Alexander County
2045 Comprehensive Plan
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While Alexander County is a rural oasis in its own right, it is skirted by natural beauty between its interior and neighboring counties, creating an interesting reality for those craving a short adventure in any direction. Just ask the locals, or in many cases, the transplants. Mountain beauty, laid back atmosphere, and rural charm appeal to both visitors and good people of Alexander County. Each of the many unique places has its own distinct opportunity for fun, adventure and discovery.

To describe why I like living in Alexander County, I would much rather take you for a ride to the Brushy Mountains and share with you a slice of an apple from one of our orchards to show first-hand why our apples taste the best. Then we would take on a short trip to historic Linney's Mill where we might imagine stepping back in time, hoping that the buckwheat pancake mix has not sold out. From there, we would drive south and cross the South Yadkin River before turning toward Rocky Face Mountain. Then I would tell you that I love the fact that the mighty Yadkin River has part of its origin in our county.

For a closer encounter with our county's wild beauty, I would suggest that we lace up our hiking shoes and take a trek up Rocky Face Mountain, or if we feel up to it, try climbing up

the "Stairway to Heaven," a rock face ascent at its maximum climbable incline. I would promise you that an afternoon on the mountain would probably offer up something unexpected, something special. I would point out to you Mt. Mitchell and Grandfather Mountain. And on a clear day, I would show you how to locate the barely visible tip of the summits of Table Rock and Hawksbill mountains three counties away, as well as the Charlotte skyline and Kings Mountain. An afternoon might even include a bald eagle sighting and I would show you the exact spot where I stood when I once spotted one. Regardless of the temperature, the black vultures would assure us that heat continuously rises from the granite dome as they spiral effortlessly upward.

To know what truly holds me here I would ask if you might consider grabbing a paddle and tell you that with near perfect conditions all year long, Lake Hickory is one of the best paddling and boating destinations in our region. One has not really experienced Alexander County until you get out on the water. I would let you know that my favorite time to paddle is early Sunday morning and during the first snowfall because there are very few boats then, and I have never seen another boat when paddling in the snow. For me, our county's natural beauty gets to my soul. Slipping my kayak into the water or hiking

a trail, I can explore the world from a new, less complicated and less hectic perspective. For all of nature seen and heard, how much goes unimagined? For every turn intended, how many have we taken wrong, overlooked, ignored amid everyday distractions? In these moments, I see my county as it truly is. A morning not worth losing flows by with the river and it's not often one hears snow settling on water, but it happens there…softly and quietly…and I am reminded that morning never seems so fresh and alive as in wet weather. Excitement overwhelms me as soon as I hear that first flock of migrating geese landing in the cove, or the eerie, haunting sound of that single lonely loon that returns every March. And I am reminded that our natural beauty reserves some of her choice gifts for days and mornings when my mood may be somber.

On the map, Alexander County is defined and somewhat square, though driving through you would hardly notice this boundary line or that highway; this bridge or that bridge tend to be nothing more than passage ways into other counties. Alexander County is much more than that.

Beyond a few strands of rusted wire an old barn groans, a farmer walks toward it, and a story walks with him. In the coolness of

morning, an old horse stands to the edge of the pasture, stretching its neck over the wire fence, as if it could see through the mist or just might want to be included in the farmer's story. To the left, a cornfield rises into the distance, dips, and rises again toward a blue sky. A small pile of rocks is purposely stacked in the center. In front, a whole mountain blossoms orange in autumn. In between a creek cascades over smooth stones then flows into a wood. What grows here and lives here is possessed with a beauty all its own, sometimes expected, but often unexpected. Of those that travel through on the local roads, few pay that cornfield any mind, even those with an eye for what blossoms may not notice. I have passed that way many times, and I look for that horse, and I can tell you I know where that creek flows and where that cornfield goes and how the maple trees glow in autumn. And I smile when I wonder what that rock pile implies.

-Bud Caywood, 2020

Introduction

The Alexander County Comprehensive Plan touches on almost every component of our quality of life. It addresses issues like public services, land use and flexibility, the natural environment and culture, and a variety of other facets that matter to Alexander County's citizens, visitors, and local businesses. A comprehensive plan is a document that identifies and distinguishes the county's vision for the future and determines its goals, objectives, and strategies that guide the decision-making process.

Alexander County is a rural county located in western North Carolina, with a population of approximately 37,000. The county is home to a diverse range of residents, with a rich history and cultural heritage. The county's residents and businesses contribute to the overall prosperity and quality of life of the community. However, the county faces challenges, such as creating new economic development opportunities, expanding access to quality higher education and healthcare, and encouraging the construction of affordable housing. The development and implementation of a comprehensive and equitable plan is vital to addressing these challenges and supporting the county's growth and prosperity.

A comprehensive plan is a long-term planning document that guides the physical, economic, and social development of a community. It sets out a vision for the future of the community and identifies the strategies, actions, and policies needed to achieve that vision. The purpose of a comprehensive plan is to ensure that the community is able to meet the current and future needs of its residents, businesses, and visitors, and to promote a high quality of life for all.

Comprehensive plans typically cover a wide range of topics, including land use, transportation, housing, economic development, natural and cultural resources, public facilities, and community services. The plan is developed through a participatory process that engages the community, stakeholders, and decision-makers in the planning process. This helps to ensure that the plan reflects the needs, goals, and values of the community.

The comprehensive plan serves as a blueprint for the community's growth and development. It provides guidance for decision-making on land use, zoning, infrastructure, and other issues that impact the community. It also serves as a tool for coordinating the efforts of different agencies and organizations that play a role in the community's development. By providing a long-term vision and roadmap for the community's future, the comprehensive plan helps to ensure that the community is able to adapt to change and respond to new opportunities and challenges.

In summary, a comprehensive plan is a vital tool for guiding the future development of a community. It sets out a vision for the future, identifies the strategies and actions needed to achieve that vision, and provides guidance for decision-making on issues that impact the community. By engaging the community in the planning process and providing a long-term roadmap for the community's future, a comprehensive plan helps to ensure that the community is able to meet the current and future needs of its residents, businesses, and visitors, and to promote a high quality of life for all.

Alexander County, located in the western part of North Carolina, was formed in 1847 from parts of Iredell, Caldwell, and Wilkes Counties. It was named after William Julius Alexander, a state senator who played a key role in the creation of the county. The county's history is closely tied to the development of the textile industry in North Carolina. The county's first major industry was the production of cotton and woolen textiles, which began in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The county's location along the Catawba River, which provided a source of hydropower, made it an attractive location for textile mills. The textile mills in Alexander County were mechanized by hydro-electric powered waterwheels incorporated into the mills constructed on the Upper Little River, the Middle Little River, the Lower Little River, and the Yadkin River. Hydroelectric power from the Catawba River powered homes after 1926.

In the mid-1900s, Alexander County experienced significant growth as the textile industry expanded. The county's population more than doubled between 1950 and 1960, and continued to grow throughout the rest of the century. The county's economy became more diverse over time, with the addition of new industries such as furniture manufacturing, healthcare, and tourism.

In recent years, Alexander County has continued to grow and develop, with a focus on building a strong and diversified economy. The county has invested in infrastructure improvements, such as the development of a new industrial park, and has worked to attract new businesses and industries to the area. The county has also focused on preserving its natural and cultural resources, including the development of a number of recreational and cultural attractions, such as Rocky Face Park and Courthouse Park.

Overall, Alexander County has a rich history that has been shaped by the growth and development of the textile and furniture industry, as well as by the county's efforts to build a strong and diversified economy and preserve its natural and cultural resources.

Demographics

Alexander County is part of the Hickory-Lenoir-Morganton Metropolitan Statistical Area. This area, also referred to as the Unifour, consists of Alexander, Burke, Caldwell and Catawba counties. Alexander is well connected to these surrounding communities via US Highway 64 and NC Highways 90, 16, and 127.

Population Changes and Trends

North Carolina as a whole is growing at a rapid pace. Population projections show the state could add 3.5 million people between July 1, 2021 to July 1, 2050.[*] This growth, however, is not occurring evenly throughout the state. Areas around urban centers are growing exponentially, while more rural county populations are projected to maintain or decrease in population over the next 20 years. Alexander County is bordered by areas of projected population growth to the south (Catawba) and east (Iredell), and by areas of projected population decline to the north (Wilkes) and west (Caldwell). (See Table 1.)

Iredell County is booming as a result of the urban expansion of the Charlotte Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). Charlotte was named #1 on Zillow's list of the 10 hottest housing markets for 2023.

Table 1: Growth Projections	2002-2022 Growth	2022-2042 Projected Growth
Alexander	5.3%	-0.3%
Burke	-3.2%	-0.2%
Caldwell	1.5%	-0.5%
Catawba	12.1%	15.8%
Iredell	49.3%	39.4%
Wilkes	-2.9%	-8.4%
North Carolina	27.7%	21.3%

Table 2: Population	2010 Population	2020 Population	2022 Estimates
Alexander	37,198	36,444	36,512
Catawba	154,358	160,610	163,462
Iredell	159,437	186,693	195,897

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[*] Dr. Michael Cline, North Carolina State Demographer https://carolinademography.cpc.unc.edu/2022/12/30/ncs-population-to-reach-14-0-million-by-2050

Likewise, Catawba County is seeing expansion around Hickory. Hickory was named in the US News and World Report's The 25 Best Places to Live in the U.S. in 2023-2024, which noted that, "Hickory is a fairly small metro area that's benefiting from growth as a result of bigger population boons in neighboring spots like Charlotte and Asheville."

Due to its location, Alexander County has the opportunity to see some of this growth spread into the county from both Iredell and Catawba. Growth could provide a larger tax base, an increased workforce, and attract more businesses and industries, but it could also lead to a loss of farmland, open spaces

and the rural character that is so important to Alexander County's residents. Planning to allow for concentrated development and growth in the Bethlehem, Hiddenite, Stony Point, and Taylorsville communities, while still protecting and preserving open spaces and farmland in the rest of the county will help achieve a good balance.

Aging Population

The ages represented within a population can have a significant impact on the needs and trends of a community. North Carolina's population is projected to trend

Table 3: Age Composition	% Of Populaiton
0-17	18.9%
18-24	7.8%
25-54	38.2%
55-64	14.2%
65+	20.9%

older as the baby boom generation ages. According to Dr. Michael Cline, state demographer for NC, "By 2029, one in five North Carolinians will be at least 65 years old and by 2031 there will be more older adults than children. The median age is predicted to rise from 39 in 2021 to 42 by 2050 (compared to 35 in 2000)."

Alexander County's median age is trending even older than the state as a whole, which is also fairly consistent with surrounding counties.

Table 4: Median Age	Age
Alexander	43.7
Burke	45.3
Caldwell	43.8
Catawba	41.4
Iredell	40.7
Wilkes	45.3
North Carolina	39.4

Over the past 20 years, the percentage of residents over the age of 65 has increased steadily and is projected to continue.

An aging population means more fixed income budgets, debilitating health conditions, and reduced mobility. "One of the primary mechanisms that localities can utilize to increase housing choices for seniors at all income levels is zoning to allow a variety of residential options, such as accessory dwelling units, multifamily housing, cohousing, and mixed-use developments. Promoting the development of these diverse housing options in close proximity to public transit facilities and within walkable and

pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods increases the mobility and independence of older adults."

Prioritizing affordable housing designed with accessibility and proximity to social activities, shopping, and healthcare will allow Alexander County seniors to maintain a good quality of life.

Economics

When comparing the incomes of Alexander County residents with neighboring counties, Alexander County falls somewhere in the middle with Iredell and Catawba having higher and Caldwell and Wilkes having lower median incomes.

When taking a closer look at the numbers by census tracts, we see that those nearest the more urban borders tend to have higher incomes.

One of the primary roles of economic

metrics collected by the census is to assess the overall economic health of a community. This includes indicators such as median household income, poverty rates, and employment levels. These metrics paint a picture of a community's prosperity, revealing whether it is thriving, facing economic challenges, or somewhere in between.

Understanding a community's economic status is essential for resource allocation. Federal, state, and local governments, as well as nonprofit organizations, use these metrics to determine where resources are most needed. For instance, areas with high poverty rates might receive additional funding for social support programs.

Public policy development heavily relies on economic metrics. Local and state governments use this data to shape policies related to taxation, education, infrastructure, and more. For example, a

Table 6: Census Tracts	Median Household Income	Mean Household Income	Family Median Household Income	Family Mean Household Income	Nonfamily Median Household Income	Nonfamily Mean Household Income	Per Capita Income
401	$49,313	$72,563	$61,563	$81,444	$33,097	$35,301	$26,295
402	$50,669	$64,755	$65,294	$69,465	$29,833	$49,560	$27,125
403	$51,290	$61,179	$59,861	$75,773	$26,635	$29,819	$24,650
404	$48,294	$63,048	$61,038	$78,858	$19,481	$28,519	$24,645
405	$63,355	$82,956	$70,000	$95,762	$24,147	$41,153	$30,742
406	$59,358	$79,500	$74,191	$89,856	$32,857	$41,806	$23,322
407	$64,956	$88,578	$75,500	$98,365	$48,140	$57,215	$33,938

region with a strong manufacturing sector might develop policies to support workforce training and infrastructure to attract similar industries.

Economic metrics also reveal disparities within communities. They identify pockets of poverty or areas with limited economic opportunities. This information is critical for developing targeted initiatives that address economic inequalities.

Economic metrics collected by the census are not just numbers on a spreadsheet; they are the lifeblood of a community's development and prosperity. These metrics serve as a roadmap for policymakers, businesses, and organizations, guiding

them to make informed decisions and investments. By providing a comprehensive snapshot of a community's economic status, they empower communities to address challenges, seize opportunities, and ultimately create a better future for their residents. The economic metrics from the census are far more than statistics; they are the foundation upon which a brighter, more prosperous community is built.

A map of Alexander County's census tracts can be found below which gives a geographical context to the numbers included above. The information provided in this chapter is only the tip of the iceberg, however, and those with interest can find great resources on the US Census website as well as the Office of the NC State Demographer.

Table 5: Income	Alexander	Burke	Caldwell	Catawba	Iredell	Wilkes	North Carolina
Median Household Income	$55,041	$55,529	$41,210	$56,603	$69,410	$43,933	$61,972
Poverty Rate	11.5%	13.8%	14.7%	14.1%	9.3%	19.5%	13.4%
Employment Rate	54.4%	54.2%	53.2%	55.6%	60.7%	46.7%	58.1%

Map 1: Census Tracts

Census tracts are geographic subdivisions used by national statistical agencies, like the United States Census Bureau, to facilitate the collection and analysis of detailed demographic and socioeconomic data.

These defined areas play a crucial role in organizing and reporting data from the decennial census and various surveys. Understanding what census tracts are and how they function is essential for researchers, policymakers, and businesses seeking to gain insights into specific communities and neighborhoods.

Census tracts are small, relatively permanent statistical subdivisions of a county or equivalent entity. They are designed to represent relatively homogeneous population characteristics within a given geographic area. Census tracts are typically defined based on population size, ensuring that they contain a roughly equal number of residents, which facilitates more accurate data analysis.

Census tracts are designed to group together populations with similar demographic and socioeconomic characteristics. This homogeneity allows for more precise data analysis. Each census tract has defined geographic boundaries, which can be based on natural features (e.g.,rivers, roads) or administrative lines (e.g., city or county borders).

The size of census tracts can vary significantly depending on population density. In densely populated urban areas, tracts may cover just a few city blocks, while in rural areas, they can encompass large expanses of land.

Policymakers rely on census tract data to design and implement policies that address the unique needs of different communities. These policies can range from planning and transportation to healthcare access and social services.

Businesses use census tract data to assess market demand, make location-based decisions (e.g., store openings), and understand the demographic characteristics of their target customer base.

Map 1 shows all of the census tracts for Alexander County.

Alexander County Census Tracts
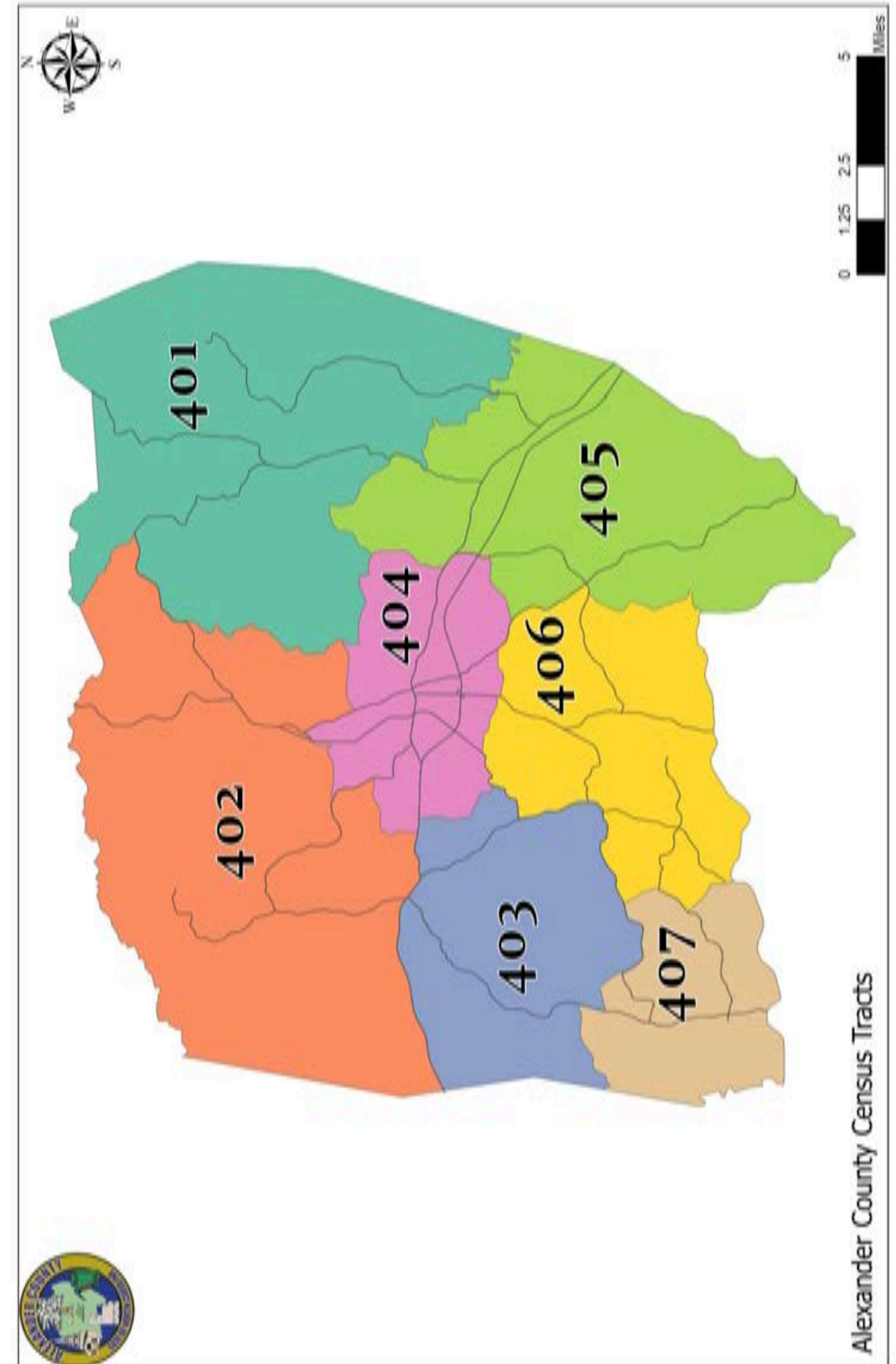
Map 2: Townships

Census townships, despite their name, are not administrative units or towns in the traditional sense.

Instead, they are a geographic delineation used by the United States Census Bureau for the purpose of collecting and organizing data during the decennial census. Understanding what census townships are and why they exist is crucial for accurately conducting population and housing counts and for efficient government planning and resource allocation.

These divisions are typically used in areas where there is no well-defined local government or administrative boundaries. Census townships are often found in rural or unincorporated areas and serve as a way to group households and residents for data collection and reporting purposes.

Census townships do not have any form of local government aside from the County, or administrative authority. They are purely statistical units used for data collection. Census townships can vary in size widely, from a few square miles to hundreds of square miles, depending on the population density of the area they cover.

Although they lack administrative authority, census townships have defined boundaries that are used for data collection. These boundaries are determined by the Census Bureau based on factors such as population density and natural geographic features.

Census data collected within these townships are used to allocate federal funds for various programs, such as education, healthcare, transportation, and housing, based on population and demographic characteristics. Census data from townships are also used for research and analysis by government agencies, academic institutions, businesses, and non-profit organizations to better understand population trends, social needs, and economic conditions.

Census data, including population counts from townships, are used to determine the allocation of seats in the U.S. House of Representatives, state legislatures, and local government bodies, ensuring fair political representation.

Map 2 shows the census designated townships for Alexander County.

Alexander County Townships
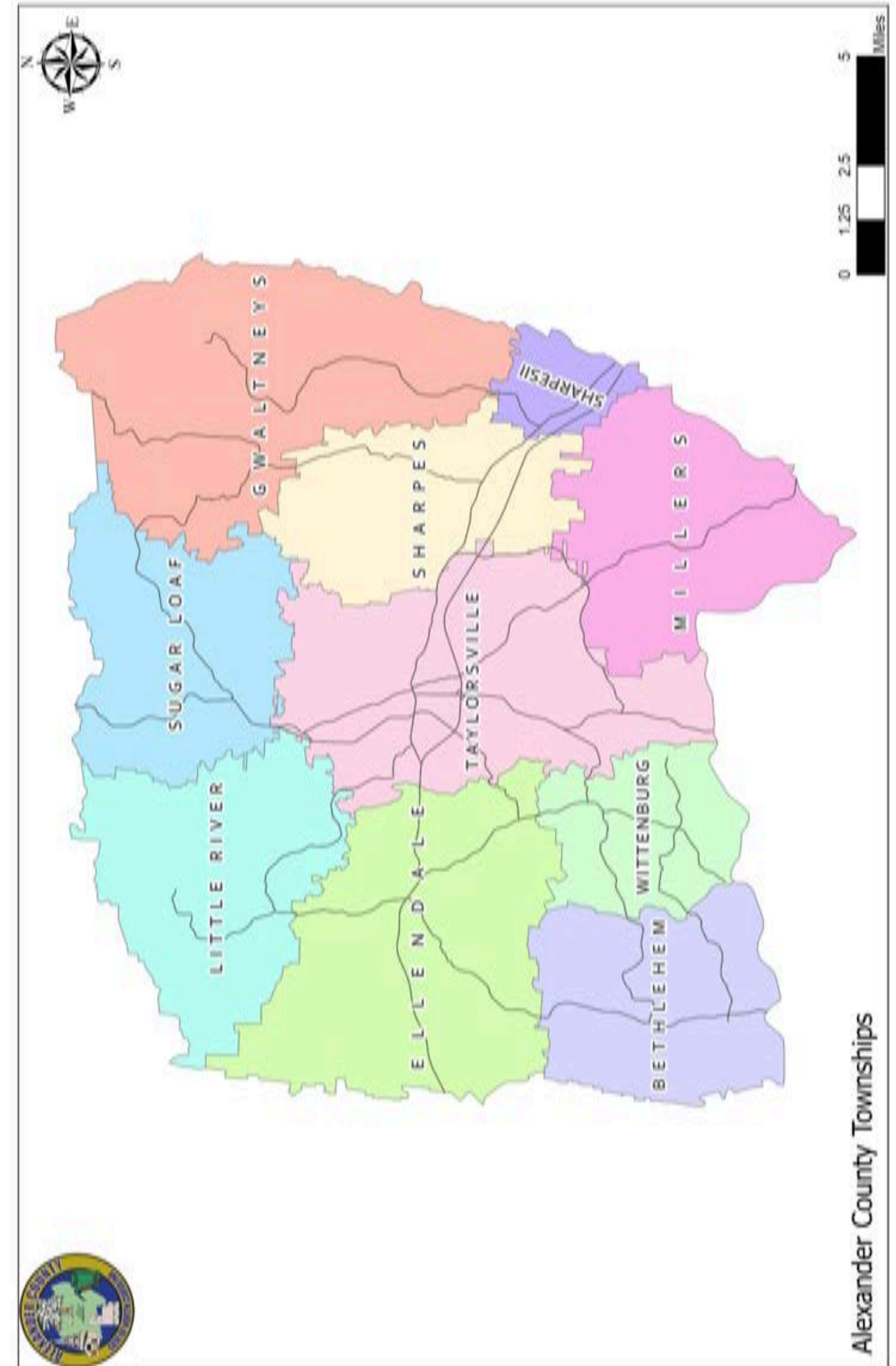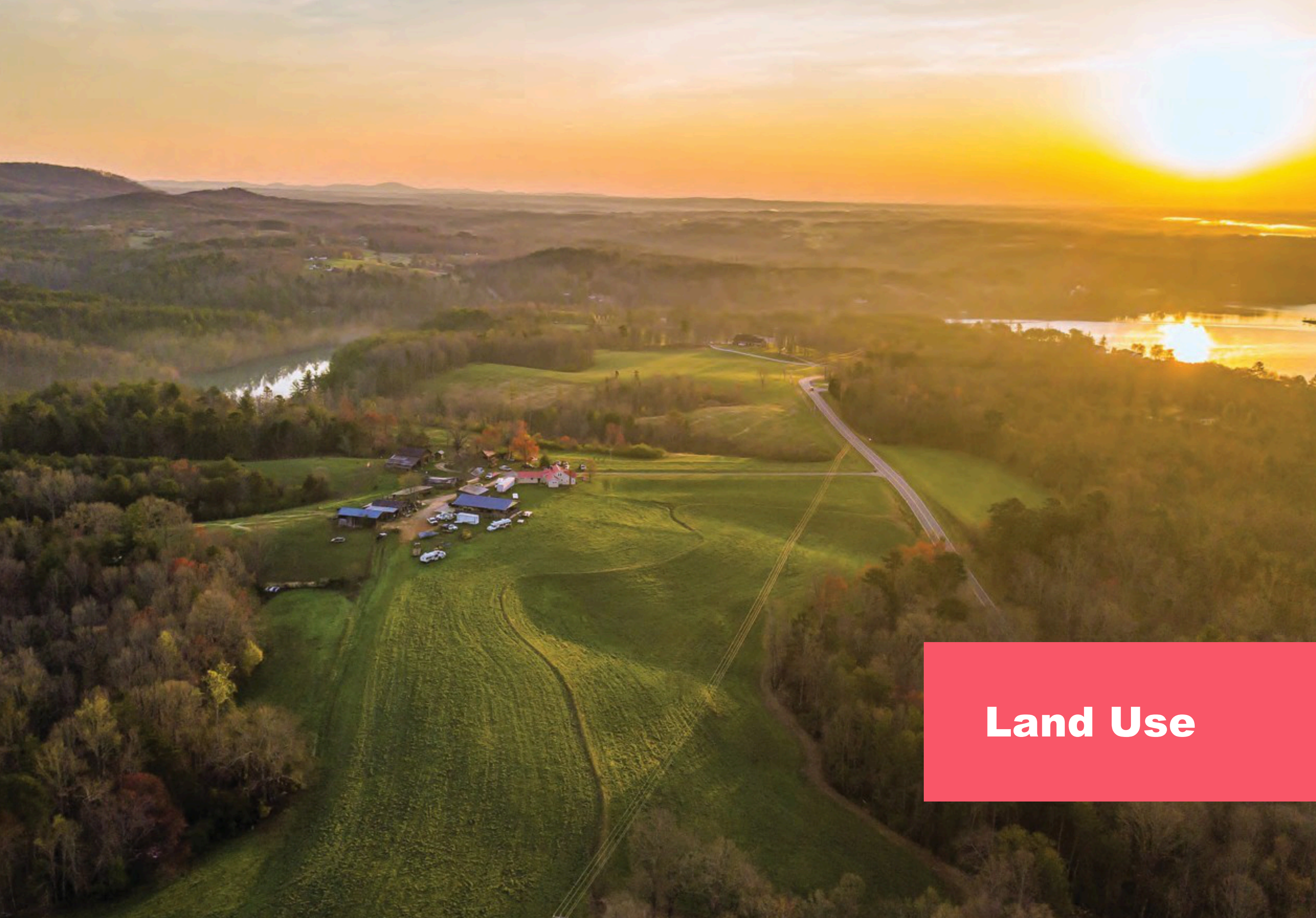
Land Use

Overview

Alexander County is home to a diverse range of land uses, including residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural. The County's land use patterns and development practices have a significant impact on the quality of life for residents and the overall prosperity of the community. However, the County faces challenges, such as a lack of coordination between land use and transportation planning, a lack of affordable housing, and a lack of open space and natural resource protection. The development and implementation of a comprehensive and equitable land use plan is vital to supporting the county's growth and prosperity.

Alexander County has had various planning efforts going back as far as the mid-1960s, and its first true zoning oprdinance was adopted in 1987. Much of the current zoning ordinance is a holdover from the originally adopted zoning ordinance, showing that land-use regulation has largely remained static in Alexander County for 40 years. Given the fairly low growth rate in the County during that time, it makes sense that these ordinances have held up. However, with development pressures approaching from Hickory, Lenoir, Wilkesboro, and Statesville, a new approach will be necessary to implement a comprehensive growth management strategy for Alexander County.

Public input regarding land use seemed to be fairly mixed (See Appendix 1). While some residents welcome growth for the additional services and business opportunities it brings, others are reluctant to see much change in the community they call home. A consistent desire to balance and strategically direct growth was expressed both through the public input survey as well as the in-person sessions. The overall desire of the community seems to be to encourage necessary growth in areas that can support it, but restrict development as much as possible in environmentally sensitive areas, rural communities, and agricultural lands. The standard practice used to help plan for and direct growth is to develop and implement a Future Land Use Map and strategy.

Public Input

The majority of respondents to the public survey expressed a neutral option about land use regulations. Survey participants were asked to rank the following land use protections by priority: schools, churches, public facilities (such as parks and libraries), residential, commercial, industrial, recreation facilities, and agriculture. Residential, schools, and agriculture came out slightly ahead, but overall the categories were fairly evenly divided. In a separate question, respondents overwhelmingly agreed that preserving agricultural land was important for the county. Over the next 20 years, the majority said they want a balance of growth and small town feel and would like to see an increase in restaurants and recreation.

Future Land Use

The County's land development policies and regulations will be designed to bring about the generalized vision of future development that is depicted on the Future Land Use Map. The Future Land Use Map is not intended to provide precise, parcel-level detail concerning future land use. Rather, it is intended to serve as a general guide for important infrastructure development, zoning, and other decisions.

The Future Land Use Map is intended to be dynamic and continually evolving with changing conditions. It should be revised upon adoption of Community Plans envisioned below. Also, it should be revised to reflect other important documents such as the schools, recreation, transportation, sewer / water, and economic development master plans envisioned within this Comprehensive Plan.

When considering the primary differences throughout the County, three geographically distinct levels of developability emerge: the Urban Services Area (USA), the Rural / Urban Transition Area (RTA), and the Rural / Agricultural Area (RAA). The County's development policies and regulations should shape the pattern and intensity of future growth in a manner that is consistent with the characteristics of each of these areas, a practice known as a growth management strategy. The growth management strategy is depicted on the Future Land Use Map and summarized below.

Map 3: Future Land Use

A Future Land Use Map is a graphical representation of how a community or region intends to utilize its land over a specified planning horizon, often spanning 10, 20, or even 50 years into the future.

A Future Land Use Map (FLUM) is a fundamental component of urban and regional planning, providing a simple visual representation of a local government's long-term vision for land development and land use patterns. It is a planning tool that helps guide and manage growth and development in a sustainable and organized manner. A FLUM serves several crucial purposes, making it an indispensable resource for communities and local governments. It divides the area into different zones or land use categories, each designated for specific types of development or land use, such as residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, recreational, or conservation areas.

One of the primary purposes of a FLUM is to provide a framework for long-term planning. It helps communities envision how they want to grow and develop over time, ensuring that development aligns with their goals and aspirations. FLUMs serve as the basis for zoning and land use regulations. Zoning ordinances and codes are often developed to align with the land use categories defined in the FLUM. This ensures that development and land use activities are consistent with the

community's vision.

Planning infrastructure like roads, utilities, and public services (schools, parks, fire stations) requires knowledge of where development is likely to occur. The FLUM assists in the efficient allocation of resources for infrastructure development and maintenance. A well-structured FLUM can help identify and protect environmentally sensitive areas, such as wetlands, floodplains, and critical habitats. It guides decision-makers in avoiding or mitigating potential adverse impacts on natural resources.

Businesses often rely on the FLUM to make informed decisions about where to locate or expand. It can help attract commercial and industrial development that aligns with the community's economic goals.

In cases where conflicts arise over land use or development proposals, the FLUM can serve as a reference point for resolving disputes. It provides a clear, documented vision for land use that can help mediate disagreements.

Alexander County Future Land Use 2023
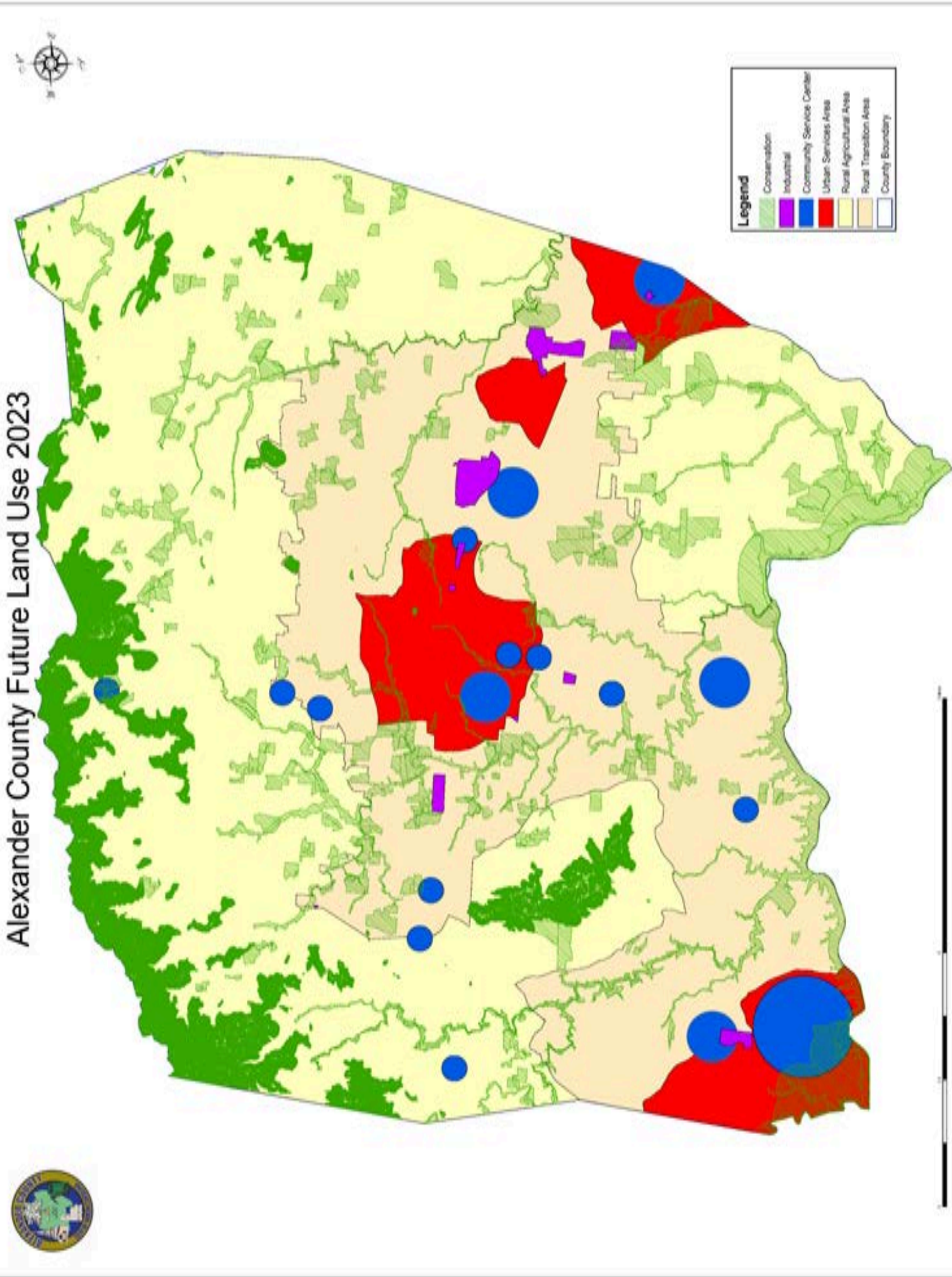
Urban Services Area (USA)

The following is a description of the patterns of development envisioned within the USA.

1. The Urban Services Area is that area within which most urban services and urban-scale development is currently concentrated, and within which such development should generally be concentrated through the year 2045.

2. Growth and development will be proactively managed through extensive planning. Much of the USA falls near a municipal planning jurisdiction (namely Taylorsville) and will be managed by that jurisdiction. Land use planning for areas falling within the County's jurisdiction should be comparable and compatible in its approach and intensity with planning conducted within the various nearby municipal jurisdictions.

3. Wide ranges of residential densities will exist. Over the long term, land use regulations and policies should favor higher density development, consistent with natural constraints and the availability of urban services. At the same time, policies and regulations should protect existing less-intensely developed communities.

4. The USA will contain considerable commercial development at a mixture of scales: Local, Community, and Regional, as defined below. In particular, all Regional Commercial development should be concentrated here. Commercial development will exist within predefined zoning districts whose standards and configuration are in keeping with the surrounding community.

5. The USA will contain virtually all existing and future industrial development and will be the focus of future economic development activities. Industrial development will exist within predefined zoning districts whose standards and configuration are in keeping with the surrounding community.

6. The County's economic development activities should be pursued within the USA.

7. Substantial investments in affordable housing development should occur within the USA.

8. Public schools should be developed within the USA whenever possible.

9. Development within the USA should be accessible by roads which are developed to urban standards, with capacities to accommodate increasingly complex volumes of traffic. Access along roads should be managed appropriately.

10. Most public investments in transit and greenways should be focused upon the USA through 2045.

11. New development should be designed with pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle access in mind.

12. Transportation planning should be conducted within a regional framework, with active participation by all units of local government within the Urban Services Area.

13. Land use planning should acknowledge the presence of sensitive natural areas such as floodplains, wetlands, areas of excessively steep topography, and other natural and cultural assets, and should strive to protect these areas from development that would damage them or diminish their integrity.

14. Sewer and water infrastructure investments should be focused within the USA first and foremost. Priority should be given to economic development sites, commercial districts, dense residential areas, schools, and existing areas prone to septic failure within the USA. Investments in sewer and water infrastructure outside of the USA should be made cautiously.

15. The precise extent of the USA and the Rural / Urban Transition Area (RTA; see below) should be periodically reviewed in light of any changes in sewer and water capacity or other factors. As urban densities within the USA and development pressures within the RTA increase and as sewer and water capacities within the RTA are developed, areas of the RTA should be pulled into the USA, and allowable densities substantially increased.

16. Farmland protection measures should be aggressively pursued within the USA.

Rural / Urban Transition Area (RTA)

The following is a description of the patterns of development envisioned within the RTA.

1. The RTA is currently rural in character, with existing pockets of limited higher density residential and commercial development. Slopes vary across the RTA, although the area can be considered to be generally developable. The primary factor preventing urban development in the RTA is the absence of sewer and water service. The RTA will continue to experience extensive development over the operational timeframe of this Comprehensive Plan.

2. Population and residential densities should be generally lower than the more urban population densities found within the USA and should be generally in keeping with topography, septic limitations, and school and transportation capacities. Land development ordinances in the RTA should strive for a general, average density of 4 or fewer residential dwelling units per acre. Actual densities as defined by zoning requirements should vary across the RTA according to constraints and community characteristics. As infrastructure is expanded and becomes available, the RTA should have an average density no more than 4 units per acre.

3. At the same time, it should be recognized that growth has steadily increased in the RTA during the preceding decade and that the RTA will remain in a state of transition and will absorb much of the development pressure in

the USA. As such, it will be necessary to allow for more dense development where appropriate.

4. Land uses should be regulated via rigorous regulations in much the same way as in the USA, albeit at lower densities.

5. Land use policies and regulations will encourage moderate to low-density residential development that is consistent with a rural setting, with more dense residential development around defined Community Service Centers. Community Service Centers are located at key nodes / intersections and traditional locations and within predefined zoning districts whose standards and configuration are in keeping with the surrounding community and which minimize congestion and sprawl (see definition below).

6. Clustering and conservation design will be encouraged with the intent of maintaining a rural environment, protecting sensitive natural areas, and reserving land for future development with the expansion of the USA.

