

SECTION B: OUR CITY

Overview

This section of the plan provides a greater context for how the City is performing across a wide variety of data points and indicators. For example, the Our City section begins with an examination of how the City compares with its peer communities in terms of livability as defined by the AARP Public Policy Institute. This section also outlines factors that will influence the future direction of the City such as demographic, educational, economic and housing trends. This section concludes with an inventory and analysis of a range of elements that are important to the City's future including; natural resources, public services, parks and recreation, transportation, and land use. All of these components, when evaluated together, provide a comprehensive base of information to help plan the future of the City.

AARP Livability Index

The AARP Public Policy Institute created a Livability Index for assessing the degree to which communities meet objective livability standards in seven primary categories: Housing, Neighborhoods, Transportation, Environment, Health, Engagement, and Opportunity. This tool can be used to measure how the combination of policies and the built environment create a livable and inclusive community for residents of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. The Livability Index is an objective indicator of which aspects of a community are doing well and areas where a community can seek to improve its rating, and thus improve its overall livability. For these reasons, the results of the analysis of each of the livability factors will help to inform and guide policy recommendations for the Comprehensive Plan.

▼ FIGURE B.1 AARP LIVABILITY FACTORS

Livability Factors



HOUSING



NEIGHBORHOOD



TRANSPORTATION



ENVIRONMENT



HEALTH



ENGAGEMENT



OPPORTUNITY

Comparison Communities - Livability Index

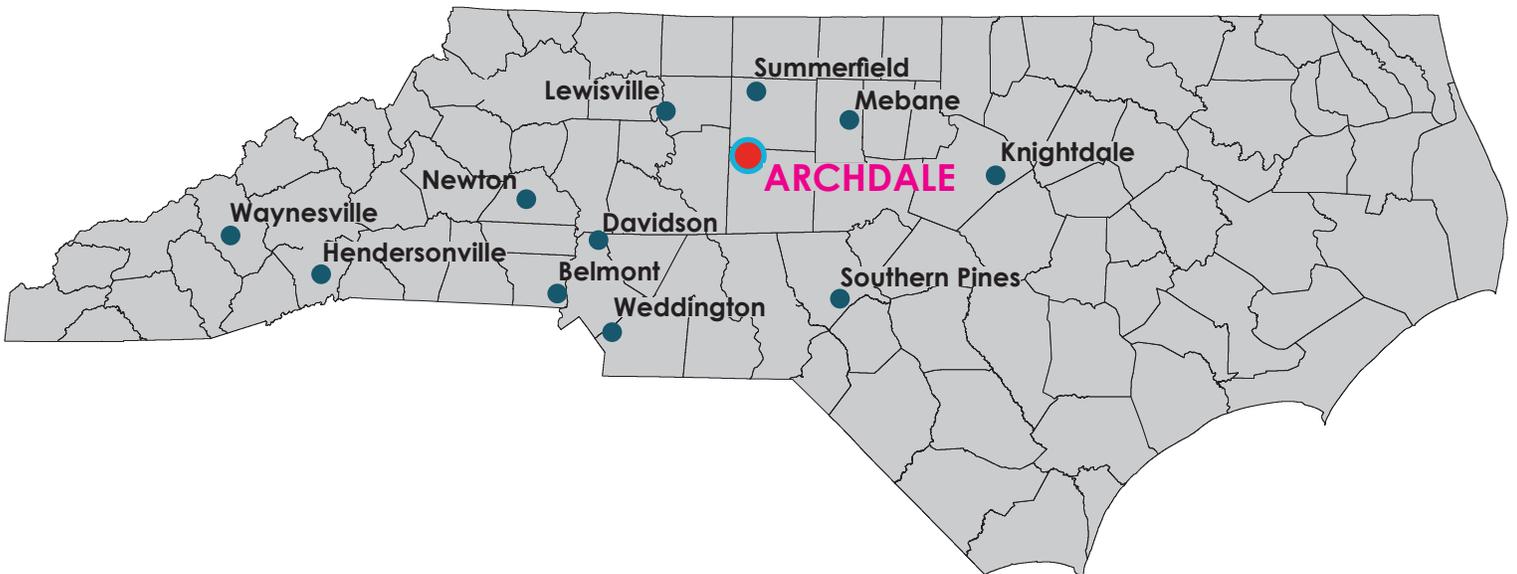
During the planning process, Archdale was compared to neighboring communities along the I-85 corridor (Trinity, Thomasville, High Point, Jamestown, and Greensboro) in the Piedmont Triad, as well as to other communities across the state as a whole. The comparison of other communities across the state helped identify high scoring places of similar size that can be looked to for ideas about how to improve local ratings. The high-scoring communities that were used as benchmarks for this analysis are shown below in Map B.1.

The Piedmont Triad region is generally considered to have “average livability” with a regional average of 51 (on a 1-100 scale) in the overall livability category. Archdale’s overall livability rating of 48 is comparable, albeit slightly lower, than the regional average. Notably, Archdale’s score in the “opportunity” category is the highest among the other cities in the region and compares favorably to peer communities across the state. The City’s rankings in the engagement and housing categories were also above average. The lowest ranked categories were environment, health, and transportation. While the City’s score in the neighborhoods category, which measures the accessibility of grocery stores, parks, and similar amenities, was slightly below average, it was found to be comparable to other cities in the region.

It should be noted that there are underlying issues with the national-scale data sets used in developing the Livability Index that may have varying impacts on communities’ scores (such as missing data). These issues will typically affect most communities equally, especially when comparing communities within a state or sub-region of a single state, and so they tend to be mitigated by having the same positive or negative impact on the scores of geographic peers.

The following pages explain each category and demonstrate how Archdale ranks against its regional neighbors and statewide peer communities.

