Buncombe County Strategic Planning
Community Input Session – Black Mountain
12/4/2019

RESIDENT WELL BEING:

Transportation

- Public transportation
- Increase access to widespread and affordable public transportation. This transportation must be powered by renewable energy too.

Equity/Inclusion

- Increase cultural pride.

Education/Schools

- Educated population
- Increase education of public on safe and discerning use of internet.

Community (sense of, access to services, place-making)

- Develop community gardens
- Increase access to assistance to close the technology gap for older or underserved residents. They cannot apply for many programs or services because they do not understand or have access to technology.
- Provide assistance workshops on how to apply for state/fed assistance and insurance – disability, healthcare, identification. Could be informational.
- Food and shelter for the homeless – opportunity for rehabilitation and training for viable employment.
- Encourage and supporting the arts at all levels
- Community garden support
- Increasing efforts to create social ties and create places for communities to connect with each other in physical space, which will positively impact jail populations, drug use, health issues, etc.
- Building trust among leaders and communities by absolute actions and not words

Housing

- Lowest per capita income: cost of living
- Allow tiny houses
- Build small apartments for elderly-low income
- Develop housing for the homeless, i.e. tiny houses
- Reduce homelessness

Criminal Justice/Public Safety

- Police in area more

- Law abiding sheriff who doesn't release illegal immigrant felons into the community when ICE can get them out of the community
- Have more police officers monitoring roads for violations of drivers
- Enforcement of traffic laws. It has become increasingly dangerous on roads in Buncombe County. Increase presence of law enforcement officers who enforce the law.
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Employment, Econ Development & Partnerships

- Increase wages/decrease gaps in wages (social detriments of health)
- Decrease gender wage gap
- Bring in more tourism to support more jobs
- Access to employment for those released from prison – backs up to quality training in prison – address recidivism

Children/Youth/Pre-K & Childcare

- Implement a way to support child care – private or public
- Affordable childcare with emphasis on quality early childhood education

Funding (taxes, alternate sources, add'l investment

- Low taxes
- Tourism is causing rising costs. Stop investors or heavily tax investors who don't live in community to give back to all
- Change policy to have developers who are building large buildings to allocate 20% to service or low income people.

Health/Substance Abuse/Mental Health

- Increase accessibility to quality preventative healthcare
- Mental health access – affordable/free, individual/group
- Swannanoa – have a more diverse choice of doctors
- Healthcare available for all
- Low cost medical clinics (more affordable/free mental health access)
- County health dept. outreach through mobile clinics to underserved populations
- Emphasis on drug education and treatment
- Opioid crisis – have all doctors responsible for drugs they prescribe
- Better hospitals. Mission recently was downgraded to a "C".
- Address ongoing drug addiction through programs, funding, etc.
- Maintaining/establishing healthcare access, in light of for-profit healthcare now being dominant

Land Use, Development & Public Investment

- Good trash pickup, street lights, good water
- No new regulations on landowners
- Encourage compact housing with dense landscaping.
- Not increase density

Natural Resources (water & air quality, greenspace, farmland & food)

- Provide food for the food insecure
- Increase local food security and access to healthy food.
- Food security

Recreation/Greenways/Healthy Life

- Make our town and county pedestrian friendly via sidewalks and connecting greenways
- Recreational spaces
- Recreational spaces – healthy activities
- Full access to playground
- Building safe sidewalks and bicycle paths
- Provide opportunities for all people to be active as a natural part of their daily activities (i.e. access to greenways and parks)
- Provide adequate access to healthy food for all residents.
- Completion of a countywide greenway system
- Provide options for people to stay active
- Protect and enhance greenspace in the cities, including pedestrian and bike friendly roads

Energy & Waste Reduction

- Reduce greenhouse emissions/carbon footprint via building operations, transit options, and public pressure Duke Energy to utilize much more renewable energy sources.

VIBRANT ECONOMY:

Transportation

- Efficient and effective public transportation
- Free bus transportation available to all citizens
- improved public transportation

Education/Schools

- Vocational training is available, affordable, accessible and supported/integrated with industry partnerships
- Educated population
- Support AB Tech and skilled trades, small businesses such as lawn care, home repair, etc.
- Make sure all races have the same education
- Have more educational festivals – reading science environment not just one topic at a time

Community (sense of, access to services, place-making)

- Develop a "cottage industry" mentality and form a self-sufficient community/county
- Nourish community connections through support of public recreational spaces and programming for diverse populations

- Focus not just on middle-class needs, priorities, and concerns but those of the truly poor.