7. Commercial development and community facilities (see definition below) will be encouraged within defined Community Service Centers (see definition below). Commercial development will be at Local and Community scales (see definitions below), while Regional Commercial development will be strongly discouraged within the RTA.

8. At the present time, much of the RTA does not have sewer or water services. Future

expansions of sewer and water infrastructure into the RTA should be consistent with the Sewer and Water Master Plan as envisioned in the Public Facilities chapter of this Comprehensive Plan and should be timed to coincide with deliberate expansions of the USA.

9. The Residential-Agriculture Zoning district covers much of the RTA. While the basic structure of Residential-Agriculture Zoning may remain, certain established residential communities should be protected with more traditional zoning.

10. Public economic development investments should be focused within the USA, although economic development activities may take place within the RTA in limited form, within properly zoned areas. Most Industrial and Regional Commercial land uses should be discouraged, except in limited circumstances.

11. Land use planning should acknowledge the presence of sensitive natural areas such as floodplains, wetlands, areas of excessively steep topography, and other natural and cultural assets, and should strive to protect these areas from development which would damage such resources or diminish their integrity.

12. Substantial incentives should be incorporated into the County's land development ordinances in order to encourage the protection of sensitive natural areas and key farmland.

13. Farmland protection measures should be aggressively pursued within the RTA.

14. The precise extent of the USA and RTA should be periodically reviewed in light of any changes in sewer and water capacity or other factors. As urban densities within the USA and development pressures within the RTA increase and as sewer and water capacities within the RTA are developed, areas of the RTA should be pulled into the USA and allowable densities substantially increased.

15. Limited public transportation within the RTA should be focused on defined Community Service Centers.

Rural / Agriculture Areas (RAA)

The following is a description of the patterns of development envisioned within the RAA:

1. The RAA covers those portions of the county that are predominantly rural and are characterized by low-density residential development with substantial land areas devoted to agriculture and undeveloped lands. Land use policies will seek to retain that character.

2. Slopes may be steep, often exceeding 10%, with significant areas greater than 20%.

3. Most sections of the RAA are so far from sewer services as to make their extension largely impossible. Land development regulations should recognize this by not permitting densities that would require sewer

services or introduce traffic capacity problems and by encouraging densities that are consistent with steep slopes, poor septic capacities, and sensitive topography.

4. Densities should be considerably lower than that of the USA or the RTA. The suitability of land within these regions of the county should be a principal consideration in determining developmental densities and segregation of incompatible land uses. Land development ordinances in the RAA should strive for a general, average density of 1½ or more acres per residential dwelling unit, but due to topography and land use constraints, some areas in the RAA should have densities of 1 unit per 5 or more acres. Actual densities as defined by zoning requirements should vary across the RAA according to constraints and community characteristics.

5. Extraordinary care should be taken in these areas to preserve their rural character and to protect valuable farmlands as well as environmental and cultural resources. Farmland protection measures should be aggressively pursued within the RAA.

6. Land use planning should acknowledge the presence of sensitive natural areas such as floodplains, wetlands, areas of excessively steep topography, and other natural and cultural assets, and should strive to protect these areas from development which would damage such resources or diminish their integrity.

7. The Residential-Agriculture Zoning district covers much of the RAA. While the basic structure of the Residential-Agriculture Zoning district may remain, certain established residential communities should be protected with more traditional zoning.

8. Commercial development and Community Facilities will be directed to defined Community Service Centers (see below), which are located at key nodes / intersections and traditional locations, and within predefined zoning districts whose standards and configuration are in keeping with the surrounding community and which minimize congestion and sprawl. Commercial development will be of a Local and Community commercial nature, and most Industrial and Regional Commercial land uses should be prohibited. Economic development activities will be largely discouraged in the RAA.

9. Sewer and water development (including private waste treatment, or "package" plants) in the RAA should be generally discouraged.

10. Only very limited, formal, project-based affordable housing development should take place.

11. Limited public transportation within the RAA should be focused to defined Community Service Centers (see below).

Conservation

This category includes land areas that are intended to remain largely in their natural state, with only limited development. Such areas should be targeted for protection through regulations and incentives. Conservation areas are lands that generally exhibit any of the following characteristics:

1. Sensitive natural areas such as steep slopes, floodplains, major wetlands, forest reserves and wildlife conservation areas, and key watersheds.

2. Areas of historic and archeological significance.

3. Local, state or federally-managed natural areas.

4. Areas managed for agricultural or forestry land uses.

5. Other areas yet to be defined.

Community Service Centers

Community Service Centers are intended to be intensive, efficient, defined concentrations of mixed services that meet the needs of the surrounding community and defined service areas. Community Service Centers are appropriate for a mixture of commercial uses scaled to the service area in question; residential uses of varying densities depending upon available services; and Community Facilities such as schools, parks, community

centers, and other similar Community Facilities. The mixture and intensity of land uses contained within Community Service Centers are intended to be appropriate within the context of the surrounding community and intended service area. Community Service Centers should also be properly controlled by appropriate aesthetic standards, access management standards, and other appropriate development control measures.

Community Service Centers are located in unified development concentrations at intersections of selected thoroughfares and in central locations that are convenient to nearby residential development so as to minimize problems associated with "strip" commercial development. Community Service Centers should be priority targets of investments for sewer and water, public transportation, greenways, other general road improvements, and other appropriate infrastructural improvements. Numerous Community Service Centers are identified on the Future Land Use Map. Other Community Service Centers throughout the county remain to be identified via the Community Planning process envisioned in Strategy 5.4.1. The following are descriptions of general land uses that should be located within Community Service Centers.

Community Facilities: Sites and uses that generally serve their immediate surrounding community. This can range from schools and public services to churches and community centers.

Local Commercial areas are located within defined Community Service Centers. They serve small market areas and are intended to be located within the residential neighborhoods that they serve. They contain a range of commercial uses that can be safely intermixed with residential uses. They are pedestrian- friendly areas that typically generate fairly low traffic volumes and can be located along minor residential streets. Public utilities are strongly encouraged but not necessarily required. The range of uses permitted within a Local Commercial area should be compatible with available utilities and infrastructure. They include a variety of retail sales and services, public and private administrations, offices and all other uses done primarily for sale or profit on a local or neighborhood scale. They should be compatible with adjacent development and the surrounding community and should minimize congestion and sprawl.

Regional Commercial areas are located within defined Community Service Centers. Regional Commercial areas can overlap with Industrial areas given proper design. While internally pedestrian-friendly on a project basis, they are intended to service a regional market area. As such, they generate high volumes of traffic and are located along major roadways. Public utilities are required. They should include a variety of retail sales and services, public and private administrations, offices and all other uses done primarily for sale or profit on the local, community, and regional level. They should be compatible with adjacent development and the surrounding community and should minimize congestion and sprawl.

Commercial and Community Facilities uses are not represented individually on the Future Land Use Map. Rather, they are depicted in generalized form within defined Community Service Centers. Whenever practical, the Future Land Use Map should be updated to depict commercial and community facilities land uses as Community Plans and other land use and master planning documents are developed.

Industrial

Most defined industrial areas should lie within the Urban Services Area, and in other areas on a very limited basis. Most industrial uses should be segregated from other uses with the exception of Regional Commercial uses. Industrial areas depicted on the Future Land Use Map are derived from existing industrial zoning districts. It is intended that the Countywide Community Plans will further refine the location, extent, and intensity of future industrial areas.

Goal 1: Adopt land use regulations that are clear, equitable, and reasonably focused on addressing the needs of Alexander County.

As mentioned above, the first true zoning ordinance adopted by Alexander County was in 1987. Zoning ordinances should be living documents, changing to meet the needs and transitions of the County as they arise, and after thirty-six years it would seem that the County's zoning ordinance has earned its retirement. While the County's other land use ordinances don't appear to date back quite as far as the zoning ordinance, the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance, and Watershed Ordinance are all due for updates to either comply with state minimum standards or improve service to residents.

In the effort to simplify these regulatory documents, the development of a Land Development Code should also be undertaken. This is a document that will house all of the above mentioned ordinances, but in one, internally consistent ordinance. Rather than having residents and developers forced to look between a handful of documents to find information they need, a Land Development Code will have clearly organized "Articles" that pertain to varying types of development standards.

This should be a document that is searchable, and hosted on the County's website for ease of use.

In order to avoid future stagnation and non-compliance with state laws, staff should be tasked with at least one annual review of the County's ordinances to ensure that emerging issues, recent legislative changes, and service gaps are being addressed in a timely manner. Any changes found to be necessary should be packaged into a regularly occurring text amendment process. Additionally, in order to keep staff apprised of legislative changes, updates in best practices, and creative land use solutions to common problems, training and educational opportunities should remain a priority for the County.

Goal 2: Promote the development of a diversified and balanced mix of land uses in the county.

Alexander County currently uses a kind of zoning called "Euclidean Zoning". This is a kind of zoning that sets strict separation between land uses. [*]There are pros and cons to this kind of zoning practice, but a significant downside to euclidean zoning is inefficiency. Where historically small scale businesses and residences found a somewhat symbiotic relationship near each other, euclidean zoning forced these businesses to move further and further from residential uses, increasing traffic and travel times in communities that saw this change. While more rural areas may not see much benefit from a more mixed use focus, community service centers and urban service areas (see above) should be considered prime candidates for greater efficiencies through mixed use development. Walkable neighborhoods with pedestrian access to low-impact services such as restaurants, light shopping, or healthcare not only create desirable homes for residents, but also reduce strain on utilities, transportation networks, and public services. To this end and where appropriate the County should allow for mixed-use and infill development and incentivize this kind of development through reduced setbacks, higher density allowances, and other methods.

This approach will not be appropriate for all parts of Alexander County, however. Land use regulations should be sensitive to the context of our communities. Understanding the needs of a particular reason, and including those needs when making land use decisions, should be of utmost importance to the County. Neighborhoods with large senior populations, for example, should be supported by appropriate neighboring land uses, such as health care and accessible facilities. Neighborhoods with families of varying ages should have improved access to resources such as schools and recreation. While this is not something a zoning ordinance can wholly control, context should always be a consideration in the decision making process.

[*]*For more information on the history and details of Euclidean Zoning see "Zoned in the USA: The Origins and Implications of American Land-Use Regulation" by Sonia A. Hirt, 2014.*

Goal 2: Promote the development of a diversified and balanced mix of land uses in the county. (Cont'd.)

Residential standards should be flexible enough to meet the needs of the community while still providing the benefits of a well-planned County.

One creative strategy that small and medium sized communities have used to help support the development of small businesses is to designate a "pop-up shop" site. These are locations that have otherwise remained un- or underutilized near commercial cores with small, typically mobile shelters (such as sheds, tents, chalets, etc.) that can be rented at a low cost to local entrepreneurs to serve as their storefront. This serves as a way for potential business owners with little access to startup capital to earn money from their product or service, gain experience, and gain a customer base so that they can later move onto building or leasing more traditional spaces within the community. In communities that have used this strategy it is not uncommon for these businesses to later fill vacant downtown spaces with their new companies.

In the case of incompatible uses locating in close proximity to each other, appropriate protections must be in place. While this should be discouraged and planned for, there will always be select situations where conflict between uses is unavoidable. Tools such as buffering, increased setbacks, and impact mitigation should be in place to reduce conflicts in these situations. In order to preempt these situations, however, careful consideration should go into where zoning districts are placed in relation to each other. Smooth transitions between high, medium, and low intensity should be created wherever possible when developing the County's zoning map.

Goal 3: Direct growth to areas where essential services and infrastructure are present, and protect sensitive natural areas and key historic / cultural resources from extensive development.

An invaluable tool in directing growth to appropriate areas is the Future Land Use Map. This is not a parcel-specific map, but rather one that communicates a desired intensity in any given part of the County. When considering rezonings, the staff, the Planning Board, and Board of Commissioners should take this map into consideration. High intensity zoning districts should be discouraged in areas identified for low intensity development on the Future Land Use Map. Not only does this create a more predictable, well communicated development pattern for developers and residents to review, but also makes strategic planning for public services much simpler; knowing where growth is likely to focus takes out much of the reactive nature of facilities and service planning. The use of a Future Land Use Map has the additional benefit of communicating to industry and business where utilities will be focused. A new business or employer who depends on foot traffic or visibility for their success can identify ideal locations based on anticipated growth patterns with reasonable confidence. Similarly, businesses that may need more space or buffering in order to operate without impact to the neighboring community can reasonably avoid centers that

are likely to grow into future conflicting land uses. To this end, the Future Land Use Map should be widely available to the public, with educational resources on the use and purpose of the map offered as much as possible. From economic development, residential development, and even planning for future schools, this map should be consulted as a guide for making strategic decisions.

Adaptive reuse becomes an important key to growth under this growth management strategy as well. Rather than supporting the unlimited expansion of business and industry into areas better left protected, efforts should be made to encourage adaptive reuse of structures and locations that have been underutilized or abandoned. Incentives to help restore a structure or site for future development should be considered as a means to keep development where it has already been planned and provided for. An inventory of such sites should be pursued and promoted when new or existing businesses seek to locate or expand within Alexander County.

Goal 4: Aim to mitigate common negative impacts of new development.

Access management is "the proactive management of vehicular access points to land parcels adjacent to all manner of roadways. Good access management promotes safe and efficient use of the transportation network." *Put simply, access management makes transportation more predictable, orderly, and safe. By giving thought to where potential conflict points on roadways may arise, where congestion might begin, or where confusion on where a property should be accessed, we can identify ways to design access points that improve safety and travel experience. Adopting policies that can be implemented during the development stages of new construction ensures that consideration is given to avoiding common, predictable problems. An example of an access management strategy with proven success throughout the nation is the encouragement of shared driveways. If several businesses are all located on neighboring parcels there is the potential for several access points very close to each other. This creates a "start and stop" traffic flow as customers all make their way to various shopping sites. Businesses who agree to share one access

* *https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/access_mgmt/what_is_ accsmgmt.htm*

point, however, create only one potential slowdown on the road they front, and redirect their customers in a slower (and therefore safer) manner away from high speed traffic.

Strategies such as this should be a part of the development approval process. Reviewers should give consideration to site context, and not prescribe "one size fits all solutions", rather encourage a "toolbox" of access management strategies that offer new development solutions that meet their specific needs. These policies should consider the type of development (residential, commercial, industrial), the roads the development will front on, and the expected demand once the development is completed.

Another common negative impact of new development is stormwater and erosion. Sites that were previously forested or grassy land that would absorb stormwater and sedimentation naturally become large swathes of concrete and pavement once developed, where water and sedimentation

cannot be absorbed but only pushed along to the next site. The North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality does regulate this to some extent within Alexander County, though only for development of one or more acres at a time, and only to the State minimum standards. Alexander County should consider some local overview of stormwater and erosion control specifically for development along sensitive sites (such as Lake Hickory) and for development with a high percentage of impervious surface. The County should consider performing its own stormwater and erosion control review in order to bring oversight of development back to the local level. This would require the County to join the Locally Designated Erosion and Sedimentation Control program, and would allow the County to handle these regulations "in-house".

Map 4: Farmland Preservation

Farmland Preservation is accomplished through designating areas within a region or jurisdiction that are specifically set aside and regulated to protect agricultural land and encourage the continuation of farming activities known as Voluntary Agricultural Districts (VADs).

A VAD is a legally defined, voluntary land use designation established by the Alexander County Board of Commissioners in 2005. Its primary purpose is to protect agricultural lands from incompatible development and to promote the preservation of farming as a viable land use. VADs come with benefits such as public recognition, a requirement of a public hearing for condemnations, funding eligibility, and more.

These districts play a crucial role in safeguarding the agricultural industry, conserving valuable natural resources, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of food production. VADs are essential for preserving valuable agricultural land from urban sprawl and incompatible development. By designating specific areas for agriculture, communities ensure that fertile soil and open space are reserved for farming rather than being converted into housing or commercial developments.

In an era of global uncertainties, maintaining local food production capacity is crucial for food security. VADs protect farmland, reducing the risk of losing the ability to produce essential crops and sustain local food supplies in times of crisis.

Agriculture is a significant contributor to the Alexander County economy. VADs help stabilize the agricultural sector by providing farmers with a predictable environment for their operations. This stability is critical for maintaining jobs and economic viability in rural communities.

Farming is an integral part of the cultural heritage of Alexander County. VADs help preserve rural landscapes and traditions, ensuring that future generations can connect with their agricultural roots.

As mentioned above, Alexander County's VAD is entirely voluntary, and participants retain the right to leave the VAD if they so choose, otherwise the parcels participate for a term of ten years. This map shows all parcels participating in the VAD program as of the adoption of this plan.
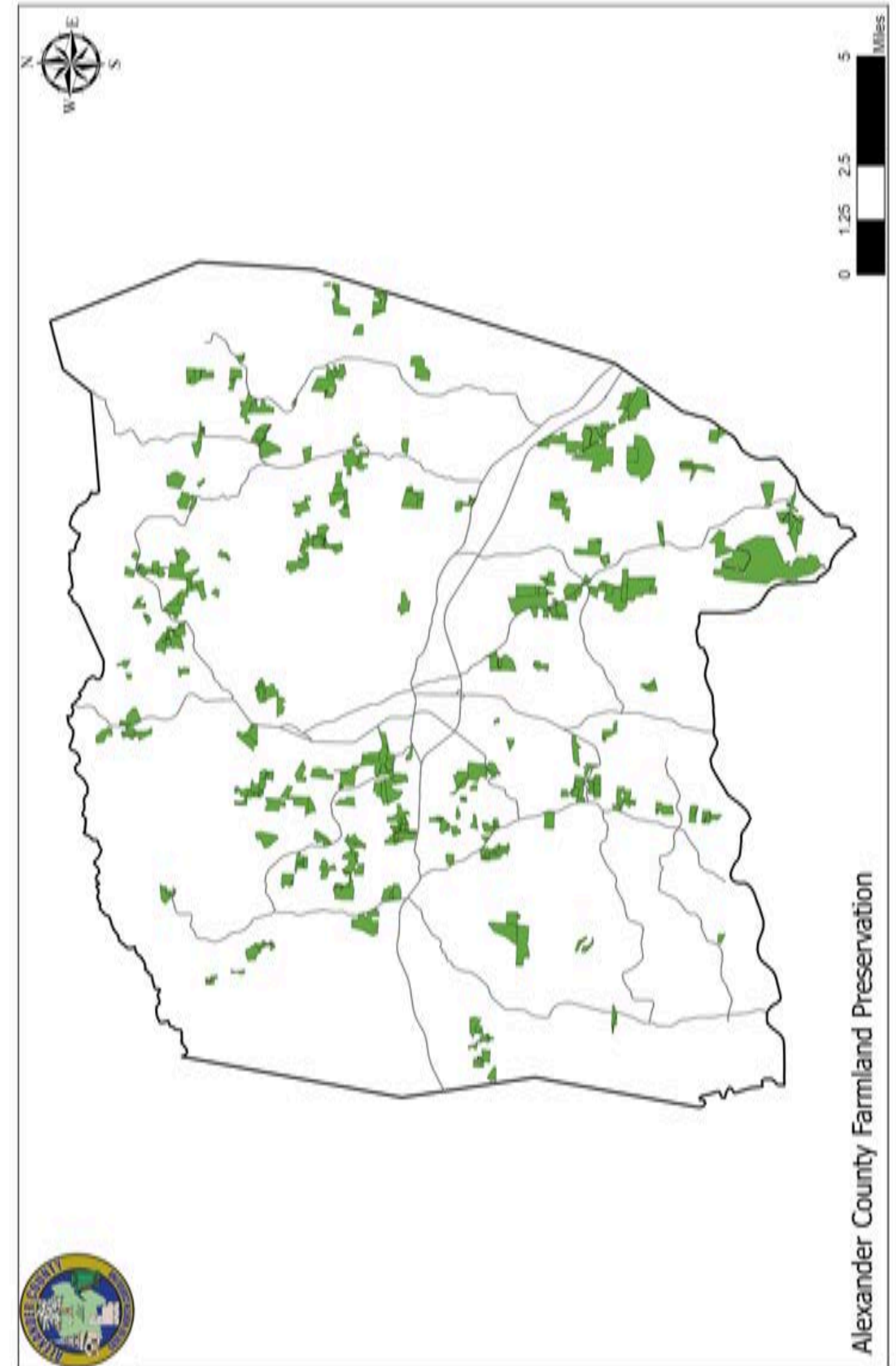
Alexander County Farmland Preservation

Goal 5: Encourage and develop land use regulations that help to promote and preserve Alexander County's sense of place.

As mentioned above, mixed-use development is generally viewed as a more efficient use of land under most circumstances. A concerted effort to allow such development in appropriate areas should be undertaken when updating the County's zoning ordinance. Community Service Centers and Urban Services Areas are obvious choices for areas that should support mixed use development, but careful consideration should still be taken before rezoning properties.

Design is an important element in regulating new development. While North Carolina General Statutes explicitly forbid the regulation of single-family home design (except in the case of historic preservation), commercial, office, and industrial sites can and should be regulated to some extent. These regulations should be careful to remain reasonable and not place undue burden on businesses in the County, but rather require simple, consistent design elements that help protect and maintain the overall aesthetic appeal of our commercial corridors. Landscaping,

facade work, and parking lot standards are examples of standards commonly used in other communities, and should be considered for Alexander County. For businesses that are in otherwise incompatible areas, landscaping requirements can also be used to protect neighboring homes from impacts such as lighting, noise, and invasion of privacy.

On the other end of the development spectrum are the areas that are important for Alexander County to protect as much as possible. Environmentally sensitive areas such as ridgelines, wetlands, floodplains, and watersheds should be protected through zoning designations, incentivizing conservation designs, and regulations on steep slope development. Careful consideration should be taken when developing these protections, however. An important balance must be acknowledged between the property rights of County residents and the overall well-being of our ridgelines, waterways, and sensitive areas.

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Alexander County is a community of varied needs and desires. Indeed, as shown in the survey distributed for this very plan, the aspirations of those living in Bethlehem are vastly different from those living in Hiddenite, which differs still from those in Vashti, and so on. While this comprehensive plan aims to provide recommendations that will benefit all of Alexander County, special consideration should be given to the various communities and their needs. Small area plans should be developed as additions to this document to provide greater insight to the needs of individual communities. Urban Services Areas should be targeted for small area planning initially, due to more urgent infrastructure needs, and the remaining townships between these areas should follow with their own small area plan. Bethlehem has recently completed a small area plan with the assistance of the Western Piedmont Council of Governments, and that work should be continued for the following areas:

Urban Services Areas:
- Stony Point
- Hiddenite
- Unincorporated Taylorsville
- Bethlehem (10 year update)

Townships:
- Millers
- Gwaltneys
- Sugar Loaf
- Little River
- Ellendale
- Wittenburg
- Sharpes

In conjunction with these efforts, it should also be the policy of the County to promote land use policies that are sensitive to the overall nature of the area in which any development is taking place. Special consideration should be given to agricultural areas, possibly going so far as to increase signage and awareness resources for farming areas, and the establishment of an opt-in agricultural zoning district that would offer specialized regulations meant for agricultural land.

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Goals and Objectives

The following goals and objectives have been identified for land use in Alexander County:

- Goal 1: Adopt land use regulations that are clear, equitable, and reasonably focused on addressing the needs of Alexander County.
  - Objective 1.1: Conduct a thorough review and update land use policies where possible.
    - Strategy 1.1.1: Draft and adopt an updated zoning ordinance.
    - Strategy 1.1.2: Adopt the most recent model watershed ordinance offered by the Department of Environmental Quality.
    - Strategy 1.1.3: Adopt the most recent model Flood Damage Prevention ordinance offered by FEMA and the North Carolina Floodplain Management Branch.
    - Strategy 1.1.4: Draft and adopt an updated subdivision ordinance.
  - Objective 1.2: Consolidate and clarify land use regulations.
    - Strategy 1.2.1: Bring all land development regulations together into one Land Development Code.
    - Strategy 1.2.2: Ensure all rules and procedures regarding land development are explained in an accessible manner in a publicly available document.
  - Objective 1.3: Remain proactive in keeping land use policies relevant, reasonable, and focused.
    - Strategy 1.3.1: Conduct an annual review of all land development regulations and recommend text amendments as necessary.

    - Strategy 1.3.2: Support regular educational and training opportunities to ensure staff are equipped with up-to-date information regarding land-use legislation.

- Goal 2: Promote the development of a diversified and balanced mix of land uses in the county.
  - Objective 2.1: Encourage the development of mixed-use and infill development in existing developed areas to promote a more efficient use of land.
    - Strategy 2.1.1: Ensure zoning requirements for higher intensity districts allow for infill development.

    - Strategy 2.1.2: Incentivize infill development through reduced setbacks, higher density allowances, etc.

  - Objective 2.2: Encourage the development of a range of housing types and densities to meet the needs of different populations, including seniors, families, young professionals, and people with disabilities.
    - Strategy 2.2.1: Consider nearby facilities to reduce distance between essential needs and residential development.

    - Strategy 2.2.2: Adopt flexible residential development standards to allow for context sensitive development.

  - Objective 2.3: Encourage the development of commercial, industrial, and agricultural uses in appropriate locations to support the county's economy and promote a balanced mix of land uses.
    - Strategy 2.3.1: Use zoning as a means to encourage and incentivize intentional development patterns.

    - Strategy 2.3.2: Adopt requirements to reduce the impact of incompatible uses on each other.

    - Strategy 2.3.3: Develop a "pop-up shop" site to allow emerging small business owners an opportunity to accrue starting capital.

- Goal 3: Direct growth to areas where essential services and infrastructure are present, and protect sensitive natural areas and key historic / cultural resources from extensive development.
  - Objective 3.1: Adopt and enforce the future land use map and classifications presented above.
    - Strategy 3.1.1: Consider the future land use map in all rezoning decisions, with deviations restricted to unique cases.

    - Strategy 3.1.2: Promote and educate on the future land use map and classifications to community stakeholders frequently.

  - Objective 3.2: Encourage intentional decisions regarding where growth and infrastructure should be fostered.
    - Strategy 3.2.1: Limit shopping centers and highway commercial development only in areas indicated as suitable for commercial development on the

      Future Land Use Map.

    - Strategy 3.2.2: Amend land development regulations to establish location standards for commercial development that pushes such development to nodes.

  - Objective 3.3: Encourage adaptive reuse when possible to reduce unnecessary development expansion.
    - Strategy 3.3.1: Support rezonings for the adaptive reuse of existing industrial and small-business/ commercial sites that are not being used.

    - Strategy 3.3.2: Inventory and promote sites that may be strong adaptive reuse candidates.

- Goal 4: Aim to mitigate common negative impacts of new development.
  - Objective 4.1: Improve access management on new development within the County.
    - Strategy 4.1.1: Discourage driveway permits for every parcel by incentivizing shared driveways, cross-access easements, and other mechanisms that reduce the number of direct access points onto arterials and major collectors from adjoining parcels.

    - Strategy 4.1.2: Require new commercial subdivisions to provide access to the newly platted parcels via one or two access points (depending on size of development and amount of frontage on arterial and major collector).

- Strategy 4.1.3: Recognize that nodes where several compatible commercial uses can be organized around signalized intersections and accessible by an internal network of streets and private drives are more desirable commercial locations than individual parcels with separate driveways.
- Objective 4.2: Encourage stormwater and erosion control to improve water quality and reduce stormwater runoff.
    - Strategy 4.2.1: Adopt a stormwater and erosion control ordinance that would apply to new major development within the County.
    - Strategy 4.2.2: Consider joining the Locally Delegated Erosion and Sedimentation Control Program through the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality.
- Goal 5: Encourage and develop land use regulations that help to promote and preserve Alexander County's sense of place.
    - Objective 5.1: Facilitate well-designed, walkable, mixed use communities that fit the character and scale of Alexander County within areas indicated as suitable on the Future Land Use Map.
        - Strategy 5.1.1: Identify areas that might best support mixed-use development and establish overlay districts permitting such development.
        - Strategy 5.1.2: Explicitly permit mixed-use development in zoning districts that can be expected to support such development.
    - Objective 5.2: Establish context sensitive design standards for varying types of development.
        - Strategy 5.2.1: Update design standards that improve the aesthetics of commercial, office,

industrial and mixed use development along major corridors.

- Strategy 5.2.2: Establish landscaping standards where commercial development should be discouraged.
- Strategy 5.2.3: Establish a zoning district that is appropriate for permanently protected lands and rezone areas accordingly.
- Strategy 5.2.4: Incentivize conservation design in areas deemed appropriate by the Future Land Use map.
- Strategy 5.2.5: Consider greater protections for steep slope development to avoid common negative impacts of land disturbance on sloped terrain.
- Objective 5.3: Continue to support and protect rural businesses.
    - Strategy 5.3.1: Continue to support home-based businesses throughout the County.
    - Strategy 5.3.2: Allow and encourage home occupations in residential districts that will not negatively impact the residential nature of the district.
    - Strategy 5.3.3: Modify zoning regulations to allow for more flexibility for rural businesses that have minimal impact on adjacent properties and rural character.
    - Strategy 5.3.4: Encourage greater communication between local farmers and neighboring residents to foster a collaborative approach to farmland preservation.

- Objective 5.4: Encourage a greater understanding of the unique characteristics of the various Alexander County Townships.
    - Strategy 5.4.1: Complete a small area plan for each of the townships of Alexander County.
    - Strategy 5.4.2: Promote land use policies that consider the overall nature of the area being regulated.
    - Strategy 5.4.3: Increase awareness of agricultural sites and districts through signage, web resources, etc.
    - Strategy 5.4.4: Consider the development of an opt-in agricultural zoning overlay that amends land use regulations for areas being used for farming.

Transportation

Overview

Transportation planning is a cornerstone of comprehensive planning, weaving together the intricate threads of urban development, economic growth, environmental sustainability, and quality of life. A well-designed transportation system is more than roads and bridges—it's a catalyst that shapes communities, influences land use, and connects people. Efficient transportation systems are vital arteries for economic growth. Well-planned transportation networks facilitate the movement of goods, services, and people, supporting commerce and trade. Proximity to well-connected transportation hubs can attract businesses and investment, fostering job creation and boosting local economies.

A well-designed transportation system prioritizes safety for all road users. By implementing measures such as pedestrian crossings, bike lanes, and traffic calming techniques, communities can create safer environments that encourage walking and cycling. This contributes to more livable neighborhoods and improved public health.

Transportation projects are often substantial investments, requiring careful allocation of resources. Comprehensive planning enables communities to prioritize projects based on need, impact, and available funding sources. By integrating transportation priorities into the broader planning framework, communities can make informed decisions that align with

overall goals. A well-considered transportation system shapes the way we live, work, and interact, playing a pivotal role in creating the resilient, vibrant, and connected cities of the future. As we navigate the challenges of urbanization and growth, effective transportation planning remains an essential tool in steering our communities toward the community we hope to build.

Public Input

Respondents to the public input survey were divided on the county's need for more public transportation with 44% responding "No," 33% "Unsure," and 24% saying "Yes." Most respondents, however, believe increasing alternative modes of transportation (such as biking, walking trails, sidewalks, etc.) is important for the county's future with only 11% saying it was "Not important at all." When asked what roads and intersections should be improved, respondents noted multiple areas of concern throughout the county.

The Planning Process

Transportation planning is a surprisingly slow and complex process at times. Because most of the roads in Alexander County are owned and maintained by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), almost all road improvement projects go through the same process from beginning to end.

Larger projects begin with the statewide 2050 Plan which looks at strategic corridors throughout the entire state. This feeds into the Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) which is a 30-year plan with no financial constraints. This can be viewed almost like a "wishlist". The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) then takes projects recommended in the CTP and compares them to current and future needs. This is handled by staff at the Greater Hickory Metropolitan Planning Organization (GHMPO) for Alexander County. The MTP looks at all facets of transportation from road, bicycle and pedestrian, transit and rail needs. The MTP is a siginificant step in the financial planning for future projects.

Projects from this plan are then prioritized, going through a process called "SPOT", where projects are given a score based on a number of factors aimed at improving

safety, traffic flow, connectivity, etc. Projects that score well enough are included in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), which includes state and federally funded projects over the next ten years. The GHMPO must also keep a matching document called the TIP that deals with the MPO's region more specifically.

Projects are then designed and evaluated, and typically public input is sought for specific projects at this point. Only once all of this is done can right-of-way acquisition begin and the project get funded.

Many people remain unaware of just how long certain road improvements can take to become reality, but strategic planning goes a long way in making sure that a community's needs are addressed as funding becomes avaialable.

Goal 1: Improve aesthetics, function, and capacity of community gateways and corridors.

Goal 2: Enhance the county's infrastructure to support active transportation, such as walking and biking.

First impressions are not only important when meeting new people. Communities can often be helped or hindered by the first thing visitors see when crossing county lines. The County should consider areas of high traffic and community "gateways" for enhancements such as landscaping, wayfinding signage, and design standards. Aside from creating a stronger "sense of place" for the communities throughout Alexander County, these enhancements would serve as economic development incentives as well; businesses considering the County as their new home are much more likely to be drawn to areas that invest in these kinds of improvements.

Careful consideration should be given to community needs when pursuing transportation related projects. Neighborhoods with shopping and mixed use development should pursue two-lane, low speed roads to increase safety and visibility around these community cores. Areas surrounding major thoroughfares should be considered for connectivity projects. Where road widening has often failed to reduce congestion on major roads (due to induced demand), connectivity has seen consistent success. Increasing connectivity is as simple as

creating greater alternatives for traffic to choose from when reaching their destination, decreasing the total number of vehicles on a single given road. Finally, where possible, land uses that are high in trip generation (such as homes to shopping, or homes to job centers) should be located in close proximity to each other in order to reduce the total length of those trips and potentially reduce trip generation through pedestrian access.

Another common practice in transportation planning is transportation demand management (TDM). This is a wide array of tools used to lessen the overall demand on a community's road systems. Ideas such as rideshare, carpooling, or shift staggering programs with local employers are proven methods for reducing the total number of vehicles on the road during peak hours. Encouraging bus ridership at local schools is another effective way to reduce peak hour congestion near education centers. Any means of encouraging pedestrian trips over vehicular trips is yet another proven means of reducing travel demand. This can be supported by providing adequate signage, crosswalks, and visibility tools to keep those pedestrians safe when choosing this transportation method.

In order to make bicycle and pedestrian (bike/ped) transportation a viable option for those who would utilize these means, however, there must be facilities to support it. Requiring bike/ped facilities along new development to create larger networks of multi-modal transportation options as growth takes place is a common practice throughout North Carolina as a means of supporting these options. Facilities such as bike racks and other amenities are other bike/ped friendly practices, and these kinds of services should be encouraged where possible. A buzz word in transportation planning right now is "road diet", which is a practice where roads that are overbuilt or underutilized can be adjusted to allow for multi-use paths, pedestrian facilities, or bike lanes while still leaving room for the amount of traffic typically experienced on that road. This is something that typically the County would have no direct control over, as the NCDOT funds and constructs nearly all public road projects in Alexander County; however showing support for these practices does influence design choices when projects are being considered.

A particular challenge in most communities is considering where to invest very limited resources for bike/ped facilities. A well-crafted bike/ped plan is an excellent way to get feedback from the community and input from design professionals on where things such as greenways, multi-use paths, and sidewalks should be prioritized, and sends a clear message to decision makers for potential grant funding that our community has a vision and strategy for future investments. Such a plan should also be used to delineate areas where new private development can be expected to provide sidewalks, trail connectivity, or multi-use path connections.

Regardless of how many bike/ped facilities a community has, there remains the issue of awareness. Efforts to provide educational and informational resources on bike/ped safety, where public facilities are, and other potential knowledge gaps should be made alongside any new bike/ped facility development. Signage, social media, smartphone apps, and traditional media have all been used in neighboring communities to help raise awareness surrounding bike/ped concerns to great success.

Goal 3: Enhance public transportation options in appropriate areas of Alexander County.

Transit planning is a complicated and expensive endeavor. Alexander County is fortunate to have a partner in Greenway Public Transportation, our regional transit authority, which provides fixed and flex route transportation, as well as paratransit services. Through public input and conversations with community stakeholders, however, there are opportunities to improve these services. As feasible, increased frequency and extended hours for current transit routes have been requested almost universally by those who use this service. Another highly requested enhancement is to upgrade and better maintain amenities at current stops, potentially adding benches and shelters at high traffic stops. Opportunities to extend or add routes to the County's transit service should also be explored, though only where ridership could be increased as a result of such an addition. Demand-response service (typically paratransit) should be considered for the same expansion where possible.

Land use impacts transportation networks tremendously, something that should be taken into consideration when planning for transportation services- higher density areas should be examined regularly to ensure demand needs are being met. TDM was mentioned above as a tool for reducing strain on existing roadways, but the practice has the additional benefit of reducing strain on public transportation systems as well. Carpooling leaves seats available on transit vehicles for those lacking such an option. Telecommuting should also be encouraged, as this has significant impacts on reducing peak hour traffic and transit counts. Above all, though, greater promotion of the services provided by Greenway Public Transportation should be encouraged to increase ridership in the County. As needs grow in Alexander County it may become necessary to consider the development of a more localized transportation service as well.

In larger residential developments transit should still be a consideration, and developers should design with potential transit connections in mind where feasible. New technologies and services should be cautiously embraced as well; options such as Uber and Lyft can be used to reduce transit and traffic congestion at times, and new opportunities for improvement should be considered as they emerge. As stated above, however, multi-modal transportation seems to have the most success in communities throughout North Carolina in helping alleviate public transportation challenges, and should be supported as feasible.

Goal 4: Make strategic investments and secure NCDOT funding for known transportation issues throughout the County.

Alexander County is fortunate to have a fairly robust and well maintained road network, though improvements are needed in some areas. Road projects generally follow a fairly long approval process wherein county staff and elected officials work with the Greater Hickory Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to see projects developed, designed, and funded by NCDOT. Participants in public input for this plan were surprisingly united regarding some of the County's roadway deficiencies, and these should take priority at future MPO meetings when discussing new projects. Parts of US 64 and NC 90 are reported to experience congestion and access issues that might be alleviated by considering a 4-lane upgrade where the need arises on these roads. Similar concerns exist for NC Hwy 16 S from the county line to Main Avenue in Taylorsville, and modernization or widening should also be considered for this thoroughfare. Rink Dam Rd. was a popular topic of concern during public input, though not with an eye toward widening the road, but rather to modernize it, and ease out some of the sharp and blind turns that pose safety risks. The same solution has been recommended for NC 127 north of Richey Rd., with little interest in widening, but marked interest in modernization. As mentioned above, however, widening often leads to something called induced demand, where widening attracts more traffic therefore leaving roadways much in the same problem before they were improved. To this end, it is worth seeking opportunities to improve connectivity along the routes mentioned above, though particularly between US 64 and NC 90 on the eastern side of the county. This list should not be seen as exhaustive, and further opportunities for roadway improvement should be sought through the small area planning process mentioned in the Land Use chapter.

While some roadways may be in acceptable condition overall, certain intersections have been noted as particularly unsafe or otherwise problematic. By far the most noted intersection during public input was the intersection of NC 16 S and Millersville Rd. An overwhelming number of respondents mentioned this intersection as one for urgent consideration. Following this was a fairly common request to improve safety for US 64 intersections and to improve traffic flow along the corridor (access management).

Goal 4: Make strategic investments and secure NCDOT funding for known transportation issues throughout the County. (Cont'd)

Many requested that the county investigate ways to improve intersections along school-access roads during peak hours and to work with the Town of Taylorsville to request signalized intersection timing improvements. As mentioned above, this should not be seen as an exhaustive list of necessary improvements, and the County should seek further intersection improvement opportunities through the small area planning process.

An unsurprising amount of support was offered for pedestrian facilities in areas that seemed to be experiencing more density and development pressure. Pedestrians have an informal means of requesting facility improvements in the form of "desire paths". These paths are typically shortcuts between two common destinations where grass cannot survive due to the amount of foot traffic-resulting in informal trails through more urban landscapes. The county should review aerial photography for "desire paths" that can be supported with infrastructure improvements when developing small area plans. These can often be found between or near unconnected sidewalks as well, which is why the County should encourage the Town of Taylorsville to

identify and connect gaps between pedestrian facilities. Aside from on-the-ground evaluation of these gaps, the County should also map current pedestrian facilities to determine further gaps in access. Of course, as above, the County should seek further pedestrian facility improvement opportunities through the small area planning process.

One particular challenge that arose during public input was a lack of service-based transportation. Many of the County's human service providers have noted a challenge in getting residents without reliable transportation to important appointments such as court dates, medical visits, and job interviews. Many times the only barrier to upward mobility for some residents is transportation. As an investment in those residents, and their continued success, it is recommended that the County increase capacity for service-based transportation offered through appropriate departments. The exact mechanism to meet this need is one best left to service providers, but serious consideration should be given to bridging this gap.

Goals and Objectives

The following goals and objectives have been identified for transportation in Alexander County:

- Goal 1: Improve aesthetics, function, and capacity of community gateways and corridors.

