

LIVING ASHEVILLE

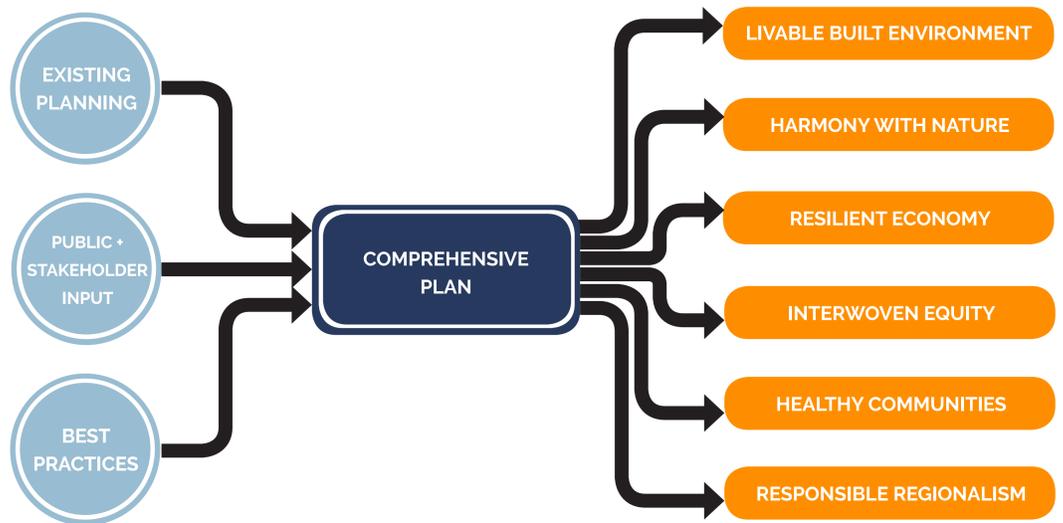
A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR OUR FUTURE



AN UPDATE TO THE CITY'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A Comprehensive Plan is a tool that many cities use to establish a high-level vision to guide citywide policy decisions over several years. **Living Asheville: A Comprehensive Plan for Our Future** will provide a visionary framework to help guide Asheville's continued long-term development, and provide an essential tool that will be used across the City's many departments.

The plan will gather input from several sources - existing city and neighborhood plans, the public and key stakeholders - about existing city challenges and goals for the future. It will provide recommendations based on best practices in contemporary urban planning to shape a set of aspirational ideas and specific strategies for achieving shared outcomes across key ideas - 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. Its recommendations will help guide policy decision-making over the coming years.



PURPOSE 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

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

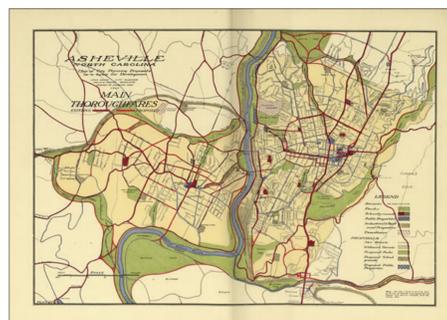
To create **a resource to inform policy decisions** over the lifespan of the plan

To develop **a high-level methodology** for implementing and measuring progress, including periodic updates to create a living document

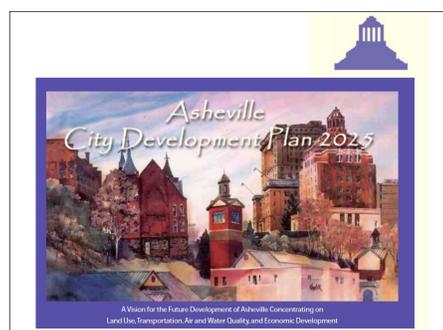
To help **balance and align core service delivery and long range planning** with City Council and citizen strategic priorities

ASHEVILLE'S PLANNING TRADITION

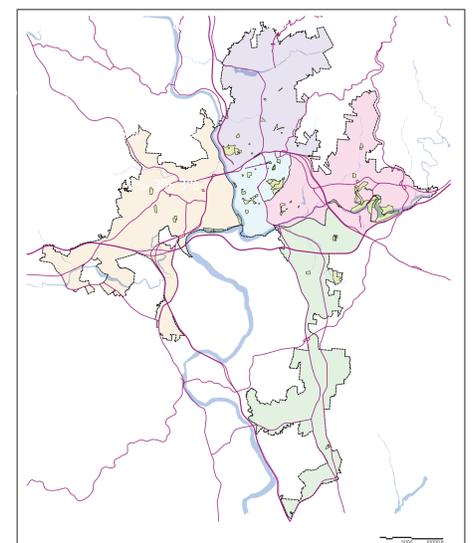
Asheville has long benefitted from a tradition of strong city planning. The City's first Comp Plan was completed in 1925, written by famed city planner John Nolen. The City's most recent Comp Plan was completed in 2003. **Living Asheville: A Comprehensive Plan for Our Future** is being crafted with specific intent to understand challenges and aspirations specific to each of five "character areas" in the City - Central Asheville, South Asheville, North Asheville, West Asheville, and East Asheville.



1925: Asheville's first Comprehensive Plan



City Development Plan 2025, completed in 2003



Asheville: Five Character Areas

THE PUBLIC PROCESS

THE PATH TO THE PLAN

Living Asheville: A Comprehensive Plan for Our Future will be crafted over an 18-month process that began in May 2016. This plan is your plan, and we need your input to shape it over the coming months. To do this, four public meetings are scheduled over the course of the planning process. Tonight is the first. Please follow the planning process and keep an eye on the links below for information about how to get involved.



The official plan website:
www.ashevilenc.gov/compplan



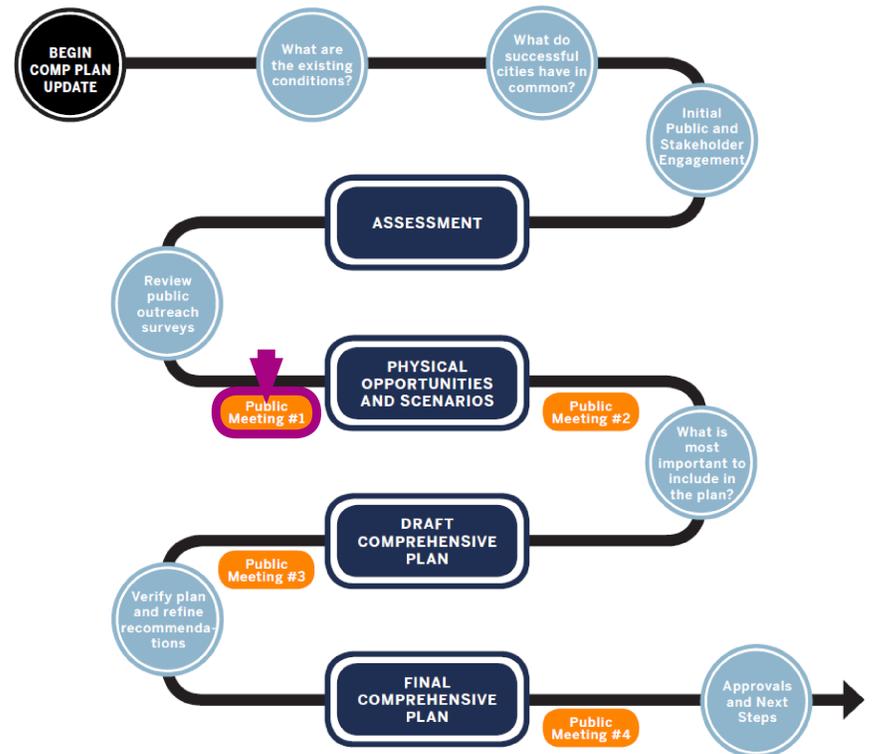
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facebook.com/CityofAsheville



Twitter:
twitter.com/CityofAsheville

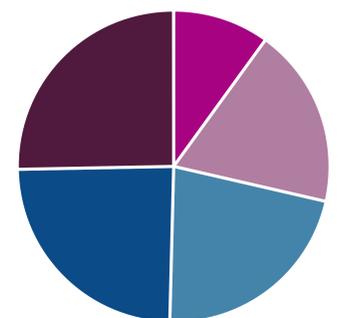
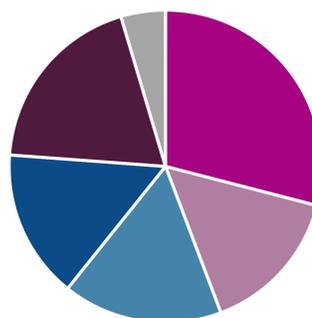
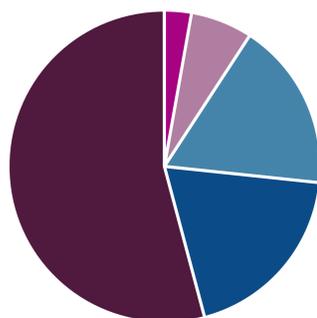


THE PUBLIC SURVEY - AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 2016

370
Survey responses

96%
Percentage of respondents who live in Asheville

71%
Percentage of respondents who work in Asheville



park from rent homes short term they feel how home town income tourist afford live Sidewalks s important all neighborhoods just South community residents use East **Asheville** was building promoting without space now **downtown** neighborhood **more** do other erosion **planning** historic bike lanes HawCreek **New** police residential areas such green Allowing vacation rentals Stop questions jobs don't them ensure businesses **Increase** up **infrastructure** before any gro

with **development** service Reduce taxes think through job economic character tourists code energy even allow increased density urban corridors Less small business cleanstreets control living River place what makes Preserving **affordable housing** nothing well Over us **traffic parking** into Als o **need** address Council high **needs** way toohotels Does take tourism with in property focus only Education pay schools change Improve area Increasing particularly see public communities **SO** both Access work land alongtransportation street commercial some quality current **roads** plan existing etc REAL PEOPLE WHO like going down buildings money approach rental much enforcement options thoseart local paying county zoning low better services water one tax

PUBLIC WORKSHOP #1

GOALS FOR THE WORKSHOP

1

Establish priorities for shaping a Livable Future

Asheville is a city of creative residents with big ideas. At the same time, we must acknowledge that there is only so much we can do with increasingly limited resources. So how do we achieve a vision that both thinks boldly and aspirationally about where we want to go as a city, but which also **prioritizes** which investments are the most important? What, **realistically**, can we achieve?

2

Reach consensus about where we want to go

Do we want to add population OR do we want to limit population growth?
Do we want to be a low tax, lower service city OR do we want to be a higher tax city with greater services?
Do we want to focus on new investment OR on maintaining what we already have? How can we do both?
What are the bold ideas that will move this city forward? And how do these ideas differ within different parts of the city?
What is the role of government in achieving our goals as a City?

3

Brainstorm the BIG ideas.

What are the alternative paths the City can take moving forward?
What are the characteristics that will make Asheville continue to stand out in 20 years?
Where do we want to focus the BIG investments?

4

SOAR...Recognize our Strengths, Opportunities, and Aspirations. And, understand how we can measure progress through Results.

The stations tonight are organized around an exercise called SOAR that will generate an understanding of Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results for each of the six themes. Leaders from the Consulting team will guide these discussions - but need your help in documenting the ideas for each. Now...Let's create this plan together!

SIX KEY THEMES FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



**A LIVABLE
BUILT ENVIRONMENT**



**HARMONY WITH THE
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**



**A RESILIENT
ECONOMY**



**INTERWOVEN
EQUITY**



**A HEALTHY
COMMUNITY**



**RESPONSIBLE
REGIONALISM**

A Livable Built Environment

CHARACTER OF DEVELOPMENT

As it grows, Asheville has pursued a strategy of “mixed-use” development since the creation of the last Comp Plan. Mixed-use development positions a range of uses (residential, retail, commercial, etc.) in close proximity to create livable and walkable communities.

Mountainous terrain limits infrastructure options, concentrating both development and transportation facilities in constrained corridors that are often shared with significant streams or rivers. This increases traffic volumes, construction costs, and environmental impacts.

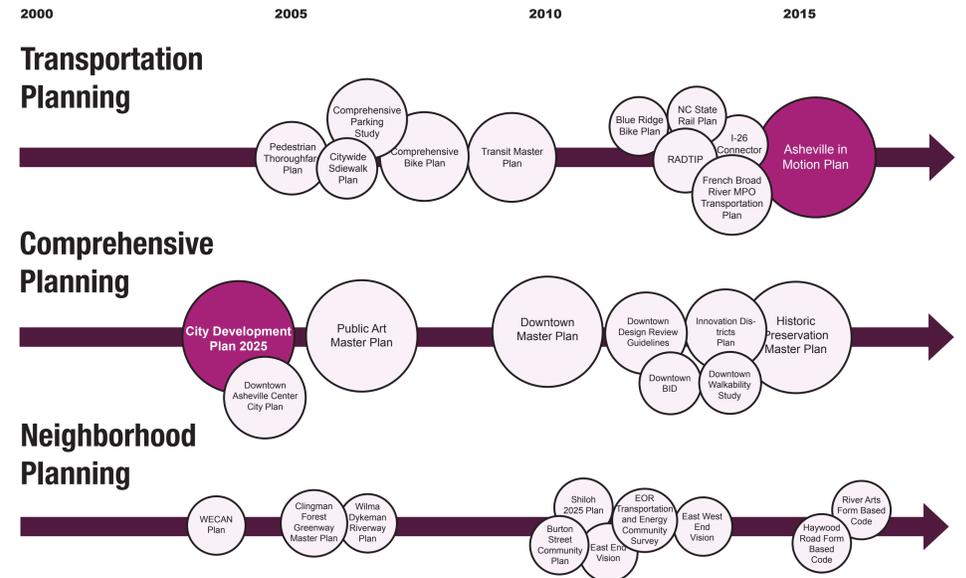
Asheville leads many peer cities in seasonal home occupancy. Meanwhile debates linger about short-term rentals. Moving forward:

- How much development should the City encourage?
- Where should it be concentrated?
- What kinds of land uses should be encouraged?

PREVIOUS PLANNING

Previous Planning

Asheville has done a lot of planning for the Built Environment.



MOBILITY AND DEVELOPMENT

Most people in Asheville drive to get places. Unfortunately, it takes longer to get to jobs in Asheville than in other similarly-sized cities.

