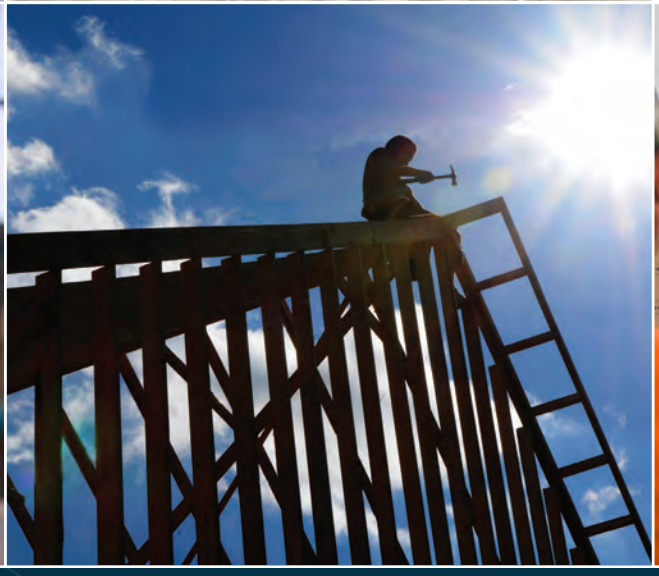
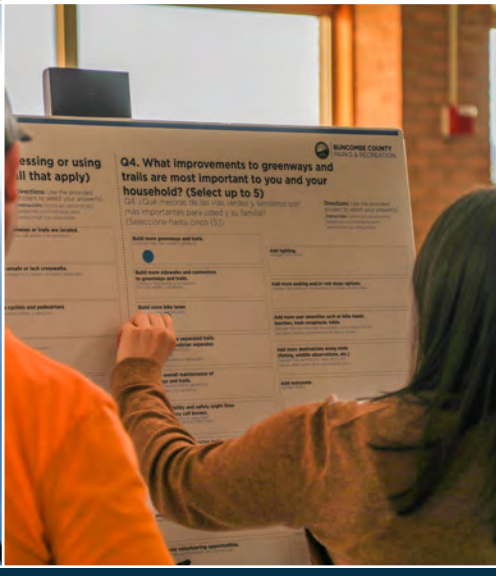












Buncombe County Helene Recovery Plan

November 2025

Buncombe County Helene Recovery Plan

November 2025

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"Even When the Creek Rises"—Turning rubble into art with a message of hope backlit by the Aurora Borealis.

HELENE RECOVERY PLAN SUMMARY

Helene was a catastrophic tropical cyclone that impacted North Carolina in September of 2024. Buncombe County experienced the highest level of damage of the 26 counties in the western part of the state that were part of the declared disaster area. Roughly 30% of housing units damaged or destroyed by the storm in North Carolina were located in Buncombe County. Other impacts of this severe flooding and wind event included loss of life, forest damage, streambank erosion, immense levels of debris, extended disruptions to utilities, communication, and transportation, business interruptions, and unemployment.

In total, this plan presents **114 recovery projects across 7 local governments**:



These projects are intended to respond to local needs and community input.

The **Top 10 Recovery Priorities** expressed through the **ENVISION BUNCOMBE** engagement process including the following:

1. Investing in infrastructure: water, roads, bridges, telecommunications
2. Disaster preparedness and resiliency investments
3. Wildfire prevention
4. Floodplain management
5. Restoring streambanks
6. Rebuilding parks
7. Preserving flood-prone property from development
8. Landslide stabilization
9. Building more affordable housing
10. Funding to promote food security in food deserts or vulnerable areas

Disaster recovery is a long-term process due to the complexity of rebuilding homes and infrastructure, the time required to administer federal and state funding programs, and the need to align multiple partners and resources. These factors mean that full recovery is measured not in weeks or months, but often in many years. Each entity will pursue project implementation at its own pace and approach its projects in a manner that best meets the needs of its jurisdiction.



“River Arts Shore” — A resident stands near the flooded streets of the River Arts District.

1 TROPICAL STORM HELENE & IMPACTS

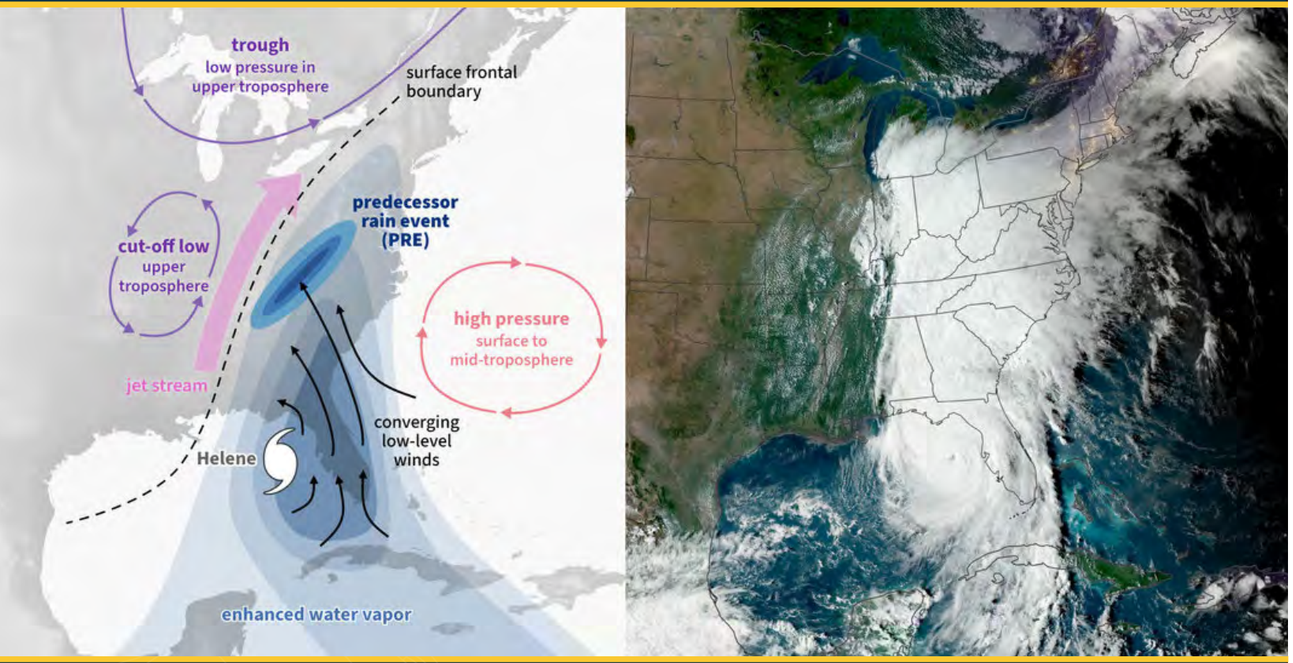


Figure 1. (Left) Weather patterns tapped Helene's moisture well before landfall. (Right) Clouds and rain stretched hundreds of miles north of Helene on September 26, 2024.

THE STORM

Helene was a catastrophic tropical cyclone that caused widespread destruction from flooding, landslides, and hurricane-force wind gusts when it moved across southern Appalachia on September 27, 2024. It is the most devastating natural disaster in the history of Buncombe County, surpassing the damage caused by the Flood of 1916.

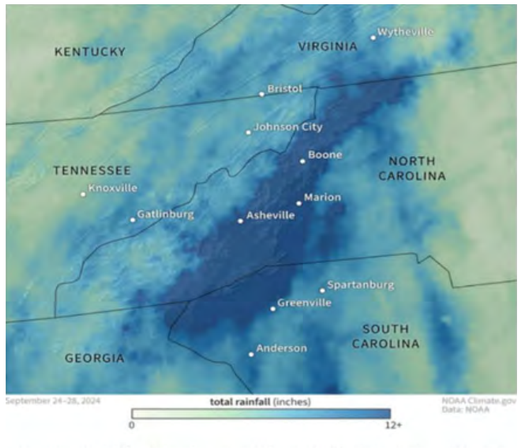


Figure 2. Estimated rainfall totals from Hurricane Helene.

In North Carolina, the strongest winds were measured at Mt. Mitchell, recording sustained winds around 80 miles per hour (mph) with peak gusts topping 106 mph. The storm produced 39 tornadoes, including 6 tornadoes in North Carolina. Heavy rains of 6 to 10 inches in the days prior to September 27 caused oversaturated soils and raised streams to flood stage, which exacerbated flooding impacts when Helene moved over Western North Carolina, adding another 12 inches to the total rainfall. Buncombe County, with rainfall rates as high as 2–3" per hour, experienced localized flash floods, widespread riverine flooding, and landslides.

Thirty-two (32) flash flood emergencies occurred across the southern Appalachian region with the highest density in Western North Carolina. In less than 24 hours, river levels rapidly rose from 10 feet to 18 feet before reaching peak levels around 10:00 pm on September 27. Many of the rivers and streams were already in flood stage from the predecessor rain event, resulting in 1,000-year flood events across several counties. The French Broad River gauge in Asheville reached a record height of 24.8 feet, exceeding a record set in 1916. The Swannanoa River gauge at Biltmore and the Ivy River near Barnardsville also reached record-breaking levels.

THE IMPACTS

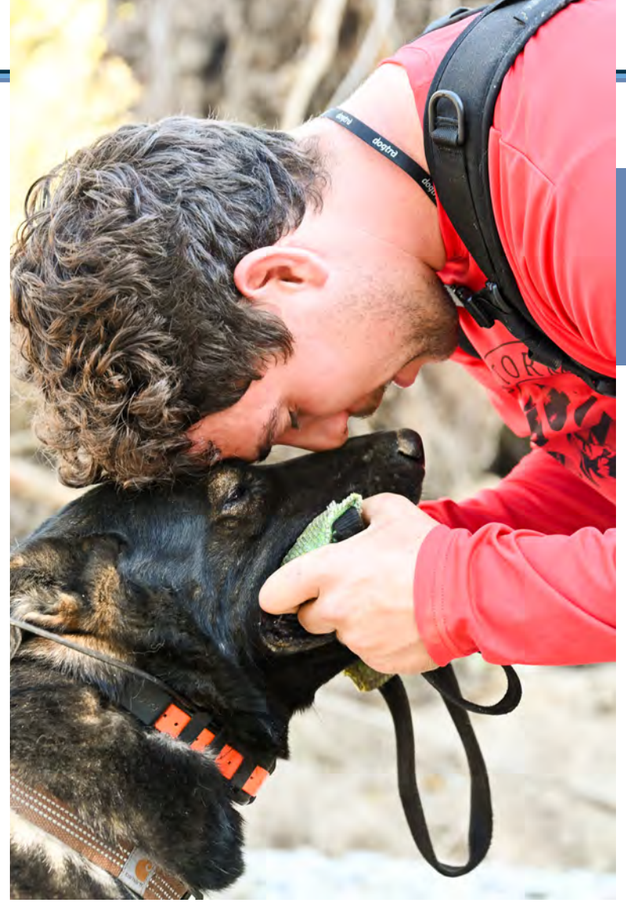
The historic River Arts District in Asheville was largely destroyed by floodwaters extending hundreds of feet from the French Broad River. In Biltmore Village, where the Swannanoa River intersects and flows into the French Broad River, buildings were severely inundated with water at least 20 feet high, with some completely swept away. Buildings along the Ivy River in Barnardsville and swaths of Swannanoa were obliterated.
The southeast part of the county experienced flooding from the Broad River, impacting several structures and roads. There were approximately 1,000 landslides identified throughout the county due to the storm.

Across the southeastern U.S., there were at least 250 deaths from the storm event, with North Carolina accounting for almost half of all deaths. In Buncombe County, 43 fatalities are attributed to Helene, largely as a result of flash flooding, riverine flooding, and landslides.

Infrastructure and utilities were severely impacted, with Asheville's water treatment infrastructure taking on extensive damage. Customers experienced extended water outages, and clean, potable water was not fully restored until November 18 (53 days after the storm). A 36-inch bypass main line was destroyed that serviced 80% of Asheville water customers, and in locations where water was still received, Boil Water Notices and Boil Water Advisories were issued.

Transportation was severely disrupted, including the complete shut-down of major arteries, hampering relief efforts in the region. Interstates 40 and 26 experienced closures as a result of storm impacts including flooding, washout, landslides, and debris. This includes those owned and maintained by public entities such as the North Carolina Department of Transportation and local municipalities, as well as hundreds of damaged private roads and bridges.

Nearly 100,000 households were without power at the peak. Although power was reinstated to more than half of Asheville's customers within a week, over 25,000 customers were still without power two weeks post-storm.



A member of the Urban Search & Rescue (USAR) team and their canine partner take a break from recovery efforts.

The storm caused extensive debris accumulation, with more than 3 million cubic yards of debris collected in Buncombe County over the following months, including vegetative debris and demolition material, as well as mud, silt, and soil.

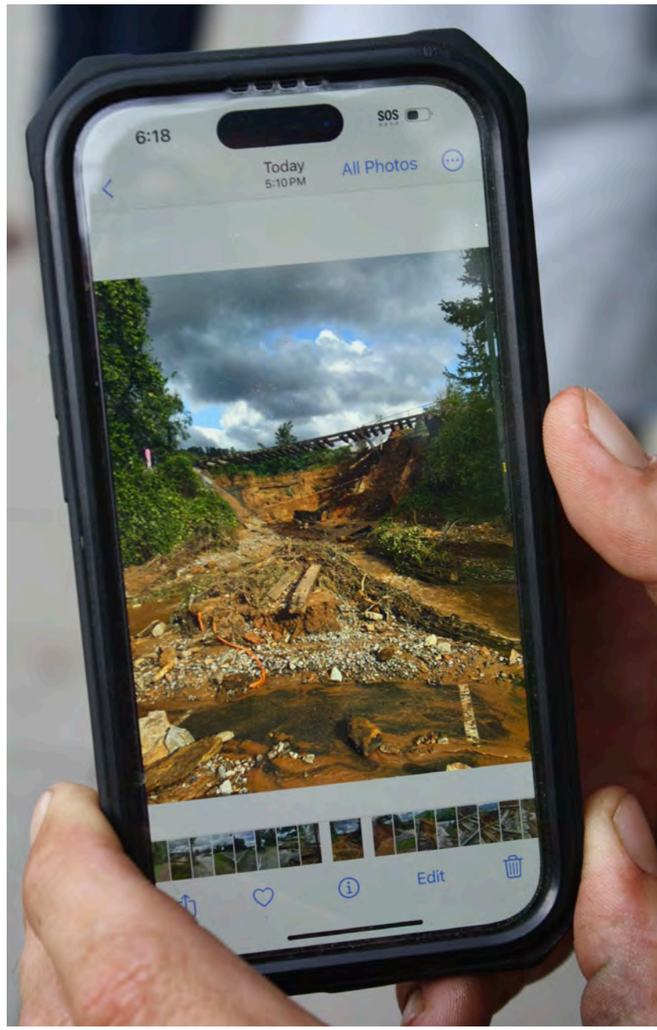
Overall, it is estimated Helene caused $78.7 billion in damages, making it the 7th costliest hurricane in U.S history. It was the costliest Tropical Storm in North Carolina history, with direct and indirect damages in the state estimated to be over $53 billion.

More than 372 residential housing units were destroyed, at least 734 sustained major damage, and more than 11,133 incurred minor or moderate damage. This equates to a Helene impact to more than 9% of the total housing stock in Buncombe County. There was an estimated $415 million in real estate losses within Buncombe County.

Natural resources and agricultural lands faced destructive losses. The North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management estimated agricultural damages and needs totaled nearly $4.9 billion statewide, and The North Carolina Forest Service estimated damaged timberland created an approximate value loss of $214 million.



Damage to small church surrounded by vegetative debris.



Phone showing a picture of storm washout.



Machinery processes logs into mulch.

An estimated 16.9% of Buncombe County's non-urban forest was to have been severely or majorly damaged by Helene. The heaviest damage to timberland was confined to a six-county area, with Buncombe and McDowell counties at the center. The North Carolina Forest Service estimates 89,440 combined public and private acres of Buncombe's 223,600 total woodland acreage was damaged by the storm, with an estimated value of $19.3 million in lost timber. The assessment from the North Carolina Forest Service did not include urban settings, so the statistics do not reflect the tree loss in the City of Asheville. The downed trees primarily came from high winds, rushing flood waters, and tornadoes that touched down in areas of the county.



Aerial image of Biltmore Village after the water receded back into Swannanoa River.

A rescue team paddles down the Swannanoa River after the remnants of Hurricane Helene caused widespread flooding, downed trees, and power outages in western North Carolina, Sept. 29, 2024.

2 STORM RESPONSE



"We once stood here" —a photo from the Buncombe County Special Collections—shows how high the flood waters rose in places community members .

EMERGENCY ADVISORIES

Buncombe County declared a local state of emergency on Wednesday, September 25, and an elevated Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was activated by the Buncombe County Emergency Services and Buncombe County Government at the Emergency Services Facility for the predecessor rain event. Our response was carried out in accordance with Buncombe County's Emergency Operations Plan.

The storm began its course on Thursday, September 26, with voluntary evacuation orders issued to more than 15,000 county residents. Buncombe issued emergency notifications urging residents to seek higher ground early that morning. A total of 23 emergency advisories, alerts, and warnings were issued in Buncombe County, with the majority coming from the National Weather Service, followed by the Integrated Public Alerts and Warning System (IPAWS). The county sent out Code Red alerts in advance of the storm, as well. In the week following the storm, Buncombe County Emergency Medical Services were dispatched to over 2,300 calls, a 55% increase over the same three periods prior.

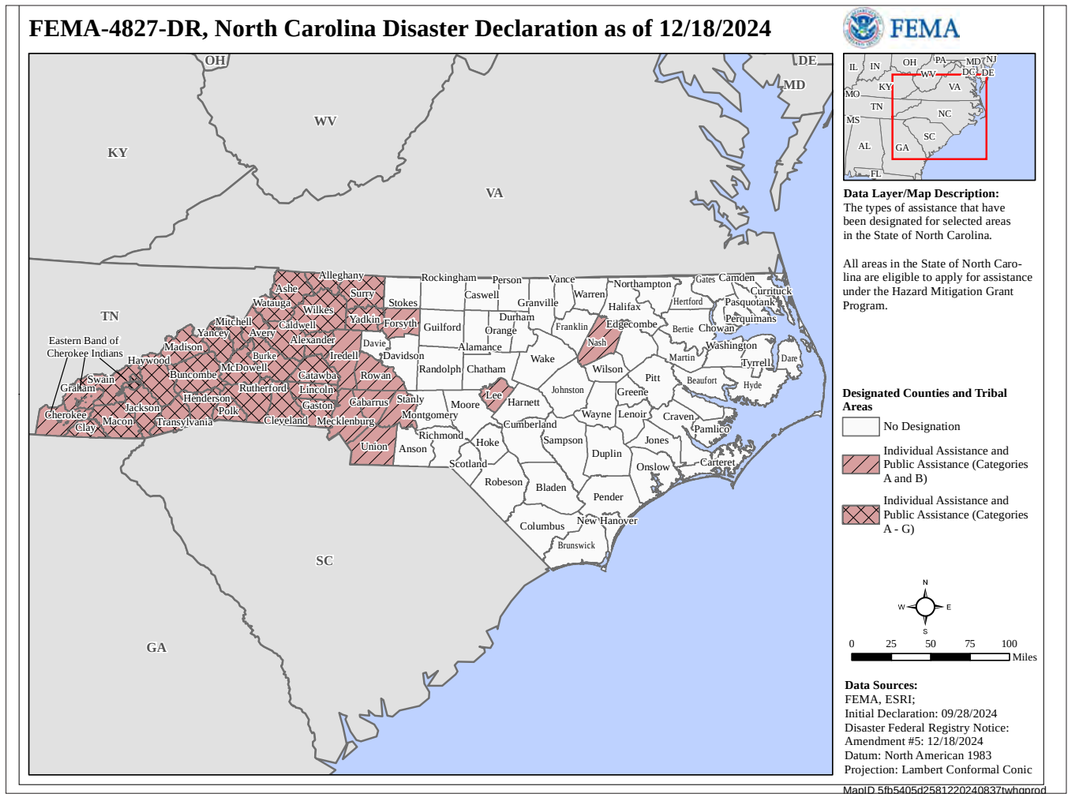


Figure 3: A map of Designated Counties and Tribal Areas in North Carolina for DR-4827 NC.



The Mourning: a bull stands on a sidewalk near a search and rescue truck.

RESCUES

By Friday, September 27, mandatory evacuation orders were issued as hundreds of swift water boat rescues were underway. By September 28, there were 5,500 calls to 911 received. Over the course of the storm, 18 Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) and Swift Water teams were supporting operations, performing more than 490 water rescues across the county.



Emergency vehicles parked on site of rescue operations.



Urban Search and Rescue supporting operations.

BASIC NEEDS

After the major disaster presidential declaration was announced on September 28, response efforts ramped up with additional disaster shelters opened. Buncombe County Community Paramedics worked with partners to establish and operate a life-saving Special Medical Needs shelter. Sheltering operations saw their peak on October 8, with 585 people sheltered.

In the following days, the EOC supported first responders with food and shelter, and deployed 840 volunteers to check on 6,065 high-priority households and distribute more than 700 care packages. Buncombe County and its partners began emergency water and food distributions as utility outages continued, with a variety of points of distribution open across the county, including at local schools. Community Care Stations were established as access points for food, potable & non-potable water, showers, and laundry.

DONATIONS & VOLUNTEERS

Buncombe County partnered with the United Way to establish a volunteer-fueled community donation center to collect most-needed items and route them to people in need through a network of area nonprofits, as well as, a Volunteer Reception Center to connect people with opportunities to help. Many helped with the operation of a Family Assistance Center focused on welfare checks, coordinating outreach efforts, and managing donations to assist residents.

The donation and volunteer operation quickly grew into a massive initiative involving over 2,600 volunteers, becoming a backbone of community response efforts.



Volunteers helping to distribute potable water.



Various disaster relief and community care stations were set up to assist the community.

COMMUNICATION

Communication with the public was central to Buncombe County's response, in order to help people understand what resources were available, where to go for help, and other key public health and safety information. A Joint Information Center was established with area partners including the City of Asheville, to serve as a trusted source of information during the crisis. Community Briefings were initially held daily, and resource information was distributed through various methods, such as multilingual flyers, carried to disconnected areas. Local radio stations offered critical infomation during utility outages.



Mobile cellular towers were critical for response operations and for community members.



Coordinated supply drop during response efforts was critical.



Distribution centers provided resources for the community.



Community Briefings were not only a source for information, but a place community members came together to show each other support.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

The response efforts were coordinated with cross-jurisdictional planning on the local, state, and federal level. With the support of North Carolina Emergency Management, Buncombe County and its municipalities mobilized and and mutual aid from other state offices, NC counties, and 38 other states. This support and mutual aid included the following:

- **Urban Search and Rescue Teams** from Alabama, Arizona, California, Illinois, Massachusetts, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Vermont.
- **Incident Management Teams**, including FEMA Gold, Cleveland County, Columbus County, Duplin County, Durham County, Fire Department of New York, Lee County, Maine, New Hanover County, Texas Emergency Management, Wake County, and Washington D.C.
- **First Responder Deployments**, including Alamance County, Allen, Apex, Asheboro, Bear Pond, Brogden, Brunswick County, Burlington, Cabarrus County, Carthage, Cary, Charlotte, Chocowinity, Cokesbury, Cold Water, Concord, Davidson County, Durham, E.M. Holt, East Lincoln, Emerald Isle, Fayetteville, Franklinville, Fuquay-Varina, Gastonia, Goldsboro, Graham, Greensboro, Guil-Rand, Hampton Roads, Haw River, High Point, Lexington, Lincolnton, Louisburg, Mar-Mac, McLeansville, Micro, Millingport, Milton, Morrisville, Nakina, Northeast Stokes, Peachtree, Pender County, Pine Level, Pittsboro, Qualla, Raleigh, Randleman, Rimer, Rockwell, Rocky Mount, Shelby, Sherrills Ford, Siler City, Snow Camp, South Stokes, Spout Springs, Stanly County, Steele Creek, Stokes-Rockingham, Stricklands Crossroads, Swansboro, Tabernacle, Teachey, Wallace, Walnut Cove, Wilmington, Wilson, and Winston Salem.
- **Mutual Aid Support** from Louisiana State Police, Michigan State Police, Virginia State Emergency Management, U.S. Forest Service and U.S. National Guard, NC Forestry Service, NC Wildlife, Office of State Fire Marshal.
- **Local Public Partners**, such as Buncombe County Sheriff's Office, Asheville City Schools, Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College, Buncombe County Fire Districts, Buncombe County Register of Deeds, Buncombe County Schools, Housing Authority of the City of Asheville, and the N.C. Agricultural Center.

Federal mobilization included up to **400 National Guard** personnel, **300 active military** personnel, and **hundreds of FEMA staff** in Buncombe County, along with many other federal agency staff on the ground locally. FEMA provided Individual and Housing

We are Grateful

assistance to more than **60,000 households** in Buncombe County, totaling more than **$151 million** in relief.

COMMUNITY-LED RESPONSE

While federal, state, county, city, and town governments played essential roles, community-led response efforts were equally critical in supporting residents and filling urgent gaps. These responses reflect the strength and resilience of local people working together through formal and informal networks to support their neighbors in a time of need. Some examples are as follows.

- **Organizations Active in Disaster**, such as: America Cares, American Medical Response, Baptists on Mission, Garner, Global Medical Response, Hearts with Hands, Lutheran Services Carolinas, MedTrust, Mennonite Disaster Services, Red Cross, Samaritan's Purse, SLS, Team Rubicon, and World Central Kitchen.
- **Nonprofit Organizations** that pivoted to disaster response, such as: ABCCM, ABIPA, Advent Health, Arts AVL, Asheville Dream Center, Babies Need Bottoms, BeLoved Asheville, Big Ivy Community Development Club, Bounty & Soul, Buncombe Partnership for Children, Center for Participatory Change, Children First Communities in Schools, Colaborativa La Milpa, Friends and Neighbors of Swannanoa, Helpmate, Leicester Community Center, Manna FoodBank, Mountain Area Health Education Center, Mountain BizWorks, Novant Health, Operation Gateway, Pisgah Legal Services, PODER Emma, RSAA, Sunrise Community for Recovery and Wellness, The Steady Collective, United Way of Asheville and Buncombe County, and Verner Center for Early Learning.
- **Churches and Faith Communities**, such as: Bethel International Church, Biltmore Church, Brown Temple CME, Crossroads Church, Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church, Land of the Sky UCC, Liberty Baptist Church, Maple Ridge Baptist Church, Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church, Nazareth First Baptist Church, New Salem Baptist Church, Newbridge Baptist Church, Nuevo Comienzo Church, Rock Hill Baptist Church, St. James AME, St. John Baptist Church, Tried Stone Missionary Baptist Church, and Trinity Baptist Church.
- **Area Businesses** that delivered free relief or provided valuable resources, such as: Bear's BBQ, French Broad Chocolate, Eluvium Brewing Company, Highland Brewing, Ingles Markets, Pisgah Brewing, and Pratt & Whitney.
- **Business Associations** that coordinated services and raised relief funds, such as: AIR Asheville, Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce, Asheville Brewer's Association, Asheville Downtown Association, Buncombe County Tourism and Development Association, and Go Local.
- **New Grassroots Groups** formed in response to needs, such as: Flush-AVL, Just Recovery, Swannanoa Communities Together, and Swannanoa Grassroots Alliance.

TRANSITION TO RECOVERY

As the months progressed, the response operations continued. While some areas of the county were able to restore a level of normalcy fairly quickly, the more devastated geographies and households required ongoing public support. FEMA's Transitional Sheltering Assistance served 5,284 households at its peak in October 2024, yet 6 months later there were still dozens of households checked in. Power and water utilities had been largely restored by November 2024, yet as of spring 2025, many families were living in situations without regular access to showers and laundry. The longest remaining Community Care Station in Swannanoa closed on April 30, 2025.

Buncombe County kept its EOC in operation until June 4, 2025, just over 8 months after the storm. By this time, response efforts were fully over, and recovery was well underway. Recovery support teams were busy coordinating economic revitalization, health and social services, housing, infrastructure, and natural and cultural resources and beginning to envision projects for long-term recovery.



Community members hold a vigil.



A resilience exercise in Buncombe County's EOC.

Beautiful view of the Blue Ridge Mountains

3 OUR LAND



The layers of the Blue Ridge Mountains take on various colors as the sun rises and sets over its peaks and ridges.

LANDFORMS AND WATERWAYS

Buncombe County, sometimes referred to as “Land of the Sky,” is in the mountainous western region of North Carolina and encompasses 656.67 square miles of rugged mountains and valleys. It is about 230 miles west of Raleigh, the state capital. Parts of the Great Craggy Mountains, Blue Ridge Mountains, and Black Mountains are within the county, and the Swannanoa River, French Broad River, and a section of the Eastern Continental Divide run through it. The Blue Ridge Mountains and French Broad River are among the oldest mountain ranges and rivers in the world. The Black Mountain Range contains 6 of the 10 highest peaks in the eastern United States, and the tallest peak east of the Mississippi River, Mt. Mitchell.

The county is bordered by Henderson, Transylvania, Haywood, Madison, Yancey, McDowell, and Rutherford counties. Buncombe is less than 50 miles to the eastern Tennessee, northeastern Georgia, and northern South Carolina borders. Buncombe is the 19th largest county by land area in North Carolina, and 65% of the county is considered woodland.

Interstate 40 runs east to west across Buncombe and Interstate 26 runs north to south, effectively dividing the County into quadrants. There are three interstates, five U.S. highways, and 15 North Carolina state routes that run through Buncombe and Madison Counties, as well as two railroads.

Buncombe County is located on the Eastern Continental Divide, and most of the streams drain toward the Gulf. The eastern portion of the county is drained by the Swannanoa River and Big Ivy and Reems Creeks, originating

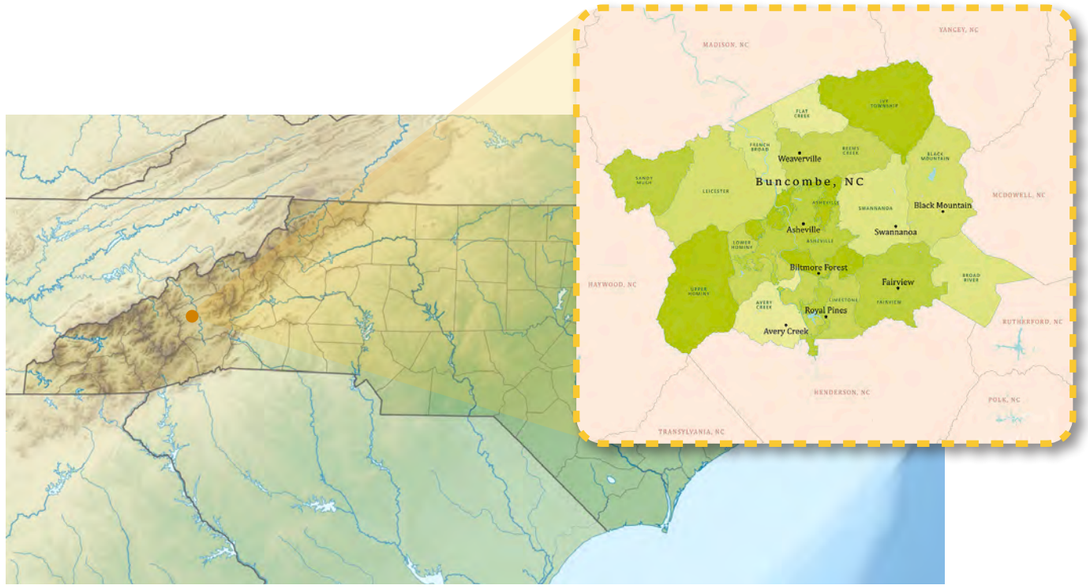


Figure 4: Topography view of North Carolina and detail close up of Buncombe County,

near the Black and Craggy Mountains. The western portion of the county is drained by several creeks, which flow into the French Broad River, one of the few rivers in the US that runs northward. Eventually the French Broad continues northwest converging with other rivers, which ultimately flow into the Gulf. The southeastern portion of Buncombe is drained by headwaters of the Broad River which eventually meets with other rivers to drain to the Atlantic Ocean.



Figure 5: French Broad Watershed.

The topography within the county accelerates runoff, increasing speed and intensity of floodwaters, which can lead to rapid erosion, landslides, and debris flows, particularly in areas like the Blue Ridge Mountains and French Broad River watershed. Low-lying areas, including Asheville and the surrounding valleys, act as natural collection points for excess water, which often overwhelms creeks and

The Hazard Mitigation Plan identified 16 hazards, of which 9 were climate related. The hazard risk assessment performed as part of the hazard mitigation plan determined flooding, landslides, winter storms, and severe thunderstorms presented the highest risks for the Buncombe-Madison region. Within Buncombe County, flooding, landslides, and wildfires are of particular concern.



Hot air balloon flights are a popular excursion out of the City of Asheville and over the Blue Ridge Mountains.



Buncombe County offers a variety of trails for hikers, bikers, and nature enthusiasts.



Buncombe County is home to several stunning waterfalls.

tributaries. This can lead to flash flooding that is exacerbated by the region's rocky and clay-heavy soils, which have limited absorption capacity causing more surface runoff.

The climate in Buncombe County is humid subtropical to highland climate, with four distinct seasons. As elevation increases, rainfall amounts increase and temperature decreases. Daily temperatures can fluctuate widely, with cold or warm spells occurring year-round. Throughout the year, precipitation is evenly distributed, with heavy rains from prolonged thunderstorms covering the entire region during the summer that may cause severe flooding in valleys.

NATURAL HAZARDS

The 2021 Buncombe-Madison Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) compiled a list of hazards that may impact the region and included a risk assessment and disaster profiles for each county. Madison County sits directly north of Buncombe.

Flooding is one of the most prevalent risks in the county, with 1,255 residential, commercial, and public buildings located in the 100-year floodplain. About 13% of all commercial properties, 1,148 residential properties, and 17% of government-owned and critical facilities in the county are vulnerable to flooding. About 5% of roads in the county are within identified flood hazard areas, and 18% of all roads are exposed to landslides.

Landslide risk is high, with 19% of commercial properties and about 5% of residential properties in the county exposed to this hazard. Approximately 60% of natural lands within the county have potential debris flow pathways. About 24% of government-owned and critical facilities in the county are exposed to debris flow pathways.

Wildfire hazards are based on the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI), which has two types depending on the amount of wildland vegetation in proximity to homes. Approximately 51% of commercial properties in the county are located within WUI areas

but in lower risk zones. About 6% of residential properties have medium to high vulnerability risk to wildfire. More than 50% of government-owned and critical facilities are within the WUI.

The Buncombe-Madison region has experienced 14 presidential disaster declarations, of which eight were related to severe storms, flooding, and hurricane/tropical storms between 1973 and 2021. Historically, 24 storm tracks have come within 75 miles of the Buncombe-Madison region since 1850.

Prior to Tropical Storm Helene in 2024, several significant storms have caused similar widespread impacts. The last major storm to hit the Buncombe-Madison region was Tropical Storm Fred, in late August 2021. Fred caused widespread power outages, damage to more than 450 buildings, as well as roads and bridges, and dropped more than 5 inches of rain in the County, leading to severe flooding along the French Broad and Swannanoa Rivers. The rain also triggered power outages and landslides throughout the region and resulted in 6 deaths.

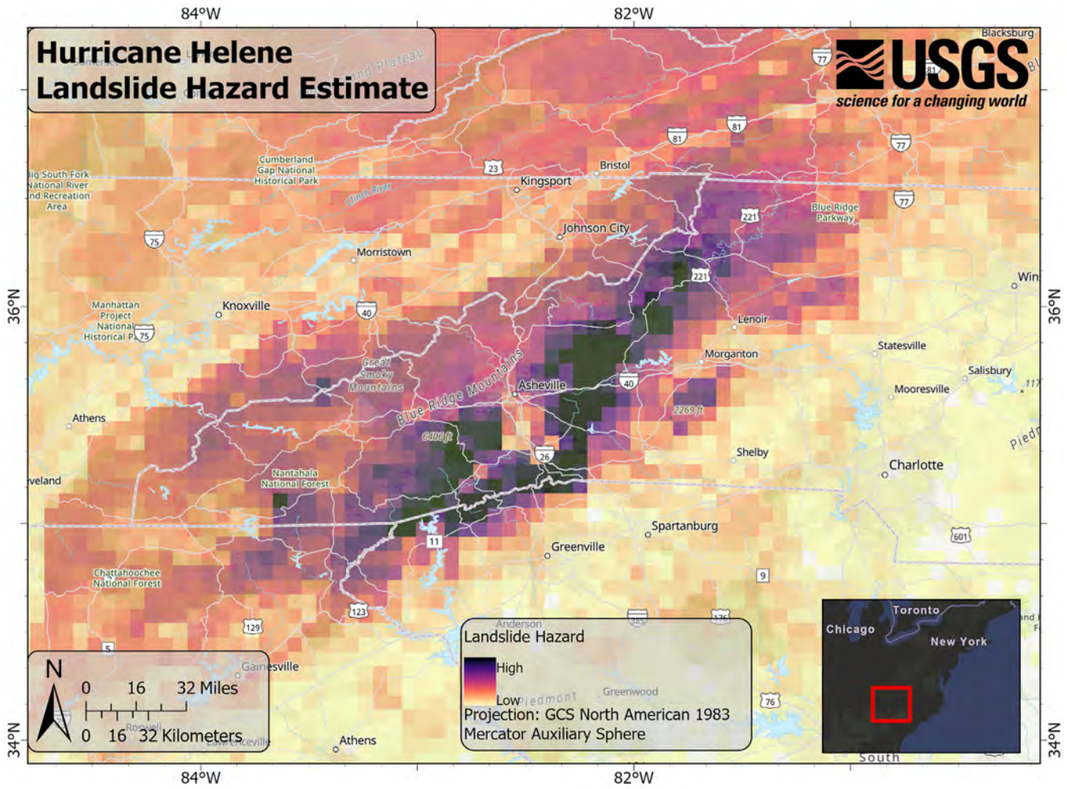


Figure 6: U.S. Geological Survey Hurricane Helen Landslide Hazard Estimate.

Hurricane Florence in 2018, which was a Category 1 storm. Florence brought record-breaking storm surges up to 13 feet on the North Carolina coast, and rainfall of 20–30 inches across the state. Hurricane Ivan hit in 2004, and less than 2 weeks prior, Tropical Storm Frances with 5–15 inches of rain raising many streams and rivers above flood stage. When Ivan came through so soon after, it caused widespread flooding and landslides. The last presidential disaster declaration was in 2020, for Severe Storm, Tornadoes, and Flooding (DR-4533).

As a result of Tropical Storm Helene, the vulnerability to natural hazard risks has increased. Tropical Storm Helene caused significant streambank erosion, undermining stability and increasing sediment in local waterways. Restoring damaged streambanks is critical to reduce future flood risk, protect infrastructure, and improve the long-term health and resilience of the watershed. Landslide risk remains high due to the disturbed soils and land post-storm. Additionally, with extensive damaging impacts to trees, the future risk of wildfires has increased. Forest debris of this type and volume cannot be handled through prescribed burns because the trees are too large. Downed trees not only result in increased fuel load, the debris complicates the ability to effectively fight wildfires because of impeded access.



Landslide scars are a reminder of the magnitude of water and mud that came through during the storm.



Downed trees from landslides can increase wildfire risks.



4 OUR PEOPLE

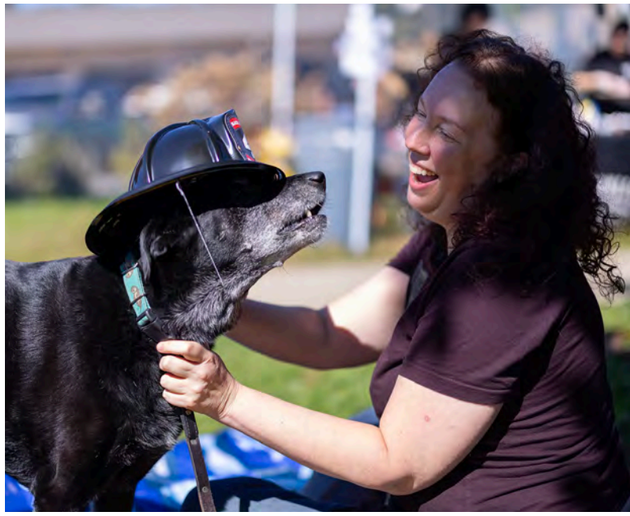
Black Mountain resident sharing a message of love during a community engagement event



A young child finds balance in the middle of destruction.

POPULATION

Buncombe County is the seventh most populous county in North Carolina and the largest metropolitan area in Western North Carolina. It has a total population of approximately 269,452 people as of the 2020 U.S. Census, representing roughly 104,000 households. It is one of the fastest growing counties in the state, experiencing a 13.1% increase in population between 2010 and 2020, with projections indicating continued population growth between 55,000-83,000 by 2045.



Having a light-hearted moment with a furry friend.



Buncombe County received packages of Thank You cards made by children from as far away as Washington DC.



Community members show each other support with an embrace during a community briefing.

Buncombe County has a slightly older population compared to average population statistics for the state, with about 22% of the population age 65 or older. Social vulnerability is considered low to moderate, but it varies by census tract, and minority populations are disproportionally impacted by lower economic and health outcomes.

Buncombe County has a diverse economy reflecting modern job markets. The top industries in Buncombe County are listed below, with the top three making up over 50% of the employment in the county.

- Health Care and Social Assistance (20.8% of total employees in the county)
- Accommodation and Food Service (16.1% of total employees in the county)
- Retail and Trade (15.3% of total employees in the county)

By payroll, the top three industries are:

- Health Care and Social Assistance (about $1.4 million by payroll)
- Manufacturing (about $800,000 by payroll)
- Retail trade (about $500,000 by payroll)

Over an 8-county area, the French Broad River has a total economic impact of $3.8 billion. Annually, over 38,000 jobs are directly or indirectly related to recreation and tourism on the river.



Police officer with a puppy during response efforts.

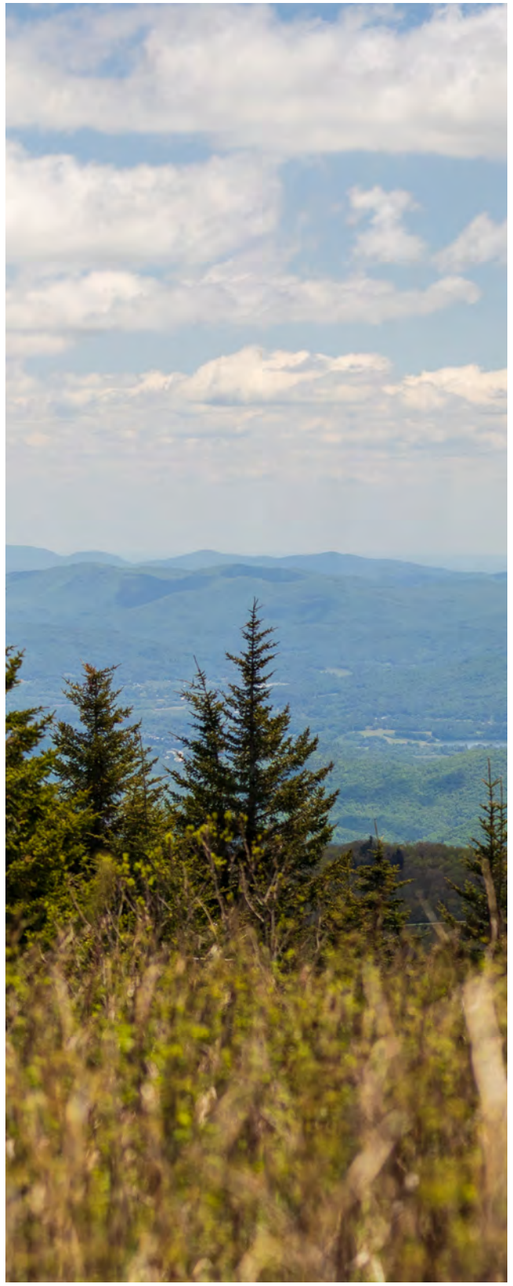


Water Distribution: Volunteers unload water at local distribution centers.

ECONOMICS

According to the Mountain Area Workforce Development Board, in October 2024, Buncombe County had the highest unemployment rate in the state. Prior to Tropical Storm Helene, Buncombe County consistently had one of the lowest rates in the state, ranging from 2.6% in April 2024 to 3.4% in August 2024. After the storm, the adjusted October 2024 unemployment rate in Buncombe was 10.4%, or 15,391 people.

The cost of living in the Asheville Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) is ranked 98.1, just under the national index average of 100. The average household income in the county is $94,799 and the median is $66,541. The sales tax rate in Buncombe is 7%, the North Carolina individual income tax rate is 4.5%, and the North Carolina corporate income tax rate is 2.5%. The average home sale price in the Asheville MSA in 2023 was $539,473, and there were 6,682 closed sales. The median rent in the Asheville MSA in 2022 was $1,121. In 2023, there were 3,926 new building permits and the value of those permits was $1.24 billion.



5 COMMUNITY CONCERNS

Builder working on the frame for a new construction home



Community members have coffee with a planner to share their vision for recovery.

As noted previously, Buncombe is one of the fastest growing counties in North Carolina, experiencing a 13.1% increase in population between 2010 and 2020. With this increase in residents and the influx of over 10 million visitors a year, concerns around housing, transportation, economic stability, and balanced growth have emerged. All of these existing concerns were exacerbated by the impacts of Tropical Storm Helene.

HOUSING

There are 139,477 housing units within the county, with 64.4% being owner-occupied housing and 35.6% renter-occupied. Due to the rapid population growth, the development of diverse housing options has lagged, causing a housing affordability crisis across the county, particularly in Asheville.

The county conducted a community survey as part its Comprehensive Plan 2043 planning process. Regarding housing affordability, 76% of participants expressed that housing was not affordable. Currently, more than 17,000 renter households are considered cost burdened, as defined by spending more than 30% of their income on housing. There are more than 7,000 burdened renter households, spending 50% of their income toward housing. According to the *Within Reach: Ending Unsheltered Homelessness* in the Asheville-Buncombe Continuum of Care report, there was a 21% increase in homelessness between 2021 and 2022.

In the City of Asheville, rents have risen more than 41.7% since the COVID-19 pandemic with rents 98% more expensive than other North Carolina cities. The incorporated towns have also noted housing prices and rent increases in their comprehensive plans and identified the need for development of diverse housing options.



Home damaged beyond repair.

Tropical Storm Helene exacerbated this housing crisis with 12,239 residential units suffering damage, of which 372 were destroyed. There were over 734 residential units with major damage, and 11,133 requiring habitability repairs. Of the 372 destroyed homes, about half were owner-occupied, and half were rentals. All together, almost 9% of the total county housing stock was damaged or destroyed following Helene..



Rebuilding a residenital home.



Damaged Roads: limit residents on transit options.

TRANSPORTATION

Buncombe County's primary form of transportation is personally-owned vehicles. A county bus system with 18 routes and 3 complementary paratransit routes also provides service. The lack of public mass-transit options within the county has been identified by the majority of the municipalities in their comprehensive plans, with development of diverse transit options included within plan goals. The Land of Sky Regional Council has also been supporting transit-oriented development throughout the county.

Helene's impacts on transportation were felt through the destruction and closing of heavily trafficked roads such as I-40 and I-26. The Blue Ridge Parkway, of which a large section runs through Buncombe, was severely affected and areas of the parkway remain closed, a year after the storm.

JOBS

Prior to Tropical Storm Helene, Buncombe County had a consistently lower unemployment rate compared to the state and national average, with a steady decline since 2007. However, post Helene, the continued impact to the hospitality sector and small businesses has led to a loss of jobs in those industries and a consistently higher than normal unemployment rate. Unemployment has risen in the county by 2.4 percentage points between March 2024 (2.9% unemployment rate) and March 2025 (5.3% unemployment rate). The State of North Carolina only had unemployment rise by 0.1%, to 3.7% during the same time period.

Tourism-related sectors continue to account for a large portion of the local economy, with Buncombe County hosting more than 10 million visitors a year. However, the primary industry continues to be Health Services and Education. Maintaining the existing industries while also expanding into other sectors and building out a stable workforce is a common goal found in the county's, and each municipality's, comprehensive plan.

There has been concern with the county's agricultural sector, which has seen decreasing revenues since 2012, with farm income falling 12% between 2012 and 2017. Agriculture has deep roots in the county with 21 family farms still in operation for more than 100 years.



Teacher showing young children a book.



A farmer plowing a field in perparation for planting a new crop.

Community members come together to participate in the recovery planning process

6 THE RECOVERY PLANNING PROCESS

RECOVERY CONTINUUM



From the National Disaster Recovery Framework, the Recovery Continuum depicts how recovery efforts begin alongside response activities, and gradually scale up during response operations, highlighting the relationship across these phases.

RECOVERY SUPPORT FUNCTIONS

Drawing from FEMA's National Disaster Recovery Framework and the North Carolina Disaster Recovery Framework, Buncombe County established Recovery Support Functions (RSF) to focus on the broad array of storm-related impacts and coordinate recovery operations:

Debris Management

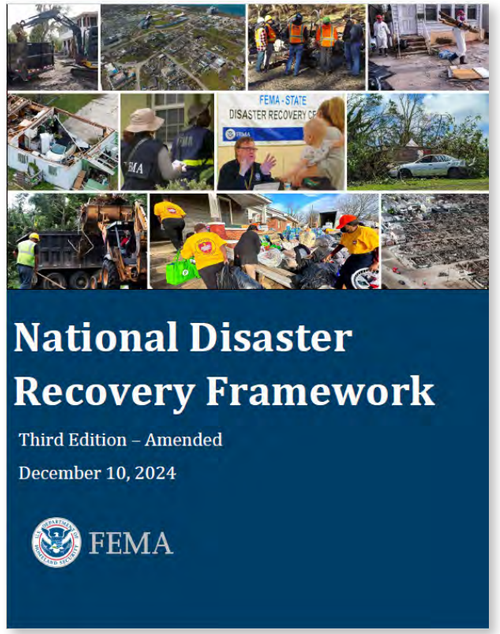
Focused on storm debris, including solutions for debris removal on public and private property and waterways, managing specialized debris types, evaluating hazardous materials considerations, coordinating disposal, and exploring sustainable re-use of debris.

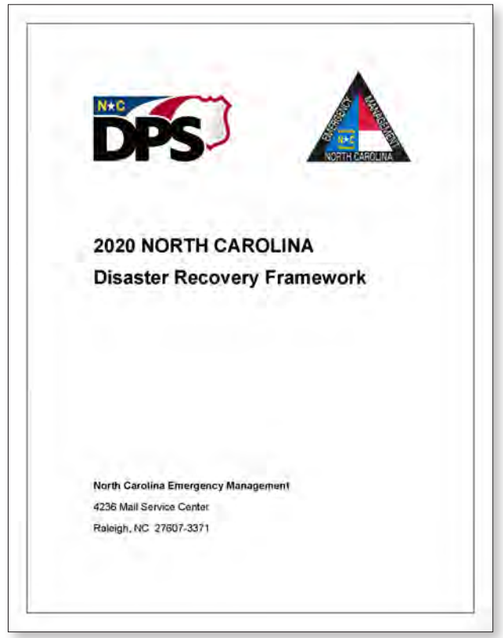
Economic Revitalization

Focused on stimulating economic recovery, supporting local businesses, responding to workforce needs, and ensuring the long-term economic stability and prosperity of the area with a focus on revitalization of critical economic sectors.

Education

Focused on successful recovery and increased resiliency for education institutions, including childcare and early education, primary and secondary schools, and the community college within the county.





Health & Social Services

Focused on ensuring the health and well-being of residents with attention to the social determinants of health, including consideration of medical, behavioral, educational and environmental health concerns and social service recovery needs.

Housing

Focused on supporting people in moving toward housing permanence through connecting survivors to home repair opportunities, removing barriers to temporary housing units, connecting survivors to short- and long-term rental opportunities, and coordinating rental and mortgage assistance for survivor households with economic impacts.

Infrastructure & Access

Focused on restoring and enhancing essential public infrastructure and accessibility to private property, including comprehensive damage assessments, coordination of repairs/ restoration, and mitigation of future hazards such as floods and landslides.

Natural & Cultural Resources

Focused on the restoration and sustainable management of natural and cultural resources, including coordinating capabilities to maintain, conserve, renew, and rehabilitate resources such as parks, farmland, watersheds, and streambanks in alignment with relevant environmental and historic preservation laws.



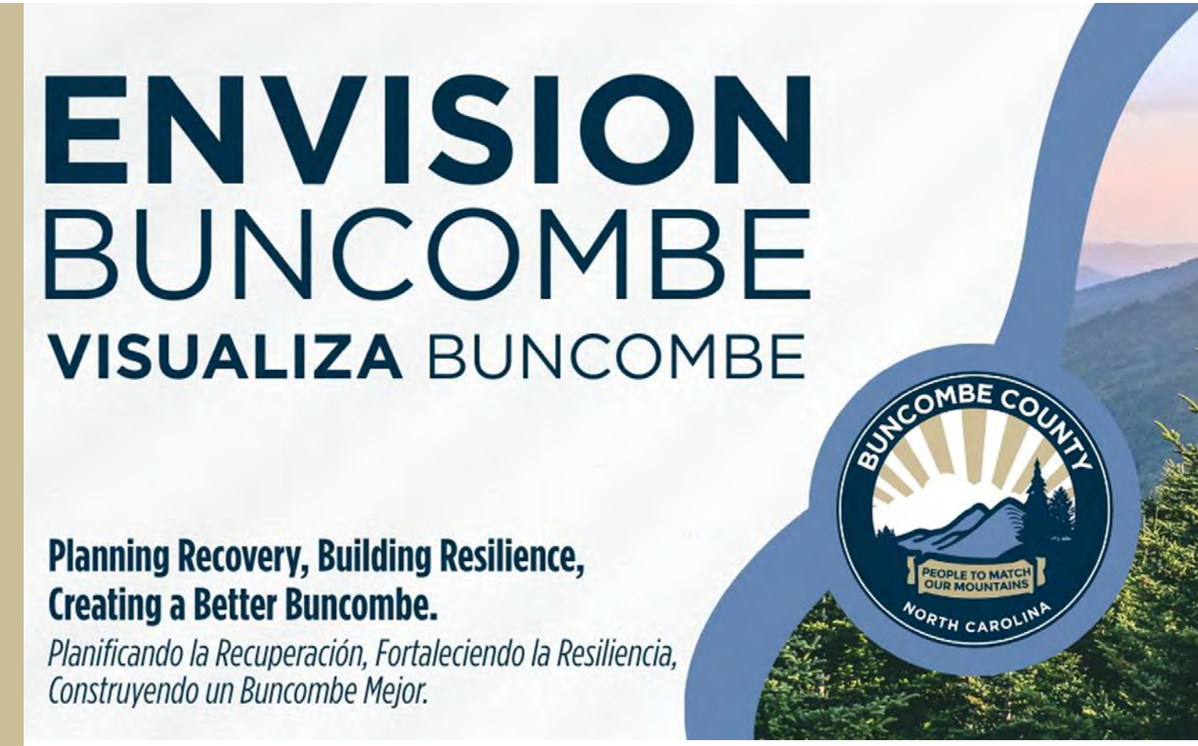
The RSFs served as a lens through which recovery is considered as well as a vehicle for coordination. County-led RSF task forces convened to prioritize solutions in response to the needs and concerns of county residents. Task forces also include a variety of local, state, and federal partners that can offer supporting capabilities and serve as a coordinating structure for community-based recovery activities.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

An early and critical step in the planning process was to seek community input. In April 2025, Buncombe County launched Envision Buncombe, an opportunity for members of the public to weigh in on recovery priorities and the types of projects they'd like to see their local governments undertake toward recovery. Engagement included 28 in-person events across 13 zip codes, and 2,622 survey submissions were received.

