

# KINGSTON

**PAST**



**PRESENT**

**FUTURE**



**Allison Beesmer  
Janelle Carr  
Jake Michels  
Diane Passaro  
Rachel Ronk**

## Community Overview

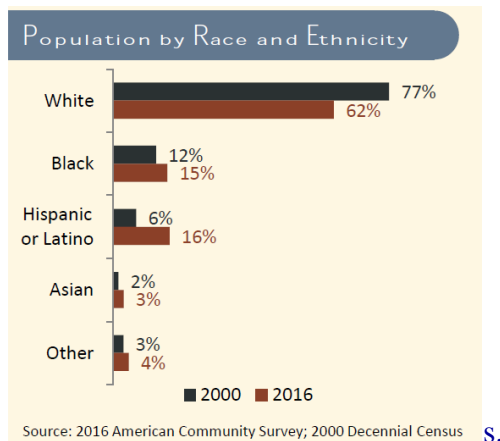
The City of Kingston is located on the west bank of the Hudson River at the mouth of the Rondout Creek at the foot of the Catskills in Ulster County New York. It is located 91 miles north of New York City and 59 miles south of Albany. It is a relatively small city of 23,893. It is the County Seat of Ulster County and was once known as a commercial hub for the Mid-Hudson Valley due to the discovery of natural cement in the region and its availability to both railroad and canal connections.

In 1777 Kingston became the first capital of New York State, the Senate first met in a house that still stands today as a museum. Several of the original pre-revolutionary stone houses still remain standing including the famous Four Corners, the only intersection in American where all four structures are original stone houses from the 17<sup>th</sup> century (pre-revolutionary war). The City of Kingston, continues to be a dynamic, progressive city where history meets the future – giving residents all of the benefits of a city with the feel of a smaller town.

Kingston is a diverse community separated into 3 distinct districts – Uptown Stockade area also known as the Historic District, Mid-Town area which is known for its early 20<sup>th</sup> century industries and home to the Ulster Performing Arts Center referred to as the Broadway Corridor, and the Downtown area which includes the recently redeveloped waterfront referred to as the Rondout-west Strand Historic District (Wikipedia). The City of Kingston applied for and received from the State of New York a \$10 million Downtown Revitalization Initiative Grant. The grant will work to not only revitalize the downtown area but also help to bridge the distinct districts throughout the Broadway corridor. Mayor Noble would like to “link the areas through transportation opportunities”. Improvements to the Broadway corridor are expected to begin in 2020. The Broadway corridor will encompass the historic urban fabric that is the City of Kingston and will act as a hub for healthcare and education, housing the County’s largest employer, WMCHHealth Health Alliance as well as the City’s High School and a satellite State University of New York. Bridging this area is key to attaining a City that is walkable with bikeable pathways, and convenient access to transportation.



According to the 2015 American Community Survey Kingston's population has had a 0.7% growth since 2000. However, the demographics have changed and now 25% of the residents are under the age of 20 with 60% of the population between the ages of 20-64 and only 16% of the population 65 and older. Population by race and ethnicity has diversified within the last 15 years as shown below.



Within the City of Kingston there are six large employment centers one of which is WMCHHealth HealthAlliance and we have identified it as a large anchor institution for the community. The hospital's Community Engagement Department participates in many local events, including the O+ positive Wellness Festival which is dedicated to connecting underinsured local artists with a variety of wellness services, expanding its mission and making the bond with the community even stronger.

Over the past 5 years, Westchester Medical Center has gone through a healthcare transformation into WMCHHealth, a 1,700-bed healthcare system that includes 10 hospitals on 8 campuses, with a goal of improving services throughout the entire Hudson Valley. Through affiliation, WMCHHealth has emerged as an important anchor institution in the City of Kingston community. Their Anchor Institution Approach works to not only support and promote community wellness, but also supports community development in general. Their Anchor Institution strategies will include the following:

