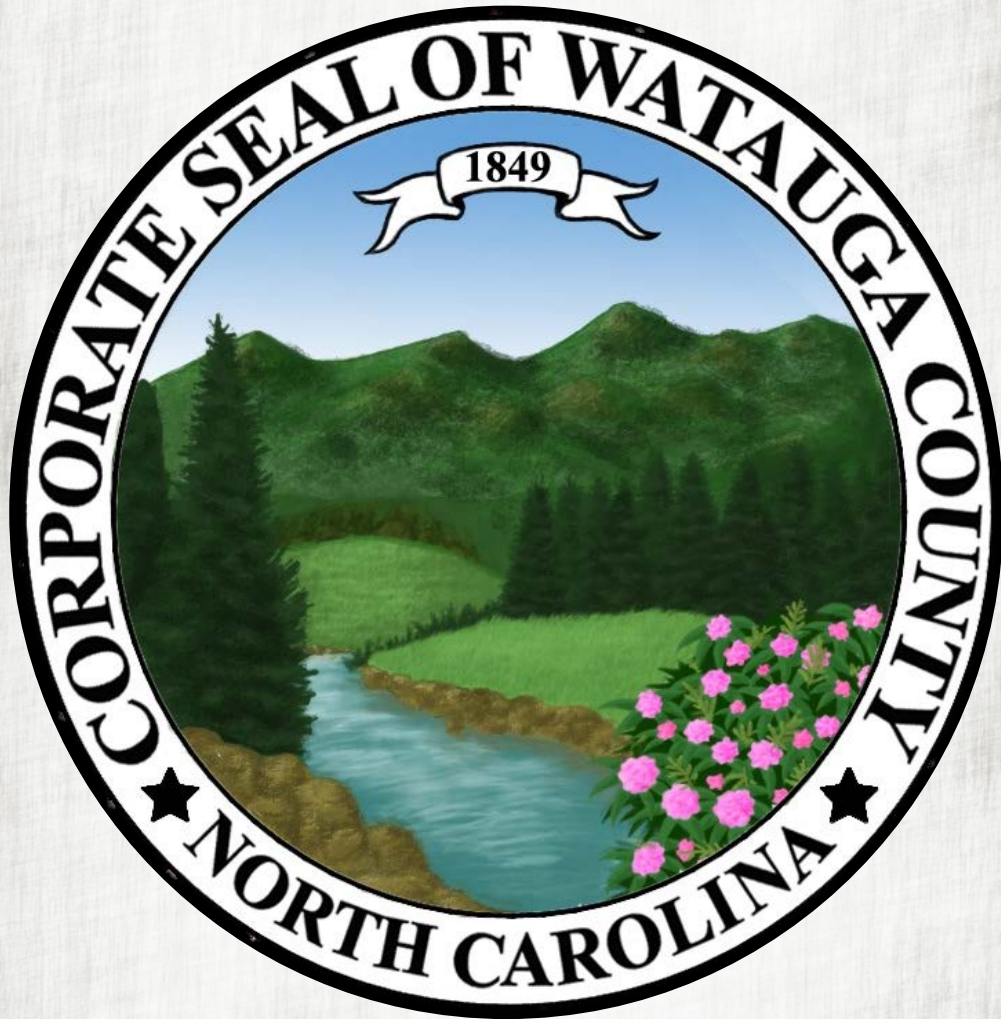


**Watauga County
Annual Retreat
February 9 & 10, 2023**



Board of Commissioners
Larry Turnbow, Chairman
Charlie Wallin, Vice-Chairman
Todd Castle
Braxton Eggers
Ray Russell



WATAUGA COUNTY

OFFICE OF THE
COUNTY MANAGER

Administration Building, Suite 205 – 814 West King Street – Boone, NC 28607 – (828) 265-8000
TDD 1-800-735-2962 – Voice 1-800-735-8262 – FAX (828) 264-3230

MEMORANDUM

TO: Watauga County Board of Commissioners
FROM: Deron Geouque
County Manager
SUBJECT: Annual Retreat
DATE: February 2, 2023

North Carolina's economic conditions remain vibrant with the State experiencing a \$6.5 billion surplus for the fiscal year ending 2021-2022 and a projected surplus for fiscal year ending 2022-2023. The State is already projecting a \$1.2 billion surplus half way through the fiscal year. Like all employers, hiring and retention of employees remains a difficult issue for the County. Due to the diminished applicant pool, staff is focusing on measures to retain existing personnel. The local employment market has taken notice of the County's efforts to retain and attract new employees and in turn they are increasing their salaries and benefits to be comparable with the County.

The County has multiple capital projects ongoing. Blueridge Energies and Skyline have made very good progress deploying the new backbone and distribution fiber throughout the County. The new fiber will provide the ability for citizens to remote learn, receive treatment through telemedicine, and telework; something that many were not able to do during the pandemic. The construction of the new Valle Crucis Elementary School has begun with the groundbreaking occurring this past October. This will be the County's first new elementary school in over 20 plus years. The County completed the programming and design phase of the parking deck to be located at the intersection of Water and Queen Street. The parking deck will provide a total of 135 spaces that will solidify the courthouse location for the next 10-20 years. The Board approved the acquisition of property located off US Highway 421 and next to the County transfer station. The property is to be utilized to construct a multi-facility complex to house the County's new 911 Consolidated Dispatch Center, Emergency Management Services and Operations Center, and medic base. The new multi-facility will provide enhanced emergency services to our citizens and allow the County to meet current and future emergency services needs. Lastly, the facility study continues to progress forward determining future County space needs.

Sales and property taxes remain strong with staff still following a conservative approach regarding the budgeting of sales tax revenue. Property and sales taxes are the County's two (2) primary sources of revenue with sales tax being the most volatile. During the recession of 2009 and 2010, the County sales tax dropped \$1.4 million and \$1.3 million, respectively, for an overall decrease of 22%. As a result, staff continues a conservative approach in budgeting sales tax revenues and allocating any additional funds above normal historic growth to capital reserve. County revenues and expenditures are trending near budgeted levels established by the FY 2022-2023 budget.

The 2022 County reevaluation has been completed and the first year of the 2027 revaluation has begun. The 2027 revaluation will be a full measure and list process. During a full measure and

list all properties will be physically visited, measured, photographed, and reviewed. Property sales remain strong with selling prices considerably higher than tax valuations. The January 2022 median list price was \$486,000 with median days on the market being 70. The December 2022 median list price was \$550,000 with median days on the market being 69.

In conclusion, staff will rely on the direction received from the Board at the retreat to prepare the upcoming Fiscal Year 2023-2024 budget. Commissioner feedback will be crucial in developing a budget that reflects the Board's goals and vision for the County. Information and reports on the County's current financial status will be provided. The County is financially healthy due in part to the planning and leadership from the Board and execution by County staff.

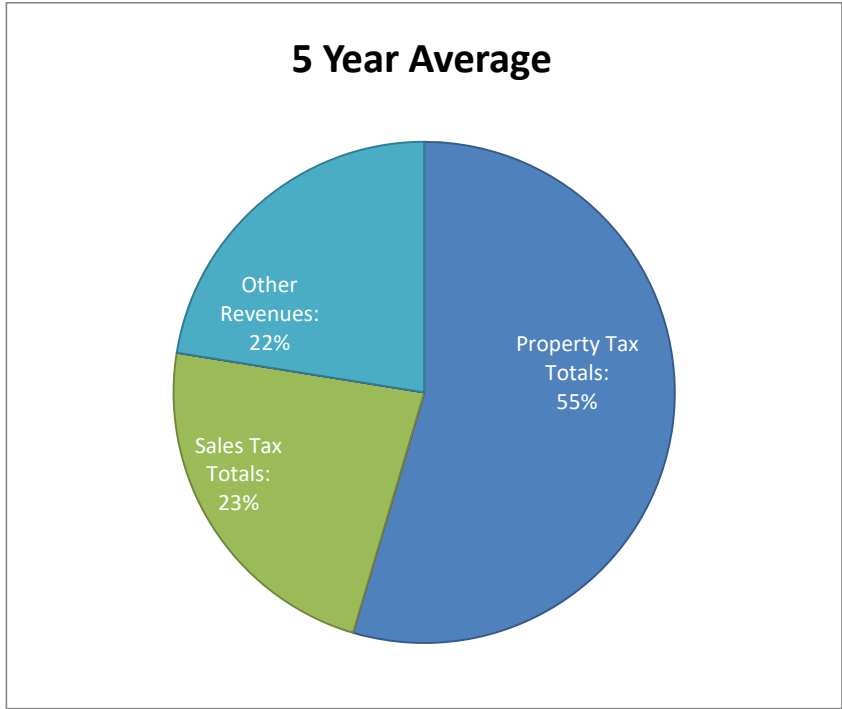
TENTATIVE RETREAT AGENDA
WATAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
COMMISSIONERS' BOARDROOM
WATAUGA COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, BOONE, NC
FEBRUARY 9 & 10, 2023

TIME	TOPIC	PRESENTER	PAGE
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2023			
12:00 PM	OPENING REMARKS AND LUNCH	MR. DERON GEOUQUE	
1:30 PM	FY 2023 REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF FY 2024 BUDGET	MS. SAMANTHA JONES	
	A. Revenues		1
	B. Expenditures		2
	C. Debt Service Report		6
	D. Budget Calendar		8
	E. Special Appropriations		9
1:45 PM	REVIEW OF CURRENT CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP)	MR. DERON GEOUQUE & MR. ROBERT MARSH	
	A. Current CIP Status Report		10
	B. Valle Crucis Elementary School		11
	C. County Facilities Assessment Update		33
	D. Courthouse Parking Deck		35
	E. Roof Repairs Update		39
	1. Human Services		
	2. Law Enforcement		
	F. ARPA Projects/Funding		
	1. COVID-19 Expenses i.e. inmate testing	\$300,000	
	2. Broadband	\$7,750,000	42
	3. Kill/Chill Water/Sewer	\$500,000	45
	4. Valle Crucis School Water/Sewer	\$2,145,000	
	5. Outside Agency Requests		
	G. Library	MR. BILL DIXON	46
	H. School Facilities		
3:45 PM	BREAK		
4:00 PM	SANITATION FACILITY UPGRADES	MR. REX BUCK	
4:15 PM	TAX MATTERS	MR. LARRY WARREN	
	A. Appraisal		59
	B. 2027 Revaluation		65
4:30 PM	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MATTERS	MR. JOE FURMAN	
	A. Workforce Housing		80
	B. Economic Development Commission (EDC) Update		81
4:45 PM	WATAUGA COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN	MR. JASON WALKER	90
5:00 PM	WATAUGA MEDICS	MR. CRAIG SULLIVAN	190
	A. Annual Report		
	B. Future Needs		
5:15 PM	COUNTY NAMING POLICY	MR. DERON GEOUQUE	207
5:30 PM	COUNTY MANAGER'S SUMMARY	MR. DERON GEOUQUE	
6:00 PM	RECESS UNTIL FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2023 AT 9:00 AM		

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2023			
8:30 AM	BREAKFAST		
9:00 AM	MIDDLE FORK GREENWAY UPDATE	MS. WENDY PATOPRSTY	
9:15 AM	WATAUGA TDA	MR. MATT VINCENT MR. WRIGHT TILLEY	212
9:30 AM	APPALACHIAN DISTRICT HEALTH	MS. JENNIFER GREENE	
	A. District Matters		216
	B. Opioid Plan		237
10:00 AM	CALDWELL COMMUNITY COLLEGE & TECHNICAL INSTITUTE	DR. MARK POARCH	263
10:30 AM	SCHOOL BOARD FUNDING ISSUES	DR. SCOTT ELLIOTT & SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS	267
	A. FY 2024 Funding Needs		
	B. Schools' Capital Improvement Plan		
11:30 AM	PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS MATTERS	MR. WILL HOLT	
	A. EMS Updates		268
	B. Communications Updates		270
	C. Fire Department Contracts		272
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		

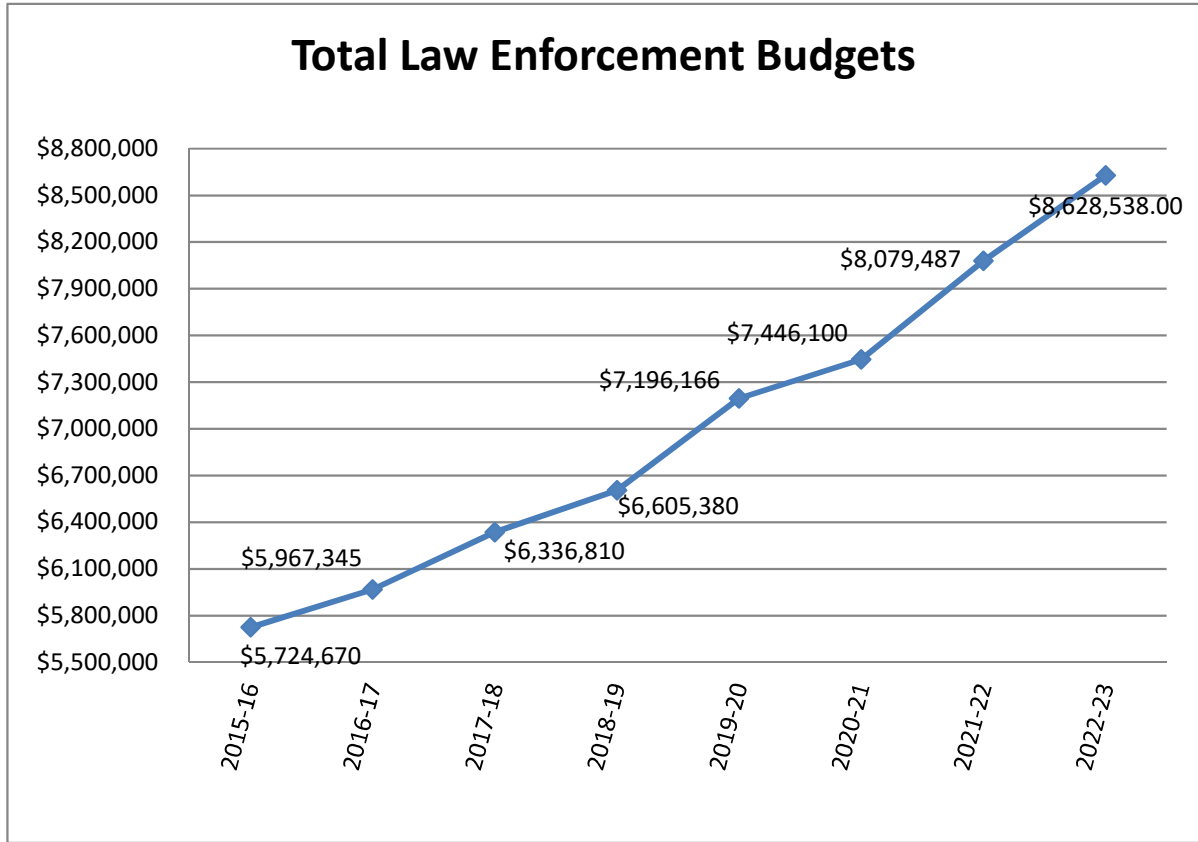
Primary County Revenues

	FY 17-18	FY 18-19	FY 19-20	FY 20-21	FY 21-22
Property Tax Totals:	\$ 32,480,532	\$ 32,786,204	\$ 37,373,588	\$ 38,677,716	\$ 39,147,623
Sales Tax Totals:	12,162,274	12,809,697	14,117,340	17,179,832	19,606,458
Other Revenues:	12,451,024	11,617,631	15,658,071	15,614,540	18,924,521
Total Revenues:	<u>\$ 57,093,830</u>	<u>\$ 57,213,532</u>	<u>\$ 67,148,999</u>	<u>\$ 71,472,088</u>	<u>\$ 77,678,602</u>



Budget Summary Report					2023 Annual Pre-Budget Retreat		
	Actuals Thru 6-30 of Each Year				FY 2022-23		
General Fund	FY 18-19	FY 19-20	FY 20-21	FY 21-22	Annual Budget	Actual at 12.31.22	Percent to Date
Revenues							
Property Taxes	\$ 32,786,204	\$ 37,373,588	\$ 38,677,716	\$ 39,147,623	\$ 42,719,702	\$ 40,593,566	95.0%
Sales Taxes	12,809,697	14,117,340	17,179,832	19,606,458	15,706,529	5,454,439	34.7%
Other Taxes	952,758	1,017,017	1,474,845	821,885	848,000	748,686	88.3%
Intergovernmental	5,778,526	7,829,046	7,932,293	8,006,948	7,314,337	2,130,647	29.1%
Permits and Fees	787,275	839,865	1,094,582	1,050,677	788,400	516,465	65.5%
Sales and Services	1,194,343	1,079,918	936,988	1,079,918	1,962,310	1,199,597	61.1%
Miscellaneous	1,344,481	1,273,134	783,215	810,910	628,976	1,218,434	193.7%
Transfer from Other Funds	1,560,248	3,619,091	1,617,000	7,154,183	6,564,260	-	0.0%
Fund Balance	-	-	-	-	46,626	-	0.0%
Revenue Subtotal:	\$ 57,213,532	\$ 67,148,999	\$ 69,696,471	\$ 77,678,602	\$ 76,579,140	\$ 51,861,834	67.7%
Expenditures							
General Administration	\$ 2,107,172	\$ 1,968,935	\$ 1,320,449	\$ 1,679,033	\$ 1,856,500	\$ 729,684	39.3%
Finance	386,855	391,481	389,249	389,249	469,047	261,874	55.8%
Tax	1,254,749	1,321,991	1,452,001	1,895,352	1,778,900	917,317	51.6%
Legal	57,749	86,155	60,087	72,887	101,000	41,569	41.2%
Court Facilities	1,361	5,011	-	-	2,000	395	19.7%
Elections	335,633	404,870	620,405	391,425	413,076	276,138	66.8%
Register of Deeds	520,726	533,430	552,290	563,274	677,532	359,103	53.0%
Information Technology	844,644	993,624	969,777	1,103,167	1,108,476	706,782	63.8%
Maintenance/Buildings	2,823,688	3,220,074	3,949,518	5,348,096	8,630,184	3,289,917	38.1%
Sheriff/Jail	6,186,586	6,747,492	7,054,662	7,940,452	8,628,538	4,384,880	50.8%
Emergency Services	2,520,656	3,269,951	4,045,291	3,197,716	4,533,477	1,848,431	40.8%
Planning & Inspections	651,345	621,424	640,544	739,722	7,949,247	435,800	5.5%
Ambulance & Rescue	1,457,499	1,471,249	1,659,404	1,950,921	2,475,195	1,386,739	56.0%
Animal Control	131,034	135,460	141,292	154,187	221,437	126,348	57.1%
Transportation	224,792	231,493	87,956	235,062	77,495	132,727	171.3%
Economic Development	205,436	181,640	96,550	101,649	99,752	33,350	33.4%
Cooperative Extension	255,004	274,185	278,469	287,185	305,119	125,324	41.1%
Soil Conservation	118,435	258,615	95,122	238,610	158,929	83,966	52.8%
Public Health	680,705	746,920	813,129	879,342	945,555	551,574	58.3%
Mental Health	171,195	171,194	171,194	171,194	171,194	99,863	58.3%
Project on Aging	1,281,296	1,278,447	1,253,052	1,448,505	1,688,164	811,436	48.1%
Veteran's Service	118,550	123,532	127,756	136,863	151,756	85,278	56.2%
Special Appropriations	468,469	531,493	531,443	598,649	591,424	384,780	65.1%
WCS, Board of Education	14,992,995	15,248,056	15,718,662	15,443,216	15,830,022	9,262,921	58.5%
CCC&TI, Watauga Campus	1,252,325	1,000,279	1,000,279	1,000,279	1,047,793	611,213	58.3%
Library	604,760	652,360	652,360	699,960	741,660	432,635	58.3%
Parks & Recreation	1,010,962	795,436	879,092	1,442,723	2,049,485	997,317	48.7%
Transfers to Other Funds	9,703,918	9,868,106	6,174,808	18,511,290	\$ 20,767,455	-	0.0%
Expenditures Subtotal:	\$ 50,368,539	\$ 52,532,903	\$ 50,734,841	\$ 66,620,008	\$ 83,470,412	\$ 28,377,361	34.0%
Social Services Fund							
Revenues							
Federal/State Programs	\$ 3,392,855	\$ 3,193,993	\$ 3,324,415	\$ 4,153,686	\$ 4,011,696	\$ 1,337,018	33.3%
Miscellaneous	27,145	86,407	100,532	72,837	17,888	19,094	106.7%
Transfer from General Fund	1,396,655	2,232,006	2,110,851	2,524,622	2,524,622	1,262,311	50.0%
Fund Balance	-	-	-	-	369,364	-	0.0%
Revenues Subtotal:	\$ 4,816,655	\$ 5,512,406	\$ 5,535,798	\$ 6,751,145	\$ 6,923,570	\$ 2,618,423	37.8%
Expenditures							
Administration	\$ 3,177,801	\$ 3,184,033	\$ 3,324,449	\$ 3,711,996	\$ 4,218,598	\$ 2,213,830	52.5%
Child Support Enforcement Programs	215,705	206,020	208,868	173,458	191,685	93,404	48.7%
Expenditures Subtotal:	\$ 5,171,429	\$ 4,975,518	\$ 5,248,861	\$ 5,715,892	\$ 6,923,570	\$ 3,176,630	45.9%
Solid Waste Fund							
Revenues							
Intergovernmental	\$ 150,629	\$ 140,998	\$ 148,684	\$ 163,047	\$ 138,025	\$ 41,969	30.4%
Charges for Services	5,092,325	5,118,690	5,689,417	5,377,303	5,718,880	4,026,677	70.4%
Miscellaneous	126,841	127,692	291,678	479,984	11,975	1,750	14.6%
Fund Balance Appropriated	-	-	-	-	575,000	-	0.0%
Revenues Subtotal:	\$ 5,369,795	\$ 5,387,380	\$ 6,129,779	\$ 6,020,334	\$ 6,443,880	\$ 4,070,396	63.2%
Expenditures							
Solid Waste Operations	\$ 4,969,102	\$ 5,101,540	\$ 4,828,565	\$ 6,051,385	\$ 6,324,518	\$ 3,203,529	50.7%
Recycling Operations	108,761	81,986	116,259	105,523	119,362	72,151	60.4%
Expenditures Subtotal:	\$ 5,077,863	\$ 5,183,526	\$ 4,944,824	\$ 6,156,908	\$ 6,443,880	\$ 3,275,680	50.8%

Law Enforcement Budget History



Fiscal Years	Sheriff	Jail	Total for Law Enforcement	Percent of Change	Percent of County Budget
2022-23	\$ 5,782,284	\$ 2,846,254	\$ 8,628,538	6.80%	10.34%
2021-22	\$ 5,432,213	\$ 2,647,274	\$ 8,079,487	8.51%	9.68%
2020-21	\$ 5,049,045	\$ 2,397,055	\$ 7,446,100	3.47%	12.98%
2019-20	\$ 4,839,670	\$ 2,356,496	\$ 7,196,166	8.94%	11.41%
2018-19	\$ 4,314,320	\$ 2,291,060	\$ 6,605,380	4.24%	11.25%
2017-18	\$ 4,106,758	\$ 2,230,052	\$ 6,336,810	6.19%	10.78%
2016-17*	\$ 3,793,710	\$ 2,173,635	\$ 5,967,345	4.24%	11.63%
2015-16	\$ 3,626,820	\$ 2,097,850	\$ 5,724,670	12.17%	11.69%

*\$254,000 in one time additional capital removed from FY 16-17 totals.

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	Future Valle Crucis School	Total Capital Funding
2021-22	450,000	500,000	-	950,000	300,000	1,500,000	2,700,000	5,450,000
2022-23	450,000	500,000	300,000	950,000	300,000	5,500,000	2,700,000	9,750,000
2023-24	450,000	500,000	500,000	950,000	300,000	5,500,000	2,700,000	9,950,000
2024-25	450,000	500,000	-	950,000	300,000	5,500,000	2,700,000	9,450,000
2025-26	450,000	500,000	-	950,000	300,000	5,500,000	2,700,000	9,450,000
2026-27	450,000	500,000	-	950,000	300,000	5,500,000	2,700,000	9,450,000
2027-28	450,000	500,000	-	950,000	300,000	5,500,000	2,700,000	9,450,000
2028-29	450,000	500,000	-	950,000	300,000	5,500,000	2,700,000	9,450,000
2029-30	450,000	500,000	-	950,000	300,000	5,500,000	2,700,000	9,450,000
2030-31	450,000	500,000	-	950,000	300,000	5,500,000	2,700,000	9,450,000
2031-32	450,000	500,000	-	950,000	300,000	5,500,000	2,700,000	9,450,000
2032-33	450,000	500,000	-	950,000	300,000	5,500,000	2,700,000	9,450,000

Lottery Funds: Unallocated balance is \$457,127 as of January 10, 2022 with additional revenues expected in FY 21-22 of approximately \$183,917. (Utilized the unallocated balance as the 2021-22 lottery distribution has not been released.)

ADM Funds: Balance is \$3,661.

Ten Year Funding Summary for Watauga County Schools

Budgeted

Current Expense

Fiscal Year	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22-23
Current Operating	11,839,645	12,195,409	12,198,409	12,558,345	12,942,400	13,157,455	13,557,455	13,864,674	13,864,674	14,280,571	14,780,022
Annual Inc/(Dec)	-	355,764	3,000	359,936	384,055	215,055	400,000	307,219	-	415,897	499,451
	0.00%	3.00%	0.02%	2.95%	3.06%	1.66%	3.04%	2.27%	0.00%	3.00%	3.50%
WCS Fund Balance	4,687,534	4,077,715	3,333,909	3,235,107	3,256,372	3,256,238	3,662,377	3,775,921	3,989,656	4,102,627	
Fund Bal Inc/(Dec)	188,285	(609,819)	(743,806)	(98,802)	21,265	(134)	406,139	113,544	213,735	112,971	(4,102,627)

Capital Expense

Fiscal Year	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23
Capital Projects Fund	-	640,400	300,000	375,000	400,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	450,000	450,000
Long Term Capital Needs	-	-	-	-	-	1,500,000	1,500,000	4,200,000	4,200,000	4,700,000	8,700,000
Lottery/ADM Projects	268,964	216,249	820,740	210,132	566,931	167,500	456,200	295,711	300,000	300,000	600,000
Current Capital	340,400	-	175,000	275,000	300,000	450,000	450,000	450,000	450,000	450,000	450,000
Subtotal of Capital:	609,364	856,649	1,295,740	860,132	1,266,931	2,617,500	2,906,200	5,445,711	5,450,000	5,900,000	10,200,000
Annual Inc/(Dec)	(678,318)	247,285	439,091	(435,608)	406,799	1,350,569	288,700	2,539,511	4,289	450,000	4,300,000
Debt Service	6,999,071	7,020,392	6,452,109	5,458,896	5,348,988	5,202,104	5,060,420	4,863,331	4,562,231	4,423,998	4,287,933
WCS Fund Balance	173,108	39,504	315,497	303,378	325,991	405,963	334,564	283,871	333,219	592,358	
Capital Bal Inc/(Dec)	(148,236)	(133,604)	275,993	(12,119)	22,613	79,972	(71,399)	(50,693)	49,348	259,139	

Total County Funding Excluding Debt Service and Lottery Projects	12,180,045	12,835,809	12,673,409	13,208,345	13,642,400	14,107,455	16,007,455	19,014,674	19,014,674	19,880,571	24,380,022
Annual Inc/(Dec)	18,826	655,764	(162,400)	534,936	434,055	465,055	1,900,000	3,007,219	-	865,897	5,365,348

Total Funding	19,448,080	20,072,450	19,946,258	18,877,373	19,558,319	20,977,059	21,524,075	24,173,716	23,876,905	24,604,569	29,404,020
Annual Inc/(Dec)	(1,207,346)	624,370	(126,192)	(1,068,885)	680,946	1,418,740	547,016	2,649,641	(296,811)	727,664	5,527,115

Change in Operating Fund Balance, last year versus 9 years ago: \$ (509,593) decrease

Change in Capital Fund Balance, last year versus 9 years ago: \$ 11,875 increase

Lottery Funds: Unallocated balance is \$457,127 as of January 10, 2022 with additional revenues expected in FY 21-22 of approximately \$183,917. (Utilized the unallocated balance as the 2021-22 lottery distribution has not been released.)

Debt Service Summary

2023 Annual Pre-Budget Retreat

Fiscal Year	2012 High school Debt (Refunded and Unrefunded)	2018 Recreation Center	2022 Valle Crucis	Total General Fund Debt Service
	LOBs	LOBs	LOBs	
2022-23 (P)	3,720,000	1,320,000	965,000	6,005,000
(I)	567,933	662,400	954,797	2,185,130
Total	4,287,933	1,982,400	1,919,797	8,190,130
2023-24 (P)	3,670,000	1,320,000	1,625,000	6,615,000
(I)	481,257	596,400	1,557,950	2,635,607
Total	4,151,257	1,916,400	3,182,950	9,250,607
2024-25 (P)	3,620,000	1,325,000	1,625,000	6,570,000
(I)	395,012	530,400	1,476,700	2,402,112
Total	4,015,012	1,855,400	3,101,700	8,972,112
2025-26 (P)	3,600,000	1,320,000	1,625,000	6,545,000
(I)	278,415	464,150	1,395,450	2,138,015
Total	3,878,415	1,784,150	3,020,450	8,683,015
2026-27 (P)	3,555,000	1,320,000	1,625,000	6,500,000
(I)	187,335	398,150	1,314,200	1,899,685
Total	3,742,335	1,718,150	2,939,200	8,399,685
2027-28 (P)	3,515,000	1,325,000	1,625,000	6,465,000
(I)	94,905	332,150	1,232,950	1,660,005
Total	3,609,905	1,657,150	2,857,950	8,125,005
2028-29 (P)		1,320,000	1,620,000	2,940,000
(I)		292,400	1,151,700	1,444,100
Total		1,612,400	2,771,700	4,384,100
2029-30 (P)		1,320,000	1,625,000	2,945,000
(I)		226,400	1,070,700	1,297,100
Total		1,546,400	2,695,700	4,242,100
2030-31 (P)		1,320,000	1,620,000	2,940,000
(I)		160,400	989,450	1,149,850
Total		1,480,400	2,609,450	4,089,850
2031-32 (P)		1,320,000	1,620,000	2,940,000
(I)		94,400	908,450	1,002,850
Total		1,414,400	2,528,450	3,942,850
2032-33 (P)		1,320,000	1,620,000	2,940,000
(I)		48,200	827,450	875,650
Total		1,368,200	2,447,450	3,815,650
2033-2042 (PI)			14,605,000	14,605,000
(I)			3,770,250	3,770,250
			18,375,250	18,375,250
Principal	\$25,360,000	\$15,850,000	\$31,800,000	\$68,010,000
Interest	\$2,748,855	\$4,533,850	\$16,650,047	\$38,537,752

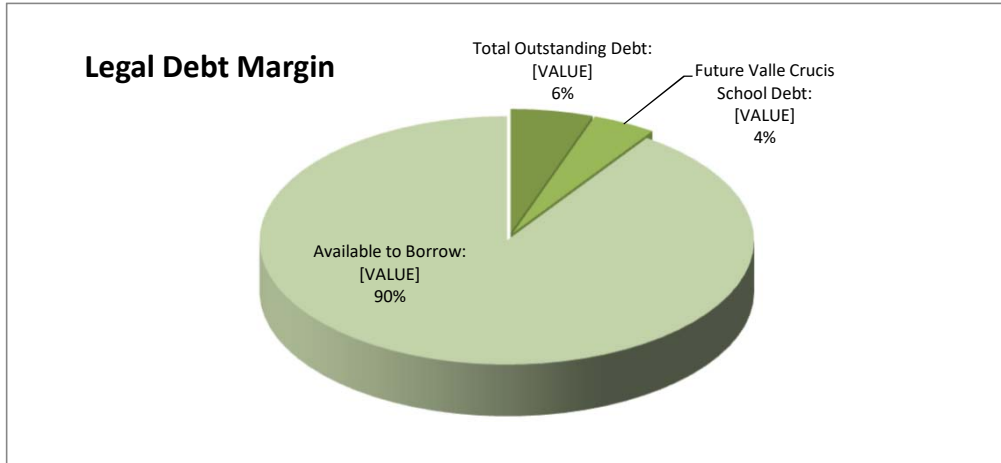
Outstanding Debt at June 30

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
2019-20	46,190,000	(5,264,027)
2020-21	41,210,000	(4,980,000)
2021-22	36,210,000	(5,000,000)
2022-23	62,060,000	(6,005,000)
2023-24	55,445,000	(6,615,000)
2024-25	48,875,000	(6,570,000)
2025-26	42,330,000	(6,545,000)

Debt Service Summary

2023 Annual Pre-Budget Retreat

2026-27	35,830,000	(6,500,000)
2027-28	29,365,000	(6,465,000)
2028-29	26,425,000	(2,940,000)
2029-30	23,480,000	(2,945,000)
2030-31	20,540,000	(2,940,000)
2031-32	17,600,000	(2,940,000)
2032-33	14,660,000	(2,940,000)
2033-42	55,000	-\$14,605,000



Legal Debt Margin:	\$762,182,511
Total Other Outstanding Debt:	\$41,210,000
Total Valle Crucis Schc	\$31,800,000
Available to Borrow:	\$689,172,511

Fiscal Year 2023-24 BUDGET SCHEDULE

January 2023

Capital Improvement Plan packets to departments.

January 31, 2023

Capital Improvement Program requests due back.

February/March 2023

Requests for funding sent to outside agencies.

February 9 and 10, 2023

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

February 13, 2023

Department head staff meeting - budget information packets emailed out. Worksheets and all supporting documents are due by email to Misty by March 11. Early submission is encouraged.

April 2023

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

May 3, 2023

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

May 11 and 12, 2023

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

May 16, 2023

Public hearing held on County Manager's proposed budget.

June 6, 2023

Budget adoption.



SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
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	21,000	22,500	23,000	24,000	23,000	22,000	
CHILDREN'S COUNCIL	1,500	2,500	25,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	
CHILDREN'S PLAYHOUSE	1,223	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	6,131	
COMMUNITY CARE CLINIC	17,000	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	2,500	2,500	2,500	3,000	
HOSPITALITY HOUSE	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	
HUNGER COALITION	8,500	8,500	9,315	9,315	9,315	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	2,500	2,500	2,500	5,000	
WATAUGA COUNTY ARTS COUNCIL	8,800	8,800	8,800	8,800	8,800	10,000	
WATAUGA HUMANE SOCIETY	81,482	82,460	83,865	85,036	86,822	88,124	
WATAUGA OPPORTUNITIES	33,000	33,000	33,000	33,000	33,000	33,000	
WESTERN YOUTH NETWORK	1,500	1,500	-	-	-	-	
TOTALS:	\$ 281,005	\$ 293,760	\$ 317,480	\$ 344,651	\$ 345,437	\$ 354,255	

CAPITAL PROJECTS SUMMARY

Project Description	6/30/2022 Balance	2022-23 Budget	Budget Amendments		6/30/2023 Balance
			In	Out	
Caldwell Community College	\$ 153,257	\$ 50,000			\$ 203,257
Information Technology Needs	\$ 451,756				451,756
East Annex Renovations	\$ 338,303				338,303
Eastern Community Center	\$ 54,220				54,220
Emergency Communications	\$ 2,761,811	1,300,000	500,071	(1,133,550)	3,428,332
Facilities Maintenance	\$ 1,624,313	500,000		(397,110)	1,727,203
Future County Parking Deck	\$ 5,406,875		2,500,000	(5,033,600)	2,873,275
Future County Buildings	\$ 5,471,109	1,200,000	2,500,000		9,171,109
EDC	\$ 421,622	50,000			471,622
LEC Future Expansion		100,000			100,000
Potential Flood Mitigation		22,500			22,500
Recreation-Facilities/Maintenance	\$ 2,051,350	50,000			2,101,350
Watauga Co. Schools-Long Term Needs	\$ 7,608,313	5,500,000			13,108,313
Future Valle Crucis School	\$ 5,763,012	2,700,000			8,463,012
Watauga Co. Schools-CIP	\$ 1,026,742	500,000			1,526,742
Totals:	\$ 33,132,685	\$ 11,972,500	\$ 5,500,071	\$ (6,564,260)	\$ 44,040,995

Project Description	Actual Additions				
	FY 2017-18	FY 2018-19	FY 2019-20	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22
Caldwell Community College	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000
Potential Flood Mitigation					
Future Processing Plant					500,000
East Annex Renovations	-	-	-	-	-
Eastern Community Center	-	-	-	-	-
EDC	-	50,000	83,463	100,000	50,000
LEC Future Expansion					
East Annex Renovations	-	-	200,000	-	-
Emergency Communications	250,000	250,000	500,000	1,000,000	550,000
Facilities Maintenance	146,400	208,990	1,123,817	1,500,000	785,783
Future County Buildings	-	-	-	2,900,000	2,424,583
Parking Deck	-	-	-	-	5,400,000
Recreation-Facilities/Maintenance	2,477,075	1,881,140	274,655	50,000	750,000
Recreation-Future Park Development	-	-	-	-	-
Watauga Co. Schools-Long Term Needs	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	-	3,000,000
Future Valle Crucis School	-	-	2,700,000	-	7,545,000
Watauga Co. Schools-CIP	714,205	767,133	704,165	574,808	580,507
Totals:	\$5,137,680	\$4,707,263	\$7,136,100	\$6,174,808	\$21,635,873

\$0

Valle Crucis Elementary School

February 17, 2022

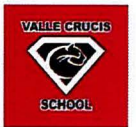


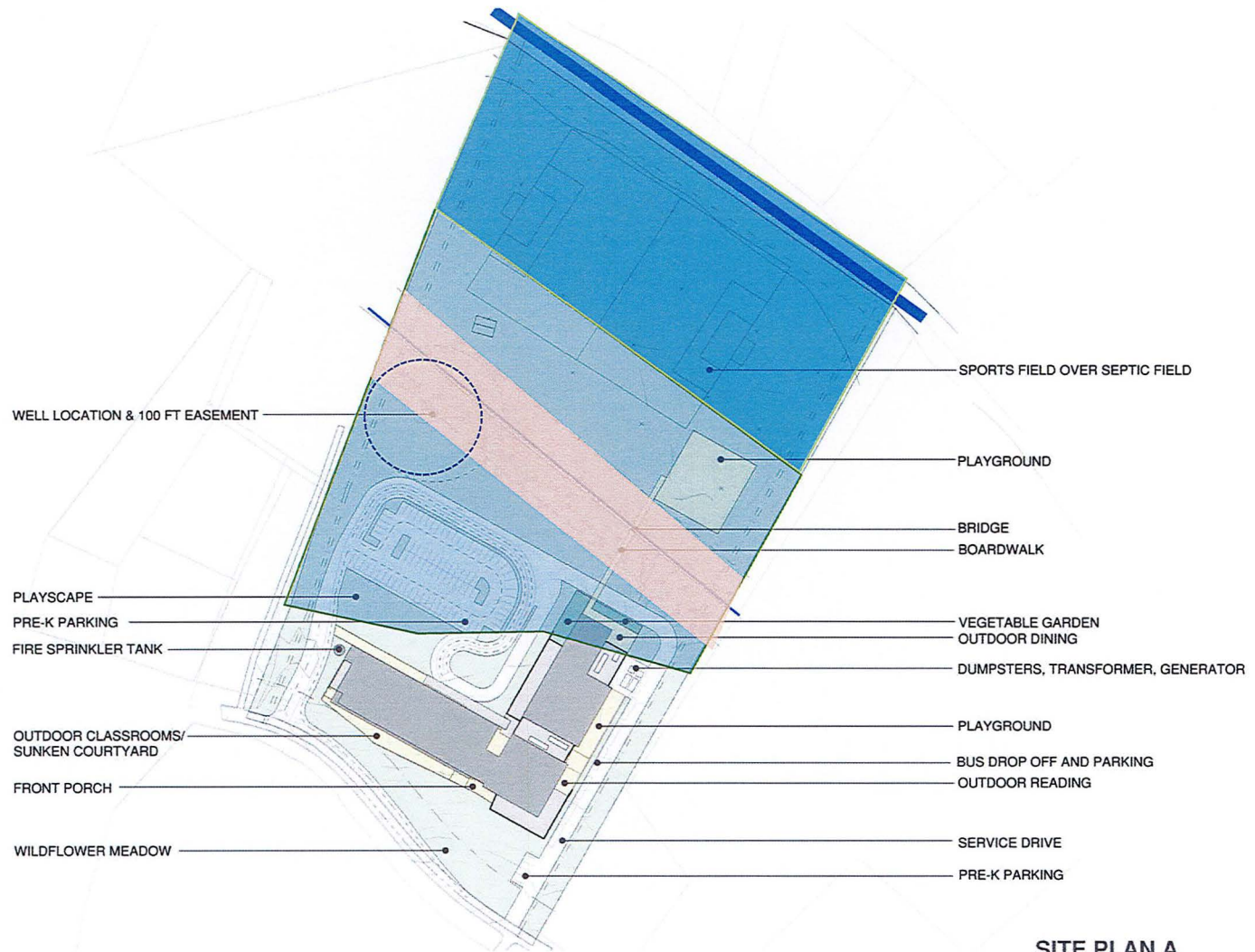
Project Goals

- Values and integration with the community
- Connection to the environment
- Avoid flooding
- Student Centered strategies
- Warm and inviting campus
- Growth

Create

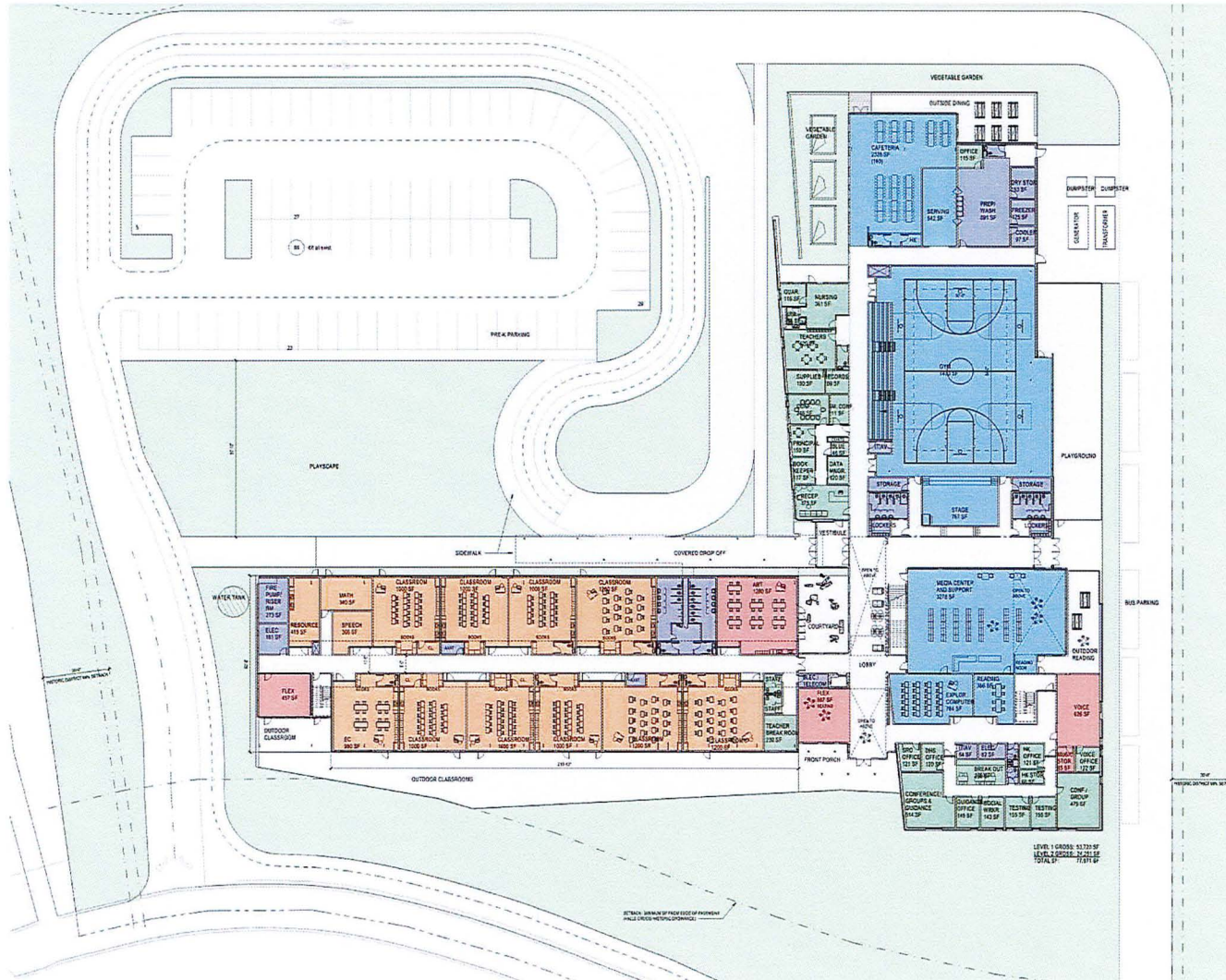
- Flexible spaces for the future
- Environmentally Friendly
- Open, airy, expansive
- Engaging the community
- Safe
- Improved traffic patterns
- Organized facility
- Supporting 21st century learning
- Access to the river and outdoor space



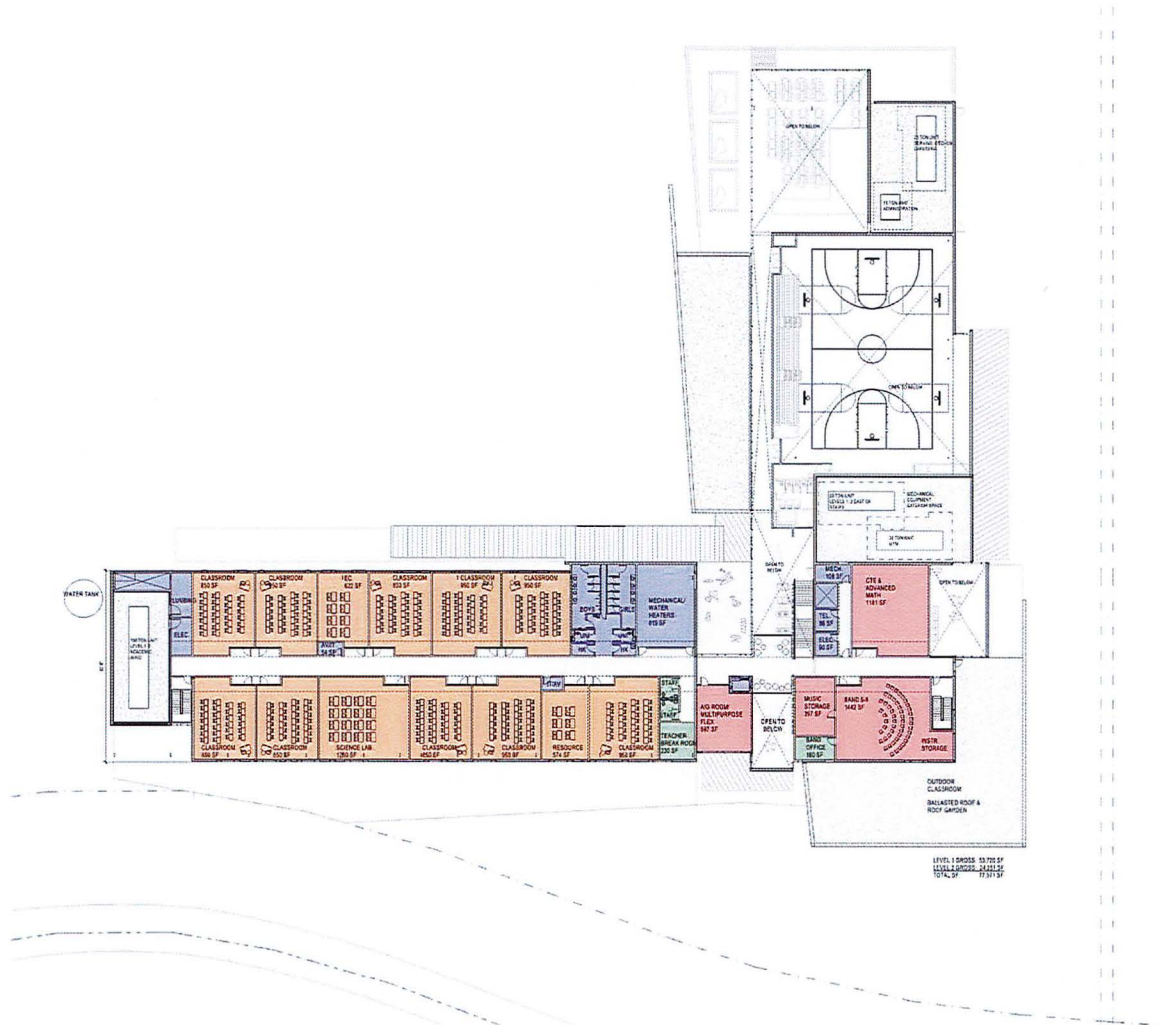


SITE PLAN A

CLARK NEXSEN 



LEVEL 1
CLARKNEXSEN



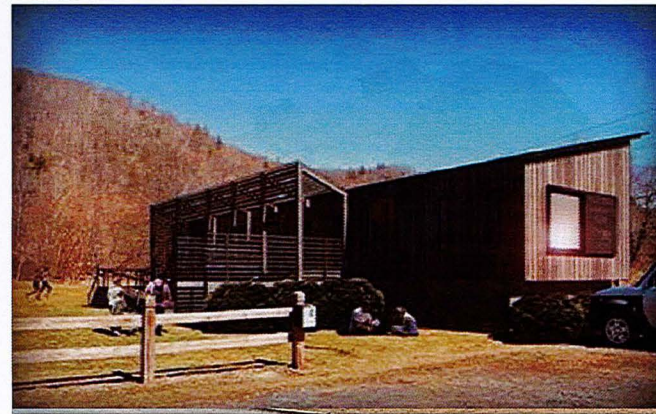
LEVEL 2 
 CLARKNEXSEN

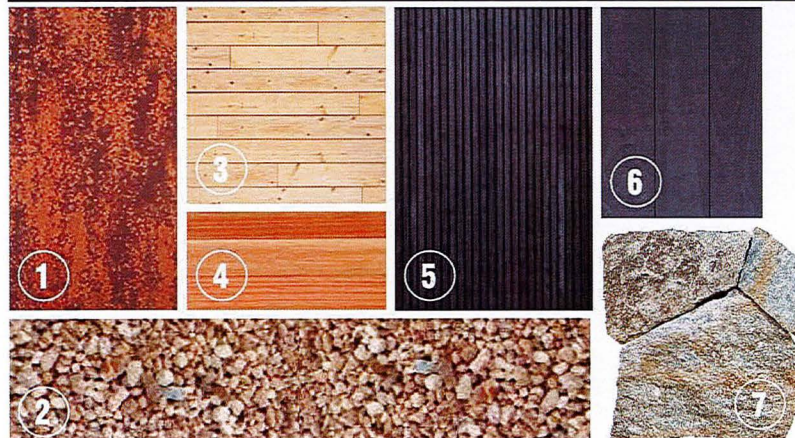
MATERIALS





A SCHOOL THAT REFLECTS THE CULTURE AND HISTORY OF THE COMMUNITY
A DESIGN THAT IS OF THE RURAL LANDSCAPE
CONNECTION TO THE COMMUNITY





PROPOSED EXTERIOR MATERIALS

- 1. STANDING SEAM ROOF AND SIDING
- 2. RIVER ROCK
- 3. WOOD ROOF DECK
- 4. WOOD BEAMS
- 5. WOOD SIDING AT A DISTANCE
- 6. WOOD SIDING (CLOSE)
- 7. STONE VENEER SIDING

LOCAL STONE: BLEND OF MOSAIC AND LEDGESTONE



STONE IN SHADE →



STONE IN SUNLIGHT →



D.



