

REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION

HENDERSON COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

MEETING DATE: June 15, 2023

SUBJECT: Continued Discussion on 2045 Comprehensive Plan Goals

PRESENTER: Autumn Radcliff, Planning Director

ATTACHMENTS: 1. 2045 Comprehensive Plan Goals

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

The Planning Board Chair has requested that the Board discuss the current 2045 Comprehensive Plan Goals edits made by the Board of Commissioners and discuss if any changes should be reconsidered by the Board of Commissioners. The goals are attached for reference.

As reminder, the Comprehensive Plan is different from a land use plan in the goals and action steps pertaining to multiple County departments and creates a vision for the County that goes beyond land use. The recommendations and action steps are suggested things to do to accomplish that goal.

BOARD ACTION:

The Planning Board Chair has requested the Board to review and discuss the 2045 Comprehensive Plan Goals edits and make any necessary recommendation to the Board of Commissioners.

Suggested Motion: No motion suggested.

GOAL 1: COORDINATE DEVELOPMENT NEAR EXISTING COMMUNITY ANCHORS

RECOMMENDATIONS

Rec 1.1: Grow ~~intentionally~~ where infrastructure and services exist, in and around municipalities, community investments, and anchors.

- A: Coordinate with municipalities and other service providers to update the Utility Service Area (USA) and utility service agreements to best fit the Future Land Use Map and municipal land use plans.
- B: Encourage high ~~er~~-density residential developments to be located within the USA.
- C: Locate commercial and residential growth near community anchors (i.e. Neighborhood Anchors and Community Centers on the FLU Map).
- D: Utilize ~~appropriate~~ tools ~~such as utility provision, increased density or other incentives, zoning overlays, and FLU consistency statements~~ to encourage growth in-line with the Future Land Use Map.
- ~~E: Continue density bonuses for conservation subdivisions with access to water and sewer and evaluate additional density bonuses for the incorporation of workforce housing in new developments.~~

- ~~F: Develop an overlay district within the Edneyville Sewer service area prior to construction. This overlay would limit uses that are incompatible with the existing rural, agricultural area.~~
- ~~G: Preserve a portion of Edneyville Sewer capacity for industrial and agriculture uses.~~
- H: Develop a ~~mechanism that could joint overlay district with the Town of Laurel Park and the City of Hendersonville for the Ecusta Rail Trail.~~
 - ~~• This overlay could~~ expand allowable uses that are compatible with the ~~Ecusta Rail Trail.~~ ~~It may also include additional design criteria for properties adjacent to the trail.~~
- I: Ensure zoning districts around Neighborhood Anchors and Community Centers allow, by right, consistent land uses.

Rec 1.2: Use available zoning tools to encourage context-appropriate rural businesses.

- A: Continue to allow for administrative approval for small to medium-scale uses that meet basic standards in rural areas (e.g. AG on FLU).
- B: Modify thresholds for administrative approval ~~versus conditional zoning or special use permit~~ requirements for certain types or sizes of new nonresidential uses.
- C: Collaborate with the Henderson County Partnership for Economic Development to encourage ~~redevelopment~~ of underutilized industrial and/or commercial properties.
- D: The size and intensity of uses in Neighborhood Anchors should be evaluated to maintain the local business economy.

GOAL 2: PROTECT AND CONSERVE RURAL CHARACTER AND AGRICULTURE

RECOMMENDATIONS

Rec 2.1: Support agriculture as an economic driver.

