

DRAFT OCTOBER 15, 2024

## Chapter 6

# Economy

Bolster diverse and equitable economic growth and prosperity.

Danville is committed to promoting diverse economic growth, ensuring prosperity that benefits all residents and job holders within the community. Danville will prioritize inclusive approaches that cultivate a wider range of industries, thereby reducing dependence on a single or handful of industry sectors. Danville aims to achieve economic empowerment for individuals and families from a variety of backgrounds, leading to an economy that is steadily improved and uplifts the entire community.

# Economy Policies

## E.1: ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

PROMOTE ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION AND RESILIENCE TO STRENGTHEN THE CITY'S ECONOMY AGAINST EXTERNAL SHOCKS, SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE AND EQUITABLE GROWTH, ADDRESS WAGE DISPARITIES, AND FOSTER INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

### E.1.1 Promote Food and Agriculture Businesses

Promote environmentally-friendly and socially-responsible food and agricultural businesses to stimulate sustainable agriculture, increase food security, protect natural resources, promote rural development, and create economic opportunities for farmers and rural communities.

### E.1.2 Support the Business-to-Business Industry

Expand industries that are focused on providing goods and services to other businesses through infrastructure development, access to finance, networking opportunities, and skills development programs.

### E.1.3 Support Accessible Healthcare

Incentivize the growth and innovation of healthcare businesses like maternal health, clinics, and other medical facilities to enhance both physical and financial access to healthcare services within the community.

### E.1.4 : Encourage the Growth of Green Industries

Foster the growth and innovation of businesses that specialize in sustainable infrastructure solutions such as renewable energy, eco-friendly construction, green transportation, and water management.

## E.2: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

IMPLEMENT A HOLISTIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY TO ATTRACT INVESTMENTS, CREATE JOBS, AND BOOST PROSPERITY.

### E.2.1 Strengthen the Redevelopment Process

Enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the redevelopment process for industrial and commercial business hubs within the city to attract new businesses, stimulate economic growth, create job opportunities, and enhance the overall vibrancy.

### E.2.2 Invest in Commercial Districts

Enrich the distinctive character of Danville's commercial districts through strategic investments in physical assets to attract visitors, encourage business growth, stimulate economic activity, and foster a sense of pride and belonging among residents.

## **E.3: SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT**

SUPPORT SMALL BUSINESSES AND ENTREPRENEURS BY PROVIDING RESOURCES, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, AND FINANCIAL INCENTIVES TO PROMOTE THEIR SUCCESS.

### **E.3.1 Advance Equity and Inclusion**

Take proactive steps to promote equity and inclusion in small business development to facilitate economic empowerment, reduce disparities, encourage diversity, and establish a more equitable and resilient small business ecosystem that benefits the entire community.

### **E.3.2 Support and Grow Small and Independent Retail**

Bolster the vitality and sustainability of small and independent retail businesses within the community to preserve neighborhood character, stimulate economic activity, create jobs, and foster a sense of community pride and connection.

## **E.4: TALENT RECRUITMENT**

FOSTER A WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT THAT ATTRACTS AND RETAINS SKILLED PROFESSIONALS AND ENCOURAGES A VARIETY OF PEOPLE TO MAKE THE CITY THEIR HOME.

### **E.4.1 Support Related Workforce Readiness and Preparation Efforts**

Build a more skilled, adaptable, and resilient workforce and bridge the gap between job seekers and available opportunities, promote economic mobility, and address workforce shortages in key sectors.

### **E.4.2 Strengthen Infrastructure to Support Workers**

Address disparities in access to essential services and opportunities to better support the needs of workers within the community.



“ Danville’s economy is at an important pivot point. We are finally seeing the payoffs and planning for growth. ”

*- 2023 Economy and Retail Roundtable*



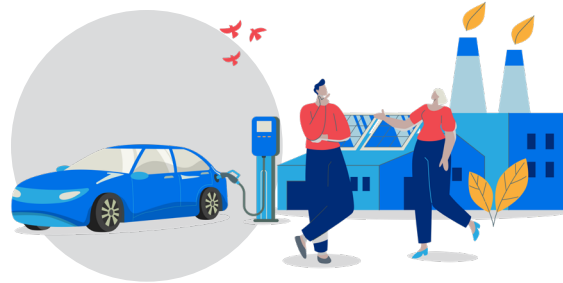
# Aligning with Public Feedback

Strengthening economic opportunity in Danville was one of the cross-cutting community themes. During discussions with residents, support for local businesses, a need to enhance education and workforce development, and the city's history of discrimination and racism were common features of discussions around the economy. The local economy is an issue that is present within themes related to Economic Development and Opportunity, Bolstering Unity and Respect, Education and Youth Development, and Community Engagement and Collaboration. Creating high-quality job opportunities along with educational and training programs that provide career pathways as a means to address a history of disinvestment and economic exclusion were commonly cited as issues to be addressed by residents.



## Goal 6. Economy

Aligning with Public Feedback



### E.1 Economic Resilience

Stable, well-paying jobs that are less subject to the ebbs and flows of the national economy was a desire among many residents. This policy prioritizes development of industries that are local in nature, like food, business services, and healthcare. These industries grow based on the local economy and return wealth to the city and region, rather than exporting the wealth to other areas. In addition, the plan emphasizes development and growth of green industries that are growing rapidly and emphasize responsible use of local resources.



### E.2 Economic Development

Time is money, for both large and small investors. Streamlining processes with an emphasis on existing business hubs, versus new development, will help to encourage re-investment and provide greater certainty for small and large businesses alike. Further, improving the visual appeal and maintenance of existing business districts and storefronts is critical to providing a higher quality of life for residents, while also encouraging other investment in neighborhood commercial centers.



### E.3 Small Business Support

Historical exclusion of people of color from realizing economic opportunity in Danville was commonly cited by residents as a major concern. Small business development and entrepreneurship represents an opportunity to earn a regular wage, while also building wealth by providing services and amenities the community demands. This policy emphasizes providing small business assistance that is tailored to communities of color to support revitalization of Danville's neighborhood commercial districts.



### E.4 Talent Recruitment

Meaningful workforce development and job training programs that lead to high-quality, sustainable job opportunities are strongly desired by Danville residents. This strategy aligns this desire with opportunities in growing industries and industries with workforce shortages, while improving the services available to help residents develop the skills and experience necessary to secure the jobs they want.



## POLICY

### E.1

# Economic Resilience

Promote economic diversification and resilience to strengthen the city's economy against external shocks, support sustainable and equitable growth, address wage disparities, and foster inclusive economic development.

Danville has a rich history deeply intertwined with its industries, most notably the mill and textile industries. While Danville's economy has evolved over time, it remains heavily reliant on only a select few industries, posing challenges to the city's resiliency and adaptability. Furthermore, Danville faces increasing environmental risks due to higher instances of extreme heat and persistent flooding, highlighting the urgent need for intentional economic diversification and resilience planning.

To tackle these issues, this plan provides recommendations to establish more resilient industries while leveraging its existing market strengths. Key target sectors include precision metalworking, IT, food and beverage processing, healthcare/medical services, agribusiness, and entrepreneurship across all industries.

By prioritizing these sectors, Danville can create accessible jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities while enhancing its economic diversification and resilience goals. Additionally, initiatives such as the business-to-business (B2B) cluster and green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) cluster offer paths for increasing local supply chains, improving community health outcomes, and mitigating environmental risks. Through collaborative efforts and strategic planning, Danville can pave the way towards a more inclusive, dynamic, and resilient economy that benefits all residents.



#### Goal 6. Economy

Policy E.1 Economic Resilience



### Desired Outcomes

- A more inclusive and dynamic economy that generates middle-wage employment opportunities and effectively meets community requirements
- Enhanced localization and integration of supply chains
- A city and region that exhibit greater resilience to economic fluctuations and disasters, including the repercussions of flooding and climate change



## WHY IT MATTERS

### The key to economic resiliency is diverse economic growth.

Single industry economies can be a big boon for communities, but can also become dangerous if there is ever an economic downturn, foreclosure, or shift in job skills needed which can financially impact large groups of people at once. Danville has worked to diversify its economy since the Dan River Mill closure in the early 2000s.

#### Wage Disparities

While there is diversity among the workforce, significant wage disparities exist, with women and BIPOC workers earning less compared to their counterparts.

#### Increased Cost of Living

Annual household expenditures in Danville grew at a faster rate than the national consumer price index (CPI) from 2016 to 2020, indicating an increase in the cost of living relative to national trends.

#### Small Businesses Matter

Danville has lower levels of minority-owned business enterprises (MBEs) but relatively high levels of women-owned business enterprises (WBEs), with contrasting performance compared to national trends.

Job access challenges persist, particularly for individuals without access to private vehicles, impacting physical and commuter flows.

#### Stable Retail Market

Retail in Danville remained stable in establishment count, employment, and wages from 2017 to 2021, except for notable losses in Food Services and Personal & Laundry Services during the initial COVID closure period.

Total quarterly wages in Personal & Laundry Services have not returned to pre-pandemic levels when comparing 2020 to 2021.

#### Concentrated Industry Workforce

The Danville economy exhibits high concentration of jobs within 3 top industries – Food and Drinking Services, Ambulatory Health Care Services, and Plastics and Rubber Product Manufacturing.

The top three industries account for a significant portion of jobs in Danville, with notable disparities compared to Pittsylvania County and the U.S.

Fourteen out of Danville's 20 largest industries experienced declines between March 2020 and June 2021, surpassing the national average decline.







## WHY IT MATTERS

### Danville has a wealth of skills in the city.

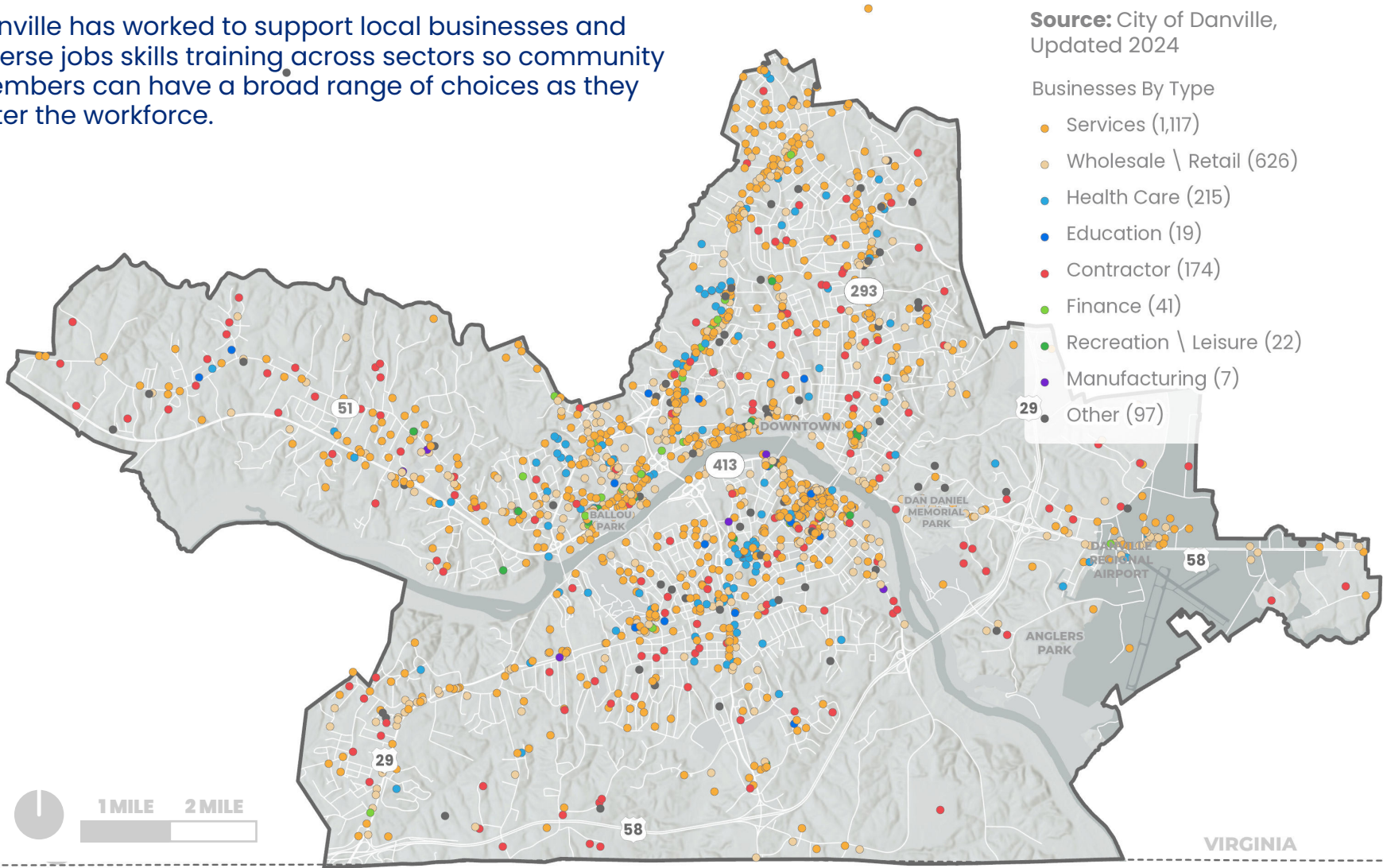
Danville has worked to support local businesses and diverse jobs skills training across sectors so community members can have a broad range of choices as they enter the workforce.

### Businesses By Type

**Source:** City of Danville, Updated 2024

#### Businesses By Type

- Services (1,117)
- Wholesale \ Retail (626)
- Health Care (215)
- Education (19)
- Contractor (174)
- Finance (41)
- Recreation \ Leisure (22)
- Manufacturing (7)
- Other (97)





## WHY IT MATTERS

### Tourism is on the rise.

Tourism is a rising industry, especially in Southern Virginia. Regional organizations such as Virginia is for Lovers, Visit SoSi, Experience DPC, and SoVa is Home are promoting the many assets and opportunities to visit and support the local businesses of Danville.

There are obvious draws to the area such as Caesars Casino and the River District, but tourism takes many forms. According to a [Virginia State University study](#), agritourism was a 1 billion dollar industry in 2023. Agritourism includes farms, breweries, and wineries.

