

**CITY OF MONROE
DOWNTOWN ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
300 W. CROWELL STREET
MONROE, NORTH CAROLINA 28112
Wednesday, April 16, 2025 - 9:00
AM
AGENDA**

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Approval/Acceptance of Minutes (Action Required)
4. Downtown Building Rehabilitation and Improvement Grant Program (BRIG) 2nd Review
5. GROW Monroe Grant Program to support new or expanding businesses 2nd Review
6. Placer AI Demonstration
7. Adjourn Meeting (Action Required)

ATTENTION ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS: Please contact Donna O'Keefe at 704-292-1705, Ext. 6040 to confirm your attendance. Thank you.

Regularly scheduled meetings are on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 9 am.

**AS A COURTESY, PLEASE TURN OFF ALL MOBILE DEVICES WHILE MEETING IS
IN PROGRESS.**

**CITY OF MONROE
DOWNTOWN MONROE ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
300 W CROWELL STREET, MONROE, NC 28112
March 19, 2025
MINUTES**

DAB Members: Chair: Joyce Rentschler, Courtney Garrison, William Heisner, Clint Lawrence, Lisa Boix, Sheila Crunkleton, and Greg Moore were all present.

Staff Present: Donna O’Keefe, Jeff Wells, Assistant City Manager; and Assistant City Manager Lisa Hollowell, was present for a portion of the meeting.

Visitors Present: No other visitors were present.

Member(s) Absent: None

The Downtown Monroe Advisory Board met on March 19, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.

Item 1: Call to order

Joyce Rentschler called the Wednesday, **March 19, 2025** Downtown Advisory Board Regular Meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Item 2: Roll Call

Roll was documented by Donna O’Keefe through a sign-in sheet.

Item 3: Approval of February 19, 2025 Minutes

Joyce Rentschler, introduced this item and asked for three corrections which were reviewed and corrected.

Motion: Greg Moore made a motion to approve with corrections as described to the February 19, 2025 Minutes of the Downtown Advisory Board Meeting.

Second: Sheila Crunkleton

Action: The motion to accept the February 19, 2025 minutes with corrections as described was passed unanimously.

Item 4: Mural Project - Donna O’Keefe

Joyce Rentschler introduced this item.

A committee was created in October 2024. That committee provided design direction and feedback to the mock up presented by the artist. The flowers, insects and birds were identified as the best elements from the mock up. A request was made to move the first mural project location to Windsor Alley on March 12, 2025. This first mural will serve as a pilot, allowing staff to develop a stronger mural project plan that will benefit all of our future mural projects and property owners. The first mural project will be installed in

Morgan/Windsor Alley as part of the alley décor and improvement project to bring additional beauty to the alley. Staff explained that the bird element needed their input. Cardinal (State bird), Yellow Finch, options were considered. Staff is requesting the Downtown Advisory Board recommend their top mural design choice to City Council on April 8, 2025.

Sheila Crunkleton expressed her love of Cardinals.

Courtney Garrison also expressed her preference for the Cardinal option. A request was made to improve the lettering to make it bolder.

Donna O'Keefe explained that the request had already been made to the artists to tighten the lettering.

Bill Heisner commented on the three D nature of the location. He wanted to be sure this would be addressed by the artists.

Donna O'Keefe shared that the image would wrap to accommodate the bump out of the wall. The board wanted to make sure the cardinal is fully in front for picture taking. She explained that the mural artists will be on sight and there will be conversation as they prepare the wall and plan the design on the actual wall.

Bill Heisner expressed concern about the conduit.

Donna O'Keefe said there is a plan to remove the conduit.

Joyce Rentschler requested a motion.

Motion: Sheila Crunkleton made a motion to accept the Cardinal Mural Option and recommend that version ordinance as written to City Council.

Second: Courtney Garrison and Lisa Biox both seconded the motion simultaneously.

Action: The motion to recommend approval and recommend the Cardinal Mural to City Council passed unanimously.

Item 5a: New Downtown Incentive Grant Discussion - Downtown Building Rehabilitation and Improvement Grant Program (BRIG)

Joyce Rentschler introduced this item.

Donna O'Keefe said, we currently have 9 grants all with different language, different maps, and timelines. Two new grants have been written to help tighten up and simplify the grant language in the current grants the city offers. The new grant also address the awards so that they are more consistent.

Donna O'Keefe read each grant draft beginning with the Downtown Building Rehabilitation and Improvement Grant Program or BRIG grant. This grant covers construction and improvement projects. The second grant covers items like rent, marketing, signage, etc.

BRIG Recommendations and Edits:

- The word applicable on page 2.
- Sheila Crunkleton requested more detail in the example on page 2.

- Bill Heisner asked where does the \$ come from? Donna O'Keefe answered, the General Fund. Each individual approved grant is approved by council along with a budget amendment. These monies are then encumbered and wait for them to be reimbursed. Jeff Wells, Assistant City Manager offered additional insight and shared with the board that the board has generally approved all of the approved applications. Grants have been a priority to past councils as well as this council.
- Sheila Crunkleton asked, do you think the award amount is too much? Donna O'Keefe answered, no, people are spending so much more money now on these projects. This grant is based on the new Tax Value. The property pays taxes so when that goes up so does the taxes they pay.
- Clint Lawrence asked how the 10% award determined was. Donna O'Keefe explained that she researched about 40 grant programs, and made a grid with all of them. This amount is on the high end, but not at the top. The longer we retain tenants and improve these building the amount will flatten out over time. I imagine in the future it will be mostly improvements.
- The group recommended that an applicant can reapply for a different project 1 year after the prior award was executed.
- Donna O'Keefe explained that applicants can bundle multiple eligible items into one project application as long as they provide the required estimates outlined in the grant.
- Sheila Crunkleton asked what routine maintenance is. Donna O'Keefe answered, just like in your own home, there are routine maintenance issues that come up, and an example would be a floor repair, vs. a floor replacement. Neglect could lead to a project.
- Lisa Boix asked, can more than one tenant of a property owner apply for a grant? Donna answered, yes. It goes by the address and not the ownership.
- The one year time period was recommended. (Sheila Crunkleton) Suggested we adjust this if it becomes necessary.
- Sheila Crunkleton asked, how long does it take to get a new tax value? Donna O'Keefe answered, after speaking to the UC Tax Assessor on 4/9/2025. The following statement was added to the draft document: *New Tax assessed value by the Union County Tax Assessor. This is provided each January to anyone who has applied for a permit. The new assessed value is determined using the last county reevaluation criteria.*

New Business and Residential Incentive Escalators:

Donna O'Keefe explained that additional escalators to the BRIG grant have been established to encourage companies, businesses, and investors considering relocating or expanding to or within the Central Business district. These escalators are calculated after the BRIG grant reimbursement has been confirmed.

1. An additional 10% of the total grant award if the company or business is part of one of the approved business clusters (See table below) and creates a minimum of 3 new jobs.
2. An additional 10% of the total grant award if an existing company or business will be relocating or establishing their new business in a vacant space on floors above the street level.
3. An additional 20% of the total grant amount to applicant who is creating residential units in floors above the street level.

There were no requested changes to this portion of the grant draft or to the Business types table on page 5 and 6.

Sheila Crunkleton asked, if you had a project you would be advised to wait until a grant is

approved by council. (Donna O’Keefe) Yes. (Bill Heisner) Architects can take 3 months.

Bill Heisner stated, I don’t think that maintenance of a building should be funded by taxpayers. I want to be sure resources are used wisely.

Jeff Wells stated that the city desires to give every opportunity for folks to improve their property. We want to improve the building, economic development, grow downtown regardless of how long you own the property. A roof is a significant element of a building, it’s a lot of money and it improves the value of buildings significantly and that only benefits a tenant, owner, and the city. These incentives are short term investments for long term gains.

Clint Lawrence and Sheila Crunkleton stated that City Council makes the final decision.

Jeff Wells stated that you also need to be sure that you have a statement that would cover items you have not thought of. We should reassess these annually through feedback from applicants and so that Donna can make recommendations to you all about changes that might improve the grant. Regardless the grants have the same goal to improve property.

(Donna O’Keefe)I will make all of the changes you have recommended and bring it back to you in April.

Item 5b: New Downtown Incentive Grant Discussion – GROW Monroe-A grant program to support new or expanding Businesses

Donna O’Keefe stated, that this is the “To be named grant”. We can revisit the name after you have Had a chance to learn more about it. This grant program is a matching 50/50 incentive grant program designed to provide assistance with rental expenses, marketing expenses, up-fit expenses, or expansion costs. We did not have a grant for existing businesses and this was designed to include them as they too enhance downtown. This grant is not based on an assessed tax value so I needed a way to make them consistent and square footage seems to be the most common method used and we are already using that method in our current grants.

Awards are determined using a formula based square footage.

1. **New businesses** are eligible for \$6.00 per sq foot for retail/office and \$8.00 per square foot for food service/restaurants opening in the Downtown Business District.
2. **Expanding businesses** are eligible for \$4.00 per squire foot for retail/office and \$6.00 per square foot for food service/restaurant for the addition of square footage to an existing business in the Downtown Business District. Applicants who have received an incentive award within the prior 5 years are not eligible.

Item 2 was changed: “Square footage” was changed to “increasing the footprint”.