- A: Continue to collaborate with Agribusiness Henderson County (AgHC) on supporting existing agriculture ~~and land use planning efforts related to agriculture, economic development and land use.~~
- B: Recruit and prepare the next generation of farmers through the 4-H and Future Farmers of America (FFA) program ~~and in~~ coordination with Henderson County Schools and Blue Ridge Community College.
- ~~• Build on middle school farm field trips and exposure to careers in agriculture~~
 - ~~• Support and improve FFA programs in high schools~~
 - ~~• Support Blue Ridge Community College programs including internships~~
 - ~~• Connect young farmers to jobs and agricultural leases~~
- C: Leverage partnership with Blue Ridge Community College to advance workforce development assets and respond to specific agri-business needs.
- D: Assist the three government-supported agricultural entities (AgHC, Henderson County Soil & Water Conservation District, and NC Cooperative Extension) on joint issues and encourage collaboration.
- E: Continue to allow for a flexible approach to rural business **development**.
- ~~• Encouraging small businesses in rural areas can indirectly support agriculture by allowing non-farm income—~~
- F: ~~Reduce~~ Identify and address barriers to integration, extension, and diversification of agribusiness and agritourism (i.e. packing facilities, processing, value-added production, distribution, retail).
- G: Study the creation of an Agricultural Visitor Center and incorporated offices for agricultural related agencies.
- ~~• This could include a visitors center with public restrooms, a place for events, or community meetings Potentially could allow for the relocation of the Cooperative Extension Office or other agricultural related agencies.—~~
- H: Collaborate with the NC Cooperative Extension and other organizations to connect current and future farmers to federal ~~and State~~ agricultural funding programs ~~like the USDA's Farm Service Agency and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture. A full list of potential grant and loan programs are listed within the Supplemental Information Document.~~
- ~~I: Work with the NC cooperative Extension and other organizations to help farmers to negotiate lease agreements that include the right of first refusal.~~

Rec 2.2: Preserve existing farmland.

- A: Encourage enrollment in Present Use Value (PUV) and Voluntary Agricultural District (VAD) programs.
- B: ~~Consider the creation of~~ Formulate a plan to create a Voluntary Farmland Preservation Program to purchase farmland development rights and establish agricultural conservation easements.
- ~~C: Study potential mechanisms for transfer of development rights program to allow for transfer of density away from agricultural and natural resource areas to designated receiving areas.~~
- D: Study the creation of a County-wide Farmland Mapping & Monitoring Program. (Term listed in Glossary)
- ~~E: Consider applying the County Voluntary Agricultural District to all Present Use Value enrolled farms to further protect farmland from development pressure.~~

Rec 2.3: ~~Reduce conflict~~ Promote cooperation between existing agriculture and new residential development.

- A: Discourage rezonings for higher density residential subdivisions outside the defined Utility Service Area (USA) and in the Agricultural/Rural (AR) area identified on the Future Land Use Map.
- B: ~~Continue to require and enforce the Farmland Preservation District Setback. This requires~~ Review the requirement for a 100 foot setback for all buildings from any Voluntary Agricultural District (VAD).

C: Consider zoning updates to reduce development pressure in agricultural areas.

- ~~• This could include implementing a new district that reduces residential density and/or the creation of a rural cluster option in the Land Development Code (LDC) that allows for smaller setbacks, building spacing, and innovative design.~~

Rec 2.4: ~~Incentivize~~ Encourage non-farm development outside of agricultural areas.

- A: ~~Continue to~~ provide incentives for revitalizing existing commercial and industrial sites through economic development ventures.
- B: ~~Focus on higher density housing in non farm development areas closer to the city to reduce sprawl, provide affordable housing for workforce and relieve pressure on roads.~~
- C: Encourage industrial growth in areas away from large concentrations of farmland and agricultural operations.
- D: Carefully evaluate potential utility extensions that could impact large concentrations of productive farmland.
- Hold community meetings with targeted input from farmers and landowners when planning for future growth and utility provision ~~Modify plans for water and sewer line locations, size and access policies accordingly~~

Rec 2.5: Utilize zoning tools to help conserve rural character.

- A: Study existing rural character and identify defining elements that can be modeled.
- B: ~~Require lighting mitigation standards for all new commercial and industrial developments within proximity to an existing residential area.~~

- C: Work with developers to strategically locate required open space ~~to increase visual compatibility.~~
- D: ~~Consider requiring robust~~ Clarify buffers ~~or “green belts”~~ between commercial development and residential and between residential develop- ment and farmland.

~~consider requiring geotechnical review of developments with slope greater than 40%.~~

- E: Study the creation of guidelines for a ~~Conservation Overlay District~~ development of ~~all County~~ public lands.

