



BUNCOMBE COUNTY 2022 FACTBOOK: PLANNING TRENDS AND INFLUENCES



April 2022

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT THE FACTBOOK	1
OUR PEOPLE	3
OUR LAND USE, HOUSING, & TRANSPORTATION	20
OUR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION, & UPWARD MOBILITY	69
OUR INFRASTRUCTURE & ENERGY	87
OUR WORKING LANDS	100
OUR ENVIRONMENT, RECREATION, & COMMUNITY HEALTH	108
OUR RESILIENCE & HAZARD MITIGATION	128

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Historical Recognition Statement

Buncombe County acknowledges that the land our County occupies is the ancestral territory of many Indigenous peoples, acquired by European settlers through violence, oppression, and coercion, as well as legally and illegally executed treaties.

We also acknowledge the many vibrant American Indian communities that continue to call this occupied land home. In Western North Carolina, this includes members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and many others who identify with and belong to other Indigenous cultures and groups.

We also acknowledge that Western North Carolina was home to thousands of enslaved Black or African American laborers who suffered at the hands of an oppressive economic system that exploited their labor, their bodies, and their culture. Western North Carolina's modern economy would not exist the way it does today without their sacrifices: physical, mental, and otherwise.



ABOUT THE FACTBOOK

About Buncombe 2043

Picturesque landscapes, welcoming people, artistic expressions, diverse communities, an inclusive spirit, and a growing region. When we think of Buncombe County, we think of these attributes and more. Home to the Pisgah National Forest and sections of the iconic Blue Ridge Parkway, Buncombe County is a highly valued place in North Carolina and nationally. It brings together the history and culture of Appalachia and its farming communities with the growing opportunities for nature-based exploration and tourism—both tethered to the economic pull of its growing municipalities.

These community characteristics have spurred consistent growth over the last decade, resulting in a 27% increase in population between 2000 and 2019. Population projections suggest that this growth will continue, and the county may add an additional 55,000-83,000 residents by 2045. Where will these residents live? Where will they work? How will they get around? What services will they need? These are all critical questions to be explored in the County's first comprehensive planning process - Buncombe 2043: Our Voices, Our Vision. For more information on the process, visit the project website at buncombecounty.org/plan2043

About the Factbook

This Factbook is a technical report and provides important data, trends, and information on planning influences that should be considered when developing new policy direction and implementation actions for Buncombe County.



The County may add an additional 66,000 residents by 2045. Where will these residents live? Where will they work? How will they get around? And what services will they need?

These are all critical questions to be explored in the County's first comprehensive planning process - Buncombe 2043: **Our Voices, Our Vision.**

Photo by Angela Bartosh on Unsplash

The Factbook is set out in several chapters:

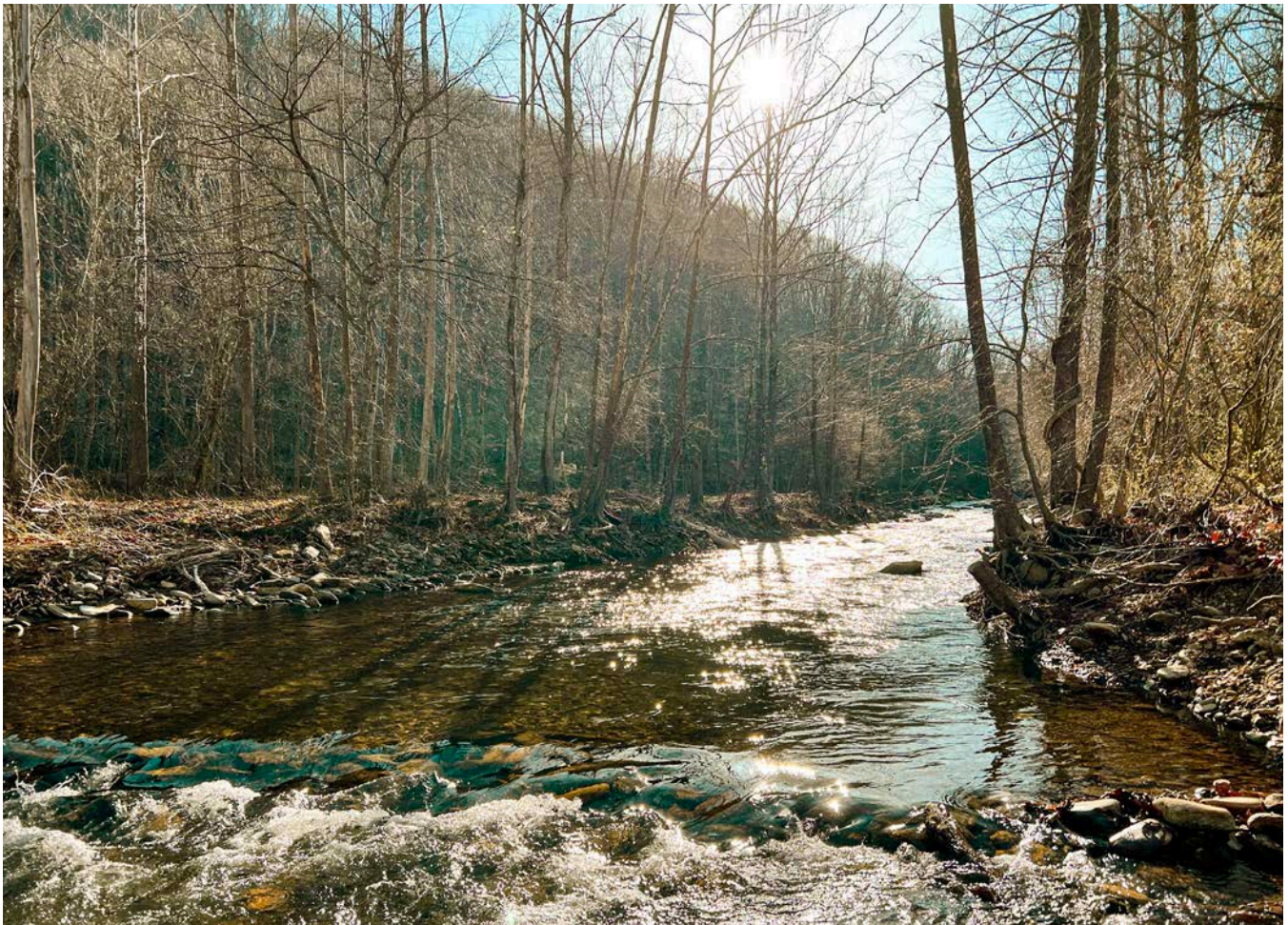
- Our **People**
- Our **Land Use, Housing, and Transportation**
- Our **Economic Development, Education, and Upward Mobility**
- Our **Infrastructure and Energy**
- Our **Working Lands**
- Our **Environment, Recreation, and Community Health**
- Our **Resiliency and Hazard Mitigation**

Several key themes are integrated throughout these chapters that are priorities for this planning process: racial and social equity, community sustainability, and the importance of the regional context of western North Carolina.

Each chapter includes four main components:

- Introduction
- Overview of Trends and Planning Influences
- Findings from Analysis
- Considerations for the Future

The purpose of this analysis is to provide a base of understanding and to inform the planning and decision-making process. The report will help residents, stakeholders, and other leaders to sift through a large amount of information and gather insights on the key trends that are affecting Buncombe County, its municipalities, and the greater Asheville region.



Barnardsville Stream. Photo provided by County.