
Community Development
2026 BOC Budget Retreat Update
BURKECOUNTY

Commissioner Policy & Strategic Planning

BURKE COUNTY
FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026
FOCUS AREAS AND STRATEGIC GOALS



FOCUS AREA 1: COMMUNITY ADVANCEMENT
To invest in cultural capital and advancement strategies that promote participative governance that elevates a community to live, work, and play, while also positioning Burke County as a community of choice.



FOCUS AREA 2: ECONOMIC GROWTH & SUSTAINMENT
To promote of Burke County as a business and economic center in the region through recruitment of new industry and creating a healthy business climate for existing businesses.



FOCUS AREA 3: PUBLIC SAFETY& WELL BEING
To ensure the safety of our residents through efficient and effective public safety agencies.



FOCUS AREA 4: FISCAL STEWARDSHIP
To pursue of high-performing organization model that ensures high quality, transparent, and efficient use of public resources.



FOCUS AREA 5: EMPLOYER OF CHOICE
To promote a professional value-based employee centric workplace that promotes innovation, performance, integrity, and differentiation.



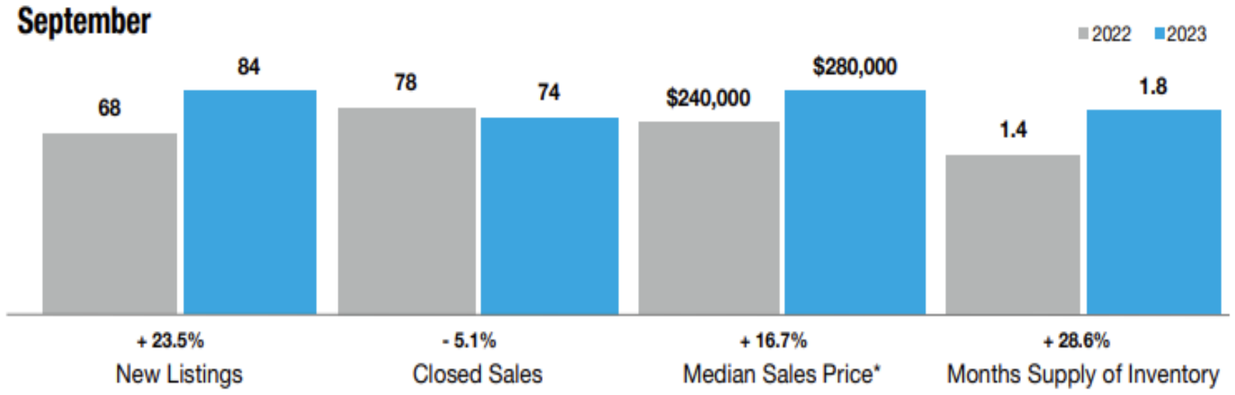
FOCUS AREA 1: COMMUNITY ADVANCEMENT

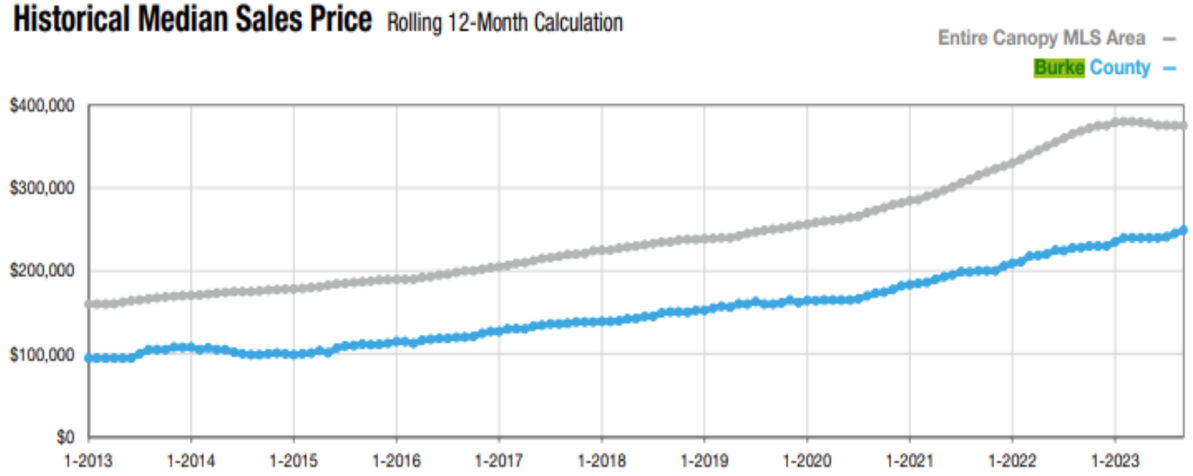
FY 25-26 GOALS

1. Leverage the completed housing assessment to promote new product development, including developing modernized land use and zoning administration plans.
2. Identify census track data specific to county-wide broadband availability and pursue grant based public-private expansion that aims to cover more than 90% of Burke County households.
3. Community Beautification Strategies including roadside litter cleanup efforts.
4. Develop Asset Inventory Analysis (AIA) for all water and sewer infrastructure with a focus on investment return and potential future expansion options to underserved areas.
5. Prioritize trail development and parks/recreation support.
6. Increase citizen engagement & participation on county boards and committees.

County Wide Housing Study

BOWEN NATIONAL RESEARCH





	September			Year to Date		
Key Metrics	**2022**	**2023**	Percent Change	**Thru 9-2022**	**Thru 9-2023**	Percent Change
New Listings	68	**84**	+ 23.5%	781	**705**	- 9.7%
Pending Sales	67	**50**	- 25.4%	691	**622**	- 10.0%
Closed Sales	78	**74**	- 5.1%	701	**602**	- 14.1%
Median Sales Price*	$240,000	**$280,000**	+ 16.7%	$233,000	**$250,000**	+ 7.3%
Average Sales Price*	$281,539	**$341,292**	+ 21.2%	$278,366	**$304,427**	+ 9.4%
Percent of Original List Price Received*	96.0%	**96.6%**	+ 0.6%	98.2%	**96.2%**	- 2.0%
List to Close	63	**74**	+ 17.5%	75	**78**	+ 4.0%
Days on Market Until Sale	20	**35**	+ 75.0%	26	**33**	+ 26.9%
Cumulative Days on Market Until Sale	20	**35**	+ 75.0%	25	**38**	+ 52.0%
Average List Price	$338,964	**$301,317**	- 11.1%	$311,816	**$324,483**	+ 4.1%
Inventory of Homes for Sale	111	**118**	+ 6.3%	--	--	--
Months Supply of Inventory	1.4	**1.8**	+ 28.6%	--	--	--

