

**Watauga County
Annual Retreat
February 27 & 28, 2025**



Board of Commissioners
Braxton Eggers, Chairman
Todd Castle, Vice-Chairman
Emily Greene
Tim Hodges
Ronnie Marsh



WATAUGA COUNTY

OFFICE OF THE
COUNTY MANAGER

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Watauga County Board of Commissioners
FROM: Deron Geouque
County Manager
SUBJECT: Annual Retreat
DATE: February 3, 2025

Watauga County continues to deal with the aftermath of Hurricane Helene on our community and its resources. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) estimates that Hurricane Helene cost \$78.7 billion. The North Carolina Office of State Budget Management (OSBM) estimates that the storm caused \$59.6 billion in damage. Watauga County and the other western counties of North Carolina will continue to feel the impact of Helene for years to come.

Watauga County has committed over \$3 million to right-of-way debris removal. Waterway debris removal is scheduled to start next week and will be coordinated with Private Property Debris Removal (PPDR). The County has contracted with the United States Army Corps of Engineers and there will be no cost to the County for waterway and PPDR removal. However, the County has set aside funding for repairs at several of our recreational facilities and Old Cove Creek School/Gym. Budget impacts from Helene will be monitored and considered with the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 budget process.

Construction of the County's new 911/Medic facility has broken ground and is scheduled for completion in 2026. NCDOT has completed the initial design of Innovation Drive and Landfill Road. Staff is working in conjunction with NCDOT on a draft for the potential relocation of the container site to the end of Landfill Road. The new Valle Crucis Elementary is scheduled to be completed and open for the 2025 school year.

Recruitment and retention of employees remains difficult, with the need to continue salary evaluations and overall benefits package to ensure the County is competitive with our market. Health insurance costs continues to increase at a steady pace along with retirement pension increases.

In conclusion, the annual retreat is an opportunity for the Commissioners to provide direction to staff on what your goals and objectives are for the County. The input received will shape the budget to address these goals and objectives. The County's strong financial position lessened the impact of Helene which was due in part to the planning and leadership from the Board and execution by County staff.

TENTATIVE RETREAT AGENDA
WATAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
COMMISSIONERS BOARD ROOM
WATAUGA COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, BOONE, NC
FEBRUARY 27 & FEBRUARY 28, 2025

TIME	TOPIC	PRESENTER	PAGE
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2025			
12:00 PM	OPENING REMARKS AND LUNCH	MR. DERON GEOUQUE	
1:30 PM	FY 2025 REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF FY 2026 BUDGET	MS. MISTY WATSON	1
	A. Sheriff's Report	SHERIFF HAGAMAN	1
	B. Revenues		9
	C. Expenditures		10
	D. Debt Service Report		15
	E. Budget Calendar		17
	F. Special Appropriations		18
2:00 PM	REVIEW OF CURRENT CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP)	MR. DERON GEOUQUE & MR. ROBERT MARSH	19
	A. Current CIP Status Report		19
	B. Valle Crucis Elementary School		
	C. County Facilities Assessment Update		20
	D. Board of Elections Storage Needs		22
	E. ARPA Projects/Funding		23
	1. Broadband	\$7,750,000	23
	2. Kill/Chill Water/Sewer	\$500,000	26
	F. 911/Medic/Emergency Services Facility	DR. JIM HAMILTON	29
	G. Library		38
	H. School Facilities		44
3:15 PM	BREAK		
3:30 PM	SANITATION MATTERS	MR. CHRIS MARRIOTT	61
	A. Facility Upgrades		
	B. Recycling		
4:15 PM	TAX MATTERS	MR. TYLER RASH	77
	A. 2027 Revaluation Updates		77
	B. Licensing		86
4:30 PM	APPALACHIAN DISTRICT HEALTH		88
	A. District Matters	MS. JENNIFER GREENE	88
	B. Opioid Plan	MS. LINDSEY SULLIVAN	96
5:00 PM	WATAUGA COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN	MR. JASON WALKER	102
5:15 PM	WATAUGA MEDICS	MR. CRAIG SULLIVAN	217
	A. Annual Report		
	B. Future Needs		
5:30 PM	COUNTY MANAGER'S SUMMARY	MR. DERON GEOUQUE	
6:00 PM	RECESS UNTIL FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28 AT 9:00 AM		

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2025			
8:30 AM	BREAKFAST		
9:00 AM	EDC/CHAMBER FOUNDATION REPORT	MR. DAVID JACKSON MR. JOE FURMAN	
9:30 AM	MIDDLE FORK GREENWAY UPDATE	MS. WENDY PATOPRSTY	
9:45 AM	WATAUGA TDA	MR. MATT VINCENT MR. WRIGHT TILLEY	232
10:00 AM	CALDWELL COMMUNITY COLLEGE & TECHNICAL INSTITUTE	DR. MARK POARCH	240
10:30 AM	SCHOOL BOARD FUNDING ISSUES	DR. LESLIE ALEXANDER & SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS	245
	A. FY 2026 Funding Needs		245
	B. School's Capital Improvement Plan		250
11:30 AM	PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS MATTERS	MR. WILL HOLT	261
	A. EMS Updates		
	B. Communications Updates		
11:45 AM	MISCELLANEOUS & COMMISSIONER MATTERS	MR. DERON GEOUQUE	
	A. State Issues		
	B. Commissioner Matters		
11:55 AM	WRAP UP, GOALS & OBJECTIVES, BOARD DIRECTIVES		
12:00 PM	ADJOURN		

Watauga County Sheriff's Office



Investing in Public Safety – Law Enforcement Budget & 3-Year Growth Plan

I. Introduction (1-2 min)

- **Opening Statement:** "Public safety is a top priority, and our elected office remains committed to effective policing, crime prevention, and community engagement."
- **Purpose of Presentation:**
 - 3-year plan to **increase patrol staffing & school resource officer presence.**
 - Proposal to **add a legal team** to support law enforcement operations.
 - **Enhancing officer training** to improve response, professionalism, and liability reduction.
 - **Addressing officer retention challenges with innovative solutions.**
 - Emphasizing **our current successes and ongoing responsibilities.**

II. Current Department Overview & Challenges (2 min)

- **Patrol Division Responsibilities:**
 - Responding to emergency calls, crime prevention, proactive policing 24/7.
- **Crime Prevention & Reduction Efforts:**
 - Community policing, intelligence-led strategies, intervention programs.
 - Sheriff's App is coming online soon. (See attached QR)
- **Investigations & Crime Solving:**
 - Case closures, use of modern technology, collaboration with other agencies.
- **Jail Recidivism Reduction Programs:**
 - Rehabilitation programs, mental health interventions, reintegration efforts.
- **Challenges:**
 - **Limited patrol staffing** impacting response times.
 - **Insufficient SRO presence** at the high school.
 - **Legal complexities** requiring specialized law enforcement legal support.
 - **Need for advanced training** to handle complex incidents professionally and effectively.
 - **Retention struggles due to increasing workloads, burnout, and competitive job markets.**

III. 3-Year Plan for Expansion (3 min)

1. **Increasing Patrol Staffing:**
 - Year 1 (2025-26): Add **1 new officer** to patrol division.
 - Year 2 (2026-27): Add **1 additional officer.**
 - Year 3 (2027-28): Add **2 more officers**, achieving a **4-officer increase** over three years.
2. **Expanding School Resource Officer (SRO) Presence:**
 - Current: **1 officer for the high school.**

- Year 1 (2025-26): Add **1 more SRO**.
- Year 2 (2026-27): Add **1 additional SRO**, bringing the total to **3 dedicated officers**.
- Year 1 (2025-26) add 1 Sex Offender compliance officer. State mandated compliance checks for registered sex offenders withing Watauga Co. Checks done quarterly.

3. **Introducing a Law Enforcement Legal Team:**

- **Purpose:** Provide **legal guidance on complex cases, policy compliance, and risk mitigation**.
- **Proposed Structure:**
 - **Year 1: Hire SR&A Police Law enforcement attorneys.**
- **Benefits:** Improved case handling, reduced liability risks, and better legal preparedness. 24/7 police attorney access, with quick analyses of the issue, and an answer verbally on the phone, as well as a written synopsis of what was said. Free legal training for officers and specialized units such as K-9 law.

4. **Implementing a Robust Training Budget:**

- **Objective:** Equip officers with **modern policing strategies, de-escalation techniques, legal training, and scenario-based exercises** to handle complex incidents professionally.
- **Key Focus Areas:**
 - **Crisis Intervention & De-escalation Training** (mental health, high-risk encounters).
 - **Use of Force Decision-Making** (reducing excessive force claims).
 - **Legal Updates & Procedural Training** (keeping officers informed on current laws).
 - **Technology & Investigative Training** (enhancing crime-solving efficiency).
- **Budget Allocation:**
 - Dedicated funds for **annual training conferences, expert instructors, and simulated scenario exercises**.
 - Online and in-person courses to ensure comprehensive officer readiness.
- **Outcome:**
 - **Reduces liability** by ensuring officers respond legally and professionally.
 - **Enhances officer decision-making** in high-pressure situations.
 - **Improves public trust and safety** through professional interactions.

5. **Enhancing Officer Retention with Innovative Solutions:**

- **Why It Matters:**
 - Recruiting officers is expensive and time-consuming.

- Retaining experienced personnel improves efficiency, response times, and community trust.
- **Proposed Retention Strategies:**
 - **Wellness & Mental Health Programs:**
 - Implement confidential counseling services.
 - Introduce peer support groups and stress management workshops.
 - **Career Development & Incentives:**
 - Offer specialized training and leadership development opportunities.
 - Tuition assistance for officers pursuing higher education.
 - **Schedule Flexibility & Work-Life Balance:**
 - Consider alternative shift models to reduce burnout.
 - **Competitive Compensation & Benefits:**
 - Introduce retention bonuses for officers at key career milestones.
 - **Recognition & Morale Boosting Initiatives:**
 - Implement an awards program for outstanding service.
 - Create a mentorship program where senior officers guide newer recruits.
 - **Increased Officer Input & Department Transparency:**
 - Regular feedback sessions to address concerns.

IV. Budget Justification & Expected Benefits (2 min)

- **Projected Budget Needs:**
 - Salary, training, retention incentives, and equipment costs.
 - Funding strategies: **grants, reallocations, phased hiring.**
- **Public Safety Impact:**
 - Faster response times & improved crime prevention.
 - Greater high school security & stronger student-officer relationships.
 - Legal team reducing exposure to litigation and improving case success rates.
 - **Well-trained officers** leading to fewer liability claims and better community relations.
 - **Higher officer retention** results in **better continuity, institutional knowledge, and improved morale.**

V. Conclusion & Call to Action (1 min)

- **Summary:**
 - Law enforcement is essential to community safety.
 - The **3-year plan** balances **growth, budget efficiency, and community needs.**
 - A **robust training program** ensures officers are prepared, professional, and legally sound.
 - **Retention strategies** reduce turnover, ensuring a stable, effective force.
- **Request for Support:**
 - Encourage leadership and community backing for the funding.
 - Open for questions and feedback.

Sheriff's App QR code



In North Carolina, a **Sheriff** is a constitutional officer elected to a four-year term in each county. Their **legally required roles and responsibilities** include:

1. Law Enforcement Duties

- Enforcing state and local laws within the county.
- Conducting criminal investigations and making arrests.
- Serving criminal and civil processes, such as warrants, subpoenas, and court orders.

2. Jail Administration

- Operating and maintaining the county detention center.
- Ensuring the care, custody, and control of inmates.

3. Court Security & Civil Process

- Providing security for courthouses and court proceedings.
- Serving civil processes, including evictions, restraining orders, and writs of execution.

4. Execution of Court Orders

- Enforcing judgments, including property seizures and sales.
- Overseeing foreclosures and repossessions when ordered by the court.

5. Issuing Gun Permits

- Approving or denying pistol purchase and concealed carry permits based on background checks.

6. Transportation of Individuals

Transportation of inmates and respondents to Prison facilities and Mental Health facilities respectively,

In North Carolina, a **Sheriff's authority to serve civil process** is established by **state law**, primarily under **N.C. General Statutes (G.S.) Chapter 162 and Chapter 1A (Rules of Civil Procedure)**. The **specific authority** includes:

1. Statutory Authority

- **N.C. G.S. § 162-14**: Mandates that sheriffs execute and return all legal process directed to them.

- **N.C. G.S. § 1A-1, Rule 4:** Grants the sheriff the authority to serve **summons, complaints, subpoenas, and other legal documents** related to civil cases.
- **N.C. G.S. § 1-440.25:** Authorizes sheriffs to serve **attachments, garnishments, and other prejudgment remedies**.

2. Types of Civil Process a Sheriff May Serve

- **Summons & Complaints** (initiating lawsuits).
- **Subpoenas** (ordering individuals to appear in court or produce documents).
- **Writs of Execution** (enforcing monetary judgments by seizing property).
- **Evictions (Writs of Possession)** (removing tenants under court order).
- **Restraining Orders & Protective Orders** (domestic violence, no-contact orders).
- **Civil Arrest Orders** (body attachments for failure to comply with court orders).

1. Sheriff's Duty to Operate the County Jail

Statutory Authority:

- **N.C. G.S. § 162-22** – The sheriff has exclusive authority over the **operation and management** of the county **jail**.
- **N.C. G.S. § 162-5** – If a sheriff is unable to perform their duties, the **chief deputy** or another designated person must continue jail operations.
- **N.C. G.S. § 162-6** – The sheriff is responsible for ensuring **inmate care, custody, and control**.
- **N.C. G.S. § 162-55 to § 162-60** – Establishes **standards for inmate treatment, medical care, and work release programs**.

Key Responsibilities:

- Ensuring **secure detention** of pretrial and sentenced inmates.
- Providing **adequate food, medical care, and living conditions** for inmates.
- Managing **jail staff** and ensuring compliance with state and federal regulations.

2. Sheriff's Duty to Provide Court Bailiffs

Statutory Authority:

- **N.C. G.S. § 162-26** – Requires the sheriff to provide **bailiffs for the courts** within the county.
- **N.C. G.S. § 7A-41.1 & § 7A-103(6)** – The sheriff must ensure the **safety and security of the courthouse and court proceedings**.

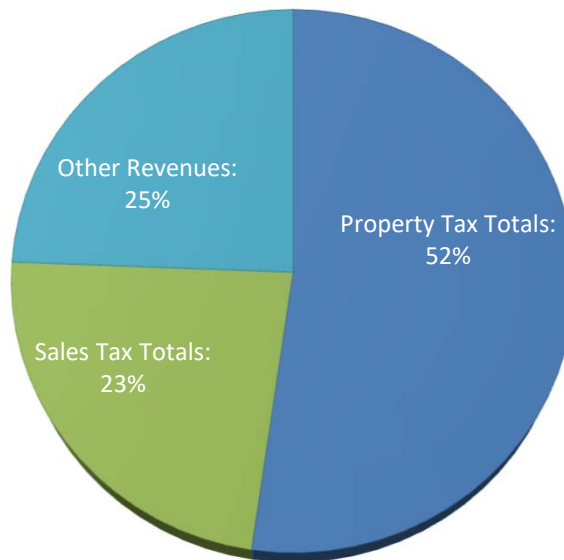
Key Responsibilities:

- Assigning **deputies as bailiffs** to maintain order in the courtroom.
- Ensuring **judges, jurors, witnesses, and court staff** are protected.
- Transporting **inmates** between the jail and courtroom.
- Enforcing **courtroom rules and removing disruptive individuals**.

Primary County Revenues

	FY 19-20	FY 20-21	FY 21-22	FY 22-23	FY 23-24
Property Tax Totals:	\$ 37,373,588	\$ 38,677,716	\$ 39,147,623	\$ 44,989,124	\$ 45,337,052
Sales Tax Totals:	14,117,340	17,179,832	19,606,458	20,149,869	20,660,415
Other Revenues:	15,319,380	15,646,870	18,998,047	20,461,007	25,452,358
Total Revenues:	<u>\$ 66,810,308</u>	<u>\$ 71,504,418</u>	<u>\$ 77,752,128</u>	<u>\$ 85,600,000</u>	<u>\$ 91,449,825</u>

Average Revenue Breakdown



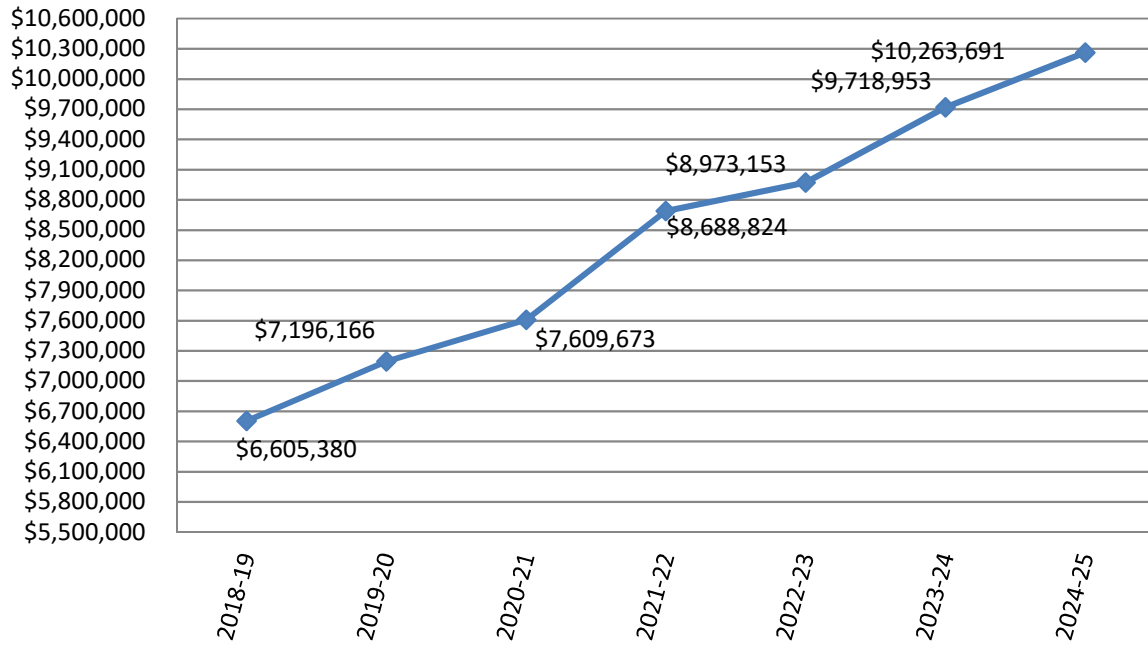
Budget Summary Report

2025 Annual Pre-Budget Retreat

	Actuals Thru 6-30 of Each Year			FY 2024-25		
General Fund	FY 21-22	FY 22-23	FY 23-24	Annual Budget	Actual at 12/31/2024	Percent to Date
Revenues						
Property Taxes	\$ 39,147,623	\$ 44,989,124	\$ 45,337,052	\$ 45,368,982	\$ 37,135,631	81.9%
Sales Taxes	19,606,458	20,149,869	20,660,415	21,190,300	5,626,298	26.6%
Other Taxes	1,731,196	1,388,052	1,405,394	980,000	683,274	69.7%
Intergovernmental	8,105,837	7,581,294	10,177,461	7,522,609	2,612,091	34.7%
Permits and Fees	1,050,677	979,468	945,385	762,750	404,822	53.1%
Sales and Services	2,546,392	3,474,521	3,611,678	2,319,534	1,292,825	55.7%
Miscellaneous	1,409,189	1,628,197	1,718,274	652,248	150,027	23.0%
Transfer from Other Funds	7,154,183	9,203,557	6,726,053	3,119,939	1,559,969	50.0%
Investment earnings	55,845	1,977,454	3,995,550	150,000	1,859,293	1239.5%
Fund Balance	-	-	-	9,996,941	-	0.0%
Revenue Subtotal:	\$ 80,807,400	\$ 91,371,536	\$ 94,577,262	\$ 92,063,303	\$ 51,324,230	55.7%
Expenditures						
General Administration	\$ 1,679,033	\$ 1,355,434	\$ 2,116,676	\$ 2,899,502	\$ 844,513	29.1%
Finance	417,220	427,446	462,749	637,252	217,733	34.2%
Tax	1,895,352	1,626,917	1,686,685	2,188,145	829,029	37.9%
Legal	72,887	74,451	79,569	116,000	28,014	24.2%
Court Facilities	900	395	900	2,000	416	20.8%
Elections	391,425	391,466	549,740	578,105	394,431	68.2%
Register of Deeds	563,274	624,066	650,201	724,442	343,733	47.4%
Information Technology	1,106,167	1,131,336	1,110,683	1,357,885	740,520	54.5%
Maintenance/Buildings	5,348,096	5,631,958	9,151,480	6,538,947	3,101,053	47.4%
Sheriff/Jail	7,940,452	8,022,040	9,304,943	10,351,700	4,769,273	46.1%
Emergency Services	3,197,716	3,568,593	4,278,991	10,972,187	1,981,874	18.1%
Planning & Inspections	739,722	760,480	769,902	858,341	400,858	46.7%
Ambulance & Rescue	1,950,921	2,448,967	2,614,100	2,810,383	1,279,405	45.5%
Animal Control	154,187	208,287	211,556	238,570	114,585	48.0%
Transportation	235,062	272,107	272,481	79,820	115,972	145.3%
Economic Development	101,649	157,002	177,091	193,845	50,078	25.8%
Cooperative Extension	287,185	302,783	333,573	370,835	145,787	39.3%
Soil Conservation	238,610	164,922	278,468	208,933	149,230	71.4%
Public Health	879,342	945,555	1,000,000	1,030,000	515,000	50.0%
Mental Health	171,194	171,194	171,194	171,194	85,897	50.2%
Project on Aging	1,448,505	1,449,812	1,466,247	1,901,439	752,489	39.6%
Veteran's Service	136,863	147,388	154,136	169,473	79,914	47.2%
Special Appropriations	598,649	595,813	602,813	701,645	365,864	52.1%
WCS, Board of Education	15,443,216	16,153,825	16,451,088	18,815,597	10,070,774	53.5%
CCC&TI, Watauga Campus	1,000,279	1,047,793	1,097,913	1,129,350	564,675	50.0%
Library	699,960	741,660	776,045	818,990	409,495	50.0%
Parks & Recreation	1,442,723	1,790,072	1,804,502	2,437,848	1,044,621	42.9%
Transfers to Other Funds	18,511,290	17,472,571	17,510,030	\$ 23,760,875	11,880,438	50.0%
Expenditures Subtotal:	\$ 66,651,879	\$ 67,684,333	\$ 75,083,756	\$ 92,063,303	\$ 41,275,671	44.8%
Social Services Fund						
Revenues						
Federal/State Programs	\$ 4,054,797	\$ 3,325,960	\$ 3,359,789	\$ 3,976,394	\$ 1,450,681	36.5%
Miscellaneous	44,114	106,061	238,827	45,239	90,017	199.0%
Transfer from General Fund	2,524,622	2,524,622	2,141,293	2,947,627	1,473,814	50.0%
Fund Balance	-	-	-	210,460	-	0.0%
Revenues Subtotal:	\$ 6,623,533	\$ 5,956,643	\$ 5,739,909	\$ 7,179,720	\$ 3,014,512	42.0%
Expenditures						
Administration	\$ 3,711,995	\$ 3,882,657	\$ 4,250,289	\$ 4,849,549	\$ 2,218,787	45.8%
Child Support Enforcement Programs	173,458	171,465	179,707	214,414	93,484	43.6%
	1,830,438	1,375,046	1,246,770	2,115,757	471,941	22.3%
Expenditures Subtotal:	\$ 5,715,891	\$ 5,429,168	\$ 5,676,766	\$ 7,179,720	\$ 2,784,212	38.8%
Solid Waste Fund						
Revenues						
Intergovernmental	\$ 163,047	\$ 164,725	\$ 171,327	\$ 158,800	\$ 43,726	27.5%
Charges for Services	5,377,303	5,820,254	6,942,329	6,564,986	5,378,494	81.9%
Miscellaneous	624,364	398,519	444,346	305,000	300,951	98.7%
Fund Balance Appropriated	-	-	-	1,143,386	-	0.0%
Revenues Subtotal:	\$ 6,164,714	\$ 6,383,498	\$ 7,558,002	\$ 8,172,172	\$ 5,723,171	70.0%
Expenditures						
Solid Waste Operations	\$ 6,051,385	\$ 6,298,148	\$ 7,853,716	\$ 8,033,698	\$ 4,230,951	52.7%
Recycling Operations	105,523	125,437	127,041	138,474	59,264	42.8%
Expenditures Subtotal:	\$ 6,156,908	\$ 6,423,585	\$ 7,980,757	\$ 8,172,172	\$ 4,290,215	52.5%

Law Enforcement Budget History

Total Law Enforcement Budgets



Fiscal Years	Sheriff	Jail	Total for Law Enforcement	Percent of Change	Percent of County Budget
2024-25	\$ 6,999,385	\$ 3,264,306	\$ 10,263,691	5.60%	11.15%
2023-24	\$ 6,653,788	\$ 3,065,165	\$ 9,718,953	8.31%	9.46%
2022-23	\$ 5,892,466	\$ 3,080,687	\$ 8,973,153	3.27%	10.29%
2021-22	\$ 5,771,307	\$ 2,917,517	\$ 8,688,824	14.18%	10.54%
2020-21	\$ 5,156,992	\$ 2,452,681	\$ 7,609,673	5.75%	11.24%
2019-20	\$ 4,839,670	\$ 2,356,496	\$ 7,196,166	8.94%	8.33%
2018-19	\$ 4,314,320	\$ 2,291,060	\$ 6,605,380	4.24%	11.04%

**Watauga County
Parks and Recreation
Ten Year Analysis**

	Expenses											Revenues	Total	Revenues (under) expenses	
	104289	104280	104281	104282	104283	104284	104285	104286	104287	104288	Revenues				expenses
Recreation dept	Building	Old building	Aquatics	Optimist	Fields	Old Cove Creek Gym	Brookshire park	Anne Marie	Brookshire soccer	Rocky knob	Custodians	Revenues	expenses	Revenues	(under) expenses
2024	1,804,495	466,536	-	-	336,335	17,700	25,153	19,404	204,848	27,147	252,405	2,078,663	3,154,023	(1,075,360)	
2023	1,790,072	456,035	-	-	82,847	65,744	24,800	19,775	22,167	21,167	267,101	1,967,603	2,749,708	(782,105)	
2022	1,442,723	321,096	-	-	1,675,954	20,776	84,470	16,669	15,719	15,233	213,510	1,749,688	3,806,150	(2,056,462)	
2021	879,092	282,476	-	4,745	1,054,223	17,082	47,209	18,932	8,925	18,440	194,248	368,433	2,525,372	(2,156,939)	
2020	795,436	77,996	-	32,732	105,870	13,784	14,962	136,536	486,367	89,003	35,128	164,906	1,787,814	(1,622,908)	
2019	1,010,962	1,200	1,651	66,065	47,482	428,374	15,125	34,365	16,963	11,858	14,000	35,128	282,089	1,683,173	(1,401,084)
2018	995,017	-	1,489	78,397	67,568	74,178	15,853	17,324	13,475	8,484	13,418	19,146	314,183	1,304,349	(990,166)
2017	1,004,192	-	1,766	56,377	42,720	219,745	12,862	53,884	19,783	11,589	16,138	17,630	343,016	1,456,686	(1,113,670)
2016	918,756	-	3,339	87,204	28,997	58,913	27,622	491,896	17,030	14,876	13,482	17,215	306,302	1,679,330	(1,373,028)
2015	927,198	-	1,409	82,480	32,344	361,323	25,986	186,155	17,677	24,876	157,720	16,626	335,905	1,833,794	(1,497,889)

1 Recreation specialist was added in FY 2023
 1 Program assistant was added in FY 2024

	Expenses					Total expenses	Revenues (under) expenses
	104289	104280	104281	Custodians	Revenues		
Recreation dept	Building	Old building	Aquatics	Custodians	Revenues	Total expenses	Revenues (under) expenses
2024	1,804,495	466,536	-	-	252,405	2,078,663	(444,773)
2023	1,790,072	456,035	-	-	267,101	1,967,603	(545,605)
2022	1,442,723	321,096	-	-	213,510	1,749,688	(227,641)
2021	879,092	282,476	-	-	194,248	368,433	(987,383)
2020	795,436	77,996	-	-	35,128	164,906	(743,654)
2019	1,010,962	1,200	1,651	66,065	35,128	282,089	(832,917)
2018	995,017	-	1,489	78,397	19,146	314,183	(779,866)
2017	1,004,192	-	1,766	56,377	17,630	343,016	(736,949)
2016	918,756	-	3,339	87,204	17,215	306,302	(720,212)
2015	927,198	-	1,409	82,480	16,626	335,905	(691,808)

Capital Funding Plan

Watauga County School System

	Current Capital	Capital Project Set Aside	General Assembly Public School Renovation Fund	Total Annual County Funding	Lottery Funds	Long-Term Needs	Total Capital Funding
2025-26	450,000	500,000	-	950,000	300,000	5,500,000	6,750,000
2026-27	450,000	500,000	-	950,000	300,000	5,500,000	6,750,000
2027-28	450,000	500,000	-	950,000	300,000	5,500,000	6,750,000
2028-29	450,000	500,000	-	950,000	300,000	5,500,000	6,750,000
2029-30	450,000	500,000	-	950,000	300,000	5,500,000	6,750,000
2030-31	450,000	500,000	-	950,000	300,000	5,500,000	6,750,000
2031-32	450,000	500,000	-	950,000	300,000	5,500,000	6,750,000
2032-33	450,000	500,000	-	950,000	300,000	5,500,000	6,750,000
2033-34	450,000	500,000	-	950,000	300,000	5,500,000	6,750,000
2034-35	450,000	500,000	-	950,000	300,000	5,500,000	6,750,000

Lottery Funds: Unallocated balance is \$554,819 as of January 28, 2025 with additional revenues expected in FY 24-25 of approximately \$187,324 and \$480,000 being approved at the 10/15/25 BOC meeting thus netting approximately \$262,143. (Utilized the unallocated balance as the 2024-25 lottery distribution has not been released.) Unallocated repair and renovation lottery fund balance is \$1,415,549 with \$825,000 approved at the 10/15/25 BOC meeting leaving a balance of \$590,549.

ADM Funds: Balance is \$6,873.

Ten Year Funding Summary for Watauga County Schools

Budgeted

Current Expense

Fiscal Year	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
Current Operating	12,198,409	12,558,345	12,942,400	13,157,455	13,557,455	13,864,674	13,864,674	14,280,597	14,780,597	15,280,597	16,065,597
Annual Inc/(Dec)	(80,905)	359,936	384,055	215,055	400,000	307,219	-	415,923	500,000	500,000	785,000
	-0.73%	2.95%	3.06%	1.66%	3.04%	2.27%	0.00%	3.00%	3.50%	3.38%	5.14%
WCS Unassigned Fund Balance	3,333,909	3,235,107	3,256,372	3,256,238	3,662,377	3,775,921	3,989,656	4,102,627	3,568,659	1,432,056	
Fund Bal Inc/(Dec)	(743,806)	(98,802)	21,265	(134)	406,139	113,544	213,735	112,971	(533,968)	(2,136,603)	

Capital Expense

Fiscal Year	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
Capital Projects Fund	300,000	375,000	400,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000
Long Term Capital Needs	-	-	-	1,500,000	1,500,000	4,200,000	4,200,000	4,200,000	8,200,000	5,017,050	5,098,300
Lottery/ADM Projects	820,740	210,132	566,931	167,500	456,200	295,711	300,000	237,564	278,203	285,224	300,000
Current Capital	175,000	275,000	300,000	450,000	450,000	450,000	450,000	450,000	450,000	450,000	450,000
Subtotal of Capital:	1,295,740	860,132	1,266,931	2,617,500	2,906,200	5,445,711	5,450,000	5,387,564	9,428,203	6,252,274	6,348,300
Annual Inc/(Dec)	179,375	(435,608)	406,799	1,350,569	288,700	2,539,511	4,289	(62,436)	4,040,639	(3,175,929)	96,026
Debt Service	6,452,109	5,458,896	5,348,988	5,202,104	5,060,420	4,863,331	4,562,231	4,423,998	6,207,730	7,334,207	7,116,712
WCS Fund Balance	315,497	303,378	325,991	405,963	334,564	283,871	333,219	592,358	314,812	177,212	
Capital Bal Inc/(Dec)	275,993	(12,119)	22,613	79,972	(71,399)	(50,693)	49,348	259,139	(277,546)	(137,600)	

Total County Funding Excluding Debt Service and Lottery Projects	12,673,409	13,208,345	13,642,400	14,107,455	14,507,455	14,814,674	14,814,674	19,430,597	23,930,597	21,247,647	22,113,897
Annual Inc/(Dec)	2,663,723	534,936	434,055	465,055	400,000	307,219	-	4,615,923	4,500,000	(2,682,950)	866,250

Total Funding	19,946,258	18,877,373	19,558,319	20,977,059	21,524,075	24,173,716	23,876,905	24,092,159	30,416,530	28,867,078	29,530,609
Annual Inc/(Dec)	5,364,900	(1,068,885)	680,946	1,418,740	547,016	2,649,641	(296,811)	215,254	6,324,371	(1,549,452)	663,531

Change in Operating Fund Balance, last year versus 9 years ago: \$ (1,901,853) decrease

Change in Capital Fund Balance, last year versus 9 years ago: \$ (138,285) increase

Lottery Funds: Unallocated balance is \$554,819 as of January 28, 2025 with additional revenues expected in FY 24-25 of approximately \$187,324 and \$480,000 being approved at the 10/15/25 BOC meeting thus netting approximately \$262,143. (Utilized the unallocated balance as the 2024-25 lottery distribution has not been released.) Unallocated repair and renovation lottery fund balance is \$1,415,549 with \$825,000 approved at the 10/15/25 BOC meeting leaving a balance of \$590,549.

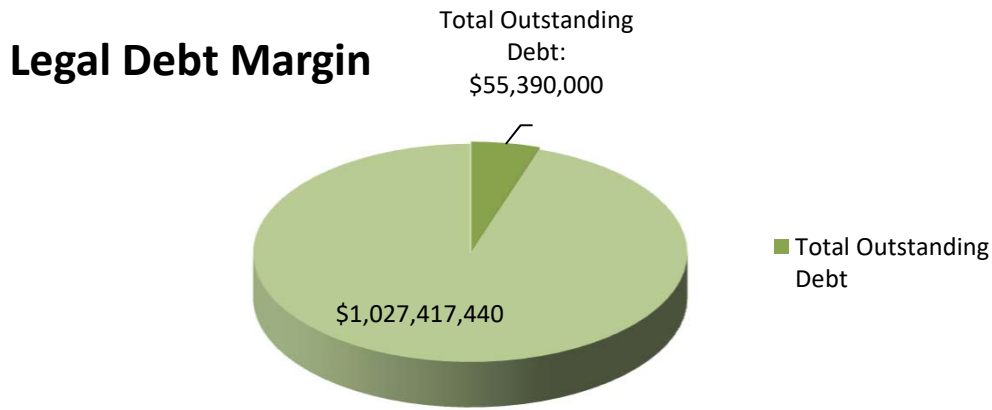
Debt Service Summary

2025 Annual Pre-Budget Retreat

Fiscal Year	2012 High School Debt (Refunded and Unrefunded)	VC SCHOOL	2018 Recreation Center	Total General Fund Debt Service
	LOBs	LOBs	LOBs	
2024-25 (P)	3,620,000	1,625,000	1,325,000	6,570,000
(I)	395,012	1,476,700	530,400	2,402,112
Total	4,015,012	3,101,700	1,855,400	8,972,112
2025-26 (P)	3,600,000	1,625,000	1,320,000	6,545,000
(I)	278,415	1,395,450	464,150	2,138,015
Total	3,878,415	3,020,450	1,784,150	8,683,015
2026-27 (P)	3,555,000	1,625,000	1,320,000	6,500,000
(I)	187,335	1,314,200	398,150	1,899,685
Total	3,742,335	2,939,200	1,718,150	8,399,685
2027-28 (P)	3,515,000	1,625,000	1,325,000	6,465,000
(I)	94,905	1,232,950	332,150	1,660,005
Total	3,609,905	2,857,950	1,657,150	8,125,005
2028-29 (P)		1,620,000	1,320,000	2,940,000
(I)		1,151,700	292,400	1,444,100
Total		2,771,700	1,612,400	4,384,100
2029-30 (P)		1,625,000	1,320,000	2,945,000
(I)		1,070,700	226,400	1,297,100
Total		2,695,700	1,546,400	4,242,100
2030-31 (P)		1,620,000	1,320,000	2,940,000
(I)		989,450	160,400	1,149,850
Total		2,609,450	1,480,400	4,089,850
2031-32 (P)		1,620,000	1,320,000	2,940,000
(I)		908,450	94,400	1,002,850
Total		2,528,450	1,414,400	3,942,850
2032-33 (P)		1,620,000	1,320,000	2,940,000
(I)		827,450	48,200	875,650
Total		2,447,450	1,368,200	3,815,650
2033-34 (P)		1,625,000		1,625,000
(I)		746,450		746,450
Total		2,371,450		2,371,450
2034-35 (P)		1,625,000		1,625,000
(I)		665,200		665,200
Total		2,290,200		2,290,200
2035-36 (P)		1,625,000		1,625,000
(I)		583,950		583,950
Total		2,208,950		2,208,950
2036-37 (P)		1,625,000		1,625,000
(I)		502,700		502,700
Total		2,127,700		2,127,700
2037-38 (P)		1,625,000		1,625,000
(I)		421,450		421,450
Total		2,046,450		2,046,450
2038-39 (P)		1,620,000		1,620,000
(I)		340,200		340,200
Total		1,960,200		1,960,200
2039-40 (P)		1,620,000		1,620,000
(I)		255,150		255,150
Total		1,875,150		1,875,150
2040-41 (P)		1,620,000		1,620,000
(I)		170,100		170,100
Total		1,790,100		1,790,100
2041-42 (P)		1,620,000		1,620,000
(I)		85,050		85,050
Total		1,705,050		1,705,050
Principal	\$10,620,000	\$27,585,000	\$10,570,000	\$55,390,000
Interest	\$955,667	\$14,137,300	\$2,546,650	\$20,275,224

Debt Service Summary

Outstanding Debt at June 30



	<u>Total</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
2022-23	62,005,000	(6,005,000)
2023-24	55,390,000	(6,615,000)
2024-25	48,820,000	(6,570,000)
2025-26	42,275,000	(6,545,000)
2026-27	35,775,000	(6,500,000)
2027-28	29,310,000	(6,465,000)
2028-29	26,370,000	(2,940,000)
2029-30	23,425,000	(2,945,000)
2030-31	20,485,000	(2,940,000)
2031-32	17,545,000	(2,940,000)
2032-33	14,605,000	(2,940,000)
2033-34	12,980,000	(1,625,000)
2034-35	11,355,000	(1,625,000)
2035-36	9,730,000	(1,625,000)
2036-37	8,105,000	(1,625,000)
2037-38	6,480,000	(1,625,000)
2038-39	4,860,000	(1,620,000)
2039-40	3,240,000	(1,620,000)
2040-41	1,620,000	(1,620,000)
2041-42	-	(1,620,000)
Legal Debt Margin:	\$1,082,807,440	
Total Outstanding Debt Available to Borrow	\$55,390,000	5.12%
	\$1,027,417,440	94.88%

Fiscal Year 2025-26 BUDGET SCHEDULE

January 2025

Capital Improvement Plan packets to departments.

January 31, 2025

Capital Improvement Program requests due back.

March 3, 2025

Requests for funding sent to outside agencies.



February 27 (12-7 PM) and February 28, 2025 (9AM-1PM)

Board of Commissioners Retreat with staff. There are typically two sessions with some presentations.

March 3, 2025

Department head staff meeting - budget information packets emailed out. Worksheets and all supporting documents are due by email to Misty by March 21. Early submission is encouraged.

April 2025

Individual agency and department meetings will be during April with budget staff.

May 6, 2025

Staff submits recommended budget to Board of Commissioners for review prior to work sessions.

May 8 (12-8 PM) and May 9, 2025 (9AM-1PM)

Budget work sessions held with staff and Board of Commissioners. There are two sessions planned.

May 20, 2025

Public hearing held on County Manager's proposed budget.

June 3, 2025

Budget adoption.

SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
APPALACHIAN THEATER OF THE HC	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
BLOWING ROCK PARKS & REC	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000
BLUE RIDGE MEDIATION/DRUG COURT	23,213	25,151	26,115	26,389	25,858	25,000
BOONE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE	-	-	-	-	-	30,000
CHILDREN'S COUNCIL	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	30,000
CHILDREN'S PLAYHOUSE	2,500	2,500	6,131	7,000	7,000	7,000
COMMUNITY CARE CLINIC	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000
FOSCOE GRANDFATHER COMM. CENTER	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
GREEN VALLEY COMMUNITY PARK	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000
HOSPITALITY HOUSE - WECAN	2,500	2,500	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
HOSPITALITY HOUSE	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
HUNGER COALITION	9,315	9,315	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
MOUNTAIN ALLIANCE	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
OASIS	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN HISTORICAL ASSN	22,000	22,000	22,000	22,000	22,000	22,000
VALLE CRUCIS COMMUNITY PARK	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
WAMY	2,500	2,500	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
WAMY RENTAL HOUSING PROGRAM	-	-	-	-	-	86,250
WATAUGA COUNTY ARTS COUNCIL	8,800	8,800	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
WATAUGA HUMANE SOCIETY	85,036	86,822	88,124	94,645	101,176	104,616
WATAUGA OPPORTUNITIES	33,000	33,000	33,000	33,000	33,000	33,000
HOSPICE CARE	-	-	-	50,000	50,000	50,000
TOTALS:	\$ 343,864	\$ 347,588	\$ 358,370	\$ 416,034	\$ 422,034	\$ 520,866

CAPITAL PROJECTS SUMMARY

Project Description	6/30/2024 Balance	2024-25 Budget	Budget Amendments		6/30/2025 Balance
			In	Out	
Caldwell Community College	\$ 267,462	\$ 50,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 317,462
Information Technology Needs	482,587	-	-	-	482,587
East Annex Renovations	361,391	-	-	-	361,391
Eastern Community Center	57,919	-	-	-	57,919
Emergency Communications	1,876,464	4,200,000	6,575,583	(2,800,000)	9,852,047
Facilities Maintenance	341,059	500,000	-	(269,680)	571,379
Future County Parking Deck	3,128,844	-	-	-	3,128,844
Future County Buildings	15,957,005	1,200,000	-	(12,337,307)	4,819,698
EDC	323,857	40,000	-	-	363,857
LEC Future Expansion	207,772	100,000	-	(50,259)	257,513
Future Processing Plant	519,429	-	-	-	519,429
Potential Flood Mitigation	46,749	22,500	-	-	69,249
Library Expansion	51,943	30,336	-	-	82,279
Workforce Housing	-	50,000	-	-	50,000
Recreation-Facilities/Maintenance	1,773,756	50,000	-	-	1,823,756
Watauga Co. Schools-Long Term Needs	9,020,853	5,098,300	-	(1,850,000)	12,269,153
Watauga Co. Schools-CIP	-	500,000	-	(500,000)	-
Totals:	\$ 34,417,090	\$ 11,841,136	\$ 6,575,583	\$ (17,807,246)	\$ 35,026,563

Project Description	Actual Additions				
	FY 2018-19	FY 2019-20	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24
Caldwell Community College	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000
EDC	50,000	83,463	50,000	50,000	50,000
Processing Plant	-	-	500,000	-	-
East Annex Renovations	-	200,000	-	-	-
Emergency Communications	250,000	500,000	550,000	1,800,071	1,300,000
Facilities Maintenance	208,990	1,123,817	785,783	500,000	500,000
LEC Future Expansion	-	-	-	100,000	100,000
Future County Buildings	-	-	2,424,583	3,700,000	9,540,715
Potential Flood Mitigation	-	-	-	22,500	22,500
Future County Parking Deck	-	-	5,400,000	2,500,000	-
Recreation-Facilities/Maintenance	1,881,140	274,655	750,000	50,000	50,000
Watauga Co. Schools-Long Term Needs	1,500,000	1,500,000	3,000,000	5,500,000	5,017,050
Future Valle Crucis School	-	2,700,000	7,545,000	2,700,000	-
Watauga Co. Schools-CIP	767,133	704,165	580,507	500,000	779,765
Totals:	\$4,707,263	\$7,136,100	\$ 21,635,873	\$ 17,472,571	\$ 17,510,030



Memorandum

CLARK NEXSEN
 301 College Street, Suite 300
 Asheville, NC 28801
 P: 828.232.0608
 F: 828.232.1606

Project: Watauga County Projects

Date: 2-21-2024

Comm #:

Purpose: Commissioner update

To: Deron Geouque

Subject: Project updates

Watauga EMS

Please see attached documents and images of the new facility.

Watauga Courthouse/Administrative evaluation

- Existing buildings have been evaluated.
- Program spaces have been previously confirmed.
- Proposed alternatives are being evaluated that include interior renovation and/or addition to the north or southeast. Coordination with existing circulation and sally port will be investigated.
- Anticipated schedule is to be complete with evaluation and recommendations for next steps by June 1, 2024

Watauga County Schools HVAC improvements

- Existing schools were evaluated to develop a master plan in 2018, recommendations made to replace Valle Crucis (currently under construction) and Hardin Park.
- Temporary cooling solutions utilizing outdoor air to help reduce the internal temperatures were investigated in 2019. These solutions indicated only moderate improvements in the existing facilities with a substantial cost.
- An additional option investigated during 2023 to include installation of modular heating and cooling units within individual classroom spaces. These units have the option to be installed in the classroom and generally are the size of a large refrigerator. The secondary solution would be wall mounted unit that is exposed on the exterior of the buildings. The benefit of these units is they can be phased over time and provide a reasonable economical solution to providing enhanced conditioning for the classroom spaces. During earlier evaluations, adding forced air systems to the facilities would require significant phasing and temporary classrooms to accommodate the modifications. The extent of a force air system cannot be installed over summer breaks or holidays. The negative aspect of these units is they occupy space in the classrooms and can be a challenge to install the units in areas where architectural standards exist for exterior building elevations. Given the type of unit, they would not be conducive to larger spaces such as media center, gyms, or cafeteria spaces.



Memorandum

Next steps for improvements:

1. Perform an evaluation on the existing buildings to determine the extent of electrical modifications to the existing building. Given the age and lack of forced air systems, it is very likely that the existing Main Distribution Panels will have to be modified or changed to accommodate the additional loads required by the units.
2. Perform a cost estimate for the electrical modifications.
3. Determine the number and types of modular HVAC units that will be required per school.
4. Develop a cost analysis for each school.
5. Create a schedule for funding and implementation of the plan.

See attached flyer from Bard Manufacturing for the types of classroom units that could be utilized.

Watauga County

Capital Improvement Plan FY 2026

Project Title: STORAGE AREA

Requesting Department or Agency: BOARD OF ELECTIONS

Fund: GENERAL

Project Description/Project Justification

We are purchasing new voting equipment for the first time in almost 20 years. As a result, we will need some work done on our existing storage area to ensure adequate conditions and compliance with our requirements. The wall between us and the Food Hub’s refrigerator is a definite concern. We would like to ask that the sheet rock that molded be replaced and some type of moisture barrier be put in place. This should be done well in advance of our equipment purchase so the room is ready when the equipment is delivered.

We would also like the room to be climate controlled with a dehumidifier and external drain tube. We ask that we be assigned the two storage cribs immediately next to our equipment room and that those two storage cribs be incorporated into one large room that is secured. Ideally, this room has its current door that we use to access the voting machines and a second set of doors. This second set of doors should be double doors with a seven to eight foot high clearance. Door entries will need to be audit controlled.

Manager’s Priority Ranking: _____
Adjusted Ranking: _____

	Budget Year 2025-26	Planning Year 2026-27	Planning Year 2027-28	Planning Year 2028-29	Planning Year 2029-30	Planning Year 2030-31	Total
Project Cost Elements: (list expenditure categories)	???						???
Totals:							
Revenue Sources: (list expenditure categories)							
GENERAL	???						???
Totals:							
Annual Operating Budgetary Impact: (list expected annual operating costs and effects)							
Net Annual Operating Effect:							



Grantee Name: Blue Ridge Electric Membership Corporation/Watauga Broadband Deployment Grant
Partner: Skyline Membership Corporation, and Skybest Communications, Inc.

Contact Information: Jason Smith

Title: SVP/CCO

Primary Telephone: 828-759-8971

Email – jsmith@blueridgeenergy.com

Reporting Period: 4th Quarter 2024

Design/Engineering:

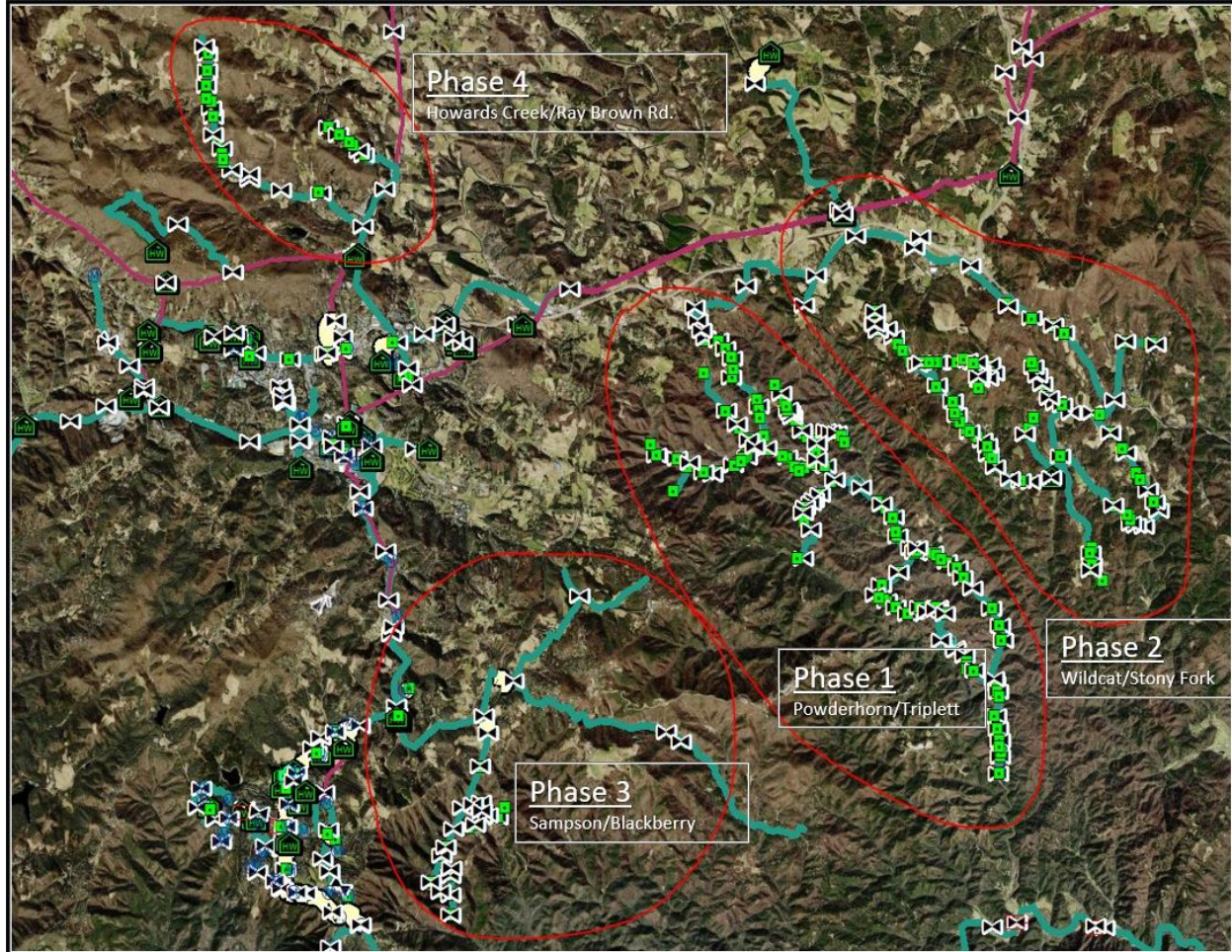
As of December 31, 2024, the permitting, design, engineering, and trunk construction phases of the four-phased broadband initiative in Watauga County, North Carolina has been successfully concluded. Most of the last mile has been installed by Skybest as well, except for the areas addressed below. All required easements and rights of way have been submitted and approved by the relevant authorities.

To recap: The proposal submitted builds approximately seventy-five (75) miles of trunk fiber by Blue Ridge Energy and SkyLine/SkyBest to provide seventy-eight (78) miles of distribution fiber for approximately 1,565 homes to access. The project consists of four phases to be constructed over a two and a half (2.5) year period. The four phases as originally proposed are as follows:

- Phase 1 – Triplett/Powder Horn - would provide the largest amount of access to homes (503) and territory. 29 miles of fiber built.
- Phase 2 – Wildcat/Stoney Fork – access for 310 homes. 20 miles of fiber built.
- Phase 3 – Blackberry/Sampson – access for 252 homes. 16 miles of fiber built.
- Phase 4 – Howard’s Creek/Ray Brown/Raven Rock – access for 500 homes. 10 miles of fiber built.

To date, Phase 1, 2, and 4 have been completed representing over 78.6% of the project, approximately over a three-year period. As BREMCO has stated, Phase 3 has been delayed due to the Park Service approval of the construction permit. Permitting was received at the 4th quarter of 2024 and two of the remaining Parkway crossing underground fiber routes constructed, one at Aho road and one on Holloway Mountain Road. This gives access to those communities previously cut off by the Parkway

from receiving broadband services. All fiber trunkline is complete. The following is a BREMCO “as built” update to the information above:



- Phase 1 – Triplett/Powder Horn – Cable constructed – 35.7 miles, 190 splice/access points, 140 Storage locations
- Phase 2 – Wildcat/Stoney Fork – Cable constructed – 26 miles, 137 splice/access points, 140 Storage locations
- Phase 3 – Blackberry/Sampson – Cable constructed – 19.4 miles, 50 splice/access points, 95 Storage locations
- Phase 4 – Howard’s Creek/Ray Brown/Raven Rock – Cable constructed – 11.5 miles, 34 splice/access points, 38 Storage locations

BREMCO Total – 92.6 miles of fiber, 412 Splice/Access points, and 413 Storage locations

This does not include Skyline/Skybest construction, service locations and last mile fiber to the home. Castle Ford area Heavenly Mountain and Flat Mountain were some extra areas of coverage. I think there are a couple others Skyline covered as well. These areas and the Holloway Mountain Rd. Community are not depicted on the map above.

Materials/Supplies:

All materials and supplies have been purchased and received.

Staffing/Contractors:

Blue Ridge Energy
 SkyBest Communications
 CVO Communications

Construction Update:

As of February 20th, 2024, the following milestones of construction have been completed. A combined 189 miles of fiber optic cable construction have been completed for the county facilities, Castle Ford, Phase 1, 2, 3, 4 and other additional areas not included in the original proposal. We are currently in the fiber allocation, splicing and testing phase for phases 3 in the Blackberry-Sampson/Holloway Mountain sections. Watauga County residents have been served by Skybest in Castle Ford, Howards Creek, Ray Brown Road, Wildcat/Stony Fork area and the Powderhorn/ Triplett areas. Blackberry/Sampson, and Holloway Mountain areas will follow.

SkyBest Update:

As mentioned earlier there were 1,565 unserved/underserved locations identified as being eligible use locations for the ARP funds allocated to Watauga County. The plan established by BREMCO and SkyBest was for BREMCO to construct the trunk portions of the area and for SkyBest to construct the last mile and connections (drops) to the individual customers. SkyBest projected a take rate of 60% once all areas are built and residents have had time to sign up which would equate to 939 potential new broadband customers once the network is completely deployed. To date SkyBest has:

- Completed all construction required for Watauga ARP deployment.
- Constructed 96.34 miles of fiber as part of the Watauga ARP project.
- Signed up 664 new broadband customers (71% of original goal).
 - This number will almost certainly rise as areas delayed due to Parkway crossing issues gain momentum.
- Estimated a 98% broadband availability for Watauga County residents & businesses.
 - This is above our original goal due to taking on a few extra areas (on our own dime) that requested service during the buildout process.

SkyBest Data provided by:

Robbie Farmer
 Title - Chief Technology Officer
 Phone – 336-876-6281
 Email – Robbie.farmer@skyline.org

Funding Source	Construction	Infrastructure	Equipment	Engineering/planning	Contingency	totals
Golden Leaf	674700	154000	13500	77800	80000	1000000
Tobacco Trust	20963	0	162959	20000	16314	220236
ADTF	195040	0	245360	29250	4800	474450
ARC Equip	0	0	100000	0	0	100000
ARP/Watauga	0	500000	0	0	0	500000
EDA Infrastructure	0	817000	0	0	0	817000
ARC Construction*	500000	0	0	0	0	500000
State Award	1000000	0	0	0	0	1000000
Totals	2390703	1471000	521819	127050	101114	4611686

* to be officially 'awarded' after 1st 100k of equipment funding is expended

Phase 1		
Item	Description	Cost
Engineering (Estimate)	Stamp plans, Pole Barn, IMP liner, Steel work	\$75,000.00
Civil Work (Estimate)	Estimate	\$100,000.00
Buidling Phase 1 3461 Square Ft	Slaughter and office / Cooler 25 head	\$519,000.00
Interior Wall Panels	4 inch IMP	\$70,000.00
Interior Ceiling Panels	4 inch IMP	\$35,000.00
Electrical	Estimate	\$550,000.00
Refrigeration	Estimate	\$350,000.00
Waste Water	Rotor Screen for removal heavy Solids 150 gallons per head - just slaughter	\$125,000.00
Correls and Chute	Powder River Equipment	\$65,000.00
Knock Box	Purchase plus Hydraulics / pump	\$75,000.00
Shackles	10 shackles / \$340	\$3,400.00
Trolleys	100 trolleys - 35 per trolley	\$3,500.00
Shackle Hoist	Drive, V-Cone, Positioner, landing device, chain and Starter	\$52,000.00
Shackle Drop	Lowers shackle after first leg	\$9,000.00
Leg Hoist	Raises trollys to rail	\$9,000.00
Rails and hangers	rails and hangers for attaching to beams	\$8,000.00
Corner rail	bent for corners	\$1,300.00
Rail Beams	8 inch x 6 inch rail beam	\$25,000.00
Support Beams	8x8 support Beams 600 foot x \$75	\$45,000.00
Cross Beams	12x8 beams for cross supports	\$25,000.00
Additional Hangers for bleed rail	Spacing for carcass hanging 25 extra hangers	\$550.00
Rail Switches	Cooler and slaughter floor rails	\$500.00
Working Stands for legging	3 -4 workers for first legging, cut off, hanging, second legging, cut off, hanging, udder removal, bung marking and tail marking, high flanking.	\$15,000.00
Low Flanking Stand	1 -2 workers remove hide from brisket / mark front legs	\$4,500.00
Rumping stand / bunging Stand	skin round and high back, bunger 2 people	\$6,000.00
Brisket Saw Stand	1 worker	\$4,000.00
Brisket Saw and Hydraulic Pump	Brisket Saw, pump and balancer and pipe and Eelectical connection	\$25,000.00
Air Knives	4 Air knives	\$12,000.00
Hide Puller	Cable Puller, Hoist, Chains, Stands	\$30,000.00
Head drop stand	Cart for holding 5-10 heads for USDA	\$3,500.00
Gut Table	Stationary Gut Table for USDA	\$10,000.00
Evisceration Drop Track	Used to lower cattle to the gut table	\$16,000.00
Head boning table	used to take meat off head and tongues to box	\$3,500.00
Split Saw	Jarvis split saw / balancer / Electrical Connection	\$17,500.00
Trim Stands	3 trim stands / Air cylinders / used for Usda and two plant personnel	\$25,000.00
Misc Equipment	Tubs, totes, carts	\$10,000.00
Scale	Carcass Scale (hand write tags)	\$4,500.00
Spray cabinet	Hand spray carcasses / and intervention spray	\$25,000.00
Hot Water Equipment	Hot Shot Equipment for hot water	\$150,000.00

Cold Water set up / Piping	Piping through out floor and nozzels, hoses, small tank, attachments, elbows etc.	\$25,000.00
Air Compressor	Air compressors for air cylinders and equipment	\$75,000.00
Air Lines	Air Lines to feed knock box to final area	\$25,000.00
Maintenance Shop	Set up for shop	\$5,000.00
Locker Rooms	Employee Lockers, sinks, toilets, Bathroom set	\$10,000.00
Labor Estimate	Install of all Beams, steel and equipment listed	\$350,000.00
Semi Tractor and Trailer	Older Truck and Refer	\$45,000.00
Carcass Hoist	Loading Hoist	\$2,500.00
Rib Saw	Break Carcass quarters	\$13,000.00
Cooler Dock Door	Door to load carcasses out of	\$10,000.00
Total Phase 1		\$2,883,250.00
Phase 2		
Building 10x33- 330 Squ Ft	Building for additional Carcass Cooler, Civil, Engineering	\$82,500.00
Wall Panels		\$12,125.00
Ceiling Panels		\$3,500.00
Refrigeration	Freon Units and Compressors	\$350,000.00
Electrical		\$75,000.00
Carcass Rails and hangers		\$4,000.00
Beams and Steel	8 inch beams, 12 inch beams and 8x8 Steel tube	\$25,000.00
Switches	Switches	\$350.00
Labor		\$60,000.00
Total Phase 2		\$612,475.00
Phase 3		
Building 1128 Square Feet	Boning Room, Box Cooler and Shipping Dock Engineering, Civil	\$282,000.00
Insulated Wall Panels		\$25,000.00
Insulate Ceiling Panels		\$10,000.00
Insulated Roll Up Doors	Doors between fab, box Cooler and Doc	\$45,000.00
Dock Doors	2 Dock Doors and Plates	\$20,000.00
Refrigeration	For Boning Room, Box Cooler and Dock	\$750,000.00
Electrical	For All plant services	\$850,000.00
Cooler Ribbing Saw		\$13,000.00
Brisket Break Saw		\$25,000.00
Boning Room Front Saw		\$30,000.00
Front Stand to Match Saw		\$10,000.00
Table Conveyor	Live belt, product conveyor	\$80,000.00
Product Conveyor	Product to packaging machine	\$15,000.00
Combo Conveyor	Combo fill conveyor	\$20,000.00
Carts and Misc. Equipment	Carts and buggies to move product around	\$5,000.00
Rib Saw	Table Saw	\$22,000.00
Combo Scale	Weigh Combos of Meat	\$15,000.00
Box Scale	Weigh product cases and produce label	\$7,500.00
Vacuum Machine	Package all primal product	\$150,000.00
Pallet Racking	32 Pallet Spaces	\$4,500.00
Total Phase 3		\$2,379,000.00



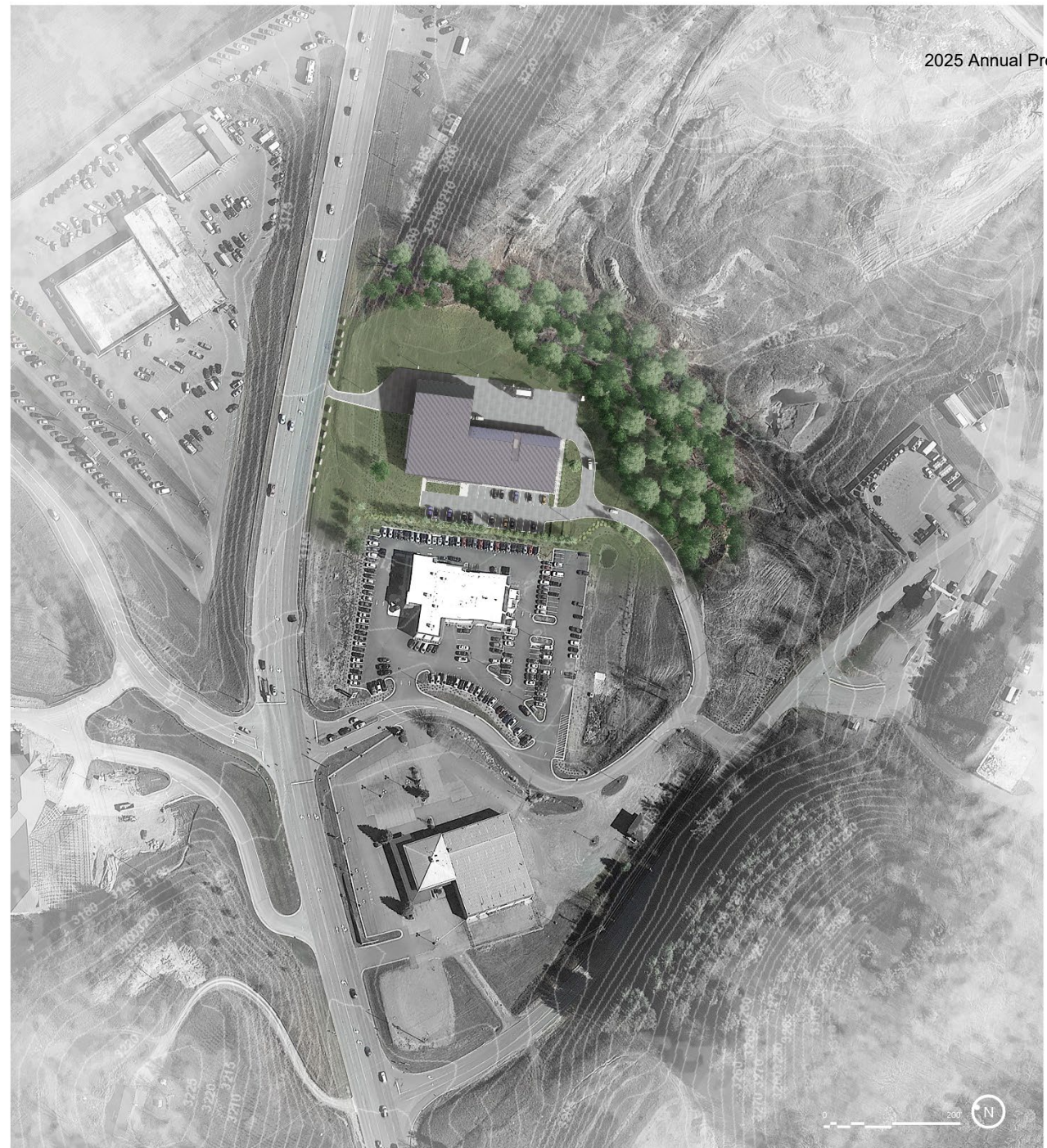
Watauga County EMS FACILITY





FEATURES:

- EMS DISPATCH STATION
- EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER
- STATE-OF-THE-ART EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION CENTER
- WATAUGA COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES OFFICES
- RECORDS & EQUIPMENT STORAGE





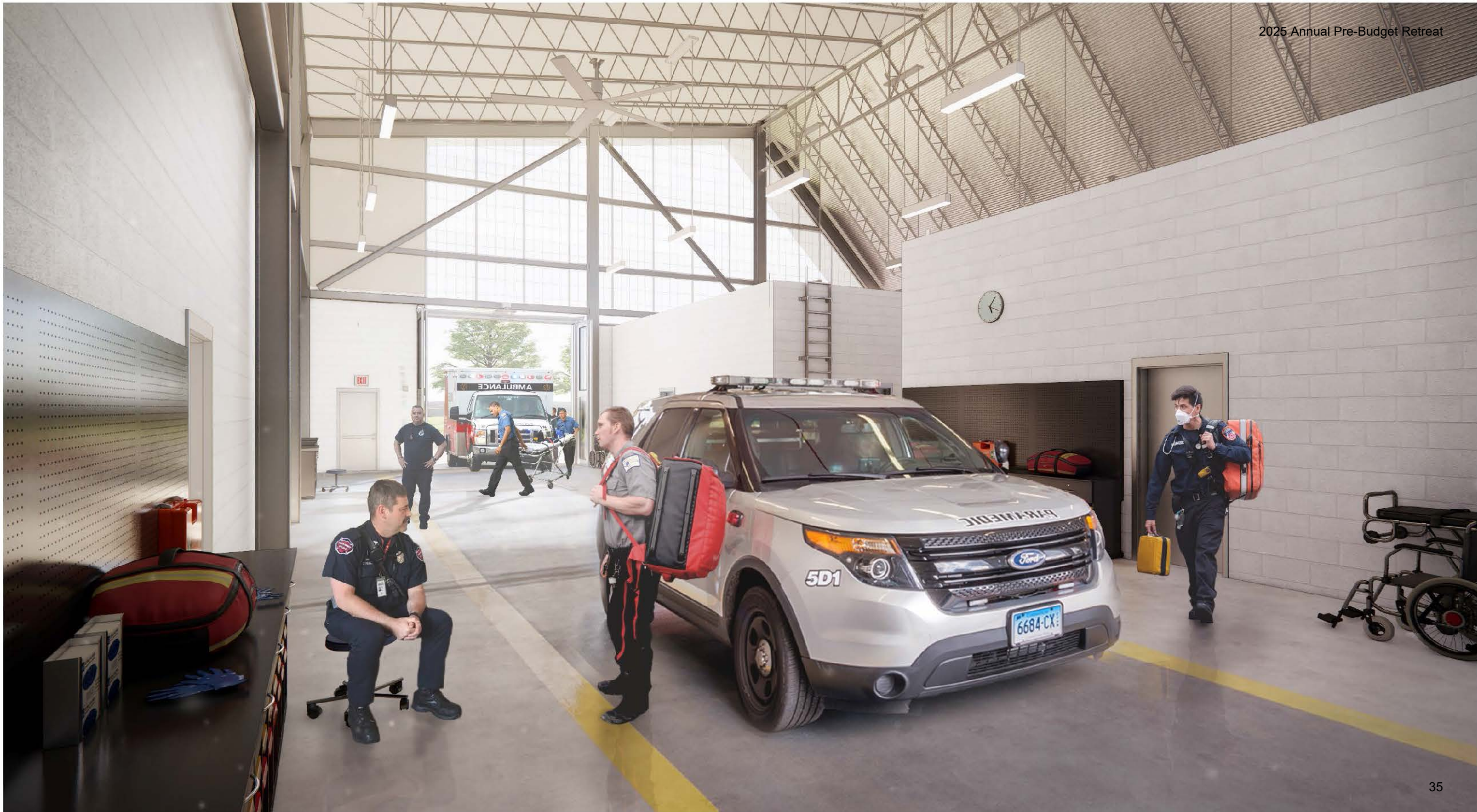


- 1 ENTRANCE AND LOBBY
- 2 ADMIN
- 3 COMM CENTER
- 4 EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER
- 5 BUNK ROOMS
- 6 LOCKER ROOMS
- 7 EMS BREAK ROOM
- 8 EMS VEHICLE BAY
- 9 STORAGE
- 10 GENERATOR







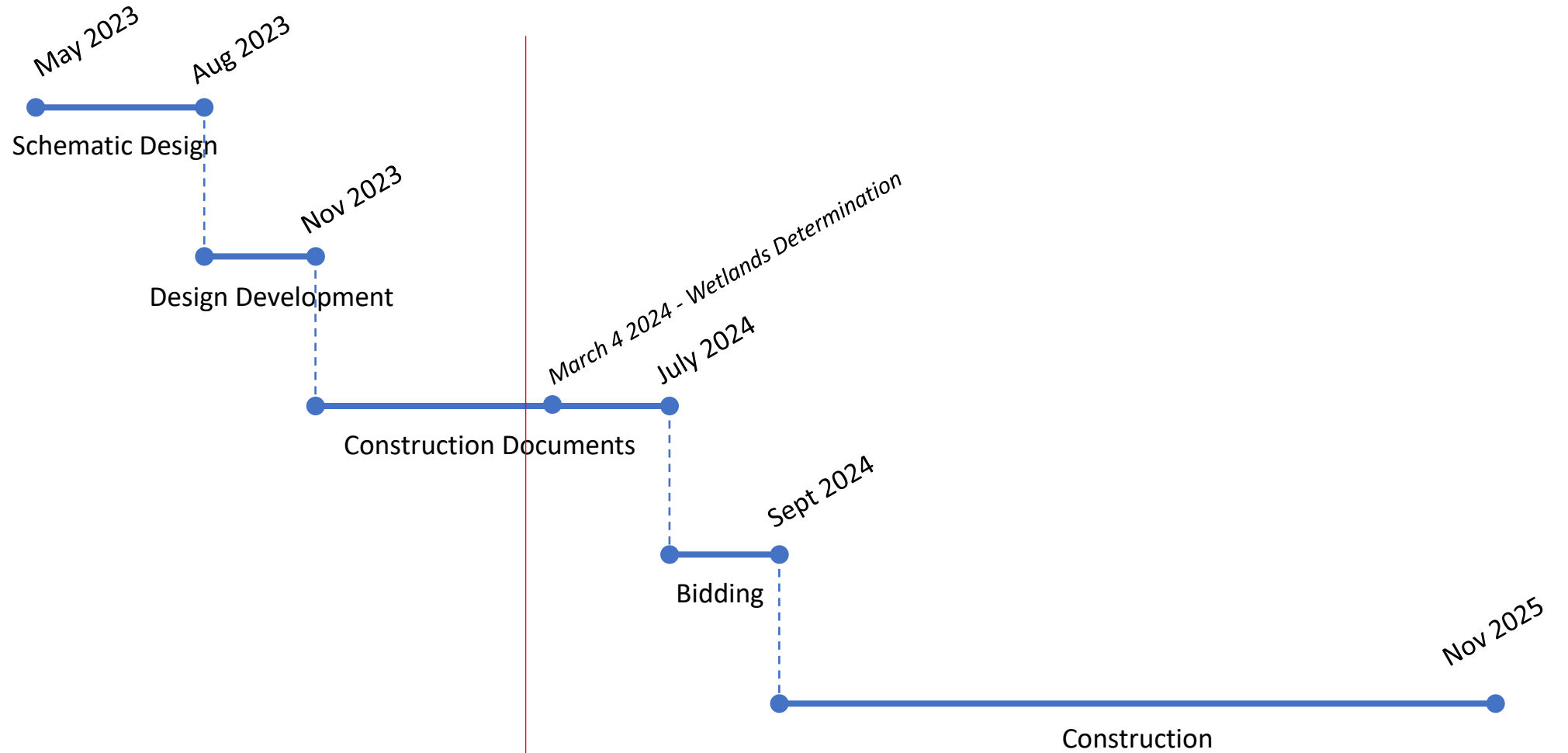


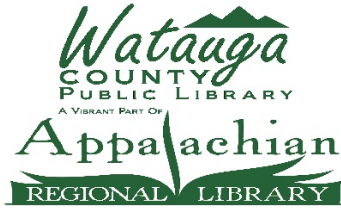


EOC ROOM



Project Schedule





February 19, 2025

Dear Deron Geouque and Watauga County Commissioners:

As some of you know, Watauga County Library has been working to secure funds for an expansion project over the past several years. There were many discussions held while creating our last 5-year Strategic Plan as well as a space needs study that was done in 2017 that showed expansion was needed to accommodate our growing community. We also know when the building opened in 1997 it was unfortunately 7,000 square feet smaller than the original blueprints had indicated it would be, so we have outgrown the space that much sooner.

