

Buncombe County Strategic Planning
 Community Input Session – Environmental Stewardship
 10/25/2019

Theme	Energy
<p>What would success look like?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County invest in widespread rooftop solar and community oriented storage capacity • Require utilities to have equitable net metering • Increased solar charging stations • Utility systems are fairly priced and flexible. End Duke’s monopoly. • Widely distributed roof top solar and storage capacity • Duke has converted to 100% renewable with natural gas • Solar PV on most businesses, many residences • Control of energy supplies: establish a county-owned energy district • Find a way to enable 3rd party sales of energy to encourage distributed energy grid • County coordinates plan for private sector solar plus energy efficiency (ex. roof tops, wind turbines) • <i>County-stimulated/supported business community cooperation for solar on commercial building.</i> • Aggressive carbon negative policies beyond the 20% net zero gases already in place
<p>Goals with greatest impact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% renewable energy ASAP • <i>Similar to how the county buildings are submitting a bid together for rooftop solar, campaign and help fund solar bids so neighborhoods can have rooftop solar.</i> • Increased use of electric vehicles, including county sponsored solar electric vehicle recharging stations (like Earth Fares on Hendersonville Rd) and parking for electric vehicles specifically • Shift to renewables <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Wind and solar and composting sources of energy ○ Efficiency efforts and codes ○ 3rd party sales of solar ○ Regional control of the energy grid ○ Agro-photo voltaic • <i>Reduce waste – solid waste, energy waste</i> • Steps toward 100% renewable energy/increased energy efficiency. • Raise the issue that as a community, we are greatly handicapped by Duke Energy’s monopoly status in this state. Challenge this in every possible way, including changes to the city and county charters, so that both government bodies can make the locally and regionally impactful changes that will provide energy that is clean, community controlled, equitable and affordable. • Renewable Energy – increasing EV infrastructure, state level support, encouraging community solar, eliminating local barriers to solar (i.e. HOA restrictions) • Communitywide goal for renewable energy development (public/private) • 100% renewable energy for Buncombe County and Asheville City including school properties within 5 years • Increase energy efficiency and renewables • Housing affordability via making homes more efficient (and lower income homes)

Theme	Land Use/Permitting
What would success look like?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharpen building codes for efficiencies Focus on growth (inevitable) without sprawl. <i>Land development committee that includes municipalities through Buncombe County works together to protect and support farmland, forests and sustainable development</i> Policies that link density of housing developments to protection of open space. Improve % of impervious surface added in county Manage for big storm events
Goals with greatest impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase housing density in cities and near-city areas of county; focus on making it easy for people to reside close to the places they actually live their lives (work, play, etc.) Reduce pollution using best available practices. Create and implement a countywide connectivity master plan that provides better accessibility, no sprawl, green spaces for health and farms for healthy foods. Recognize impact of infrastructure choices (farming services, transportation)

Theme	Equity
What would success look like?	
Goals with greatest impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting low-income communities – access and education to outdoors and environment Healthcare for all – even marginalized people; will have a lower total cost to society.
Theme	Healthy Life
What would success look like?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Countywide connectivity and healthy living and healthy food through coordinated approach</i>
Goals with greatest impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Increase access to the outdoors and environmental education to underserved communities and young people which will improve resident well-being (physical and emotional health)</i>

Theme	Water Quality Protection
What would success look like?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address the dirty French Broad narrative and address real concerns (i.e. e-coli every year) Improve all stream restoration Stream sedimentation reduced/minimized through control and enforcement Waterways are clean and provide recreational opportunities for all. Storm water systems are up to date and keep trash and pollutants out of waterways. County policy for protection of stream margins Empower the Buncombe Soil and Water District to educate farmland owners and leverage state/national resources to reduce agricultural storm water runoff
Goals with greatest impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empower Soil and Water Conservation District to mitigate pollution sedimentation of surface waters.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving water quality through investments in storm water, land protection and restoration. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Educate developers and permittees on storm water management (there are better ways to manage than just retention basins) ○ Provide financial support or incentive to better manage storm water ○ Protect (provide county funding) to preserve/conservate important parcels and also help existing conservation landowners (including farmers) with riparian buffers. Reduce acreage lost during big storm events while also reducing silt and sedimentation. • Strong programs for river and stream restoration • Improve storm water runoff management – no net increase in impervious surface.
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Theme	Funding
What would success look like?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restructure BCTDA to help with our infrastructure/100% renewables by 2030 • Broadly supported public funds for ambitious and intentional plan
Goals with greatest impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct campaign for bond referendum, linked with how to spend the dollars on conservation