Burke County

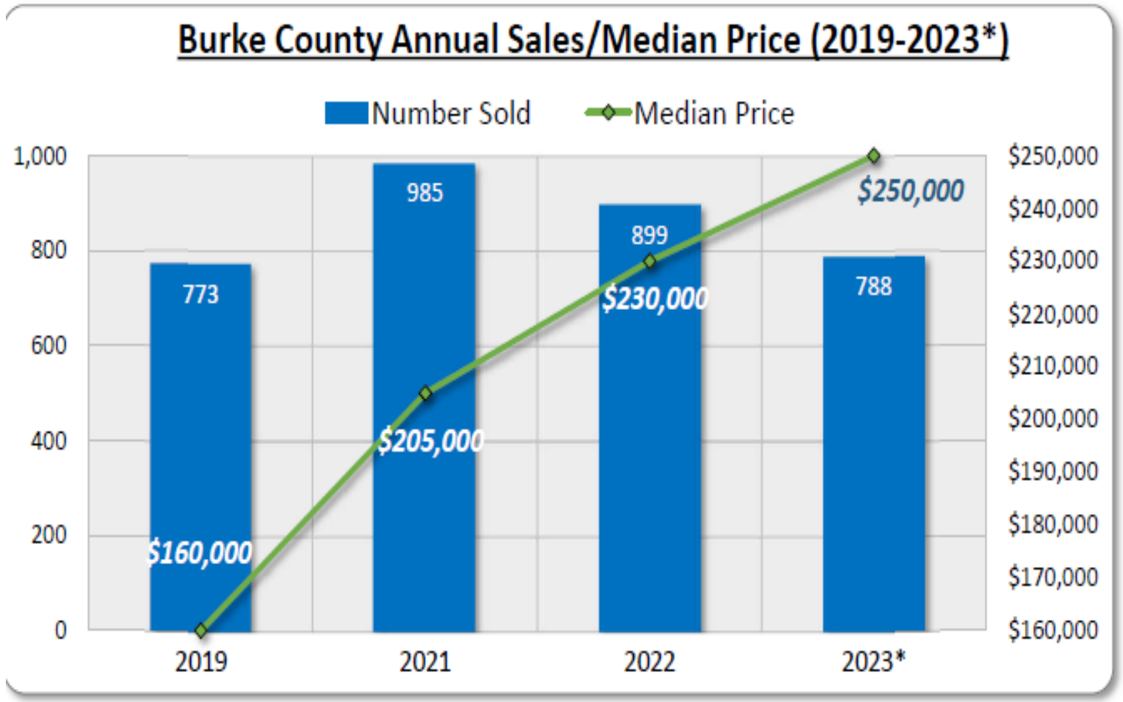
North Carolina

MLS Data

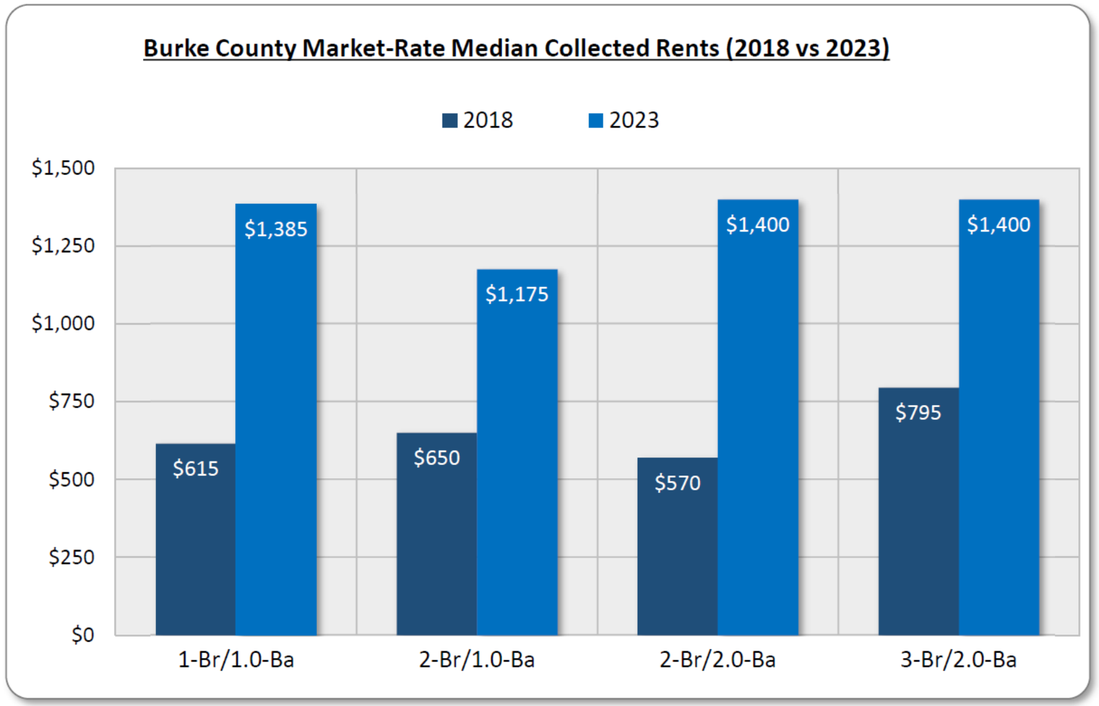
	March			Year to Date		
Key Metrics	**2023**	**2024**	Percent Change	**Thru 3-2023**	**Thru 3-2024**	Percent Change
New Listings	97	**106**	+ 9.3%	229	**266**	+ 16.2%
Pending Sales	88	**88**	0.0%	216	**217**	+ 0.5%
Closed Sales	76	**63**	- 17.1%	167	**160**	- 4.2%
Median Sales Price*	$233,825	**$270,000**	+ 15.5%	$245,000	**$240,000**	- 2.0%
Average Sales Price*	$266,269	**$277,723**	+ 4.3%	$286,222	**$275,528**	- 3.7%
Percent of Original List Price Received*	95.4%	**95.0%**	- 0.4%	95.4%	**93.9%**	- 1.6%
List to Close	93	**79**	- 15.1%	88	**82**	- 6.8%
Days on Market Until Sale	36	**38**	+ 5.6%	40	**41**	+ 2.5%
Cumulative Days on Market Until Sale	41	**41**	0.0%	45	**44**	- 2.2%
Average List Price	$326,943	**$403,223**	+ 23.3%	$315,098	**$357,859**	+ 13.6%
Inventory of Homes for Sale	107	**158**	+ 47.7%	--	--	--
Months Supply of Inventory	1.6	**2.4**	+ 50.0%	--	--	--

* Does not account for sale concessions and/or downpayment assistance. | Percent changes are calculated using rounded figures and can sometimes look extreme due to small sample size.