Requirements:

Donna O’Keefe stated that applicants must submit a completed application and obtain approval from the Downtown Manager/Director.

- For new businesses the application must be recieved within 6 months of opening.
- For expansions of existing busineses the application and approval will be required prior to beginning the expansion project.

The new or expanding business must be in one of the approved clusters/business types and create a minimum of 3 new jobs. (See table below).

Donna O'Keefe stated, you can see that Financial and Professional Services are limited to second floor locations. We do not want to incentivize any more of these types of businesses on the street level.

Donna O'Keefe stated, the business must operate their business a minimum of 6 days per week or 45 hours per week. We do not want to incentivize business that are only open 2 days.

Donna O'Keefe stated that applicants must show proof of ownership or a leasing contract if the property is leased. Business owners who are tenants of a building (minimum three-year lease) must provide written consent from the building owner for all proposed improvements. In addition, the grant application must be signed by the property owner.

Sheila Crunkleton stated, I want people open but many businesses are not open on Sunday and others are professional and not open.

Courtney Garrison used her boutique and her medical supply business as an example. Donna suggested that we change Professional Services, Financial, and Information Technology and Industry to 5 days and 40 hours and leave restaurants, retail and hospitality to 6 days or 40 hours. The group agreed.

Square footage was changed on page 2 to footprint. Donna used an example of a Deli adding ice cream. This expansion of their business might require additional equipment that would bring additional attributes to downtown.

Jeff Wells used an example of unused space within existing location. This would increase the use of the space.

Donna O'Keefe reviewed the cluster and business types, eligible up-fit expenses for food service and retail/business and example. Donna reviewed Eligible Sign expenses, and went over the 5 types of signs that would be considered. Signs must conform to the city of Monroe's DT CBD Sign Ordinance and must be designed, manufacture, and installed by a professional sign company/contractor.

Donna O'Keefe reviewed the rent subsidy assistance and payout. She explained that this grant would pay 2x in the first year vs. the former grant that paid out quarterly. This will reduce the paperwork and administrative time. Proof of timely payment of the full amount of rent will be required before Rent Subsidy funds are released.

Donna O'Keefe reviewed Eligible Expansion Projects for existing businesses. She provided examples of expanding the footprint of an existing business and ineligible expenses. An example was reviewed to help the reader understand the grant. The application procedures were reviewed and Business/Marketing Plan was changed to Business Plan only.

Greg Moore asked if these grants will replace the PRONTO and other grants? (Donna O'Keefe) Yes.

Donna O'Keefe stated these grants payout immediately after the documentation is reviewed and accepted except rent subsidy, which pays out 2x in a year.

Sheila Crunkleton stated it is very straight forward.

Greg Moore asked about naming the grant GROW Monroe.

Jeff Wells stated he had concern because sometime the term GROW can be problematic. Certain people don't like growth. He suggested the board think about it and comeback with any suggestions in April. Council will make that final decision.

Sheila Crunkleton offered that these are grants for people coming to Monroe or growing their business and she did not think GROW would present an issue. Is not out there to the general public unless they were looking to open a business in downtown.

Clint Lawrence stated that he thinks these will get people excited. There is some good stuff here.

Donna O'Keefe stated, we will not sunset our current grants until we have a replacement.

Clint Lawrence asked what the timeline is. We will review at our April meeting, then call for a public hearing, and then finally to council in May or June.

Staff will update information based on the board's comments. We will review the edits at our next meeting.

Announcements:

Jeff Wells stated that Monroe received an award at the Main Street Conference this past week. He shared the award for Piedmont Lofts with the group. This is a great conference and you might consider attending in the future. We are currently choosing a company for our Downtown Master Plan. We had 11 responses which is very good. We had great firms apply. We will keep you posted.

Donna O'Keefe shared that Jeff Wells had received an award as a MS Champion at the same meeting and joins Joyce as a former MS Champion and he will help us strengthen our program. Joyce, Lisa and I were able to be there. Email later today to drop in to 108 N. Main Street on March 28th.

Item: Adjourn (Action Required)

The Chair, Joyce Rentschler called for a motion.

Motion: Courtney Garrison moved to adjourn.

Second: Sheila Crunkleton

Action: The motion to adjourn passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

DOWNTOWN BUILDING REHABILITATION AND IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM



Overview:

The City of Monroe values the commercial buildings in the downtown area and has created the Downtown Building Rehabilitation and Improvement Grant (BRIG) to offer an incentive that stimulates investment and encourages property and business owners to make improvements to their building(s) and/or business operations. This reimbursement grant provides assistance with the significant improvement and rehabilitation of properties in the Downtown Business District. Improvement of these buildings preserves downtown's unique attributes and promotes economic growth by attracting and retaining residents and businesses, creates jobs, and reduces the deterioration of properties in the downtown district.

The Building Rehabilitation and Improvement Grant (BRIG) program provides matching grants (50/50) that encourage improvements and/or upgrades to the interior and exteriors of buildings in the Business District to make them more attractive for new, existing, and expanding businesses and residences.

Grant applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis. Awards are based on the availability of funds and meeting the programs requirements. Work done prior to approval of an application is not eligible for reimbursement.

Eligible Properties:

A commercial building located within the Downtown Business District of Monroe. Private dwellings are not eligible unless they originally functioned as commercial buildings and were later converted.

Only one application per year, per property is eligible (Separate addresses within a single building may qualify if there is more than one tenant). The applicant may be either the owner or a tenant of the building (tenant/s will need to have written permission from the owner).



Downtown Business District Description:

Beginning at the CXS Railroad Right of Way and Charlotte Ave. to Lancaster Ave. Lancaster Ave. to Morrow Ave., Morrow Ave. to Church St., Church St. to Windsor St., Windsor St. to Franklin St., Franklin St. to Jefferson St., Jefferson St. to Church St., Church St. to the CXS Railroad Right of Way, the CXS Railroad Right of Way to Charlotte Ave., the place of beginning.

The Grant:

This is a 50/50 matching reimbursement grant. Approved applicants are eligible for (50%) of the eligible costs up to a maximum amount of 10% of the tax value (After improvements). Payments will be made upon the completion of the project, review of receipts by a designated member of City Staff and the final approval of City Council.

Example:

An applicant submits documentation for \$222,000 in eligible improvements (111,000 50/50) with a tax value (after improvements) of \$880,000. The applicant would qualify for 10% of the new assessed value (per the Union County Tax Assessor Office) or \$88,000 in reimbursement.

Requirements:

- Applicants must obtain approval from the Downtown Manager/Director prior to beginning work. Work completed prior to approval will not be eligible for any reimbursement.
- All rehabilitation work must comply with City Zoning and Building Code requirement, historic district requirements (if applicable), and established standards within the designated area.
- All work must meet the guidelines of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the Supplementary Requirements for Development in the Central Business District* [City of

Monroe Code of Ordinances Title XV, Chapter 156.054] will be used as guidelines for awarding project reimbursements.

- Applicant must show proof of ownership or a leasing contract if the property is leased.
- A certificate of occupancy is required upon completion of the project.
- All approved work must be completed within 1 year of the application approval. If a project will require additional time, the applicant will need to make that request in writing before the 1 year limit expires.

Eligible projects include:

- Structural Repairs including masonry repair and restoration
- Roofing repair/replacement
- Plumbing, electrical, HVAC and similar elements
- Construction for accessibility, fire code, etc.
- Painting
- Flooring
- Building façade, or building side which faces a public right of way including; Removal of false fronts, cleaning of brick, and/or historic reconstruction.
- Window, front door repair/replacement - the repair of original material that adhere to the Secretary of Interiors standards for Historic Rehabilitation and EPA Guidelines.
- Installation of new pedestrian amenities such as city approved outdoor seating, awnings, and lighting.
- Railing and ironwork repair
- Cornice repair/replacement
- Exterior step repair/replacement
- Equipment repair/replacement
- Energy efficiency upgrades
- Improving restroom facilities
- Improving or re-installing stairways
- Upfit, replacement, or new installation of an elevator
- Other projects not listed will be considered unless ineligible

**Applications can include one or more eligible projects*

**Grant awardees are eligible to apply for a new eligible project one year after a prior award is executed.*

Ineligible projects include:

- Building and land acquisition
- New building construction
- Interior design services
- Architectural design services
- Demolition expenses
- Fire, flood, or water damage repairs

- Furnishings, equipment, or personal property not part of the building construction repair or replacement
- Legal, zoning, or building permit fees
- Routine maintenance work
- Parking lot repair/resurfacing
- Pest extermination
- Work on an active code compliance citation
- Work begun prior to application submittal meeting or done without required permits

Application Procedures

1. Submission of the grant application with all required forms and documents to the Downtown Office.

Application Checklist	
Completed application	
Summary outlining the full extent of work	
A minimum of 2 quotes from licensed, bonded, and insured contractor/s covering full extent of work	
Site plans, elevation plans, drawings	
Photos of existing conditions	
Certificate of Appropriateness, if property is within the Local Historic District	
Copies of all required permit application/s	
Property owner's written permission, if tenant is applying.	