E.


HOOPERS CREEK STONE

Ashlar Brown
 Mosaic Gray
 Ledgestone Blended

STANDING SEAM ROOF AND SIDING
 A. PREWEATHERED STANDING SEAM METAL ROOF

STRUCTURAL ROOF DECK AND GLULAMS
 B. DOUGLAS FIR GLULAMS
 C. DOUGLAS FIR OR SPRUCE STRUCTURAL DECKING

STONE
 D. RIVER ROCK
 E. LOCAL NATURAL STONE (ADHERED APPLICATION)



← SPRUCE

← DOUGLAS FIR GLULAMS

OPTIONS FOR VERTICAL PLANK SIDING

K. L. M. N.
 H. I. J.
 F. G. A.

D. B.

HIGH DENSITY COMPOSITE CLADDING
 F. PARKLEX BLOCK FAÇADE OR
 G. TRESPA PURA NFC SIDING
 OR EQUAL

OR

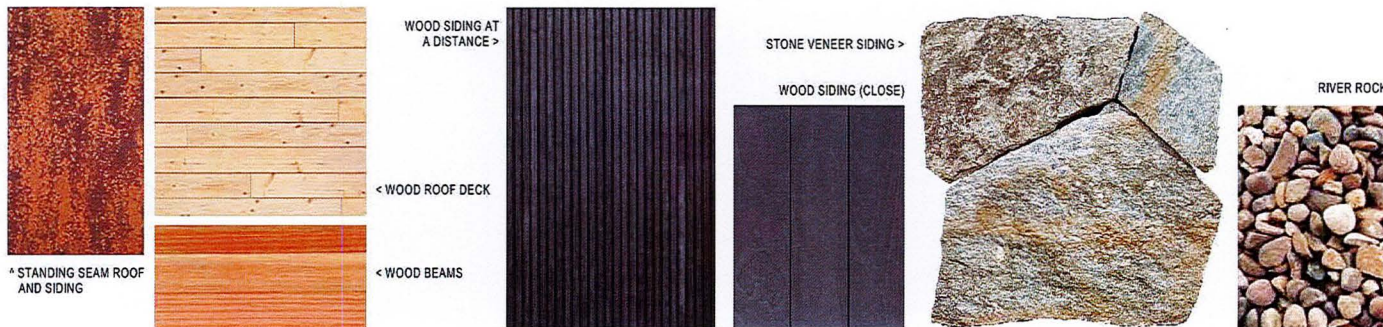
NATURAL WOOD CLADDING
 H. WESTERN RED CEDAR OR
 I. CYPRESS OR
 J. CYPRESS OR
 K. WESTERN RED CEDAR OR
 L. ACETYLATED ACCOYA OR
 M. WESTERN RED CEDAR OR
 N. THERMALLY MODIFIED RADIATA PINE
 OR EQUAL

* SELECTION OF ACTUAL PRODUCTS/MANUFACTURERS WILL BE A FUNCTION OF THE BIDDING PROCESS, BUDGET, WARRANTY, DURABILITY, MAINTENANCE, AND AVAILABILITY AT THE TIME OF PROCUREMENT

MATERIAL CONCEPTS



^ VIEW LOOKING EAST ALONG BROADSTONE RD.





Aerial view looking northeast



Street view looking east on Broadstone



Aerial view looking south



Main entry



Main Lobby



Main Lobby



View from Cafeteria towards the river



Aerial view looking northeast

Schedule

- 95% Construction Documents to VC: 06.01.2022
- Submit to Department of Insurance: 06.01.2022
- VC Review Comments: 06.08.2022
- Cost Estimate Complete: 06.08.2022
- Comments back from DOI: 07.01.2022
- Advertise to Bid: 07.06.2022
- 100% Construction Documents for Bid: 08.04.2022
- Bidding August 4 - September 1, 2022
- Notice to Proceed: 09.15.2022
- Construction Complete: May/June 2024

Valle Crucis Elementary School

February 17, 2022





February 8, 2019

Watauga County Manager
814 West King Street
Suite 205
Boone, NC 28607

Attn: Mr. Deron Geouque
County Manager

RE: WATAUGA COUNTY FACILITIES ASSESSMENT

Dear Mr. Geouque,

Long ranging planning is critical to thoughtful and steady growth. Clark Nexsen is please to provide you this proposal for a preliminary facilities assessment. The goal of this assessment is to evaluate existing programs of the County Judicial and Administrative staff, determine how best to utilize the available space, and to plan for future growth. Our task will be to meet with up to 5 groups identified by the County to evaluate their space needs, formulate a building program from these needs, and make a recommendation for accomplishing the goals established during this programming effort. Generally these efforts will take 2-3 months to accomplish due to scheduling conflicts among the participants. Our approach will be to schedule a series of departmental meetings at 1.5 hour intervals. We will interview the groups and document their needs. It will be important for the departments to prepare or have a clear understanding of existing staff, future growth, emerging trends for their profession, and express this during the interview process. Prior to our meeting we will send a questionnaire to assist them with their preparations. Upon completion of the information gathering, we will distribute our findings to the departments and modify the programming document based on their feedback.

Deliverables for these efforts shall include the following:

- a. Meeting minutes from group discussions
- b. Tabular spread sheet indicating space requirements for each department or group
- c. Parking evaluation across from existing County building.
- d. Recommendations for use of existing structures or possible new facilities
- e. Presentation to County Commissioners or administrative staff.

For the above listed items we propose a lump sum fee of \$15,000. Our efforts will be monthly based on the percentage complete of our task.



If you have any additional questions, please let me know.

Sincerely,

CLARK NEXSEN



Chadwick S Roberson, AIA, LEED AP BD+C
Principal

Accepted by: Devin George date: 11-4-2019

Printed Name: Devin George

**This instrument has been preaudited in the manner
required by the local Government Budget and Fiscal
Control Act.**

11-4-19 [Signature]
Date Finance Director



APPALACHIAN ARCHITECTURE, P.A.

Watauga County Parking Deck

Architect's Update

Prepared for Watauga County Commissioners Retreat

February 9th & 10th, 2023

Appalachian Architecture & Municipal Engineering continue to work on Construction drawings and specifications to release for public bidding in March 2023.

Status of the bid documents as of January 27th, 2023:

Civil & all site related information	60 % complete
Site Lighting	75% complete
Structural	60% complete
Architectural	60% complete
Plumbing (Service line for sprinkler system)	25% complete
Mechanical exhaust (Lower Level)	85% complete
Electrical (lighting-Lower Level)	85% complete
Fire Protection (Lower Level)	25% complete
Specifications/Bidding Instructions	33% complete

ALL BID DOCUMENTS SHOULD BE 100% COMPLETE & READY FOR BID ADVERTISING BY MARCH 31st, 2023





1 WATER ST. / QUEEN ST. VIEW
N.T.S.



2 WATER ST. VIEW
N.T.S.



3 QUEEN ST. VIEW
N.T.S.

APPALACHIAN ARCHITECTURE, P.A.
 APPALACHIAN ARCHITECTURE, P.A.
 703 W. KING STREET, SUITE #201
 BOONE, NC 28607
 P.O. BOX 179
 BOONE, NC 28607
 WWW.APPALACHIANARCHITECTURE.COM

DATE: 5/25/22

PROJECT: WATAUGA COUNTY PARKING GARAGE
 BOONE, NORTH CAROLINA

EXTERIOR ELEVATIONS

DRAWN BY: JLB
 CHECKED BY:
 SHEET TITLE

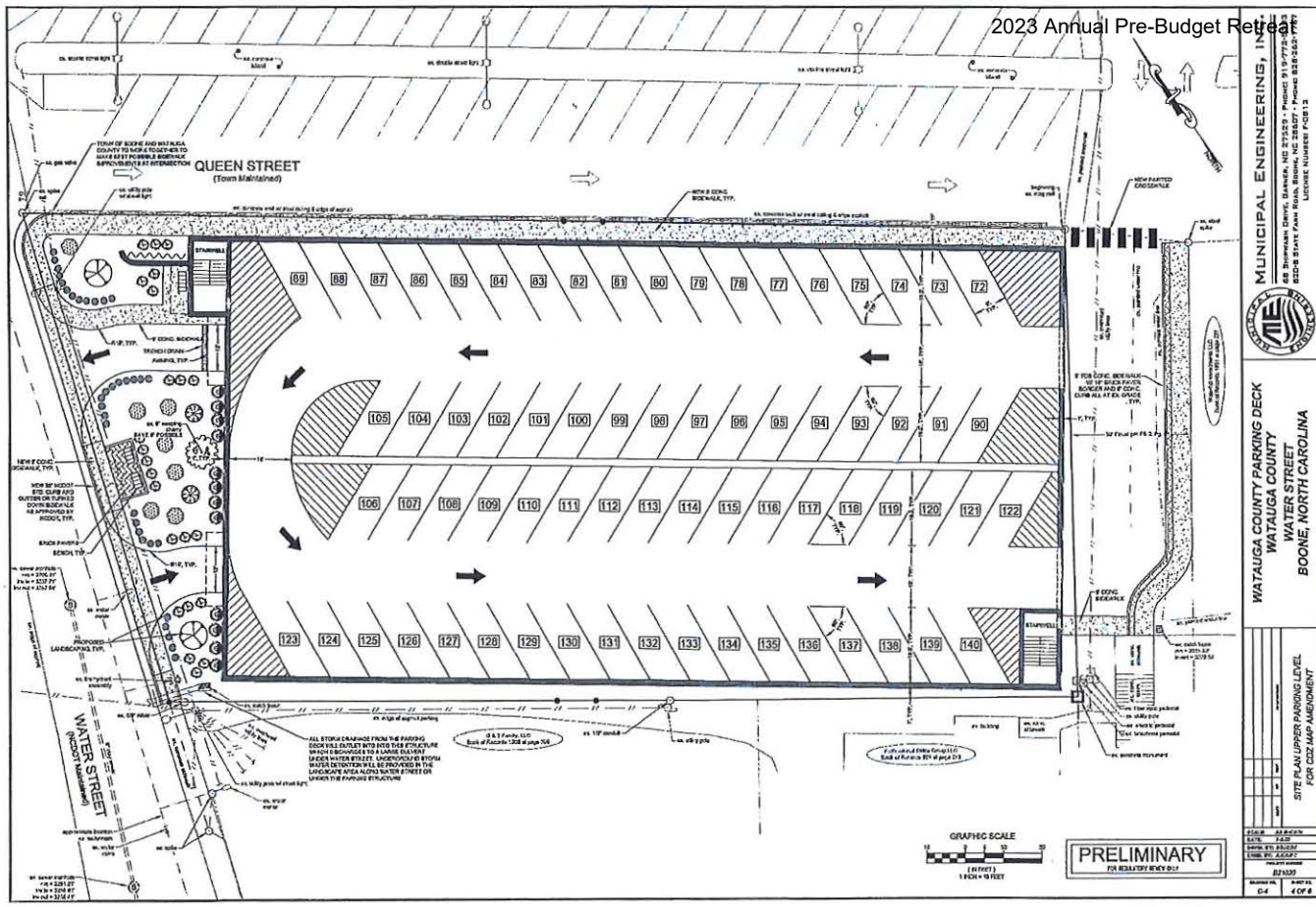
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Watauga County Parking Deck
 View from intersection of King & Water Streets

August 22, 2022

Appalachian Architecture, P.A.
 703 W. King Street, Suite #201
 Post Office Box 179
 Boone, NC 28607



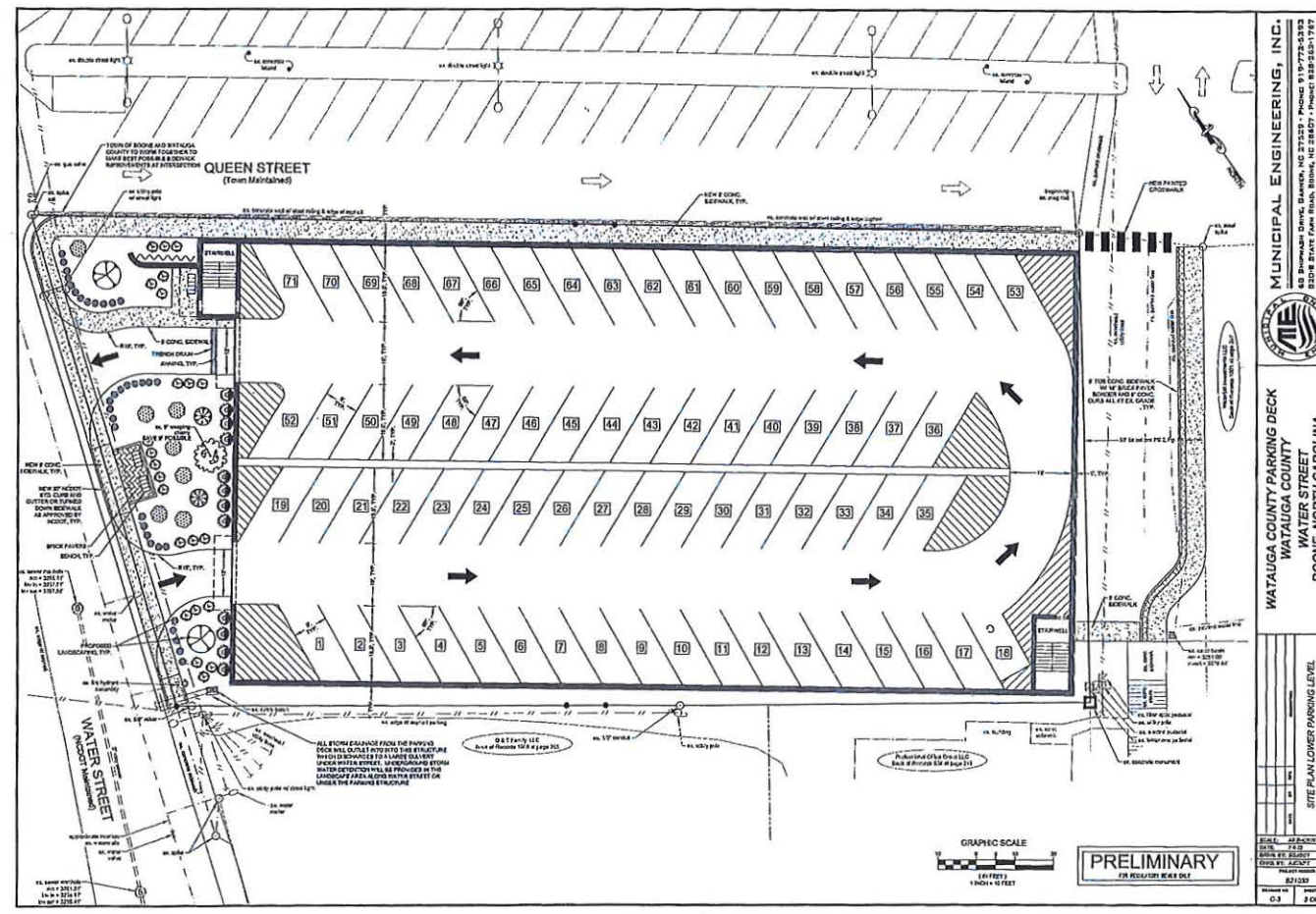
MUNICIPAL ENGINEERING, INC.
 48 Brummar Drive, Blawie, NC 27619 • Phone: 919-775-9373
 8208 State Court, Suite 100 • Phone: 919-775-1747
 License Number: PCB13

WATAUGA COUNTY PARKING DECK
WATAUGA COUNTY
WATER STREET
BOONE, NORTH CAROLINA

PLAN 222-APP-AMENDMENT

SITE PLAN LOWER PARKING LEVEL
 FOR 222-APP-AMENDMENT

DATE:	02/20/23
DRAWN BY:	PAJ
CHECKED BY:	AGENT
SCALE:	AS SHOWN
PROJECT NO.:	222-APP
DATE:	02/20/23
SCALE:	AS SHOWN
PROJECT NO.:	222-APP
DATE:	02/20/23
SCALE:	AS SHOWN
PROJECT NO.:	222-APP



MUNICIPAL ENGINEERING, INC.
 48 Brummar Drive, Blawie, NC 27619 • Phone: 919-775-9373
 8208 State Court, Suite 100 • Phone: 919-775-1747
 License Number: PCB13

WATAUGA COUNTY PARKING DECK
WATAUGA COUNTY
WATER STREET
BOONE, NORTH CAROLINA

PLAN 222-APP-AMENDMENT

SITE PLAN LOWER PARKING LEVEL
 FOR 222-APP-AMENDMENT

DATE:	02/20/23
DRAWN BY:	PAJ
CHECKED BY:	AGENT
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DATE:	02/20/23
SCALE:	AS SHOWN
PROJECT NO.:	222-APP
DATE:	02/20/23
SCALE:	AS SHOWN
PROJECT NO.:	222-APP



APPALACHIAN ARCHITECTURE, P.A.

WILLIAM (BILL) DIXON, JR., AIA, NCARB
 703 W. KING STREET, SUITE 201 - POST OFFICE BOX 179 - BOONE, NC 28607
 PHONE: (828) 265-2405 - FAX: (828) 265-2406

WATAUGA COUNTY PARKING DECKOctober 18th, 2022**Revised Cost Estimate**

Provided by Architect

August 21st, 2021

Original preliminary Building Cost estimate –	\$ 4,576,000.
10% Professional fees	\$ 457,600.
	<u>\$ 5,033,600.</u>

Original building cost estimate –	\$ 4,576,000.
8% Architectural and Engineering fees	\$ 366,080. (\$91,520.)

Historic Preservation Commission COA approval**Exterior Materials**

6,000sf additional brick @ \$50.psf =	\$ 300,000.
Storefront openings	\$ 15,000.
Precast Concrete- Headers, sills, parapet	\$ 35,000.
Stairs-Design, materials & roofing	\$ 35,000.

PC/TC Conditional Zoning approval**Building Code-**

Lower Level - Mechanical Ventilation	\$ 30,000.
Automatic Fire sprinkler system	<u>\$ 100,000.</u>

Subtotal	\$ 5,457,080.
10% construction industry Cost Increase	<u>\$ 545,708.</u>

TOTAL REVISED COST ESTIMATE	\$ 6,002, 788.
October 18 th , 2022	



WATAUGA COUNTY

MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT

274 Winklers Creek Road, Suite B, Boone, NC 28607 - Phone (828) 264-1430
Fax (828) 264-1473

TO: Deron Geouque, County Manager

FROM: Robert Marsh, Maintenance Director 

DATE: February 2, 2023

RE: Capital Projects

I have summarized the current or recently-completed major building projects in the attached chart. I have included information regarding the Administration Building roof even though it was completed prior to FY 22-23, because it is part of the ongoing design build contract with Muter Construction.

DESIGN BUILD CAPITAL PROJECTS						
Building	Project	Contractor	Budget	Cost to Date	% Complete	Completion Date
Admin	Roof	Design Build Muter Const	\$3,509,509	\$2,609,563	100%	2019
Courthouse	Roof	" "	In above	In above	95%	May '23
Human Services	Roof HVAC	" "	" "	" "	95%	Feb '23
LEC	Roof HVAC	" "	" "	" "	75%	May '23
Courthouse	Change Order Foundation Waterproofing	" "	" "	" "	100%	Oct '22
Courthouse	Stormwater Design	Muter/Municipal Engineering	" "	" "	100%	July '22
Human Services	Change Order Replace deteriorated metal decking	" "	" "	" "	100%	Nov '22
OTHER PROJECTS						
Courthouse	Stormwater system replacement	Iron Mtn	\$123,154	\$123,154	100%	Oct '22
Courthouse	Rebuild Water Service	Iron Mtn	\$14,993	\$14,993	100%	Dec '22
Courthouse	Upgrade Courtroom CRAVE A/V System	NCAOC Wat Co Maint	\$10,000 to prewire AOC will supply equipment	0	0%	Feb '23
Courthouse	Upgrade Courtroom wireless WAVE system	NCAOC Wat Co. Maint	\$5,000 to prewire AOC will supply equipment	0	0%	April '23
LEC	HVAC Controls Replacement	Alpha Energy Solutions	\$47,978	0	0%	April '23
Library	HVAC Replacement of DX Cooling	TBD	\$150,000	0		Sept '23
Library	Repair Rear section Boiler	Nor-Well	\$2,870	\$2,870		
Courthouse	HVAC Upgrades	TBD	TBD	\$3,475 Design \$58,900 Chiller	25%	Dec '23

Courthouse	Water Damage Repair due to frozen pipe	Wat Co	TBD	TBD	50%	April '23
Admin	FAS Panel Replacement	TBD	TBD	TBD	0%	May '23
Admin	Water Damage Repair due to broken water filter	FRC Painting PBI Flooring WJ Office City NW Drywall Edmisten Heating & Cooling Wat Co.	\$79,149	\$9,785 \$69,364 paid by Ins.	100%	Dec '22
West Annex	FAS Panel Replacement	Creekside	\$11,244	\$11,244	0%	Feb '23
WWCC	Paint Interior	FRC Painting Wat Co	\$14,900	\$14,900	100%	Dec '22
WWCC	Replace Carpet	TBD	\$35,000	0	0%	April '23
Recreation Center	Water Damage due to frozen sprinkler valve	Creekside Elect Fire Sprinkler Systems	\$1,500 EST \$1,184	\$1,184	50%	Feb '23
Hannah Building	Reroof	TBD	\$363,925	0	0%	Sept '23
Hannah Bldg	Roof Design Const Admin	SKA Engineers	\$33,900	\$20,340	90%	Sept '23

Anita.Fogle

From: Brad Shields <bshields@blueridgeenergy.com>
Sent: Monday, January 16, 2023 2:42 PM
To: Deron.Geouque; Robbie Farmer; Brantley Davis
Cc: Jason Smith
Subject: Broadband Update

Hello Deron,

The following is an update on the 4 Phases of the Watauga Broadband Project. We are moving ahead at lightning speed to get your constituents lit with broadband.

Watauga Broadband Report Ending December 31, 2022

Project: Watauga Broadband Initiative (Watauga)
 County - Watauga
 Client Information: Blue Ridge Electric Membership Corporation
 Contact Information – Brad Shields, SVP/CCO - 828-759-8951

The following details are for updating construction activity for Phase 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Phase detail fiber trunk construction outlined below: (Refer to red path on mapped routes for each phase)

- Phase 1 - Powder Horn/Triplett 20 of 29.5 miles completed (Parkway crossing complete)
- Phase 2 – Wildcat/Stony Fork 19 of 22.5 miles completed (Parkway crossing complete)
- Phase 3 – Blackberry/Sampson 8 of 14 miles completed (Awaiting Parkway approval for underground)
- Phase 4 – Ray Brown/Howards Creek 6.5 of 6.5 miles completed and Fiber collocation hut set at Boone substation
- Fiber connectivity is complete and connected from the Landfill to the Weigh Station to the Recycle Center and finally the Garage/Animal Control.
- Fiber is also built from the Court House to the Health department and then on to the Sherriff’s Department. Splicing is still required for connectivity.
- Skyline/Skybest is in the process of setting huts and remote equipment across these areas

I will let you know as we complete each phase. We have crossed the Parkway with fiber to connect Powder Horn. SkyBest is working to complete the last mile of that Phase.

SkyBest will give you an update on their progress in the Castle Ford area and other areas related to their construction efforts.

Thanks Deron. Have a great day. Brad

BRAD SHIELDS
 SR. VP AND CCO
 1216 BLOWING ROCK BLVD NE
 PO BOX 112 • LENOIR, NC 28645
 Office: 828-759-8951
blueridgeenergy.com

Anita.Fogle

From: Robbie Farmer <Robbie.Farmer@skyline.org>
Sent: Tuesday, January 17, 2023 10:17 AM
To: Deron.Geouque
Cc: Brad Shields; Brantley Davis; Jason Smith; Kim Shepherd
Subject: SkyBest Watauga ARP Update

Deron,

I hope all is well. Below is an update from our perspective on the Watauga ARP buildout thus far. Hopefully this information is beneficial.

SkyBest has installed 50.93 miles of the estimated 85 miles of cable required for the project thus far. That equates to having 60% of our construction completed. Details on the cable we've installed are as follows:

Phase 1 - 26.55 miles of construction complete as follows:

- 12.32 miles in Castle Ford remote area.
- 2.27 miles in the Cascade Lane.
- 5.71 miles in the Green Valley School area
- 2.78 miles in the Profit Rd area
- 3.47 miles in the Hidden Hills area

Phase 2 - 12.61 miles in the Wildcat area.

Phase 3 - 4.46 miles in the Holloway Mountain area.

Phase 4 - 7.31 miles in the Howards Creek remote area

Two of our four planned remote buildings have been installed at 1343 NC Hwy 194 N in Boone (Howards Creek) and at 4931 Wildcat Rd in Deep Gap (Wildcat). Sampson and Powder Horn remote buildings will likely be placed this Spring / Summer.

Eighty (80) customers have taken service in the Castle Ford, Hidden Hills, and Cascade Ln areas to date. Broadband take rate thus far has been 50% - this is a very strong take rate this early into a build. These are the current active areas with others coming online soon very. Some of the next areas to come online will be Howards Creek, Profit Road, Green Valley, and Holloway Mt. Howards Creek and Profit road should come online by late February / early March. The others will come online as electronics and other required materials arrive.

We anticipate a busy Spring and Summer for customer installations as we bring these new sites online.

Hopefully this helps augment what Brad sent yesterday. Let me know if you have any questions or concerns that we can help you with.

Have a blessed day!

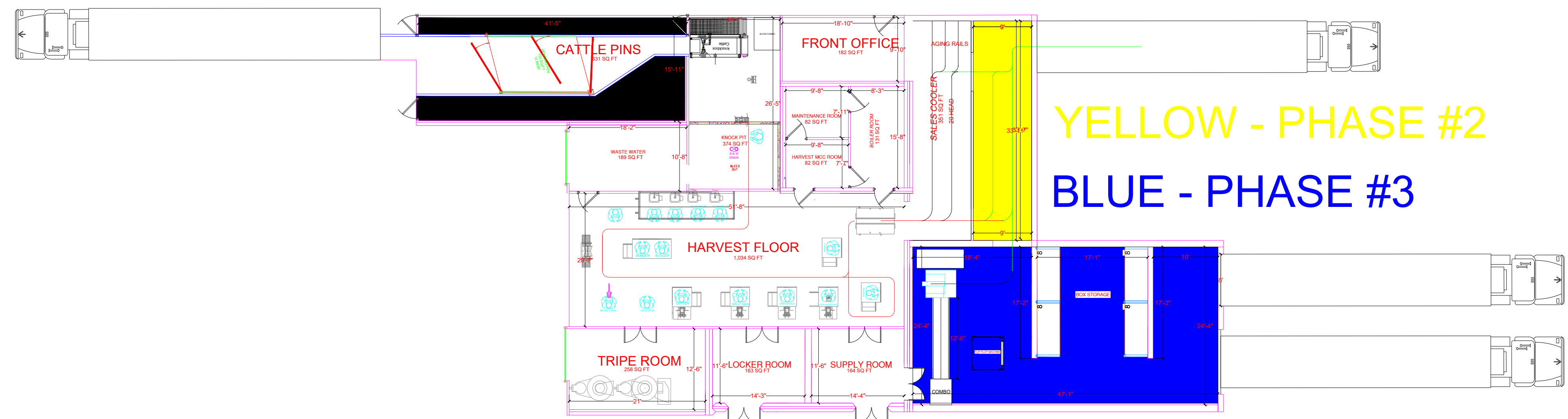
The Lord is my Shepherd

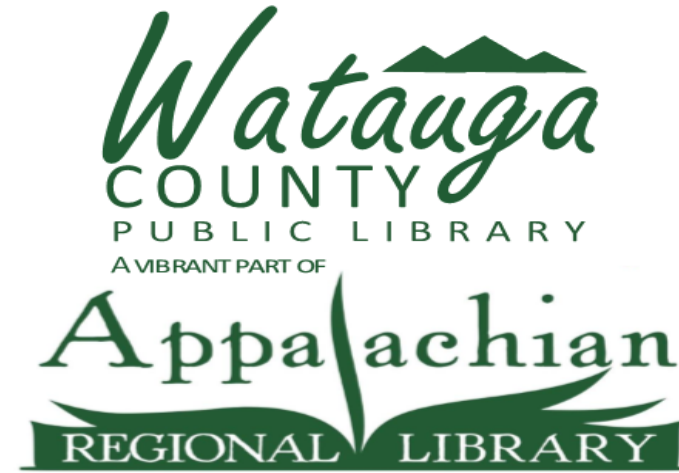
Robbie Farmer, Chief Technology Officer
SkyLine Membership Corp. | SkyBest Communications

O: (336) 876-6281 | www.skybest.com   

SkyLine  **SkyBest**







Watauga County Public Library

The Need for Expansion

By the Numbers

Watauga County Public Library 2022



32,587
residents have a library card, or 58%

An average of

7,928 people visited monthly.
Branch = 490



NC Cardinal Library Consortium provides access to over 7 million items including:



Books



Movies



Audio

183,297 items were loaned last year. For the Branch, it was **15,264**.



Circulation has increased **13%** since last year!

E-book and e-audio circulation has **increased 27%** from 2017-2021. E-audio circulation increased by 4% in 2022



101,026 people visited the Main Library (+38%)
5,880 people visited the Branch (+ 56%)



Wi-Fi usage increased at Main Library by **24%** and at the Branch by **81%**.

326 programs with **11,011** attending, Branch = **36** with **593** attending

The Library welcomed 101 volunteers last year for 3,981 hours. According to the Independent Sector, this equates to \$119,230 @ \$29.95 per hour.



Ashe Wilkes and Watauga Libraries are part of the Appalachian Regional Library.



WCPL is open 56 hours weekly, Branch = 32 hours

Appalachian Regional Library employs **60** staff



In 2022, the meeting room was used 106 times by outside groups with **1,346** attendees. The usage more than doubled compared to 2021.



The Need for an Expansion

Building is 26 years old

Building was built 1/3 smaller than planned

Per NC Public Library Standards and subtracting the ASU student population, the **Essential** size is 23,400 sq. ft.

HVAC and carpeting/furnishings are 26 years old

The building is not currently adequate to meet community demand

More space is needed for children's, teen and adult programming (particularly more STEM activities)

Our teens have no dedicated space of their own

The Need for an Expansion, cont.

Many times we have to turn groups away due to meeting room demand. If we had more meeting space, this would help resolve the problem. Outside groups and library programs are in constant competition to use a single meeting room

There is very little comfortable, quiet reading space for working and retired adults

Space for Digital Watauga work and genealogy/local history materials

Space for Friends group book sales, book sorting, and storage

Office space for Youth, Adult and Circulation staff

History of Recommendations to Expand the Boone Facility...

During Watauga County Public Library's strategic planning process (2021-2026) with our consultant and after interviews, focus groups, and a large random mailed sample survey, the final report recommendations stated:

- A) In terms of what is missing (random survey) expansion of the Boone Library was listed
- B) "Expand the physical facilities and/or seek a bond referendum to build a new library – everyone agrees the library in Boone is too small."

Facilities Assessment done by Sheary Associates, LLC, 2017 quote:

- A) "Additional square footage is needed and how much and for what purposes depends on the library's service philosophy and priorities."
- B) "Since additional square footage for the Boone building has been identified as the highest priority, exploration of how that might be accomplished is worthwhile."

Expansion Progress to date

Contracted with Solid Rock Engineering and they determined that a basement is possible.

Feasibility Study completed with Whitney Jones, Inc.

Whitney Jones Inc. fundraising firm may help us with private fundraising via the Friends of the Watauga County Public Library.
The Friends first need to know if the county will commit funding.

An account for building expansion donations is active through Allen Wealth. Jane Blackburn is the Campaign Treasurer and Doris Isaacs will be Assistant Treasurer.

In July, Ramsay Burgin Smith Architects created a building program that shows the potential increase in square footage needed for all spaces in the Library.

According to the NC Public Library Standards for Facilities:

Recommended Size
Total Gross Square Feet per Capita for populations 25,000 – 99,000

Wat. Co. total pop = 56,500

Minus ASU students(20,500)= 36000

Essential = 36,725 sf
Enhanced = 39,550 sf
Exemplary = 42,375 sf

Essential = 23,400 sf
Enhanced = 25,200 sf
Exemplary = 27,000 sf



Feasibility Study Result

Funding: 60% of interview participants rated a \$1.3 million private sector capital campaign for the Library as a high priority for their own giving, and 31% rated it as a medium priority. Over 90% felt that a lead gift of \$200,000 toward the \$1.3 million goal would be possible or perhaps possible.

In addition, everyone interviewed indicated they or their company or foundation would support a campaign, and a few mentioned the possibility of making a six figure gift. All respondents believed that achieving a \$5 million goal for the expansion and renovation project in 2023 would be largely dependent upon the County's capacity to make a significant commitment to the project, plus the Town's consideration of a gift as well.

A number of private sector donors said their giving depends on what the County decides to contribute since the Library is a County facility.

Grants for construction

Will investigate Appalachian Regional Commission funds through the NC Dept. of Commerce

Federal grant opportunities

Thank you for your support and consideration to invest in our community!

History: The original library, constructed in 1997, was originally designed to be 22,000sf. Due to costs, the building was reduced to its current size of 16,000sf. Over the past year, Appalachian Architecture and Municipal Engineering have been working with the library in developing conceptual plans for an expansion based on current and projected library use to serve the next generation of users. The proposed expansion will add approximately 9,000sf to the main level with an additional 2nd story mezzanine level of approximately 6,000sf and an optional 8,000sf basement.

Zoning: The property is currently located in the B1 Downtown Interface Zoning District. As such, approval of the design is subject to the approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness' from the Historic District Commission. See permitting options below.

Optional Basement – Topography on the existing site would allow for the construction of a basement. Sample soil borings taken in the proposed expansion area indicates the soils could be excavated for a daylighted basement.

Features of the proposed expansion:

- Increases square footage of main floor of the existing library by 54%; with 2nd floor level mezzanine - 89% with optional basement 138%
- New main entry with centralized circulations desk (security)
- Enlarged community meeting room (divisible into smaller meeting rooms) w/ separate entry
- Exterior design compatible with the existing building design
- Separate basement entry for receiving/shipping/cataloging and future expansion

Drawings are conceptual only. Interior space planning is diagrammatic, illustrating only one of many possible layouts. As the expansion plans are further developed, an interior space planner specializing in modern library design should assist the library in determining the best use of the space provided.

PROJECTED COSTS

<u>SITE IMPROVEMENTS</u>		\$.250 million
<u>NEW CONSTRUCTION</u>	Main level	9,071sf x \$425.00 = \$ 3.855 million
	Mezzanine	5,912sf x \$425.00 = \$ 2.512 million
	Basement	8,211sf x \$425.00 = \$ 3.489 million
<u>RENOVATE EXISTING</u>	Main level	16,840sf x \$225.00 = \$ 3.789 million.....TOTAL = \$ 13.9million

*Proposed addition would require installation of new fire sprinkler system throughout entire building
Existing 1996 Mechanical system upgrades – Current County budgeting has some monies allocated for upgrading the existing original 1996 mechanical systems which, if timing allowed, could possibly offset some of the costs.
Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment (FFE) would be paid for by donations through the 'Friends of the Library'.*

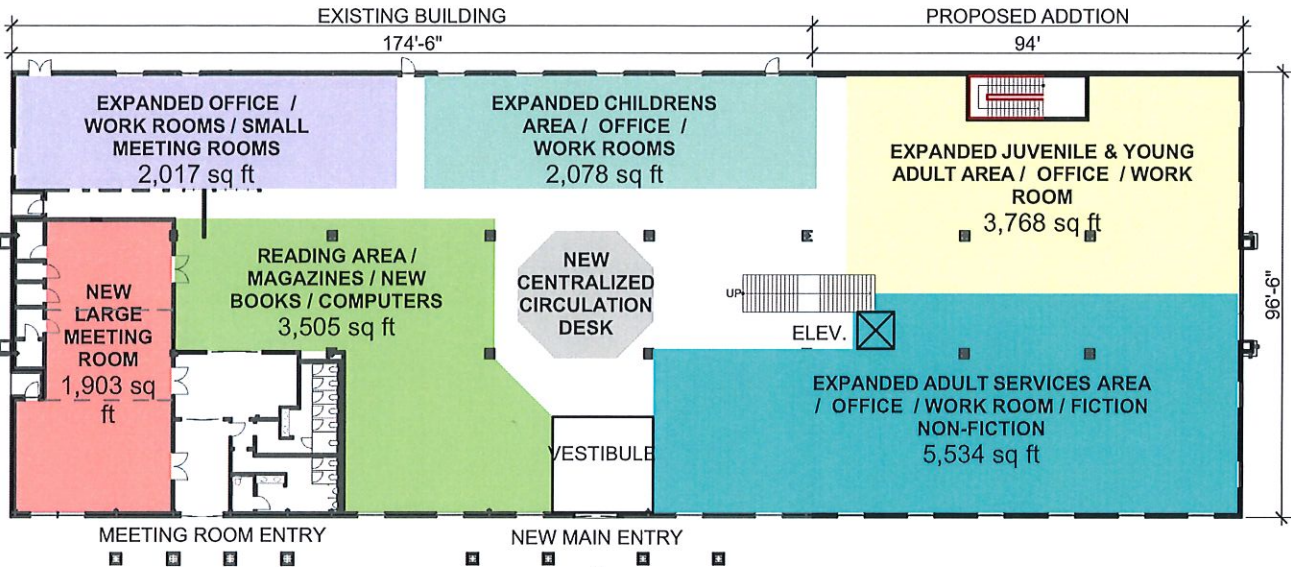
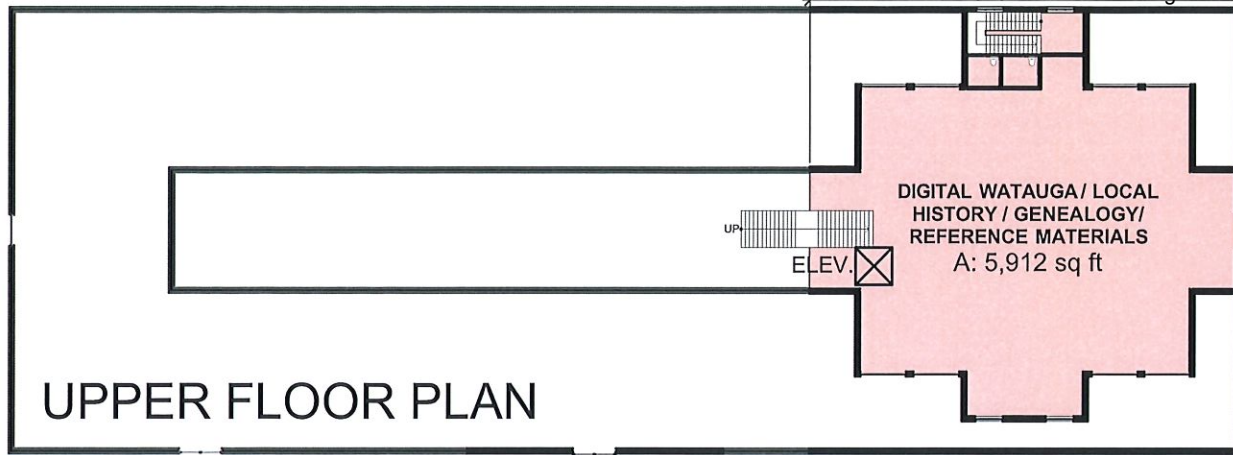
PERMITTING – Property is current zoned- B1 Interface District (B1ID). The 'Appearance Standards' in the Town's Zoning Ordinance would **NOT** permit approval of the current design in the B1ID. The County might consider having the property rezoned to Office/Institutional (O/I) which would not subject the addition to the scrutiny and approval of the Town's Historic Preservation Commission. **Rezoning Options** – O/I or Conditional District (site specific) rezoning

SITE ISSUES

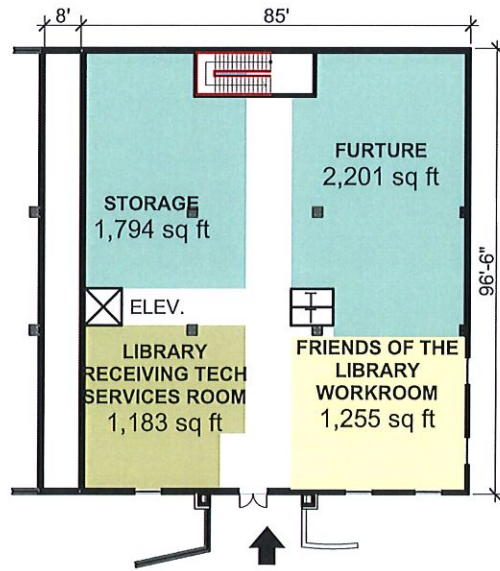
SIDEWALKS- Town's zoning ordinance would require the County to install sidewalks along the property facing both Queen Street and Depot Street. Because of the grades and limited space along Depot Street, the town might accept 'payment in lieu of' installation of the sidewalk at Depot Street. T.B.D.

PARKING – Current parking requirements are based on 'maximum use' - not minimum requirements. There would appear to be sufficient parking on the site to serve the proposed library expansion; notwithstanding previous agreements with the Town regarding the leased parking spaces in the parking area above the current building.





MAIN FLOOR PLAN



LOWER FLOOR PLAN

Facts and Figures

Watauga County Library Expansion

Existing 1-story Library (96'-6" x 174'-6")	16,840 sqft on one level
Expansion	
Main Level (96'-6" x 94'-0")	9,071 square feet
Mezzanine (varies)	5,912 square feet
Basement (96'-6" x 85')	8,211 square feet
TOTAL	23,194 square feet
TOTAL (After expansion)	40,034 square feet

BUILDING INFORMATION

Sprinkler - expansion will require the entire building to be protected by an automatic fire sprinkler system

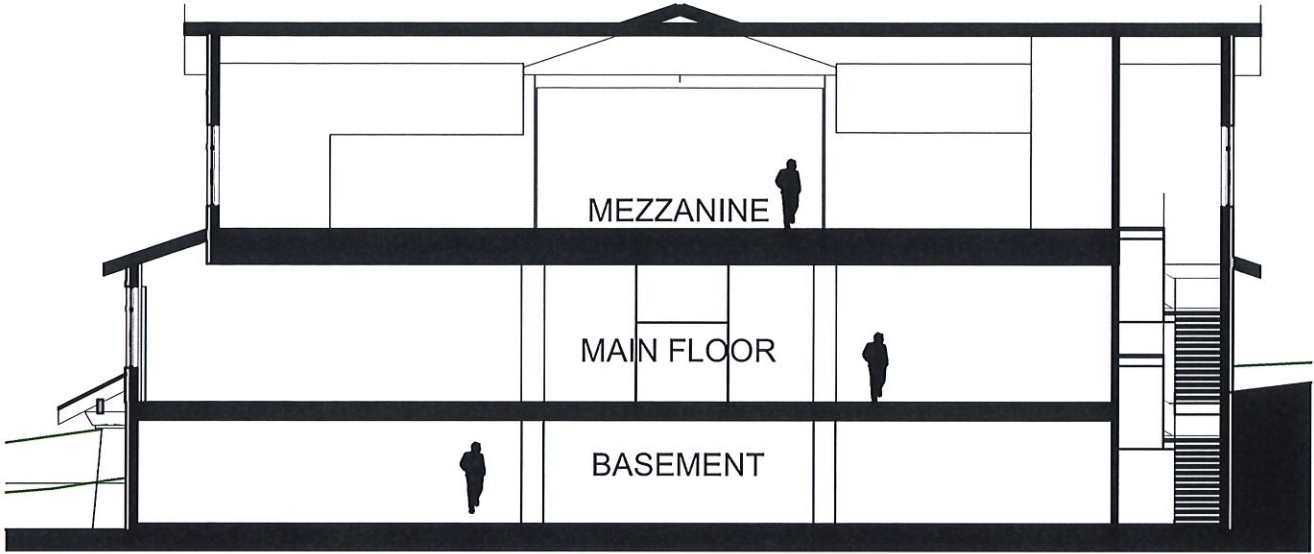
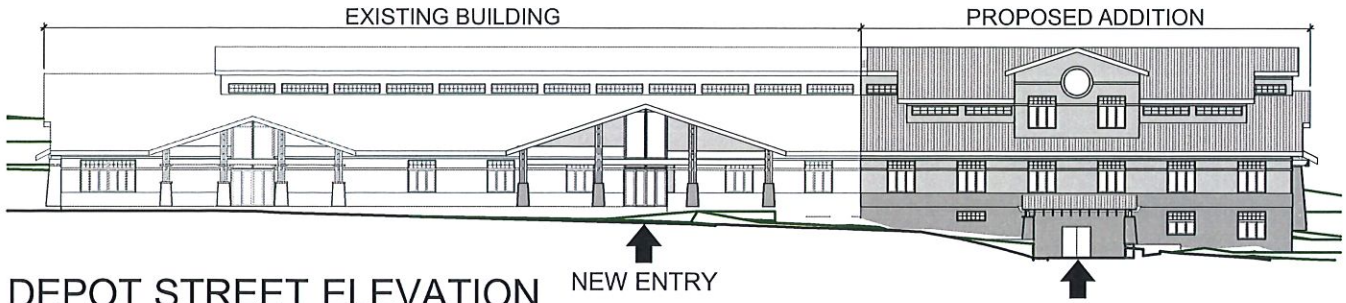


**PROPOSED EXPANSION
WATAUGACOUNTY PUBLIC
LIBRARY**
Commissioners Planning Retreat
Feb 9/10 2023

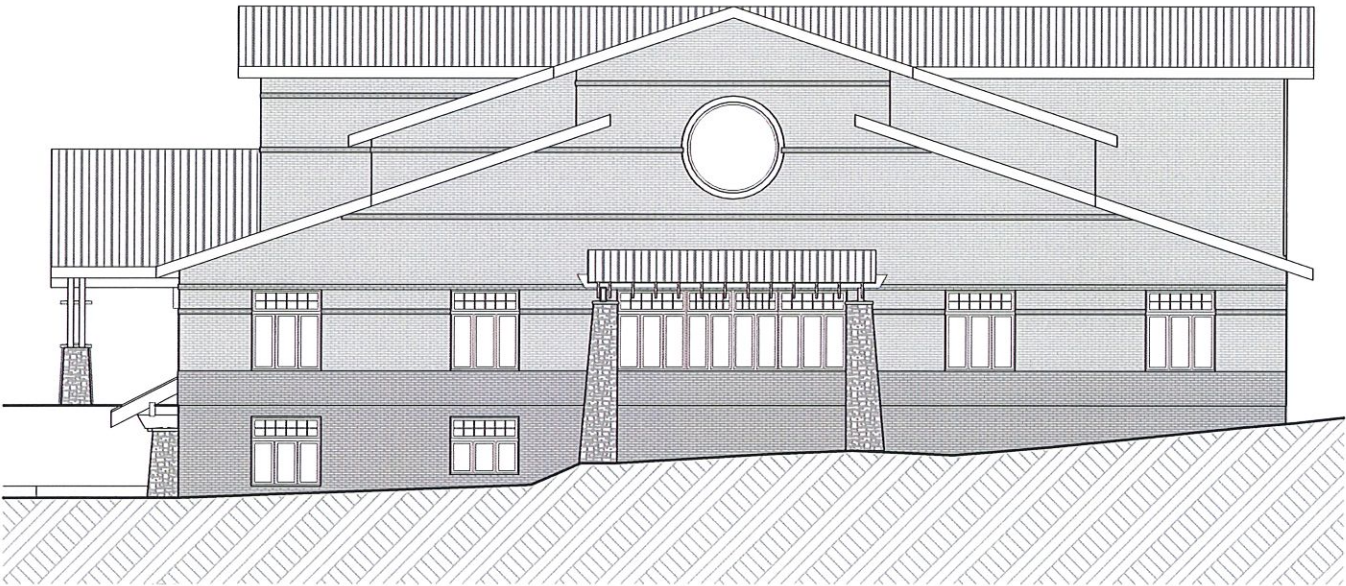


APPALACHIAN
ARCHITECTURE, PA
BILL DIXON, NCARB
703 W. KING ST.
SUITE 201
BOONE, NC 28607
828 265 2405
FAX: 828 265 2406





SECTION @ MEZZ



**PROPOSED EXPANSION
WATAUGACOUNTY PUBLIC
LIBRARY**
Commissioners Planning Retreat
Feb 9/10 2023



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STREET VIEW



NEW ENTRY VIEW



**PROPOSED EXPANSION
WATAUGACOUNTY PUBLIC
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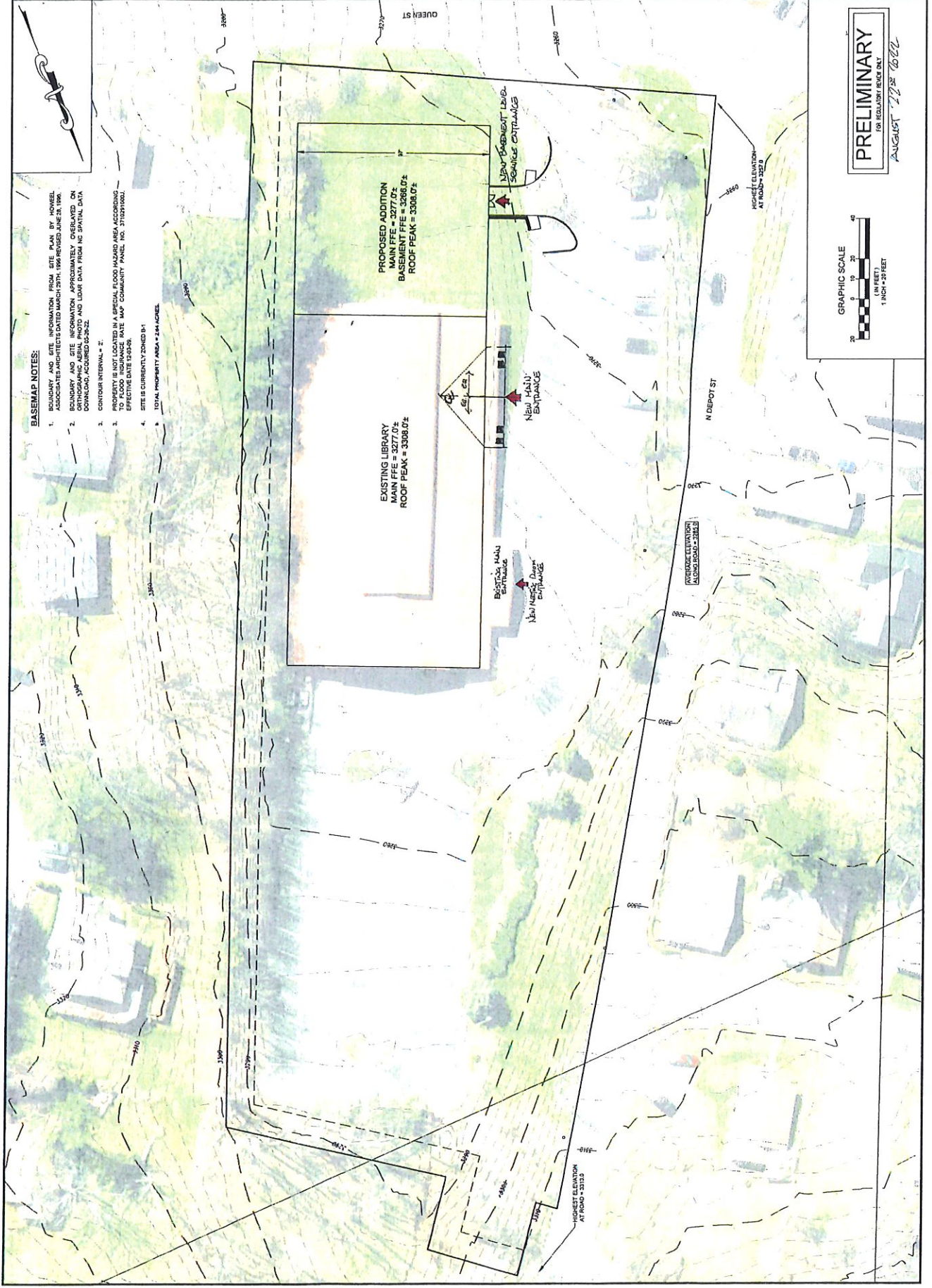
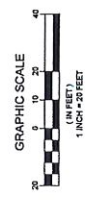
SCALE:	AS SHOWN
DATE:	8/22/22
DRAWN BY:	ADP
CHECKED BY:	ADP
DATE:	8/22/22
PROJECT NO.:	2023 Annual Pre-Budget
PROJECT NAME:	WATAUGA COUNTY LIBRARY BUILDING ADDITION
LOCATION:	QUEEN STREET, BOONE, NORTH CAROLINA
DRAWING NO.:	C-1
SHEET NO.:	2 OF 2

WATAUGA COUNTY LIBRARY
 BUILDING ADDITION
 QUEEN STREET
 BOONE, NORTH CAROLINA

MUNICIPAL ENGINEERING, INC.
 68 BIRCHWAY DRIVE, DANFERN, NC 27529 • PHONE 888-262-1767
 820-B STATE FARM ROAD, BOONE, NC 28607 • PHONE 888-262-1767
 LICENSE NUMBER: F-0813 & C-586



PRELIMINARY
 FOR REGULATORY REVIEW ONLY
 AUGUST 22, 2022



BASEMAP NOTES:

1. BOUNDARY AND SITE INFORMATION FROM SITE PLAN BY MICHAEL ASSOCIATES ARCHITECTS DATED MARCH 20TH, 1994 REVISION 3/16/94.
2. BOUNDARY AND SITE INFORMATION APPROXIMATELY DERIVED FROM ORTHOPHOTO AERIAL PHOTO AND LIGHT DATA FROM NC SPATIAL DATA DOWNLOAD, ACQUIRED 05-26-22.
3. CONTOUR INTERVAL = 2'
4. PROPERTY IS NOT LOCATED IN A SPECIAL FLOOD HAZARD AREA ACCORDING TO FLOOD INSURANCE RATE MAP COMMUNITY PANEL NO. 311030100A, EFFECTIVE DATE 12/03/04.
5. SITE IS CURRENTLY ZONED R-1
6. TOTAL PROPERTY AREA = 2.64 ACRES.