We realize that Watauga County has many needs and prioritizing how funds are spent is a great challenge. **Over the past year the library has pivoted its focus to renovating the current space to make the best use of the facility and meet as many of the community's needs as possible.** We will continue to have a long-term goal to expand the building footprint. The Watauga County Friends of the Library hired local architect, John Arnaud, to create concept plans based on community, staff and volunteer immediate needs for this renovation.

The Friends of the Library have been working hard to find ways to raise awareness and collect donations towards the renovation project. They are also submitting grant applications as they become available.

The Library, in coordination with the County Manager, submitted the **NC Department of Commerce grant last month for \$125,000 with a \$6,250 match from the county.** Per the documents prepared for the grant, and particularly the estimate provided by VPC Builders, **interior improvements would total \$1,226,214.** We greatly appreciate your overall support with this grant application and for approving the Resolution of Support in August of 2024. I submitted the annual Capital Improvement Plan request a couple of weeks ago for FY 25-26 and **requested \$250,000 per year for the next three years.** This requested amount would go towards building improvements including updated lighting, interior painting, electrical and replacement of the carpeting.

Regarding our FY 25-26 annual budget request to the county to fund our staffing needs, we will be **requesting a 3.25% increase to last year's appropriation or approximately \$27,500.** This amount was based on our present knowledge of expected Retirement and Health Insurance cost increases, continued high inflation and overall cost of living increases. Please note that the Retirement and State Health Plan increases are still being reviewed at the state level and official numbers have yet to be approved. It would allow us to maintain our current level of staffing.

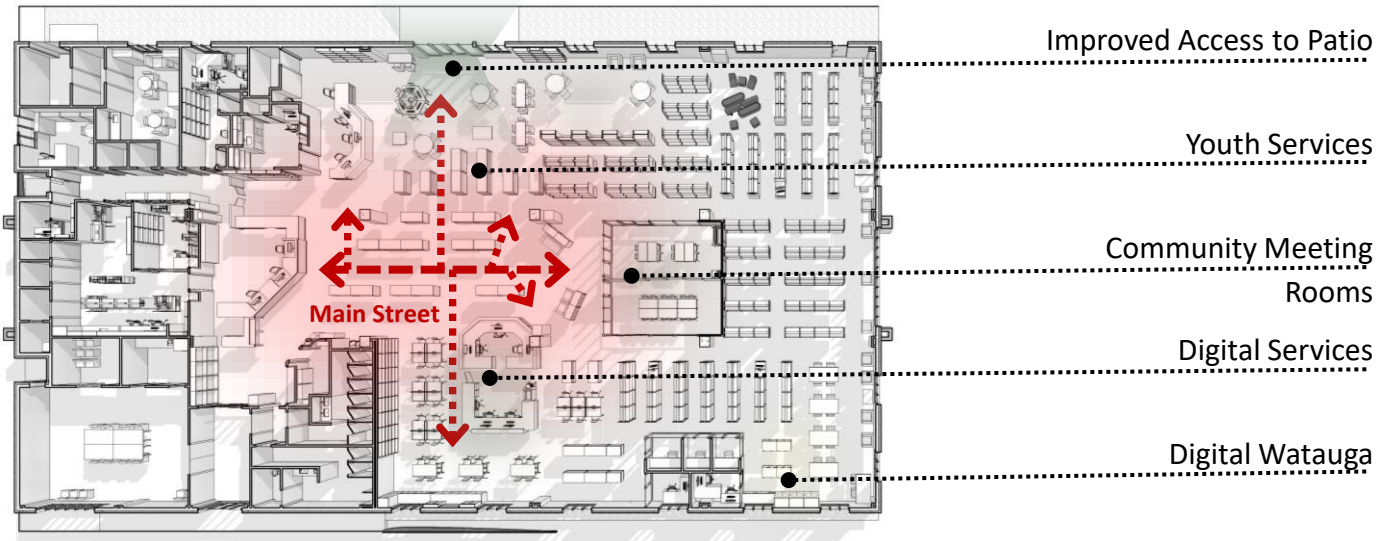
Thank you for your time and consideration.

Monica Caruso, County Librarian

Meeting Rooms at Main Street

As our community has grown the needs of the library have evolved. The library increasingly serves as a community resource center offering places to meet, access to technology, a safe space for children to learn, and a repository for traditional media. Overcrowding and dated layout present challenges to patrons and staff. Regrettably, the staff has to deny requests from 10-15 groups per month for use of the current single meeting room. Sight lines from departments and service desks are limited and wayfinding for new patrons is difficult.

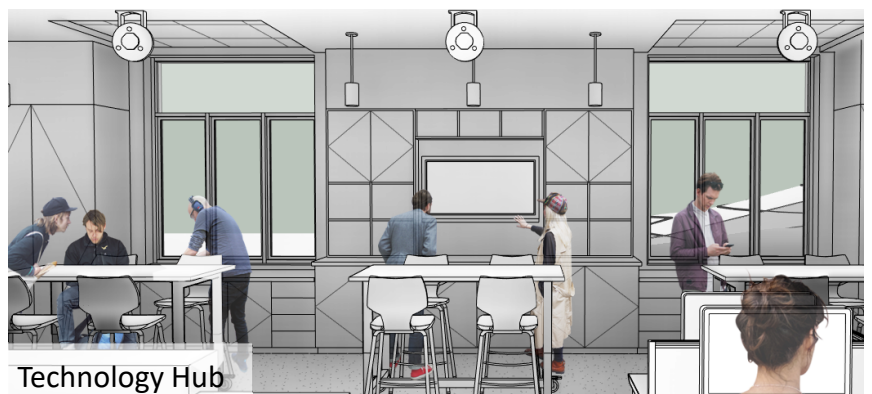
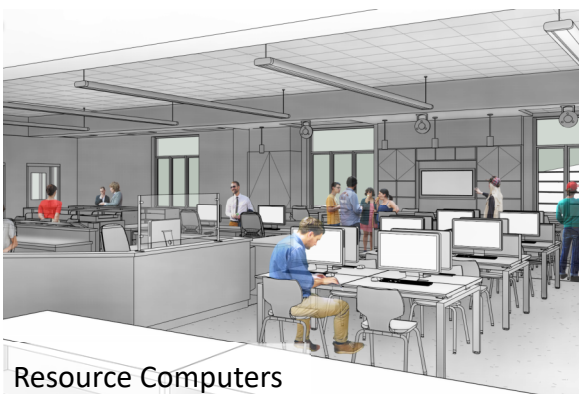
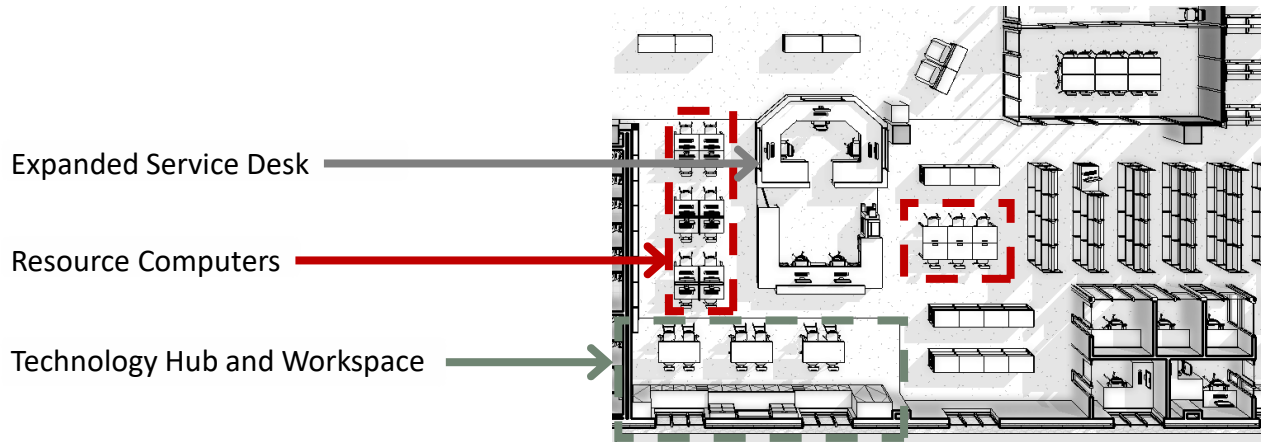
Rethinking the existing layout and anchoring a library 'Main Street' between the circulation desk and new conference rooms will offer the community additional places to meet, easy wayfinding between the library's resources, and improve ability of staff to interact and monitor activities throughout the facility.



Adult Services and Digital Resource Offerings

Our Adult Services staff manages resources that range from access to technology, to Spanish language materials, genealogy, local history and beyond. As the needs of the community have shifted to the digital, the nearly 30-year-old facility has fallen behind. Resource computers are frequently occupied and unavailable; limited power leaves patrons unplugging library equipment. A service desk built to serve a community a fraction the size of ours is frequently overwhelmed.

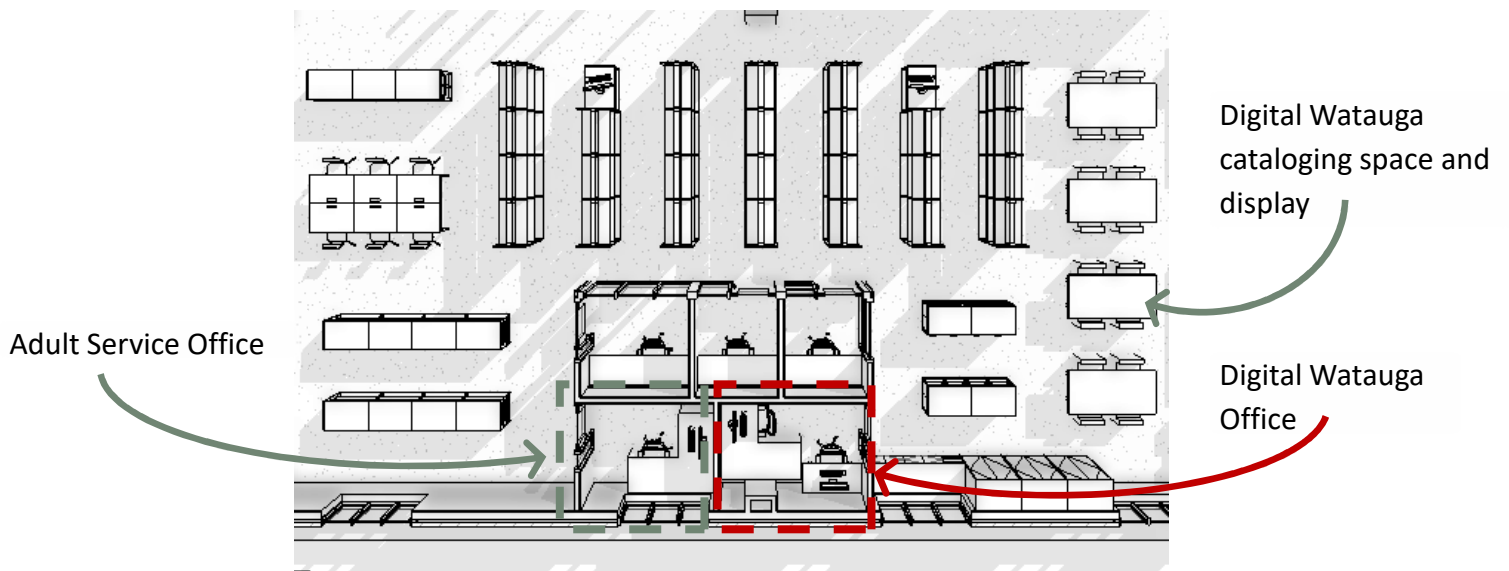
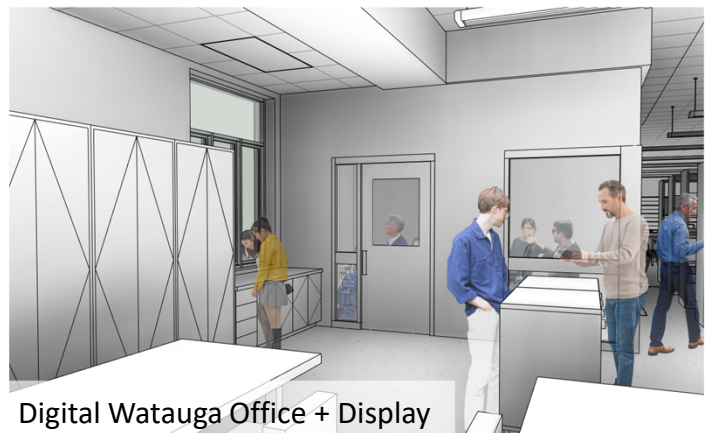
Increasing the footprint of the department, quantity of computer stations, reach of the service desk, and infrastructure for innovative technologies will allow our 'Digital' Adult Services to collaborate with schools, businesses, entrepreneurs and the community as a hub of technology and digital literacy.



Digital Watauga and Local History

Watauga County's Appalachian community has a history we are proud to preserve and share. Our library is home to Digital Watauga, a collaboration between the non-profit Watauga Historical Society and the library. Currently, the Adult Services team shares an office with Digital Watauga, supervises their materials, and shares patron facing space and equipment with the cataloging team.

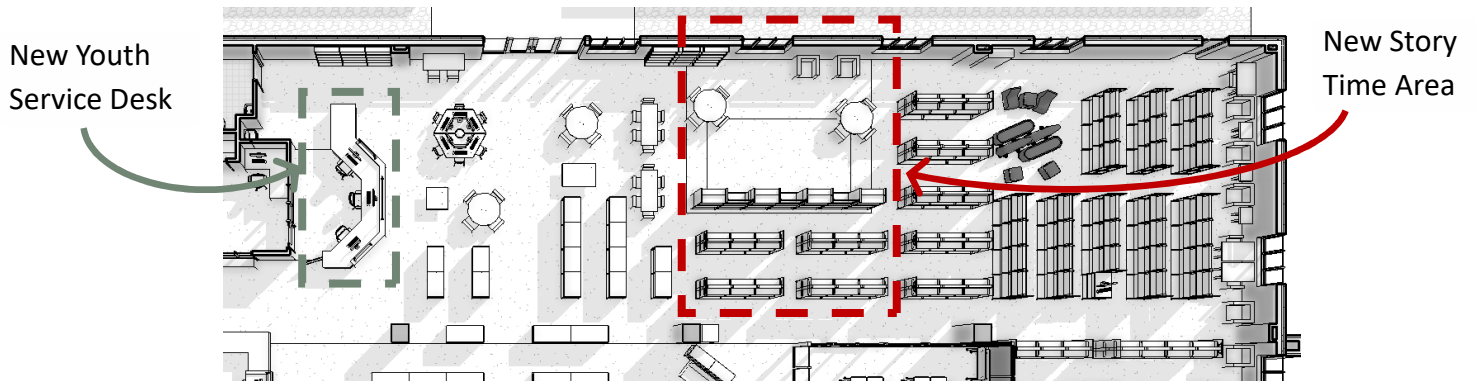
Reconfiguring the existing shared office and study rooms will give both Adult Services and Digital Watauga private spaces to work and sightline to their unique departments. Locating local history media near Digital Watauga will allow volunteers and proud Appalachians a place to quietly learn about and celebrate their heritage.



Youth Services and Story Stacks

Our youth services and programs are viewed by many in the county as our most essential. The library is where parents bring their children and teens to gather, share stories, and learn through books and technology. As the number of children served has grown with the community the existing configuration of the youth services department has become inadequate.

Restructuring our story area to create a flexible and technology friendly place will allow our team to better manage events with participation that varies with the seasons. Relocating youth computers and the service desk will allow staff to better respond to patron needs. Implementation of a sound masking system will help the facility manage, but not lose the joy of youthful excitement. A reimagining of the story area into the new 'Story Stacks' will create a place for story time to serve groups of varying sizes and incorporate technology without interfering with the library's other offerings.

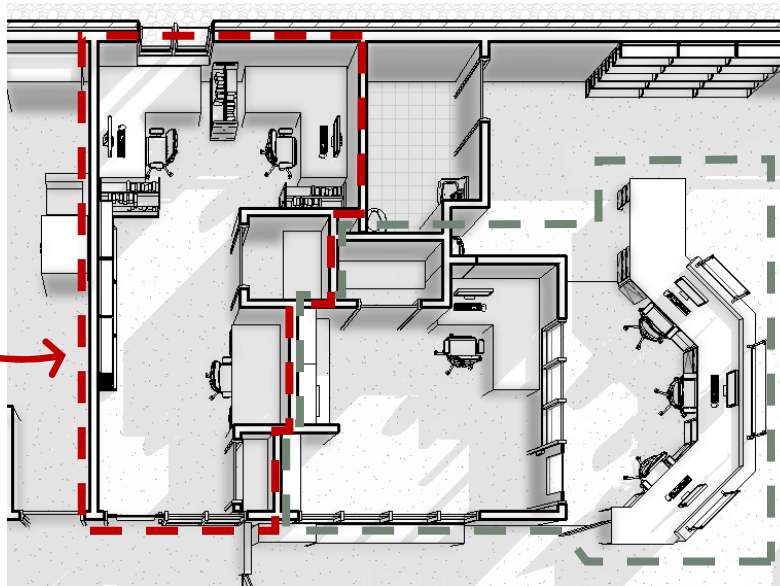


Staff Workroom Improvements

A vibrant, growing community requires constant attention and service. As our services have grown, the need for uninterrupted work spaces has increased. Reconfiguring our staff spaces will allow our staff and volunteers to work more efficiently in dedicated spaces with dedicated storage.

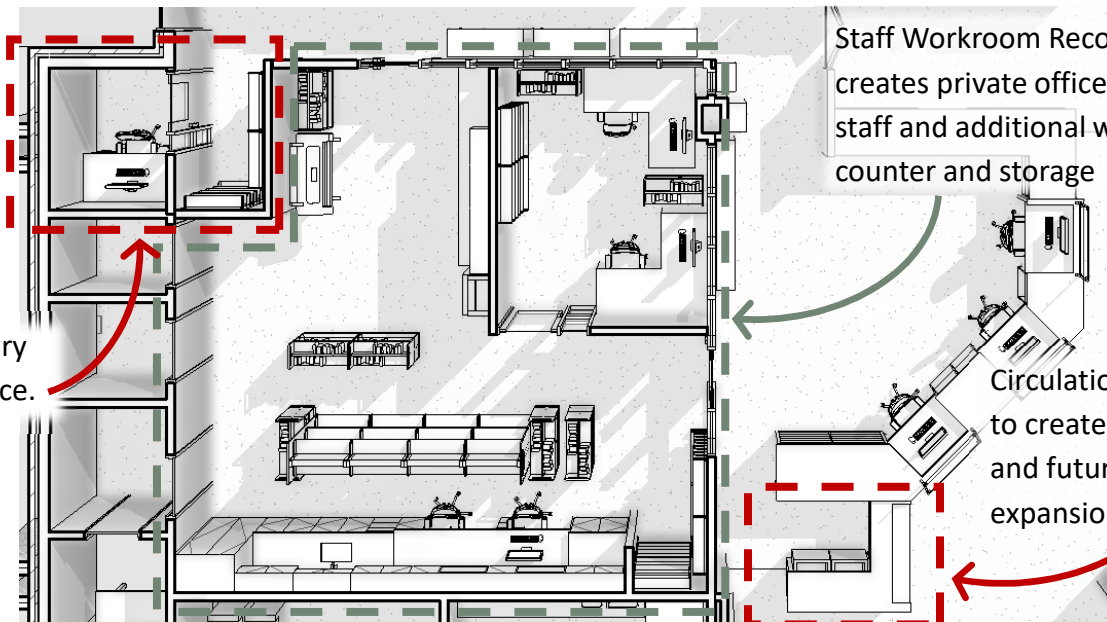
Reconfiguring the east workroom will allow Youth Services to work in a dedicated office. Technical Services will gain a private office with dedicated storage space. An IT closet and desk to share with the regional library's 'floating' IT manager. The main workroom will be updated to create a dedicated Circulation Office that is separated from the bustle of main workroom. The reconfiguration will allow additional cabinet storage and work counter to be added. The local Friends of the Library, that work tirelessly to support operations, will gain a small dedicated space for them to collect and sort donations on an ongoing basis without interfering with staff activities or egress through the back door.

Technical Service in private office with dedicated closets and shared desk for regional IT personnel.



The Youth Services office, workroom, and dedicated storage adjacent to service desk.

Friends of Library sorting and office.



Staff Workroom Reconfiguration creates private office for circulation staff and additional workroom counter and storage

Circulation Desk Extension to create space for holds and future self-service expansion.

2 Fire Alarm Panel Replacements	140,000
Air Cond.@ GV & Bethel	4,000,000
Band / Art Program Equipment	40,000
Cafeteria Tables	18,000
Carpet & Tile Replacement	45,000
Custodial Floor Equipment	25,000
Door Replacement	20,000
Electrical Upgrades for Cove Creek/ BR/Mabel	250,000
Fuel Oil Tank Replacement @ CC	100,000
Furniture / Equipment	70,000
Generator @ Maintenance Shop	80,000
Gym Floor Screening and Recoating	25,000
HVAC Sewer Pump Replacement	25,000
Pavement Repair	80,000
Replace Kitchen/Cafeteria Equipment	75,000
Roof Maintenance	100,000
Sidewalk Repair	80,000
Vehicle Replacement	150,000

5,323,000

Activity Bus Replacement	120,000
Air Cond.@ CC/Mabel/BR	7,000,000
Band / Art Program Equipment	40,000
Cafeteria Tables	18,000
Carpet & Tile Replacement	45,000
Custodial Floor Equipment	25,000
Door Replacement	20,000
Furniture / Equipment	70,000
Gym Floor Screening and Recoating	25,000
HVAC Sewer Pump Replacement	25,000
Pavement Repair	80,000
Replace Kitchen/Cafeteria Equipment	75,000
Roof Maintenance	100,000
Sidewalk Repair	80,000
Vehicle Replacement	150,000

7,873,000

Activity Bus Replacement	120,000
Band / Art Program Equipment	40,000
Cafeteria Tables	18,000
Carpet & Tile Replacement	45,000
Custodial Floor Equipment	25,000
Door Replacement	20,000
Furniture / Equipment	70,000
Gym Floor Screening and Recoating	25,000
HVAC Sewer Pump Replacement	25,000
Pavement Repair	80,000
Replace Kitchen/Cafeteria Equipment	75,000
Roof Maintenance	100,000
Sidewalk Repair	80,000
Vehicle Replacement	150,000
Parkway Addition	7,000,000
	7,873,000

Activity Bus Replacement	120,000
Band / Art Program Equipment	40,000
Cafeteria Tables	18,000
Carpet & Tile Replacement	45,000
Custodial Floor Equipment	25,000
Door Replacement	20,000
Furniture / Equipment	70,000
Gym Floor Screening and Recoating	25,000
HVAC Sewer Pump Replacement	25,000
Pavement Repair	80,000
Replace Kitchen/Cafeteria Equipment	75,000
Roof Maintenance	100,000
Sidewalk Repair	80,000
Vehicle Replacement	150,000
Upgrade Central Exhausts @ Bus Garage	50,000
Add Lift for Service Vehicles	25,000
Replace Dump Truck	100,000

1,048,000

Activity Bus Replacement	120,000
Band / Art Program Equipment	40,000
Cafeteria Tables	18,000
Carpet & Tile Replacement	45,000
Custodial Floor Equipment	25,000
Door Replacement	20,000
Furniture / Equipment	70,000
Gym Floor Screening and Recoating	25,000
HVAC Sewer Pump Replacement	25,000
Pavement Repair	80,000
Replace Kitchen/Cafeteria Equipment	75,000
Roof Maintenance	100,000
Sidewalk Repair	80,000
Vehicle Replacement	150,000
	873,000

Activity Bus Replacement	120,000
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Custodial Floor Equipment	25,000
Door Replacement	20,000
Furniture / Equipment	70,000
Gym Floor Screening and Recoating	25,000
HVAC Sewer Pump Replacement	25,000
Pavement Repair	80,000
Replace Kitchen/Cafeteria Equipment	75,000
Roof Maintenance	100,000
Sidewalk Repair	80,000
Vehicle Replacement	150,000
Hardin Park Design	750,000

1,623,000

Activity Bus Replacement	120,000
Band / Art Program Equipment	40,000
Cafeteria Tables	18,000
Carpet & Tile Replacement	45,000
Custodial Floor Equipment	25,000
Door Replacement	20,000
Furniture / Equipment	70,000
Gym Floor Screening and Recoating	25,000
HVAC Sewer Pump Replacement	25,000
Pavement Repair	80,000
Replace Kitchen/Cafeteria Equipment	75,000
Roof Maintenance	100,000
Sidewalk Repair	80,000
Vehicle Replacement	150,000
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Door Replacement	20,000
Furniture / Equipment	70,000
Gym Floor Screening and Rec	25,000
HVAC Sewer Pump Replacement	25,000
Pavement Repair	80,000
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Roof Maintenance	100,000
Sidewalk Repair	80,000
Vehicle Replacement	150,000

873,000

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Vehicle Replacement	150,000
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Health Is in the Air

Strategies for reduction in
the spread of infectious aerosols



Solutions for Healthy Classrooms

Every classroom is its own ecosystem

Whether the requirements are heating and cooling capacity for a space or substantial fresh air ventilation with filtration, there are advantages to maintaining optimal conditions for each classroom.

With each classroom being its own ecosystem, utilizing a single packaged vertical unit (SPVU) offers numerous advantages versus traditional heating and cooling technologies.

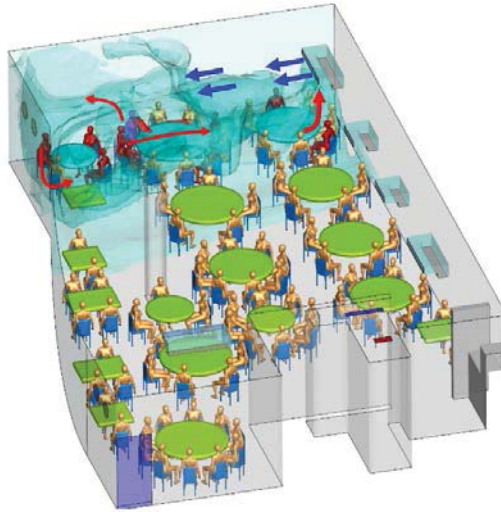
Bard's individualized comfort systems whether exterior or interior mounted, provide each classroom with precise humidity and ventilation control, quiet operation and energy savings.

HVAC systems role in reducing the spread of the spread of infectious particles

HVAC systems play a vital role by providing regulated fresh air during classes as well as outside air during unoccupied times. This is beneficial to insure the classroom can be purified before and after class.

How does a virus spread?

Studies indicate individuals infected with a virus expel heavy droplets of aerosols that fall and land on surrounding surfaces or persons.



Infectious particles also break up into smaller airborne particles that can drift for hours in confined spaces. Because of the density of some classrooms during occupied times, it is imperative to take the necessary steps to reduce the concentration of infectious particles.

Effective means to offer cleaner air in classrooms

Ventilation helps by exhausting stale classroom air and bringing in fresh outdoor air in a controlled sequence.

Filtration helps by capturing contaminants, including virus-sized particles. High filtration products such as MERV13 are recommended.

Humidity Control helps by keeping humidity in the space within recommended ranges. Controlled humidity shortens the life of infectious aerosols.

Supply Air Path helps by directing high velocity HVAC supply air away from the breathing zone, reducing the spread of airborne particles around the room.

UVC-LED technology produces light at optimal disinfection wavelengths to deactivate microorganisms.



Filtration

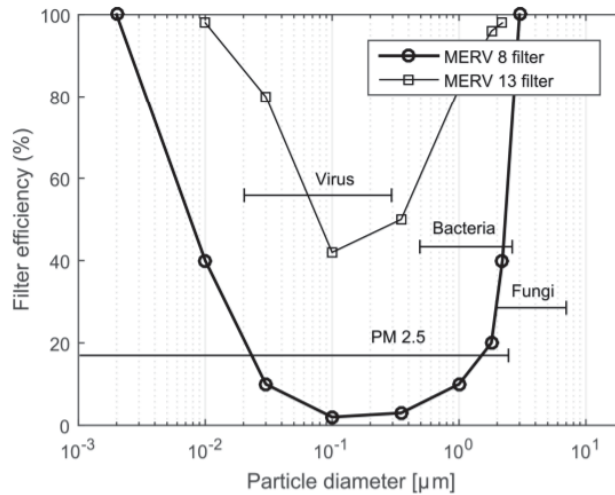
Filtration Benefits

Filtration provided by heating, ventilating, and air-conditioning systems can reduce the airborne concentration of SARS-COV-2 and thus the risk of transmission through the air particles. (Source: Harvard School of Public Health)

Upgrading to MERV-13 (or higher) filters is recommended if it does not adversely impact HVAC operation. Some single unit per classroom HVAC systems are not designed to push air through restrictive high MERV filters. If this is the case, portable HEPA air cleaners may be considered for occupied spaces. (Source: ASHRAE)

How Does Bard Solve This?

- 1 Bard systems are designed with large filters and low pressure drop.
- 2 Indoor blower systems are also designed to automatically adjust airflow for proper system operation, even with high MERV filters.
- 3 Filters are easy to reach and change both with inside mount units or outside mount units.
- 4 Indoor blowers are designed with ultra quiet continuous fan operation for constant filtration of classroom air.
- 5 MERV 13 and higher is preferred based on the recommendations from AHRI.



MERV rating for filters

MERV ratings indicate the percentage of particles and size of particles filters can capture when passing through the filter. The chart above shows standard MERV 8 filters are less effective in capturing small virus size particles. MERV 13 filters are more effective filtering out very small particles that might otherwise recirculate throughout the classroom.

Before upgrading to higher efficiency filters a qualified HVAC technician should check the blower system to confirm it will operate with higher MERV filters, especially after the filters are in operation for some period of time. Owners should inspect higher MERV filters more often. These filters load faster than low efficiency filters.

A typical Bard 3.5 ton system installed in a 950 sq. ft. classroom can filter the entire volume of classroom air, four times each hour if continuous fan mode is energized.

Develop standards for frequency of filter replacement and type of filters to be utilized. Select filtration levels (MERV ratings) that are maximized for equipment capabilities. Use MERV 13 if equipment allows, while assuring the pressure drop is less than the fan's capability.

The chart below illustrates the low initial resistance of large face area filters installed in Bard equipment. The blower systems are also designed to overcome resistance through high MERV filters and/or duct work.

Any HVAC system with supply/return duct should be checked by local HVAC experts to measure the air resistance through the duct, before upgrading filters.

Model	Blower motor	Max ESP	Filters	rated airflow	fpm/filter	initial filter resistance
I30H	EC Constant Airflow (2)	0.5	24x30x2	900	90	0.08
I36H	EC Constant Airflow (2)	0.5	24x30x2	1150	115	0.08
I42H	EC Constant Airflow (2)	0.5	24x30x2	1300	130	0.08
I48H	EC Constant Airflow (2)	0.5	24x30x2	1500	150	0.09
I60H	EC Constant Airflow (2)	0.5	24x30x2	1700	120	0.09
W30HB	EC Constant Torque (1)	0.5	16x30	1020	306	0.20
W36HB	EC Constant Torque (1)	0.5	16x30	1125	337.5	0.21
W42HC	EC Constant Torque (1)	0.5	20x20	1350	408	0.29
W48HC	EC Constant Torque (1)	0.5	20x20	1600	480	0.37
W60HC	EC Constant Torque (1)	0.5	20x20	1800	540	0.37

Ventilation

Ventilation Benefits

A fresh supply of outside air can dilute contaminants in the classroom. Bard systems are designed to bring in specific amounts of fresh outside air as determined by the design requirements and local regulations. The amount of fresh air can be increased to assist in diluting contaminants including virus particles.

The effect of additional outside air must be measured to assure existing systems can maintain comfort conditions and energy usage is not overly impacted. Bard systems are able to flush the air in each classroom prior to occupants arriving or after they have departed. Each system can flush air throughout the night if desired.

Ventilation should be adjusted to meet the needs of each classroom, possibly with less or more students. Each ventilation system can easily be changed and verified.

Bard systems accomplish all this while keeping all classroom and outside air contained in each space. Minimal air is recirculated throughout the building.

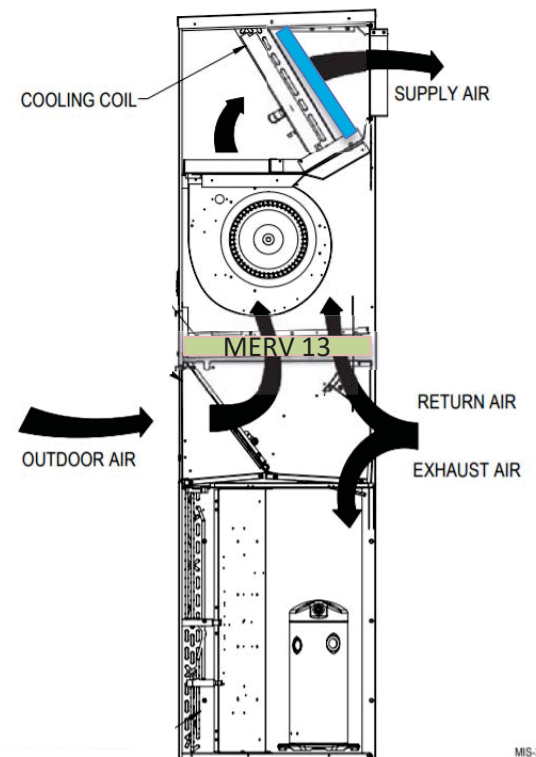
How Does Bard Solve This?

- 1 Each Bard classroom system manufactured with a ventilation package is designed to deliver specific amounts of outside air and also exhaust stale classroom air without mixing with air from any other space.
- 2 Each system is designed to heat or cool the classroom and neutralize the hot, cold or humid outside air maintaining comfort conditions during all seasons: summer, fall, winter and spring.
- 3 Most existing Bard systems without a ventilation package can be retrofitted to add ventilation with a slide-in ERV option. ERV stands for Energy Recovery Ventilator. This means it pretreats outside air, removing most of the heat and moisture in cooling season and injecting heat in heating seasons. You must consult with your local Bard System specialist to determine if a field-installed ERV package is available and what the proper settings are.

Increasing outside air during classroom hours must be carefully researched by HVAC professionals. Your local Bard expert can help with this also.

The side-view illustrates a Bard system that can include high and low capacity heating and cooling for peak and off peak conditions.

Automatic humidity control can also be factory installed for maintaining comfortable and healthy humidity levels in the space.



“Devices that simply recirculate the same indoor air without filtering it or replacing it with fresh air are not helpful in reducing any airborne virus present in the room.”

Source: Harvard School of Public Health

Humidity Control

Humidity Benefits

ASHRAE recommends maintaining 30-60 % RH in occupied spaces. Keeping humidity at acceptable levels in classrooms is critical for comfort and also for decreasing the possibility of unhealthy pathogens developing in the space. High humidity levels encourage growth of mold and mildew and keep airborne virus alive longer. Low humidity levels also assist virus particles to survive longer.

How Does Bard Solve This?

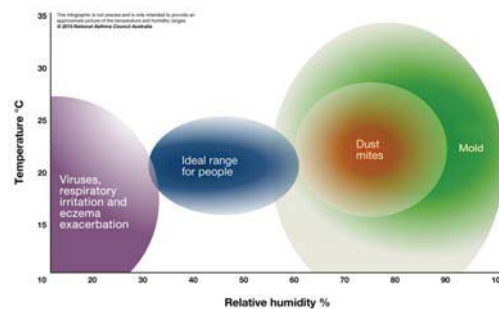
Bard systems can actively reduce high humidity with factory-installed humidity controls as well as energy recovery ventilators, ultimately reducing the amount of moisture in the outside air before it enters the conditioned space.

Equipment with humidity control requires an additional humidity sensor that energizes the unit in dehumidify mode, when humidity

levels exceed set point.

Equipment with humidity controls must be installed at the time of manufacture.

Equipment with a ventilation package should include humidity control if possible. During warm or moderate weather, fresh air holds enough moisture to raise humidity in the space above acceptable levels.



Conclusion

Bard classroom systems are designed to meet all recommendations by industry and health experts to reduce the spread of infectious aerosols floating in the space.

Whether it's ventilation, filtration, or sterilization, Bard offers solutions to meet the needs of the classroom. Bard systems optimize energy efficiency while operating each classroom independently.

Bard Manufacturing has built a reputation of quality, durability, reliability and innovation over its 107 year history.

Resource Information

- www.ahrinet.org
- Harvard School of Public Health
- www.bardhvac.com
- National Asthma Council Australia
- Ashrae.org

Additional Info

Contact your Bard representative for more information on how Classroom Preferred™ can make the grade for your school.

Supply Air Path

Supply Air Path Benefits

Per ASHRAE recommendations, supply air should be routed in a path above the breathing zone if possible.

What does this mean?

Health experts recommend airflow from HVAC registers and grills; do not push high velocity air across the breathing zone of occupants. This cause's greater dispersion of virus or germs exhaled by students.

Bard Systems can be adjusted to deliver air at ceiling height and disperse throughout the space with a lower velocity.



More info

There's a reason why we call our school systems Classroom Preferred™. It's because districts across the country have realized all the advantages of Bard's unique solution and are now choosing us over other options. In fact, we're the world's largest manufacturer of wall-mounted heating and cooling equipment. Please check out our additional information regarding school products:

- Classroom Preferred™ Brochure
- *The Ideal Solution For Climate Control In Schools* Video
- www.bardschools.com

BardHVAC.com



Disclaimer

Bard HVAC is not a medical expert. The content is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition. These recommendations were made with the guidance of AHRAE information regarding the reduction in spread of infectious aerosols at the time of writing this publication. Bard is not responsible for the claims of external websites and education companies.



Bard Manufacturing Company, Inc.
1914 Randolph Dr., Bryan, OH 43506
419-636-1194

www.bardhvac.com
sales@bardhvac.com

Solid Waste Management 2025 Update

February 27, 2025

Chris Marriott

Operation Services Director



Solid Waste Management 2025 Update

- ❑ Facility & Equipment Upgrades

1. Completed FY24
2. In-Process FY25
3. Proposed FY26

- ❑ Budget Review

Past, Present, & Future

- ❑ Recycling

Past, Present, & Future

Upgrades FY 2024



Inbound Scale &
Scale-house

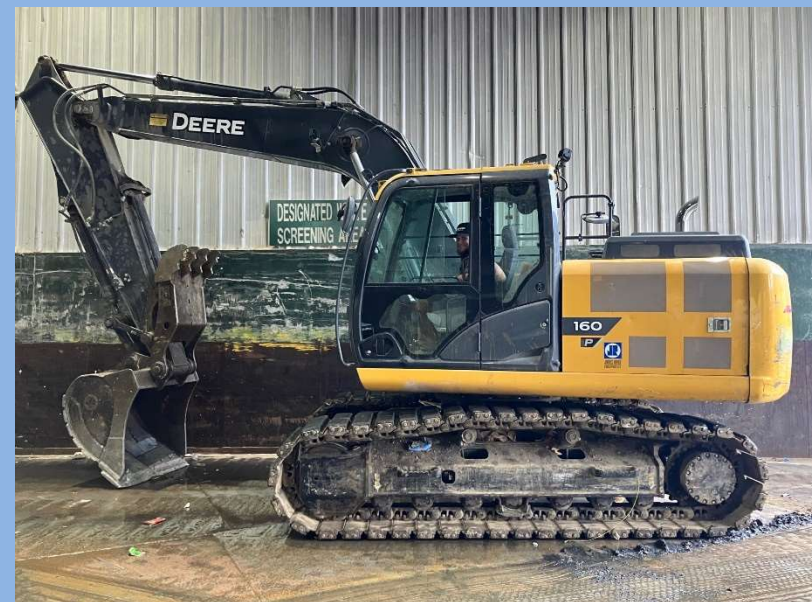
Upgrades FY 2024



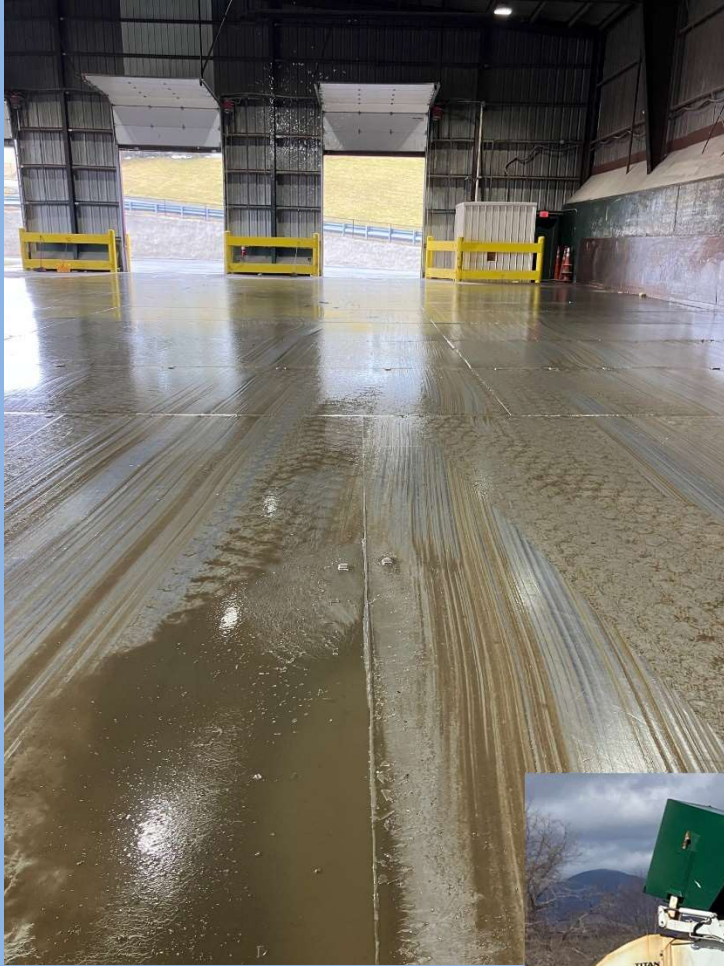
Inside of scale-house



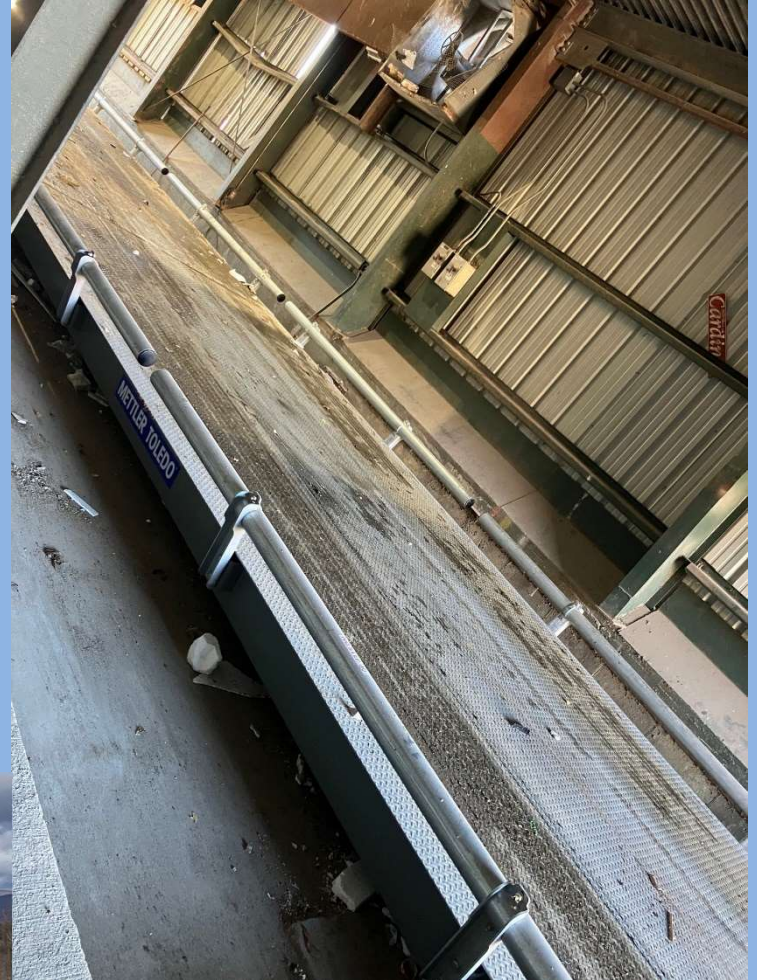
Upgrades FY 2024



Upgrades FY 2025



New steel floor



New tunnel scale



Front load garbage truck

Upgrades FY 2025



Potential Projects FY 2026



Potential Projects FY 2026



Outside of Transfer Station

Repairs to loading chute needed



Potential Projects FY 2026



Potential Projects FY 2026



Pavement at commercial entrance



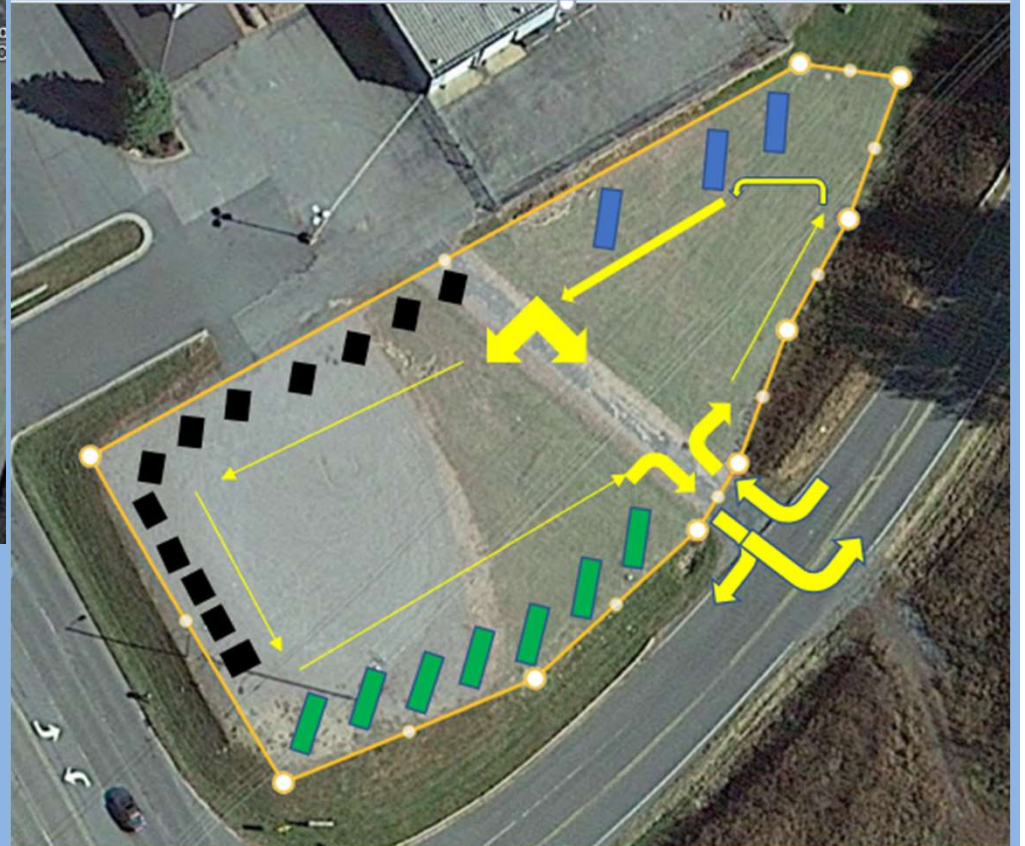
Pavement at metal area

Potential Projects FY 2026



Current Site

Potential layout of new site



Additional Potential Projects FY 2026

1. Paving at Triplet Convenience Center
2. Replacement Mini-Loader
3. Replacement/additional scrap metal trailer
4. Paving assessment/gap sealing
5. Replacement pick-up truck
6. Replacement Tub Grinder
7. Replacement Tire hauling trailers

Budget Review

- FY 2024
 - Revenues: \$7.507M
 - Expenses: \$8.252M
 - \$745,218
- FY 2025 (YTD=Jan. 2025)
 - Revenues: \$5.807M
 - Expenses: \$4.811M
- FY 2026
 - Tipping Rate increase*
 - Solid Waste Availability Fee increase*

*discussion and approval of Board of Commissioners

Recycling Review

	FY 2024	FY 2025 YTD
Cardboard	655	980
Commingled	681	564
Glass	465	230
Metal	400	427
White Goods	269	79
Brush/Tree	4214	3521

QUESTIONS ?

Chris Marriott
Chris.Marriott@watgov.org



TAX ADMINISTRATION UPDATES





2027 Revaluation

Reminder:

- ▶ County wide revaluations are required by state law
- ▶ A reappraisal is not to increase/decrease assessed value to collect more or less revenue, it's to equalize values among property classes to ensure everyone is paying their fair share

2027 Revaluation

- ▶ Appraise all real property at true value (G.S. 105-283)
- ▶ Appraise all real property uniformly (G.S. 105-284)
- ▶ Develop a Schedule of Values (G.S. 105-317)

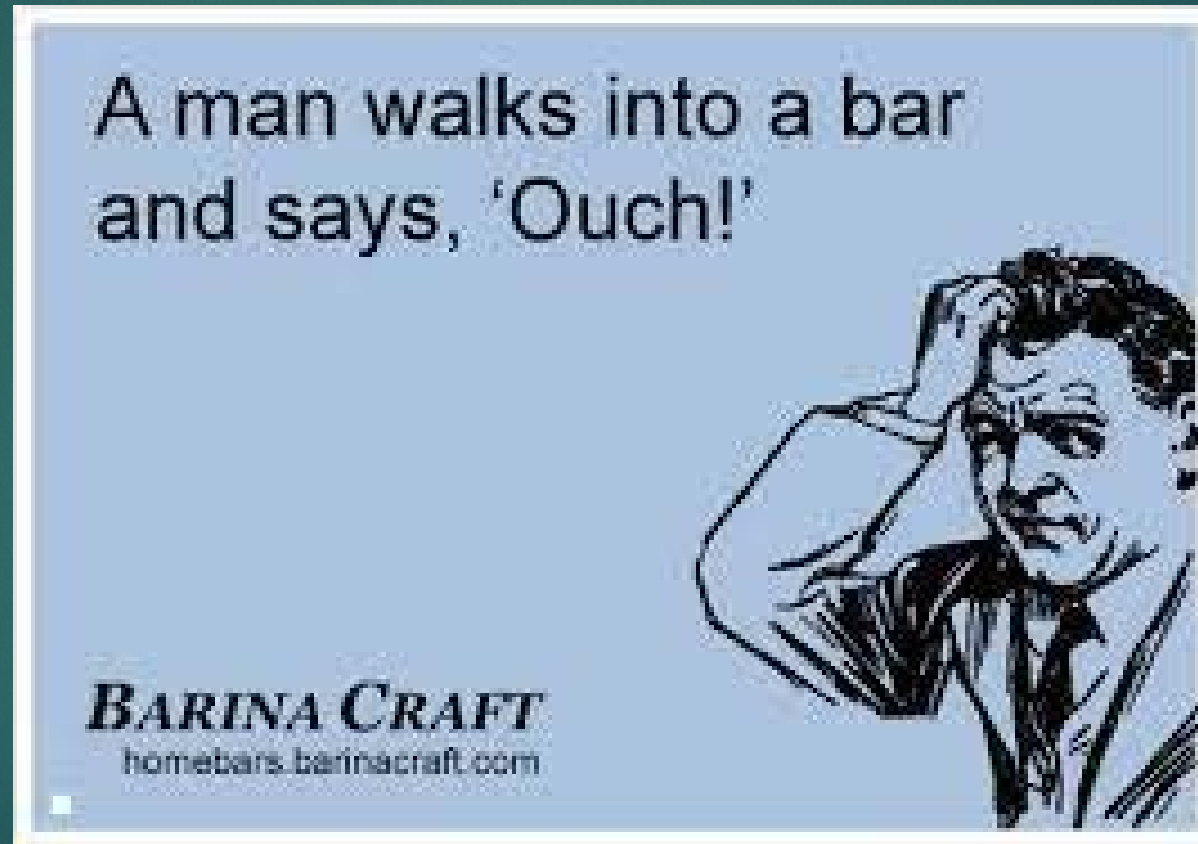
2027 Revaluation

- ▶ 19,059 out of 49,546 parcels inspected (38%)
- ▶ Completion of all revaluation inspections to be done by the time we transition to new construction for 2026 in November
- ▶ Desktop review process, modeling, and sales analysis to begin in February of 2026

2027 Revaluation

- ▶ Current county sales ratio is 70%
- ▶ 2025 new construction to be completed by the end of this month
- ▶ Value letters will be sent the first week of March

Malt Beverage & Wine Licenses



Malt Beverage & Wine Licenses

- ▶ § 105-113.78. County malt beverage and wine retail licenses.
- ▶ A person holding any of the following retail ABC permits for an establishment located in a county shall obtain from the county a county license for that activity. The annual tax for each license is as stated.
- ▶ ABC Permit Tax for Corresponding License
- ▶ On-premises malt beverage \$25.00
- ▶ Off-premises malt beverage \$5.00
- ▶ On-premises unfortified wine, on-premises fortified wine, or both \$25.00
- ▶ Off-premises unfortified wine, off-premises fortified wine, or both \$25.00

Malt Beverage & Wine Licenses

- ▶ The licenses are required to be purchased annually
- ▶ This will be billed on a fiscal year cycle
- ▶ The Tax Administration will mail letters to all businesses with a current active permit
- ▶ Per the NC ABC Commission, there are 376 active permits in Watauga



WATAUGA COUNTY TAX ADMINISTRATION

*Courthouse, Suite 21 – 842 West King Street – Boone, NC 28607
(828) 265-8036 – FAX (828) 265-8087*

Re: County Malt Beverage and Wine Retail Licenses

Dear Taxpayer,

Per North Carolina State Statute any business selling malt beverages and/or wine in Watauga County is required to annually purchase a Malt Beverage & Wine License from the Watauga County Tax Administration. The license is good for one year and must be renewed prior to July 1 of each year.

Beginning this year, county malt beverage and wine licenses will be billed. You will receive a beverage license application in the mail. The completed application along with the appropriate payment will be due by July 1st. The application and payment can be mailed to 842 West King Street Suite 21 Boone, NC 28607 or dropped off at our office in the courthouse Monday-Friday 8:00am-5:00pm.

Below is the referenced state statute and list of associated fees.

§ 105-113.78. County malt beverage and wine retail licenses. A person holding any of the following retail ABC permits for an establishment located in a county shall obtain from the county a county license for that activity.

The ABC Permit Tax for the corresponding license is listed below.

- On-premises malt beverage \$25.00
- Off-premises malt beverage \$5.00
- On-premises unfortified wine, on-premises fortified wine, or both \$25.00
- Off-premises unfortified wine, off-premises fortified wine, or both \$25.00

If you have further questions please contact our office at (828) 265-8036.

Sincerely,

Tyler Rash

Administrator

Watauga County Tax Administration

WATAUGA COUNTY TAX ADMINISTRATION

842 West King Street, Suite 21
 Boone, NC 28607
 (828) 265-8036 – FAX (828) 265-8087

BEVERAGE LICENSE APPLICATION

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY		
ACCT. #	LIC #	DATE:

Application is hereby submitted for licenses in accordance with and in conformity to all the provisions of the Beverage Control Act of 1937. If applicant possesses a State Permit, although he does not sell alcoholic beverages, he must purchase a County License. Complete and return this application along with your check or money order made payable to the Watauga County Tax Administration.

Trade Name: _____ Business Telephone: _____

Location of Business: _____

Street City State Zip

Mailing Address: _____

Street City State Zip

Owner/Corp. Name: _____ Owner's Telephone: _____

Owner's Address: _____

Street City State Zip

PLEASE FILL IN YOUR STATE ABC COMMISSION PERMIT NUMBERS WHERE APPLICABLE:

On Premises: Beer _____ Wine _____

Off Premises: Beer _____ Wine _____

COUNTY FEE SCHEDULE:

Beer On Premises: \$25.00 Wine On Premises: \$25.00

Beer Off Premises: \$5.00 Wine Off Premises: \$25.00

Note: State laws provides that any person who shall knowingly make any false statement in an application for this license shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction shall be fined and/or imprisoned as provided by law.

SIGNATURE CERTIFIES THAT THE FOLLOWING ARE TRUE:

1. The Applicant is a resident of North Carolina and is not less than 21 years of age except if a corporation holds the State ABC Permit then the manager/applicant is not less than 19 years of age.
2. The Applicant has not had an unsatisfied outstanding final judgment entered against him/her in an action under Article 1A of Chapter 18B of the Alcoholic Beverage Control Laws.
3. The Applicant within two (2) years has not had any alcoholic beverage offenses or any misdemeanor controlled substance offense.
4. The Applicant has not within three years been convicted of a felony or had an alcoholic beverage permit revoked; or during the preceding license year, committed any act or permitted any condition for which his/her license has been revoked or suspended.

