



HELENE UPDATE

Board of Commissioners | May 6, 2025



BUNCOMBE COUNTY



Topics for Today

PRESENTATIONS:

- **Debris** – Dane Pedersen
- **Parks** – Allison Dains
- **Residential & Commercial Rebuilding** – Matthew Cable
- **Helene Household Assistance Program** – Tyler Henry
- **Helene Resource Center** – Nathan Greene

APPENDIX:

- **Data Updates by Recovery Support Function**



Debris Removal Deadlines

- **Right of Way Debris Removal**
 - Mission is complete. County & NCDOT actively inspecting each zone to determine debris remaining & resources that may be required to collect remaining debris
- **Private and Commercial Property Debris Removal**
 - Application Deadline closed April 15th
 - All PPDR debris removal complete by June 30th
- **Private and Commercial Property Demolition**
 - Application deadline closed April 15th
 - Demolition will begin mid May
- **Waterway Debris Removal**
 - All waterway debris removal ends June 1st



Debris Volume



- **Right of Way Debris Removal:**
 - 1,540,409 cubic yards as of 5-5-25
 - Total Soil/Sediment/Silt: 151,198 Tons, 6,530 loads
- **Waterway Debris Removal:**
 - 1,294,895 cubic yards as of 5-5-25
- **Debris Hauled out of Temporary Debris Sites:**
 - 1,112,236 cubic yards
 - Mulch: 870,390 cubic yards
 - Construction and Demolition debris: 241,846 cubic yards
- **Private and Commercial Property Debris Removal:**
 - 6,074 Total applications
 - 4,399 delivered to FEMA
 - 2,266 sites cleaned up and completed



Private Property Debris Removal



FEMA determines eligibility of debris hazard removal on all PPDR applications

- What is **eligible** in the PPDR program:
 - Removal of hazardous limbs, trees or other mixed debris caused by Hurricane Helene that is near a commonly used area or maintained area of the property
 - Removal of debris impacting a waterway
- What is **not eligible** in the PPDR program:
 - Debris on vacant lots, unimproved property, and unused or unmaintained areas
 - Debris on land used primarily as agricultural purposes, such as land for crops or livestock



Commercial property debris removal

- FEMA determines eligibility of debris hazard removal on all Commercial Property applications
 - FEMA will review each application and make determinations on eligibility on a case-by-case basis.
 - Commercial applicants must provide proof of insurance claims paid/denied
 - Mortgage notification and acknowledgment from mortgage firm must be included



Residential & Commercial Demolition

- **Demolition requirements:**
 - Signed Rights of Entry
 - All applicants must prove they have filed through their insurance first and provide evidence of denial or claims paid
 - Statement from any liens/mortgage that demolition is allowed
 - Inspection of the structure
- **Demolition Packets delivered to FEMA: 65**
 - Buncombe County (unincorporated): 44
 - Town of Black Mtn: 9, 3 are commercial
 - City of Asheville: 12, 9 are commercial
- **Demolition Packets in process for delivery to FEMA are undergoing the requirement list above**
 - Buncombe County (unincorporated): 15



Debris Resources & Questions

- **Helene Resource Center**
 - 94 Coxe Ave. Asheville
 - Hours of Operation: Monday-Friday 8 am – 5 pm
- **One Buncombe Call Center**
 - 828-250-6100 #2 for debris
 - Hours of Operations: 7 days/week 7 am-7 pm
- **Private Property Debris Removal Questions only:**
debrismanagementhelene@buncombecounty.org



Questions?



Parks Overview

- **Park Assessments** were completed by staff at all Park locations
 - Inventory of all damage including pictures
 - Identified short term vs long term projects for opening parks – Vegetative and Construction debris removal
 - Site visits at all park locations
 - Damage Inventory completed and submitted to FEMA
- **Tree assessments** were completed at all parks to help maintain the health of trees and the safety of all park visitors
 - Roadmap to care for and guide long-term management of trees to ensure resilient parks and open space
 - Hazardous trees were identified and removed
- **Damaged fencing** has been replaced throughout park system
- **Hydroseeding** plan developed; initiated at priority park locations
- **Systemwide Master Plan for Parks & Recreation** – paused last October; re-kickoff meeting held 4.25.25
 - Amendment to contract to include re-assessment/evaluation, additional public engagement, updated needs, and resiliency component in parks.
 - Revised timeline for completion is January 2026
- **Greenway Projects** – paused by NCDOT last October, given the green light to proceed in February
 - Woodfin Greenway Hwy 251 and Beaverdam Creek and the Enka Heritage Trail sections will have amended scopes to assess feasibility of proposed alignments because of the hurricane including surveys, geotechnical, hydraulics, and outreach.
 - Timeline will be updated upon completion of assessments
- **Buncombe County Sports Park** turf and lighting projected in design
 - Completion of project is Spring 2026
- RFQ for **Owen Park** advertised April 30, 2025



River Parks

Park	Status
Alexander River Park	Closed – TOLS site
Bent Creek River Park	Closed – TOLS site
Corcoran Paige River Park	Open
Glen Bridge River Park	Closed – TOLS site
Hominy Creek River Park	Partially Open – Peninsula Closed
Ledges River Park	Closed – TOLS site
Walnut Island	Closed – TOLS site

*Note – Hominy Creek River Park peninsula will be closed until a river access can be established and remediation has occurred.



River Parks

Overview: Waterway Debris Clean-up began in February 2025 and utilizes 6 out of 7 Buncombe County River Parks as TOLS for access into rivers and streams; June 2025 is projected completion.

- **Temporary Off-Load Sites (TOLS)** – designated areas, used in disaster situations, where debris is gathered and processed before being moved to a final disposal or recycling location.
- **Site Closure** – TOLS sites must be closed for resident safety until work is complete
- **Site Inspection** – Once USACE has completed work at each TOLS site, a walk through is done to close out the site
- **Re-Opening** – Sites will be re-opened once they have been deemed safe and some erosion mitigation and bank stabilization has occurred

