Avril M. Pinder, CPA, ICMA-CM
County Manager

Buncombe County Government
Commissioner Briefing
March 5, 2026
3:00 PM
1st Floor Conference Room - 200 College St.

I.	Meeting Called to Order		Chair Edwards
II.	Review Meeting Agenda		Chair Edwards
III.	Staff Updates		
	a. 2026 Limited Obligation Bonds - Introduce Findings Resolution and Public Hearing Notice	10 mins	Melissa Moore
	b. Comprehensive Plan Update	30 mins	Nathan Pennington
IV.	Open Discussion		All

[MEET_FOOT]

Comprehensive Plan Update

Presented by

Gillian Phillips, AICP and Nathan Pennington, CFM

Planning & Development Department

Board of Commissioners Briefing

March 5, 2026

PURPOSE

Board Update on the Buncombe County Comprehensive Plan

- Comprehensive Plan Information
- Zoning Map Amendments and Changes to the Future Land Use Plan Map
- Review of Pre-Storm Plan for Implementation
- Review of Adjusted Storm Plan for Implementation
- Down Zoning Portion of the Disaster Recovery Act of 2024
- Approved Text Amendments
- Upcoming Text Amendments
- Small Area Plan
- Future Endeavors

Buncombe 2043 Comprehensive Plan

- Adopted May 16, 2023
- The County's first true Comprehensive Plan
- Created Overall Vision Themes for the Future
- Goals, Policies and Actions
- Future Land Use Map (growth management tool)
- Small Area Planning
- Used in other Planning processes in the County

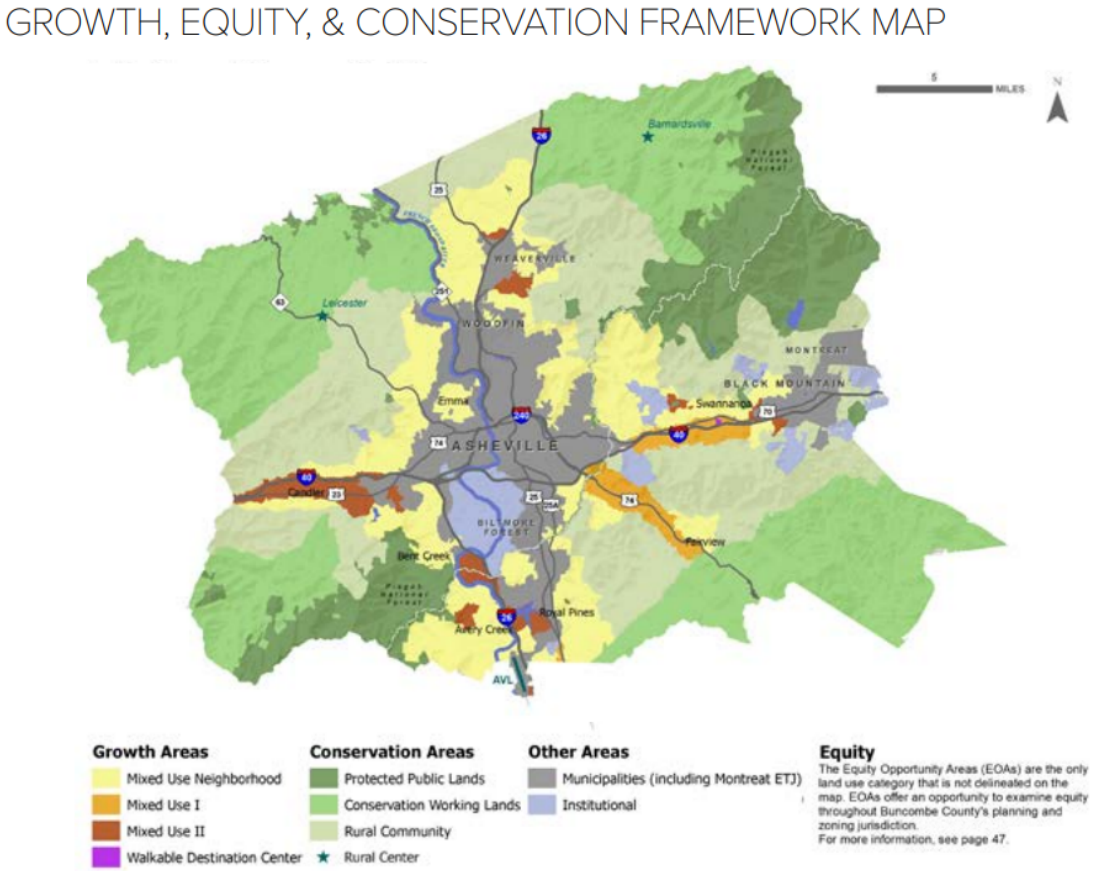


How a Comp Plan Guides Growth and Development



- Sets a Clear Vision
- Guidance for Land Use Decisions
- Policy Foundation, Basis for Text Amendments
- Provides Legal Foundation for our Development Regulations

Future Land Use Map (FLUM)



- In 2025, rezoning requests resulted in four (4) changes to the FLUM.*
- In 2026, rezoning requests were matched to the FLUM districts thus resulting in **no** changes to the map.