▼ MAP B.1 NORTH CAROLINA PEER COMMUNITIES

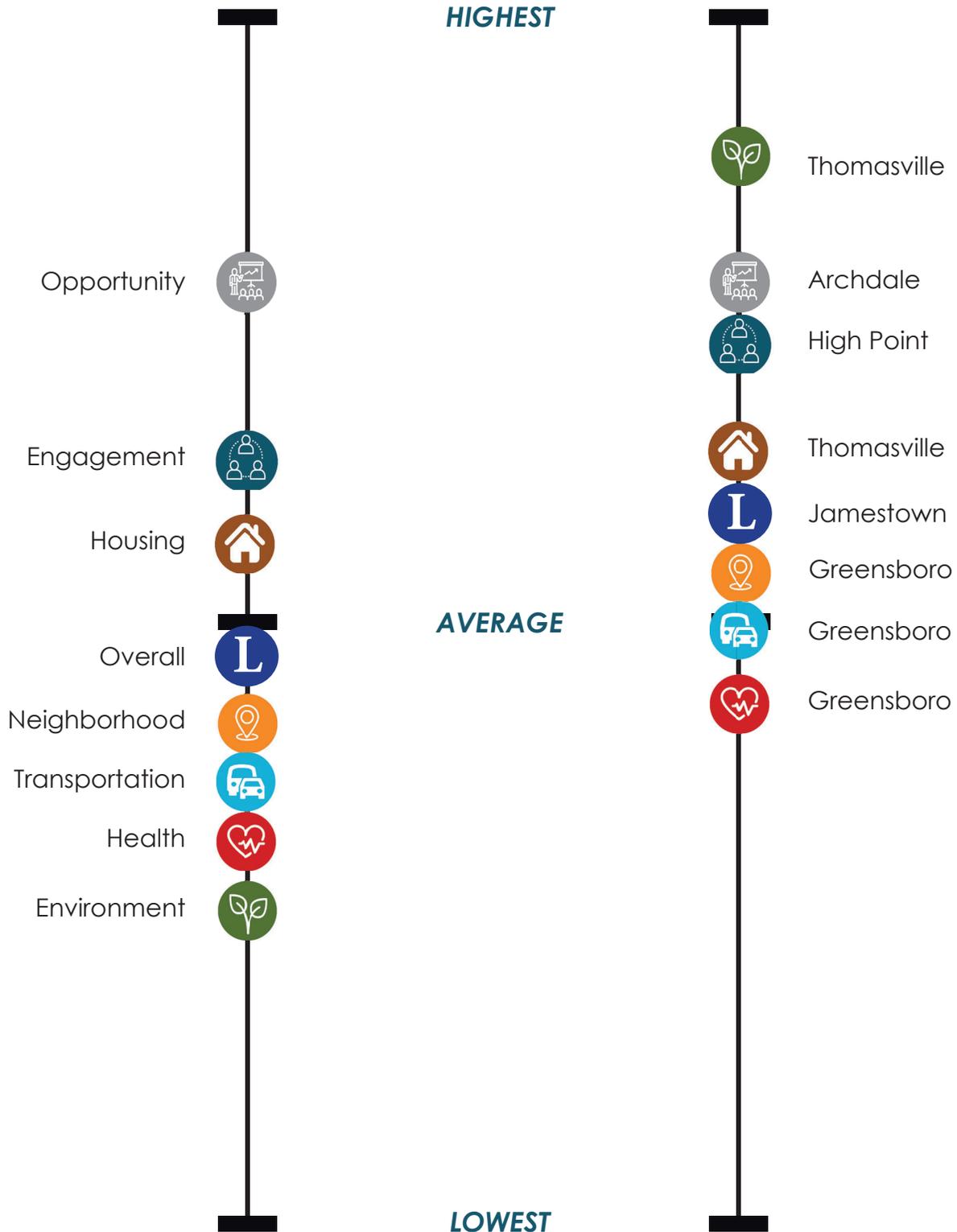


▼ FIGURE B.2 AARP LIVABILITY INDEX SCORES

AARP LIVABILITY INDEX

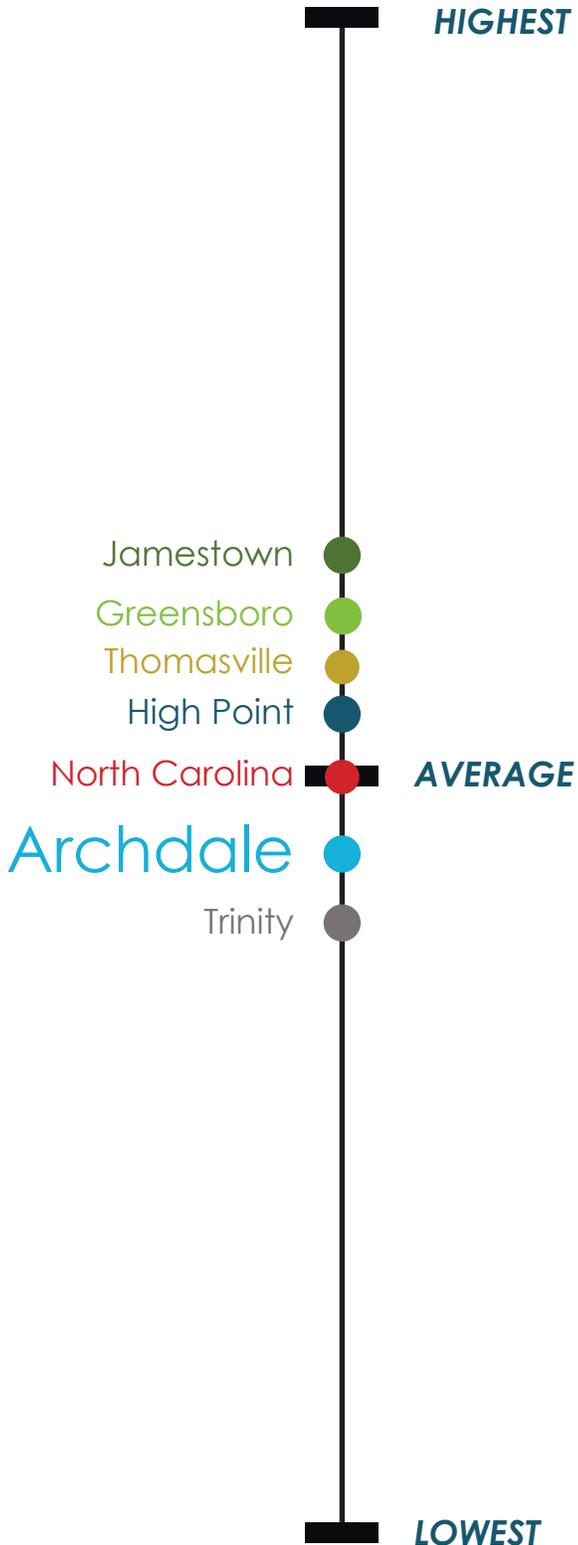
Archdale's Scores

Top Regional Scores

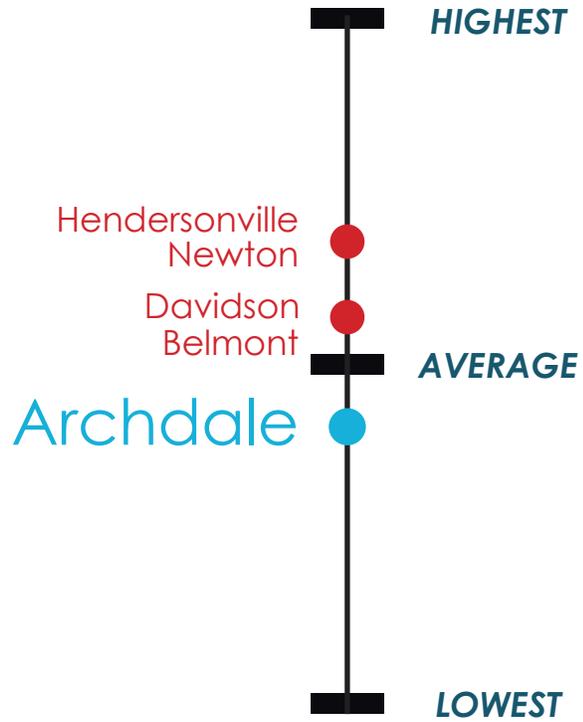


L OVERALL LIVABILITY

▼ FIGURE B.3 REGIONAL COMPARISON



▼ FIGURE B.4 HIGH SCORING PEER CITIES



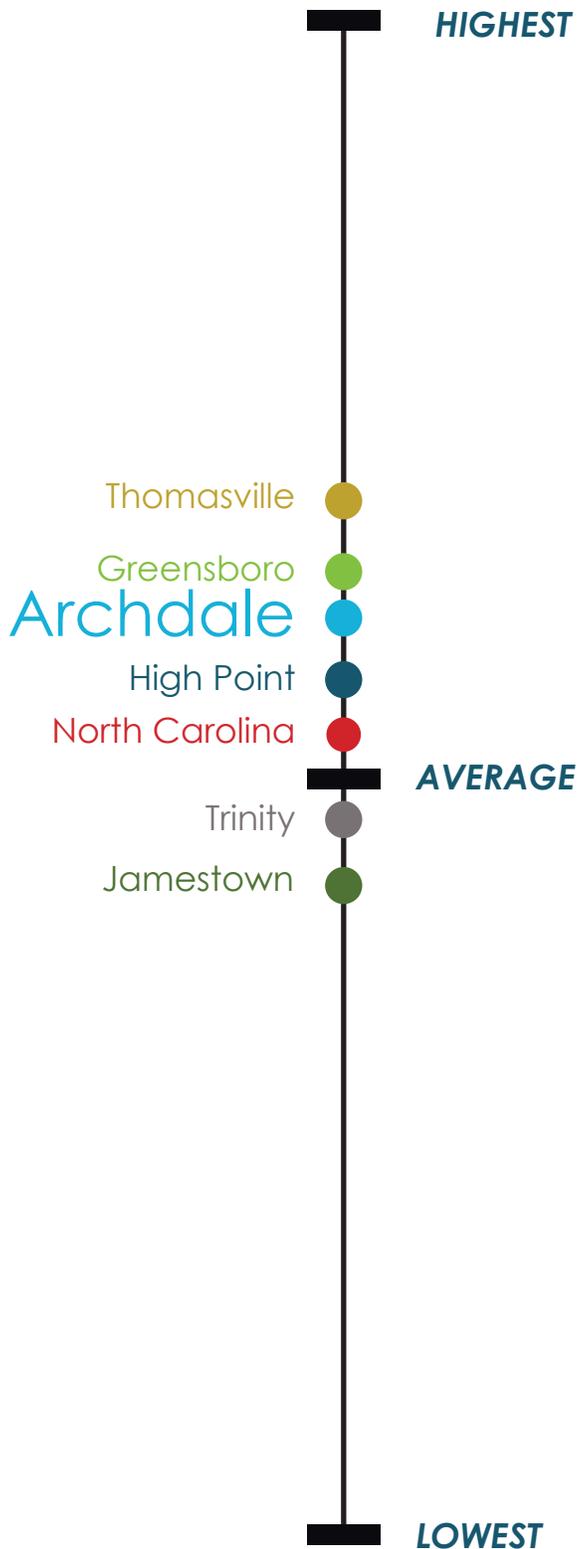
Overall Livability

The graphic on the left identifies how Archdale scores in overall livability in comparison with other cities in the region. While Archdale's overall score is higher than Trinity's, it is below the other cities' overall scores. In order to provide context on the overall standing of the state, North Carolina's score is included in the rankings, and the highest scoring comparable cities in the state are shown in the graph above. Comparable cities to Archdale were identified as those in the state which have populations between 10,000 and 16,000 residents.