The top 10 recovery priorities expressed by the community are as follows:

1. Investing in infrastructure: water, roads, bridges, telecommunications
2. Disaster preparedness and resiliency investments
3. Wildfire prevention
4. Floodplain management
5. Restoring streambanks
6. Rebuilding parks
7. Preserving flood-prone property from development
8. Landslide stabilization
9. Building more affordable housing
10. Funding to promote food security in food deserts or vulnerable areas



Major themes identified among open-ended survey responses:

- A Need for Smart Recovery: Calls for sustainable, climate-resilient rebuilding.
- Equity in Recovery: Prioritization of vulnerable populations, especially low-income households and rural communities.
- Rebuilding Trust and Communication: Public dissatisfaction with the pace of aid and transparency from government entities.
- Resilient Infrastructure and Affordable Housing: Emphasis on the desire for secure, affordable homes that can withstand future disasters.

A full report of survey results, including results by recovery support function and jurisdiction, is included in the appendix of this plan.

This Helene Recovery Plan has been prepared in partnership between Buncombe County Government and the six municipalities in the county: City of Asheville, Town of Biltmore Forest, Town of Black Mountain, Town of Montreat, Town of Weaverville, and Town of Woodfin.

PROJECT EVALUATION CRITERIA

Projects were developed by teams of staff for each of the local government entities, informed by the Envision Buncombe survey results as well as with guidance from elected governing boards. The project evaluation process differed somewhat across jurisdictions; however, the following criteria were generally considered.

- Organizational Alignment: Aligns with organizational scope
- Strategic Alignment: Aligns with goals from existing adopted plans
- Community Alignment: Aligns with Envision Buncombe priorities
- Necessity: Necessary to recover environmentally, financially, and/or socially from the disaster
- Community Impact: Addresses the disaster's most impacted populations and/or places
- Resiliency & Risk Reduction: Reduces vulnerability to future disasters or enhances redundancy/ robustness of key systems
- Cost & Funding: Has a reasonable potential cost relative to benefits/ return on investment and aligns with known possible funding sources
- Feasibility: Is technically and logistically feasible, project sponsor has capacity to carry it out, and any major implementation obstacles are identified and addressed

PLAN CREATION

This recovery plan has been prepared by Buncombe County with support from FEMA's Interagency Coordination Division, and Community Assistance Recovery Support Function (RSF), which has been embedded alongside Buncombe County since the early weeks following the storm. FEMA representatives consulted on the development of the recovery coordination structure and assisted with project development as well as the writing, design, and production of the plan.



Letters of Support from surranding Communities.



Community Engagement Public Meeting.

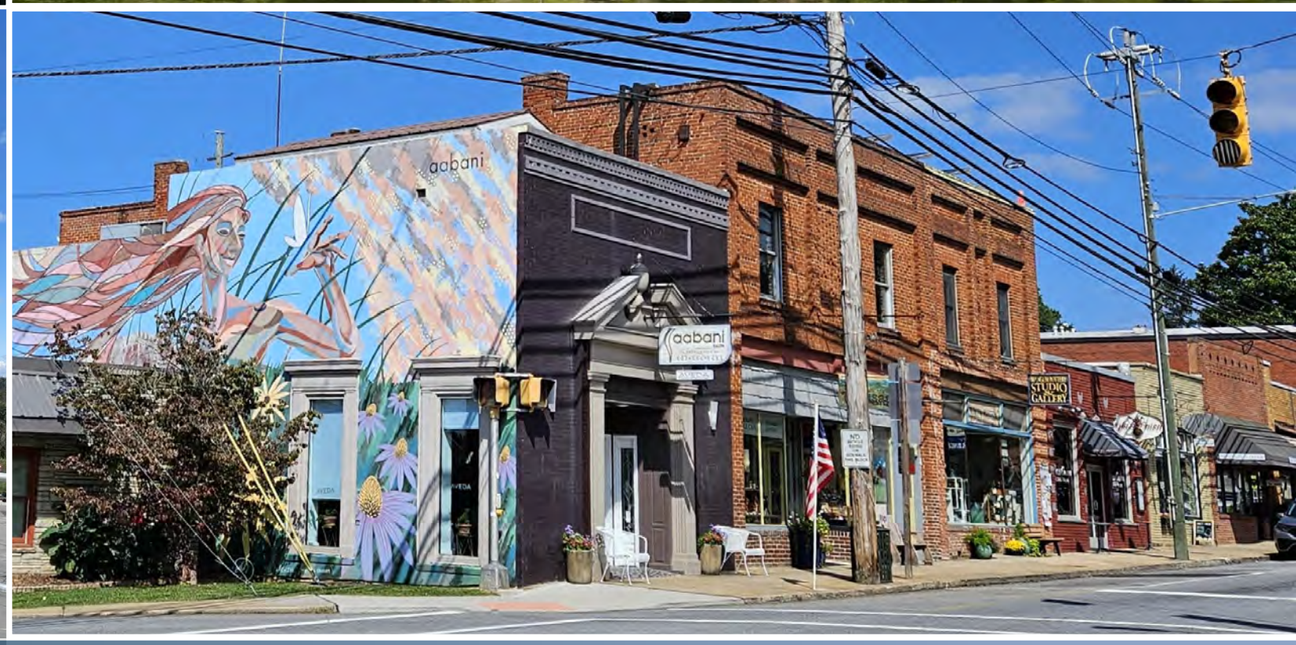












7 OUR PROJECTS

HOW TO READ THIS PROJECT SHEET: PAGE 1

Project Sponsor
Responsibility of County, City, or Town

County City Town Town Town Town Town

Project Title

Project Description

This is a 1 sentence bite-sized summary of what the project entails.

Purpose

This section describes why the jurisdiction is pursuing a given project and why the project is important for resilient long-term recovery.

Fact or Quote

Project image

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

This section describes the anticipated beneficial outcomes of the project/ program.

Project Map (if applicable)

HOW TO READ THIS PROJECT SHEET: PAGE 2

Complexity
An estimate of the general complexity of a project.

Low Medium High

Cost
Estimated cost of a project.

Low $0 to $1 million
Medium $1 million to $10 million
High More than $10 million

Timing
Estimated completion time

Short-term 1 to 2 years
Medium 3 to 5 years
Long-term More than 5 years

Complexity Cost Timing

Alignment with Existing Plans & Goals

Activities & Deliverables

This section describes the main components of this project/program that will enable its successful completion.

Implementation Considerations

This section identifies key issues to be prepared for in project/program implementation.

Project Sponsor:

Partners:

Project Lead:

BUNCOMBE COUNTY

MISSION

To promote a healthy, safe, well-educated community with a sustainable quality of life.

279,210
POPULATION

154,504
UNINCORPORATED POPULATION

42.4
MEDIAN AGE

$71,525
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

$328,900
MEDIAN HOME PRICE

$1,267
MEDIAN RENT

VISION

Buncombe County is a caring community in harmony with its environment where residents can succeed, thrive and realize their potential.

MUNICIPALITIES
City Of Asheville
Town of Biltmore Forest
Town of Black Mountain
Town of Montreat
Town of Woodfin
Town of Weaverville

UNINCORPORATED CENTERS
Alexander
Arden
Barnardsville
Candler
Fairview
Leicester
Swannanoa

659.95
SQ MILES

GOVERNMENT PROFILE

GOVERNMENT	ANNUAL BUDGET	EMPLOYEES
Board of Commissioners	$433,096,618	1,741

KEY SERVICES

- Agriculture & Land Resources
- Air Quality
- Economic Development
- Election Services
- Emergency Services
- Health & Human Services
- Justice Services
- Parks & Recreation
- Permits & Inspections
- Planning & Development
- Public Libraries
- Public Safety Communications
- Register of Deeds
- Sheriff
- Solid Waste
- Sustainability

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA

- Community Health
- Economic Development
- Education
- Energy & Environment
- Growth & Development
- Public Safety

Affordable Housing Development

Work with selected developers to build affordable housing on county-owned property, including parcels on Coxe Avenue, Ferry Road, and Valley Street.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
High	$$$ Medium	Medium

Alignment with Buncombe County Strategic Plan Focus Area:

GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

- **Objective 1:** Encourage a diversity of housing as a foundation for affordable, healthy, and thriving communities, particularly for the most vulnerable.

Purpose

Buncombe County's affordable housing supply was significantly impacted by Tropical Storm Helene. These projects will replace destroyed rental units and build affordable housing in areas that are outside of the floodplain. Prior to Helene, Buncombe County was already at an affordable housing deficit. To meet the County Commissioner approved goal of 2,800–3,150 affordable housing units by 2030, Buncombe County identified 3 development sites with over 74 acres of county-owned land for development.

Roughly 76% of the 6,505 rented housing units damaged by the storm were designated as low- and moderate-income.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

In addition to replacing affordable housing that was impacted by Tropical Storm Helene, this project contributes to economic revitalization by incorporating mixed use options, outdoor public recreation, and other amenities for healthy and thriving communities.

Ferry Road

Conserve more than 70 acres of natural space, provide 4 miles of public trails and greenways, and provide 645 units of rental, ownership, and affordable housing.



Ferry Road Conceptual Design

Coxe Avenue

Provide more than 200 units of 100% affordable housing with redesigned streetscapes, green roofs, interconnected transportation, pedestrian amenities, and mixed-use development.



Coxe Avenue Conceptual Landscape

Valley Street

After additional community engagement, redevelop 2,444 acres of county-owned property to create up to 196 housing units for households earning between 20% - 80% of area median income.



Valley Street Downtown Asheville

Activities & Deliverables

These projects are public-private partnerships with developers experienced in affordable housing. The projects will pursue Low Income Housing Tax Credits, and Buncombe County will work with selected developers to apply for grant opportunities, including CDBG-DR and HOME funding. Plans and permits require approval by the City of Asheville.

Implementation Considerations

These are complex affordable housing development projects that will require considerable staff capacity and financing from multiple resources, including successful tax credit applications and additional gap funding. Other implementation phases include: conceptual design; partner selection; and development agreements that detail project timelines and construction schedules.

Project Sponsor:
Buncombe County

Project Lead:
Buncombe County Planning & Development

Partners:

- Buncombe County Affordable Housing Subcommittee
- Development Finance Institute – University of North Carolina Chapel Hill School of Government
- City of Asheville
- Tourism Development Authority
- Contracted Developers

Buncombe County Food Security

Develop and implement a countywide initiative aimed at improving food security through strategic planning, local food system development, community partnerships, and emergency preparedness.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	Low	Medium

Alignment with Buncombe County Strategic Plan Focus Area:

COMMUNITY HEALTH

- **Objective 1:** Increase coordination and resilience of community health services to create a healthier and safer community.

Purpose

The project responds to worsening food insecurity in the wake of Tropical Storm Helene and aims to build long-term resilience through sustainable action. Buncombe County has a robust network of programs and services that address food needs for low-income households, however Helene exacerbated needs and exposed gaps in access both during regular operations and in times of disaster. As the administrator of the publicly-funded Food and Nutrition Services program, Buncombe County Government is in a unique position to convene and coordinate partners to improve food security.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

- Improve equitable access to nutritious food.
- Build sustainable, hyperlocal food systems.
- Strengthen community and emergency food response systems.
- Establish countywide food policy and planning framework.

Buncombe County received 20,494 applications for Disaster-related Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP) funding over a 4-week period following Tropical Storm Helene.

Activities & Deliverables

- County Food Policy Plan adopted and implemented.
- Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) signed with at least 5 major food distribution partners.
- At least 3 new community food growing spaces established.
- 10% increase in residents' proximity to a fresh food access point.
- Emergency food response protocol integrated into county preparedness plan.
- Partner with community organizations to support food access mapping platform launched and publicly available.

Implementation Considerations

- Coordination with partners to ensure services are developed comprehensively and to avoid duplication or redundancy of efforts.
- Constraints around local government scope or statutory authority and best fit for the work, as well as staff capacity.
- Funding sources for work of implementing activities identified through completion of this plan will be a challenge at the point of future implementation.



Project Sponsor:
Buncombe County

Project Lead:
Buncombe County Health & Human Services

Partners:

- Buncombe County Agriculture & Land Resources
- Buncombe County Communications & Public Engagement
- Buncombe County Emergency Services
  Buncombe County Planning & Development
- Long-Term Recovery Group
- Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster
- Local Food Production/Distribution Organizations
- Education System Partners

Code of Ordinance Amendments

Update County codes related to housing, economic development, and environmental resiliency, including modifications to the Flood Prevention Ordinance, creating progress towards joining the National Flood Insurance Program's (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS).

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ Low	Long-term

Alignment with Buncombe County Strategic Plan Focus Area:

GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

- **Objective 2:** Maximize the use of land, guiding development to targeted growth areas that lead to resilient communities.

Purpose

A County Code of Ordinances in North Carolina is a comprehensive, legally binding collection of rules and regulations enacted by a County's Board of Commissioners. These codes address a wide range of local issues, aiming to maintain order, promote public health and safety, and regulate land use within the county. Code amendments will identify opportunities to revise and strengthen design standards such as the use of low-impact development and infrastructure improvements. It will also increase adaptive capacity to current and future hazards, while promoting economic and housing recovery.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

Addresses and cultivates recovery, while building resilience in areas of environmental sensitivity, by:

- Recovering and expanding the housing stock.
- Supporting economic development.
- Promoting environmental recovery and resilience.

Communities earn points for various activities, and these points determine their CRS class, which in turn dictates the flood insurance premium discounts offered to property owners in the Special Flood Hazard Area.

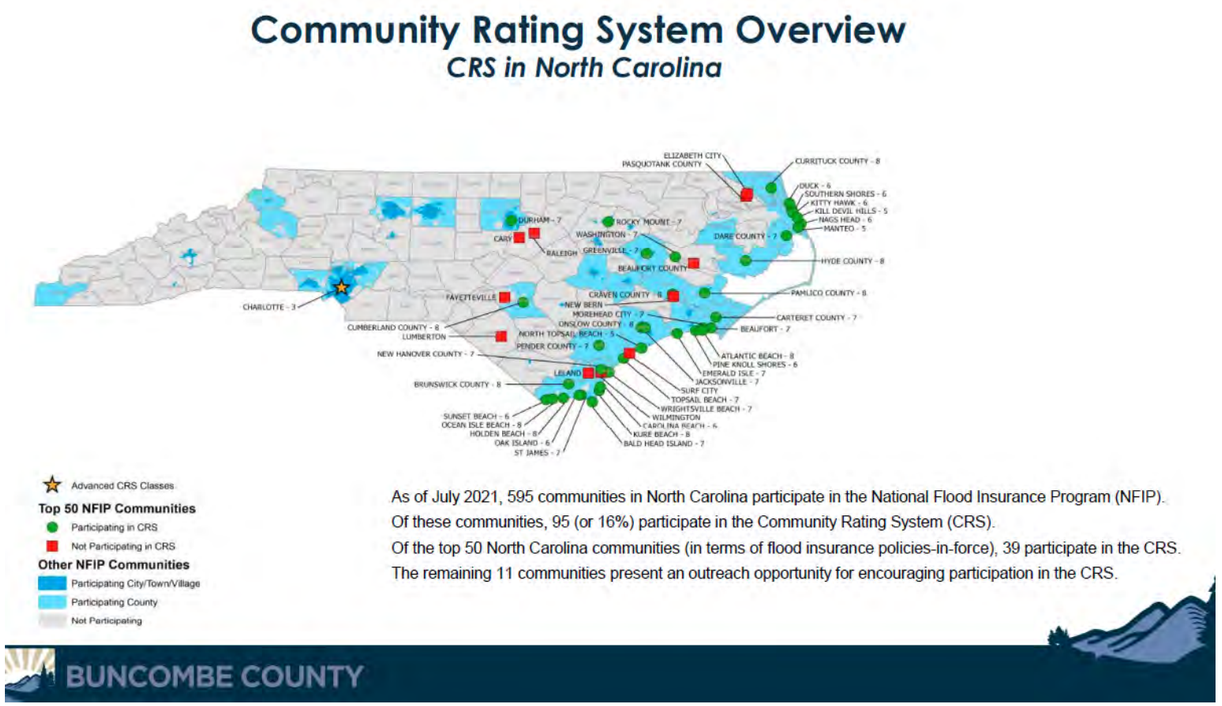
Activities & Deliverables

This program creates new amendments to the code. Key steps include:

1. Research critical issues;
2. Draft proposed code amendments;
3. Introduce, discuss, revise, and hold public hearings with the Planning Board;
4. Adopt the code of amendments through the Board of Commissioners public hearing; and
5. Incorporate into the Code of Ordinances.

Implementation Considerations

Additional floodplain managment personnel will be required for full implementation of CRS. As the ordinances are prepared, and more detail is available on the required steps to implement the ordinance, other staff additions may be required.



Project Sponsor:
Buncombe County

Project Lead:
Buncombe County Planning & Development Department

Partners:

- Buncombe County Planning Board
- Design Professionals
- The Development Community
- Subject-Matter Experts
- Residents

Commercial District Revitalization

Revitalize commercial districts damaged by Helene in unincorporated areas such as Barnardsville, Fairview, and Swannanoa to support commercial recovery, encourage economic opportunities, and support jobs.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
High	High	Medium

Alignment with Buncombe County Strategic Plan Focus Area:

GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

- **Objective 2:** Maximize the use of land, guiding development to targeted growth areas that lead to resilient communities.

Purpose

Buncombe County has jurisdiction for areas in the county that are not incorporated into cities or towns, and several of these areas such as Barnardsville, Fairview, and Swannanoa experienced physical devastation and economic harms as a result of Tropical Storm Helene. Commercial district revitalization can be used to support the return of businesses in the county to profitability, retaining jobs within the community, and ensuring continued access to products and services for residents. Improvements could include mixed-use projects with commercial and residential components and rehabilitation and installation of infrastructure such as lighting, sidewalks, streetscaping, and recreational amenities.

According to a Riverbird Research Survey, 76% of businesses in Buncombe County reported physical damage from Tropical Storm Helene, and 93% reported financial losses.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

Commercial district revitalization will support unmet economic recovery needs throughout the county's unincorporated areas and improve the county's economic resilience for future disasters. Supporting the commercial activities in these areas allows for businesses and jobs to be retained, supporting the economic security of residents as well as access to products and services for local customers. Along with direct benefits to local economies, revitalizaton activities can serve broader county goals such as greenway and sidewalk improvements, mixed-use commercial developments, and more.

Activities & Deliverables

- Work with unincorporated communities to understand ongoing, unmet recovery needs and develop projects for commercial improvements.
- Design projects to meet these needs and connect with local organizations for support.
- Submit competitive grant applications to funding sources such as Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) and the State's Small Business Infrastructure Grant.

Implementation Considerations

Exact projects will depend on community engagement and resulting priorities as well as grant funding criteria. Infrastructure improvements and maintenance will require General Services coordination for maintenance on some projects (e.g., sidewalks). Other departments with involvement will include Planning and Development and Parks and Recreation, such as for greenway development plans. With multiple departments involved in these projects, consideration should be given to the impacts of staff capacity on the pace of implementation.



Project Sponsor:
Buncombe County

Project Lead:
Buncombe County
Economic Development

Partners:

- N.C. Department of Commerce
- N.C. Department of Transportation
- Design & Construction Contractors
- Local Business Communities

Community Memory Project

Implement "Come Hell or High Water" to collect, index, preserve, and present records that convey the stories and impacts of Tropical Storm Helene while creating pathways for community reflection and healing.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
High	Low	Short-term

Alignment with Buncombe County Strategic Plan Focus Area:

COMMUNITY HEALTH

- **Objective 2:** Improve outcomes in physical, mental, and behavioral health, and increase social connectedness.

Purpose

The impact of Tropical Storm Helene extends beyond the damage to the land and infrastructure, leaving people across the region with immense losses that will shape our geography, communities, and collective memory for years to come. The goal of this project is to create a pathway for community reflection, healing, and long-term development of community memory. Alongside crowdsourced materials, the project includes scientific and environmental data, media coverage, and historic photos of past weather events in the region. These resources offer a deeper understanding of the storm's impact by enhancing individual experiences with data driven content and historical context.

The Buncombe County Special Collections library is an archival facility locate in Pack Memorial Library in downtown Asheville that specializes in the social, cultural, and natural history of the area.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

Utilize Buncombe County Public Library's Special Collections at Pack Library to establish a diverse and permanent digital and physical collection of items that document and create context around flooding disasters in Western North Carolina, especially Tropical Storm Helene.



Activities & Deliverables

- Engage with residents of the county and the surrounding region to build a crowdsourced community archive.
- Document the role of local, state, and federal government by archiving relevant materials.
- Build a permanent web-archive capturing fragile digital media.
- Gather detailed, qualitative information about how community members prepared for, responded to, and accessed resources in the aftermath of the storm through oral history interviews.
- Document past disasters using historical photos, newspaper reports, and data.
- Facilitate community programs to include storytelling, creative responses to the storm, environmental history, and more.

Implementation Considerations

Long-term information technology support for hosting and backups will be required. Successful implementation should also include support/ contributions to the archive from other Buncombe County agencies. This may include the contribution of deliverables that could be considered to hold "enduring historical value," documenting staff experiences via oral histories with critical emergency operations staff members, and ensuring that staff and the public are aware of the archive and its potential uses.

BUNCOMBE COUNTY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Project Sponsor:
Buncombe County

Project Lead:
Buncombe County Public Libraries

Partners:

- University of North Carolina at Asheville
- Swannanoa Valley Museum & History Center
- Preservation Society of Asheville & Buncombe County
- Friends of Buncombe County Special Collections
- Warren Wilson College
- Montreat College
- Area Art, History, Science, & Learning Institutions

Community Organization Support

Enhance disaster preparedness, response, and recovery capacity by partnering with community-based organizations such as nonprofits, faith-based groups, and local initiatives that collaborate to address the needs of communities affected by disasters.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	Low	Medium

Alignment with Buncombe County Strategic Plan Focus Area:

PUBLIC SAFETY

- **Objective 2:** Improve outcomes in physical, mental, and behavioral health, and increase social connectedness .

Purpose

During Tropical Storm Helene response efforts, aid was delivered by dozens of community-based organizations. This includes well-established disaster response and recovery agencies as well as other groups with steady state missions unrelated to disaster. Real-time collaborations emerged, allowing Buncombe County to partner with community-based organizations for access to food, water, emergency supplies, housing and social services as well as accounting for disaster-related donations and volunteer management. Best practice models call for year-round collaboration and formalized partnerships to enhance effectiveness in disaster response. Examples include: Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD), Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD), and Long-Term Recovery Group (LTRG).

Some of the organizations that came to support Western North Carolina include World Central Kitchen, Redneck Airforce, and Mennonite Disaster Services.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

Broad and ongoing coordination across sectors and organizations enhances effectiveness across all disaster phases: preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation. Pre-established relationships and partnerships allow for swift and coordinated response when a disaster strikes, which streamlines access and reduces duplication in services to the public.



Activities & Deliverables

- Regularly convene VOADS and/or COADS.
- Maintain a repository of disaster-related community resources, providers, and contact information.
- Establish pre-positioned mutual agreements for key services (e.g. donations management, warehousing).
- Conduct shared trainings and disaster preparedness exercises
- Maintain volunteer and donation policies.
- Participate in Long-Term Recovery Group addressing unmet needs of survivors.

Implementation Considerations

Preparedness initiatives such as VOADs & COADs can be difficult to maintain during “blue sky days” when it has been a while since a community has been directly impacted by a disaster. Therefore, it’s important to assign multiple points of contact for continuity during turnover, and meeting agendas should include meaningful, engaging activities such as tabletop disaster drills. See related project, “Social Services Emergency Response Plan.”

Project Sponsor:
Buncombe County

Project Lead:
Buncombe County Strategic Partnerships

Partners:

- N.C. Voluntary Organizations in Disaster
- Buncombe County Public Safety Communications
- Long-Term Recovery Group
- Voluntary & Community Organizations Active in Disaster

Community Risk Reduction Campaign

Implement a countywide risk reduction (CRR) campaign to promote emergency preparedness to increase community readiness and mitigate risks from future disasters, including a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Low	$$$ Low	Short-term

Alignment with Buncombe County Strategic Plan Focus Area:

PUBLIC SAFETY

- **Objective 1:** Increase prevention and harm reduction.

Purpose

Buncombe County faces increasing risk from hazards including wildfires, floods, winter storms, and house fires. Many residents, especially those in rural, low-income, or immigrant communities, are underprepared due to limited access to resources or lack of awareness. Action on this topic can prevent loss of life, injuries, and property damage during emergencies.

> *"If our citizens are educated and prepared, there will be less fear and negative responses in future disasters."*
>
> *— Envision Buncombe Survey Response*

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

A community risk reduction campaign is intended to lead to enhanced risk literacy in the community, increased household and business preparedness, and reduced avoidable emergency incidents (e.g., structure fires, flood exposure).

Activities & Deliverables

- Develop a community awareness curriculum, including disaster preparedness guidelines, for community members and promotion of early action, expecially among at-risk groups.
- Distribute awareness materials and host community education events.
- Design and implement a CERT program, including a council and training plan.
- Conduct CERT Trainings.
- Maintain records of training and current roster of CERT team members.

Implementation Considerations

Where possible, the program should focus benefit for historically marginalized and underserved communities, non-English-speaking households, rural and geographically isolated populations, and youth and older adult populations through school and caregiver outreach. There is an opportunity to develop this program along with Resilience Hubs and other preparedness programs. The program would benefit from engagement with libraries and emergency services on educational sessions. Pacing of the program may be dependent on staff capacity.



Project Sponsor:
Buncombe County

Project Lead:
Buncombe County Emergency Services

Partners:

- Buncombe County Communications & Public Engagement
- Fire Districts
- School Systems

Critical Facility Upgrades

Upfit critical public facilities for county operations with installation of floodproofing, wind hardening, and secondary power sources (such as backup batteries, generators and solar systems) to ensure continuous operation before, during, and after future disasters.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ High	Long-term

Alignment with Buncombe County Strategic Plan Focus Area:

PUBLIC SAFETY

- **Objective 2:** Increase hazard mitigation and disaster preparedness to support a climate resilient community.

Purpose

Critical county services must have continuous operations during emergencies, including Emergency Services, General Services, Information Technology, Public Health, and Public Safety Communications. A variety of hazards threaten to disrupt essential services at critical county facilities including natural disasters, utility outages, security breaches, communication disruption, or access issues. Reducing vulnerabilities to these threats is essential in providing critical services to residents when need for support is elevated.

FEMA reports that, on average, every $1 invested in hazard mitigation provides the nation with about $4 in future benefits, including avoided losses and reduced recovery costs.

Benefits & Outcomes

These upgrades will enhance resilience to disruptions ensuring continuous operation while reducing energy consumption and associated greenhouse gas emissions and operating costs, resulting in ehanced public trust in County's commitment to providing critical services.



Activities & Deliverables

- Hazard assessment including hydrological studies, evaluation of structural wind loads, and critical power load calculations.
- Internal audience engagement.
- Concept design: Explore multiple adaptation strategies and cost analysis.
- Develop funding strategy.
- Final design: Construction and installation.
- Develop operations and maintenance plan.
- Data collection and analytics to measure facility performance and inform future decision making.

Implementation Considerations

While conducting upgrades to critical facilities, it will be necessary to ensure continuity of operations of essential government functions throughout the construction process. Implementation is dependent on staff capacity and funding sources, such as FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.



Project Sponsor:
Buncombe County

Project Lead:
Buncombe County Office of Sustainability

Partners:

- Buncombe County Emergency Services
- Buncombe County General Services
- Buncombe County Information Technology
- Contracted Sustainability, Design, and Construction Firms

Cultural Asset Restoration

Restore county parks, libraries and community centers to address storm damages while enhancing and expanding cultural and recreational amenities.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ High	Medium

Alignment with Buncombe County Strategic Plan Focus Area:

COMMUNITY HEALTH

- **Objective 2:** Increase outcomes in physical, mental, and behavioral health, and increase social connectedness.

Purpose

As a result of Tropical Storm Helene, Buncombe County sustained damages to more than 28 locations for county-operated cultural and recreational amenities, including 20 parks, 5 libraries, and 2 community centers. Charles D. Owen Park in Swannanoa was the most extensively damaged, along with the county's 7 river parks along Hominy Creek and the French Broad River. Many trails and greenways were also impacted. In Barnardsville, the Big Ivy Community Center experienced massive flood damage, impacting both the building and the grounds.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

Buncombe County intends to repair, replace and/or restore each of these parks, libraries, and community centers. Some can be restored to their pre-disaster condition, yet some were so severely damaged or destroyed that they will need to be re-envisioned. Mitigation and resiliency measures will be prioritized in order to enhance readiness to withstand future risks.

> ***"Please, please, please rebuild Charles D. Owen Park and all the public places that brought people close to nature!"***
>
> *– Envision Buncombe Survey Response*

Activities & Deliverables

- Procure contracts for professional services to support redesign.
- Engage the public in reimagining these public spaces.
- Navigate insurance recovery process for insured property.
- Maximize FEMA Public Assistance and other funding sources.
- Consult hazard mitigation specialists to advise on design.
- Conduct design, permitting and reconstruction work.
- Reopen all amenities to the public.



Implementation Considerations

While restoration of community centers and libraries is well underway, County Parks will require significant redevelopment—most notably Owen Park. These activities will be carried out in alignment with the Parks Master Plan, which is in progress. Project specifications and schedule will be dependent on the funding sources for these expenses, likely to include insurance recovery, FEMA Public Assistance, FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grants, and/or USDA Emergency Watershed Protection Program. Additional interdependencies include staff capacity, regulatory reviews such as environmental and historic preservation, as well as coordination with utility service providers and easement holders.



Owen Park View: Former walking trail and ponds

Project Sponsor:
Buncombe County

Project Lead:
Buncombe County Parks and Recreation

Partners:

- FEMA
- Buncombe County General Services
- Buncombe County Parks & Recreation
- Buncombe County Public Libraries
- Nonprofit Community Center Partners
- Contracted Design & Construction Firms

Disaster Response Heavy Equipment

Evaluate Buncombe County's access to heavy equipment and enhance where needed through methods such as purchase, lease, contract, mutual aid. Examples include debris removal vehicles and water rescue equipment to respond to emergency in both rural and urban environments.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ Low	Short-term

Alignment with Buncombe County Strategic Plan Focus Area:

PUBLIC SAFETY

- **Objective 2:** Increase hazard mitigation and disaster preparedness to support a climate resilient community.

Purpose

Tropical Storm Helene demonstrated the complexities of emergency response the dynamic environment of Buncombe County, which is comprised of a variety rural, urban, and largely undeveloped communities. Proactively identifying and securing access to equipment necessary to navigate complex settings and disaster conditions will not only enhance Buncombe County's ability to effectively perform search & rescue operations in all areas of the county, but also in response to a wide range of potential emergency situations including flooding, wildfires, landslides, and more.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

Buncombe County will evaluate all disaster response equipment needs to effectively reach all areas of the county under a multitude of conditions. This will result in a list of useful equipment and evaluation of the best fit for procuring these goods. Ultimately, this work will result in quicker response times and improved life safety outcomes in emergency rescue situations.

Multiple organizations like Team Rubicon and Rise Disaster Relief supported response through equipment sharing during Tropical Storm Helene.

Activities & Deliverables

- Form an interdepartmental team to evaluate options and confirm equipment needs to achieve project outcomes.
- Evaluate best fit procurement source for all equipment identified, in alignment with the County's capital improvement and procurement policies and procedures.
- Identify funding sources.
- Implement contracting and/or purchasing of all identified equipment.

Implementation Considerations

Effectively filling all heavy equipment needs for disaster response will require thorough assessment of:

- Types of heavy equipment needed.
- Staging requirements for effective deployment.
- Human, financial, and capital resources required for maintenance and storage.
- Availability of equipment through contracting, mutual aid, or other non-ownership agreements.
- Funding sources and availability.



Project Sponsor:
Buncombe County

Project Lead:
Buncombe County Emergency Services

Partners:

- N.C. Emergency Management
- Buncombe County Budget & Finance
- Buncombe County General Services
- Fire Districts

Down Payment Assistance

Establish a down payment assistance program for low- and moderate-income households affected by Helene. Down payment assistance would provide loans to income-eligible homebuyers who have been permanently displaced due to the storm.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Low	$$$ Medium	Short-Term

Alignment with Buncombe County Strategic Plan Focus Area:

GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

- **Objective 2:** Encourage a diversity of housing as a foundation for affordable, healthy, and thriving communities, particularly for the most vulnerable residents.

Purpose

Naturally occurring affordable housing in Buncombe County was significantly impacted by Tropical Storm Helene due to proximity to or location in special flood hazard areas. Down payment assistance would provide loans to income-eligible homebuyers who have been permanently displaced because of the storm through its well-established Affordable Housing Services Program (AHSP).

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

Down payment assistance will help families get back into homes and stabilize local communities as they recover from the impacts of Helene. The program is designed to serve low- and moderate-income households (households at less than 80% Area Median Income), which generally have inequitable access to safe, affordable housing in Buncombe County, as evidenced by recent Housing Needs Assessments.

According to recent FEMA data, 247 housing units in Buncombe County occupied by households earning 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI) or less were destroyed.

Activities & Deliverables

1. Commissioners approve the project and associated budget.
2. Staff recommend revisions to the AHSP Guidelines to reflect the specific use of downpayment assistance for households impacted by the storm.
3. The Affordable Housing Subcommittee reviews revisions and recommends to the full Board of Commissioners for approval.
4. Staff publishes application or request for proposals.
5. The Affordable Housing Subcommittee reviews applications and recommends funding to the full Board of Commissioners for approval.
6. Staff executes contracts with funded organizations, monitors work, and manages dibursement of funds.

Implementation Considerations

The program will require adherence to standards, including:

- Sold as affordable (not to exceed 30% of the buyer's income).
- Sold to an eligible homebuyer (a household income at or below 80% of AMI adjusted for household size as described in U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's [HUD] Income Limits Summary Table.)
- Have a maximum sales price as described in HUD's Homeownership Sales Price Limits Table or sell at a higher price but only the first mortgage is affordable to the buyer based on their income.

The capacity of existing and future staff to guarantee these standards may impact the pace of implementation.



Project Sponsor:
Buncombe County

Project Lead:
Buncombe County Planning & Development

Partners:

- N.C. Department of Commerce
- Asheville Regional Housing Consortium
- Long-Term Recovery Group
- Municipalities
- Downpayment Assistance Nonprofit Service Providers

Emergency Operations Center

Construct a new, resilient facility to house an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) for unified management, command and control of all disasters and emergency events affecting Buncombe County.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ High	Medium

Alignment with Buncombe County Strategic Plan Focus Area:

PUBLIC SAFETY

- **Objective 2:** Increase hazard mitigation and disaster preparedness to support a climate resilient community.

Purpose

Tropical Storm Helene demonstrated the insufficiency of existing County infrastructure to house the human resources, technological infrastructure, life safety utilities, and other functions required to respond, manage, and maintain continuity of government operations to effectively meet community needs during a disaster event.

Insufficient facility space resulted in Buncombe County managing its Emergency Operation Center from 4 separate locations during Tropical Storm Helene.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

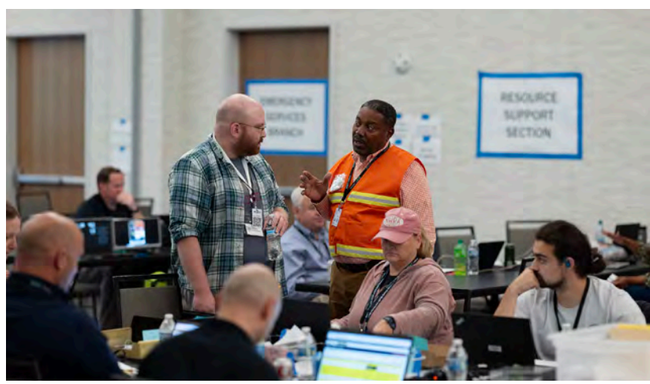
Construction of a new EOC, designed with an emphasis on resiliency to support continuity of operations under a variety of emergency circumstances, will significantly unify response efforts across emergency management functions by facilitating more effective information sharing, resource allocation, and efficient deployment of support for field operations.

Activities & Deliverables

- Design physical and operational requirements for the facility.
- Evaluate and identify appropriate locations to meet requirements.
- Identify funding sources/financing mechanisms, in compliance with Buncombe County's capital improvement policy.
- Conduct design, engineering, permitting, and construction.

Implementation Considerations

EOC planning will need to be done in coordination with Buncombe County's preparedness action planning process. Identifying a suitable building location and evaluating opportunities to upgrade an existing facility should be assessed compared to the construction of a new building. Considerations in this process will include staff capacity, security, parking, utility access, and technological requirements, as well as confirmation of all emergency management functions to be located at this facility. Confirming funding sources for this effort will also be integral to success, as ensuring that the facility is constructed to ensure weather resiliency and utility redundancy is integral to achieving the project's desired outcomes.





Project Sponsor:
Buncombe County

Project Lead:
Buncombe County General Services

Partners:

- N.C. Emergency Management
- Buncombe County Emergency Services
- Buncombe County Public Safety Communications
- Public Safety Partners Including Municipalities & Fire Districts

Emergency Shelter Facility

Construct a new multi-purpose facility to serve a year-round county use such as a recreation center, that converts to mass care shelter in the event of a disaster.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ High	Medium

Alignment with Buncombe County Strategic Plan Focus Area:

PUBLIC SAFETY

- **Objective 2:** Increase hazard mitigation and disaster preparedness to support a climate resilient community.

Purpose

During Tropical Storm Helene response efforts, Buncombe County was challenged to find available locations adequate to meet the community's needs for emergency shelter. Several transitions between various locations caused disruption in services, and it became clear that Buncombe County could benefit from owning a facility to meet this need. One opportunity to meet this need would be to expand a previously planned construction of a modest facility to house recreation services into a larger scale facility also capable of meeting community sheltering needs. In the aftermath of the storm, the project was reenvisioned to potentially be a large-scale facility that serves as a recreation center during times of normal operations and converts to a mass care shelter during times of emergency.



Across the United States, the American Red Cross opens an average of 500 emergency shelters annually in response to disasters, housing more than 50,000 people each year.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

The new recreation and emergency shelter facility will increase Buncombe County's portfolio of recreational assets and contribute to community health and wellness. During times of emergency, it will serve as Buncombe County's primary shelter location. The facility will be outfitted with resiliency measures for access during times of emergency. These would potentially include flood mitigation measures, renewable energy installation, battery energy storage, natural gas backup generation, and water storage among others.



Activities & Deliverables

- Study feasibility and determine location.
- Engage the community for input on facility design.
- Identify financing mechanisms in compliance with Buncombe County's capital improvement policy.
- Conduct design, engineering, permitting, and construction.

Implementation Considerations

Shelter planning will need to be done in coordination with Buncombe County's preparedness action planning process. Considerations in this process will include staff capacity, security, parking, utility access, and technological requirements, as well as confirmation of all "blue skies" and emergency functions to be located at this facility. Confirming funding sources for this effort will also be integral to success, as ensuring that the facility is constructed to ensure weather resiliency and utility redundancy is integral to achieving the project's desired outcomes.

Project Sponsor:
Buncombe County

Project Lead:
Buncombe County General Services

Partners:

- N.C. Emergency Management
- Buncombe County Emergency Services
- Buncombe County Parks & Recreation
- Buncombe Health & Human Services

Fleet & Facilities Restoration

Conduct repairs and replacements to address damages from Tropical Storm Helene to county-owned fleet and facilities while incorporating mitigation measures to prevent damage from future disasters.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
High	$$$ High	Medium

Alignment with Buncombe County Strategic Plan Focus Area:

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **Objective 2:** Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect air quality.

Purpose

As a result of Tropical Storm Helene, Buncombe County sustained extensive damages to county-owned roads, buildings and equipment. This includes: multiple service roads (e.g. public safety communication tower access roads); nearly 100 county-owned vehicles damaged or destroyed by flood waters (e.g. ambulances and law enforcement patrol cars); and building damages from wind and water (e.g. the county garage and public safety communications center).

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

Buncombe County intends to repair, replace, and/or restore each of these roads, buildings, and equipment. This includes not only to their condition before the storm but also with mitigation and resiliency measures where feasible in order to enhance readiness to withstand future risks. Building repairs will be completed in line with the county goal to achieve 100% renewable energy, and fleet replacements will be completed in line with the county goal that 25% of county vehicles will be zero emission, as identified in the strategic plan.

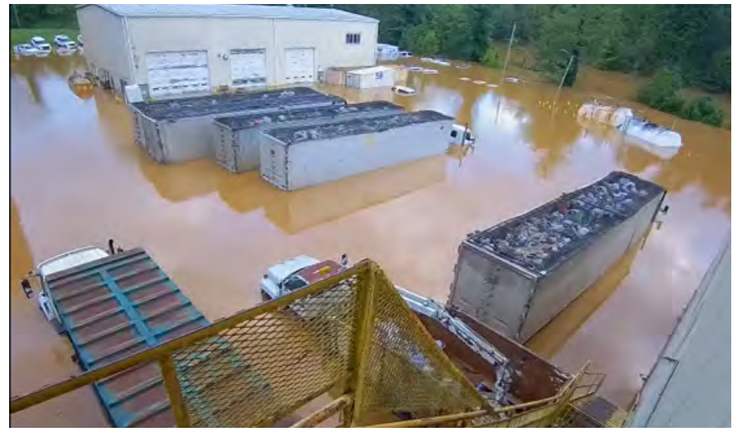
Mountain Mule Packers played a significant role in providing aid to communities in Western North Carolina after Tropical Storm Helene rendered many roads impassable. Each mule could carry about 200 pounds.

Activities & Deliverables

- Maintain an inventory of Tropical Storm Helene-related damages to County fleet and facilities.
- Navigate insurance recovery processes for insured property.
- Maximize FEMA Public Assistance and other funding sources.
- Consult hazard mitigation specialists to advise on design.
- Conduct design, permitting, and reconstruction work for facilities, including in-house repairs where feasible.
- Procure contracts for professional services as well as vehicle and equipment replacements where needed.

Implementation Considerations

Project specifications and schedules will be dependent on a combination of insurance recovery, FEMA Public Assistance, and other potential funding sources for these expenses, as well as staff capacity for the implementation.



Project Sponsor:
Buncombe County

Project Lead:
Buncombe County General Services

Partners:

- FEMA
- N.C. Emergency Management
- Buncombe County Budget & Finance
- Buncombe County Legal & Risk Management
- Buncombe County Office of Sustainability

Home Repair

Implement a grant program to assist low- and moderate-income survivor households with home repair needs beyond what other disaster resources can meet.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
High	$$$ High	Medium

Alignment with Buncombe County Strategic Plan Focus Area:

GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

- **Objective 1:** Encourage a diversity of housing as a foundation for affordable, healthy, and thriving communities, particularly for the most vulnerable residents.

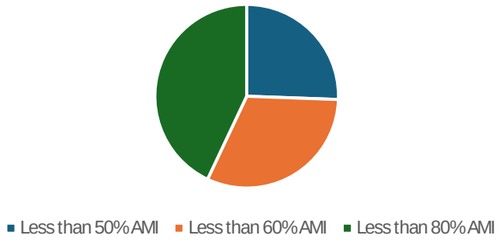
Purpose

Repaired homes are more resilient to future disasters where homes in disrepair face risk of further and greater damage in future events. Currently, there are 426 survivor homeowner households with incomes less than 80% Area Median Income (AMI) that need home repairs but experience a repair cost gap after FEMA payments. For those households, the FEMA repair cost gap averages $29,500 per residence.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

This project will provide safe, healthy, and habitable housing while reducing further financial harm to low- and moderate-income households using a unique model that addresses work already completed (Post-Repair) as well as work to be completed (Pre-Repair).

'Proposed Household Income Served'



More than 9,200 homes in Buncombe County were damaged by Helene, including 489 with major damage.

The Post-Repair option allows eligible applicants to receive compensation for recovery-related work completed prior to the launch of formal assistance programs and paid for with personal funds or private loans. Through the Pre-Repair option, homeowners with more limited resources can provide written construction estimates for Helene related, necessary and reasonable, habitability repairs to be completed and then reimbursed with payment directly to the contractor. This approach allows a shorter period of carrying debt or using limited cash funds for the homeowner.

Activities & Deliverables

- Identify program funding sources.
- Establish program guidelines, and determine model for program management.
- Deliver financial assistance to reimburse low- and moderate-income survivor households for home repairs.

Implementation Considerations

The project could be outsourced to an external management entity as selected through a competitive bidding process or managed internally. Partnerships with non-profits, grant-making organizations, and other philanthropic groups may increase the capacity and success of the program. This project is scalable to specified income levels, funding support caps, and other resources.



Project Sponsor:
Buncombe County

Project Lead:
Buncombe County Planning & Development

Partners:

- North Carolina Department of Commerce
- Asheville Regional Housing Consortium
- Long-Term Recovery Group
- Municipalities
- Affordable Housing Repair Program Nonprofit Service Providers

Landslide Mitigation

Conduct assessments of landslides on county-owned and private property to identify imminent threats to life, property, and infrastructure. Seek mitigation or buyout opportunities through state and federal partnerships for qualifying slides on impacted properties to avoid future damage.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
High	$$$ High	Long-term

Alignment with Buncombe County Strategic Plan Focus Area:

PUBLIC SAFETY

- **Objective 2:** Increase hazard mitigation and disaster preparedness to support a climate resilient community.

Purpose

It is estimated that Tropical Storm Helene caused approximately 1,000 landslides in Buncombe County, which far exceeds the number of historically recorded landslides in the Madison/ Buncombe County region (213). It is estimated that there are still about 145 landslides that could threaten residentials structures in Buncombe County. Of those 145 landslides, 55 of those slides potentially impact multiple residential structures. An additional small number of landslides occurred on county-owned properties. The emphasis of this project is landslides that threaten life safety and infrastructure.

The Blue Ridge Parkway suffered massive damage, with over 30 landslides reported within Buncombe County alone, including 10 categorized as "catastrophic." Repairs are expected to take years.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

This project will reduce the risk and potential severity of future damage from landslides on identified eligible slopes. Garren Creek, within the unincorporated town of Fairview southeast of Asheville, suffered 13 lost lives during Helene due to landslides. This project seeks to reduce/eliminate the number of lives lost in the future due to landslides.



Activities & Deliverables

- Conduct engineering assessments on slides determined to pose imminent future threats. The engineering assessments will include proposed mitigation strategies and related costs.
- Work with state and federal partners to support implementation of the most reasonable mitigation strategy, such as slope stabilization and/or acquisition of properties for where stabilization is not reasonable.

Implementation Considerations

The primary consideration and challenge for this project will be funding and cost reasonableness. The costs associated with engineering and stabilizing slopes are substantial, particularly given the extensive complexity of many of these slopes. Funding for this project may come from FEMA Public Assistance (PA), but eligibility for PA funding will vary for different slopes and the timing of that funding will impact the project duration and scope. There are a limited number of firms capable of performing this specialized work, posing capacity challenges. The County lacks subject-matter experts in this area, potentially complicating the implementation process. This project is highly dependent on federal funding and staff capacity.

Project Sponsor:
Buncombe County

Project Lead:
Buncombe County General Services

Partners:

- FEMA
- U.S. Geological Service
- N.C. Department of Environmental Quality
- N.C. Emergency Management
- Buncombe County Agriculture & Land Resources
- Buncombe County Emergency Services
- Buncombe County Planning & Development
- Contracted Enginering & Construction Firms

Mental Health Trainings & Support

Work with partners to develop and deliver a comprehensive plan for effective community mental health support during and after disaster events, including a series of trauma-informed mental health support trainings for community members, first responders, educators, social service providers, and local businesses across the county.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	Low	Medium

Alignment with Buncombe County Strategic Plan Focus Area:

COMMUNITY HEALTH

- **Objective 1:** Increase coordination and resilience of community health services to create a healthier and safer community.

Purpose

There is a critical need to increase trauma literacy across the community to effectively support the well-being of those at high risk of vicarious trauma and burnout in the wake of Tropical Storm Helene. This project will cultivate a more resilient and supportive community by enhancing the understanding of trauma and equipping individuals and organizations with the tools necessary to respond effectively to trauma, prevent burnout among helpers, and prepare for community-wide disasters. This enhanced understanding is vital to mitigate the impact of trauma, support the well-being of those at high risk of vicarious trauma and burnout, and ensure a coordinated and compassionate community response to emergencies and disasters.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

- Increased community trauma literacy.
- Improved well-being and resilience for community and helping professionals.
- Strengthened community resilience.
- Improved support systems.
- Coordinated disaster response.

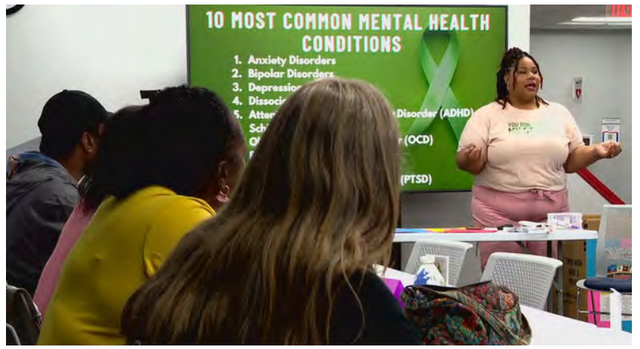
According to findings of the Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response (CASPER) conducted in June 2025, 45.7% of households reported at least one member experiencing new or worsening behavioral health symptoms since Helene.

Activities & Deliverables

- Assess needs and assets.
- Design and implement a community partner engagement strategy.
- Train for program design & curriculum development.
- Develop project evaluation framework.
- Research and secure project funding & resource requirements.
- Training delivery.
- Community resource identification and dissemination.
- Community Mental Health Disaster Response Plan development.
- Integrate Community Mental Health Response plan into existing emergency response plans.

Implementation Considerations

Consideration of the county's role in behavioral health programming under state governance structures will be relevant to this project's implementation. Accordingly, confirming funding sources, staff capacity, and close coordination with community partners to effectively perform all key activities will be integral to effective delivery of this training program and disaster response plan.





Project Sponsor:
Buncombe County

Project Lead:
Buncombe County Health & Human Services

Partners:
- N.C. Department of Health & Human Services
- Mental Health & Healthcare Providers
- Education System Partners
- Social Service Providers & Community Organizations

Natural Hazard Monitoring

Implement environmental data tracking technology such as weather & air quality monitors, river gauges, and landslide monitors to improve emergency notifications, prevent loss of life, and support public health.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ High	Short-term

Alignment with Buncombe County Strategic Plan Focus Area:

PUBLIC SAFETY

- **Objective 2:** Increase hazard mitigation and disaster preparedness to support a climate resilient community.

Purpose

The core purpose of this project is to increase situational awareness and readiness to communicate potential threats to people and property as a result of natural disasters in Buncombe County. Tropical Storm Helene demonstrated vulnerability both to geographic areas and weather-related dangers traditionally considered low-risk in Buncombe County. These projects will improve the county's ability to monitor, mitigate, and communicate risk to reduce threats to personal wellbeing and property in this emerging landscape of increased risks from natural disasters.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

This project will improve the county's ability to monitor and proactively respond to natural threats to people and property through increased situational awareness. It will further enhance overall community awareness of natural hazards through community outreach and education.

The Envision Buncombe community survey results ranked Community Health, Public Safety, and Disaster Preparedness as top priorities, including repeated calls for emergency alert systems.



Activities & Deliverables

- Assessment of geographic vulnerabilities to determine key locations for each category of monitoring.
- Project scoping & identification of funding sources.
- Installation of river gauges, weather and air quality monitoring, & warning systems in key areas.
- Integration with public safety communications and community notification technology.
- Delivery of community awareness programs to support effective use of updated systems.

Implementation Considerations

This project is multi-jurisdictional, requiring collaboration with state & municipal partners for maintenance & use of river gauge/sirens systems and locations where non-regulatory air quality monitors or sensors can be utilized. Successful project implementation will also require coordination with private property owners and intergovernmental partners to secure right of way access to areas outside of county property. Staff capacity may impact the pace of project implementation.

Project Sponsor:
Buncombe County

Project Lead:
Buncombe County Emergency Services

Partners:

- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- N.C. Department of Environmental Quality
- N.C. Emergency Management
- N.C. Forest Service
- N.C. Department of Transportation
- Buncombe County Communications & Public Engagement
- Buncombe County Information Technology
- Asheville-Buncombe Air Quality Agency
- Fire Districts
- Municipalities & Public Safety Partners

Open Space Property

Create and implement a land use and management plan for hazard mitigation properties acquired by the county as a result of Tropical Storm Helene to ensure open space, natural resource conservation, floodplain management, and allowable recreational and agricultural uses.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
High	High	Medium

Alignment with Buncombe County Strategic Plan Focus Area:

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **Objective 1:** Preserve the agricultural heritage of Buncombe County & prioritize the conservation of natural resources.

Purpose

Long-term recovery requires sound land management principles for public and privately owned properties that address repetitive losses to flood hazards and mitigation of streambank erosion across miles of waterways throughout Buncombe County. Through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) property acquisition (buy-out) program, Buncombe County will come into ownership of large amounts of new property to be preserved from future development. This necessitates a structured and measured approach that incudes future uses for lands, land management & maintenance, staffing, and funding resources.



Studies have shown that flood buyouts can be a wise investment, with some estimates suggesting a savings of $5.10 for every $1 spent.