2. The Downtown Manager/Director will schedule an application review meeting with an applicant (within two weeks of receipt of application).
3. Staff will present the application and documents to the Downtown Advisory Board. Upon their recommendation, staff will request a call for a public hearing. The award recommendation will then be presented to City Council at their next regularly scheduled meeting. If approved, funds will be encumbered and held until the project is completed and a new assessed value is provided by the Union County Tax Assessors office.
Note: The approval process will take a minimum of 3-4 months.
4. An approval letter will be mailed, emailed, or given by hand to the applicant upon approval. If an application is not approved, the downtown office will convey the rejection through email along with the reason for the rejection.

Application Review and Reimbursement Procedures

Upon completion of the project in accordance with the approved plan of work and a new tax assessed value is provided by the Union County Tax Assesor, the applicant will submit the following to the Downtown Manager/Director:

- Copy of Certificate of Occupancy
- Copies of paid invoices for total rehabilitation costs (invoices must reflect a zero balance and signed by the contractor on the contracting invoice or letter head).

- Photos of improvements
- New Tax assessed value by the Union County Tax Assessor. This is provided each January to anyone who has applied for a permit. The new assessed value is determined using the last county reevaluation criteria.
- Any remaining documentation requested by the Downtown office.

The improvements will be inspected and approved by Downtown Manger/Director or approved City Staff member. Once completed the Accounting department will issue a check to the applicant. If the site inspection based on the scope of work is not satisfactory, the applicant will be notified and allowed up to thirty working days for correction of unsatisfactory items.

New Business and Residential Incentive Escalators

Additional escalators to the BRIG grant have been established to encourage companies, businesses, and investors considering relocating or expanding to or within the Central Business district. These escalators are calculated after the BRIG grant reimbursement has been confirmed.

1. An additional 10% of the total grant award if the company or business is part of one of the approved business clusters (See table below) and creates a minimum of 3 new jobs.
2. An additional 10% of the total grant award if an existing company or business will be relocating or establishing their new business in a vacant space on floors above the street level.
3. An additional 20% of the total grant amount to applicant who is creating residential units in floors above the street level.

Cluster	Business type
Financial Services and Insurance	Financial Investment and Related Activities
	Credit Intermediation and Related Activities
	Insurance Carriers and Related Activities
Professional Services	Accounting, Bookkeeping and Auditing
	Human Resources and Payroll Services
	Architectural, Engineering, Design and Surveying Services
	Medical, Dental or Optical Services
	Law firms and Legal Services
	Public Relation Services
	Real Estate Services
	Recruitment Services
	Graphic Design Services
Information Technology	Software Development

and Industry	Media, Film and Video Production
	Analytics and Cybersecurity Consulting
	Cybersecurity Consulting
Retail Stores	Art and Craft Supply, Antiques, Vintage, and Collectables, Children and Baby, Bath and Body, Beauty and Cosmetics, Bike, Bookstores, Bridal and Formal Wear, Apparel, Florist, Furniture, Hobby Sports Equipment, Home Décor, Jewelry, Kitchenware, Music and Musical Instruments, Footwear, Printing and Stationery , and Pharmacies.
Restaurants and Food Service	Bakeries, Coffee Stores, Fish Market, Gourmet Food Stores, Ice Cream Shops, Natural Food Stores, Tea Shops, Delicatessens, Ethnic Grocery Stores, Farmers Markets and Butcher Shops
Hospitality	Hotel, Bed and Breakfast, Health and Fitness, Event Spaces, Spas, and Wellness Centers.

**Applicants are required to meet performance requirements which may include, but are not limited to, job creation, level of capital investment, creation of new residential units.*

Example:

An applicant (also the property owner) submits an application to move their existing accounting firm to the second floor of a building in the Central Business district and add 3 new jobs as part of their plan. The building they have purchased has an existing retail business on the street level and 2 vacant upper floors in need of significant renovation. Their application fully outlines the extent of their planned work and they have included: Site plans, drawing, photos of existing conditions, copies of required permit applications along with price quotes from licensed, bonded, and insured contractors. They estimate the work will total \$250,000 in eligible improvements. This will make them eligible for 50% of their final costs up to a maximum amount of 10% of their tax value after improvements or an amount not to exceed \$125,000. Their application is presented at a public hearing and approved by City Council.

After the work is completed the owner submits all of the required documents along with documentation of the new assessed value (after improvements) from Union County of \$880,000. As a result of the new tax value, the applicant would now only qualify for \$88,000 in reimbursement.

Since this applicant is expanding, and adding 3 new jobs, on the second and third floors of an existing building they would qualify for:

1. +10% because their business is in one of the approved clusters, and adding an additional 3 jobs.
2. +10% because they renovating and relocating this business to a vacant 2nd and 3rd floor of an existing building.

The final reimbursement would be \$104,000.

Insert Application

Here

DRAFT

GROW MONROE - A grant program to support new or expanding businesses



Overview:

The City of Monroe is committed to supporting and promoting new and existing businesses in the Downtown Business District by providing financial assistance through an incentive grant that helps to off set the costs associated opening a new business, or expanding an existing business.

The Grant:

The **XXXX MONROE** grant program is a matching 50/50 incentive grant program designed to provide assistance with rental expenses, up-fit expenses, or expansion costs.

Awards are determined using a formula based square footage.

1. **New businesses** are eligible for \$6.00 per sq foot for retail/office and \$8.00 per square foot for food service/restaurants opening in the Downtown Business District.
2. **Expanding businesses** are eligible for \$4.00 per square foot for retail/office and \$6.00 per square foot for food service/restaurant for increasing the footprint of an existing business in the Downtown Business District. Applicants who have received an incentive award within the prior 5 years are not eligible.

Requirements:

Applicants must submit a completed application and obtain approval from the Downtown Manager/Director.

- For new businesses the application must be received within 6 months of opening.
- For expansions of existing businesses the application and approval will be required prior to beginning the expansion project.
- The new or expanding business must be in one of the approved clusters/business types and create a minimum of 3 new jobs. (See table below)
- The business must operate their business a minimum of 6 days per week or 45 hours per week.
- Applicants must show proof of ownership or a leasing contract if the property is leased. Business owners who are tenants of a building (minimum three-year lease) must provide written consent from the building owner for all proposed improvements. In addition, the grant application must be signed by the property owner.
- New businesses will be required to provide a business and marketing plan as well as certificate of occupancy, and all approved permits.
- Applicants for expansion assistance must be adding to the existing footprint of their business as well as creating 3 new jobs.
- Existing businesses will be required to provide a detailed description of their expansion plan including: Current footprint and footprint after expansion, cost for all proposed improvements including 2 price quotes from a licensed/bonded and insured contractor, description and cost for new equipment that will be part of the expansion project. Description of marketing plan and cost including estimate. Copies of all approved permits.



Downtown Business District Description:

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Cluster	Business type
Financial Services and Insurance – Second Floor locations Only Open 5 days per week or 40 hours	Financial Investment and Related Activities
	Credit Intermediation and Related Activities
	Insurance Carriers and Related Activities
Professional Services – Second Floor locations Only Open 5 days per week or 40 hours	Accounting, Bookkeeping and Auditing
	Human Resources and Payroll Services
	Architectural, Engineering, Design and Surveying Services
	Medical, Dental or Optical Services
	Law firms and Legal Services
	Public Relation Services
	Real Estate Services
	Recruitment Services
Information Technology and Industry– Second Floor locations Only Open 5 days per week or 40 hours	Software Development
	Media, Film and Video Production
	Analytics and Cybersecurity Consulting
	Cybersecurity Consulting

<p>Retail Stores – Street Level and Upper floor locations</p> <p>Open 6 days per week or 40 hours per</p>	<p>Art and Craft Supply, Antiques, Vintage, and Collectables, Children and Baby, Bath and Body, Beauty and Cosmetics, Bike, Bookstores, Bridal and Formal Wear, Apparel, Florist, Furniture, Hobby Sports Equipment, Home Décor, Jewelry, Kitchenware, Music and Musical Instruments, Footwear, Printing and Stationery , and Pharmacies.</p>
<p>Restaurants and Food - Service Street Level and Upper floor locations</p> <p>Open 6 days per week or 40 hours per</p>	<p>Bakeries, Coffee Stores, Fish Market, Gourmet Food Stores, Ice Cream Shops, Natural Food Stores, Tea Shops, Delicatessens, Ethnic Grocery Stores, Farmers Markets and Butcher Shops</p>
<p>Hospitality- Street Level and Upper floor locations</p> <p>Open 6 days per week or 40 hours per</p>	<p>Hotel, Bed and Breakfast, Health and Fitness, Event Spaces, Spas, and Wellness Centers.</p>

Eligible Business Up-Fit Expenses

For a food service business:

- Refriderators, Freezers, and Coolers
- Oven, Ranges, Grill, and Ventilation
- Fryers and Grease Interceptor, Grease Trap or Receptacle
- Washing equipment
- Safety Equipment
- Point of sale equipment
- Lighting
- Construction of outdoor dining or gathering spaces
- City approved outdoor furniture

For a retail/office business:

- Point of sale equipment
- Lighting
- Permanent fixtures
- Security equipment

Example:

A 2200 square food service business would be eligible for \$17,600. The same business spends \$30,000 on eligible expenses, making them eligible for a \$15,000 award. *(The business would have to spend \$35,200 to receive the maximum award for their square footage of \$17,600).*

Grant applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis. Awards are based on the availability of funds and meeting the programs requirements.

