STAFF REPORT

To: Planning Board of Adjustment

Agenda Title: Helene Recovery Plan

Staff Contact: Ricky Hurley

Meeting Date: December 2, 2025

Summary:

The proposed recovery plan, Buncombe County Helene Recovery Plan, is presented for adoption in accordance with North Carolina General Statute 160D-501 Plans.

Background:

The Helene Recovery Plan consists of eight chapters addressing the storm and its immediate impacts, the disaster response, the effects on land and people, and the community concerns that shaped the recovery planning process. Buncombe County invited all six municipalities, along with all residents, to participate in developing the plan. While staff concentrated on the Woodfin-specific section, the public, including Woodfin residents, was welcome to comment on any portion of the plan during two public input periods. The Town also offered an additional opportunity for feedback through its website.

Staff Analysis:

North Carolina General Statute 160D-501(a1) states:

> A comprehensive plan sets forth goals, policies, and programs intended to guide the present and future physical, social, and economic development of the jurisdiction. A land-use plan uses text and maps to designate the future use or reuse of land. A comprehensive or land-use plan is intended to guide coordinated, efficient, and orderly development within the planning and development regulation jurisdiction based on an analysis of present and future needs.
>
> Planning analysis may address inventories of existing conditions and assess future trends regarding demographics and economic, environmental, and cultural factors. The planning process shall include opportunities for citizen engagement in plan preparation and adoption.
>
> A local government may prepare and adopt other plans as deemed appropriate. This may include, but is not limited to, small area plans, neighborhood plans, hazard mitigation plans, transportation plans, housing plans, and recreation and open space plans.

The statute further describes common elements that should be included in a plan, summarized as:

1) Issues and opportunities
2) The pattern of desired growth and development
3) Employment, economic, and community development opportunities
4) Public services and infrastructure needed to support development
5) A range of housing types and affordability to accommodate a variety of needs and income levels
6) Recreation and open spaces
7) Mitigation of natural hazards (floods, landslides, wildfires, etc.)
8) Protection of the environment and natural resources
9) Protection of significant architectural, scenic, cultural, and historic resources
10) Analysis and evaluation of implementation measures

The plan includes an introduction and an appendix that summarizes all projects needed to support the town's recovery and its progress toward long-term resiliency. Chapter Seven—Projects—is the largest chapter, detailing 114 projects across the seven local governments of Buncombe County. The Town of Woodfin identified 17 projects, many of which align with the *Woodfin Together* comprehensive plan. The *Helene Recovery Plan* satisfies all statutory requirements and will serve as an important guide for future decisions and actions in Woodfin as the community continues to recover from Tropical Storm Helene. The Buncombe County Commissioners adopted the plan at their November 18, 2025, meeting.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommend approval of the **Helene Recovery Plan** as presented.

Suggested Motion:

I move to approve the proposed plan, known as **Helene Recovery Plan**, subject to the following conditions:

1) (*Board to add additional content here, if applicable.)*
2) ….

and find that it is reasonable, is in the public interest, is consistent with town adopted goals and plans, and meets development and other needs of the community in that the request:

1. Use the Future Land Use Map to guide development decisions and protect existing affordable housing through regulatory or other tools (1.1.1, 1.2.2).
2. Encourage green and healthy working spaces that use renewable energy, walkable design, and green infrastructure (3.3.2).
3. Incorporate climate resilience and green building practices into town facilities and operations and coordinate with neighboring jurisdictions on decisions of local significance for more effective and efficient services (4.1.4, 4.3.1).
4. Make government decision-making accessible and transparent to all residents while updating development standards to minimize risk from new development (4.4.3, 5.4.2).
5. Support collaboration with Asheville and Buncombe County on climate action and resiliency planning (5.3.4).

6. Protect floodplains, wetlands, wildlife habitat, and other environmentally valuable and sensitive areas by updating development standards to minimize the risk from new development and educating the public on risks and actions needed to protect themselves (5.1.1, 5.4.1, 5.4.2).

Attachments:

1) Helene Recovery Plan
2) Woodfin subsection
3) Proposed Ordinance
4) Draft PBOA Recommendation

Link to full Helene Recover Plan on Buncombe County's webpage

TOWN OF WOODFIN

VISION

Woodfin Together Community Vision is to have a great government, a livable and sustainable town that offers transportation options and opportunities to thrive



9.2
SQ MILES

7,936
POPULATION

43.9
MEDIAN AGE

$62,759
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

$326,600
MEDIAN HOME PRICE

$1,408
MEDIAN RENT

GOVERNMENT PROFILE

GOVERNMENT	ANNUAL BUDGET	EMPLOYEES
Town Council	$8,214,932	39

KEY SERVICES

- Police
- Parks & Recreation
- Planning & Zoning
- Streets
- Solid Waste
- Environmental Services

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Provide excellent town services · Promote affordable living, equity & inclusion · Invest in transportation and infrastructure · Build community through excellent police department services · Foster Woodfin's sense of place through quality government facilities · Build community connections

Affordable Housing

Identify housing needs and implement policy and program changes to create more affordable housing opportunities in Woodfin.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ Medium	Long-term

Alignment with Woodfin Comprehensive Plan:

- **Goal 1.1:** Woodfin's built environment will be sustainable and equitable.
- **Goal 1.2:** Woodfin will seek to remain an affordable place to live and work.
- **Goal 5.4:** Woodfin is climate resilient and mitigates risk to landslides, flooding, and wildfires.

Purpose

The Town of Woodfin, like many communities in Buncombe County, faces a critical shortage of affordable and resilient housing. This shortage, exacerbated by regional growth and increasing environmental risks such as flooding, leaves low- and moderate-income residents vulnerable to displacement, health risks, and economic instability. To address these gaps and foster equitable, resilient, and sustainable community growth, this project aims to expand and enhance affordable housing options in Woodfin by promoting resilient building practices, incentivizing affordable housing development, and integrating resilience measures into new and existing housing projects. This initiative is essential for strengthening the town's social fabric, resilience, and economic vitality, ensuring long-term stability and equitable recovery for all residents.

In June 2025, the median listing home price in Woodfin was $499,900, according to Redfin.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

- Increase access to safe, affordable, and resilient housing for low- and moderate-income residents.
- Reduce displacement risk during environmental hazards such as flooding.
- Strengthen community resilience by fostering diverse, inclusive neighborhoods capable of long-term recovery.
- Enhance neighborhood stability, economic vitality, and social cohesion.
- Improve overall community health and safety outcomes through resilient housing infrastructure.

Activities & Deliverables

- Conduct a housing needs assessment to identify priority areas and gaps.
- Alignment rezoning: Update zoning map to better align with the towns goals and visions identified in the comprehensive plan.
- Partner with developers, nonprofits, and financial institutions to support affordable housing projects.
- Identify and acquire land or existing structures suitable for resilient affordable housing.
- Design resilient housing prototypes incorporating flood-resistant and energy-efficient features.
- Facilitate community engagement and outreach to ensure equitable participation.
- Secure funding through grants, public-private partnerships, and other sources.
- Monitor and evaluate project progress and impacts periodically.



Implementation Considerations

- Secure adequate funding and grants for land acquisition and construction.
- Navigating local zoning and regulatory barriers to affordable and resilient housing development.
- Gaining community support and addressing concerns related to density, land use, and neighborhood change.
- Identifying suitable sites that balance affordability, resilience, and community impact.
- Building effective partnerships across public, private, and nonprofit sectors.
- Ensuring equitable participation of vulnerable populations in planning and decision-making.

Project Sponsor:
Town of Woodfin

Project Lead:
City of Woodfin Planning Department

Partners:

- Buncombe County Housing Authority
- N.C. Housing Finance Agency
- Nonprofit Housing Organizations (e.g., Mountain Housing Opportunities)
- Local Banks and Financial Institutions
- Buncombe County Planning and Development Services
- Community Organizations and Resident Advocacy Groups
- Federal Agencies Offering Grants or Technical Assistance (e.g., HUD, USDA)

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Disaster Partnership Planning

Develop a network of formalized partnerships, which enable Woodfin's coordinated response to future community-wide emergencies.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	Medium	Medium

Purpose

This initiative aims to strengthen the resilience of the Woodfin community by establishing formal pre-disaster partnerships with faith-based organizations, community groups, and vulnerable populations. By engaging these entities, the town seeks to develop emergency response strategies and improve outreach, ensuring that the needs of all residents—especially those at higher risk—are proactively addressed. Recognizing that community partnerships significantly improve emergency response outcomes, formalizing relationships with these organizations ensures that pre-disaster planning is inclusive and actionable, ultimately reducing risks and enhancing recovery capacity for vulnerable populations.

Inherent trust in faith-based and community organizations allows them to reach individuals and communities that might be overlooked or hesitant to engage with traditional emergency services, especially vulnerable groups like low-income individuals, the elderly, and immigrant populations.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

- Strengthened relationships between the town and community organizations.
- Improved communication channels with vulnerable populations,
- Development of tailored, culturally sensitive emergency plans that meet community-specific needs.
- Increased community engagement and ownership of disaster preparedness activities.
- More coordinated, effective response and recovery efforts.
- Long-term resilience built through ongoing partnerships, training, and shared resources.