Before

After



Ledges River Park



River Parks



Hominy River Park



Glen Bridge River Park



Bent Creek River Park



Walnut Island River Park



Alexander River Park



Sports and Field Park Status

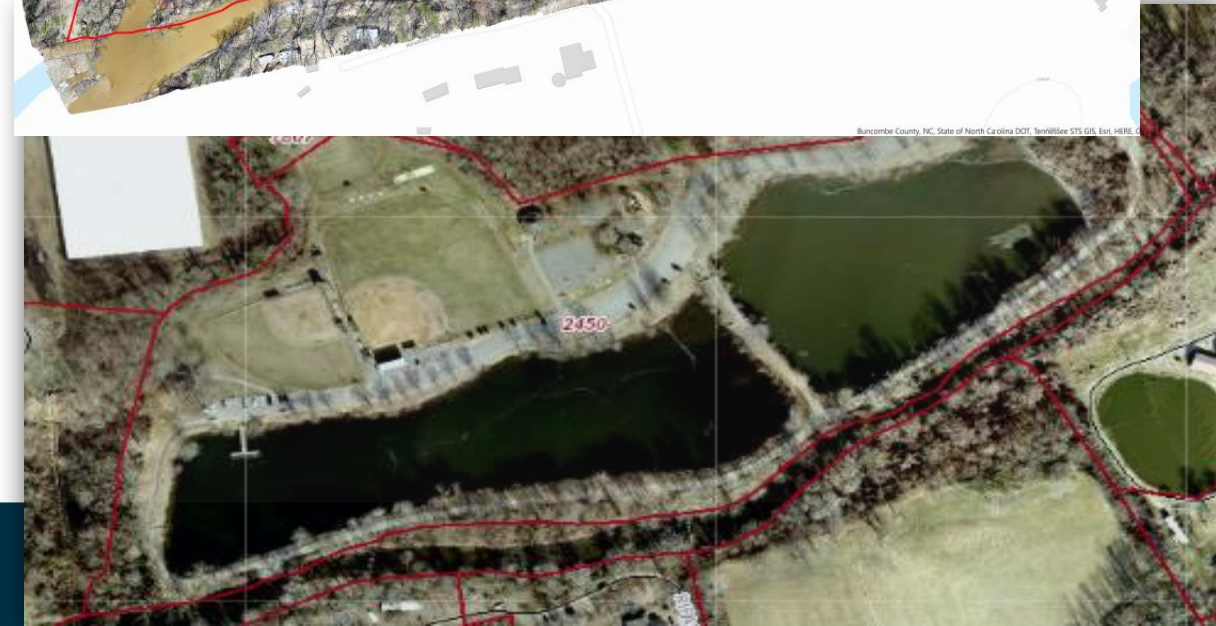
Park	Status
Charles D. Owen Park	Closed
Karpen Soccer	Closed
Cane Creek Park	Partially Open
Collier Nature Preserve	Partially Open
Buncombe County Pools	Set to Open May 24, 2025
Lake Julian Park	Open
Buncombe County Sports Park	Open
Hominy Valley Park	Open
North Buncombe Fields	Open



Owen Park

Overview: Owen Park experienced catastrophic damages after the Swannanoa River breached its banks through the ponds and shifting approximately 40 feet toward the park.

- **Engineering** – park will need to be re-engineered and designed to stabilize the riverbank and create a more resilient park
- **Community Engagement** – Input into the master planning of a reimagined park that best suits community needs
- **Funding** – FEMA, grants, and general operating funds
- **Construction** – rebuild key park features and amenities
- **Timeline** – RFQ for engineering May 2025
 - Fall/Winter 2025 – Community engagement
 - Spring 2026 – Construction documents
 - Summer 2026 RFP
 - Fall 2026 - Construction 18 month minimum depending on amenities and funding



Karpen Soccer Field

Overview: Reems Creek flooded the soccer field, and a sink hole damaged the walking path and far end of the field. The stream banks need restoration and revegetation



- **Funding** – FEMA, grants, and general operating funds
- **Construction** – rebuild soccer field and walking path; remediate sink hole; stream bank restoration
- **Timeline** – 8-12 months



Cane Creek Park

Overview: The multi-use sports field is being used as a debris site and will need extensive repairs prior to opening. The playground at Cane Creek has remained open and the pool is being prepared for an on-time opening Memorial Day weekend.

- **Engineering** – multi-purpose field will need storm water control measures to ensure proper drainage and playability
- **Funding** – FEMA, grants, and general operating funds
- **Construction** – complete rebuild of field.
- **Timeline** – approximately 12 – 18 months after debris cleared from location



Collier Cove Nature Preserve

Overview: 29 acres of hillside woodland with nearly 2 miles of well-defined hiking trails. The park is partially opened, areas where landslides occurred has been fenced off and closed.

Engineering – two landslides will need rehabilitation.

- **Funding** – FEMA, grants, and general operating funds
- **Construction** – landslide remediation to restore slope stability.
- **Timeline** – currently undetermined



Buncombe County Pools

Overview: All 5 county pools including Cane Creek, Hominy Valley, North Buncombe, Erwin, and Owen Community Pools are set to open Memorial Day Weekend

- **Operations** – Pools are open 7 days a week May 24 through August 10
 - **General Hours of operation**
 - Saturday 11:00a.m. to 6:00p.m.
 - Sunday 1:00p.m. to 6:00p.m.
 - Monday 11:30a.m. to 5:00p.m.
 - *Tuesday 11:30a.m. to 5:00p.m.
 - Wednesday 11:30a.m. to 5:00p.m.
 - *Thursday 11:30a.m. to 5:00p.m.
 - Friday 11:30a.m. to 5:00p.m.
 - **Extended Hours at Cane Creek, Erwin, and Hominy**
 - Tuesday 11:30a.m. to 7:00p.m.
 - Thursday 11:30a.m. to 7:00p.m.



Lake Julian Park

Overview: An approximate 300+ area park that offers boating, fishing, paddleboats, shelters, playgrounds, disc golf, a marina, and outdoor games. The park is fully open.

Renovations and Repairs

- New Fencing at the front entry way and marina
- Installation of park signage
- Hydroseeding
- Playground elements have been ordered for Fisherman's Trail side of park to repair playground
- DUKE Power is working through the process to repair damage to the dam which lowered the level of the lake by 4 feet.



Buncombe County Sports Park

Overview: Park is fully open including all sports fields, dog park, community garden, disc golf course and playground areas. Two new restroom facilities have been completed and an EV charger station installed.

Renovations and Repairs

- Fencing around sports fields
- Engineering, permitting, and design of turf fields and lighting for fields 3, 4, 5, & 9
 - Expected Completion: Late Spring 2026
- Contract negotiations for Accessible Parks Grant
 - Universal design for playground that allows all abilities to participate
 - Shelter and Park Ranger Contact station renovation



Questions?

