

ASHEVILLE
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN //

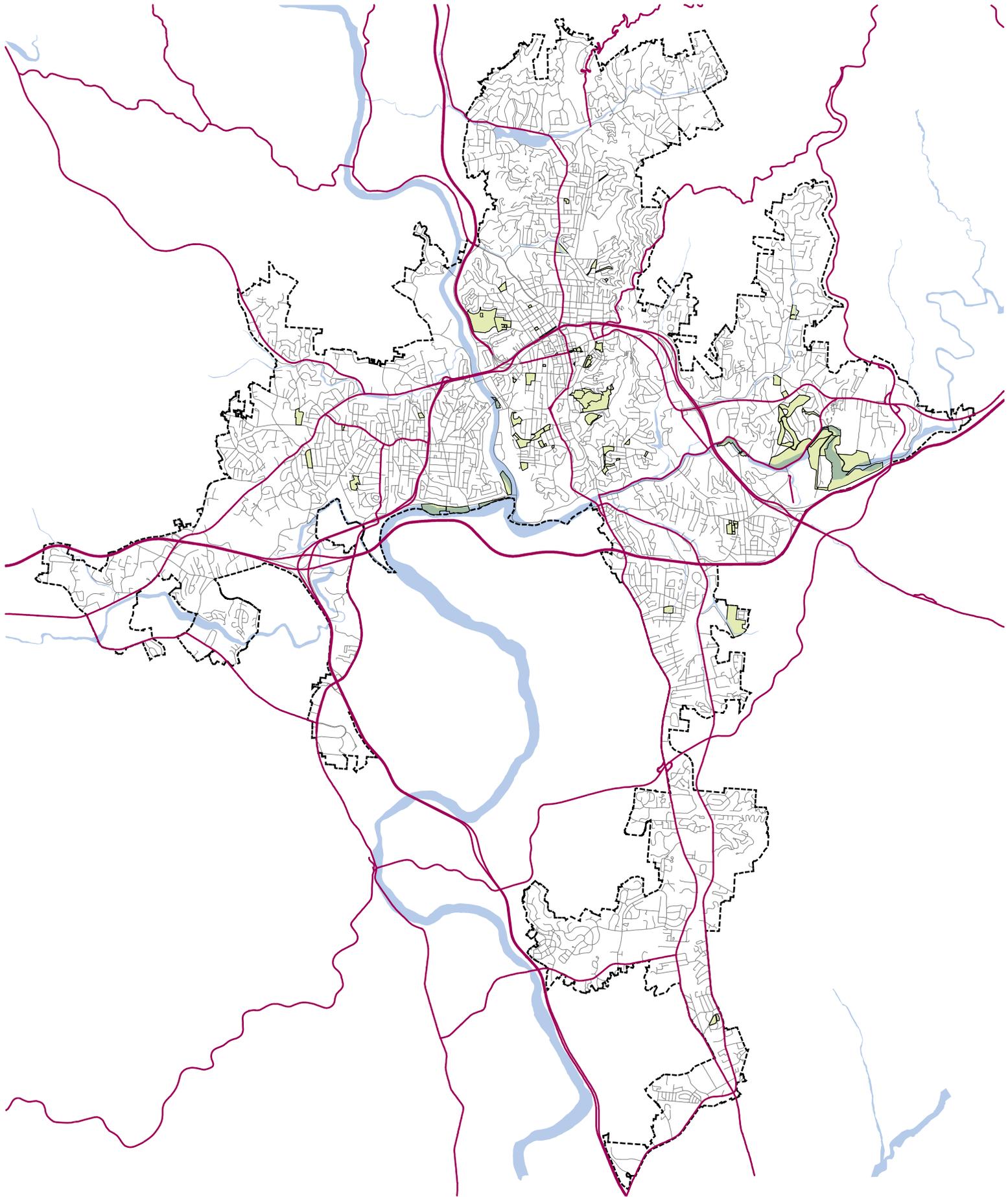
Task 2 Report:
Assessment

September 27, 2016

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	04
BACKGROUND AND FORMAT	22
EXISTING PLAN REVIEW	34
BENCHMARKING AND METRICS	68
SUSTAINABILITY APPROACH	94
ECONOMIC ANALYSIS	100
TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS	120
OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY	128
CITY AUTHORITY, TOOLS & RESOURCES	138
APPENDIX	146

INTRODUCTION //



MISSION OF THE PLAN UPDATE

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A Comprehensive Plan is a tool that many cities use as the leading means for establishing a high-level vision to guide citywide policy decisions over several years. The famed city planner John Nolen prepared Asheville's first Comprehensive Plan in 1925, and since then, the city has periodically created a new Comprehensive Plan as an official tool to guide future growth.

Asheville currently is renewing this tradition by conducting an update to the City's existing Comprehensive Plan, which was adopted in 2003. The update to the Comprehensive Plan will provide a visionary framework to help guide the city's continued long-term development, and provide an essential tool that will be used across the City's many departments.

Goals of the Plan:

- To highlight key aspirations, challenges, and opportunities that will define Asheville in the coming decades
- To set principles and priorities about where the city should be devoting its time, attention, and investment
- To help guide decision-making with respect to the key ongoing challenges and opportunities of fostering a livable and affordable built environment, ensuring harmony with the natural environment, growing a resilient economy, promoting interwoven equity, ensuring a healthy community, and bolstering responsible thinking at the regional scale
- To outline specific goals and strategies for addressing each of these challenges and opportunities
- To create a unifying vision that integrates the many existing and ongoing planning and development efforts across the city
- To create a resource to inform policy decisions over the lifespan of the plan
- To develop a high-level methodology for implementing and measuring progress, including periodic updates to create a living document
- To help balance and align core service delivery and long range planning with City Council and citizen strategic priorities
- To prepare an illustrative and user-friendly comprehensive planning document

Why is the Comprehensive Plan Update being conducted now?

The City's current Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2003, and has provided guidance to the City on development decisions for the last 13 years. Since its adoption, the City has made progress in addressing many of its goals. However, since 2003 Asheville has continued to grow and change. The Comprehensive Plan Update will look at items identified in the National Community Survey and will renew the city's thinking as it relates to the key issues Asheville faces today, including, but not limited to: continued population growth, demographic changes, culture and character, livability, climate change, economic resiliency, sustainability, and equity.

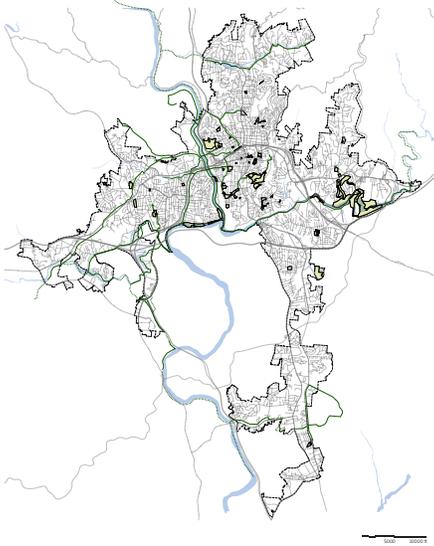
Who is leading the Comprehensive Plan Update?

The Comprehensive Plan Update is being led by the City's Planning and Urban Design Department, with support from an Advisory Committee established by City Council and a technical team from relevant City Departments. The City has hired a consultant team led by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM), one of the country's leading urban design, planning, and sustainability firms to help guide and shape the process. SOM is working in association with four additional firms: Asheville-based Design Workshop, Asheville-based Chiple Consulting, St. Louis based-Development Strategies, and Charlotte based-VHB.

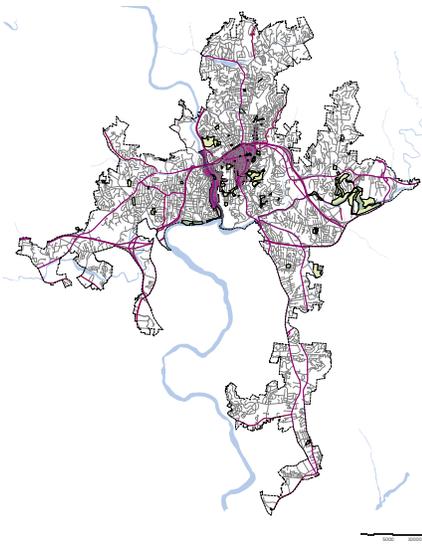
How is the plan being conducted?

The process for completing the Comprehensive Plan Update is projected to take approximately 18 months. Early phases of the Comprehensive Plan Update include an analysis of Asheville's existing environment, its role within the region, social and economic conditions, and projected growth patterns. The team is working closely with city leaders to coordinate work with city planning efforts currently underway, and will incorporate a sustainable design strategy to track and measure the city's progress toward future goals. The Comprehensive Planning process is designed for public engagement, to gather input from the city's residents and to reflect the diversity of voices within Asheville. Thus, the process for creating the plan includes several opportunities for the public to provide input, voice opinions, and to comment on in-progress plan materials.

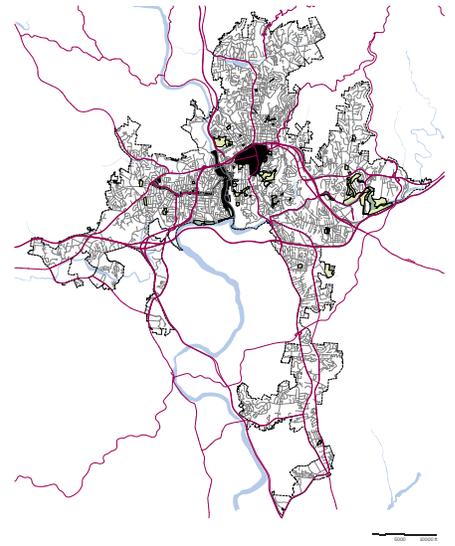
Parks and greenways



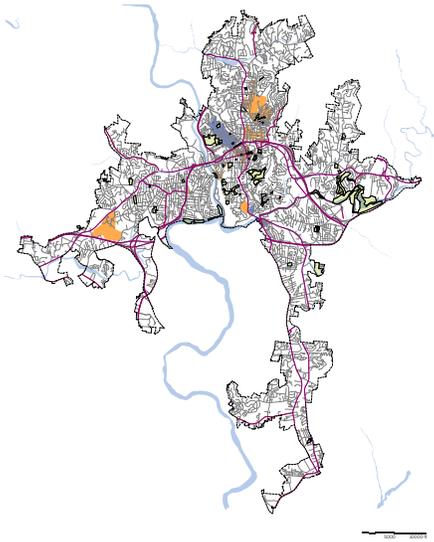
Innovation Districts



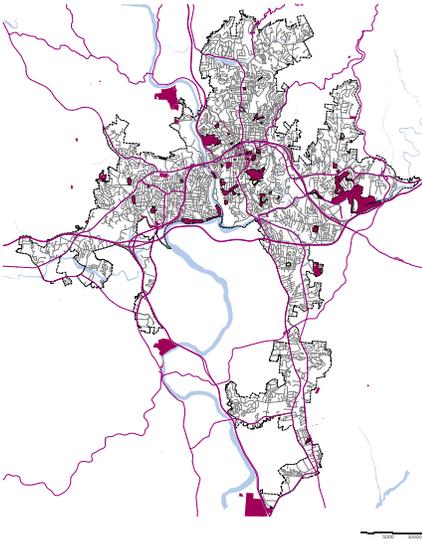
Form-Based Code Districts



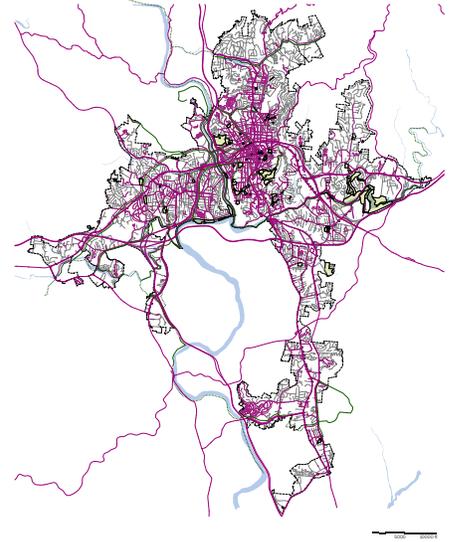
Historically-designated areas



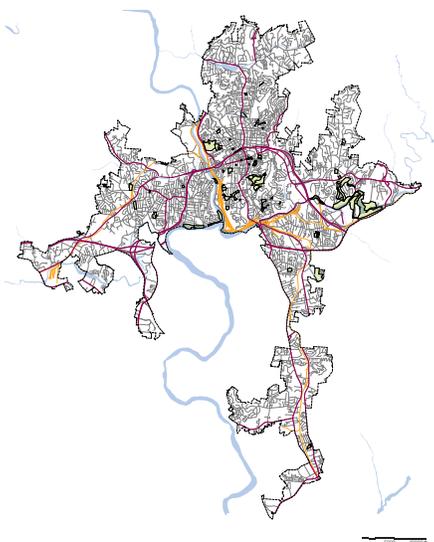
City-owned property



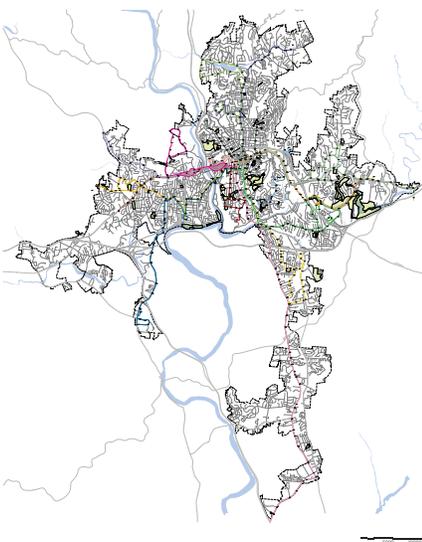
Sidewalks and traffic signals



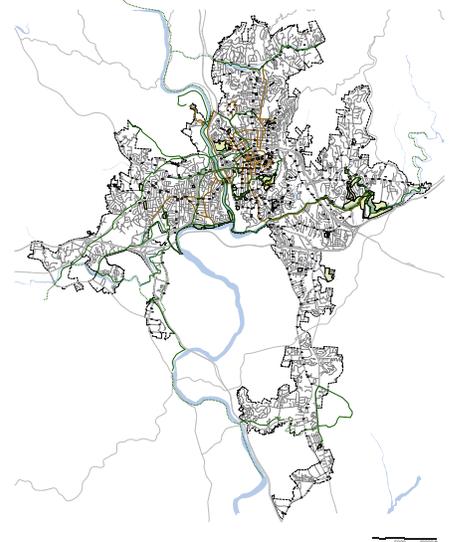
Railways



Bus routes



Bike routes



SINCE THE LAST COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

What's changed in 13 years

Asheville has changed a lot since the completion of City Development Plan 2025. There is new growth, new challenges, new city leadership, and new branches of planning that nary existed a decade ago. There are many factors driving the need for a new Comp Plan:

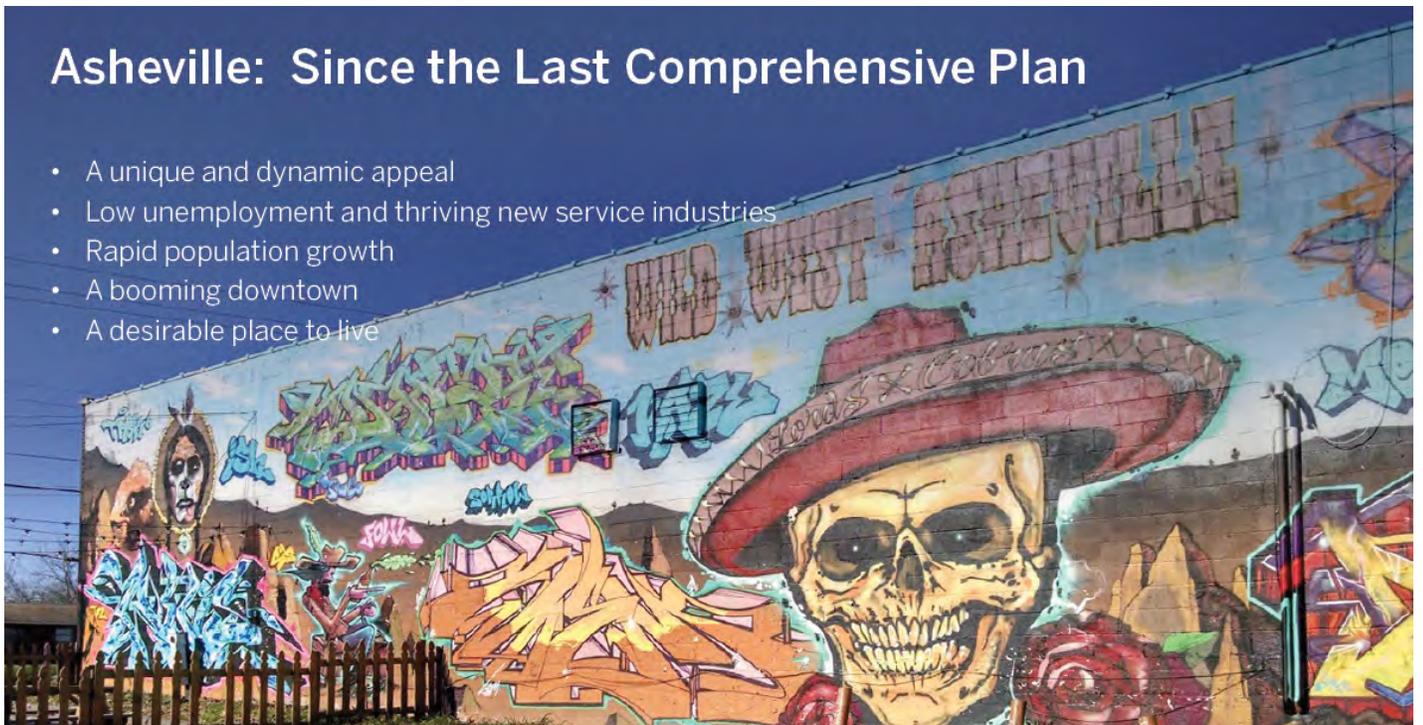
- It's time: Comp planning typically occurs every 10-15 years in cities
- Most of the objectives of the last comp plan have been met: A 2009-10 "report card" evaluating progress on the previous Comp Plan indicated that most of its goals had been met or addressed.
- Asheville faces a new suite of challenges, and new best practices have emerged in planning since the last plan
- Asheville has conducted many plans over the last several years that need be reviewed and assessed within a unified vision

Key Challenges

- Shaping a shared community vision that equitably addresses the challenges of each neighborhood
- Growing a resilient, diversified economy, and a wider range of jobs
- Improving housing affordability
- Embracing Asheville's natural heritage
- Combatting climate change, promoting resiliency, and investing in healthy living
- Directing growth and improving neighborhoods
- Broadening mobility for a diverse population
- Increasing multi-modal options to reduce car dependence
- Connecting people to place through mobility and land use decisions
- Keeping Asheville unique - and a great place to live and work
- Ensuring that the City remains livable and equitable for all

Asheville: Since the Last Comprehensive Plan

- A unique and dynamic appeal
- Low unemployment and thriving new service industries
- Rapid population growth
- A booming downtown
- A desirable place to live



PLAN BACKGROUND

COUNCIL 2036 VISION

In January 2016, Asheville City Council created a 20-year vision for the city. This Council vision reflects Asheville's unique character and the aspirations for the community. While recognizing that portions of the vision are not in direct control of local government and resources may be constrained, Council plans to use the vision as a guide when developing policies and priorities.

City management will use the adopted Council vision and the three-year short-range priorities to create a strategic work plan. In developing the strategic work plan, management will analyze existing and potential resources. The Council vision and progress on the strategic work plan will be communicated through an engaging multi-channel communication effort to include traditional and social media as well as communication networks involving community groups, boards and commissions.

Draft 2036 Vision

Asheville is a great place to live because we care about people, we invest in our city, and we celebrate our natural and cultural heritage. Our city is for everyone. Our urban environment and locally-based economy support workers, entrepreneurs and business owners, families and tourists, and people of all ages. Cultural diversity and social and economic equity are evident in all that we do. Our neighborhoods are strong, participation in civic life is widespread, and collaborative partnerships are the foundation of our success.

Here's what makes us special.

A diverse community: Asheville is an inclusive, diverse community. We define diversity broadly, including but not limited to all races, ages, sexual orientations, gender identification, socioeconomic backgrounds, and cultural beliefs. We have created a fair and balanced society where everyone can participate and has the opportunity to fulfill their potential because they have access to healthy, affordable food, transportation, quality education, and living wage jobs. Asheville promotes and supports minority business as a means of strengthening our local economy. We use a racial equity lens to review and achieve our city's strategic goals in health, education, housing, and economic mobility.

A well-planned and livable community: Asheville promotes community through thoughtful, resident-led planning that results in pedestrian oriented development for all ages and abilities, harmonized with an integrated transportation system. Asheville's unique character is reflected in our land use, preserved in our historic structures, and honored when incorporated in new development. Thoroughfares are lined with thriving businesses mixed with residential and office uses, and neighborhoods are socioeconomically diverse with a range of affordable housing choices. Open spaces, parks, greenways, community gardens, and edible landscapes are abundant throughout the city.

A clean and healthy environment: Asheville continues to be a leader in innovative technologies and conservation efforts in response to global climate change. The City is powered by locally-generated, clean sources of energy, and air quality problems have disappeared. Views of surrounding mountains have regained clarity unknown since the late 1800s.

Clean energy is not the only priority when preserving our high quality of life. Recognized as a Tree City USA for decades, streets, greenways, and parks embody an urban forest. Emphasis on local resilience spurs the use of municipal land for gardening, farming, and urban orchards. Known as a food destination city, most restaurants serve locally grown foods.

Thanks to an extremely high-quality water source nestled in the gentle folds of the Blue Ridge Mountains, Asheville continues to attract companies that depend on clean water - from breweries to high tech start-ups to restaurants and food manufacturers. Our modern transportation system has increased options that reduce carbon emissions. Successful waste, recycling, and curbside composting programs have greatly reduced the city's landfill needs.

Quality Affordable Housing: Asheville is a city with abundant housing choices for people at all economic levels and stages of life. Chronic homelessness is a thing of the past and rapid rehousing strategies abound thanks to an effective network of service providers. Housing is affordable not only because of reasonable prices but also because of low energy and transportation costs. Innovative and historic housing options, from tiny homes and co-housing to apartments and single-family homes, are available throughout the city. Asheville's former public housing communities have been transformed into a diverse mix of affordable and market rate homes within vibrant neighborhoods.

Transportation and Accessibility: Whether you drive a car, take the bus, ride a bike or walk, getting around Asheville is easy. Public transportation is widespread, frequent, and reliable. Sidewalks, greenways, and bike facilities get us where we want to go safely and keep us active and healthy. It is easy to live in Asheville without a car and still enjoy economic, academic, and social success.

Thriving Local Economy: Asheville is unique in its locally-focused economy. Our local businesses are vibrant and, no matter where you are in the city, you see a diversity of customers, employees, and business owners. Our historic buildings are home to funky, eclectic businesses that reflect the character of the city, and a creative economy of artists, makers, and innovators is thriving.

As an employer, the City values its workers by paying living wages and offering benefits that ensure both security and opportunity. Businesses of all types that share those values locate, start, and grow in Asheville, offering a wide range of career opportunities. Plentiful educational options, workforce development, access to capital, economic incentives, and a culture that values homegrown businesses make our economy strong. Our public and private partners have demonstrated a unity of purpose. If you do your part, you will find opportunity for success.

Connected and Engaged Community: We pride ourselves on building and growing partnerships – with regional and state governments, nonprofits, the private sector, and neighborhood associations to name a few - to achieve our vision. If you live, work, or play here, you want to be involved and you have a voice. When you join a citizen board or commission, the City provides training and support. Diverse interest groups work together to tackle problems, and neighborhood engagement enables residents to express thoughts, visions, and concrete plans that build a collective and harmonious community. City government is trusted and transparent, and we use the latest technologies and methods to communicate with, engage, and empower community participants. When you live in Asheville, you belong and are valued.

Smart City: Asheville has an AAA bond rating. We use our debt capacity and revenue wisely in order to maintain and improve the City's infrastructure and invest in our public employees. We strive to control our costs and still provide the highest possible level of service. We have a diverse revenue base that enables us to plan far into the future and to benefit from our growth. Our individual and corporate citizens generously invest in our community through partnerships and public/private projects that enrich the quality of life in the city.

PLAN SCHEDULE AND ORGANIZATION

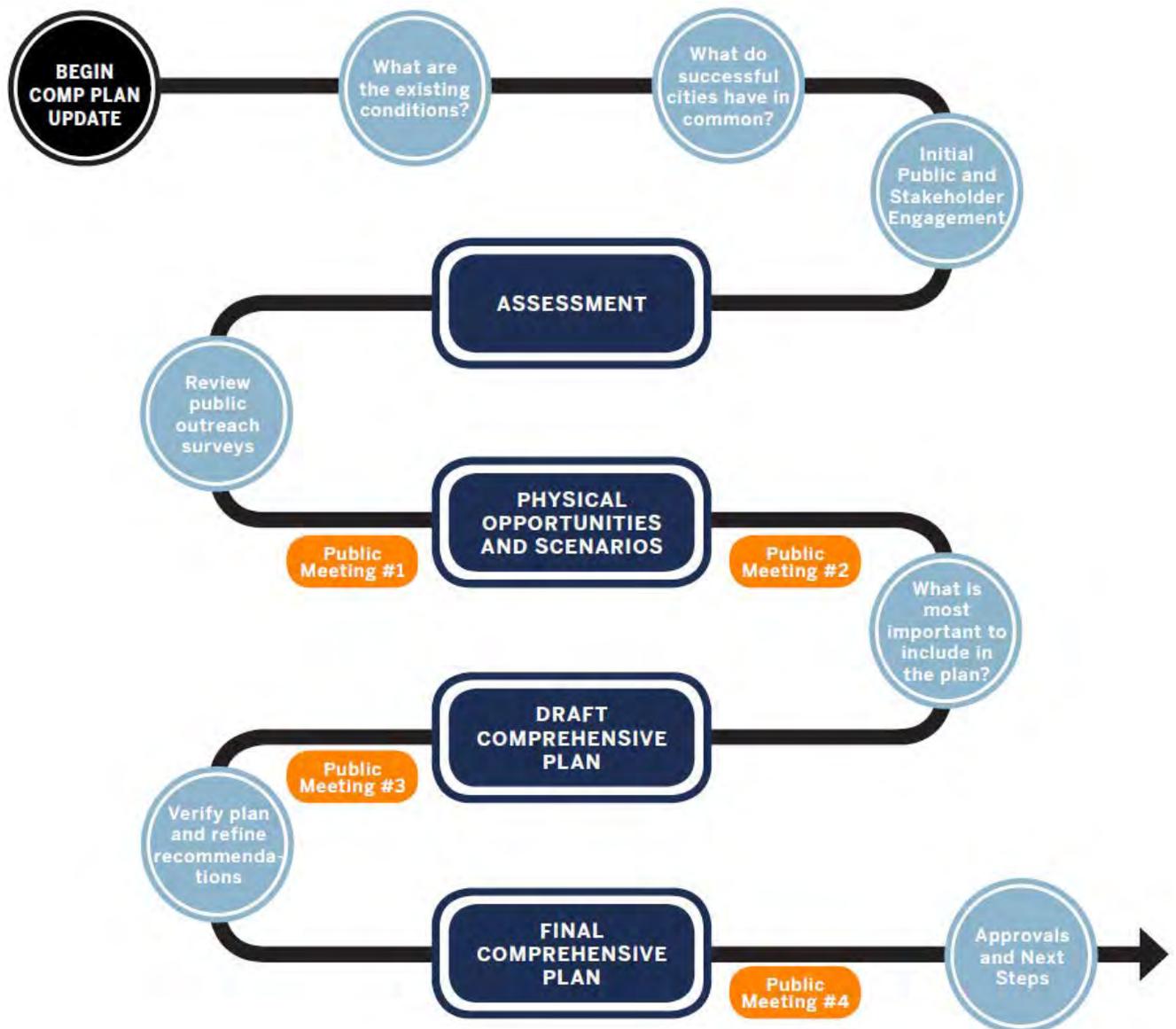
Planning Process

The planning process began in May 2016 and is expected to take approximately 17 months. The process is organized around four main phases following the kickoff meeting.

- **Task 1:** Project Mobilization and Kickoff - May 2016
- **Task 2:** Assessment - May-August 2016: The Planning Team will gather data and compile a background understanding on key issues facing the City of Asheville. The task will entail a process to review existing and past planning in the city, begin research into socioeconomic trends and opportunities, and will include a benchmarking exercise that will compare Asheville against other comparable cities and evaluate key metrics for success.
- **Task 3:** Strategy + Vision - 4+ months: In Task 3, the Planning Team will develop a strategy and vision for the Comprehensive Plan process. This task will entail extensive community engagement, including administration of a public survey, two formal community workshops, and extensive stakeholder outreach. The task will establish guiding principles, priorities, and goals, and will shape physical opportunities and scenarios. The task will also yield economic development and housing strategies.
- **Task 4:** Draft Plan - 4+ months: The Planning Team will work with the City to develop the Draft Comprehensive Plan. At the conclusion of Task 4, the City and Planning Team will present the Draft Comprehensive Plan to the public. Recommended refinements to the plan will be gathered, and a page-by-page review will allow key advisors to help shape the plan's final recommendations.
- **Task 5:** Final Plan - 3+ months: The Planning Team will work with the City to finalize the elements in the Comprehensive Plan. During Task 5, the final draft Comprehensive Plan will be completed and reviewed by the City Technical Team and Advisory Committee. At the conclusion of this phase, the final Comprehensive Plan update will be presented to the city for final review and adoption.



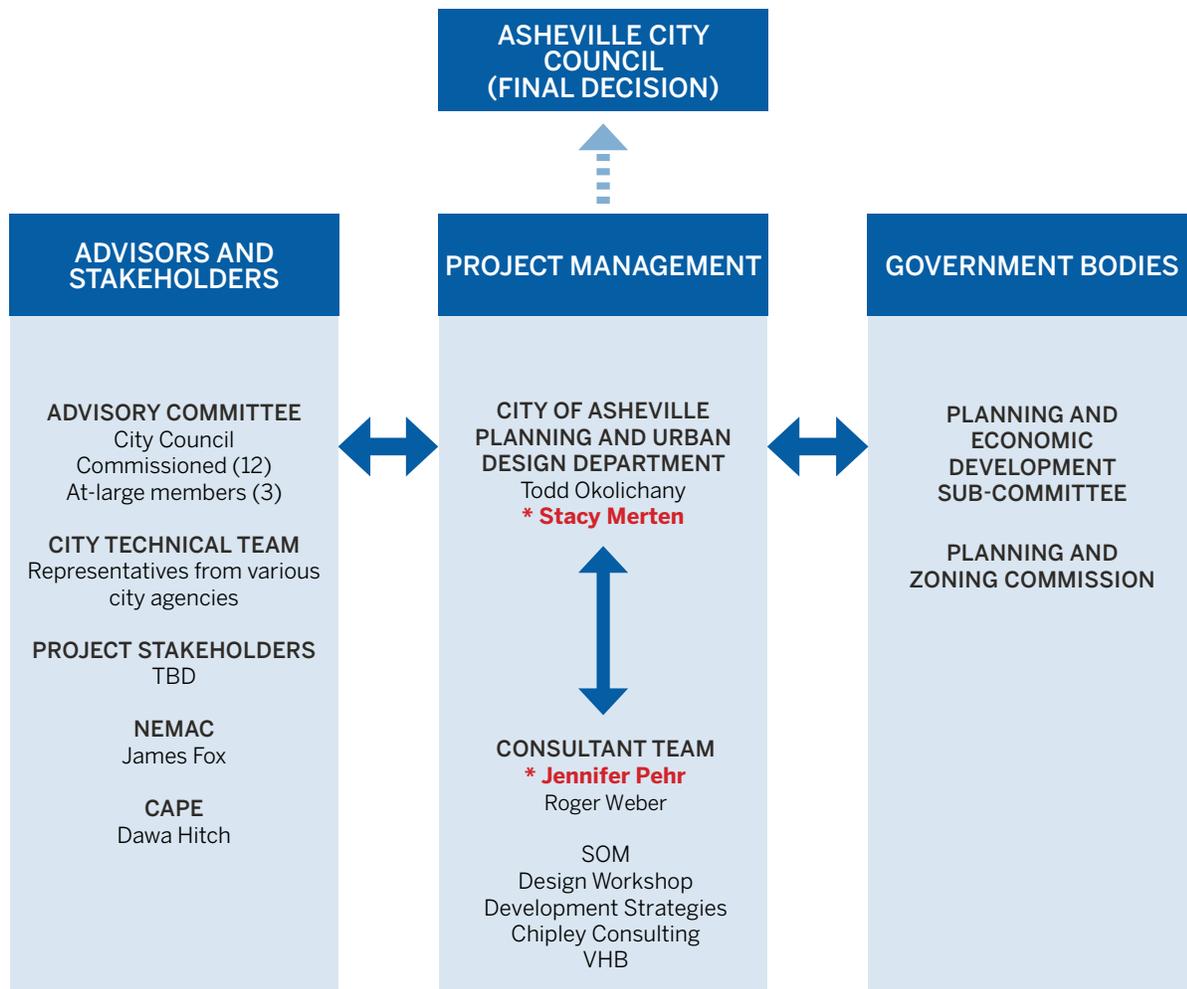
THE PATH FORWARD



WORK CHART

The Comprehensive Plan Update is being led by the City's Planning and Urban Design Department, with support from an Advisory Committee established by City Council and a technical team from relevant City Departments. The Planning Process is a multidisciplinary effort that will

be shaped by these groups working alongside a Consultant Team, The work chart below outlines the relationships between the organizations involved.



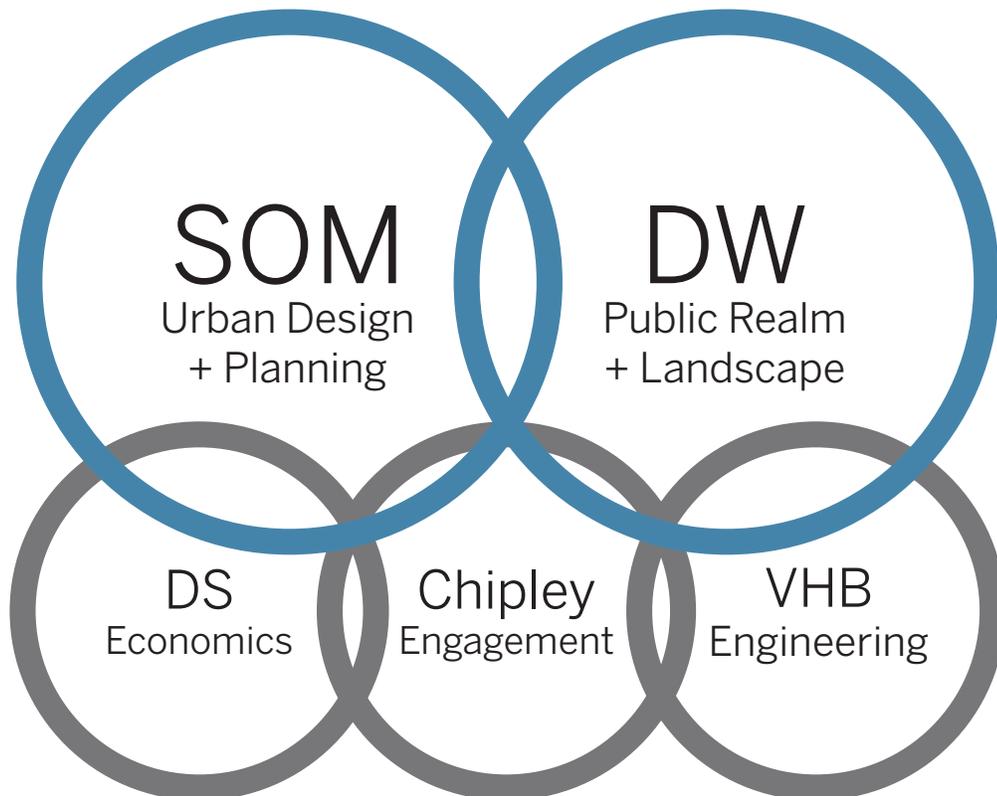
* Project Manager and Primary Point of Contact

THE PLANNING TEAM

The City has hired a consultant team led by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM), one of the country's leading urban design, planning, and sustainability firms to help guide and shape the process. SOM is working in association with four additional firms: Asheville-based Design Workshop, Asheville-based Chipley Consulting, St. Louis based-Development Strategies, and Charlotte based-VHB.

SOM, in conjunction with Design Workshop, will lead plan visioning, design, public realm ideas, placemaking and creative endeavors, and resiliency and regional sustainability planning. Development Strategies will lead the thinking about economic development strategies, land use decisions, and plan phasing. VHB will lead thinking about transportation, including pedestrian, transit, vehicular, and mixed-use concepts. Their work will include strategies for public infrastructure, resiliency and regional sustainability. Chipley Consulting will lead the public outreach process, including public engagement, communications, and facilitation.

Consultant team structure





THE CONSULTANT TEAM

SOM

SOM was founded in 1936 on the notion that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. The firm's founders sought to integrate planning, architecture, engineering, and other design disciplines under one roof, resulting in projects that are efficient, elegant, and unlike any others.

Since its inception, SOM has received over 1,700 design awards—more than any other design firm in the country. SOM employs over 1,000 design professionals worldwide. Our in-house diversity of strengths allows us to offer a complete breadth of services—from the master planning phase to the finest design details. We are dedicated to improving the built environment through visionary planning, superior functionality, technical strength, sustainability, and unparalleled design. As a multi-disciplinary firm, SOM fosters a collaborative environment. The multi-disciplinary approach—one that SOM helped pioneer—has allowed us to develop new and unique solutions in our planning, architectural design and project management.

The SOM City Design Practice is the world's most awarded urban design and planning studio. It has won the respect of its clients and recognition of its leadership from professional urban design organizations, based on its decades-long record of innovative work on many of the world's largest and most complex urban redevelopment projects. SOM combines experience in creating long-range plans for entire cities, city centers, mixed-use districts, education, healthcare and research campuses, and vibrant urban neighborhoods to provide thoughtful, sensitive and powerful planning solutions. Designs that maximize the harmony of humanity and nature are a hallmark of our practice.

Design Workshop

For more than four decades, Design Workshop has provided landscape architecture, planning, urban design and strategic services to clients in North America and throughout the world. The firm offers many services, including DW Legacy Design®, a proprietary process that seeks to imbue every project with a balance between environmental sensitivity, community connection, artistic beauty and economic viability that demonstrates measurable results.

Development Strategies

Development Strategies provides economic development analyses and strategies, market and feasibility analysis, and fiscal and economic impacts studies. Development Strategies believes that successful planning goes beyond standard approaches, and thus brings clients creative solutions and strategies that are tailored to the unique characteristics of their projects and communities.

VHB

VHB works to improve mobility, enhance communities and economic vitality, and balance development and infrastructure needs with environmental stewardship. VHB's passionate professionals include engineers, scientists, planners, and designers who partner with public and private clients in the transportation, real estate, institutional, and energy industries, as well as federal, state, and local governments.

Chiple Consulting

Chiple Consulting is a small, woman-owned firm based in Asheville that provides communities with a range of communications and planning services. The firm manages public and stakeholder involvement for projects across Western North Carolina.

TASK 2: WHAT WE'RE DOING NOW

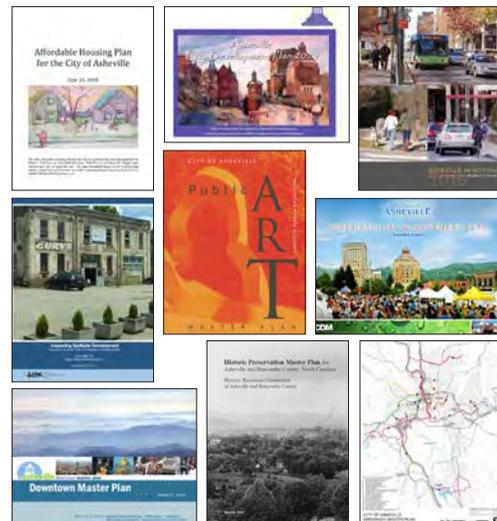
Peer Cities Benchmarking

An ethos of responsible regionalism - one of the six themes of this comp planning effort - suggests it is prudent to reflect at a high level on how Asheville is performing in key areas relative to other similar cities, particularly those with similar challenges and shared aspirations. Peer city benchmarking is one of the core elements of the consultant team's Task 2 work. It is useful for understanding where Asheville is distinct, where it is typical, and can be helpful for understanding tools that Asheville has employed that other cities have not, and what tools Asheville should aspire to in order to achieve positive ends based on the experiences of other cities. While the map to the right shows 13 cities initially considered for this exercise, only Eugene, Chattanooga, Greenville, Charleston, Wilmington, Winston-Salem, and Charlottesville are being evaluated in detail.



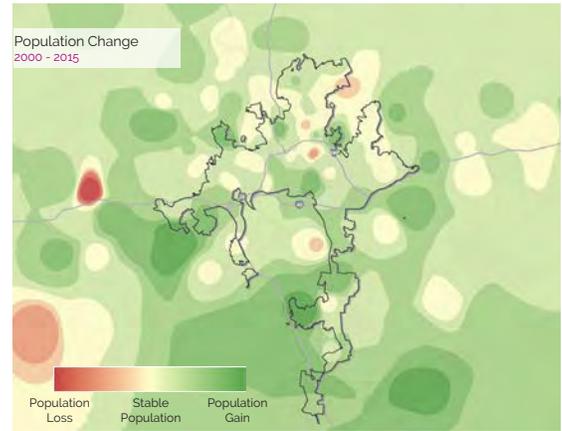
Plan Review

Dating back to the John Nolen plan compiled in 1925, to its most recent comp plans completed in 1987 and 2003 respectively, Asheville has long benefitted from a tradition of strong city planning. Over the course of Task 2, the Planning Team has conducted an extensive but not exhaustive plan review process to understand the city's planning tradition. At the heart of this process has been an extensive review of a collection of nine recent plans known as the "core plans" of this plan review process. These plans are analyzed in detail in the Task 2 Report. An assessment is being conducted to understand how the city has responded to recommendations put forward in those plans.



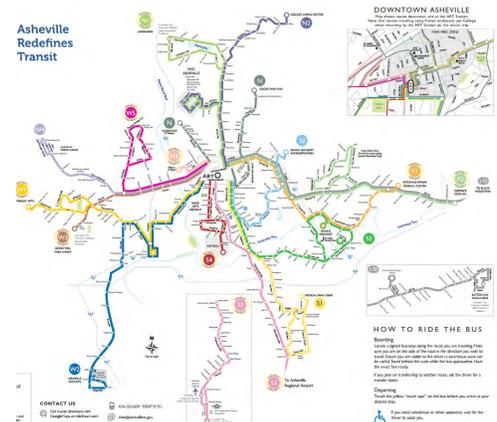
Economic Analysis

The team is working with the City and stakeholders to collect, review, analyze, and summarize socioeconomic information, including current local and regional economic drivers, housing, including affordable housing issues, a socioeconomic profile of the region, projected trends in future population and economic growth and projected implications on the city, initial ideas for catalytic projects, and land use projections based on anticipated future growth. The Planning Team is working with the City over the course of Tasks 2 and 3 to offer strategies for strengthening the economy and addressing housing affordability in a sustainable manner.



Transportation Analysis

Asheville is the largest city in western North Carolina, and its importance is highlighted by the confluence of transportation resources. Transportation and land use are intrinsically linked in Asheville, and strong transportation strategies are key to a strong future for the city. During Task 2, the Planning Team has begun conducting an extensive transportation analysis of the city, exploring transit, roadways, pedestrian and bicycling opportunities, and parking.



Community Outreach

The Comprehensive Plan Update will be Asheville's plan, shaped centrally around the generation of a shared local vision. Capturing the spirit of the community is essential to the plan's execution. To create a path for doing this, the Planning Team has, during Task 2, devised a multi-faceted strategy to engage the public, key stakeholders, and plan advisors continuously over the course of the plan. This strategy includes four components:

- Stakeholder Engagement
- Advisory Engagement
- Public Outreach
- Public Engagement



THE OFFICIAL PLAN WEBSITE:
www.ashevilenc.gov/complan



CITY SOURCE:
coablog.ashevilenc.gov



FACEBOOK:
facebook.com/CityofAsheville



TWITTER:
twitter.com/CityofAsheville

WHAT'S NEXT: TASK 3

Task 3 Overview

In Task 3, the Planning Team will develop a strategy and vision for the Comprehensive Plan process. During this stage, we will work on and complete assignments related to:

- Engaging the public to determine priorities
- Economic development and strategies for housing
- Physical opportunities and scenarios
- Establishment of Asheville's Principles and Goals

During Task 3, the Planning Team will hold two public workshops and will meet with the Technical Team three times and the Advisory Committee two times.

Shaping Plan Goals, Principles, and Physical Scenario

The Planning Team will work with the City Technical Team, Advisory Committee, Stakeholders and the public to craft principles toward a Vision for Asheville. These principles will represent future goals of the City and will be aspirational in nature yet grounded in reality and implementable. The Planning Team will use the topics studied to date to elicit from these same groups the priority areas of focus for the Comprehensive Plan. Through an iterative process, the priorities identified will inform the principles and goals for the plan.

For each topic, options will be studied and concept-level solutions for incorporation in the Draft Comprehensive Plan will be identified. The team will work through these processes to begin shaping strategies for land use, density, open space and the public realm, transportation, infrastructure, utilities, population growth, character, heritage, and culture, sustainability, district and neighborhood branding, mixed-use concepts, anchor and location strategies, and competitive differentiation.

Public Engagement:

The Planning Team is promoting opportunities for public involvement in the plan through multimedia and in-person outreach throughout the month of August. Other major elements of public engagement in Task 3:

- A brief survey will be opened to the public in August, both online and in hard format as the first major element of public outreach. The survey will be used to discern citizen satisfaction with existing city services and qualities, and to understand public preferences for prioritizing future investment. The survey will be used to inform the physical scenario development in the public workshops. Survey tools will allow the Planning Team to evaluate how responses differ by geographic area.
- In addition to meetings with the City Technical Team, Advisory Committee, and Stakeholders, the Planning Team will conduct two public workshops during Task 3, the first as a working charrette to brainstorm ideas in response to an understanding of priorities generated through the survey, and the second an opportunity to vet and refine physical planning scenarios.