COST OF HOUSING CHANGE



*Excludes 2020 sales data (unavailable); 2023 full year projection



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Housing Gap Estimates (Rental Housing)

Burke County has an **Overall Rental Housing Gap** of **Approximately 1,499 Residential Units** at a **Variety of Affordability Levels.**

	Burke County, North Carolina Rental Housing Gap Estimates (2023-2028)			
Percent of Median Income	**≤ 50%**	**51%-80%**	**81%-120%**	**121%+**
Household Income Range	**≤$35,650**	**$35,651-$57,040**	**$57,041-$85,680**	**$85,681+**
Monthly Rent Range	**≤ $891**	**$892-$1,426**	**$1,427-$2,142**	**$2,143+**
Household Growth	-336	62	131	99
Balanced Market	206	0	33	46
Replacement Housing	507	119	31	14
External Market Support	167	158	83	72
Severe Cost Burdened	273	137	46	0
Step-Down Support	95	2	-5	-92
Less Pipeline Units	-78	-151	-120	0
Overall Units Needed	**834**	**327**	**199**	**139**

The greatest rental housing gap is for units with rents ≤ $891 for households generally earning <$35,650 annually.

Housing Gap Estimates (For-Sale Housing)

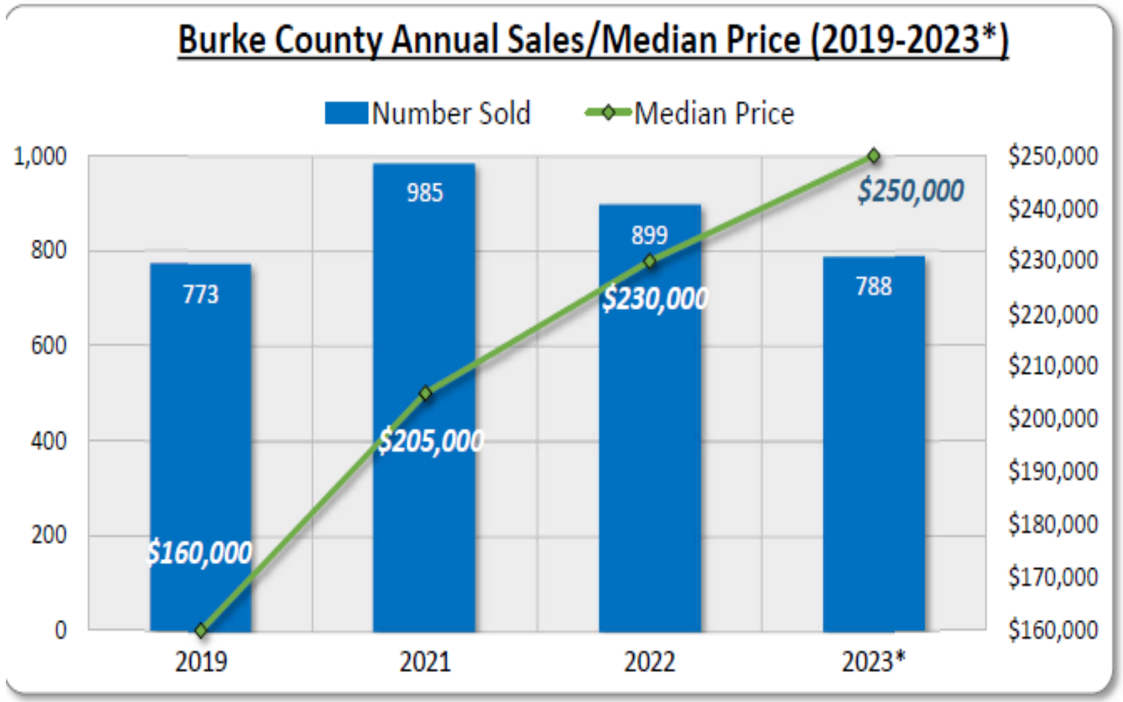
Burke County has an **Overall For-Sale Housing Gap** of **Approximately 3,323 Residential Units** at a **Variety of Affordability Levels.**

	Burke County, North Carolina For-Sale Housing Gap Estimates (2023-2028)			
Percent of Median Income	**≤ 50%**	**51%-80%**	**81%-120%**	**121%+**
Household Income Range	**≤$35,650**	**$35,651-$57,040**	**$57,041-$85,680**	**$85,681+**
Price Point	**≤ $118,833**	**$118,834-$190,133**	**$190,134-$285,600**	**$285,601+**
Household Growth	-871	-607	163	2,139
Balanced Market	182	157	112	244
Replacement Housing	179	78	36	36
External Market Support	374	217	199	400
Severe Cost Burdened	197	98	33	0
Step-Down Support	0	872	988	-1,860
Less Pipeline Units	0	0	-14	-29
Overall Units Needed	**61**	**815**	**1,517**	**930**

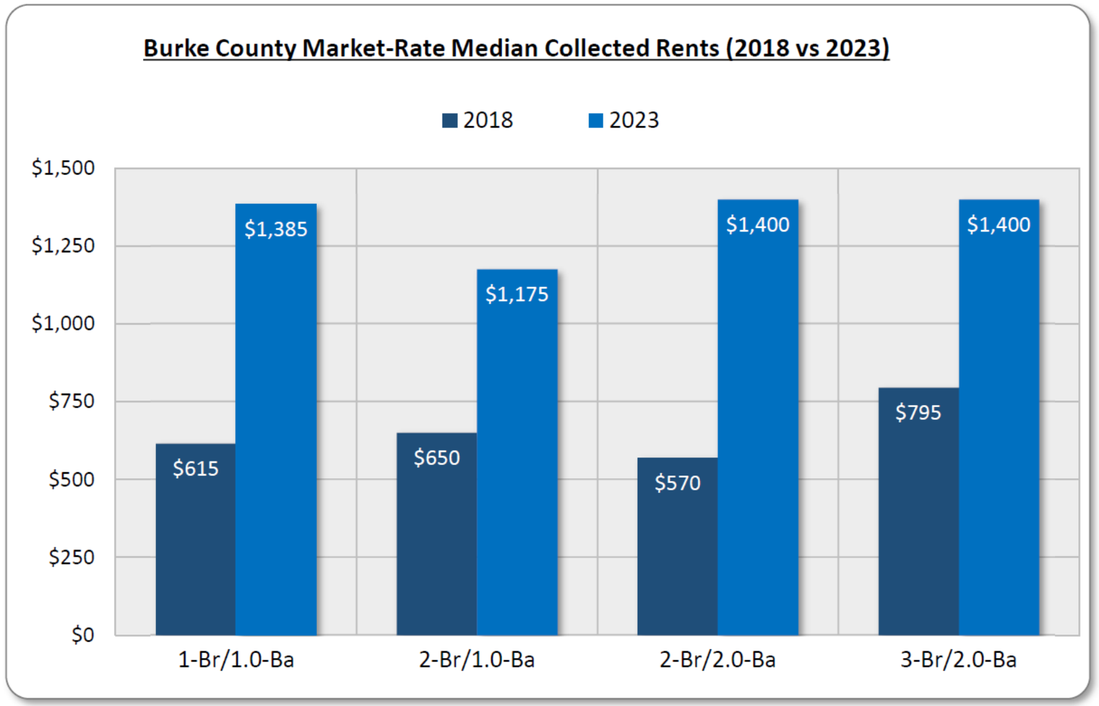
The greatest gap appears to be for housing priced between $190,134 and $285,600 (1,517 units) for households generally earning between $57,041 and $85,681.