- F: ~~Consider increasing the open space requirements when developing within a Farmland Preservation District.~~

- G: Consider incentivizing open space conservation in new industrial developments of a certain size and where appropriate.

- H: Consolidate steep slope requirements within the Land Development Code for simplification. ~~transparency.~~

- I: Consider the creation of a voluntary program with a land conservancy fund to purchase development rights and establish conservation easements on important natural lands and other sensitive environmental habitats.

GOAL 3: IMPROVE RESILIENCY OF THE NATURAL AND BUILT ENVIRONMENTS

RECOMMENDATIONS

Rec 3.1: Protect and conserve sensitive environmental habitats, steep slopes, and ridge tops.

- A: ~~Strengthen~~ Encourage conservation subdivision design in areas with sensitive environmental resources.
- B: Consider allowing for administrative approval for conservation subdivisions that meet certain criteria ~~as defined in the Land Development Code.~~
- C: ~~Implement minimum open space requirements and prioritize~~ Encourage the reservation of sensitive natural resources as open space in new development.
- D: ~~Limit development on steep slopes and mountain ridges by lowering the slope thresh- old for density reductions and~~

Rec 3.2: Improve the resiliency of natural areas and critical assets against hazards.

- A: ~~Collaborate~~ In collaboration with existing organizations, ~~study how~~ to protect sensitive habitats, farmland, and land adjacent to creeks and rivers throughout Henderson County.
- B: Coordinate efforts between Emergency Services and the Planning Department regarding emergency response and critical infrastructure.
- C: Regularly review implementation progress and update the Hazard Mitigation Plan to strengthen emergency management and response in the County.
- D: Ensure ~~federally required emergency- service regulations are reflected in the the~~ Land Development Code is consistent with State and Federal regulations.

- E: ~~Consider lowering the threshold for required additional ingress/egress for developments and requiring reasonable connection between developments.~~
- F: ~~Protect critical infrastructure facilities, especially utility and emergency facilities through facility upgrades and site design.~~
- G: ~~Develop ingress/egress emergency plans for areas that may become inaccessible if land slides occur.~~
- H: ~~Develop a flood early warning system for areas that may become inaccessible if roadways are flooded.~~
- I: ~~Continue to w~~ork with local, state, and federal land managers to develop plans for wildfire management, especially in interface areas. (See also Rec 3.3 F)
- J: ~~Continue to w~~ork with the community to increase emergency preparedness awareness and educate the community regarding existing response plans.

Rec 3.3: Decrease the potential exposure to hazards by managing future development

- A: Within new subdivisions consider the reservation of open space and conservation areas in and around areas with a high potential for landslides.
 - Maps of past debris flow and area of potential debris flow pathways are maintained by the NC dEQ See landslidesncgs.com for more information.
- B: Use ~~available existing~~ vulnerability and risk assessment ~~s tools (such as the regional Land of Sky vulnerability and risk assessment)~~ to guide development design and rezoning

decisions.

- C: Discourage the amount of land disturbed in steep slope developments, including construction of roads, as well as ~~decrease~~ density of development.
- D: Continue to limit fill in floodplains unless additional standards are met.
- E: Utilize the fire, building, and land development codes to mitigate risk of fire hazards in areas with limited access.
- F: Encourage wildfire mitigation principles in new developments located in the Wildland Urban interface including:
 - design recreation space and access roads to double as firebreaks
 - design each home site to have defined defensible space
 - Encourage fire resistant building design and provide defensible space around clustered development
- G: Encourage best practice design standards for new construction within the Wildland Urban Interface.
- H: Encourage additional street trees within new developments to enhance the environmental benefits of the requirement.

Rec 3.4: Improve stormwater management strategies and water quality protections.

- A: ~~+~~ Continue to limit built-upon area within the watersupply watersheds and provide standards for storm- water management.
- B: Monitor water quality trends to determine effectiveness of existing regulations and other trends.

C: Consider additional site development standards to reduce stormwater and erosion impacts of new ~~minor and~~ major subdivisions.