Most Asheville residents (53%) say they cannot reach their daily needs by walking. But 88% would like to, and 61% say they would be willing to pay more for housing if they could.

Walkability and Bikeability

Pedestrian infrastructure is abundant downtown, but not elsewhere.

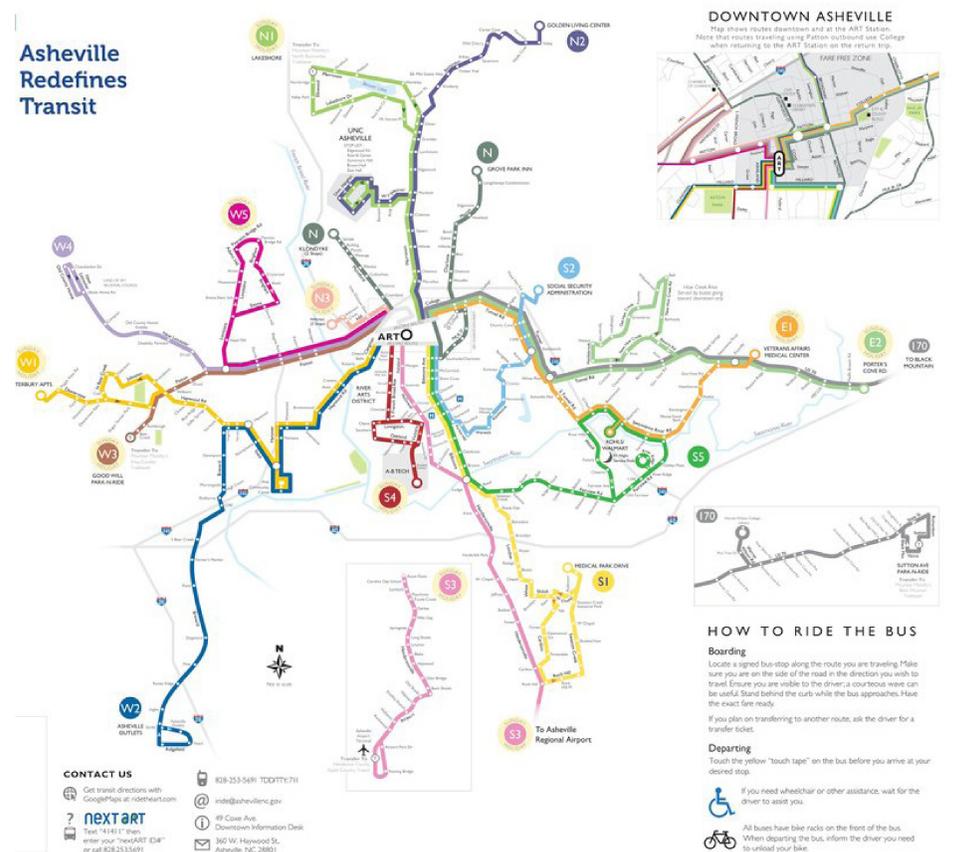
Asheville has the highest per capita rate of pedestrian and bicycle crashes of medium and large cities.

Transit Accessibility

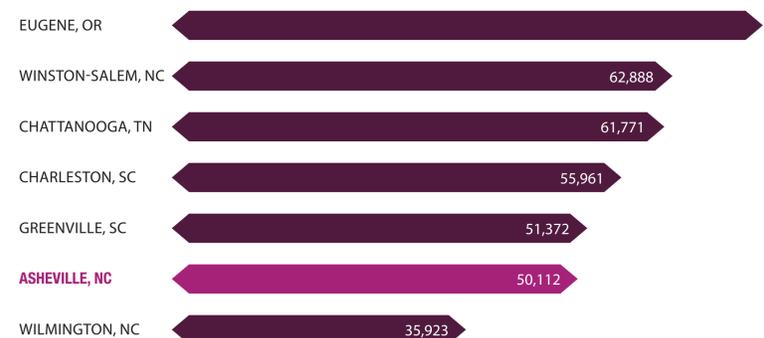
Asheville’s Transit agency, Asheville Redefines Transit (ART), is growing - it provided 1.5 million trips in 2014 - but it performs only average in measures of efficiency and effectiveness.

Parking

Parking supply, location, pricing, and wayfinding significantly influence traffic congestion, mode choice, walkability, and urban character.



JOBS WITHIN 30-MINUTE COMMUTE



The most significant recent transportation plan is the Asheville in Motion Plan (AIM). This plan completed a comprehensive review of transportation conditions and goals through a public engagement process. The plan emphasizes multimodalism, neighborhood connectivity, and improvements to the transit system and pedestrian infrastructure.

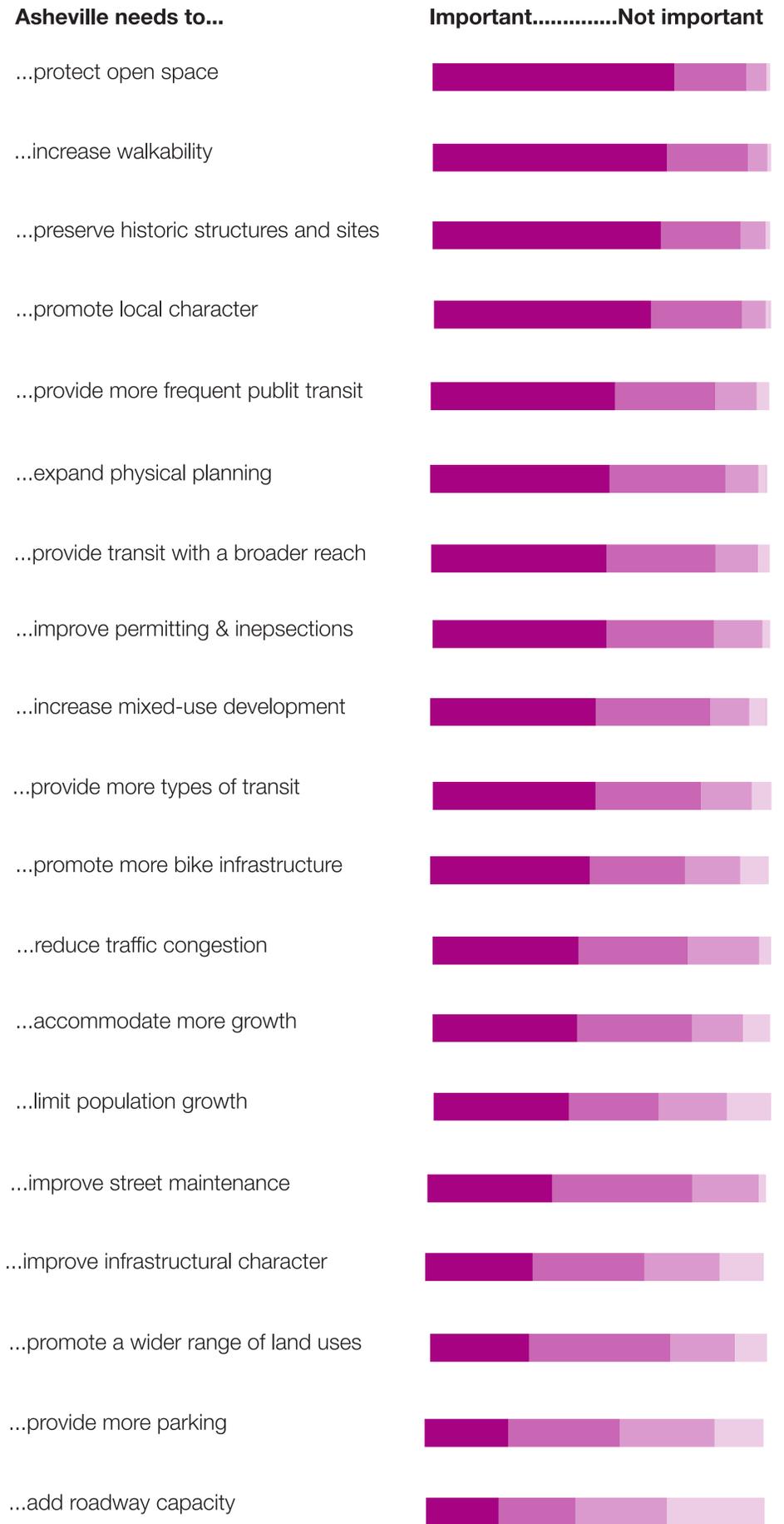
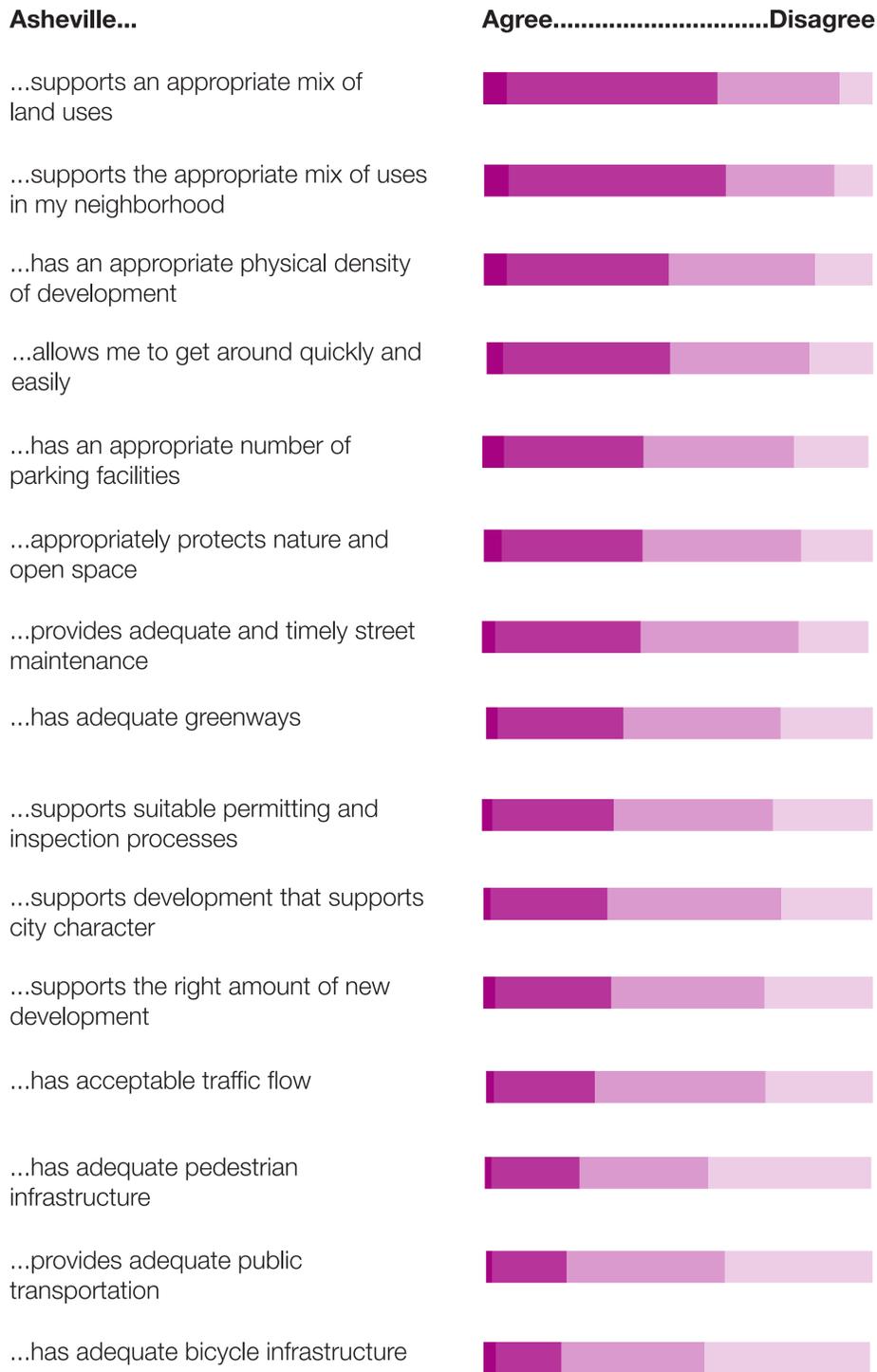
A Livable Built Environment

Public Survey Results



SATISFACTION WITH EXISTING CITY SERVICES

PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE



“Sidewalks, sidewalks, sidewalks.”

“I would like the city to look more deeply at the trolley system that used to be here and how effective it was.”

“Increase transit frequency on high-potential corridors”

“Incentivize mixed use development on commercial corridors.”

