



# Coats, North Carolina

Report of  
Economic Development Assessment  
January 22, 2019



*Coats*  
a peaceful place... a friendly face

Adopted April 11, 2019

## Table of Contents

| SECTIONS  | Page |
|---|------|
| 1. Introduction   |      |
| Rural Planning Team & Local Work Group .....  | 2    |
| North Carolina Department of Commerce.....  | 3    |
| NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center.....   | 3    |
| 2. Demographics.....  | 4    |
| Population, Households, Families, Owner-Renter Occupied, Income, Age<br>Race & Ethnicity..... | 5    |
| 3. Market Analysis.....   | 6    |
| Jobs - inflow and outflow.....  | 6    |
| Retail Market Profile.....  | 7    |
| Primary Trade Area.....   | 7    |
| Retail Demographics & Supply & Leakage.....   | 8    |
| Leakage – Opportunities.....  | 9    |
| 4. Assessment Input.....  | 10   |
| Assets.....   | 10   |
| SWOT Analysis - <i>Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats</i> .....                    | 12   |
| Stakeholder Chart .....   | 14   |
| 5. Assessment Review, Adoption, and Monitoring .....  | 15   |
| 6. Assessment Recommendations .....   | 16   |

## Section 1. Introduction

The Town of Coats invited the NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center to develop an Economic Development Assessment. The two-member Rural Planning Team visited Coats on January 22, 2019. Each member has extensive experience in community planning and economic development.

During the one-day visit, the Rural Planning Team toured the community, and conducted interviews with members of the community; elected officials, property and business owners, citizens and Town staff who are listed in the Appendix.

### Rural Planning Team

**Bruce Naegelen**, (Project Manager)  
**Community Economic Development Planner**  
North Central Prosperity Zone  
NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center  
North Carolina Department of Commerce  
Clayton, NC

**Mark Zeigler**, (Project Co-Manager)  
**Community Economic Development Planner**  
Wilmington Office  
NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center  
North Carolina Department of Commerce  
Wilmington, NC

### Coats Town Commissioners

Chris Coats, Mayor  
Jerry Beasley, Mayor Pro Tem  
J.C. Allen, Commissioner

J.D. Raynor, Commissioner  
Allen Mosby, Commissioner

The Rural Planning Team would like to thank the **Local Work Group** members who generously gave up two full mornings and an early afternoon to work with us through this process:

Shirley Allen, *President, Coats Chamber of Commerce*

Amy Johnson, *Beautification Committee/Campbell Counseling Services*

Teddy Byrd, *Downtown Business Owner, Former County Commissioner*

Debbie Taylor, *Business Recruitment, Harnett County Economic Development*

Chris Coats, *Mayor & Small Business Owner*

Walter Weeks, *Planning Board, Former Mayor*

Allen Faircloth, *Owner, Cornerstone Café*

Nick Holcomb, *Town Manager/Town Planner*

We offer this report as a working document to guide you through the on-going activity of focusing and successfully implementing the recommendations found in this Economic Development Assessment. The residents of Coats have a keen sense of community pride. We hope this report inspires the community to support the economic development efforts of the Town of Coats.

## North Carolina Department of Commerce

[www.nccommerce.com](http://www.nccommerce.com)

The North Carolina Department of Commerce is the state's lead agency for economic, community and workforce development. The Department works with local, regional, national and international organizations to fulfill its mission to improve the economic well-being and quality of life for all North Carolinians.

Taking a comprehensive approach to economic development, the Department's work reaches many areas. The Department helps people find jobs and employers find and retain a qualified workforce. The Department administers the state's employment security system, supporting workers during career transitions. The Department provides local communities with grants and planning services to spur infrastructure development and economic growth and administers the state's economic incentive programs.

The Department is also responsible for recruiting companies to the state, helping existing North Carolina companies expand, encouraging business start-ups, enabling companies to export, and marketing North Carolina as a business and visitor destination. In October 2014, the Department entered a contract with a new public-private organization, the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina ([www.edpnc.com](http://www.edpnc.com)) to take the lead in these recruitment and marketing functions.

The Department also publishes data, statistics, information and reports for citizens and policymakers interested in the state's economy.

The Department of Commerce, an executive branch agency of the State of North Carolina, is headquartered in Raleigh.

### The NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center

The *NC Main Street and Rural Planning Center* (MS&RPC) is part of the NC Department of Commerce, the state's lead agency for workforce, community, and economic development. In this capacity, the Center provides downtown revitalization and planning assistance to communities across the state, primarily in economic development planning.

The Center has offices throughout the state, in the West (Asheville and Sylva), Northwest (N. Wilkesboro), the Piedmont (Winston-Salem), Southwest (Albemarle), North Central (Raleigh and Wilson), South Central (Fayetteville) and the East (Washington, Jacksonville, and Wilmington).

Recognizing that economic prosperity is the number one priority in most communities, our experienced staff partners with community leaders to add value to their economic development efforts through a variety of services and assistance.

Whether rural communities are planning future economic expansion, injecting life into existing structures, or developing in an economically challenged area, the MS&RPC staff can help attain those goals through targeted assistance with these services:

- > Economic Development Assessment
- > Strategic Economic Development Planning
- > Implementation Services
- > Local & Regional Market Analysis
- > Small Area Planning for High Impact Areas
- > GIS & Custom Mapping

## Section 2. Demographics

### Location

Coats is in eastern Harnett County. NC Highway 55 (McKinley Street) passes through the center of town, leading north 8 miles to Angier and south 6 miles to Erwin. NC Highway 27 (Stewart Street) crosses NC 55 in the northern part of Coats, leading east 7 miles to Benson and west 9 miles to Lillington, the Harnett county seat. According to the United States Census Bureau, Coats has a total area of 1.4 square miles.