Theme	Waste Management
What would success look like?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food waste is composted or used in bio gas digesters for methane • Anti-littering laws are being enforced, so the roadsides, waterways and neighborhoods are litter-free • All food waste is composted locally and organically • Biogas digesters now handle all sewage and generate electricity • Biogas digesters in many restaurants provide cooking gas • Countywide curbside composting is available to all residents • Plastics ban
Goals with greatest impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Reduce waste – solid waste, energy waste</i> • Improve recycling, offer curbside composting

Theme	Collaboration/Public Engagement
What would success look like?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More community rights • We need leaders and public to acutely understand the importance. • Help people take personal responsibility for their environmental impact. • Accept the inevitable tension between individual rights and the rights of all individuals in the community and err on the side of the community • Pass a community bill of rights giving our community more voice in the decision that affect us, ex. corporate/fossil fuels having the right to pollute our community. • Rather than working in the background on behalf of these goals for long-term conservation, pursue a defined high-profile campaign or

	<p>initiative, which weaves together goals of connectivity of green spaces, transportation goals and access for a cohesive campaign.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>County-stimulated/supported business community cooperation for solar on commercial building.</i> • <i>Land development committee that includes municipalities through Buncombe County works together to protect and support farmland, forests and sustainable development</i>
Goals with greatest impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with marginalized people and communities of color and historically underrepresented groups to address green initiatives (i.e. how does a poor single mother have time to prioritize community gardening, solar, compost, etc?) • Providing jobs for homeless picking up trash, landscaping, including edible gardens • <i>Similar to how the county buildings are submitting a bid together for rooftop solar, campaign and help fund solar bids so neighborhoods can have rooftop solar.</i> • Identify core group of champions on county commission, business leaders and others with local influence to plan steps of initiative • Formalize committed volunteer leadership • Invite consultants such as Trust for Public Land or representatives of other counties in the Southeastern US who have conducted successful long-term conservation initiatives in their communities to come tell us how to succeed. • Launch awareness campaign to build broad support for a bond referendum or other community initiative. • Implement the conservation initiative in public/private partnership between county government and non-profit land trusts. • County encouragement of local communities • Commitment to work with other municipalities to secure statewide changes essential to promote renewables (REPS, Regulatory changes to Duke Energy) • Get involved with State Clean Energy Plan by NC DEQ.

Theme	Nature/Wildlife
What would success look like?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Love creation – care for it wisely. • Live with nature. Turn off HVAC in mild weather. • Protect high value wildlife habitat, including plants, pollinators • Increase outdoor access – ease of interacting with environment
Goals with greatest impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support bears • Promotion of trail-running and trail hiking to bond people to the land, increase enthusiasm for various fitness activities and promote more sustainable tourist attractions to our area.