**NORTH CAROLINA
WATAUGA COUNTY**

SERVICE CONTRACT

THIS CONTRACT is made, and entered into this the 21st day of June, 2022, by and between the **COUNTY of WATAUGA**, a political subdivision of the State of North Carolina, (hereinafter referred to as "COUNTY"), and **Vincent Valuations LLC** a corporation duly authorized to do business in the state of North Carolina, (hereinafter referred to as "CONTRACTOR").

For and in consideration of mutual promises to each as herein after set forth, the parties hereto do mutually agree as follows:

1. **SCOPE OF SERVICES.** CONTRACTOR hereby agrees to provide the services and/or materials under this contract pursuant to the provisions and specifications identified in "Attachment 1" (hereinafter collectively referred to as "Services"). Attachment 1 is hereby incorporated herein and made a part of this contract. Time is of the essence with respect to all provisions of this contract that specify a time for performance.
2. **TERM OF CONTRACT.** The Term of this contract for services is from 7/1/2022 to 9/30/2027 unless sooner terminated as provided herein.
3. **PAYMENT TO CONTRACTOR.** COUNTY agrees to pay CONTRACTOR at the rates specified for Services performed to the satisfaction of the COUNTY, in accordance with this contract. Unless otherwise specified, CONTRACTOR shall submit an itemized invoice to COUNTY by the end of the month during which Services are performed. A Funds Reservation number may be assigned to encumber the funds associated with this contract and must appear on all invoices and correspondence mailed to Purchaser. Payment will be processed promptly upon receipt and approval of the invoice by COUNTY.
4. **INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR.** COUNTY and CONTRACTOR agree that CONTRACTOR is an independent contractor and shall not represent itself as an agent or employee of COUNTY for any purpose in the performance of CONTRACTOR's duties under this Contract. Accordingly, CONTRACTOR shall be responsible for payment of all federal, state and local taxes as well as business license fees arising out of CONTRACTOR's activities in accordance with this Contract. For purposes of this contract taxes shall include, but not be limited to, Federal and State Income, Social Security and Unemployment Insurance taxes.

CONTRACTOR, as an independent contractor, shall perform the Services required hereunder in a professional manner and in accordance with the standards of applicable professional organizations and licensing agencies.

5. **INDEMNIFICATION.** To the fullest extent permitted by laws and regulations, CONTRACTOR shall indemnify and hold harmless the COUNTY and its officials, agents, and employees from and against all claims, damages, losses, and expenses, direct, indirect, or consequential (including but not limited to fees and charges of engineers or architects, attorneys, and other professionals and costs related to court action or mediation) arising out of or resulting from CONTRACTOR's performance of this Contract or the actions of the CONTRACTOR or its officials, employees, or subcontractors under this Contract or under contracts entered into by the CONTRACTOR in connection with this Contract. This indemnification shall survive the termination of this Contract.

In claims against any person or entity indemnified under this provision by an employee of the CONTRACTOR, a subcontractor, an employee of a subcontractor, or an agent of the CONTRACTOR or a subcontractor, the indemnification obligation under this provision shall not be limited by a limitation on amount or type of damages, compensation or benefits payable by or for the CONTRACTOR or a subcontractor under workers' or workmen's compensation acts, disability benefit acts or other employee benefit acts.

6. INSURANCE. CONTRACTOR shall procure and maintain for the duration of the contract the following insurance coverage from an insurance company(s) licensed to do business in North Carolina. All of the policies required of the CONTRACTOR shall contain a waiver of subrogation provision to waive all rights of recovery under subrogation or otherwise against the COUNTY. In the event CONTRACTOR'S Insurance Policy or Certificate of Insurance conflicts with the aforesaid language concerning "waiver of subrogation" this contract shall govern. CONTRACTOR shall advise the COUNTY of any cancellation, non-renewal, or material change in any policy within ten (10) days of notification of such action and provide updated certificates of insurance evidencing renewals within fifteen (15) days of expiration. CONTRACTOR'S insurance shall be primary and any insurance or self-funded liability programs maintained by the COUNTY shall not contribute with respect to the CONTRACTOR's insurance. COUNTY shall not be listed as an additional insured on any Insurance Policy or Certificate of Insurance of the CONTRACTOR. In the event CONTRACTOR'S Insurance Policy or Certificate of Insurance conflicts with the aforesaid language concerning "additional insured" this contract shall govern.

6.1 Commercial General Liability: Insurance Services Office (ISO) Form CG 00 01 on an "occurrence" basis, including products and completed operations, property damage, bodily injury, and personal & advertising injury with limits no less than **\$1,000,000** per occurrence and **\$1,000,000** aggregate.

6.2 Commercial Automobile Liability: ISO Form CA 00 01 covering any auto with limit not less than **\$1,000,000** per accident for bodily injury and property damage.

6.3 Worker's Compensation and Employers Liability: as required by The State of North Carolina, with statutory limits, and Employers Liability Insurance with a limit of no less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence.

By requiring insurance herein, the COUNTY does not represent that coverage and limits will necessarily be adequate to protect CONTRACTOR, and such coverage and limits shall not be deemed as a limitation on CONTRACTOR's liability under the indemnities granted to the COUNTY in this Contract. CONTRACTOR shall provide the COUNTY a valid certificate of insurance, in advance of the performance of any work, exhibiting coverage required. CONTRACTOR shall require and verify that all subcontractors maintain insurance meeting all the requirements stated herein.

The failure of the COUNTY at any time to enforce the insurance provisions, to demand such certificates of insurance, or to identify a deficiency shall not constitute a waiver of those provisions, nor reduce obligations of the CONTRACTOR to maintain such insurance or to meet its obligations under the indemnification provisions. Notwithstanding the foregoing, nothing contained in this section shall be deemed to constitute a waiver of the governmental immunity of the COUNTY, which immunity is hereby reserved to the COUNTY.

7. TERMINATION.

7.1. EVENT OF DEFAULT. Any one or more of the following acts or omissions of the Contractor shall constitute an Event of Default hereunder:

- a. Failure to perform the Services satisfactorily or on schedule,
- b. Failure to submit any report required hereunder; and/or
- c. Failure to perform any other covenant, term, or condition of this Agreement.

Upon the occurrence of an Event of Default, the County may take one or more or all of the following actions:

1. Give Contractor written Notice of the Event of Default, specifying the Event of Default and requiring it to be remedied within, in the absence of greater or lesser specification of time, seven (7) calendar days from the date of the notice; and if the Event of Default is not timely

remedied, terminate the agreement, effective two (2) days after giving the Contractor written Notice of Termination; and/or

2. Deduct any and all expenses incurred by the County for damages caused by the Contractor's Event of Default; and/or
3. Treat the agreement as breached and pursue any of its remedies at law or in equity, or both, including damages and specific performance.

7.2 TERMINATION PAYMENT. In the event this contract is terminated for any reason, the CONTRACTOR shall be compensated only for work completed through the termination date. Any incomplete work will be compensated on a pro-rata basis.

- 8. COUNTY NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR EXPENSES.** COUNTY shall not be liable to CONTRACTOR for any expenses paid or incurred by CONTRACTOR, unless otherwise agreed in writing.
- 9. EQUIPMENT.** CONTRACTOR shall supply, at its sole expense, all equipment, tools, materials, and/or supplies required to provide Services hereunder, unless otherwise agreed in writing.
- 10. COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS.** CONTRACTOR shall abide by all statutes, rules, regulations, laws, and executive orders Federal, State and Local as they relate to, but are not limited to, (i) services in general, (ii) payment of employees, subcontractors and agents, (iii) the Fair Labor Standards Act and (iv) the Wage and Hour Division. In the event CONTRACTOR is determined by the final order of a court or appropriate agency to be in violation of any Federal, State or Local statute, rule, regulation, law or executive order or this provision, this Contract may be canceled, terminated or suspended in whole or in part by COUNTY and CONTRACTOR may be declared ineligible for further COUNTY contracts.
- 11. HEALTH AND SAFETY.** CONTRACTOR shall be responsible for initiating, maintaining and supervising all safety precautions and programs required by OSHA and all other regulatory agencies while providing Services under this Contract.
- 12. NON-DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT.** CONTRACTOR shall not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of age, sex, race, creed, national origin, or disability. CONTRACTOR shall take affirmative action to ensure that qualified applicants are employed and that employees are treated fairly and legally during employment with regard to their age, sex, race, creed, national origin, or disability. In the event CONTRACTOR is determined by the final order of an appropriate agency or court to be in violation of any non-discrimination provision of federal, state or local law or this provision, this Contract may be canceled, terminated or suspended in whole or in part by COUNTY, and CONTRACTOR may be declared ineligible for further COUNTY contracts.
- 13. AUDIT RIGHTS.** For all Services being provided hereunder, COUNTY shall have the right to inspect, examine, and make copies of any and all books, accounts, invoices, records and other writings relating to the performance of the Services. Audits shall take place at times and locations mutually agreed upon by both parties. Notwithstanding the foregoing, CONTRACTOR must make the materials to be audited available within one (1) week of the request for them.
- 14. DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURE.** To prevent disputes and litigation, it is agreed by the parties that any claim or dispute between COUNTY and the CONTRACTOR, arising from this Agreement or the services and/or materials being provided by the CONTRACTOR, shall be sent to the WATAUGA County Manager who shall appoint a qualified mediator to address the issue. Such request shall be submitted to the County Manager in writing within ten (10) days of the claim or dispute. Upon receipt of a timely written claim, the Manager, or his designee, shall notify the Mediator who will conduct a mediation and notify the CONTRACTOR in writing of the decision within forty five (45) calendar days from the date of the submission of the claim or dispute,

unless the Mediator requires additional time to gather information or allow the parties to provide additional information. The Mediator's orders, decisions and decrees shall be non-binding. Mediation, pursuant to this provision, shall be a pre-condition to initiating litigation concerning the dispute. During the pendency of any dispute and after a determination thereof, parties to the dispute shall act in good faith to mitigate any potential damages including utilization of schedule changes and alternate means of providing services and/or materials. The costs of mediation shall be divided equally between parties to the dispute.

The mediation session shall be private and shall be held in WATAUGA County, North Carolina. Mediation under this provision shall not be the cause for a delay of services and/or materials being provided which is the focus of the dispute.

If the disputed issue cannot be resolved in mediation or either party disagrees with the results of the mediation, the parties may seek resolution in the General Court of Justice in the County of WATAUGA and the State of North Carolina. If a party fails to comply in strict accordance with the requirements of this provision, the non-complying party specifically waives all of its rights provided hereunder, including its rights and remedies under State law.

15. **EXISTENCE.** CONTRACTOR warrants that it is a corporation or otherwise legal entity duly organized, validly existing, and in good standing under the laws of the State of North Carolina and is duly qualified to do business in the State of North Carolina and has full power and authority to enter into and fulfill all the terms and conditions of this contract.
16. **NON-SOLICITATION.** During the period of agreement and for the period of six months following the project completion date, the County will not solicit for employment or hire any Company employee without the express written consent of the Company.
17. **FORCE MAJEURE.** In no event shall the CONTRACTOR be responsible or liable for any failure or delay in the performance of its obligations hereunder arising out of or caused by, directly or indirectly, forces beyond its control, including, without limitation, strikes, work stoppages, extreme periods of inflation, accidents, acts of war or terrorism, civil or military disturbances, nuclear or natural catastrophes or acts of God, and interruptions, loss or malfunctions of utilities, communications or computer (software and hardware) services; it being understood that the CONTRACTOR shall use reasonable efforts which are consistent with accepted practices in the appraisal industry to resume performance as soon as practicable under the circumstances.
18. **CORPORATE AUTHORITY.** By execution hereof, the person signing for CONTRACTOR below certifies that he/she has read this contract and that he/she is duly authorized to execute this contract on behalf of the CONTRACTOR.
19. **SUCCESSORS AND ASSIGNS.** CONTRACTOR shall not assign its interest in this Contract without the written consent of COUNTY. CONTRACTOR has no authority to enter into contracts on behalf of COUNTY.
20. **NOTICES.** All notices which may be required by this contract or any rule of law shall be effective when received by certified mail sent to the following addresses:

COUNTY OF WATAUGA
ATTN: Larry Warren, Tax Administrator
842 WEST KING STREET, SUITE 21
BOONE, NC 28607

CONTRACTOR
ATTN: Ryan Vincent
226 COWAND RD
Merry Hill, North Carolina 27957

21. HEADINGS. The subject headings of the sections are included for purposes of convenience only and shall not affect the construction or interpretation of any of its provisions. This contract shall be deemed to have been drafted by both parties and no interpretation shall be made to the contrary.

22. GOVERNING LAW. This Contract shall be governed by and in accordance with the laws of the State of North Carolina. All actions relating in any way to this Contract shall be brought in the General Court of Justice in the County of WATAUGA and the State of North Carolina.

23. ENTIRE CONTRACT. This contract, including Attachment 1, shall constitute the entire understanding between COUNTY and CONTRACTOR and shall supersede all prior understandings and agreements relating to the subject matter hereof and may be amended only by written mutual agreement of the parties.


24. COMPUTER ACCESS. The county shall provide remote access to the counties CAMA system, Tyler IAS, along with any other relevant data bases required to complete data entry work such as Survey 123.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, the parties have expressed their agreement to these terms by causing this Service Contract to be executed by their duly authorized officer or agent.

COUNTY OF WATAUGA

 Chairman
Name and Title

Print Name/Title: John Welch, Chairman, Board of Commissioners

CONTRACTOR
By: 
Authorized Representative

Print Name/Title: Ryan Vincent Member/Manager

ATTACHMENT 1" to follow

This instrument has been preaudited in the manner required by the local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act.


Date Finance Director



VINCENT
VALUATIONS

Watauga County Managers Office
Deron Geouque, County Manager

Mr. Geouque,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a proposal to Watauga County for the 2027 General Reappraisal (Revaluation) Project. Vincent Valuations has a respectable understanding of the requirements and needs of the County. Our expertise, services and review processes align and match the goals and expectations set forth.

Our staff has completed and assisted multiple counties with their statutory general reappraisals (revaluations). We have developed time tested methods to accurately and efficiently complete revaluations ensuring quality, and property attributes are accurately recorded and identified. It is our goal to work with the county throughout the project, learning your processes and offering any input for improvement practices that will save the county both time and money.

We propose the following rates for services for the 2027 revaluation:

Full measure and list reappraisal including the following:

- Full measure and list of each property in the county by qualified staff appraisers
- Photographs
- All reappraisal related data entry
- Full in office review
- Schedule of Values development and presentation
- 100 Person days of appeals

The above services shall be invoiced at a rate of \$38.50 per parcel.

In addition to the full measure and list reappraisal Vincent Valuations can assist the county with the statutory duties of annual new construction appraisal. Staff will visit all permits, collect all pertinent information, take photographs, and deliver the information to county data entry staff. Staff will review the data entered values for accuracy and consistency and ensure the appraised values are inline with the current schedule of values.

The above services shall be invoiced at a rate of \$29.50 per parcel.

We welcome feedback and thank you for this opportunity. Vincent Valuations is excited about the Watauga County project. We are hopeful for the opportunity to work with the county on this very important project.

Ryan Vincent



Watauga County

2022 Summary

Vincent Valuations

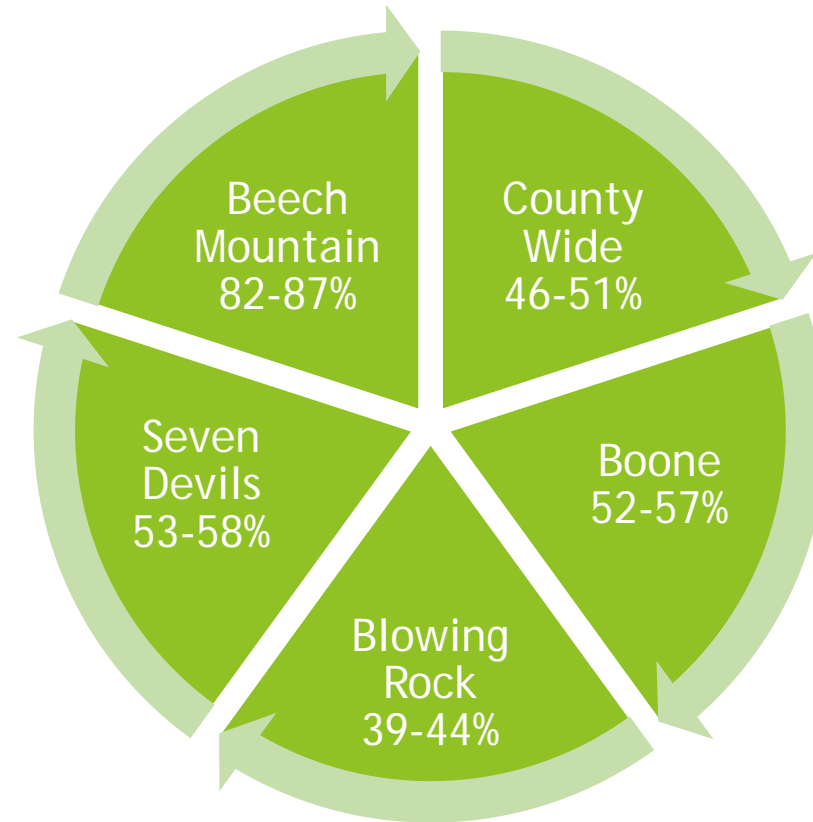


Watauga County Data 2022 Reappraisal

- ▶ Effective 1-2-22
- ▶ Overall countywide change was between 46-51%
- ▶ 82% of properties have a value higher than in 2014
- ▶ 18% of properties have a value lower than in 2014
- ▶ 19% of all properties changed by +/-15% or less



Jurisdictional Change



Appeals, Board of Equalization, and PTC

- ▶ 2,146 appeals were filed
- ▶ 297 individual parcels went to the Board of Equalization and Review
- ▶ 224 cases were heard at the Board of Equalization and Review
- ▶ 35 of these cases have filed for PTC hearings
 - ▶ 4 of these cases have consented and 2 have withdrawn



Median Household Price in Watauga County

- ▶ Per statistics from Realtor.com
 - ▶ January 2022 median list price \$486,000 with median days on market of 70
 - ▶ December 2022 median list price \$550,000 with median days on market of 69



Tax Office Contracting

- ▶ July 2022 Watauga County contracted with Vincent Valuations to complete the following:
 - ▶ Appraisal of New Construction and Permits
 - ▶ The following slides will show a small amount of the items that have been discovered throughout this process
 - ▶ Full Measure and List Reappraisal for 2027
 - ▶ County has not completed this process in over 20 years
 - ▶ A staff appraiser will visit each property in the county over the next 3 years verifying essential appraisal data
 - ▶ This will ensure the County stays in compliance with NCDOR and IAAO guidelines



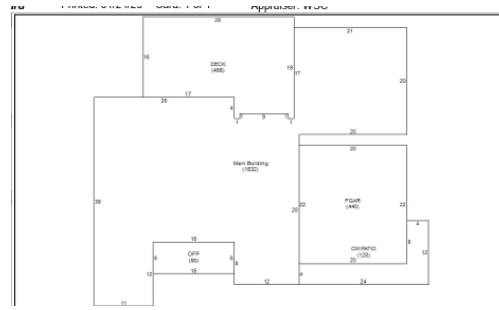
Permit/New Construction Inspections

- ▶ 2,546 unique permits have been inspected
- ▶ 375 permits have been marked for re-inspection
- ▶ 2,171 permits have been closed out

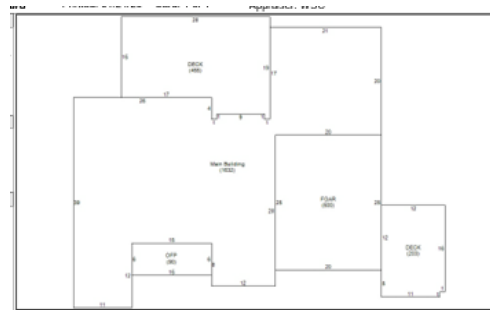


Examples of Discoveries

- ▶ The following Parcels have had changes that were discovered during inspections that did not pertain to the permit provided.
 - ▶ 1941-61-6915-000(717 Pine Ridge Rd, Beech Mountain, NC 28604)
 - ▶ A/C unit installed, discovered \$11,200 in deck additions.



Previous Sketch

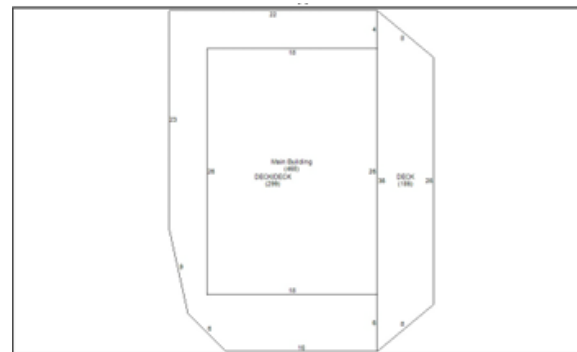


Current Sketch



Examples of Discoveries Continued

- ▶ 1940-94-6195-000(114 Village Cluster Rd, Beech Mountain, NC 28604)
 - ▶ Tree Cutting, discovered \$265,500 in new construction of a single-family home built 2019 (41% complete).

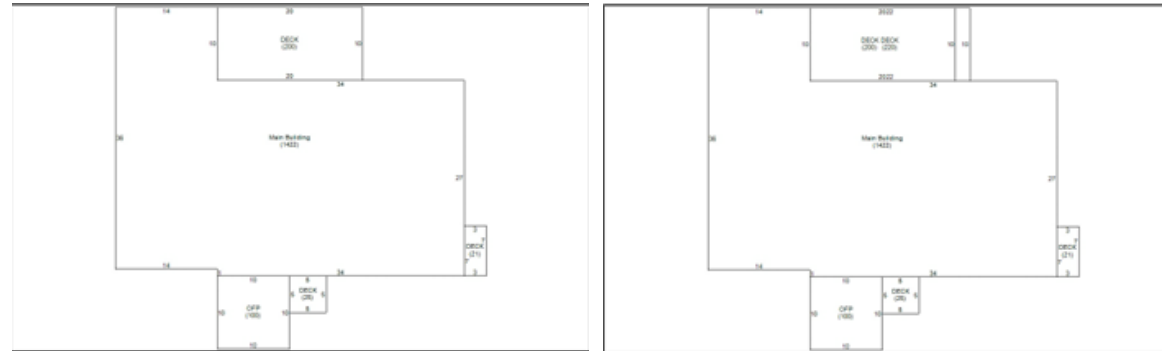


Current Sketch



Examples of Discoveries Continued

- ▶ 1940-57-9237-000(102 Columbine Ln, Beech Mountain, NC 28604)
 - ▶ Residential Electric, discovered \$147,200 in a deck addition and 1,442 SQF of finished basement not picked up.



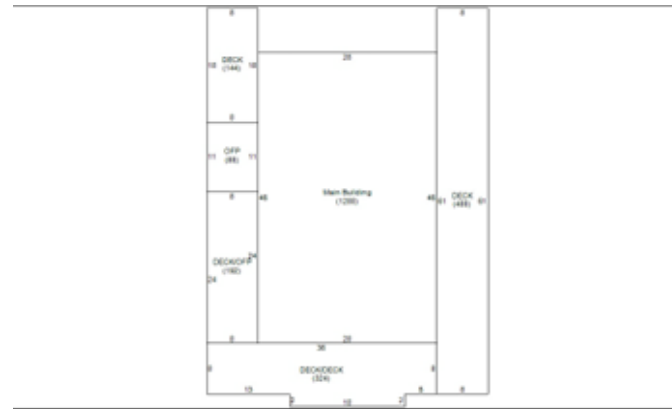
Previous Sketch

Current Sketch



Examples of Discoveries Continued

- ▶ 1940-84-0915-000(109 Raven Rd, Beech Mountain, NC 28604)
 - ▶ Tree Cutting, discovered \$921,900 in a 100% complete single family home built 2021.

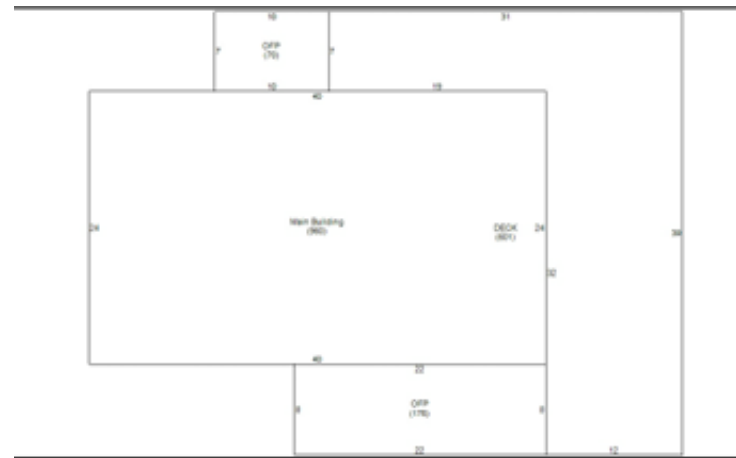


Current Sketch



Examples of Discoveries Continued

- ▶ 1941-60-5321-000(205 Poplar Dr, Beech Mountain, NC 28604)
 - ▶ Residential Fuel and Gas, discovered \$566,700 in new construction of a single-family home built 2021 (95% complete).

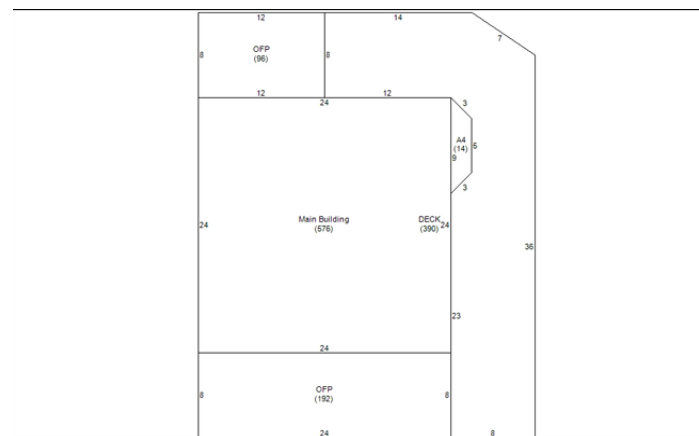


Current Sketch



Examples of Discoveries Continued

- ▶ 1972-99-1732-000(424 Isaacs Branch Rd, Sugar Grove, NC 28679)
 - ▶ Demolition/Electrical Alteration, discovered \$313,200 in a 100% complete single-family home built 2021.

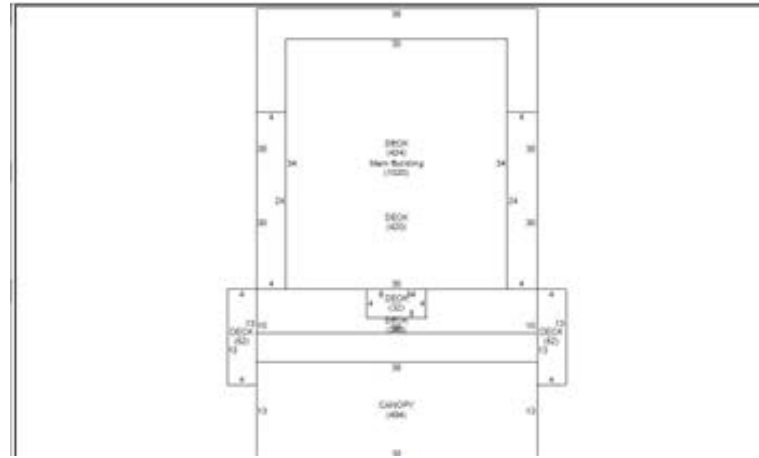


Current Sketch



Examples of Discoveries Continued

- ▶ 1878-15-6771-000(220 Deepwood Ct, Seven Devils, NC 28604)
 - ▶ Deck Remodel Permit, discovered \$45,200 in incorrectly coded additions and 540 SQF of finished basement.



Previous Sketch



Current Sketch



Questions?

Larry Warren, Tax Administrator

Ryan Vincent, Vincent Valuations LLC



WORKFORCE HOUSING

Please click on the links below for more information from the
2022 Housing Forums
&
Watauga Community Housing Trust

[Watauga Housing Council | NC \(hosphouse.org\)](https://www.hosphouse.org/)



<https://www.wataugacommunityhousingtrust.org/>



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

LEASE ADDENDUM TO
FUNDING AGREEMENT

COUNTY OF WATAUGA

THIS LEASE ADDENDUM TO FUNDING AGREEMENT (this "Lease Addendum" or this "Agreement") is made and entered into this 15TH day of November 2022 by and between the County of Watauga (hereinafter called "County" or "Landlord"), and the Boone Area Chamber of Commerce, a not-for-profit organization (hereinafter called "Chamber" or "Tenant"):

WITNESSETH

WHEREAS, the Chamber and County entered into a Funding Agreement on August 16, 2022 (the "Funding Agreement") the terms of which, generally speaking, state that the County shall grant financial support to establish a coordinated county-wide economic development program, the purpose of which shall be to guide growth in Watauga County by encouraging the creation of new jobs, or saving of existing jobs, which pay above-average wages, are in businesses which have a favorable or non-adverse impact on the physical or social environment, and which contribute to an appropriately balanced, stable, and vital local economy; and

WHEREAS, in conjunction with providing for the financial support of an established county-wide economic development program as detailed in the Funding Agreement, the County and Chamber desire to enter into a lease agreement for the Chamber to operate the portions of the Appalachian Enterprise Center building located at 130 Poplar Grove Connector which are not currently leased and operated by the High Country Workforce Development Board ("HCWFD") (the portion(s) that are the subject of this Agreement shall be referred to as the "Leased Premises");

WHEREAS, this Lease Addendum shall supplement the terms of the Funding Agreement only and shall not otherwise modify or amend same. Any conflict will be resolved in favor of the enforcement of the Funding Agreement; and

NOW THEREFORE, based on good and valuable consideration including, without limitation, the assumption by the Chamber of certain economic development services for the benefit of the whole County, and Landlord leases to Tenant and Tenant leases from Landlord the Leased Premises upon the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth:

1. PREMISES. All of the building known as the Appalachian Enterprise Center located at 130 Poplar Grove Connector, Boone, North Carolina, *LESS AND EXCEPT* the portion(s) leased to HCWFD as set forth in its Lease Agreement with the County which portion(s) are described as "approximately 2800 square feet" of the building which is shown as the red cross-hatched area on the drawing attached hereto and incorporated herein as Exhibit "A." Chamber accepts the Leased Premises in their present condition.

2. RELATIONSHIP OF PARTIES. Nothing in this Lease Agreement will change the Chambers' status as an independent contractor of the County. Any term read to imply that the Chamber is an agent or representative for the County shall be stricken. The Chamber cannot bind the County to any contract, obligation, servitude, covenant or other promise that the County has not acknowledged and to which it has not affixed its signature indicating consent in writing by the County Manager with approval of the Watauga County Board of Commissioners.

3. RENTS and OPERATIONS. The Chamber shall pay the County annual rent of \$1.00 per year for the Leased Premises. The Chamber shall collect rents due from subtenants/ lessees who rent a portion of the Leased Premises including, without limitation, offices and conference room(s) located therein, on a short or long-term basis. The Chamber is responsible for managing those subleases, and collecting rent from all subtenants/ sublessees. The Chamber may retain the rents collected subject to the Chamber's responsibility for certain operating expenses as provided in this Agreement. Any agreements entered into between the Chamber and any sublessee/ subtenant/ contractor for use of any portion of the Leased Premises must not violate any term of or be inconsistent with this Agreement or the Funding Agreement.

4. UTILITIES, OTHER EXPENSES, REPAIRS. The County shall continue to pay for the power, heating, air conditioning, and water and wastewater-related utilities. The County shall be responsible for all repairs to the Leased Premises and building in which it is located except for repairs made necessary by the negligence or willful misconduct of the Chamber or any sublessee/ users of the Leased Premises. All other utilities/ regular monthly expenses shall be paid by Chamber including, without limitation, phone, internet, copier lease/ supplies and repairs, and cleaning of the Leased Premises. Responsibility to pay for a utility service shall include all metering, hookup fees or other miscellaneous charges associated with the installation and maintenance of such utility.

5. IMPROVEMENTS; ALTERATIONS. Tenant shall not nor shall allow anyone else to make any alterations, additions, or improvements to the Leased Premises without Landlord's prior written consent which it may withhold in its sole discretion. Tenant shall promptly remove any alterations, additions, or improvements constructed in violation of this paragraph upon Landlord's written request. All approved alterations, additions, and improvements will be accomplished in a good and workmanlike manner, in conformity with all applicable laws and regulations, and by a contractor approved by Landlord, free of any liens or encumbrances

6. TERM AND CANCELLATION. The term of this Agreement shall run concurrently with that of the Funding Agreement, and any renewals, extensions, or cancellation of this Lease Addendum shall be the same as those set forth in the Funding Agreement. Likewise, any amendments thereto shall automatically serve to amend this Lease Addendum.

7. TENANT'S COMPLIANCE; INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS. Tenant shall comply with all applicable laws, ordinances and regulations affecting the Leased Premises, now existing or hereafter adopted, including without limitation, The Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 (the "ADA"), and any Rules and Regulations, if any, adopted by Landlord. The insurance requirements for the Parties set forth in the Funding Agreement are incorporated herein by reference as if fully set forth. In addition thereto, Landlord shall keep the building in which the Leased Premises are located, including the improvements not required to be insured by the Tenant under this Agreement, insured against damage and destruction by perils insured by the equivalent of ISO Special Form Property Insurance in the amount of the replacement value of the Building. Each party shall keep its personal property and trade fixtures in the Leased Premises and Building insured with the equivalent of ISO Special Form Property Insurance in the amount of the full replacement cost of the property and fixtures. In the event of a partial or full casualty event, it will be in the County's sole discretion whether, when, and how to make any repairs or to rebuild, and it may immediately terminate this Agreement (and the subleases) and account for the rent paid to date. All insurance proceeds resulting from any such event shall be the sole property of the County and the County is not obligated to pay any expenses or damages incurred by the Chamber or any subtenant/ sublessee associated with loss of personal property, business interruption or other loss.

The Chamber must be in compliance with all insurance requirements and terms set forth in the Funding Agreement including, without limitation, notice(s), proof of insurance (certificates satisfactory to the County), etc. prior to taking possession of and/ or commencing managing and operating the Leased Premises and reconfirm all such requirements are met annually thereafter prior to the beginning of each year of the term/ renewal term(s). The Chamber shall be responsible for providing immediate notice of policy cancellation or non-renewal during the term of this Agreement to the Watauga County Finance Office and for three years subsequent for any claims made coverage. If Chamber does not meet the insurance requirements specified above, alternate insurance coverage satisfactory to Watauga County may be considered. Any requests for consideration of alternate coverage must be presented by Chamber PRIOR TO provision of any services associated with this Agreement. In the event that Chamber contracts with or uses and third parties and/ or subcontractors to perform any of the services under this Agreement, then and in that event, Chamber shall contractually require such subcontractor(s) to meet all of the requirements of this section.

Except to the extent same are caused by the negligence or willful misconduct of the County, it is the intent of this section to require Chamber to indemnify Watauga County to the extent permitted under North Carolina law. Chamber shall defend, indemnify and hold harmless the County from and against any and all losses, liability, claims or expenses (including reasonable attorney's fees) arising out of (i) Chamber's use of all or a portion of the Leased Premises, (ii) any activity, work, or other thing done, permitted or suffered by Chamber or users/ sublessees in or about the Leased Premises, (iii) any breach or default by Chamber in the performance of any of its obligations under this Agreement, or (iv) any act or negligence of Tenant, or any officer, agent, employee, contractor, servant, invitee or guest of Tenant; and in each case from and against any and all damages, losses, liabilities, lawsuits, costs and expenses or fees at (all tribunal levels) arising in connection with any such claim or claims (i) through (iv) above, or any action brought thereon. The provisions of this paragraph shall survive the termination of this Lease.

Watauga County and the Chamber agree that nothing in this Agreement shall be construed to mandate purchase of insurance by Watauga County pursuant to N.C.G.S. 153A-435; or to be inconsistent with Watauga County's "Resolution Regarding Limited Waiver of Sovereign Immunity" enacted _____; or to in any other way waive Watauga County's defense of sovereign or governmental immunity from any cause of action alleged or brought against Watauga County for any reason if otherwise available as a matter of law.

8. MISCELLANEOUS.

- a. The Chamber shall not assign all or any portion of this Agreement, including rights to payments, to any other party without the prior written consent of the County.
- b. The County may enter the Leased Premises at any time.

County of Watauga



Deron Geouque
County Manager

11-16-2022

Date

**Boone Area Chamber
Of Commerce**

David Jackson
President and CEO

Date

This instrument has been pre-audited in the manner required by the local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act.



Finance Director

11.16.22

Date

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF WATAUGA**

FUNDING AGREEMENT

THIS AGREEMENT made and entered into this 16th day of August 2022 by and between the County of Watauga (hereinafter called "County"), and the Bbone Area Chamber of Commerce, a not-for-profit organization (hereinafter called "Chamber"):

WITNESSETH

WHEREAS, the Chamber has requested that the County grant financial support to establish a coordinated county-wide economic development program, the purpose of which shall be to guide growth in Watauga County by encouraging the creation of new jobs, or saving of existing jobs, which pay above-average wages, are in businesses which have a favorable or non-adverse impact on the physical or social environment, and which contribute to an appropriately balanced, stable, and vital local economy; and

WHEREAS, the services, goods and programs offered by the Chamber constitute a public purpose offered to benefit the citizens and residents of the County of Watauga; and

WHEREAS, the Chamber desires to use these funds solely for the public good and to further a public purpose; and

WHEREAS, the County desires that these funds be appropriated to the Chamber so that they may provide the services, goods and programs stated below:

NOW THEREFORE, for and in consideration of the annual sum of \$100,000 to be paid by the County in four quarterly payments of \$25,000 beginning on July 1 and ending on or about June 30, concurrent with County's fiscal year. Pro-rata payment for the current fiscal year shall begin January 1, 2023, and shall consist of unexpended funds allocated by County for economic development for FY 2022-23. For this funding, the Chamber hereby agrees to initiate and provide the following services and programs:

- a) Employ an Economic Development Director to support the management of all aspects of the business recruitment and expansion (BRE) process and contribute to the overall BRE strategy. This includes economic development project management, existing industry support and site development throughout Watauga County and in coordination with Watauga County municipalities. All salary, benefits, and other support such as transportation necessary to carry out the job function will be provided with funds outlined in this contract agreement.
- b) Marketing & Brand Awareness: Increase Watauga County's brand awareness and communicate competitive advantages through targeted, strategic marketing efforts such as digital media ads, targeted media buys, targeted advertising, and other innovative efforts. Evaluate and refresh business recruitment materials such as microsites and print collateral to articulate Watauga County's business and lifestyle advantages with a focus directed to headquarters. Purchase of external databases and the use of third-party contractors to provide necessary information and / or research on Watauga County and the High Country Region in support of marketing efforts and the provision of demographic and other critical information to the municipalities is considered part of the information support function.

- c) **Site Assessment & Product Development:** Provide support to Watauga County to identify and develop new sites for commercial and industrial development.
- d) **Existing Industry Support:** Support existing Watauga County businesses through implementing a comprehensive existing industry strategy.
- e) **Talent Recruitment:** Increase overall awareness and recognition of Watauga County as a top destination for talent.
- f) **Research & Analysis:** Provide an annual report to the Watauga County Board of Commissioners detailing economic development expenditures and an overview of economic development activities. This report will be made at the time and in the manner deemed appropriate by the County Manager. Provide periodic updates and print & digital materials as requested.
- g) **Financial Support:** Provide supplemental funding, when appropriate, to agencies and organizations within the county involved in economic development activities that support overall economic development strategies of Watauga County. When appropriate, the Chamber shall seek approval of the Watauga County Board of Commissioners for expenditures from the County's Economic Development Capital Reserve Fund.

I. RELATIONSHIP OF PARTIES

Chamber is an independent contractor of the County. Chamber represents that it has or will secure, at its own expense, all personnel required in performing the services under this Agreement. Such personnel shall not be employees of or have any contractual relationship with the County. All personnel engaged in work under this Agreement shall be fully qualified and shall be authorized or permitted under state and local law to perform such services. It is further agreed that the Chamber will obey all State and Federal statutes, rules and regulations that are applicable to provisions of the services called herein. Neither Chamber nor any employee of the Chamber shall be deemed an officer, employee or agent of the County.

The funds shall be used solely for the above stated purposes, and such other professional, clerical and other research and support activities that are essential to fulfill these purposes. All publications, audiovisual materials, community profiles, sites and buildings inventories or other information or materials produced by this economic development effort shall become the property of the County and may be used by the County for other purposes without additional compensation to the Chamber. Permission must be obtained from the photographer for additional use of custom photography unless agreed upon in advance.

II. TERM

The initial term of this Agreement shall begin on January 1st, 2023 and end on June 30, 2023, and shall automatically renew for additional one (1) year periods through June 30, 2028 unless cancelled pursuant to Section III of this agreement.

III. CANCELLATION

Either party may terminate or amend this agreement by giving the other party a one hundred eighty (180) day written notice of its desire to do so. In the event of such termination,

the Chamber shall provide the County with all pertinent information regarding the current status of all efforts in any stage of progress at that time.

IV. INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

The Chamber shall obtain, at its sole expense, all insurance required in the following paragraphs and shall not commence work until such insurance is in effect and certification thereof has been received by Watauga County's Finance Office. If any required insurance policy expires during the term of this agreement, Chamber must provide a certificate of insurance to the Watauga County Finance Office as evidence of policy renewal prior to such policy expiration.

Chamber signature on this agreement indicates that Chamber agrees to the terms of this insurance section and understands that failure to comply may result in cancellation of this agreement at Watauga County's option.

Workers' Compensation Insurance, with limits for Coverage A Statutory- for State of North Carolina and Coverage B - Employers Liability \$500,000 each accident/disease each employee/disease policy limit.

Commercial General Liability - with limits no less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$2,000,000 aggregate, including contractual liability.

Commercial Automobile Liability, with limits no less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence for bodily injury and property damage for any vehicle used during performance of contract services, including coverage for owned, hired, and non-owned vehicles. Evidence of commercial automobile coverage is only necessary if vehicles are used in the provision of services under this Agreement.

Professional Liability Insurance, applicable to any professional services provided under this Contract with limits of no less than \$1,000,000 per claim and \$2,000,000 aggregate.

If any coverage is on a claims-made basis, Chamber agrees to maintain a retroactive date prior to or equal to the effective date of this Agreement and to purchase and maintain Supplemental Extended Reporting Period or 'tail coverage' with a minimum reporting period of not less than three (3) years if the policy expires or is cancelled or non-renewed. If coverage is replaced, the new policy must include full prior acts coverage or a retroactive date to cover the effective dates of this Agreement. Chamber shall provide a Certificate of Insurance annually to Watauga County indicating any claims made coverage and respective retroactive date. The duty to provide extended coverage as set forth herein survives the effective dates of this Agreement.

All insurance companies must be authorized to do business in North Carolina and have an AM Best rating of "A-/VII" or better; or have reasonable equivalent financial strength to the satisfaction of the County's Finance Office. Proof of rating shall be provided to the County upon request.

Insurance with limits no less than those specified above shall be evidenced by a Certificate of Insurance issued by a duly authorized representative of the insurer and dated no more than thirty (30) days prior to the start date of the agreement. In the case of self-insurance, a letter of explanation must be provided to and approved by Watauga County Risk Management.

The Chamber shall be responsible for providing immediate notice of policy cancellation or non-renewal during the term of this Agreement to the Watauga County Finance Office and for three years subsequent for any claims made coverage.

If Chamber does not meet the insurance requirements specified above, alternate insurance coverage satisfactory to Watauga County may be considered. Any requests for consideration of

alternate coverage must be presented by Chamber PRIOR TO provision of any services associated with this Agreement.

In the event that Chamber uses subcontractors to perform any of the services under this Agreement, then and in that event, Chamber shall contractually require such subcontractor(s) to meet all of the requirements of this section.

V. INDEMNIFICATION

Chamber agrees to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the County, for all loss, liability, claims or expense (including reasonable attorney's fees) arising from bodily injury, including death or property damage, to any person or persons caused in whole or in part by the negligence or misconduct of the Chamber, except to the extent same are caused by the negligence or willful misconduct of the County. It is the intent of this section to require Chamber to indemnify Watauga County to the extent permitted under North Carolina law.

VI. NO WAIVER OF SOVEREIGN IMMUNITY

Watauga County and the Chamber agree that nothing in this Agreement shall be construed to mandate purchase of insurance by Watauga County pursuant to N.C.G.S. 153A-435; or to be inconsistent with Watauga County's "Resolution Regarding Limited Waiver of Sovereign Immunity" enacted _____; or to in any other way waive Watauga County's defense of sovereign or governmental immunity from any cause of action alleged or brought against Watauga County for any reason if otherwise available as a matter of law.