Activities & Deliverables

Conduct meetings with faith-based institutions, community groups, and vulnerable population

1. Develop a community partnership framework and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) to formalize collaborations.
2. Identify and map vulnerable populations and their specific needs (e.g., language barriers, mobility issues).
3. Design and implement joint training sessions, drills, and preparedness workshops.
4. Create communication and outreach materials tailored to community needs.
5. Establish a community liaison team to maintain regular contact and coordinate efforts.
6. Document best practices, protocols, and contact lists for the town's emergency management plan.
7. Monitor and evaluate partnership effectiveness.

Implementation Considerations

- Building and maintaining trust among diverse community organizations and residents.
- Ensuring ongoing funding and resources for training and engagement activities.
- Overcoming language, cultural, or mobility barriers to participation.
- Establishing clear roles, responsibilities, and communication channels.
- Adapting plans based on feedback and changing community needs.
- Ensuring inclusivity and equitable participation across all demographics.

Alignment with Woodfin Comprehensive Plan:

- **Goal 4.1:** Woodfin residents receive high-quality public servuces and facilities that promote the health, safety, and well-being of all community members.
- **Goal 4.3:** Woodfin will be an active participant in planning and policymaking efforts that impact the town across the region.
- **Goal 4.4:** Woodfin is a place where residents have opportunities to engage on community issues
- **Goal 5.4:** Woodfin is climate resilient and mitigates risk to landslides, flooding, and wildfires.



Project Sponsor:
Town of Woodfin

Project Lead:
City of Woodfin Administrative Staff/ Police Department

Partners:

- Buncombe County Emergency Management
- Local Faith-Based Organizations and Community Groups
- Nonprofits Serving Vulnerable Populations
- Public Health Agencies
- Regional Planning Organizations
- Local Senior Centers and Social Service Providers

Town of Woodfin

Economic Infrastructure Support

Improve public utilities and infrastructure systems to support commercial growth and development.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	Medium	Medium

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to rebuild and enhance infrastructure that directly supports small businesses, which are vital drivers of local economic vitality. In the wake of Tropical Storm Helene, resilient infrastructure is necessary to ensure small businesses can recover, operate efficiently, and contribute to long-term community stability. Strengthening this infrastructure will help foster economic resilience by reducing vulnerability, promoting business continuity, and attracting new investments, ultimately supporting sustainable recovery and growth.



Zillicoah Beer Co. Oct. 23, 2024 in Woodfin Josh Bell/Asheville Citizen Times

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

- Improved access to utilities, transportation, and commercial facilities for small businesses
- Increased economic activity and job creation in the community
- Greater resilience of small businesses to future disruptions
- Enhanced community vibrancy and local economic diversification
- Strengthened confidence among small business owners and investors

Activities & Deliverables

- Conducting assessments of existing infrastructure needs for small business support.
- Designing infrastructure upgrades (utilities, roads, signage, commercial spaces).
- Securing permits and funding for construction projects.
- Implementing infrastructure improvements in targeted commercial areas.
- Engaging small business stakeholders for input and support.
- Developing a phased implementation plan and timeline.
- Monitoring and evaluating the impact of infrastructure enhancements.

Implementation Considerations

- Securing adequate funding and permits.
- Coordinating construction activities to minimize disruption.
- Ensuring infrastructure improvements align with long-term community and economic goals.
- Managing stakeholder expectations and engagement.
- Addressing potential environmental or logistical constraints during construction.

Alignment with Woodfin Comprehensive Plan:

- **Goal 1.1:** Woodfin's built environment will be sustainable and equitable.
- **Goal 1.2:** Woodfin will seek to remain an affordable place to live and work.
- **Goal 3.1:** Jobs are accessible locally and residents have opportunities to live and work in Woodfin.
- **Goal 3.2:** A thriving, modern local economy that offers a variety of job opportunities.
- **Goal 3.3:** An equitable and inclusive local economy for all residents.
- **Goal 4.1:** Woodfin residents receive high quality public services and facilities that promote the health, safety and wellbeing of all community members.
- **Goal 5.3:** Woodfin is an energy efficient city with green transportation and energy options.

Buncombe County, where Woodfin is located, suffered the largest numerical decline in jobs, losing almost 13,000 jobs, a 9.3% decrease.

Project Sponsor:
Town of Woodfin

Project Lead:
Town of Woodfin Administrative Staff

Partners:

- Local Business Associations and Chambers of Commerce
- Utility Providers (water, sewer, electricity)
- Land Use and Planning Departments
- Regional Economic Development Agencies
- Community Organizations and Small Business Support Groups

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Emergency Communications Plan

Implement improved community-wide emergency alerts and communications for more inclusive public safety and enhanced response.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ Medium	Short-term

Alignment with Woodfin Comprehensive Plan:

- **Goal 4.1:** Woodfin residents receive high-quality public servuces and facilities that promote the health, safety, and well-being of all community members.
- **Goal 4.3:** Woodfin will be an active participant in planning and policymaking efforts that impact the town across the region.

Purpose

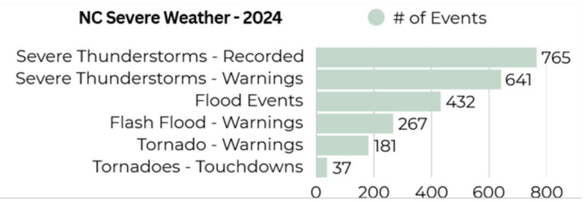
The project will create a comprehensive emergency communications plan for the Town of Woodfin, ensuring effective and accessible communication during disasters such as floods and storms. This plan will utilize various communication channels—including emergency text messaging, internet platforms, cellular connectivity, and low-tech options—to deliver timely alerts and information to residents and responders. The need for this project stems from past communication failures that hindered evacuation and recovery efforts in flood-prone areas. As climate change increases disaster frequency and severity, establishing a robust communication infrastructure is essential for public safety and long-term community recovery. Incorporating low-tech options will also promote inclusivity, ensuring all residents have access to vital information.

Modern systems with geolocation-based messaging can deliver relevant information to only the affected areas, preventing unnecessary alerts and potential panic in unaffected regions

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

- Reliable, timely distribution of emergency alerts and information to all community members.
- Increased community awareness and preparedness for hazards.
- Enhanced coordination among emergency responders, local government, and residents.
- Improved evacuation and response times, reducing injury and property loss.
- Greater inclusivity by providing multiple communication channels, including low-tech options.
- Strengthened community resilience and long-term recovery capacity.

5 of North Carolinas top six warmest years have occurred since 2016



Activities & Deliverables

- Assess current communication systems and identify gaps.
- Select and deploy a community-wide emergency text messaging platform.
- Explore backup options for internet and cellular connectivity.
- Develop low-tech communication methods, such as notice boards, radios, and door-to-door alerts.
- Create and distribute emergency preparedness guidelines for diverse audiences.
- Conduct outreach and training to promote system awareness and usage.
- Train staff, volunteers, and leaders on emergency communication protocols.
- Establish procedures for system maintenance, testing, and updates.

Implementation Considerations

- Secure funding for technology acquisitions and infrastructure upgrades.
- Ensure equitable access for residents with limited connectivity or mobility barriers.
- Coordinate with regional infrastructure providers for backup systems.
- Conduct regular testing, drills, and community education to ensure system effectiveness and awareness.
- Overcome potential public skepticism or resistance to new communication tools.

Project Sponsor:
Town of Woodfin

Project Lead:
City of Woodfin Administrative Staff/Police Department

Partners:

- Buncombe County Emergency Management
- Local Internet and Cellular Service Providers
- Regional Emergency Response Organizations
- Community Organizations and Neighborhood Associations
- N.C. Office of Emergency Management
- Nonprofits focused on Disaster Preparedness and Community Resilience

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Green Infrastructure

Implement green infrastructure best practices to promote and enhance the environmental quality and stewardship of Woodfin.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	Medium	Medium

Purpose

The Town of Woodfin is pursuing the Green Infrastructure Initiative to enhance environmental resilience and mitigate the impacts of urbanization and climate change on local ecosystems. Green infrastructure involves using natural systems and processes to manage stormwater, improve air quality, and enhance community aesthetics.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

- Green infrastructure practices will reduce surface runoff and improve water quality by filtering pollutants through natural systems.
- The initiative will support the establishment of habitats for urban wildlife, promoting biodiversity within the community.
- Expanding green spaces will enhance community aesthetics, provide recreational opportunities, and improve residents' quality of life.
- Implementation of green roofs, tree canopies, and permeable surfaces will help mitigate the urban heat island effect, leading to cooler temperatures in the area.
- This initiative will foster community involvement in environmental stewardship and promote awareness of sustainable practices.

