            |
| Sales and Related Occupations                             | 253              | 256              | 1%              | \$11.35                            |
| Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations          | 235              | 249              | 6%              | \$8.51                             |
| Transportation and Material Moving Occupations            | 146              | 145              | (1%)            | \$14.75                            |
| Healthcare Support Occupations                            | 133              | 141              | 6%              | \$12.83                            |
| Office and Administrative Support Occupations             | 129              | 128              | (1%)            | \$16.03                            |
| Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations        | 87               | 91               | 5%              | \$26.06                            |
| Construction and Extraction Occupations                   | 85               | 87               | 2%              | \$17.65                            |
| Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations         | 82               | 80               | (2%)            | \$20.89                            |
| Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations | 61               | 64               | 4%              | \$11.10                            |

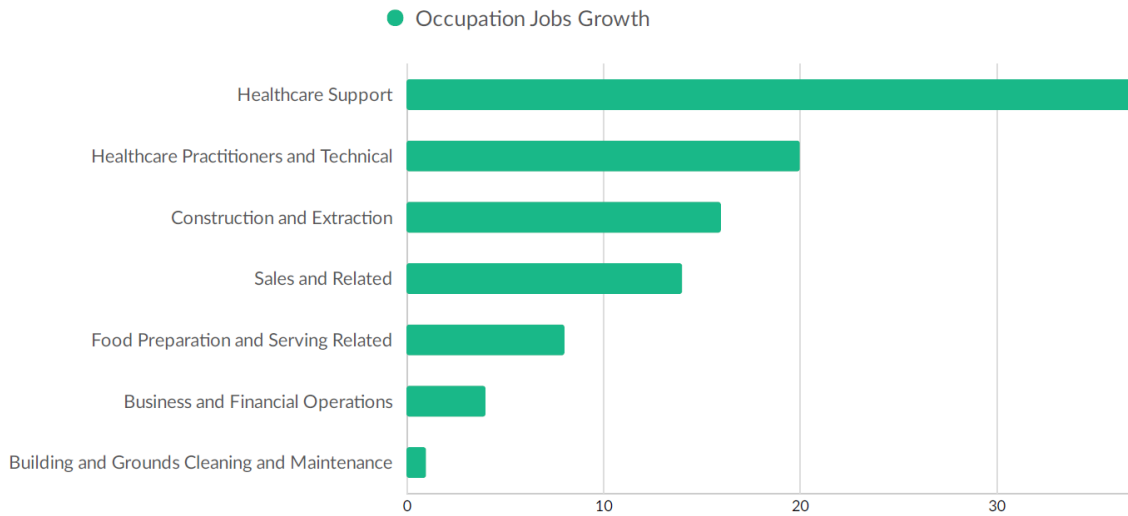
*Table 8 Largest Ranked Occupations Biscoe Zip Code Source: EMSI 3rd Q 2021*

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## Top Growing Occupations

In the Biscoe zip code area, the top growing occupations revolved around a mix of blue-collar and white-collar jobs in 2021 (Figure 14). Healthcare support and healthcare practitioner occupations increased during this time. Construction and extraction also increased along with sales and food prep occupations.

### Top Growing Occupations



*Figure 14 Top Growing Occupations Biscoe Zip Code Source: EMSI 3rd Q 2021*

## Largest Employers

In the Biscoe zip code area, near 80% of the businesses had under 20 employees and were considered small businesses (Figure 15). Small businesses are the backbone of the United States' economy and Biscoe's businesses reflect that. The small business size means that when one business closes, the shock can be absorbed more easily. If the town were reliant on one or two large businesses where most of the people worked, that shock would be difficult to overcome.

