



Insert Photos of Boone Here

# Town of Boone

## 2018 Comprehensive Plan

ADOPTED , 2018

PREPARED BY:

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# Chapter 1 Background and Purpose

## Planning Process History

### **1993 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

In 1992, recognizing the need to prepare a comprehensive vision for the future of Boone, the Town Council appointed a fourteen-member Steering Committee made up of area citizens and charged them with responsibility for guiding the preparation of a long-range plan. Assisting the Steering Committee in accomplishing this task was the Town planning department and the planning firm of Glenn Harbeck Associates. Public input was gathered during two community meetings and circulation of draft documents. The 1993 Comprehensive Plan was adopted by Boone Town Council on September 7, 1993.

### **2006 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE**

In 2002, Town Council directed the Boone Planning Commission to review and update the 1993 Comprehensive Plan. The Boone Planning Commission utilized a similar input process used in development of the 1993 Plan, including monthly work sessions with government officials, community groups, staff members, and other town boards or committees; and public input sessions, including two public meetings and posting of drafts for public review/comment. The 2006 Comprehensive Plan Update was adopted by Boone Town Council on June 15, 2006.

### **BOONE 2030 PLAN**

In 2008, the Town of Boone began work on a land-use plan. The land-use plan was intended to work in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan and other adopted plans to guide the Town's long-range growth. The development of the Boone 2030 Plan was conducted by The Lawrence Group. The plan development process included establishment of an advisory committee, distribution of a community-wide survey, creation of a project website, and facilitation of a 5-day public planning and design charrette. The Boone 2030 Plan was adopted by Boone Town Council on October 15, 2009.

## **Need for Plan Revision**

Since the Town has two separate long-range plans, Town officials and staff decided to rewrite the Comprehensive Plan and incorporate concepts and recommendations from the Boone 2030 Plan into the update. The revision was deemed necessary due to the age of the two plans, and other actions that have occurred since those plans were developed. These include:

### **ABOLISHMENT OF THE TOWN'S EXTRATERRITORIAL JURISDICTION (ETJ)**

In 2014, the NC General Assembly passed legislation that abolished the Town's ETJ. The Town exercised its zoning regulations within the ETJ, which extended up to one mile outside town limits and covered approximately 7.2 square miles. In 2016, the NC Supreme Court upheld the State law.

### **PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE PLAN**

In 2014, the Town adopted the Town of Boone Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan. The Plan makes specific recommendations for pedestrian and bicycle facility improvements throughout the Town.

## **WATAUGA COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (CTP)**

The Town adopted the 2013 Watauga County CTP in June 2013. CTPs are developed by local governments and NC Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to guide future transportation projects. The CTP includes both NCDOT roads and Town streets. The 2013 Watauga CTP makes specific recommendations for projects in all transportation modes – highway, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit.

### **NEW WATER INTAKE**

To accommodate future demand, the Town of Boone constructed a new raw water intake on the South Fork New River approximately 10 miles east of Boone. Water is piped to the Town's existing water treatment plant, which is being expanded as part of the project.

### **APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY (ASU) GROWTH**

ASU has increased enrollment by over 4,000 students since 2006, to a total enrollment of 18,811 in 2017. Two University capital projects also affect planning within Boone – ASU's purchase of the former Watauga High School property off NC Highway 105, and construction of the Beaver College of Health Sciences Building at the State Farm Road/Deerfield Road intersection.

### **WELLNESS DISTRICT**

In 2013, the Town created a Wellness District through amendment to the Boone Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) and Zoning Map. The Wellness District contains 58 parcels covering approximately 95 acres. The UDO establishes specific standards regarding use, building architecture, landscaping, parking, and signage in the Wellness District.

## **Functions of the Plan**

The Comprehensive Plan texts, narratives, and policies are designed primarily to guide the physical development of the Town for the next five to ten years. In addition, the Plan performs several important functions for local government, private development interests, and the general public. These functions are briefly described as follows:

### **GUIDANCE FOR GOVERNMENT DECISIONS**

When the Boone Town Council adopted the 1993 Comprehensive Plan, it had a policy foundation for guiding decisions regarding development proposals, subdivision reviews, rezoning requests, capital improvements, ordinances, and other matters. Changes in organization and wording that will continue to provide that foundation are incorporated into this document.

### **PREVIEW OF GOVERNMENT ACTIONS**

Business decisions of the public in general, and developers in particular, are easier to make when the probable outcome of government decisions are understood; the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan increases the predictability of government actions.

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN MANAGING GROWTH**

The adopted plan is designed for use by the public on an on-going basis.

## Components of the Plan

The Comprehensive Plan consists of the following four parts:

1. Information Base
2. Objectives for the Boone Comprehensive Plan - set forth the overall direction and emphasis of the plan.
3. Future Land Use Map – derived from the Framework Plan of the Boone 2030 Plan.
4. Policies and Actions for Growth and Development - specific growth Policy Statements and an accompanying narrative are presented on 14 broad topics identified by area citizens during the public involvement process. Finally, Action Agenda items assign suggested implementation actions to the various policy categories. These action items state specific courses of action the Town can pursue to implement the stated policies.

The 2018 Comprehensive Plan reflects accomplishments from 2006 and common elements from the Boone 2030 Plan.

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## Chapter 2 Information Base

### Socio-Economic Data

#### **POPULATION**

According to the NC Office of State Management and Budget, Boone had a 2016 population of 19,028. Boone's population is unevenly distributed, with the vast majority of the population between 15 and 34 years of age. The median age of the population is 21.1. These data reflect the presence of Appalachian State University's student population.

Age Cohort	Percentage
< 5 years	1.1%
5 to 14 years	1.7%
15 to 24 years	72.0%
25 to 34 years	9.1%
35 to 44 years	3.9%
45 to 54 years	3.3%
55 to 64 years	3.2%
65 to 74 years	2.7%
75 to 84 years	1.1%
85 years and over	1.4%

Source: US Census

The table below shows historic population figures for the Town of Boone.

Year	Population
1970	8,754
1980	10,191
1990	12,949
2000	13,470
2010	17,122

Source: US Census

Boone has a predominantly white, non-Hispanic population. Out of the total population, 92.8% are White, 2.3% are Black, and 3.1% are Hispanic or Latino.

#### **EDUCATION**

According to US Census data, of the Town's population age 25 and over:

91.4% have graduated high school

48.4% have a bachelor's degree or higher

#### **INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT**

According to the 2015 Census data, the median household income for the Town is \$13,149, while the per capita income of all working age population in Town is \$12,874. 11.4% of families and 64.5% of

individuals are below the poverty level. Of the Town's 5,812 households, 3.7% receive Supplemental Security Income, and 8.5% receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly called food stamps) benefits.

According to 2015 Census data, Boone's workforce is 7,091. The table below illustrates the employment by industry in 2015.

Industry	Percent of Workforce
Construction	3.4%
Manufacturing	1.5%
Retail Trade	15.4%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	2.3%
Professional, Technical, and Management Services	4.9%
Education and Health Care	33.1%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	31.3%
Public Administration	0.3%

## HOUSING

According to 2015 US Census data, Boone has 6,848 housing units. Of those units, 85% were occupied and 15% were vacant. Of the occupied units, 18.6% are owner-occupied and 81.4% are renter-occupied. Average household size of both rental units and owner-occupied units is approximately 2.2 persons. The following four tables provide statistics on housing type, age, and values from US Census.

Units in Structure	Number	Percentage
1 unit, detached	1,712	25.0%
1 unit, attached	164	2.4%
2 units	153	2.2%
3 or 4 units	592	8.6%
5 to 9 units	1,012	14.8%
10 to 19 units	1,656	24.2%
20 or more units	1,363	19.9%
Mobile home	196	2.9%

Value of Owner-Occupied Units	Number	Percentage
Less than \$50,000	34	3.1%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	13	1.2%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	14	1.3%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	167	15.5%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	429	39.7%
\$300,000 to \$499,999	303	28.1%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	100	9.3%
\$1,000,000 or more	20	1.9%
Median value	\$266,000	

Gross Rent	Number	Percentage
Less than \$500	792	17.3%
\$500 to \$999	2,201	48.0%
\$1000 to \$1,499	1,024	22.3%
\$1500 to \$1,999	536	11.7%
\$2,000 or more	0	0%
Median rent paid	\$823	

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## Infrastructure

### TRANSPORTATION

The Town is traversed by several major highways that provide access to surrounding areas and counties. These include US Highway 221, US Highway 321, US Highway 421, NC Highway 105, and NC Highway 194. Many of these routes converge within Boone as common facilities.

NCDOT schedules transportation projects through its 10-year State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The current STIP covers years 2018-2027. The STIP is updated every two years to adjust for changes in funding and priorities. The Table below details STIP projects within or adjacent to Boone’s jurisdiction.

<b>NCDOT Project No.</b>	<b>Route</b>	<b>Limits</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Construction Start</b>
R-2615	US 321/421	Vilas to NC 105 Bypass	Widen to multi-lanes	2024
R-2566B	NC 105	Foscoe to NC 105 Bypass	Widen to multi-lanes	2023
R-5830	Deerfield Rd.	Statte Farm Rd. to Wilson Ridge Rd.	Upgrade roadway	2020
U-5705	US 221/321	NC 105 intersection	Upgrades	2021
U-5603	NC 105	US 321 to NC 105 Bypass	Upgrade roadway	2021
U-5810	Bamboo Rd., Wilson Ridge Rd.	US 421 to Deerfield Rd.	Widen to 12’ lanes, 4’ shoulders	2020

NCDOT, the High Country Rural Planning Organization (RPO), and the local governments in Watauga County adopted a Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) for Watauga County in 2013. The CTP process involves projection of population and employment growth, identification of future transportation network deficiencies, and recommendation of improvements in all transportation modes to meet future needs. The CTP includes recommendations for 30 highway projects, 10 public transportation projects, and 45 bicycle/pedestrian projects. The recommended projects within or adjacent to Boone’s jurisdiction include all of the projects currently included in the STIP (see table above), as well as:

- Improvements to US 321 (Blowing Rock Road) – replace center turn lane with median
- Upgrade SR 1107 (NC 105 Bypass) to three-lane facility
- Upgrade NC 194 to four-lane facility from US 421 to Howards Creek Road
- Construct US 421 Bypass (Daniel Boone Parkway) – multi-lane divided facility south of Boone
- Upgrade State Farm Road to three-lane facility from NC 105 to Deerfield Road

### PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY

The Town of Boone has one water treatment facility and two raw water intakes (Winklers Creek and South Fork New River). The treatment facility’s rated total capacity is 3.0 million gallons per day (MGD). Monthly use is relatively constant, ranging from a high of 1.86 MGD in September 2016 to a low of 1.60 MGD in March 2016. The maximum day use in 2016 was 2.31 MGD.