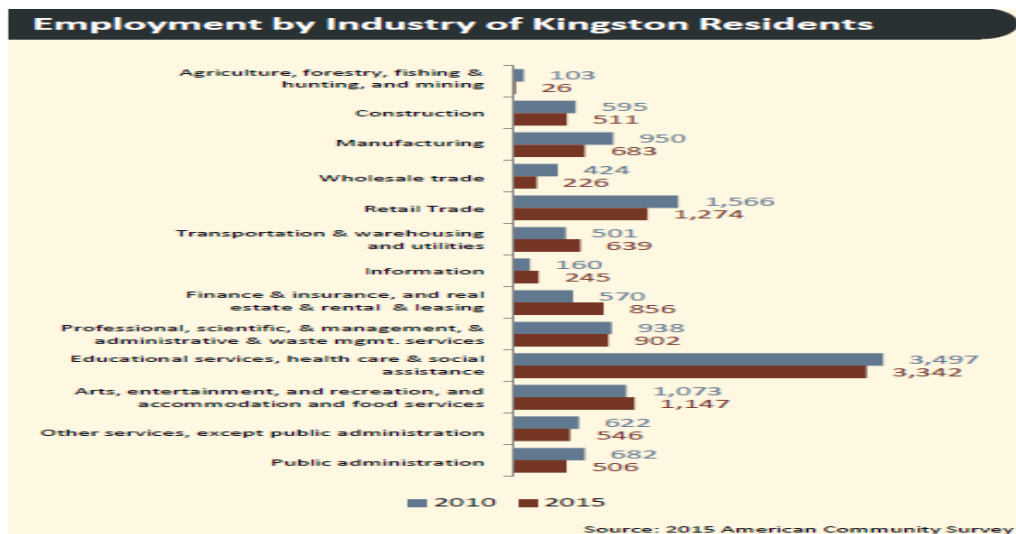
- (1) Food For Life
- (2) Personal Violence and trauma Advocacy Program – Addressing Violence and Promoting Safe Communities
- (3) Live Local – Community Investment, Housing and Economic Development

WMCHHealth’s **Food for Life** initiative identifies the need for readily available healthy foods as an important step in promoting community wellness and will address the following priority focus areas: Addressing Food Insecurity, Healthy Food Education, and Support of Local Economy.

A majority of the City of Kingston has been identified as a “food desert”, (an area with limited access to affordable nutritious foods); with only a small portion of city within at least a 15 minute walk to a supermarket. (USDA Food Access Research Atlas 2015) WMCHHealth’s dedication to this initiative, in conjunction with the City of Kingston’s Live Well program will support the overall health and wellness of the community it serves.

WMCHHealth is already working with significant stakeholders within the community to promote the Live Local initiative. City of Kingston’s main stumbling block at this time appears to be, by the Mayor’s own acknowledgement, a significant shortage of available, affordable housing. WMCHHealth can act as a facilitator to obtain funding for improvements needed to increase the housing stock and redevelop neighborhoods. These initiatives in conjunction with other community outreach programs will solidify WMCHHealth as a committed Anchor Institution within the City of Kingston. (WMCHHealth Network: An Anchor Institution Approach)

As shown below the majority of the City’s residents work within the educational services and health care industries.



The Kingston City School District (KCS D) is home to approximately 6,400 students and is one of the City’s largest employers. The district is supported by teachers, psychologists and counselors, literacy specialists, instructional coaches, media specialist and teacher assistants along with the many support staff maintaining all facilities. The largest school district in Ulster County, Kingston is a proudly diverse community that benefits from a multitude of strong community partnerships. They partner with many community programs including Seed Song

Farm, Mad Science Camp, Bike Fest 2019, Young Writers programs, Kid's Growth Mindset & Athlete Camp, The Secret City Art Revival to name a few.

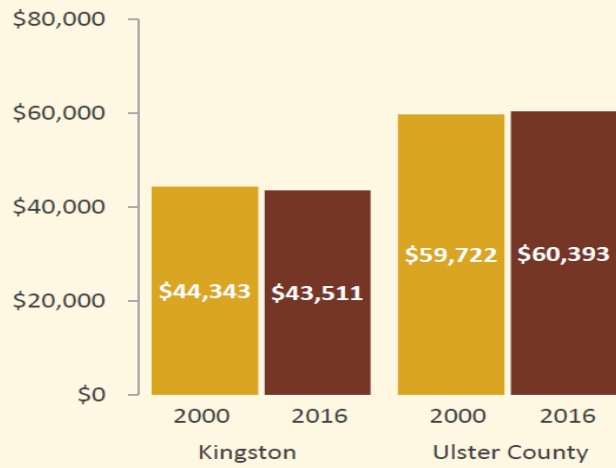
The district offers full athletic opportunities for all ages and skill levels including 29 varsity sports teams, 16 junior varsity, and 15 modified sports teams. KCS D is the proud home of the 200-member Kingston High School Tiger Band, one of the largest in New York State, and world-class School Marching Band champions. The High School campus is located in the center of the historic city. They are home to an on-campus science and technology center – the Ulster BOCES Hudson Valley Pathways Academy. They offer dozens of Advanced Placement and college-level courses. They are currently undergoing a \$137.5 million renovation, which will enable them to offer the very best in facilities and technology for years to come.