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COST OF HOUSING CHANGE



*Excludes 2020 sales data (unavailable); 2023 full year projection



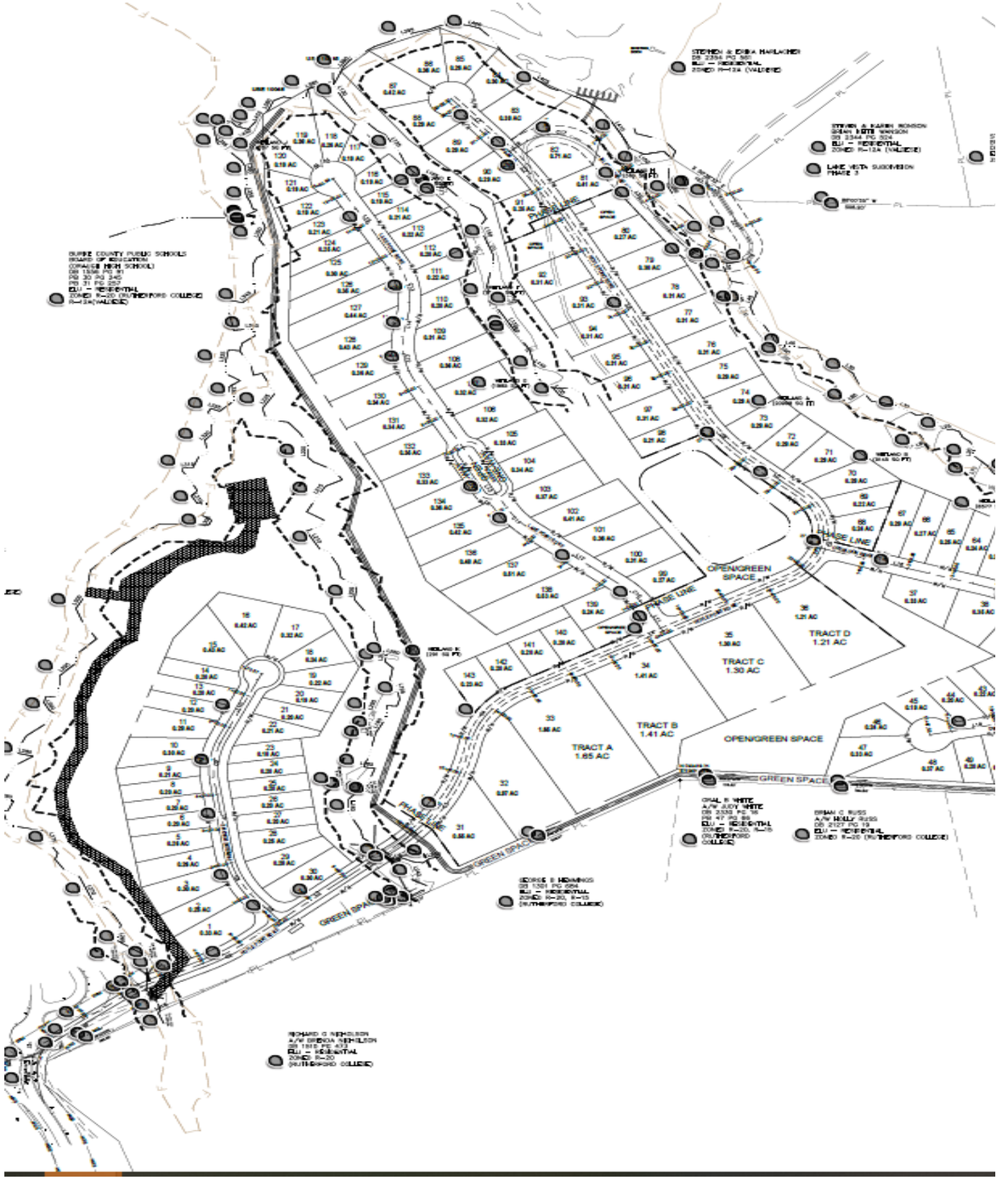
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Housing Inducement Strategies

- Water / Sewer Infrastructure Investments
  - County System AIA Studies
  - Housing Inducement Fund
    - $3.25M (Directed General Assembly Grant to Burke County)
      - Utilized through municipal grant partnerships
        - » IE. Valdese Bluffs Development Agreement

- Regulatory Environment Review


INLET SHORE RD NE
Hoyle Creek
Hoyle Creek
Hoyle Creek


TRACT A
1.65 AC
TRACT B
1.41 AC
TRACT C
1.30 AC
TRACT D
1.21 AC
OPEN/GREEN SPACE
OPEN/GREEN SPACE
OPEN/GREEN SPACE
GREEN SPACE
PHASE LINE
PHASE LINE
PHASE LINE

Project Overview:

- 140 single-family residential lots
- Average home value: $350,000
- Estimated total tax base at buildout: $49,000,000