Access to green infrastructure is linked to improved physical and mental health, lower asthma rates, reduced stress, and stronger social connections within communities, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Activities & Deliverables

- Conduct a comprehensive assessment of existing green infrastructure and identify opportunities for new installations.
- Create a strategic plan that outlines specific green infrastructure projects, including rain gardens, green roofs, permeable pavement, and urban tree planting.
- Execute projects based on the developed plan, focusing on both public spaces and incentivizing private property owners to adopt green infrastructure practices.
- Organize workshops and educational programs to engage residents, inform them about the benefits of green infrastructure.
- Establish a monitoring program to evaluate the effectiveness of implemented projects and adapt strategies as needed.

Implementation Considerations

- Ensuring community buy-in and regarding the implementation of green infrastructure projects is crucial for success.
- Identifying and securing funding sources for project implementation may require significant effort.
- Securing necessary permits and approvals for green infrastructure installations could pose challenges.
- Establishing a sustainable maintenance plan to ensure the effectiveness and longevity of green infrastructure projects over time.

Alignment with Woodfin Comprehensive Plan:

- **Goal 3.3:** An equitable and inclusive local economy for all residents
- **Goal 4.1:** Woodfin residents receive high quality public services and facilities that promote the health, safety, and well-being of all community members.
- **Goal 4.2:** Woodfin residents have access to excellent parks, recreation, and community facilities.
- **Goal 5.2:** A clean watershed that enhances sustainability and resiliency.
- **Goal 5.3:** Woodfin is an energy efficient city with green transportation and energy options.





Project Sponsor:
Town of Woodfin

Project Lead:
Town of Woodfin Administrative Staff/ Planning Department

Partners:
- Local Environmental Agencies (e.g., state or federal conservation organizations)
- Non-Profits focused on Environmental education and advocacy
- Local universities or research institutions for technical support and collaboration
- Community Development Organizations

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Green Space Development

Expand public green space through acquisition and development of intentionally designed habitats and natural landscapes.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ Medium	Medium

Purpose

The Town of Woodfin aims to expand and enhance green spaces to promote environmental resilience, improve air and water quality, and provide community recreational areas. With increasing urban development and climate-related challenges such as flooding and heat islands, establishing more green spaces is crucial for long-term ecological stability and community well-being. This initiative addresses the need to buffer against climate impacts, support biodiversity, and improve the quality of life for residents, ensuring a resilient and sustainable town future.

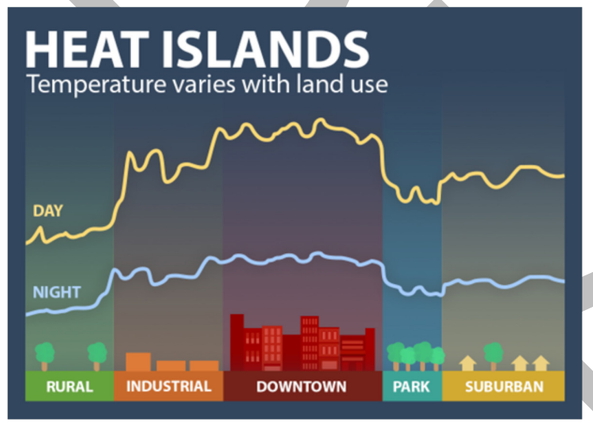
Benefits & Intended Outcomes

- Increased tree canopy and green areas that mitigate urban heat island effects.
- Improved stormwater management and reduced flooding through natural landscaping.
- Enhanced habitat for local wildlife and pollinators.
- Greater community access to recreational and recreational spaces, promoting health and social cohesion.
- Increased community awareness and engagement around environmental resilience.

Pollinator gardens not only attract beautiful butterflies and bees, but they also promote biodiversity, improve air and water quality, and can even help cool urban areas and manage stormwater runoff.

Activities & Deliverables

- Site assessment and selection of priority areas for green space expansion.
- Design and planning of new green spaces, including landscaping, planting, and infrastructure.
- Acquisition or repurposing of land parcels for green space development.
- Community engagement and outreach to incorporate local input.
- Construction and planting of trees, gardens, and natural habitat features.
- Monitoring and maintenance plans to ensure sustainability.
- Educational signage and programs to promote stewardship.



Alignment with Woodfin Comprehensive Plan:

- **Goal 2.1:** Recognize and support greenways as a viable and key transportation connector for the community.
- **Goal 2.2:** Woodfin's amenities are accessible on foot and by bicylce.
- **Goal 4.1:** Woodfin residents receive high quality public services and facilities that promote the health, safety, and well-being of all community members.
- **Goal 4.2:** Woodfin residents have access to excellent parks, recreation, and community facilities.
- **Goal 5.2:** A clean watershed that enhances sustainability and resiliency.

Implementation Considerations

- Securing funding and land acquisition.
- Navigating permitting and environmental review processes.
- Ensuring community buy-in and addressing potential opposition.
- Developing long-term maintenance and funding strategies.
- Coordinating with other infrastructure projects to maximize benefits.

Project Sponsor:
Town of Woodfin

Project Lead:
Town of Woodfin Administrative Staff/ Planning Department

Partners:
- Buncombe County Land Conservation Advisory Board
- Local RC&Ds
- Local Schools and Community Groups
- Nonprofit Environmental Organizations
- Utility Providers (stormwater and water management)
- State Environmental Agencies

Multi-modal Connectivity

Enhance the town's transportation network with pedestrian and vehicular improvements to create better connectivity and provide more options to the public.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ Medium	Long-term

Purpose

The Town of Woodfin is pursuing this project to enhance physical connectivity within the community, focusing on identifying and improving vehicular and multi-modal connections. Strengthening transportation links is essential for resilient long-term recovery, as it improves access, evacuation routes, and mobility options, especially during emergencies. Aligning land use policies with public safety needs ensures that infrastructure supports community safety, economic vitality, and equitable access, fostering a more resilient and connected community.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

- Improved access and mobility for residents, emergency services, and commerce.
- Enhanced safety during daily operations and emergencies.
- Increased availability of multi-modal transportation options (walking, biking, transit).
- Greater community cohesion and economic resilience through better connectivity.
- Reduced transportation-related vulnerabilities during disasters.

The ability to switch between modes of transportation during peak and off-peak periods and in response to unexpected disruptions like delays or bad weather offers greater flexibility for both riders and communities, at large.

Activities & Deliverables

- Identification of critical vehicular and multi-modal connections that need improvement.
- Conducting planning, feasibility, and design studies for prioritized connections.
- Securing funding sources for planning, design, and construction phases.
- Developing and updating Urban Design Ordinances (UDO) to align with public safety and connectivity goals.
- Engaging stakeholders, including community members and emergency services.
- Implementing prioritized infrastructure improvements.
- Monitoring and evaluating connectivity improvements and safety outcomes.

Implementation Considerations

- Securing funding and permits for construction and design work.
- Addressing potential opposition or concerns from stakeholders.
- Ensuring alignment with land use and safety policies.
- Managing construction impacts on existing traffic and community activities.
- Coordinating with regional and state transportation agencies for broader connectivity goals.

Alignment with Woodfin Comprehensive Plan:

- **Goal 2.1:** Woodfin will seek to remain an affordable place to live and work.
- **Goal 2.2:** Woodfin's amenities are accesible on foot and by bicycle.
- **Goal 2.3:** A reliable bus system that people can use to commute and make trips to Asheville and Weaverville.
- **Goal 4.1:** Woodfin residents receive high quality public services and facilities that promote the health, safety, and well-being of all community members.
- **Goal 5.3:** Woodfin is an energy efficient city with green transportation and energy options.



Project Sponsor:
Town of Woodfin

Project Lead:
Town of Woodfin Planning Department

Partners:

- Emergency Services and Public Safety Agencies
- Land Use and Planning Departments
- Regional Transit Authorities
- Community Organizations and Advocacy Groups
- Local Developers and Landowners

Public-Private Partnerships

Develop framework for and negotiate public-private partnerships to leverage community investments for economic development.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ Low	Short

Alignment with Woodfin Comprehensive Plan:

- **Goal 4.3:** Woodfin will be an active participant in planning and policymaking efforts that impact the town across the region.
- **Goal 4.4:** Woodfin is a place where residents have opportunities to engage on community issues.

Purpose

To foster collaboration between public agencies and private sector entities to stimulate economic growth, innovation, and community development. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) are essential for leveraging additional resources, expertise, and investment to address community needs efficiently. This approach is vital for resilient long-term recovery, as it encourages shared responsibility, mobilizes private capital, and promotes sustainable development that can adapt to future challenges.



Public-private partnerships combine the financial resources of governments, businesses, and nonprofits, reducing the burden on public budgets alone. This allows for larger and more impactful projects to be undertaken and provides a wider safety net for recovery efforts.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

- Increased investment in community infrastructure, services, and economic development projects.
- Enhanced capacity for innovation and resource sharing.
- Creation of new business opportunities and jobs.
- Strengthened relationships between government and private sector stakeholders.
- Improved community resilience through diversified economic activities and investments.

Activities & Deliverables

- Identifying potential private sector partners and opportunities for collaboration.
- Developing frameworks, agreements, and policies for effective PPPs.
- Conducting outreach and engagement with private sector stakeholders.
- Structuring and negotiating partnership agreements.
- Implementing pilot projects or programs to demonstrate partnership models.
- Monitoring and evaluating partnership outcomes and impacts.