Eligible Sign Expenses

- Signage including: Blade Sign, Wall/Attached Sign, Canopy Awning Sign, Window sign, or Sidewalk Sign

Blade Sign	A sign attached directly to a supporting building wall and intersecting the building wall at a right angle. A Projecting/Blade Sign may be used in lieu of a Canopy/Awning sign. Shall not extend above the roof line or the parapet wall. Buildings with two (2) or more stories shall not have a projecting sign located higher than the second story or twenty-four (24) feet, whichever is less.
Wall/Attached	A sign attached directly to a building wall above the entrance, limited to one per façade, per building tenant Awnings
Canopy/Awning Sign	A sign attached to, or affixed to, a canopy/awning. Canopy/awning signs shall have a minimum clearance of nine (9) feet from the surface below and a maximum height of four (4) feet above the clearance.
Window Sign	A sign attached flat, but parallel, to the inside of a window. These signs shall only be placed on the first floor windows and a maximum of 20% of all windows may be covered by a window sign.
Sidewalk Sign	A sidewalk sign (also commonly referred to as a sandwich board sign) allows for the display of a message on the sidewalk. A maximum of one (1) sidewalk sign shall be permitted and located in front of/adjacent to the entrance. Sign area shall be limited to a maximum of eight (8) square feet per side. Sign width is limited to a maximum two (2) feet. Sign height is limited to a maximum four (4) feet. May not be placed in a way that obstructs pedestrian traffic.

**Signs must conform to the city of Monroe’s Downtown CBD Sign Ordinance. Signs must be designed, manufactured, and installed by a professional sign company/contractor*

Rent Subsidy (New businesses only)

Rent subsidy assistance awards 50% of a new businesses rent for the first 12 months. Funds shall be made by the City of Monroe to approved applicants after their first 6 and again after 12 months. Proof of timely payment of the full amount of rent will be required before Rent Subsidy funds are released.

Eligible Expansion Projects (Existing businesses)

This is for businesses expanding the footprint of an existing business within the Downtown District. Interior remodeling including walls, electrical, plumbing, ADA improvements, safety improvements, painting

- Purchase of equipment and fixtures that are part of the expansion project scope of work
- Construction of outdoor dining or gathering spaces

- City approved outdoor furniture

Example:

The addition of unfinished space within existing building, or the addition of adjacent outdoor space that is being upgraded.

Ineligible Expansion Projects

It is not the purpose of the program to finance ongoing improvements which could be considered part of a building’s routine maintenance and upkeep.

- Expansion projects completed prior to approval by the Downtown Manager or Director will be ineligible.
- Interior furniture or decor
- Administrative, accounting, and legal costs
- Extermination of insects, rodents, vermin, and other pests
- Legal fees, Title reports, and escrow fees
- Refinancing existing debt, or operational costs
- Working capital for businesses
- Environmental assessments
- Nonvisible mechanical equipment (including HVAC, Security Cameras, etc.) and related screening
- Temporary, portable, or non-permanent improvements
- Routine maintenance and repair
- Purchase of tools

Example:

An existing restaurant in the Downtown Business District plans to expand their footprint from 1300 to 2300 square feet. As part of their expansion plan, they will be updating some of their kitchen equipment, painting their interior, replace the existing floors and adding city approved outdoor furniture.

Based on the program guidelines they are eligible for \$6.00 per square foot on the expansion square footage of 1000 Sq. ft. or \$6000 max. To reach the maximum reimbursement amount they will have to provide paid invoices for \$12,000 in expenses.

After a full review of documentation the business has provided \$15,050 in eligible expenses. This means they will be awarded the full \$6000 based on their expanded footprint.

Application Procedures

1. Submission of the grant application with all required forms and documents to the Downtown Office.

Application Checklist	
Completed application	
Statement of Personal history and experience	
Letter of intent to lease or purchase, or a signed lease/purchase contract (required for rent subsidy)	

Business plan	
Summary detailing the full scope of work and projected expenses	
To ensure efficient use of program funds all proposed project must be submitted with at least two construction or marketing bids/estimates from licensed, bonded, and insured contractor/s or reputable marketing company.	
Photos of existing conditions	
Site plans, elevation plans, drawings, or mock ups	
Copies of all approved permits	
Property owner's written permission, if tenant is applying.	

2. The Downtown Manager/Director will schedule an application review meeting with an applicant (within two weeks of receipt of application).
3. An approval letter will be mailed, emailed, or given by hand to the applicant upon approval. If an application is not approved, the downtown office will convey the rejection through email along with the reason for the rejection.
4. Staff will present the application and documents to the Downtown Advisory Board. Upon their recommendation, staff will request a call for a public hearing. The award recommendation will then be presented to City Council at their next regularly scheduled meeting. If approved, funds will be encumbered and held until the project is completed.

Project Review and Reimbursement Procedures

Upon completion of the project in accordance with the approved application the applicant will submit the following to the Downtown Manager/Director:

- Copies of paid invoices for all eligible costs (invoices must reflect a zero balance and signed by the contractor on the contracting invoice or letter head).
- Photos of expansion or improvements
- Any remaining documentation requested by the Downtown office.
- Current W-9

The scope of work approved in the application will be inspected by Downtown Manager/Director or approved City Staff member. Once completed the Accounting department will issue a check from funds approved through City Council, to the applicant. If the site inspection based on the scope of work is not satisfactory, the applicant will be notified and allowed up to thirty working days for correction of unsatisfactory items.

The City of Monroe reserves the right to waive or increase incentive program requirements and to interpret and/or adjust incentive program eligibility as it deems necessary. The City of Monroe reserves the right to receive, decline, review, and approve/deny application from uses not fitting within the above criteria on a case by case basis. The City of Monroe will base its decisions based on the applicant's anticipated impact on the overall economic health of Downtown Monroe.

Insert Application

Here

DRAFT

Property Overview

Apr 1, 2024 - Mar 31, 2025

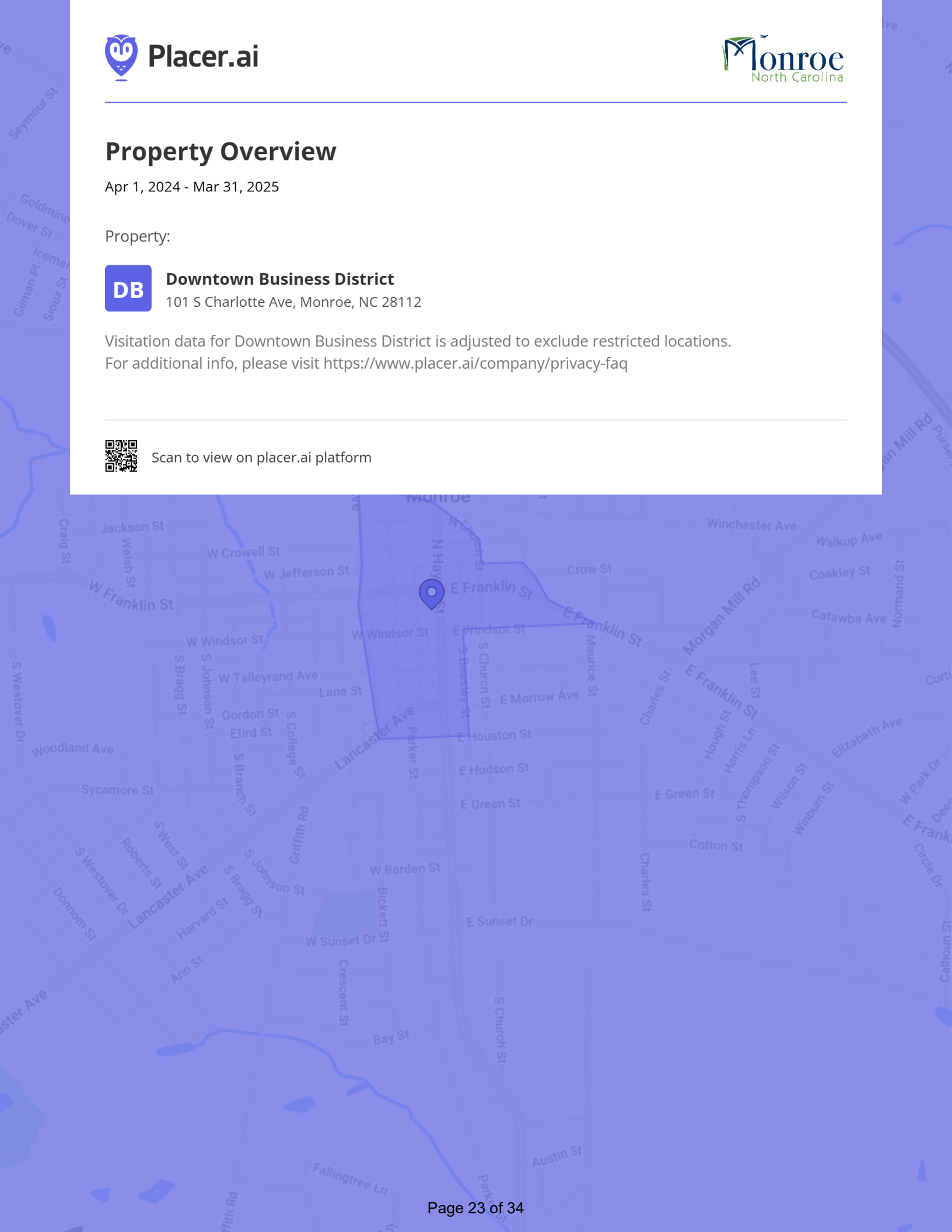
Property:

DB **Downtown Business District**
101 S Charlotte Ave, Monroe, NC 28112

Visitation data for Downtown Business District is adjusted to exclude restricted locations.
For additional info, please visit <https://www.placer.ai/company/privacy-faq>



Scan to view on plac.ai platform

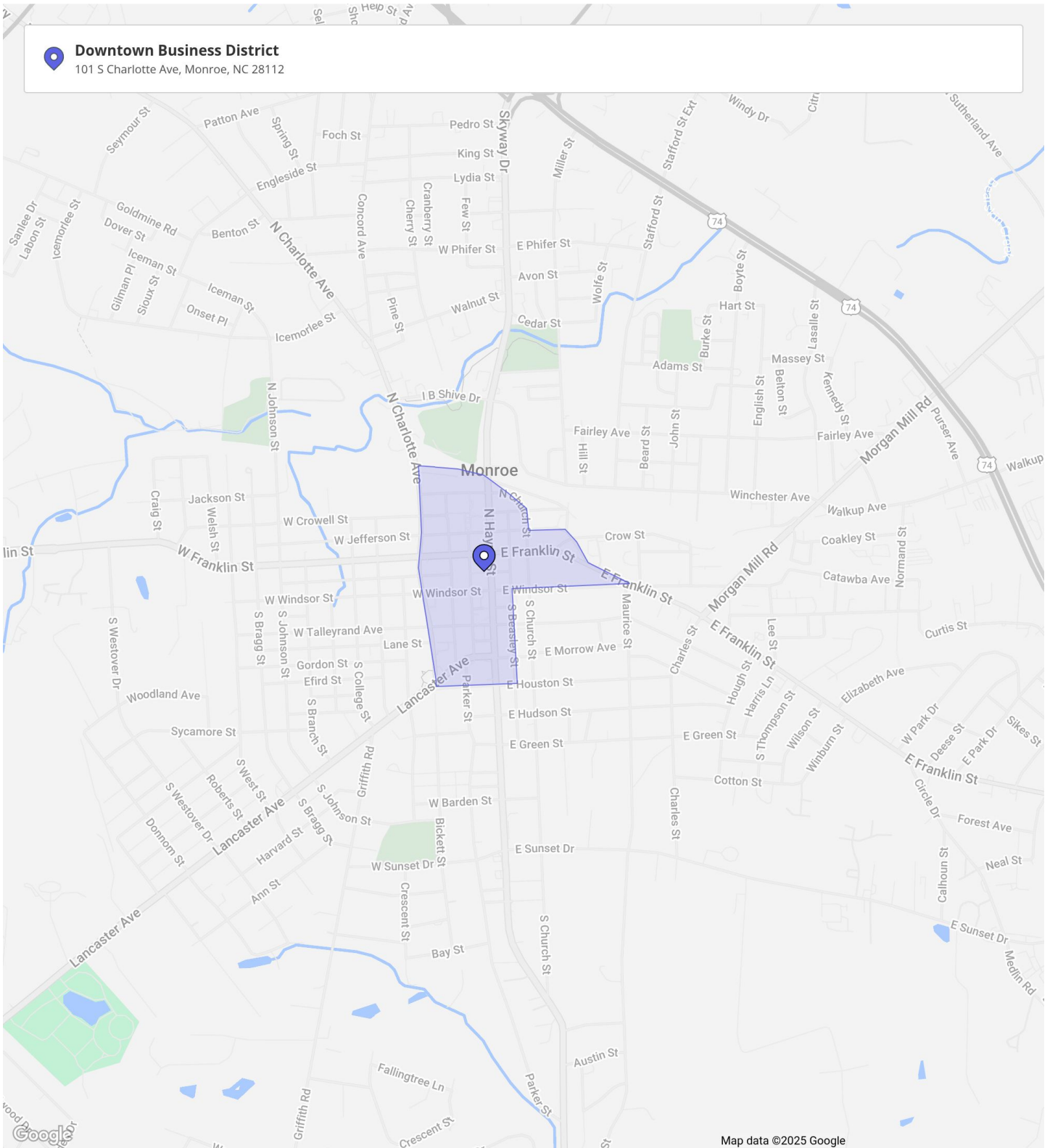




Property Overview

Apr 1, 2024 - Mar 31, 2025

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Property Overview

Apr 1, 2024 - Mar 31, 2025



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Metrics

Downtown Business District
101 S Charlotte Ave, Monroe, NC 28112

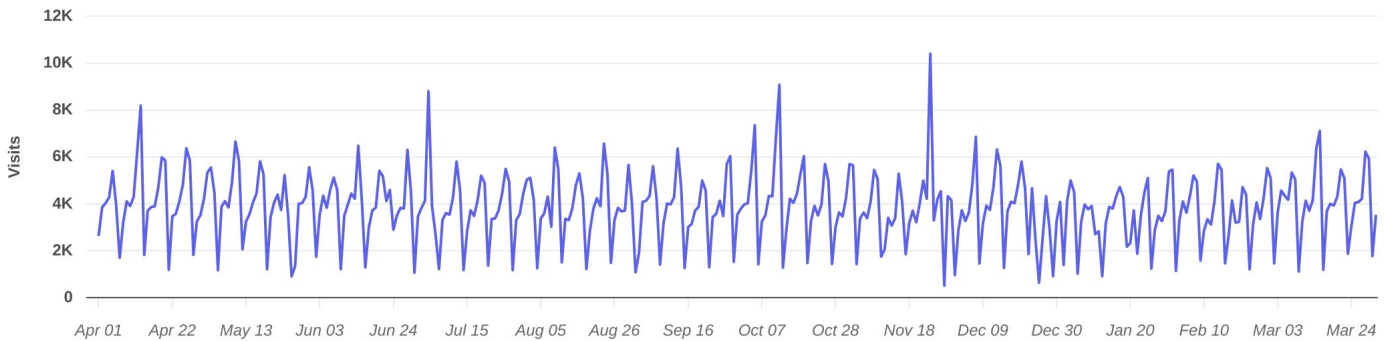
Visits	1.4M	Avg. Dwell Time	59 min
Visits / sq ft	0.39	Panel Visits	139.8K
Size - sq ft	3.6M	Visits YoY	+9%
Visitors	254.4K	Visits Yo2Y	+16.9%
Visit Frequency	5.53	Visits Yo3Y	+30%

Apr 1st, 2024 - Mar 31st, 2025
Data provided by Placer Labs Inc. (www.placer.ai)



Visits Trend

Downtown Business District
S Charlotte Ave, Monroe, NC



Daily | Visits | Apr 1st, 2024 - Mar 31st, 2025
Data provided by Placer Labs Inc. (www.placer.ai)





Property Overview

Apr 1, 2024 - Mar 31, 2025



Visitation data for Downtown Business District is adjusted to exclude restricted locations. For additional info, please visit <https://www.placer.ai/company/privacy-faq>

Audience Overview

Summary

Property	Median Household Income	Bachelor's Degree or Higher	Median Age	Most Common Ethnicity	Persons per Household
Downtown Business... S Charlotte Ave, Monroe,...	\$91.6K	38.9%	36.4	White (62%)	2.88
North Carolina	\$69.9K	34.7%	38.3	White (60.6%)	2.53

Apr 1st, 2024 - Mar 31st, 2025 | Data Source: Census 2023
Data provided by Placer Labs Inc. (www.placer.ai)