VII. NON-ASSIGNMENT

Chamber shall not assign all or any portion of this Agreement, including rights to payments, to any other party without the prior written consent of the County.

VIII. ENTIRE AGREEMENT

The parties have read this Agreement and agree to be bound by all of its terms, and further agree that it constitutes the complete and exclusive statement of the Agreement between the parties unless and until modified in writing and signed by the parties. Modifications may be evidenced by scanned signatures.

IX. GOVERNING LAW

Both parties agree that this Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of North Carolina.

X. E-VERIFY REQUIREMENTS

To ensure compliance with the E-Verify requirements of the General Statutes of North Carolina, all contractors, including any subcontractors employed by the contract(s), by submitting a bid, proposal or any other response, or by providing any material, equipment, supplies, services, etc, attest and affirm that they are aware and in full compliance with Article 2 of Chapter 64, (NCGS 64-26(a)) relating to the E-Verify requirements.

XI. IRAN DIVESTMENT

By signing this agreement, Chamber certifies that as of the date of execution of this Agreement 1) it does not appear on the Final Divestment List created by the North Carolina State

Treasurer pursuant to N.C.G.S. 147-6E and published on the State Treasurer's website at www.nctreasurer.com/iran and 2) it will not utilize any subcontractor that appears on the Final Divestment List in the performance of duties under this Agreement.


County of Watauga



John Welch, Chairman
Board of Commissioners

8/16/2022
Date

**Boone Area Chamber
Of Commerce**



David Jackson
President and CEO

8/19/22
Date

This instrument has been pre-audited in the manner required by the local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act.



Finance Director

8/16/22
Date

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

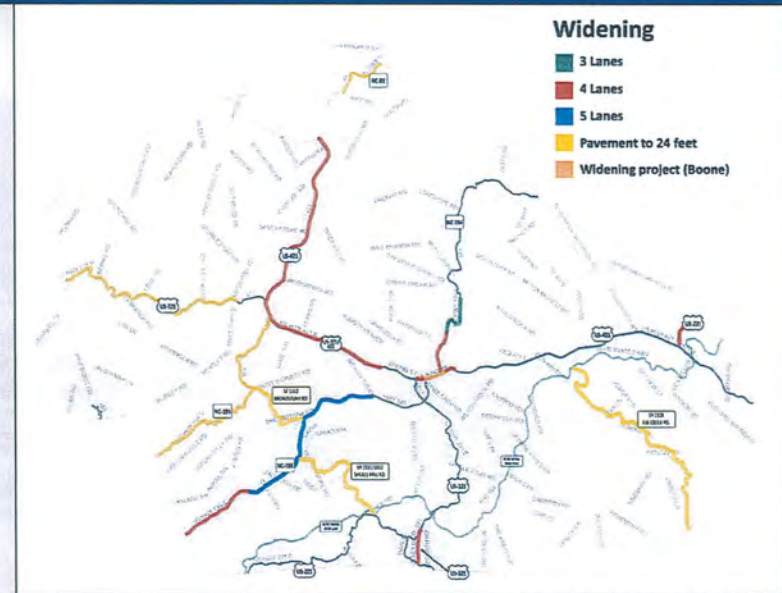
TRANSPORTATION

Highways

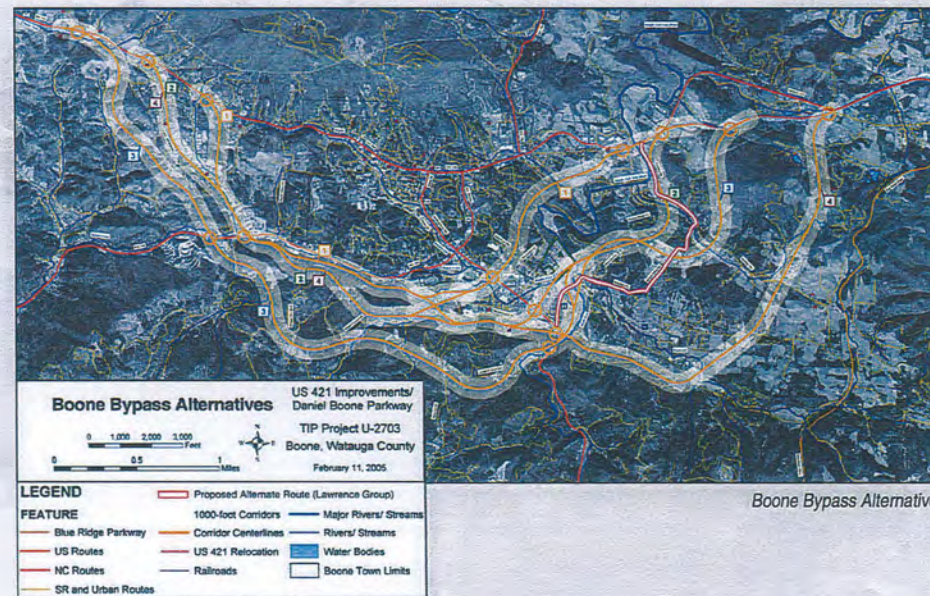
- Update the 2002 Thoroughfare Plan for Watauga County.
- Town of Boone, Watauga County, High Country Council of Governments (RPO), NCDOT, Appalachian State University (ASU) and citizen groups should work together to resolve the issue of routing for a Boone Bypass, which is considered to be the top transportation 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.



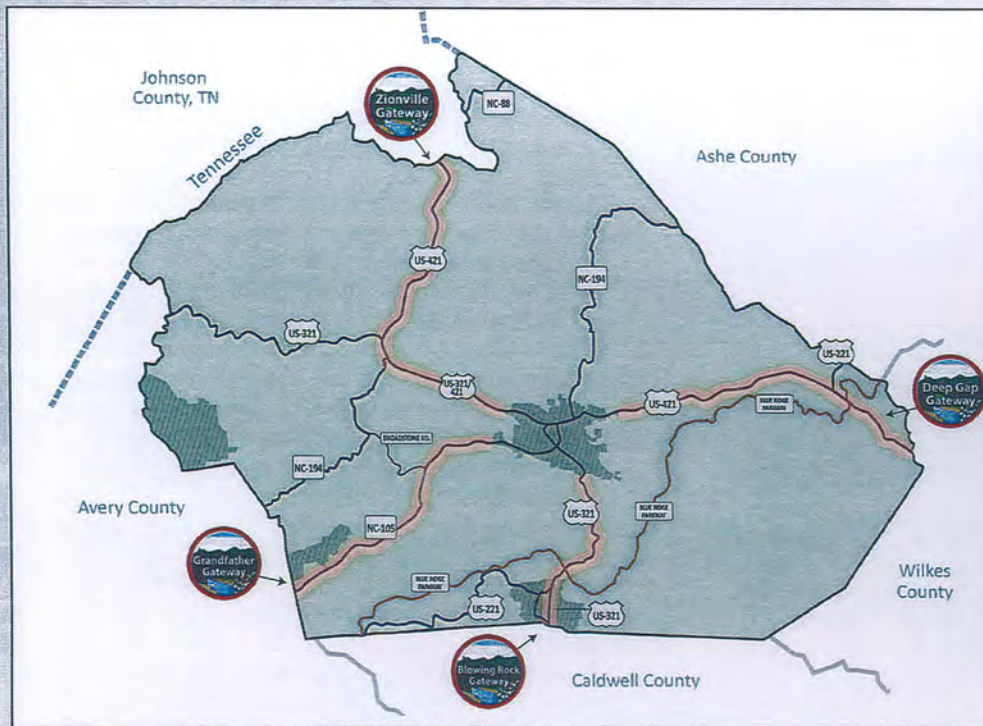
ECONOMIC GATEWAYS

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.



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.



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

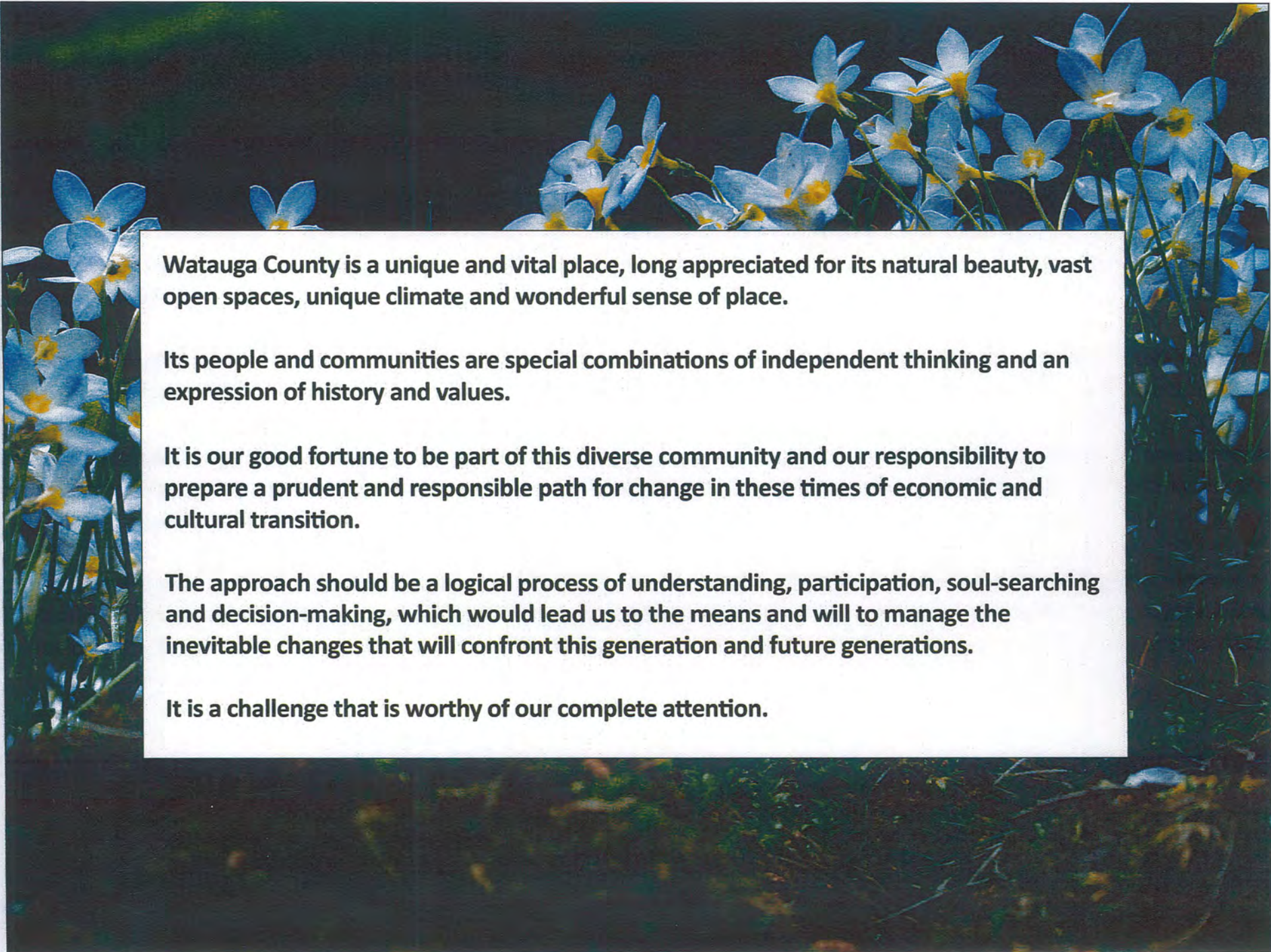
- Establish a "Citizens' Plan for Watauga" newsletter that would be published quarterly on the County's website and further distributed in the community. The newsletter would post news related to important planning and change management initiatives and summarize information and events that relate to 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/ Bowling 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 by Ulrich Vetter

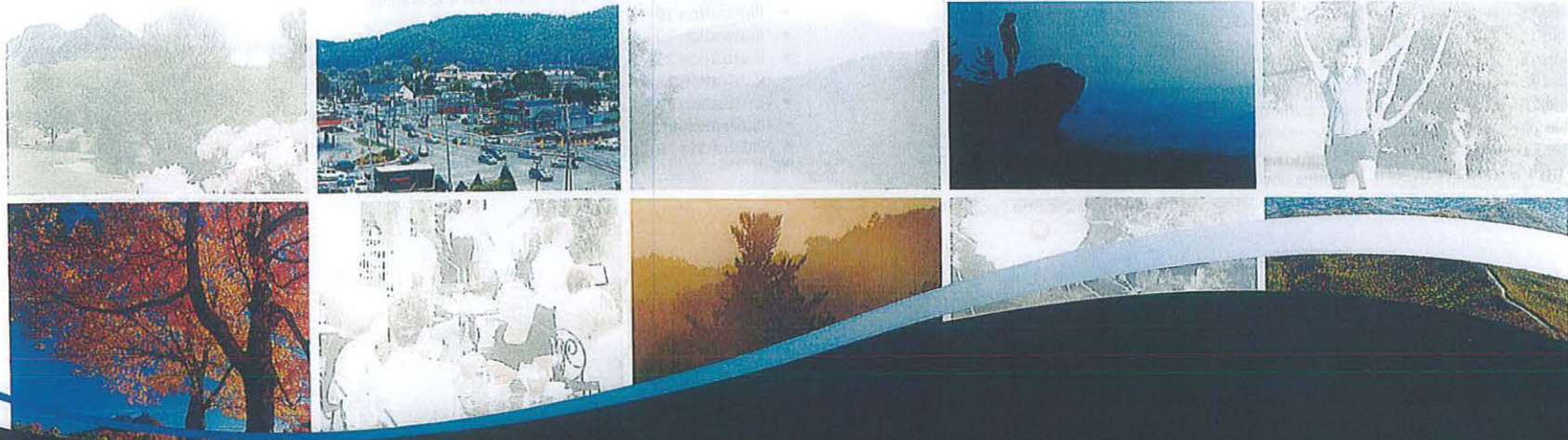


Citizens' Plan for Watauga

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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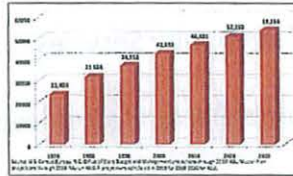
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Martin • McGill

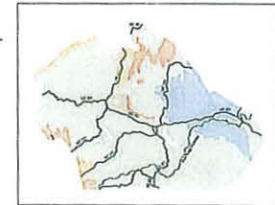
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Preface

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 Sberwood.

2

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



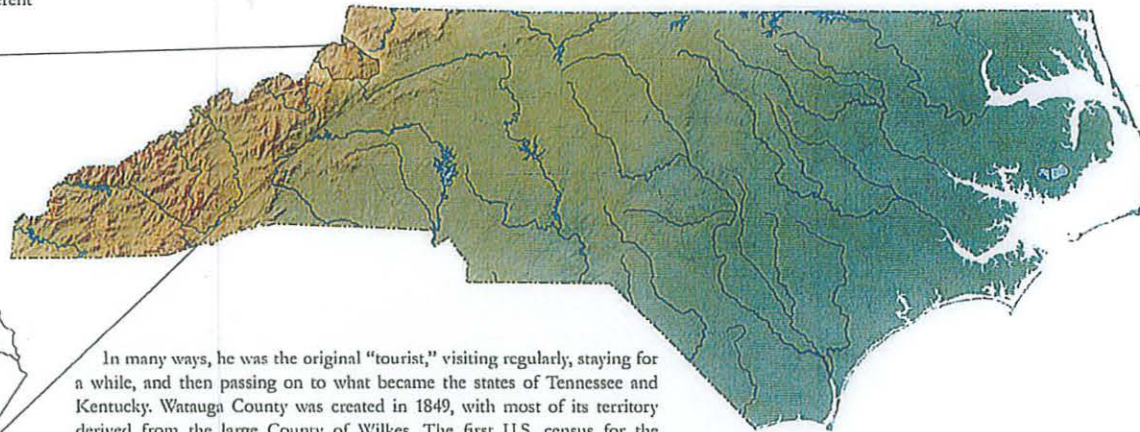
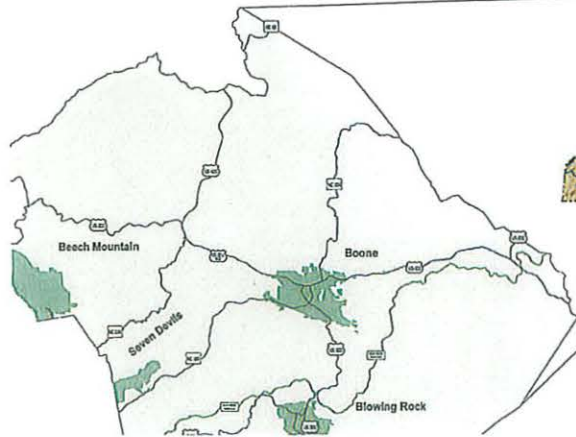


Watauga County

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.

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Section 1
Demographics

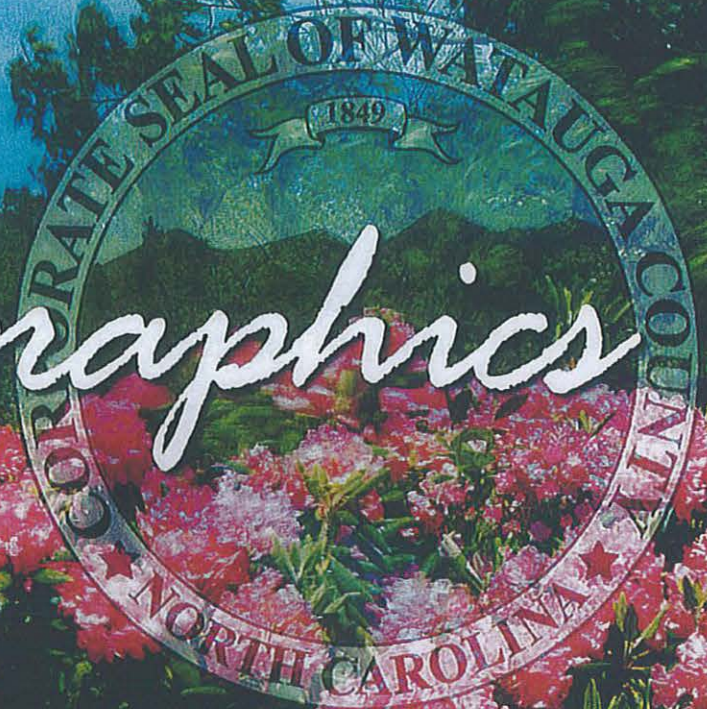
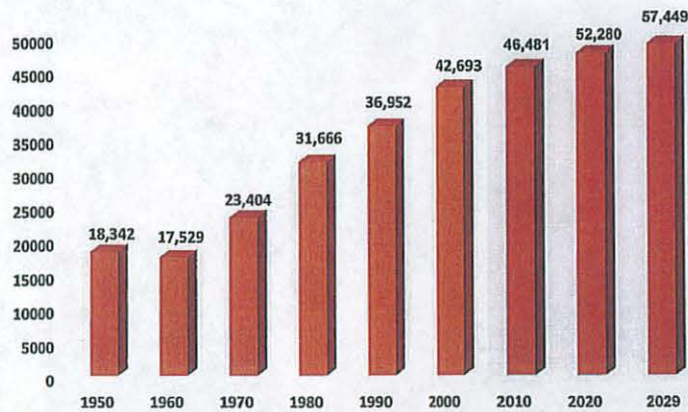


Photo by Hugh Morrison

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

6

Population Trends - Appalachian State

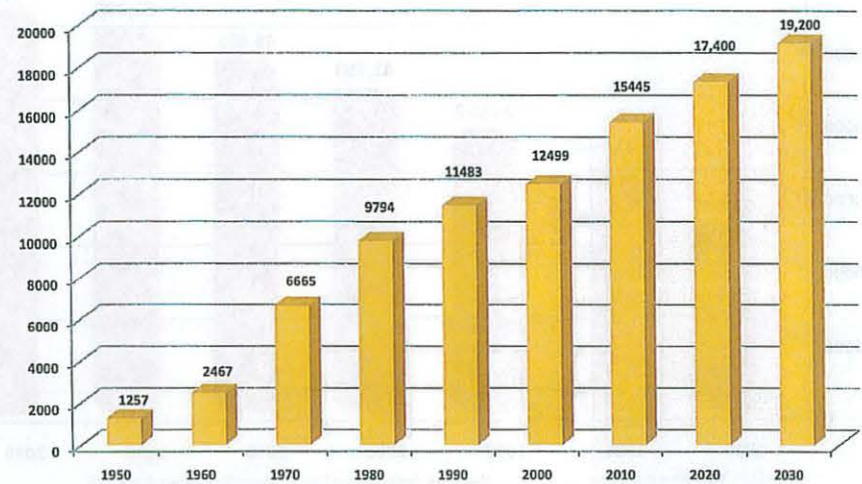
Appalachian State University is a major contributor to Watauga County in many ways, including the ever-increasing population of on-campus students. In 1950, the on-campus student enrollment was 1,257. In 2000, the on-campus student enrollment was recorded at 12,499. During the fall semester of 2007,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



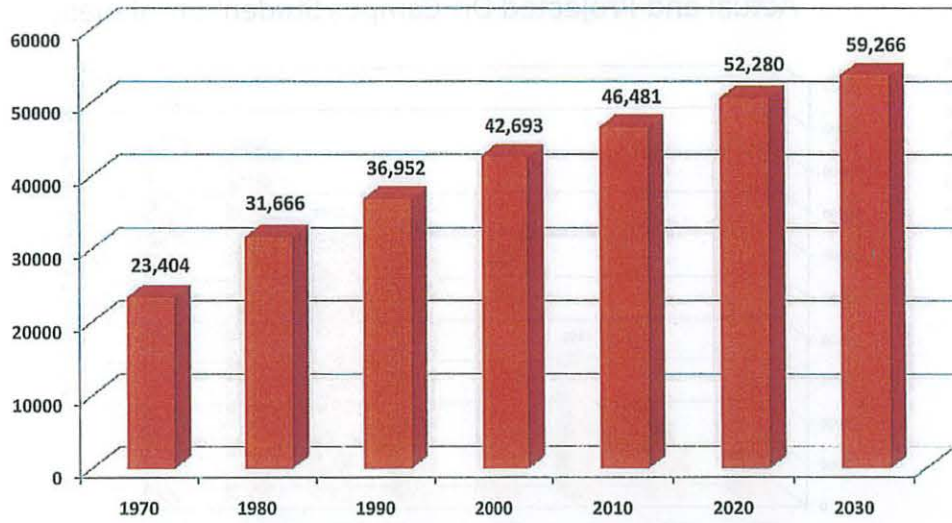
Sources: Appalachian State University Master Plan Projections through 2018. Martin-McGill projections calculated in 2008 for years 2019 to 2030.



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.

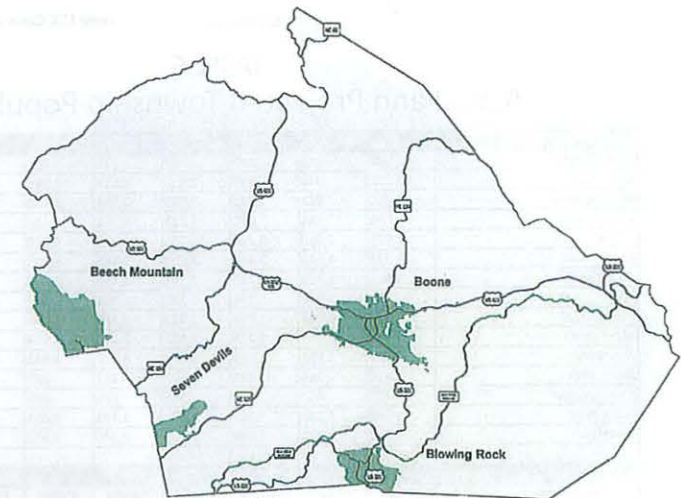
Table 4 provides the populations of each town and their growth from 1990 to 2008. Also listed is the portion of each town's population (in adjoining counties) that lies outside of Watauga County.

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	77,386	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

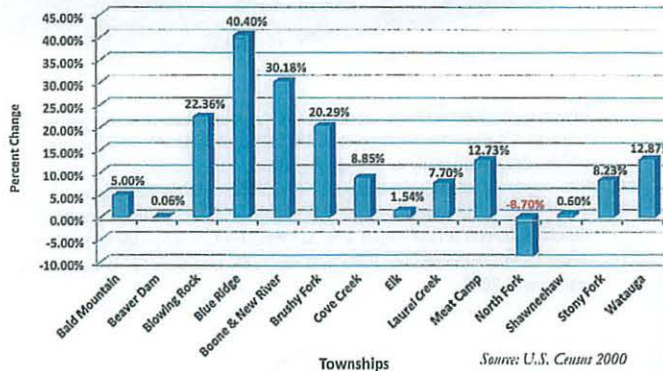


TABLE 6

Actual and Projected Township Populations

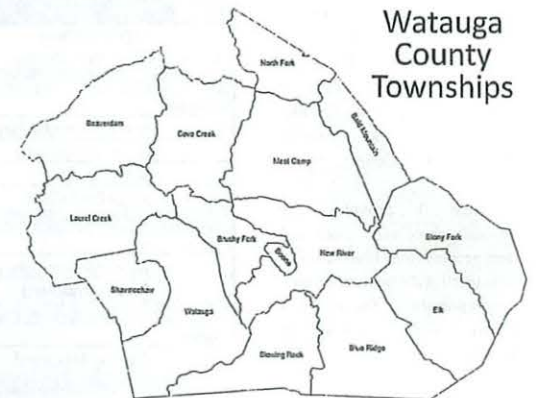
Township	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030
Bald Mountain	380	361	363	280	370	485	514	550	594
Beaver Dam	1,279	944	847	1,030	1,176	1,283	1,321	1,387	1,498
Blowing Rock	1,042	982	1,321	2,295	2,332	2,858	3,029	3,271	3,533
Blue Ridge	665	644	898	1,613	2,204	3,628	4,063	4,769	5,627
Boone	2,973	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
Shawneehaw	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.

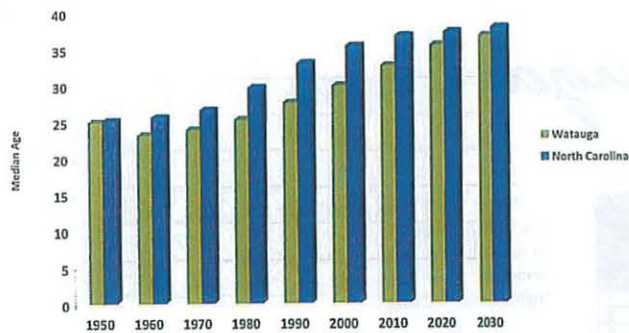
- Noteworthy in Blue Ridge and Elk Townships is the planned Reynolds Blue Ridge Development, which could be a major contributor due to an increase in lots and housing units.
- In the Watauga Township, the Echota Development is adding additional housing units and may contribute to the future population.
- The least populated townships in the County include Bald Mountain, Beaver Dam, Elk, Laurel Creek, North Fork, Shawneehaw 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

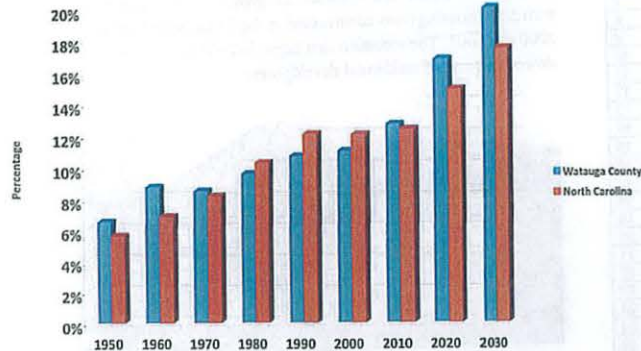


TABLE 9
County Population Growth and Migration 1990-2000

	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	292,755	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	53,294	52,848	52,848	14,539	27.51%	8
Hoke County	15,876	12,607	12,621	12,618	3,355	26.79%	9
Johnston County	62,198	50,621	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	2,782	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	3,483	17.45%	23
Watauga County	27,096	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	29,380	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%
Rentied 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

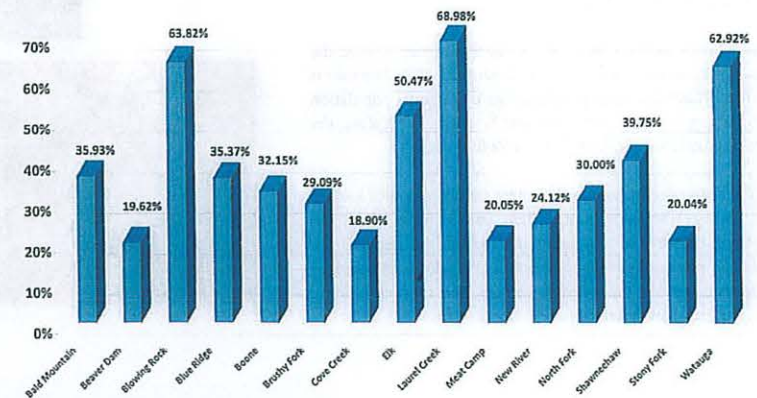
Definition: Housing unit

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



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

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

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	Watuaga 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)

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

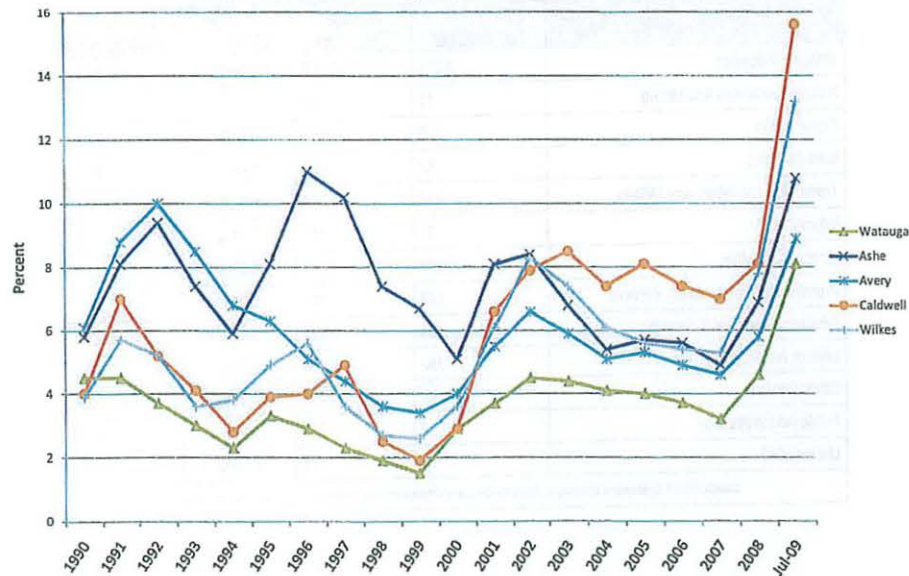
Current Industry Structure (updated 7/2008)				
Watauga County	Quarter Ending December 31, 2007			
	Number of Business Units	Average Employees	Percent of NC Average	Percent of Watauga Avg
Total, All Industries	1,814	23,109	0.56%	100.00%
Natural Resources and Mining	11	67	0.00%	0.29%
Construction	308	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

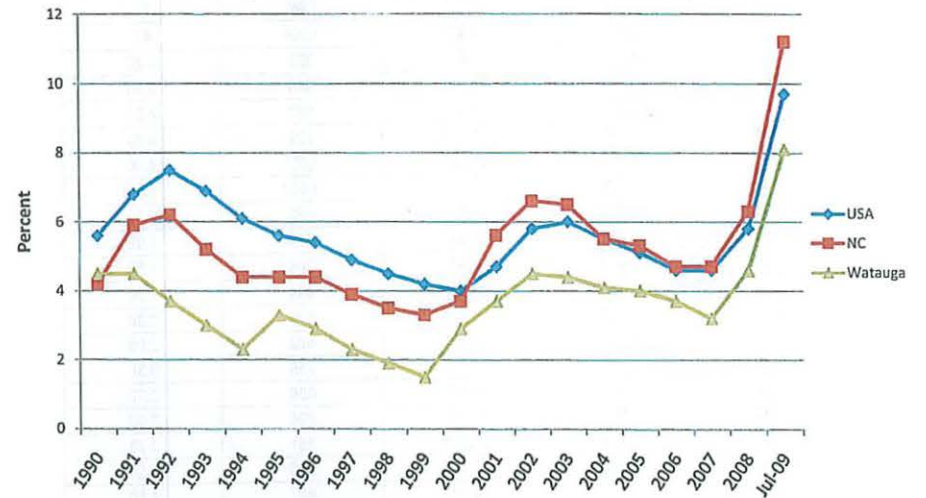
Since 1991, the average annual unemployment rate in Watauga County has been lower than North Carolina's average annual rate and lower than the national average rate. The unemployment rate in Watauga County has also been very favorable compared to adjoining counties. Many individuals commute from other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

Account	2022	2023	2024
1000	1000	1000	1000
1001	1001	1001	1001
1002	1002	1002	1002
1003	1003	1003	1003
1004	1004	1004	1004
1005	1005	1005	1005
1006	1006	1006	1006
1007	1007	1007	1007
1008	1008	1008	1008
1009	1009	1009	1009
1010	1010	1010	1010
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1012	1012	1012	1012
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1100	1100	1100	1100

Section 2

Physiographic Features

21

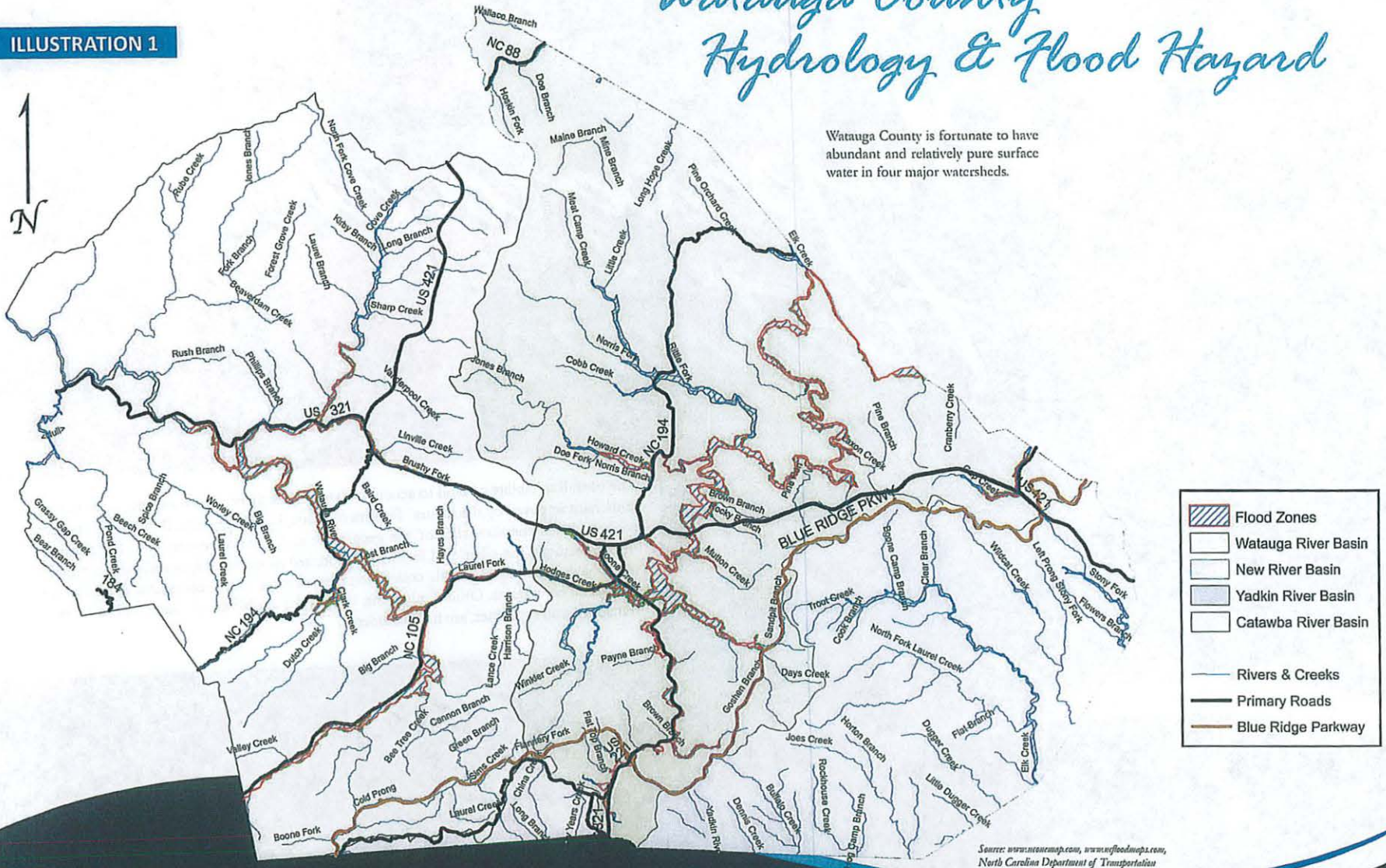
The overall suitability of land to accommodate development is generally viewed as the cumulative constraint imposed by the natural features of slope, hydrology, soils, flooding and other sensitive environmental characteristics of the geographic area under consideration. For the purposes of this assessment, 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.



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

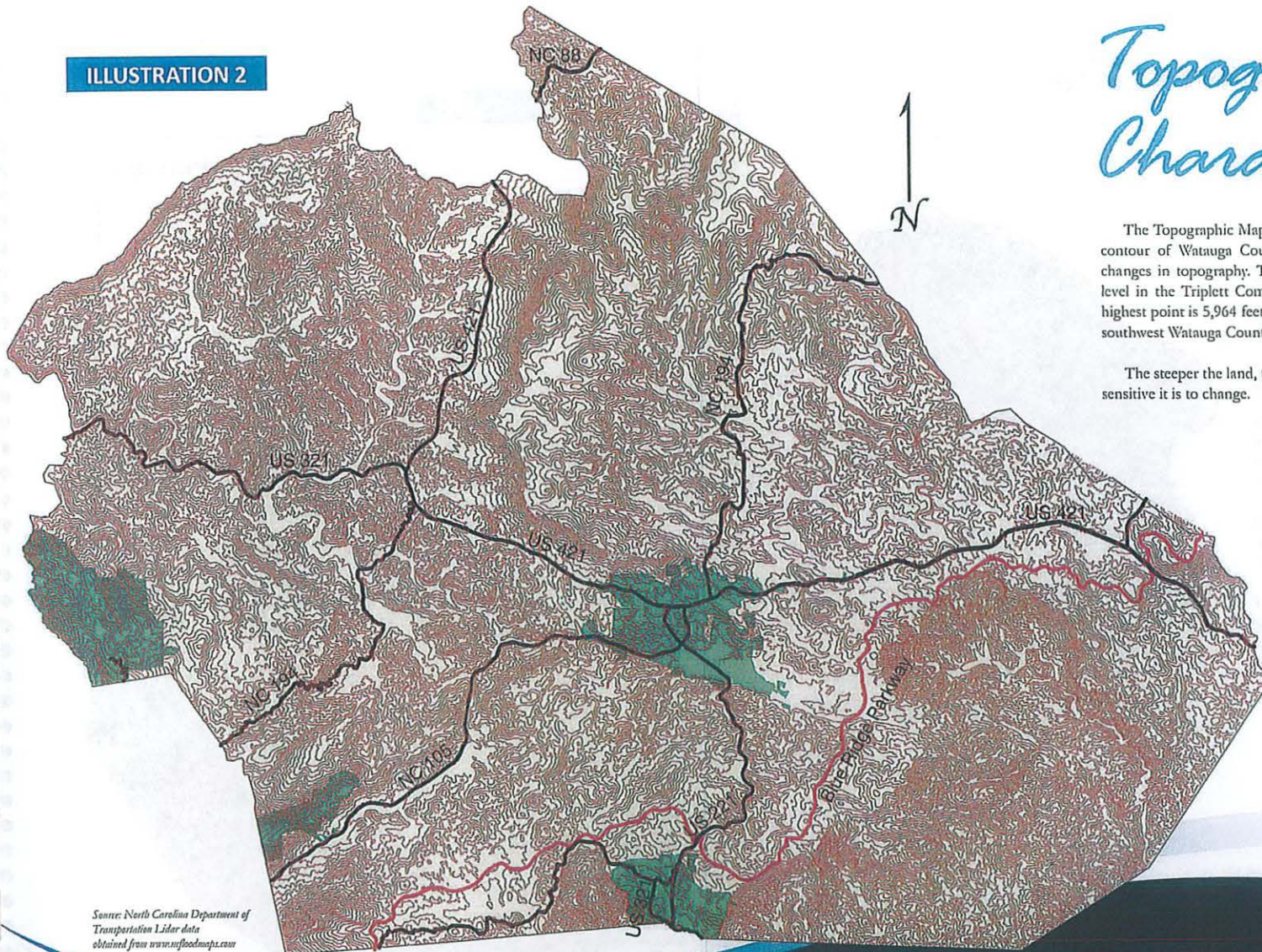
ILLUSTRATION 2

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.usfoodmcp.com

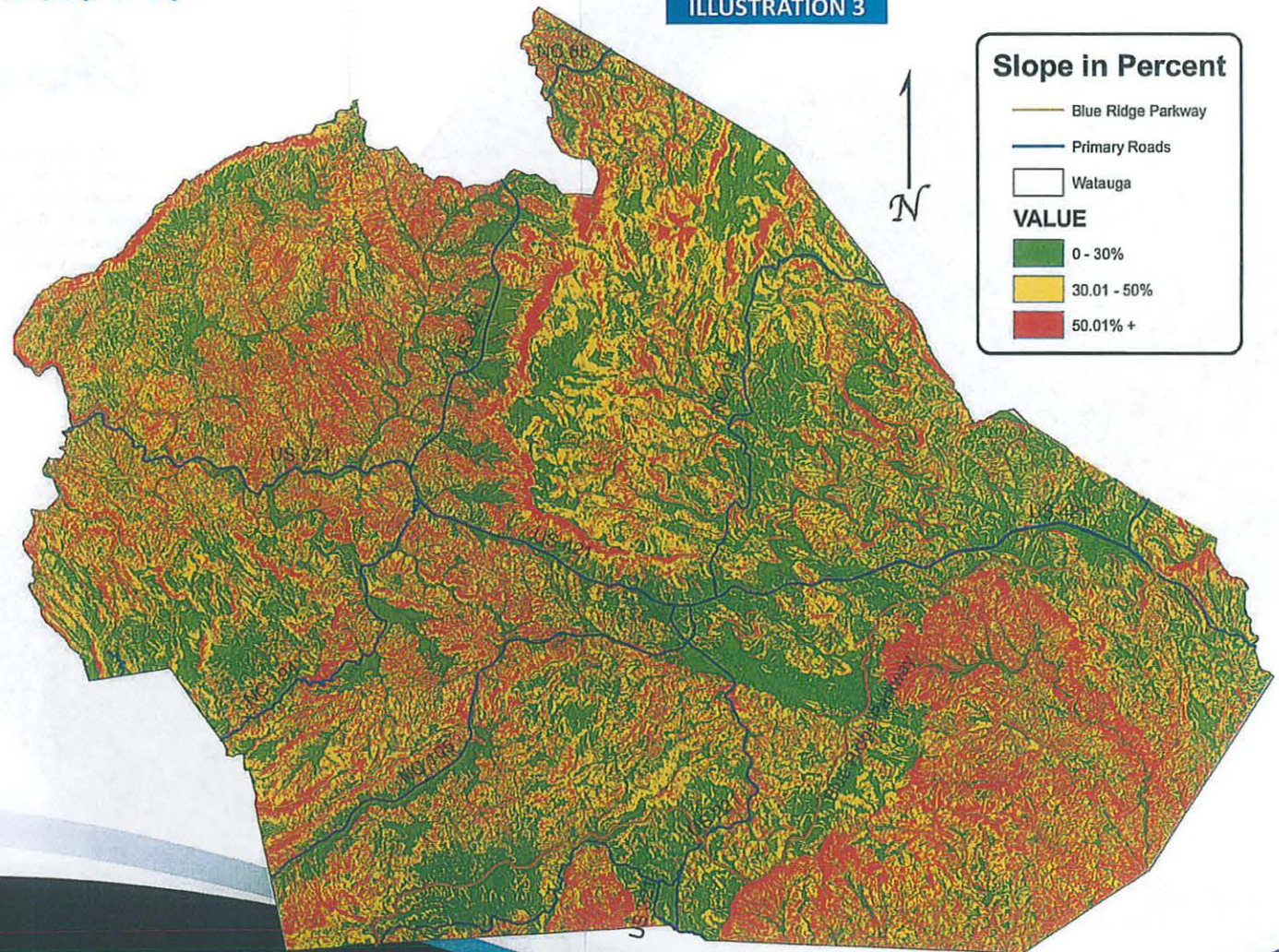
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Slope Characteristics

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



Slope in Percent

- Blue Ridge Parkway
- Primary Roads
- Watauga

VALUE

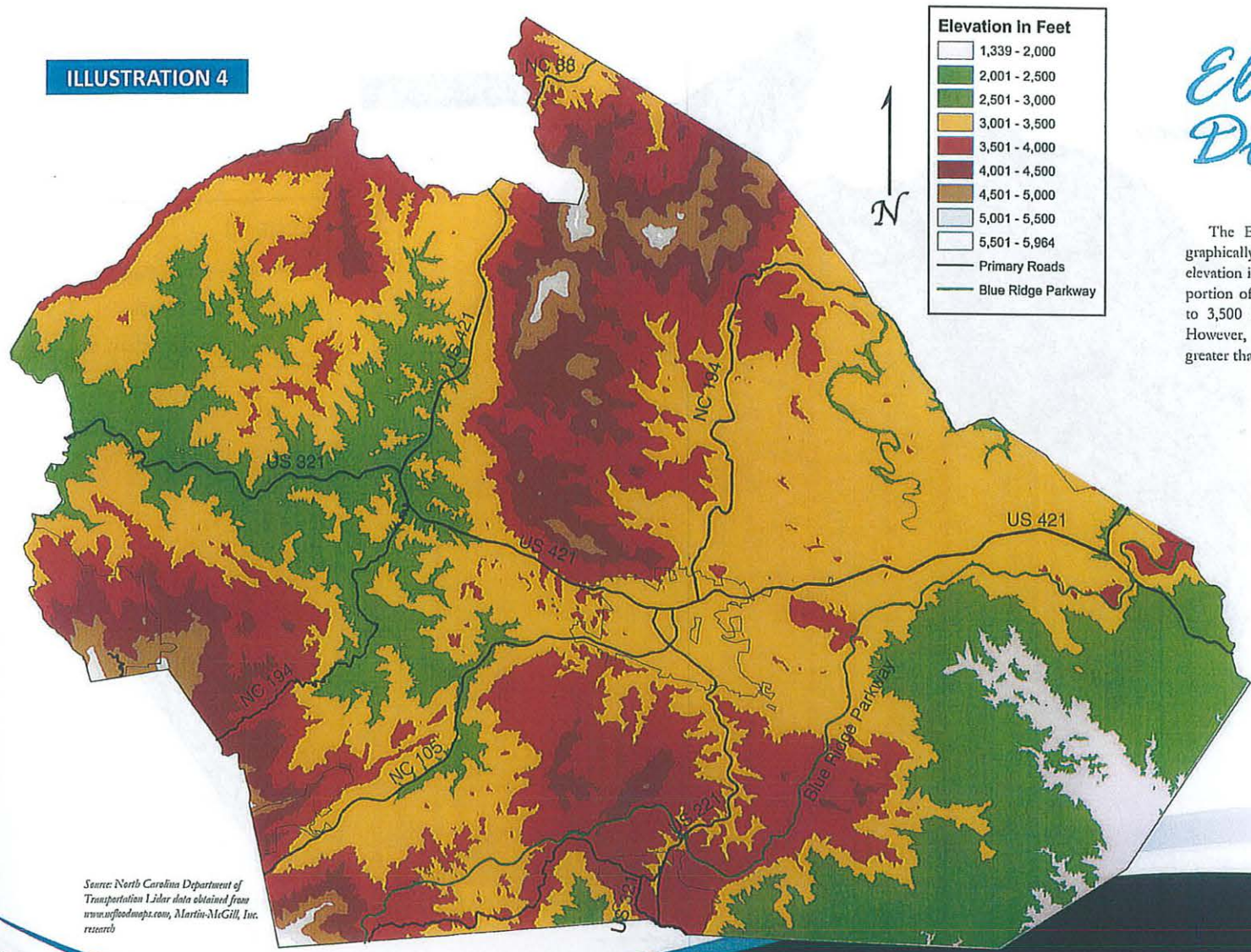
- 0 - 30%
- 30.01 - 50%
- 50.01% +

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

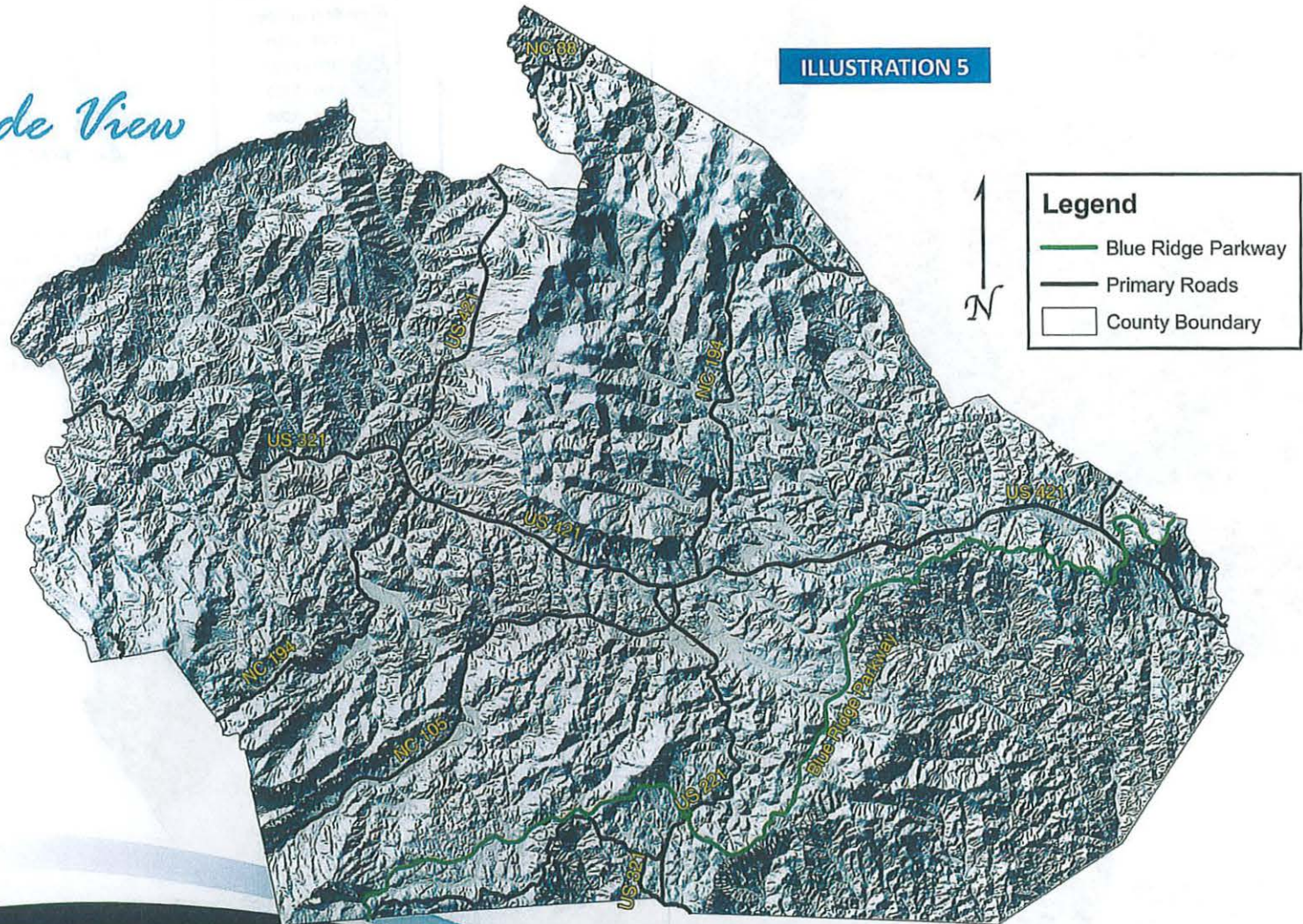


Source: North Carolina Department of Transportation Lidar data obtained from www.nctoolbox.com, Martin-McGill, Inc. research