Implementation Considerations

- Building trust and transparent communication between public and private stakeholders.
- Developing clear legal and contractual frameworks.
- Securing initial funding or incentives for partnership projects.
- Managing diverse stakeholder expectations and interests.
- Ensuring projects align with community goals and regulatory requirements.

Project Sponsor:
Town of Woodfin

Project Lead:
Town of Woodfin
Administrative Staff

Partners:

- Local Business Associations and Chambers of Commerce
- Private Companies and Developers
- Financial Institutions and Investors
- State and Regional Economic Development Agencies
- Community Organizations and Civic Groups

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Town of Woodfin

Resilience Hubs

Develop a system of locations for sheltering, resources, and information-sharing to create a more resilient community-wide emergency response to future disasters.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ Medium	Medium

Alignment with Woodfin Comprehensive Plan:

- **Goal 4.1:** Woodfin residents receive high-quality public servuces and facilities that promote the health, safety, and well-being of all community members.
- **Goal 4.3:** Woodfin will be an active participant in planning and policymaking efforts that impact the town across the region.
- **Goal 5.4:** Woodfin is climate resilient and mitigates risk to landslides, flooding, and wildfires.

Purpose

The Town of Woodfin aims to enhance resilience by creating strategically located resiliency hubs that serve as safe gathering spots, shelters, and resource centers during emergencies. Incorporating features like solar power, backup systems, and flood-resistant design into the new town hall building will ensure continuity during crises. Additional water wells and dedicated gathering spaces will improve flood response and community preparedness. Exploring community centers such as incubators or farmers' markets will also strengthen local economy and social cohesion. This initiative addresses key gaps in emergency response, infrastructure, and community bonds, helping residents better withstand and recover from future hazards.



"Each dollar spent on mitigation saves an average of $6 in post-disaster costs." FEMA

Resilience hubs are not meant to replace traditional emergency centers; rather, they form part of a larger ecosystem of resources and support, strengthening community preparedness and bridging gaps in emergency management.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

- Increased community safety through reliable, accessible emergency gathering and shelter points.
- Enhanced capacity for rapid response and evacuation during disasters.
- Improved resilience of critical infrastructure, including water supply and communication systems.
- Strengthened social cohesion and economic vitality via multifunctional community spaces.
- Greater preparedness and awareness among residents, reducing vulnerability, and potential displacement.
- Long-term community stability and recovery post-disaster.

Activities & Deliverables

- Incorporate flood-resistant and renewable features into the town hall rebuild.
- Identify sites for multiple wells to ensure emergency water access.
- Establish a community gathering/ relocation space with necessary amenities.
- Assess sites for potential community centers (incubator, farmers' market).
- Collaborate with engineers, floodplain managers, and stakeholders.
- Secure funding, permits, and approvals.
- Develop operational plans, signage, and outreach to inform residents.
- Conduct drills and community engagement to test and familiarize residents with the hubs.

Implementation Considerations

- Voluntary program for ingress/egress in areas identified on risk map.
- Secure funding and grants for infrastructure and sites.
- Identify accessible, flood-safe locations.
- Design resilient, functional hubs meeting community needs.
- Ensure equitable access for vulnerable populations.
- Coordinate construction with other projects.
- Conduct outreach to raise awareness and promote use.

Project Sponsor:
Town of Woodfin

Project Lead:
Woodfin Department of Public Works / Emergency Management Coordinator

Partners:

- Buncombe County Emergency Management Agency
- Local Water Utility Providers
- Regional Floodplain Management Agencies
- Community Organizations and Resident Groups
- Local Businesses (for community center options)
- State and Federal Funding Agencies (e.g., FEMA, HUD)

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Riverfront Park Restoration

Restore riverfront parks to revitalize recreational amenities and provide greater environmental resilience against future flooding.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	Medium	Medium

Alignment with Woodfin Comprehensive Plan:

- **Goal 4.1:** Woodfin residents receive high quality public services and facilities that promote the health, safety, and well-being of all community members.
- **Goal 4.2:** Woodfin residents have access to excellent parks, recreation, and community facilities.
- **Goal 5.2**: A clean watershed that enhances sustainability and resiliency.

Purpose

The Town of Woodfin is pursuing the Riverfront Park Restoration Initiative to enhance environmental resilience and improve community access to natural spaces. Riverfront parks play a crucial role in flood management, providing natural buffers against flooding while offering recreational opportunities for residents. This project aims to restore and revitalize these parks, ensuring they are equipped to withstand climate impacts, enhance biodiversity, and serve as vital community assets for recreation and education.

Silver-Line Park

Before Helene



After Helene



Construction for the Riverside Park expansion, which will double its size, was stalled due to Tropical Storm Helene in September 2024, but is now targeted for completion in December 2026.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

- Restored riverfront parks will provide natural flood control, reducing the impact of flooding on adjacent communities.
- Restoration efforts will improve habitats for local wildlife and promote biodiversity along the riverbanks.
- Revitalized parks will enhance recreational opportunities, fostering community engagement and well-being.
- The initiative will provide educational programs focused on environmental stewardship and the importance of river ecosystems.
- A revitalized riverfront park can become a focal point for community events and gatherings, enhancing local pride and identity.

Activities & Deliverables

- Conduct a comprehensive evaluation of current riverfront park conditions, including ecological health and infrastructure.
- Develop a detailed restoration plan that addresses habitat improvement, erosion control, and enhancement of recreational facilities.
- Execute restoration activities, including planting native vegetation, improving trails, and constructing natural features, such as rain gardens.
- Involve the community through volunteer days, educational workshops, and feedback sessions to ensure the project meets local needs.
- Establish a monitoring program to evaluate the success of restoration efforts and develop a long-term maintenance plan.

Implementation Considerations

- Securing necessary permits and approvals for restoration activities could pose challenges.
- Engaging the community and addressing any concerns regarding the project will be crucial for its success.
- Identifying and securing funding sources (grants, partnerships, etc.) for project implementation may require significant effort.
- Establishing a sustainable monitoring and maintenance plan to ensure the success of restoration efforts over time.

Project Sponsor:
Town of Woodfin

Project Lead:
Town of Woodfin Administrative Staff/Public Works

Partners:

- Local Environmental Agencies (e.g., state or federal conservation organizations)
- Watershed Associations
- Community Non-Profits focused on Environmental Education
- Local Schools or Universities for Educational Support

DRAFT

Riverfront Resilience Plan

Develop and implement a marketing campaign to promote the Woodfin Riverfront recreation, event space, and natural environment.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	Medium	Medium

Alignment with Woodfin Comprehensive Plan:

- **Goal 2.1:** Recognize and support greenways as a viable and key transportation connector for the community.
- **Goal 4.2:** Woodfin residents have access to excellent parks, recreation, and community facilities.
- **Goal 5.1:** A town with plentiful green spaces connected together and intewoven by green corridors.

Purpose

To strengthen Woodfin's economic resilience by boosting its outdoor recreation brand and developing a comprehensive plan for riverfront resilience. This initiative is vital for fostering sustainable economic growth, attracting visitors, and ensuring the riverfront area can withstand environmental challenges. It supports long-term recovery by creating a vibrant, resilient community hub that promotes tourism, local engagement, and ecological stability.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

- Increased tourism and outdoor recreation activity, leading to economic growth.
- A well-defined, actionable plan for riverfront resilience to mitigate flood risks and environmental impacts.
- Enhanced community engagement and pride in the riverfront area.
- Improved ecological health and sustainability of the riverfront ecosystem.
- A stronger, more resilient local economy that can adapt to environmental and economic changes.

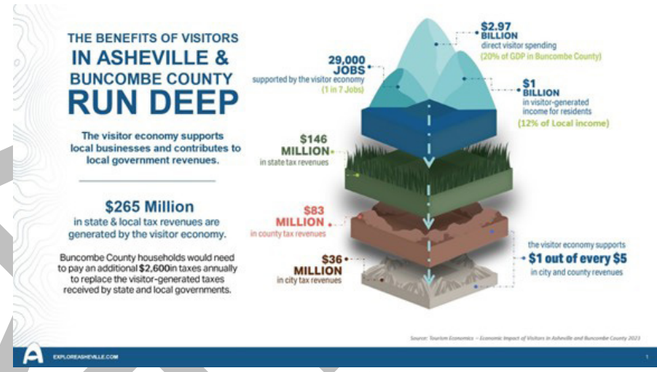
Woodfin's efforts align with the broader state initiative, the North Carolina Flood Resiliency Blueprint, which seeks to reduce the impact, disruption, and costs of future floods across the state, according to NC.gov

Activities & Deliverables

- Developing a branding and marketing strategy for Woodfin's outdoor recreation assets.
- Conducting assessments of the riverfront's resilience and environmental conditions.
- Designing a comprehensive riverfront resilience plan with specific mitigation strategies.
- Stakeholder engagement and community outreach.
- Implementation of initial infrastructure or ecological improvements as identified in the plan.
- Monitoring and evaluation of economic and ecological outcomes.

