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Atlanta Regional Commission



Tracks to Progress

City of Hampton

Economic Development Strategy

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Samyukth Shenbaga, Manager

Jared Lombard, Project Manager

Elizabeth Sandlin

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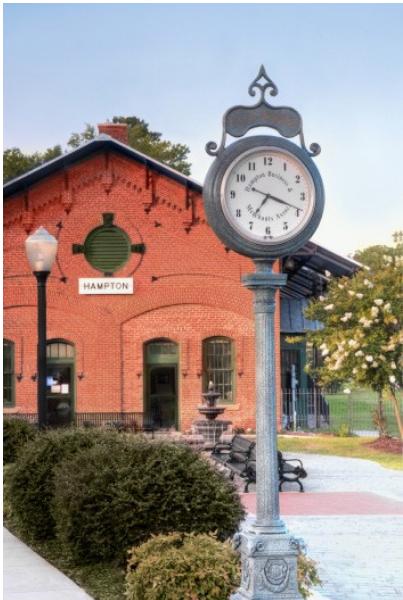


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CHAPTER 1

Executive Summary



Executive Summary

Hampton's Tracks to Progress is a community driven economic strategy for the City of Hampton. All members of the Hampton community were welcome participants to help craft an economic vision for the future of the City of Hampton and identify key strategies to make that vision a reality.

Facilitated by the Atlanta Regional Commission and the City of Hampton, Hampton's Tracks to Progress is a roadmap to guide economic development and decision making within the City. This strategy is a continuation of the positive change that is happening within the City of Hampton, which includes:

- Updated Zoning Code
- New Comprehensive Plan
- Active and energized Main Street.

With this strategy in place, the focus is on the hard work of implementation - the act of transforming the strategy, goals, and policies into investment in the City through both public and private sources. The success of Hampton's Tracks to Progress calls for sustained support and involvement from the entire Hampton community.



CHAPTER 2

Data & Demographics





Hampton Today

The City of Hampton was once known as “Bear Creek” or “Bear Creek Station”, named after a creek that runs through the area. In 1873, when the Central Railroad of Georgia was built, the City was moved, established, and renamed after Brig. General Wade Hampton, an American soldier in the Revolutionary War and War of 1812.

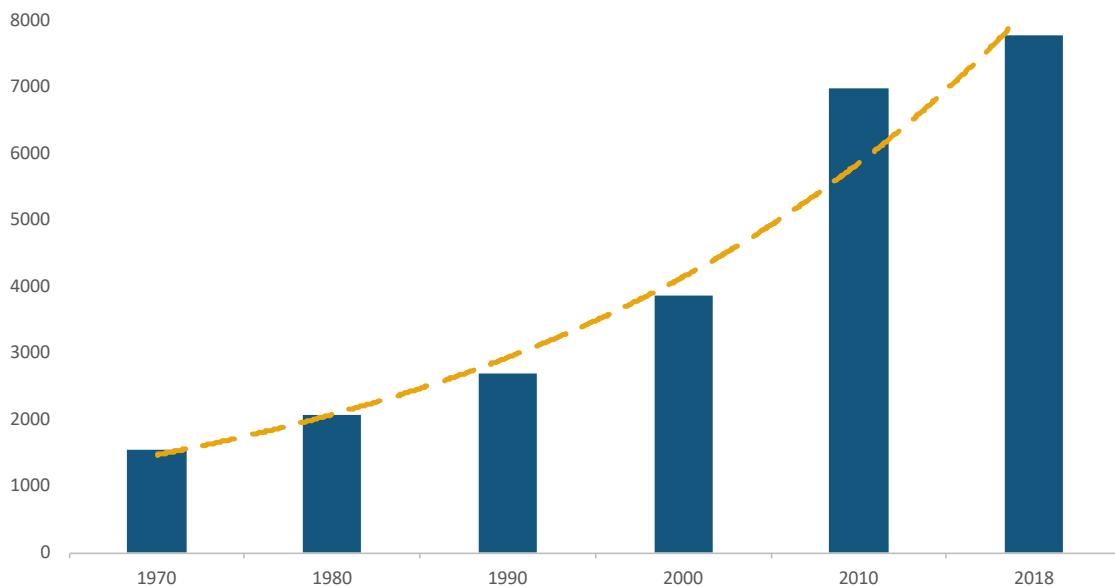
Hampton prides itself on being designated as a “Tree City” and a “Bird Sanctuary City”. In 2012, Hampton also achieved the status of “Playful City” - one of 213 communities in the United States to be so designated.

With the rapid growth of the Atlanta region in the 1990s and 2000s, the population of the City of Hampton nearly doubled from 3,857 in 2000 to 7,188 in 2015. The population growth has steadied recently and in 2016, the City’s population totaled 7,281.

This growth is best illustrated with the large increases in citizens in the 14-24 age cohort and the increasing diversity within the city. The proportion of black residents and residents who identified as two or more races increased, while the proportion of white residents and Asian residents decreased.

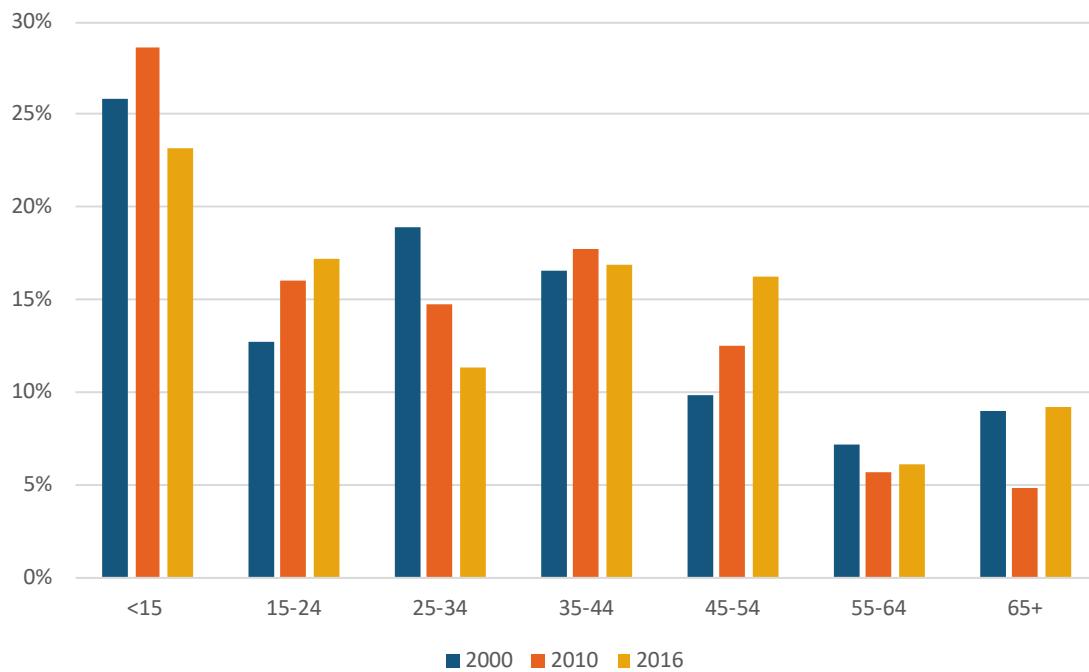
Hampton is a young city with over 59% of its residents under the age of 35. This is in sharp contrast to Henry County where 49% of its residents are under the age of 35.