Cultural tourism is also growing. The [American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association](#) found that rural arts organizations attracted more outside visitors than urban ones (31% vs 14%) as of 2023. These visitors spend money on admissions, parking, dining, and more, directly contributing to local economies. These outdoor forms of tourism resurged as prominent forms of tourism during the Covid-19 pandemic and seem to remain.

Through investments in Danville’s parks, commercial centers, arts venues, and natural spaces it can not only enhance quality of life for residents, but also support the local economy and a thriving jobs network.

Source: [SoVa is Home](#), Updated 2024



## DANVILLE IN ACTION

### Danville is investing in tourism.

Danville completed a [study and action plan](#) for tourism in partnership with SoSi and Pittsylvania County in 2023.



**350+** annual festivals and events are hosting in the greater Danville area.

There are **100+** memorable day trips & excursions in and around Danville.





## WHY IT MATTERS

### **Agriculture remains a key part of the local economy, and could help health outcomes by expanding access to local foods.**

The greater Danville region (hereto referred to as the PEA) has existing strengths in agricultural production, and the city has strengths in food and beverage manufacturing, other food related manufacturing, and food retail and services (food-related distribution, with an LQ of 0.9, is almost on par with the U.S. concentration). The food and beverage manufacturing subcluster is growing faster in Danville and the region than it is nationally, and it is becoming more specialized. The food cluster – particularly the manufacturing and distribution components – offers relatively accessible, middle-wage jobs.

With a more coordinated strategy, the city’s resiliency could be improved by addressing gaps in and localizing the food supply and value chain. While there can be significant economic benefits to localizing food, it can be critical when there are supply-chain disrupting emergencies like there were during the COVID pandemic.

There is also growing interest in more localized and diverse food production nationally – especially in specialty crops – in response to increasing droughts and climate change impacting the central valley of CA, which still produces a staggering amount of the nation’s food. While the scale of the ag/food opportunity is at the city and regional level, it can also help address neighborhoods and populations in Danville facing food access challenges or food insecurity – especially as nine out of 10 Danville community members lives in a USDA-classified food desert.





## Learn from Leaders

### AgLaunch

National

While the City of Danville is just east of the Appalachian Regional Commission's definition of Appalachia, multiple counties (Patrick, Henry, and Martinsville) in the greater Danville region (PEA) are a part of ARC's South Central region, and many of the case studies and strategies around localizing food in ARC's 2022 study, [Agriculture and Local Food Economies in the Appalachian Region](#), are relevant to Danville's ag/food economy.

One of these is AgLaunch, a Memphis-headquartered nonprofit working to advance innovation in agriculture through its "distributed network of farm incubators, entrepreneurial farmers, aligned capital partners, research consortia, technical consulting, and best-in-class accelerator programming." The work in the following areas:

- Specialty crops, including new grains for beverage and food markets
- Regenerative and organic agriculture and carbon markets
- New uses for forestry products
- Pasture raised cattle
- Local value-added products
- Farm-to-market with novel technologies
- Bioenergy
- Controlled environment agriculture
- Data & traceability
- Climate resiliency

Their service area includes multiple counties in the greater Danville region, presenting an opportunity for Danville to strategically partner with the regional initiative. This strategic alignment – particularly around opportunities to improve resilience in the ag/food system and localize regional food supply chain – could provide Danville with a valuable platform to exchange best practices, explore innovative solutions, and tap into AgLaunch's comprehensive partner network of experts from universities, tech transfer offices, research institutions, farmer organizations, and other support organizations.



## WHY IT MATTERS

### Most of Danville is classified as a food desert.

Food deserts are classified by the [US Department of Agriculture](#) according to proximity to “supermarkets, supercenters, grocery stores, or other sources of healthy and affordable food.” Generally, census tracts are classified as “low access” based on the share of population that can access these stores within a certain radius.

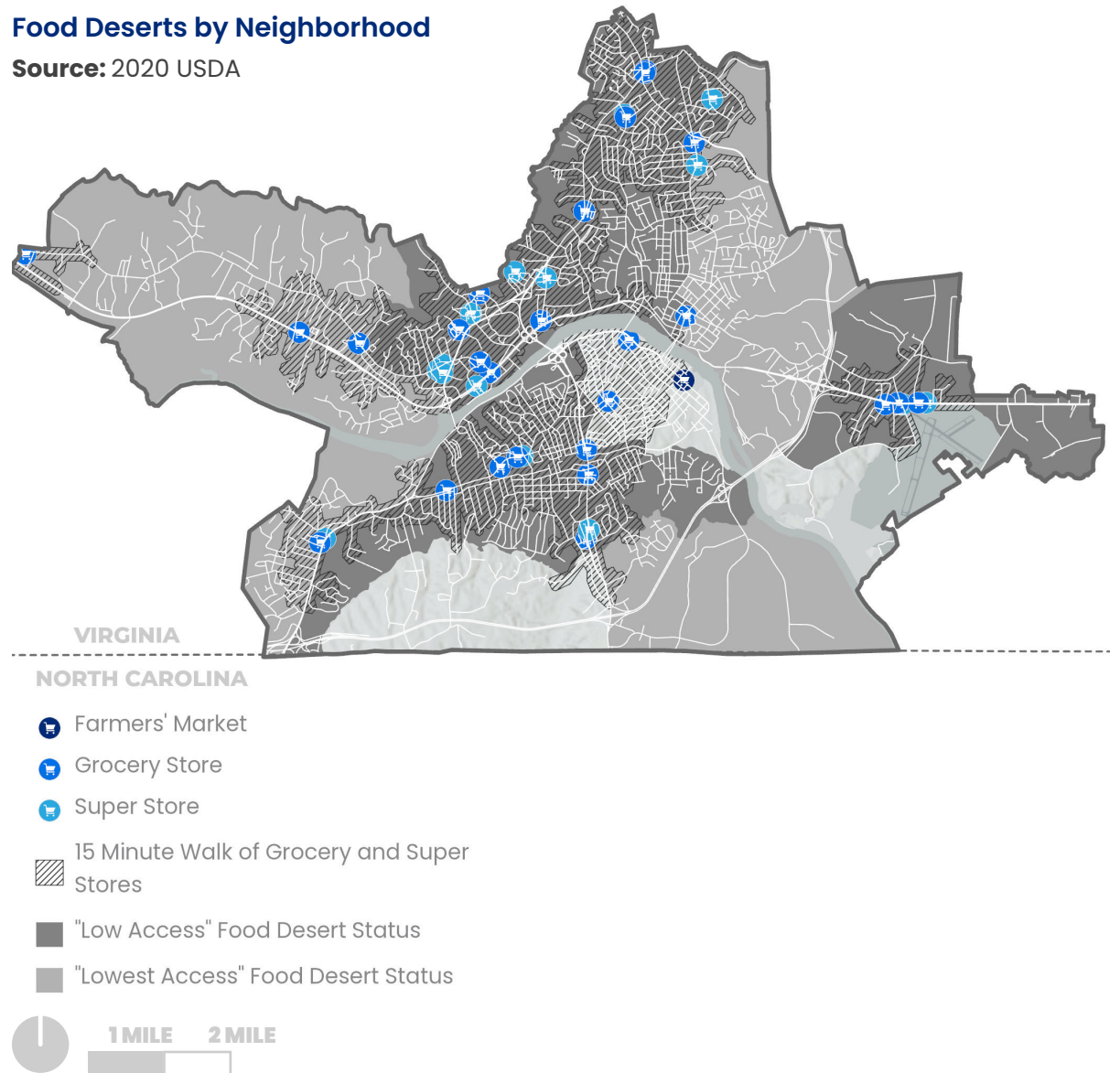
By land area, almost 90% of Danville is a food desert, as defined by the USDA. Within this area live over 38,200 residents of which 8,500 are in poverty (90% of all in poverty) and 3,400 households (83% of households in the city) are on SNAP/Food Stamps. Efforts to localize ag and food production, processing, manufacturing, distribution, and retailing activity should be sited in these areas wherever possible.

**Source:** 2021 American Community Survey Estimates



### Food Deserts by Neighborhood

**Source:** 2020 USDA





## Danville is working to expand food access.

In Danville, Virginia, various initiatives are undertaken to enhance access to food goods and services for the community:

- The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) offers benefits based on income and other criteria, helping families achieve a nutritionally adequate diet.
- The Mobile Food Pantry, managed by the Danville Housing Authority, delivers monthly food packages to residents, targeting underserved areas and relying on local donations.
- The Housing Authority of Danville provides monthly food boxes through its Resident Services' Food Pantry, available to all eligible residents without discrimination. These efforts are supported by community donations and volunteers.
- Feeding Southwest Virginia extends support to these programs, ensuring food availability from Danville to Roanoke, including mobile pantries and children's feeding programs. These initiatives collectively reflect Danville's dedication to combating food insecurity.





## Expanding past food access are several organizations working to support entrepreneurs seeking to open concepts and expand access locally:

- **Entrepreneur Ecosystem Dan River Region** are key partners in providing business planning services to small businesses looking to launch and sustain businesses locally.
- **River District Association** offered \$475,000 through a series of grants and business support programs to small businesses, many occupying the River District’s storefronts.
- **God’s Storehouse** works throughout the Danville and Pittsylvania County to collect and distribute food to residents in need. With support from the Chamber of Commerce, Optima Health, and other local stakeholders, God’s Storehouse distributed over 1 million pounds of food to communities in 2022 alone. Expanding this and other local efforts to improve food access is key to improving nutrition and health outcomes.
- **Movement Bank and American National Bank and Trust Company** addresses access to capital challenges with products designed for small businesses.
- **The Health Collaborative’s** 2021 Health Equity Plan, includes a number of recommendations for eliminating health disparities and increasing access to health care services within the Dan River Region, including:
  - ▶ Increasing local participation existing Federal safety net programs, such as Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).
  - ▶ Exploring the feasibility of a Guaranteed Income program to enable cost-burdened individuals and households to afford health care services and other basic needs.
  - ▶ Enhancing transit access by providing subsidized or free unlimited ride 30-day passes to families in target neighborhoods.
  - ▶ Encouraging eligible residents to take advantage of the Transit System’s half-fare program and “Handivan” service.
  - ▶ Subsidizing mass transit to large employers, health systems, or retail centers for low-income individuals and households.





## Learn from Leaders

### *Healthy Corner Stores*

National

In food deserts throughout the City and Danville region, residents lack access to affordable, nutritious food options, which can contribute to issues such as poor nutrition, diet-related diseases, and health disparities. While the solution to concentrated food insecurity may seem obvious – i.e., increasing access to grocery stores and supermarkets with fresh, healthy foods – the often razor thin margins of grocery retailers combined with the economic challenges of operating in lower-income neighborhoods (e.g., limited purchasing power, lower sales volume, etc.) can make opening new full-service grocery stores in food deserts economically unviable.

In cases where opening a new grocery store doesn't "pencil out," innovative strategies such as Healthy Corner Store Initiatives and mobile produce markets may offer complementary solutions to the challenge of food deserts in Danville.

Healthy Corner Store Initiatives are programs implemented by various state and local health departments to promote access to fresh and healthy food options in underserved communities. These initiatives typically provide convenience stores and other small retailers in food-insecure neighborhoods with grants or other financial incentives to offset the costs associated with stocking more nutritious food options such as fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grain foods. The Richmond Healthy Corner Store Initiative (RHSCI) was a VA-based collaboration between Shalom Farms and the Richmond City Health District that ran from 2012 to 2020, partnering with 19 corner stores to increase access to produce for low-income communities in Richmond. Similar Healthy Corner Store Initiatives have successfully increased access to nutritious foods in New Orleans, Milwaukee, Detroit, Philadelphia, and numerous other cities nationally.







## WHY IT MATTERS

### Business-to-business services are an emerging industry.

The “business-to-business” (B2B) cluster is composed of firms that provide a broad range of support activities to businesses (as opposed to consumers as B2C firms do). Clients are often anchor institutions or large firms that sell specialized goods and services in national and global markets, while B2B firms themselves are often small or mid-sized businesses.

Unlike specialized suppliers that are part of one or a small number of specific national or global supply chains—say, makers of parts for airplane engines—B2B firms often provide somewhat standard products and services across a range of clients in a trade area no bigger than a multi-county metropolitan area. Because of these demand and locational patterns, B2B firms are present in all local economies but often take on distinctive characteristics based on the dominant traded industries in the regional economy in which they operate.

B2B firms can engage in physical (e.g., product assembly, repair, storage, transport) or digital/managerial (payroll support, data services, staffing) activities. In the physical or “blue-collar” realm, B2B activities can take place off-site at the client’s location (e.g., facilities maintenance) or on-site at the B2B firm itself (e.g., wholesaling). In general, B2B activities in the digital-managerial or “white-collar” realm take place at the B2B firm itself.

Within B2B, there are 3 subclusters and many segments which economic analysts use to evaluate when there is potential for growth and investment. **Ten of the 19 B2B segments are strengths in the City or Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) but there are promising signs of growth within the Blue Collar subclusters.**

Blue Collar B2B Off-Site
Facilities Management
Local Transportation and Logistics
Local Trucking
Other Business Services
Repair and Servicing
Waste
Blue Collar B2B On-Site
Rental and Leasing
Warehousing and Storage
Wholesale – Auto
Wholesale – Construction
Wholesale – Consumer and Business
Wholesale – Energy/Chemical
Wholesale – Food
Wholesale – Healthcare
Wholesale – Other Industrial
Wholesale – Support
White Collar B2B
HR Services
Professional Services
Real Estate





## WHY IT MATTERS

The B2B cluster strengthens the overall economy, improves and reinforces local and regional supply chains, keeps more dollars locally, and provides accessible, middle-wage jobs to a diverse workforce and relatively strong MWBE entrepreneurship opportunities, with high average revenues per firm. One of the critical limiting factors for B2B firm growth – and MWBE B2B firms, especially – is access to capital. More specifically, challenges related to working capital are a structural condition for firms across the cluster. Because of these characteristics, availability of high-quality working capital options and extensive training in cash flow management are even more critical to B2B than to small businesses generally.