Housing

- Reduce housing costs/increase housing opportunities
- Help the homeless by creating spaces that help them to move forward
- Allow for areas of small/micro houses for anyone (homeless, working low-to-moderate income to live)
- Affordable housing within the county
- Increase affordable housing options for the workforce
- Workforce housing
- Invest in workforce housing and relax ordinances prohibiting alternative housing
- Affordable housing for working people
- Abundant and affordable housing
- Affordable housing

Employment, Econ Development & Partnerships

- Create zones of affordable business space
- Regional collaboration to ED projects (increase wages, economic diversity)
- Attract business
- More manufacturing
- Encourage/incentivize businesses to relocate to Buncombe County or to expand their operations that will bring high-wage employment with opportunities.
- We need more manufacturing and food or hotels
- Good enough employments so individual persons don't have to work two jobs. Good enough jobs, less stress, better health, happier communities, more time to practice environment stewardship and volunteerism.
- Encourage the entrepreneurial spirit.
- Jobs that require skills above basic education. Workers who will be able to support their families and not work several hours.
- Increase economic activity; i.e. jobs, business creation across all levels (size of company, variety of business types)
- Diversity of industry – not dependent on service economy
- Increase minimum hourly wage to a living wage
- Focus on supporting local businesses and on employing local people. No more selling off our homegrown businesses, such as Earth Fare and Whole Foods. The county could find ways to encourage homegrown business and to discourage large corporate chains. Tourists for example, love our local breweries and locally crafted art.
- Raising the minimum wage, which is shown to alleviate many of our significant issues
- Support local small businesses
- Encouraging small businesses to relocate or start up with perhaps incentives
- Diversification of tourism economy

Children/Youth/Pre-K & Childcare

- Community childcare available at costs adjusted to income

Funding (taxes, alternate sources, add'l investment

- Low taxes

Land Use, Development & Public Investment

- Swannanoa needs a new library
- Zone rules that support greenspaces, wider sidewalks, etc.
- Maintain/build infrastructure

Recreation/Greenways/Healthy Life

- Green spaces, greenways, trails, parks
- Green spaces etc to support tourism

Rural Access/Connectivity

- Swannanoa – have more choice to eat fast food and have a bank
- Support free internet or internet access for home based occupations

EDUCATED AND CAPABLE COMMUNITY:

Transportation

- Expand mass transit

Education/Schools

- Increase opportunities for lifelong learning
- College and quality trade schools
- Student Debt
- Support AB Tech and skilled trades
- Whatever happened to that tax for AB Tech?
- Increase access/provide programs and services to young adults to assist with applying for employment and applying for college and scholarships. Teach them how to be responsible with money. Programs in schools
- Attract/keep best teachers with affective methods/curriculum
- All children can read at their grade level or higher
- All public schools have top-tier talent (teaching, administrators)
- Extend the school year for all children to 210-220 days
- Focus on resources to address racial education gaps
- Try to increase all children to be in classes together and not separated by schools headed in one direction
- Increase access to and support of public school education
- No child left behind – no matter age or race.
- More industry training, vocational training

- Increase number of teachers and merit based salary increases.
- Use the successful educational models of some charter schools – Evergreen, Art Space, etc. and bring these to a larger population in the county. These are model schools with great staff and outcomes and this type of education should not be up to winning the lottery.
- Post-secondary education access
- Go to schools to find the poor and find out what they feel is important to them.
- Access to post-secondary education at all ages and stages
- Increase funding of county schools and increase teacher salaries
- Encourage vocational education in fields where well-paying jobs are available.
- Parental involvement

Community (sense of, access to services, place-making)

- Promote/support "Cottage Industries" to enable community self sufficiency
- Elderly can find services
- Increase access to counselors in school for youth to feel comfortable addressing needs such as domestic violence, drugs, food insecurity.
- Create opportunities within and without educational institutions to learn valuable practical life skills
- Create opportunities for residents and business owners to learn and be supported in engagement with local and county government
- Senior citizens have access to high quality community services and programs
- Educational and enrichment activities should be accessible and affordable to the residents.
- Host more of this type of event where community members participate in the bigger picture. Advertise widely.
- Provide presentations about internet and business scams so people can discern and make good
- Need more drug rehab places and long stay
- Emphasis on food security
- Expand library funding and capabilities to reach out to all young people.
- Support for libraries across the county, especially digital resources

Housing

- Safe, affordable housing

Employment, Econ Development & Partnerships

- Attract industry sectors which may require greater educational experiences
- Our goal is to have educated and capable community by having better employments for families to have less stress and financial worries so that they can contribute to the community, feed their family and focus on a better quality of living.
- Providing a living wage to all staff that work in childcare

