

# Buncombe County Strategic Plan

## Focus Area

### Economy

**Goal:**  
Improve Workforce Development

**Goal:**  
Identify, target and support new and existing industries that show promise for employment retention and growth

**Goal:**  
Provide leadership and support to provide a well trained and educated workforce for area businesses

**Goal:**  
Reduce High school dropout rate by 2020

**Goal:**  
Promote accessible, high quality and affordable child care to remove barriers to employment

**Goal:**  
Work with safety net providers to promote and expand access to healthcare to underinsured and uninsured citizens of Buncombe County

### Objectives and Action Steps

- Focus on improving Accountability, Results, Coordination and Communication
  - Identify a lead workforce development agency and consolidate workforce development efforts to improve accountability and assign responsibility
  - Work with economic development practitioners to identify workforce needs of existing and future businesses; and train workforce to meet these needs
  - Support land purchase through providing subsidies and/or other tax incentives for worthwhile manufacturing/business projects; and identify and prioritize unused commercial sites for clean-up and redevelopment
  - Support economic development that attracts/generates “place based” quality, higher paying jobs and businesses within the community that focus on the unique strengths and capabilities of the community; increase incentives for small business job creation
- Work with school districts and colleges to provide vocational training and/or exposure to programs that prepare students and county residents for existing and anticipated jobs
- Improve and expand the involvement of local public colleges and universities (AB Tech, UNC-A, Western Carolina University) within the county by seeking and requiring continuing education and training for employment opportunities and economic development outreach
- Require drop out benchmarking and reporting by city and county school systems.
- Devise a program to utilize education and community resources in a cooperative, focused effort toward drop out reduction; encourage incentives (scholarships) for training in high demand/low enrollment training programs
- Build support systems for families to support children finishing school
- Re-align current resources to leverage additional care
- Examine economies of scale for common services to reduce overall cost of care
- Re-align county and community resources to expand capacity
- Explore potential waivers to leverage additional federal dollars into the community to expand healthcare options
- Work with legislative delegation on health care issues including those that affect small businesses
- Feasibility study to be completed by March 15, 2009

## Focus Area

### Lands

### Objectives and Action Steps

**Goal:**

Preserve the Mountains including steep slopes and ridges setting clear balanced standards

- Study sessions on preserving the mountains including steep slopes and ridges will be held as needed
- Buncombe County will set reasonable and balanced standards for the protection of steep slopes and ridges by July 1, 2009

**Goal:**

To sustain productivity and acreage of farming in Buncombe county. Encourage and educate citizens on farm preservation

- Work with general assembly delegation to preserve farm productivity and acreage. Coordinate with farm land conservation programs
- Develop strategies to promote local farm products
- Encourage the collaboration of agricultural agencies and interested parties to develop effective means to improve agri-business

**Goal:**

Encourage a thoughtful process of land subdivision and development, considering the importance of preserving open space and the relationship between adjacent developments

- Identify and prioritize unincorporated areas for future growth based on existing population density in an area, availability of utilities, road capacities, housing unit densities, protection of scenic views, environmental impacts, etc. Develop incentives and criteria requiring a prescribed percent of development allocated for affordable housing
- In cooperation with the municipalities and sewer district, develop a Utility Extension Master Plan for extension of water and sewer to support future development
- Collaborate with municipalities in development of a Land Use Plan for development through utility extensions to include community hearings to encourage public input and support. Develop a utility extension policy setting forth extension criteria including developer funding responsibilities as appropriate

**Goal:**

Ensure preservation of open space

- Expand conservation easements to protect critical and valuable lands
- Support future development in areas where there is adequate infrastructure, thus facilitating preservation of open space
- Consider providing matching funding to municipalities for land preservation
- Determine the percentage of "open space" that should be conserved within the county. When determining percentage of "open space" study other counties

## Focus Area

### Social

**Goal:**

Maintain and improve core services to ensure basic health, safety and welfare of county citizens

**Goal:**

Improve access to and convenience of County Human Services for all residents

**Goal:**

Ensure that county facilities support the functions of the county in an effective and way

**Goal:**

Buncombe County will continue to explore community partnerships for non-core services and those services not traditionally provide by government

### Objectives and Action Steps

- Continue to have open dialogue with staff and citizens and solicit their opinions channeled through the chain of command

- Install a "Safety NET" computer system with shared data between local health care and social service providers
- Encourage an increase in the number of child care subsidy slots, including drop-in and after hours care
- Increase human services language capabilities through innovative human resource recruitment strategies for non-English speaking personnel
- Initiate multi-county discussions for potential of joint efforts/information systems/service delivery in health and human services

- Consolidate county administrative offices in efficient facilities to improve organization effectiveness and improve ease of access for residents
- Provide court facilities to both support current and future case loads and better serve the community
- Create multiple regional full service satellite facilities to include social services, health, child care and other relevant county services and locate in and/or with school facilities where feasible
- Conduct needs assessments using multiple indicators (population, poverty statistics, health care statistics, etc.) overlaid by zip code to determine areas with highest levels of need
- Establish and maintain current inventory of community buildings for possible satellite locations including school facilities
- Complete an overall assessment of the use of county facilities including schools

## Focus Area

### Housing

**Goal:**

Ensure there is an adequate supply of affordable housing in the county

**Goal:**

Promote affordable housing initiatives county wide to accommodate current and future residents. Support affordable housing initiatives in urban areas, in proximity to employment, and in locations with access to existing public transit service.

**Goal:**

Provide a variety of housing types (rental and ownership) countywide that are affordable to a wide range of households and that can be supported by market demand

### Objectives and Action Steps

- The County Manager will collect data and analyze relevant information in preparation for study sessions. Study sessions on affordable housing issues in the county will be held by April 15, 2009
- The Board of Commissioners will set policy direction and act based on the findings of the study sessions. The manager will carry out these policies
- Build an inventory of needs/assets. Conduct a substantial analysis of current and projected housing needs by income levels, determine the current rate of supply creation by cost range, inventory those local organizations assisting in creating affordable and workforce housing assess barriers in home acquisition, evaluate the most effective approaches for addressing shortfall in workforce housing needs and initiate programs that address those needs
- Expand owner occupied repair and rehabilitative options and emergency repair services with federal and state funding

## Focus Area

### Energy

### Objectives and Action Steps

**Goal:**

Reduce energy consumption in county facilities to the greatest extent possible without reducing the level of service citizens have come to expect

- Introduce and apply energy saving principles, such as, LEED and Energy Star, to the greatest extent possible
- Continually monitor building energy consumption to detect abnormalities and track performance
- Expand the use of sustainable practices in all building construction and renovation
- Explore the possibilities of alternative energy production and utilization
- Seek out and apply innovative energy saving techniques

**Goal:**

Reduce the demand of fossil fuel use and carbon from the county vehicle fleet without impacting the safety and security of citizens

- Implement strategies that reduce emissions and fuel consumption
- Constantly manage fleet maintenance to the highest level possible to extend the useful life of assets
- Evaluate alternative fuels and emerging technology in advanced transportation systems
- Continually monitor total fuel use and emissions to track performance and detect any abnormalities
- Efficiently landscape facilities and parks to reduce demand for mowing equipment

**Goal:**

Education of public and staff regarding the efficient use of energy at home and in the workplace

- Help employees understand decisions they make everyday effect energy consumption
- Provide education on ways to reduce energy and water consumption
- Provide information on alternative transportation available
- Provide information to the public regarding the current level of energy consumed by the county