### Summary Demographics<sup>1</sup>

Table 2-1

| 2018 Summary Demographics for 1-Mile Radius |          |
|---|----------|
| Population                                  | 2,346    |
| Households                                  | 957      |
| Families                                    | 663      |
| Average Household Size                      | 2.45     |
| Owner Occupied Housing Units                | 53.4%    |
| Renter Occupied Units                       | 35.8%    |
| Median Disposable Income                    | \$36,583 |
| Per Capita Income                           | \$24,422 |
| Median Household Income                     | \$43,983 |
| Average Household Income                    | \$63,710 |
| Median Age                                  | 37.8     |

Table 2-2

| 2018 Summary Demographics for 3-Mile Radius |          |
|---|----------|
| Population                                  | 7,484    |
| Households                                  | 2,881    |
| Families                                    | 1894     |
| Average Household Size                      | 2.44     |
| Owner Occupied Housing Units                | 51.4%    |
| Renter Occupied Units                       | 36.8%    |
| Median Disposable Income                    | \$35,510 |
| Per Capita Income                           | \$22,777 |
| Median Household Income                     | \$42,312 |
| Average Household Income                    | \$60,207 |
| Median Age                                  | 34.4     |

Table 2-3

| 2018 Summary Demographics for 5-Mile Radius |          |
|---|----------|
| Population                                  | 20,497   |
| Households                                  | 7,153    |
| Families                                    | 4,732    |
| Average Household Size                      | 2.61     |
| Owner Occupied Housing Units                | 53.5     |
| Renter Occupied Units                       | 35.1     |
| Median Disposable Income                    | \$36,697 |
| Per Capita Income                           | \$21,719 |
| Median Household Income                     | \$44,242 |
| Average Household Income                    | \$59,192 |
| Median Age                                  | 32.4     |

<sup>1</sup> Data Note: Household population includes persons not residing in group quarters. Average Household Size is household population divided by total households. Persons in families include the householder and persons related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. Per Capita Income represents income received by all persons aged 15 years and over divided by the total population. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ESRI

## Race

The following charts<sup>2</sup> show the racial and ethnicity mix within a 5-mile radius of Coats.

Figure 2-1

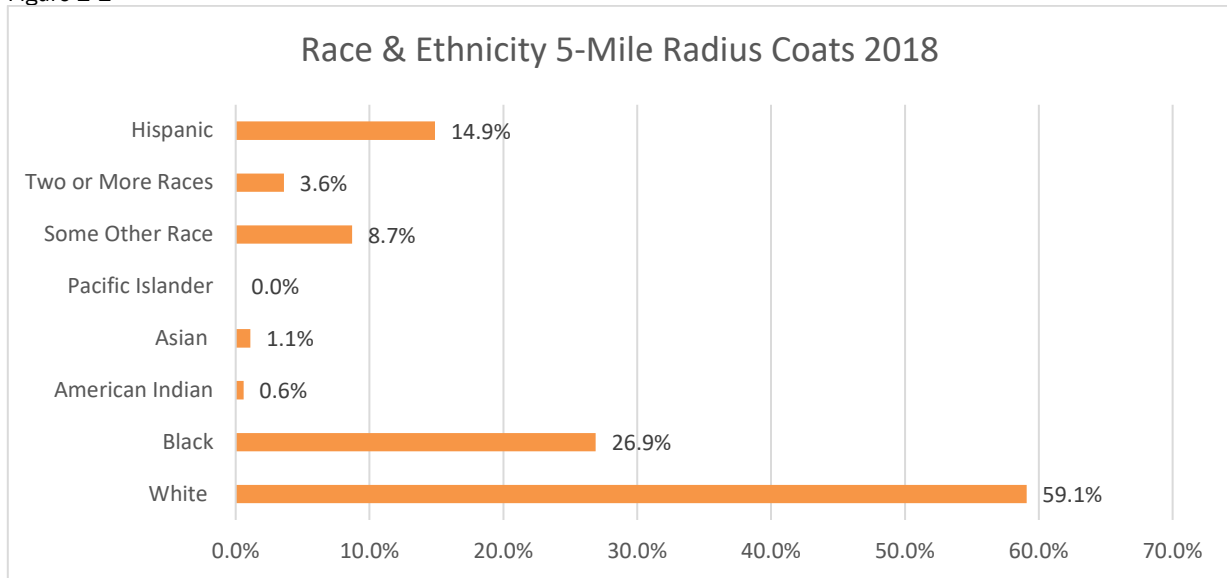
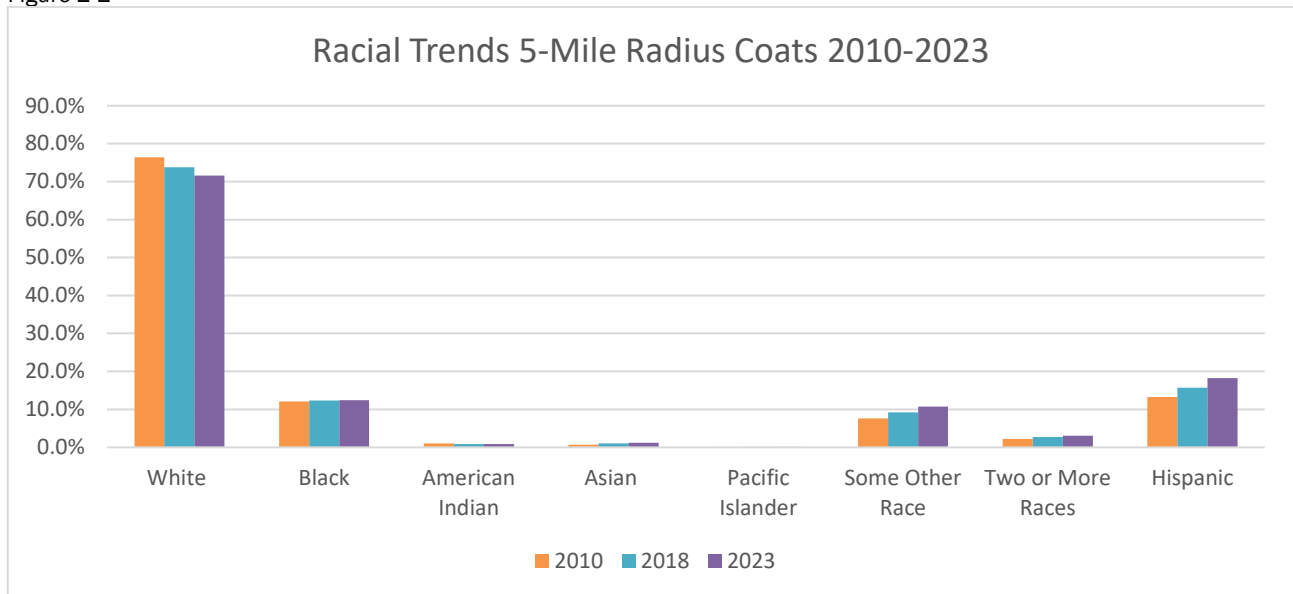


