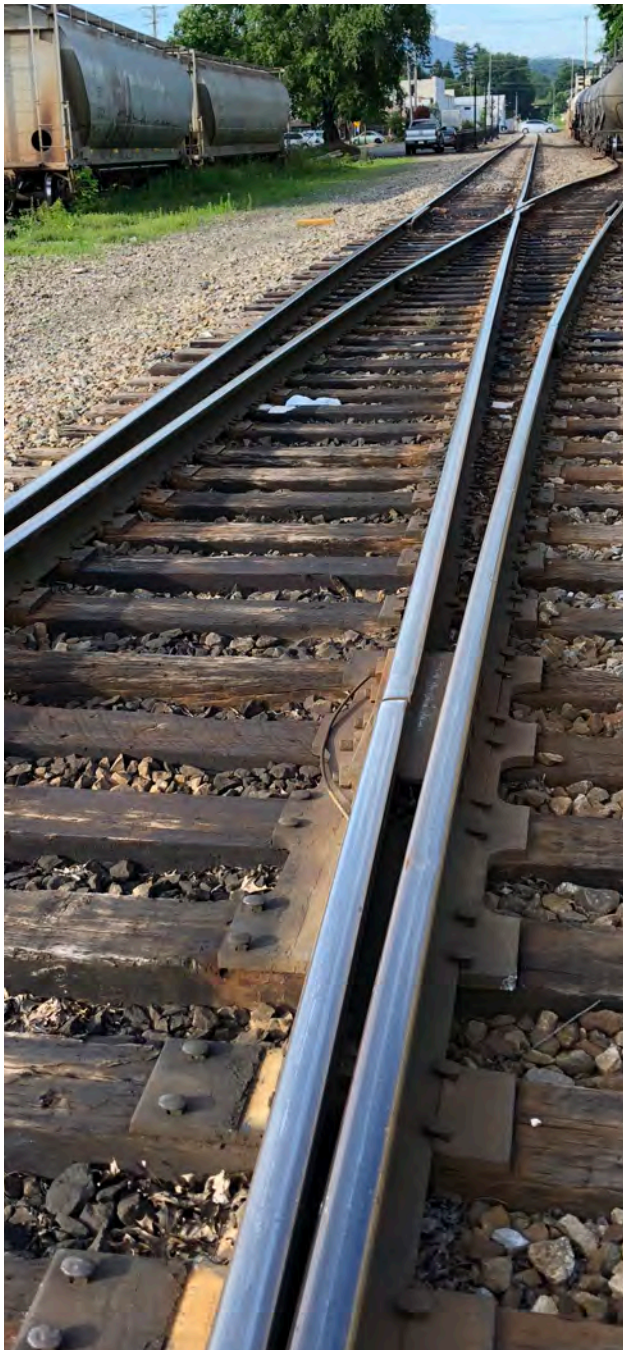




INTRODUCTION



Rail Line through Frog Level

Waynesville 2035: Planning with Purpose is the Comprehensive Land Use Plan for the Town of Waynesville. This plan provides policy guidance for development standards, subdivision, zoning, and the provisions of public services. It updates and replaces *Waynesville: Our Heritage, Our Future, Town of Waynesville 2020 Land Development Plan* as the comprehensive planning document for the Town.

This chapter provides an introduction to the plan and includes a description of the plan's purpose, background information, an overview of the planning process, and a summary of input.

PURPOSE

Waynesville 2035: Planning with Purpose updates the *Waynesville: Our Heritage, Our Future, Town of Waynesville 2020 Comprehensive Land Development Plan*, to serve as a guideline for community decision making into the future. It is intended to be used by the town staff, the Board of Aldermen, and other Town Boards and Commissions as they make decisions about resources and land use in accordance with North Carolina General Statutes. It is also intended as a reference document for the public at large and for those investing in land and development within Waynesville. This document lays out strategies and recommendations to accomplish community goals over a 15 year planning horizon.

The plan should be reviewed and may be amended periodically in response to land use trends, changes in populations, or to facilitate evolving Town goals. *Waynesville 2035: Planning with Purpose* will leverage the successes of the past to enhance future potential of the Town.

BACKGROUND

Waynesville, known as the “Gateway to the Smokies” is located off the US Routes 23 and 74 (the Great Smoky Mountains Expressway). The Town is a popular destination for visitors to Western North Carolina, and at more than 10,000 residents, is the largest town in North Carolina west of Asheville. It is the county seat for Haywood County. The Town has a strong historical heritage, vibrant arts community and diverse culture.