  - Objective 1.1: Provide welcoming and positive gateway corridors and entrances into and throughout the County.

    - Strategy 1.1.1: Provide landscaping, shade trees, and other aesthetic amenities with visual access to retail businesses along corridors.

    - Strategy 1.1.2: Develop community identifiers (signage, landscaping, core community centers, etc.) in order to promote a "sense of place" for each community.

  - Objective 1.2: Ensure appropriate transportation capacity for varying community needs.

    - Strategy 1.2.1: Support and preserve two-way streets to support retail establishments, reduce traffic speeds, and enliven neighborhoods.

    - Strategy 1.2.2: Provide more routes (connectivity) to reach destinations to reduce demand and congestion on major thoroughfares.

    - Strategy 1.2.3: Reduce the length and number of vehicle trips per capita by locating jobs and shopping close to residential areas.

  - Objective 1.3: Promote the use of alternative modes of transportation, such as carpooling and vanpooling, to reduce traffic congestion and improve mobility.

    - Strategy 1.3.1: Work with area employers to develop carpooling, rideshare, or shift staggering programs to reduce peak hour congestion.

    - Strategy 1.3.2: Work with Alexander County Schools to encourage bus ridership to reduce individual trips during peak hours.

    - Strategy 1.3.3: Provide adequate signage, crosswalks, and visibility strategies to ensure safety and awareness for pedestrian access.

- Goal 2: Enhance the county's infrastructure to support active transportation, such as walking and biking.

  - Objective 2.1: Increase the capacity for multi-modal transportation.

    - Strategy 2.1.1: Establish standards for collector streets that include on-road bicycle facilities where appropriate, to be constructed as part of private developments.

    - Strategy 2.1.2: Encourage installation of bike racks and other amenities at strategic locations.

    - Strategy 2.1.3: Establish a process for identifying and retrofitting existing roads that are candidates for upgrading, or removing travel lanes from a roadway and utilizing the space for other uses and travel modes.

  - Objective 2.2: Encourage the development of new trails and greenways to connect communities and promote recreation.

    - Strategy 2.2.1: Where appropriate, encourage developers to provide adequate pedestrian and bicycle facilities, based on anticipated demand for pedestrians and bicyclists, and the ability of such facilities to effectively mitigate speeds and/or traffic volumes that could contribute to unsafe or uncomfortable conditions.

    - Strategy 2.2.2: Update regulations, as appropriate, to require the inclusion of sidewalks in new development in areas near existing or planned Centers, as well as other potential pedestrian generators (i.e. schools, parks, senior centers, retail).

    - Strategy 2.2.3: Develop a county-wide bike/ped plan to identify and prioritize infrastructure improvements, such as sidewalks, bike lanes, and pedestrian crossings.

  - Objective 2.3: Promote the use of active transportation through education and outreach programs.

    - Strategy 2.3.1: Expand educational and informational outreach identifying dedicated pedestrian/bicycle facilities and preferred shared roadways, through maps, wayfinding signage, smartphone apps, and online resources.

- Goal 3: Enhance public transportation options in appropriate areas of Alexander County.

  - Objective 3.1: Attract more ridership by improving the service quality of the current fixed-route transit system, while optimizing system efficiency (Commuter/Regional).

    - Strategy 3.1.1: Evaluate the benefits of increased frequency and extended service hours, implementing as feasible.

    - Strategy 3.1.2: Upgrade and maintain amenities at existing stops, and encourage improvements to pedestrian connections.

    - Strategy 3.1.3: Build ridership by extending or adding routes to expand service area where justifiable.

    - Strategy 3.1.4: Improve and expand demand-response service.

    - Strategy 3.1.5: Coordinate land use and transportation planning to ensure that transportation infrastructure is in place to support the county's land use goals.

    - Strategy 3.1.6: Encourage the development of transportation demand management strategies, such as carpooling and telecommuting, to reduce the demand for single-occupant vehicle trips.

    - Strategy 3.1.7: Promote the services made available by Greenway to Alexander County residents.

  - Objective 3.2: Encourage the inclusion of transit accommodations within new development at Community Service Centers.

    - Strategy 3.2.1: Update subdivision and site plan regulations to provide "transit-supportive" development and amenities where appropriate.

    - Strategy 3.2.2: Investigate the potential for any emerging private or public transportation services technologies for all modes of travel (i.e. Uber, Lyft) to supplement demand-responsive service and fulfill first-mile/last-mile needs.

    - Strategy 3.2.3: Encourage multi-modal transportation options in all Urban Services Areas

- Goal 4: Make strategic investments and secure NCDOT funding for known transportation issues throughout the County.

  - Objective 4.1: Investigate and improve road deficiencies in the County.

    - Strategy 4.1.1: Consider widening US 64/NC 90 (both connected and separate portions) to 4 lanes where appropriate.

    - Strategy 4.1.2: Consider widening or modernization for NC Hwy 16 S.

    - Strategy 4.1.3: Consider modernization of Rink Dam Rd.

    - Strategy 4.1.4: Consider modernization and easing of curves along NC 127 north of Richey Rd.

    - Strategy 4.1.5: Encourage connectivity between US 64 and NC 90.

    - Strategy 4.1.6: Seek further road improvement opportunities through the small area planning process.

  - Objective 4.2: Investigate and improve intersection deficiencies in the County.

    - Strategy 4.2.1: Improve safety at the intersection of NC 16 S and Millersville Rd.

    - Strategy 4.2.2: Improve safety for US 64 intersections and better access management.

    - Strategy 4.2.3: Investigate ways to improve intersections along school-access roads during peak hours.

    - Strategy 4.2.4: Work with the Town of Taylorsville to request signalized intersection timing improvements.

    - Strategy 4.2.5: Seek further intersection improvement opportunities through the small area planning process.

  - Objective 4.3: Find areas where pedestrian facilities can meet existing demand.

    - Strategy 4.3.1: Review aerial photography for "desire paths" that can be supported with infrastructure improvements when developing small area plans.

    - Strategy 4.3.2:Encourage the Town of Taylorsville to identify and connect gaps between pedestrian facilities and maintain existing sidewalks / pedestrian facilities within the town limits.

    - Strategy 4.3.3: Map current pedestrian facilities within the County to determine further gaps in access.

    - Strategy 4.3.4: Seek further pedestrian facility improvement opportunities through the small area planning process.

    - Strategy 4.3.5: Increase County capacity for service-based transportation (such as trips to court dates, doctor's appointments, and job interviews for low income residents) offered through appropriate departments.

Economic Development

Overview

The Economic Development Chapter of the Alexander County Comprehensive Plan outlines the county's vision and strategies for fostering a resilient, diverse, and prosperous economy. This chapter serves as a blueprint for sustainable economic growth that supports job creation, enhances local businesses, attracts investments, and improves the overall quality of life for residents. By leveraging the county's unique assets and collaborating with stakeholders, Alexander County seeks to position itself as a vibrant economic hub in the region.

Understanding the county's economic landscape is essential for effective economic planning. Below is an overview of Alexander County's current economic profile, including key industries, employment trends, and economic drivers. All data referenced below are provided by ESRI. By analyzing data on income distribution, workforce demographics, and business establishments, the county gains insights into its economic strengths and areas for potential growth.

Alexander County currently has 1,033 businesses employing 10,792 individuals. Retail trade makes up 29.9% of that employment, with manufacturing coming in a close second at just below 23%.

The highest paid occupation type for Alexander County residents is management with an average annual salary of $103,875 and employing an

estimated 5,012 people. The lowest paid occupation type is the food preparation and serving occupation with an average annual salary of $21,225 and employing 7,554 individuals. The largest occupation type of Alexander County residents is production at 16,119 individuals, and the smallest is legal, with only 350 individuals. It is important to note that not all of these jobs are necessarily located in Alexander County, and folks who have more than one job will be represented more than once.

The Spending Potential Index (SPI) represents the amount spent in the area relative to a national average of 100. For example, an SPI of 110 means that the area spends 10 percent more than the national average, on that good or service. Alexander County has an SPI lower than the national average in every segment assessed by ESRI. The highest SPI for the county is in Healthcare spending (SPI 90), with residents spending a forecasted $96,939,380 in healthcare this year. The lowest SPI for the county is in education (SPI 65) with county residents forecasted to spend $16,969,620 through 2023.

The Market Potential Index (MPI) is an index that uses the segment composition of a geography (in this case Alexander County) to estimate customer potential based on the segment penetration rates of a chosen product, service, or lifestyle. While there is too much information to cover here (for details see Appendix 2), there are some standout findings. Something of interest is that some of the highest MPI

segments for Alexander County are in pet spending for cats (MPI 146) and dogs (MPI 140). Some of the lower potential segments like fiber optic streaming (MPI 39) and streaming television shows (MPI 69) are likely due to a lack of viable broadband options for such segments. This will be discussed more in Chapter 6.

Restaurants were widely requested during public input, and the MPI scores for nearly every segment tracked by ESRI shows that county residents are spending more than the national average on retaurants.

Another interesting trend is that Alexander County residents seem to prefer to keep their money local when it comes to banking with 27.6% of residents using a credit union and another 18.7% using a local/community bank.

Public Input

51% of public input respondents currently work in Alexander County. When asked to rank the county's economic development attributes, "quality of life" came in first as Alexander County's greatest economic development strength. Other strengths included "geographic location" and "growth in surrounding counties." Respondents stated they want more restaurants, recreation facilities, healthcare, and shopping options. Suggestions to improve economic development in the county included improving educational opportunities; attracting long-term, sustainable jobs; improved internet and sewer access; revitalizing downtown businesses; and attracting/retaining young people and families.

Goal 1: Increase the number of job opportunities and increase the employment rate in the county.

The first objective in Alexander County's attempt to increase job opportunities is to attract new businesses and industries to the county, including manufacturing, healthcare, and technology sectors. A proven, successful method for attracting new business and manufacturing is to undertake the construction of shell buildings. While this will initially require some investment from the County, ongoing projects can be funded on a revolving status once the initial construction has been sold those funds can then be reinvested for the construction of a new shell building.

Another strategy the County should pursue is to identify and promote the assets it has that are unique to Alexander County. One notable example is the existence of the Alexander Railroad, a rail line still in operation that runs from Taylorsville to Statesville, which connects to Norfolk Southern. Alexander County has an asset in rail service that many communities cannot provide. The things that give the County a competitive or unique edge in attracting business should be focused on and promoted. Another important asset is the Alexander Industrial Park which has seen

significant public and private investment. The county should take steps to promote the continued development of the Industrial Park, focusing on sites which can be served by the Alexander Railroad Company.

A challenge in economic development is often the balance of wages. Employers will prefer to go where wages are affordable, but employees want to work for employers who pay higher wages. When recruiting new firms to locate in the County it is important to promote wages that fall somewhere within this "sweet spot". Residents need to be able to afford a living in the County for the work they choose, and businesses must be able to afford the employees they need.

Small businesses are the backbone of the local economy. Alexander County must be committed to supporting entrepreneurship and cultivating a conducive environment for small business growth. By empowering local entrepreneurs, the county can foster innovation, creativity, and resilience in the County's business communities. One of the primary ways to support these small businesses is to encourage the Town of Taylorsville to enhance and increase

business opportunities in the downtown area. Downtowns are often the primary hub for small business generation in any community, and a strong working relationship with the Town is essential to the achievement of this goal.

To this end, the County might also consider the development of a facade grant in partnership with the Town to help enhance the aesthetic appeal of our primary commercial corridors. This is something that was attempted before to lukewarm reception, largely due to the amount of funding necessary for the required grant match. With this in mind, the County and Town should look into ways to further reduce the cost burden of obtaining these funds should a program be restarted in the future.

One strategy to support development of new businesses is a "Business Incubator". A business incubator is designed to assist businesses during their first few years of operation, when their needs usually outpace their resources and they are most vulnerable to failure. In addition to physical space to operate, an incubator can provide

hands-on management assistance, access to equipment, and exposure to critical support services under one roof. Incubators typically operate with some level of in-house staffing along with an advisory board of business professionals to evaluate those who apply to participate in the program. There should be a heavy focus on their job-creation and growth potential and ability to add to economic diversification. Clients accepted into the program typically participate for a preset number of years, and are usually required to pay minimal rent.

The last recommendation for achieving this objective is to review incentive policies to allow greater participation by creating new or expanding existing small and medium-sized firms. Many incentives for economic development tend to be oriented toward much larger firms and industries, which leaves a gap for small and medium-sized businesses to fall through. These smaller firms should be included when considering incentive opportunities.

Goal 2: Diversify the county's economic base to reduce reliance on a single industry segment.

The mix of uses, development configuration and quality, variety of amenities, and connectivity affect the attractiveness—and competitiveness—of employment centers. Many employers in manufacturing and technology industries seek live-work-play locations that current and prospective employees and their families can enjoy. In order to appeal to these kinds of businesses the County should allow a range of complementary uses in proximity to industrial parks to create attractive work environments with amenities.

Another strategy for diversifying the economic base of the County is to provide flexibility for rural businesses that have limited impact on adjacent properties and preserve rural character. Rural communities tend to thrive when the needs of that community are determined by the community itself. Businesses are established to meet those needs in areas that would likely not see the same success if located in a more urbanized area. Flexibility is key when allowing for this kind of development, so long as what is being proposed still serves the rural character of the community. Similarly, in areas designated as

"Community Service Centers" (see Chapter 2) the County should encourage small-scale retail development, service, office, "flex" space, and other small business development. Community Service Centers are areas focused on serving the immediate needs of smaller areas, often in the form of shops and services that attract nearly all their business from a handful of neighborhoods near the business location. These kinds of businesses tend to decentralize certain commercial and institutional provisions, creating greater resiliency should one particular business fail or relocate.

Tourism contributes significantly to local economies, which is why the second objective in diversifying the local economy is to encourage tourism and recreational opportunities within the County. So long as it is not the sole industry in the community, tourism can offer a great boost to local economies. Alexander County should aim to leverage its natural beauty, historical assets, and cultural heritage to promote tourism. With mountains along the northern boundary of the County, the Catawba River along the southern border, and easy access

Goal 2: Diversify the county's economic base to reduce reliance on a single industry segment. (Cont'd.)

to four major cities, Alexander County has a little bit of everything - an appeal that should not be understated.

An emerging kind of tourism, sports tourism, is another major opportunity for the County. Sports such as soccer and baseball have massive industries surrounding them, bringing in no small amount of revenue to the communities that host their events. Sports complexes that can host travel tournaments provide more than just a recreational opportunity for residents; hotels, restaurants, and light shopping all thrive near facilities like this. The County should pursue the development of recreational complexes that spur this kind of development, and encourage land uses near those facilities that only serve to enhance their appeal.

Agritourism is another vital element for a successful tourism industry. The term "agritourism" can be somewhat misleading, though. While touring farms and vineyards is certainly part of the agritourism experience, much of the agritourism in North Carolina centers around things such as wedding venues, recreational facilities,

and entertainment. Not only does agritourism offer additional economic opportunities to local farmers, it opens up new customer bases to local businesses as well.

One primary obstacle to supporting a tourism industry in Alexander County, however, is suitable lodgings. This is somewhat a case of the "chicken and the egg", as lodgings have not been pursued here due to lack of need, which is caused by the lack of lodgings. The County should review and amend its land use policies wherever possible to attract hotels and other lodging development.

Goal 3: Enhance the county's infrastructure and facilities to support economic development.

Goal 4: Work to make Alexander County more competitive when attracting industry.

One primary objective in enhancing the County's infrastructure is to focus on road and highway upgrades. This means different priorities for different parts of the County. The County should encourage the Town of Taylorsville to create a more walkable downtown with slower traffic speeds to increase visibility for downtown businesses. On the eastern side of the county, near industrial centers, the County should partner with NCDOT, Iredell County, and the Greater Hickory MPO to upgrade US Highway 64 to a 4-lane road from east of Hiddenite to I-40. This would dramatically increase the appeal of industrial sites to potential employers, as it connects them with faster, more reliable access to a major interstate. In higher to medium density areas the county should invest in bike/ped improvements that connect core residential neighborhoods to core employment centers. As mentioned above, many businesses desire communities that support the "live-work-play" lifestyle, and walkability is a core component of this.

While the subject of public facilities will be discussed in detail in its own chapter below, it cannot be understated the importance of water and sewer capacity to economic development efforts. A concerted effort should be focused on key needs in order to ensure strategic investments in these services. A reactionary approach to utility investments tends to slow down economic development projects, and can be the determining factor for a business considering Alexander County for its home. Having a clear plan for utility expansion can also help in securing funding for future projects from State and Federal agencies, something the County should continue to pursue to keep tax-payer burden as low as possible.

Another, often overlooked, kind of infrastructure is communication. Tools that link residents, businesses, and local organizations are a key infrastructure for any local economy. The County could consider an in-depth study to evaluate communication tools and platforms to improve dissemination of information across the County. Businesses that can tap into these kinds of tools will have an edge when getting established in the community. Intergovernmental communication is of particular importance, from permitting, zoning, incentives, and priorities, local governments set the landscape for businesses that choose to locate in their boundaries.

Preparation meets opportunity. If Alexander County is to be more competitive when attracting industry, it must prepare for those opportunities. A grants coordinator dedicated to economic development would allow the County to remain prepared for any funding opportunities. Grant funding, as mentioned before, is a means to offset the cost of economic development activities, lowering the tax burden on residents. Indeed, other communities are seeking to acquire the same funding, and there is no reason Alexander County should be left out of that competition.

Alexander County now has two business associations specific to Bethlehem and Taylorsville. The County could support the development of a financially-independent, non-profit Chamber of Commerce. Chambers are often the first stop for potential new business owners, tourists,

Goal 4: Work to make Alexander County more competitive when attracting industry. (Cont'd.)

and residents.

The County could consider the development of a new industrial park. Site location and acquisition should be a priority so that, once the current industrial park is complete, a new one can begin. The preparation of pad and shovel ready projects is yet another great way to meet opportunity when it arises. Locating these sites along primary corridors only serves to increase the appeal of the site - US 64, and NC 90, and the Alexander Railroad should be a primary focus to position new industrial sites in closer proximity to I-40.

Every activity discussed in this chapter requires staff and resources. Many communities invest greatly in their economic development activities, and Alexander County should be no exception. Where possible and feasible the County should strengthen Alexander EDC's capacity to carry out business retention, recruitment, workforce development, data gathering, and dissemination activities. In order to increase the amount of opportunities for Alexander County, it must work to increase its appeal. A skilled workforce is essential for

economic success. Alexander County should emphasize workforce development programs that align with the needs of target industries. Utilizing partnerships between the county, educational institutions, and training centers to provide residents with the skills required for emerging job opportunities, and by investing in education and training, the County can ensure that its workforce remains competitive on a regional scale.

Amenities contribute greatly to the appeal of a community when businesses are looking for locations. The employees of that company will typically live in the community in which they locate, which gives quality of life considerations a lot of weight in these decisions. Parks, community centers, and other quality of life improvements should all be viewed as an economic development priority.

It is not uncommon to find shopping centers and industrial sites with vast, empty parking lots even at peak capacity in communities across the United States. The cost of grading, paving, and maintaining these

unused spaces is ever increasing, and often only exists because a local government requires it.

The County should consider lowering or even eliminating minimum parking requirements to allow developers and business owners to build to their need. Not only does this preserve more open space and reduce stormwater runoff in commercial areas, it significantly lowers the cost of construction for new businesses. Indeed, the County should strive to make all interactions with and requirements of new businesses as clear, simple, and reasonable as possible.

Diversity in industry and wage levels is appealing to local communities and new businesses alike. While contributing to upward mobility for local residents, businesses benefit from the larger and more diverse pool of employees available to them.

Finally, ongoing communication between local employers, educators, and training providers should be encouraged by the County. Industry needs change, new technologies emerge, and communication is the key to fine tune and maintain a strong bond between the new workforce and established industries.

Goals and Objectives

The following goals and objectives have been identified for economic development in Alexander County:

- Goal 1: Increase the number of job opportunities and increase the employment rate in the county.

    - Objective 1.1: Attract new businesses and industries to the county.

        - Strategy 1.1.1: Develop a revolving fund for the construction of shell buildings geared toward desirable industries for Alexander County.

        - Strategy 1.1.2: Promote continued development of the Alexander Industrial Park to capitalize on the park's unique opportunity to provide both rail served and non-rail sites.

        - Strategy 1.1.3: Work to balance wages at competitive rates for both employers and employees.

    - Objective 1.2: Expand the County's small business support program to encourage the growth and success of local businesses.

        - Strategy 1.2.1: Work with the Town of Taylorsville to enhance and increase business opportunities in the downtown area.

        - Strategy 1.2.2: Consider developing a facade grant program in partnership with the Town of Taylorsville to enhance the aesthetic appeal of primary business corridors.

        - Strategy 1.2.3: Develop a "business incubator" program to assist new businesses during the first years of operation.

        - Strategy 1.2.4: Review incentive policies to allow greater participation by creating new or expanding existing small and medium sized firms.

- Goal 2: Diversify the county's economic base to reduce reliance on a single industry.

    - Objective 2.1: Identify opportunities for growth in new and emerging sectors.

        - Strategy 2.1.1: Allow a range of complementary uses in proximity to industrial parks to create attractive work environments with amenities to compete with other employment location options in the Southeastern United States.

        - Strategy 2.1.2: Provide flexibility for rural businesses that have limited impact on adjacent properties and preserve rural character.

        - Strategy 2.1.3: Encourage small-scale retail development, service, office, "flex" space, and other small business development in Community Service Centers as shown on the Future Land Use Map.

    - Objective 2.2: Encourage the development of tourism and recreational opportunities in the County, including outdoor recreation, agritourism, and heritage tourism.

        - Strategy 2.2.1: Promote the county's assets, such as its natural beauty and rich history, to attract new businesses and residents.

        - Strategy 2.2.2: Develop recreational facilities that could support sports tourism throughout the County.

        - Strategy 2.2.3: Encourage land uses near recreational facilities that would enhance their appeal.

        - Strategy 2.2.4: Continue to support and educate local agricultural businesses regarding agritourism.

        - Strategy 2.2.5: Promote agritourism and heritage tourism opportunities through targeted advertising, regional partnerships, and earned media.

        - Strategy 2.2.6: Review land use policies to encourage development of hotels and other lodging accommodations.

- Goal 3: Enhance the county's infrastructure and facilities to support economic development.

    - Objective 3.1: Invest in infrastructure improvements to support the growth of businesses and industries in the county.

        - Strategy 3.1.1: Encourage the Town of Taylorsville to create a more walkable downtown with slower traffic speeds to increase visibility for downtown businesses.

        - Strategy 3.1.2: Partner with NCDOT, Iredell County, and the Greater Hickory MPO to upgrade US Highway 64 to a 4-lane road from east of Hiddenite to I-40.

        - Strategy 3.1.3: Invest in bike/ped improvements that connect core residential neighborhoods to core employment centers.

    - Objective 3.2: Enhance the county's public facilities, such as water and sewer capacity, to support economic development.

        - Strategy 3.2.1: Determine existing and future economic development needs for public facilities in order to target investments strategically.

        - Strategy 3.2.2: Pursue State and Federal funding that would allow for utility upgrades geared toward economic development.

    - Objective 3.3: Explore new communication tools to link Alexander county residents, businesses, and organizations.

        - Strategy 3.3.1: Consider a study to evaluate communication tools and platforms to improve dissemination of information across the County.

        - Strategy 3.3.2: Provide technical support to enable necessary staffing, permitting, and outreach.

- Goal 4: Work to make Alexander County more competitive when attracting industry.

    - Objective 4.1: Increase the County's capacity for opportunity.

        - Strategy 4.1.1: Consider acquiring a grants coordinator specifically for economic development opportunities to lower the tax burden on Alexander County Citizens.

        - Strategy 4.1.2: Support the development of a financially-independent, non-profit Chamber of Commerce.

        - Strategy 4.1.3: Consider a long range plan for a new industrial park within Alexander County.

        - Strategy 4.1.4: Prepare and promote shovel and pad ready sites within the County, with special emphasis on rail served sites.

        - Strategy 4.1.5: Consider zoning that allows distribution and warehouse uses along major transportation corridors, particularly Hwy 127, US 64, and NC 90.

- Strategy 4.1.6: Strengthen Alexander EDC's capacity to carry out business retention, recruitment, workforce development, data gathering, and dissemination activities.

- Objective 4.2: Work to increase Alexander County's appeal to potential employers.

  - Strategy 4.2.1: Work with local educational institutions to develop training programs and apprenticeships to prepare residents for in-demand and emerging jobs.

  - Strategy 4.2.2: Enhance the County's amenities, such as parks and community centers, to support economic development and quality of life.

  - Strategy 4.2.3: Reduce or eliminate parking standards for most commercial and industrial uses to allow business owners to determine need.

  - Strategy 4.2.4: Work to develop a clear, simple, and reasonable permitting process for new businesses within the County.

  - Strategy 4.2.5: Work to attract industries at many wage levels to provide opportunities for residents of many skill levels.

  - Strategy 4.2.6: Facilitate regular communication between local employers, educators, and training providers to align offerings with business needs.

Overview

The Housing chapter of the Alexander County Comprehensive Plan addresses the critical role that housing plays in fostering a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable community. This chapter outlines the county's strategies to meet the diverse housing needs of its residents, promote housing affordability, enhance housing sustainability, and ensure housing stability for all. By creating a range of housing options that cater to various income levels, demographics, and lifestyles, Alexander County aims to establish a resilient and thriving living environment for its current and future generations.

Local housing markets are dynamic ecosystems influenced by various factors that determine the supply and demand for housing within a specific area. Local housing markets are subject to the fundamental economic principle of supply and demand. The supply side represents the number of homes available for sale or rent, while the demand side reflects the number of potential buyers or renters in the market.

Housing prices are primarily determined by the interaction of supply and demand. When demand outpaces supply, prices tend to rise, and when supply exceeds demand, prices typically decrease. Various factors, including location, housing type, and condition, also influence price. Location is a critical factor in local housing markets. Proximity to employment centers, schools, amenities, and public transportation often drives demand and impacts property values. Desirable neighborhoods generally command higher prices.

Local housing markets are subject to various government regulations, including zoning laws, building codes, and property tax assessments. These regulations influence property development, construction standards, and taxation.

Housing markets can be influenced by broader economic trends. Factors such as interest rates, employment levels, and demographic changes impact housing demand. For example, low interest rates often encourage home buying, while economic downturns may slow the market.

Local factors, such as the state of the local economy, development projects, and government policies, have a substantial impact on the housing market. For instance, the expansion of a major employer or the development of new infrastructure can drive demand and increase property values.

Price Range of Comps Sold

This chart shows the distribution of homes reported sold in the past three months within different price ranges in the area of your search. The amount shown for the subject property is sold data where available, or the property's estimated value when sales data is unavailable (such as a non-disclosure state) or provided in range format.

Data Source: Public records data
Update Frequency: Daily

Age Range of Comps Sold

This chart shows the distribution of homes reported sold in the past three months of different age ranges in the area of your search.

Data Source: Public records data
Update Frequency: Daily

Historic Sales Price Trend

Months of Inventory

Included in this section are several data points acquired through the MLS in September of 2023. The trends shown here raise some cause for concern regarding housing in Alexander County. The price range of homes sold recently shows the bulk of home sales falling on either extreme of the spectrum, suggesting that the standard "middle-class" housing is either unavailable for sale or undesirable for potential homeowners. The data seem to suggest that the cause would be the former - as shown below, homebuyers in Alexander County are buying primarily homes that are over thirty years old at increasing prices, and less of those homes are avaialable. While some of the supporting solutions are presented in other

AARP Livability™ Index for 28681

This chart rates the overall livability of a selected ZIP code on a scale from 0 to 100. AARP Livability™ is a trademark of AARP Inc.

Data Source: AARP
Update Frequency: Annual

| 0-19 | 20-39 | 40-59 | 60-79 | 80-100 |

Total Score
48 /100
A score over 50 is above average

Housing — Affordability & Access	55
Neighborhood — Access to Life, Work & Play	33
Transportation — Safe & Convenient Options	48
Environment — Clean Air & Water	76
Health — Prevention, Access & Quality	21
Engagement — Civic & Social Involvement	56
Opportunity — Inclusion & Possibilities	44

chapters of this plan (such as increasing density, investing in infrastructure, etc.) this chapter aims to tackle some of the policies that are more housing specific. As suggested by the AARP livability index, the County's environment is potentially its most valuable asset, with health potentially being the County's weakest point. This plan recommends policies throughout that would hopefully have a positive impact on many of the scores shown below.

Public Input

Respondents to the survey offered during the public input phase of this plan expressed a fairly diverse set of opinions regarding housing in Alexander County. 82% of participants reported living in homes they owned, 10% reported living on farm residences, and 7% reported living in a rental unit. When asked if there were adequate home ownership opportunities in the County only 45% of participants said "Yes", with 36% answering "No", and another 18% remaining unsure. When asked the same question about rental opportunities, 49% answered "No", while 27% said they were "Unsure", and only 24% saying "Yes". When asked their preference between owning and renting, 97% reported they would rather own their home. These responses seem to suggest that, while there is an overwhelming desire to own a home in the County, there may be serious obstacles to both home ownership and rental opportunities.

When asked what may be the greatest hindrance to obtaining housing in Alexander County, respondents cited availability as the greatest obstacle (44%), with cost as a close second (39%). Utilities (10%) and information (7%) were not noted as significant barriers by many participants. Several commenters also noted concerns such as the condition and age of the County's housing stock, lack of options for senior and workforce housing, and distance to employment centers. Alexander County residents seem to feel that Alexander County's housing stock is lower than it should be, and what is available is often priced above what is feasible.

Participants were asked where new housing should be focused when built. The Taylorsville area outside of town limits (48%), Bethlehem (37%), and Wittenburg (37%) were the top three suggested areas, with Sharpes (8%), Millers (8%), and Gwaltneys (8%) receiving the lowest percentages of recommendations. In fact, there seems to be a natural division between the more urbanized areas of the county and areas that are more rural in the responses. An overwhelming majority of participants would prefer to see single-family housing in their neighborhoods (86%), though senior housing (29%) and Condos/Townhomes (27%) were distant runners up.

In-person input sessions echoed much of what was shown in the survey. Availability and affordability were among the top issues mentioned regarding housing, as well as the poor state of the current housing stock. Another topic brought up in the in-person sessions was the homelessness/houselessness problem within the County. A desire to limit new development to communities that can handle the growth within the county was an almost universal desire. More diversity in housing options was discussed, as was senior housing.

The overall impression gained through public input resulted in the development of the following 3 goals: Promote safe, stable housing opportunities for County residents in order to support upward mobility and reduce houselessness, preserve and improve the quality of existing housing units in the County, and encourage the development of a range of housing types and densities in the County.

Goal 1: Promote safe, stable housing opportunities for County residents in order to support upward mobility and reduce homelessness/ houselessness.

Affordable housing is a cornerstone of a healthy community. The availability of housing that is affordable to a wide range of income levels fosters economic diversity and ensures that essential service workers can live near their places of employment. Alexander County is committed to increasing the supply of affordable housing through a multi-faceted approach. This includes providing incentives for developers to include affordable units in their projects, collaborating with nonprofit organizations and housing authorities, and exploring zoning changes to accommodate mixed-income developments.

As the county's population ages, housing options that accommodate the needs of seniors become increasingly crucial. Alexander County should promote the principles of universal design in housing development, ensuring that homes are accessible and adaptable for people of all ages and abilities. Additionally, the county is committed to promoting housing solutions for individuals with disabilities or special needs, with a focus on supportive housing programs and accessible infrastructure.

An important distinction in the conversation surrounding homelessness has recently emerged between the words "homeless" and "houseless". While this is a much more nuanced discussion than can be covered in this document, it is worth noting the distinction. Whereas a homeless person is someone who might live in tents, camps, cars, or on sidewalks, a houseless person is someone who might live in a motel, hotel, shelter, or sleeping on the couch of a friend or family member. The distinction points to the differences in approaching the issue; where houselessness tends to be short-term and can be brought on by job loss, interpersonal conflict, or natural disasters, homelessness is typically more chronic and accompanied by both mental and physical health concerns. Addressing both homelessness and houselessness and ensuring housing stability are essential components of Alexander County's housing strategy. The County recognizes the importance of preventing homelessness and houselessness and providing supportive services to individuals and families at risk. Through rapid rehousing programs, homelessness prevention initiatives, and collaborations with service providers, the county aims to address housing insecurity and promote stable living conditions for all residents.

The first objective in accomplishing this goal is to support the development of affordable and workforce housing options in the County. While the County cannot be the direct developer for these kinds of homes, it can certainly pave the way to allow developers to meet the needs of County residents. The best and most effective means of bridging these gaps is a complicated matter, and one of rigorous debate throughout both North Carolina and the nation. Some widely accepted methods, however, are to develop housing plans that identify specific needs within a community, public-private partnerships with nonprofits and housing developers, promoting current and emerging "safety net" providers, and identifying sites that might best be focused on future development.

Understanding that this topic is one that currently has no "one size fits all" solution, the County should remain vigilant in seeking out new and creative strategies for meeting its housing needs. This is the second objective in meeting Goal 1, and warrants the establishment of a housing committee comprised of developers, elected officials, non-profit providers, and administrators, tasked with evaluating and recommending new opportunities for improvement regarding housing with Alexander County.

Goal 2: Preserve and improve the quality of existing housing units in the County.

As mentioned above, many residents expressed concern over the age and condition of homes within the County. Whether by age or neglect, many homes in Alexander County fall below what might be considered an acceptable standard for new and current homeowners alike. Indeed, the Alexander County Planning Department has struggled or altogether failed to enforce existing ordinances in recent years that may have helped mitigate many issues the County currently faces. While this is something that has become more of a priority for the County, there is no small amount of work to do. Enforcement staff tend to see two kinds of cases in Alexander County. Firstly are those cases where there is a genuine desire for improvement but financial or physical constraints make improvements harder to achieve. Secondly are those cases where land-owners, landlords, and tenants have seen little to no enforcement of County ordinances and have felt no pressure to bring their property into compliance.

For those with genuine need, the County should begin to aggregate resources into a housing rehabilitation program that connects residents with State and Federal funds, non-profit assistance, and service providers that can assist with the cost of minimum housing upgrades. Following the development of this program, an earnest attempt to educate citizens who most need these resources should be undertaken and maintained. This may range from simple brochures available in County facilities to partnering with nonprofits and educational centers to offer training on basic home maintenance and improvement.

Enforcement is the other recommended action for these cases. Where ordinances currently exist, enforcement must be strengthened, consistent, and visible. In areas where the County does not currently address enforcement needs, policies should be considered, recommended, and adopted in order to bridge existing gaps between current conditions and future goals. It is important to recognize that the improvement of Alexander County's housing environment is not just a benefit to the residents of the County, but an economic development tool as well; employers need homes for their employees and are typically hesitant to locate in areas where the available housing is in poor condition.

Goal 3: Encourage the development of a range of housing types and densities in the county.

Recognizing that a one-size-fits-all approach to housing is inadequate, Alexander County should promote a diverse range of housing options. By encouraging a mix of housing types and styles, from single-family homes to townhouses and multi-family complexes, the County can cater to the varying needs and preferences of its residents. The County should also support the creation of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and embrace the principles of traditional neighborhood design to create walkable, well-connected communities.

The first objective in realizing this goal is to encourage high and medium-density housing development where appropriate. While this is not something that can be supported throughout all of Alexander County, areas with public infrastructure, suitable land, and existing facilities should be considered for greater development potential. Focused development leads to greater efficiencies; the cost of a linear foot of water or sewer line remains the same regardless of the number of homes connected to that line. Increasing density around utilities helps reduce the overall tax burden on residents by splitting the cost between more residents. Additionally, mixed-use developments allow for light commercial and residential uses to benefit from each other. Communities that allow residents to walk to restaurants, shopping, and services are highly desirable for many, and tend to support more local business than stand-alone shops. For neighborhoods that already exist in these areas, accessory dwelling units (ADUs) should not only be permitted by right, but encouraged. ADUs often become a starter home for young professionals, help supplement the income of current homeowners, and reduce the sprawl of development into more rural communities.

Another objective necessary to meet Goal 3 is to work with local developers and builders to identify and address any barriers to the development of new housing units in the County. While the County might do its best to predict the needs and challenges of residential development, there is no greater input than from professionals in this industry. To that end, realtors, homeowners, and homebuilders should all be required members of the Housing Committee proposed above. Additionally, as opportunities for improvement are recommended, county staff should regularly propose amendments to the Land Development Code with input from the community.

Goals and Objectives

The following goals and objectives have been identified for housing in Alexander County:

- Goal 1: Promote safe, stable housing opportunities for County residents in order to support upward mobility and reduce homelessness/houselessness.

  - Objective 1.1: Support the development of affordable and workforce housing options in the County.

    - Strategy 1.1.1: Develop a county-wide housing plan to identify and prioritize the needs of different populations, including seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income families.

    - Strategy 1.1.2: Encourage the development of new affordable housing units using partnerships with private developers and non-profit organizations.

    - Strategy 1.1.3: Identify and support providers of rental assistance and down payment assistance programs to help low-income families afford to rent or purchase homes.

    - Strategy 1.1.4: Target specific sites for workforce housing near employment centers.

  - Objective 1.2: Continue to seek out new, creative ways to approach challenges regarding housing in Alexander County.

    - Strategy 1.2.1: Develop an Alexander County Housing Committee to evaluate current housing needs and recommend future housing strategies.

    - Strategy 1.2.2: Task the Alexander County Housing Committee with a periodic report to the Board of Commissioners regarding innovations and best practices used in neighboring communities for consideration.

- Goal 2: Preserve and improve the quality of existing housing units in the County.

  - Objective 2.1: Pursue resources to support existing housing needs.

    - Strategy 2.1.1: Develop a county-wide housing rehabilitation program to find financial assistance for homeowners to repair and improve their homes.

    - Strategy 2.1.2: Develop a county-wide housing education and outreach program to provide information and resources to homeowners and renters on how to maintain and improve their homes.

  - Objective 2.2: Enforce and improve existing nuisance and minimum housing codes.

    - Strategy 2.2.1: Continue county-wide code enforcement program to ensure that all housing units meet minimum health and safety standards.

    - Strategy 2.2.2: Seek ways to bridge gaps between County enforcement policies and known deficiencies in enforcement, and pursue text amendments when necessary.

- Goal 3: Encourage the development of a range of housing types and densities in the county.

- Objective 3.1: Encourage high and medium density housing development where appropriate.

  - Strategy 3.1.1: Develop a county-wide zoning ordinance that allows for the development of a range of housing types, including single-family homes, apartments, and manufactured homes in places best suited for those housing types.

  - Strategy 3.1.2: Encourage the development of mixed-use and multi-family housing to increase density and create a more vibrant and walkable community.

  - Strategy 3.1.3: Promote the development of accessory dwelling units by relaxing standards for ADUs in higher density zoning districts.

  - Strategy 3.1.4: Reduce setbacks in higher-density zoning districts to encourage greater use of land.

  - Strategy 3.1.5: Invest in public utilities such as water and sewer service in Urban Service Areas to encourage higher-density development.

- Objective 3.2: Work with local developers and builders to identify and address any barriers to the development of new housing units in the county.

  - Strategy 3.2.1: Include industry professionals such as realtors, developers, and non-profits as members of the Alexander County Housing Committee.

  - Strategy 3.2.2: Consider regular text and zoning map amendments in order to respond to feedback from industry professionals and emerging issues identified by residents.

- Objective 3.3: Preserve the rural character and lifestyle of Alexander County.

- Strategy 3.3.1: Restrict housing densities in rural areas of the County.

- Strategy 3.3.2: Identify clear distinctions between the more "urbanized" and "rural" parts of the County through zoning.

- Strategy 3.3.3: Reduce development pressure on rural communities by restricting public utilities to Urban Service Areas.

- Strategy 3.3.4: Continue to encourage participation in the Farmland Preservation District to protect agricultural uses.

- Strategy 3.3.5: Require buffering in areas where higher and lower density housing developments meet.

Public Services
& Facilities

Overview

Rural county governments play a significant role in the well-being of their communities. They serve as stewards of public resources, orchestrators of essential services, and promoters of economic and social development. Public services and facilities are the linchpin of rural county governments, and their importance cannot be overstated. This chapter is broad and covers a wide range of topics, perhaps more than any chapter in this plan.

Rural county governments like Alexander County are partially responsible for facilitating access to healthcare services. This is particularly crucial in areas with aging populations and limited mobility. Public health services such as vaccination programs, disease control, and health education are vital to maintaining the well-being of rural communities. Alexander County often plays a central role in these initiatives.

County government is essential in supporting Alexander County Schools, from funding to infrastructure development. Quality education not only equips the workforce but also nurtures community growth and development. Our schools are often centers for community activities and youth engagement, fostering social cohesion and a sense of belonging.