Figure 2-2



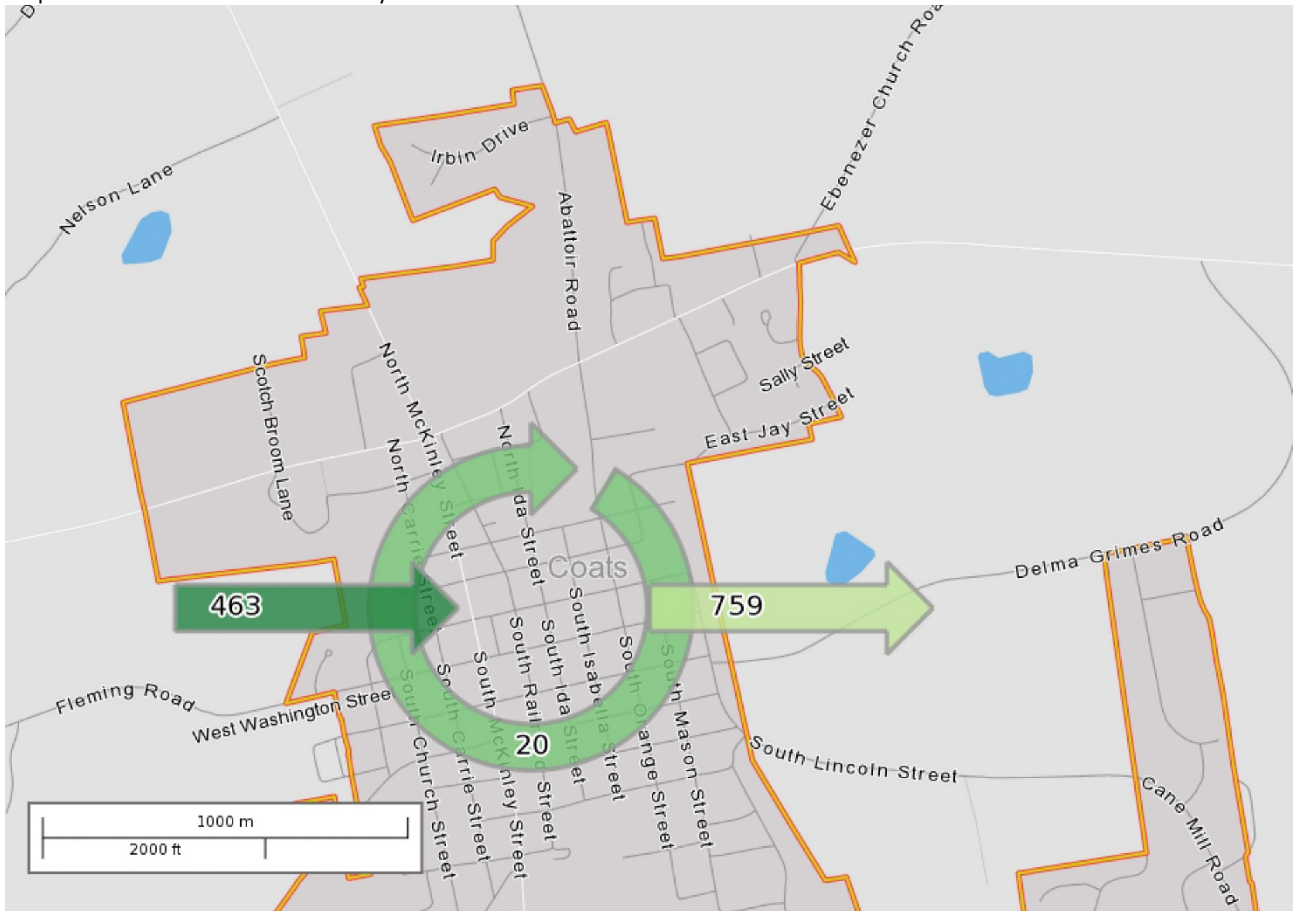
<sup>2</sup> Source: US Census, ESRI

### Section 3. Market Analysis

#### Jobs – Inflow and Outflow - 2015

The following Map 3-1 shows a 2015 jobs analysis with inflow and outflow where: 463 people are employed in Coats and commute in from outside the town; 759 people live in Coats and commute outside the town for work; and 20 workers are employed and live in Coats.

Map 3-1. Jobs inflow and outflow analysis of Coats – 2015.



As you can see in Table 3-1 Raleigh, Dunn, Fayetteville and Lillington were the most popular destinations for commuting to work from Coats in 2015, which is the most recent data collected.