Ongoing Market, Economic, and Housing Studies

Building on the assessment phase, the team will work with the City to offer strategies for strengthening the economy and addressing housing affordability in a sustainable manner. Continued analyses will inform the generation of principles and physical scenarios, and will address place-based attraction and retention strategies, strategies to leverage planned public and private investment to maximize potential impact, related businesses, and key connections, strategies to boost innovation, entrepreneurship, venture capital, ideas related to the sharing economy, tourism, equity, and workforce readiness, housing policy, affordability, growth, preservation, density, and development tools.

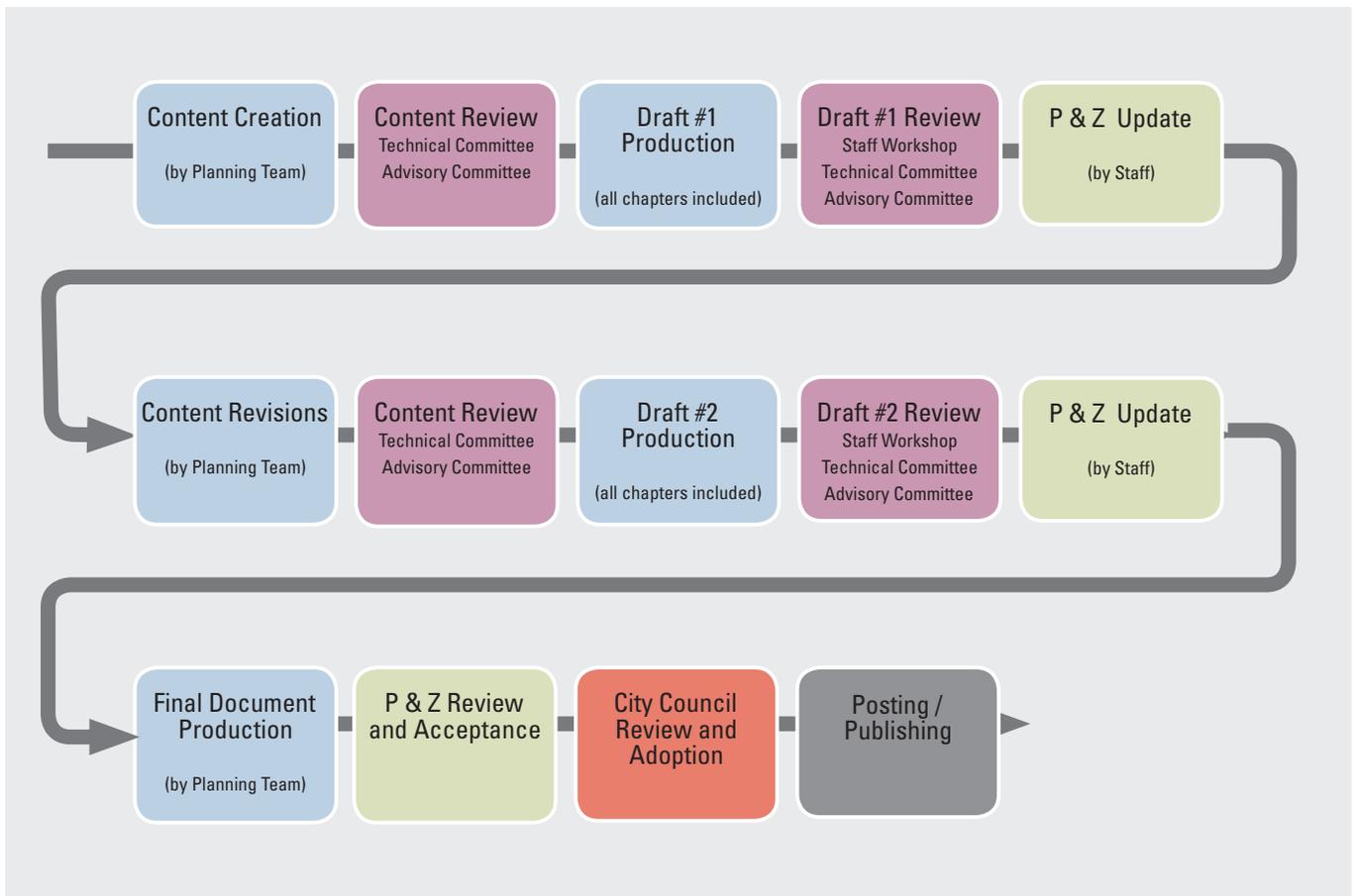
TASK 4 AND 5 PLAN REVIEW PROCESS

Following the generation of principles and physical scenarios in Task 3, Task 4 will entail the creation of the Draft Plan. The following chart outlines the process that will be enlisted during the creation and review of planning materials created during that task. The Advisory Committee and Technical Committee will be particularly important during this task, and so the process is designed to elicit their feedback repeatedly.

document for the city,. This process will ensure that input is gathered at timely intervals through a structured process of continual review in a way that is useful to the Consultant Team.

Supplemental to this process, the Planning Team will be delivering ongoing updates throughout the planning process to the City's Planning and Economic Development Committee.

This process is designed to ensure that all voices have a chance to share in the creation and review of the plan, helping to mold it into a useful



BACKGROUND AND FORMAT //

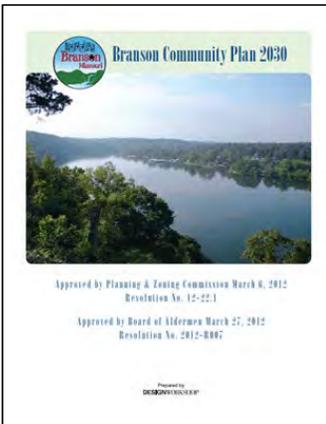
BACKGROUND ON COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

The American Planning Association invokes the definition of a Comprehensive Plan as “the official statement of a local government establishing policies for its future long-range development”. While Comprehensive Planning has existed for generations - Asheville’s first Comprehensive Plan was created in 1925 - and is statutorily required in many states, the range of possible uses, formats, and processes for creating comp plans is rapidly evolving.

Historically Comprehensive Planning was a relatively simple process: most comp plans still follow a relatively simple format, laying out high-level aspirational goals, followed by a series of plan elements, or chapters, that highlight key ideas with regard to topical areas of specific interest to the city, followed by a matrix of implementation “action items” for achieving the ambitions of the plan. While these components still define the crux of all comprehensive plans, there is an abundance of new

thinking about alternative ways comp plans can be structured to provide the greatest utility to residents and city governments. In particular, new capabilities and ideas in multimedia and engagement are transforming the way cities think about comp plans as a tool for capturing the spirit of collective civic ambition within a city’s populace.

While City Development Plan 2025 has been a useful tool for Asheville over the last 13 years, it will be important for the city to think creatively and strategically about the most useful structure and format for the current comp plan update, with specific regard for how the comp plan will be used by the city. The images below highlight a number of recent “precedent” comp plans conducted by other cities.



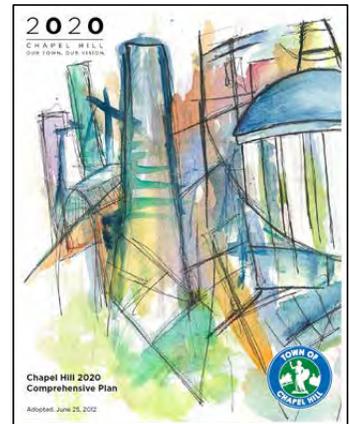
BRANSON



WINSTON-SALEM



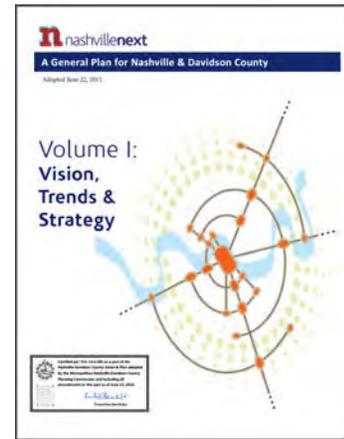
FORT LAUDERDALE



CHAPEL HILL

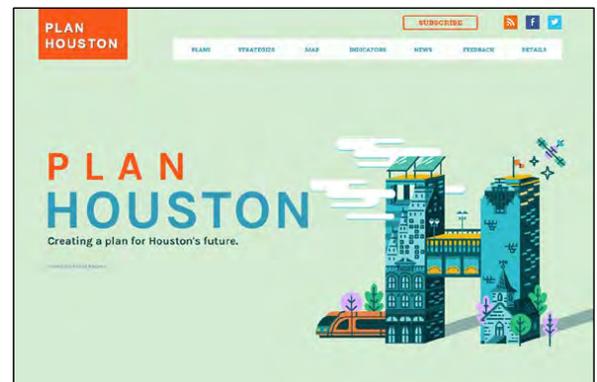
“Nashville Next” Comprehensive Plan

The Nashville Next Comprehensive Plan is structured much like most comprehensive plan, with chapters devoted to citywide goals, elements, and an action agenda for implementation. However it also includes sub-chapters devoted to strategies specific to each of the city’s 17 neighborhoods, an approach that gives the plan local meaning and the opportunity to outline targeted strategies that are spatially specific to certain neighborhoods. This approach also allows for high-level citywide strategies to accrue greater “on the ground” meaning through implementation strategies at the neighborhood scale.



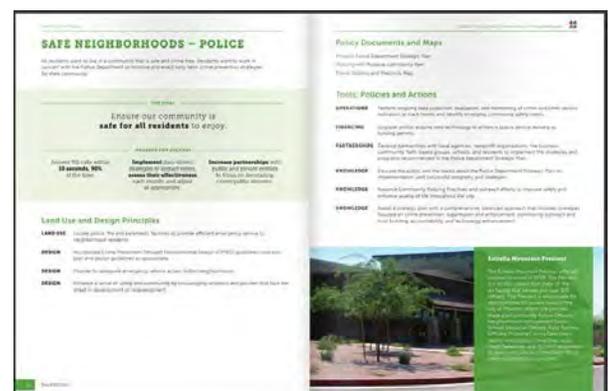
Plan Houston

Plan Houston exemplifies the power that innovative thinking about multimedia and outreach can have in expanding the opportunities for a comp plan. Completed by Consultant Team member Design Workshop, Plan Houston is entirely paperless, a comp plan delivered entirely online. The plan is designed to speak clearly and interactively to the public, a public “face” for the city’s priorities as much as an internal guiding policy document.



Phoenix General Plan

The Phoenix General Plan has both an online and a “paper” presence. It is distinguished, however, by the clarity and simplicity of its format. While it is not short on content, it presents its ideas concisely with a clear and consistent structure. It provides both useful strategies to policymakers while also clearly laying out key themes that are legible to the general public.



PHOENIX GENERAL PLAN

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING THEMES

A successful comprehensive plan must encapsulate many ideas and address a bevy of city-scale challenges. To do this, comp plans are typically structured around a small collection of topical “elements” or “themes” that vary by plan, as the adjoining chart illustrates. These themes typically encapsulate urgent citywide priorities, carefully considered to address immediate challenges of place and time.

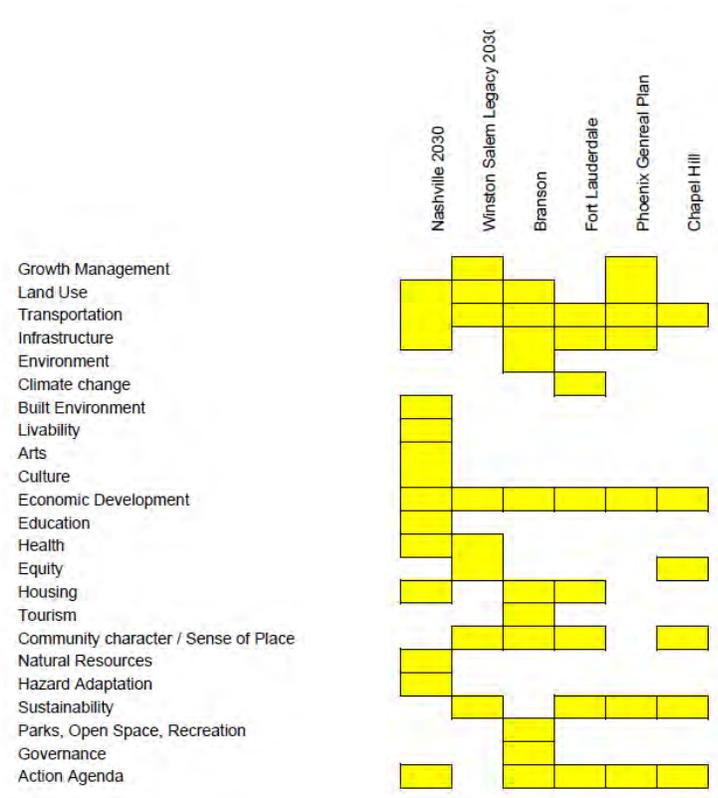
Ideally, a comprehensive plan should address all of these challenges, and more. Today, many innovative ideas in urban planning center around themes like resiliency, regeneration, and sustainability, topics that were only barely considered the last time Asheville executed a comp plan. To ensure the comp plan is both comprehensive and manageable, Asheville’s comp plan update will look for inspiration from a variety of sources, including such precedent plans, as well as the American Planning Association’s 2010 “Sustaining Places Initiative”, which attempted to establish best practices for structuring comp plans.

In the “Sustaining Places Initiative”, the APA established a list of six “best practices” principles for guiding comprehensive planning, based on an extensive review of comp planning nationwide. These include:

- **Livable Built Environment:** Ensure that all elements of the built environment work together to provide sustainable, green places for living, working, and recreating, with a high quality of life.
- **Harmony with Nature:** Ensure that the contributions of natural resources to human well-being are explicitly recognized and valued and that maintaining their health is a primary objective.
- **Resilient Economy:** Ensure that the community is prepared to deal with both positive and negative changes in its economic health and to initiate sustainable urban development and redevelopment strategies that foster green business growth.
- **Interwoven Equity:** Ensure fairness in providing for the housing, health, safety, and livelihood needs of all citizens and groups.
- **Healthy Community:** Ensure that public health needs are recognized and addressed through provisions for healthy foods, physical activity, access to recreation, health care, and safe neighborhoods.
- **Responsible Regionalism:** Ensure that all local proposals account for, connect with, and support the plans of adjacent jurisdictions and the surrounding region.

Themes of Comp Plan Precedents from other cities

Themes for each plan highlighted in yellow



THEMES OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



A LIVABLE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Grow Responsibly to Promote Affordability and Quality of Life



HARMONY WITH THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Become a Pioneer in the Integration of Natural Systems with Human Activity, Mitigate the Impacts of Climate Change



A RESILIENT ECONOMY

Balance Environmental Stewardship with Economic Vitality to Grow a Resilient Future



INTERWOVEN EQUITY

Keep Asheville a Top Place to Live for Everyone, Equitably



A HEALTHY COMMUNITY

Encourage Public Health by Prioritizing Walkability and Food Policy



RESPONSIBLE REGIONALISM

Plan for a Future of Regional Growth, Opportunity and Improvement

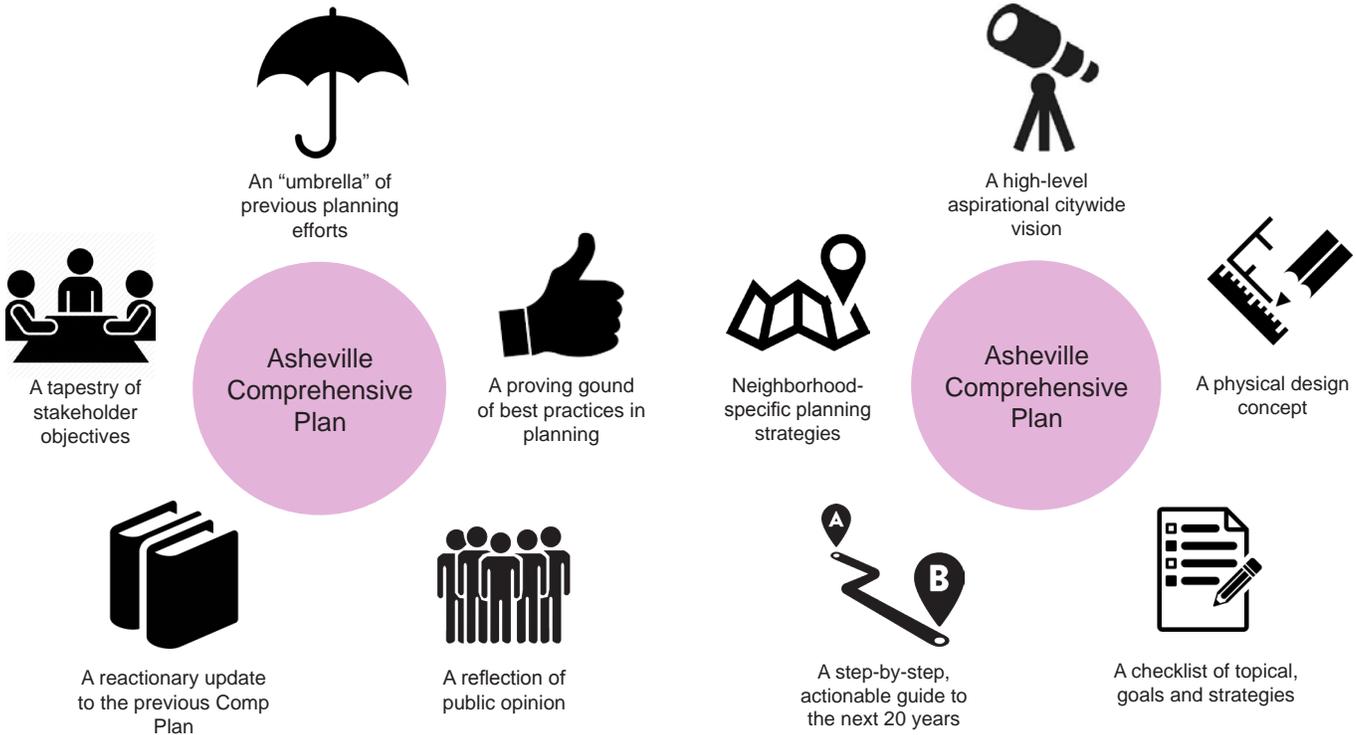
ROLE OF THE PLAN

A comp plan is only successful if it serves as a useful tool for its city. City Development Plan 2025 outlined strategies that were able to be effectively implemented such that by 2009 a city analysis indicated that nearly 90 percent of the plan's recommendations had been achieved. This comp plan update likewise must be shaped both to reflect the appropriate role for the comp plan - is it a consolidated compendium of

existing planning work, or is it a document of new ideas, for instance - as well as include strategies that are most useful for the city - should it be a checklist, a set of high-level goals and aspirations, or place-specific strategies that can shape detailed planning at the neighborhood scale. Understanding the answers to these questions before embarking on future tasks will be essential.

What is the role of the Comprehensive Plan?

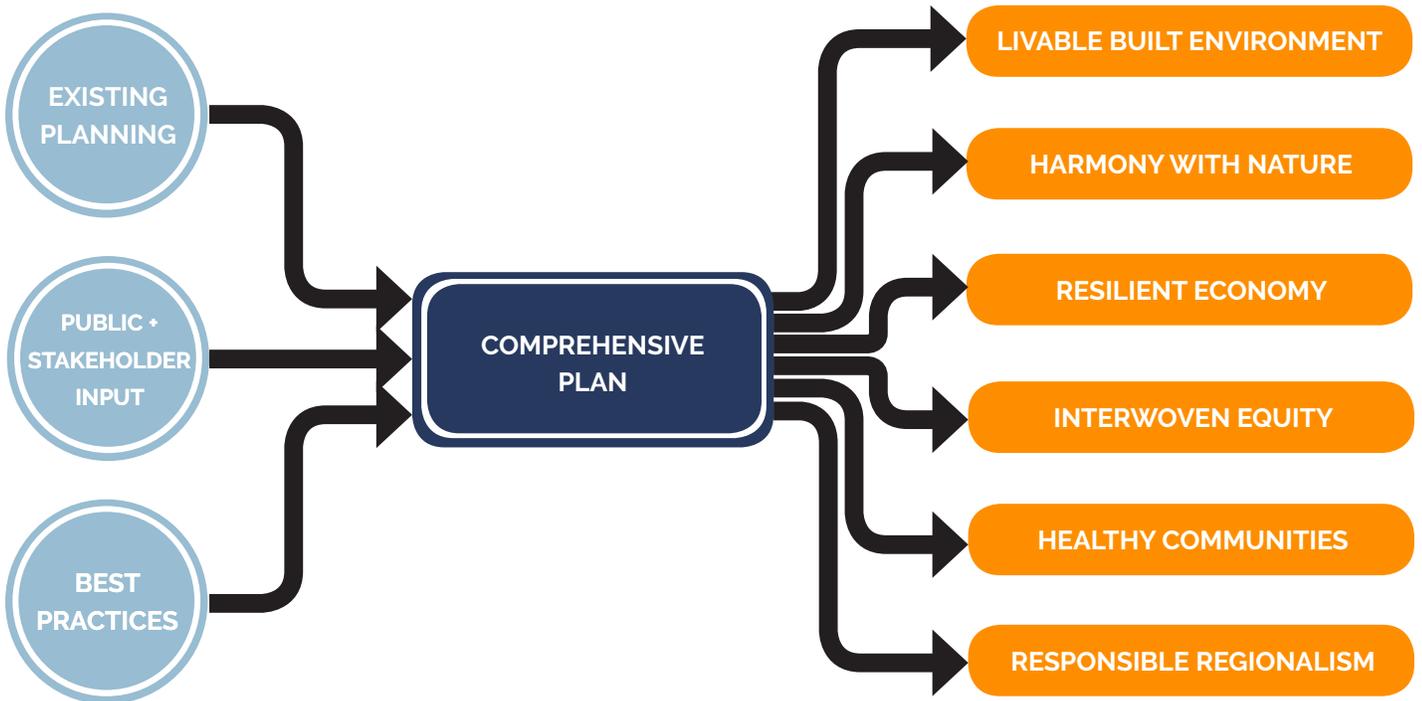
What strategies will it comprise?



ROLE OF THE PLAN

A comp plan is a complex document that is in many ways a streamlined tapestry compiling and consolidating a variety of “inputs” in a way that can usefully create successful “outputs”. A comprehensive plan must incorporate a city’s existing planning and development efforts, an understanding of public and stakeholder needs and goals, and an application of “best practices” in place-specific urban planning, in order to generate effective strategies toward achieving broad goals.

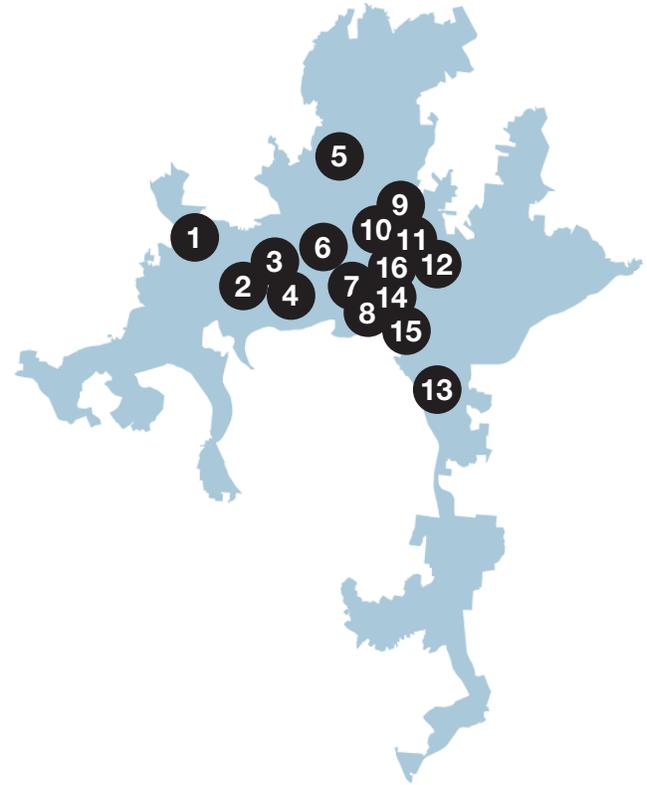
In Asheville, an abundance of planning efforts have been conducted over the last several years that have addressed a wide variety of topics individually. The plan must synthesize and pull together the thinking from these efforts. Asheville is also a vibrant community of many voices. The plan must establish a shared vision shaped by the community. Finally, the plan must also consider Asheville’s greatest challenges through best practice strategies and tools through the lens of professional expertise.



PLACE-SPECIFIC APPROACH

Asheville has benefitted from abundant planning work to-date through the execution of over 50 city planning efforts completed within the last decade or so. A goal of the comp plan will to be consolidate and coalesce the citywide planning work behind a unified vision.

It is worth noting, however, that while Asheville has benefitted from extensive planning, most of this planning work has focused on the macro-scale through citywide goals and policies. The 16 or so detailed planning efforts that have provided input at a more local grain have primarily focused on only a few areas, among them Downtown, the neighborhoods east of the Riverway, and West Asheville. Below is a list of neighborhood-specific plans, which are represented spatially in the map at the right, which highlights the dearth of detailed planning in the rest of the city.



- 1) Smith Mill Creek Greenway
- 2) Haywood Road Form Based Code
- 3) Burton Street Community Plan
- 4) I-26 Connector
- 5) Riverside Drive Development Plan
- 6) West End Clingman Area Neighborhood Plan
- 7) River Arts Form Based Code
- 8) RADTIP
- 9) Charlotte Street corridor
- 10) Downtown (multiple plans)
- 11) The Block development Plan
- 12) East End Valley Street Neighborhood Vision
- 13) Shiloh Community 2025 Plan
- 14) Wilma Dykeman Riverway Plan
- 15) East of the Riverway (multiple plans)
- 16) South Slope Innovation District



Unlike many comp planning efforts, this comp plan update has a unique opportunity to leverage the abundance of city-scale planning to date to help remedy the geographic inequity in the city's neighborhood-specific plans by dedicating increased focus on place-specific implementation of ideas and policies already conceptually well-established citywide, rather than focusing only on ideas at the macro-scale. A point of emphasis of the Task 2 work has been to understand ways in which the comp plan update can be of particular value to neighborhoods that have not benefitted as richly from planning as others.

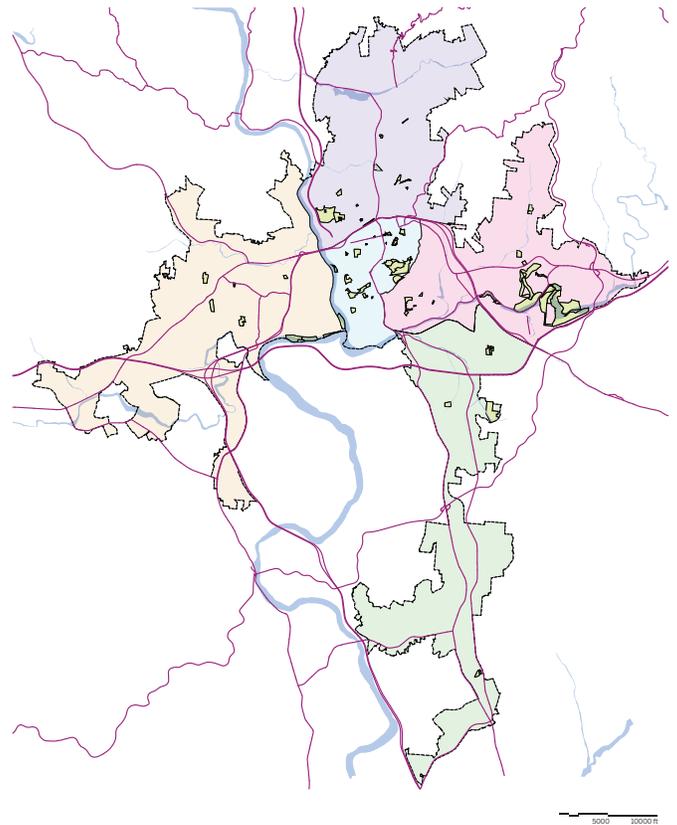
PLAN CHARACTER AREAS

During Task 2, the Planning Team has deliberated about how to best ensure the plan is responding to the unique concerns of each of the city's neighborhoods.

The plan must offer both citywide and locally-focused strategies, to both shape a shared aspirational vision for the city as a whole, and to ensure that each neighborhood benefits individually and uniquely from opportunities to implement that vision. Local planning strategies are useful in helping to shape small area thinking, and the comp plan has the opportunity to provide specific ideas for how citywide goals can be implemented equitably and uniquely in each neighborhood across the city - through real, discernible physical strategies.

The Planning Team has proposed considering local implementation strategies at the scale of five "character areas", each of which has a distinct local identity. These are based on our team's local knowledge, as well as discernible geographic and infrastructural boundaries. The outlines of these "character areas" are depicted in the adjoining image. The public engagement process in Task 3 will assess the viability of this strategy. Tools like the survey can provide insight into whether priorities differ between the different "character areas".

Asheville Neighborhood Character Areas



FORMAT OF THE PLAN + DIGITAL & WEB PRESENCE

Asheville's comp plan update will be a living document - with the potential to be edited and updated over time to meet the ongoing challenges of a continually evolving city. The Planning Team will work with the city to establish a graphic interface and appropriate presence for the plan that captures the spirit of its aspirations, facilitates usefulness for both the general public and for city departments, and maximizes

its legibility. Of particular interest is establishing an appropriate web presence for the plan, likely to accompany a physical document. The Planning + Consulting Team is working alongside the City Planning Department to determine the appropriate vehicle for promoting an interactive planning process with the public, as well as producing a final web-based life for the plan after its initial completion.

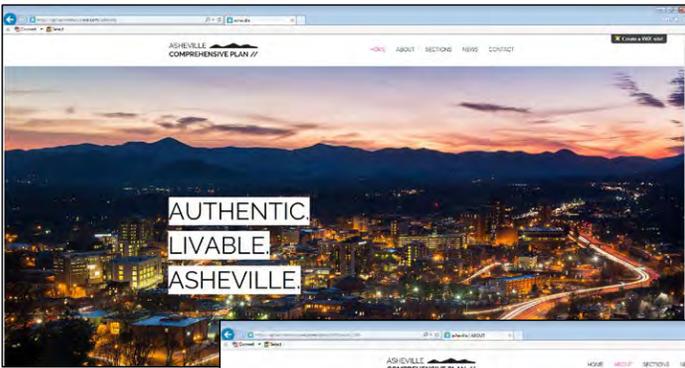
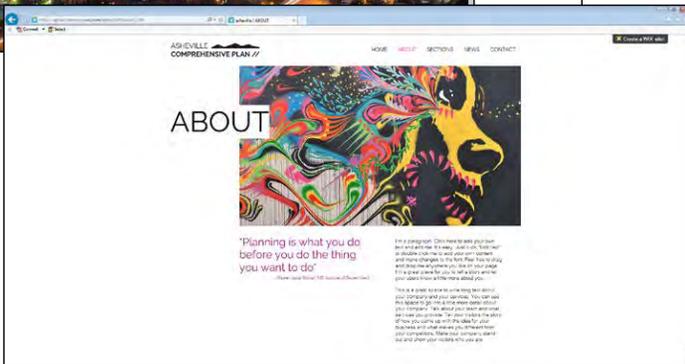


TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
1. LOCAL & GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT	1. LOCAL & GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT
Regional Growth Outlook	Regional Growth Outlook
Global Trends Outlook	Global Trends Outlook
WADSWORTH WITH THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	WADSWORTH WITH THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT
Water Vision Delta Study	Water Vision Delta Study
Ecological Health Study	Ecological Health Study
LAND USE & ZONING	LAND USE & ZONING
Major Districts Plan	Major Districts Plan
City-Wide Urban Form Study	City-Wide Urban Form Study
PLANNING POLICY	PLANNING POLICY
Land Use Management	Land Use Management
Economic Development	Economic Development
Transportation	Transportation
Housing	Housing
Community Development	Community Development
Cultural Resources	Cultural Resources
Historic Resources	Historic Resources
Public Utilities	Public Utilities
Energy	Energy
Environmental Quality	Environmental Quality
Aesthetics	Aesthetics
Public Safety	Public Safety
Health and Human Services	Health and Human Services
Social Equity	Social Equity
Other	Other



EXISTING PLAN REVIEW //

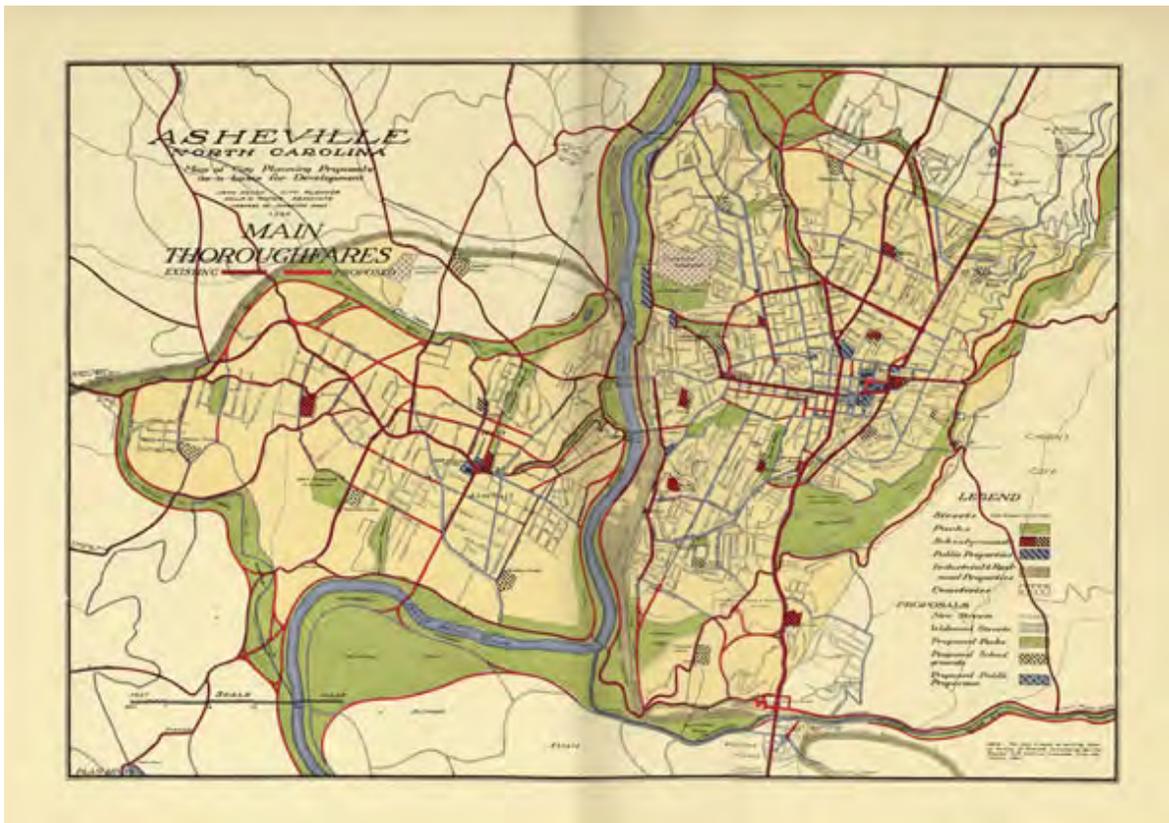
ASHEVILLE'S PLANNING TRADITION

Dating back to the John Nolen plan compiled in 1925, to its most recent comp plans completed in 1987 and 2003 respectively, Asheville has long benefitted from a tradition of strong city planning. Asheville's planning has long been visionary in leading the cultivation of the city's unique identity - for tourism, for art, for historic preservation, and for responsible and equitable growth.

Over the last few decades Asheville has benefitted from an extensive array of city planning efforts, most dedicated to addressing specific topical challenges at the city scale. Given the city's unusually large volume of existing and recent plans, this comp plan will have a uniquely

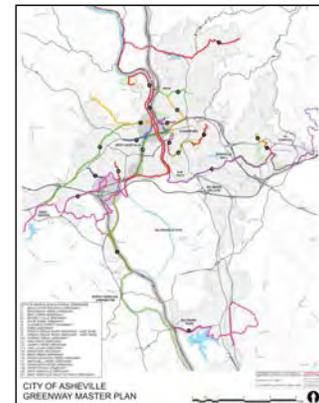
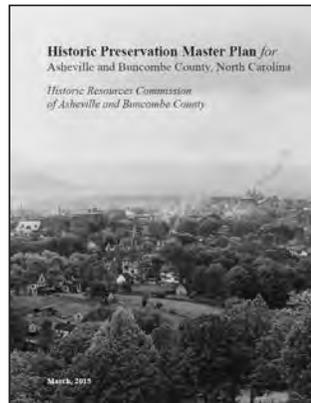
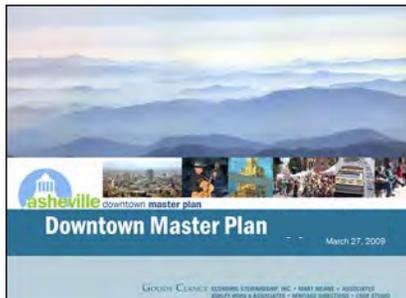
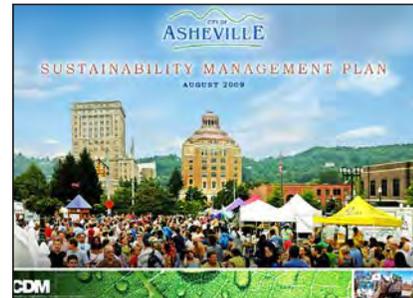
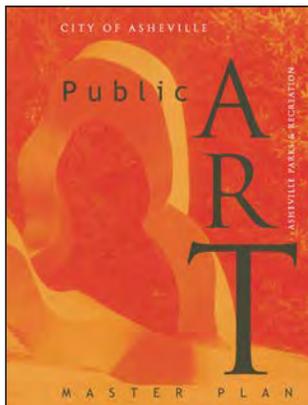
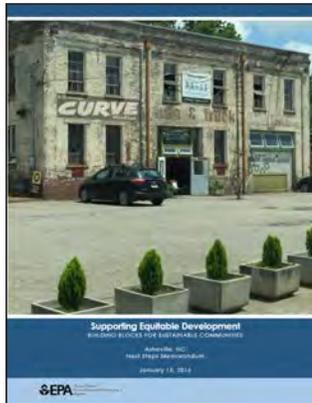
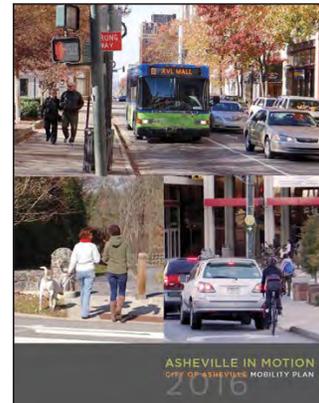
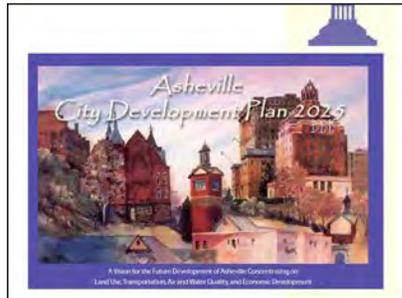
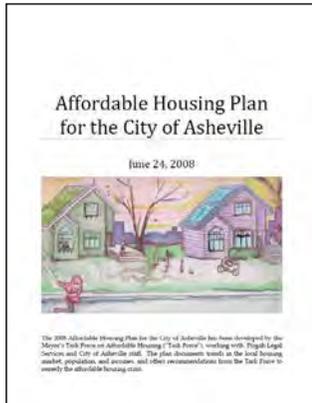
significant responsibility to understand and prioritize strategies within the city's landscape of existing planning, building on, synthesizing, and unifying established planning thinking around a shared vision.

Over the course of Task 2, the Planning Team has conducted an extensive but not exhaustive plan review process to understand the city's planning tradition. At the heart of this process has been an extensive review of a collection of several recent plans known as the "core plans" of this plan review process. These plans are analyzed in detail over the following pages.

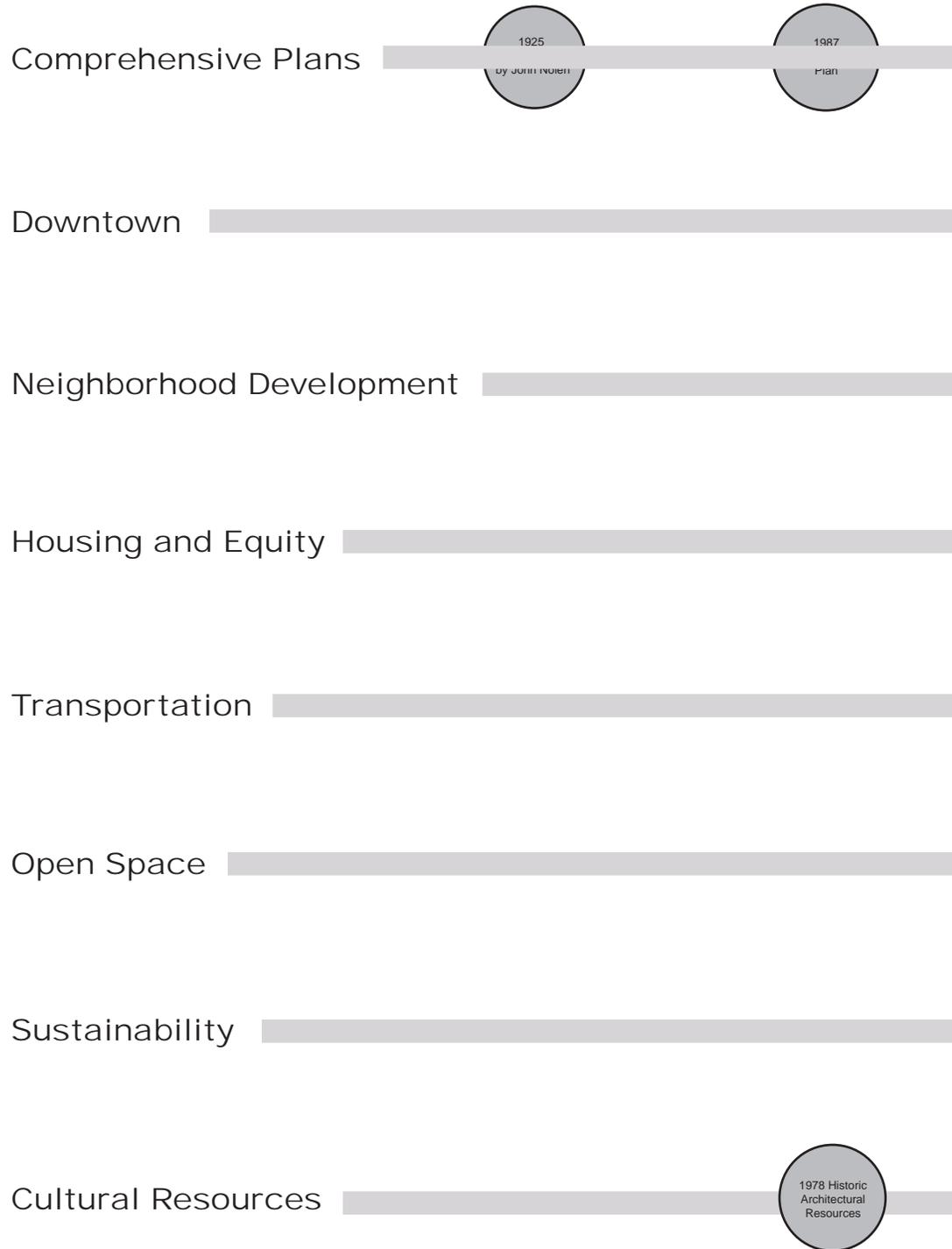


EXISTING PLAN REVIEW

CORE PLANS ANALYSIS



RECENT PLANNING TRADITION



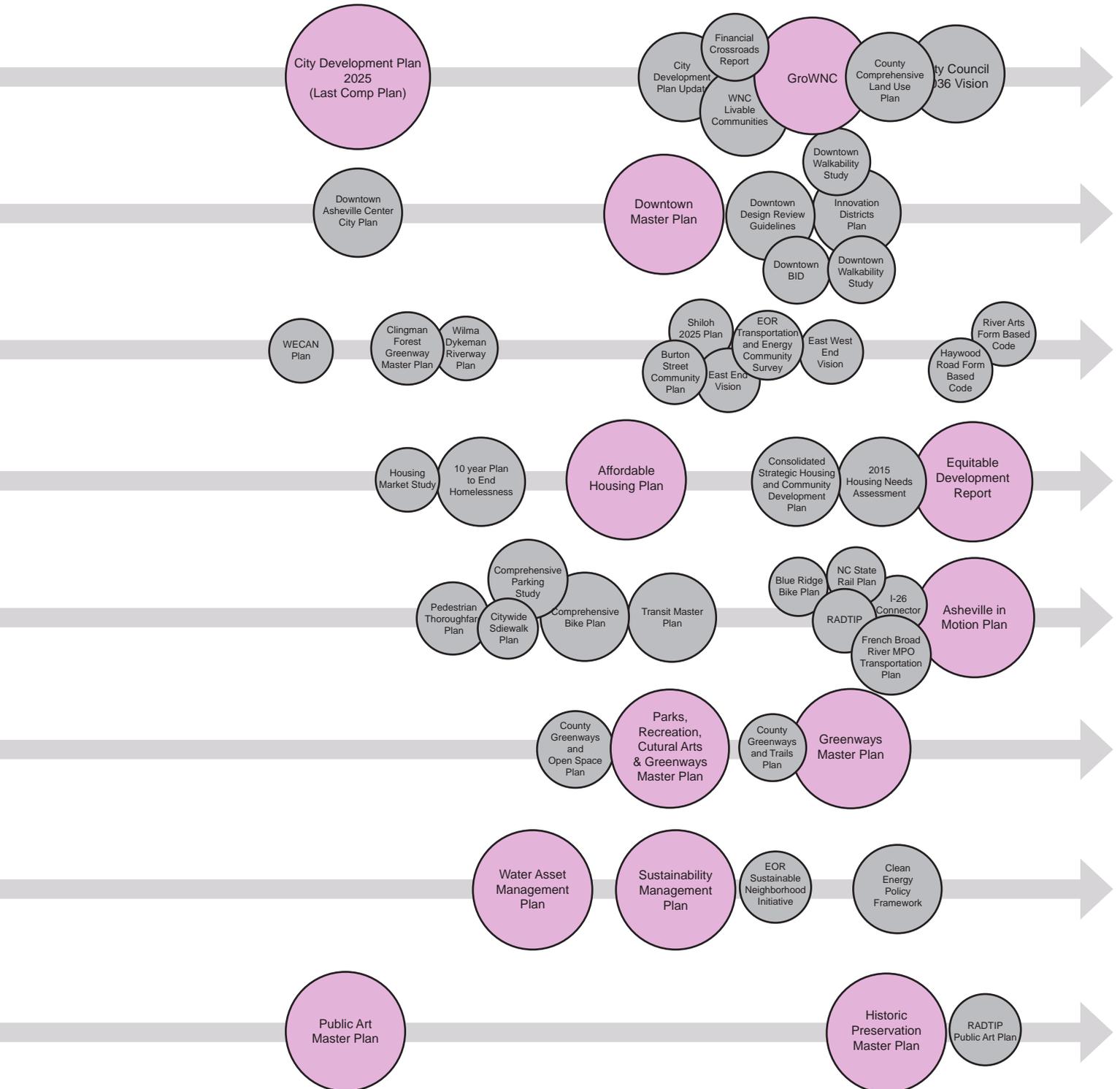
1995

2000

2005

2010

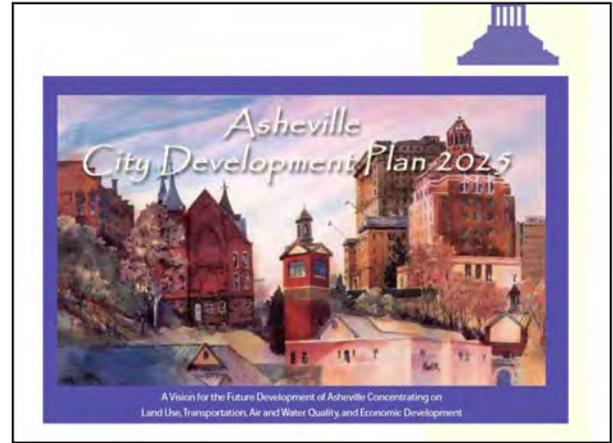
2015



CITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2025

2003

Advisory Committee: 56 members
Steering Committee: 10 members
Feedback Committee: 10 members
Information and Facilitation Committee: 10 members
Authorizing Council: 7 members
Adopting Council: 7 members
7 categories, 430 pages
96 goals, 486 strategies
87% progress on goals as of 2009



Asheville's last completed Comprehensive Plan, City Development Plan 2025 is an extensive and exhaustive document that has shaped city policy for well over the last decade. The plan is organized around four ideas - to be relevant, acceptable, usable, and workable - and focuses heavily on the challenges of accommodating future growth, in particular how to ensure future growth is consistent with City Council's SmartGrowth policies adopted in 2000.