Implementation Considerations

- Securing funding and permits for ecological and infrastructure projects.
- Building strong stakeholder and community support.
- Ensuring ecological restoration aligns with recreational and economic goals.
- Addressing potential conflicts with existing land use or development plans.
- Developing clear, actionable plans with measurable goals for resilience and economic growth.



Project Sponsor:
Town of Woodfin

Project Lead:
Town of Woodfin Administrative Staff/ Public Works

Partners:

- Local Environmental Agencies (e.g., watershed or conservation groups)
- State and Regional Tourism Organizations
- Landowners and Private Stakeholders along the Riverfront
- Utility Providers and Infrastructure Agencies
- Community Organizations and Residents

Town of Woodfin

Stream & Riverbank Restoration

Restore stream and riverbanks throughout the community while promoting public awareness of biodiversity and recreational opportunities for the town.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	Medium	Medium

Alignment with Woodfin Comprehensive Plan:

- **Goal 4.1:** Woodfin residents receive high quality public services and facilities that promote the health, safety, and well-being of all community members.
- **Goal 4.2:** Woodfin residents have access to excellent parks, recreation, and community facilities.
- **Goal 5.2:** A clean watershed that enhances sustainability and resiliency.

Purpose

The Town of Woodfin is pursuing the Stream and Riverbank Restoration Initiative to enhance environmental resilience and mitigate the risks associated with flooding, erosion, and habitat loss. Restoring streams and riverbanks is essential for improving water quality, preserving local ecosystems, and protecting surrounding communities from the adverse effects of natural disasters. This project will ensure that waterways are resilient to climate change impacts, contributing to the overall health and sustainability of the town's natural resources.



Residents of Woodfin can attend workshops offered by RiverLink and NC State Cooperative Extension-Buncombe County to learn about streambank repair methods and landowners with eroded streambanks can inquire about RiverLink's Adopt-A-Stream Program.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

- Water quality improved through the stabilization of stream and riverbanks, reducing sedimentation, and pollution runoff.
- Enhanced habitats for local wildlife and aquatic species, promoting biodiversity in the region.
- Reduced flooding risks by restoring natural water flow and absorption patterns in riparian areas.
- Increased community access to natural areas for recreation and education, fostering a connection to the environment.
- Strengthened community resilience against climate-related impacts and natural disasters.

Activities & Deliverables

- Conduct a comprehensive assessment of existing stream and riverbank conditions to identify areas in need of restoration.
- Develop a restoration plan including methods for bank stabilization, replanting native vegetation, and enhanced habitat features.
- Organize community events to engage residents in the restoring and promoting stewardship of local waterways.
- Execute restoration activities, including the installation of bioengineering techniques, planting native species, and implementing erosion control measures.
- Establish a monitoring program to assess the effectiveness of restoration efforts and maintenance as needed.

Implementation Considerations

- Securing necessary permits and approvals for restoration activities may present challenges.
- Engaging the community and addressing any concerns regarding the project will be crucial for its success.
- Identifying and securing funding sources for project implementation may require significant effort.
- Establishing a sustainable monitoring and maintenance plan to ensure the success of restoration efforts.

Project Sponsor:
Town of Woodfin

Project Lead:
Town of Woodfin Administrative Staff/Public Works

Partners:

- Local Environmental Agencies (e.g., state or federal conservation organizations)
- Watershed Associations
- Community Non-Profits focused on Conservation
- Local Universities or Research Institutions for Technical Support

DRAFT

Tree Canopy Enhancement

Increase the tree canopy by planting more trees and native species on public lands, protecting existing trees, and enhancing landscape management plans.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ Medium	Short-term

Alignment with Woodfin Comprehensive Plan:

- **Goal 1.1:** Woodfin's built environment will be sustainable and equitable.
- **Goal 2.1:** Recognize and support greenways as a viable and key transportation connector for the community.
- **Goal 5.1:** A town with plentiful green spaces connected together and interwoven by green corridors.
- **Goal 5.2:** A clean watershed that enhances sustainability and resiliency.

Purpose

The Town of Woodfin recognizes the vital role of urban tree canopies in mitigating climate change effects, reducing urban heat islands, improving air quality, and enhancing community aesthetics. However, recent development, storm events, and natural attrition have led to a decline in tree coverage. This project aims to restore and expand the tree canopy across the town, supporting environmental resilience, biodiversity and long-term econlogical health. Strengthening the tree canopy is essential for adapting to climate impacts, managing stormwater, and providing shade and recreational spaces.

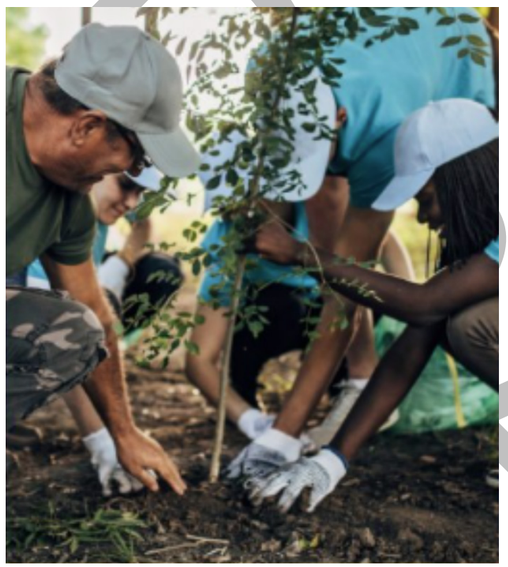
Benefits & Intended Outcomes

- Increased tree canopy coverage throughout Woodfin, leading to cooler urban environments.
- Improved air and water quality through natural filtration.
- Enhanced stormwater management and reduced flooding risks.
- Strengthened habitat connectivity for urban wildlife.
- Elevated community well-being, property values, and aesthetic appeal.
- Increased community awareness and environmental stewardship.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, shaded surfaces can be 20-45°F (11-25°C) cooler than unshaded ones, and trees can reduce nearby air temperatures by up to 10°F.

Activities & Deliverables

- Conducting a comprehensive tree inventory and assessment of current canopy coverage, including GIS component for easy access.
- Identifying priority areas for planting based on environmental and social criteria.
- Developing planting plans with native species suited for the local climate.
- Securing funding and acquiring necessary permits.
- Community outreach and volunteer engagement programs.
- Planting new trees and replacing declining or hazardous trees.
- Implementing maintenance and monitoring protocols to ensure tree health.
- Developing long-term management plans for continued canopy growth.



Implementation Considerations

- Securing sufficient funding and grants.
- Navigating permitting and environmental regulations.
- Identifying and prioritizing planting sites.
- Ensuring community support and engagement.
- Developing a long-term maintenance and monitoring plan.
- Addressing potential conflicts with existing infrastructure or development plans.

Project Sponsor:
Town of Woodfin

Project Lead:
Town of Woodfin Administrative Staff/Public Works

Partners:

- Buncombe County Soil & Water Conservation District
- Asheville GreenWorks
- Local Non-Profit Organizations focused on Urban Greening
- Buncombe County Cooperative Extension
- Schools and Youth Groups for Volunteer Planting
- Utility companies for Coordination around Infrastructure
- State Department of Environmental Quality

Unified Development Ordinance Updates

Update Woodfin's Unified Development Ordinance to incorporate risk reduction and emergency preparedness standards for new development.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	Medium	Medium

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to update the Town of Woodfin's Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) for greater resiliency. The updates will include regulations for flood-resistant construction, green infrastructure, land use planning, and resilient communication systemsto ensure reliable connectivity during disasters.

Without proactive updates to land use, infrastructure standards, and communication systems, residents and responders remain at risk. Integrating flood-resistant standards with resilient communication infrastructure will improve the community's capacity to withstand, respond to, and recover from future disasters.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

- Adopt updated development standards for greater resiliency and sustainability
- Ensure accessible and well-marked evacuation routes for all areas of the community
- Enhance community emergency communications

Activities & Deliverables

- Develop at least two independent ingress/egress routes for all new developments to prevent isolation during events.
- Ensure ADA compliant primary and secondary routes are elevated, flood-resistant, and maintained to remain passable during severe weather.
- Identify and develop additional ingress/egress points and install resilient communication infrastructure such as emergency repeaters and relay stations.
- Install clear signage for evacuation routes and implement real-time updates through community alerts and digital platforms.
- Incorporate requirements for multiple access points and resilient communication infrastructure in the UDO.
- Conduct emergency notification drills and ensure roads and communication assets are properly maintained and unobstructed.

Implementation Considerations

- Ensure the revised UDO promotes flood-resistant construction.
- Gain support from landowners, developers, and the community for adopting resilient building models.
- Integrate the latest flood risk data and resilient building techniques into regulations.
- Address potential increased costs for flood-resistant construction and explore incentives or funding options.
- Coordinate updates with ongoing development projects to ensure timely adoption.
- Establish mechanisms to ensure compliance with new standards.
- Staff time.