 PRINTED NAME OF APPLICANT

 SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT

PLEASE RETURN APPLICATION WITH PAYMENT

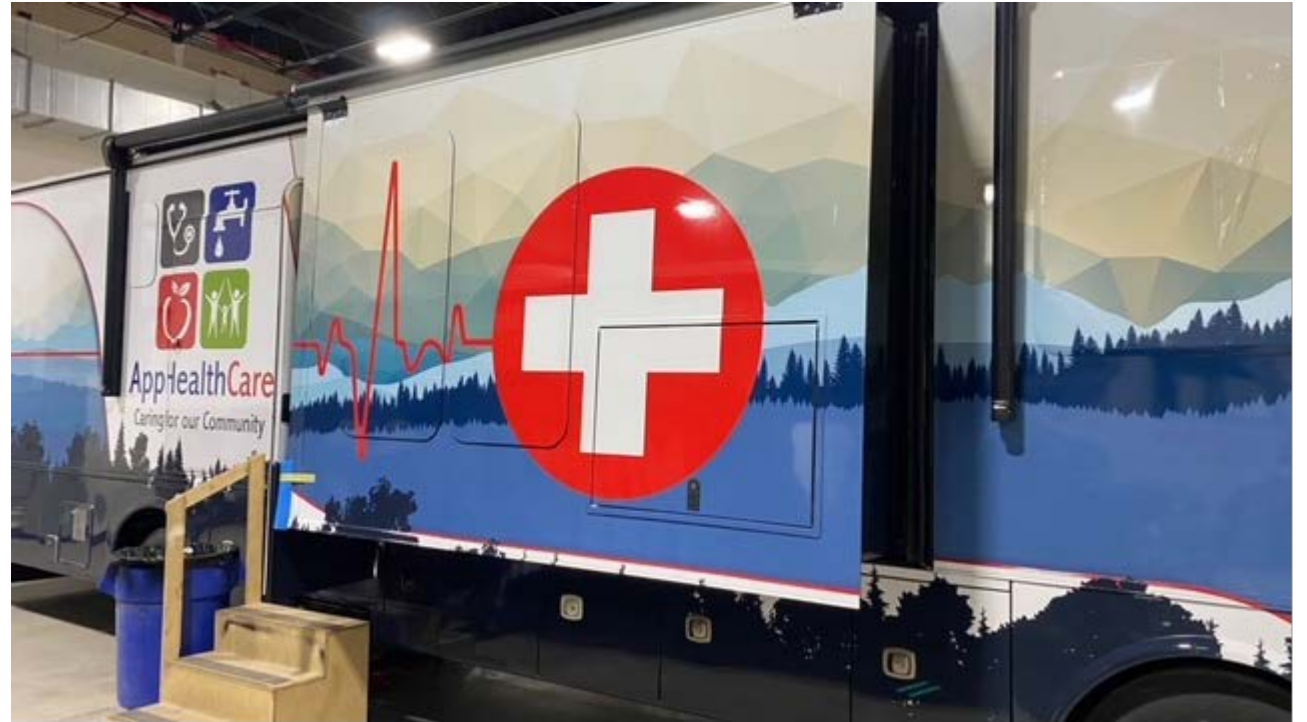


Watauga County Budget Retreat Updates



Organizational highlights

- Public health response team mobilized during Hurricane Helene
- Community health report –March, 2025
- Mobile clinic launch planned Spring, 2025



Environmental Health

- Environmental health remains fully staffed
- Turnaround time for permits: 1 week
- On track with food, lodging, institution permitting percentages
- GPS units in use (future planning for mapping)

Communicable Disease

- Areas we are watching...
 - Tickborne illness –Lyme Disease & others
 - Respiratory viruses –Influenza, COVID, RSV
 - Norovirus
 - Domestic health outbreaks –TB, Measles
 - Global health activity –Ebola
 - H5N1 –Bird flu activity –risk is still LOW
 - No known human cases in NC
 - No documented evidence of human-to-human spread at this time

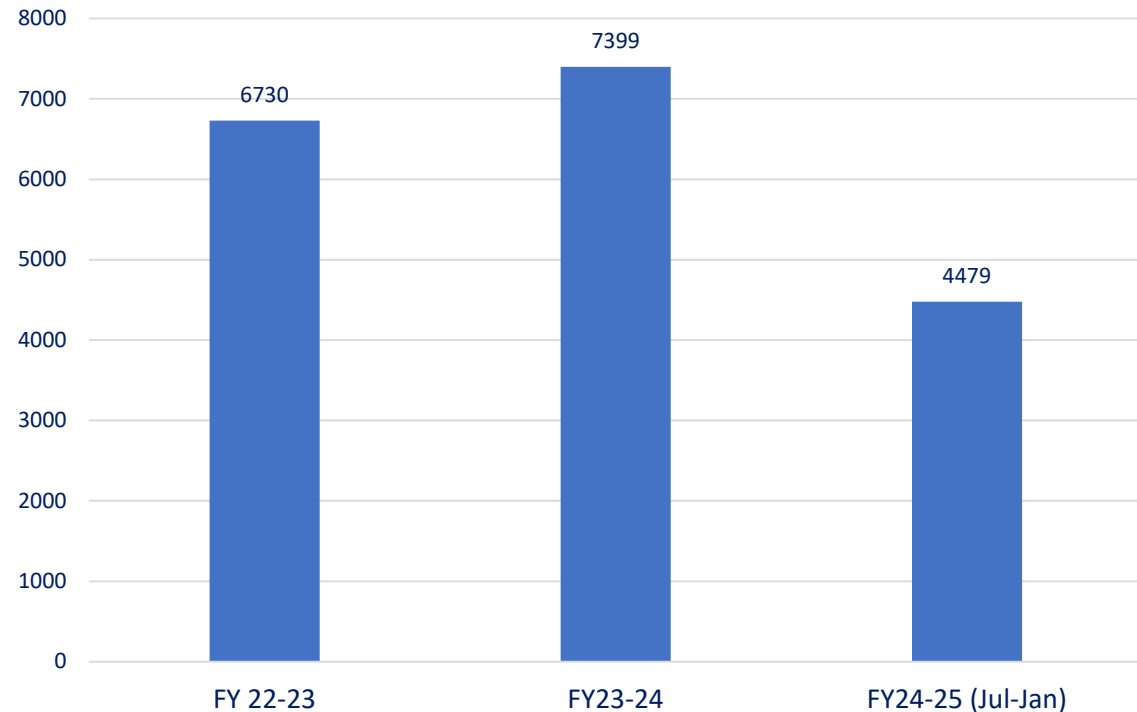
Clinical services updates

FY 24-25

On pace to exceed last FY visits

- Primary Care
- Women's health
- Communicable disease
- Integrated behavioral health
- Substance use disorder treatment

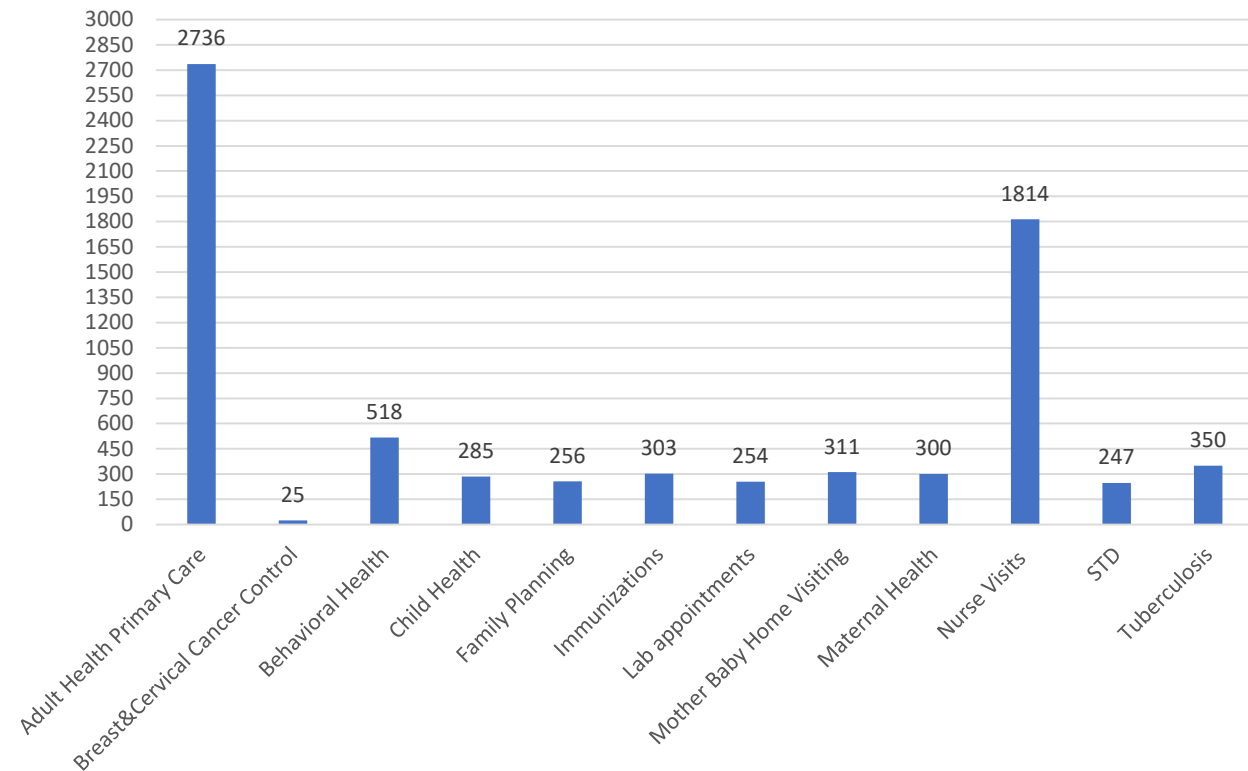
Watauga Clinic Visits



Clinical services updates

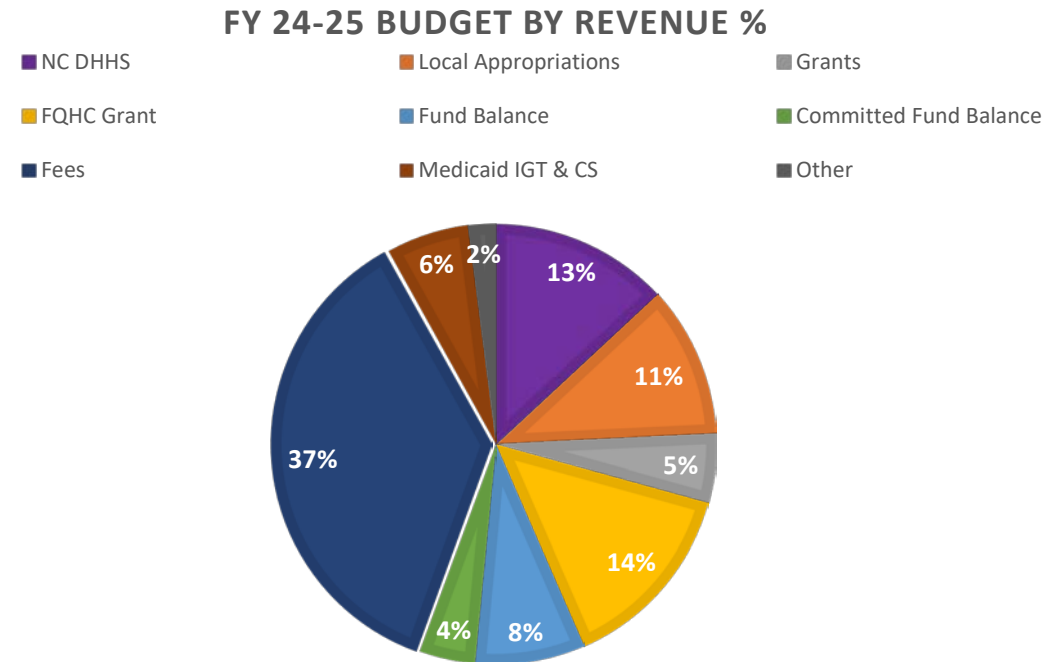
Program	Visits
Adult Health Primary Care	2736
Breast&Cervical Cancer Control	25
Behavioral Health	518
Child Health	285
Family Planning	256
Immunizations	303
Lab appointments	254
Mother Baby Home Visiting	311
Maternal Health	300
Nurse Visits	1814
STD	247
Tuberculosis	350

FY 23-24 Visits by Program Type



FY 25-26 Budget Considerations

- Environmental health fees
- Advocacy is needed to maintain and increase funding from state & federal sources
 - WIC Program

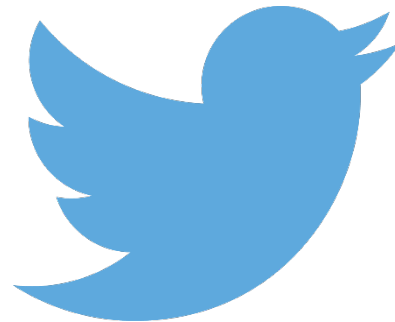




AppHealthCare

Caring for our Community

www.AppHealthCare.com





Opioid Settlement

Update to Watauga County Commissioners

February 27th, 2025

FY 24-25: Coordination Activities to Date

- Completed and submitted 23-24 Financial and Impact Reports on behalf of the County, as well as 24-25 Spending Resolution.
- Helping bridge subcontractors with Opioid Settlement Technical Assistance Team (OSTAT) and providing guidance on data collection as needed.
- Partnering with AppState team to implement a needs assessment over the course of calendar year 2025, including bridging researchers and those with lived/living experience for interviews and survey development.

Recap: 24-25 Projects Selected

Applicant:	Project Summary:	Proposed Amount to Award for Year 1:
Mediation & Restorative Justice Center/Homestead Recovery Center	Operation of Watauga Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD), Recovery on the Inside (ROI), Peer Services, The Homeplace Recovery Housing and the Reentry Service Station.	\$174,690
AppHealthCare	Oversight and administration of opioid settlement expenditures, complete required reporting, develop and improve opioid-related data, and lead strategic planning efforts for future projects; Harm reduction services, training, and health education to prevent and/or reduce overdose deaths in alignment with the Vital Strategies matching funds grant.	\$161,245
High Country Community Health	Identify and serve individuals that are not currently involved in treatment for opioid use disorder (OUD) and/or those that have had health and/or legal consequences due to use of substances.	\$150,000
Western Youth Network	Serve additional students in the mentoring program, all of whom will be referred by school mental health professionals, juvenile court case workers, or Department of Social Services due to substance misuse in the household; provide YMHFA training.	\$85,205
Hospitality House of NorthWestern NC	Provide dedicated housing services to residents of Watauga county that have been impacted by Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) alongside Substance Use Disorder (SUD) or other co-occurring Mental Health conditions, and are experiencing homelessness.	\$75,000
	TOTAL:	= \$646,140

Looking Ahead: FY 25-26

Est. settlement payments received by Watauga County as of Spring 2025, minus spending to date:	\$661,566
AppHealthCare- Continued coordination, data development, strategic planning, & Vital Strategies matching grant activities:	-\$161,245
Available funding to award:	=\$500,321

Proposed next steps: FY 25-26

March 7th AppHealthCare issues finalized project worksheet on behalf of the County

April 4th Project worksheets due to AppHealthCare by 5pm

April 7th-25th AppHealthCare supports Review Committee to review and score submissions

May 6th AppHealthCare will bring draft spending resolution to Commissioners on behalf of the Review Committee

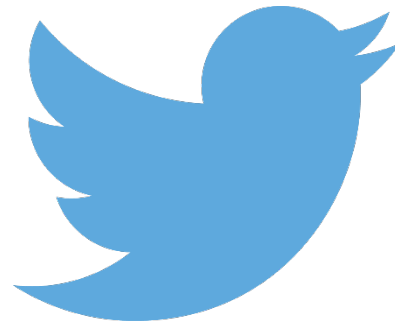
July 1st Funding and project timeline begins



AppHealthCare

Caring for our Community

www.AppHealthCare.com

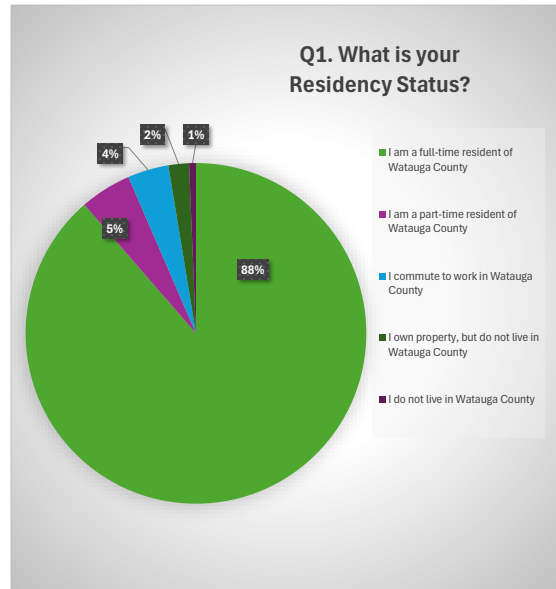
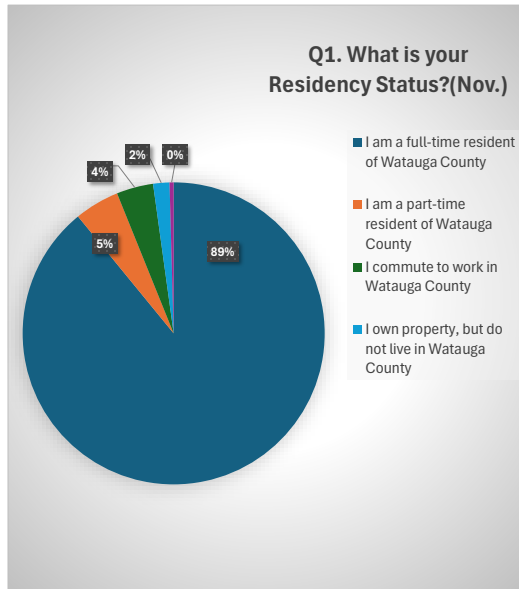


Watauga County Citizen Survey

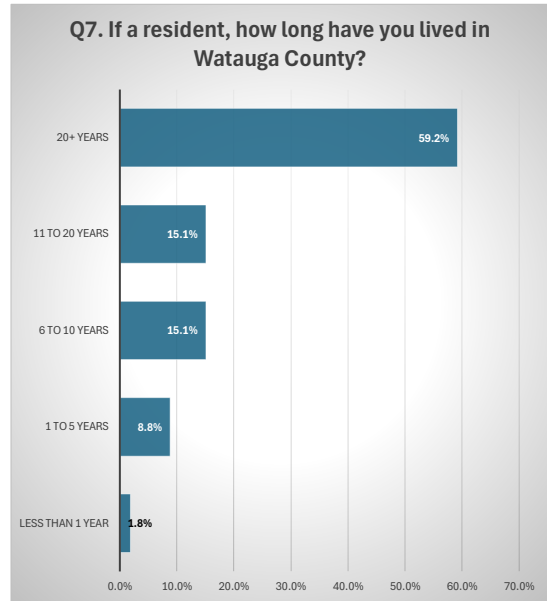
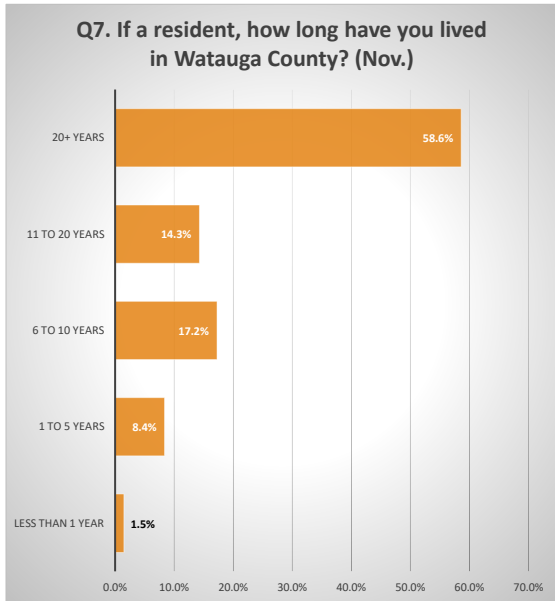
RESULTS FEBRUARY 17, 2025

COMPARED WITH RESULTS FROM NOVEMBER 18, 2024

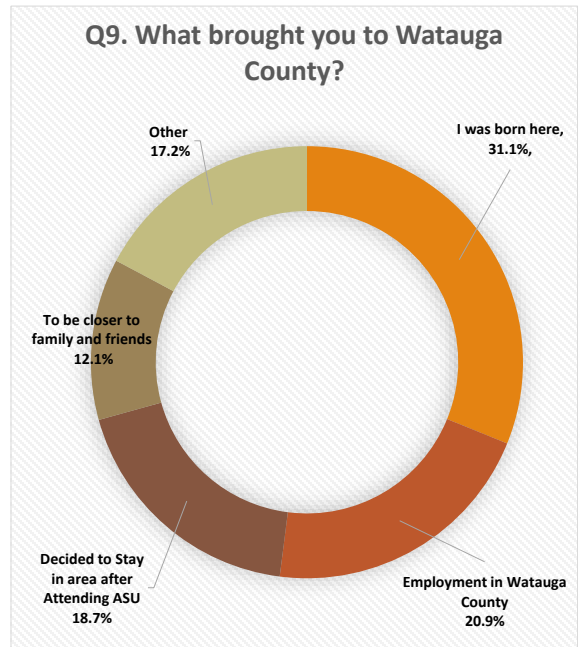
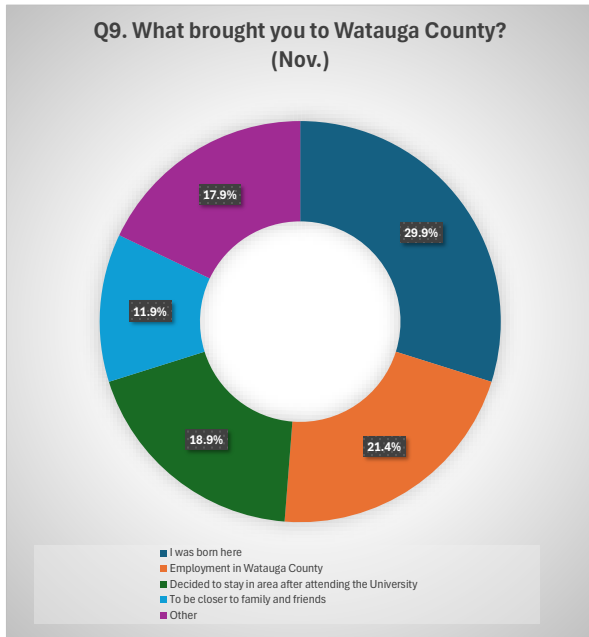
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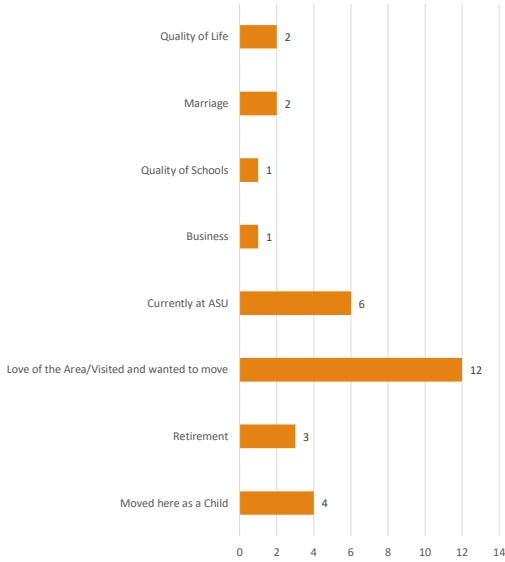


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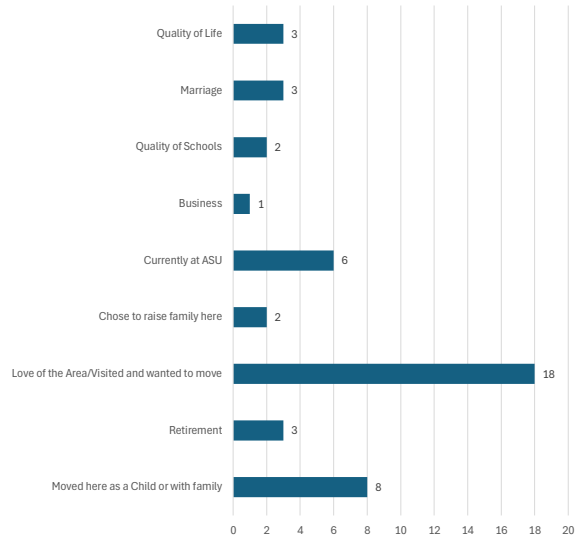


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**Q9. What brought you to Watauga County?
"Other" Answers (Nov.)**

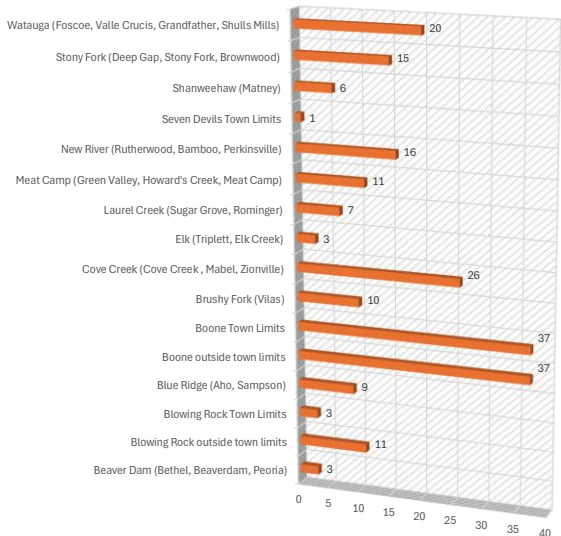


**Q9. What brought you to Watauga County?
"Other" Answers**

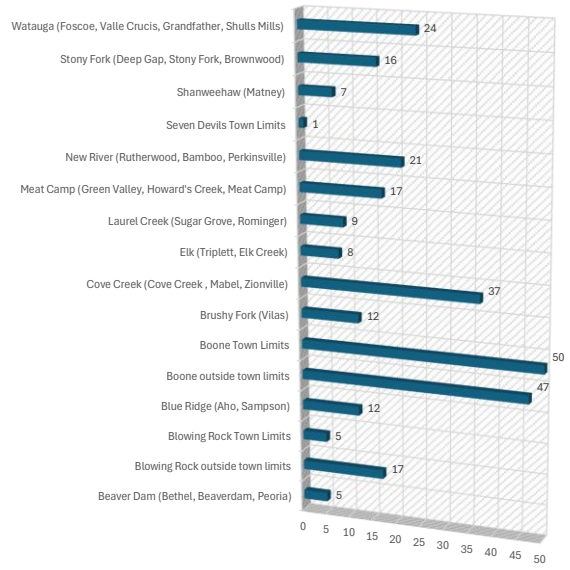


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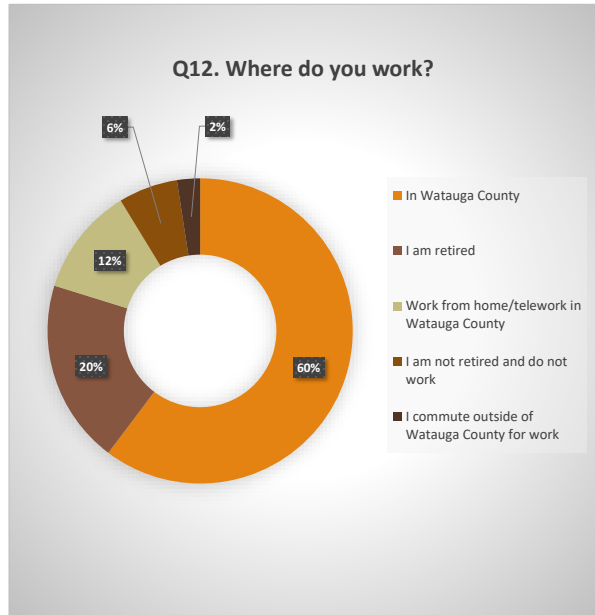
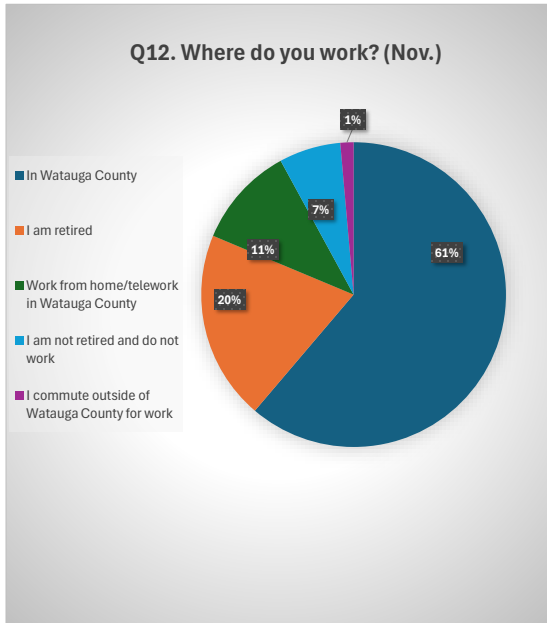
**Q11. If a Resident, which Township to you live?
(Nov.)**



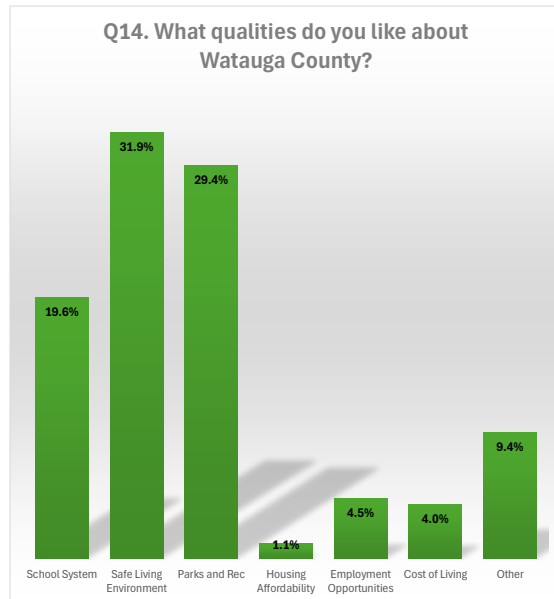
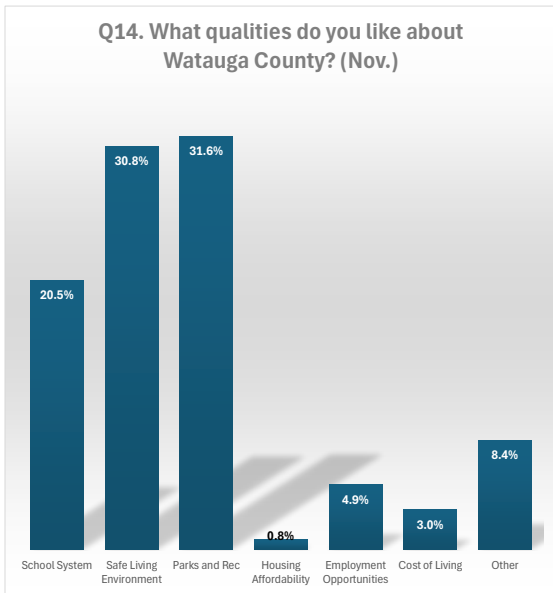
Q11. If a Resident, which Township to you live?



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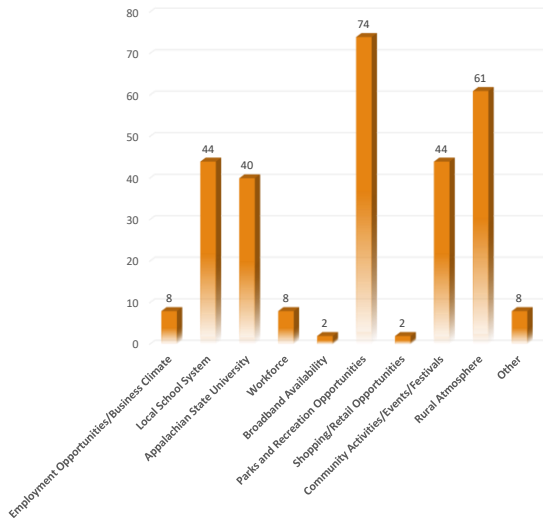


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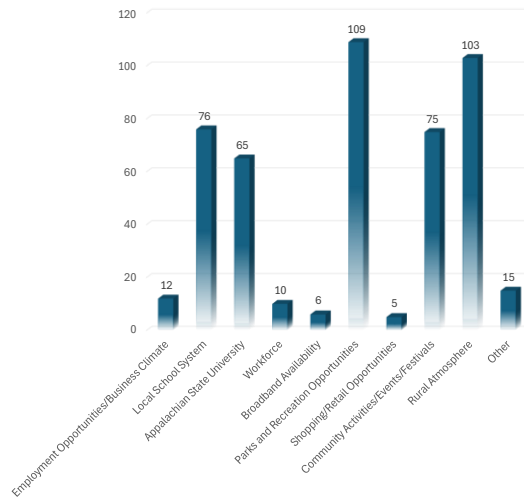


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Q15. What are Watauga County's Greatest Strengths? (Nov.)



Q15. What are Watauga County's Greatest Strengths?

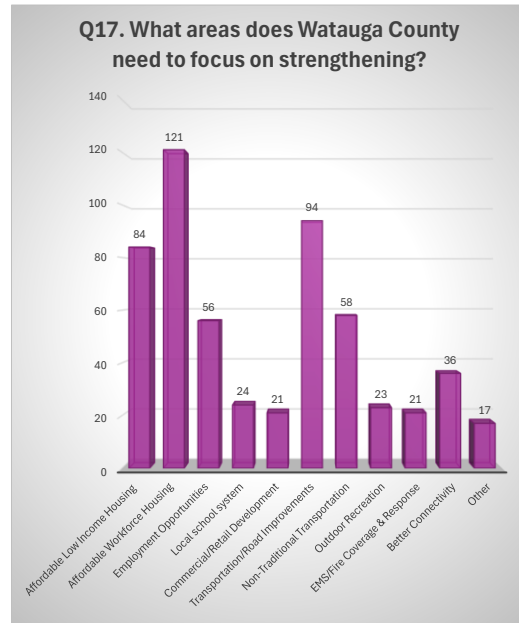
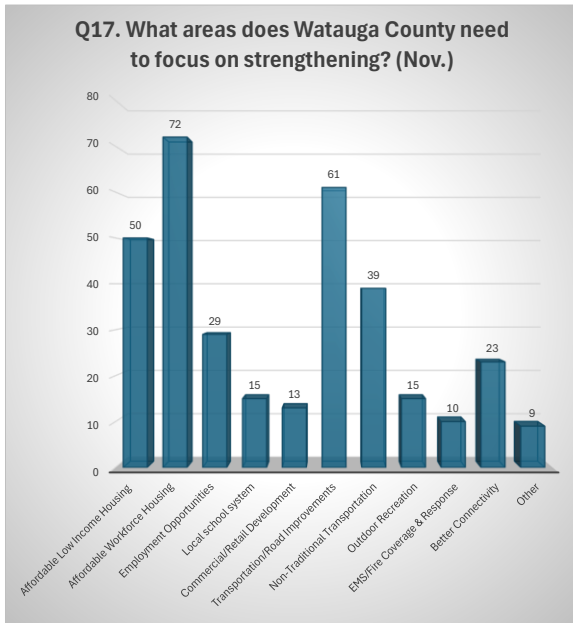


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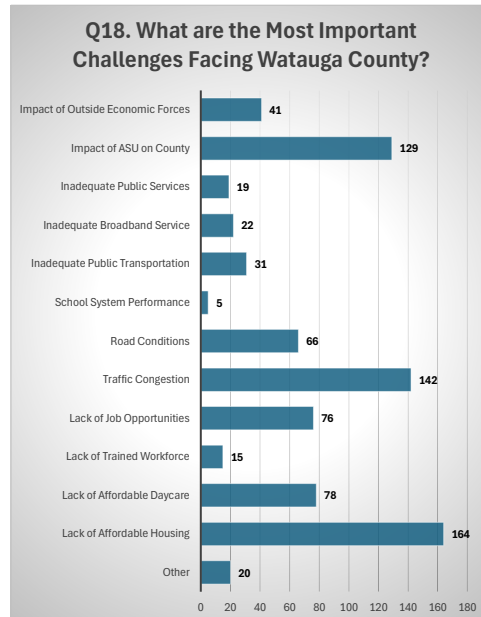
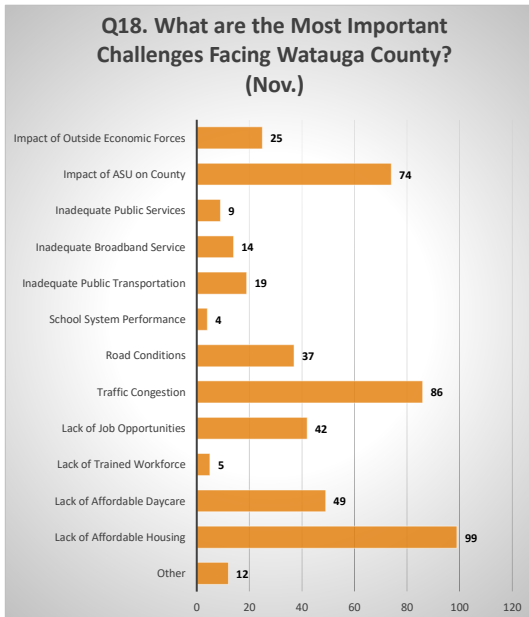
	Q16. Rank in order of importance the greatest priorities when looking forward at Watauga County's Future Growth. (Nov.)	Votes for Most Important
	Ranked in order of Importance	
1	Protecting natural resources	53
2	Housing	38
3	Supporting existing businesses	3
4	Improving road infrastructure to accommodate future traffic	11
5	Expanding broadband access to new and underserved areas	1
6	Protecting property values	8
7	Expanding water and sewer utilities to new and underserved areas	5
8	Attracting new businesses	4
9	Expanding recreation opportunities	5

	Q16. Rank in order of importance the greatest priorities when looking forward at Watauga County's Future Growth.	Votes for Most Important
	Ranked in order of Importance	
1	Protecting natural resources	80
2	Housing	61
3	Supporting existing businesses	7
4	Improving road infrastructure to accommodate future traffic	17
5	Expanding broadband access to new and underserved areas	1
6	Protecting property values	15
7	Expanding water and sewer utilities to new and underserved areas	0
8	Attracting new businesses	5
9	Expanding recreation opportunities	2

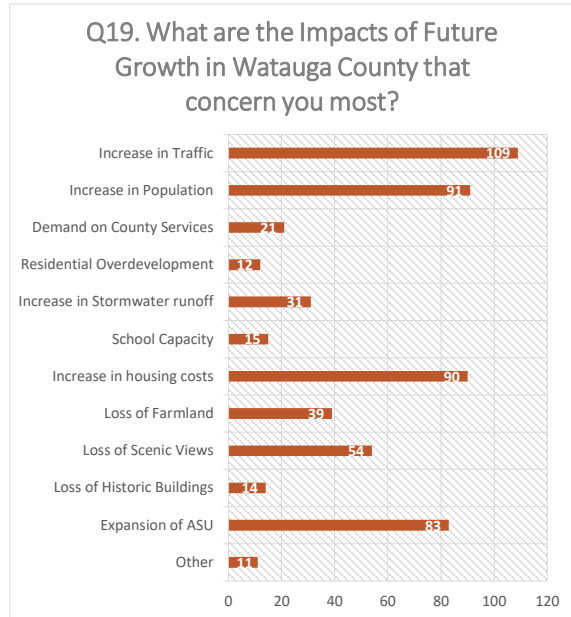
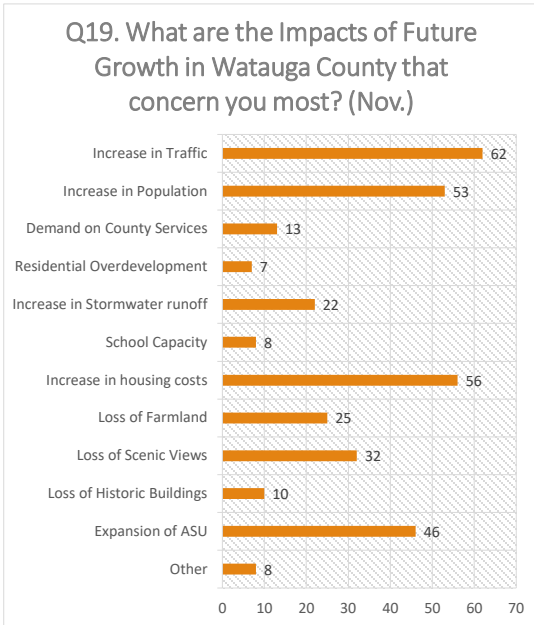
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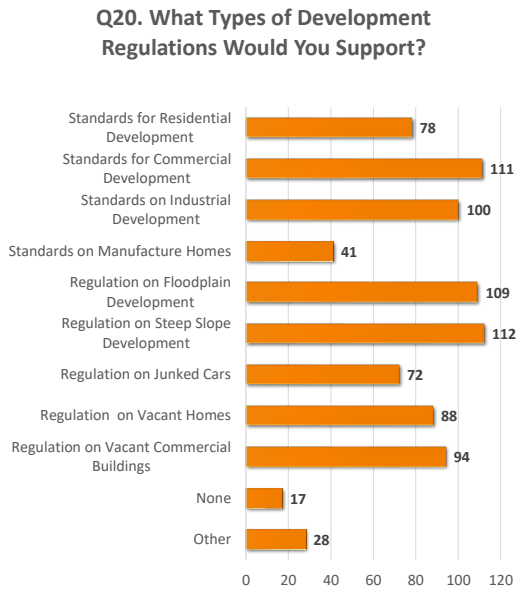
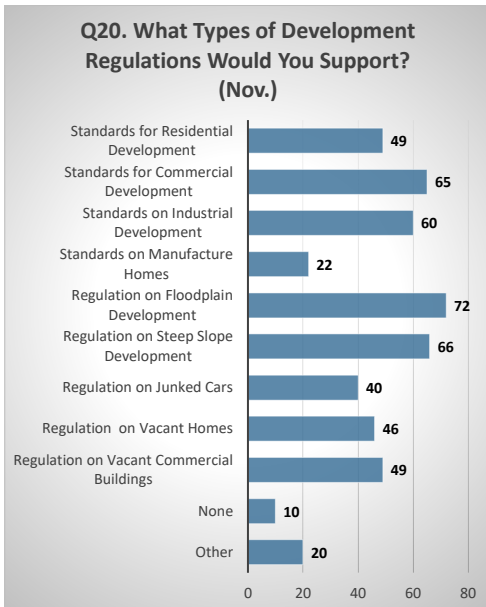
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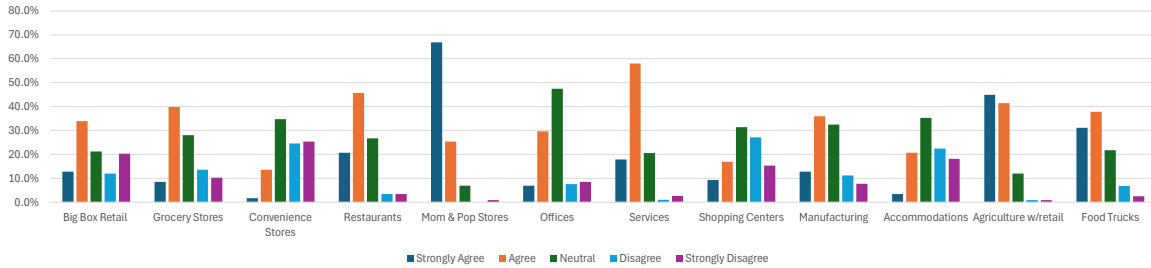
14

Q21. How Important are the following business sectors to Watauga County's future? (Nov.)		
	Ranked in order of Importance	Votes for Most Important
1	Health Care	32
2	Agriculture/Forestry	20
3	Service Industry	8
4	Retail	12
5	Tourism	16
6	Professional Offices	9
7	Construction	4
8	Non-profits	5
9	Manufacturing	1
10	Real Estate	9

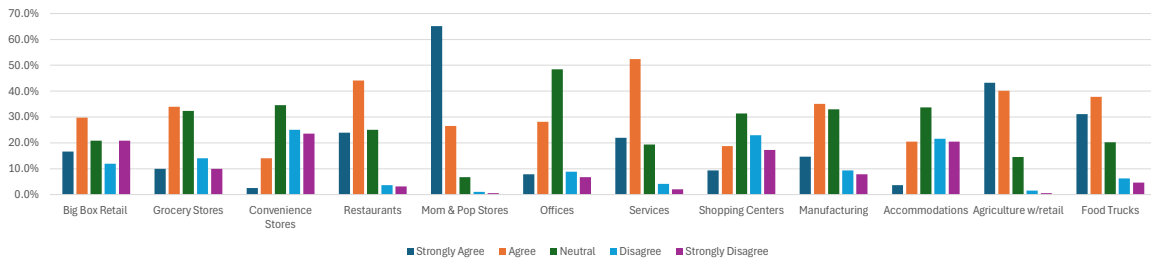
Q21. How Important are the following business sectors to Watauga County's future?		
	Ranked in order of Importance	Votes for Most Important
1	Health Care	52
2	Agriculture/Forestry	33
3	Retail	20
4	Service Industry	15
5	Tourism	25
6	Professional Offices	13
7	Construction	4
8	Non-profits	7
9	Manufacturing	4
10	Real Estate	12

15

Q22. Watauga County should encourage the following commercial development. (Nov.)



Q22. Watauga County should encourage the following commercial development.



16

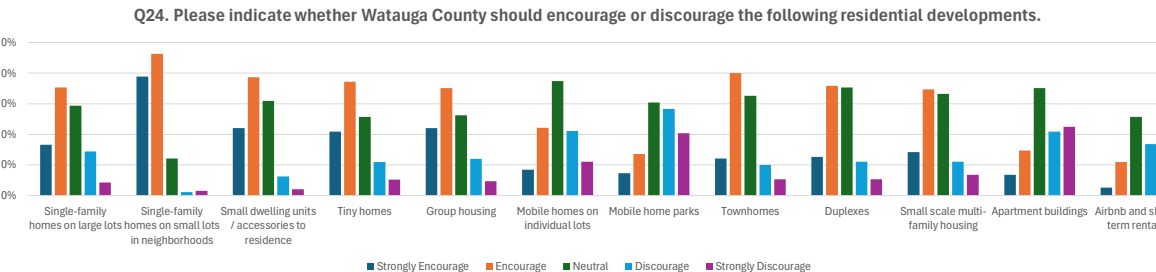
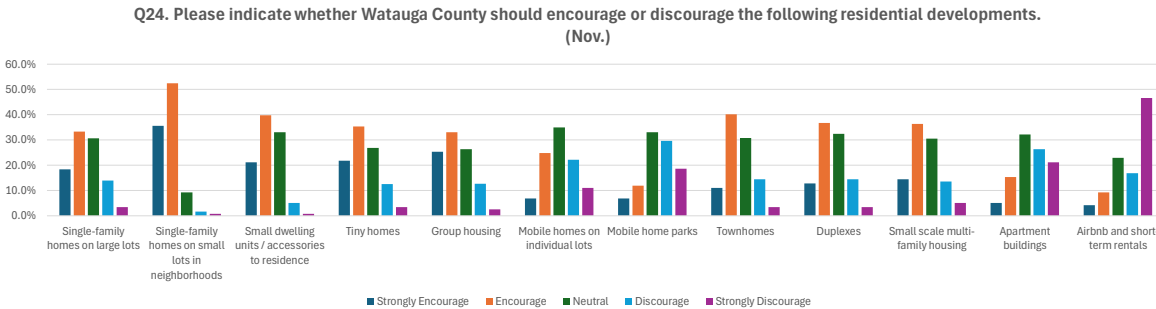
Q23. What should Watauga County prioritize regarding economic development? (Nov.)

	Ranked in order of Importance	Votes for Most Important
1	Improvements to the road system to accommodate future traffic increases	33
2	Investing in infrastructure	28
3	Support growth of existing businesses	15
4	Maintaining a high quality of life to attract new businesses	11
5	Natural resources-based tourism	13
6	Agriculture activities & agritourism	6
7	Support recruitment of new businesses	6
8	Reducing requirements/regulations necessary for developing businesses	6

Q23. What should Watauga County prioritize regarding economic development?

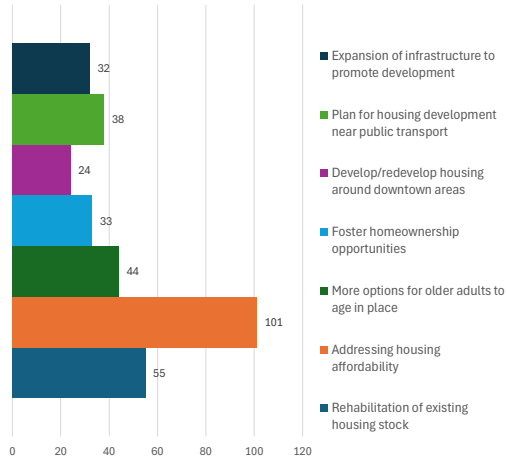
	Ranked in order of Importance	Votes for Most Important
1	Improvements to the road system to accommodate future traffic increases	59
2	Investing in infrastructure	43
3	Support growth of existing businesses	24
4	Maintaining a high quality of life to attract new businesses	16
5	Natural resources-based tourism	19
6	Agriculture activities & agritourism	7
7	Support recruitment of new businesses	7
8	Reducing requirements/regulations necessary for developing businesses	13

17

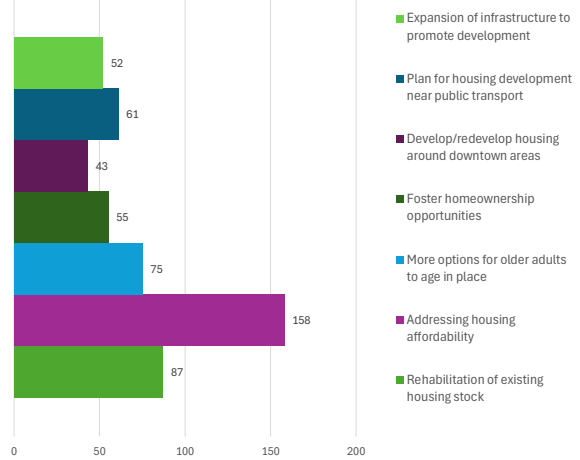


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Q25. What types of housing initiatives should Watauga County prioritize? (Nov.)

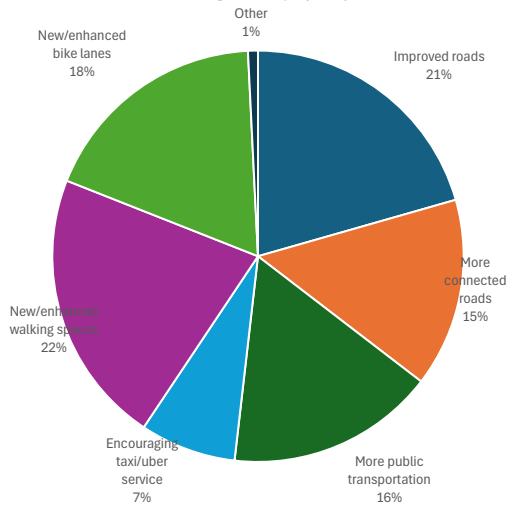


Q25. What types of housing initiatives should Watauga County prioritize?

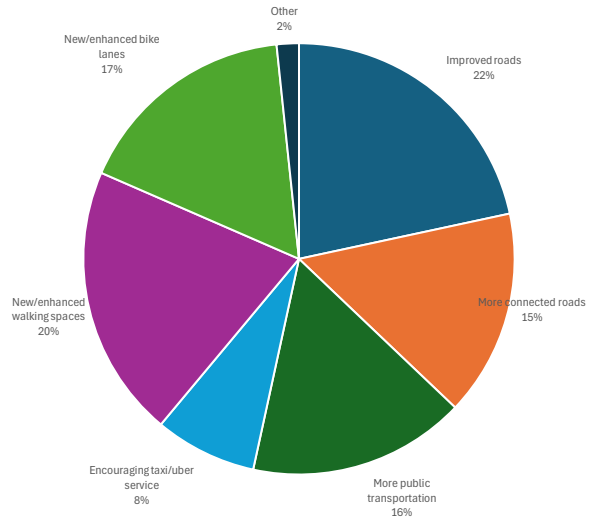


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Q26. What transportation features do you think are most important to the future development of Watauga County? (Nov.)

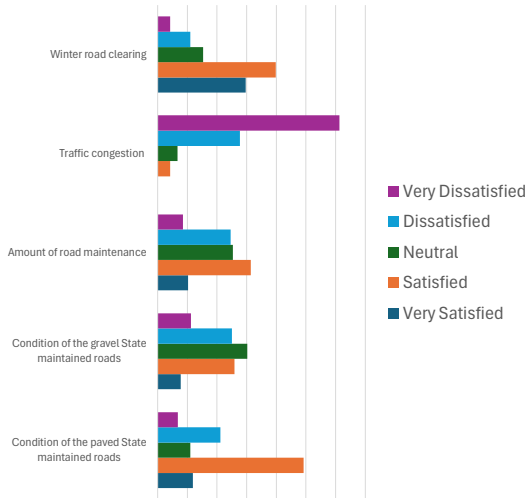


Q26. What transportation features do you think are most important to the future development of Watauga County?

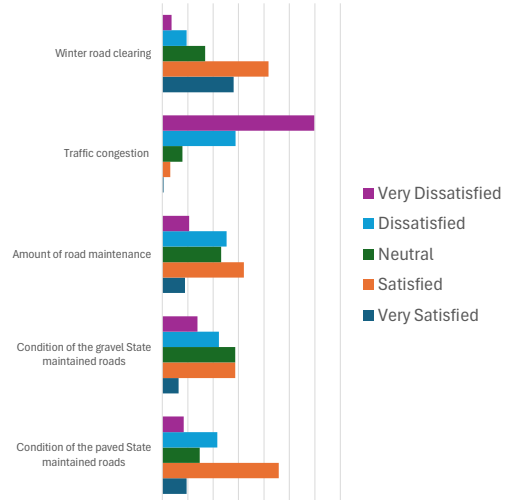


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Q27. How satisfied are you with the following: (Nov.)

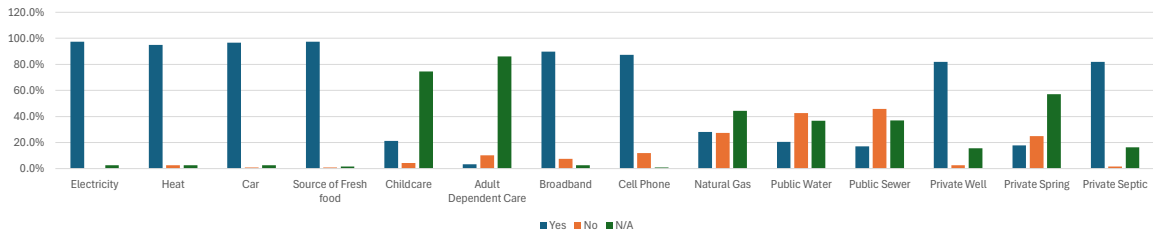


Q27. How satisfied are you with the following:

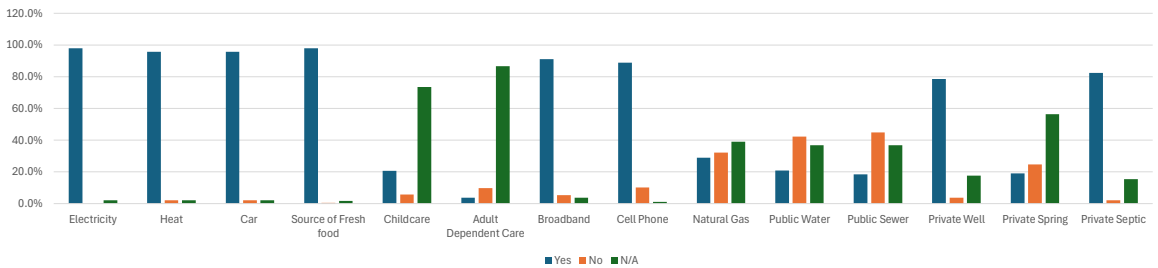


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Q28. I have access to ... (Nov.)

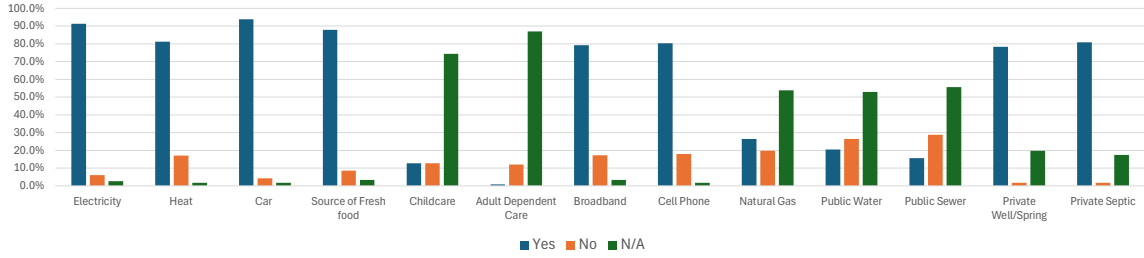


Q28. I have access to ...

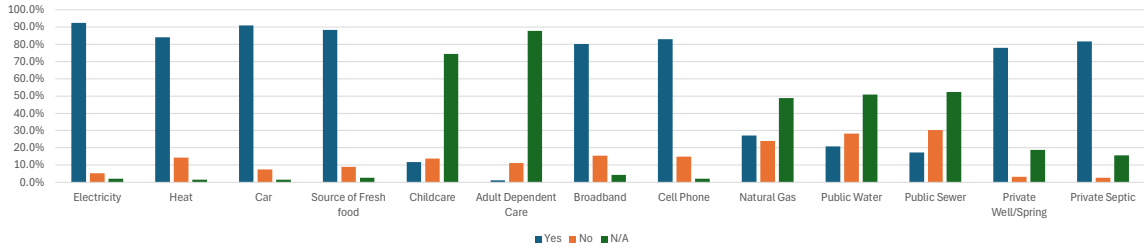


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Q29. I have affordable access to.... (Nov.)

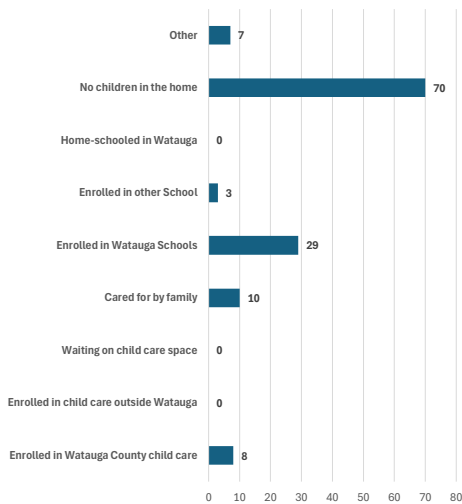


Q29. I have affordable access to....

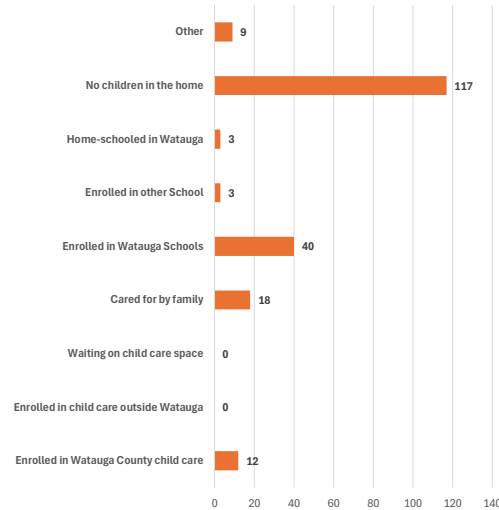


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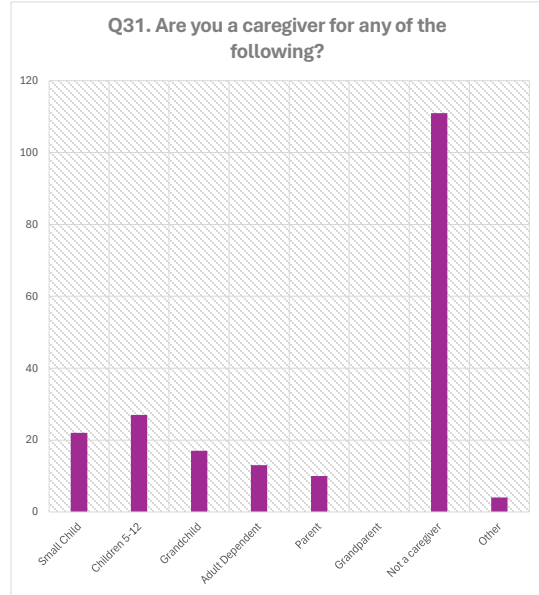
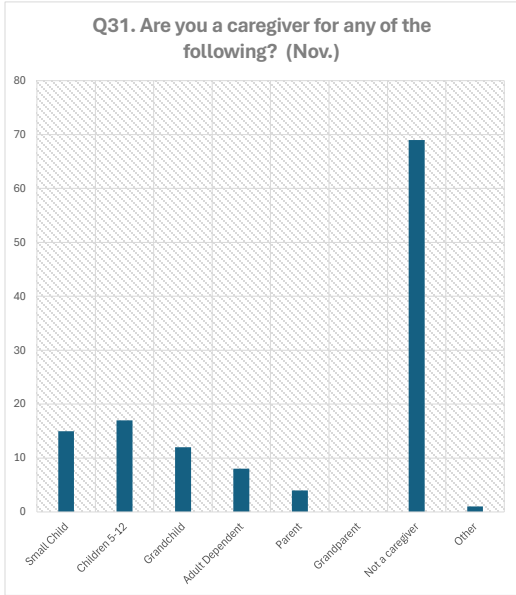
Q30. If there are children living in the home, are they... (Nov.)



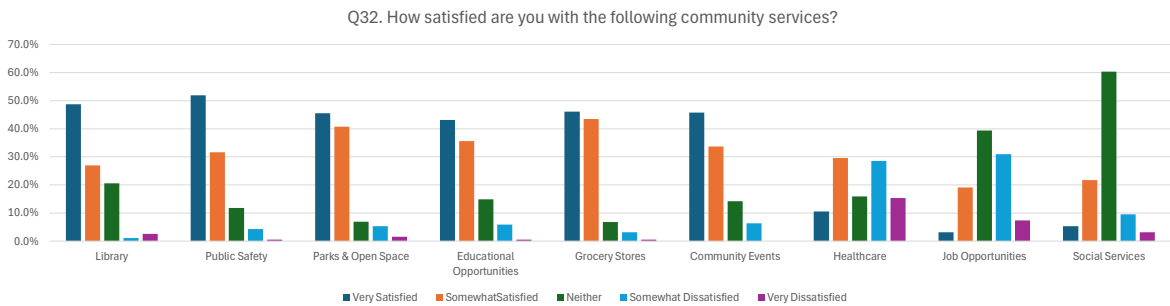
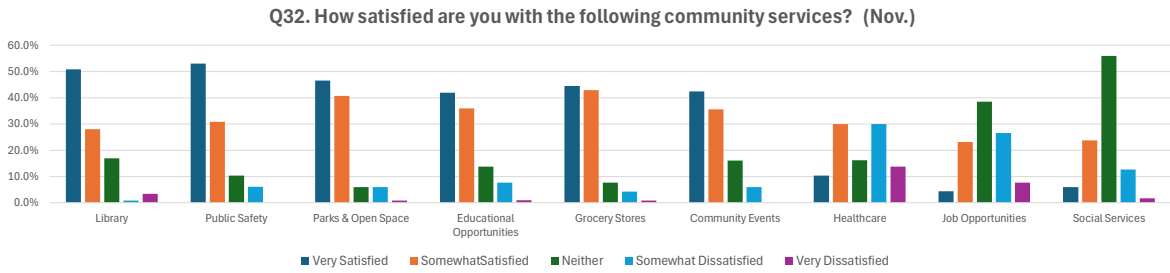
Q30. If there are children living in the home, are they...



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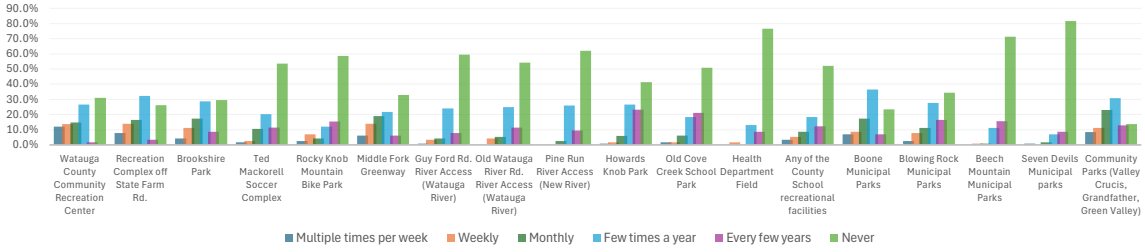


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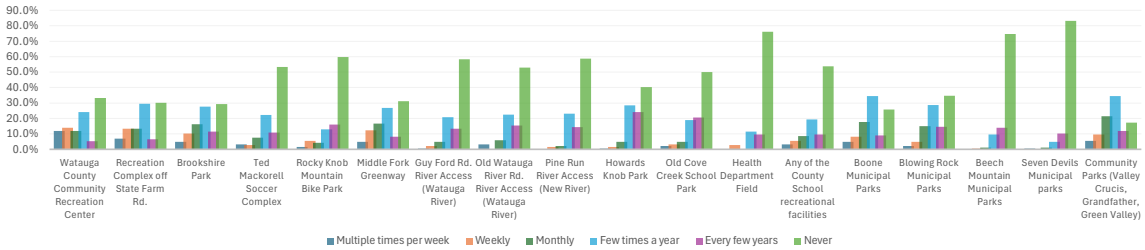


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Q34. How frequently do you visit the following pars and recreation areas in Watauga County? (Nov.)

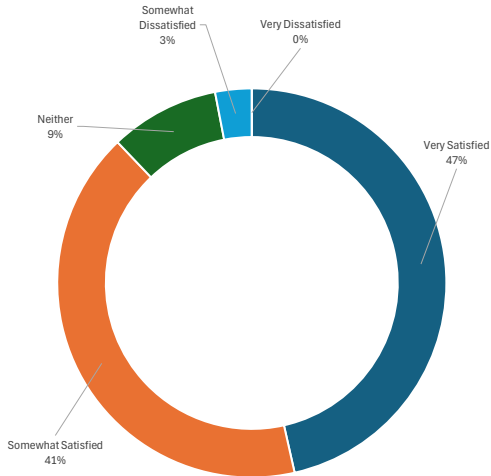


Q34. How frequently do you visit the following parks and recreation areas in Watauga County?

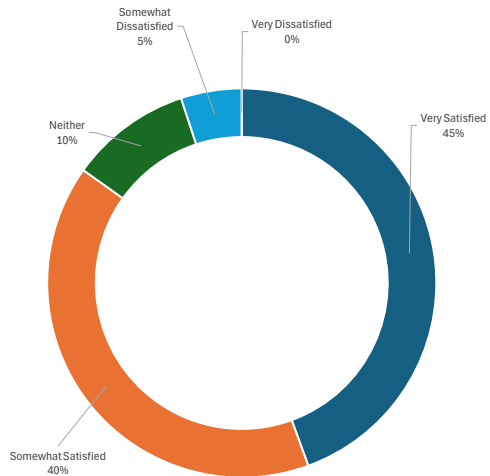


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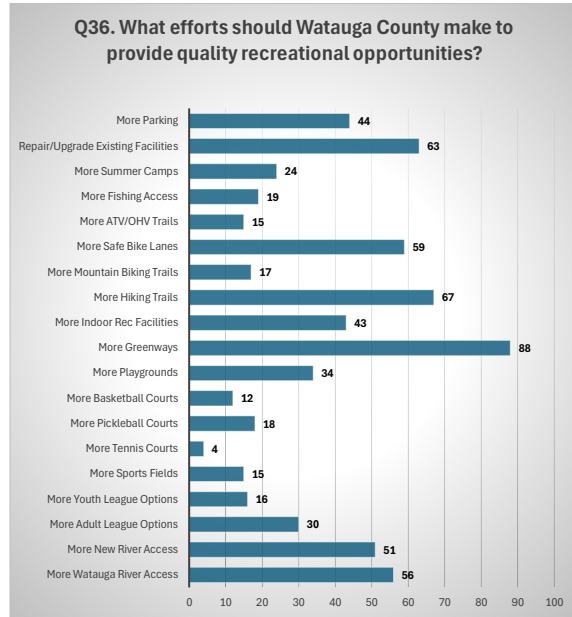
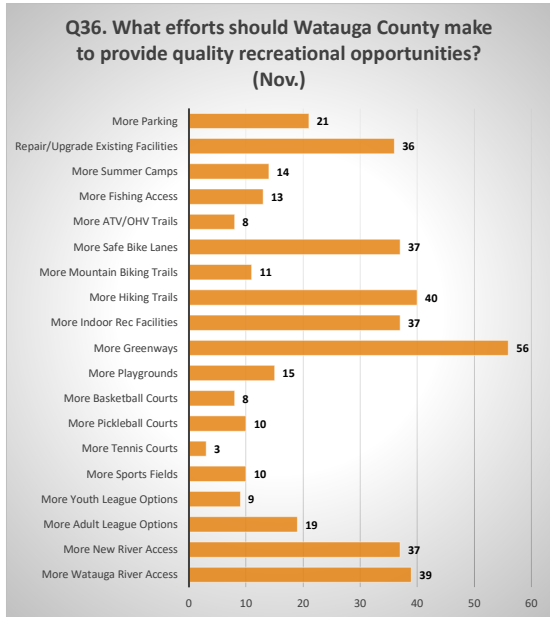
Q35. How satisfied are you with the variety of parks and recreation opportunities available in Watauga County? (Nov.)



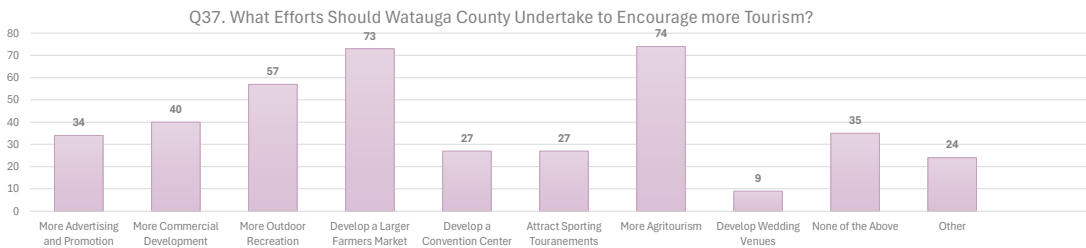
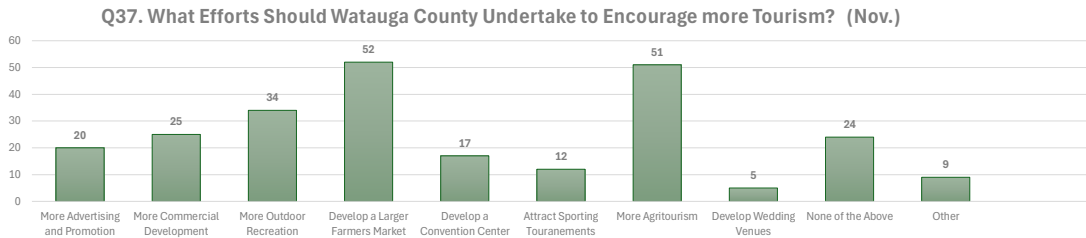
Q35. How satisfied are you with the variety of parks and recreation opportunities available in Watauga County?



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29



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Citizens' Plan for Watauga



Summary of Recommendations

The "Citizens' Plan for Watauga" is an expression of the vision of Watauga citizens and leaders of the County's goals and objectives for managing change in the community. The plan's purpose is to provide a balance between managing change, preserving community traditions, protecting the natural environment and enhancing "quality of life."

Plan Oversight Group



POG members from left to right: Buck Robbins, Fred Badders, Shelton Wilder, Charlie Wallin, Winston Kinsey and Steve Loflin. Absent from photo is Bill Sherwood.