The Town is currently constructing a new raw water intake on the South Fork New River to provide additional supply capacity.

The Town's water and sewer utility has 4,920 individual accounts. The table below shows these accounts by type and average water use.

<b>Account Type</b>	<b>Connections</b>	<b>Average Use (MGD)</b>
Residential	4,125	0.409
Commercial	742	0.515
Industrial	13	0.055
Institutional	39	0.077

Source: NC Department of Environmental Quality

### **SEWAGE TREATMENT**

The Town has one wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) that discharges to the South Fork New River. The maximum capacity for the plant is 4.82 MGD. Average use in 2016 was 2.21 MGD.

### **WATER RESOURCES**

#### Stormwater Management

NC General Statutes regulate the management of stormwater on development sites involving at least one acre of land disturbance. Additionally, the Town's Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) regulates stormwater management on all new development except single-family and two-family residences.

#### Water Supply Watersheds

Watershed areas are land areas contributing surface drainage to drinking water supply intake points as delineated on the Town of Boone Watershed Map. Development is subject to the restrictions provided in the Town's Unified Development Ordinance.

#### Flood Hazard Areas

The Town's Unified Development Ordinance regulates development within Flood Hazard Areas (Floodplains/Floodways). The Town uses Flood Insurance Rate Maps from FEMA to delineate the Flood Hazard Areas.

### **PARKS AND RECREATION**

The Town owns and maintains six Town Parks, and approximately four miles of paved greenway trail. The Town Parks include:

Daniel Boone Park  
Junaluska Park  
Boone Jaycee Park  
North Street Playground  
Clawson-Burnley Park  
Jimmy Smith Park  
Rivers Park

The Town leases property (State Farm fields) to Watauga County for County Parks and Recreation Department use. The County owns/operates additional recreation facilities in and around Boone, and operates recreation programs.

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## Appalachian State University

The Appalachian State University (ASU) campus is located on the west side of Boone, adjacent to the Downtown area. ASU owns approximately 600 acres within the Town's jurisdiction, including the campus area, the recently-purchased former Watauga High School site, and a large parcel along the Town of Boone Greenway. Approximately 250 acres are currently developed on campus.

ASU's 2017 enrollment is 17,537 (excluding distance learning students). Approximately 5,600 students (32%) live on campus. The table below shows ASU enrollment by year (total enrollment discrepancies due to dual-enrollments).

Year	Total Enrollment	Main Campus	Distance Education
2017	18,811	17,537	1,274
2015	17,269	16,432	837
2010	16,388	15,343	1,045
2005	13,812	13,077	735
2000	12,452	12,055	396
1995	11,651	11,426	225
1990	11,086	10,841	245
1985	9,370	9,129	241
1980	9,458	9,083	375
1975	8,820	7,991	829

Source: ASU

ASU developed a Campus Master Plan in 2010. The Plan provides recommendations for new 11 academic building projects, 7 residence hall projects, 7 support building projects, and 4 parking deck projects on the main campus. The Campus Master Plan is scheduled to be updated in 2020.

Update with newly adopted Master Plan information



## Chapter 3 Overall Objectives

The following objectives are deliberately broad in scope and less specific than either a policy statement or an implementation action. The objectives have been developed through the various public and stakeholder processes used in creation of past Comprehensive Plan versions, the Boone 2030 Plan, and this revision.

### Economic Development

**Promote economic growth through the Town’s position as a regional center for commerce, health care, and education. Utilize this position to attract technology and other knowledge-based jobs.**

A 2008 Market Study for the Town indicates a stable market for retail (4.5% vacancy rate), a two-year inventory of office space, and a five-year inventory of industrial space. Economic development efforts shall include consideration of affordable housing, and housing alternatives such as smaller homes, townhomes, and condominiums. The Town will focus its economic development efforts on two areas – Downtown, and the US 321 corridor.

#### **PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT**

**Manage development through the Unified Development Ordinance to achieve the following:**

**Encouragement of infill development**

**Mixed-use development**

**Compatibility of adjoining land uses**

**Predictability in project permitting**

The Future Land Use Map shall guide Boone’s leaders on location and intensity of future growth. The Future Land Use Map divides the Town into a spectrum of land use categories – Preserved Land, Conservation Land, Restricted Growth Sector (low density), Controlled Growth Sector (medium density), Intended Growth Sector (medium to high density), and Infill/Redevelopment Growth Sector. Land use priorities for the Town include protection of natural resources; development of a vibrant downtown; encouragement of denser/pedestrian-friendly mixed-use development; facilitation of infill development; and provision of a wide range of housing opportunities.

#### **DOWNTOWN**

**Support and enhance the cultural and historic significance of downtown Boone, and affirm its appealing, pedestrian orientation.**

To help achieve this objective, the following priorities should be followed:

Provide Wi-Fi network

Make wayfinding easy for visitors

Utilize available financing for public improvements (i.e., grants, tax increment financing, municipal service district tax)

Enhance streetscape with open spaces, furnishings, and public art

Provide adequate parking

Promote mixed-use infill development

Encourage decorative signage and storefront lighting

## **NEIGHBORHOODS**

**Ensure the sustainability of neighborhoods, especially through land use and traffic planning. Additionally, the Town shall encourage ASU to maximize on-campus housing for students.**

Encroachment of commercial and multi-family development on the perimeter of existing single-family neighborhoods has been the primary concern of residents desiring to protect the neighborhoods. The impacts of the adjacent development include cut-through traffic, light, and noise. Development of neighborhood plans will be used to determine area-specific issues, neighborhood characteristics, and recommendations.

## **HOUSING**

**Encourage a broad range of housing opportunities, to include both rental and for-sale units. Housing stock shall accommodate workforce, students, low-income persons, seniors, and retirees.**

To help achieve this objective, the Town shall facilitate the development of a variety of housing styles, sizes, and price. Opportunities for new housing exist through:

Mixed use developments in downtown  
Townhome and condominium developments  
Accessory dwelling units as permitted use  
Multi-family developments as permitted use  
Duplexes and triplexes as permitted uses  
Inclusionary zoning

## **COMMUNITY APPEARANCE**

**Manage development to create attractive commercial corridors, and improve appearance along public rights-of-way. Blend the built environment with the natural, scenic, and historic character of a High Country small town.**

To help achieve this objective, it is recommended that the Town develop architectural design standards for all buildings. Other mechanisms to improve community appearance include streetscape improvements, enhancement of corridor overlay standards, and creation of a Boone Design Studio.

## **HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

**Properties with historic, architectural, and cultural significance shall be identified and protected. An Historic Preservation Plan shall be developed which details significant properties, and specific strategies for historic preservation (i.e., tax credits, Town incentives, landmark designation).**

The Boone Historic Preservation Commission shall have primary responsibility for achievement of these objectives.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

**Relieve traffic congestion and reduce auto dependency by:**

- 1. improving the efficiency of existing facilities**
- 2. implementing planned bikeways**
- 3. developing an integrated system of sidewalks, paths, and crosswalks**

4. **enhancing mass transit opportunities**
5. **encouraging compact, mixed-use development**

To help achieve this objective, it is recommended that the following Liveable Transportation Principles be followed in future transportation planning:

1. Integrate land use and transportation
2. Utilize context sensitive design
3. Build complete streets
4. Enhance the regional network
5. Improve street connectivity
6. Manage roadway access
7. Be a transit-oriented community
8. Promote walkability
9. Become a bike-friendly community

The development and adoption of the Boone Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan (2014) provides a detailed strategy to improve sidewalk and bikeway connectivity. Other recommended strategies include development of park and ride lots, enhancement of transit service, and retrofit of existing three-lane and five-lane facilities.

#### **INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Engage in long-range planning for water and sewer systems, including utilization of water and sewer service to manage growth. Develop plan for management of stormwater.**

The Town's Public Works Department shall have primary responsibility for achievement of these objectives.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**

**Mitigate activities that contribute to water, air, light, and noise pollution.**

Suggested mechanisms to achieve this objective include:

- Increase minimum riparian buffer widths
- Enhance minimum open space requirements
- Limit new development in the 100-year floodplain
- Apply best management practices for water resource protection
- Allow for transfer of development rights
- Incorporate a Site Resource Assessment process for new development
- Apply best management practices for steep slope development

#### **OPEN SPACE**

**Integrate open space and greenways into urban development. Encourage denser, infill development to minimize impacts in floodplains, on ridgetops, and on steep slopes.**

Preservation of open space helps achieve many of the objectives under the **Community Appearance and Character** and **Environmental Quality** sections.

To help protect open space for water quality protection, recreational use, or agricultural use the Town may consider the following options:

- purchase of property
- regulatory requirements for new/redevelopment
- incentives for new/redevelopment
- establishing Transfer of Development Rights program

#### **TREES**

**Conserve existing trees and plant new trees, especially hardwoods.**

The Town's Urban Forestry Management Plan shall be used to guide implementation of this objective.

#### **PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Maintain a high level of policing and fire protection and plan the expansion of public safety services to coincide with projected population increases and identified needs.**

The Town's Fire and Police Departments shall have primary responsibility for achievement of this objective.