## WHY IT MATTERS

### Community health is a priority in the region.

In 2021, the Health Collaborative, a cross-sector group of residents working together to improve the health and well-being of the Dan River Region, released an update to its [2017 Dan River Region Health Equity Report](#) in partnership with the University of North Carolina Greensboro's Center for Housing and Community Studies. The [2021 Health Equity Report](#) identifies a number of needs and gaps in the region's health care system, as well as recommendations to close health disparities and improve access to care. Efforts to address the healthcare challenges described above and strengthen access to health care services in the region should leverage this existing body of work.

### There are opportunities to expand within the healthcare sector.

Access to healthcare is one of the critical community-identified needs and is an issue that disproportionately impacts lower income communities and people of color. The entirety of the Danville, all adjacent counties, and the broader area are all considered "[Medically Underserved](#)" by the U.S. Health Resources Administration. Countless statistics – residents in fair or poor health, premature deaths, and low life expectancies, to name a few – point to the need for more and better healthcare in the Danville region.

Danville has strengths in many healthcare industries and a 250-bed hospital, impressive considering national trends in hospital closures and consolidation. However, growth in healthcare industries in Danville and the surrounding area have lagged Virginia and the U.S.

Hospital employment has declined significantly in the city and surrounding area. This differs from state and national trends but is part of a trend in the downsizing and closure of smaller and rural hospitals across the U.S.

There are also critical gaps in the city and region's healthcare system, particularly around community health centers/clinics and family planning centers, which support women's and reproductive health (which is particularly concerning given the city's statistics on infant mortality, low birthweights, and STIs). The city and healthcare industry should also consider assessing the viability of additional federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), in addition to the PATHS Community Medical Center; Medicare-certified rural health clinics (RHCs); other satellite or branch locations of healthcare facilities and providers; mobile health clinics; and improved tele-health offerings to better address the medical needs of residents in the region.





## WHY IT MATTERS

### Telehealth is on the rise.

Geographic disparities in access to health care facilities across the United States are well-known, with lower-income, non-white, and rural communities disproportionately lacking access to vital health services.

Given the pressing need to address inequities in health care access and improve health outcomes, mobile health clinics have emerged as a powerful tool for expanding access to medical services, particularly for underserved populations.

According to Mobile Health Map, the only comprehensive national database of mobile clinics, there are an estimated 3,000 mobile clinics in the U.S. with 10 million visits each year. A study of Mobile Health Map data from 2007 to 2017 found that mobile clinics provide a median of nearly 3,500 visits annually, with more than half of their clients being women (55%) and racial/ethnic minorities (59%).

According to the Mobile Health Map, there are 22 mobile clinics throughout VA (and 64 in NC), as of September 2024. Originally deployed to distribute COVID-19 vaccinations throughout greater Danville in 2021, the PATHS Mobile Unit is now predominantly focused on provide medical and dental services to students at Danville-area schools. Outside of the PATHS Mobile Unit, no mobile clinics are located in or near the Danville PEA but, in addition to tele-health, more mobile health vans/buses could be part of the solution to bringing healthcare – including preventative, reproductive, or more specialized health services – to residents of all ages in the neighborhoods and communities within the city and region most in need.

### Learn from Leaders

#### Remote Area Medical Clinic

Rockford, TN

Headquartered in Rockford, TN, Remote Area Medical (RAM) Clinic's mobile clinics provide essential health care services, including dental, vision, and general medical care, directly to communities lacking adequate access. Services are offered completely free and clients are not required to bring proof of residency or insurance to receive services.

Since its inception in 1985, over 196,000 RAM volunteers – including health professionals and support staff – have treated more than 900,000 individuals and delivered nearly \$190 million worth of free health care services.

The mobile health clinic model is vital for reaching underserved communities, and as Danville explores strategies to improve healthcare accessibility and reduce disparities, the mobile health clinic model provides a tangible blueprint for fostering equitable healthcare delivery.



#### Goal 6. Economy

Policy E.1 Economic Resilience



## WHY IT MATTERS

### Stormwater engineering and design is a skill on the rise across the nation.

The green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) cluster is comprised of industries that:

- design and plan
- manufacture materials for green stormwater infrastructure
- wholesale materials for green stormwater infrastructure
- and build and maintain green stormwater infrastructure that mitigates flooding and stormwater impacts.

There are several benefits to these types of jobs.

- They have construction-related transferrable skills.
- They are very accessible (with the exception being designing and planning subclusters)
- They offer middle-wage jobs.
- They offer M/WBE entrepreneurship opportunities – especially for smaller firms and the self-employed.

While many skills are transferrable, it is worth noting that specialized training for workers – both current and pipeline – is required for aspects of the work.

While there are many regionally- and locally-run programs, the [National Green Infrastructure Certification Program](#) (NGICP) provides specialized training and professional certification in GSI activities. Importantly, the newly launched American Climate Corps may mean significant federal dollars and programming coming down the pipeline in the coming years in support of these types of efforts.

The GSI cluster overall is not currently a strength in Danville (or the PEA) but the region has strengths in the materials subcluster and both the city and PEA are strong in upstream materials manufacturing. The more “white collar” (and less accessible) designing and planning subcluster is notably weaker, small, and declining in both the city and region – potentially pointing to the need, at least early in the development and growth of the cluster, to partner with specialized design and planning firms from further afield. It is also encouraging to see that in recent years – over the 2019 to 2021 period – growth in the more blue collar subclusters has outperformed the U.S.





## Danville is tackling stormwater.

Danville’s current stormwater management and pollution prevention programs and ordinances include:

### The Erosion and Sediment Control Program

Specifies that before a land disturbing activity over 5K square feet occurs in the City of Danville, permits must be obtained to ensure that the activity complies with all laws and prevents any soil and sediment from washing into Danville’s public waters.

### Urban Stormwater Quality Management and Discharge Control Ordinance (Chapter 9, Article V, Division 7)

Prohibits non-stormwater discharges to the storm drain system.

### Stormwater Quality Management and Discharge Control Ordinance (Chapter 9, Article V)

Prohibits residents, businesses, and contractors from discharging illegal and harmful substances into Danville’s public drainage system.

### Virginia Stormwater Management Program (VSMP) Ordinance (Chapter 13, Article III)

Protects the quality and quantity of state waters from the potential harm of unmanaged stormwater.

### Erosion and Sediment Control Ordinance (Chapter 13)

Provides for the effective control of soil erosion, sediment deposition, and nonagricultural runoff into waters and other natural resources.

### Stormwater Management Program

Specifies that land disturbances of one acre or greater, or part of a “common plan” as defined by the Department of Conservation and Recreation, are required to obtain the Virginia Stormwater Management Program (VSMP) General Permit for Construction Activities.





## RECOMMENDATIONS & ACTIONS

### RECOMMENDATION

#### **E.1.1 Promote Sustainable Businesses**

Promote environmentally-friendly and socially-responsible food and agricultural businesses to stimulate sustainable agriculture, increase food security, protect natural resources, promote rural development, and create economic opportunities for farmers and rural communities.

### ACTIONS

1. Identify strengths, gaps, and opportunities in agriculture/ food industries to improve resilience and localize the food supply chain, including regional coordination through a cluster organization.
2. Address food insecurity and access challenges through programs like pop-up food retail, mobile produce markets, and urban agriculture in food deserts.
3. Explore implementing the “Healthy Corner Store Initiative” to improve fresh food access in convenience stores and promote mobile market options.
4. Assess the potential for a service or platform to connect food entrepreneurs with available real estate, potentially utilizing philanthropic funding for businesses in food deserts.
5. Evaluate the impact of “food branding” for Danville and the region, drawing inspiration from successful models like “Taste NY” and “Food City” to support local food brands and initiatives.





### RECOMMENDATION

## E.1.2 Support the Business-to-Business Industry

Expand industries that are focused on providing goods and services to other businesses through infrastructure development, access to finance, networking opportunities, and skills development programs.

### ACTIONS

1. Research and catalogue big purchasers to connect with smaller suppliers to establish a collaborative business-to-business (B2B) program.
2. Create a B2B Working Group that includes representatives from B2B firms, anchor institutions, and business support organizations, with a focus on promoting inclusive growth and meeting local contracting requirements.
3. Implement a customized capital strategy for Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBE) in the B2B sector, addressing the challenges they face in accessing working capital. Conduct surveys of businesses and engaging with regional lenders.
4. Support the development of flexible and shared spaces for B2B firms throughout the city, by facilitating needs assessment for real estate and assisting in land assembly efforts, particularly in downtown and industrial areas.







## RECOMMENDATIONS & ACTIONS

### RECOMMENDATION

#### **E.1.3** **Support Accessible Healthcare**

Incentivize the growth and innovation of healthcare businesses like maternal health, clinics, and other medical facilities to enhance both physical and financial access to healthcare services within the community.

### ACTIONS

1. Consider assessing the viability of new or expanded facilities as an economic opportunity for needed medical services in the area, including:
  - Federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), in addition to the PATHS Community Medical Center;
  - Medicare-certified rural health clinics (RHCs)
  - Other satellite or branch locations of healthcare facilities and providers
2. Support the growth of existing health care facilities to support women's health and maternal care.
3. Improve access to healthcare through improved bus connections, tele-health, and mobile clinics.





### RECOMMENDATION

#### **E.1.4** **Encourage the Growth of Green Industries**

Foster the growth and innovation of businesses that specialize in sustainable infrastructure solutions such as renewable energy, eco-friendly construction, green transportation, and water management.

### ACTIONS

1. Prioritize local businesses specializing in green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) in public RFPs for capital projects.
2. Assess and track investments in GSI cluster, including savings from reduced flooding, job creation, wages, and support for local GSI businesses.
3. Invest in workforce readiness programs that align with industry diversification, fostering collaboration between educational institutions, workforce development organizations, and local businesses, including enhanced training and formal apprenticeships for GSI and emerging industries.
4. Keep city staff apprised of current state and federal stormwater management regulations, as well as Best Management Practices for reducing stormwater runoff
5. Implement a Stormwater Management Inspection Program to ensure the proper maintenance and operation of private BMP structures
6. Develop a Regional Stormwater Management Plan that emphasizes regional BMPs over small, onsite systems
7. Consider establishing a Stormwater Utility to help cover the cost of maintenance and improvements to the public stormwater management systems



## How to Incentivize Green Stormwater Infrastructure

Communities across the nation have implemented many government programs that could be implemented in Danville if federal or state funding were available to develop them.

Programs can incentivize green stormwater infrastructure, which puts less strain on city systems, supports the environment, and grows this economic industry in the area.

- Green Roof Density Bonus: higher allowable residential densities for green roofs [Philadelphia, PA]
- Green Roof Tax Credit: up to \$100,000 for green roof construction costs for businesses [Philadelphia, PA]
- Stormwater Management Incentive Program: grant funding up to \$100,000 per managed impervious acre, for non-residential properties [Philadelphia, PA]
- Greened Acre Retrofit Program (GARP): grant funding up to \$90,000 per managed impervious acre, for multi-property programs [Philadelphia, PA]
- Stormwater Credits Program: reduced stormwater bills for e.g., pervious surfaces [Philadelphia, PA]
- Stormwater Retention Credits (SRC) Trading: Program that enables property owners to sell their stormwater credits achieved by installing GSI to noncompliant properties [Washington, DC]
- DWSD Capital Partnership Program: Funding program designed to support the design and installation of GSI by nonresidential customers in the form of a 50/50 matching reimbursable grant of up to \$50,000 [Wayne County, MI]



## How To Create Green Stormwater Infrastructure Workforce Opportunities

PowerCorpsPHL is a paid, 4 to 24 month workforce development program (part of Philadelphia's AmeriCorps) that trains un- and under-employed residents ages 18 to 30 in clean energy and green infrastructure careers (as well as more general work readiness skills). PowerCorpsPHL participants work closely with the Philadelphia Water Department's GSI Maintenance Team, receiving technical training, work experience, and transferable skills, while helping to maintain the city's GSI. Upon completion of the program, PowerCorpsPHL participants are connected to area employers to explore jobs in GSI and adjacent industries.

Similarly, DC Water offers training in GSI installation, inspection, and maintenance through a program launched in partnership with the Water Environment Federation (WEF). Housed within WEF's Stormwater Institute, the training

program offers DC residents of all ages the opportunity to not only gain valuable hands-on experience but also to become certified via the National Green Infrastructure Certification Program (NGICP).

These and other programs address critical workforce needs in sustainable stormwater management and green infrastructure implementation. Adopting a similar model in Danville could involve collaboration between area educational institutions, workforce development agencies, and industry stakeholders to establish a local GSI workforce training program. A key component would be the integration of NGICP certification, equipping participants with the knowledge and skills needed to support the green infrastructure sector locally while gaining a nationally-recognized credential.





Tourism is newer for the area but we think it could really support our small businesses.

*- 2023 Economy and Retail Roundtable*



## RECOMMENDATIONS & ACTIONS

### RECOMMENDATION

#### **E.1.5 Strengthen Tourism**

Build and strengthen the tourism sector, building off Danville's natural assets and resort development.

### ACTIONS

1. Implement the Schoolfield District Plan to build a vibrant mixed-use node to complement the Caesar's resort campus.
2. Support eco-tourism opportunities through the recommendations of Chapter 7. Environment.
3. Support arts and culture tourism opportunities through the recommendations of Chapter 8. Culture
4. Support the Virginia Tourism Corporation to ensure an adequate supply of lodging and visitor uses.



## POLICY

### E.2

# Economic Development

Implement a holistic economic development strategy to attract investments, create jobs, and boost prosperity.

Economic development is a means of supporting a vibrant, diverse, and inclusive economy in the City of Danville for existing and future business owners alike. The following section focuses on the linkages between real estate and the economy and, in particular, supporting the land, real estate, placemaking, and corridor needs of businesses.