Alignment with Woodfin Comprehensive Plan:

- **Goal 1.1:** Woodfin's built environment will be sustainable and equitable.
- **Goal 4.1:** Woodfin residents receive hgih quality public services and facilities that promote the health, safety, and well-being of all community members.
- **Goal 4.4:** Woodfin is a place where residents have opportunities to engage on community issues.
- **Goal 5.4:** Woodfin is climate resilent and mitigates risk to landslides, flooding, and wildfires.

Woodfin's UDO helps the town shed its image as a "landing spot for any developer who didn't want to comply with the more stringent requirements of other municipalities." (Mountain Xpress, October 4, 2023)

Project Sponsor:
Town of Woodfin

Project Lead:
Town of Woodfin Planning & Police Departments

Partners:

- Land of Sky
- Buncombe County
- Woodfin Fire and West Buncombe Fire
- Reems Creeks Fire, Woodfin Water
- Town of Weaverville
- HOAs

//PRE-DECISIONAL DRAFT//

Town of Woodfin

Vulnerability Data

Acquire data and implement a Geographic Information System (GIS) to build localized information on natural hazards and environmental risks for the community of Woodfin.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ Medium	Medium

Alignment with Woodfin Comprehensive Plan:

- **Goal 4.1:** Woodfin residents receive high-quality public servuces and facilities that promote the health, safety, and well-being of all community members.
- **Goal 4.3:** Woodfin will be an active participant in planning and policymaking efforts that impact the town across the region.
- **Goal 5.4:** Woodfin is climate resilient and mitigates risk to landslides, flooding, and wildfires.

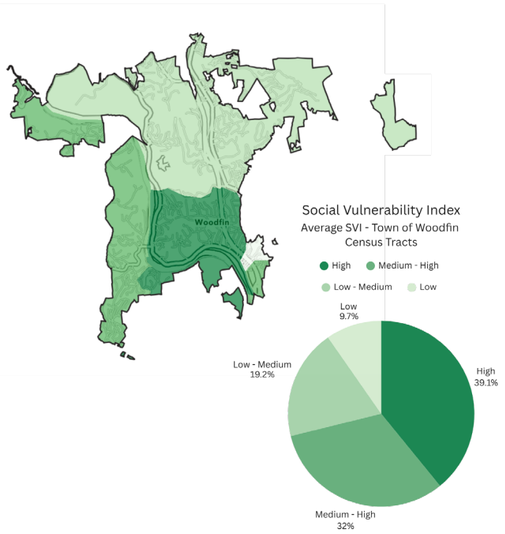
Purpose

The Town of Woodfin, located along flood-prone waterways like the French Broad River, faces escalating environmental hazards due to climate change, urban development, and socio-economic vulnerabilities. Historically, fragmented and outdated data has hindered effective planning, community engagement, and resource allocation. This project aims to develop a centralized, platform that organizes, analyzes, and visualizes comprehensive data on flood hazards, climate impacts, and community vulnerabilities. By providing up-to-date, transparent information, the initiative will empower residents, decision-makers, and stakeholders to make informed, targeted investments in resilient infrastructure, land use, and emergency preparedness—strengthening Woodfin's capacity for long-term recovery, adaptation, and equitable growth in the face of increasing environmental risks.

GIS can combine historical data with current conditions to analyze past disaster events and their impacts, helping identify high-risk areas and developing strategies to minimize future harm.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

- Improved community awareness of vulnerabilities from flooding, climate change, and other hazards.
- Enhanced decision-making through accessible data.
- Increased community engagement and support for resilience initiatives.
- Facilitation of targeted investment in resilient infrastructure, land use, and emergency preparedness.
- Strengthened recovery efforts by providing, up-to-date hazard and vulnerability information.



Activities & Deliverables

- Collect and compile existing vulnerability data from federal, state, and local sources.
- Conduct new assessments or data collection to fill gaps, including floodplain mapping, socio-economic vulnerabilities, and infrastructure resilience.
- Develop a centralized, user-friendly database or platform to organize data.
- Create data visualizations, dashboards, and reports for public and stakeholder use.
- Develop accessibility and outreach materials to publish and disseminate vulnerability data.
- Establish protocols for regular updates and maintenance of the data.

Implementation Considerations

- Securing access to comprehensive, high-quality data sets.
- Ensuring data privacy and security, especially with socio-economic or demographic information.
- Building or acquiring technical capacity for GIS and data management.
- Promoting transparency and accessibility to diverse audiences, including non-technical stakeholders.
- Updating data regularly to reflect changing vulnerabilities and hazards.
- Securing sustainable funding for ongoing data maintenance.

Project Sponsor:
Town of Woodfin

Project Lead:
City of Woodfin Public Works/ Planning Department

Partners:

- Buncombe County GIS and Planning Departments
- N.C. Office of Emergency Management
- Regional Planning Agencies (e.g., Mountain Area Planning Organization)
- Local universities or Research Institutions
- Community Organizations and Resident Advocates
- Federal agencies (e.g., FEMA, USGS)
- Nonprofits Specializing in Data and Resilience

DRAFT

Weaverville Road Flood Mitigation

Implement flood control measures along Weaverville Road to address ongoing drainage and flood risks within Woodfin.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	Medium	Medium

Alignment with Woodfin Comprehensive Plan:

- **Goal 4.3:** Recognize and support greenways as a viable and key transportation connector for the community.
- **Goal 5.1:** A town with plentiful green spaces connected together and intewoven by green corridors.
- **Goal 5.4:** Woodfin is climate resilent and mitigates risk to landslides, flooding, and wildfires.

Purpose

The Town of Woodfin needs to mitigate the recurring flash flooding issues on Weaverville Road, that threaten public safety, disrupt transportation, and cause damage to infrastructure. Addressing these flood risks is essential for long-term community resilience, ensuring safe and reliable transportation, safeguarding properties, and reducing emergency response costs. This project is a critical component of the community's effort to recover from past flood events and build resilience against future storms.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

- Significant reduction in flood frequency and severity on Weaverville Road.
- Improved public safety and transportation reliability during storm events.
- Protection of infrastructure and properties from flood damage.
- Shortened recovery times after flood events, minimizing economic impacts.
- Increased community confidence in flood resilience measures.

Weaverville Road's proximity to Beaverdam Creek and the increasing flood risk in the area indicate that closures are a possibility during periods of heavy rainfall, inlcuding prolonged closures in both 2014 and 2024.

Activities & Deliverables

- Conduct hydraulic and flood risk assessments.
- Design and implement flood mitigation infrastructure (e.g., drainage upgrades, culverts, retention basins).
- Construction of flood control measures.
- Engage stakeholders and inform the public.
- Develop a monitoring plan to evaluate flood reduction success.
- Document lessons learned and best practices for future flood mitigation.

Implementation Considerations

- Securing adequate funding and permits.
- Coordinating with multiple agencies and jurisdictions.
- Ensuring minimal disruption during construction.
- Addressing potential ecological impacts and regulatory constraints.
- Engaging community stakeholders early and managing expectations.

Section of Weaverville Rd.



Before Helene | After Helene

Project Sponsor:
Town of Woodfin

Project Lead:
Town of Woodfin Administrative Staff/Public Works

Partners:

- Local Watershed and Environmental Agencies
- State Department of Transportation or Equivalent
- Upstream Watershed Management Organizations
- Emergency Management Agencies
- Local Community Groups and Residents

PRE-DECISIONAL DRAFT

Wildfire and Flash Flood Risk Awareness Program

Promote education programs and develop policies for wildfire and flash flood safety.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ Medium	Medium

Alignment with Woodfin Comprehensive Plan:

- **Goal 5.4:** Woodfin is climate resilient and mitigates risk to landslides, flooding, and wildfires.

Purpose

The Town of Woodfin is pursuing this project to enhance community resilience against natural disasters, specifically mitigating risks associated with wildfires and flash floods. Given the increasing frequency and intensity of these events, it is crucial to establish effective pre-disaster planning strategies. This initiative will promote a Firewise policy, identify funding for debris removal, and establish clear evacuation routes. Strengthening these aspects will not only protect lives and property but also ensure a more coordinated and efficient response during emergencies.



Human activity is responsible for nearly all wildfires in North Carolina, with a staggering 99% attributed to human causes.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

- Improved safety and protection for residents against wildfire and flash flood risks.
- Enhanced community awareness and preparedness through the implementation of Firewise policies.
- Streamlined debris removal processes to facilitate quicker recovery post-disaster.
- Clearly marked evacuation routes that ensure safe and efficient egress during emergencies.
- Strengthened community cohesion and resilience, leading to a more robust recovery process.



Activities & Deliverables

- Promote Firewise Policy by developing educational materials and hosting community workshops on wildfire prevention and mitigation
- Identify funding for debris removal through research of federal, state, and local grants, and by establishing partnerships with local organizations and agencies
- Identify and map evacuation routes by assessing effective paths and creating clear maps for residents to ensure accessibility and awareness

Implementation Considerations

- Ensuring residents are informed and involved in the process.
- Identifying and securing adequate funding for all aspects of the initiative may present challenges.
- Changes to zoning or land use may require public hearings and approvals, which could affect project timelines.
- Establishing a plan for the upkeep of evacuation routes and Firewise practices post-implementation.