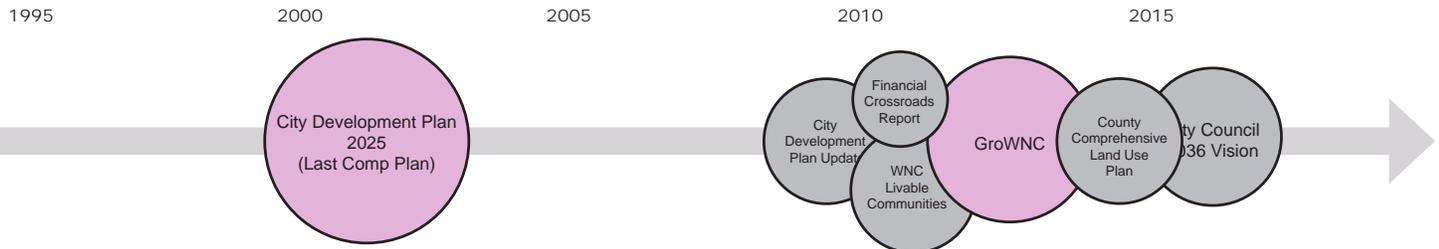
The plan addresses several major topical areas: Smart Growth, Communication and Coordination, Land Use and Transportation, Air and Water Quality, Economic Development, City Services, the Center city, strategies for implementing and updating the plan, strategies for accommodating growth, promoting quality of life, improving communication, and addressing difficult topography. While the plan is exhaustively comprehensive, it includes limited content on several areas of greater concern today, among them sustainability, resiliency, neighborhood-specific planning, equity, and regional concerns. It is notable in that it includes prescriptions employing many tools that are no longer available to the city. It is also notable because it integrates Land Use and Transportation together into one chapter, an important though unusual distinction given how integrated those two forces are in Asheville. Finally, it is notable because it primarily focuses on the issue of growth, while early conversations suggest that while growth is still important, it may be paramount in the Plan Update to focus on quality of life as a foremost focus.

The plan included robust public engagement structured around nine public forums. While a formal survey was never administered, the plan solicited open-ended commentary from the public, which is cataloged in the plan.

It includes an implementation matrix addressing affordable housing, development tools, including annexation, green building, historic preservation, open space, forest and wildlife protection, public participation and intergovernmental coordination, land use and transportation, air and water quality, economic development, and city services.

CITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2025

2003



Key Tools Employed in the Plan

The plan's numerous strategic prescriptions employ a large kit of tools for addressing key challenges:

- **Development Tools:** Annexation, self-financing bonds, transfer-of-development rights, land value taxation, design review, adaptive reuse, infill, green building, historic preservation, new urbanism, and open space protection
- **City Services:** Fire, Police, Streets, Solid Waste and Recycling, Water Infrastructure, Sewer Infrastructure, public schools, parks and open space
- **Tools for Growth:** Attracting entrepreneurship, attracting skilled workforce, high tech and medical jobs, increased property investment along commercial corridors, promoting mixed-use development, multi-modal transportation strategies, sensitivity to character, air, and water quality concerns.

Growth and Demographics

In the plan: Asheville grew over 11 percent in the 1990s and growth was projected to continue growing similarly into the 2000s, with many of the same concerns we talk about today, including an aging population, shrinking household sizes, and interest in accommodating denser housing.

Since the plan: Asheville has grown more quickly than projections in the plan, which estimated that Asheville would not reach 90,000 residents until 2025.

CITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2025

2003

Smart Growth Initiative

The plan expresses concern about sprawl in Asheville, including resulting challenges such as the extension of water lines to remote areas that caused Asheville to have the most expensive public water in the state. The city committed to developing largely through dense, mixed-use infill and traditional neighborhood development, to be implemented through new projects and adjustments to the zoning code. Additionally, the city committed to transportation policies to make Asheville a premier walkable and biking city by disconnecting cul-de-sacs, eliminating gated communities, implementing the city's bicycle and pedestrian plan, incorporating mass transit, and traffic calming. However it was recommended not to deviate from established capital improvements program or to close existing streets.

Since the 2025 plan:

- To provide for more small scale infill development a Cottage Development use was added as a Use by Right Subject to Special Requirements in all multi-family zoning districts and higher density single family zoning districts.
- To provide for a greater diversity, density and affordability of housing types in areas best served by city services and infrastructure, the Urban Residential district was added to the UDO.
- The Haywood Road Form Based Code was established and the River Arts District Form Based Code is currently under development.
- Gated Communities were added as a prohibited use.
- Developers of Level III projects located in the CBD and also located in the Downtown Design Review Overlay District are required to meet with neighbors in the area.
- Conditional Zoning is now utilized to tailor infill development so that it is more in keeping with community character and values.
- The City is currently gathering data and community input on opportunities for small scale neighborhood compatible infill housing.
- The City has removed barrier for construction of accessory dwelling units. The allowed size was increased and they can be constructed on non-conforming lots.
- Removed barriers for short term rentals, defined as homestays.

Transportation and Land Use

The plan conveyed concern about the transportation-land use cycle and cautioned against continued auto-oriented development. It recommended implementation of the city's bicycle plan and the continued cultivation of urban village districts as beneficial to multi-modal transportation. The Hendersonville Road corridor was recommended as a potential site for fixed transit, however transit was discussed only in terms of its long-term potential, contingent on land use transformations, with higher priority placed on optimizing the utility of existing transit and gateway corridor roads. The plan recommended permitting denser development such as duplexes in single-family neighborhoods, expanding density around transit stops and along corridors, and expanding the boundaries of the downtown area.

The plan celebrated downtown's role as the mixed-use core of the region, and advocated for eliminating sprawl by promoting targeted denser, mixed-use development and the reconnection of cul-de-sac development. Targeted traffic calming and design improvements were recommended. Traffic demand management was encouraged. The plan also promotes the introduction of street design templates. The I-26 corridor widening is discussed and the plan cautions regarding the need for extensive study for any changes to area interstates. The plan projects a passenger rail station to open in Biltmore Village by 2005, something that has not yet occurred.

Since the 2025 plan:

- Transit system was overhauled with new more efficient buses, Asheville Redefines Transit (ART) logo, and improved routes and service.
- A Complete Streets Policy was adopted by City Council.
- Web based applications were developed to help make it easier to find and pay for parking downtown.
- A Neighborhood Sidewalk policy was adopted to prioritize sidewalks constructed with funding identified in the city's Neighborhood Sidewalk CIP category. Priorities are based on proximity to transit, community destinations, more densely zoned areas, low income areas and unsafe area.
- Sidewalks were extended on Hendersonville Road in South Asheville and Tunnel Road in East Asheville
- Multi-modal transportation commission established, with sub-committees focused on greenways, transit, and bike and pedestrian issues.

CITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2025

2003

Affordable Housing

Affordable Housing was listed as the number one economic development problem facing the community. At the time Asheville had only three percent vacancy and was much more expensive than many other North Carolina communities. The plan advocated continuing to fund the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and establishing a countywide trust fund as well. It advocated zoning changes to increase the supply of affordable housing, and addressing the problem on both the supply and demand side through multiple strategies concurrently.

Since the 2025 plan:

- Affordable Housing Advisory Committee was created to work in conjunction with City leadership and staff to implement the 2008 Affordable Housing Plan. The specific functions will be to consider affordable housing policy issues and advise City leadership about those policies; to develop concrete action steps to implement the highest priorities of the Affordable Housing Plan, and to update that Plan as appropriate over time; and to advise City leadership and staff regarding affordable housing priorities for the investment of City-controlled funds
- The Housing Trust Fund was expanded to provide a source of local funding to assist in the development of affordable housing.
- Land Use Incentive Grants were implemented to encourage the development of more affordable housing.

Tax Equity

Increasing the share of taxes paid by nonresidential land uses was a key theme in the plan, to be achieved by increasing the intensity and quality of nonresidential development through Smart Growth solutions.

Since the 2025 plan:

- The City has experienced a great deal of redevelopment in targeted areas, including Downtown, Southslope, Biltmore Village and Haywood Road in West Asheville.

Economy

The plan expressed concerns about declining employment in traditional industry and highlighted the negative impacts wrought by Asheville's popular regional appeal. It recommended accommodating larger commercial centers, working educational and medical institutions to implement their master plans and help enhance their role as neighborhood anchors. It recommended working in particular with Mission St. Joseph's Health System to implement its strategic plan and to develop a streetscape plan for Biltmore Avenue. It recommended pursuing partnerships to help business recruitment, but focuses mainly on marketing the city more effectively and ensuring development standards are capable of accommodating new development. While it recommends increasing entrepreneurship training, few recommendations are made about expanding the base of the economy.

It recommended enhancing the tourist experience throughout the city, redeveloping the riverfront to maximize its full potential as a quality of life amenity to the city, and ensuring future development is able to meet the changing demands wrought by technology.

Since the 2025 plan:

- Creation of three municipal service districts (Innovation Districts)
- A Riverfront Coordinator position was created to oversee redevelopment of the River Arts District.
- The RADTIP CIP project currently underway will construct a 2.2 mile piece of the Wilma Dykeman Riverway, a planned 17-mile multi-modal corridor in Asheville along the French Broad and Swannanoa Rivers.
- In addition to improved intersections and bridge reconstruction, the project includes roadway improvements, sidewalks, bike lanes, greenways, on-street parking, and stormwater improvements along Lyman Street and Riverside Drive adjacent to the French Broad River.
- City was successful in recruiting New Belgium Brewery, White Labs, GE Aviation
- In the 2013-14 Budget, City Council adopted a \$.02 tax increase to fund capital improvements (and \$.01 for capital maintenance)

City Services

The plan highlights inadequacies of the city's infrastructure, lamenting the deferral of major maintenance. It celebrates the achievements of the fire department and advocated for new station construction and renovation. It advocated diverting solid waste and organic material from landfills, as well as using technology to eliminate solid waste disposal.

Development tools

The plan highlighted a number of development tools available for addressing key issues, including annexation, self-financing bonds, and adaptive reuse tools. It recommended employing annexation and developing a joint planning area based on jurisdictional overlap between Asheville's ETJ and Buncombe County to accommodate orderly outward growth. It recommended using conditional use zoning to facilitate infill development based on smart growth. It also recommended using self-financing bonds to improve infrastructure in the WECAN neighborhood. It recommended pursuing the statutory authority to implement transfer-of-development rights, land value taxation, and mandatory design review. And it cautioned against the limits of zoning as a tool to regulate design at the micro level. And finally, it recommended pursuing green building standards through an incentive-based program incorporating LEED.

Since the plan:

- Annexation has been eliminated as a potential development tool, and TDR authority has not materialized. In lieu of making design review mandatory, Asheville has developed form-based codes for two neighborhoods, a tool that was not discussed in the last comprehensive plan. In 2007 Asheville implemented LEED standards for city-owned buildings. The city adopted sustainable and green goals and committed to the creation of an Energy Management Plan and a Municipal Action Plan for climate change.
- Review of downtown design guidelines

Historic and Natural Resources Preservation

The plan lauded the city for its efforts to incentivize preservation and reuse downtown and surrounding neighborhoods, also lauding the city's urban village zoning districts. It promoted new urbanism extensively. It expressed concern about the loss of open space and wildlife habitats and urged the development of greenways and enhanced environmental education. It also recommended the documentation of Asheville's historic resources and the creation of a comprehensive conservation map, as well as the cultivation of more tools for flexible conservation. It recommended continuing to preserve scenic views and vistas.

Since the plan:

- A Trails and Greenways plan has been completed since the last Comprehensive Plan, as has a Historic Resources Preservation Plan.
- A comprehensive survey of 4,400 properties was completed.
- The Downtown Area National Historic District was expanded.
- The Saint Dunstan's local historic District was created.
- Eight new districts were added to the National Register of Historic Places.
- The guidelines for three of the four local districts were updated.

Public Participation

The plan urged the city to develop better methods of public notification, to examine the effectiveness of the zoning and conditional use permit hearings, technical review committee hearings, and Board of Adjustment Appeals hearing processes, and to evaluate the effectiveness of pre-application meetings between developers and neighborhoods. It urged more effective intergovernmental coordination and the introduction of technology to alert the public about key issues.

Since the 2025 plan:

- Neighborhood Coordinator position was formed to effectively communicate with various residential and merchant neighborhood groups and associations and link neighborhood organizations and city departments to address service needs.
- The Communication and Public Engagement (CAPE) Division was created to better facilitate public engagement and participation.
- The City Created a Development Services Department (One Stop Shop)

CITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2025

2003

Air and Water Quality

The plan recommended supporting regional efforts to improve air quality, supporting zero emission vehicles, and participating in compacts to implement regional air pollution measures. It recommended developing a municipal renewable energy program and implementing intelligent transportation systems. It recommended strategies to reduce water use and prevent erosion.

Since the 2025 plan:

- A Chief Sustainability Officer position and Sustainable Advisory Committee were created to implement sustainability goals, resulting in a zero waste single stream recycling program, and greenhouse gas emissions program.
- The state passed the Clean Smokestacks Act in 2002, requiring the state's electric utilities to reduce emissions of nitrogen oxide and sulfur dioxide by more than 70 percent over the following 11 years.
- The law was intended to give North Carolina standing to bring lawsuits to force other states to reduce emissions affecting North Carolina. The state sued Tennessee Valley Authority in 2006, and a 2011 settlement forced the utility to clean up its coal-fired power plants and pay North Carolina \$11.2 million for energy efficiency programs.
- City received initial NPDES Stormwater permit in 2005 and created a stormwater utility in order to collect fees to implement the stormwater management requirements of the permit.
- The City of Asheville has been actively partnering with groups such as the Clean Water Management Trust Fund, NCDOT, NC Division of Water Resources (NCDWR), GoldenLEAF Foundation, US Economic Development Administration (EDA), and the USACE on various capital improvement projects throughout the city. In addition to stormwater related activities, these projects include aspects that demonstrate opportunities where partnering on larger scale projects achieves both stormwater quality and quantity improvements as well as flood mitigation. Two such projects currently under construction are the Lake Craig/Azalea Road Project and the Craven Street Improvement Project.

Additional Measures Since the Plan

The City is currently pursuing a \$74 million bond referendum for the following projects:

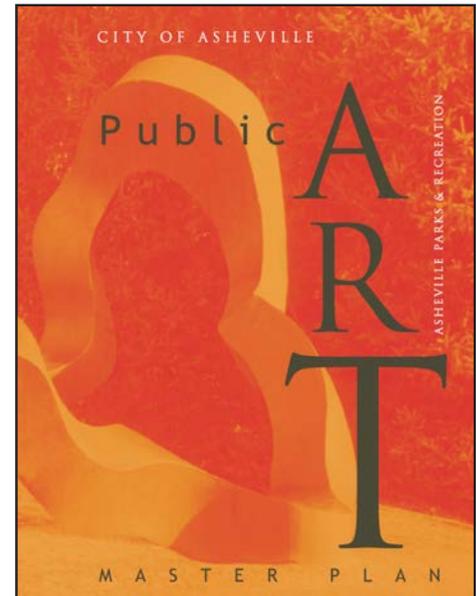
- Transportation networks: At a maximum of \$32 million, proposed projects would significantly improve the transportation network to include streets, sidewalks, bike lanes, greenways and bus shelters.
- Parks and recreation facility improvements: At a maximum of \$17 million, proposed projects would make major improvements to passive and active recreational facilities across the city.
- Affordable housing: At a maximum of \$25 million, proposed programs would support affordable housing within the city limits.

PUBLIC ART MASTERPLAN

2001

5-year vision

36 pages



Summary

The Public Art Masterplan was developed by the Public Art Board, whose charge is to make recommendations to the Asheville City Council on all public art policy matters. The Plan endeavors to tie together a recognition of Asheville's unique and character-laden history with acknowledgement of its thriving artistic present.

The plan defines the role of the Public Art Board by establishing three working committees to address permanent art, temporary art, and collections management.

The plan sets standards for community involvement in all aspects of public art and proposes funding for public art through several sources including the Parks and Recreation Department by allocating one percent of the general capital improvement program budget for art.

The plan sets guidelines for acquisition of public art, including through commissions, purchases, loans, and gifts, and also sets guidelines for deaccessing public art. Additional guidelines define standards for interpretation and presentation of art to the public, addressing issues like visual access, lighting, identification, and publication.

A History of Public Art in Asheville

The plan provides background on Asheville's public art tradition, noting that public art is a concept that has only existed since the mid-1960s. In 1992 the city established the city's art walking trail, and in 1998 it established a Public Art Policy, the first formal effort to set goals for public art. Among these were providing for art in public spaces, promoting the city as an arts destination, providing a process to acquire art, providing for art maintenance, and educating citizens about local culture and history through art. The subsequent creation of the Public Art Board in 2000 was the impetus for the creation of the Public Art plan.

Key Elements and Goals

- **Selection of Artists:** The plan clarifies a number of ways for selecting artists, including through open competition, limited competition, invitational competition, direct selection, or some combination.
- **Criteria for selecting public art:** One of the plan's primary objectives is to set goals for public art. To do this, it establishes five criteria deemed most important for selecting public art: collaboration, visibility, accessibility, quality, and appropriateness to site.
- **An ongoing process:** The plan establishes that the city should conduct a survey of public art once every three years

PUBLIC ART MASTERPLAN

2001



Public Art Classifications

The plan provides goals and guidelines for art based on a series of category classifications.

- **Permanent Art:** Includes gateway projects, streetscape projects, neighborhood projects, community center projects, community-wide projects, building projects, infrastructure projects, and projects in parks, greenways,
- **Temporary Public Art:** Includes community art projects, existing site projects, and invited rotating art
- **Scale:** Intimate, pedestrian, vehicular, and monumental
- **Venue:** Sculptural, environmental, contextual, functional, serial, decorative, interactive

Progress Since the Plan

- 2009, Change of board terms for the Public Art Board from 4 year to 3 year staggered terms.
- 2010, Updated definition of public art and implementation guidelines, composition of the board, terms of office, selection of board officers, role of the board and staff support.
- 2011, Change the name of the Public Art Board to Public Art & Cultural Commission (PACC) to address to scope of looking at cultural activity in Asheville.
- 2013, The Public Art & Cultural Commission requests City Council to move to Economic Development in support of public art as an economic initiative
- 2014, Approval of Administrative Policy & Guidelines to Implement the 1% for Public Art from the City's Capital Improvement Projects budget annually beginning FY15.
- 2015, CIP Review with City staff & PACC for upcoming projects.
- 2016, Worked with the Riverfront Office to support a Public Art Plan for the Riverfront Redevelopment Plan, a 4-month public engagement project.

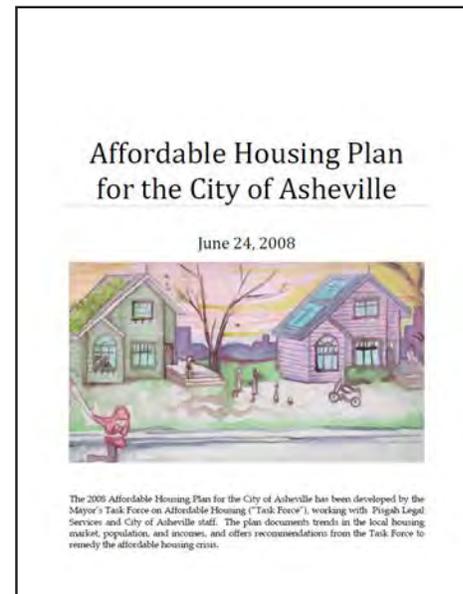
AFFORDABLE HOUSING PLAN

2008

6 months

80 pages

20-member "task force"



Summary

Convened by the Mayor's Task Force on Affordable Housing under Mayor Terry Bellamy, the Affordable Housing Plan was intended to be long-range and comprehensive. The plan documents trends in the local housing market, including an understanding of population and incomes. It also offers recommendations to the Task Force for remedying the city's affordable housing crisis.

The plan addresses why Asheville is having an affordability crisis - too little vacant land, tourist-related, low-income jobs, a large number of second homes, and mountain terrain that increases construction costs - and posits several goals for improving affordability. Among these are educating stakeholders, supporting community initiatives, matching housing resources to people in need, increasing the supply of affordable housing, and removing barriers to existing programs and ordinances.

One of the plan's key concerns was ensuring the city adequately understood the seriousness of the affordable housing crisis. This concern stemmed from the fact that only two of eight recommendations from a previous housing task force had been fully implemented.

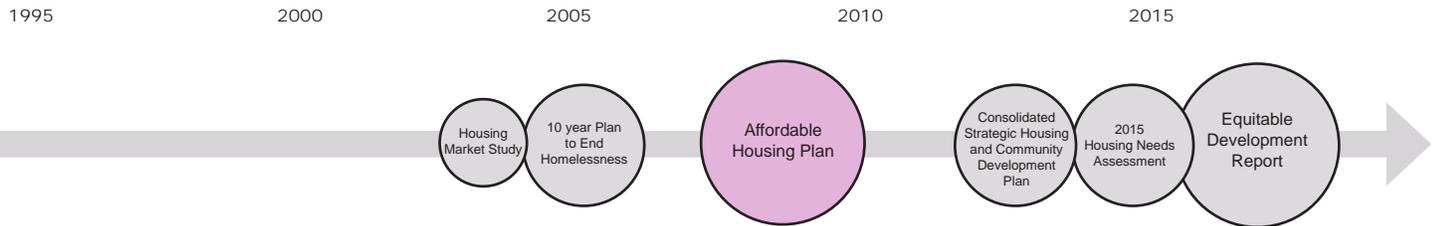
The plan does not address important affordable housing topics including mobile homes, community organizing, relocation assistance, and specifics related to the city's housing trust fund.

Key Findings in the Plan

- **Asheville has a multi-dimensional housing crisis:** The plan states that 45% of renters cannot afford rent and 32% of homeowners cannot afford their mortgage payments, a reality derived from Asheville's relatively low incomes and relatively high housing costs. Additionally, the plan notes that 25% of homes are non-primary residences. According to the plan, Asheville has over 100,000 residents who cannot afford an efficiency apartment, as well as 509 homeless residents.
- **Developable land should be better optimized to promote affordable housing:** Research conducted as part of the planning process revealed that most vacant property that is zoned for multi-family development is located far away from bus routes. Similarly, many of the city's vacant parcels are in the flood plan and many others are subject to the steep-slope ordinance. The plan highlighted, perhaps as an alternative, the fact that there are numerous city-owned properties close to the city core whose use needs to be considered carefully.
- **Rental housing is the greatest concern:** The plan stressed a need to promote subsidized assistance for renters in addition to owners, and to redevelop much of the city's subsidized rental housing. It recommended prioritizing the development of rental housing, and suggested the goal to increase rental supply by 500 units per year over the next 20 years, primarily in efficiency and 1-bedroom units.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING PLAN

2008



Specific goals

- Promote infill, and higher density. And mixed-use development.
- Allow multi-family housing in single-family districts.
- Consider reducing parking requirements and encourage the use of transit as a way of reducing total cost burdens.
- Encourage public participation and limit council discretion and bias in housing permitting
- Eliminate existing regulatory barriers to affordable housing.
- Study semi-annually whether new regulations are supporting affordable housing goals.
- Support affordable development across the city's neighborhoods
- Revise the cottage development code to allow developments of 12+ units
- Enhance the ability for residents to take advantage of housing tax credits
- Establish a local employer-assisted housing collaborative.
- Promote education to residents and developers, and provide housing counseling for residents.
- Promote a variety of housing assistance programs, including the housing choice voucher program, Section 8, public bonds for affordable housing, fee rebates for developers who provide affordable housing, community development block grants (CDBGs), TIF financing, ETJ opportunities, partnerships with MHO and Habitat for Humanity, and use the housing trust fund in more creative ways.

Related Initiatives:

- Asheville Comprehensive Housing Strategy and Policy Framework, 2015
- Comprehensive Housing Strategy Progress Report, 2015
- Affordable Housing Plan Recommendations Update, 2011

Progress Since the Plan

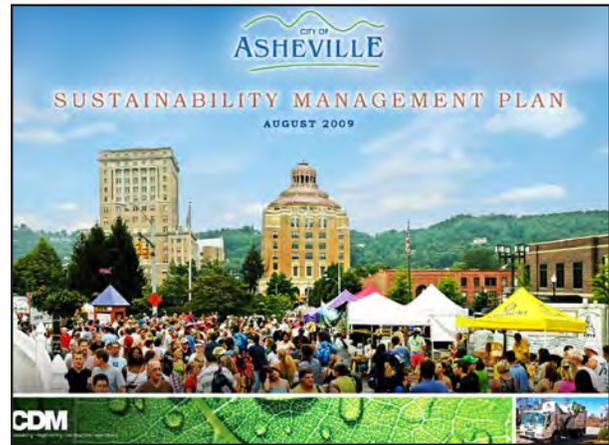
- The Plan was never adopted by City Council
- The city has continued with several other affordable housing plans and initiatives.
- The Asheville Housing Task Force and County Housing Task Force are now practically aligned.
- The City has expanded the supply of affordable housing, to the tune of 100 to 150 per year. The City has funded 433 Affordable Housing Units since 2014 through the Housing Trust Fund and HOME, through a total of over \$1.7 million in funding
- These sources have also funded approximately 165 Affordable units outside the city limits since 2014.
- The City has conditionally zoned 109 Affordable Housing Units since 2014
- Only 9 Affordable Housing units have been completed since 2014 through these programs, however 197 are under construction, and an additional 336 are in planning.
- The Housing Authority has partnered with the City in applying for a Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant
- The City has established a "sustainable development project" density bonus
- Off-street parking requirements have been reduced
- Minimum sale price requirements have not been removed, however are no longer the determinant of affordability
- Fee rebate program for developments that comply with price limits have not been implemented
- The Land Use Incentive Grant program has been established to incentivize affordable housing in new developments.
- The Housing Authority has expanded landlord education efforts
- A Housing website has not been created
- A local employer-assisted Housing Collaborative has not been implemented

SUSTAINABILITY MANAGEMENT PLAN

2009

Municipal Sustainability Plan

169 pages



Summary

The Sustainability Management Plan is a municipal sustainability plan for Asheville that is aspirational in shaping a sustainable future for the city. It defines a unique mission for sustainability in the city: “making decisions that balance the values of environmental stewardship, social responsibility, and economic vitality to meet our present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs”.

The plan is organized into four areas: 1) Visioning and Goals, 2) Sustainability Assessment, 3) Management Plan Policies, and 4) Implementation and Benchmarking. Within these sections, the plan assesses the city's performance with regard to sustainability in eight focus areas, identifying specific weaknesses and areas for improvement. It also includes a draft checklist of sustainability strategies.

The plan incorporates strategies for funding and management and provides a detailed inventory of benchmarks upon which progress could be measured. It includes a detailed implementation table that defines funding requirements and responsible actors.

The plan endeavors to incorporate existing planning infrastructure into its strategies, banding together a number of programs and initiatives. The plan promotes coordination between various city departments, and incorporates sustainability into a wide range of city operations, covering topics like management practices, employee education, greenhouse gas emissions, land use, facilities, transportation, water, and solid waste.

It sets a management systems framework for assessing existing conditions, identifying opportunities, setting targets, developing and implementing actions, performance monitoring, and communicating progress. It promotes metrics that address ecosystems, land use, economic development, clean energy, community health and wellness, affordability, and social equity.

Key Findings of the Plan

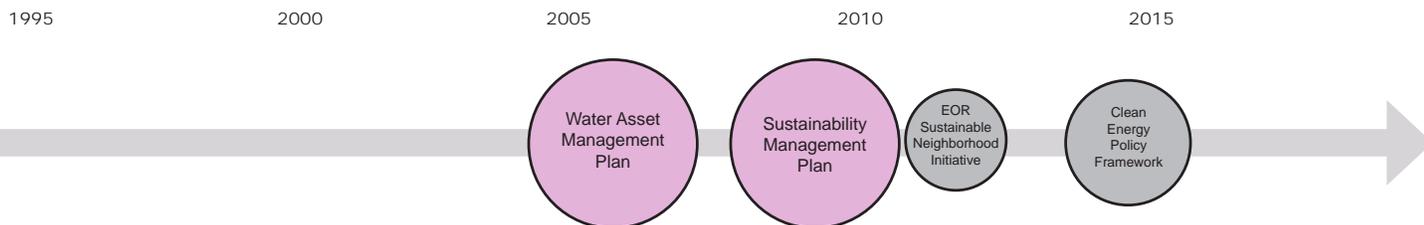
Benchmarks: The plan sets GHG as a benchmark for evaluating the sustainable performance of City operations, and promotes LEED EB for standards to upgrade buildings.

Criteria to evaluate plan implementation: The plan sets a number of criteria for evaluating the feasibility and timeline for implementing its recommendations, including evaluating the existence of an equivalent current program, assessing environmental, economic, and social benefits, evaluating whether a financial incentive exists, assessing personnel availability, technical feasibility, stakeholder concerns, regulatory requirements, the timeline to realize benefits, and projected contribution to overall goals.

Key factors for action: The plan outlines the key factors necessary to implement sustainability strategies, including finding capital dollars, general staff commitment, management leadership, political leadership, and the strength of a city Office of Sustainability.

SUSTAINABILITY MANAGEMENT PLAN

2009



Specific Strategies

- Improve the sustainability of City operations, including water pumping, sewage, street lights, city-owned buildings, weatherization, lighting, HVAC, and deteriorating building envelopes
- Promote Transit-oriented development
- Promote strategies for reducing vehicle miles traveled, including expanded carpooling, flex-time policies, and increased transit usage
- Expand bicycle, greenway, and pedestrian infrastructure
- Upgrade water treatment plants and pumping stations
- Upgrade electrical and mechanical systems
- Conduct a feasibility study on renewable energy sources
- Improve the city's solid waste management system
- Promote landfill diversion
- Expand recycling
- Create a pay-as-you-throw program
- Develop anaerobic digestion for food waste
- Optimize relationships with state and federal climate agencies
- Promote regional transportation partnerships
- Promote transfer-of-development rights opportunities
- Promote the City employee green challenge and sustainability award programs
- Inform residents through the Corporate University Greening course
- Engage in continuous monitoring of sustainability strategies
- Tie long-term cost savings as incentives for expediting the implementation of sustainability measures

Related initiatives

- 2007 City Council decree that the city should lower GHG emissions by 2% each year until an 80% reduction has been achieved
- Creation of sustainability office in 2008 to monitor progress, suggest policy, and coordinate sustainability efforts across departments
- Sustainable Advisory Commission on Energy and the Environment

- 2008 Comprehensive Bicycle Plan
- 2005 Pedestrian Plan
- Six neighborhood Plans and four local Historic District Plans
- City of Asheville FY 2015 Carbon Footprint Update
- The Edible Mile
- Bikeshare study
- Energy Innovation Task Force
- Compost Feasibility Study
- Facilities masterplan assessment
- Food Policy Action Plan

Progress Since the Plan

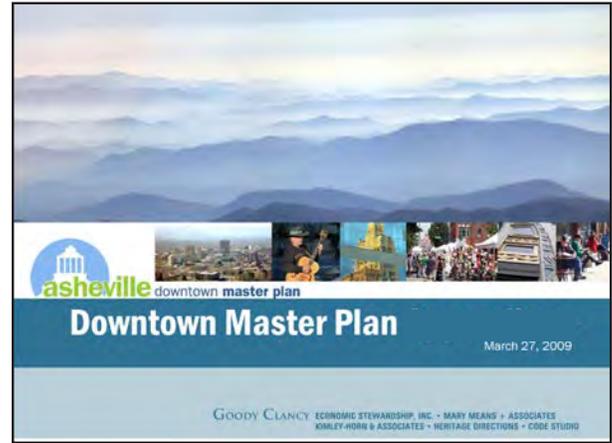
- The City continues to work to improve sustainability of City operations, to promote transit-oriented development, to reduce vehicle miles traveled, to expand bike and greenway facilities, to upgrade electrical and mechanical systems, to improve solid waste management, to promote landfill diversion, to expand recycling, to address affordable housing, and to leverage cost savings as an incentive for expanding sustainability measures.
- The City is conducting a feasibility study on renewable energy.
- The City is developing a City employee engagement plan.
- Food Policy Council partnerships to address food scarcity
- The Anaerobic digester for food waste is in the planning stages
- NEMAC is contributing toward the goal of optimizing the relationship with state and federal climate agencies
- The City is exploring a pay-as-you-throw program.
- The City has reduced Carbon emissions by 23.6 percent
- The City has reduced landfill waste by 6.1 percent.

DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

2009

122 pages

28-member advisory committee



Summary

The 2009 Downtown Master Plan is a vision for experiencing, shaping, and managing the future of downtown Asheville, its 22,000 jobs, and its increasing residential community. The plan builds on topics identified as part of the 2003 City Center Master Plan, and explores the central themes of core assets, development factors, economic factors, concerning issues, and related initiatives. Managing the immense appeal and rapid growth of downtown remains the plan's central focus.

The plan identifies three core aspirations: to help the community shape growth in a way that preserves Asheville's character, to create a shared vision for downtown over the next 20 years, and to enable the community to understand choices, take advantage of opportunities, and develop tools to achieve the shared vision through changing economic and political cycles. It seeks to manage character, tap into the energy and entrepreneurship of downtown, and promote sustainability.

The plan identifies a suite of new realities for downtown: that it is a focus for development, that development interests threaten its most celebrated assets, and that economic uncertainty loomed at the time of the plan's writing (2009). The plan advocates a focus on new development, not rehabilitation, that the city should be willing to wait for the right projects, and that the City needs to use its land holdings strategically. It warns of the challenges in realizing successful private sector-led community benefits amid high land costs, but acknowledges downtown's emergent vibrancy due to its increasing role as a residential neighborhood.

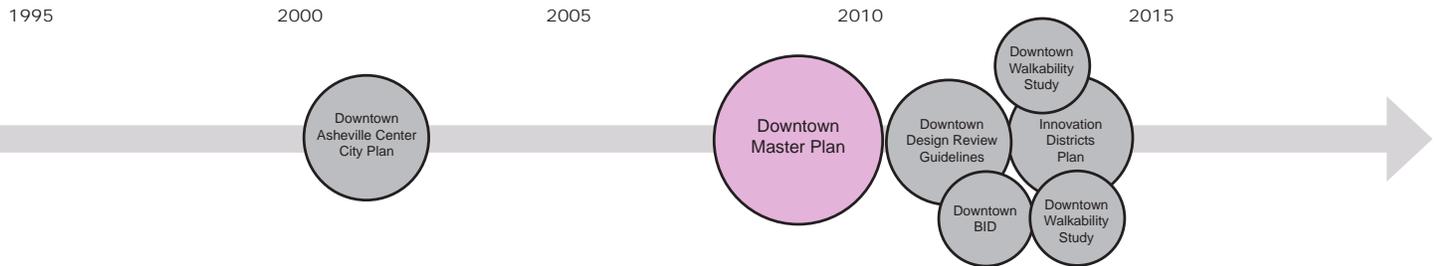
Stakeholders included artists, developers, preservationists, entrepreneurs, and residents. Community engagement affirmed that downtown's greatest appeal lies in its entertainment options, sense of place, and shopping. Assets identified included historic buildings, stunning views, food and beverage options, walkability, and public spaces. Challenges identified included graffiti, trash, weeds, the vulnerability of historic landmarks, disenfranchisement, and the lack of a guiding economic vision.

The Community Vision

- Sustain downtown's dynamic and diverse culture and economy
- Enhance downtown's role as the larger community's front porch
- Strengthen downtown's identity as a series of residential neighborhoods
- Preserve and enhance downtown's diverse architecture, historic resources, walkable streets, and view corridors
- Provide good, interconnected transportation choices
- Make downtown a model of sustainable planning and development
- Establish creative strategies for managing downtown

DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

2009



Specific strategies

- Cultivate downtown's creative, cultural, and historic character
- Bolster strong administrative organization for the arts
- Perform the first annual state of the arts audit
- Stage a cultural summit
- Expand arts crawls
- Create of an arts resources center
- Enable air rights development
- Expand convenient choices for access and mobility
- Continue to study shuttle service
- Study access to downtown
- Improve walkability
- Extend meter fees
- Promote shared car services
- Inaugurate an urban design framework to extend downtown's sense of place and community
- Shape downtown's character by considering it in terms of five districts - the traditional downtown, Beaucatcher Gateway, Eagle/Market, South Slope, and Patton/River Gateway.
- Safeguard the National Register district
- Establish gateways
- Implement streetscape improvement goals.
- Expand downtown to consider Broadway toward UNCA, the Martin Luther King and Stevens-Lee neighborhoods, the corridor along Asheland and Coxe near the Mission Health campus, WECAN, and River Arts, plus Broadway, Montford, Chestnut, East End edges.
- Encourage infill along Haywood and Patton
- Encourage commercial development along Beaucatcher
- Encourage housing in Eagle/Market
- Encourage new residential development along Coxe
- Create a new high-value mixed-use gateway at intersection of Biltmore and Southside.
- Establish plans for all areas around downtown.
- Shape building form to promote quality of place through gradual scale transitions, limited height, and considerations of views, shading, and scale.
- Update the downtown design guidelines to be current, clear, and sustainable, including a concise checklist that integrates the UDO, Downtown Asheville Design Guidelines, and new design criteria
- Expand standards for height, massing, proportion, and detail,
- Promote a green community benefit program
- Establish LEED Gold as the standard for all city-owned buildings
- Make downtown project review transparent, predictable, and inclusive by including more community engagement
- Create a downtown development handbook
- Nurture a sustainable and resilient economy
- Promote a more aggressive citywide energy code
- Introduce transit shuttle service
- Better regulate building height
- Better connect downtown to surrounding communities
- Form a community improvement district
- Realize a world-class cultural district integrating the Art Museum and Diana Wortham Theater
- Establish a Downtown Development Team
- Evaluate process changes after four years and amend as needed
- Limit application of Conditional Use Permit process to questions of land use
- Reform the Downtown review process to include Level 1 (small projects regulated by the technical review committee), Level 2 (expanded to larger projects, regulated by the Planning and Zoning Commission), and Level 3 (Reserved for the largest projects, regulated by City Council)
- Ensure Technical Review (TRC) is occurring before Design Review (the Downtown Commission).

DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

2009

Related Initiatives:

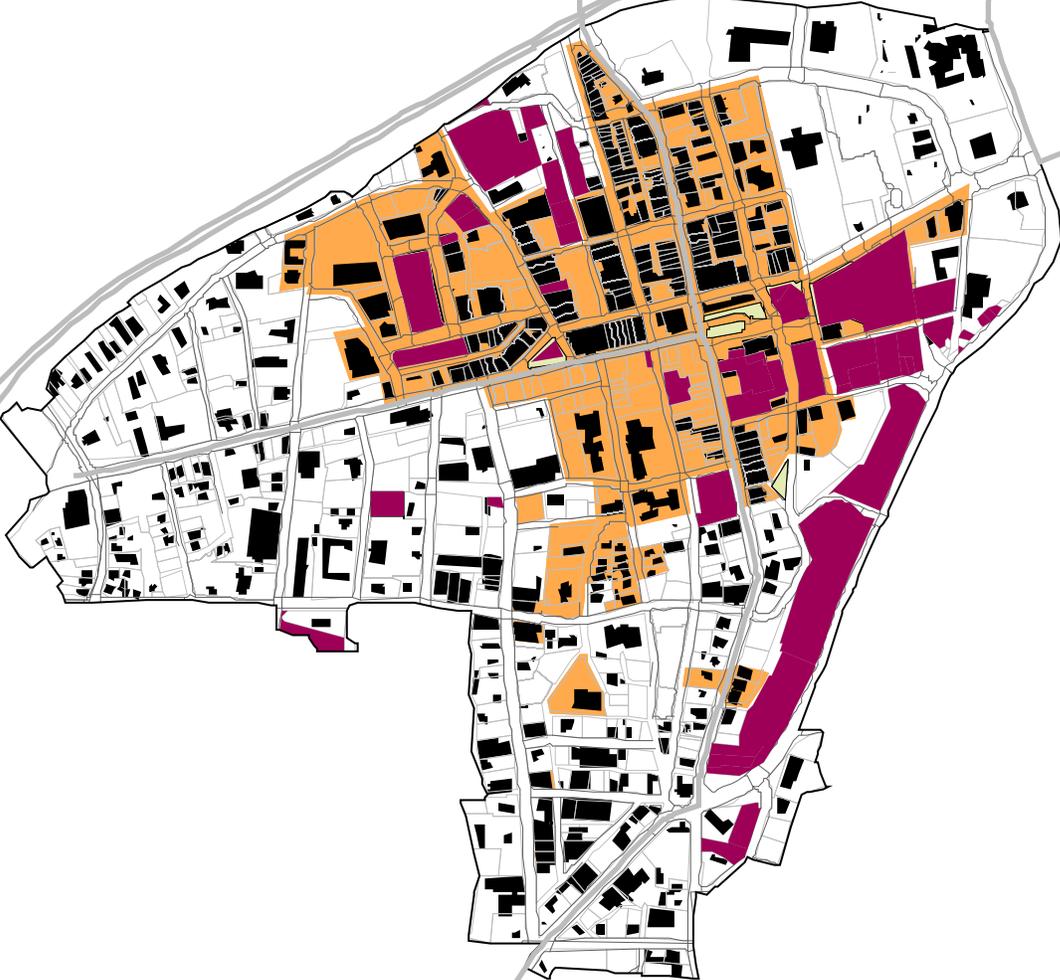
- Downtown HUB initiative: An effort to develop 400,000 square feet of downtown research and office building space around seven clusters to house the centers for climatic and environmental interaction, NOAA, NEMAC, a rejuvenation cluster that provides workforce housing and medical office space, and destination retail along Asheland Avenue and Beaucatcher Gateway
- Innovation Districts
- Homelessness: Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness
- Western Carolina Rescue Ministries
- Salvation Army, Homeward bound
- Eagle Market initiatives: YMI, Mt. Zion, EMSDC
- Downtown Asheville Parking Study 2008
- Wayfinding improvement
- Area plans for Aston Park and the French Broad corridor
- Unified Development Ordinance
- Downtown Development Guidelines
- New downtown design criteria
- The City Center Plan (2002): Focused on economic development, housing and residential development, the physical environment, and transportation and accessibility.
- Walkability study done in 2013 by the Downtown Association.
- Downtown parking study was updated in 2010.

Progress Since the Plan:

- Since the 2003 City Center Master Plan, the overseeing City Development Office, tasked with implementing the plan, evolved into the Office of Economic Development.
- The City has recently hired a Downtown Coordinator, housed within the Economic Development division.
- Asheville Area Arts Council (AAAC) has produced an annual Cultural Summit for the past four years, starting in 2011. The City participates in the Summit annually.
- The Asheville Arts Museum is continuing to pursue capital funding for the museum expansion.
- Significant advances have been achieved in facilitating greater resources for artists, including peer and mentor networking
- The City now works through partnerships with the private sector to encourage, develop and execute festivals and cultural programming that contribute to reaching city goals.
- The City has completed the 12 million dollar renovation of the Explore Asheville Arena and most of the common areas.
- The Center for Diversity Education does a "Many Faces of Asheville" tour, which highlights different parts of Downtown's history than the Urban Trail.
- Bike racks are in most places where there is room.
- No new transit access services to date
- Parking fees were increased in 2013
- Car Share was implemented through a U Haul program in summer, 2014.
- No efforts to promote off-peak driving use or related initiatives

DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

Downtown Today



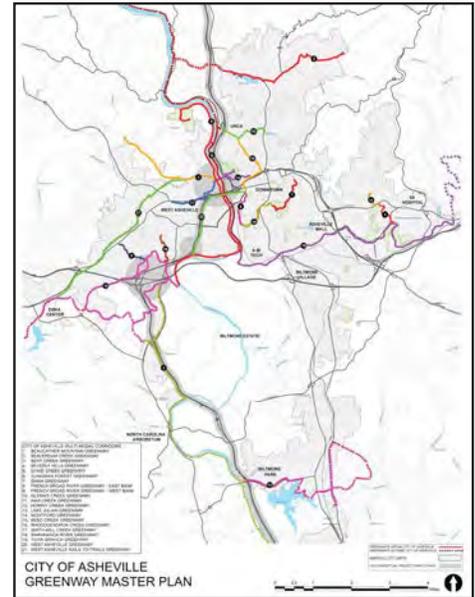
- Buildings
- Historic District
- City-owned property

1000 2000 ft

GREENWAYS MASTERPLAN

2013

17 existing greenways
6 proposed additional
greenways



Summary

The 2013 Greenways Masterplan was a five-year update to the City of Asheville Parks, Recreation, Cultural Arts, and Greenways Master Plan, and a continuation of the city's efforts to cultivate a robust network of greenways throughout the city.