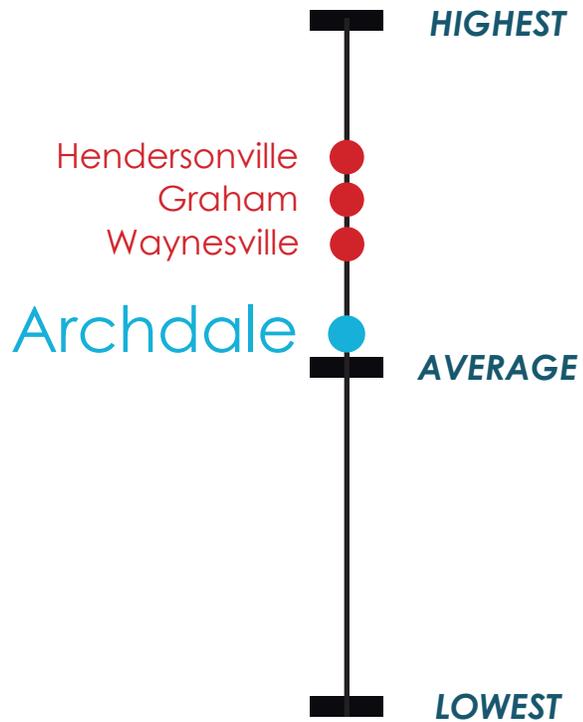


HOUSING

▼ FIGURE B.5 REGIONAL COMPARISON



▼ FIGURE B.6 HIGH SCORING PEER CITIES



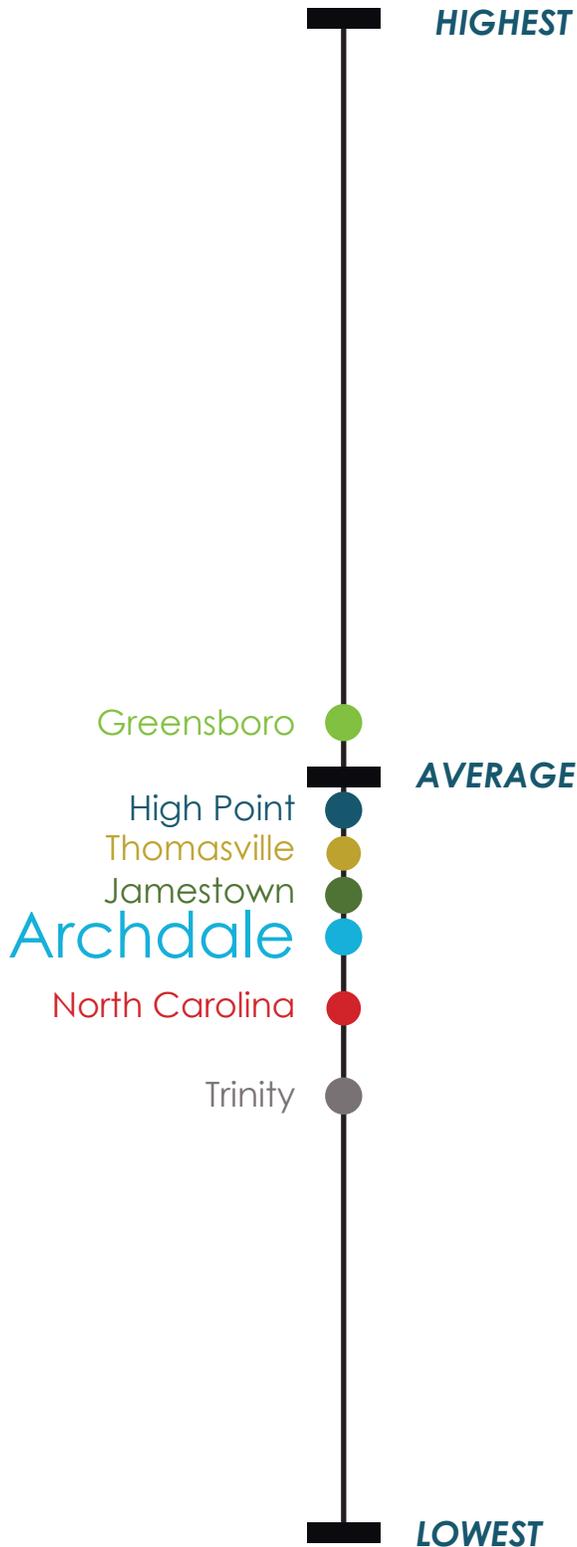
Housing

The AARP Livability Index defines housing livability by examining housing accessibility, multi-family availability, housing affordability, the cost burden of housing, and subsidized housing. Archdale does fairly well in this category, scoring slightly above the national average and comparable to the region. Of particular note are the two indicators that Archdale scores in the top third of the country: housing affordability (cost) and housing affordability (subsidized housing). It is clear by reviewing Census data on housing that the City has been making improvements in this regard, particularly with respect to housing occupancy and vacancy rates.