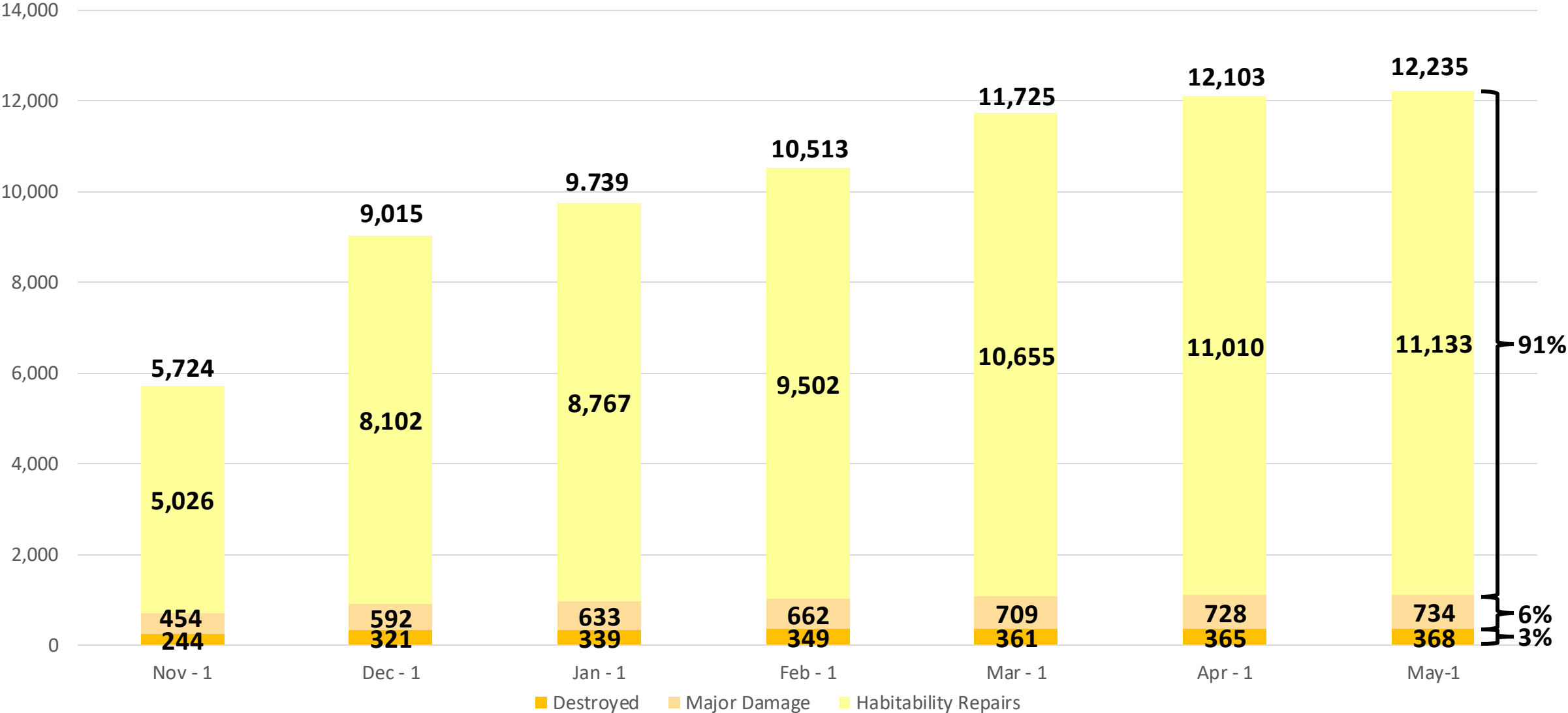


Residential Rebuilding

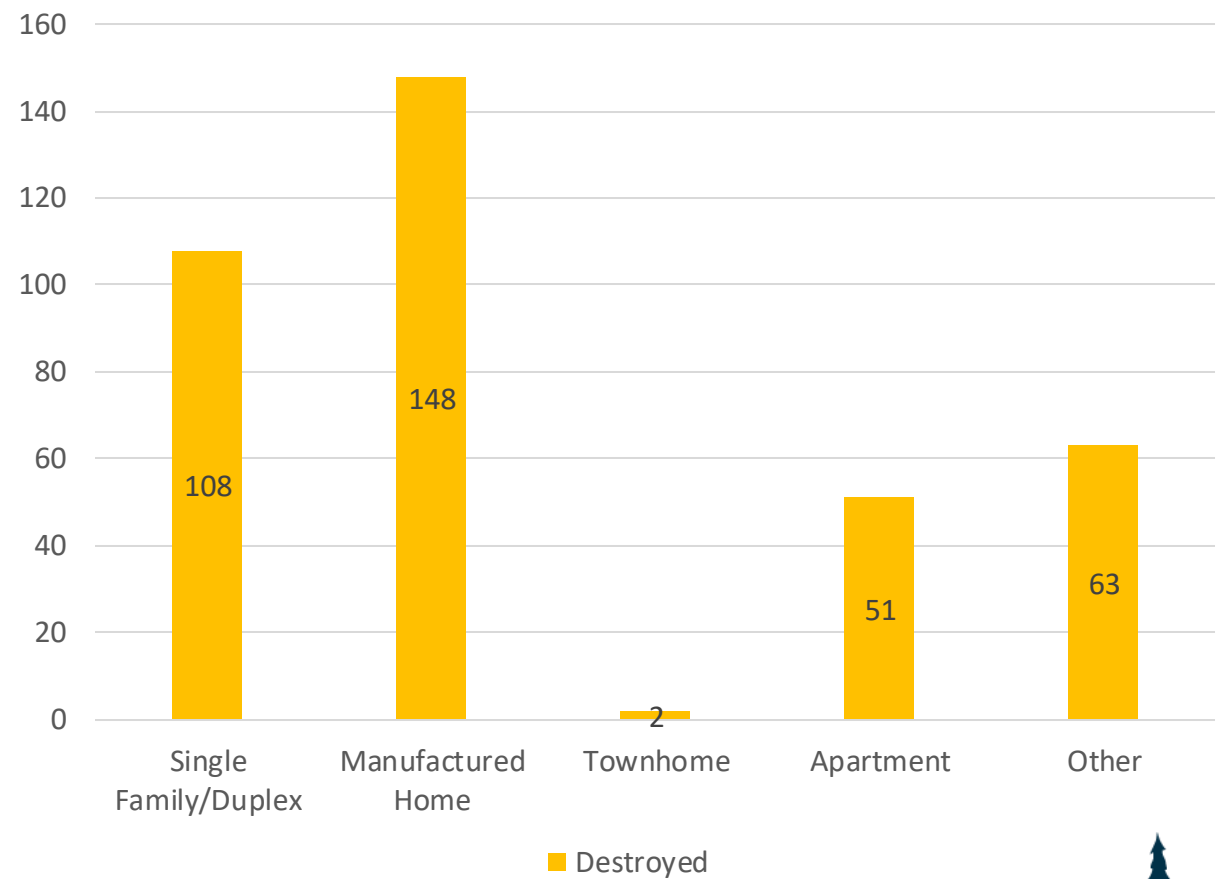
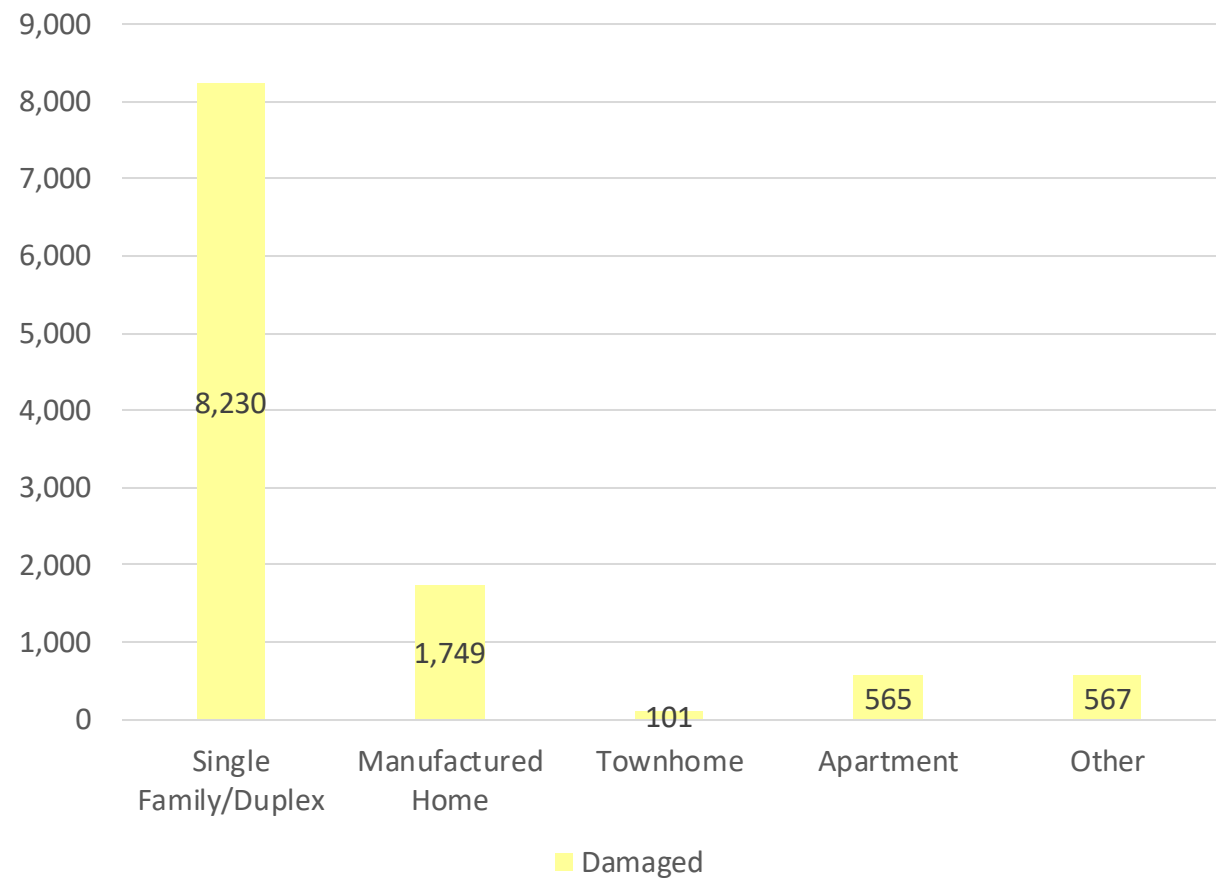
Baseline: 137,123 Total Housing Units in Buncombe County Pre-Helene