– Environmental Law Institute, 2018

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

This project plans for the implementation of a county-wide flood buy-out program. Potential uses for these open space properties include recreational and agricultural. The outcomes of such a program are intended to address issues of water quality, streambank erosion, repetitive losses to flood hazards, and loss of access to critical infrastructure. Ancillary benefits may address nuisance issues, protect endangered species and critical habitat, and guard against invasive species.

Activities & Deliverables

- Carry out acquisition activites in accordance with HMGP guidance.
- Analyze properties for potential future open space uses.
- Engage public input to inform the plan.
- Develop a funding and staffing model for land management, including maintenance and public access.

Implementation Considerations

Additional staffing may be required to oversee the financial and legal aspects of the buyouts and to manage the land long term. In addition, demolition and new use may require floodplain permits and deed restrictions. All properties, once acquired, will convert to open space, flood storage, and/or passive recreational use, per standards, which will require the development of a long-term maintenance plan and will remain under public ownership in perpetuity.

Properties acquired through HMGP are restricted to open space uses, such as:

OPEN SPACE
parks, greenways, nature preserves

RECREATION
trails, picnic areas, ball fields

WETLANDS MANAGEMENT
natural floodplain, wildlife habitat

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT
retention basins, rain gardens, natural drainage

AGRICULTURE
community gardens, farming, grazing

FORESTRY
tree planting, managed forests

LIMITED PARKING
unpaved, permeable public use

Project Sponsor:
Buncombe County

Project Lead:
County Manager's Office

Partners:
- FEMA
- N.C. Emergency Services
- Buncombe County Parks & Recreation
- Buncombe County Planning & Development

Preparedness Action Plan

Implement recommendations from the County's Tropical Storm Helene Preparedness Action Plan to enhance organizational capacity to effectively respond to future disasters.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
High	$$$ Low	Short-term

Alignment with Buncombe County Strategic Plan Focus Area:

PUBLIC SAFETY

- **Objective 2:** Increase hazard mitigation and disaster preparedness to support a climate resilient community.

Purpose

The purpose of the Preparedness Action Plan is to implement Tropical Storm Helene's After-Action Report to mitigate risk and enhance emergency preparedness throughout Buncombe County government. The need to broaden emergency response capacity beyond typical Emergency Management roles and functions was identified immediately following the disaster. The Report will address these systemic gaps by updating the County's disaster preparedness policies, procedures, and resources to reflect the needs highlighted during this event.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

Implementation will result in improved preparedness, communication, coordination, and overall effectiveness of Buncombe County's disaster response systems. These outcomes aim to reduce vulnerability to disaster events community-wide and result in more efficient emergency response, resource distribution, and continuity of core county functions in future situations.

The Action Plan recommends that residents make family emergency plans and kits. It identifies resources for home repair, other recovery efforts, and mental health support.



Activities & Deliverables

- Review & update Buncombe County Standard Operating Guidelines, job aides, and tools for the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) operations.
- Establish Standard Operating Guidelines, tools, and job aids for all Emergency Support Functions and Operations.
- Pre-position contracts for necessary emergency operations & logistics.
- Update the County's Crisis Communication Plan.
- Conduct a vulnerability assessment of Buncombe County.
- Establish emergency expectations with Buncombe County. Municipalities and Fire Departments.
- Develop a Comprehensive Staffing Plan for all EOC Positions.
- Provide Emergency Operations Procedure training to Staff.
- Enhance Public Safety Communications by Creating a Primary, Alternate, Contingent, Emergency (PACE) Model Plan to ensure continuity of 911 operations during a disaster.
- Establish a Comprehensive Commodities Redistribution and Distribution Point (CRDP) Operation Plan.

Implementation Considerations

The primary consideration and challenge for this project will be funding and staffing capacity constraints. Effective implementation will require dynamic oversight to track progress and ensure updated policies, procedures, and information are substantively disseminated to all impacted personnel.

Project Sponsor:
Buncombe County

Project Lead:
Buncombe County Emergency Services

Partners:

- Buncombe County Human Resources
- Buncombe County Finance
- N.C. Emergency Management
- Municipal & Regional Governments
- Fire Districts and other Public Safety Partners

Public Art

Commission and install public art pieces across key public spaces in Buncombe County, focusing on neighborhoods, commercial corridors, and community gathering areas.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ Low	Short-term

Alignment with Buncombe County Strategic Plan Focus Area:

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- **Objective 2:** Increase economic and business opportunities in Buncombe County.

Purpose

Public art strengthens community cohesion and emotional resilience, particularly during and after crises. It transforms shared spaces into places of healing, and provides platforms for storytelling and collective reflection. This project addresses the need for economic recovery in the creative economy. Before Tropical Storm Helene, many local artists lacked sustainable sources of income or support for public commissions. Additionally, many neighborhoods in Buncombe County lacked investment in public cultural assets, resulting in underutilized and disconnected public spaces.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

- Public art installations across multiple locations, such as sidewalks, plazas, parks, and building facades.
- Local artists gain paid opportunities, visibility, and professional development, while small businesses and commercial corridors benefit from increased foot traffic and enhanced public spaces that attract visitors and shoppers.
- Community members in underserved neighborhoods gain new access to cultural experiences and public spaces that reflect their stories and identities.
- Residents and tourists benefit from improved aesthetics, walkability, and cultural richness throughout the county.

Activities & Deliverables

- Identify and secure funding.
- Establish project parameters including budget, theme, and media.
- Identify locations for art work.
- Select works of public art in compliance with County procurement policy.
- Install and maintain works of art.

Implementation Considerations

Art selection and implementation should include the whole community, through communication, participation, investments, and participation to ensure community voices and stories are reflected in the art. This project may be improved through coordination with ArtsAVL and the development of their Asheville Arts Recovery Plan.

According to Arts AVL, Buncombe County's dedicated arts agency, Tropical Storm Helene significantly impacted over 570 arts businesses and cultural assets in Buncombe County.



Project Sponsor:
Buncombe County

Project Lead:
Buncombe County
Strategic Partnerships

Partners:

- Buncombe County Economic Development
- Buncombe County General Services
- Buncombe Couty Parks & Recreation
- Designated Arts Agency
- Artists & Arts Organizations

Public Safety Communications Resilience

Assess capabilities and perform resilience upgrades to critical public safety communications infrastructure, including: solar for radio towers, community notification technology, backup systems, and satellite communication devices for emergency services and critical facilities.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ Medium	Short-term

Alignment with Buncombe County Strategic Plan Focus Area:

PUBLIC SAFETY

- **Objective 2:** Increase hazard mitigation and disaster preparedness to support a climate resilient community.

Purpose

Tropical Storm Helene demonstrated the vulnerabilities of existing public safety communications infrastructure in Buncombe County when systems damaged in the storm did not have redundant backups in place. Existing capacity was insufficient for the amount of radio traffic and public communications needs that arose during the emergency response phase. This project will enhance the capacity and functionality of systems, tools, and procedures through a renewed emphasis on resiliency and redundancy in the design of local public safety communications infrastructure.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

In addition to improving capacity and redundancy, this project will improve interoperability between Buncombe County's public safety communications systems and that of public safety partners such as Fire Districts. These improvements will bolster the efficiency of emergency response services during everyday and disaster emergency response events alike.

Buncombe County operates 17 public safety radio communication towers that broadcast using specific frequency bands to enable first responders to communicate during emergencies.

Activities & Deliverables

- Evaluate capacity and limitations of existing public safety communications systems (including alerting technology) to identify enhancement and backup opportunities.
- Identify critical facilities and providers for reduncdancies to enhance efficacy of community-wide warning systems.
- Design, procure, and implement systems and install equipment that can be deployed to service locations during outages to provide phone, internet, and radio access.

Implementation Considerations

Producing the key deliverables for this project will require:

- Identifying and securing funding for all identified equipment.
- Coordination with private property owners and intergovernmental partners to secure Right-of-Way access to areas containing critical communication infrastructure outside of county property.
- Learning and development requirements to ensure all Public Safety Communications employees are provided the necessary training and tools to achieve the intended outcomes of this work.
- Staff capacity for full implementation.



Project Sponsor:
Buncombe County

Project Lead:
Buncombe County Information Technology

Partners:

- Buncombe County Emergency Services
- Buncombe County Public Safety Communications
- Law Enforcement & Fire Districts Within Buncombe County

Resilience Hubs

Add features to public facilities (e.g. libraries, community centers, schools) for resilience before, during, and after emergencies. Features may include alternative energy sources, telecommunications, wind hardening and floodproofing, water hookups and storage, enhanced air filtration systems, accessibility, and adaptable multi-use spaces.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ High	Medium

Alignment with Buncombe County Strategic Plan Focus Area:

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

- **Objective 2:** Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect air quality.

Purpose

Evidence suggests that the frequency and intensity of exposure to environmental hazards is increasing. Socioeconomic factors including income, race, age, and underlying health issues make certain Buncombe County residents more vulnerable to these threats. Power, communication, and water systems are vulnerable during natural disasters yet are essential to offering resident support, necessitating redundancies for these services. To build resilience, there is a need for hubs that include physical spaces operable during emergencies paired with programming and services to meet community needs.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

- Offer centralized resource distribution during and after an emergency including food, water, basic medical, and information.
- Foster year-round social cohesion/ connection, promote disaster preparedness, and enhance well-being through workshops, classes, recreational opportunities, and cultural events.
- Enhance personal adaptive capacity for County residents by offering year-round programs that address root causes of vulnerability and proactively build healthier communities including job training, mental health services, and disaster preparedness education.
- Employ building upgrades to address the root causes and symptoms of climate change including energy efficiency, renewable energy, and relief from extreme temperatures or poor air quality.
- Prioritize access for traditionally underserved residents.



Activities & Deliverables

- Needs assessment.
- Community engagement and partnership development.
- Site selections.
- Concept design and cost feasibility.
- Funding strategy.
- Final design, construction, and installation.
- Staff training and operations plan.
- Ongoing programming and partnerships.

Implementation Considerations

This project to establish resilence hubs is interdependent with several other Helene Recovery Projects, including: Cultural Asset Restoration; Emergency Shelter Facility; Community Risk Reduction Campaign; Mental Health Trainings. Implementation may be dependent on staff capacity.

By creating spaces for gathering, events, and skill-building activities, resiliency hubs strengthen community ties and build social capital.

Project Sponsor:
Buncombe County

Project Lead:
Buncombe County Office of Sustainability

Partners:

- Buncombe County Emergency Services
- Buncombe County General Services
- Buncombe County Health & Human Services
- Buncombe County Office of Equity & Human Rights
- Buncombe County Parks & Recreation
- Buncombe County Public Libraries
- Local School Systems
- Asheville-Buncombe Air Quality
- Contracted Design & Construction Firms
- Area Nonprofits and Community-Based Organizations

Sewer Extension & Septic Mitigation

Work with partners to develop and implement plans for sewer system expansions, to include the removal of septic systems and package plants, generating environmental benefits and opportunities for economic development in unincorporated Buncombe County.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
High	$$$ High	Long-term

Alignment with Buncombe County Strategic Plan Focus Area:

GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

- **Objective 2:** Maximize the use of land, guiding development to targeted growth areas that lead to resilient communities.

Purpose

Sewer infrastructure impacts public health and water quality as well as the type and pattern of development in the county. Septic complaints, repairs, and notices of violation have increased in recent years, exacerbated by flooding during tropical storm Helene. Issues with these systems can impact environmental health in many areas of the county such as French Broad River or other recreational spaces. Extending water and sewer will create economic opportunity by enabling commercial and industrial growth. Disaster recovery presents an opportunity to expand the sewer system, remove unreliable septic systems and package plants in the county, and increase economic growth.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

Expansion of sewer infrastructure provides environmental, health, and economic benefits to the community. Expansion provides new opportunities for economic development as areas can support higher densities of residents and businesses without relying on individual septic systems and package plants. Septic systems and package plants in the county are vulnerable to leaks and are not resilient to disaster flooding as seen during Helene.

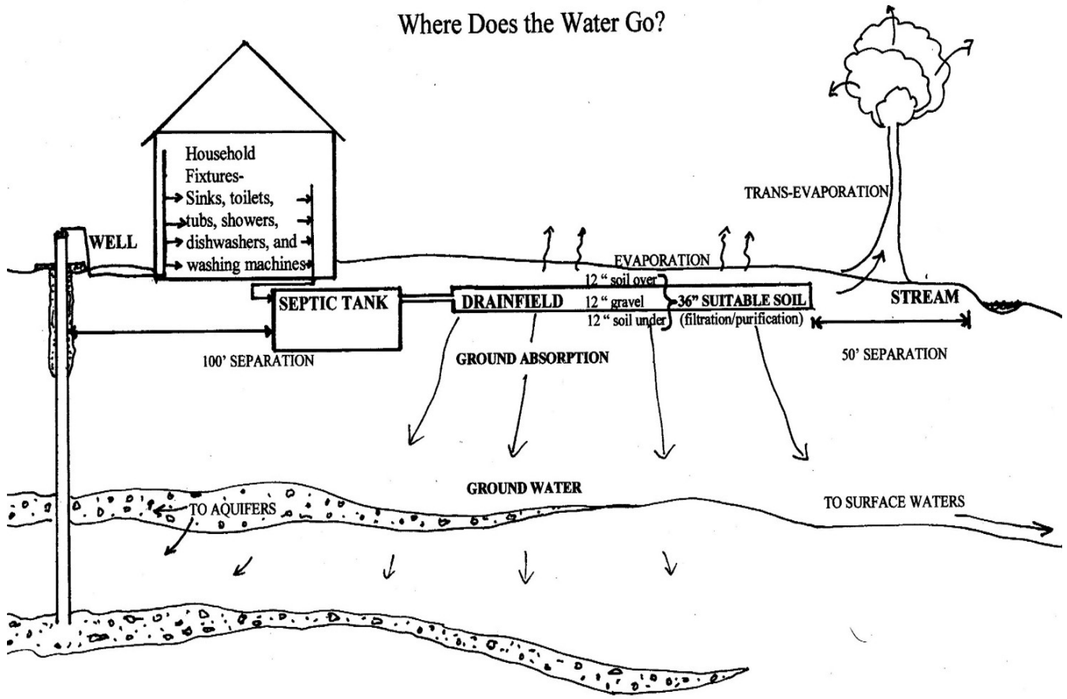
The MSD wastewater treatment plant currently processes an average of 20 million gallons per day yet has the capacity to treat twice that volume if expanded.

Activities & Deliverables

- Work with the Metropolitan Sewerage District (MSD) to study extensions in identified expansion areas such as Enka-Candler, North Buncombe, and Cane Creek.
- Conduct engineering reviews to ensure alignment to MSD capital improvement plan.
- Develop plans and seek funding to extend and improve infrastructure.

Implementation Considerations

MSD has a detailed extension policy noting types, locations, and new connections of extensions. Extension reimbursements are available for affordable housing developments and economic development opportunities. MSD is ultimately responsible for sewer infrastructure and does not expand without strong identified need. High cost of sewer expansion lends itself to conservative planning and capital improvements and amplifies the importance of grant funding.



Project Sponsor:
Buncombe County

Partners:
- Metropolitan Sewerage District
- Buncombe Economic Development
- Municipalities

Project Lead:
Buncombe County
Planning & Development

Skills, Training, & Employment Program

Increase STEP enrollment and program graduation rates to serve Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients with opportunities to earn a living wage by offering reskilling through continuing education courses and living wage job access.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Low	Low	Medium

Alignment with Buncombe County Strategic Plan Focus Area:

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- **Objective 1:** Increase opportunities and support for local workforce.

Purpose

This program currently allows all food and nutrition service recipients (ages 16 and older) the opportunity to take continuing education courses at no cost. This project will address negative economic impacts from Tropical Storm Helene, such as unemployment in the tourism sector. The high cost of educational access coupled with a prime age working population (18–44) where 39.3% do not have a degree and 29.2% have a high school equivalent or less (myfuturenc.org), contribute to a mismatch between the skills employees have and the postitons employers seek to fill.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

This project is intended to increase community awareness, enrollment, graduation and employment rates for Skills, Training, and Employment Program (STEP) program participants, elevating their ability to earn a living wage and uplifting them from poverty while contributing to overall economic revitalization.

The estimated economic damage of Helene in Western North Carolina includes $251 million in lost wages, $2.5-3 billion in physical damage to commercial infrastructure, and $1.8 billion in lost revenue (WNC Business Loss Assessment, Development Partnership of North Carolina.)

Activities & Deliverables

- Rebrand the STEP program in alignment with More Than a Job NC.
- Establish and implement an engagment plan in collaboration with community partners to increase awareness about STEP and other workforce training programs.
- Work with education institution partners to develop course programming reflective of local workforce needs.
- Work with employers to promote career opportunities for STEP graduates.

Implementation Considerations

Buncombe County is currently executing an Economic Mobility Cohort grant from International City and County Management Association to support STEP and gather program feedback. The results of this work will be used as foundation for developing increased enrollment in STEP. Changes to SNAP or More Than a Job at the federal or state level would impact this program.





Project Sponsor:
Buncombe County

Project Lead:
Buncombe County Health & Human Services

Partners:

- N.C. Department of Health & Human Services
- Buncombe County Economic Development
- Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College
- Local Educational Institutions
- Workforce Development Board
- Area Nonprofits & Business Partners
- International City & County Management Association

Small Business Grants

Provide financial support in the form of grants to small businesses that experienced negative economic impacts from Tropical Storm Helene, aiding their recovery.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Low	$$$ Medium	Short-term

Alignment with Buncombe County Strategic Plan Focus Area:

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- **Objective 2:** Increase economic and business opportunities in buncombe county.

Purpose

This project supports small business recovery and economic revitalization. Businesses with 150 employees or fewer account for a vast majority of businesses in Buncombe County and are a major employer. Small businesses were already burdened with additional debt as a result of the pandemic and cannot afford to take on additional loans. A significant loss of small businesses would exacerbate unemployment and further injure critical economic sectors, such as hospitality.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

Small business grants provide direct financial support to struggling small businesses, which make up a majority of firms in the county. Financial support of this type prevents business closures and resulting unemployment during a time of economic stress for the county. Grant programs of this type also support unique local industries like food and beverage, hospitality, and creative manufacturing.

FEMA estimates that up to 40% of small businesses in an area close after a major disaster, with a further 25% at risk in the following year.

Activities & Deliverables

- Seek funding from private, state and federal sources to support financial support for small businesses.
- Develop a pass-through funding system with Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) partners to distribute funds.
- Ensure access to ongoing technical support and business coaching.



Implementation Considerations

Mountain BizWorks, an area CDFI, estimates that the region's small businesses will need $100 million for recovery, yet only $65 million has been raised so far. This funding will ensure that small businesses will be able to cover about one-third of their Helene expenses with grants and the remaining amount with loans. Size and scope of small business support will depend on available funds. Staff capacity to assist with implementation may impact the pacing of the project.



Project Sponsor:
Buncombe County

Project Lead:
Buncombe County
Economic Development

Partners:

- Buncombe County Finance
- Dogwood Health Trust
- N.C. Department of Commerce
- U.S. Small Business Administration
- Community Development Financial Institution(s)
- Economic Development Coalition partners

Social Services Emergency Response Plan

Develop and implement an integrated social services disaster plan that ensures the effective and equitable delivery of social services to all residents of Buncombe County before, during, and after a disaster event.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	Low	Short-term

Alignment with Buncombe County Strategic Plan Focus Area:

COMMUNITY HEALTH

- **Objective 1:** Increase coordination and resilience of community health services to create a healthier and safer community.

Purpose

During response to Tropical Storm Helene, Buncombe County identified areas where advanced planning would have enhanced the delivery of human services. A post-disaster social services framework serves as a roadmap to guide comprehensive, coordinated, and compassionate support for survivors, helping them to stabilize, and recover. The scope is intended to be comprehensive, covering the full breadth of core human safety functions - including feeding, sheltering, and family reunification.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

- Enhances efficiency of communication and collaboration to prepare for and respond to disaster scenarios.
- Improves outcomes for survivors.
- Creates stronger community resilience.
- Provides better long-term disaster planning and mitigation.

After a disaster, social workers specializing in disaster management social work provide individuals and communities with immediate and long-term support to facilitate rebuilding and recovery.

Activities & Deliverables

- Engage in training and research around disaster response models.
- Establish a comprehensive response plan, including clear roles for County staff and community partners.
- Develop formal collaborative agreements with community-based organizations, including local resiliency hubs and mass-care providers, and mental health response agencies.
- Deliver employee training on comprehensive response plan.

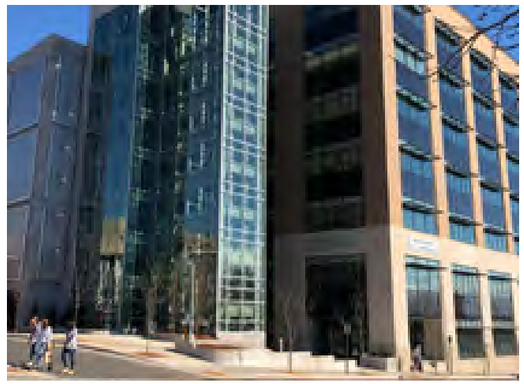


Implementation Considerations

Buncombe County lacks the staffing capacity to develop and implement this comprehensive framework. Close coordination through MOUs with community partners to ensure mutual understanding of roles and responsibilities under this framework will be integral to success. This includes the Continuum of Care and the Community Organizations Active in Disaster and Buncombe County Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster in development as a part of this Recovery Plan. See related projects, “Community Organization Support.”



North Carolina Disaster Case Management Program Help with Navigating Recovery Resources



Project Sponsor:
Buncombe County

Project Lead:
Buncombe County Health & Human Services

Partners:

- Buncombe County Emergency Services
- Buncombe County Planning & Development
- Asheville-Buncombe Continuum of Care
- Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster
- Buncombe County & Asheville City Schools
- Nonprofit partners

Stream Stabilization

Undertake activities to stabilize and restore streambanks, to include both county property (such as the County's river parks) and private property (such as residential and farmland property).

Complexity	Cost	Timing
High	$$$ High	Medium

Alignment with Buncombe County Strategic Plan Focus Area:

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

- **Objective 1:** Preserve the agriculture heritage of buncombe county & prioritize the conservation of natural resources.

Purpose

Nearly all waterways impacted by Helene are adjacent to some form of infrastructure. Historically, due to the topography of Buncombe County, infrastructure has been placed along waterways for access. In a post-Helene world, severe erosion and denuded stream banks are affecting water quality, tourism, and access to critical infrastructure, which impacts the County's ability to deploy emergency personnel. Streambank stabilization and long-term restoration strategies repair existing issues and reduce the likelihood of future deterioration.



This project will work to restore more than 1.3 million linear feet (250+ miles) of streambanks across 8 waterways.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

Streambank stabilization produces multiple outcomes: it removes debris from streams, stabilizes streambanks against future disasters and floods, and buffers and hardens water-adjacent properties and infrastructure critical for access to remote areas in the event of emergencies. Failing to stabilize stream banks after a flood allows continued erosion threatening homes, roads, bridges and safety of residents. The project includes 3 phases of stabilization to span immediate to long-term recovery needs: Revegetation; Stabilization; and Restoration of riparian corridors and wildlife habitat restoration. This project is intended to serve eight (8) waterways:

- Hominy Creek: 176,600 linear ft.
- Swannanoa River: 253,600 linear ft.
- Ivy Creek: 75,000 linear ft.
- Reems Creek: 168,000 linear ft.
- Garren Creek: 56,400 linear ft.
- Cane Creek: 165,000 linear ft.
- Dillingham Creek: 56,600 linear ft.
- French Broad River: 375,000 linear ft.

Activities & Deliverables

Identify funding and carry out a streambank stabilization program, including:

- Planning and assessment
- Design and permitting
- Construction
- Operation and maintenance

Implementation Considerations

Permits for work in water and floodplain will be required. Use of federal funding of any kind may require advanced environmental project review. This stream stabilization work will occur on both private and public properties, including County parks and greenways. Capacity of staff may impact the pace of implementation.



Project Sponsor:
Buncombe County

Project Lead:
Buncombe County Parks and Recreation

Partners:

- U.S. Department of Agriculture
- Natural Resource Conservation Service
- N.C Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
- N.C. Department of Environmental Quality
- N.C. Cooperative Extension
- Buncombe County Soil and Water Conservation District
- Area Nonprofits

Swannanoa Small Area & Resilience Plan

Engage the Swannanoa community in needs/priority assessment and the development of a framework to guide future development and public investments in this unincorporated area of Buncombe County that was severely impacted by Helene.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ Low	Short-term

Alignment with Buncombe County Strategic Plan Focus Area:

GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

- **Objective 2:** Maximize the use of land, guiding development to targeted growth areas that lead to resilient communities.

Purpose

Small area plans in North Carolina are focused, community-driven planning initiatives that provide detailed strategies for specific geographic areas, supplementing comprehensive plans by addressing unique needs and priorities of smaller areas. Swannanoa is an unincoporated area of Buncombe County that was severely damaged in the storm, primarily by flooding, but also was impacted by wind and landslides. The small area plan was proposed before the storm, but took on added urgency given the current needs for rebuilding and recovery. The plan aims to guide future growth, development, conservation, and resilience in Swannanoa. It will serve as both a physical land use plan and a policy guide. It will address topics common in Small Area and Corridor Plans, such as housing, transportation, health, and recreation, while also focusing on resilience and disaster mitigation.

Buncombe County sponsored informal gatherings in the Swannanoa community, like "Pizza with a Planner" and "Coffee with a Planner" to encourage casual conversations about the plan.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

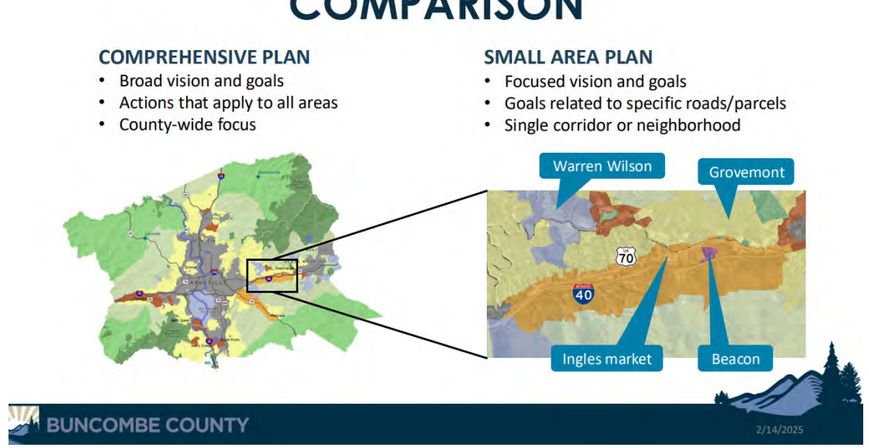
The plan will serve as a resource to collect community input on the future growth of Swannanoa. It will define a geographic boundary and outline a detailed plan for addressing future change in a way that responds to the unique characteristics and needs of the area.

Activities & Deliverables

- Identify the unique needs, challenges, resilience, and growth and conservation demands of the area.
- Identify and evaluate the changed landscapes and development challenges related to Helene.
- Achieve the vision and goals outlined in the 2043 Comprehensive Plan.

Implementation Considerations

The creation of the plan includes a robust bilingual community engagement process. It will be critical for the community to remain involved throughout the process to ensure broad buy-in before the plan is presented to the Board of Commissioners.



Project Sponsor:
Buncombe County

Project Lead:
Buncombe County
Planning & Development

Partners:

- Buncombe County Communications & Public Engagement
- Black Mountain Swannanoa Chamber of Commerce
- Fairview Business Association
- Weaverville Business Association
- Swannanoa Area Nonprofits & Community Groups

Vehicle Resilience

Assess and improve fuel and energy resiliency for Buncombe County business travel during times of emergency, such as expansion of mobile or fixed-location fuel storage and electric vehicle charging solutions.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ Medium	Medium

Alignment with Buncombe County Strategic Plan Focus Area:

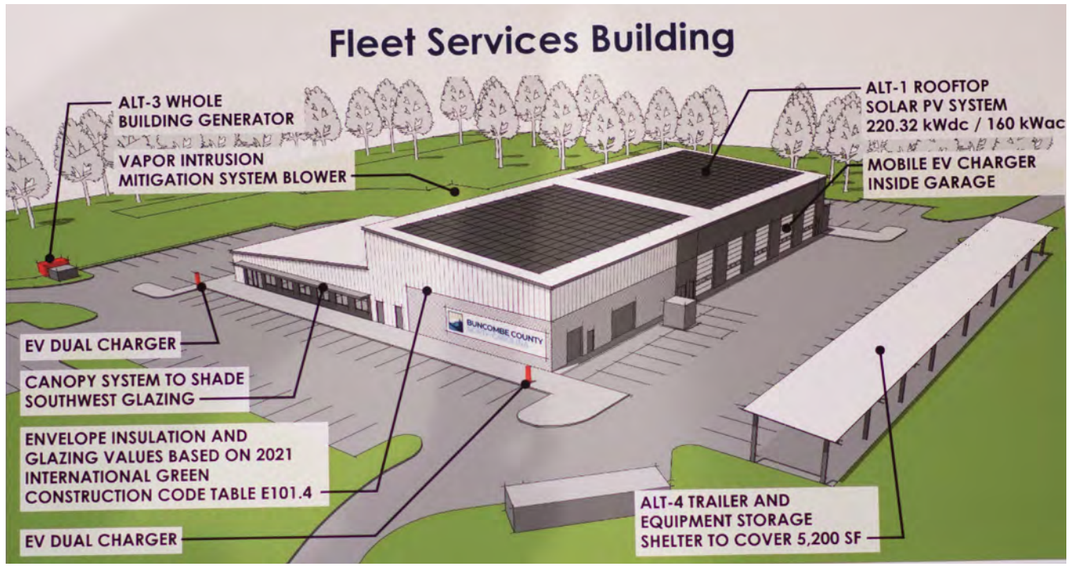
PUBLIC SAFETY

- **Objective 2:** Increase hazard mitigation and disaster preparedness to support a climate resilient community.

Purpose

Planning for emergency fleet operation is a complex issue requiring considerations for equipment, location of infrastructure, multiple fuel sources, adaptability for multiple scenarios, clear communication, supply contracts, and cross-department coordination. Emergencies can disrupt fuel supply chains, and electric vehicle charging infrastructure is vulnerable to electric grid outages, threatening the continuation of critical services. Certain stored fuels degrade over time, requiring planning to ensure quality. Fueling operations will shift during emergency operations, necessitating written procedures including, but not limited to refueling locations and fuel rationing. By proactively addressing these challenges with a disaster vehicle fueling and charging plan, Buncombe County can minimize disruptions to essential services.

During Tropical Storm Helene, Buncombe County faced fuel delivery delays, power outages, and road closures, forcing agencies to ration fuel for essential services.



Benefits & Intended Outcomes

- Protect Buncombe County against fuel supply chain interruptions.
- Minimize disruptions to Electric Vehicle (EV) charging caused by grid outages.
- Align fuel preparedness with sustainable fleet initiatives

Activities & Deliverables

- Assess risks and vulnerabilities to fuel supply and County-owned fueling/charging infrastructure.
- Develop a detailed plan outlining fueling/charging procedures for multiple emergency scenarios including communications protocol.
- Develop a funding strategy.
- Reexamine contracts with fuel suppliers.
- Calculate on-site fuel storage needs including battery storage for EV charging.
- Where necessary, ensure backup generators are sized to power EV chargers during grid outage.
- Update Fleet Policy as needed.
- Ensure ongoing testing, training, maintenance, and plan updates.

Implementation Considerations

Vehicle resilience activities should consider an all-hazards approach with consideration for how to maintain critical operations during various scenarios (e.g. fuel shortages, power outages, severe weather, transportation route disruptions). Staff capacity may impact the pace of implementation.

Project Sponsor:
Buncombe County

Project Lead:
Buncombe County General Services

Partners:

- Buncombe County Emergency Management
- Buncombe County Office of Sustainability
- Buncombe County Sheriff's Office
- Contracted Fuel & Energy Providers

Wildfire Protection Plans

Complete a comprehensive Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) for each of 19 fire districts to provide hazard and risk identification along with pre-planning for mitigation measures and response plans.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	Medium	Medium

Alignment with Buncombe County Strategic Plan Focus Area:

PUBLIC SAFETY

- **Objective 2:** Increase hazard mitigation and disaster preparedness to support a climate resilient community.

Purpose

As a severe wind event, Tropical Storm Helene had a catastrophic impact on forests in Western North Carolina. Following unprecedented rainfall (30+ inches in some areas) and extreme wind gusts (up to 106 mph), there was widespread blowdown across an approximately 822,000 acres in 17 counties. The results of these impacts have created a multi-year to multi-decade hazard that requires coordinated, proactive planning and sustained resources.

Wildfire risks include:

- **Immediate:** High ignition risk from fine fuels and debris; critical gaps in access and readiness.
- **Short-Term (2–5 years)**: Increased insect and disease outbreaks; heightened wildland-urban interface danger from increased fuel load and limited access for firefighting services.
- **Long-Term (5–15+ years):** Large fuels will persist on the forest floor, increasing the risk of long-burning, wildfires, and hampering suppression access unless mitigated.

According to the National Hurricane Center Tropical Cyclone Report on Hurricane Helene, tens of thousands of trees were knocked down across Buncombe County.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

A CWPP is tailored to the unique characteristics of each fire district and outlines specific actions for wildfire preparedness, mitigation, response, and prevention. The goal is to have CWPPs in place for all of the fire districts in Buncombe County.

Activities & Deliverables

Activities include: secure funding; formalize roles through written agreements; conduct wildfire hazard assessments; map risk areas considering past fires; evaluate response capabilities; prioritize fuel reduction; address structural integrity; design mitigation measures; and create a detailed implementation strategy with timelines, responsible parties, and metrics for tracking progress.

Implementation Considerations

Effective wildfire preparedness and response will require:

- Cross-agency coordination among local, state, and federal wildfire response agencies, emergency managers, planners, and scientific partners.
- Public and partner communication to ensure residents understand evolving risks and how to prepare.
- Legislative engagement and resource allocation to secure support for suppression entities, equipment, staffing, landowner assistance, data and mapping tools, and long-term forest recovery programs.



Project Sponsor:
Buncombe County

Project Lead:
Buncombe County Emergency Services

Partners:

- U.S. Department of Agriculture
- U.S. Fire Administration
- N.C. Forest Service
- Buncombe County Agriculture & Land Resources
- Fire Districts & Public Safety Partners
- Municipalities

THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE

CITY COUNCIL HELENE RECOVERY VISION

Rooted in Resilience • Rising in Unity • Repairing with Care • Ready for Tomorrow



45.5
SQ MILES

CITY OF ASHEVILLE

95,053
POPULATION

41.3
MEDIAN AGE

$66,032
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

$465,800
MEDIAN HOME PRICE

$1,377
MEDIAN RENT

GOVERNMENT PROFILE

GOVERNMENT	ANNUAL BUDGET	EMPLOYEES
City Council	$256,209,453	1,396

KEY SERVICES

Fire
Parking
Police
Development Services

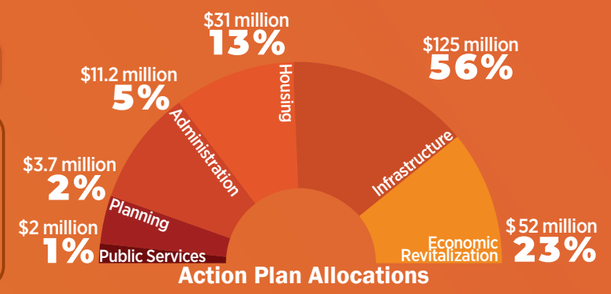
Public Works
Sanitation
Stormwater
Streets

Transit
Transportation
Water

Planning & Urban Design
Community & Economic Development
Community & Regional Entertainment Facilities

CDBG-DR

The City of Asheville received approximately $225 million in Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery funds from the Department of Housing and Urban Development.



Action Plan Allocations

ASHEVILLE CITY COUNCIL PRIORITIES FOR RECOVERY

INFRASTRUCTURE & ENVIRONMENT • PEOPLE • ECONOMY • HOUSING

City of Asheville

The City of Asheville worked in partnership with Buncombe County and other municipalities across the county to develop a comprehensive, county-wide Long-Term Recovery Plan (LTRP). This plan will serve as a living guide for our community's recovery and will continue to evolve as progress is made. Each municipality will have its own dedicated section, highlighting specific projects and priorities for its jurisdiction.

The City of Asheville has developed a list of priority projects to be included in the Buncombe County Long-Term Recovery Plan. These projects were selected using a balanced approach that incorporates:

- City Council's adopted vision, priorities, and goals for recovery
- Community feedback and input
- Existing adopted plans and policies
- The City's organizational work plan and operational priorities

During the City Council retreat in January, Council adopted the following vision and priorities to guide Asheville's recovery efforts:

Goals:

People Goals:

- Support residents recovering from disaster impacts while strengthening long-term community resilience.
- Ensure clear, consistent communication so people feel informed, engaged, and connected to resources.
- Strengthen neighborhood-level preparedness efforts (e.g., resilience/neighborhood hubs and neighborhood disaster planning).
- Recognize that pre-existing vulnerabilities are amplified in disasters and work to address these disparities.

Economy Goals:

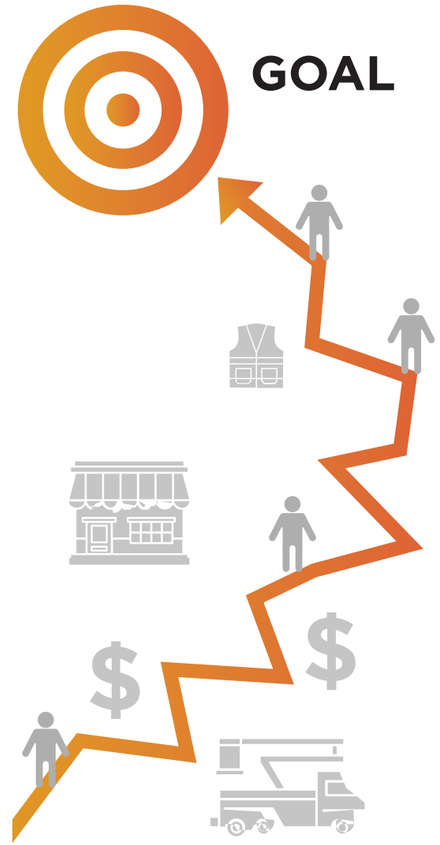
- Ensure that businesses impacted by the disaster have access to resources needed to recover and rebuild.
- Strengthen outreach and support for businesses to ensure equitable recovery opportunities.
- Expand the City's contractor pool to improve capacity for recovery and future resilience projects.
- Enhance economy and strengthen resilience through a diversified and sustainable economic base.

Infrastructure and Environment Goals:

- Rebuild infrastructure with a focus on long-term resilience, even if it means a longer recovery timeline.
- Improve water system resilience, flood management, and stormwater infrastructure to reduce future risks.
- Strengthen the City's ability to prepare for and respond to climate-related disasters.
- Prioritize environmental sustainability, recognizing the impact and role of Asheville's natural resources in recovery.

Housing Goals:

- Help residents navigate post-disaster housing challenges by connecting them to available resources and funding.
- Proactively address future displacement events (e.g., developing a Disaster Housing Plan).
- Support temporary and permanent housing solutions for displaced residents.
- Leverage policy tools and partnerships where possible to expand housing options in the City.
- Advance housing stability efforts such as home repair programs and regulatory flexibility to increase supply.



Community Engagement



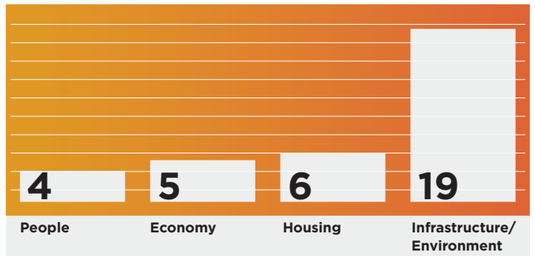
The Helene Recovery Priorities Survey, which closed on February 2, 2025, garnered over 6,800 responses. Through this survey, community members shared valuable input on the issues and priorities that matter most to them as Asheville continues to recover and rebuild in the aftermath of Helene.



As part of developing the CDBG-DR Action Plan, the City conducted a robust public engagement process to ensure community input shaped the final document. In February, the City hosted six public input sessions, followed by the release of the draft Action Plan on March 4, 2025, which opened a 30-day public comment period. During this time, residents provided feedback online, by email, and by mail, and the City held three additional public sessions to review the draft and gather comments. All input was incorporated into the HUD-approved.

City staff and community members met with national experts through the ULI Advisory Services Program. Over five days, ULI's nine-member panel toured impacted areas, met with local leaders and stakeholders, and shared preliminary insights and recommendations for Asheville's resilient recovery, with a final report to be released later this year.

The City of Asheville project summary:



Each project is listed under its primary City Council priority category:

Infrastructure & Environment

- Stormwater Infrastructure Improvements
- Relocate City Facilities
- HMGP Private Property Acquisition Program
- Resilient Critical Facility Power Systems
- Large Scale Arts and Entertainment Facility Evaluation
- French Broad Riverfront Parks
- Azalea Parks and Infrastructure
- Municipal Golf Course Restoration
- Swannanoa Road and Riverway Planning
- Wilma Dykeman RiverWay Plan Update
- Living Asheville and Unified Development Ordinance Plan Updates
- Urban Forest Master Plan
- Solid Waste Master Plan
- Urban Land Institute (ULI) Recommendations
- North Fork & William DeBruhl Water Treatment Plant Improvements
- North Fork Alternate Route Utility Protection
- Water Treatment Plant Feasibility Analysis
- Explore Inter-Jurisdictional Water System Connection
- Local Watershed-Wide Early Warning Systems

People

- Resilience Hub Mapping
- Community Space Upfit Project (CSUP)
- Reframe Community Engagement Academy (CEA)
- Update Emergency Operations Plan and Continuity of Operations Plan

Economy

- Small Business Support
- Workforce Development
- Revitalization of Flooded Commercial Corridors
- Development of a Strategic Economic and Workforce Development Plan
- Biltmore Village Public Realm Restoration

Housing

- Affordable Housing Plan Implementation
- Coordinated Housing Access
- Multi-Family Housing Construction
- State Partnership for Home Repairs
- 65 Ford Street Master Planning
- Emergency Shelter Planning & Development

65 Ford Street Master Planning

Partner with experienced affordable housing developers to assess, plan, and build affordable housing on 30 acres of City-owned property in the Deaverview neighborhood.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	Low	Medium

Council Priority:
HOUSING

Purpose

Impacts from Helene have magnified the need for affordable housing. The City of Asheville owns approximately 30 acres of developable land in the Deaverview neighborhood, much of which was purchased in 2021 using Community Development Block Grant–Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds with the intent of developing affordable housing on it. The city's Community Development Division will partner with a pre-development planning firm to conduct in-depth site feasibility assessments, research market demand, secure financial viability, and investigate environmental considerations in order to develop affordable housing on the site. The selected partner will also be responsible for crafting a Request for Proposals (RFP) to identify a master development partner and will assist the city throughout the selection and negotiation process.

Benefits & Outcomes

The initiative directly addresses Asheville's affordable housing shortage, brings essential investment to an underutilized property, and fulfills US Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) CDBG-DR compliance mandate.

Asheville City Council established the Housing Trust Fund in 2000 to specifically fund the construction of affordable housing units in the community. Between 2001 and 2019, approximately 1300 units were built using funding from the Housing Trust Fund.



Key Activities & Deliverables

1. Engage with pre-development planning partner.
2. Conduct comprehensive site feasibility assessments.
3. Draft RFP for Master Development Partner.
4. Draft a fully developed affordable housing plan for the Deaverview site.
5. Select and engage a qualified master development partner.
6. Initiate affordable housing construction.
7. Ensure compliance with HUD's CDBG-DR funding requirements.

Implementation Considerations

Partnerships will require interest and engagement with developers having affordable housing experience to secure funding and complete development with a reasonable timeframe.

Project Sponsor:
City of Asheville

Project Lead:
Community and Economic Development

Potential Funding Sources:
- Community Development Block Grant–Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR)
- City Capital Improvement Plan and Bond Funds

Anticipated Partners:
- Housing Authority of the City of Asheville (HACA)
- Deaverview Residents
- Public Housing Residents

Affordable Housing Plan

Implement the strategies outlined for Year 1 of the Affordable Housing Plan to provide affordable housing access throughout Asheville.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ High	Short-Term

Council Priority:
HOUSING

Purpose

Prioritizing the implementation of its Year 1 Affordable Housing Plan strategies, the city aims to accelerate housing production and improve accessibility for residents. This plan provides a vital roadmap for refining current programs, instituting innovative policies, and effectively leveraging resources.

Benefits & Outcomes

Distribution of Affordable Housing bond dollars will result in more affordable units available to those in need and improve access to renters applying for affordable housing. Under the plan, home repairs made for low-income residents allow them to remain in their homes while making the housing stock more resilient.

The Asheville Affordable Housing Plan focuses on several key areas: preserving current affordable housing options, expanding the availability of new units, and bolstering the overall affordable housing ecosystem.

Key Activities & Deliverables

- Update policies for program implementation.
- Enhance housing programs.
- Prepare progress report on housing production and access.
- Prepare action plans for future implementation.

Implementation Considerations

Challenges potentially include high community expectations with limited public funds to achieve the goals. Ongoing staff is required to support program administration and monitoring.



Project Sponsor:
City of Asheville

Project Lead:
Community & Economic Development

Potential Funding Sources:
- Affordable Housing Bond
- General Fund Allocations
- Public Benefit Funds
- Other Applicable Grants

Anticipated Partners:
- The Community
- City of Asheville
- Affordable Housing Advisory Committee
- Dogwood Health Trust
- Self-Help Ventures Fund
- Buncombe County
- Long-Term Recovery Group (LTRG)
- Thrive Asheville
- Developers
- Service Providers

Assess Urban Land Institute (ULI) Recommendations

Review and make recommendations based on ULI's strategies for post-disaster economic recovery and long-term resiliency.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Low	$$$ Medium	Medium

Council Priority:
ECONOMY

Purpose

The ULI panel was convened to address the needs for economic recovery in the city's most damaged and vulnerable river corridors.

Benefits & Outcomes

The Panel provided recommendations on:

- Economy: Industry Resilience & Diversification
- Workforce: Economic Mobility
- Real Estate Development and Public Investment
- Infrastructure



ULI is the oldest and largest network of cross-disciplinary real estate and land use experts in the world and it's mission is to shape the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide.

Key Activities & Deliverables

- Analysis of recommendations made by the ULI panel against resources and current plans and initiatives.
- Reporting on the considerations, feasibility of and options for implementing the recommendations made by the ULI panel.

Implementation Considerations

The broad recommendations of the ULI Panel are targeted recovery activities that require analysis based on City resources, organizational planning and other plans and initiatives.

Key Recommendations from the panel included:

These recommendations will be assessed by staff and prioritization and possible implementation will be based on feasibility, capacity and community input

- Expand park space in the French Broad and Swannanoa Corridors.
- Invest in Legacy Neighborhoods.
- Enhance water system resilience.
- Relocate the River Arts District.
- Reset the economy through resilience, not replication.
- Acknowledge the market forces on housing availability.
- Change zoning ordinances for floodplains and other areas.
- Hire a development liaison.
- Act quickly.

WHERE THE FUTURE IS BUILT

Advisory Services Program

Charlotte



Project Sponsor:
City of Asheville

Project Lead:
Planning & Urban Design

Anticipated Partners:
- To Be Determined

Potential Funding Sources:
- FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)
- Community Development Block Grant–Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR)

Azalea Parks and Infrastructure

This project aims to restore damaged recreational open spaces and establish a long term vision for resiliency and community protection along the Swannanoa riverfront.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
High	$$$ High	Long-term

Council Priorities:
INFRASTRUCUTRE & ENVIRONMENT

Purpose

This project aims to rebuild and enhance parks, greenways, open spaces, and roadways along the Swannanoa Riverfront in Asheville. The goal is to create a resilient and accessible public space that can withstand and adapt to periodic flooding, supporting long-term community use, ecological health, and climate adaptation.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

The project includes the restoration of park spaces with a focus on long-term resiliency; the protection of naturalized riparian areas and stabilization of streambanks; construction of flood-protection landforms; and implementation of stormwater management measures.

The area near the confluence of the Swannanoa and French Broad rivers was once a meeting place and ceremonial ground for the Cherokee, known as "Untokiasdiyi" (where they race).

Activities & Deliverables

1. Complete request for proposal process and obtain consultant assistance.
2. Identify project team members.
3. Secure funding for plan development, technical studies and community engagement.
4. Define project boundary.

Implementation Considerations

The project will have 3 phases of implementation:

- **Short Term:** Temporary and Phased Re-opening of amenities for public use where possible.
- **Medium Term:** Design and Public Engagement.
- **Long Term:** Construction.





Project Sponsor:
City of Asheville

Project Lead:
Capital Management

Anticipated Partners:

- FEMA
- Buncombe County
- Riverfront Commission
- RiverLink
- Land of Sky Council of Governments
- N.C. Department of Transportation
- Utility Companies

Potential Funding Sources:

- FEMA Public Assistance
- FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)
- Community Development Block Development–Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR)

Biltmore Village Public Realm Restoration

Restore the historic public spaces of Biltmore Village to support the economic revitalization of the historic business neighborhood.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ Medium	Long-term

Council Priorities:
ECONOMY • PEOPLE
INFRASTRUCTURE
ENVIRONMENT

Purpose

Tropical Storm Helene severely impacted Biltmore Village. This project seeks to restore public infrastructure and original historic design elements such as brick sidewalks, granite curbing, original decorative streetlights, trees, the village green, and street furniture. It directly supports the Village's economic recovery while fulfilling long-standing preservation goals outlined in the 1992 Development Plan and 2015 Historic Preservation Master Plan.



Benefits & Outcomes

This project aims to foster a cleaner, safer, and more cohesive public environment for an important economic hub and tourist destination by restoring the public realm in Biltmore Village, creating positive impacts on the broader psyche of our community as we recover from Helene.

Biltmore Village, an area settled as early as the 1780s, grew into a bustling community with the arrival of Asheville's first train station in 1881. It stands out for its unique architectural style, which blends historic English manorial cottages with the surrounding landscape.

Key Activities & Deliverables

- Secure funding.
- Restore public infrastructure.
- Reinstate historic design features.
- Compliance documentation.
- Enhance public realm.

Implementation Considerations

All work will require adherence to historic guidelines and best practices with permits and documentation to support compliance.



Project Sponsor:
City of Asheville

Anticipated Partners:
- N.C. Department of Transportation
- Biltmore Village Merchants Association

Project Lead:
Planning & Urban Design

Potential Funding Sources:
- Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR)
- Small Business Infrastructure Grant

Community Space Upfit Project

Upgrade 5 community spaces with essential digital tools and infrastructure to support neighborhood cohesion, access to information during emergencies, and enhanced access to decision-making.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Low	Low	Short-Term

Council Priorities:
PEOPLE
INFRASTRUCTURE
ENVIRONMENT

Purpose

Asheville's Community Space Upfit Project (CSUP) is a transformative project to enhance neighborhood resilience by addressing the digital divide and strengthening neighborhood connections, particularly for vulnerable communities impacted by emergencies such as Tropical Storm Helene. This project, driven by community input, is part of the city's broader American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Inclusive and Accessible Government project. It strategically upgrades 5 non-city-owned community spaces with essential digital tools and infrastructure to support access to information during emergencies, build cohesive neighborhood connections, and enhance access to decision making.



Benefits & Outcomes

The CSUP's focus on hybrid meeting capabilities, virtual access to city information, and localized resilience programming empowers historically underserved neighborhoods. Supporting digital literacy and providing critical infrastructure such as audio/visual equipment and improved internet allows the project to foster access to government processes and vital government information, ultimately boosting neighborhood resilience and community engagement.

Key Activities & Deliverables

- Five (5) upgraded community spaces with audio/visual and internet infrastructure, accessibility improvements, etc.
- Digital literacy support.
- Increased capacity for hybrid meetings.
- Increased capacity for virtual access to city meetings and information.
- Increased capacity for local resilience programming.

The program is powered by $75,000 in federal ARPA funds specifically targeted at enhancing neighborhood and climate resilience.

Implementation Considerations

Equipment maintenance will be supported by neighborhood organizations with guidance from the city. Each site will receive training and setup support, and maintenance responsibilities will be defined in partnership agreements. Neighborhoods will be responsible for their own tech support, but occasional requests for support from city staff are expected.



Project Sponsor:
City of Asheville

Project Lead:
Communication & Public Engagement (CAPE)

Anticipated Partners:
- Neighborhood Organizations

Potential Funding Sources:
- American Rescue Plan Act

Coordinated Housing Access

Create a community-based comprehensive affordable housing access program to stabilize low-income, unhoused, and storm-displaced individuals.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Low	$$$ Medium	Short-Term

Council Priority:
HOUSING

Purpose

This project proposes a unified, resilient framework that integrates and expands upon community-based initiatives (e.g. Just Economics and Thrive). This critical effort will enhance landlord partnerships and establish a comprehensive housing navigation system, thereby increasing access to affordable housing and fostering stability for low-income, unhoused, and storm-displaced individuals.

Benefits & Outcomes

The project will improve access to housing, may decrease the length of time individuals experience homelessness, lower turnover in affordable rental units, and increase landlord engagement with more affordable units becoming available over time.



Key Activities & Deliverables

- Unified framework for coordinated housing access
- Enhanced landlord partnership program
- Operational housing navigation system
- Collaboration agreements/ integration documentation
- Performance metrics and outcomes report

Implementation Considerations

Planning would occur through and with the Asheville-Buncombe Continuum of Care and the Buncombe County Long-Term Recovery Group. Building a system to deliver services across multiple partners is challenging, but otherwise no major challenges are identified.

A core strategy embedded in Asheville's approach is the "Housing First" model, which emphasizes providing vulnerable people with housing first, without requiring them to address other issues like substance abuse or mental health beforehand.

Project Sponsor:
City of Asheville

Project Lead:
Community & Economic Development

Potential Funding Sources:
- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)
- Hotel Public Benefit Funds

Anticipated Partners:
- Asheville-Buncombe Continuum of Care Affordable Housing Advisory Committee
- Buncombe County Long-Term Recovery Group
- Just Economics
- Thrive Asheville

Development of a Strategic Economic & Workforce Development Plan

Develop a strategic and comprehensive plan to address economic and workforce development to establish a clear vision of business support for long-term economic recovery and resilience.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Low	Low	Short-Term

Council Priority:
ECONOMY & PEOPLE

Purpose

This project supports the development of a comprehensive economic and workforce development strategic plan. This plan will guide city investments and leverage existing resources, data, community input, and federal programs, like FEMA and Community Development Block Grant–Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) to:

- Foster economic prosperity and mobility.
- Cultivate a more resilient and dynamic economy.
- Create a supportive business environment.
- Optimize the use of operational tools, such as land use planning and capital project selection to achieve goals.



