

SUSTAINABILITY PLAN FOR

Buncombe County



TABLE OF CONTENTS



Message from the Board of Commissioners	1-2
The Buncombe County Sustainability Partnership	2-1
Executive Summary.....	3-1
Introduction.....	4-1
Structure of the Plan.....	5-1
Developing a Plan for Buncombe County.....	6-1
Sustainability in Action.....	7-1
COMMUNITY	
Educational Resources that Match the Needs of the Community.....	7-2
Healthy People.....	7-4
Affordable, Green, and Livable Housing	7-7
Citizen Participation in Community Decisions	7-9
Equity in Access.....	7-12
Safe, Low-Crime Communities	7-14
Resistance to Natural and Manmade Hazards	7-15
Healthy Environments	7-17
ENVIRONMENT	
Partnerships for Conservation/Preservation/Restoration of Natural Resources	7-19
Pollution and Waste Prevention	7-22
Accessible, Multi-Modal, and Efficient Transportation Network	7-27
ECONOMY	
Sustainable Local Food Systems.....	7-29
Sustainable Localized Economy	7-32
Workforce Development.....	7-34
Framework for the Future	8-1

THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

David Gantt, Chairman

Bill Stanley, Vice Chairman

K. Ray Bailey, Commissioner

Holly Jones, Commissioner

Carol Peterson, Commissioner



MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



THE BUNCOMBE COUNTY SUSTAINABILITY PARTNERSHIP



The Buncombe County Sustainability Partners, all of whom provide leadership in their respective fields, were asked to participate because of their expertise and involvement in the economic, social, and environmental sectors of our community. Members of the Buncombe County Sustainability Partnership generously provided the County with their expertise and time to solidify draft goals and provide input crucial to the development of this Plan.

On behalf of Buncombe County, we would like to thank the members of the Buncombe County Sustainability Partnership for their dedication to this important endeavor:

Jamie Ager
Hickory Nut Gap Farm

Mike Butrum
Asheville Board of Realtors

Kit Cramer, *President and CEO*
Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce

Vicki Heidinger, *Executive Director*
Community Action Opportunities

Marylyn Huff
Huff Associates

Chris Joyell, *Executive Director*
Asheville Design Center

J. Craig Madison, *President & CEO*
Grove Park Inn

Brian Moore, *Director of Planning and Public Relations*
Mission Health

Reverend L.C. Ray, *Co-founder & CEO*
One Youth At A Time, Inc.

Carl Silverstein, *Executive Director*
Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy

Bill Stanley, *Vice Chairman*
Buncombe County Board of Commissioners

Jay Swain, *Division Engineer*
North Carolina Department of Transportation

Susanne Swanger, *Assistant Superintendent*
Buncombe County Schools

Martha Thompson, *Community Relations Manager*
Progress Energy

Phyllis VanHoy, *Executive Director,*
Business Development and Incubation
Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



As our community continues to grow, we find ourselves increasingly focused on adapting to changes in a sustainable manner. As sustainability expert Mark Roseland notes, “sustainable communities are not merely about ‘sustaining’ the quality of our lives—they are about improving it.”¹ Through the development and implementation of this Sustainability Plan, we are taking the necessary steps to improve our community’s quality of life.

Buncombe County and its Sustainability Partners crafted a Vision Statement (articulating our preferred future) and a Mission Statement (focusing on what we plan to accomplish) to guide both County Government and the community in the development of goals, objectives, indicators, outcomes, and strategies for implementation of this Plan. These statements provide focus and direction as we work toward improvement in our community.

Vision Statement

Buncombe County is a leader in sustainable practices through the collaboration of citizens, institutions, businesses, and government.

We promote a sense of community through public engagement. We celebrate a healthy, safe, well-educated, and thriving community with a sustainable quality of life. We are stewards of the environment who advocate the conservation, preservation, and restoration of resources. We are part of a community and environmentally-conscious economy that is stable and diverse. We have a strong sense of place, and continue to work to preserve our distinctive landscape and culture.

We are committed to continually improving our community for the betterment of future generations.

Mission Statement

Buncombe County is dedicated to strengthening our quality of life for everyone by taking fiscally and socially responsible actions to ensure the prosperity of future generations. Our collective decisions as citizens, businesses, government, and organizations measurably enrich our environment, our community, and our economy.

¹ Roseland, Mark “Toward Sustainable Communities”, 2005, New Society Publishers, Page 2.



This Sustainability Plan was created through the development of goals and objectives that address the wide-reaching and interconnected needs and desires of our community. By setting these goals, we define what we want to achieve within our environment, community, and economy through the adoption of this Plan. Each goal has objectives that serve as statements of action to provide guidance on how to reach each goal.

These goals and objectives, which set forth the framework for our Plan, are provided on the following pages.





Educational Resources that Match the Needs of the Community

- Increase high school graduation rate.
- Increase access to higher education.
- Expand quality and quantity of early childhood development programs.
- Increase parent and community involvement in the educational system and in the education of individual children.
- Promote programs that supplement equitable educational opportunities for all ages.
- Ensure that all children are reading at grade-level by the end of 3rd grade or have a reading intervention program/curriculum in place.



Healthy People

- Decrease rates of childhood and adult obesity.
- Reduce tobacco use and exposure to second-hand smoke.
- Assure the availability of a medical home for all to increase appropriate, age-specific health screenings and preventative care.
- Decrease infant mortality and low-weight births.
- Increase access to mental health and substance abuse prevention programs, especially for youth and aging populations.
- Increase access to affordable health insurance.



Affordable, Green, and Livable Housing

- Provide educational opportunities in financial planning and homebuyer education.
- Expand housing rehabilitation and repair programs.
- Provide affordable and workforce housing funding for new developments in areas served with existing infrastructure.
- Promote home ownership while also supporting quality rental developments that are required to remain affordable and safe.
- Ensure the availability of a diverse housing stock.
- Ensure that County regulations, ordinances, and other programs do not impede and, where possible, provide incentives for the adoption of sustainable products and strategies.





Citizen Participation in Community Decisions

- Create partnerships across multiple sectors of the community to reduce duplication of services and to assist in prioritizing and funding initiatives.
- Increase opportunities for civic engagement and participation.
- Ensure that information reaches citizens.
- Value and respect contributions of all Buncombe County citizens.



Equity in Access

- Improve equality in access to health care.
- Promote an array of transportation options.
- Increase quantity and quality of recreational activities.
- Build an extensive network of social services with locations in each high school district.
- Increase the availability of locally produced foods to low income individuals and increase educational opportunities regarding farms and locally produced foods.
- Ensure reliable access to information resources (i.e., broadband internet).



Safe, Low-Crime Communities

- Support neighborhood watches and community policing.
- Foster a sense of neighborhood pride and civic responsibility.
- Provide a comprehensive criminal justice system that includes law enforcement, court staff, alternative treatment providers, and members of the community who collaborate to deliver justice while protecting the public.
- Promote crime prevention through environmental design for residences and businesses.



Resistance to Natural and Manmade Hazards

- Locate critical facilities outside high hazard areas.
- Ensure local preparedness for emergencies (floods, fuel shortages, climate change, fires, droughts, earthquakes, food shortages, landslides, hazardous materials incidents, medical epidemics, etc.).



*Photo courtesy
of Swannanoa
Fire Department*



Healthy Environments

- Improve and increase opportunities for safe, active living.
- Promote healthy buildings and homes.
- Decrease unintentional injuries.
- Improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists.



Partnerships for Conservation/Preservation/Restoration of Natural Resources

- Conserve and protect water resources.
- Protect ecological systems/wildlife.
- Promote energy conservation programs.
- Restore natural resources.
- Encourage sustainable land use.
- Educate the public to help them reduce their environmental footprints.



Pollution and Waste Prevention

- Improve air quality.
- Improve water quality.
- Reduce the use of harmful chemicals.
- Manage waste - reduce, reuse, and recycle.



Accessible, Multi-Modal, and Efficient Transportation Network

- Reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT).
- Increase multi-modal options.
- Encourage land development connected to existing transportation corridors.
- Promote access to goods and services in areas of significant population density and in neighborhood hubs.





Sustainable Local Food Systems

- Promote farmland preservation and decrease loss of agricultural land.
- Promote sustainable agricultural production and personal and community gardening in connection with the County's agricultural heritage.
- Increase demand for locally produced foods.



Sustainable Localized Economy

- Provide incentives to businesses for growth.
- Encourage a "business-friendly" regulatory environment.
- Promote "Buy Local" programs.
- Ensure a diverse economy with competitive wages.
- Support small business development.



Workforce Development

- Identify and reduce barriers to employment (e.g., childcare, transportation, housing, insurance).
- Provide robust job training that fits present and anticipated workforce demand.
- Encourage collaboration among workforce and educational institutions.

Each goal has a corresponding worksheet that identifies indicators of progress toward the objectives and recommended strategies for implementation within the framework of this five-year Plan. Yearly progress reports will help track our efforts through updating information on each indicator and identifying the status of implementation for each recommended strategy.

While this Sustainability Plan is designed to be implemented within five years of its adoption, it is important to note that Buncombe County will revisit and update the Plan after the initial five-year period to ensure both the relevancy of the Plan and to maintain a positive direction for our community in the years ahead. Additional strategies were identified within the initial Plan that may require changes in regulation, greater funding availability, or a more complex developmental process than can be provided within this five-year time frame. This initial Plan and these strategies will be used as building blocks as our Plan for a sustainable Buncombe County is updated and evolves to create a more sustainable future.



INTRODUCTION



The concept of sustainability is certainly not a new one, globally or locally. The earliest residents of Buncombe County adopted sustainable practices to ensure that they could support themselves and their families in an often formidable landscape and climate. The rich history of Buncombe County is highly recognized. As our community continues to grow, we find ourselves increasingly focused on adapting in a sustainable manner to these changes.

There are a number of definitions for sustainability and sustainable development, the most often quoted is that developed by the World Commission on Environment and Development. This Commission concluded that “Sustainable Development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”¹ Discussions of sustainable practices often include references to the “triple bottom line” approach, which takes into account economic, environmental, and social concerns to evaluate proposed actions. Because sustainability is defined in many different ways, it was important for us to develop an understanding of sustainability that speaks specifically to Buncombe County through our vision and mission statements.



¹ “Our Common Future” report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987.



