

## MEMORANDUM

**TO: Nathan Pennington, CFM, Director of Planning & Development, Buncombe County  
Gillian Phillips, AICP, MPA, Manager of Long Range Planning Division, Buncombe County**

**FROM: Leigh Anne King, Director, Clarion Associates  
Emily Gvino, Associate, Clarion Associates**

**DATE: April 26, 2023**

**RE: Planning Board Special Meeting Public Hearing for the Comprehensive Plan and Recommended Plan Adjustments**

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In preparation for review and consideration of the Comprehensive Plan at the May 2, 2023, Buncombe County Planning Board Special Meeting Public Hearing, this memorandum provides:

1. The list of issues and corresponding requested Comprehensive Plan edits confirmed by the Board of Commissioners and Planning Board at their Joint Review Session held April 19, 2023.
2. The Project Team's specific recommended changes to the draft Comprehensive Plan in response to the requested edits and a technical clarification requested by Buncombe County staff.

### Joint Review Session Issues Listed

The following issues and requested Comprehensive Plan edits were raised at the Board of Commissioners and Planning Board Joint Review Session held April 19, 2023.

- It was raised that the Growth, Equity, and Conservation (GEC) Map's designated colors for the growth land use categories (in particular, Mixed Use I, Mixed Use II, and Walkable Destination) are too similar, making it difficult for a reader to distinguish the individual colors. A different color palette was requested.
- It was raised that the County's support for development of appropriate alternative energy storage capacity infrastructure (and future related technology) is not addressed in the Infrastructure and Energy Actions. The request was made to add a new bullet on pages 197-198 reflecting this support.



## **Recommended Plan Changes**

Based on review of these items, the project team recommends the following changes to the Comprehensive Plan. All recommended plan changes refer to material and page numbers from the “Public Hearing Draft” document dated March 2023 and available on the Buncombe County website here:

<https://www.buncombecounty.org/comprehensive-plan-2043/#sec-docs>

### *Recommended Change #1: Revise the GEC Map Color Palette*

Following the discussion at the Joint Review Session, the Planning Board and Board of Commissioners agreed to revise the color palette of the GEC Map located on page 46. The land use categories of Mixed Use I, Mixed Use II, and Walkable Destination Center will be revised to increase contrast and better differentiate the colors to aid viewing and understanding of the GEC Map.

### *Recommended Change #2: Add Action to Support Development of Renewable Energy Storage Infrastructure*

The Plan will be revised to support the development of renewable energy storage infrastructure. On pages 197-198, a new bullet will be added under Infrastructure and Energy Action #2 within the Implementation and Energy section that reads:

*“Support existing and emerging technologies for Energy Storage Systems (ESS), such as battery storage and microgrid technologies, to maximize effectiveness of renewable energy installations, reduce peak energy demand costs, and provide increased reliability and resilience due to grid disturbances.”*

### *Recommended Change #3: Staff Request for Technical Change: Clarification of Conservation Easements and Conservation Subdivisions*

Buncombe County staff requested that clarification between the terms “conservation easement” and “conservation subdivision” is added to the Rural Community land use category in the Growth, Equity, and Conservation chapter, starting on page 56. The Project Team recommends that the following sentence is added to the text on page 56:

*“A conservation subdivision should not be confused with a conservation easement, which is defined in the Glossary of Planning Terms on page 207 as a ‘voluntary legal agreement applying to a specific parcel of land between a landowner and a land trust or government agency that permanently limits the uses allowed on the land in order to protect natural areas from development disturbance.’”*

## **Process for Reviewing the Public Hearing Draft and Managing Requested Changes**

The Public Hearing Draft of the Buncombe County 2043 Comprehensive Plan is the final draft of the Plan that will be reviewed as follows:

- May 2, 2023: Planning Board Public Hearing to receive the 2043 Comprehensive Plan, receive Joint Review Session recommended changes, receive public comments, and consider endorsing the Board of Commissioners’ adoption of the Plan.
- May 16, 2023: Board of Commissioners Public Hearing to receive the 2043 Comprehensive Plan, receive Planning Board Public Hearing recommended changes, receive public comments, and consider adoption of the Plan.

To maintain consistency and reduce confusion during the public hearing process, **the Public Hearing Draft will not be modified during the above timeframe.** Instead, any requested changes endorsed by the Board of Commissioners



or Planning Board will be tracked and documented in a series of memoranda with the most up-to-date memorandum being transmitted prior to each scheduled meeting. Following adoption by the Board of Commissioners, all final adopted edits to the Plan will be incorporated into the adopted version of the 2043 Comprehensive Plan.