### Business Size



*\*Business Data by DatabaseUSA.com is third-party data provided by Emsi to its customers as a convenience, and Emsi does not endorse or warrant its accuracy or consistency with other published Emsi data. In most cases, the Business Count will not match total companies with profiles on the summary tab.*

**Figure 15 Business Size Biscoe Zip Code Area Source: EMSI 3rd Q 2021**

The Town of Biscoe's 2021 audit also backed up the local business nature of the town. In table 10, the town's annual audit showed that 40% of the top employers in town were local employers and 30% were considered small business. There is a mix of large and commercial chains along with local businesses represented.



| <b>Top 10 Employers Town of Biscoe</b>          |     |
|---|-----|
| AAM (MPG) (GREDE)                               | 380 |
| Wal-mart  | 152 |
| Carolina Dairy ( <i>formerly Wright Foods</i> ) | 125 |
| Autumn Care of Biscoe                           | 116 |
| Kellam Properties I LLC                         | 95  |
| McDonalds                                       | 60  |
| Myrick Construction                             | 55  |
| Town of Biscoe (Government)                     | 50  |
| Jordan Forest Products LLC                      | 40  |
| Bojangles                                       | 35  |

*Table 9 Top 10 Employers in Biscoe Source: 2021 Town of Biscoe Annual Audit*

Biscoe has a variety of businesses which represents a stable economy. Manufacturing and construction had the largest number of employees followed by big box retail, the county school system and a nursing care facility. Many of these businesses are independent businesses who circulate more money into the local economy than chain businesses.

Data from NC Commerce Access NC also showed 118 other businesses with less than 10 employees. Some were chain businesses but the majority were independent businesses – from beauty care to car dealers to farms to agricultural services. How to make these businesses viable? What happens when a crisis happens? How can the town support these businesses?

## Occupational Diversity

In 2020, Montgomery County had an occupational diversity of 64.3% according to EMSI. This was higher compared to what was found in a typical county. This means that Montgomery County has employment more evenly distributed across 14 major occupational categories (Table 10). These 14 occupations range from semi-skilled service to medical to skilled/semi-skilled labor to education to engineering. Occupational diversity can help provide stability in a local economy and could be a goal to achieve.

| OCCUPATION CLUSTER                                      | 2020 JOBS | % OF TOTAL EMPLOYMENT | % OF TYPICAL COUNTY EMPLOYMENT |
|---|-----------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| SEMI-SKILLED SERVICE                                    | 3,030     | 30.2%                 | 33.4%                          |
| MANAGEMENT & FINANCE                                    | 1,636     | 16.3%                 | 26.3%                          |
| PRODUCTION  | 1,507     | 15.0%                 | 5.0%                           |
| OCCUPATIONAL EMPLOYMENT EXCLUDED FROM KNOWLEDGE CLUSTER | 1,067     | 10.6%                 | 2.5%                           |
| CONSTRUCTION & SPECIALIZED MECHANICAL                   | 731       | 7.3%                  | 5.6%                           |
| LEGAL, CLERICAL, ADMINISTRATIVE, & TECHNICIANS          | 718       | 7.2%                  | 5.4%                           |
| MEDICAL SCIENCE & HEALTH SERVICES                       | 420       | 4.2%                  | 6.1%                           |
| EDUCATION   | 394       | 3.9%                  | 6.1%                           |
| ENGINEERING & ARCHITECTURE                              | 224       | 2.2%                  | 3.6%                           |
| COUNSELING, SPECIALIZED EDUCATION, & THERAPY            | 140       | 1.4%                  | 1.8%                           |
| INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY & COMMUNICATIONS                 | 90        | 0.9%                  | 2.5%                           |
| MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT                                 | 49        | 0.5%                  | 1.2%                           |
| AGRICULTURE, LIFE & NATURAL SCIENCES                    | 24        | 0.2%                  | 0.5%                           |

*Table 10 Occupation Cluster Diversity Montgomery County Source: EMSI 3rd Q 2021*

## Industry Clusters

Clusters could be developed to support the diversity and opportunities in the Biscoe region. This can also provide stability for the local economy. These cluster industries are businesses that are closely related to existing businesses and have various links across a region.