Rural county governments ensure the availability of emergency services such as law enforcement, fire departments, and rescue units, and Alexander County is no

different. These services are the first line of defense in protecting lives and property.

Additionally, where natural disasters like floods, wildfires, and tornadoes are common, Alexander County plays a critical role in disaster response, providing shelter, aid, and recovery support.

Alexander County also plays a role in ensuring a clean and safe water supply and sanitation services. Reliable access to these utilities is essential for public health and well-being.

Alexander County also provides support for vulnerable populations, including the elderly, children, and individuals facing economic hardship. Services such as housing assistance, food programs, and counseling are vital for maintaining social stability. Effective social services can help prevent poverty and reduce the strain on communities, creating opportunities for residents to thrive.

All of these services and more play a vital role in the well-being of the County, and are addressed below as a result of public input, staff feedback, and best practices.

Public Input

76% of survey respondents agreed that waste disposal services and convenience centers in the county were adequate. The majority of survey participants also agreed that public water availability (90%) and public sewer availability (80%) are important for the county's future. Participants were asked to rate the

county's public services from very inadequate to very adequate. The majority of responses found the Police and Sheriff, Fire Department, Emergency Medical Services, Public Schools, NC Department of Transportation, and Public Library to be somewhat to very adequate. Respondents were primarily neutral/unsure about Trash Collection, County Government Administration, Stormwater and Erosion Controls, and Zoning Regulations.

Many of the comments received during public input also addressed the inadequacy of broadband service in select parts of the County.

One of the recurring themes in conversations with both residents and County staff was concern over the state of many County facilities. Many buildings have either inadequate space for emerging demands, increased costs for maintenance, or pose some health and safety risks for inhabitants.

Along the same line of thinking was a concern voiced several times over the use of rented spaces to provide vital County services rather than owning those spaces outright.

Goal 1: Improve capacity and condition of public facilities in the county.

While many of the topics discussed below will be specific to different departments and services, there are some recommendations that will apply more generally to all County services and facilities. First and foremost for consideration should be the facilities themselves. While the County has a dedicated facilities manager to respond to needs as they arise, there is no plan currently in place that anticipates the needs that are likely to arise in the coming years. Whether through age, growth, or service demands, the County's facilities will have need to expand and adapt, and a long-range facilities plan makes it so that the County can remain proactive rather than reactive in light of those needs. Additionally, this kind of planning makes the financial burden of such adjustments much more predictable, and can be better absorbed over a long-term plan than a sudden emergent need. This plan should be mindful of both the County staff and community needs and expectations, meaning input should be a key consideration when developing a long-range facilities plan.

The County has previously not utilized capital improvement planning as a core tool for financial planning. As facility and equipment needs continue to grow more complex and expensive, there should be a focused effort to begin utilizing capital improvement planning as a means of managing future needs, particularly in regards to fleet management. Capital improvement planning is a proven best practice utilized by most local governments to keep unexpected major expenses to a minimum.

While the cooperative extension and farmer's market are a bit more department-specific than the recommendations above, the extent to which agriculture impacts Alexander County as a whole should be considered when looking at County-wide policies. Alexander County does currently have an active farmer's market, though it does not have a dedicated space. The market currently uses the County's administrative services building's parking lot. Capacity and space have been commonly cited issues in public input discussions. A dedicated, central space for the farmer's market should be considered as the next step for the growth of the market. Grant funds are commonly available for the

development of such facilities, and communities with standalone market spaces (such as in Cleveland and Rutherford Counties) can often use the space for income-generating rental space during non-operational hours. Additionally, this could be developed alongside a standalone Cooperative Extension facility. Many neighboring counties have dedicated facilities for their cooperative extension which affords them the ability to offer expanded educational opportunities, community gardens, and agricultural event hosting. The current cooperative extension is housed in the corner of the County's administrative services facilities building which leaves staff competing for meeting space, limited educational resources, and no room for gardening and farming projects on-site.

The same consideration should be offered to all service-based departments, however. There are many departments that are the first place many people in our County go during a crisis, or in times of stress. The Health Department, Department of Social Services, and even the Tax Office are all common contact points for residents, and

facility needs should be sensitive to this fact. Adequate, functional, and welcoming facilities can help offer a sense of stability and comfort to those who may already be struggling. This is not to suggest that tax dollars should be spent frivolously to create a positive impression of our service providers, rather that when residents have an experience with the County facilities they should do so in spaces that are well-maintained, adequate, and welcoming.

Maintenance was a recurring theme in public input discussions. It is paramount that the County work to keep facilities and equipment in good repair, and this is something that some residents have expressed concern over. A maintenance plan should be considered to work alongside the recommended facilities plan above. This would give careful consideration to what maintenance needs the County currently has, and provide a timeline and strategy for how to improve and maintain a high standard of excellence when tending to anything from soccer fields to public buildings. This plan should also consider the current state of accessibility on County grounds, and work to identify and

Goal 1: Improve capacity and condition of public facilities in the county. (Cont'd.)

Goal 2: Strive to maintain and enhance the County Sheriff's Office.

remediate problem areas for those with disabilities.

One concern that many residents raised during public input sessions was what some called "band-aid" fixes to County needs. As one resident explained, "The County has to stop spending a dollar to save a dime." While all of the above should help to improve the investments of the County, one final recommendation is for the County to avoid the rental of facility space as a policy. For short-term needs this may be a viable option, however, long-term facility needs should not be met this way. While facility development can require high initial costs, rental agreements are a perpetual financial encumbrance that will never result in a fixed asset. Buildings owned and operated by the County will eventually cease to be a financial burden aside from maintenance and upkeep, and can be sold if the need arises. A shift toward County facility ownership should be pursued where feasible. To the same end of reducing overall expenditures, when developing or renovating County facilities there should be consideration of energy efficiency and multi-use possibilities. Increasing the County's energy efficiency

reduces ongoing monthly costs at the expense of one-time improvements. Designing county facilities for multiple uses not only extends the usefulness of the building should needs suddenly change, but also creates conveniences for residents who may use multiple county services at once. Pairing services such as parks at library facilities or near educational centers keeps complementary services near one another.

The County Sheriff's Office deals with a complex array of services and issues, most of which are far beyond the purview of a standard Comprehensive Plan. Regular evaluation should be undertaken to "touch base" with the community to determine what needs exist, and which needs are not already being met. When possible, staffing should be assessed to meet any unmet needs identified through this evaluation. Additionally, the Sheriff's Office should strive to continue its practice of utilizing proven methods for crime reduction, and be encouraged to try emerging techniques as they arise.

Technology in law enforcement is an ever-evolving field, and Alexander County should plan for changes in industry standards and identify funding sources outside of tax revenue to help keep the Sheriff's Office up-to-date and competitive. An annual meeting between the Sheriff's Office and local elected officials would be an effective way to keep local leaders updated on emerging trends, anticipated needs, and new revenue streams to pursue. This kind of collaboration helps keep decision makers well-informed and cooperative when opportunities to

improve service present themselves.

No department works entirely independently of one another in county government, and this reality should be acknowledged and used as a strength in Alexander County. Opportunities for collaboration on complex community service needs should be sought out and acted on. For example, substance abuse has been shown to be an issue requiring work from DSS, Public Health, EMS, and the Sheriff's Office. Each department plays an important role in facing this issue, and greater collaboration between these departments results in a more comprehensive and organized approach to addressing this crisis. The County may go even further by periodically establishing issue-oriented workgroups to investigate new and creative ways to address emerging community concerns.

Based on the public input received, the County Sheriff's Office appears to have an excellent relationship with the public in Alexander County overall. This positive relationship should be maintained and expanded on. Activities such as an annual

Goal 2: Strive to maintain and enhance the County Sheriff's Office. (Cont'd.)

Goal 3: Strive to maintain and enhance the County Fire Marshal and Emergency Management Departments.

public input session for residents to speak with and ask questions of law enforcement and consistent geographical staff assignments to help residents become familiar with "their" sheriff's deputy are potential ways to increase the already positive relationship between residents and law enforcement. Additionally, where possible, it may be preferable to hire law enforcement from within Alexander County to strengthen the bond between residents and those who serve with the Sheriff's Office.

The County Emergency Services department covers a vast service area, from planning and inspections to community engagement, and much more. Much of the Fire Marshal and emergency management activities begin with planning efforts, often required by the State or in order to secure grant funding. Due to the number of plans developed through these departments it is likely that both the public and local officials are fully aware of the value and importance of this work. The emergency management officials should consider giving an annual report to the Board of Commissioners to assess plan implementation, as well as to discuss upcoming goals. Additionally, collaboration with the County PIO and other departments to raise awareness of emergency management planning efforts would both inform the public of what efforts being made and improve the amount of public input these plans receive. As mentioned above, many of these plans are used to secure grant funding, and an annual update showing just how much the County has secured as a result of these planning efforts should be offered to the Board of Commissioners. Of course, as new funding opportunities arise these planning efforts

should continue to be leveraged to secure funding for the County.

Not unlike what was discussed above for the Sheriff's Office, a need and desire from County staff to work more collaboratively was also echoed in discussions with the staff of the Fire Marshal's office. An increased focus on where departments must work together and aiming to improve training and collaboration seems appropriate, and should be encouraged where feasible. This would also include updating the County's Operations Plan to reflect this more collaborative approach, as well as the inclusion of the Fire Marshal and a representative from Emergency Management on the County's Technical Review Board.

Another problem the Fire Marshal's Office shares with the Sheriff Office is the challenge of keeping equipment, staffing, and technology up-to-date. The County should strive to move toward industry standards in radio equipment, as recent industry changes threaten to make the

Goal 3: Strive to maintain and enhance the County Fire Marshal and Emergency Management Departments. (Cont'd.)

current equipment obsolete. Any opportunities to increase training and staff certification should also be encouraged when feasible. Fire department substations can also be expanded in order to reduce the overall insurance rate of residents. Finally, the Fire Marshal's office has expressed a desire to staff fire departments with 24-hour coverage.

Community awareness is a vital operation for both the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management. Programs such as fire prevention and education should be maintained and expanded where possible. Fire inspections also serve as a means of educating the public by informing new business owners of their obligations and best practices. Additionally, a "pipeline" should be established for new businesses that helps clarify inspection requirements, fire code, and other questions for business owners new to the process. Efforts to expand the online presence of Fire Marshal and Emergency Management programs should be made in collaboration with the County PIO for the community overall to access educational and emergency information.

The equipment needs of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management programs are a broad area of discussion which warrants more investigation and planning than can be achieved by this document; however, some general recommendations can help begin that process. A focus on where equipment redundancies and duplication of services can be eliminated should be considered, as well as developing a unified, consolidated storage area for emergency management equipment.

Goal 4: Strive to maintain and enhance the Emergency Medical Services Department.

Echoing once more what was discussed above for the Sheriff's Office and Fire Marshal's Office, a need and desire from County staff to work more collaboratively was also echoed in discussions with the staff of the EMS department. An increased focus on where departments must work together and aiming to improve training and collaboration seems appropriate, and should be encouraged where feasible. This would also warrant the inclusion of a representative from Emergency Medical Services on the County's Technical Review Board.

An ongoing effort for EMS is to strive for lower response times as much as feasible. One of the ways to do this is to expand EMS facilities into areas that show emerging needs for service. The Ellendale and East Alexander areas of the county appear to be the most pressing areas in need of facilities according to EMS staff. However, this kind of review of staffing and facilities is something that should be done regularly to ensure residents are getting adequate service. EMS is also subject to the same change in radio technology that the Fire Marshal's office is facing, and consideration for fire upgrades should be considered alongside EMS needs. A service gap noted by EMS staff was the ability to treat trauma victims. Due to the distance from most places in Alexander County to a hospital, an attempt to better outfit EMS responders with trauma treatment resources, such as Whole Blood, could go a long way in saving the lives of residents. Similarly, the recently established PORT/CP (Post-Overdose Response Team/ Community Paramedic) program should continue to expand and include the County's substance use disorder coalition in its efforts.

Education and outreach is also an important aspect of what the EMS department does, and efforts to maintain and expand these programs, such as the "Stop the Bleed" educational program, should be pursued where feasible. Similar to the above recommendation, collaboration with the County PIO to expand social media and press presence of county EMS programs would also be of great benefit.

Map 5: Fire & EMS

Fire districts, fire stations, and EMS (Emergency Medical Services) stations are critical components of a community's emergency response infrastructure.

A fire district is a defined geographic area within a municipality or county that is served by a specific fire department or fire protection agency. These districts are established to ensure efficient and effective fire protection services for residents and properties within their boundaries. Alexander County is currently divided into eight fire districts, with two districts serving outside of the County boundaries due to interlocal agreements with neighboring counties. Fire districts typically rely on a combination of funding sources, which may include property taxes, grants, and fees for services. These funds are used to maintain equipment, train personnel, and operate fire stations.

Fire stations are the physical facilities strategically located within fire districts to house firefighting equipment, vehicles, and personnel. These stations serve as the operational bases for firefighters and emergency responders. Alexander County currently has ten fire stations throughout the County, with at least one in each fire district.

EMS stations are dedicated facilities where Emergency Medical Services personnel are stationed, and medical equipment and ambulances are stored. These stations are strategically located to provide timely medical assistance in response to emergencies, including medical emergencies, accidents, and trauma cases. Alexander County currently has three EMS stations in different parts of the County.

These entities ensure rapid response to emergencies, minimizing property damage, and saving lives. They are instrumental in safeguarding public safety, including fire prevention, medical care, and disaster response. Fire and EMS stations often engage in community education and outreach to promote safety and emergency preparedness as well. These facilities contribute to the resilience of communities by providing essential emergency services during disasters and crises.

Map 5 shows the current boundaries of the Alexander County Fire Districts, as well as the location of each Fire and EMS station.
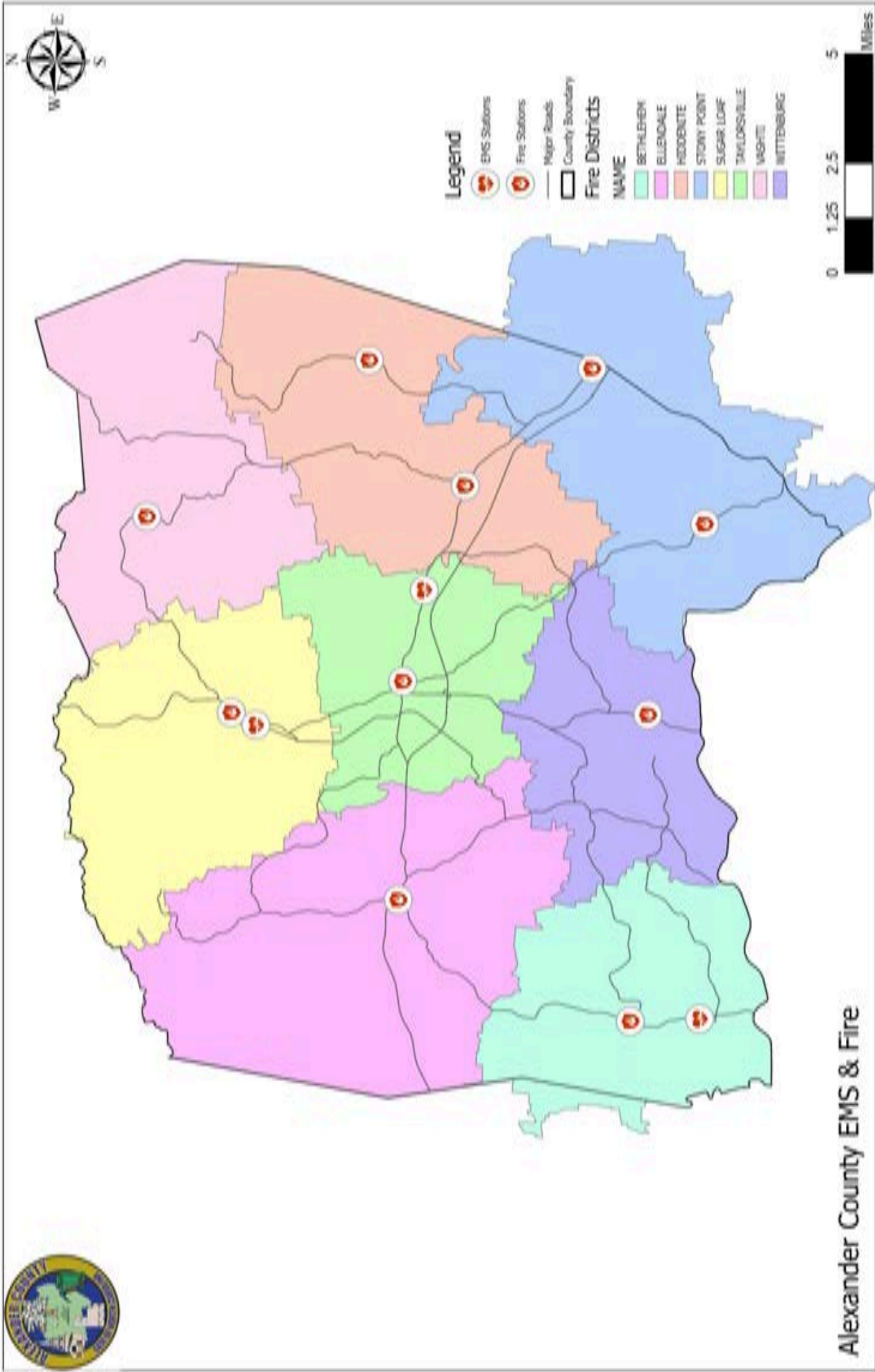
Alexander County EMS & Fire

Goal 5: Strive to maintain and enhance the County's Public Schools.

Goal 6: Strive to maintain and enhance the County's Utilities.

Alexander County Schools (ACS) are not directly administered through the County, but rather the Alexander County School Board. To that end, this plan aims to recommend ways that the County can help support ACS through its other services. One important way the County can support ACS is to collaborate on land use decisions and school design/placement in order to encourage walking routes to schools and pedestrian access to surrounding neighborhoods. Similarly, land use decisions should strive to make schools the focal point of communities, especially when considering density (and how it relates to school capacity), pedestrian access (and how safe it is for our students), and community services (and how they can help enhance the educational experience).

Another way the County can help support ACS is to include decision makers in the planning process. Both when looking at major development decisions and when looking to evaluate facility needs, ACS should be included in the conversation to ensure that capacity concerns are noted, facilities remain adequate to meet growing demand, and any other issues that may arise over the course of development. Above all the ACS Strategic Plan should guide policy decisions when relevant.

Alexander County has previously not developed formal policies or plans when it comes to utility extensions. While this has been adequate in the past, development pressures from Catawba and Iredell counties are likely to require a more intentional and well-planned approach. The County should work to develop utilities policies, systems, and services that facilitate compact development and support economic development in defined areas. In order to keep services efficient and expansion costs low, the County should prioritize utilities investments in areas designated as "Urban Services Areas" on the Future Land Use Map. In evaluating development proposals, and prior to approval, the County should consider the potential demands relative to existing and planned water and sewer capacity, the relationship to existing and future service areas, and commitments for current and future allocations. In order to avoid development projects that place undue burden on the County's water and sewer services, development policies should require new development to demonstrate the ability to provide an adequate water supply and wastewater treatment indefinitely for all uses in the proposed

project.

Water and sewer availability increase the potential for new development, which can be a curse as much as a blessing. In areas where rural and agricultural land need to be protected, the County should limit utility extensions or upgrades. In order to avoid sprawl and unnecessary upgrades, the County should also aim to effectively use existing utility systems, prioritizing development with existing utility and services extensions first such as infill development.

Far beyond the scope of this document, but no less important, would be a comprehensive utilities plan for Alexander County. This plan would provide detailed information and well-researched recommendations on exactly where water and sewer investments would have the most impact in the County, as well as establish a path forward that is clear and broadly communicated to all stakeholders. Once this plan is established the County might consider forming an inter-local sewer and water board to advise the County and Town (cont'd)

Map 6: Schools

Alexander County is home to a variety of educational institutions that serve its residents.

Alexander County Schools (ACS): The Alexander County School District is the primary public school system in the county. It operates seven elementary schools, two middle schools, and Alexander Central High School. These schools offer a comprehensive curriculum, including academic and extracurricular programs. In addition to traditional schools, the ACS provides alternative education options for students who may benefit from a non-traditional approach to learning. The Student Success Center and Early College are the primary alternative opportunities. These facilities are shown on Map 7.

While not within the county limits, Alexander County is close to several higher educational institutions. Nearby colleges and universities provide opportunities for residents to pursue higher education and vocational training.

Alexander County residents have access to nearby technical and community colleges, especially the Catawba Valley Community College satellite campus, offering a range of programs and degrees to help individuals acquire new skills or advance in their careers.

The comprehensive planning process is significantly influenced by the presence and quality of public schools. The quality of education provided by public schools directly impacts the skills and knowledge of the future workforce. Well-educated students are better prepared to meet the demands of a dynamic job market.

The quality of nearby schools significantly influences property values. Parents often choose homes based on school district quality, which impacts housing demand and property tax revenue. Public schools are integral to housing policies and land use planning. Planners must consider school capacity and performance when designating residential zones and determining infrastructure needs. Public schools require infrastructure support, including utilities, safety services, and recreational facilities like sports fields and playgrounds. Comprehensive plans must allocate resources for school-related infrastructure and public services.

Put plainly, public schools are essential to the comprehensive planning process because they influence education quality, housing, transportation, community engagement, infrastructure, and long-term development. The County recognizes the relationship between public schools and the broader community, ensuring that educational considerations are integrated into comprehensive planning efforts for sustainable, vibrant, and thriving communities.
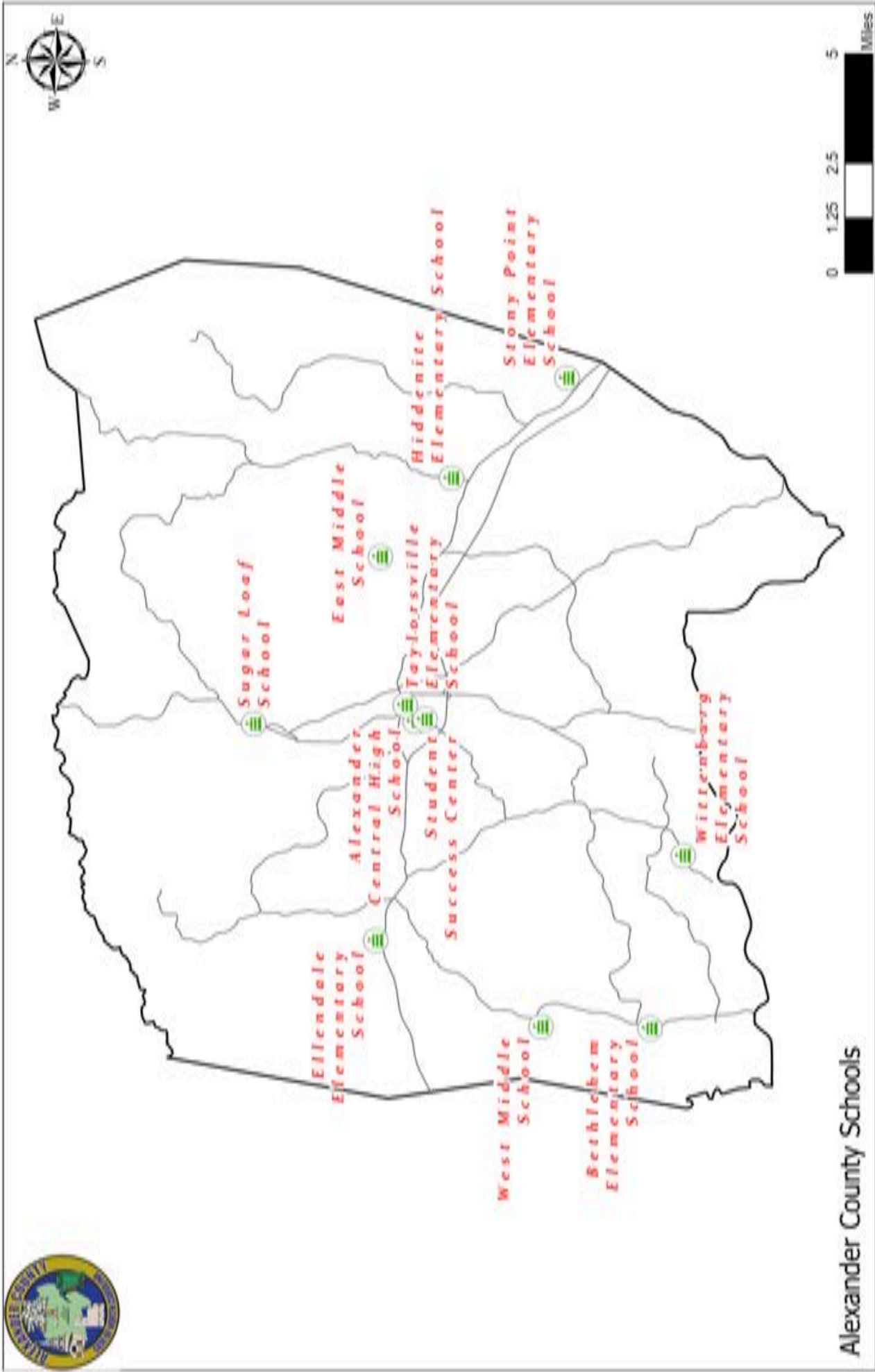
Alexander County Schools

Goal 6: Strive to maintain and enhance the County's Utilities. (Cont'd.)

Goal 7: Strive to maintain and enhance County Administrative Services.

of Taylorsville on utility conditions, needs, and priorities, and oversee the execution of the utilities plan. In order to maintain and support these programs, however, it seems necessary to establish and fund a 10-year capital improvement program and capital reserve fund which is adequate to implement planned investments in sewer and water infrastructure.

Alexander County currently depends on private service or contract agreements to handle water and sewer. This may continue to be the best option for the County moving forward, though it may be appropriate to consider the development of a County-owned water treatment plant, and wastewater treatment plant to reduce dependence on external systems. Independent of the conclusion, the County should still work to identify water and sewer service gaps in Urban Services Areas and prioritize investment in closing those gaps when possible as well as prioritize water line and sewer line extensions to economic development sites. For water service specifically, where feasible, the County should aim to construct new water supply lines as looped systems to prevent stagnant

water conditions. Specific to wastewater systems, the County should avoid investment in private systems, especially where capacity is a concern in order to keep taxpayers from inheriting costly maintenance and repairs.

One often overlooked yet incredibly vital utility is internet coverage. As shown in maps 8-10, there are still quite a few unserved and underserved areas of Alexander County. The County has recently moved on some truly significant projects and grant funding opportunities, and we should continue building on previous broadband coverage research and explore grant funds and partnerships to expand broadband internet service to high-priority portions of the County. It is also important to acknowledge broadband access as an economic development, public health, and educational need and eventually develop a strategic plan to prioritize and pursue broadband initiatives as they become available.

The County Manager's office and corresponding departments tend to remain forgotten in many comprehensive planning efforts. Administration has considerable impact on County operations, though, especially in regards to budgeting and human resources. Conversations during the public input process help to illuminate a gap between the residents of the County and the decisions of administration. This is something that could be well alleviated by better communication both ways, and strategic efforts to keep the public informed on a regular basis. To this end, the County should consider holding an annual public input session before the budgeting process begins to gain insight regarding needs, concerns, and priorities, as well as consider a regularly posted video series or social media post that answers common questions from the public.

One of the most impactful aspects of County government is the staff hired to do the work of said government. As with any budget, personnel is always one of the largest expenses of doing business, and the County is no exception. What sets the County apart, however, is that the investment made in staff is done with tax dollars. An added responsibility

to invest in well-trained and outstanding staff comes with the use of public funds, making recruitment and retention paramount. The County should seek to implement measures to recruit and retain exemplary County staff, as well as conduct periodic review of County staff to ensure County priorities are being maintained. Evaluations and retention are only part of the puzzle, however. In order to gain insight as to what the average resident is experiencing when interacting with County staff, there should be a customer feedback program to gain input regarding positive or negative experiences with the County.

Some positions with the County are likely to have more turnover than others. Whether due to the difficulty of the job, lack of competitive pay, or positions that are high stress, the County should give thought on how to deploy creative measures to reduce turnover in low-retention positions. Conveniences for high demand areas might also be considered for both customers and staff. Namely, in areas of the County where certain services are used disproportionately more than in other areas, departmental annexes should be considered to better meet the needs of that area.

Map 7: Water & Sewer

Public water and sewer services are fundamental utilities that play a pivotal role in the health, well-being, and development of rural communities.

While often taken for granted in urban areas, access to clean and reliable drinking water and efficient wastewater management is just as critical, if not more so, in rural settings.

Public water services encompass the supply, treatment, and distribution of safe and clean drinking water to residential, commercial, and industrial consumers within a community or region. Alexander County is currently served by Energy United Water Corporation, the Town of Taylorsville, and Alexander County lines that distribute water purchased from the City of Hickory.

Access to clean and safe drinking water is fundamental to public health. It prevents waterborne diseases and ensures proper sanitation, reducing the risk of illness in rural communities. Adequate water supply also encourages economic growth and attracts businesses to rural areas, contributing to job creation and prosperity.

Public sewer services involve the collection, treatment, and disposal of wastewater and sewage from homes, businesses, and industries in a community or region. These services ensure the safe and environmentally responsible management of wastewater.

Alexander County is currently served by a mixture of private systems and services offered by the County and Town of Taylorsville, with some service from the City of Hickory in the Bethlehem.

This service involves a network of sewer pipes collects wastewater from individual properties and conveys it to treatment facilities where contaminants, pathogens, and pollutants are removed, making it safe for release into the environment. Finally, treated wastewater is safely discharged into the Catawba river, or used for beneficial purposes, such as irrigation or industrial processes.

Proper wastewater treatment safeguards the environment by preventing the contamination of water bodies, protecting aquatic ecosystems, and public health. Effective wastewater management reduces the risk of waterborne diseases and promotes community health. Reliable sewer services also support infrastructure development, including housing, commercial areas, and industrial zones.

Map 6 shows the water and sewer lines already installed throughout Alexander County.

Alexander County Water & Sewer Lines
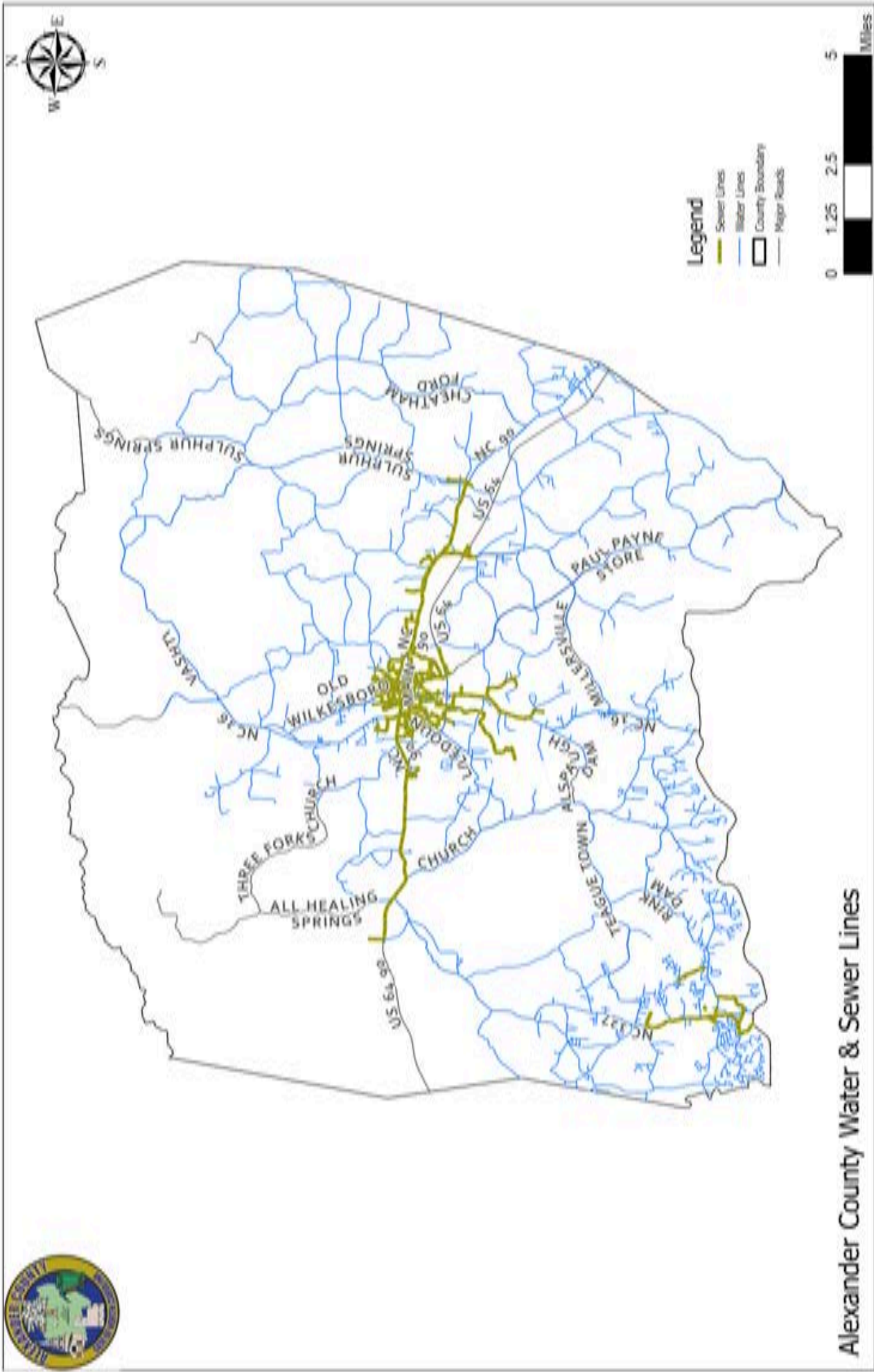
Maps 8, 9, & 10: Broadband

In today's digitally connected world, broadband internet access is not a luxury but a necessity.

Rural communities, often underserved or unserved, stand to benefit significantly from reliable broadband access. The following maps use data from the Federal Communications Commision to show areas of the county that currently have access to broadband (Map 8), areas that are underserved (Map 9), and areas that are unserved (Map 10). Underserved households may have some access to internet, but it may be slow, unreliable, or insufficient by modern standards, usually less than 100 mbps download speed and 20 mbps upload speed. Unserved households have no access to broadband internet at all. Each hex on the map gets its colo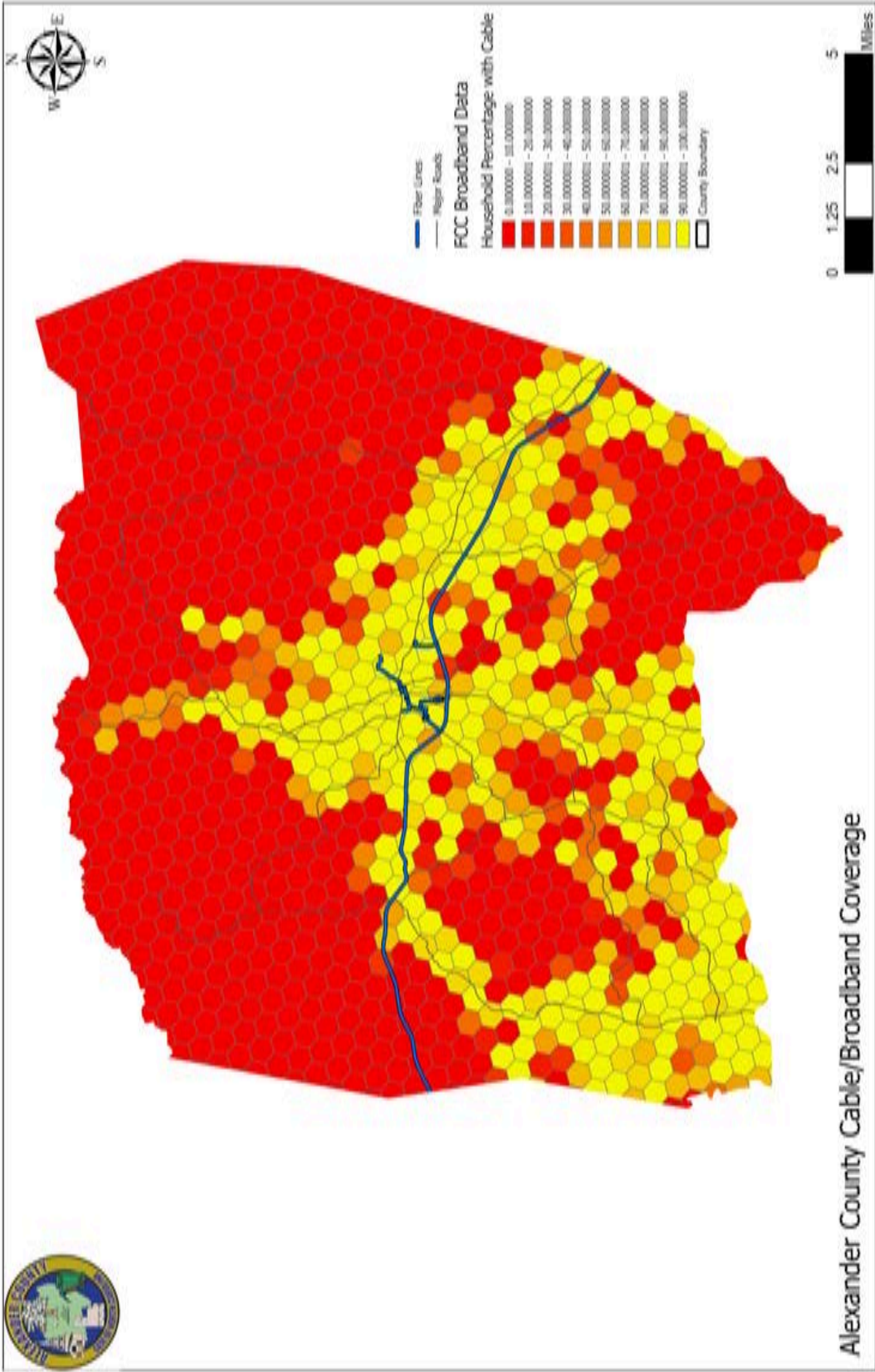r designation by the percentage of households that have broadband, are underserved, or are unserved, depending on the map.

Broadband internet is a lifeline for rural communities, promoting education, economic development, healthcare, civic engagement, agriculture, and social enrichment. It enables students in rural areas to access online educational resources, engage in remote learning, and pursue higher education opportunities. It , ensures that education is not limited by geographical location. Broadband connectivity attracts businesses to rural areas, and enables remote work, access to online job markets, and entrepreneurship opportunities.

Telemedicine relies on broadband internet to deliver medical services remotely. Rural residents benefit from virtual doctor visits, specialist consultations, and improved access to healthcare resources. Broadband internet also facilitates access to government services and civic engagement. All Board of Commissioners meetings are now available to view online. Internet access empowers rural communities to participate in decision-making processes and access critical government information.

One surprising benefit of broadband access applies to the agricultural community. Broadband internet supports precision agriculture, enabling farmers to use data-driven techniques for planting, irrigation, and pest control. It enhances productivity and sustainability in rural farming.

As mentioned above, the County is already making strategic investments and focused efforts to enhance broadband access throughout the County. This is an encouraging trend, as many residents raised concerns over internet access during public input. Bridging the digital divide by providing reliable broadband access to rural areas is essential for ensuring that all citizens, regardless of their location, have the opportunities and resources they need to thrive in the digital age.

Alexander County Cable/Broadband Coverage

Alexander County Cable/Broadband Coverage

Alexander County Cable/Broadband Coverage

Goal 8: Strive to maintain and enhance Solid Waste Collection.