*Per North Carolina state law, when a map amendment is approved which does not conform to an adopted Comprehensive Plan's future land use map, the rezoning has the effect of automatically changing the adopted map.

Pre-Storm - Text Amendment Buckets

1 -SHORT TERM RENTAL EVALUATION

COMPLETED

2 - MIXED USE, DESIGN STANDARDS, MISSING MIDDLE, AFFORDABLE HOUSING, TRANSPORTATION

3 - PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT & ENTITLEMENT REVIEW PROCESS

4 - ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY, SAFETY

5 - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

6 - UNIFIED CODE OF ORDINANCES

POST-STORM TEXT AMENDMENT CATEGORIES

RECOVERY & LIFE SAFETY

ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY, SAFETY

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT & ENTITLEMENT REVIEW PROCESS

MIXED USE, DESIGN STANDARDS, MISSING MIDDLE, AFFORDABLE HOUSING, TRANSPORTATION

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

HOUSING

PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT & ENTITLEMENT REVIEW PROCESS

MIXED USE, DESIGN STANDARDS, MISSING MIDDLE, AFFORDABLE HOUSING, TRANSPORTATION

UPCOMING TEXT AMENDMENTS

RECOVERY & LIFE SAFETY

- Flood Ordinance Revisions (in process)
- E-911 Addressing Ordinance
- Watershed Ordinance
- Stormwater
- Hillside Development Standards/Subdivision Ordinance
- Overlays (steep slope/protected ridge)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Development review efficiency changes (BOA)
- Increase by-right options to reduce regulatory barriers
- Modernize Standards (lighting, buffering, parking)

HOUSING

- End mandatory single-family zoning (completed)
- Incentivize missing middle housing
- Reduce regulatory barriers to housing construction

NC Disaster Recovery Act

What Changed in North Carolina Law?

- Enacted as part of S.L. 2024-57 (Disaster Recovery Act of 2024)
- 2024 legislation restricts local governments' ability to **down-zone property**
- **Written consent required from ALL affected property owners**
- Applied **retroactively to June 14, 2024**

What is Down Zoning?

What Is "Down-Zoning"?

A zoning amendment that:

- **Reduces development density**
- **Reduces permitted uses**
- **Creates new nonconformities** in zoning districts

Applies to both:

- Zoning map amendments
- Zoning text amendments

What that means?

- Definition of what constitutes a downzoning or nonconformity is unclear in the law
- Limits the ability or puts the County at risk for more litigation related to specific changes within the Zoning Ordinance
- Must carefully consider what we change until resolution is reached
- Stand-alone Ordinances enacted under different enabling legislation would not be affected. (Example: Flood Damage Prevention and E-911 Addressing Ordinance)
- Numerous exemptions and appeal bills have been filed, but they have not moved forward

UPCOMING TEXT AMENDMENTS – RISK ASSESSMENT

RECOVERY & LIFE SAFETY

- Flood Ordinance Revisions (in process)
- E-911 Addressing Ordinance
- Watershed Ordinance
- Stormwater
- Erosion Control
- Hillside Development Standards
- ▲ Overlays

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- ▲ Development review efficiency changes (BOA)
- ▲ Increase by-right options to reduce regulatory barriers
- ▲ Modernize Standards (lighting, buffering, parking)

HOUSING

- End mandatory single-family zoning **(completed)**
- ▲ Incentivize missing middle housing
- ▲ Reduce regulatory barriers to housing construction

▲ Changes could be limited or legally complex based on the Disaster Recovery Act

Approved Text Amendment

ZPH2025-00012- Dimensional Table and Statement of District Intent

- PB 6/16/2025; BOC 7/15/2025
- Ended Mandatory Single-Family Zoning
- Modernized the standards for the Beaverdam Zoning District

Supported Actions and Polices from the following Section:

- Growth, Equity, Conservation

Upcoming Text Amendments

ZPH2026-00002 Revisions to the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance

- PB PUBLIC HEARING 3/16/2026; BOC PUBLIC HEARING 4/21/2026

E-911 Addressing Ordinance Modernization and Revisions

- Planning Board will Start Reviewing in April
    - Work session in May
    - Public Hearing in June
    - BOC Public Hearing in July

Small Area Plans-Swannanoa



Next Steps

- Adoption of the Small Area Plan: Goal date of September 2026
- Continue the evaluation of the following text amendments:
  - Watershed
  - E-911
- Donut Hole Map Amendments (un-zoned areas)
- Continue to work on ordinance revisions to be ready when the Downzoning Law is resolved: Entitlements, Missing Middle Housing, Parking, Lighting, etc.
- Dashboard/Polices and Actions added to Clear Point

Questions