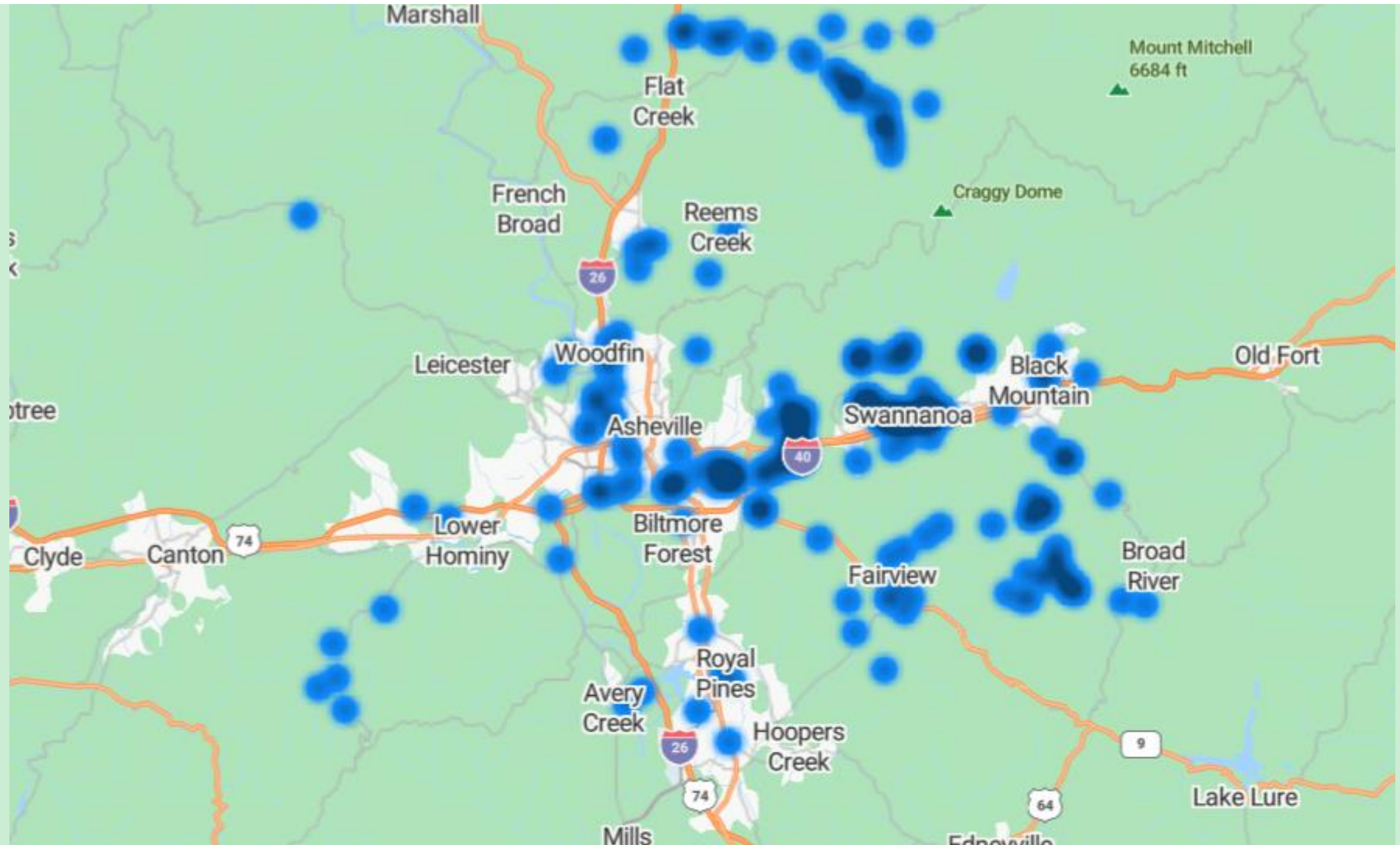
FEMA Reported Damaged Units



FEMA Damaged & Destroyed Units by Type



FEMA Destroyed Units

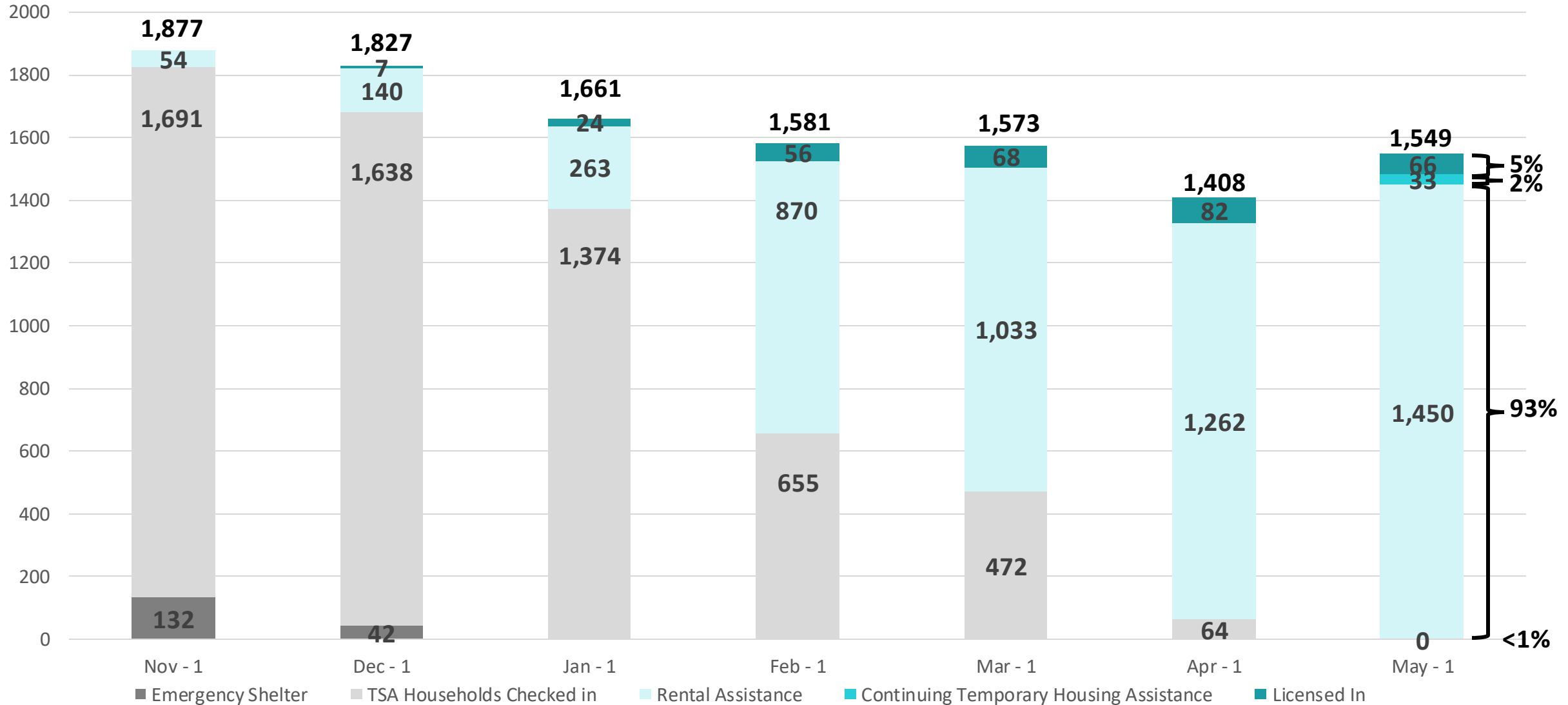


Residential Substantial Damage Determinations: Special Flood Hazard Area

355 residential substantial damage determinations



Housing: Sheltering & Temporary Housing



Temporary Housing Permitting

187 zoning permits issued for temporary residential use with Helene Tag

- 72 FEMA permits
- 112 individual permits not with property owner affidavit
- 3 individual permits with property owner affidavit



Residential Repair Permitting

Permits (zoning, floodplain development, and building) have been issued to facilitate residential repair for homes with Helene damage



Pre-Storm



Post Storm



Restored



Residential Repair Permitting

Zoning Permits for Repair	Oct 2024 – March 2025
Single Family	43
Townhomes	0
Duplex	0
Manufactured Home	77
Apartments	0
Other (Garage/Addition)	53
Total Residential Repair Zoning Permits	173
Total Residential Repair Building Permits*	1,670

*A single project may include multiple permits across multiple trades. These permit counts do not directly correlate to the number of units.

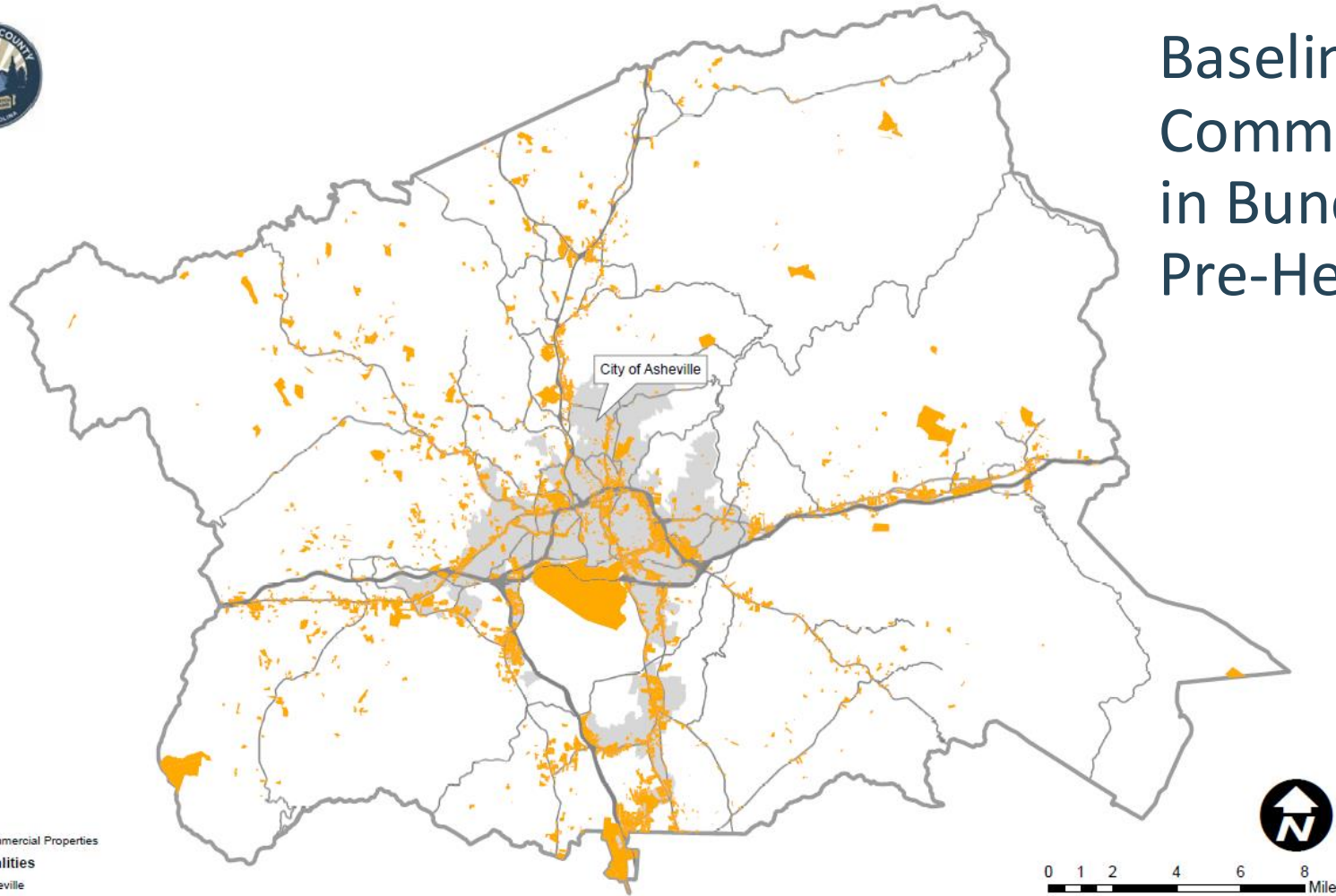


Residential New Construction Permitting

Building Permits	Oct 2024 - March 2025	Oct 2023 - March 2024
Single Family	254	839
Townhomes (units)	134	84
Duplex (units)	11	132
Manufactured Home	98	200
Apartments (units)	276	2,560
Total Residential	773	3,815



Commercial Rebuilding



Baseline: 7,025
Commercial Parcels
in Buncombe County
Pre-Helene



Commercial Substantial Damage Determinations: Special Flood Hazard Area

45 nonresidential substantial damage determinations



Commercial Repair Permitting

37 zoning permits issued to repair commercial property with Helene damage
55 building permits issued to repair commercial property with Helene damage



Commercial New Construction Permitting

Building Permits	Oct 2024 - March 2025	Oct 2023 - March 2024
Commercial	20	101
Total Commercial	20	101



Floodplain Development Permits

Required for:

- All Structures (buildings, manufactured homes, sheds, carports, etc.)
- Trade (electrical, mechanical, combination, etc.)
- Fill/Grading
- Stream Restoration Projects (EWP)
- Bridges/Culverts

276 floodplain development permits in since Helene including:

200 Helene related floodplain development permits

76 floodplain development permits not associated with Helene



Questions?



