2025 Strategic Plan Measures and Accomplishments

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Environmental & Energy Stewardship</td><td>Reduce Greenhouse Gases

Tier 2 Goals and Measures based on Business Plans Targets:
✓ Reduce internal and community GHG emissions
✓ Replace carbon-emitting county vehicles by 5% year over year
✓ Increase number of electronic plan reviews
✓ Increase recycling in Buncombe County Local Government Programs
✓ Reduce greenhouse gases
✓ Increase renewable energy access and reduce community wide GHG emissions

Key accomplishments impacting this goal:

• The Permits & Inspections department implemented processes and procedures to achieve the goal of 100% of plan reviews performed electronically
• 54 solar systems were installed, 15 for County Operations including the 5 Mega Watt utility project at Woodfin Landfill, 39 projects supported community-wide goals with installations on County Schools, A-B Tech Facilities and Fire Stations
• Approximately 33 EV charging stations were installed with another 12 currently under construction at the College Street Parking Deck
• Ambulance Idle Mitigation has, in one-year, reduced idling and has prevented approximately 447,378 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions from being released into the atmosphere and saved over $68,000 in fuel costs</td></tr>
<tr><td>Preserve farmland and environmentally sensitive tracts

Tier 2 Goals and Measures based on Business Plans Targets:
✓ Preserve natural resources for future generations with 3,750.85 acres total over the five-year plan

Key accomplishments impacting this goal:
• Increased funding conservation easement projects through the Buncombe Farmland Preservation Program and local Land Trusts serving the county (this is also addressed in 2043 Comprehensive Plan)

2030 Strategic Plan Goals:
• Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect air quality
• Preserve agriculture heritage of Buncombe County and prioritize the conservation of natural resources</td></tr>
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Vibrant Economy	**Implement land use strategies that encourage affordable housing near transportation and jobs** **Tier 2 Goals and Measures based on Business Plans Targets:** ✓ Work with community and stakeholders to promote sustainable growth **Key accomplishments impacting this goal:** • Buncombe County's affordable housing impacts have primarily been accomplished through its Affordable Housing Services Program and the range of activities it supports including new construction, rehabilitation, home repair, rental assistance and downpayment loans. Some key milestones are: o 161 affordable rental units built o 60 affordable rental units currently under construction o 485 emergency home repairs completed o 67 households purchased a home with downpayment assistance o 861 households received tenant-based rental assistance o 85 Permanent supportive housing units created o 40 deeply affordable units under construction to house people experiencing homelessness o 696 affordable rental apartments have been funded ✓ American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) o 125 deeply affordable units under construction to house people experiencing homelessness o 29 emergency repairs completed
	Increase median household income to NC benchmark **Tier 2 Goals and Measures based on Business Plans Targets:** ✓ Increase average wage for Buncombe County incentivized projects by 31% to $19.66/hr in FY 2025 ✓ Increase median household income for STEP graduates **Key accomplishments impacting this goal:** • Engaged with local businesses to create increased wage opportunities for participants in the Skills, Training, Education Program which is a collaboration with A-B Tech that connects food and nutrition services recipients with the opportunity to take continuing education courses • Engaged with community partners (Inclusive Hiring Partners, Accelerate Buncombe, Guided Compass, INspire Recovery) to increase workforce development programs – Accelerate Buncombe served 110 community members seeking job training • Established an affordable parking program, which offers a flat $40 per month parking pass to downtown workers who make 80% of AMI or less

Increase total employment in regions targeted industries

Tier 2 Goals and Measures based on Business Plans Targets:

- ✓ Increase small business and "startup" jobs
- ✓ Increase total employment in targeted advanced manufacturing jobs
- ✓ Increase total employment in targeted Professional Office and Information Technology jobs

Key accomplishments impacting this goal:

- Major investments by Pratt & Whitney, System Logistics Corporation, and BorgWarner to increase manufacturing jobs - $715,000,000 with continuing ongoing investments.
- Smaller, locally based businesses (Poppy & East Fork Pottery) also had sizeable expansions
- During COVID the County created the OneBuncombe Fund to provide financial assistance to small businesses
- Partnered with the State and internet providers to expand broadband services to over 2,000 households
- Advocated for development and expansion of critical infrastructure that led to development of a new bridge in Barnardsville that was impacted by flooding and the opening of the Enka Heritage Bridge and access roads
- Increased engagement with the Mountain Community Capital Fund (MCCF) which has supported 77 small businesses and the creation of more than 270 jobs