STRUCTURE OF THE PLAN





Each of the goals set forth in this Plan serves as a starting point for the development of objectives, indicators, outcomes, and strategies, all of which are outlined in the worksheets in Section 7. For the purposes of this Plan, these terms are defined as:

Goal:

A description of what we want to achieve.

Objective:

A statement of action that indicates how to attain a specific goal.

Strategy:

The plan of action that identifies how to achieve a goal or objective. Strategies include projects, policies, programs, education, outreach, etc.

Indicator:

A measurable quality or characteristic that is used to identify progress and track trends over time.

Outcome:

The end result toward which efforts are directed.



DEVELOPING A PLAN FOR BUNCOMBE COUNTY



By combining each of the structural components into worksheets focused on specific goals, Buncombe County will be able to identify a plan for attainment that includes the rationale for each action, items that can be tracked to measure progress, and plans for implementation and future progress.

This Plan has been developed as part of a collaborative effort, including consultation with sustainability experts, staff, elected officials, community partners, and citizens. County staff performed initial research both through the review of a number of local government sustainability plans and through discussion with relevant state and local agencies tasked with improving our community, environment, and economy. County staff reviewed existing County plans that addressed the adoption of sustainable practices, as well as efforts to engage and empower citizens to be more sustainable. These initiatives include: the County's Energy Savings Reinvestment Fund, which funds efficiency projects on County buildings using savings gained from past efficiency upgrades; the Buncombe Green Initiative, which placed special emphasis on recycling, reuse, and energy efficiency; and the GrowBC Campaign, a marketing campaign that addresses five core approaches to improving our community. Buncombe County hired CDM Smith for their expertise in sustainability planning to design the planning process, facilitate stakeholder meetings, and assist in developing the Plan.

The Buncombe County Sustainability Partnership was formed to gather feedback, receive guidance, and gain buy-in from local community leaders. Fifteen partners, representing multiple facets of our community, were asked to participate in this process. In addition to representing their colleagues and peers throughout the County, they represented the following organizations:

- Asheville Board of Realtors
- Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College
- Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce
- Asheville Design Center
- Buncombe County Board of Commissioners
- Buncombe County Schools
- Community Action Opportunities
- Grove Park Inn
- Hickory Nut Gap Farm
- Huff Associates
- Mission Health
- North Carolina Department of Transportation
- One Youth At A Time, Inc.
- Progress Energy
- Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy



The Sustainability Partners met seven times to solidify draft goals and provide input vital to developing the worksheets in Section 7. This collaborative effort helped shape and guide the Sustainability Plan, generating a list of known indicators and strategies, both long-term and short-term. Indicators were chosen that could best convey the starting point and expected progress toward each of the identified objectives. These indicators have existing baseline data available and will continue to be tracked by a variety of organizations in the coming years. As any successful plan must result in actions that are suitable for implementation to build momentum, these strategies were culled to identify those attainable within a five-year period. The Sustainability Partners, experts from CDM Smith, and County staff took into account a number of considerations to identify strategies that could be reasonably implemented within five years, including:

Financial Considerations:

- Implementation costs
- Annual operation and maintenance costs
- The availability of non-County funding sources

Implementation Considerations:

- Expected timeframe for implementation
- The level of effort and/or number of staff
- The potential for collaboration
- The likelihood of success with regard to the current regulatory environment

Potential Benefits:

- Inclusion of efficiency, conservation, or preservation of the environment
- Ability to inspire the adoption of sustainable practices in the community
- Ability to improve quality of life



Strategies that the Sustainability Partners felt could be implemented during the course of this five-year Plan are outlined in each of the worksheets in Section 7 and long-term strategies are discussed in Section 8.

Once the draft Plan was developed, Buncombe County facilitated community meetings through which citizen input could be maximized. Meetings took place at:

- Avery's Creek Community Club
- Ox Creek Community Club
- Big Ivy Community Club
- Swannanoa Fire Department, Bee Tree Sub-Station
- Enka-Candler Fire and Rescue
- Spring Mountain Community Club
- Leicester Community Club
- Board of Commissioners' Chambers

"Buncombe County's Sustainability Plan sets a long-term vision, and outlines the goals, objectives, strategies, and outcomes that our community can take to preserve our natural environment, cultural and historical roots, and exceptional quality of life.**"**

-Bill Stanley, Vice Chairman, Buncombe County Board of Commissioners



These eight community meetings provided integral feedback to the Board of Commissioners, Sustainability Partners, and County staff.

In addition to community meetings, Buncombe County solicited feedback in other ways. Members of the Buncombe County Sustainability Partnership were encouraged to share their enthusiasm for the Sustainability Plan with their colleagues and within their respective communities. Buncombe County employed public outreach techniques including listing the Plan as a news item in the weekly E-Zine, providing a website and web-based feedback opportunities, and working through social media. Copies of the Plan were made available in the local libraries, and the Plan was presented in BCTV segments.



SUSTAINABILITY IN ACTION





GOAL: EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES THAT MATCH THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY

OBJECTIVES

1. Increase high school graduation rate.
2. Increase access to higher education.
3. Expand quality and quantity of early childhood development programs.
4. Increase parent and community involvement in the educational system and in the education of individual children.
5. Promote programs that supplement equitable educational opportunities for all ages.
6. Ensure that all children are reading at grade-level by the end of 3rd grade or have a reading intervention program/curriculum in place.

Sustainability Indicators	Current Status	Potential Outcomes
High school graduation rate (for 9 th grade cohorts)	Buncombe County Schools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4-year cohort graduation rate is 73.1% • 5-year cohort graduation rate is 76.8% ¹ Asheville City Schools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4-year cohort graduation rate is 73.7% • 5-year cohort graduation rate is 77.3% ² 	Increase graduation rate
Percent of adults with some post-secondary education	64% ³	Increase percent attaining post-secondary education
Number of individuals receiving associate degrees, certificates, and diplomas at ABTech	587 associate degrees awarded (2009-2010 school year) 282 certificates awarded (2009-2010 school year) 148 diplomas awarded (2009-2010 school year) ⁴	Increase number completing associate degree, certificate, and diploma programs

¹ Susanne Swanger, Asst. Superintendent, Buncombe County Schools

² <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/reporting/cohortgradrate>

³ County Health Rankings, <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/north-carolina/buncombe>

⁴ AB Tech Degrees, Diplomas, and Certificates Awarded (1987-2010), <http://www.abtech.edu/factbook/curriculum/degrees.html>





“Education is Buncombe County’s greatest hope and most effective means of holding our current generation accountable to the next generation and for improving the well-being and livability of our community into the future. ”

- K. Ray Bailey, Commissioner, Buncombe County Board of Commissioners

Sustainability Indicators	Current Status	Potential Outcomes
Children enrolled in Pre-K programs	5,235 (35%) (2011) ⁵	Increase enrollment in Pre-K programs
Average reading proficiency level of 3 rd grade students	Buncombe County Schools: 70.3% (2009-2010) ⁶ NC Reading Proficiency Target Goal for Adequate Yearly Progress, No Child Left Behind: school years 2007 – 2010 is 43.2% school years 2010 – 2013 is 71.6% school year 2013 – 2014 is 100% ⁷	Meet or exceed NC Reading Proficiency Target Goal for Adequate Yearly Progress
Number of accessible events that facilitate partnerships between parents and educators, particularly for youth at risk	Buncombe County Elementary Schools: 131 Title I parent meetings (2010-2011) ⁸	Increase number of events
Number of volunteer hours contributed to school system	Buncombe County Schools: 102,178.25 hours (2009-2010) ⁹	Increase number of volunteer hours

⁵ Leslie Moss, Smart Start of Buncombe County

⁶ Susanne Swanger, Asst. Superintendent, Buncombe County Schools

⁷ <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/nclb/abcayp/overview/ayp>

⁸ Susanne Swanger, Asst. Superintendent, Buncombe County Schools

⁹ Susanne Swanger, Asst. Superintendent, Buncombe County Schools

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES:

- Partner with school systems on plans for rising 9th graders with emphasis on career and college readiness.
- Promote early childhood learning opportunities (Health Adventure, Nature Center, etc.).
- Work to connect parents, educators, and employers in ways that encourage partnerships in each child’s education.
- Collaborate within the community to promote and advertise early childhood programs.



GOAL: HEALTHY PEOPLE

OBJECTIVES

1. Decrease rates of childhood and adult obesity.
2. Reduce tobacco use and exposure to second-hand smoke.
3. Assure the availability of a medical home for all to increase appropriate, age-specific health screenings and preventative care.
4. Decrease infant mortality and low-weight births.
5. Increase access to mental health and substance abuse prevention programs, especially for youth and aging populations.
6. Increase access to affordable health insurance.

Sustainability Indicators	Current Status	Potential Outcomes
Number of community and school gardens	14 community gardens within the City of Asheville ¹ 17 elementary school gardens in Buncombe County (2011) ²	Increase access to healthy foods by increasing the number of community and school gardens
Level of regular physical activity	11.2% of Buncombe County adults do not get any moderate exercise (2010) ³ 26.8% of Buncombe County adults get moderate exercise more than one day per week (2010) ⁴	Increase percentage of Buncombe County adults who get moderate exercise more than one day per week
Rate of regular/routine health checkups or screenings	75% of County residents had a routine checkup within the past year (2010) ⁵	Increase the percentage of routine health screenings

¹ Darcel Eddins, Executive Director Bountiful Cities works with/is aware of the following community gardens in the City of Asheville: Pearson, Antigua's, Dr. George Washington Carver, Joyner, Shiloh Community, Burton Street Community Peace, Martha James, Falconhurst, Hillcrest, Pisgah View, UNCA Rhoades Property, WC Reid, Merrimon Baptist Church, and Montford (August 2011).

² Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project

³ Buncombe County 2010 Community Health Assessment

⁴ Buncombe County 2010 Community Health Assessment

⁵ Buncombe County 2010 Community Health Assessment





“Good health is one of the most significant components for a happy and productive life. Access to healthy lifestyles and health care is essential for the future of our community’s economy and well-being.”