Helene Household Assistance Program

- On 11/1/24, the Board of Commissioners approved the reallocation of \$1.597M in ARPA funds for Helene Relief Household Assistance Programs
 - \$300K to Grace Covenant, serving 122 households
 - \$1.297M to Buncombe County Economic Services
- BC Economic Services announced an application for Household Assistance grants between 12/5 – 12/18, receiving 5,826 applications
- On 1/21/25, the Board of Commissioners approved the execution of an interlocal agreement to receive \$624,000 in CDBG-DDRF from the City of Asheville



Program Performance

ARPA

Number of Households Served:
(receiving mortgage, rental and/or utility assistance)

- 325

Average amount of assistance:

- \$2,399.85

GCPC-ARPA

Number of Households Served:
(receiving rental assistance)

- 122

Average amount of assistance:

- \$2,479.34

CDBG-DDRF

Number of Households Served:
(receiving rental assistance)

- 160

Average amount of assistance:

- \$3,510.00

Overall

- **607** Households $\leq 80\%$ AMI have received mortgage, rental and/or utility assistance.



Additional Funds Available

- Proposed New Interlocal Agreement with City of Asheville:
 - Total Amount of Additional Funds: \$135,000
 - If accepted, the CDBG funds would go toward rental assistance for City of Asheville households with incomes at 80% AMI or less
 - Administrative Fee: 10%
 - Program will be administered by Economic Services
 - Grant payment structure: cash advance
 - Funds are required to be used within the jurisdiction of the City of Asheville
 - Reporting: as the participating entitlement community, City of Asheville is responsible for reporting to Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)



Next Steps

- 1. City Council Approval:**

City Staff will be presenting the interlocal agreement for approval to City Council on May 13th, 2025

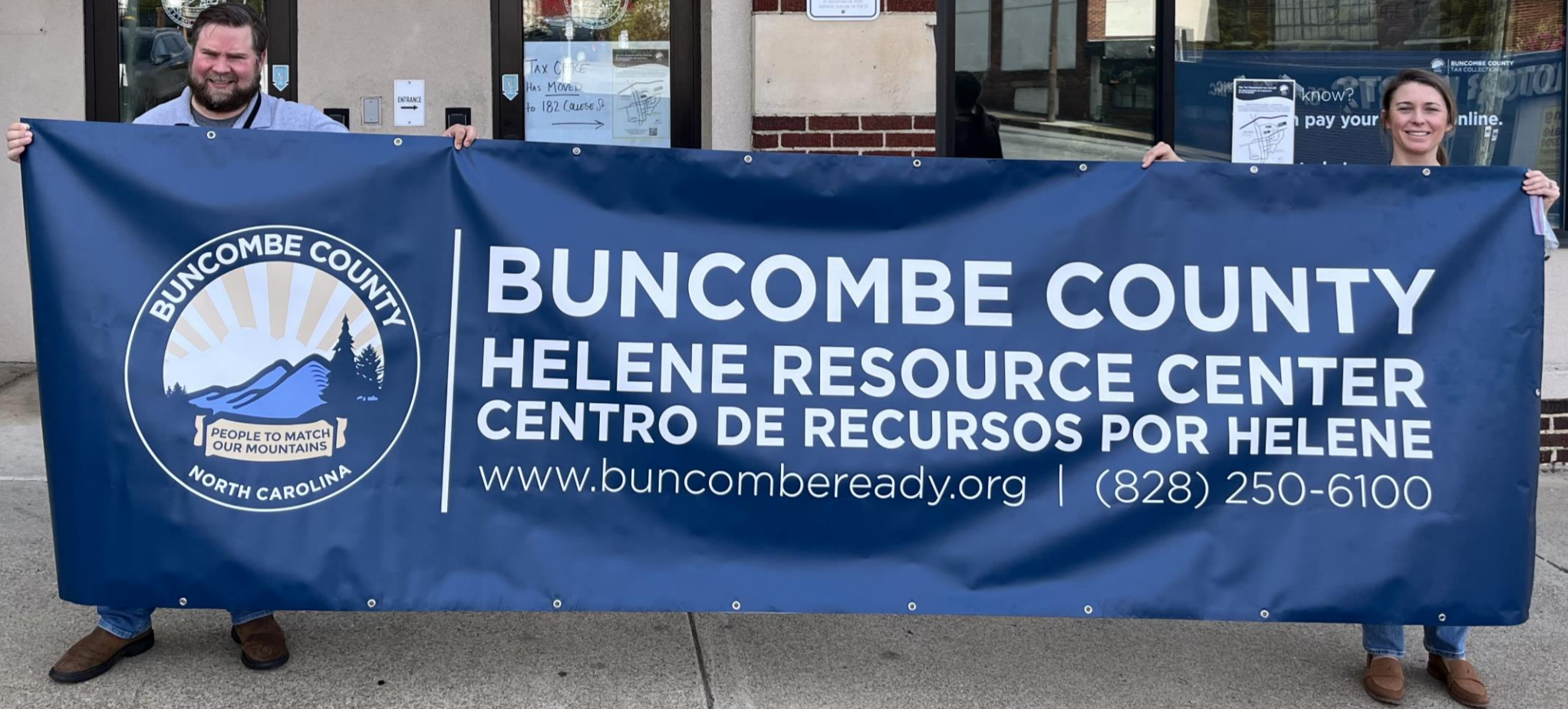
- 2. Buncombe County Commission Approval:**

If the interlocal agreement is approved on 5/13 by City Council, County Staff will present the agreement for consideration on May 20th, 2025



Questions?





Helene Resource Center Timeline

March 31

Disaster Resource Center
transition to Local Resource
Center

**Walk through of 94 Coxe Avenue
/ Helene Resource Center (HRC)**

April 7th

Weaverville DRC
closed. **Soft launch of
Helene Resource
Center**

April 14th

Helene Resource
Center at 94 Coxe
Avenue fully opened

April 4th

Weaverville DRC
Closed. Moved to 94
Coxe Ave

April 11

Fairview Library DRC
Closed; Staff moved to
94 Coxe Avenue



External Stakeholders

FEMA Individual
Assistance

Disaster Case
Management- 37 total
personnel, rotating
shifts

Small Business
Administration- 4 total
personnel

Private Property Debris
Removal-2 Tetra Tech

FEMA Hazard
Mitigation Community
Education and
Outreach Specialist- 1

Buncombe County
Staff- Long Term
Temporary New Hires-
3 Representatives, 1
Coordinator



Services Overview

Key Resources:

- Housing assistance
- Mental health services
- Disaster case management
- Debris removal
- Roads and bridges information
- Additional resources as needed, based on survivors' needs

Supportive Environment:

- Open to everyone
- Services available in multiple languages

Easy to Access:

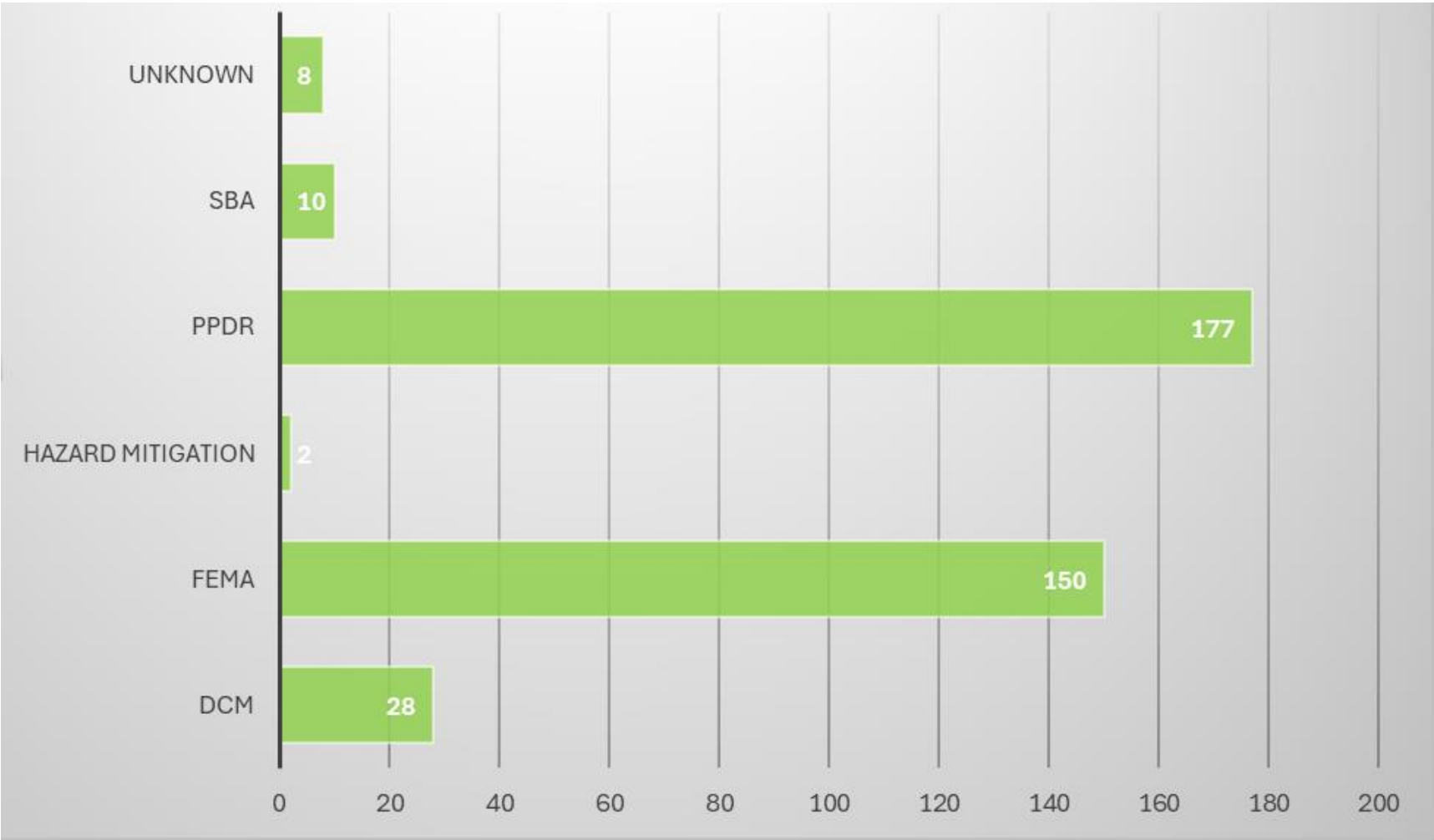
- Located near the bus station, on the bus line
- Free parking across the street





375 Customers Served

*as of 4/28/2025



Questions?



End of Presentation

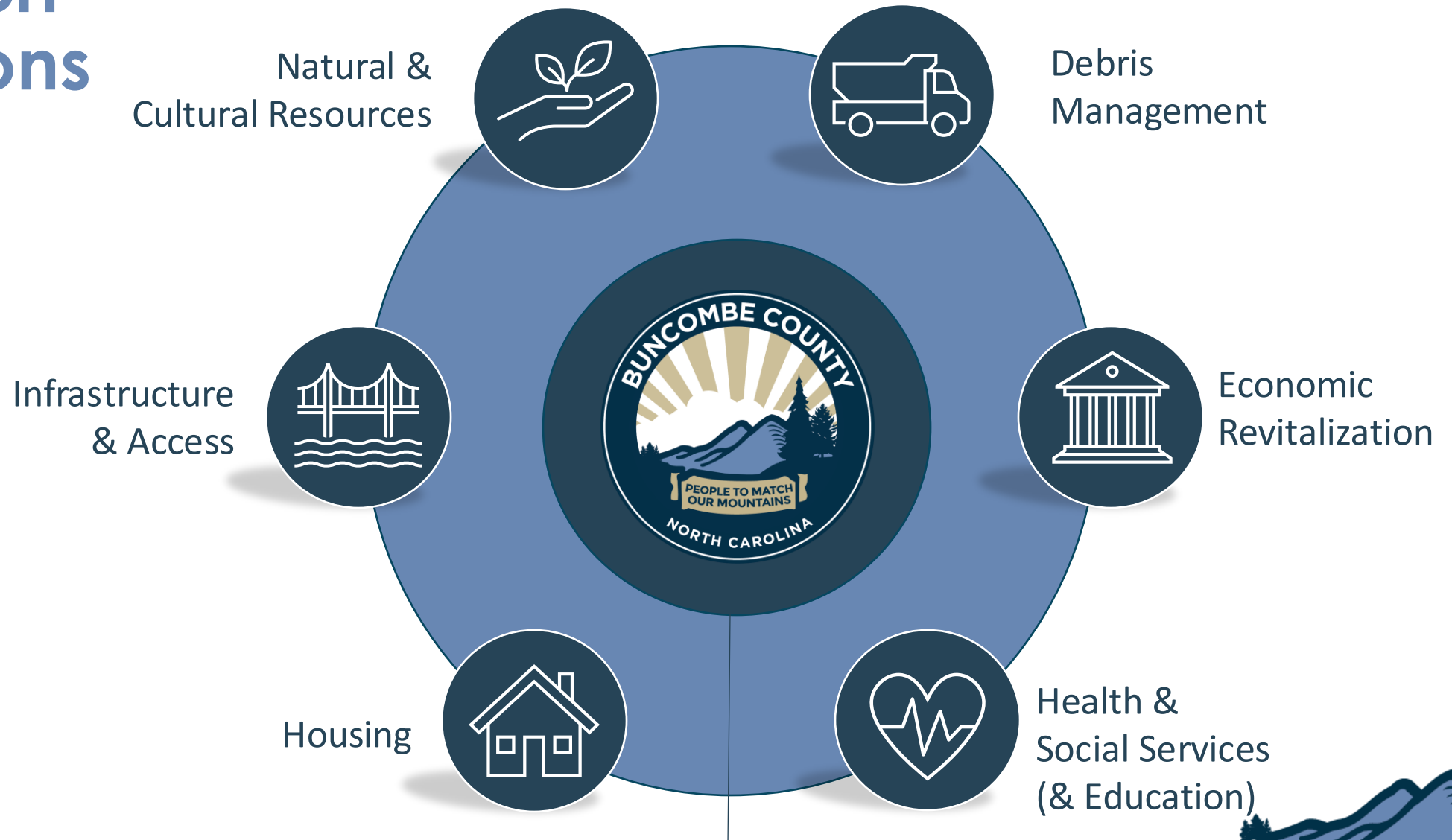


APPENDIX – DATA UPDATES

Reference Data by Recovery Support Function



Recovery Support Functions



Foundational



DEBRIS MANAGEMENT



Focused on storm debris, including solutions for debris removal on public and private property and waterways, managing specialized debris types, evaluating hazardous materials considerations, coordinating disposal, and exploring sustainable re-use of debris.



