# SUSTAINABILITY ANNUAL REPORT FOR BUNCOMBE COUNTY

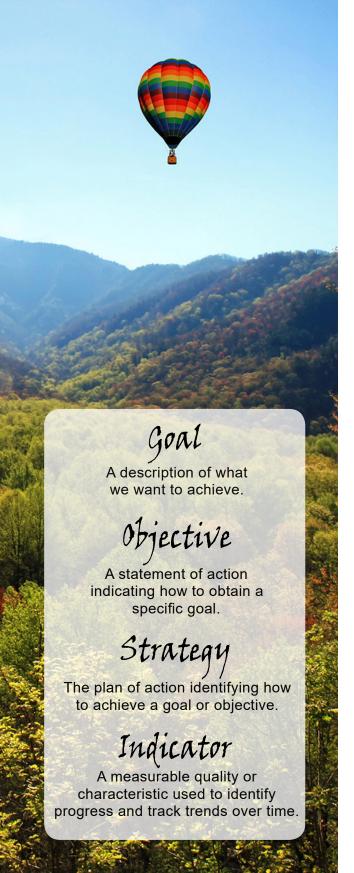








# Buncombe County Sustainability Plan Annual Update - April 2019



Originally adopted May 15, 2012, **Buncombe County's Sustainability Plan** was developed to outline the process for improving and strengthening the County's community, environment, and economy. The Plan was created based on this "triple bottom line" approach, which takes into account economic, environmental, and social concerns to evaluate proposed actions.

The Sustainability Partnership convened in 2011 and with staff's assistance developed the framework of the plan based on stated goals. Community meetings were held throughout the County to gather citizen input, which further led to refining the Plan's structure to include objectives and indicators for measuring the progress on those original goals.

In 2017, stakeholders formed to reassess the Plan and its goals, objectives, and indicators as well as highlight specific strategies to improve goal attainment. Members were chosen due to their direct daily involvement in improving the community, environment, and economy, and consisted of County staff and community members whose department or agency reports annually on indicators identified within the Sustainability Plan. After receiving public input on the draft Plan Update, the Sustainability Plan Update was refined and was adopted in 2017.

This is the seventh Annual Report for the Sustainability Plan. The Annual Report highlights goal indicators, measured in fiscal, calendar, or school year depending on the type of data. The previous year's data is provided as a benchmark, and when reliable information is available, cumulative years' data is shown. The last page of the Plan Update highlights our partners and data sources.



INDICATOR STRATEGY

INCREASE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE			Four-year high school graduation rate at Asheville
YEAR	ACS	BCS	City Schools (ACS) and Buncombe County Schools (BCS)
2017-18	*	87.8%	Provide personalized graduation plans for all
2016-17	88%	88.3%	students aligned to their career and college planning.
INCREAS	E ACCESS TO HIGH	ER EDUCATION	Number of students enrolled in college level
YEAR	ACS	BCS	courses in grades 9-12
2017-18	*	4,229	Provide opportunities for students to enroll in
2016-17	275	2,924	college courses during high school.
	22	JALITY EARLY D PROGRAMS	Number of children enrolled in four- and five-star rated child care centers
	2017	2018	Expand accessible, affordable, high-quality preschool for 3 and 4 year olds through a public-
111	2,872	3,019	private partnership.
	EASE PARENT AND ( ENT IN THE EDUCA		Volunteer hours contributed to Asheville City and
YEAR	ACS	BCS	Buncombe County school systems
2017-18	*	119,076	Provide a variety of opportunities for parents and families in areas such as academics, career and
2016-17	44,689	141,459	college planning, and parenting skills.
INCREASE THE PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN READING AT GRADE LEVEL BY THE END OF 3RD GRADE			Percentage of children reading at grade level by the end of 3rd grade
YEAR	ACS	BCS	Provide research-based, grade level reading instruction supported through high quality
2017-18	*	62.1%	professional development and classroom coaching using a variety of digital and print
2016-17	67.9%	59.3%	resources. In addition, a district literacy team has formed to develop a new pacing guide for state standards with benchmark accountability measures.