According to EMSI 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Report for the Biscoe area, plastics, local health services and food preparation are clusters to examine. These occupations can match the labor forces in Biscoe or identify potential training to meet those cluster needs.

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## Agriculture Impacts

Agriculture and forestry are thriving industries in Montgomery County. There were 240 farms in the county with 33,521 acres in farm production in 2017 according to the US Department of Agriculture. In 2019, agriculture in Montgomery County brought in \$119,751,287 in cash receipts and the county was ranked 33<sup>rd</sup> in the state for cash receipts.



The average size of a farm in the County was 140 acres and the average age of a farmer was 57.2 in 2017 which has undoubtedly increased since. The age of producers and loss of young people can contribute to farm loss. This presents challenges to the future of agriculture and to the county.

Much like as business owners age, farmers growing older need to consider the future of their farms. Information on taxes, farm transition options, and diversification can help landowners determine what to do with the valuable infrastructure, land and equipment that has been built up over the years.

In 2018, Montgomery County had over 176,687 acres in timberland and landowners received over \$10.7 million dollars in stumpage paid for harvest. It is important to note that the Uwharrie National Forest is in primarily in Montgomery County with approximately 52,000 acres in Montgomery, Randolph and Davidson Counties. This means 75% of the land in the county is timberland with both public and private landowners.

The forest sector includes loggers, forestry, and forest product industries. This sector brought in \$672.8 million total contribution in 2019. It supported over 2,900 positions that had payroll of approximately \$149.1 million for labor income. Value added income in forestry was \$242.27 million in total contributions during this time.



There are multiple ancillary business opportunities, such as crop consultants, consulting foresters, technology, veterinary care, and processing, which could be developed around agriculture and forestry. Strong partnerships with area agencies and groups can allow the town and county to work with these entities on these opportunities. The leverage of time and expertise can also be used with these partnerships to grow these industries in the Biscoe region.

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## Conclusion

Biscoe is a town poised to move forward. It's location along Interstate 74 and in the middle of the state makes it an ideal location for businesses and residents. There is great interest in residential development in Biscoe which can bring in more businesses and workers. With careful planning and thought, Biscoe can become a thriving and attractive community for the area.

This report is a starting point to look for trends and growth that can assist the county and the town with economic development and recruitment efforts. Other tools could serve the county and town well by taking a more in-depth look at the largest and fastest growing industries in the area. The North Carolina Main Street and Rural Planning Center can provide resources, technical assistance and training.

Town staff and the CERRI work group are committed to following through the plan of work to make the Biscoe economy resilient and strong. This plan is not static and should evolve as needed. The work group should also change to include those with expertise and experience to accomplish the goals. The end goal of this initiative to create a strong Vass that can grow and provide the quality of life attractive to all.

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# Appendices

## Economic Vision Statement:

Nestled in the heart of North Carolina, Biscoe is your exit to endless opportunities. Biscoe is geared to be the future home for everyone.

## Plan of Work

| Biscoe- Economic Recovery Work Plan 2022-2027   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <b>Economic Recovery Vision:</b> Nestled in the heart of North Carolina, Biscoe is your exit to endless opportunities. Biscoe is geared to be the future home for everyone.   |  |  |
| <b>Implementation Strategy:</b> Over the next five years, Biscoe will use a dual approach focused on Community Economic Resiliency and Small Business Support to implement its economic recovery and resiliency initiative.   |  |  |
| ECONOMIC RECOVERY STRATEGIES  | Community Economic Resiliency  | Small Business Support   |
| <p>Take advantage of Biscoe’s geographic location in the county and its interstate and highway accessibility to expand and grow local businesses and residential amenities.</p> <p><b>Goal:</b><br/>Encourage and support business development in Biscoe</p> <p><b>Objectives:</b><br/>By 2027, increase investment in public facilities, private buildings, and local businesses</p> | <p>Action:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop gateway plan for US Interstate 74/Hwy 24-27 interchange that encourages investment as well as present positive image of Biscoe and of Montgomery County in 2023.</li> </ol> | <p>Action:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop business network to provide resources, tools and information for local businesses to prepare for future changes and enhance business development and growth by 2023.</li> <li>2. Create list of current local businesses and information to add to town website and Facebook page by 2022.</li> <li>3. Work with Montgomery County Economic Development, Montgomery County Community College Small Business Center, Montgomery County Cooperative Extension, and others to identify potential business recruitment and business needs that the work group can assist by 2024.</li> <li>4. Collaborate with Montgomery County Economic Development and other partners with regional efforts to market all of Montgomery County as destination for outdoor recreation by 2025.</li> </ol> |