Benefits & Outcomes

Asheville's economic strategic plan will:

- Define a **clear vision** with long-term goals for recovery and sustainable growth.
- Enhance **business support** through updated incentives, infrastructure, and tailored disaster planning, including improvements to programs like the Mountain Community Capital Fund.
- Strengthen **workforce development** by aligning training with future job opportunities and leveraging federal and infrastructure investments.
- Promote **economic diversification** by reducing reliance on tourism and aligning with regional development plans.
- Improve **fiscal health and collaboration** by expanding the tax base and fostering cross-sector investment partnerships.
- Ensure **measurable outcomes**, such as job growth, increased wages, reduced unemployment and vacancies, new housing, and infrastructure and small business development.

Key Activities & Deliverables

Next Steps:

1. Secure funding for a strategic plan to inform decision-making.
2. Confirm recommendations.
3. Work with stakeholders.
4. Complete the Request for Proposal and award process.

Products:

- Comprehensive Strategic Plan Document.
- Implementation Framework/Action Plan.
- Performance Measurement Framework.
- Stakeholder Engagement Summary/ Report.

Implementation Considerations

Ultimately, this strategic plan will enable Asheville to recover more effectively and build a stronger, more diversified economic future.

Collaboration between employers, educational institutions, workforce agencies, and economic development organizations is crucial for conducting skill gap analyses and creating tailored training programs to fill those gaps.

Project Sponsor:
City of Asheville

Project Lead:
Community & Economic Development

Potential Funding Sources:

- Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR)
- General Fund

Anticipated Partners:

- City of Asheville – Economic Support Group (ERSG)
- Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority
- Economic Development Coalition (EDC)
- Land of Sky of Council of Governments
- Buncombe County
- Other Financial Institutions
- Technical Assistance Providers
- Private Sector Partners
- Community Groups and Business Associations

Emergency Shelter Planning & Development

Partner with the Asheville-Buncombe Continuum of Care to develop and construct low-barrier shelter capacity and improve outcomes for unsheltered individuals and vulnerable populations.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
High	$$$ High	Long-Term

Council Priority:
HOUSING

Purpose

In partnership with the Asheville-Buncombe Continuum of Care (CoC) the Community and Economic Development Department is launching a new emergency shelter initiative. This project addresses the rise in unsheltered homelessness, exacerbated by Tropical Storm Helene. It will build essential infrastructure for improved disaster response for vulnerable populations. This is a top priority identified by the CoC's strategic plan and aligns with recommendations from the National Alliance to End Homelessness. The goal is to increase low-barrier shelter capacity, improve referral pathways for first responders, reduce institutional discharges to the streets, and ultimately shorten the duration of unsheltered homelessness for individuals, guiding them toward stable housing.

Natural disasters like Tropical Storm Helene have further intensified the housing crisis and put additional stress on Asheville's emergency housing network.

Benefits & Outcomes

This project will reduce unsheltered homelessness by improving access to housing-focused services. This directly enhances the health, stability, and safety of individuals in crisis, while also improving community public safety and sanitation, and supporting business recovery. Furthermore, it builds community resilience and preparedness through new emergency infrastructure for future crises.

Key Activities & Outcomes

1. Finalize detailed project plans.
2. Select site and obtain necessary approvals.
3. Acquire property.
4. Initiate construction and renovation
5. Operate Emergency Shelter

Outcomes

- Increased shelter capacity
- Enhanced referral oathways
- Reduced institutional discharges to homelessness
- Shortened length of unsheltered homelessness
- New emergency shelter infrastructure
- Improved disaster response capability
- Alignment with CoC strategic priorities



Implementation Considerations

As a project developed through the Asheville-Buncombe Continuum of Care, pre-requisite steps include establishing and onboarding a work group and creating new staff capacity for project management. During its May 8, 2025, meeting, the CoC Board established and appointed the Emergency Shelter Development Work Group for this purpose.

Challenges

- Site selection and neighborhood concerns.
- Identifying an appropriate shelter operator with capacity to expand services.
- Developing an effective funding strategy for sustainability.

Successful implementation requires collaboration and dedicated project management. Ongoing support will be identified, but some public investment for facility management or operations may be needed.

Project Sponsor:
City of Asheville

Project Lead:
Community & Economic Development

Anticipated Partners:

- Asheville-Buncombe Continuum of Care
- Emergency Shelter Development Work Group will lead project development as designated by the CoC Board, including collaboration with current service providers and people experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

Potential Funding Sources:

- Federal (SAMHSA, CDBG, CDBG-DR)
- State (ESG, State Mental Health Block Grant)
- Local (general funds)
- Private (CFWNC, DHT, WNC Bridge, CoC partners)
- Other (Opioid Settlements, Healthy Opportunities Pilot)

French Broad Riverfront Parks

Restore the storm-damaged parks, recreation, and infrastructure system along the French Broad Riverfront and River Arts District that is home to 200+ acres of public parks, greenways and recreation facilities.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
High	$$$ High	Long-Term

Council Priorities:
INFRASTRUCUTRE & ENVIRONMENT

Purpose

This project aims to restore the recreational system along the French Broad Riverfront, which was damaged by flooding, and to develop a long-term, resilient vision for the future. It recognizes the recurring nature of flood events and focuses on rebuilding in a way that adapts to and mitigates future flood impacts, ensuring continued public use and ecological sustainability.

Benefits & Outcomes

This project will restore park spaces with a focus on long-term resiliency. It seeks to protect naturalized riparian areas and stabilize the riverbank with the implementation of stormwater best management practices.

The land for the park was donated to the City of Asheville by Carolina Power & Light (now DukeEnergy) and previously served as an unauthorized dump filled with garbage and other debris.

Key Activities & Deliverables

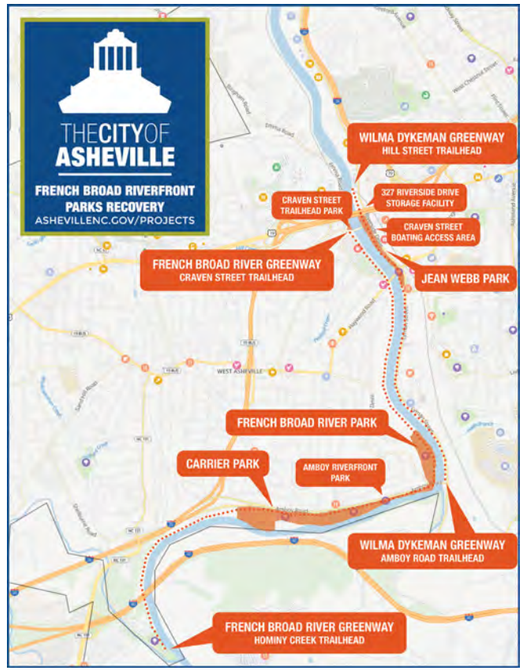
1. Complete request for proposal process and obtain consultant assistance.
2. Identify project team members.
3. Secure funding for plan development, technical studies and community engagement.
4. Define project boundary.



Implementation Considerations

The project will have 3 phases of implementation:

- **Short Term:** Temporary and phased reopening of amenities for public use where possible.
- **Medium Term:** Design and public engagement for resilient. improvements
- **Long Term:** Construction of improvements.



Project Sponsor:
City of Asheville

Project Lead:
Capital Management

Anticipated Partners:

- FEMA
- Buncombe County
- Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority
- Riverfront Commission
- RiverLink
- Land of Sky Council of Governments
- N.C. Department of Transportation
- Utility Companies

Potential Funding Sources:

- FEMA Public Assistance
- FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)
- Community Development Block Development–Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR)

HMGP Private Property Acquisition Program

Create and implement a land use and management plan for hazard mitigation properties acquired by the city as a result of Tropical Storm Helene.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
High	$$$ Medium	Medium

Council Priorities:
INFRASTRUCTURE & ENVIRONMENT

Purpose

The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) Property Acquisition Program is a federally funded initiative managed by FEMA and administered at the state and local levels. Its primary goal is to reduce future disaster risk and losses by acquiring and permanently removing structures from hazard-prone areas.

Benefits & Outcomes

The purpose of the HMGP property acquisition program is to reduce the long-term risk to people and property from natural hazards—especially flooding—by removing vulnerable structures from high-risk areas. This helps break the cycle of repeated disaster damage and rebuilding, freeing property owners from future risk. Not only does the program reduce risk to life and property, it also supports environmental conservation and floodplain restoration.

A property acquisition program, along with removing structures from disaster prone areas, can also serve other objectives such as protecting critical habitat, providing recreational opportunities, and enhancing natural resources.

Key Activities & Deliverables

1. Determine what recovery of city-acquired properties looks like.
2. Secure funding.
3. Create an acquisition/open space management plan.
4. Develop actions for long-term maintenance of the buyout properties.

Implementation Considerations

The implementation of an acquisition program relies on property owners with repetitive losses to choose the buy-out option. Further, structures require demolition and land restoration to open space and/or passive recreation in line with approved standards for floodplains.



Properties acquired through HMGP are restricted to open space uses, such as:

OPEN SPACE
parks, greenways, nature preserves

RECREATION
trails, picnic areas, ball fields

WETLANDS MANAGEMENT
natural floodplain, wildlife habitat

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT
retention basins, rain gardens, natural drainage

AGRICULTURE
community gardens, farming, grazing

FORESTRY
tree planting, managed forests

LIMITED PARKING
unpaved, permeable public use

Project Sponsor:
City of Asheville

Project Lead:
Economic Development Division

Anticipated Partners:
- Buncombe County
- N.C. Emergency Management Division
- FEMA

Potential Funding Sources:
- FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)

Large Scale Arts and Entertainment Facility Evaluation

Undertake a strategic exploratory process to assess the feasibility, potential sites, design concepts, and implementation options for a large arts and entertainment facility.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
High	High	Long-Term

Council Priority:
INFRASTRUCTURE & ENVIRONMENT

Purpose

This project aims to create a signature destination designed to support the arts and related industries through performing arts, community performance space, and opportunities to support local artists and their careers in this sector.

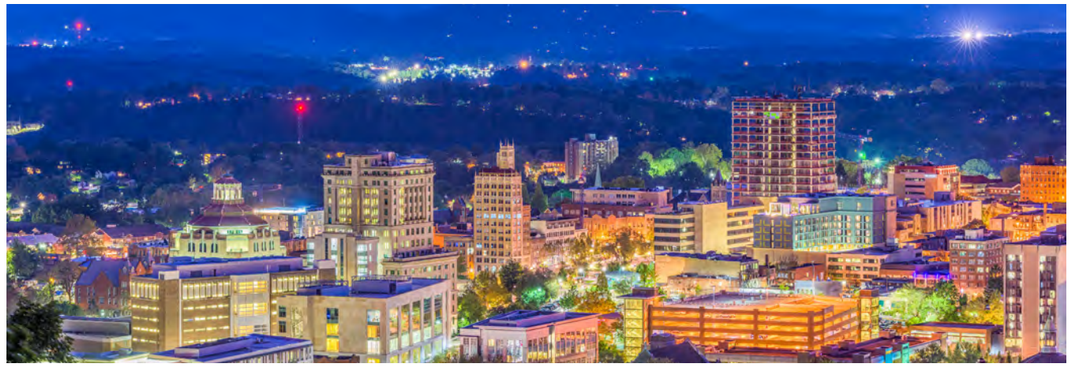
Benefits & Outcomes

- Evaluate the market demand, feasibility, and cost estimates for the center.
- Identify and assess potential options for incubator/training programs to support those interested in the arts industries.
- Estimate costs, environmental considerations, and permitting requirements.
- Engage community members and incorporate public input.

The arts contribute significantly to the economy, with a 2019 report from the U.S. Department of Commerce stating that they contribute more than $800 million a year to U.S. economic output.

Key Activities & Deliverables

1. Develop a scope of work and request for proposal to obtain consultant assistance.
2. Identify project team members.
3. Secure funding for plan development, technical studies and community engagement.
4. Define project boundary.



Implementation Considerations

The project will involve a comprehensive assessment of feasibility studies, projected costs, and implementation details. This initiative reflects the City's commitment to supporting high-quality destination experiences for the community as well as supporting existing and prospective artists.



Project Sponsor:
City of Asheville

Project Lead:
Community & Regional Entertainment Facilities Department

Anticipated Partners:
- ArtsAVL
- Arts Nonprofits and Advocacy Groups (e.g., Asheville Symphony & ArtsAVL)
- Buncombe County
- Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority
- Explore Asheville
- Land of Sky Council of Governments
- Development Administration (EDA)

Potential Funding Sources:
- EDA Grant
- Private investment
- Tourism Development Authority (TDA) Grants
- Philanthropic Donations
- Naming Rights

Living Asheville & Unified Development Ordinance Plan Updates

Update Living Asheville (Comprehensive Plan) and the Unified Development Ordinance to align with Asheville's goals of a resilient and sustainable city.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
High	$$$ Medium	Medium

Council Priorities:
ECONOMY • PEOPLE
INFRASTRUCTURE
ENVIRONMENT

Purpose

Tropical Storm Helene's impact highlights the critical need for Asheville to update its core guidance and development regulation tools: the Comprehensive Plan (Living Asheville) and the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). Modernizing and aligning these documents is essential for effective development governance, addressing current challenges, and building a sustainable and resilient future for the city. Associated changes are also expected to be proposed to the City's Standard Specifications and Details Manual.

Benefits & Outcomes

The project establishes a clear, unified vision for officials, staff, developers, and the public to guide Asheville's growth. Updates to plans support proactive planning for hazard mitigation, improved housing, transit, environmental quality, and public services. Updated plans and guidance documents enhance the city's resilience to climate change and future challenges, strengthen grant applications for recovery and resilience projects, ensure land use regulations are legally defensible, and align the built environment with the community's long-term goals.

The City of Asheville Unified Development Ordinance sets requirements for the development of land.

Key Activities & Deliverables

1. Prepare Request for Qualifications for consulting services (FY26).
2. Initiate Public Engagement Process/ Outcomes/Report.
3. Identify needed updates to Comprehensive Plan, UDO, and Standards Specifications and Details Manual (SSDM).
4. Establish Integrated Principles of Sustainability, Resiliency and Climate Action: demonstrating how these principles are woven into the updated plans with a focus on equitable benefits for low to moderate-income areas.
5. Document Internal and Regional Alignment with recovery and other existing plans.

Implementation Considerations

The project will require secured funding to enable the city to pursue a request for professional consultant services, engage community partners and stakeholders, and draft recommendations.



Project Sponsor:
City of Asheville

Project Lead:
Planning and Urban Design

Anticipated Partners:
- To Be Determined – Consultant

Potential Funding Sources:
- FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)
- Community Development Block Grant–Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR)

Multi-Family Housing Construction

New construction and rehabilitation of affordable multifamily housing to expand access to much-needed affordable units for residents.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Low	$$$ High	Long-Term

Council Priority:
HOUSING

Purpose

In the wake of Tropical Storm Helene, Asheville's affordable housing challenges have intensified. Recognizing housing as a core requirement for Community Development Block Grant–Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) grants, the city is committing substantial funds to accelerate the development of affordable multifamily housing. This investment will support both new construction and rehabilitation, directly expanding access to much-needed affordable units for residents.



Asheville's existing apartment inventory has grown by nearly 55% over the past 10 years (from 2014 to 2024), adding roughly 9,800 units. This makes Asheville one of the fastest-growing apartment markets nationwide during that period.

Benefits & Outcomes

Generate more affordable units available to households at or below 80% Area Median Income (AMI.)

Key Activities & Deliverables

- Fund Allocation and Program Guidelines
- Executed Development Agreements
- New Affordable Multifamily Housing Units
- Rehabilitated Affordable Multifamily Housing Units
- Tenant Occupancy Data
- CDBG-DR Compliance Documentation

Implementation Consideration

Program policies and procedures must be created before a call for proposals can be issued. Staff is currently working with a consulting firm to accomplish.



Project Sponsor:
City of Asheville

Project Lead:
Community & Economic Development

Potential Funding Sources:
- Community Development Block Grant–Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR)

Anticipated Partners:
- City of Asheville – Housing Recovery Support Group (HRSG)
- Community Stakeholders
- Developers
- City of Asheville – Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC)

Municipal Golf Course Restoration

Restore the Municipal golf course with upgrades for stormwater infrastructure and resiliency measures to protect the site from future damages.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ High	Long-term

Council Priorities:
INFRASTRUCUTRE & ENVIRONMENT

Purpose

To restore and repair the golf course with a focus on enhancing resilience to future environmental challenges, while also improving stormwater infrastructure to better manage runoff, reduce flooding risks, and support long-term sustainability.

Benefits & Outcomes

The project will restore and enhance the historic design and functionality of the golf course's front nine holes damaged by the storm. The new features will include upgraded stormwater infrastructure to effectively manage runoff and prevent future damage. It will also implement resiliency measures to protect the golf course from future environmental challenges.



Municipal Golf Course Before Tropical Storm Helene

Asheville Municipal Golf Course was the first integrated public golf course in the Southeast during the period of racial integration, and the course and clubhouse are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Activities & Deliverables

1. Complete request for proposal process and obtain consultant assistance.
2. Identify project team members.
3. Secure funding for plan development, technical studies and community engagement.
4. Define project boundary.

Implementation Considerations

The project will have 3 phases of implementation:

- **Short Term:** Temporary and Phased Re-opening of amenities for public use where possible.
- **Medium Term:** Design and Public Engagement.
- **Long Term:** Construction.



Municipal Golf Course After Tropical Storm Helene

Project Sponsor:
City of Asheville

Project Lead:
Capital Management

Anticipated Partners:
- FEMA

Potential Funding Sources:
- Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority
- FEMA Public Assistance
- Tourism Development Authority (TDA)

North Fork Alternate Route Utility Protection

Create water system resilience with additional North Fork water lines to avoid the river valley erosion during storms.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
High	High	Long-Term

Council Priorities:
INFRASTRUCTURE & ENVIRONMENT

Purpose

The project aims to build resilience through its design phase, addressing the issue of North Fork water lines repeatedly washing out during hurricanes/tropical storms, most recently during Tropical Storm Helene. The water lines are located within the river valley where erosion impacts the lines during high water and strong currents.

Benefits & Outcomes

The project creates a redundant water line to avoid the river valley. North Fork water lines have been repeatedly washed out during hurricanes/tropical storms. System redundancy would provide water to 80% of system customers during impacts.

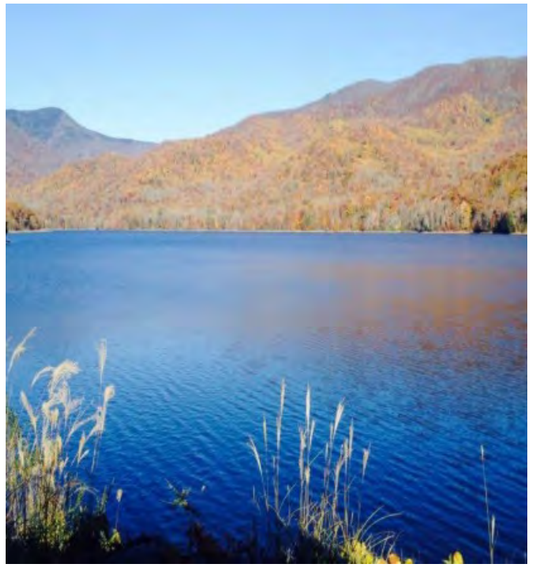
The North Fork Water Treatment Plant's primary water source is the Burnett Reservoir, which is fed by the North Fork of the Swannanoa River and has a capacity of 5.8 billion gallons.

Key Activities & Deliverables

1. Develop a scope of work and request for proposal to obtain consultant assistance.
2. Identify project team members.
3. Secure funding for plan development, technical studies, and community engagement.
4. Define project boundary.

Implementation Considerations

The project will require a contract with engineering consultants.





Project Sponsor:
City of Asheville

Project Lead:
Planning & Urban Design

Anticipated Partners:
- Consulting Engineers

Potential Funding Sources:
- FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)

North Fork & William DeBruhl Water Treatment Plant Improvements

Improve water treatment plants with pre-filtration process to mitigate water source quality issues during storms and other impacts on the watershed.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
High	High	Long-Term

Council Priorities:
INFRASTRUCTURE & ENVIRONMENT

Purpose

The project aims to implement a pre-filtration treatment process solution for the North Fork & William DeBruhl Water Treatment Plants (WTP) to mitigate the impacts of rapidly changing source water quality. Landslides and deforestation caused by Tropical Storm Helene within the watersheds removed natural barriers to silt infiltration into the reservoirs, decreasing source water quality and emphasizing the need for additional treatment measures.

Benefits & Outcomes

As direct filtration plants, the North Fork & William DeBruhl WTPs have limited ability to mitigate the impacts of rapidly changing source water quality. Tropical Storm Helene caused landslides and deforestation leading to increased silt infiltration into reservoirs, jeopardizing water sources. The project provides added resilience while decreasing impacts to the water treatment process. This project provides the ability to mitigate the impacts of rapidly changing source water quality and continue provision of potable water to more than 150,000 customers in greater Buncombe County & Northern Henderson County.

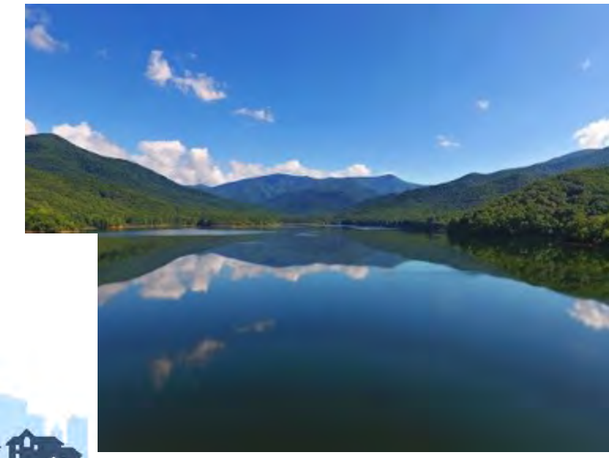
The William DeBruhl WTP has a design capacity of 5 million gallons per day; North Fork WTP has a maximum production capacity of 31 million gallons per day.

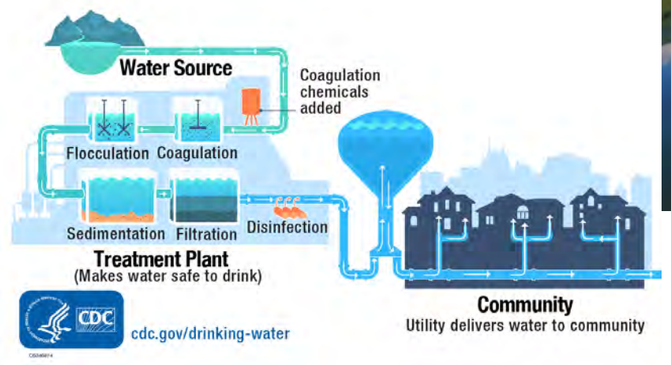
Key Activities & Deliverables

1. Develop a scope of work and request for proposal to obtain consultant assistance.
2. Identify project team members.
3. Secure funding for plan development, technical studies and community engagement.
4. Define project boundary.

Implementation Considerations

The project would use Public Assistance funds, which require review and approval through FEMA.





Project Sponsor:
City of Asheville

Project Lead:
Water Resources Department

Potential Funding Sources:
- FEMA Public Assistance

Anticipated Partners:
- Hagerty Consulting, Inc.
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
- FEMA
- N.C. Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ)

Relocate City Facilities

To strengthen community resilience, the City of Asheville plans to relocate key facilities, including the Transit Maintenance Garage and Parks Maintenance Facilities to more reliable and sustainable sites.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
High	$$$ High	Long-term

Council Priorities:
INFRASTRUCTURE & ENVIRONMENT

Purpose

The Transit Maintenance Garage, built in the 1960s, is too small to support current and future needs as outlined in the Transit Master Plan. The Parks Maintenance Facilities were destroyed by Tropical Storm Helene. The Public Works Department must have the capacity to support storm recovery while managing day-to-day operations.

Benefits & Outcomes

Current facilities limit operations; relocation will enhance service delivery and resilience. The Transit Maintenance Garage relocation will support the needs of transportation services provided to the city. The Parks Maintenance Facilities must be relocated to a less vulnerable site to continue to support maintenance of city parks and greenways. The Public Works Department performs critical services during storm recovery while also managing streets, sidewalks, stormwater, solid waste, and the City's fleet.

Relocating public facilities, especially parks maintenance facilities, can improve access to essential services and enhance the overall quality of life for residents.

Key Activities & Deliverables

1. Develop a scope of work and request for proposals to obtain consultant assistance.
2. Identify project team members.
3. Secure funding for plan development, technical studies, and community engagement.
4. Define project boundary, and confirm site.

Implementation Considerations

The city is exploring opportunities to co-locate these facilities for efficiency and long-term sustainability.



Project Sponsor:
City of Asheville

Project Lead:
City of Asheville Cross-Departmental Effort

Anticipated Partners:
Buncombe County

Potential Funding Sources:
- City of Asheville Capital Improvement Program
- Community Development Block Grant–Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR)

Resilience Hub Mapping

Planning efforts to develop a well-connected network of resilience hubs that will equip Asheville to respond more effectively to future disruptions.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	Low	Medium

Council Priority:
PEOPLE

Purpose

A strategic, well-connected network of resilience hubs will enable Asheville to respond more effectively to future disruptions. This involves enhancements to city-owned facilities, clear role definitions, and strategic support of community-led hub development. Beyond emergency response, a diverse, dynamic network will strengthen social fabric and connectivity in daily life.

Benefits & Outcomes

- A shared map resource to guide resilience hub strategy and community dialogue.
- Strategic city investments to enhance resilience functions, especially in communications and power.
- Integration of resilience hub development into broader city initiatives.
- Data-informed decision-making to strengthen community resilience and clarify the city's role.
- Clear, locally tailored definition and operational framework for resilience hubs.

While the term "asset mapping" was coined in the 1990s, the practice of communities identifying their strengths to solve problems is centuries old.

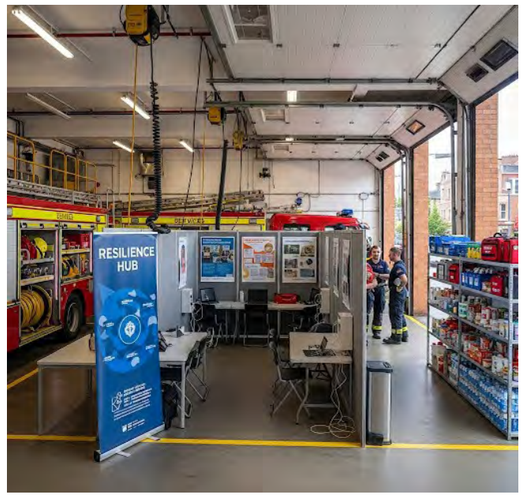
Key Activities & Deliverables

The city will launch a participatory research and asset mapping project using existing engagement platforms to document community-led resilience assets, evaluate current resilience hub infrastructure and gaps, and foster ongoing conversations that connect city investments with community priorities. The city will develop a Request for Proposals to select a project consultant.



Implementation Considerations

A key prerequisite step for this project is identifying a skilled, organized, and well-connected project consultant who can navigate the discrete tasks of this project alongside the variable scope(s) and tasks of the community-led conversations around resilience hubs. Community leaders have begun conducting community conversations throughout the region that should complement the asset mapping initiative, but risk confusion or complication if not well considered and coordinated.



Project Sponsor:
City of Asheville

Project Lead:
Sustainability

Anticipated Partners:
- Elevate AVL Engagement Agents
- Thrive Asheville
- U.S. Sustainability Directors Network

Potential Funding Sources:
- General Fund
- Community Development Block Grant–Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR)
- Other Grants

Resilient Critical Facility Power Systems

Ensure continuity of operations and critical communications with the development of resilient back-up power systems for city facilities.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
High	$$$ High	Long-Term

Council Priority:
INFRASTRUCTURE & ENVIRONMENT

Purpose

Tropical Storm Helene clearly demonstrated the urgent need to strengthen the City of Asheville's properties, especially critical facilities. Ensuring the continuity of city operations and critical communications during disruptions necessitates reliable and sustainable power solutions. This project will proactively enhance Asheville's resilient power systems by performing structural analyses on city buildings, integrating renewable energy generation and battery storage at key critical city facilities, and upgrading operational systems to reach peak efficiency. To better safeguard emergency staff, protect vital city assets, and guarantee uninterrupted critical services to residents after future disasters, the city is proposing comprehensive upgrades.

Benefits & Outcomes

- Address single-source fossil fuel generator reliance during power outages by providing clean, redundant electricity for city operations and resident communications.
- Increased Resilience: Strengthens city-critical facilities and communication systems against disruptions.
- Cleaner Energy: Reduces reliance on fossil fuel generators, leading to environmental benefits.
- Access to clean energy during disruption (reduced need to refuel generators).
- Demonstration of renewable energy and resilient technology—innovation that could be replicated by private sector or residents.

Key Activities & Deliverables

Next Steps:

1. Develop scopes of work for projects.
2. Identify resources for implementation.
3. Develop and advertise Request for Qualification.
4. Refine Letter of Interest, develop into sub applications, and submit to N.C. Emergency Management.
5. Identify bridge funding if needed.
6. Align existing facilities projects that may be involved with the execution of these projects.

Key Products:

- Structural analyses on all existing critical city buildings.
- Secondary energy feasibility analysis on critical facilities.
- Broadway Public Safety Station Battery Storage Installation.
- Municipal building solar panel and battery storage installation.
- Expanded feasibility and cost assessment.
- Ongoing, strategic installation of Photovoltaics and battery backup storage across critical facilities.
- Roadmap for continued investment.

Implementation Considerations

Ongoing system maintenance is scoped for all existing solar installations and will be required for both solar and battery installs included in this project. The finance and sustainability teams are developing a cost avoidance policy to fund ongoing maintenance of efficiency projects.

An example of a resilient power system are microgrids. Microgrids are localized grids that can disconnect from the main grid and operate independently, and are often powered by renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind power.



Project Sponsor:
City of Asheville

Project Lead:
Capital Management

Anticipated Partners:
- FEMA
- N.C. Emergency Management

Potential Funding Sources:
- FEMA–Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)
- Other Grant Funding
- General Fund Capital
- Green Savings

Revitalization of Flooded Commercial Corridors

Support the revitalization of flooded commercial districts that were physically impacted by the storm through the administration of grant funds, including the River Arts District, Biltmore Village, Swannanoa River Road and others.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
High	Medium	Medium

Council Priority:
ECONOMY

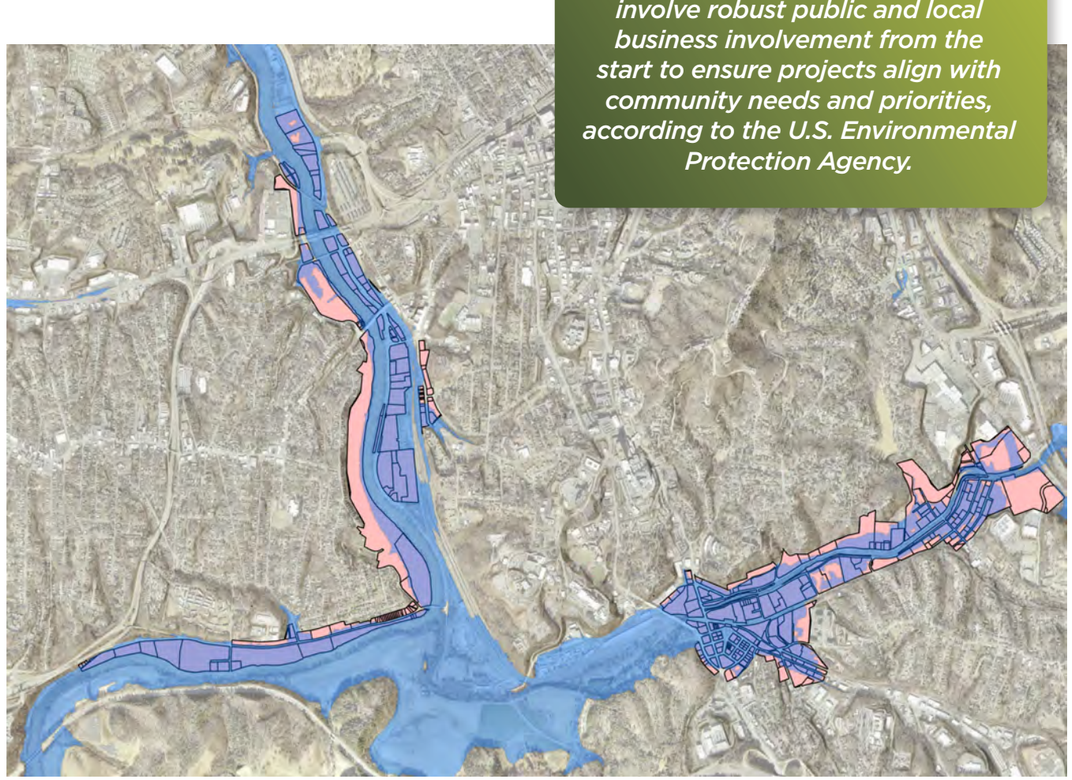
Purpose

The Revitalization of Flooded Commercial Districts Program will provide funding for site development and improvements, facility improvements, floodproofing, arts and cultural support, and equipment investments.

Benefits & Outcomes

This program is intended to support the revitalization of commercial districts that were physically impacted by the storm.

Effective revitalization strategies involve robust public and local business involvement from the start to ensure projects align with community needs and priorities, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.



GIS Image of the rivers showing the flooding infrastructure along the banks.

Key Activities & Deliverables

Implementing a program to revitalize flooded commercial corridors involves:

- Establishing a Community Block Grant–Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Compliant Framework to ensure adherence to all federal requirements.
- Strategic Program Scoping and Partnership Selection to define the scope of revitalization programs and select subrecipients to manage projects effectively.
- Leverage Public-Private Partnerships for Economic Revitalization to actively explore opportunities for collaboration with development entities to support impactful projects. This includes developing models for significant investments that can serve as anchors for neighborhood revitalization and catalyze broader economic development goals, especially in key commercial corridors.
- Establish a performance monitoring and evaluation plan.

Implementation Considerations

Review of existing plans and emerging initiatives will require public participation and consideration to encourage sustainable redevelopment in the neighborhood.

Project Sponsor:
City of Asheville

Project Lead:
Community & Economic Development

Potential Funding Sources:

- Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR)

Anticipated Partners:

- City of Asheville – Economic Support Group (ERSG) and other City staff
- Economic Development Coalition (EDC)
- Land of Sky Council of Governments
- Buncombe County
- Other Financial Institutions
- Technical Assistance Providers
- Private-Sector Partners
- Community Groups and Business Associations

Scoping a Post-Helene Community Engagement Academy

Update the Community Engagement Academy through a recovery lens to empower youth leadership, strengthen grassroots involvement, and build long-term community sustainability.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	Low	Medium

Council Priority:
PEOPLE

Purpose

The City of Asheville will explore reframing its Community Engagement Academy (CEA) within the context of recovery to include space for youth and grassroots involvement that maximizes the potential for long-term sustainability. The initiative will identify opportunities to integrate sustainability and resilience into the Academy's curriculum, address operational needs, and reinforce the role of community connectors in advancing community participation.

Benefits & Outcomes

The project amplifies city engagement and information sharing through grassroots networks by facilitating youth involvement in neighborhood resilience, improving city-led engagement by connecting directly with impacted communities, supporting local resilience planning and social cohesion, and fostering long-term community ownership of projects.



Key Activities & Deliverables

1. Update scope for CEA to align recovery efforts to integrate CEA activities with existing recovery operations and other community-led programs like Elevate AVL.
2. Define next phase of CEA.
3. Engage youth by reformatting learning modules to empower younger audiences.
4. Identify diverse funding sources to ensure the Academy's longevity and continued support for Community Connectors.
5. Create branded web campaign and social media plan; implement a phased relaunch.
6. Standardize role for community connectors within city engagement operations.

The academy was co-designed based on community input received during the re-imagining public safety and equity-focused budget engagement efforts that took place during the pandemic.

Implementation Considerations

Given the complexities of the city's current operational environment, scoping is necessary to identify interconnections with initiatives including Community Development Block Grant–Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) engagement, the Sustainability Department's resilience hub project, and the Buncombe County Helene Recovery Plan.



Project Sponsor:
City of Asheville

Project Lead:
Communication and Public Engagement (CAPE)

Anticipated Partners:
- Community Connectors
- OUR AVL Academy Class of 2024
- GAP AVL
- Realignment Working Group

Potential Funding Sources:
- Community Development Block Grant–Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR)

Small Business Support Program

Development of a small business assistance program to include financial, technical, and diversification investment to support Asheville's business community and provide greater resilience to the economy.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
High	$$$ High	Short-Term

Council Priority:
ECONOMY

Purpose

Tropical Storm Helene highlighted specific needs amongst the small business community in Asheville, including a strategic approach to small business support with financial assistance for storm-impacted and growth-oriented businesses. This project will provide technical assistance in disaster planning, insurance, and business strategy economic diversification by investment beyond tourism and retail, support for existing industries via infrastructure upgrades, visibility during construction, and funding to revitalize commercial areas and support artist spaces, especially in low-to-moderate income neighborhoods.



Diversifying the economy helps reduce vulnerability to disruptions in single sectors like tourism and hospitality, which were significantly impacted by Tropical Storm Helene.

Benefits & Outcomes

Financial Support

- Recovery funding.
- Diversified investment to support rebuilding and long-term economic growth.

Technical Assistance

- Disaster preparedness to plan for and reduce future risks.
- Insurance navigation to educate businesses on smart insurance choices.
- Business planning to support adaptation, capital access, and sustainable growth.

Economic Diversification & Resilience

- Focus funding on sectors to reduce reliance on tourism and boost long-term stability.
- Support for existing industries.
- Provide gap funding for revitalization projects and public-private partnerships.
- Offer visibility tools like signage during construction.
- Ensure investments reflect community values and strengthen key industries.

Key Activities & Deliverables

Implementing small business support initiatives through Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funding and other grants requires a robust and strategic approach:

1. Establish a rigorous CDBG-DR Compliant Framework to develop comprehensive policies and procedures to ensure adherence to all requirements.
2. Strategic Program Scoping and Partnership Selection to define the scope of financial assistance programs and select subrecipients with the capacity to manage grant distribution.
3. Targeted Technical Assistance to identify specific needs and potential roadblocks.
4. Leveraging Public-Private Partnerships for Economic Revitalization for collaboration with development entities (e.g., Chamber of Commerce, Community Development Corporations).

Implementation Considerations

This is a complex project involving layers of assistance and funding, which will ultimately benefit the recovery and future resilience of Asheville's economy.

Project Sponsor:
City of Asheville

Project Lead:
Community & Economic Development

Potential Funding Sources:

- Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR)

Anticipated Partners:

- City of Asheville – Economic Support Group (ERSG) & Other City Staff
- Economic Development Coalition (EDC)
- Land of Sky Council of Governments
- Buncombe County
- Mountain BizWorks
- Financial Institutions
- Technical Assistance Providers
- Private Sector Partners
- Community Groups & Business Associations
- National Institute – Institute Capital (ICAP)
- National Institute – Community Economic Development

Solid Waste Master Plan

Development of a Solid Waste Master Plan to address infrastructure, growth and climate-related impacts to the City's waste management system for improved resilience and efficacy.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ Low	Short-Term

Council Priorities:
ECONOMY & PEOPLE

Purpose

The City of Asheville plans to overhaul its solid waste management system to address outdated infrastructure, growing urban development, and climate-related impacts like Tropical Storm Helene. The project will create an integrated program with short-, mid-, and long-term strategies to boost efficiency, improve finances, and increase waste reduction and diversion, supporting both environmental resilience and sustainable growth.

Benefits & Outcomes

The master plan will include:

- Sanitation Division service analysis, recommendations, and growth plan.
- Fee study and financial structure recommendations.
- Downtown waste storage and collection plan.
- City waste reduction goal evaluation and recommendations.
- City facility waste reduction plan.
- City of Asheville Chapter 15 Code of Ordinance revisions.

The City of Asheville has a goal to reduce municipal solid waste by 50% by the year 2050.

Key Activities & Deliverables

1. Evaluate existing solid waste management system (underway).
2. Recommend short-, mid-, and long-term strategies.
3. Recommend Fee-Structure modifications.
4. Recommend waste reduction and diversion systems.
5. Prepare Solid Waste Master Plan document.



Implementation Considerations

Challenges

- Lack of capacity/opportunity for public engagement due to other priorities and capacity of lead staff to meaningfully engage with consultant due to storm-related workload and priorities.
- Funding is available for the master planning process, but no funds have been allocated for implementing recommendations.
- Helene has impacted current short-term disposal options that will impact service provision and staff capacity as well as long-term disposal capacity, which will impact scope and direction of SWMP tasks.
- Potential changes to scope of work post-Helene could increase cost of plan.
- Original scope of work (to potentially be modified based on Helene-impacts).



Project Sponsor:
City of Asheville

Project Lead:
Public Works

Potential Funding Sources:

- General Fund

Anticipated Partners:

- Kessler Consulting (contracted consultant)
- N.C. Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ)
- Curbside Management
- Buncombe County

State Partnership for Home Repairs

Create a partnership between the City of Asheville and State of North Carolina to use CDBG-DR funds to establish a low-income home repair and replacement program for qualifying Asheville residents.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	Medium	Medium

Council Priority:
HOUSING

Purpose

Tropical Storm Helene worsened existing financial strains on Asheville homeowners, increasing the need for home repairs and replacement. The City of Asheville is partnering with the State of North Carolina to extend the State's Rehabilitation and Reconstruction (R&R) Program to qualifying Asheville residents, leveraging state funding and Community Development Block Grant–Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds for comprehensive recovery services.

Asheville acts as the lead entity for a four-county consortium (Buncombe, Henderson, Transylvania, and Madison Counties) for the Home Investment Partnership Program, which provides grants to increase the stock of safe, decent, affordable housing in the region.



Benefits & Outcomes

The program provides low-income Asheville residents with needed financial assistance to rebuild their homes and helps alleviate displacement due to storm damages.

Key Activities & Deliverables

- Create a formalized partnership agreement.
- Establish access pathways.
- Create a financial contribution mechanism.
- Complete home repairs and reconstructions.
- Provide program performance reports.

Implementation Considerations

Ongoing compliance and monitoring will be required to ensure funding is utilized according to both the city's and State of North Carolina's CDBG-DR Action Plans, as well as U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regulations.

Project Sponsor:
City of Asheville

Project Lead:
Community & Economic Development

Anticipated Partners:
- N.C. Department of Commerce

Potential Funding Sources:
- Community Development Block Grant–Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR)

Stormwater Infrastructure Improvements

Improve city-owned stormwater facilities with system upgrades and implementation of green infrastructure.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ High	Long-term

Council Priorities:
INFRASTRUCTURE & ENVIRONMENT

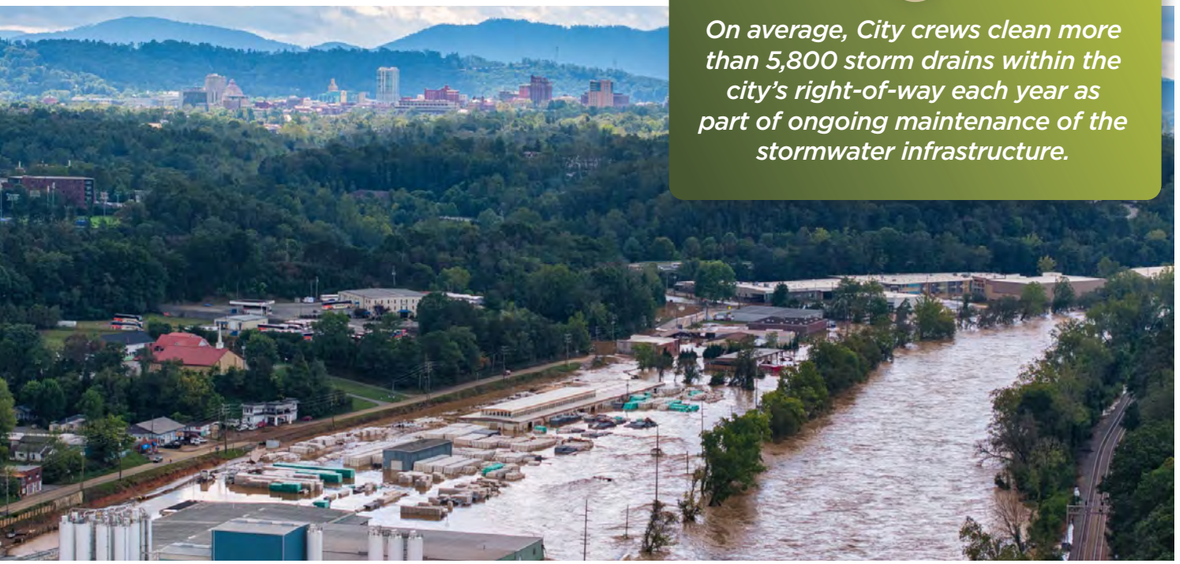
Purpose

To reduce flooding impacts and reduce pollutants to natural waterways, the City is proposing stormwater improvements on City-owned properties and an improved approach to maintenance. A resilient system combines traditional infrastructure with green solutions that reduce runoff like permeable surfaces, swales, and vegetation-based Stormwater Control Measures (SCM). Upgrading systems and integrating green infrastructure at multiple scales, individual, neighborhood, and citywide, will strengthen overall system performance and environmental resilience. An example project could include the completion of the Edwin Place/Celia Place/Canterbury Road Stormwater Improvement Project.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

This project will create greater resilience to changing climate conditions, broad environmental, social, and economic enhancements; manage and improve stormwater quality; improve air quality; reduce the effects of the urban heat island; and enhance ecological diversity and opportunities for healthy human activity.

On average, City crews clean more than 5,800 storm drains within the city's right-of-way each year as part of ongoing maintenance of the stormwater infrastructure.

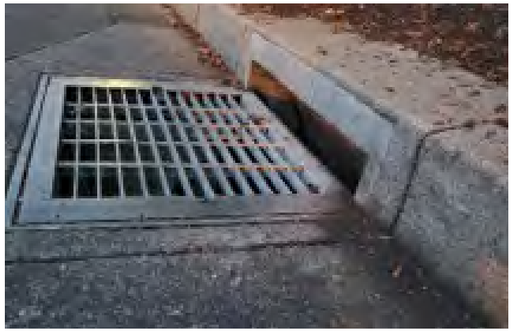


Activities & Deliverables

The City of Asheville will improve its standard process to ensure all departments consider effective stormwater control measures in improvement projects; building on recent program and studies. The Stormwater Division will also refine its project prioritization to focus on reducing flood risk in vulnerable areas identified through climate resilience data and maintenance records while using watershed studies to guide strategic investments.

Implementation Considerations

The city will need to identify short, medium, and long-term projects and planning efforts. Some examples of short-term prioritized projects include the Edwin Place/Celia Place/Canterbury Road Stormwater Improvement Project. Examples of medium- and long term-projects include the Central Asheville Watershed Improvement Project and East Asheville Watershed Improvement Projects.



Project Sponsor:
City of Asheville

Project Lead:
Public Work–Stormwater Division

Anticipated Partners:
- FEMA
- N.C. Department of Transportation
- Utility Companies

Potential Funding Sources:
- FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)
- Stormwater Utility Fee
- State Grants

Swannanoa Road and Riverway Planning

Undertake a plan to study infrastructure improvements along the Swannanoa River Corridor between Biltmore Avenue and South Tunnel Road to mitigate repetitive flooding and promote sustainable development.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ Medium	Long-Term

Council Priorityies

INFRASTRUCUTRE & ENVIRONMENT

Purpose

This planning effort will study improvements to mitigate repetitive flooding, enhance transportation infrastructure, and promote sustainable development within the Swannanoa River Corridor, specifically focusing on the area between Biltmore Avenue and South Tunnel Road.

Benefits & Outcomes

The plan will identify strategies to mitigate repetitive flooding within the Swannanoa River Corridor, while also enhancing transportation infrastructure. The plan also aims to evaluate and create recommended improvements to connectivity, safety, and resilience for all modes of travel. It will identify land use and environmental strategies to promote sustainable development, balancing growth with ecological health and long-term community resilience.

This greenway is a crucial part of the future 100-mile Fonta Flora State Trail, connecting Morganton to Asheville.

Key Activities & Deliverables

1. Develop a scope of work.
2. Issue a request for proposals to obtain consultant services.
3. Identify project team members,
4. Secure funding for plan development, technical studies and community engagement.
5. Define project boundary around specified area.

Implementation Considerations

The plan intends to provide full community outreach and participation with a developed community engagement plan.



Project Sponsor:
City of Asheville

Project Lead:
City of Asheville Transportation

Anticipated Partners:

- N.C. Department of Transportation
- Utility companies
- Neighborhood Associations
- Business Owners and Associations
- Transportation Agencies
- Buncombe County
- Riverfront Commission
- RiverLink
- Land of Sky Council of Governments

Potential Funding Sources:

- FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)

Urban Forest Master Plan

The Urban Forest Master Plan will assess and advise the city on ways to manage and maintain a strong urban forest and tree canopy.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Low	Low	Medium

Council Priorities:
INFRASTRUCTURE & ENVIRONMENT

Purpose

The City of Asheville is working on an Urban Forest Master Plan that will expand and improve our urban forest. Trees and tree canopy play a critical role in Asheville and all communities by reducing heat, improving water and air quality, and adding to quality of life for residents and wildlife through countless other benefits. The ***Urban Forest Master Plan*** will provide a roadmap of recommendations to build a sustainable, resilient urban forest that thrives into the future.

Benefits & Outcomes

The Plan will create long-term guidelines to manage and sustain a healthy, resilient urban forest by balancing ecological needs with city growth. It will integrate green infrastructure into urban planning, address threats from pests and diseases, and align policies with natural systems. The plan should provide a comprehensive roadmap that considers future funding, resources, and staffing, while fostering public engagement, collaboration, and education.

Western North Carolina, where Asheville is located, boasts approximately 144 different native tree species out of a total of 221 in the state, which is more native tree species than all of Europe combined.

Key Activities & Deliverables

- Data Collection of the city public tree inventory and an Urban Tree Canopy Analysis.
- Community engagement and development of the master plan.
- Updated tree canopy data post storm.

Implementation Considerations

Data collected pre-storm is significantly impacted due to tree loss. 30% of the tree inventory was complete prior to the storm and 90% of the canopy study. The project will include an assessment of the current data, possibly securing funding to add additional data collection post storm and conducting community engagement before completing a draft of the Urban Forest Master Plan.



Project Sponsor:
City of Asheville

Project Lead:
Planning & Urban Design

Potential Funding Sources:
- General Fund
- N.C. Department of Forestry Resources

Anticipated Partners:
- Asheville GreenWorks
- Buncombe County Extension
- N.C. Division of Forest Resources
- U.S. Forest Service Southern Research Station
- RiverLink
- MountainTrue
- Builder's Association of the Blue Ridge Mountains

Water Treatment Plant Feasibility Analysis

Conduct feasibility study for the design and construction of a fourth water treatment plan in response to growth, infrastructure needs, regulatory requirements, and climate-related risks.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
High	$$$ Medium	Medium

Council Priorities:
INFRASTRUCTURE & ENVIRONMENT

Purpose

The City of Asheville is undertaking a strategic evaluation to explore the feasibility, location, and design options for a fourth municipal water treatment plant. This proactive planning effort aims to enhance the long-term resilience, redundancy, and capacity of the city's water system in response to population growth, climate-related risks, aging infrastructure, and future regulatory requirements.

Benefits & Outcomes

The project will involve a comprehensive assessment of potential sites, available water sources, environmental impacts, projected costs, and integration with the existing distribution network. It will also include analysis of future demand scenarios, public health protection measures, and the ability to ensure uninterrupted service during emergencies or maintenance activities. This initiative reflects the city's commitment to maintaining a high-quality, reliable water supply for residents, businesses, and institutions across the region. Findings from this exploratory phase will inform future infrastructure investment decisions and help guide the development of a long-term water system master plan.

Both the North Fork and William DeBruhl Water Treatment Plants have won awards from the EPA for water quality.

Key Activities & Deliverables

1. Develop a scope of work and request for proposals to obtain consultant assistance.
2. Identify project team members.
3. Secure funding for plan development, technical studies and community. engagement.
4. Define project boundary.

Implementation Considerations

- Evaluate the need for additional treatment capacity to meet future demand.
- Identify and assess potential locations and water sources.
- Ensure system resilience and operational redundancy.
- Estimate costs, environmental considerations, and permitting requirements.
- Engage community and incorporate public input.
- Align with regional planning and sustainability goals.



Project Sponsor:
City of Asheville

Project Lead:
Water Resources Department

Anticipated Partners:
- Consulting Engineers
- County and Municipal Governments
- U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA)

Potential Funding Sources:
- Economic Development Administration (EDA) Grant

Wilma Dykeman RiverWay Plan Update

Investigate opportunities to update the 2004 Wilma Dykeman RiverWay Plan to guide future investment and development.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ Medium	Long-Term

Council Priorities:
INFRASTRUCUTRE & ENVIRONMENT

Purpose

This project explores opportunities for a phased approach to update the 2004 Wilma Dykeman RiverWay Plan, a guiding document for investment along the French Broad and Swannanoa Riverfronts.

Benefits & Outcomes

The project will provide a guide for future investments to enhance flood resilience, improve transportation and connectivity, and promote economic development.

Key Activities & Deliverables

1. Develop a phased scope work.
2. Identify project team members.
3. Secure funding for plan development, technical studies and community engagement.
4. Define project boundary.

The RiverWay is named after Wilma Dykeman, a renowned author and advocate who championed the cause of linking economic development with environmental protection, especially along the French Broad River.

Implementation Considerations

The project is intended to define a scope of work and phases of the planning process, which incorporate previous planning efforts and guide future studies along the French Broad and Swannanoa Riverfronts.







Project Sponsor:
City of Asheville

Project Lead:
Planning & Urban Design

Anticipated Partners:
- Asheville Buncombe Riverfront Commission

Potential Funding Sources:
- To Be Determined

Workforce Development

Develop a workforce development program targeting low- and middle-income individuals with training to build capacity in specific industries to support wider economic development, such as green infrastructure, construction, and trades.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
High	$$$ High	Short-Term

Council Priority:
ECONOMY & PEOPLE

Purpose

The Workforce Development Program will address the need for skilled labor and specialized training to benefit the City's recovery and rebuilding efforts. ULI recommends partnering with educational institutions, prioritizing enrollment in low- and middle-income (LMI) communities, and building local capacity for green retrofits, green infrastructure, and climate resilience.