2030 Strategic Plan Goals:

Economic Development

- Increase opportunities and support the local workforce
- Bolster economic and business opportunities by increasing total employment in the professional and Information Technology advanced manufacturing industries
- Increase the number of small businesses in the county
- Increase high speed internet to residence

Growth and Development

- Encourage diversity of housing as a foundation for affordable, healthy, and thriving communities, particularly for the most vulnerable residents
- Maximize the use of our land, guiding development to targeted growth areas that lead to resilient communities

Resident Well-Being	**Increase access to public transportation** **Tier 2 Goals and Measures based on Business Plans Targets:** • Grow ridership through Mountain Mobility o Mountain Mobility saw significant year-over-year growth in ridership beginning in FY 2022 and continuing until October 2024 when the impacts of Tropical Storm Helene deeply impacted this measure. **Key accomplishments impacting this goal:** • Increased ridership in Mountain Mobility's deviated fixed route, the Trailblazer, from 29,393 in 2020 to 32,936 in 2024 • In FY 2024 Mountain Mobility's deviated fixed route and demand response services operated at levels either surpassing or within 10% of pre-pandemic ridership levels
	Expand and maintain cultural and recreational assets **Tier 2 Goals and Measures based on Business Plans Targets:** ✓ Maintain high quality parks that are welcoming and provide amenities ✓ Improve recreation outcomes for residents in underserved or underrepresented communities through targeted programs • Increase the number of miles of greenways o Greenways were affected by Tropical Storm Helene, in some cases damaged or flooded completely. **Key accomplishments impacting this goal:** • Developed and executed new programs and events: Winter Warm up and Spring Festival; Fishing Club and 55+ Club • Expanded Creating Outdoor Recreation Economies (CORE) Programming and increased participants by more than 40% • Added a second Special Olympics Spring Games at AC Reynolds High School • Awarded over $12 million in grants from the Tourism Development Authority (TDA) for Enka Recreation Destination and Woodfin Greenway and Blueway • Silverline Park Completed • Libraries New programing doubled and there was an 300% increase in attendance
	Eliminate deaths as a result of substance abuse **Tier 2 Goals and Measures based on Business Plans Targets:** ✓ Increase access to behavioral health services ✓ Decrease the number of emergency department visits due to overdose ✓ Decrease the number of children who enter custody with the reason of "Parental Substance Use" identified. • Decrease the number of substance abuse overdose deaths o Trend is declining – 30% YoY decrease – but did not reach the set target **Key accomplishments impacting this goal:** • There was a reduction in the per capita rate of deaths because of opioid overdose from 55.2 in 2022 to 42.4 in 2024

- Developed a comprehensive strategic plan for the use of Opioid Settlement Funds with over 1,000 community surveys
- Leveraged Opioid Settlement Funds to expand Emergency Services Community Paramedicine Post Overdose Response Team that helps those who have experienced an overdose or at risk of an overdose
- The Hope and Healing Campaign provided additional outreach and messaging
- The percentage of children who entered custody with the reason of "Parental Substance Use" declined from 40% in 2021 to 33% in 2025
- Sobriety and recovery teams were established by the Social Work department

Reduce jail population and enhance public safety

Tier 2 Goals and Measures based on Business Plans Targets:

- ✓ Increase the percentage of processes recalled
- ✓ Increase alternative pathways to move through the justice system
- Maintain staffing levels required to provide Emergency Services
- Increase community safety and accountability for those who do harm
  - Trends for both goals were heading in positive direction but did not meet targets

Key accomplishments impacting this goal:

- Developed a community safety and violence prevention plan
- Secured $2.19M in grant funds and implemented a community safety and violence prevention initiative
- Funded the creation and implementation of a court reminder application
- Implemented and maintained a Jail Review Team to support efficient case processing.
- Redefined eligibility criteria for Pretrial Support Services Program to increase public safety.
- In coordination with the District Attorney's Office, expanded eligibility criteria for the Adult Misdemeanor Diversion Program, increasing enrollments by 28%
- Established and/or expanded Felony Drug Diversion, Adult Misdemeanor Diversion, Justice Resource Center (JRC) Case Management, Driver's License Restoration/Expunction Assistance programs within the Justice Resource Center
- Established a Court Navigator position in the Courthouse
- Aspire Court recognized as a national model Academy Court by the National Center for Driving While Impaired (DWI) Courts
- Completed an Emergency Management Services study to develop recommendations to respond to increased service demand and improve ambulance response times across the county
- Increased the number of ambulances from 11 in FY 2022 to 14 in FY 2025

2030 Strategic Plan Goals:

Community Health

- Increase coordination and resilience of community health services to create a healthier and safer community
- Improve outcomes in physical, mental, and behavioral health and to increase social connectedness

	Public Safety ▪ 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 ▪ 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 & Capable	**Increase kindergarten readiness** **Tier 2 Goals and Measures based on Business Plans Targets:** ✓ Enhance early childhood educator's ability to provide high quality early childhood education through Preschool Outreach Program (POP) • Increase the percentage of incoming kindergarten students who score proficient on the kindergarten entry assessment o Trend was stable, but targets were not met due to external factors including COVID, TS Fred and TS Helene **Key accomplishments impacting this goal:** • The Early Childhood Education Committee facilitated the launch of a new program, Building Capacity in Buncombe County to Expand NC Pre-K Availability and Accessibility, which successfully expanded access and improved teacher retention by fully funding NC Pre-K slots, supporting educator advancement, and removing barriers for families, resulting in higher enrollment and more equitable opportunities for young children • As of FY 2025, the Preschool Outreach Program (POP) was serving 52 childcare centers (up from 45 in 2020) and 167 classrooms (up from 124 in 2020) each month • From fiscal year 2020 through 2025 POP staff served 14,704 children and 5,348 adults by delivering 132,010 early literacy items (books, puppets, curriculum materials) to childcare centers and presenting 1,137 story times
	Improve college and career readiness **Tier 2 Goals and Measures based on Business Plans Targets:** ✓ Reduce youth involvement in justice system ✓ Strengthen education partnerships • Increase number of high school students participating in the electoral process o Goal target was aggressive and due to external factors including COVID, TS Fred and TS Helene, poll participation was low **Key accomplishments impacting this goal:** • Awarded specific education support contracts during this strategic plan included Career Academy and Youth Leadership Academy to enhance career and college access. • The NC State Board of Election's Student Assistant program was actively promoted by the County which provided students with the opportunity to directly participate in the elections process and thus giving them familiarity with their right to vote • Coordinated efforts across schools in the County by the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council, the Community-based Public Health response to Violence, the School-Justice Partnership,

	and the N.C. Division of Juvenile Justice led to a 43% decrease in juvenile complaints in 2025
	Protect Older Residents' Ability to Age in Place **Tier 2 Goals and Measures based on Business Plans Targets:** ✓ Improve the quality of life for older residents as reflected though AARP's Livability Index Score **Key accomplishments impacting this goal:** • Buncombe County Government hosted the Inaugural Age-Friendly Summit Conference in May 2024 with the theme of the conference being "The Future of Aging", 78% of attendees rated the quality of presentations as excellent • The Housing Options for Aging in Place (HOAP) workgroup, part of Age-Friendly Buncombe County completed the first revision of the Aging in Place Planning Guide - Aging in Place Planning Guide.pdf • Between FY 2022 and FY 2025, over 3,495 older adults and unpaid caregivers received services from Buncombe County Supplemental Aging Funding (BCSAF) • The County's Special Assistance In-home program increased and is currently serving 108 individuals • Buncombe County also currently serves 32 residents through our In-home aide program with a waitlist of over 100 that continues to grow
	Increase 3rd grade literacy rates especially among underperforming students **Tier 2 Goals and Measures based on Business Plans Targets:** ✓ Strengthen education partnerships to increase student performance and disparities **Key accomplishments impacting this goal:** • Buncombe County joined the United for Youth Network • The percentage of students proficient at N.C. end of grade tests for 3rd grade reading and math rose from 51.1% in FY 2022 to 58.6% in FY 2025 **2030 Strategic Plan Goals:** ▪ Enhance early and adult learning. ▪ Improve outcomes in education