Table 3-1

| Commute to Work     | Percentage |
|---------------------|------------|
| Raleigh             | 12.6%      |
| Dunn                | 9.1%       |
| Fayetteville        | 4.2%       |
| Lillington          | 4.1%       |
| Cary                | 3.3%       |
| Benson              | 3.1%       |
| Charlotte           | 3.1%       |
| Fuquay-Varina       | 2.7%       |
| Coats               | 2.6%       |
| Durham              | 2.6%       |
| All Other Locations | 52.6%      |

Source: US Census – On The Map

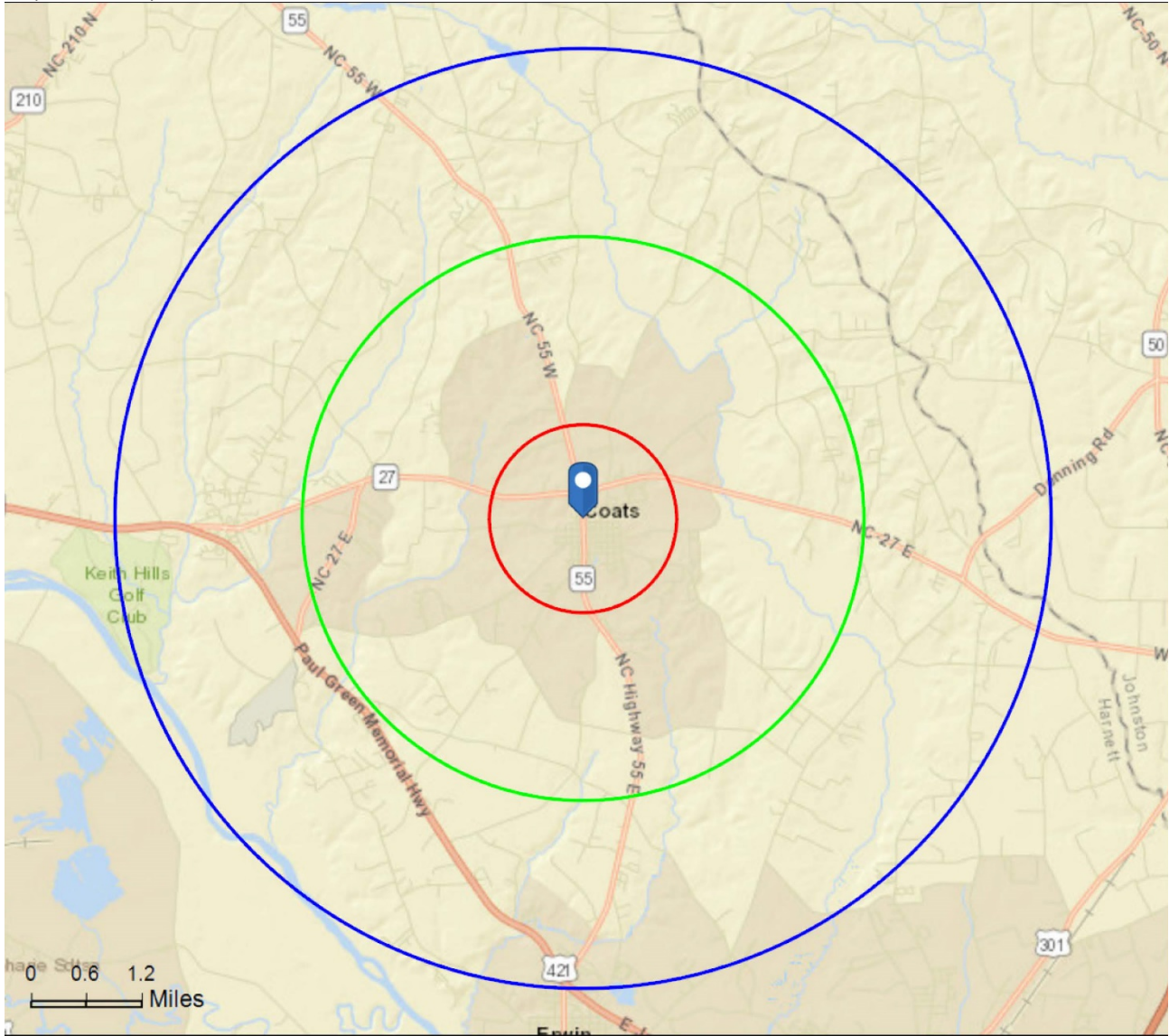


## Retail Market Profile

### Primary Trade Area

A Primary Trade Area (PTA) is simply the contiguous geographic area around a site that generates most of the customers for a business, shopping center or business district. Customer concentrations tend to decline rapidly beyond the bounds of the primary trade area. The rings on the map below (*Map 3-2*) represent **1 mile (red)**, **3 miles (green)** and **5 miles (blue)** using Coats Town Hall as the “center” of Town. For the purposes of this report, we are using the 5-mile Primary Trade Area data.

Map 3-2. Primary Trade Area 1-3-5 Mile Radii





## Retail Summary

Table 3-2 shows summaries of the *Total Retail Trade and Food & Drink* categories within the 1-mile, 3-mile and 5-mile Primary Trade Area radii.

Under the “**Surplus/Leakage**” column, negative numbers (**red**) represent the “Surplus” or dollars that residents are spending within the 5-mile Primary Trade Area. The positive numbers (**green**) are the dollars “leaking” out of the Primary Trade Area to purchase products that may not be available within the 5-mile PTA.

The summaries in Table 3-2 show leakage of retail sales to outside Coats’ 5-mile Primary Trade Area. These are potential opportunities new stores or expansion of existing businesses in Coats.

Table 3-2 2017 Industry Summary – 1,3,5 Mile Radius (Primary Trade Area)

| Radius | Retail Summary Profile Coats (1,3,5-Mile Radius) | Demand (Retail Potential) | Supply (Retail Sales) | Retail Gap    | Leakage/Surplus Factor | Number of Businesses |
|--------|--|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 1-Mile | Total Retail Trade and Food & Drink              | \$ 29,046,993             | \$ 27,324,586         | \$1,722,407   | 3.1                    | 21                   |
| 3-Mile | Total Retail Trade and Food & Drink              | \$ 82,119,488             | \$ 44,991,317         | \$37,128,171  | 29.2                   | 35                   |
| 5-Mile | Total Retail Trade and Food & Drink              | \$ 200,539,655            | \$ 88,014,122         | \$112,525,533 | 44.8                   | 72                   |

## Retail Demand, Supply and Leakage

The Retail Demand, Supply & Leakage report in Table 3-3 is edited to show the best likely opportunities for new business in Coats, based on 2017 sales data. Highlights include \$27 million leaking in the General Merchandise Stores categories. \$21 million of that is in the Department Stores category (*Walmart, Target, warehouse-type membership stores*) but there’s also \$6.5 million leaking in Other General Merchandise stores, such as dollar stores, trading posts, variety stores, home and auto supply stores.