#### **ENERGY AND WASTE**

**Reduce waste generation, and the consumption of energy and water. Develop area recycling programs to the fullest. Encourage an anti-litter consciousness among residents and visitors. Promote renewable energy development by removing regulatory barriers and providing incentives.**

#### **UNIVERSITY**

**Emphasize cooperative planning among the Town, County, and University.**

Opportunities for cooperation with ASU exist in areas of road projects, AppalCART planning, park-and-ride lot development, environmental protection, and recreation facilities.

#### **RECREATION**

**Develop additional public recreation facilities, especially sports fields, greenways and indoor recreation centers. Expand the Town Greenway to connect to future Middle fork Greenway.**

The Town's Public Works Department shall have primary responsibility for achievement of these objectives.

#### **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

**Encourage active public involvement and volunteerism to expand the effectiveness of community planning and action.**

The Town shall engage existing advisory boards and commissions to achieve this objective. The Town shall follow State laws regarding public involvement in meetings, land-use decisions, and other applicable town actions.

## Chapter 4 Future Land Use Map

Development of the Boone 2030 Land Use Plan was visually represented on the Framework Plan Map. The Boone 2030 Plan recognized that the current Comprehensive Plan's Growth Strategy Map lacked the parcel-level detail needed to define areas for protection and varying levels of development/redevelopment. The Framework Plan Map provides the basis for this Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use Map.

The Future Land Use Map is intended to provide guidance on land-use regulation decisions. It provides the overall structure for appropriate patterns of growth and environmental conservation. The Future Land Use Map divides land into the following sectors:

### Preserved Lands

This sector includes basic "green infrastructure" providing critical habitat for wildlife; protection of water quality and protection from flooding and erosion; and needed recreation and greenspace for the human habitat. Appropriate land uses/development types in the Preserved Lands sector are:

1. conservation areas
2. parks & greenways
3. limited agricultural/forestry uses
4. water access areas
5. limited civic uses such as schools

### Reserved/Conservation Lands

This sector includes areas that are prime candidates for conservation easements or other open space acquisition/protection measures such as Transfer of Development Rights. In large part, these areas correspond with locations identified for viewshed protection in the Town's current regulations. This sector also corresponds with areas in the Secondary Water Pressure Zone, defined as elevations above 3,400 feet, which are difficult to efficiently serve with adequate public water pressure. Appropriate land uses/development types in the Reserved/Conservation Lands sector are:

1. Conservation areas
2. Parks & greenways
3. Agricultural and forestry uses
4. Limited civic uses such as schools
5. Very low-density residential development and clustered development

### Restricted Growth Sector

This sector is intended for relatively low density residential development. It includes existing low-density residential neighborhoods that are not appropriate for redevelopment. It also includes lands that are not proximate to thoroughfares and are not projected to be high growth areas due to limited access to

transportation networks and utilities. Appropriate land uses/development types in the Restricted Growth Sector are:

1. low density cluster developments
2. low-density residential development comprised predominately single-family detached structures and small scale multiple family units (e.g. duplexes, triplexes)
3. limited convenience retail uses
4. civic uses (parks, schools, religious and government uses)

### **Controlled Growth Sector**

This sector contains denser, mixed-use development that is typically close to thoroughfares and at key cross-road locations. It specifically includes areas that are already developed with neighborhood-serving retail and service uses or at key cross-roads where future development of this type is likely to occur. It also includes a mixture of higher density residential types (e.g., small lot single family houses, townhomes, apartment or condominium buildings, or mixed-use buildings) that are already occurring or would be appropriate to transition between higher intensity commercial uses and existing lower density neighborhoods. Appropriate land uses/development types in the Controlled Growth Sector are:

1. traditional neighborhood developments
2. single-family and multifamily residential
3. neighborhood mixed-use centers
4. neighborhood-scale commercial uses (retail and office)
5. civic uses
6. light industrial uses

### **Intended Growth Sector**

This sector is intended to apply along high-capacity regional thoroughfares at major transportation nodes, or along portions of highly-traveled corridors. Property in this sector generally falls within areas for higher-intensity, regional-serving development. Appropriate land uses/development types in the Intended Growth Sector are:

1. single-family and multifamily residential
2. neighborhood-serving commercial uses (retail and office)
3. civic uses
4. traditional neighborhood developments
5. neighborhood centers
6. regional centers
7. industrial districts

## Infill/Redevelopment Growth Sector

This sector is comprised of areas with existing development, with a relatively dense street grid, and which are appropriate for redevelopment or additional development. It includes the historic downtown and the King Street corridor as far east as Hardin Street. The area is appropriate for redevelopment and new infill development and well served with infrastructure (roads, utilities, etc.), and access to services and amenities. Appropriate land uses/development types in the Infill/Redevelopment Growth Sector are:

1. single-family and multifamily residential
2. commercial uses (retail and office)
3. mixed-use development
4. civic uses
5. light industrial uses

The Boone 2030 Framework Plan recommended, and the Future Land Use Map also includes, Regional Mixed-Use Centers, Neighborhood Centers, and Gateway Enhancement Corridors. These areas are located along high-traffic corridors, and are recommended for higher-intensity development. **Regional Mixed-Use Centers** are intended to contain employment and commercial uses that attract people from beyond the immediate neighborhoods and from surrounding communities. These centers are also appropriate for the area's highest density housing. **Neighborhood Centers** are intended to contain mixed-use development and limited civic or commercial development. **Gateway Enhancement Corridors** are located along the US 421 corridor at the eastern and western entrances to the Town. These areas are recommended for enhanced public and private investment to improve the appearance of these corridors for the public traveling into and through Boone.



# Chapter 5 Policies for Growth and Development

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Policies of the Boone Comprehensive Plan are designed to provide a basis for future decisions regarding general development, capital improvements, rezoning requests, subdivision approvals, and other related matters. The intention is to establish agreed upon principles from which a coordinated strategy for development can be implemented.

## **POLICY FORMAT**

Each of the Policy Categories presented in the Comprehensive Plan is addressed in the following format:

### **Narrative**

*A brief summary of the issues, relevant findings, and background information*

### **Policies and Actions**

*Brief statements of local government principles designed to achieve public objectives related to the issue*

## Economic Development

### NARRATIVE

During the past four decades, Boone’s economic base has shifted from its traditional industrial and agricultural sectors toward the service sector, represented most strongly by Appalachian State University, Watauga Medical Center, and the tourism industry. Watauga County has had lower unemployment levels than the state and the nation for several years, but the occupational choices available locally are dominated by the lower wage portion of the service sector’s jobs.

Most area residents support different or expanded economic activity only if it increases the opportunity for stable, higher wage jobs and enhances the quality of life for existing residents. Specifically, area residents have expressed a strong desire that any future economic development be consistent with maintaining the quality of the area’s existing natural resources.

While current business data is not available for the Town of Boone town limits, the table below provides an industry snapshot for the 28607 Zip Code Tabulation Area, which covers most of Watauga County, excluding Blowing Rock.

Industry	2017 Employment	Average Annual Wages	Change in employment, 2012-2017	Forecasted growth demand, 2017-2027
Agriculture, Forestry	109	\$12,791	-30	-10
Utilities	33	\$60,121	-7	-5
Construction	915	\$37,276	61	46
Manufacturing	505	\$30,249	-98	-79
Wholesale trade	364	\$49,470	-208	-9
Retail trade	2,895	\$23,779	186	27
Transportation, Warehousing	170	\$35,099	-30	-18
Information	197	\$36,614	-27	-39
Finance, Insurance	373	\$63,328	9	-9
Real Estate	400	\$33,539	100	-13
Professional Services	730	\$49,537	84	39
Management	229	\$57,542	2	-6
Administrative Services	555	\$40,039	34	4
Education	4,362	\$38,060	-1,356	-99
Health Care, Social Services	2,515	\$47,774	-482	335
Arts, Entertainment	239	\$21,753	-24	2
Lodging, Food Services	3,038	\$15,990	609	-37
Other Services	661	\$23,160	28	-6
Public Administration	747	\$36,148	72	-23

Source: Chmura Economics and Analytics, JobsEQ, 2017

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## **POLICIES AND ACTIONS**

- A.** The Town shall protect and enhance a high quality of life, image, cultural amenities, and natural beauty as the most effective, long term component of an economic development strategy.
  - 1. Continue to evaluate and amend development regulations to help ensure aesthetic quality in the area and preserve the natural beauty of the area.
  - 2. Support the Downtown Boone Development Association, Boone's Cultural Resources Advisory Board, ASU, and others in attracting quality cultural events to Boone.
  - 3. Balance the benefits of economic development projects with special concern for environmental quality issues.
- B.** New and expanding industries and businesses shall be encouraged which: 1) diversify the local economy, 2) train and use a skilled labor force and 3) increase area residents' incomes.
- C.** The Town shall encourage the development of a well-balanced tourism trade as a primary element of the area's economic future. Investments in services, facilities, and proper growth management shall be employed in furtherance of this policy.
- D.** Economic development efforts shall encourage the revitalization and reuse of currently unused or underutilized structures, sites, and infrastructure in appropriately located areas.
  - 1. Evaluate/amend development regulations to provide flexibility in the renovation and redevelopment of existing structures and sites.
  - 2. Continue to mitigate remediation of the property located at 482 State Farm Road (former Vermont American site).
  - 3. Pursue joint public-private economic development projects.
- E.** The Town shall maintain a public service and regulatory environment conducive to business recruitment and expansion, while at the same time enhancing the area's physical and human resources.
  - 1. Continue to look for ways to make development regulations and permit procedures more predictable and timely. Enable administrative review and permit issuance for development projects which, due to their small size or relatively minor impacts, may not require review by a formal public commission or board.
- F.** The Town shall support the development of new business parks.
  - 1. Identify suitable property for business park development.
- G.** The Town shall promote coordination of economic development resources with appropriate institutions and agencies. Regional coordination and interaction among areas with a shared economic interest shall be encouraged.
  - 1. Assist business recruitment and expansion efforts by providing demographic and market data and development information to potential developers and business prospects.
  - 2. Direct businesses requesting assistance to the Watauga County Economic Development Director.
  - 3. Continue to support the Watauga County Economic Development Commission as the lead economic development agency in the county. Continue to support and work with the Boone Area Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Development Authority, High Country Host, ASU, High

Country Council of Governments, Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute, others on issues of economic benefit to the whole community.