- These could include changes to minimum disturbance thresholds that require stormwater devices or adjusting impervious surface lot coverage maximums.

D: Identify regulatory barriers and consider incentives for green infrastructure projects, which can lessen stress on natural systems.

GOAL 4: PRIORITIZE MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS AND CONNECTIVITY.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Rec 4.1: Address traffic and road maintenance priorities.

- A: Advocate for the County's transportation priorities at the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (FBRMPO) board meetings regarding project prioritization, roadway design, and safety.
- B: Coordinate with NCDOT and municipalities via the Henderson County Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC).
- C: Advocate for the ~~NCDOT French Broad River MPO~~ to update the Comprehensive Transportation Plan, which was adopted in 2008, and focus improvements on active transportation options and transit.
- D: Collaborate with NCDOT and the French Broad River MPO to develop a county-wide Rural Roadway Design Manual to provide clear recommendations to NCDOT and developers for expanding and improving the transportation network throughout the County.

Rec 4.2: Adopt policies and regulations that reduce or mitigate impacts of new development.

- A: Encourage adequate roadway connectivity with appropriate access (ingress and egress) and limited dead ends/cul-de-sacs in new subdivisions.
- B: Consider reducing Henderson County's Traffic Impact Study (TIS) threshold for developments located along specific road classifications.
- C: ~~Create access management standards for private roads and driveways in Henderson County, limiting the number of curb cuts on specific road classifications.~~
- D: Consider amending the Land Development Code to allow for integration of residential and commercial uses to allow for shorter travel time between destinations.
- E: Consider additional sidewalk/trail connections for new commercial developments, especially when adjacent to an existing trail.
- F: ~~Consider requiring~~ Encourage connections between existing and new commercial developments to reduce curb cuts and make it easier to access the businesses.

Rec 4.3: ~~Ensure that~~ Promote the development of Henderson County's transportation system in ways that benefits the community.

- A: Continue to seek grant funding (through the French Broad River MPO and other sources) for corridor studies along primary roadways throughout the County.
- B: Establish a vision for significant roadway corridors and its surrounding land use, with input from the community they serve.

- C: Identify creative solutions for roadway congestion and safety during seasonal peak demand and at public schools.
- D: Support NCDOT with the on-going ~~corridor~~ studies for ~~major roadways US-64~~.
- E: ~~Address~~ Collaborate through the TAC and the NCDOT on intersections with safety and congestion issues in the County.
- F: Communicate the desire to NCDOT for prioritization of continuous traffic flow ~~to allow for alongside~~ safer speeds, ~~and~~ EMS access, ~~sustainability, and aesthetics~~ in strategic rural intersections ~~during high traffic seasons~~.
- G: Encourage NCDOT to accept and maintain all public subdivision roads and drainage infrastructure which were dedicated, recorded, approved or installed prior to October 1, 1975, without requiring the private property owners who adjoin the improvement to pay the costs of bringing them up to current NCDOT standards.

Rec 4.4: Improve active transportation options (i.e. transit, sidewalks, and bicycle facilities) in the County.

- A: Identify opportunities to incorporate transit, cycling, and pedestrian facilities into roadway upgrades.
- B: ~~Advocate for~~ Encourage NCDOT where appropriate to install ~~wide, buffered multiuse~~ paths along key roadways, giving people an option for bicycle and pedestrian commuting and recreational use when applicable ~~and encourage~~ NCDOT to install appropriate signage for bicyclists to follow local traffic laws.
- C: Conduct studies of the transportation network surrounding County schools to identify deficiencies in safety and access.

- D: Identify safe cycling routes and create ~~and distribute~~ maps to be made available to community members and visitors ~~and update as needed~~.
- E: Support the State Legislature to improve solutions for the funding, construction, and maintenance of bike, public transit, and pedestrian infrastructure.
- F: Work with NCDOT and the municipalities to create guidance for businesses that want to connect to a ~~greenway~~ identified in the Greenway Master Plan.
 - ~~Ensure~~ Advocate for safety of pedestrians and bicyclists through parking lots and via roadway access.
 - Encourage adjacent businesses to develop connections along existing trails.