DECREASE INFAN	IT MORTALITY RATE	Infant mortality rate in Buncombe County (deaths per 1,000 live births)
2016	2017	Promote preconception health and access to adequate prenatal care.
5.8	4.6	



	SE OF RECREATION AMS, AND SERVICES	Number of adults participating in Buncombe County adult recreation activities and leagues
FY2017	FY2018	Use social media to promote recreation
285	364	facilities, programs, and services.

IMPROVE THE SAFETY OF PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS			Number of traffic related pedestrian and cyclist
CRASHES	BICYCLE PEDESTRIAN		injuries in Buncombe County
FY2018	28	101	Educate residents through the Watch For Me
FY2017	26	106*	safety campaign.

<sup>\*</sup>National data indicates an increase in pedestrian crashes due to distracted pedestrians and drivers on mobile devices.

	O MENTAL HEALTH AND BUSE SERVICES	Number of Medicaid clients receiving mental health and substance abuse services
FY2017	FY2018	Coordinate with the Local Management Entity
11,578	12,210	(LME) to strengthen mental health and substance abuse services.
	F PEOPLE WITH DIABETES ANAGE THEIR ILLNESS	Diabetes mortality rate in Buncombe County
2016	2017	Support the availability of diabetes prevention and management programs. Leverage existing
18.4	18.1	community partnerships in preventing diabetes by expanding access to programs in high needs communities, including access to information, moving more and eating better.
	O AFFORDABLE HEALTH RANCE	Percentage of uninsured adults between the ages of 19-64
2013	2016	Promote Affordable Care Act information and enrollment assistance.
20% 12.6%		



INDICATOR STRATEGY

	ENTAL DEVELOPMENTS FO REMAIN AFFORDABLE	Number of affordable rental units assisted with Buncombe County funding	
FY2017	FY2018	Participate with the HOME Consortium Board to	
70 70		prioritize rental development.	
254 total units assisted since FY2012			

PEOPLE TO INCREAS	AL CAPABILITIES FOR SE KNOWLEDGE, BUILD IMPROVE CREDIT	Number of participants in financial education classes through OnTrack Financial
FY2017	FY2018	Provide money management, credit education,
1,300	1,192	and counseling.



EXPAND HOUSING REPAIR PROGRAMS		Amount of funding supporting emergency repair programs	
FY2017	FY2018	Partner with organizations that complete	
\$150,000 \$181,500		emergency home repairs.	
41 repairs resulting from 2018 funding			

CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE THE CONSTRUCTION OF GREEN BUILT NC CERTIFIED HOMES		Number of Green Built NC (Formerly Healthy Built) certified homes	
FY2017	FY2018	Increase the amount of Buncombe County Affordable Housing Services Program application	
145 127		points awarded for Green Built NC certified units.	
1,388 total homes certified since 2011			

Provide housing assistance for affordable and workforce housing.





# CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

	R REGISTRATION IN BE COUNTY	Number of registered voters			
FY2017	FY2018	Conduct outreach to community groups, libraries,			
190,300	199,908	and high schools with registration drives.			
	•				
	OF LIBRARY PROGRAMS ERVICES	Number of Buncombe County residents attending library programs			
FY2017	FY2018	Increase social media advertising of programs in			
121,812	121,712	each of the branch library areas.			
	E OF THE BUNCOMBE / WEBSITE	Total page views on Buncombe County website			
2017	2018	Include the web address on all print and online media, and keep web information current.			
1,710,686	1,848,918				
	EERISM IN BUNCOMBE UNTY	Number of volunteers through Asheville- Buncombe United Way Initiatives			
FY2017	FY2018	Advertise volunteer opportunities online and			
3,093*	3,500	through school and employer Resource Teams.			
	*Revised	d tracking in FY2017			

	ER OF CITIZENS WILLING OMBE COUNTY BOARDS	Number of applications received for Boards
2017 2018		Create a virtual online academy to inform citizens about the County, service opportunities on boards
53 113		and commissions, and how to volunteer.