“Preserve the human scale charm that has made Asheville an attractive tourist destination”

“Bike” “Walk”

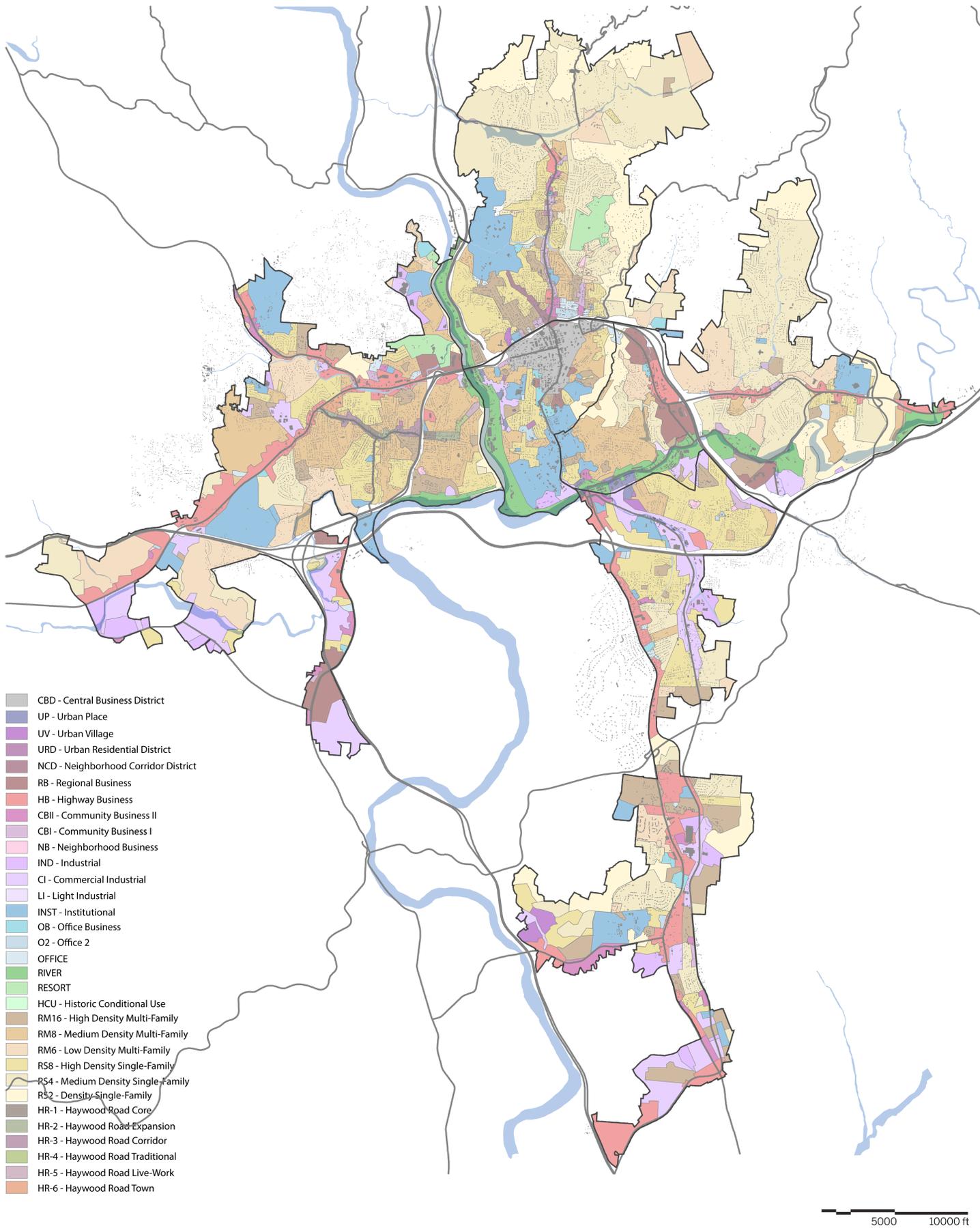
“Bus” “Transit” “Car” “Helicopter” “Solar powered car” “Pony cart”
 “Scooter” “Park & Ride” “Electric Bus” “Gondola” “Moving sidewalk” “Golf cart” “Autonomous vehicle” “Uber Shared rides” “Trolley” “Minibus” “Light rail” “Greenway” “Vans”

“We desperately need a process that easily facilitates infill within city limits.”

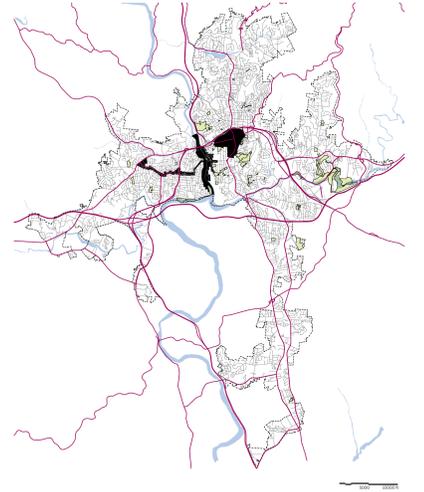
Preferred Commuting mode

A Livable Built Environment

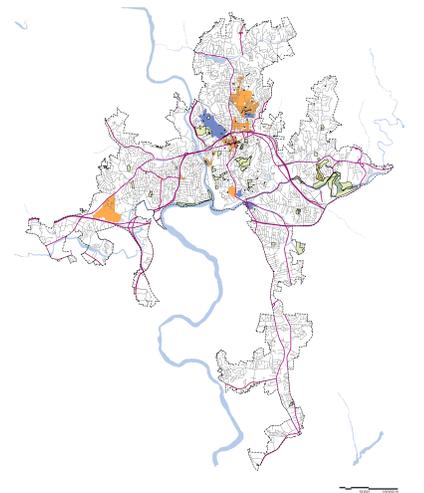
LAND USE



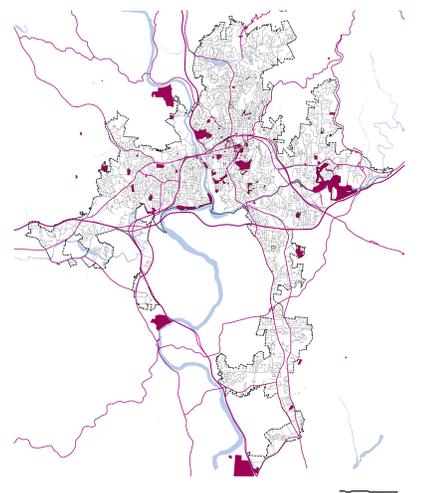
FORM-BASED CODE DISTRICTS



HISTORIC DISTRICTS

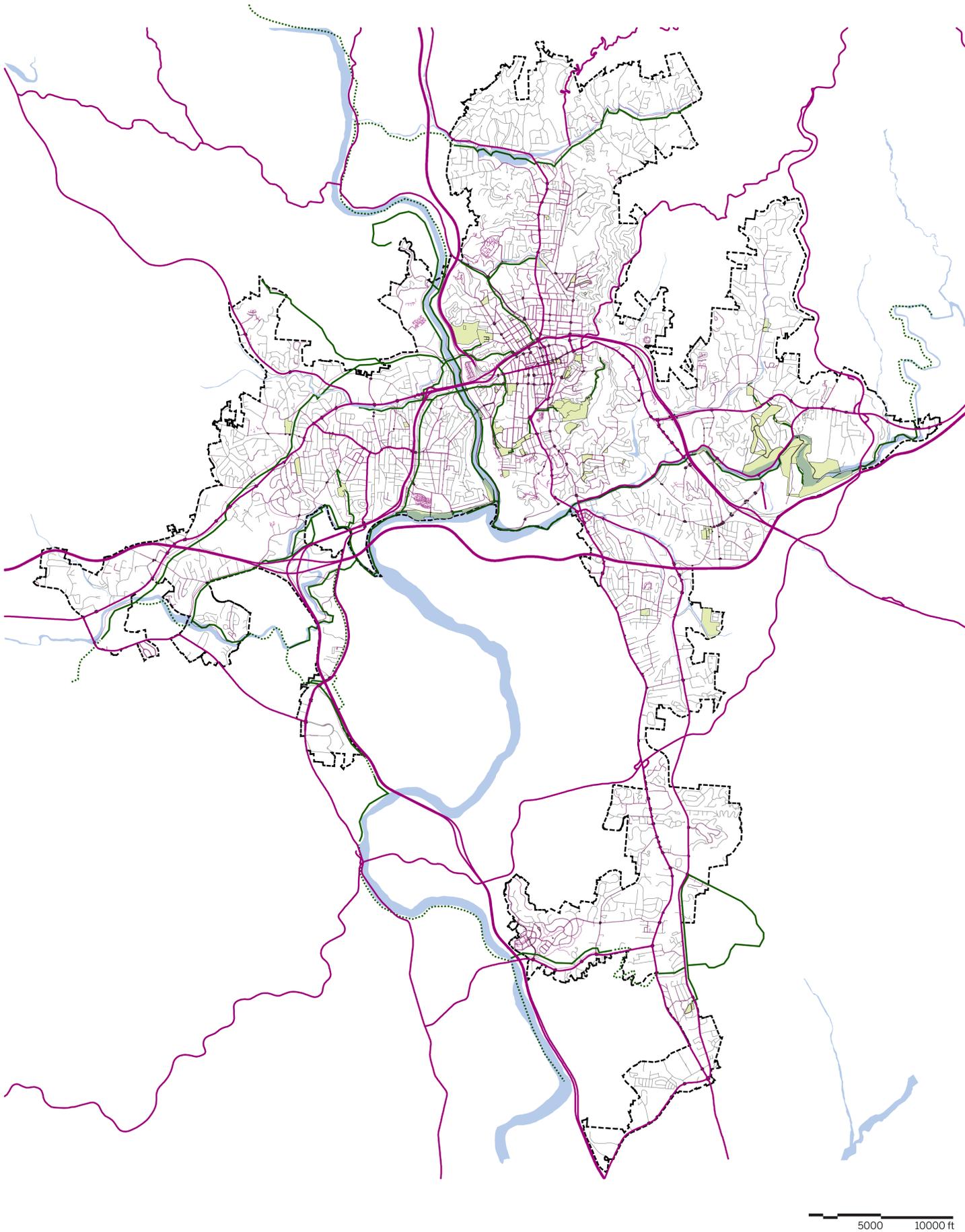


CITY-OWNED PROPERTIES

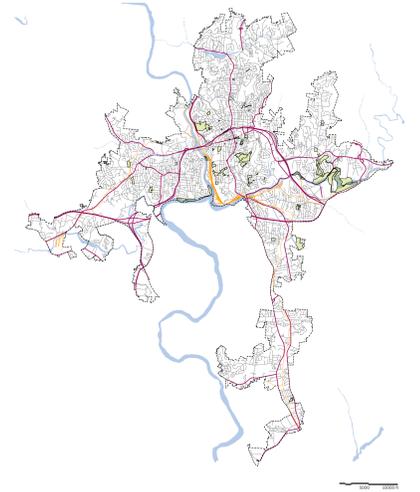


A Livable Built Environment

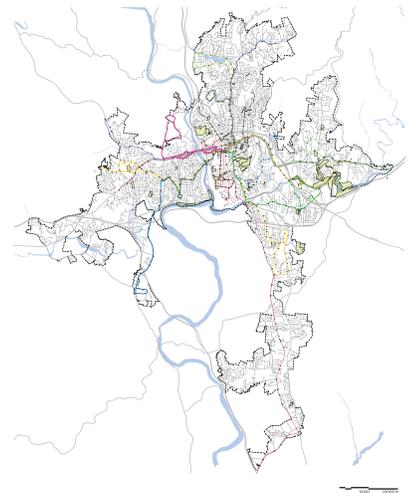
ROADS



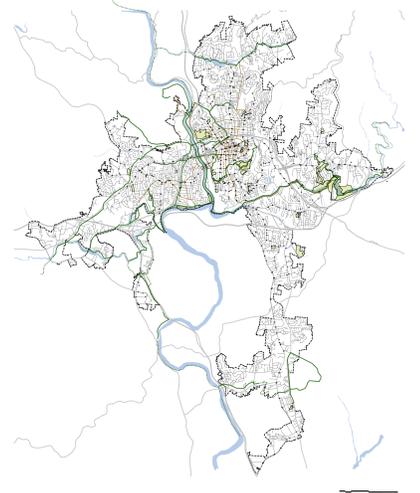
TRAIN



BUS



BIKE

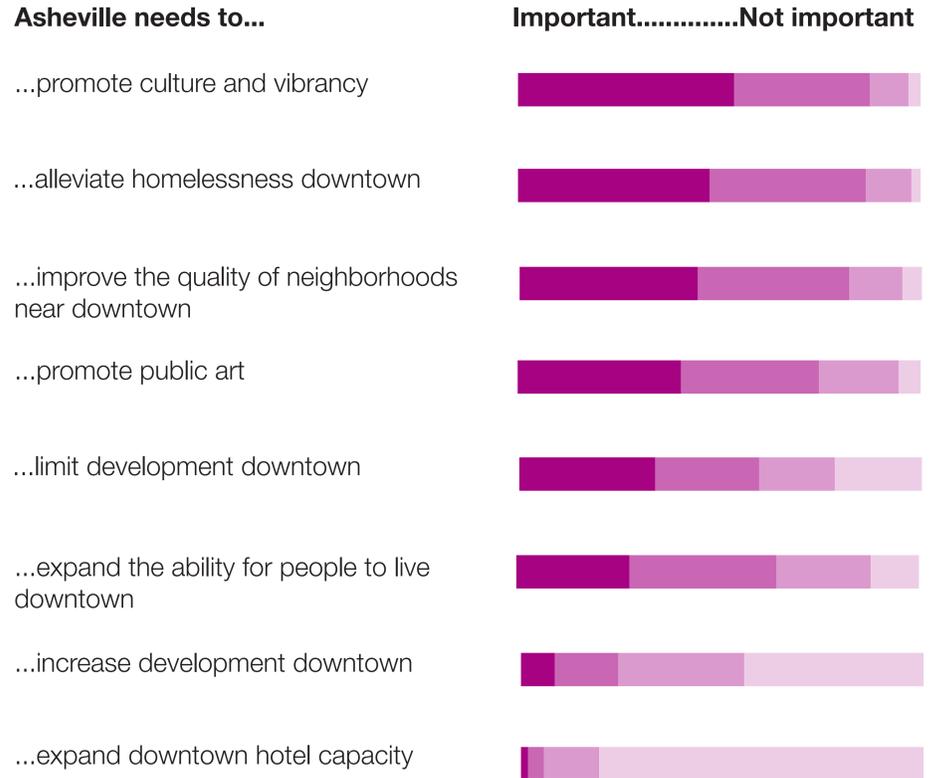
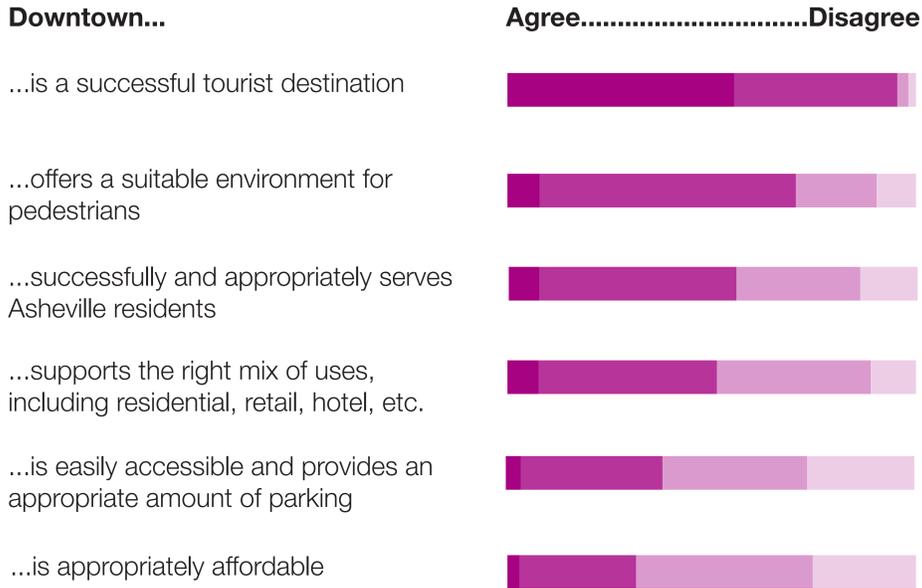


Downtown

Public Survey Results

SATISFACTION WITH EXISTING CITY SERVICES

PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE



Asheville in 2036...