Rec 4.5: Maintain Apple Country Public Transit's service levels and invest in infrastructure to support transit.

- A: Conduct a transit feasibility study to identify gaps in transit service, particularly to schools, large employers, and ~~greenway~~ and recreation facilities ~~as needed~~.
- B: Use the Future Land Use Map to identify potential stops along transit routes.
- C: Support higher density housing developments along transit routes.
- D: ~~Consider increasing the percentage of Henderson County's population living~~ Consider directing development to within 3/4 mile of the fixed-route transit system by extending the distance of the routes, ~~and~~ adding new routes, ~~as well as by supporting denser housing~~.
- E: Continue to work with regional partners and explore the concept of a Regional Transit Authority (RTA) that would focus on regional transit service while preserving local control of existing systems.

- F: Explore mechanisms to provide express routes to connect Hendersonville to Asheville and other destinations in Buncombe, Madison, and Haywood County, while focusing on regional mobility management, employee training, maintenance, and funding administration.
- G: ~~Create~~ Explore possible connections between transit and greenways to help reduce traffic and vehicle miles traveled.
- H: Continue to improve existing bus stops through amenities like benches and shelters.
- I: Explore solutions to solve the garbage collection issue at bus stops.
- J: Collaborate with the City of Hendersonville on a joint planning effort for a more robust transfer station in downtown Hendersonville.
- K: Encourage diversification of the Henderson County vehicle fleet, including transit buses, for optimum resiliency and to reduce costs of operations.

Rec 4.6: Complete the trail and greenway network.

- A: Implement the Greenway Master Plan's policy to incorporate the use of existing and future sewer utility easements for public use greenways.
- B: Work with the ~~City~~ municipalities, employers, nonprofits, and schools to provide additional amenities for existing greenways and trails (i.e. parking, benches, lighting, restrooms, water fountains, bike repair stations, mile markers, and educational signage).
- C: Coordinate with partners to advance, complete, and maintain the entire 19 miles of

the Ecusta Rail Trail.

- D: Coordinate with NCDOT to ensure that all Ecusta Rail Trail roadway crossings follow safety standards for vehicles and pedestrians, are highly visible for drivers, and have appropriate signage.
- E: Coordinate with the Rail Trail Advisory Committee, Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), Planning Board, and Recreation Advisory Board on priority greenway implementation.
- F: Prioritize planning and design for greenway segments to connect existing trails.
- G: Incorporate spurs and short connections where feasible to hospitals and County-owned properties, like ~~schools and~~ parks, into greenway planning.
- H: Update the Henderson County Greenway Master Plan to reflect current progress, new initiatives, updated funding opportunities, and tentative community partners.
- I: ~~Ensure~~ Prioritize the design of ~~that~~ new trails-are to be adequately designed as-resilient and withstand extreme weather events, as well as design for stormwater best management practices (BMPs), when cost effective, and other flood prevention strategies.
- J: Appropriate hydraulic modeling should be performed whenever a greenway is to be constructed in a floodplain.
- K: Create a user-friendly, online method for people to report maintenance issues on County-maintained greenways.
 - This could be done via a smart phone application, a specific telephone line, or an email address dedicated to the greenway system.

Rec 4.7: Support education and encourage activities related to bicycling.

- A: Encourage skills clinics that teach novice riders how to ride safely and efficiently when riding alone or in groups.
- B: Encourage bicycle ~~rides~~ riding along designated rural routes in Henderson County and utilization of the Ecusta Rail Trail and other greenways.

GOAL 5: CREATE A RELIABLE, CONNECTED UTILITY AND COMMUNICATION NETWORK.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Rec 5.1: Improve communications infrastructure.

- A: ~~Strive to improve~~ ~~Improve~~ the County's Broadband Availability Index ranking per the NC Broadband Infrastructure Office.
- B: Pursue the extension of broadband Internet, especially trunk-line improvements or extensions between major population centers, including improvements along I-26.
- C: Continue participation in broadband planning programs. Work with the State to receive and distribute funding for building broadband infrastructure grants, such as the Completing Access to Broadband Grant Program **and others.**
- D: Continue County participation in the BAND-NC grant program to complete the county-wide

digital inclusion plan.