- H.** Appropriate educational and training programs shall be encouraged to help local residents, especially those unemployed and underemployed, take advantage of business expansion and to develop new skills.
  - 1.** Encourage the growth of a student internship program between area businesses, ASU and Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute as a means of providing training for Boone area citizens.
  - 2.** Actively pursue workforce training through ASU and Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute to meet existing needs of current employers and make efforts to develop the skills necessary for higher paying jobs.
  - 3.** Support careers education programs in the public schools.
- I.** Boone shall identify and provide services consistent with the needs of the area's growing retiree population.
  - 1.** Support local agencies' and institutions' efforts in the development of programs and services providing for the needs of the growing retiree population.

## **PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT**

### **NARRATIVE**

Subdivision and development of property in Boone is regulated by the Town's Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). The UDO establishes use districts and standards for lots, buildings, utilities, driveways/streets, parking, signage, and landscaping. The accompanying Town of Boone Zoning Map delineates the districts. The UDO establishes eight residential districts, five commercial districts, three educational districts, and one industrial district. The UDO also establishes the following overlay districts that contain supplemental development standards:

Special Flood Hazard Area  
Watershed District  
Corridor Overlay District  
Neighborhood Conservation District  
Viewshed Protection District  
Historic District

### **POLICIES AND ACTIONS**

- A. *Develop an Engineering Design and Construction Manual that includes details and specifications for streets, parking, water and sewer system components, driveways, stormwater system components, and grading activities.*
- B. *Develop formal Annexation Policy that establishes procedures and evaluation criteria.*

## **COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **NARRATIVE**

The location and intensity of commercial development impacts aesthetics, traffic, stormwater runoff, and adjoining property values. It also creates private and public sector revenue, and provides jobs. Achieving a publicly-acceptable balance of these impacts is a difficult and evolving process. Planning efforts in Boone have established the following principles related to commercial development:

1. very large scale commercial uses work best at the intersections of major streets
2. locating commercial buildings up to the street creates a sense of street enclosure and commercial signs can be incorporated into the design of the building itself
3. all-around architecture (buildings which are equally presentable on all sides) and accessibility can encourage pedestrian activity thereby reducing traffic and parking demand
4. Limiting driveway cuts and connection of parking lots can improve traffic movement and safety
5. mixed uses can reduce traffic demand
6. on-street parking can be highly effective in meeting the parking needs of small, pedestrian-oriented stores and businesses

Commercial development in Boone is highly influenced by the presence of Appalachian State University (ASU). The student population creates significant demand for retail and services. Also, the large

demand for multi-family housing from ASU's off-campus student population competes with commercial development for limited land supply.

The Town of Boone Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) currently regulates the location, appearance, and intensity of commercial development. All multi-family development projects in commercial districts must include a commercial component.

The UDO establishes the following commercial districts:

1. B1 Central Business District - provides for the development of the commercial and service center for the Town while maintaining its character, and to encourage appropriate residential uses in the central area of Town, normally as part of mixed-use developments
2. B2 Neighborhood Business District - provides for the development of low-density commercial and services that are accessible by pedestrians and cyclists from surrounding neighborhoods, which serve the day to day convenience needs of surrounding neighborhoods, and are of such nature as to be in harmony with the neighborhoods they serve
3. B3 General Business District - provides a wide range of consumer goods, convenience goods and personal services for the community and surrounding region
4. OI Office/Institutional District - provides a zoning district which promotes the development of moderately intensive office and institutional uses which are oriented toward the provision of services versus the sale of products
5. Wellness District - provides an area-specific zoning district located around the local hospital to promote a diverse mixture of medical, education, office, retail and residential uses within a compact, vibrant pedestrian oriented center while encouraging community interaction and transportation options

## **POLICIES AND ACTIONS**

- A. Uncontrolled strip development along the area's subcollector and minor streets shall be prohibited.
- B. The undesirable effects of existing strip development shall be reduced and/or reconfigured when redevelopment opportunities permit. Commercial and Office Development shall be encouraged to locate in planned shopping centers, office parks, and mixed use developments to stop the proliferation of strip development.
  1. Revise the Town's zoning text and map to encourage infill development.
- C. Commercial Centers shall be located adjacent to an arterial street.
- D. Automobile Orientated Neighborhood and Convenience Commercial Centers shall be encouraged to locate on a collector street or subcollector street at its intersection with an arterial street.
- E. Residentially scaled and designed neighborhood businesses may be a planned element of newly developed or redeveloped neighborhoods. The height, width, setback, building materials, roof pitch, etc. of neighborhood businesses should be consistent with the scale and character of the residential area they serve.
- F. Commercial uses may be allowed to develop by consolidation and expansion of existing commercially zoned property only when such consolidation and expansion does not encroach upon a viable residential area.

- G.** Effective buffering and/or landscaping shall be provided where a large scale or automobile-orientated commercial or office use adjoins an existing or planned residential use.
- H.** Encroachment of incompatibly scaled and designed commercial uses into viable existing or planned residential areas shall be prohibited.
- I.** Office and institutional development may be encouraged as a transitional land use between residential areas and higher intensity commercial activities.
- J.** Highway Oriented Commercial uses shall be clustered along segments of arterial streets and contain land uses which are mutually compatible and reinforcing in use and design. Businesses shall be encouraged to coordinate their site designs with other nearby businesses. Design factors shall include, at a minimum, shared parking and street access, convenient pedestrian and vehicular movement, and consistent sign standards.
- K.** Encourage commercial development to site buildings up to street and place parking in the interior or rear of site. Require large-scale commercial developments to include transit stops.
- L.** Properly planned mixed use developments that promote efficient provision of public services shall be encouraged within the business districts.

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## **INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **NARRATIVE**

Boone's recruitment of large manufacturing firms has been hampered by the Town's location away from major interstate highways, rail service, and commercial air facilities. Additionally, steep topography and competition for land from commercial interests is a deterrent to large industrial operations. Existing manufacturing operations in Boone are primarily locally-grown businesses in niche industries. Additionally, there are existing resource extraction, concrete, and asphalt businesses in and around Boone.

The Town of Boone Unified Development Ordinance establishes the M1 Manufacturing District to accommodate appropriate light industrial and warehouse enterprises engaged in the assembly, fabrication, finishing, packaging, or warehousing of goods and materials, including the storage and processing of raw materials into other products.

### **POLICIES AND ACTIONS**

- A.** The Town shall encourage a public service and regulatory environment conducive to light industrial development, provided that long term environmental quality considerations shall not be compromised.
  - 1. Support establishment of new, environmentally friendly, light industries.
- B.** Industrial development shall be located on land which is physically suitable and has unique locational advantages for industry. Advanced planning for the identification of such land shall be encouraged.
  - 1. Review the town's zoning maps to determine the appropriate location of existing and future light industries.
- C.** Industrial development shall not be located in areas which would diminish the desirability of existing and planned non-industrial uses, nor shall non-industrial uses be allowed to encroach upon existing or planned industrial sites.
- D.** Heavy industrial uses shall not be permitted within the Town of Boone.
- E.** Light industrial uses may be located in or near existing built up areas to take advantage of available services and to minimize home to work distances. Careful design and or buffering may be required to ensure compatibility with surrounding areas.
- F.** Warehousing, storage, and distribution facilities shall have direct access to an arterial street, and shall be visually buffered according to their location.

## **AGRICULTURAL & RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **NARRATIVE**

The preservation of agricultural land serves many functions. It provides income to individuals; contributes to the local, state, and national economy; contributes to the character of the Boone community; provides wildlife habitat; and protects air and water quality.

The Town of Boone Unified Development Ordinance establishes the RA Residential/Agricultural District as a district in which the principal use of the land is for low density residential and agricultural purposes.

### **POLICIES AND ACTIONS**

- A.** Farms and woodlands shall be recognized as an integral part of the planning area's open space system.
  1. Farms and woodland open spaces shall be conserved through a comprehensive rural area conservation strategy, to include rural area density standards, tax incentives, conservation easements, and other means. These areas should be considered in the planning for pedestrian ways, bikeways, greenways, and other open space needs.
  2. Develop an open space/green infrastructure plan.
  3. Investigate expansion of the Town's jurisdiction as a means to provide proactive planning.
  4. Establish Town support for local farm to local market initiatives with NC Cooperative Extension and ASU Department of Sustainable Development.

## **HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS**

### **NARRATIVE**

Past planning efforts in Boone have recognized the challenge to preserve existing single family neighborhoods. Many of Boone's neighborhoods have been negatively affected by encroaching commercial and apartment development, traffic, and noise. An important factor influencing the quality of life in existing neighborhoods in Boone has been the impact of traffic movement within the Town. The Town has taken steps to mitigate the problem of neighborhood cut-through traffic.

Another recurring theme from previous planning initiatives is the need for affordable housing. The Town has established the Affordable Housing Task Force to examine public and private sector opportunities to provide affordable housing.

Accessory housing is a term used to describe a variety of housing forms, all of which are secondary to primary residence but share the same site or structure. They include garage apartments, mother-in-law apartments, or other accessory housing units. This form of housing is typically convenient to existing urban services, and thus places little additional burden on the area's public infrastructure and road system. Accessory housing also offers particular promise to meet the needs of the area's growing retiree population.