CITIZENS' PLAN FOR WATAUGA - Summary of Recommendations

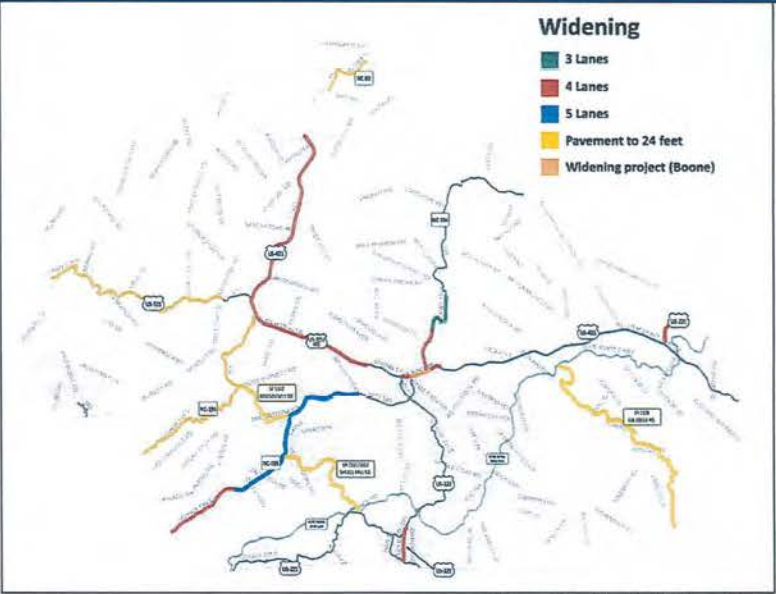
TRANSPORTATION

Highways

- Update the 2002 Thoroughfare Plan for Watauga County.
- Town of Boone, Watauga County, High Country Council of Governments (RPO), NCDOT, Appalachian State University (ASU) and citizen groups should work together to resolve the issue of routing for a Boone Bypass, which is considered to be the top transportation priority.
- Priority should be given to the following projects:
 - Hwy. 194 to four-lane from U.S. 421 to Howard's Creek Road, and multi-lane from Howard's Creek Road to Jack Hayes Road.
 - U.S. 421 N to multi-lane from Boone to the intersection of U.S. 421/U.S. 321 in Vilas.
 - N.C. Hwy 105 S to multi-lane from the Boone municipal limits to Avery County.
 - Multi-lane U.S. 421 S (King Street) from Hardin Street to N.C. Hwy 194.
 - Multi-lane Old U.S. 421 from U.S. 421 S to the high school.
- NCDOT should schedule paving of all public gravel roads to NCDOT standards as feasible.

Multimodal

- Strong emphasis should be placed on creating roadways that are safe for all modes of transportation, including bicycles and pedestrians.
- Expand AppalCART rural routes and decrease the service intervals between existing stops so more people have the opportunity to ride and waiting times are shorter.
- Expanded corridors for AppalCART should include U.S. 421 in both directions in the County, U.S. 321 toward Blowing Rock, and N.C. Hwy 194 to Green Valley School.
- Assess the most heavily populated areas of the County and provide service as practical to those areas.
- Expand AppalCART service to affordable housing projects as feasible.
- Create Park-n-Ride lots outside of Boone and provide AppalCART service to these lots.
- Boone and ASU should work together to:
 - Promote and provide more environmentally friendly, greener, safer and sustainable transportation modes, especially pedestrian and bicycles.
 - Provide more parking areas for bicycles at ASU and in business areas.
 - Encourage ASU to consider further limiting the number of students who can bring their vehicles to the University campus.



Thoroughfare Plan for Watauga County



Boone Bypass Alternative

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The concern for preserving and improving "quality of life" is a theme that permeates all aspects of Watauga County's future. All efforts to promote economic development should focus on "better rather than bigger" and enhancing "quality of life."

Economic development related organizations are charged with various aspects of economic promotion and support in Watauga County. While each is important, there is a growing need to achieve a higher degree of cooperation to ensure that the array of activities collectively promote established core objectives.

Strengthening Organization

- Strengthen the focus of economic development by making the County the core agency for economic planning, policy interpretation and coordination. Adding resources to this ongoing program would enable the County to assume a more assertive role in economic development.
- Invest in the creation of a dynamic and comprehensive economic development strategy to better explore and capitalize on potential economic opportunities.
- Encourage and facilitate the provision of essential infrastructure, such as transportation, water, sewer and natural gas, to provide an attractive business climate for potential economic development.
- Work with and coordinate the wide range of economic development resources available to the County, including Advantage West, Appalachian Regional Commission, ASU Center for Entrepreneurship, Committee of 100, Future Forward, High Country Business Network, Service Corps of Retired Executives, Tourism Development Authority, Watauga County Economic Development Commission, and others, to explore innovative and fresh concepts.
- Organize annual or semi-annual workshops with these entities to create a spirit of cooperation and focus resources.
- Where appropriate, promote regional economic development strategies beyond Watauga County that provide employment opportunities for Watauga County residents.
- Increase promotion of the Watauga Green Business Plan and the concepts it embraces.
- Promote the development of renewable energy concepts and participation in renewable energy initiatives.



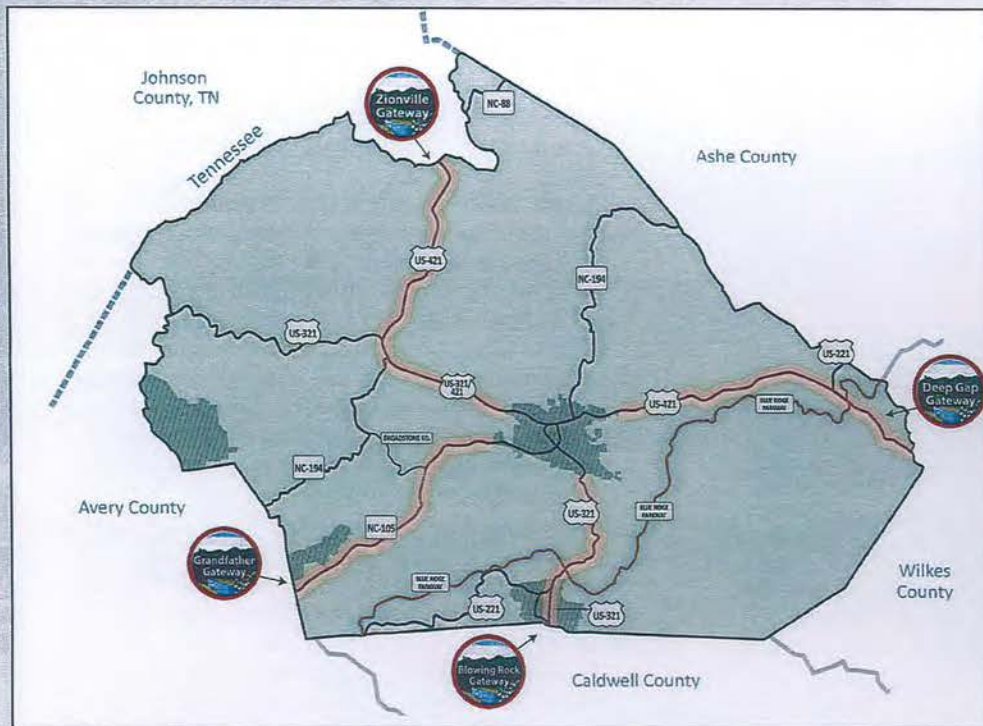
ECONOMIC GATEWAYS

Watauga transportation corridors are also economic “Gateways” into the County and are critical to the County’s economic future. Watauga County should guide development and protect the integrity and potential of these strategic economic corridors.

“Gateways” are defined as the entrances to Watauga County and are identified as the primary arterial highways (US 321, US 421 and NC Hwy 105). Providing attractive as well as functional “Gateways” into Watauga County facilitates both the positive image and economy of the community.

The quality of life enjoyed by Watauga County citizens and visitors is directly related to the natural environment. The “Gateways” are inextricably linked to the perception of this unique environment and the rich quality of life.

- Incentives for property owners and the community should be developed to maintain attractive and compatible development that will enhance the total economic value of the “Gateways” to the community.
- Formulate an individual “Gateway Corridor” strategy for each of the four (4) designated “Gateways,” beginning with the “Deep Gap” Gateway Corridor.



Economic Gateways Map



KEY ECONOMIC SECTORS

Education/Research

- Work with Appalachian State University to capitalize on University research.
- Promote the development of a research park to bring skilled employment into the community.
- Support the University of North Carolina Tomorrow goals mandating that ASU “increase its capacity and commitment to respond to and lead economic transformation and community development.”
- Strengthen the alliance with Appalachian State University and Caldwell Community College & Technical Institute to understand and attain education and skill levels needed by Watauga residents.

Medical/Research

- Watauga County should work with medical professionals and the Appalachian Regional Healthcare System to facilitate a “medical cluster” concept.
- Encourage Appalachian State University and Caldwell Community College & Technical Institute to explore new healthcare ventures.
- Focus on and promote activities and businesses that are involved in technology, research, education and medicine.

Tourism and Recreation

- Capitalize on existing tourism by encouraging the Tourism Development Authorities to enhance and increase strategic marketing of Watauga County.
- Fully develop and promote the greenways concept such as the new greenway connector near the new high school, trails, parks and other eco-tourism assets.
- Promote eco-tourism, defined as "environmentally responsible travel and visitation to natural areas."

Industry and Business

- Develop a commerce/business park site in Watauga County and explore opportunities for a joint venture with Appalachian State University, Caldwell Community College & Technical Institute, and the medical cluster.
- Plan for a flex or shell building in a commerce/business park to meet the demands of potential new businesses.
- Expand and strengthen support between the community and existing businesses and industry to reassure businesses that their presence is appreciated and their needs are considered.



Photocourtesy/Blowing Rock, TN

Agriculture

- Promote the production of agricultural products, especially those produced organically, to capitalize on the growing demand for local food products.
- Conduct relevant market research to support a marketing strategy for such products.
- Find effective ways to facilitate the local farmers markets, and related efforts of the Watauga County Cooperative Extension.
- Promote a grower's cooperative.
- Promote and explore opportunities in niche markets of food production, such as herbs and spices, grapes (vineyards), strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, and local vegetables, and promote as local foods.
- Work with local agricultural interests to create an interest group committee to promote agri-tourism and sponsor demonstration projects, such as organic gardening with a living historic farm.



WATER AND SEWER

The most appropriate alternative role for Watauga County is the role of planner and facilitator of water and sewer services.

- The County should promote sound water and sewer intergovernmental cooperation, facilitating needed and feasible development of infrastructure and services in areas not currently served, and assume a leadership role by participating in planning, policy making and strategic capital investments.
- The County should plan and implement measures that would improve existing public and private services.
- County officials should assign leadership roles at policy and staff levels that would be consistent with the County's assumed role as facilitator.
- County officials should assume a leadership role in identifying and protecting water sources.
- Watauga County should expect and plan for future strategic investments in the planning and the development of water and sewer infrastructure and services for areas of the County not presently served, where feasibility can be demonstrated.
- Watauga County should reevaluate and update the recommendations made by Draper Aden in 2001.
- Watauga County should work with municipalities to help guide water and sewer to areas targeted for economic development and affordable housing.
- Watauga County should provide for the proper disposal of chemicals and substances likely to end up in the water supply by making disposal of such items easier and more convenient, and by increasing the frequency with which toxic substances can be disposed.
- Watauga County should encourage the use of indigenous vegetation for landscaping.
- Watauga County should seek grants and other funding resources to help with the expansion of municipal service to unserved areas.
- Watauga County should work with and support the High Country Council of Governments in reference to a study of ground water resources.
- Watauga County should lead in an intergovernmental endeavor to develop a 10-year Capital Improvement Plan for water and sewer projects in the interest of economic development and public health.

KEY COMMUNITY SERVICES

Schools

- Provide air conditioning in all schools.
- Update the media retrieval system in all schools.
- Construct a new four classroom building for Valle Crucis School and demolish the existing building prone to flooding.
- Add office space and parking area at the Central Office.
- Resurface parking areas at several schools.
- Provide new roofing at most schools.
- Evaluate the prevailing dropout rate and implement a plan to address retention of students.

Community Centers

- Assess the need and financial viability for a community center in eastern Watauga County.
- Encourage greater cooperation between schools and communities for use of County school facilities.
- Facilitate community centers that are attractive, functional, visible, safe and accessible to their communities.



Law Enforcement

- Periodic evaluations should take place to monitor the resources of the Sheriff's Department to insure these resources are adequate to meet the law enforcement needs and demands of Watauga County.
- New policies should be made regarding transport of detainees and mental health patients.
- A Capital Improvement Plan should be prepared to address law enforcement capital needs.
- The Detention Center should be expanded in the near-term to accommodate anticipated needs.

Emergency Services

- Perform periodic evaluations to assess the ratio of population to emergency services personnel, taking into consideration the rural character of Watauga County and the number of miles that must be traveled from emergency service centers to all areas of the County.
- Develop strategies to improve cooperation and coordination between the County and each of the fire departments.
- Create an Emergency Services Master Plan for the County to address:
 - The need for paid personnel in fire stations.
 - The need for central dispatch of emergency services personnel.
 - Alternative approaches to communications to enhance efficiency and effectiveness.
 - Methods to improve cooperation between the County and fire departments.
 - Additional water points for retrieving water to fight rural fires.

Other Human Services

- Although beyond the scope of the Plan, maintaining the "quality of life" in Watauga County must consider other human social needs, such as care for children and the elderly, health care and other fundamental human needs.
- An in-depth assessment of such needs and a plan for addressing the most pressing humanistic issues should be undertaken in the future.

AFFORDABLE (WORKFORCE) HOUSING

- Ensure that subdivision regulations and other land use ordinances do not serve as barriers to the construction of affordable housing.
- Promote mixed land uses that incorporate housing with other uses that can be blended without sacrificing safety, health and welfare of citizens.
- Allow a broad range of housing choices in Watauga County ordinances. Encourage duplex, triplex and quadraplex development.
- Ensure that current and future regulations provide sufficient opportunities for nursing homes and other similar care facilities.
- Consider the use of land use policies that accommodate manufactured housing and mixed-use housing.
- Develop a countywide affordable housing plan in cooperation with municipalities.
- Investigate state and federally funded programs that assist in housing rehabilitation.
- Lead in establishing an affordable housing trust fund in cooperation with municipalities and the County, and seek external funding from other sources.
- Preserve existing housing stock and address substandard housing wherever possible.

PRESERVATION OF UNIQUE COMMUNITY IDENTITIES AND HERITAGE

- Create a strategy for preservation of unique communities that identifies and promotes preservation of significant historic, scenic and cultural features.
- Encourage restoration and use of historic sites and community landmarks to foster community identity.
- Develop uniform and pleasing community identification signage along roadways to identify designated communities.
- Review the Community Planning Guidelines to determine if the guidelines are still appropriate for current needs.
- Develop Small Area Planning guidelines and initiatives to guide land use, open space, transportation improvements, capital improvements and identify opportunities for preservation and revitalization.
- Where appropriate, develop Small Area Plans.
- Enhance community gathering points.
- Explore whether some school sites could be utilized to accommodate other community programs.
- Design and locate public spaces and buildings to reinforce and express the community's unique character.
- Implement programs for removing unattractive elements, such as illegal signs, graffiti, litter, utility poles and billboards, as feasible.
- Promote art and cultural opportunities at appropriate public and private locations in unique communities.

Preservation of Farmland

- Promote the Voluntary Farm Preservation Program and work to ensure the Soil and Water Conservation office continues to provide education and opportunities for persons interested in the program.
- Support the Soil and Water Conservation office in its efforts to provide information about the Agriculture Cost Share Program (ACSP). This program is voluntary and is designed to protect water quality by installing best management practices on agricultural lands.
- Promote and educate citizens on the benefits of establishing conservation easements by involving local land conservancies and Soil and Water Conservation personnel.
- Promote the use of the Present-Use-Value taxation program.



PARKS AND RECREATION

- Develop a countywide recreation master plan.
- The plan should be regional in scope, developed with the cooperation and coordination of all municipalities, the Watauga County Board of Education, ASU, Watauga Parks and Recreation, and the public. The plan should address present and future needs with an emphasis on:
 - Organized Sports
 - Passive Recreation
 - Greenways
 - Blueways
 - Walking and Bicycling
- A Recreation Capital Improvement Plan should be incorporated into the master plan.
- Subdivision planning and development plans of various types for medium and high density developments should include provisions for open space.

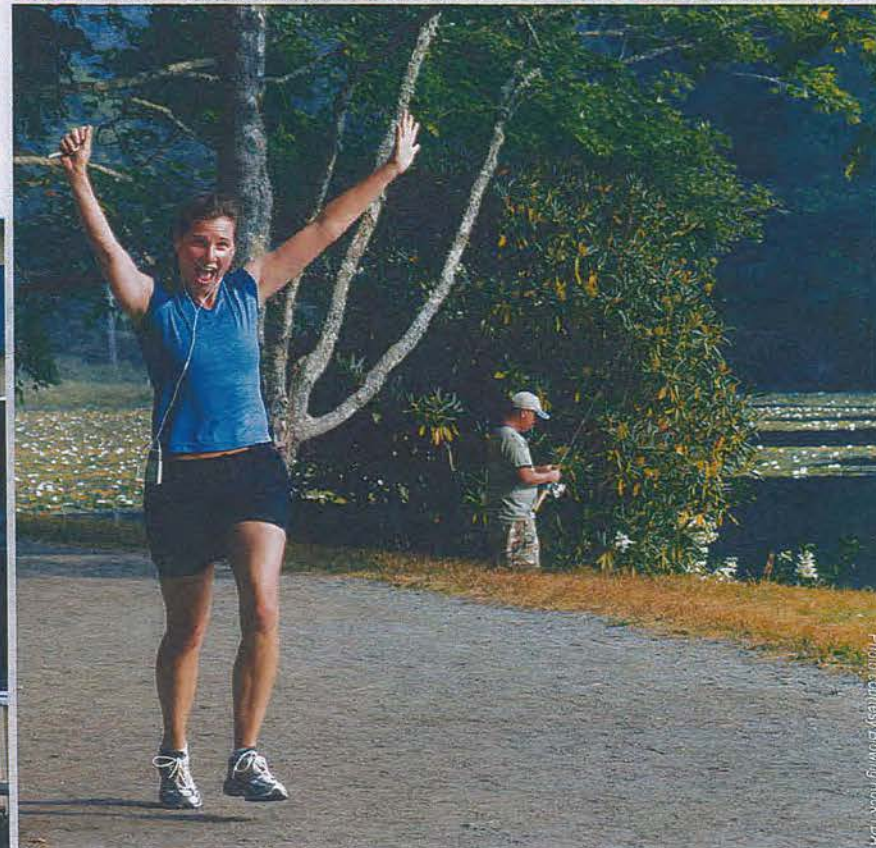


Photo courtesy: Browning Hook, TDA

IMPLEMENTATION FOR THE CITIZENS' PLAN FOR WATAUGA

The "Citizens' Plan for Watauga" should be the beginning point in a process that carries the community forward into a continuum of deliberate strategies and actions designed to understand, anticipate and manage changes that will occur in the future and to ensure that such change is consistent with the will of the Watauga citizenry and compatible with the fragile natural environment that is the essence of Watauga County.

Public Involvement

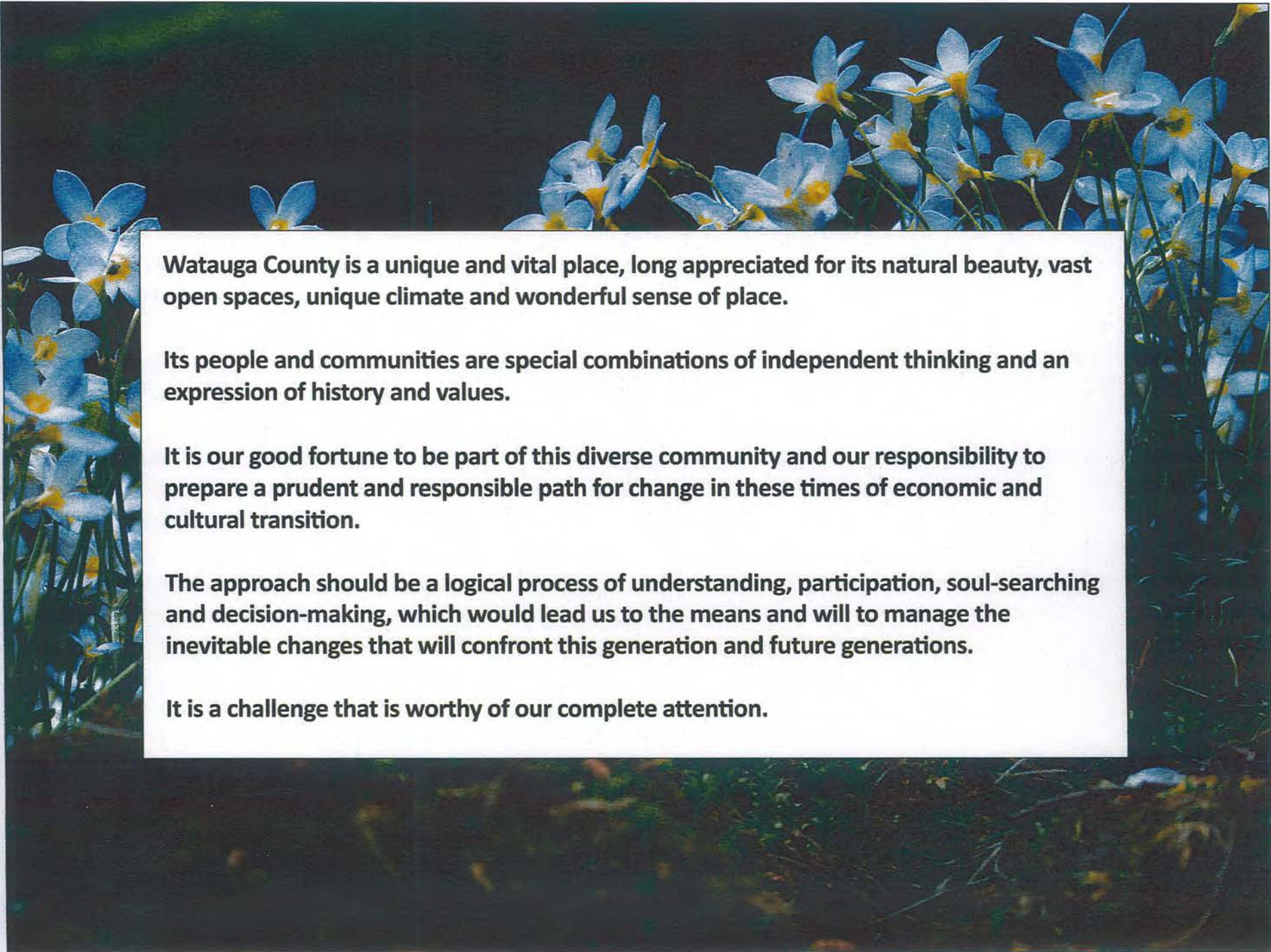
- Establish a "Citizens' Plan for Watauga" newsletter that would be published quarterly on the County's website and further distributed in the community. The newsletter would post news related to important planning and change management initiatives and summarize information and events that relate to this theme.
- Create a "Citizens' Plan for Watauga" Forum composed of a cross-section of community leaders and citizens in Watauga County, including elected officials, business people, institutional representatives, retirees, youth and others who have a stake in managing change in Watauga County. Create an environment in which participation in this forum is both prestigious and meaningful. Meet periodically with this group and present the progress of the preceding year and formulate at least five (5) concrete objectives for the subsequent year.
- Take planning and information about managing change in Watauga County into the schools. The future of Watauga County rests with our children.

Intergovernmental Coordination

- A key consideration in achieving a successful process for plan implementation is meaningful and deliberate cooperation among the local governments, and their management and planning staffs, within Watauga County. Mistrust and competition must not be permitted to delay the creation of a productive and innovative solution to achieving a desirable level of information sharing and collaboration among the County, the four municipalities and ASU.
- Formalize and enhance the planning consortium among the local governments and ASU to foster intergovernmental collaboration on key planning issues.
- Establish quarterly status working retreats of the consortium that are managed by a facilitator that rotates annually among the five governments.
- Formulate specific annual objectives related to plan implementation and sponsor joint participation in work tasks that are of mutual interest to the participants.
- Assign responsibilities among the participants for staffing and participation in the annual "Citizens' Plan for Watauga" Forum.
- Facilitate coordinated involvement in strategic public participation events and processes.



Photo courtesy: Blowing Rock TDA



Watauga County is a unique and vital place, long appreciated for its natural beauty, vast open spaces, unique climate and wonderful sense of place.

Its people and communities are special combinations of independent thinking and an expression of history and values.

It is our good fortune to be part of this diverse community and our responsibility to prepare a prudent and responsible path for change in these times of economic and cultural transition.

The approach should be a logical process of understanding, participation, soul-searching and decision-making, which would lead us to the means and will to manage the inevitable changes that will confront this generation and future generations.

It is a challenge that is worthy of our complete attention.

Martin ■ McGill

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Citizens' Plan for Watauga



Watauga County

Photo: Doreen Vernon

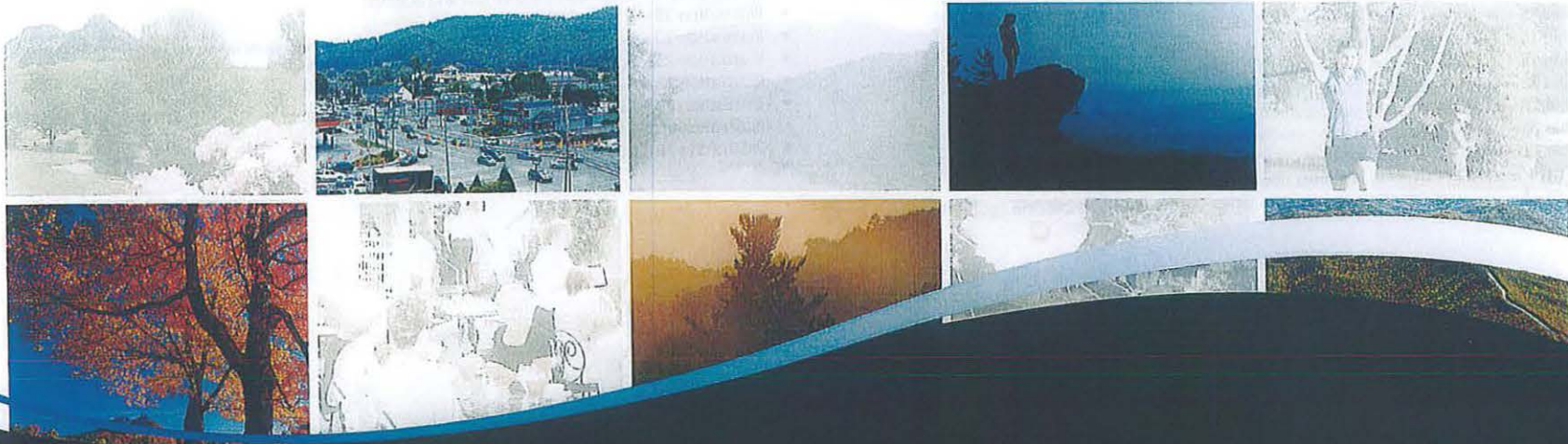


Citizens' Plan for Watauga

The Watauga County Board of Commissioners and Watauga County Planning Board and staff are commended for recognizing the importance of updating the County's comprehensive plan and the absolute significance of "quality of life" issues for Watauga County. From the beginning of this process, Commissioner Kinsey has stressed that "this must be a citizens' plan."

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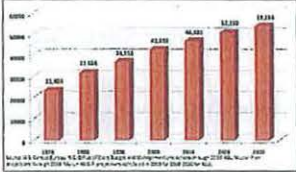
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Preface

The "Citizens' Plan for Watauga" is an expression of the vision of Watauga citizens and leaders of the County's goals and objectives for managing change in the community. The plan's purpose is to provide a balance between managing change, preserving community traditions, protecting the natural environment and enhancing "quality of life."

Human beings, the land on which we live, and our environment are undeniably interrelated. Sustaining an equitable balance in these relational elements is important for present and future generations.

Our individual and collective decisions and actions affect the quality of human life and the quality of our natural environment. By understanding these principles, and the consequences of continuing to violate them, we establish a common basis for working toward becoming a "sustainable community."

This document is a reflection of the Watauga community's concern for such principles. At the same time, this plan focuses on new issues that have emerged, such as "sustainability" and "green" issues, which are of great importance to the future of the Watauga community.

Sustainability Principles

- A natural resource will only be available for a finite time if the depletion rate exceeds the replacement rate. Thus, unconstrained use of resources affects future generations.
- Human activity produces harmful substances, which must be mediated to maintain balance in the natural systems.
- Humans and other living creatures make up ecosystems, which are inter-dependent. Ecosystems are most stable when they include a diversity of species. Overuse and pollution of the natural environment has implications for maintaining the earth's biodiversity.
- Human needs have physical, economic, environmental, cultural, social and spiritual dimensions. They can be met equitably without compromising the physical environment. To achieve social stability and the cooperation required for large-scale changes related to the first three principles, we must work together to achieve greater fairness.

This emphasis on sustainability and the efficient use of land and other natural resources is particularly relevant given the great recessionary decline in our national and local economies since 2007. It is essential that the community acts to protect its vital economic and natural resources. Further, strategic community investments in capital improvements must be carefully weighed against the collective benefits and economic gain derived from such investments. This re-emphasis on sustainability points to the greater need to plan and prioritize to achieve strategic community goals and meet essential needs.

Plan Oversight Group (POG)



POG members from left to right: Buck Robbins, Fred Badders, Shelton Wilder, Charlie Wallin, Winston Kinsey and Steve Loffin. Absent from photo is Bill Sherwood.

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Beginning the Planning Process

The Watauga County Board of Commissioners named residents from each commission's district and the County Planning Board to the Plan Oversight Group (POG) and appointed Commissioner Winston Kinsey as the direct representative from the County Commission. The POG recognized the inevitability of change, the necessary management of existing resources, and most of all, the essential need to have a broad-based process involving as many citizens as possible from all parts of the County. The first product of the comprehensive planning effort was the "Citizens' Plan for Watauga," Phase 1, presented to the County Commission on April 14, 2008. Several issues of concern emerged from the community meetings held around the County in Phase 1 of the process.

These issues and others are addressed in the "Citizens' Plan for Watauga." From these citizen responses, the POG developed recommendations in numerous work sessions addressing the issues that are important to citizens. The key question derived from Phase 1 was; "What do the County's citizens want this plan to accomplish?" Watauga County citizens answered the question with the following responses:

- The "Citizens' Plan for Watauga" must demonstrate that the concerns and priorities of the public are shared by the Board of Commissioners.
- It should indicate that the County Commission is prepared to take a proactive leadership role.
- It should reflect communication with public and private agencies and groups working independently for Watauga's future, such as the NC Department of Transportation, the National Park Service and economic development organizations.
- It must establish goals and place the responsibilities for meeting them.
- It should suggest strategies and approaches for reaching goals.
- It must report on the plan and involve the citizenry.
- Finally, it should establish a process for periodic review and updating.

Prominent Community Issues from Community Meetings

1. Traffic congestion
2. Water availability
3. Protection of natural resources
4. Farmland/large tract preservation
5. Land use divisions that are appropriate
6. Preservation of unique community identities and mountain heritage
7. Economic development/employment/affordable housing
8. Emergency services keeping pace with growth
9. Educational opportunities
10. Widespread recreational opportunities



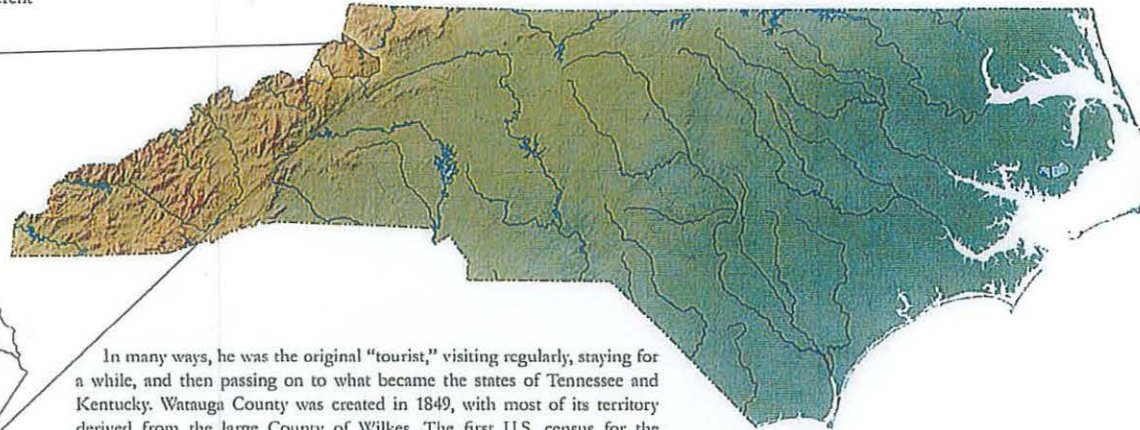
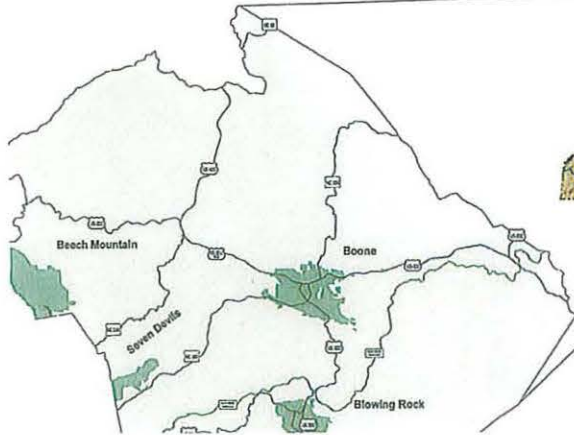


Watauga County

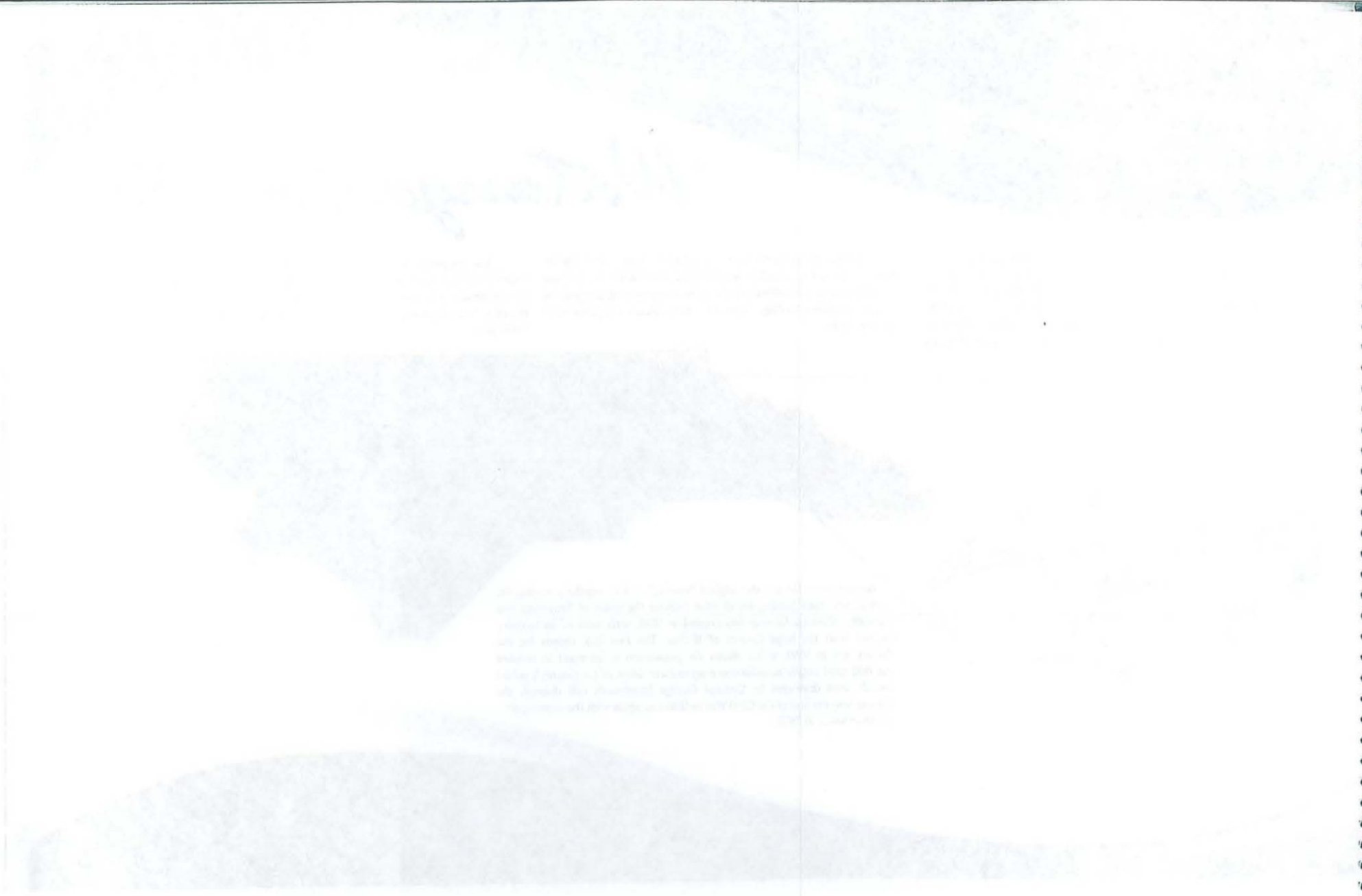
Watauga County is located in northwest North Carolina. Ashe, Avery, Caldwell and Wilkes counties in North Carolina and Johnson County in Tennessee bound the County. The County has a complex geology and falls within the Unaka Mountain Range and Blue Ridge Mountain Range. The County is the headwaters for four major river basins: Yadkin, New, Watauga and Catawba; all four flow in different directions.

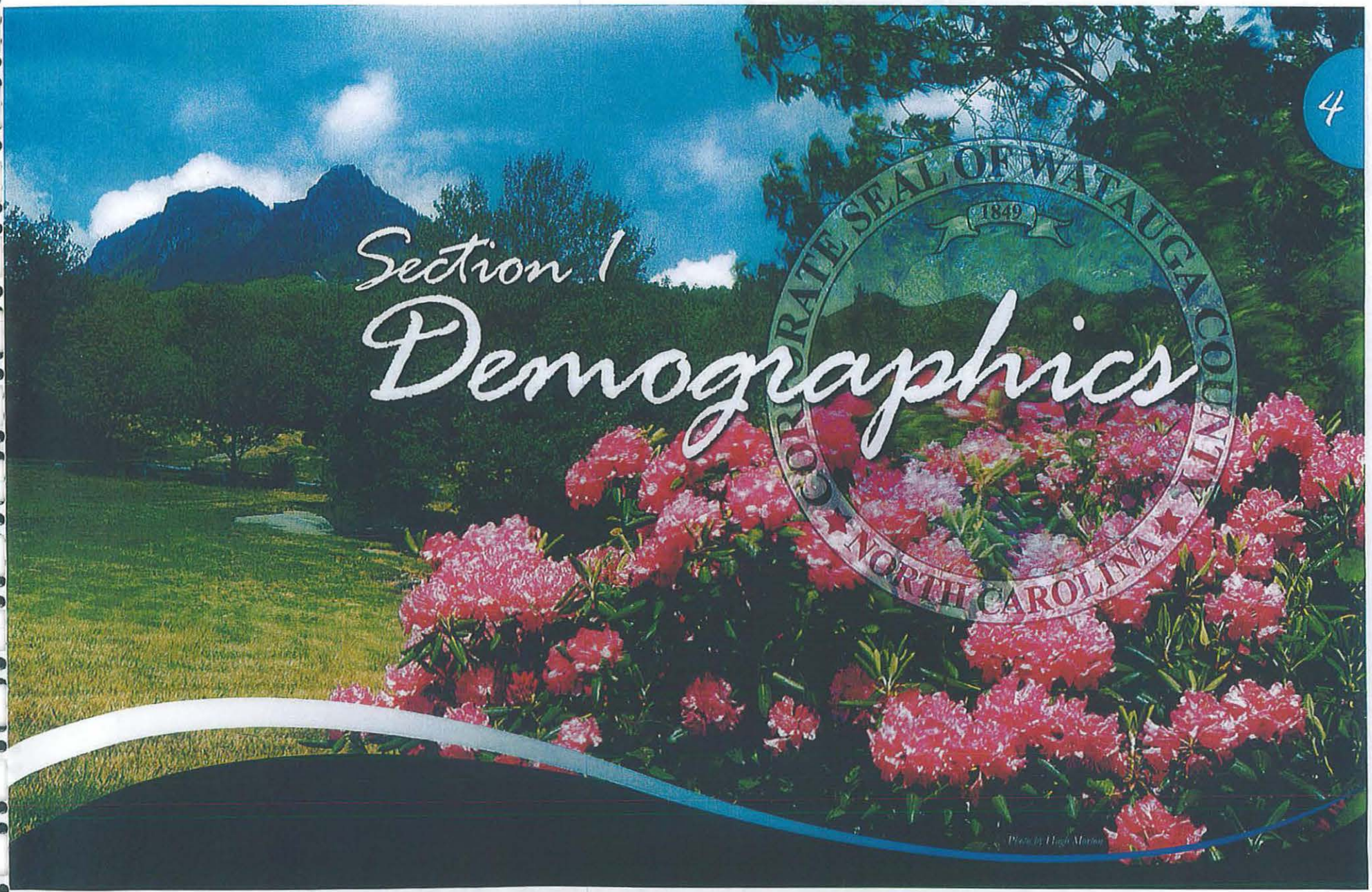
The human history of the area of Watauga County starts with the "Native" Americans, probably several thousand years B.C. In later eras, the Cherokee, Catawba and perhaps Shawnee hunted, camped and had some agricultural villages here. The name Watauga is probably of Cherokee origin.

A few people of European descent were here by 1730. Later, would-be settlers had no easy access from the great wagon road of the Shenandoah Valley. As early as 1760, Daniel Boone was one of the early "long hunters," who came here from the Yadkin River in the Piedmont.



In many ways, he was the original "tourist," visiting regularly, staying for a while, and then passing on to what became the states of Tennessee and Kentucky. Watauga County was created in 1849, with most of its territory derived from the large County of Wilkes. The first U.S. census for the County was in 1850, which shows the population to be small in number and dedicated largely to subsistence agriculture. Most of the County's public records were destroyed by General George Stoneman's raid through the County near the end of the Civil War in 1865 and again with the burning of the courthouse in 1872.



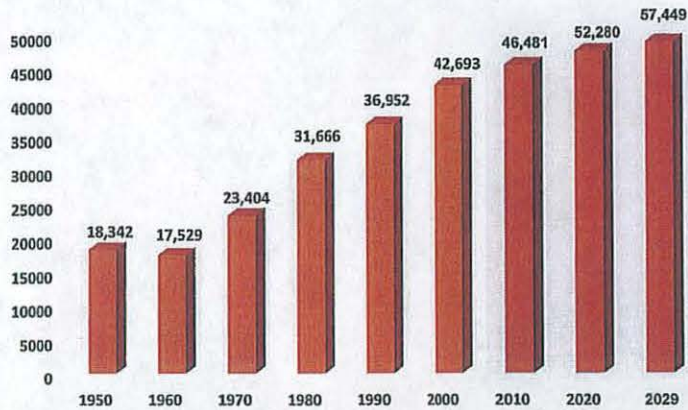


Section 1
Demographics

Photo by Hugh Martin

Population Trends

TABLE 1
Watauga County Actual
& OSBM Population Projections



Source: U.S. Census Bureau & N.C. Office of State Budget and Management
 (April 24, 2009)

Watauga County has experienced growth during every decade since 1960. Between 1960 and 2000, the population more than doubled from 17,529 to 42,693 according to the U.S. Census Bureau. The increase from 1990 to 2000 was more than 15%, equaling 1.5 people moving into Watauga County every day throughout the ten-year period. From 2010 to 2029, the N.C. Office of State Budget and Management (April 24, 2009) projects an increase of more than 10,968 new residents.

Watauga County remains an increasingly popular location within North Carolina for first and second homebuyers. The projections by the N.C. Office of State Budget and Management do not include the people who are second homeowners. Although these people are not counted in the census as residents of Watauga County, they will nonetheless, directly affect the County's capacity to manage growth and deliver essential services.

The projections for future population (Table 1) do not include planned increases in Appalachian State University's student population.

The population projections may be influenced by the national economic recession that began in 2008.



Photo courtesy Blowing Rock TDA

Appalachian STATE UNIVERSITY

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Population Trends - Appalachian State

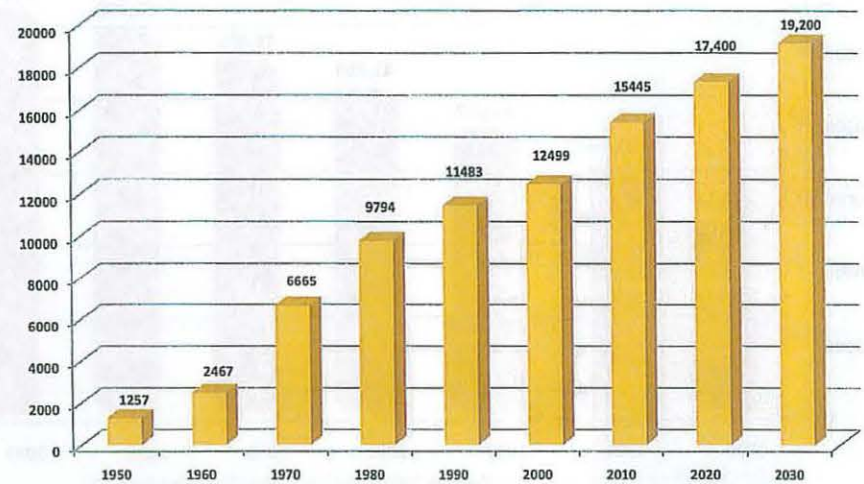
Appalachian State University is a major contributor to Watauga County in many ways, including the ever-increasing population of on-campus students. In 1950, the on-campus student enrollment was 1,257. In 2000, the on-campus student enrollment was recorded at 12,499. During the fall semester of 2007, on-campus enrollment was 14,482. This increase reflects a 15.87% increase from 2000.



Appalachian State University

Projections for future growth at Appalachian State University (Table 2) are more modest. The Master Plan for the University projects an on-campus student enrollment of 17,026 by 2018. Projections for increases from 2019 to 2030 are calculated at 1% per year to arrive at a projected on-campus student enrollment of 19,185 by 2030.

TABLE 2
Appalachian State University -
Actual and Projected On-Campus Student Enrollment



Source: Appalachian State University Master Plan Projections through 2018. Martin-McGill projections calculated in 2008 for years 2019 to 2030.



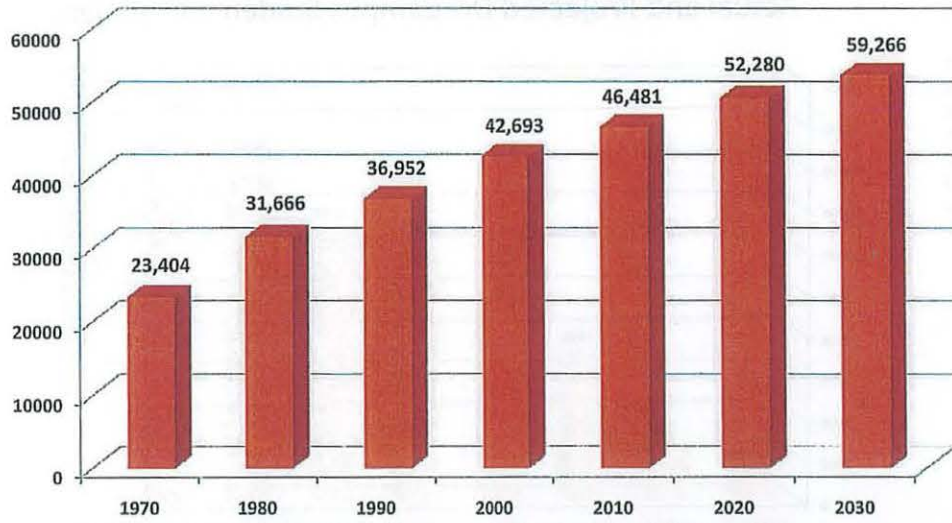
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Appalachian

Population Trends

Table 3 reflects projections by the N.C. Office of State Budget and Management in 2009, plus the projections for Appalachian State University for planned increases in on-campus student enrollment for the period beginning 2008 through 2030.

TABLE 3
Projected Population for Watauga County



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, N.C. Office of State Budget and Management; Appalachian State University Master Plan Projections through 2018. Martin-McGill projections calculated in 2008 for years 2019 to 2030.



Kidd Brewer Stadium, Appalachian State University

Population Trends - Watauga Municipalities

Watauga County has four municipalities: Beech Mountain, Blowing Rock, Boone and Seven Devils. Of these four towns, Boone is the only municipality that lies totally within the Watauga County boundary. Beech Mountain, Blowing Rock and Seven Devils all straddle a county line. Both Beech Mountain and Seven Devils lay partially within Avery County. Blowing Rock lies partially within Caldwell County.

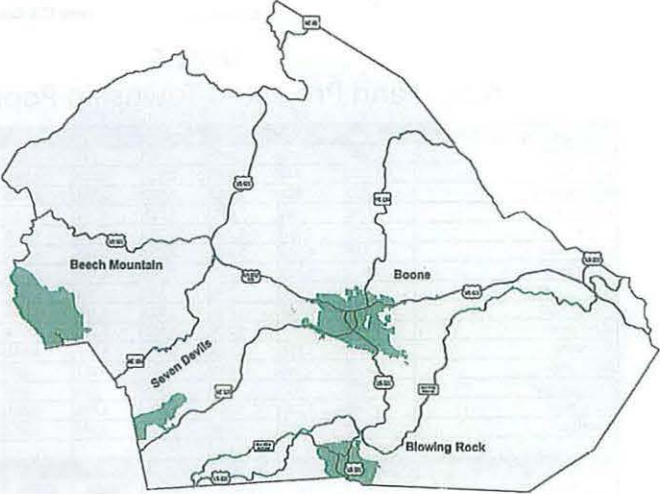
Table 4 provides the populations of each town and their growth from 1990 to 2008. Also listed is the portion of each town's population (in adjoining counties) that lies outside of Watauga County.

TABLE 4
July 2008 Population Estimates by Municipality
County and State Populations for Reference

County and State Populations for Reference						
Geographic Area	April 1990	April 2000	July 2008	Growth		
County Municipality				Amount	% 2000-2008	
Watauga	36,952	42,693	45,319	2,626	6.15	
Beech Mountain(Part)	232	297	335	38	12.79	
Blowing Rock(Part)	1,219	1,365	1,422	57	4.18	
Boone	12,949	13,470	14,942	1,472	10.93	
Seven Devils(Part)	97	112	128	16	14.29	
Avery	14,867	17,167	18,428	1,261	7.35	
Beech Mountain(Part)	7	13	49	36	276.92	
Seven Devils(Part)	20	17	18	1	5.88	
Caldwell	70,709	77,385	80,020	2,634	3.40	
Blowing Rock(Part)	44	53	60	7	13.21	

Source: N.C. Office of State Budget and Management Last updated September 25, 2009

- Boone is the largest of the municipalities by population. It is the county seat of Watauga County. Appalachian State University is located within its boundaries, which adds significantly to Boone's population.
- Blowing Rock is the second largest municipality, with a population of 1,422 in 2008. During the summer, Blowing Rock's population swells to over 8,000.
- Beech Mountain is next largest with 327 Watauga County residents in 2008.
- Seven Devils is the smallest town in Watauga County, with 121 Watauga County residents in 2008.

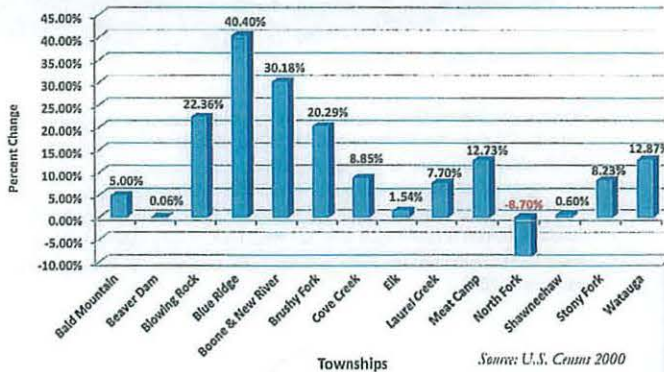




Population Trends - Watauga Townships

TABLE 5

Average Decennial Population Change 1950-2000



Townships Source: U.S. Census 2000

TABLE 6

Actual and Projected Township Populations

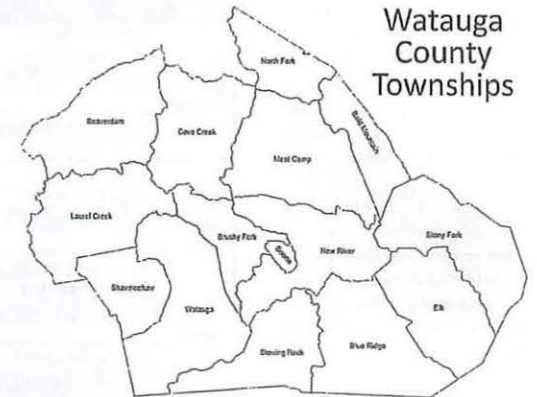
Township	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030
Bald Mountain	380	361	363	280	370	485	514	550	594
Beaver Dam	1,279	944	847	1,030	1,176	1,283	1,321	1,387	1,498
Blowing Rock	1,042	982	1,321	2,295	2,332	2,858	3,029	3,271	3,533
Blue Ridge	665	644	898	1,613	2,204	3,628	4,063	4,769	5,627
Boone	2,973	3,686	8,754	10,191	12,915	8,690	9,733	11,485	13,667
Brushy Fork	1,272	1,642	2,345	2,656	3,368	3,203	3,427	3,667	3,942
Cove Creek	1,921	1,626	1,780	2,141	2,335	2,935	3,066	3,202	3,426
Elk	428	366	274	260	314	462	517	610	720
Laurel Creek	1,212	1,036	1,096	1,332	1,383	1,756	1,861	1,991	2,130
Meat Camp	1,468	1,257	1,275	1,805	2,214	2,673	2,833	3,031	3,243
New River	1,718	1,952	1,499	3,785	3,322	8,848	9,910	11,694	13,799
North Fork	350	261	231	207	232	222	231	243	260
Shawneeohaw	655	450	390	544	668	675	702	737	789
Stony Fork	1,388	1,199	1,192	1,476	1,773	2,061	2,185	2,338	2,502
Watauga	1,591	1,123	1,139	2,051	2,346	2,914	3,089	3,305	3,536
Watauga County	18,342	17,529	23,404	31,666	36,952	42,693	46,481	52,280	59,266
Percent change from previous census	1.26%	-4.43%	33.52%	35.30%	16.69%	15.54%	8.87%	12.48%	13.36%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (1950-2000) - Martin-McGill projections 2010 to 2030 made August 2009

Table 5 summarizes the average percentage change in population of each township during all decades from 1950 to 2000. The Boone and New River Townships are combined to eliminate skewing of the data for these two townships resulting from corrections to township boundaries. The two townships with the greatest populations are Boone and New River. These two townships had the largest number of new residents moving into the County during the period examined. However, the highest percentage growth rate in the County during the 50-year period occurred in the Blue Ridge Township, which averaged over 40%. The combined growth in the Boone and New River Townships ranked second in percentage of change with an increase of 30.2%. Slightly more than 41% of the total population of the County reside in the Boone and New River Townships.

The projected populations in Table 6 were derived from analysis of the historical trends in each of the townships individually, followed by utilizing regression analysis to project potential population at the 2010, 2020 and 2030 census intervals. Statistical projections consider historical data, but do not account for any potential changes that may alter the data in any significant way. Thus, subjective adjustments are warranted where significant factors are likely to influence future populations. Such is the case with three townships, including Blue Ridge, Elk and Watauga Townships.

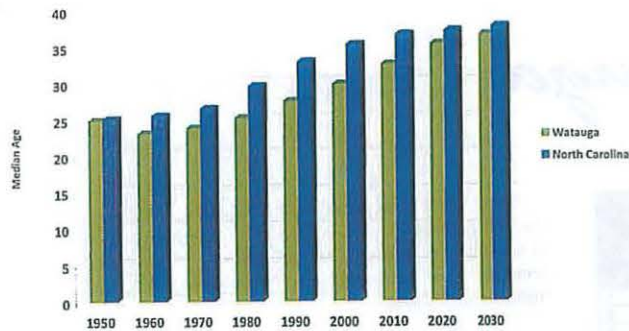
- Noteworthy in Blue Ridge and Elk Townships is the planned Reynolds Blue Ridge Development, which could be a major contributor due to an increase in lots and housing units.
- In the Watauga Township, the Echota Development is adding additional housing units and may contribute to the future population.
- The least populated townships in the County include Bald Mountain, Beaver Dam, Elk, Laurel Creek, North Fork, Shawneeohaw and Stony Fork Townships. Each experienced slow growth from 1950 to 2000.
- In the case of North Fork Township, a 36.5% decline in population occurred over the 50-year period.



The Changing Face of Demographics in Watauga County



TABLE 7 - Median Age of Population



- The population of the nation and our state is getting older (Table 7). This is revealed in the census data for 2000 and in the annual estimates produced by the Census Bureau in May 2008 for the nation and North Carolina. The median age in the United States increased from 35.3 to 36.6 from 2000 to 2007.
- The age in North Carolina increased from 35.3 to 36.8. This trend toward an older population is also revealed in the number of people with an age of 65 years or older (Table 8).
- Watauga County's median age statistic is greatly influenced by the student population at Appalachian State University. In general, the large number of students in the 18- to 24-year-old cohorts skews the data toward a substantially lower median age.
- The percentage of persons in Watauga County over age 65 is currently less than the state's average (Table 8).
- By 2010, the N.C. Office of State Budget and Management projects that the percentage of persons in Watauga County age 65 and over will slightly surpass the percentage for the same age group for the state.
- By 2030, Watauga County residents who are age 65 or older will represent 20% of inhabitants, while North Carolina's average will be 17.4%.

Watauga County experienced a growth rate of 15.5% from 1990 to 2000. The natural growth during the period was 965 (Table 9), indicating a birth rate that exceeded the death rate during the period. However, 12.9% of the growth in Watauga County resulted from in-migration. The neighboring mountain county of Avery experienced similar growth with slightly more in-migration growth at 14.4%. Ashe County experienced slightly less in-migration at 11.0%. The neighboring foothill counties of Caldwell and Wilkes experienced lower growth rates overall than Watauga County and less in-migration. In comparison, North Carolina's average growth rate from in-migration was 15.0%.

TABLE 8 - Percent of Population 65 and Older

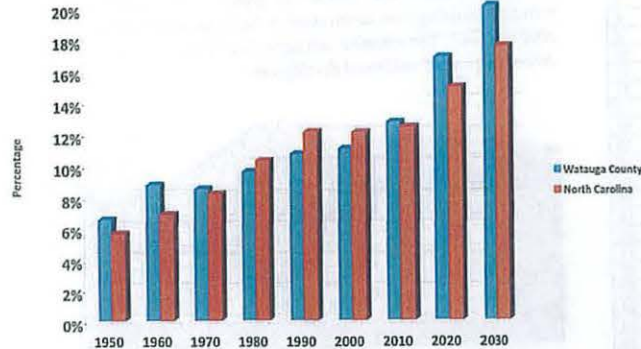


TABLE 9
County Population Growth and Migration 1990-2000

	1990 Population	2000 Population	Growth*	Percent Growth	Births	Deaths	Natural** Growth	Net*** Migration	Percent Net Migration
Watauga	36,952	42,693	5,741	15.5	3,523	2,558	965	4,776	12.9
Ashe	22,209	24,384	2,175	9.8	2,415	2,693	-278	2,453	11.0
Avery	14,867	17,167	2,300	15.5	1,834	1,671	163	2,137	14.4
Caldwell	70,709	77,708	6,999	9.9	9,993	6,639	3,354	3,645	5.2
Wilkes	59,393	65,636	6,243	10.5	7,938	5,782	2,156	4,087	6.9
North Carolina	6,632,448	8,046,813	1,414,365	21.32	1,055,655	638,776	416,879	997,486	15.0

Source: N.C. Office of State Budget and Management, N.C. State Demographer (June 18, 2008)
 *2000 Population minus 1990 Population = Growth
 **Difference in Births and Deaths = Natural Growth
 ***Growth minus Natural Growth = Net Migration



TABLE 10

Counties in North Carolina, Sorted by Percent Change in Housing Units, 4/1/00 Estimate Base to 7/1/07	July 1, 2007	July 1, 2000	Estimates Base	Census	Absolute Change April 1, 2000 Estimates Base to July 1, 2007	Percent Change April 1, 2000 Estimates Base to July 1, 2007	Rank of County in North Carolina
Union County	67,420	46,364	45,723	45,695	21,697	47.45%	1
Brunswick County	73,018	51,850	51,430	51,431	21,588	41.98%	2
Mecklenburg County	390,393	296,332	292,765	292,780	97,638	33.35%	3
Wake County	339,766	261,040	258,954	258,953	80,802	31.20%	4
Currituck County	13,822	10,781	10,687	10,687	3,135	29.33%	5
Camden County	3,841	2,990	2,973	2,973	888	29.20%	6
Iredell County	66,486	52,405	51,917	51,918	14,569	28.06%	7
Cabarrus County	67,387	53,284	52,848	52,848	14,539	27.51%	8
Hoke County	15,876	12,607	12,521	12,518	3,355	26.79%	9
Johnston County	62,188	50,821	50,163	50,196	12,035	23.99%	10
Clay County	6,726	5,467	5,425	5,425	1,301	23.98%	11
Pitt County	71,977	58,706	58,364	58,408	13,613	23.32%	12
Jackson County	23,727	19,492	19,291	19,291	4,436	23.00%	13
New Hanover County	97,664	80,096	79,634	79,616	18,030	22.64%	14
Durham County	115,872	96,129	95,452	95,452	20,420	21.39%	15
Dare County	32,358	26,888	26,671	26,671	5,687	21.32%	16
Cherokee County	16,281	13,580	13,499	13,499	2,762	20.61%	17
Pender County	25,003	20,920	20,798	20,798	4,205	20.22%	18
Lincoln County	30,823	25,951	25,717	25,717	5,106	19.85%	19
Granville County	21,446	18,023	17,896	17,896	3,550	19.84%	20
Chatham County	25,539	21,482	21,357	21,358	4,182	19.58%	21
Onslow County	65,626	56,181	55,726	55,726	9,900	17.77%	22
Lee County	23,446	20,086	19,963	19,909	3,493	17.45%	23
Watauga County	27,086	23,296	23,156	23,155	3,940	17.02%	24
Ashe County	15,243	13,339	13,268	13,268	1,975	14.89%	34
Avery County	13,538	11,962	11,911	11,911	1,627	13.66%	39
Caldwell County	35,918	33,560	33,420	33,430	2,498	7.47%	66
Wilkes County	30,749	29,360	29,263	29,261	1,486	5.08%	77
North Carolina	4,125,308	3,543,084	3,522,334	3,523,944	602,974	17.12%	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division

North Carolina has one of the fastest growing populations in the United States. North Carolina's overall percentage increase in housing units between 2000 and 2007 was 17.12%. Table 10 summarizes the housing growth for counties exhibiting the highest rates of change.

Growth in housing units in Watauga County falls just under the state average of 17.12% at 17.02%. Watauga County ranks 24th of North Carolina's 100 counties for growth in housing units, with 3,940 housing units constructed in the 7-year period between 2000 and 2007. The recession that began in 2007 has substantially slowed this rate of residential development.



Seasonal and Absentee Owner Population

TABLE 11

The 2000 U.S. Census recognized 23,155 total housing units in Watauga County (Table 11). Census Bureau research reported 5,098 housing units as seasonal, recreational or occasional use. Thus, 22.02% of all housing, or 77.1% of all vacant housing in Watauga County was seasonal in the 2000 U.S. Census.

Subject	Number	Percent
Total housing units	23,155	100%
Occupied housing units	16,540	71.4%
Vacant housing units	6,615	28.6%
TENURE		
Occupied housing units	16,540	100%
Owner-occupied housing units	10,406	62.9%
Renter-occupied housing units	6,134	37.1%
VACANCY STATUS		
Vacant housing units	6,615	100%
For rent	511	7.7%
For sale only	170	2.6%
Rented or sold, not occupied	261	3.9%
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	5,098	77.1%
For migratory workers	3	0%
Other vacant	572	8.6%

Source: U.S. Census 2000

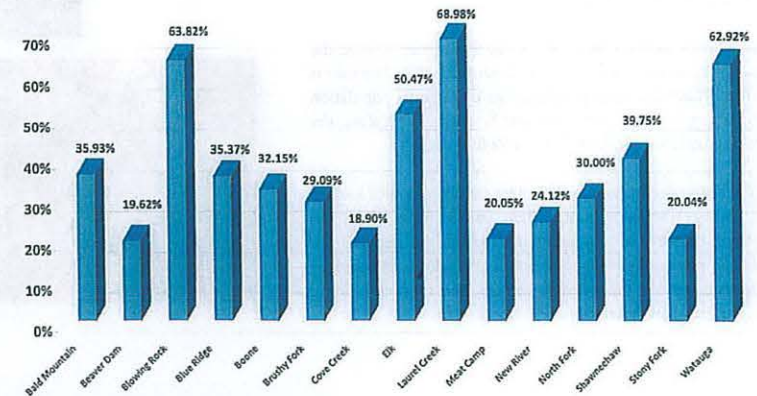
Definition: Housing unit

A house, an apartment, a mobile home or trailer, a group of rooms, or a single room occupied as separate living quarters, or if vacant, intended for occupancy as separate living quarters. Separate living quarters are those in which the occupants live separately from any other individuals in the building and which have direct access from outside the building or through a common hall. For vacant units, the criteria of separateness and direct access are applied to the intended occupants whenever possible.

Arriving at a definitive estimate of Watauga County's seasonal population is difficult. Data is incomplete and conflicting. The data produced by the 2000 Census is dated, but it is probably the most realistic indicator available. Based on the Census and tax record indicators, it is estimated that the number of seasonal residents in Watauga County is between 10,700 to 13,000, or 25% to 30% of the County's permanent population.

In 2000, the U.S. Census reported 42,693 people living in Watauga County. If the above estimates of seasonal residents is reasonable, then the population of Watauga County may be as high as 55,000 on a seasonal basis. This increase in population, even if temporary, is certain to place extra demand on essential services including water and sewer, fire and police protection, roads and streets, and emergency services. Table 12 estimates the distribution of this seasonal population among the townships.

TABLE 12 - Absentee Owned, Residential Properties - Percent Per Township in June 2008



Source: Watauga County Tax Administration



Demographic Conclusions

Watauga County has transformed from a rural, agrarian county to a robust and growing transition community with a large tourism industry and growing population. Population growth more than doubled from 1960 to 2000. Predictions by the N.C. Office of State Budget and Management reflect continued growth, although at a slower rate.

Population projections for Watauga County place the population (excluding seasonal residents) in 2030 at approximately 59,000. To fully understand the potential for growth in Watauga County, one must consider two influencing factors, which are student enrollment at ASU and seasonal population.

Analysis indicates that the seasonal population may increase the year-round permanent population by as much as 25-30%. Townships that currently have a very large percentage of seasonal population include Blowing Rock, Laurel Creek and Watauga. Therefore, the effective population could be as high as 72,000 by 2030.

Another noteworthy issue is that these numbers do not include tourists visiting Watauga County. Their numbers are substantial during three seasons of the year and add to the demand for services. The increasing number of seasonal residents and tourists are elements of growth that officials and planners must consider in weighing future growth issues.



Photo courtesy Blowing Rock TDA



Photo by Hugh Martin



Photo courtesy Blowing Rock TDA

Economic Trends

Income Characteristics

Three income characteristics are particularly important in analyzing the economic viability of the Watauga community: Income Per Capita, Median Household Income and Median Family Income. These three income characteristics, when viewed in comparison to one another, help to indicate the strength of the local economy. Table 13 compares these three income indicators for Watauga County, North Carolina and the United States.

- For each of these three income statistics, Watauga County is lower than the average for North Carolina and the United States in each census year.
- The 2000 Census shows that Watauga County's per capita income is 85% of that for North Carolinians and 80% of the per capita income for the nation.
- For median family income, Watauga County families earn 98% of the income of other North Carolina families and 91% of families in the United States.
- Both per capita income and median household income in Watauga County lag significantly behind other North Carolina households at 83%, and behind U.S. households at 78%.
- Much of the difference in these income areas is attributable to the high student population.

TABLE 13

Income Characteristics 1970 - 2008						
	Census Year Income				2007 Income	2008 Income
	1969	1979	1989	1999	2007	2008
Watauga: Income Per Capita	1,969	5,097	10,628	17,258	22,924	23,038
Watauga: Median Family Income	6,149	14,532	27,752	45,508	55,634	56,485
Watauga: Median Household Income	No data	11,039	20,252	32,611	40,571	40,995
State: Income Per Capita	2,474	6,133	12,885	20,307	32,234	26,823
State: Median Family Income	7,770	16,792	31,548	46,335	55,028	60,446
State: Median Household Income	7,025	14,481	26,647	39,184	42,219	51,411
National: Income Per Capita	3,119	7,298	14,420	21,587	38,611	39,751
National: Median Family Income	9,586	19,917	35,225	50,046	61,173	N/A as of Aug. 09
National: Median Household Income	8,486	16,841	30,056	41,994	50,233	N/A as of Aug. 09

Source: 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000 Censuses of Population, NC Economic Development Intelligence System (2008, 2nd Quarter)
Income Surveys Branch, HHES Division
U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce

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Employment/Wages by Industry

At the end of the fourth quarter in 2008, the number of employed persons in Watauga County was approximately 21,672, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (Table 14).