## Desired Outcomes

- Reduced vacancy and underutilization of land and buildings
- Improved, more vibrant commercial corridors - through infill (re) development - and improved access to goods and services
- Creation of larger sites (parcel assemblies) for more impactful development
- Better, more accessible and inclusive jobs on sites (e.g., through more directed development)



**Goal 6. Economy**

Policy E.2 Economic Development

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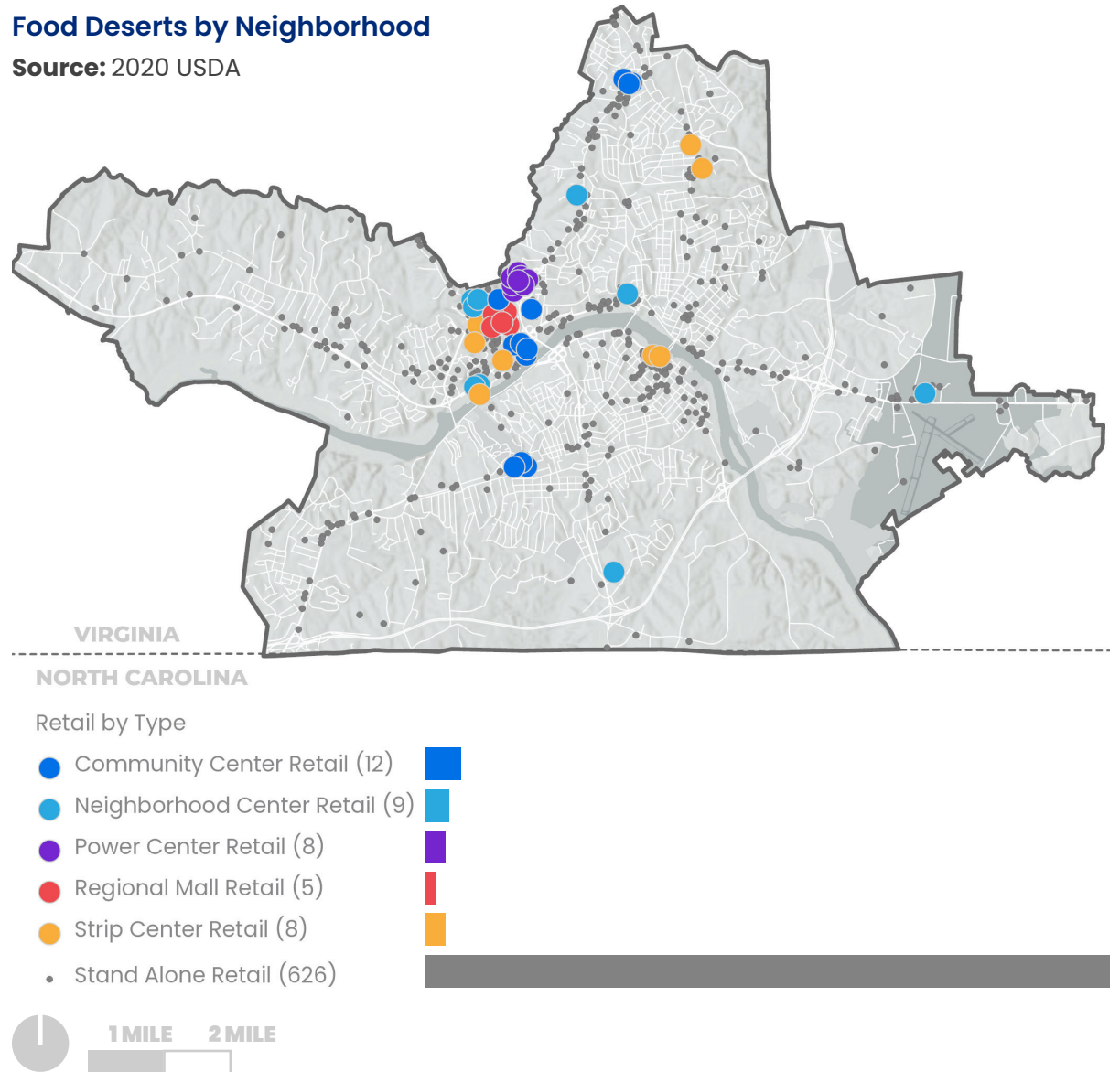
## WHY IT MATTERS

### Retail development is central to Danville's neighborhoods.

From storefronts to distribution centers, real estate remains a critical component for retailer success. This reality reflects how retail demand generated in-person and online centers neighborhoods outside of the downtown core, a trend quickly advanced following the pandemic. Bedroom communities are experiencing a renaissance with a mix of neighborhood serving and food/ beverage tenants driving leasing activities. In Danville, there is over \_\_\_ acres of commercial real estate located outside of the retail core in the River District and the big box node surrounding Piedmont Drive and Mount Cross Road. Focusing on making mixed-use neighborhood centers outside of these geographies will complement the retail core.

### Food Deserts by Neighborhood

Source: 2020 USDA



### Goal 6. Economy

Policy E.2 Economic Development





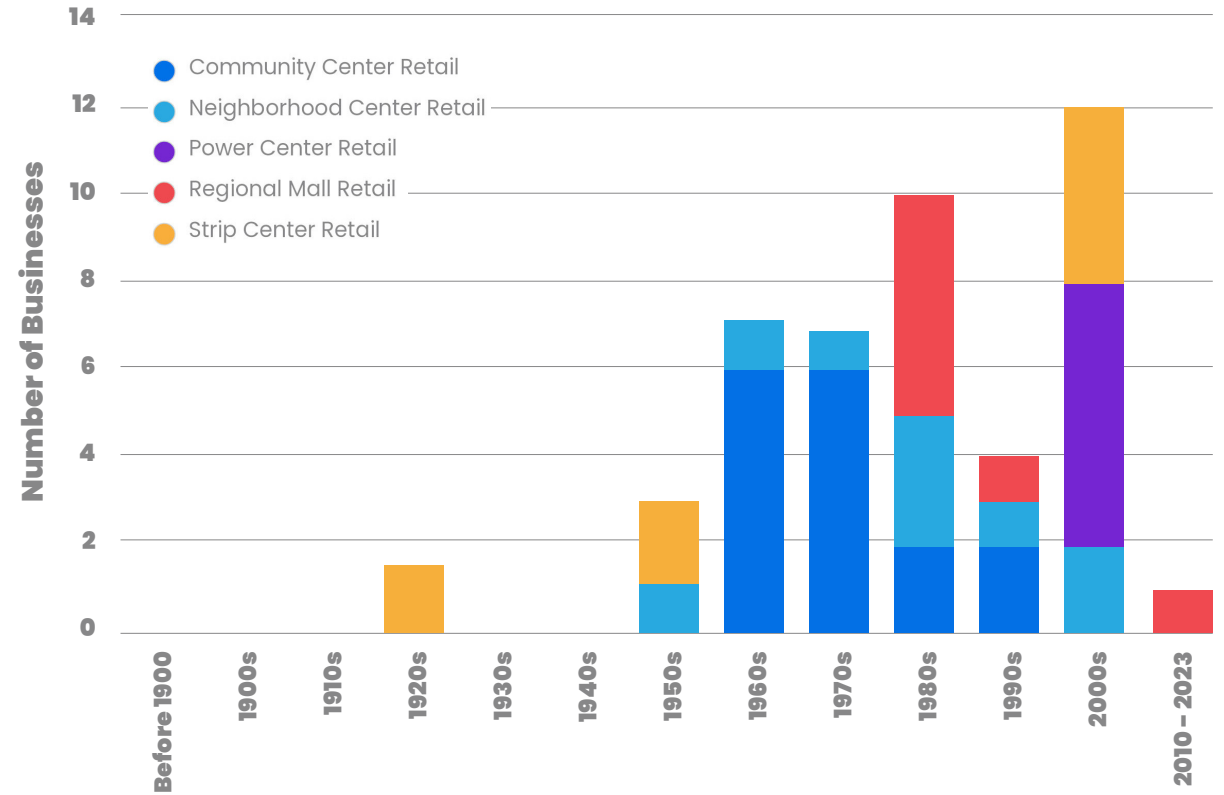
## WHY IT MATTERS

### Old shopping centers create new opportunities.

An active mixed-use neighborhood center strategy is rooted in an ability to reinvest in and retain strip centers with a goal of providing increased access to goods and services. The majority of Danville's many shopping centers were developed prior to 2010. These centers account for over 241,866 square feet of vacant property. Danville Mall, presents an opportunity ripe for redevelopment efforts to include multi-tenant spaces, multifamily residential development, and/or other forms of new construction to activate the vacant spaces or parking lots. In tandem with redevelopment, placemaking improvements are required to create vibrant communities and shopping districts residents and visitors alike want to patronize regularly.

### Retail over Time

Source: 2024 &Access



### Goal 6. Economy

Policy E.2 Economic Development



## Danville supports the commercial development community through a range of opportunities, including:

**The River District Developer Grant (RDDG)** is a strategic initiative designed to foster development in the city's River District. It offers financial assistance to developers renovating historic properties within this area, providing a grant that equals up to 5% of qualified expenses. However, developers must choose between the RDDG and other grants like the Technology Enhancement Grant (TEG) or Industrial Enhancement Grant (IEG). The RDDG prioritizes funding for projects that generate significant job opportunities, particularly those in sectors like back office operations, headquarters, research and development, and technology.

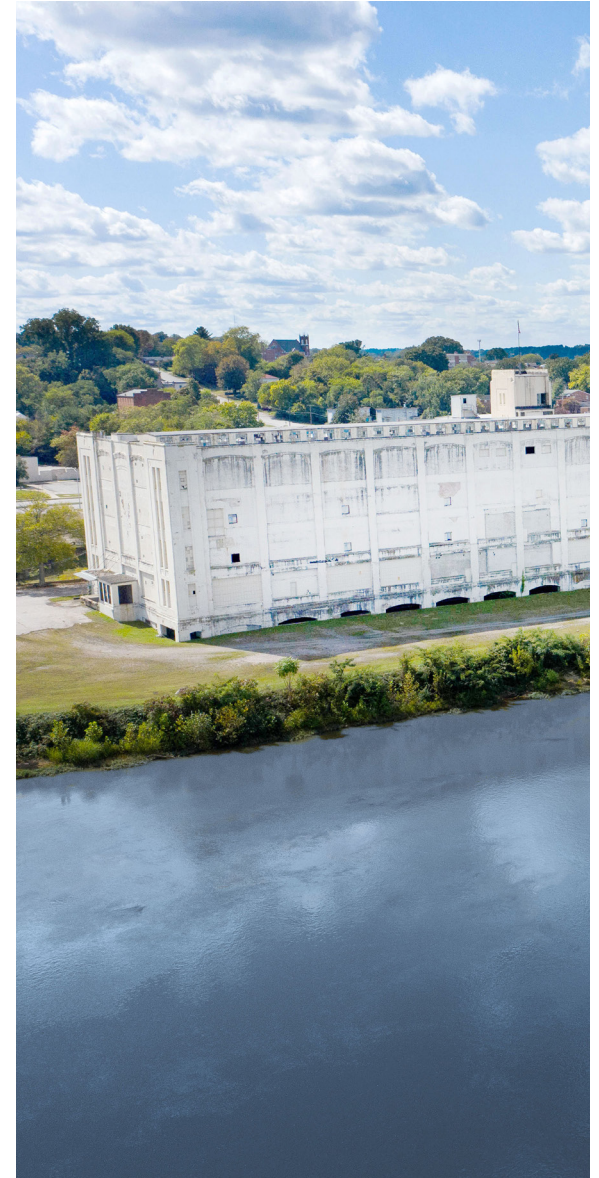
**The Danville Enterprise Zone Program**, managed by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, the program is designed to offer state and local incentives for businesses to locate or expand within the

designated zone. Danville has two enterprise zone designations, consisting of 3,652 acres of commercial, industrial, retail, and office spaces.

Danville utilizes these tools in commercial and retail real estate development, including the landmark projects:

**Dan River Falls Development**, a multi-use project that will feature 110,000 square feet of commercial space and 150 apartments. Another 100 apartments are planned in a future phase. The first phase is currently projected to generate a minimum total investment of \$62.5 million.

**Caesars Virginia**, \$500 million premier destination resort casino which is set to bring 900 construction jobs during the construction period and 1,300 new jobs to the area.





## The City provides multiple incentives to support industrial development.

### Industrial Enhancement Grant (IEG)

The IEG program provides tax rebates (typically 50–70% of taxes paid) for business that utilize advanced manufacturing techniques and provide jobs paying wages above the median income of the Danville region. Qualifying businesses must create at least 20 new full-time jobs and have a minimum taxable capital investment of \$1M.

### Technology Enhancement Grant (TEG)

The TEG program provides tax rebates (typically 50–70% of taxes paid) for technology businesses that increases the number of living wage jobs in the region, diversifies the local economy, and attracts a workforce with new skillsets. Qualifying businesses must create at least 10 new full-time jobs and have a minimum taxable capital investment of \$250K.

### River District Developer Grant

This program provides developers renovating historic properties within the River District access to grant funding equaling 5% of qualified expenses. The program prioritizes funding for: back office, headquarters, research and development, and technology companies that will employ a significant number of people with above median salaries; upscale restaurants and unique eateries; and niche retailers that will not compete directly with any other current business in Danville.

### Build to Suit, or Renovation of Existing Facility for Lease

For qualified businesses interested in a lease/purchase arrangement, the Industrial Development Authority will consider a financing mechanism where payments amortize the principal necessary for the project.

### Land Cost Write Down

For projects requiring a greenfield development site, Danville typically offers land at little or no cost in an established business park.

### Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) Revolving Loan Program

Reserved for small business owners, the RBEG loan program provides up to \$25K at 4% with a negotiated term not to exceed 10 years.

### Danville Regional Foundation (DRF) Economic Development Grants

The DRF supports local economic development projects with grants that can bolster incentives for new industry or build the capacity of local economic and small business development organizations.

### Other

Other incentives offered by the City of Danville to new/growing industrial businesses include: Accelerated Fast Track Permitting, Assistance, Historic Tax Credits, New Market Tax Credits, and loans available through the IDA.





### Enterprise Zone Program

This program, managed by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, provides special state and local incentives to developments inside the zones. The program is designed to offer state and local incentives for businesses to locate or expand within the designated zone. Danville has two enterprise zone designations, consisting of 3,652 acres of commercial, industrial, retail and office spaces.

### The Virginia Economic Development Loan Fund

This loan fund can be used to buy land, buildings, machinery, equipment, or make improvements.

### The Loan Guaranty Fund

The fund offered by the Virginia Small Business Financing Authority provides guarantees on loans or lines of credit to Virginia businesses.





### RECOMMENDATION

## E.2.1 Strengthen the Redevelopment Process

Enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the redevelopment process for industrial and commercial business hubs within the city to attract new businesses, stimulate economic growth, create job opportunities, and enhance the overall vibrancy.