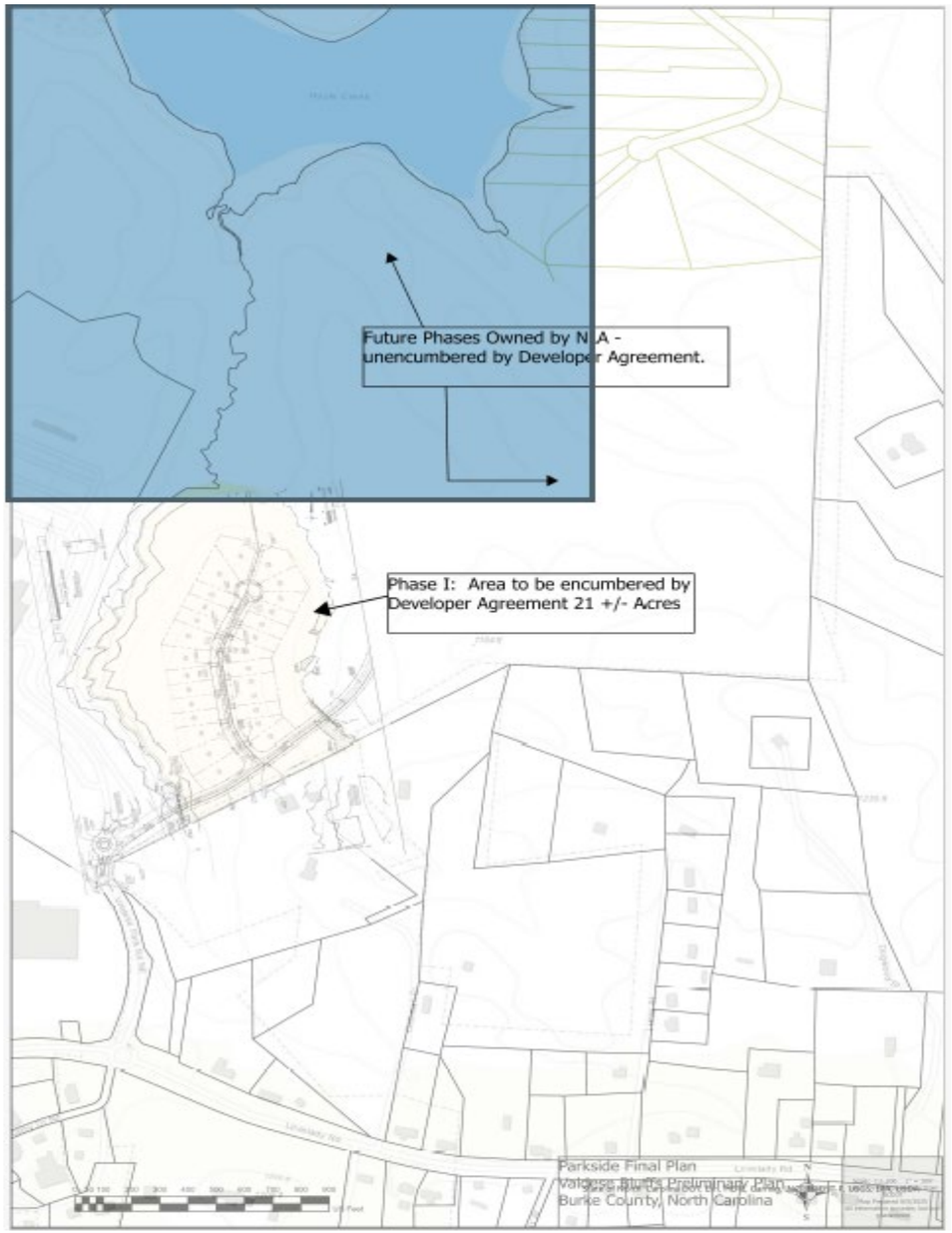
- Public Infrastructure:
  - Town to construct pump station and sewer force main
    - $1.75M
      - 2021 $850k SCIG Grant to Town of Valdese
      - 2026 (50/50) Split
        - » County – Housing Inducement Fund

- Financial Impact (County):
  - Estimated annual revenue at full buildout: $274,400
  - Performance payments protect public investment
  - Strengthens long-term tax base growth

Valdese Bluffs Development Agreement – Phase I

Performance Standards:
- Minimum 27 residential dwellings completed
- Completion required within 3 years after Sewer Availability Date
- Average assessed value target: $350,000 per dwelling

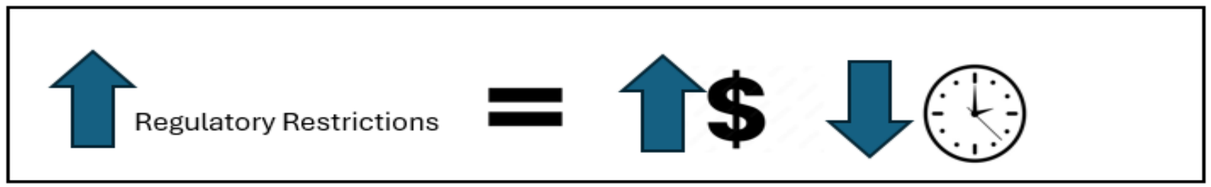
Claw-back Provisions:
- $14,440.87 per unit (to each Local Government) for each unit below 27
- $250 per $50,000 (or fraction) below $350,000 assessed value (County only)
- Vacant lots assessed at 72 months after Sewer Availability Date
- Deed of Trust recorded to secure payments
- Permits/Certificates of Occupancy may be withheld upon default
- Foreclosure remedies available if unpaid

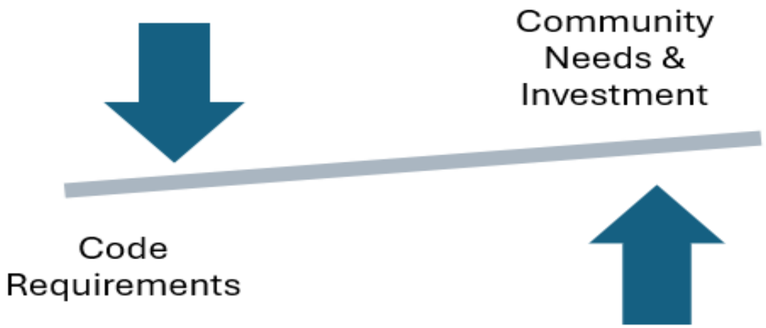


Regulatory Environment

By reducing unnecessary hurdles for homeowners and continuing to modernize our development standards, we are actively positioning Burke County as a "community of choice" where regulations facilitate the ability to live, work, and play.

An "overly regulated land use policy" refers to a set of rules governing how land can be developed that are excessively restrictive, often leading to limited housing supply, higher property prices, and hindering economic growth by placing too many constraints on what can be built where, potentially impeding development and innovation in a given area.





Zoning Amendment Timeline

What we've completed so far:

- Zoning Ord. Overhaul (Completed 2021)- Compliance with NCGS 160D, moving towards modern UDO (unified development ordinance).
- ZTA 2024-01: Introduction of conditional zoning, allowing for greater community input, flexible design standards, and mixed-use developments.
- ZTA 2025-01: Reduced lot sizes and changes to formatting to formulate a unified development ordinance.
- ZTA 2025-02: Reduced regulations for ADUs, provide options for accessory structures, streamlined MHP regulations, added options for residential and commercial "special developments", and state statue compliance.



Where we are headed:

- Hobby Farm & Chicken Keeping: Exploring options for introducing hobby farms and chicken keeping into our zoning ordinance.
- Subdivision Ord. Revision- Updating road standards and minor/major subdivision criteria.
- END GOAL: Unified Development Ordinance

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Data from 2025

BUILDING PERMITS

- 2024 TOTAL: 2283
- 2025 TOTAL: 2813
- UP 22.1%

NEW HOME PERMITS

- 2024 TOTAL: 251
- 2025 TOTAL: 401
- UP 59.76%

ZONING PERMITS

- 2024 TOTAL: 1268
- 2025 TOTAL: 1397
- UP 10.2%

PLAT MAP REVIEWS

- 2024 TOTAL: 69
- 2025 TOTAL: 134
- UP 131%

2026 TRENDS





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Our Community Contracts





- Community Development administers zoning for Glen Alpine & Connelly Springs
- Each municipality has their own zoning ordinance that regulates their land uses
- Recently completed an overhaul to the Glen Alpine Zoning Ordinance.
- As of Jan 1, 2026, Community Development reviews all plats submitted in Burke before heading to deeds for recording (after applicable municipality signs off for zoning and subdivision standards)

What Governs Our Work

Zoning Ordinance

- Establishes land use regulations such as residential, commercial, or industrial zoning.
- What it controls: Zoning, how tall buildings can be, how far a house must be from the street (setbacks), parking, signs, etc.