- Private industry employed 16,665 individuals.
- Federal, state and local governments employed 5,017 people.
- Specific areas that stand out as employers of a large percentage of workers include state government, educational services, the accommodations and food services sector, and retail trade.
- State government and educational services numbers are high, mainly due to the large number of employees in administration and teaching at Appalachian State University.
- Large numbers of workers in the accommodation and food services sector and retail trade are explained by the area's popularity as a tourist destination.
- The weekly wages for Watauga County workers are lower than the average wages in North Carolina in all categories of industry except two – state government and education services.
- Based on information in the report, employees of North Carolina state government in Watauga County fare better than average North Carolina state employees by approximately 15%.
- Workers employed in education services also fare better than the average in North Carolina and earn 19% more than other North Carolina education service workers.

TABLE 14

Employment/Wages by Industry - Watauga County with North Carolina for Comparison (4th Quarter, 2008)			
Government Industry	Watauga County - Average Employment	Watauga County - Average Weekly Wage	North Carolina - Average Weekly Wage
Total Federal Government	102	\$961	\$1,170
Total State Government	3,084	\$951	\$830
Total Local Government	1,831	\$701	\$767
Private Industry			
Total Private Industry	16,655	\$535	\$787
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	37	\$408	\$559
Mining	37	\$496	\$1,035
Utilities	74	\$885	\$1,412
Construction	1,537	\$691	\$836
Manufacturing	643	\$671	\$927
Wholesale Trade	750	\$1,053	\$1,146
Retail Trade	3,629	\$399	\$472
Transportation and Warehousing	318	\$699	\$837
Information	310	\$608	\$1,124
Finance and Insurance	546	\$902	\$1,261
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	400	\$531	\$738
Professional and Technical Services	623	\$847	\$1,303
Management of Companies and Enterprises	95	\$935	\$1,448
Administrative and Waste Services	530	\$432	\$574
Educational Services	3,828	\$909	\$765
Health Care and Social Assistance	2,318	\$797	\$836
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	670	\$397	\$689
Accommodation and Food Services	3,894	\$251	\$274
Other Services, Ex. Public Admin	445	\$435	\$521
Public Administration	911	\$677	\$825
Unclassified	77	\$643	\$1,077
Total All Industries	21,672	\$610	\$793

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics for wages and establishments by industry. www.bls.gov



Economic Trends

Tourism Statistics - 2007

- Domestic tourism in Watauga County generated an economic impact of \$189.8 million in 2008.
- In 2008, Watauga County ranked 18th in travel impact among North Carolina's 100 counties.
- More than 2,510 jobs in Watauga County were directly attributable to travel and tourism.
- Travel generated a \$43.84 million payroll in 2008.
- State and local tax revenues from travel to Watauga County amounted to \$17.25 million. This represents a \$397.00 tax saving to each County resident.
- Area attractions include the Blue Ridge Parkway, Horn in the West outdoor drama, Hickory Ridge Homestead, Mast General Store, Beech Mountain Resort, Mystery Hill, museums devoted to Appalachian culture and heritage, Blowing Rock, Tweetsie Railroad and Appalachian Ski Mountain.
- There are several attractions in adjoining counties that contribute to Watauga County tourism for basic services, such as restaurants and lodging.



Photo courtesy Blowing Rock TDA

TABLE 15

Year	Revenues \$(millions)	Change from previous year
2008	\$189.76	-0.7 %
2007	\$191.15	6.70 %
2006	\$179.14	9.18 %
2005	\$164.08	3.10 %
2004	\$159.14	4.95 %
2003	\$151.64	-2.78 %
2002	\$155.98	6.17 %
2001	\$146.92	-2.89 %
2000	\$151.29	5.33 %
1999	\$143.64	10.30 %
1998	\$130.23	7.92 %
1997	\$120.67	1.79 %
1996	\$118.55	5.12 %
1995	\$112.78	8.79 %
1994	\$103.67	6.42 %
1993	\$97.42	6.53 %
1992	\$91.45	8.87 %
1991	\$84.00	2.46 %

Source: N.C. Department of Commerce



Principal Employers

TABLE 16

Twelve Largest Employers - Watauga County			
Watauga County - As of September 1, 2008			
Rank	Company Name	Industry	Employment Range
1	Appalachian State University	Education	*3,000
2	Appalachian Regional Healthcare	Health Services	1,600
3	Watauga County Board Of Education	Education	650
4	Samaritans Purse Inc	Ministry - Relief Organization	550
5	Watauga County	Government-Public Administration	*290
6	Wal-Mart Associates Inc	Retail	254
7	Boone Drug, Inc.	Retail	232
8	Lowes Home Centers Inc	Retail	171
9	Town Of Boone	Government-Public Administration	163
10	Chetola Mountain Resort	Leisure & Hospitality	160
11	Hospitality Mints	Manufacturing	135
12	IRC	Manufacturing	150

*Appalachian State University has 5,000 employees including part-time and temporary
 *Watauga County has an additional 170 employees who are classified as seasonal or non-regular
 Source: Martin-McGill, Inc. research (August 2009)

Watauga County's largest employer is Appalachian State University (ASU).

- On September 1, 2008, ASU had 3,000 full-time employees.
- The total employment is more than 5,000 with part-time and temporary employees.
- Considering full-time employees, ASU employs 13% of the County's entire workforce.
- The employment of Appalachian Regional Healthcare System was 1,600 on September 1, 2008.
- The next largest employer is the Watauga County Board of Education with 650 employees.
- Samaritan's Purse, Incorporated, an international Christian relief organization, has 550 employees in Watauga County.
- Other major contributors to the labor force include Watauga County, the Town of Boone and Chetola Resort.



Appalachian State University

Employment Trends

The 2000 U.S. Census defines labor force as "all people classified in the civilian labor force (i.e., "employed" and "unemployed" people), plus members of the U.S. Armed Forces." Tables 17 and 18 summarize key employment and economic sector statistics for Watauga County.

TABLE 17

Watauga County Employment Characteristics 1990-2009				
Watauga County	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
June 2009 (partial)	24,094	22,154	1,940	8.1
2008	23,614	22,518	1,096	4.6
2007	25,637	24,814	823	3.20
2006	23,921	23,036	885	3.70
2005	23,293	22,371	922	4.00
2004	22,729	21,800	929	4.10
2003	22,647	21,646	1,001	4.40
2002	22,326	21,324	1,002	4.50
2001	23,511	22,649	862	3.70
2000	23,232	22,554	678	2.90
1999	23,956	23,608	348	1.50
1998	23,455	23,011	444	1.90
1997	23,228	22,703	525	2.30
1996	22,769	22,107	662	2.90
1995	22,539	21,784	755	3.30
1994	21,923	21,417	506	2.30
1993	21,098	20,474	624	3.00
1992	20,763	20,002	761	3.70
1991	20,123	19,223	900	4.50
1990	19,904	19,007	897	4.50

Source: Employment Security Commission of North Carolina

TABLE 18

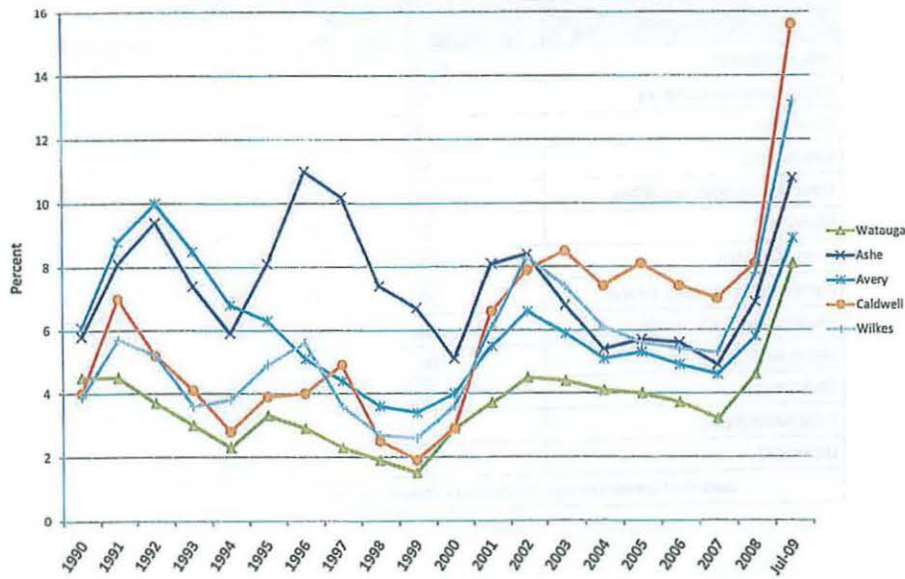
Current Industry Structure (updated 7/2008)				
Watauga County	Quarter Ending December 31, 2007			
	Number of Business Units	Average Employees	Percent of NC Average	Percent of Watauga Avg
Total, All Industries	1,814	23,109	0.56%	100.00%
Natural Resources and Mining	11	67	0.00%	0.29%
Construction	308	1,742	0.04%	7.54%
Manufacturing	52	889	0.02%	3.85%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	416	4,794	0.12%	20.75%
Information	31	312	0.01%	1.35%
Financial Activities	176	1,001	0.02%	4.33%
Professional and Business Services	243	1,359	0.03%	5.88%
Education and Health Services	164	6,984	0.17%	30.22%
Leisure and Hospitality	192	4,496	0.11%	19.46%
Other Services	99	466	0.01%	2.02%
Public Administration	26	887	0.02%	3.84%
Unclassified	96	112	0.00%	0.48%

Source: NAICS Employment and Wages, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) Unit, ESC/LMI Division

Unemployment Rate

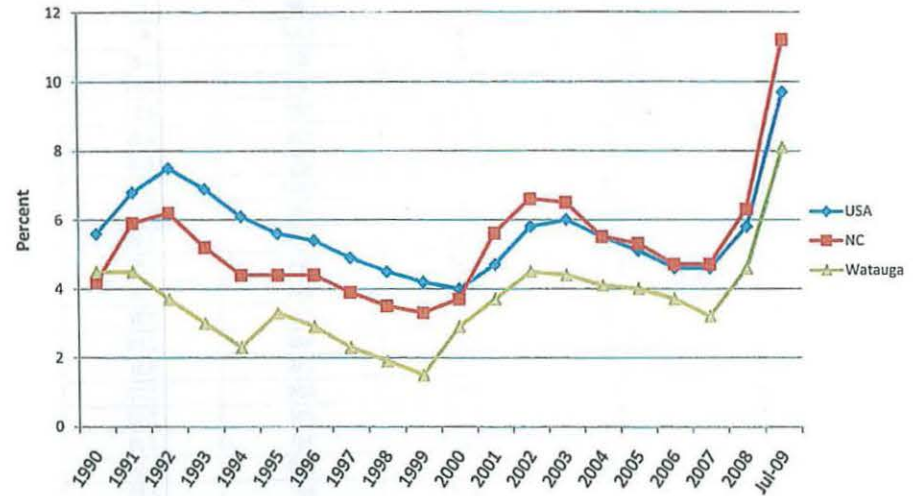
Since 1991, the average annual unemployment rate in Watauga County has been lower than North Carolina's average annual rate and lower than the national average rate. The unemployment rate in Watauga County has also been very favorable compared to adjoining counties. Many individuals commute from other counties in North Carolina and Tennessee to work in Watauga County.

TABLE 19
Average Annual Unemployment Rate - Counties



Source: Employment Security Commission of North Carolina

TABLE 20
Average Annual Unemployment Rate - Comparison



Source: Employment Security Commission of North Carolina

Working Commuters

- In 2000, 2,964 individuals, or 12.4% of the labor force in Watauga County, lived in North Carolina counties other than Watauga County.
- Over half of these people lived in the adjoining counties of Ashe (1,350) and Avery (557). The adjoining counties of Caldwell (271) and Wilkes (244) accounted for another 515 workers.
- 4.7% of the workers commuting to Watauga County lived in Tennessee and 85.2% of these came from Johnson County.



Photo courtesy Blowing Rock TDA

TABLE 21

Workers Commuting to Work in Watauga County, Living In:		
NC Counties	1990	2000
Ashe County	713	1,350
Avery County	296	557
Caldwell County	143	271
Wilkes County	147	244
Mecklenburg County	73	69
Forsyth County	20	61
Catawba County	76	55
Wake County	40	43
Buncombe County	10	40
Mitchell County	37	27
Other Counties	453	247
Total	2,008	2,964
<hr/>		
Tennessee	581	1,114
Virginia	15	90
South Carolina	20	6
Other States	674	1,273
Total	1,290	2,483

Source: U.S. Census 2000

TABLE 22

Workers Living in Watauga County Commuting to Work in:		
NC Counties	1990	2000
Avery County	615	777
Caldwell County	521	364
Wilkes County	160	259
Ashe County	133	248
Catawba County	178	175
Mecklenburg County	37	95
Forsyth County	30	89
Iredell County	33	74
Cabarrus County	6	56
Mitchell County	31	51
Other Counties	360	403
Total	2,104	2,591
<hr/>		
Tennessee	101	151
Virginia	42	10
South Carolina	32	32
Other States	169	121
Total	344	314

Source: U.S. Census 2000

The image shows a large, faint, and mostly illegible table or grid structure, possibly a budget or schedule, with a central column of text and several rows of data. The content is too light to transcribe accurately.

Section 2

Physiographic Features

21

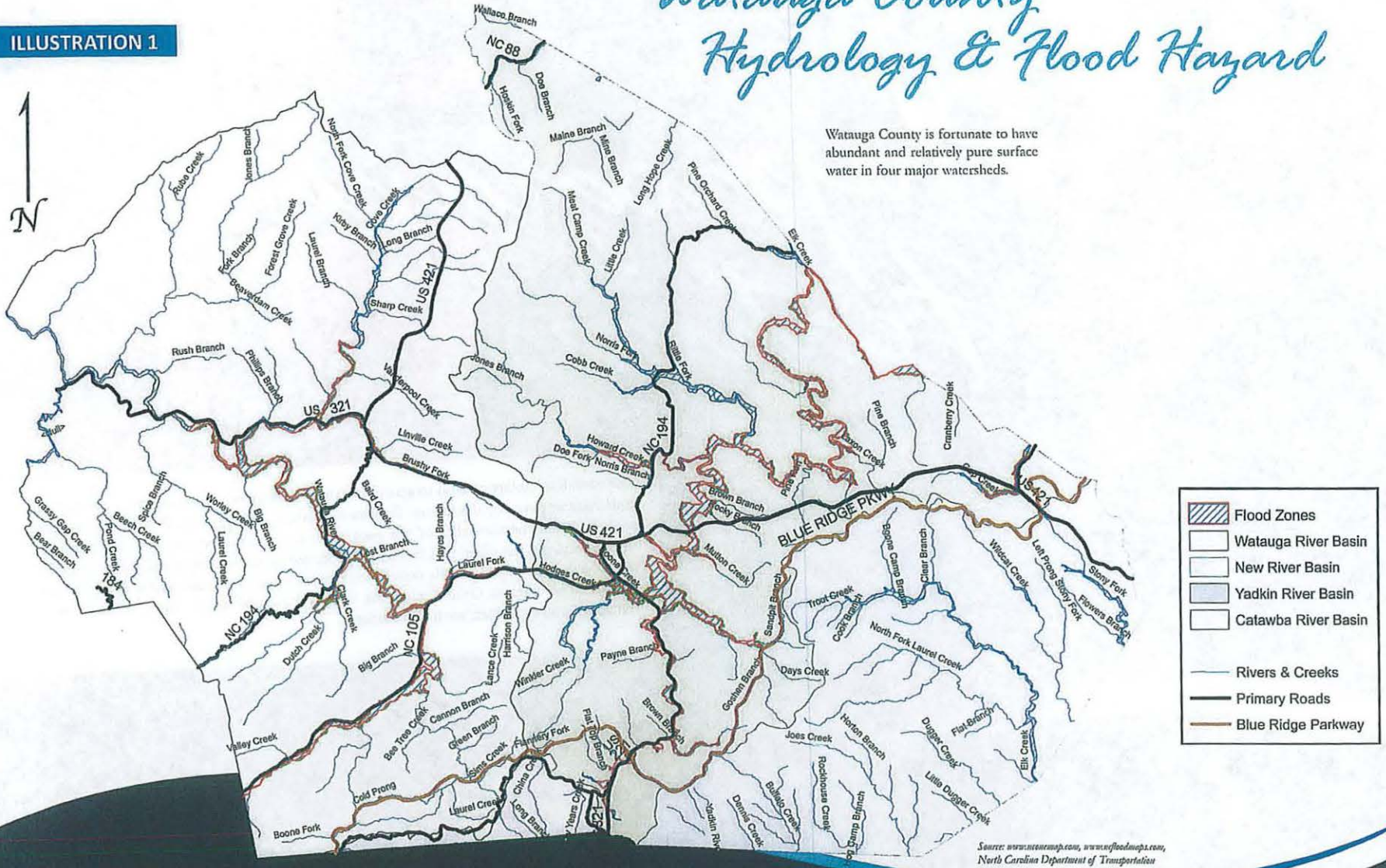
The overall suitability of land to accommodate development is generally viewed as the cumulative constraint imposed by the natural features of slope, hydrology, soils, flooding and other sensitive environmental characteristics of the geographic area under consideration. For the purposes of this assessment, the additional factors of protected mountain ridges and certain publicly-owned lands have been added to this collective categorization. This assessment is made on the basis of natural constraints. Other limitations, such as the availability of water and sewer services and transportation capacities, are not considered.









Photo by Hugh Martin

ILLUSTRATION 1

Watauga County Hydrology & Flood Hazard

Watauga County is fortunate to have abundant and relatively pure surface water in four major watersheds.



-  Flood Zones
-  Watauga River Basin
-  New River Basin
-  Yadkin River Basin
-  Catawba River Basin
-  Rivers & Creeks
-  Primary Roads
-  Blue Ridge Parkway

Source: www.ncourmap.com, www.ncfloodmaps.com,
North Carolina Department of Transportation

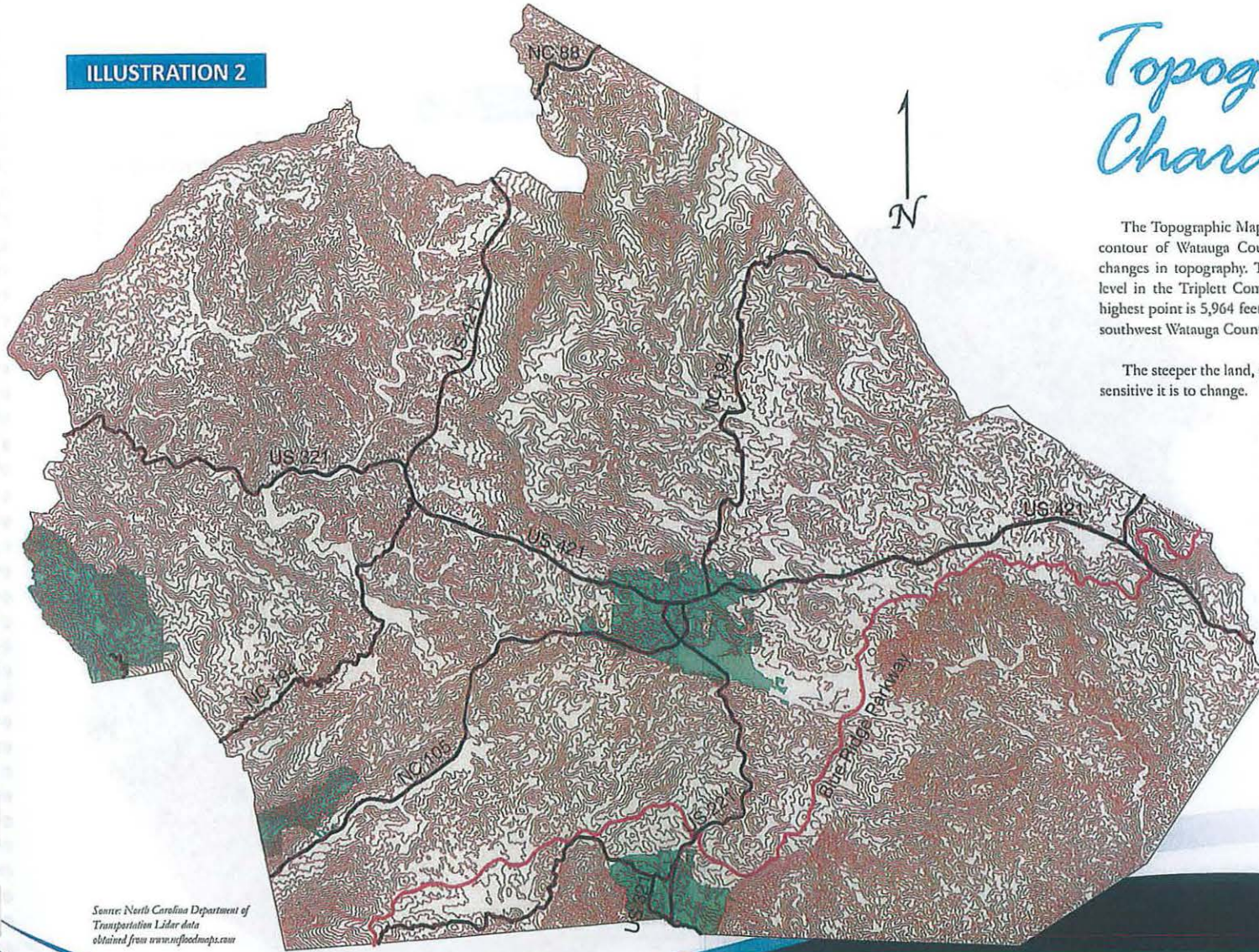
ILLUSTRATION 2

Topographic Characteristics

23

The Topographic Map shown in Illustration 2 displays the natural contour of Watauga County. The contour lines represent 100-foot changes in topography. The lowest elevation is 1,350 feet above sea level in the Triplett Community in southeast Watauga County. The highest point is 5,964 feet above sea level at Grandfather Mountain in southwest Watauga County.

The steeper the land, the more difficult it is to utilize and the more sensitive it is to change.



Contour Lines

- 100 ft Contours
- Primary Roads
- Blue Ridge Parkway
- Municipalities
- Watauga County

Source: North Carolina Department of Transportation Lidar data obtained from www.nctdotmcp.com

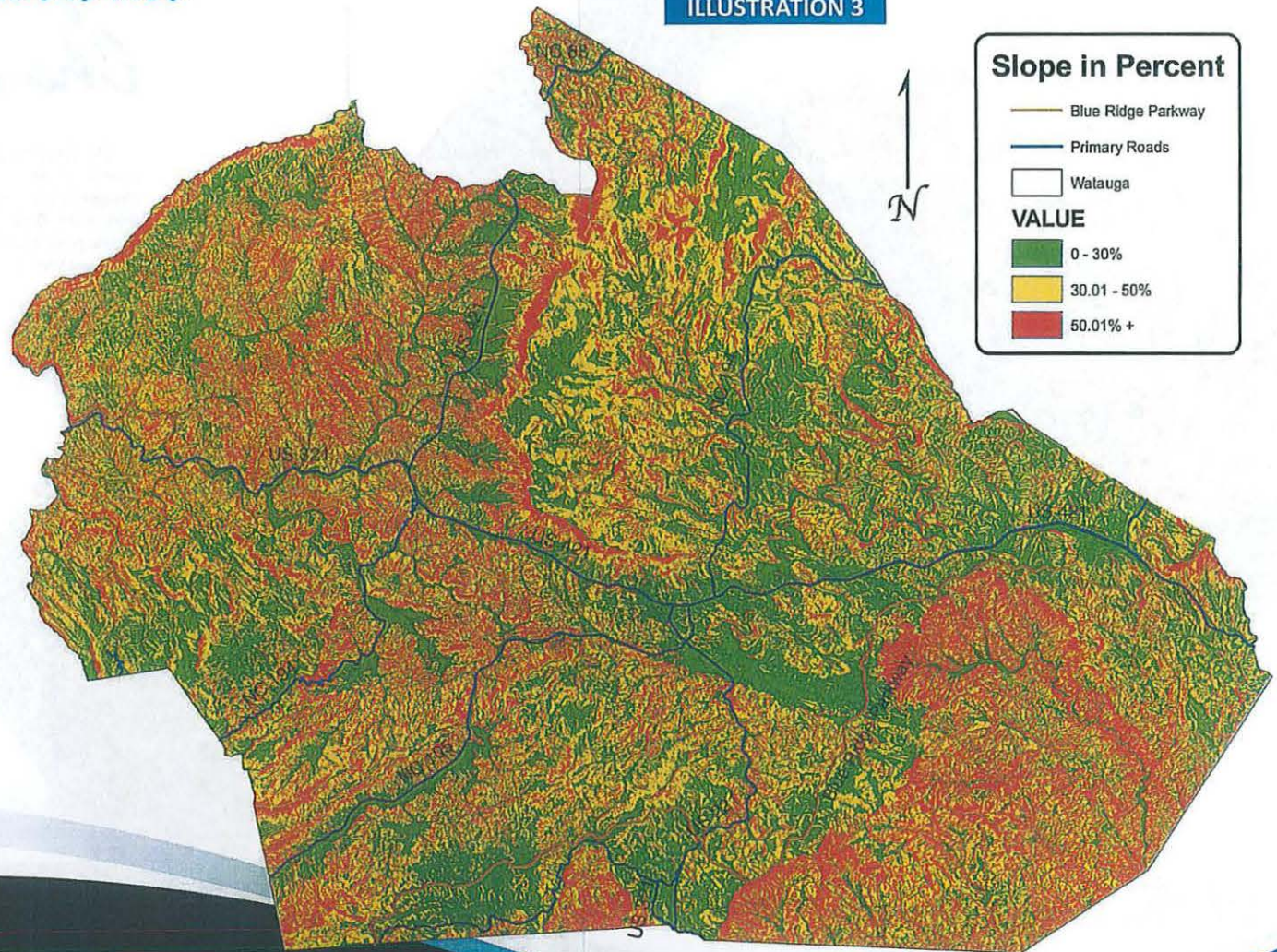
24

Slope Characteristics

Watauga County has very diverse topographic features. Elevations range from as low as 1,350 feet above sea level to 5,964 feet above sea level.

- The Slope Map (Illustration 3) shows topographic characteristics in 3 categories.
- Green areas are slope percentages between 0% and 30% and are most amenable to change.
- Red areas have very steep slope percentages of 50% or greater and are most sensitive to change.
- The slope of the land has a direct bearing on the stability of the land and suitability for development. Areas of steep slope are often associated with earth slides, increased fire hazards, increased potential for damage to the natural environment, and greater economic issues.
- The Watauga County subdivision ordinance notes that a slope of 50% or greater is generally "considered too steep for subdivision development."
- This does not prevent construction of improvements on steep slopes. It merely restricts subdivision development.
- All the flood-prone areas shown in Illustration 3 are located in areas exhibiting average slopes of 0-30%.

ILLUSTRATION 3

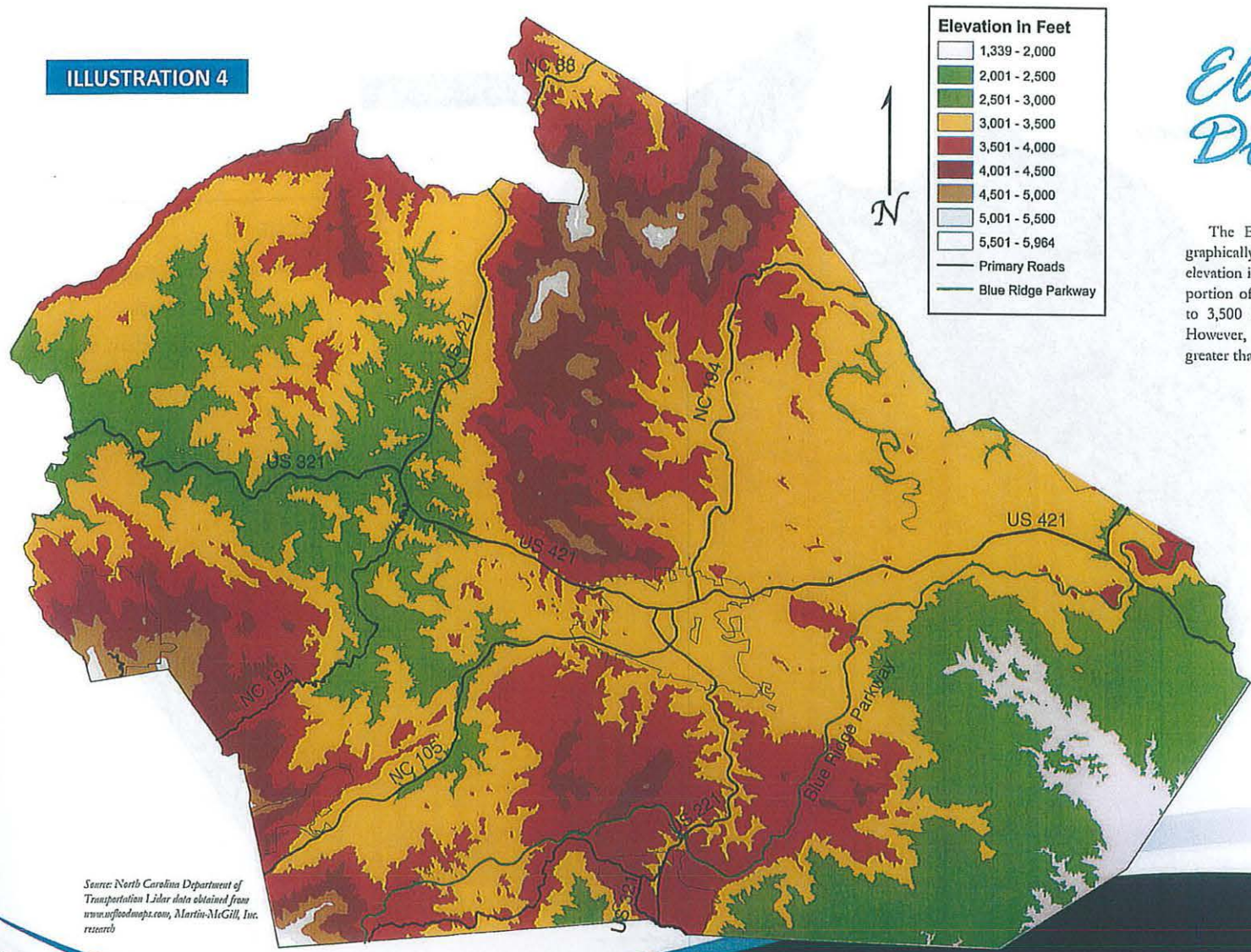


Source: North Carolina Department of Transportation
 Lidar data obtained from www.ncfloodmaps.com, Martin-McGill, Inc. research

Elevation Diversity

The Elevation Map (Illustration 4) graphically displays the wide variation in elevation in Watauga County. The largest portion of the County falls in the 3,001 to 3,500 feet above sea level category. However, about 25% of the County is greater than 3,501 feet and above.

ILLUSTRATION 4

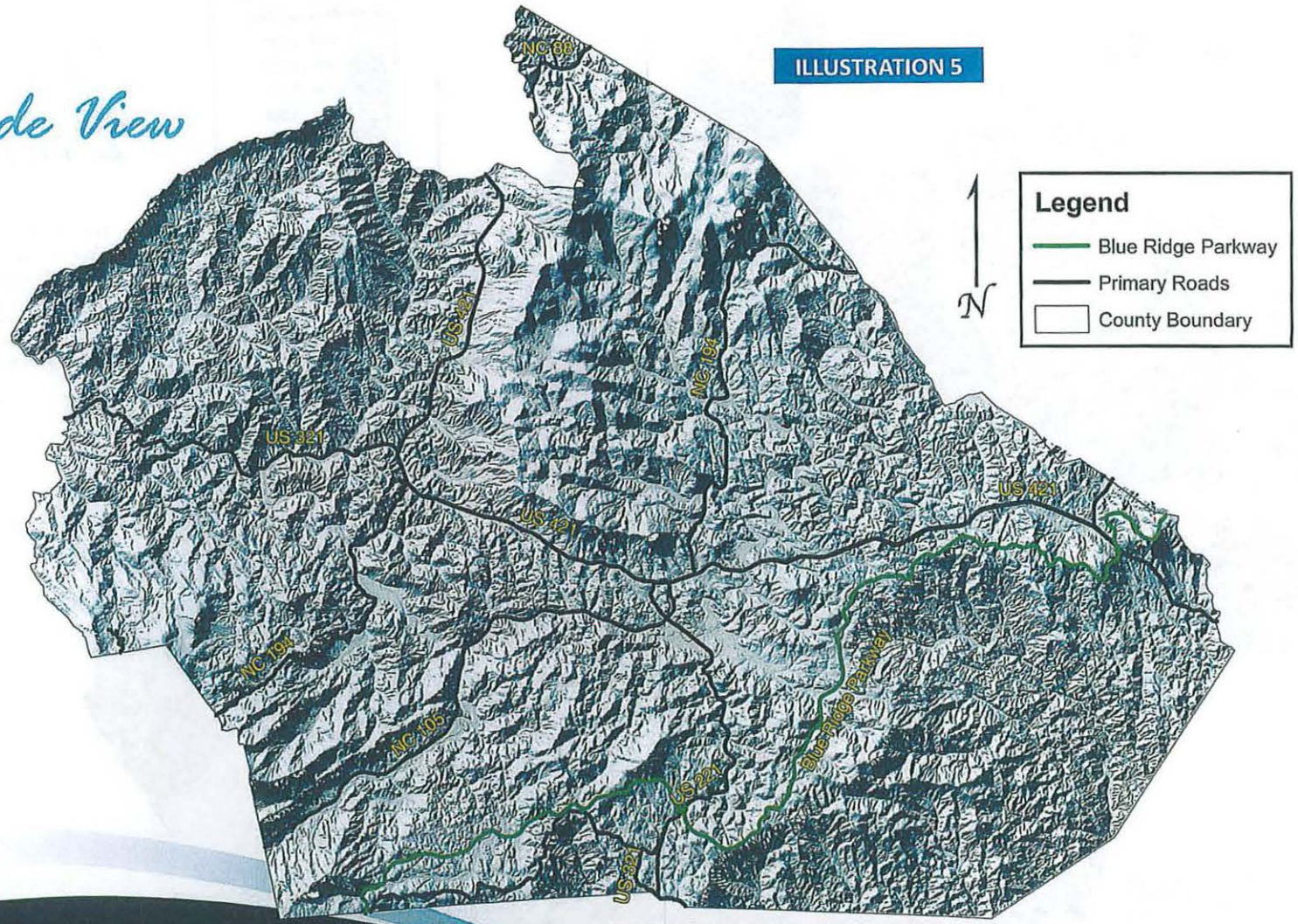


Source: North Carolina Department of Transportation Lidar data obtained from www.nctoolbox.com, Martin-McGill, Inc. research

Hill Shade View

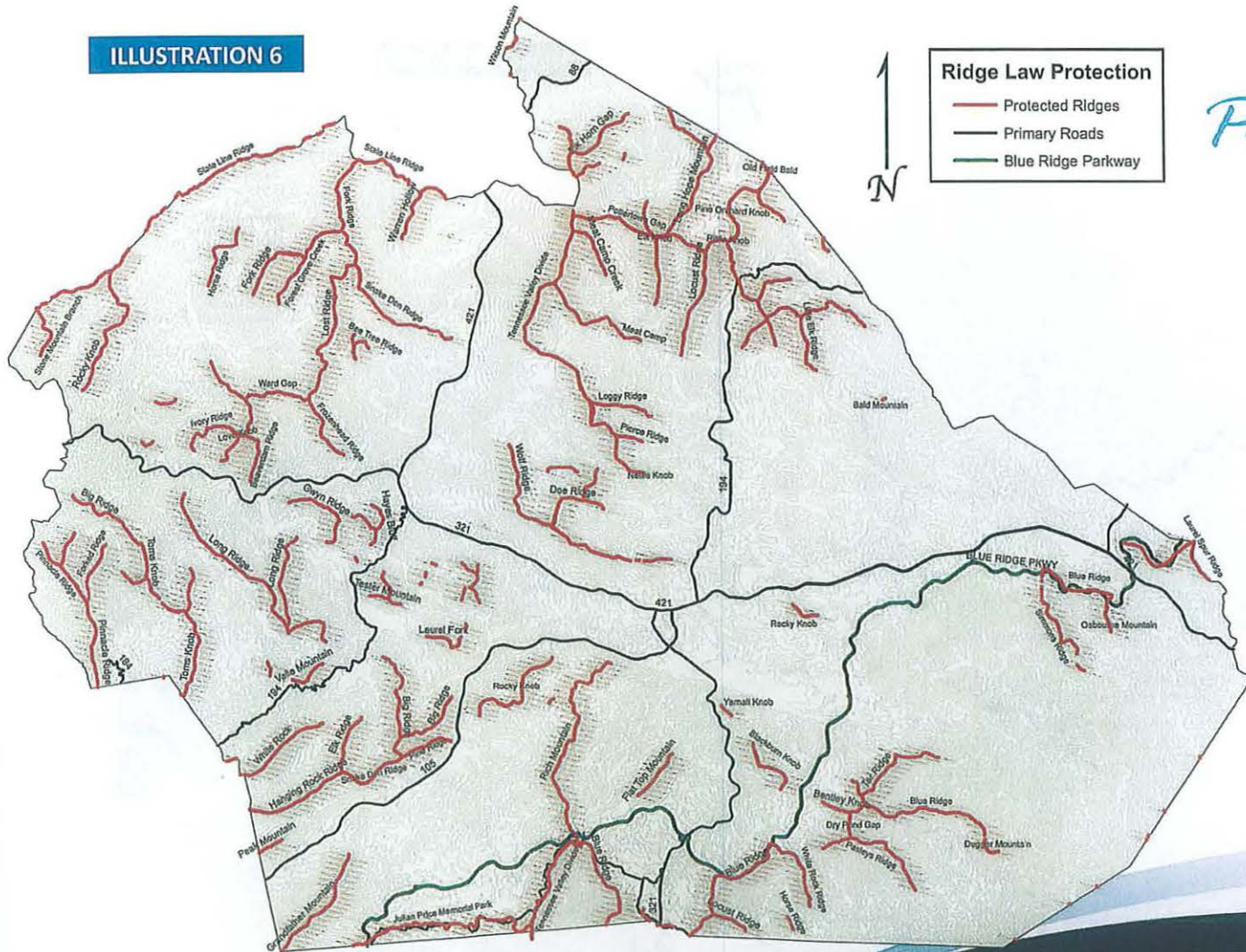
The Hill Shade View Map (Illustration 5) provides an alternate view of the topographic features of Watauga County. This map, along with the Topographic, Elevation and Slope Maps, provides a picture of the rugged and diverse landscape of the County. This graphic representation presents the relief of the landscape as viewed from the west quadrant of the map.

ILLUSTRATION 5



Source: North Carolina Department of Transportation Lidar data obtained from www.nsfloodsupt.com

ILLUSTRATION 6



Protected Ridges

- In 1983, The General Assembly adopted North Carolina General Statute 113A-205-448, known as the "Mountain Ridge Protection Act." The regulations contained therein apply to mountain ridges with an elevation of 500 feet or more above the valley floor. The regulated portion of the ridge is the area within 100 feet below the elevation of the crest of the mountain.
- The Act prohibits "tall buildings or structures" on protected mountain ridges.
- A "tall building or structure" has a vertical height of more than 40 feet measured from the top of the foundation to its highest point.
- Tall buildings or structures may not protrude above the crest of the ridge by more than 35 feet.
- Certain structures and building projections are not regulated under the Act, including towers for communications, electricity, telephone, television and radio, structures such as chimneys, spires, steeples, antennas, windmills, etc., and structures designated as National Historic Sites.

Source: North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources, United States Geological Survey, Martin-McGill, Inc. research

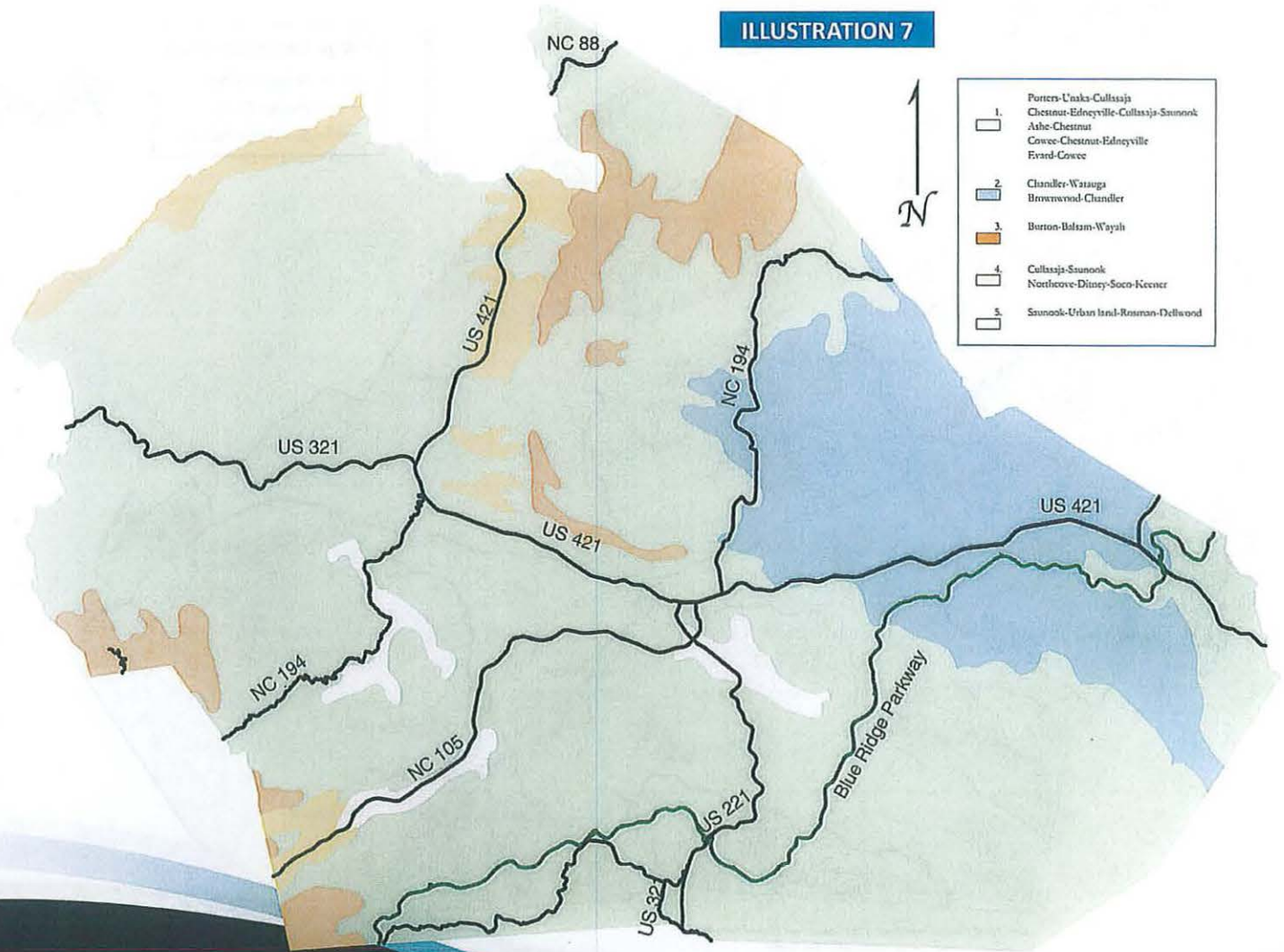
28 Soil Types

The Soil Map shown in Illustration 7 combines 11 different series of soil types within the Soil Orders of Ultisols and Inceptisols into smaller groups that have similar characteristics.

- Group 1 soils are soils with bedrock issues, rocky soils and are typically high in Mica content.
- Group 2 soils are also high in Mica content and as a result are highly erosive and not easily compacted.
- Group 3 soils are high elevation soils usually having rocky, steep slopes.
- Group 4 soils are typically found in coves. They are colluvium soils that are loose and have been transported by gravity.
- Group 5 soils include soils having characteristics of cove type soils and urban soils. A portion of this group contains floodplain soils, which are frequently wet and often contain springs and seeps.

The type of soil can have a direct bearing on the suitability of that land for different uses. Thus, soil type may be a limiting factor for some applications.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service maintains maps and publications delineating all the different soils in Watauga County. Included are nearly 80 different series.

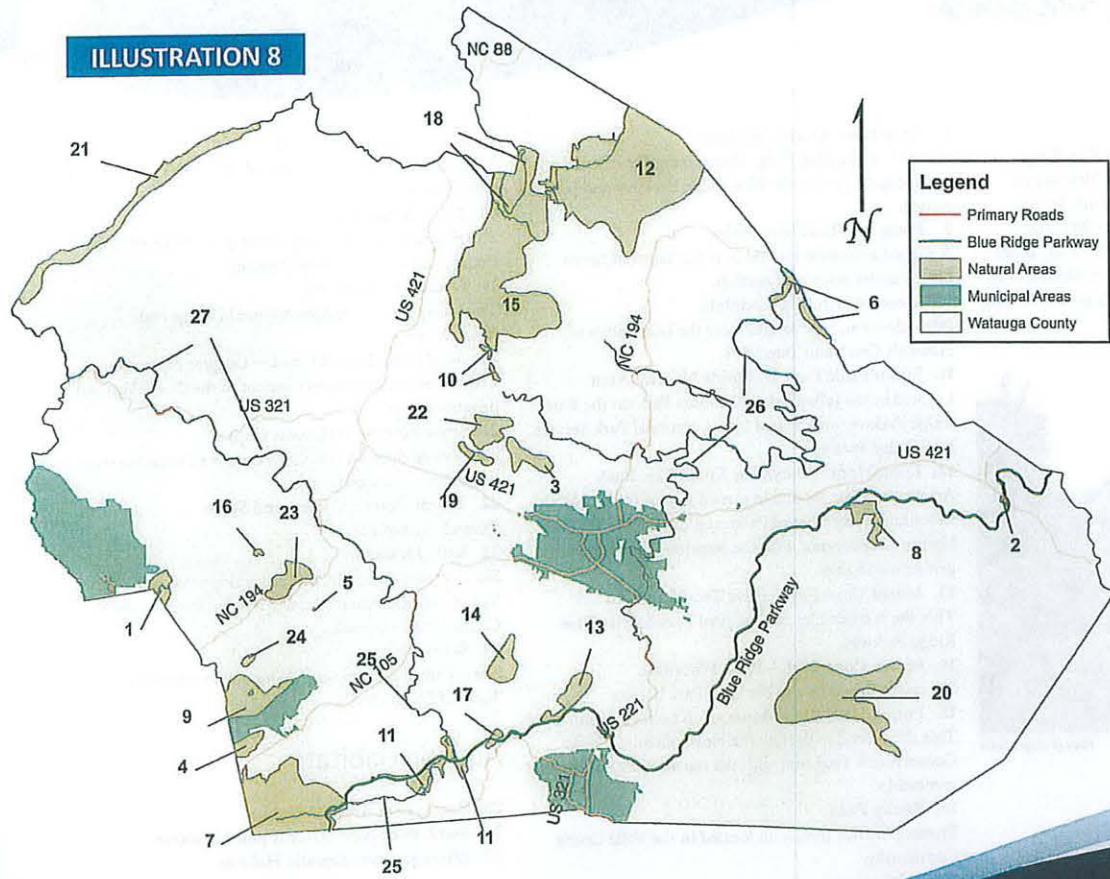


Source: Natural Resources Conservation Service, Martin-McGill, Inc., r220arb

Watauga County Significant Natural Areas

Watauga County has several sites designated as natural heritage areas or significant natural areas in the report, "An Inventory of the Significant Natural Areas of Watauga County, North Carolina," produced in 2000 by the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program. It names many sites in the County as significant. It breaks them into Terrestrial Sites and Aquatic Habitats. All of the sites, according to the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program, have one of the following designations: national, state, regional or county significance. The following is a list of the sites with matching numbers for reference to the Watauga County Significant Natural Areas Map shown in Illustration 8, along with acreages as recorded by the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Recreation, Natural Heritage Program*. Some of the sites enjoy protection through ownership by federal or state entities. Others are in private ownership.

ILLUSTRATION 8



1. Beech Creek Bog – 121.88 acres and 79.19 acres
2. Deep Gap Bog – 11.08 acres
3. Doe Fork Seeps and Forests – 269.88 acres
4. Dun Vegan Mountain – 320.0 acres
5. Dutch Creek Falls – 2.19 acres
6. Gilley Field Station Forests – 95.11 acres and 103.89 acres
7. Grandfather Mountain – 6367.35 acres
8. Grandview Overlook Slopes – 224.06 acres
9. Hanging Rock Mountain – 700.23 acres and 5.04 acres
10. Howards Creek Floodplain – 23.92 acres and 22.12 acres
11. Julian Price Park Wetlands – 129.75 acres and 170.72 acres
12. Long Hope Knob/Elk Knob/The Peak – 7208.61 acres and 86.54 acres and 324.18 acres
13. Moses Cone Park – Flat Top Mountain – 298.17 acres
14. Moses Cone Park – Rich Mountain – 290.78 acres
15. Potato Hill Bog and Seeps – 2992.1 acres
16. Rocky Face – 18.07 acres
17. Sims Creek Old Growth Forest – 47.32 acres
18. Snake Mountain – 377.68 acres and 716.6 acres
19. Snakeden Mountain – 97.24 acres
20. South Fork Laurel Creek – Dugger Mountain – 1854.68 acres
21. Stone Mountain (Locust Gap) – 1148.85 acres
22. Trivette Branch Forests and Seeps – 310.21 acres
23. Valle Mountain – 308.09 acres
24. White Rock – 37.14 acres
25. Boone Fork Aquatic Habitat – 71.36 acres
26. South Fork New River Aquatic Habitat – 1399.6 acres
27. Watauga River Aquatic Habitat – 169.3 acres

*Source: NC DENR, Dir. of Parks and Recreation, *Natural Heritage Areas: NC DENR, Dir. of Parks and Recreation, Natural Heritage Program, Raleigh, North Carolina.*

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Significant Natural Areas (continued)

Terrestrial Sites

1. Beech Creek Bog Natural Area

Portion owned by North Carolina Department of Parks and Recreation as a State Natural Area and the remainder is privately-owned located near Beech Mountain.

2. Deep Gap Bog

Site owned partly by the National Park Service Blue Ridge Parkway and is a Registered Heritage Area and the remainder is privately-owned located near Deep Gap.

3. Doe Fork Seeps and Forests

Privately-owned site located north-northwest of Boone near Rich Mountain.

4. Dun Vegan Mountain

Privately-owned site near the Town of Seven Devils.

5. Dutch Creek Falls

Privately-owned site located near the Valle Crucis Community.

6. Gilley Field Station Forests – Robert Gilley Field Station

Currently being used by the Anthropology and Biology Departments at Appalachian State University for faculty and student research projects and owned by ASU Endowment Fund located in the Todd Community.

7. Grandfather Mountain

A high, rugged mountain located on the Blue Ridge Escarpment. Ownership of Grandfather Mountain is by the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service Blue Ridge Parkway, The Nature Conservancy, and private ownership. An agreement (September 29, 2008) to purchase a large portion of Grandfather Mountain by the State of North Carolina became the State's 34th State Park.



Photo by Hugh Merion

8. Grandview Overlook Slopes

Located on the Blue Ridge Escarpment between Boone and Deep Gap, near the Blue Ridge Parkway and privately owned.

9. Hanging Rock Mountain

A rugged mountain located near the Town of Seven Devils under private ownership.

10. Howards Creek Floodplain

Privately-owned site located near the headwaters of Howards Creek and Tater Hill.

11. Julian Price Park Wetlands Natural Area

Located in the Julian Price Memorial Park on the Blue Ridge Parkway and owned by the National Park Service Blue Ridge Parkway.

12. Long Hope Valley/Elk Knob/The Peak

An Amphibolite mountain owned in part by the North Carolina Department of Parks and Recreation and The Nature Conservancy with the remaining portion under private ownership.

13. Moses Cone Park—Flat Top Mountain

This site is owned by the National Park Service Blue Ridge Parkway.

14. Moses Cone Park – Rich Mountain

Site ownership is by the National Park Service.

15. Potato Hill/Rich Mountain Knob/Harmon Bald

This site owned in part by the North Carolina Plant Conservation Program, with the remainder under private ownership.

16. Rocky Face

Privately-owned mountain located in the Valle Crucis Community.

17. Sims Creek Old Growth

This site is owned by the National Park Service Blue Ridge Parkway.

18. Snake Mountain

A high mountain top ridge located in northern Watauga County and under private ownership.

19. Snakeden Mountain

This site is part of the Rich Mountain Ridge and privately-owned.

20. South Fork Laurel Creek—Dugger Mountain

Located on the eastern escarpment of the Blue Ridge and privately owned.

21. Stone Mountain (Locust Gap)

An elevated ridge on the North Carolina-Tennessee state line under private ownership.

22. Trivett Branch Forests and Seeps

Privately-owned site.

23. Valle Mountain

Site is a small mountain with steep slopes located in the Valle Crucis Community and privately-owned by the Valle Crucis Mission School.

24. White Rock

Site is a small privately-owned mountain northwest of the Town of Seven Devils.

Aquatic Habitats

25. Boone Fork Aquatic Habitat

26. South Fork New River Aquatic Habitat

27. Watauga River Aquatic Habitat

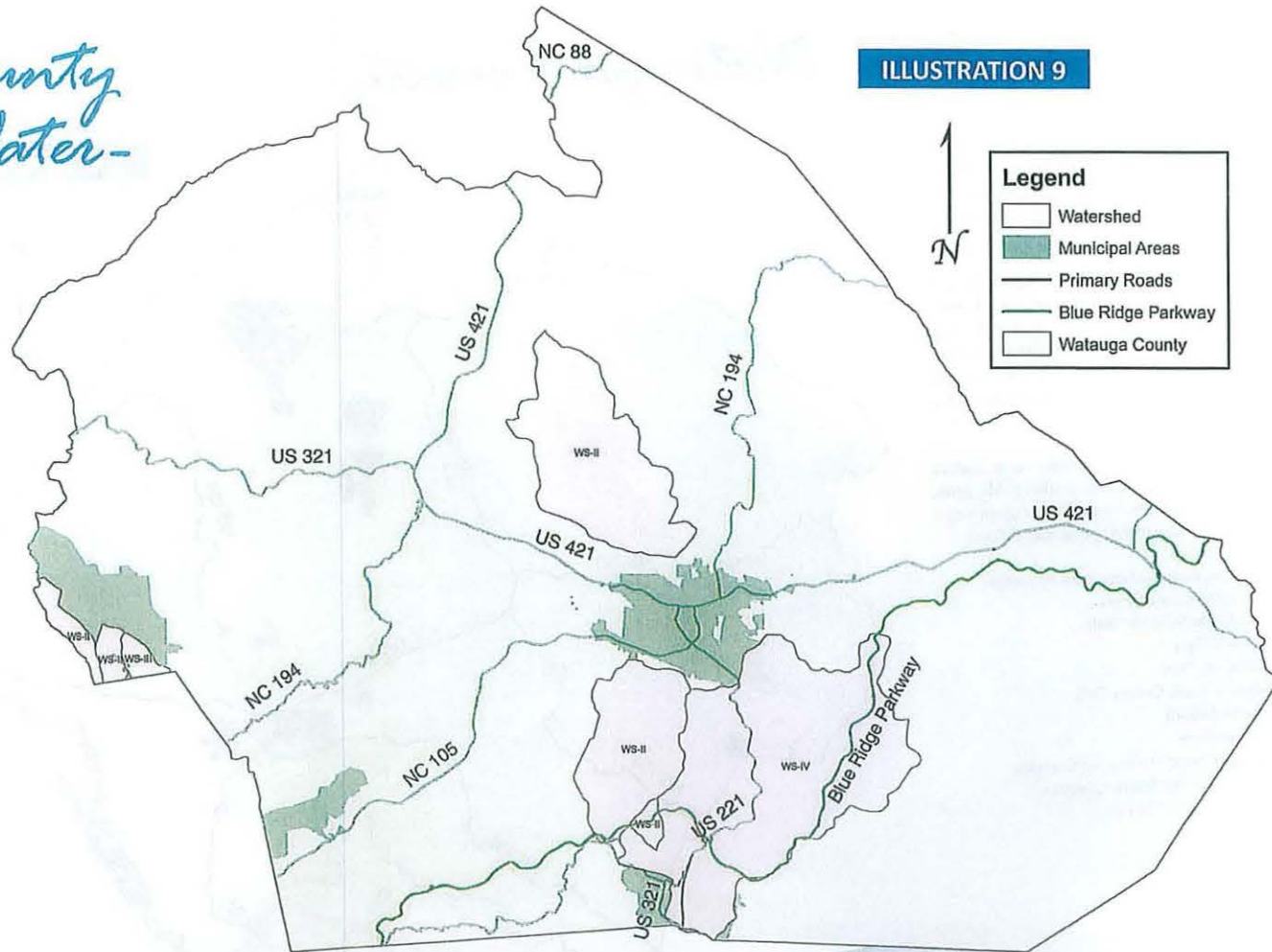
Watauga County Drinking Water- Watersheds

Watershed Protection

The Legislature of the state of North Carolina delegates the responsibility to Watauga County to adopt regulations that provide protection for watersheds. New development is subject to the restrictions of the watershed ordinance.

Protected watersheds include:

- Winklers Creek
- Howards Creek
- Norris Branch
- Flat Top Branch
- Pond Creek
- South Fork New River



Public Lands in Watauga County

Watauga County enjoys a large amount of public land owned by the federal government. It is mostly located in the southern portion of Watauga County and is part of the Blue Ridge Parkway and properties accessed from the Parkway.

Properties owned by the state of North Carolina include Elk Knob State Park in northern Watauga County, which has the second highest peak in Watauga County, and the property around Grandfather Mountain. The state of North Carolina also owns much property in and around Boone occupied by Appalachian State University.

Watauga County owns properties that include government buildings, schools, recreation fields, gyms, swimming pools and others. A partial list of the principal County operated and/or owned properties follows:

- Watauga County Government Buildings
- Watauga County Schools
- Anne Marie Softball Fields
- Complex Field
- Brookshire Park
- Howards Knob County Park
- Industrial Fields
- Optimist Park
- Watauga County Swimming Complex
- Watauga County Tennis Complex
- Watauga County Tot Lot

ILLUSTRATION 10

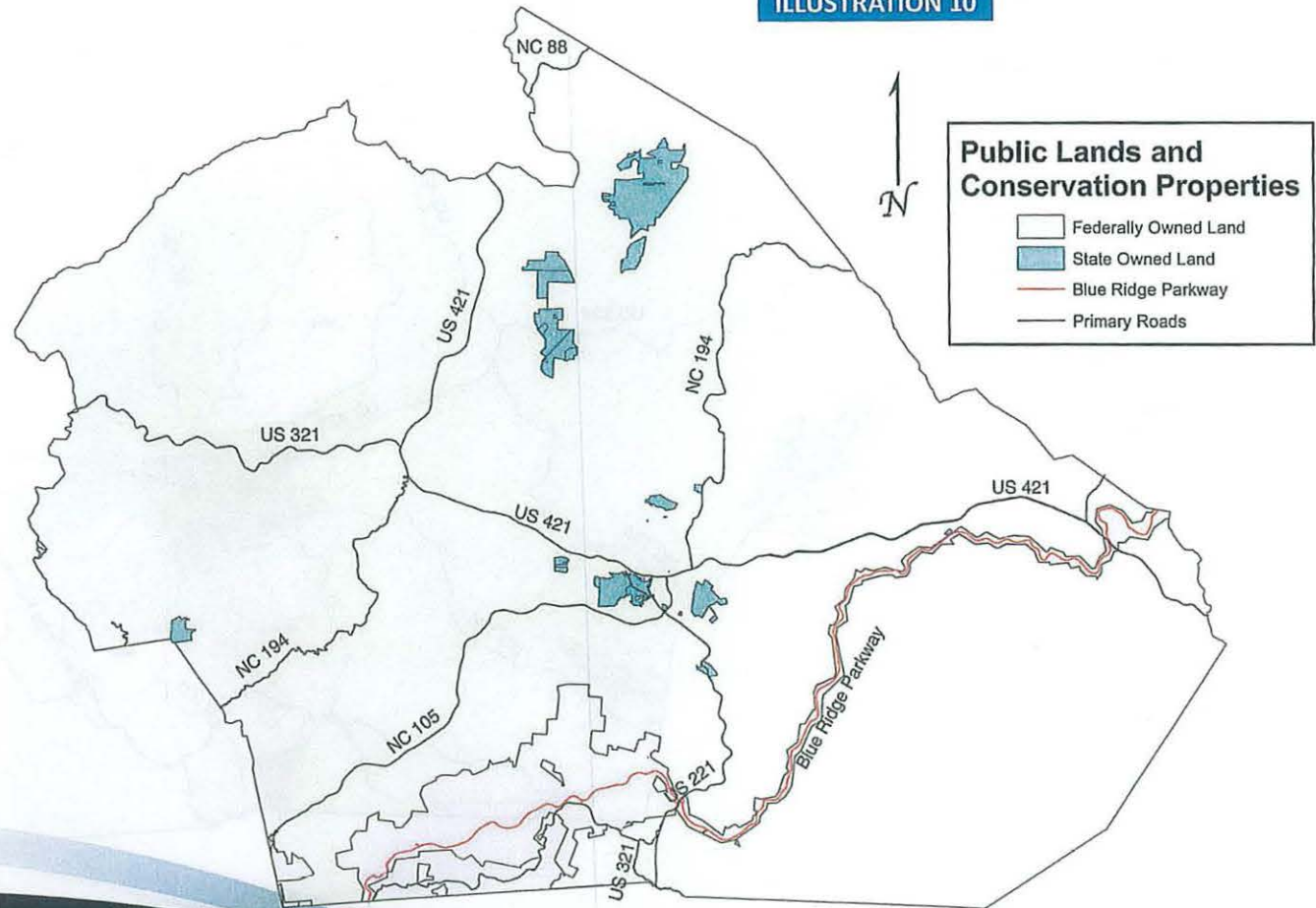
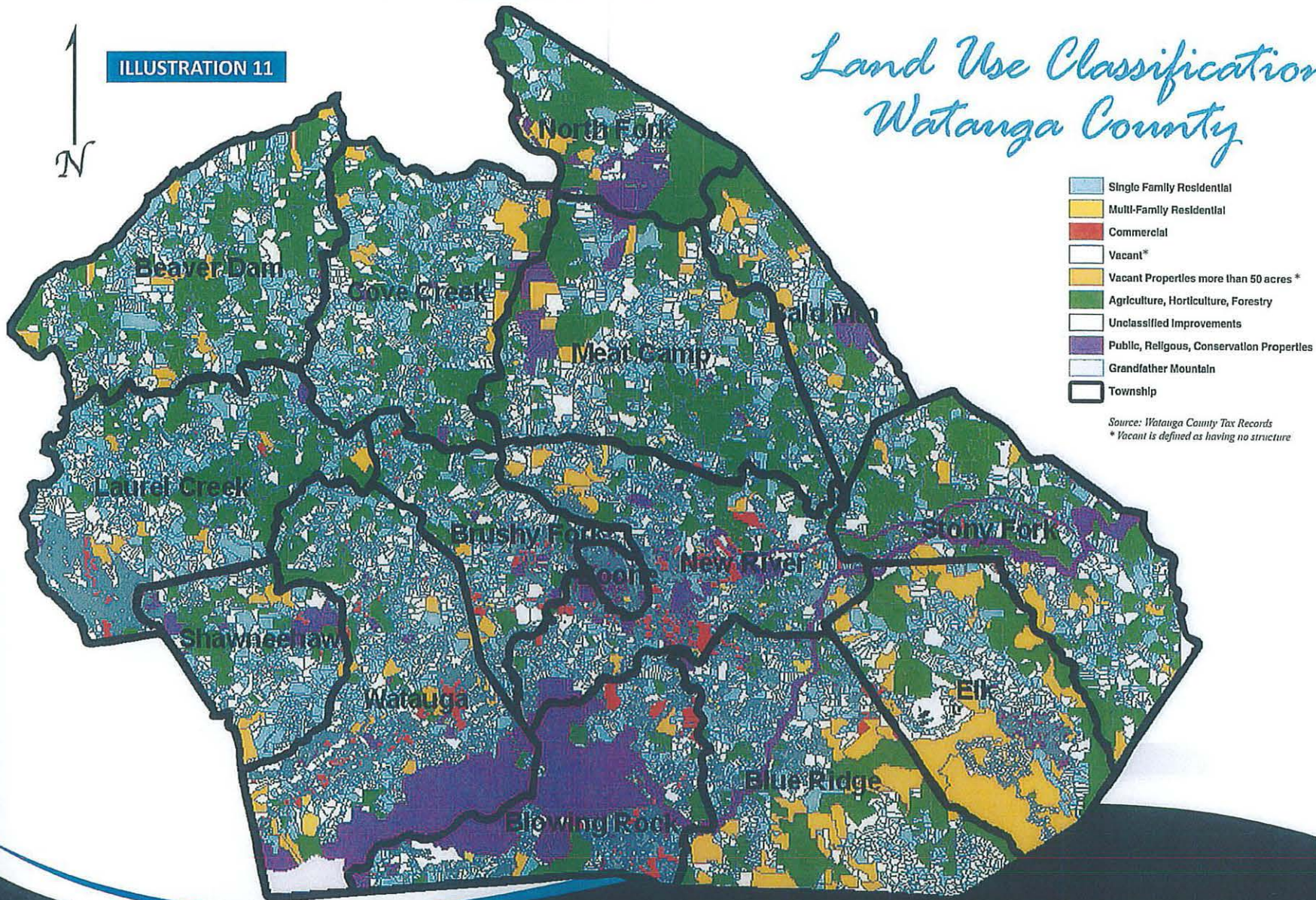
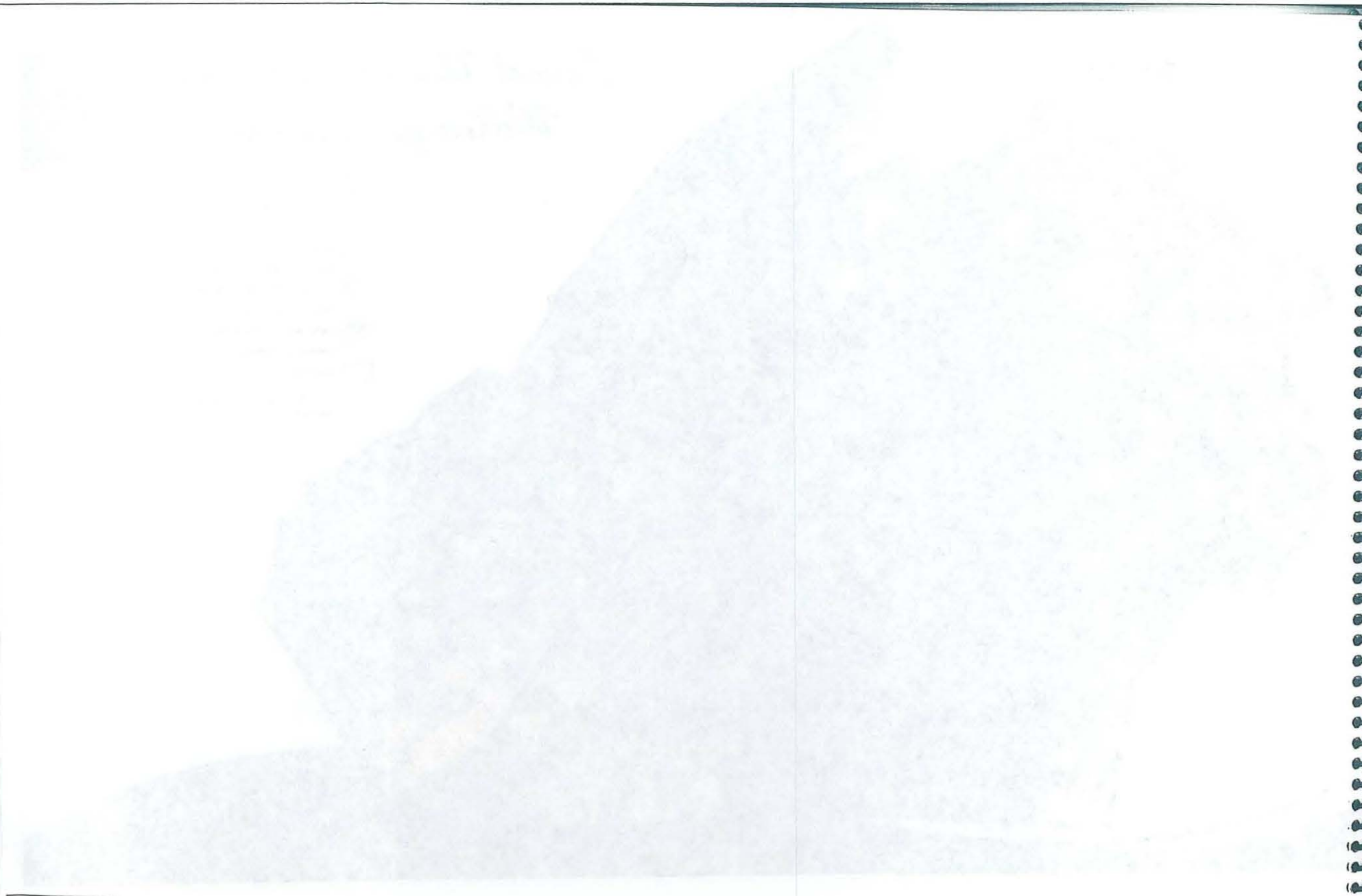


ILLUSTRATION 11

Land Use Classification Watauga County





Section 3

Transportation



Transportation Planning

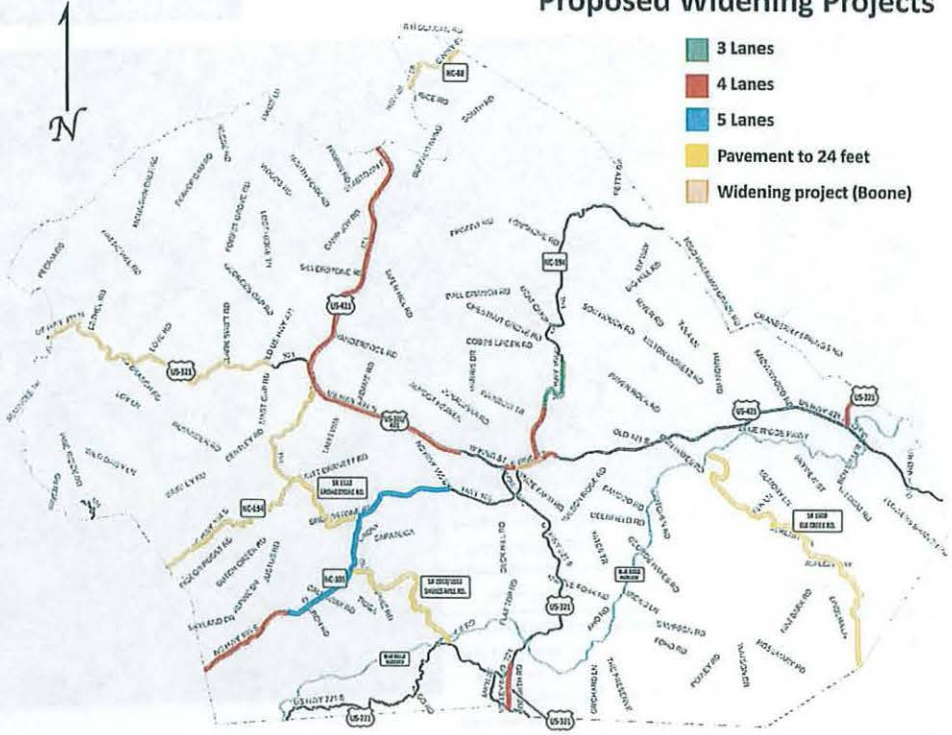
Transportation Findings

In 2002, the North Carolina Department of Transportation's Small Urban Planning Unit developed the current Thoroughfare Plan for Watauga County. "The primary objective of this plan is to reduce traffic congestion and improve safety by eliminating existing and projected deficiencies in the transportation system." Twelve (12) highway recommendations were made in the plan, grouped as principal and minor arterials and major and minor collectors. Other plan recommendations deal with replacing several functionally obsolete bridges and fifteen (15) structurally deficient bridges.