Population Change



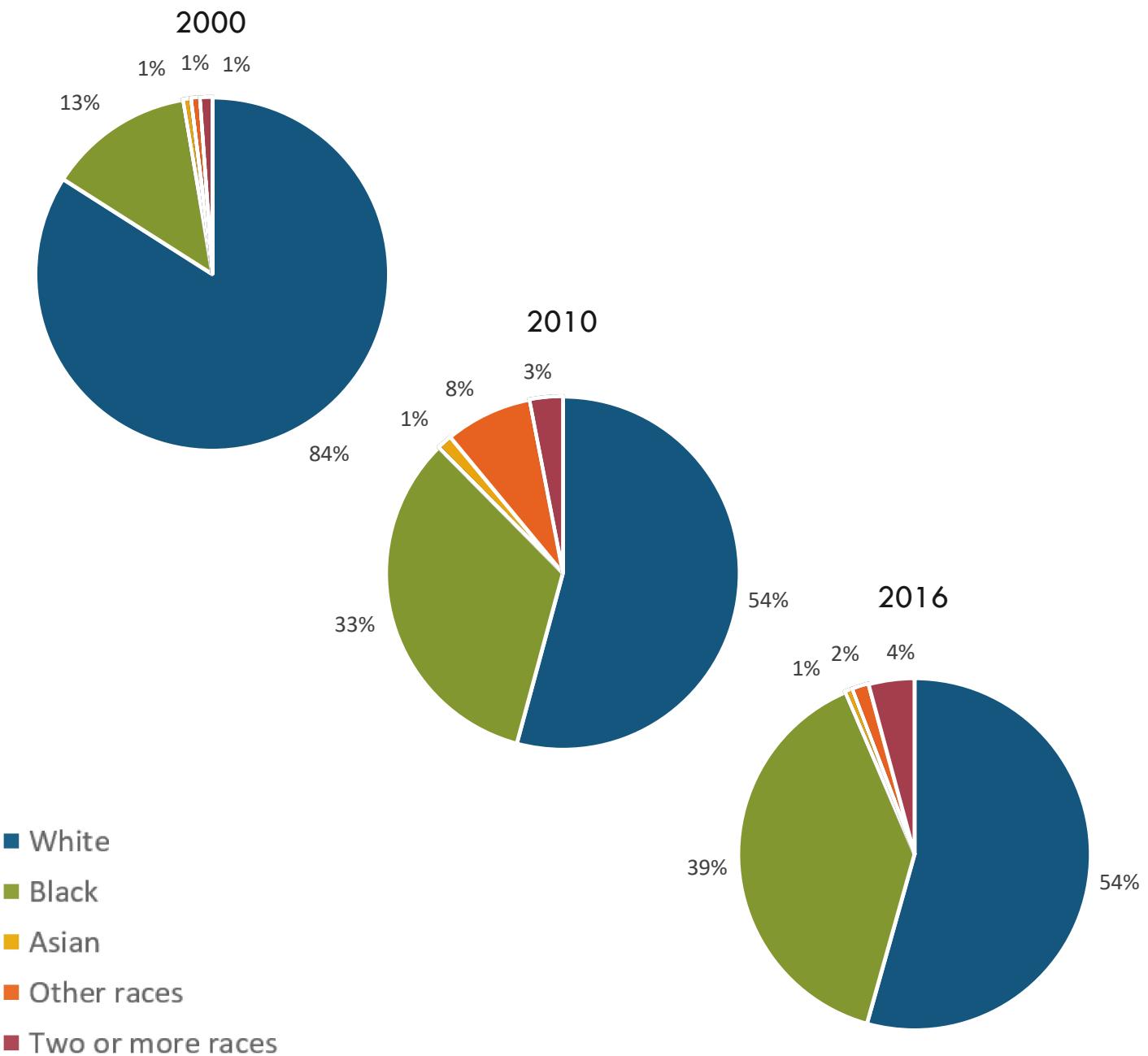
Since 1970, the population of Hampton has increased by approximately 6,000 individuals. Growing slowly at first, the most significant change came in the decade after the year 2000, when the population grew from 3,857 to 6,987.

Age Distribution



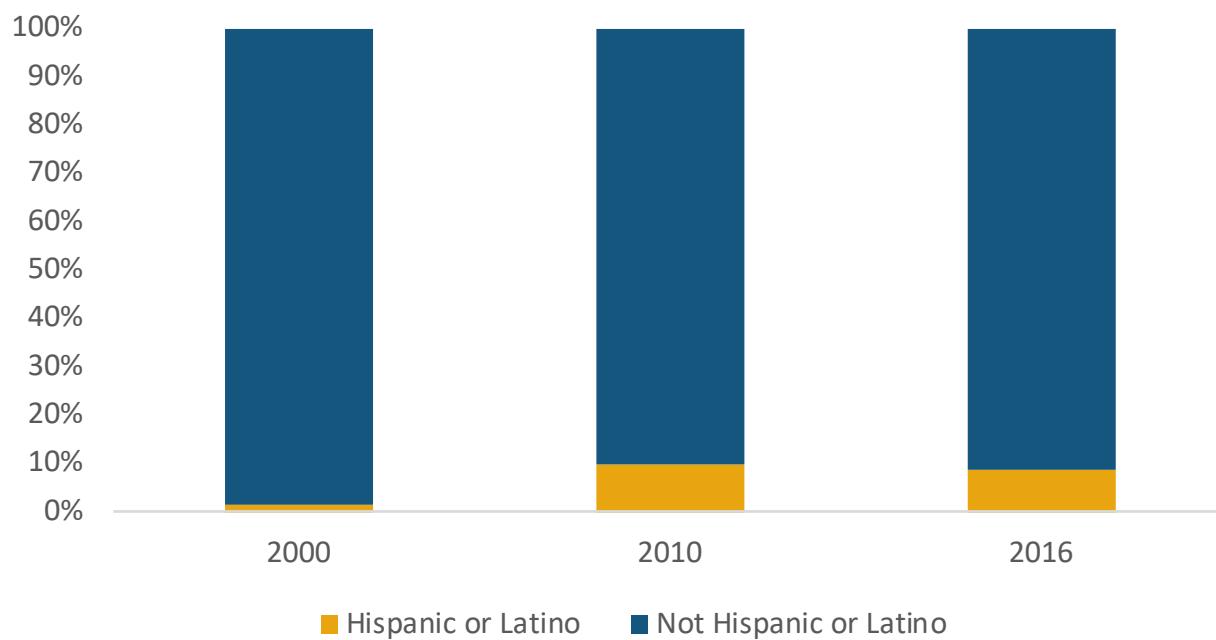
The age distribution in Hampton has not changed dramatically since 2000. The overall trend that those under the age of 15 make up the greatest percentage of the population, while those over the age of 65 have consistently accounted for less than 10% of the population, has not changed. The age range of 35-44 has remained the most consistent, while the largest shift was in the 25-34 group, which decreased by 8% from 2000 to 2016. Particularly between the ages of 15 and 54, the age distribution is consistently well-balanced.

Race Distribution



The racial makeup of Hampton has changed significantly since 2000. Nearly 20 years ago, almost 85% of the population was White. Today, that number is closer to 50%. The Black population in particular has increased by over 30%. While 8% of the population in 2010 was categorized as other races, that number fell back to 2% in 2016.