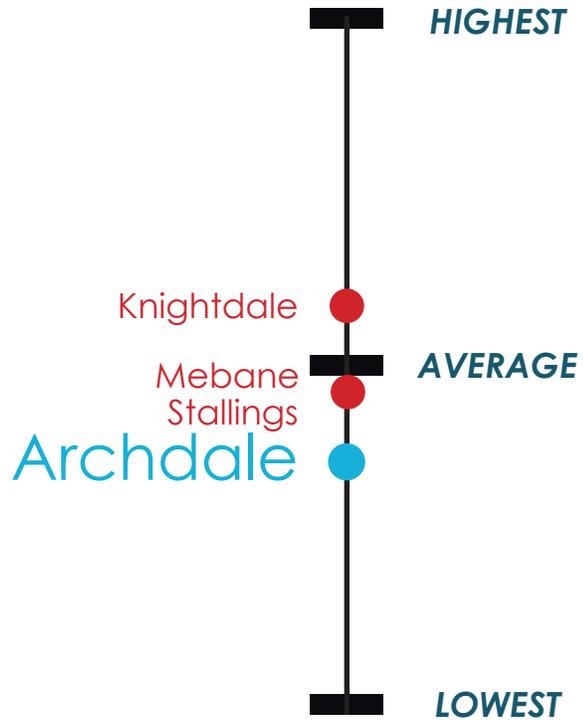


NEIGHBORHOOD

▼ FIGURE B.7 REGIONAL COMPARISON



▼ FIGURE B.8 HIGH SCORING PEER CITIES



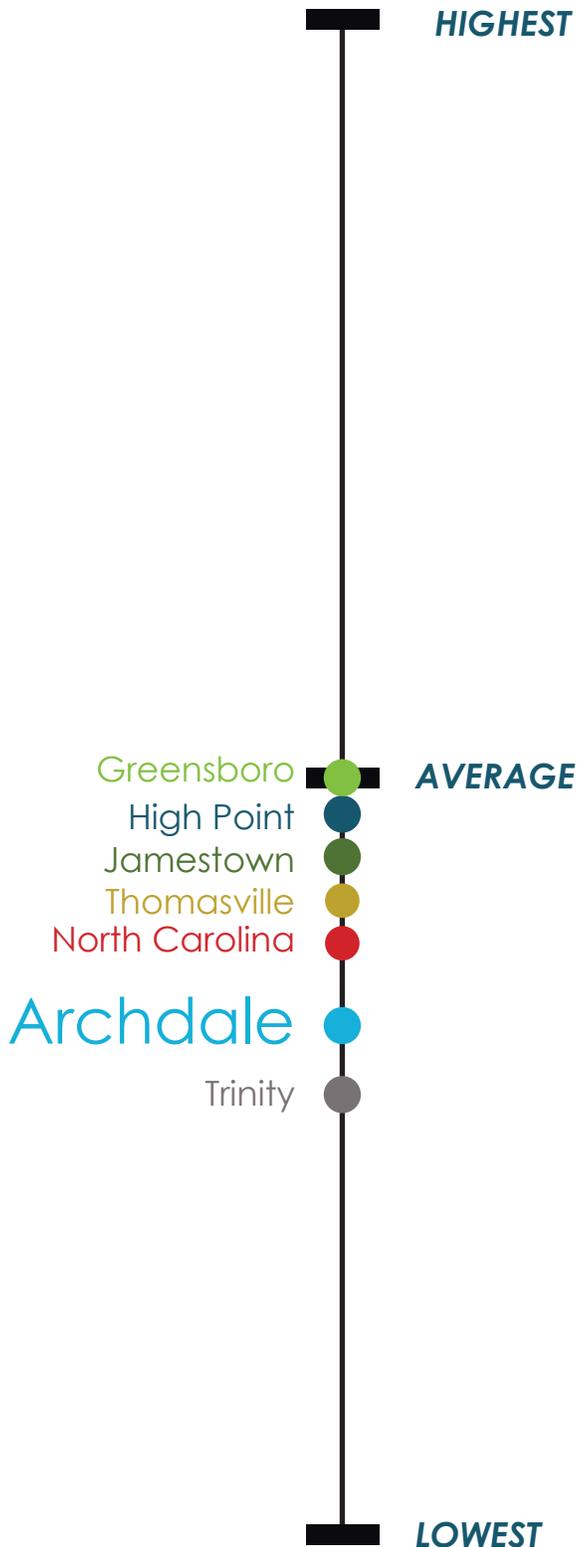
Neighborhood

The neighborhood indicator evaluates proximity to destinations such as grocery stores, farmers' markets, libraries, and parks. Per AARP, Archdale has a neighborhood score of 46 (50 is average). This is higher than Randolph County and Trinity, though below or equal to the remainder of the region. While this is important to review, it should be noted that we believe Archdale's score for this category should be higher than indicated by AARP. The datasets used to score the Livability Index do not include details on Archdale's Library or Creekside Park. These two variables alone would have a relatively substantial impact on the City's overall score for this category.