Establish priorities for shaping a Livable Future

Reach consensus about where we want to go

Brainstorm the BIG ideas...

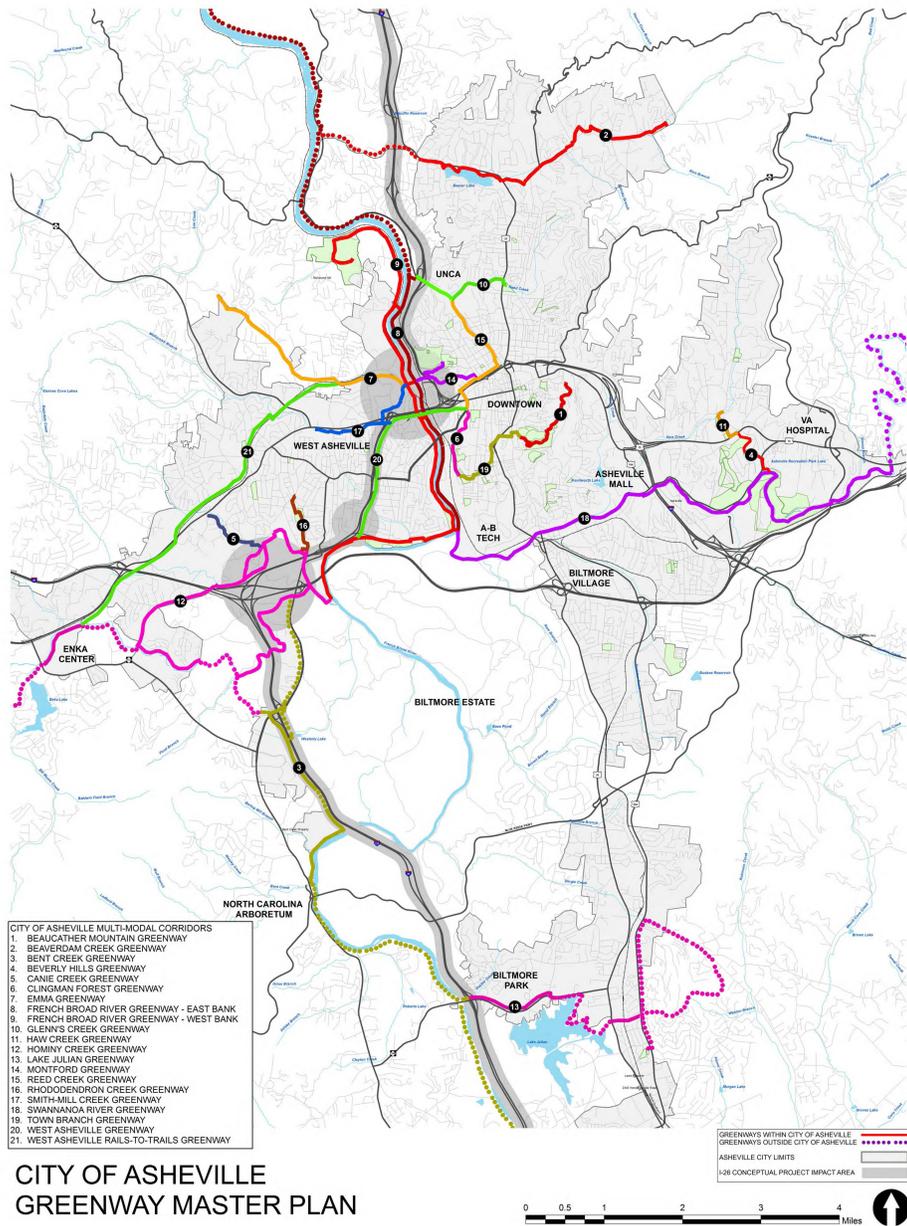
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- What are the characteristics that will make Asheville continue to stand out in 20 years?
- Where do we want to focus the BIG investments?

In 2036, I envision...

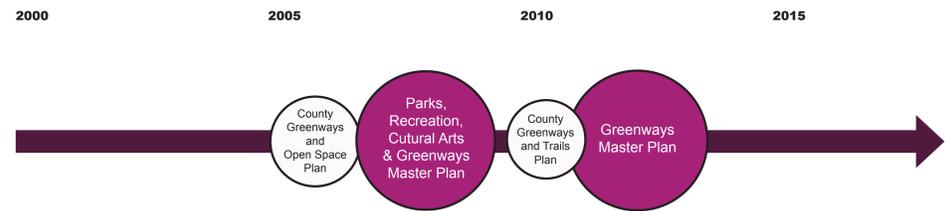


Harmony with the Natural Environment

KEY ISSUES



PREVIOUS PLANNING



The **Greenway Master Plan** was approved in 2009 and includes a map of recommended greenways. The current Master Plan classifies greenways as “High” and “Medium” priority depending on the scale of connectivity they provide, land availability, availability of funds and construction feasibility.

HOW ASHEVILLE COMPARES TO OTHER CITIES

WALK SCORES (0 = LEAST WALKABLE; 100 = MOST WALKABLE)



Asheville compares favorably on WalkScore compared to benchmark cities.

ACCESS TO THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT



Asheville has easy access to the natural environment, as good as any of the benchmark cities. Asheville has 54 public parks, which is similar to benchmark cities.

CREATIVE STRATEGIES

- Benchmark maintenance and personnel budgets
- Commit to a % of people within a 5-minute walk to a park
- Make WalkScore and BikeScore a goal to improve upon
- Tie WalkScore and BikeScore improvements to community health initiatives.

Generally, Asheville has good parks and open space.

Providing and **maintaining high quality parks** is a challenge to pay for under current economic conditions without higher property taxes or user fees.

Direct access to state and national park system in addition to city parks and easy access to Blueways in addition to Greenways.

Asheville has continued to **cultivate the city's greenways**, with 4.5 miles completed as of the 2016 Asheville in Motion plan.

Regional **Farm to Table** and **Local Food Movements** contribute create recreation and tourism related to food and promotes rural character.

“Open spaces, parks, greenways, community gardens, and edible landscapes are abundant throughout the city.”

-Council Vision 2036

Natural Environment

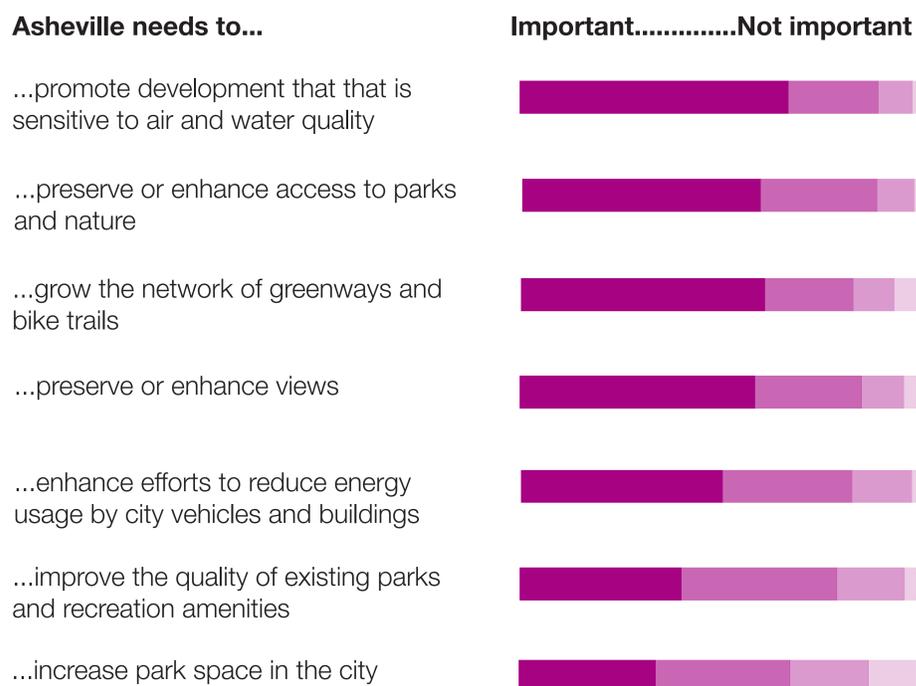
Public Survey Results



SATISFACTION WITH EXISTING CITY SERVICES



PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE



“Let’s focus on the natural beauty, the arts and community.”

“It’s critical to preserve natural resources and soils to keep tree cover in order to keep the city clean, cool, attractive, decrease stormwater events and erosion, etc.”

“We have to treat climate change as a crisis, not an afterthought.”

“Enable more tree cover and other shading of large parking lots”

“It is imperative that we, as a city in the middle of a forest, do everything possible to save that forest. “

“We need more greenways!”

“We should have at least one purely ecological indicator in our comprehensive plan which drives us to support a healthy environment for its own sake. Water quality? Diversity of aquatic species in the section of the river that runs through the city? Tree canopy diversity and coverage?”

“Build a park on Haywood across from the library.”

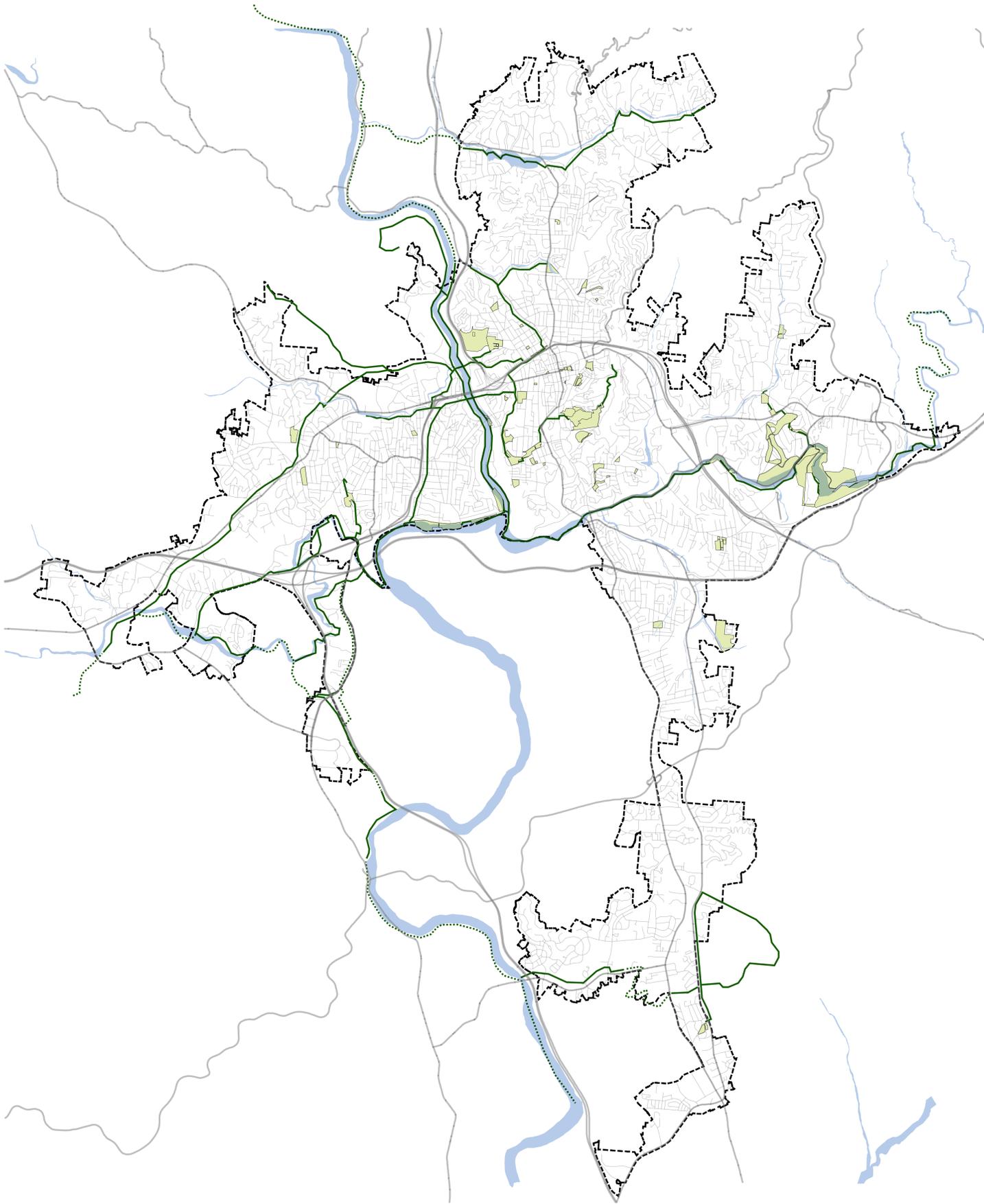
“URBAN AGRICULTURE, WATERSHED PROTECTION, WILDLIFE CORRIDORS.”

“It is imperative that we, as a city in the middle of a forest, do everything possible to **save that forest**. When anyone even thinks about cutting down one of the ancient trees or topping a tree, they should have to deal with a list of regulations explaining that that kind of **destruction is not allowed** in our city.”

“Planting edible landscapes, **OPEN SPACES** so people can gather without permits, community centers.”

Harmony with the Natural Environment

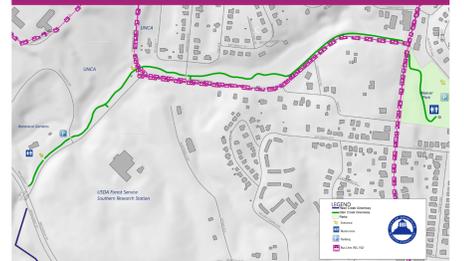
PARKS AND GREENWAYS



RIVER GREENWAY



GLEN CREEK GREENWAY



REED CREEK GREENWAY



RIVERBEND PARK GREENWAY



BUILT AREA



A Resilient Economy

A Resilient Economy is a thriving, equitable economy that supports jobs and affordable housing for everyone.