Asheville has been cultivating multimodal greenways for several years. Greenways are off-road trails utilizing natural conditions to connect people and places within the city. Greenways promote multimodal transportation, environmental protection and habitat connectivity, health, recreation, and access to nature. They offer economic, educational, and cultural benefits, and contribute to improvements in air and water quality.

The Greenways plan identifies the city's 17 existing greenways and also proposes six additional new greenways. It is designed to be integrated alongside bike and pedestrian improvements along roadways.

Related Initiatives

- City of Asheville Parks, Recreation, Cultural Arts and Greenways Master Plan, 2009
- Buncombe County, NC Greenways and Open Space Plan, July 2008
- Connect Buncombe Greenways and Trails Master Plan, August 2012
- I-26 Corridor Improvements (NCDOT)
- Multimodal Transportation Commission includes Greenway and Transit sub-committees
- Wilma Dykeman Riverfront Plan, 2004
- East of the Riverway Plan, 2014
- Design Guidelines for Open Space, 1991
- River to Ridge Greenway Network
- Currently preparing to construct 6.87 miles of connected greenway. Once built Asheville will have 10.25 miles of connected greenways forming the River to Ridge Greenway network.

Progress Since the Plan

Asheville has continued to cultivate the city's greenways, with 4.5 miles completed as of the 2016 Asheville in Motion plan. The thinking within the Greenways plans has been incorporated into a wide variety of city plans and policies: they factor heavily into considerations about multi-modal transportation and bike and trail classification, and are also discussed as early as the city's Public Art Plan in 2001. That plan proposed standards for public art along greenways. The greenways effort is ongoing, and is particularly important as the city and state move forward with planning for the I-26 connector.

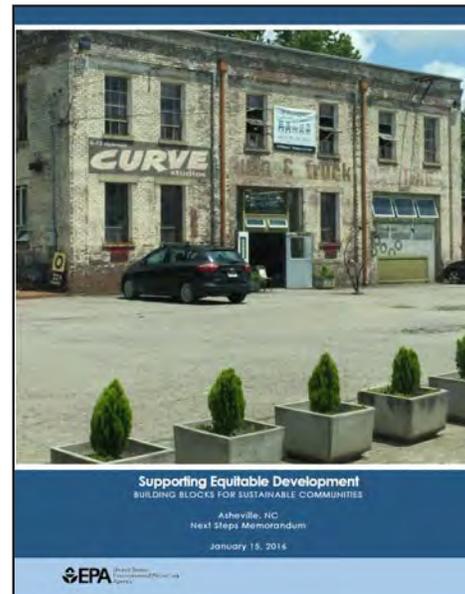
EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT REPORT

2015

24 pages

Funded by EPA Building Blocks Grant

Subheader: "Supporting Equitable Development: Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities".



Summary

The Equitable Development Report provided an analysis of community input gathered during a two-day workshop and outlined best practices for city staff and community agencies for promoting equitable development. The plan addresses concerns about equity and gentrification, particularly in the East of the Riverway area, where efforts are often met with suspicion from local residents. The plan is structured around four goals: preserving and creating affordable housing, preventing displacement, strengthening access to jobs and neighborhood amenities, and supporting the arts community.

The community engagement portion of the plan identified a number of local ambitions: creating a community for the ages, greater control over their future, improved education, local autonomy, a clean and healthy environment, sustainable development, housing affordability, food access, sustainable economics, transportation, mental health services, communications, open-mindedness, accountability in decision-making, more mixed income development, defying gentrification, a sense of security, peace and representation, dismantling white supremacy, employment and living wages, more Africa-American representation, affordable live/work spaces for artists, greater diversity of opportunity and employment, promoting a greater percentage of minority-owned businesses, building wealth, fair access to healthcare, and the creation of a land trust.

Ultimately the report focused largely on the legacy of urban renewal, housing unaffordability, persistent poverty, public housing issues, and availability of affordable commercial spaces. It also focused on opportunities to better link the history and culture of the African American community into new development, to build greater trust and collaboration between local constituencies and the city, to improve awareness and utilization of existing affordable housing and community development opportunities, to expand citywide programs for equitable development, to increase access to jobs and training, and to create more engaged organizations to link non-profits.

Specific strategies

- The effort identified a number of "next steps" to improve community engagement by establishing a non-profit collaborative strategy, identifying key metrics, and expediting two-way communication with the city.
- Preserving and enhancing affordable housing was targeted through new partnerships, more mixed-use projects, and the creation of an EOTR land trust.
- Efforts to strengthen local investment and community-building were targeted through the encouragement of workforce training programs, business incubation, and the incorporation of equitable development goals into broader city policies and other initiatives.
- Preserving and promoting community identity and African-American heritage was targeted through better storytelling through the city parks, infrastructure improvements, and stronger communication.
-

Related efforts

East of the Riverway Initiative, 2011: initiated a project including multimodal transportation, community engagement, and the Alternatives to Gentrification Study.

10-year Plan to End Homelessness: Focuses on the prevention of homelessness through programs like Housing First and Housing Plus, and the management of homelessness through an integrated information system to link services and gather data

Asheville City Council established a staff position in the 16-17 Budget to assist in implementing policy, programs and partnerships to achieve racial equity within the City's operations, policy and community responsibilities. This includes conducting a comprehensive Disparity Study city-wide in 2016-17.

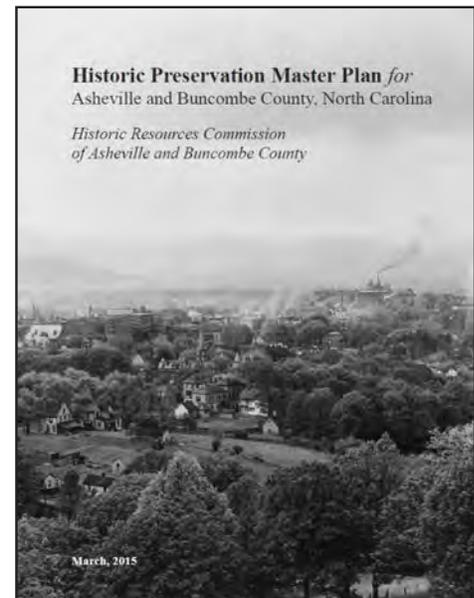
HISTORIC PRESERVATION MASTER PLAN

2015

Historic Resources Commission of Asheville and Buncombe County

118 pages

9-member advisory committee



Summary

The Historic Preservation Master Plan is a comprehensive vision of goals and strategies for preserving the built heritage of Asheville in the 21st century. The plan provides a vision for historic preservation that embodies broad public outreach, education for sharing history, private sector investment, and best practices for supporting historic preservation, all around several themes: preservation context, outreach and advocacy, historic tax credits, historic neighborhoods, business districts, county heritage, public appreciation, and encouraging heritage tourism.

The plan promotes several reasons for historic preservation, including economic, tourism, placemaking, sustainability, community building and environmental benefits. It addresses the importance of engaging the public in historic preservation within a community like Asheville, where historic preservation plays a role in all placemaking efforts.

The effort included a review of the current inventory of 4,400 historic properties, created criteria for adding and surveying historic districts, recommended methods of protection of historic structures, and provided recommendations for preserving resources, working with disadvantaged property owners, and better integrating preservation with environmental and sustainability goals. The plan also promotes methods for integrating the artistic community with historic preservation efforts and integrating preservation into all planning processes.

The plan addresses local, state, and federal historic preservation initiatives and groups, and introduces potential new tools, including NCODs, a designation for Complete Neighborhood that include historic preservation components.

The plan addresses strategies for the six significant Buncombe County historical interpretive sites, scenic byways, Asheville's 14 National Register historic districts, and Neighborhood Conservation Overlay Districts.

A History of Historic Preservation in Asheville

Asheville is a city with a rich history, both natural and man-made. Efforts to preserve the city's unique heritage owe much of their success to the city's 1978 Historic Architectural Resources Survey, the first major effort to document the city's built treasures. Since 1979, 173 buildings and 100 homes have been rehabilitated while qualifying for historic tax credits.

Relevant tools

- Historic Resources Commission, an educational, quasi-judicial resource that reviews applications for alterations to historic structures
- Certified Local Government Program
- Preserve America Community designation
- Nonprofit Preservation Society of Asheville and Buncombe County
- Nonprofit Preservation North Carolina
- Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority
- Historic American Buildings Survey surveys for Buncombe County
- National Historic Landmarks program
- Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP)
- North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office
- Section 106 Review

HISTORIC PRESERVATION MASTER PLAN

2015



Specific strategies

- Continue to invest in historic resource surveys
- Link state historic databases with county historic databases
- Conduct neighborhood reconnaissance
- Encourage landmark designation
- Adopt a Notable Properties program
- Require recommendations from the Historic Resources Commission prior to issuing demolition permits
- Develop special overlay zoning for district gateway areas
- Establish a public realm policy for historic character elements
- Enlist Historic Resources Commission staff in city sustainability initiatives
- Use historic buildings for affordable housing
- Research making downtown Asheville a district of state or national significance
- Create better communication materials, including guidebooks
- Develop hands-on historic preservation training for homeowners
- Promote financing assistance for historic home repairs
- Develop more powerful tools for addressing historic preservation in business districts, including downtown, Biltmore Village, River Arts, and West Asheville, as a means for promoting qualitative aspects of community in addition to growth
- Restore the original historic Olmsted landscape and streetscape in Biltmore Village
- Conduct a cultural landscape reconnaissance of Buncombe County
- Conduct surveys, interviews, and educational programs related to county historic resources
- Develop a county funding program for historic preservation
- Invest in more tours and walking trails, including better wayfinding, a Neighborhood Trail, and other placemaking activities
- Preserve the county's agricultural lands

Progress Since the Plan

- The plan recognizes the ongoing success of programs like the Urban Trail and historic tax credits. From 2014 until 2016, however, North Carolina eliminated its state historic tax credit, which posed challenges to promoting historic preservation. As of early 2016, the tax credit has been restored.
- Notable properties program was adopted by the HRC.
- Plan on Page process was established for neighborhood planning with initial input poised for inclusion in the Comprehensive Planning Update.
- A new web page is under development that will include a Landmark story map and more easily accessible information on landmark designation.
- A joint sub-committee was formed with representation from the Downtown Commission and Historic Resources Commission to review downtown design review processes and bring them into alignment with historic preservation goals. The Committee is also assessing the possible establishment of one or more local historic district in the downtown.
- A budget proposal for dedicated county funding was submitted—which was not funded for FY2017.
-

Additional Relevant reports

North Carolina 2022 Preservation Plan: Presents broad preservation goals, and reviews impacts of projects developed using state funding.

2007-2012 Historic Resources Commission Historic survey update: Revealed that Asheville has seen fewer historic demolitions than other North Carolina cities. Out of 4,000 properties, 629 were rehabilitated and 2,450 were unchanged.

ASHEVILLE-IN-MOTION PLAN

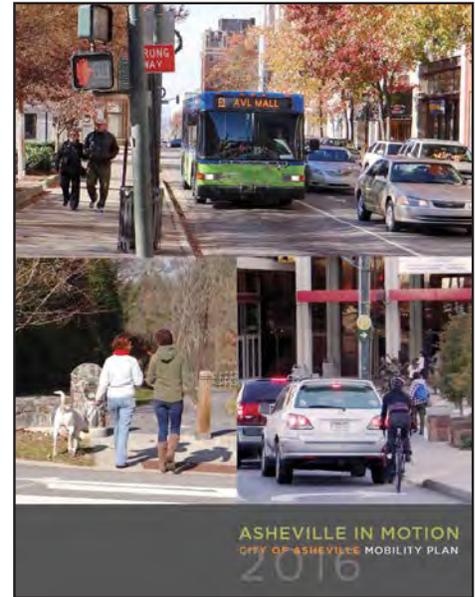
2016

172 pages

19-member “oversight committee”

Consultant team: Kimley-Horn, Toole Design Group, Nelson Nygaard, Kostelec Planning

Plan sections: Mobility Matters, Mobility Vision, Mobility Framework, Mobility Strategy, and Mobility Plan



Summary

The Asheville-in-Motion Plan is a cohesive strategy for prioritizing transportation investment, consolidating previous plans that individually addressed operations, parking, walking, and bicycling. The plan positions transportation alongside the philosophical goals of community vitality, economic growth and quality of life, and the challenges of a growing population, shifting employment, and expanding tourism. Within this context, the plan stresses the need for a multi-modal Asheville.

The plan explores important questions like how to afford multi-modal transportation, how to promote affordable housing through mobility, and how to work realistically within existing constraints. It provides a new transportation framework plan, new categories of street types, a consistent method for integrating community context, and methods for planning for mobility in constrained physical settings.

The planning process included substantial public engagement, including the use of an interactive tool called Street Builder. The public engagement process focused around seven themes that recur throughout the plan: safety, neighborhoods, economic vitality, congestion, transit, bikes, and pedestrians; of these, pedestrians, safety, transit, and bikes were selected as the most paramount concerns.

Asheville's Multi-Modal History

The plan provides background on Asheville's tradition that links bold multi-modal transportation investments with new urban growth. The arrival of the railroad in 1880 was the catalyst for Asheville's transformation from a rural crossroads into a thriving resort town, and from 1907 until 1934 Asheville led North Carolina by carrying three million streetcar passengers annually. It notes that City Plan 2025 treated Land Use and Transportation as one interlinked subject area, and highlights the city's 11 percent growth in the 1990s, its 14 percent growth in the

2000s, and the projection of 120,000 residents by 2040 - signs that the time may be right for Asheville to once again make a bold commitment to multi-modality.

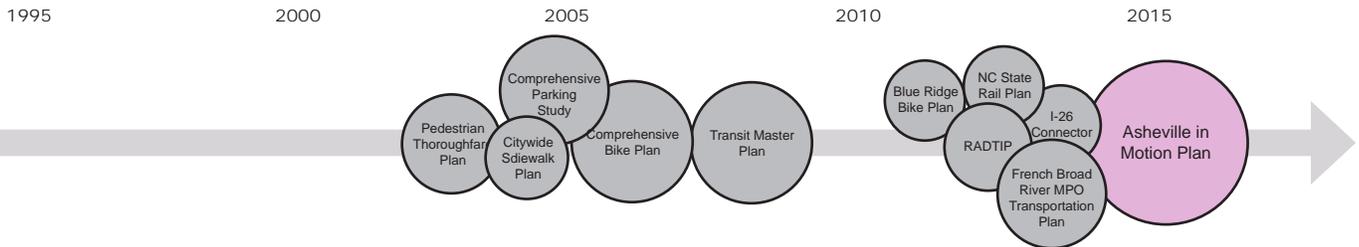
A Lineage of Transportation Planning

The plan reiterates a number of findings from other transportation planning efforts conducted by the city:

- The plan that the Pedestrian Thoroughfare Plan recommended updating the Unified Development Ordinance and Transportation Demand Management Program to incorporate pedestrians.
- It highlights the vision for a continuous network of bicycle facilities envisioned in the 2008 Comprehensive Bicycle Plan.
- It highlights the 5-year implementation vision and 10-year vision plan for transit implementation along main travel corridors developed as part of the 2009 Transit Master Plan.
- It highlights the vision to create interconnected local and regional parks and greenways that connect to pedestrian and bike lanes and recreational facilities developed as part of the 2009 Parks, Recreation, Cultural Arts, & Greenways Master Plan.
- It highlights the intertwined goals for economic development, transportation, health, education, recreation, and environmental sensitivity for the East of the Riverway area proposed in the 2004 Wilma Dykeman RiverWay Plan. It promotes continued development of low impact development, gateways, and connections.
- It highlights the 2009 Downtown Master Plan's 20-year vision for maintaining identity and expanding downtown's role as a community-oriented neighborhood. It notes the goals for expanded walking, transit, and biking infrastructure downtown as well as the idea for auto-free zones.
- It highlights the RADTIP vision for a transportation spine with pedestrian network, ecological sustainable landscapes, improved intersections, sidewalks, parking, and stormwater infrastructure in the River Arts District.

ASHEVILLE-IN-MOTION PLAN

2016



Key Findings in the Plan

- Asheville is a city that needs - and is already investing in - multi-modal transportation:** 11 percent of Asheville residents have no access to vehicles, while 20 percent live in poverty. At the same time, Asheville has made progress developing 72 miles of bike lanes, 490 miles of pedestrian lanes, and 4.5 miles of greenways. The plan notes that multi-modal choice increases close to downtown. It also notes that Asheville’s transit system is designed to promote maximum access and coverage, but not speed to key destinations, and notes that most riders are low-earning.
- Infrastructural Priorities:** Through the public engagement process, the plan determined that the public is highly concerned about slow and unreliable bus transfers, the safety of sidewalks and intersections, the need for longer and more continuously connected sidewalks and bike paths. While promoting the pedestrian was the public’s top priority, expanded transit service, safer bicycle infrastructure, and improved roads were important as well. Transformative projects should promote economic vitality, social equity, community vibrancy, and promote mode shift.
- Outward growth is not the answer:** Outward growth puts increased pressure on vehicular infrastructure, infringes upon the natural landscape, and limits transportation accessibility. It is also nearly physically impossible to expand indefinitely in this way given Asheville’s topography.
- Connectivity into neighborhoods:** The plan found that the public is more concerned with better transit connectivity into neighborhoods than with more transit options to employment centers or institutions. It notes that affordable housing is more abundant at the fringe of town, but is not readily accessible.

Specific goals

- Continue to embrace ideas from the City Plan 2025 vision - linking land use and transportation, permitting transit-supportive density, ensuring affordable housing while promoting urbanity, lively streetscapes, and cost-effective improvements.
- Embrace the ethos of “vision zero” to reduce roadway fatalities from 20 to 25 per year down to zero.
- Adjust level-of-service (LOS) criteria to “variable LOS” criteria so that they can be adjusted by street type and neighborhood type based on more human-centric factors. Develop a “cumulative impacts” tracker for streets.
- Design streets based on neighborhood type, not flow type. These categories include residential, traditional neighborhood, downtown, suburban center and corridor, regional center and corridor, manufacturing, logistics and aerospace, craft industry, campus, and open space.
- Memorialize the community and street types by incorporating them into the city’s comprehensive plan
- To overcome topography, don’t build more streets; rather, build alternative routes concentrated in heavily traveled areas
- Look into developing premium bus service
- Continue to promote the city’s Greenways program
- Identify target “complete streets” projects.
- Consider creating a downtown circulator bus.

Progress since the Plan

- The plan was completed in early 2016.

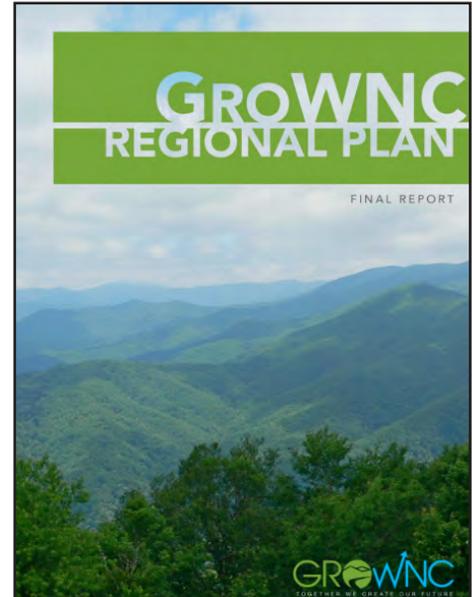
GROWNC

2013

203 pages

Led by Land of Sky Regional Council

Consultant: LandDesign



GroWNC, completed in 2013, was a three-year project to develop voluntary collaborative strategies across five counties in western North Carolina toward the goal of achieving positively impactful growth.

Tools

- Business support and entrepreneurship
- Resource conservation
- Accessibility and connectivity
- Land use policies
- Healthy communities
- Energy innovation
- Housing choices
- Education and Awareness

Goals

Economic goals:

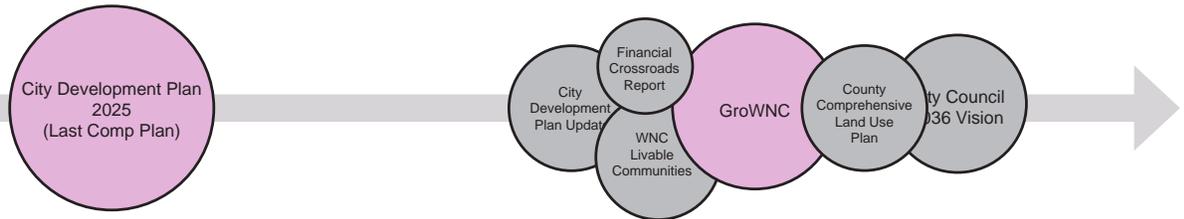
- Promote adaptive economic development that encourages entrepreneurship, supports existing businesses, and attracts new employers
- Support an economic development approach that enables a diversified economy built on the region's priorities, competitive advantages, and local initiatives
- Create a region where every individual has the opportunity to improve their employment status through affordable access to timely and relevant skills training and job placement assistance
- Support opportunities and jobs that attract and keep our young people in the region
- Create and maintain appropriate physical infrastructure needed for economic development opportunities in each county

Energy goals:

- Support the advancement of the region's clean energy economy to drive innovation and entrepreneurship, create high-wage jobs, and foster business activity
- Increase the deployment of pricecompetitive, clean, and locally produced renewable energy to give consumers more energy choices while strengthening the energy, economic, and environmental landscape of Western North Carolina
- Improve residential, commercial, and industrial sector energy performance through the promotion of sustainable design, energy efficiency, conservation, and advanced energy analytic
- Strengthen transportation sector energy performance and reduce petroleum dependency through the promotion of alternative fuels, clean vehicles, and demand reduction programs
- Strengthen regional energy literacy through public education and outreach to create energy conscious communities in Western North Carolina

Land Use goals:

- Preserve agricultural lands for farming and forest products
- Integrate/coordinate local and regional planning for economic development, land use and infrastructure
- Preserve scenic quality
- Land use planning in the region should accommodate a diverse set of businesses, employers, and citizens
- Promote development of land that integrates and optimizes its natural suitability and function
- Improve transportation connections and options within and between communities
- Build mixed-use neighborhoods, towns and urban areas that cultivate and engender a "sense of place"
- Create an environment that promotes many housing types, costs and choices
- Promote understanding of the importance of building and community design and form



Natural Resources goals:

- The region actively supports sustainable farming and forestry practices and invests in the necessary infrastructure to ensure a strong, vital farm community that provides at least 10% of foods locally
- The region has significantly decreased the rate in which it is losing high quality farm/ forestlands and prime soils
- The region invests in eco-tourism as a key economic driver, supporting collaborations, land and water conservation, stewardship, promotion, and educational or support infrastructure
- The region's decision-makers, community leaders, and landowners recognize that sustaining high quality natural habitats enhance and sustain the region's economy and overall quality of life for its residents, and maintain or improve water resources, air quality, biodiversity and scenic viewsheds
- Residents recognize the health and restorative benefits associated with outdoor recreation and regularly take advantage of opportunities throughout the region
- The region recognizes the importance of connectivity between protected lands by managing wildlife and recreation corridors for biodiversity and protecting unfragmented forest blocks

Cultural Resources goals:

- Preserve, restore, and cultivate our natural and cultural landscapes and resources
- Compile existing and new metrics to quantify the economic and social impacts of cultural resources and track trends over time
- Create a unified voice for the cultural resource community in WNC to facilitate communication with consumers, while supporting artists, cultural assets, and heritage sites
- Improve advocacy for cultural resources to ensure that community leaders and decisionmakers value and support cultural resources as a key industry cluster
- Ensure that residents (including students), know more about the arts, culture, and history of the region and have an appreciation for the unique assets of this region

Housing goals:

- Encourage the development of affordable/ workforce housing within proximity to employment, transportation, services, goods and recreation
- Increase the supply of new and existing housing stock that is safe, energy-efficient and accessible to the elderly and persons with disabilities
- Promote the development of a variety of housing options that are appropriately priced for persons of all income levels
- Recognize the unique needs and differences of rural and urban communities and tailor housing planning accordingly
- Promote legislation at the Federal, State and Local levels that support other identified housing goals

Transportation goals:

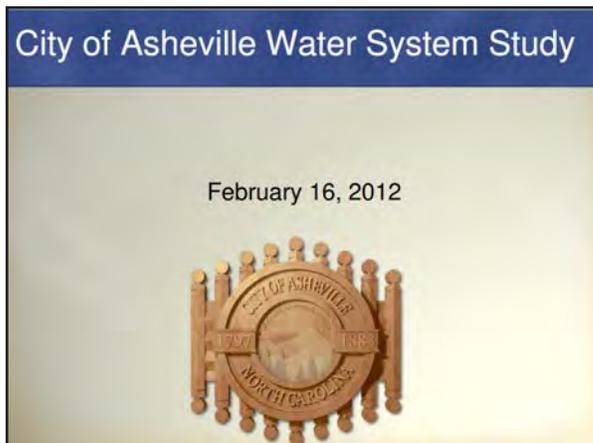
- Provide for non-motorized transportation options
- Provide for efficient and safe freight movement
- Increase transportation choices
- Promote transit
- Optimize infrastructure management
- Integrate transportation with land use
- Diversify energy portfolio, increase energy efficiency

Health and Wellness goals:

- Advocate for a sustainable built environment that supports health promotion in the planning, assessment and intervention processes
- Advocate for improved access to community, holistic and medical health care options for all regardless of ethnicity, age, state of disease or financial resources
- Maintain a unified focus on and investment in prevention that improves quality of life and reduces health care expenses
- Increase individual and community resilience through the integration of community, holistic and medical resources

ASHEVILLE WATER PLANS

2007 Water Asset Management Report
2012 Water System Study
2012 NC House Study Committee on Asheville slides



Asheville Water Plans

As the City's only locally-funded utility, Asheville's water system is very important to the City as a source of revenue. Major recent capital investments to ensure the longevity of the system make it an even more important asset. This report is being delivered amid an ongoing legal battle over whether the City or the Metropolitan Sewerage District will long-term oversee control of the system.

The Planning Team has reviewed several studies conducted over the last decade, including a two-volume Asset Management report produced in 2007, a Water System Study from 2012, and a slideshow prepared for the NC House Study Committee on Asheville in 2012, that discuss key issues and strategies facing the water system.

Most significant of these was the 2007 plan, which outlined a bold and pioneering program to evaluate water distribution systems and analyze future conditions for the 5-, 10-, and 30-year planning horizons. This report laid the framework that helped the City craft a \$40 million investment to fund long-term water infrastructure improvements within the last decade, crucial to ensuring the system's longevity. A leadership decision was made to establish a capital improvement fee to users that would help repay the bonds used for major capital improvements. Thanks to this investment, the water system is well-positioned for the future.

Key notes:

- Since 1976 Asheville's city water system has been funded through debt issued by the City.
- The city's water system covers the entire City of Asheville as well as 27% of Buncombe County outside the City, a total of 183 total square miles. The City is statutorily prohibited from charging increased rates to residents outside the City limits, which is unusual for water utilities.
- Asheville's water customer base increased from 50,903 in 2007 to 52,896 by 2011.

- Asheville has 20,000 acres of protected watershed, two reservoirs containing 7 billion gallons of stored water, three water treatment facilities, and 1,661 miles of water lines.
- Demand is 21 million gallons per day with permitted treatment capacity of 43.7 million gallons. Demand has been growing by less than one percent per year, suggesting the water system has adequate capacity to endure throughout the Comp Plan's 20-year plan horizon.
- While effort has been made to improve system efficiency in recent years, the system still loses an unusually large quantity of water daily to leakage.
- Innovative new programs include automated meter reading.
- Asheville's City Council has adopted a financial policy that the Water Enterprise Fund must have a reserve fund of over a year in order to provide stability and resiliency against unforeseen impacts on the water system.

PARKS, RECREATION, CULTURAL ARTS & GREENWAYS MASTER PLAN

2009

Consultant: GreenPlay

Parks, Recreation, Cultural Arts and Greenways Master Plan

Conducted in 2009 by consultant GreenPlay, the Parks, Recreation, Cultural Arts and Greenways Master Plan was a comprehensive effort to prioritize the need for community services and new facilities related to open space, greenways, cultural art, and public programming.

Strategic Goals

- Maximize planning effort
- Improve administration effectiveness and transparency
- Create management resources to increase efficiency, continuity and sustainability in
 - critical focus areas needed in the department
 - Strengthen marketing, communications, and credibility
 - Increase the level of service and access for Greenways
 - Enhance public confidence in and appreciation for the “arts” including festivals and the
 - WNC Nature Center
 - Strengthen the organizational structure of public and cultural arts delivery
 - Build public and organizational capacity for the arts
 - Ensure a continued high level of service in parks
 - Strategically increase recreational programming level of service

PLAN REVIEW

CONCLUSIONS

Takeaways

- Asheville has conducted extensive citywide planning in nearly all major topical area typically addressed by comprehensive planning. In several areas, multiple major planning initiatives have been undertaken.
- For most plans, a significant proportion of the outlined goals have been achieved.
- In some areas - like public art and sustainability - some planning goals and metrics set by previous planning efforts may no longer be applicable or appropriate for the city, or the plans may now be out of date.
- In many instances, specific proposed tools for achieving certain ends are no longer available to the city - transfer of development rights (TDRs) and annexation are examples.
- Most of the city's recent planning has generally been relatively high-level, at the city scale, while many recommendations have been fairly modest. A limited number of transformative shifts have occurred as the result of these plans, however only a few of the plans are boldly transformational, a testament both to Asheville's ongoing success as well as to the need in some areas to perhaps think more boldly in ways that can make Asheville a model for the nation.
- Coordinating implementation across city departments seems challenging in some instances, even limiting. So to does crafting plan tools applicable between the public and private sectors.
- Influencing change within the city in areas where tools are limited, or in dimensions not easily governed by City Hall, seems particularly difficult.

Next Steps

- Task 3 should consider the city's current and existing planning a source of inspiration for establishing principles and priorities for the comp plan update, alongside discussions about principles and priorities with the public, stakeholder groups, the Advisory and Technical committees, and city leadership.
- An assessment should be conducted to understand which policy recommendations from existing planning materials should carry over into the comp plan update.
- Strong emphasis should be placed on understanding the tools outlined in previous planning efforts. In all cases, existing policy frameworks should be understood as the baseline for proposed strategies.
- In areas where recent planning has just been completed - like transportation - efforts should be undertaken by the Planning Team to understand key areas not covered by such planning that are important priorities to the city, as well as whether it is appropriate to accept all recommendations of such planning as a component of the vision supported by the comp plan.
- Some new planning topics - like resiliency, regeneration, and planning's specific influence on public health - have emerged within the planning lexicon that are not covered in previous planning efforts.
- Strong emphasis should also be placed on better translating high-level aspirations and policy strategies outlined in previous planning to implementable solutions with a more tangible impact on the city's day-to-day livability and experience.

BENCHMARKING AND METRICS //

PEER CITIES ANALYSIS

Cities today are increasingly competitive. Asheville has remained a leader because it has cultivated a unique brand, identity, appeal, and quality of life that distinguishes it from other places. However many other cities are vying for similar residents, and, more importantly, many cities share similar aspirations and similar challenges. An ethos of responsible regionalism suggests it is prudent to reflect at a high level on how Asheville is performing in key areas relative to other similar cities. Those metrics should represent a combination of best practice understanding and a reflection of the priorities of local residents. Understanding those priorities is a focus of Task 3.

The Task 2 Benchmarking explores these cities on a variety of levels. The exercise is useful for understanding where Asheville is distinct, where it is typical, and can be helpful for understanding tools that Asheville has employed that other cities have not, and what tools Asheville should aspire to create in order to achieve positive ends.

An initial brainstorming session during Task 1 - Project Kickoff and Mobilization - yielded a list of 13 potential peer cities against whom to benchmark, as shown in the map below.



PEER CITIES SELECTION

Initial economic and demographic analysis helped the Planning Team reduce the list of 13 cities to a more manageable set of seven “peer cities” that share many things in common with Asheville, including a similar population, a similar bent for tourism, a similar mix of jobs and industries, and a similar relationship to nature. This smaller list has allowed the consultant team to optimize resources to yield useful inputs from the study of these seven cities.

Cities that were eliminated during this initial analysis period were done so for a few typical reasons: 1) several are home to large universities with tens of thousands of students, something Asheville does not have, which can deeply skew local economic drivers and strategies; 2) several were slow-growth cities, in contrast to Asheville’s rapid growth, and thus do not experience similar challenges with regard to jobs and housing affordability, and 3) some are substantially different in scale or setting.



BENCHMARKING METRICS

A key element of the plan will be understanding by which measures Asheville is successful, in what areas it lags behind, and in what areas it is typical. More important moving forward will be selecting key metrics that can be used as critical measures of success in evaluating the plan's ability to achieve its stated aims. These measures will ensure the city has tangible ways to ensure accountability to the plan.

Key Concerns

- Planning for growth
- Promoting income growth
- Diversifying Asheville's economy
- Facilitating entrepreneurship
- Housing affordability
- Job access
- Transportation funding

Critical Measures of Success - Sample Metrics

Economics and Demographics:

Population
Population growth over time
Regional population growth
City percentage share of regional population
Average age
Percent college attainment
Proportion of millennials
Median household income
Median earnings for Bachelor's degree holders
Families living below poverty
Homeless population
Median home value
Proportion of vacant properties that are seasonal units
Housing value increases from 2012-2016
Percentage renters
Average household size
Unemployment rate
Entrepreneurship ranking
College attainment ranking
Small business ranking
Per capita venture capital investment
Location quotients of key industry sectors
Relative change in employment sector
Median income
Median income for college graduates
Annual startups per 100 businesses
Commuting into and out of the city / day

Livability and Quality of Life:

Livability and quality of life ranking (multiple metrics)
Areavibes
Education ranking
Best Places for Business ranking
Crime rate
Environment score
Air and water quality indexes
AARP Health Score
Distribution of other metrics by neighborhood and character area

Physical Development:

Compact neighborhood score
Density
Walk score
Transit access score
Job accessibility within 30-minute transit trip
Social infrastructure distribution (grocery stores, retail, etc.)
New multifamily / affordable units per year
Distribution of jobs
New building permits

Physical Planning:

Maintenance and coverage of current plans:
Comprehensive plan
Vision plan
Form-based codes
Special area plans or overlay districts
Design standards and guidelines
Bike/pedestrian plans
Park and open space plans
Art and cultural master plans
Sustainability plans

Transportation:

Commuting mode split
Vehicle ownership
Transit trip cost
Frequency of transit service
Annual passenger transit trips
Transit trips per route mile
Cost per transit trip
Job accessibility via transit
Transit funding from non-local sources
Annual transit operating revenue
Annual passenger transit trips
Transit fleet size
Annual transit route miles
Airport service

Historic and Cultural Planning:

Is the city on the national historic registry?
Historic districts?
Does the city have an arts council or cultural council or similar?
Does the city have an arts or a cultural facilities master plan?
Does the city have a design center?
Funding for arts and cultural activities?
of historic or cultural facilities or institutions?
History, arts or culture as a component of the city's branding?
Public dollars spent on cultural facilities or activities?
Revenue from cultural events or activities?
Revenue created from cultural or historic tourism?
Historic district design guidelines?

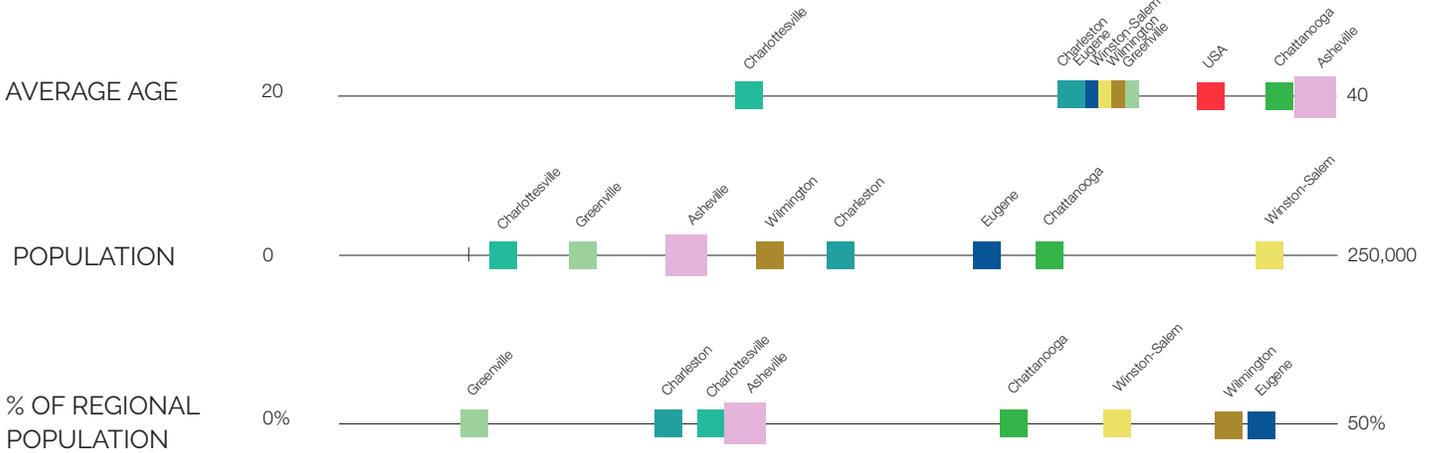
Park and open space benchmarks:

Park acreage as a percentage of total city area
Park acreage per 1000 people
Natural resource area (open space) as a percentage of total city area
Natural resource area (open space) per 1000 people
Miles of trails per 1000 people
Athletic fields per 1000 people
Maintenance budget per 1000 people
Maintenance budget as a percentage of total budget
Annual investment in new parks or park facilities
Park Staff per 1000 people
Distribution of parks and proximity to residents

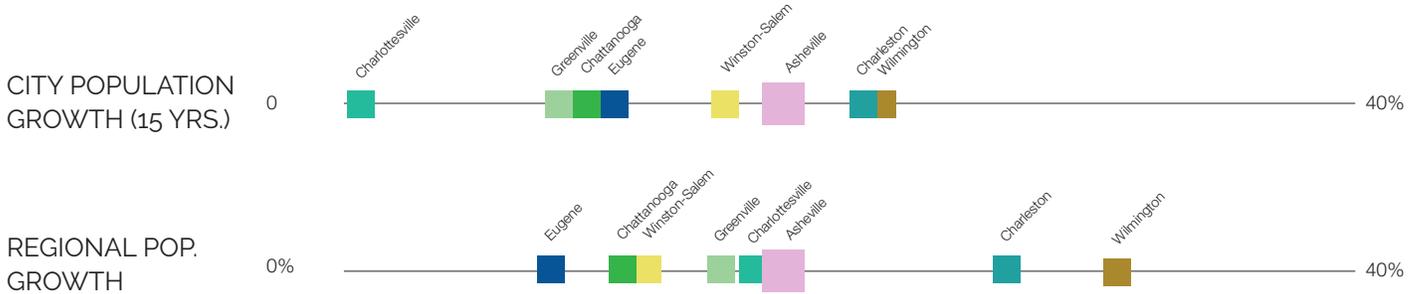
PEER CITIES COMPARISON

Preliminary comparisons between the selected benchmark cities confirm the urgency of addressing many of the themes commonly discussed within the Asheville planning community, among them:

- Planning for growth
- Promoting income growth
- Diversifying Asheville's economy
- Facilitating an increase in entrepreneurship opportunities
- Promoting housing affordability
- Increasing access to jobs
- Improving and investing more heavily in citywide transportation

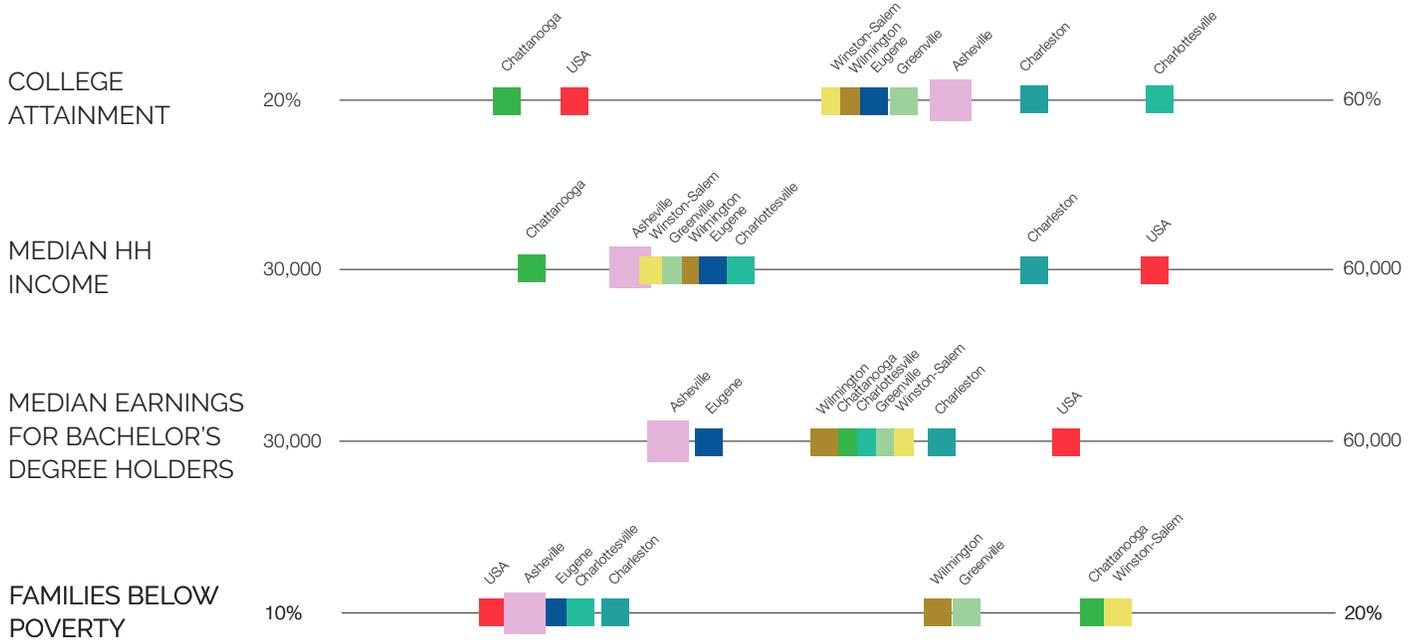


Uniquely, both Asheville and its surrounding region are growing rapidly, at approximately the same rate. In many cities discussions about growth center around concerns that the center city is not accommodating its "fair share" of regional growth. However in Asheville the city has managed to grow as quickly as the overall region, despite limits on buildable area and mounting affordability concerns.

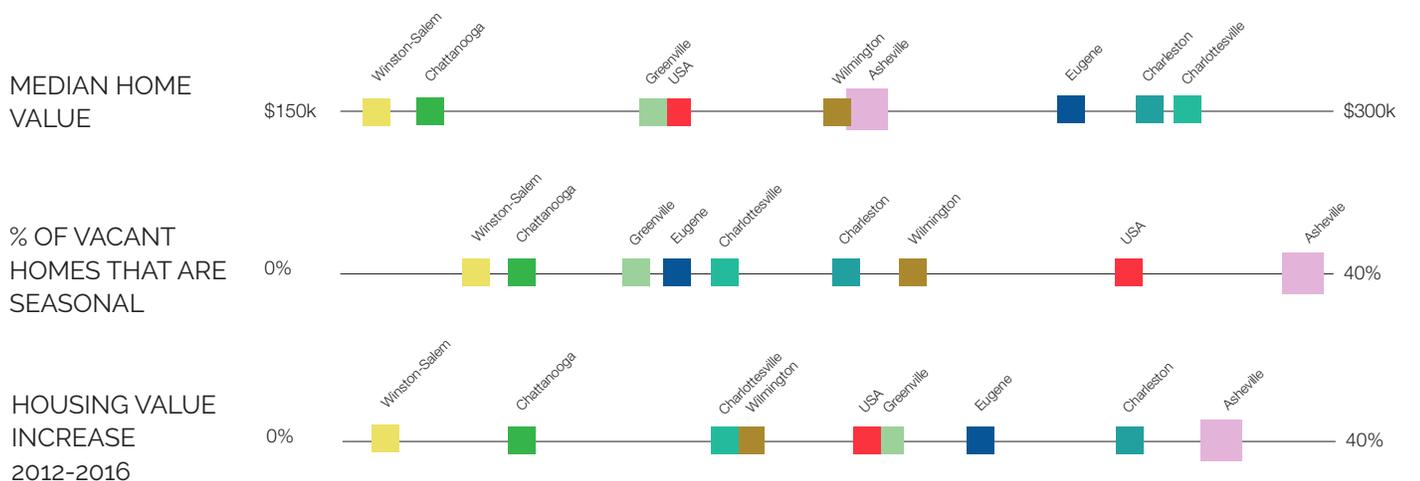


PEER CITIES COMPARISON

Asheville is highly educated compared to many cities, with a low rate of poverty. But incomes for the city's well-educated incomes, as well as average income overall, are comparatively low. Asheville is not providing well-paying jobs in comparison to other cities, particularly notable given the quality of its workforce.



Asheville's home values are not uniquely high, despite concerns about affordability. However affordability concerns are compounded by low average incomes. Prices are rapidly rising, which is contributing to the perception of unaffordability. A major area of note is the high percentage of vacant units that are vacant because they are seasonal residences.



TRANSPORTATION COMPARISON

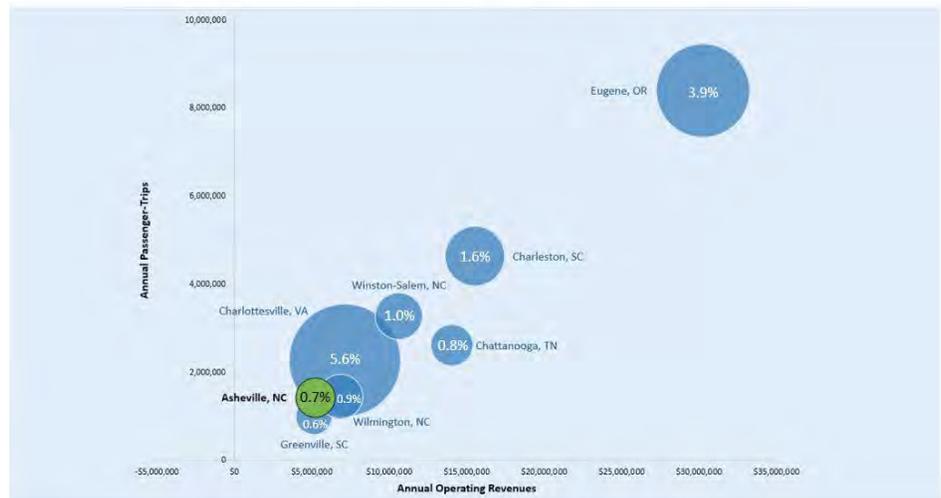
A preliminary benchmarking analysis with respect to transportation in the selected cities suggests that Asheville is in many ways very typical. Its commuting mode split, vehicle ownership rates, transit trip costs, frequency of transit service, number of transit trips per route mile, and airport size and level of service are all consistent with those of the other benchmarked cities.