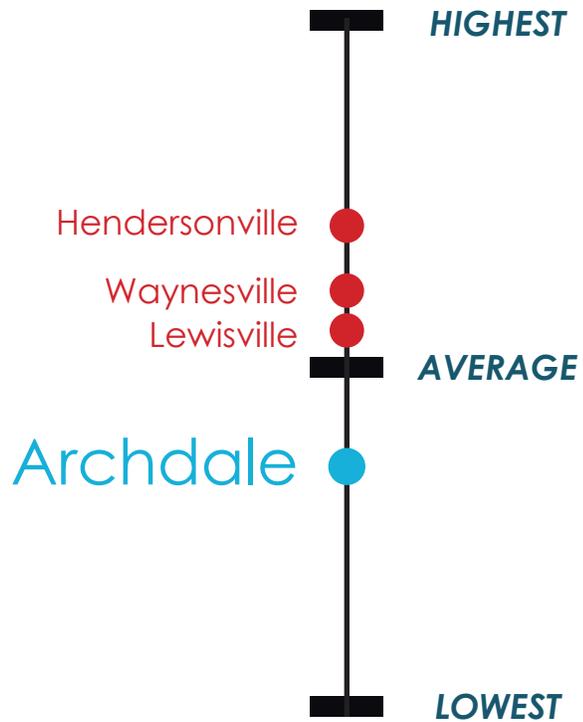


TRANSPORTATION

▼ FIGURE B.9 REGIONAL COMPARISON



▼ FIGURE B.10 HIGH SCORING PEER CITIES



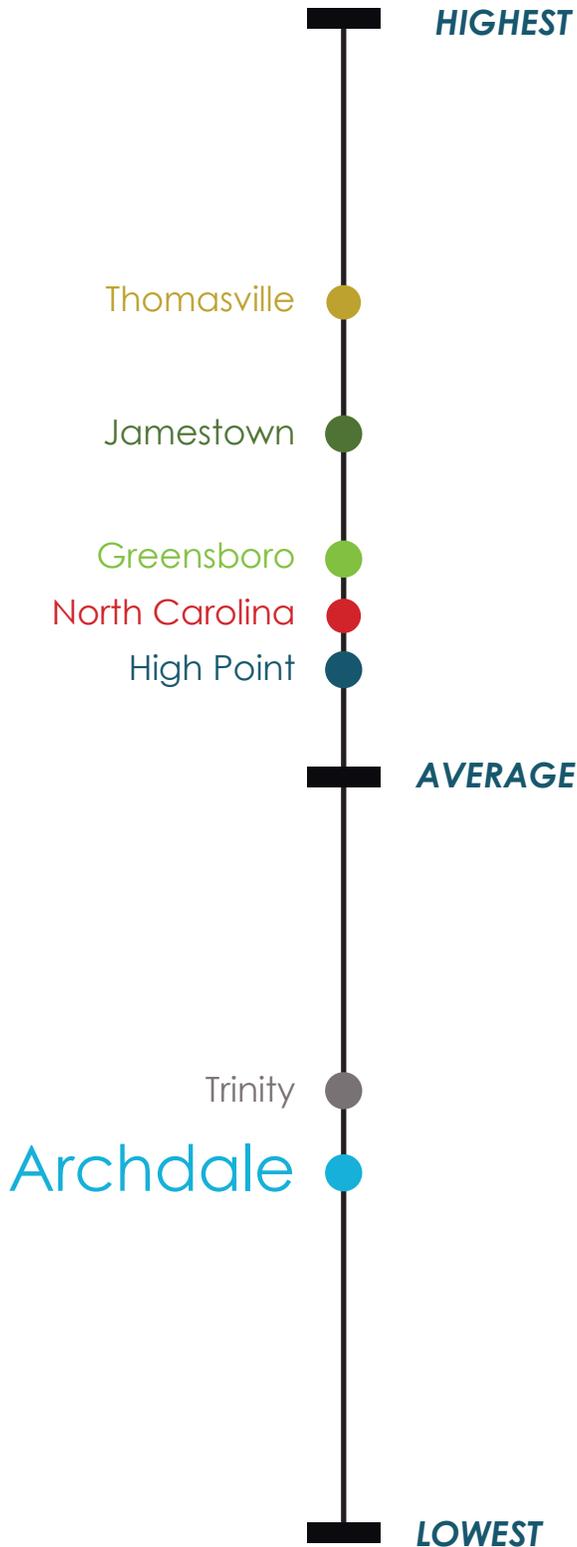
Transportation

When examining transportation scores, the AARP analyzes transit frequency, ADA stations and vehicles, walk trips, congestion, household transportation costs, speed limits, and crash rates. In comparison to the country and region, Archdale fares relatively poorly in this category. It's important to note that much of this is because there are no fixed-route public transportation options in the City. This alone reduces Archdale's score by 30%. Further, many plans include recommendations to enhance pedestrian access, reduce speeds, and increase roadway safety.

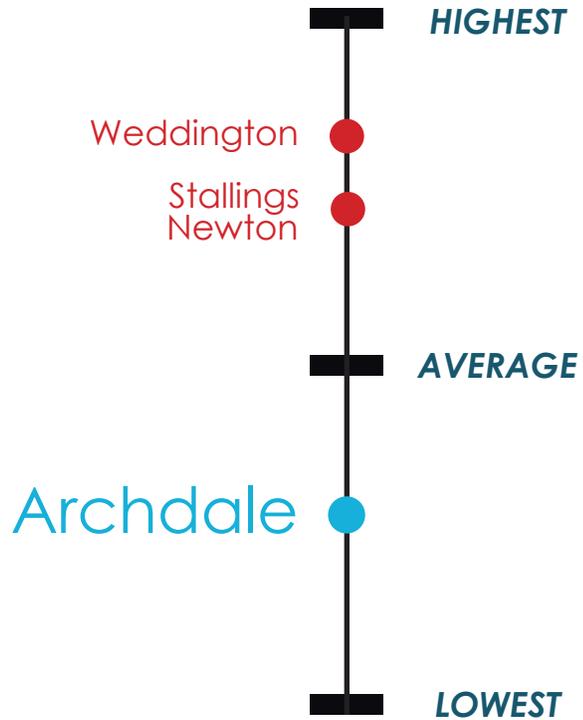


ENVIRONMENT

▼ FIGURE B.11 REGIONAL COMPARISON



▼ FIGURE B.12 HIGH SCORING PEER CITIES



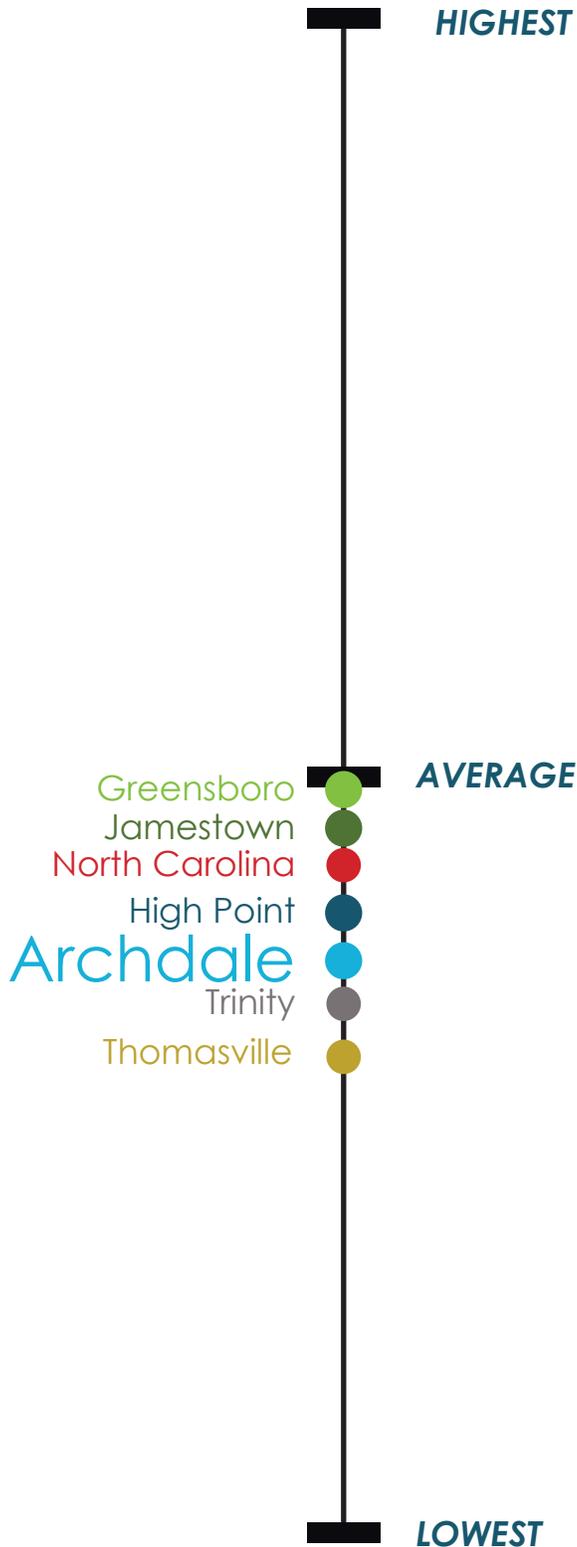
Environment

The AARP Livability Index reviews environmental livability based on drinking water quality, regional air quality, near-roadway pollution, and local industrial pollution. This indicator is one that Archdale and much of the region do poorly on. However, based on a limited number of locations where environmental data is collected, we believe this is an indicator that may not necessarily be accurate. The data used by AARP in the analysis indicates that Archdale falls in the bottom third of the country in terms of drinking water quality, near-roadway pollution, and local industrial pollution, while regional air quality data is missing from the AARP analysis for the City.