The UDO establishes the following residential districts:

1. R1 Single Family Residential District - provides a low-density living area consisting only of single-family dwelling units and other related uses necessary for a sound neighborhood
2. R1A Single-Family Residential with Accessory Dwelling District - provides a low-density living area consisting of single-family dwellings with or without subordinate, accessory dwellings
3. RR Residential Rehabilitation District - designed to recognize the need to preserve existing housing stock for low income occupants through rehabilitation efforts
4. R2 Two-Family Residential District - provides a medium density living area consisting of single-family and two-family dwellings, and other related uses necessary for a sound neighborhood
5. R3 Multiple-Family Residential District - provides a high-density area consisting of three or more dwelling units per lot plus limited service use
6. R4 Two-Family/Manufactured Home District - provides a medium density area consisting of two-family uses, and manufactured homes on single lots
7. RA Residential/Agricultural District - established as a district in which the principal use of the land is for low density residential and agricultural purposes
8. MH Manufactured Home Park District - established to encourage well planned, attractive land development in the Town by providing fair standards and beneficial requirements for the siting, operation, and maintenance of manufactured homes

## **POLICIES AND ACTIONS**

- A.** The protection and rehabilitation of viable neighborhoods shall be encouraged to ensure their continued existence as a major housing source and as a reflection of the area's image as an attractive, highly livable community.
  - 1. As road widenings are proposed, carefully evaluate their potential impact on the integrity of residential areas, pedestrian-oriented commercial districts, and the ability of bicyclists and pedestrians to function in the affected area.
  - 2. Prepare neighborhood plans as requested to address land use, traffic, housing, neighborhood business services, infrastructure improvements, parks and recreation needs, crime, and safety.
  - 3. Prepare a document readily accessible to the public that details residential zoning areas and the date on which each was implemented.
  - 4. Establish a planning and development policy that protects older established residential neighborhoods from the negative effects of adjacent commercial development.
  - 5. Establish a task force to determine how like communities successfully enforce their existing residential codes. Items requiring focused attention include detailed analysis of implementation and enforcement. For example, penalties, personnel requirements, budget implications, long-term effect on town character, and economic development.
  - 6. Implement a residential zoning enforcement policy based on the task force analysis above.
- B.** Street system designs which discourage through traffic on purely local streets while allowing for free circulation within the neighborhood shall be encouraged.
  - 1. Update the Town's standards for subdivision street layouts, emphasizing circulation between neighborhoods and the ability of pedestrians and bicyclists to travel on back streets throughout the town.
  - 2. Seek federal and state funding to provide for bicycle paths to connect residential areas with commercial and university districts.
- C.** Proposed residential development which would expose residents to harmful effects of incompatible development or to environmental hazards shall be prohibited.
  - 1. Amend the zoning map and UDO to prevent residential uses from locating adjacent to existing developments and other uses which may have characteristics which cannot be effectively mitigated.
- D.** Innovative and flexible land planning and development practices shall be encouraged to create livable developments which better safeguard natural and historic resources.
  - 1. Continue to evaluate opportunities in the UDO for flexibly designed and located single-family and multi-family residential developments.
  - 2. Establish ongoing relationships with ASU's departments of Geography and Planning, Sustainable Development, and Sustainable Technology And The Built Environment to develop, enhance, and implement efforts toward creating affordable housing, appropriate infill development, neighborhood livability standards, visitability standards (physical accessibility), and design standards for multi-family development. This should include attention to lighting, bike and pedestrian pathways, and federal, state, and local funding sources.

- E.** Factors in determining preferred locations for high density residential development shall include: close proximity to the university, employment, or shopping centers; access to arterial streets and the transit system; the availability of public services and facilities; and compatibility with adjacent land uses.
  - 1. Review the UDO for the appropriate placement of high density housing near urban activity centers that are coordinated with transit system stops.
- F.** The affordable housing needs of area residents, particularly elderly and low to moderate income residents, shall be recognized in Town policies and actions regarding residential development.
  - 1. Seek federal and state funding to provide for low to moderate income housing.
  - 2. Provide incentives for affordable housing.
  - 3. Remove regulatory barriers to affordable housing options such as cottages, small homes, neighborhood-scaled multi-family (2-4 units), and in-home rentals.
- G.** Compact, full service neighborhoods, offering opportunities for living, working, shopping, and gathering places, shall be encouraged in newly planned developments, as well as for redeveloping areas.
- H.** The overall housing unit density for proposed infill residential development or redevelopment should be compatible with the average density of existing areas.
- I.** Evaluate current requirements and district allowances for mixed-use development in the Unified Development Ordinance and Zoning Map.

## **DOWNTOWN**

### **NARRATIVE**

Residents have expressed a strong desire that the traditional rural and small town, high country atmosphere of Boone be retained. Further, Boone's downtown largely represents the last vestiges of the town's original character. The Town has enacted a number of UDO text amendments which have as their objective the preservation and improvement of Downtown's prevailing character, building setbacks, street yard environs, and landscape standards.

Development of a plan for Downtown should be led by citizen's steering committee, comprised of downtown area merchants, property owners, university officials, Town officials, and nearby residents.

The Town of Boone Unified Development Ordinance establishes the B1 Central Business District to provide for the development of the commercial and service center for the Town while maintaining its character, and to encourage appropriate residential uses in the central area of Town, normally as part of mixed-use developments. The current Town of Boone Zoning Map classifies the Downtown area as B1.

The Town has an established municipal service district (MSD). An MSD is a defined area within a municipality or county in which the unit's governing board levies an additional property tax in order to provide extra services to the residents or properties in the district. Boone's MSD encompasses 142 parcels covering 54 acres in the downtown area. Revenue from the MSD is used for infrastructure improvements and promotion of businesses in the downtown area.

### **POLICIES AND ACTIONS**

**A.** Develop a Master Plan and Capital Improvement Plan for Downtown, to address:

- an overall landscape strategy for the public right-of-way in coordination with private sector landscape treatments, e.g. street trees, planter boxes, planting beds
- the adequacy and appearance of street lighting
- the need for additional street amenities such as benches, trash receptacles, and directory signs
- specific architectural and design standards for downtown consistent with its location, setting, and various functions
- enhanced design guidelines that specifically address desired architectural and landscape details
- development of a market assessment
- development of a signage and wayfinding program that highlights the arts and crafts industry
- parking, transit, and pedestrian transportation needs

**B.** The Town, in concert with the downtown property owners and merchants, shall encourage public and private efforts to develop and publicize off-street parking lots in the downtown area.

1. Develop a plan and establish a timetable for the construction of off-street public parking facilities including well designed parking decks (decks other than traditional concrete boxes).
2. Develop shared parking decks with ASU.

- C. A variety of mutually compatible and supportive mixed uses, including residential, shall be encouraged in the downtown area.
  - 1. Develop strategies that will assist in providing a diversity of commercial and service businesses more reflective of the town's economic and demographic profile.
- D. Public and private developments shall be encouraged to incorporate local artistry into public and semi-public spaces downtown.
  - 1. Consider the placement of public art (including murals and statuary) at appropriate locations in the downtown area.
  - 2. Support the development and enhancement of cultural facilities (e.g. art and antique galleries).
- E. Public and private development decisions in the downtown area shall exhibit a special concern for maintaining the intensive, pedestrian oriented character of the district.
  - 1. Evaluate the need for additional sidewalks and crosswalks and make physical improvements to existing sidewalks and crosswalks in the downtown area.
  - 2. Evaluate the needs of bicyclists and take appropriate action regarding bicycle travel and storage needs in the downtown area.
  - 3. Incorporate transit stops into the downtown area for the convenience of the bus riders.
  - 4. Planned improvements shall emphasize needs of the pedestrian in building design.
  - 5. Create pedestrian alley between King Street and Howard Street.
- F. The maintenance and revitalization of downtown Boone, as well as planning for its future development, will reflect the realities and qualities befitting its geographical setting and function as a center of (1) commercial and service activities, (2) educational and cultural activities, events and (3) public services.
  - 1. Support events throughout the year that promote the downtown area as the cultural center of Boone.
  - 2. Continue to support the efforts of the Downtown Boone Development Association, the North Carolina Main Street Program, and the Boone Area Chamber of Commerce.
  - 3. Encourage private investment and seek public funding opportunities for downtown revitalization projects.
  - 4. Engage the University in both planning and implementation actions.

## Infrastructure

### **TRANSPORTATION**

#### **NARRATIVE**

There are approximately 78 total miles of roads within the Town limits of Boone. This includes all North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), Town, and privately maintained streets and highways. The Town maintains 43 miles, NCDOT maintains 19 miles, and 16 miles are privately maintained. The Town received approximately \$440,000 in 2016 from NCDOT's Powell Bill State Aid program.

The Town is traversed by several major highways that provide access to surrounding areas and counties. These include US Highway 421, US Highway 321, US Highway 221, NC Highway 105, and NC Highway 194. All of these routes are combined routes for certain sections through Boone.

Public transportation is provided in Boone by AppalCART. AppalCART currently operates thirteen fixed routes in and around Boone, and demand-response trips throughout Watauga County. Town of Boone contributes financially to AppalCART, and is represented on AppalCART's Board.

NCDOT schedules transportation projects through its 10-year State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The current STIP covers years 2018-2027. The STIP is updated every two years to adjust for changes in funding and priorities. The Table below details STIP projects within or adjacent to Boone.