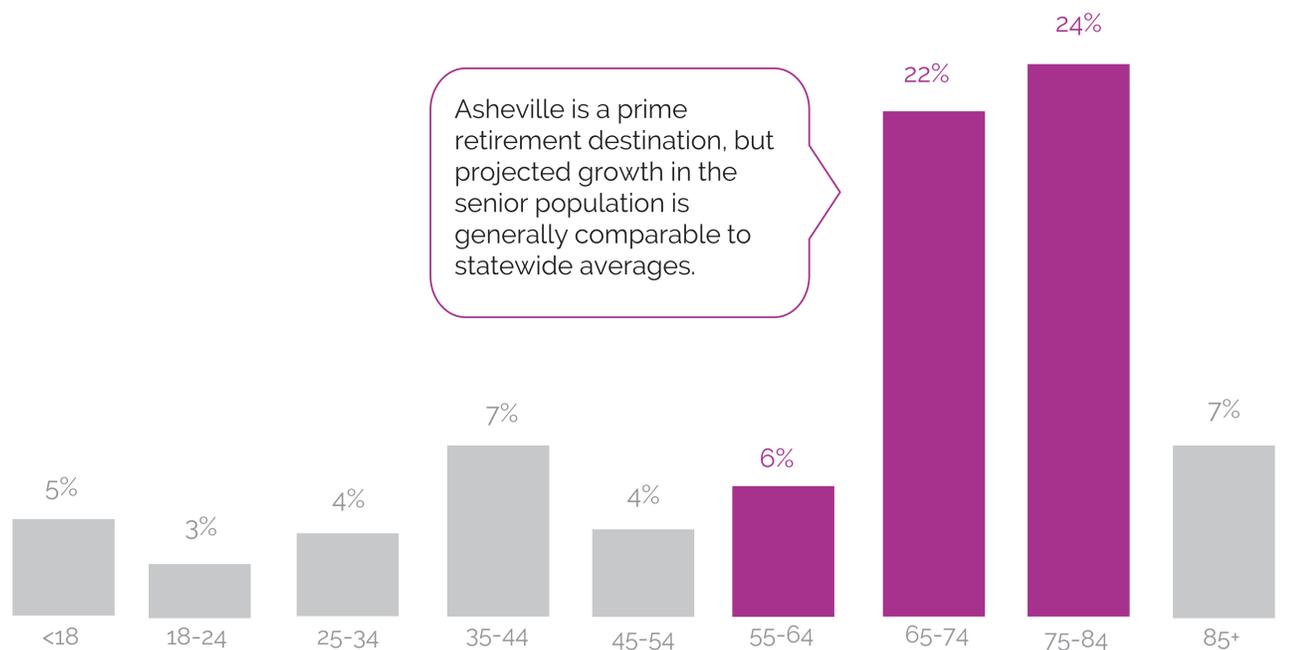
In a Resilient Economy:

- Housing is affordable
- Education is strong
- Incomes are growing
- Employment is abundant
- Commutes are short
- Entrepreneurship is supported
- Prosperity is equitable
- Growth is diverse

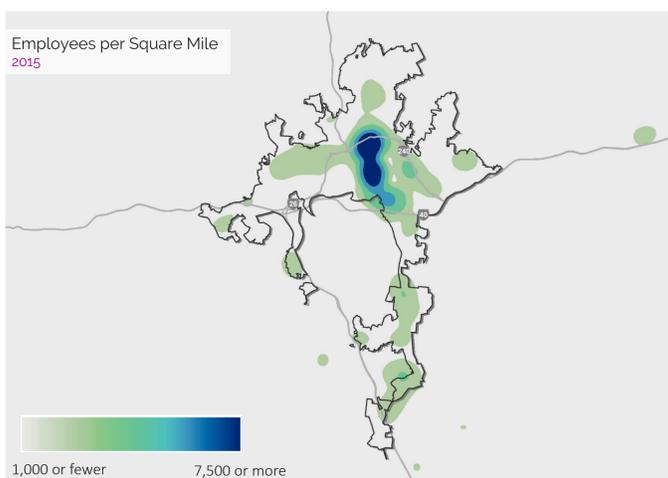
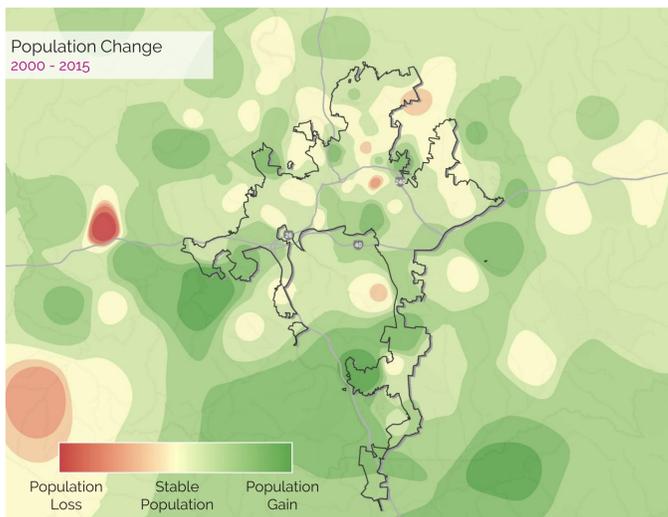
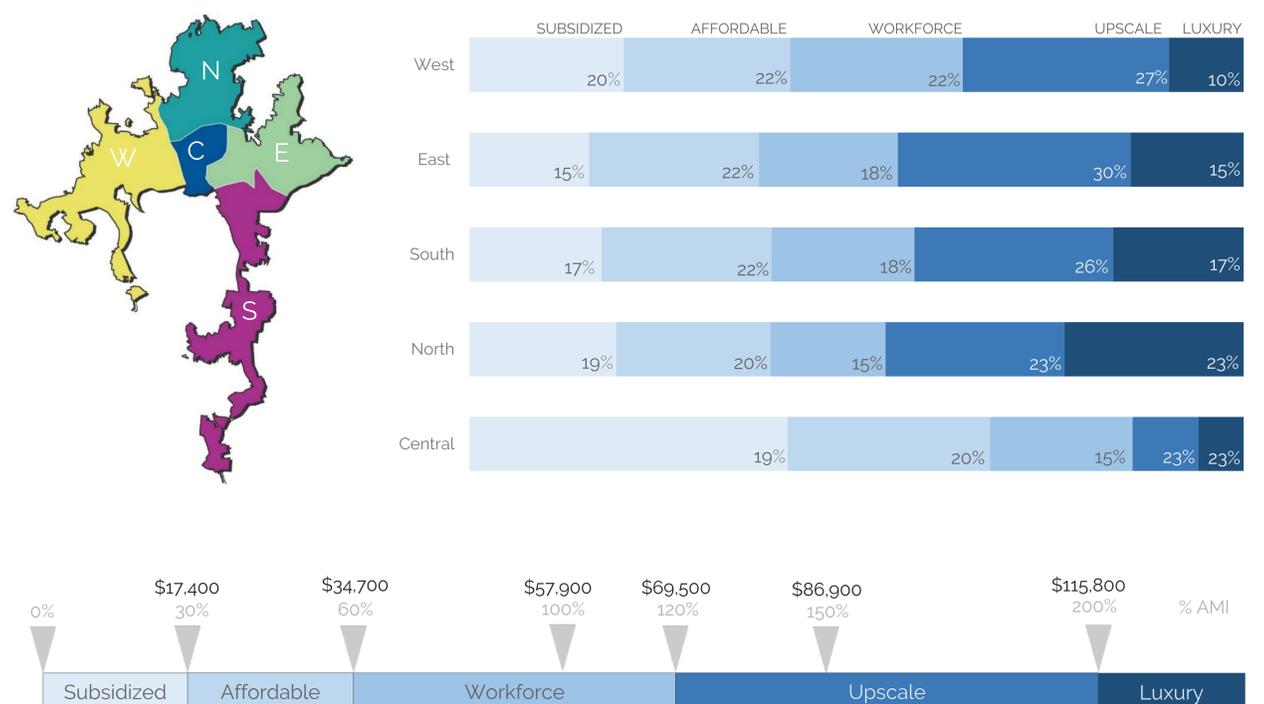
REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS



CHANGE IN POPULATION BY AGE, 2016-2021



AFFORDABILITY BY SUB-DISTRICT



A Resilient Economy

EDUCATION

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey



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

42% **17%**

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

the number of individuals without a high school diploma

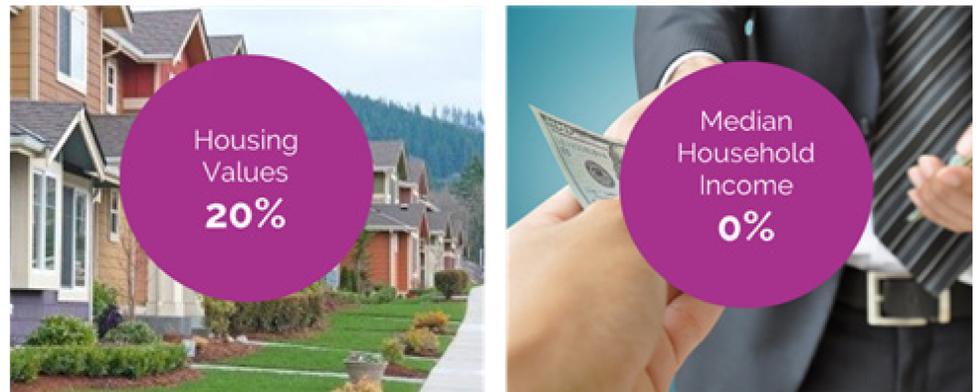
Consistent with national trends of urban areas increasing their share of a younger and highly educated population, from 2009 to 2014. The number of individuals aged 25 to 34 with at least a bachelor's degree increased by almost 59%.

Educational attainment in Asheville is relatively high and on the rise.

(45% of residents aged 25 and older hold at least a Bachelor's degree)

INCOME

Percent Change from 2012 to 2015:



Household income in Asheville is relatively low compared to its peer cities and is not keeping pace with rising housing costs.

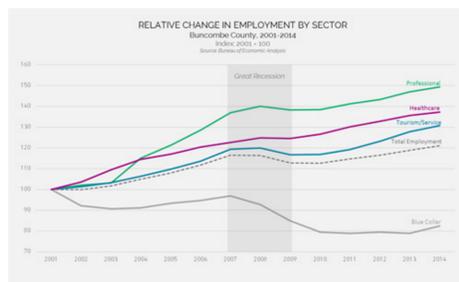
EMPLOYMENT

2014 Employment by Sector



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

Just over a quarter of the total jobs in Buncombe County are in tourism or service-sector industries; however, the combined share of healthcare and professional sector jobs (34%), which tend to be higher-paying, actually make up a larger portion of the local economy.



Since 2001, Professional sector employment has grown faster than any other sector, while Blue Collar employment continues to decline with little to no recovery since the Recession.

Buncombe County has fully recovered from the Great Recession with total employment surpassing pre-Recession levels.

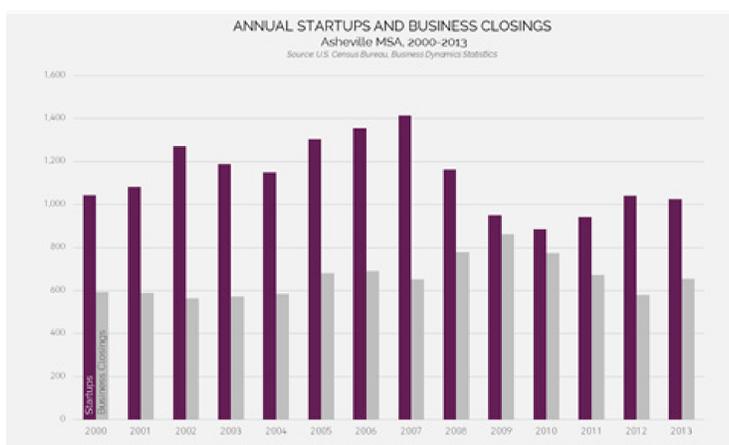
COMMUTING

Source: ESRI



More than 75% of Asheville's workforce lives outside of the city.

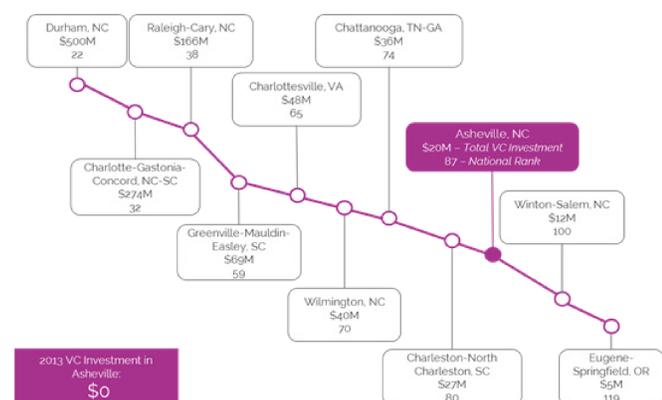
ENTREPRENEURSHIP



The startup business rate (number of new businesses created annually) is still lower than before the Recession and lower than the national average.

