STRATEGIC PLAN 2025 CLOSE OUT

Presented by

Andy Zoller

Strategy & Innovation

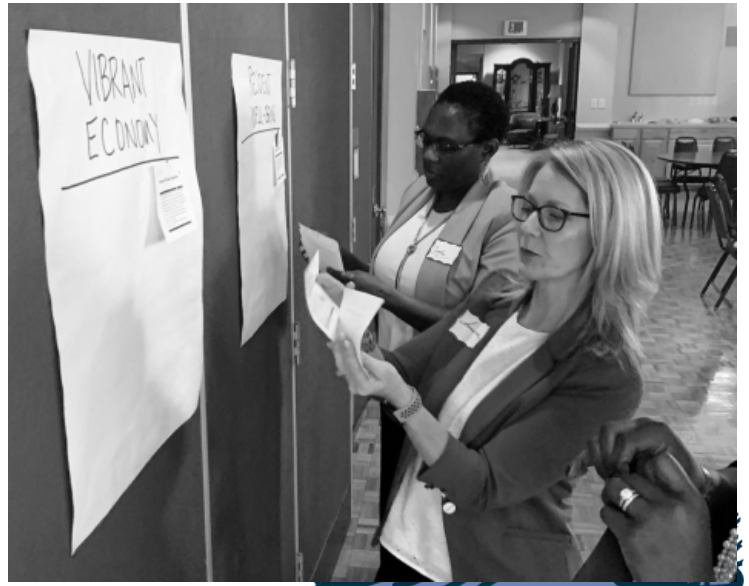




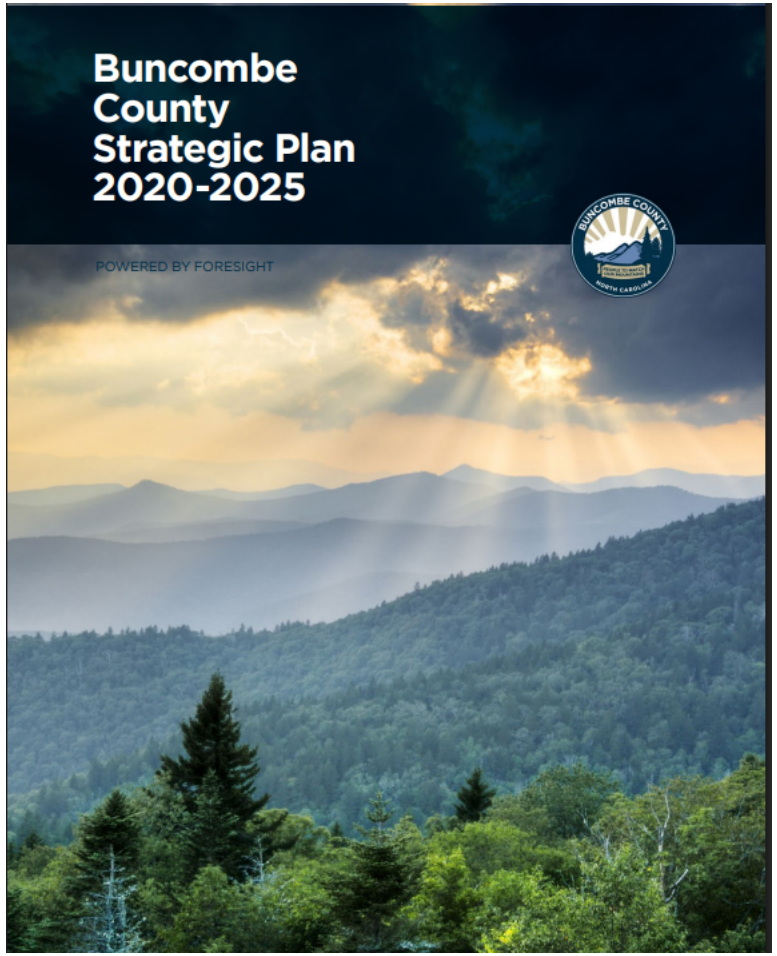




Strategic Plan 2025



STRATEGIC PLAN 2025



COMMUNITY FOCUS AREAS

Educated & Capable Community
Vision: A county where all residents thrive and demonstrate resilience throughout their lives.

Environmental & Energy Stewardship
Vision: High quality air, water, farmland and renewable energy for future generations.

Resident Well-Being
Vision: Our residents are safe, healthy, and engaged in their community.

Vibrant Economy
Vision: A robust and sustainable regional economy that builds on our homegrown industries and talent and provides economic mobility for residents.

2025 GOALS

- Increase third grade literacy rates especially among underperforming students
- Increase kindergarten readiness
- Improve college and career readiness
- Protect older residents' ability to age in place
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Preserve farmland and environmentally sensitive tracts
- Expand and maintain culturalandrecreational assets
- Increase access to public transportation, including public transit and paratransit services
- Reduce jail population and enhance public safety
- Eliminate deaths as a result of substance abuse
- Increase median household income to North C arolina benchmark
- Increase total employment in region's targeted industries
- Implement land use strategies that encourage affordable housing near transportation and jobs

FOUNDATIONAL FOCUS AREAS

Equity: Systems, policies, and practices that support equity for all people and an organizational culture that embraces diversity and inclusion.