Conversely, however, Asheville underperforms in a few key areas as well, in particular the accessibility of jobs via transit and in transit funding from non-local sources.

Transit comparison:

- Transit mode share
- Annual transit operating revenue
- Annual transit passenger trips

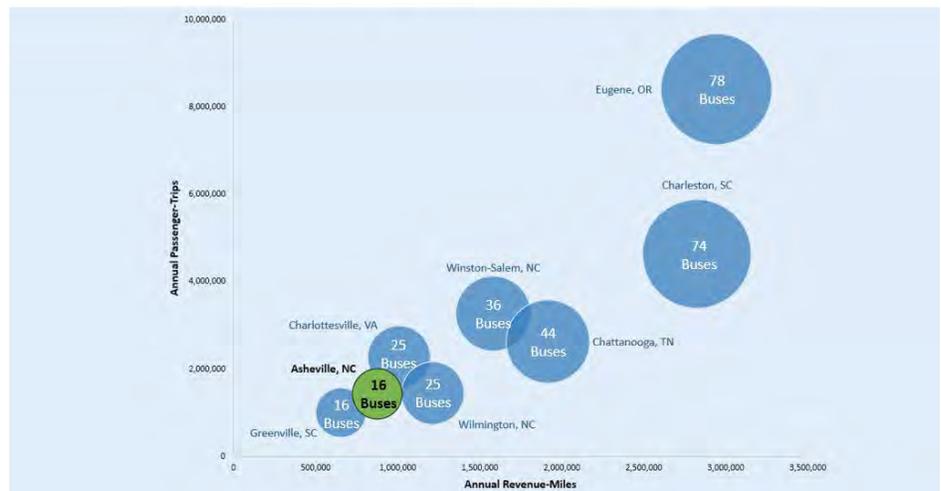
- Area → Transit Mode Share
- Horizontal Axis → Annual Operating Revenue
- Vertical Axis → Annual Passenger-Trips



Transit comparison:

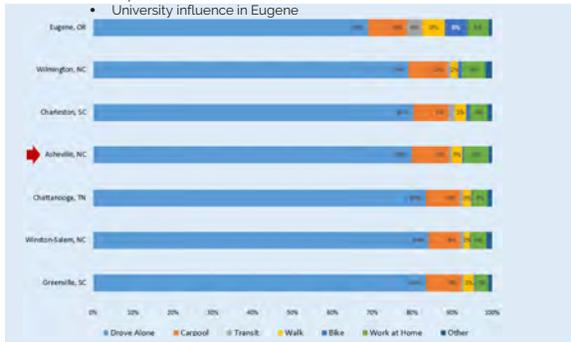
- Fleet size
- Annual route-miles
- Annual passenger trips

- Area → Fleet Size
- Horizontal Axis → Annual Route-Miles
- Vertical Axis → Annual Passenger-Trips



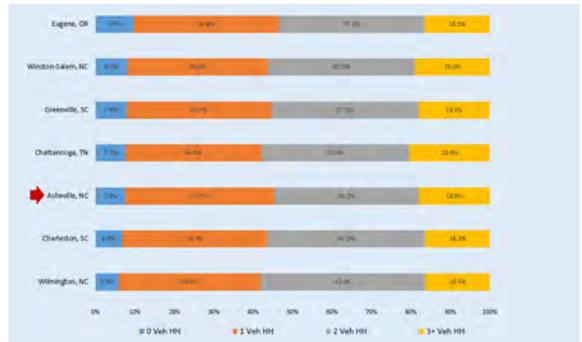
Commute Mode Splits

- Asheville's mode split is fairly typical
- Asheville has a relatively high percentage of **Work At Home**
- Higher **Bicycle, Walk, & Transit** shares explain Eugene's lower auto-dependence
- University influence in Eugene



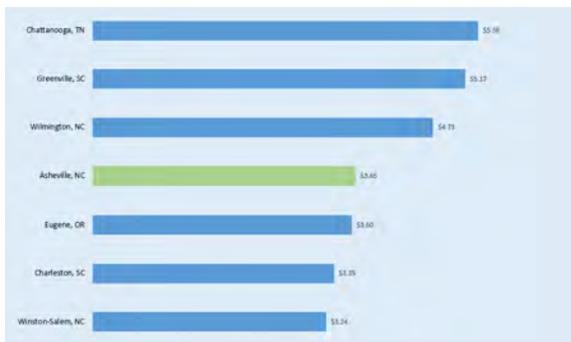
Household Vehicle Ownership

- 7.6% of Asheville households do not own a car



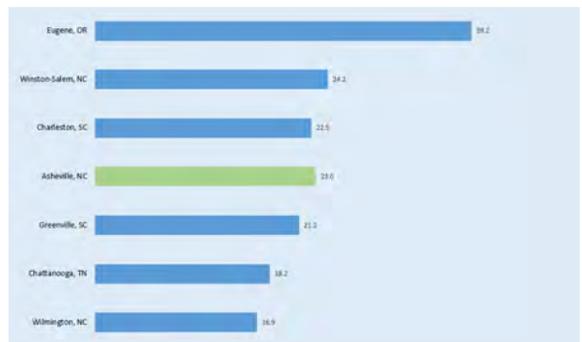
Cost per Transit Trip

- Measure of transit service efficiency



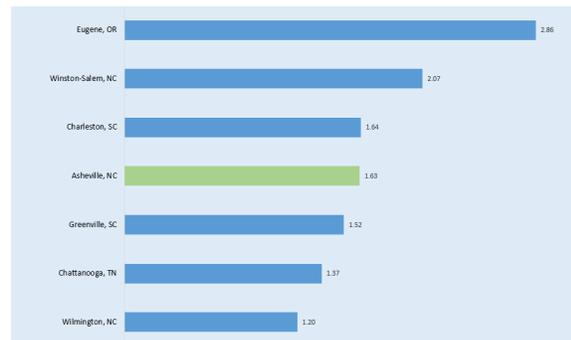
Transit Trips per Service Hour

- Measure of transit system schedule productivity
- Eugene heavily influenced by university service

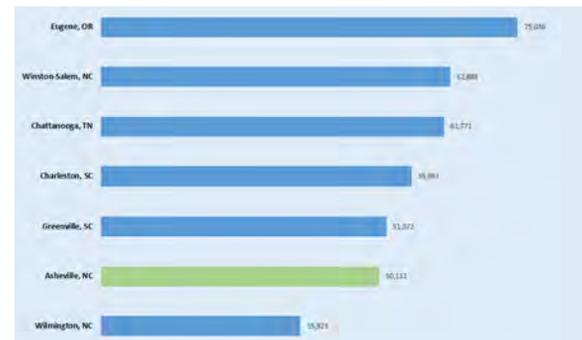


Transit Trips Per Route Mile

- Measure of effectiveness of transit system coverage
- Eugene heavily influenced by university service

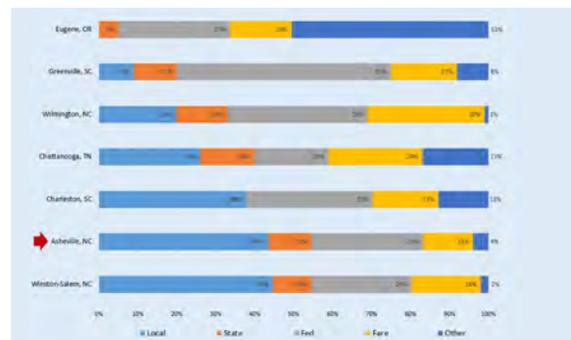


Jobs Accessible Within 30-minute Transit Trip



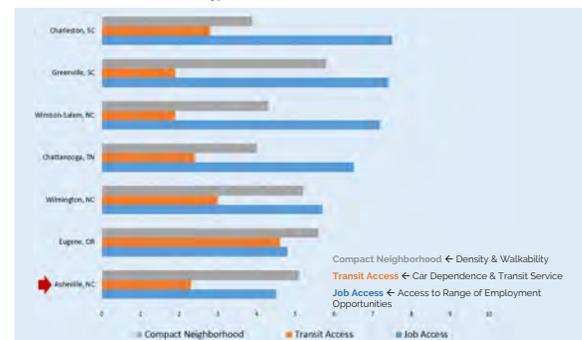
Transit Funding Sources

- Relatively high local contribution for Asheville
- Significant university contributions in Eugene



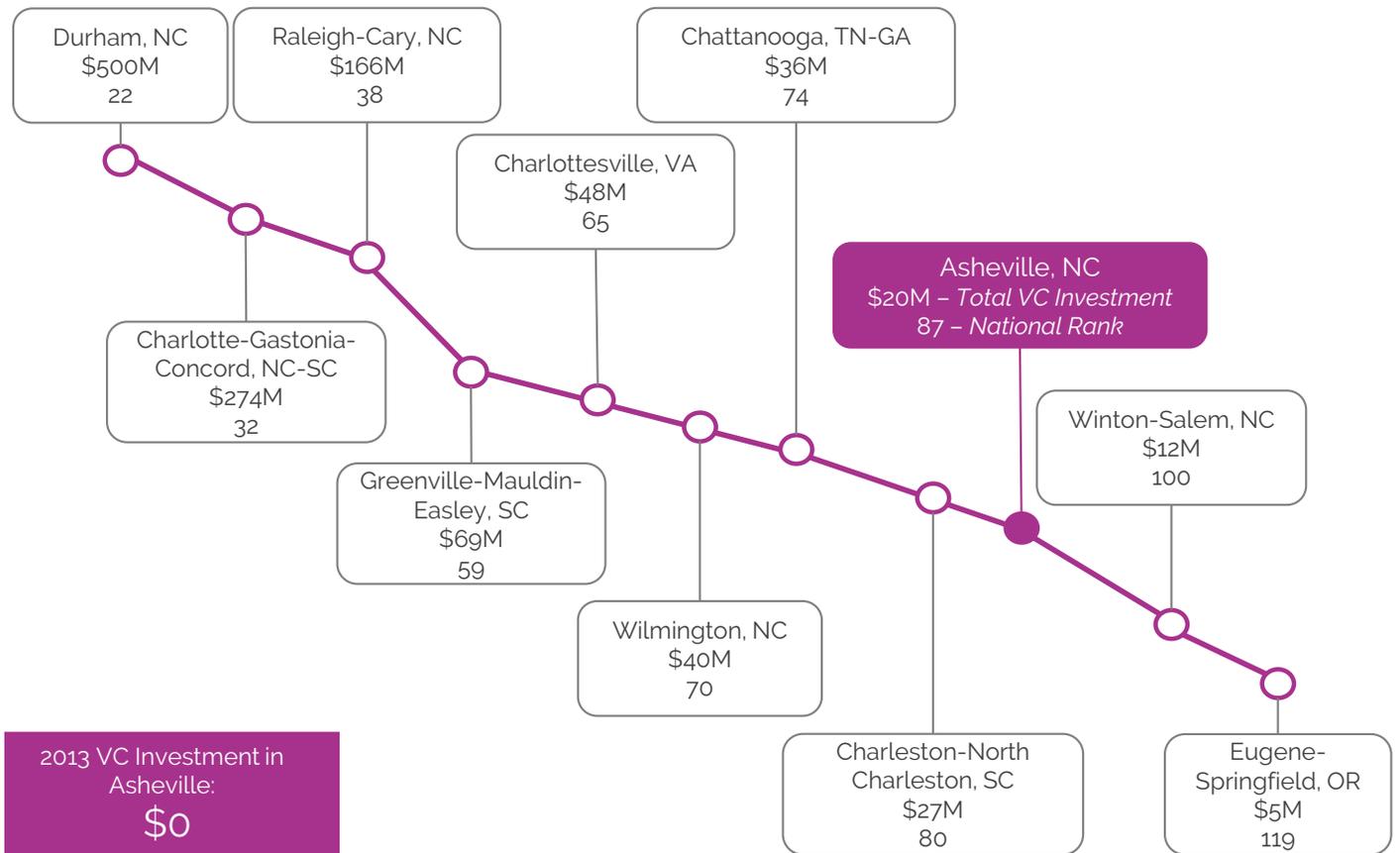
Neighborhood Characteristic Evaluation

- Asheville has lowest **Job Access** score
- Asheville has higher **Compact Neighborhood** score
- Asheville has typical **Transit Access** score



VENTURE CAPITAL INVESTMENT COMPARISON

Venture capital investment is another indicator for regional innovation and entrepreneurship. In 2014 and 2015, firms in the Asheville region received a total of \$20.5 million in venture capital funding ranking the region 87th in the United States. Prior to 2014, Asheville did not receive any VC investment on record demonstrating its very recent success as a hub of innovation and entrepreneurship.

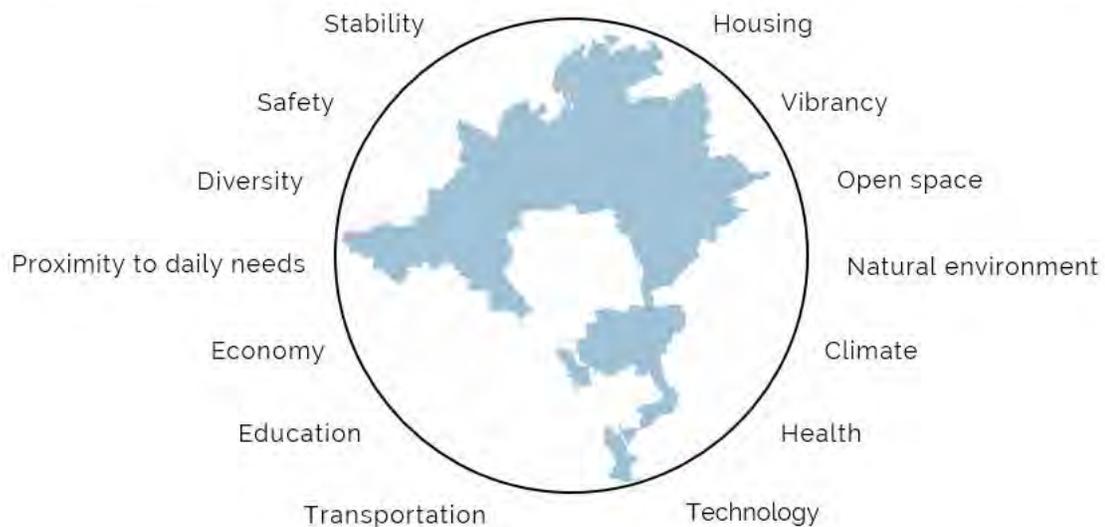


LIVABILITY METRIC COMPARISON

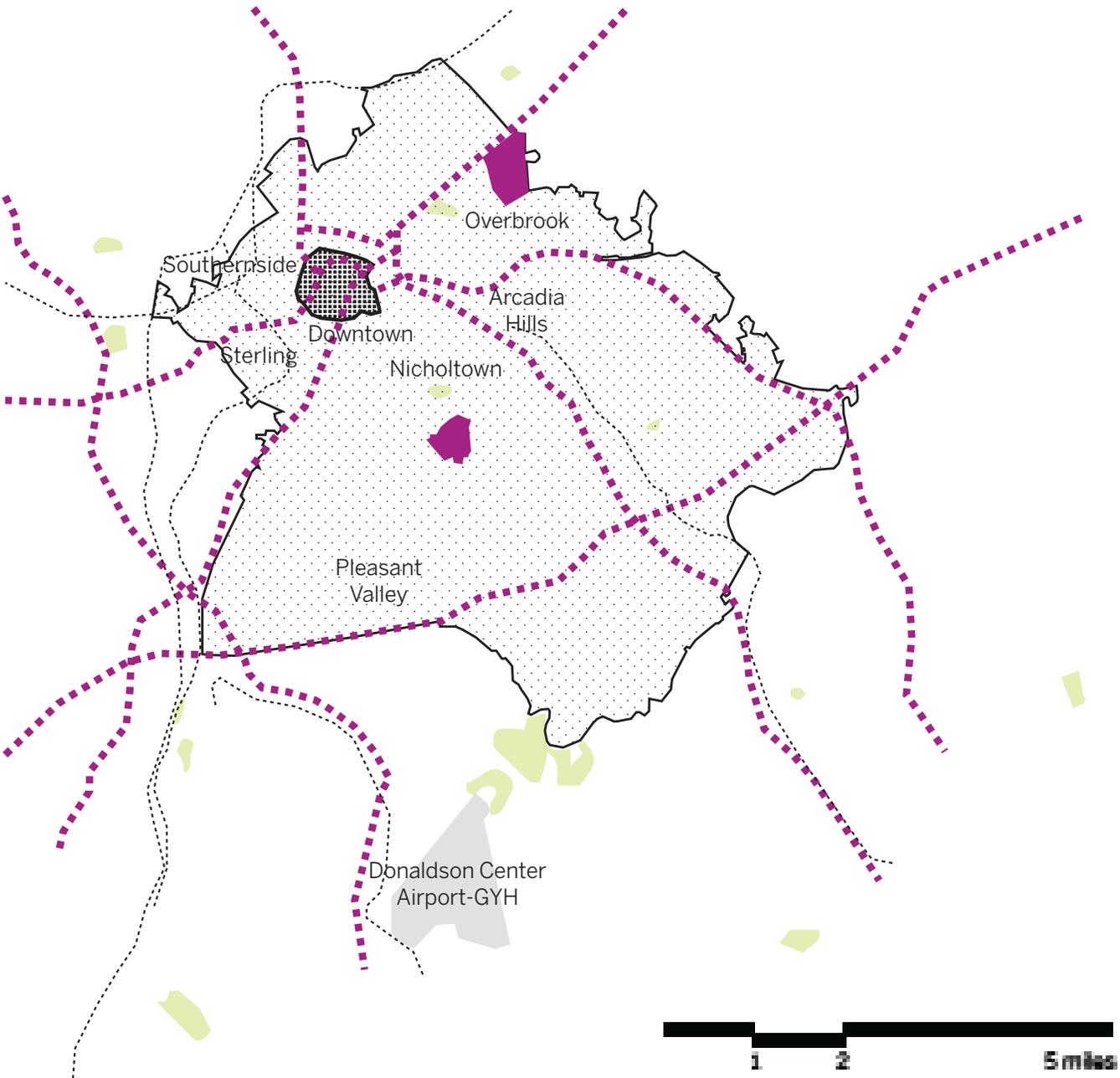
Establishing the metrics upon which to assess Asheville's success compared to its peers is in many ways as complicated as the analysis itself. The Asheville comp plan update will be rooted in the challenge of making a great city excel at achieving strong livability. Defining livability is a challenge with no single clear metric, and so the Planning Team has begun exploring what it means to excel as a "livable" city, and how such themes may apply to implementable initiatives in Asheville. Below is a preliminary analysis of livability based on a sampling of best practice analyses on the subject.

Mercer	Economist	Monocle	NY Magazine	Jacksonville	Boston	Bhutan
Political and social	Stability			Responsible government		
		Population	Diversity			Cultural diversity and resilience
		Crime	Safety / crime	Safety	Public safety	
Medical and health	Healthcare		Health & Environment	Healthy	Health	Health
						Psychological well-being
Economic environment		Business environment		Vibrant economy	Economy	
Schools and education	Education	Education	Schools	Education excellence	Education	Education
Public services and transport	Infrastructure	Connectivity	Transit proximity	Moving around efficiently	Transportation	
Housing			Housing Quality		Housing	Living standards
			Affordable housing cost			
Recreation			Green space			
Natural environment		Environment		Natural environment	Environment	Ecological diversity and resilience
Socio-cultural environment	Culture and environment	Lifestyle	Creativity Bars & Nightlife Restaurants	Social well-being Arts, culture, and recreation	Civic vitality Cultural life and arts	Time use Community vitality
Consumer goods			Shopping			
		Climate				
					Technology	

14 Common Themes emerge from the Livability Benchmarks



GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA



Demographic indicators

The city of Greenville is slightly smaller than Asheville with just under 63,000 residents, although the city represents only seven percent of the total regional population of around 880,000. Population growth in the city has been steady from 2000 to 2016 (11 percent growth), but regional population growth has been booming, growing by over 21 percent during this time period. Given access to arterial networks and vacant and developable land in the region, population growth is pushing development outward. Educational attainment is slightly below Asheville, with 43 percent of the population with at least a Bachelor's Degree. Greenville has a larger proportion of Millennials (persons aged 15 to 34) compared to Asheville. Similar to national trends, Greenville's cohort of residents aged 65 to 74 is growing rapidly, increasing by over 40 percent from 2010 to 2016.

Housing market

Despite sprawling regional development, Downtown and the urban core has experienced a building boom since the end of the Recession with approximately 450 multifamily units added in the last five years and an additional 1,800 units to be added in this year alone. Most of this supply is higher-end development aimed to attract young professionals and empty nesters seeking a more walkable, urban living experience; however, it is unclear whether the market can absorb such a large new inventory of multifamily units. This new development has increased housing costs in the central parts of the city, pushing working and middle-class households to other parts of the region. Since June 2012, housing values in Greenville have increased by 20 percent, outpacing regional housing value growth (17 percent). New development continues to encroach in historically low-income and minority neighborhoods, which has led to concerns about gentrification and affordability. The demand for quality affordable housing continues to increase and then city continues to invest in affordable housing development and is considering the formal adoption of inclusionary zoning.

Economic indicators

The Greenville economy continues to evolve from a base of farming and textiles to now an international business hub with strong manufacturing, warehousing and distributions, healthcare, and technology sectors. Much of this growth can be attributed to the BMW plant that was built in the early 1990s and has led to an increasing number of direct international investment over the last 10 to 15 years. Greenville County recently announced over \$1.2 billion in new capital investment and 8,940 new jobs in the last five years, and is home to more corporate headquarters than any other region in South Carolina. Given this growth in professional services and international business, Greenville is also committed to growing its' knowledge economy with investment in startups and entrepreneurship with the NEXT Innovation Center, which provides flexible office space tailored to startups. Of the peer cities, the Greenville region had the most total venture capital investment in 2104 and 2015 at \$68.8 million.

Transportation

With less than 65,000 residents, the City of Greenville is smaller than peer cities but has strong regional transportation connections. I-85 runs through the City and I-385 and I-185 provide a partial loop around the city, while the GSP International Airport provides 60 direct flights each day. Public transportation options include Amtrak, 16 buses on 11 fixed route transit destinations, and open aired trolleys downtown for residents and tourists. Greenville's downtown and Main Street have won plaudits in part because of a pedestrian-focused revitalization and revival.

Physical planning initiatives

- Comprehensive Plan
- Downtown Plans
- Neighborhood Plans
- Transit Plans
- Bike and Pedestrian Plans
- Trails and Greenways Plans
- Corridor Plans
- Housing Strategy
- Affordable Housing Strategy
- Downtown Design Standards – in development

Livability and quality of life

- 76 score on Areavibes compared to 79 for Asheville
- #128 in Education according to Forbes. Asheville is #58
- #46 Best Places for Business and Careers according to Forbes. Asheville is #12
- Ranked #93 on Livability.com. Asheville is ranked #69
- Livability score of 54 on AARP. Asheville's is 56

Health and Wellness metrics

- Greenville Health System has a 55,000 Life Center
- Swamp Rabbit Trail
- Walkscore of 42 compared to Asheville's 36
- Environment score according to AARP 64. Asheville is 58
- Health score according to AARP 59. Asheville is 53

Historic and cultural amenities

- 7 Historic Districts
- 423 sites on the National Historic Registry
- Metropolitan Arts Council (MAC)
- SmartArts – partnership between schools and MAC
- Mauldin Cultural Center
- Blue Wall Group - Slater
- Carolina Ballet Theatre
- Emrys Foundation
- Foothills Piecemakers Quilting Guild
- Greenville Center for Creative Arts
- Greenville Chautauqua Society
- Greenville Woodworkers Guild
- Greer Cultural Arts Council
- Travelers Rest Artists Alliance
- Upstate Film Society
- Wits End Poetry

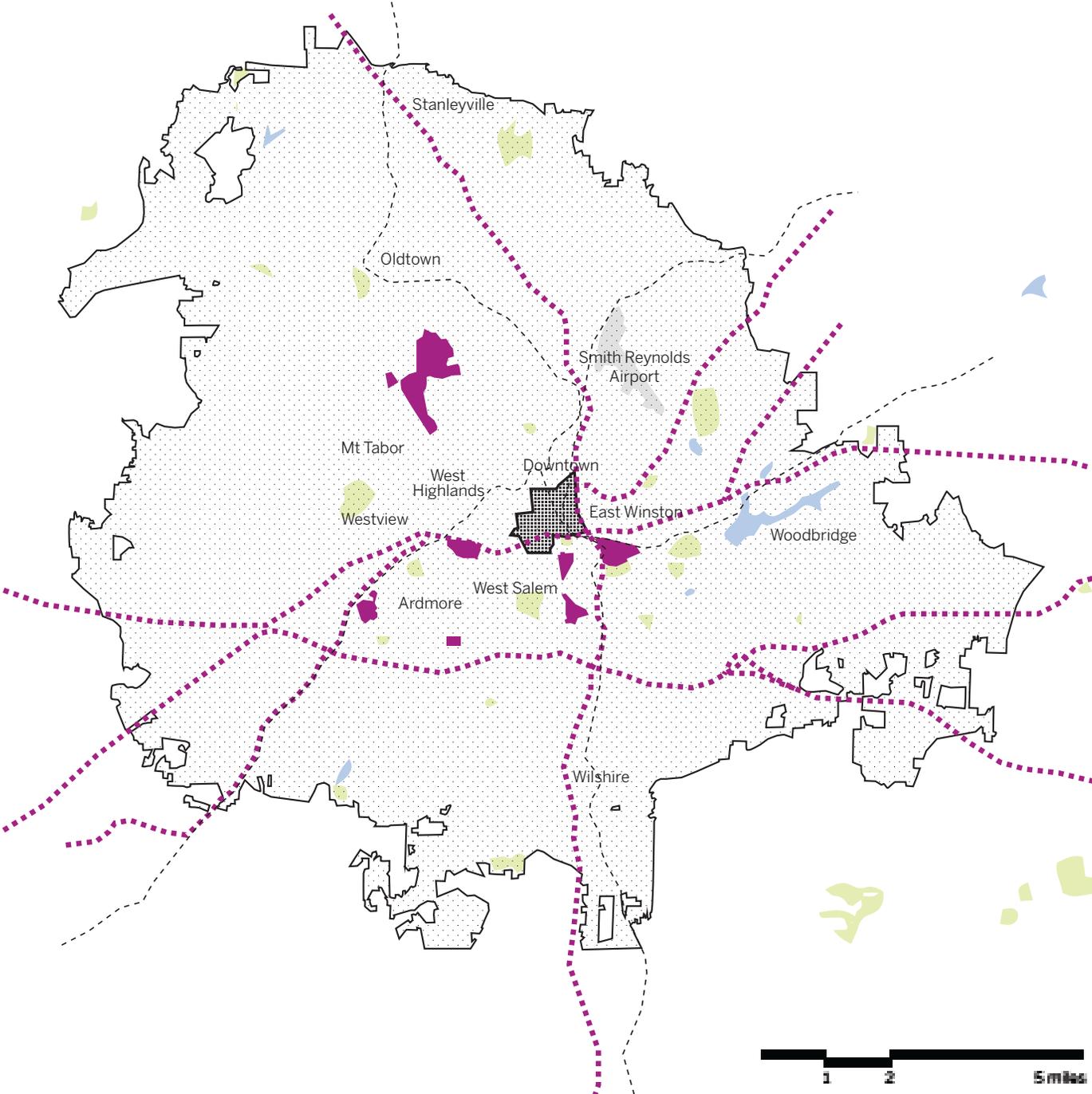
Higher education institutions

- Furman University
- University of South Carolina Upstate
- Greenville Technical College
- Clemson University

Parks and Open Space

Greenville Rec manages over 55 parks and facilities throughout Greenville County including 8 community centers, 6 historic sites, 3 waterparks, an ice rink, an inline rink, a camp and retreat center, and a 17.5 mile rail-trail greenway.

WINSTON-SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA



Demographic indicators

The city has had steady population growth of around 20 percent since 2000, which is just slightly below the pace of growth in Asheville. Most of the population growth during this time was outside of the urban core, although there have been a number of historic loft conversion residential developments Downtown in recent years. Of the peer cities, Winston-Salem is more of a “family city” with the largest proportion of school-aged children and a relatively high proportion of residents aged 50 and older. This age distribution has also contributed to relatively low levels of educational attainment with only 34 percent of the population older than 25 with at least a Bachelor’s degree (compared to 45 percent in Asheville). This has led to efforts to try to attract and retain more college graduates and young professionals by diversifying the local economy and revitalizing Downtown.

Housing market

Winston-Salem, and the Triad as a whole, has had a relatively slow recovery from the recession, given its historically strong manufacturing base. Population growth is slower than pre-recession levels and housing values have only increased by seven percent since June 2012, the lowest among all of the peer cities. Given the availability of vacant land throughout the city and ample redevelopment opportunities in the urban core, housing affordability is less of an issue in Winston-Salem (also the lowest median home value of peer cities). There is a greater need for housing diversification and offering higher-density development in pedestrian-friendly areas. Downtown is being targeted for mixed-use development and there is some “horizontal mixed use” development happening in some of the suburban areas to create more walkable nodes.

Economic indicators

Winston-Salem is still a hub of North Carolina’s traditionally strong manufacturing sectors of tobacco, textiles, and furniture; however, manufacturing now only represents around 11 percent of total employment, similar to the national average, after a decline of 42 percent since 2000. Because of the reliance on the manufacturing sector, recovery from the recession has been relatively weak and the city has the second-highest unemployment of benchmarking cities and employment has grown slower than the national average since the 2010. Given these economic shifts, the city has recognized the need to diversify the local economy and capture a larger share of the technology sector that is growing throughout the state. The 2003 completion of a master plan for the Wake Forest Innovation Quarter, a collaboration between area universities, corporations, and institutions, signaled a path forward for the emerging downtown high-tech research and development district.

Transportation

Winston-Salem is a central transportation hub in North Carolina. The City is served by I-40 Business, an important business loop of I-40, which runs through the downtown area. It is also home to a CSX TRANSFLO Terminal and Service Bulk Terminal where bulk commodities are transferred between railcars and trucks. Winston-Salem is growing slower than other peer cities, which has allowed for the transit system to grow and provide coverage throughout the City. Winston-Salem has fewer terrain and hydrological limitations than many peer cities.

Physical planning initiatives

- Comprehensive Plan – Legacy 2030
- Downtown Plan and Area Plans for the entire City to serve the Comp Plan
- Creative Corridors Master Plan
- Long range transportation plans
- Bike and Pedestrian Plans
- Trails and Greenways Plans
- Context Sensitive Multifamily Design Guidelines
- The do not have housing plans.

Livability and quality of life

- 76 score on AreaVibes compared to 79 for Asheville
- #142 in Education according to Forbes. Asheville is #58
- #78 Best Places for Business and Careers according to Forbes. Asheville is #12
- Livability score of 51 on AARP. Asheville’s is 56

Health and Wellness metrics

- Walkscore of 22 compared to Asheville’s 36
- Bikescore of 34
- 100 Health Care according to Numbeo compared to 82.64 for Asheville
- Environment score according to AARP 53. Asheville is 58
- Health score according to AARP 44. Asheville is 53

Historic and cultural amenities

- It calls itself the city of Arts and Innovation and has a history of supporting public art.
- Creative Corridors Coalition
- The Arts Council of Winston Salem and Forsyth County
- The Wachovia historical society is one of the oldest in the nation
- Old Salem
- Bethabara Moravian Settlements
- The Winston-Salem Fire and Rescue Historical Society
- Preservation Forsyth
- Forsyth County Historic Resources Commission
- 3 locally zoned historic districts
- Local Historic Landmark (LHL) program.
- Historic Preservation month
- 99 places on the National Historic Registry

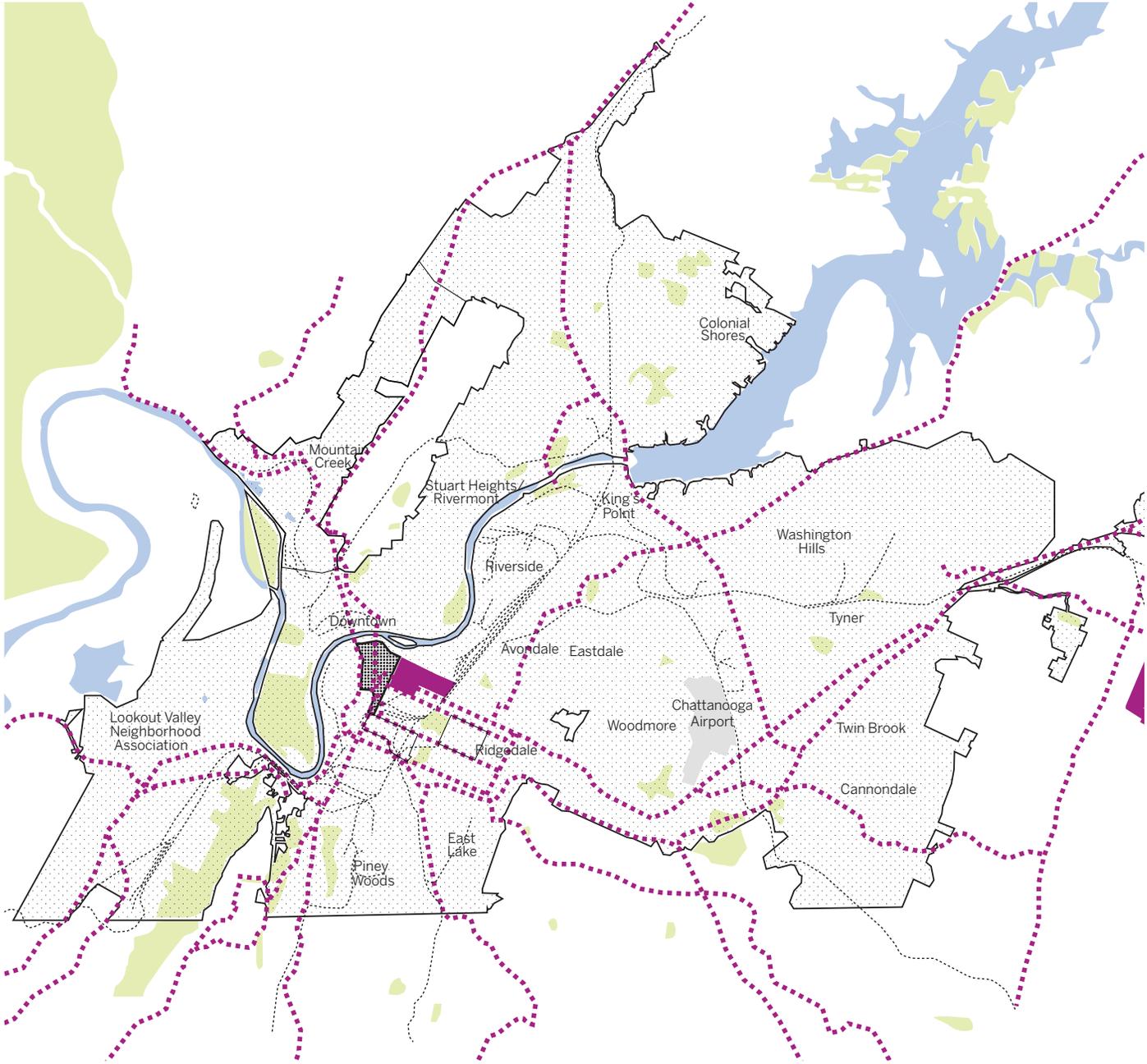
Higher education institutions

- Forsyth Tech
- Piedmont International University
- Salem College
- UNC School of the Arts
- Wake Forest University
- Winston Salem State University

Parks and Open Space

The Recreation and Parks Department operates and maintains 74 parks. Among them are 51 picnic shelters, 47 playgrounds, 43 soccer fields, 47 softball fields, 112 tennis courts, eight pools, six volleyball courts, 25 basketball courts and a football field. All parks are open from sunrise to sunset. Please obey all posted park rules. Dogs in parks must be leashed. No leash is required in the Dog Park located in Washington Park.

CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE



Demographic indicators

Chattanooga is about twice the population of Asheville. Its population has grown by 12 percent since 2000, drawing in new residents attracted by the city's robust job market and low cost of living. In contrast to cities where universities play a large role, the percentage of college students in Chattanooga (8 percent) is low, and the proportion of residents with a high school degree or less is high at 42 percent. Of the surveyed cities, Chattanooga has the highest proportion of low income residents and nearly 18 percent of households are living in poverty. Median age is 38 and the age distribution is very similar to the national average.

Housing market

Chattanooga faced the same postwar decline as many industrial cities, leading to a greater amount of disinvestment than in many of the peer cities. Housing is generally older, with over one-third of the city's housing stock dating to before 1960 and only twelve percent of units built since 2000. Renters make up 52 percent of occupants, and housing is predominately single family detached (60 percent). Given the relatively slow appreciation of property values since 2012 (8 percent increase) housing affordability is less of a concern here. Additionally, the median housing value to income ratio is second lowest among peer cities (4.45), but still higher than the National Average (3.76). Since the 1980s, downtown Chattanooga has been the site of many of the city's major revitalization efforts. Most recently, the \$100M Cameron Harbor waterfront development added 375 new housing units downtown within a larger project including a hotel and outdoor amenities.

Economic indicators

Termed "The South's Manufacturing Magnet," Chattanooga's economy is based more heavily on manufacturing than the other cities. Manufacturing accounts for 12 percent of employment, while wholesale trade and transportation provides an additional 9 percent. Industry is supported by low utility costs, strong focus on business development, and state-sponsored industrial training programs. Though manufacturing employment has declined by 25 percent since 2001, there has been a 9 percent increase in manufacturing employment since the end of the recession, repositioning the region as a strong manufacturing center. Major employers include BlueCross BlueShield, an Amazon distribution center, the TVA, Unum Insurance, McKee Foods, and Volkswagen.

In addition to manufacturing, Chattanooga is in the process of positioning itself as the emergent "tech hub of the Southeast." Aided by one of the country's most extensive fiber optic networks, the city has been taking steps to lure startups and other companies to the downtown innovation district through quality placemaking and public-private partnerships. This innovation infrastructure has triggered significant venture capital investment in recent years and the region attracted \$35.7 million in 2014 and 2015, almost twice that of Asheville during this time period.

Transportation

Chattanooga is a small but growing city with approximately one-third of the regional population living within the city limits. Despite the size, Chattanooga is an important transportation center in the region. The combination of several major industrial manufacturers and the proximity to I-24, I-75, and I-59 result in nearly 80 percent of the freight traveling through Chattanooga heading for delivery in other locations. Although Chattanooga is a car-dependent city—92 percent reporting commuting via car alone or carpool—Bike Chattanooga provides an economical public bike share system with 33 stations. Chattanooga shares some of the terrain challenges of Asheville and is also built around a river.

Physical planning initiatives

- Comprehensive Plan
- Downtown Plan and Area Plans for the entire City to serve the Comp Plan
- Long range transportation plans
- Multimodal plans
- Bike and Pedestrian Plans
- Trails and Greenways Plans
- The do not have housing plans.

Livability and quality of life

- 78 score on AreaVibes compared to 79 for Asheville
- #154 in Education according to Forbes. Asheville is #58
- #97 Best Places for Business and Careers according to Forbes. Asheville is #12
- Livability score of 54 on AARP. Asheville's is 56

Health and Wellness metrics

- Walkscore of 29 compared to Asheville's 36
- Bikescore of 30
- 47.2 Health Care according to Numbeo compared to 82.64 for Asheville
- Environment score according to AARP 57. Asheville is 58
- Health score according to AARP 52. Asheville is 53

Historic and cultural amenities

- Arts Build
- Arts and Education Council
- Association for Visual Arts
- Public Art Chattanooga, a division of the City of Chattanooga, is dedicated to introducing a wide variety of high quality public art into the community, enhancing the civic environment and enriching the lives of visitors and residents.
- Chattanooga History Center
- The Chattanooga Area Historical Association
- The Chattanooga Historic Zoning Ordinance – 4 communities
- 102 site on National Historic Registry
- 1 national historic landmark – Moccasin Creek

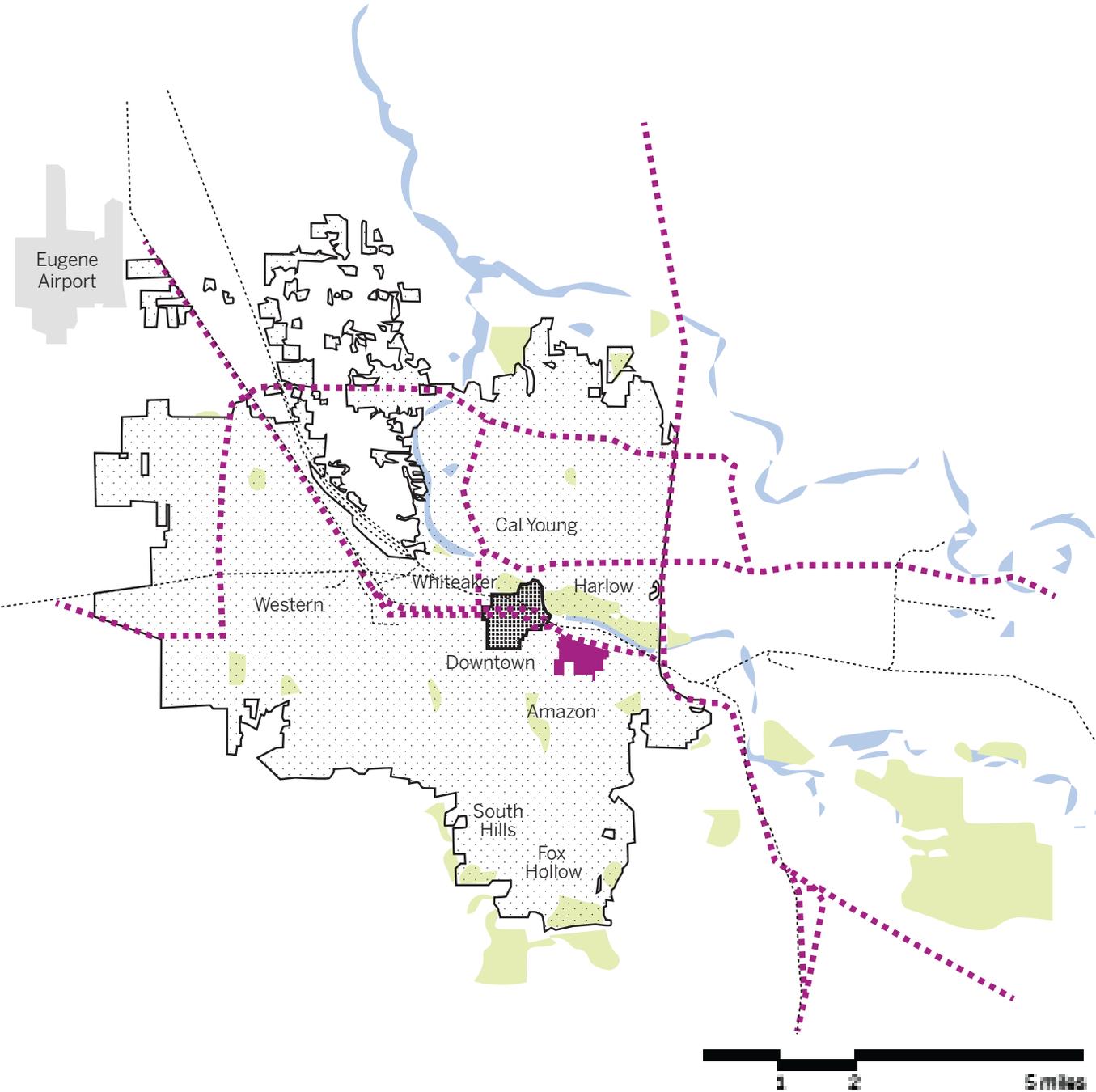
Higher education institutions

- University of Tennessee Chattanooga
- Chattanooga State Community College
- Virginia College-School of Business and Health
- ITT Technical Institute

Parks and Open Space

The City of Chattanooga has an extensive network of public parks, playgrounds, walking trails, and leisure facilities. With 4,800 acres of park space and 35 miles of greenways and trails, there is something for everyone! The City's close proximity to lakes, rivers, and mountains provides additional opportunities for recreation. The city of Chattanooga operates 14 Youth and Family Development community centers equipped with outdoor spaces that include playgrounds, sports fields and walking trails. Outdoor Chattanooga. Our mission is to make outdoor recreation an attractive, healthy, and distinguishing lifestyle for Chattanooga's residents and visitor population, which, in turn, will maintain and enhance the value of the region's natural and built resources, and help grow the region's economy.

EUGENE, OREGON



Demographic indicators

Eugene has grown rapidly over the past few decades, doubling from nearly 80,000 people in 1970 to over 160,000 today. Most of the population growth has occurred in the city, as the region is considerably smaller than Asheville with just under 360,000 residents. Migration from other states plays a key role in this growth, with Eugene drawing people in through the University of Oregon (UO) and attractive quality of life amenities. Though Eugene is generally considered more than just a college town, the university, with an enrollment of around 24,000, plays a significant role in the demographic makeup of the city--twenty percent of the city population is enrolled in college. The population of school-aged children is low compared to other peer cities (14 percent). A somewhat higher population of Millennials is driven in part by college enrollment, and one third of the population is over 50. Degree attainment is high, with nearly half of residents having at least an associate's degree. The cost of housing in Eugene is relatively high compared to median household income (Eugene had the second highest median housing value to income ratio of the peer cities at 6.26), which limits housing options, especially for low- to moderate-income residents.

Housing market

Eugene saw its greatest housing growth in the 1970s, with approximately one in four units dating from that decade. About 40 percent of its housing stock has been added since then, making Eugene's housing stock relatively new compared to the benchmarking cities. The present sustained demand for homes and apartments in Eugene has caused an increase in housing costs with housing values increasing by almost 24 percent since June 2012. An urban growth boundary limits open land for development, leading to an emphasis on infill construction. Multifamily construction has dominated the market post-recession, and Downtown has been the site of over \$300 million in investment over the past five years as the result of public-private partnerships.