### ACTIONS

1. Create a detailed inventory of vacant and underutilized land for potential industrial parcel assemblies and strategic relocations.

#### Action Steps

- 1.a. Catalog, assess, and evaluate inventory and update throughout the year as ownership, zoning, vacancy, and underutilization evolve.
- 1.b. Identify current and potential sites for development (including and beyond the “Certified Industrial Sites from the VA Economic Development Partnership”).
  - Special attention should be paid to both the number of unique parcel owners within the site – the fewer the easier and cheaper to assemble and develop.

- Attention should also be paid to the acreage owned by the City or other public land owner – as public land holdings can be given or sold at a discount to the other, private parcel owner(s) or a developer in exchange for City requirements with respect to what is developed on the site (e.g., number or type of jobs, specific uses, etc).
- 1.c. Monitor parcels adjacent to the “Certified Industrial Sites” to determine if they can be acquired for the purposes of expanding these sites for development throughout Danville, and reserve smaller and/or isolated parcels for industries with lower and/or more flexible land demands (e.g., B2B industries, some food manufacturers and other small manufacturers or wholesalers, GSI industries, etc.).





## RECOMMENDATIONS & ACTIONS

2. Encourage the redevelopment and reinvestment of existing business districts as economic hubs.

### Action Steps

- 2.a. Identify any existing, adjacent or nearby businesses in need of expansion or relocation space and weigh any/all surrounding community input on (un)desired uses on site.
- 2.b. Develop a sidelot and “sidebiz” program for suitable smaller vacant parcels/buildings (or assemblies thereof) for both neighborhood residents and, potentially, local business owners; part of broader effort to support existing business districts and corridors as economic hubs with infill opportunities.

- 2.c. Expand existing and develop new financial incentives (e.g., Danville River District Developer Grant, Danville’s Enterprise Zone Program, Economic Incentive Areas or scattered site tax increment financing) that aid landlords in supporting small businesses and achieving required rents from reinvestment and redevelopment, including multi-family opportunities to meet the unmet housing demand (2,323 apartment units as defined in the 2023 Housing Study).
- 2.d. Encourage activation of parking lots with placemaking, green space, cafe seating, modern loading/delivery and curbside pickup/drop off infrastructure, among other interventions to address retail trends.



### Goal 6. Economy

Policy E.2 Economic Development

## How to Assemble Undeveloped Land

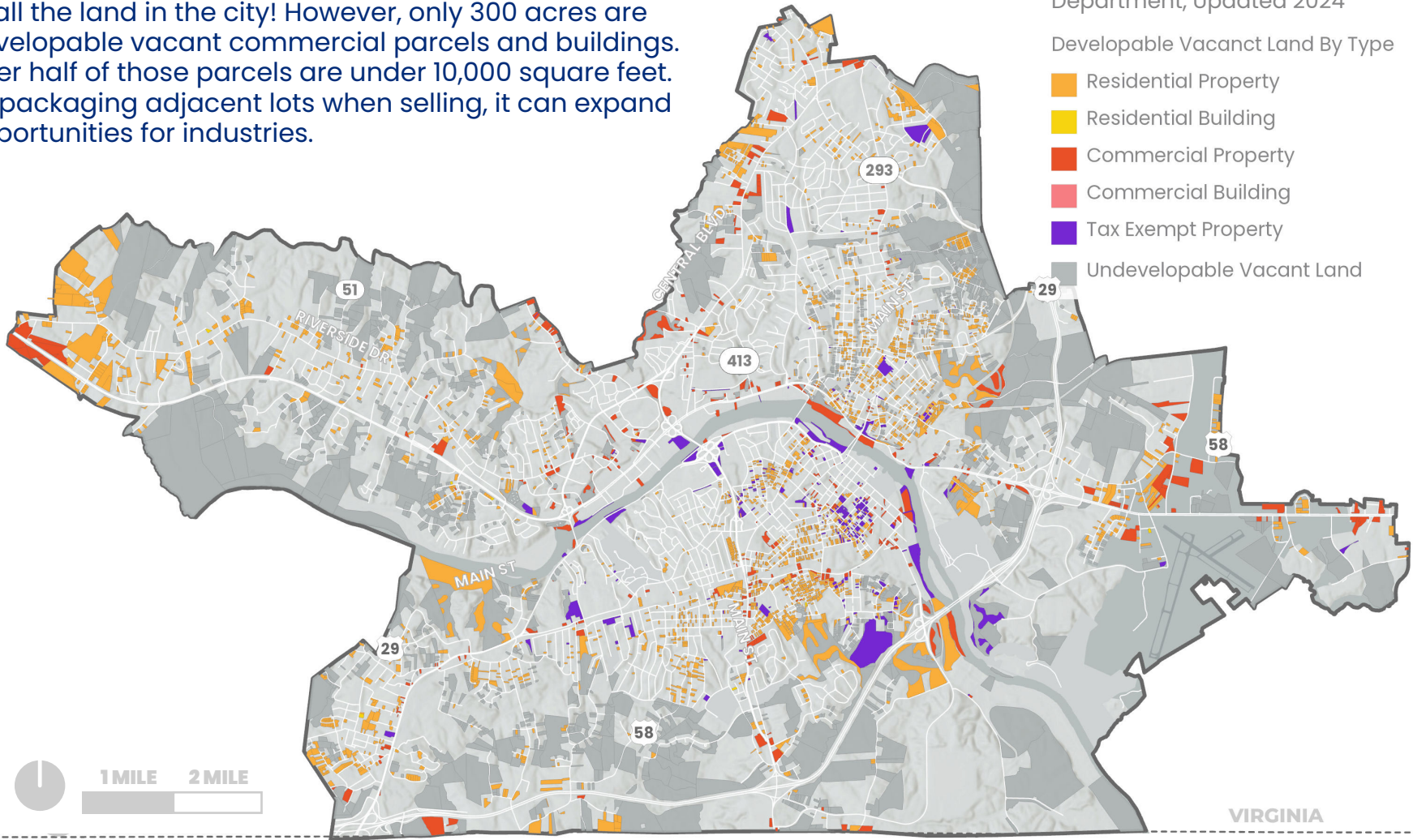
Danville has 7,789 acres of undeveloped land. That's 32% of all the land in the city! However, only 300 acres are developable vacant commercial parcels and buildings. Over half of those parcels are under 10,000 square feet. By packaging adjacent lots when selling, it can expand opportunities for industries.

### Developable Land

**Source:** Danville GIS Department, Updated 2024

Developable Vacant Land By Type

- Residential Property
- Residential Building
- Commercial Property
- Commercial Building
- Tax Exempt Property
- Undevelopable Vacant Land





## Learn from Leaders

### Land Assembly

Cuyahoga County, OH

The strategic land assembly efforts undertaken by the Cuyahoga Land Bank exemplify a proactive approach to advancing local economic development. Based in Cleveland, OH and working across Cuyahoga County, the Cuyahoga Land Bank strategically engages in land assembly as a central tool to fulfill its mission of revitalizing non-productive, vacant, and abandoned properties in the county.

By assembling smaller parcels into larger development sites, the Land Bank has enabled large-scale housing and commercial development projects such as a 900,000-square-foot Amazon fulfillment center opened in North Randall, OH in 2019. This transformative project not only breathed new life into a once-declining shopping mall but also substantially boosted the City's income tax base.

To facilitate its strategic land assembly and identify opportunity sites, the Land Bank has developed a comprehensive database of parcels owned by the Cuyahoga Land Bank or a municipal land bank, eligible for tax foreclosure, and/or listed on State forfeiture, with overlays for vacancy and abandonment.

By adopting a similar approach to cataloging, assessing, and updating information on under-utilized parcels, and aligning its land assembly strategy to meet the demands of current and future target clusters, Danville can leverage land assembly as a catalyst for economic revitalization and industrial development.

See Appendix 4. Case Studies to learn more about how similar practices were used for the Atlanta Beltline and in St. Louis.





## RECOMMENDATIONS & ACTIONS

### RECOMMENDATION

## E.2.2 Invest in Commercial Districts

Enrich the distinctive character of Danville’s commercial districts through strategic investments in physical assets to attract visitors, encourage business growth, stimulate economic activity, and foster a sense of pride and belonging among residents.

### ACTIONS

1. Define retail districts and corridors with soft boundaries and connections to nearby natural assets; consider aligning with “Focus Corridors” and other planning commercial real estate efforts.
2. Discourage scattered site retail development outside of defined retail districts and corridors.
3. Institute a place management organization for each retail district/corridor, including Main Street, business improvement districts, and private landlords.
4. Utilize wayfinding and placemaking to amplify the commercial district success and attract tourists, residents, and employees.
5. Align festivals and event sites nearby with accessible connections to retail districts/corridors.
6. Identify anchoring catalytic projects in key reinvestment areas that promote patronage.





## Learn from Leaders

### Mixed-Use Redevelopment

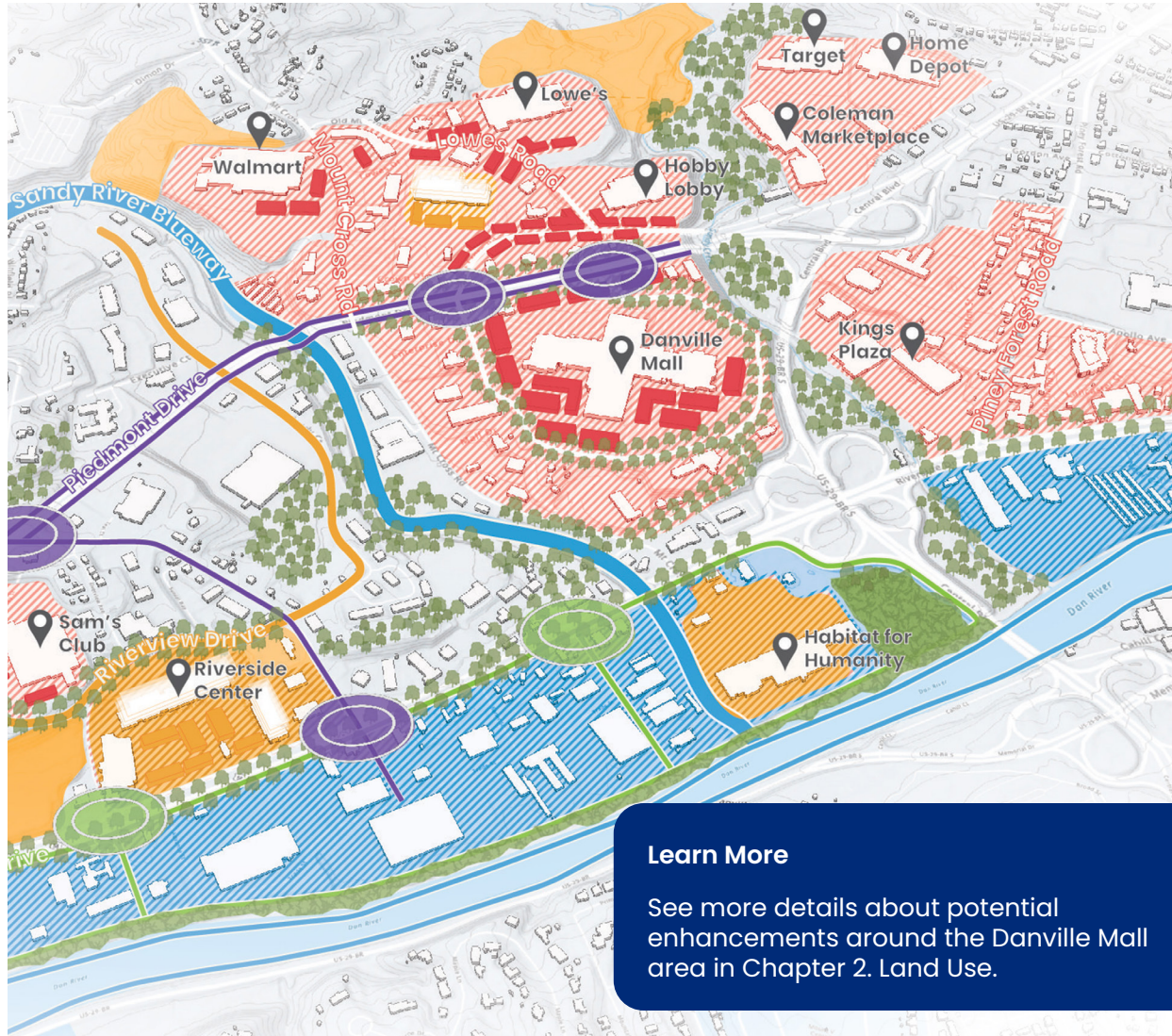
Pittsburgh, PA

Pittsburgh Yards is a 31-acre, mixed-use, phased redevelopment project located on the southern portion of the Atlanta BeltLine in an economically distressed neighborhood. A “buy / clean / hold” strategy with intensive community engagement and the release of a RFQ “with guardrails” was used to guide potential uses by the site’s owner, the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

The first phase includes 61K square feet of adaptive reuse development with space for ~100 diverse businesses (light industrial, administrative, creative, etc.) offering living wage jobs and various infrastructure improvements (e.g., roads, sewer, stormwater, amenities). It provides open space and pedestrian connections to the Atlanta Beltline trail and later phases will include additional space for businesses, events, and neighborhood functions. The project goals include:

- At least 50% of new hires for phase I construction will be local residents.
- At least 30% of the contracted construction values will go to local, minority- and/or women-owned businesses.
- At least 30% of contracted predevelopment services will go to local-, minority- and/or women-owned businesses.
- At least 50% of the new permanent entry- and mid-level jobs will be focused on local residents.
- Proactively address zoning and entitlement challenges to mixed use development on commercial corridors and in retail districts.





**Learn More**  
See more details about potential enhancements around the Danville Mall area in Chapter 2. Land Use.

## Learn from Leaders

### *Mall Redevelopment* National

Over the last decade, malls across the United States have grappled with vacant stores due to changing community behaviors and the rise of e-commerce. To address this issue, various case studies highlight strategies for redeveloping shopping centers into mixed-use developments, aiming to attract residents, enhance local economies, and increase tax revenues. Three specific mall redevelopment projects in Florida, California, and Wisconsin illustrate efforts to transform these properties for twenty-first-century communities, with private equity, state, and federal funds playing pivotal financial roles. To achieve this result at the Danville Mall, similar tax increment financing is recommended with zoning changes to ensure development is by-right.