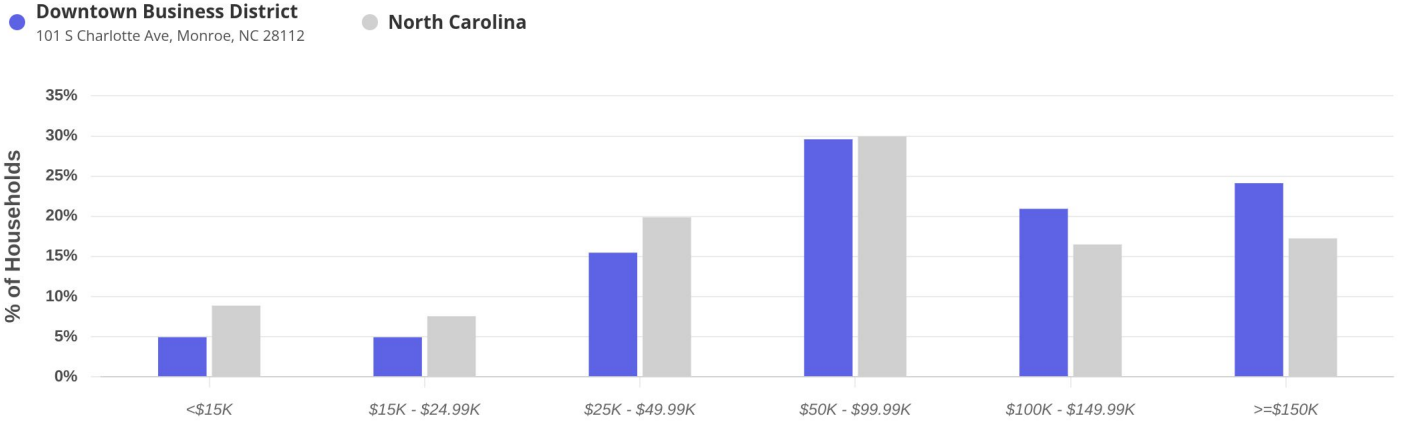
Property Overview

Apr 1, 2024 - Mar 31, 2025



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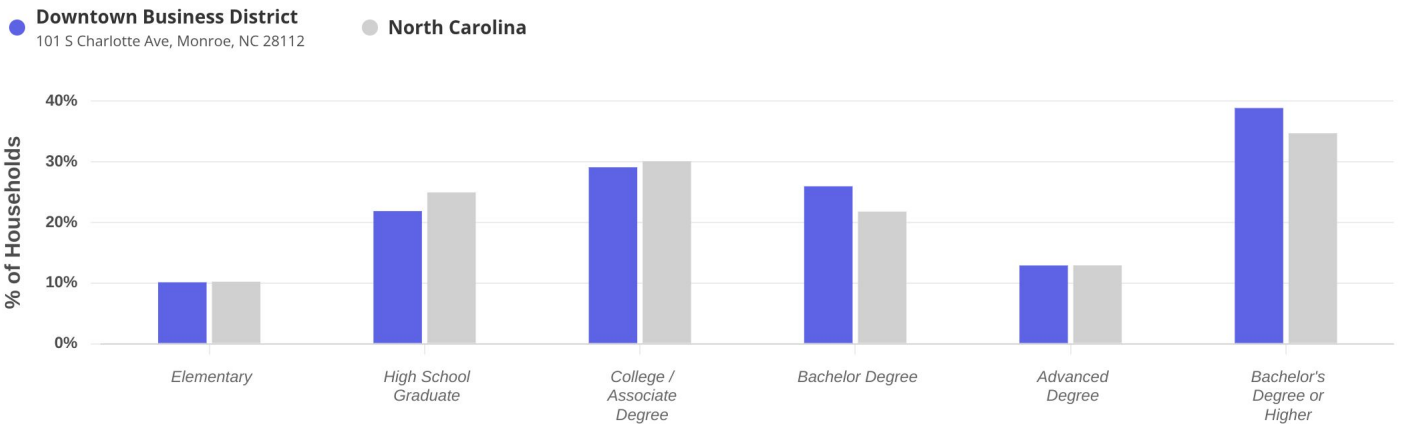
Household Income



Apr 1st, 2024 - Mar 31st, 2025 | Data Source: Census 2023
Data provided by Placer Labs Inc. (www.placer.ai)



Education



Apr 1st, 2024 - Mar 31st, 2025 | Data Source: Census 2023
Data provided by Placer Labs Inc. (www.placer.ai)





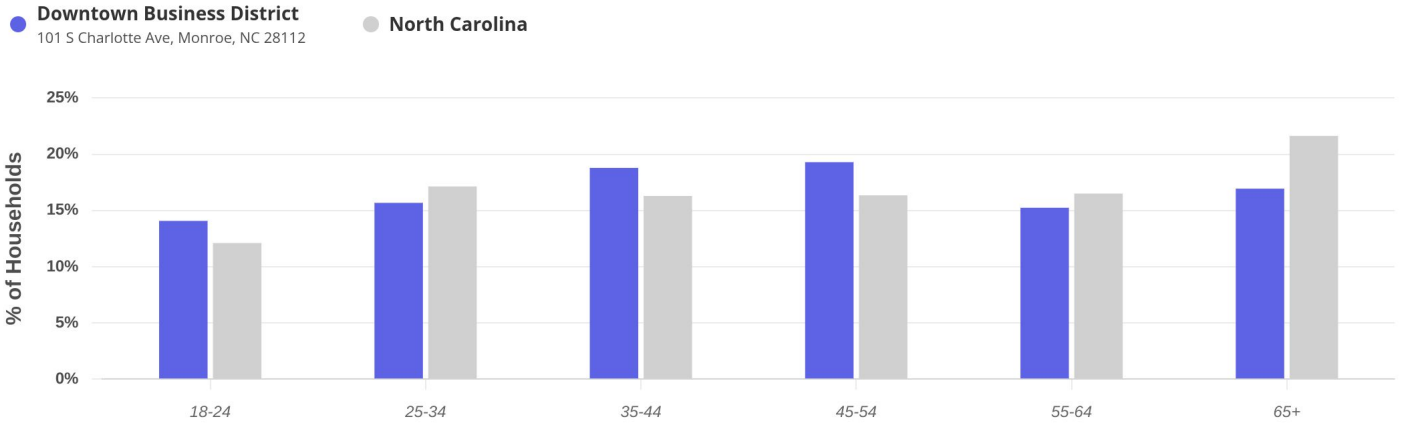
Property Overview

Apr 1, 2024 - Mar 31, 2025



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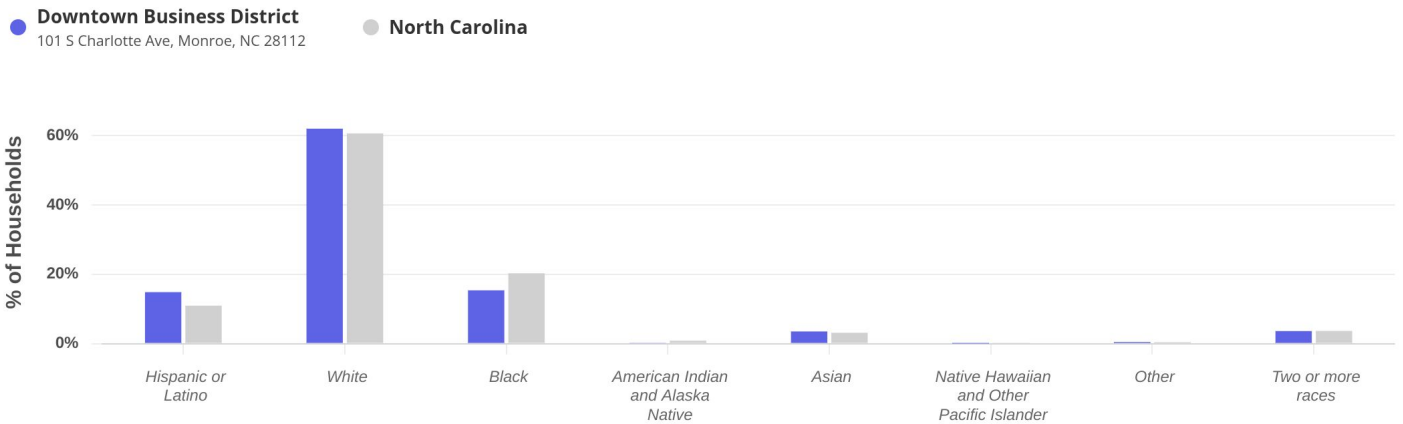
Age



Apr 1st, 2024 - Mar 31st, 2025 | Data Source: Census 2023
Data provided by Placer Labs Inc. (www.placer.ai)



Ethnicity



Apr 1st, 2024 - Mar 31st, 2025 | Data Source: Census 2023
Data provided by Placer Labs Inc. (www.placer.ai)





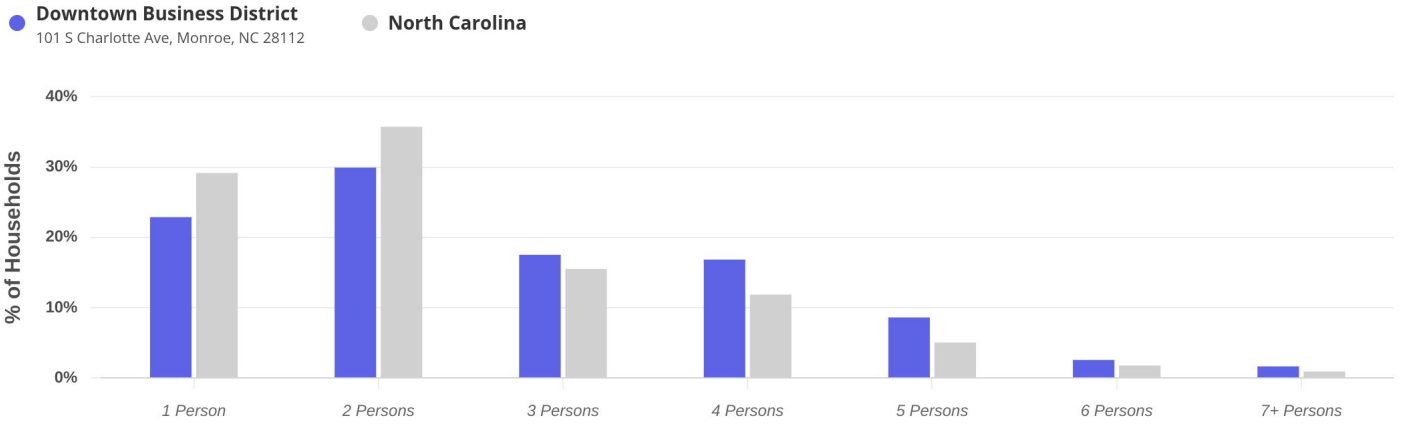
Property Overview

Apr 1, 2024 - Mar 31, 2025



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Household Size



Apr 1st, 2024 - Mar 31st, 2025 | Data Source: Census 2023
Data provided by Placer Labs Inc. (www.placer.ai)