Strategic Plan 2025 Goals and Accomplishments

Environmental & Energy Stewardship

Reduce greenhouse gas emissions

- Implemented a replacement plan for carbon-emitting county vehicles and invested in charging stations – 33 EV stations with 12 more under construction
- Increased renewable energy access via solar system installations – 54 total installations
- Implemented electronic plan reviews, reducing paper utilization – Permits and Inspections now at 100% electronic plan reviews
- Reduced County operations' greenhouse gas emissions – Emergency Services' ambulance idle mitigation systems have prevented approximately 447,378 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions and saved over $68,000 in fuel costs

Preserve farmland and environmentally sensitive tracts

- Increased funding for conservation easement projects through the Buncombe Farmland Preservation Program and local Land Trusts with 3,750 total acres over the 5-year plan

Energy and Environment - 2030 Plan

2030 Strategic Plan Objectives:

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect air quality
- Preserve agriculture heritage of Buncombe County and prioritize the conservation of natural resources



Vibrant Economy

Implement land use strategies that encourage affordable housing near transportation and jobs

- Worked with community and stakeholders to promote sustainable growth
  - 161 affordable rental units built
  - 60 affordable rental units currently under construction
  - 485 emergency home repairs completed
  - 861 households received tenant based rental assistance
  - 696 affordable rental apartments have been funded

Vibrant Economy

Increase median household income to NC benchmark

- Increased the average wage for Buncombe County incentivized projects
- Increased the median household income for STEP graduates as average hourly wages grew 31% to $19.66/hr in FY 2025

Increase total employment in the region's targeted industries

- Increased small business and "start up" jobs, such as expansions by Poppy and East Fork Pottery
- Increased total employment in advanced manufacturing jobs, professional office, and information technology, including $715,500,000 in investments by Pratt & Whitney, System Logistics, and BorgWarner

Vibrant Economy - 2030 Plan

Economic Development	Growth and Development
Increase opportunities and support the local workforce	Encourage diversity of housing as a foundation for affordable, healthy, and thriving communities, particularly for the most vulnerable residents
Bolster economic and business opportunities by increasing total employment in the professional and Information Technology advanced manufacturing industries	Maximize the use of our land, guiding development to targeted growth areas that lead to resilient communities
Increase the number of small businesses in the county	
Increase high speed internet to residents	

Resident Well Being

Increase access to public transportation

- Continue to grow ridership through Mountain Mobility – ridership increased on deviated routes from 29,393 in 2020 to 32,936 in 2024

Expand and maintain cultural and recreational assets

- Maintained high quality parks
- Improved recreation outcomes for residents in underserved communities by expanding CORE programming and participation by more than 40%
- Continue to work to increase the miles of greenway



Resident Well Being

Eliminate deaths as a result of substance abuse

- Continue to work to decrease the number of substance abuse overdose deaths
- Increased access to behavioral health services, including the expansion of the Community Paramedic Post Overdose Response Team
- Decreased the number of ED visits due to overdoses by 35%
- Decreased the percentage of children entering custody with the reason of “Parental Substance Use” identified from 40% in FY 2021 to 33% in FY 2025

Resident Well Being

Reduce jail population and enhance public safety

- Increased the percentage of outdated warrants recalled from 7.6% in FY 2021 to 12.5% in FY 2025
- Increased alternative pathways to move through the justice system, including the expansion of Felony Drug Diversion and Adult Misdemeanor Diversion programs
- Continue to work to reduce EMS response times and increase community safety and accountability to those who do harm

Resident Well Being - 2030 Plan

Community Health	Public Safety
Increase coordination and resilience of community health services to create a healthier and safer community	Increase prevention and harm reduction by increasing the number of community members who are trained in risk reduction and preparedness, partnering with community organizations to reduce gun-related injuries and deaths, and improving the number of Child Protective Services cases that are initiated on time
Improve outcomes in physical, mental, and behavioral health and to increase social connectedness	Increase hazard mitigation and disaster preparedness to support a climate-resilient community
	Enhance individualized diversion services, which are programs that offer an alternative to the justice system

Educated and Capable

Increase kindergarten readiness

- Enhanced early childhood educators' ability to provide high quality early childhood education through the Preschool Outreach Program (POP) – as of FY 2025, POP serving 52 childcare centers and 167 classrooms
- Continue to work to increase the percentage of incoming kindergarten students who score proficient on the kindergarten entry assessment

Increase 3rd grade literacy rates especially among underperforming students

- Strengthened education partnerships to increase student performance and disparities – percentage of 3rd graders scoring proficient in reading and math rose from 51.1% in FY 2022 to 58.6% in FY 2025

Educated and Capable

Improve college and career readiness

- Reduced youth involvement in the justice system, to include a 43% decrease in juvenile complaints in FY 2025
- Strengthened education partnerships, including the establishment of the School Justice Partnership
- Continue to work to engage students in the electoral process

Protect older residents' ability to age in place

- Improved quality of life for older residents

Education - 2030 Strategic Plan

2030 Strategic Plan Objectives:

- Enhance early and adult learning
- Improve outcomes in education



Next Steps

- Sustain our gains that we achieved in the 2025 Plan and continue to monitor new trends
- Continue unfinished business from the 2025 Plan in the 2030 Plan, Recovery Plan, Comprehensive plan, etc.
- Work underway on the 2030 Strategic Plan, including the development of a public facing dashboard that will track progress
- First update on the 2030 Strategic Plan is scheduled to take place in Fall 2026