There may also be opportunity in Food Services and Drinking Places category since the data shows just under \$12 million leaking out of the area for *Drinking Places* and *Restaurants*.

Building Materials, Garden Equipment & Supply Stores show a little over \$8 million leaking to *Building Material & Supplies Dealers*. About \$7 million is leaking to Miscellaneous Store Retailers, which include stores with unique characteristics, such as florists, pet and pet supply stores, art supply stores, candle shops, collectors’ items (autograph, coin, stamp, card) shops, trophy shops, and others.

Before drawing conclusions about potential business expansion or recruitment opportunities qualitative considerations, such as additional sources should be more closely studied. This could be additional information from ESRI data or sources the county or regional economic development office may have. This report<sup>1</sup> is based on the data collected and should serve as a starting point for your retail recruitment efforts.

<sup>1</sup> **Disclaimer:** This report was prepared by the NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center. Information contained in the report is primarily from ESRI On-Line Business Analysis and checked against sources above. Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained within is accurate, however, no warranty is made about the accuracy of this report by the NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center or its sources.

Table 3-3 2017 Retail Demand, Supply &amp; Leakage for 5-Mile Radius Coats

| NAICS Code | Retail Demand, Supply & Leakage (5-Mile Primary Trade Area) | Demand (Retail Potential) | Supply (Retail Sales) | Retail Gap (Leakage) | Leakage Factor | Number of Businesses |
|------------|---|---------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| <b>452</b> | <b>General Merchandise Stores</b>                           | <b>\$29,760,043</b>       | <b>\$2,024,519</b>    | <b>\$27,735,524</b>  | <b>87.3</b>    | <b>2</b>             |
| 4521       | Department Stores Excluding Leased Spaces                   | \$21,394,823              | \$0                   | \$21,394,823         | 100.0          | 0                    |
| 4529       | Other General Merchandise Stores                            | \$8,365,220               | \$1,787,035           | \$6,578,185          | 64.8           | 2                    |
| <b>722</b> | <b>Food Services &amp; Drinking Places</b>                  | <b>\$18,990,316</b>       | <b>\$7,247,276</b>    | <b>\$11,743,040</b>  | <b>44.8</b>    | <b>18</b>            |
| 7224       | Drinking Places (Alcoholic Beverages)                       | \$1,230,151               | \$0                   | \$1,230,151          | 100.0          | 0                    |
| 7225       | Restaurants/Other Eating Places                             | \$17,587,775              | \$6,262,519           | \$11,325,256         | 47.5           | 16                   |
| <b>444</b> | <b>Bldg. Materials, Garden Equip. &amp; Supply Stores</b>   | <b>\$12,926,710</b>       | <b>\$5,522,634</b>    | <b>\$7,404,076</b>   | <b>40.1</b>    | <b>8</b>             |
| 4441       | Building Material & Supplies Dealers                        | \$12,172,773              | \$3,562,106           | \$8,610,667          | 54.7           | 6                    |
| 4442       | Lawn & Garden Equipment & Supplies Stores                   | 753,936                   | 1,960,528             | (\$1,206,592)        | (44.5)         | 3                    |
| <b>453</b> | <b>Miscellaneous Store Retailers</b>                        | <b>\$7,940,631</b>        | <b>\$1,129,249</b>    | <b>\$6,811,382</b>   | <b>75.1</b>    | <b>8</b>             |
| 4531       | Florists  | \$236,351                 | \$156,896             | \$79,455             | 20.2           | 2                    |
| 4532       | Office Supplies, Stationary, and Gift Stores                | \$1,610,604               | \$152,681             | \$1,457,923          | 82.7           | 1                    |
| 4533       | Used Merchandise Stores                                     | \$887,449                 | \$366,784             | \$520,665            | 41.5           | 2                    |
| 4539       | Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers                         | \$5,206,226               | \$452,888             | \$4,753,338          | 84.0           | 2                    |
| <b>445</b> | <b>Food &amp; Beverage Stores</b>                           | <b>\$31,305,176</b>       | <b>\$24,654,932</b>   | <b>\$6,650,244</b>   | <b>11.9</b>    | <b>6</b>             |
| 4451       | Grocery Stores  | \$29,129,619              | \$24,654,932          | \$4,474,687          | 8.3            | 6                    |
| 4452       | Specialty Food Stores                                       | \$1,141,734               | \$0                   | \$1,141,734          | 100.0          | 0                    |
| 4453       | Beer, Wine & Liquor Stores                                  | \$1,033,824               | \$0                   | \$1,033,824          | 100.0          | 0                    |
| <b>442</b> | <b>Furniture &amp; Home Furnishings Stores</b>              | <b>\$6,840,211</b>        | <b>\$1,255,702</b>    | <b>\$5,584,509</b>   | <b>69.0</b>    | <b>2</b>             |
| 4421       | Furniture Stores  | \$4,196,613               | \$359,878             | \$3,836,735          | 84.2           | 1                    |
| 4422       | Home Furnishings Stores                                     | \$2,643,599               | \$895,824             | \$1,747,775          | 49.4           | 1                    |
| <b>443</b> | <b>Electronics &amp; Appliance Stores</b>                   | <b>\$5,240,379</b>        | <b>\$1,344,190</b>    | <b>\$3,896,189</b>   | <b>59.2</b>    | <b>3</b>             |
| 451        | <b>Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book &amp; Music Stores</b>       | \$4,696,095               | \$2,387,820           | <b>\$2,308,275</b>   | 32.6           | 4                    |
| 4511       | Sporting Goods/Hobby/Musical Instrument Stores              | \$3,964,225               | \$1,366,786           | \$2,597,439          | 48.7           | 3                    |
| 4512       | Book, Periodical, and Music Stores                          | \$731,871                 | \$1,021,034           | (\$289,163)          | (16.5)         | 1                    |