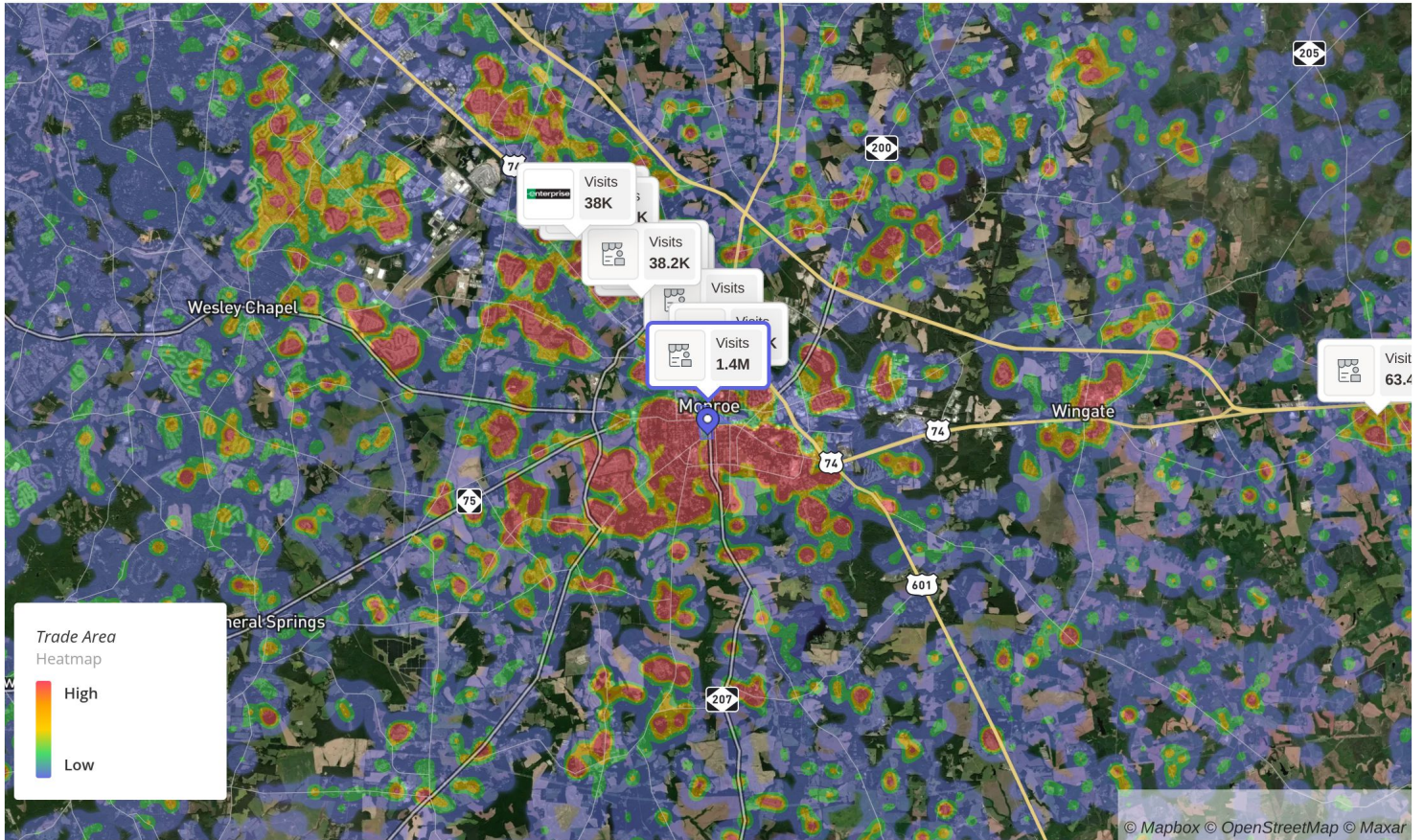
Property Overview

Apr 1, 2024 - Mar 31, 2025



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Market Landscape



Home locations are obfuscated for privacy and randomly placed within a census block. They do not represent actual home addresses.

Apr 1st, 2024 - Mar 31st, 2025

Data provided by Placer Labs Inc. (www.placer.ai)





Property Overview

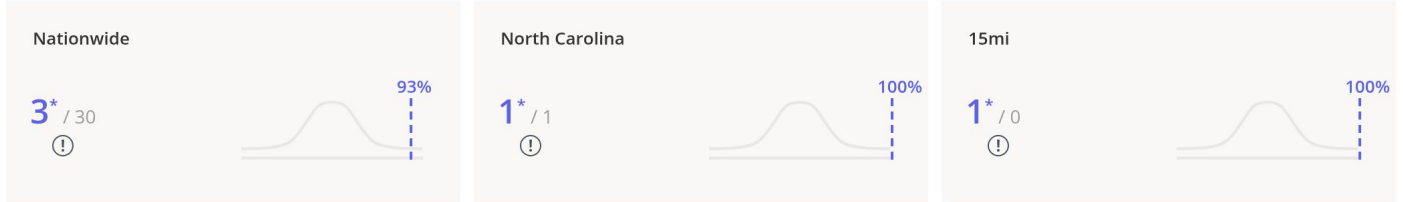
Apr 1, 2024 - Mar 31, 2025

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Ranking Overview

Downtown Business District
101 S Charlotte Ave, Monroe, NC 28112

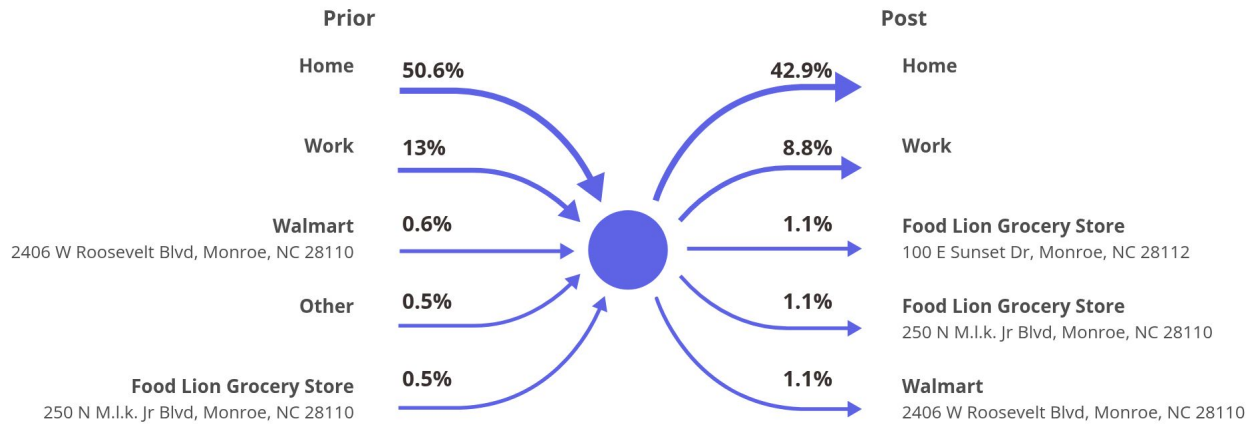


Category: Stores & Services | Visits | Apr 1st, 2024 - Mar 31st, 2025
Data provided by Placer Labs Inc. (www.placer.ai)



Visitor Journey

Downtown Business District
101 S Charlotte Ave, Monroe, NC 28112



Show by: | Apr 1st, 2024 - Mar 31st, 2025
Data provided by Placer Labs Inc. (www.placer.ai)