Economic indicators

Eugene had a healthy manufacturing and timber industry that underwent a severe decline in the 1980s. Today, manufacturing employment is lower than the national average, but has generally stabilized since the end of the recession. There is no single dominant industry in Eugene, but the city has a slightly higher proportion of retail trade and service jobs (18 percent) and a lower percentage of professional, scientific, and management jobs than peer cities. The largest employers, including the University of Oregon, come from the educational, health care, and public administration sectors. Though there are no major corporate headquarters in Eugene, there are a large number of small entrepreneurial businesses, including startups, creative and artistic ventures, independent retailers, and craft food and beverage purveyors. Moving forward, the city has also set out to increase the role of innovation and technology within the local economy.

Transportation

Eugene is the third largest city in Oregon, with nearly 50 percent of the regional population living within the city. Eugene is located on I-5 and does not have a loop route. Residents have many transportation options—biking, walking, carpool/vanpool, car/bike share, bus, or train. VMT in Eugene has been on a steady decline over the past years, while the city and MPO have grown the bicycle network with nearly 80 miles of off-street bicycle and pedestrian paths and over 140 miles of bike lanes and bike boulevards. University is major factor in non-auto travel; student fees (for fare-free transit use) provide substantial funds for transit.

Physical planning initiatives

- Urban Growth Boundary
- Comprehensive Plan
- The Community Design Handbook (CDH) is a broad set of non-regulatory design principles and guidelines that express the community's vision for the built environment. The CDH represents best practices related to design in support of several pillars of Envision Eugene.
- Downtown Plan Plans
- Historic Review Board
- Housing Study
- Long range transportation plans, Multimodal plans
- Bike and Pedestrian Plans, Trails and Greenways Plans

Livability and quality of life

- 76 score on Areavibes compared to 79 for Asheville
- #102 in Education according to Forbes. Asheville is #58
- #52 Best Places for Business and Careers according to Forbes. Asheville is #12
- Ranked #94 on Livability.com. Asheville ranked #69
- Livability score of 59 on AARP. Asheville's is 56

Health and Wellness metrics

- Walkscore of 44 compared to Asheville's 36
- Bikescore 74
- Transitscore 36
- 72.22 Health Care according to Numbeo compared to 82.64 for Asheville
- Environment score according to AARP 51. Asheville is 58
- Health score according to AARP 52. Asheville is 53

Historic and cultural amenities

- Lane Arts Council
- Lane County Historical Society
- Eugene Historic Property Restoration Grants
- The Eugene Historic Review Board
- The Eugene Cultural Resource Inventory Program - These surveys have inventoried over 5,000 historic properties, and resulted in protection of over three hundred historic resources, including two historic districts listed in the National Register of Historic Places.
- 10 neighborhoods in Cultural Resource Inventory
- 134 sites on National Registry of Historic Places
- Hult Center for the Performing Arts
- Cuthbert Amphitheater
- Art in Public Places program
- Percent for Art Ordinance of 1981

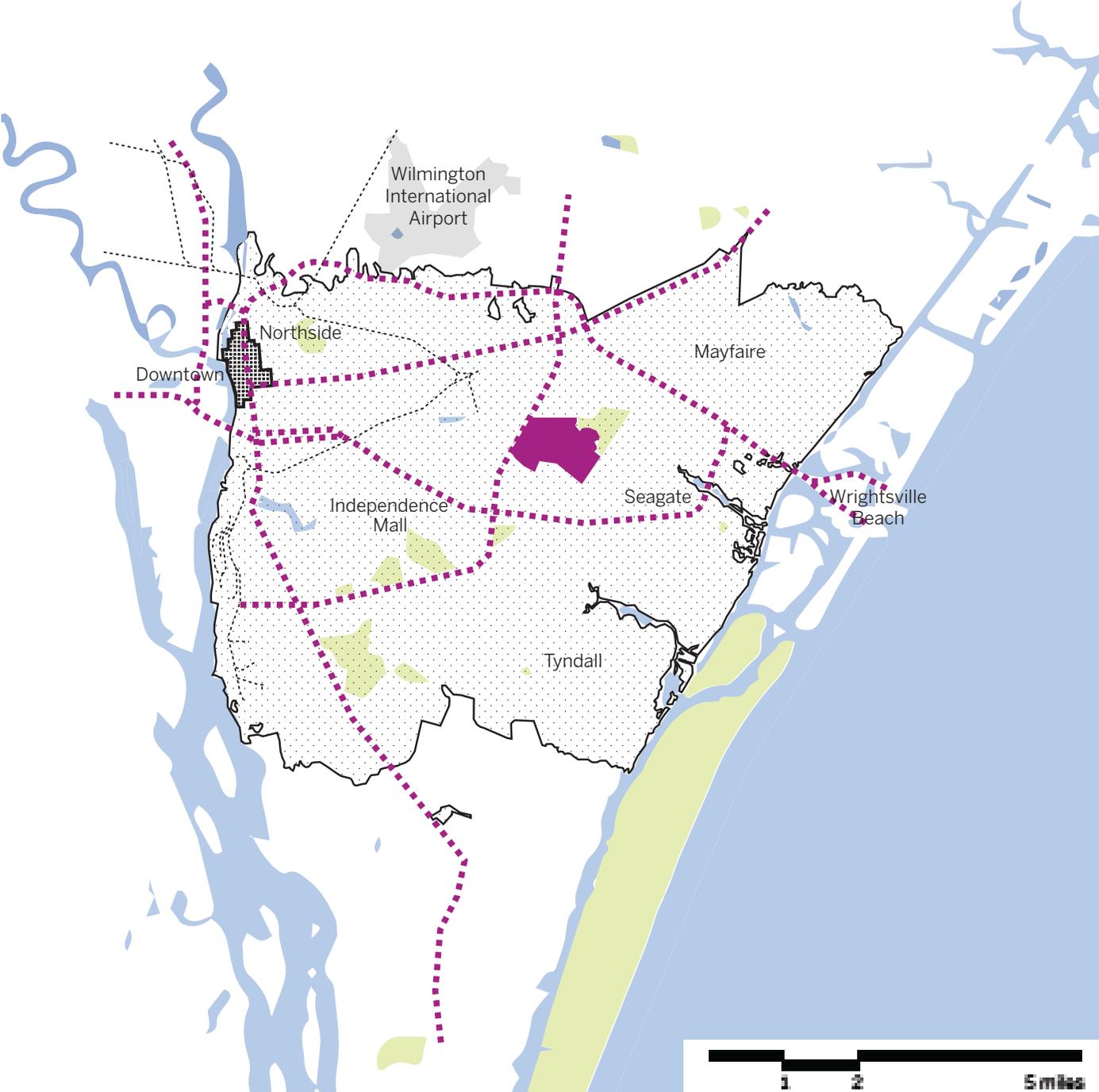
Higher education institutions

- University of Oregon
- Gutenberg College
- New Hope Christian College
- Northwest Christian University

Parks and Open Space

The park system boasts over 4,300 acres of natural and developed park areas within the context of the broad Willamette River basin and its adjacent buttes and ridge lines. 48 neighborhood parks, 6 community centers, 19 metropolitan parks, 87 miles of paved paths, 6000 programs and events, 3 pools.

WILMINGTON, NORTH CAROLINA



Demographic indicators

With a 2016 population of nearly 117,000, the city of Wilmington is of similar size to Asheville, although the region is considerably smaller with around 280,000. Both the city and region have experienced rapid growth since 2000 with the city population increasing by almost 30 percent and regional population by almost 40 percent. Similar to Asheville, Wilmington has experienced a significant increase in persons older than 65, but, similar to Charleston, there has been an increasing number of young professionals in the 25 to 34 year-old cohort (11 percent increase since 2010). The proportion of residents with at least a Bachelor's Degree is lower than Asheville, although overall educational attainment is increasing with the influx of young professionals.

Housing market

Given challenges with wetland development, there is limited developable land in Wilmington, which has pushed development outward in the region. The increasingly limited housing supply in the city has led to significant increases in housing values (20 percent increase since June 2012). Median housing values and income levels in Wilmington are comparable to Asheville, so both cities are dealing similar housing affordability issues. There have been efforts to higher-density development in the urban core in order to accommodate growing demand, especially from young professionals and retirees. In the last 18 months, over 2,700 multi-family units in New Hanover County have been built, approved, or are under construction as opposed to only 700 multifamily units in Buncombe County in 2014 and 2015 combined.

Economic indicators

Similar to Charleston, Wilmington historically has had a significant shipping industry through the Port of Wilmington. Over time, it has become a tourist destination given its historic Downtown and nearby beaches, but in recent years it has continued to grow its technology sector and promote entrepreneurship. In 2014 and 2015, Wilmington had twice the amount of venture capital investment as Asheville with \$40.0 million. Much of this growth has been spawned from UNC-Wilmington's Crest Research Park, which is a model for interactions between academic research, business, and state agencies and home to MARBOINC (Marine Biotechnology in North Carolina).

Wilmington continues to position itself as a multi-modal shipping hub with modernizations at the Port of Wilmington to accommodate larger vessels and a new freight rail line connecting to the intermodal terminal in Charlotte. The city is redeveloping its obsolete industrial/warehousing building stock on the north riverfront adding a new convention center and world headquarters of Pharmaceutical Product Development (PPD). Dubbed "Hollywood East," Wilmington is home to EUE Screen Gems Studios, the largest domestic tv production facility outside of California with the third largest soundstage in the country; however, this facility has been severely impacted by the end of filmmaking state tax credits.

Transportation

Wilmington is home to a port within 700 miles of more than 70 percent of the industrial base in the United States, making it an important transportation, logistics, and intermodal hub. The port connects to major transport networks, including vehicular access via US 17, US 74, and I-40 and rail service via CSX. The City is served by Wilmington International Airport, greyhound, WAVE Transit, and growing number of bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Despite the options, 79 percent of residents commute to work by driving alone. Wilmington is a terminus for I-40 and has lower through traffic than most other peer cities.

Physical planning initiatives

- Comprehensive Plan
- Land Development Code
- Corridor Plans
- Downtown Plan
- Small Area Plans
- Brownfield's Initiative
- Historic Preservation Commission
- Long Range Transportation Planning

Livability and quality of life

- 77 score on AreaVibes compared to 79 for Asheville
- #35 Best Places for Business and Careers according to Forbes. Asheville is #58
- #43 in Education according to Forbes. Asheville is #12
- Livability score of 52 on AARP. Asheville's is 56

Health and Wellness metrics

- Walkscore of 34 compared to Asheville 36
- Transitscore 36
- 71.3 Health Care according to Numbeo compared to 82.64 for Asheville
- Environment score according to AARP 52. Asheville is 58
- Health score according to AARP 55. Asheville is 53

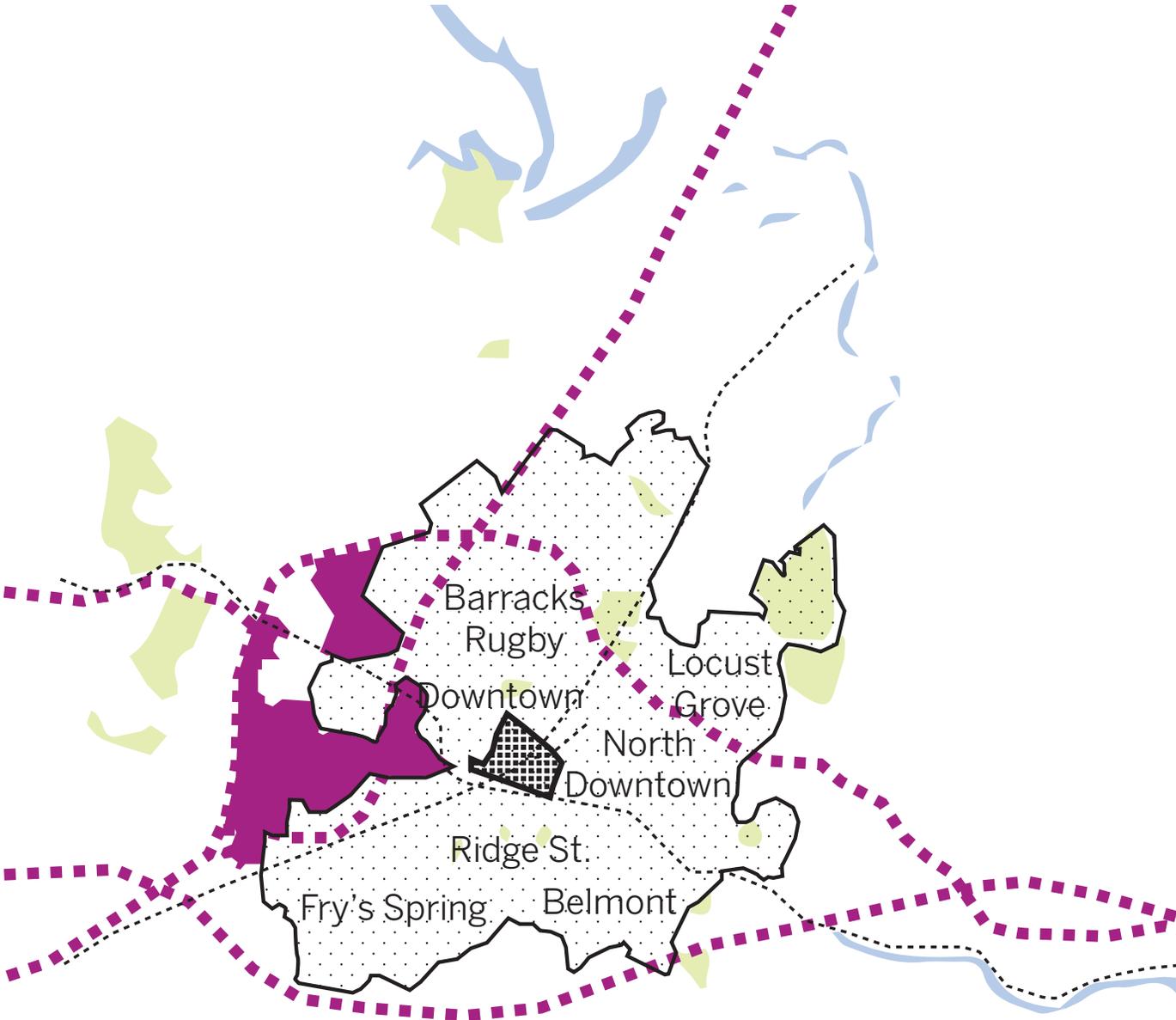
Historic and cultural amenities

- The Arts Council of Wilmington
- Wilmington Art Center
- Upperman African American Cultural Center: UNCW
- the Wilson Center
- Hannah S. Block Community Arts Center
- DREAMS of Wilmington, Inc. is a nationally award-winning nonprofit dedicated to building creative, committed citizens, one child at a time, through providing youth in need with high-quality, free-of-charge programming in the literary, visual, multimedia and performing arts.
- Historic Wilmington Foundation
- Lower Cape Fear Historical Society – Wilmington
- 27 sites on National Registry of Historic Places
- USS North Carolina Battleship – Wilmington NC's Historic Battleship

Higher education institutions

- UNC Wilmington
- Cape Fear Community College (CFCC)
- North Carolina Wesleyan College
- University of Mount Olive at Wilmington (UMO)

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA



Demographic indicators

After decades of minimal population growth, Charlottesville has grown rapidly in popularity and population in recent years; however, given the city's small town character with only 46,000 residents and limited developable land, the majority of growth in the last 15 years has been in surrounding communities. Since 2000, population in the city only grew by three percent, while the region grew by 23 percent. Though principally a college town (one in three residents is enrolled in college, the greatest proportion of the benchmarking cities), the Charlottesville region is gaining attention from a number of new demographics such as returning young professionals, families, retirees, and telecommuters, attracted by its small town charm, quality of life, and outdoor recreational opportunities. The population is well-educated, with 53 percent of residents holding at least a bachelor's degree. Nearly half of the city's residents are between 15 and 34 years of age.

Housing market

Though housing in Charlottesville feels affordable for transplants from cities like Washington, D.C., rapid population growth has led to increasingly higher rents and home price relative to other benchmarking cities—Charlottesville has the highest median home value (\$278,000). Overall, median household incomes are above average, but nearly a third of households earn less than \$25,000 per year, which is likely attributed to the higher-than-average student population. At the same time, the local workforce, especially long-time low- to moderate-income households, are being pushed to less convenient or substandard housing in the region. For a small city, Charlottesville has a remarkably urban feel, given the large number of pedestrians and amenities within walking distance. Rates of commuting on foot, by bike, or by public transportation are the highest of the benchmarking cities. Building on this foundation, city officials have been working to build an attractive urban dynamic, both in Downtown and in “quasi-urban places.”

Economic indicators

The local economy is driven by the University of Virginia, with four out of ten employees working in the educational and health care services industry. The University has also triggered a growing technology sector and the region was second among peer cities in terms of venture capital investment in 2014 and 2015 with \$48.3 million. Other large employers include Martha Jefferson Hospital and the City of Charlottesville. The foundation of education, health care, and public administration provides a stable economy overall, but are unlikely to expand dramatically. Professional, scientific, and management services employ 14 percent of workers, the greatest proportion of the benchmarking cities, and this industry has been growing consistently since the recession. Small, independent retailers occupy storefronts in and around the Downtown area, and much like other places, small-scale production of artisan crafts and food has proliferated. Unemployment is very low at three percent, the lowest of the peer cities.

Transportation

Charlottesville is served by the Charlottesville Area Transit (CAT)—a public bus system—as well as Greyhound, Amtrak, and regional airport. Transit mode share is the highest of the peer cities at 5.6 percent, which may be related to the lowest average age (under 30). Charlottesville has experienced very little population growth in the past 15 years, with population density centered in the traditional downtown core and additional residential and commercial density along the primary travel corridors of US 29 and I-64. University influence on development patterns and travel modes is significant.

Physical planning initiatives

- Comprehensive Plan
- Zoning
- Neighborhood Plans
- Historic Preservation and Design Review
- Transportation Planning
- Bike / ped improvements planning
- Create Charlottesville/Albemarle cultural plan

Livability and quality of life

- 77 score on AreaVibes compared to 79 for Asheville
- #8 in Education according to Forbes. Asheville is #58
- #42 Best Small Places for Business and Careers according to Forbes. Asheville is #12
- Ranked #21 on Livability.com. Asheville ranked #69.
- Livability score of 60 on AARP. Asheville's is 56

Health and Wellness metrics

- Walkscore 58 compared to Asheville 36
- Transitscore 37
- 80.56 Health Care according to Numbeo compared to 82.64 for Asheville
- Environment score according to AARP 64. Asheville is 58
- Health score according to AARP 42. Asheville is 67

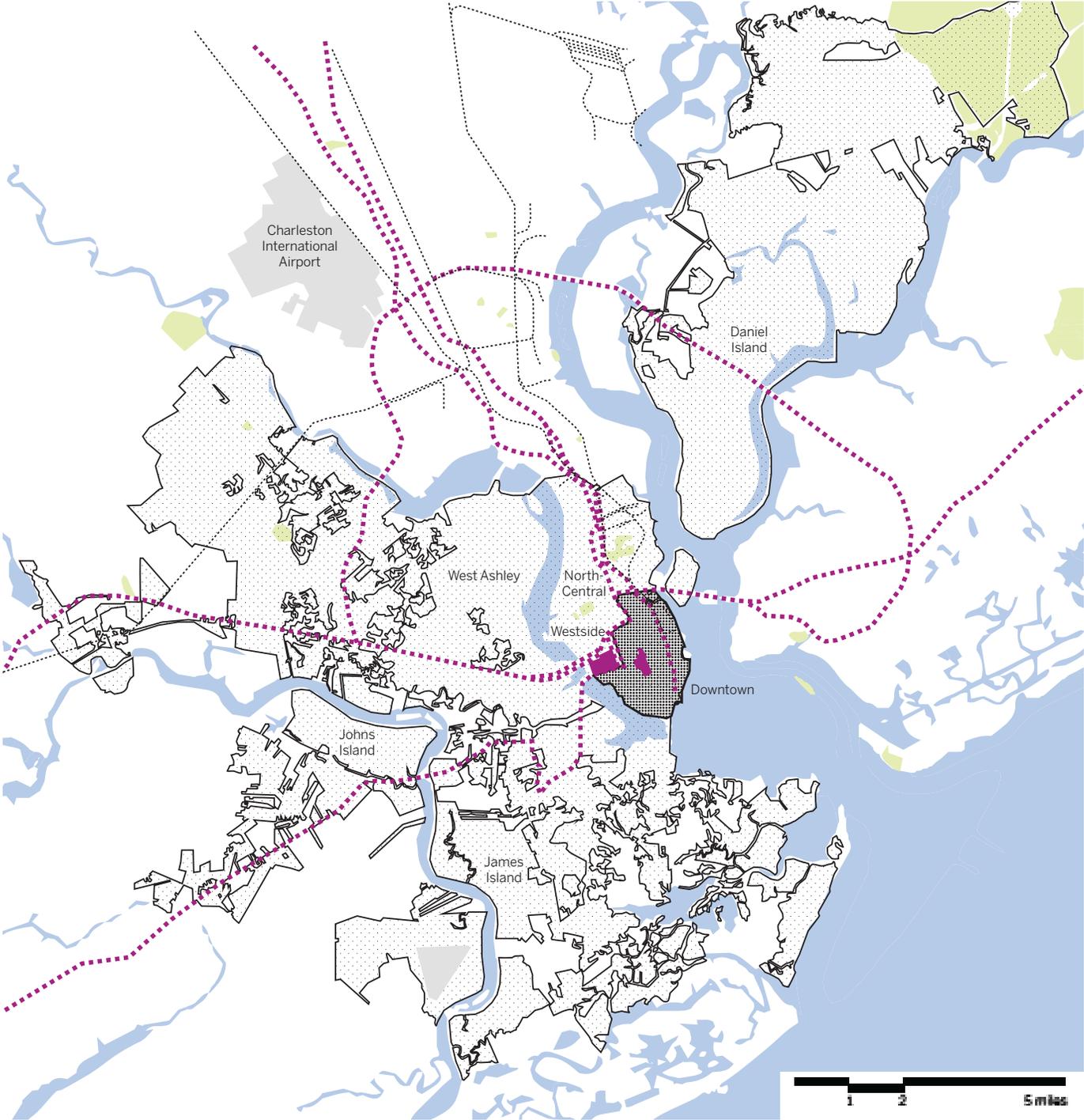
Historic and cultural amenities

- Piedmont Council for the Arts
- Monticello Artisan Trail is a connected network of talented artisans strewn throughout the beautiful landscapes of our area.
- Monticello, the Rotunda and the grounds of UVA - designated UNESCO World Heritage Sites
- 68 sites on the national registry
- Percent for art program
- ArtInPlace- Charlottesville
- The Martin Luther King, Jr. Performing Arts Center
- The McGuffey Art Center
- the Charlottesville Pavilion
- Bayly Art Museum at the University of Virginia

Higher education institutions

- University of Virginia
- Piedmont Virginia Community College

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA



Demographic indicators

Charleston continues to experience rapid population growth adding almost 30,000 new residents since 2000 for an increase of 28 percent. The city of Charleston's share of the regional population (18 percent) is comparable to Asheville (20 percent). Given rising housing costs and lack of developable land in the city, the region is growing at a faster rate increasing by almost 35 percent since 2000. The distribution of educational attainment is generally comparable to Asheville. Despite being a retirement destination with an increasing proportion of residents over the age of 65, the city of Charleston has a much higher proportion of residents aged 15 to 34 compared to the national average and Asheville, and the growth of this cohort has been a major contributor to regional population growth overall.

Housing market

Charleston has the second highest median housing values of the peer cities (\$273,000) and increasing demand continues to push prices upwards—housing values have increased by over 30 percent since 2012 making it one of the fastest growing housing markets in the Southeast. Much of this increasing demand can be attributed to retirees relocating the city, but also the growing information technology sector and thriving shipping industry through the Port of Charleston, bringing higher-wage jobs the region. In fact, according to the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce, growth of the Millennial population from 2000 to 2012 (58 percent) outpaced Nashville, Denver, and Austin during this time period. Though housing affordability continues to be an issue, especially for long-time, lower-income households, given the higher median income from the large concentration of higher-paying jobs, the median housing value to income ratio in Charleston (5.38) is slightly lower than Asheville (5.78).

Economic indicators

Historically, Charleston has been a major tourist destination and shipping hub through the Port of Charleston, one of the largest and most productive ports in the nation, but in recent years, the region continues to diversify its economy with a focus on technology and innovation. According to the Milken Institute, the Charleston region ranks fourth in the nation for high-tech GDP growth over the past five years. Despite these major strides in promoting growth in technology-related industries, Asheville is not far behind in terms of venture capital investment in 2014 and 2015 with \$20.5 million, just behind Charleston's \$27.0 million. Given the growth in higher-skilled and higher-paying jobs, workforce development and education is a critical issue to ensure that local residents have the skills necessary to access many of these jobs; however, given the overall attractiveness of the region, many of the job openings are drawing an influx of skilled professionals.

Transportation

The South Carolina coastline is an important shipping, trucking, and transportation connection to the greater United States. There are six shipping terminals in Charleston, the east coast's fourth busiest port, contributing \$53 billion into South Carolina's annual economy and connecting shipping containers to trucks and tourists to cruise lines. Similar to other cities, Charleston is a car-oriented city although 3 percent of residents report commuting to work by walking. Charleston is fragmented by rivers and inlets and is a terminus for I-26, limiting through traffic.

Physical planning initiatives

- Charleston has a full suite of planning documents including:
- Comprehensive Plan
- Zoning
- Neighborhood Plans
- Greenways Plan
- Preservation Plan
- Transportation Planning
- Bike / ped improvements planning
- 10,000 Trees for Charleston

Livability and quality of life

- 82 score on AreaVibes compared to 79 for Asheville
- #56 in Education according to Forbes. Asheville is #58
- #36 Best Places for Business and Careers according to Forbes. Asheville is #12
- Livability score of 55 on AARP. Asheville's is 56

Health and Wellness metrics

- Lighten Up Charleston
- 79.54 Health Care according to Numbeo compared to 82.64 for Asheville
- Environment score according to AARP 65. Asheville is 58
- Health score according to AARP 54. Asheville is 53

Historic and cultural amenities

- Charleston performing arts center
- North Charleston Performing Arts Center
- Charleston Regional Alliance for the Arts
- Charleston Regional Alliance for the Arts
- Cultural Arts Department
- City of Charleston Office of Cultural Affairs
- Historic Charleston Foundation
- Preservation Society of Charleston
- Charleston Heritage Federation
- 93 properties on the National Historic Registry
- 34 of the National Historic Landmark
- Spoleto-Charleston Initiative

Higher education institutions

- College of Charleston
- The Citadel
- Art Institute of Charleston
- Charleston School of Law
- Charleston Southern University
- Limestone College
- Saint Leo University
- Southern Wesleyan University
- Webster University
- Lowcountry Graduate Center
- Medical University of South Carolina
- Trident Technical College

Parks and Open Space

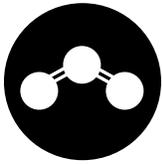
The city currently owns and is responsible for 120 parks which consist of approximately 1,809 acres of parks and open space 211 buildings which total 3.67 million square feet of building space.

SUSTAINABILITY APPROACH //

SUSTAINABILITY APPROACH

To date the Municipal Sustainable Management Plan has quantified key areas well, and defined progress towards sustainable goals in several strategic content areas.

In order to set the stage for continued Strategic Sustainability Success:



Greenhouse Gas Emissions



Buildings, Public Facilities, & Street Lighting



Transportation



Water Systems



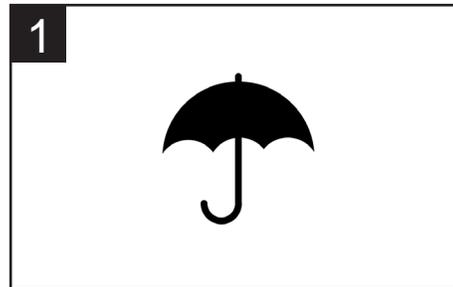
Solid Waste



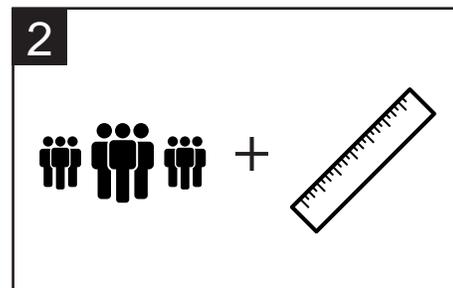
Land Use



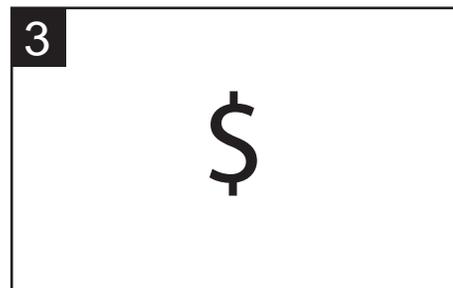
Education & Communication



"Sustainability Coordinator" unlocks potential between City Departments

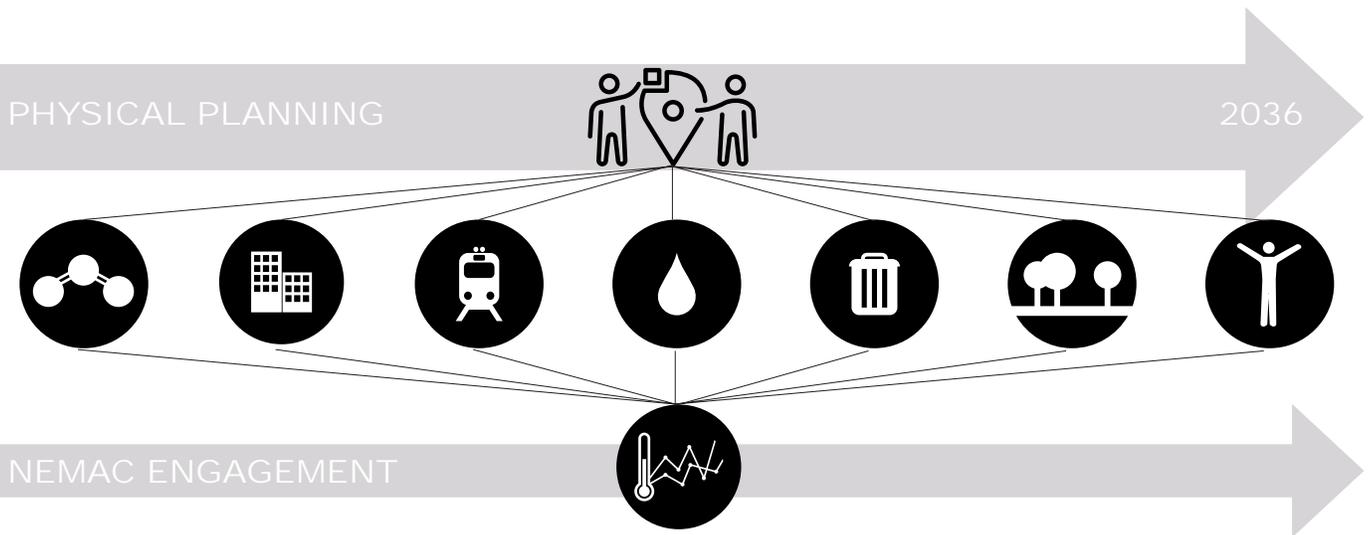


Link "Quality of Life" to "Performance Metrics" through Spatial Planning



Successful Financing, including Dis-incentivizing unsustainable development patterns

Moving forward the Comprehensive Plan should clearly combine physical planning with sustainable goals and targets



To date Asheville has created a strong plan identifying goals and inventorying the state of the Environment. Significant progress has been made to reduce the carbon footprint and associated energy, water and waste of City operations. The next step is to continue this strong trajectory of City savings, while enabling Residents to contribute further to the cities environmental footprint.

Studies have shown that cities perform better, environmentally, compared to their host nations. This is in large part due to compact planning, progressive policy, and creative financing. The biggest contributor to a smaller environmental footprint for Asheville will be facilitating compact development beyond downtown. As such the Planning team believes that a strong focus should be put on this to ensure the continued success of Asheville’s long term Environmental Goals.

Future planning should strongly dovetail Spatial Planning with Sustainability Goals and Metrics. By leveraging Asheville’s “Sustainability Coordinator” the team can vigilantly create a feedback loop that breaks down the barriers between city departments and gives clear guidance regarding how each goal can be achieved with, many of which will require the input of various city agencies. Partners such as NEMAC will be critical to the success and scientific credibility of the team’s next steps.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND RESILIENCY STRATEGIES

Engagement with NEMAC

Concurrent to the comp planning work, UNC Asheville's National Environmental and Modeling Center (NEMAC) is engaged in a multi-faceted effort alongside city leaders to develop options for how Asheville can best prepare for climate-related hazards.

NEMAC has existed for 11 years at the intersection of academia, government, and private enterprise, and six years ago led the technical elements of the climate adaptation plan for the state of North Carolina. NEMAC offers a variety of tools to address climate change and resiliency.

As part of this effort, NEMAC is enhancing its multi-hazard risk tool for Buncombe County to increase its utility from a parcel-based risk exposure tool to a vulnerability and risk tool that assesses multiple assets. NEMAC is using this tool to analyze Asheville's risk associated with floods, landslides, drought and wildfires, and other hazards, and will use this information to provide a vulnerability analysis that defines linkages between threats and an understanding of key city assets. This work will be informed by efforts in previous planning and the comp plan to define city priorities and identify its most valuable assets.

NEMAC's final report is projected to be completed by the end of 2016, midway through the comp plan process. The Planning Team is aware of NEMAC's ongoing efforts, and will work to understand and incorporate NEMAC's findings as a tool to inform the plan's recommendations with regard to sustainability, resiliency, and other factors. Select recommendations from NEMAC's report may also be incorporated into the draft and final comp plan strategies.

Additional Measures

The Planning Team's recommendations will regard to resiliency and climate change will also be informed by the state's climate adaptation plan, the GroWNC sustainability initiative, and stakeholder-level engagement with NEMAC and the City's Sustainability Coordinator to understand issues such as flooding, droughts, slope stability, vulnerability, risk, stormwater and transportation challenges, and the many programs and initiatives the city is already conducting.

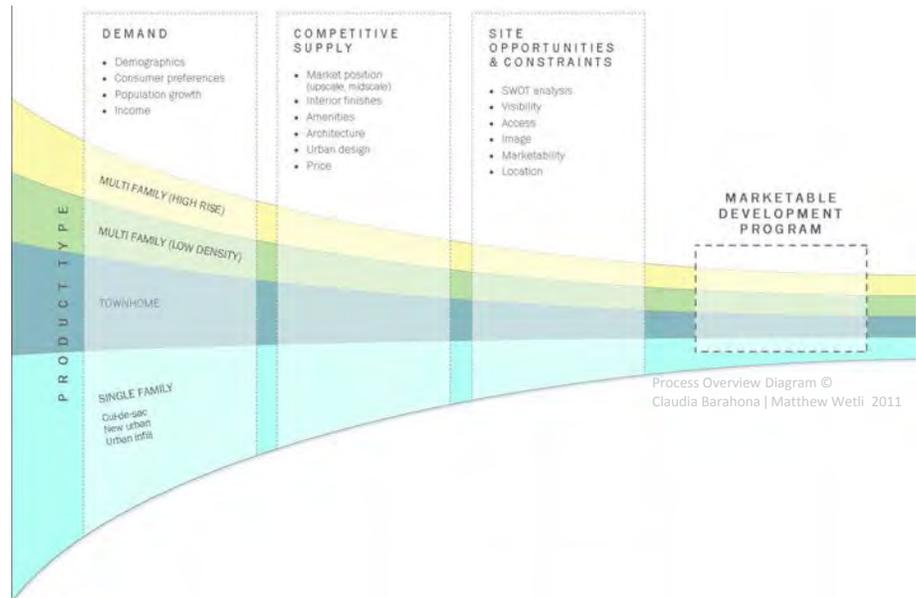
IN-PROGRESS ECONOMIC ANALYSIS //

BASELINE ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

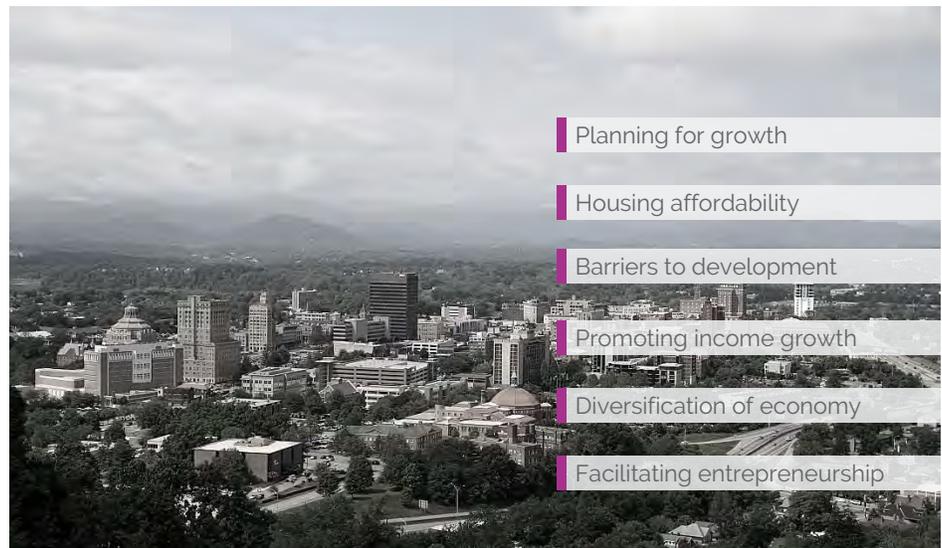
About the Baseline Analysis:

Market analysis can be conducted on a variety of scales from site to neighborhood to city to region. It must entail the evaluation of supply and demand across a variety of uses, and it must offer a blend of art (qualitative) and science (quantitative).



Preliminary Findings:

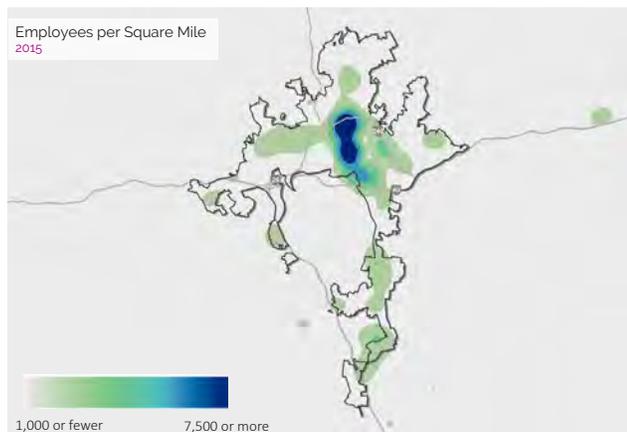
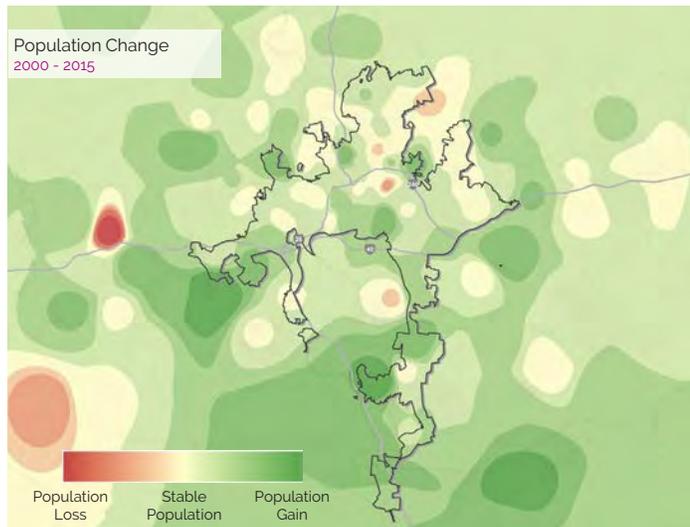
Needs of the community:



BASELINE ANALYSIS

DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

Spatial Analysis:
Population Change
Median Household Income
Employees per Square Mile

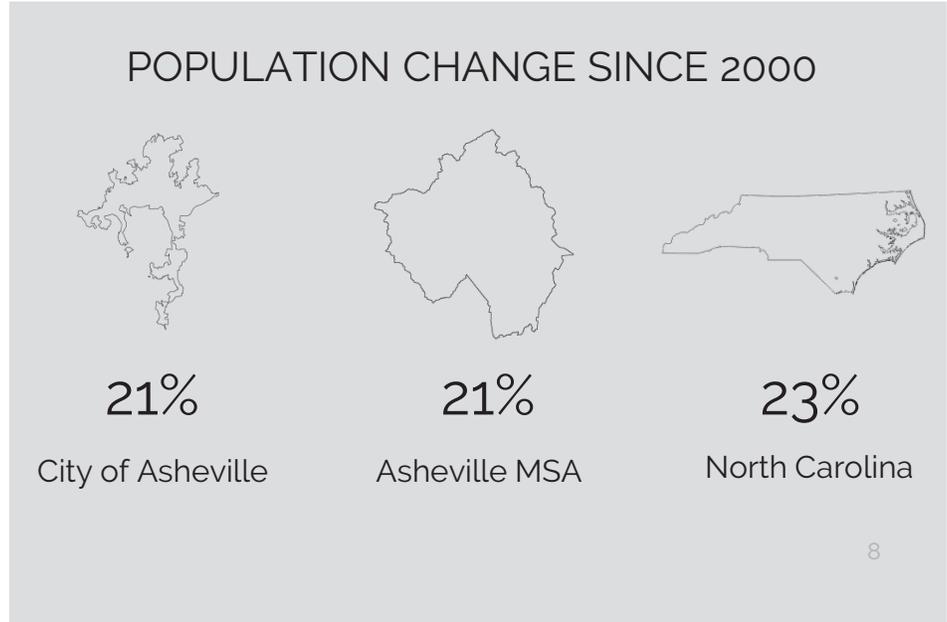


BASELINE ANALYSIS

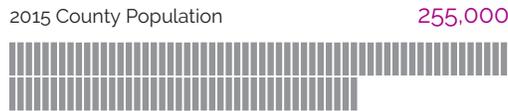
DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

Demographic indicators:

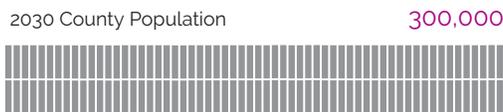
- City makes up 20 percent of MSA and 35 percent of county population
- City and MSA growing at a similar rate
- Peer cities generally had faster regional growth than city growth (more sprawl)
- Most households moving to Buncombe County already live in North Carolina



Population Projections



Currently, Asheville represents 35% of Buncombe County's population. If this distribution of population continues, the city will have a population of 105,000 in 2030.



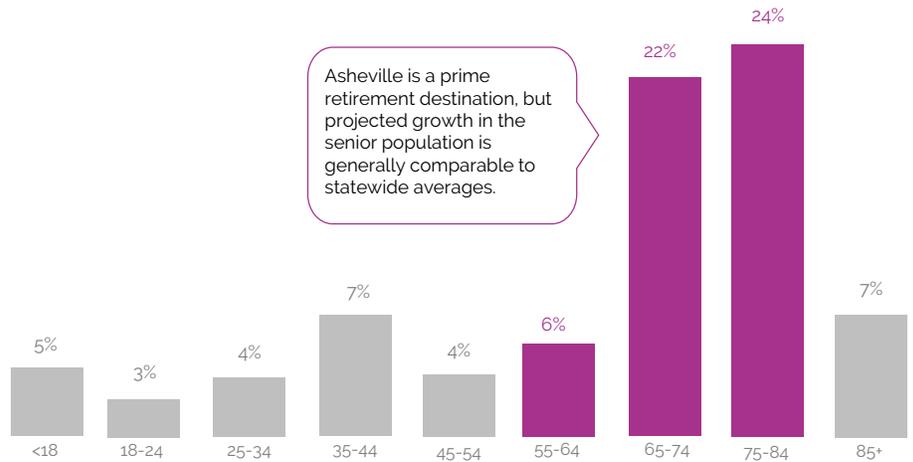
County's Projected Population Growth (2015-2030)	City of Asheville's Share of County's Population Growth	Persons Per Household in Asheville (2016)	City of Asheville's Share of New Households
45,000 people	16,000 residents	2.15	7,500 households

BASELINE ANALYSIS

DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

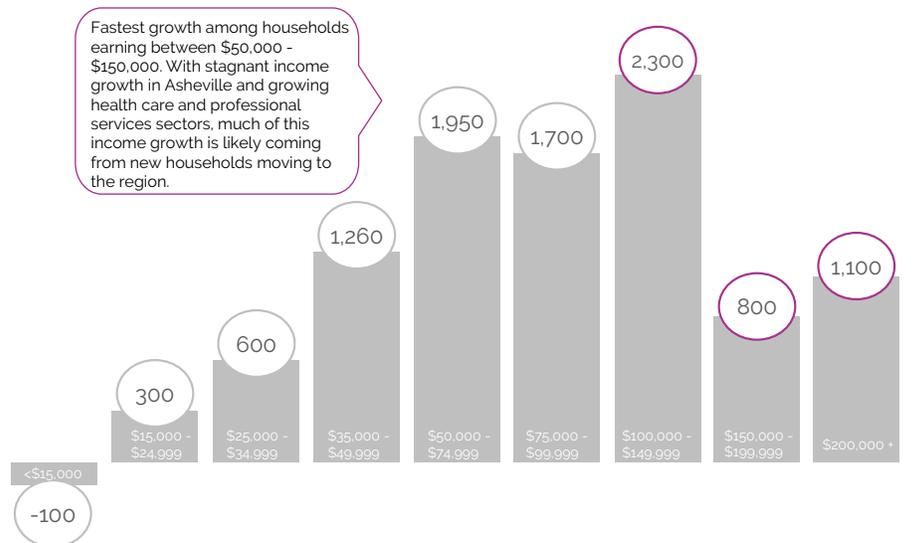
Asheville Projected Change in Population by Age, 2016-2021

- Based on projections from ESRI, the City of Asheville's will add approximately 7,000 residents in the next five years
- The City of Asheville population is expected to grow (8 percent increase) faster than the state of North Carolina (6 percent increase)
- The population of residents older than 65 will increase by 20 percent; however, this growth is comparable to the state of North Carolina



Asheville Change Household by Income, 2010-2016

- From 2000-2016, there was faster growth among households earning between \$50,000 and \$150,000.
- With stagnant income growth in Asheville and growing health care and professional services sectors, much of this income growth is likely coming from new households moving to the region
- Still analyzing whether wealthy retirees moving to Asheville are having a significant impact on these numbers



BASELINE ANALYSIS

DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

Educational Attainment:

- Since 2009, educational levels have increased substantially in the city of Asheville—the number of individuals aged 25 and older with at least a bachelor's degree has increased by 42 percent.
- Consistent with national trends of urban areas increasing their share of a younger and highly educated population, from 2009 to 2014, the number of individuals aged 25 to 34 with at least a bachelor's degree increased by almost 59 percent.
- The number of individuals without a high school diploma also decreased by 17 percent from 2009 to 2014.