Goal 9: Strive to maintain and enhance the County's Health Department and area healthcare facilities.
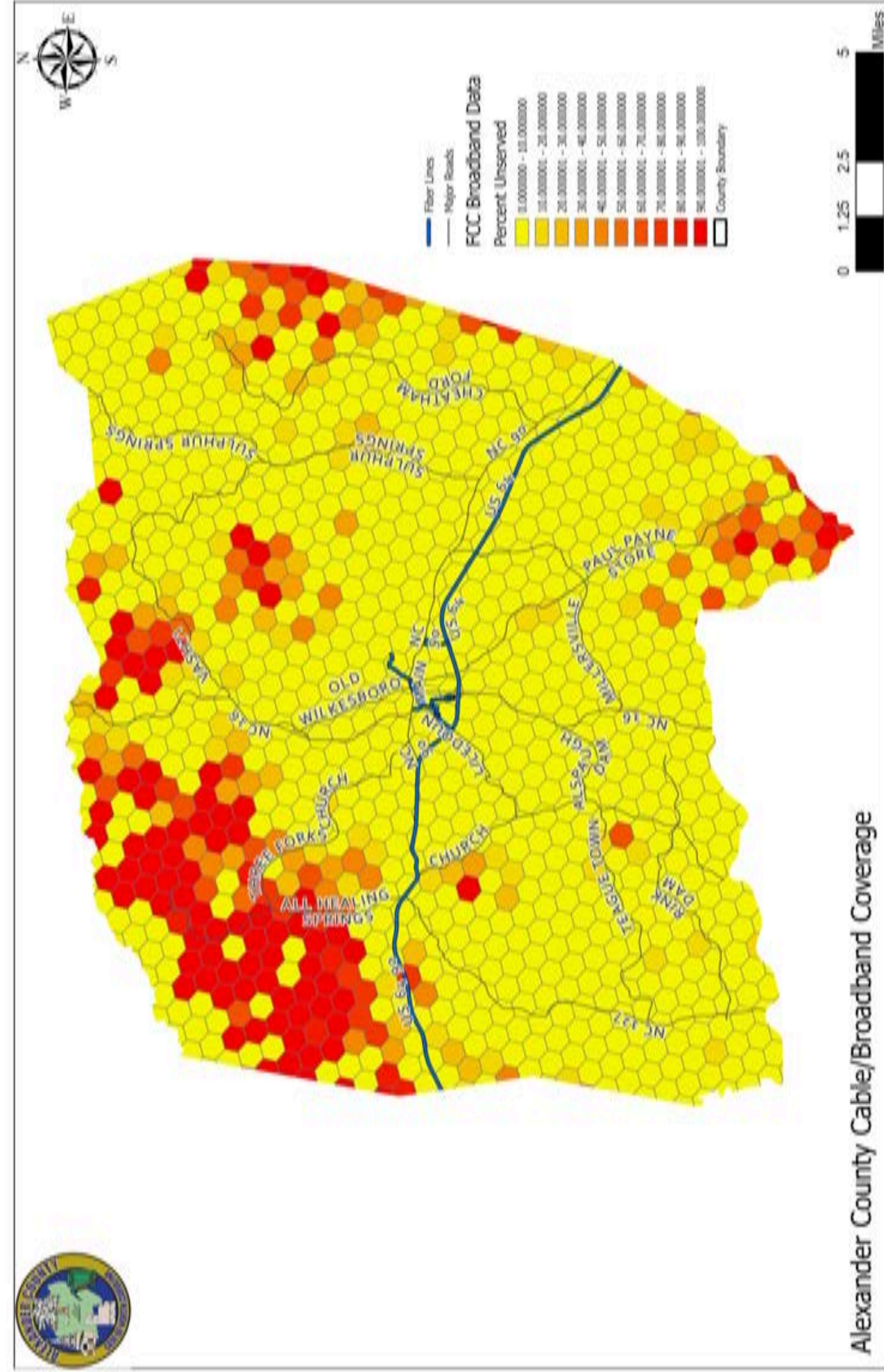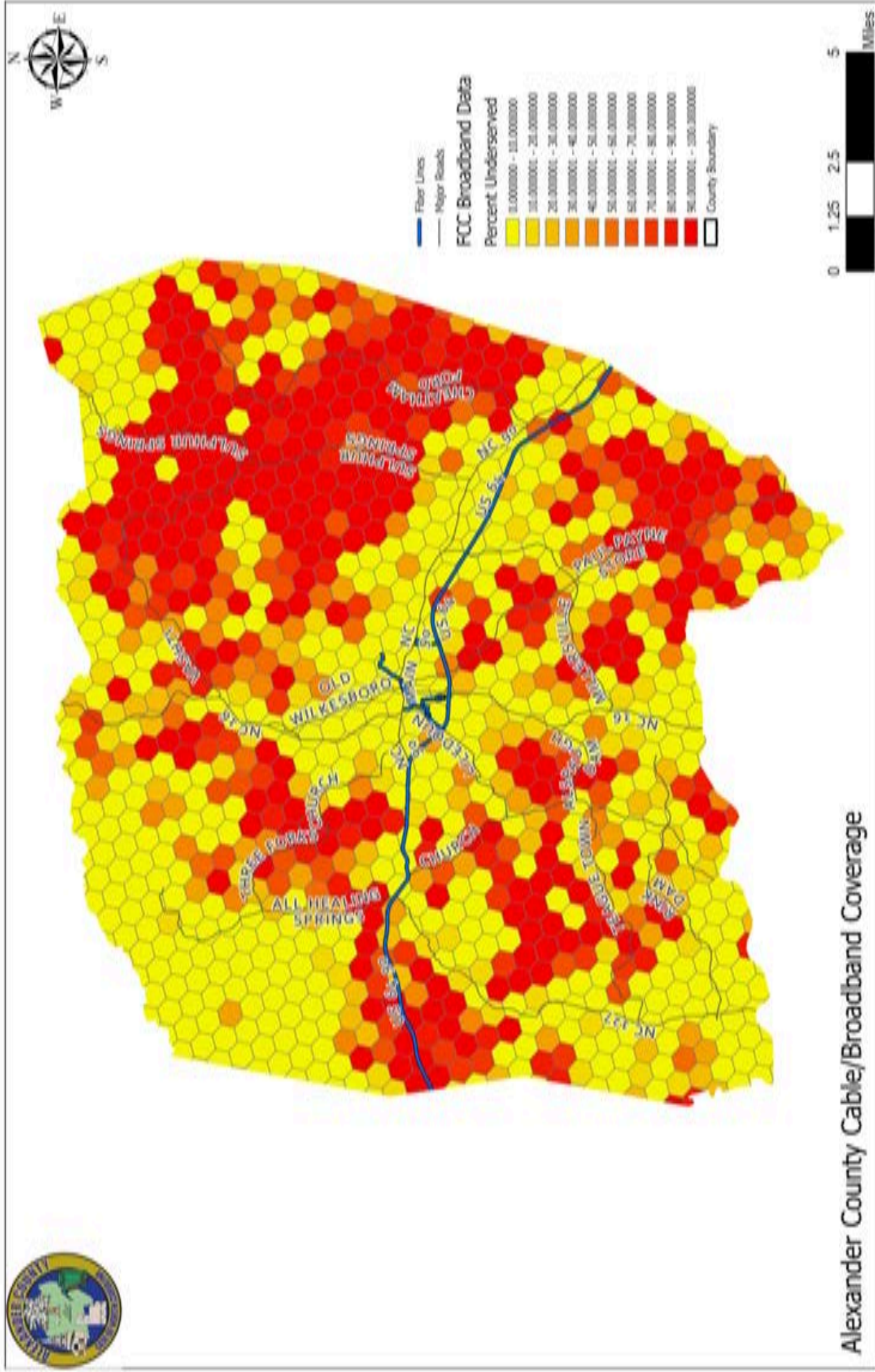
The Solid Waste Collection of the County is fairly straightforward, and based on public input, most folks seem satisfied with the work already being done. Strategies for solid waste collection, then, are less about sweeping improvements, but small scale changes than can enhance the services already being provided. One of the main areas for improvement identified in Staff discussions was to remove on-site convenience center fee collection in favor of a more efficient program. There are many potential approaches to this, which should be investigated by solid waste staff. The overall goal of removing fee collection on-site, however, would reduce traffic and slowdowns during peak hours. In the same vein, staff discussions recommended the County consider the development of a larger transfer station to reduce crowding and wait times. If the County sees growth along what would be expected based on the future land use plan there will likely be a need to increase convenience center capacity to scale with increased densities in Urban Service Areas. Finally, solid waste staff expressed a desire to work to increase awareness and educational opportunities for County Solid Waste programs and policies.

Public health is a broad and complex area with very few simple solutions. However, Alexander County's Health Department is positioned to tackle these nuanced issues and have recommended plenty of strategies that should help. One of the highest expressed priorities is to collaborate with hospitals and other medical facilities to close gaps in healthcare needs within the County. One of the most prevalent gaps seems to be mental health care in the County. Alexander County should work to provide psychological and psychiatric care either through public or private services so that residents can receive care without needing to leave Alexander County. Additionally, the County should investigate opportunities to attract specialist services, urgent care facilities, and stand-alone emergency rooms to serve the County, as there is currently a significant deficit of these services locally. Nationally and locally there is an alarming lack of childcare options for working parents, and those that are available tend to be unaffordable for many working class families. This is a need that was echoed through almost all public input discussions, as well as in discussions with staff from many County departments. Given

the urgency of this need, the County should aggressively pursue means to encourage childcare options for Alexander County residents.

Almost all discussion regarding the need for childcare was followed by an expression of need for a hospital in Alexander County. Currently the nearest facilities require anywhere from 45 minutes to over an hour of travel simply to begin the intake process, which doesn't account for wait times at these facilities which can often be multiple hours. In order to provide better care for residents, the County should pursue the recruitment or development of a full-service hospital for Alexander County. In this recruitment effort there should be additional effort made to attract care for our most vulnerable populations by seeking specialized care for communities with greater health care needs, such as senior care, pediatricians, Alzheimer's care, etc.

The Health Department undertakes an assessment process every four years to determine needs and goals for care. One of the current priorities is childcare, mentioned above. The other three topics

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Goal 9: Strive to maintain and enhance the County's Health Department and area healthcare facilities. (Cont'd.)

identified in this assessment as priorities are mental health, healthy living, and elder care. One of the major components to providing better mental health care in the county is overcoming the negative stigma that surrounds the field. This impression is not found in Alexander County alone, but remains a primary obstacle in getting residents the care they need. Concerted efforts to decrease stigmas surrounding mental health care through education, outreach, and service provision should be made when possible. Something else to consider is increasing access to telehealth for residents. Many mental health providers have some kind of telehealth capabilities which expands the options for care tremendously. Patients who are geographically restricted can still access care so long as they have a stable internet connection and a capable device. For residents who may not have reliable internet or access to a device that can be used for telehealth, the County might consider dedicating private spaces with internet access at DSS or Health Department sites to give residents telehealth options for both mental health and primary care.

Many of the needs expressed by seniors align with priorities expressed by many other residents - access to quality health care, walkable options for passive recreation, and health care specialists that can meet their unique needs. With a population that is aging, however, special emphasis needs to be made on what those needs are and how the County can help meet them. Where possible, the County should work to meet the unique needs of senior populations regarding healthcare and elder-friendly activities.

Many of the elements that make up support for a healthy lifestyle have been discussed elsewhere in this plan, but warrant restating in the context of how they contribute to this goal here. Recreational facilities, likely the single most requested facility during public input, offer residents a space to exercise, socialize, and manage stress. Particularly now, on the heels of the Covid-19 pandemic and the amount of sedentary and isolated habits most were required to adopt, an investment in active, social resources has gained a new sense of urgency. The same benefits can be associated with facilities such as walking trails and multi-use paths. Of

course healthy lifestyles cannot be sustained on exercise alone. Special consideration for diet should be made, and attempts to promote access to healthy choices (especially when locally produced) should be encouraged where feasible. In short, the County should consider investments that promote healthy lifestyle options for County residents such as recreational facilities, multi-use paths, and farmer's markets.

Finally, while the County cannot require that employers or private businesses provide childcare for their employees, it can lead by example. The County is one of the largest employers in the community, and childcare is as much a concern for those in the public sector as it is in the private sector. By establishing some form of childcare for County employees, a positive example is set for employers in the area, and serves the dual purpose of making the County a more competitive and attractive option for employees. If possible, the County should consider offering childcare to County employees, and encourage employers within the County to do the same.

Goals and Objectives

The following goals and objectives have been identified for public services & facilities in Alexander County:

- Goal 1: Improve capacity and condition of public facilities in the county.

  - Objective 1.1: Identify needs and gaps in public facilities.

    - Strategy 1.1.1: Develop a long-range facilities plan that evaluates current and future facility needs, financial obligations, and maintenance expectations.

    - Strategy 1.1.2: Work with local organizations and County staff to identify the specific needs and preferences of the community and incorporate them into the development and improvement of public facilities.

    - Strategy 1.1.3: Implement a capital improvement plan for fleet maintenance and replacement.

    - Strategy 1.1.4: Develop and maintain a Capital Improvements Plan to prioritize and plan for future capital expenditures.

    - Strategy 1.1.5: Consider the development of a dedicated space for a Farmer's Market with a renewed effort to promote the market.

    - Strategy 1.1.6: Consider the development of a stand-alone cooperative extension building with a focus on educational spaces and land for demonstrations, gardens, etc.

    - Strategy 1.1.7: Strive to increase facilities for service-based departments (such as DSS) to meet growing and emergent needs.

  - Objective 1.2: Invest in adequate public facilities through maintenance and development.

    - Strategy 1.2.1: Develop a county-wide public facilities maintenance and improvement program to ensure that facilities are well-maintained and in good repair.

    - Strategy 1.2.2: Enhance the accessibility of existing public facilities for people with disabilities through the implementation of ADA-compliant features and accommodations.

    - Strategy 1.2.3: Strive to reduce the amount of rented County facilities to lower the overall tax burden of public buildings.

  - Objective 1.3: Identify opportunities for efficiency and sound financial practices when managing public facilities.

    - Strategy 1.3.1: Encourage the use of energy-efficient and environmentally-friendly design and construction techniques in the development and improvement of public facilities.

    - Strategy 1.3.2: Encourage the development of multi-use facilities that can serve multiple purposes and support a range of activities, such as recreation, education, and social services.

- Goal 2: Strive to maintain and enhance the County Sheriff's Office.

  - Objective 2.1: Work to increase safety and reduce crime in Alexander County.

    - Strategy 2.1: Evaluate law enforcement needs on a community basis, and provide adequate staff to meet those needs.

    - Strategy 2.2: Promote crime prevention through proven techniques such as community watches.

  - Objective 2.2: Support emerging needs for local law enforcement.

    - Strategy 2.2.1: Identify and plan for emerging technologies in law enforcement while securing funding sources to obtain these resources.

    - Strategy 2.2.2: Consider an annual meeting between elected officials and the Sheriff's Office to discuss current and emerging trends in local law enforcement.

  - Objective 2.3: Promote inter-departmental cooperation to support community needs.

    - Strategy 2.3.1: Identify opportunities for county service providers to work collaboratively on complex community needs (i.e. DSS, Public Health, EMS, and Sheriff regarding substance abuse cases).

    - Strategy 2.3.2: Consider periodic, issue-oriented workgroups comprised of various County staff and local expertise to investigate new and creative solutions to community concerns.

  - Objective 2.4: Increase community engagement between citizens and law enforcement.

    - Strategy 2.4.1: Consider an annual public input session for residents to speak with local law enforcement.

    - Strategy 2.4.2: Consider consistent staff assignments for each township to increase familiarity between law enforcement and residents.

    - Strategy 2.4.3: Give preference to qualified County residents when hiring new law enforcement.

- Goal 3: Strive to maintain and enhance the County Fire Marshal and Emergency Management Departments.

  - Objective 3.1: Develop, update, and implement emergency management planning.

    - Strategy 3.1.1: Provide an annual report to the Board of Commissioners to assess plan implementation and upcoming goals.

    - Strategy 3.1.2: Work with County Planning, PIO, and other departments to help increase public input on upcoming plans.

    - Strategy 3.1.3: Track total funding obtained as a result of emergency planning to measure value to citizens.

    - Strategy 3.1.4: Identify new grant opportunities made available through planning efforts.

  - Objective 3.2: Encourage inter-departmental cooperation with Emergency Management/Fire Marshal's office.

    - Strategy 3.2.1: Take a holistic community approach to improve interoperability in planning, preparation, and execution of emergency response.

    - Strategy 3.2.2: Update the County Emergency Operations Plan to include increased training and a unified approach to emergency response.

    - Strategy 3.2.3: Include EM representative on Technical Review Board to give comment on development plans earlier in the permitting process.

- Objective 3.4: Increase community awareness of Emergency Management and Fire Marshal operations.

  - Strategy 3.4.1: Continue to establish Fire Prevention and Education programs throughout the County.

  - Strategy 3.4.2: Maintain and enhance annual fire inspections and code enforcement.

  - Strategy 3.4.3: Work with County PIO to develop Fire Marshal/ Emergency Management social media presence to keep residents informed of emergency information as it becomes available.

  - Strategy 3.4.4: Develop a new business "pipeline" that informs new business owners of fire code requirements during the permitting process.

- Objective 3.5: Seek efficiency opportunities without reducing fire and emergency management services to residents.

  - Strategy 3.5.1: Seek opportunities to reduce equipment redundancies between various departments.

  - Strategy 3.5.2: Develop a unified, consolidated storage area for emergency management equipment.

  - Strategy 3.5.3: Identify and work to reduce duplication of services.

- Goal 4: Strive to maintain and enhance the Emergency Medical Services Department.

  - Objective 4.1: Encourage inter-departmental cooperation with Emergency Medical Services.

    - Strategy 4.1.1: Encourage inter-departmental training to increase response team awareness.

- Strategy 4.1.2: Include EMS representative on Technical Review Board to give comment on development plans earlier in the permitting process.

- Objective 4.2: Expand and improve the service capacity for Emergency Medical Services.

  - Strategy 4.2.1: Work to lower response times when responding to emergency calls.

  - Strategy 4.2.2: Consider the development of an Ellendale and East Alexander EMS station.

  - Strategy 4.2.3: Move toward industry standards in radio equipment.

  - Strategy 4.2.4: Regularly review staffing for EMS to ensure adequate support for County needs.

  - Strategy 4.2.5: Increase capacity for trauma victim treatment with resources such as Whole Blood.

  - Strategy 4.2.6: Enhance and expand the County's PORT/CP program in partnership with the Alexander County SUD coalition.

- Objective 4.3: Increase community awareness of Emergency Medical Services operations.

  - Strategy 4.3.1: Continue to establish Emergency Medical Services education programs throughout the County such as the "Stop the Bleed" program.

  - Strategy 4.3.2: Work with County PIO to develop EMS social media presence to keep residents informed of emergency information as it becomes available.

- Goal 5: Strive to maintain and enhance the County's Public Schools.

  - Objective 5.1: Work to improve school safety, accessibility, and development.

    - Strategy 5.1.1: Collaborate on land use decisions for school design and placement, considering walking routes to schools and access to surrounding neighborhoods.

    - Strategy 5.1.2: New and existing schools should function as focal points for communities when considering density, pedestrian access, and community services.

    - Strategy 5.1.3: Support partnerships between local law enforcement, emergency management, and ACS to improve safety.

  - Objective 5.2: Plan proactively for public school needs.

    - Strategy 5.2.1: Include public school officials in major development planning discussions.

    - Strategy 5.2.2: Encourage regular planning and evaluation of school capacity and facilities to ensure timely responses to emerging needs.

    - Strategy 5.2.3: Support ACS in its implementation of the adopted 5-year facilities plan.

- Goal 6: Strive to maintain and enhance the County's utilities.

  - Objective 6.1: Ensure adequate utilities and public services to support the desired development pattern.

    - Strategy 6.1.1: Develop utilities policies, systems and services that facilitate compact development and support economic development in defined areas.

- Strategy 6.1.2: Prioritize utilities investments in areas designated as "Urban Services Areas" on the Future Land Use Map.

- Strategy 6.1.3: In evaluating development proposals, and prior to approval, consider the potential demands relative to existing and planned water and sewer capacity, the relationship to existing and future service areas, and commitments for current and future allocations.

- Strategy 6.1.4: Require new development to demonstrate the ability to provide an adequate water supply and wastewater treatment indefinitely for all uses in the proposed project.

- Strategy 6.1.5: Limit utility extensions or upgrades in key rural and agricultural areas.

- Strategy 6.1.6: Effectively use the existing utility systems, prioritizing development with existing utility and services extensions first (infill development).

- Strategy 6.1.7: Develop a comprehensive utilities plan for Alexander County to plan for future water and sewer investments.

- Strategy 6.1.8: Consider forming an inter-local sewer and water board to advise the County and Town of Taylorsville on utility conditions, needs, and priorities.

- Strategy 6.1.9: Establish and fund a 10-year capital improvement program and capital reserve fund which is adequate to implement planned investments in sewer and water infrastructure.

- Objective 6.2: Increase water service capacity in appropriate areas.

  - Strategy 6.2.1: Consider the development of a County-owned water intake site to reduce dependence on external systems.

- Strategy 6.2.2: Identify water service gaps in Urban Services Areas and prioritize investment in closing those gaps when possible.

- Strategy 6.2.3: Construct new water supply lines as looped systems to prevent stagnant water conditions.

- Strategy 6.2.4: Prioritize waterline extensions to economic development sites.

- Objective 6.3: Increase sewer service capacity in appropriate areas.

  - Strategy 6.3.1: Consider the development of a County-owned wastewater treatment plant to reduce dependence on external systems.

  - Strategy 6.3.2: Identify sewer service gaps in Urban Services Areas and prioritize investment in closing those gaps when possible.

  - Strategy 6.3.3: Avoid County investment in private systems, especially where capacity is a concern.

  - Strategy 6.3.4: Prioritize sewer line extensions to economic development sites

- Objective 6.4: Strive to improve internet service in underserved parts of the County.

  - Strategy 6.4.1: Building on previous broadband coverage research, explore grant funds and partnerships to expand broadband internet service to high-priority portions of the County.

  - Strategy 6.4.2: Acknowledge broadband access as an economic development, public health, and educational need.

  - Strategy 6.4.3: Develop a strategic plan to prioritize and pursue broadband initiatives as they become available.

- Goal 7: Strive to maintain and enhance County Administrative Services.

  - Objective 7.1: Increase interaction between County government and residents.

    - Strategy 7.1.1: Consider holding an annual public input session before the budgeting process begins to gain insight regarding needs, concerns, and priorities.

    - Strategy 7.1.2: Consider a regularly posted video series or social media post that answers common questions from the public.

  - Objective 7.2: Prioritize outstanding customer service, equitable regulation, and departmental expertise in County staffing.

    - Strategy 7.2.1: Implement measures to recruit and retain exemplary County staff.

    - Strategy 7.2.2: Conduct periodic review of County staff to ensure County priorities are being maintained.

    - Strategy 7.2.3: Develop a customer feedback program to gain input regarding positive or negative experiences with the County.

    - Strategy 7.2.4: Deploy creative measures to reduce turnover in low-retention positions.

    - Strategy 7.2.5: Consider the development of departmental annexes (such as building services) in high-need areas to increase convenience to taxpayers.

- Goal 8: Strive to maintain and enhance Solid Waste Collection.

  - Objective 8.1: Improve efficiency and customer experience at convenience sites.

- Strategy 8.1.1: Strive to remove on-site convenience center fee collection in favor of a more efficient program.

- Strategy 8.1.2: Consider the development of a larger transfer station to reduce crowding and wait times.

- Strategy 8.1.3: Increase convenience center capacity to scale with increased densities in Urban Service Areas.

- Strategy 8.1.4: Work to increase awareness and educational opportunities for County Solid Waste programs and policies.

- Goal 9: Strive to maintain and enhance the County's Health Department and area healthcare facilities.

  - Objective 9.1: Improve access to medical care within Alexander County.

    - Strategy 9.1.1: Collaborate with hospitals and other medical facilities to close gaps in healthcare needs within the County.

    - Strategy 9.1.2: Work to provide psychological and psychiatric care either through public or private services so that residents can receive care without needing to leave Alexander County.

    - Strategy 9.1.3: Investigate opportunities to attract specialist services, urgent care facilities, and stand-alone emergency rooms to serve the County.

    - Strategy 9.1.4: Aggressively pursue means to encourage childcare options for Alexander County residents.

    - Strategy 9.1.5: Pursue the recruitment or development of a full-service hospital for Alexander County.

    - Strategy 9.1.6: Seek specialized

care for communities with greater health care needs, such as senior care, pediatricians, Alzheimer's care, etc.

- Objective 9.2: Support the County's Community Health Assessment goals.

  - Strategy 9.2.1: Strive to decrease stigmas surrounding mental health care through education, outreach, and service provision.

  - Strategy 9.2.2: Work to meet the unique needs of senior populations regarding healthcare and elder-friendly activities.

  - Strategy 9.2.3: Consider investments that promote healthy lifestyle options for County residents such as recreational facilities, multi-use paths, and farmer's markets.

  - Strategy 9.2.4: Consider dedicating private spaces with internet access at DSS or Health Department sites to give residents telehealth options for both mental health and primary care.

  - Strategy 9.2.5: Consider offering childcare to County employees, and encourage employers within the County to do the same.

Environment & Recreation

Overview

While at first the interconnectedness of environment and recreation may not be apparent, there are important considerations for environmental policies that impact recreational opportunities, and vice versa. In a world increasingly characterized by urbanization and technological advancements, the connection between recreation and the environment has become more important than ever. The interaction between human leisure activities and the natural world is not just a pleasant coincidence; it's a symbiotic relationship that holds profound implications for both personal well-being and the health of our planet.

Recreation offers people an opportunity to immerse themselves in nature, fostering a deeper appreciation for the environment. Engaging in activities like hiking, camping, birdwatching, or simply spending time in green spaces exposes individuals to the beauty and complexity of nature. As a result, people are more likely to develop a sense of stewardship and a desire to protect these natural wonders for future generations.

Recreation is intrinsically linked to physical and mental well-being. Outdoor activities encourage exercise, which has a direct positive impact on cardiovascular health, muscular strength, and overall fitness. Furthermore, spending time in natural environments has been proven to reduce stress, anxiety, and depression, enhancing mental health. This reciprocal relationship—where the environment provides the setting for recreation, and recreation contributes to personal well-being—creates a positive feedback loop.

Recreation, particularly in the form of ecotourism, contributes significantly to local economies. Natural landscapes attract tourists, creating jobs in hospitality, guiding, and other related industries. This economic incentive can bolster support for conservation efforts as communities recognize the financial value of preserving their natural assets.

However, the increasing popularity of outdoor recreation also raises concerns about overuse and environmental degradation. Heavy foot traffic, pollution, and improper waste disposal can harm ecosystems and disrupt delicate natural balances. Achieving a balance between recreation and conservation requires careful planning, responsible behavior, and investment in infrastructure that minimizes the impact of human activities on sensitive areas.

The connection between recreation and the environment is not just a passive interaction but a dynamic relationship that shapes individual well-being, community vitality, and environmental stewardship. Engaging with nature through recreational activities nurtures an appreciation for the County's natural assets, motivating people to take active roles in its protection. By understanding and nurturing this symbiotic link, we can create a future where the pursuit of leisure and the preservation of the environment go hand in hand.

Public Input

When survey participants were asked if there are adequate parks, waterfront access, recreation, and entertainment opportunities for residents of all ages and groups, 63% of survey respondents replied "No", 28% said "Yes", and 9% were "Unsure." Respondents particularly noted the need for soccer fields with many requesting a soccer complex. Several also commented on the problems associated with multiple sports having to share the same fields. Baseball fields, basketball courts, tennis courts, pickleball courts, biking trails, and accessible walking trails suitable for older patrons were also recommended. Participants expressed a need for indoor entertainment options and suggested a gymnasium, recreation center, movie theater, and an updated library.

Additionally, a pool to provide recreation, swim team practice, and swim lesson opportunities was suggested. Respondents requested more culturally diverse art, music, and entertainment as well as more public access to the abundant natural spaces in Alexander County. Finally, participants want to see the current parks updated, cleaned regularly, and maintained.

Map 11: Parks

Parks are not just about greenery and recreational spaces; they are essential components of rural communities that contribute to overall well-being and quality of life.

In rural areas, the importance of parks is particularly significant, as they offer a range of social, economic, and environmental benefits. Parks serve as community hubs where residents can come together for social interactions and shared activities. In rural areas, where communities are often more tightly-knit, parks play a crucial role in fostering a sense of belonging and social cohesion.

Parks provide opportunities for physical activity, which is essential for maintaining good health. Walking, jogging, sports, and recreational activities in parks promote physical fitness and overall well-being.

Parks can stimulate local economies. Rural areas often rely on tourism, and well-maintained parks can attract visitors, boosting local businesses. Events held in parks, such as fairs, festivals, and markets, provide economic opportunities for vendors and local entrepreneurs.

In times of emergencies, parks can serve as gathering points or staging areas for first responders and residents. Their open spaces can be invaluable during natural disasters, such as floods or wildfires.

In rural areas, parks can be repositories of cultural heritage. They may contain historical sites, monuments, or cultural artifacts that celebrate the community's past. Preserving and showcasing these elements in parks helps maintain a sense of identity and history.

Parks enhance the overall quality of life in rural communities. They offer spaces for relaxation, reflection, and enjoyment of nature, reducing stress and improving mental health.

More than any other topic discussed during public input sessions parks were made a priority. The residents of Alexander County seem to feel that the parks of Alexander County should be made a much higher priority moving forward, asking for investments, programs, maintenance, and much more.
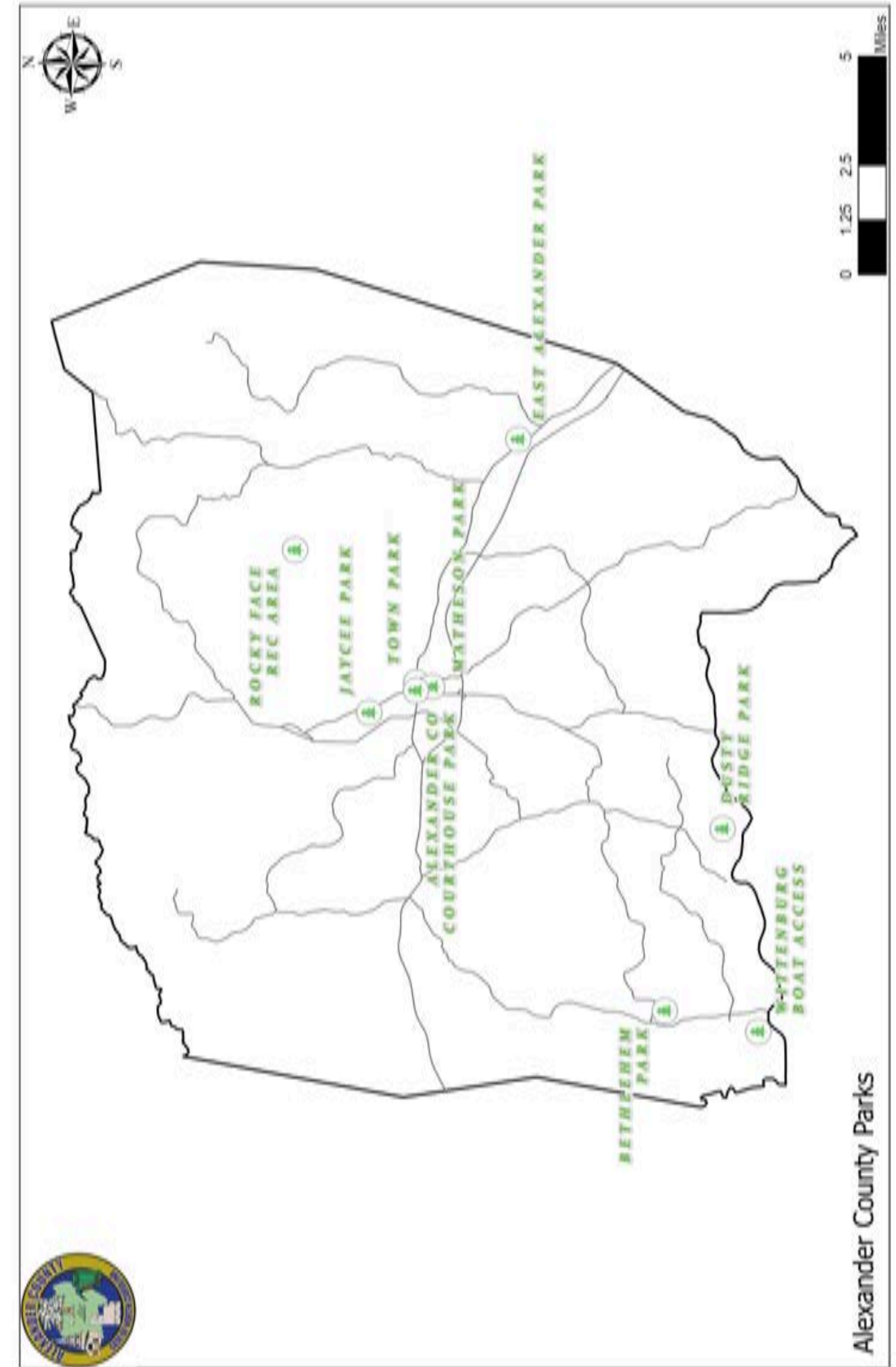
Alexander County Parks

Goal 1: Protect, promote, and improve the quality of the County's natural and cultural resources.

Maintaining and improving water quality is possibly the most important undertaking if the County is to protect its natural resources. From Lake Hickory and the Catawba River to the Yadkin River and the many, many sensitive waterways in Alexander County, natural resources in Alexander County depend greatly on water quality. The County should maintain riparian buffers as required by the Watershed Protection Ordinance and minimize stream crossings in new developments in order to reduce stream contamination. As mentioned in the Land Use chapter, the County might also benefit by developing and adopting sedimentation and erosion control standards, as well as supporting a stormwater management system to decrease water-borne contaminants, and consider alternative forms of stormwater retention, like filtered swales, green roofs, and rainwater collection for irrigation to protect surface water. County staff will be necessary to ensure adequate enforcement of these sedimentation and erosion control standards, which should be carefully planned for.

Many of Alexander County's farms are recognized as being "River Friendly'' by the State, a positive reflection on Alexander County, and something that should be encouraged. The County can also benefit from updating policies and regulations to limit impacts of natural gas exploration and extraction which can have detrimental impacts on water quality. Another significant threat to both water quality and floodplain stabilization is stream debris. The County Soil & Water department currently utilizes State funding sources to identify and mitigate large stream debris sites, though larger sites tend to use up available funding before the many smaller sites can be mitigated. The County should consider housing a stream debris removal program for small maintenance needs that don't meet state program thresholds.

A lack of awareness of both the existence of natural resources and the impact residents might have on them can lead to problems made by no malice, but problems nonetheless. Spreading awareness and educating the public about these resources and ways to protect them is vital. A great first step is to include environmental data on County websites and GIS, such as percent slope, wildlife corridors, conservation areas, etc. The County Soil & Water department spends no small amount of time offering educational resources to the public, and it is recommended that the County increase Soil & Water's capacity for those environmental education programs. These efforts can be assisted by educational opportunities at County parks as well. Through grant fundraising, grant opportunities, and various partnerships, the County might also consider an educational center for environmental education programs. One particular barrier for residents earning a greater understanding and connection to the County's natural resources is simply a lack of access to them. This can be aided in part by improving public access points to natural resources such as rivers, mountain trails, and lakes. For the protection of natural resources impacting the agricultural community, it is recommended the County develop a farmland protection plan through Soil & Water.

As noted above, Alexander County has no shortage of wonderful natural assets to offer, and those assets should be enjoyed, appreciated, and protected. Unlimited development might be the fastest way to depreciate those natural resources, and careful consideration should be given to the impacts to viewsheds and recreational access needs during the development review process. The County can also protect these assets by continuing to limit light pollution, especially in rural and conservation areas. There is a notable lack of public access areas to many of the County's natural resources, which is why it should partner with state and local governments and non-profit organizations to increase access to protected lands and unique natural features. With these access points secured, the County could pursue the development of a Blueways program to establish and maintain a riparian recreational network, as well as increase the amount of trails and greenways available for residents. Indeed, the County should strive to support passive recreation opportunities through the utilization of County-owned properties for activities such as primitive camping, trails, rock climbing, etc. and promote the county's recreation infrastructure as an economic asset.

Goal 1: Protect, promote, and improve the quality of the County's natural and cultural resources. (Cont'd.)

Goal 2: Increase the availability and accessibility of recreation facilities and programs in the county.

Care must be taken to ensure the County's open space and natural resource areas are protected for generations to come. It's recommended that the County develop mechanisms to conserve and create open space using development incentives, conservation easements, conservation overlay districts, and land conservation and donation programs. During the development of a new Land Development Code, the County should also work to improve mechanisms for conservation subdivision development in lower-density areas and in areas that have open space or natural resource lands and consider incentives for redevelopment of vacant structures with the intent to minimize further environmental impacts from contaminated sites. Finally, the County should work to promote development patterns that respect sensitive mountainous areas.

The County contracted with the Western Piedmont Council of Governments to develop an Alexander County Parks Plan in 2020. This plan, however, seems to have not been followed or considered much since its adoption. Due to the significant changes in prices, priorities, and logistics since this plan was adopted, it is recommended that the County develop a county-wide parks and recreation master plan to identify and prioritize the needs of different populations, including seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income families, with more detail than the current plan. This plan would provide a road map for the development of new recreation facilities, such as parks, aquatics centers, and community centers, as well as the development of a sports complex in a central location that includes soccer, baseball, football, and basketball facilities to allow for travel-sports events. The County might also consider an expansion of Rocky Face Park as opportunities arise.

These projects cannot be funded entirely through tax-dollar investment, however. The County must aggressively pursue grants, endowments, and fundraising opportunities to assist in the development of these planned programs and facilities. While this funding is being secured, smaller, less expensive recreational opportunities can be provided by increasing small natural spaces available to community centers and neighborhoods throughout the County.

Parks must be welcoming to the entire community, as the entire community makes investments in these facilities. Accessibility and safety must be a top priority for our recreation facilities, and the County should work to enhance the accessibility of existing recreation facilities for people with disabilities through the implementation of ADA-compliant features and accommodations, as well as encourage universal design when considering the development or expansion of park facilities. In order to identify and mitigate emerging issues for safety and accessibility, the County might have risk management conduct periodic assessments of incidents and opportunities to improve accessibility.

Map 12: Watershed

A water supply watershed is a geographical area defined by natural boundaries that collects, stores, and delivers water to a specific reservoir or source of drinking water.

Watersheds are like nature's filtration systems, and they play a pivotal role in ensuring a clean and sustainable water supply.

A water supply watershed, often referred to simply as a watershed, is an area of land where all the surface water from rainfall and snowmelt drains into a common body of water, such as a river, lake, or reservoir. Watersheds are often demarcated by natural features like ridgelines, mountains, or hills, which determine the direction in which water flows. Everything within the boundaries of a watershed contributes to the quality and quantity of water that eventually reaches its outlet.

Human activities within a watershed, such as development, agriculture, and industry, can have significant impacts on water quality and quantity.

Many communities, including Alexander County, rely on watersheds to supply drinking water. Reservoirs or groundwater recharge areas within watersheds serve as sources of clean, potable water. By understanding and managing activities within watersheds, communities can ensure the sustainable use of water resources and protect against water scarcity.

Watersheds are also critical for preserving aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems, supporting threatened and endangered species, and conserving natural landscapes.

North Carolina regulates watersheds through local programs known as water supply watershed protection programs. The North Carolina Department of Envionmental Quality oversees this work, and provides model ordinances for local governments to adopt to ensure compliance with State policy. These ordinances implement limits on built-upon area, require vegetative setbacks, call for stormwater controls, and place certain prohibitions on land uses.