## How to Redevelop Strip Centers

The Five Forks neighborhood in Danville, Virginia, stands at a crossroads of opportunity and revitalization. Strategically positioned within a three-minute drive of the vibrant downtown core, Five Forks possesses 15 properties owned by public entities, primarily the “Danville Redevelopment and Housing Authority” and the “Industrial Development Authority of Danville Virginia”. An initial focus on a Food and Beverage tenant mix at 260 Jefferson Avenue and 770 Loyal Street will anchor the corner at this intersection with an opportunity to root in a customer base by relocating one of the city’s departments into the second floor of 260 Jefferson Avenue. By enlivening this node with the initial investments, an opportunity exists to further redevelop and revitalize the surrounding parcels.

**Photo Source:** TCA Architects



## Learn from Leaders

### *Strip Center Redevelopment*

Santa Ana, CA

La Placita Cinco in Santa Ana, California, is an innovative redevelopment case study, transforming the underused Tiny Tim Plaza into a mixed-use community. It repurposed a gas station and parking lot into a new building with 51 multi-bedroom affordable homes for lower-income households and community spaces on the ground floor. The project, spearheaded by Community Development Partners with City Fabrick, TCA Architects, and Walton Construction, also revitalized existing commercial structures, improving façades and accessibility in line with ADA standards. The development promotes active lifestyles with landscaped plazas and a mini-park featuring a playground and fitness space. Funded by a 9% Low-Income Housing Tax Credit and city financing, it demonstrates a collaborative urban renewal with a focus on affordable housing and community integration.

## POLICY

### E.3

# Small Business Support

Support small businesses and entrepreneurs by providing resources, technical assistance, and financial incentives to promote their success.

Small businesses are the beloved establishments that represent the culture and identity of the city. However, many entrepreneurs and small business owners are challenged by a limited ability to access financial, social, and political capital to support their success. The goal of rooting Small Business Support in the Comprehensive Plan is to not only stimulate economic development and job creation but also contribute to the overall vibrancy and resilience of the local economy, enhancing quality of life for residents and strengthening the community fabric.

## Desired Outcomes

- A shared understanding of the current racial, ethnic, and gender gaps in economic outcomes (e.g., income, wages, entrepreneurship rates, etc.) and progress towards closing these gaps
- A more robust, efficient and effective business support organization ecosystem in greater Danville
- Reduced food and health deserts



### Goal 6. Economy

Policy E.3 Small Business Support





## WHY IT MATTERS

### **Wage disparities exist**

While there is diversity among the workforce, significant wage disparities exist, with women and BIPOC workers earning less compared to their counterparts.

Danville has lower levels of minority-owned business enterprises (MBEs) but relatively high levels of women-owned business enterprises (WBEs), with contrasting performance compared to national trends.

Job access challenges persist, particularly for individuals without access to private vehicles, impacting physical and commuter flows.

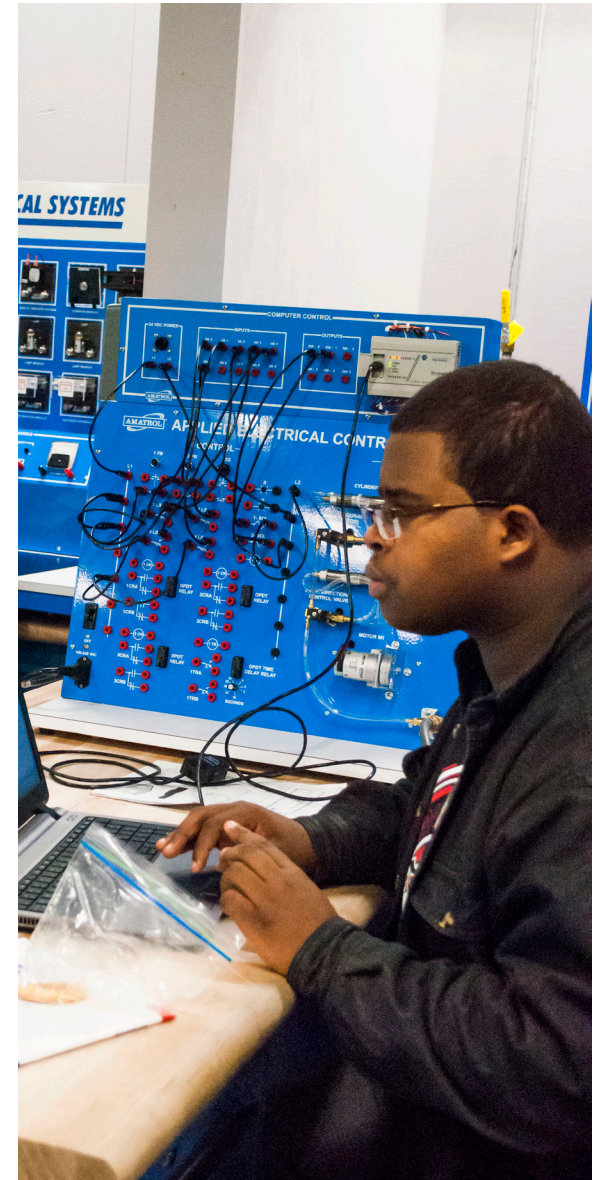
### **Danville has a stable retail market.**

Retail in Danville remained stable in establishment count, employment, and wages from 2017 to 2021, except for notable losses in Food Services and Personal & Laundry Services during the initial COVID closure period.

Total quarterly wages in Personal & Laundry Services have not returned to pre-pandemic levels when comparing 2020 to 2021.

### **There is an increased cost of living, which impacts employees and staff recruitment.**

Annual household expenditures in Danville grew at a faster rate than the national consumer price index from 2016 to 2020, indicating an increase in the cost of living relative to national trends.





## WHY IT MATTERS

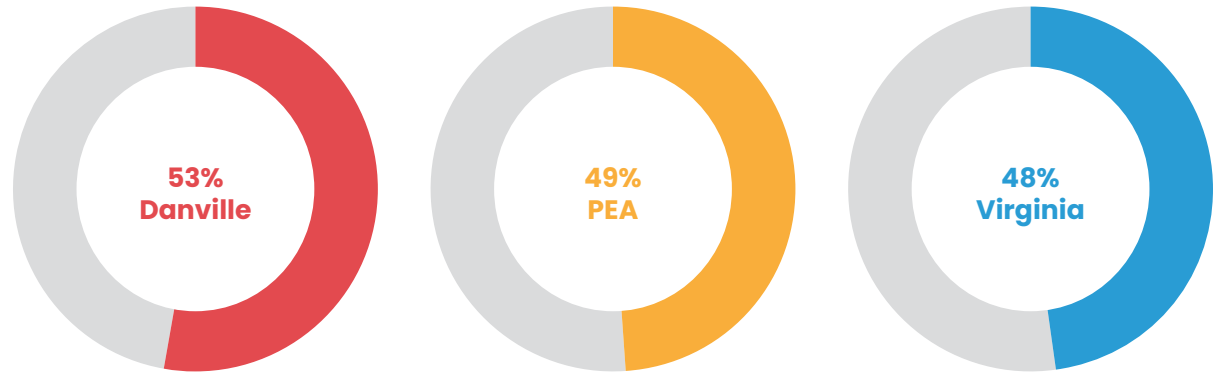
### One of Danville’s key strengths is its diversity.

Compared to the PEA and Virginia overall, the City of Danville has a higher share of women workers; in 2021, 53% of Danville’s workers were female, compared to 49% and 48% in the PEA and Virginia, respectively. The city also has a higher share of Black workers; about one-third of the city’s workers are Black, compared to 27% in the PEA and 21% in Virginia.

### But opportunities and prosperity are not widely shared by different demographic groups.

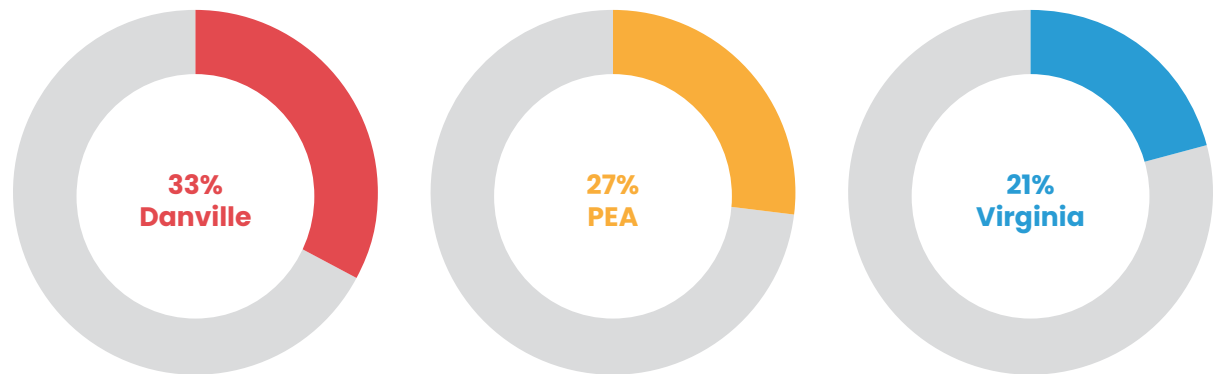
### Ratio of Female Workers by Geography

Source: 2021 US Census Bureau; Mass Economics analysis



### Ratio of Black and African American Workers by Geography

Source: 2021 US Census Bureau; Mass Economics analysis





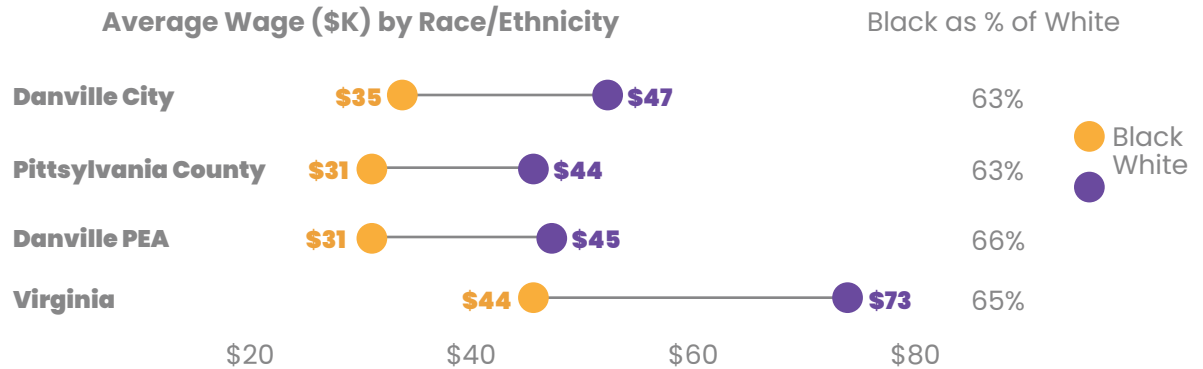
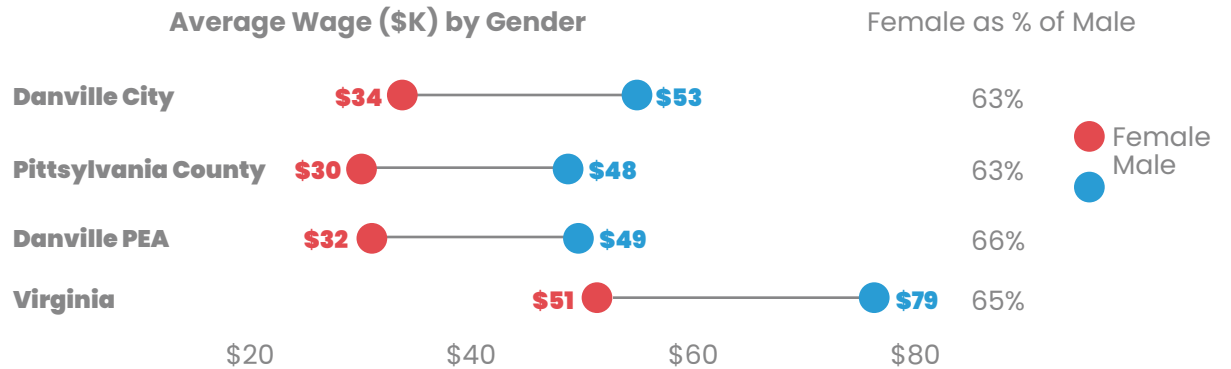
## WHY IT MATTERS

### Earnings show dramatic differences by sex and race/ethnicity.

Women in the city earned just 63% of what their male counterparts earned on average in 2021 (\$33.7K vs. \$53.2K), and Black, non-Hispanic workers earned just 73% of what white, non-Hispanic workers earned on average (\$34.8K vs. \$47.5K). The ratio for women workers is lower compared to both the PEA (66%) and VA (65%) while the ratio for Black workers is higher than the PEA (70%) and VA (just 60%). While both of these ratios have fluctuated year to year over the past two decades, the gap for women has been closing (i.e., the ratio has increased) while the gap for Black workers has remained relatively constant, hovering around 71%.