Benefits & Outcomes

The program is intended to support training for LMI individuals to seek employment in target industries.



Asheville is a major tourism hub, making accommodation, food services, and retail key employment sectors.

Key Activities & Deliverables

Implementing workforce development initiatives requires a robust and strategic approach:

- Establishing a rigorous CDBG-DR Compliant Framework to all federal requirements.
- Strategic Program Scoping and Partnership Selection to define the scope of training programs to manage funding distribution and training programs effectively.
- Targeted Training Program to enable the provision of crucial training programs in areas like trades and construction.
- Maintenance and evaluation program for effective implementation and monitoring.

Implementation Considerations

Long-term maintenance of the training program may require identification of additional funding sources and partners.



Project Sponsor:
City of Asheville

Project Lead:
Community & Economic Development

Potential Funding Sources:

- Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR)

Anticipated Partners:

- City of Asheville – Economic Support Group (ERSG) and Other City staff
- Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority
- Economic Development Coalition (EDC)
- Land of Sky Council of Governments
- Buncombe County
- Mountain Area Workforce Development Board
- Educational Institutions (e.g., community colleges, higher education institutions, etc.)
- Trade groups and Representatives from Target Industries
- Technical Assistance Providers
- Private Sector Partners
- Community Groups

TOWN OF BILTMORE FOREST

2.91
SQ MILES



VISION

Biltmore Forest will be the most livable residential community in Western North Carolina. It will embrace its historical founding and character while giving all residents the opportunity to live, work, and play in an open and supporting environment.

1,536
POPULATION

52.1
MEDIAN AGE

$172,500
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

$1,249,000
MEDIAN HOME PRICE

$1,245
MEDIAN RENT

GOVERNMENT PROFILE

GOVERNMENT	ANNUAL BUDGET	EMPLOYEES
Board of Commissioners	$6,100,000	32

KEY SERVICES

Fire
Police
Planning & Zoning
Recreation
Sanitation
Water

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS

- Maintain our open and transparent Board of Commissioners, Town Administration, and Committees
- Maintain the effective community policing capabilities of the police force
- Maintain the effective and responsive public works department
- Protect and improve the existing tree canopy
- Improve walking and biking safety on streets
- Develop new off-street walking paths
- Ensure existing zoning ordinances are equitably enforced
- Control speeding by reducing the average speed on town streets
- Support optimal enjoyment of parks and public spaces
- Communicate better with new residents

Emergency Operations Plan Update

Update the Emergency Operations Plan using best practices learned from Tropical Storm Helene.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	Low	Short-term

Alignment with Biltmore Forest Comprehensive Plan:

- Maintain the Effective Community Policing capabilities of the Biltmore Forest Police Force

Purpose

Biltmore Forest has an existing Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). Using lessons learned from the response and ongoing recovery from Tropical Storm Helene, the town intends to develop an enhanced version of the plan with up-to-date protocols, resources, and activities identified to maximize Biltmore Forest's ability to respond to future natural and man-made emergencies of all scales.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

The EOP contains procedures for various aspects of emergency response, such as communication, evacuation, and resource allocation. It outlines roles and responsibilities, defines lines of authority, and establishes protocols for coordinating actions among different entities. The update process will review the existing plan, after-action reports, and lessons learned from Helene, and revise procedures, protocols, and plans to more efficiently and effectively respond.

Activities & Deliverables

Key benchmarks in updating the EOP may include:

- Review existing plan to identify successes and challenges from Helene response.
- Identify resources and capabilities for Emergency Support Functions, identifying any successes or challenges from Helene response.
- As necessary, revise hazard-specific procedures.
- Generate up-to-date information on personnel, roles and responsibilities, resources, mutual aid agreements, and points-of-contact for response partners and other information.

Implementation Considerations

Updates to the EOP are easiest when completed based on after-action reports to learn directly from successes and challenges, but also during a time when the plan does not need to be in action. As severe storms and disaster become increasingly stronger and longer in duration, it may be difficult to time the project to allow updates and the ability of the town to invest personnel and funding in the project to be ready for the next emergency response.

EOPs are often referred to as "roadmaps" because they provide a structured approach to emergency response, guiding organizations and communities through the various phases of an emergency, from preparedness and response to recovery.





Project Sponsor:
Town of Biltmore Forest

Partners:

- Emergency Support Function Partners
- Federal, State, and Local Emergency Response Partners

Project Lead:
Emergency Managenment Services (EMS)

Law Enforcement & Public Safety Facility

Design and construct a new Law Enforcement and Public Safety facility for Biltmore Forest to address the growing safety and emergency response needs of the community.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
High	$$$ High	Long-term

Alignment with Biltmore Forest Comprehensive Plan:

- Maintain the Effective Community Policing capabilities of the Biltmore Forest Police Force
- Police and Public Works Master Plan

Purpose

The Town of Biltmore Forest planned for the construction of a new Law Enforcement & Public Safety facility prior to the impacts of Tropical Storm Helene. Based on re-assessed needs, the town will develop a project for the design and construction of this new facility, with capacity and size to respond more effectively to future emergencies.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

The Police and Public Works master plan completed by DP3 Architects identified the need to replace aging public facilities in Biltmore Forest. The plan included a survey of potential sites and conceptual designs to honor the environment, architecture, and history of the community. With these concepts as a guide, the development of full-scale designs and construction of new facilities should complement the built and natural environments to blend functionality with the town's unique identity. The addition of space and functionality for emergencies will aid in future response efforts.

The building will serve as a public safety hub for the town, designed with efficiency and security in mind.

Activities & Deliverables

Key benchmarks for completion of a new facility would include:

- Review existing pre-planning documents and conceptual designs; update as necessary.
- Prepare project design and delivery (architectural team selection; detailed designs; project schedules; costing and timelines).
- Initiate project construction and delivery (permitting, construction management, operations and maintenance schedules).
- Occupy new facility.

Implementation Considerations

DP3 Architects completed a Police and Public Works master plan before Helene. It recommended a new police department facilities building, housing essential services such as dispatch, training facilities, locker rooms, offices, and support spaces. This building will serve as the hub for police operations in the town, designed with efficiency and security in mind. Changes to the conceptual design and project scope may be necessary based on assessments of facility use and needs, post-Helene. The Board of Commissioners will consider a Capital Project Ordinance to approve cost projections over the multi-year life of the project (instead of capital funds approved through annual budgets).



Project Sponsor:
Town of Biltmore Forest

Partners:

- Architects
- Community
- Engineers

Project Lead:
Town Manager/ Police/ Public Works

Stormwater Management Improvements

Update the current Stormwater Master Plan using post-Helene best practices and reassessed priorities for project implementation.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ Medium	Medium

Alignment with Biltmore Forest Comprehensive Plan:

- Maintain the Effective and Responsive Public Works Department
- Stormwater Master Plan

Purpose

Biltmore Forest is currently at year 5 of a 10-year Stormwater Master Plan, which is the best time to evaluate the progress of the plan, reassess priorities, and use the lessons of Tropical Storm Helene to target implementation of remaining projects.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

The current plan identifies 10 stormwater projects, with work started or completed on four. This project seeks to reassess the remaining projects based on new priorities, post-Helene, and establish benchmarks to align implementation of the updated plan with priorities.

Activities & Deliverables

The project seeks to:

- Assess existing goals of the 2022 Stormwater Master Plan and identify key priorities.
- Assess the remaining projects in the 2022 Stormwater Master Plan for alignment with priorities.
- Identify potential changes to projects based on post-Helene assessment of stormwater infrastructure.
- Seek consensus on updated goals, priorities, and projects.

Implementation Considerations

Fewer than one-half of the projects identified in the original plan are substantially complete, allowing the time to reassess priorities. Based on lessons learned from Tropical Storm Helene, the priority to replace outdated stormwater infrastructure has the added need to be more resilient not only for long-term durability, but in the face of increased drainage volume and force, possibly increasing the need for additional hydrology and hydraulic assessments and system upsizing. The Town currently engages with consultants for on-call stormwater services, who, along with town staff and commissioners, will need to complete due diligence on the existing plan and re-prioritize projects, as needed. This may require additional capital improvement funds and project re-scoping.



The Master Plan advocates for the increased use of natural stormwater management methods like bioretention areas, bioswales, and regenerative stormwater conveyance to filter runoff, improve water quality, and create more stable stream-like systems which are good for both built and natural environments.

Project Sponsor:
Town of Biltmore Forest

Partners:

- Engineering Consultants
- Stormwater Experts
- On-call Stormwater Services

Project Lead:
Public Works

Stream & Forest Restoration

Restore the natural landscapes of Biltmore Forest with enhanced guidance for tree plantings, stream restoration, and land management.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ Low	Short-term

Alignment with Biltmore Forest Comprehensive Plan:

- Protect and improve existing Tree Canopy of Biltmore Forest

Purpose

Prior to Tropical Storm Helene, Biltmore Forest received a matching grant from the North Carolina Land and Water Fund to develop a stream restoration master plan for public and private properties. Based on the existing work, the town has identified a list of 16 potential projects with preliminary scopes, and is seeking additional funding opportunities for implementation. Helene caused the loss of a tremendous number of mature trees in the town. In addition to stream restoration, the town and a consultant will identify non-native species plants and trees to address and implement land management activities including tree planting to further the objectives of storm recovery while enhancing the natural landscape and environmental quality for which the town is named.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

During the 2022 Comprehensive Plan update, community engagement indicated that people see the forest identity and the tree canopy of the town as essential. This project will provide context and planning strategies to restore streams affected by Helene, as well as provide specific support for land management to address invasive species and forest restoration in the community.

The extensive woodlands at Biltmore Estate were transformed under the guidance of early conservationists like Gifford Pinchot and Carl Schenck, creating the first scientifically managed forest in the nation. This effort, which began in the Biltmore Forest area, is credited with launching American forestry.

Activities & Deliverables

The project was underway prior to Helene but put on pause during the initial response and recovery. The initial assessments and project identification, GIS analyses, preliminary scoping, non-native invasive species assessments and removal, and basic recommendations for new plantings have all been completed. In July 2025, reports to the Board of Commissioners put status of the project at approximately 50% with key tasks remaining, including:

- Complete project prioritization
- Develop best practices and implementation steps
- Complete design work
- Implement projects based on priority
- Public outreach
- Complete Fall replanting

Implementation Considerations

This project addresses key needs from Tropical Storm Helene and the 2022 Comprehensive Plan. The environmental restoration of the community is directly connected to community identity and satisfaction of residents. Some of the work may require agreements with private landowners. Volunteers will likely be needed to fully implement the tree planting. The project is partly complete, and full implementation should not take long.



NNIS Removal for Stream Restoration Project_Before and after cut stem treatment – mostly autumn olive and Chinese privet.

Project Sponsor:
Town of Biltmore Forest

Project Lead:
Town Manager/Public Works

Partners:

- Buncombe County
- Eco-Foresters
- Jennings Environmental (consultants)
- Private Property Owners

Wildfire Prevention

Mitigate future wildfire risk through debris removal, community education, and Firewise program development.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Low	$$$ Medium	Short-term

Alignment with Biltmore Forest Comprehensive Plan:

- Maintain our open and transparent Board of Commissioners, Town Administration and Administrative Committees (Board of Adjustment, Design Review Board, and Planning Commission).
- Protect and improve existing Tree Canopy of Biltmore Forest.

Purpose

The Town of Biltmore Forest is at moderate risk for wildfires, and as such continues to work on prioritizing wildfire mitigation efforts. While continuing to work on Helene-related debris removal, this project will focus specifically on removal of vegetative debris from town properties that may otherwise be fuel for wildfires. It will also create Firewise communities, engage with property owners to encourage the creation of defensible spaces on private lands, and work with utility providers to address high hazard areas.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

Reducing vulnerabilities and risk for wildfire benefits all property owners and citizens. Reducing potential fuel ensures added protection against large wildland fire. The Firewise USA® program provides simple, effective steps to help communities reduce the risk of destruction from wildfire, with community-wide education, community maintenance, and volunteer programs for implementation of wildfire protection plans. Homeowners who implement defensible space reduce wildfire risk and vulnerabilities to other natural hazards like wind and fallen vegetative debris.

The town of Biltmore Forest represents 5% of all debris removed as a result of Tropical Storm Helene in NC but accounts for .016% of land area impacted by the storm.

Activities & Deliverables

- Plan for vegetative debris maintenance/annual removal for public lands.
- Prepare community engagement plan (education and outreach).
- Establish Firewise committee.
- Implement public utility engagement plan (course of action to negotiate hazard mitigation).



Implementation Considerations

The Firewise USA® program requires the development of a community board to define the program boundaries, assess the number of single-family dwelling units, and perform a community risk assessment. The plan must be updated every 5 years and include a 3-year action plan to identify and reduce risks, and to document volunteer hours equivalent to 1 hour per dwelling unit in order to apply for and receive Firewise USA recognition. In addition, working with utilities will require Board of Commissioners agreement (a request was made to Duke Energy in March 2025). Biltmore Forest's 99% residential properties are at some level of risk to wildfires over the next 30 years (firststreet.org), making the implementation of wildfire prevention tactics and plans a sound investment for the community.



Project Sponsor:
Town of Biltmore Forest

Project Lead:
Town Manager

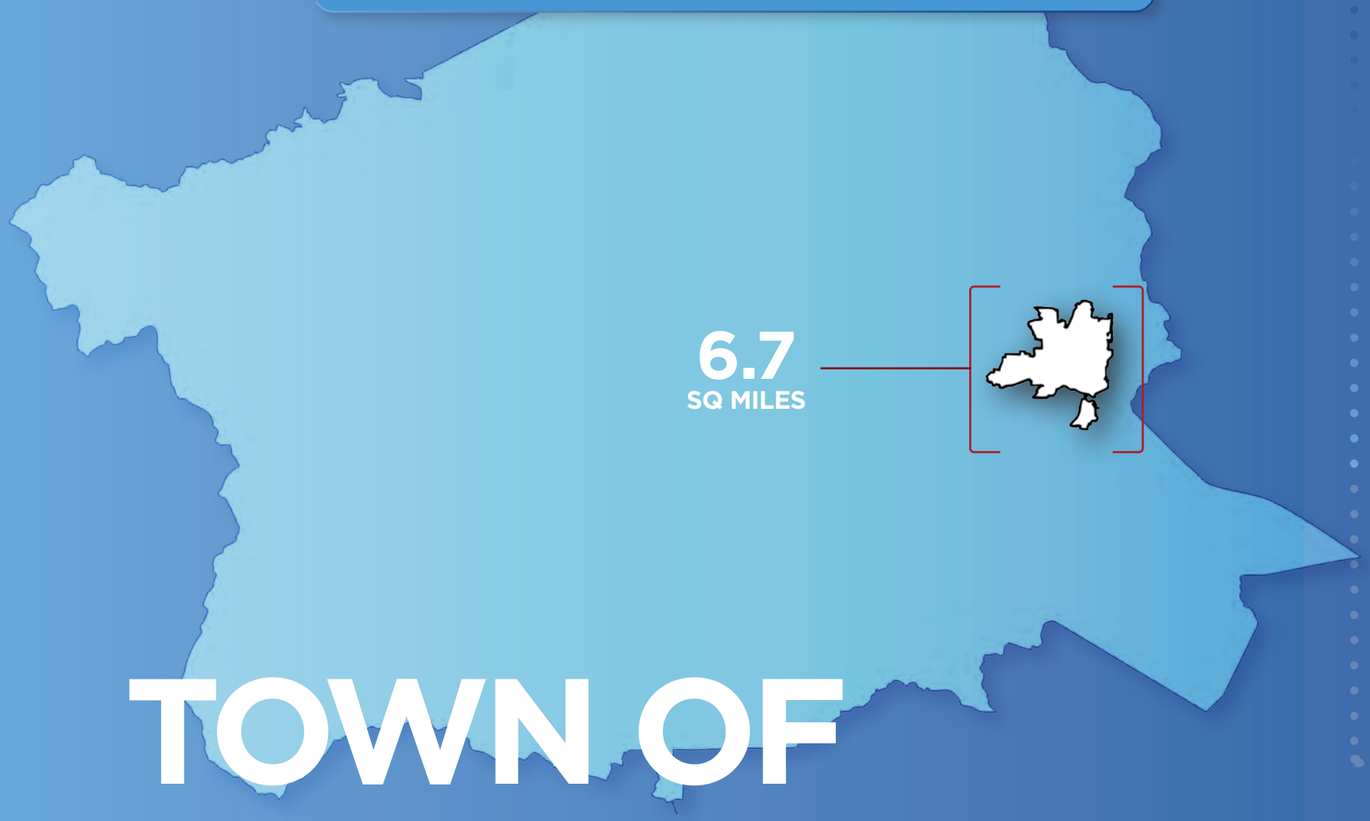
Partners:

- Duke Energy and Other Public Utilities
- Residents of Biltmore Forest
- National Fire Protection Association (Firewise USA®)

TOWN OF BLACK MOUNTAIN

MISSION

Provide quality services to protect the health, safety, and welfare of its residents.



8,462
POPULATION

60.6
MEDIAN AGE

$70,041
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

$351,700
MEDIAN HOME PRICE

$1,334
MEDIAN RENT

GOVERNMENT PROFILE

GOVERNMENT	ANNUAL BUDGET	EMPLOYEES
Town Council	$11,785,500	110

KEY SERVICES

Police	Water
Planning	Sanitation
Public Works	Permits & Inspections
Parks & Recreation	

OFFICE OF RECOVERY & RESILIENCY GOALS

Improving local infrastructure (roads, dam, water system, and parks) repairing and strengthening damaged buildings, coordinating state and federal mitigation efforts, and providing community education on flood risks and preparedness.

Communications

Enhance communications to provide more inclusive early warning alerts for the community during times of emergency.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
High	High	Medium

Alignment with Black Mountain Comprehensive Plan:

- **Goal 5.1:** Equitable engagement and opportunities for residents.
- **Goal 5.3:** Excellent public services and facilities.

Purpose

Black Mountain lost virtually all communications during Helene. This was a common occurance among municipalities in Western North Carolina. This project incorporates significant improvements across the spectrum of problem areas. They include:

- Make the Code RED model an "opt-out" feature, rather than the current "opt-in" feature.
- Add satellite equipment to public buildings.
- Increase communication system capacity in addition to installing a public siren warning system.
- Determine the feasibility and impact of early warning flood systems.
- Add an "opt-in" registry for people with Special Needs to provide critical information to Emergency Managers during response events.



Code RED is an emergency alert system that enables public safety agencies to quickly disseminate critical information to residents during emergencies.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

The key benefits and intended outcomes of these projects include the following (tied to the earlier numbered projects):

- This is expected to significantly increase the number of people receiving notifications, including those with special needs. Notifications will include critical warning during a storm event.
- This will significantly improve the towns ability to maintain operations, including emergency alerts.
- This will increase the ability of high risk areas to receive early warnings in an emergency situation.
- The town did not have the capacity to issue warnings of imminent flood hazards.

This project will investigate implementation of an early warning flood system.

Activities & Deliverables

These projects will each require significant scoping discussions to determine specific steps. Ideally, the projects could all be contracted with a single emergency management firm. Key steps would include:

1. Define the equipment needs and necessary programs to achieve the desired results.
2. Prepare a Request for Proposals (RFP) for qualified firms.
3. Issue the RFP and select a consulting firm.
4. Seek funding for the equipment.
5. Implement the program.

NOTE: If a single firm is not selected to manage all of the projects, then a similar process would be followed for each project.

Implementation Considerations

This is an ambitious project for Black Mountain. If successful as proposed, it will significantly enhance Black Mountain's ability to respond to, and recover from, a disaster. Partnerships with adjacent government agencies (e.g. Buncombe County and Montreat) should be pursued wherever available.



Project Sponsor:
Town of Black Mountain

Project Lead:
Town of Black Mountain

Partners:

- FEMA
- N.C. Emergency Management
- Buncombe County Emergency Management
- Residents
- Business and Property Owners in Black Mountain

Create Stormwater Management Corps

Develop a volunteer organization focused on stormwater management education and best practices for the implementation of community-wide stormwater awareness program.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Low	$$$ Low	Short-term

Alignment with Black Mountain Comprehensive Plan:

- **Goal 3.3:** A sustainable and resilient watershed that uses natural approaches to address stormwater.
- **Goal 5.1:** Equitable engagement opportunities for residents.

Purpose

This project identifies an approach to increasing community awareness about urban stormwater management issues. The concept is to create a volunteer-based community group with the core focus of stormwater management, addressing both the quality and quantity of stormwater, particularly as it drains to Flat Creek, which has been documented as negatively impacted by urban runoff from Black Mountain. Residents of Black Mountain are deeply aware of the impacts of flooding. Residents however, may be less aware of the day-to-day choices that impact stormwater quality and ultimately downstream water quality. This project will seek to engage the community through education opportunities and enhanced local conversation around this important topic.



To raise awareness about where runoff goes, volunteer stormwater corps often involve activities like marking storm drains with messages such as "Dump No Waste, Drains to Creek", according to the EPA.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

This project will promote knowledge of, and engagement in, the preparation and implementation of the Black Mountain Stormwater Management Plan by increasing awareness of resiliency strategies and issues associated with permits relating to construction projects. This will include specific design options for consideration. It will also increase awareness of these strategies among residents of Black Mountain. Construction contractors may lack specailized knowledge to incorportate risk-mitigation stratgies in site development, even when the additional cost may be negligable.

Activities & Deliverables

The following key steps will be needed to implement this project.

1. Establish a conceptual organization chart for the Stormwater Management Corps.
2. Seek community volunteers to join the Corps.
3. Develop a library of educational materials that address levels of complexity suitable for a range of audiences, such as volunteers, designers, and contractors.
4. Train the Corps members around key objectives and mission, and in familiarity with the Corps library.
5. Develop workshop materials oriented to two workshops, one to construction contractors and the other to property owners.
6. Develop a broad community outreach and engagement program to incorporate stormwater management into the general ethos of Black Mountain.

Implementation Considerations

While the volunteer base of the Corps will be universal, specific efforts should be made to reach out to young people and encourage their participation. This would also present an excellent opportunity to take training programs into local schools, from elementary through high schools. Knowledge gained when a person is young can stay with them throughout their life.

Project Sponsor:
Town of Black Mountain

Project Lead:
Town of Black Mountain

Partners:

- Project partners will include community volunteers, property owners, and design and construction contractors. Information for the library should be widely available online from other jurisdictions and agencies.

Flat Creek Restoration

Stabilize and restore the Flat Creek streambanks damaged by Tropical Storm Helene.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ Low	Short-term

Alignment with Black Mountain Comprehensive Plan:

- **Goal 3.2:** Conserved green spaces and green corridors that are integrated throughout the town
- **Goal 3.3:** A sustainabile and resilient watershed that uses natural approaches to address stormwater

Purpose

This project is to restore the Flat Creek streambanks severely damaged by flooding from Tropical Storm Helene-caused flooding. Streambanks were eroded, causing stream pollution and loss of public and private property. Without streambank stabilization, the erosion is very likely to continue in future storm events. This could lead to more significant flooding impacts, particularly impacting public and private property as Flat Creek "follows its own course."

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

This project will be oriented to streambank restoration from flood damage. Jurisdictions throughout Western North Carolina were similarly impacted by Helene. Key long term benefits include stabilized streambank, improved water quality, and protection of property from future storm events.

Restored streambanks with established vegetation are better equipped to withstand future flooding and storms, providing a natural buffer against erosion and damage.

Activities & Deliverables

Key activities for this project include:

- Identify and inventory impacted streambanks.
- Discuss the project(s) with private property owners to measure both the extent of damages and their willingness to participate in the project.
- Define the extent of the project and prepare a draft Request For Proposals (RFP).
- Issue the RFP and select design contractors.

A similar process will occur for construction contractors, but those proposals will be specific to engineering design.

Implementation Considerations

Implementation of this project will be conducted primarily by contractors (both design and construction). A critical component of managing the project will be the initial and on-going outreach to property owners other than the town. It may also be necessary to coordinate with other agencies (e.g. Buncombe County and the State of North Carolina) for oversight of work by the contractors on specialized design and construction best practices.



Project Sponsor:
Town of Black Mountain

Project Lead:
Town of Black Mountain

Partners:

- Streamflow Rehabilitation Assistance Program (StRAP), managed by North Carolina's Soil & Water Conservation Commission. Other partners include private property owners, other impacted public agencies, and community volunteers. It is also appropriate to reach out to other public agencies (e.g. Buncombe County, Montreat) to coordinate on adjacent and/or related projects.

Black Mountain

Park Development

Inventory property and set design standards for property acquired for parks and open space within the Floodplain of the Swannanoa River and Flat Creek.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	Medium	Medium

Purpose

This project looks at public lands developed as parks and open space. It is anticipated that the town may be able to acquire additional property along the area where the Flat Creek enters the Swannanoa River. The opportunity is to develop this additional open space in a manner that can help capture floodwaters and mitigate downstream flooding activity. If downstream flooding is reduced for the Swannanoa, water may not back up into Flat Creek, thus mitigating flooding in that waterway as well. This project will also create new design standards for parks that will increase the capacity to retain water in a major storm (up to 500-year flood event).



Lake Tomahawk Park was partially constructed as part of a New Deal-era project. The Civilian Works Administration and Federal Emergency Lake Administration built the lake's dam, a community building, and a boathouse between 1933 and 1935. Among many other features, the park is home to the Black Mountain Radio Sailing Club, which races on Saturdays.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

The project provides additional park space for the public and additional flood storage along the confluence of Flat Creek and Swannanoa River. Design standards for parks will be modified to require flood storage and mitigation for up to a 500-year storm event allowing increased opportunities for flood storage on public property and protects more property and people. For publicly owned properties where construction is occuring, the base flood elevation for the bottom of the building will be increased to a minimum of 2 feet above the Base Flood Elevation.

Activities & Deliverables

Key Activities for this project include a detailed inventory of available property. If this property is made available following an acquisition by Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds, the process will be controlled by the North Carolina Deparment of Emergency Management. No development, beyond general open space (trails, benches, etc.) will be allowed on this property. Other properties will need to be evaluated for flood storage capacity, and developed accordingly. This entails detailed surveys and site clearance activities that meet the design, including the desired engineering capacity.

Alignment with Black Mountain Comprehensive Plan:

- **Goal 3.2:** Conserved green spaces and green corridors that are integrated throughout the town.
- **Goal 3.2:** A sustainable and resilient watershed that uses natural approaches to address stormwater.
- **Goal 3.5:** Active and accessible public parks, trails, plazas, greens, and squares.
- **Goal 5.2:** High quality parks and public spaces

Implementation Considerations

It will be challenging to design open space property to have the capacity to retain excess water from a 500-year storm standard. However, it is an important objective and floodplains are ideal locations for open space. Trails, dog parks, and picnic areas are all compatible uses for these areas, and can be more resilient to flood inundation.

Project Sponsor:
Town of Black Mountain

Project Lead:
Town of Black Mountain

Partners:
- FEMA
- N.C. HMGP Property Acquisition
- National Park Service - Rivers Trails and Conservation Assistance Program

Public Building & Equipment Replacement

Restore public buildings, facilities, and equipment to pre-disaster condition in the Town of Black Mountain.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ High	Medium

Alignment with Black Mountain Comprehensive Plan:

- **Goal 5.3:** Excellent public services and facilities.

Purpose

Repair and rebuild all public buildings and facilities including parks and greenways, and all equipment and fleet damaged or destroyed by Helene. This project will help restore the public facilities owned by the Town of Black Mountain that were damaged or destroyed by Helene. These are all funded by the FEMA Public Assistance (PA) program.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

These projects will restore fundamental city operations, including building, fleet equipment, and public open space, to Black Mountain. These facilities are all eligible for FEMA PA funding and will be rebuilt to modern codes and standards. The work will replace what is lost or damaged. It is anticipated that the replacement equipment will include mitigation improvements that will help mitigate damages from future storm events.

FEMA's Public Assistance program requires rebuilt structures or restored facilities to meet or exceed the latest applicable building codes to better withstand future hazards. This is often facilitated by including hazard mitigation measures like elevated buildings or improved drainage systems as part of the reconstruction projects.

Activities & Deliverables

Projects funded by FEMA PA require significant lead time and discussions with FEMA employees. The work entails:

- Identify the facility and its condition, pre-storm event.
- Prepare detailed cost estimates to replace the building without expansion or significant modification to current building codes.
- Obtain design and contruction bids.
- Contract for design and construction.
- Occupy buildings, fleet, and public open space.

Implementation Considerations

Obtaining reimbursement from FEMA through its PA program can take longer than cities and their residents expect. There is a significant amount of documentation required to obligate eligible projects prior to the start of design and construction.



Project Sponsor:
Town of Black Mountain

Project Lead:
Town of Black Mountain

Partners:

- FEMA Public Assistance program and city staff.
- Residents.
- Business Owners and Property Owners are all impacted.

Purchase Disaster Response Equipment

Create local weather stations for Black Mountain and purchase generators to provide emergency backup power for water systems and critical town facilities.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Low	$$$ Medium	Short-term

Alignment with Black Mountain Comprehensive Plan:

- **Goal 5.1:** Equitable engagement opportunities for residents.
- **Goal 5.3:** Excellent public services and facilities.

Purpose

This project includes purchase of key equipment that was identified as needed during the Helene event. The equipment includes small weather equipment installations for three locations in town, purchase of generators and a diesel pump to provide potable water service when power is out (an estimated 10,200 water users were left without potable water during Helene), and generators to provide backup power to town buildings. Purchase of these pieces of equipment will address multiple issues the town experienced during Helene.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

The installation of "hyperlocal" weather stations will promote the understanding of Black Mountain's unique weather events and patterns, and may assist in directing quick response efforts where needed due to varying impacts across the town. The town does not have this data currently. This hyperlocal weather data will also be used to support planning and grant applications. The generators and diesel equipment have obvious use in providing emergency power when the power supply is out during a storm or other emergency event.

Activities & Deliverables

This project will provide equipment that will make Black Mountain better prepared for and more resilient during and after storm and other emergency events. Key activities to pursue these equipment purchases include:

1. Identify specifically needed equipment.
2. Prepare applications for grant funding (likely HMGP).
3. Identify source and scale of matching funds, if required.
4. Submit grant applications.
5. Install equipment.
6. Prepare public information to inform the town residents of the equipment installation.

Implementation Considerations

This project is relatively straightforward to implement. Grant applications will be submitted that could potentially require matching funds. Due to the nature of purchasing and installing equipment, there is little public engagement involved, though public information demonstrating how the town is being more proactive should be pursued.



With localized data, alerts can be more specific and targeted, ensuring that the right people receive the right information at the right time. By monitoring weather patterns a community can better predict the intensity and impact of severe weather events.

Project Sponsor:
Town of Black Mountain

Project Lead:
Town of Black Mountain

Partners:

- Potential partners include FEMA, North Carolina HMGP and Buncombe Countty Emergency Management.

Resilient Stormwater Infrastructure

Complexity	Cost	Timing
High	$$$ High	Medium

Upgrade the community-wide stormwater system and develop programs for private landowners to encourage the implementation of green infrastructure.

Purpose

Black Mountain's stormwater system was overwhelmed during Helene. While it is clearly not feasible to plan and construct infrastructure capable of managing an event Helene's magnitude, the system can be made significantly more robust to handle storms of lesser events that can also cause tremendous damage to the town.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

System improvements will be made through the following steps:

- Conduct an Assessment Inventory Analysis (AIA) of the citywide stormwater system.
- Evaluate downtown stormwater inlets to reduce street flooding, by increasing capacity through a regular system of downtown drainage inlets.
- Initiate a program to repair and/or replace undersized culverts and drainageways to increase the level of service to a 25-year storm minimum.
- Implement a program with the goal of improved stormwater quality runoff by facilitating small scale private green infrastructure.

This could include facilities such as rain gardens, french drains, or pervious surfaces pavement techniques to provide a hard surface while allowing some stormwater to infiltrate into groundwater rather than running off into streams. Overall, these improvements should help to reduce risk to the private property and promote local economic stability.

Activities & Deliverables

Many, if not all of these physical improvements, will require professional design assistance from consulting engineers. The town will need to conduct significant preliminary work and document the general level, complexity, and location of improvements. When the general content is defined, the town can proceed as follows:

- Issue a Request For Proposals (RFP) for design services.
- Evaluate proposals and select a design consultant.
- Negotiate contract and proceed with the consulting work.

Once design is completed, the town will need to go through a similar process to identify contractors to construct the designed improvements.

Implementation Considerations

This project addresses a key vulnerability identified during Helene and provides an opportunity for significant community engagement and education. Simple techniques such as painting a fish on the street near an inlet structure can serve as a reminder to not place items into the stormwater system and lead to improved stormwater runoff quality. There are many examples available with a simple browser search to help the town gain and share broader knowledge and acceptance of these system management issues.

Alignment with Black Mountain Comprehensive Plan:

- **Goal 3.3:** A sustainable and resilient watershed that uses natural approaches to address stormwater.



Green streets, with features like permeable pavement and bioswales, can remove as much as 90 percent of stormwater pollutants before the water reaches waterways.

Project Sponsor:
Town of Black Mountain

Project Lead:
Town of Black Mountain

Partners:

- Partners for this work will primarily include Black Mountain residents, property, and business owners. Concepts and potential projects can be discussed with other municipalities, but these improvements will largely be up to the town to implement.

Response, Recovery, & Resiliency Office

Introduce the Office of Response, Recovery, and Resilience for the Town of Black Mountain to implement disaster recovery and resiliency projects and programs guided by the core values of the community.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ Medium	Medium

Alignment with Black Mountain Comprehensive Plan:

- **Goal 3.1:** Efficient and fiscally balanced growth that priorities sue of existing utilities and service areas.
- **Goal 5.1:** Equitable engagement opportunities for residents.
- **Goal 5.3:** Excellent public service an facilities.

Purpose

This project will assure Black Mountain's ability to improve future response efforts and overall resilience through the creation of a comprehensive Response, Recovery, and Resiliency Office. The office will provide core leadership in the city by leading recovery and resiliency efforts and ensure these topics are included as core values of the town.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

The project will provide centralized coordination for response efforts in a future disaster, including close coordination with first responders and other response officials. It will also be the lead office to mobilize response to on-going emergencies, such as initiating Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) or Mutual Aid Agreements. Finally, it will coordinate response activities among first responders and citizen-based groups providing response/recovery activities.

There are about 1,200 volunteers making up 84 CERT teams in 57 counties in North Carolina, including Buncombe County.

Activities & Deliverables

Key activities and functions this office will provide include:

- Establish agreements for emergency shelters, mutual aid, and public information sites, including location. Also enter into MOUs with local vendors for emergency response, such as tree removal, heavy earth moving equipment, emergency food supply, and others.
- Create a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and establish a training program, likely through the Fire Department. Recruit interested volunteers. Prepare for an Emergency Operations Center (EOC), by acquiring critical supplies, such as vehicle access, emergency water supplies, communication equipment, food, cots, and electronic office equipment.
- Provide Incident Command System training for critical city employees.

This will enable them to jump into a EOC with little lead or preparation time.

Implementation Considerations

This is a fairly broad reaching and significant project for a town the size of Black Mountain. The city can reach out to other jurisdictions for support and creative ideas for implementation. A significant portion of the initial organization of the office can be assisted by community volunteers. Ultimately though, it is a city function and will require technical staff with resources.



Project Sponsor:
Town of Black Mountain

Project Lead:
Town of Black Mountain

Partners:

- FEMA for CERT training background
- N.C. Emergency Management
- Buncombe County Emergency Management
- Nearby Municipalities
- Private Entities for Emergency Response MOUs
- Residents
- Business Owners and Property Owners
- Core volunteers for CERT

Risk Mitigation & Resilience

Inventory and assess property impact from Helene and update the Unified Development Ordinance to include increased standards for resilient development of private property.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ Low	Short-term

Purpose

This project is designed to obtain a better understanding of the flooding impacts to Black Mountain and review the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to identify means to require improved development standards on private property. The UDO currently supports requirements on private development that can increase resiliency efforts, ranging from environmental elements like landscaping and stormwater to increased density to increase more affordable housing. This effort would include partnering with Western Carolina University (WCU) to obtain better baseline maps and to codify standards to improve resilience in Black Mountain.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

Currently, there is no official record of what areas flooded during Helene. FEMA's Flood Information Rate Maps (FIRM) do not provide a comprehensive view of flood hazards. The partnership with WCU will produce more accurate mapping of disaster impacts and will inform a broad array of town development and planning, such as integrating opportunities for mitigation and resiliency into long-term development regulations and land use decisions for future development areas, disaster evacuation routes, a framework for developing emergency alerts, and community education and strategies. This mapping effort may help mitigate the town's current vulnerability to floods and other hazards that create threats to life safety, commercial & residential properties, and critical infrastructure. The new maps may provide critical information that can inform future FIRM map updates.



Activities & Deliverables

Key activities for this project include the following steps:

1. Work closely with WCU to identify the university's capability to support the mapping effort and potentially also support the town's necessary UDO amendments to improve resiliency.
2. With WCU, survey areas flooded during Helene and provide base data necessary to produce detailed mapping information. This includes base flood information along with the associated impacts on evacuation routes and public infrastructure.
3. Review the UDO development regulations for ways to strengthen requirements for private and public developments, including stormwater management.
4. Prepare an amendment to the UDO that includes updates for greater resilience for new developments, including new mapping if applicable to the UDO language.

Alignment with Black Mountain Comprehensive Plan:

- **Goal 2.1:** Complete neighborhoods with diverse housing options and walkable daily needs, jobs, and services.
- **Goal 2.3:** A town that maintains an affordable cost-of-living for low and middle-income residents.
- **Goal 3.4:** Energy efficient buildings and transportation options.

Implementation Considerations

This project creates an excellent opportunity to increase community reslience through the partnership with WCU, at relatively low cost.

A study by the Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT) found a significant increase in home sale prices for properties near green stormwater infrastructure, like rain gardens, permeable pavements, and swales.

Project Sponsor:
Town of Black Mountain

Project Lead:
Town of Black Mountain

Partners:
- Western Carolina University
- Buncombe County Emergency Management
- FEMA
- N.C. Department of Emergency Management

Swannanoa River Flood Mitigation Projects

Mitigate future flood impacts through the engineered redesign of the Swannanoa River channel and dredging of Lake Tomahawk.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
High	$$$ High	Short-term

Alignment with Black Mountain Comprehensive Plan:

- **Goal 3.2:** Conserved green spaces and green corridors that are integrated throughout the town
- **Goal 3.3:** A sustainabile and resilient watershed that uses natural approaches to address stormwater
- **Goal 5.2:** High quality parts and public spaces

Purpose

The Swannanoa River flooding during Tropical Storm Helene devastated hundreds of properties and led to loss of lives, receiving national attention. Over the long term, this project should save property and lives and mitigate future flooding impacts, including mitigating pressure during storm events that may cause flash flooding. It presents an opportunity to create new or restore old public open space within the flood zone. Trails and natural areas are commonly located in flood zones and are a compatible use with the area.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

By dredging and increasing the volume of Lake Tomahawk, additional capacity will capture runoff before it enters the Swannanoa River. Additional capacity will also be added by floodbenching the Swannoanoa and constructing wetlands. The Swannanoa River flooding impacted many miles of the river downstream of its confluence with the French Broad River in Asheville. This multi-dimensional project is a long-term effort to redesign the waterway by opening up areas in and adjacent to the riverbank for floodwaters to go during storm events (i.e. floodbenching and lake dredging).

Floodbenching, a form of floodplain restoration, involves reshaping and restoring the natural function of floodplains to mitigate flood risks and provide a range of ecological and societal benefits

Activities & Deliverables

This is a multi-phased project. The first phase is approved and under design. The second phase would continue work from Phase 1 and is not yet funded. Phase 3, separate but related to mitigating Swannanoa River flood impacts, is the dredging of Lake Tomahawk.

Implementation Considerations

The first phase of this project is under design and is funded by the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality. Thus the DEQ will be responsible for designing and contracting the multi-jurisdictional project. Future phases may also be managed/funded by the DEQ, but this is not obligated. The Lake Tomahawk portion of the project is also not funded. As noted, there is a great opportunity to provide public open space adjacent to and within the flood zone of the river. This is both a design issue as well as an opportunity for community members and volunteers to become involved and gain "ownership" of the project.



Project Sponsor:
Town of Black Mountain

Project Lead:
N.C. Department of Environmental Quality

Partners:

- N.C. Department of Environmental Quality, Buncombe County, and Adjacent Jursidictions for Engineering
- Recreation Design and Support
- Residents, Business, and Property Owners

Tool Lending Library

Create a tool lending library for the purpose of easing the financial strain of home repair and maintenance for residents of Black Mountain.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Low	Low	Short-term

Purpose

Launching a tool lending library supports residents and property owners to maintain their property. Supporting property owners performing maintenance increases minimum housing conditions, especially for affordable housing projects and reduces risk during weather events large and small. Providing these resources helps residents during “blue sky” periods when a household project requires tools for a one-time job, making homes more resilient and able to survive the next storm event, while reducing financial and storage burdens on residents.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

Secure homes are less likely to pose a risk to residents during a major storm event. Providing a tool lending-library will make it easier for residents to repair property after an event and be better prepared before an event happens. It also reduces the financial strain and the burden of long-term storage on property owners.

Tool libraries promote resource sharing, reduce waste, and offer affordable access to tools for home improvement, repairs, and DIY projects. They typically have a diverse inventory, including hand tools, power tools, gardening equipment, and more.

Activities & Deliverables

Key Activities for this project include the following steps.

1. Identify a location for the tool lending library.
2. Identify a list of tools to acquire for the lending program.
3. Purchase or acquire a range of tools for lending. This may include donated tools to add to the library.
4. Establish the tool lending library.
5. Establish a public information program to assure residents of Black Mountain are aware of the tool lending library and how it can be used.

Implementation Considerations

A tool lending library is relatively inexpensive and provides an excellent resource for the community. If succesful, the town could consider encouraging the tool library to expand into a Maker Space. The Maker Space would provide more sophisticated tools (e.g. power tools) that could be used by local residents and entrepreneurs. Maker Spaces are often considered economic development investments, but can also provide a resource for local people to use at low or no cost. Maker Spaces need a greater investment to put in place along with a higher level of management, though there are many locations throughout the country that have succesfully implemented these spaces.

Alignment with Black Mountain Comprehensive Plan:

- **Goal 2.2:** Social housing that is afforable to everyone, including workers and low-wealth residents.
- **Goal 2.3:** A town that maintains an affordable cost-of-living for low and middle-income residents.
- **Goal 4.1:** A strong, diversified economy.
- **Goal 4.4:** Innovation through arts, culture, and creativity.
- **Goal 4.5:** Thriving manufacturing, including small-scale.



Project Sponsor:
Town of Black Mountain

Project Lead:
Town of Black Mountain

Partners:
- Residents
- Business Owners
- Property Owners of Black Mountain.
- Other jurisdictions which have established similar programs for advice on the best way to implement a program

Water System Improvements

Assess and improve the public water distribution system to build capacity and make it more resilient for future growth and emergency needs.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
High	High	Medium

Alignment with Black Mountain Comprehensive Plan:

- **Goal 5.3:** Excellent public services and facilities.

Purpose

Black Mountain's water system serves more than 10,000 customers. The system was severely impacted by Helene. This project includes several specific steps designed to address the impacts of Helene and to make the system less vulnerable to harm and more resilient by addressing future construction in high hazard areas for the water system and all major public facilities where feasible. If not feasible to avoid the flood zone, then it will take steps to harden existing facilities from future storm impacts. The town also desires to increase system capacity for future growth and to provide additional backup supplies when the overall supply is impacted.

Investing in resilient infrastructure can lead to significant financial benefits in the long run. Studies suggest that every $1 invested in such infrastructure can yield a $4 return in avoided recovery costs. (Yale Climate Connections, April 2025)

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

The project is expected to deliver the following benefits:

- Provide baseline data on Black Mountain's water system.
- Remove waterlines from high hazard floodways and stream crossings.
- Reduce disruption of drinking water to more than 10,200 customers of the water system.
- Relocate or harden waterline stream crossings if crossing the stream is unavoidable.
- Relocate waterlines from floodways to ensure future resilience.
- Rehabilitate the town reservoir to address damages incurred from Helene.
- Adopt an ordinance prohibiting all future public facilities from construction located in the 100—year flood plain.
- Drill additional wells to increase overall water supply when emergency shortfalls occur.

Activities & Deliverables

This is an ambitious program that undertakes a comprehensive evaluation of the town's water system and identifies specific steps to make the system more resilient in the future. It will require design and construction contractors to complete the various identified projects. Generally speaking, the Request For Proposal (RFP) process for both design and construction will follow the following steps.

1. Conduct a detailed inventory of the water system, including specific descriptions of the desired improvements.
2. Prepare and issue a RFP for final design services for the identified improvements.
3. Select a professional design firm to prepare construction drawings.
4. Issuue the contract for design.
5. Submit final plans for permitting review.
6. Issue RFP for construction.

Implementation Considerations

This project includes several major construction projects. Construction inspection is a critical component, and the town may wish to contract for that service as well.



Project Sponsor:
Town of Black Mountain

Project Lead:
Town of Black Mountain

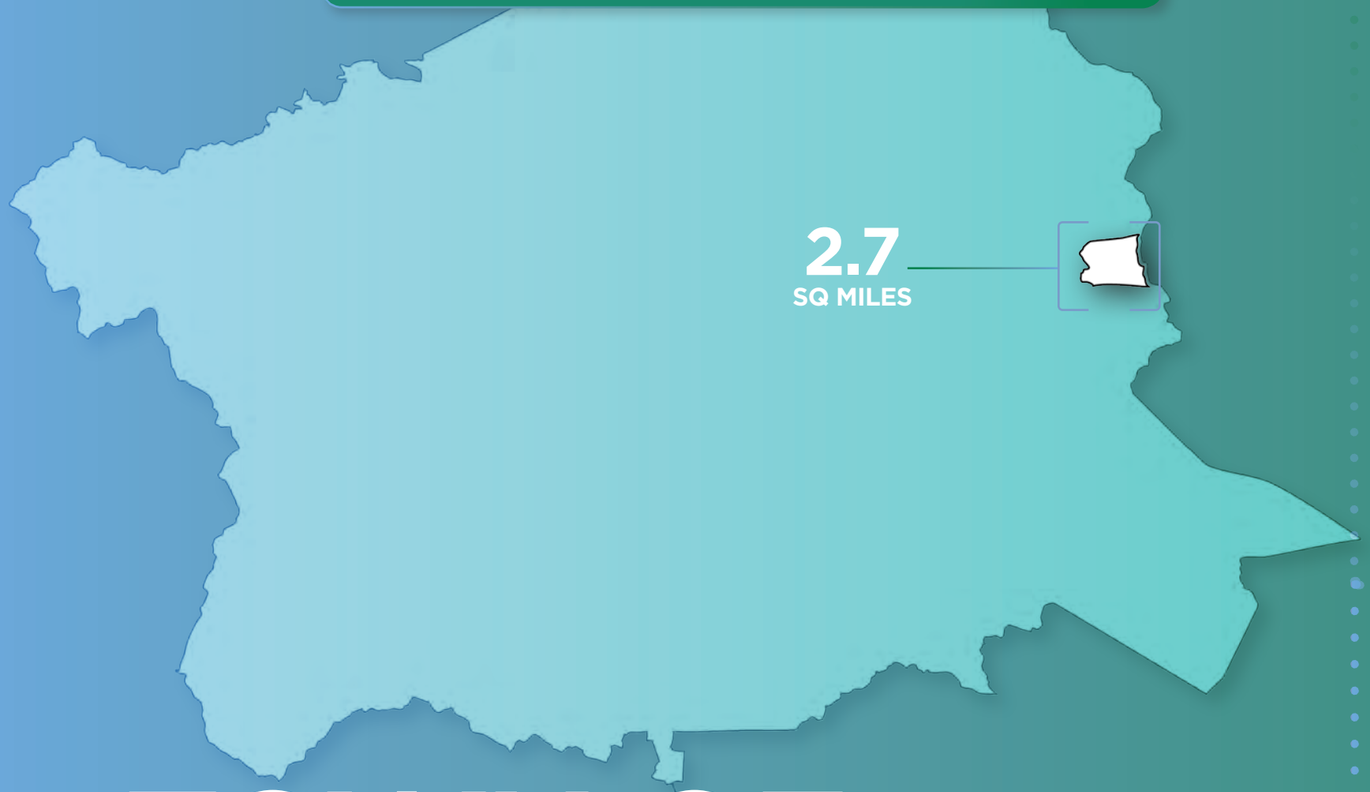
Partners:

- FEMA
- N.C. Department of Emergency Management
- USEPA for Water System Infrastructure
- USDA for Rural Infrastructure Loans
- Design Professionals

TOWN OF MONTREAT

MISSION

To seek ways to maintain and improve the quality of life, preserve the natural beauty, and promote responsible growth while maintaining our community image, heritage, and traditions.



474
POPULATION

20.1
MEDIAN AGE

$78,538
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

$780,000
MEDIAN HOME PRICE

$1,250
MEDIAN RENT

GOVERNMENT PROFILE

GOVERNMENT	ANNUAL BUDGET	EMPLOYEES
Board of Commissioners	$2,502,815	16

KEY SERVICES

Fire
Sewer
Water
Public Works
Recreation & Environment
Police
Streets
Sanitation
Emergency Management

DEVELOPMENT VISION

Montreat will be a community that respects buildings with historic value, encourages new development to consider the surrounding architecture, and strives for resilience in the face of a changing climate.

ENVIRONMENT VISION

Montreat values and protects its tree canopy, streams, land, and natural beauty.

Montreat

Community Information Hubs

Develop a volunteer Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) to provide immediate disaster resources at key locations during community emergencies.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Low	$$$ Low	Short-term

Alignment with Montreat Comprehensive Plan:

Environment

- **Objective 12:** Support and implement the goals and recommendations for the Town of Montreat in the Buncombe and Madison County Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Purpose

The Town of Montreat has a small staff of 13 employees. Most of these employees were impacted by Tropical Storm Helene, as was all Western North Carolina. This project is designed to establish a program of community information hubs that can be put in play in a short period after, or potentially during, an event. The program will establish a group of volunteers, identify pre-selected locations throughout town, and train the volunteers to get to these hubs as soon as possible. These centers would be in places such as public buildings, churches, and even private locations, such as a popular café. They would be centers for storm response information, water distribution, and other immediate disaster response needs.

CERT became a national program in 1993, and there are now over 3,200 local CERT programs across all 50 states, tribal nations, and US territories.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

This program is not oriented to physical improvements. Rather, it is oriented to quick response and would organize and galvanize volunteers immediately after an event. It would include establishing a CERT, which consists of volunteers trained in various aspects of disaster response. The CERT would be an adjunct to the volunteers at the Information Hubs and would be trained and available to support emergency responders. The goal of this program is to have a core group of volunteers in the community that can provide a rapid resource for the residents and visitors to Montreat.

Activities & Deliverables

To implement this program, the town will take the following actions:

- Identify available training resources for a CERT (law enforcement, FEMA, emergency managers). Advertise and seek volunteers willing to participate in the CERT training program.
- Coordinate with local first responders to organize the information hubs and any training of volunteers that is needed.
- Reach out to community groups to explain the program and establish a core group of volunteers.
- Establish groups of volunteers and assign them to designated information hub locations and train them how to respond when an emergency strikes.

Implementation Considerations

The key to implementing this project is to engage community residents to help each other during these events. Simply put, it is community organizing.



Project Sponsor:
Town of Montreat

Project Lead:
Town of Montreat

Partners:

- Buncombe County Emergency Management
- Community Groups
- First Responders
- Residents of Montreat

Montreat

Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan

Develop a Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) to guide preparedness, response, and recovery for future community emergencies.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Low	$$$ Low	Short-term

Alignment with Montreat Comprehensive Plan:

Environment

- **Objective 12:** Support and implement the goals and recommendations for the Town of Montreat in the Buncombe and Madison County Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Purpose

The Community Hubs and Incident Command Staff Training projects address emergency management response issues. The town recognizes the importance of these projects along with the importance of tying them and other emergency management issues into a CEMP. A CEMP would evaluate preparedness and response in a full document. Examples of issues addressed in a CEMP might include identification of areas in the town that are vulnerable to disasters (e.g. potential landslide areas, significant potential streambank erosion due to flooding, dense and unmaintained wooded areas vulnerable to wildfires, etc.), along with general protocols for response to various types of disasters, such as evacuation routes that may vary depending on the type and location of a given disaster.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

The CEMP would provide a clear look at potential problem areas in preparedness as well as response and suggest solutions to better prepare the town to address them. In other words, it would make Montreat a more resilient town as it moves into the future.

A core principle of the CEMP is the "all-hazards" approach. This means the plan isn't limited to a specific type of emergency but considers all plausible hazards and threats, both natural and human-caused, ensuring preparedness for a broad spectrum of emergencies.

Activities & Deliverables

To prepare a CEMP, the town will undergo the following key activities:

- Reach out to emergency management agencies for advice on emergency management plan essential components.
- Elicit community volunteers, working with town staff, to identify issues and where feasible, prepare an initial draft plan.
- Prepare a Request for Proposals (RFP) from qualified consultants with applicable emergency planning expertise. Include the community prepared draft plan in the RFP.
- Evaluate consultant responses to the RFP and conduct interviews of top candidates.
- Select a team and initiate the project.

Implementation Considerations

This project is closely connected with the Community Information Hubs and Staff ICS Training projects, as noted earlier. It should also be closely coordinated with Buncombe County Emergency Management and the State of N.C. Department of Emergency Management. Finally, and most importantly, it should be closely connected to the residents of Montreat, who will live with the plan for the foreseeable future.



Project Sponsor:
Town of Montreat

Project Lead:
Town of Montreat

Partners:

- Buncombe County Emergency Management
- N.C. Department of Emergency Management
- First Responders (Police & Fire)
- Health Providers
- Residents of Montreat

Montreat

Incident Command System Training

Identify and train additional town employees to run Incident Command System (ICS) during community emergencies.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Low	Low	Short-term

Alignment with Montreat Comprehensive Plan:

Environment

- **Objective 12:** Support and implement the goals and recommendations for the Town of Montreat in the Buncombe and Madison County Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Purpose

The Community Information Hub project discussed Montreat's small staff and noted that they were overwhelmed during Helene. The town employee best suited to run Incident Command is the Police Chief, who was unable to reach the community due to extensive storm damage. The town had a major delay in effectively responding to the storm. This project is designed to provide ICS training to other staff members, providing better preparedness and allowing greater coverage during a storm event.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

The fundamental need for this project is to better serve residents and visitors during the next event. Due to Montreat's steep and deeply wooded terrain, it is vulnerable to wind, flooding, wildfires, and landslide events. While the proposed training program will not be a panacea, it will enable the town to be better prepared to respond. Trained employees will be seen as resources at the Community Hubs, wherever possible (acknowledging that true emergency response would take precedent over the communication and supportive focus of the Community Hubs.)