Map 12 shows the watersheds within Alexander County. Areas designated with a "P" are protected areas, while areas designated with a "C" are critical areas. Critical areas can be found closer to where approved water intake stations exist, and often require stricter regulation.
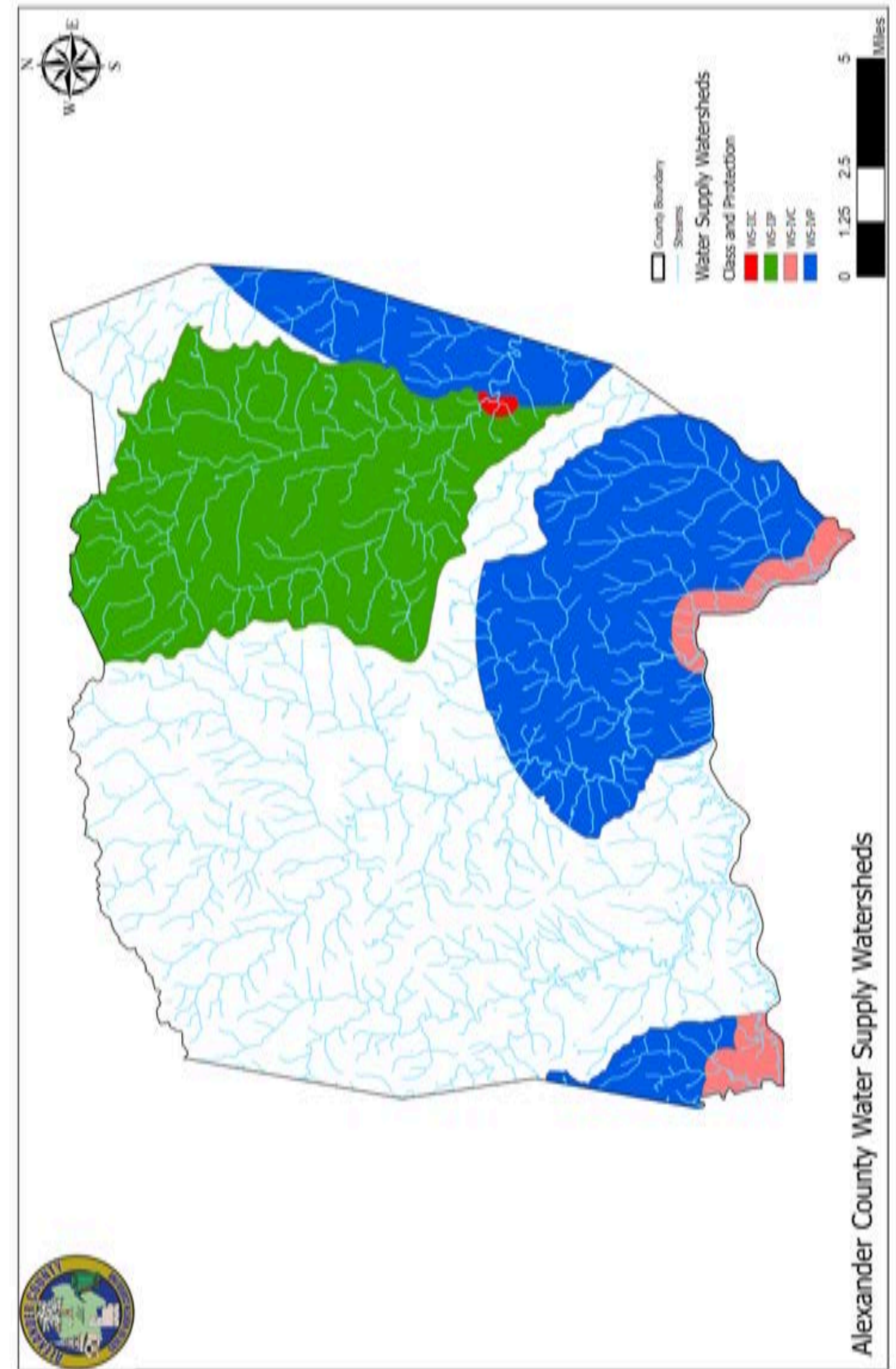
Alexander County Water Supply Watersheds

Goal 3: Maintain and improve existing parks to meet evolving facility and programming needs.

Goal 4: Become more resilient by mitigating, and responding and adapting to emerging threats.

Future park development cannot be the only focus for the County. During public input, many residents expressed concern over the condition and accessibility of our existing facilities. It is recommended that the County strive to improve accommodations for senior and disabled populations at existing parks. Another concern raised was a shortage of recreational opportunities for young residents who were too old to participate in true "youth" sports, but too young to enjoy any elder-focused programming. To this end, the County should consider recreational facilities and programs for youth that have aged out of existing leagues. Similar concerns surrounded recreational opportunities for lower-income residents; many current programming options require reliable transportation, expensive equipment, etc. While this is a complex topic worthy of its own examination, it should still be a priority to consider ways to reduce barriers for low-income residents to enjoy parks and recreation facilities.

Regarding the condition of our current park facilities, no small amount of public input focused on personal accounts of poor experiences due to maintenance issues. Residents repeatedly requested that the County upgrade playgrounds and equipment as well as increase staff capacity for maintaining existing park facilities and grounds. Even when these deficiencies are mitigated, the County should still conduct an annual review of parks and recreation maintenance needs before budget requests are submitted to ensure a proactive approach to park upkeep. Even with annual reviews, there may be needs that would not be identified without having residents express them. It is recommended that the Alexander County Recreation Advisory Board conduct regular public input sessions to determine those unrecognized needs of the community.

Alexander County has unfortunately seen first-hand the dangers of flooding, fire, and storms. While there is no way to be entirely protected from these risks, every effort possible should be made to mitigate risk factors for life safety when disaster strikes. One of the cheapest, most effective means of protecting against forces such as flooding is to have in place landscape planting guidelines to emphasize native species, diversity, drought tolerant plants, and other sustainable landscaping practices while discouraging the use of and encouraging removal of invasive species. The impact of invasive plant species cannot be understated; the amount of water they absorb, the nutrients they need, and the resilience of these plants can change the makeup of the soil beneath them, leading to greater erosion, ground saturation, and stream debris during flood events. Native plant species are better suited to the conditions of our county, and should be relied on to play their part in our ecosystem as they have for centuries.

Flooding cannot be mitigated through landscaping practices alone, though. Alexander County is rich in water-oriented resources, and it is no surprise that residents want to live, work, and play near these assets. Caution should be used, however, anytime potential alteration of the landscape is being considered, especially when this landscape falls within the floodplain. It is always a source of frustration for residents when they are restricted from developing near such wonderful resources, but the safety risks are far too great during a flood event not only to those developing their land, but those downstream from this development. Alterations to the floodplain should be discouraged as much as is feasible.

Flooding is not the only environmental risk in Alexander County. Wind events, fires, tornados, and many other hazards threaten the safety of residents every year, and Alexander County has a responsibility to mitigate those risks where possible, and respond quickly and effectively when an issue arises. Increased coordination is needed between the Planning Department, Erosion Control (DEQ), Fire Marshal's Office, and Emergency Management in consideration of proposed development in order to identify and avoid potential issues early in the development process. Once issues arise, however, the County should encourage CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) organizations at the County and community levels to organize, train, and prepare for rapid emergency response.

Map 13: Streams & Floodplain

Streams and floodplains impact our lives much more than we may know at first glance.

A floodplain is a low-lying area adjacent to a river, stream, or other water body that periodically experiences flooding when the water body overflows its banks. These areas are essential components of a river's ecosystem and offer several significant features.

Floodplains act as natural storage areas for excess water during periods of high precipitation or snowmelt. This helps to prevent immediate flooding downstream and provides a buffer against the impacts of extreme weather events.

As water floods onto a floodplain, it carries with it sediments and nutrients. When the water recedes, these sediments are deposited onto the floodplain. This process enriches the soil, making floodplains fertile areas for agriculture. Floodplains, due to their fertile soils, are often used for agriculture. However, when not in use, they serve as valuable open spaces for recreation, such as parks or golf courses.

While floodplains offer numerous benefits, they also pose flood risks to nearby communities. Proper land use planning, zoning regulations, and flood control measures are crucial to manage these risks effectively.

Floodplains interact with our streams as well; as rainwater falls and flows into bodies of water the rise must go somewhere, often creating a snowball effect downstream. As smaller streams build and empty into larger streams the water flow backs up creating large areas that fall under the floodline.

Alexander County is no stranger to flooding, often times experiencing events that lead to severe damage to property and loss of life. Greater appreciation for these areas and the risks they pose must be a priority as growth and development take place, ensuring that homes and their residents remain safe during flood events.

Alexander County Water Features
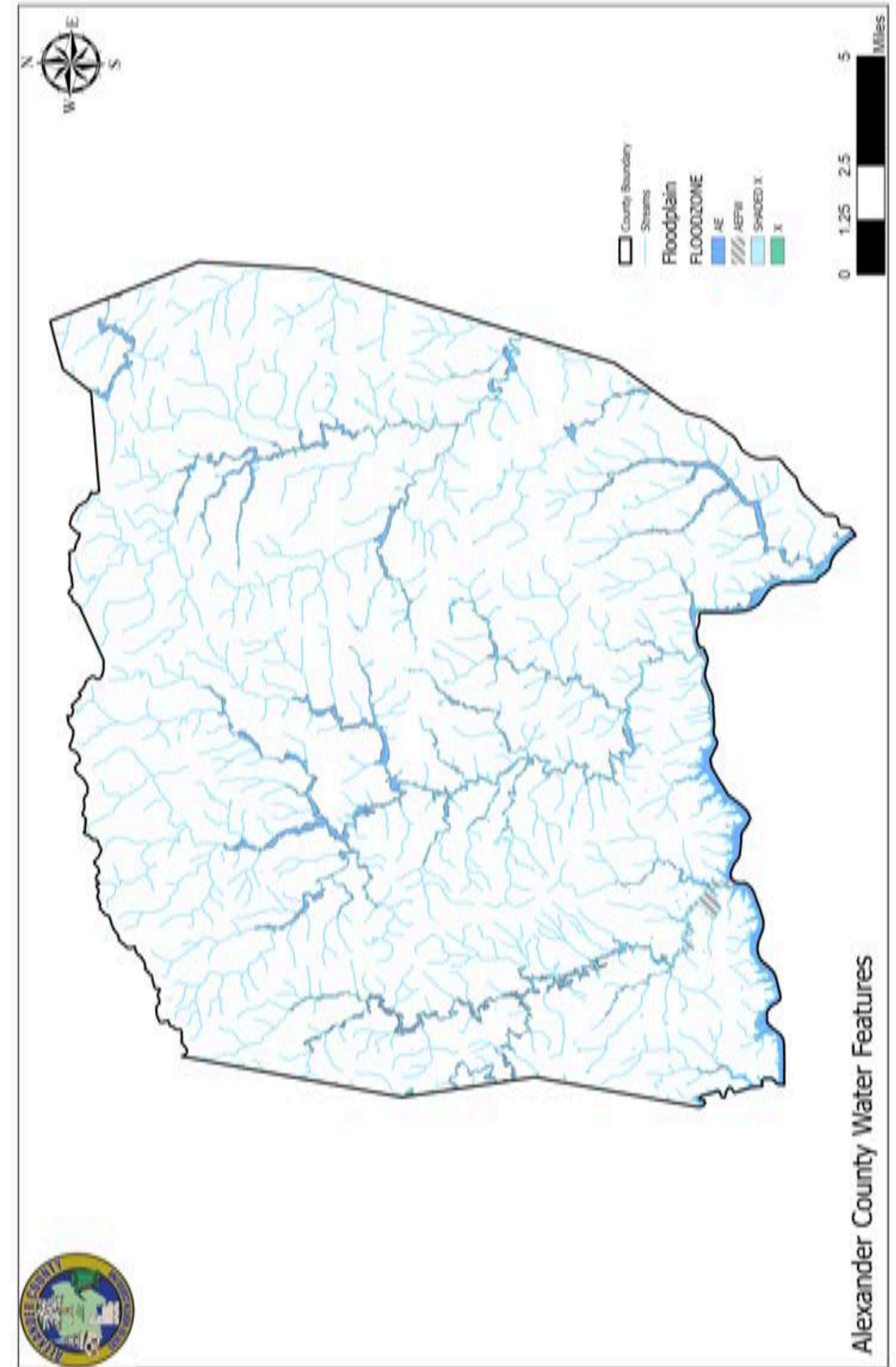
Goals and Objectives

The following goals and objectives have been identified for environment and recreation in Alexander County:

- Goal 1: Protect, promote, and improve the quality of the County's natural and cultural resources.

    - Objective 1.1: Maintain and improve water quality.

        - Strategy 1.1.1: Maintain riparian buffers in Watershed Protection Ordinance and minimize stream crossings in new developments.

        - Strategy 1.1.2: Develop and adopt sedimentation and erosion control standards for Alexander County.

        - Strategy 1.1.3: Increase capacity of County staff to ensure adequate enforcement of sedimentation and erosion control standards.

        - Strategy 1.1.4: Encourage Best Management Practices (BMPs) in agricultural and timber operations.

        - Strategy 1.1.5: Update policies and regulations to limit impacts of natural gas exploration and extraction.

        - Strategy 1.1.6: Support a stormwater management system to decrease water-borne contaminants, and consider alternative forms of stormwater retention, like filtered swales, green roofs, and rainwater collection for irrigation to protect surface water.

        - Strategy 1.1.7: Consider housing a stream debris removal program through Alexander County for smaller maintenance needs.

    - Objective 1.2: Improve education and awareness of natural assets.

        - Strategy 1.2.1: Include environmental data on County websites and GIS, such as percent slope, wildlife corridors, conservation areas, etc.

        - Strategy 1.2.2: Increase Soil & Water capacity for environmental education programs.

        - Strategy 1.2.3: Increase educational opportunities at County parks.

        - Strategy 1.2.4: Consider an educational center for environmental education programs through schools, the County, and other educational resources.

        - Strategy 1.2.5: Improve public access points to natural resources such as rivers, mountain trails, and lakes.

        - Strategy 1.2.6: Develop a farmland protection plan through Soil & Water.

    - Objective 1.3: Improve access to natural areas and support outdoor recreation-based tourism.

        - Strategy 1.3.1: Consider impacts to viewsheds and recreational access needs during the development review process.

        - Strategy 1.3.2: Continue to limit light pollution, especially in Rural and Conservation Areas.

        - Strategy 1.3.3: Partner with state and local governments and non-profit organizations to increase access to protected lands and unique natural features.

        - Strategy 1.3.4: Consider the development of a Blueways program to establish and maintain a riparian recreational network.

        - Strategy 1.3.5: Strive to increase the amount of trails and greenways available in the County.

        - Strategy 1.3.6: Support passive recreation opportunities through the utilization of County-owned properties for primitive camping, trails, rock climbing, etc.

        - Strategy 1.3.7: Promote the county's recreation infrastructure as an economic asset.

    - Objective 1.4: Conserve open space and natural resource areas.

        - Strategy 1.4.1: Develop mechanisms to conserve and create open space using development incentives, conservation easements, conservation overlay districts, and land conservation and donation programs.

        - Strategy 1.4.2: Improve mechanisms for conservation subdivision development in lower density areas and in areas that have open space or natural resource lands.

        - Strategy 1.4.3: Consider incentives for redevelopment of vacant structures with the intent to minimize further environmental impacts from contaminated sites.

        - Strategy 1.4.4: Promote development patterns that respect sensitive mountainous areas.

- Goal 2: Increase the availability and accessibility of recreation facilities and programs in the county.

    - Objective 2.1: Determine facility needs and opportunities for growth.

        - Strategy 2.1.1: Develop a county-wide parks and recreation master plan to identify and prioritize the needs of different populations, including seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income families.

        - Strategy 2.1.2: Encourage the development of new recreation facilities, such as parks, aquatics centers, and community centers in underserved areas of the county.

        - Strategy 2.1.3: Encourage the development of a sports complex in a central location that includes soccer, baseball, football, and basketball facilities to allow for travel-sports events.

        - Strategy 2.1.4: Pursue grants, endowments, and fundraising opportunities to assist in the development of programs and facilities.

        - Strategy 2.1.5: Increase small natural spaces available to community centers and neighborhoods for greater opportunities throughout the County.

        - Strategy 2.1.6: Consider an expansion of Rocky Face Park as opportunities arise.

    - Objective 2.2: Enhance the accessibility of existing recreation facilities for people with disabilities through the implementation of ADA-compliant features and accommodations.

        - Strategy 2.2.1: Have risk management conduct periodic assessments of incidents and opportunities to improve accessibility.

        - Strategy 2.2.2: Encourage universal design when considering the development or expansion of park facilities.

- Goal 3: Maintain and improve existing parks to meet evolving facility and programming needs.

    - Objective 3.1: Provide recreational opportunities for a diverse range of needs, interests, and abilities.

        - Strategy 3.1.1: Improve accommodations for senior and disabled populations at existing parks.

        - Strategy 3.1.2: Consider recreational facilities and programs for youth that have aged out of existing leagues.

        - Strategy 3.1.3: Consider ways to reduce barriers for low-income residents to enjoy parks and recreation facilities.

    - Objective 3.2: Improve and enhance the experience for park users.

    - Strategy 3.2.1: Upgrade playgrounds and equipment at all parks as needed.

    - Strategy 3.2.2: Increase staff capacity for maintaining existing park facilities.

    - Strategy 3.2.3: Conduct an annual review of parks and recreation maintenance needs before budget requests are submitted.

    - Strategy 3.2.4: Have the Alexander County Recreation Advisory Board conduct regular public input sessions to determine unrecognized needs of the community.

- Goal 4: Become more resilient by mitigating, responding and adapting to emerging threats.

    - Objective 4.1: Prepare for and respond to acute natural events and man-made emergencies.

        - Strategy 4.1.1: Update landscape planting guidelines to emphasize native species, diversity, drought tolerant plants, and other sustainable landscaping practices while discouraging the use and encouraging the removal of invasive species.

        - Strategy 4.1.2: Encourage CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) organizations at the County and community levels.

    - Objective 4.2: Minimize, mitigate and adapt to present and future risks.

        - Strategy 4.2.1: Discourage alterations of floodplain.

        - Strategy 4.2.2: Increase coordination between the Planning Department, Erosion Control (DEQ), Fire Marshal's Office, and Emergency Management in consideration of proposed development.
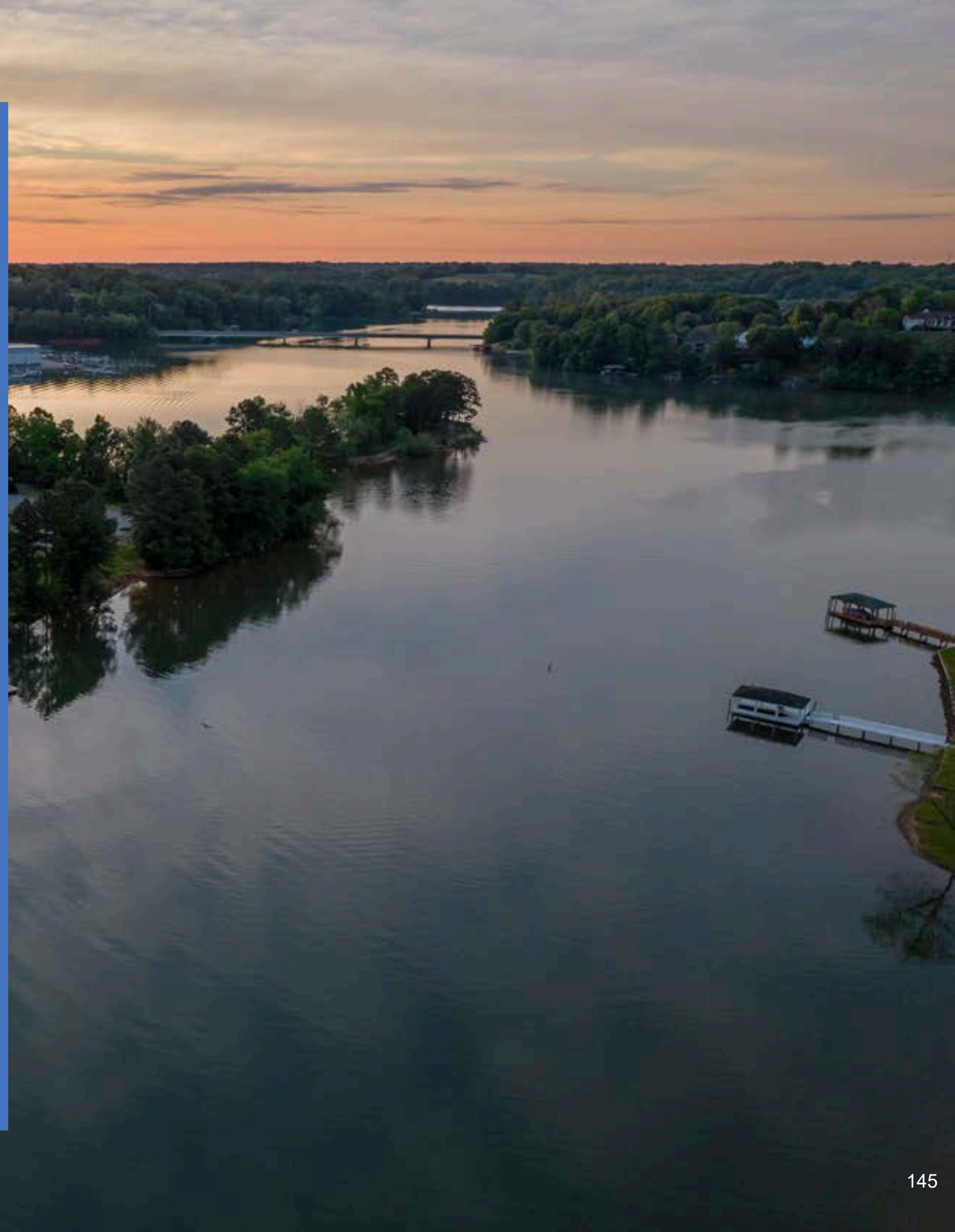
Historic & Cultural Resources

Overview

Alexander County has a rich history and cultural heritage, with a diverse range of historic and cultural resources, such as buildings, sites, and artifacts. The County's historic and cultural resources play a vital role in the quality of life for residents and the overall prosperity of the community. However, the county faces challenges, such as a lack of access to historic and cultural resources in some areas, a lack of funding to preserve and protect these resources, and a lack of awareness of the importance of these resources. The preservation and promotion of the county's historic and cultural resources is vital to supporting the County's growth and prosperity.

County libraries are custodians of the past. They safeguard not only books but also manuscripts, photographs, newspapers, and archives that hold the collective memory of a region. Through their historical collections, libraries allow us to trace the footsteps of our ancestors, explore the evolution of societies, and understand the cultural tapestry that weaves us all together. Without these repositories, much of our heritage would be lost to time.

Libraries are more than just book warehouses; they are vibrant community hubs. They host a variety of events, from book clubs to author talks, art exhibitions to children's story hours. These gatherings foster a sense of belonging, helping neighbors connect and engage. Libraries are places where the diverse threads of a community come together, creating a richer tapestry of shared experiences.

In the digital age, libraries have adapted, becoming gateways to the online world for those who lack access at home. They offer computers, internet access, and digital resources, ensuring that everyone has an equal opportunity to explore the digital realm. This digital inclusivity is crucial in a world where online access is increasingly necessary for education, job searches, and communication.

Education doesn't end in the classroom; it's a lifelong journey. County libraries embrace this concept wholeheartedly. They offer classes, workshops, and resources for individuals of all ages. Whether you're a child discovering the joy of reading or an adult looking to learn a new skill, libraries are there to support a community's educational pursuits.

Public Input

Rocky Face Park was the top response when asked which community landmark was most important. Other responses included the Hiddenite Arts & Heritage Center, Lucas Mansion, downtown Taylorsville, farms, churches, and cemeteries. Housing density, types of business, open spaces, and walkable communities were the most common responses when asked about maintaining the County's "small town feel". When asked why they choose to live in Alexander County, the top responses included family & friends, rural character, and a good place to raise children. When

asked about the biggest concerns facing the future of Alexander County, responses included a lack of investment in education; the need for revitalization of downtown businesses; drug use; lack of employment opportunities; lack of available housing; loss of farmland; young people leaving due to lack of educational, career, and entertainment options; an aging population; lack of planning for the future; and having to go outside of the county for shopping, entertainment and medical services. Some respondents expressed concern that unchecked growth could cause a loss of small town character and farmland, and bring increased crime, traffic, and housing prices. Other respondents were concerned about a lack of growth causing an increased tax burden on citizens, lack of businesses, families moving away, and deterioration of buildings and infrastructure. Many people mentioned the great beauty and potential of the County.

Goal 1: Preserve and protect the County's historic and cultural resources.

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) has recently written and adopted an Historic Preservation Plan which does an excellent job of outlining the history of Alexander County, the sites that warrant attention for historic preservation, and a work plan for the Commission in the coming years. The implementation of this plan should be among the top priorities for County historic preservation efforts. Among the items discussed in this plan is the establishment of historic districts. As the Commission identifies and recommends these districts to the State Historic Preservation Office, the Planning Department should be prepared to establish an Historic Preservation overlay district to ensure these properties are identified on zoning maps. This addition helps to guarantee that unapproved changes to historic sites don't take place without appropriate review. Another important action item mentioned in the Historic Preservation Plan is the continued participation in the State's Certified Local Government (CLG) program. This program sets standards and benchmarks for historic preservation efforts throughout North Carolina, and aids local governments in these efforts through technical and financial assistance where possible. The HPC encourages the preservation of the county's historic properties and assists owners in improving their historic properties. Many grant funding opportunities for historic preservation depend on a local government's CLG status, making the County's involvement paramount. This funding source can sometimes mean the difference between the demolition of an historic property and the rehabilitation of one, which should always be encouraged when feasible.

The historic preservation program in Alexander County is fairly new, which lends weight to the importance of developing education and outreach programs for the community to explain just what historic preservation is (and is not), and promote the benefits of this program. Realtors who might be listing historic properties should be given proper resources as well, such as ensuring that all historic properties in Alexander County are noted on the MLS and offering periodic training to professionals and the community at large on common requirements. Successful preservation work should be promoted broadly to highlight the value and importance of the work being done by the Historic Preservation Commission. For sites that are introduced into the program, adequate signage should be promoted as well to raise awareness of the County's historic assets.

Goal 2: Increase the availability and accessibility of cultural resources in the County.

Possibly the single most important cultural resource that county governments can provide are their public libraries. As mentioned above, libraries are more than just a place to find books, but also educational opportunities, social events, access to technology, employment resources, and so much more. An investment in the future of the County library is an investment in a myriad of programs, residents, and resources. The main branch of the County library has begun to show signs of growing beyond the current facility, however. Space for staff has become severely limited, maintenance is becoming a challenge, and patrons can often be found waiting in line for computers, meeting spaces, and programs. Strong consideration should be given to an upgraded facility to house the County's main library branch. The North Carolina State Library offers guidelines for how local libraries should be measured over 18 topics and Alexander County only meets 75 out of 253 (29.6%) of those guidelines. While some of these guidelines are aspirational and may never be a priority for more rural governments, among the 107 metrics deemed essential by the State Library, Alexander County meets only 52 (48.6%). Many of the guidelines that the County library currently meets are due to the persistent efforts of current staff and the Library Board. Ardent passion can be found among these bodies, and an earnest desire to continue improving has been expressed during public input discussions.

Some of the areas for improvement that seem pressing are to provide meeting spaces for library patrons for both educational programming and group discussions, to increase the amount of cultural and educational programming available through the library, and to place particular emphasis on expanding programming for adults. Concerns were also expressed over ADA compliance and disability-friendliness at the existing branches. An interest in continuing to have and add public transportation stops and facilities near library branches was expressed by library staff. Many of these issues make necessary the development of a new library facility, the cost of which should be offset as much as possible through endowment funds, library foundation work, and pursuing grants to ensure the burden of cost to the taxpayer is minimal.

Goal 2: Increase the availability and accessibility of cultural resources in the County. (Cont'd.)

Goal 3: Promote the economic and cultural value of the County's historic and cultural resources.
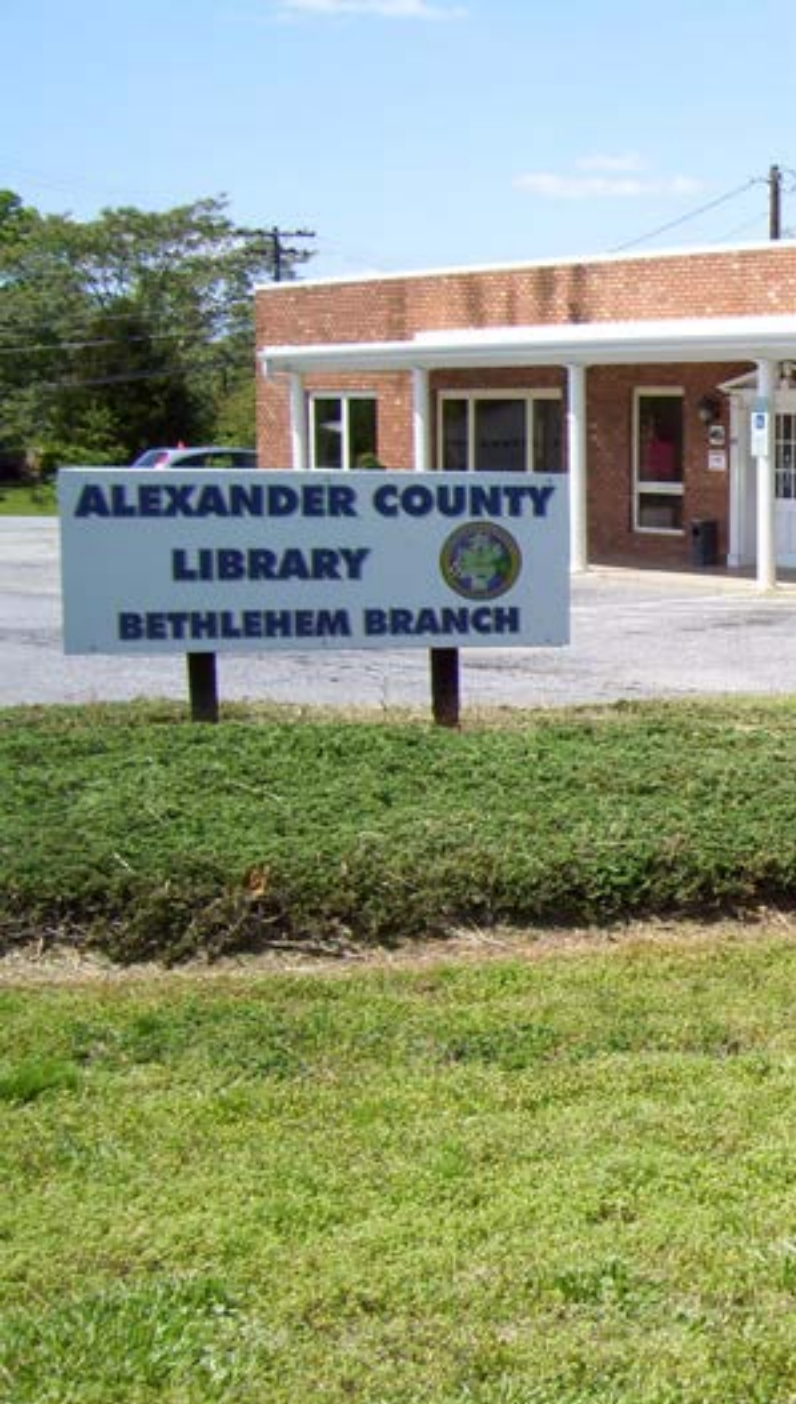
Of course, libraries are not the only cultural resource available to county residents. Facilities such as museums and cultural centers often provide important resources to communities at the local level, and Alexander County should position itself to encourage these kinds of facilities wherever possible. Zoning districts near community centers should allow for an array of cultural facilities. While the County may not be in a position to develop these facilities directly, seeking opportunities to research and secure grant funding for such projects should also be considered. The small area planning process should also be used to seek out important cultural resources to support and promote.

Events are another important cultural resource, many of which will not be directly offered by the County, but can be supported nonetheless. Providing a clear pathway for permitting special events to ensure proper event planning takes place without undue burden is an important step the County can take to support these kinds of events. Identifying and promoting these events through County outlets should also be a priority.

In Alexander County an estimated 23% of adults lack basic literacy skills, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. Local libraries can offer support in reducing this number through regularly offered literacy programs. This is an important first step for many who are seeking gainful employment and must navigate applications, resumes, employment agreements, etc. which are made that much more complicated by poor literacy. For those without access to a computer or reliable internet, applying for jobs in the current job market the library is often the only means to seek employment. The County should consider the development of a computer lab for these residents to support their chances at upward mobility, while also serving as a place for residents to learn, create, and grow. While the County has an excellent resource in Catawba Valley Community College, there are some skills that can be learned in shorter-term courses, and cost might be an obstacle for some residents. Offering in-demand skill educational opportunities for residents is an important role many local libraries take on, and one Alexander County should consider investing in as well.

Aside from the many ways local libraries serve as a tool for economic development, a community's cultural identity is often protected and promoted

through genealogy rooms and local history programs. Alexander County has an excellent genealogical research room, and this should be promoted and expanded when possible to ensure the County's cultural heritage is not lost for future generations.

Cultural and historic preservation should not be a passive endeavor. Connecting important historic and cultural resources to events and festivals is an excellent way to keep those resources alive and engaged in the community. Promoting this link through event promotion and literature also serves to connect these resources to the current environment. There may be opportunities to develop new events and festivals surrounding important cultural and historic resources as well. Aside from the importance to cultural identity, historic and cultural resources are outstanding means of producing economic development, and with renewed efforts to preserve and promote the resources there should be effort to track these impacts. Tourism dollars spent in Alexander County as a result of historic tourism, increase in property values as a result of historic landmark improvements, and the inclusion of historic and cultural attractions in any County promotions should all become standard procedure alongside the strategies discussed above.

Goals and Objectives

The following goals and objectives have been identified for historic and cultural resources in Alexander County:

- Goal 1: Preserve and protect the county's historic and cultural resources.

    - Objective 1.1: Enhance and encourage historic preservation in Alexander County.

        - Strategy 1.1.1: Implement the county-wide historic preservation plan to identify and prioritize the protection of the county's historic and cultural resources, such as buildings, sites, and artifacts.

        - Strategy 1.1.2: Establish an historic preservation overlay district that implements the County's design standards for designated landmarks.

        - Strategy 1.1.3: Continue to maintain the Alexander County Historic Preservation Commission's Certified Local Government (CLG) status and pursue funding opportunities through the CLG program to support historic preservation activities.

        - Strategy 1.1.4: Promote the rehabilitation of historically designated properties over demolition.

    - Objective 1.2: Increase awareness of County historic assets.

        - Strategy 1.2.1: Develop an education and outreach program to provide information and resources to the community on the importance and value of historic preservation.

        - Strategy 1.2.2: Ensure the local MLS system has all historically designated properties tagged and Realtors have access to information to inform potential homebuyers about what the designations mean.

        - Strategy 1.2.3: Host training and educational opportunities for preservation professionals and interested citizens.

        - Strategy 1.2.4: Highlight and share successful preservation work through press releases, newsletters, annual reports, and other outlets.

        - Strategy 1.2.5: Maintain and improve signage of historic districts and local historic landmarks.

- Goal 2: Increase the availability and accessibility of cultural resources in the county.

    - Objective 2.1: Improve access and availability of library resources in Alexander County.

        - Strategy 2.1.1: Consider the development of a new main library branch designed to meet State standards.

        - Strategy 2.1.2: Strive to improve the total percentage of state standards Alexander County libraries meet.

        - Strategy 2.1.3: Develop meeting spaces at library branches for community and organizational use.

        - Strategy 2.1.4: Increase the Library's capacity for cultural and educational programming.

        - Strategy 2.1.5: Place particular emphasis on expanding adult programming for both social and educational opportunities.

        - Strategy 2.1.6: Work to improve ADA compliance and disability friendliness at library branches.

        - Strategy 2.1.7: Encourage public transportation options to place benches and route stops at or near all county library branches.

        - Strategy 2.1.8: Pursue funding opportunities such as endowment funds, library foundations, and grant funding to enhance County resources without impact to tax demand.

    - Objective 2.2: Encourage the development of new cultural resources, such as museums and cultural centers, in underserved areas of the County.

        - Strategy 2.2.1: Ensure zoning districts allow for an array of cultural facilities.

        - Strategy 2.2.2: Investigate opportunities for new or existing cultural sites to determine appropriate funding opportunities.

        - Strategy 2.2.3: Identify opportunities for cultural resource development in the small area planning process.

    - Objective 2.3: Encourage the development and continuation of cultural events throughout the County.

        - Strategy 2.3.1: Provide a clear pathway for permitting special events throughout the County.

        - Strategy 2.3.2: Identify and promote existing cultural events happening within Alexander County.

- Goal 3: Promote the economic and cultural value of the county's historic and cultural resources.

    - Objective 3.1: Promote the economic and cultural value of the County library.

        - Strategy 3.1.1: Develop literacy programs though the County library as a pathway to gainful employment.

        - Strategy 3.1.2: Develop a "computer lab" on library sites that can provide employment resources and space to submit job applications.

        - Strategy 3.1.3: Develop and promote educational programs for in-demand skills that can be provided through the County library.

        - Strategy 3.1.4: Promote and expand the County library's historic and genealogical resources to encourage a greater understanding of local history and culture.

    - Objective 3.2: Encourage the use of historic and cultural resources in community events and festivals.

        - Strategy 3.2.1: Identify ways to support existing events and festivals by connecting them with relevant historic and cultural resources.

        - Strategy 3.2.2: Strive to inform the County's PIO of any upcoming events in the early stages of planning in order to identify opportunities for collaboration with historic and cultural resources.

        - Strategy 3.2.3: Investigate vital historic and cultural resources around which future events and festivals could be developed.

    - Objective 3.3: Promote the economic value of the County's historic preservation resources.

- Strategy 3.3.1: Implement a mechanism to help track tourism dollars spent in Alexander County as a result of historic tourism.

- Strategy 3.3.2: Include historic landmarks and attractions when promoting the County to outside communities.

- Strategy 3.3.3: Track improvements to historic landmarks and districts to determine impacts on property values.

Implementation

Overview

The implementation of the comprehensive plan for Alexander County is a critical step in achieving the goals and objectives of the plan. The plan is a living document that will guide the County's growth and development over the next 20 years, and will be implemented through a variety of strategies and actions. The implementation of the plan will require the participation and collaboration of a range of stakeholders, including County officials, residents, businesses, and community organizations.

County governments worldwide adopt comprehensive plans to ensure well-organized growth and development. These plans encompass diverse aspects such as land use, transportation, housing, economic development, environmental conservation, historic & cultural resources, and public services. Successful implementation of these plans requires careful consideration of various factors, including financial resources, stakeholder participation, regulatory alignment, and ongoing monitoring.

Comprehensive plans provide a framework for addressing current and future challenges while enhancing quality of life for residents. Implementation ensures that long-term visions are translated into actionable strategies that promote sustainable growth, efficient resource allocation, and improved community well-being.

Challenges and Mitigation

Financial Constraints: Limited funding can hinder plan implementation. Seeking alternative revenue streams, pursuing grants, and advocating for dedicated funding sources can help mitigate financial challenges.

Political Support: Changes in leadership or shifts in political priorities can impact plan implementation. Building broad-based support and emphasizing the plan's economic, environmental, and social benefits can maintain political backing.

Regulatory Hurdles: Inconsistent regulations and bureaucratic hurdles can slow down implementation. Clear communication, interdepartmental coordination, and periodic regulatory reviews can streamline the process.

Resistance to Change: Some stakeholders may resist changes outlined in the comprehensive plan. Effective communication, education, and demonstrating successful case studies can help address resistance.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Lack of monitoring can lead to deviations from the plan's objectives. Implementing a robust monitoring and evaluation framework ensures that progress is tracked and adjustments are made as needed.

Implementation Strategy

The implementation of the comprehensive plan will be guided by the following strategies:

Coordination: The plan will be implemented through coordination between different County departments and agencies, as well as with local, state, and federal partners.

Partnerships: The plan will be implemented through partnerships with local organizations, businesses, and community groups.

Incentives: The plan will be implemented through the use of incentives, such as grants, loans, and tax credits, to encourage the development of projects and initiatives that support the plan's goals and objectives.

Regulation: The plan will be implemented through the adoption and enforcement of zoning regulations, building codes, and other land use and development regulations.

Implementation Timeline

The implementation of the comprehensive plan will occur over the next 20 years, with specific timelines for each action and strategy to be determined. The plan will be reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis to ensure that it remains relevant and effective in achieving the county's goals and objectives.

Land Use

Goal 1: Adopt land use regulations that are clear, equitable, and reasonably focused on addressing the needs of Alexander County.

Objective 1.1: Conduct a thorough review and update land use policies where possible.

Strategy 1.1.1: Draft and adopt an updated zoning ordinance.

Strategy 1.1.2: Adopt the most recent model watershed ordinance offered by the Department of Environmental Quality.

Strategy 1.1.3: Adopt the most recent model Flood Damage Prevention ordinance offered by FEMA and the North Carolina Floodplain Management Branch.

Strategy 1.1.4: Draft and adopt an updated subdivision ordinance.

Objective 1.2: Consolidate and clarify land use regulations.

Strategy 1.2.1: Bring all land development regulations together into one Land Development Code.

Strategy 1.2.2: Ensure all rules and procedures regarding land development are explained in an accessible manner in a publicly available document.

Objective 1.3: Remain proactive in keeping land use policies relevant, reasonable, and focused.

Strategy 1.3.1: Conduct an annual review of all land development regulations and recommend text amendments as necessary.

Strategy 1.3.2: Support regular educational and training opportunities to ensure staff are equipped with up-to-date information regarding land-use legislation.

Goal 2: Promote the development of a diversified and balanced mix of land uses in the County.

Objective 2.1: Encourage the development of mixed-use and infill development in existing developed areas to promote a more efficient use of land.

Strategy 2.1.1: Ensure zoning requirements for higher intensity districts allow for infill development.

Strategy 2.1.2: Incentivize infill development through reduced setbacks, higher density allowances, etc.

Objective 2.2: Encourage the development of a range of housing types and densities to meet the needs of different populations, including seniors, families, young professionals, and people with disabilities.

Strategy 2.2.1: Consider nearby facilities to reduce distance between essential needs and residential development.

Strategy 2.2.2: Adopt flexible residential development standards to allow for context sensitive development.

Objective 2.3: Encourage the development of commercial, industrial, and agricultural uses in appropriate locations to support the County's economy and promote a balanced mix of land uses.