## Section 4. Assessment Input

### Assets

The following information was recorded from the Local Work Group and Stakeholder Interviews on January 22, 2019



#### Economic Assets

Campbell Student Health Outreach  
Campbell University nearby  
Carlie C's grocery store  
Coats Museum/Old Schoolhouse (*high visitation*)  
Coats Pharmacy  
Coats Village Shopping Center  
Farming – *tobacco, strawberries, veg truck farming, cotton, soybeans, sweet potatoes, hemp (near airport)*  
Founders House  
Grey Flex Mfg  
Harnett County Jetport  
Harnett Health System Clinic  
Home of 1<sup>st</sup> Licensed Pilot in NC  
Home of Campbell Medical Complex – Osteopathic  
Insurance  
*Mill Houses*  
Used Car Sales  
Property across from Carlie C's

#### Governmental Assets

Coats Library  
Police Department (new facility)  
Public Works (Old Theater)

#### Natural / Recreational Assets

Bike Trail from Coats to Campbell (*Future*)  
Black River swamp - nearby  
Coats Park - *ballfield, children's playground, tennis courts and picnic area*  
Park at 1st Baptist Church – ballfield & athletic field  
Soccer Complex - Ebenezer Church Rd  
Widening of Hwy 27 & 55 (*long-term plan*)

#### Institutional Assets

Campbell University - *4,500 students - 4 miles away*  
Churches – (14)  
**Coats Elementary School**  
Coats Medical Clinic  
Coats Public Library

#### Community / Human Resources Assets

Churches (14)  
Coats Area Chamber of Commerce  
Community Building (Soup Kitchen)  
Daycare  
Grace Connection (Family Planning)  
Halfway House (residential for men with disabilities)  
His Daily Bread Ministries  
Lions Club / Kiwanis Club

Town Code Enforcement  
Town Committees  
Town Hall  
US Post Office

Senior center  
Washington Street Apts. (senior/disabled)

### Cultural Assets

|  |   |
|--|---|
| 02/02 – Souper Bowl 5k Race  | Barn Quilts County Tours                          |
| 02/19 – A Night at the Barn  | Baxter Ennis, author, from Coats                  |
| 03/28 – Annual Community Meeting   | Beehives - growing industry                       |
| 04/27 – Annual Oyster & Shrimp Fest & Street Dance                             | Coats Museum                                      |
| 05/4 – Celebrating Spiritual Unity Day   | Cotton Museum                                     |
| 9/5 – From Farm to Table: A Harvest Meal with Entertainment                    | History of Coats Book                             |
| 10/11 – Farmers Day Weekend ( <i>5,000 people</i> )                            | Spiritual Unity Day - Cross Cultural all churches |
| 12/1 – Tree Lighting   | Writers - Historical and Horror                   |
| 12/5 – Coats Christmas on Main & Christmas Parade                              |   |
| African-American Monument first in Harnett County                              |   |
| Alton Stewart - 1st Licensed Pilot in NC                                       |   |
| Alton Stewart - historic plaque with original license signed by Orville Wright |   |
| Alton Stewart - Mural c 2004   |   |

## SWOT Analysis

The following information was recorded during the Local Work Group meeting on January 22, 2019 at the Coats Town Hall Conference Room. The input information is in four SWOT categories: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and (outside external) threats.

| Strengths  | Weaknesses  |
|--|---|
| <p>Stewart's Tire Service (Car Wash/Storage)</p> <p>Used Car Lots</p> <p>Undeveloped properties adjacent to main roads</p> <p>Vacant buildings on Main Street</p> <p>New zoning allows for redevelopment</p> <p>Pro-development/re-development Town Boards</p> <p>Mixed uses</p> <p>Grey Fox Mfg (Grey Metal South (Dunn)</p> <p>Grace Connections (Family Planning)</p> <p>Viva Zapata Mexican Restaurant</p> <p>Thrift Stores/Consignment (4)</p> <p>Black River (refer to Anderson Creek)</p> <p>Alton Stewart - 1st Licensed Aviator in NC (3rd in nation behind Orville &amp; Wilbur Wright</p> <p>Coats Museum/Cotton Museum</p> <p>Proximity to Campbell University</p> <p>Location of NC 55 &amp; NC 27</p> <p>Halfway between Fayetteville and Raleigh</p> <p>Bee Industry - growing</p> <p>Coats Library</p> <p>Town Hall in Downtown</p> <p>NC 55 renovations-widening</p> <p>Small town culture</p> <p>Growth coming from Wake/Johnston counties</p> <p>Churches (14)</p> <p>Volunteer organizations</p> <p>Experts in their field (educated townspeople)</p> <p>Terrace Farming innovator</p> <p>Coats Chamber of Commerce</p> <p>African American Monument 1st in Harnett County</p> | <p>No bank</p> <p>No historic district</p> <p>Lack of destination businesses</p> <p>Lack of entertainment/amenities</p> <p>Lack of entertainment venue</p> <p>Building re-use for multi-purpose &amp; office use</p> <p>Lack of Broadband coverage (explore Ting)</p> <p>Vacant buildings on Main Street</p> <p>Code enforcement of vacant buildings</p> <p>Appearance of buildings/property (code enforcement)</p> <p>Lack of participation by Hispanic population</p> |
|  | <b>Threats</b>  |
|  | <p>Lack of funding/major corporate sponsorships</p> <p>Unwilling property to sell/develop their vacant buildings &amp; property</p> <p>Lack of 4-lane highway</p> <p>No banking</p> <p>New housing developments in County</p> <p>County provides water/sewer to municipalities</p> <p>County development of parks, etc.</p> <p>Out-migration of young people</p>  |
|  | <b>1 Unique Thing in Coats</b>  |
|  | <p>Small Town USA</p> <p>1st Licensed Aviator in NC</p> <p>Small town feel</p> <p>Proximity to Campbell University</p> <p>Agriculture</p> <p>Oldest Farmers Day in NC (104 years)</p> <p>Vacant land at crossroads (NC 55/27)</p>   |
| Opportunities  | Opportunities   |
| <p>Collaboration with Harnett County and nearby Towns</p> <p>Banking</p> <p>Internships for students at Campbell</p> <p>Research &amp; Development - professors, etc.</p> <p>Recruit college professors for business start-ups</p> <p>Land that can be developed</p>   | <p>Recruit unique specialty businesses as destination</p> <p>Community gardens (inclusive)</p> <p>Tree planting program</p> <p>Souperbowl 5k expansion (250 runners)</p> <p>Proximity to I-95 and I-40</p> <p>Improved promotion of Coats (chamber, Town and other outlets)</p>   |