Hill Shade View

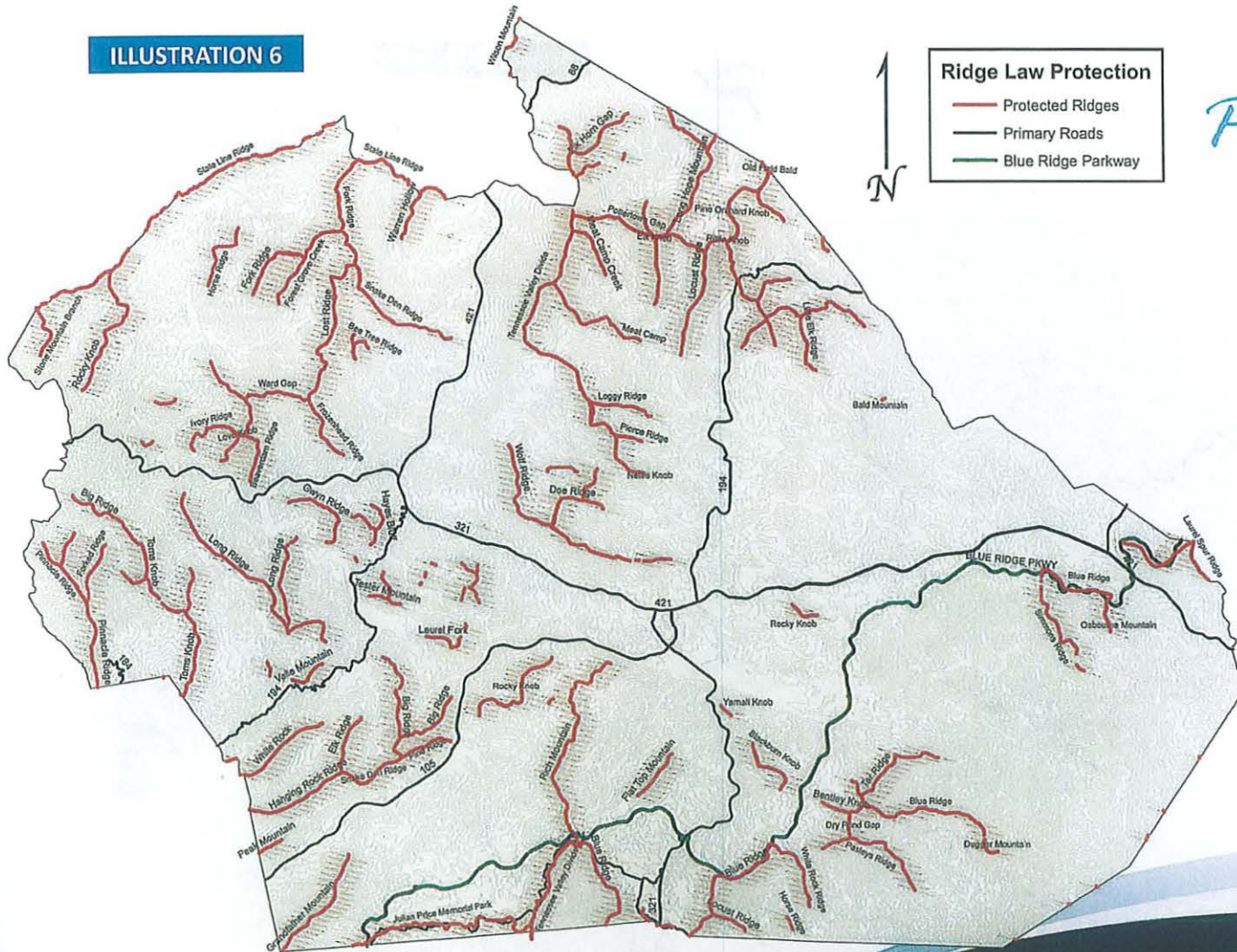
The Hill Shade View Map (Illustration 5) provides an alternate view of the topographic features of Watauga County. This map, along with the Topographic, Elevation and Slope Maps, provides a picture of the rugged and diverse landscape of the County. This graphic representation presents the relief of the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

ILLUSTRATION 5



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

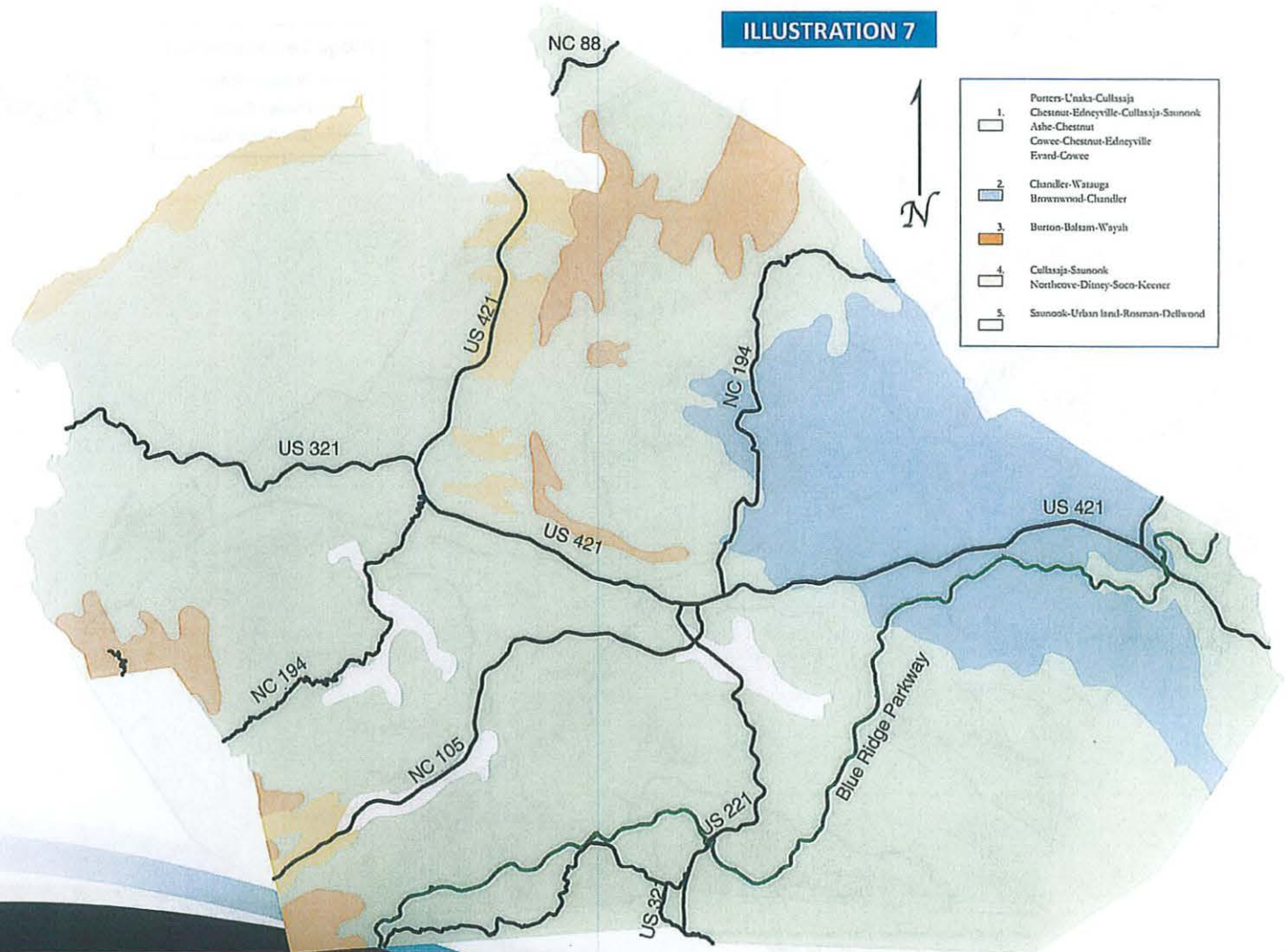
28 Soil Types

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.

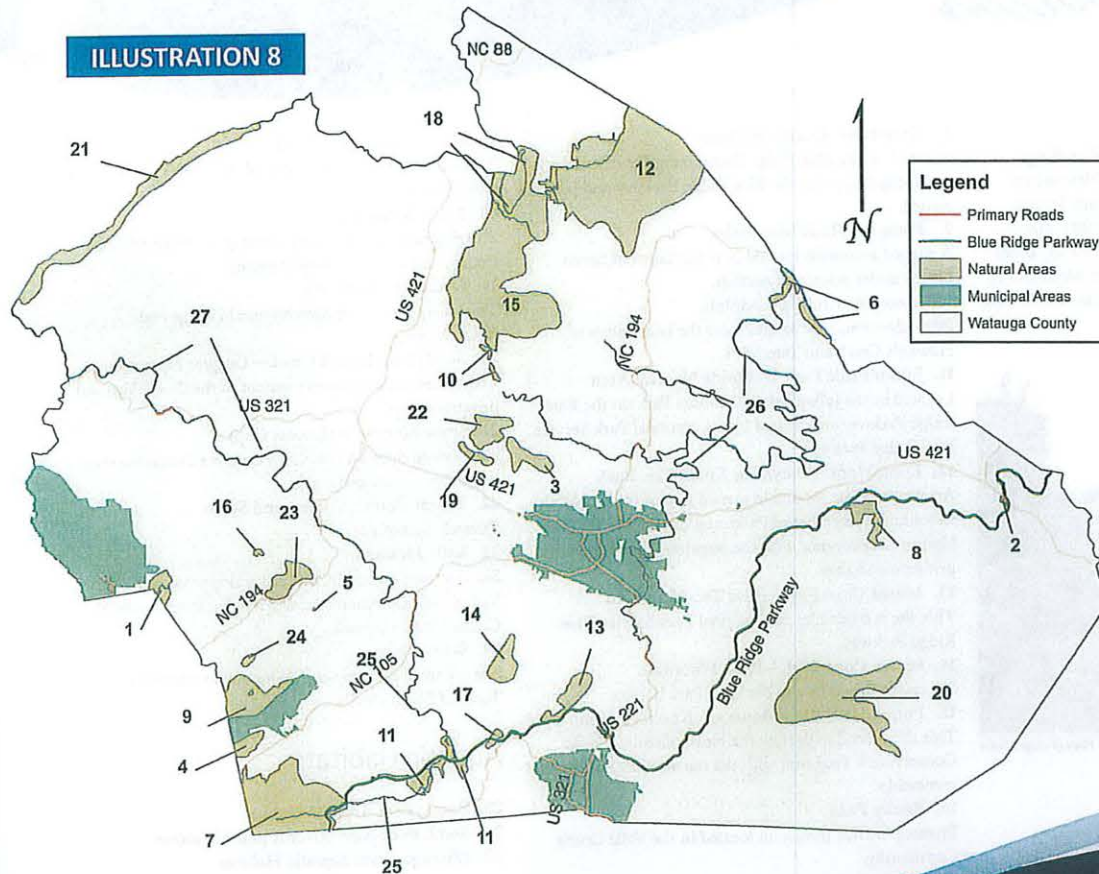


Source: Natural Resources Conservation Service, Martin-McGill, Inc., research

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.

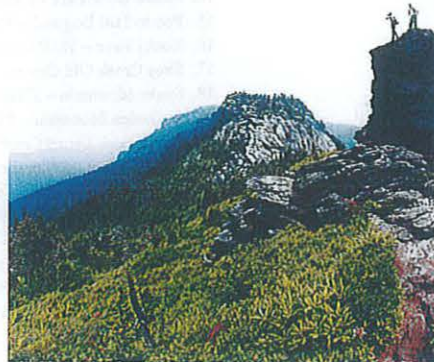


Photo by Hugh Merlon

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

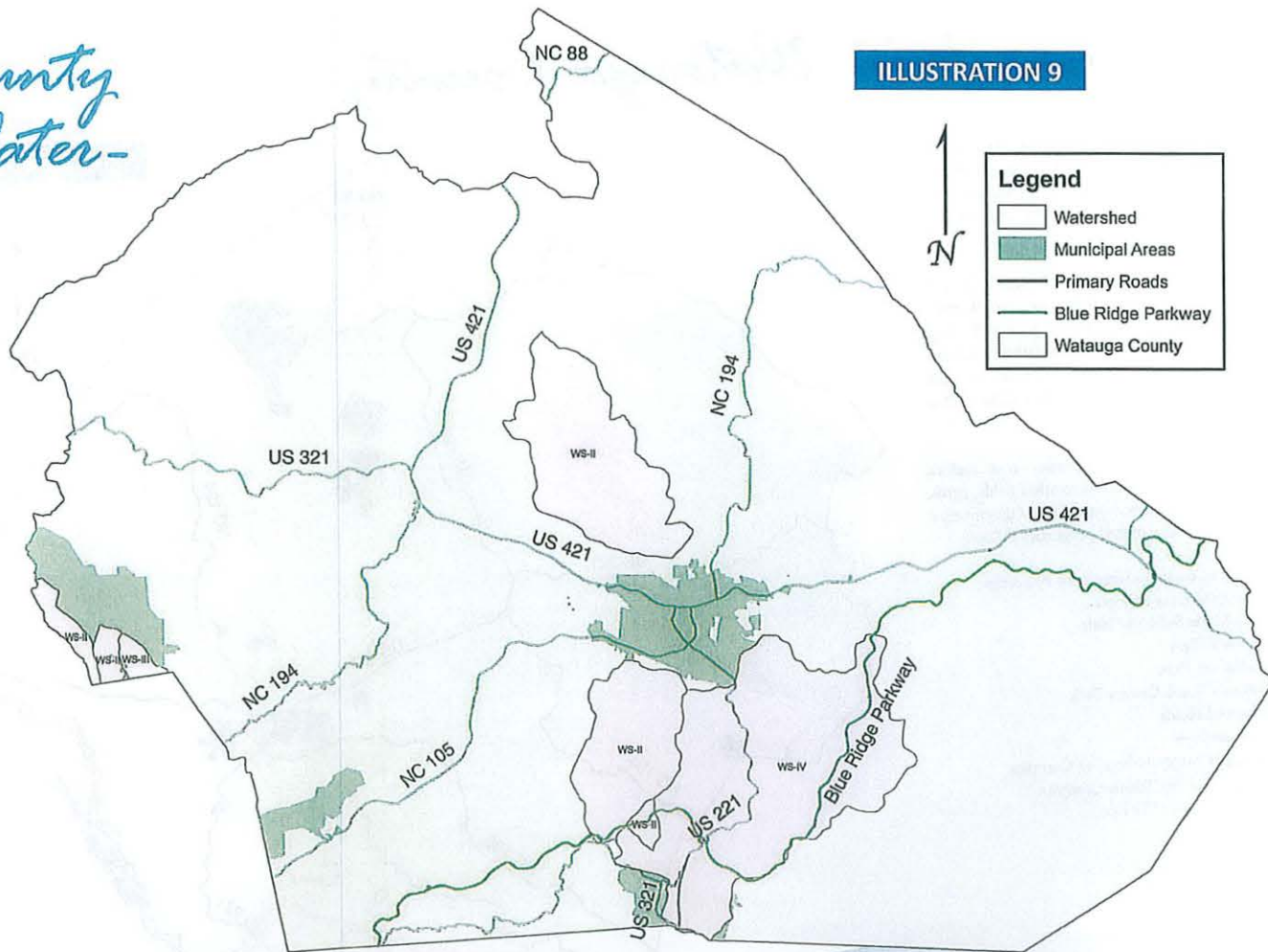
Watauga County Drinking Water- Watersheds

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

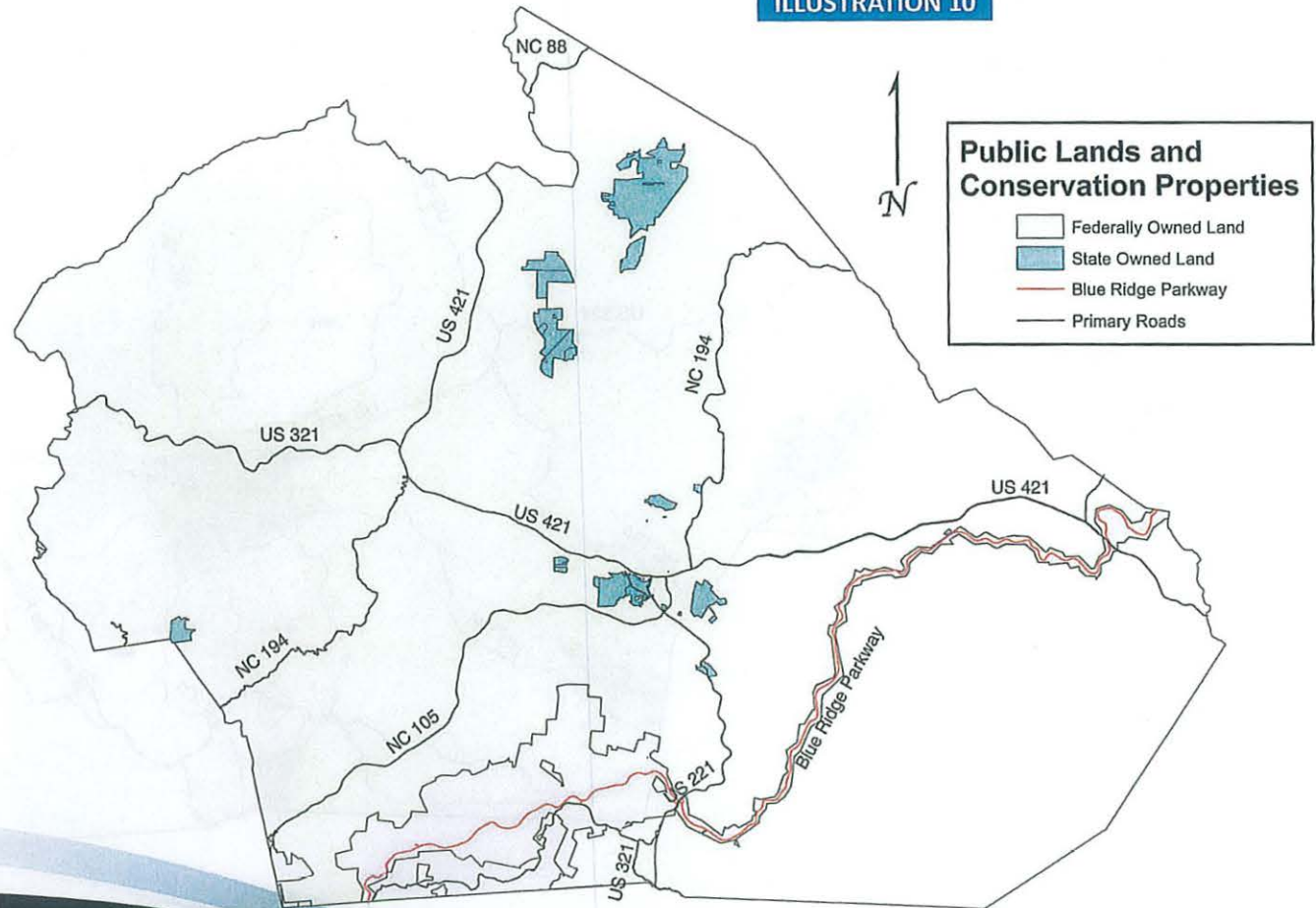
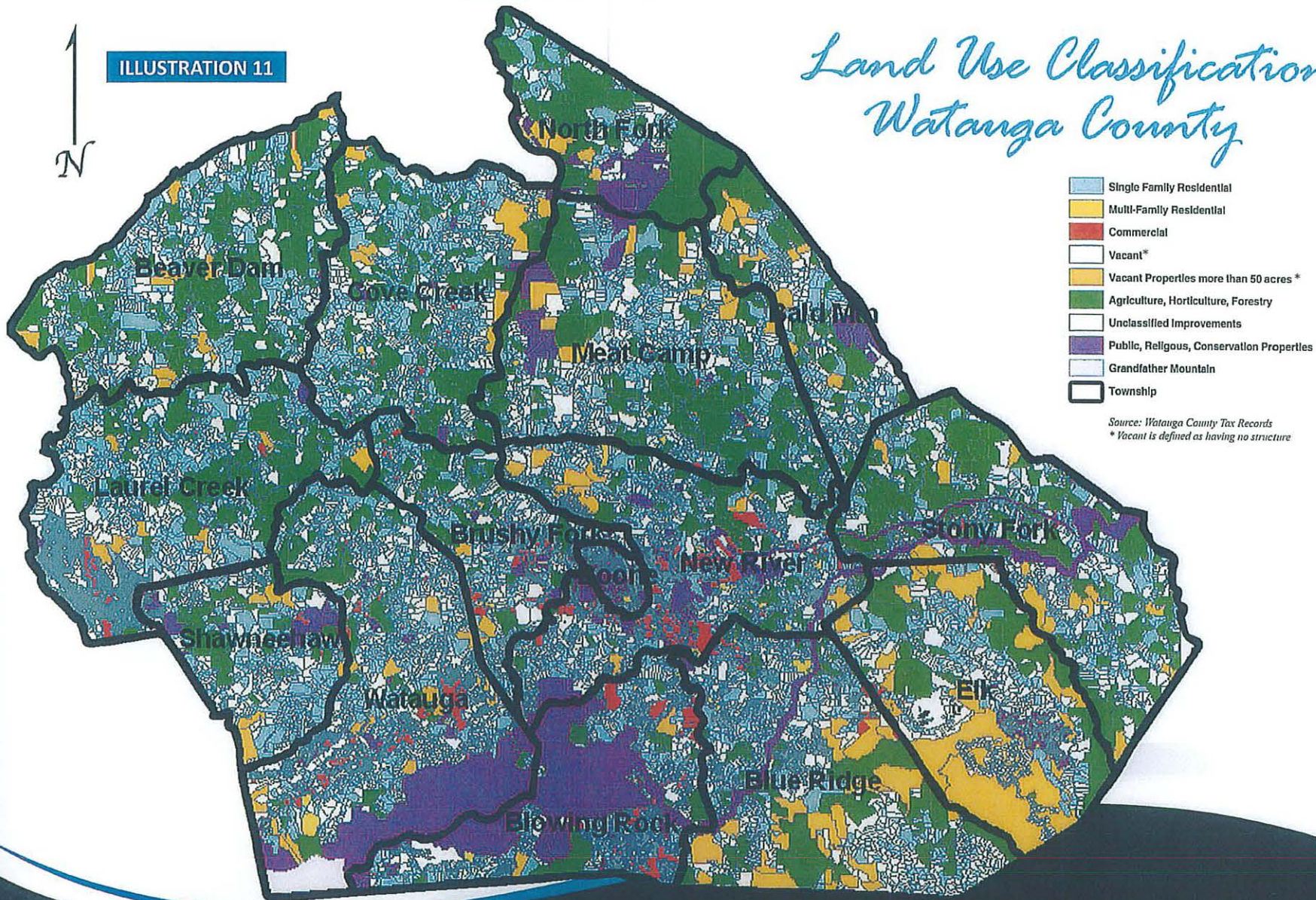
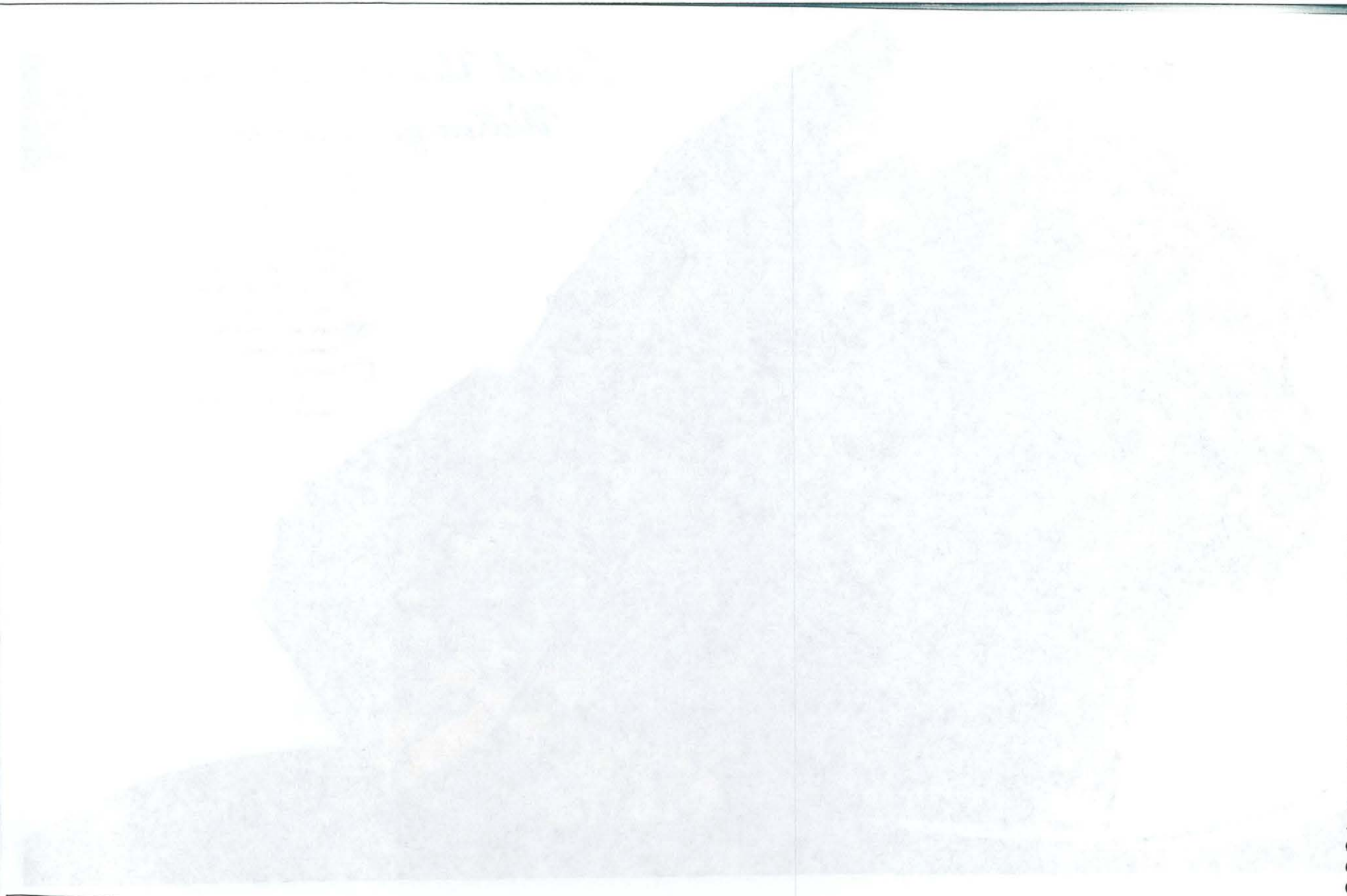


ILLUSTRATION 11

Land Use Classification Watauga County





Section 3

Transportation



Transportation Planning

ILLUSTRATION 12

Watauga County Road and Highway Network

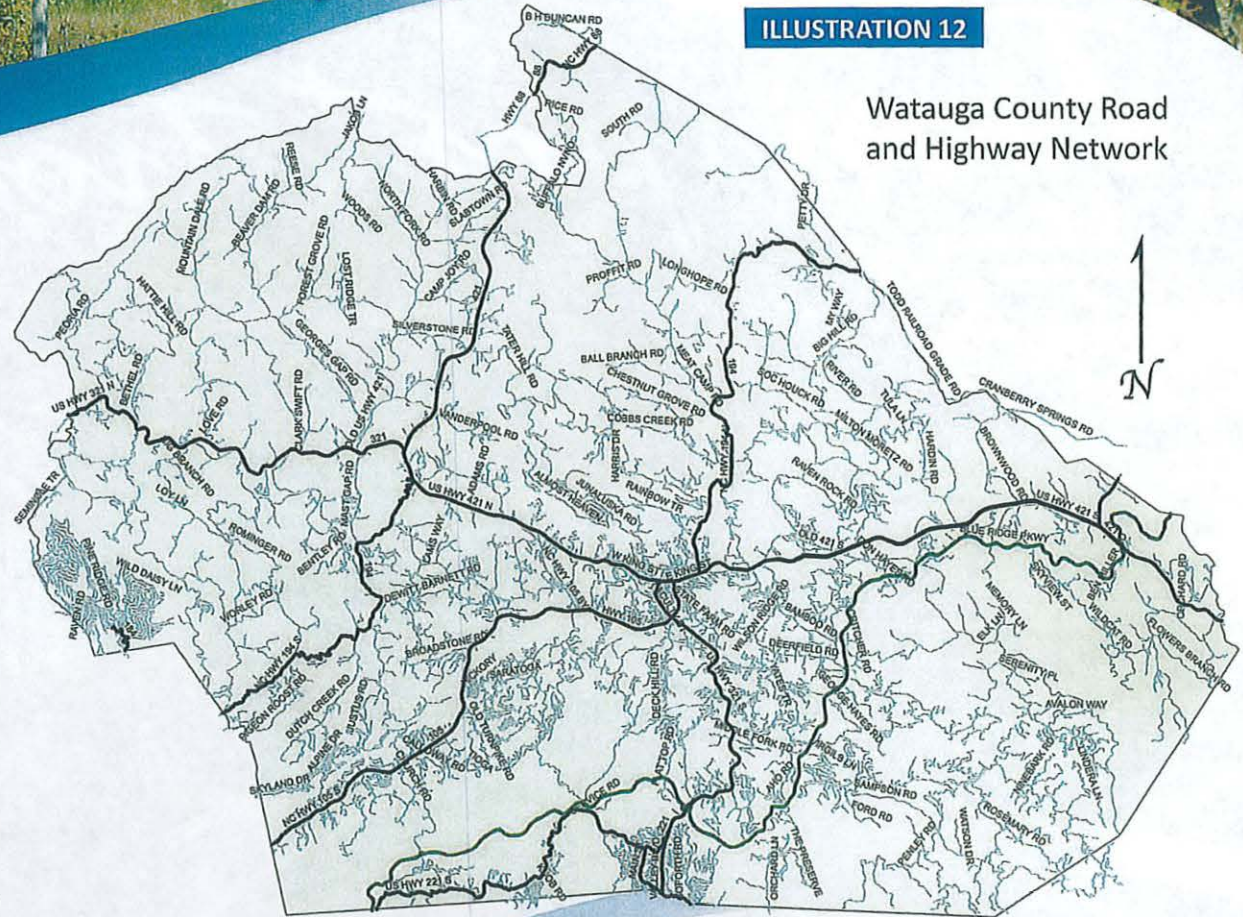
Preface

Watauga County's goal is to achieve an efficient and balanced transportation system that combines motorized and non-motorized modes of transportation. Specific objectives include:

- An efficient and integrated multi-modal transportation system.
- A transportation system that is affordable and accessible to all users.
- A multi-modal transportation system that supports future development and preserves community character.
- A regionally integrated transportation planning process.

The principal highways in Watauga County are U.S. 321, U.S. 221, U.S. 421, N.C. 105, N.C. 194 and N.C. 88. These roads form the backbone of the County's transportation network (Illustration 12). In Watauga County, current transportation modes are limited to surface transportation, including vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians. The County does not have a public airport or any navigable waters. Public perceptions about transportation are summarized as follows:

- In a survey conducted by Professors Dragan Stefanovic and Marvin Hoffman of Appalachian State University in 2007, the need for "improved roads and traffic flow" was a primary finding, with 72% of respondents favoring a bypass around Boone.
- In a survey related to recreation management conducted by Dr. Eric Frauman and Dr. Sarah Banks of Appalachian State University in 2006-2007, respondents named traffic as a primary concern.
- In a survey administered by Watauga County and Martin-McGill, Inc. in 2008, respondents named traffic congestion second in a list of top ten issues. The respondents' suggestions included:
 - The desire for a Boone bypass, also called the Daniel Boone Parkway.
 - The desire for continued improvements to U.S. 421 and U.S. 321, and the development of those roads as commercial corridors.
 - Improvement of the Highway 105/Broadstone Road intersection.



Transportation Planning

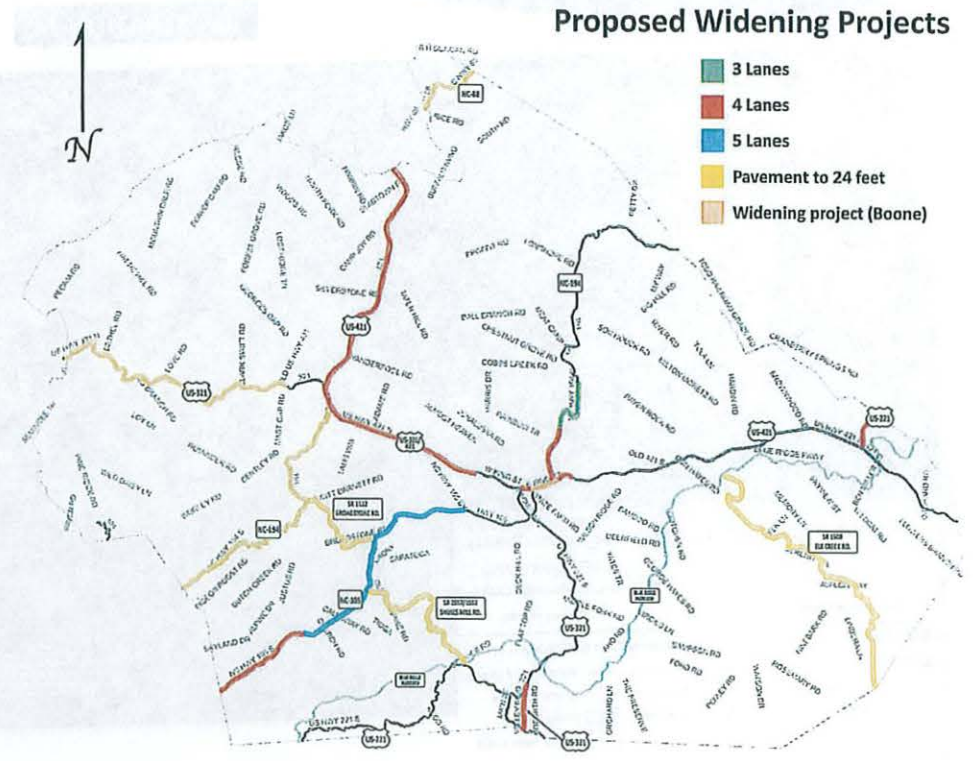
Transportation Findings

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.

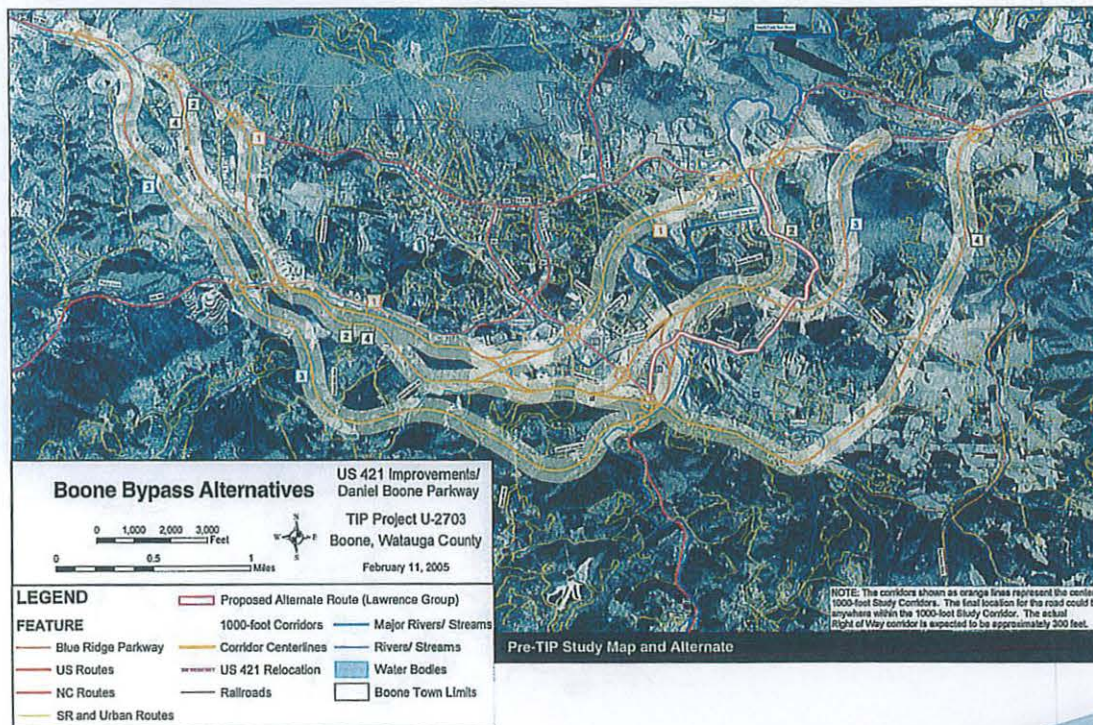
Minor Collectors

- 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.

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Section 4 Economic Development

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Photo courtesy Blowing Rock, NC

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.

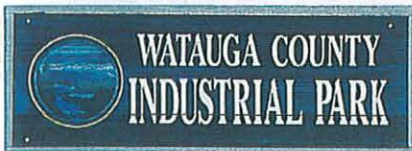
Tourism and Recreation

- 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."

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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."

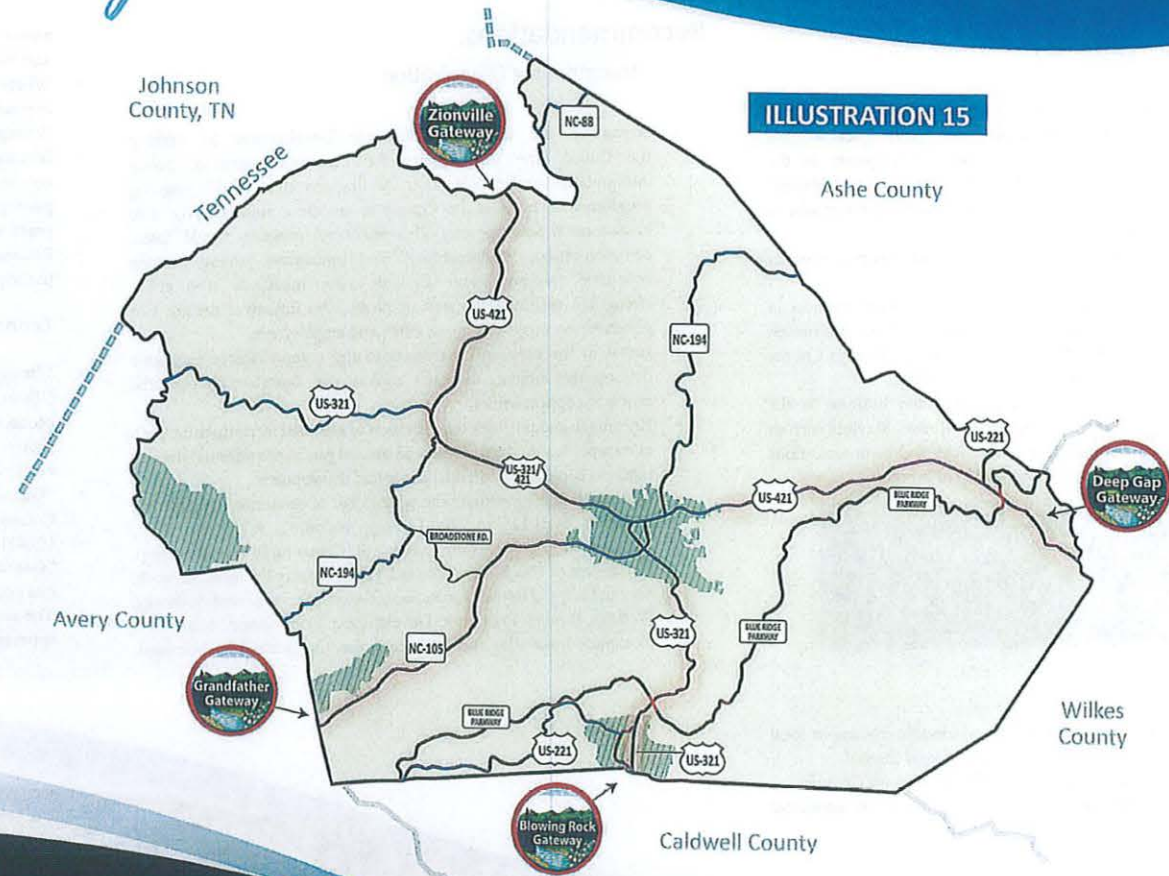
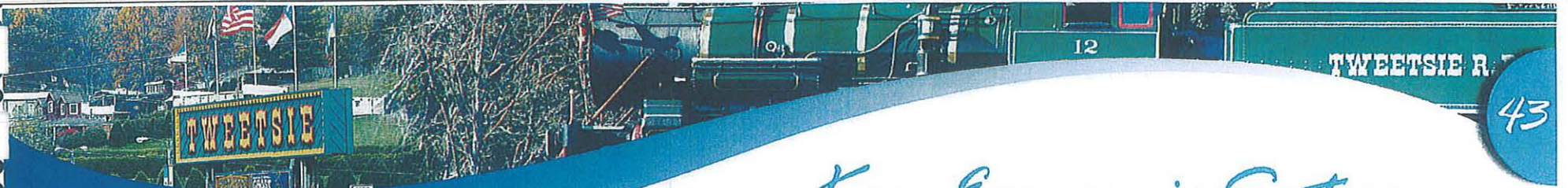


ILLUSTRATION 15



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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

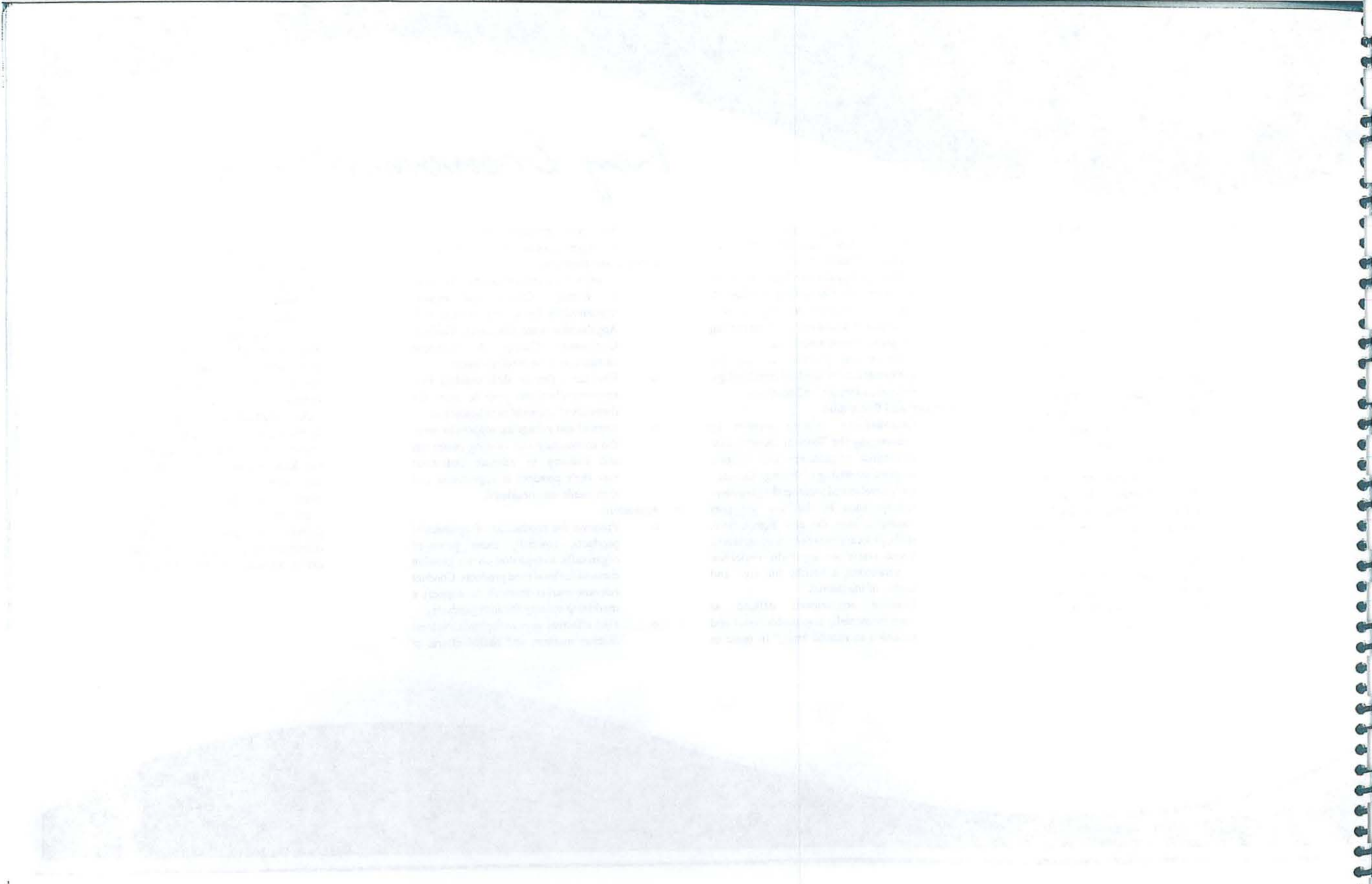
- Develop a commerce/business park site in Watauga County and explore opportunities for a joint venture with Appalachian State University, Caldwell Community College & Technical Institute, and the medical cluster
- Plan for a flex or shell building in a commerce/business park to meet the demands of potential 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.

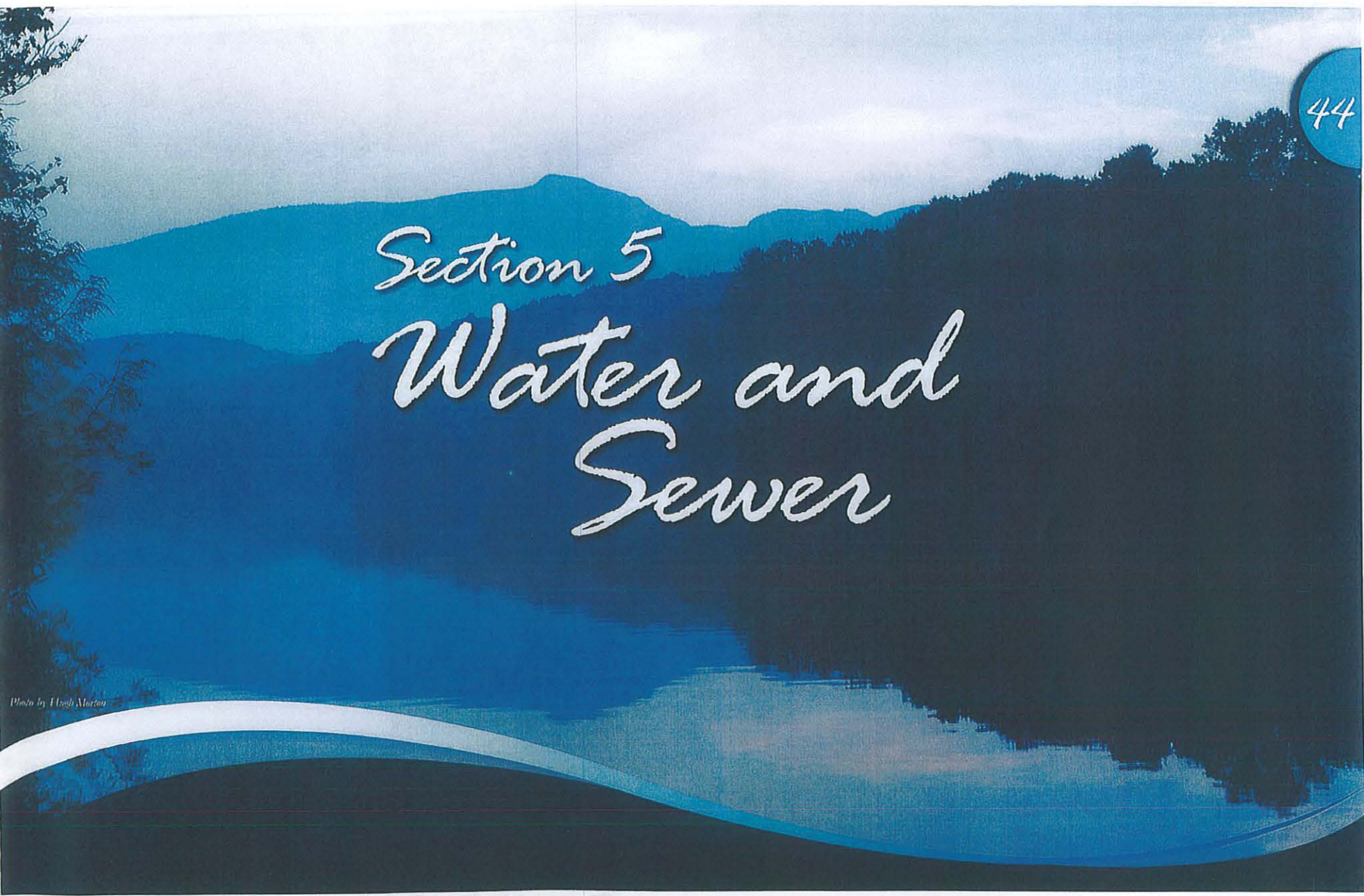
• Agriculture

- 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.