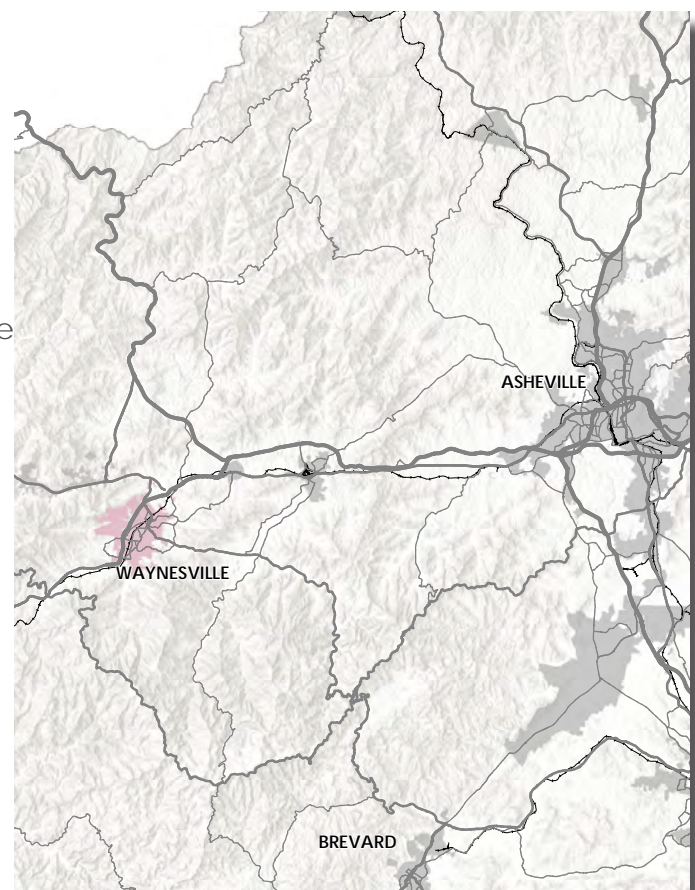
Waynesville has a rich history of community planning. The 2002, *Waynesville: Our Heritage, Our Future, 2020 Comprehensive Land Use Plan* was adopted after a two-year planning effort. That planning process established a forward-thinking standard for development and growth that:

- » Implemented Smart Growth principles.
- » Promoted multi-modal transportation.
- » Recommended controlled infrastructure expansion through the adoption of an Urban Services Boundary.
- » Encouraged mixed-use development.
- » Protected the Town’s natural and historic resources.

To implement the objectives of the 2002 Land Use Plan, the Town updated its Land Development Standards (zoning regulations) in 2003, 2009 and 2011.

In 2018, the Town initiated an update to the current plan in order to keep it relevant and reflect the current needs and desires of the Town with a new future planning horizon of 2035.

Waynesville’s Regional Context



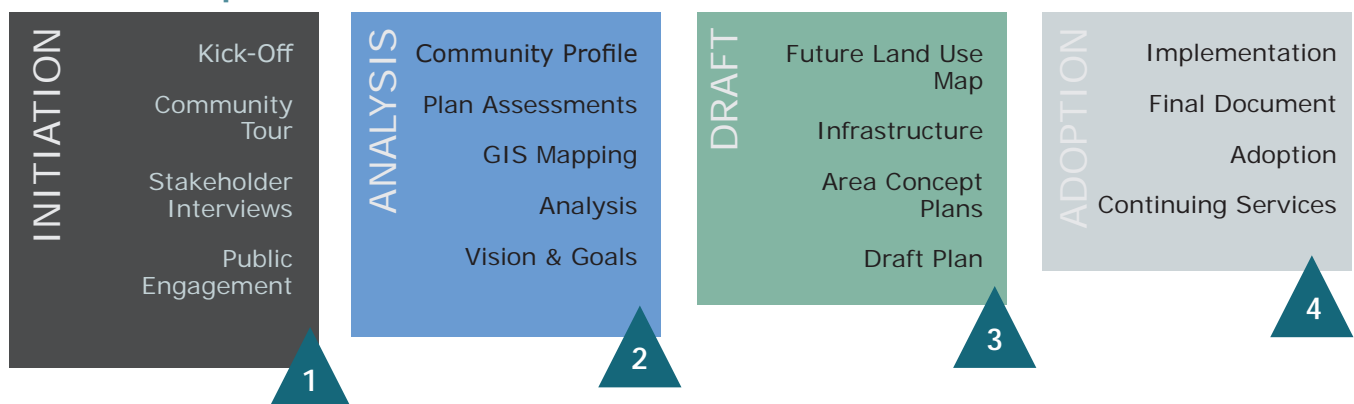
PLANNING PROCESS

In action, planning with purpose is accomplished by addressing and analyzing existing conditions and making implementable recommendations for the future. Topics include:

- » Land Use & Development
- » Housing & Neighborhoods
- » Economic Development
- » Transportation & Connectivity
- » Recreation, Cultural and Natural Resources
- » Utilities & Infrastructure

The plan update began in early 2018 following a 4-phase process illustrated below. The early phases included listening to staff and stakeholders and an analysis of existing conditions. Diverse methods of public engagement were implemented to ensure community support and buy-in. The Plan includes community-wide recommendations, the future land use map, and conceptual scenarios for areas targeted for potential redevelopment areas. Staff and community leaders, already accustomed to using the Comprehensive Land Use Plan when making development decisions, were asked to evaluate the plan for its practical application and usefulness.

Plan Development



Summary of Input

The love for and commitment to Waynesville shown by residents, business owners, and visitors provided no shortage of input, guidance, and review throughout the development of the Plan. The Plan is a reflection of the values and desires of the community and the plan's recommendations and implementation strategies are influenced by the comments received.

The engagement strategy combined traditional and online methods including:

- » Stakeholder group interviews
- » Steering committee meetings
- » Web presence through the Development Department portal
- » Public online survey
- » Public visioning workshop (sponsored by Haywood County Board of Realtors)
- » Public open house to reveal the plan
- » Public hearings for adoption
- » Public meetings held at the Pigeon Community Center, Waynesville Recreation Center, Waynesville Fire Department, and Folkmoot

Staff conducted further outreach with advisory Boards and Commissions.

Steering Committee

Town Aldermen appointed a steering committee of individuals from diverse backgrounds to provide guidance and make decisions related to this plan's vision, goals, and recommendations. The steering committee met throughout the process and participated in other public events.

Stakeholder Groups

Early in the process, stakeholder groups consisting of in-town and regional professionals from the following sectors were interviewed:

- » Real Estate



Stakeholder Group Meeting



Steering Committee activity

- » Social Services and Housing
- » Economic Development, Tourism and the Arts
- » Town and County staff

Real estate professionals shared that people, including many retirees, are moving to Waynesville because of the high quality of life. Buyers are attracted to Waynesville's recreation and fitness opportunities, access to natural features such as the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and hiking trails, and the Town's greenways. Moderately priced housing is quickly sold, creating a high demand for new housing and rental opportunities.

Social services professionals shared that Waynesville has a growing homeless and "working-poor" population. Local agencies such as Mountain Housing Opportunities and Habitat for Humanity are finding that they cannot meet the demand of qualified applicants for housing, and the creation of new projects is difficult because of land costs and geographical constraints. Another concern identified is the need for increased mental health and substance abuse resources, particularly as it relates to opioid addiction.

The Economic Development professionals, which included Waynesville's major employers, shared concerns about being able to recruit and retain employees with advanced training and professional skills. Nursing is an area particularly difficult to find staffing. A shortage of entry-level workforce was also a concern and related back to a lack of housing and mental health and substance abuse resources. Tourism and the arts are an important sector of Waynesville's economy, and these businesses rely on seasonal and entry level employees. Healthcare and workforce preparedness and education were therefore identified as critical areas for growth. Stakeholders noted that the Town should encourage the expansion of broadband internet in support of these sectors as well as local businesses.

Visioning Workshop

On June 21, 2018, the public was invited to a visioning workshop at the Waynesville Recreation Center. The workshop, made possible by a **Smart Growth Action Grant** secured by the Haywood County Board of Realtors, was attended by at least 85 people who signed the attendance log. The workshop was an open house-style event with ten activity stations, which were designed to inform attendees about the plan as well as to gather input on specific topics that affect Waynesville.



Workshop Activity: Keep, Toss, Create



Visioning Workshop Flyer

1 INTRODUCTION

Stations included:

- » A Comprehensive Plan background
- » A project overview that framed potential issues, outlined economic trends, and existing land use
- » A “keep/toss/create” station that allowed attendees to identify areas they love, areas that need work, and areas where they would like to see something created
- » A transportation and mobility station illustrating existing transportation conditions and proposed improvements.
- » A station that highlighted Waynesville’s natural resources, utility network and urban services boundary
- » A visual preference station that asked attendees to place a dot next to preferred images depicting different styles of development
- » A station for attendees to validate goals and objectives from the current land use plan and add new goals
- » A station that invited attendees to sketch ideas for downtown, Hazelwood, and Frog Level
- » A survey station where attendees could take the online survey