- E: ~~Implement~~ **Consider implementation of** the Henderson County Broadband Taskforce's recommendations concerning the most effective and legal role for Henderson County to take in assisting and promoting improvements and growth of broadband infrastructure.

Rec 5.2: Locate utilities to maximize efficiency of services, minimize cost of service, and minimize impacts on the natural environment.

- A: Initiate and conduct utility planning efforts that align with land use policies and community goals.
- B: Coordinate with local governments and regional entities to address service issues and secure long-term water and sewer capacity.
- C: Coordinate targeted utility and service enhancements within the defined Utility Service Area.
- D: Discuss with Henderson County Schools regarding alignment of future school planning with water and sewer infrastructure planning.

Rec 5.3: Use utilities to incentivize economic development and conservation opportunities.

- A: County staff and elected officials should coordinate with partners to plan for effective site readiness for specific economic development projects.
- B: ~~Reserve a percentage of new sewer infrastructure capacity for economic development. Recalculate/reaffirm the percentage on an annual basis based on projection versus actual demand.~~
- C: Encourage conservation subdivision design for all new major residential subdivisions of a certain size ~~residential growth~~ in unincorporated areas tied to sewer infrastructure.

Rec 5.4: Take a leadership role in sewer and water planning by helping to foster intergovernmental cooperation.

- A: Recommend a water and sewer management structure including County and municipal participation to ~~guide~~ **manage** growth within the entire County.
- B: ~~Conduct interchange~~ **Coordinate** transportation studies with the City to evaluate and prioritize development potential ~~of key interchanges~~ for future commercial and/or **industrial** development.
- C: ~~Begin-Encourage~~ the development of a ~~three-, five or ten- year~~ capital improvement program and capital reserve fund to help implement planned investments in sewer infrastructure and other services.
- D: ~~The Environmental Health Department should identify areas of septic failure, areas where future septic systems may fail, and address these through existing remediation programs and by leveraging state and federal grants.~~

GOAL 6: STIMULATE INNOVATIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, AND LOCAL BUSINESSES.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Rec 6.1: Increase high-wage employment and foster growth in the local tax base.

- A: Using the Future Land Use Map, identify and publicize key sites for diverse **industrial** development in cooperation with The Partnership.
- B: Encourage **rezonings** to commercial and **industrial** zoning districts in areas identified as Employment and Industry on the Future Land use Map.
- C: ~~Allow for~~ **Consider** small scale businesses ~~to easily~~ **development** in the Neighborhood Anchors to promote local spending.

Rec 6.2: Coordinate workforce education.

- A: Leverage partnership with **Blue Ridge Community College** to advance workforce development assets and respond to specific industry needs via curriculum updates and employer partnerships.
- B: Support **Blue Ridge Community College** in their mission to educate students for direct, local

employment, ~~including new industry like greenhouses and other high-skilled work.~~

Rec 6.3: Advance small businesses and entrepreneurs.

- A: Encourage development of office, retail and light industrial space through land use and zoning decisions.
- B: Prioritize expansion of small business infrastructure needs such as high-speed broadband.
- C: ~~Apply~~ Support the assets of Blue Ridge Community College ~~assets~~ to respond to industry, consumer trends, and emerging opportunities.

Rec 6.4: Facilitate placemaking efforts to reinforce community character and attract businesses and investment.

- A: Work with the Henderson County Tourism Development Authority (TDA) to develop a uniform signage style and place directional, gateway and/or historical signage within established community centers.
- B: Encourage NCDOT to improve the safety of intersections for pedestrians.
- C: ~~Encourage TDA and the City of Hendersonville to locate an outdoor amphitheater space.~~
- D: ~~Create a permanent shelter/farmers market space.~~

GOAL 7: DIVERSIFY HOUSING CHOICES AND INCREASE AVAILABILITY.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Rec 7.1: Increase housing in the Utility Service Area (USA).