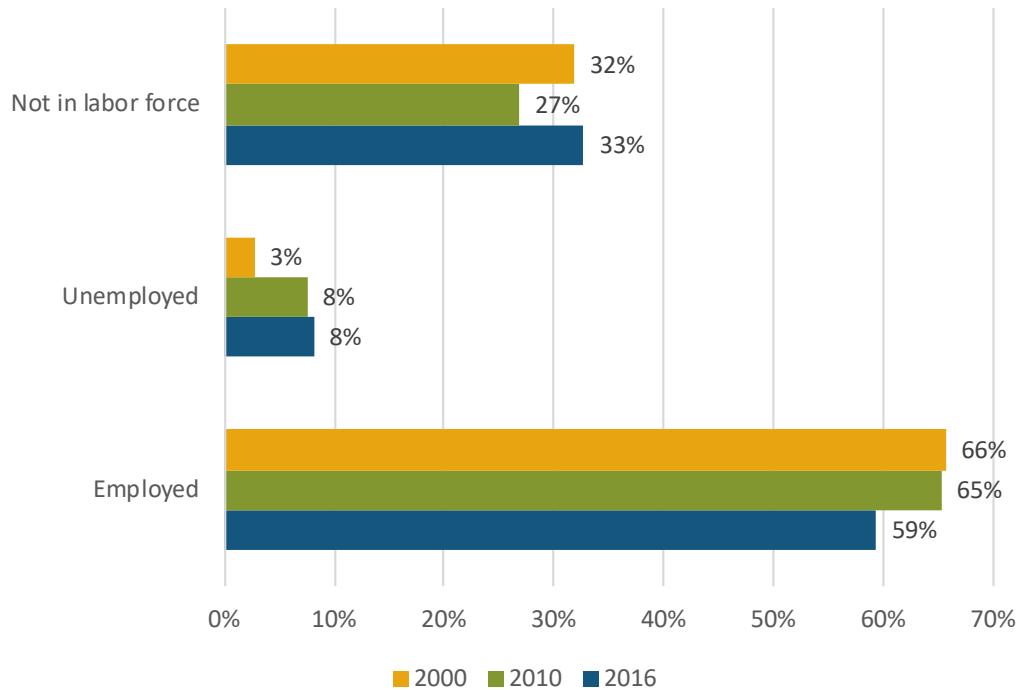
Ethnicity



The Hispanic population grew from 2% in 2000 to 10% in 2010 before dropping to 9% in 2016. While 90% of the population of Hampton is not Hispanic or Latino, this is a significant change over the course of 10 years.

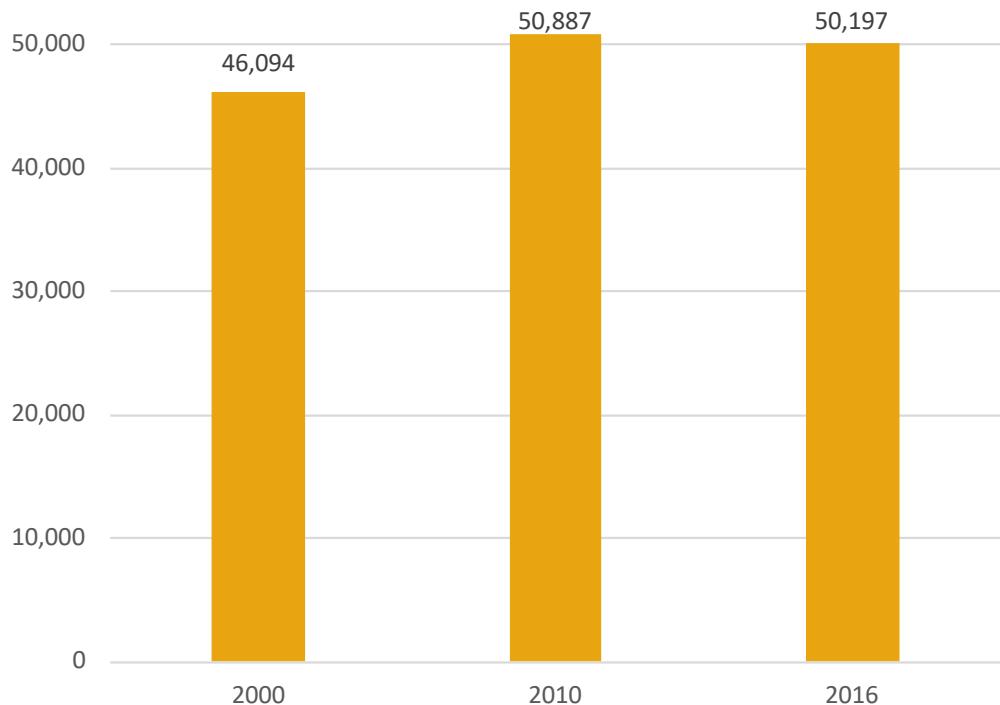
Data Source: US Census (2010); American Communities Survey, Annual Population Estimate (2012-2016).

Employment



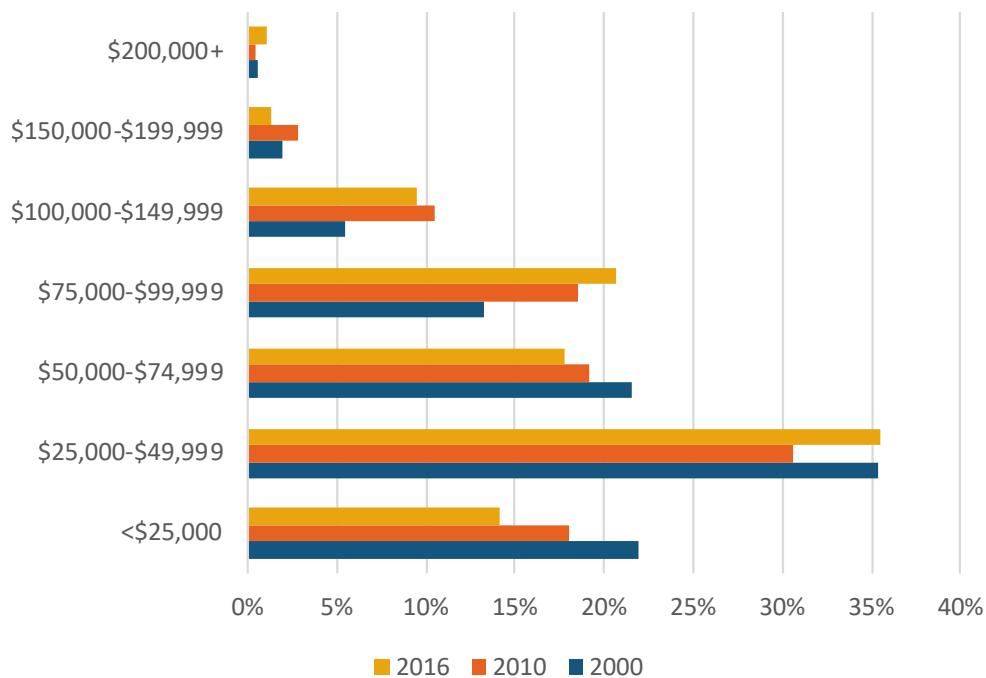
The percentage of the population that is employed decreased by around 5% between 2010 and 2016, while the population not in the labor force increased by the same amount. The unemployment increased from 3% to 8% between 2000 and 2010 but has remained consistent since then.

Median Household Income



The median household income in Hampton has not changed significantly since 2000. It has grown by nearly \$5,000 over the past 20 years but has stayed relatively consistent since 2010.