The workshop and online survey contained visual preference exercises related to design, aesthetics, recreation, housing, and density. Responses showed preferences for:

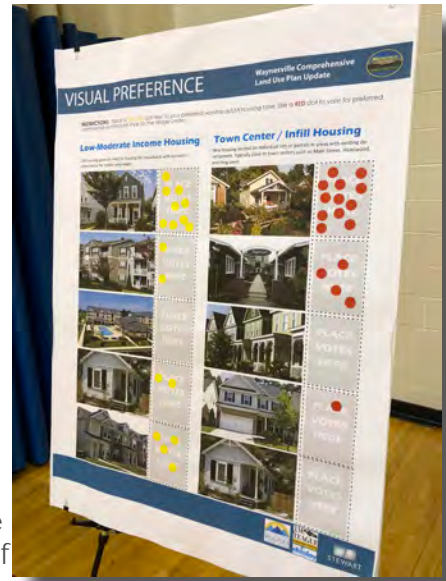
- » Protected bike/pedestrian infrastructure
- » Richland Creek greenway expansion
- » Improving ADA compliance with the town’s pedestrian infrastructure
- » Keeping Waynesville a walkable community

Development-related comments included concerns about a large apartment project and a desire for more downtown infill development.

Participants demonstrated support for improvements to the commercial areas of Frog Level, downtown Hazelwood, and the Waynesville Plaza. The Steering Committee notes that the workshop attendance was limited and mostly attended by older citizens.

Pigeon Center Community Meeting

The Pigeon Community Multicultural Development Center hosted a meeting to discuss the Land Use Plan, parks planning and historic preservation on August 16th, 2018. The meeting provided an overview of a study of the Town’s Historic Preservation Commission to document African-American resources within Waynesville. The Pigeon Community Center and Dix Hill Cemetery were identified as community resources for possible listing on the National Register.



Preferred development types exercise from visioning workshop

Additionally, important stories and history were collected and will be used in creating a historic marker in a park that the Town is developing within the neighborhood. Issues of housing, inclusionary zoning, and infrastructure were also discussed.

Project Website

The Town created a link to the Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update on the Development Services Department website. There, the public could track the Plan’s progress, review meeting summaries, survey results, and see notices for upcoming meetings and maps with convenient 24/7 access.

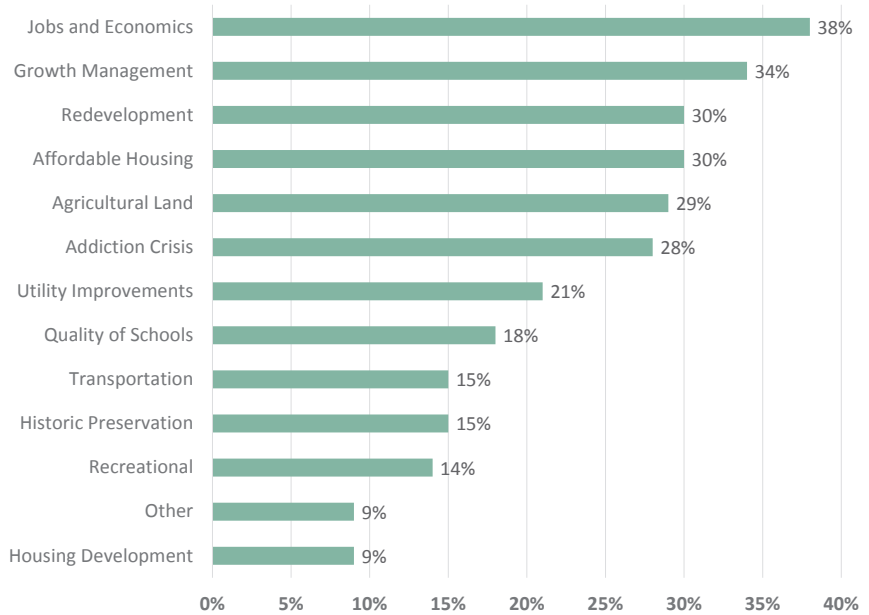
Online Survey

368 individuals (over 3% percent of the community over 18 years old) took an online survey offered in June and July 2018. The survey was designed to gather information on community priorities related to land use, conservation, mobility and more. These responses from people living and working in Waynesville and its extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) provided another viewpoint shaping the goals and objectives of this plan.