Property Overview

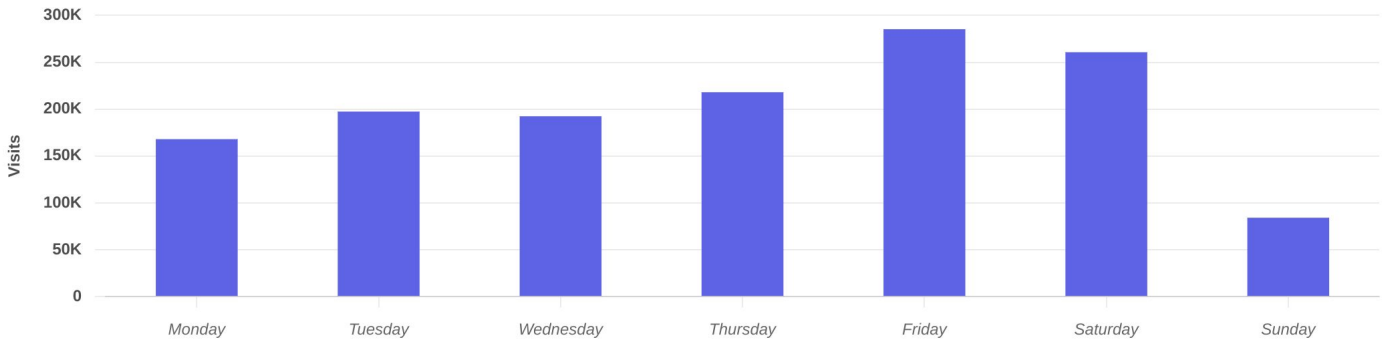
Apr 1, 2024 - Mar 31, 2025



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Daily Visits

Downtown Business District
101 S Charlotte Ave, Monroe, NC 28112

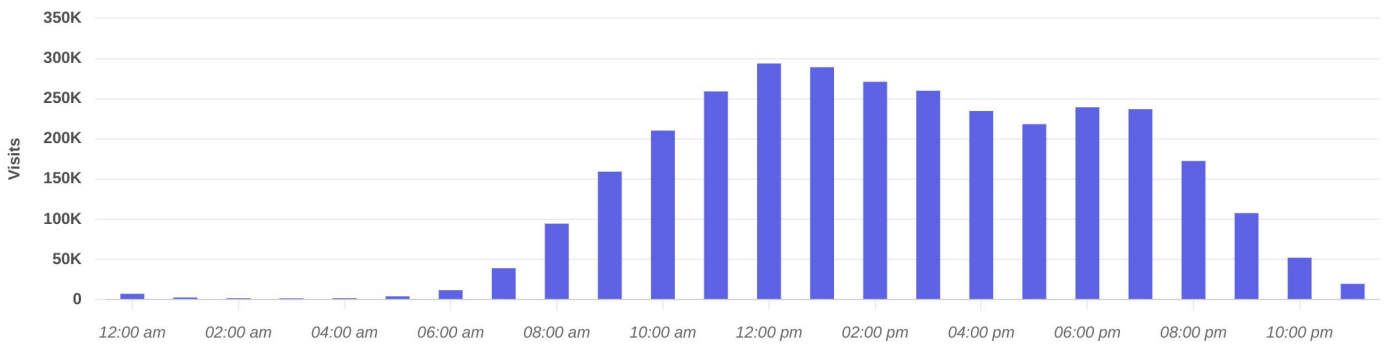


Visits | Apr 1st, 2024 - Mar 31st, 2025
Data provided by Placer Labs Inc. (www.placer.ai)



Hourly Visits

Downtown Business District
101 S Charlotte Ave, Monroe, NC 28112



Visits | Apr 1st, 2024 - Mar 31st, 2025
Data provided by Placer Labs Inc. (www.placer.ai)





Property Overview

Apr 1, 2024 - Mar 31, 2025

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Favorite Places

Downtown Business District / S Charlotte Ave, Monroe, NC

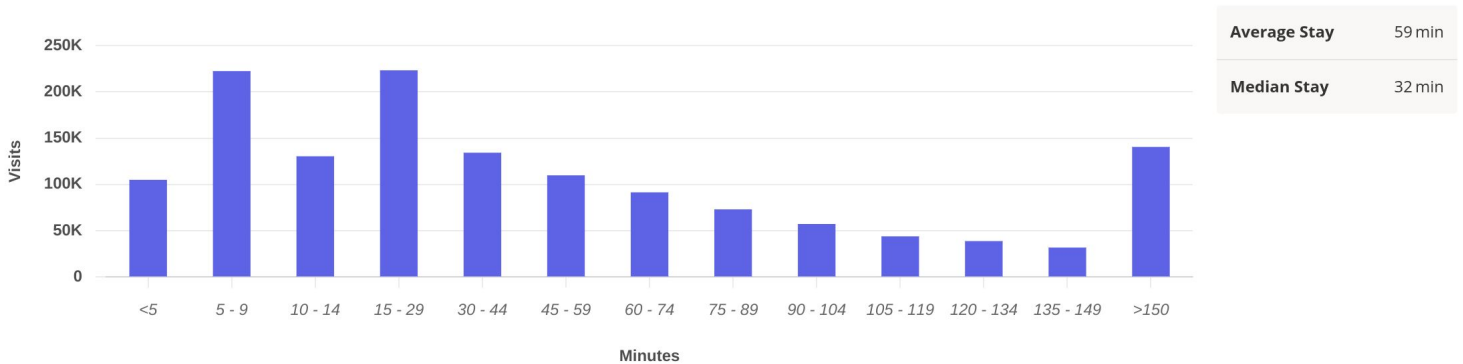
Rank	Name	Distance	Visitors
1	Poplin Place / 2901 W Roosevelt Blvd, Monroe, NC 28110	3.2 mi	158K (63.8%)
2	Monroe Crossing / 2115 W Roosevelt Blvd, Monroe, NC 28110	1.7 mi	143K (57.8%)
3	Windsor Square / 1814 Windsor Square Dr, Matthews, NC 28105	13.9 mi	136.7K (55.2%)
4	Sycamore Commons / 10530 Northeast Pkwy, Matthews, NC 28105	13.4 mi	133.9K (54.1%)
5	Walmart / 2406 W Roosevelt Blvd, Monroe, NC 28110	2.4 mi	125.2K (50.6%)
6	The Park / 1851 Wellness Blvd, Monroe, NC 28110	3.3 mi	123.2K (49.8%)
7	Matthews Festival Shopping Center / 10416 E Independence Blvd, Matthews, NC 28105	13.5 mi	113.8K (46%)
8	Target / 2901 W Highway 74, Monroe, NC 28110-8435	3.2 mi	110K (44.4%)
9	Charlotte Douglas International Airport / 5501 Josh Birmingham Pkwy, Charlotte, NC 28219	27.7 mi	104.4K (42.2%)
10	Carolina Place / 11025 Carolina Pl Pkwy, Pineville, NC 28134	19.8 mi	98K (39.6%)

Category: All Categories | Min. Visits: 1 | Apr 1st, 2024 - Mar 31st, 2025
Data provided by Placer Labs Inc. (www.placer.ai)



Visit Duration

Downtown Business District
101 S Charlotte Ave, Monroe, NC 28112



Visits | Apr 1st, 2024 - Mar 31st, 2025
Data provided by Placer Labs Inc. (www.placer.ai)





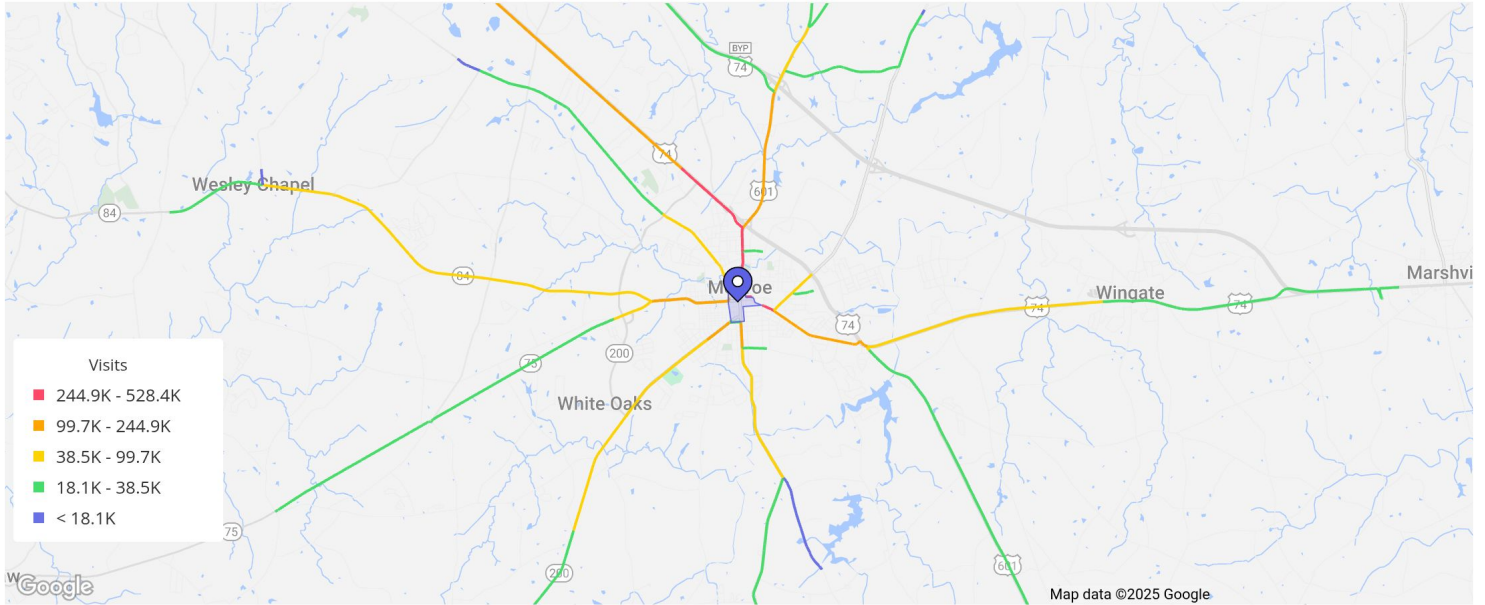
Property Overview

Apr 1, 2024 - Mar 31, 2025

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Visitor Journey - Routes



To protect individual privacy, the beginning points shown for each route are approximations and do not represent actual home locations.

Journey Direction: To Property | Apr 1st, 2024 - Mar 31st, 2025
Data provided by Placer Labs Inc. (www.placer.ai)