The City of Kingston has many positive attributes such as waterfront accessibility, rich history and museums, diverse restaurants and a deep sense of community. It has a vibrant creative arts and cultural environment. The community is very supportive as evident in the rehabilitation of the Lace Mill building which is home to 50+ affordable apartments/lofts for artists, studios and gallery space. The Department of Arts and Cultural Affairs was established (Kingston.gov 2019) in 2018 under Mayor Noble's leadership. It has been named as America's best places for artists. (Business Week 2007). Kingston also promotes "First Saturdays" which includes art exhibitions throughout the community, live music, open studio tours, and theatrical performances.

The City of Kingston is committed to wellness as evident by Mayor Noble hiring a full time Health & Wellness Director and they formed the Live Well Kingston Commission, which brings partners and residents together to facilitate policy, environmental and systems changes that result in a health and active community. Their mission being: envisioning a community environment that promotes and supports healthier lifestyle choices. Live Well Kingston is a coalition of local organizations, businesses and individuals working together and with City of Kingston to make Kingston a healthier place to live. This coalition is divided into subgroups – Eat Well, Play Well, Travel Well, Heal Well and Age Well. Each subgroup has a specific mission guiding them to enhance the City and make it a healthier place to live and work. (LivewellKingston.org)

Median household income levels within the City of Kingston may be somewhat lower than that of the entire County of Ulster; however, potential for economic growth is expanding within the healthcare industry.

### Median Household Income



Sources: 2016 American Community Survey; 2000 Decennial Census (Inflation Adjusted)

## **Why Kingston?**

The area is rich in culture, both past and present and the diversified population makes it a hub for expansion and growth. It has been identified that there has been slow population growth in the City of Kingston over the past 15 years.

The City of Kingston has become the center for many new business opportunities mainly in technology, digital media, film making and craft beverages. Leaders in these industries have found that the lower cost of living, along with opportunity for a better quality of life make Ulster County, more particularly the City of Kingston, a prime spot to allow their businesses to succeed. Film making has become one of the biggest growth opportunities in the area due to the diversity and the generous tax credits offered. Mary Stuart Masterson founder of the non-profit Stockade Works is working to root the film industry in the region. Stockade Works has partnered with RUPCO to convert a local building referred to as The Metro into space for TV/film sound stages, post production studios as well as affordable housing. A portion of The Metro will be home to Stockade Works Film/Video Production, editing, post production finishing. The remaining space will be filled with a variety of tenants including, maker spaces, manufacturing, commercial kitchen, food coop and other to be determined tenants. The goal of the Metro is to engage the community through job creation, services, goods and training. The Metro will preserve a local historic structure while creating new jobs and pathways of opportunities for people who have been disenfranchised including women, people of color, and those without college degrees.

Technology industry leaders have made City of Kingston a flourishing tech center. Companies such as Evolving Media Network and Dragon 360 have made Uptown Kingston their home base. In addition, business partners Kale Kaposhilin and Dan Stone, of Evolving Media Network, co-founded Hudson Valley Tech Meet Up which allows tech professionals the opportunity to discuss innovation and the emerging market. (Ulster for Business)

City of Kingston has also begun to move into the Craft Beer Industry with 3 local breweries, Keegan Ales, Great Life Brewing and the most recent addition Kingston Standard, popping up within the last several years.

In the case of where history does really meet the future, Rough Draft Bar & Books, an independent bookstore that also serves craft beers (including local), is located in one of the original stone houses at Kingston's historic four corners. Rough Draft also facilitates creativity and innovation in the city by sponsoring a monthly Writer's Retreat featuring a visiting writer that is chosen by a panel of local writers.

Kingston is host to one of the most diverse and biggest farmers' market in the area. It is held outdoors on Saturday mornings in the spring, summer, and fall, and then moves indoors to the Old Dutch Church, where it remains robust, and held semiweekly.

Travel along Main and North Front Streets and you will browse some of Uptown's many unique boutiques and shops. Broadway Midtown Kingston recalls the once-thriving business

district and is host to a few of the city's most beautiful architectural features still standing. If Uptown has the deepest history, and Midtown the most energy and grit, the Roundout is, undoubtedly ground zero for Kingston's romance and charm. There is the Hudson River Maritime Museum with woodworking classes at their board building school, and the Kingston lighthouse on the Hudson. Across the inlet is the Hutton Brickyards, one of the most important sites of manufacturing in the making of New York City. Recently repurposed, it is now the site of seasonal events such as the high-end craft fair, Field + Supply.

