



# Key Notes from Meeting

Buncombe County 2043 Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Meeting  
 5:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M.  
 April 12, 2022  
 Hybrid (In-Person and Virtual)

## Summary

**Meeting Objective:** Develop general questions to ask the public about potential future policy direction through Community Engagement Window #2. These ideas will be developed from (1) a review of CEW #1 and Stakeholder Survey findings, and (2) Factbook findings.

## Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Approval of Minutes
3. Updates
4. Community Engagement Window #1 Findings & Discussion
5. Factbook Highlights and Discussion
6. Next Steps/Questions

The meeting began with a welcome and approval of minutes. The meeting facilitators shared updates on Community Engagement Window #1 and a review of the planning process.

Progress on Phase 2 included additional virtual stakeholder interviews, continued outreach for the Stakeholder Survey, Community Engagement Window #1, and Factbook Development.

	<b>Virtual Meetings (January, February, and March)</b>	<b>In Person Events (March and April)</b>	<b>Total</b>
Events	6 meetings	5 meetings 7 intercept or drop-in events	<b>18 events</b>
Number of Hours	10 hours	29 hours	<b>39 hours</b>
Number of Participants	111 participants	203 meeting attendees 120 interactions at intercept events	<b>1,775 participants for the online activities 347 people</b>



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## Discussion

### Small Group Discussion Questions

Participants split up into 3 groups (2 in person groups and 1 virtual group) to discuss Community Engagement Window #1 results from the PublicInput.com reports and the Factbook/Technical Analysis, both shared via email.

Participants watched the [Factbook Highlights](#) video.

Each group had a Round Robin discussion to answer the following questions:

- *What issues/opportunities rise to the top that are candidates for policy change?*
- *What questions do we need to ask the public in upcoming public engagement opportunities regarding that potential policy change?*

### Common Threads

A few topics were common across the different group discussions:

- **Housing:** affordability and diversity of housing stock, policy changes for density, rentals, and Airbnb's; options to incentivize lower rents
- **infrastructure and energy:** broadband expansion, sustainable energy sources for residents (including solar); cost and implementation for infrastructure expansions, such as public water and sewer
- **Economic Development:** support apprenticeship model and trades; childcare for workforce

Tables with all of the recorded ideas from the group discussions, organized by planning topic, are provided below.





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## Issues/Opportunities and Policy Changes by Planning Topic

### Equity and Other Planning Topics

Issue-Opportunity	Policy Change
Consider projected growth in Hispanic/Latino population	make all information available bilingually
aging population	support for housing accessibility (w/disabilities), healthcare, transportation, nursing homes/related facilities
aging population	support diversity of housing stock (house size) for aging population
CDC vulnerability data: Can the county integrate into the comp plan a section to identify by census tract or area, communities vulnerable to gentrification or displacement and then come up with mitigation and resiliency strategies. It would be important for the county to acknowledge climate crisis/gentrification. What areas are going to be displaced, vs. where they can be absorbed? Policies to address people without economic means to weather the growth.	
Racial equity toolkit	Should the county be using that kit to determine whose voice is missing and what other perspectives do we need on an issue?
population growth	Present information about population growth contextually
population growth	Ensure local youth population is retained by increasing access to housing, employment, etc.





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Environmental Protection, Recreation, Community Health, and Working Lands Protection

Issue-Opportunity	Policy Change
Environmental protection	Are you willing to agree to density in strategic areas to protect environmentally vulnerable areas?
steep slope ordinances	enforcement in municipalities (county-wide) - keep housing development off steep slopes to reduce runoff/erosion
Increase access and eligibility for mental health resources for the County.	
Create an accessible County information portal.	
Increase access and quality of prenatal care for all residents in Buncombe County	
Increase education and messaging around Buncombe County Parks and Rec services.	
Provide natural environments (community gardens, etc.) for every community in Buncombe County.	
Provide opportunities for youth activities through the Parks and Recreation Department.	
balancing working lands and transportation / development needs	