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.

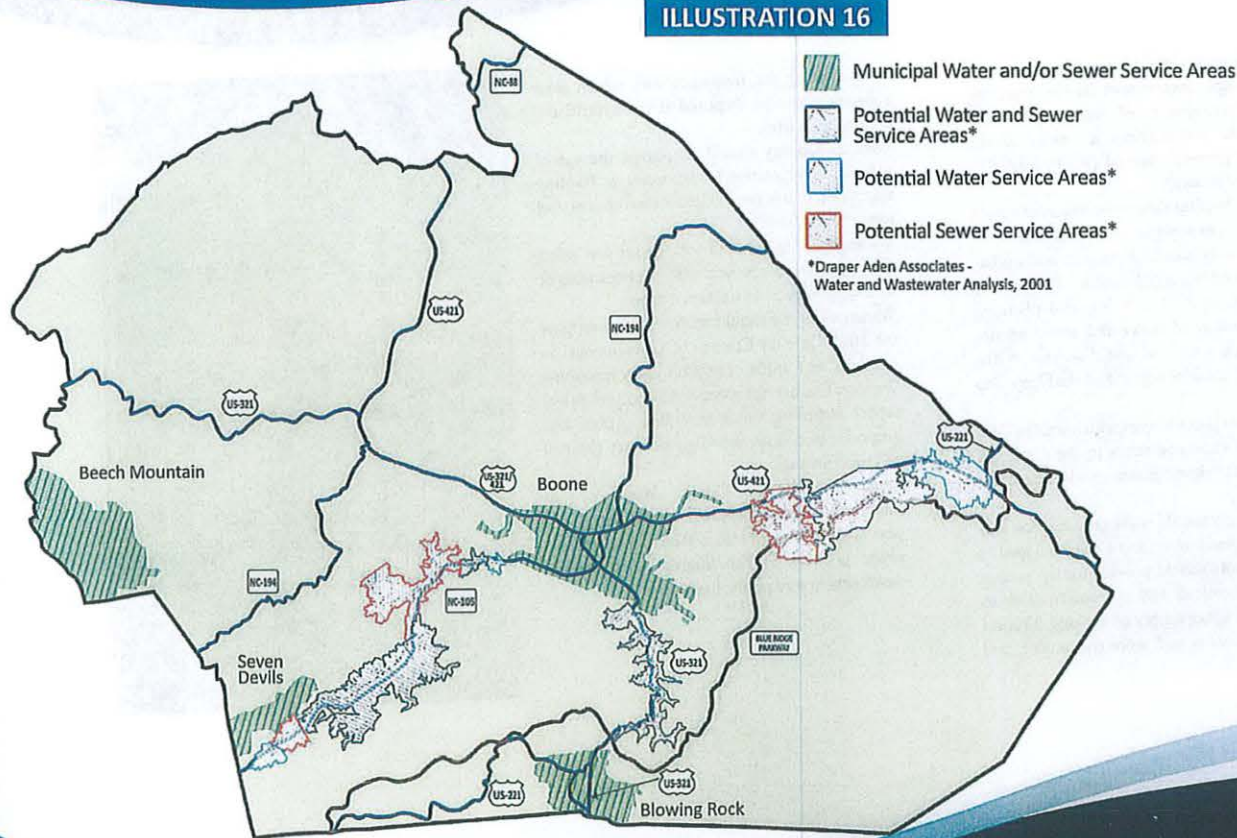
- A new water source called "The New River Project" was proposed to meet Boone's water needs, and a bond referendum on the issue passed in 2008.
- This project would provide an additional supply of 4 million gallons of water per day from the South Fork New River.
- Boone and Watauga County are presently 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 Blowing 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 1 High School under construction, March 2009

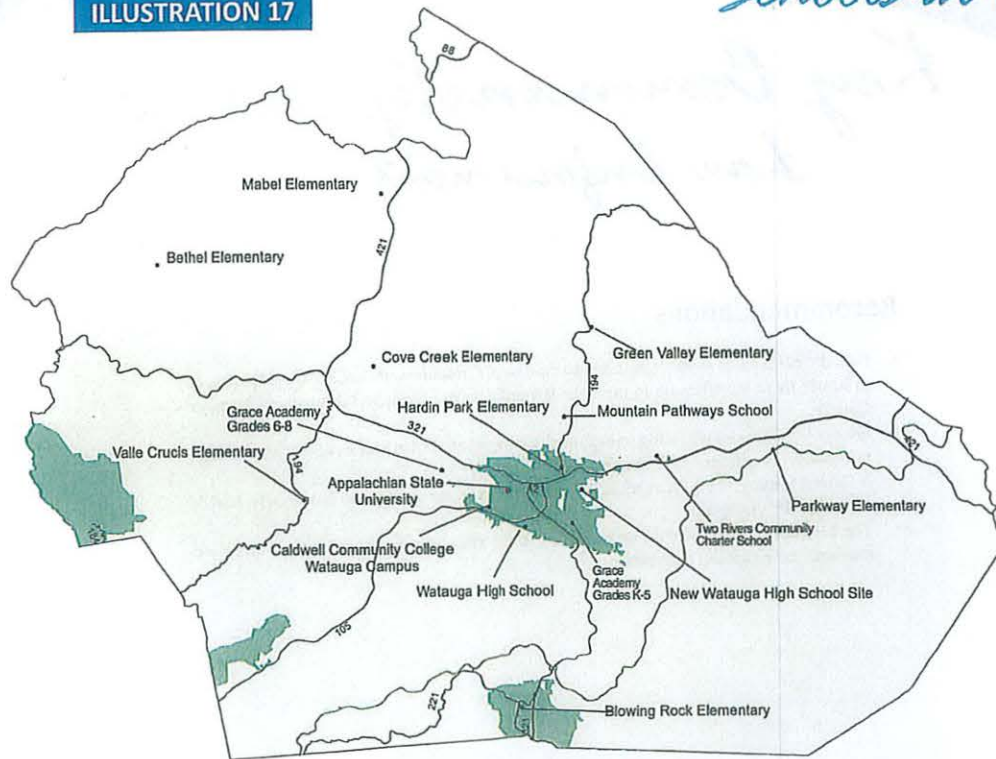
- Enrollment in Watauga County schools is projected to be relatively stable over the next few years, indicating no need for additional schools in the short-term.
- The eight elementary schools are located throughout the County (Illustration 17) and conveniently serve most communities.
- The Watauga County 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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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

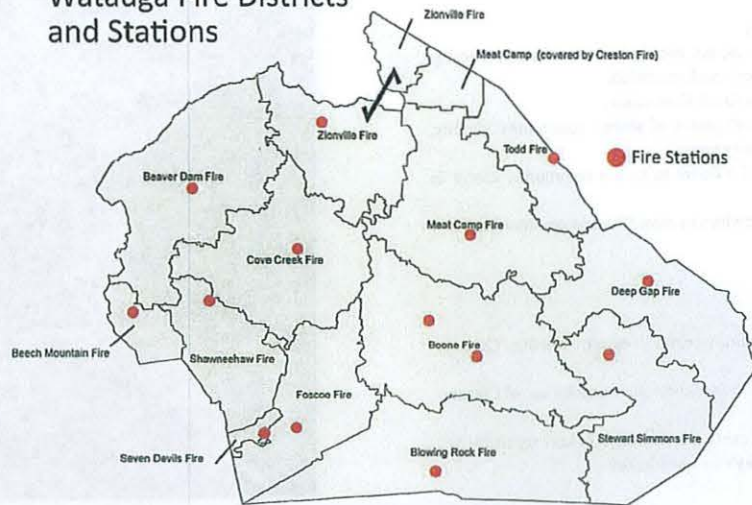
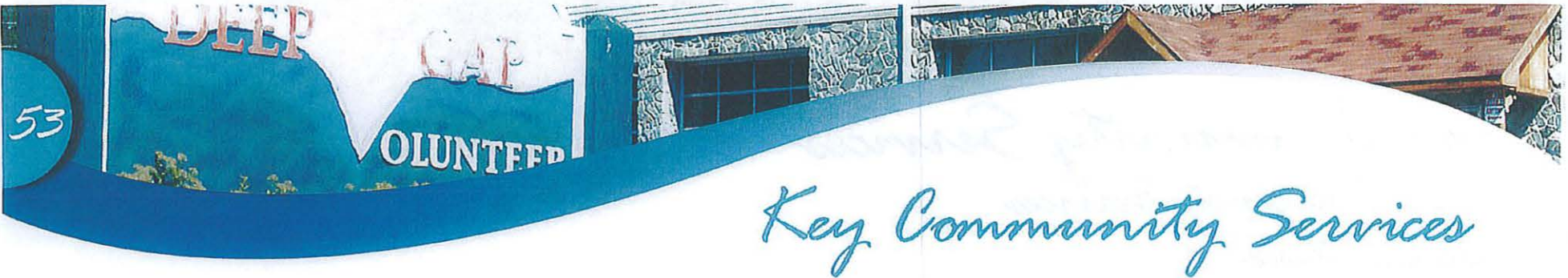


ILLUSTRATION 18

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 Blazing 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 quadplex 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

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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

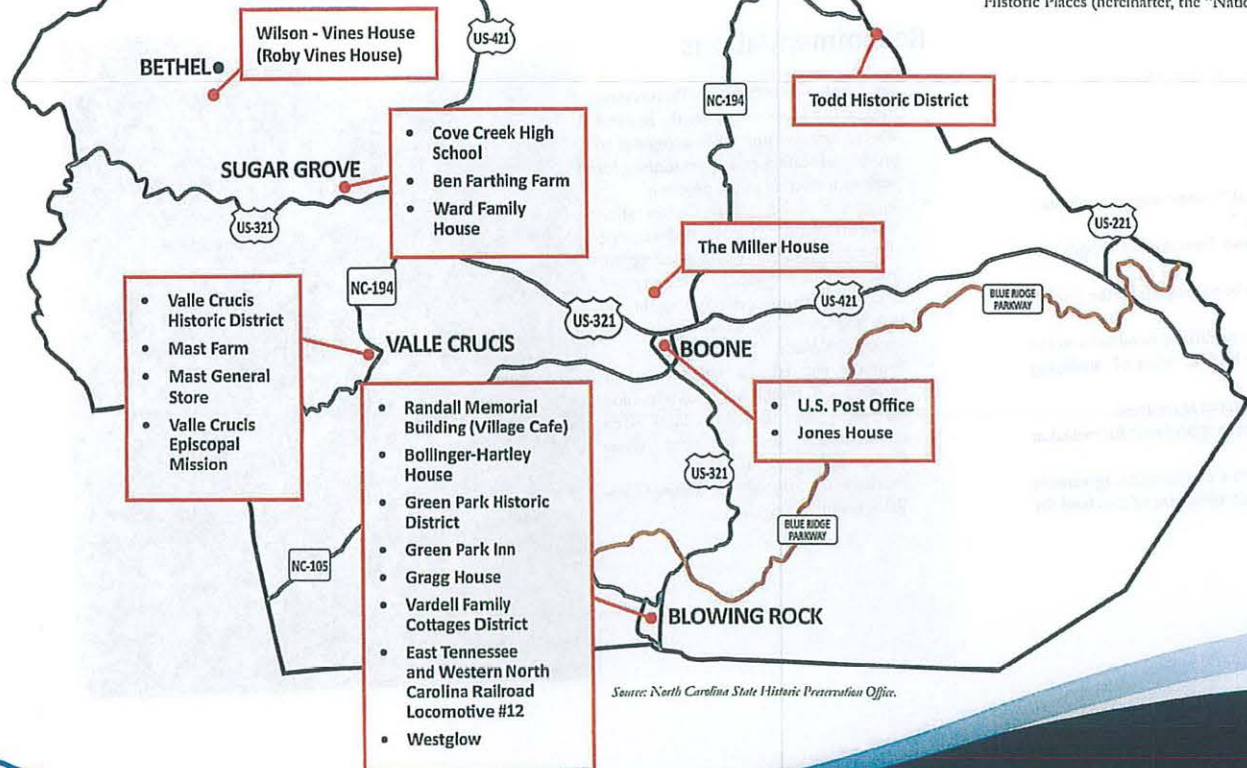
Recommendations

- 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**
 - Todd Historic District

Source: North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office.

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Preservation of Farmland

Preface

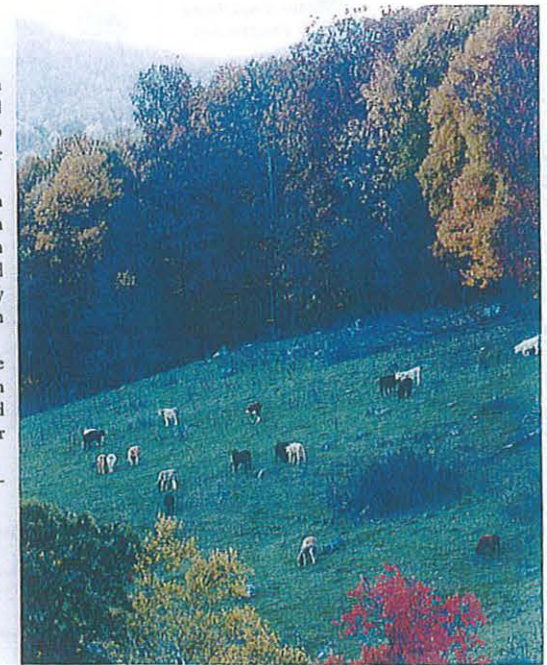
Preserving community identity and the County's unique heritage is a worthy endeavor.

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 Rock Hill

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

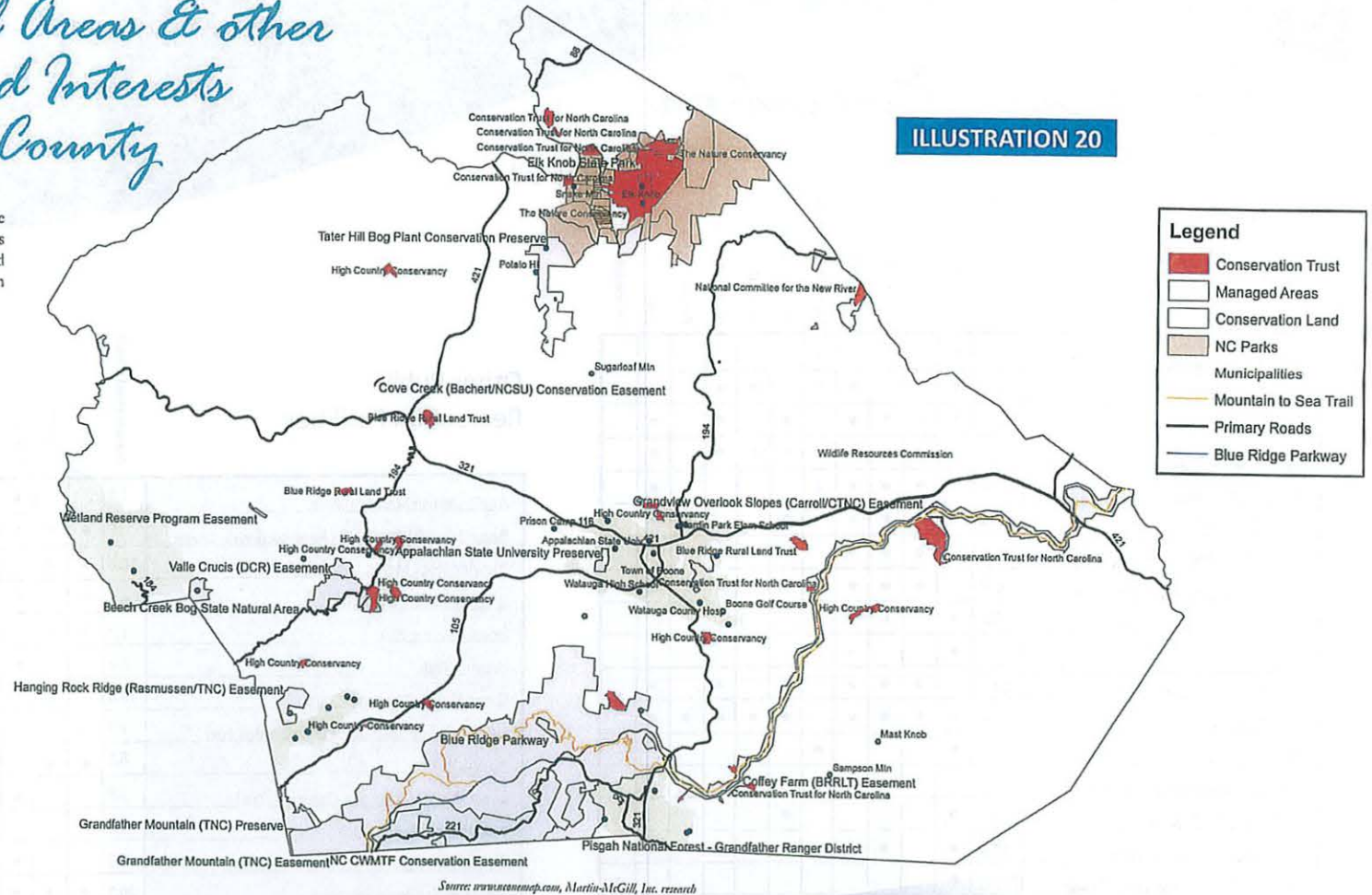
	Average (total parcel)	Restrooms	Playground	Walking Trails	Picnic Shelters	Baseball/Softball Fields	Athletic/Soccer Fields	Tennis Court	Basketball Court	Fishing	Gym	Swimming Pool
Annie Cannon Memorial Park	1.9			•								
Beech Mountain Park / Buckeye Recreation Center	39	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Blowing 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			•								

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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



An aerial photograph of a lush, green forested valley. A winding road or path is visible, curving through the trees. In the foreground, a bridge with a white arch spans across a body of water. The background shows rolling hills and mountains under a clear sky.

Section 10
Managing Change in
Watanga County

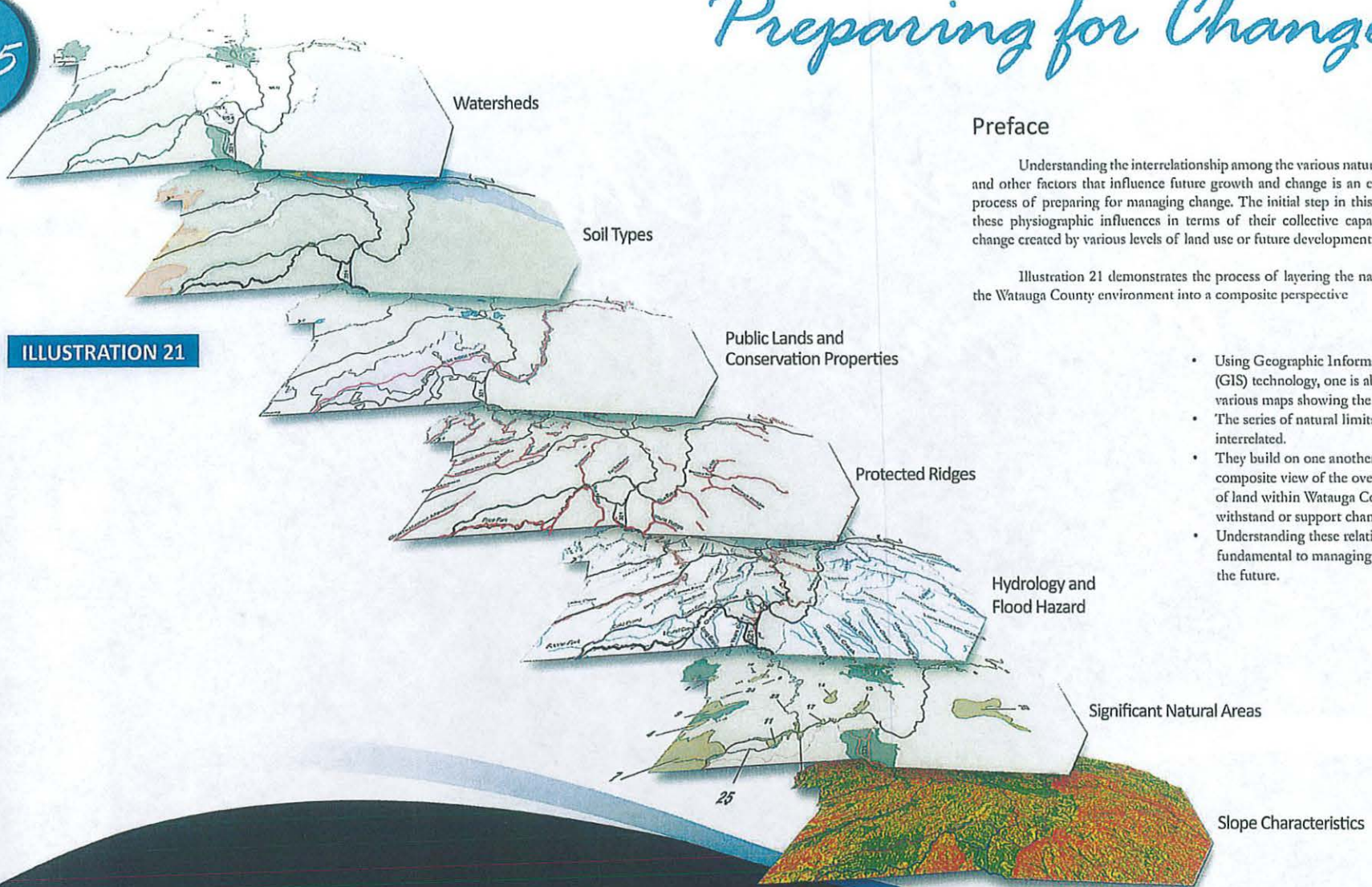
Preparing for Change

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

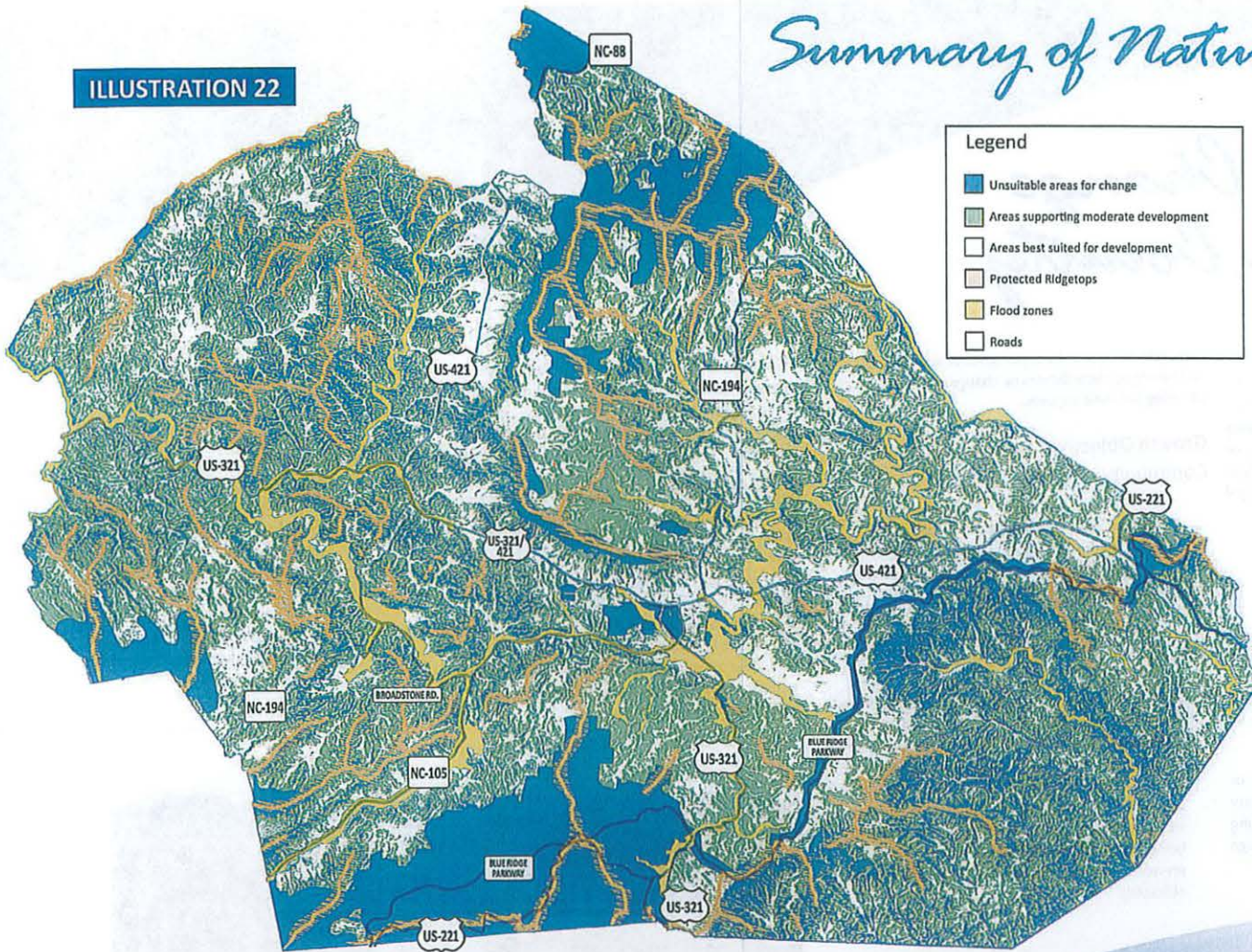
ILLUSTRATION 21



- 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.

ILLUSTRATION 22

Summary of Natural Limitations



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.

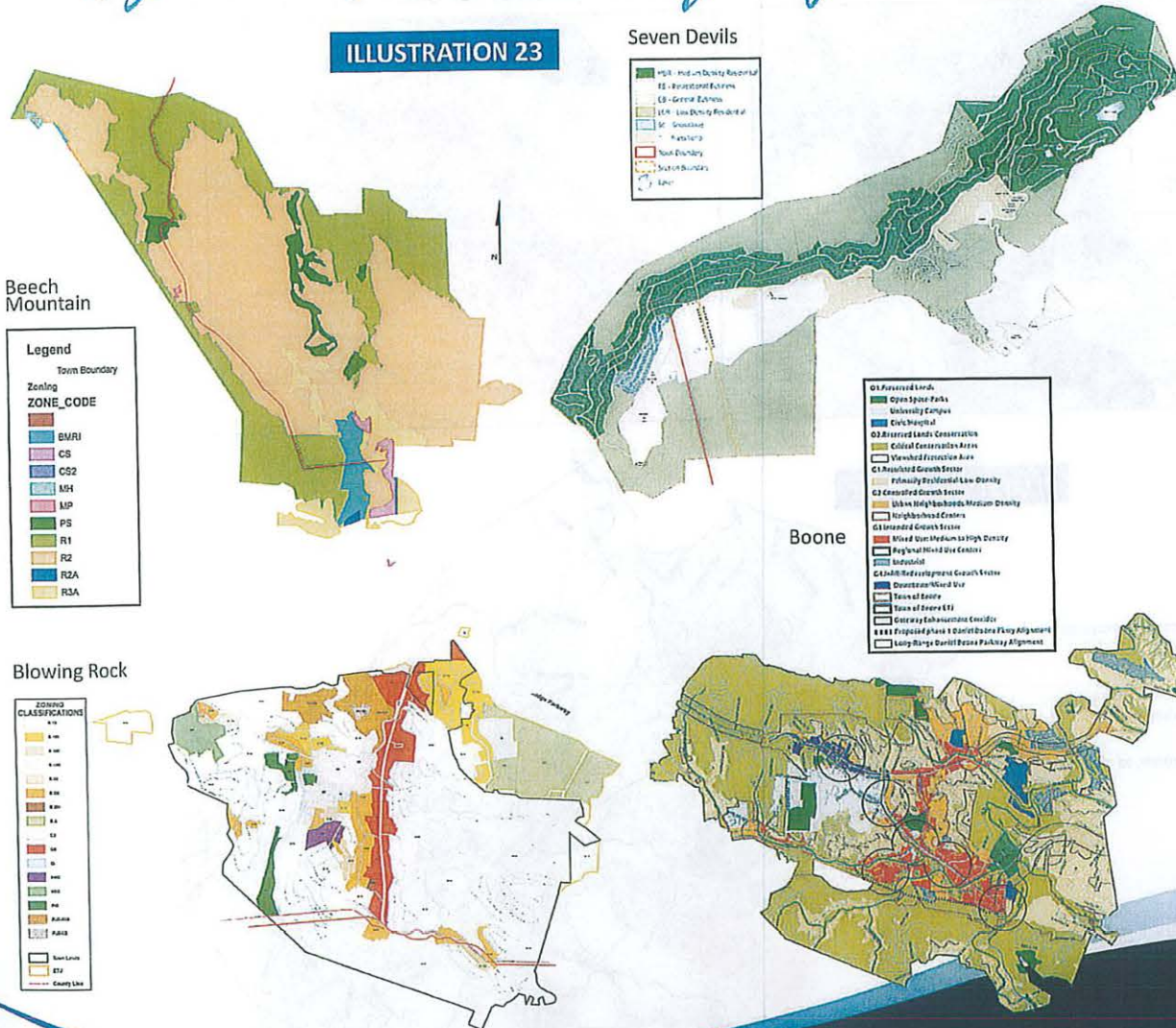
The following objectives are intended to guide the County:

- 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.



Regional Framework for Growth Management

ILLUSTRATION 23



Acknowledging Municipal Planning Jurisdictions

Managing change should reflect a regional strategy. Therefore, planning for Watauga County's growth should consider similar endeavors across governmental jurisdictions. It is incumbent upon County government to consult with its political neighbors as it plans for its future growth. Its plans and policies should efficiently and effectively mesh with those of the municipalities within Watauga County.

At present, the four municipalities of Boone, Blowing Rock, Beech Mountain and Seven Devils each have land use plans, land use regulations and various other ongoing planning activities that are in place and reflect their individual objectives and policies regarding managing growth and influencing change (Illustration 23). Further, Boone and Blowing Rock have extraterritorial jurisdictions within which they plan and administer land use regulations. The County's Growth Management Policy should:

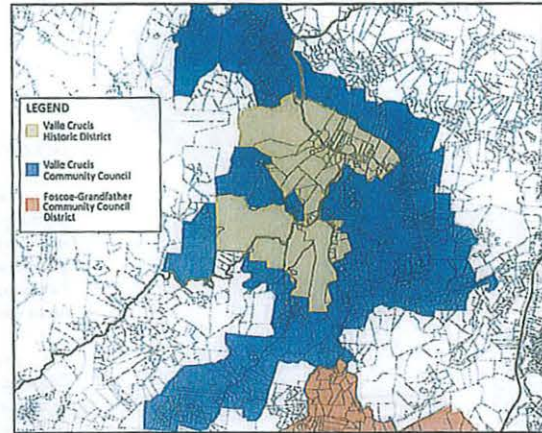
- Acknowledge these individual municipal planning jurisdictions.
- Reflect the current plans that have been adopted for each municipal jurisdiction.
- Strive to ensure that County plans and recommendations for those areas of Watauga County that are adjacent to municipal jurisdictions are consistent with municipal planning.
- Coordinate plans and recommendations for essential services and infrastructure with corresponding plans for the municipal jurisdictions.
- Strive for regional or countywide solutions to planning and urban services.
- In the absence of municipal plans for essential services and infrastructure, the County should coordinate its planning with the affected municipality.

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A. Cove Creek Community Council District



B. Valle Crucis Historic District



C. Foscoe-Grandfather Community Council District

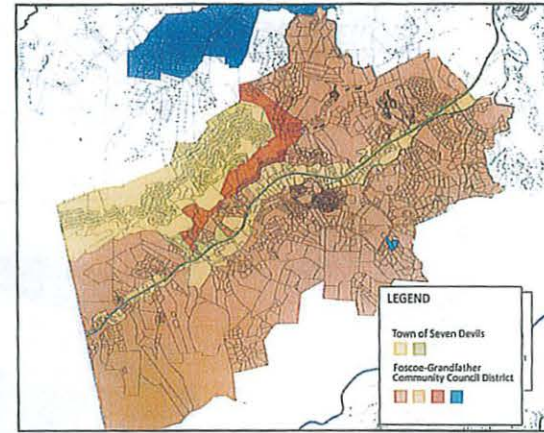
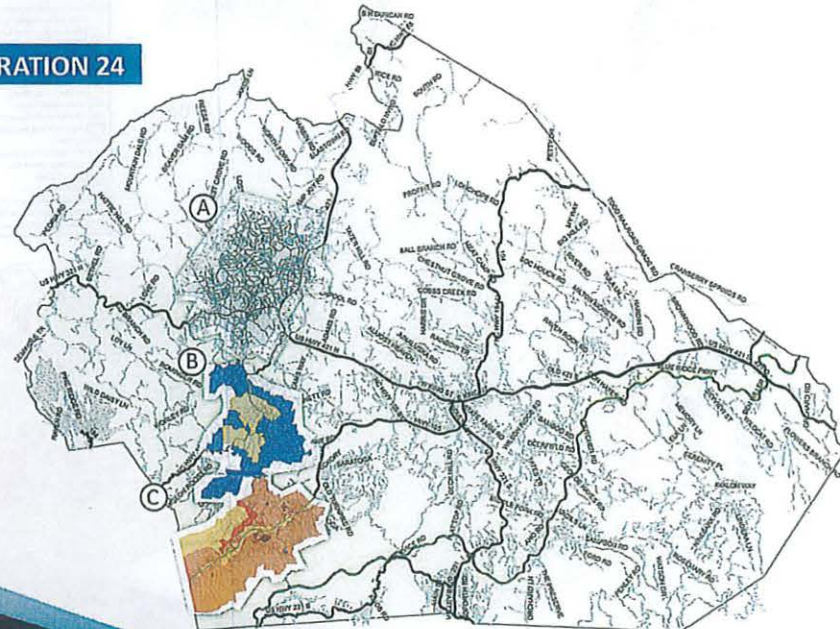


ILLUSTRATION 24

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.

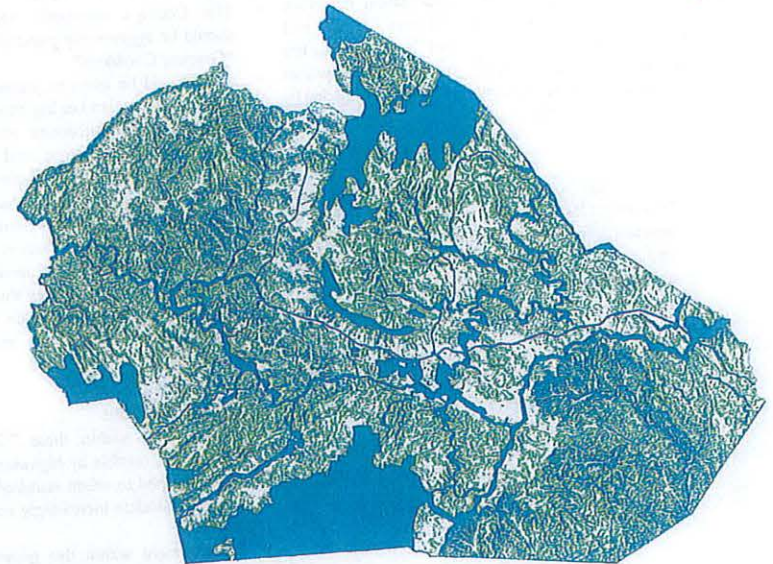
Watauga County is a community in transition. It has evolved from a principally rural environment into a community that is typically urban along its principal highway corridors and progressively more rural and agricultural as distances increase away from those transportation corridors. This urban / rural 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.

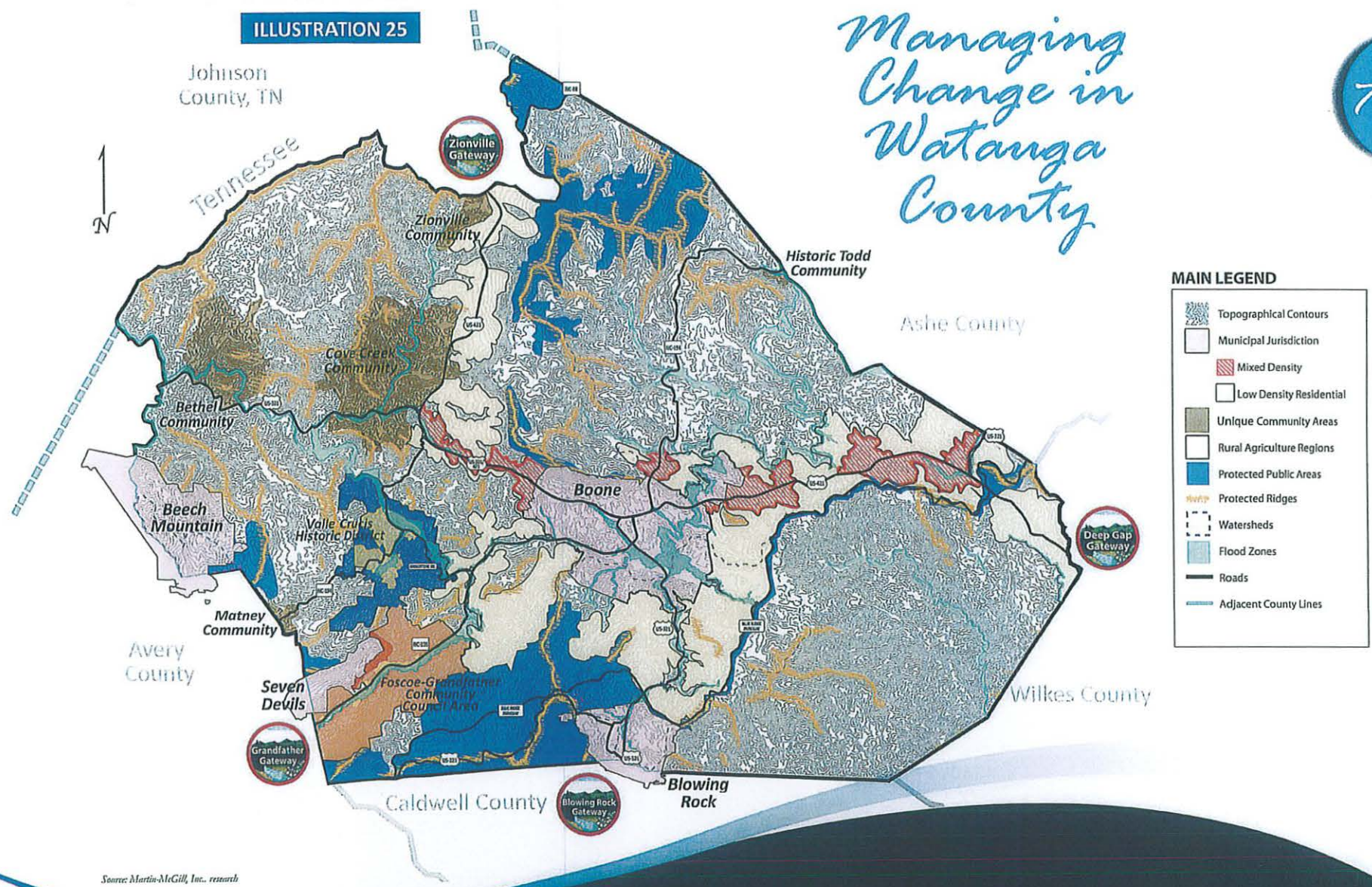
Planning and Organizational Structure

- 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



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.

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

Year 2022 at a Glance

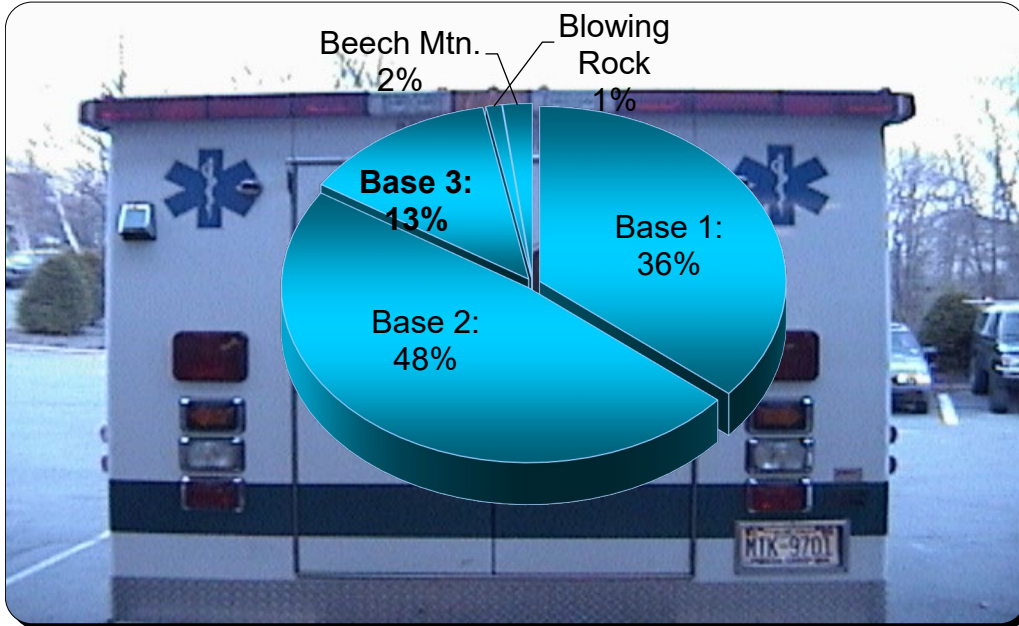
Total Number of Calls:	6,451
Number of No Transports:	1,943
Total Patients Transported:	4,508
Yearly Average Response Time:	0:09:39
Total Out of County Transports:	431
Total Out Of County Emergency Tranports:	115
Total Number of Emergency Calls:	3,065
Total Number of Patients Transported Emergency:	705
Total Number of Calls in Boone Fire District:	3,670
Total Calls other than Boone:	2,781
Busiest Fire District other than Boone:	BLOWING ROCK
Average Number of Calls per Day:	17.7
Most number of calls in a 24 hour period:	37
Fewest number of calls in a 24 hour period	6
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 31 years:	3.91%
Increase percentage in calls from prevous year	2.76%
Percentage of Calls that resulted in No Transports (NTP's):	30%
Total Number of DOA's for Year:	76
Total Number of Patients flown from the scene:	22

Watauga Medics Inc. Year 2022 Annual Report

For year ending 2022

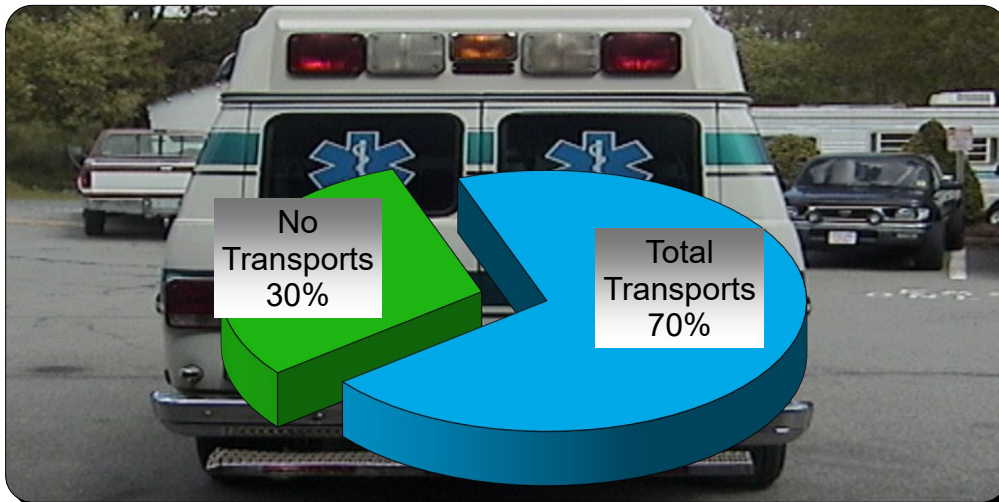
Calls for each Base

Base 1:	2,328
Base 2:	3,098
Base 3:	833
Blowing Rock	67
Beech Mtn.	125
Total Number of Calls	6,451



No Transports compared to Total Calls

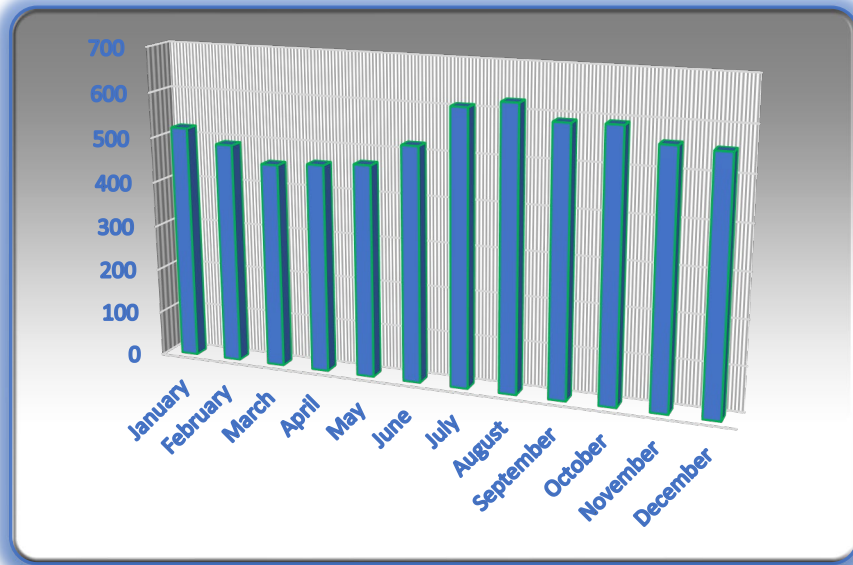
Total Transports	4,508
No Transports	1,943
Total Calls	6,451



Watauga Medics Annual Report for 2022 For Year ending 2022

Calls by the Month

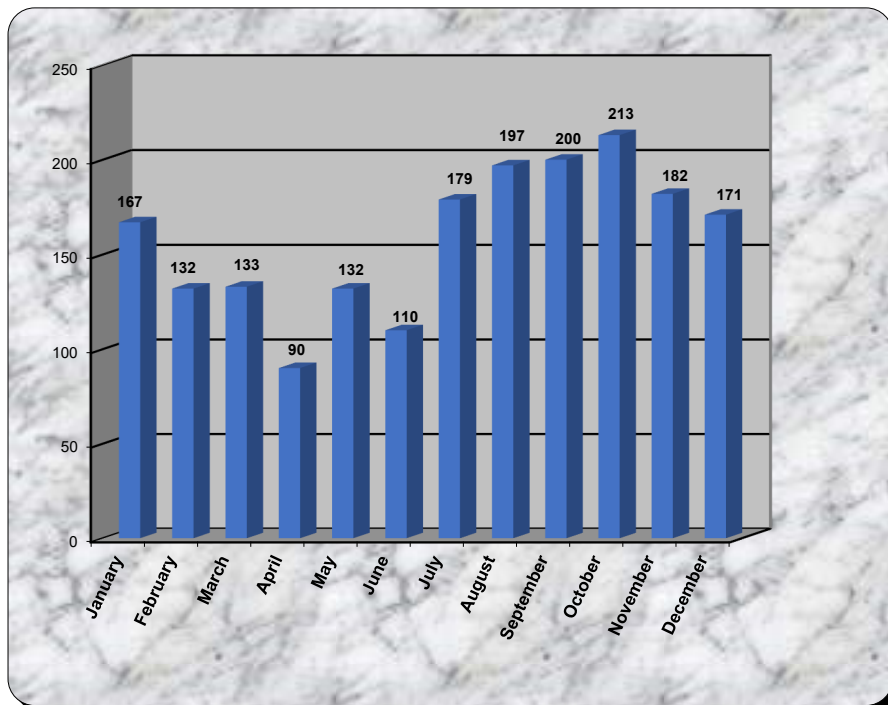
<u>Month</u>	<u>Calls</u>
January	521
February	491
March	455
April	463
May	471
June	520
July	608
August	624
September	590
October	593
November	560
December	555



Total Calls 6,451

No-Transports by Month

<u>Month</u>	<u>NTP's</u>
January	167
February	132
March	133
April	90
May	132
June	110
July	179
August	197
September	200
October	213
November	182
December	171



Total 1,941

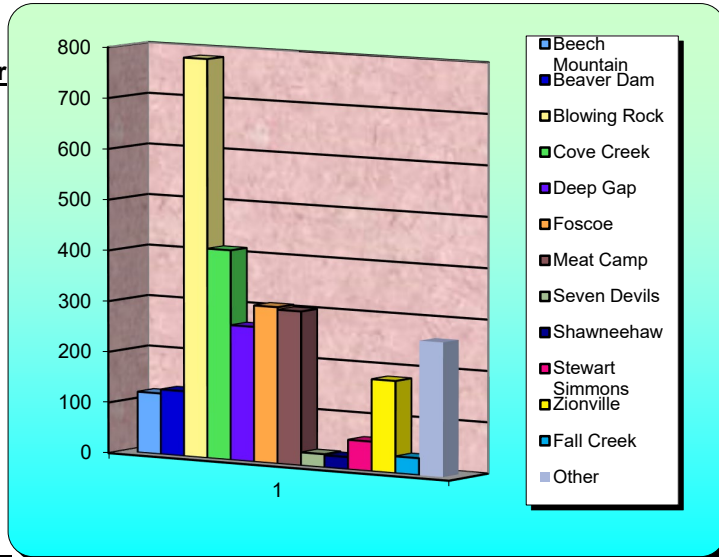
Watauga Medics Inc. Year 2022 Annual Report