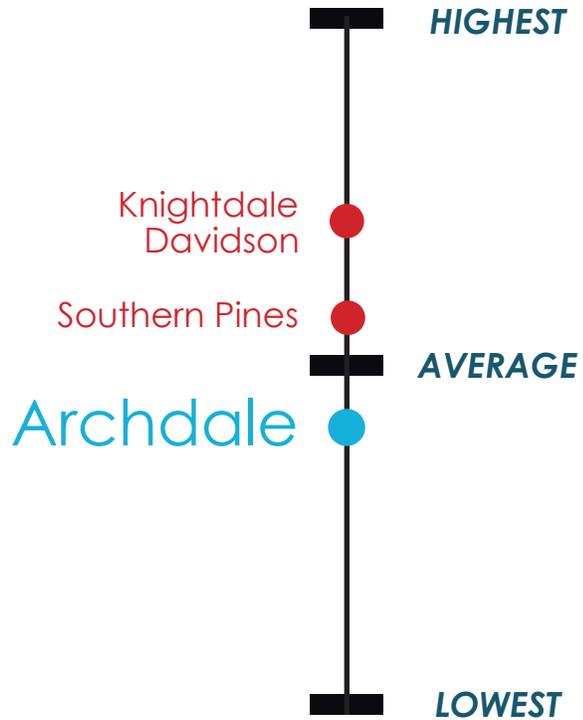


HEALTH

▼ FIGURE B.13 REGIONAL COMPARISON



▼ FIGURE B.14 HIGH SCORING PEER CITIES



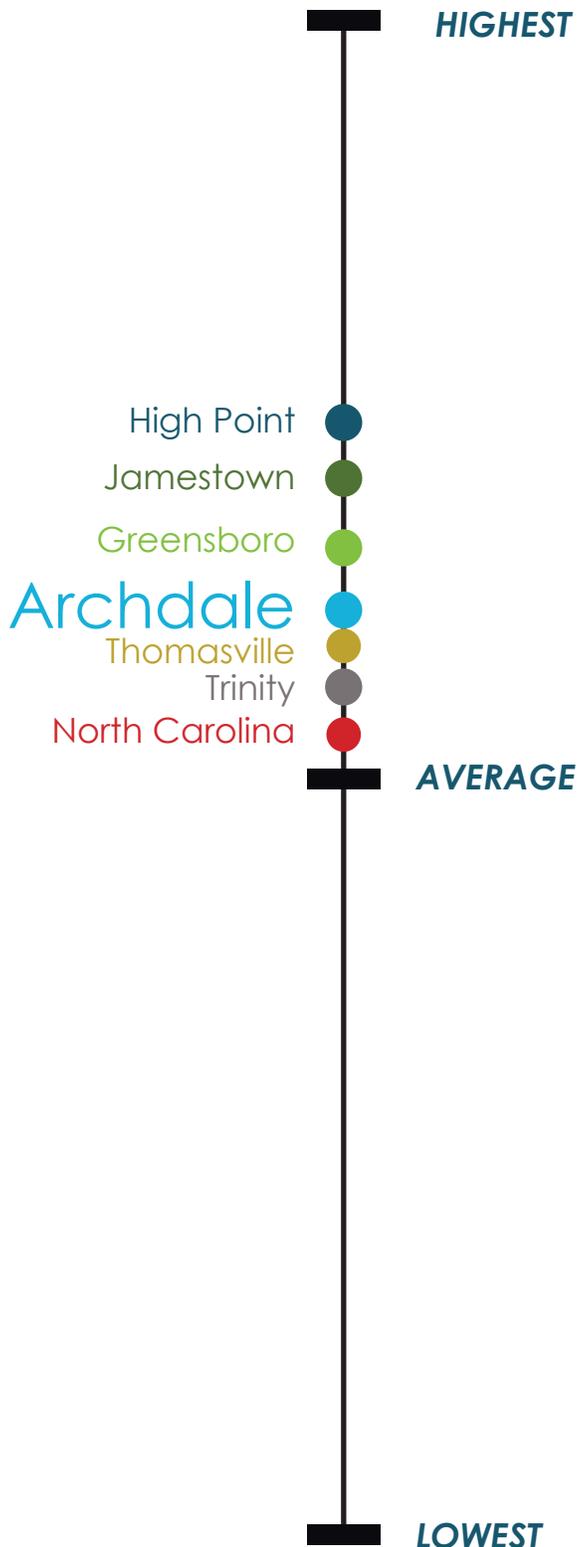
Health

The AARP Health Livability Index score is based upon population characteristics which include smoking prevalence, obesity prevalence, access to exercise opportunities, health care professional shortage areas, preventable hospitalization rates, and quality of health care (patient satisfaction). According to the AARP, Archdale falls in the bottom third of the country in terms of all these indicators, except preventable hospitalization rate, in which it is in the middle third. Archdale's score is comparable to the directly adjacent region, though below the State's average.