DEBRIS MANAGEMENT

- Cubic yards of debris collected from right of way: 1,540,409 (1% increase over last update)
- Cubic yards of debris collected from waterway: 1,294,895 (100%+ increase over last update)
- Tons of mud, silt and soil collected: 151,198 (100%+ increase over last update)
- PPDR applications received: 6,074 (application window closed)
- PPDR applications ready for site inspection: 357 (55% decrease over last update)
- PPDR applications delivered to FEMA: 4,399 (10% increase over last update)
- PPDR inspections complete: 4,831 (12% increase over last update)
- % of applications received on-line: 54%
- % of applications received in-person: 46%
- % of applications requesting debris removal only: 93%
- % of applications requesting debris and demolition: 6%
- % of applications requesting demolition only: 1%



ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION



Focused on stimulating economic recovery, supporting local businesses, responding to workforce needs, and ensuring the long-term economic stability and prosperity of the area with a focus on revitalization of critical economic sectors



ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION

- Asheville-Buncombe "Rebuilding Together" Business Grant www.mountainbizworks.org/helene/fund/
 - 843 applications received totaling more than \$18M (no change compared to prior update)
 - Buncombe County Only
 - 137 small businesses awarded grants, totaling \$1,567,480 (no change compared to prior update)



ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION

Small Business Association Loans*

	Home Loans	For Profit Business Loans	Nonprofit Business Loans	Total
Number of Applications	3,485 (3% increase)	6,757 (1% increase)	232 (1% increase)	10,474 (2% increase)
Number of Loans Disbursed	606 (7% increase)	1,944 (8% increase)	4 (100% increase)	2,554 (7% increase)
\$ Amount of Loans Disbursed	\$28,544,050 (12% increase)	\$124,653,413 (6% increase)	\$163,000 (159% increase)	\$153,360,463 (7% increase)



ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION

Unemployment Estimates: Reported February 2025, Revised January 2025 and December 2024 (Updated as of 4/9/2025)

	Reported Feb 2025	Revised Jan 2025*	Revised Dec 2024*
Buncombe County	6.2%	6.8%	6.0%
Asheville Metro**	5.5%	6.0%	5.3%

*Revised unemployment did not change in January or December

**Asheville Metro includes Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, and Madison counties

Helene Impact on County Unemployment Rankings December 2024 (Updated as of 4/9/2025)

County	Labor Force*	Unemployment **	Rate	Rank
Buncombe	143,725	8,956	6.2	96
Tyrell	1,269	82	6.5	97
Mitchell	7,134	470	6.6	98
Dare	17,393	1,248	7.2	99
Hyde	1,608	139	8.6	100

*Number of people working and number of people unemployed combined

** Number of people unemployed



HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES



Focused on ensuring the health and well-being of residents with attention to the social determinants of health, including consideration of medical, behavioral, educational, and environmental health concerns and social service recovery needs



HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES

- Applications submitted for individual assistance thru Buncombe Co.: 5,826 (no change compared to last update)
- Applications approved for individual assistance: 539 (1% increase over prior update)
- Funds approved for individual assistance: \$1,836,062 (1% increase over prior update)
- Total loads of laundry at Community Care Sites: 61,921 (CCS locations closed on 4/30)
- Total number of showers at Community Care Sites: 48,818 (CCS locations closed on 4/30)
- Mass care meals program operations ended 4/1
- Current individuals in emergency shelters: Shelter closed as of 12/31
- NC DHHS Disaster Energy Assistance: \$1,981,846 (1% increase over prior update)
- NC DHHS Disaster Adult Service Assistance: \$64,133 (30% increase over prior update)
- NC DHHS Disaster Child Welfare Assistance: \$423,720 (2% increase over prior update)
- NC DHHS Disaster Rental Assistance: \$142,396 (32% increase over prior update)



EDUCATION

- The number of homeless (unhoused) students identified under the McKinney-Vento Act:
 - Asheville City Schools – 282 (3% increase over previous update)
 - **79 of these cases are due to Helene** (0% increase over previous update)
 - Buncombe County School – 1,483 (5% increase over previous update)
 - **971 of these cases are due to Helene** (0% increase over previous update)
- 100% of **Buncombe County Schools** sites have resumed normal water usage after receiving lead test results
- 100% of **Asheville City Schools** sites have resumed normal water usage after receiving lead test results



HOUSING



Focused on supporting people in moving toward housing permanence through home repair, removing barriers to temporary housing units, connecting survivors to short- and long-term rental, and coordinating rental and mortgage assistance for survivor households with economic impacts



HOUSING

- Residential units destroyed: 372 (no change from prior update)
- Residential units with major damage: 734 (no change from prior update)
- Residential units with habitability repairs: 11,133 (no change from prior update)
- Total residential units damaged: 12,239 (no change from prior update)
- Households currently in TSA: 0 (no change from prior update)
- Households approved for FEMA direct housing: 68 (no change from prior update)
- FEMA temporary housing units complete: 72 (no change from prior update)
- FEMA temporary housing units in-progress: 0 (no change from prior update)
- Households approved for rental assistance: 1,450 (no change from prior update)



INFRASTRUCTURE & ACCESS



Focused on restoring and enhancing essential public infrastructure and accessibility to private property, including comprehensive damage assessments, coordination of repairs/restoration, and mitigation of future hazards such as floods and landslides



INFRASTRUCTURE & ACCESS

- 329 Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) applications have been submitted to NCEM (9% increase over last update)
 - 216 for acquisition & 74 for elevation/reconstruction & 24 for slope stabilization
- Helene related building permit apps filed across 1,475 unique locations (4% increase over last update)
- Helene related building inspections conducted at 1,221 unique locations (8% increase over last update)
- State has stood up a private bridge and road repair program with 800+ county residents applying for help
- 100+ landslides impacting residential properties identified for FEMA assessments
- 1,400 assessments conducted of properties in flood plain with letters of significant damage being sent



NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES



Focused on the restoration and sustainable management of natural and cultural resources, including capabilities to maintain, conserve, renew, and rehabilitate resources such as parks, farmland, watersheds and streambanks in alignment with environmental and historical preservation laws



NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

- Emergency watershed protection potential applicants identified: 597 (3% increase compared to prior update)
- Emergency watershed protection Field Visits Completed: 353 (6% increase compared to prior update)
- Emergency watershed protection applications submitted: 128 (8% increase compared to prior update)
- 7 County parks open to the public (no update compared to prior update)
- 12 County libraries open to the public (no update compared to prior update)





FOUNDATIONAL

Focused on coordinating the resources needed for an effective recovery for and linking recovery with organizational operations –such as grants & funding, data sharing, county property damage, staffing considerations, communications, funding, facilities, fleet, human capital and technology



FOUNDATIONAL

- \$ 21.1 M expended for Helene; \$6.9 M committed
- Category A* project submitted in FEMA grants portal
 - Submitted: \$68.2 M (no change compared to prior update)
 - Received: \$34.1 M (no change compared to prior update)
 - **expedited funding*
- Category C,E, & G projects submitted in FEMA grants portal
 - Submitted: \$14.3 M (no change compared to prior update)
 - Received: \$0
- 1 active staff reassignments being managed by HR
- 126 internal county staffing vacancies (not including BCSO)
- Insurance claim for County-owned assets:
 - Claims submitted: \$2.56 M (no new data compared to prior update)
 - Claim received: \$1.99 M (no new data compared to prior update)
- Recovery-related grant funding:
 - Requested: \$19.8 M (no new data compared to prior update)
 - Awarded: \$3.45 M (no new data compared to prior update)