For Year Ending 2022

All Calls

Calls by Fire District

<u>Calls by Fire District</u>	<u>Number</u>
Beech Mountain	120
Beaver Dam	128
Blowing Rock	784
Cove Creek	412
Deep Gap	265
Foscoe	307
Meat Camp	302
Seven Devils	26
Shawneehaw	24
Stewart Simmons	58
Zionville	180
Fall Creek	33
Other	262



Calls by Fire District

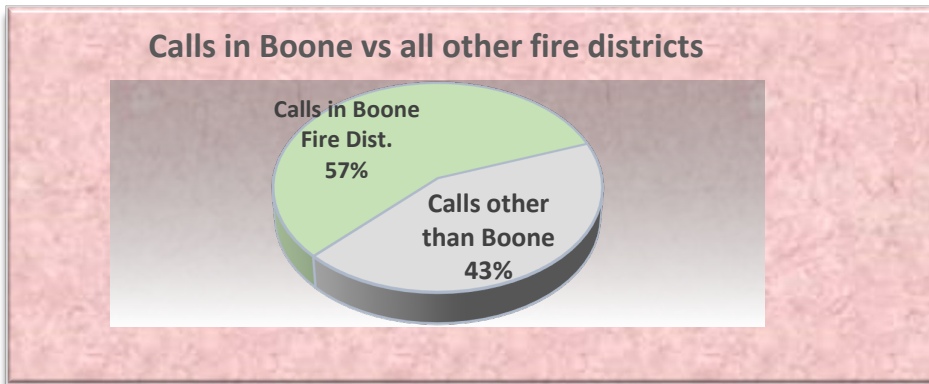
Other Than Boone: 2,781

Calls in Boone vs other districts

Calls other than Boone **2,781**

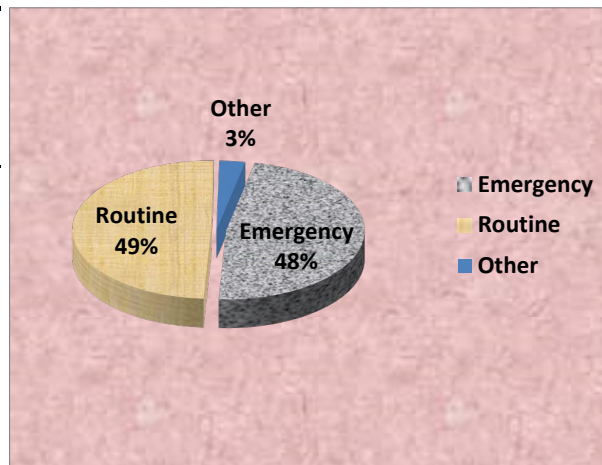
Calls in Boone Fire Dist. **3,670**

6,451



Calls by type of response used:

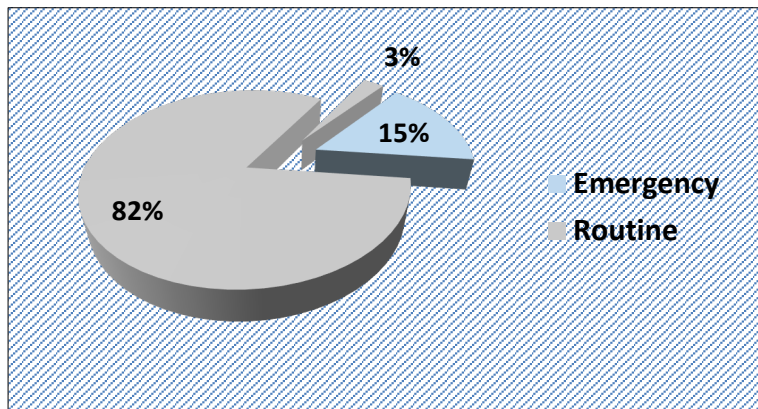
<u>Type of Response</u>	<u>Number</u>
Emergency	3,065
Routine	3,192
Other	194
Total	6,451



**Watauga Medics Inc. Year 2022 Annual Report
For Year Ending 2022**

Type of response used while transporting patients

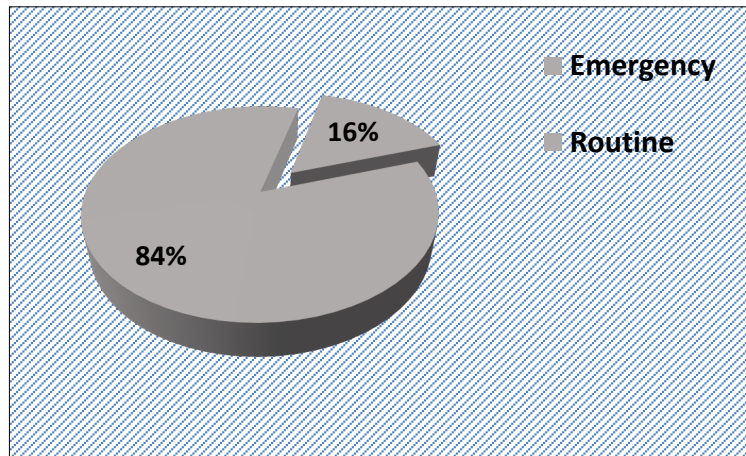
<u>Transport Type</u>	<u>Number</u>
Emergency	705
Routine	3,684
Other	119
Total Transports	4,508



Type of Traffic for Out-Of-County Trips

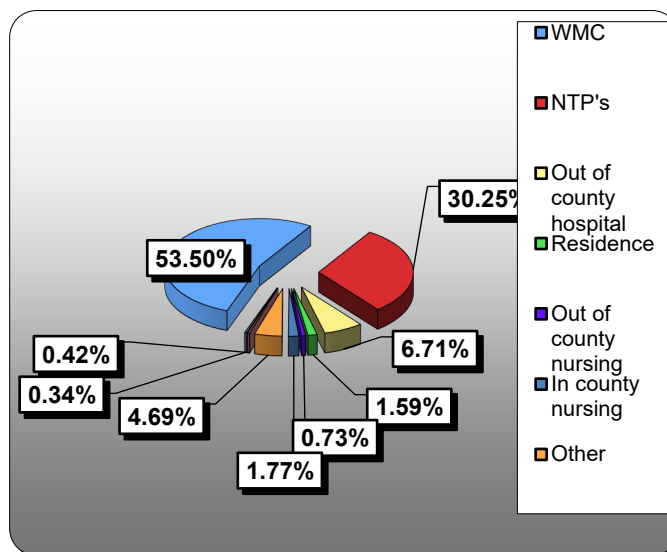
<u>Traffic</u>	<u>Number</u>
Emergency	20
Routine	411

Total Out of County 431



Destination of Calls

<u>Destination</u>	<u>Number</u>
WMC	3,437
NTP's	1,943
Out of county hospital	431
Residence	102
Out of county nursing	47
In county nursing	114
Other	301
Rhab / Hospice	27
Scene Flights	22
Dr. Office	27
Total	6,451

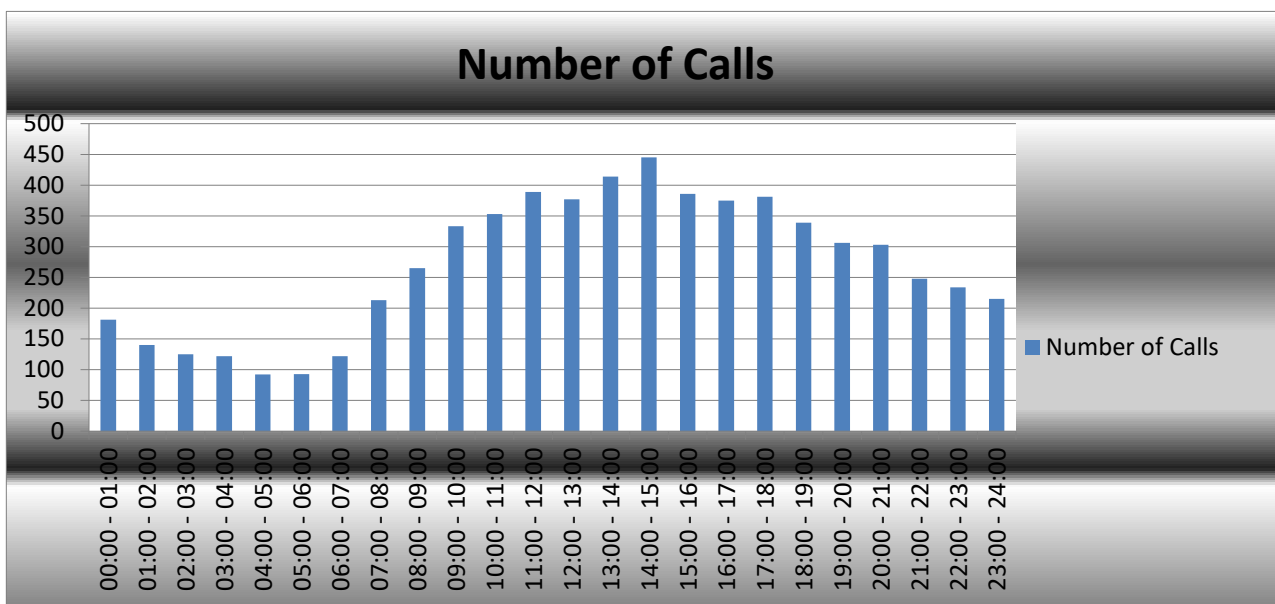


* WMC: Watauga Medical Center
* NTP: No Transports

Watauga Medics Inc. Year 2022 Annual Report

<u>Time of Day</u>	<u>Number of Calls</u>
00:00 - 01:00	181
01:00 - 02:00	140
02:00 - 03:00	125
03:00 - 04:00	122
04:00 - 05:00	92
05:00 - 06:00	93
06:00 - 07:00	122
07:00 - 08:00	213
08:00 - 09:00	265
09:00 - 10:00	333
10:00 - 11:00	353
11:00 - 12:00	389
12:00 - 13:00	377
13:00 - 14:00	414
14:00 - 15:00	445
15:00 - 16:00	386
16:00 - 17:00	375
17:00 - 18:00	381
18:00 - 19:00	339
19:00 - 20:00	306
20:00 - 21:00	303
21:00 - 22:00	248
22:00 - 23:00	234
23:00 - 24:00	215

6,451



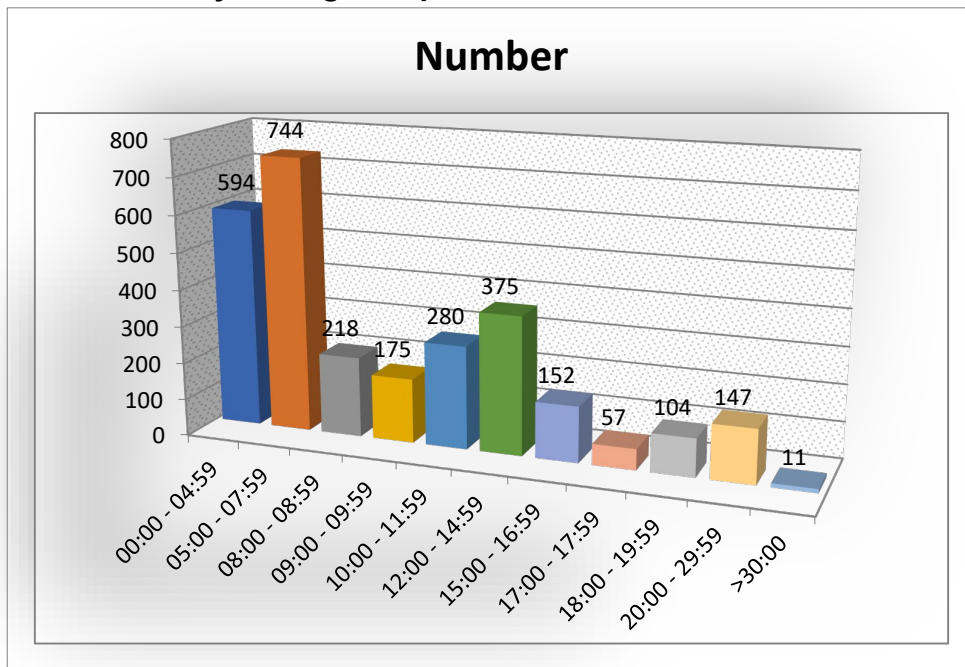
Watauga Medics Inc. Year 2022 Annual Report

Response Times For Year Ending 2022

<u>Response Times</u>	<u>Number</u>
00:00 - 04:59	594
05:00 - 07:59	744
08:00 - 08:59	218
09:00 - 09:59	175
10:00 - 11:59	280
12:00 - 14:59	375
15:00 - 16:59	152
17:00 - 17:59	57
18:00 - 19:59	104
20:00 - 29:59	147
>30:00	11

Total Emergency Responses **2,857 ****

Yearly Average Response Time: **0:09:39**



***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*

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

Number Increase/Decrease

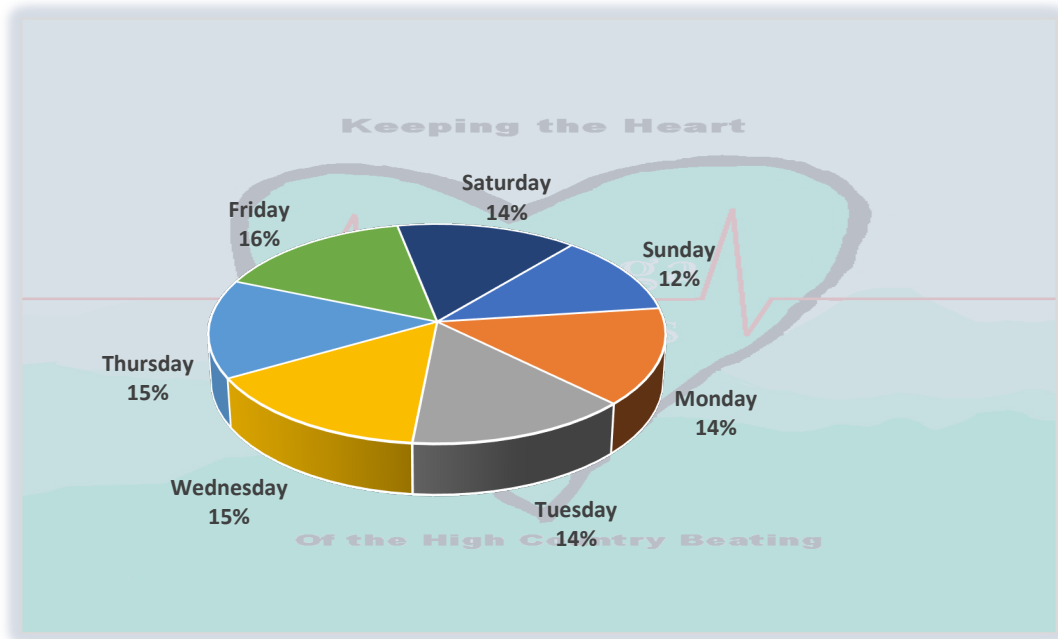
Year	Change
1991	
1992	139 7.24%
1993	96 4.76%
1994	181 8.23%
1995	329 13.02%
1996	44 1.71%
1997	213 7.65%
1998	-29 -1.05%
1999	384 12.23%
2000	348 9.98%
2001	201 5.45%
2002	87 2.30%
2003	91 2.35%
2004	-114 -3.04%
2005	170 4.33%
2006	131 3.23%
2007	-5 -0.12%
2008	412 9.24%
2009	1 0.02%
2010	12 0.27%
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%

avg. 151 3.91% avg

2022 Calls by the day of the week

Total Calls by Day of The Week

	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Sunday	781	745	676	721	733
Monday	904	897	765	957	855
Tuesday	977	895	782	874	824
Wednesday	905	954	788	896	865
Thursday	915	912	744	908	871
Friday	1,025	978	768	966	918
Saturday	944	892	745	820	886
	6,451	6,273	5,268	6,142	5,952



2022 End of the year report

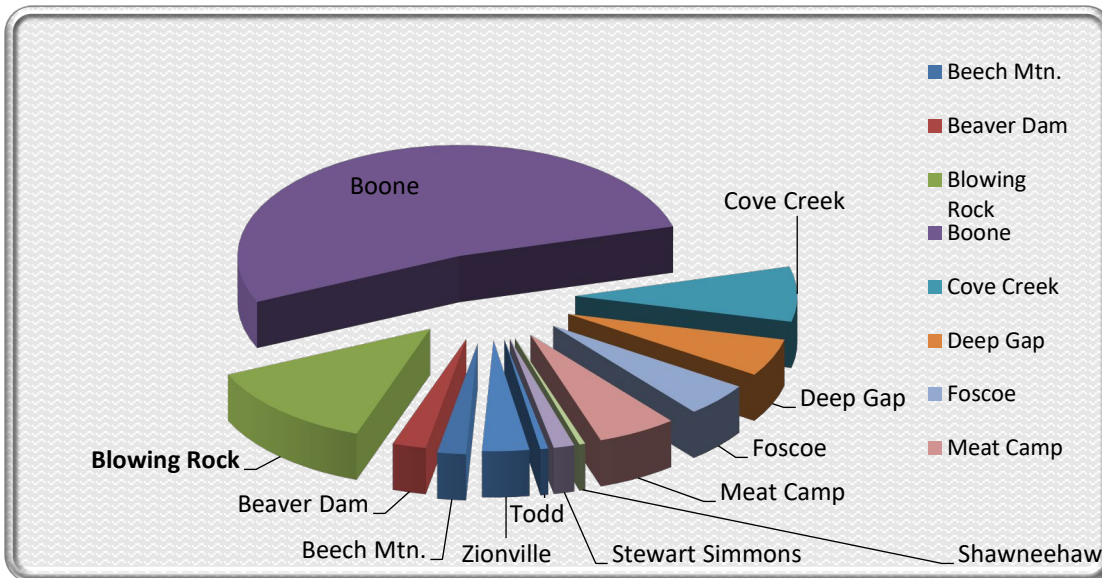
Emergency Calls by fire district

Beech Mtn.	62
Beaver Dam	73
Blowing Rock	382
Boone	1,559
Cove Creek	238
Deep Gap	163
Foscoe	145
Meat Camp	172
Shawneehaw	13
Stewart Simmons	45
Todd	17
Zionville	102

2971

Response times

9:36
20:24
12:32
6:54
10:11
15:12
14:46
14:32
23:37
22:45
22:17
11:52



2022 Data for Blowing Rock

Total calls in the Blowing Rock Fire District

All Calls 784

Emergency Calls: 382

Number of Emergency Calls to:

Foley Center	61
App Ski Mountain	10
Urgent Care	27
cancelled	25
No transports that were not one of the above:	74
Total	197

That leaves a remainder of 185

Watauga Medics Inc.

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

January 12, 2022

2021 Billing Policy

Our current rates for service are as follows:

BLS:	\$300.00
ALS: non Emerg.	\$325.00
Emerg.	\$415.00
ALS II:	\$550.00
Charge per loaded mile:	\$9.50

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

EMS SYSTEM



Whereas WATAUGA COUNTY has made a commitment to providing quality emergency medical care to its citizens and has demonstrated that it meets the criteria of an EMS SYSTEM as defined by the North Carolina Medical Care Commission, it hereby receives approval as a NORTH CAROLINA EMS SYSTEM. This approval shall be effective until the last day of November, 2027

Division of Health Service Regulation

Office of Emergency Medical Services

Personnel

Watauga Medics Inc. Roster

Name	Position	M Number
Craig Sullivan	Director	M11
Pete Pickering	Training Coordinator	M62
Darlene Hicks	Office Manager	
Amber Jackson	Administrative Assistant	
Candace Barker	Human Resources	
Ricky Roark	Fleet Maintenance	
Angela Seeley	Paramedic Supervisor	M15
Erin Oliver	Paramedic	M71
Brianna Seeley	Paramedic	M54
Courtney Miller	EMT (paramedic student)	M38
Jullian Pereira	EMT	M20
Kate Wood	Paramedic	M47
John Whitner	Paramedic	M52
Veronica Shelton	Paramedic Supervisor	M16
Adam Cleary	Paramedic	M78
Josiah Davis	Paramedic	M55
Kevin Norris	Paramedic	M15
Nathan Lukas	AEMT (paramedic student)	M32
Anthony Woodard	Paramedic Supervisor	M17
Jack Reedy	Paramedic	M45
Lena Kilby	EMT (paramedic student)	M70
Jessi Abbott	Paramedic	M31
Brad Chenauski	Paramedic	
Trenton Winebarger	AEMT (paramedic student)	M72
Justin Mack	Paramedic	M53
Kurt Kaunath	Paramedic	M23
Greg Bryant	Paramedic	M55

Part-time personnel

Dan Pittello	Paramedic	
Faye Kelly	Paramedic	M75
Kate Johnson	EMT (medic student)	M51
Chanda Brooks	Paramedic	M55
Dakota Todd	EMT	M33
Ryan Kissell	Paramedic	M24
Angie Norris	EMT	M34
Angela Bowen	Paramedic	M39
Alexandra Jolly	Paramedic	M44
James Bonner	Paramedic	M66
Floyd Hicks	EMT	
Josh Poe	Paramedic	M53
Don Abbott	EMT	M31
Garry Pomerleau	Paramedic	M57
Kat Greer	Paramedic	M28
Conrad Poe	Paramedic	M58

Christy Taylor	Paramedic	M27
Alyssa Nucols	EMT	M29
Ben Samburg	EMT	M45
Jacob Starnes	EMT	M42
Jessee Devaney	EMT	M74
Eric Thomas	AEMT	M73
Jackson Lamb	EMT	M37
Aidan Brodie	EMT	M77
Matt Schram	EMT	M46
Noel Jones	EMT	M35
John Bard	EMT	M54

q4 2022**Ambulances**

Unit #	Type	Year model	VIN
Medic 1	Chevy Type I 4x4 AEV	2016	1GB3KZC83GF165100
Medic 2	Chevy Type III (McCoy Mille	2015	1GB3KZC89FF668600
Medic 3	Chevy Type III G4500	2015	1GB6G5CL8F1112450
Medic 4	Chevy Type I 4x4 AEV	2017	1GB3KZCY5JF148967
Medic 5	Chevy Type I (4x4)	2014	1GB3K0C8DEF117935
Medic 6	Chevy Type I (2x4)	2016	1GB3CZCG7GF118074
Medic 7	Chevy Type III	2015	1GB3G2CL9F1234719
Medic 8	Chevy Type I 4x4 AEV	2019	1GB3KWCY2KF145525
Medic 9	Chevy type I 4x4	2020	1GB3YTE78LF306222

Cardiac Monitors

3	Zoll E series 12 lead EKG cardia	1	Zoll AED
7	Zoll X-Series cardiac monitors	1	Zoll AED Trainer

Communications

4	Motorola 99 channel radios	7	HT1000 Motorola portable 2-way radios
4	99 channel Kenwood 100 watt m	5	16 Channel Portables (HT750)
3	Base stations	4	Motorola MT1500 Portables
1	Repeater system for WMI channel	7	TK 290 Kenwood Portables
6	Kenwood NX-3220 portable radios		
5	dual band viper/vhf radios		

Training Equipment

1	Laredal IV Torso	1	Vascular system chart
1	Skillmeter Resusci-annie	1	Respiratory system chart
2	Resusci-Junior	1	Overhead 3M projector
3	Intubation Manikins	1	Pressure IV bag
2	Junior intubation manikin		
1	Regular Resusci-annies	1	Sony Video camera
1	IV arm start kit	1	OB/GYN pregnancy simulator
1	ALS resusci-baby	3	Portable suction units
9	Regular resusci-babies		
1	OB Manikin		
1	Chest decompression manikin	1	Armstrong patient simulator
1	Crich manikin	1	vitamins patient simulator
2	ALS rhythm generator	1	Video adapter
2	Sets Adult CPR Mannequins	1	Airway management kit
1	Set Pediatric CPR Mannequins	3	Resuscitator kits
		1	Projection Screen
2	Airway manikins	1	National Registry software for EMT-P
1	Complete model of the heart		
1	Complete skeleton		Multiple training videos.
1	Torso model		Multiple books and manuals for training.
1	Laerdal head suction model		Misc. disposable supplies used for training.

**WATAUGA COUNTY
PUBLIC EVENT AND TOURNAMENT MEMORIAL NAMING
& MEMORIAL BENCH DONATION POLICY**

I. PURPOSE

- a. The purpose of this policy is to establish a process for naming public events and tournaments hosted by Watauga County and to establish a process for accepting donated memorial benches to be placed on property owned by Watauga County.

II. AUTHORIZATION

- a. The Board of County Commissioners shall accept or reject all proposed event and tournament naming requests. County staff may make initial recommendations for naming.
- b. The Board of County Commissioners shall accept or reject, and designate placement of all donated memorial benches. County staff may make initial recommendations for placement.

III. QUALIFYING NAMING REQUESTS AND MEMORIAL BENCH DONATIONS

- a. Public event and tournament memorial naming will only be considered for acceptance by the Board of County Commissioners based on the following:
 - i. Memorial naming is requested on behalf of an individual who is no longer living.
 - ii. Memorial naming is requested on behalf of an individual who was of good standing and reverence in the Watauga County community.
 - iii. Memorial naming is appropriate and recommended by Watauga County staff.
- b. Donated memorial benches will only be considered for acceptance by the Board of County Commissioners based on the following:
 - i. Memorial benches are donated on behalf of an individual who is no longer living.
 - ii. Memorial benches are donated on behalf of an individual who was of good standing and reverence in the Watauga County community.
 - iii. Memorial benches are purchased from a pre-selected design from an approved vendor.
 - iv. Memorial Plaque verbiage is appropriate and approved by Watauga County staff.
 - v. Memorial Bench location is recommended by Watauga County staff.

IV. PROCESS OF CONSIDERATION FOR MEMORIAL EVENT OR TOURNAMENT NAMING

- a. Recommending a memorial naming for an event or tournament must originate in the following manner: An individual or an organization may file an application requesting the naming of an event or tournament. The format is shown on the Watauga County Public Event or Tournament Memorial Request Form.

- b. The request form must be supported by official documentation including but not limited to:
 - i. List of services/volunteer activities including dates of involvement
 - ii. List of professional accomplishments
 - iii. List of honors or rewards
 - iv. Information regarding any significant donations, gifts, financial support or contributions made by the individual to the County.
 - v. Proof of site meeting with the appropriate County Department Head and recommended naming or renaming of an event.
- c. The burden of supporting documents along with the request form rests with the individual or group making the request.
- d. Watauga County Public Event or Tournament Memorial Request Form and all supporting documentation shall be submitted to the Watauga County Manager, 814 West King Street, Suite 205, Boone, NC 28607.
- e. A 15-business day verification period will immediately follow the request submittal.
- f. At the end of the verification period, the County Manager will place the application on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of County Commissioners for consideration.
- g. The Board of County Commissioners will review and consider the application for acceptance or rejection.
- h. The County will make every effort to preserve the name of the event or tournament. If necessary, due to the nature of the event or any confusion a naming or renaming may cause, the County reserves the right to change the name at any time.
- i. The County Commissioners may waive or modify any requirement of this policy as they deem appropriate on a case-by-case basis.

V. PROCESS OF CONSIDERATION FOR MEMORIAL BENCH DONATION

- a. Donating a memorial bench shall originate in the following manner: An individual or an organization may file an application requesting acceptance of a donated memorial bench. The format is shown on the Watauga County Memorial Bench Donation Request Form.
- b. The request form must be supported by official documentation including but not limited to:
 - i. List of services/volunteer activities including dates of involvement
 - ii. List of professional accomplishments
 - iii. List of honors or rewards
 - iv. Information regarding any significant donations, gifts, financial support or contributions made by the individual to the County.
 - v. Proof of site meeting with the appropriate County Department Head and recommended location placement of donated memorial bench.
- c. The burden of supporting documents along with the request form rests with the individual or group making the request.

- d. The Watauga County Memorial Bench Donation Request Form and all supporting documentation shall be submitted to the Watauga County Manager, 814 West King Street, Suite 205, Boone, NC 28607.
- e. A 15-business day verification period will immediately follow the request submittal.
- f. At the end of the verification period, the County Manager will place the application on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of County Commissioners for consideration.
- g. The Board of County Commissioners will review and consider the application for acceptance or rejection.
- h. The County will make every effort to preserve the memorial bench and plaque. If necessary, due to repair of the surrounding areas, construction or redesign of an area or facility, the memorial bench and plaque may be relocated. If the memorial bench and plaque cannot continue to be maintained or after a reasonable period of time, it may be removed by the County.
- i. The County Commissioners may waive or modify any requirement of this policy as they deem appropriate on a case-by-case basis.

VI. LIMITATIONS

- a. The use and ownership of any County owned property or events may change. The memorial name of an event or tournament is not guaranteed in perpetuity.
- b. The memorial naming of an event shall not create a property interest in the event or tournament or the location of the event or tournament.
- c. All events and tournaments are the sole property of the County.

VII. RESPONSIBILITY

- a. The County Manger is responsible for monitoring and ensuring regular review of this policy.
- b. All costs associated with this process is the responsibility of the requester.
- c. All memorial benches and plaques donated to the County must be purchased by the donor from a preferred vendor and benches must be of an approved, specific design.
- d. The County will make every effort to preserve any memorial naming of an event or tournament.
- e. The County Commissioners may waive or modify any requirement of this policy as they deem appropriate on a case-by-case basis.

**WATAUGA COUNTY
MEMORIAL EVENT NAMING AND BENCH DONATION FORM**

Before submitting, please review the Watauga County Public Event and Tournament Memorial Naming & Memorial Bench Donation Policy.

Do you wish to:

Name and/or rename an event after a deceased individual YES / NO

Donate a memorial bench in honor of a deceased individual YES / NO

Per Section IV of the Public Event and Tournament Memorial Naming and Memorial Bench Donation Policy, please provide the following information with this form:

_____ Narrative describing why the individual should be honored by naming or renaming an event or tournament OR placing a donated memorial bench on County Property.

_____ List of services/volunteer activities including dates of involvement

_____ List of professional accomplishments

_____ List of honors or rewards

_____ Information regarding any significant donations, gifts, financial support or contributions made by the individual to the County

_____ Proof of site meeting with the appropriate County Department Head and recommended naming or renaming of event OR location of dedicated memorial bench

Applicant Information:

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Date of Submittal: _____

Please deliver this application with accompanying documents to:

In Person Delivery:

Watauga County Manager
814 West King Street
Boone, NC 28607

Mail:

Watauga County Manager
814 West King Street, Suite 205
Boone, NC 28607

**WATAUGA COUNTY
MEMORIAL EVENT NAMING AND BENCH DONATION FORM**

If applicant is requesting to name a NEW event in honor of an individual, please describe the event below:

If the applicant is requesting to rename an existing event in honor of an individual, please identify the event and provide justification below:

If the applicant is requesting to donate a memorial bench in honor of an individual to be placed on County owned property, please describe the location and verbiage to be placed on the plaque below:

By signing below, the applicant agrees that:

- The applicant has reviewed the Watauga County Public Event and Tournament Memorial Naming & Memorial Bench Donation Policy.
- If donating a memorial bench, the applicant will purchase the bench from an approved Watauga County Vendor and the bench will be a design approved by Watauga County.
- The appropriate Watauga County Employees will provide a recommendation to the County Manager and/or the Watauga County Board of Commissioners for approval or denial of any part of this request.
- Submission of this request and all accompanying documentation does not guarantee approval of requests.
- The Watauga County Board of County Commissioners will be the final decision making body on all requests.

Applicant Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

OFFICE USE ONLY

Amount Paid: \$ _____ Cash: ___ Check #: ___ CC: ___ Date Paid: _____ Accepted By: _____



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

FROM: Wright Tilley, Executive Director

RE: TDA Update for Watauga County Board Retreat

DATE: 1/30/2023

The Watauga County Tourism Development Authority (TDA) is pleased to provide this update for the 2023 Watauga County Commissioners' Retreat.

Attached to this memo is a copy of the year-end FY 21/22 Occupancy Tax chart from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. This chart compares the most recent fiscal year to previous fiscal years.

Fortunately, the mountain region of North Carolina has continued to do well since Covid. Cabin and house rentals have been more popular than traditional hotel rooms. Our many outdoor recreation options have been appealing to those wanting to get away, but still maintain distancing. As a result, our numbers remain up even after the historic increases immediately following the Covid lockdowns.

Watauga TDA Highlights:

- Closed the FY 21/22 fiscal year with an increase in occupancy tax revenue of 6.96%, which amounted to a \$276,689.68 increase in occupancy tax funds over the prior fiscal year. This was even after a historic increase of 90.62% the prior fiscal year.
- Current FY 22/23 fiscal year occupancy tax collections are up 7.46% over last year for July through November. This amounts to an additional \$143,069.44 in occupancy tax funds five months into the fiscal year.
- As of this memo date, we don't have the current December Occupancy tax numbers yet. I will give you all an update on the 2022 Calendar year collections at the retreat presentation.

- The TDA continued to support the Watauga Choose & Cut program in 2022 with a \$5,500 marketing grant to the Watauga County Christmas Tree Association.
- The Watauga County TDA had continued success with our new ad campaign launched in FY 21/22. The campaign entitled “Inspiring Awe Since 1849” focuses on the variety of awe-inspiring things to see and do in the Boone area. The campaign continues to emphasize outdoor recreation and natural beauty, but will also showcase arts & cultural programming, and local food & beverage. Our 2022/23 media plan uses a variety of advertising mediums including, digital, paid search, print, radio, out-of-home, native and paid social media and public relations strategies. We shifted more heavily into digital and programmatic ads which gives us the flexibility to start, stop and change messaging in shorter time frames.

We received several industry awards for our marketing campaigns during this past year including:

- Best Leisure Marketing Campaign – Medium Size Bureaus – from the North Carolina Travel Industry Association
- Best Travel Online Campaign – Explore Boone Winter Radio Campaign -from the Internet Advertising Competition

Visit NC and NC Commerce released their 2021 report on County Level Visitor Spending during 2022. We hope to have the 2022 numbers later in the Spring or early Summer.

- Watauga County is ranked 15th out of North Carolina’s 100 counties in terms of visitor spending. (NC Commerce/ Visit NC)
- Tourism in Watauga County generated visitor spending of \$465.05 million in 2021, which had a growth rate of 44.9% over 2020. This includes spending on lodging, food & beverage, recreation, retail, and transportation. (NC Commerce)
- Local tax revenues generated by tourism in Watauga County in 2021 amounted to \$ 18.1 million. According to the NC Commerce Department, this represents a \$651 tax savings to each county resident.
- 2,916 jobs in Watauga County were directly attributable to travel & tourism in 2021.

TDA Infrastructure/Product Development Projects:

- Middle Fork Greenway – The Watauga County TDA continues its commitment to helping make the Middle Fork Greenway a reality. Over the past eight years we’ve committed a \$2.5 million to the Middle Fork Greenway Association.
- * County-wide Wayfinding Plan – The TDA installed phase 1 of our County-wide Wayfinding Signs. We have begun the process for phase 2 of the wayfinding signage program.
- Rocky Knob Park – The popularity of Rocky Knob Park to visitors and local residents continues to grow. As a result, we began some major upgrades to the pump track and surrounding area this year. The pump track was upgraded to a paved track with a feature wall. We also updated the entrance sign at Rocky Knob.

We will update the area around the pump track this year with a covered picnic area, new fencing, speed tables, and a stone paver area for special events. We also plan to relocate the parking in front of the pump track to the other side, which will allow us to add some additional parking spots.

- Tourism Master Plan – The TDA hired the local planning firm, Destination By Design, to research and produce a new long-term Tourism Master Plan for the TDA. The last major master plan the TDA did was the Outdoor Recreation Plan in 2010-11. This new tourism master plan, called Imagine Watauga will look at future recreation opportunities & infrastructure, but will also look at placemaking, branding, streetscapes, community revitalization and tourism growth opportunities in the county.
- Howard Knob Park – We recently embarked on a plan to revitalize Howard Knob Park and add an ADA accessible viewing platform overlooking Boone and the area. During this project we will clean up the park, refresh the picnic tables and existing facilities and hopefully build a new, ADA accessible viewing platform. We recently contracted with Stitch Architecture and Arete to design and engineer the new proposed platform. Local firm, Destination By Design, is overseeing this project for the TDA.

Occupancy Tax Collection Report

														restrict 19/20	restrict 19/20	restrict 19/20
July 2021 to date																
	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	JULY to Date			
BR																
2019/20	155,423.25	141,725.41	119,314.86	155,869.29	87,372.08	91,492.54	73,322.82	65,059.86	26,729.38	652.85	11,219.81	74,131.76				
2020/21	143,262.60	139,757.36	129,464.93	204,286.54	108,352.71	110,332.76	120,003.28	104,087.54	83,824.29	90,101.51	124,003.99	155,395.63	1,512,873.14			
2021/22	226,175.15	191,155.32	159,774.40	239,478.58	140,957.77	151,674.80	109,536.78	107,853.09	84,511.91	110,771.00	130,859.44	159,825.90	1,812,574.14			
	82,892.55	51,397.96	30,309.47	35,192.04	32,605.06	41,342.04	(10,466.50)	3,765.55	687.62	20,669.49	6,855.45	4,430.27	299,701.00			
	57.85%	36.78%	23.41%	17.23%	30.09%	37.47%	-8.72%	3.62%	0.80%	22.94%	5.53%	2.90%	19.81%			
(19/20)	45.52%	34.88%	33.91%	53.64%	61.37%	65.78%	49.40%	65.80%	216.00%	16867.00%	1066.41%	115.60%				
Boone																
2019/20	194,352.96	186,771.03	154,333.63	198,371.58	135,490.30	140,616.91	116,989.08	116,509.44	48,374.63	25,693.33	42,858.99	98,694.77				
2020/21	158,116.33	143,603.50	163,988.58	225,467.56	131,486.14	178,045.79	179,471.61	173,463.81	135,621.73	120,766.30	143,421.07	173,769.78	1,927,222.20			
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			
	79,484.57	51,420.01	17,623.22	69,186.07	31,831.76	9,253.86	(17,931.32)	10,581.30	4,853.17	20,436.36	15,759.92	14,816.85	276,446.83			
	50.27%	35.81%	10.75%	30.70%	24.21%	5.20%	-10.00%	-6.00%	-3.60%	16.90%	11.00%	8.53%	14.34%			
(19/20)	22.25%	4.42%	17.67%	48.54%	20.54%	33.20%	38.10%	39.80%	170.00%	449.60%	271.41%	91.10%				
Watauga																
2019/20	254,674.60	217,608.87	174,199.64	214,671.17	161,134.03	253,872.96	205,827.86	157,431.81	58,521.26	9,495.01	98,510.27	279,926.21				
2020/21	377,331.40	358,877.47	309,299.99	380,066.83	228,272.21	431,116.27	336,852.31	371,306.62	302,362.83	268,311.42	269,531.83	342,748.98	3,976,078.16			
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	253,100.43	293,386.94	342,497.61	4,252,767.84			
	51,805.62	6,589.86	(16,251.48)	95,805.44	126,457.30	(10,842.40)	82,835.69	(31,655.77)	(36,447.56)	(15,201.99)	23,855.11	(251.37)	276,689.68			
	13.73%	1.84%	-5.25%	25.21%	55.40%	-2.50%	24.60%	-8.50%	-12.00%	-6.70%	8.85%	-0.01%	6.96%			
(19/20)	68.50%	67.95%	68.23%	121.70%	120.15%	65.55%	103.90%	115.70%	354.00%	2566.00%	197.82%	22.40%				
TTLs																
2019/20	604,450.81	546,105.31	447,848.13	568,912.04	383,996.41	485,982.41	396,139.76	339,001.11	133,625.27	35,841.19	152,589.07	452,752.74				
Prior Yr	678,730.33	642,238.33	602,753.50	809,820.93	468,111.06	719,494.82	636,327.20	648,857.97	521,808.85	479,179.23	536,956.89	671,914.39	7,416,173.50			
Cur Yr	892,913.07	751,646.16	634,434.71	1,010,004.48	659,005.41	759,248.32	690,765.07	610,386.45	481,195.74	505,074.09	583,427.37	690,910.14	8,269,011.01			
\$'s +/-	214,182.74	109,407.83	31,681.21	200,183.55	190,894.35	39,753.50	54,437.87	(38,471.52)	(40,613.11)	25,894.86	46,470.48	18,995.75	852,837.51			
% +/-	31.56%	17.04%	5.26%	24.72%	40.78%	5.53%	8.60%	-5.90%	-7.80%	5.40%	8.65%	2.83%	11.50%			
(2019/20)	47.72%	37.64%	41.66%	77.53%	71.62%	56.23%	74.37%	80.05%	260%	1309%	283.35%	52.60%				

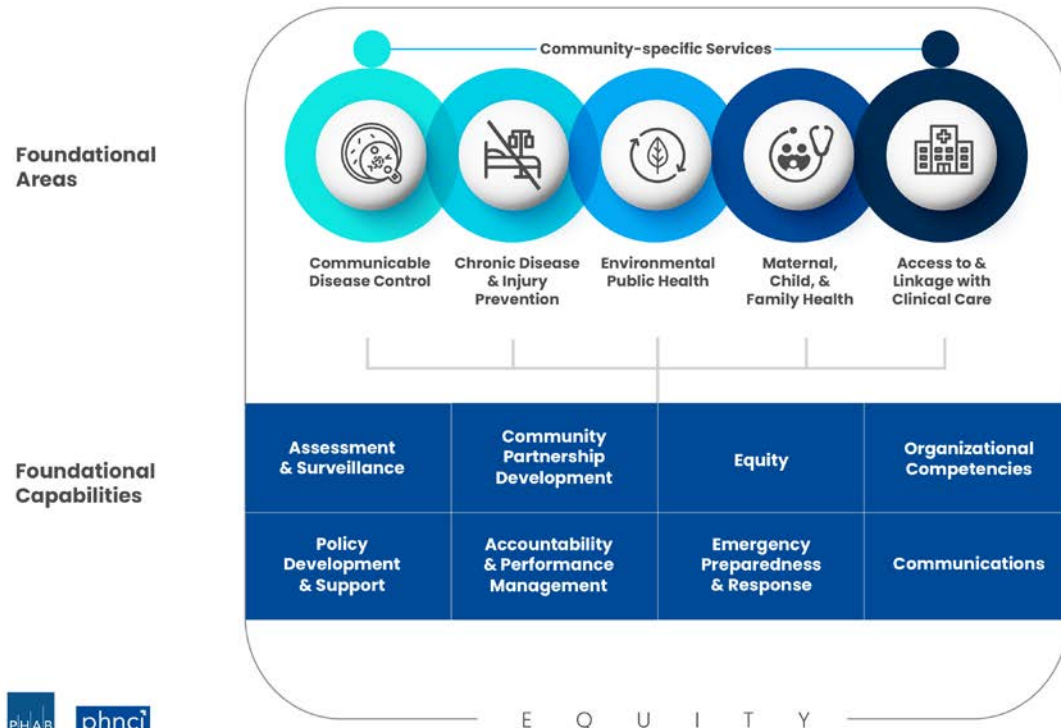


Watauga County Update

February, 2023

Foundational Capabilities of Public Health

Foundational Public Health Services



February 2022

- ✓ Assessment/Surveillance
- ✓ Emergency Preparedness and Response
- ✓ Policy Development and Support
- ✓ Communications
- ✓ Community Partnership Development
- ✓ Organizational Administrative Competencies
- ✓ Accountability/Performance Management
- ✓ Equity

Gap Analysis data coming soon!

