

Celebrating 41 Years with NC Main Street

downtown sanford 2025



MAIN STREET IMPACT REPORT

Downtown Sanford continues to serve as a catalyst for economic growth, small business success, and community connection—driving both local pride and regional interest.

VISION & MISSION

Vision: Downtown Sanford is the gateway to the city with an active downtown for entrepreneurial growth and an engaging environment for entertainment.

Mission: Downtown Sanford Inc. serves to champion the economic growth of the City of Sanford while preserving the historical integrity of downtown through education, promotion and management.

ECONOMIC STRATEGY

The City of Sanford is a thriving community well-centered for growth. Downtown Sanford is the heart of the city and has positioned itself to be the “best-in-class” place to work and play.



blocks	17
parcels	183
1st floor storefronts	33
residential units	83
lodging units	0
restaurants	21
retail	36
vacancy rate	23.5%
property value increase 2020-2025	29.42%
public parking spots	590

INVESTMENT:

PUBLIC

\$318,231

PRIVATE

\$8,530,500

STATS:

4 FACADE/BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS

6 PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

10 NET NEW BUSINESSES

26 NET GAIN JOBS

COMMUNITY

PROFILE - 2024

*Census and Placer.aiData



POPULATION

32,971



HOUSEHOLDS

11,447



MEDIAN HH INCOME

71,900



MEDIAN AGE

35 YEARS

Volunteers Matter

Downtown Sanford, Inc. is proud to be a volunteer-driven organization, led by a dedicated board whose time and leadership help guide our mission. Our volunteers truly have the biggest hearts, contributing 556 hours in 2025—an impact valued at \$18,354—and their support is essential to bringing our events and initiatives to life. Continued volunteer involvement is critical to sustaining the energy, programming, and experiences that make downtown Sanford thrive.



Municipal Service Districts Matter - ECONOMIC GOAL

Increase awareness and frequency of use of downtown Sanford, positioning it as a go-to destination for residents and visitors to meet everyday needs.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

- Increase foot traffic in downtown by 8–12%
- Increase sales/revenue reported by downtown businesses by 5–8%
- Increase repeat visitation by 10% (based on surveys or merchant feedback)
- Grow social media reach and engagement by 15–20%
- Increase participation in downtown promotions and events by 10–15%
- Reduce commercial vacancy rate from 23.5% to 20%
- Support 5–7 new or expanded businesses downtown



Engagement Matters

Our events and promotions bring people downtown, creating opportunities for connection, discovery, and repeat visits to local businesses. This increased engagement strengthens the local economy while fostering a vibrant sense of community and place.



DESIGNATIONS

- 2025 Main Street America Accredited
- Tree City USA
- Bee City USA
- 2022 Carolina's Finest Downtown



HELPING BUSINESSES THRIVE

Building Improvement Grant

The Building Improvement Grant program (BIG) is available to owners of buildings and business owners who are located in the Municipal Service District (MSD) in Downtown Sanford. The purpose of the grant program is to provide financial incentives that will encourage appropriate, attractive improvements to downtown buildings.

RISE

Founded in 2020 through a partnership between the Sanford Area Growth Alliance and CCCC's Small Business Center, RISE has grown into a powerful no-cost program for entrepreneurs—graduating 72 participants across nine cohorts, sparking 22 new businesses, and creating 72 jobs in the community.

Next steps...Incubator opportunities.

SMALL AREA PLAN

Building on the findings of the Small Area Plan, we are advancing a series of initiatives aimed at improving the downtown environment for businesses, residents, and visitors. These include efforts to modernize regulatory frameworks, enhance public spaces and pedestrian infrastructure, support events and activation of public spaces, plan for key redevelopment, and explore streetscape enhancements such as parklets.

Our goal is to ensure these efforts are coordinated across Planning, Engineering, and Downtown Sanford Inc., and aligned with upcoming budget cycles and capital planning.

DOWNTOWN PRIVATE INVESTMENT IS STRONG!

Private investment projects in downtown Sanford reflect strong confidence in the district, with several projects currently underway that are driving new development, supporting business growth, and enhancing the overall vibrancy of downtown.