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Economic Development, Education, and Upward Mobility

Issue-Opportunity	Policy Change
Utilize already-developed space for business opportunities	
More support for apprenticeship model - trades and other high-demand jobs	
	policies to reduce barriers to employment (transportation, housing, childcare)
supporting all services for new workers (housing, childcare, etc.)	
Need high quality and flexible childcare for all families in Buncombe County.	Are you willing to fund universal early childcare? Focus on creating more opportunities in the craft community.
Need for training and apprenticeships for residents to be able to move upward in their careers.	
Need to attract higher paying jobs to Buncombe County. There are major industries.	
Census Tract 9 - only distressed tract in Buncombe County. Increasing capacity of that tract for economic development and inclusion	What opportunities can the county do to bring economic opportunity to that tract, and policies regarding displacement?
What role can the county play in encouraging providers to collaborate more to reduce duplication in services? How to have more results-oriented providers that create jobs and can grow? You need people with experience and understanding of the community.	Where are there different economic development organizations that can support each other? How to spread funds out more equitably?
Operationalizing equity:	Begin tracking through purchasing and management minority businesses and women owned businesses participate in contracting.
Issue of low wages and wage gap. Ordinary folks cannot afford to live here. Who can afford to stay?	How can we change recruitment and create enforceable policies for higher paying jobs?
County funding to have accelerators and incubators, especially in minority areas.	
How to incentivize higher wage industries? Incentivize ESOPs and worker owned businesses? Brings wealth, not just a higher paycheck.	





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Infrastructure and Energy

Issue-Opportunity	Policy Change
public safety	Review of current policies regarding public safety
cost of infrastructure for public water and sewer	
Infrastructure and public safety	Can we use TDA funds to provide for infrastructure, public safety, etc.? How can we create greater latitude for the use of TDA funds?
Sustainability	How can we encourage residents to adopt more sustainable/renewable energy
Sustainability	Can we support policies to allow or incentivize solar panels + selling power back to grid?
Public safety	Is there public support for community policing policies?
Childcare as a component of infrastructure - need to add more childcare facilities.	
Expanding broadband to areas of the County do not currently have it. Everyone should have access to free broadband.	
Water driven power plant for energy	
Commercial standardization for energy efficiency in new buildings	
Sewer and water expansion is needed for more affordable development.	
Incentivize solar panels	
Crypto currency mining.	Can we create a high impact use regulation before those types of industries locate in the county?





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Land Use, Housing, and Transportation

Issue-Opportunity	Policy Change
Housing	encourage people to convert short term rentals to long-term
Strategically invest in infrastructure, beyond water, sewer, etc.	Are you willing to think of these like bonds as a funding mechanism?
Housing affordability	
Support transportation for workers	
Better connections between city and county transit, and better integration with regional transit networks. Meet needs of workers	
Housing affordability	will the community support tax breaks for landlords to make property rentals affordable?
Help people understand role of density in allowing housing for all income levels	
Reconfigure transit systems - not just hub-and-spoke model for bus service	
joint city-county bus system + park and rides	
People seeking more access to sidewalks, greenways, etc.	Could we encourage these not just as recreation opportunities but also as transportation options?
food security and land use	Land should be used for growing food. With concerns about climate change, we need to preserve as much farmland as possible and protect pollinating insects. Each person should have a community garden and/or if they grow food for sale, they should have a tax exemption for smaller parcels
housing	Increase development where we already have development. Increase density.
The current Land Use Policy is pretty primitive. There is a need for Land Use Policy in general	support for advancing land use policy to meet vision and goals
connectivity	Build sidewalks in the County where there is high need
Having the county create an overlay district to take place of the ETJ. Can they work with the municipalities to coordinate on those areas? Developers locating right outside of the city, but with no ETJ there are few regulations. No amenities required in those	