Children/Youth/Pre-K & Childcare

- Head Start programs
- More and cheaper early childcare

- Support very early childhood development
- Childcare is available to all that need the service with quality, accessibility and affordable
- Full access for all children birth-5 to high quality childcare at an affordable cost of fully subsidized
- High quality and easy accessible, 24-hour available childcare in order that any family may work anytime.
- Affordable childcare – resources for centers to receive support financially and in services to better equip young children for the future.
- Early childhood educational opportunities should be available across the county.
- Early childhood education for all races
    - Reading
- Increased funding for daycare, primary and secondary education
- Community daycare infrastructure
- Early childhood education support (subsidy)
- Abundant and affordable childcare for everyone

Funding (taxes, alternate sources, add'l investment

- Library funded

Health/Substance Abuse/Mental Health

- Center maternal health

Collaboration/Public Engagement

Land Use, Development & Public Investment

Natural Resources (water & air quality, greenspace, farmland & food)

Recreation/Greenways/Healthy Life

- Promote use of bicycles
- Provide healthy food during the activities.

Rural Access/Connectivity

- High speed internet

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP:

Transportation

- Improve Mountain Mobility access/public transportation
- Have a better mass transit system
- Better use for public or shared transportation
- Increase access to alternative means of transportation.
- Free electric bus service around county
- Vehicles run on solar energy (buses, etc.)

Housing

- Acknowledge that "homelessness" is going to be with us for the foreseeable future. Establish "camps" with port-a-johns and a dumpster. Set up a few of the portable storage sheds for a cooking and shower area.

Land Use, Development & Public Investment

- A transfer station in the east end of Buncombe County
- Slope protection (mountainsides are being defaced by development
- Protect all creeks and rivers from storm water runoff, sediment/erosion from development and construction projects and strengthen/enforce all existing regulations and ordinances.
- Before building new homes, the whole place needs to be looked at for water runoff.
- You can have policies that encourage maintaining farmland and undeveloped land while protecting private property rights for landowners ability to do as they wish
- Increased supervision of infractions
- Limit development. The Board of Adjustments must stop approving conditional use permits to developers that make exceptions to county and state laws.
- Protect farmland from development through easements and ecological agricultural development projects.
- Adding teeth to enforcement of environmental regulations on industry in the county, including agriculture, with particular focus on water quality.
- Change policy and laws to stop the cutting of all the trees on property (not somewhere else) i.e. must keep 20% of property in trees.
- Preserve existing trees by regulating the number and types of trees that are removed for development.
- Require trees to be planted to replace the trees that are lost
- Improve storm water drainage by regulating development and educating home and commercial builders.
- Continue to limit development on ridge tops

Natural Resources (water & air quality, greenspace, farmland & food)

- Conservation and protection of drinking water resources
- Steward development
- End unnecessary development/destruction of resources and protect watersheds
- Sustainable agriculture
- As already identified, reserve land for natural undeveloped spaces and farms
- Continue and further develop clean-up and protection of waterways and groundwater
- Make pollinator gardens
- Address bear population – education – safety
- Set strict storm water ordinances and practices
- Preserve open-space, farm land
- Maintain amount of greenspace, farms, forests, large tracts of undeveloped land
- Collaborate with conservation trusts to protect more open space and farmland

- Save land near rivers and streams where flat for growing food
- Increase the number of viable small farms supplying local food to the community
- Prioritize maintenance of farms and wilderness
- We need to be alive and breathe in 2025.
- Increased land conservation education
- Protect natural resources

Recreation/Greenways/Healthy Life

- Preserve/protect/expand parks, greenways
- Build out Buncombe Co. greenways to connect as much as possible between communities, area attractions, have bicycle lockers, commuter parking lots, incentives from county to use bicycles for transportation.
- County programs for getting outdoors at any age.
- Completion of a countywide greenway system

Energy & Waste Reduction

- Reduce carbon emissions (start with building, transit, green the grid)
- reduce greenhouse emissions
- Implement clean energy solutions across the board (buildings, transportation)
- Have programs that cuts cost of energy (insulation installed for houses, etc.)
- Reduce greenhouse gases is a ridiculous goal
- Mandatory fees for all bottles and cans that could be recycled
- Places to get rid of things that clutter the community that is easily accessible and affordable.
- Eliminate/reducing carbon producing vehicles that are operated by the county/city
- Solar energy
- Wider recycling and ways to compost food waste
- Focus on the goal of 100% renewable energy, clean water, clean air, and maintaining habitat for wildlife in addition to public lands for the enjoyment and well-being of humans.