INCREASE THE USI	E OF SOCIAL MEDIA	
FY2017	FY2018	Number of views of Buncombe County social media
6,432	10,764	
273,731	292,700	Invest advertising funds in social media marketing with strategic posts encouraging
5,486	6,406	citizen involvement.



INDICATOR STRATEGY

EXPAND ACCESS	S TO INFORMATION	Number of new videos produced and played on BCTV
FY2016 FY2017		Improve the quality of video and social media content, and publicize community events,
318 307		resources and programs.



EXPAND PROVISION OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION		Number of Mountain Mobility passenger trips	
FY2017	FY2018	Promote Mountain Mobility services through presentations to communities and agencies and	
146,079* 131,689		distribution of Trailbrazer brochures and flyers to existing and potential markets.	
*Poduction in passanger trips is a result of the loss of volume from contract changes with			

\*Reduction in passenger trips is a result of the loss of volume from contract changes with N.E.M.T (Medicaid).

IMPROVE ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE				Number of patients served through Western North Carolina Community Health Services
2016 2017		2017	Promote medical care home model for integrated	
15,448		15,683		health care.
CONTINUE OPI	ECEIVE	EDUCATION		Number of participants in Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) and Family & Consumer Science (FCS) classes
2016		017	2018	Ensure the continuation of the EFNEP and FCS programs by coordinating with partners (HHS,
6,329	6,329 6,632		5,779	WIC, and faith based organizations) to identify qualified participants.
INCREASE THE NUMBER OF RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES AVAILABLE IN THE COMMUNITY				Number of participants in Buncombe County Recreation Services activities, programs, or facilities
FY2017			FY2018	Plan new recreation programming in response to
882,119	882,119 1,22		,222,956	customer feedback and community trends.
EXPAND THE PROVISION OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES IN COLLABORATION WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS				Number of Buncombe County contracts with government entities, nonprofits, and the private sector to provide health and human services
FY2016	FY2016 FY2017		FY2017	Partner with a broad array of community organizations to deliver health and human
177			180	services.



# SAFE RESILIENT COMMUNITY

	FETY PERSONNEL ARE RED FOR EMERGENCIES	Number of training hours for public safety personnel through the Buncombe County Public Safety Training Center	
2017 2018		Offer training each year that is focused on current issues and officer needs such as defensive	
4,861	4,101	tactics, taser use, firearms, active shooter, and driver training.	
INCLUDING SPECIA	S TO INCARCERATION, ALIZED COURTS AND I PROGRAMS	Number of alternatives to incarceration supported through Buncombe County	
FY2017	FY2018	Partner with the courts, law enforcement, and local agencies to implement programming base	
13	13	on nationally recognized best practices.	
SITE ASSESSMENTS	REVENTION THROUGH FOR RESIDENCES AND NESSES	Number of assessments made to improve safety and security of property and businesses	
FY2016 FY2017		Continue to meet with the community using productive analytics including RMS to identify	
15	*	problem areas and offer safety assessment services.	
*Most recent data provided is for FY2016.			



ENSURE TIMELY EMERGENCY SERVICE RESPONSE		Average response time for Buncombe County Sheriff's Department emergency calls	
FY2016 FY2017		Provide deputies with adequate training and equipment to efficiently answer calls and use	
9.38 min.*	9.55 min.	Resource Management Systems (RMS) to predict and schedule staff for high volume call times.	

\*Officers are spending more time at the scene on domestic and other priority calls, and less time for officer initiated calls (i.e. usually traffic stops that are logged as "0" response time).

	MUNITY AS A PARTNER TY POLICING ACTIVITIES	Number of Community Oriented Problem Solving (COPS) teams community meetings
FY2016 FY2017		Use COPS teams to identify and problem solve in
14	14	areas with increased crime.
	61 total ı	meetings since 2012
	OCATION OF CRITICAL HIGH HAZARD AREAS	Critical facilities newly permitted to be located in the 100-year floodplain
2017 2018		Require a pre-application meeting for critical facilities locating in the 100-year floodplain to
0	0	explain risks and requirements.