<b>NCDOT Project No.</b>	<b>Route</b>	<b>Limits</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Construction Start</b>
R-2566B	NC 105	NC 105 Bypass to Foscoe	Widen roadway	2023
R-2615	US 321/421	NC 105 Bypass to Vilas	Widen to multi-lanes	2024
R-5830	Deerfield Rd.	State Farm Rd. to Wilson Ridge Rd.	Upgrade roadway	2020
U-5603	NC 105	US 321 to NC 105 Bypass	Upgrade roadway	2021
U-5705	US 321/NC 105	Intersection	Construct upgrades	2021
U-5715	King St./College St.	Intersection	Construct improvements	2019
U-5810	Bamboo Rd.; Wilson Ridge Rd.	US 421 to Deerfield Rd.	Widen roadway	2020

NCDOT, the High Country Rural Planning Organization (RPO), and the local governments in Wilkes County completed a Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) for Watauga County in 2013. The CTP process involves projection of population and employment growth, identification of future transportation network deficiencies, and recommendation of improvements in all transportation modes to meet future needs. The recommended road projects within or adjacent to Boone, in addition to the STIP projects listed above, include:

1. US 321, from US 421 to Fairway Drive - The CTP proposes converting US 321 to a boulevard by removing the center turn lane, providing a median, and bicycle accommodations
2. NC 105 Bypass, from NC 105 to US 321/421 - The CTP proposes improving NC 105 BYP (SR 1107) to a three-lane major thoroughfare with 4 foot paved shoulders to accommodate bicycles
3. NC 194, from US 421 to Howards Creek Road - The CTP proposes improving this section of NC 194 to a boulevard. This would be accomplished by widening to four lanes and adding a median. Bicycle and pedestrian accommodations are also recommended along the proposed project
4. US 421 Bypass (Daniel Boone Parkway) – The CTP proposes constructing a multi-lane bypass south of Boone
5. US 421, from NC 194 to Old US 421 - The CTP proposes improving US 421 to a boulevard from NC 194 to Old 421 by removing the center turn lane and providing a median
6. NC 105, from US 421 to NC 105 Bypass - The CTP proposes improving this section of NC 105 to a boulevard by removing the center turn lane, providing a median, and bicycle accommodations
7. Poplar Grove Road Bypass – The CTP proposes constructing a new facility connecting Homespun Hills Road and Bodenheimer Drive
8. State Farm Road, from NC 105 to Deerfield Road - The CTP proposes improving State Farm Road to a three lane, curb and gutter, cross section with wide outside lanes to accommodate bicycles
9. Greenway Road, from Winklers Creek Road to Leola Drive – Widen to 12 foot lanes
10. Meadowview Drive, from US 321 to US 321 – Widen to 12 foot lanes
11. Leola Drive, from Greenway Road to US 321 – Widen to 12 foot lanes
12. Poplar Grove Road, from Rivers Street to NC 105 – Widen to 12 foot lanes
13. Rivers Street, from Poplar Grove Road to US 321 (Hardin Street) – Widen to 12 foot lanes
14. Winklers Creek Road, from Greenway Road to Wilson Drive – Widen to 12 foot lanes

The primary project intended to alleviate traffic congestion and improve safety in Town is the US Highway 421 Bypass. The project, identified as NCDOT Project No. U-2703 (also referenced as the Daniel Boone Parkway), is included in the 2013 Watauga County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP). The project is necessary to reduce the current mixed use of US 421 by through and local traffic, improve connectivity between US 421 and US 321/221 and NC 105, and to improve the traffic flow and safety of the traveling public. The Town continues to place a very high priority on this project and looks forward to seeing this project fully funded.

Related to the US 421 Bypass project, there is consensus on the desire to see King Street in downtown Boone retain its present character and design in terms of pedestrian and automobile movement and on-street parking. Under no circumstance should the number of vehicle lanes on King Street downtown be increased to move greater volumes of traffic at the expense of on-street parking or pedestrian movement. Similarly, while proposals to improve the appearance and functionality of Howard Street are well supported, an increase to move greater volumes of traffic at the expense of parking or pedestrian movement would be unacceptable.

In 2014, the Town adopted the Boone Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan. The Plan is long-term in scope, involved extensive public involvement, and includes the following elements:

1. Inventory of existing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure
2. Analysis of existing plans and policies affecting pedestrian and bicycle transportation
3. Prioritized facility recommendations
4. Policy recommendations
5. Funding resources
6. Facility design guidelines

Specifically, the Boone Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan recommends a total of 70.25 miles of various new bicycle facilities (signed routes, bike lanes, paved shoulder, etc.), and provides details on 12 priority bicycle projects. The Plan makes recommendations for 53 specific sidewalk, greenway, and pedestrian crossing projects, and provides details on 10 prioritized pedestrian projects.

### **POLICIES AND ACTIONS**

- A.** Develop a connected grid network of streets in Boone to provide easy connections between residential and commercial land uses, making them closer together and accessible by walking and bicycling.
- B.** Planned systems of pedestrian ways, bikeways, greenways, and similar facilities shall be encouraged as energy efficient and environmentally sound transportation alternatives.
  1. Implement the adopted 2014 Town of Boone Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan.
- C.** The adopted 2013 Watauga County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP), and subsequent adopted updates, shall be followed to promote a hierarchical, functional road network and to promote the proper arrangement of land patterns by controlling the location of streets and roads.
  1. Explore opportunities for major traffic planning initiatives between the Town of Boone and ASU in accordance with the 2013 Watauga County CTP.
  2. Promote the following additional projects not included in the CTP:
    - a. open Howard Street between Appalachian Street and College Street
    - b. convert Hodges Gap Road to three lanes between NC 105 Spur and US 421
    - c. extend Appalachian Street from Howard Street to Rivers Street
    - d. reconfigure intersection of Old Bristol Road/US 421/NC 105 Spur
- D.** Redesign major street intersections to improve traffic flow.
  1. Construct additional turning lanes at intersections where traffic is backed-up during peak traffic times.
  2. Construct roundabout at intersection of Hardin Street and Rivers Street.
- E.** Sufficient right-of-way along new roadways and at major intersections shall be acquired to allow future facility expansion.
  1. Amend development regulations to require sufficient right-of-way in new developments.

- F. A program of improvements and maintenance to maximize the use of existing streets shall be employed as a cost-effective means of meeting area transportation needs, provided that such improvements shall not destroy the livability of a residential or commercial area for the sole purpose of moving greater traffic volumes.
  - 1. Synchronize all traffic signals and coordinate sign locations in the Town with priority given to the downtown area.
  - 2. Continue and expand the role of Boone's Transportation Committee, whose responsibility is to recommend priorities and action plans for small scale transportation improvements.
  - 3. Reallocate space on Rivers Street and Hardin Street.
  - 4. Develop a long-term plan for US 321 that includes parallel access roads.
- G. The operational success of the area's mass transit system shall be enhanced through the encouragement of compact, transit sensitive development patterns. Site planning that incorporates transit stops and convenience clusters shall be required, where appropriate.
  - 1. Evaluate and amend site plan standards to include provisions for transit stops, sidewalks and pedestrian ways, bikeways, and secure bicycle storage.
  - 2. Construct transit stops with covered passenger shelters to encourage ridership.
  - 3. Construct bus stop pull-out areas or lanes at intersections to avoid holding up traffic along traffic corridors.
  - 4. Require new multi-family developments to contract with AppalCART for regular service to site.
  - 5. Support expansion of AppalCART services to new and currently unserved large traffic generators.
- H. Policies that have the effect of reducing automobile dependency, use, and congestion shall be supported.
  - 1. Prepare educational information concerning the location and use of bikeways, greenways, the bus system, and other forms of transportation as alternatives to the automobile.
  - 2. Coordinate with ASU on implementation of the Boone Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan and expansion of AppalCART service to improve access to ASU.
- I. Driveway cuts along major streets and roads shall be limited to allow these streets to serve primarily as safe traffic movement corridors or, alternatively, to maximize curb frontage for on-street parking.
  - 1. Periodically evaluate the Town's driveway regulations to minimize driveway cuts onto area streets.
  - 2. Consolidate driveways and develop cross-parcel connections along US 321 (Blowing Rock Road) between NC 105 and Deerfield Road.
- J. Private roads shall meet design standards and maintenance provisions established in the Unified Development Ordinance.
- K. The Town shall encourage the development and use of park and ride lots at the edge of town when and where demand warrants.
  - 1. Plan for park and ride lots on the perimeter of town.

- L. All future road construction within the Town shall be examined for bike and pedestrian feasibility. Wherever possible, compatible bike lanes and pedestrian walkways shall be implemented in conjunction with accompanying road construction.
  1. Facilitate the development of central medians in the town's main roadways to assist in the creation of safe pedestrian crossings.
  2. Explore funding options for conversion of the center turn-lane of Hardin Street so as to enhance the character of the street and promote shared use by cars, businesses, the university, bikes, and pedestrians.
  3. Work with NCDOT when planning new roadways or roadway improvements. Stress the importance of bike and pedestrian ways, bike and pedestrian crossings, and landscaping.

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## **UTILITIES**

### **NARRATIVE**

The Town of Boone operates water treatment/distribution and wastewater collection/treatment systems. The water system is interconnected with ASU and Town of Blowing Rock, and the sewer system is connected to ASU. The Town is currently constructing a new raw water intake on South Fork New River approximately 10 miles east of Boone. The Town has a supplemental water intake on Winklers Creek. The Town's wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) discharges to South Fork New River on the east side of town.

Boone's water treatment facility has a permitted capacity of 3.0 million gallons per day (MGD). Monthly withdrawal is relatively constant, ranging from a low of 1.59 MGD in May 2016 to a high of 1.86 MGD in September 2016. The maximum day use in 2016 was 2.31 MGD. The Town is in the process of expanding the water treatment plant to 4.5 MGD.

The Town's water utility has 4,920 individual accounts. The table below shows these accounts by type and average use.

<b>Account Type</b>	<b>Connections</b>	<b>Metered Average Use (MGD)</b>
Residential	4,126	0.409
Commercial	742	0.515
Industrial	13	0.055
Institutional	39	0.077

Source: NC Department of Environmental Quality

The Town's water system includes approximately 102 miles of water distribution lines, and a total finished water storage capacity of 5.1 million gallons.

The Town's WWTP has a permitted capacity of 4.82 MGD. Average use in 2016 was 2.21 MGD.

The Town maintains a Capital Improvement Plan for the water and wastewater systems. It is updated annually.