## **Research Methodology**

Our research methodology consisted of discussion with marketing and housing professionals, interviewing the City of Kingston Mayor, Steve Noble, Pattern's research from census and housing data and our individual internet searches of areas of interest in the City of Kingston.

Garnered from this information we have formulated the need for developing a marketing strategy to attract the demographic of young professionals who would benefit from the vast diversity and culture that is present in the City of Kingston.

Statistical information regarding Young Adults in the Hudson Valley. The PFP report is suggesting that they leave the area due to the cost of living and other factors. This information gives us the understanding that Kingston will need to highlight other benefits to living than cost i.e. quality of life.

## **Research Findings**

In speaking with marketing professionals who have developed the live local strategy for other counties, it was apparent that our team should focus on accessibility, walkability, and the future economic growth and development of the area. The City of Kingston also emulates a sense of “place” to all that visit which should be highlighted in our marketing strategy.

Our research showed that recent marketing strategies in surrounding areas followed this formula which has been very successful. For instance in 2017 the City of Poughkeepsie surveyed the public and asked a question about how they felt about the future. The response was overwhelming positive – they felt strongly that the City’s best days are yet to come. The Poughkeepsie initialized and developed the PKGO new marketing plan. It has put a spotlight on the new buildings and new businesses that are appearing all over the city. Their web site Poughkeepsie GO serves as a hub for the movement, highlighting stories about the revitalization and what it is like to live, work and play in the City. The video they created allowed the City of Poughkeepsie to be positioned as a burgeoning epicenter for young talent. It speaks to the high quality of life that it offers its residents and businesses.

## **Marketing Strategy**

Our marketing strategy focuses on the creation of a video that showcases Kingston. The video will target college graduates and professionals who may not be familiar with Kingston. The occupation groups included in our target audience will be from the arts, healthcare, entertainment, and technology sectors. The video and photography will be shared on social media through various local groups as well as targeting young professionals ages 20 to 39. Social media plays an important role in our strategy to development awareness of Kingston as a business partner. Additionally, social media plays a pivotal role driving engagement to better refine strategies and help tell the Kingston story from an economic development perspective.

The video will highlight the past, present, and future of Kingston by bringing awareness to the distinguishing features Kingston has such as arts, culture, quality healthcare, jobs, wellness, and recreational opportunities.

The video will open with Mayor Steve Noble, welcoming you to the city of Kingston. As a native Kingstonian he will articulate his enthusiasm for all that is Kingston. The video will fade to a person riding their bike through the city during his narration. The purpose of using a cyclist instead of aerial footage or a car is to highlight the accessibility of Kingston. Footage of the historic midtown and uptown will highlight the history of Kingston. Mayor Noble will talk about the important anchor institutions that Kingston has to offer and the role they play in the community. Finally, as the cyclist continues their journey, footage of various wellness and recreational features such as the rail trail and waterfront parks will be represented.

- Focus Groups to produce SWOT analysis - Include a diverse cross section of current longtime local residents as well as new residents
- Storytelling – Recent additions to the community to tell their story of “Why Kingston?”
- Digital Marketing through twitter and Instagram as well as Linked In.
- Market to Young Professionals, Entrepreneurs looking for business opportunities in tech/media, Artists
- Focus on business opportunities, health & wellness, sense of community, diverse neighborhoods, accessibility, historic resources

### **SWOT Analysis – City of Kingston**

#### **Strengths**

Rich Historical significance

Small town feel

Business opportunities – Technology/media

Artist community

Cultural/Entertainment

Waterfront

Diverse neighborhoods

**Weaknesses**

“Food desert”

3 distinct neighborhoods with no connection

**Opportunities**

Bike trail expansion

Transportation upgrades

Medical Village

Downtown Revitalization Project

**Threats**

Aging Infrastructure

Midtown area – need for economic development/concerning demographics

Low housing stock

## **Anticipated Program Outcomes**

We anticipate a two to five percent incremental population growth in the City of Kingston over the next ten years due to the many projects slotted to be completed within the City, such as the Downtown Revitalization Initiative and our Marketing Strategy.

Social media plays an important role in the development of awareness to attract not only individuals' relocation to the City but to spur economic growth showcasing Kingston as a place to not only play but work as well. Our marketing strategy will include various social media sites including, Kingston's website, Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Tumblr, Twitter, Google, LinkedIn, Reddit, Foursquare, YouTube, StumbleUpon to name a few. It is within the marketing strategy to position the City of Kingston as an epicenter for young talent seeking a high quality of life as an affordable alternative to New York City.

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(Mid-Hudson News, 2017)

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

WMCHHealth Network: An Anchor Institution Approach