# CONSERVATION & RESTORATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

INDICATOR STRATEGY

CONSERVE AND PROT	ECT WATER RESOURCES	Linear feet of streams restored by the Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) and partners	
FY2017 FY2018		Utilize state programs (e.g. NC Agricultural Cost Share Program (NCACSP), Community	
3,465 3,900		Conservation Assistance Program, and Natural Resources Conservation Service programs) to restore stream banks and riparian areas.	
12,378 total linear feet since FY2011			

PROTECT ECOLOGICAL	. SYSTEMS AND WILDLIFE	Acres of plans by SWCD and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) with wildlife habitat improvement
FY2017 FY2018		Partner with the NRCS to write plans for private lands that contain provisions for wildlife habitat
127.01	114.6	improvement.

PROMOTE ENER	GY CONSERVATION	Energy intensity measurement (kBTU/sf) for Buncombe County facilities
FY2017	FY2018	Execute commodity-saving initiatives through the existing Buncombe County portfolio to promote
53.89	49.73	the conservation of energy.



ENCOURAGE SUSTAINABLE LAND USE		Number of acres of conservation plans by SWCD and NRCS	
FY2017 FY2018 434 708.7		Maximize the tools available through the NC Conservation Partnership to write and implement	
		conservation plans on rural lands in the County.	
		7,565 total acres since FY2012	

EDUCATE THE PUBLIC IN REDUCING THEIR ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT			Number and reach of environmental education		
	FY2017	FY2018	programs by SWCD		
PROGRAMS	205	218	Utilize existing state and local environmental education programs (e.g. NC Envirothon,		
POPULATION 76,605 83,218		83,218	Food Land & People, Conservation Contests, Environmental Education Field Days) and other activities/programs outlined in the District's Annual Plan of Work.		
393,445 total reached since 2012					



# POLLUTION AND WASTE PREVENTION

IMPROVE /	AIR QUALITY	Current Design Value for Ozone in the County
2016 2017		Partner with local, regional, and state agencies to
63 ppb	62 ppb	facilitate air quality improvements.

IMPROVE WATER QUALITY		Number of NC Agricultural Cost Share Program projects
FY2017	FY2018 Work with citizens who have NC Agricultural (	
6 8		Share Program contracts to provide services to expedite installation of projects.

56 total projects since FY2012.



REDUCE THE USE OF HARMFUL CHEMICALS		Number trained in Integrated Pest Management (IPM) by Cooperative Extension	
2017	2018	Pursue additional funding for Integrated Pest Management education.	
9,930	12,182		
64.827 total trained since 2012			

REDUCE BUNCOMBE COUNTY GOVERNMENT'S CARBON FOOTPRINT		Metric tons of CO <sub>2</sub> e (carbon dioxide equivalents)
FY2017	FY2018	Implement low cost/no cost facility conservation measures and capital improvement projects to
14,025	14,147.14	reduce carbon emissions.

MANAGE WASTE - REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE				
	FY2017	FY2018		
HOME HAZARD. WASTE	60	60	Amount of recycled goods (household,	
WHITE GOODS	450	283.82	commercial, household hazardous waste, special waste) in Tons	
TIRES	2,733	2,724		
USED OIL & FILTERS	23.64	38.39		
ANTIFREEZE	2.9	1.9		
LEAD BATTERIES	1.7	0.69		
ELECTRONICS	157.41	99.63	Educate the public about their options to recycle	
USED COOKING OIL	1.18	1.18	through website, brochures, quarterly newspaper inserts, tours of the landfill facility, school	
RECYCLING	7,006	8,184	education, and media outlets.	
CARDBOARD	2,591	1,449.82		
		47,303.6	6 tons since FY2012	



INDICATOR STRATEGY

	F INCREASE OF ANNUAL TRAVELLED (VMT)	Percent change in VMT within Buncombe County
2016	2017	Promote awareness and use of Park-and-Ride
6.32% 4.33%*		lots.
*Estimate until final numbers released. The NCDOT suggests that low gas prices and an improved economy are factors in the increase.		