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Improve the quality of life for Biscoe’s residents and businesses.</p> <p>Goal:<br/>Meet the daily needs of the workforce, residents, visitors, and businesses in Biscoe.</p> <p>Objectives:<br/>By 2025, expand goods, services and amenities that can be acquired in Biscoe.</p> | <p>Action:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Host a housing summit and conduct study to determine housing needs for the town by 2024. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. By 2023, work with Piedmont Triad Regional Council, Montgomery County and other groups to set up the summit with speakers, resources.</li> <li>b. Host summit by 2024. Encourage community to participate.</li> <li>c. Work with Piedmont Triad to secure services of consultant for housing study to be completed by 2024. Encourage community to participate.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Identify new and existing public assets that could meet the needs of the residents and visitors such as electric car charging station at park, event spaces, a Master Plan for Parks and Recreation.</li> <li>3. Continue to expand and ramp up Town’s online presence and communications with citizens.</li> </ol> | <p>Action:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. By 2023, investigate a Biscoe specific “shop local” campaign with help from Montgomery County Community College Small Business Center, Piedmont Triad Regional Council, Montgomery County Economic Development to tie in with events year round such as Halloween in the Park, Festival in the Park.</li> </ol> |
|---|---|--|

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## **Biscoe Projects List**

### **1. Create List of Local Businesses and Information**

**Project:**

Create a list of local businesses, contacts, additional information

**Purpose:**

The list will be used on the town website and Facebook pages to promote the local businesses. The list can be used to contact businesses about opportunities for recovery and resiliency funding, and to find out what local assistance is needed to expand/grow. The list will also be used for communication with local businesses.

**Responsible Party:**

Biscoe Work Group and Town Staff

**In-House or Outsource:**

In-House

**Cost/Time:**

30 hours

**Tools Needed:**

Database of all local businesses. Email is the preferred contact information needed to generate a mailing list.

**Partners/Assistance:**

NC Commerce Main Street and Rural Planning, Town of Biscoe, Montgomery County Economic Development

**Date To Be Completed:**

December 2022



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## 2. Host housing summit and develop housing study for Biscoe.

**Project:**

Conduct housing study and host housing summit to identify ways to increase housing for all income levels.

**Purpose:**

Housing issues and supplies were noted as top issues facing Biscoe in surveys and interviews. A study can lay out options for the town to pursue in easing this need. A summit can provide an overview of the housing situation and link the town to additional resources to address housing needs. A housing study can further explore the situation in the area, analyze capacity and resources, and provide strategies.

**Responsible Party:**

Biscoe Work Group, Town Staff, Planning Board, Piedmont Triad Regional Council

**In-House or Outsource:**

In-House

**Cost/Time:**

55 hours

**Tools Needed:**

Biscoe CERRI Report, US Census Housing Information, NC Housing Coalition data, Policy Map data

**Partners/Assistance:**

Montgomery County Economic Development, NC Commerce Main Street and Rural Planning, NC Housing Coalition

**Date To Be Completed:**

January 2025

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### **3. Develop business network**

**Project:**

Develop a Biscoe Business Network/Association to provide resources, tools and information for local businesses to prepare for future changes and enhance business development and growth.