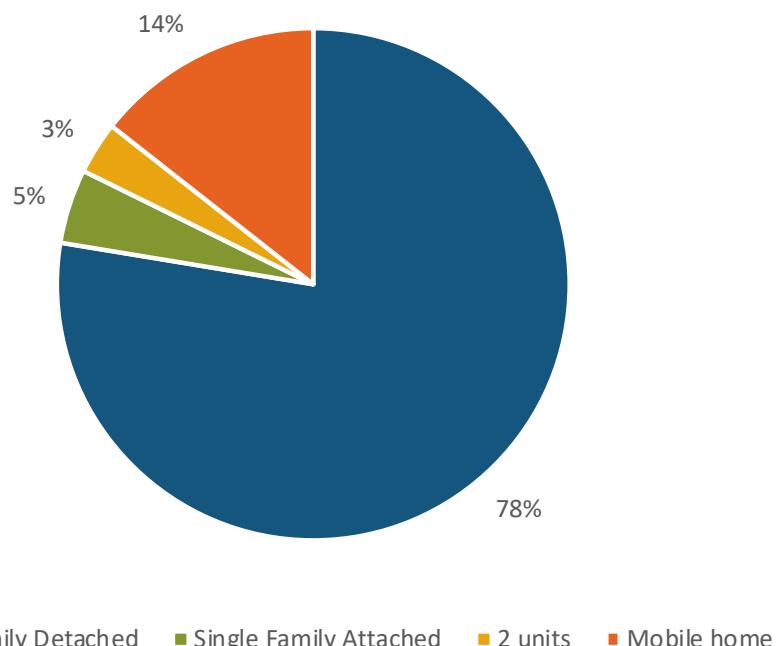
Income Distribution



Nearly 75% of the City of Hampton earns between \$25,000 and \$100,000 annually, while over 20% earns less than \$25,000. Since 2010, there has been an increase in those who earn less than \$75,000. In turn, the percentage of the population earning more than \$75,000 in any income group decreased in recent years.

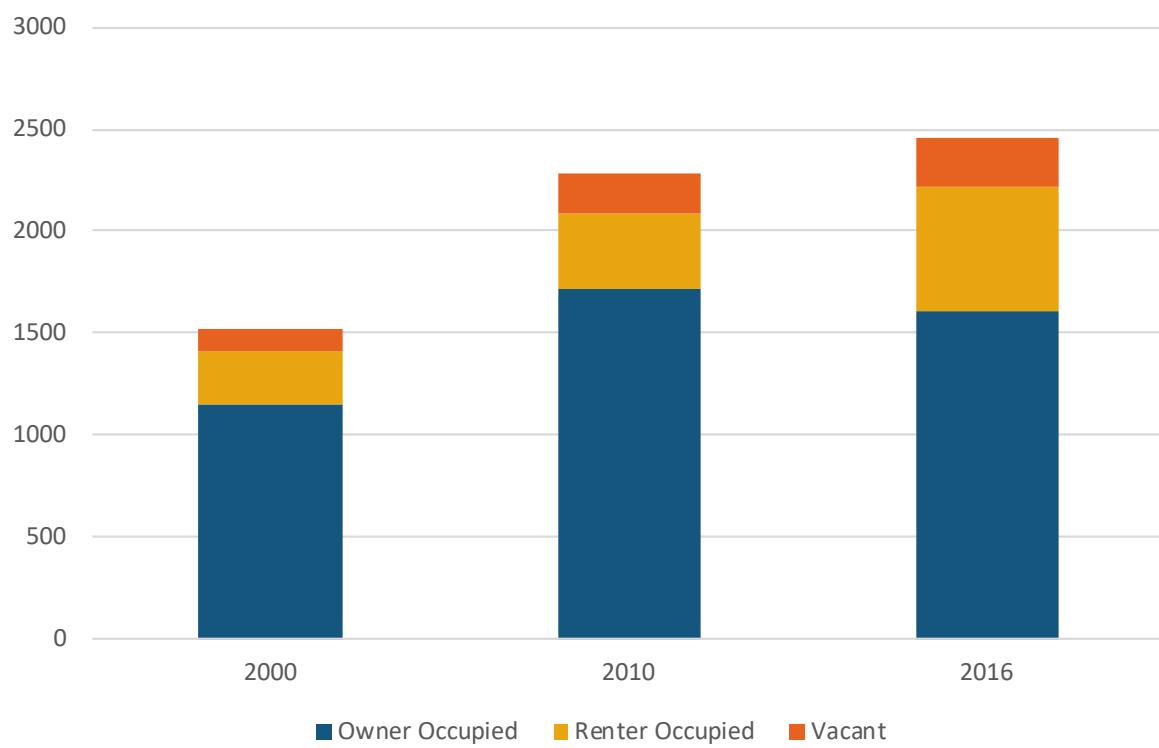
Data Source: US Census (2010); American Communities Survey, Annual Population Estimate (2012-2016).

Housing Type



In 2016, the vast majority of housing options in Hampton were single family units. Just 3% of the housing stock was multi-family housing, while 14% were mobile homes.