Source: [PHNCI](https://www.phnci.org/) (February, 2022)

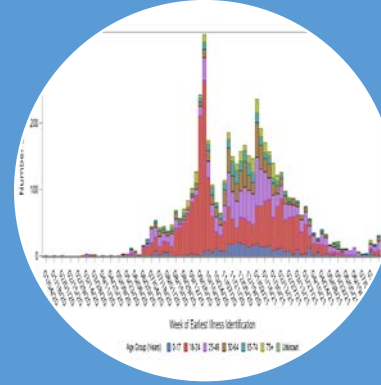




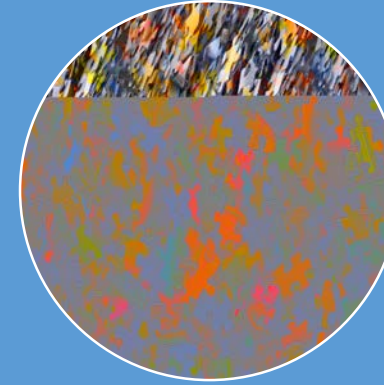
Internal systems improvement



External Communication



Data-informed benchmarking, monitoring, & decisions



Workforce Development

Healthy work culture & organizational health that supports our mission & effectiveness

Core values: Integrity, Drive, Resilience, Service, & Community

Foundations of Health and Opportunity:

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE OF
LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH IN
NORTH CAROLINA



NCIOM Report Recommendations

2023 Annual Pre-Budget Retreat

- **Recommendation 1:** Enhance local public health's role as Chief Health Strategist by implementing a collective impact framework to address community health priorities
- **Recommendation 2:** Transform local public health's capacity to collect, share, use, integrate, and communicate data to drive continuous improvement in programs, agencies, and whole communities
- **Recommendation 3:** Strengthen capabilities and build trust to communicate effectively with diverse community members, media, and policy makers
- **Recommendation 4:** Bolster local public health's capacity to promote community health and well-being by sustaining and supporting the current workforce
- **Recommendation 5:** Build local public health's future capacity to serve the community by growing a diverse and skilled workforce
- **Recommendation 6:** Pursue innovative strategies to address broader population health and meet the organizational, funding, and workforce challenges that local governmental public health currently faces
- **Recommendation 7:** Ensure governmental local public health is sufficiently and consistently funded to carry out Foundational Public Health Services and meet the unique needs of communities across the state

Public Health Accreditation

2023 Annual Pre-Budget Retreat

- **March 8-9, 2023**
- **Hybrid –site visits & interviews**
- **147 benchmarks covering 6 years of evidence**

Environmental Health

- **Communications**

- Written one-pager guide for site prep
- Video clips –Request for bids to be launched in January
- Application changes for increased understanding & ease of submission

- **Workflow, Data, & Reporting**

- Pilot test scheduling
- Explore use of GPS units & other technology
- Improve reporting accuracy –work with vendor, CDP

- **EH Stakeholder group**

- Next meeting planned January

Environmental Health

- **Staffing**

- Test the use of EH Technicians
- **Onboard/hire/train new staff**
- **Recruit for open positions**
- **Deeper dive analysis for staffing levels**

- **Regional ARPA Workforce EH Project**

- Report draft received

- **Legislative changes proposed**

- Registered Environmental Health Specialist recruitment standards

Environmental Health

Month Received	Alleghany	Ashe	Watauga	District	Issued
January	34	61	71	166	132
February	42	77	95	214	328
March	86	110	122	318	318
April	47	93	107	247	214
May	60	76	109	245	261
June	39	71	131	241	273
July	40	84	118	242	233
August	39	79	91	209	220
September	58	72	108	238	242
October	19	67	111	197	246
November	15	62	81	158	92
December	30	42	94	166	142
YTD Totals	509	894	1238	2828	2701

Pending Applications			
October		53	213
November		41	161
December		64	119

Environmental Health

- 2022 Complaints –Alleghany 21; Ashe 33; Watauga 95 (149 total)

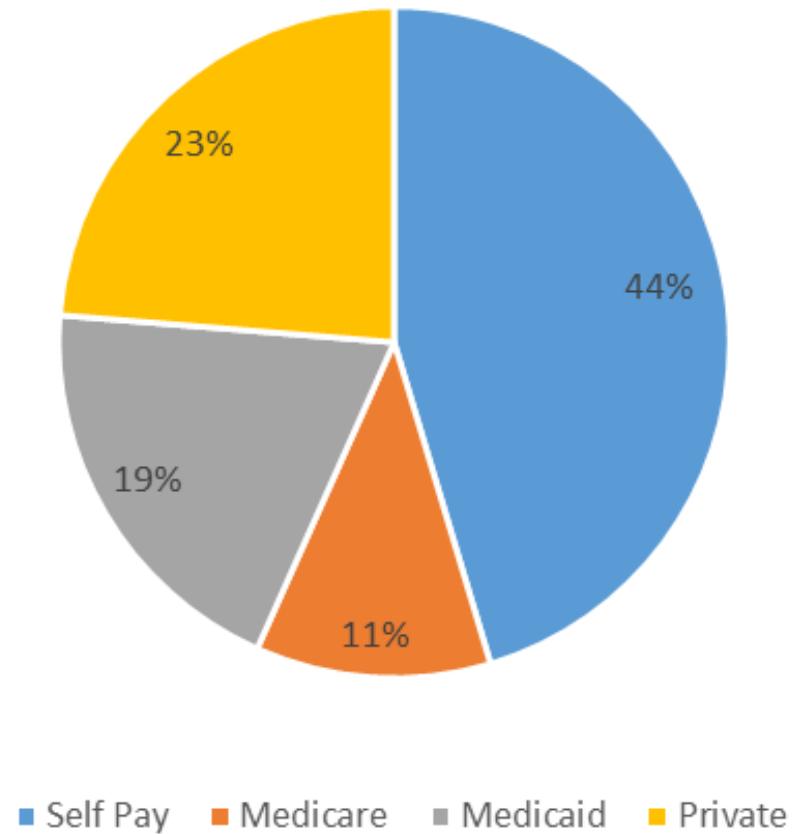
District-Wide						
2022	*A2 (IP) Private Option	*A5 (CA) Private Option		Engineered Option NOI	Engineered Option ATO	Migrant Housing Inspection
Alleghany	0	0		0	0	33
Ashe	25	22		8	4	48
Watauga	56	35		26	7	6
District	81	57		34	11	87

Environmental Health

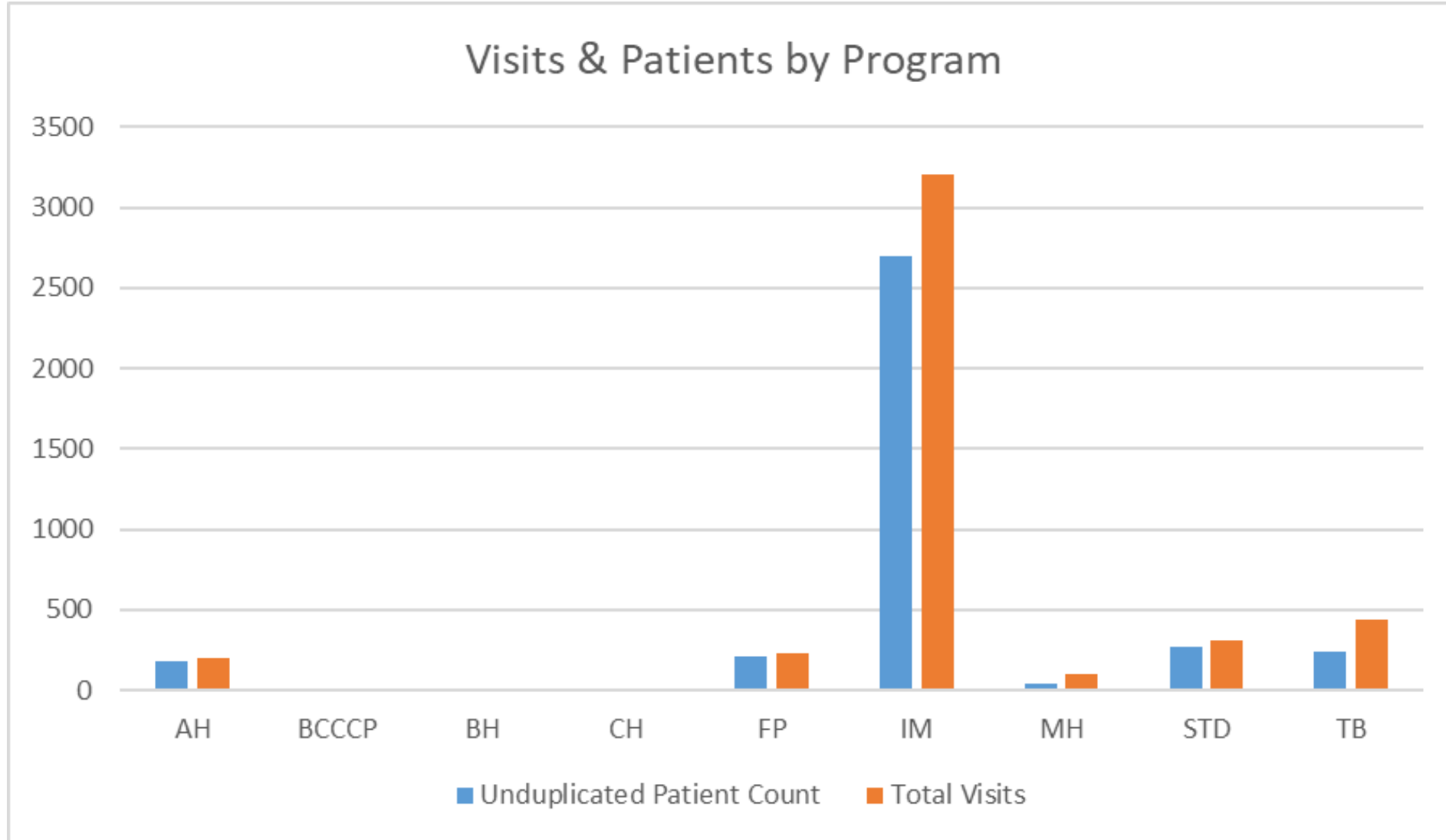
- Andy Blethen (EH Director); Jason Pierce (Water Protection Supervisor); Monica McKinney (Food/lodging/institution Supervisor)
- Luke Price, Jonathan Yates (hired 2021), Jay Thacker (hired 2022)
- Albert Visser (hired 2023; Training for water protection)
- Vacant REHS specialist for water protection still open
- EH Technician –planned to repost
- All food/lodging positions filled
- Work capacity/manpower study review underway

Clinical Services

Payor Mix



Clinical Services



COVID-19 Update & more

- Bivalent booster uptake is about 20% across all populations and even less among younger populations
- Awaiting confirmed updated COVID-19 vaccination schedule
 - Commercialization of vaccines and treatment options anticipated for next budget year
- Treatment is widely available and promoted through Test-to-Treat providers (AppHealthCare does Test-to-Treat)
 - Statewide COVID-19 Telemedicine Platform Launched –No Cost to Patient – www.starmed.care/nc or 704-941-6000 (7 days/week from 9am-7pm) -state funded potentially thru March
- Communications –situation updates continue; social media and special vaccine campaign planned
 - Please see our latest epidemiology update report for trends of communicable diseases
- Staffing capacity review underway

- MPOX
- Ebola
- Extended Tamiflu Supply & ongoing monitoring

Organizational Updates

- **Staffing infrastructure**
 - Human Resources
 - Communicable Disease RN → **Identified need:** Epidemiology/Communicable Disease Manager
 - Public Health Preparedness Coordinator
 - Information Technology Helpdesk Manager
 - Deputy Finance Officer
- **Leadership training**
 - Management & Supervision for Public Health Professionals
 - Health equity
- **Quality Improvement Teams/Workgroups**
 - Purchasing & Contracting, Epi/Preparedness, Clinical/Dental Financial Performance, Employee Recruitment/Retention, Employee Wellness, Environmental Health, Safety, & project groups
- **Technology & training**
 - Inventory management system –in progress
 - Learning management system –in progress
 - Electronic timekeeping system –in progress
 - Electronic data tracking for human resources –in progress

Grants Update

- **Title X and Women’s Health Service Funds**

Awarded \$137,101 total for each of the next three years beginning June 1, 2023 to support Family Planning Services

- **Vital Strategies, Matching Grant for Opioid Settlement Funds**

Awarded \$70,000 for three years with match from district Counties to support availability of Naloxone, health education, and harm reduction strategies to prevent overdose deaths

- **Office of Rural Health Community Health Grant**

Applied for three year \$150,000 grant to support mobile health services

- **NC Community Health Center Association - Expand MAT**

Potential to apply for \$200,000 time-limited funding (March 1 through January 31) through partnership with SAMHSA and NC DHHS to be used to cover costs for new prescribers, additional hours for current prescribers, medication costs, participant co-pays, outreach, patient transportation, clinical treatment services, such as: individual counseling, group and family therapies, care coordination, and peer or other recovery supports.

Community Health Services

- Peer support specialists
- Exploring mobile medication assisted treatment
- Triple P Positive Parenting Program
- Family Connects, an evidence-based home visiting program, in partnership with the Children's Council of Watauga County
- Community health improvement
- Medicaid care management for high risk pregnancy and at-risk children

Nutrition & WIC Services

- Federal special supplemental nutrition program for pregnant women and children 0-5
- Offers health screening & referrals
- Is not the same as SNAP
- Farmer's Market vouchers & education
- Supermarket education
- Program currently has more flexibility to provide services for families

Dental Health Services

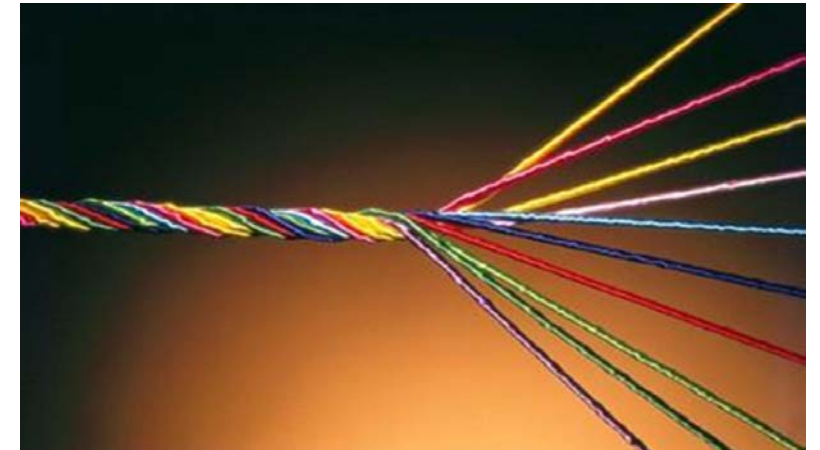
- Mobile services offered
- Some home visits or special visits
- Accept public and private insurance
- Nominal fee \$70



Legislative updates

- **NCALHD Legislative Priorities**

- Medicaid Expansion
- Communicable Disease/Public Health Infrastructure Funding
- REHS Recruitment Requirements
- Tobacco 21 –Retail licensing requirements
- Community Health Grant Funding



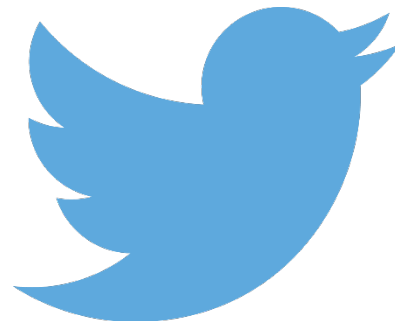
**CMS requirement ends -
Medicaid “Unwinding” ends
April 1, phase-out over the year.**



AppHealthCare

Caring for our Community

www.AppHealthCare.com





Proposal for Opioid Settlement

Update to Watauga County Commissioners

February, 2023

Activities to date

AppHealthCare awarded Vital Strategies matching funds

November Results-Based Accountability (RBA) exercise

- Over 30 partners in attendance, including county and municipality staff, non-profit and human services staff, law enforcement, Chamber of Commerce, and more
- Provided partners with a shared understanding of the issue of opioids in our communities, as well as some potential focus areas

The 5 selected focus areas for Watauga County for the next four years:

1. Prevent overdose deaths and other harms (harm reduction)
2. Connect people who need help to the help they need (connections to care)
3. Support people in treatment and recovery
4. Treat opioid use disorder
5. Address the needs of criminal justice involved persons

Proposed next steps: Request for Proposals

February 7th AppHealthCare presents RFP process to Board of Commissioners for approval

February 13th AppHealthCare issues finalized RFP on behalf of the County

February 20th AppHealthCare hosts informational webinar (recorded for those who cannot join)

February 24th Questions will be due to AppHealthCare by 5pm*

March 20th Proposals will be due to AppHealthCare by 5pm

*Questions received will have a coordinated response by receiving information from the County, NC Opioid Settlement office, or other parties as needed

Steps Following Proposal Submissions

March 20th- April 18th Coordination Group* review of submitted proposals to make recommendation to Watauga Board of Commissioners

April 18th Recommendation for funding presented to Watauga Board of Commissioners by AppHealthCare on behalf of Coordination Group

May 1st Funding and project timeline begins

*Coordination Group will include the County Manager, County Attorney, two County Commissioners, the Health Director, another human services representative, and two individuals with lived experience with substance use

Timeline for Reporting

July 31st 2023 AppHealthCare will work with the County to complete and submit a budget or resolution authorizing expenditure of a stated amount to the statewide opioid settlement dashboard

September 31st 2024 AppHealthCare will work with the County to complete and submit the annual financial report

September 31st 2024 AppHealthCare will work with the County to complete and submit the impact information report

Proposed Budget Breakdown

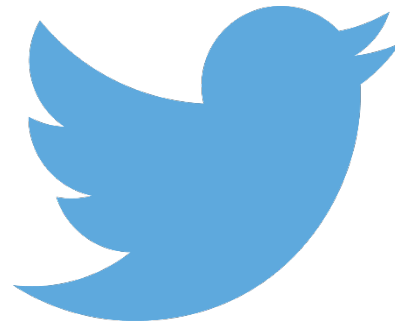
Total settlement payments received by Watauga County as of Spring 2023:	\$372,294
Harm Reduction, Vital Strategies Matching Grant:	-\$40,000
Coordination, Leadership, and Strategic Planning:	-\$32,294
Available funding to award:	=\$300,000



AppHealthCare

Caring for our Community

www.AppHealthCare.com



(For county letterhead)

RFP Opioid Settlement

Date of Issue: February 13th, 2023

Informational Webinar Date (will be recorded): February 20th at **TBD**

Webinar Registration Link:

TBD

Questions Due Date: February 24th by 5pm

Proposal Due Date: March 20th by 5pm

Direct all inquiries concerning this RFP to:

grants@apphealth.com (TBD)

Proposals shall be submitted in accordance with the terms and conditions of this RFP and any addenda issued hereto.

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1.0 PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

In July 2021, Attorney General Josh Stein announced a historic \$26 billion agreement that will help bring desperately needed resources to communities harmed by the opioid epidemic. The agreement resolves litigation over the role of four companies in creating and fueling the opioid epidemic. A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the State and local governments directs how opioid settlement funds are distributed and used in our state. To maximize funds flowing to North Carolina communities on the front lines of the opioid epidemic, the MOA allocates 15 percent of settlement funds to the State and sends the remaining 85 percent to NC's 100 counties and 17 municipalities.

The overdose death rate in Watauga County was 20 out of 100,000 people in 2020. This represents 11 people in Watauga who died from overdose in that year. For every death, there are more non-fatal overdoses. While we are not able to capture all opioid overdoses, emergency department visits for overdoses are one way to measure the number of overdoses happening. The overdose emergency department visit rate in Watauga County was 39 out of 100,000 people in 2020, with a population of 54,000. This represents 22 emergency department visits by Watauga residents for overdose in that year.

The purpose of this RFP is to fund eligible organizations to implement evidence-based, high-impact strategies to address the opioid epidemic in Watauga County, North Carolina. In addition, this RFP builds capacity and local infrastructure to respond to the overdose crisis in Watauga County, North Carolina. The goal of the RFP is to reduce overdose deaths, emergency department visits for overdose, and illicit opioid involvement.

As a result of the opioid settlement, Watauga County government is set to receive \$3,024,789 over an 18-year period. Before spending settlement funds, every local county or municipality must first select which opioid mitigation strategies they would like to fund. Local governments that choose to participate in collaborative, strategic planning may select from a broader list of strategies under [Option B of the MOA](#) to address the epidemic.

In November 2022, Watauga County agencies and partners initiated a Results-Based Accountability action planning process in which strategies were ranked to determine focus areas for the next four years. **In February 2022, the Watauga County Commissioners approved the utilization of \$300,000 to fund multi-year (two-years) pilot projects that align with the top 5 strategy focus areas determined through action planning.** In alignment with guidelines set by the North Carolina Attorney General's Office and North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Watauga County will consider funding agencies to implement the following strategies:

1. Prevent overdose deaths and other harms, or harm reduction
2. Connect people who need help to the help they need, or connections to care
3. Support people in treatment and recovery
4. Treat Opioid Use Disorder
5. Address the needs of criminal-justice involved persons

Proposals shall be submitted in accordance with the terms and conditions of this RFP and any addenda issued hereto.

2.0 PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS & REQUIREMENTS

2.1 REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL DOCUMENT

The RFP consists of the base RFP document, any attachments, and any addenda released before contract award. All attachments and addenda released for this RFP in advance of any contract award are incorporated herein by reference. By submitting a proposal, the vendor agrees to meet all stated requirements in this section as well as any other specifications, requirements and terms and conditions stated in this RFP. If a vendor is unclear about a requirement or specification or believes a change to a requirement would allow for the County to receive a better proposal, the vendor is urged and cautioned to submit these items in the form of a question during the question and answer period in accordance with Section 2.3.

Vendors shall populate all attachments of this RFP that require the vendor to provide information and include an

authorized signature where requested. Failure to include required documents and/or signatures, where requested, will result in rejection of submitted proposals.

2.2 PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL

Proposals, subject to the conditions made a part hereof and the receipt requirements described below, shall be received at the address indicated in the table below.

Mailing address for delivery of proposal via US Postal Service	Email address for delivery of proposal electronically
<p><i>PROPOSAL TITLE:</i></p> <p><i>Opioid Settlement Proposal - *Agency Name*</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>AppHealthCare ATTN: Lindsey Sullivan 126 Poplar Grove Connector Boone, NC 28607</i></p>	<p><i>PROPOSAL TITLE (in subject line):</i></p> <p><i>Opioid Settlement Proposal - *Agency Name*</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">grants@apphealth.com (TBD)</p>

IMPORTANT NOTE: All proposals shall be delivered by one of the two methods listed above by **5:00 PM on Monday, March 20th, regardless of the method of delivery.** All risk of late arrival due to unanticipated delay—whether delivered by email, hand, U.S. Postal Service, courier or other delivery service is entirely on the vendor. It is the sole responsibility of the vendor to have the proposal to the contact specified by the specified time and date of opening. Any proposal received after the proposal submission deadline will be rejected.

All proposal addendums and/or corrections will be emailed to vendors who submit a notice of intent to bid to email grants@apphealth.com.

2.3 PROPOSAL QUESTIONS

Written questions shall be emailed to grants@apphealth.com by **5:00 p.m. (EST) on February, 24th, 2023.**

Vendors should enter “**RFP Opioid Settlement: Questions**” as the subject for the email. Questions will not be answered by phone. Question submittals should include a reference to the applicable RFP section.

Questions received prior to the submission deadline date, the County’s response, and any additional terms deemed necessary by the County shall become an Addendum to this RFP. **Vendors who submit an intent to bid will receive addendums by email.** Vendors shall rely *only* on written material contained in an Addendum to this RFP. **Vendors should not contact any other County employees, besides those listed above, during the bid process. Vendors who contact any other County employees may be disqualified.**

Any questions considered minute in nature or that point to an error in the RFP or that the County determines will produce information required in order for all vendors to submit a responsible proposal, may be answered at the County’s discretion after the specified date and time. Such questions that are received after the deadline are not guaranteed to be answered and if the questions qualify as “minute in nature” shall be determined at the sole discretion of the County.

2.4 INFORMATIONAL WEBINAR

Date: February 20th, 2023

Time: TBD

Webinar Registration Link: TBD

2.5 RFP TERMS & CONDITIONS

It shall be the vendor's responsibility to read the instructions, the County's terms and conditions, all relevant exhibits and attachments, and any other components made a part of this RFP, and comply with all requirements and specifications herein. Vendors also are responsible for obtaining and complying with all Addenda and other changes that may be issued in connection with this RFP.

Questions, issues, or exceptions regarding any term, condition, or other component within this RFP, those must be submitted as questions in accordance with the instructions in Section 2.3 PROPOSAL QUESTIONS. Vendor's proposal shall constitute a firm offer.

If a vendor desires modification of the terms and conditions of this solicitation, it is urged and cautioned to inquire during the question period, in accordance with the instructions in this RFP, about whether specific language proposed as a modification is acceptable to or will be considered by the County. It is the County's sole discretion to accept or reject requested modifications and/or exceptions.

3.0 NOTICES TO VENDOR

3.1 PROHIBITED COMMUNICATIONS AND CONFIDENTIALITY

PROHIBITED COMMUNICATION: Each vendor submitting a proposal, including its representatives, subcontractors and suppliers, is prohibited from having any communication with any employees or members of the board of commissioners of the County except those employees of the County's Finance Department as designated in this RFP. A vendor not in compliance with this provision may be disqualified from contract award.

!IMPORTANT INFORMATION! CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION: The proposal must not contain any information marked as "confidential" or as a "trade secret" or in any other manner as to indicate that it is information protected by the Trade Secrets Protection Act (the "Act") as set out in Article 24 of Chapter 66 of the North Carolina General Statutes, unless the vendor has noticed the County Finance Department of its intent to designate any information in the proposal as such and received permission from the County Finance Department to do so in writing. Vendor's notice to the County Finance Department must be in writing and must describe the information for which confidentiality is requested and explain how the information is a "trade secret" as defined in G.S. § 66-152(3). If the County Finance Department determines the information for which confidentiality is requested is a "trade secret" covered by the Act, it will notify the vendor how to mark the information in the proposal and will identify the measures that County will take to protect the confidentiality of the information. Vendor's submission of a proposal after receipt of this notice from the County Finance Departments shall be deemed to be acceptance of the County Finance Department's statement of how it will maintain confidentiality. If the County Finance Department determines the information for which confidentiality is requested is not a "trade secret" covered by the Act, it will notify vendor of that determination. Any proposal marked with any information as "confidential" or as a "trade secret" or in any other manner as to indicate that it is information protected by the Act in violation of this section shall be regarded as not responsive to the request for proposals and shall not be considered.

3.2 PROPOSAL COMPLIANCE

It is in the best interest of vendors to submit proposals that are clear, concise, and easily understood. Proposals should provide information essential for a straightforward and concise description of vendor capabilities to satisfy the requirements of the RFP specifications.

Vendor may include any optional data not provided for elsewhere and considered to be pertinent to this bid as an

addendum.

Vendors are urged and cautioned to read the RFP completely through as noncompliance with requirements may result in bid rejection. Section 4.0 requirements and request for information must be in the same order with the same titles as listed in Section 4.0. Vendor proposals should be easy to follow and all sections should be easily identified.

The specifications included in this package describe the services that the County feels are necessary to meet the performance requirements of this RFP, and shall be considered the minimum standards expected of the Proposer. However, the specifications are not intended to exclude potential bidders.

If the vendor is unable to meet any of the specifications as outlined therein, vendors are advised to submit questions and concerns regarding the specifications during the question and answer period described in Section 2.3.

If the vendor does not indicate or submit questions or concerns regarding the specifications, the County shall assume it is able to fully comply with these specifications. The County shall be the sole and final judge of compliance with all specifications.

The County further reserves the right to determine the acceptability or unacceptability of any and all alternatives or deviations.

3.3 PROPOSAL EVALUATION PROCESS

The County shall review all responses to this RFP to confirm that they meet the specifications and requirements of the RFP. The County shall not be required to hold interviews; however, depending on the number of responses and the information contained in the responses, the County may decide to conduct interviews with firms of its choice. The County reserves the right to request clarification of information submitted. Vendors may be required to provide a demonstration upon request.

The County reserves the right to reject all offers.

3.4 EVALUATION CRITERIA

All qualified proposals will be evaluated and a selection committee will review the submitted proposals. Qualifying application proposals will be collectively scored by the proposal review team. All qualified applications will be evaluated, and awards made based on the following criteria considered, to result in awards most advantageous to the County. Applications will be scored on the content, quality, and completeness of the responses to the items in the scope of work and to how well each response addresses the following core factors. Each application can earn a total of 100 points. The points possible for each section are listed in parentheses.

- Strategy (required, not scored)
- Project Description and Implementation Plan (15 points)
- Statement of Need (10 points)
- Population Served (10 points)
- Evidence-Based Practices (10 points)
- Evaluation (15 points)
- Equity Impact (10 points)
- Project Partners (10 points)
- Experience and Organizational Capacity (10 points)
- Letters of Commitment/Support (required, not scored)
- Budget and Budget Narrative (10 points)

3.5 METHOD OF AWARD

The County reserves the right to make separate awards to different vendors, to not award or to cancel this RFP in its entirety without awarding a contract, if it is considered to be most advantageous to the County to do so.

4.0 SCOPE OF WORK & VENDOR'S PROPOSAL CONTENT REQUIREMENTS

4.1 ELIGIBILITY

Proposals will be accepted from nonprofit organizations and governmental agencies. For profit agencies will not be considered. Proof of nonprofit status is required for entities applying as a non-profit. Applicants must clearly demonstrate experience working with individuals with opioid use disorder and a commitment to evidence based strategies addressing opioid use disorder. Collaborative proposals are strongly encouraged. Applicants may be individual organizations or a partnership/collaboration of multiple organizations, one of which must serve as the fiscal agent or the organization that will take overall responsibility of the fiscal and grant-related requirements.

4.2 VENDOR'S PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

The vendor's proposal must include the required information below. Proposals shall be tabbed, using the titles identified in this section, to identify the required information. Tabs must be in the same order as listed below. Failure to submit this information may render its proposal non-responsive. **Vendors are urged and cautioned to read the notices in Section 3.1. Noncompliance with the confidentiality requirements will result in a proposal being considered nonresponsive.**

A. PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

Funded projects must:

- Meet a public purpose and fall within County authority to fund per NC General Statutes, to be affirmed and reviewed by the Watauga County legal department prior to execution of a contract or funding agreement
- Identify and directly address a need related to reducing opioid overdoses and related deaths through treatment, recovery, harm reduction, and other life-saving programs
- Directly address health inequities, social determinants of health, and support equitable outcomes for the most impacted populations
- Utilize evidence-based practices
- Have at least three years of experience and demonstrated success of providing related services
- Leverage and align with other funding sources
- Make best use of this infusion of resources
- Provide performance reporting regarding use of funds and project impact on a quarterly basis
- Include an approved budget utilizing the County's Budget Template and track and report expenditures utilizing the same form
- Comply with all provisions of the funding [North Carolina MOA](#), including expenditure tracking and federal subrecipient monitoring include costs incurred no earlier than the beginning of the contract period
- Serve the residents of Watauga County
- **Proposals must be two-year projects**
- A representative of funded agencies must participate in ongoing strategic planning efforts and systems building towards sustainability as deemed appropriate by the County

- Participate in all coordinated meetings with other funded agencies

4.3 PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Eligible applicants shall populate all attachments of this RFP that require the nonprofit to provide information and include an authorized signature where requested. Nonprofit RFP responses shall include the following items in the following order:

Legal Name of Agency

Organization's Address

Primary Contact Title

Primary Contact Name

Primary Contact Email

Primary Contact Phone Number

Agency's Website

Agency's Mission and Vision

Name of Project

Amount of Funds Requested

Strategy (Indicate all that apply) This question is required, but not scored.

1. Prevent overdose deaths and other harms, or harm reduction
2. Connect people who need help to the help they need, or connections to care
3. Support people in treatment and recovery
4. Treat Opioid Use Disorder
5. Address the needs of criminal-justice involved persons

RFP responses should provide a concise description of the applicant's capabilities, collaborations, and partnerships. Responses are required to submit a Projective Narrative, responsive to each of the following sections: Project Description and Implementation Plan, Statement of Need, Evidence-Based Practices, Population Served, Results, Evaluation, Equity Impact, Project Partners, Organizational Capacity, and Budget Narrative. Project narratives must be no more than ten (10) pages, excluding the budget. Project narratives must be single-spaced in a minimum of 12-point font with 1-inch margins. The title of each section should be in bold font in the submitted document. Number each page consecutively.

All proposals will be reviewed and scored by a review committee established by Watauga County. Applications will be scored on the content, quality, and completeness of the responses to the items in the scope of work and its alignment with project priorities that resources and services are provided directly to people who use opioids. The total possible points for each section are listed in parentheses, where the highest number is the best. Each application can earn a total of 100 points.

Evaluation criteria are described below.

Project Description and Implementation Plan (15 points): Provide a description of your proposed project. Clearly identify and describe which implementation strategies from the list of eligible strategies are included in the project. Briefly describe how the proposed project will be implemented, including information about the staff implementing the proposed project and where services are taking place. *Selected applicants may be required to submit a more detailed implementation plan including timeline at a later date.*

Statement of Need (10 points): Describe the need that this project will address. For example: opioid misuse, overdoses, or deaths; Narcan availability and distribution; housing, employment, incarceration, and recidivism rates, etc. Include data to demonstrate the need and cite the source of the data.

Relevant data is available at:

- <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/opioid-and-substance-use-action-plan-data-dashboard>
- <https://injuryfreenc.ncdhhs.gov/DataSurveillance/Poisoning.htm>
- <https://nc211.org/data/>
- <https://medicaid.ncdhhs.gov/reports/dashboards#annual>

Population Served (10 points): Identify and define the target population to be served by this project, including the eligibility criteria for services provided. Describe how you will recruit participants into your program. Provide a description of the demographic information and any other risk or protective factors of the target population. Applicants are required to list the number of anticipated clients served in the service period.

Evidence-Based Practices (10 points): These funds are intended to fund services or practices that have a demonstrated evidence base and that are appropriate for the population(s) of focus (individuals with opioid use disorder). An evidence based practice (EBP) refers to approaches to prevention, treatment, or recovery that are validated by a credible form of documented research evidence. Proposals should describe the evidence-based practices that will be implemented.

Proposals that address opioid treatment must include evidence-based addiction treatment consistent with the American Society of Addiction Medicine’s national practice guidelines for the treatment of opioid use disorder – including Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) with any medication approved for this purpose by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. There are three medications approved for the treatment of Opioid Use Disorder by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration:

- Methadone
- Buprenorphine
- Naltrexone (known by its brand name, Vivitrol®).

For more information about evidence-based treatment visit: <https://www.morepowerfulnc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/FAQ-about-Option-A-Strategies-updated-August-2022.pdf>

Evaluation (15 points): List at least one overarching goal of the project. In addition, describe the data collection and performance measures you will use to assure ongoing, effective tracking of project goals and objectives. Describe any existing survey instruments that are being used to gather data in the target area of high need. Funded projects are required to provide a quarterly report on process and quality measures. Describe **how** your project will collect data on the following demographic, process, and quality measures.

- 1) “How much did you do?” Examples: number of persons enrolled, treated, or served; number of participants trained; units of naloxone or number of syringes distributed.
- 2) “How well did you do it?” Examples: percentage of clients referred to care or engaged in care; percentage of staff with certification, qualification, or lived experience; level of client or participant satisfaction shown in survey data.
- 3) “Is anyone better off?” Examples: number or percentage of clients with stable housing or employment; self reported measures of client recovery capital, such as overall well-being, healthy relationships, or ability to manage affairs; number or percentage of formerly incarcerated clients receiving community services or supports within X days of leaving jail or prison.
- 4) Demographic information of participants for the process and quality measures in questions 1, 2, and 3. Examples: age, race, ethnicity, gender, education, income, and zip codes.

More information on performance measures can be found here: <https://clearimpact.com/results-based-accountability/example-performance-measures-can-use-program-service/>

Please note that the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners is working to develop key process and quality measures successful applicants may be required to report upon.

Equity Impact (10 points): Describe how the proposed project addresses health inequities and reaches historically

marginalized populations. Additionally, describe how the proposed project addresses the needs of the uninsured and underinsured. Finally, describe how the proposed project will address social determinants of health (transportation, housing, employment, etc.) directly or through collaboration with other agencies.

Project Partners (10 points): List the community partners and agencies that will participate in this project. Describe the role and contribution of each community partner. Describe how you will make referrals to clients and collaborate with partners at the organizational level, assure coordinated services and avoid duplication of services.

Experience and Organizational Capacity (10 points): Describe the background, experience, and capabilities of your organization or department as it relates to capacity for delivering the proposed project and managing grant funds. Describe your organization's existing resources and any previous or current efforts to address the identified problems discussed. This may include any past achievements and accomplishments. Describe the qualifications and training of the staff providing services. Describe your experience in addressing health disparities and addressing social determinants of health.

Budget and Budget Narrative (10 points): Provide a detailed project budget including all proposed project revenues and expenditures, including explanations and methodology utilizing the Budget Template (Attachment C). **The submitted budget and budget narrative MUST be submitted using the provided Budget Template. A printed version of the budget and budget narrative with an authorized signature must be included with hard copy submissions and on the electronic copy, as well as the Excel version that must be submitted on the electronic copy.** The submitted budget should be a **two-year** budget.

Complete the narrative section on the Budget Template. The budget narrative describes how funds would be spent and why costs included in the budget template are justified and necessary to conduct the proposed project. Costs should be reasonable and appropriate for the level of effort proposed. The budget narrative should explain how the numbers in the budget were calculated and how each expense is related to the proposed project.

Allowable eligible expenditures are limited to direct project-related costs and cannot supplant any existing funding.

Cost Items	Project	Project
	<i>Project Name</i>	<i>Project Name</i>
	<i>Year 1</i>	<i>Year 2</i>
Personnel (Salary and Wages)	\$0.00	\$0.00
Fringe Benefits	\$0.00	\$0.00
Travel	\$0.00	\$0.00
Equipment	\$0.00	\$0.00
Material & Supplies	\$0.00	\$0.00
Consultant (Professional Service)	\$0.00	\$0.00
Training and Education	\$0.00	\$0.00
Additional Cost Item(s) -- add lines as needed	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Project Budget	\$0.00	\$0.00

Budget should be inclusive of all direct admin cost; indirect admin percentages are not allowed

VENDOR _____

PRINT NAME & TITLE OF PERSON SIGNING
ON BEHALF OF VENDOR: _____

VENDOR'S AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE: _____

DATE _____

Personnel (Salaries and Wages) and Fringe Benefits

Project (Project Name):									
Project ID:									
Year 1									
Name	Position	Salary or Wage	Basis	Length of Time	Personnel Cost	Fringe Benefits Rate	Fringe Benefits Cost	Personnel & Fringe Narrative	
							\$0.00		
Total Personnel Project:					\$0.00	Total Fringe Project:		\$0.00	

Project (Project Name):									
Project ID:									
Year 2									
Name	Position	Salary or Wage	Basis	Length of Time	Personnel Cost	Fringe Benefits Rate	Fringe Benefits Cost	Personnel & Fringe Narrative	
							\$0.00		
Total Personnel Project:					\$0.00	Total Fringe Project:		\$0.00	

Travel

Grant Project (Project Name):							
Project ID:							
Year 1							
<u>Purpose of Travel/Items</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Cost Rate</u>	<u>Basis</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Number of Trips</u>	<u>Travel Cost</u>	<u>Travel Narrative</u>
						\$0.00	
Total Travel Project:						\$0.00	

Grant Project (Project Name):							
Project ID:							
Year 2							
<u>Purpose of Travel/Items</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Cost Rate</u>	<u>Basis</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Number of Trips</u>	<u>Travel Cost</u>	<u>Travel Narrative</u>
						\$0.00	
Total Travel Project:						\$0.00	

Equipment

Project (Project Name):					
Project ID:					
Year 1					
<u>Item</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Cost Per Item</u>	<u>Equipment Cost</u>	<u>Equipment Narrative</u>	
			\$0.00		
Total Equipment Project:			\$0.00		

Project (Project Name):					
Project ID:					
Year 2					
<u>Item</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Cost Per Item</u>	<u>Equipment Cost</u>	<u>Equipment Narrative</u>	
			\$0.00		
Total Equipment Project:			\$0.00		

Material & Supplies

Project (Project Name):					
Project ID:					
Year 1					
<u>Item</u>	<u>Quantity/Duration</u>	<u>Cost Per Item</u>	<u>Supplies Cost</u>	<u>Supplies Narrative</u>	
			\$0.00		
			Total Supplies Project:	\$0.00	

Project (Project Name):					
Project ID:					
Year 2					
<u>Item</u>	<u>Quantity/Duration</u>	<u>Cost Per Item</u>	<u>Supplies Cost</u>	<u>Supplies Narrative</u>	
			\$0.00		
			Total Supplies Project:	\$0.00	

Consultant Services and Expenses

Project (Project Name):								
Project ID:								
Year 1								
Service Provided/Item Expense	Location	Fee/Cost Rate	Basis	Quantity	Consultant Service/Expense Cost	Contractual Services Narrative		
						\$0.00		
Total Consultant Service/Expense Project:						\$0.00		

Project (Project Name):								
Project ID:								
Year 2								
Service Provided/Item Expense	Location	Fee/Cost Rate	Basis	Quantity	Consultant Service/Expense Cost	Contractual Services Narrative		
						\$0.00		
Total Consultant Service/Expense Project:						\$0.00		

Training and Education

Project (Project Name):							
Project ID:							
Year 1							
<u>Description</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Basis</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Length of Time</u>	<u>Training & Education Cost</u>	<u>Training & Education Narrative</u>	
Total Training & Education Project:					\$0.00		

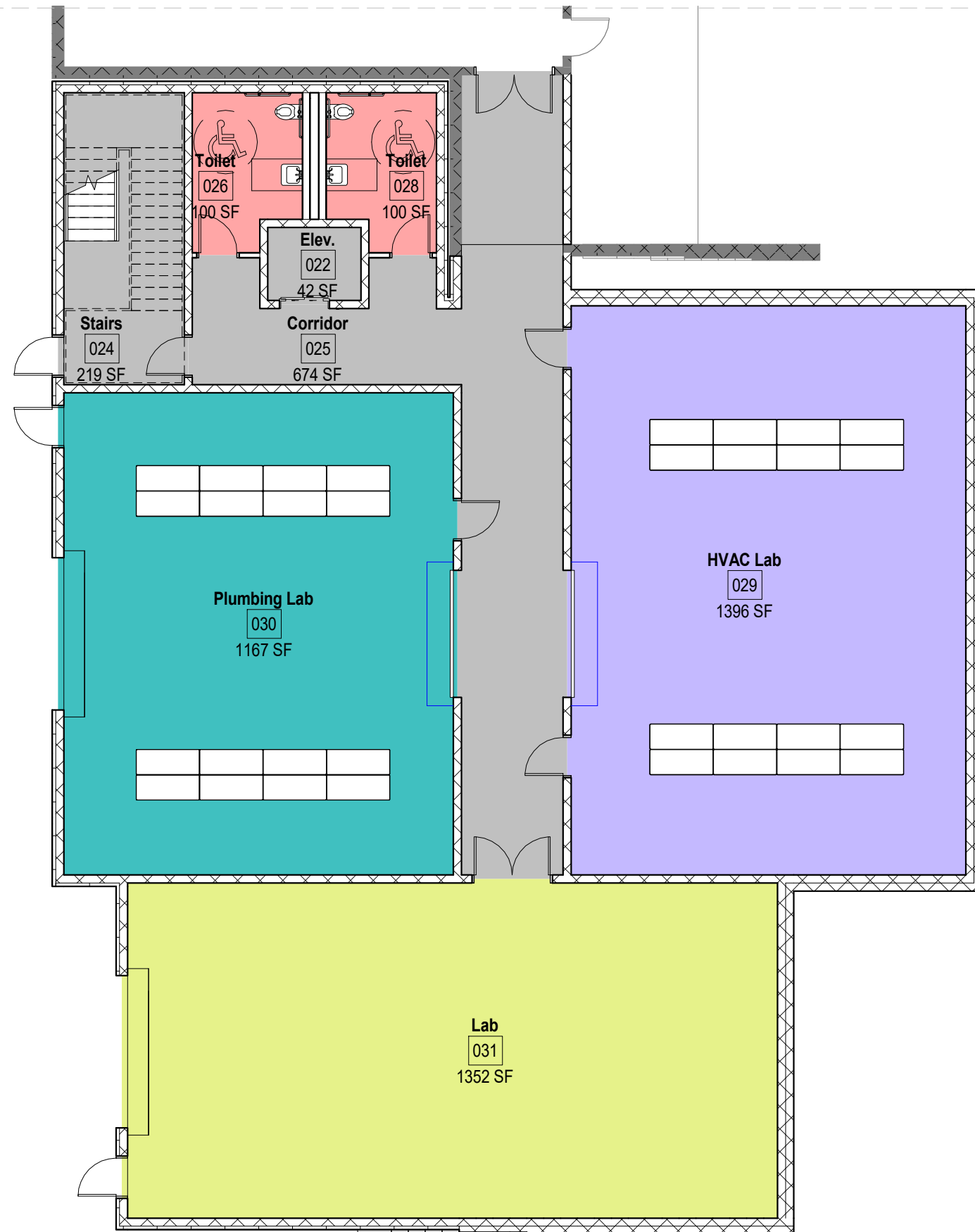
Project (Project Name):							
Project ID:							
Year 2							
<u>Description</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Basis</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Length of Time</u>	<u>Training & Education Cost</u>	<u>Training & Education Narrative</u>	
Total Training & Education Project:					\$0.00		

Additional Cost Item

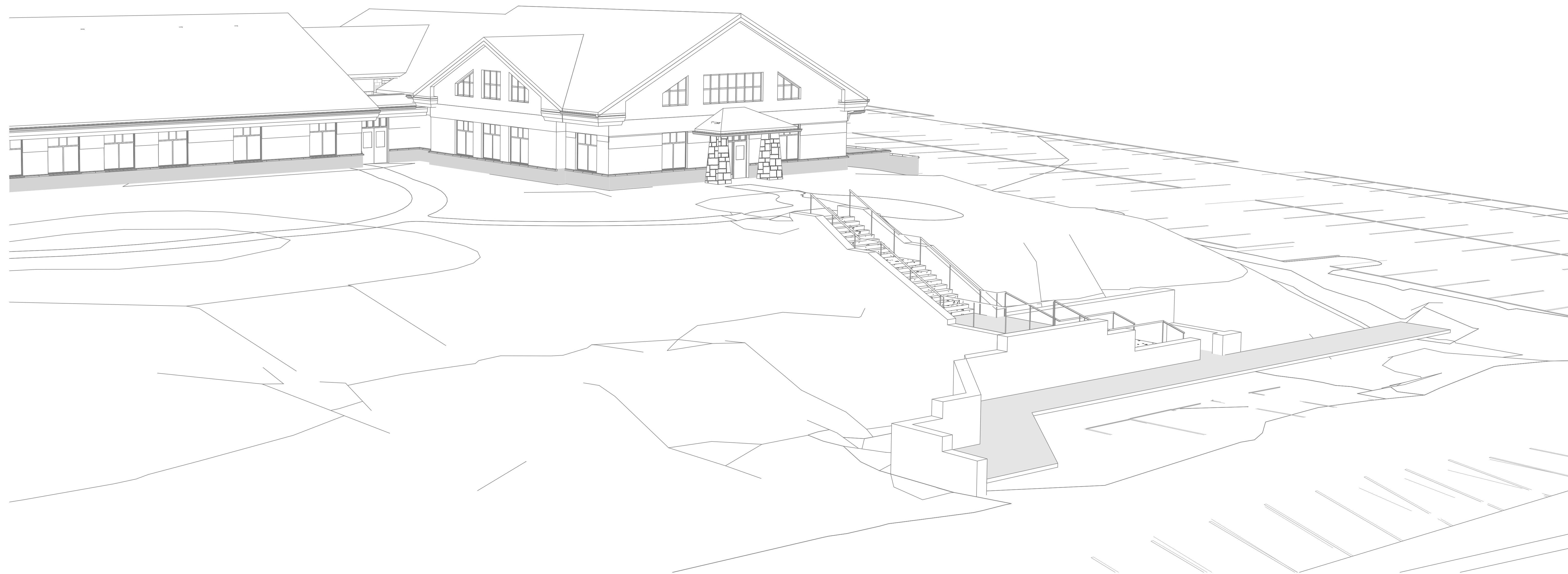
Project (Project Name):						
Project ID:						
Year 1						
Description	Quantity	Basis	Cost	Length of Time	Grant Exclusive	Additional Cost Item
Total Additional Cost Item Project:					\$0.00	

Project (Project Name):						
Project ID:						
Year 2						
Description	Quantity	Basis	Cost	Length of Time	Grant Exclusive	Additional Cost Item
Total Additional Cost Item Project:					\$0.00	









mcmillan | pazdan | smith
ARCHITECTURE

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

BASE BID 3D VIEW CLOSE UP

04/19/21



February 9, 2023

To: Watauga County Commissioners
Mr. Deron Geouque, County Manager

From: Watauga County Board of Education
Dr. Scott Elliott, Superintendent

Re: Preliminary Budget Discussion for FY 2023-24

The Watauga County Schools system is extremely grateful for the Watauga County Commissioners' longstanding commitment to generous funding for our schools. That commitment is a major factor in the strong and successful public school system that we have in Watauga County.

As we plan for the upcoming school year, we estimate an average of 4% in salary increase for all employees. Employer paid benefit costs also continue to rise and we will build in approximately 3% above our current rates into the budget to cover those estimated costs. It is also important to keep at the forefront that this will be the final year of access to all federal COVID relief funds of which we have utilized in the hiring of additional nurses, teacher assistants, and Watauga Virtual Academy teachers. The district also used COVID relief funds to purchase additional academic intervention materials, support our beginning teachers, and to help retain our employees as we all dealt with the pandemic over the past few years.

Looking at our ongoing capital needs, there are always many items and projects we need to address. We continue to upgrade our outdated and broken classroom digital projectors and to replace student and teacher computer devices across the district as funds allow. There continues to be routine maintenance items like roofs, carpet and tile needs, and overall school security measures in place that continually need repair and replacement. The biggest opportunity on the horizon is of course the continued planning and construction work on the new Valle Crucis School. At the same time, we cannot ignore the need to start planning for the building of a new Hardin Park School, and due to great enrollment growth, the needed construction of additional classroom space at Parkway School is also a priority.

We will continue to provide ongoing additional information you need to make the best possible decisions about the appropriate level of funding for our schools. We do appreciate the local funding you continue to provide during these ongoing uncertain times at the state and federal levels.

Thank you for your consideration and continued support in providing high quality and safe education to all the students of Watauga County Schools.



Watauga County Emergency Services

184 Hodges Gap Rd, Suite D
Boone, NC 28607
Phone 828-264-4235
Fax 828-265-7617



Fire Marshal ♦ Emergency Management ♦ Communications

Emergency Medical Services Update

Watauga County has long been served by a private, for-profit contractor for emergency medical services (EMS). While historically the service has met baseline expectations, as we move forward with the continued growth, increasing call volume, and greater acuity of care, Watauga County must take a more direct role in oversight of the EMS system.

Current System Status

- For FY24, before the CPI adjustment the budget for the Watauga Medics, Inc. (WMI) contract was \$2,240,735 which includes:
 - o Four 24hr ambulances and one 12hr ambulance Countywide
 - o One 24hr truck located in the Town of Beech Mountain, the Town pays for this service although the CPI adjustment was more than budgeted
- WMI was dispatched to a total of 4558 calls for service through the 911 system
- Additionally, WMI performed 942 transports outside of the 911 system (details under Challenges)
- 14 agencies provide first responder services at the Emergency Medical Responder level or higher, the agencies are all funded by fire tax and sales tax revenues for areas served outside of municipal limits
- Watauga County Rescue Squad provides back-up EMS transport, currently funded at \$100,000/yr

Challenges

- Recurring staffing issues, partially industry driven. The results of staffing issues include:
 - o Dropping trucks for partial or full shifts
 - o Decrease in average education and experience of the crew
- Interfacility and convalescent transports take up a large amount of time (in some cases many hours) and resources with such examples as:
 - o Emergent and non-emergent transfers from Watauga Medical Center for a higher level of care or service not provided by ARHS
 - o Discharges to home or skilled nursing facilities
 - o Transports to doctor's appointments
- Overall patient care is not at a level commensurate with our peers
 - o For example: Wilkes, Caldwell, and McDowell Counties all operate whole blood administration programs with great outcomes, a service not currently provided in Watauga County



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A Path Forward

- The current franchise agreement term ends on December 31st, 2025
 - o Subsequent to the term expiration, the agreement becomes year to year with continuing terms unless otherwise terminated
- Beginning as an exploration of program efficacy, the County could create a position within Emergency Services to staff a Quick Response Vehicle (QRV), this serves several purposes
 - o Begins the licensure process for Watauga County to be an ALS agency. This process is not quick, and requires significant staff time to do efficiently
 - o Fully explore nuances, logistics, and costs of operating a supplemental service to Watauga Medics, Inc. vs. transitioning to a full county-operated service
 - o Provide a consistent ALS back-up, in a non-transport role, when the EMS system is busy and out of available units
 - o Refresh and manage the First Responder Program



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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. 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. For clarification, VIPER stands for Voice Interoperability Plan for Emergency Responders and is the North Carolina Statewide 700/800Mhz public safety radio network.

System-wide Status

- The overall system plan has shifted to a simulcasted, primary VIPER concept of operations
 - o As previously discussed, the VHF spectrum is becoming increasingly prohibitive due to the changes in FCC frequency band allocation, looming requirement for 6.25Mhz narrow banding, and geographical interference with Virginia, West Virginia, Tennessee, and other NC Counties
 - o The large majority of end users (law, fire, rescue, EMS) have obtained dual band radios that will be compatible with the changeover to a primary VIPER system
 - o Partnering with VIPER yields significant cost savings both in the initial construction and long-term operation costs.
- As the VIPER system is a statewide system under the supervision of NCSHP, the State Engineer for Motorola has taken the lead on verifying current and projected coverage with sites
- FCC relicensing of our current VHF pairs is not currently possible

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 currently underway at the current facility which will transition into the stand-alone backup facility pending new primary site construction.
- The integration of our consoles with VIPER in addition to going on the State's ESINet for 911 phones will allow for a fully remote and redundant option for our communications center operations

Buckeye Knob (VHF/VIPER)

- The only current operation here will be determining any upgrades necessary for the tower once the radio design is complete



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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
- The back-up generator will be given to NCSHP for maintenance, etc. in exchange for combining sites
- The towerhouse is being evaluated for retrofit vs replacement, civil drawings are underway
- The partnership with NCSHP at this site yields significant possibilities for operational cost reduction as the radio equipment will all be maintained by their staff

Sampson (VIPER)

- This site went live in late Spring of 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

Powderhorn Mountain (VIPER)

- This site was donated by the Powderhorn POA to Stewart Simmons Fire Department for the purpose of constructing a tower
- Pending the final administrative approval, this site will go to bid with construction beginning in FY24
- This site is dependent upon the Transfer Station being completed for simulcast operations
- 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

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 would be via Hidden Pond Rd pending the final easement
- Civil drawings have been completed and administrative review at the federal level is pending

Foscoe (VIPER)

- This site has moved to a new location based on real estate needs and is being reviewed by engineers



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Fire Department Contracts Update

Watauga County is served by 15 different fire departments which provide fire protection throughout all of Watauga County. Watauga County funds these services through various means including service districts, fire protection districts, and sales tax allocations. The contractual agreement to provide these services is severely antiquated (most departments have contracts from the 1970s) or missing altogether. In cooperation with the Watauga County Fire Commission, the Emergency Services Department has worked to update these contracts to reflect current legislation and with decades of observing the need for mutually beneficial contracts. At the January 2023 Commission meeting, the chiefs voted to approve the draft contract and we will be submitting for County Commissioner approval very soon.

Key Points:

- Section 1, funding mechanism and schedule
- Section 2, minimum requirements of NCRRS rating for the fire department
- Section 3-4, financial review requirements
- Section 5, public meeting requirements
- Section 6, non-compliance procedures
- Section 7-10, contract terms (insurance, length, termination, dissolution, notices)

Watauga County Emergency Services would like to thank the Fire Commission for their work in cooperation to develop a contract proposal that meets everyone's needs.