- Gibbie Harris, Buncombe County Health Director

Sustainability Indicators	Current Status	Potential Outcomes
Smoking rate	Current County adult smoking rate is 17.5% (2009), down from 25.9% (2004) ⁶	Continue downward trend
Percent of uninsured adults between the ages of 19 and 64	16.7% (2009) ⁷	Decrease percentage of uninsured adults by 10%
Infant mortality and low birth weight rates	Buncombe County infant mortality rate (deaths before age one) is 8.2% (2008) African-American infant mortality rate is 11.3% (2008) ⁸ Low birth weight rate is 9.1% (2011) ⁹	Reduce total infant mortality and low-weight birth rates
Percent of people with access to mental health care or counseling	18.2% reported wanting mental health care or counseling during the past 12 months but did not get it at that time (2010) ¹⁰	Decrease the percentage of those wanting mental health care or counseling, but did not receive
Percent of children tested for unacceptable lead levels	The Lead Poisoning Prevention Program has achieved a 59.4% testing rate for one and two year olds, through CDC funding (2010) ¹¹	Increase the percentage of children tested for unacceptable lead levels

⁶ NC Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) Survey Data (2009), <http://www.cdc.gov/BRFSS>

⁷ NC Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) Survey Data (2009), <http://www.cdc.gov/BRFSS>

⁸ NC Vital Statistics

⁹ County Health Rankings, <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/north-carolina/buncombe>

¹⁰ Buncombe County 2010 Community Health Assessment

¹¹ Buncombe County 2010 Community Health Assessment





RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES:

- Promote partnerships with local farmers to create accessible farmers markets on a seasonal basis.
- Promote development and use of community gardens.
- Promote National Women’s Check-Up Day (the day after Mother’s Day each year) or National Men’s Health Week (the week before Father’s Day each year).
- Support tobacco education for youth.
- Enable farmers markets to accept EBT cards.
- Support school garden programs.
- Increase awareness of screening for lead levels.
- Develop incentives for local sustainable farms (expand Blue Ridge Food Ventures program).
- Explore funding streams for mental health programs.
- Cross-promote mobility and safety programs in marketing of community health screening and preventative care programs and vice versa.
- Ensure access to evidence-based care (the use of the best available critically evaluated research to guide the choice of interventions, management, and care of the patient) for diabetes and asthma.
- Promote incentives for primary care providers.
- Partner with agencies offering prenatal care in the community.

Sustainability Indicators	Current Status	Potential Outcomes
Number of hospital visits related to asthma and diabetes	Out of 37,456 inpatients, there were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 577 with a primary diagnosis (ICD-9) of diabetes; • 8,797 patients with a primary and/or secondary diagnosis of diabetes (23.4%); • 288 patients with a primary diagnosis of asthma; • 2,968 patients with a primary and/or secondary diagnosis of asthma (7.9%) (FY 2010) ¹² 	Decrease the number of asthma and diabetes related hospital visits
Number of hospital non-emergency visits	296,689 (FY 2010) ¹³	Decrease the number of non-emergency hospital visits
Ratio of primary health care providers to population	One primary care provider per 464 people (2011) ¹⁴ The national benchmark is one primary care provider per 631 people. ¹⁵	Maintain the ratio of primary health care providers to population

¹² Brian Moore, Director of Planning & Public Policy, Mission Health

¹³ Brian Moore, Director of Planning & Public Policy, Mission Health

¹⁴ County Health Rankings, <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/north-carolina/buncombe>

¹⁵ County Health Rankings, <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/north-carolina/buncombe>



GOAL: AFFORDABLE, GREEN, AND LIVABLE HOUSING

OBJECTIVES

1. Provide educational opportunities in financial planning and homebuyer education.
2. Expand housing rehabilitation and repair programs.
3. Provide affordable and workforce housing funding for new developments in areas served with existing infrastructure.
4. Promote home ownership while also supporting quality rental developments that are required to remain affordable and safe.
5. Ensure the availability of a diverse housing stock.
6. Ensure that County regulations, ordinances, and other programs do not impede and, where possible, provide incentives for the adoption of sustainable products and strategies.

Sustainability Indicators	Current Status	Potential Outcomes
Number of participants in financial planning and homebuyer classes	OnTrack provided training to 114 participants in their Homebuyer Education classes; 2,383 residents participated in OnTrack financial education presentations; and 3,525 clients were served by OnTrack financial counseling (2011). ¹	Increase number of participants
Availability and reach of housing rehabilitation and repair programs	MHO and other neighborhood groups such as Asheville Green Opportunities through assistance from Community Action Opportunities provide rehabilitation and repair programs for citizens throughout Buncombe County. MHO has a waiting list of 78 families (March 2011) who need home repairs costing up to \$5,000 each, and MHO has completed, in Buncombe County, 2,891 repairs from 1988-2010. MHO has completed 141 home rehabilitations since 1988. ²	Grow availability and reach of housing rehabilitation and repair programs

¹ Hart Dahlhauser, HomeRun Coordinator, OnTrack Financial Education and Counseling

² Community Action Opportunities, <http://www.communityactionopportunities.org/weatherization.html>





“An important part of sustainable development is preserving the existing diversity of housing stock, and providing affordable options for people of all backgrounds. The existing housing stock is a valuable contributor to a sustainable and affordable future.”

- Jon Creighton, Buncombe County Planning Director/Assistant County Manager

Sustainability Indicators	Current Status	Potential Outcomes
Percentage of residents over 65 years old residing at home	In 2000, 28.7% of the County population over age 65 lived alone. <i>Buncombe County's projected growth in population ages 60 and older is estimated to increase by 84% between 2005 and 2030.</i> ³	Increase percentage of residents over 65 years old residing at home
Number of affordable homes and rental properties for individuals/families at or below 80% of area median income	The number of affordable homes on the market has declined steadily over the past five years. In mid-October 2009, 483 residential units were on the market with asking prices at or below \$150,000, of which 249 were at or below \$125,000. ⁴ The number of renters with housing costs that are 30% or more of household income has increased significantly. In 2005-2007, 41% of renters were “cost-burdened” compared with 34% in 2000. ⁵	Increase number of affordable homes and rental properties on the market
Rental housing inspections for code compliance	In 2010, there were 123 rental inspections completed in Buncombe County and there were 200 rental inspections completed in the City of Asheville.	Increase number of inspections
Number of incentives granted to encourage sustainable housing construction	In 2010, in the City of Asheville there were 20 rebates issued for HealthyBuilt Homes (\$2,000), 23 issued for Energy Star Certification (\$2,300), three issued for solar installation (\$150), and one issued for geothermal installation (\$50).	Increase number of incentives granted

³ North Carolina Division of Aging, Buncombe County Data Report, via the Council on Aging of Buncombe County, Inc.

⁴ Buncombe County Housing Needs Assessment & Market Study, November 2009

⁵ Buncombe County Housing Needs Assessment & Market Study, November 2009, p.21

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES:

- Promote alternative and sustainable materials, designs, and methods for construction following the allowances under the NC State Building Codes.
- Develop a building permit fee incentive program to encourage energy efficient, HealthyBuilt Home, and LEED-certified development.
- Increase funding opportunities for rental housing improvements and ensure that existing policies allow landlords to rehabilitate existing rental properties.
- Provide educational materials for renters and landlords on Buncombe County’s website.



GOAL: CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DECISIONS

OBJECTIVES

1. Create partnerships across multiple sectors of the community to reduce duplication of services and to assist in prioritizing and funding initiatives.
2. Increase opportunities for civic engagement and participation.
3. Ensure that information reaches citizens.
4. Value and respect contributions of all Buncombe County citizens.

Sustainability Indicators	Current Status	Potential Outcomes
Volunteer rate	2,900 individuals volunteered with 151 Buncombe County nonprofits (2010) ¹	Increase the number of volunteers and nonprofits participating in Hands On Asheville-Buncombe
Youth involvement in community service	<p>1,500 youth served by the Daniel Boone Council of the Boy Scouts of America (June 2011) ²</p> <p>16,278 children served by different programs of the YMCA of Western North Carolina (2010) ³</p> <p>736 children served by YWCA of Asheville (2010) ⁴</p> <p>846 girls in the Girl Scouts in the County (June 2011) ⁵</p>	Increase youth involvement in community service organizations

¹ Hands On Asheville-Buncombe

² Jennifer Fox, Daniel Boone Council of the Boy Scouts of America

³ YMCA of Western North Carolina 2010 Annual Report

⁴ Catherine Peck, YWCA of Asheville

⁵ Emily Matix, Carolinas Peak to Piedmont Council of the Girl Scouts of America





“It is important that the community is engaged and committed, particularly as an active partner in ensuring Buncombe County remains a desirable place to live, work, and play.”

- David Gantt, Chairman, Buncombe County Board of Commissioners

Sustainability Indicators	Current Status	Potential Outcomes
Number of Buncombe County E-Zine subscribers	5,000 subscribers (2010) ⁶	Increase the number of Buncombe County E-Zine subscribers
Number of Buncombe Life magazines printed and distributed	10,000 magazines (2010) ⁷	Increase the distribution of Buncombe Life magazine
Number of Buncombe County Facebook friends	316 friends (April 2011) ⁸	Increase the number of Twitter and Facebook followers
Number of Buncombe County Twitter followers	460 followers (April 2011) ⁹	
County funding for community, economic, and cultural development	\$13,282,070 (FY 2011) down from \$14,581,514 (FY 2010) ¹⁰	Maintain the current level of funding
Voter rate	45.69% for general election (November 2010) ¹¹	Increase the voter turnout percentage

⁶ Kathy Hughes, Director of Buncombe County Public Relations

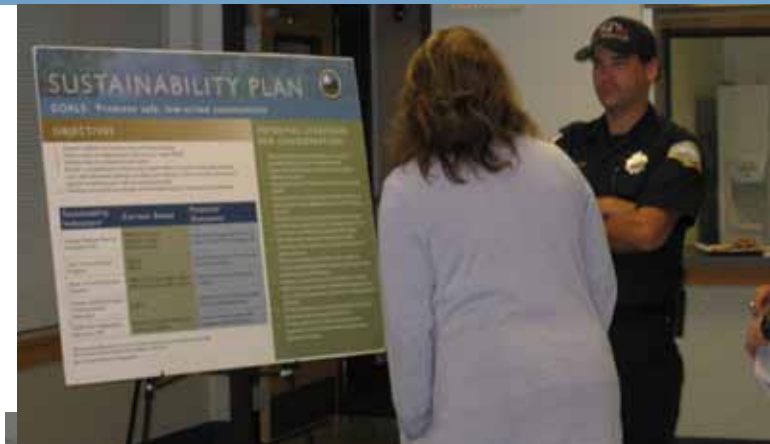
⁷ Kathy Hughes, Director of Buncombe County Public Relations

⁸ Kathy Hughes, Director of Buncombe County Public Relations

⁹ Kathy Hughes, Director of Buncombe County Public Relations

¹⁰ Buncombe County Department of Budget and Finance

¹¹ North Carolina State Board of Elections, <http://www.sboe.state.nc.us/content.aspx?id=69>





RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES:

- Educate citizens and youth on how they can be involved in their community (collaborative outreach effort between schools, community organizations, and local government, and perhaps create a website listing programs).
- Utilize a multi-faceted approach to gain citizen input that focuses on a proactive approach.
- Create and publicize a comprehensive list of available youth programs.
- Provide information on the community and government at centers located within each high school district.
- Target youth participation in community decisions.
- Provide training for board members (governmental and nonprofit) regarding function and purpose.
- Re-evaluate boards and commissions (governmental and nonprofit) with consideration of their roles and responsibilities.
- Partner educational institutions with youth programs to increase outreach participation.
- Promote partnerships for programs that teach English as a second language.
- Increase voter registration and participation in all elections (EZ registration, early voting, etc.).
- Utilize alternate locations that service lower-income populations as a means to circulate information.