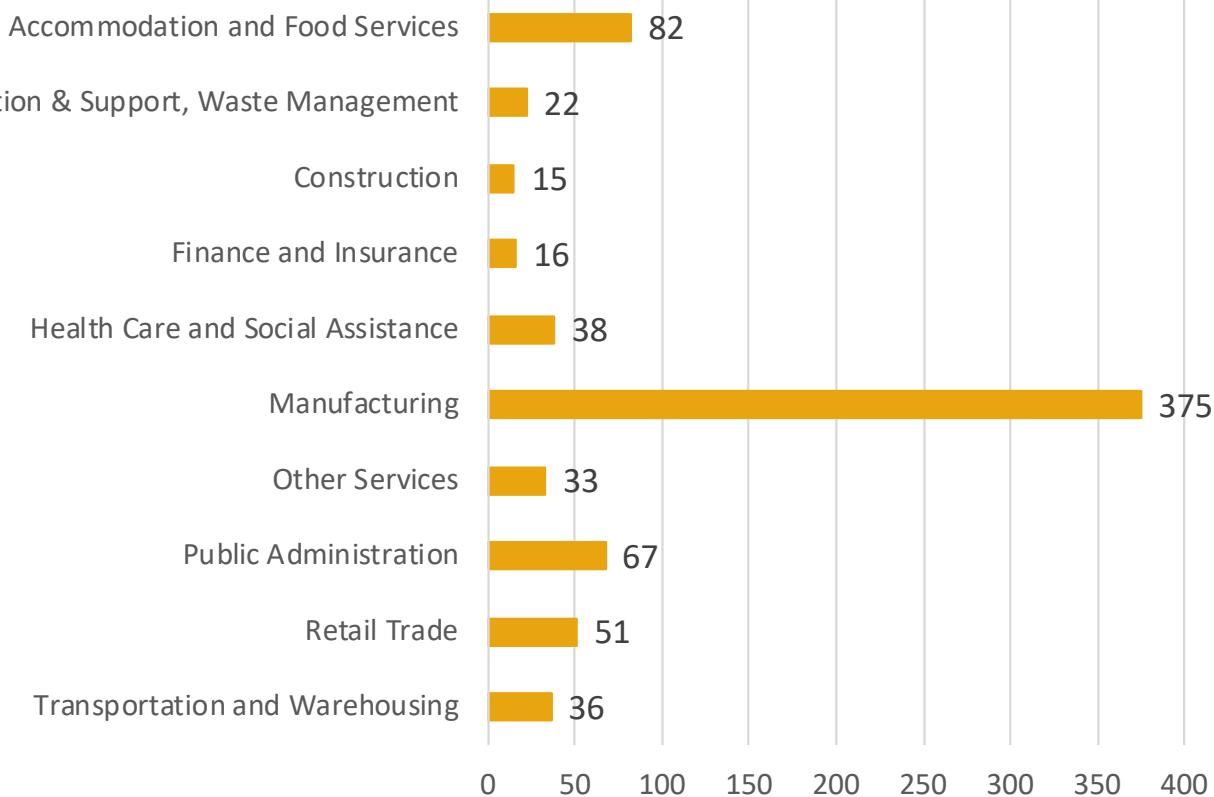
Housing Occupancy



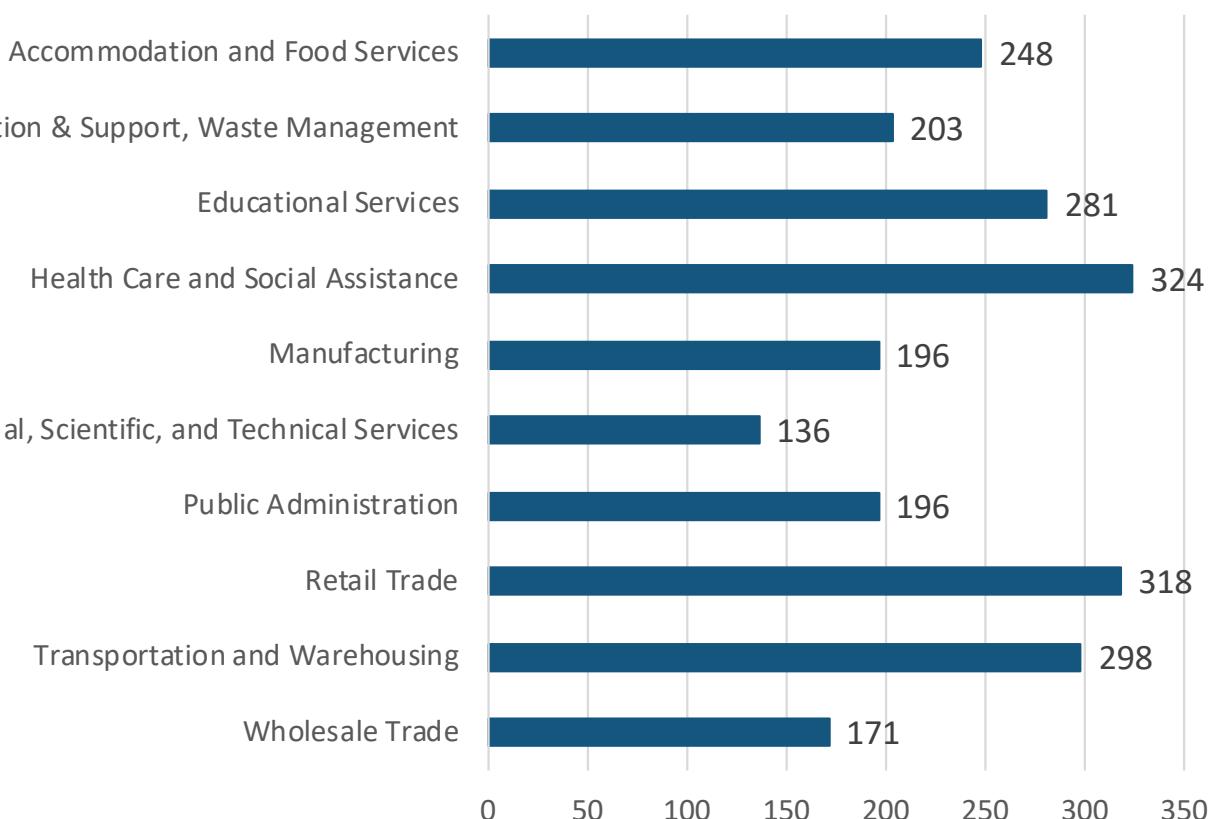
The housing stock in Hampton has grown by nearly 1000 units since 2000. The number of vacant units has increased slightly, and the number of renter-occupied units has grown by around 350 units.

Employment and Workforce

WHAT JOBS ARE AVAILABLE IN HAMPTON?

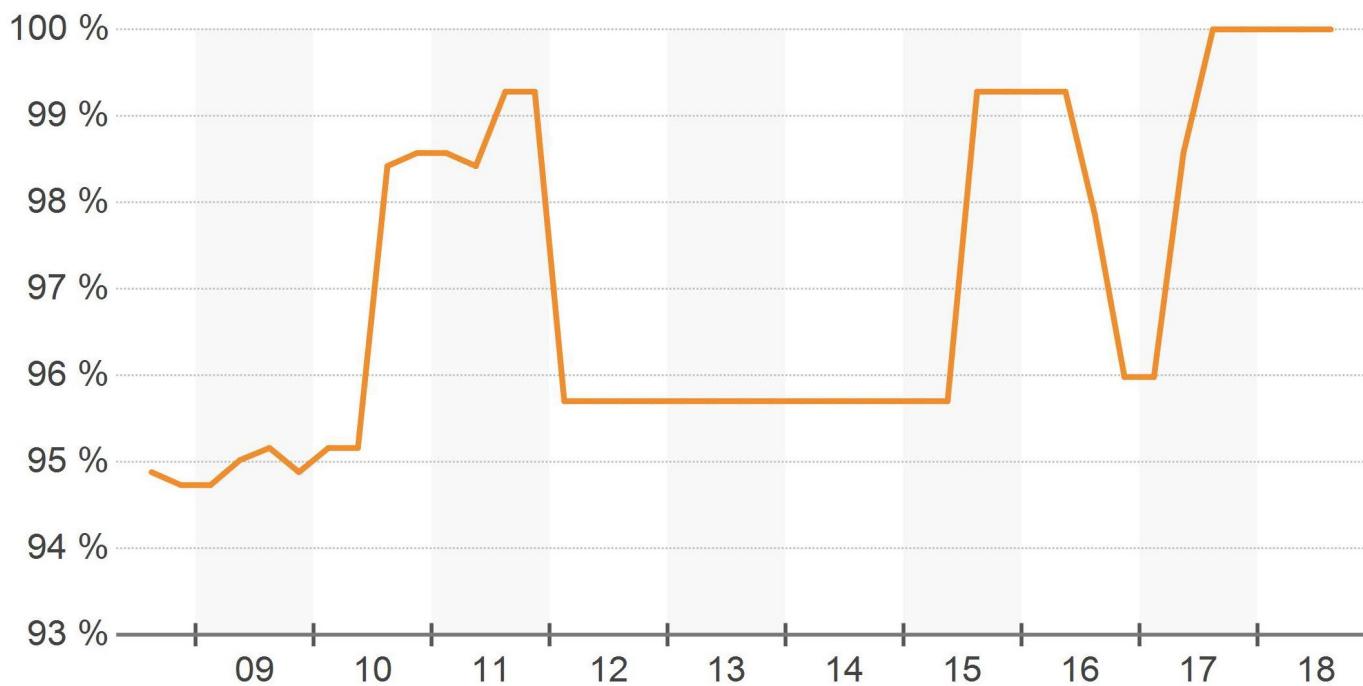


WHAT JOBS DO HAMPTON RESIDENTS DO?



The largest employment sector within the City of Hampton is Manufacturing, followed by Accommodation and Food Services and Public Administration. Most Hampton residents work in Health Care and Social Services, Retail Trade, or Transportation and Warehousing.