INCREASE COMMUTING CHOICES		Number of Facebook followers on Go Mountain Commuting website	
FY2017	FY2018	Partner with the regional Transportation Management Demand Program to increase participation in commuting options like carpools, vanpools and transit.	
622	602		

INCREASE FIXED ROUTE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION RIDERSHIP		Annual passenger trips provided by Asheville Redefines Transit (ART)
FY2017	FY2018	Conduct collaborative outreach efforts with the
2,135,775	1,967,116	City of Asheville's ART fixed route system.

EXTEND GREENWAYS FOR PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS		Miles of greenways added throughout Buncombe County and all municipalities
2017	2018	Work with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to integrate multi-
0.5 0		use paths into highway construction and road upgrade projects.
14 total miles of greenways. 101.5 miles of proposed future greenways		

ENCOURAGE LAND DEVELOPMENT CONNECTED TO EXISTING TRANSPORTATION CORRIDORS			Percent of County households within 1/4 mile of transportation options (Greenways, bus stops, Mountain Mobility Trailblazer route, and sidewalks)
	2017	2018	Promote the Community Oriented Development
COA	96%	96%	option under the County's Zoning Ordinance that allows density bonuses for affordable housing
ВС	26%	25%	along existing transportation corridors.



#### THRIVING LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS

PROMOTE FARMLAND PRESERVATION IN
ORDER TO DECREASE LOSS OF AGRICULTURAL
LAND

Acres added in land protection programs (Voluntary Agricultural District program (VAD), Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural District program (EVAD), conservation easements)

FY2017	FY2018
469	158.66

Increase public awareness of the need to conserve local farmlands and the availability of local and state programs (e.g. the Voluntary Agricultural District (VAD), Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural District (EVAD), and conservation easements).

4,035.66 total acres protected since FY2012



PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL
PRODUCTION AND COMMUNITY GARDENING

Number of citizens who obtained knowledge or developed new skills in farming, gardening, agritourism, farm marketing and related areas as a result of Cooperative Extension training and information

2017	2018
175,213	172,015

Maintain training programs in agricultural production and community gardening disciplines (e.g. farming, gardening, agritourism, farm marketing, and related areas).

## INCREASE DEMAND FOR LOCALLY PRODUCED FOODS

Number of local outlets (restaurants, retail, tailgate markets, community supported agriculture (CSA) programs, and other outlets)

2017	2018
277	94

Expand the Health & Human Services Pop-Up Markets to provide local and healthy food at four additional community sites.

Data indicates the demand for local food and vendors has increased, while the number of outlets has decreased.















21 CSA'S

TAILGATE MARKETS

30

ROADSIDE STANDS

**17** U-PICK

**FARMS** 

RETAIL GROCERIES

RESTAURANTS

OTHER OUTLET

INDICATOR STRATEGY

INCREASE THE NUMBER OF NEW JOBS IN BUNCOMBE COUNTY		Number of new jobs announced through the Chamber of Commerce
FY2017	FY2018	Promote Asheville-Buncombe as a centralized hub for entrepreneurship to efficiently connect
566	178	entrepreneurs, talent, and investors to one another, and to startup resources.
1,928 total new jobs announced since 2012		

INCREASE THE NUMBER OF NEW JOBS WITH EARNINGS ABOVE \$50K		Number of new jobs with earnings above \$50k announced through the Chamber of Commerce
FY2017	FY2018	Promote Asheville-Buncombe's new target industries and explore targeted niche
264	46	opportunities such as Micro-electromechanical systems (MEMS).