Watershed Protection Ordinance

- Protects our drinking water resources by limiting the amount of impervious surface (pavement & roofs).
- When precipitation runs-off impervious surfaces it picks up pollutants (oil, fertilizer, trash etc.) which then pollutes our lakes and rivers.

Subdivision Ordinance

- Regulates how a single large piece of land is split into smaller lots.
- Regulates that all subdivisions provide adequate roads, water and sewer access, and flood protections.

Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance

- What it controls: It requires buildings in high-risk areas to be elevated above a certain flood level.
- FEMA manages flood maps that designate properties this ordinance applies to.

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RECENT ZONING UPDATES:



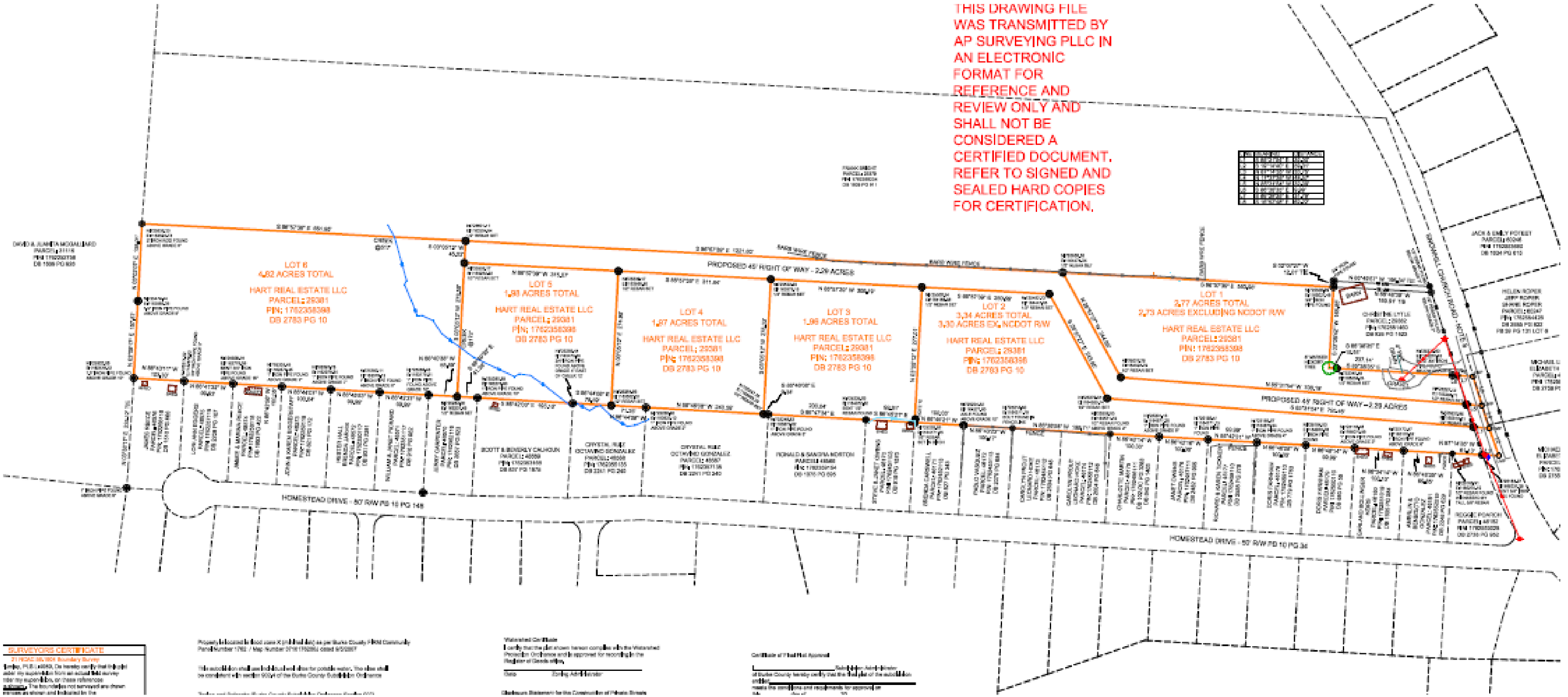
1. INCREASE IN SQ. FOOTAGE FOR ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS
2. SCALE CHANGES FOR ACCESSORY STRUCUTRES
3. SOLAR FARM ALLOWANCES
4. TINY HOMES DEFINED- APPENDIX Q RULE
5. MINIMUM LOT SIZE- LOWERED ACERAGE

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Updating the Subdivision Ordinance