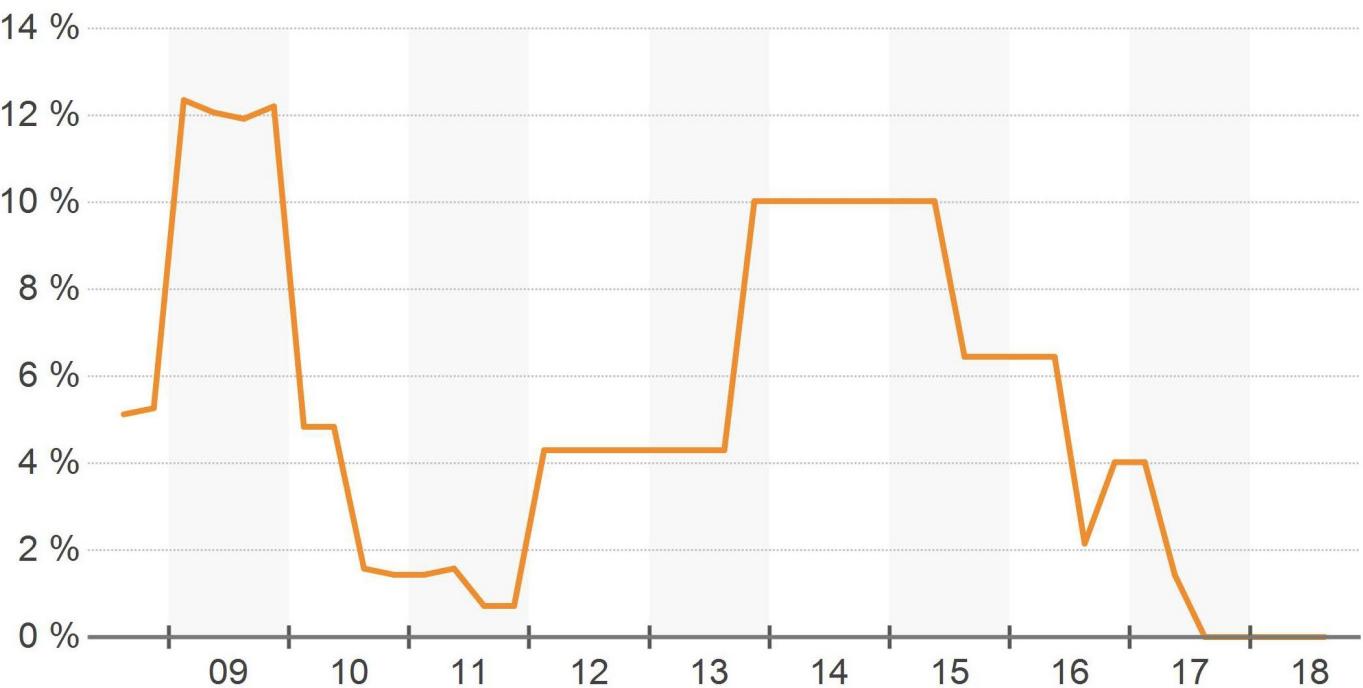
Downtown Occupancy



Occupancy of downtown rental properties has fluctuated between 95% and 100% since 2009. Since 2017, occupancy has remained constant at 100%.

Data Source: Downtown Hampton Retail Report, CoStar.

Downtown Availability



Availability of property in downtown Hampton was highest in 2009, at around 12%. Since then, it fell to under 2% in 2011 before rising back up to 10% in 2014 and 2015. Today, no property is available for rent in downtown Hampton.

Top Buyers



Top Sellers



The above graphs depict the top buyers and sellers of property in downtown Hampton in 2018.

Data Source: Downtown Hampton Retail Report, CoStar.

CHAPTER 3

Goals



Goals

The following goals are broad ideals that address a range of economic development issues facing the City of Hampton.

1. Maintain and market Hampton's "small town charm."
2. Continue and enhance pro-growth policies and initiatives while maintaining high standards for development.
3. Create and implement a business recruitment and retention strategy.
4. Attract more shopping, dining, and entertainment options.
5. Market the City of Hampton to attract visitors.
6. Improve the appearance of Hampton's commercial corridors and downtown.
7. Strengthen and grow educational opportunities in Hampton.
8. Improve quality of life in existing residential neighborhoods.
9. Make Hampton an arts destination.
10. Make Hampton easily accessible to visitors and residents.



CHAPTER 4

Plan Initiatives and Implementation



Plan Implementation

While the goals help to guide how policies and investments should occur within the City of Hampton, they do not have the weight of legal policy. Without comprehensive and practical policies, programs, and infrastructure projects, the goals will not become reality. A plan is just a plan until it is translated into implementation measures.

The Hampton Economic Development Department is the primary administrative agency responsible for implementation of Tracks to Progress. However, other municipal departments have important responsibilities in their respective service areas, and the City Manager must propose and recommend approval of funding levels appropriate to carry out the many programs suggested here.

The Hampton City Council should work closely with the Hampton Downtown Development Authority and the Hampton Historic Preservation Commission to provide support for plan implementation and should periodically review the progress of this implementation. Other agencies also have important roles to play in this process. Ad-hoc committees can be formed as needed to help guide the process of implementation. If at any time a particular program, strategy, project, or policy rises in its level of importance, the City Council or a specified committee should address that issue directly.



Policies

Policies are actions that the City of Hampton can put into place to assist in the implementation of the goals and guide city actions. These following policies are recommended from the community. Items with a star are a top community priority.

★ Use strong code enforcement to ensure that properties are maintained and meet desired standards.

Code enforcement should ensure that properties throughout the City are maintained and do not become detrimental to the surrounding community. Particularly as the City sees an increase in renter-occupied housing, code enforcement issues can arise in residential neighborhoods. The increase in absentee landlords has led to compliance issues, which could be solved by more diligent code enforcement.

★ Remain engaged in regional decision-making so that the City will be included in decisions that affect the region.

As local governments are realizing that approaching issues from a regional perspective can be more effective than smaller cities working on their own, the City of Hampton should ensure strong engagement in regional decision-making. Partnerships with surrounding governments and civic groups will become increasingly important.

★ Target specific industries to attract new businesses.

Because not every industry is a good fit in Hampton, the City should decide which types of industries are most desirable given the current economic conditions. Initiatives such as the creation of a business recruitment website and active involvement in all regional business initiatives can help to attract businesses.

Create a grant program for façade and/or curb appeal improvements along commercial corridors.

Funding for businesses to make façade and/or curb appeal improvements would aid the visual appearance of commercial areas and could increase pedestrian activity, especially along Main Street. A grant program could be administered by the Downtown Development Authority and the Main Street Advisory Board. Business owners should be encouraged to use the grants as long as improvements fit with the existing or desired surrounding architectural style.

Programs

Programs are activities that the City of Hampton staff and officials can implement the goals. These following programs are recommended from the community. Items with a star are a top community priority.

★ Recruit restaurants and shops to downtown that are attractive for further development and new businesses.

To attract new residents and grow the commercial tax base, Hampton should proactively work to attract new restaurants and shopping options that are unique and sustainable.

★ Encourage home ownership through incentives and support for a range of housing prices.

As the number of rental properties in Hampton has increased over the past 20 years, home ownership should be encouraged. Particularly given the established single-family residential neighborhoods, a strong concentration of owner-occupied housing should be maintained.

Market Hampton to potential residents.

Hampton should be marketed to potential new residents through the creation of a residential marketing website and programs to target those most likely to move to the community. A possible initiative includes the creation of a welcome packet for new residents with important information about living in Hampton, such as key demographics, local businesses, events, community organizations, and elected officials.

Utilize social media, press releases, and other print and online media to brand the city and increase awareness of events in Hampton.

A branding campaign allows the City to offer a first impression of Hampton to outsiders, while also informing residents of events and relevant information. This should be done through a variety of media outlets in order to reach the greatest number of people. Creating an improved information dissemination process for key events and meetings would help increase attendance and engagement.

Support and strengthen civic institutions, local clubs, neighborhood associations, and volunteer groups that create a sense of community.

Hampton's "small town charm" comes not only from the historic Main Street and surrounding architecture, but also from the existing social connections. The character of the City can be strengthened by supporting these groups.