- A: Encourage rezonings ~~to~~ for high density housing and mixed-use development within the USA.
 - Areas within the USA have access to transportation, utilities, and services. In addition, growth in these areas is less likely to create conflicts with agriculture and natural resources.
- B: To avoid conflict with agricultural areas and natural resources, major subdivisions should be located near defined centers and within the Infill and Transitional Areas as defined on the Future Land Use Map. (To be revisited)
- C: Allow for a variety of housing types, including condos, townhomes, ~~and~~ multi-family complexes, ~~and~~ manufactured housing, in the defined Utility Service Area.
- D: Re-evaluate standards for intermediate and maximum residential density within all zoning districts.
- E: Consider allowance for small-scale multi-family units (3-4 units) without a Special Use Permit if supplemental requirements are ~~design criteria~~ ~~is~~ met.

F: Eliminate the requirement of a Special Use Permit for developments with attached residential units within the USA and keep the existing Special Use Permit for areas outside the USA.

G: ~~Encourage subdivision design to aesthetically mirror rural surroundings by developing~~ Develop a rural cluster option in the Land Development Code (LDC) that allows for smaller setbacks, building spacing, and innovative layout design. ~~in exchange for preservation of open space and views.~~

H: Continue to provide a density bonus for conservation subdivisions.

I: Consider administrative approval for conservation subdivisions.

Rec 7.2: Encourage development of workforce affordable and inclusive housing.

~~A: Encourage developers to offer at least two lot size options and/or varied housing product types in major residential subdivisions.~~

B: Consider creating incentives ~~for the inclusion of affordable or workforce housing in new developments to~~ encourage the creation of workforce housing developments.

- Incentives could include a density bonus or reductions in site design requirements (i.e. amount of required open space).

~~C: Allow for cottage clusters (pocket neighborhoods) and for multi-family developments that meet affordability standards in certain zoning districts.~~

D: Allow for a variety of housing types and

mixed-use development at appropriate key locations along the Ecusta Rail Trail. ~~within the potential overlay district.~~

E: Support appropriately sized, affordable housing developments within rural, agricultural areas and residential zoning districts.

Rec 7.3: Support the ability to “age in place.”

A: Encourage age-sensitive design in all residential developments to appeal to a variety of residents.

B: Consider adjustments to the Land Development Code to allow for assisted living residences that meet supplemental standards and have water and sewer connections within the USA without a special use permit.

C: Provide option for administrative provision of a percent reduction in parking space requirements for retirement and/or age-targeted housing developments.

D: Consider accessibility for seniors when creating new recreation spaces.

E: Promote the “Village Network” model, similar to that of Saluda, among older populations.

- Saluda (SLIPNC) provides a model of a “Village Network” where neighbors help each other age in place.

F: Continue to allow for accessory dwelling units.

G: Partner with municipalities to study housing needs, disseminate information on housing options, and increase supply of affordable, workforce housing.

Rec 7.4: Locate workforce housing near jobs.

A: In accordance with guidance from the Future Land Use Map, support residential

development near employment areas and in and around commercial centers.

B: Coordinate with municipalities to jointly plan for areas near new employment areas that share municipal and County jurisdiction.

~~C: Educate the community regarding the North Carolina Migrant Housing Act that requires standards for living quarters.~~

D: Increase awareness of USDA Farm Labor Housing Direct Loans and Grants.

E: Support innovative housing solutions that serve seasonal and year-round farm workers.

F: Encourage opportunities for homeownership by continued partnership with the Housing Assistance Corporation and other agencies that help renters become homeowners.

- Support efforts for property acquisition by the Housing Assistance Corporation and others by engaging the business community and the public at large.

GOAL 8: PROMOTE HEALTHY LIVING, PUBLIC SAFETY, AND ACCESS TO EDUCATION.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Rec 8.1: Encourage healthy living by expanding access to parks, greenways,

and other recreational amenities.