91



Since 2009, educational levels have increased substantially in the city of Asheville:

▲ 42%

the number of individuals aged 25 and older with at least a bachelor's degree

▼ 17%

the number of individuals without a high school diploma

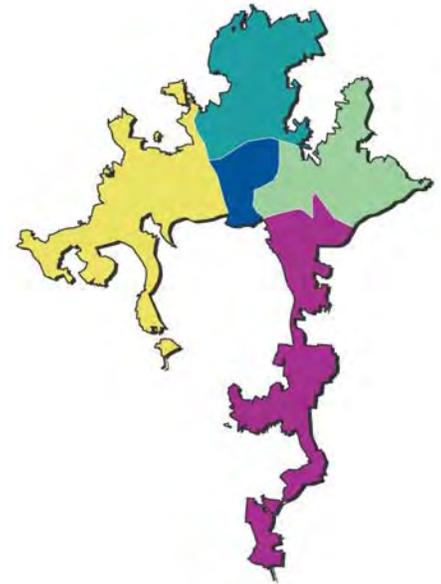
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BASELINE ANALYSIS

DEMOGRAPHICS OF ASHEVILLE'S SUB-DISTRICTS

Educational Attainment:

- South Asheville has had the fastest population growth since 2000 followed by West Asheville
- Since 2010, population growth has been relatively consistent throughout the city
- Population density is generally consistent throughout the city; this presents challenges for TOD, since ideal densities are typically between 5K and 15K units per square mile
- Median household income is generally consistent throughout the city, except for Central Asheville that has a larger concentration of low-income households
- Housing values are generally consistent throughout the city except for North Asheville with home values more than 1.5 times the median home value
- Generally, the distribution of owners and renters is comparable throughout the city, although there is a much higher proportion of renters in Central Asheville.



Population Change 2000 - 2010	Population Change 2010 - 2016	Population per Sq. Mi.	Median HH Income	Median Home Value	Percent Renter
Central					
4%	8%	2,060	\$22,000	\$191,000	72%
North					
6%	8%	2,130	\$47,000	\$352,000	50%
South					
27%	12%	2,190	\$43,000	\$198,000	55%
East					
5%	11%	1,710	\$47,000	\$221,000	48%
West					
14%	8%	1,990	\$40,000	\$183,000	46%

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BASELINE ANALYSIS

ECONOMY

Key Industrial Sectors:

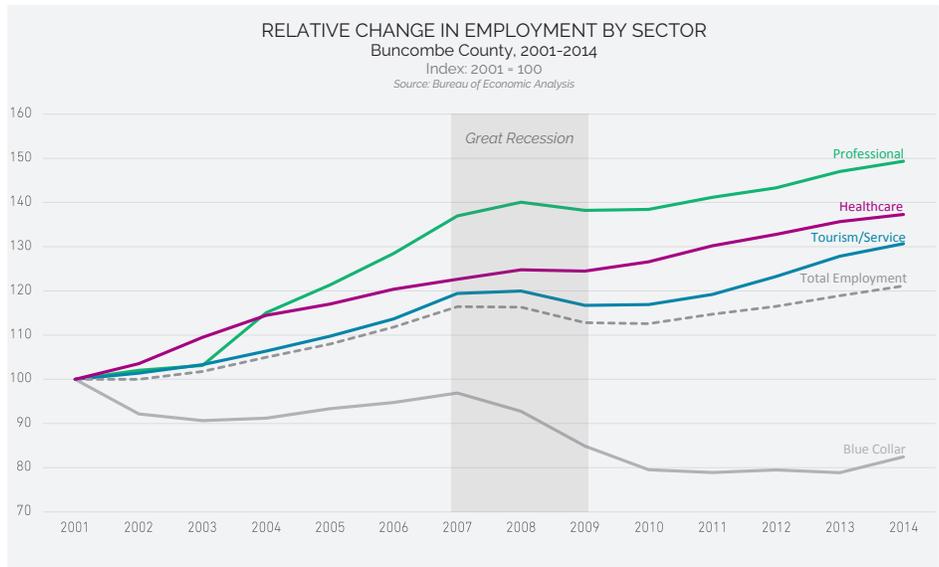
- Location quotient shows the relative proportion of employment in a given industry sector compared to the national average
- Location quotient of 1.0 indicates the national average
- Location quotient >1.0 indicates a relatively higher employment concentration and in most cases, a regional competitive advantage
- The Asheville MSA (data unavailable at the city level) has higher-than-average location quotients for industries serving the tourism industry, health care, retail, real estate and construction.
- Despite losses in manufacturing jobs during the recession, Asheville still has a strong concentration in manufacturing employment

LOCATION QUOTIENT, BUNCOMBE COUNTY, 2014
Compared to National MSA Employment Distribution
US Average = 1.0



Employment change:

- Based on relative employment growth by sector, Buncombe County has seen the greatest proportion increase in professional services jobs since 2001. These sectors include Professional, scientific, and technical services, Business and finance, Information, Real estate, Administrative support, and Management of companies
- Both Health care and tourism has also experienced significant growth since 2001
- Since 2001, employment in “blue collar” sectors, including Manufacturing, Construction, Wholesale trade, and Transportation and warehousing has decreased by 17 percent in Buncombe County for a net loss of over 6,000 jobs. These jobs (generally not requiring a college education) are essentially being replaced by tourism- and retail-oriented jobs, which have increased by 35 percent since 2001.



BASELINE ANALYSIS

ECONOMY

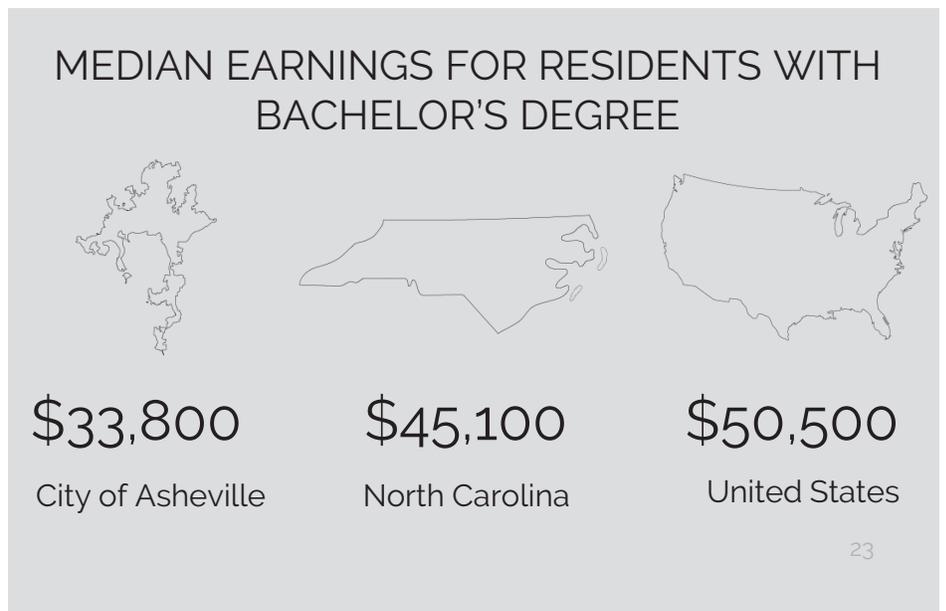
Regional Employment Projections:

- Over the next 10 years, employment in Western North Carolina is expected to increase by 14.6 percent, exceeding national employment growth projections (6.5 percent)
- The top ten occupations with the fastest projected growth nationally are expected to grow even faster in Western North Carolina. More importantly, the majority of these jobs pay more than the average wage.



Income:

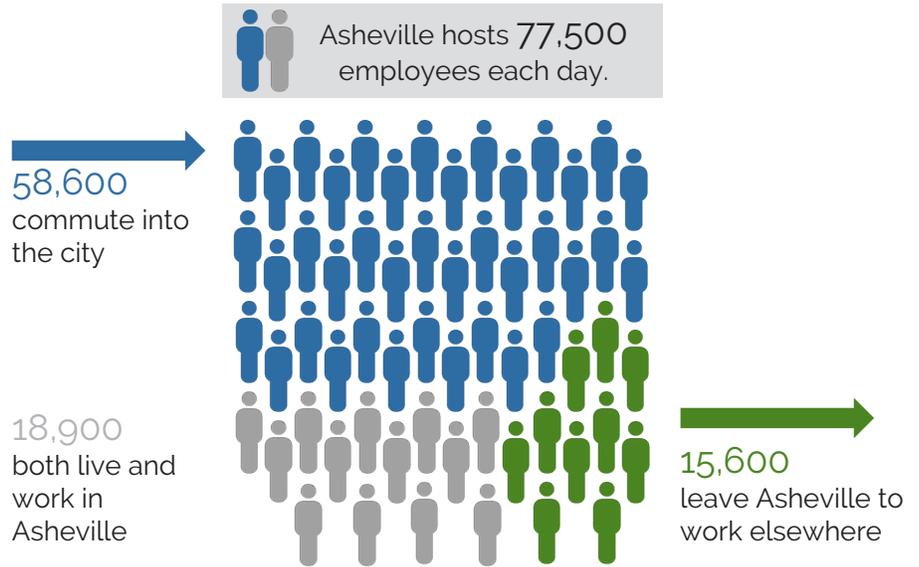
- Median household income is generally lower in Asheville compared to peer cities
- Poverty rate lower than peer cities
- Asheville is highly educated, but not compensated accordingly



BASELINE ANALYSIS

ECONOMY

Commuting Patterns:



Commuting Patterns:

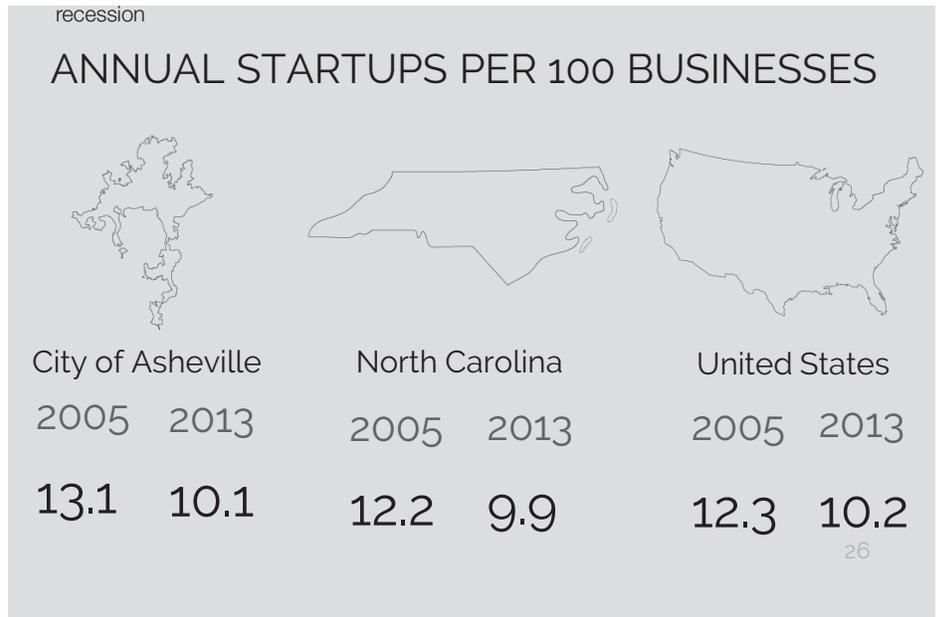


BASELINE ANALYSIS

ECONOMY

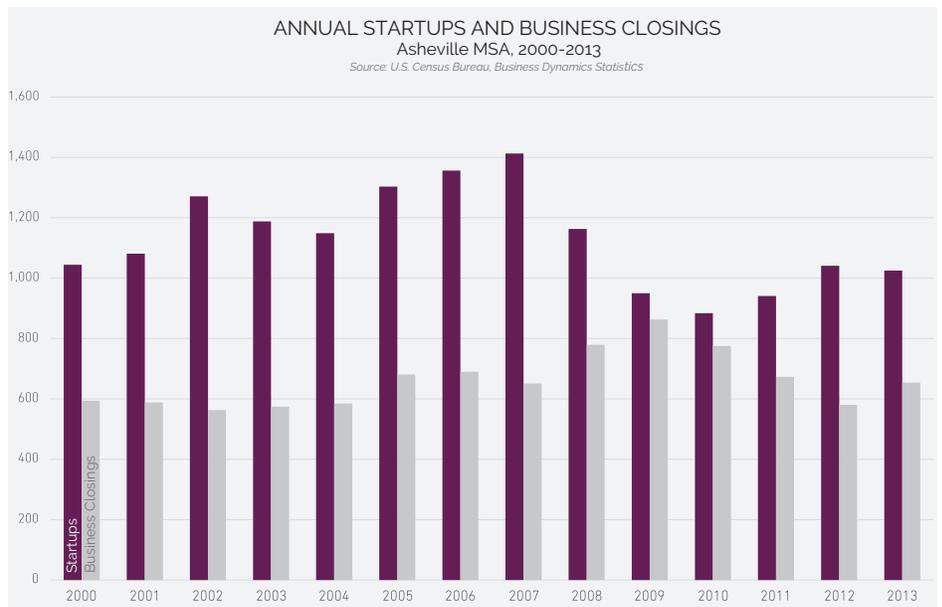
Entrepreneurship:

- Startup business rate higher than the national average pre-Recession
- Startup business rate generally lower than the national average post-Recession
- Since Recession, total startups increasing and total business closings decreasing



Startups:

- Total number of annual startup businesses increased from 2004 until the start of the recession, but then experienced a significant decline
- Since the end of the recession, the total number of annual startups in the region has not yet reached 2002 levels
- The total number of annual business closings continues to decline since the

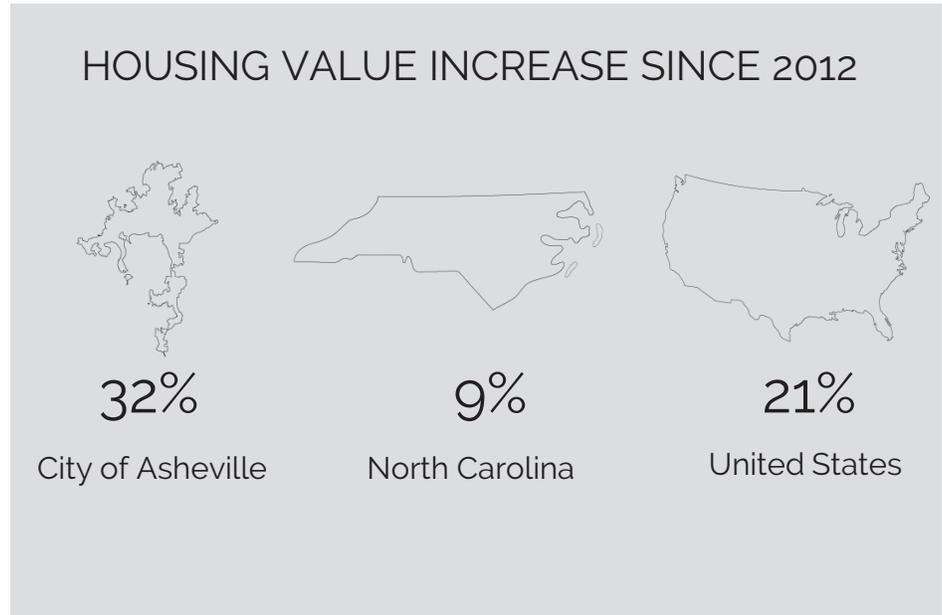


BASELINE ANALYSIS

HOUSING

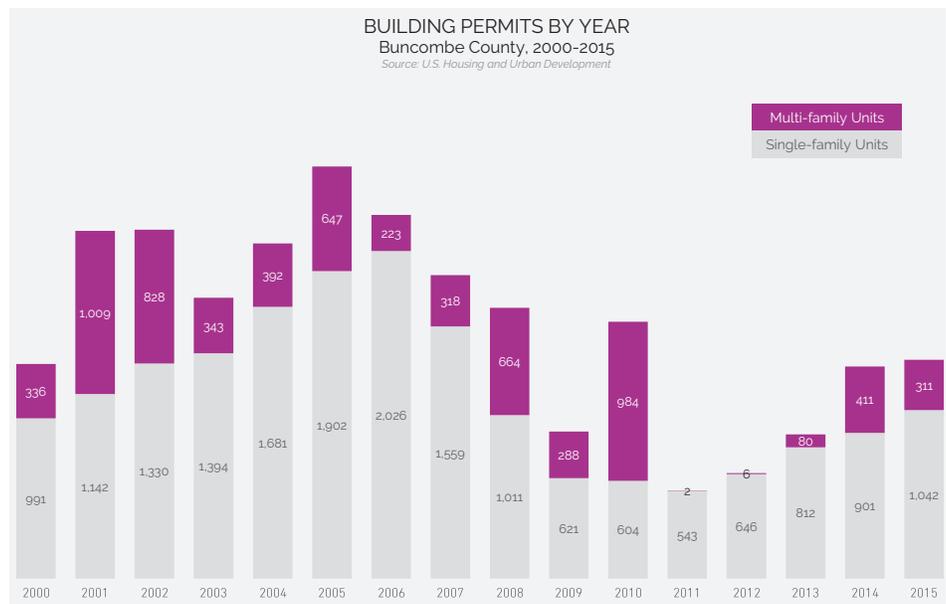
Affordability:

- Many indicators suggest that housing is affordable:
- 45 percent of renters in Asheville spend more than 30 percent of income on rent, which is lowest among peer cities
- 40 percent of owner-occupied housing is by households earning less than \$50,000, which is higher than most peer cities
- However, housing prices are rapidly increasing



Residential Building Activity:

- From 2000 to 2009, Buncombe County added approx. 14,600 households with 18,700 permits issued
- From 2010 to 2016, Buncombe County added approx. 8,300 households with 6,300 permits issued



BASELINE ANALYSIS

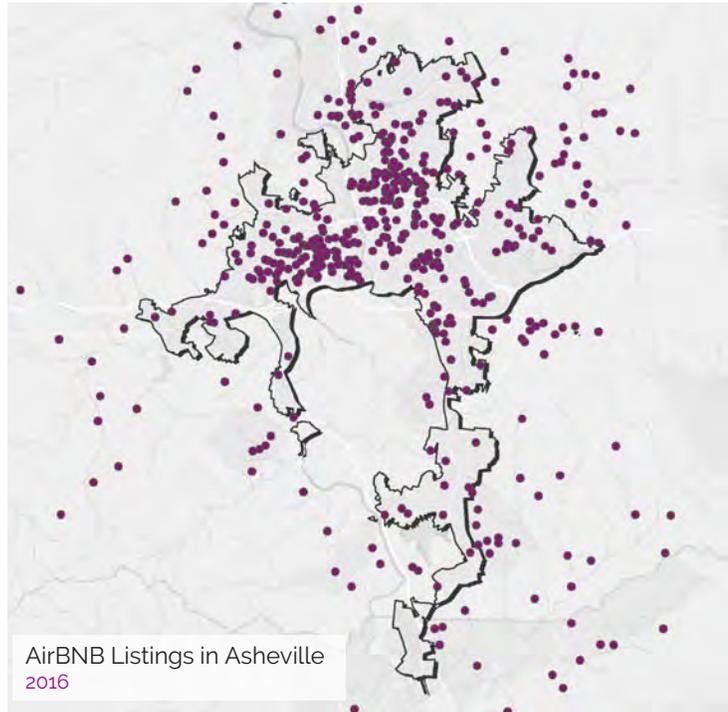
ECONOMY

Impact of vacation rentals:

- Can lead to housing supply constraints and increasing costs by directly competing for available housing if visitor-serving use is more profitable than residential use.
- Growth of websites facilitating short term rentals (Airbnb, VRBO, etc) has made it easier for residents to offer housing for vacation rental use
- Homes in visitor-serving areas can be targeted by those seeking investment opportunities

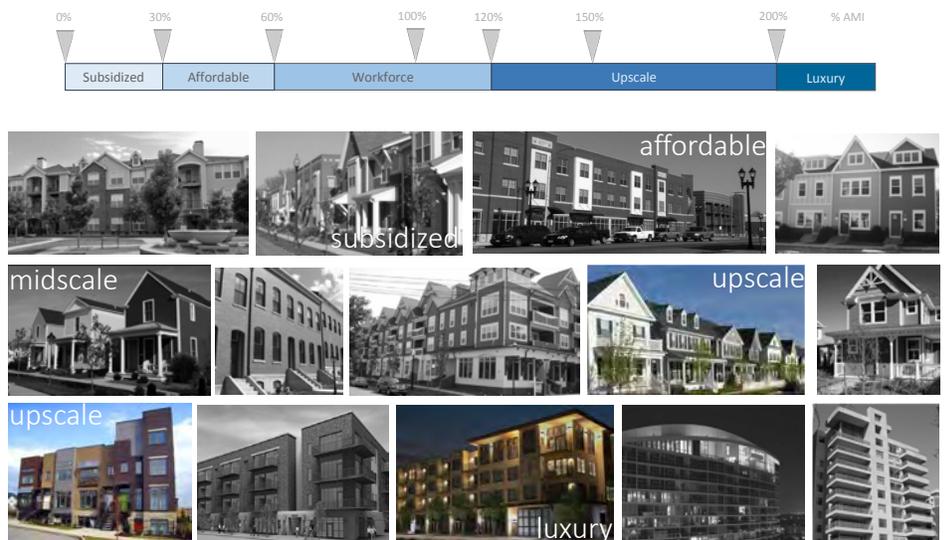
Rich retirees:

- Recently US News & World Report named Asheville one of “10 Best Places to Retire.”
- “With the issue of housing, for example, retirees have been shaping Asheville home prices by buying second-homes at prices locals cannot afford. At the same time, the retirement-aged population is also one of the most vulnerable communities impacted by rising housing costs.”



Affordability:

- The term “affordable housing” can often refer to housing supported with subsidy, but also housing that is affordable.
- The following chart shows the continuum of housing terminology based on the percent of Area Median Income.
- According to HUD, the median household income (AMI) for a four-person household in the Asheville region is \$57,900; therefore, in this case “affordable housing” refers to households earning between \$17,400 and \$34,700.

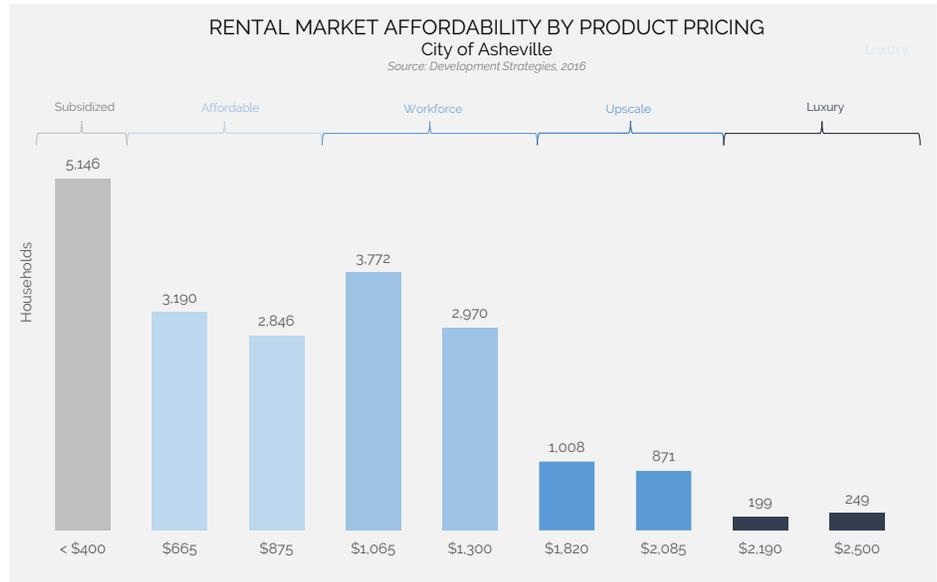


BASELINE ANALYSIS

HOUSING

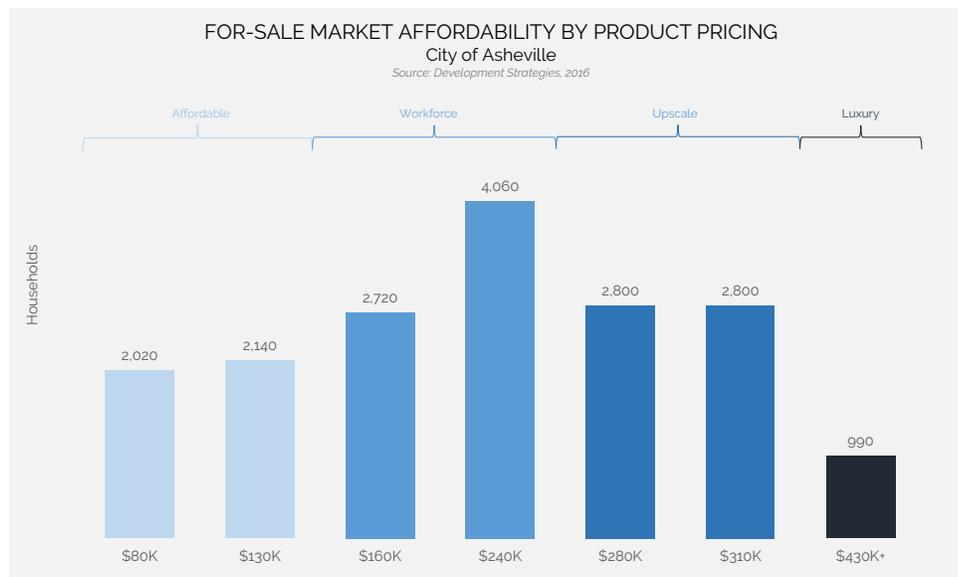
Rental Demand Pricing:

- This chart shows how many households can afford rents by rental product
- Based on total households by income bracket, total owner-renter households by income bracket, and average percentage of income spent on rent by income bracket
- For example, 5,146 renter households in Asheville can only afford rents of \$400 or less, while there are around 2,300 renter households that can afford rents of more than \$1,820.



For-Sale Demand Pricing:

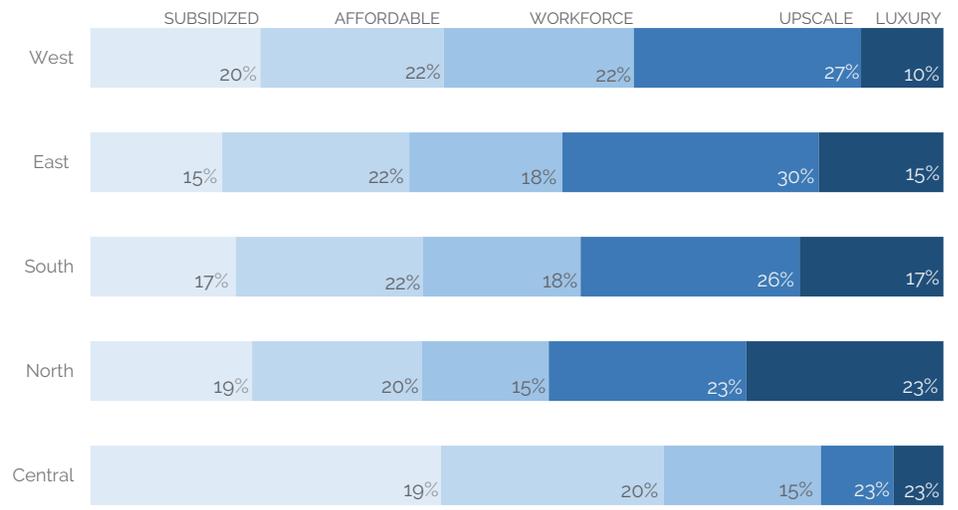
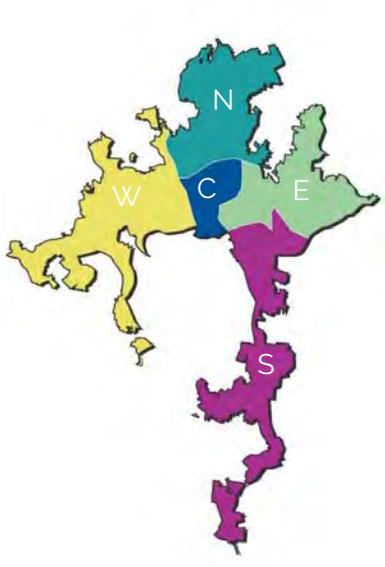
- This chart shows how many households can afford housing by pricing
- Based on total households by income bracket, total owner-renter households by income bracket, and average percentage of income spent on housing (mortgage, insurance, taxes, maintenance) by income bracket
- In this case, it is assumed very low-income households cannot enter the for-sale market without significant subsidy.
- The largest proportion of households can afford homes of \$240,000, which is consistent with the median home value of around \$230,000.
- However, the stock of homes priced at or below \$240,000 is in short supply, which presents challenges for nearly half of the households in Asheville.



BASELINE ANALYSIS

HOUSING

Affordability by sub-district:

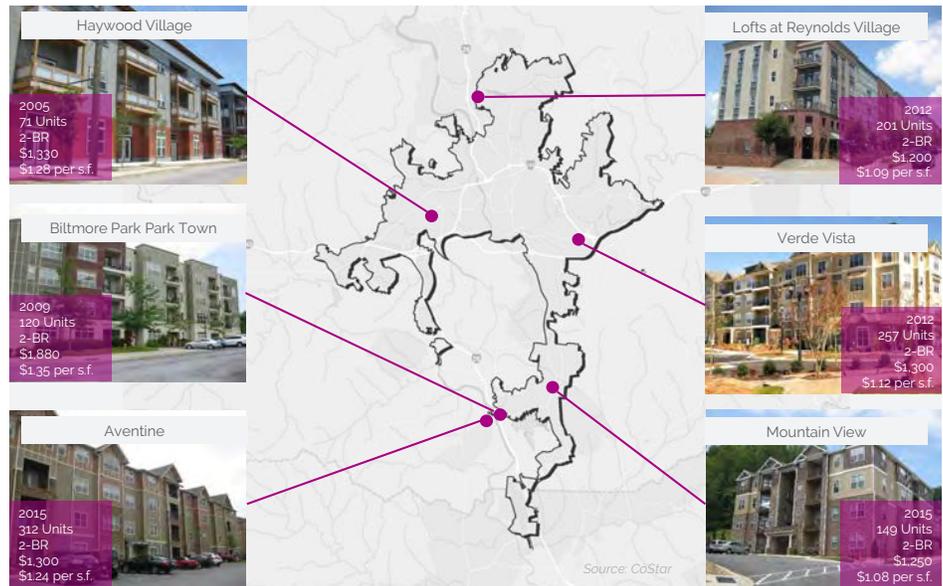


BASELINE ANALYSIS

LAND USE

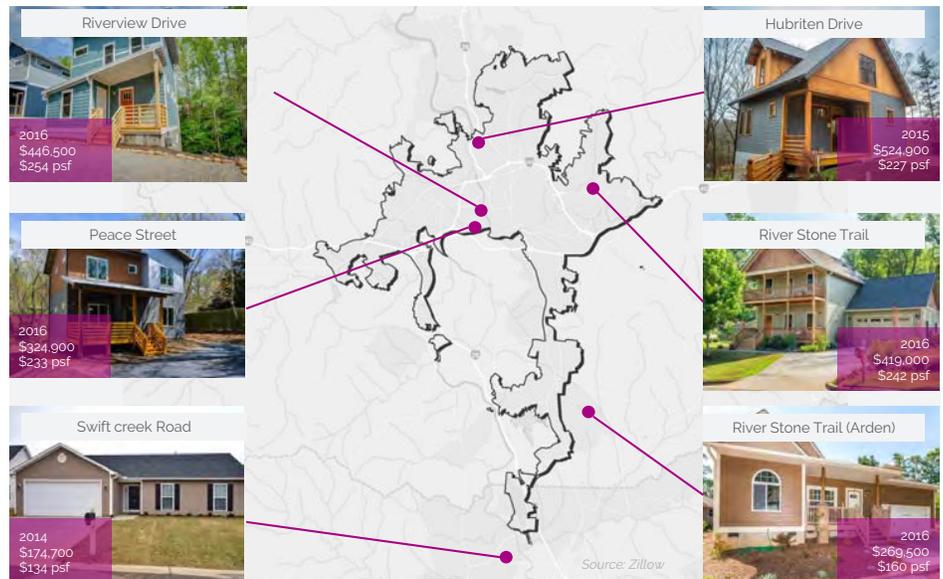
Rental Residential Supply:

- Most of the new rental product built in the last 5 to 10 years is located on the fringes of the city with limited access to public transportation.
- The Biltmore Park Park Town achieves the highest rents per square foot with an average of \$1.35.
- These properties are generally affordable to households earning more than \$50,000 annually.



For-Sale Residential Supply:

- New single-family construction in the city of Asheville is generally above \$230 per square foot
- New construction just beyond the city limit, such as in Arden, is more affordable with prices between \$130 to \$160 per square foot
- Prices and condition vary considerably for older homes, but recent sales show that smaller homes generally start at around \$250,000 for a price per square foot of \$200 up to \$250. Even larger homes tend to follow the \$200 to \$250 price per square foot trend.

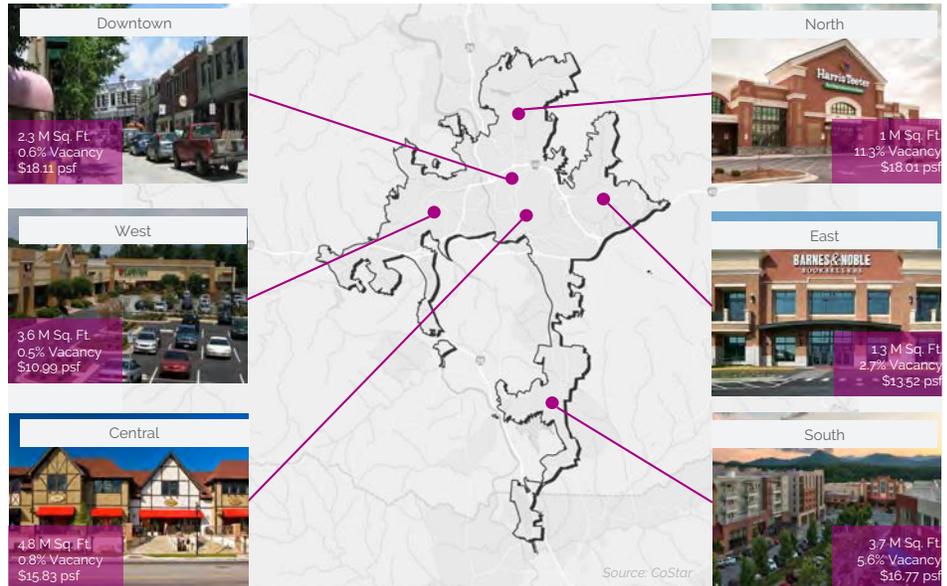


BASELINE ANALYSIS

LAND USE

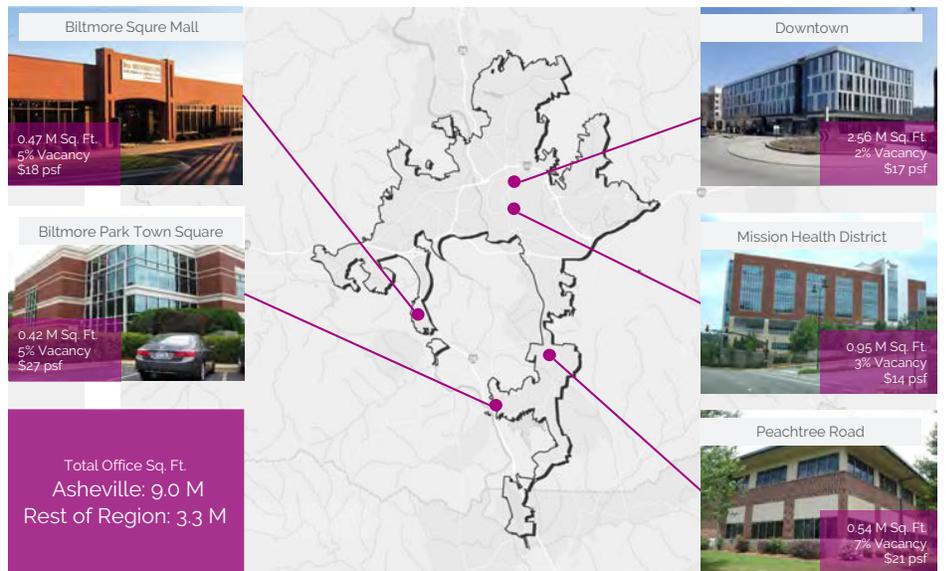
Retail Supply:

- The City of Asheville has roughly half of the total retail space in the region (15.4 million SF of 30.6 million SF)
- Retail in Downtown Asheville achieves the highest rents and a vacancy rate of 0.6%, which could make operating in Downtown unaffordable for many businesses
- Note that CoStar only reports data on properties with active listings and does not count abandoned/obsolete properties
- West Asheville, which includes the Patton Avenue Corridor, achieves the lowest rents in the city, but still consistent with regional averages



Office Supply:

- Downtown and Central Asheville account for more than half of the total office space in the city and 41 percent of the total office space in the region
- Downtown office space does not achieve higher rent premiums compared to most of the other office clusters in the region; however, vacancy is only at two percent indicating high demand
- Biltmore Park achieves the highest rents in the region

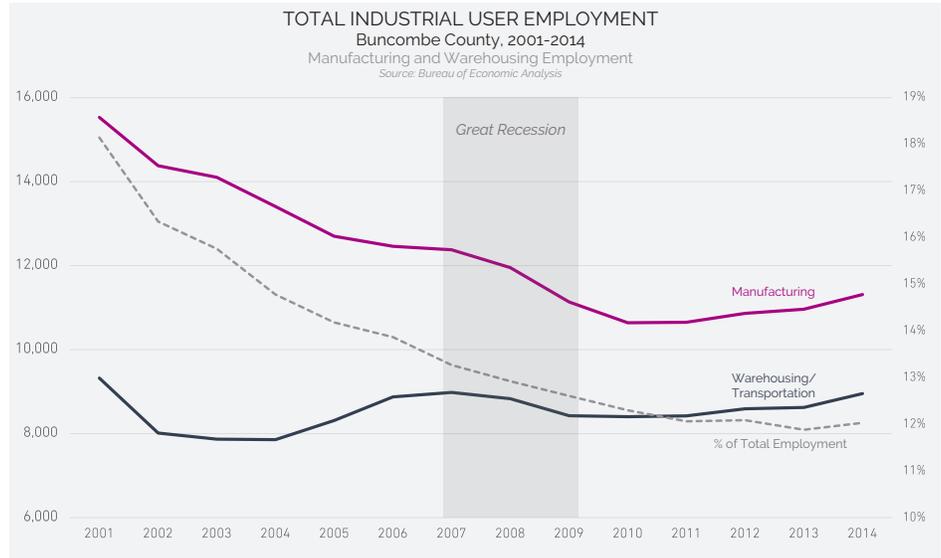


BASELINE ANALYSIS

LAND USE PROJECTIONS

Industrial Demand:

- Without positive job growth in manufacturing or shipping/warehousing since 2001 and with limited projected job growth over the next 10 years, there is little to no demand for new industrial space
- However, this planning process will need to evaluate the strategic positioning of the region and the support for maintaining a strong industrial base



Real Estate Demand Projections:

- Based on employment projections by occupation and assumptions about average square footage per worker by occupational category, there will be net new demand for 2.59 million square feet of conventional office space, 2.46 million square feet of medical office space, and 260,000 square feet of civic space
- The data represents the Western North Carolina Region, as reported by the North Carolina Department of Commerce
- As the primary population and employment center in the greater Western North Carolina region, Asheville could be positioned to capture a large proportion of this demand, if the proper office products are available.



RESIDENTIAL/HOUSING

Projected 15 year demand for Asheville:
Population Growth | 16,000 residents
New Housing Units Needed To Satisfy Demand | 7,500
THIS PACE OF DEVELOPMENT IS ACHIEVABLE ASSUMING ACCESS TO DEVELOPABLE LAND AND AFFORDABILITY



RETAIL

Average Household Spending On Retail | \$31,200
City's Net Increase In Retail Spending By 2030 | \$234M
To Maintain Competitive Position, The City Of Asheville Needs To ADD 16 MILLION SQUARE FEET OVER THE NEXT 15 YEARS.



OFFICE

Projected 10 year office demand in Western NC:
CONVENTIONAL | 2.59M sq. ft
MEDICAL | 2.46M sq. ft
CIVIC | 260,000 sq. ft



INDUSTRIAL

Very little projected manufacturing employment growth
ASSESSMENT OF FUTURE INDUSTRIAL REAL ESTATE NEEDS IS TBD

BASELINE ANALYSIS

IMPLEMENTATION

Preliminary Catalytic Development Concepts:

Based on the market analysis and preliminary stakeholder interviews, the following “preliminary catalytic development concepts” were identified as potential focus areas to provide a framework for the proceeding housing, economic development, and land use strategy formation phase. Future goals and strategies related to these concepts should have the most impactful, or catalytic, outcomes related to the housing, economic development and land use needs of the city and region.

- Mixed-use corridors
- Transit-oriented development (TOD)
- Mixed-income housing
- River Arts District Implementation
- Entrepreneurship & Innovation
- Leverage Competitive Assets



TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS //

TRANSPORTATION OVERVIEW

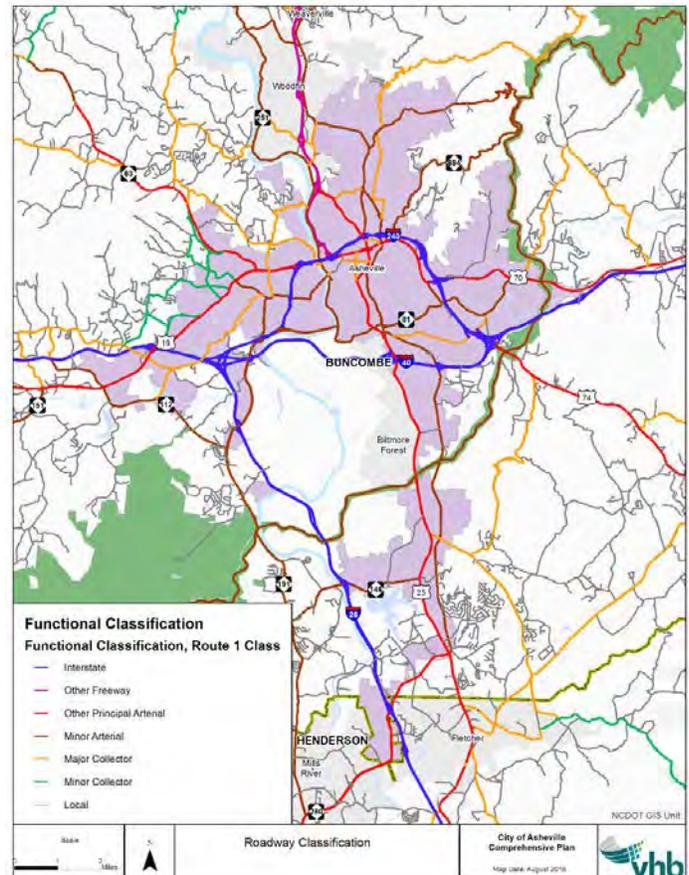
Asheville is the largest city in western North Carolina, and its importance is highlighted by the confluence of transportation resources. Two regionally significant interstates, I-26 and I-40, meet in Asheville and a third, I-240, partially rings the city. Other important transportation corridors in Asheville include Merrimon Avenue, Tunnel Road, Patton Avenue, Haywood Road, Broadway Street, Biltmore Avenue, Brevard Road, Hendersonville Road, and Charlotte Street.

Asheville is a popular tourist destination, which brings its own transportation challenges. Visitors are likely to cluster around events and seasonal spikes (high in summer months, weekends, and fall holidays) and are likely to put a particular strain on major routes and interstates. Parking access and wayfinding is important for visitors who are unfamiliar with the city and unlikely to know where to hunt for available spaces. Services like transit may be able to attract visitors but need specific marketing and simple structures for unfamiliar patrons.

Asheville's transportation network is growing and evolving as the city changes. Significant improvements have been made in the last ten years to transit service with ridership growing over that time. Asheville is a progressive community with a strong healthfulness focus, which has increased demand for new bicycling facilities, sidewalks, and greenways. Still, challenges remain to improve transit frequency, expand sidewalk coverage, improve ADA compliance, incorporate bike facilities into existing and future roadways, and expand the greenway network.

The mountainous terrain makes many new transportation infrastructure projects more expensive than in flatter communities, a significant challenge in developing new projects. The terrain also makes retrofit projects more challenging (e.g., adding sidewalks) and is a particular barrier to transit where turning radii, grades, and horizontal clearances render some routes unusable for buses. The terrain also limits the number of alternate routes, concentrating traffic in a few corridors, and providing few options in case of road closure due to a traffic incident, natural disaster, or construction project. For example, I-40 is one of only a few interstate-level crossings of the Appalachian Mountains,

making it a vital component of the US interstate system and one with few alternatives in case of closures. Locally and regionally significant roadway projects must be carefully planned and programmed in order to improve mobility and safety. The increased cost of new infrastructure and the engineering challenge means Asheville should place a strategic emphasis on maintenance and operational solutions to improve performance, efficiency, and resilience. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities need to be carefully planned to maximize benefits and increase the interconnection throughout the network.