Create a public art and creative placemaking program, including an arts and culture master plan.

Improving the arts and investing in creative placemaking strategies in Hampton can have widespread social and economic impacts. An arts and culture master plan will help the City determine its goals in the arts, and can offer an initial set of potential projects. A concentration of arts venues, artists, and other cultural institutions can attract visitors and businesses, but also improves quality of life for current residents.

Create a farmer's market and/or food truck park on a visible site that is currently vacant.

Vacant and underutilized sites can be revitalized through simple temporary initiatives such as a farmer's market, which helps to improve the local economy and can spur additional development in the area. This type of programming also improves the visual appearance of these sites, creating a public gathering space for the community as well as an attraction for visitors.

Create a magnet program at public schools in the city.

In many areas, magnet programs have been successfully used to attract middle class families to invest in local schools.

Create a banner program on major corridors to help brand the city.

A banner program is another opportunity to brand Hampton for visitors and potential future residents or businesses. In some cities, a seasonal banner program has been successful.

Offer opportunities for adult education, such as a higher education center in Hampton.

Programs for adult education can both improve educational attainment levels and offer opportunities for adults to be engaged in the community. Programs may also attract visitors, which has a positive economic impact.



Infrastructure

Infrastructure investments are physical investments within the City of Hampton that implement the goals. These following Infrastructure investments are recommended from the community. Items with a star are a top community priority.

★ Activate underutilized spaces, such as Cherry Street.

Vacant or underutilized parts of Hampton negatively impact the visual appeal of the City for both residents and visitors. Cherry Street in particular, given its proximity to Main Street, could benefit from infrastructure improvements and programming that would make it a more desirable space within the City. More ideas and concepts for Cherry Street can be found on page 24.

★ Eliminate or upgrade blighted properties, especially along main corridors.

The appearance of a community has far-reaching impacts on economic development, as it can encourage or discourage investment by both individuals and businesses considering moving to Hampton. Particularly commercial corridors offer visitors their first impression of Hampton, and a negative impression can be harmful to future economic development.

★ Address the lack of parking in downtown.

In order to support existing and future shops and restaurants along Main Street, more parking is needed. While downtown is relatively pedestrian-friendly, it is necessary to allow people to come from farther away and enjoy the amenities Hampton has to offer.

Install gateway signage at key entrances to the community.

Because gateway signage often acts as the first impression of a community, this is an opportunity for branding the City of Hampton to visitors.

Install historic markers that tell the history of specific buildings/properties.

Historic markers can help to highlight the character of Hampton and draw attention to its historic downtown. They can also act as advertisements for specific buildings or neighborhoods, and can help to drive economic growth in commercial areas.

Ensure a safe pedestrian environment by improving conditions of existing sidewalks and installing high-visibility crosswalks at major intersections.

Pedestrian activity helps to spur economic activity in a downtown, and ensuring that pedestrians have a safe and comfortable walking environment is a key step in encouraging pedestrian activity.

Consider traffic calming mechanisms in residential neighborhoods, such as narrowed streets, medians/refuge islands, and curb extensions.

Quality of life in neighborhoods is often negatively impacted by heavy traffic in quiet residential areas. Traffic calming techniques can help reduce the number of vehicles using neighborhood streets as cut-throughs and generally slow down traffic.

Implement bicycle and pedestrian paths, and install bicycle racks throughout downtown.

Multi-use paths allow for both intra-city and long-term regional connectivity. Whether used for recreation or transportation, they can reduce congestion and encourage a healthy lifestyle, while also bringing foot traffic downtown.

Create pocket parks in residential neighborhoods.

Small pocket parks are a relatively simple, non-disruptive way to ensure that residents have access to greenspaces within walking distance of their homes. They provide a safe space for children to play and can be a meeting spot for neighbors.

Install wayfinding signs for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Wayfinding signs help to brand Hampton while also providing a functional use for pedestrians and bicyclists. Any initiative to encourage alternative modes of transportation can help further economic development, particularly in downtown.

Provide more space for community meetings/events.

Public gathering spaces, particularly in central locations such as downtown, can help to create a strong sense of community. Regular programming in these spaces for all residents is also key.



Implementation Priorities

	1. Maintain and market Hampton's "small town charm."	2. Continue and enhance pro-growth policies and initiatives while maintaining high standards for development.	3. Create and implement a business recruitment and retention strategy.	4. Attract more shopping, dining, and entertainment options.	5. Market the City of Hampton to attract visitors.	6. Improve the appearance of Hampton's commercial corridors and downtown.	7. Strengthen and grow educational opportunities in Hampton.	8. Improve quality of life in existing residential neighborhoods.	9. Make Hampton an arts destination.	10. Make Hampton easily accessible to visitors and residents.
Use strong code enforcement to ensure that properties are maintained and meet desired standards.		✓	✓			✓		✓		
Remain engaged in regional decision-making so that the city will be included in decisions that affect the region.										✓
Target specific industries to attract new businesses.			✓	✓	✓				✓	
Create a grant program for façade and/or curb appeal improvements along commercial corridors.		✓				✓				✓
Recruit restaurants and shops to downtown that are attractive for further development and new businesses.			✓	✓					✓	

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Encourage home ownership through incentives and support for a range of housing prices.								✓		
Market Hampton to potential residents.	✓						✓			✓
Utilize social media, press releases, and other print and online media to brand the city and increase awareness of events in Hampton.					✓				✓	✓
Support and strengthen civic institutions, local clubs, neighborhood associations, and volunteer groups that create a sense of community.							✓	✓	✓	
Create a public art and creative placemaking program, including an arts and culture master plan.	✓				✓	✓	✓		✓	

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Create a farmer's market and/or food truck park on a visible site that is currently vacant.		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
Create a magnet program at public schools in the city.							✓			
Create a banner program on major corridors to help brand the city.	✓				✓	✓			✓	✓
Offer opportunities for adult education, such as a higher education center in Hampton.			✓				✓			
Market positive aspects of the current school options in Hampton.	✓		✓				✓			
Activate underutilized spaces, such as Cherry Street.	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	
Eliminate or upgrade blighted properties, especially along main corridors.		✓			✓	✓				

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Address the lack of parking in downtown.		✓			✓	✓				
Install gateway signage at key entrances to the community.	✓				✓	✓			✓	✓
Install historic markers that tell the history of specific buildings/properties.	✓				✓					
Ensure a safe pedestrian environment by improving conditions of existing sidewalks and installing high-visibility crosswalks at major intersections.	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓		✓
Consider traffic calming mechanisms in residential neighborhoods, such as narrowed streets, medians/ refuge islands, and curb extensions.	✓							✓		✓
Implement bicycle and pedestrian paths, and install bicycle racks throughout downtown.	✓				✓	✓		✓		✓

	1. Maintain and market Hampton's "small town charm."	2. Continue and enhance pro-growth policies and initiatives while maintaining high standards for development.	3. Create and implement a business recruitment and retention strategy.	4. Attract more shopping, dining, and entertainment options.	5. Market the City of Hampton to attract visitors.	6. Improve the appearance of Hampton's commercial corridors and downtown.	7. Strengthen and grow educational opportunities in Hampton.	8. Improve quality of life in existing residential neighborhoods.	9. Make Hampton an arts destination.	10. Make Hampton easily accessible to visitors and residents.
Create pocket parks in residential neighborhoods.		✓	✓					✓		
Install wayfinding signs for pedestrians and bicyclists.		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓
Provide more space for community meetings/events.		✓					✓	✓	✓	✓

CHAPTER 7

Cherry Street: Creative Placemaking



Cherry Street

Cherry Street, located just one block away from Main Street and Hampton's historic downtown, is a prime space to be a showcase of the initiatives identified in the previous chapter. Identified by the Steering Committee as underutilized space, a range of infrastructure improvements and programming activities could make Cherry Street a vibrant part of downtown Hampton, even attracting visitors from nearby communities.