**Purpose:**

Interviews with stakeholders identified a need for businesses to learn about resources and gain timely information that would benefit them. A majority of Biscoe businesses are small business (less than 100 employees) and need support to deal with growth, new crises, change. A business network could provide that assistance and build comradery among the businesses.

**Responsible Party:**

Biscoe Work Group

**In House/Outsource:**

In House

**Cost/Time:**

30 Hours to start up and 10 hours to maintain

**Tools Needed:**

Business list

**Partners/Assistance:**

Montgomery County Economic Development, Montgomery County Community College SBC, Fayetteville State SBTDC

**Date to be Completed:**

March 2023

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**4. Develop a Gateway Plan for the US Interstate 74/Highway 24/27 interchange that encourages future investment and enhances the first impressions of Montgomery County and Biscoe.**

**Project:**

Create a Gateway Plan for the US Interstate 74/Highway 24/27 interchange to map out how the land and buildings along the interchange can be utilized for future improvements and development, both public and private.

**Purpose:**

A gateway plan can provide a review of current ordinances and zoning rules that can help or hinder development along the interchange. A plan can also guide the town as it considers how it wants to present itself when people arrive.

**Responsible Party:**

Town Staff, Planning Board, Biscoe Work Group, NC Commerce Main Street and Rural Planning

**Cost/Time:**

3-6 Months to prep, conduct interviews, review materials, and create plan

**Tools Needed:**

Copies of ordinances and zoning rules, maps, any plans related to project, GIS

**Partners/Assistance:**

Piedmont Triad Regional Council, Montgomery County Economic Development

**Date To Be Completed:**

January 2025

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## 5. Develop “Shop Local” Campaign

**Project:**

Work with the Montgomery County Community College Small Business Center to create a “Shop Local” campaign.

**Purpose:**

Calls to “buy local” seem to have sprung up everywhere in recent years. Recognition of the crucial role small businesses play in creating jobs, strengthening community cohesion, and enhancing local character is rising, thanks largely to a rapidly growing number of community coalitions that have formed specifically to support local independent business and build thriving local economies.

**Responsible Party:**

Biscoe Work Group, Biscoe Business Network/Association

**In-House or Outsource:** In-House

**Cost/Time:**

60 hours/Research opportunities for marketing with Montgomery County Economic Development

**Tools Needed:**

Marketing funds, email list

**Partners/Assistance:**

Montgomery County Community College SBC

**Date To Be Completed:**

October 2023

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**6. Continue to expand and ramp up Town’s online presence and communications with citizens. Identify barriers that may exist to reach certain audiences and address.**

**Project:**

Increase effective Town communications and information to Biscoe citizens and those interested in Biscoe.

**Purpose:**

In interviews and surveys, communication was cited for improvement between the Town, elected officials and citizens. Over 1/3 of the Town is Latino and there may be a language/cultural barrier. There are some citizens who have difficulties with internet services and applications which may limit vital information. Handling those barriers can make sure information goes where it is needed. Technology and applications rapidly change so it is important to stay abreast of those changes.

**Responsible Party:**

Town of Biscoe, Biscoe Work Group

**In-House or Outsource:**

In-House

**Cost/Time:**

Free

**Tools Needed:**

Town website, Town social media pages

**Partners/Assistance:**

Montgomery County Community College

**Date To Be Completed:**

Ongoing

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<sup>i</sup> US Census: <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/profile?g=1600000US3706000>

<sup>ii</sup> USDA Economic Research Service : <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/rural-economy-population/employment-education/rural-education/#:~:text=The%20map%20below%20shows%20areas,or%20equivalent%20during%202014%2D18.&text=The%20map%20below%20is%20an%20update%20to%20the%20low%20education%20county%20type>

<sup>iii</sup> NC Housing Coalition: <https://nchousing.org/county-fact-sheets/>