**Opportunities** *(continued)*

Playgrounds - Kiwanis grants  
Jobs for Life via His Daily Bread  
Changing hearts and minds  
Establishing a Historic District (tax credits)  
Wifi - TING  
Pocket park with benches, clock, memorial  
Gateway entrance improvements  
Wayfinding signage  
Improvement of vacant lots

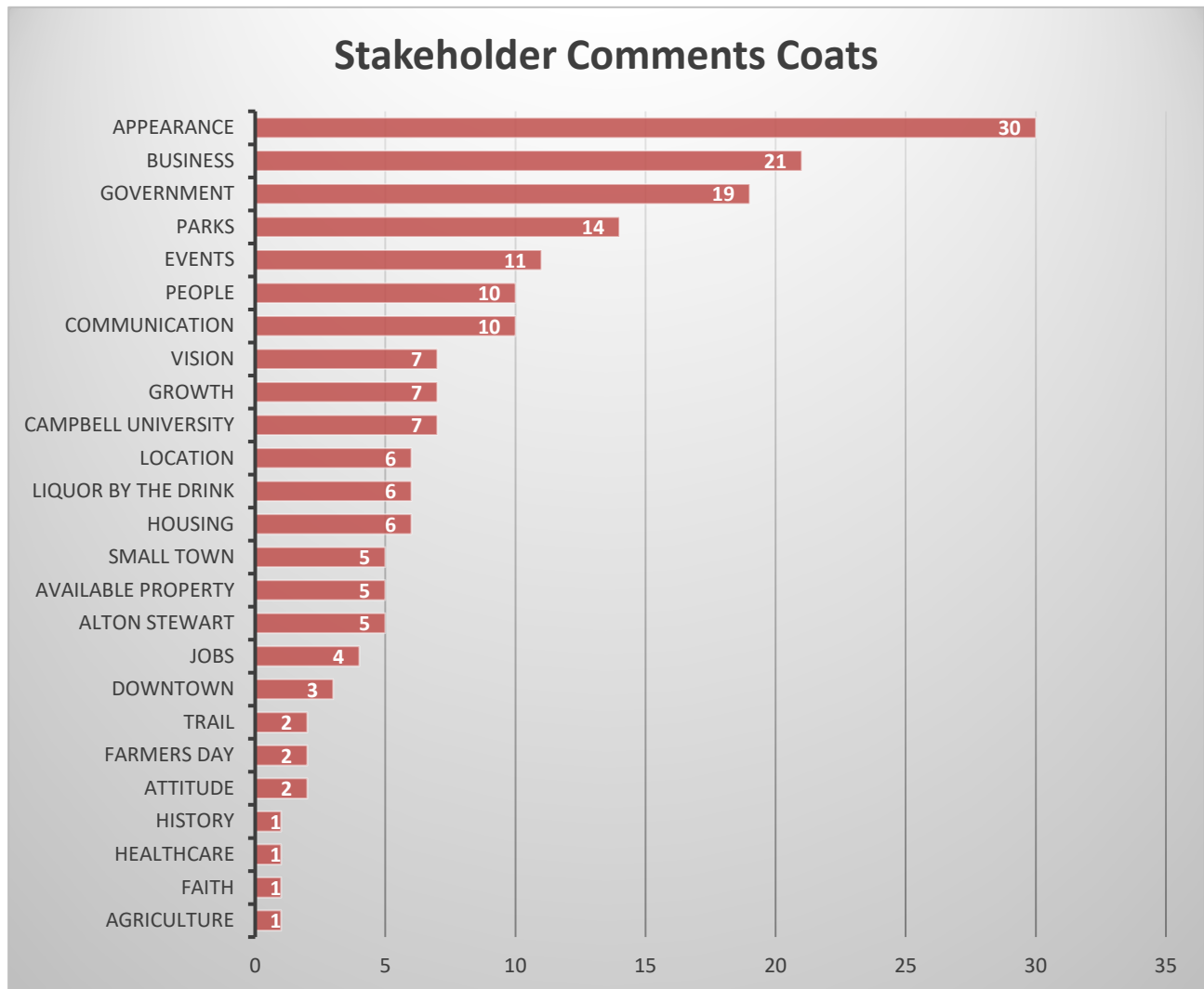
**Opportunities** *(continued)*

Improve social media presence  
Town of Coats app (M-connect)  
Catering to Campbell students  
Take advantage of Campbell Athletics Div 1  
Recruit Campbell-oriented sports bar  
Develop working relationship with Campbell U  
Lodging - Bed & Breakfast - Air bnb  
Improve Parks & Recreation Program  
Create mini-parks  
Universal Park  
Indoor recreation  
Business recruitment

## Section 4a. Stakeholder Comments

### Stakeholder Interview Comments

This chart shows the topics stakeholders discussed in order of the number of times the topics were mentioned regardless of whether the topic was a strength, weakness or opportunity. There were 18 stakeholder interviews conducted that contained 190 comments.