Sustainability Indicators	Current Status	Potential Outcomes
Number of Kids Voting ballots cast	883 votes cast in 2011—a 14% increase over the comparable election 2007 participation. ¹²	Increase the number of ballots cast
Number of active Buncombe County community clubs served by Cooperative Extension	Nine of the 15 clubs supported by County Cooperative Extension would be considered active. ¹³ <i>Active clubs are clubs whose monthly meetings average between 20 and 40 people (total annual attendance of 2,160 to 4,320).</i>	Increase the number of active clubs Increase the number of citizens attending the club meetings
Percent of residents not proficient in English	3% of Buncombe County population ¹⁴	Increase English proficiency of residents

¹² Kids Voting Buncombe County, <http://www.kidsvotingbc.org>

¹³ Steve Duckett, County Extension Director, NC Cooperative Extension

¹⁴ County Health Rankings, <http://countyhealthrankings.org/north-carolina/buncombe>



GOAL: EQUITY IN ACCESS

OBJECTIVES

1. Improve equality in access to health care.
2. Promote an array of transportation options.
3. Increase quantity and quality of recreational activities.
4. Build an extensive network of social services with locations in each high school district.
5. Increase the availability of locally produced foods to low income individuals and increase educational opportunities regarding farms and locally produced foods.
6. Ensure reliable access to information resources (i.e., broadband internet).

Sustainability Indicators	Current Status	Potential Outcomes
Percent of uninsured adults between the ages of 19 and 64	16.7% (2009) ¹	Decrease percentage of uninsured adults by 10%
Percent of uninsured children age 17 and under	10.8% of children age 17 and under are uninsured (2005) ²	Decrease percentage of uninsured
Ratio of primary health care providers to population	One primary care provider per 464 people (2011) ³ <i>The national benchmark is one primary care provider per 631 people.</i> ⁴	Maintain ratio of primary health care providers to population
Rate of recreation facilities per 100,000 population	10 per 100,000 (2011) ⁵	Increase rate of recreation facilities

¹ NC Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) Survey Data (2009), <http://www.cdc.gov/BRFSS>

² NC Catch, <http://www.ncpublichealthcatch.com>

³ County Health Rankings, <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/north-carolina/buncombe>

⁴ County Health Rankings, <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/north-carolina/buncombe>

⁵ County Health Rankings, <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/north-carolina/buncombe>





“ Supporting access to quality health care and increased options for healthy lifestyle choices are important services provided by the County. ”

- Holly Jones, Commissioner, Buncombe County Board of Commissioners

Sustainability Indicators	Current Status	Potential Outcomes
Number of trips provided by Mountain Mobility	148,578 (2010) ⁶	Monitor the number of trips provided by Mountain Mobility
Number of community and school gardens	14 community gardens within the City of Asheville ⁷ 17 elementary school gardens in Buncombe County (2011) ⁸	Increase access to healthy foods by increasing the number of community and school gardens

⁶ Buncombe County Mountain Mobility

⁷ Darcel Eddins, Executive Director Bountiful Cities, works with/is aware of the following community gardens in the City of Asheville: Pearson, Antigua's, Dr. George Washington Carver, Joyner, Shiloh Community, Burton Street Community Peace, Martha James, Falconhurst, Hillcrest, Pisgah View, UNCA Rhoades Property, WC Reid, Merrimon Baptist Church, and Montford (August 2011).

⁸ Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES:

- Promote the importance of a medical home within the community by expanding connections among health providers, school nurses, and social workers to community agencies such as DSS and the Health Department to provide better referral services. Stakeholders should meet regularly to help streamline health services.
- Increase marketing to connect farm sellers with buyers.
- Expand the participation in the Blue Ridge Commuter Connections and Emergency Ride Home Programs.
- Expand community programs that combat hunger (i.e., backpack programs, Manna FoodBank).
- Increase programs that promote healthy food options (community gardens, EBT cards at farmers markets, etc.).
- Expand the locations of satellite social service providers.
- Promote partnerships for programs that teach English as a second language.
- Increase recreational opportunities.
- Increase awareness of existing senior programs.



GOAL: SAFE, LOW-CRIME COMMUNITIES

“The level of crime activity directly affects the degree to which we can move towards a more equitable and just society. Buncombe County’s efforts toward education, job creation, and community re-entry programs provide important services that supplement the criminal justice system. These combined services protect our community day-to-day with an eye towards the future.”

- Van Duncan, Buncombe County Sheriff

OBJECTIVES

1. Support neighborhood watches and community policing.
2. Foster a sense of neighborhood pride and civic responsibility.
3. Provide a comprehensive criminal justice system that includes law enforcement, court staff, alternative treatment providers, and members of the community who collaborate to deliver justice while protecting the public.
4. Promote crime prevention through environmental design for residences and businesses.

Sustainability Indicators	Current Status	Potential Outcomes
Average response time for emergency calls	10.75 minutes (2007) 9.21 minutes (2008) 9.53 minutes (2009) ¹	Maintain an average response time of below 10 minutes for emergency calls
New community watch programs	24 new programs (2009) 12 new programs (2010) Total number of community watch programs is 84 (August 2011) ²	Maintain development of new community watch programs
Reach of crime prevention programs	5,739 adults and 6,081 children (2008) 5,918 adults and 6,081 children (2009) ³	Expand reach of crime prevention programs

¹ Office of the Sheriff, Buncombe County, North Carolina - Comprehensive Annual Report Year Ending 2009

² Lt. Helen Hall, Buncombe County Sheriff’s Department

³ Office of the Sheriff Buncombe County North Carolina Comprehensive Annual Report Year Ending 2009, http://www.buncombecounty.org/common/sheriff/Annual_Report.pdf

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES:

- Use local media coverage to support and promote community crime prevention programs and help raise public awareness.
- Improve access to and increase awareness of mental health and substance abuse treatment through advocacy and requiring treatment programs for substance abuse offenders.
- Utilize nonviolent offenders to clean up public places so that neighborhoods are not conducive to crime.
- Continue to develop and increase the number of community-based programs targeting adjudicated youth and those at risk of offending.
- Provide training to law enforcement and judicial personnel concerning economic and cultural issues.
- Increase the number of offenders utilizing alternative sentencing options.
- Promote a citizen-friendly judicial and law enforcement system.



GOAL: RESISTANCE TO NATURAL AND MANMADE HAZARDS

OBJECTIVES

1. Locate critical facilities outside high hazard areas.
2. Ensure local preparedness for emergencies (floods, fuel shortages, climate change, fires, droughts, earthquakes, food shortages, landslides, hazardous materials incidents, medical epidemics, etc.).

Sustainability Indicators	Current Status	Potential Outcomes
Availability, extent, and variety of emergency notification systems	<p>Neighborhood/community watch programs utilize an email notification system to inform community of suspicious or criminal activities in neighborhoods.</p> <p>City of Asheville and Town of Weaverville operate phone notification systems.</p> <p>The Buncombe County website provides public notification of hazards.</p> <p>WWNC has storm information that runs on each hour and half hour, and during winter weather.</p>	Expand availability, extent, and variety of emergency notification systems
Individuals trained in emergency response	<p>240 individuals trained in the CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) curriculum (2003-2011)</p> <p>14 individuals trained in the CERT Train-the-Trainer curriculum (2003-2011) ¹</p>	Increase the number of individuals trained for emergency response

¹ Training numbers provided by Angie Ledford, Emergency Services Planner for Buncombe County (2011)





"A disaster-resilient community takes responsibility for the hazards it faces and, to the extent possible, is self-reliant."

- Jerry VeHaun, Buncombe County Emergency Services Director

Sustainability Indicators	Current Status	Potential Outcomes
Number of schools receiving CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) training	CERT training conducted at Cane Creek Middle School (2010) <i>There are currently 41 schools, including Early/Middle College and the Career Education Center, operating within Buncombe County.</i>	Increase the number of schools receiving CERT training
Percentage of jurisdictional dams with a dam hazard potential of high or intermediate that have an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) in place	20.8% of jurisdictional dams with a dam hazard potential of "high" or "intermediate" have EAPs in place ²	Increase the percentage of potentially hazardous dams with EAP in place
Average response time for emergency calls	10.75 minutes (2007) 9.21 minutes (2008) 9.53 minutes (2009) ³	Maintain an average response time of below 10 minutes for emergency calls
Number of vaccines given to protect against communicable diseases	36,866 vaccinations (2010) ⁴	Increase number of vaccines given to protect against communicable diseases
Number of required emergency response plans that include local practice exercises	100% of required emergency response plans included local practice exercises (2010) ⁵	Maintain 100% of required emergency response plans that include local practice exercises

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES:

- Educate the public regarding hazard mitigation.
- Support and foster Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training to community and neighborhood groups.
- Expand current emergency shelter options in the community (i.e., to ensure access for families with pets, etc.).
- Facilitate hazard mitigation in the planning process of each jurisdiction.
- Build upon current notification warning systems in communities, working with local nonprofits, industry, schools, and media outlets.
- Expand training on emergency response plans to include institutional administrators, religious institutions, and the community at large.
- Increase awareness and education of stormwater best management practices to control floods and soil erosion.