RECRUIT NEW BUSINESS		Number of new businesses successfully recruited by the Chamber of Commerce	
FY2017	FY2018	Target high growth and Inc. 5000 firms from major East Coast markets where there are existing business ties to Asheville for expansion/relocation into Asheville-Buncombe County.	
0	1		
9 total businesses recruited since 2012			

SUPPORT THE EXPANSION OF EXISTING BUSINESSES		Number of expansions of existing businesses reported by the Chamber of Commerce
FY2017	FY2018	Work with partners to ensure real estate options, infrastructure, and other attraction components
2	1	that meet the needs of current and prospective employers, and evaluate gaps with respect to the needs of target and expanding industries.

923 total jobs created through expansion since 2013

#### Maintain high employment.



#### Unemployment rate in Buncombe County

Host the Annual Homecoming Career Fair, the region's largest career fair connecting employers with job seekers.



# RESPONSIVE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

INCREASE THE NUMBER OF SPECIALIZED TRAINING COURSES OFFERED FOR BUSINESSES IN BUNCOMBE COUNTY		Number of specialized training courses offered for businesses by Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College Economic and Workforce Development/Continuing Education Program	
FY2017	FY2018	Increase the number of state funded Customized Training Program (CTP) projects as businesses	
161	181	locate or expand in Buncombe County through local economic development efforts.	
770 total courses since FY2012			

PROVIDE JOB APPLICANT ASSESSMENT AND JOB TRAINING THAT FITS ANTICIPATED AND CURRENT JOB SKILLS DEMAND	Number of NC Career Readiness Certifications in Buncombe County	
2018	Achieve Work Ready Community status.	
1,514		
7,316 certifications since January 2012. *2018 data covers a 15 month period from 10/1/17 to 12/30/2018		

INCREASE THE NUMBER OF COMPANIES PARTICIPATING IN TRAINING AND/OR SERVICES FOR JOB CREATION OR ADVANCEMENT		Number of companies participating in training and/or services through A-B Tech Economic and Workforce Development/Continuing Education Program	
FY2017	FY2018	Connect Economic & Workforce Development (EWD) staff with local businesses and industry to	
74	105	analyze training needs and provide specialized training events.	
450 total companies participating since FY2012			



### CONCLUSION

Buncombe County's Sustainability Plan is now in its eighth year of implementation. Through the Plan's twelve goals, 60 objectives, and 60 indicators, there has been continued commitment from County partners and staff to retain the Plan's significance relative to daily decision making. With the structured approach for implementation, and the measurable components that has become the highlighted feature of the annual report, progress areas and those areas that need improvement can be identified.

The earliest accomplishment of community stakeholders who convened to draft the Sustainability Plan was their agreement on the following vision statement:

Buncombe County is a leader in sustainable practices through the collaboration of citizens, institutions, businesses, and government. We promote a sense of community through public engagement. We celebrate a healthy, safe, well-educated, and thriving community with a sustainable quality of life. We are stewards of the environment who advocate the conservation, preservation, and restoration of resources. We are part of a community and environmentally-conscious economy that is stable and diverse. We have a strong sense of place, and continue to work to preserve our distinct landscape and culture. We are committed to continually improving our community for the betterment of future generations.

The vision statement is as relevant today as it was in 2012, and serves as a reminder of the importance of having high ideals and striving to make positive change, collectively. Efforts to continue to consider our actions today with tomorrow in mind will be part of our legacy: a vibrant community, healthy environment, and strong economy.

#### **SOURCES:**

Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Program

Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce

Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College

Asheville City Schools

**Buncombe County Government** 

Buncombe County Health & Human Services

**Buncombe County Schools** 

Buncombe Partnership for Children

City of Asheville

French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization

Land-of-Sky Regional Council

Mountain Area Health Education Center

North Carolina Community Health Improvement Process

North Carolina Cooperative Extension

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

North Carolina Department of Transportation

North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics

OnTrack Financial Education & Counseling

Soil and Water Conservation District

USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service

United States Probation Office

Western North Carolina Air Quality

Western North Carolina Green Building Council





#### SUSTAINABILITY PLAN 2019 ANNUAL REPORT FOR BUNCOMBE COUNTY

Download this report online:
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