ILLUSTRATION 13

Proposed Widening Projects

- 3 Lanes
- 4 Lanes
- 5 Lanes
- Pavement to 24 feet
- Widening project (Boone)



Principal Arterials (See Transportation Map)

- US 421: four-lane divided facility on new location from NC 194 to 2 miles east of US 221 for 11.9 miles. (Project is complete)
- NC 105: widen roadway from western Boone Urban Planning Boundary to the Avery County line.
- US 321 (South of Boone): widen roadway to a four-lane facility from just north of US 221 interchange to the Caldwell County Line. (project to begin in 2010)
- US 321 (West of Boone): widen from 10-foot lanes to 12-foot lanes from Cove Creek Bridge to Avery County.

Minor Arterials

- US 421 (North of Boone): widen roadway to a multi-lane facility from US 321 in Boone to the Tennessee state line.
- US 221: widen roadway to a four-lane divided facility from US 421 to the Ashe County Line. (This project is funded in the TIP)

Major Collectors

- NC 194 (North of Boone): widen roadway to a four-lane divided facility from US 421 to SR 1306 (Howards Creek Road), and widen the roadway from SR 1306 to SR 1327 (Jack Hayes Road) to a three-lane.
- NC 194 (South of Boone): widen existing 9- or 10-foot lanes to 10- and 11-foot lanes from US 421 to Avery County. (This project is funded in the TIP)
- NC 88: widen from 9-foot lanes to 10-foot lanes from Ashe County line to Tennessee line.

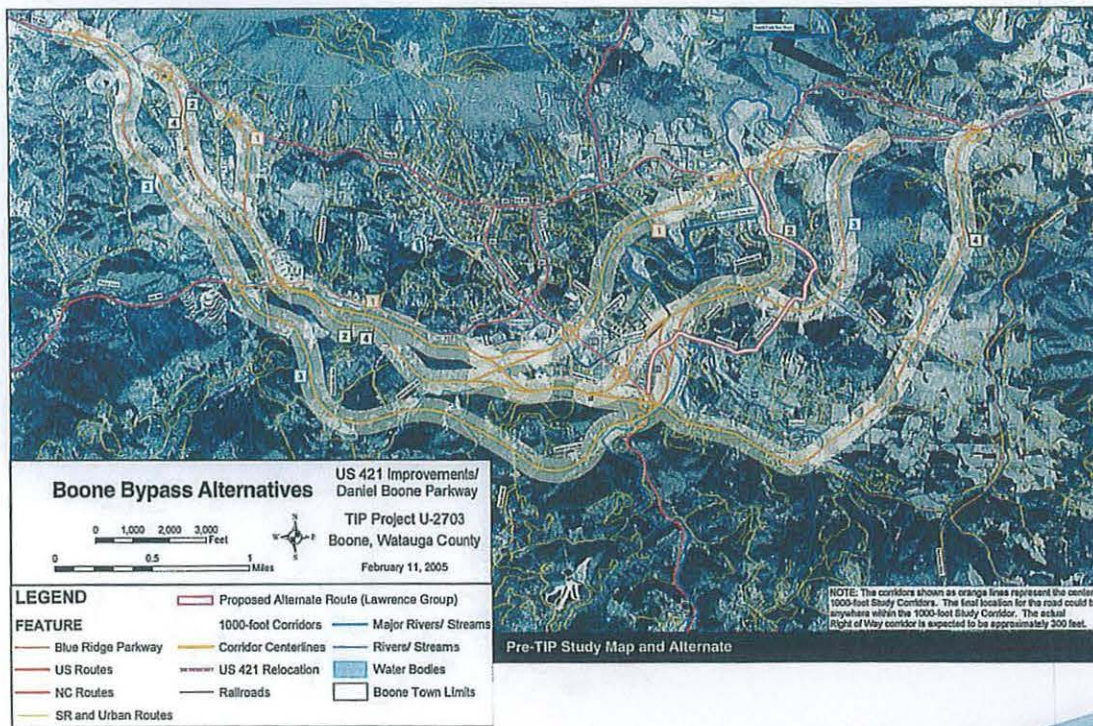
Minor Collectors

- SR 1557/1552 (Shulls Mill Road): improve from 8- and 10-foot lanes to 11-foot lanes from SR 1568 (Old Shulls Mill Road) to US 221.
- SR 1112 (Broadstone Road): install a right turning lane in front of the Valle Crucis Elementary School.
- SR 1508 (Elk Creek Road): improve from 9-foot lanes to 11-foot lanes from SR 1583 (Wes Randall Road) to US 421.

Transportation Planning

ILLUSTRATION 14

The Boone Bypass



- Many of the issues related to transportation planning in Watauga County deal with traffic congestion, and particularly traffic congestion in Boone. Survey respondents believe a bypass around Boone is the answer to the problem. An alternate route around Boone will need to provide easy access points for those whose end destination is Boone.
- Boone also has a Thoroughfare Plan. The first plan was completed in 1964, the second in 1976, and the most recent in 1992. A major element in each of the plans was the construction of a route to bypass Boone. The NCDOT outlined possible routes in the 1992 plan. Some of these routes are similar to the Pre-TIP Study Plan developed and released in 2008 that contains several potential routes.
- Several routes for a Boone bypass have been proposed (Illustration 14). Most routes require new road construction. The Lawrence Group, in their development of a Land Use Master Plan for Boone, has proposed yet another route. It utilizes a combination of existing roads and new segments to create an alternate route.
- Regardless of which route is eventually agreed upon, the public believes that the Boone bypass is the most important road project in the County.

Transportation Planning

- Watauga County's public transportation authority is the AppalCART. It serves all of Watauga County and operates as a coordinated effort between local, state and federal governments, human service agencies and Appalachian State University. AppalCART provides numerous Boone routes free of charge and provides rural routes via van to destinations such as Zionville, Foscoe, Matney, Meat Camp, Blowing Rock, Deep Gap and Cove Creek for a route fee. All routes are open to the public. Out-of-county routes to Winston-Salem, Hickory and Charlotte are available for residents to attend medical appointments.
- The County does not have a public airport, but there is a short, private airstrip in the Kellwood/Bamboo area. The nearest airports providing commercial passenger service are in Charlotte, Greensboro, Asheville, North Carolina, and Blountville, Tennessee. General aviation airports with runways over 5,500 feet are located in North Wilkesboro, Morganton/Lenoir and Hickory.
- The Piedmont Authority of Regional Transportation also provides two round trips per day to Boone from Greensboro with service to certain towns and hospitals in between.
- The Hickory "Hop" currently provides a shuttle service between Watauga County and the Charlotte airport at four scheduled times daily, seven days each week.

Recommendations

Highways

- Town of Boone, County, High Country Council of Governments (RPO), NCDOT, ASU and citizens groups should work together to resolve the issue of routing for a Boone Bypass, which is considered to be the top transportation priority by the public. A group representing these interests is urgently needed to work toward resolution of this important issue.
- Watauga County should work with NCDOT officials to promote, establish priorities, and facilitate progress toward completing projects identified in the Watauga County and Boone Thoroughfare Plans.
- Priority should be given to the following Projects:
 - Hwy. 194 to four-lane from U.S. 421 to Howard's Creek Road, and multi-lane from Howard's Creek Road to Jack Hayes Road.
 - U.S. 421 N to multi-lane from Boone to the intersection of U.S. 421/U.S. 321 in Vilas.
 - N.C. Hwy 105 S to multi-lane from the Boone municipal limits to Avery County.
 - Multi-lane U.S. 421 S (King Street) from Hardin Street to N.C. Hwy 194.
 - Multi-lane Old U.S. 421 from U.S. 421 S to the high school.
- NCDOT should schedule paving of all public gravel roads to NCDOT standards as feasible.

Multimodal

- Town, County, High Country Council of Governments, and NCDOT officials should place strong emphasis on creating roadways that are safe for all modes of transportation, including bicycles and pedestrians.
- Expand AppalCART rural routes and decrease the service intervals between existing stops so that more people have the opportunity to ride and waiting times are shorter.
- Expanded corridors for AppalCART should include U.S 421 in both directions in the County, U.S. 321 toward Blowing Rock, and N.C. Hwy 194 to Green Valley School. Assess the heaviest population areas of the County and provide service as practical to those areas.
- Expand AppalCART service to affordable housing projects as feasible.
- Create Park-n-Ride lots outside of Boone and provide AppalCART service to these lots in order to capitalize on the use of mass-transit and reduce downtown congestion.
- Boone and ASU should work together to: Promote and provide more environmentally friendly, greener, safer and sustainable transportation modes, especially pedestrian and bicycles.

- Provide more parking areas for bicycles at ASU and in business areas.
- Encourage ASU to consider further limiting the number of students who can bring their vehicles to the University campus. Removing freshman and sophomore students' vehicles from the campus would remove them from the roadways in the busiest times of day. A balanced approach incorporating both new parking areas and limiting students having vehicles on campus would help alleviate traffic congestion.

Transportation Planning

- Local government should show solidarity in their desires to encourage the NCDOT to proceed with improvements already identified as needed in the County and the Town of Boone. The working association among Appalachian State University, Watauga County, Boone, Blowing Rock, High Country Council of Government, High Country Rural Planning Organization, and the NCDOT should be strengthened.
- Adopt minimum standards for new and redesigned roads that specify the creation of bicycle lanes and sidewalks that promote safe alternatives.
- Encourage a study by NCDOT to ascertain where and if roundabouts might be utilized to enhance traffic flow and reduce congestion.



Section 4

Economic Development

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Photo courtesy Blowing Rock, LLC

Economic Development

Preface

The economy in Watauga County is diverse. The principal economic segments that drive the County's economy include education, tourism, healthcare, finance, construction, services and agriculture. In 2008, Policom Corporation ranked Boone 96th among 577 micropolitan areas in the U.S. for economic strength.

Findings

- **Quality of Life** - The concern for preserving and improving "quality of life" is a theme that permeates all aspects of Watauga County's future. All efforts to promote economic development should focus on "better rather than bigger" and enhancing "quality of life."
- **Gateways** - Watauga County's principal transportation corridors are also its major economic corridors. They are "economic gateways" into the community. These corridors offer visitors their first perception of Watauga and they are therefore an essential element of planning for the future. The primary corridors include US 421, US 321 and NC Hwy 105.

- The Deep Gap area is of particular importance since it contains much of the most desirable land for development and has good transportation accessibility.

Economic Development Infrastructure

- The economic development related organizations are charged with various aspects of economic promotion and support in Watauga County. While each is important, there is a growing need to achieve a higher degree of cooperation and ensure that the array of activities collectively promote established core objectives.
- **Critical Economic Sectors** - Watauga County's key economic sectors are education and research, tourism and recreation, the medical services field, construction, and existing business and industry.

Education/Research

- Appalachian State University is the largest employer in Watauga County. In September 2008, it had over 5,000 total full-time and temporary employees.

In 2008, the Center for Economic Research & Policy Analysis at ASU released the report *Economic and Tax Revenue Impacts*, which found that:

- (1) ASU contributed \$125 million to the region in earnings and had a \$506 million total impact on the regional economy.
 - (2) ASU brought \$185 million in state appropriations, tuition and fees, grants, contracts and gifts to the region.
 - (3) A 10% increase in enrollment (1,500 students) will generate an additional \$56 million in economic activity and will create an additional 572 jobs on campus and throughout the region.
- Planning among ASU, Boone and Watauga County is very important. A heightened degree of cooperation and coordination at the highest levels is warranted and finding ways to enhance this essential partnering is a strategic challenge for the community.
 - Caldwell Community College & Technical Institute (CC&TI), Watauga Campus is a valuable resource for Watauga County. It can provide the education essential for the technological jobs needed in today's workplace.

Medical/Research

- The second largest employer in the County is Appalachian Regional Healthcare System. In 2008, it had 1,600 employees.
- Appalachian Regional Healthcare System has become the predominant regional medical center.

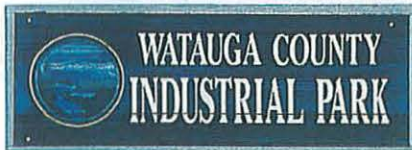
Tourism and Recreation

- Tourism has a profound effect on the economy in Watauga County. It is the largest driver of the economy apart from ASU. The study, "The Economic Impact of Travel on North Carolina Counties", states that in 2007, Watauga tourism generated \$191.5 million in expenditures and a tourism payroll of \$43.56 million for 2,580 jobholders.
- Ample recreational opportunities, including fishing, hiking, biking, skiing, rafting, canoeing, kayaking, rock climbing and ASU athletic events, also add to the appeal of the County and contribute to the economy.
- Watauga County is a hub for many tourism activities that take place throughout the region. Visitors to adjoining counties make Boone the base of their activities for lodging, dining, medical services and other services.
- Watauga County's recreational opportunities are enhanced by its unique and diverse environment, which includes assets such as the Blue Ridge Parkway, Mountain to Sea Trail, Elk Knob State Park, Grandfather Mountain State Park, New River, Watauga River and many pristine streams.

Economic Development

Industry and Business

- Retaining and enhancing existing industry and business is fundamental to the County's economic future. Local officials actively sought to promote economic development in the County with the creation of the Watauga County Industrial Park. The Park, now filled to capacity, provides many jobs to County residents.
- A proposal to create another industrial/multi-use park is under consideration.
- Approximately 35 manufacturing firms conduct business in Watauga County. Most are small "home grown" businesses. The two largest manufacturing businesses in Watauga County are Hospitality Mints and TT Electronics/IRC.
- A major factor in attracting industry and business is the provision of the services they need to thrive. Services such as the provision of water, sewer, electricity and communications are very important to almost any kind of business.



Agriculture

- Watauga County residents have considerable interest in local farming practices and the availability of local foods.
- Over 100 growers produce Fraser Firs in Watauga County.
- Local vegetables and other crops represent an important economic segment.

Recommendations:

Strengthening Organization

- Strengthen the focus of Economic Development by making the County the core agency for economic planning, policy interpretation and coordination. Adding resources to this ongoing program would enable the County to assume a more assertive role in economic development. This enhanced program would foster communication, "sustainability" and innovation among existing economic programs and facilitate new initiatives that either strengthen existing programs or create new initiatives designed to generate new economic investments and employment.
- Invest in the creation of a dynamic and comprehensive economic development strategy to better explore and capitalize on potential economic opportunities.
- Encourage and facilitate the provision of essential infrastructure, such as transportation, water, sewer and natural gas, to provide an attractive business climate for potential economic development.
- Work with and coordinate the wide range of economic development resources available to the County, including Advantage West, Appalachian Regional Commission, ASU Center for Entrepreneurship, Committee of 100, Future Forward, High Country Business Network, Service Corps of Retired Executives, Tourism Development Authority, Watauga County Economic Development Commission, and others to explore innovative and fresh concepts. Organize annual or semi-

annual workshops with these entities to create a spirit of cooperation and focus resources.

- Where appropriate, promote regional economic development strategies beyond Watauga County that provide employment opportunities for Watauga County residents.
- Increase promotion of the Watauga Green Business Plan and the concepts it embraces regarding business operations by encouraging participation in the Plan, focusing on "green" or "sustainable" practices.
- Promote the development of renewable energy concepts and participation in renewable energy initiatives.

Economic Gateways

- Watauga transportation corridors are also economic "Gateways" (Illustration 15) into the County and are critical to the County's economic future. Watauga County should guide development and protect the integrity and potential of these key strategic economic corridors.
- "Gateways" are defined as the entrances or means of access to Watauga County and are identified as the primary arterial highways (US 321, US 421, and NC Hwy 105). Providing attractive as well as functional "Gateways" into Watauga County facilitates both the positive image and economy of the community.
- The economic future of the community is linked to the vitality and appearance of these "Gateways."

Economic Gateways



- The quality of life enjoyed by Watauga County citizens and visitors is directly related to the natural environment. The "Gateways" are inextricably linked to the perception of this unique environment and the rich quality of life.
- The aesthetic quality of the "Gateways" concept is vitally important to the economic future of the community. Incentives for property owners and the community should be developed to maintain attractive and compatible development that will enhance the total economic value of the "Gateways" to the community.
- Formulate an individual "Gateway Corridor" strategy for each of the four (4) designated "Gateways."

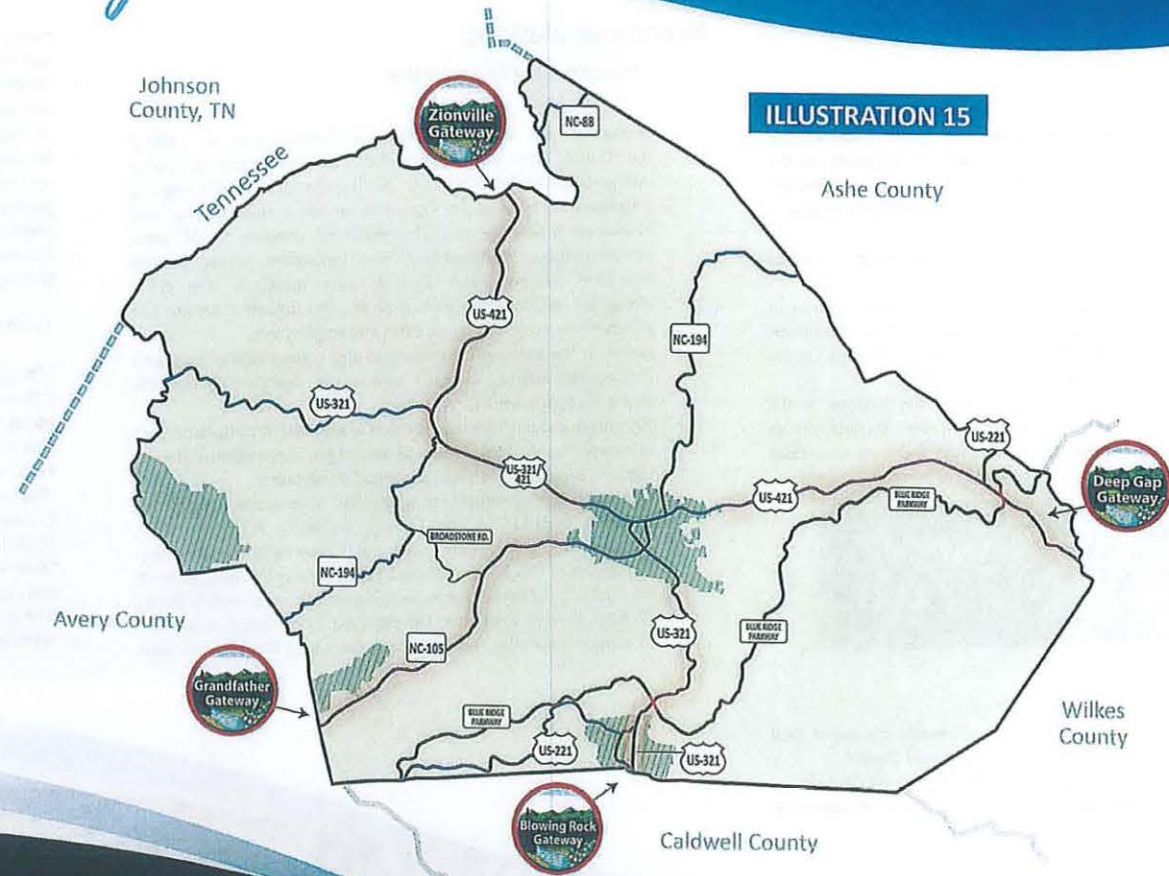
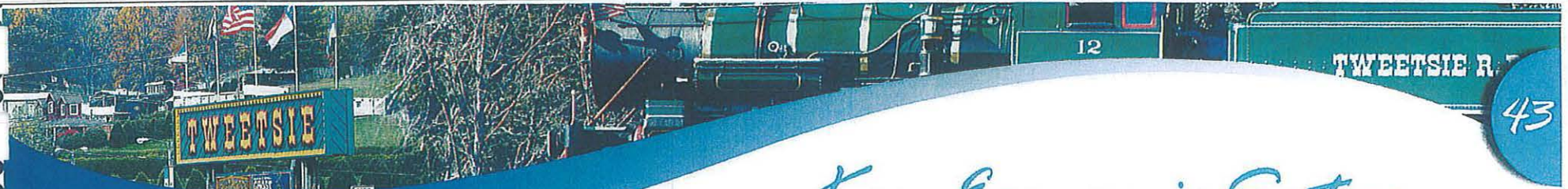


ILLUSTRATION 15



Key Economic Sectors

Emphasis on Successful Economic Sectors

• Education/Research

- Work with Appalachian State University to capitalize on University research opportunities.
- Promote the development of a research park to bring highly skilled employment into the community.
- Support the University of North Carolina Tomorrow goals mandating that ASU "increase its capacity and commitment to respond to and lead economic transformation and community development."
- Strengthen the alliance with Appalachian State University and Caldwell Community College & Technical Institute to understand and attain education and skill levels needed by Watauga residents.

Medical/Research

- Watauga County should work with medical professionals and the Appalachian Regional Healthcare System to facilitate a "medical cluster" concept

to further develop the groundwork that has been laid in making Watauga County a regional medical center.

- Encourage Appalachian State University and Caldwell Community College & Technical Institute to explore new healthcare ventures related to the nursing programs at each institution.
- Focus on and promote activities and businesses that are involved in technology, research, education and medicine.

• Tourism and Recreation

- Capitalize on existing tourism by encouraging the Tourism Development Authorities to enhance and increase strategic marketing of Watauga County.
- Fully develop and promote the greenways concept such as the new greenway connector near the new high school, trails, parks and other eco-tourism assets. These assets are especially important in promoting a healthy life style and quality of life themes.
- Promote eco-tourism, defined as "environmentally responsible travel and visitation to natural areas," in order to

enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features).

• Industry and Business

- Develop a commerce/business park site in Watauga County and explore opportunities for a joint venture with Appalachian State University, Caldwell Community College & Technical Institute, and the medical cluster
- Plan for a flex or shell building in a commerce/business park to meet the demands of potential new businesses.
- Expand and strengthen support between the community and existing businesses and industry to reassure businesses that their presence is appreciated and their needs are considered.

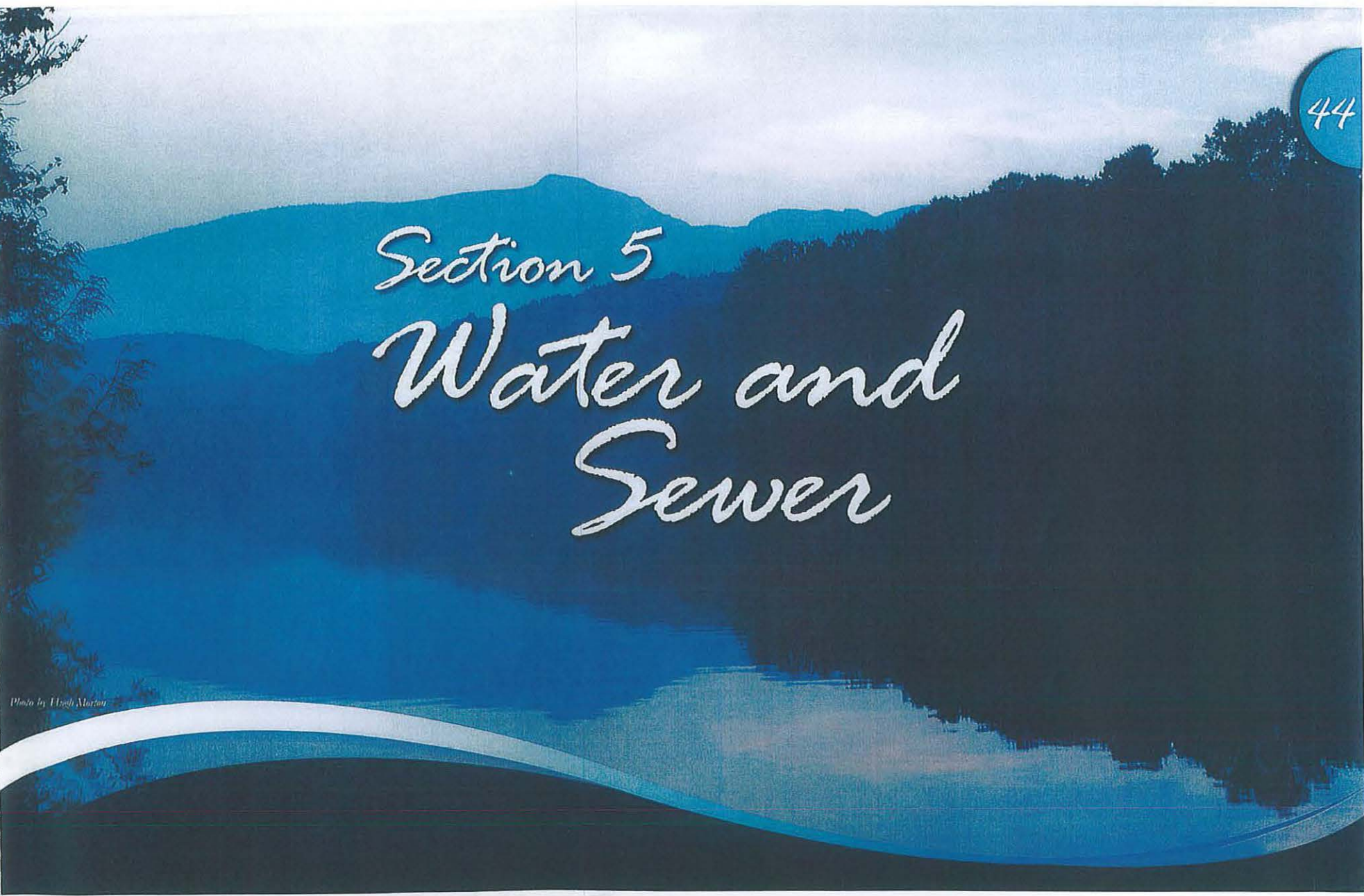
• Agriculture

- Promote the production of agricultural products, especially those produced organically, to capitalize on the growing demand for local food products. Conduct relevant market research to support a marketing strategy for such products.
- Find effective ways to facilitate the local farmers markets, and related efforts of

the Watauga County Cooperative Extension. The Farmers Market has grown beyond the capacity of the initial site and a new location is warranted to enable the market to re-consolidate and continue to grow. A strategy is proposed that addresses a new location with expanded hours of operation and greater diversity of products.

- Promote a grower's cooperative.
- Promote and explore opportunities in niche markets of food production, such as herbs and spices, grapes (vineyards), strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, and local vegetables, and promote as local foods.
- Work with local agricultural interests to create an interest group committee to promote agri-tourism and sponsor demonstration projects, such as organic gardening with a living historic farm.

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Section 5
Water and
Sewer

Photo by Hugh Morton

Water and Sewer

Preface

Water is a valuable and precious resource. Stress caused by increasing population and dwindling resources due to drought, pollution and misuse should cause us to look closer at how we use and protect our water resources.

- In a survey conducted by ASU Professors Dragan Stefanovic and Marvin Hoffman in 2007, a primary public response was to "secure the water supply."
- Another survey conducted by Martin-McGill in 2008 for Phase 1 of the "Citizens' Plan for Watauga," identified "water availability" as a top issue for the community.
- Within the County, four municipalities provide water services and three municipalities provide sewer services. Appalachian State University provides its own water supply.
- In 2001, Draper Aden Associates studied and subsequently produced the "Countywide Water and Wastewater Analysis." W.K. Dickson produced the "Water System Hydraulic Analysis and Master Plan" for the Town of Boone in 2004.

- The adequacy of water and sewer is essential for commercial or residential growth. The provision of water and wastewater to areas outside of municipalities is of strategic interest to the County.

Findings – Water

- The N.C. Public Water Supply Section and the N.C. Division of Water Resources have established a 2008 list that ranks local water systems in three tiers of drought vulnerability. Boone and Blowing Rock are listed as Tier 1, communities having the greatest vulnerability.
- The N.C. Drought Management Advisory Council assigns a drought rating of D-2 and D-3 for Watauga County in 2008, meaning the County had severe to extreme drought conditions.
- The Town of Boone provides water to all residents within the city limits. Water supply lines extend beyond the Town boundary in several areas and serve small numbers of customers outside of the city.
- The W.K. Dickson study revealed that Boone is expected to reach 90% of the maximum capacity of existing water sources by 2009. Based on late 2008 economic trends, Boone Public Utilities

believes that the date may be delayed until 2010 or 2011.

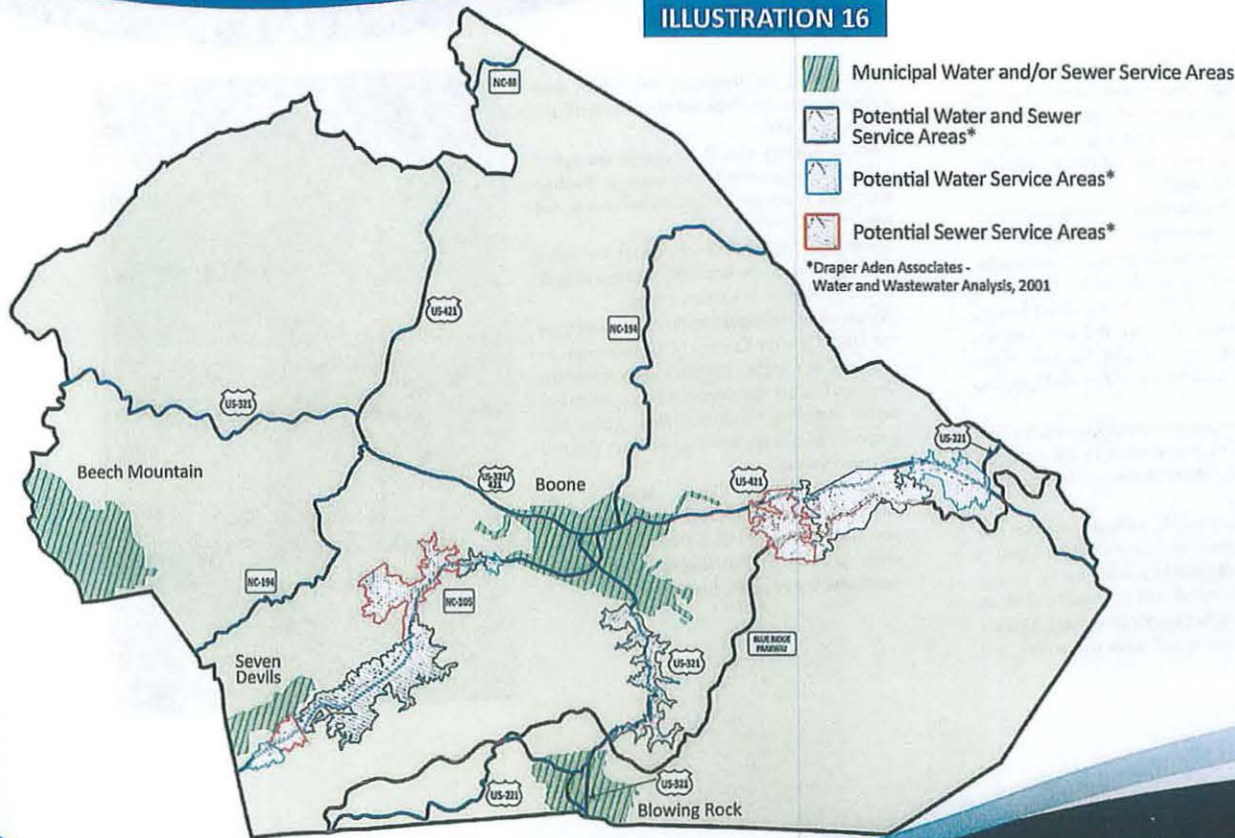
- A new water source called "The New River Project" was proposed to meet Boone's water needs, and a bond referendum on the issue passed in 2008.
- This project would provide an additional supply of 4 million gallons of water per day from the South Fork New River.
- Boone and Watauga County are presently considering the development of water supply lines along the U.S. 321 and 421 corridors and the N.C. Hwy 105 corridor.
- Boone, Blowing Rock and ASU are interconnecting their water supply resources.
- The water supply for Beech Mountain comes from Buckeye Lake located some 2,000 feet below the Town and five miles away.
- The water supply for Seven Devils is provided by wells with storage tanks owned by the Town. Seven Devils is currently conducting a study to determine the adequacy of its water supply.
- Several large developments provide water to their residents, including Hound Ears, Echota, Mill Ridge and the Ponds. Reynolds Blue Ridge also plans to have a water and wastewater treatment system.
- Watauga County is currently not a purveyor of water services.
- The availability and adequacy of ground water will be examined in the coming months as the High Country Council of Governments completes a study of the issue.

Findings – Sewer

- The Town of Boone provides wastewater treatment to residents and businesses within the Town's limits.
- Appalachian State University relies upon the Town of Boone for provision of sewer service.
- Town of Blowing Rock provides sewer services to most residents within the Town's limits, but none outside of the Town. Blowing Rock is considering the construction of a new wastewater treatment plant south of town in Caldwell County.
- Beech Mountain provides sewer services to most properties in the Town.
- Seven Devils does not provide sewer services. However, there are two private sewer systems serving certain parcels.
- Wastewater treatment systems and service are not available to most residents and businesses outside the municipalities. Private communities providing wastewater treatment include Hound Ears, Echota, Mill Ridge and the Ponds. Reynolds Blue Ridge plans to have a wastewater treatment system.

Water and Sewer

ILLUSTRATION 16



Findings - 2001 Study Committee

- The Draper Aden study recommends that the County form a study committee regarding water and sewer. The 2001 findings of that committee are as follows:
 1. Identify, designate and protect drinking water supply watersheds.
 2. Have serious conversations between the County and the Town of Boone, as well as other towns, to discuss water and sewer issues.
 3. Consider financially supporting activities, such as surveys, additional technical expertise and financial analysis.

Recommendations

Potential roles for Watauga County regarding water and/or sewer include:

1. Continue in an undefined role.
2. Assume the role of a purveyor of water and sewer services for unserved areas of the community.
3. Assume a role as planner and facilitator of water and sewer services in the community.

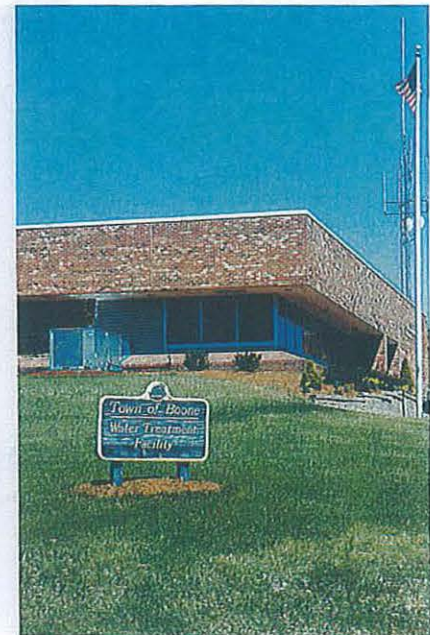
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Water and Sewer

(Recommendations continued)

The most appropriate alternative role for Watauga County is the role of planner and facilitator of water and sewer services.

- The County should promote sound water and sewer intergovernmental cooperation, facilitating needed and feasible development of infrastructure and services in areas not currently served, and assume a leadership role by participating in planning, policy making and strategic capital investments.
- The County should plan and implement measures that would improve existing public and private services. Water and wastewater systems and services should continue to be operated by municipalities or other existing purveyors of such services.
- County officials should assign leadership roles at policy and staff levels that would be consistent with the County's assumed role as facilitator.
- County officials should assume a leadership role in identifying and protecting future water sources.
- Watauga County should expect and plan for future strategic investments in the planning and the development of water and sewer infrastructure and services for areas of the County not presently served (where feasibility can be demonstrated).
- The ownership of resulting infrastructure should be assumed by existing service providers.
- Watauga County should reevaluate and update the recommendations (Illustration 16) made by Draper Aden in 2001 that included planning for the provision of water and sewer service to the Foscoe area, and water service to the Tweetsie/321 corridor region and the Deep Gap region.
- Watauga County should work with municipalities to help guide water and sewer to areas targeted for economic development and affordable housing.
- Watauga County should make conservation and protection of water resources a principal goal.
- Watauga County should provide for the proper disposal of chemicals and substances likely to end up in the water supply by making disposal of such items easier and more convenient, and
- by increasing the frequency with which toxic substances can be disposed at the landfill and convenience sites.
- Watauga County should encourage the use of indigenous vegetation for landscaping. Planting vegetation that is not indigenous to the area may require more water.
- Watauga County should seek grants and other funding resources to help with the expansion of municipal service to unserved areas.
- Watauga County should work with and support the High Country Council of Governments in reference to a study of ground water resources. Watauga County has requested a comprehensive report regarding water, including surface and ground water, from the High Country Council of Governments.
- Watauga County should lead in an intergovernmental endeavor to develop a 10-year Capital Improvement Plan for water and sewer projects in the interest of economic development and public health.



Section 6
Key Community
Services

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Photo courtesy Blaring Rock TD-1

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Key Community Services

Preface

Key community services provided by Watauga County include schools, law enforcement (Sheriff's Office), emergency services and community centers.

Findings - Schools

- Watauga County elementary schools have 3,028 students in grades kindergarten through eight. The high school enrollment includes 1,445 students in grades nine through twelve (October 2008). Pre-kindergarten students also attend the elementary schools.
- A new high school on the east side of Boone is scheduled to be operational by the 2010-11 academic school year, to replace the existing high school.



Watauga High School under construction, March 2009

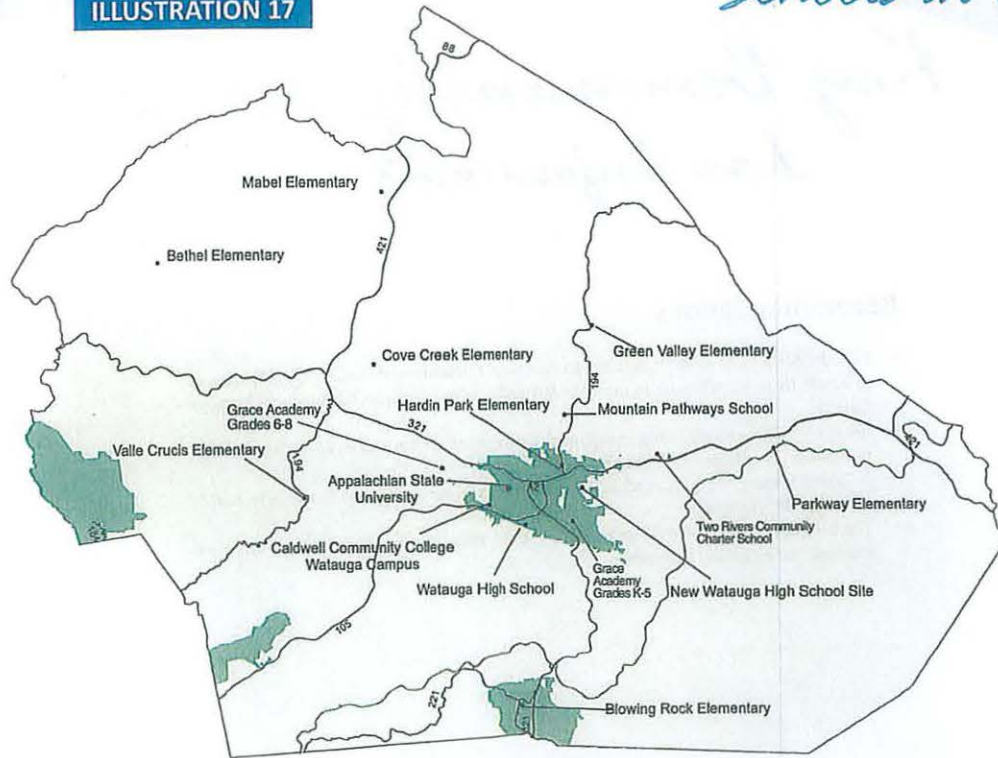
- Enrollment in Watauga County schools is projected to be relatively stable over the next few years, indicating no need for additional schools in the short-term.
- The eight elementary schools are located throughout the County (Illustration 17) and conveniently serve most communities.
- The Watauga County School system has a Facilities Improvement Plan outlining capital improvement needs for facilities through 2018.
- In the 2008-09 academic school year, 77.8% of the schools in Watauga County were recognized as "Schools of Distinction" as compared to only 10% for North Carolina schools overall.
- Based on "End-of-Course" test results, Watauga County students scored higher in grade levels three through eight in reading and math, and scored high on computer skills testing. Watauga students scored higher on 4th, 7th and 10th grade writing tests than the average of students in all North Carolina schools. Similarly, Watauga students scored higher on 5th and 8th grade science tests.
- High school students scored an average of 1,102 on SAT exams, which combine math and critical reading. This is compared to SAT scores averaging 1,007 for all North Carolina students.
- The Watauga County graduation rate was 68.5% in 2008-09 compared to 71.7% for North Carolina.

Recommendations - Schools

- Implement the following capital improvement projects listed in the Watauga County Schools Facilities Improvement Plan 2008-2018:
 - Provide air conditioning in all schools.
 - Update the media retrieval system in all schools.
 - Construct a new four classroom building for Valle Crucis School and demolish the existing building prone to flooding.
 - Add office space and parking area at the Central Office.
 - Resurface parking areas at several schools.
 - Provide new roofing at most schools.
- Evaluate the prevailing dropout rate and implement a plan to address retention of students.

Key Community Services Schools in Watauga County

ILLUSTRATION 17



Elementary Schools:		Enrollment (October 2008)	
<i>Kindergarten through Eighth Grade</i>			
Bethel Elementary	Sugar Grove, NC	K-8	134
Blowing Rock Elementary	Blowing Rock, NC	K-8	341
Cove Creek Elementary	Vilas, NC	K-8	282
Green Valley Elementary	Boone, NC	K-8	388
Hardin Park Elementary	Boone, NC	K-8	773
Mabel Elementary	Zionville, NC	K-8	188
Parkway Elementary	Boone, NC	K-8	543
Valle Crucis Elementary	Sugar Grove, NC	K-8	379

High School		Enrollment (October 2008)	
Watauga High School	Boone, NC	9-12	1,445

Public Charter Schools		Enrollment (October 2008)	
Two Rivers Community School	Boone, NC	K-12	260

Private Schools		Enrollment (October 2008)	
Mountain Pathways Montessori	Boone, NC	K-12	75
Grace Academy	Boone, NC	K-12	35



Valle Crucis Elementary

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WATAUGA COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Key Community Services Law Enforcement

Findings - Law Enforcement

- In 2008, the Watauga County Sheriff's Office had 39 sworn officers, including one sheriff, four captains, 18 detectives and civil officers, and 16 shift deputies.
- The civilian labor force at the Sheriff's Office includes nine dispatchers and three administrative officers.
- The Detention Center employs 28 jailors.
- In the Sheriff's Offices 2003 report (adjusted to 2009) produced by the U.S. Department of Justice, the average number of sworn officers for counties with a population between 25,000 – 49,999 is 31 and the average number of civilians is 26.
- Watauga County has a large number of seasonal residents and tourists that are not included in the population numbers, which should be considered in determining the adequacy of services.
- The Watauga County Detention Center has a maximum capacity of 106 prisoners and the average number of detentions is 86, or 81% (March 2009).
- Workspace for deputies and other staff is marginally adequate, indicating a probable need for expansion of the existing building/facility in the future.
- Sheriff's deputies spend a large part of their work hours transporting detainees and mental health patients.
- The narcotics division is experiencing the greatest increases in calls, resulting in high-risk arrests and greater demands for special task forces.
- All municipalities in Watauga County have police forces.

Recommendations

- Periodic evaluations should take place to monitor the resources of the Sheriff's Department to insure these are adequate to meet the law enforcement needs and demands of Watauga County.
- New policy decisions regarding transport of detainees and mental health patients are desirable to enhance the efficiency of deputies.
- A Capital Improvement Plan should be prepared to address current and future capital needs of the Sheriff's program.
- The Detention Center should be expanded in the near-term to accommodate anticipated increased peak capacity demands.

Key Community Services Emergency Services



Emergency Services - Findings

- Watauga County has 12 fire districts with fire departments. Ten are primarily rural areas and include Beaver Dam, Cove Creek, Deep Gap, Foscoe, Meat Camp, Shawneehaw, Stewart Simmons, Todd and Zionville. (Illustration 18)
- The Boone, Blowing Rock, Foscoe and Stewart Simmons Fire Departments have some paid staff who work with volunteer firefighters.
- All fire districts outside of municipalities in Watauga County are fire tax supported districts.
- The Watauga County ambulance and rescue service is a paid, contracted service. In addition, there are two volunteer (Medics) rescue squads in the County.
- The large amount of training required to become a volunteer firefighter, the time required away from primary jobs to fight fires, and the expense of travel to and from emergency calls often hurts retention of volunteer firefighters.
- Emergency communications personnel believe certain enhancements to existing communications equipment will improve efficiency for emergency communications.
- Survey respondents and community meeting participants expressed opinions that each of the fire stations should have a full-time firefighter. Others expressed a desire to have fire and rescue personnel located in western and eastern locations in the County.
- Community meeting participants and survey responders want assurance that emergency services will keep pace with growth.

Watauga Fire Districts and Stations

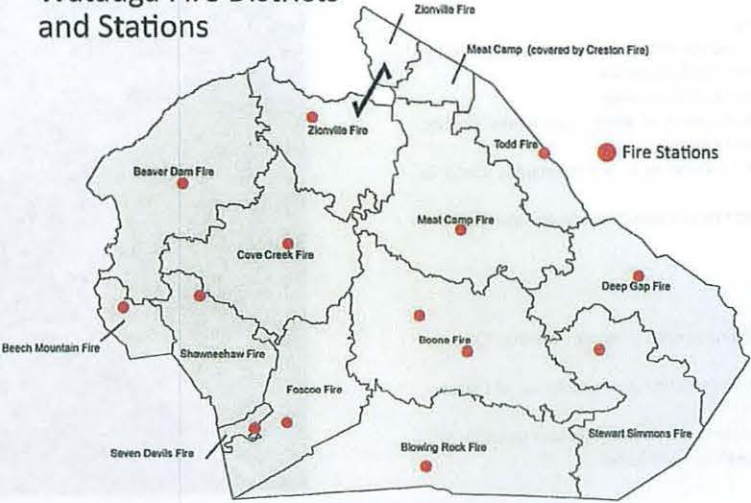
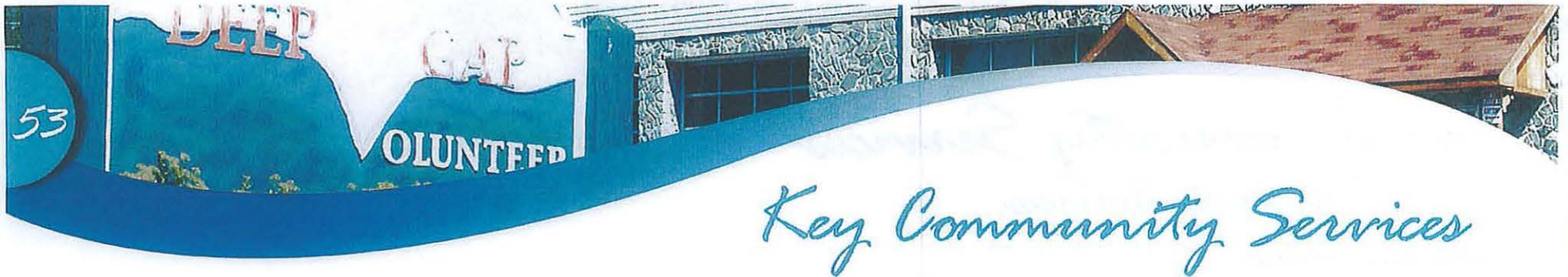


ILLUSTRATION 18

Recommendations

- Perform periodic evaluations to assess the ratio of population to emergency services personnel, taking into consideration the rural character of Watauga County and the number of miles that must be traveled from emergency service centers to all areas of the County.
- Develop strategies to improve cooperation and coordination between the County and each of the fire departments.
- Create an Emergency Services Master Plan for the County to address current and future needs including:
 - Evaluate the need for paid personnel in fire stations.
 - Assess the need for central dispatch of emergency services personnel.
 - Assess how alternative approaches to communications to enhance efficiency and effectiveness.
 - Evaluate methods to improve cooperation between the County and fire departments.
 - Establish additional water points for retrieving water to fight rural fires.



Key Community Services

Community Centers - Findings

- Community centers help to promote community identity.
- Community centers may provide certain benefits such as, but not limited to, a library, meeting space, media center, childcare, senior programs, urgent care and recreation.
- The Western Watauga Center serves citizens in the Cove Creek Community.
- Community centers play an important role in the development of shared community identity, community pride, community preservation and community growth.
- In surveys and community meetings, citizens expressed a desire to have a community center in eastern Watauga County.
- Schools are the main focal point and center for social activities in most Watauga communities.

Recommendations

- Assess the need and financial viability for a community center in eastern Watauga County similar to the Western Watauga Center.
- Establish a plan for greater cooperation between schools and communities for use of County school facilities.
- Facilitate community centers that are attractive, functional, visible, safe and accessible to their communities and reflective of each community's unique identity.

Other Human Services

- Although beyond the scope of the Plan, maintaining the "quality of life" in Watauga County must consider other human social needs, such as care for children and the elderly, health care and other fundamental human needs.
- An in-depth assessment of such needs and a plan for addressing the most pressing humanistic issues should be undertaken in the future.



Section 7
Affordable (Workforce)
Housing

Photo courtesy Blairns Rock TDA



Affordable (Workforce) Housing

Preface

The rich heritage of Watauga County coupled with its physical beauty, easy lifestyle and vast number of cultural and recreational opportunities make it an inviting place to live. As the popularity of mountain properties grows, and student and seasonal populations increase, so do the prices for purchasing or renting housing. A common complaint in the County is that affordable (or workforce) housing is difficult or impossible to find.

Findings

- Making affordable housing a priority in Watauga County is not an easy task. It involves many governmental entities, regulations, competing land uses, and the developers who seek the highest return for their investments.
- Planning for affordable housing for future residents will require a proactive approach.
- In Phase 1 of the "Citizens' Plan for Watauga," survey responses confirm that Watauga County citizens agree that the County needs affordable-housing, and that it is one of the top concerns for the future.
- Housing is the greatest single expense for most residents in Watauga County and is often a major consideration among people who want to relocate to the area.
- The Watauga Housing Opportunities Group, Watauga Planning & Inspections, and the Boone Area Planning Commission have addressed the lack of affordable housing, as have other interested groups and individuals.
- Ideal sites for affordable housing would be near towns to eliminate travel time to and from employment, merchants and services.
- The County Commission has agreed to explore a public-private partnership by allocating funds toward engineering for a package sewer plant for affordable-housing projects.
- Rural areas may provide the most potential for affordable housing ventures.
- Emphasis should be given to both renters and owners of affordable housing.

Recommendations

1. Ensure that subdivision regulations and other land use ordinances do not serve as barriers to the construction of affordable-housing. Rather, craft regulations and ordinances to favor affordable-housing.
2. Promote mixed-land uses that incorporate housing with other uses that can be blended without sacrificing safety, health and welfare of citizens.
3. Allow a broad range of housing choices in Watauga County ordinances. Encourage duplex, triplex and quadraplex development. Encourage higher density multi-family housing to reduce the cost of land per unit.
4. Ensure that current and future regulations provide sufficient opportunities for nursing homes and other similar care facilities.
5. Consider the use of land use policies that accommodate manufactured housing and mixed-use housing.
6. Develop a countywide affordable housing plan in cooperation with municipalities.
7. Investigate state and federally funded programs that assist in housing rehabilitation.
8. Lead in establishing an affordable housing trust fund in cooperation with municipalities and the County and seek external funding from other sources.
9. Preserve existing housing stock and address substandard housing wherever possible.

Section 8 Preservation of Community

Photo courtesy Blowing Rock TDA

MOSES H. CONE MEMORIAL PARK

Preservation of Unique Community Identities and Heritage

Preface

Community identity is defined as the collection of attributes that makes a community unique and separates it from other places. In Phase 1 of "Citizens' Plan for Watauga," citizens expressed their interest in preserving the unique community identities and heritage of the County. Phase 1 community meetings revealed that citizens take great pride in their communities and believe, regardless of which neighborhood they live in, that theirs is the best part of Watauga County.

Citizen participants in surveys and community meetings expressed a desire to preserve rural areas, to be a destination remembered for its culture and history, to retain its natural beauty, and to preserve its Appalachian roots. It is important that communities preserve their culture and history for future generations.

Findings - Community Identities

- According to the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, the National Register is an official listing of "buildings, structures, objects, sites and districts worthy of preservation for their

significance in American history, architecture, archaeology and culture."

- The Valle Crucis community took steps toward preservation by creating the Valle Crucis Historic District – the first rural historic district in North Carolina. The entire community is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Valle Crucis adopted a "Historic District Ordinance" on September 1, 1990, which provides for preservation and protection of the heritage of the community, protection of properties, conservation of the district for education, pleasure and enrichment, fostering civic beauty, and improvement of the general health and welfare of the residents.
- The Todd community has also been designated a Historic District.
- Watauga County has "Community Planning Guidelines" for developing a system of community planning. These guidelines were adopted in 1986.
- Several unincorporated communities in Watauga County have cultural, historical or architectural significance and contribute to the quality of life for residents and tourists. Such communities include: Beaver Dam-Bethel, Cove Creek, Deep Gap, Elk, Foscoe-Grandfather, Mabel, Matney, Rutherfordwood, Stony Fork, Sugar Grove, Todd, Triplett, Valle Crucis, Vilas, Zionville and others.

- In many communities, schools are the main focal point and center for social activities.
- Residents feel strongly that newcomers to the area would benefit from education about mountain traditions and attitudes.
- Some communities want to take advantage of local community councils, but lack the knowledge to proceed with such an initiative.
- Community planning districts (Illustration 19) have been established in Foscoe, Cove Creek and Valle Crucis.



The Miller House - Boone

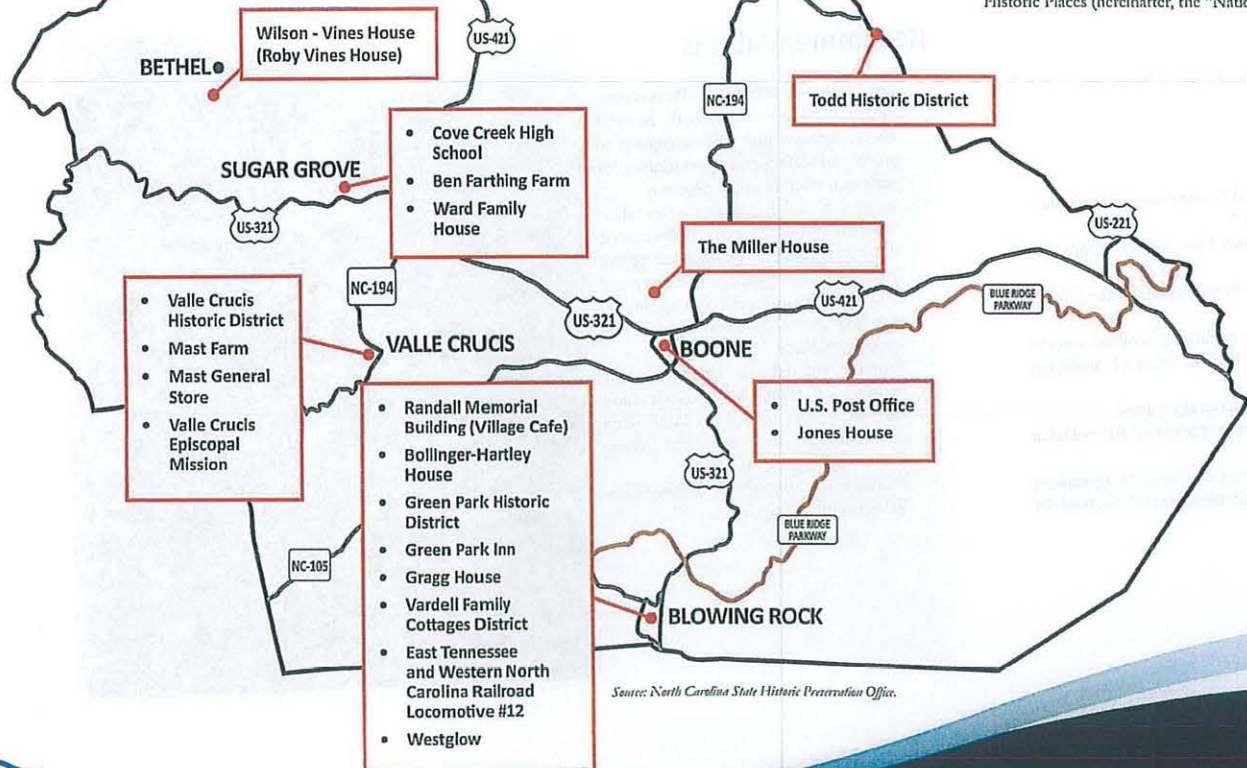
Recommendations

- Create a strategy for preservation of unique communities that identifies and promotes preservation of significant historic, scenic and cultural features. Encourage restoration and use of historic sites and community landmarks to foster community identity.
- Develop uniform and pleasing community identification signage along roadways to identify designated unique communities.
- Review the Community Planning Guidelines to determine if the guidelines are still appropriate for current needs in the County.
- Develop Small Area Planning guidelines and initiatives to guide land use, open space, transportation improvements, capital improvements and identify opportunities for preservation and revitalization.
- Where appropriate, develop Small Area Plans.
- Enhance community-gathering points at convenient locations.
- Explore whether some school sites could be utilized to accommodate facilities necessary for other community programs, such as community center facilities, park/school combinations, libraries and daycare.
- Design and locate public spaces and buildings to reinforce and express the community's unique character.
- Implement programs for removing unattractive elements, such as illegal signs, graffiti, litter, utility poles and billboards, as feasible.
- Promote art and cultural opportunities at appropriate public and private locations in unique communities.

National Historic Sites and Districts

ILLUSTRATION 19

The map (Illustration 19) depicts districts and individual properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places (hereinafter, the "National Register").



- Bethel**
 - Wilson - Vines House (Roby Vines House)
- Sugar Grove**
 - Cove Creek High School
 - Ben Farthing Farm
 - Ward Family House
- Boone**
 - The Miller House
 - U.S. Post Office
 - Jones House
- Valle Crucis**
 - Valle Crucis Historic District
 - Mast Farm
 - Mast General Store
 - Valle Crucis Episcopal Mission
- Blowing Rock**
 - Randall Memorial Building (Village Cafe)
 - Bollinger-Hartley House
 - Green Park Historic District
 - Green Park Inn
 - Gragg House
 - Vardell Family Cottages District
 - East Tennessee and Western North Carolina Railroad Locomotive #12
 - Westglow
- Todd Historic District**
 - Todd Historic District

Source: North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office.

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Preservation of Farmland

Preface

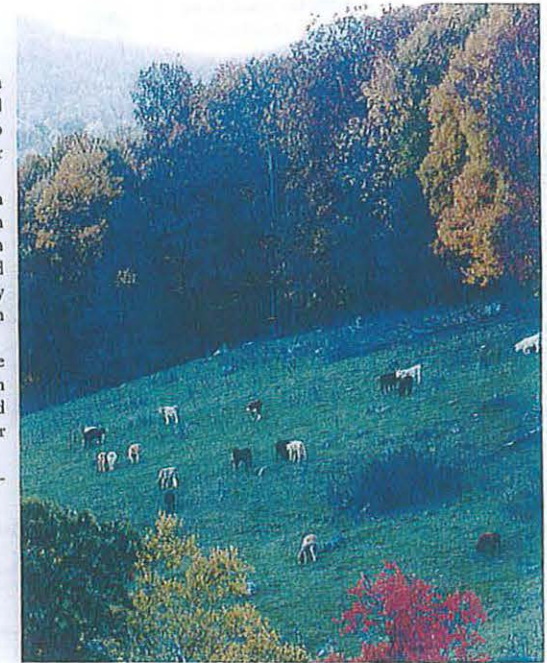
Preserving community identity and the County's unique heritage is a worthy endeavor.

Findings

- The Voluntary Farmland Preservation Program is an instrument designed "to encourage the voluntary preservation and protection of farmland from non-farm development."
- The Watauga County Board of Commissioners adopted the Farmland Preservation Program in October 2000.
- Participants in the Voluntary Farmland Preservation Program must also be participants in the Present Use-Value taxation program.
- An Agricultural Advisory Board reviews and approves applications for qualifying farmland and the establishment of voluntary agricultural districts, which consist of at least 25 acres of qualifying farmland located within one mile of each other.
- Participating landowners sign agreements to sustain, encourage and promote agriculture.
- The land must be certified by the Natural Resources Conservation Service as appropriate for inclusion in the Voluntary Farmland Preservation Program.
- The Voluntary Farmland Preservation Program members are subject to a conservation agreement between the County and the landowner that prohibits non-farm use or development of that land for a period of at least 10 years.

Recommendations

- Promote the Voluntary Farm Preservation Program and work to ensure the Soil and Water Conservation office continues to provide education and opportunities for persons interested in the program.
- Support the Soil and Water Conservation office in its efforts to provide information about the Agriculture Cost Share Program (ACSP). This program is voluntary and is designed to protect water quality by installing best management practices on agricultural lands.
- Promote and educate citizens on the benefits of establishing conservation easements by involving local land conservancies and Soil and Water Conservation personnel.
- Promote the use of the Present-Use-Value taxation program.



Section 9 Parks and Recreation

Photo courtesy of the City of Rock Hill, SC

WATAUGA COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION

Parks and Recreation

Preface

Watauga County is a wonderful place for those seeking outdoor recreational activities. Preservation and promotion of recreational endeavors is of great importance to sustaining the quality of life theme. Recreational activities are also vital to the economic well-being of Watauga County. Most of these activities relate to the natural environment. They include opportunities such as hiking, biking, fishing, rock climbing, canoeing, rafting, kayaking, hunting, skiing, sledding, snow boarding and others.

Findings

The Parks and Recreation Department, which was formed in 1973, is advised by an 18-member Recreation Commission, and appointed by the Watauga County Board of Commissioners.

The commission's role is to guide and advise the Parks and Recreation Department in its mission to provide for adequate recreational opportunities for all citizens of the County.

Table 23 provides a summary of the recreation facilities that are presently operated by the County and other public organizations.

- In Phase 1 of the "Citizens' Plan for Watauga," survey responses indicated that the public wants "widespread recreational opportunities."
- The Parks and Recreation staff offers both adult and youth team sports and programs and special events.
- The athletic opportunities for adults include softball, basketball, soccer and co-ed volleyball.
- Youth athletics include softball, baseball, basketball and soccer.

Illustration 20 shows the distribution of parks and recreation sites in Watauga County that are owned and managed by federal, state and conservation organizations.

The mission statement of Watauga County Parks and Recreation is:

"The Watauga County Parks and Recreation Department strives to provide a wide variety of quality recreational programming opportunities in the areas of arts, youth and adult athletics, special programs, special events, special populations including Special Olympics, aquatics, and summer youth camps. The department's mission is for these programs to be enjoyable, fun, fulfilling, safe and rewarding for all Watauga County citizens."