² 16 out of 77 high or intermediate hazard dams listed within Buncombe County under the August 11, 2010 North Carolina Dam Inventory had EAPs in place. The inventory is located at <http://www.dlr.enr.state.nc.us/pages/damsafetyprogram.html>

³ Office of the Sheriff Buncombe County North Carolina Comprehensive Annual Report Year Ending 2009 http://www.buncombecounty.org/common/sheriff/Annual_Report.pdf

⁴ Buncombe County Human Services FY 2010 Annual Report <http://www.buncombecounty.org/common/humanServices/AnnualReport.pdf>

⁵ Buncombe County Human Services FY 2010 Annual Report <http://www.buncombecounty.org/common/humanServices/AnnualReport.pdf>



GOAL: HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS

OBJECTIVES

1. Improve and increase opportunities for safe, active living.
2. Promote healthy buildings and homes.
3. Decrease unintentional injuries.
4. Improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

Sustainability Indicators	Current Status	Potential Outcomes
Rate of recreation facilities per 100,000 population	10 per 100,000 people (2011) ¹	Increase rate of recreation facilities
Number of healthy buildings in the County	There are currently 524 certified HealthyBuilt Homes and 239 in progress in the Western North Carolina area. ² Within Buncombe County, there have been 468 certified HealthyBuilt Homes and four LEED certified buildings. ³	Increase number of healthy buildings
Miles of road suitable for biking	The Bicycle Suitability Index indicates there are currently 570 miles of roads suitable for biking in Buncombe County. ⁴	Increase miles suitable for biking

¹ County Health Rankings, <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/north-carolina/buncombe>

² HealthyBuilt Homes of Western North Carolina, <http://www.wncgbc.org/healthybuilt> (August 1, 2011)

³ Matt Siegel, WNC Green Building Council (July 29, 2011)

⁴ <http://gis.buncombecounty.org/HealthyLiving/Map.html>; GIS analysis by Buncombe County. Suitable roads are rated one or two, and are inclusive of the Blue Ridge Parkway.





“We have a responsibility to give back to the community we serve. Providing healthy schools, work environments, and public facilities is one way we can fulfill that responsibility.”

- Mandy Stone, Buncombe County Social Services Director/Assistant County Manager

Sustainability Indicators	Current Status	Potential Outcomes
Availability and reach of community safety and mobility programs and targeted recipients	<p>The Asheville Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force has conducted seven bike corrals, adult bicycle safety courses, and children's bike rodeos.</p> <p>Safe Kids program addresses childhood injuries through education on seat belt use, car seat use, bike helmets, fire safety, etc.</p> <p>Buncombe County Parks, Greenways & Recreation Services' bicycle safety pilot program educates Buncombe County employees and their families on bicycle safety.</p> <p>NC Center for Healthy Aging's Fall Prevention program has conducted 60 screenings at 12 sites, resulting in 60 referrals for individuals at risk for falls due to medications, poor balance, or other medical/physical causes.</p> <p>Buncombe County Parks, Greenways & Recreation Services' A Matter of Balance class works to stop the fear of falling cycle and increase activity levels for older adults.</p>	Increase the availability and reach of programs and recipients
Rate of unintentional deaths	<p>13.6 motor vehicle deaths per 100,000 people in the County</p> <p>30.7 deaths per 100,000 people (excluding motor vehicle deaths) in the County ⁵</p>	Decrease number of unintentional deaths
Number of traffic accidents involving cyclists/pedestrians	73 accidents (2008) ⁶	Decrease number of traffic accidents involving cyclists/pedestrians

⁵ NC Center for Health Statistics 2010

⁶ North Carolina Department of Transportation

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES:

- Encourage adoption of safe driving insurance discount programs.
- Support the Safe Kids program, including car seat installation training and checks.
- Support the development of the County Greenways & Trails Master Plan.
- Support the Kids and Parks program.
- Develop a building permit fee incentive program to encourage energy efficient, HealthyBuilt home, and LEED-certified development.
- Provide education for young inexperienced drivers to reduce accidental deaths.
- Cross-promote mobility and safety programs in marketing of community health screening and preventative care programs and vice versa.
- Encourage healthy work environments by promoting the County's and large employers' wellness programs.
- Expand and encourage participation in radon testing and education programs.
- Increase recreational opportunities.



GOAL: PARTNERSHIPS FOR CONSERVATION/PRESERVATION/ RESTORATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

OBJECTIVES

1. Conserve and protect water resources.
2. Protect ecological systems/wildlife.
3. Promote energy conservation programs.
4. Restore natural resources.
5. Encourage sustainable land use.
6. Educate the public to help them reduce their environmental footprints.

Sustainability Indicators	Current Status	Potential Outcomes
Number and reach of environmental education programs	Activity (number of people reached) (2009): ¹ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental education field days (400) • Asheville Middle School FLOW (60) • Classroom lessons (625) • Career Day (100) • WNC Regional State Fair (15,000) • Quarterly newsletters (5,360) • Website (15,000) • BCTV programs (20,000) • Sponsor Envirothon team (10) • Sponsor students-resource conservation workshop (3) • Assist with Area I Envirothon (210) • Assist with NC Envirothon (250) • Participate in Earth Day celebration (50) Total programs - 13 Total people reached - 57,068	Grow the availability and reach of programs and recipients

¹ Buncombe County Soil and Water Conservation District, Annual Report 2010 <http://buncombecounty.org/common/soil/annualreport.pdf>





Sustainability Indicators	Current Status	Potential Outcomes
Average household energy use	1,050 kilowatt hours per month ²	Reduce average household energy use
Funding and number of conservation projects	<p>Buncombe County Land Conservation Advisory Board and Soil and Water Conservation cumulative totals (2010): ³</p> <p>Conservation Projects: 23 projects, 3,838.53 acres County investment: \$5,569,746.83 Cost to County: \$1,451 per acre Leveraged funds: \$26,535,528.50</p>	Increase the number, acres, and appraised value of conservation projects/land
Number of exceedences of Water Quality Standards for Surface Waters for turbidity	<p>There were 27 exceedences above 50 NTU between August 2006 and June 2011. ⁴</p> <p><i>Water Quality Standards: not to exceed 10 NTU (nephelometric turbidity units) for trout waters, not to exceed 50 NTU to protect other aquatic life. None of the sites currently sampled in Buncombe County are considered trout waters.</i></p>	Reduce number of exceedences
Streams restored by the Soil and Water Conservation District	1,055 linear feet of streams were restored in FY 2011 ⁵	Increase number of restored stream miles



² Martha Thompson, Progress Energy

³ Deborah Trueempy, Planner, Buncombe County Planning and Development

⁴ James Aaron, NCDENR Division of Water Quality, Surface Water Protection Section, Asheville Regional Office

⁵ Gary Higgins, Soil and Water Conservation Department Director



"The natural environment is a critical ingredient for our economic success in Buncombe County. It is why many of our families have lived here over the generations. It drives our tourism industry, and it is often a central consideration of business investment in the region."

- Carol Peterson, Commissioner, Buncombe County Board of Commissioners

Sustainability Indicators	Current Status	Potential Outcomes
Watercourses classified as trout streams in Buncombe County	There are 251.14 linear miles of watercourses with a trout stream classification in Buncombe County. ⁶	Increase total linear miles of watercourses that can be classified as trout streams
Number of endangered species	As of June 30, 2011 there are four recognized endangered species and one threatened species in Buncombe County. ⁷	Support management of endangered species/plants

⁶ Based on GIS analysis of NCDENR DWQ Surface Water Classifications Shape File, as updated September 21, 2007. Unclassified/unnamed streams which feed into trout streams may also be considered trout streams for the purposes of regulation, but are not included in this number.

⁷ Allen Ratzlaff, Biologist, US Fish and Wildlife Service (Asheville Office)

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES:

- Promote participation in Progress Energy's energy efficiency programs.
- Apply for additional funding for conservation/preservation/restoration programs through federal and state grants.
- Educate the public on available programs through Progress Energy and other providers regarding energy efficiency and available rebates.
- Encourage the use of energy efficient and environmental building design.
- Promote energy audits, retrofits, and weatherization programs and assist residents in applying for utility incentives, state cash rebates, and tax credits for renewable energy applications and performance up-fits.
- Support reuse of existing buildings.
- Educate the public on ways to minimize individual impacts on the environment.
- Encourage conservation easements to preserve wildlife habitat and ecologically significant areas and to protect intact blocks of forest.



GOAL: POLLUTION AND WASTE PREVENTION

OBJECTIVES

1. Improve air quality.
2. Improve water quality.
3. Reduce the use of harmful chemicals.
4. Manage waste - reduce, reuse, and recycle.

Sustainability Indicators	Current Status	Potential Outcomes
Air Quality Index and Air Quality Attainment status	<p>Air Quality Index (AQI): Asheville Ridge Tops-39 Asheville Valleys-35 ¹</p> <p>Air Quality Index is a scaled ranking (0 to 500). An AQI between 0-50 is classified as "Good," where air quality is considered satisfactory, and air pollution poses little or no risk.</p> <p>The County is in attainment for all criteria pollutants (ozone, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, particulate matter and lead). ² Nonattainment would indicate that air pollution levels persistently exceed the national air quality standards.</p>	<p>Maintain AQI < 40</p> <p>Maintain attainment for all criteria pollutants</p>

¹ AIRNow Local Air Quality Conditions and Forecasts <http://www.airnow.gov>

² U.S. EPA The Green Book Nonattainment Areas for Criteria Pollutants <http://www.epa.gov/oaqps001/greenbk>





“Poor air quality threatens human health and the natural environment. We value a clean, healthy environment - it is essential to the character and livability of Buncombe County.”