## Section 5. Assessment Adoption, Monitoring and Implementation

The following steps are recommended to adopt, monitor, and implement Recommendations in the 2019 Coats Economic Development Assessment.

### Assessment Items to Address and Follow

- ✓ Town Council should review, make any changes, and adopt the Recommendations in Section 6 of the 2019 Coats Economic Development Assessment.
- ✓ We recommend that six (6) months after the Recommendations are adopted the Town Council receive a progress update from the Mayor.
- ✓ If the municipality would like the NC Commerce Rural Planning Center to provide assistance or guidance in the implementation of any of the Recommendations, the Mayor should direct that request in writing (e-mail) to the Community Economic Development Planner for the North Central Prosperity Zone or to the Main Street & Rural Planning Center.
- ✓ After a specified period, 6 months to 1 year, the Rural Planning Center Project Leader and municipality will determine if the municipality might benefit from other asset-based, local economic development technical assistance.
- ✓ On the 1-year anniversary of adoption of the Assessment and Recommendations, the Rural Planning Center Project Leader will conduct a review of the municipality's progress and results.
- ✓ If Goals in Section 6 need revisions or adjustments the Plan should be amended by the Town. These amendments should also be adopted by the Town Board.
- ✓ We suggest that the easiest recommendations in Section 6 be addressed and accomplished. The more difficult items will take some persistence, time, and working together by the person(s) or groups responsible identified in Section 6 for each of the items.

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# Coats Economic Development Assessment Implementation Plan 2019-2020

**Vision:** A peaceful place...a friendly face. Home of NC's first licensed aviator.

| <p><b>Strategy 1:<br/>APPEARANCE/DESIGN</b></p>   | <p><b>Strategy 2:<br/>DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION /<br/>BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT</b></p>   | <p><b>Strategy 3:<br/>PROMOTION/COMMUNITY EVENTS</b></p>   |
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| <p>The initial impression of the community is formed by the quality appearance of its physical development. The appearance of the community contributes to quality of life and livability for those who reside in Coats, as well as those who may be making an investment or relocation decision. The largest number of stakeholder comments had to do with improving the Town's appearance.</p>  | <p>Downtown is the heart of a community. Not only can it generate sales and create jobs, but the downtown district also contributes to the quality of life as a gathering space and social center for residents, workers, and visitors. Although relatively small, downtown Coats is where most of the Town's events occur, Town business is transacted, and is home to several businesses. With some building rehabilitation and upfitting, additional businesses could be added providing a destination and gathering places for residents and visitors.</p> | <p>Establishing a strong town identity is important, particularly for smaller townships. Smaller towns can use community events to connect their residents and keep old traditions alive, while making new ones as well. It can also help attract new visitors, by showing off what makes the town so unique, which can simultaneously help build a strong sense of pride for the community. A sense of pride amongst the community may also encourage members to take better care of their neighborhoods.</p>               |
| <p><b>GOAL 1: Create a positive visual image of Coats throughout town.</b></p>  | <p><b>GOAL 2: Make Downtown Coats the commercial and social center of the community.</b></p> <p><b>GOAL 3: Grow the local economy in Coats</b></p>   | <p><b>GOAL 4: Enhance and strengthen Coats' identity and visibility.</b></p>   |
| <p><b>Objective 1.1: Improve landscaping/streetscapes at gateway/entrances to Town.</b></p> <p><b>Action:</b> Identify entrances to landscaped/improved and discuss with appropriate stakeholders, i.e. property owners, NCDOT, etc.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Engage student(s) from NC State School of Design (Landscape Architecture) to help with design (or Campbell University if they have similar program)</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Create "before and after" streetscape drawings showing potential improvements.</p> | <p><b>Objective 2.1: Increase the number of small businesses and restaurants downtown.</b></p> <p><b>Action:</b> Assess downtown properties and list those that are available and ready for move-in</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Research average rental cost per square foot</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Identify types of small businesses that are needed downtown/in-town.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Consider referendum on Liquor by the Drink and sales of beer and wine to help attract restaurants and other nightlife opportunities.</p>                               | <p><b>Objective 4.1: Increase visitors and foot traffic in the downtown area.</b></p> <p><b>Action:</b> Host several downtown-centered events/activities throughout the year that can bring people to the businesses.</p> <p><b>Objective 4.2: Create an annual "signature" aviation event to strengthen Coats' identity and Alton Stewart legacy.</b></p> <p><b>Action:</b> Establish a committee of local and regional aviators and others to brainstorm and outline a weekend event that would attract people with an</p> |

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| <p><b>Objective 1.2: Improve appearance of residential neighborhoods</b></p> <p><b>Action:</b> Enhance code enforcement efforts</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Work with property owners to repair houses and other structures</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Continue systematic condemnation and demolition of unsafe structures.</p> <p><b>Objective 1.3: Increase residential occupancy</b></p> <p><b>Action:</b> Meet with property owners who have consistent vacant properties about obstacles to longer-term occupancy</p> | <p><b>Objective 2.2: Improve aesthetics and appearance of downtown/commercial area through public and private investment.</b></p> <p><b>Action:</b> Re-design parking lot next to Chamber of Commerce to include a performance area with utilities and tables/seating for social gathering.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Obtain and renovate at least one downtown structure</p> <p><b>Objective 2.2: Research potential National Register Historic District</b></p> <p><b>Action:</b> Invite the Architectural Survey Coordinator from the State Historic Preservation Office to evaluate the potential of a historic district. A historic district would provide building owners with potential historic tax credit to help rehabilitate their buildings.</p> <p><b>Objective 3.1: Leverage proximity of Campbell University with Town of Coats</b></p> <p><b>Action:</b> Initiate relationship with leadership of Campbell University to determine common needs.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Identify business opportunities in Town to partner with the university (i.e. training/office/research space)</p> | <p>interest in aviation from across the state and beyond.</p> <p><b>Objective 4.3: Create a music concert series with a spring and summer concert.</b></p> <p><b>Action:</b> Organize two concerts with regional bands to attract people from all around Harnett County.</p> |
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