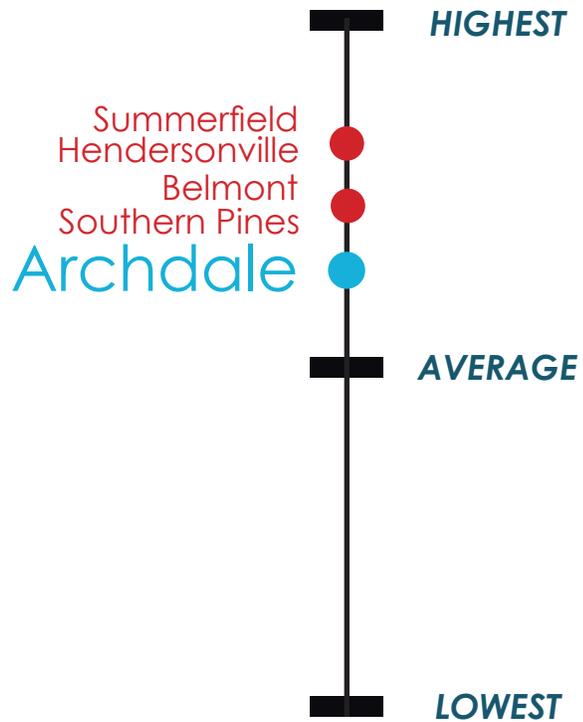


ENGAGEMENT

▼ FIGURE B.15 REGIONAL COMPARISON



▼ FIGURE B.16 HIGH SCORING PEER CITIES



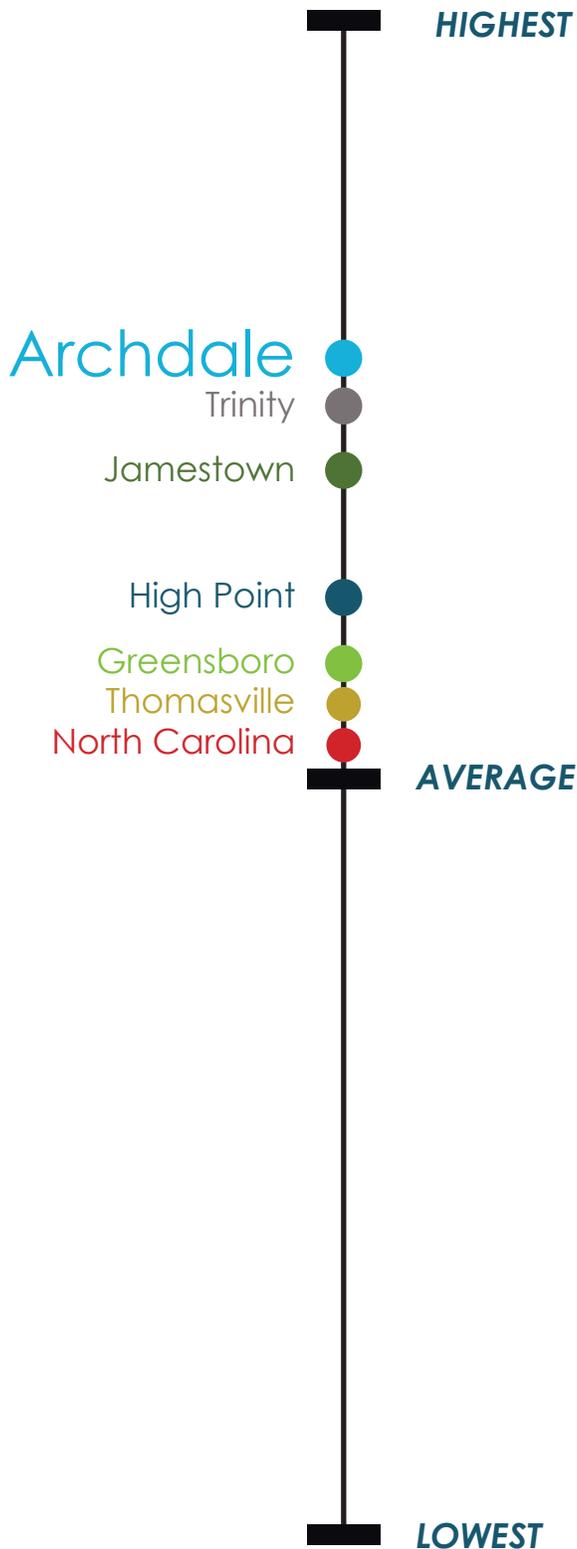
Engagement

Engagement is examined by reviewing internet access, civic engagement (voting rate), and opportunity for civic engagement. When breaking this category down to these metrics, Archdale does well with internet access and opportunities for civic engagement. However, they fall into the middle third of the country in terms of voting rate, social involvement, and cultural / entertainment institutions. The desire to have more civic opportunities has been expressed in previous plans, including the 2020 Strategic Plan. This shows that increasing involvement in the community, potentially through some form of civic / cultural venue, is something the City may want to work towards.

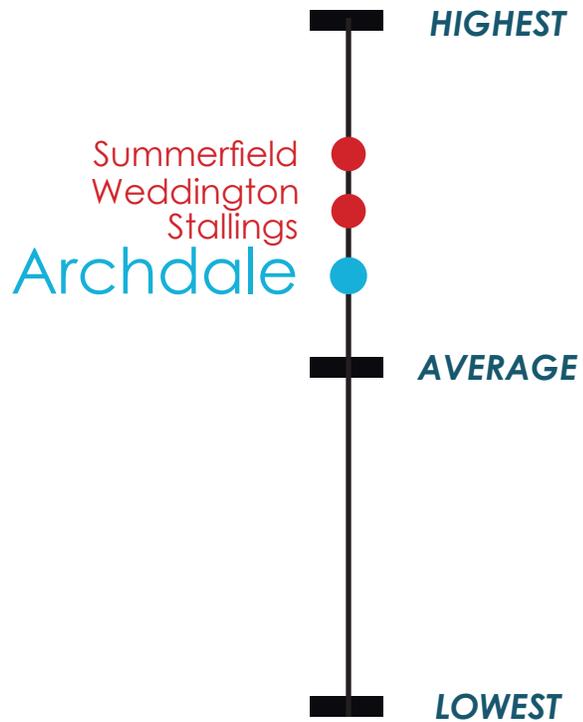


OPPORTUNITY

▼ FIGURE B.17 REGIONAL COMPARISON



▼ FIGURE B.18 HIGH SCORING PEER CITIES



Opportunity

The AARP Livability Index defines “opportunity” by examining income inequality, jobs per worker, high school graduation rates, and age diversity. This indicator is one that Archdale scores very high on. While Randolph County has the same score, no municipality in the region scores as high as Archdale. We view this as a positive asset for the community, as the conditions that lead to greater opportunity are difficult to manufacture. While many of the factors that Archdale scored lower in can be remedied by providing infrastructure or services, opportunity is a great basis to build a community and is something that would be harder to improve on if it were lower.