- David Brigman, Director, WNC Regional Air Quality

Sustainability Indicators	Current Status	Potential Outcomes
Number and reach of environmental education programs	<p>Activity (number of people reached) (2009):³</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental education field days (400) Asheville Middle School FLOW (60) Classroom lessons (625) Career Day (100) WNC Regional State Fair (15,000) Quarterly newsletters (5,360) Website (15,000) BCTV programs (20,000) Sponsor Envirothon team (10) Sponsor students-resource conservation workshop (3) Assist with Area I Envirothon (210) Assist with NC Envirothon (250) Participate in Earth Day celebration (50) <p>Total programs - 13 Total people reached-57,068</p>	Grow the availability and reach of programs and recipients
Number of Impaired Waters within Buncombe County	<p>Newfound Creek, Pollutant: Fecal coliform⁴ <i>The State's 303(d) list is a list of all waters classified as "impaired" in the state. A Total Daily Maximum Load (TDML), describing a value of the maximum amount of a pollutant that a body of water can receive while still meeting water quality standards was developed for Newfound Creek in 2005.⁵</i></p> <p>TDML for fecal coliform in Newfound Creek = 2.61 (2005)⁶</p>	Improve water quality of Impaired Waters to remove from State 303(d) list

³ Buncombe County Soil and Water Conservation District, Annual Report 2010 <http://buncombecounty.org/common/soil/annualreport.pdf>

⁴ North Carolina 2010 Integrated Report of Categories four and five Impaired Waters http://portal.ncdenr.org/cl/document_library/get_file?uuid=8ff0bb29-62c2-4b33-810c-2eee5afa75e9&groupId=38364

⁵ Total Maximum Daily Loads for Fecal Coliform for Newfound Creek, North Carolina. February 2005 http://portal.ncdenr.org/cl/document_library/get_file?uuid=e24a15ad-997e-434e-b30d-13cf7c99da0&groupId=38364

⁶ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Watershed Assessment, Tracking & Environmental Results http://iaspub.epa.gov/tmdl_waters/10/attains_impaired_waters.tmdl_report?p_tmdl_id=10763&p_report_type=T





Sustainability Indicators	Current Status	Potential Outcomes
Pollutants in drinking water	<p>City of Asheville Water System (2009):⁷</p> <p><u>Fluoride, ppm</u> (regulated at the treatment plant) high 0.86 (Mills River); goal range (0.77 -0.086)</p> <p><u>Total organic carbon (source), ppm</u> (regulated at the treatment plant) average 0.28; goal range (0-1.10)</p> <p><u>Total organic carbon (treated), ppm</u> (regulated at the treatment plant) average 0.35; goal range (0-1.4)</p> <p><u>Lead, ppb</u> (regulated at customer's tap) <3 at 90th percentile (good)</p> <p><u>Copper, ppm</u> (regulated at customer's tap) 1.0055 at 90th percentile (good)</p> <p><u>Total coliform bacteria</u> (regulated at distribution center) 2% (good)</p> <p><u>Fecal coliform or E.coli</u> (regulated at distribution center) 0% (great)</p> <p><u>Chlorine</u> (regulated at distribution center) system average 1.32; goal range (0.25-1.93)</p>	Surpass all requirements for drinking water quality

⁷ Asheville Water Resources Department: 2010 Annual Water Quality Report, http://www.ashevillenc.gov/portals/0/city-documents/Water/2010_Water_Quality_Report.pdf (Note: this information is for Asheville's water utility only).





Sustainability Indicators	Current Status	Potential Outcomes
Number of chemicals that exceed health guidelines	<p>The numbers of chemicals found in drinking water that exceed health guidelines for the six largest municipal systems (national average is four):⁸</p> <p><u>Woodfin Sanitary Water and Sewer</u> Six chemicals</p> <p><u>City of Asheville</u> 11 chemicals</p> <p><u>Town of Black Mountain</u> Nine chemicals</p> <p><u>Town of Weaverville</u> Eight chemicals</p> <p><u>Town of Biltmore Forest</u> Six chemicals</p> <p><u>Montreat Water System</u> Five chemicals</p>	Reduce number of chemicals that exceed health guidelines
Hazardous and special waste recycled	The County collected 48 tons of household hazardous waste; 500 tons of white goods; 2,906 tons of tires; 1,672 gallons of used oil; 286 gallons of antifreeze; 742 lead-acid batteries; and 82 tons of electronic equipment (FY 2008). ⁹	Increase recycling of hazardous and special wastes and improve collection programs



⁸ Environmental Working Group, Drinking Water Quality Report <http://www.ewg.org/tap-water/whatsinyourwater/NC/City-of-Asheville/0111010/>

⁹ Buncombe County, Solid Waste Management Plan 2010 Update



Sustainability Indicators	Current Status	Potential Outcomes
Percent of solid waste recycled/Percent reduction in landfilled solid waste volumes	<p>2008 residential recycling (in tons of materials) increased by 14.5% County-wide when compared to 2005. The amount of material recycled versus landfilled increased by 2.5% over the same period.¹⁰</p> <p>Cardboard recycling by commercial establishments was 57% more than FY 2004 — an average annual increase of more than 11%.¹¹</p> <p>The Land of Sky Regional Council's Waste Reduction Partners (WRP) helped 67 different businesses and industrial sector clients divert an estimated 21,288 tons from landfills (2007).¹²</p>	Improve residential and commercial recycling

¹⁰ Buncombe County, Solid Waste Management Plan 2010 Update

¹¹ Buncombe County, Solid Waste Management Plan 2010 Update, 4-8

¹² Buncombe County, Solid Waste Management Plan 2010 Update, ES-2

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES:

- Promote waste minimization and composting programs.
- Educate landowners to reduce fertilizer use that could impact water bodies.
- Promote education programs regarding healthy streams/waterways, reaching people through multi-media outlets (i.e., tax bill, laundromats, religious institutions, community centers, BCTV, schools).
- Encourage use of public transit, carpools, and alternative transportation.
- Partner with local, regional, and state agencies to facilitate air quality improvements (identify air quality problems and potential solutions).
- Partner with local, regional, and state agencies to facilitate water quality improvements (identify water quality problems and potential solutions).
- Encourage businesses and residents to purchase goods from recycled materials, produced locally, with minimal packaging, and that are durable, repairable, and reusable.



GOAL: ACCESSIBLE, MULTI-MODAL, AND EFFICIENT TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

OBJECTIVES

1. Reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT).
2. Increase multi-modal options.
3. Encourage land development connected to existing transportation corridors.
4. Promote access to goods and services in areas of significant population density and in neighborhood hubs.

Sustainability Indicators	Current Status	Potential Outcomes
Annual VMT within Buncombe County	Current annual VMT within the County is 3,486.22 (millions) for 2006 (U.S. EPA). The estimated VMT growth for the County is 73% from 2000 projected through the year 2030. ¹	Reduce percent growth in annual VMT
Miles of alternative transportation options	Currently there are 667.7 miles of roads with ratings for bike use (570 of which are listed as suitable), ² 176.2 miles of Asheville Transit bus routes, ³ 98.1 miles of Mountain Mobility routes ³ and 417.29 miles (in Asheville) of sidewalks. ⁴	Increase total miles of alternative transportation options
Number of individuals using alternative transportation options	Asheville Transit (FY 2010): Ridership: 1,525,212 ⁵ Mountain Mobility (FY 2010): ⁶ Trips: 148,578 Passengers signed up for service: 7,456	Increase number of individuals using alternative transportation options

¹ French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization. *Transportation 2030 Plan*. September 2005

² <http://gis.buncombecounty.org/HealthyLiving/Map.html>; GIS analysis by Buncombe County. Suitable roads are rated one or two, and are inclusive of the Blue Ridge Parkway.

³ Asheville Transit and Mountain Mobility route calculations based on a GIS analysis by Buncombe County.

⁴ Sidewalk information taken from sidewalks layer in Buncombe County GIS database.

⁵ Asheville Transit

⁶ Taken from Mountain Mobility Performance Information, provided by Denise Braine, Planner, Buncombe County Planning and Development.





“Transportation options foster self-sustainability, promote independence, and benefit the environment.”

- Lori Hembree, General Manager, Mountain Mobility

Sustainability Indicators	Current Status	Potential Outcomes
Miles of Complete Streets and designation of completeness	None (2011) ⁷	Increase miles of Complete Streets
Miles of road suitable for biking	The Bicycle Suitability Index indicates that there are currently 570 miles of roads suitable for biking in Buncombe County. ⁸	Increase miles suitable for biking
Percent of County households within ¼ mile of transportation options	69% of addresses (residential and non-residential) within Buncombe County are within ¼ mile of biking or public transit options. ⁹	Increase percent of households with close access to transportation options
Number of new commercial building permits within ¼ mile of transportation options	13 new commercial buildings within ¼ mile of transportation options received Certificates of Occupancy in FY 2010. ¹⁰	Increase number of new commercial building permits within ¼ mile of transportation options

⁷ NCDOT Complete Streets standards are expected to be adopted in early 2012 and will be tracked by the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

⁸ The bicycle suitability layer assigns most of Buncombe County’s main thoroughfares to one of four categories: green (most suitable for biking), yellow, red and black (least suitable). The Blue Ridge Parkway is also shown in blue. Please note that the index refers only to a route’s suitability for bicycling due to vehicular traffic. It does not categorize how strenuous a ride might be. <http://gis.buncombecounty.org/buncomap/>; GIS analysis by Buncombe County.

⁹ Addresses consist of any structures or units with 911 addresses. Vacant parcels are not addressed. <http://gis.buncombecounty.org/buncomap/>; GIS analysis by Buncombe County.

¹⁰ Based upon permitting and GIS analysis conducted by Buncombe County. This number represents commercial structures within ¼ mile of Mountain Mobility and Asheville Transit routes, which are permitted through Buncombe County Permits & Inspections (within the unincorporated areas of Buncombe County and the corporate limits of the Town of Woodfin, Town of Weaverville, and Town of Biltmore Forest).

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES:

- Use existing media outlets (BCTV, website, social media) to connect rideshare participants.
- Promote carpool programs.
- Promote preferred parking for carpooling and alternative fuel source vehicles.
- Investigate grant sources related to climate change that could fund multi-modal transportation.
- Support and work with Land of Sky Regional Council (GroWNC) and other regional partners to promote an accessible, multi-modal, and efficient transportation network.
- Solicit neighborhood businesses to offer rebates, discounts, or coupons for participants in rideshare program and carpoolers.
- Encourage municipalities to continue and expand the Safe Routes to Schools program.
- Support the development of the County Greenways & Trails Master Plan.
- Explore a regional transit system.
- Collaborate with regional transportation agencies in efforts such as “Strive Not to Drive.”



GOAL: SUSTAINABLE LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS

OBJECTIVES

1. Promote farmland preservation and decrease loss of agricultural land.
2. Promote sustainable agricultural production and personal and community gardening in connection with the County's agricultural heritage.
3. Increase demand for locally produced foods.

Sustainability Indicators	Current Status	Potential Outcomes
Number of farms	115 farms lost from 2002 (1,192 farms) to 2007 (1,077) ¹	Decrease the number of farms lost
Number of community and school gardens	14 community gardens within the City of Asheville ² 17 elementary school gardens in Buncombe County (2011) ³	Increase access to healthy foods by increasing the number of community and school gardens
Acres of agricultural land lost	22,847 acres of agricultural land lost from 2002 (94,934 acres existing) to 2007 (72,087 acres) ⁴	Decrease the amount of agricultural land lost

¹ USDA Census of Agriculture 2002, 2007 <http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/>

² Darcel Eddins, Executive Director Bountiful Cities, works with/is aware of the following community gardens in the City of Asheville: Pearson, Antigua's, Dr. George Washington Carver, Joyner, Shiloh Community, Burton Street Community Peace, Martha James, Falconhurst, Hillcrest, Pisgah View, UNCA Rhoades Property, WC Reid, Merrimon Baptist Church, and Montford (August 2011).

³ Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project

⁴ USDA Census of Agriculture 2002, 2007 <http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/>





“The long-term health of a community’s food system is an important indicator of its vitality and sustainability. When we support local farms, we strengthen our local economies.”

- Steve Duckett, County Extension Director, NC Cooperative Extension

Sustainability Indicators	Current Status	Potential Outcomes
Acres in the Voluntary Agricultural District program (VAD)	27,033 acres in program (April 2011) ⁵ <i>VAD raises awareness of farmland preservation, enables farmers to enter into a voluntary agreement to keep land in farmland use, and provides some level of protection from nuisance suits related to normal agricultural activity.</i>	Increase the number of acres in VAD annually
Enrollment in the Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural District program (EVAD)	No farms enrolled (2011) ⁶ <i>EVAD enables farmers to enter into a binding 10-year agreement to keep land in farmland use, and provides some level of protection from nuisance suits related to normal agricultural activity.</i>	Increase the number of farms enrolled in EVAD
Availability and extent of programs aimed to promote agricultural production and increase purchases of locally produced food	<p>Cooperative Extension offers workshops, consultation, and business planning to help new and existing small farmers to enhance their profitability and allow them to stay on the farm.</p> <p>Cooperative Extension and the Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture project promote agritourism.</p> <p>Cooperative Extension’s Urban Horticulture program provides gardening information for all citizens to promote personal and community gardening in connection with the County’s agricultural heritage.</p> <p>Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project, the Cooperative Extension and Blue Ridge Food Ventures work to increase marketing to connect farms with buyers. ⁷</p>	Increase the availability and extent of programs aimed to promote agricultural production and increase purchases of locally produced food



⁵ Soil and Water Conservation District, April 2011 Summary

⁶ Soil and Water Conservation District, April 2011 Summary: EVAD is a new program as of 2011

⁷ Cooperative Extension, April 2011 Summary



Sustainability Indicators	Current Status	Potential Outcomes
Number of community supported agriculture programs and number of shares	23 individual CSA programs in Buncombe County offering a total of 1070 shares (June 2011) ⁸	Increase the number of community supported agriculture shares
Number of local outlets	232 local outlets (restaurants, retail, tailgate markets in Buncombe County) (June 2011) ⁹	Increase the number of local outlets
Funding and number of conservation projects	Buncombe County Land Conservation Advisory Board and Soil and Water Conservation cumulative totals (2010): ¹⁰ Conservation projects: 23 projects, 3,838.53 acres County investment: \$5,569,746.83 Cost to County: \$1,451 per acre Leveraged funds: \$26,535,528.50	Increase the number, acres, and appraised value of conservation projects/land

⁸ Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project, Local Foods Guide, <http://www.buyappalachian.org>

⁹ Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project, Local Foods Guide, <http://www.buyappalachian.org>

¹⁰ Deborah Truempy, Planner, Buncombe County Planning and Development

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES:

- Support the “farm to table” program.
- Increase marketing to connect farm sellers with buyers.
- Research the feasibility of a meat packing facility in the area.
- Continue efforts to connect established/retiring farmers with the next generation of farmers.
- Increase participation in the Voluntary Agricultural District program.
- Work to increase marketing and to reduce obstacles for sale of local food (USDA regulations, local health department regulations).
- Encourage innovative development, incentives, and conservancy efforts to protect agricultural land.
- Support existing programs that teach and promote the importance of healthful cooking.





GOAL: SUSTAINABLE LOCALIZED ECONOMY

OBJECTIVES

1. Provide incentives to businesses for growth.
2. Encourage a “business-friendly” regulatory environment.
3. Promote “Buy Local” programs.
4. Ensure a diverse economy with competitive wages.
5. Support small business development.

Sustainability Indicators	Current Status	Potential Outcomes
Retail sales per capita	\$15,862 (2007) ¹	Increase sales
Per capita income	\$26,209 (2005 to 2009 5-year estimates in 2009 dollars) ²	Increase per capita income
Percent of unemployed adults served by Mountain Area Workforce Development	1,574 adults served in 2010 ³ (2010 annual average 10,186 unemployed) ⁴	Increase percent of unemployed adults served

¹ US Census, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/37/37021.html>

² U.S. Census Bureau American FactFinder, 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year estimates http://fastfacts.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=05000US37021&-qr_name=ACS_2009_5YR_G00_DP5YR3&-ds_name=ACS_2009_5YR_G00_-&-lang=en&-_sse=on

³ <http://www.buncombecounty.org/common/humanServices/AnnualReport.pdf>

⁴ Employment Security Commission of North Carolina, <http://eslmi40.esc.state.nc.us/ThematicLAUS/clfasp/CLFaasy.asp>





"Buying local is a powerful consumer choice. Buncombe County's local economy is diverse and thriving and should be supported at all levels. **"**

- David Gantt, Chairman, Buncombe County Board of Commissioners

Sustainability Indicators	Current Status	Potential Outcomes
Percent of businesses by economic sector	Construction: 12.7% Manufacturing: 4% Wholesale trade: 4.2% Retail trade: 15.5% Transportation and warehousing: 2% Information: 1.9% Finance and insurance: 5.4% Real estate and rental and leasing: 5.4% Professional, scientific, and technical services: 11.5% Administrative, support, waste management, and remediation services: 4.9% Educational services: 1.5% Health and social assistance: 10.6% Arts, entertainment & recreation: 1.5% Accommodation and food services: 9% Other services (except public administration): 9.2% Not classified: 0.7% (2008) ⁵	Maintain diverse economy
Employment rate	91.6% (2010 annual average) ⁶	Increase employment rate
Number of businesses with fewer than 10 employees	5,411 (72.7%) (2008) ⁷	Increase number of small businesses

⁵ US Census Bureau, <http://www.census.gov/econ/cbp/index.html>

⁶ Employment Security Commission of North Carolina, <http://eslmi40.esc.state.nc.us/ThematicLAUS/clfasp/CLFaasy.asp>

⁷ US Census Bureau, <http://www.census.gov/econ/cbp/index.html>

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES:

- Provide small businesses with opportunities that encourage growth and expansion (expand reach of small business startup classes and existing business growth classes).
- Expand small business incubator program.
- Promote green jobs and businesses.
- Promote strategic partnerships among education, economic development, and business growth organizations.
- Collect and analyze feedback from area businesses through a business satisfaction survey (interaction with County services, efficiency of processes). Establish a satisfaction baseline for doing business within Buncombe County with results of survey.
- Provide incentives for the use of brownfields.
- Support business strategies that encompass targeted industry clusters (health care, advanced manufacturing, science and technology, arts and culture, knowledge-based entrepreneurship, agri-business, tourism).
- Recruit and identify vendors for new and existing business.
- Support streamlining of the local regulatory environment.



GOAL: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

OBJECTIVES

1. Identify and reduce barriers to employment (e.g., childcare, transportation, housing, insurance).
2. Provide robust job training that fits present and anticipated workforce demand.
3. Encourage collaboration among workforce and educational institutions.

Sustainability Indicators	Current Status	Potential Outcomes
Employment rate	91.6% (2010 annual average) ¹	Increase employment rate
Unemployment rate	8.4 % (2010 annual average) ²	Decrease percent unemployed
Per capita income	\$26,209 (2005 to 2009 5-year estimates in 2009 dollars) ³	Increase per capita income
Number of Work First cash recipients	813 recipients (FY 2010) ⁴ <i>Work First provides employment and cash assistance, Medicaid, and referrals to other supportive services to enable recipients to become self-sufficient and self-supporting.</i>	Decrease number of Work First cash recipients
Percent of individuals below poverty level	13.8% of individuals in Buncombe County are below the poverty level (2009) ⁵	Decrease percent of individuals below poverty level

¹ Employment Security Commission of North Carolina, <http://eslmi40.esc.state.nc.us/ThematicLAUS/clfasp/CLFaasy.asp>

² Employment Security Commission of North Carolina, <http://eslmi40.esc.state.nc.us/ThematicLAUS/clfasp/CLFaasy.asp>

³ U.S. Census Bureau American FactFinder, 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year estimates http://fastfacts.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=05000US37021&-qr_name=ACS_2009_5YR_G00_DP5YR3&-ds_name=ACS_2009_5YR_G00_&-_lang=en&-_sse=on

⁴ Buncombe County Human Services FY 2010 Annual Report <http://www.buncombecounty.org/common/humanServices/AnnualReport.pdf>

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau State & County Quick Facts, Buncombe County, NC <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/37/37021.ht>





"We're not only concerned with overcoming barriers to employment, but also ensuring that a job can become a long-term career in our community. Supporting education and investment in emerging industries, such as green jobs, plays to our community's strengths. An educated and diverse workforce is not only good for business; it also results in higher paying jobs. "

- Wanda Greene, Buncombe County Manager

Sustainability Indicators	Current Status	Potential Outcomes
Number of individuals served by the Mountain Area Workforce Development Board	JobLink services provided job readiness skills and job search assistance services to 3,339 Buncombe County residents (program year 2010). ⁶ <i>Mountain Area Workforce Development Board provides employment and training activities and resources for County residents.</i>	Monitor number of individuals served by the Mountain Area Workforce Development Board
Number of NC Career Readiness Certifications (CRC)	257 CRC in Buncombe County in 2010 (25.3% Gold, 60.3% Silver, 14.4% Bronze) ⁷	Increase number of certifications
Number of subsidized childcare slots Number of children on waiting list	1,962 children getting subsidized childcare as of June 2011 ⁸ 1,262 on the waiting list as of June 2011 ⁹	Increase number of subsidized childcare slots

⁶ Mountain Area Workforce Development Board Summary of Services and Funding (Program Year 2010)