Total Venture Capital Investment by Region, 2014

Source: National Venture Capital Association

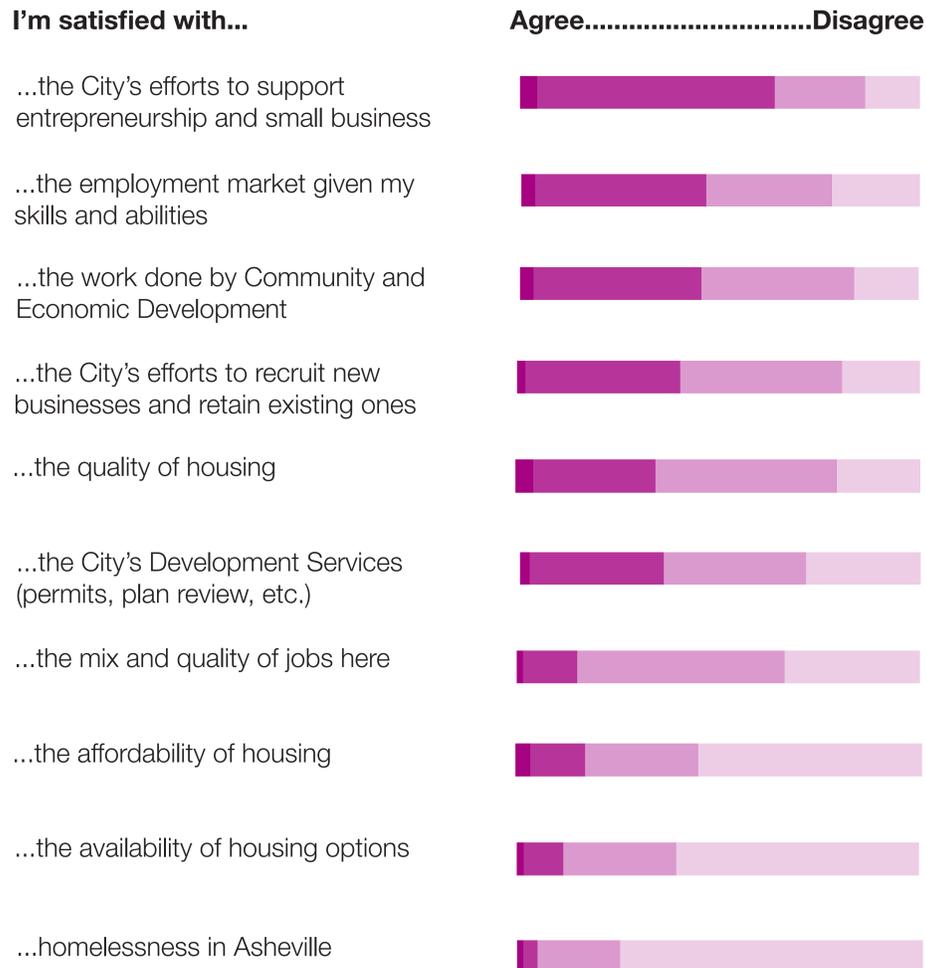


However, Asheville is now "on the map" in terms of venture capital investment, which is a measure of innovation and entrepreneurial activity in a region.

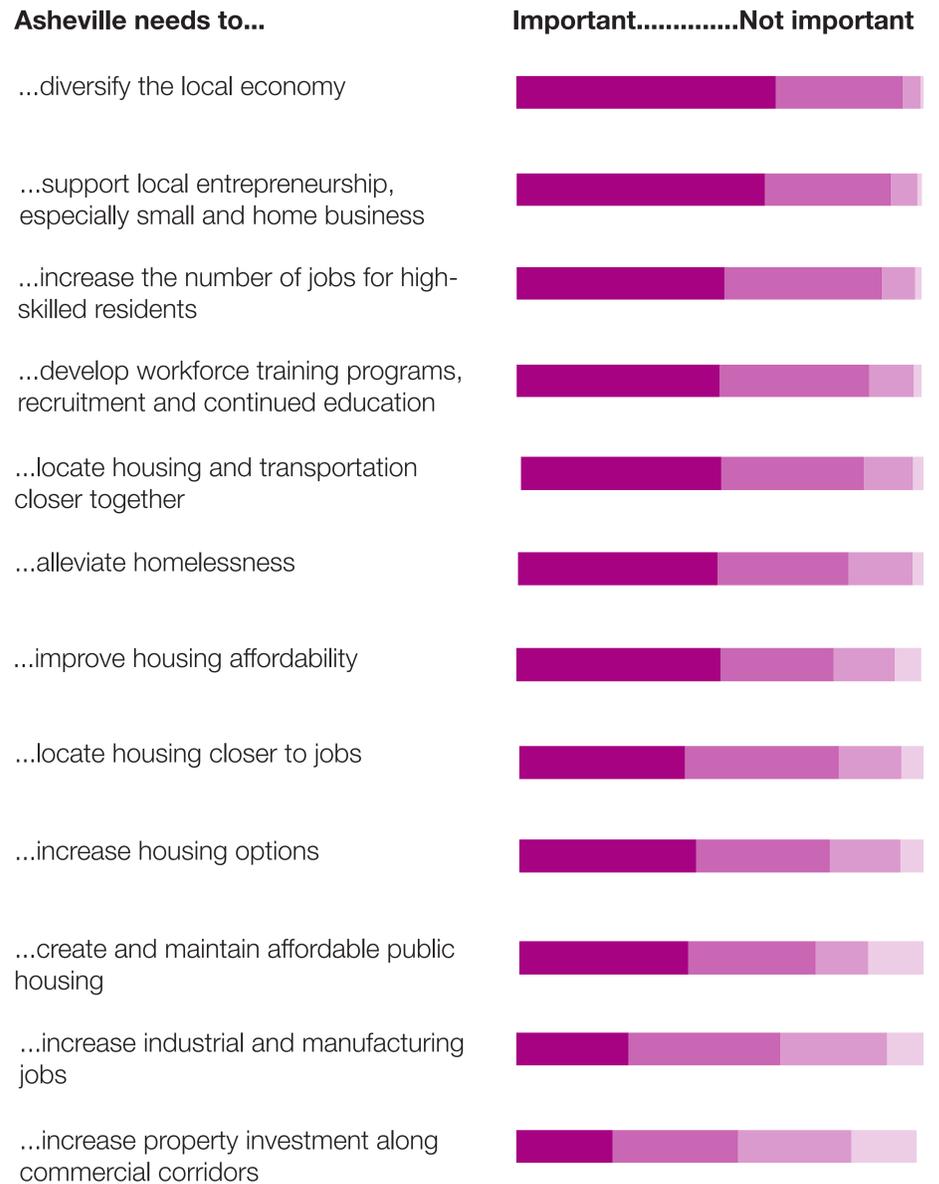
A Resilient Economy

Public Survey Results

SATISFACTION WITH EXISTING CITY SERVICES



PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE



“We are greatly in need of programs to attract white collar jobs and higher paying jobs in general.”

“The tourism industry is not enough to sustain a diversified city.”

“Promote smaller affordable houses – not just single family but with an apartment to rent or grouped around communal building.”

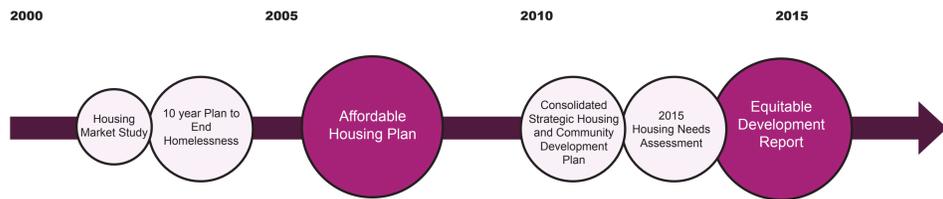
“I THINK AFFORDABLE HOUSING IS MUCH NEEDED!”

“**JOBS** ARE A HUGE PROBLEM IN THIS AREA.”

“There needs to be some way to address the ways that some folks have lots of access to jobs, transportation, housing options, education, etc. This particularly relates to the historic African American community and increasingly will relate to the newer immigrant communities.”

Interwoven Equity

PREVIOUS PLANNING



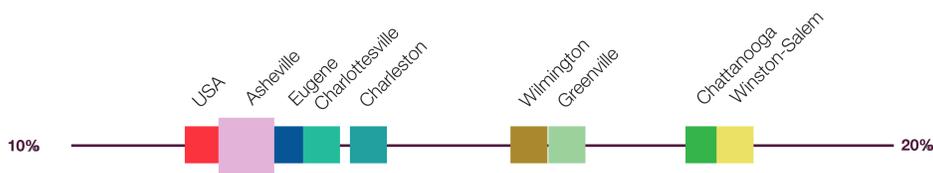
Many studies have been completed regarding the equity issue (see Housing and Equity Diagram), especially over the last 10 years. Major themes revolving around increasing housing affordability, improving equity, strengthening access to living-wage jobs and neighborhood amenities, and preventing displacement are considered underlying goals.

“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.”

- Council Vision 2036

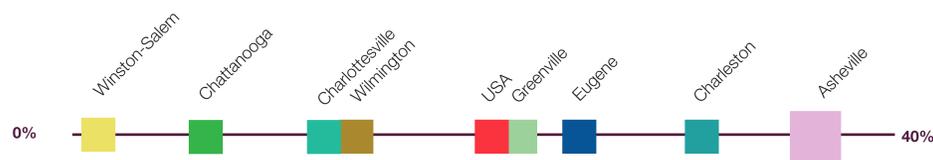
HOW ASHEVILLE COMPARES

FAMILIES BELOW POVERTY



Asheville has the lowest percentage of families below poverty compared to similar cities, though slightly higher than the national average.

HOUSING VALUE INCREASE, 2012 – 2016



Asheville's home values are not uniquely high, despite a large increase in value. However, affordability concerns are compounded by low average incomes and rapidly rising housing prices.

KEY ISSUES

Employment Equity

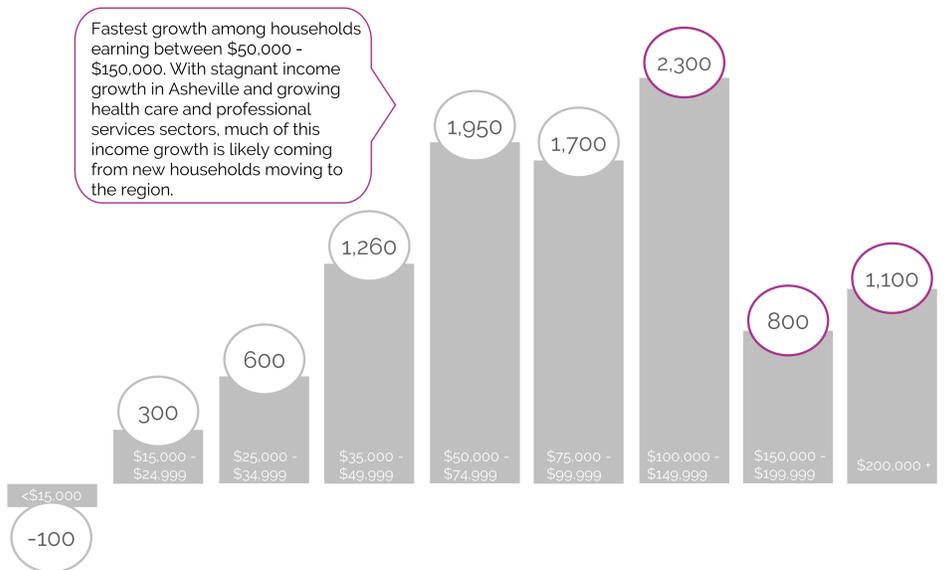
There is **declining employment** in traditional industry.

Income Growth in Asheville is slow.

Asheville has a highly educated workforce, but **the lowest average earnings for Bachelor's degree holders** of all cities studied in the Benchmarking analysis.

Many new households are moving to Asheville, bolstering the **healthcare and professional sectors**

Asheville Change in Household Income 2010-2016



Housing

Asheville has a **multi-dimensional housing crisis** (2008 Affordable Housing Plan)

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

Tax Equity

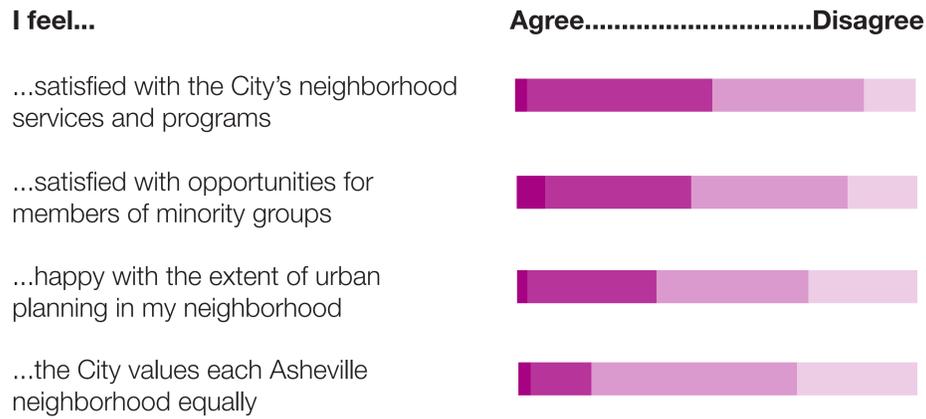
Tax Equity: Increasing the share of taxes paid by non-residential land uses was a key theme in the 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update