Recommendations

- An important step toward meeting the community's recreational needs is the development of a countywide recreation master plan.
- The plan should be regional in scope, developed with the cooperation and coordination of all municipalities, the Watauga County Board of Education, ASU, Watauga Parks and Recreation, and the public.
- A Recreation Capital Improvement Plan should be incorporated into the master plan and routinely updated.
- Subdivision planning and development plans of various types for medium and high density developments should include provisions for open space and provide for the improvement of recreational space by seeking higher quality standards for the spaces created.
- Because County schools are uniquely situated, they are logical and natural locations for public recreation. Cooperation and coordination between Watauga Parks and Recreation and Watauga County Schools may provide some additional ways to provide for public recreation, and make it available to a wider number of residents who can participate in their own local communities.
- The plan should address present/future needs with an emphasis on:
 - Organized sports
 - Greenways
 - Blueways
 - Walking and bicycling

Parks and Recreation

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Watauga County Recreation Facilities (owned and/or operated)

TABLE 23

	Average (total parcel)	Restrooms	Playground	Walking Trails	Picnic Shelters	Baseball/Softball Fields	Athletic/Soccer Fields	Tennis Court	Basketball Court	Fishing	Gym	Swimming Pool
Anne Marie Softball Fields	17.3	•				•						
Complex Field	4.0	•			•	•		•	•			
Cove Creek School Park	7.6	•	•	•	•		•		•		•	
Bethel School Park	3.0		•	•	•		•	•	•		•	
Blowing Rock Elementary School Park	1.7		•	•	•	•					•	
Brookshire Park	6.6	•		•	•		•			•		
Green Valley Elementary School Park	7.6		•	•	•		•		•		•	
Hardin Park Elementary School Park	6.9		•	•	•		•		•		•	
Howards Knob County Park	5.5	•		•	•							
Industrial Fields	7.5	•			•	•						
Mabel Elementary School Park	10.7		•	•	•		•		•		•	
Old Cove Creek Park	4.9	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	
Optimist Park	5.7	•				•						
Parkway Elementary School Park	5.2		•	•	•		•		•			
Ted Mackorell Soccer Complex	15.5	•					•					
Watauga County High School	32.9	•		•		•	•	•	•		•	
Watauga County Swimming Complex	2.0	•										•
Watauga County Tennis Complex	2.4	•	•					•	•			
Watauga County Tot Lot	1.1		•	•	•							

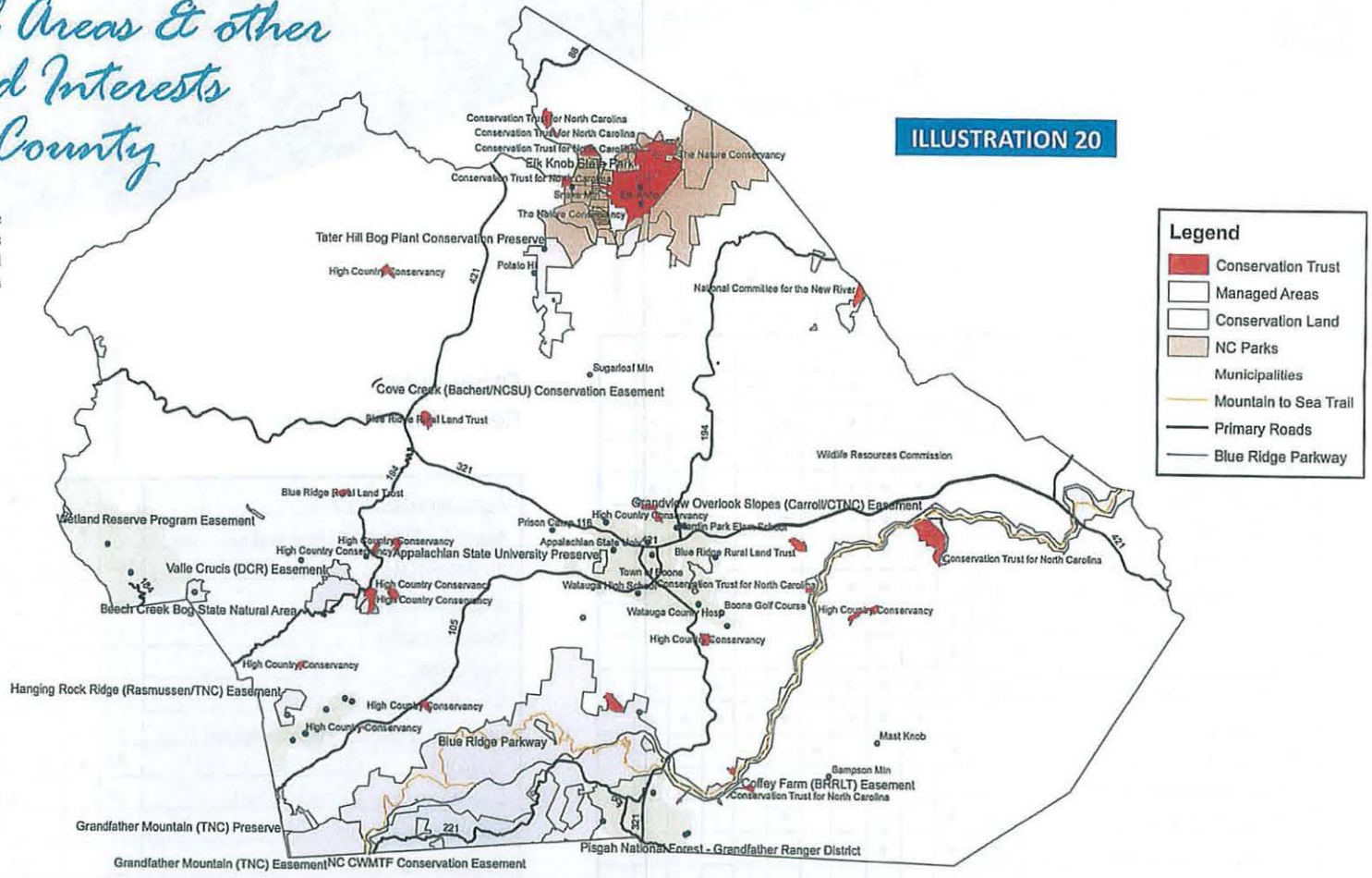
Other Public Recreation Facilities

	Average (total parcel)	Restrooms	Playground	Walking Trails	Picnic Shelters	Baseball/Softball Fields	Athletic/Soccer Fields	Tennis Court	Basketball Court	Fishing	Gym	Swimming Pool
Annie Cannon Memorial Park	1.9			•								
Beech Mountain Park / Buckeye Recreation Center	39	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Blowing Rock Memorial Park	10.6	•	•		•			•	•			
Blowing Rock DaVant Field	4.8	•		•	•	•	•					
Boone Jaycees Park	1.7	•	•		•							
Broyhill Park	6.4			•						•		
Green Valley Community Park	16.3		•	•	•		•			•		
Grover C. Robbins Memorial Swimming Pool	1.7	•										•
Junaluska Park	8.5	•	•		•		•		•			
Lee and Vivian Reynolds Greenway Trail	3.0			•								
Mountaineer Ruritan Field	1.4	•			•		•					
North Street Park	0.3			•								
Valle Crucis Community Park	20.7	•	•	•	•		•		•	•		
Valle Crucis School Park	9.9		•				•					
Watauga Humane Society's Dog Park	12.6			•								

63 Recreational Areas & other Public Owned Interests in Watauga County

The map (Illustration 20) shows the distribution of parks and recreation sites in Watauga County that are owned and managed by federal, state and conservation organizations.

ILLUSTRATION 20



Source: www.ncconemap.com, Martin-McGill, Inc. reprocessed

An aerial photograph of a lush, green forested valley. A winding road or path is visible, leading through the trees. In the foreground, a bridge spans across a river or stream. The overall scene is vibrant and scenic, with various shades of green and blue.

Section 10
Managing Change in
Watanga County

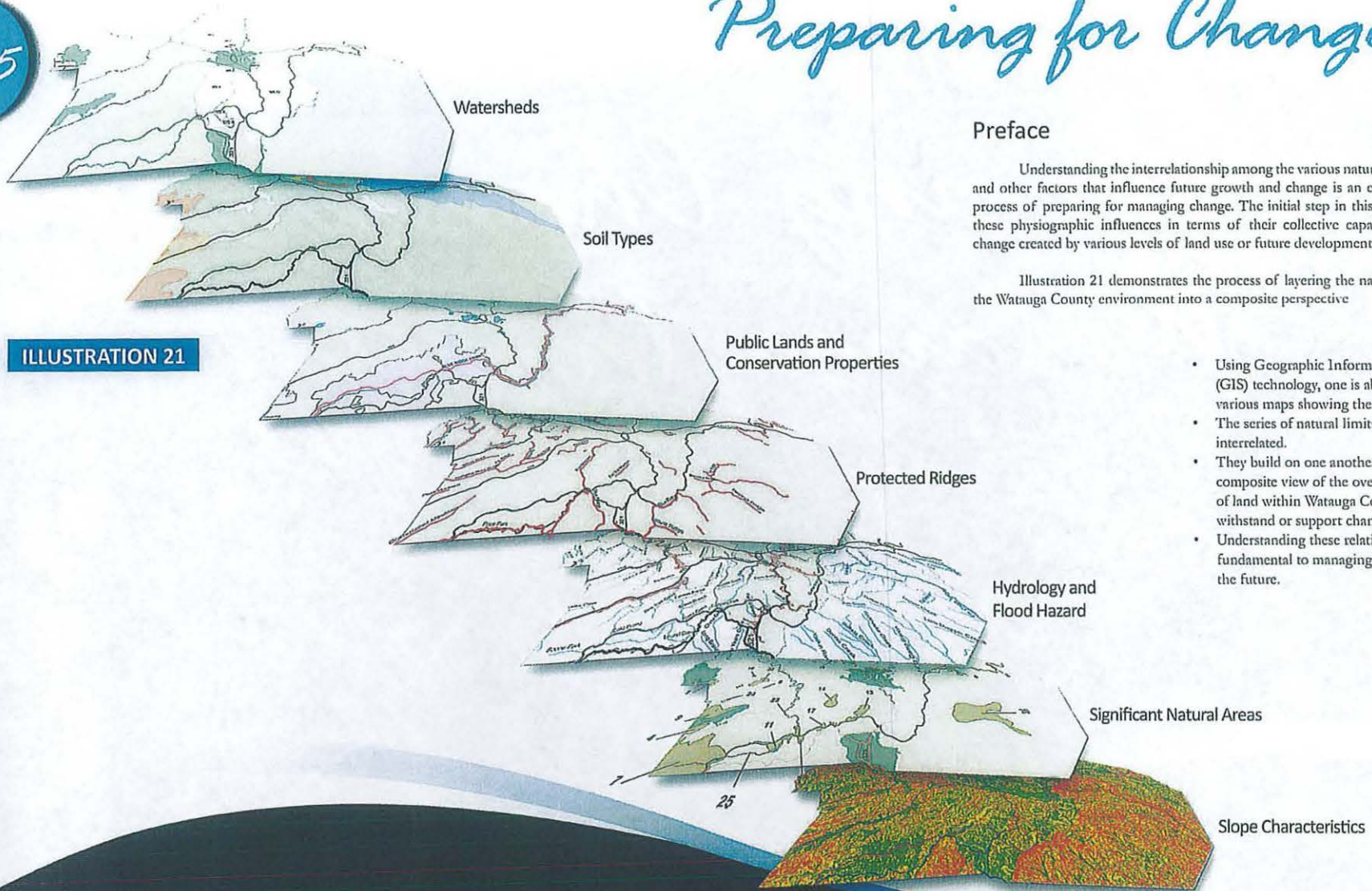
Preparing for Change

Preface

Understanding the interrelationship among the various natural or physiographic and other factors that influence future growth and change is an essential step in the process of preparing for managing change. The initial step in this process is to view these physiographic influences in terms of their collective capability to withstand change created by various levels of land use or future development

Illustration 21 demonstrates the process of layering the natural limitations of the Watauga County environment into a composite perspective

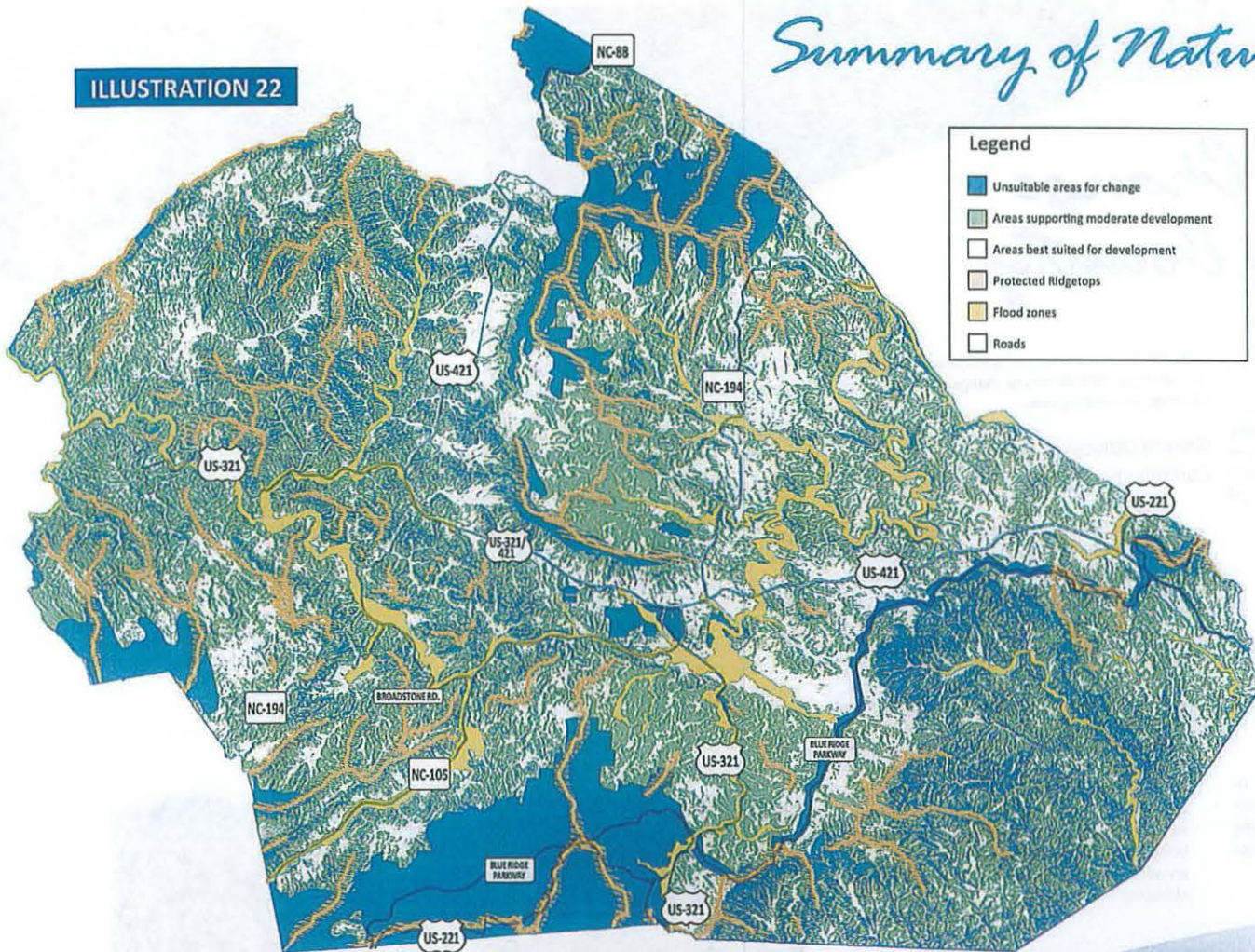
ILLUSTRATION 21



- Using Geographic Information System (GIS) technology, one is able to layer the various maps showing the components.
- The series of natural limitations are interrelated.
- They build on one another to present a composite view of the overall capacity of land within Watauga County to withstand or support changes.
- Understanding these relationships is fundamental to managing such change in the future.

Summary of Natural Limitations

ILLUSTRATION 22



Legend

- Unsuitable areas for change
- Areas supporting moderate development
- Areas best suited for development
- Protected Ridgetops
- Flood zones
- Roads

The categories of suitability of land for development for Watauga County may be explained as follows:

- **Areas Best Suited for Development**

Land areas that have few constraints for development activity. With appropriate services, such land could best accommodate future change (Illustration 22).
- **Areas Supporting Moderate Development**

Land areas that exhibit certain constraints for development in that they may exhibit one or more significant limitation, such as a less than ideal slope characteristic, or location within a protected watershed.
- **Areas Least Suited for Development**

Land that has limited or no development potential because of severe physiographic challenges or other impeding limitation, such as land under public ownership. These areas also encompass protected ridge tops and flood zones.

Managing Change in Watauga County

Preface

Change is inevitable in Watauga County; however, future change can be influenced by many factors, which may be altered or utilized to direct or mitigate such change. This fundamental assumption is the basis for managing change. The principal factors that influence change include:

- Transportation Routes
- Physiographic Constraints
- Public Policy
- Water and Wastewater Infrastructure
- Centers of Employment
- Proximity to Urban Centers
- Community Facilities (including schools)
- Land Use Regulations
- Public Health Regulations

The planning, placement, modification or enforcement of such influences become primary tools that are available to the community in managing change. It is therefore incumbent upon Watauga

County to recognize the importance of acknowledging and managing these factors of change and deliberately planning for their impacts.

Growth Objectives for the Community

Achieving balance between fostering change and protecting community values and important economic, environmental and cultural resources is the foundation of change management.

The following objectives are intended to guide the County:

- Population growth should be concentrated in areas of Watauga County where essential services and infrastructure are adequate to meet the needs of future populations. Population and development densities should vary in accordance with the availability of such services and infrastructure, with more dense concentrations of development being directed to locations where essential services and infrastructure may be provided most efficiently.
- Extension of essential services and infrastructure should be planned to support future growth within these designated concentrations of development, with such extensions being guided by deliberate policies that acknowledge efficiency and change management strategies.
- Priority should be given to achieving development and managing growth that is sustainable and emphasizes efficiency in the consumption of resources, including land, energy, water resources and other necessities that consume or degrade the natural environment of Watauga County.
- Growth in rural areas of the community, outside of planned concentrations of development, should be managed to occur at densities that do not require inefficient investments in essential services and infrastructure.
- Growth outside of planned concentrations of development should not infringe on prevailing agricultural or rural land use patterns in such rural areas.
- Growth management in both urban and rural areas of the community should be sensitive to valuable environmental, cultural, or historic resources and assets.
- Existing unique rural communities, outside of urban concentrations, should be protected. New communities in rural regions, which may require essential urban services, should be discouraged by the County's policies, unless such services are provided by the developers and are self-sustaining services.

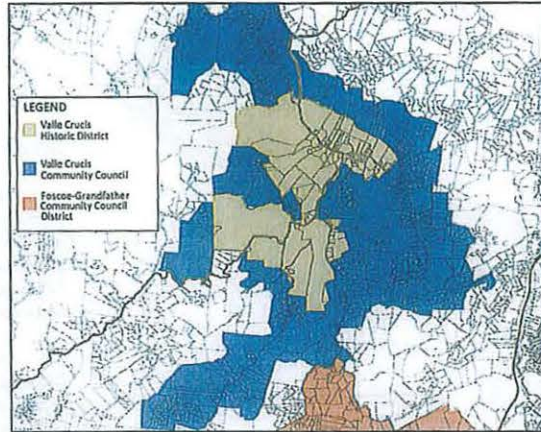


69

A. Cove Creek Community Council District



B. Valle Crucis Historic District



C. Foscoe-Grandfather Community Council District

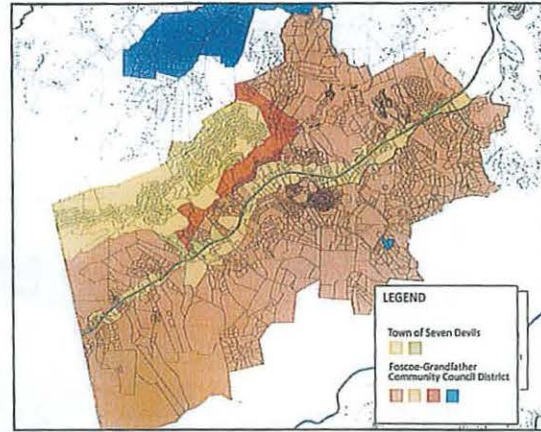
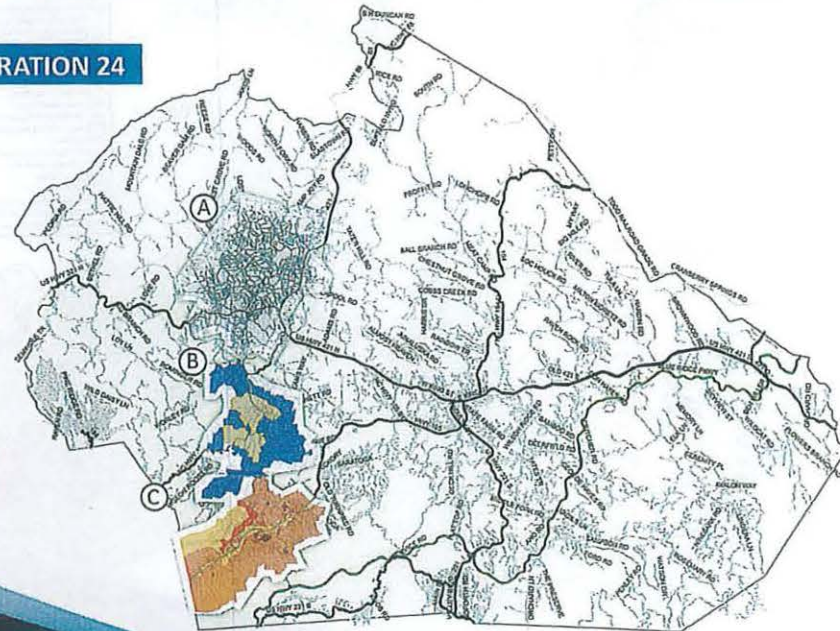


ILLUSTRATION 24

Community Planning Districts

Illustration 24 presents the locations and extent of the three present community planning districts in Watauga:

- No regulations have been adopted for the Cove Creek Community Council District.
- The Valle Crucis Community Council District is primarily dedicated to historic preservation. It contains a designated historic district zone.
- The Foscoe-Grandfather Community Council District is divided into 4 zones, as shown on Map C.



Managing Future Change in Watauga County

Preface

The County's strategy for managing change is developed to reflect the diversity of the community and to provide for a logical approach to addressing this diversity of needs and the wide range of factors that influence and direct growth under these unique conditions.

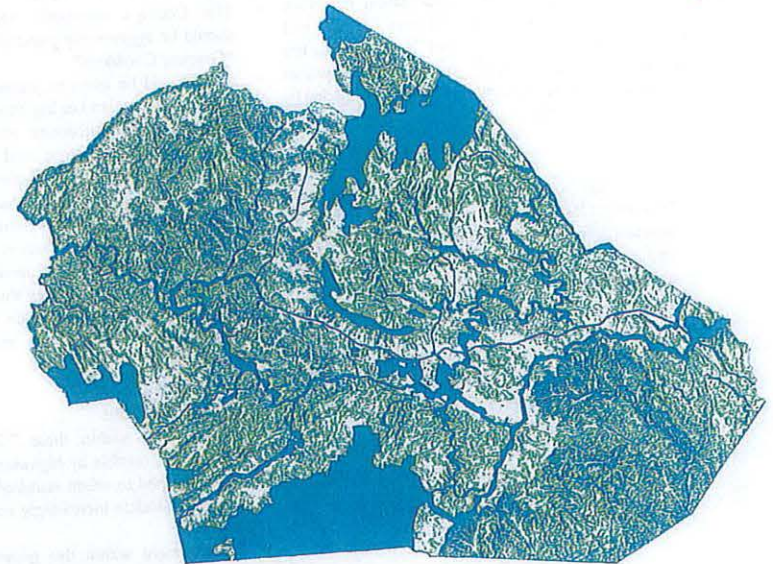
Watauga County is a community in transition. It has evolved from a principally rural environment into a community that is typically urban along its principal highway corridors and progressively more rural and agricultural as distances increase away from those transportation corridors. This urban / rural setting, coupled with its complex physiographic limitations, provides a great challenge.

Growth management issues in the community are complex. A single planning model for the County is probably not adequate to comprehensively address the requirements of this transitional planning environment. Therefore, multiple planning paths may better provide for the flexibility to address the range of factors and issues that are presented to the community.

Emphasis should be directed toward achieving change that reflects sustainability in future development and insures a minimal disruption to the natural environment and maximize use of energy, land resources and other natural and community assets.

The Change Management Strategy for Watauga County divides the County into three Growth Paths, acknowledging the range of planning objectives and developmental environments throughout the community:

- The Watauga "Gateway Corridors"
- Unique Community Areas
- Rural / Agriculture Regions



NORTH CAROLINA

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Watauga Gateway Corridors

Watauga County is characterized by distinct and constantly changing primary transportation corridors, which include key segments of highways 421, 321 and 105. These corridors are considered the strategic or key Gateways to the community and managing change within these so called "Gateway Corridors" should be guided by the following principles:

Population

- The average population densities achieved in these "Gateway Corridors" are, or will in the future, be substantially higher than other regions of the County and generally fall into a range of 500 to 900 persons per square mile.

Land Use Patterns

- Land use patterns will be generally more complex with wide ranges of residential densities, substantial commercial concentrations, as well as industrial and institutional complexes.
- Within these "Gateway Corridors," the County and its municipalities should aggressively avoid conflicting land uses and maintain minimum standards of quality for development.

Economic Development

- The County's economic development activities should be aggressively pursued within the Watauga "Gateway Corridors."
- Care should be taken to protect areas identified as prime industrial land or key economic assets.
- Appropriate infrastructure should be developed to sustain this ongoing and planned economic development program. However, investments in public infrastructure should be cost-effective, with economic benefits to the Community outweighing the costs of new investments in infrastructure.
- A formula should be developed to assess this cost/benefit ratio and the County should utilize a concise policy to guide in its future capital investments in economic development related services and infrastructure.

Essential Services

- Development within these "Gateway Corridors" would be accessible by highways and streets, which are developed to urban standards, having capacities to accommodate increasingly complex volumes of traffic.
- Development within this growth path should be served by water and sewer infrastructure, except for areas that are deemed infeasible to receive such services due to excessive cost, incompatible

slopes, or factors, that serve to isolate certain areas from essential services.

- Transportation, water and sewer planning should be conducted within a regional framework, with active participation by all units of local government. The County should assume a leadership role in such planning activities.

Environmental Considerations

- Managing change initiatives should acknowledge the presence of sensitive natural areas, such as floodplains, wetlands, unique natural assets and areas exhibiting excessively steep topography, and strive to protect these areas from development, which would damage such resources or diminish their integrity.
- Planning initiatives should attempt to incorporate natural assets into future preservation projects, such as greenways, parks, conservation easements and other ventures, that would serve to protect such areas from serious damage or destruction.
- The County's growth management policies and regulation should be reviewed and revised as required to ensure that new growth is both sustainable and minimizes the consumption of valuable resources and energy.
- The "quality of life" theme should be reflected in all aspects of planning.

Planning and Organizational Structure

- Much of this "Gateway Corridors" growth path would fall within municipal planning jurisdictions

and be managed within the provisions of urban scale guidelines and regulations, including zoning, subdivision regulations, stormwater ordinances, floodplain regulations, local erosion control ordinances, and other such municipal land use standards and guidelines.

- Planning for areas that fall outside of such municipal planning jurisdictions should be coordinated with municipal programs.
- Tools used for managing change for areas falling within the County's jurisdiction should be comparable and compatible in approach and intensity to planning conducted within the various municipal jurisdictions, except where the County determines that its requirements should vary from those of adjacent municipalities.
- A permanent mechanism for ensuring coordination and consistency in planning in this "Gateway Corridor" setting should be implemented to ensure that planning, growth management activities, transportation, water, sewer, schools, housing and other essential services are conducted within a regional framework. Such a vehicle might be viewed as a Cooperative Planning Council. It would be assigned a formal agenda, by way of an interlocal agreement, for intergovernmental coordination among the local governments that have a direct interest in the "Gateway Corridors."

The general boundaries of the "Gateway Corridors" are shown on Illustration 25.

Unique Community Areas

Beyond the designated "Gateway Corridors" there are other significant areas of Watauga County that are recognized as established rural communities and which exhibit unique characteristics worthy of preservation. Although these areas may be isolated from the more developed "Gateway Corridors," their service needs are not typical of the most rural regions of the County, primarily due to the density of development or other unique circumstances. At present, these unique Rural Communities include Deep Gap, Todd, Valle Crucis, Cove Creek, Foscoe, Matney, Bethel, Zionville and Mabel.

Some of these unique places are located within the designated "Gateway Corridors," including Deep Gap, Foscoe-Grandfather, and portions of Cove Creek and Zionville. Change in these unique communities would be managed within the parameters established for the "Gateway Corridors."

Managing change within these Unique Community Areas shall be guided by the following principles:

Population

- The average development density may be higher than other typically rural regions of the County, but would be substantially lower than urban concentrations of population within "Gateway Corridors."

Land Use Patterns

- Land use patterns should be managed with conscious efforts to prevent incompatible land uses, maintain low population densities, and preserve the integrity of the Unique Community Areas.
- The nature of such communities tends to encourage the mixing of land uses, with limited commercial and service activities inter-dispersed among residential land uses. Unique Community Areas should be more tolerant of mixed land uses, as might be seen in more densely developed areas of the County.
- As growth continues in these unique communities, commercial development should be encouraged to concentrate in nodes, becoming more isolated from residential concentrations.
- However, incompatible industrial or other land uses should be avoided in favor of the predominant residential character of these communities.

Economic Development

- New economic development activities should not be encouraged within the boundaries of Unique Community Areas, which would demand levels of urban services that are not currently present in the community.
- The natural evolution of commercial activities in Unique Community Areas should not be prohibited, except where such development is incompatible with the character of the community and would tend to damage property values and disrupt the community.

Essential Services and Infrastructure

- The extent of development in these existing unique communities may dictate certain essential services, including water and sewer, where such services are economically feasible.
- Such infrastructure should be developed as self-sustaining enterprise funds, which can be supported without subsidy by the larger community.

Environmental Considerations

- County regulations should acknowledge the presence of sensitive natural areas, such as floodplains, wetlands, unique natural assets and areas exhibiting excessively steep topography, and strive to protect these areas from development.
- Planning initiatives should attempt to incorporate such natural assets into future preservation projects, such as greenways, parks, conservation easements and other ventures, that would serve to protect such areas from serious damage or destruction.

Planning and Organizational Structure

- The County should endeavor to establish some level of ongoing community planning within these individual areas, which would reflect a degree of self-determination in decisions relating to planning and services.

Such planning structure should be incorporated into the structure of the County's planning program. This level of autonomy might help to avoid future unnecessary incorporation of new municipal governments.

- The development of new Unique Community Areas should be discouraged by the utilization of planning services and regulations. New Unique Community Areas should be developed only with the provision of essential services and infrastructure by the forces which are responsible for their planning and development.
- The County should review its present community planning guidelines to ensure that the present ordinance is adequate to meet future needs related to establishing the valuable and unique rural communities.

The general boundaries of the Community Areas are shown on Illustration 25.

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Rural/Agriculture Regions

All areas that fall outside of the Watauga Gateway Corridors and designated Unique Community Areas would be contained within the designated Rural / Agriculture Regions (Illustration 25). These areas are predominantly rural and are characterized by low-density residential development with substantial land areas devoted to agriculture and undeveloped forest lands. Growth management within Rural/Agriculture regions is characterized by the following principles:

Population

- The average population densities within these areas would be less than the Gateway Corridors and Rural Communities growth paths.

Land Use Patterns

- Development densities should be substantially lower than those for the Watauga Gateways Corridors, so as to avoid future pressures for extending urban services and infrastructure.
- Development that tends to increase pressure on County government for the provision of essential urban services should be discouraged by policy and by the absence of such urban services and infrastructure.
- Some mixing of residential and non-residential land uses should be encouraged and provided for in future planning and management of growth. Rural service centers providing limited shopping and services should be encouraged within prescribed guidelines.

Economic Development

- Except for agricultural business activity, no new large-scale economic development activities, such as industrial parks or shopping centers, should be encouraged within the boundaries of such regions of the County.
- The natural evolution of economic activity in Rural/Agriculture Regions should not be prohibited, except where such development is incompatible with the character of the area and would tend to damage property values or be incompatible with the predominant agricultural or residential land uses.

Essential Services and Infrastructure

- No water and sewer services would be promoted or provided by local government within these areas, due to the inefficiencies of providing such services and their ultimate impacts on rural areas. However, this does not preclude the provision of water and sewer services by private providers for specific areas of development that are self-sustaining.
- Highway transportation would be accomplished principally by two-lane roads that are typically not consistent with urban design standards, except for state highways, which traverse certain areas of the community.

Environmental Considerations

- Extraordinary care should be taken in these areas to preserve their rural character and to protect valuable farmlands, as well as environmental and cultural resources.



- The suitability of land within these regions of the County should be a principal consideration in determining appropriate developmental densities and segregation of incompatible land uses.

Planning and Organizational Structure













- Planning for these regions of the community should be managed within the structure of the Watauga County Planning Board and the County Board of Commissioners.

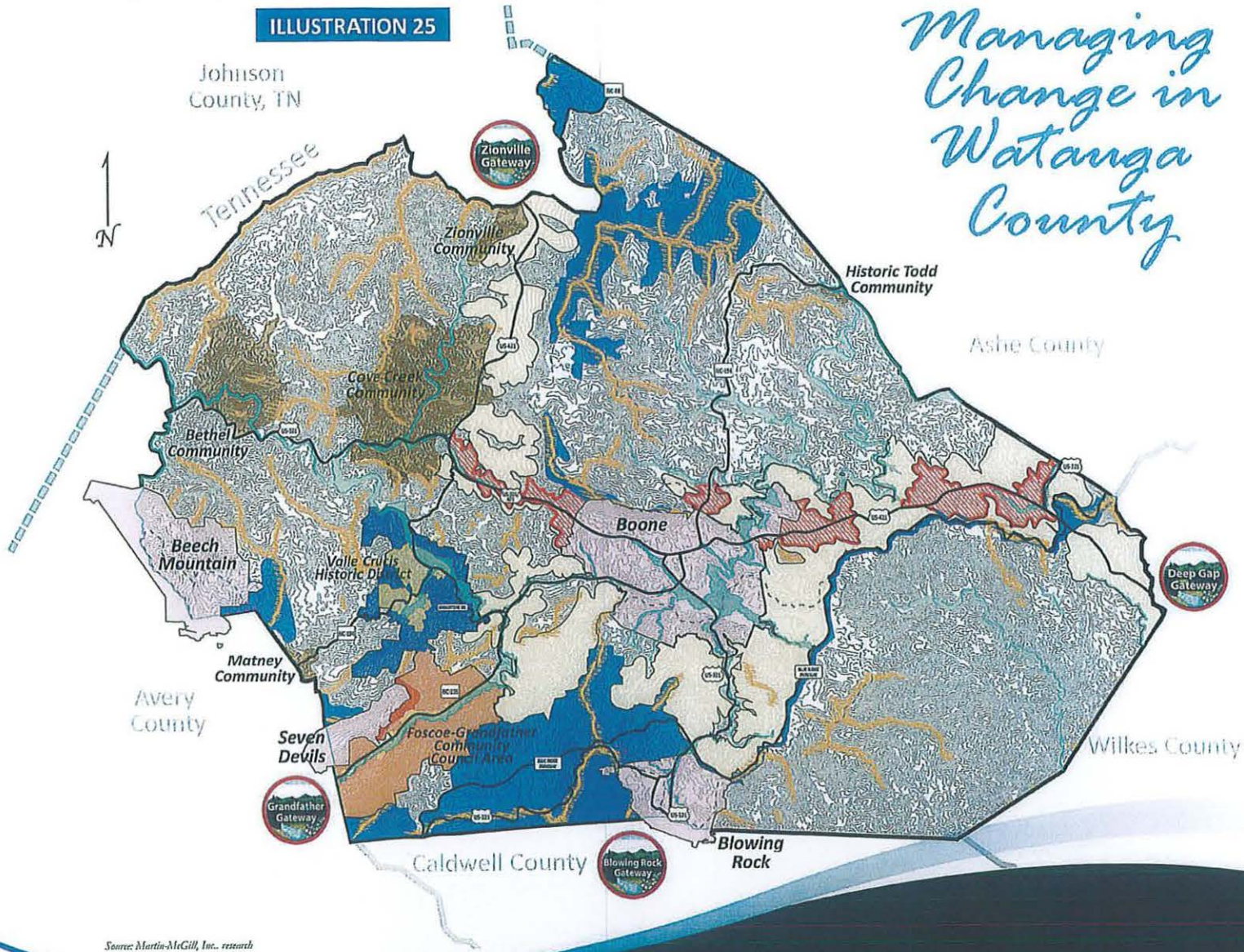
The general boundaries of the Rural / Agriculture Regions are shown on Illustration 25 .

ILLUSTRATION 25

Managing Change in Watanga County

MAIN LEGEND

-  Topographical Contours
-  Municipal Jurisdiction
-  Mixed Density
-  Low Density Residential
-  Unique Community Areas
-  Rural Agriculture Regions
-  Protected Public Areas
-  Protected Ridges
-  Watersheds
-  Flood Zones
-  Roads
-  Adjacent County Lines



Source: Martin-McGill, Inc., research



Section 11

*Implementation for the
Citizens' Plan
for Watanga*

75

Photo by Hugh Morrison

Implementation of the Citizens' Plan for Watauga

The "Citizens' Plan for Watauga" should be the beginning point in a process that carries the community forward into a continuum of deliberate strategies and actions designed to understand, anticipate and manage changes that will occur in the future and to ensure that such change is consistent with the will of the Watauga citizenry and compatible with the fragile natural environment that is the essence of Watauga County.

Public Involvement

The public must be involved in this essential process. This element of awareness and participation is fundamental to the successful implementation of this strategy for managing change.

This Citizens' plan must be followed by many subsequent initiatives that are necessary to deal with the multitude of details and actions that are intended to carry out the vision. The public must understand that this process is continual and that its role in this process is the most essential ingredient for its success.

Public involvement began with Phase One of the planning process and continues with a series of community meetings to present the "Citizens Plan for Watauga" to the public.

Intergovernmental Coordination

A key consideration in achieving a successful process for plan implementation is meaningful and deliberate cooperation among the local governments, and their management and planning staffs, within Watauga County. Mistrust and competition must not be permitted to delay the creation of a productive and innovative solution to achieving a desirable level of information sharing and collaboration among the County, the four municipalities and ASU. Suggestions for continuing this important involvement process include:

- Establish a "Citizens' Plan for Watauga" newsletter that would be published quarterly on the County's website and further distributed in the community. The newsletter would post news related to important planning and change management initiatives and summarize information and events that relate to this theme.
- Create a "Citizens' Plan for Watauga" Forum composed of a cross-section of community leaders and citizens in Watauga County, including elected officials, business people, institutional representatives, retirees, youth and others who have a stake in managing change in Watauga County. Cultivate an environment in which participation in this forum is both prestigious and meaningful. Meet periodically with this group and present the progress of the preceding year and formulate at least five (5) concrete objectives for the subsequent year.
- Take planning and information about managing change in Watauga County into the schools. The future of Watauga County rests with our children. They must understand and accept this immense responsibility.
- Formalize and enhance the planning consortium among the local governments and ASU to foster intergovernmental collaboration on key planning issues that are both current and prominent to the community.
- Establish quarterly status working retreats of the consortium that are managed by a facilitator that rotates annually among the five governments.
- Formulate specific annual objectives related to plan implementation and sponsor joint participation in work tasks that are of mutual interest to the participants.
- Assign responsibilities among the participants for staffing and participation in the annual "Citizens' Plan for Watauga" Forum.
- Facilitate coordinated involvement in strategic public participation events and processes.

An impression derived during the course of preparing the "Citizens' Plan for Watauga" is that the County's planning program has accomplished many objectives and achieved a great deal of success in spite of limited funding and very little notoriety during its brief history. However, there are many recommendations and issues raised within this plan that will bring new pressures and demands to bear on this very streamline program, which presently assumes responsibility for many aspects of Watauga County government.

This raises the question of how this efficient program will evolve and expand to meet these new stresses and demands. Attention should be given to:

- Assessing the overall programmatic needs associated with the ongoing planning program and the new initiatives that are associated with this plan.
- Evaluating alternative organizational options that could address the increased workload demands, to ensure that the program continues to be a viable and creative mechanism for managing change in Watauga County.
- Establishing an organizational model that would be implemented in phases in the coming years, as the need for growth and change is evident.

In Conclusion

- Watauga County is a unique and vital place, long appreciated for its natural beauty, vast open spaces, unique climate and wonderful sense of place.
- Its people and communities are special combinations of independent thinking and an expression of history and values.
- It is our good fortune to be part of this diverse community and our responsibility to prepare a prudent and responsible path for change in these times of economic and cultural transition.
- The approach should be a logical process of understanding, participation, soul-searching and decision-making, which would lead us to the means and will to manage the inevitable changes that will confront this generation and future generations.
- It is a challenge that is worthy of our complete attention.

Martin ■ McGill

38 Orange Street, Asheville, North Carolina 28801
Phone: (828) 255-0313 | Fax: (828) 253-5612
dennie@martin-mcgill.com

Watauga Medics Inc. yearly report for 2024

It is with great pride that I present this year's report! This past year has been challenging to say the least, but Watauga Medics met the demand and answered the call, and I couldn't be any prouder of my team and of the service we deliver.

In our response section of this report, you may notice we were unable to meet the "under 10-minute avg. response requirement". There are a few reasons for this but the two most obvious are due to the storm and the damage from it which still delays us in some areas. The other biggest factor is our response area has changed over the years, such as being dispatched to areas outside our county like Flat Springs and Beech Mountain. As contract renewal approaches, I hope to discuss this further. It also is time to start considering the addition of another crew, which I hope to also discuss in contract renewal.

I know there has been some discussion in the past about the county providing EMS as a county department moving forward. I will share with you the facts of a county ran EMS currently the avg. cost of a county ran EMS is between \$80.00-\$90.00 per capita for year 2023/2024 where Watauga was paying between \$34.00-\$42.00 per capita depending on how you figure the Beech Mountain crew. This is the lowest amount of any County in the entire state. Not counting the Beech Mountain reimbursement, Watauga is still approx. half what a county ran service is costing on a per capita basis. At the end of the day if the service is county ran or if another private provider is running the system it will be essentially ran with the same crews, being dispatched with the same calls using the same equipment, training the same way, under the same state rules and regulations, over seen by the same medical direction. The only difference will be is it would cost twice as much if the County brought the EMS in house. I have the cost data for most other Counties in the state and can gladly share that with you upon request.

I look forward to answering any questions you may have and can be reached anytime on my cell at 828-964-1706. Thank you for your continued trust and confidence in Watauga Medics Inc.

Watauga Medics Inc.

921 W. King St. Boone NC 28607 Ph: (828) 264-9486 Fax: (828) 264-9482

January 12, 2025

2024 Billing Policy

These rates are at or below the approved Medicare allowable rates.

Watauga Medics Inc. bills all claims for patients that are Medicare recipients. After Medicare has processed a claim, we receive a *Medicare Remittance Notice* stating how the claim was processed. If Medicare denies the claim and states that the Patient is responsible for the charges, we then bill the Patient. If the Patient has private insurance, we file a claim to their insurance company after Medicare pays.

If a patient is a Medicare and Medicaid recipient, Medicare is filed first. Medicaid pays after Medicare pays.

For all other Patients, we bill the patient the appropriate charges, in accordance with our contract, along with an insurance information sheet. If a completed insurance information sheet is returned, we submit the claim to the insurance company. If partial payment is received from an insurance company, the patient is responsible for the remainder. If the insurance company denies the claim, the Patient is responsible for the entire bill. Our billing cycle is setup on a 120-day schedule. If we receive no response after 120 days (four statements) the account is sent to a collection agency. If at any time during the 120-day billing cycle, the patient contacts our office and offers to make payments, we will hold the account as long as payments are made regularly. No interest charge is added to any patient account.

We are a participating provider with blue cross/blue shield which speeds up their payment procedures and protects the patient from expensive insurance denials.

Each year by accepting assignment for Medicare, Medicaid and private insurance over \$300,000 is written off patients accounts. It should be noted that over the years Watauga Medics Inc. has voluntarily written off well over \$100,000 in patients bills where a true hardship was known and we were made aware of the situation.

Sincerely,

Craig Sullivan
Director

Watauga Medics Inc.

921 W. King St. Boone NC 28607 Ph: 828 264 9486 Fax: 828 264 9482 email: medics@boone.net

Year 2024 at a Glance

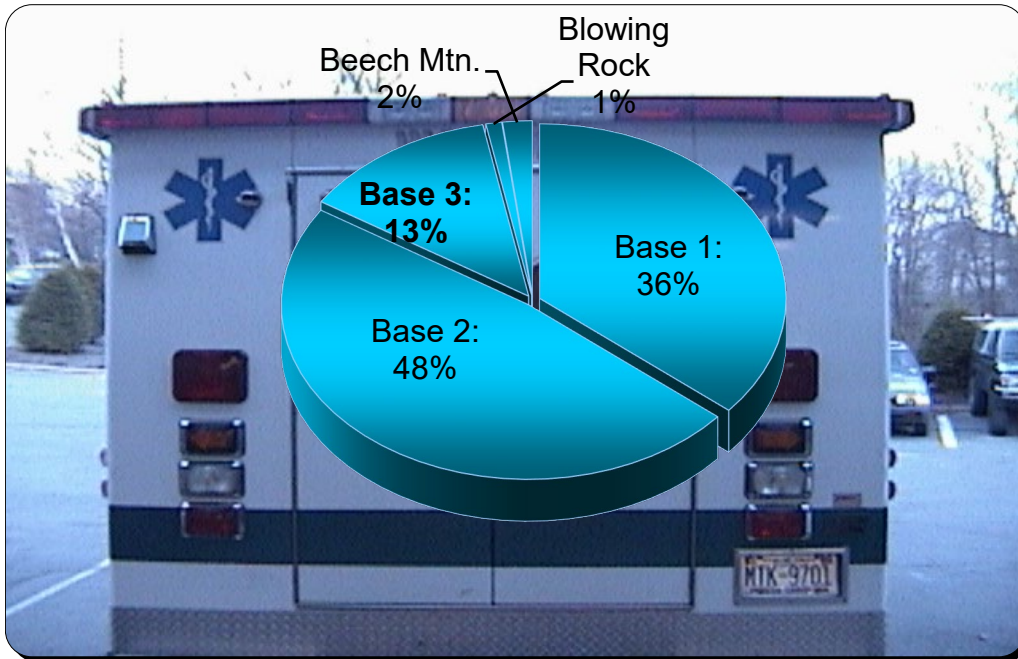
Total Number of Calls:	6,655
Number of No Transports:	1,884
Total Patients Transported:	4,811
Yearly Average Response Time:	0:10:10
Total Out of County Transports:	530
Total Out Of County Emergency Tranports:	97
Total Number of Emergency Calls:	3,005
Total Number of Patients Transported Emergency:	865
Total Number of Calls in Boone Fire District:	3,734
Total Calls other than Boone:	2,921
Busiest Fire District other than Boone:	BLOWING ROCK
Average Number of Calls per Day:	18.2
Most calls in a 24 hour period:	31
Fewest calls in a 24 hour period:	5
Busiest month:	August
Busiest day of the week	Friday
Busiest time of the day:	2:00-3:00
Yearly average percent increase in calls over last 34 years:	3.76%
Increase percentage in calls from prevous year	3.50%
Percentage of Calls that resulted in No Transports (NTP's):	28%
Total Number of DOA's for Year:	53
Total Number of Patients flown from the scene:	35

Watauga Medics Inc. Year 2022 Annual Report

For year ending 2024

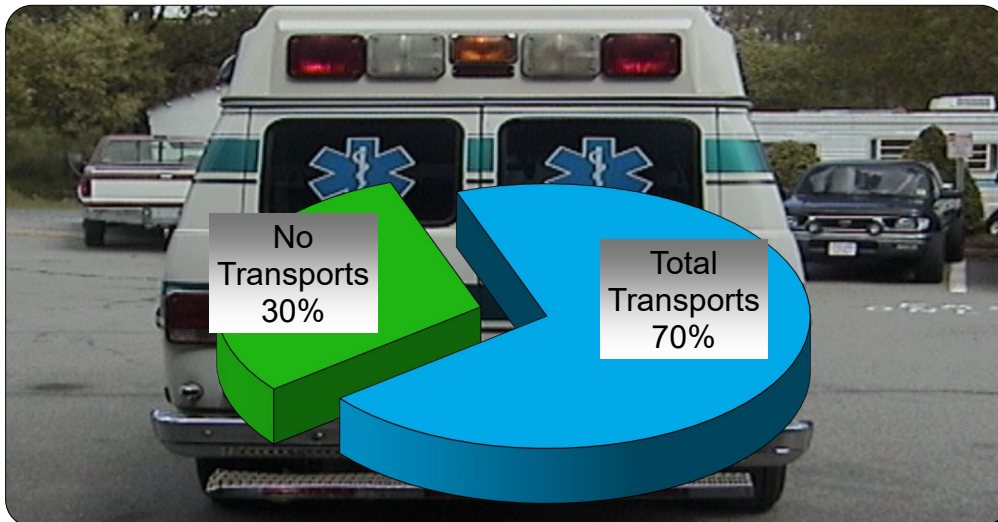
Calls for each Base

Base 1:	2,255
Base 2:	3,271
Base 3:	848
Blowing Rock	63
Beech Mtn.	198
Total Number of Calls	6,635



No Transports compared to Total Calls

Total Transports	4,771
No Transports	1,884
Total Calls	6,655

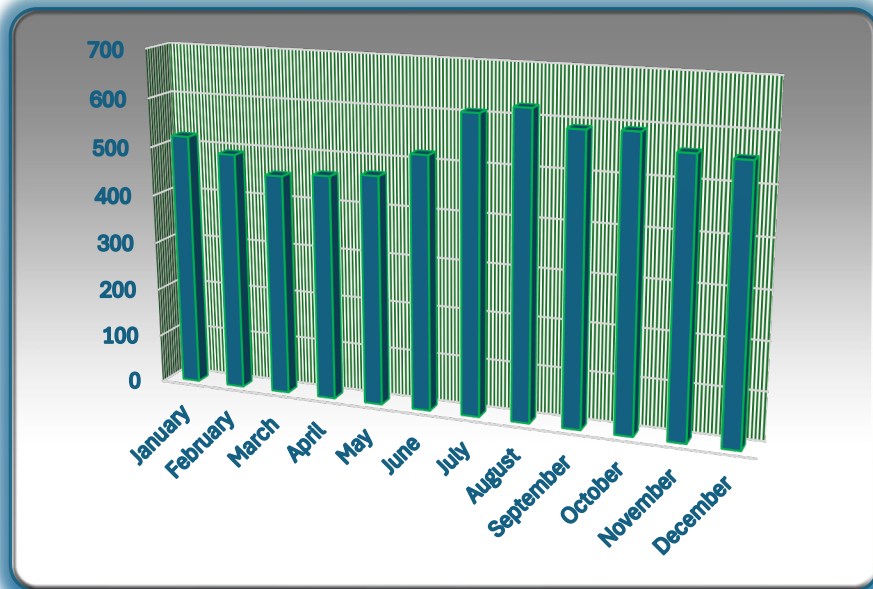


Watauga Medics Annual Report for 2024

For Year ending 2024

Calls by the Month

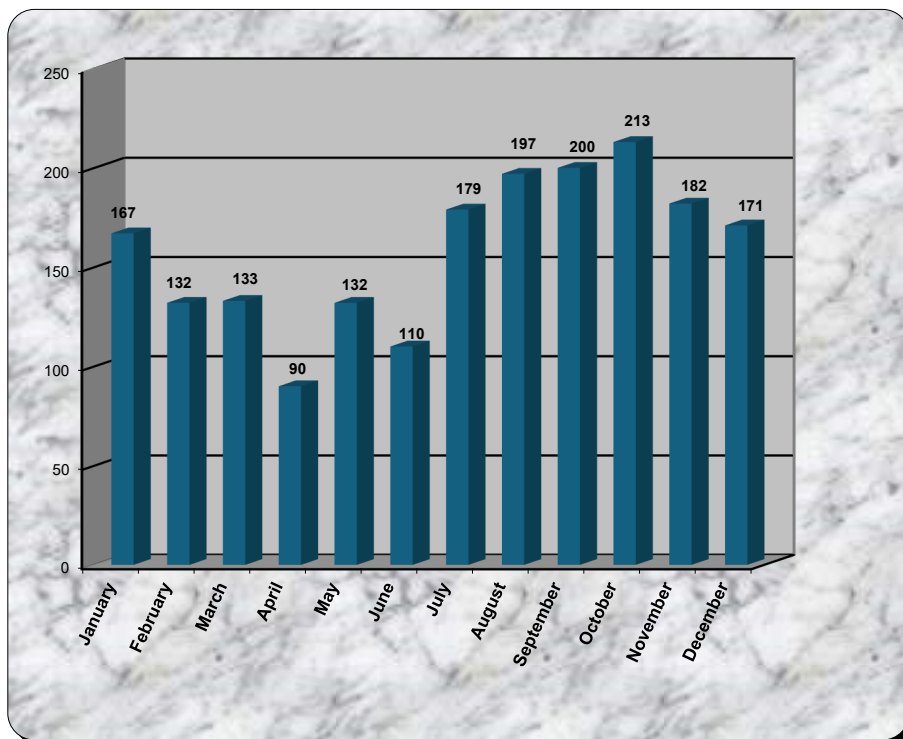
<u>Month</u>	<u>Calls</u>
January	599
February	553
March	548
April	569
May	549
June	542
July	543
August	615
September	569
October	490
November	566
December	512



Total Calls 6,655

No-Transports by Month

<u>Month</u>	<u>NTP's</u>
January	167
February	165
March	159
April	146
May	120
June	142
July	153
August	187
September	167
October	159
November	177
December	142



Total 1,884

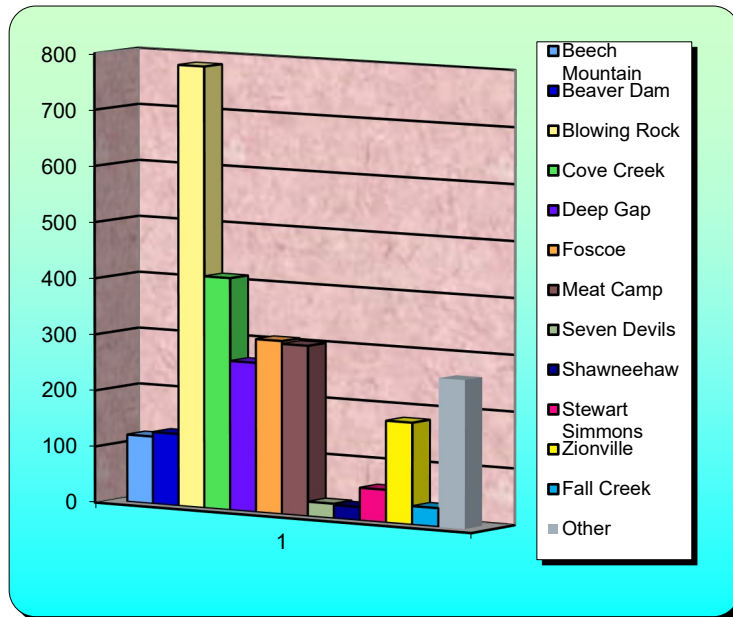
Watauga Medics Inc. Year 2024 Annual Report

For Year Ending 2024

All Calls

Calls by Fire District

<u>Calls by Fire District</u>	<u>Number</u>
Beech Mountain	205
Beaver Dam	161
Blowing Rock	735
Cove Creek	368
Deep Gap	320
Foscoe	249
Meat Camp	274
Seven Devils	33
Shawneehaw	26
Stewart Simmons	33
Zionville	197
Fall Creek	18
Other	302



Calls by Fire District

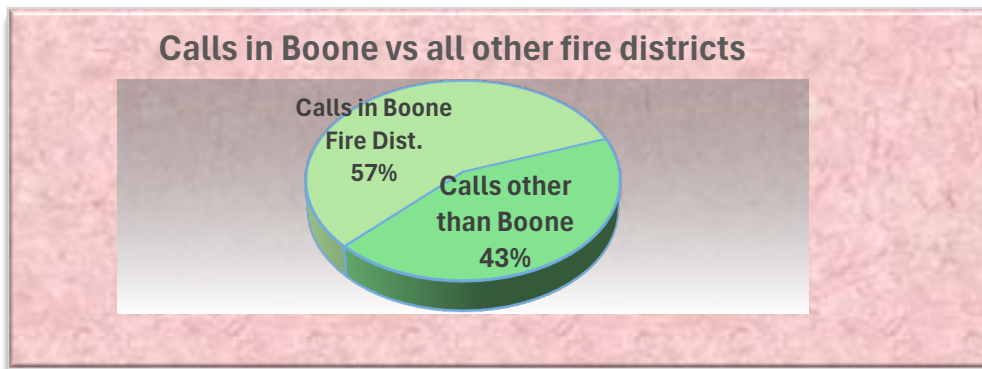
Other Than Boone: 2,921

Calls in Boone vs other districts

Calls other than Boone **2,921**

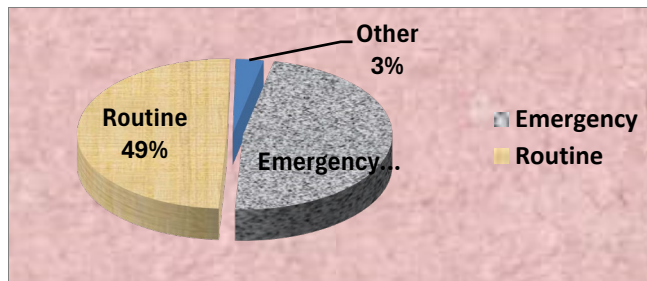
Calls in Boone Fire Dist. **3,734**

6,655



Calls by type of response used:

<u>Type of Response</u>	<u>Number</u>
Emergency	3,005
Routine	3,525
Other	125
Total	6,655

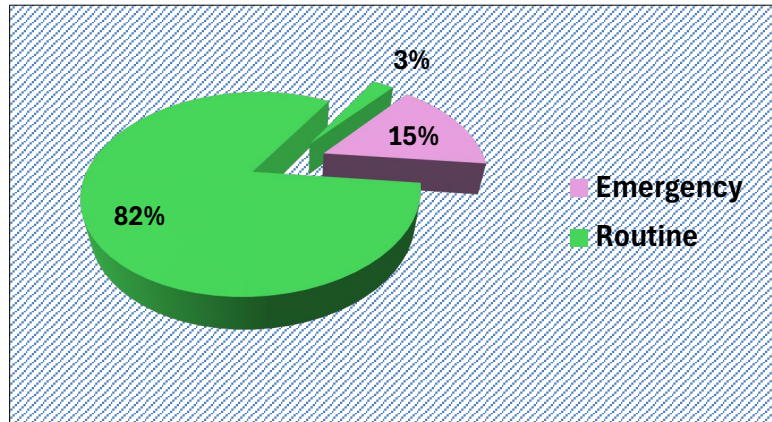


Watauga Medics Inc. Year 2024 Annual Report

For Year Ending 2024

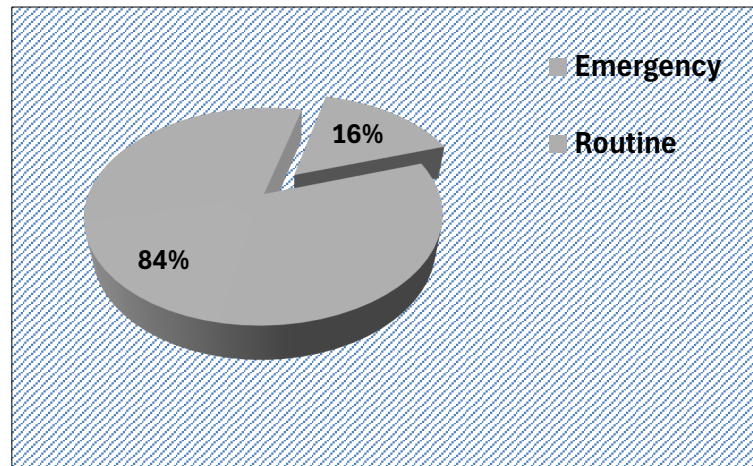
Type of response used while transporting patients

<u>Transport Type</u>	<u>Number</u>
Emergency	865
Routine	3,896
Other	50
Total Transports	4,811



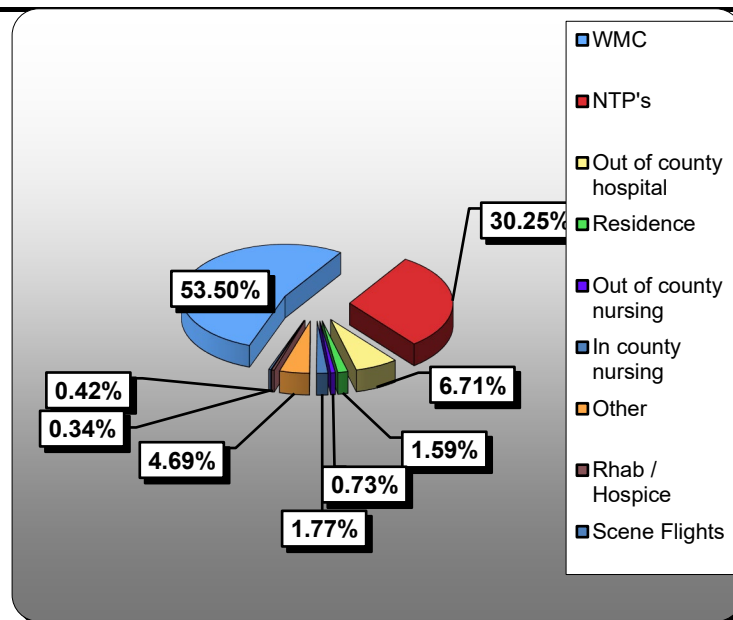
Type of Traffic for Out-Of-County Trips

<u>Traffic</u>	<u>Number</u>
Emergency	97
Routine	433
Total Out of County	530



Destination of Calls

<u>Destination</u>	<u>Number</u>
WMC	3,484
NTP's	1,884
Out of county hospital	488
Residence	90
Out of county nursing	65
In county nursing	307
Other	277
Scene Flights	35
Dr. Office	25
Total	6,655



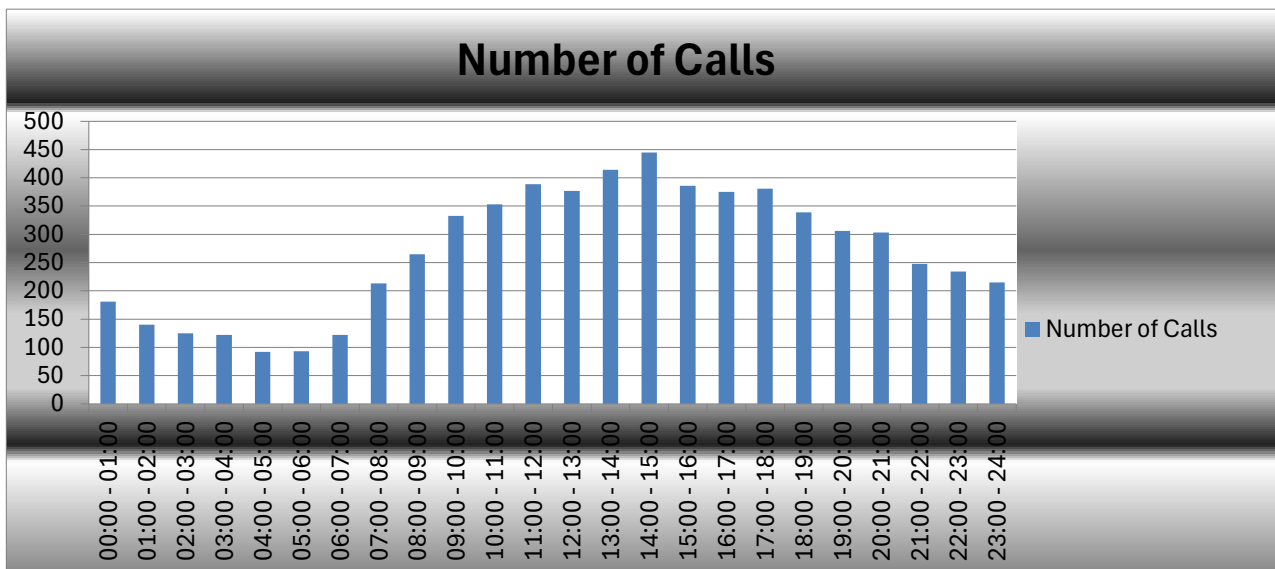
* WMC: Watauga Medical Center

* NTP: No Transports

Watauga Medics Inc. Year 2024 Annual Report

<u>Time of Day</u>	<u>Number of Calls</u>
00:00 - 01:00	195
01:00 - 02:00	144
02:00 - 03:00	137
03:00 - 04:00	117
04:00 - 05:00	116
05:00 - 06:00	89
06:00 - 07:00	107
07:00 - 08:00	235
08:00 - 09:00	303
09:00 - 10:00	328
10:00 - 11:00	396
11:00 - 12:00	354
12:00 - 13:00	435
13:00 - 14:00	403
14:00 - 15:00	446
15:00 - 16:00	404
16:00 - 17:00	438
17:00 - 18:00	362
18:00 - 19:00	333
19:00 - 20:00	316
20:00 - 21:00	281
21:00 - 22:00	268
22:00 - 23:00	228
23:00 - 24:00	220

6,655

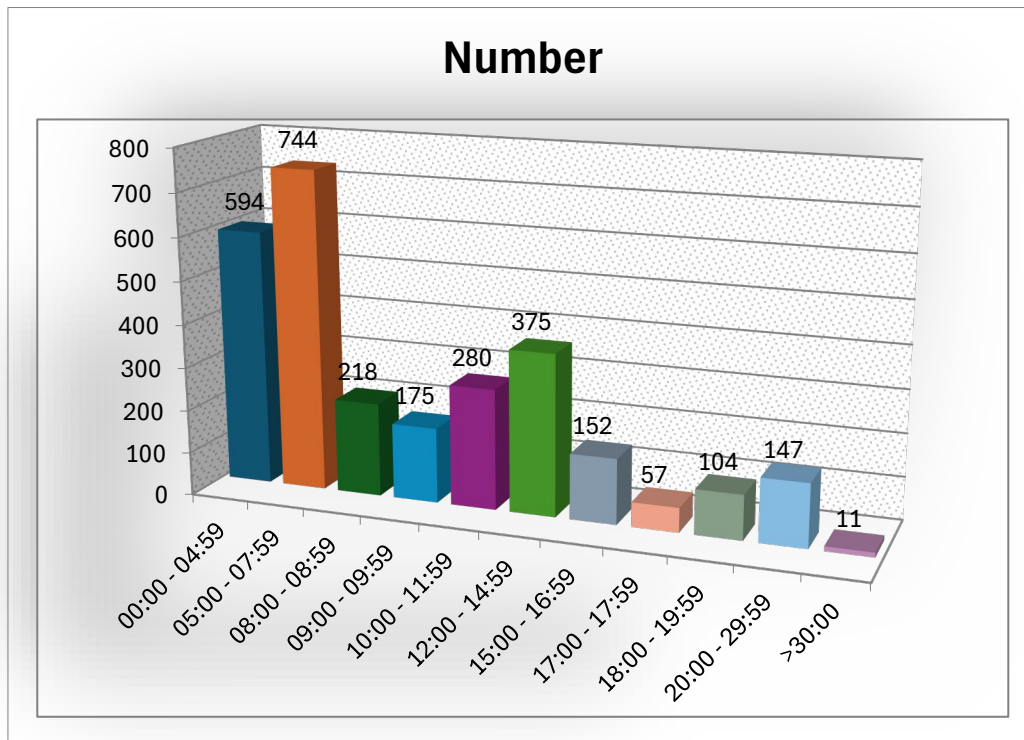


Watauga Medics Inc. Year 2024 Annual Report Response Times For Year Ending 2024

<u>Response Times</u>	<u>Number</u>
00:00 - 04:59	250
05:00 - 07:59	327
08:00 - 08:59	88
09:00 - 09:59	78
10:00 - 11:59	169
12:00 - 14:59	176
15:00 - 16:59	89
17:00 - 17:59	33
18:00 - 19:59	37
20:00 - 29:59	83
>30:00	16

Total Emergency Responses **1,346 ****

Yearly Average Response Time: **0:10:10**



***This number will differ slightly from our total emergency response numbers because there were a few calls where response times were unable to be calculated exactly.*

*** This number also pulls out the calls where we had to stage prior to arriving on scene*

2022 End of the year report

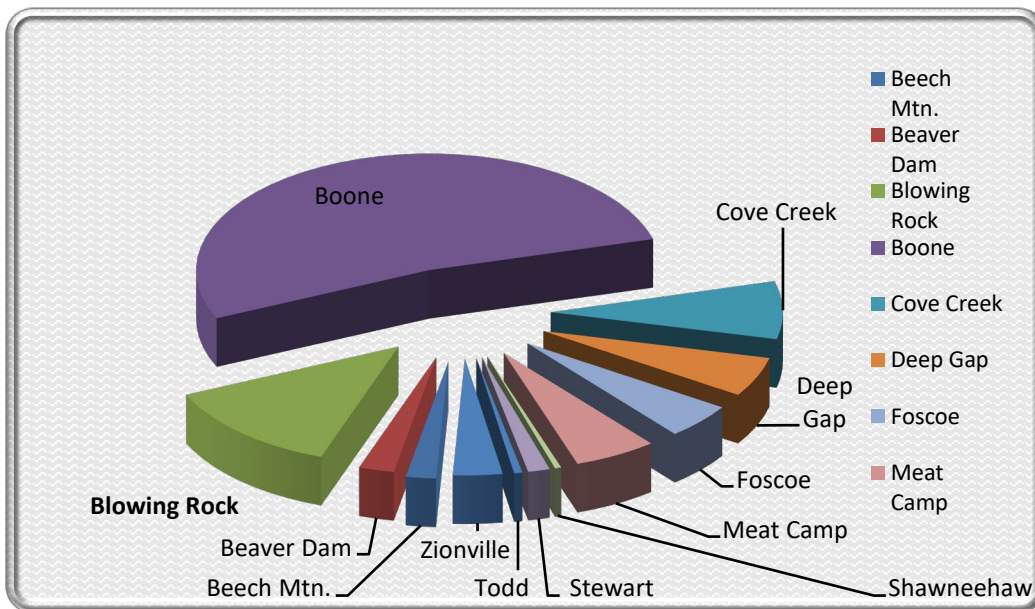
Emergency Calls by fire district

Beech Mtn.	60
Beaver Dam	87
Blowing Rock	358
Boone	1,471
Cove Creek	207
Deep Gap	199
Foscoe	121
Meat Camp	147
Shawneehaw	23
Stewart Simmons	21
Todd	15
Zionville	117

2,826

Response times

0:10:30
0:22:05
0:12:27
0:07:12
0:10:32
0:16:02
0:14:48
0:16:54
0:22:10
0:25:34
0:24:17
0:11:37



Total Number of Calls by Year

Year	Total Calls
1991	1,782
1992	1,921
1993	2,017
1994	2,198
1995	2,527
1996	2,571
1997	2,784
1998	2,755
1999	3,139
2000	3,487
2001	3,688
2002	3,775
2003	3,866
2004	3,752
2005	3,922
2006	4,053
2007	4,048
2008	4,460
2009	4,461
2010	4,473
2011	4,783
2012	4,714
2013	4,705
2014	5,191
2015	5,435
2016	5,912
2017	5,990
2018	5,952
2019	6,142
2020	5,380
2021	6,273
2022	6,451
2023	6,422
2024	6,655

Number Increase/Decrease

Year	Change
1991	
1992	139 7.24%
1993	96 4.76%
1994	181 8.23%
1995	329 13.02%
1996	44 1.71%
1997	213 7.65%
1998	-29 -1.05%
1999	384 12.23%
2000	348 9.98%
2001	201 5.45%
2002	87 2.30%
2003	91 2.35%
2004	-114 -3.04%
2005	170 4.33%
2006	131 3.23%
2007	-5 -0.12%
2008	412 9.24%
2009	1 0.02%
2010	12 0.27%
2011	310 6.48%
2012	-69 -1.46%
2013	-9 -0.19%
2014	486 9.36%
2015	244 4.49%
2016	477 8.07%
2017	78 1.30%
2018	-38 -0.64%
2019	190 3.09%
2020	-762 -14.16%
2021	893 14.24%
2022	178 2.76%
2023	-29 -0.45%
2024	233 3.50%

3.76%

Watauga Medics Inc.