ICS was initially developed in the 1970s by Southern California fire agencies (through a project called FIRESCOPE) to improve the coordination and management of complex and rapidly spreading wildfires.

Activities & Deliverables

The town will pursue this program with the following key activities:

- Identify which employees and/or positions should be prioritized for training.
- Identify resources to provide ICS training.
- Determine cost of training, including scheduling training sessions while keeping basic town functions intact.
- Enact an agreement with selected trainers (Memorandum of Understanding and or contracts for services, as needed).

Implementation Considerations

This project should be closely coordinated with the Community Information Hubs project. These projects are fundamentally connected in that they are intended to improve Montreat's ability to respond to disasters, respond to disasters and the town's long-term resilience.

It is important to engage with to the community to explain this project and how it will relate to town resilience. With limited resources, Montreat is tapping into its employee base and community members to be better prepared for future events.



Project Sponsor:
Town of Montreat

Project Lead:
Town of Montreat

Partners:

- Buncombe County Emergency Management
- N.C. Department of Emergency Management
- First Responders
- Community Groups

Stormwater Ordinance Update

Update the Montreat Stormwater Ordinance to reflect best practices for municipal stormwater design and management, incorporating lessons learned from Tropical Storm Helene.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Low	Low	Short-term

Alignment with Montreat Comprehensive Plan:

Environment

- **Objective 8:** Inventory the Town's current stormwater infrastructure and identify opportunities for system improvements and expansions.

Purpose

Montreat has a stormwater ordinance that covers all development in the town. It is a relatively strict ordinance and carries an important purpose as Montreat is quite hilly and is densely forested. Further, Montreat is mostly built out, and little land remains in the town limits to add infrastructure like stormwater detention/retention basins. Thus, there is a need for clear and unequivocal language in the ordinance that defines on-site storage for building sites.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

The primary benefit of an updated ordinance will be to add clarity for permittees and town staff that are reviewing development permits. It will also provide an opportunity to identify preferred methods for on-site stormwater storage that will reduce downstream flows and mitigate increases in flooding due to development. It is anticipated that the updated ordinance will require little or no new runoff from new structures and will provide suggested retention methods such as: rain gardens, rain barrels, french drains, and other innovative features for stormwater management.

Montreat College students and residents act as 'citizen scientists' and are involved in water quality monitoring of Flat Creek and the protection and recovery of the Eastern Hellbender.

Activities & Deliverables

The key activities for this project include:

- Evaluate the existing ordinance to identify strengths and weaknesses.
- Conduct an online search of other municipalities for good examples of stormwater management ordinances, including those that have solid examples of preferred alternatives.
- Prepare draft ordinance revisions addressing the key identified needs.
- Present the ordinance revisions to the Town Council and allow input from the public on the proposed amendments.

Implementation Considerations

It is critical for a new ordinance to allow the community the opportunity to review and comment on the changes, prior to adoption and implementation.



Project Sponsor:
Town of Montreat

Partners:

- Other Municipalities
- Department of Public Works
- Site Development Specialists

Project Lead:
Town of Montreat

TOWN OF WEAVERVILLE

MISSION

To provide quality service, fast and efficient emergency services when needed, and provide an overall safe and pleasant atmosphere for its visitors and residents.



4
SQ MILES

4,799
POPULATION

51.6
MEDIAN AGE

$90,000
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

$452,700
MEDIAN HOME PRICE

$1,642
MEDIAN RENT

GOVERNMENT PROFILE

GOVERNMENT	ANNUAL BUDGET	EMPLOYEES
Town Council	$17.7 MILLION	90

KEY SERVICES

Fire
Police
Planning & Zonning
Park & Recreation
Streets
Public Works
Sanitation
Stormwater
Ground Maintenance
Water Production & Distribution
Community Center Facility & Programming

HELENE RECOVERY PRIORITIES

Emergency Preparedness
Community Resilience
Economic Resilience
Environmental Resilience
Infrastructure Resilience

Eller Cove Watershed Fuel Load Removal

Identify funding and authorize contract services to clean up downed trees and other vegetation, which creates fuel load, in the Eller Cove Watershed to reduce wildfire risks.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Low	$$$ High	Short-term

Category:
ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCE

Purpose

The Eller Cove Watershed experienced a major number of downed trees from the storm. The Town is concerned about wildfire risk in the watershed, particularly related to the downed trees. The Eller Cove watershed is over 300 acres in size, and the threat of wildfire from downed trees is very real. This project would including establishing a funding plan and contracting for removal of downed trees and post-removal clean up.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

There is a threat of wildfires from downed trees in Western North Carolina following the destruction of Tropical Storm Helene. As the trees are primarily hardwood, they will not decay as rapidly as softwood, thus lengthening the threat of fire. If the trees were to decay on the ground, there could be significant new organic materials from the decay process, which could negatively impact runoff and thus water quality. Downed tree removal would help to mitigate those negative impacts.

Weaverville placed a conservation easement on 310 acres of the Weaverville Watershed, including the headwaters of Eller Cove Branch and 12 of its tributaries, to protect water quality and wildlife habitat.

Activities & Deliverables

The Town will seek contractors for services to remove fuel load from the property. Prior to seeking contractors for the service, the Town should conduct an on-ground survey to obtain an estimate of the density of downed trees throughout the site. This general estimate of downed trees, and thus fuel load, will provide important information to the background of the Request for Proposals (RFP), and should produce better informed proposals from contractors. The normal steps to procure this service would be to issue a RFP and to select the most-qualified proposer.

Implementation Considerations

The Town should develop a program of public engagement for these efforts. In addition to trees on the ground, it will likely be necessary to remove "hangers," or hazardous trees that will not survive and provide a threat to the public. This program should be explained in detail and made widely available to the public.



Project Sponsor:
Town of Weaverville

Project Lead:
Town of Weaverville

Partners:
- The State Fire Marshal is a potential partner, along with the USDA Forest Service.
- Other federal,state, and nonprofit programs could potentially provide funding.

Weaverville

Emergency Operations Plan

Develop and implement an Emergency Operations Plan and Incident Command Structure for future emergency response.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ Low	Short-term

Category:
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Purpose

Weaverille experienced serious communication issues during Helene. The town also realized that it needed a more formal Emergency Operations Plan to establish an Incident Command Structure, and dedicated roles among town employees. While town employees responded "above and beyond the call of duty," it became apparent that additional training was needed, particularly in better defining roles and responsibilites.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

This project will relate closely with the Public Communication and Notification Project. The two projects will address issues identified post-disaster. Specifically, this project will provide an up-to-date response plan that will better enable the town to respond to the next disaster. It will also discuss specific activities in the plan that may be tailored to the type of disaster (e.g. rain/flooding, wildfire, landslides, wind).

The Weaverville Police Department is the first municipality in Western North Carolina to incorporate electric vehicles into its fleet. This initiative demonstrates the department's commitment to efficiency and environmental responsibility.

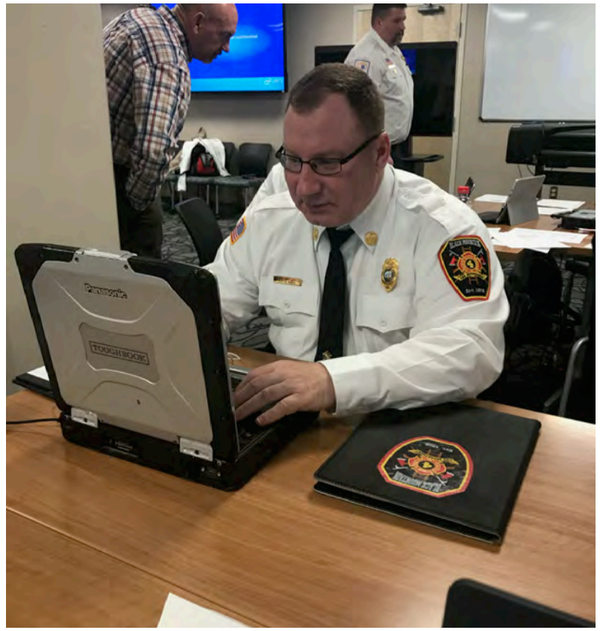
Activities & Deliverables

Key activities include:

1. Research similar plans from other jurisdictions.
2. Assess staff level training needs.
3. Determine if planning and employee training will be done with in-house resources, or if an outside contractor will be appropriate.
4. Develop specific strategy, and if a contractor is to be retained, a scope of work.
5. Develop a project budget and timeline.
6. Obtain approval from Weaverville Council to proceed.
7. Initiate project.

Implementation Considerations

It is critical that Weaverville Emergency Operations Plan be developed and coordinated with similar regional and statewide efforts, including Buncombe County and neighboring city, regional, and statewide programs. This project will develop a written emergency operations plan to address all governmental functions and critical community needs and include training to a cross-section of Town employees for emergency management. It will address activities such as emergency debris removal, temporary communications, search and rescue, shelter set-up and management, pet rescues, and other activities. Town employees will be trained to support outside responders to be better connected with local issues and ease transition from response to recovery.



Project Sponsor:
Town of Weaverville

Project Lead:
Town of Weaverville

Partners:

- Buncombe County Department of Emergency Management
- North Carolina Department of Emergency Management
- FEMA
- Community Based Organizations

Expanding Open Space & Parks

Develop an interconnected park and trail system joining existing parklands such as Lake Louise and Main Street Park with Reems Creek Greenway between Weaverville's Community Club and the French Broad River.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ High	Medium

Category:
COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Purpose

Weaverville has two outstanding parks. The crown jewel of Lake Louise Park is located in central Weaverville and includes over 15 acres of parkland around a 5-acre lake. The park features a brand new playground, outdoor exercise equipment, picnic shelters, a walking track, grills, and fishing. The Main Street Nature Park is a 10-acre park that provides walking trails and a quiet natural area in the heart of downtown. The Reems Creek Greenway is a planned walkway of about 2.25 miles in Weaverville adjacent to Reems Creek. This would connect to a much longer trail east and west of Weaverville, starting at the Community Club and terminating at the French Broad River. The town desires to enhance these open space assets and determine where they can be expanded or connected to other open spaces.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

This project will work with Weaverville's existing park system and identify ways to expand and enhance it. This could include strategic property acquisitions, specific improvements in certain locations, and potentially new "pocket parks" that will serve neighborhoods and address local public needs.

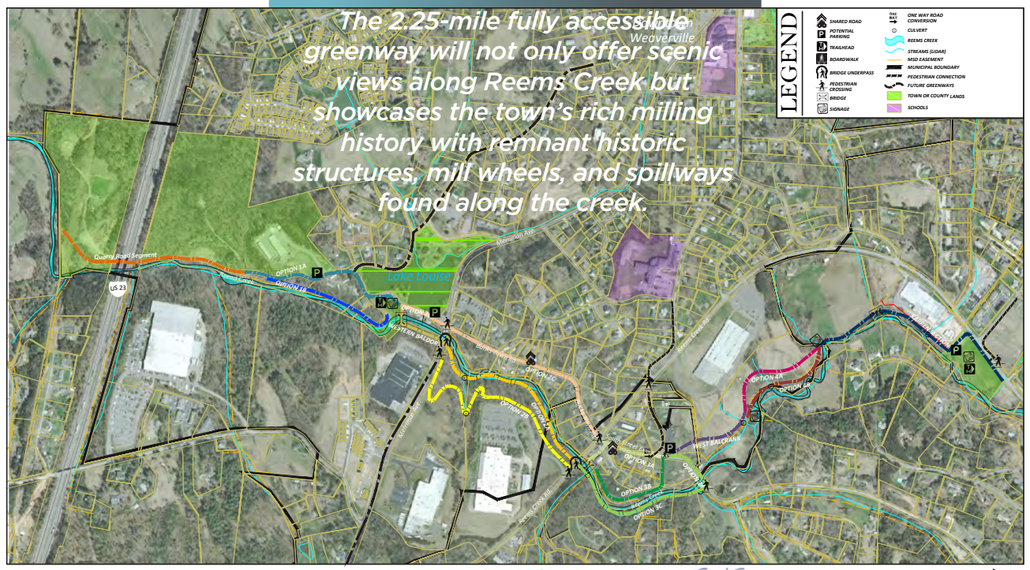
Activities & Deliverables

The key activities for this project include:

1. Identify properties that could be used as "pocket parks" or larger passive or active recreational uses.
2. Evaluate areas adjacent to existing parks that would be good candidates for expansion or enhancement.
3. Evaluate potential trail/walkway connections between parks in addition to regional trails and facilities (such as the proposed Reems Creek Greenway system).
4. Evaluate activity programming opportunities for community connection among specific groups and across all groups in existing and expanded parks.

Implementation Considerations

In addition to the key activities and deliverables identified for this project, the town will pursue community engagement as the "hard" details of the system are identified. Community engagement will focus on park redesign, park programmatic issues, and if significant structural improvements are required, construction issues.



The 2.25-mile fully accessible greenway will not only offer scenic views along Reems Creek but showcases the town's rich milling history with remnant historic structures, mill wheels, and spillways found along the creek.

REEMS CREEK GREENWAY | *Balcrank Property* |
CONCEPTUAL PLAN

Project Sponsor:
Town of Weaverville

Project Lead:
Town of Weaverville

Partners:
Parks and open space expansion provides opportunities for parterning with multiple groups, including:

- Arts organizations (public art)
- Economic Development (visitor promotions)
- Outdoor Recreationists
- Environmental Groups
- Buncombe County
- Town of Woodfin
- State and Federal Agencies may provide funding resources.

Weaverville

First Responder Mental Health

Provide a comprehensive mental health program specifically designed for Town of Weaverville first responders dealing with on-the-job trauma

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ Low	Medium

Category:
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Purpose

In their day-to day jobs, first responders (law enforcement, firefighter/ emergency medical technicians, and critical infrastructure repair) often face traumatic situations—sometimes literally life and death situations. In disaster response, that traumatic situation is frequently much greater. Reports are common of first responders seeking and/or continuing counseling services for a year or more after a disaster. Even in the absence of a disaster, emergency-related trauma can accumulate and take a serious toll on responder mental health.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

This project would include evaluating and implementing programs to create opportunities for and encourage use of easily accessed, and stigma–free mental health services. These services could include individual counseling sessions and/or group therapy sessions. It could also encourage peer-to-peer outreach, and could facilitate "matching" services for peer-to-peer contact. The benefit of this program is to reduce mental health crises among first responders, allowing greater personal mental health and job productivity.

Rates of PTSD and depression for firefighters and police officers are as much as five times greater than for the general population.

Activities & Deliverables

This project would entail the following key activities:

1. Conduct a full review of existing programs available to publicly employed first responders with the intent of identifying strengths and areas of needed improvement.
2. Identify potential providers of mental health services, including non-profit and private providers.
3. Reach out to all first responders to identify needs and desired services, including first responder input on how these services can assist them with their mental health and in their job performance.
4. Issue a Request For Proposal for services, or if an existing public provider is available that meets the identified program needs, enter into a Memorandum of Agreement for services.

Implementation Considerations

It is critical to reach out to potential participants to understand their needs and how best to meet them. There are likely similar programs elsewhere that can be instructive to Weaverville in establishing its program. It is important to incorporate input from employee groups. Mental health services are deeply private and can be sensitive. Maintaining this sensitivity in identifying approaches and solutions will be necessary to ensure the success of the program to address the potentially more complex needs of first responders.



Project Sponsor:
Town of Weaverville

Project Lead:
Town of Weaverville

Partners:

- Buncombe County Health Department
- Private and Nonprofit Mental Health Providers
- Insurance Companies
- The Federal Department of Health and Human Services
- The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
- Employee representatives

Local Business Support

Support arts recovery through the provision of gallery, workshop, and office space, and the creation of a tool lending-library.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
High	$$$ Medium	Long-term

Category:
ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

Purpose

Weaverville experienced economic losses, as did many jurisdictions throughout the state. This project is designed to support local recovery and growth through multiple efforts to promote local entrepreneurs and business start-ups. Three areas are emphasized in this project, including Arts Recovery, creation or expansion of co-working spaces, and creation of a Tool Library and Maker Space.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

These projects are designed to boost local economic growth in Weaverville. In general, they focus on providing opportunities and locations for local entrepreneurs to develop businesses from the ground up. The projects will support the arts, and small business start-ups.

Activities & Deliverables

1. Arts Recovery. Support private efforts at a former industrial site on Reems Creek Road to provide art studios and galleries for displaced artists.
2. Co-Working Space. Support private efforts to provide co-working spaces where businesses can share office space, equipment and administrative tools, or need parttime support services and equipment.
3. Tool Library and Maker Space. Support private efforts to establish a tool library and/or facility for the community to access woodworking and other equipment for repair or improvement projects. This space may also support business start-ups that are not yet fully equiped.



Implementation Considerations

These three activity areas will be interconnected with non-profit, and private entities in Weaverville and Buncombe County to support regional economic development efforts:

1. Arts Recovery will provide cultural growth for Weaverville residents and visitors:
   - Develop a framework and strategy to support outreach to interested artists and arts organizations.
   - Identify information sources to publicize the existence of the facility and the various users.
   - Explore the creation of programs that can provide advertising and/or economic support for the arts.
2. Co-Working Space.
   - Identify an appropriate site for a facility.
   - Identify funding for the inital site acquisition.
   - Prepare a business plan for developing, publicizing and managing the space.
3. Tool Library and Maker Space.
   - Identify a site for the facility.
   - Identify funding for acquisition of tools for lending, and larger equipment for local community makers and entrepreneurs to use.
   - Prepare a business plan for developing, publicizing, and managing the space.

Weaverville's arts and crafts legacy is carried on by the Weaverville Art Safari, one of Western North Carolina's longest-running studio tours.

Project Sponsor:
Town of Weaverville

Project Lead:
Town of Weaverville and private and non-profit partners.

Partners:
- Weaverville Business Association
- Arts Organizations
- The Chamber of Commerce in addition to other business groups
- Buncombe County Economic Development
- The NCWorks Career Center

Weaverville

Main Street Nature Park Stormwater & Streambank Restabilization Project

Repair the streambanks in the Main Street Nature Park to restore and upgrade stormwater control measures damaged during Tropical Storm Helene.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Low	$$$ Medium	Short-term

Category:
ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCE

Purpose

Main Street Nature Park, encompassing 10 acres, is located in downtown Weaverville and open to the public daily. The park has a walking trail, where dogs are permitted on leash. The park serves as a demonstration area for natural habitats for Western North Carolina flora and fauna. This project will focus on repairing the streambank that was damaged by flooding from Tropical Storm Helene. It will also repair and upgrade stormwater control measures in the park, which were damaged by Helene.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

Main Street Nature Park is a tranquil and peaceful park with a stream and walking trails in the heart of Weaverville. The flooding caused major erosion and streambank scouring that not only is unsightly but also contributes to increased erosion and degraded water quality. Walking trails in the park were also damaged, but this project is specifically referencing the streambank stabilization and stormwater management improvements.

The Main Street Nature Park hosts the Second Saturday Summer Concert Series at its meadow stage during the warmer months. This combination of environmental education and community entertainment makes it a truly unique and engaging space for residents and visitors alike.

Activities & Deliverables

This project will likely require specialized contractors. Prior to issuing a Request for Proposal from contractors, the Town should conduct and document an in-house damage assessment. This will better inform proposals and should support better defined submittals. Mitigation for streambank erosion may include vegetation plantings and armoring with rock. Stormwater management repairs will be sensitive to the natural environment in the park.

Implementation Considerations

The Main Street Nature Park is one of two significant parks located in Weaverville (Lake Louise Park being the other). Repairs to the park will likely be closely watched by the community, and the Town will make a point of assuring good information about the project is available to the community. Local groups and individuals could be solicited for volunteer support for the project to obtain better community participation and offset some expenses from a contractor.



Project Sponsor:
Town of Weaverville

Project Lead:
Town of Weaverville and Private and Non-Profit Partners

Partners:
- N.C. Department of Water Resources
- Land and Water Conservation Fund (Federal)
- Foundations
- Community Organizations

Property Buyout

Implement a property acquisition program for flood-damaged property located in high-hazard areas and convert land to uses suitable for future flood mitigation and control.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ Medium	Short-term

Category:
ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCE

Purpose

As with all municipalities in Buncombe County, Weaverville suffered catastrophic flooding from Helene. Some property improvements located in the flood zone were destroyed by the floods. This project is to identify those properties and seek funding to acquire the property and convert it to open space. Property owners would be compensated for the property.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

This project allows for acquisition of properties located in the flood zone of waterways that were destroyed. It also provides the property owner the opportunity to relocate to a non-hazard area. Finally, the program allows the Town to reduce the potential damage to private property, while increasing public open space that will be more resilient to high-water incursions.

13.1% of all properties in the area are at risk of flooding in the next 30 years (firststreet.org)

Activities & Deliverables

In order to implement a buy-out program, the Town will need to take the following general steps:

1. Identify properties condemned from Helene damage, particularly those located in the flood zone.
2. Collect information on the property (i.e. owner, estimated value, status on whether the owner has pursued buyout directly with FEMA) and consider potential re-use scenarios.
3. Apply to FEMA and the state of North Carolina for hazard mitigation funding eligible for acquisition of properties in hazard areas (typically Hazard Mitigation Grant Program - HMGP).
4. Implement the property acquisition(s).
5. Demolish any remaining structures and convert the land to open space or other approved floodplain use.

Implementation Considerations

This project creates several public benefits to both the property owners and the public. Property owners are relocated out of potentially hazardous locations, which are in turn converted to passive recreation and open space providing additional amenities to the community. The Town should publicize the program and seek community engagement on reuse scenarios.



Project Sponsor:
Town of Weaverville

Project Lead:
Town of Weaverville and Private and Non-Profit Partners

Partners:
- N.C. Emergency Management
- Public Agencies such as the National Parks Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program
- Open Space Oriented Nonprofit Organizations

Public Communication & Notification

Evaluate post-disaster lessons learned and plan to implement best practices for emergency communications and warning systems throughout Weaverville.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ Medium	Short-term

Category:
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Purpose

Weaverville had difficulty with emergency communications during and after the storm. Landlines were lost and public notifications were seriously compromised. This project has two parts to help address these identified issues: to identify and implement a reliable radio communication system that does not utilize landlines, and to implement a community-wide notification system for emergencies and for recovery information.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

This project is designed to initiate and implement a comprehensive evaluation of disaster communications. It should include early warning systems, on-going communications during the event(s) and post-disaster recovery-related community communication. Various types of communications will be evaluated, such as radio, online sources, and community-based networks.

Weaverville utilizes the CodeRED emergency notification system to send alerts to residents.

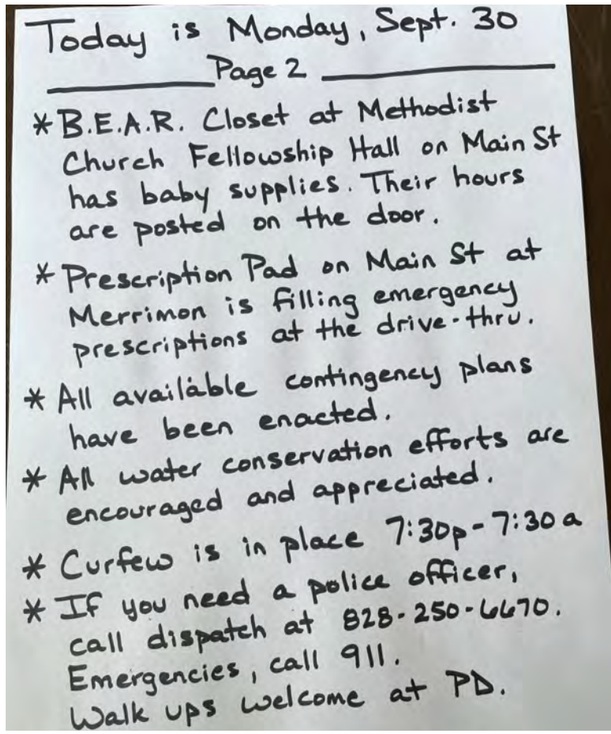
Activities & Deliverables

Develop a detailed plan for the project, including the following steps:

1. Conduct an "after action" review of positives and negatives from the Helene response.
2. Identify and prioritize projects for implementation.
3. Conduct outreach to other agencies for recommended best practices.
4. Conduct outreach to community partners, such as churches, business organizations, nonprofit agencies, health providers and others.
5. Identify significant budget needs.
6. Seek funding as necessary, including potential grants for emergency preparedness equipment.

Implementation Considerations

Disaster communications (before, during and post-disaster) rely on multiple agencies, as well as private and nonprofit entities. This project addresses formal disaster preparedness and response issues, and also includes overall formal and informal communications within the community. This project should be closely coordinated with the public WiFi project in this plan. It should be well publicized in Weaverville to assure broad community knowledge exists.



Project Sponsor:
Town of Weaverville

Project Lead:
Town of Weaverville

Partners:

- North Carolina Department of Emergency Management
- Law Enforcement
- Fire Departments
- Health Departments
- All First Responder Agencies

Public WiFi & Community Engagement

Expand Weaverville's public WiFi system to support future emergency communications and promote community engagement.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ Medium	Medium

Category:
COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Purpose

Weaverville has a public WiFi system supported by the Town. This project will evaluate the existing system and determine optimal ways to expand it, particularly relating to accessibility during disasters. The town is also seeking to promote opportunities for various groups in Weaverville to connect and improve communications and general "interconnectedness" among community members. The project will seek to identify ways for Weaverville to expand community outreach, and thus, engagement.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

Making specific steps to provide a more resilient WiFi system will increase its availability during storm events and future disasters. Public WiFi provides residents and visitors easy access to WiFi, which has effectively become a basic need. Free access to WiFi is also a way for low-income people and people who are house-ridden to stay in contact with others in the community and to have easy access to emergency services, particularly when other services are down. Finally, free WiFi provides the Town a vehicle for public outreach in various ways beyond simply broadcasting Town Council meetings.

The Town of Weaverville offers free public WiFi in downtown Weaverville, covering the area from Town Hall up to The Yellow Mug, as well as in Lake Louise Park and the Main Street Nature Park

Activities & Deliverables

Key activities and deliverables include:

1. Assess existing system, focusing on coverage, strength of signal, and vulnerability to disasters.
2. Determine alternative techniques to "harden" the system's broadcast capabilities, including the ability to survive damaging conditions, and expanding strength of signal and general coverage throughout the Town limits of Weaverville.
3. Determine the best approach to expand and strengthen the system.
4. Determine how to implement the project.
5. Concurrently, evaluate community-driven programs to expand outreach by existing groups, such as churches, care providers, and senior service agencies to encourage the community and become more enagaged in town issues and other issues of public interest.

Implementation Considerations

While emergency preparedness and response are core reasons to pursue the project, there is an additional core value in this project to promote and encourage the community to be more connected and engaged. This will support individual welfare and enhance Weaverville's ability to be a stronger and tightly knit community. Along with the key activities and deliverables identified for this project, the Town will pursue community engagement as the "hard" details of the system are identified. Community engagement will focus on programmatic issues, and if significant structural improvements are required, construction issues.



Project Sponsor:
Town of Weaverville

Project Lead:
Town of Weaverville

Partners:

- Emergency Managers
- First Responders
- Community-Based Organizations that will work directly with the town and its Information Technology staff
- Other Organizations to improve Communications

Weaverville

Resilience Hub

Develop a network of community locations to serve as emergency shelters, resource storage, and information sharing sites in time of community-wide emergencies.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ Low	Short-term

Category:
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Purpose

A Resilience Hub is a facility that will enhance the community's ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters. They serve as gathering places, resource distribution centers, and communication hubs, to strengthen communities both in everyday situations and during emergencies. The Hub can serve as a shelter, a distribution center for food and other needs and a central location for critical health and communication needs.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

This project would evaluate facilities that can also serve as multi-use centers. These facilities could meet multiple community needs and be almost instantly converted to serve as a disaster response hub when the need demands. Community Centers, places of worship, civic organizations, and public buildings could all provide these multiple functions. Ideally, critical disaster response needs could be stored onsite for immediate use once a disaster strikes. If onsite storge of supplies and materials is not feasible, a central warehouse of "ready-to-go" equipment and supplies should be accessible.

Resilience Hubs prioritize community needs, empower local leadership, and offer a sustainable pathway towards a more resilient future.

Activities & Deliverables

This project would entail the following key activities:

1. Evaluate all publicly owned facilities in Weaverville, with emphasis on town-owned facilities, to determine their suitability to serve as a resilience hub.
2. Evaluate privately-owned facilities for suitability, and if suitable, enter into conversations with owners about the potential use:
3. Develop a list of facilities that can be identified as suitable, including strengths and weaknesses.
4. Determine appropriate levels of supplies and equipment for each facility, recognizing they will likely vary significantly by facility.
5. Initiate a program to acquire and store needed supplies and equipment.
6. Develop a public information campaign to identify the program, assure broad public understanding and that the location of each designated Resilience Hub is well known.

Implementation Considerations

Resilience Hubs will take on an oversized level of importance when disaster strikes the next time in Weaverville. As noted, the entire community should be encouraged to participate in this project. Community engagement and outreach should be central to its implementation. The broader the designation as a Resilience Hub is known in the community the better. It is also a very positive feature if the center is used as a community center for other activities in "normal times." This use would ensure broader knowledge with the Hub, and a comfort level of being there—in good and in difficult times.



Project Sponsor:
Town of Weaverville

Project Lead:
Town of Weaverville

Partners:

- The entire community should be encouraged to partner in this project
- Other partners include Buncombe County Emergency Management
- Health Care Providers
- Nonprofit Agencies
- Churches
- Other community-based organizations can all be important partners

Weaverville

Street & Sidewalk Evaluation & Repair

Create an inventory of streets and sidewalks in Weaverville with implementation of upgrades and improvements as necessary to provide greater resiliency against future disasters.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Low	$$$ High	Medium

Category:
INFRASTRUCTURE RESILIENCE

Purpose

Some streets in Weaverville were impacted by the storm, both by flooding and landslides in the municipality. This project will conduct an inventory of streets that experienced or have the future potential to experience flood and landslide damages. The study will focus on those streets to determine if they can be cost-effectively redesigned to reduce the potential of future storm damages. Concurrently, the Town will look at sidewalks in Weaverville and conduct an inventory of inadequate or missing sidewalks that can be built or repaired to create a more effective pedestrian network for Weaverville.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

A fundamental function of town government is to provide safe and effective infrastructure. Transportation networks, such as streets and sidewalks, are core parts of Weaverville's infrastructure. This project will be focused on making streets and sidewalks safer and more effective, while also making them more resilient in future storm events. This will make recovery from future events easier, while improving quality of life for Weaverville's residents and visitors on a daily basis.

Activities & Deliverables

This project includes inventorying and designing repairs and improvements to Weaverville's transportation network. These following steps will generally describe the activities that are necessary for the street and sidewalk evaluation/ improvement project, and are the same general activities as described in the water system improvement projects (some activities may be concurrent, and not necessarily linear.)

1. Identify the general parameters of each project.
2. Initiate a design process, either through in-house design professionals, or through engineering design contractors.
3. If contractors will be used, prepare a Request for Proposals (RFP) for design services and conduct a selection process for the selected firm(s).
4. Prepare budget–level cost estimates and obtain approval for the budget from the Town Council.
5. Initiate and complete project construction.

Implementation Considerations

Street and sidewalk improvement projects sometimes impact local circulation and property access. It is important to make sure that members of the public that are impacted by critical design and construction projects, be well-informed before the project is initiated.

Weaverville has developed a Walking Map illustrating its sidewalk system, connecting pedestrians to downtown, the Main Street Nature Park, Lake Louise Park, and the future Reems Creek Greenway.



Project Sponsor:
Town of Weaverville

Project Lead:
Town of Weaverville

Partners:
- Most of the partners for this project will be staff, residents, visitors and businesses in Weaverville

Urban Canopy Inventory & Enhancement

Create a tree inventory and a long-term strategy to enhance and protect the tree canopy on public land in Weaverville.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Low	Low	Short-term

Category:
ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCE

Purpose

The wind, flooding, and landslides resulting from Helene caused significant damage to Weaverville's trees. This project looks to replace the trees, and improve tree planting to enhance the overall urban canopy in town. An adjunct component of this project is to obtain a certified arborist to identify and assess the health of the trees on property owned by the town.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

It has been well-documented that trees in urban areas provide many benefits, both environmental and economic. Tree leaves and needles collect water from rain and fog, often supporting groundwater sources. Water hits the ground at a much slower rate, thus allowing more infiltration and less stormwater runoff. Trees also produce shade and provide measurable cooling to adjacent areas. Areas with a strong urban tree canopy also benefit from higher real estate values, as has been documented in multiple studies of real estate transactions throughout the country.

The Town of Weaverville has been recognized for nearly 30 years as a Tree City USA by the Arbor Day Foundation.

Activities & Deliverables

Tree canopy inventory and enhancement is relatively straightforward. The following key activities include:

1. Identify the scope of need for the project by conducting a detailed inventory by a certified arborist.
2. Identify needs throughout the Town and also on Town-owned properties.
3. Develop a strategy and budget for Town-owned property and a program to encourage tree planting on privately-owned property.

Implementation Considerations

The Town can be a coordinator of these efforts on properties not owned by the town. This could include enlisting local partners and providing information on national programs and funding sources. The Town should manage the efforts on town-owned properties.



Project Sponsor:
Town of Weaverville

Project Lead:
Town of Weaverville and Private and Non-Profit Partners

Partners:

- National organizations, including but not limited to: the Arbor Day Foundation, National Forest Foundation, One Tree Planted and TreePeople
- Federal sources include USDA Reforestation Project Programs, Urban and Community Forestry Program and Emergency Forest Restoration Program
- Grant funding has been obtained from Truist Bank in conjunction with the Arbor Day Foundation for these components
- Local Support can also be encouraged through Community and Nonprofit Groups

Weaverville

Water System Interconnection Project

Connect the Weaverville water distribution system to the systems in the City of Asheville and Woodfin Water District to create emergency redundancies for greater resiliency in all three systems during emergencies.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ Medium	Medium

Category:
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Purpose

The Town of Weaverville has an independent public water supply and distribution system, as do the City of Asheville and Woodfin Water District. During Helene, all three of these jurisdictions experienced significant water supply and distribution issues. The Town of Weaverville believes that with some physical infrastructure modifications (interconnecting the three systems) all three systems would have much-needed system redundancy, which does not now exist.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

The project to interconnect the three water systems would provide a back-up water supply. In the case of catastrophic failure of a water treatment plant and/or major transmission line, the ability to get the system back on-line would be significantly enhanced, and thus a shorter timeframe for restoring operations would be available.

Weaverville's primary source of water is the Ivy River, with a watershed above the intake covering a 112 square mile drainage area.

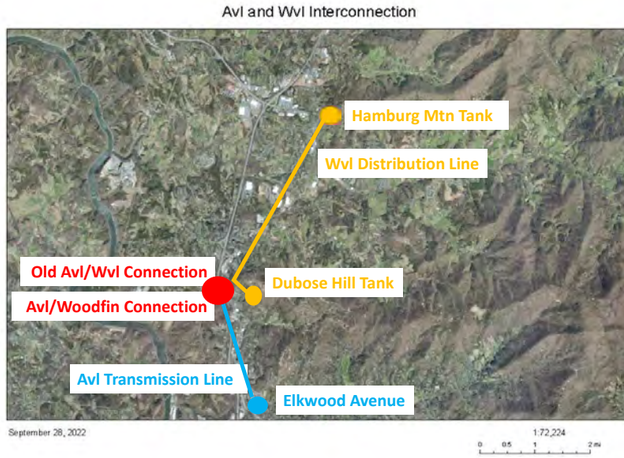
Activities & Deliverables

Implementing this project will require close coordination, planning, and engineering between the three jurisdictions. Key steps include the following:

1. Initiate discussions between the three water providers, addressing areas of mutual agreement and concerns.
2. Identify a course of action for project design and construction, including initial cost estimates.
3. Negotiate an agreement between the jurisdictions on the project, including cost-sharing, water purchase agreements, and design implications.
4. Retain design professionals and initiate design, including final cost estimates.
5. Identify construction funding and construct improvements.

Implementation Considerations

All three water supply and transmission systems would require infrastructure modifications to create the interconnections. However, all systems have components that are close together, and the new infrastructure to cross-connect is not anticipated to be extensive. It would be necessary to coordinate, plan, and design the infrastructure. It would also be necessary to negotiate emergency water purchase agreements with partners that would be well-defined and in place before any disaster happens.



Project Sponsor:
Town of Weaverville

Partners:
- The Town of Weaverville, Woodfin Water District, and the City of Asheville.

Project Lead:
Town of Weaverville

Weaverville Water System Improvements

Upgrade water lines and install backup generators at critical water facilities to provide power to the water distribution system during times of emergencies.

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ High	Medium

Category:
INFRASTRUCTURE RESILIENCE

Purpose

Helene impacted Weaverville's water system in ways similar to water providers throughout Western North Carolina. This has caused needs to significantly repair and upgrade the system. This project outlines several water system improvements for Weaverville. They include: 1) Purchase and install a generator at High Bluff water tank; 2) Install generator at WTP Raw Water Intake; 3) Install generator at the Water Treatment Plant as part of the proposed expansion project; 4) Design and install a second main water line crossing Reems Creek for system redundancy; and 5) Replace old and undersized waterlines at various locations in the water system.

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

While Helene caused untold damages to Weaverville's infrastructure, it also provided the opportunity to take a hard look and evaluate existing systems. This evaluation has demonstrated these projects as necessary repairs while also providing the opportunity to upgrade and modernize other system components.

Weaverville currently has the capacity to treat 1.5 million gallons per day (MGD), with upgrades, it could treat up to 3 million gallons per day.

Activities & Deliverables

These projects include infrastructure and physical improvements to the water system. The following steps will generally describe the activities that are necessary for all five system improvements (some activities may be concurrent, and not necessarily linear);

1. Identify the general parameters of each project.
2. Initiate a design process, through engineering design contractors.
3. If contractors will be used, prepare a Request for Proposals (RFP) for design services and conduct a selection process for the selected firm(s).
4. Prepare budget level cost estimates and obtain approval for the budget from the Town Council.
5. Initiate and complete project construction.

Implementation Considerations

In addition to the specific steps outlined in "Key Activities/Deliverables," it is important to assure the residents of Weaverville are fully informed about the upgrades to the community water system. Outreach could be by status reports at Town Council meetings, public information such as press releases to local media organizations, or informational postings on the Town's website.



Project Sponsor:
Town of Weaverville

Project Lead:
Town of Weaverville Water Department

Partners:
While some portions of the costs of these projects will be borne by ratepayers, grant funding has been secured for some of these projects. Potential partners include:

- Environmental Protection Agency
- NCGA Direct Appropriation
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- FEMA Hazard Mitigation
- Economic Development

TOWN OF WOODFIN

VISION

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



9.2
SQ MILES

7,936
POPULATION

43.9
MEDIAN AGE

$62,759
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

$326,600
MEDIAN HOME PRICE

$1,408
MEDIAN RENT

GOVERNMENT PROFILE

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

KEY SERVICES

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

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

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

Affordable Housing

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

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ Medium	Long-term

Alignment with Woodfin Comprehensive Plan:

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

Purpose

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

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

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

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

Activities & Deliverables

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



Implementation Considerations

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

Project Sponsor:
Town of Woodfin

Project Lead:
City of Woodfin Planning Department

Partners:

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

Disaster Partnership Planning

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

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ Medium	Medium

Alignment with Woodfin Comprehensive Plan:

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

Purpose

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

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

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

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

Activities & Deliverables

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

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

Implementation Considerations

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



Project Sponsor:
Town of Woodfin

Project Lead:
City of Woodfin Administrative Staff/ Police Department

Partners:

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

Town of Woodfin

Economic Infrastructure Support

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

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	Medium	Medium

Purpose

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



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

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

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

Activities & Deliverables

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

Implementation Considerations

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

Alignment with Woodfin Comprehensive Plan:

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

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

Project Sponsor:
Town of Woodfin

Project Lead:
Town of Woodfin Administrative Staff

Partners:

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

Town of Woodfin

Emergency Communications Plan

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

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ Medium	Short-term

Alignment with Woodfin Comprehensive Plan:

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

Purpose

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

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

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

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



Activities & Deliverables

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

Implementation Considerations

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

Project Sponsor:
Town of Woodfin

Project Lead:
City of Woodfin Administrative Staff/Police Department

Partners:

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

Green Infrastructure

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

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	Medium	Medium

Alignment with Woodfin Comprehensive Plan:

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

Purpose

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

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

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

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

Activities & Deliverables

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

Implementation Considerations

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





Project Sponsor:
Town of Woodfin

Project Lead:
Town of Woodfin Administrative Staff/ Planning Department

Partners:

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

Green Space Development

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

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ Medium	Medium

Purpose

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

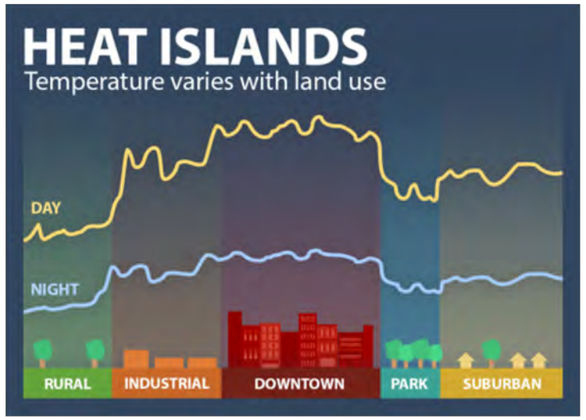
Benefits & Intended Outcomes

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

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

Activities & Deliverables

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



Alignment with Woodfin Comprehensive Plan:

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

Implementation Considerations

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

Project Sponsor:
Town of Woodfin

Project Lead:
Town of Woodfin Administrative Staff/ Planning Department

Partners:

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

Multi-modal Connectivity

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

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ Medium	Long-term

Purpose

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

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

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

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

Activities & Deliverables

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

Implementation Considerations

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

Alignment with Woodfin Comprehensive Plan:

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



Project Sponsor:
Town of Woodfin

Project Lead:
Town of Woodfin Planning Department

Partners:

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

Town of Woodfin

Public-Private Partnerships

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

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	Low	Short

Alignment with Woodfin Comprehensive Plan:

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

Purpose

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

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

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

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



Activities & Deliverables

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

Implementation Considerations

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

Project Sponsor:
Town of Woodfin

Project Lead:
Town of Woodfin
Administrative Staff

Partners:

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

Resilience Hubs

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

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	Medium	Medium

Purpose

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



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

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

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

Activities & Deliverables

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

Alignment with Woodfin Comprehensive Plan:

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

Implementation Considerations

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

Project Sponsor:
Town of Woodfin

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

Partners:

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

Riverfront Park Restoration

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

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	Medium	Medium

Alignment with Woodfin Comprehensive Plan:

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

Purpose

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

Silver-Line Park

Before Helene



After Helene



Benefits & Intended Outcomes

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

Activities & Deliverables

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

Implementation Considerations

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

Project Sponsor:
Town of Woodfin

Project Lead:
Town of Woodfin Administrative Staff/Public Works

Partners:

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

Town of Woodfin

Riverfront Resilience Plan

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

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	Medium	Medium

Alignment with Woodfin Comprehensive Plan:

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

Purpose

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

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

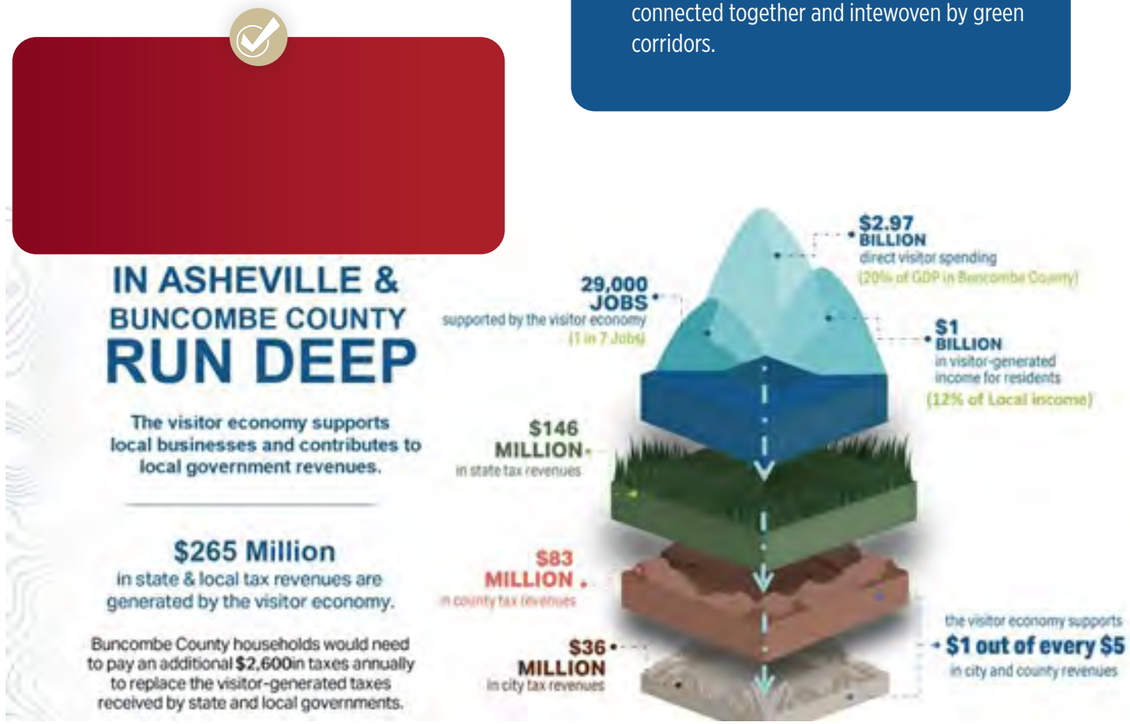
- Increased tourism and outdoor recreation activity, leading to economic growth.
- A well-defined, actionable plan for riverfront resilience to mitigate flood risks and environmental impacts.
- Enhanced community engagement and pride in the riverfront area.
- Improved ecological health and sustainability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

Activities & Deliverables

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

Implementation Considerations

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



Project Sponsor:
Town of Woodfin

Project Lead:
Town of Woodfin Administrative Staff/ Public Works

Partners:

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

Town of Woodfin

Stream & Riverbank Restoration

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

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	Medium	Medium

Alignment with Woodfin Comprehensive Plan:

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

Purpose

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



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

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

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

Activities & Deliverables

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

Implementation Considerations

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

Project Sponsor:
Town of Woodfin

Project Lead:
Town of Woodfin Administrative Staff/Public Works

Partners:

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

Town of Woodfin

Tree Canopy Enhancement

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

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ Medium	Short-term

Purpose

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

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

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

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

Activities & Deliverables

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



Alignment with Woodfin Comprehensive Plan:

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

Implementation Considerations

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

Project Sponsor:
Town of Woodfin

Project Lead:
Town of Woodfin Administrative Staff/Public Works

Partners:

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

Unified Development Ordinance Updates

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

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	Medium	Medium

Purpose

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

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

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

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

Activities & Deliverables

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

Implementation Considerations

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

Alignment with Woodfin Comprehensive Plan:

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

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

Project Sponsor:
Town of Woodfin

Project Lead:
Town of Woodfin Planning & Police Departments

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

Vulnerability Data

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

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ Medium	Medium

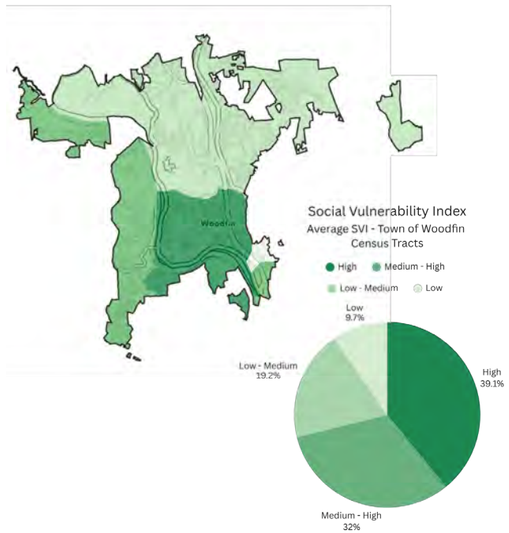
Purpose

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

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

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

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



Activities & Deliverables

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

Alignment with Woodfin Comprehensive Plan:

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

Implementation Considerations

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

Project Sponsor:
Town of Woodfin

Project Lead:
City of Woodfin Public Works/ Planning Department

Partners:

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

Weaverville Road Flood Mitigation

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

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	$$$ Medium	Medium

Alignment with Woodfin Comprehensive Plan:

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

Purpose

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

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

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

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

Activities & Deliverables

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

Implementation Considerations

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

Section of Weaverville Rd.



Before Helene | After Helene

Project Sponsor:
Town of Woodfin

Project Lead:
Town of Woodfin Administrative Staff/Public Works

Partners:

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

Wildfire and Flash Flood Risk Awareness Program

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

Complexity	Cost	Timing
Medium	Medium	Medium

Alignment with Woodfin Comprehensive Plan:

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

Purpose

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



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

Benefits & Intended Outcomes

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



Activities & Deliverables

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

Implementation Considerations

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

Project Sponsor:
Town of Woodfin

Project Lead:
Town of Woodfin Administrative Staff

Partners:

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

8 MOVING FORWARD



Volunteers for TEAM Buncombe coming together to support a community event.

PARTNERING FOR RECOVERY

This recovery plan has been prepared in partnership between Buncombe County Government and the six municipalities in the county: City of Asheville. Town of Biltmore Forest, Town of Black Mountain, Town of Montreat, Town of Weaverville, and Town of Woodfin. Each entity will pursue project implementation at its own pace and approach the project in a manner that best meet its needs. There are, however, common factors that should be considered as projects are better defined and pursued. These factors are discussed below.



The Blue Ridge Mountains are a constant backdrop during all seasons of change.

Establish an Implementation Strategy

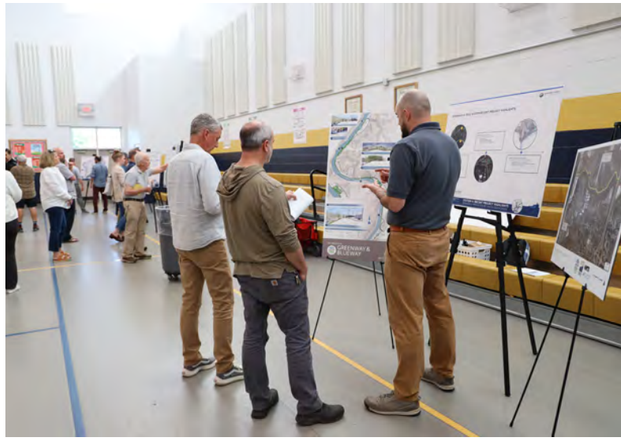
Projects should be implemented using best practices for project management. This includes developing a clear scope and defining tasks, milestones, roles and responsibilities, timelines, and resources. Following these practices will enable jurisdictions to carry out projects in an organized and efficient way.

View the Plan as a Living Document

The project list should be reviewed and discussed by local government staff and governing bodies on a regular basis. Updates and changes to projects should be expected. This may impact timing, funding, and the overall priority of the project. Additionally, new projects or approaches may be identified that may cause changes to, or replacement of, an existing project. This is typical and to be expected.

Engage the Community

The community should be kept engaged and informed about the progress on the identified projects in the Recovery Plan and related activities. When projects are initiated, the key steps in the project should be addressed in advance, and for certain projects, public engagement will be a critical component for the project design and, ultimately, its success. Tools such as a webpage, dashboards, progress reports, and regular news releases can be great ways to keep recovery in the forefront.



Community engagement is key to implementing new ideas and projects.

Leverage Connections

Projects will impact other activities that may not be directly related to the specific conceptual project in question. When further defining and designing a given project, impacts on previously identified activities should be discussed and carefully evaluated. There may be opportunities to have a much greater positive impact, or a way to avoid a negative impact, by considering these activities in greater detail and taking them into account for final project design.

Focus on Resilience

Recovery is a process that is expected to continue for years. Helene was a pivot point that will likely cause jurisdictions to consider fundamentally new approaches to disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. If financially feasible, jurisdictions should consider the following: Incorporating risk assessment and resilience-building into project design (e.g., climate risks, economic shifts); evaluating long-term sustainability; considering investment in internal capacity or partnering with external experts or organizations, coupled with staffing, training, or technical needs required to implement and sustain projects over time.

Maximize Funding

Identification of funding opportunities will be a vital component of the long-term recovery process. Projects may need multiple funding sources to be implemented, and each jurisdiction will need to develop a cohesive strategy to access funds throughout the process. This plan includes a matrix of potential funding opportunities that can be considered a starting point, but these opportunities will also change over time. Outside funding sources might include federal, state, and non-governmental sources (i.e. philanthropic entities).



Buncombe County is working to bring the communities together to reflect, reconnect, and rebuild.



A sunset glow on a river can be a reminder to stop and take time to reflect and reconnect.

Coordinate Locally

Just as the emergency response required community-wide action, recovery will likewise depend on community-led projects. In addition to initiatives led directly by county and municipal governments, many important Helene recovery efforts originate within the community itself. These projects are driven by residents, neighborhood associations, nonprofits, businesses, institutions, and other local partners who bring unique perspectives, energy, and capacity to address shared challenges. While local governments will not lead these efforts, we recognize their importance to the overall success of our community goals. Local government will act as a partner and supporter according to each organization's scope and authorities—helping to align resources, provide technical assistance when appropriate, and ensure that community-driven solutions are connected to broader local and regional priorities.

KEY COMMUNITY-LED INITIATIVES

Arts Recovery Plan: Creation of a roadmap for public-private partnerships to help rebuild arts and culture initiatives across the county, Led by ArtsAVL with partnership from groups including City of Asheville, Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority (BCTDA) of Buncombe County (aka "Explore Asheville)", and Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce & Economic Development.



Engaging in art is an important part of recovery for all ages.

Asheville Regional Coalition for Home Repair (ARCHR): Collaborative with organizations that provide home repairs and modification, led by Asheville Area Habitat for Humanity with support from groups including Community Action Opportunities, Mountain Housing Opportunities, and PODER Emma Community Ownership.