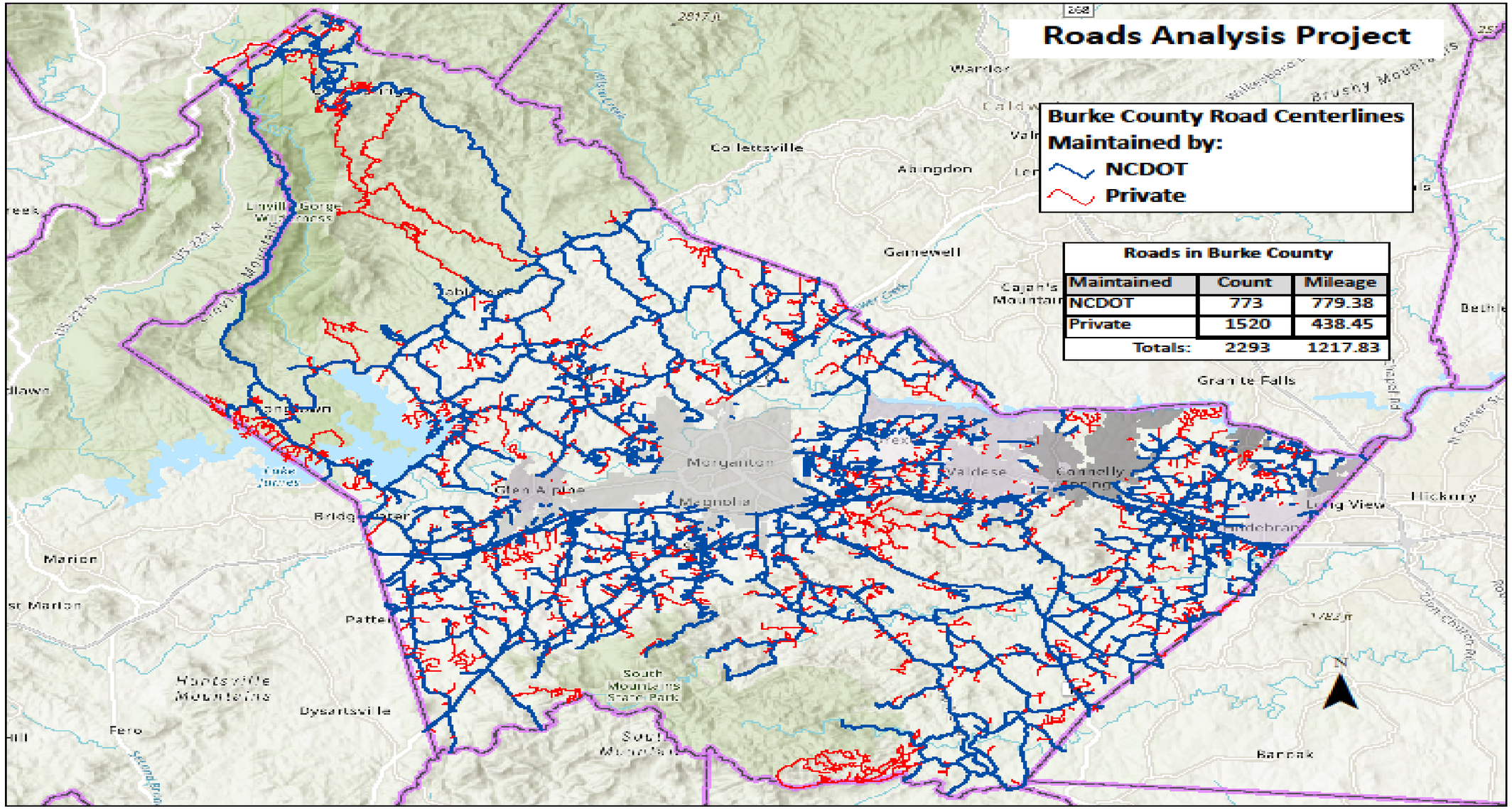
- Currently Burke County is operating off a subdivision ordinance that was adopted over 20+ years ago.
- Community Development has identified priority areas of improvement:
  - Road standards:
    - Currently, any subdivision with greater than 6 lots must build a road to NCDOT standards.
    - For previously existing subdivisions with nonconforming roads (dirt, gravel, or small right of way) further subdivision is strangled as the entire road must be brought up to NCDOT standards after 6 lots are served.
  - Revising Minor VS. Major Subdivision Criteria:
    - Minor subdivisions (6 or less lots) do not require NCDOT standard roads and internal plat review.
    - Major subdivisions (7 or more) require NCDOT standard road, and reviews internally and by the planning board.
    - Many developers are choosing to do just six lots due do this increasingly costly requirement= less housing and more sprawl.
      - For our typical 10-20 lot major subdivision, this requirement can add ~$10,000 more per lot.

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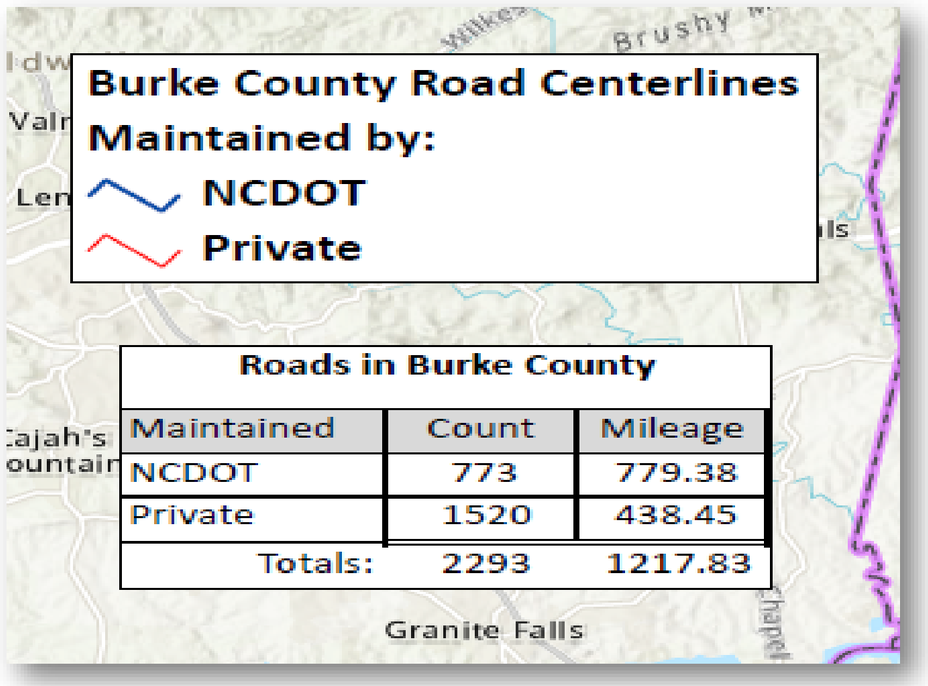


Note the subdivision from the 1990's on the south side is much denser for the same area of land

ROAD ANALYSIS PROJECT



Road Analysis Project



- Community Development & GIS/Mapping went across the county and physically inspected, measured and photographed 10% (162) of our private roads.
- The study found a clear link between surface material and its condition, with asphalt roads averaging the highest score (3.41), followed by gravel (2.75), and dirt roads performing the worst with an average score of 1.89.
- Across the 162 rated roads, the average score was 3.03, which falls into the "fair" category. The most frequent rating assigned was a score of 3 (75 roads).
- Road surface also influenced accessibility; asphalt roads were the widest on average at 14.93 feet, while gravel and dirt roads were narrower, measuring 12.71 feet and 12.33 feet respectively.