 Update Status

General Information

Physical Address:

921 West King Street
 Boone, NC 28607
 Watauga County
 Latitude/Longitude Point: 36.2205437,-81.6886452

Mailing Address:

921 West King St
 Boone, NC 28607
 Watauga County
 Latitude/Longitude Point: 36.2205437,-81.6886452

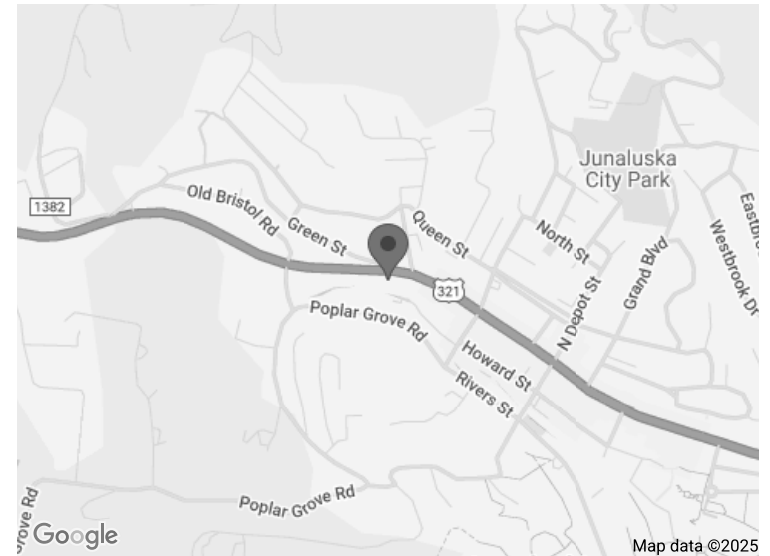
Primary Phone:

Secondary Phone: (828) 264-9486

Fax: (828) 264-9482

Website: www.wataugamedics.net

Status: Open



Last Updated: August 7, 2021 8:27 PM

Properties ^

Agency Number: 0951125

EMS Agency Service Area County(ies):

Vendors:

- ESO Solutions

SMAT Team Site: Yes

Services

Service Level: Paramedic

Primary Service: 911 Response (Scene) with Transport Capability

Other Services:

Associated System(s):

- **System:**Watauga, **Region:** West

Metropolitan Statistical Area:

Configuration

EMD Vendor:

Billing Status: Yes

EMS Agency Specialty Service Capability:

Patient Monitoring Capability(ies):

Crew Call Sign:

Expanded Scope Of Practice: No

Organization

Type: Private, Non-Hospital

Status: Non-Volunteer

Agency Attachments ^

Agency License ^

Number	Issue Date	Expiration Date	Status
1554	11/30/1999	11/30/2027	Active

Agency Inspection ^

Nothing found to display.

Vehicles ⓘ

+ Create ^

VIN	Model Year	Unit Name	Permit	Expiration	Permit Type	Level	Status
1GB3KZC83GF165100	2016	M-1	NC000798	01/31/2025	Permanent	Paramedic	In Service
1GB3G2CL9F1234719	2015	MEDIC 7	NC003071	01/31/2026	Permanent	Paramedic	In Service
1GB3KSE76SF109706	2024	Medic 6	NC006282	12/31/2026	Permanent	Paramedic	In Service
1GB3KWY8KF146985	2020	Medic 2	NC004430	01/31/2026	Permanent	Paramedic	In Service
1GB3KZCY5JF148967	2018	MEDIC 4	NC003066	01/31/2026	Permanent	Paramedic	In Service
1GB3YTE71NF341977	2022	Medic 3	NC005595	01/31/2026	Permanent	Paramedic	In Service
1GB3YTE72LF250309	2020	Medic 5	NC004508	01/31/2025	Permanent	Paramedic	In Service
1GB3YTE78LF306222	2020	Medic 9	NC005153	01/31/2026	Permanent	Paramedic	In Service
1GB3YTE79LF306147	2021	Medic 8	NC006185	01/31/2025	Permanent	Paramedic	In Service

9 items found, displaying all items.

Export options: CSV | Excel | XML



Vehicle Availability

Vehicle Type	2-hour Availability	24-hour Availability	Total
ATV			2
Ambulance			9
Ambulance (4-Wheel Drive)			5
Heavy Rescue			1
Light Rescue			3
Quick Response Vehicle (QRV)			1

Contacts



Name	Job Title(s)	Certification	Exp Date	Phone Number(s)
Candace M Barker P022064	Administrator (Paramedic) Agency Primary Contact (Paramedic)	Paramedic	03/31/2028	Work: (336)-846-9111
Kaitlyn Hinshaw P561676	Medical Director			Work: (828)-262-4299
Peter Keith Pickering P024613	EMS Technician Training Officer (Paramedic) Secondary Contact (Paramedic)	Paramedic	02/29/2028	
Angela Nicholson Seeley P123232	EMS Technician Secondary Contact	Paramedic	05/31/2028	
Craig J Sullivan P007724	Agency Primary Contact EMS Technician Training Officer (Paramedic) Director	Paramedic	03/31/2025	Work: (828) 264-9486

Export options: CSV | Excel | XML

Personnel Availability



Personnel Type	2-hour Availability	24-hour Availability	Full Time Open Positions	Part Time Open Positions	Full Time	Part Time
EMT-Basic	6	2	0	0	1	8
EMT-Intermediate	0	0	0	0	0	5
EMT-Paramedic	8	6	0	0	25	5
Medical Responder	0	0	0	0	0	45

Stations

+ Create ^

Name	Location	Phone
Base 1	921 West King Street Boone, NC 28607	(828) 264-9486
Base 2	133 Longvue Dr Boone, NC 28607 Watauga County	(828) 264-9486
Base 3	193 Highway 321 North Villas, NC 28692	(828) 297-3200
Beech Mountain	513 St, Andrews Rd. Beech Mountain , NC 28604 Watauga County	

Resource Capabilities

^

Type	Total
Available Ventilators	0
Total Ventilators	
Ambulatory Decontamination Capability	30
Non-ambulatory Decontamination Capability	10
EMS Chem Packs	0
Hospital Chem Packs	0

Special Skills

 Edit ^

Skill and number trained or training

Name	Total
Decontamination	100
HAZMAT Response	100
High Angle Rescue	20
Incident Command	150
SMAT Training	15
Trench / Confined Space Rescue	6
Wilderness Search and Rescue	20



TO: Watauga County Board of Commissioners
Deron Geouque, Watauga County Manager

FROM: Wright Tilley, Executive Director

RE: TDA Update for Commissioners Retreat

DATE: 2/17/2025

The Watauga County Tourism Development Authority (TDA) is pleased to provide this update for the 2025 Watauga County Commissioners Retreat.

Along with this memo is a copy of the current FY 24/25 Occupancy tax chart through December of 2024. This chart compares current fiscal year occupancy tax revenues to the prior fiscal year. Also attached is a copy of the full FY 23/24 occupancy tax collections.

As the current report indicates occupancy tax collections in Watauga County were significantly affected by Hurricane Helene in September, October, and November. We lost \$616,606.88 in tax revenue during those months this year compared to last year. We are happy to report that we saw a bounce back in December collections to a very slight increase over last year, and we are hopeful for good January and February ski season collections.

The full FY 23/24 year was solid with the Watauga County TDA posting a 5.72% increase in occupancy tax collections over the prior year.

Watauga TDA Highlights:

- Ended FY 23/24 fiscal year with \$4,389,238.31 in occupancy tax collections.
- Current advertising, marketing, and public relations budget is roughly \$1.9 million. This includes general advertising and marketing, website content & development, creative services, sponsorships, promotional items, tradeshow, public relations services, research, and wayfinding.

- We are in year four of our ad campaign “Inspiring Awe Since 1849” and a couple of years into our responsible recreating campaign titled “Preserve The Awe.” We have begun discussions with our ad agency team about our next campaign to replace “Inspiring Awe.”
- As a result of Hurricane Helene, we paused all advertising & marketing on September 28th and slowly began resuming elements of the campaigns on November 1. We participated in weekly Zoom meetings with the Visit NC team and our tourism colleagues in Western North Carolina during that time as well.
- We won “Best Leisure Marketing Campaign” for medium size tourism bureaus at this years North Carolina Travel Industry Association awards in November.
- We won (1) Gold and (4) Silver awards at this years Telly Awards for Best Promotional Video, Voiceover & Narration, Cinematography, and Video Editing.

Visit NC and NC Commerce released their 2023 report on County Level Tourism Spending during the summer of 2024.

- Watauga County ranked 14th out of North Carolina’s 100 Counties in terms of visitor spending (NC Commerce/ Visit NC). We moved up one spot from 2022 and this is the highest we have ever been.
- Tourism in Watauga County generated visitor spending of \$517.51 million in 2023, which was an increase of 3.2% over the prior year. This includes spending on lodging, recreation, food & beverage, retail, and transportation.
- Local tax revenues generated by tourism in Watauga County in 2023 amounted to \$18.4 million. According to the NC Commerce department, this represents a \$649.11 tax savings per Watauga County resident.
- 3064 jobs in Watauga County were attributable to travel & tourism in 2023.

TDA Infrastructure / Product Development

- Blue Ridge Conservancy & Middle Fork Greenway – The WCTDA remains committed to supporting the development of the Middle Fork Greenway connecting Boone & Blowing Rock as well as supporting other public land access and land conservation efforts of the Blue Ridge Conservancy. The new paddle access on the Watauga River in Valle Crucis was officially opened in 2024.

- During 2024, we completed the renovations and additions to the pump track area at Rocky Knob Mountain Bike Park. These improvements included a new shelter/picnic pavilion, additional parking, new fencing, and an event area.
- Phase two of the countywide wayfinding signs were completed during the past year. This will complete the wayfinding signage plan, except for a couple of signs on Hwy 105.
- Howard Knob Park improvements are currently underway to renovate and improve accessibility at the park. The TDA received an Accessibility in Parks grant to help offset some of the costs of improving existing facilities and adding a new ADA accessible scenic overlook. Construction is beginning soon as weather permits.

Lastly, we would like to invite you all to our Annual Tourism Summit & Partners Meeting on March 25th from 10:30am to 2pm at App State's Grandview Ballroom.

Occupancy Tax Collection Report

July 2023 to date

	<u>Jul</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sep</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Dec</u>	<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>March</u>	<u>April</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>JULY to Date</u>
BR													
2021/22	226,829.62	191,155.32	160,261.30	240,139.82	140,957.77	151,674.80	109,536.78	109,563.63	85,351.39	111,477.51	132,057.87	160,685.00	1,819,690.81
2022/23	209,400.41	186,790.34	177,694.52	231,410.73	126,060.26	148,720.61	102,083.86	95,435.10	76,956.45	95,511.84	120,721.48	158,473.11	1,729,258.71
2023/24	230,215.65	194,274.16	188,045.42	250,684.23	144,651.83	156,527.76	115,833.76	103,613.64	89,210.11	93,436.69	126,849.89	180,157.03	1,873,500.17
	20,815.24	7,483.84	10,350.90	19,273.50	18,591.57	7,807.15	13,749.90	8,178.54	12,253.66	(2,075.15)	6,128.41	21,683.92	144,241.46
	9.94%	4.00%	5.82%	8.32%	14.74%	5.24%	13.46%	8.57%	15.92%	-2.18%	5.07%	13.68%	8.34%
Boone													
2021/22	237,600.90	195,023.51	181,611.80	294,653.63	163,317.90	187,299.65	161,540.29	162,882.51	130,768.56	141,202.66	159,180.99	188,586.63	2,203,669.03
2022/23	228,927.75	205,671.17	221,678.29	279,813.07	149,616.87	186,371.86	136,858.15	140,790.22	139,608.20	133,483.27	159,307.54	189,265.89	2,171,392.28
2023/24	214,753.42	207,191.70	222,405.41	283,719.71	157,311.22	190,215.12	152,820.68	154,423.13	124,406.08	140,545.52	176,246.47	184,825.44	2,208,863.90
	(14,174.33)	1,520.53	727.12	3,906.64	7,694.35	3,843.26	15,962.53	13,632.91	15,202.12	7,062.25	16,938.93	4,440.45	37,471.62
	-6.19%	0.74%	0.33%	0.37%	5.14%	2.06%	11.66%	9.70%	-10.89%	5.29%	10.63%	-2.35%	1.73%
Watauga													
2021/22	429,137.02	365,467.33	293,048.51	475,872.27	354,729.74	420,273.87	419,688.00	339,650.85	265,915.27	141,202.66	293,386.94	342,497.61	4,140,870.07
2022/23	513,233.61	390,481.23	343,902.63	453,965.72	359,741.12	395,601.62	380,549.15	301,130.56	198,961.43	210,934.74	253,877.18	349,269.21	4,151,648.20
2023/24	517,238.25	419,111.42	370,606.58	488,459.15	372,014.24	410,805.90	419,758.88	304,401.26	233,845.80	193,959.66	278,788.08	380,249.09	4,389,238.31
	4,004.64	28,630.19	26,703.95	34,493.43	12,273.12	15,204.28	39,209.73	3,270.70	34,884.37	(16,975.08)	24,910.90	30,979.88	237,590.11
	0.08%	7.07%	7.76%	7.59%	3.41%	3.84%	10.30%	1.10%	17.53%	-8.00%	9.81%	8.87%	5.72%
TTLS													
Prior Yr	951,561.77	782,942.74	743,275.44	965,189.52	635,418.25	730,694.09	619,491.16	537,355.88	415,526.08	439,929.85	533,906.20	697,008.21	8,052,299.19
Cur Yr	962,207.32	820,577.30	780,982.36	1,019,077.46	670,383.13	757,315.52	688,084.16	562,438.03	447,111.03	427,941.87	581,884.44	745,231.56	8,471,602.38
\$'s +/-	10,645.55	37,634.56	37,706.92	53,887.94	34,964.88	26,621.43	68,593.00	25,082.15	31,584.95	(11,987.98)	47,978.24	48,223.35	419,303.19
% +/-	1.11%	4.80%	5.07%	5.58%	5.50%	3.64%	11.07%	5.05%	7.60%	-2.73%	8.98%	6.91%	5.20%

Occupancy Tax Collection Report

July 2024 to date													
	<u>Jul</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sep</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Dec</u>	<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>March</u>	<u>April</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>JULY to Date</u>
BR													
2022	209,400.41	186,790.34	177,694.52	231,410.73	126,060.26	148,720.61							1,080,076.87
2023	230,215.65	194,274.16	187,970.37	250,398.07	144,646.83	156,294.50							1,163,799.58
2024	248,706.45	208,895.84	156,605.03	162,473.76	163,969.69	156,578.82							1,097,229.59
	18,490.80	14,621.68	(31,365.34)	(87,924.31)	19,322.86	284.32							(66,569.99)
	8.03%	7.52%	-16.69%	-35.11%	13.36%	0.18%							-5.72%
Boone													
2022	228,927.75	205,671.17	221,678.29	279,813.07	149,616.87	186,371.86							1,272,079.01
2023	214,753.42	207,191.70	222,405.41	283,719.71	157,311.22	190,215.12							1,275,596.58
2024	228,417.23	234,307.74	180,747.43	250,690.16	227,781.25	213,237.53							1,335,181.34
	13,663.81	27,116.04	(41,657.98)	(33,029.55)	70,470.03	23,022.41							59,584.76
	6.36%	13.09%	-18.73%	-11.64%	44.80%	12.10%							4.67%
Watauga													
2022	513,233.61	390,481.23	343,902.63	453,965.72	359,741.12	395,601.62							2,456,925.93
2023	517,238.25	419,111.42	370,606.58	488,459.15	372,014.24	410,805.90							2,578,235.54
2024	516,143.63	437,507.66	235,595.97	109,707.58	269,169.54	411,940.36							1,980,064.74
	(1,094.62)	18,396.24	(135,010.61)	(378,751.57)	(102,844.70)	1,134.46							(598,170.80)
	-0.21%	4.38%	-36.43%	-77.54%	-27.65%	0.03%							-23.20%
TTLS													
Prior Yr	962,207.32	820,577.28	780,982.36	1,022,576.93	673,972.29	757,315.52							5,017,631.70
Cur Yr	993,267.31	880,711.24	572,948.43	522,871.50	660,920.48	781,756.71							4,412,475.67
\$'s +/-	31,059.99	60,133.96	(208,033.93)	(499,705.43)	(13,051.81)	24,441.19							(605,156.03)
% +/-	3.23%	7.32%	-26.64%	-48.87%	-1.99%	3.23%							-12.06%

North Carolina - All Counties - 2023

2025 Annual Pre-Budget Retreat

County	Visitor Spending, 2023 (millions)							Spending Growth Rate (2023/2022)	Employment	Share of State	Labor Income (Millions)	State Taxes (Millions)	Local Taxes (Millions)	State/Local Tax Savings per Resident
	Lodging*	F&B	Recreation	Retail	Transport**	Total Spending (Millions)	Share of State							
Alamance	\$57.11	\$101.15	\$31.16	\$21.08	\$60.82	\$271.33	0.8%	7.9%	1,841	0.8%	\$61.6	\$11.0	\$6.9	\$99.46
Alexander	\$5.69	\$12.15	\$4.23	\$2.86	\$7.85	\$32.77	0.1%	-3.4%	201	0.1%	\$7.9	\$1.3	\$1.2	\$68.97
Alleghany	\$10.91	\$15.65	\$7.01	\$4.15	\$10.60	\$48.31	0.1%	1.3%	283	0.1%	\$11.0	\$1.6	\$2.2	\$329.09
Anson	\$5.09	\$8.16	\$3.08	\$1.56	\$6.57	\$24.46	0.1%	3.9%	150	0.1%	\$5.5	\$1.0	\$0.7	\$77.38
Ashe	\$27.05	\$33.71	\$15.44	\$10.13	\$26.27	\$112.59	0.3%	2.7%	554	0.2%	\$22.5	\$3.8	\$4.4	\$300.79
Avery	\$64.21	\$79.31	\$39.78	\$21.90	\$54.26	\$259.45	0.7%	4.8%	1,531	0.7%	\$66.2	\$8.5	\$9.0	\$1,000.40
Beaufort	\$33.70	\$46.12	\$20.41	\$11.03	\$31.22	\$142.48	0.4%	5.9%	724	0.3%	\$28.7	\$5.3	\$6.1	\$256.68
Bertie	\$6.58	\$7.15	\$2.94	\$1.86	\$5.93	\$24.47	0.1%	4.5%	93	0.0%	\$3.6	\$0.9	\$0.9	\$109.04
Bladen	\$8.88	\$19.42	\$8.56	\$4.90	\$14.23	\$55.99	0.2%	8.6%	272	0.1%	\$11.6	\$2.3	\$1.8	\$139.44
Brunswick	\$297.97	\$346.89	\$168.13	\$104.93	\$255.45	\$1,173.37	3.3%	7.5%	5,595	2.5%	\$230.5	\$35.5	\$48.4	\$524.97
Buncombe	\$900.96	\$787.03	\$366.19	\$540.73	\$371.94	\$2,966.86	8.3%	3.0%	19,862	8.7%	\$672.8	\$135.6	\$107.2	\$879.89
Burke	\$31.86	\$48.68	\$18.50	\$10.33	\$28.39	\$137.75	0.4%	3.0%	865	0.4%	\$30.2	\$5.4	\$4.1	\$107.85
Cabarrus	\$154.00	\$201.21	\$99.67	\$47.05	\$122.96	\$624.89	1.8%	10.3%	4,821	2.1%	\$171.5	\$24.7	\$16.4	\$171.51
Caldwell	\$13.81	\$24.42	\$8.15	\$5.08	\$19.96	\$71.42	0.2%	4.4%	458	0.2%	\$17.3	\$2.8	\$2.4	\$64.65
Camden	\$0.84	\$1.29	\$0.54	\$0.34	\$0.98	\$4.00	0.0%	11.3%	25	0.0%	\$1.0	\$0.1	\$0.2	\$31.21
Carteret	\$199.93	\$219.35	\$104.19	\$60.93	\$147.89	\$732.29	2.1%	5.3%	3,749	1.7%	\$143.8	\$21.9	\$28.7	\$725.93
Caswell	\$5.69	\$5.48	\$2.51	\$1.48	\$4.66	\$19.83	0.1%	7.7%	92	0.0%	\$3.4	\$0.6	\$0.8	\$65.39
Catawba	\$73.35	\$120.32	\$45.80	\$27.39	\$81.37	\$348.22	1.0%	5.1%	2,495	1.1%	\$86.7	\$14.0	\$12.0	\$157.86
Chatham	\$15.75	\$28.52	\$10.48	\$6.38	\$18.46	\$79.59	0.2%	5.1%	651	0.3%	\$23.4	\$3.3	\$2.9	\$76.75
Cherokee	\$26.82	\$31.76	\$12.12	\$8.60	\$22.08	\$101.38	0.3%	2.6%	589	0.3%	\$20.3	\$3.1	\$4.1	\$241.59
Chowan	\$6.44	\$9.92	\$4.31	\$2.70	\$6.74	\$30.11	0.1%	4.8%	181	0.1%	\$7.1	\$1.1	\$1.5	\$191.65
Clay	\$7.67	\$9.83	\$3.98	\$2.76	\$7.25	\$31.49	0.1%	1.3%	136	0.1%	\$6.0	\$0.9	\$1.9	\$239.02
Cleveland	\$31.30	\$51.15	\$19.64	\$11.03	\$36.69	\$149.82	0.4%	-1.6%	943	0.4%	\$37.4	\$6.0	\$3.8	\$96.01
Columbus	\$12.29	\$22.46	\$8.34	\$5.35	\$14.91	\$63.34	0.2%	4.3%	377	0.2%	\$14.4	\$2.7	\$2.1	\$96.23
Craven	\$39.30	\$63.80	\$24.70	\$13.98	\$36.33	\$178.11	0.5%	4.4%	1,288	0.6%	\$44.6	\$6.9	\$5.1	\$117.24
Cumberland	\$139.94	\$236.76	\$84.46	\$54.74	\$181.20	\$697.09	2.0%	4.6%	4,942	2.2%	\$176.4	\$26.9	\$20.1	\$139.05
Currituck	\$176.78	\$159.94	\$75.67	\$46.91	\$114.06	\$573.35	1.6%	4.3%	2,502	1.1%	\$115.1	\$16.4	\$21.8	\$1,211.74
Dare	\$583.94	\$636.56	\$317.52	\$184.85	\$424.31	\$2,147.18	6.0%	8.8%	12,564	5.5%	\$472.1	\$70.4	\$77.9	\$3,891.20
Davidson	\$68.65	\$88.59	\$42.17	\$18.43	\$88.33	\$306.17	0.9%	5.2%	1,611	0.7%	\$69.9	\$11.7	\$9.3	\$119.75
Davie	\$9.08	\$14.39	\$5.91	\$3.37	\$13.34	\$46.08	0.1%	6.1%	322	0.1%	\$12.5	\$1.8	\$1.2	\$68.01
Duplin	\$7.24	\$14.35	\$4.67	\$3.01	\$14.72	\$43.99	0.1%	4.6%	266	0.1%	\$10.0	\$1.8	\$1.6	\$68.42
Durham	\$233.20	\$303.21	\$131.81	\$69.33	\$388.07	\$1,125.62	3.2%	10.5%	7,582	3.3%	\$304.0	\$39.8	\$38.9	\$233.80
Edgecombe	\$13.39	\$23.53	\$8.99	\$5.57	\$19.23	\$70.73	0.2%	2.1%	358	0.2%	\$14.1	\$2.7	\$1.8	\$90.93
Forsyth	\$206.54	\$328.45	\$126.38	\$77.63	\$317.05	\$1,056.05	3.0%	6.9%	6,753	3.0%	\$272.3	\$43.9	\$28.7	\$184.69

North Carolina - All Counties - 2023

2025 Annual Pre-Budget Retreat

County	Visitor Spending, 2023 (millions)							Spending Growth Rate (2023/2022)	Employment	Share of State	Labor Income (Millions)	State Taxes (Millions)	Local Taxes (Millions)	State/Local Tax Savings per Resident
	Lodging*	F&B	Recreation	Retail	Transport**	Total Spending (Millions)	Share of State							
Franklin	\$8.46	\$14.55	\$5.81	\$3.05	\$10.28	\$42.15	0.1%	10.6%	216	0.1%	\$9.7	\$1.6	\$1.1	\$35.71
Gaston	\$76.33	\$115.70	\$39.25	\$24.19	\$96.99	\$352.46	1.0%	4.9%	2,309	1.0%	\$86.8	\$14.3	\$8.9	\$97.53
Gates	\$2.47	\$2.97	\$1.36	\$0.86	\$2.22	\$9.89	0.0%	1.0%	43	0.0%	\$1.7	\$0.4	\$0.3	\$70.67
Graham	\$14.67	\$17.90	\$7.20	\$4.63	\$11.58	\$55.98	0.2%	2.0%	347	0.2%	\$12.6	\$1.8	\$2.6	\$547.44
Granville	\$13.31	\$20.04	\$9.18	\$4.49	\$13.96	\$60.98	0.2%	3.5%	323	0.1%	\$13.7	\$2.5	\$1.9	\$70.39
Greene	\$2.33	\$3.98	\$1.65	\$0.93	\$2.42	\$11.30	0.0%	7.9%	73	0.0%	\$2.6	\$0.4	\$0.4	\$42.54
Guilford	\$349.47	\$508.39	\$199.25	\$120.62	\$503.95	\$1,681.67	4.7%	8.7%	11,580	5.1%	\$514.2	\$62.5	\$49.4	\$203.50
Halifax	\$31.72	\$43.29	\$17.84	\$10.74	\$30.87	\$134.46	0.4%	10.4%	773	0.3%	\$31.9	\$5.7	\$4.2	\$208.98
Harnett	\$22.04	\$43.29	\$17.88	\$9.21	\$31.77	\$124.18	0.3%	4.7%	792	0.3%	\$27.4	\$4.9	\$3.5	\$58.70
Haywood	\$87.00	\$105.86	\$46.09	\$29.22	\$81.98	\$350.15	1.0%	4.2%	2,131	0.9%	\$88.1	\$12.8	\$11.7	\$389.36
Henderson	\$96.79	\$137.13	\$61.18	\$34.03	\$97.65	\$426.78	1.2%	3.3%	2,673	1.2%	\$112.5	\$15.1	\$16.4	\$264.31
Hertford	\$5.86	\$10.47	\$3.99	\$2.43	\$8.46	\$31.21	0.1%	6.7%	194	0.1%	\$7.1	\$1.3	\$1.0	\$119.69
Hoke	\$3.24	\$3.58	\$2.11	\$1.22	\$4.93	\$15.09	0.0%	3.8%	105	0.0%	\$3.5	\$0.6	\$0.4	\$18.37
Hyde	\$16.81	\$19.70	\$8.45	\$5.23	\$11.69	\$61.87	0.2%	6.1%	392	0.2%	\$14.1	\$2.0	\$2.6	\$1,005.48
Iredell	\$87.07	\$124.45	\$57.01	\$27.71	\$87.20	\$383.44	1.1%	4.2%	2,428	1.1%	\$90.2	\$14.5	\$12.6	\$135.37
Jackson	\$114.80	\$135.09	\$71.30	\$40.32	\$106.48	\$468.00	1.3%	3.4%	2,470	1.1%	\$121.6	\$15.3	\$15.3	\$687.05
Johnston	\$61.68	\$103.42	\$40.18	\$23.81	\$69.86	\$298.95	0.8%	4.9%	2,003	0.9%	\$76.4	\$12.4	\$9.2	\$89.24
Jones	\$1.46	\$1.77	\$0.81	\$0.48	\$1.80	\$6.32	0.0%	1.0%	32	0.0%	\$1.5	\$0.3	\$0.2	\$49.62
Lee	\$19.54	\$40.06	\$13.63	\$8.56	\$22.80	\$104.59	0.3%	8.6%	706	0.3%	\$27.5	\$4.3	\$3.0	\$108.97
Lenoir	\$24.83	\$38.87	\$15.57	\$8.69	\$26.46	\$114.41	0.3%	4.2%	732	0.3%	\$28.9	\$4.7	\$3.1	\$141.16
Lincoln	\$19.81	\$35.15	\$11.16	\$7.07	\$22.49	\$95.68	0.3%	3.0%	607	0.3%	\$23.1	\$3.9	\$2.9	\$71.13
Macon	\$84.54	\$109.63	\$52.03	\$30.01	\$73.89	\$350.09	1.0%	3.8%	1,706	0.8%	\$83.0	\$11.4	\$17.6	\$753.73
Madison	\$20.10	\$23.40	\$11.24	\$7.26	\$21.36	\$83.36	0.2%	2.6%	393	0.2%	\$15.8	\$2.8	\$2.9	\$256.91
Martin	\$8.22	\$11.34	\$4.26	\$2.46	\$7.64	\$33.92	0.1%	7.1%	273	0.1%	\$9.0	\$1.3	\$1.1	\$115.35
McDowell	\$25.81	\$32.13	\$14.27	\$8.12	\$31.63	\$111.96	0.3%	3.8%	661	0.3%	\$27.3	\$4.0	\$3.9	\$175.81
Mecklenburg	\$1,338.32	\$1,720.45	\$763.93	\$401.73	\$1,622.23	\$5,846.66	16.4%	9.6%	36,310	16.0%	\$1,957.0	\$206.0	\$185.7	\$336.60
Mitchell	\$11.14	\$14.16	\$6.74	\$3.68	\$10.88	\$46.60	0.1%	5.2%	239	0.1%	\$10.1	\$1.4	\$1.6	\$200.73
Montgomery	\$11.36	\$16.47	\$8.12	\$4.69	\$14.42	\$55.05	0.2%	4.2%	247	0.1%	\$10.9	\$1.8	\$3.4	\$198.27
Moore	\$202.98	\$242.19	\$115.44	\$65.47	\$179.04	\$805.11	2.3%	7.4%	5,977	2.6%	\$234.5	\$30.8	\$26.1	\$532.10
Nash	\$78.56	\$112.89	\$46.33	\$27.74	\$82.61	\$348.14	1.0%	4.0%	2,675	1.2%	\$94.2	\$13.5	\$11.2	\$256.21
New Hanover	\$288.57	\$349.04	\$136.73	\$82.86	\$264.97	\$1,122.17	3.1%	5.9%	6,790	3.0%	\$278.9	\$37.0	\$40.3	\$323.85
Northampton	\$7.81	\$8.60	\$4.24	\$2.55	\$6.87	\$30.07	0.1%	4.7%	116	0.1%	\$5.5	\$0.9	\$1.5	\$147.07
Onslow	\$99.43	\$132.72	\$50.82	\$27.10	\$102.06	\$412.12	1.2%	8.5%	2,485	1.1%	\$94.7	\$14.5	\$14.3	\$134.63
Orange	\$61.88	\$93.20	\$39.98	\$19.37	\$52.49	\$266.92	0.7%	13.0%	1,990	0.9%	\$73.6	\$10.3	\$8.3	\$123.11

North Carolina - All Counties - 2023

2025 Annual Pre-Budget Retreat

County	Visitor Spending, 2023 (millions)							Spending Growth Rate (2023/2022)	Employment	Share of State	Labor Income (Millions)	State Taxes (Millions)	Local Taxes (Millions)	State/Local Tax Savings per Resident
	Lodging*	F&B	Recreation	Retail	Transport**	Total Spending (Millions)	Share of State							
Pamlico	\$8.05	\$12.68	\$6.49	\$2.96	\$7.57	\$37.76	0.1%	3.7%	194	0.1%	\$6.6	\$1.1	\$2.2	\$266.53
Pasquotank	\$18.44	\$32.71	\$10.72	\$8.09	\$20.25	\$90.21	0.3%	6.7%	535	0.2%	\$19.1	\$3.6	\$2.7	\$150.98
Pender	\$52.21	\$60.13	\$30.33	\$16.77	\$39.69	\$199.12	0.6%	5.0%	1,000	0.4%	\$40.4	\$6.4	\$9.1	\$226.37
Perquimans	\$3.95	\$8.95	\$2.61	\$1.57	\$3.35	\$20.43	0.1%	3.1%	96	0.0%	\$4.0	\$0.7	\$1.3	\$146.32
Person	\$11.66	\$18.66	\$6.40	\$4.41	\$14.10	\$55.22	0.2%	6.6%	314	0.1%	\$11.6	\$2.2	\$1.6	\$94.49
Pitt	\$65.47	\$111.84	\$39.60	\$23.06	\$72.91	\$312.88	0.9%	7.5%	2,082	0.9%	\$75.2	\$11.8	\$9.3	\$120.44
Polk	\$13.14	\$17.75	\$7.98	\$5.46	\$14.31	\$58.64	0.2%	1.5%	316	0.1%	\$11.7	\$1.9	\$2.3	\$208.91
Randolph	\$41.90	\$66.79	\$23.23	\$15.24	\$42.34	\$189.50	0.5%	6.1%	1,145	0.5%	\$43.9	\$8.3	\$5.0	\$89.75
Richmond	\$12.58	\$19.58	\$9.14	\$4.84	\$13.90	\$60.04	0.2%	6.2%	413	0.2%	\$15.3	\$2.4	\$1.6	\$93.83
Robeson	\$36.68	\$58.53	\$21.27	\$13.66	\$38.00	\$168.14	0.5%	5.1%	1,173	0.5%	\$41.1	\$6.9	\$4.9	\$101.04
Rockingham	\$19.58	\$33.63	\$11.35	\$6.74	\$22.56	\$93.86	0.3%	6.4%	688	0.3%	\$23.7	\$3.8	\$3.1	\$73.89
Rowan	\$45.26	\$70.83	\$25.02	\$15.55	\$61.40	\$218.06	0.6%	4.1%	1,483	0.7%	\$52.3	\$8.6	\$7.7	\$107.36
Rutherford	\$75.04	\$88.58	\$38.11	\$23.74	\$64.36	\$289.83	0.8%	2.6%	1,673	0.7%	\$69.8	\$11.9	\$9.4	\$325.78
Sampson	\$14.31	\$22.65	\$9.06	\$5.03	\$15.59	\$66.64	0.2%	5.3%	344	0.2%	\$14.6	\$2.7	\$2.2	\$83.21
Scotland	\$12.07	\$18.69	\$7.44	\$4.58	\$14.92	\$57.70	0.2%	3.8%	395	0.2%	\$13.5	\$2.2	\$1.4	\$104.45
Stanly	\$22.40	\$36.06	\$13.26	\$8.29	\$28.24	\$108.24	0.3%	4.2%	662	0.3%	\$23.6	\$4.4	\$3.5	\$119.62
Stokes	\$13.31	\$16.35	\$6.98	\$4.00	\$11.54	\$52.18	0.1%	1.7%	279	0.1%	\$11.3	\$2.0	\$1.7	\$81.31
Surry	\$33.09	\$51.88	\$16.16	\$11.70	\$38.63	\$151.47	0.4%	3.0%	911	0.4%	\$37.8	\$6.1	\$4.4	\$147.77
Swain	\$88.38	\$101.93	\$51.87	\$31.08	\$80.74	\$354.00	1.0%	1.4%	2,016	0.9%	\$96.8	\$14.2	\$9.0	\$1,665.49
Transylvania	\$48.10	\$57.81	\$28.86	\$17.26	\$43.08	\$195.10	0.5%	3.5%	1,175	0.5%	\$50.9	\$6.0	\$7.4	\$399.64
Tyrrell	\$1.72	\$2.07	\$1.02	\$0.64	\$1.49	\$6.94	0.0%	3.1%	29	0.0%	\$1.2	\$0.2	\$0.4	\$173.25
Union	\$37.18	\$73.09	\$24.98	\$14.72	\$48.54	\$198.52	0.6%	6.1%	1,290	0.6%	\$45.6	\$7.8	\$5.0	\$50.01
Vance	\$15.44	\$23.13	\$9.50	\$5.93	\$16.02	\$70.02	0.2%	8.1%	445	0.2%	\$16.2	\$2.8	\$2.3	\$119.76
Wake	\$808.16	\$938.64	\$606.12	\$543.79	\$391.65	\$3,288.36	9.2%	11.4%	25,984	11.4%	\$900.1	\$153.8	\$162.5	\$265.73
Warren	\$18.54	\$21.28	\$10.41	\$5.96	\$16.83	\$73.02	0.2%	10.8%	251	0.1%	\$11.4	\$2.0	\$3.6	\$293.22
Washington	\$4.40	\$5.83	\$2.50	\$1.44	\$4.24	\$18.41	0.1%	3.3%	89	0.0%	\$3.6	\$0.7	\$0.7	\$128.40
Watauga	\$138.05	\$154.05	\$73.97	\$43.46	\$107.98	\$517.51	1.5%	3.2%	3,064	1.3%	\$127.7	\$17.2	\$18.4	\$649.11
Wayne	\$42.34	\$68.97	\$25.33	\$15.19	\$50.78	\$202.61	0.6%	5.4%	1,280	0.6%	\$46.9	\$8.6	\$5.0	\$114.14
Wilkes	\$27.08	\$37.88	\$13.88	\$9.04	\$26.58	\$114.47	0.3%	5.1%	701	0.3%	\$27.3	\$4.3	\$3.4	\$117.85
Wilson	\$27.90	\$49.95	\$17.91	\$10.55	\$37.38	\$143.70	0.4%	6.3%	972	0.4%	\$33.6	\$5.9	\$4.0	\$124.81
Yadkin	\$11.43	\$17.29	\$6.78	\$4.45	\$12.52	\$52.46	0.1%	3.4%	394	0.2%	\$14.6	\$2.1	\$1.5	\$95.06
Yancey	\$18.56	\$22.56	\$10.64	\$6.54	\$16.26	\$74.55	0.2%	3.7%	361	0.2%	\$15.4	\$2.4	\$3.6	\$316.38
State	\$8,560.7	\$10,813.4	\$4,881.4	\$3,328.6	\$8,047.8	\$35,631.9	100%	6.9%	227,224	100%	\$9,271.5	\$1,347.4	\$1,245.1	\$239.26

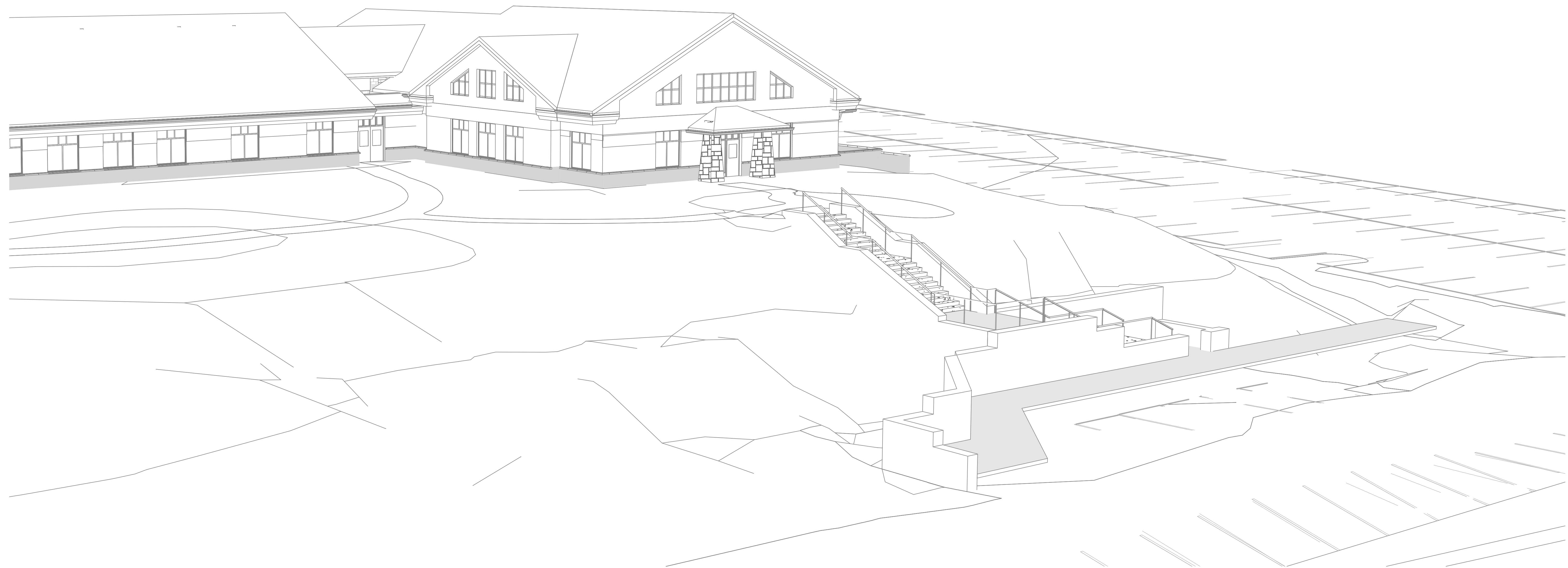
* Lodging includes 2nd home spending.

** Transport includes both ground and air transportation.

Source: Tourism Economics, 2024







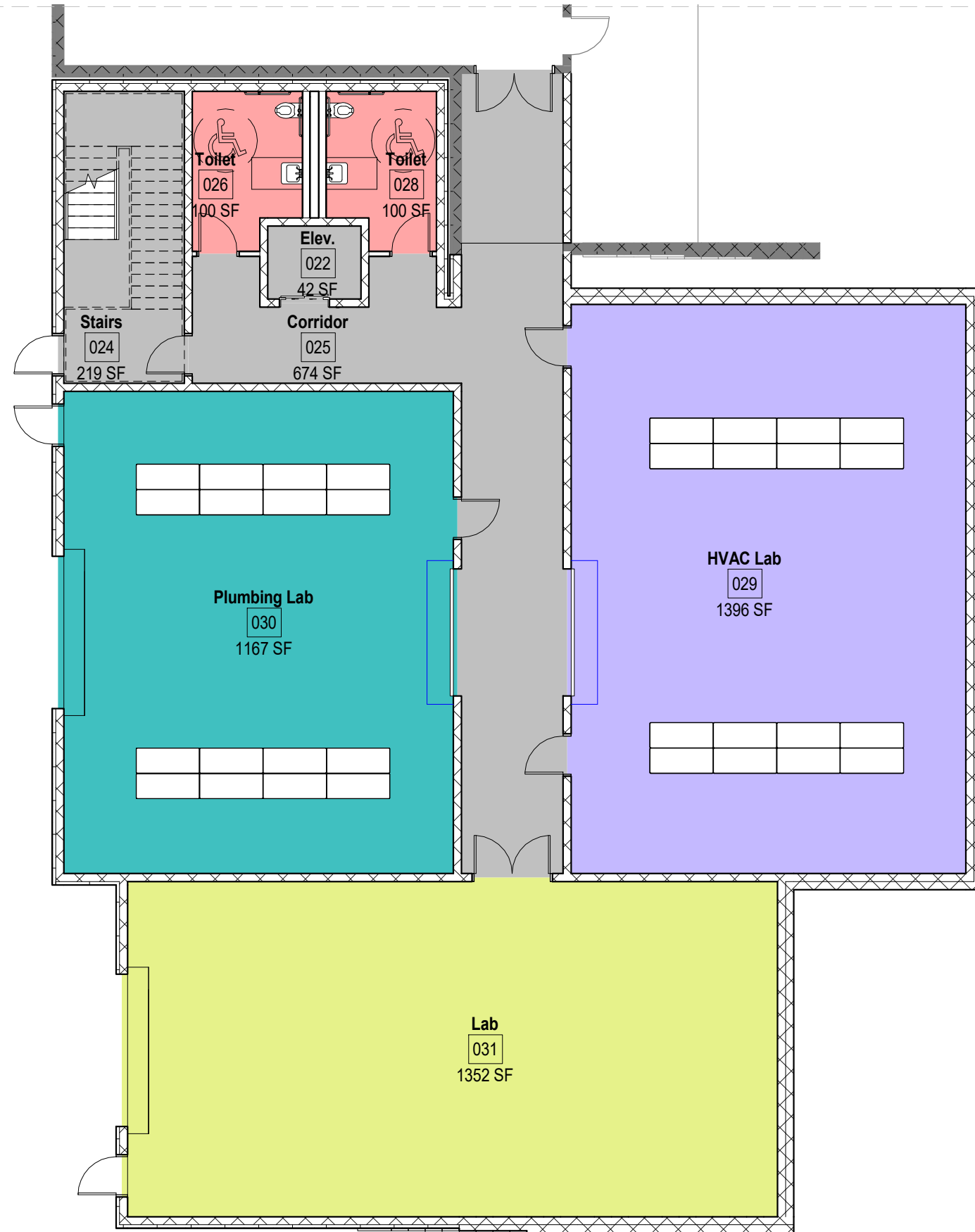
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ARCHITECTURE

STUDENT CENTER SIDEWALKS
CCC & TI WATAUGA CAMPUS
732 COMMUNITY COLLEGE DRIVE, BOONE, NC

BASE BID 3D VIEW CLOSE UP

04/19/21







SUMMARY REQUEST TO THE COUNTY

MEMORANDUM

TO: Deron Geouque, County Manager
Commissioners, Watauga County

FROM: Leslie Alexander, Superintendent

DATE: February 17, 2025

RE: '25-'26 Budget Request

Payroll	\$11,871,415
Nurses	\$130,000
Supplement 2nd Year	\$130,000
National Boards	\$25,000
Student Chromebooks	\$300,000
Curriculum Resources	\$170,000
Non-Payroll	\$4,360,168
Subtotal	\$16,986,584

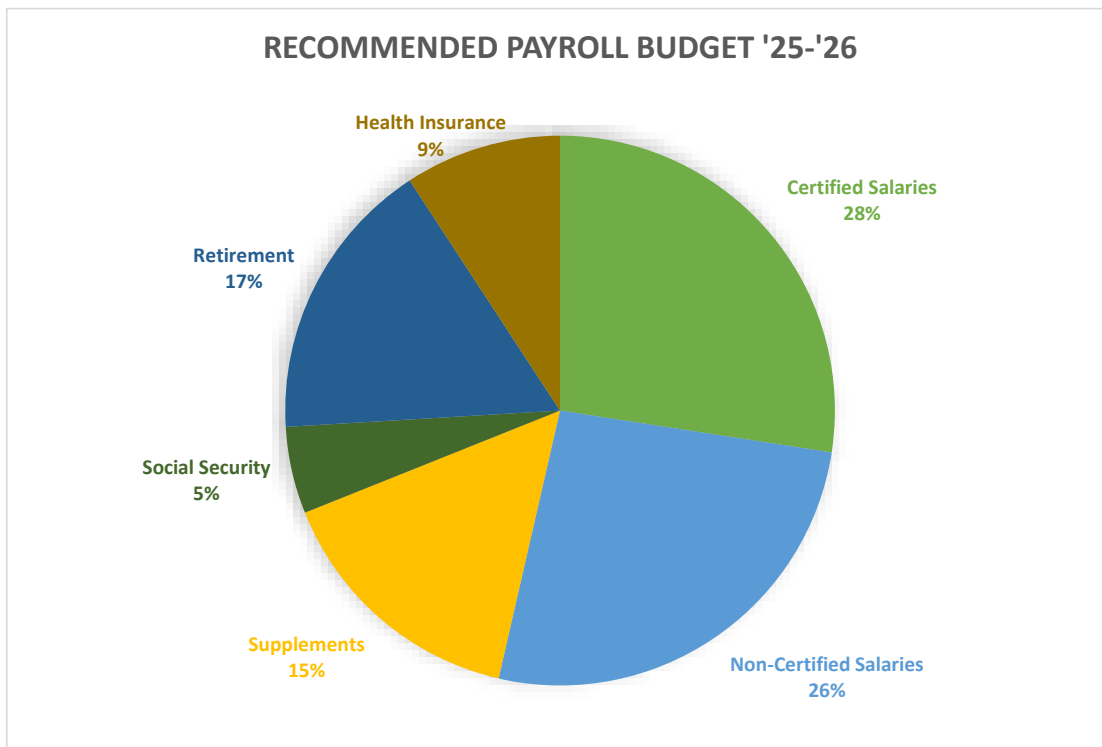


LOCAL FUND 2 PAYROLL

Salary 3% Increase	FICA & Retirement 1% Increase	Health 5% Increase		
\$9,199,605	\$2,999,485	\$1,378,275	\$13,577,365	SUBTOTAL
\$269,000	\$87,936	\$0	\$356,936	Overage on State Fund
\$46,250	\$3,538	\$0	\$49,788	Local Subs
\$199,000	\$0	\$0	\$199,000	Coaching Supplements
\$30,900	\$10,101	\$0	\$41,001	Mentor Pay
(\$1,381,736)	(\$451,689)	(\$259,250)	(\$2,092,675)	Less 30.5 Positions
\$8,363,019	\$2,649,371	\$1,119,025	\$12,131,415	GRAND TOTAL



	Actual Prior Year	Projected Current Year	Recommended Payroll Budget '25-'26
Certified Salaries	\$4,539,759	\$4,485,110	\$3,329,129
Non-Certified Salaries	\$3,247,229	\$3,242,835	\$3,172,805
Supplements	\$1,699,681	\$1,780,166	\$1,861,086
Social Security	\$693,953	\$698,570	\$619,996
Retirement	\$2,058,532	\$2,175,349	\$2,029,374
Health Insurance	\$1,095,341	\$1,227,974	\$1,119,025
	\$ 13,334,494	\$ 13,610,004	\$ 12,131,415

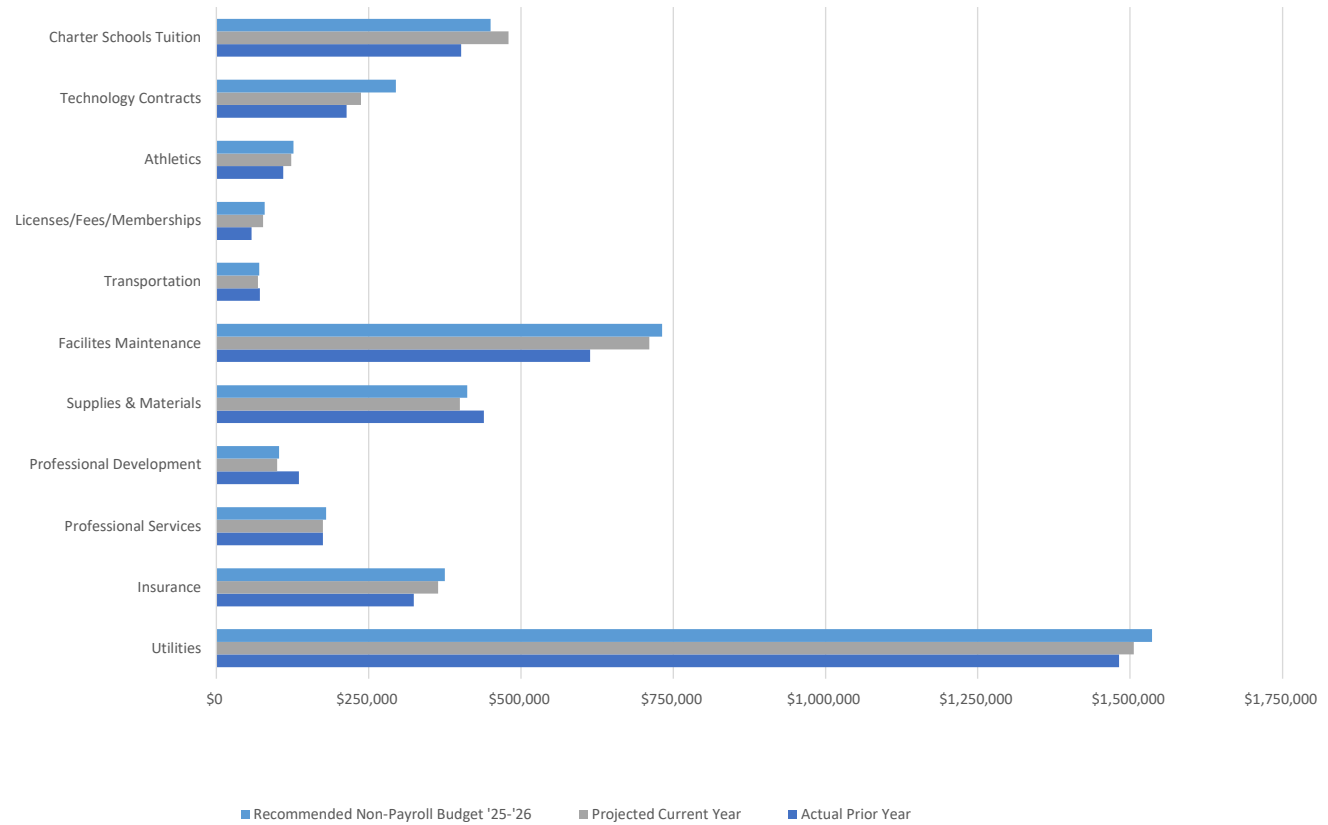




	Actual Prior Year	Projected Current Year	Recommended Non-Payroll Budget '25-'26
Utilities	\$1,481,814	\$1,506,000	\$1,536,120
Insurance	\$324,158	\$364,214	\$375,140
Professional Services	\$174,993	\$175,000	\$180,250
Professional Development	\$135,787	\$100,000	\$103,000
Supplies & Materials	\$439,402	\$400,000	\$412,000
Facilities Maintenance	\$613,867	\$710,780	\$732,103
Transportation	\$71,803	\$68,500	\$70,555
Licenses/Fees/Memberships	\$58,043	\$77,000	\$79,310
Athletics	\$110,153	\$123,000	\$126,690
Technology Contracts	\$214,190	\$237,457	\$295,000
Charter Schools Tuition	\$401,786	\$480,000	\$450,000
	\$ 4,025,997	\$ 4,241,951	\$ 4,360,168



Recommended Non-Payroll Budget '25-'26



2 Fire Alarm Panel Replacements	140,000
Air Cond.@ GV & Bethel	4,000,000
Band / Art Program Equipment	40,000
Cafeteria Tables	18,000
Carpet & Tile Replacement	45,000
Custodial Floor Equipment	25,000
Door Replacement	20,000
Electrical Upgrades for Cove Creek/ BR/Mabel	250,000
Fuel Oil Tank Replacement @ CC	100,000
Furniture / Equipment	70,000
Generator @ Maintenance Shop	80,000
Gym Floor Screening and Recoating	25,000
HVAC Sewer Pump Replacement	25,000
Pavement Repair	80,000
Replace Kitchen/Cafeteria Equipment	75,000
Roof Maintenance	100,000
Sidewalk Repair	80,000
Vehicle Replacement	150,000

5,323,000

Activity Bus Replacement	120,000
Air Cond.@ CC/Mabel/BR	7,000,000
Band / Art Program Equipment	40,000
Cafeteria Tables	18,000
Carpet & Tile Replacement	45,000
Custodial Floor Equipment	25,000
Door Replacement	20,000
Furniture / Equipment	70,000
Gym Floor Screening and Recoating	25,000
HVAC Sewer Pump Replacement	25,000
Pavement Repair	80,000
Replace Kitchen/Cafeteria Equipment	75,000
Roof Maintenance	100,000
Sidewalk Repair	80,000
Vehicle Replacement	150,000

7,873,000

Activity Bus Replacement	120,000
Band / Art Program Equipment	40,000
Cafeteria Tables	18,000
Carpet & Tile Replacement	45,000
Custodial Floor Equipment	25,000
Door Replacement	20,000
Furniture / Equipment	70,000
Gym Floor Screening and Recoating	25,000
HVAC Sewer Pump Replacement	25,000
Pavement Repair	80,000
Replace Kitchen/Cafeteria Equipment	75,000
Roof Maintenance	100,000
Sidewalk Repair	80,000
Vehicle Replacement	150,000
Parkway Addition	7,000,000
	7,873,000

Activity Bus Replacement	120,000
Band / Art Program Equipment	40,000
Cafeteria Tables	18,000
Carpet & Tile Replacement	45,000
Custodial Floor Equipment	25,000
Door Replacement	20,000
Furniture / Equipment	70,000
Gym Floor Screening and Recoating	25,000
HVAC Sewer Pump Replacement	25,000
Pavement Repair	80,000
Replace Kitchen/Cafeteria Equipment	75,000
Roof Maintenance	100,000
Sidewalk Repair	80,000
Vehicle Replacement	150,000
Upgrade Central Exhausts @ Bus Garage	50,000
Add Lift for Service Vehicles	25,000
Replace Dump Truck	100,000
	1,048,000

Activity Bus Replacement	120,000
Band / Art Program Equipment	40,000
Cafeteria Tables	18,000
Carpet & Tile Replacement	45,000
Custodial Floor Equipment	25,000
Door Replacement	20,000
Furniture / Equipment	70,000
Gym Floor Screening and Recoating	25,000
HVAC Sewer Pump Replacement	25,000
Pavement Repair	80,000
Replace Kitchen/Cafeteria Equipment	75,000
Roof Maintenance	100,000
Sidewalk Repair	80,000
Vehicle Replacement	150,000

873,000

Activity Bus Replacement	120,000
Band / Art Program Equipment	40,000
Cafeteria Tables	18,000
Carpet & Tile Replacement	45,000
Custodial Floor Equipment	25,000
Door Replacement	20,000
Furniture / Equipment	70,000
Gym Floor Screening and Recoating	25,000
HVAC Sewer Pump Replacement	25,000
Pavement Repair	80,000
Replace Kitchen/Cafeteria Equipment	75,000
Roof Maintenance	100,000
Sidewalk Repair	80,000
Vehicle Replacement	150,000
Hardin Park Design	750,000

1,623,000

Activity Bus Replacement	120,000
Band / Art Program Equipment	40,000
Cafeteria Tables	18,000
Carpet & Tile Replacement	45,000
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Radio Infrastructure Update

While the public safety radio infrastructure has been a long-term project, it is with pleasure that we are able to report significant progress over the past year. This summary will provide the current status of the overall project and plans moving forward. For clarification, VIPER stands for Voice Interoperability Plan for Emergency Responders and is the North Carolina Statewide 700/800Mhz public safety radio network. Engineered Towered Solutions (ETS) is the state contractor for tower construction and provided the additional updates under the ETS section of each site.

As this project has been ongoing in some form since well before my time with the County, I feel it prudent to share some highlights of the history of this project. This document does not intend to serve as a comprehensive review and as such I will be happy to provide answers to specific questions at the budget retreat.

Pre-September 2018

- Jeff Virginia and Dr. Marvin Hoffman worked on a plan to simulcast a 5-channel 5-site VHF system in the County incorporating both current and new sites.
 - o No formal real estate conversations were had regarding site selection or availability
 - o No formal engagement of the FCC had occurred to determine if this was even possible

September 2018 – March 2020

- Reviewed current progress and began conducting proof of concept of the study presented by Dr. Hoffman
- During the time a transition was made from using Dr. Hoffman as a consultant to a subject matter expert on tower and system construction, 10-18 Consulting
- It was realized unfortunately during proof of concept that the solution presented in the study wasn't going to work for the following reasons:
 - o The coverage maps were not representative of geography and its challenges
 - o VHF spectrum availability showed no feasibility in getting the frequency pairs necessary to license such a system
 - o The real estate acquisition process was extremely difficult in that the site had to have the right characteristics and a willing landowner

March 2020 – July 2021

- March 2020 marked a significant change in the project as we had to reevaluate the total scope of the project, expected outcomes, and realistic budget estimates
- The COVID-19 project ceased the majority of progress for well over a year as regulatory processes all but stopped along with private sector impacts



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- We did get the first ever inspections and mapping of the towers at Rich Mtn and the Comm Center done and remediated concerns as a result of that inspection
- Staff focus also was divided as we supported pandemic response including PPE acquisition, site support, and in Winter 2020 vaccination site operations

July 2021 – Present

- Transitioned concept of operations to Primary VIPER with a VHF outbound paging system. This will require 6 sites, 2 of which are existing sites
- Site evaluation and acquisition took extensive time with several sites in the Foscoe and Meat Camp areas all being evaluated and denied for various reasons.
- 5 sites for the system with only one site currently not fully secured but well into the process with a favorable outcome expected based on information currently available. A deeper description on the current status of the sites and system is below.
 - o Rich Mountain
 - o Buckeye
 - o Sampson
 - o Powderhorn
 - o Transfer Station
 - o Foscoe/Seven Devil's area (under negotiation)
- A planning meeting with NCSHP VIPER on February 6th showed significant progress as the sites and channel amounts were decided upon based on current system information

System-wide Status

- Meetings have progressed very well with a close symbiotic partnership moving forward as the VIPER team has agreed to take over maintenance and operations of a huge portion of the system once constructed saving several thousand dollars a year in maintenance and contract cost
- The system will have 12 channels (22 talk paths with TDMA enabled) which includes all current capacity and room for continued growth
- VHF equipment that will be remaining in service for paging purposes has been replaced with new equipment
- Consoles and consolettes have been upgraded to accept the system changes
- The Fire Commission's Communications sub-committee is meeting regularly to discuss what a final operations picture looks like
- Testing of a better VHF paging outbound-only paging option is being tested this year
- Review of a back-up VHF system utilizing existing licenses is being done this year. The system will have the same limitations of the current VHF system but will be a valuable backup if the primary has a failure



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Communications Center (VHF/VIPER)

- The communications center's radios have been upgraded to include the rack-mounted radios and portables used as our required back-up
- The console replacement is complete
- The integration of our consoles with VIPER in addition to going on the State's ESINet for 911 phones allows for a fully remote and redundant option for our communications center operations

Buckeye Knob (VHF/VIPER)

- As of February 6th, ETS has been engaged to do the tower study requirements for the addition of two antennas and a microwave dish. This will determine any potential tower upgrade requirements

Rich Mountain (VHF/VIPER)

- The tower is being redesigned to accommodate NC SHP moving to our site
 - o This "drop and swap" will be on a 199' tower allowing for further propagation, and most importantly more real estate on the tower for microwave dishes to integrate the system with the Statewide network infrastructure
- Remediation for NEPA requirements is currently being accomplished by the NC Forest Service at no cost to the County
- Final tower loading is being established with the first meeting completed February 6th and final decisions hopefully done by February 16th. The biggest concern is who is staying on the current tower which is not being taken down. These remaining tenets will probably be by UNC Health-Appalachian, the Watauga County HAM club, and the Watauga County Schools system.

ETS Update:

FAA = complete; 2023-ASO-12787-OE; issued 6/27/2023 expires 12/27/2024

NEPA = complete; issued 4/15/2023

FCC/ASR = complete; File Number A1251042 Registration number 1327000

CD's = In Progress; pending final tower loading; ETS issuing Rev B preliminary construction drawings

Construction Staking - On Hold; Tentatively forecasted for end of Q1; pending your notice to proceed with scheduling

Sampson (VIPER)

- This site went live in late Spring 2022 with significant coverage improvements in the southern area of Watauga County, specifically the Aho community, Blue Ridge Mountain Club, Sampson, and other areas along that corridor



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- Additions to this site will be a revised microwave path to increase redundancy and include the system in the simulcast network directly
- Additional channels will be added in accordance with VIPER specifications

Powderhorn Mountain (VIPER)

- This site was donated by the Powderhorn POA to Stewart Simmons Fire Department for the purpose of constructing a tower
- Construction approval was delayed by the FCC (staffing issues, no biologist)
- This site is dependent upon the Transfer Station being completed for simulcast operations but there is also a possibility of a microwave path to the Sampson site, this is being evaluated closer by VIPER as they need to determine final tree height in the area of the Blue Ridge Parkway.
- This site has a revenue potential through leasing space to a cell phone provider. This possibility will be further explored as construction continues and the fiber line is installed by Blue Ridge/SkyLine

ETS Update:

FAA = complete; 2022-ASO-15257-OE; issued 6/2/2023 expires 12/2/2024

NEPA = complete; issued 11/11/2022

Environmental Assessment = complete; issued 6/30/2023

FCC/ASR = In Progress; Application A1247896 "Env. Certification" Status

- ETS was informed that the FCC appears to have hired a biologist in order for this application to proceed.

CD's = Rev 0 issued 12/23/2022

Construction Staking – On Hold; Tentatively forecasted for end of Q1; pending your notice to proceed with scheduling

Transfer Station (VIPER)

- This site is being evaluated as the microwave hub for a simulcasted system and coverage for Meat Camp/Southern Boone/Deep Gap
- This site would be constructed at the top of the bike park, neighboring with existing towers
- Access to the site is via Hidden Pond Rd via a negotiated easement

ETS Update:

FAA = complete; 2023-ASO-405-OE; issued 10/2/2023 expires 4/2/2025

NEPA = complete; issued 12/27/2023

FCC/ASR = In Progress; Application A1273052 "National Notice" Status

- Local public notice completed; in "National Notice" status meaning FCC 180 day clock has started; comments and petitions to deny are due 30 days after public notice is issued, occasionally these take up to 45 days. Any comments and petitions extend the timeline up to 180 days. Forecasting for approval in March.



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CD's = On Hold; pending final tower loading
Construction Staking – On Hold; Tentatively forecasted for end of Q1; pending your notice to proceed with scheduling

Foscoe/Seven Devils (VIPER)

- This site has moved to a new location based on real estate needs and is being reviewed by engineers
- This location is moving forward and we are in due diligence for initial approvals prior to requesting an approved lease to avoid undue use of funds.

ETS Update:

FAA = On Hold; pending approval to proceed with filing
NEPA = In Progress; Forecasting for (120) days or 3 months. ETS will provide regular updates to forecast.
FCC/ASR = On Hold; pending NEPA to proceed
CD's = On Hold
Construction Staking – On Hold; Tentatively forecasted for end of Q2; pending other deliverables and notice to proceed with scheduling

As an example of a finished site, this is the Sampson Site:



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