CREATIVE STRATEGIES

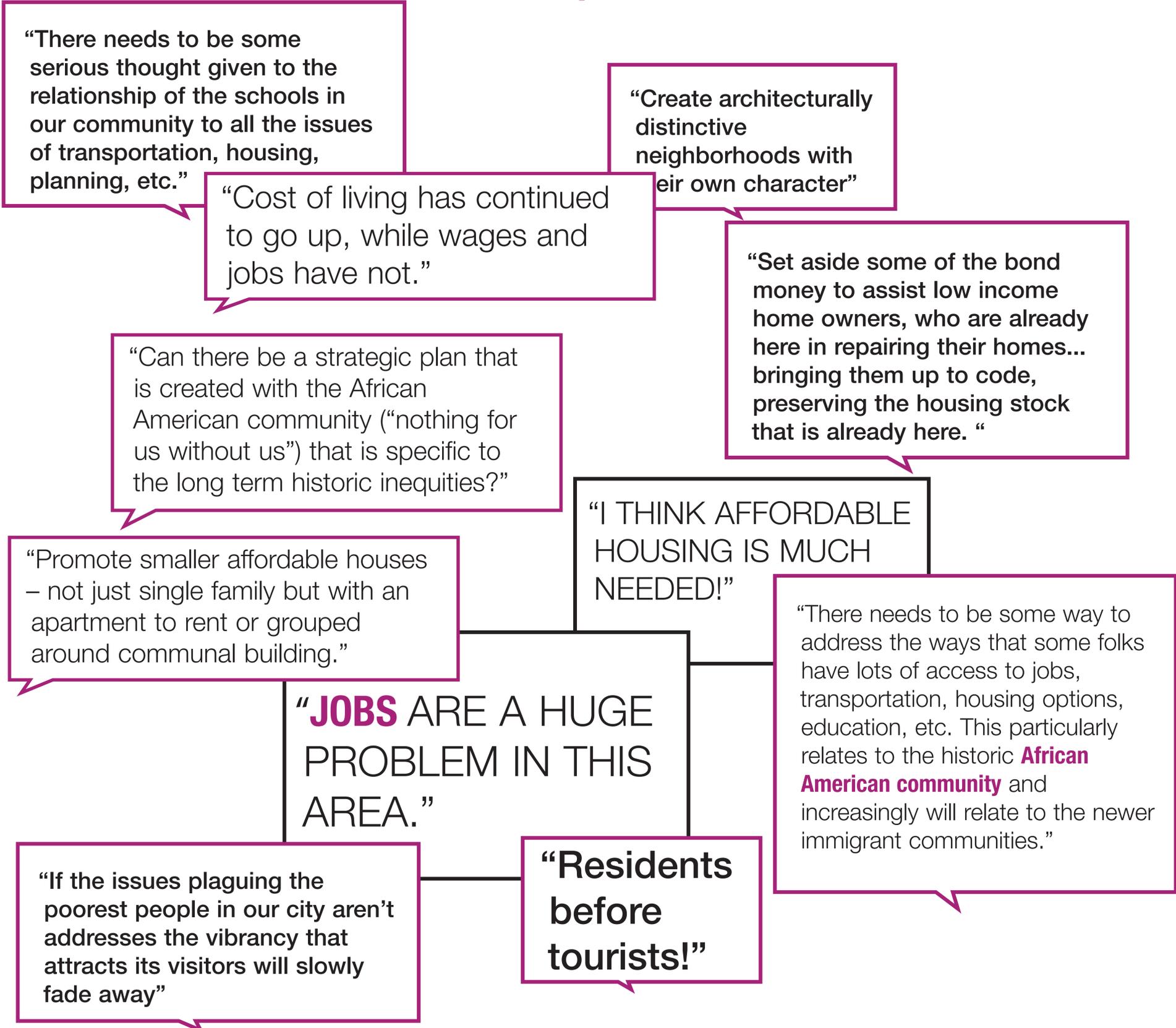
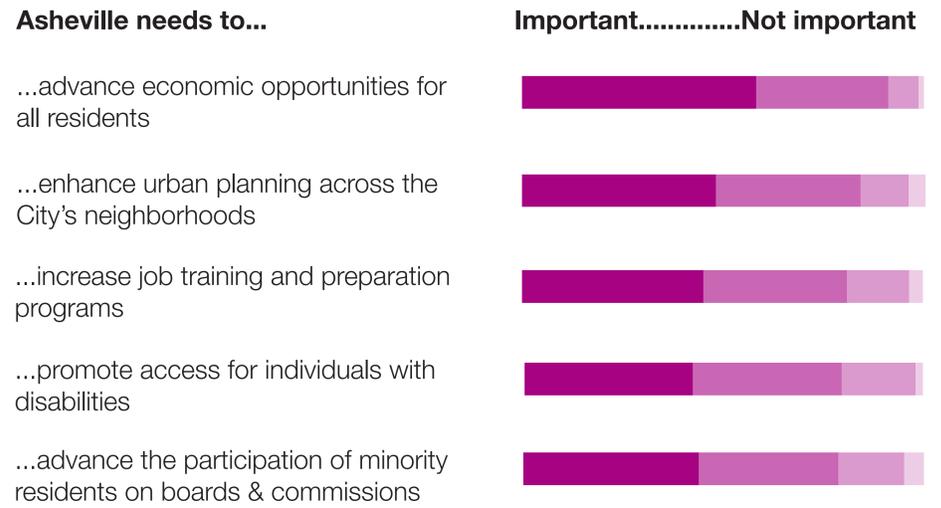
- Greenville is considering the formal adoption of **inclusionary zoning**
- Eugene has had major **public-private partnerships** for multi-family homes

Interwoven Equity

SATISFACTION WITH EXISTING CITY SERVICES

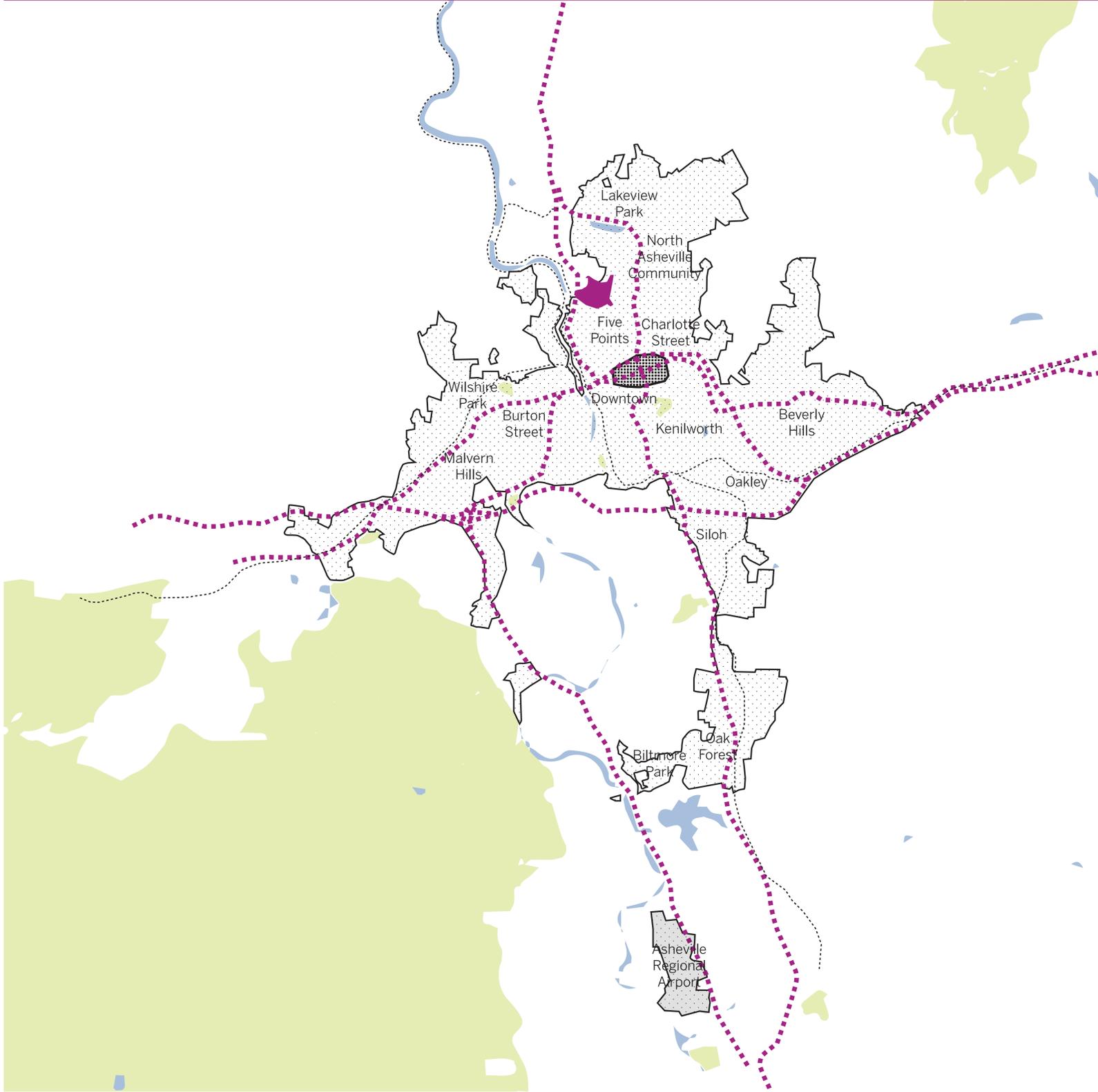


PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE

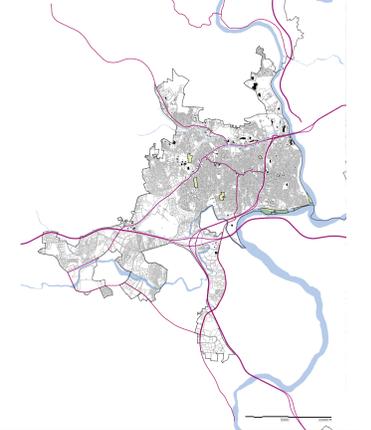


Interwoven Equity

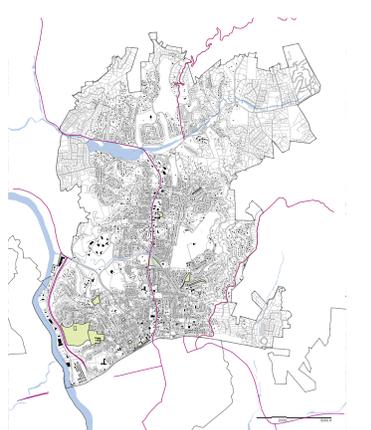
ASHEVILLE



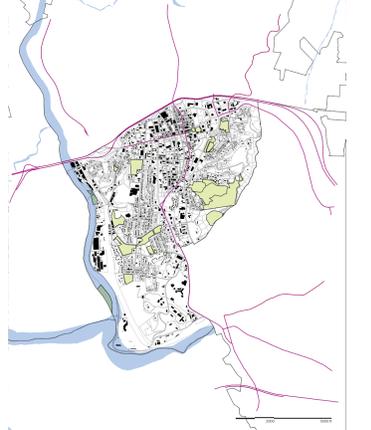
WEST ASHEVILLE



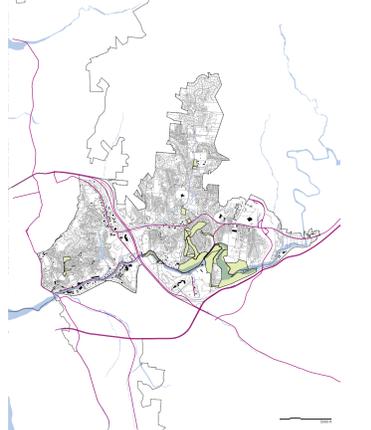
NORTH ASHEVILLE



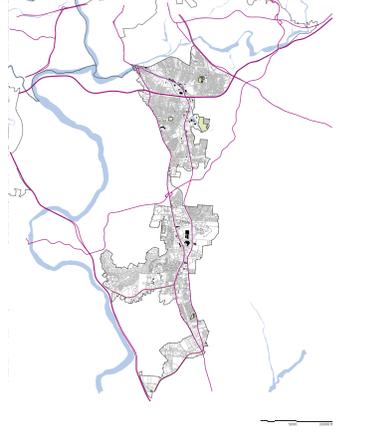
CENTRAL ASHEVILLE



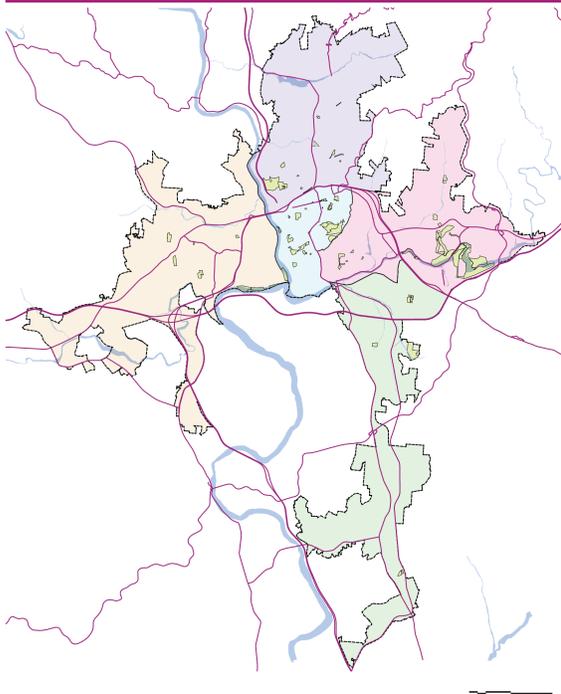
EAST ASHEVILLE



SOUTH ASHEVILLE



FIVE CHARACTER AREAS



A Healthy Community

KEY ISSUES



Key Assets and Challenges Related to Health And Wellness

- Strong natural environment
- Clean air
- Strong access to recreation amenities
- Safety concerns
- Economic health a concern
- Environmental resiliency

“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.”

“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.”

- Council 2036 Vision

PREVIOUS PLANNING



The **Sustainability Management Plan**, which was completed in 2009, emerged from the City’s ambition to take a leadership role in addressing important issues of resource conservation and climate protection. The plan allows the City to provide an integrated approach for resource management and for addressing the full spectrum of local government services.