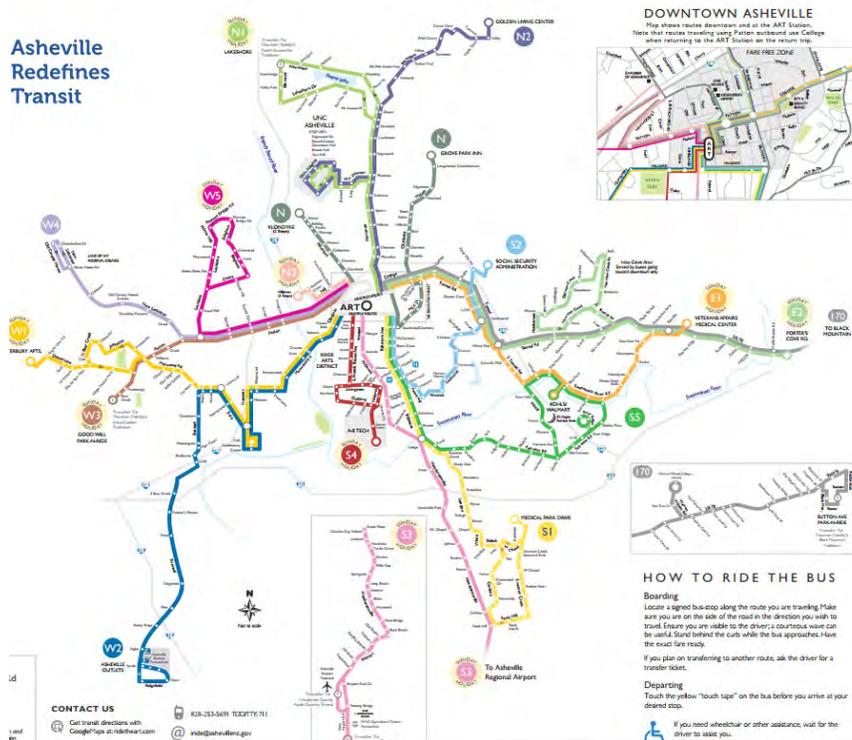


TRANSIT

Asheville's transit system, Asheville Redefines Transit (ART), provided about 1.5 million trips in 2014. Compared to peer agencies, ART performs in line with peers in terms of frequency of transit service, transit trips per service mile, and trip cost per rider. Relative to its peers, Asheville is challenged with respect to job accessibility via transit and transit funding from non-local sources. Almost 7% of Asheville households do not have access to a vehicle; for these households, transit service can be critical for access to jobs, services, and amenities.

The French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (FBRMPO) Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) includes transit recommendations for bus service in Asheville. These long-term recommendations include improvements in service to nearly all of the

routes in Asheville and several new routes. Improved transit service is an important component of the transportation network and improving mobility to and around Asheville, as are larger discussions about regional rail including the WNC Passenger Rail Initiative. While existing transit coverage in the city is good, there is a desire to improve frequency and accessibility. However, terrain limits routing options, with detrimental effects on travel times, system efficiency, and ridership. Missing or inadequate pedestrian infrastructure, particularly ADA-compliant facilities, further hampers transit use by limiting access to transit routes. There is also an opportunity to increase park-and-ride services to reduce the number of cars entering the downtown area and encourage increased use of transit.



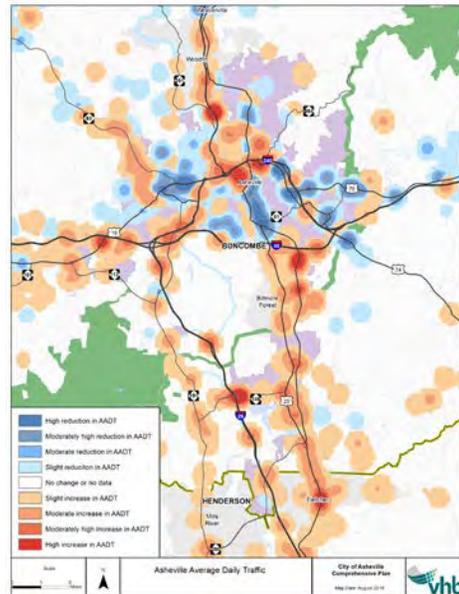
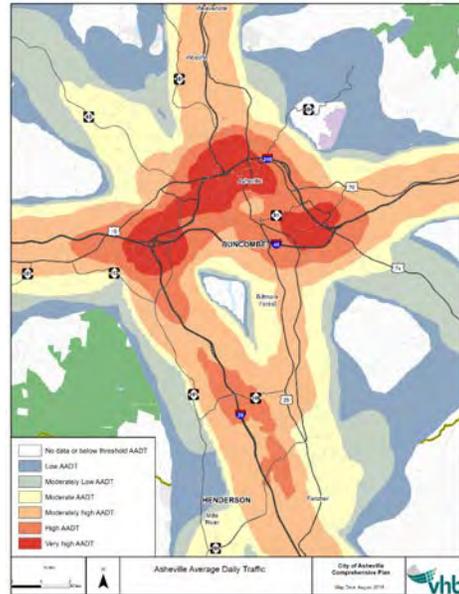
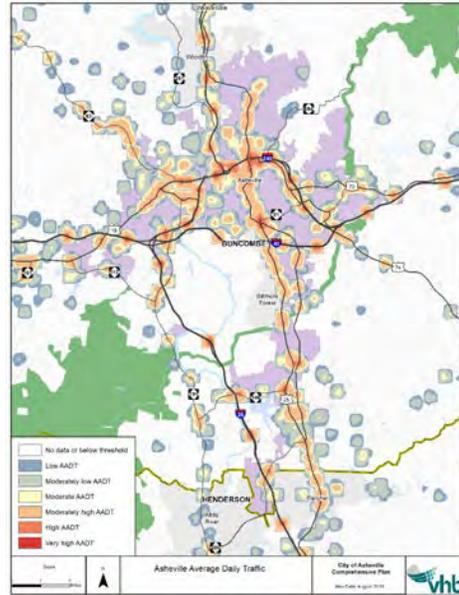
ROADWAYS

Asheville has a commute travel pattern that is typical of many American cities. Roughly 80% of commuters drive alone to work and a further 9% carpool. Work at home accounts for another 6% and the remaining 5% is split between walking, biking, taking transit, and other options. This suggests that pedestrian and bicycle travel are used primarily for non-work travel, including recreational travel. Driving is important for mobility for Asheville residents and visitors.

The major corridors are evident from Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) maps which are based on NCDOT counts of traffic volumes. The interstates and US routes are major carriers of vehicular traffic, and are especially critical for trucking and goods movement. These are important roads for both local and regional traffic. AADT is highest around the downtown area, particularly along I-240.

Traffic has generally grown in and around Asheville in the last ten years, based on NCDOT AADT count station data from 2002/03 to 2013/14. The major corridors have seen increases in AADT (I-26, US 25A, I-40, I-240) as has the area around the downtown CBD. Some neighborhoods west, east, and south of downtown have seen modest drops in AADT, possibly as a result of a shift in travel patterns, modes, or development.

Asheville has several important roadway projects planned for the near-term future. The most significant of these is the I-26 connector, a project which is funded in North Carolina's State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The I-26 Connector is an interstate improvements project on the western side of Asheville. The project will upgrade the interchange of I-26 / I-40 / I-240, widen I-240 west of Asheville, and provide an improved connection to US 19/23/70 north of Asheville on a new location, including a new crossing of the French Broad River. This project will provide mobility improvements to bottleneck in the current network and modernize a facility that does not meet current design standards and has a higher than average crash rate.



OTHER MODES

Pedestrian and Bicycle

Infrastructure for biking and walking in Asheville is heavily concentrated in the downtown area with most downtown streets have sidewalks on both sides of the road. Neighborhood streets in the areas immediately surrounding the downtown area also generally have decent sidewalk coverage. Sidewalks are spottier in areas further from downtown. Even in areas with sidewalk coverage, ADA-compliance is often lacking; pedestrian crossings, in particular, are often in need of upgrades. Improving safety and comfort for pedestrians is important and will also provide benefits to transit (increasing access to stops) and even parking and congestion (by encouraging “park once” behavior).

The same is generally true of on-road bicycle facilities; although there are only limited on-road facilities, those that exist are primarily in the downtown area. Both the CTP and the 2008 Asheville Bike Plan identify significant opportunities for the expansion of bicycle facilities. Further, the 2012 Buncombe Greenways and Trails plan identified 31 planned miles of greenway trails in Asheville and 102 in Buncombe County overall. As with all other modes, the terrain creates challenges and increases costs for retrofits.

Parking

Parking is an important consideration in terms of land use and travel options/choices. The success of many of Asheville’s neighborhoods is evident in the high parking utilization rates. Downtown parking garages and lots are more than 60% utilized during the lunchtime peak (11:00 am to 3:00 pm). While this indicates spare capacity, individual lots and garages have utilization rates approaching practical capacity. Many on-street facilities near downtown are more than 80% utilized during weekday night and weekend periods.

Other neighborhoods have seen successful commercial, dining, nightlife, and entertainment areas lead to parking spillover into residential neighborhoods. The Haywood Road area in West Asheville is increasingly becoming a popular destination and as a result, parking on Haywood Road is at practical capacities and nearby residential neighborhoods are experiencing parking overflow. Operational improvements and policy changes may need to be considered to better utilize existing spaces. Also, better pedestrian infrastructure may encourage more “park once” behavior.

STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH NOTES

Mariate Echeverry (Transit)

- Comp Plan should support community's vision (smart growth, multimodal); previous Comp Plan was not comprehensive enough with respect to multimodalism.
- Would like to see land use (regs?) & zoning advance transit
- Successful transit requires more than just good connections/facilities – need “destinations” (walkable, desirable...uses/places)
- Sprawl extends service area, increases costs, decreases efficiency/effectiveness
- Distant locations, too expensive to serve
- Buses cannot access all locations (grades, tight vertical/horizontal curves, narrow roads, nowhere to turn around)
- ADA (non)compliance is big concern
- Funding to go outside city limits is tenuous; funding in general is challenge
- Captive riders vs choice riders (not as many captive as people think)
- Would like to increase frequency & coverage
- Need safer bike/ped environment (for its own sake, and for transit access); more infrastructure (quality, comfort)

Successes

- Good coverage
- Staggered routes on corridors
- University partnerships (tenuous...one pulled out)

Threats

- Congestion and reliability

Opportunities

- Regional service
- Technology (already some success)

Jeff Moore (DOT)

- Balance (modal) is important. Bike/ped vs cars, esp at intersections (signal timing, crosswalks)
- Integrate modes – seamless; emphasize moving people over moving cars
- BRT and TOD is more efficient use of space
- Likes Patton Ave vision. Tunnel Rd is inaccessible for peds no bus riders
- Bike/ped safety concerns in low-income neighborhoods
- Could transit be marketed to visitors (Biltmore Village, RAD)? Frequent, simple, reliable.
- Park & Ride potential.
- Parking policy in general needs to be considered. Good garage access (for cars and for peds) needed downtown – “park once”
- Maximize existing infrastructure, efficiency (too expensive to expand/build new)
- Would like to see:
- Bus & emergency vehicle signal pre-emption
- Fee-in-lieu of for developers
- More extensive bus passes
- Bike facilities & amenities
- Also, better NCDOT coordination, even though they do work well together. Different goals, views.
- Things generally work pretty well, even though it's not easy. Work with what we have. Customer (citizen) relations is important.

Biggest worries:

- Speeding (need traffic calming)
- Development review process
- Parking
- Threat
- ADA suit – intersections, curb cuts/ramps.

OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY //

OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

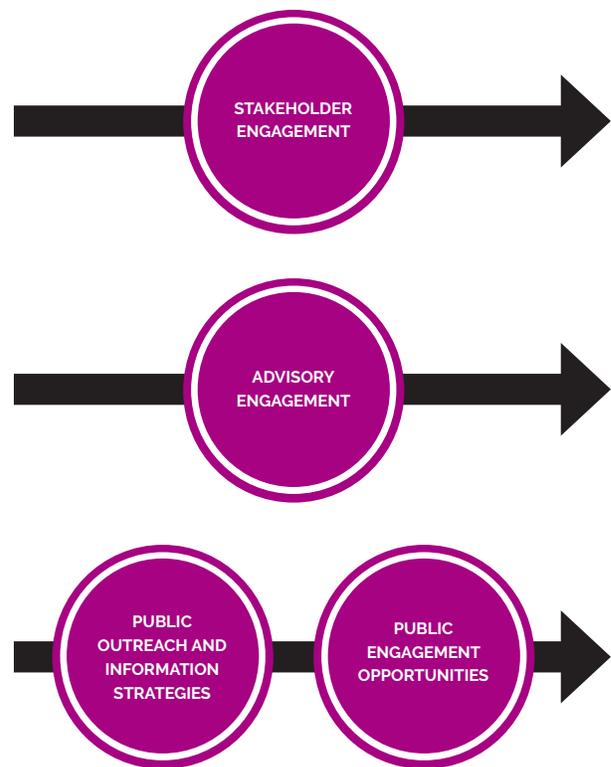
The Comprehensive Plan Update will be Asheville's plan, shaped centrally around the generation of a shared local vision. Capturing the spirit of the community is essential to the plan's execution. Thus, the Planning Team has devised a multi-faceted strategy to engage the public, key stakeholders, and plan advisors continuously over the course of the plan, while also working hand-in-hand with the City Department of Planning and Urban Design.

The input of the public over the course of the Comprehensive Plan update is particularly essential to determine the values and priorities that should be incorporated into physical planning and policy strategies, and to achieve a successful plan that gets realized. City Development Plan 2025, the last Comprehensive Plan conducted in Asheville, was developed through an open-ended public engagement process that included nine public forums, and which solicited open-ended comments from the public which are included at the end of that plan as a memorialization of public commentary at the time. Since its creation, community engagement processes for comp plans have become leaner and more focused on employing fewer resources and a wider range of strategies to generate meaningful public input in more structured ways. Technology has also greatly expanded the ability to keep the public actively engaged, and created new avenues to reach more people. The planning process for this update to the comp plan will devote particular effort to crafting engagement that is diverse, but which solicits feedback that will be productive and meaningful.

The plan's Outreach and Engagement strategy will entail four major components:

- Stakeholder Engagement
- Advisory Engagement
- Public Outreach
- Public Engagement

These elements are detailed over the following pages. Extensive community outreach will occur during Task 3, immediately following the Task 2 workshop.



ASHEVILLE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN //

The City of Asheville is preparing an update to the Comprehensive Plan, an exciting process to decide on key principles that will guide the city's decision-making for the next 15 to 20 years. This is the City's first Comprehensive Plan update since 2002. This Plan is your plan. It will highlight aspirations, challenges, and opportunities for Asheville's future, establish a community vision, outline specific citywide goals and strategies, set principles for future city investment, and serve as a resource to guide the City's decision-making and inform policy decisions.



Goals of the Plan:



A LIVABLE BUILT ENVIRONMENT
Grow Responsibly to Promote Affordability and Quality of Life



INTERWOVEN EQUITY
Keep Asheville a Top Place to Live by Celebrating Diversity



HARMONY WITH THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT
Become a Pioneer in the Integration of the Natural Environment



A HEALTHY COMMUNITY
Encourage Public Health by Prioritizing Walkability



A RESILIENT ECONOMY
Balance Environmental Stewardship with Economic Vitality to Grow a Resilient Future



RESPONSIBLE REGIONALISM
Plan for a Future of Regional Growth, Opportunity and Improvement

Get involved:



THE OFFICIAL PLAN WEBSITE:
www.ashevillenc.gov/compplan



CITY SOURCE:
coablog.ashevillenc.gov



FACEBOOK:
facebook.com/CityofAsheville



TWITTER:
twitter.com/CityofAsheville



Asheville Comprehensive Plan



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!!!

The City of Asheville is preparing an update to the Comprehensive Plan, an exciting process to decide on key principles that will guide the city's decision-making for the next 15 to 20 years. This is the City's first Comprehensive Plan update since 2002. The Comprehensive Plan is your plan, and we are seeking your input to guide it. Your input will help determine key decision-making priorities through an online survey process, and will also help shape planning concepts and strategies through participation at in-person workshops. Visit the links below for specific dates and times.

TAKE THE
ONLINE
SURVEY
BEGINNING
IN AUGUST

ATTEND
VISIONING
WORKSHOPS IN
SEPTEMBER AND
OCTOBER

WATCH FOR
EVENTS COMING
TO YOUR
NEIGHBORHOOD!



THE OFFICIAL PLAN WEBSITE:
WWW.ASHEVILLENC.GOV/COMPPLAN



CITY SOURCE:
COABLOG.ASHEVILLENC.GOV



FACEBOOK:
FACEBOOK.COM/CITYOFASHEVILLE



TWITTER:
TWITTER.COM/CITYOFASHEVILLE

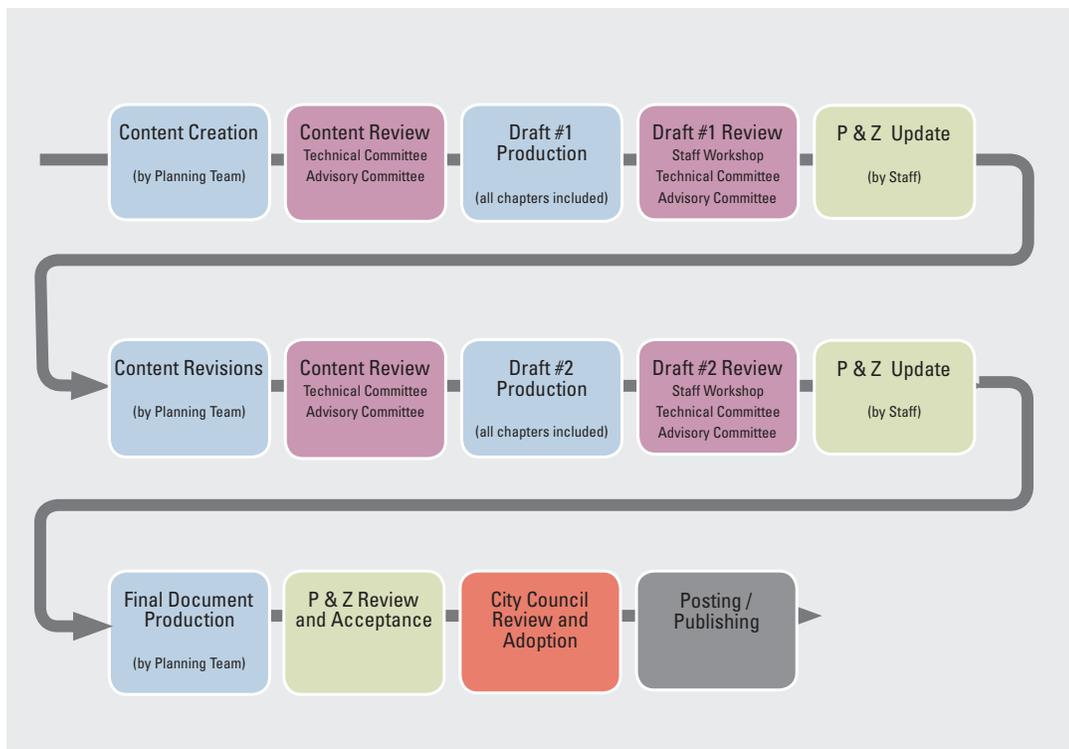


ADVISORY ENGAGEMENT

To ensure the plan responds to technical challenges as well as aspirational ones, to ensure it develops as a useful document for those with decision-making authority, and to ensure the plan reflects aspirations from both inside City Hall and out, the plan includes a process for engaging specified advisors and specific identified stakeholders.

Plan Advisors: The planning team will meet at regularly scheduled intervals with the Advisory Committee and City Technical Team, soliciting feedback and input through an established Document Review process that will ensure these key groups have a continuous ability to influence the plan's development. Asheville City Council, the Planning and Economic Development SubCommittee, and the Planning and Zoning Committee will be engaged through a less intensive process. The consultant team is also engaging NEMAC and CAPE as advisors to the project to ensure the plan is compatible with their work.

Comp Plan Document Review Process



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The Planning Team will work with stakeholders and focus groups to develop a list of plan priorities. This will include stakeholder group meetings and engagement with key advisory members. Targeted stakeholder groups include:

Transportation

- Land of Sky Regional Council
- North Carolina Department of Transportation
- WNCTA
- FBR MPO
- Mountain Mobility

Environment

- Asheville on Bikes
- Green Opportunities
- Asheville GreenWorks
- RiverLink
- MountainTrue

Cultural

Center for Diversity Education
Asheville Writers

Housing

Mountain Housing
Asheville Housing Authority
Buncombe County Planning and Development
Housing and Community Development Committee members
EagleMarket Street Development Corporation
Mt. Zion Development
Public Interest Projects
Wachovia Bank
City of Asheville Department of Community Development
City of Asheville Department of Planning and Urban Design
HomeTrust Bank

Employers

Asheville Area Chamber
Asheville Chamber
Land of Sky Regional Council
Asheville Convention and Visitors Bureau
Asheville HUB
Asheville Downtown
UNC Asheville
Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College
City of Asheville Department of Economic Development
G/M Property Group
Mountain Micro Enterprise
Thirsty Monk
Biltmore Company
Mission Health
Venture Asheville
Mountain BizWorks
Small Business Technology Development Center

Other

Latino Steering Committee
Young Professionals of Asheville
UNC-Asheville
Area Agency on Aging
AARP

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Strategies for communicating information and updates about the plan, and to advertise opportunities for the public to get involved, include:

Plan website: Working with CAPE, the Planning Team has prepared an official website for the plan accessible at www.ashevillenc.gov/complan. The website is intended as an overarching tool for informing the public about the plan, and includes plan information and to get involved in the public engagement opportunities, and information about additional resources.

Digital outreach platforms: Information about the plan, as well as links to engagement tools like the survey, will be shared across the city's social media and interactive platforms, including on Facebook, Twitter, and City Source.

In-person Community outreach: Chipley Consulting has scheduled several neighborhood meetings in each of the major geographic areas of Asheville. They will provide a short introduction to the plan, advertise its intent and ways for the public to get involved, followed by a Q&A Session. They will also include opportunities for the public to share initial ideas in an interactive format.

Groups reached out to include:

- Grove Park/Sunset Mountain
- Shiloh
- Kenilworth
- South Slope
- National Night Out at Haw Creek
- WECAN
- Coalition of Asheville Neighborhoods
- Latino Steering Committee
- Downtown Association
- East End/Valley Street
- Burton Street
- Montford
- DARN
- Grover Park/Sunset Mountain
- NAC
- RADBA
- Downtown Association



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FACEBOOK:
facebook.com/CityofAsheville



TWITTER:
twitter.com/CityofAsheville

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Opportunities for the public to engage in and shape the development of the plan include:

Plan survey (August & September): A brief survey will be opened to the public both online and in hard format as the first major element of public outreach. The survey will be used to discern citizen satisfaction with existing city services and qualities, and to understand public preferences for prioritizing future investment. The survey will be used to shape a background understanding that will inform the physical scenario development in the public workshops. Survey tools will allow the Planning Team to evaluate how responses differ by geographic area.

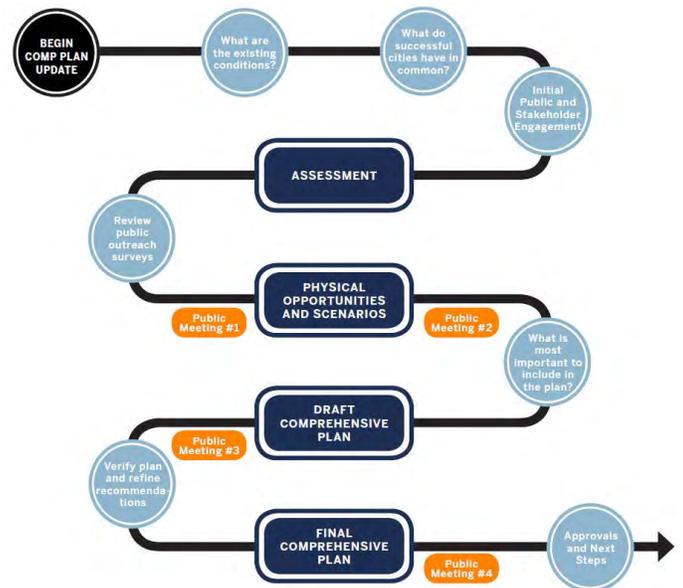
The survey is organized into nine sections: Built Environment, Housing, Transportation, Downtown, Natural Environment, Economy, Equity, Health, and Regionalism. Within each section, residents will be asked to prioritize a series of sub-topical services and qualities based on 1) current satisfaction, and 2) perceived importance for investment in the future.

The survey will generate a matrix relating current satisfaction of city services, public prioritization of city services, and neighborhood geography. The survey will be reviewed in early September to inform the first public workshop in late September.

Task 3 Public workshops (October and November): During Task 3, in addition to meetings with the City Technical Team, Advisory Committee, and Stakeholders, the Planning Team will conduct two public workshops, the first as a working charrette to brainstorm ideas in response to an understanding of priorities generated through the survey, and the second an opportunity to vet and refine physical planning scenarios. Special care will be taken at these workshops to identify strategies specific to each of the five city character areas.

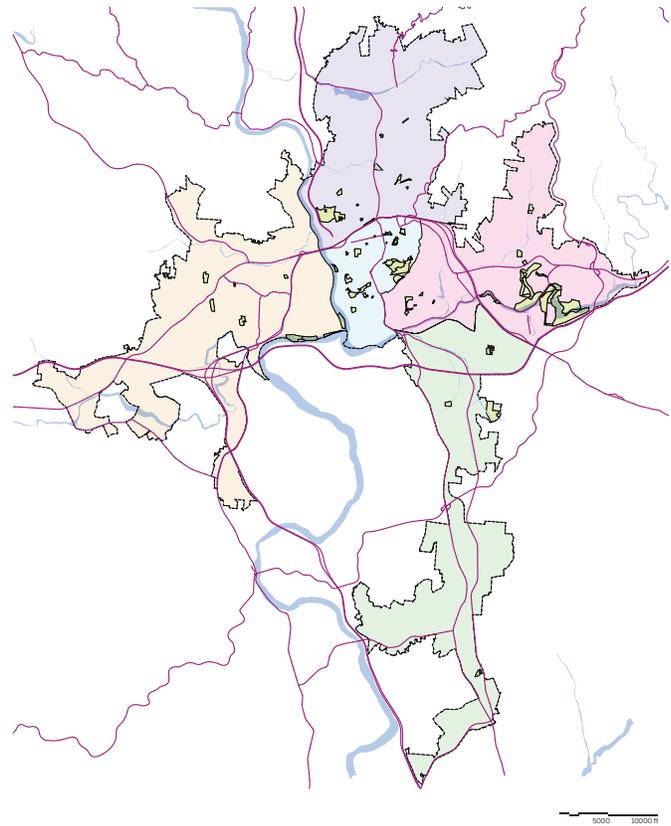
Task 4 Public workshop: Once the draft plan is developed in Task 4 in response to the generation of principles and physical scenarios in Task 3, an additional opportunity for the public to provide input to a more developed version of the plan will be held during Task 4.

Task 5 Public presentation: The final plan will be presented to the public at the conclusion of Task 5.



NOTE ON CITY CHARACTER AREAS

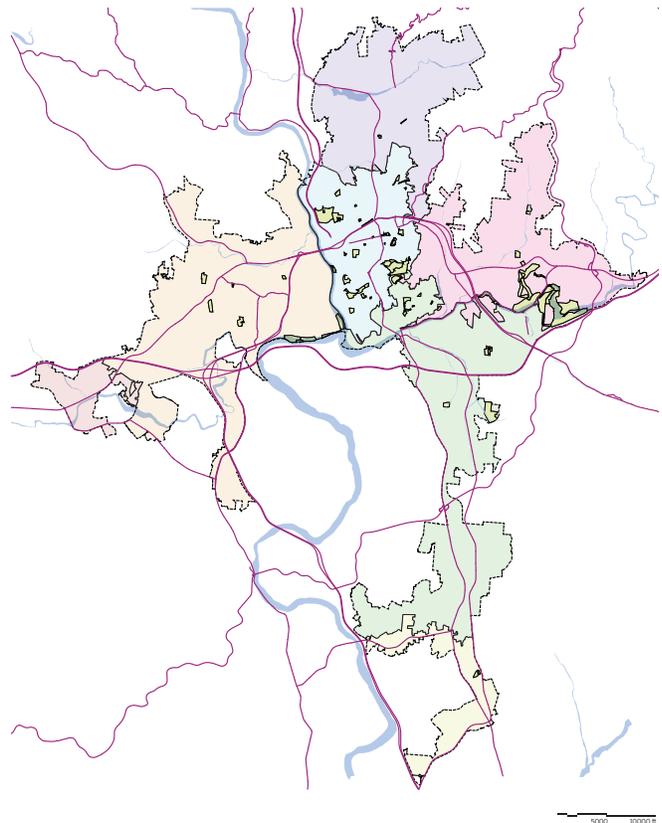
Asheville Neighborhood Character Areas



During Task 2, the Planning Team has deliberated about how to best ensure the plan is responding to the unique concerns of each of the city's neighborhoods. A detailed discussion of why locally-focused planning strategies are important appears earlier in this report, including a discussion of potentially shaping portions of the plan around an understanding of the city's five "character areas".

The public engagement process in Task 3 will assess the viability of this strategy. Tools like the survey can provide insight into whether priorities differ between the different "character areas". Understanding these unique geographic qualities of place is thus a major objective of the survey.

Zip Code Delineations



It should be noted that, for ease of administration, the delineation used to assess from which character area a survey was submitted will be determined by zip code, a measure that closely, but not exactly, aligns with the city's five "character areas" as the Planning Team has established them.

CITY AUTHORITY , TOOLS, AND RESOURCES //

UNDERSTANDING OF LOCAL, COUNTY, AND STATE AUTHORITY

While North Carolina is neither a Home Rule nor a Dillon's Rule state, it effectively functions as a Dillon's Rule state. In North Carolina municipalities derive all their power from state delegation.

- Cities have the authority to generate revenue through property tax, local option sales taxes and special assessments, user fees, and miscellaneous taxes and charges.
- They may, by ordinance, define, prohibit, regulate, or obate acts, omissions, or conditions detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of citizens and the peace and dignity of the city, and may define and abate nuisances, so long as all ordinances are consistent with state laws.
- They have authority to pass regulation related to begging, sexually oriented businesses, noise, and other topics.
- They have extensive authority to regulate land use and development
- They may operate public enterprises such as libraries, public recreation facilities, hospitals, and animal shelters
- Through the local act system, cities have a mechanism to experiment with new and innovative programs, with state approval.
- Counties have exclusive local responsibility for schools, public health, mental health, social services, and courts.
- Cities and counties have authority to promote local economic development, to cooperate interlocally through joint agencies or contracts, to establish service districts or authorities with authority to tax, borrow, and regulate, and to change their own government organization and structures without legislative approval.
- Stricter limitations exist with regard to finance, procurement, and property disposal.
- Only cities and the state are authorized to conduct road construction and maintenance.

Planning is occurring at all levels of government. The Planning Team will work to understand the relationships between planning at different levels and to clarify and understanding of jurisdictional relationships and tools between city, county, and state.

County Relationship

The statutory delegation of authority - including the enabling laws in Chapters 160A and 153A of the North Carolina General Statutes - specify specific delineations between city and county authority. Asheville's relationship with Buncombe County and the ETJ zone carry complexity that the Planning Team will work with the City to understand over the course of Tasks 3 and 4. Clearly in many areas - such as initiatives to expand affordable housing - City efforts are closely aligned with those of the county. However it is the Planning Team's understanding that this is not the case in all areas.

State Relationship

The Planning Team will also work closely with the City to better understand tools Asheville has been granted by the state, including what changes have occurred to this toolkit since the creation of City Development Plan 2025. The Planning Team is aware that a complex relationship exists between the City and the State with regard to specific tools, delegated authority, and laws at both levels.

The loss of key tools like annexation and transfer-of-development rights since the execution of the last comp plan, the elimination and subsequent restoration of tools like the state historic tax credit, an ongoing dispute over ownership and control of the Asheville water system between the City government and the Metropolitan Sewerage District, and splits between right-of-way, sidewalk, and carriageway jurisdiction between different levels of authority on different streets highlight the complexity of these relationships.

City Development Plan 2025 and other more recent city plans have laid the groundwork for our team’s understanding of the range of development tools at the City’s disposal within this complex jurisdictional environment. In the Plan Review portion of this report, the Planning Team has described how many of these tools were leveraged in past planning strategies.

City of Asheville Primary Development Tools

As a general overview, it is our understanding that the following list represents the primary tools that the City of Asheville uses to encourage/incentivize new real estate development/redevelopment in the city.

- Land Use/Zoning – Density bonuses, etc.
- Real estate ownership/land assemblage
- Taxation (sales and property)
- Municipal Service Districts (aka Innovation Districts)
- Tax Abatement (Land Use Incentive Grant)
- Affordable Housing Trust Fund/Low Interest Loans
- Municipal Bonds
- Capital Improvement Plan

City of Asheville Revenue Tools

Key existing tools for achieving fiscal health:

- Tax base sharing
- Property tax revenues
- Sales tax revenues
- Occupancy taxes
- Utility revenues
- Fees for services, licenses, and permits
- Motor vehicle tax
- Investment earnings
- Intergovernmental revenue

Shared Jurisdiction Tools

The following organizations/entities have shared jurisdiction, governance, or aligned interests with the City of Asheville and should be key stakeholders in the comprehensive planning process.

- Asheville Area Riverfront Redevelopment Commission
- Economic Development Coalition
- Land of Sky Regional Council (technical assistance)
- Tourism Development Authority (hotel tax allocations)
- Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD)
- Greater Asheville Regional Airport Authority (GARAA)
- Historic Resources Commission of Asheville and Buncombe County

Potential Jurisdictional Constraints/Limitations

The following is a preliminary list of constraints or barriers to future planning and development activity for the City of Asheville.

- North Carolina Department of Transportation control of state roads
- Dillon’s Rule
- Inclusionary zoning
- Impact fees
- Annexation (requires vote from annexed property owners)
- Project Development Financing (requires county and state approval)
- Biltmore Forest (or other adjacent communities)
- Municipal Extraterritorial Planning Jurisdiction (ETPJ)

ASHEVILLE'S FISCAL CHALLENGE

Asheville, NC: A Financial Crossroads (2010 and 2013)

Asheville 2010: A Financial Crossroads and Asheville 2013: A Financial Crossroads describe the relationship between Asheville's financial challenges and its urban aspirations. They are useful documents that provide perspectives on the city's role as a regional center, its growth and capacity, revenue diversification, and the overall impact the city's financial picture has on city services. They address a key question that underlies the Comp Plan effort: "what kind of city do we want to be and what will it take to get there"?

The Financial Crossroads reports outline a variety of approaches to funding key city services, including providing a local transportation network, operating water and sewer, collecting solid waste, providing for the safety of the public, building and operating essential facilities, supporting parks and recreation, ensuring safe and reliable buildings, and rebuilding obsolete sections and improving housing stock.

While the reports highlight many key issues, three of the most significant takeaways include:

- That the large reliance on municipal property owners to sustain services that benefit an entire region is not a sustainable path forward.
- That the City's recent reliance on declining municipal budgets as the only path for achieving fiscal health is also unsustainable.
- That the city's current budget struggles are incompatible with the city's grand aspirations as illustrated through recent planning efforts.

The reports contend that the ability to annex land is a key measure of fiscal health and notes that cities that are beholden to traditional boundaries - as Asheville is now - have suffered severe segregation. They stress the interdependency of the city and region. The fact that Asheville both provides services to the region to a uniquely significant extent and is so uniquely constrained from using the provision of utility services as a tool for annexation make this a significant problem for the city.

City sales taxes are distributed ad valorem, meaning sales tax revenue is divided between the county, local municipalities, the city school district, and rural fire districts based on each entity's share of total countywide taxes. As the county has grown more rapidly than the city, Asheville's share of sales tax revenues has decreased.

The reports noted the unique and unusual dynamics of Asheville's occupancy tax, whose revenues transfer directly to the City's Tourism Development Authority to promote tourism rather than for city facilities of infrastructure. Other communities have authorized both cities and counties to authorize occupancy taxes.

They also noted that Asheville has contemplated shifting the sourcing for several City services away from the General Fund toward fee-based approaches, but has been reluctant to implement such moves for fear of alienating residents or deterring additional momentum toward the region and away from the City.

A key takeaway from these reports is that as a center for jobs and services, Asheville's ability to accommodate a larger share of regional growth within the city limits is imperative to its ability to retain fiscal health. With constrained boundaries, Asheville otherwise has limited opportunity to support the cost of the regional economy across a growing regional population.

In identifying new tools for achieving fiscal health, Asheville should seek to creatively leverage continued growth, especially downtown, and the strong influx of both tourists and regional residents who use services from the City but do not pay the same taxes as residents who live there.

Key Notes on Asheville's Fiscal Trajectory:

All notes are gathered from the Financial Crossroads reports.

- Asheville has the highest daytime to nighttime population ratio, with 40,000 daytime commuters.
- Asheville takes more calls for fire and emergency services per capita than any other city in North Carolina
- Between 1950 and 2000 Asheville captured only a small share of regional growth. However this trend has shifted over the last several years.
- Although Asheville is growing as rapidly as its larger region, because Asheville comprises only a small share of the region it is still adversely impacted by declining sales tax revenues.
- Between 2000 and 2010, 45% of Asheville's growth was "natural" as opposed to as the result of annexation.
- Because Asheville is a tourist mecca, where many purchases are of elastic goods, its sales tax revenues fell especially greatly during the recession.
- Asheville's rising land values and resulting increases in property taxes have masked other fiscal challenges
- Asheville has seen a declining share of sales tax revenue distributed to Buncombe County - 19.60%, which is 16th of 18 North Carolina cities
- Asheville has lowered its property tax rate more steeply in many years than the rest of the county, and generally has low property taxes
- Buncombe County's county-wide room occupancy rate of 4% is second lowest of 15 metro areas surveyed.
- While many cities operate water, sewer, and electric utilities, Asheville only operates a regional water utility.
- While most municipalities charge a higher water rate for customers outside the municipality, Asheville is prohibited from doing this.
- Asheville has reduced pressure on the City's General Fund by restructuring service fees to cover the full cost of many city services. However core services like garbage collection are still funded by the General Fund.
- The portion of low- to moderate-income residents in Asheville is high compared to nearby communities despite the pressure on Asheville to shoulder the burden for a large share of services benefitting the region.
- Asheville's street resurfacing schedule is once every 81 years, compared to the typical 20-year expected actual life of an asphalt street, and its replacement schedule for city vehicles is 15.4 years.
- Most of the city's efforts to cut costs have focused on maintenance of capital investments, such as public facilities, vehicles and infrastructure.
- Funding for facility maintenance is less than 1 percent of the city's overall budget.
- The city has recently used reserves to achieve a balanced General Fund budget.
- An estimate as of the time of the plan suggested the city would need \$200 million to implement the recommendations of even existing city planning documents over 20 years.
- The growth in the cost of services continues to outpace the growth in revenues
- Costs for healthcare, fuel, utilities, and equipment continue to rise
- As of 2013, growth in the City's General Fund spending has remained below inflation

ASHEVILLE'S FISCAL CHALLENGE

Key Questions to Guide Future Resource Strategies:

- How to build a more diverse mix of revenues moving forward?
- How to achieve community ownership, not just aspiration, to planning ideas
- What does Asheville want to be in the future? A low-tax, low-service community, or a community with greater burdens but capable to taking on bolder visions?
- How to focus investments in areas that will provide a strong return-on-investment?
- How to more increase and more pointedly prioritize spending of revenues from non-local sources?

Strategies for Augmenting Revenues:

- Sales tax increase (must be approved by the State)
- Bond programs
- Access to other regional revenue
- Restructuring of the occupancy tax revenues or addition of a local occupancy tax
- Expanding/re-introducing annexation
- Fee-based approaches to City Services
- Conduct aggressive pricing analysis to determine rates citizens are willing to pay for services
- Adjust fees and taxes on city services that impact visitors more than residents
- Create revolving funds for addressing needs by increasing tax base
- Increase the city's capacity for residential growth
- Increase revenue from non-local sources
- Stronger regional collaborations

Strategies for Reducing Costs:

- Some city services have actually grown less expensive to provide
- Right-sizing (re-engineering of service delivery)
- Automated garbage collection
- Fuel/fleet conversions
- Energy management cost savings
- One stop development plan and permitting process
- Freezing salaries
- Increasing employee contributions to health insurance
- Reducing staffing levels
- Deferring capital improvements
- Privatization of city services and greater leveraging of projects that can be funded by private capital
- More aggressive prioritization of visionary objectives
- Cull anachronistic programs

APPENDIX //

PLAN MATERIALS RECEIVED AND OUTSTANDING

Received Base Maps

Regional, State, and County GIS base

Citywide GIS:

- City boundary
- ETJ boundary
- Roads
- Parcels
- Blocks
- Building footprints (partial)
- PUD
- Permits
- Food locations
- MHO overlay
- Traffic counts
- MHO overlay
- Conditional Use overlay
- Transitional use overlay
- Streams and modeled drainage
- Floodway
- Lakes
- COA approximate watersheds
-
- Parks
- Greenways
- City-owned property
- ART Bus routes
- Bike routes
- Historic Districts, landmarks, and National Register properties
- Form-based code districts
- Innovation districts
- New developments
- Neighborhoods
- Sanitation districts
- Interstate highways, local highways, streets, Blue Ridge Parkway
- Traffic signals
- Traffic calming
- Traffic AADT
- MPO Boundary
- NCDOT Boundary
- State-maintained roads
- Sidewalks
- Fire stations and service areas
- Train lines
- Zip code boundaries
- Census blocks and districts
- Census - Family income
- Census - Poverty status
- Census - population
- Census - median housing
- Census - SNAP
- Census - per capita income
- Census - 5-year economic data
- Census - demographic
- Census - social
- Public art
- Topography - LIDAR contours 10ft, 20ft, 50ft, 100ft
- Soils
- County 50m DEM
- County parcels
- County street centerlines
- County addresses
- County corporate limits
- County zoning
- County 5-ft contours
- County fire districts
- County landslides
- County soils
- County subdivisions
- County zoning overlay

Hard copy:

- Asheville Innovation Districts
- Downtown Development
- River Arts Form-Based Code Districts

Outstanding Base Maps

- Complete building footprints
- Complete land use

Received Plans

Asheville City Plan by John Nolen, 1923
City Development Plan 2025
City Development Plan 2025 Update, 2009
Downtown Asheville City Center Plan, 2003
Downtown Master Plan, 2009
Affordable Housing Plan, 2008
Comprehensive Housing Strategy and Policy Framework, 2015
Historic Preservation Master Plan, 2015
Sustainability Management Plan, 2009
Equitable Development Report, 2016
Greenways Master Plan, 2013
Asheville-in-Motion Plan, 2016
Public Art Master Plan, 2001
Historic Architecture Resources of Downtown Asheville
Asheville NC 2010: A Financial Crossroads
Water Asset Management Plan

Outstanding Plan Progress Reports

Equitable Development Plan
Asheville in Motion Plan

Other Documents Received

City Council Vision 2036
Plan on a Page
Neighborhoods & Planning presentation, November 2015
Background on Work Program for NEMAC Collaboration with Asheville
Duke energy Western Carolinas Modernization Project news release
City of Asheville FY 2015 Carbon Footprint Update
Affordable Housing Plan recommendations Update, 2011
Comp Housing Strategy Progress Report, 2015
Copy of 15-19 Affordable Housing Units Tracking Table
Land Use Parcel Class codes (for land use GIS)
City of Asheville Style Guide
City of Asheville colors
Asset Management Program Action Plan Report

PLAN MATERIALS RECEIVED AND OUTSTANDING

Additional Background Materials

City Clean Energy Policy Framework
10-year Plan to End Homelessness
2015 Housing Needs Assessment
2015 Consolidated Strategic Housing & Community Development report
2009 Transit Master Plan
Asheville Comprehensive Bicycle Plan
Blue Ridge Bike Plan
I-26 Connector study
Charlotte Street Transportation Enhancement Study
North Carolina Comprehensive State Rail Plan
Western North Carolina Passenger Rail Initiative
Pedestrian and Bicycle Counts
City-funded sidewalk projects
Pedestrian Thoroughfare Plan
Comprehensive Parking study
Buncombe County Comprehensive Land Use Plan
Buncombe County Greenways and Trails Master Plan
WNC Livable Communities Initiative
GroWNC Regional Plan and Strategy Toolkit
City of Asheville zoning map
Asheville Unified Development Ordinance
General zoning threshold requirements
Accessory dwelling units report

Asheville Steep Slope Ordinance
Downtown Design Review Guidelines
Downtown Design Review Checklist
Asheville Downtown Association: Why is Downtown Important document
BID Formation Report
BID Economic Benefit Report
BID Survey results
Spare Change for Real Change
Urban Trail Walking Tour
2012 Downtown Walkability Study
Willma Dykeman Riverway Plan
Alternatives to Gentrification East of the Riverway
Reducing Energy Use East of the Riverway
East of the Riverway Transportation & Energy Community Survey
East of the Riverway Sustainable Neighborhood Initiative
River Arts District Form-Based Code
RADTIP plan
Haywood Road Form-Based Code
West End Clingman Area Neighborhood Plan
Shiloh Community 2025 Plan
East End/Valley Street Neighborhood Vision
East West Asheville Neighborhood Vision
Burton Street Community Plan
Asheville Design Center materials
Buncombe County Townships map

DATA SOURCES

Economic Analysis Data Sources

Additional specificity with regard to source material used in the peer city benchmarking and economic analysis will be provided as part of the full Economic Analysis report to be delivered at the conclusion of Task 3. Most economic and demographic statistics provided as part of the peer city benchmarking in this report are derived from:

- US Census
- Bureau of Labor Statistics
- Bureau of Economic Analysis

Transportation Analysis Data Sources

Existing city plans:

- 2016 Asheville in Motion Plan
- 2009 Sustainability Management Plan
- 2009 Transit Master Plan
- 2005 Pedestrian Plan
- 2008 Comprehensive Bicycle Plan
- 2008 Comprehensive Parking Plan
- 2016 Haywood Road Corridor Parking Study
- French Broad River MPO 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan
- 2007 FBR MPO Comprehensive Transportation Plan
- I-26 Connector information page

Peer review data sources:

- Transit data for Asheville Redefines Transit (ART) and the peer agencies was pulled from the National Transit Database. 2014 data was the most recent available and all the peer review data came from the agency profiles. These can be accessed here: <https://www.transit.dot.gov/ntd/transit-agency-profiles>.
- Enplanements: http://www.faa.gov/airports/planning_capacity/passenger_allcargo_stats/passenger/media/cy14-commercial-service-enplanements.pdf
- American Community Survey 2014 5-year average data (using Urbanized Area for each city):
- Means of Transportation to Work for workers 16 and older (work mode split): (Table S0801: Commuting Characteristics by Sex)
- Mean Commute Time (Table S0801: Commuting Characteristics by Sex)
- Vehicle Ownership (Table B25044: Tenure by Vehicles Available)
- The job access, transit access, and neighborhood compactness scores were all accessed through the Center for Neighborhood Technology's Housing and Transportation Affordability research. We used city-level factsheets. <http://htaindex.cnt.org/map/>

Other data sources:

- Traffic volume data (current counts for stations, road segments, and change) come from NCDOT Average Annual Daily Traffic counts (via a GIS layer provided by NCDOT).
- Roadway classification data is from NCDOT roadway classification GIS data.
- Asheville Redefines Transit system map: <http://www.ashevilenc.gov/Departments/Transit/MapsSchedules.aspx>

Interviews:

- Mariate Echeverry, ART Transportation Planning Manager
- Jeff Moore, Asheville City Traffic Engineer