Theme	Air Quality
What would success look like?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Goals with greatest impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay attention to chemical pollution in the air: glyphosate and in water supply • Improving air quality by reducing vehicle emissions (greenway network, park and ride programs, public transit investments) • <i>Improve air quality by reducing vehicle congestion</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Expand greenway networks</i> ○ <i>Reduce prioritization of parking – instead invest in better public transportation, park and ride programs and more connected greenways, road diets and more bike lanes.</i>
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Theme	Greenspace/Farmland Protection
What would success look like?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase local county funding to leverage state/federal money to purchase ag. Conservation easements on prime and state important sales ● More funding for transactional costs for conservation easements ● Double or triple the amount of farmland in conservation easement ● County connected by conserved green space, farmland, conserved corridors that connect regions of county. ● County actually supports farming with infrastructure as well as promotion of farms and buying practices. ● Broadly supported public referendum for a bond to support purchasing conservation easements and land to preserve farms and scenic open space in the county – with those funds being available to leverage federal and state grant programs and private philanthropic donor contributions. ● Enthusiastic leadership among government leaders and other community champions for an ambitious carefully planned long-term community initiative to preserve farms and open space in the county. ● We need Buncombe County’s business and other leaders to fully understand and value the ambitious proactive steps that are needed to achieve long-term conservation goals for the county. ● Community-wide farmland trusts that allow for large and small scale community food production ● More funding would be directed toward transactional costs to help landowner protect their land in conservation easements.
Goals with greatest impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase funding for purchase of conservation easements ● Maintain acreage of undeveloped lands – promote sustainable development, restore forests, including urban forests, create community land trusts for conserving small parcels of land, especially in urban areas. ● Encourage working landscapes ● Maintaining farmland and undeveloped land ● Conduct GIS planning to describe what success would look like in terms of conservation initiative. ● Provide the funding to make farmland, forest and green space preservation financially viable for landowners who would like to support it. ● Investment in land protection – both farmland, forestland and open space. Supporting farmers and landowners with protecting/improving water quality. ● Maintain current farmland and undeveloped lands through conservation and proactive utilization.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communitywide goal and process for specifying land protection includes streams and tree protection, conservation easement, ag land protections. • Increase preservation of forestry and ag lands through public/private efforts and collaboration • Protect more land in county through conservation easements for farms and forests.
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Theme	Transportation
What would success look like?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-county transit plan (van pools, business focus on employment transportation) • Transportation – focus on access not transport • Use public transportation – drive less • Reduce commute times/traffic and improve non-single car use/time
Goals with greatest impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access (public transit, walkability, affordable housing near worksites) • Transportation – energy/pollution • Build more strategic parking garages, have vans/shuttles • Have vans for after hours (24 hr!) for people to go to work/classes/city-county meetings • Businesses furnish employee transportation • To reduce private automobile usage in the county using carrots and sticks • Parking Downtown – reconsider priority • Improved countywide public transportation system (hours, routes, frequency) • <i>Improve air quality by reducing vehicle congestion</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Expand greenway networks</i> ○ <i>Reduce prioritization of parking – instead invest in better public transportation, park and ride programs and more connected greenways, road diets and more bike lanes.</i> • Public transit achieves 3 goals: decrease fossil fuel, increase air quality and equity.

Theme	Farming/Food/Local Food
What would success look like?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote consumption of local food and permaculture • Eat mostly plants – no “food products” • Buy local crops and plants adapted to the county. • Plant native plants. Eliminate grass • Encourage neighborhood mini-farms • Adoption for restorative and regenerative agriculture practices (over cropping, no till, permaculture, agroforestry and silva pasture) • Restorative farming initiative/education • Farm coalitions for various stewardship paths of stakeholders • Support family farms, large and small • Sustainable food systems
Goals with greatest impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food – teaching gardening. Planting eatable gardens throughout city/county. • Improved infrastructure of access to markets and resources needed to maintain the economics of agriculture in the county.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Schools to farms connections (education on our food supply and packaging problems)</i> • Regenerating ag practices actually draw carbon into soil and rebuild soil.
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Theme	Education
What would success look like?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase education in public schools – partner the strategic plan goals • Find ways around doubts on climate change
Goals with greatest impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing education at all levels of the public • Community education – investments in childcare and teacher support • Fully fund early childhood education and day care so the community can, through education, see the connection between quality of life and environmental goals. • <i>Increase access to the outdoors and environmental education to underserved communities and young people which will improve resident well-being (physical and emotional health)</i>

Theme	Tree Canopy/Urban Forestry
What would success look like?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase tree canopy especially in municipalities • Encourage re-forestation/tree planting • The loss of trees, especially in Asheville would be reversed with tree canopy increased. • Investing in green dominate infrastructure and valuing our urban forest/ecosystems for the ability to increase community resilience in this climate oasis. • Allowing more status and recognition for the historical and ecological value of trees in our community, more protection.
Goals with greatest impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban forestry – balance development with preserving urban forest canopy • Preserve our urban tree canopy and increase it over time. Value it! • Recognize the work trees do for our community with mitigating storm water, cooling our neighborhoods and sequestering carbon. • Don't cut down trees for solar energy – find other ways to build that infrastructure.

Other GOALS:

- To think about and act upon ways to RE-FIX Carbon
 - o Tree planting and protections
 - o Regenerative agriculture efforts including silvo-pasture
 - o Countywide composting
 - o Supports in statutes and laws to preserve farmlands
 - o Reducing – controlling waste
 - o See DRAWDOWN book for other ideas

- Environment – 5 years from now
 - Weatherize 2,000 low income homes
 - 100 MW of new solar in BC
 - 20 MW of energy storage in BC
 - Have at least 10 MW of wind energy in BC under contract
 - Have 1000 public EV charging points in BC
 - Build miles of connecting hiking/biking trails
 - New funding sources identified
 - Be available
 - Protect more land