### Wage Gap by Job Holder

Source: 2021 US Census Bureau, Quarterly Workforce Indicators; Mass Economics analysis







## WHY IT MATTERS

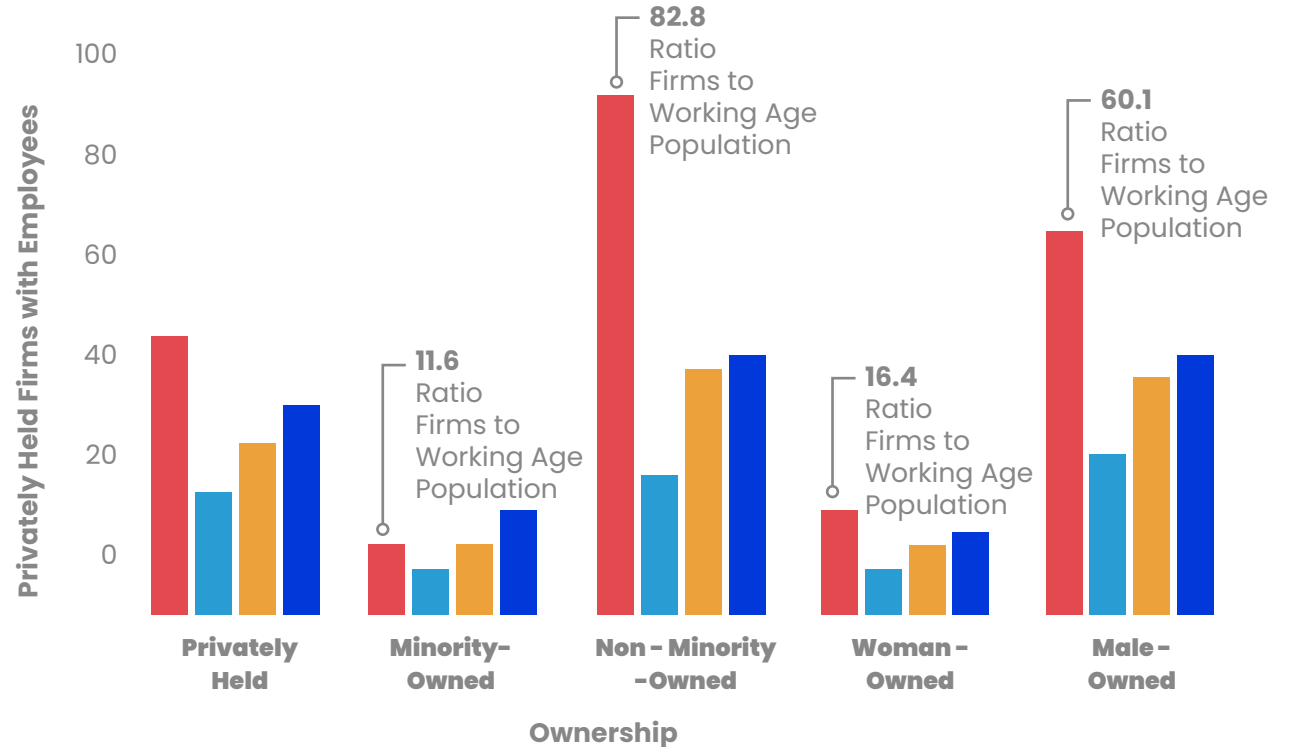
### People of color and women own businesses at lower rates.

Business ownership rates reflect the number of privately-held businesses relative to the size of the population. In Danville, the overall business ownership rate is higher than the U.S., but the business ownership rate for people of color (or minority business enterprises, MBE, rate) is lower than the U.S. People of color own businesses at just 14% the rate of white people.

Though business ownership rates for females (or women business enterprises, WBEs) are higher in Danville than the U.S. overall, they are less than one-third the rate of males.

### Business Ownership Rates by Geography

Source: 2017 US Census Bureau; Mass Economics analysis



- Danville City
- Pittsylvania County
- Danville MSA
- U.S.



### Goal 6. Economy

Policy E.3 Small Business Support



## WHY IT MATTERS

### Businesses owned by people of color and women tend to be smaller and report lower revenues.

While MBEs and WBEs have lower average jobs, revenues, and payroll per firm, compared to their male-owned and White-owned counterparts, respectively, MBEs in the city of Danville provide higher average wages than White-owned businesses. This is in contrast to the rest of the U.S. In Danville, people of color are 7 times less likely to own a business than their white counterparts; women are almost 4 times less likely than their male counterparts.



People of color are **7 times less likely** to own a business than their white counterparts in Danville.



Women are almost **4 times less likely** to own a business than their male counterparts.





## WHY IT MATTERS

### Danville businesses face significant hurdles when it comes to accessing capital.

At least a portion of the inequitable outcomes facing business owners can be traced back to challenges in accessing capital and how those challenges are perpetuated along racial, spatial, and gender-based lines. When it comes to small business lending, business owners in the City of Danville face particularly grim circumstances. Across traditional bank small business loans (for <\$1M) of all sizes, Danville reports lower lending levels than the U.S., Pittsylvania County, and the PEA (after normalizing by the size of the economy, which is estimated by the number of private sector jobs). The low levels to businesses with less than \$1M in revenue and for <\$100K are especially troubling, as these loans are more likely to go to smaller and micro businesses. Furthermore, small farms in the PEA also receive only about half the dollar loan value (per 1K jobs) compared to the U.S. (\$56K/1K Job vs \$110 in the U.S.).

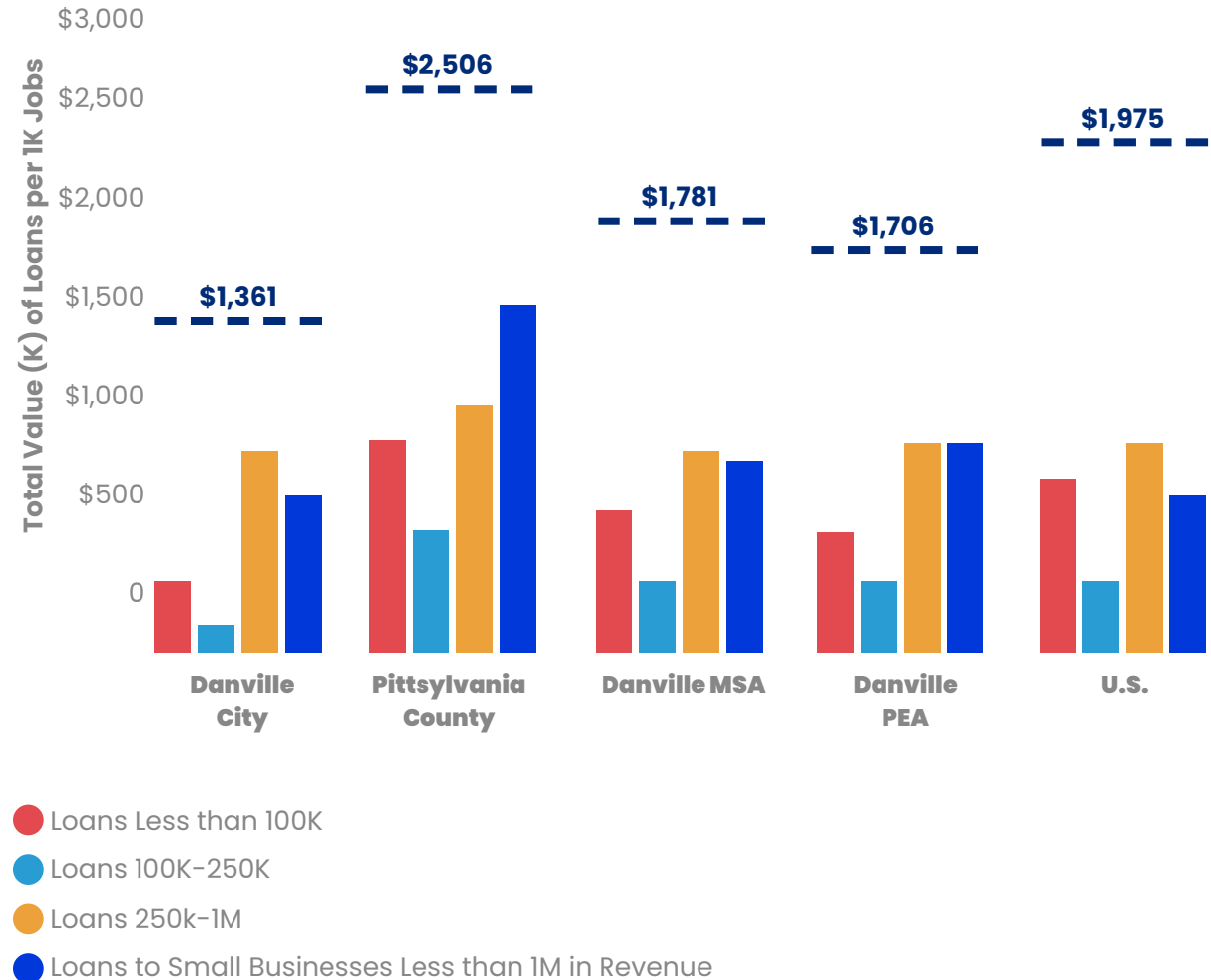


#### Goal 6. Economy

Policy E.3 Small Business Support

### Value of Traditional Bank Small Business Loans per 1K Jobs

Source: 2019 US Census Bureau; Mass Economics analysis



## There are multiple barriers to accessing capital.

Unfortunately, Danville's underperformance with respect to small business lending activity extends beyond traditional bank small business and small farm lending. The city, MSA, and PEA all face lending gaps for Small Business Association (SBA) 7A loans (including revolving or working loans, both of which are especially important to B2B firms), SBA 504 loans, and both micro and business Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) loans when compared to U.S. rates on a \$ value received per establishment basis.

## Estimated Lending Gaps

Source: 2020 US Census Bureau; Mass Economics analysis

Type	Danville	Danville MSA	Danville PEA	Pittsylvania
<b>Traditional Small Business Loans</b>	<b>-\$32,362,000</b>	<b>-\$57,874,000</b>	<b>-\$123,911,000</b>	<b>-\$25,512,000</b>
Traditional Small Business Loans for <\$100K	-\$11,756,000	-\$19,555,000	-\$38,374,000	-\$7,799,000
Traditional Small Business Loans for \$100K to \$250K	-\$5,124,000	-\$9,467,000	-\$17,637,000	-\$4,343,000
Traditional Small Business Loans for \$250K to \$1M	-\$15,482,000	-\$28,852,000	-\$67,900,000	-\$13,370,000
SBA 7A Loans	-\$3,970,000	-\$6,279,000	-\$13,929,000	-\$2,309,000
SBA 7A Loans [non-revolving, non-working]	-\$3,448,000	-\$5,396,000	-\$11,781,000	-\$1,948,000
SBA 7A Loans [revolving or working]	-\$522,000	-\$884,000	-\$2,148,000	-\$362,000
<b>Traditional Small Farm Loans</b>	<b>-\$2,774,000</b>	<b>-\$2,052,000</b>	<b>-\$6,291,000</b>	<b>\$722,000</b>
Traditional Small Farm Loans for <\$100K	-\$776,000	-\$388,000	-\$923,000	\$389,000
Traditional Small Farm Loans for \$100K to \$250K	-\$849,000	<b>\$68,000</b>	-\$1,034,000	\$917,000
Traditional Small Farm Loans for \$250K to \$500K	-\$1,148,000	-\$1,733,000	-\$4,333,000	-\$584,000
<b>SBA 504 Loans</b>	<b>-\$980,000</b>	<b>-\$570,000</b>	<b>-\$2,524,000</b>	<b>\$410,000</b>
<b>Micro+Business CDFI Loans</b>	<b>-\$978,000</b>	<b>-\$1,651,000</b>	<b>-\$4,156,000</b>	<b>-\$673,000</b>
Business CDFI Loans	-\$847,000	-\$1,420,000	-\$3,574,000	-\$573,000
Micro CDFI Loans	-\$132,000	-\$231,000	-\$582,000	-\$100,000
<b>Total Estimated Gap</b>	<b>-\$41,064,000</b>	<b>-\$68,426,000</b>	<b>-\$150,809,000</b>	<b>-\$27,362,000</b>



## WHY IT MATTERS

### Information gaps across capital, networks, available business support programs, and myriad other resources remain persistent challenges.

Information gaps are one of the most commonly cited issues facing MBEs and WBEs – entrepreneurs, small business owners, and would-be business owners alike. Information gaps refer to a variety of disconnects but are most acutely felt in the knowledge of available support programs, including alternative capital, real estate, networks, and business support organization (BSO) programs. These information gaps create additional barriers when it comes to starting and sustaining a business, developing basic and specialized business skills, and advancing broader career development opportunities. Furthermore, [research](#) has shown that networks and networking skills are critical for “entrepreneurial success.”



## Learn from Leaders

### *Creating Resource Systems* National

[KCSourceLink](#) is a one-stop shop for navigating resources across Kansas City region’s entrepreneurial ecosystem. In addition to compiling, categorizing, and mapping business support organizations (and their programs), and connect people to these resources. They also provide resource guides and Technical Assistance support and have developed a BSO client relationship management system to track impacts.

SourceLink has a national footprint with a presence covering dozens of states, regions, and individual counties. It is worth noting that Virginia had its own statewide SourceLink up until 2019 when it ceased operations – but some individual VA counties (e.g., Fairfax) are “rebooting” a local SourceLink, which greater Danville could consider.



### Goal 6. Economy

Policy E.3 Small Business Support

DRAFT



## WHY IT MATTERS

### **Most retailers are small and local.**

Equity and inclusion are vital considerations when supporting small and independent retailers in Danville, VA, as they directly impact the well-being and prosperity of the entire community. For example, denial rates on loans, line of credit, and merchant cash advance applications in 2022 across the U.S. for WBEs was 25% vs only 19% for male-owned businesses (a gap of 6% points) and the rates for Asian-owned, Hispanic-owned, and Black-owned businesses were 31%, 32%, and 50%, respectively, as compared to only 18% for white-owned businesses (a 32% point gap for Black-owned vs. white-owned businesses).

Additionally, MBEs consistently reported higher rates of experiencing one or more challenges at large banks, small banks, credit unions, finance companies, and online lenders compared to rates reported by white-owned businesses.



#### **Goal 6. Economy**

Policy E.3 Small Business Support

This often makes it hard for them to compete with national brands. Ensuring equity and inclusion in small business support programs can bridge these disparities by providing targeted assistance and creating an environment where all entrepreneurs have a fair chance to thrive. This not only contributes to a more diverse and resilient local economy but also fosters social cohesion and community empowerment. By addressing these disparities, the comprehensive plan aims to tap into the untapped potential of underserved entrepreneurs, leading to increased job creation, economic growth, and a stronger, more inclusive Danville.

**Source:** U.S. Federal Reserve, Small Business Credit Survey, 2023 release

### **Danville is performing at market equilibrium.**

The economic stability of the retail industry was exhibited throughout COVID, denoting an overall market equilibrium. Comparing pre- and post-COVID trends (2010 to 2019 vs. 2019 to 2021) reveals that retail and consumer services job

growth in Danville dramatically underperformed the U.S. pre-pandemic – growing only 2% vs 17% from 2010 to 2019 – but the industry sectors were less hard hit by the pandemic in the city than in the U.S. overall. These industries declined in the city by -4% (-272 jobs) – approximately half the rate of decline experienced nationally over the same 2019-2021 period (-8%). Even the city's (and U.S.'s) hardest hit industry – Food Services (NAICS code 722), which declined by -9% (-234 jobs) from 2019 to 2021 – was still less hard hit than the industry nationally (-11%, -1.3M jobs lost).