Investing in Cherry Street will implement many of the goals identified in this plan, from increasing opportunities for activating under-utilized spaces as well as creative placemaking opportunities.

Below are photos of Cherry Street as of the writing of this plan, as well as renderings of possible ideas for Cherry Street based on feedback received during the public open house. Particular aspects that appealed to Hampton residents include lighting, outdoor seating, murals and public art, and a pedestrian friendly environment.

Cherry Street







CHAPTER 8

What We've Heard



City Tours

On August 22nd, 2018, the steering committee took a bus tour of the cities of Duluth, Norcross, and Hapeville's downtowns to see the work and activities that those cities have undertaken over the past few years to improve their downtown's economic vitality. The steering committee was impressed with the consistency and implementation of each communities vision over the past 15 years to consistently improve their downtown. One of the key takeaways from the trip was to start small, with small easy to implement projects to show the community results and implementation of the vision. This helps build collaboration and creates excitement. Another takeaway was to program the downtown area with events and activities to help drive foot traffic to downtown. This could be done with events or reprogramming public space in downtown to make downtown a destination. This was discussed as an implementation method of looking at Cherry Street as a festival style street. Further discussion in this document shows how this could be implemented. A key takeaway from Duluth was to ensure that the downtown has 10 places within 6 blocks that are open after 6 P.M. This ensures that the downtown has active foot traffic and becomes a destination for the southern part of the Atlanta region.



Steering Committee Meeting

A Steering Committee meeting was held on September 6, 2018. Key topics of discussion included the City's visual appearance, the arts and creative placemaking, and a reflection on the city tours. Ensuring that the City's visual appearance is attractive to visitors can help spur economic development. Simple ideas such as gateway signage and building facade improvements help to brand the City and create a sense of place. Code enforcement was also discussed as a method of ensuring a pleasant and cohesive appearance throughout Hampton. In regard to the arts, ideas included murals, lighted trees along Main Street, the revitalization of Cherry Street, and open container regulations in specific areas. Members of the Steering Committee saw the potential for certain components of all three cities to be successful in Hampton. In particular, a small theater in downtown and a local restaurant that can be a community gathering space were discussed.

Public Meeting

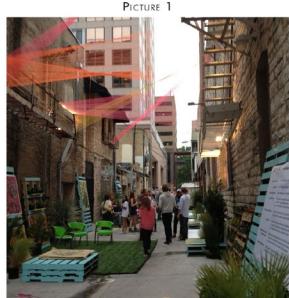
A public open house was held on October 4, 2018. Residents were asked to identify their home or business on a map of Hampton, and were shown background demographic information about the City. The main focus of the meeting was on prioritizing both the goals and strategies described in this document. Results from these surveys helped to order the goals and strategies based on community priorities. Comments left on the boards also informed descriptions of the strategies and some specific events or initiatives residents want to see in Hampton.

Residents were also asked to choose the most visually appealing image for potential design of Cherry Street, as that was identified as a key area for improvement by staff and the Steering Committee. Two images in particular were deemed most desirable for the area, as can be seen on the following page. Some features in these two images include strings of lights, murals, outdoor seating, and planters.



CHERRY STREET

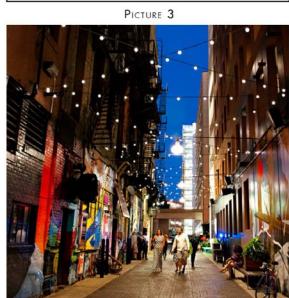
Use a sticky dot to vote for the image you find most visually appealing.
The results may inform art, design, and activities on Cherry Street.



[VOTE FOR PICTURE 1 HERE!](#)



[VOTE FOR PICTURE 2 HERE!](#)



[VOTE FOR PICTURE 3 HERE!](#)



[VOTE FOR PICTURE 4 HERE!](#)

STRATEGIES: POLICIES

Please place a dot on your top three priorities.

	Vote Here	Comments
Create a grant program for façade and/or curb appeal improvements along commercial corridors	● ● ●	
Support lot assembly to increase the number of larger lots that are more likely to attract development	●	
Target specific industries to attract new businesses through initiatives such as the creation of a business recruitment website and active involvement in all regional business initiatives	● ● ● ● ●	
Use strong code enforcement to ensure that properties are maintained and meet desired standards	● ● ● ● ●	Code enforcement not very diligent about cleanup of rental properties & absentee landlord compliance
Create separate zoning district for downtown Hampton to protect the scale of the historic downtown	● ● ● ● ●	
Remain engaged in regional decision-making so that the city will be included in decisions that affect the region	● ● ● ● ●	Partnerships are important for progress - Hampton cannot operate in a vacuum, must instate plans for joining County & surrounding cities to make strategies work

WHAT ELSE?

STRATEGIES: PROGRAMS

Please place a dot on your top three priorities.

	Vote Here	Comments
Create a banner program on major corridors to help brand the city	● ●	Need signs at 19/41 and 20 at entries
Create a public art program, including a public art master plan	● ● ● ●	
Utilize "pop-up" shops in downtown Hampton		
Support and strengthen civic institutions, local clubs, neighborhood associations, and volunteer groups that create a sense of community	● ● ● ●	
Create a farmer's market and/or food truck park on a visible site that is currently vacant	● ● ●	Farmers' market over food trucks
Market positive aspects of the current school options in Hampton	●	
Create a magnet program at public schools in the city	● ● ●	
Offer opportunities for adult education, such as a higher education center in Hampton	●	
Market Hampton to potential residents with the creation of a residential marketing website and programs to target those most likely to move to the community	● ● ● ● ●	Create welcome package for new & existing residents with vital info about the city - population, businesses, etc.
Encourage home ownership through incentives and support for a range of housing prices	● ● ● ● ●	Do not need small homes, like 3-4 per acre
Utilize social media, press releases, and other print and online media to brand the city and increase awareness of events in Hampton	● ● ● ● ●	Not only online, but more written info re: city meetings An improved information dissemination plan/process
Recruit restaurants and shops to downtown that are attractive for further development and new businesses	● ● ● ● ●	Duplicate the City of Duluth in every way Need zoning flexibility to extend downtown up & down Main Street to enhance downtown

WHAT ELSE?

STRATEGIES: INFRASTRUCTURE

Please place a dot on your top three priorities.

	Vote Here	Comments
Install wayfinding signs for pedestrians and bicyclists	●	
Implement bicycle and pedestrian paths, and install bicycle racks throughout downtown	● ● ●	
Consider traffic calming mechanisms in residential neighborhoods, such as narrowed streets, medians/ refuge islands, and curb extensions	● ● ● ●	
Ensure a safe pedestrian environment by improving conditions of existing sidewalks and installing high-visibility crosswalks at major intersections	● ● ● ● ●	
Provide more space for community meetings/events	●	
Eliminate/upgrade blighted properties, especially along main corridors	● ● ● ● ●	
Install historic markers that tell the history of specific buildings/properties	● ● ● ● ●	
Install gateway signage at key entrances to the community	● ● ● ● ●	
Activate underutilized spaces, such as Cherry Street	● ● ● ● ●	
Address lack of parking in downtown	● ● ● ● ●	
Create pocket parks in residential neighborhoods	● ● ● ● ●	

WHAT ELSE?

Amphitheater



Atlanta Regional Commission