Strategy 2.3.1: Use zoning as a means to encourage and incentivize intentional development patterns.

Strategy 2.3.2: Adopt requirements to reduce the impact of incompatible uses on each other.

Strategy 2.3.3: Develop a "pop-up shop" site to allow emerging small business owners an opportunity to accrue starting capital.

Goal 3: Direct growth to areas where essential services and infrastructure are present, and protect sensitive natural areas and key historic / cultural resources from extensive development.

Objective 3.1: Adopt and enforce the Future Land Use Map and classifications presented above.

Strategy 3.1.1: Consider the Future Land Use Map in all rezoning decisions, with deviations restricted to unique cases.

Strategy 3.1.2: Promote and educate on the Future Land Use Map and classifications to community stakeholders frequently.

Objective 3.2: Encourage intentional decisions regarding where growth and infrastructure should be fostered.

Strategy 3.2.1: Limit shopping centers and highway commercial development only in areas indicated as suitable for commercial development on the Future Land Use Map.

Strategy 3.2.2: Amend land development regulations to establish location standards for commercial development that pushes such development to nodes.

Objective 3.3: Encourage adaptive reuse when possible to reduce unnecessary development expansion.

Strategy 3.3.1: Support rezonings for the adaptive reuse of existing industrial and small-business/commercial sites that are not being used.

Strategy 3.3.2: Inventory and promote sites that may be strong adaptive reuse candidates.

Goal 4: Aim to mitigate common negative impacts of new development.

Objective 4.1: Improve access management on new development within the County.

Strategy 4.1.1: Discourage driveway permits for every parcel by incentivizing shared driveways, cross-access easements, and other mechanisms that reduce the number of direct access points onto arterials and major collectors from adjoining parcels.

Strategy 4.1.2: Require new commercial subdivisions to provide access to the newly platted parcels via one or two access points (depending on size of development and amount of frontage on arterial and major collector).

Strategy 4.1.3: Recognize that nodes where several compatible commercial uses can be organized around signalized intersections and accessible by an internal network of streets and private drives are more desirable commercial locations than individual parcels with separate driveways.

Objective 4.2: Encourage stormwater and erosion control to improve water quality and reduce stormwater runoff.	
	Strategy 4.2.1: Adopt a stormwater and erosion control ordinance that would apply to new major development within the County.
	Strategy 4.2.2: Consider joining the Locally Delegated Erosion and Sedimentation Control Program through the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality.
Goal 5: Encourage and develop land use regulations that help to promote and preserve Alexander County's sense of place.	
Objective 5.1: Facilitate well-designed, walkable, mixed-use communities that fit the character and scale of Alexander County within areas indicated as suitable on the Future Land Use Map.	
	Strategy 5.1.1: Identify areas that might best support mixed-use development and establish overlay districts permitting such development.
	Strategy 5.1.2: Explicitly permit mixed-use development in zoning districts that can be expected to support such development.
Objective 5.2: Establish context-sensitive design standards for varying types of development.	
	Strategy 5.2.1: Update design standards that improve the aesthetics of commercial, office, industrial, and mixed-use development along major corridors.
	Strategy 5.2.2: Establish landscaping standards where commercial development should be discouraged.
	Strategy 5.2.3: Establish a zoning district that is appropriate for permanently protected lands and rezone areas accordingly.
	Strategy 5.2.4: Incentivize conservation design in areas deemed appropriate by the Future Land Use Map.
	Strategy 5.2.5: Consider greater protections for steep slope development to avoid common negative impacts of land disturbance on sloped terrain.
Objective 5.3: Continue to support and protect rural businesses.	
	Strategy 5.3.1: Continue to support home-based businesses throughout the County.
	Strategy 5.3.2: Allow and encourage home occupations in residential districts that will not negatively impact the residential nature of the district.
	Strategy 5.3.3: Modify zoning regulations to allow for more flexibility for rural businesses that have minimal impact on adjacent properties and rural character.
	Strategy 5.3.4: Encourage greater communication between local farmers and neighboring residents to foster a collaborative approach to farmland preservation.

Objective 5.4: Encourage a greater understanding of the unique characteristics of the various Alexander County Townships.	
	Strategy 5.4.1: Complete a small area plan for each of the townships of Alexander County.
	Strategy 5.4.2: Promote land use policies that consider the overall nature of the area being regulated.
	Strategy 5.4.3: Increase awareness of agricultural sites and districts through signage, web resources, etc.
	Strategy 5.4.4: Consider the development of an opt-in agricultural zoning overlay that amends land use regulations for areas being used for farming.

Transportation

Goal 1: Improve aesthetics, function, and capacity of community gateways and corridors.	
Objective 1.1: Provide welcoming and positive gateway corridors and entrances into and throughout the County.	
	Strategy 1.1.2: Develop community identifiers (signage, landscaping, core community centers, etc.) in order to promote a "sense of place" for each community.
Objective 1.2: Ensure appropriate transportation capacity for varying community needs.	
	Strategy 1.2.2: Provide more routes (connectivity) to reach destinations to reduce demand and congestion on major thoroughfares.
	Strategy 1.2.3: Reduce the length and number of vehicle trips per capita by locating jobs and shopping close to residential areas.
Objective 1.3: Promote the use of alternative modes of transportation, such as carpooling and vanpooling, to reduce traffic congestion and improve mobility.	
	Strategy 1.3.2: Work with Alexander County Schools to encourage bus ridership to reduce individual trips during peak hours.
	Strategy 1.3.3: Provide adequate signage, crosswalks, and visibility strategies to ensure safety and awareness for pedestrian access.
Goal 2: Enhance the county's infrastructure to support active transportation, such as walking and biking.	
Objective 2.1: Increase the capacity for multi-modal transportation.	
	Strategy 2.1.1: Establish standards for collector streets that include on-road bicycle facilities where appropriate, to be constructed as part of private developments.

Objective 2.2: Encourage the development of new trails and greenways to connect communities and promote recreation.

Strategy 2.2.1: Where appropriate, encourage developers to provide adequate pedestrian and bicycle facilities, based on anticipated demand for pedestrians and bicyclists, and the ability of such facilities to effectively mitigate speeds and/or traffic volumes that could contribute to unsafe or uncomfortable conditions.

Strategy 2.2.2: Update regulations, as appropriate, to require the inclusion of sidewalks in new development in areas near existing or planned centers, as well as other potential pedestrian generators (i.e. schools, parks, senior centers, retail).

Strategy 2.2.3: Develop a county-wide bike/ped plan to identify and prioritize infrastructure improvements, such as sidewalks, bike lanes, and pedestrian crossings.

Objective 2.3: Promote the use of active transportation through education and outreach programs.

Strategy 2.3.1: Expand educational and informational outreach identifying dedicated pedestrian/bicycle facility and preferred shared roadways, though maps, wayfinding signage, smartphone apps, and online resources.

Goal 3: Enhance public transportation options in appropriate areas of Alexander County.

Objective 3.1: Attract more ridership by improving the service quality of the current fixed-route transit system, while optimizing system efficiency (Commuter/Regional).

Strategy 3.1.1: Evaluate the benefits of increased frequency and extended service hours, implementing as feasible.

Strategy 3.1.2: Upgrade and maintain amenities at existing stops, and encourage improvements to pedestrian connections.

Strategy 3.1.3: Build ridership by extending or adding routes to expand service area where justifiable.

Strategy 3.1.4: Improve and expand demand-response service.

Strategy 3.1.6: Encourage the development of transportation demand management strategies, such as carpooling and telecommuting, to reduce the demand for single-occupant vehicle trips.

Strategy 3.1.7: Promote the services made available by Greenway to Alexander County residents.

Objective 3.2: Encourage the inclusion of transit accommodations within new development at Community Service Centers.

Strategy 3.2.1: Update subdivision and site plan regulations to provide "transit-supportive" development and amenities where appropriate.

Strategy 3.2.2: Investigate the potential for any emerging private or public transportation services technologies for all modes of travel (i.e. Uber, Lyft) to supplement demand-responsive service and fulfill first-mile/last-mile needs.

Strategy 3.2.3: Encourage multi-modal transportation options in all Urban Services Areas

Goal 4: Make strategic investments and secure NCDOT funding for known transportation issues throughout the County.

Objective 4.1: Investigate and improve road deficiencies in the County.

Strategy 4.1.1: Consider widening US 64/NC 90 (both connected and separate portions) to 4 lanes where appropriate.

Strategy 4.1.2: Consider widening or modernization for NC Hwy 16 S.

Strategy 4.1.3: Consider modernization of Rink Dam Rd.

Strategy 4.1.4: Consider modernization and easing of curves along NC 127 north of Richey Rd.

Strategy 4.1.5: Encourage connectivity between US 64 and NC 90.

Strategy 4.1.6: Seek further road improvement opportunities through the small area planning process.

Objective 4.2: Investigate and improve intersection deficiencies in the County.

Strategy 4.2.1: Improve safety at the intersection of NC 16 S and Millersville Rd.

Strategy 4.2.2: Improve safety for US 64 intersections and better access management.

Strategy 4.2.3: Investigate ways to improve intersections along school-access roads during peak hours.

Strategy 4.2.4: Work with the Town of Taylorsville to request signalized intersection timing improvements.

Strategy 4.2.5: Seek further intersection improvement opportunities through the small area planning process.

Objective 4.3: Find areas where pedestrian facilities can meet existing demand.

Strategy 4.3.1: Review aerial photography for "desire paths" that can be supported with infrastructure improvements when developing small area plans.

Strategy 4.3.2: Encourage the Town of Taylorsville to identify and connect gaps between pedestrian facilities and maintain existing sidewalks / pedestrian facilities within the town limits..

Strategy 4.3.3: Map current pedestrian facilities within the County to determine further gaps in access.

	Strategy 4.3.4: Seek further pedestrian facility improvement opportunities through the small area planning process.
	Strategy 4.3.5: Increase County capacity for service based transportation (such as trips to court dates, doctor's appointments, and job interviews for low income residents) offered through appropriate departments.

Economic Development

Goal 1: Increase the number of job opportunities and increase the employment rate in the county.	
Objective 1.1: Attract new businesses and industries to the County.	
	Strategy 1.1.1: Develop a revolving fund for the construction of shell buildings geared toward desirable industries for Alexander County.
	Strategy 1.1.2: Promote continued development of the Alexander Industrial Park to capitalize on the park's unique opportunity to provide both rail served and non-rail sites.
	Strategy 1.1.3: Work to balance wages at competitive rates for both employers and employees.
Objective 1.2: Expand the County's small business support program to encourage the growth and success of local businesses.	
	Strategy 1.2.1: Work with the Town of Taylorsville to enhance and increase business opportunities in the downtown area.
	Strategy 1.2.2: Consider developing a facade grant program in partnership with the Town of Taylorsville to enhance the aesthetic appeal of primary business corridors.
	Strategy 1.2.3: Develop a "business incubator" program to assist new businesses during the first years of operation.
	Strategy 1.2.4: Review incentive policies to allow greater participation by creating new or expanding existing small and medium-sized firms.
Goal 2: Diversify the county's economic base to reduce reliance on a single industry.	
Objective 2.1: Identify opportunities for growth in new and emerging sectors.	
	Strategy 2.1.1: Allow a range of complementary uses in proximity to industrial parks to create attractive work environments with amenities to compete with other employment location options in the Southeastern United States.
	Strategy 2.1.2: Provide flexibility for rural businesses that have limited impact on adjacent properties and preserve rural character.
	Strategy 2.1.3: Encourage small-scale retail development, service, office, "flex" space, and other small business development in Community Service Centers as shown on the Future Land Use Map.

Objective 2.2: Encourage the development of tourism and recreational opportunities in the County, including outdoor recreation, agritourism, and heritage tourism.	
	Strategy 2.2.1: Promote the County's assets, such as its natural beauty and rich history, to attract new businesses and residents.
	Strategy 2.2.2: Develop recreational facilities that could support sports tourism throughout the County.
	Strategy 2.2.3: Encourage land uses near recreational facilities that would enhance their appeal.
	Strategy 2.2.4: Continue to support and educate local agricultural businesses regarding agritourism.
	Strategy 2.2.5: Promote agritourism and heritage tourism opportunities through targeted advertising, regional partnerships, and earned media.
	Strategy 2.2.6: Review land use policies to encourage development of hotels and other lodging accommodations.
Goal 3: Enhance the County's infrastructure and facilities to support economic development.	
Objective 3.1: Invest in infrastructure improvements to support the growth of businesses and industries in the County.	
	Strategy 3.1.1: Encourage the Town of Taylorsville to create a more walkable downtown with slower traffic speeds to increase visibility for downtown businesses.
	Strategy 3.1.2: Partner with NCDOT, Iredell County, and the Greater Hickory MPO to upgrade US Highway 64 to a 4-lane road from east of Hiddenite to I-40.
	Strategy 3.1.3: Invest in bike/ped improvements that connect core residential neighborhoods to core employment centers.
Objective 3.2: Enhance the County's public facilities, such as water and sewer capacity, to support economic development.	
	Strategy 3.2.1: Determine existing and future economic development needs for public facilities in order to target investments strategically.
	Strategy 3.2.2: Pursue State and Federal funding that would allow for utility upgrades geared toward economic development.
Objective 3.3: Explore new communication tools to link Alexander County residents, businesses and organizations.	
	Strategy 3.3.1: Consider a study to evaluate communication tools and platforms to improve dissemination of information across the County.
	Strategy 3.3.2: Provide technical support to enable necessary staffing, permitting, and outreach.

Goal 4: Work to make Alexander County more competitive when attracting industry.

Objective 4.1: Increase the County's capacity for opportunity.

	Strategy 4.1.1: Consider acquiring a grants coordinator specifically for economic development opportunities to lower the tax burden on Alexander County Citizens.
	Strategy 4.1.2: Support the development of a financially-independent, non-profit Chamber of Commerce.
	Strategy 4.1.3: Consider a long-range planning process for a new industrial park within Alexander County.
	Strategy 4.1.4: Prepare and promote shovel and pad-ready sites within the County, with special emphasis on rail served sites..
	Strategy 4.1.5: Consider zoning that allows distribution and warehouse uses along major transportation corridors, particularly NC 127, US 64, and NC 90.
	Strategy 4.1.6: Strengthen Alexander EDC's capacity to carry out business retention, recruitment, workforce development, data gathering, and dissemination activities.

Objective 4.2: Work to increase Alexander County's appeal to potential employers.

	Strategy 4.2.1: Work with local educational institutions to develop training programs and apprenticeships to prepare residents for in-demand and emerging jobs.
	Strategy 4.2.2: Enhance the County's amenities, such as parks and community centers, to support economic development and quality of life.
	Strategy 4.2.3: Reduce or eliminate parking standards for most commercial and industrial uses to allow business owners to determine need.
	Strategy 4.2.4: Work to develop a clear, simple, and reasonable permitting process for new businesses within the County.
	Strategy 4.2.5: Work to attract industries at many wage levels to provide opportunity for residents of many skill levels.
	Strategy 4.2.6: Facilitate regular communication between local employers, educators, and training providers to align offerings with business needs.

Housing

Goal 1: Promote safe, stable housing opportunities for County residents in order to support upward mobility and reduce homelessness/houselessness.

Objective 1.1: Support the development of affordable and workforce housing options in the County.

	Strategy 1.1.1: Develop a county-wide housing plan to identify and prioritize the needs of different populations, including seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income families.
	Strategy 1.1.2: Encourage the development of new affordable housing units, including through partnerships with private developers and non-profit organizations.
	Strategy 1.1.3: Identify and support providers of rental assistance and down payment assistance programs to help low-income families afford to rent or purchase homes.
	Strategy 1.1.4: Target specific sites for workforce housing near employment centers.

Objective 1.2: Continue to seek out new, creative ways to approach challenges regarding housing in Alexander County.

	Strategy 1.2.1: Develop an Alexander County Housing Committee to evaluate current housing needs and recommend future housing strategies.
	Strategy 1.2.2: Task the Alexander County Housing Committee with a periodic report to the Board of Commissioners regarding innovations and best practices used in neighboring communities for consideration.

Goal 2: Preserve and improve the quality of existing housing units in the County.

Objective 2.1: Pursue resources to support existing housing needs.

	Strategy 2.1.1: Develop a county-wide housing rehabilitation program to find financial assistance for homeowners to repair and improve their homes.
	Strategy 2.1.2: Develop a county-wide housing education and outreach program to provide information and resources to homeowners and renters on how to maintain and improve their homes.

Objective 2.2: Enforce and improve existing nuisance and minimum housing codes.

	Strategy 2.2.1: Continue county-wide code enforcement program to ensure that all housing units meet minimum health and safety standards.
	Strategy 2.2.2: Seek ways to bridge gaps between County enforcement policies and known deficiencies in enforcement and pursue text amendments when necessary.

Goal 3: Encourage the development of a range of housing types and densities in the County.

Objective 3.1: Encourage high and medium-density housing development where appropriate.

	Strategy 3.1.1: Develop a county-wide zoning ordinance that allows for the development of a range of housing types, including single-family homes, apartments, and manufactured homes in places best suited for those housing types.
	Strategy 3.1.2: Encourage the development of mixed-use and multi-family housing to increase density and create a more vibrant and walkable community.
	Strategy 3.1.3: Promote the development of accessory dwelling units by relaxing standards for ADU's in higher density zoning districts.
	Strategy 3.1.4: Reduce setbacks in higher-density zoning districts to encourage greater use of land.

Strategy 3.1.5: Invest in public utilities such as water and sewer service in Urban Service Areas to encourage higher-density development.

Objective 3.2: Work with local developers and builders to identify and address any barriers to the development of new housing units in the County.

Strategy 3.2.1: Include industry professionals such as realtors, developers, and non-profits as members on the Alexander County Housing Committee.

Strategy 3.2.2: Consider regular text and zoning map amendments in order to respond to feedback from industry professionals and emerging issues identified by residents.

Objective 3.3: Preserve the rural character and lifestyle of Alexander County.

Strategy 3.3.1: Restrict housing densities in rural areas of the County.

Strategy 3.3.2: Identify clear distinctions between the more "urbanized" and "rural" parts of the County through zoning.

Strategy 3.3.3: Reduce development pressure on rural communities by restricting public utilities to Urban Service Areas.

Strategy 3.3.4: Continue to encourage participation in the Farmland Preservation District to protect agricultural uses.

Strategy 3.3.5: Require buffering in areas where higher and lower-density housing developments meet.

Public Services & Facilities

Goal 1: Improve capacity and condition of public facilities in the County.

Objective 1.1: Identify needs and gaps in public facilities.

Strategy 1.1.1: Develop a long-range facilities plan that evaluates current and future facility needs, financial obligations, and maintenance expectations.

Strategy 1.1.2: Work with local organizations and County staff to identify the specific needs and preferences of the community and incorporate them into the development and improvement of public facilities.

Strategy 1.1.3: Implement a Capital Improvement Plan for fleet maintenance and replacement.

Strategy 1.1.4: Develop and maintain a Capital Improvement Plan to prioritize and plan for future capital expenditures.

Strategy 1.1.5: Consider the development of a dedicated space for a Farmer's Market with a renewed effort to promote the market.

Strategy 1.1.6: Consider the development of a stand-alone cooperative extension building with a focus on educational spaces and land for demonstrations, gardens, etc.

Strategy 1.1.7: Strive to increase facilities for service-based departments (such as DSS) to meet growing and emergent needs.

Objective 1.2: Invest in adequate public facilities through maintenance and development.

Strategy 1.2.1: Develop a county-wide public facilities maintenance and improvement program to ensure that facilities are well-maintained and in good repair.

Strategy 1.2.2: Enhance the accessibility of existing public facilities for people with disabilities through the implementation of ADA-compliant features and accommodations.

Strategy 1.2.3: Strive to reduce the amount of rented County facilities to lower the overall tax burden of public buildings.

Objective 1.3: Identify opportunities for efficiency and sound financial practices when managing public facilities.

Strategy 1.3.1: Encourage the use of energy-efficient and environmentally-friendly design and construction techniques in the development and improvement of public facilities.

Strategy 1.3.2: Encourage the development of multi-use facilities that can serve multiple purposes and support a range of activities, such as recreation, education, and social services.

Goal 2: Strive to maintain and enhance the County Sheriff's Office.

Objective 2.1: Work to increase safety and reduce crime in Alexander County.

Strategy 2.1.1: Evaluate law enforcement needs on a community basis, and provide adequate staff to meet those needs.

Strategy 2.1.2: Promote crime prevention through proven techniques such as community watches.

Objective 2.2: Support emerging needs for local law enforcement.

Strategy 2.2.1: Identify and plan for emerging technologies in law enforcement while securing funding sources to obtain these resources.

Strategy 2.2.2: Consider an annual meeting between elected officials and the Sheriff's Office to discuss current and emerging trends in local law enforcement.

Objective 2.3: Promote inter-departmental cooperation to support community needs.

Strategy 2.3.1: Identify opportunities for County service providers to work collaboratively on complex community needs (i.e. DSS, Public Health, EMS, and Sheriff regarding substance abuse cases).

Strategy 2.3.2: Consider periodic, issue-oriented workgroups comprised of various County staff and local expertise to investigate new and creative solutions to community concerns.

Objective 2.4: Increase community engagement between citizens and law enforcement.

Strategy 2.4.1: Consider an annual public input session for residents to speak with local law enforcement.

Strategy 2.4.2: Consider consistent staff assignments for each township to increase familiarity between law enforcement and residents.

Strategy 2.4.3: Give preference to qualified County residents when hiring new law enforcement.

Goal 3: Strive to maintain and enhance the County Fire Marshal and Emergency Management Departments.

Objective 3.1: Develop, update, and implement emergency management planning.

Strategy 3.1.1: Provide an annual report to the Board of Commissioners to assess plan implementation and upcoming goals.

Strategy 3.1.2: Work with County Planning, PIO, and other departments to help increase public input on upcoming plans.

Strategy 3.1.3: Track total funding obtained as a result of emergency planning to measure value to citizens.

Strategy 3.1.4: Identify new grant opportunities made available through planning efforts.

Objective 3.2: Encourage inter-departmental cooperation with Emergency Management/Fire Marshal's office.

Strategy 3.2.1: Take a holistic community approach to improve interoperability in planning, preparation, and execution of emergency response.

Strategy 3.2.2: Update the County Emergency Operations Plan to include increased training and a unified approach to emergency response.

Strategy 3.2.3: Include EM representative on Technical Review Board to give comment on development plans earlier in the permitting process.

Objective 3.3: Expand the service capacity for fire departments and emergency management.

Strategy 3.3.1: Move toward industry standards in radio equipment.

Strategy 3.3.2: Encourage increased training and fire & rescue certifications.

Strategy 3.3.3: Increase fire department substation coverage of the County to lower insurance rates for residents.

Strategy 3.3.4: Strive to man fire departments with 24-hour staff.

Objective 3.4: Increase community awareness of Emergency Management and Fire Marshal operations.

Strategy 3.4.1: Continue to establish Fire Prevention and Education programs throughout the County.

Strategy 3.4.2: Maintain and enhance annual fire inspections and code enforcement.

Strategy 3.4.3: Work with County PIO to develop Fire Marshal/Emergency Management social media presence to keep residents informed of emergency information as it becomes available.

Strategy 3.4.4: Develop a new business "pipeline" that informs new business owners of fire code requirements during the permitting process.

Objective 3.5: Seek efficiency opportunities without reducing fire and emergency management services to residents.

Strategy 3.5.1: Seek opportunities to reduce equipment redundancies between various departments.

Strategy 3.5.2: Develop a unified, consolidated storage area for emergency management equipment.

Strategy 3.5.3: Identify and work to reduce duplication of services.

Goal 4: Strive to maintain and enhance the Emergency Medical Services Department.

Objective 4.1: Encourage inter-departmental cooperation with Emergency Medical Services.

Strategy 4.1.1: Encourage inter-departmental training to increase response team awareness.

Strategy 4.1.2: Include EMS representative on Technical Review Board to give comment on development plans earlier in the permitting process.

Objective 4.2: Expand and improve the service capacity for Emergency Medical Services.

Strategy 4.2.1: Work to lower response times when responding to emergency calls.

Strategy 4.2.2: Consider the development of an Ellendale and East Alexander EMS station.

Strategy 4.2.3: Move toward industry standards in radio equipment.

Strategy 4.2.4: Regularly review staffing for EMS to ensure adequate support for County needs.

Strategy 4.2.5: Increase capacity for trauma victim treatment with resources such as Whole Blood.

Strategy 4.2.6: Enhance and expand the County's PORT/CP program in partnership with the Alexander County SUD coalition.

Objective 4.3: Increase community awareness of Emergency Medical Services operations.	
	Strategy 4.3.1: Continue to establish Emergency Medical Services education programs throughout the County, such as the "Stop the Bleed" program.
	Strategy 4.3.2: Work with County PIO to develop EMS social media presence to keep residents informed of emergency information as it becomes available.

Goal 5: Strive to maintain and enhance the County's public schools.	
Objective 5.1: Work to improve school safety, accessibility, and development.	
	Strategy 5.1.1: Collaborate on land use decisions for school design and placement, considering walking routes to schools and access to surrounding neighborhoods.
	Strategy 5.1.2: New and existing schools should function as focal points for communities when considering density, pedestrian access, and community services.
	Strategy 5.1.3: Support partnerships between local law enforcement, emergency management, and ACS to improve safety.
Objective 5.2: Plan proactively for public school needs.	
	Strategy 5.2.1: Include public school officials in major development planning discussions.
	Strategy 5.2.2: Encourage regular planning and evaluation of school capacity and facilities to ensure timely responses to emerging needs.
	Strategy 5.2.3: Support ACS in its implementation of the adopted 5-year facilities plan.

Goal 6: Strive to maintain and enhance the County's utilities.	
Objective 6.1: Ensure adequate utilities and public services to support the desired development pattern.	
	Strategy 6.1.1: Develop utilities policies, systems, and services that facilitate compact development and support economic development in defined areas.
	Strategy 6.1.2: Prioritize utilities investments in areas designated as "Urban Services Areas" on the Future Land Use Map.
	Strategy 6.1.3: In evaluating development proposals, and prior to approval, consider the potential demands relative to existing and planned water and sewer capacity, the relationship to existing and future service areas, and commitments for current and future allocations.
	Strategy 6.1.4: Require new development to demonstrate the ability to provide an adequate water supply and wastewater treatment indefinitely for all uses in the proposed project.
	Strategy 6.1.5: Limit utility extensions or upgrades in key rural and agricultural areas.
	Strategy 6.1.6: Effectively use the existing utility systems, prioritizing development with existing utility and services extensions first (infill development).

	Strategy 6.1.9: Establish and fund a 10-year capital improvement program and capital reserve fund which is adequate to implement planned investments in sewer and water infrastructure.
	Strategy 6.1.7: Develop a comprehensive utilities plan for Alexander County to plan for future water and sewer investments.
	Strategy 6.1.8: Consider forming an inter-local sewer and water board to advise the County and Town of Taylorsville on utility conditions, needs, and priorities.
Objective 6.2: Increase water service capacity in appropriate areas.	
	Strategy 6.2.1: Consider the development of a County-owned water intake site to reduce dependence on external systems.
	Strategy 6.2.2: Identify water service gaps in Urban Services Areas and prioritize investment in closing those gaps when possible.
	Strategy 6.2.3: Construct new water supply lines as looped systems to prevent stagnant water conditions.
	Strategy 6.2.4: Prioritize waterline extensions to economic development sites.
Objective 6.3: Increase sewer service capacity in appropriate areas.	
	Strategy 6.3.1: Consider the development of a County-owned wastewater treatment plant to reduce dependence on external systems.
	Strategy 6.3.2: Identify sewer service gaps in Urban Services Areas and prioritize investment in closing those gaps when possible.
	Strategy 6.3.3: Avoid County investment in private systems, especially where capacity is a concern.
	Strategy 6.3.4: Prioritize sewer line extensions to economic development sites.
Objective 6.4: Strive to improve internet service in underserved parts of the County.	
	Strategy 6.4.1: Building on previous broadband coverage research, explore grant funds and partnerships to expand broadband internet service to high-priority portions of the County.
	Strategy 6.4.2: Acknowledge broadband access as an economic development, public health, and educational need.
	Strategy 6.4.3: Develop a strategic plan to prioritize and pursue broadband initiatives as they become available.

Goal 7: Strive to maintain and enhance County Administrative Services.	
Objective 7.1: Increase interaction between County government and residents.	
	Strategy 7.1.1: Consider holding an annual public input session before the budgeting process begins to gain insight regarding needs, concerns, and priorities.

	Strategy 7.1.2: Consider a regularly posted video series or social media post that answers common questions from the public.
Objective 7.2: Prioritize outstanding customer service, equitable regulation, and departmental expertise in County staffing.	
	Strategy 7.2.1: Implement measures to recruit and retain exemplary County staff.
	Strategy 7.2.2: Conduct periodic review of County staff to ensure County priorities are being maintained.
	Strategy 7.2.3: Develop a customer feedback program to gain input regarding positive or negative experiences with the County.
	Strategy 7.2.4: Deploy creative measures to reduce turnover in low-retention positions.
	Strategy 7.2.5: Consider the development of departmental annexes (such as building services) in high-need areas to increase convenience to taxpayers.
Goal 8: Strive to maintain and enhance Solid Waste Collection.	
Objective 8.1: Improve efficiency and customer experience at convenience sites.	
	Strategy 8.1.1: Strive to remove on-site convenience center fee collection in favor of a more efficient program.
	Strategy 8.1.2: Consider the development of a larger transfer station to reduce crowding and wait times.
	Strategy 8.1.3: Increase convenience center capacity to scale with increased densities in Urban Service Areas.
	Strategy 8.1.4: Work to increase awareness and educational opportunities for County Solid Waste programs and policies.
Goal 9: Strive to maintain and enhance the County's Health Department and area healthcare facilities.	
Objective 9.1: Improve access to medical care within Alexander County.	
	Strategy 9.1.1: Collaborate with hospitals and other medical facilities to close gaps in healthcare needs within the County.
	Strategy 9.1.2: Work to provide psychological and psychiatric care either through public or private services so that residents can receive care without needing to leave Alexander County.
	Strategy 9.1.3: Investigate opportunities to attract specialist services, urgent care facilities, and stand-alone emergency rooms to serve the County.
	Strategy 9.1.4: Aggressively pursue means to encourage childcare options for Alexander County residents.
	Strategy 9.1.5: Pursue the recruitment or development of a full-service hospital for Alexander County.

	Strategy 9.1.6: Seek specialized care for communities with greater health care needs, such as senior care, pediatricians, Alzheimer's care, etc.
Objective 9.2: Support the County's Community Health Assessment goals.	
	Strategy 9.2.2: Work to meet the unique needs of senior populations regarding healthcare and elder-friendly activities.
	Strategy 9.2.3: Consider investments that promote healthy lifestyle options for County residents such as recreational facilities, multi-use paths, and farmer's markets.
	Strategy 9.2.4: Consider dedicating private spaces with internet access at DSS or Health Department sites to give residents telehealth options for both mental health and primary care.
	Strategy 9.2.5: Consider offering childcare to County employees, and encourage employers within the County to do the same.

Environment & Recreation

Goal 1: Protect, promote, and improve the quality of the County's natural and cultural resources.	
Objective 1.1: Maintain and improve water quality.	
	Strategy 1.1.1: Maintain riparian buffers in Watershed Protection Ordinance and minimize stream crossings in new developments.
	Strategy 1.1.2: Develop and adopt sedimentation and erosion control standards for Alexander County.
	Strategy 1.1.3: Increase capacity of County staff to ensure adequate enforcement of sedimentation and erosion control standards.
	Strategy 1.1.4: Encourage Best Management Practices (BMPs) in agricultural and timber operations.
	Strategy 1.1.5: Update policies and regulations to limit impacts of natural gas exploration and extraction.
	Strategy 1.1.6: Support a stormwater management system to decrease water-borne contaminants, and consider alternative forms of stormwater retention, like filtered swales, green roofs, and rainwater collection for irrigation to protect surface water.
	Strategy 1.1.7: Consider housing a stream debris removal program through Alexander County for small maintenance needs that don't meet state program thresholds.
Objective 1.2: Improve education and awareness of natural assets.	
	Strategy 1.2.1: Include environmental data on County websites and GIS, such as percent slope, wildlife corridors, conservation areas, etc.
	Strategy 1.2.2: Increase Soil & Water capacity for environmental education programs.

	Strategy 1.2.3: Increase educational opportunities at County parks.
	Strategy 1.2.4: Consider an educational center for environmental education programs through schools, the County, and other educational resources.
	Strategy 1.2.5: Improve public access points to natural resources such as rivers, mountain trails, and lakes.
	Strategy 1.2.6: Develop a farmland protection plan through Soil & Water.
Objective 1.3: Improve access to natural areas and support outdoor recreation-based tourism.	
	Strategy 1.3.1: Consider impacts to viewsheds and recreational access needs during the development review process.
	Strategy 1.3.2: Continue to limit light pollution, especially in rural and conservation Areas.
	Strategy 1.3.3: Partner with state and local governments and non-profit organizations to increase access to protected lands and unique natural features.
	Strategy 1.3.4: Consider the development of a Blueways program to establish and maintain a riparian recreational network.
	Strategy 1.3.5: Strive to increase the amount of trails and greenways available in the County.
	Strategy 1.3.6: Support passive recreation opportunities through the utilization of County-owned properties for primitive camping, trails, rock climbing, etc.
	Strategy 1.3.7: Promote the county's recreation infrastructure as an economic asset.
Objective 1.4: Conserve open space and natural resource areas.	
	Strategy 1.4.1: Develop mechanisms to conserve and create open space using development incentives, conservation easements, conservation overlay districts, and land conservation and donation programs.
	Strategy 1.4.2: Improve mechanisms for conservation subdivision development in lower density areas and in areas that have open space or natural resource lands.
	Strategy 1.4.3: Consider incentives for redevelopment of vacant structures with the intent to minimize further environmental impacts from contaminated sites.
	Strategy 1.4.4: Promote development patterns that respect sensitive mountainous areas.
Goal 2: Increase the availability and accessibility of recreation facilities and programs in the county.	
Objective 2.1: Determine facility needs and opportunities for growth.	
	Strategy 2.1.1: Develop a county-wide parks and recreation master plan to identify and prioritize the needs of different populations, including seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income families.

	Strategy 2.1.2: Encourage the development of new recreation facilities, such as parks, aquatics centers, and community centers in underserved areas of the county.
	Strategy 2.1.3: Encourage the development of a sports complex in a central location that includes soccer, baseball, football, and basketball facilities to allow for travel-sports events.
	Strategy 2.1.4: Pursue grants, endowments, and fundraising opportunities to assist in the development of programs and facilities.
	Strategy 2.1.5: Increase small natural spaces available to community centers and neighborhoods for greater opportunities throughout the County.
	Strategy 2.1.6: Consider an expansion of Rocky Face Park as opportunities arise.
Objective 2.2: Enhance the accessibility of existing recreation facilities for people with disabilities through the implementation of ADA-compliant features and accommodations.	
	Strategy 2.2.1: Have risk management conduct periodic assessments of incidents and opportunities to improve accessibility.
	Strategy 2.2.2: Encourage universal design when considering the development or expansion of park facilities.
Goal 3: Maintain and improve existing parks to meet evolving facility and programming needs.	
Objective 3.1: Provide recreational opportunities for a diverse range of needs, interests, and abilities.	
	Strategy 3.1.1: Improve accommodations for senior and disabled populations at existing parks.
	Strategy 3.1.2: Consider recreational facilities and programs for youth that have aged out of existing leagues.
	Strategy 3.1.3: Consider ways to reduce barriers for low-income residents to enjoy parks and recreation facilities.
Objective 3.2: Improve and enhance the experience for park users.	
	Strategy 3.2.1: Upgrade playgrounds and equipment at all parks as needed.
	Strategy 3.2.2: Increase staff capacity for maintaining existing park facilities.
	Strategy 3.2.3: Conduct an annual review of parks and recreation maintenance needs before budget requests are submitted.
	Strategy 3.2.4: Have the Alexander County Recreation Advisory Board conduct regular public input sessions to determine unrecognized needs of the community.

Goal 4: Become more resilient by mitigating, responding, and adapting to emerging threats.
Objective 4.1: Prepare for and respond to acute natural events and man-made emergencies.
Strategy 4.1.1: Update landscape planting guidelines to emphasize native species, diversity, drought tolerant plants, and other sustainable landscaping practices whilediscouraging the use of and encouraging the removal of invasive species.
Strategy 4.1.2: Encourage CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) organizations at the County and community levels.
Objective 4.2: Minimize, mitigate, and adapt to present and future risks.
Strategy 4.2.1: Discourage alterations of floodplain.
Strategy 4.2.2: Increase coordination between the Planning Department, Erosion Control (DEQ), Fire Marshal's Office, and Emergency Management in consideration of proposed development.

Historic & Cultural Resources

Goal 1: Preserve and protect the county's historic and cultural resources.
Objective 1.1: Enhance and encourage historic preservation in Alexander County.
Strategy 1.1.1: Implement the county-wide historic preservation plan to identify and prioritize the protection of the county's historic and cultural resources, such as buildings, sites, and artifacts.
Strategy 1.1.2: Establish an historic preservation overlay district that implements the County's design guidelines for designated landmarks.
Strategy 1.1.3: Continue to maintain the Alexander County Historic Preservation Commission's Certified Local Government (CLG) status and pursue funding opportunities through the CLG program to support historic preservation activities.
Strategy 1.1.4: Promote the rehabilitation of historically designated properties over demolition.
Objective 1.2: Increase awareness of County historic assets.
Strategy 1.2.1: Develop an education and outreach program to provide information and resources to the community on the importance and value of historic preservation.
Strategy 1.2.2: Ensure the local MLS system has all historically designated properties tagged and Realtors have access to information to inform potential homebuyers about what the designations mean.
Strategy 1.2.3: Host training and educational opportunities for preservation professionals and interested citizens.
Strategy 1.2.4: Highlight and share successful preservation work through press releases, newsletters, annual reports, and other outlets.
Strategy 1.2.5: Maintain and improve signage of historic districts and local historic landmarks.

Goal 2: Increase the availability and accessibility of cultural resources in the County.
Objective 2.1: Improve access and availability of library resources in Alexander County.
Strategy 2.1.1: Consider the development of a new main library branch designed to meet State standards.
Strategy 2.1.2: Strive to improve the total percentage of state standards Alexander County libraries meet.
Strategy 2.1.3: Develop meeting spaces at library branches for community and organizational use.
Strategy 2.1.4: Increase the Library's capacity for cultural and educational programming.
Strategy 2.1.5: Place particular emphasis on expanding adult programming for both social and educational opportunities.
Strategy 2.1.6: Work to improve ADA compliance and disability friendliness at library branches.
Strategy 2.1.7: Encourage public transportation options to place benches and route stops at or near all county library branches.
Strategy 2.1.8: Pursue funding opportunities such as endowment funds, library foundations, and grant funding to enhance County resources without impact to tax demand.
Objective 2.2: Encourage the development of new cultural resources, such as museums and cultural centers, in underserved areas of the County.
Strategy 2.2.1: Ensure zoning districts allow for an array of cultural facilities.
Strategy 2.2.2: Investigate opportunities for new or existing cultural sites to determine appropriate funding opportunities.
Strategy 2.2.3: Identify opportunities for cultural resource development in the small area planning process.
Objective 2.3: Encourage the development and continuation of cultural events throughout the County.
Strategy 2.3.1: Provide a clear pathway for permitting special events throughout the County.
Strategy 2.3.2: Identify and promote existing cultural events happening within Alexander County.
Goal 3: Promote the economic and cultural value of the County's historic and cultural resources.
Objective 3.1: Promote the economic and cultural value of the County library.
Strategy 3.1.1: Develop literacy programs though the County library as a pathway to gainful employment.

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	Strategy 3.1.2: Develop a "computer lab" on library sites that can provide employment resources and space to submit job applications.
	Strategy 3.1.3: Develop and promote educational programs for in-demand skills that can be provided through the County library.
	Strategy 3.1.4: Promote and expand the County library's historic and genealogical resources to encourage a greater understanding of local history and culture.
Objective 3.2: Encourage the use of historic and cultural resources in community events and festivals.	
	Strategy 3.2.1: Identify ways to support existing events and festivals by connecting them with relevant historic and cultural resources.
	Strategy 3.2.2: Strive to inform the County's PIO of any upcoming events in the early stages of planning in order to identify opportunities for collaboration with historic and cultural resources.
	Strategy 3.2.3: Investigate vital historic and cultural resources around which future events and festivals could be developed.
Objective 3.3: Promote the economic value of the County's historic preservation resources.	
	Strategy 3.3.1: Implement a mechanism to help track tourism dollars spent in Alexander County as a result of historic tourism.
	Strategy 3.3.2: Include historic landmarks and attractions when promoting the County to outside communities.
	Strategy 3.3.3: Track improvements to historic landmarks and districts to determine impacts on property values.