HOW ASHEVILLE COMPARES TO OTHER CITIES

HEALTH AND WELLNESS METRICS

Performs Well:

- 82.64 for Asheville Health Care according to Numbeo
- #12 Best Places for Business and Careers according to Forbes
- Obesity rate (21.2%)
- Diabetes rate (8.7%)
- People feeling badly about themselves (21.2%)
- General health condition (57.4% good)
- Recreation and physical activity

Performs typically:

- Ranked #69 on Livability.com.
- Livability score of 56 on AARP
- Ranked #58 in Education according to Forbes
- Environment score according to AARP 58
- Health score according to AARP 53
- Number of grocery stores (2.16 / 10,000 residents)
- Average BMI (28.6)
- Average hours of sleep per night
- Pesticide use

Needs Improvement:

- Walkscore of 36 (low)
- Crime index 385

Areavibes Grades

- Amenities: A+
- Cost of Living: B-
- Education: B-
- Weather: A
- Employment and Housing: C-

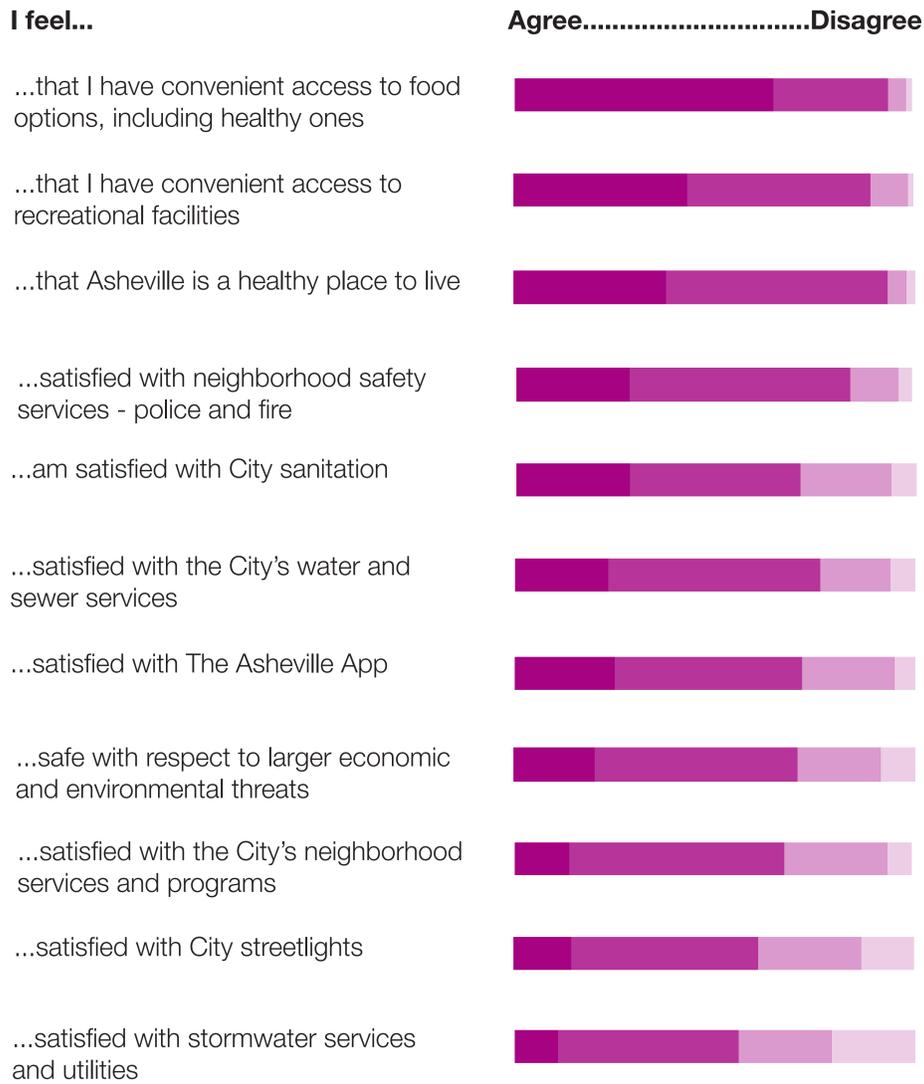
CREATIVE STRATEGIES

- **Partner with private foundations** and groups to leverage public dollars for sidewalk, trail, and other enhancement projects
- Incorporate **healthy communities strategies** and designs into transportation planning.

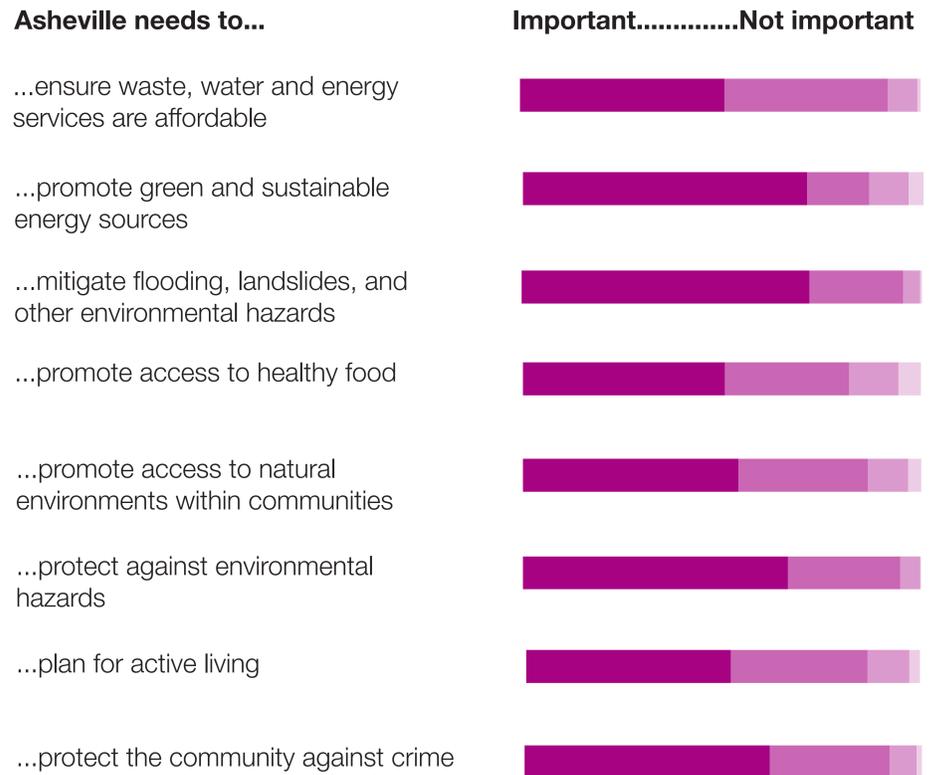
A Healthy Community

Public Survey Results

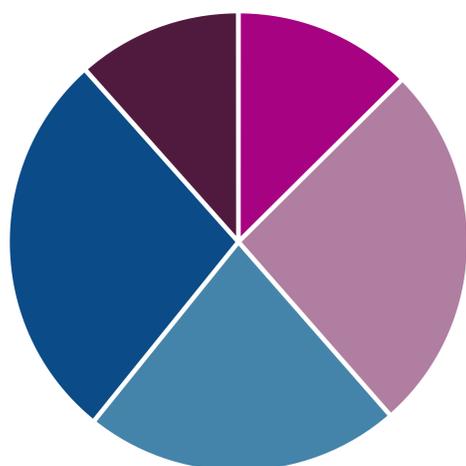
SATISFACTION WITH EXISTING CITY SERVICES



PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE



Why do people choose to live in Asheville?



“Improve education for students thru high school.”

“Mental health programs are important.”

“Key to improving our City is... creating a safe and healthy environment where we can all play, walk, run and bike in the City without fear of being hit by a car.”

“Explore possibility of assisting seniors stay in their housing by setting up a live-in housemate program”

“Water and air quality must be of highest priority.”

Responsible Regionalism

ASHEVILLE: HUB OF THE REGION

CITY POPULATION GROWTH, 2000-2015



REGIONAL POPULATION GROWTH, 2000-2015



Asheville is growing at the same rate as Buncombe County, but its share of the total County population is declining, which means lower tax revenues. **What is Asheville's role within the County?**

In the next 15 years, Buncombe County will need to add more than 20,000 new housing units to accommodate new demand. **How much of regional housing demand should/could the city of Asheville absorb?**

With approximately 75 percent of Asheville's workforce already living outside the city, **how will these development patterns put a strain on transportation networks and access to employment?**

Should Asheville support space for industry given housing demand and a shifting regional economy?

What is the role of Downtown Asheville? Tourism hub, employment center, or residential neighborhood? Or a mix?

How can the city and region continue to diversify the local economy by increasing the number of high-paying jobs in technology and healthcare?



Both Asheville and Buncombe County are growing rapidly.

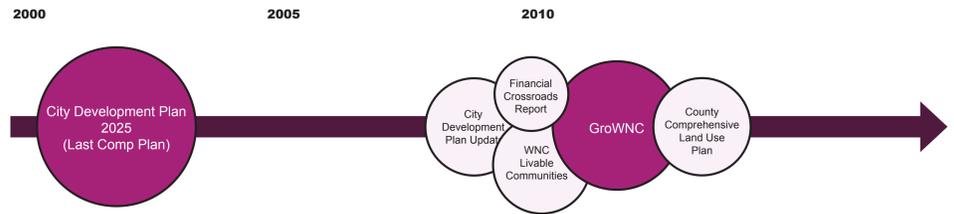
Asheville population
County population

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

Many people work and recreate in Asheville but live elsewhere.

- The greatest **disparity between daytime and nighttime population** in the state
- How do we improve **tax equity**: Increasing the share of taxes paid by non-residents?

PREVIOUS PLANNING



The most significant regional plan is the **GroWNC Regional Plan**, which 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.

HOW ASHEVILLE COMPARES TO OTHER CITIES

MEDIAN EARNINGS FOR RESIDENTS WITH BACHELOR'S DEGREES



Median household income is lower in Asheville compared to peer cities, but so is the poverty rate.

SUSTAINABILITY

Asheville is a regional leader in Sustainability

- Thanks to a high-quality water source, Asheville continues to **attract companies that depend on clean water** - from breweries to high tech start-ups to restaurants and food manufacturers.
- Recognized as a **Tree City USA** for decades
- Asheville is a leader in **climate change research**
- Comprehensive stormwater management policy as well as a slope ordinance
- Waste, recycling, and curbside composting
- Local Food Movement
- LEED Gold standard** for City Buildings
- Sustainability Management Plan
- 85% of survey respondents want **green energy and infrastructure**

CREATIVE STRATEGIES

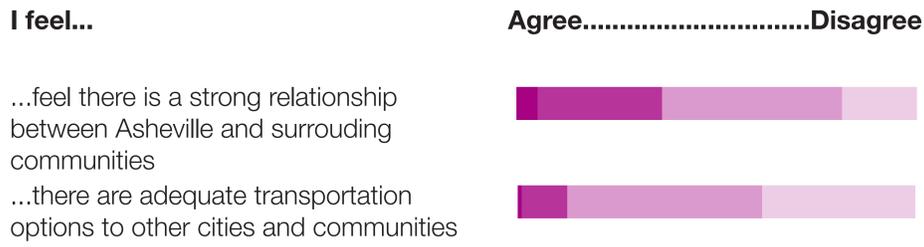
- Sustainability Scorecards
- Urban Growth Boundaries

Responsible Regionalism

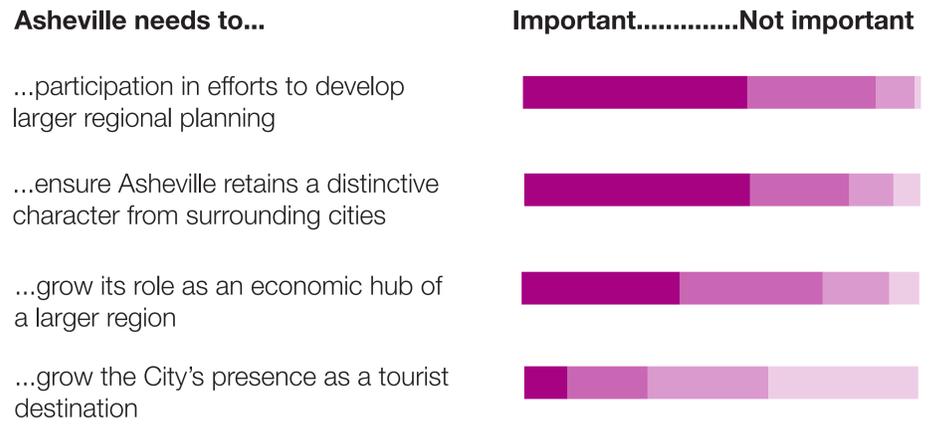
Public Survey Results



SATISFACTION WITH EXISTING CITY SERVICES

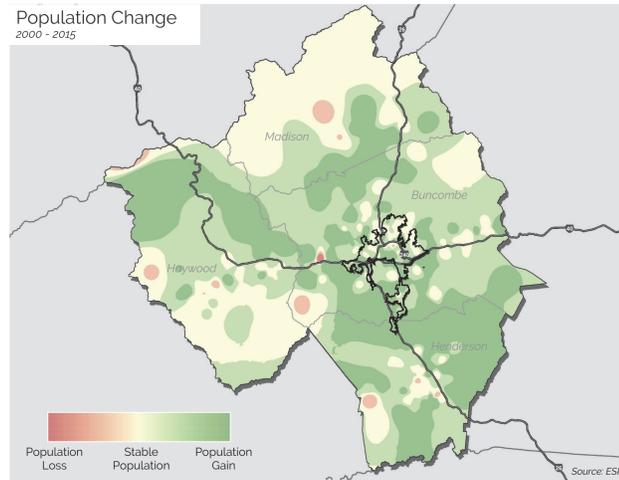
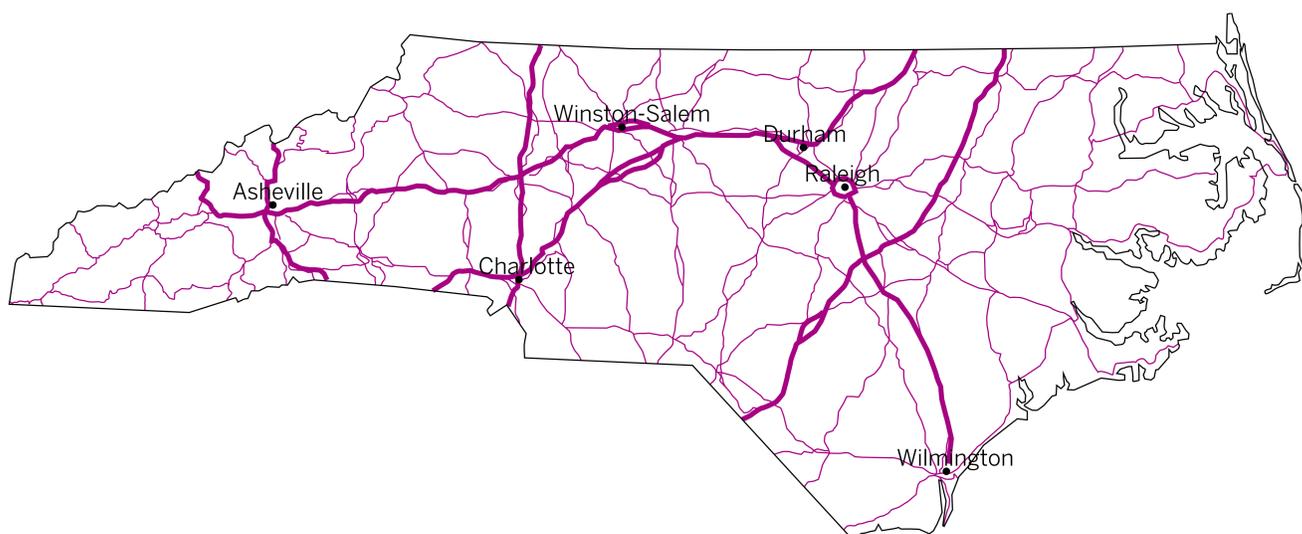


PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE



Responsible Regionalism

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA



ASHEVILLE AND BUNCOMBE COUNTY