Thanks to our generous sponsors, we were able to provide 16 events in 2025. Lots of FREE FAMILY FUN happened downtown with great attendance numbers.

EVENTS

- Strawberry Jammin' - 10,500 visitors in the entire MSD
- Downtown Trick or Treating - 3,200 visitors
- Downtown Sanford StreetFest - 10,900 visitors
- Sanford Christmas Parade - 13,700 visitors



PROMOTIONS

- Brews & News
- Boos & Brews Ghost Trail
- Holiday Punch Cards
- Small Business Saturday
- Third Thursdays
- Merchant Mingles

RETAIL FOCUS HOLIDAY PUNCH CARDS

2018 2603 cards \$130,150	2022 4721 cards \$236,050
2019 3641 cards \$182,050	2023 5732 cards \$286,600
2020 4991 cards \$249,550	2024 6102 cards \$320,098
2021 5124 cards \$256,200	2025 6945 cards \$347,250



NC Main Street is a Main Street America™ Coordinating Program. As a Main Street America™ Coordinating Program, NC Main Street is part a powerful, grassroots network consisting of over 40 Coordinating Programs and over 1,600 neighborhoods and communities across the country committed to creating high-quality places and to building stronger communities through preservation-based economic development.



THE IMPACT OF MAIN STREET

2024-25

IN OUR COMMUNITIES

THE RESULTS ARE IN...

Each year in July, North Carolina Main Street communities report the impact of their work to the North Carolina Department of Commerce. Main Street is the most impactful downtown economic development program in the state of North Carolina.

PUBLIC/PRIVATE INVESTMENT

\$6.1B **\$518M**

1980-2025 2024-2025

NET NEW BUSINESSES

8,518 **288**

1980-2025 2024-2025

NET NEW JOBS

39,530 **1,925**

1980-2025 2024-2025

BUILDINGS REHABILITATED

8,419 **293**

1980-2025 2024-2025

FACADE IMPROVEMENTS

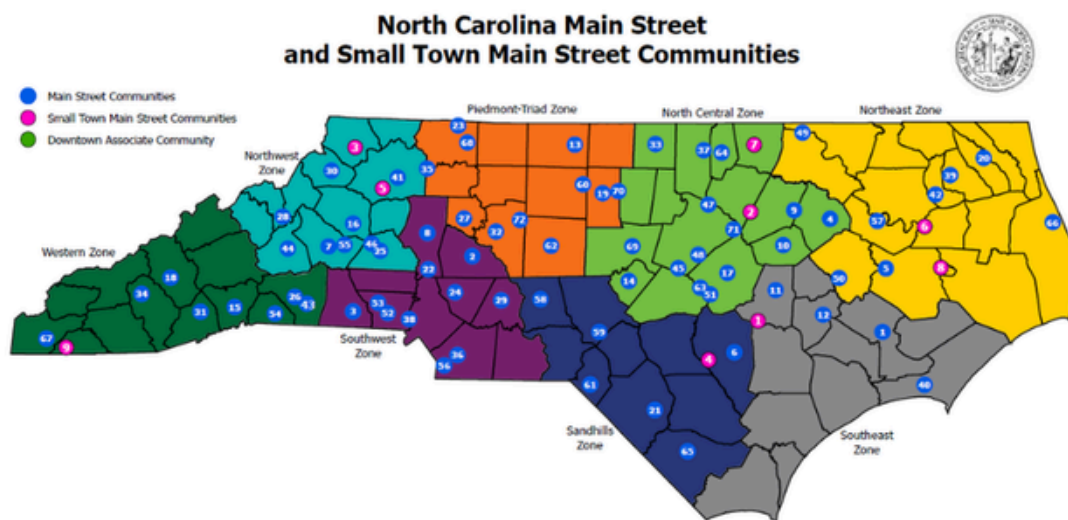
9,440 **364**

1980-2025 2024-2025

VOLUNTEER HOURS

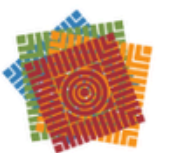
127,805 **\$4.2M**

2024-2025 Time Value



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North Carolina MAIN STREET

LEARN ABOUT OUR MAIN-TO-MAIN TRAIL

CLICK LOGO TO VIEW WEBSITE