### **POLICIES AND ACTIONS**

- A.** Extensions of water and/or sewer services that could result in scattered, non-directed development and costly provision of other urban services shall be prohibited. Priority for extensions will be given to servicing planned densely developed areas where environmental and economic benefits can be realized.
  1. Establish revised written water and sewer service extension policies consistent with the Future Land Use Map.
  2. Establish an incentive program to discourage development within the Preserved Lands and Reserved Lands/Conservation Areas on the Future Land Use Map.

- B.** Continued improvements to the public sewage collection and treatment facilities shall be supported, with priority given to servicing existing or planned densely developed areas where environmental and economic benefits can be realized.
- C.** Area-wide cooperation and support shall be sought in bringing in alternative energy services to the Boone Area.
  - 1. Establish an Energy Task force.
  - 2. Develop a Renewable Energy Plan.
  - 3. Remove regulatory barriers to renewable energy and provide incentives for their use.
- D.** Long range planning for a possible stormwater collection and treatment system shall be supported, including the development of financial and regulatory strategies.
  - 1. Prepare a community-wide stormwater management strategy to address the future implementation of NPDES Phase II program requirements.

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## PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE

### **NARRATIVE**

The Town owns and maintains six Town Parks, and approximately four miles of paved greenway trail.

The Town Parks include:

Daniel Boone Park  
Junaluska Park  
Boone Jaycee Park  
North Street Playground  
Clawson-Burnley Park  
Jimmy Smith Park  
Rivers Park

(Add acreage & GIS maps of parks. Also list of Town owned open space parcels).

The Town leases property (State Farm fields) to Watauga County for operation of County Parks and Recreation use. The County owns/operates additional recreation facilities in and around Boone, and operates recreation programs.

The Town of Boone Unified Development Ordinance has minimum recreation space requirements for multifamily developments and manufactured home parks. Recreation space is defined as the portion of total open space and livability space plus enclosed floor area, which is reserved and improved for the common recreational use of residents.

The Future Land Use Map includes a category of Preserved Lands, which includes existing Open Space.

The existing Open Space consists of the following:

Parks and greenways  
Wetlands, streams, and stream buffers  
Federal and state lands that are preserved  
Land under conservation easements  
Cemeteries

Open space preservation benefits water quality, wildlife habitat, and homeowner flood insurance rates. The Town's UDO mandates preservation of open space in new development and redevelopment through Minimum Livability Space Ratios (LSR). Livability Space is defined in the UDO as natural areas, lawns and other landscaped areas, walkways, terraces, sitting areas, outdoor recreational areas and the pervious, landscaped portion of street rights-of-way. A maximum of one-third of the livability space required for a development may be impervious (e.g., paved terraces or sitting areas). LSRs are the portion of the required livability space as percentage of total parcel area. LSR requirements range from .65 in the RA District to .27 in the OI, B2, B3, and U1 Districts. There is no LSR requirement in the B1 District

### **POLICIES AND ACTIONS**

- A. Future park development and open spaces shall be planned to provide for the rational and equitable distribution of recreation and open space opportunities within the planning area. Public facilities

shall be provided to address the unmet needs of area residents lacking access to university or private recreational facilities.

1. Expand the existing Greenway system to make connections to Boone Mall and ASU's main campus.
- B.** Financial support shall be provided to the rehabilitation, upkeep, and expansion of existing facilities first, and to new facilities second.
1. Continue and enhance support for near term improvements to existing parks and facilities.
- C.** In determining future sites for park, recreation and open space facilities, multiple objectives for natural area conservation, visual enhancement, promotion of cultural and historic preservation, watershed, and flood prone area protection shall be considered.
1. Prepare an Open Space/Green Infrastructure Plan.
- D.** Land acquisition for new recreation sites in advance of need shall be encouraged to achieve desirable locations at cost effective levels.
1. Prepare a long range, community-wide master parks and recreation plan to identify long term land acquisition and facility needs in keeping with the growth of the community.
  2. Prepare an information pamphlet identifying the tax advantages and process for making property and land easement donations.
- E.** Provision of open space and recreational facilities shall be encouraged in private developments and through intergovernmental and public/private partnerships.
1. Consider the establishment of a land dedication provision (including fee-in-lieu option) in the Town's development regulations. Coordinate such dedications fully with pedestrian, bikeway or greenway space objectives.
  2. Consider the establishment of a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program, in which sensitive lands are preserved by selling development rights to owners of other properties in exchange for higher density.
  3. Combine development of park space with environmental projects such as stream daylighting.
- F.** While emphasizing programs which serve the unmet recreation needs of the greatest number of people, the Town shall strive to meet the needs of specific population subgroups, including, particularly, teenagers, the elderly and the physically challenged.
1. Establish an inter-generational advisory committee to evaluate the needs of seniors and youth in Boone.

## Public Safety

### **NARRATIVE**

The Boone Fire Department serves an area of 40.5 square miles which includes the Town limits and a Rural Fire Service District surrounding the Town. It operates from three stations, and has 28 career and 18 volunteer members. The ISO (Insurance Service Office) rating is 3 inside the city limits and a protection class 5 within five miles of a station.

The Boone Police Department has 36 sworn police officers and 11 civilian employees. It contains the following units and divisions:

1. narcotics/vice
2. forensics
3. canine unit
4. traffic unit
5. bike patrol
6. school resource

ASU also operates a police force, which has cross-jurisdictional authority with the Boone Police Department.

### ***Objectives***

Objectives for the Town's public safety program include the following:

- Reduce the loss of life and property in the event of an emergency.
- Plan the expansion of law enforcement protection to coincide with the current and projected population increases and identified crime-related problems.
- Provide effective police services, including law enforcement, crime prevention, community service, and order maintenance.
- Dispatch emergency services in an expeditious and orderly manner.
- Maintain a high level of emergency management and civil defense preparedness.
- Continually update, revise and initiate new plans and develop citizen preparedness necessary to react efficiently to disasters.
- Promote public participation and awareness of public safety plans and programs.

### **POLICIES AND ACTIONS**

- A. The Town shall employ community education, school, and public involvement programs to enhance community awareness of public safety issues.
  1. Continue on-going community programs such as the Ride Along Program, the D.A.R.E. program, Police Explorers, School Resource Officers, the Bicycle Safety Program, and Traffic Related Safety Programs.

2. Continue to promote the Community Related Policing Concept.
  3. Continue to reduce crime through Problem Oriented Policing.
- B.** The Town shall periodically review the need for additional paid personnel, capital improvements and equipment needs to meet or exceed public safety standards, insurance ratings and other measures of public safety.
1. The need for additional paid fire department personnel to provide 24-hour staffing will be evaluated annually.
  2. Replacement schedules for retirement of aging fire and police apparatus will be updated annually.
  3. Evaluate law enforcement personnel needs annually.
  4. Set standards for recruitment of police personnel and attend career days at various education institutions.
- C.** The Town shall periodically review the need for and sponsor professional level training for law enforcement, fire, and emergency personnel.
1. Continue specialized training to meet or exceed the technical requirements of the law enforcement profession.
  2. Continue specialized training for fire personnel in areas of hazardous materials, confined space rescue, driver-operator and structural firefighting.
- D.** The Town shall enforce the state building code and flood prevention regulations to avert or minimize loss of life and property during natural disasters.

## Environmental Quality

### **NARRATIVE**

The Town's UDO currently includes provisions for flood hazard reduction, for stormwater management, and for sedimentation and erosion control. The flood hazard reduction provisions regulate new construction and substantial improvements (residential and non-residential) based on regulatory flood protection elevation. The UDO provisions also address subdivisions, manufactured homes, recreational vehicles, hazardous waste storage, fuel storage, accessory structures relative to floodplains. Additionally, the provisions prohibit construction and fill within floodways, with limited exceptions.

The UDO provisions for sedimentation and erosion control require containment of sediment on construction sites, 25-foot stream buffers, and establishment of ground cover. The stormwater provisions establish standards for stormwater management structures. Generally, stormwater must be managed to prevent adjacent properties from being unreasonably affected as a result of new development. Specifically, the UDO requires stormwater on new development to be managed such that discharge rate is not increased from pre-development rates.

The Town provides weekly curbside solid waste and recycling collection for residences. The collection services are provided by a private contractor. The Town provides collection of brush, appliances, and large items by residents upon request. Also, the Town maintains a recycling center on Horn in the West Drive, provided primarily for residents of apartments that don't provide recycling collection.

The Town's UDO currently does not specifically define/address polluting industries, or regulate hazardous materials storage. It does contain standards for manufacturing operations that address visible emissions, odors, noise, and dust.

The Town promotes water conservation through the Every Drop Counts program. The Town provides conservation audit materials, has a toilet rebate program, and conducts elementary school and public education on water conservation. The Town promotes litter removal through hosting the Adopt-A-Street program. The Town organizes participants and provides safety vests, bags, bag collection, and signage.

The Town of Boone regulates development in two water supply watersheds. These watersheds were created and classified by the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality, which mandates local governments to manage development in classified watersheds. The two watersheds are the Winklers Creek watershed (WS-II classification), and the South Fork New River watershed (WS-IV classification). The Town's UDO establishes a Watershed District in which provisions are set that regulate use and density of development within the different classified watersheds.

The watersheds are divided into Critical Area (1/2 mile upstream of intake), and Protected Area (extending 10 miles upstream of intake). The Critical Areas contain more restrictive development regulations than the Protected Areas. The Critical Area of the Winklers Creek watershed covers 3.0 acres in Town limits, and the Protected Area of the Winklers Creek watershed covers 1.4 acres in Town limits. The Critical Area of the South Fork New River watershed covers 158.5 acres in Town limits, and the Protected Area of the South Fork New River watershed covers 229.5 acres in Town limits. In total, water supply watershed areas comprise approximately 10% of the Town's jurisdiction.

The Town will maintain its existing intakes once the new raw water intake is completed. Therefore, the existing watersheds will remain.