Project Sponsor:
Town of Woodfin

Project Lead:
Town of Woodfin
Administrative Staff

Partners:

- Local Fire Department
- Emergency Management Agency
- Public Works Department
- Community Organizations (e.g., local non-profits focused on disaster preparedness)

DRAFT

ORDINANCE ADOPTING A RECOVERY PLAN TITLED
"HELENE RECOVERY PLAN"

Ordinance: 2025-xx

Passed _____

WHEREAS, Buncombe County invited all local municipalities and residents to participate in the development of a county-wide Helene Recovery Plan.

WHEREAS, Town Council directed staff to participate in the coordinated plan to guide Woodfin's recovery from Tropical Storm Helene, and in conjunction with the Woodfin Together Comprehensive Plan, would guide strategic policy, equitable investment in infrastructure, and new regulatory tools; and

WHEREAS, the Town desires to address how to better reflect and advance community values and aspirations around health, transportation, quality of life, economic development, jobs, affordable housing, health, safety, and sustainability in the plan; and

WHEREAS, municipal zoning statutes allow that municipalities may prepare and adopt other plans as appropriate, such as small area plans, hazard mitigation plans, and housing plans; and

WHEREAS, Buncombe County undertook a county-wide public engagement process consisting of advisory groups, public meetings, solicitation of feedback and comments, to gather input from and educate the community on the plan; and

WHEREAS, the Helene Recovery Plan includes an Appendix summarizing projects to be implemented by the Town that integrates community input and best practices that will guide the Town's decision-making and investment in both the near and long term recovery process; and

WHEREAS, the Woodfin Planning Board of Adjustment reviewed this recovery plan recommendation at its December 2, 2025, public meeting and voted ___ finding the draft plan to be reasonable, in the public interest, consistent with other town adopted goals and plans, and meets development and other needs of the community; and

WHEREAS, the Woodfin Town Council held the public hearing on December 16, 2025, and, after hearing such, made the following required findings:

That the proposed recovery plan is reasonable and in the public interest and consistent with town adopted goals and plans, and meets development and other needs of the community in that the request will:

1. Use the Future Land Use Map to guide development decisions and protect existing affordable housing through regulatory or other tools (1.1.1, 1.2.2).
2. Encourage green and healthy working spaces that use renewable energy, walkable design, and green infrastructure (3.3.2)
3. Incorporate climate resilience and green building practices into town facilities and operations and coordinate with neighboring jurisdictions on decisions of local significance for more effective and efficient services (4.1.4, 4.3.1).
4. Make government decision-making accessible and transparent to all residents while updating development standards to minimize risk from new development. (4.4.3, 5.4.2)
5. Support collaboration with Asheville and Buncombe County on climate action and resiliency planning (5.3.4)
6. Protect floodplains, wetlands, wildlife habitat, and other environmentally valuable and sensitive areas by updating development standards to minimize the risk from new development and educating the public on risks and actions needed to protect themselves (5.1.1, 5.4.1, 5.4.2).

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Town Council of the Town of Woodfin, that the recovery plan known as the "Helene Recovery Plan" be adopted:

Section 1: That the Helene Recovery Plan, as presented at the public hearing held on December 16, 2025, is hereby adopted subject to Section 2 below.

Section 2. That all zoning text or map amendments, and other land use decisions, will be reviewed for consistency with the Helene Recovery Plan and any other applicable adopted land use plans.

Section 3: If any provisions of this Ordinance are for any reason held invalid or unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, such provision shall be deemed a separate, independent provision and such holding shall not affect the validity of any other provision thereof, and to that end, the provisions of this Ordinance are hereby declared to be severable.

Section 4: This Ordinance shall be effective on this 16th day of December 2025.

Ayes _____

Nays _____

_____
Jim McAllister, Mayor

Attest:

_____
Gena Powers, Town Clerk

RECOMMENDATION FROM
TOWN OF WOODFIN PLANNING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT TO WOODFIN TOWN COUNCIL

Having reviewed the **Helene Recovery Plan** on **December 2, 2025,** and having considered information from the planning staff of the Town of Woodfin along with comments from other persons, pursuant to General Statute 160D-501 (Plans), the Town of Woodfin Planning Board of Adjustment hereby adopts the following motion, effective December 2, 2025:

The Town of Woodfin Planning Board of Adjustment hereby advises the Town of Woodfin Town Council that the proposed recovery plan is reasonable and in the public interest and consistent with town adopted goals and plans, and meets development and other needs of the community in that the request will:

1. Use the Future Land Use Map to guide development decisions and protect existing affordable housing through regulatory or other tools (1.1.1, 1.2.2).
2. Encourage green and healthy working spaces that use renewable energy, walkable design, and green infrastructure (3.3.2)
3. Incorporate climate resilience and green building practices into town facilities and operations and coordinate with neighboring jurisdictions on decisions of local significance for more effective and efficient services (4.1.4, 4.3.1).
4. Make government decision-making accessible and transparent to all residents while updating development standards to minimize risk from new development. (4.4.3, 5.4.2)
5. Support collaboration with Asheville and Buncombe County on climate action and resiliency planning (5.3.4)
6. Protect floodplains, wetlands, wildlife habitat, and other environmentally valuable and sensitive areas by updating development standards to minimize the risk from new development and educating the public on risks and actions needed to protect themselves (5.1.1, 5.4.1, 5.4.2).

Vote:

This document is a true and accurate statement of the findings and recommendations of the Woodfin Planning Board of Adjustment.

_____ _____

Chair Date

Planning Board of Adjustment
Variance
Staff Report & Findings

TO: Town of Woodfin Planning Board of Adjustment **DATE:** December 2, 2025

FROM: Ricky Hurley, AICP
Planning Director

SITE INFO: Street Address: 48 Gosnell Rd
Tax Description (PIN): 9721-80-2052-00000
Zoning: R-43 Residential District (R-43)
Property Owner: William Myers

Summary:
The owner, William Orville Myers, is requesting a variance to Section 54-145(c) of the Zoning Ordinance for the property located at 48 Gosnell Road and identified in the Buncombe County tax record as PIN 9721-80-2052-00000. The proposed variance seeks a reduction in the required rear setback to allow construction of an addition onto the existing house.

Zoning and Use	Zoning Requirement	Applicant Request	Variance
R-43 Single Family	20% mean lot depth; being 30 feet	22 feet (73.3%)	8 feet (26.7 % reduction)

Background/Site Context:
The subject property is a 0.71-acre lot, Lot 6 of a subdivision platted on October 14, 1970. The property is currently occupied by a two-story house and zoned R-43 Residential District. Access is provided by driveway to Gosnell Road. Surrounding properties are occupied with a mixture of detached single family and manufactured residential homes on individual lots ranging from 0.36 to 8.2 acres in size. The property is located west of the French Broad River and was part of a large involuntary annexation that occurred in 2006. Buncombe County initially zoned most unincorporated areas outside of the incorporated towns in 2009. In reviewing the application, staff noted one nonconforming situation related to the dwelling itself, being a portion of the home already encroaches into the required rear setback.

Section 54-341(b) *Nonconforming structures.* states that *"Structures having one or more dimensional nonconformities may be used for any permitted or special use allowed in the zoning district in which the structure is located. Such structures may be expanded or enlarged provided the extent of the applicable dimensional nonconformity is not increased and no new nonconformities are created."* The existing attached storage area does not comply with the rear setback standard for R-43 Residential District, any addition to the structure whether vertical or horizontal must comply with the Town's setback standard.

The applicant proposes to remove the storage area and deck and replace it with a kitchen addition 22-feet from the rear property line.

Upon reviewing the initial application for construction, staff met with the general contractor on-site to evaluate alternative locations or constraints. Staff observed that there are overhead utility lines crossing the rear portion of the property and that the owner obtained written approval from Duke Energy before submitting the variance application. The property itself slopes upwardly from Gosnell Road, rising approximately 30-feet, to a small level area where the home is located. The contractor has indicated on the site plan that the on-site septic system is in the front yard. Staff identified the southern side yard of the home where the existing concrete parking area is located as a potential alternative location for the addition. The petitioner's application expresses concern regarding the loss of level grade parking and blocking windows to existing internal bedroom of the home.

Variance requests should be the minimum necessary relief to afford reasonable use of the property. This may include alternative designs, smaller footprints, and conditions upon variances granted to mitigate impacts.

Review, Analysis, and Considerations:

- The house was constructed in 1981 and predates development regulations for both Buncombe County and the Town.
- The existing home's septic system is in front of and downhill of the dwelling.
- Proposed addition will replace and slightly enlarge the existing nonconforming situation.
- Duke Energy has provided approval to the applicant allowing the addition as shown on the site plan.
- Level areas of the property are limited to the front and rear most portions of the property.
- If the variance were to be approved, staff recommends a condition that it be limited to one-story in height.