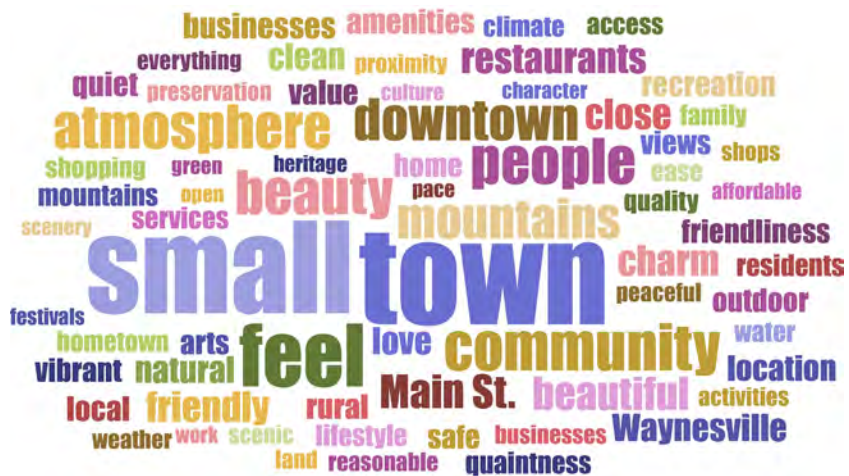
Based on survey results the top four issues were jobs and economics, growth management, redevelopment and affordable housing.

The Public Policy Institute (PPI) of Western Carolina University provided a detailed analysis of the Survey Monkey results. View the full analysis in the Appendix.

MOST PRESSING ISSUES FACING WAYNESVILLE



Results from a survey conducted by Dr. Todd Collins and students from the Public Policy Institute at Western Carolina University



Survey results indicated that Waynesville’s “small town friendliness” was what folks valued most and was the primary reason people stay, move, or visit the Town.

Draft Plan Neighborhood Meetings

Town planning staff held public meetings during the month of April 2019 at the Recreation Center, the Fire Department, and Folkmoot. These meetings allowed the public to review and provide feedback on draft recommendations in an informal setting.

Comments from these public meetings included the following:

- Maintain what is valuable to Waynesville aesthetic and what is valuable for the community.
 - Balance and manage growth (Avoid becoming Asheville or Atlanta).
 - Keep Waynesville beautiful.
 - We need housing, but we need housing with mindfulness.
 - There is a sense of Waynesville that we do not want to lose.
 - Concern over density, and keep in mind why people move to Waynesville.
 - Promote local businesses and shops.
 - New development should meet the Waynesville character. Architectural design is important.
- Good planning and economic development
 - Need jobs and industry to support families and want our children to be able to stay here
 - Put high density where we can.
 - Need to ensure infrastructure planning for commercial and residential
 - Need jobs that are not just geared towards the service industry
 - Concern over providing housing and services for all ages
- Protect the environment and provide flexibility
 - Respect steep topography
 - Respect land owner decisions and expectations
 - “Agrihoods” not just for the wealthy, build for the middle class
 - Support for greenways along Richland and Raccoon Rd.
- Neighborhoods, historic preservation, arts and culture
 - Concern for the historic preservation of the Bethel corridor and Pigeon gap (interested in conservation / preservation)
 - How do arts and community inclusion play a part in the plan?
 - Bring unkempt buildings up to a better standard and use in Frog Level
 - We want to see Waynesville grow and preserve its historic character.



Neighborhood meetings were held in the spring of 2019 to share draft recommendations and gather input on changes needed.



Kids weighed in on ideas for the Town at the Open Streets community event at Folkmoot in May of 2019

PLAN STRUCTURE

The Waynesville 2035 plan is divided into 7 chapters. Each of the chapters is described in the graphic below.

INTRODUCTION



This chapter provides an introduction to the plan and includes a description of the plan's purpose, background information, an overview of the planning process and a summary of input.

VISION & GOALS



The vision statement and goals of the plan are outlined in this chapter. Under each goal are objectives that clarify the goal statements. The vision, goals and objectives helped to frame all recommendations in the plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS



This chapter includes the Future Land Use Map, area descriptions, and policies and strategies that are organized by topic area and meant to guide decisions.

ACTION PLAN



The 2035 Action Plan contains specific, actionable steps Waynesville can take to meet the goals and vision identified during this planning process.

COMMUNITY PROFILE



Demographic data is provided to detail trends in the Waynesville area. This chapter also includes a summary of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as well as an assessment of previous plans.

EXISTING CONDITIONS



This chapter provides an analysis of the current conditions in Waynesville. Existing land use is summarized as well as environmental constraints, development suitability, infrastructure and natural and cultural resources.

APPENDIX



This chapter includes detailed survey results, market analysis, a transportation plan assessment and existing conditions analysis and copies of maps.