⁷ <http://www.crcnc.com/search/geosearch3.aspx>

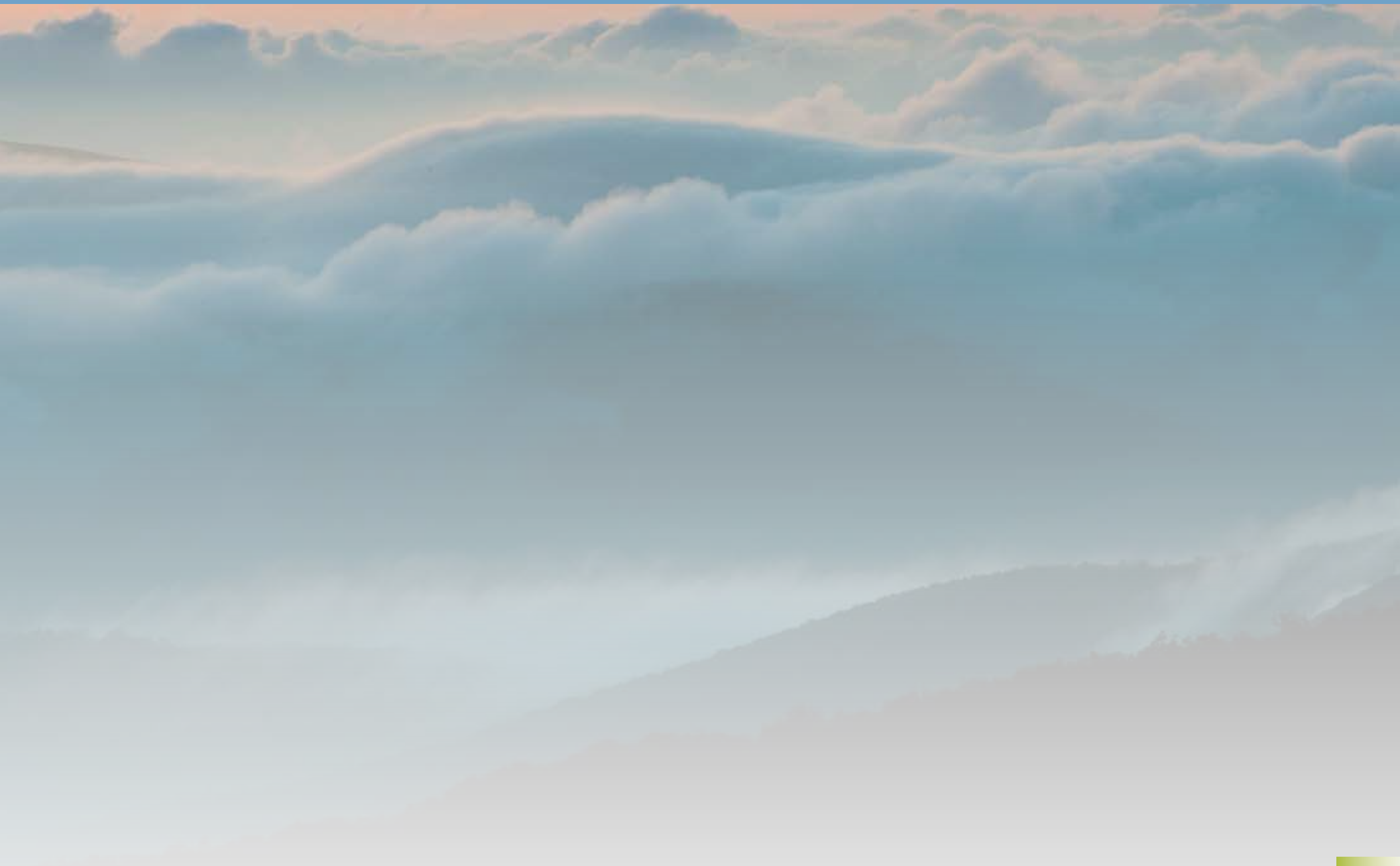
⁸ Buncombe County Department of Social Services

⁹ Buncombe County Department of Social Services

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES:

- Examine potential sources of funding to offer additional childcare options.
- Work with economic development and business growth organizations to understand deficiencies in area job skills and barriers to employment.
- Promote the Life Works program (Community Action Opportunities).

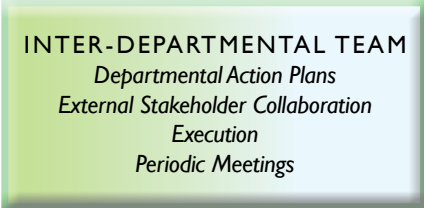
FRAMEWORK FOR THE FUTURE



Although this Plan primarily considers strategies for implementation over a five-year period, Buncombe County recognizes that our efforts toward sustainable practices must be constant, address both short and long-term goals and solutions, and adapt to our ever changing community, environment, and economy. We expect that the Sustainability Partners, as leaders in our community, will promote the implementation of this Plan and inspire positive change in our community. In addition, we anticipate that this particular Plan and the implementation efforts that follow will become a stepping stone for future action. We anticipate updating this Plan every five years, tracking our progress and allowing new initiatives to be developed. In between Plan updates, County staff will use the indicators listed in the previous section to track and detail progress via an annual report. With each update to the Sustainability Plan we expect to not only look back upon our successes, but also identify new strategies that can be adopted to make Buncombe County the sustainable community we envision.

The Plan will require continued support and leadership from the Board of Commissioners and a structured approach for implementation. As shown in the figure below, the Planning Department will provide the project management structure, but efforts to advance the identified strategies will require commitment and action from across County services and the support from several external community stakeholders. Individual department action plans should be developed that outline priorities, timelines, and stakeholder collaboration needs. An inter-departmental team should be established that meets on a quarterly basis to monitor and report progress.

The following strategies, grouped by goal, were identified for future implementation. These strategies require changes in regulation, greater funding availability, or a more complex developmental process than can be provided within this five-year time frame. We have identified these strategies as important elements of our long-term vision and it is our intent to implement them as funding becomes available and other impediments are reduced. These strategies will be used as building blocks in our work to create a more sustainable future.





Educational Resources which Match the Needs of the Community

- Target programs to improve post-secondary enrollment.
- Develop mentorship-model programs to improve high school graduation rates, e.g., Check and Connect and the Valued Youth Program (VYP): Check and Connect is a dropout prevention program for high school students with learning, emotional, and/or behavioral disabilities. Students are assigned a “monitor” who works with them year-round as a mentor, advisor, and service coordinator. Through VYP, students gain experience and skills as mentors to younger students.
- Implement quality intervention programs that increase student retention at an earlier time in the child’s life.
- Expand early childhood development programs, e.g., HeadStart, SmartStart, More at 4, Child-Parent Centers, etc.
- Collaborate within the community to make early childhood programs accessible, well-advertised, and available to all children.

Healthy People

- Reduce obstacles and provide programs to allow community gardens to sell produce.
- Develop programs to ensure children make healthy choices regarding nutrition.
- Increase testing for air quality and conduct testing for radon in public buildings.
- Provide a medical home to everyone.
- Increase access to mental health care or counseling.
- Develop an insurance co-op program for local businesses.



Affordable, Green, and Livable Housing

- Develop a process for rental housing to be inspected on a bi-annual basis to ensure basic housing code issues are compliant.
- Transition individuals from substandard housing into livable housing.
- Include measures of air quality in rental housing inspections (for asthma).

Equity in Access

- Increase access to affordable public transportation.
- Promote a sense of community through better design practices.
- Create community-based health centers with in-house primary health care providers (using high school districts to determine locations).
- Work toward the implementation of the existing Buncombe County Parks and Recreation Master Plans.



Safe, Low-Crime Communities

- Improve the equity, effectiveness, and efficiency of bringing offenders to justice.
- Expand community-based victim assistance services to help relieve stress and other consequences of crime and reduce vulnerability to repeated victimization.

Healthy Environments

- Create 25 preschool outdoor learning environment demonstration projects.
- Develop more greenways.
- Have dedicated space for pedestrians and cyclists, providing separation from automobile traffic.
- Work toward the implementation of the existing Buncombe County Parks and Recreation Master Plans.





Partnerships for Conservation/Preservation/Restoration of Natural Resources

- Expand upon existing restoration programs (i.e., streambank restoration).
- Create partnerships between government, agencies, groups, and landowners to preserve streambanks and reduce sediment.
- Create a source list for natural resource information regarding what local, state, federal, and private agencies are undertaking.
- Provide incentives for institutional/business water re-use and reductions in use.
- Partner with Land of Sky Regional Council, colleges, or other entity to develop a shared database to track efforts of multiple agencies in regards to conservation/preservation/restoration of natural resources (Linking Lands, Natural Heritage Program, NOAA, Bent Creek).
- Develop and promote programs for waste minimization and reducing energy consumption for lower income households and rental households.
- Promote residential water conservation measures including retrofitting household water appliances through rebate and incentive programs.
- Develop or continue work that the Volunteer Water Information Network program has done measuring water quality in County streams.



Pollution and Waste Prevention

- Increase funding for water quality.
- Support non-governmental organizations working to make air quality improvements.
- Support non-governmental organizations working to make water quality improvements.
- Establish a requirement for businesses and apartment complexes to recycle paper, metal, and glass.
- Expand recycling drop-off centers to accommodate all townships and municipalities and include glass recycling.

Accessible, Multi-Modal, and Efficient Transportation Network

- Fast track development that includes multi-modal linkages.
- Encourage/require developers to provide sidewalks (or an area for the later installation of sidewalks) for certain types of new development, including large subdivisions, schools, and commercial development, within the County and municipalities.
- Encourage or incentivize organizations to convert fleets to alternative fuel source vehicles.
- Increase Mountain Mobility Trailblazer routes for deviated fixed route service (can deviate off route ¼ mile to pick up a passenger who cannot get to the nearest street that the bus travels).
- Follow other areas' lead in offering a bike share program (Portland, Oregon, etc.).
- Facilitate and encourage shared transportation facilities.
- Coordinate infrastructure design and connectivity, including bike lanes and sidewalks.
- Support infrastructure (i.e., charge stations) for alternative fuel vehicles.
- Increase density along transportation corridors.
- Develop a policy in coordination with the North Carolina Department of Transportation to encourage sidewalk and/or greenway construction in unincorporated areas.



Sustainable Local Food Systems

- Increase access to farmers markets by identifying/providing affordable public transportation.
- Establish a revolving loan program to help new farmers purchase land and equipment.

Workforce Development

- Partner with local educational institutions to provide expanded job training that meets local demand.
- Develop a high-tech workforce.
- Identify companies with incumbent workers suitable for training for skill expansion.
- Promote partnerships to reduce poverty.





**CDM
Smith**