Beacon Village Park: Redevelopment on the site of the former Beacon Blanket Factory in Swannanoa to include a bike park, walking trail, event lawn, and residential and commercial uses, led by private developer Beacon Village with partnership from groups including Asheville-Buncombe Economic Development Coalition and Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority.

Climate Smart Communities: Initiative to support Swannanoa and Woodfin in building resilience after Helene through community-led planning, hazard assessments, and locally focused recovery efforts, led by Fernleaf with partnership from groups including Land of Sky Regional Council.

Futures Factory: Construction of a manufacturing hub for research, workforce training, and economic development led by Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College with partnership from groups including Biltmore Farms.



Finding ways to build resilience for emergency managment.



Climate smart infrastucture and communities is key to building resilience for future hazards.



Volunteer groups bring a wide range of skills and support to communities from hands on rebuilding to community events.

Long-Term Recovery Group (LTRG): Coalition of local nonprofits, faith-based organizations, government agencies, and volunteers united to coordinate county-wide disaster recovery through intentional collaboration. LTRG is led by United Way of Asheville and Buncombe County with partnership from groups including Asheville-Buncombe Community Christian Ministry, Asheville Area Habitat for Humanity, Catholic Charities Diocese of Charlotte, Consulta Tu Compa/Colaborativa La Milpa, Red Cross, Swannanoa Communities Together, Swannanoa Resilience Coordination Hub, and Western North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Unified River Arts District (URAD): Coalition of property owners, residents, business owners, and artists in Asheville's River Arts District who are focused on short-term reactivation, medium-term rebuilding, and long-term vision building in a way is balances the economy, environment, and creative spirit in the district. URAD led by RiverLink with partnership from groups including the River Arts District Business Association.



Communities and residents come together to develop more localized priorities and projects to rebuild together.



The iconic layers of the Blue Ridge Mountains—a part of one of the oldest mountain ranges—are known for their bluish haze and prominent peaks.

Coordinate Regionally

Regional Coordination is strongly encouraged in this plan, which itself takes a regional approach to recovery planning within Buncombe County. Key partners include:

LAND OF SKY REGIONAL COUNCIL	NORTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS	NORTH CAROLINA LEAGUE OF MUNICIPALITIES	STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENTS & DIVISIONS	MULTI-COUNTY & STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONS
A multi-county, local government, planning and development organization that serves Buncombe County along with Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania Counties and the jurisdictions therein.	Provides advocacy, education, research, and member services for North Carolina counties.	A member-driven organization representing the interests of cities and towns in the state.	Includes standing offices, such as Emergency Management and Commerce, as well as Helene-specific structures such as GrowNC and RenewNC.	Such as community colleges, economic development entities, food banks, housing consortiums, utility service providers and more.



A sign marker reminder to be kind, recovery takes time.

Acknowledge Recovery Takes Time

Disaster recovery is a long-term process due to the complexity of rebuilding homes and infrastructure, the time required to administer federal and state funding programs, and the need to align multiple partners and resources. These factors mean that full recovery is measured not in weeks or months, but often in many years. It is important to establish milestones to demonstrate the achievements made over time.

Celebrate Success

Develop a clear narrative about recovery progress and community renewal. Celebrate milestones and success stories to maintain momentum and community morale. Each jurisdiction should promote and carry out its projects in line with organizational values, such as fiscal or environmental sustainability, economic development, community physical and mental health, and more.

9 APPENDICES



1. Community Engagement Report

Contents

Background

In April of 2025, Buncombe County launched community engagement efforts, seeking insights from residents about the impacts of Tropical Storm Helene on their lives to help inform priorities for repairing this damage as county began developing projects to repair damage and move the community toward long-term recovery from this catastrophic event. This engagement was conducted in two rounds:

Round One: Public Input

The first round of engagement was conducted through a communitywide survey to gather public input on the Tropical Storm Helene Recovery Plan/ This survey, launched under the brand “Envision Buncombe” asked participants to (1) rank Strategic Plan focus areas by the degree to which they reflect recovery priorities, (2) select projects most important to repair and restore the community from the impacts of the storm, and (3) to share open-ended feedback about what they would like to see Buncombe County prioritize in these efforts.

Round Two: Public Comment/Feedback

Round two also took the form of a survey; this time, asking community members to react to draft Recovery projects informed by the priorities identified during round one surveying. This survey, titled “Envision Buncombe: A Path Forward” displayed projects developed by Buncombe County and the six incorporated government bodies therein, each designed specifically to address that jurisdiction’s unique recovery needs and scope of governance. Community members were invited to view all projects or focus on specific governments’ draft projects based on their place of residence. After each jurisdiction’s projects list, respondents were provided the chance to answer a single open-ended question, “Do you have any feedback you would like to share about the Recovery Plan projects?”

Round One: Public Input

Engagement Overview

Public Input Engagement Events

- Envision Buncombe engagement & surveying was conducted from April 10th – May 31st, 2025
- Engagement included 28 in-person events:
- Tabling at 12 community events & resource fairs
- Informational presentation facilitated with 11 community partners
- Presentation to 5 municipal districts:
  - » Weaverville Town Council
  - » Biltmore Forest Board of Commissioners
  - » Black Mountain Town Council
  - » Montreat Town Council
  - » Woodfin Town Council

In-person events were held in 13 distinct zip codes:

28701	28711
28757	28801
28806	28704
28715	28778
28803	28709
28730	28787
28804	

- Digital marketing campaign & online engagement opportunities were further promoted through social media, radio programming, and the Public Input Envision Buncombe website.

Participation

- 2,622 survey submissions
- Survey participation, by locality:
  - » Alexander 1%
  - » Arden 5%
  - » Barnardsville 2%
  - » Buncombe County – other 7%
  - » Candler 7%
  - » City of Asheville 35%
  - » Fairview 6%
  - » Fletcher 1%
  - » Leicester 6%
  - » Outside Buncombe County 2%
  - » Ridgecrest <1%
  - » Swannanoa 10%
  - » Town of Biltmore Forest 3%
  - » Town of Black Mountain 5%
  - » Town of Montreat 1%
  - » Town of Weaverville 6%
  - » Town of Woodfin 3%

Round One Survey Results

Question 1: "Please rank these topics based on which most strongly reflects your priorities or needs to fully recover from the impacts of Tropical Storm Helene."

The rankings below reflect average placement across all responses

1. Community Health (e.g. physical, emotional, environmental health)
2. Public Safety (e.g. public infrastructure safety, preparedness, resiliency)
3. Economic Development (e.g. employment, economic security)
4. Education (e.g. child, youth, family well-being)
5. Energy & Environment (e.g. environmental impacts, risk reduction)
6. Growth & development (e.g. housing, housing options)

Question 2: "Select your top 10 recovery priorities"

The percentages below reflect the percentage of all respondents who selected that category as one of their top 10 recovery priorities

1. Investing in infrastructure: water, roads, bridges, telecommunications – 74%
2. Disaster preparedness and resiliency investments – 55%
3. Wildfire prevention – 53%
4. Floodplain management – 49%
5. Restoring streambanks – 48%
6. Rebuilding parks – 47%
7. Preserving flood-prone property from development – 46%
8. Landslide stabilization – 46%
9. Building more affordable housing – 45%
10. Funding to promote food security in food deserts or vulnerable areas in the community – 45%
11. Replanting trees – 43%
12. Providing funding for small businesses – 39%
13. Investing in mental health services – 34%
14. Revitalizing business districts – 31%
15. Energy resilience – 30%
16. Job retraining or workforce development initiatives – 30%
17. Responding to student or youth homelessness – 29%
18. Support for childcare – 29%
19. Support for renters – 23%
20. Support for impact on the outdoor recreation industry – 22% Trauma-informed and mental health first aid-style trainings for community members – 21%
21. Efforts to understand and address storm impacts on well and septic systems – 20%
22. Investing in substance use disorder harm reduction and treatment – 17%
23. Addressing trauma for students – 14%
24. Investing in air safety monitoring and assurance activities – 11%
25. Other, open text box* – 5% (*see below for example responses*)
    - » Creek and waterway cleanup
    - » Support for arts infrastructure
    - » Repair roads and bridges to private homes
    - » Support for home repairs
    - » Funding for education systems, resources, and infrastructure
    - » Flood preparedness projects
    - » Invest in green infrastructure
    - » Support for farmers and agricultural recovery
    - » Revising environmental regulations for stormwater and flood zones to better meet public safety needs
    - » Support for convening residents to understand how these efforts interconnect as a complex system & eliminate siloing in planning
    - » Expedite permitting & construction approval processes
    - » Support for seniors
    - » Invest in public transportation systems and infrastructure
    - » Invest in community-centered/collaborative disaster response planning
    - » Forest restoration and preservation
    - » Protections for renters and private home buyers
    - » Economic incentives for business development and retention
    - » Efforts to harden and reduce vulnerability of water resources
    - » Continued cleanup of trash and debris
    - » Invest in green infrastructure
    - » Wildlife protection
    - » Increase the number and connectivity of greenways
    - » Homeowner assistance
    - » Support for unhoused individuals and those who use substances

Recovery Project Category Rankings, by Recovery Support Function / Strategic Plan Focus Area

Because the Envision Buncombe Survey was designed to inform content development of both the Helene Recovery Plan and the 2030 Strategic Plan, each of the recovery project categories from question 2 were analyzed to identify the Recovery Support Function (RSF) and Strategic Plan Focus Area to which they correlate most strongly. In the section below, RSFs are listed in **bold font,** *and Focus Areas are listed in* **<u>bold underline font</u>**

Economic Revitalization / <u>Economic Development</u>

- Providing funding for small businesses
- Revitalizing business districts
- Job retraining or workforce development initiatives
- Support for impact on the outdoor recreation industry

Health & Social Services / (1) Community Health, (2) Public Safety

- Funding to promote food security in food deserts or vulnerable areas in the community
- Investing in mental health services
- Responding to student or youth homelessness
- Support for childcare
- Trauma-informed and mental health first aid-style trainings for community members
- Efforts to understand and address storm impacts on well and septic systems
- Investing in substance use disorder harm reduction and treatment
- Addressing trauma for students
- Investing in air safety monitoring and assurance activities

Housing / Growth & Development

- Building more affordable housing
- Support for renters

Infrastructure / (1) Energy & Environment, (2) Growth & Development

- Investing in infrastructure: water, roads, bridges, telecommunications
- Disaster preparedness and resiliency investments
- Floodplain management
- Preserving flood-prone property from development
- Landslide stabilization
- Energy resilience

Natural & Cultural Resources / Energy & Environment

- Wildfire prevention
- Restoring stream banks
- Rebuilding parks
- Replanting trees

Question 3: "Please use this space to share any additional ideas you have for helping to repair Helene-related damage and increase our resilience to future events."

Major themes identified among open-ended survey responses:

- **A Need for Smart Recovery**: Calls for sustainable, climate-resilient rebuilding.
- **Access in Recovery**: Prioritization of vulnerable populations, especially low-income households and rural communities.
- **Rebuilding Trust and Communication**: Public dissatisfaction with the pace of aid and transparency from government entities.
- **Resilient Infrastructure and Affordable Housing**: Emphasis on the desire for secure, affordable homes that can withstand future disasters.

Themes identified among open-ended survey responses, by Recovery Support Function:

- Economic Revitalization
  - » A desire to diversify the economy beyond tourism with a focus on green jobs, trades, education, and local entrepreneurship
  - » Proposals to subsidize solar panels, generators, and other climate-resilient tools to support sustainable economic activity
  - » Focus on supporting local businesses, artisans, and small-scale agriculture.
  - » Desire for community-led economic planning
  - » Economic equity: more support for Black-owned and minority-owned businesses

- Health & Social Services [includes Education]
  - » Education services as integral to family and youth recovery
  - » Calls to integrate disaster preparedness, trauma awareness, and community resilience education into school and public programming
  - » Calls for expanded access to mental health services and trauma-informed care
  - » Addressing food insecurity through community-supported food systems
  - » Proposal to establish community resilience hubs for disaster response and social service coordination
  - » Requests for equitable access to shelters and public health resources, especially for low-income families, the elderly, and rural residents

- Housing
  - » Demand for permanent, affordable housing, especially for displaced families
  - » Worries about rising costs and displacement
  - » Emphasis on resilient housing design in line with updated floodplain standards

- Infrastructure
  - » Emphasis on floodplain restoration, resilient road systems, and burying power lines
  - » Improved stormwater and sewage systems to prevent future environmental crises
  - » Repeated requests for functional emergency alert systems, especially where cell/internet access fails.

- Natural & Cultural Resources
  - » Desire for cleanup and preservation of parks, waterways, and historic areas
  - » Cultural investment encouraged arts and outdoor recreation, both for recovery and long-term wellbeing
  - » Desire for more walkable, connected communities, including parks and greenways

Themes identified among open-ended survey responses, by Strategic Plan Focus Area:

Community Health

- Repeated concerns about mental health, trauma, and substance use post-Helene.
- Environmental health (cleaning waterways, debris removal)
- Food security and community food systems
- Requests for improved senior services and mobile health outreach, especially in rural areas.

Economic Development

- Push to diversify the economy beyond tourism: investments in local arts, agriculture, trades, and green jobs.
- Support for living wages, small business relief, and re-skilling for displaced workers
- Concerns about the cost of rebuilding for residents and business owners

Education

- A desire for investment in public schools, particularly in hard-hit areas
- Emphasis on teacher retention, student mental health, and year-round after-school programs.
- Requests for climate and disaster preparedness education in schools.

Energy & Environment

- Prioritization of flood mitigation, streambank restoration, and landslide stabilization
- Advocacy for hybrid vehicles, solar energy, and green infrastructure
- Concern over wildfire risk due to debris and tree loss; need for long-term environmental restoration plans.

Growth & Development

- Resistance to further construction in flood-prone or ecologically sensitive areas
- Calls for updated zoning and permitting processes to prioritize environmental resilience
- Demand for affordable housing

Public Safety

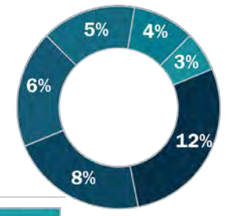
- System-wide calls for improved disaster communication systems (e.g., emergency sirens, printed contingency plans)
- Support for standardized emergency response training across departments
- Disaster preparedness and resilience planning
- Recognition of fire departments as central responders; suggestion to establish a county-wide fire department

Round One Survey Results, Disaggregated by Locality

The percentages in all tables in this section reflect the proportion of survey respondents from each locality who selected that category as one of their top 10 recovery priorities

City of Asheville

Participation overview:
778 individual responses
(35% of responses overall)



The percentages in this section reflect the proportion of survey respondents from each locality who selected that category as one of their top 10 recovery priorities

Recovery priorities:

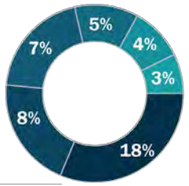
3% Responding to student or youth homelessness
3% Job retraining or workforce development initiatives
3% Revitalizing business districts
3% Support for renters
3% Support for Childcare
4% Energy resilience
4% Investing in mental health services
5% Providing funding for small businesses
5% Preserving flood-prone property from development
5% Floodplain management
5% Building more affordable housing
5% Funding to promote food security in food deserts or vulnerable areas in the community
5% Replanting trees
5% Wildfire prevention
5% Restoring streambanks
5% Rebuilding parks
6% Disaster preparedness and resiliency investments
8% Investing in infrastructure: water, roads, bridges, telecommunications

12% Other, including:

- Support for impact on the outdoor recreation industry
- Trauma-informed and mental health first aid-style trainings for community members
- Efforts to understand and address storm impacts on well and septic systems
- Investing in substance use disorder harm reduction and treatment
- Addressing trauma for students
- Investing in air safety monitoring and assurance activities
- Landslide stabilization

Barnardsville

Participation overview:
59 individual responses
(3% of responses overall)



The percentages in this section reflect the proportion of survey respondents from each locality who selected that category as one of their top 10 recovery priorities

Recovery priorities:

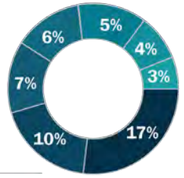
3% Job retraining or workforce development initiatives
3% Support for renters
3% Trauma-informed and mental health first aid-style trainings for community members
4% Energy resilience
4% Preserving flood-prone property from development
4% Floodplain management
4% Investing in mental health services
5% Building more affordable housing
5% Rebuilding parks
5% Landslide stabilization
5% Providing funding for small businesses
5% Disaster preparedness and resiliency investments
5% Replanting trees
7% Funding to promote food security in food deserts or vulnerable areas in the community
7% Wildfire prevention
7% Investing in infrastructure: water, roads, bridges, telecommunications
8% Restoring streambanks

18% Other, including:

- Support for impact on the outdoor recreation industry
- Revitalizing business districts
- Responding to student or youth homelessness
- Efforts to understand and address storm impacts on well and septic systems
- Investing in substance use disorder harm reduction and treatment
- Addressing trauma for students
- Investing in air safety monitoring and assurance activities
- Support for Childcare
- Open text box, individual comment

Town of Biltmore Forest

Participation overview:
59 individual responses
(3% of responses overall)



The percentages in this section reflect the proportion of survey respondents from each locality who selected that category as one of their top 10 recovery priorities

Recovery priorities:

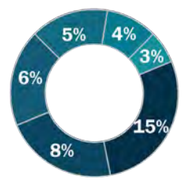
3% Building more affordable housing
3% Energy resilience
3% Support for impact on the outdoor recreation industry
4% Rebuilding parks
4% Landslide stabilization
4% Funding to promote food security in food deserts or vulnerable areas in the community
4% Providing funding for small businesses
5% Preserving flood-prone property from development
5% Job retraining or workforce development initiatives
6% Disaster preparedness and resiliency investments
6% Wildfire prevention
6% Restoring streambanks
6% Revitalizing business districts
7% Floodplain management
7% Replanting trees
10% Investing in infrastructure: water, roads, bridges, telecommunications

17% Other, including:

- Investing in mental health services
- Responding to student or youth homelessness
- Support for renters
- Trauma-informed and mental health first aid-style trainings for community members
- Efforts to understand and address storm impacts on well and septic systems
- Investing in substance use disorder harm reduction and treatment
- Addressing trauma for students
- Investing in air safety monitoring and assurance activities
- Support for Childcare
- Open text box, individual comment

Town of Black Mountain

Participation overview:
114 individual responses
(5% of responses overall)



The percentages in this section reflect the proportion of survey respondents from each locality who selected that category as one of their top 10 recovery priorities

Recovery priorities:

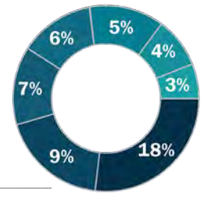
3% Energy resilience
3% Responding to student or youth homelessness
3% Support for impact on the outdoor recreation industry
4% Investing in mental health services
4% Providing funding for small businesses
4% Revitalizing business districts
5% Floodplain management
5% Building more affordable housing
5% Funding to promote food security in food deserts or vulnerable areas in the community
5% Replanting trees
6% Disaster preparedness and resiliency investments
6% Wildfire prevention
6% Restoring streambanks
6% Rebuilding parks
6% Landslide stabilization
8% Investing in infrastructure: water, roads, bridges, telecommunications

15% Other, including:

- Job retraining or workforce development initiatives
- Support for renters
- Trauma-informed and mental health first aid-style trainings for community members
- Efforts to understand and address storm impacts on well and septic systems
- Investing in substance use disorder harm reduction and treatment
- Addressing trauma for students
- Investing in air safety monitoring and assurance activities
- Support for Childcare
- Open text box, individual comment

Fairview

Participation overview:
127 individual responses
(6% of responses overall)



The percentages in this section reflect the proportion of survey respondents from each locality who selected that category as one of their top 10 recovery priorities

Recovery priorities:

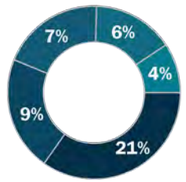
3% Investing in mental health services
3% Revitalizing business districts
3% Responding to student or youth homelessness
3% Support for Childcare
4% Building more affordable housing
4% Rebuilding parks
4% Providing funding for small businesses
4% Funding to promote food security in food deserts or vulnerable areas in the community
5% Replanting trees
6% Preserving flood-prone property from development
6% Disaster preparedness and resiliency investments
7% Floodplain management
7% Landslide stabilization
7% Wildfire prevention
7% Restoring streambanks
9% Investing in infrastructure: water, roads, bridges, telecommunications

18% Other, including:

- Job retraining or workforce development initiatives
- Support for renters
- Trauma-informed and mental health first aid-style trainings for community members
- Energy resilience
- Support for impact on the outdoor recreation industry
- Efforts to understand and address storm impacts on well and septic systems
- Investing in substance use disorder harm reduction and treatment
- Addressing trauma for students
- Investing in air safety monitoring and assurance activities
- Open text box, individual comment

Town of Montreat

Participation overview:
16 individual responses
(1% of responses overall)



The percentages in this section reflect the proportion of survey respondents from each locality who selected that category as one of their top 10 recovery priorities

Recovery priorities:

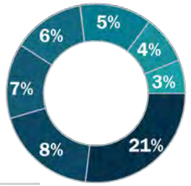
4% Support for renters
4% Investing in mental health services
4% Rebuilding parks
4% Disaster preparedness and resiliency investments
4% Trauma-informed and mental health first aid-style trainings for community members
4% Investing in substance use disorder harm reduction and treatment
6% Responding to student or youth homelessness
6% Preserving flood-prone property from development
6% Restoring streambanks
6% Landslide stabilization
7% Funding to promote food security in food deserts or vulnerable areas in the community
7% Wildfire prevention
9% Building more affordable housing
9% Investing in infrastructure: water, roads, bridges, telecommunications

21% Other, including:

- Job retraining or workforce development initiatives
- Revitalizing business districts
- Support for Childcare
- Energy resilience
- Providing funding for small businesses
- Floodplain management
- Replanting trees
- Support for impact on the outdoor recreation industry
- Efforts to understand and address storm impacts on well and septic systems
- Addressing trauma for students
- Investing in air safety monitoring and assurance activities

Swannanoa

Participation overview:
215 individual responses
(10% of responses overall)



The percentages in this section reflect the proportion of survey respondents from each locality who selected that category as one of their top 10 recovery priorities

Recovery priorities:

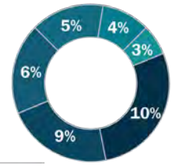
3% Providing funding for small businesses
3% Responding to student or youth homelessness
4% Investing in mental health services
5% Disaster preparedness and resiliency investments
5% Floodplain management
5% Preserving flood-prone property from development
5% Landslide stabilization
5% Building more affordable housing
5% Replanting trees
6% Wildfire prevention
6% Restoring streambanks
6% Funding to promote food security in food deserts or vulnerable areas in the community
6% Revitalizing business districts
7% Rebuilding parks
8% Investing in infrastructure: water, roads, bridges, telecommunications

21% Other, including:

- Job retraining or workforce development initiatives
- Support for Childcare
- Support for renters
- Support for impact on the outdoor recreation industry
- Trauma-informed and mental health first aid-style trainings for community members
- Efforts to understand and address storm impacts on well and septic systems
- Investing in substance use disorder harm reduction and treatment
- Addressing trauma for students
- Investing in air safety monitoring and assurance activities
- Energy resilience
- Open text box, enter comment

Town of Weaverville

Participation overview:
125 individual responses
(6% of responses overall)



The percentages in this section reflect the proportion of survey respondents from each locality who selected that category as one of their top 10 recovery priorities

Recovery priorities:

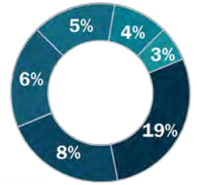
3% Support for Childcare
3% Support for impact on the outdoor recreation industry
4% Responding to student or youth homelessness
4% Investing in mental health services
4% Building more affordable housing
4% Job retraining or workforce development initiatives
4% Revitalizing business districts
4% Energy resilience
5% Rebuilding parks
5% Preserving flood-prone property from development
5% Restoring streambanks
5% Landslide stabilization
5% Funding to promote food security in food deserts or vulnerable areas in the community
5% Providing funding for small businesses
5% Floodplain management
5% Replanting trees
6% Disaster preparedness and resiliency investments
6% Wildfire prevention
9% Investing in infrastructure: water, roads, bridges, telecommunications

10% Other, including:

- Support for renters
- Trauma-informed and mental health first aid-style trainings for community members
- Investing in substance use disorder harm reduction and treatment
- Efforts to understand and address storm impacts on well and septic systems
- Addressing trauma for students
- Investing in air safety monitoring and assurance activities

Town of Woodfin

Participation overview:
56 individual responses
(3% of responses overall)



The percentages in this section reflect the proportion of survey respondents from each locality who selected that category as one of their top 10 recovery priorities

Recovery priorities:

3% Responding to student or youth homelessness
3% Energy resilience
4% Support for Childcare
4% Landslide stabilization
4% Funding to promote food security in food deserts or vulnerable areas in the community
4% Providing funding for small businesses
4% Efforts to understand and address storm impacts on well and septic systems
5% Building more affordable housing
5% Preserving flood-prone property from development
5% Floodplain management
5% Rebuilding parks
6% Restoring streambanks
6% Replanting trees
6% Disaster preparedness and resiliency investments
6% Wildfire prevention
8% Investing in infrastructure: water, roads, bridges, telecommunications

19% Other, including:

- Support for impact on the outdoor recreation industry
- Investing in mental health services
- Job retraining or workforce development initiatives
- Revitalizing business districts
- Support for renters
- Trauma-informed and mental health first aid-style trainings for community members
- Investing in substance use disorder harm reduction and treatment
- Addressing trauma for students
- Investing in air safety monitoring and assurance activities

Round Two: Public Comment/Feedback

Engagement Overview

Format & Participation

The Envision Buncombe: A Path Forward survey was open September 16th – October 3rd, 2025.

- Digital marketing of the public comment/feedback round survey was conducted through:
    - Press releases
    - Announcements and posts on the County's social media pages
    - An internal email campaign to all Buncombe County employees
    - Direct email outreach to participants who requested process updates through the round one, community input Envision Buncombe survey
- Participation:

Round Two Survey Comment Count, by Jurisdiction	
Buncombe County	34
City of Asheville	52
Town of Biltmore Forest	2
Town of Black Mountain	5
Town of Montreat	1
Town of Weaverville	3
Town of Woodfin	3
Total	100*

* A note about the sample size of these survey results: the number of comments does not dictate the validity of the analysis in qualitative data, as it does with quantitative data. However, caution should be used regarding the generalizability of this sample size to the entire population of Buncombe County.

Public Comment/Feedback Results

Survey Results: Shared Priorities

The categories below reflect themes and associated project suggestions that emerged through qualitative analysis of all survey comments, unfiltered by jurisdiction.

1. Infrastructure and Critical Facilities

- Invest in resilient development standards and green infrastructure.
- Improve pedestrian infrastructure as a resiliency measure.
- Partner with existing buildings and organizations (e.g., churches, schools) to increase shelter and backup utility access (e.g. generators) in the community.

2. Affordable Housing

- Rezone for multifamily housing.
- Include deeply affordable units (20-30% Average Median Income-AMI) and support home construction at affordable price points.
- Donate land to community land trusts to support affordable housing efforts.

3. River Arts District (RAD)

- Invest in RAD as a cultural hub for creative arts and tourism.
- Consider new modes of commercial uses for RAD.

4. Recreation and Community Centers

- Build a new recreation center to host bridge games, lessons, and tournaments.
- Revitalize parks and natural spaces in Swannanoa and other underserved areas.
- Include facilities for non-emergency recreation activities in emergency shelter plans.

5. Environmental Concerns

- Restore damaged riverside properties to natural environments with native plants and trees.
- Push for floodplain health and hazard mitigation using nature-based solutions.

6. Cultural Preservation and Public Art

- Support cultural asset restoration and public art.
- Include artists in decision-making processes for community space planning.

7. Public Engagement and Transparency

- Provide project plans with timelines, milestones, and responsible parties.
- Prioritize projects based on community needs and available resources.
- Increase public awareness about ongoing struggles in affected areas.

8. Miscellaneous, but standout

- Consider high-quality childcare as a priority for workforce and community development.

Survey Results, by Jurisdiction

Buncombe County

1. Critical Infrastructure & Facility Upgrades
    - » Prioritize sewer extension, septic mitigation, and facility repairs.
    - » Focus on immediate action to reduce prolonged planning cycles.
    - » A desire to maximize use of existing buildings (e.g., for emergency operations) rather than new construction.

2. Affordable & Accountable Housing
    - » Support for deeply affordable housing (20–30% AMI) and down payment assistance
    - » Increase accessibility and support for renters
    - » Focus on continued support for creative, equitable housing solutions.

3. Childcare & Early Childhood Development
    - » Support childcare for ages 0–5 as a strategic to promote economic recovery.
    - » Identified need for enhanced early learning infrastructure countywide.

4. Parks, Natural Spaces & Environmental Resilience
    - » Revitalize parks and green spaces
    - » Emphasize environmental safeguards like landslide mitigation, stream stabilization, and riparian zone protection.
    - » Consider restoration of natural ecosystems as an opportunity for developed riverside areas damaged in the storm.

5. Recreation & Community Facilities
    - » Support for a new recreation center that serves seniors, youth, and community organizations.
    - » Develop recreation facilities as a resource for mental health, social connection, and resilience.
    - » Requests to include card rooms in recreation facilities to ensure low-cost access.

City of Asheville

1. River Arts District (RAD) Investment
    - » A desire to see explicit inclusion of RAD in the recovery plan.
    - » Interest in maintaining RAD as a physical location for cultural, economic, and community vitality in Asheville.
    - » Invest in flood resilience, safety, and infrastructure upgrades in RAD.

2. Water, Sewer, and Utility Infrastructure
    - » Emphasis on reliable water access for residents and businesses.
    - » Support for nature-based solutions and floodplain restoration.
    - » Collaborate with power companies to reduce storm-related outages.

3. Parks, Greenways & Natural Resource Restoration
    - » Prioritize park repairs and upgrades, especially for youth sports.
    - » Increase riverfront resiliency through hazard mitigation strategies like removal of impervious surfaces and planting native vegetation on damaged properties eligible for public buyout.

4. Housing & Zoning Reform
    - » Support for rezoning and infill development to increase housing supply.
    - » Focus housing development in areas that minimize environmental damage and strain on delicate infrastructure systems
    - » Support for converting short-term rentals into long-term affordable housing.

5. Emergency Management
    - » Requests for transparency and accountability in emergency response.
    - » Enhance access to emergency response resources for vulnerable residents, including low-income and disabled community members, to access to emergency response resource

Incorporated Towns

Due to the small sample size for each individual town, the priorities below represent common themes across all five municipalities, with comments unique to each cited under the town labels below.

1. Affordable Housing & Home Repair
    - » Identified need for both affordable rental and homeownership options.
    - » Improved zoning to support housing development

2. Emergency Preparedness & Hazard Mitigation
    - » Support for projects that bolster emergency response capabilities and prioritize hazard mitigation (e.g. landslides).
    - » Support for focus on core emergency response and recovery needs

3. Resilient Development Standards
    - » Support for green infrastructure projects
    - » Prioritize sustainable development practices and rebuilding to reduce vulnerability in future events.

4. Infrastructure & Utility Access
    - » Prioritize local water systems' resiliency
    - » Ensuring that key public utilities are updated and maintained in accordance with growth.

5. Parks & Environmental Restoration
    - » Support for repairing damaged parks.
    - » Prioritize intentional planning around floodplains as part and natural resource projects move forward.

- **Biltmore Forest**

"While these are important pieces to the Biltmore Forest plan, they do not address the need for improved zoning to support affordable housing. The town needs to support the construction of affordable housing both homeownership and rental to support the Buncombe County housing needs."

- **Black Mountain**

"Please include landslide/debris flow mitigation. Also, I would encourage our town to defer approving any new development until the UDO has been updated with increased standards for safe and resilient development. "

- **Montreat**

"Please include affordable housing and home repair to this effort"

- **Weaverville**

"I have serious concerns about connecting the Weaverville water system with those of the City of Asheville and Woodfin. The Asheville water system is poorly run. Weaverville did a great job getting/keeping water available for all of us who live there right after the storm. I moved to Weaverville from North Asheville because of the quality of Weaverville's community leadership. I would just ask that as we continue to approve new housing projects we make sure the infrastructure keeps up."

- **Woodfin**

"Great! Glad to see affordable housing as a part of the plan"

2. Funding Matrix

PUBLIC FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES MATRIX

DEBRIS MANAGEMENT

Source 1: Environmental Protection Agency – Disaster Debris Removal Tool

Purpose: To promote sustainable disaster debris management in disaster planning and emergency response.

Type: Technical Assistance

Eligibility Criteria: State, local, Tribal, and territorial entities, and large industrial and municipal facilities.

Grant Link: EPA Disaster Debris Removal Tool

Source 2: NC Department of Public Safety: Emergency Management (NCEM) Disaster Recovery Programs: State Disaster Recovery Act (DRA) Funds

Purpose: May include operational support for maintaining essential government services in disaster-affected areas.

Type: Incident Based

Eligibility Criteria: Local governments submit project requests to NCEM. Provides state-appropriated funds to address unmet disaster recovery needs that are not covered by FEMA or other federal programs. Infrastructure repairs, housing reconstruction, debris removal, and other recovery.

Grant Link: Emergency Management Disaster Recovery Programs: State Disaster Recovery Act Funds

ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION

Source 1: Business & Industry Loan Guarantees

Purpose: Loan guarantee to increase access to capital for rural businesses.

Type: Loan

Eligibility Criteria: State, local governments, tribes, businesses, cooperatives, individuals engaged or proposing to engage in an eligible rural business.

Grant Link: Business & Industry Loan Guarantees

Source 2: Department of Agriculture - Rural Business Cooperative Service - Intermediary Relending Program

Purpose: Support community development and poverty relief, aiming to improve economic conditions and create jobs in rural communities by providing low-interest loans to intermediary lenders.

Type: Loan

Eligibility Criteria: Nonprofits, federally recognized tribes, public agencies, cooperatives individuals, public, or private.

Grant Link: Intermediary Relending Program

Source 3: Department of Agriculture Intermediary Relending Program

Purpose: Initiatives that support community development and poverty relief, aiming to improve economic conditions and create jobs in rural communities by providing low-interest loans to intermediary lenders.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Healthcare Institution, Individuals & Households, Local Government & Authority, Nonprofit Organizations, Public/Private Institutions of Higher Education, State, Tribal.

Grant Link: Department of Agriculture Intermediary Relending Program

Source 4: Department of Agriculture - FY25 Farmers Market Promotion Program

Purpose: Farmers Market Promotion Program funds projects that expand producer-to-consumer markets, promote local food, value-added products, and reduce farm waste.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Agricultural Producers, Local Government & Authority, Nonprofit Organizations, Tribal.

Grant Link: Farmers Market Promotion Program Fiscal Year 2025

Source 5: Department of Commerce - National Institute of Standards and Technology - FY Regional Alliances and Multistakeholder Partnerships

Purpose: To form community partnerships and create cybersecurity career pathways addressing local workforce needs, with multistakeholder partnerships focusing on in-demand skills.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: State, local, and tribal governments Accredited institutions of higher education; non-profit organizations, for-profit organizations.

Grant Link: Regional Alliances and Multistakeholder Partnerships to Stimulate Cybersecurity Education and Workforce Development

Source 6: Department of Commerce - National Institute of Standards and Technology - Measurement Science and Engineering Research Grant Programs

Purpose: To develop and strengthen research in metrology, AI, manufacturing, and U.S. innovation, and enhance U.S. Standards System coordination.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: For-Profit Organizations, Healthcare Institution, Local Government & Authority, Nonprofit Organizations, Public/Private Institutions of Higher Education, State, Territory, Tribal.

Grant Link: Department of Commerce National Institute of Standards and Technology MSE Research Grant Programs

Source 7: Department of Commerce - National Institute of Standards and Technology - FY Regional Alliances and Multistakeholder Partnerships

Purpose: To form community partnerships and create cybersecurity career pathways addressing local workforce needs, with multistakeholder partnerships focusing on in-demand skills.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: State, local, and tribal governments Accredited institutions of higher education; non-profit organizations; for-profit organizations.

Grant Link: Regional Alliances and Multistakeholder Partnerships to Stimulate (RAMPS) Cybersecurity Education and Workforce Development

Source 8: Department of Energy - Inflation Reduction Act – Transmission Siting and Economic Development Program

Purpose: To accelerate the permitting of high-voltage, interstate transmission projects and support community infrastructure projects along major new and upgraded transmission lines.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: State, county, local governments and Native American tribal governments. Federal cost share shall not exceed 50%.

Grant Link: Inflation Reduction Act

Source 9: Economic Development Administration - FY2025 Disaster Supplemental Grant Program

Purpose: This funding opportunity encourages broad based local engagement and places - special emphasis on projects that involve private industry in disaster recovery and economic renewal to ensure the maximum impact for taxpayer funding to support these communities.

Type: Disaster Relief

Eligibility Criteria: State, local and Tribal governments, economic development districts, Institutions of higher education, economic development organizations, public and private non-profits working with local governments, public-private partnership for public infrastructure.

Grant Link: FY2025 Disaster Supplemental Grant Program

Source 10: Economic Development Administration - Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs

Purpose: Designed to support the economic development activities most useful to a community based on needs and circumstances.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: District organization of EDA-designated Economic Development District, Indian tribe, state, county, and local governments, institutions of higher educations.

Grant Link: Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs

Source 11: FEMA Community Disaster Loan (CDL) Program

Purpose: Loans to local governments suffering a substantial loss of tax and other revenues to maintain existing functions of a municipal operating character. The local government must demonstrate a need for financial assistance.

Type: Loan

Eligibility Criteria: Local Government & Authority, Tribe.

Grant Link: FEMA Community Disaster Loan Program

Source 12: NC Cash Flow Loan Program

Purpose: Designed for local governments to address cash flow (operational) issues while awaiting federal disaster reimbursements; repayment expected upon receipt of federal funds.

Type: Interest-free loans

Eligibility Criteria: Town, County, Tribal Governments impacted by Hurricane Helene.

Grant Link: NC Cash Flow Loan Program

Source 13: NC Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) Emergency Infrastructure Bridge Loan Program for Commercial Underground Storage Tanks (USTS)

Purpose: For commercial UST owners/ operators in 25 specified counties affected by Hurricane Helene. Covers tank testing, product pump out, repairs to piping, dispensers, and electronics.

Type: Loan

Eligibility Criteria: Can only be used by an owner or operator for temporary financial liquidity as necessary to immediately conduct emergency services and until receipt of federal disaster relief or payment or reimbursement by insurance.

Grant Link: Emergency Infrastructure Bridge Loan Program for Commercial Underground Storage Tanks

Source 14: NC Golden Leaf Foundation: Economic Catalyst

Purpose: Grants include funds for public infrastructure, job training, upfit for buildings owned by governmental or nonprofit entities, or equipment acquisition where the building or equipment will be leased or sold at fair-market value to a company creating jobs.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Economic Catalyst is open to governmental entities and 501(c)(3) organizations with projects that will create jobs at risk without Golden LEAF funding.

Grant Link: NC Golden LEAF Foundation: Economic Catalyst

Source 15: NC Golden Leaf Foundation: Open Grants Program

Purpose: The Open Grants Program is focused in the areas of Job Creation and Economic Investment; Workforce Preparedness; Agriculture.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: The Open Grants Program is open to all governmental entities and 501(c)(3) organizations that propose projects in Golden LEAF's priority areas.

Grant Link: NC Golden LEAF Foundation: Open Grants Program

Source 16: NC Small Business Infrastructure Grant Program (SMBIZ)

Purpose: The SMBIZ program offers grants to local governments. Related infrastructure projects will target and support small businesses that employ 150 or fewer employees. Funding will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Grants must be used by local governments to address qualifying infrastructure needs that have adversely affected access to, or operations of, the identified small businesses.

Grant Link: NC Small Business Infrastructure Grant Program

Source 17: Renew NC Economic Revitalization Program

Purpose: Revitalization of disaster-impact commercial areas.

Type: N/A

Eligibility Criteria: Local governments within the HUD-identified MID area that have commercial areas damaged by Helene. Second stage open to businesses in all counties covered by the Helene major disaster declaration.

Grant Link: Renew NC Economic Revitalization Program

Source 18: Restore Act Direct Component – Non-Construction Activities

Purpose: Designed to rebuild the economy and ecosystems of the U.S. Gulf Coast.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: State and county governments.

Grant Link: Department of the Treasury - RESTORE Act Direct Component

Source 19: Rural Building Reuse Program

Purpose: Building improvements that will lead to creation of private sector jobs.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Local governments in NC Tier 1 or 2 counties, or in a rural census tract in Tier 3 county. 50% Cash matching.

Grant Link: Rural Building Reuse Program

Source 20: Rural Downtown Economic Development Grant Program

Purpose: Downtown revitalization and economic development.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Local governments in NC Tier 1 or 2 counties, or in a rural census tract in Tier 3 county. 5% Cash matching.

Grant Link: Rural Downtown Economic Development Grant Program (RDEDG)

NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

Source 1: Climate Smart Communities Initiative

Purpose: To create or advance a climate resilience plan or project in collaboration with a community that is on the front lines of the climate crisis.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: State and local communities. The community must be facing significant climate-related challenges, based on environmental as well as socioeconomic considerations.

Grant Link: Climate Smart Communities Initiative

Source 2: Department of Agriculture - Agricultural Marketing Service FY25 Farmers Market Promotion Program

Purpose: Farmers Market Promotion Program funds projects that expand producer-to-consumer markets, promote local food, value-added products, and reduce farm waste.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Agricultural Producers, Local Government & Authority, Nonprofit Organizations, Tribal governments.

Grant Link: Agricultural Marketing Service FY25 Farmers Market Promotion Program

Source 3: Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service Regional Conservation Partnership Program

Purpose: Partner-driven approach to conservation that funds solutions to natural resource challenges on agricultural land.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: State, county, local, and tribal governments. Nonprofits, special district governments, and independent school districts.

Grant Link: Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service Regional Conservation Partnership Program

Source 4: Department of Commerce NOAA Fisheries Disaster Relief

Purpose: Support commercial fishery failures due to fishery resource disasters, aiming to alleviate the burden of recovery for commercial fisheries.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Healthcare Institution, Public/Private Institutions of Higher Education, State.

Grant Link: Fishery Resource Disaster Assistance

Source 5: DOI Bureau of Reclamation Small Surface Water and Groundwater Storage Projects

Purpose: To promote federal assistance to enhance water storage opportunities for future generations in support of the interior's priorities.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: State, county, and local governments, Native American governments and organizations, special district governments. Must submit a feasibility study that meets the temporary reclamation manual release.

Grant Link: DOI Bureau of Reclamation Small Surface Water and Groundwater Storage Projects

Source 6: DOI National Park Emergency Supplemental Historic Preservation Fund – Preservation

Purpose: Supports recovery, and related expenses, for historic and cultural resources in areas impacted by natural disasters that have received a major disaster declaration.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Physical preservation grants to States, Tribes, local governments, and nonprofits for defined projects to repair historic and cultural resources (including reconstruction).

Grant Link: DOI National Park Service ESHPF – Preservation Fact Sheet

Source 7: DOI National Park Service Emergency Supplemental Historic Preservation Fund – Capacity

Purpose: Supports recovery, and related expenses, for historic and cultural resources in areas impacted by natural disasters that have received a major disaster declaration.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Capacity grants to State and Tribal Historic Preservation offices.

Grant Link: DOI National Park Service ESHPF – Capacity Fact Sheet

Source 8: DOI National Park Service Historic Preservation Fund Semi Quincentennial Grant Program

Purpose: Supports the preservation of a broad variety of cultural resources associated with the founding of America as a nation in commemoration of the country's Semi quincentennial.

Type: N/A

Eligibility Criteria: State governments and territories, local governments, federally recognized tribes, nonprofit organizations, institutions of higher education. Pre-preservation and preservation projects will be considered.

Grant Link: DOI National Park Service Historic Preservation Fund Semi quincentennial Grant Program

Source 9: DOI National Park Service Preservation Technology and Training Cooperative

Purpose: Intended for cultural resource projects which will create better tools, materials, and approaches to conserve buildings, landscapes, and cultural resources.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: State, county, and local governments. Independent school districts, public/state and private institutions of higher education, native American governments and organizations.

Grant Link: Preservation Technology and Training Cooperative

Source 10: DOI National Park Service River, Trails, And Conservation Assistance Program

Purpose: Assist communities in restoring their conservation areas, parks and outdoor recreation resources following a natural disaster.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Community groups, non-profit organizations, tribes, and government agencies.

Grant Link: DOI National Park Service River, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program

Source 11: DOI Preservation Planning Grants - American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP)

Purpose: Support a variety of projects that contribute to preservation and interpretation of historic battlefields and associated sites of armed conflict on American Soil.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: State, county, and local governments, special district governments, state and public institutions of higher education, Native American tribal organizations, non-profits.

Grant Link: DOI Preservation Planning Grants ABPP

Source 12: Department of Interior - United State Fish and Wildlife Service - FY26 North American Wetlands Conservation Act

Purpose: Supports public-private partnerships carrying out projects in the United States that further the goals of the North American Wetlands Conservation Act.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Local Government & Authority, Nonprofit/for-profit Organizations, Public/Private Institutions of Higher Education, State, Tribal.

Grant Link: North American Wetlands Conservation Fund

Source 13: Environmental Protection Agency Technical Assistance to Brownfields Communities Program

Purpose: Provides technical assistance to communities, states, Tribal Nations and other public entities to help address their brownfield sites and to increase their understanding and involvement in brownfields cleanup, revitalization and reuse.

Type: Competitive & Technical Assistance

Eligibility Criteria: Public entities including municipalities, regional planning commissions, nonprofit organizations that already have redevelopment plans for a contaminated property.

Grant Link: EPA's TAB Communities Program

Source 14: Land And Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

Purpose: The LWCF grant awards matching grants to local governments to assist with acquisition, development, renovation, or combination projects for outdoor public recreation.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: North Carolina counties and incorporated municipalities are eligible for LWCF grants. Federally recognized Native American tribes are also eligible. LWCF grants can be used for acquisition, development, renovation, and combination projects for outdoor public recreation. A project must be located on a single site.

Grant Link: Land and Water Conservation Fund

Source 15: National Park Service's Historic Preservation Grants to Underrepresented Communities

Purpose: Works to diversify listings submitted to the National Register of Historic Places.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: State and Tribal Historic Preservation offices, federally recognized tribes, non-profit organizations, and certified local governments (CLGs).

Grant Link: National Park Service's Historic Preservation to Underrepresented Communities

Source 16: NC Division of Water Resources Water Resources Development Grant, Natural Resources Conservation Service Environmental Quality Incentives Program - Stream Restoration

Purpose: Partnership with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Environmental Quality Incentives Program. Requires adherence to EQIP guidelines for natural stream channel work.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Units of local government, local political subdivisions, and non-governmental organizations (NGO, only as Co-Applicants).

Grant Link: Natural Resources Conservation Service Environmental Quality Incentives Program - Stream Restoration

Source 17: NC State Parks: Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Grant

Purpose: Sustainable, "shovel-ready" projects that leverage local funds to meet recreational trail and trail needs, to provide low infrastructure economic development opportunities through natural resource tourism.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Requires 25% match of funds received. "Shovel-ready" projects preferred that leverage local funds. Application must be submitted through the Grants Management System (GMS). Consultation with Regional Trails Specialist recommended prior to application.

Grant Link: NC State Parks: Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Grant

Source 18: NC State Parks: Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Safety and Education Grant

Purpose: Safety and Education Grants are a subset of the RTP and are awarded for safety and education instructor fees, speaker fees, displays, signage, and other trail uses.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Applications are reviewed twice yearly. Must register for WebGrants account. Applications must be received two weeks prior to NC Trails Committee meetings.

Grant Link: NC State Parks: Recreational Trails Program Safety and Education Grant

Source 19: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Partners for Fish and Wildlife

Purpose: Helps private landowners restore and protect habitats for fish and wildlife offering technical and financial support through cooperative agreements.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: State, county, local governments, non-profits, Native American tribal organizations, special district governments, public housing authorities, public and state-controlled institutions of higher education, and independent school districts. Proposed project must be on private lands.

Grant Link: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Partners for Fish and Wildlife

Source 20: USDA Farm Service Agency Emergency Conservation Program

Purpose: Provides emergency funding and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers to rehabilitate farmland and conservation structures damaged by natural disasters and implement emergency.

Type: Emergency Assistance

Eligibility Criteria: Farmers and ranchers; land eligibility based on on-site inspections of damaged land and the type and extent of damage.

Grant Link: USDA Farm Service Agency Emergency Conservation Program

Source 21: USDA Forest Service Community Wildfire Defense Grant Program

Purpose: Assist at risk local communities with planning and mitigating against the risk created by wildfire.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: City/township, non-profits, and county and state governments.

Grant Link: Community Wildfire Defense Grant Program

Source 22: USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service Emergency Watershed Protection

Purpose: To help public and private landowners conserve natural resources by relieving imminent hazards to life and property caused by natural occurrences.

Type: Incident based

Eligibility Criteria: Public and private landowners represented by an eligible sponsor for recovery from watershed impairment activities including financial and technical assistance.

Grant Link: USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service EWP Fact Sheet

Source 23: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Agriculture Conservation Experienced Services Program

Purpose: To direct resources toward the delivery of providing technical services in support of the conservation-related programs and authorities carried out by the secretary.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Nonprofits and applicants must be age 55 and over and able to provide services and skills required for the jobs advertised on the web sites of the three non-profits with which NRCS has national cooperative agreements.

Grant Link: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Agriculture Conservation Experienced Services Program

Source 24: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Agriculture Conservation Experienced Services Program

Purpose: To direct resources toward the delivery of providing technical services in support of the conservation-related programs and authorities carried out by the secretary.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Nonprofits and applicants must be age 55 and over and able to provide services and skills required for the jobs advertised on the web sites of the three non-profits with which NRCS has national cooperative agreements.

Grant Link: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Agriculture Conservation Experienced Services Program

HEALTH, EDUCATION, & HUMAN SERVICES

Source 1: Department of Education - Institute of Education Sciences NCER Research Education Research and Development Center Program

Purpose: To conduct focused program of research that will contribute to solving a specific education problem and generate new knowledge in their topic area.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: State, county, and local governments.

Grant Link: IES NCER Research Education Research and Development Center Program

Source 2: Department of Education - OSERS RSA - Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who are Blind

Purpose: Provide training and technical assistance to designated state agencies that provide vocational rehabilitation services to individuals who are blind that receive grant funding under OIB program.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: State, county, and local governments, special district governments, nonprofits, private/public institutions of higher education. Must also have capacity to provide training and technical assistance. See grant link for additional information.

Grant Link: Department of Education - OSERS RSA - Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind

Source 3: Department of Health and Human Services - Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality - Using Innovative Digital Healthcare Solutions to Improve Quality at the Point of Care

Purpose: This program funds research on digital healthcare interventions to enhance service delivery, with up to 2 years of initial support and 3 years of expanded support.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Local Government & Authority, Nonprofit Organizations, Public/Indian Housing Authorities, Public/Private Institutions of Higher Education, State, Tribal.

Grant Link: Using Innovative Digital Healthcare Solutions to Improve Quality at the Point of Care

Source 4: Department of Labor - Veterans Employment and Training Service - FY23 Stand Down Grants

Purpose: Supports local Stand Down events that assist veterans experiencing homelessness by providing a wide range of employment, social, and health services.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: For-Profit Organizations, Local Government & Authority, Nonprofit Organizations, Public/Indian Housing Authorities, Public/Private Institutions of Higher Education, State, Territory, Tribal.

Grant Link: FY23 Stand Down Grants

Source 5: Environmental Protection Agency - Smart Growth Local Foods, Local Places

Purpose: Helps cities and towns across the country engage with stakeholders to develop local food systems, preserve open space and farmland, revitalize Main Streets and downtowns, boost economic opportunities for farmers and businesses and improve access to local and healthy foods.

Type: Technical Assistance

Eligibility Criteria: Counties served by the Appalachian Regional Commission. This is a technical assistance program who will receive access to technical experts who will work with them to form a Local Foods Local Place steering committee to plan and host a two pay public convening.

Grant Link: EPA Smart Growth Local Foods, Local Places (LFLP)

Source 6: NC Division of Parks & Recreation Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

Purpose: The LWCF grant awards matching grants to local governments to assist with acquisition, development, renovation, or combination projects for outdoor public recreation.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: North Carolina counties and incorporated municipalities are eligible for LWCF grants. Federally recognized Native American tribes are also eligible. LWCF grants can be used for acquisition, development, renovation, and combination projects for outdoor public recreation. A project must be located on a single site.

Grant Link: NC Division of Parks & Recreation - Land and Water Conservation Fund

Source 7: NC Division of Water Resources Water Resources Development Grant, Natural Resources Conservation Service Environmental Quality Incentives Program - Stream Restoration

Purpose: Partnership with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Environmental Quality Incentives Program. Requires adherence to EQIP guidelines for natural stream channel work.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Units of local government, local political subdivisions, and non-governmental organizations (NGO, only as Co-Applicants).

Grant Link: Natural Resources Conservation Service Environmental Quality Incentives Program - Stream Restoration

Source 8: NC State Parks - Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Grant

Purpose: Sustainable, "shovel-ready" projects that leverage local funds to meet recreational trail and trail needs, to provide low infrastructure economic development opportunities through natural resource tourism.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Requires 25% match of funds received. "Shovel-ready" projects preferred that leverage local funds. Application must be submitted through the Grants Management System (GMS). Consultation with Regional Trails Specialist recommended prior to application.

Grant Link: NC State Parks: Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Grant

Source 9: NC State Parks - Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Safety and Education Grant

Purpose: Safety and Education Grants are a subset of the RTP and are awarded for safety and education instructor fees, speaker fees, displays, signage, and other trail uses.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Applications are reviewed twice yearly. Must register for Web Grants account. Applications must be received two weeks prior to NC Trails Committee meetings.

Grant Link: NC State Parks: Recreational Trails Program Safety and Education Grant

HOUSING

Source 1: EPA Recreation Economy for Rural Communities

Purpose: Helps communities identify strategies to grow their outdoor recreation economy and revitalize main streets.

Type: Technical Assistance

Eligibility Criteria: Local governments, tribes, nonprofit organizations or institutions representing any community in the United States. Councils of governments are also eligible. Small rural, economically disadvantaged Appalachian region communities will be prioritized.

Grant Link: EPA Recreation Economy for Rural Communities

Source 2: HUD Community Development Block Grant Program – Recovery Housing Program

Purpose: Provide stable transitional housing for individuals in recovery from substance use disorder.