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Road serves 22 lots



Road serves 30 lots



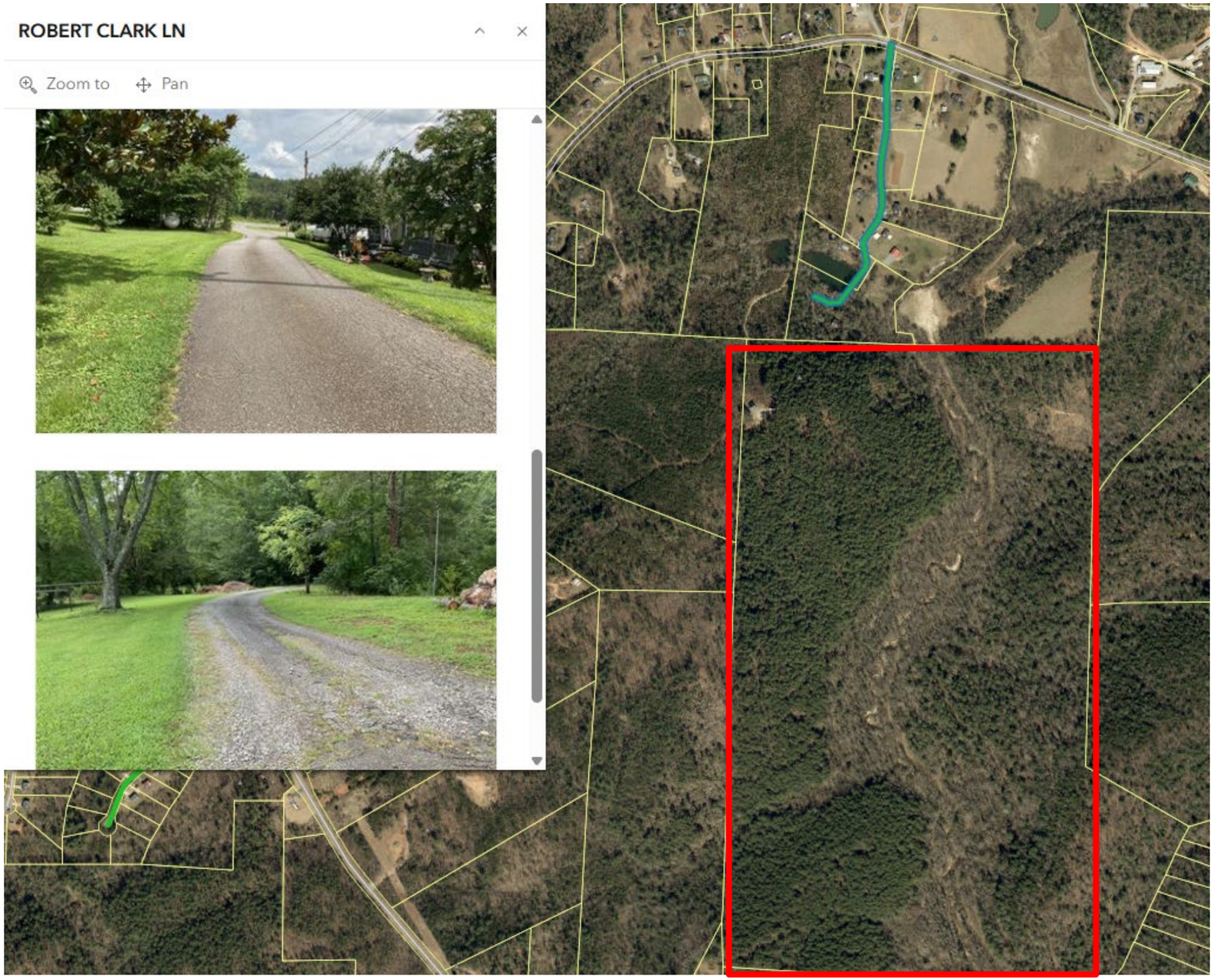
Serves 50 lots secondary access impassable

2. The sub-divider shall provide proof that the private right-of-way existed prior to September 15, 1998 by providing on the final plat a dated deed book page and reference (recorded by the Burke County Register of Deeds) identifying the right-of-way or by providing a notarized and sworn affidavit by the affected or past property owners to this effect.

3. Only one (1) private road that is not eligible for maintenance by NC DOT is allowed on each tax parcel of land existing as of the adoption date of this ordinance (September 15, 1998).

4. No more than six (6) lots may be served by a private road not constructed to NC DOT standards.

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What do you think?

We have reduced lot size and frontage requirements, but the factor of paved roads continues to be THE limiting factor of residential development other than utility availability.

Which leads us to these questions; we want to hear your thoughts!

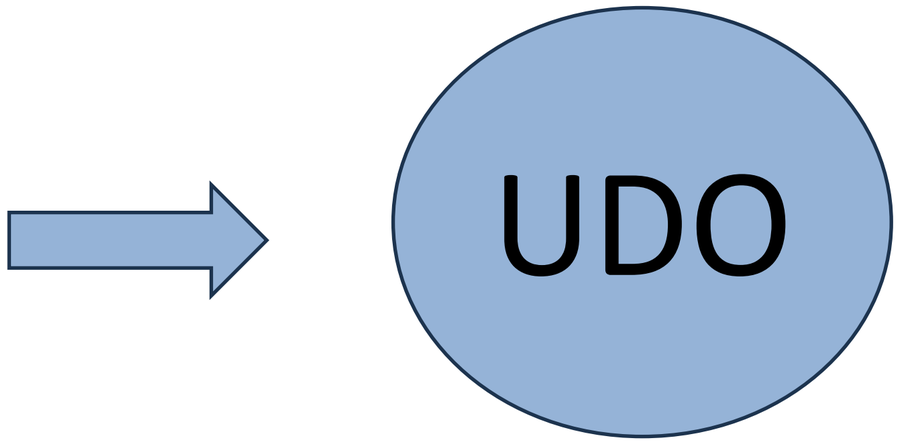
- Since NCDOT is very reluctant to take over private roads - should we require paved, NCDOT standard roads for *all* major subdivisions?
- What number of lots are we comfortable serving with gravel roads?
- How to we address nonconforming private roadways that are preventing further subdivision after the road has maxed out lots?

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Unified Development Ordinance

- Once the subdivision ordinance is adopted, it will be added to the zoning ordinance, continuing our work towards a unified development ordinance.
- Single Regulatory Framework: Consolidates land use regulations into a “one-stop shop” for developers, residents, and staff.
- Consistent Standards: Eliminates internal conflicts between separate ordinances (e.g., ensuring landscaping requirements in zoning don't clash with subdivision road standards).
- User-Friendly Design: Typically features more tables, graphics, and cross-references than traditional legacy codes to make regulations easier to interpret and promote transparency.

Ordinance	Primary Goal	Focus Area
Zoning	Compatibility	Land use and building size
Subdivision	Infrastructure	Streets, lots, and utilities
Watershed	Water Quality	Pollutants and pavement limits
Flood Damage	Public Safety	Elevation and floodplains



Summary

- Burke County is actively positioning itself as a "community of choice." This vision is supported by a surge in 2025 development activity, including a 59.76% increase in new home permits and a 131% increase in plat map reviews.
- We continue to adjust the zoning ordinance to reduce regulatory burden and address the housing crisis through reduced lot sizes, conditional zoning, and other zoning tools.
- We are actively studying options for the subdivision ordinance to further support housing development and provide options
- Continuing to move forward with the development of the UDO, bringing our land use regulations into an accessible and modern ordinance that supports our community.

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THANK YOU

Questions?