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areas. We are more of a metro district.	
Zoning changes to zoning ordinance to encourage more multi-modal options. Changes to where building should be happening	What changes are needed to zoning to create the change and protections that is being asked for?
County-wide transit first. Out of county priorities for a regional transit system.	Identify what the connection routes should be within the county and in surrounding areas.
Are there other ways to fund a transit policy besides a sales tax?	what ideas does the public have about funding ideas?
Housing affordability	Can we lower the number of Airbnb's allowed to just 1 per person before a SUP is required?
Affordable Housing: what actions can we take to incentivize lower rents? Rent controls? Incentives such as LUIGI program from the city? Deed restrictions for affordable housing- create a county program.	What are options to incentivize?
The developers selected by city and county to build affordable housing are not minority.	equity toolkit when making funding decisions
Action to regulate Airbnb's/vacation rentals	Should the county do similar regulations to the cities. Where would those regulations best be placed- entire county, or in specific areas?
County funding - Should be based on tangible results and data.	Can the county have conversation or collaboration to show there is not duplication. Long standing non-profits should have to show there is some collaboration in the community. Include a new start component in funding programs, like affordable housing, and provide technical assistance to help them succeed.
Housing affordability	County housing trust fund- could we do a bond for affordable housing?
Zoning	Would the public support Inclusionary zoning, impact fees, and other changes that would have to be pushed for at the state level?
Half cent or 1 cent sales tax levy wholly dedicated to public transit. city and county collaboration. Asheville installing transit-oriented corridor via federal money - HUD and DOT. County could do the same. connect to major employers- they also need to encourage their employees to buy passes to use that system.	would you be in favor of the tax increase to support public transit?







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Housing affordability	How do we absorb all of the new people? We are preparing to absorb the affluent people; how can we prepare for people with lesser means? What percent of new units should be affordable? How can we make sure it's the full spectrum of people? How to become a place not just attractive for people of wealth?
Housing affordability	How to first focus on the Airbnb restriction and then to allow further density? Enforcement of existing requirements that Airbnb's get zoning permits.
Rural-urban	County could experiment with things they aren't ready to bring to the whole county. How do we transition from rural to urban?
Small area plans to incorporate greenway planning. Getting Greenway easements as part of utility easements for bigger projects. When development happens near the Greenways master plan have those required to connect.	
Community Benefits Agreement: Codify the benefits tables so that in never expires. Developers agree into a housing trust fund, living wage.	Would the public support CBA?





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Resiliency and Hazard Mitigation

Issue-Opportunity	Policy Change
Rain gardens and other stormwater control measures	
Repeated flooding in Biltmore Village	how can we focus on areas of this nature which are continuously subjected to flooding?
Wildfire risk	Regulating and improving forestry practices to mitigate wildfire risk.
Wildfire risk	Educational programs to help residents understand and mitigate risk
Wildfire risk	controlled burns
Wildfire risk	IPM to reduce dead trees
Landslides and wildfire	Policies to prevent development in areas that are prone to landslides and wildfire (in the Mountainous and sensitive forest areas).
Landslides and wildfire	Stricter protected ridge and steep slope regulations through looking at the future hazards.
Increased development on the steep slopes/high elevation leads to stormwater issues, erosion, and flooding events.	
Policies need to be put in place to prevent development in areas that are prone to landslides and wildfire (in the Mountainous and sensitive forest areas). Stricter protected ridge and steep slope regulations through looking at the future hazards.	
Take climate risk into consideration when planning for development or land use decisions.	
Incentives to reduce impervious surface for commercial development to prevent stormwater issues and erosion.	
Native landscaping requirements and incentives for plants the prevent stormwater issues, erosion, and provide habitat for pollinators.	
Buncombe County education for local climate hazards. Partnering with Parks and Rec and other climate professionals.	
Climate resiliency- green infrastructure requirements. Take a look at pervious surfaces more.	How to address that?
Flooding- Developing for long term hazards.	What changes to our flood development standards and our steep slope requirements to strengthen them?