Type: Formula

Eligibility Criteria: Principle cities of MSAs Qualified urban counties with populations >= 200,000. Funds may be used for public facilities and improvements, real property acquisition, rehabilitation of residential housing, clearance and demolition, relocation and administration and technical assistance.

Grant Link: HUD Recovery Housing Program

Source 3: HUD Community Development Block Grant Neighborhood Revitalization

Purpose: Helps grantees improve their communities helps grantees improve their communities. Use CDBG funds in innovative and strategic ways to meet a broad range of community needs.

Type: Block Grant

Eligibility Criteria: State and local governments.

Grant Link: Community Development Neighborhood Revitalization

Source 4: HUD Indian Community Development Block Grant

Purpose: Development of viable Indian and Alaska Native communities.

Type: Block Grant

Eligibility Criteria: Native American tribal organizations (other than federally recognized tribal governments) and native American tribal governments (federally recognized).

Grant Link: CDBG for Indian Tribes and Alaska Natives Villages

Source 5: HUD Public and Indian Housing Indian Loan Guarantee Program

Purpose: Funding initiatives that support Native American homeownership, aiming to provide access to private financing sources for families in Indian Country.

Type: Loan

Eligibility Criteria: Federally recognized Indian tribes, Indian Housing Authorities.

Grant Link: Indian Housing Loan Guarantee Program

Source 6: NC Housing Finance Agency (NCHFA) Disaster Recovery Programs: Urgent Repair Program (URP)

Purpose: Provides small grants to assist low-income households with critical home repairs related to disaster impacts. Roof repairs, structural improvements, and accessibility modifications.

Type: Emergency Assistance

Eligibility Criteria: Local governments and non-profits can apply as intermediaries for residents.

Grant Link: Housing Finance Agency Disaster Recovery Programs: Urgent Repair Program

Source 7: Renew NC Multi-Family Housing Program

Purpose: Housing restoration and promoting development of new multifamily housing.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Private developers, local governments, public or non-profit organizations, and CHDOs/CBDOs.

Grant Link: Renew NC Multi-Family Housing Program

Source 8: Renew NC Workforce Housing for Ownership Program

Purpose: Workforce housing unit development for ownership.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Local governments, nonprofits, and Community or Community Based Development Housing Orgs.

Grant Link: Renew NC Workforce Housing for Ownership Program

Source 9: USDA Rural Development Search In North Carolina

Purpose: Helps small financially distressed rural communities pay for pre-development feasibility studies, design, and technical assistance for proposed water and disposal projects.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Area within city town, or unincorporated area with populations >= 2,500. Median income below poverty line or less than 80% of statewide nonmetropolitan median household income.

Grant Link: USDA Rural Development SEARCH in North Carolina

INFRASTRUCTURE & ACCESS

Source 1: Army Corps of Engineers - Department of Defense Clearing and Snagging Projects (Section 208)

Purpose: Provides a continuing authority for USACE to clear stream channels to increase channel flow capacity, decrease flooding, and reduce damage from the debris carried by flood flows.

Type: Technical assistance

Eligibility Criteria: Local Government & Authority, State, Territory, Tribal.

Grant Link: Clearing and Snagging Projects (Section 208)

Source 2: Army Corps of Engineers - Floodplain Management Services Program

Purpose: USACE can provide a full range of flood risk information, technical services, and planning guidance to support and promote effective flood risk and floodplain management.

Type: Available funding differs from year to year

Eligibility Criteria: States, local governmental authorities, and Indian Tribes.

Grant Link: Army Corps of Engineers - Floodplain Management Services Program

Source 3: Army Corps of Engineers Planning Assistance to States Program

Purpose: USACE can assist with comprehensive planning for the development, use, and conservation of water and related land resources.

Type: Technical Assistance

Eligibility Criteria: States, local governmental authorities, and Indian Tribes.

Grant Link: Army Corps of Engineers Planning Assistance to States Program

Source 4: Army Corps of Engineers Section 14 Authority

Purpose: USACE can partner with a non-federal sponsor to plan and construct emergency stream bank and shoreline protection for public facilities in imminent danger of failing.

Type: Available funding differs from year to year

Eligibility Criteria: States, local governmental authorities, and Indian tribes.

Grant Link: Army Corps of Engineers Section 14 Authority

Source 5: Army Corps of Engineers Section 205 Authority

Purpose: USACE can partner with a non-federal sponsor to plan and construct small flood damage reduction projects that have not previously been specifically authorized by Congress and are not part of a larger project.

Type: Available funding differs from year to year

Eligibility Criteria: Projects must be specifically named by Congress in the authorizing language for this program. Congress specifies the geographic location, amount of authorized dollars, and purpose or scope of the project.

Grant Link: Army Corps of Engineers Section 205 Authority

Source 6: Army Corps of Engineers Section 206 Authority

Purpose: USACE can partner with a non-federal sponsor to develop aquatic ecosystem restoration and protection projects that improve the quality of the environment.

Type: Available funding differs from year to year

Eligibility Criteria: States, local governmental authorities, and Indian Tribes.

Grant Link: Army Corps of Engineers Section 206 Authority

Source 7: Army Corps of Engineers Section 219 Authority

Purpose: Assist non-federal interests in carrying out water-related environmental infrastructure and resource protection and development projects.

Type: Congressionally appropriated

Eligibility Criteria: Projects must be specifically named by Congress in the authorizing language for this program. Congress specifies the geographic location, amount of authorized dollars, and purpose or scope of the project.

Grant Link: Army Corps of Engineers Section 219 Authority

Source 8: Army Corps of Engineers Section 5113 Authority

Purpose: Assist non-federal interests in carrying out water-related environmental infrastructure and resource protection and development projects (reimbursement program).

Type: Typically, congressionally appropriated

Eligibility Criteria: Projects must be specifically named by Congress in the authorizing language for this program. Congress specifies the geographic location, amount of authorized dollars, and purpose or scope of the project.

Grant Link: Army Corps of Engineers Section 5113 Authority

Source 9: Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program

Purpose: Provides affordable funding to develop essential community facilities in rural areas. An essential community facility is defined as a facility that provides an essential service to the local community for the orderly development of the community in a primarily rural area, and does not include private, commercial or business undertakings.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: States, local governments, nonprofits, and tribes in rural areas.

Grant Link: Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program

Source 10: Department of Agriculture - Agricultural Marketing Service Regional Food System Partnerships

Purpose: To plan and develop local/regional food systems, focusing on economic viability and resilience, by coordinating resources and measuring progress.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Producers, farmer or rancher cooperatives, producer networks or associations, majority-controlled producer-based business venture, community supported agriculture networks or associations, food councils, local governments, nonprofit corporations, regional farmers market authorities, and tribal governments.

Grant Link: USDA Agricultural Marketing Service Regional Food System Partnerships

Source 11: Department of Agriculture - National Resources Conservation Service - Plant Materials for Conservation

Purpose: Support the use of new and improved plant materials for soil, water, and related resource conservation and environmental improvement programs.

Type: Technical assistance

Eligibility Criteria: For-Profit Organizations, Healthcare Institution, Public/Private Institutions of Higher Education, State, Territory.

Grant Link: Plant Materials for Conservation

Source 12: Department of Agriculture - Rural Development Healthy Food Financing Initiative

Purpose: Improving access to healthy foods in underserved areas, aiming to create and preserve quality jobs while revitalizing low-income communities through targeted support and development initiatives.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Low Income Low Access census tracts. Census tracts with median family incomes less than or equal to 120 percent of area median family income that are adjacent to USDA's 2019 LILA census tracts. Geographic Areas that meet the criteria as having low access to supermarkets or grocery stores.

Grant Link: Local and Regional Healthy Food Financing Partnership Grants the Healthy Food Financing Initiative

Source 13: Department of Agriculture Rural Utilities Service Solid Waste Management Grant in North Carolina

Purpose: To assist communities through free technical assistance and/or training provided by the grant recipients.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Private, non-profit, Native American tribe, Academic Institution, state, county.

Grant Link: Department of Agriculture Rural Utilities Service Solid Waste Management Grant

Source 14: Department of Energy - Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant

Purpose: Assist eligible entities reduce fossil fuels sustainably, reduce total energy, and improve energy efficiency and build clean energy.

Type: Formula

Eligibility Criteria: State local and tribal governments that seek to address one of the programs purposes.

Grant Link: EECBG Application Instructions

Source 15: Department of Energy - Energy Improvements in Rural or Remote Areas

Purpose: Energy Communities supports rural areas with high energy costs, offering funding for clean energy projects like generation, transmission, and efficiency improvements.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: State and local governments, Indian tribes, nonprofit organizations, and for-profit organizations. Program serves rural and remote communities with 10,000 people or fewer.

Grant Link: Energy Improvements in Rural or Remote Areas

Source 16: Department of Energy - Seeding Critical Advances for Leading Energy Technologies with Untapped Potential

Purpose: Energy funds transformative energy research with market disruptive potential, focusing on scaling promising technologies for commercial deployment.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: For-Profit Organizations, Healthcare Institution, Local Government & Authority, Nonprofit Organizations, Public/Private Institutions of Higher Education, State, Tribal.

Grant Link: Seeding Critical Advances for Leading Energy Technologies with Untapped Potential

Source 17: Department of Energy National Energy - Technology Laboratory - FY25 Vehicle Technology office Program Wide

Purpose: This opportunity seeks to support innovation to reduce the energy and cost needed to move goods and people across the US, providing options for consumers and businesses that improves US Competitiveness.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Local Government & Authority, Nonprofit and for-profit Organizations, Public/Private Institutions of Higher Education, State, Tribal.

Grant Link: FY25 Vehicle Technology Office Program Wide

Source 18: Department of Interior Cooperative Matching Funds (CMF)

Purpose: Support joint projects with state, regional, tribal, and local partners to provide reliable, impartial, and timely information needed to understand and manage the Nation's water resources.

Type: Technical assistance

Eligibility Criteria: Local Government & Authority, State, Territory, Tribal.

Grant Link: United State Geological Survey Department of Interior Cooperative Matching Funds (CMF)

Source 19: Department of Transportation - FAA Aviation Research Grants

Purpose: Encourages and supports innovative, advanced research of potential benefit to the long-term growth of civil aviation and commercial space transportation.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Nonprofits, private institutions of higher education, public state-controlled institutions of higher education.

Grant Link: DOT FAA Aviation Research Grants Program

Source 20: Department of Transportation - Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration - FY25 High Priority Program - Innovative Technology Deployment

Purpose: Aims to advance and deploy intelligent transportation systems for CMV operations, improve safety and productivity, and reduce operational costs by linking federal and state CMV safety information systems.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: State governments

Grant Link: FY2025 High Priority Program - Innovative Technology Deployment

Source 21: Department of Transportation – Federal Transit Administration

Purpose: For the purchase or lease of zero-emission and low-emission transit buses, including acquisition, construction, and leasing of required supporting facilities.

Type: N/A

Eligibility Criteria: States, local governmental authorities, and Indian Tribes. All proposals for projects in rural (non-urbanized) areas must be submitted by a State, either individually or as a part of a statewide application.

Grant Link: Federal Transit Administration

Source 22: Department of Transportation - FY25 High Priority Program - Commercial Motor Vehicle

Purpose: Seeks to advance research initiatives that explore sensing-enabled passive RFID tags in commercial motor vehicle tires.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: State, county, city or township governments, Native American tribal governments, public and state-controlled institutions of higher education, and nonprofits

Grant Link: FY2025 High Priority Program-Commercial Motor Vehicle

Source 23: Department of Transportation - FY25 Low or No-Emission Program

Purpose: The Low-No Program and Bus Program goals are to enhance safety and renew our transit systems through the deployment of modern buses and associated equipment and facilities.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: States, local governments and federally recognized Indian tribes.

Grant Link: FY25 Low or No-Emission Program

Source 24: Department of Transportation - FY25 Safe Streets and Road for All

Purpose: Funds to support planning and demonstration activities, as well as projects and strategies to prevent death and serious injury on roads and streets involving all roadway users.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: County, city, special district, Native American tribal governments. Public and State controlled institutions of higher education.

Grant Link: Safe Streets and Roads for All Funding Opportunity

Source 25: Department of Transportation - Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing Program

Purpose: Funds initiatives through the Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing (RRIF) program, aiming to provide direct loans and loan guarantees to state and local governments and interstate compacts.

Type: Loan

Eligibility Criteria: For-Profit Organizations, Local Government & Authority, Nonprofit Organizations, State, Tribal.

Grant Link: Department of Transportation - Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing Program

Source 26: Department of Transportation - Regional Infrastructure Accelerator Program - Reissuance

Purpose: To help U.S. public entities develop infrastructure priorities and financing strategies for TIFIA-eligible projects.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Local Government & Authority, State, Territory, Tribal.

Grant Link: Department of Transportation - Regional Infrastructure Accelerator Program - Reissuance

Source 27: Department of Transportation - Rural and Tribal Assistance Pilot Program

Purpose: Planning and design phase activities for developing transportation projects in rural or tribal communities.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: State, count, local, and Tribal governments. Grant will support hiring staff to provide technical, legal, financial assistance to advance transportation projects.

Grant Link: DOT Rural and Tribal Assistance Pilot Program

Source 28: Department of Transportation - Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act

Purpose: Support transportation infrastructure projects, aiming to fill market gaps and leverage non-Federal and private co-investment to accelerate project development.

Type: Loan

Eligibility Criteria: For-Profit Organizations, Healthcare Institution, Local Government & Authority, Nonprofit Organizations, Public/Private Institutions of Higher Education, State, Tribal - Federally Recognized, Tribal.

Grant Link: Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act

Source 29: Department of Transportation - Transportation Planning & Capacity Building

Purpose: Fosters effective transportation planning; training and education/outreach on best practices. May provide products and services such as data, planning and analysis, financial resources, planning or engineering assistance.

Type: Technical assistance

Eligibility Criteria: Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), Councils of Government, Regional Planning Organizations, Transit Operators, State Departments of Transportation, Tribal Governments.

Grant Link: Transportation Planning & Capacity Building

Source 30: Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF)

Purpose: Safe drinking water infrastructure.

Type: Loan

Eligibility Criteria: Local governments and eligible water corporations. Cost share of 20%.

Grant Link: Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF)

Source 31: Emergency Community Water Assistance Grants (ECWAG)

Purpose: Helps eligible communities prepare, or recover from, an emergency that threatens the availability of safe, reliable drinking water.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: States, local governments, nonprofits, and tribes in rural areas.

Grant Link: Emergency Community Water Assistance Grants (ECWAG)

Source 32: Environmental Protection Agency Clean Water State Revolving Fund

Purpose: Provides low-cost financing to communities for a wide range of water quality infrastructure projects.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: State, county and local governments. Eligible projects include wastewater treatment and collection, reclaimed water, stormwater BMPs, storm restoration, and energy efficiency at treatment works or collection systems. Program is Administered by NCDEQ Division of water infrastructure.

Grant Link: EPA Clean Water State Revolving Fund

Source 33: Environmental Protection Agency Creating Resilient Water Utilities

Purpose: Provides drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater utilities with practical tools, training, and technical assistance to increase system resilience to near- and longer-term weather variability.

Type: Technical Assistance

Eligibility Criteria: State, local, and tribal governments.

Grant Link: EPA Creating Resilience Water Utilities Program

Source 34: Environmental Protection Agency - Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act

Purpose: This resource focuses on funding initiatives that support water and wastewater infrastructure, aiming to accelerate investment through long-term, low-cost credit assistance for significant projects.

Type: Competitive / Loan

Eligibility Criteria: Local, State or Tribal Government, a Private Corporation, or a State Revolving Fund Program.

Grant Link: Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act

Source 35: Environmental Protection Agency – Water Technical Assistance

Purpose: Offers free water technical assistance to help communities identify water challenges and solutions, build capacity, and develop application materials to access water infrastructure funding.

Type: Technical Assistance

Eligibility Criteria: Utilities, municipalities, and tribes.

Grant Link: EPA Water Technical Assistance

Source 36: FEMA Public Assistance

Purpose: Provides supplemental grants to state, tribal, territorial, and local governments, and certain types of private non-profits so communities can quickly respond to and recover from major disasters or emergencies.

Type: Incident Based

Eligibility Criteria: State, territory, tribe, local government or private nonprofit organization.

Grant Link: FEMA Public Assistance

Source 37: NC Division of Water Resources (DWR) Water Resources Development Grant (WRDG) - State & Local Projects

Purpose: State & Local Projects provides cost-share grants and technical assistance to local governments.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: The purpose of the S&L portion of DWR's WRDG is to provide up to 50% cost-share funding of non-federal costs and technical assistance to units of local governments. It also provides 50% cost-share funding for conducting feasibility or engineering studies.

Grant Link: Division of Water Resources Water Resources Development Grant

Source 38: Renew NC Infrastructure Program

Purpose: Infrastructure resilience for disaster-impacted WNC communities.

Type: Incident Based

Eligibility Criteria: Local governments must be in HUD or State-Identified MID counties, and projects will be required to document link to disaster recovery needs.

Grant Link: Renew NC Infrastructure Program

Source 39: Rural Demolition Program

Purpose: Demolition of blighted, public buildings to encourage site redevelopment.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Local governments in NC Tier 1 or 2 counties, or in a rural census tract in Tier 3 county. 25% Cash Share.

Grant Link: Rural Demolition Program

Source 40: Rural Infrastructure Program

Purpose: Public infrastructure projects that will lead to creation of private-sector jobs.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Local governments in NC Tier 1 or 2 counties, or in a rural census tract in Tier 3 county. 5% cash match.

Grant Link: Rural Infrastructure Program

Source 41: Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation - Defense Community Infrastructure Program

Purpose: To support infrastructure projects benefiting military installations and their surrounding communities. Funding aims to address deficiencies in transportation, community support facilities, and utilities.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: State, county, and local governments.

Grant Link: Department of Defense Community Infrastructure Program

Source 42: U.S. Department of Energy Solar with Wildfire and Ecosystem Benefits 2

Purpose: To improve the outcomes of large-scale solar development for ecosystems, wildlife, and communities.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: State, County, local governments, for profit and non-profit organizations, institutions of higher education, Native American tribal organizations, small businesses, public housing authorities.

Grant Link: U.S. Department of Energy Solar with Wildfire and Ecosystem Benefits 2

Source 43: USDA Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program

Purpose: Provide affordable funding to develop essential community facilities in rural areas.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Public bodies, community-based non-profits, federally recognized tribes in rural areas with less than 20,000 residents. Funds may purchase, construct, or improve essential community facilities, equipment, and pay for project related expenses.

Grant Link: USDA Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant

Source 44: USDA Forest Service Hazardous Fuels Transportation Assistance Grants

Purpose: Support projects that remove hazardous fuels from national forests and grasslands to locations where the woody materials may be used for various wood products and services.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Nonprofit/for-profit entities, state and local governments, Tribal entities, education institutions. Projects must remove hazardous materials and/or demonstrate direct benefit to National Forest System Lands.

Grant Link: USDA Forest Service Hazardous Fuels Transportation Assistance Grants

Source 45: USDA Rural Development Emergency Community Water Assistance Grant

Purpose: Helps eligible communities prepare or recover from an emergency that threatens the availability of safe reliable drinking water.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: State and local governments, nonprofit organizations in Rural towns with populations <=10,000, tribal lands in rural areas, and colonias.

Grant Link: USDA Rural Development Emergency Community Water Assistance Grant

Source 46: USDA Rural Development Rural Decentralized Water Systems

Purpose: Provide grants to nonprofits to create revolving loan fund or to award sub-grants to homeowners for supporting access to individually owned water and wastewater services.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Non-profits with expertise promoting safe, productive use of individually owned household water wells systems. See fact sheet for additional eligibility requirements.

Grant Link: Rural Decentralized Water Systems Grant Program Fact Sheet

Source 47: USDA Rural Development Water & Waste Disposal Technical Assistance & Training Grants

Purpose: Helps qualified private nonprofits provide technical assistance and training to identify and evaluate solutions to water and waste problems.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Non-profits other than institutions of higher education. In rural areas and towns with populations of <=10,000.

Grant Link: USDA Rural Development Water & Waste Disposal Technical Assistance & Training Grants

Source 48: USDA Rural Development Water and Waste Disposal

Purpose: Helps eligible low-income communities plan and develop applications for proposed USDA Rural Development water or waste disposal projects.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: State and local governments, nonprofit organizations and federally recognized tribes. Rural areas and towns with populations of <=10,000, tribal lands, and colonias. 25% of project must come from applicant or third party.

Grant Link: USDA Rural Development Water and Waste Disposal Predevelopment Planning Grants

Source 49: USDA Rural Utilities Service Community Connect Grant Program

Purpose: Provide financial assistance to eligible applicants that will provide service at or above the broadband grant speed to all premises in rural, economically challenged communities where broadband service does not exist.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Incorporated organization, tribal organizations, state and local governments, or any other legal entity. Applicant must define contiguous geographic area located entirely within eligible rural area where broadband service does not exist.

Grant Link: USDA Rural Utility Service Community Connect Grant Program

Source 50: USDA Water & Waste Disposal Loan & Grant Program

Purpose: Provide funding for clean and reliable drinking water systems, sanitary sewage disposal, sanitary solid waste disposal, and storm water drainage to households and businesses ineligible areas.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Rural areas/towns with population >= 10,000, tribal lands, and colonias. Funds may be used to finance the acquisition, construction or improvement of drinking water sourcing, sewer and solid waste collection, storm water collection. For other eligible activities see fact sheet.

Grant Link: USDA Water & Waste Disposal Loan & Grant Fact Sheet

FOUNDATIONAL

Source 1: Environmental Protection Agency – Smart Growth Strategies for Disaster Resilience and Recovery

Purpose: Proactive investments in resilience include creating flexible land use policies, building public sector and private sector capabilities and partnerships and engaging the entire community in making decisions about the future.

Type: Technical Assistance

Eligibility Criteria: Local communities

Grant Link: Smart Growth Strategies for Disaster Resilience and Recovery

Source 2: EPA Smart Growth Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities

Purpose: Focus on mitigating urban heat islands in disproportionately affected neighborhoods.

Type: Technical Assistance

Eligibility Criteria: Local, county, tribal government aim partnership with a community group.

Grant Link: EPA Smart Growth Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities

Source 3: Department of Labor - Updated National Dislocated Worker Grant Program Guidance and Application Information

Purpose: The WIOA statute allows the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) to fund two types of DWGs: Disaster Recovery and Employment Recovery.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: For-Profit Organizations, Local Government & Authority, Nonprofit Organizations, Public/Private Institutions of Higher Education, State, Territory, Tribal.

Grant Link: Updated National Dislocated Worker Grant Program Guidance and Application Information

Source 4: FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program

Purpose: Provides funding to state, local, tribal and territorial governments so they can develop hazard mitigation plans and rebuild in a way that reduces, or mitigates, future disaster losses in their communities.

Type: Incident Based

Eligibility Criteria: State, local, tribal and territorial governments must develop and adopt hazard mitigation plans to receive funding for hazard mitigation project applications.

Grant Link: FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)

Source 5: Flood Mitigation Assistance Grant Program

Purpose: For projects that reduce or eliminate the risk of repetitive flood damage to buildings insured by the National Flood Insurance Program.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: State, territory, and local governments and federally recognized Tribal Nations.

Grant Link: FEMA Flood Mitigation Assistance Grant Program

Source 6: General Block Grant Authority

Purpose: To pay on losses due to adverse weather events for 2023 and 2024. General block grants will not duplicate assistance for which USDA covers a similar loss.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: States

Grant Link: General Block Grant Authority

Source 7: GSA Federal Surplus Personal Property Donation Program

Purpose: Enables certain nonfederal organizations to obtain personal property that the federal government no longer needs.

Type: N/A

Eligibility Criteria: State and public agencies, nonprofit educational and public health activities, nonprofit and public programs for the elderly, public airports, educational activities of special interest to armed services, veteran service organizations.

Grant Link: GSA Federal Surplus Personal Property Donation Program

Private Funding Opportunities Matrix

ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION

Source 1: Americana Foundation

Purpose: Supports educational/advocacy programs that address sustainable growth/ development of American agriculture/community food systems, conservation/ preservation of our natural resources, & protection/ presentation of expressions of America's heritage.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Nonprofit organizations 501(c)(3), Nonprofit organizations under the fiscal sponsorship of a 501(c)(3), or Municipal government entities, such as cities, townships, and villages.

Grant Link: Americana Foundation

Source 2: Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Support

Purpose: For counties within the Appalachian region, ARC provides funding for economic development and infrastructure recovery. Economic recovery initiatives, workforce development, and infrastructure improvement in disaster-affected areas.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: ARC awards grants to state and loca government entities (including counties, cities, towns, local development districts, school districts, public authorities and other governmental entities), Indian tribes, institutions of higher education and nonprofit organizations. Every state has a state program manager to oversee economic investments, in collaboration with ARC staff.

Grant Link: Appalachian Regional Commission Support

Source 3: Duke Energy Foundation

Purpose: The Duke Energy Foundation provides grants that focus on building vibrant economies; strengthening climate resiliency; and promoting opportunity and inclusion.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Tax-exempt status as a public charity under Section 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code or be a governmental entity, including school districts.

Grant Link: Duke Energy Foundation

Source 4: Invest Appalachia

Purpose: Flexible loans from the Invest Appalachia Fund. Investments may support fixed assets, equipment, real estate, facilities, construction, working capital, project finance, relending, and more.

Type: Loan

Eligibility Criteria: Located in or primarily serving the Central Appalachian Region. Align with IA's sectors of focus. Demonstrate meaningful revenue and repayment potential. Requests for non-repayable grants will not be considered. Investments range from $100,000 to $2,500,000 (with exceptions), terms of 1 – 6 years, and vary in interest rate and repayment structure.

Grant Link: Invest Appalachia

Source 5: Spark Good Local Grants

Purpose: Local grants are designed to support local organizations that meet the unique needs of the communities where Walmart operates.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Must serve the same service area that the facility they are requesting funding from serves. 501(c)(3) public charity, Government entity (non-501(c)(3)), School, Church or other faith-based organization with a proposed project that benefits the community at large, such as food pantries, soup kitchens and clothing closets and Deed verified.

Grant Link: Spark Good Local Grants

NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

Source 1: National Forest Foundation- Collaborative Capacity Program

Purpose: The Collaborative Capacity Program provides resources to support collaborative activities that increase wildfire resilience, recreation opportunities, forest health, and rural economies.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Federally recognized Tribal governments and Tribal organizations, nonprofit organizations, local government entities, colleges and universities.

Grant Link: National Forests Foundation Collaborative Capacity Program

Source 2: National Trust Preservation Funds: Emergency/Intervention Funding

Purpose: Funding is awarded in emergency situations when immediate/unanticipated work is needed to save a historic property or site - such as when a fire or other natural disaster strikes or if a building is immediately threatened with demolition.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Applicants must be either a public agency, 501(c) (3), or other nonprofit organization to be considered eligible.

Grant Link: National Trust Preservation Funds

Source 3: Peter H. Brink Leadership Fund

Purpose: This Fund helps to build the capacity of existing preservation organizations and encourages collaboration among these organizations by providing grants for mentoring and other peer-to-peer and direct organizational development and learning opportunities.

Type: Technical Assistance

Eligibility Criteria: Organizational Level Forum members or Main Street America members of the National Trust are eligible to apply for funding from the Peter H. Brink Leadership Fund grant program. Public agencies, 501(c)(3), and other nonprofit organizations are eligible.

Grant Link: Peter H. Brink Leadership Fund

Source 4: Wild East Action Fund

Purpose: The Wild East Action Fund offers multiple grant opportunities: Conservation Planning, Land Protection, and Community Resilience grants.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Tribal, State, or Local government entity/agency or a qualified 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Regional partnerships without 501(c)(3) nonprofit status may have a qualified 501(c)(3) apply on behalf of the partnership.

Grant Link: Wild East Action Fund

INFRASTRUCTURE AND ACCESS

Source 1: Engineers Without Borders USA, Community Engineering Corps

Purpose: Community Engineering Corps provides Advisory, Preliminary Engineering Report, Pre-design, Analysis & Assessment, Cost Estimate, and Training & Knowledge Transfer for any underserved or overburdened community looking for engineering assistance.

Type: Technical Assistance

Eligibility Criteria: "Community" could include municipalities, utility companies, nonprofits, or well-organized groups making change. This includes applications from any underserved or overburdened community looking for engineering assistance.

Grant Link: Community Engineering Corps

Source 2: National Rural Water Association (NRWA), Technical Assistance

Purpose: NRWA provides training and technical assistance to all eligible water and wastewater systems, regardless of membership.

Type: Technical Assistance

Eligibility Criteria: Small and rural communities across the country.

Grant Link: NRWA Technical Assistance

Source 3: Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project, Inc.'s (SERCAP) Community Development Loans

Purpose: Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project, Inc.'s (SERCAP) Community Development Loans provide financing for community development and economic development projects. Projects may include but are not limited to building acquisitions and/or renovations, construction, and land purchases.

Type: Loan

Eligibility Criteria: Local governments, public service authorities (PSAs), 501(C)3 nonprofit organizations, private agencies, user associations.

Grant Link: SERCAP Community Development Loans

Source 4: Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project, Inc.'s (SERCAP): Technical Assistance Water Wastewater Systems

Purpose: SERCAP's Regional Program provides Technical Assistance (TA) to support water/wastewater infrastructure projects, community development, and economic development. SERCAP's TA helps rural communities and water/wastewater systems to build capacity, become self-sustaining, and achieve or maintain compliance with local, state, and federal regulations.

Type: Technical Assistance

Eligibility Criteria: Rural communities, water/wastewater treatment facilities, public and private utilities, public service authorities (PSAs), planning district commissions (PDCs).

Grant Link: SERCAP Technical Assistance Water Wastewater Systems

Source 5: UNC Environmental Finance Center

Purpose: The UNC Environmental Finance Center offers free one-on-one technical assistance for small water systems.

Type: Technical Assistance

Eligibility Criteria: Services for EPA Region 4 (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee).

Grant Link: UNC Technical Assistance

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Source 1: American Logistics Aid Network (ALAN)

Purpose: ALAN is available to help connect government organizations with the supply chain information, expertise, equipment, services and support they need most so that they can do a more expedient and efficient job of providing humanitarian relief.

Type: Technical Assistance

Eligibility Criteria: ALAN specializes in supporting government organizations that are supplying disaster relief but are also available to help many other worthy departments that require logistics assistance, space or services.

Grant Link: American Logistics Aid Network

Source 2: Auto Club Group Foundation

Purpose: The Auto Club Group Foundation priorities grants for Traffic Safety, Financial Literacy, and Driver Education.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Nonprofit organizations, Municipal government entities, such as cities, townships, and villages, Law enforcement agencies, Fire Departments, Other First Responding Agencies, K-12 School Districts Colleges and Universities.

Grant Link: Auto Club Group Foundation

Source 3: Cannon Foundation

Purpose: The Cannon Foundation's areas of focus include Human Services, Higher Education, Healthcare, and Community.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Tax-exempt status or a governmental entity.

Grant Link: Cannon Foundation

Source 4: Community Foundation of Western North Carolina, Emergency and Disaster Response Fund

Purpose: Emergency and Disaster Response Fund. Priority will be given to the geographic areas most significantly affected by Helene. A limited number of grant opportunities are available, and applications will be invited until all available funds have been awarded.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: A community-based nonprofit designated by the IRS as 501(c)(3), a faith-based organization, or a public agency. Serving the following counties and areas in WNC, with preference given to those also located in: Avery, Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Rutherford, Transylvania, and Yancey counties.

Grant Link: Emergency and Disaster Response Fund

Source 5: Community Heart & Soul Seed Grants

Purpose: The Community Heart & Soul Seed Grant Program provides $10,000 in startup funding for resident-driven groups in small cities and towns across the United States to implement the Community Heart & Soul model.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Eligible applicants: 1) local government; 2) 501(c)(3) non-profit; 3) informal resident-led groups. Local governments can include town, city or county government agencies, or Tribes that are Federally recognized as provided under the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe Act of 1994.

Grant Link: Community Heart & Soul Seed Grants

Source 6: Dogwood Health Trust: Leverage Fund

Purpose: Grant writing assistance awards.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Additional eligibility for hurricane relief funding: Organizations with budgets over $5 million, Councils of Government (COGs), and municipalities that are: Located in one of the 12 counties most impacted by Hurricane Helene (Buncombe, Yancey, Mitchell, Avery, Henderson, McDowell, Rutherford, Madison, Polk, Burke, Haywood, and Transylvania) Seeking funding for hurricane relief and recovery efforts.

Grant Link: Dogwood Health Trust Leverage Fund

Source 7: Gary Sinise Foundation

Purpose: Grant requests are limited to Equipment and Training.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Law Enforcement Organizations, Fire Fighting Organizations, Emergency Medical Service Organizations, Search and Rescue Organizations.

Grant Link: Gary Sinise Foundation

Source 8: Hometown Grants

Purpose: Projects that foster local connections, like technology upgrades, outdoor spaces, the arts, and community centers. T-Mobile awards up to $50,000 for shovel-ready projects.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Elected officials, town managers/employees, tribal leaders, or nonprofit community leaders from small towns with population less than 50,000 can apply. Applicant's proposal must include plans, budget, timeline, anticipated impact, and up to five letters of support.

Grant Link: Hometown Grants

Source 9: Pine Gate Community Impact Fund

Purpose: The Pine Gate Community Impact Fund began as an employee-led initiative in response to Hurricane Helene to support the impacted communities where we live and work. By investing in projects and initiatives that benefit our neighbors, we aim to create a better future for everyone.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: Non-profit 501(c)(3) organizations. Parks and recreation, community emergency services, and certain municipality programs. Non-profit Organizations within geographic areas where Pine Gate employees live, work, or within the Pine Gate business footprint.

Grant Link: Pine Gate Community Impact Fund

Source 10: Sisters of Mercy of North Carolina Legacy

Purpose: Sisters of Mercy of North Carolina Legacy seeks to improve the quality of life for the economically poor, especially women, children, and elderly, by supporting effective education, health care and social service organizations that have systemic impact and empower those without a voice.

Type: Competitive

Eligibility Criteria: 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization or a governmental entity.

Grant Link: Sisters of Mercy of North Carolina Legacy

3. Project List

BUNCOMBE COUNTY

Affordable Housing Development **Page 60**

Work with selected developers to build affordable housing on county-owned property, including parcels on Coxe Avenue, Ferry Road, and Valley Street.

Buncombe County Food Security **Page 62**

Develop and implement a countywide initiative aimed at improving food security through strategic planning, local food system development, community partnerships, and emergency preparedness.

Code of Ordinance Amendments **Page 64**

Update County codes related to housing, economic development, and environmental resiliency, including modifications to the Flood Prevention Ordinance, creating progress towards joining the National Flood Insurance Program's (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS).

Commercial District Revitalization **Page 66**

Revitalize commercial districts damaged by Helene in unincorporated areas such as Barnardsville, Fairview, and Swannanoa to support commercial recovery, encourage economic opportunities and support jobs.

Community Memory Project **Page 68**

Implement "Come Hell or High Water" (CHHW) to collect, index, preserve and present records that convey the stories and impacts of Tropical Storm Helene while creating pathways for community reflection, and healing.

Community Organization Support **Page 70**

Enhance disaster preparedness, response, and recovery capacity by partnering with community-based organizations such as nonprofits, faith-based groups, and local initiatives that collaborate to address the needs of communities affected by disasters.

Community Risk Reduction Campaign **Page 72**

Implement a countywide risk reduction (CRR) campaign to promote emergency preparedness to increase community readiness and mitigate risks from future disasters.

Critical Facility Upgrades **Page 74**

Upfit critical public facilities for county operations with installation of floodproofing, wind hardening, and secondary power sources (such as backup batteries, generators, and solar systems) to ensure continuous operation before, during, and after future disasters.

Cultural Asset Restoration **Page 76**

Restore county parks, libraries, and community centers to address storm damages while enhancing and expanding cultural and recreational amenities.

Disaster Response Heavy Equipment **Page 78**

Evaluate Buncombe County's access to heavy equipment and enhance where needed through methods such as purchase, lease, contract, or mutual aid. Examples include debris removal vehicles and water rescue equipment to respond to emergency in both rural and urban environments.

Down Payment Assistance **Page 80**

Establish a down payment assistance program for low- and moderate-income households affected by Helene. Down payment assistance would provide loans to income-eligible homebuyers who have been permanently displaced due to the storm.

Emergency Operations Center **Page 82**

Construct a new, resilient facility to house an Emergency Operations Center for unified management, command and control of all disasters and emergency events affecting Buncombe County.

Emergency Shelter Facility **Page 84**

Construct a new multi-purpose facility to serve a year-round county use such as a recreation center, which converts to mass care shelter in the event of a disaster.

Fleet & Facilities Restoration **Page 86**

Conduct repairs and replacements to address damages from Tropical Storm Helene to county-owned fleet and facilities while incorporating mitigation measures to prevent damage from future disasters.

Home Repair **Page 88**

Implement a grant program to assist low- and moderate-income survivor households with home repair needs beyond what other disaster resources can meet.

Landslide Mitigation **Page 90**

Conduct assessments of landslides on county-owned and private property to identify imminent threats to life, property, and infrastructure. Seek mitigation or buyout opportunities through state and federal partnerships for qualifying slides on impacted properties to avoid future damage.

Mental Health Trainings & Support **Page 92**

Work with partners to develop and deliver a comprehensive plan for effective community mental health support during and after disaster events, including series of trauma-informed mental health support trainings for community members, first responders, educators, social service providers, and local businesses across the county.

Natural Hazard Monitoring **Page 94**

Implement environmental data tracking technology such as weather & air quality monitors, river gauges, and landslide monitors where applicable and effective to improve emergency notification, prevent loss of life, and support public health - particularly in high-risk areas.

Open Space Property **Page 96**

Create and implement a land use and management plan for hazard mitigation properties acquired by the county as a result of Tropical Storm Helene to ensure open space, natural resource conservation, floodplain management, and allowable recreational and agricultural uses.

Preparedness Action Plan **Page 98**

Implement recommendations from the County's Tropical Storm Helene Preparedness Action Plan to enhance organizational capacity to effectively respond to future disasters.

Public Art **Page 100**

Commission and install public art pieces across key public spaces in Buncombe County, focusing on neighborhoods, commercial corridors, and community gathering areas.

Public Safety Communications Resilience **Page 102**

Assess capabilities and perform resilience upgrades to critical public safety communications infrastructure - including solar for radio towers, community notification technology, backup systems, and satellite communication devices for emergency services and critical facilities.

Resilience Hubs **Page 104**

Add features to public facilities (e.g. libraries, community centers, schools) for resilience before, during, and after emergencies. Features may include alternative energy sources, telecommunications, wind hardening and floodproofing, water hookups and storage, enhanced air filtration systems, accessibility, and adaptable multi-use spaces.

Sewer Extension & Septic Mitigation **Page 106**

Work with partners to develop and implement plans for sewer system expansions, to include the removal of septic systems and package plants, generating environmental benefits and opportunities for economic development in unincorporated Buncombe County.

Skills, Training, & Employment Program (STEP) **Page 108**

Increase STEP enrollment and program graduation rates to serve Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients with opportunities to earn a living wage by offering reskilling through continuing education courses and living wage job access.

Small Business Grants **Page 110**

Provide financial support in the form of grants to small businesses that experienced negative economic impacts from Tropical Storm Helene, aiding their recovery.

Social Services Emergency Response Plan **Page 112**

Develop and implement an integrated social services disaster plan that ensures the effective and equitable delivery of social services to all residents of Buncombe County before, during, and after a disaster event.

Stream Stabilization **Page 114**

Undertake activities to stabilize and restore streambanks, to include both county property (such as the County's river parks) and private property (such as residential and farmland property).

Swannanoa Small Area & Resilience Plan **Page 116**

Engage the Swannanoa community in needs/priority assessment and the development of a framework to guide future development and public investments in this unincorporated area of Buncombe County that was severely impacted by Helene.

Vehicle Resilience **Page 118**

Assess and improve fuel and energy resiliency for Buncombe County business travel during times of emergency, such as expansion of mobile or fixed-location fuel storage and electric vehicle charging solutions.

Wildfire Protection Plans **Page 117**

Complete a comprehensive Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) for each of 19 fire districts to provide hazard and risk identification along with pre-planning for mitigation measures and response plans.

CITY OF ASHEVILLE

65 Ford Street Master Planning **Page 128**

Partner with experienced affordable housing developers to assess, plan, and build affordable housing on 30 acres of City-owned property in the Deaverview neighborhood.

Affordable Housing Plan **Page 130**

Implement the strategies outlined for Year 1 of the Affordable Housing Plan to provide affordable housing access throughout Asheville.

Assess Urban Land Institute (ULI) Recommendations **Page 132**

Review and make recommendations based on ULI's strategies for post-disaster economic recovery and long-term resiliency.

Azalea Parks and Infrastructure **Page 134**

Rebuild Swannanoa Riverfront to be a resilient public space that adapts to flooding and supports long-term community use and environmental health.

Biltmore Village Public Realm Restoration **Page 136**

Restore the historic public spaces of Biltmore Village to support the economic revitalization of the historic business neighborhood.

Community Space Upfit Project **Page 138**

Upgrade 5 community spaces with essential digital tools and infrastructure to support neighborhood cohesion, access to information during emergencies, and enhanced access to decision-making.

Coordinated Housing Access **Page 140**

Create a community-based comprehensive affordable housing access program to stabilize low-income, unhoused, and storm-displaced individuals.

Development of a Strategic Economic & Workforce Development Plan **Page 142**

Develop a strategic and comprehensive plan to address economic and workforce development to establish a clear vision of business support for long-term economic recovery and resilience.

Emergency Shelter Planning & Development **Page 144**

Partner with the Asheville-Buncombe Continuum of Care to develop and construct low-barrier shelter capacity and improve outcomes for unsheltered individuals and vulnerable populations.

French Broad Riverfront Parks **Page 146**

Restore the French Broad Riverfront with improvements to recreational areas using stormwater best management practices to enable a more resilient recovery and future use.

HMGP Private Property Acquisition Program **Page 148**

Create and implement a land use and management plan for hazard mitigation properties acquired by the city as a result of Tropical Storm Helene.

Large Scale Arts and Entertainment Facility Evaluation **Page 150**

Undertake a strategic exploratory process to assess the feasibility, potential sites, design concepts, and implementation options for a large arts and entertainment facility.

Living Asheville and Unified Development Ordinance Plan Updates **Page 152**

Update Living Asheville (Comprehensive Plan) and the Unified Development Ordinance to align with Asheville's goals of a resilient and sustainable city.

Multi-Family Housing Construction **Page 154**

New construction and rehabilitation of affordable multifamily housing to expand access to much-needed affordable units for residents.

Municipal Golf Course Restoration **Page 156**

Restore the Municipal golf course with upgrades for stormwater infrastructure and resiliency measures to protect the site from future damages.

North Fork Alternate Route Utility Protection **Page 158**

Create water system resilience with additional North Fork water lines to avoid the river valley erosion during storms.

North Fork & William DeBruhl Water Treatment Plant Improvements **Page 160**

Improve water treatment plants with pre-filtration process to mitigate water source quality issues during storms and other impacts on the watershed.

Relocate City Facilities **Page 162**

To strengthen community resilience, the City of Asheville plans to relocate key facilities, including the Transit Maintenance Garage and Parks Maintenance Facilities to more reliable and sustainable sites.

Resilience Hub Mapping **Page 164**

Planning efforts to develop a well-connected network of resilience hubs that will equip Asheville to respond more effectively to future disruptions.

Resilient Critical Facility Power Systems **Page 166**

Ensure continuity of operations and critical communications with the development of resilient back-up power systems for city facilities.

Revitalization of Flooded Commercial Corridors **Page 168**

Support the revitalization of flooded commercial districts that were physically impacted by the storm.

Scoping a Post-Helene Community Engagement Academy **Page 170**

Update the Community Engagement Academy (CEA) through a recovery lens to empower youth leadership, strengthen grassroots involvement, and build long-term community sustainability.

Small Business Support Program **Page 172**

Development of a small business assistance program to include financial, technical, and diversification investment to support Asheville's business community and provide greater resilience to the economy.

Solid Waste Master Plan **Page 174**

Update Solid Waste Master Plan to address infrastructure, growth, and climate-related impacts to the City's waste management system for improved resilience and efficacy.

State Partnership for Home Repairs **Page 176**

Create a partnership between the City of Asheville and State of North Carolina to use CDBG-DR funds to establish a low-income home repair and replacement program for qualifying Asheville residents.

Stormwater Infrastructure Improvements **Page 178**

Improve city-owned stormwater facilities with system upgrades and implementation of green infrastructure.

Swannanoa Road and Riverway Planning **Page 180**

Undertake a plan to study infrastructure improvements along the Swannanoa River Corridor between Biltmore Avenue and South Tunnel Road to mitigate repetitive flooding and promote sustainable development.

Urban Forest Master Plan **Page 182**

The Urban Forest Master Plan will assess and advise the city on ways to manage and maintain a strong urban forest and tree canopy.

Water Treatment Plant Feasibility Analysis **Page 184**

Conduct feasibility study for the design and construction of a fourth water treatment plan in response to growth, infrastructure needs, regulatory requirements, and climate-related risks.

Wilma Dykeman RiverWay Plan Update **Page 186**

Investigate opportunities to update the 2004 Wilma Dykeman RiverWay Plan to guide future investment and development.

Workforce Development **Page 188**

Develop a workforce development program targeting low- and middle-income individuals with training to build capacity in specific industries to support wider economic development, such as green infrastructure, construction, and trades.

TOWN OF BILTMORE FOREST

Emergency Operations Plan Update **Page 192**

Update the Emergency Operations Plan using best practices learned from Tropical Storm Helene.

Law Enforcement & Public Safety Facility **Page 194**

Design and construct a new Law Enforcement and Public Safety facility for Biltmore Forest to address the growing safety and emergency response needs of the community.

Stormwater Management Improvements **Page 196**

Update the current Stormwater Master Plan using post-Helene best practices and reassessed priorities for project implementation.

Stream & Forest Restoration **Page 198**

Restore the natural landscapes of Biltmore Forest with enhanced guidance for tree plantings, stream restoration, and land management.

Wildfire Prevention **Page 200**

Mitigate future wildfire risk through debris removal, community education, and Firewise program development.

TOWN OF BLACK MOUNTAIN

Communications **Page 204**

Enhance communications to provide more inclusive early warning alerts for the community during times of emergency.

Create Stormwater Management Corps **Page 206**

Develop a volunteer organization focused on stormwater management education and best practices for the implementation of community-wide stormwater awareness program.

Flat Creek Restoration **Page 208**

Stabilize and restore the Flat Creek streambanks damaged by Helene.

Park Development **Page 210**

Inventory property and set design standards for property acquired for parks and open space within the Floodplain of the Swannanoa River and Flat Creek.

Public Building and Equipment Replacement **Page 212**

Restore public buildings, facilities, and equipment to pre-disaster condition in the Town of Black Mountain.

Purchase Disaster Response Equipment **Page 214**

Create local weather stations for Black Mountain and purchase generators to provide emergency backup power for water systems and critical town facilities.

Resilient Stormwater infrastructure **Page 216**

Upgrade the community-wide stormwater system and develop programs for private landowners to encourage the implementation of green infrastructure.

Response, Recovery, and Resiliency Office **Page 218**

Introduce the Office of Response, Recovery, and Resilience for the Town of Black Mountain to implement disaster recovery and resiliency projects and programs guided by the core values of the community.

Risk Mitigation & Resilience **Page 220**

Inventory and assess property impact from Helene and update the Unified Development Ordinance to include increased standards for resilient development of private property.

Swannanoa River Flood Mitigation Projects **Page 222**

Mitigate future flood impacts through the engineered redesign of the Swannanoa River channel and dredging of Lake Tomahawk.

Tool Lending Library **Page 224**

Create a tool lending library for the purpose of easing the financial strain of home repair and maintenance for residents of Black Mountain.

Water System Improvements **Page 226**

Assess and improve the public water distribution system to build capacity and make it more resilient for future growth and emergency needs.

TOWN OF MONTREAT

Community Information Hubs **Page 230**

Develop a volunteer Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) to provide immediate disaster resources during community emergencies.

Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan **Page 232**

Develop a Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) to guide preparedness, response, and recovery for future community emergencies.

Incident Command System Training for Staff **Page 234**

Identify and train additional town employees to run Incident Command System during community emergencies.

Stormwater Ordinance Update **Page 236**

Update the Montreat Stormwater Ordinance to reflect best practices for municipal stormwater design and management, incorporating lessons learned from Tropical Storm Helene.

TOWN OF WEAVERVILLE

Eller Cove Watershed Fuel Load Removal **Page 240**

Identify funding and authorize contract services to clean up downed trees and other vegetation, which creates fuel load, in the Eller Cove Watershed to reduce wildfire risks.

Emergency Operations Plan **Page 242**

Develop and implement an Emergency Operations Plan and Incident Command Structure for future emergency response.

Expanding Open Space and Parks **Page 244**

Develop an interconnected park and trail system joining existing parklands such as Lake Louise and Main Street Park with Reems Creek Greenway between Beach Community Club and the French Broad River.

First Responder Mental Health Project **Page 246**

Provide a comprehensive mental health program specifically designed for Town of Weaverville first responders dealing with on-the-job trauma.

Local Business Support **Page 248**

Support arts recovery through the provision of gallery, workshop, and office space and the creation of a tool lending-library.

Main Street Nature Park Stormwater & Streambank Re-stabilization **Page 250**

Repair the streambanks in the Main Street Nature Park to restore and upgrade stormwater control measures damaged during Tropical Storm Helene.

Property Buyout **Page 252**

Implement a property acquisition program for flood-damaged property located in high-hazard areas and convert land to uses suitable for future flood mitigation and control.

Public Communication & Notification **Page 254**

Evaluate post-disaster lessons learned and plan to implement best practices for emergency communications and warning systems throughout Weaverville.

Public WiFi & Community Engagement **Page 256**

Expand Weaverville's public WiFi system to support future emergency communications and promote community engagement.

Resilience Hub **Page 258**

Develop a network of community locations to serve as emergency shelters, resource storage, and information sharing sites in time of community-wide emergencies.

Street and Sidewalk Evaluation & Repair **Page 260**

Create an inventory of streets and sidewalks in Weaverville with implementation of upgrades and improvements as necessary to provide greater resiliency against future disasters.

Urban Canopy Inventory & Enhancement **Page 262**

Create a tree inventory and a long-term strategy to enhance and protect the tree canopy on public and private land in Weaverville.

Water System Interconnection Project **Page 264**

Connect the Weaverville water distribution system to the systems in the City of Asheville and Woodfin to create emergency redundancies for greater resiliency in all three systems during emergencies.

Weaverville Water System Improvements **Page 266**

Upgrade water lines and install backup generators at critical water facilities to provide power to the water distribution system during times of emergencies.

TOWN OF WOODFIN

Affordable Housing **Page 270**

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

Disaster Partnership Planning **Page 272**

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

Economic Infrastructure Support **Page 274**

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

Emergency Communications Plan **Page 276**

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

Green Infrastructure **Page 278**

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

Green Space Development **Page 280**

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

Multi-modal Connectivity **Page 282**

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

Public-Private Partnerships **Page 284**

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

Resilience Hubs **Page 286**

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

Riverfront Park Restoration **Page 288**

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

Riverfront Resilience Plan **Page 290**

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

Stream & Riverbank Restoration **Page 292**

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

Tree Canopy Enhancement **Page 294**

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

Unified Development Ordinance Updates **Page 296**

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

Vulnerability Data **Page 298**

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

Weaverville Road Flood Mitigation **Page 300**

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

Wildfire and Flash Flood Risk Awareness Program **Page 302**

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

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1. FIGURES

Figure 1, page 10, Left:

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, (November 6, 2024), Weather patterns tapped Helene's moisture well before landfall, adapted from schematic by J. Cordeira. https://www.climate.gov/media/16585

Figure 1, page 10, Right:

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, (November 6, 2024), Clouds and rain stretch hundreds of miles north of Helen on September 26. https://www.climate.gov/media/16585

Figure 2, page 11:

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, (November 6, 2024) Estimated Rainfall Totals from Hurricane Helene. https://www.climate.gov/media/16584

Figure 3, page 19:

Federal Emergency Management Agency, (December 28, 2024) FEMA-4827-DR, North Carolina Disaster Declaration as of 12/18/2024. https://www.fema.gov/disaster/4827/designated-areas

Figure 4, page 29:

U.S. Census Bureau. (September 2025). NC Buncombe County Vector Map Green. https://data.census.gov/map

Figure 5, page 30:

Musser, K. (May 3, 2007). French Broad River Watershed. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Frenchbroadrivermap.png

Figure 6, page 32:

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2. PHOTOS

Chapter 1

- ***Hope even when the creek rises***

Title: Even When the Creek Rises

Description

On Oct. 10, 2024, an unusually powerful solar storm brought the aurora borealis far enough south that it was visible from Asheville. With much of the power still out, I was able to get pictures of the aurora over Foundy Street in Asheville's River Arts District, where my exhibition space was before the storm. This photo carries an eerie blend of emptiness and hope, evoking the dark, strange nights that followed the storm. But it reminds me that the darkness makes us recognize the light.

Citation: Reaves, T. "Even When the Creek Rises," Come Hell or High Water Community Memory Project, accessed September 6, 2025, https://helenehistory.omeka.net/items/show/1195.

Chapter 2

- ***The Mourning***

Citation: Moore, K. "The Mourning," Come Hell or High Water Community Memory Project, accessed September 6, 2025, https://helenehistory.omeka.net/items/show/978.

- ***Slay the Mic Vigil***

Citation: Grey, A. "Slay the Mic Vigil," STM Multimedia. Accessed September 15. 2025.

Chapter 4

- ***Thank you Letters***

Citation: Creasman, C.H. "Thank you to the Helpers," Come Hell or High Water Community Memory Project, accessed September 6, 2025, https://helenehistory.omeka.net/items/show/1114.

- ***Water Distribution***

Citation: Grey, A. "Water Distribution," STM Multimedia. Accessed September 15, 2025.

Chapter 5

- ***Damaged Roads***

Citation: Funderburgh, H. "Finding the Beauty," Come Hell or High Water Community Memory Project, accessed September 6, 2025, https://helenehistory.omeka.net/items/show/947.

Chapter 7

- ***Commercial District Revitalization***

Description

Swannanoa residents walk through devastating flood damage from the Swannanoa River. The remnants of Hurricane Helene caused widespread flooding, downed trees, and power outages in western North Carolina, on Sept. 29, 2024.

Citation: Long, T. Image. The News & Observer via Reuters, for PBS North Carolina. Published September 24, 2024. Accessed September 15, 2025.