## **POLICIES AND ACTIONS**

- A.** Development on ridgetops and excessive slopes shall be strongly discouraged. Where development is allowed, stringent performance standards shall be met.
- B.** Development activities in the 100-year floodplain or along streams shall be carefully controlled. If development must occur, low intensity uses such as open space, recreation and adequately buffered agricultural or forestry activities shall be preferred.
  - 1. Evaluate Town regulations on development in the 100-year floodplain
- C.** Runoff and drainage from development activities shall be of a quality and quantity as near to natural conditions as possible, with special emphasis given to critical watershed areas.
  - 1. Increase minimum riparian buffer widths
- D.** Development which preserves the natural features of the site including existing topography, streams, and significant trees and vegetation shall be encouraged by the Town's UDO.
  - 1. Consider provisions in the UDO to include density bonuses and transfer of development rights in exchange for preservation of significant environmental features.
- E.** Recognizing the economic and environmental costs of commercial and residential stormwater runoff, the use of low-impact stormwater management techniques such as permeable sidewalks,, driveways, and parking areas shall be encouraged.
- F.** The development of a comprehensive drainage and flood plain management plan, including public and private actions in support of plan implementation, shall be supported.
  - 1. Develop and implement a comprehensive storm drainage plan and a flood management plan to include public and private implementation strategies. This plan should be coordinated with the Town's current activities with the Community Rating System (CRS) program to reduce flood insurance costs to the citizens of the Town of Boone.
  - 2. Continue to evaluate necessary revisions to the Town's flood insurance rate maps.
- G.** Local area requirements for solid waste disposal facilities shall be anticipated through advanced planning; facilities shall be located and designed so as not to adversely impact significant natural or man-made resources.
  - 1. In cooperation with current collection contractor, ASU, and Watauga County, prepare a strategic action plan for solid waste facilities and programs in Boone, particularly concerning enhancement of reuse of containers and materials, recycling, and waste reduction methods.
- H.** Research and development of reuse, recycling, and resource recovery programs, whether public or private, shall be encouraged and supported.
- I.** The Town shall encourage and set an example which promotes water and energy conservation, and the reduction of waste generation at the source.
- J.** An anti-litter consciousness, beginning in the schools, and including the university, businesses, and individual citizens and visitors shall be encouraged.

- K. The siting of hazardous waste storage and disposal facilities in Boone shall not be supported. Transportation of hazardous materials through Boone shall be discouraged. The location of propane storage tanks shall be carefully controlled to the extent permitted by state and federal law, as well as by state enabling legislation for local government regulation.
- L. Industries and activities producing excessive noise, odor, air, water and light pollution, or other harmful impacts, shall not be permitted, unless such adverse impacts can be clearly overcome through effective mitigation.

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## Community Appearance

### **NARRATIVE**

Community appearance and image are important factors - not only for the quality of life of existing residents, but also as important tools in attracting desirable new businesses and industries. Components of community appearance can include a multitude of visual images, including the presence or absence of trees, the appearance of public and private signage, streetscape conditions, parking lot landscaping, public and private outdoor art, the presence or absence of overhead wires, and the way in which local development practices seek to preserve the natural features of land and properties in the community.

The Town's Community Appearance Commission makes recommendations to the Town Council concerning visual appearance, community beautification, landscaping opportunities incorporating all parks, gardens, greenways and other Town-owned property. Additionally, it recommends policies, ordinances, administrative procedures, and plans for the Town's Urban Forestry Program.

The Town's UDO has the following provisions related to community appearance:

1. comprehensive screening and landscaping standards
2. requirements for preservation of existing trees and vegetation
3. building design standards
4. parking structure design standards
5. retaining wall design standards
6. comprehensive sign regulations which address signs permitted by district, size, associated landscaping, off-premise signs, obsolete signs, temporary signs, and political signs
7. requirements that electric power, cable TV, telephone, and natural gas lines in all developments shall be placed underground

Additionally, the Town has a Community Improvement Code which regulates storage of solid waste and the storage of abandoned, junked, and hazardous vehicles.

The Town adopted an Urban Forestry Management Plan on October 15, 2009. The Plan establishes goals and recommendations to increase tree canopy in Town. The Plan specifically recommends amending the UDO and Town Code to improve tree planting/protection, and supporting public and private funding to support an urban forestry program.

### **POLICIES AND ACTIONS**

- A. Measures to improve the effectiveness of grading, landscaping, and buffering standards for new and existing developments shall be encouraged.
- B. The significance of street trees in providing visual relief, summer cooling, improved air quality, and livability shall be recognized through public policies and actions to encourage their planting and maintenance.

1. Expand scope and effectiveness of the Town's street tree planting program in close cooperation with student and citizen volunteer groups, power companies, and other groups.
  2. Implement Boone's Urban Forestry Management Plan.
  3. Amend the Town's UDO and Town Code to improve tree planting and protection.
- C.** The significance of major roadway entrances into Boone as measures of community image and quality shall be recognized through building placement, landscape, signage, and other visual improvements. The Town, along with private property owners and developers, shall work to jointly improve the appearance and design of major street corridors.
- D.** Sign policies and standards shall be periodically updated to enhance community identity and create a high-quality business image.
1. Conduct a review of the Town's sign regulations with the goal to have a long term policy Consistent with the appearance of the High Country, including greater use of ground signs and directory signs.
- E.** The Town shall encourage public, private, and utility company efforts to place utility wires underground whenever feasible.
1. Coordinate with NCDOT and utility companies on the burying of overhead utilities when any roadway widening project is proposed.

## Historic Preservation

### **NARRATIVE**

Boone's Historic Preservation Commission is responsible for the inventory of historical, architectural and culturally significant properties within the town's planning jurisdiction, and makes recommendations to Council to promote, enhance and preserve the character and historic landmarks or districts.

The Town's UDO provides for the establishment of historic districts as an overlay district, and for the designation of historic landmarks. The UDO contains standards pertaining to alteration and demolition of structures located in designated historic districts, or designated as historic landmarks.

The North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) manages the National Register of Historic Places program in the State. Listing on the National Register is voluntary, enabling the property owner to be eligible for federal loans/grants and tax credits. No restrictions are placed on properties listed on the National Register unless federal funds are used for work on the property, in which case federal preservation standards apply. There are currently three individual properties in Boone on the National Register, and four properties on the National Register Study List (deemed eligible for inclusion on the National Register). The National Register and Study List properties are listed below.

#### National Register

Blair Farm  
Jones House  
Downtown Post Office

#### Study List

Horn in the West Amphitheater  
Watauga County Bank Building  
Former Watauga County Jail  
Dougherty House

### **POLICIES AND ACTIONS**

- A.** The identification, restoration, and active use of structures, buildings, monuments, and neighborhoods of historic or architectural significance shall be encouraged as a means of enhancing their economic and cultural value to the planning area.
  - 1. Conduct on-going assessments of critical locations in community deserving special treatment in the UDO, in light of their high visibility, traffic impact, strategic location, or other unique features.
  - 2. Seek out locations of historical merit in the community, and prepare an action plan for their enhancement, rehabilitation, or relocation as may be necessary.
- B.** Multiple and appropriate adaptive reuse of historic resources shall be encouraged.
  - 1. Amend development regulations to offer flexibility for restoration and active use of historic structures and other resources.
  - 2. Identify High Country specific architectural details and incorporate them into design guidelines.

3. Promote State and Federal incentives for the preservation of historically-significant structures and sites.
- C. Promote the area's architectural, historic, scenic, and natural resources.
    1. Consider the placement of public art at appropriate locations in downtown, including murals.
  - D. The destruction of significant architectural, historic, scenic, natural, and archaeological resources in the Town of Boone shall be discouraged.
    1. Assess infrastructure projects to ensure that such actions do not destroy community and neighborhood character.
  - E. New development, redevelopment, and rehabilitation of structures and sites shall occur in a manner which is consistent with the neighborhood and architectural context of the immediate area.

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## Public Involvement

### **NARRATIVE**

Public decision making on key issues such as land use, development, transportation, utilities, recycling, environmental management, law enforcement, education, recreation, tourism, and economic development require greater levels of advanced planning and coordination between the Town, Watauga County, and the University. Mutual support and the identification of common interests among these three key entities can have a profound impact upon achieving area goals.

Continued methods must be identified to provide for additional opportunities for meaningful input from the public on the future growth of the area.

The following committees and boards provide input to Boone Town Council and make decisions on a variety of Town functions:

ABC Board  
Affordable Housing Task Force  
Board of Adjustment  
Community Appearance Commission  
Cultural Resources Advisory Board  
Downtown Boone Development Association  
Historic Preservation Commission  
Outside Agency Funding Review Committee  
Planning Commission  
Sustainability, Economics and Environment Committee  
Tourism Development Association  
Transportation Committee

### **POLICIES AND ACTIONS**

- A.** Public involvement shall be encouraged in decisions concerning land use and development by making the public aware of proposed developments at the earliest opportunity, as well as fostering communication among developers, the Town, Watauga County, the University, and the general public.
1. Maintain and update a mailing list of architects, engineers, surveyors, landscape architects, realtors, builders, developers, and contractors for notification and distribution of changes in Town policies and regulations.
  2. Provide media outlets periodic bulletins about land use decisions, how they are advertised, and how they are made. Make presentations to schools by Town planning staff to explain land use and how it affects each citizen.
  3. Post all zoning change requests, special use, and variance requests to the Town of Boone web site with date of application and date of impending and completed actions. Explore the possibility of providing links to the Town web site from local newspaper online editions in which the Town posts public notices.

- B.** Special committees, advisory panels, educational forums, public workshops, leadership seminars, town meetings, and media contacts shall be encouraged and fostered to enhance the effectiveness of citizen involvement in community planning and action.
  - 1. Hold an annual Town Meeting to hear citizen concerns about growth and development. In addition to the annual Town Meetings, consider special workshops, open houses, and a newsletter or annual report to keep citizens involved and informed about the current and future development of the Town.

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