Findings:

Per Section 54-77(1), When unnecessary hardships would result from carrying out the strict letter of a zoning regulation, the board of adjustment may vary any of the provisions of the zoning regulation upon a showing of **all** the following (all four findings must be satisfied):

a. Unnecessary hardship would result from the strict application of the regulation. It is not necessary to demonstrate that, in the absence of the variance, no reasonable use can be made of the property.

b. The hardship results from conditions that are peculiar to the property, such as location, size, or topography. Hardships resulting from personal circumstances, as well as hardships resulting from conditions that are common to the neighborhood or the general public, may not be the basis for granting a variance. A variance may be granted when necessary and appropriate to make a reasonable accommodation under the Federal Fair Housing Act for a person with a disability.

c. The hardship did not result from actions taken by the applicant or the property owner. The act of purchasing property with knowledge that circumstances exist that may justify the granting of a variance is not a self-created hardship.

d. The requested variance is consistent with the spirit, purpose, and intent of the regulation, such that public safety is secured and substantial justice is achieved.

Attachments:

1) Exhibit 1 – Site Plan
2) Exhibit 2 – Duke Energy email
3) Exhibit A – Zoning Map
4) Exhibit B – Aerial
5) Exhibit C – Streetview
6) Application

Exhibit 1



Site Plan
of
48 Gosnell Road
for
Bill and Amy Myers

Exhibit 2

48 GOSNELL RD Clearance

From: Thompson, Kade <Kade.Thompson@duke-energy.com>
Sent: Tue, Nov 4, 2025 at 2:03 pm
To: dario@geekct.com

Hey Dario,

As we talked about today that clearance on the addition should be good to go. I gave your info over to Philip just reach out to him when you are ready to schedule our work and have the meter up.

Thanks!

Exhibit A - Zoning Map

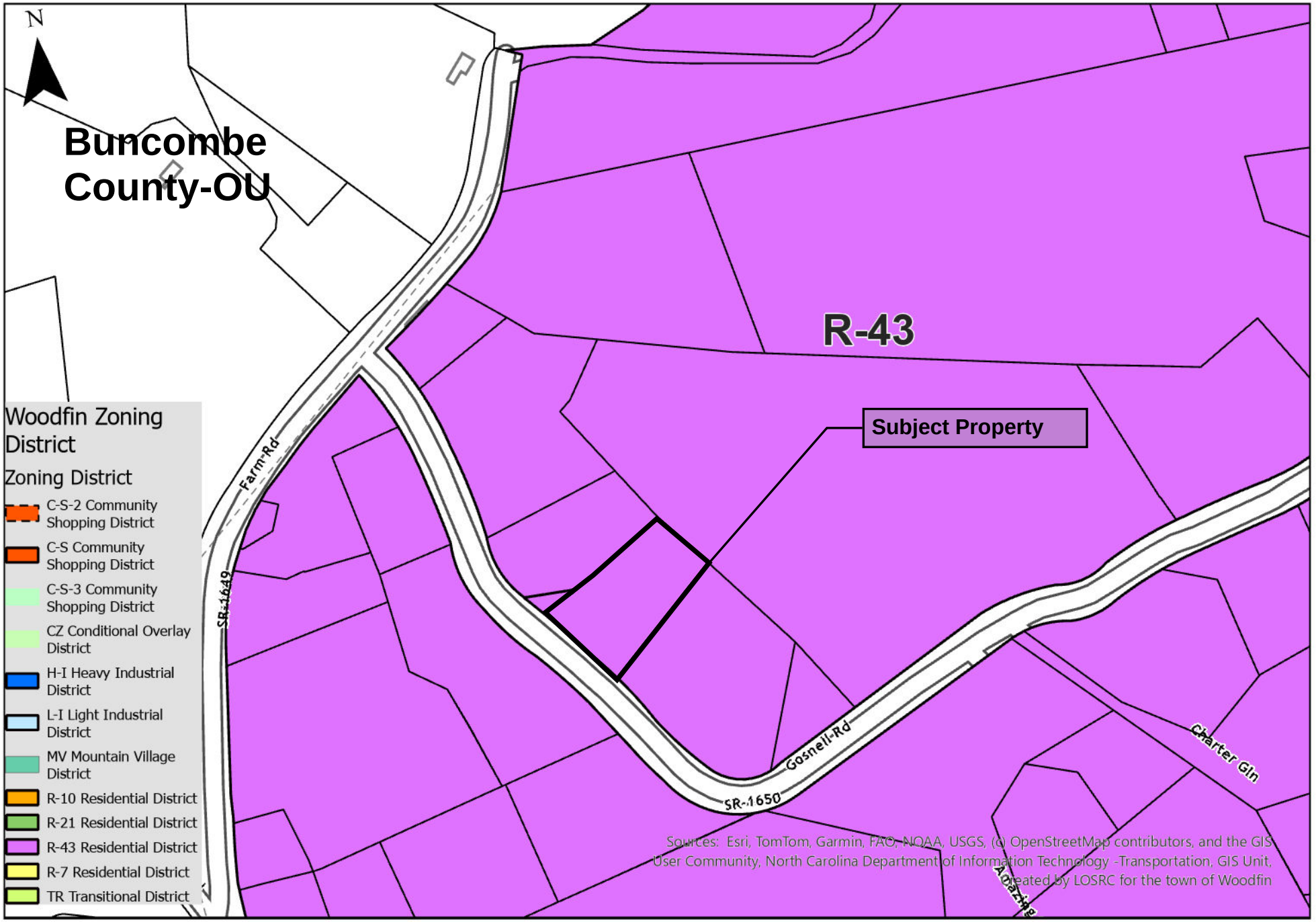


Exhibit B - Aerial



Exhibit C



VARIANCE APPLICATION

Applicant Name: Bill Myers
Property Address: 48 Gosnell Road, Asheville, NC
Phone: 828-778-5410 **Email:** wbfd531@charter.net
PIN #: 9721802052 **Zoning District:** R-43

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS: A pre-application meeting with Town staff is required prior to application submittal to the Planning and Zoning Board of Adjustment. A completed application with all supporting documents such as site plans, elevations, architectural renderings, grading plans, storm water management, or other relevant information.

What would you like to do with your property? This property was purchased in 1990. We have spent 35 years here. Our kitchen is on the second floor (original garage apartment was the original purchase). As we grow older we need to move the kitchen to the ground level. This 15x30 addition to the rear of the house will allow us to move the kitchen downstairs and allow for us to remain on the property for years to come.

What does the ordinance require? *(Include ordinance reference)*
Ordinance adopted in or around 2005. 20% of lot depth or 30' rear setback which ever is less.

N.C.G.S. 160D-705(d) requires that the Planning and Zoning Board of Adjustment vary the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance only upon presentation of ALL of the items below. Strict procedure must be followed, and all determinations must be decided by a concurring vote of four-fifths of the members of the Board. It is important to provide detailed supporting documentation for board review, which will be presented during the variance hearing. If necessary, additional sheets may be attached to this application.

1. Unnecessary hardship would result from the strict application of the regulation. *(It shall not be necessary to demonstrate that, in the absence of the variance, no reasonable use can be made of the property).*
   Explain: The original 24x24 garage apartment was built in 1981. It was constructed on the only area fit for the type of structure. The front yard had a septic system that originally served a mobile home. In 1990 the garage was converted to living space. In 1993 a 30x30 1 story addition was added as well as rear decks.

2. The hardship results from conditions that are peculiar to the property, such as location, size, or topography. *(Hardships resulting from personal circumstances, as well as hardships resulting from conditions that are common to the neighborhood or the general public, may not be the basis for granting a variance).*
   Explain: Locating the kitchen addition to an alternate location will be much more difficult. Also level parking area will be lost. Side egress windows from second floor rooms will be lost as well. Parking in the driveway will be on slopes approximately 9.5 degrees (dangerous in icy conditions). The turn-a-around would be lost causing backing up down a long steep driveway. The rear portion of the lot is the only fairly level area.

3. The hardship did not result from actions taken by the applicant or the property owner. *(The act of purchasing property with knowledge that circumstances exist that may justify the granting of a variance shall not be regarded as a self-created hardship).*
   Explain: Due to the lay of the lot, building in the rear is the only feasible location. The side yard requirements are met and consistent with the neighbors setbacks.

4. The requested variance is consistent with the spirit, purpose, and intent of the regulation, such that public safety is secured and substantial justice is achieved.
   Explain: With approval the rear setback will be approximately 22' at the nearest corner and 25' at the corner. The side will be 27'
   The safest parking and driveway conditions will remain as existing.

Additional Variance Requirements:

- The variance may not be a request to permit use of land, building or structure not permitted by right in the district property is located.
- A variance may be granted when necessary and appropriate to make a reasonable accommodation under the Federal Fair Housing Act for a person with a disability.
- No change in permitted uses may be authorized by variance.
- Appropriate conditions may be imposed on any variance, provided that the conditions are reasonably related to the variance.
- No nonconforming use of neighboring land, structures or buildings may be considered grounds for issuance of variance.

Signature of Applicant: _____ Date: _____