### **There is growing opportunity to grow retail.**

Despite a decrease in retail jobs and establishments (-2% and -1%, respectively) in the City of Danville from 2010 to 2021, there is an opportunity for additional goods and services to serve the growing population. Aligning these opportunities with mixed use centers can provide a proximate customer while expanding access.



## WHY IT MATTERS

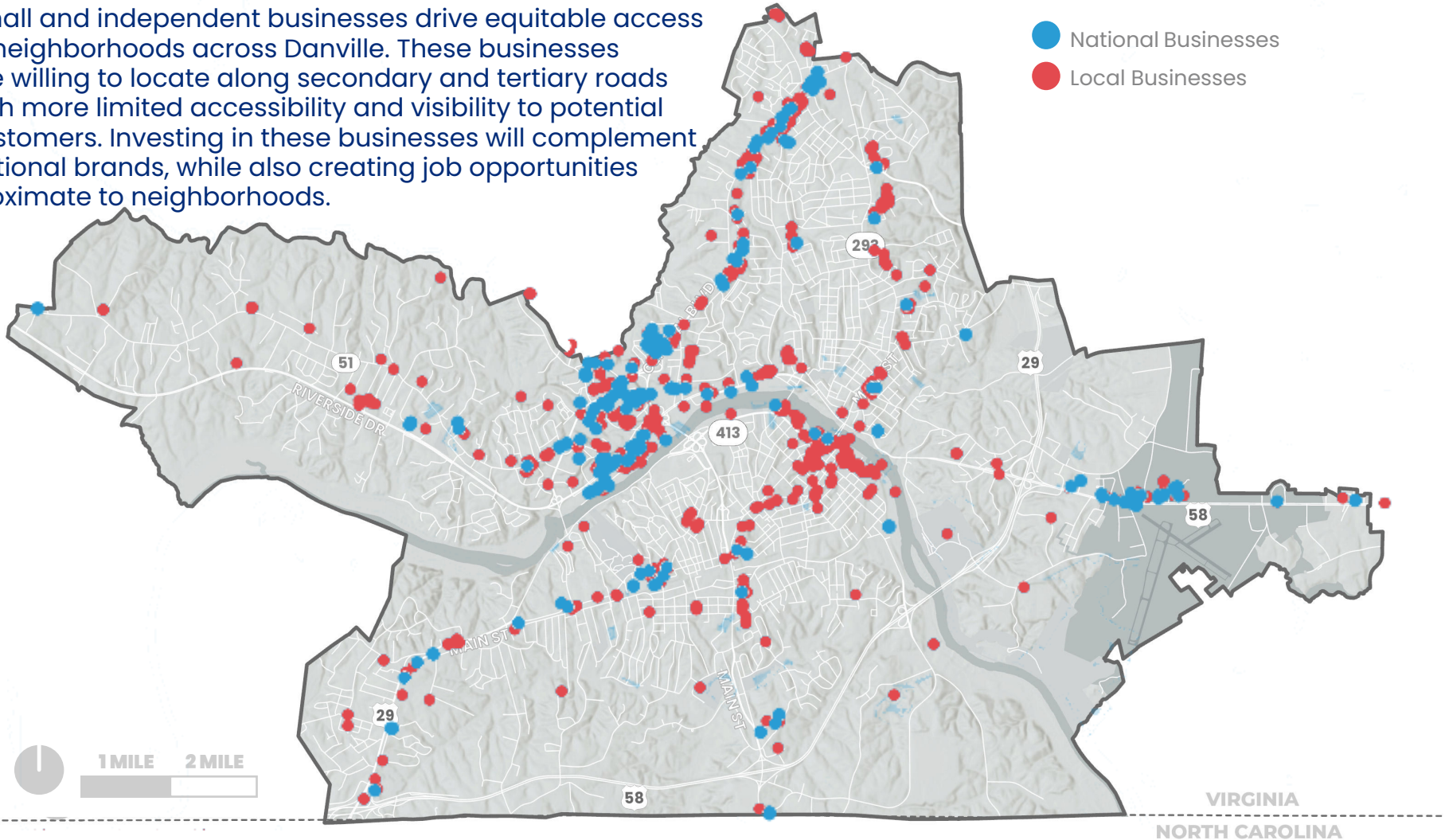
### Local retailers drive neighborhood and job access.

Small and independent businesses drive equitable access in neighborhoods across Danville. These businesses are willing to locate along secondary and tertiary roads with more limited accessibility and visibility to potential customers. Investing in these businesses will complement national brands, while also creating job opportunities proximate to neighborhoods.

#### Retail By Type

Source: &Access Updated 2024

- National Businesses
- Local Businesses



#### Goal 6. Economy

Policy E.3 Small Business Support



## Danville is supporting small, women-owned, and minority-owned businesses.

Statewide, the VA Department of Small Business & Supplier Diversity's Small, Women-owned, and Minority-owned Business (SWaM) certification program is designed to enhance procurement opportunities for underrepresented businesses in state-funded projects.

The program provides certification for micro businesses, small businesses, women-owned businesses, and minority-owned businesses that meet certain eligibility criteria.

SWaM-certified businesses are also eligible to receive up to \$10K in microloan financing through the VA Small Business Financing Authority's SWaM Business Microloan Fund.



## Learn from Leaders

### *Filling Equity Gaps*

Philadelphia, PA

To more deliberately and effectively evaluate the City of Danville's policies with an equity lens, focusing in particular on the city's practices around MWBE certification and enforcement for contracting and hiring practices, Danville can turn to the example set by the City of Philadelphia to understand how such improvements might work in practice.

In January 2020, then-Mayor Jim Kenney signed an executive order mandating that Philadelphia's City government embed racial equity as an explicit governing principle. To translate this policy into practice, all City departments were required to complete an initial racial equity action plan by the end of 2023 at the latest. Since 2020, 32 city departments and agencies have created initial racial equity action plans outlining strategies being taken to address racial disparities in government policies, programs, and operations.

The City has launched Racial Equity Strategy Dashboard where residents can monitor progress on department-specific racial equity goals. Philadelphia's Budget Office has also partnered with the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ODEI) to center racial equity in the annual budget process, allocating millions of dollars toward investment in racial equity strategies, programs, and staff. Philadelphia's commitment to eliminating racism and racial bias from the City's policies, systems, and structures provides a blueprint for how Danville might systematically assess and improve city practices from an equity standpoint, beginning with MWBE certification and enforcement for contracting and hiring practices.





### RECOMMENDATION

## E.3.1 Advance Equity and Inclusion

Take proactive steps to promote equity and inclusion in small business development to facilitate economic empowerment, reduce disparities, encourage diversity, and establish a more equitable and resilient small business ecosystem that benefits the entire community.

### ACTIONS

1. Perform baseline analysis on the state of equity and inclusion.

#### Action Steps

- 1.a. Develop a shared understanding of inclusion and equity outcomes by factors such as race/ethnicity, sex/gender, stage of business, and industry.
  - 1.b. Increase capacity at key civic and business organizations to develop new sources of high-quality, geographically detailed data on outcomes by race and place.
2. Building on the baseline analysis, assess, evaluate, and improve city policies with an equity lens.

#### Action Steps

- 2.a. Assess city practices around MWBE certification and enforcement for contracting and hiring practices.

- 2.b. Create programs for more efficiently matching local small businesses to affordable retail spaces and broadly disseminate information about these efforts to MWBEs and would-be entrepreneurs from diverse communities.

- 2.c. Create a business formalization program for small-scale businesses and identify marketplaces or pop-ups in commercial corridors (which could include philanthropic subsidized “white box” space for early-stage entrepreneurs).

- While there are hundreds of models from across the U.S., Pop-Up MKE – a program operated within Brew City Match, similar to [Detroit’s Motor City Match](#) – is a strong example, offering subsidized rent and utilities, TA, marketing and other wrap-around supports.





## RECOMMENDATIONS & ACTIONS

3. Engage capital providers to increase access to capital for area businesses.

### Action Steps

- 3.a. Organize roundtable of regional capital providers (including traditional banks and credit unions, government programs, philanthropy) to identify challenges, gaps in the provision of capital to small businesses and (ideally) get commitments to help improve the capital stack and lending outcomes for MWBE firms (including, e.g., addressing information gaps).

4. Develop and support the Business Support Organization (BSO) ecosystem to improve coordination, efficiency, and efficacy and eliminate gaps.

### Action Steps

- 4.a. Perform ecosystem assessment of Business Support Organizations in the region.
- 4.b. Identify strengths, gaps, capacity, and areas of redundancy or misalignment (including opportunities for rationalization/optimization of offerings/functions).
- 4.c. Survey local businesses to assess what BSO services they utilize and what their unmet needs are.
- 4.d. Convene funders of BSOs (e.g., government, philanthropy) to improve and formalize tracking of clients served by funded BSOs.

- 4.e. Develop a coordinated plan to improve outreach, network reach into MWBE and disadvantaged neighborhoods.





## RECOMMENDATIONS & ACTIONS

### RECOMMENDATION

## E.3.2 Support and Grow Small and Independent Retail

Bolster the vitality and sustainability of small and independent retail businesses within the community to preserve neighborhood character, stimulate economic activity, create jobs, and foster a sense of community pride and connection.

### ACTIONS

1. Explore partnerships with the banking community to leverage Community Reinvestment Act and other small business programs to address access to capital needs.
2. Explore opportunities to minimize infrastructure costs and operational burdens for storefront tenants (e.g., shared HVAC, designated pickup/dropoff zones, etc.).
3. Develop incentives to support landlords in tenancing with small businesses seeking to occupy and improve vacant older properties (older than 10 years old) to offset rent gap, especially targeted for single-use retail buildings and flexible enough to allow for subdividing larger spaces into smaller ones.
4. Identify opportunities for and fund incubator spaces, sidewalk and market vending infrastructure, and other shared space opportunities (such as food halls) that provide alternatives to traditional storefronts.





## RECOMMENDATIONS & ACTIONS

5. Increase the provision of and access to goods and services.

### Action Steps

- 5.a. Conduct a retail market analysis to determine unmet retail demand and oversupply of space by commercial district.
- 5.b. Analyze regulatory restrictions through business owner engagement to mitigate for challenges starting and maintaining a storefront business.
- 5.c. Engage national-branded grocers to identify challenges and opportunities for Danville to attract and retain new brands to increase the diversity of competition and address operational challenges.

- 5.d. Examine the business case for new grocery purveyors locally, including exploring the impact of the colocation of grocery development at or nearby multi-family development.

- 5.e. Diversify business mix with opportunities for a range of ages, including youth activities, bars and nightclubs, and other entertainment venues.

- 5.f. Enable small-scale retail space development opportunities near recreational and other tourism assets.

- 5.g. Identify parts of the city/region experiencing food insecurity and/or food access challenges (e.g., food deserts) and develop programming to fill these gaps with pop up food retail (e.g., pop up farmers market activity), mobile produce markets, urban Ag, etc. utilizing available, vacant, and/or re-developable real estate.

- Explore opportunities to leverage the VA Department of Health's "Health Corner Store Initiative" to improve the availability of fresh food in corner stores and convenience stores and the potential for mobile product markets and vans as well.



POLICY

E.4

# Talent Recruitment

Foster a welcoming and inclusive environment that attracts and retains skilled professionals and encourages a variety of people to make the city their home.

The foundation of a strong economy is recruiting and retaining talent in the area. Danville seeks to support residents and businesses by matching local talent to available jobs and creating an inviting place to live for businesses to recruit outside talent when needed.

## Desired Outcomes

- Increased percent of local residents entering the workforce out of school
- Increased grant funding won for supportive workforce programs





**Globally, there is a talent shortage.  
We are trying to balance training  
people in high and low skilled labor.**

*- 2023 Economy and Retail Roundtable*





### RECOMMENDATION

#### E.4.1 Support Related Workforce Readiness and Preparation Efforts

Build a more skilled, adaptable, and resilient workforce and bridge the gap between job seekers and available opportunities, promote economic mobility, and address workforce shortages in key sectors.

### ACTIONS

1. Expand access in secondary education and trades programs for industries which align with Danville's community values.  
**Action Steps**
  - 1.a. Continue to build alignment between Danville Public Schools, local colleges, the Learning Institute; other workforce development training programs; and industry needs (e.g., offerings, quality, funding, output, completion rates and professional placements).
  - 1.b. Develop and formalize apprenticeship programs between local employers and Danville Public Schools to support pathways into a variety of industries: GSI, trades, welding, beauty services, and others.
  - 1.c. Establish apprenticeship introduction programs in high schools so that young people can see their future in Danville.
2. Improve business-workforce training program connectedness with more frequent feedback loops (currently only meeting quarterly) on current and future industry demands.
3. Support out-of-school programs which promote soft skills development, career readiness, civic engagement, and social-emotional growth.
4. Reduce financial and technology barriers to participating in workforce training and educational programs.
5. Strengthen and expand job training programs that provide employment opportunities after completion.
6. Encourage intergenerational learning by combining teen and senior programming when possible, such as recreation courses or technology classes.





RECOMMENDATION

## E.4.2 Strengthen Infrastructure to Support Workers

Address disparities in access to essential services and opportunities to better support the needs of workers within the community.

ACTIONS

1. Support businesses with in-house programs around benefits for employees which can help to reduce benefit/income burden; providing things like in-house childcare, additional days off, and flexible working hours can help to increase quality of life for workers
2. Explore the potential for partnerships with local health institutions to create a “healthy worker” program which can help to reduce the risk of medical treatment as well as increase employee satisfaction in the workplace.
3. Create community discussions about hiring and employing individuals with disabilities, as well as policy opportunities.
4. Seek to locate businesses along existing fixed transit routes so workers can have access to transit.
5. Seek grant funding to support the Reserve A Ride service which provides services to employees who’s jobs aren’t along fixed route lines or who’s hours do not align with current hours of transit operation.
6. For larger operations, seek to have workforce housing as part of the development package proposed to enhance connectivity between residents and their place of employment.
7. Continue to support continuing education for City employees.