- A: Plan for recreational needs of the communities in Henderson County.
- B: Address facilities and programming priorities, document ongoing maintenance needs, and provide benchmarking related to facilities and staffing within a master plan.
- C: Develop a multi-year capital improvement plan for park facilities that includes planning for major maintenance expenditures.
- D: Continue to support the development of all-inclusive playgrounds in the County.
- E: Develop a master plan for Jackson Park. The master plan should address connectivity, parking issues, facility enhancements, and involve a variety of user groups.
- F: Pursue grant funding and other funding sources for the replacement of playgrounds ~~at Etowah and East Flat Rock Park.~~
- G: Consider additional county-owned parks, including pocket parks, in areas of the County with under-served populations.
- H: Enhance **recreational** programming to address the needs of senior and disabled populations.
- I: Improve access to rivers for recreational purposes through partnerships ~~with RiverLink~~ and other stakeholders.
- J: Coordinate with municipalities, **Conserving Carolina**, the US Forest Service, the North Carolina Forest Service, the National Park Service, and the NC Wildlife Resources Commission, **et al.** to improve and increase access to existing hiking, camping, fishing, and additional recreational opportunities.
- K: Encourage new development to incorporate recreational needs into the **open space** design of new subdivisions.
- L: Encourage major subdivisions to provide pedestrian connections or provide easements to immediately adjacent greenway facilities.

M: Work with the Henderson County Tourism Development Authority to provide support for safe and sustainable recreational tourism.

N: Consider investment of a county-owned indoor and outdoor sports complex.

Rec 8.2: Improve and coordinate access to health services.

A: Coordinate with the County Health Department and non-profit partners to promote physical and emotional resiliency through the utilization of existing parks for physical and mental health programs.

B: When expanding public transit and paratransit services, consider connecting areas with medical services to residential areas for easier access.

C: Address substance misuse and mental health by utilizing the opioid litigation settlement funds to support programs and spread awareness of Strategy-Specific Resources for addiction recovery.

D: Consider creating a collaborative “Recovery Court” (also known as drug diversion court) in Henderson County for low-level offenses.

Rec 8.3: Expand access to healthy food.

A: Review zoning ordinances to facilitate grocery stores, farm stands and other commercial food retail establishments ~~in rural food deserts.~~

B: Increase local retailers’ awareness of the

North Carolina Healthy Food Retail Designation Program.

C: Study the creation of a farm-to-foodshare program, a farm-to-school program, or similar programs to connect local farms with ~~food insecure~~ residents and students.

D: Support and expand farmers markets in rural areas, either by introducing new traditional farmers markets or creating a mobile version.

E: Identify and work with partners ~~to establish an organization~~ that actively manages the aggregation, distribution, and marketing of local food products from a variety of sources including new and urban farms.

Rec 8.4: Provide high-quality public and emergency services.

A: Plan for expansion of public services, capital projects, and personnel, in proportion to increasing demand.

B: Incorporate emergency service access into planning decisions.

C: ~~Discourage~~ Encourage high-density growth in areas ~~not currently~~ closest to emergency services such as served by fire and police. ~~Substations should be considered for areas that have suburban densities.~~

D: Plan for mental health needs and encourage best practices during healthcare, public safety, and emergency response interactions.

E: Ensure efficient ~~and equitable~~ public service by providing information in other languages. Consider contracting an on-call interpreter firm to better serve non-English speaking community members.

Rec 8.5: Coordinate and support the school system.

A: Collaborate with the School Board to plan for capital needs as the County grows.

- B: Partner with nonprofits and other organizations to expand services for early childhood education including Head Start.
- C: Support programs that help ~~underserved~~ students stay in school.
- D: Assist Blue Ridge Community College to maintain low tuition costs for all students.
- E: Support Blue Ridge Community College to provide a variety of training courses focused on workforce readiness.

Rec 8.6: Increase access to education for every community member.

- A: Support nonprofits in their endeavor to assist non-English speaking community members with government services including student applications to Blue Ridge Community College.
- B: ~~Offer courses for technological literacy and educate the public on internet safety.~~
- C: Ensure public libraries are adequately equipped for future growth and are placed in multiple locations around the County to increase access.
- D: Support the County libraries in their programming and outreach efforts.