Appendix 1: Public Input

Q1 What is your age range?

Answered: 641   Skipped: 3
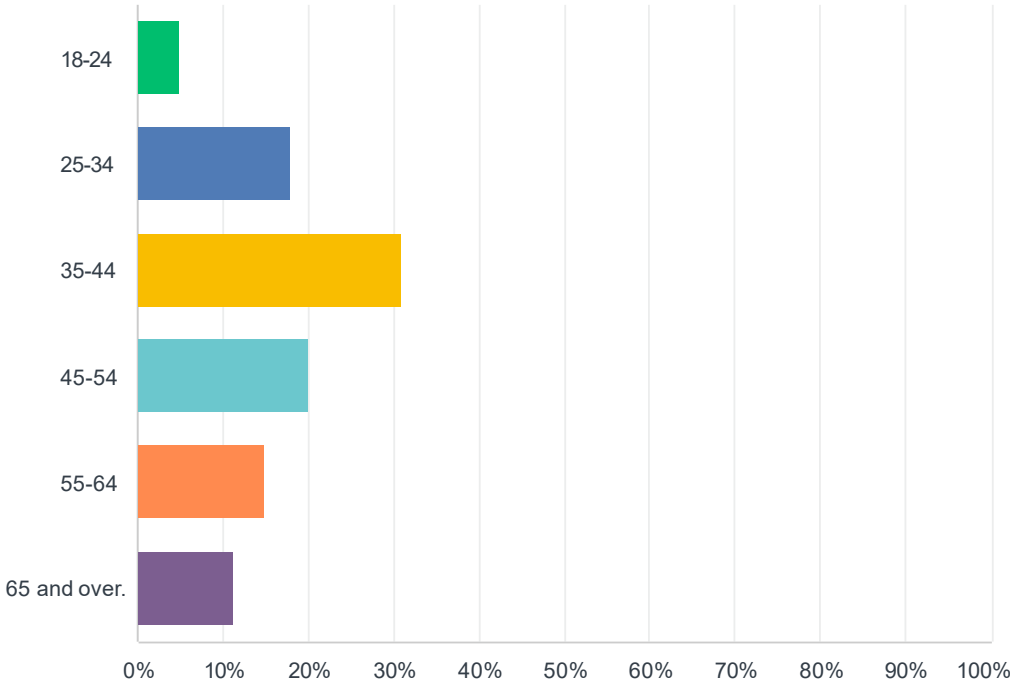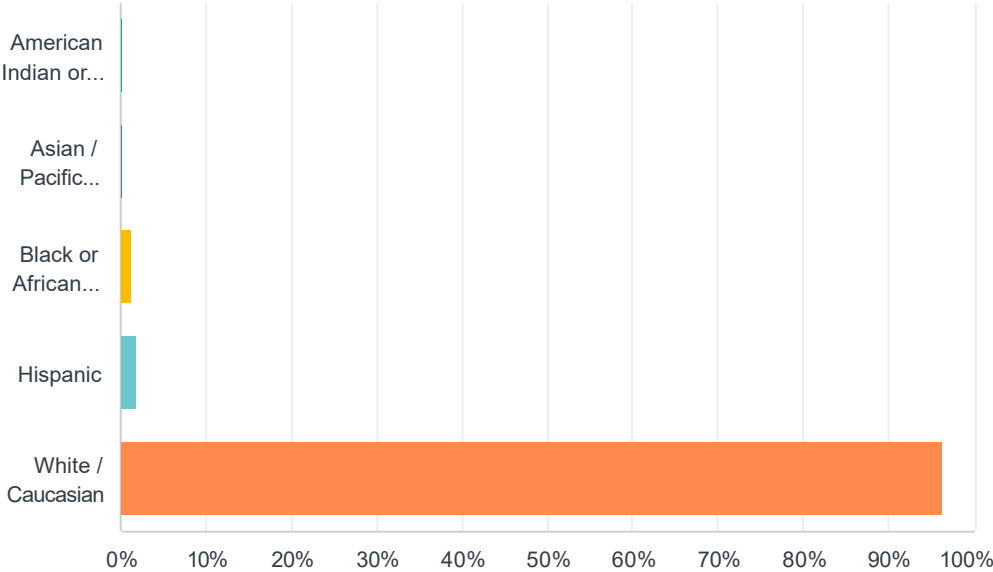

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
18-24	4.84%	31
25-34	17.94%	115
35-44	30.89%	198
45-54	20.12%	129
55-64	14.82%	95
65 and over.	11.39%	73
TOTAL		641

Q2 What is your race?

Answered: 632   Skipped: 12

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.16%	1
Asian / Pacific Islander	0.32%	2
Black or African American	1.27%	8
Hispanic	1.90%	12
White / Caucasian	96.36%	609
TOTAL		632

Q3 What is your gender?

Answered: 639   Skipped: 5
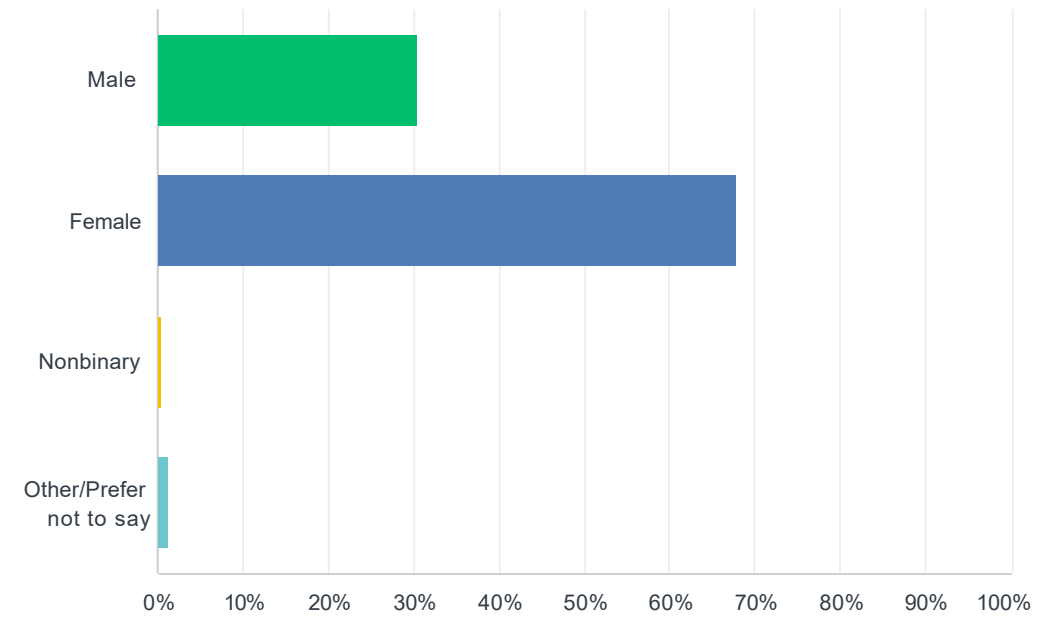
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Male	30.52%	195
Female	67.76%	433
Nonbinary	0.47%	3
Other/Prefer not to say	1.25%	8
TOTAL		639

Q4 What Township do you live in?

Answered: 636   Skipped: 8
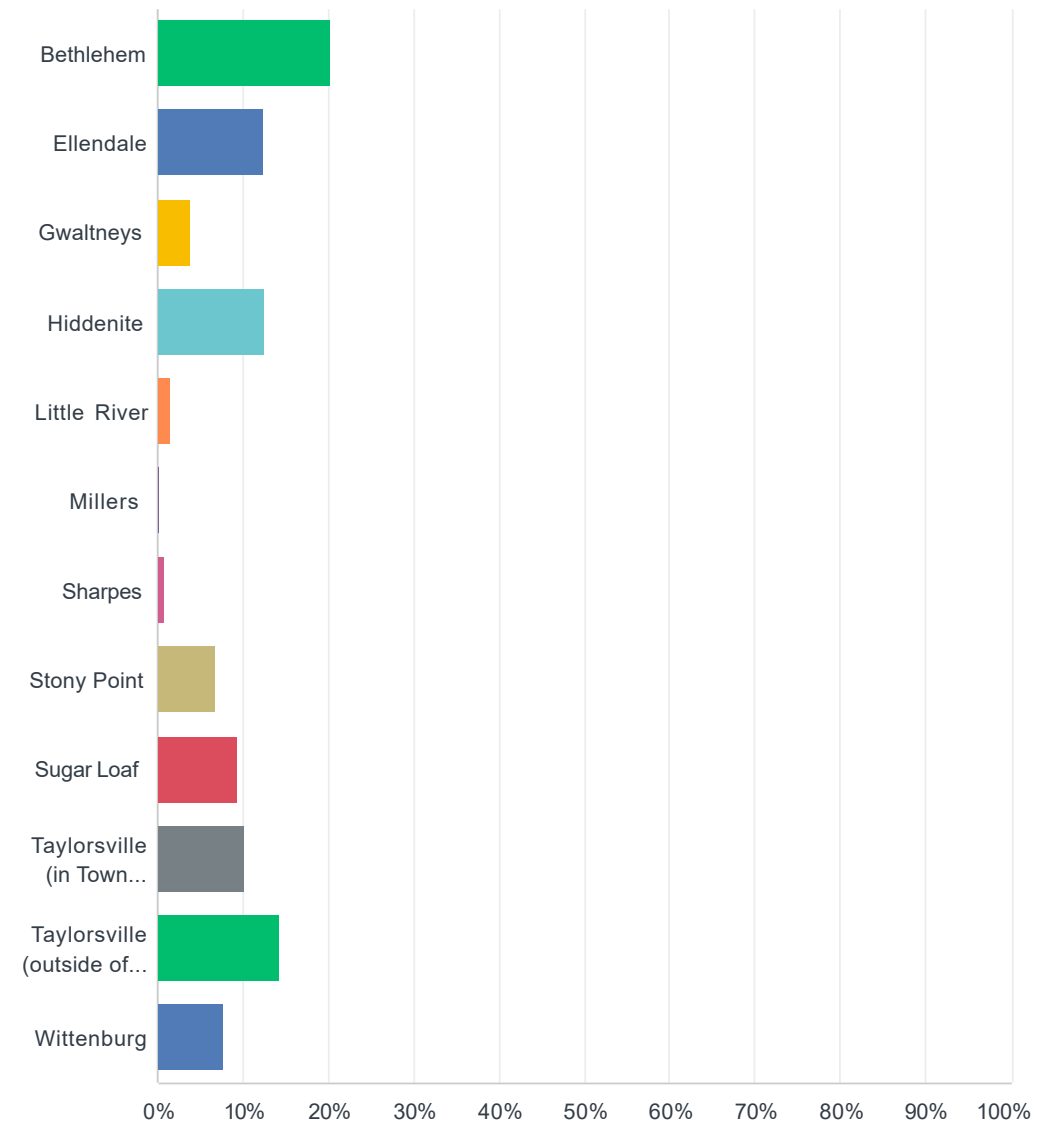
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Bethlehem	20.28%	129
Ellendale	12.26%	78
Gwaltneys	3.77%	24
Hiddenite	12.58%	80
Little River	1.57%	10
Millers	0.31%	2
Sharpes	0.79%	5
Stony Point	6.76%	43
Sugar Loaf	9.43%	60
Taylorsville (in Town Limits)	10.22%	65
Taylorsville (outside of Town Limits)	14.31%	91
Wittenburg	7.70%	49
TOTAL		636

Q5 What is your zip code?

Answered: 634   Skipped: 10

Q6 What is your experience with the land use regulations of Alexander County?

Answered: 492   Skipped: 152
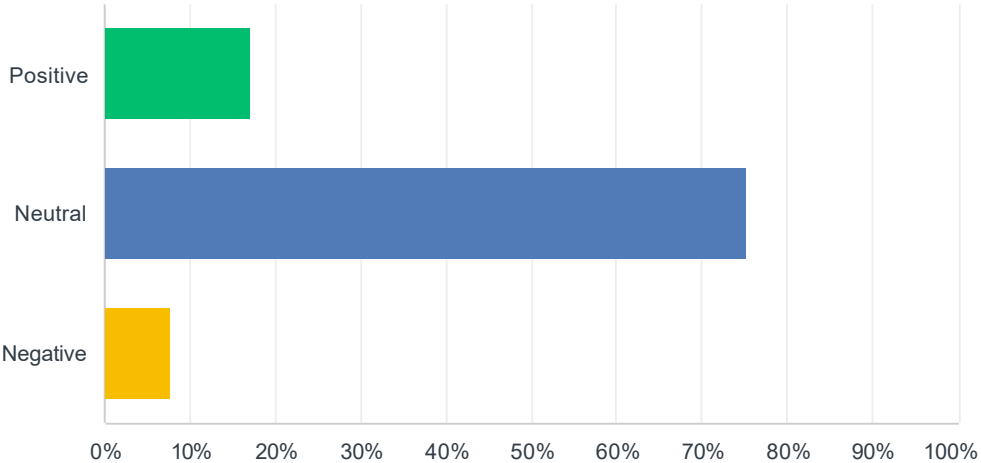
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Positive	17.07%	84
Neutral	75.20%	370
Negative	7.72%	38
TOTAL		492

Q7 Are there changes or improvements that should be made to the County's land use regulations?

Answered: 132   Skipped: 512

Q8 How should land use protections be prioritized… (Click arrows up or down to change priority.)
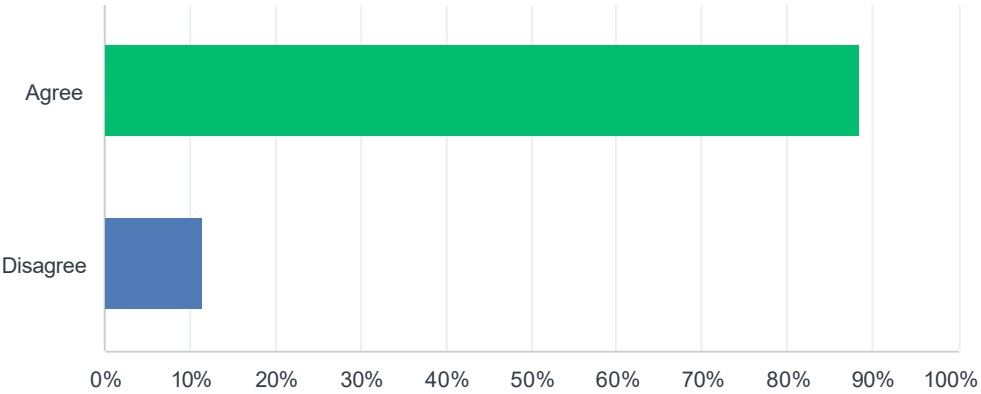
Answered: 483   Skipped: 161
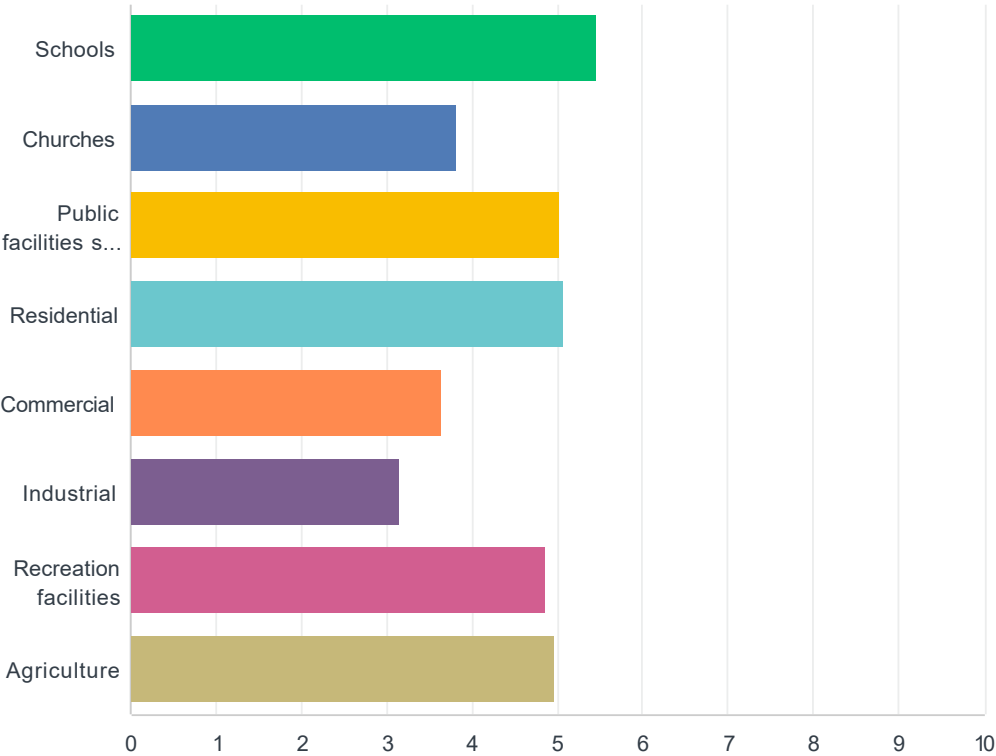
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	TOTAL	SCORE
Schools	18.84% 91	19.46% 94	15.53% 75	14.91% 72	12.01% 58	8.07% 39	6.63% 32	4.55% 22	483	5.45
Churches	10.97% 53	8.07% 39	9.32% 45	9.94% 48	10.97% 53	13.25% 64	10.56% 51	26.92% 130	483	3.82
Public facilities such as parks and libraries	13.46% 65	19.46% 94	16.15% 78	9.94% 48	12.84% 62	11.59% 56	9.73% 47	6.83% 33	483	5.03
Residential	22.57% 109	10.56% 51	10.56% 51	14.49% 70	12.01% 58	15.94% 77	7.45% 36	6.42% 31	483	5.07
Commercial	4.35% 21	6.83% 33	10.77% 52	10.97% 53	15.53% 75	13.04% 63	21.74% 105	16.77% 81	483	3.64
Industrial	2.69% 13	6.00% 29	7.87% 38	8.28% 40	11.59% 56	14.91% 72	24.43% 118	24.22% 117	483	3.16
Recreation facilities	11.59% 56	15.94% 77	15.73% 76	15.11% 73	13.25% 64	10.97% 53	9.73% 47	7.66% 37	483	4.87
Agriculture	15.53% 75	13.66% 66	14.08% 68	16.36% 79	11.80% 57	12.22% 59	9.73% 47	6.63% 32	483	4.96

Q9 Preserving agricultural land should be a planning priority for Alexander County.

Answered: 482   Skipped: 162

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Agree	88.59%	427
Disagree	11.41%	55
TOTAL		482

Q10 In the next 20 years would you prefer to see Alexander County prioritize:

Answered: 491   Skipped: 153
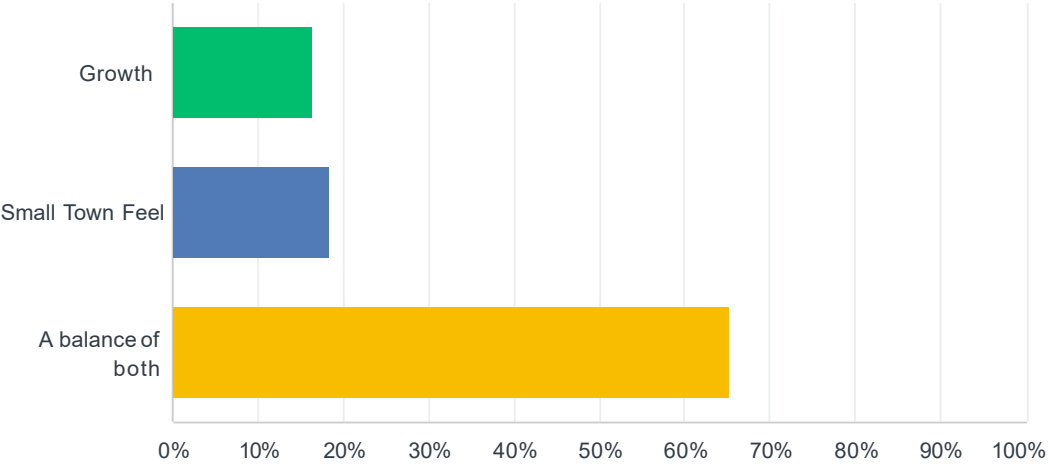
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Growth	16.50%	81
Small Town Feel	18.33%	90
A balance of both	65.17%	320
TOTAL		491

Q11 What kinds of growth would you be most comfortable seeing in Alexander County (select all that apply)?

Answered: 490   Skipped: 154
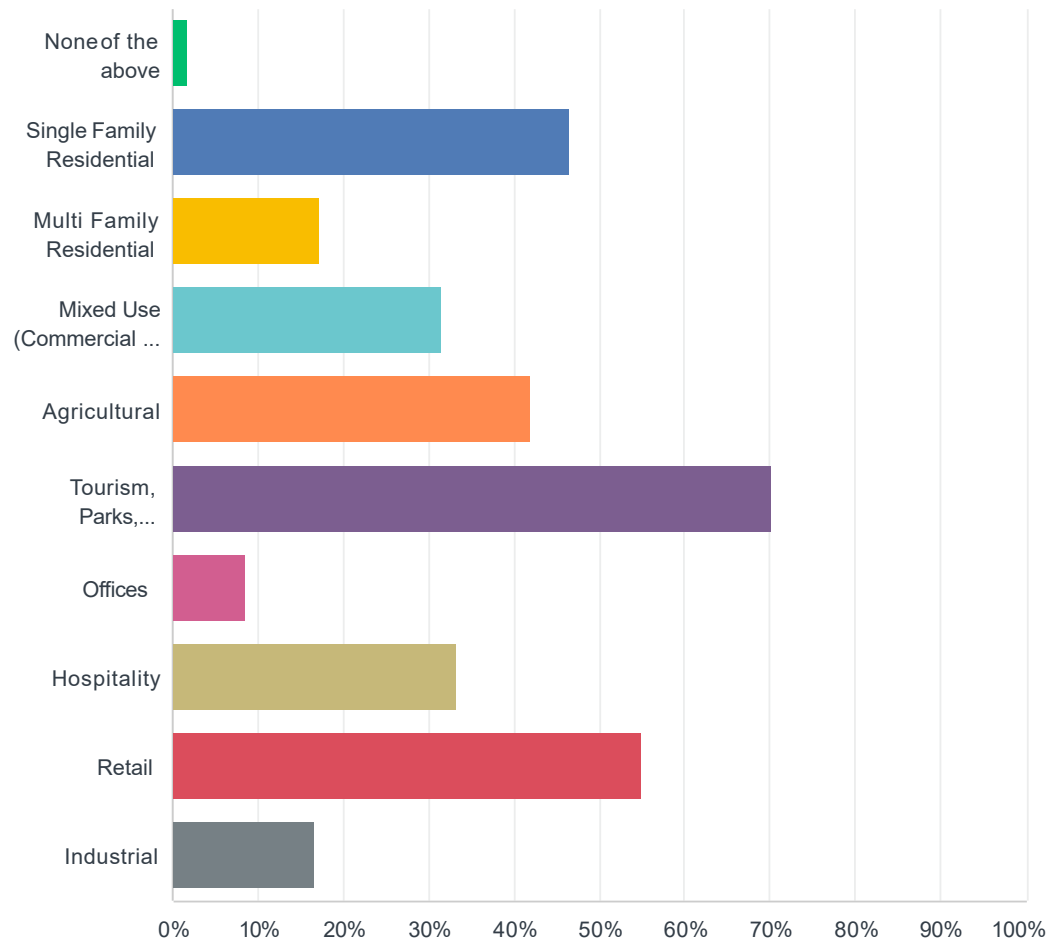
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None of the above	1.63%	8
Single Family Residential	46.53%	228
Multi Family Residential	17.35%	85
Mixed Use (Commercial & Residential)	31.63%	155
Agricultural	42.04%	206
Tourism, Parks, Recreation	70.20%	344
Offices	8.57%	42
Hospitality	33.27%	163
Retail	55.10%	270
Industrial	16.73%	82
Total Respondents: 490		

Q12 The three most important needs of Alexander County are:

Answered: 485   Skipped: 159
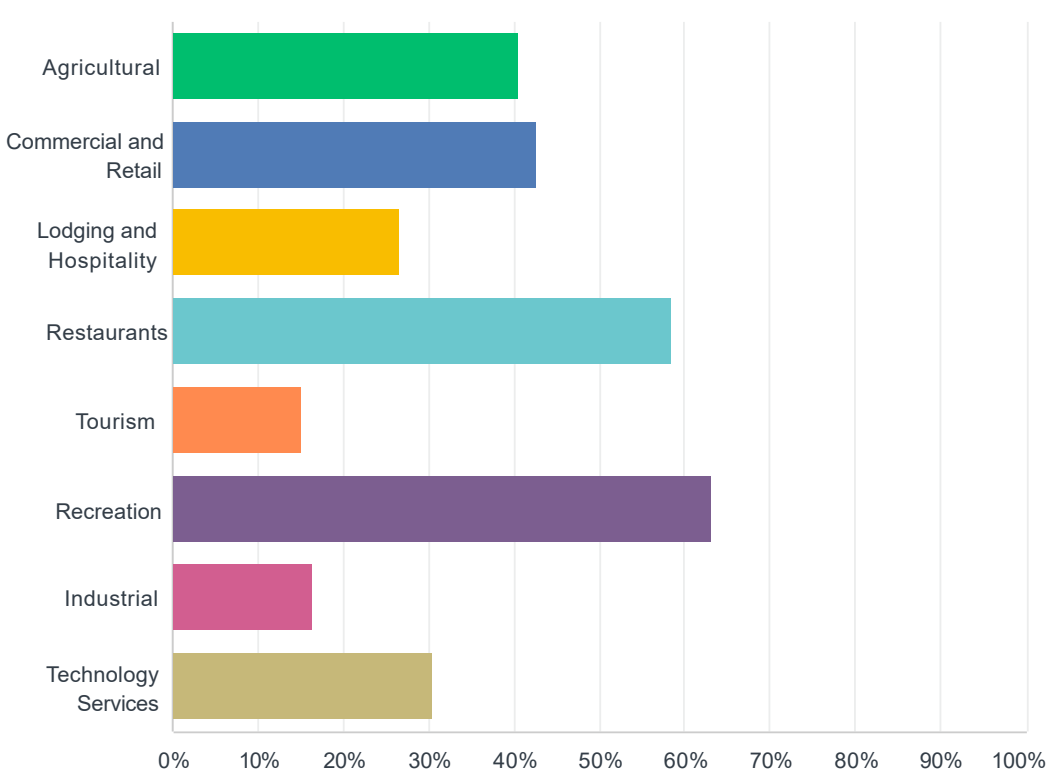
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Agricultural	40.41%	196
Commercial and Retail	42.68%	207
Lodging and Hospitality	26.60%	129
Restaurants	58.35%	283
Tourism	15.05%	73
Recreation	63.09%	306
Industrial	16.49%	80
Technology Services	30.52%	148
Total Respondents: 485		

Q13 If you have a land use you would like to encourage not listed above, list it here.

Answered: 50   Skipped: 594

Q14 If you have a land use you would like to discourage not listed above, list it here.

Answered: 76   Skipped: 568

Q15 What specific roads or intersections do you think NCDOT should improve in Alexander County, and why?

Answered: 245   Skipped: 399

Q16 Do you feel there is a need for additional public transportation?

Answered: 475   Skipped: 169
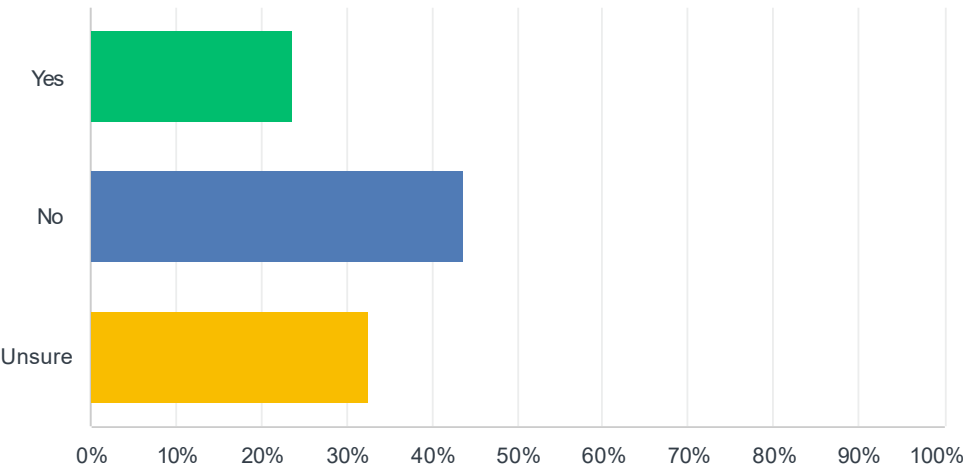
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	23.58%	112
No	43.79%	208
Unsure	32.63%	155
TOTAL		475

Q17 How important is increasing alternative modes of transportation (such as biking, walking trails, etc.) to the future of Alexander County?

Answered: 476   Skipped: 168
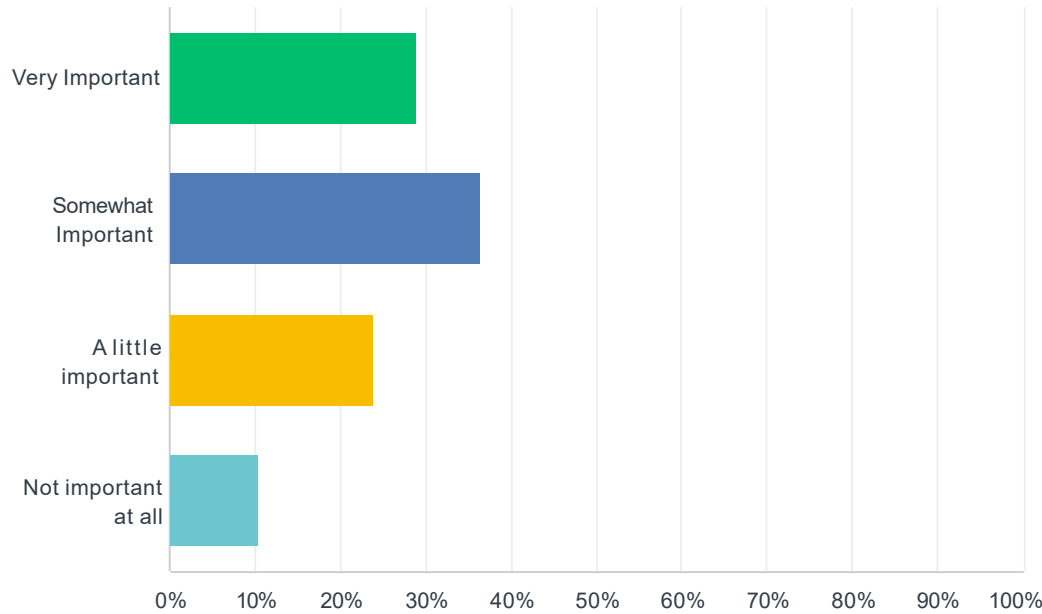
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very Important	28.99%	138
Somewhat Important	36.55%	174
A little important	23.95%	114
Not important at all	10.50%	50
TOTAL		476

Q18 Rank Alexander County's current economic development attributes from greatest strength (1) to greatest weakness. (Click up and down arrows or drag and drop to change priority)

Answered: 398   Skipped: 246
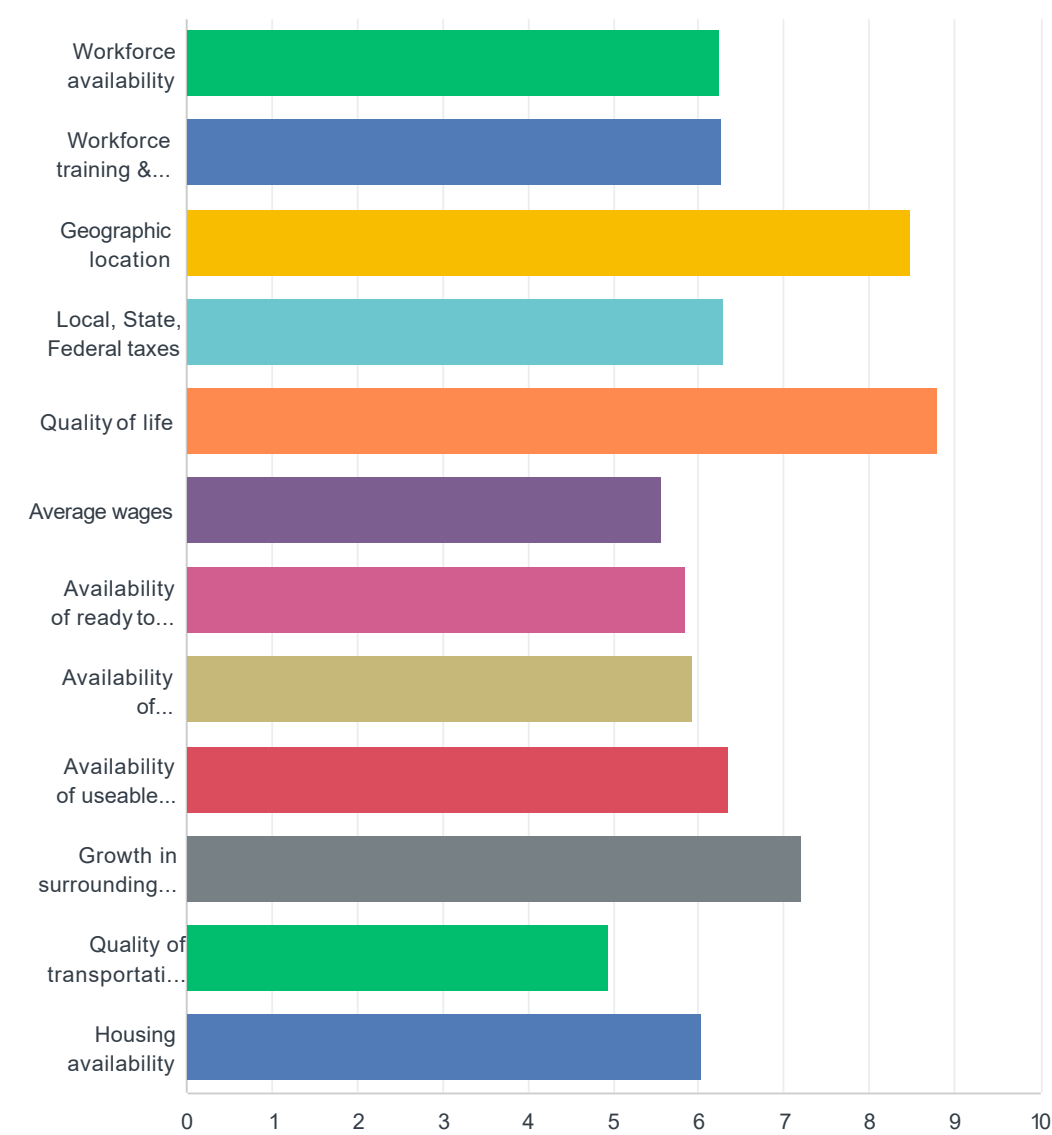
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Workforce availability	4.02% 16	7.04% 28	6.78% 27	9.55% 38	9.55% 38	12.31% 49	9.80% 39	7.29% 29	8.79% 35	10.05% 40	7.54% 30
Workforce training & education	3.77% 15	5.28% 21	8.79% 35	8.04% 32	13.57% 54	8.54% 34	8.79% 35	11.31% 45	9.30% 37	10.05% 40	6.03% 24
Geographic location	24.62% 98	17.09% 68	11.81% 47	5.53% 22	7.29% 29	5.78% 23	5.53% 22	3.77% 15	4.02% 16	5.53% 22	5.03% 20
Local, State, Federal taxes	7.04% 28	6.78% 27	8.54% 34	10.05% 40	8.54% 34	7.54% 30	8.79% 35	6.78% 27	7.79% 31	9.30% 37	9.30% 37
Quality of life	25.13% 100	17.59% 70	9.55% 38	10.30% 41	7.54% 30	8.29% 33	3.77% 15	4.52% 18	3.77% 15	3.02% 12	3.77% 15
Average wages	4.02% 16	6.53% 26	6.28% 25	7.79% 31	8.54% 34	5.78% 23	10.30% 41	5.78% 23	6.78% 27	12.56% 50	14.07% 56
Availability of ready to build Industrial \ Commercial Sites	3.02% 12	5.53% 22	8.29% 33	6.53% 26	5.78% 23	9.30% 37	11.56% 46	13.07% 52	11.31% 45	9.80% 39	9.55% 38
Availability of infrastructure, (water, sewer, electric, natural gas, internet)	5.03% 20	7.04% 28	8.29% 33	5.78% 23	7.04% 28	10.80% 43	8.79% 35	6.28% 25	11.81% 47	9.55% 38	8.04% 32
Availability of useable existing buildings	5.53% 22	7.04% 28	8.29% 33	9.80% 39	9.30% 37	8.54% 34	8.04% 32	10.05% 40	9.05% 36	8.79% 35	10.55% 42
Growth in surrounding counties	13.07% 52	12.06% 48	9.30% 37	11.06% 44	8.29% 33	7.04% 28	4.77% 19	7.29% 29	5.53% 22	3.77% 15	5.78% 23
Quality of transportation options	1.51% 6	1.51% 6	4.77% 19	7.79% 31	7.29% 29	7.29% 29	8.54% 34	15.83% 63	8.79% 35	8.29% 33	14.07% 56
Housing availability	3.27% 13	6.53% 26	9.30% 37	7.79% 31	7.29% 29	8.79% 35	11.31% 45	8.04% 32	13.07% 52	9.30% 37	6.28% 25

Q19 Do you currently work in Alexander County?

Answered: 417   Skipped: 227
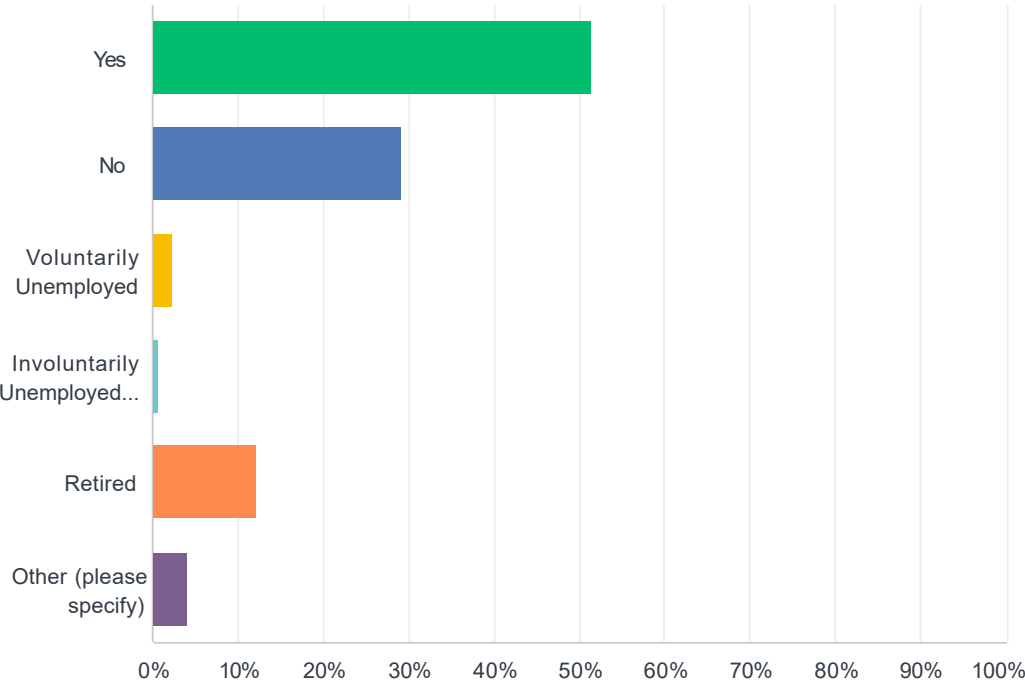
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	51.32%	214
No	29.26%	122
Voluntarily Unemployed	2.40%	10
Involuntarily Unemployed (Seeking work)	0.72%	3
Retired	12.23%	51
Other (please specify)	4.08%	17
TOTAL		417

Q20 If you could add three businesses or services to your community, what would they be and why?

Answered: 313   Skipped: 331

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Business or Service 1:	100.00%	313
Business or Service 2:	87.22%	273
Business or Service 3:	66.45%	208

Q21 What would be the one major suggestion you would make to improve the economic development potential of your county?

Answered: 248   Skipped: 396

Q22 What do you think would improve the quality of life in your community?

Answered: 277   Skipped: 367

Q23 Do you feel there are adequate home ownership opportunities in the County?

Answered: 408   Skipped: 236
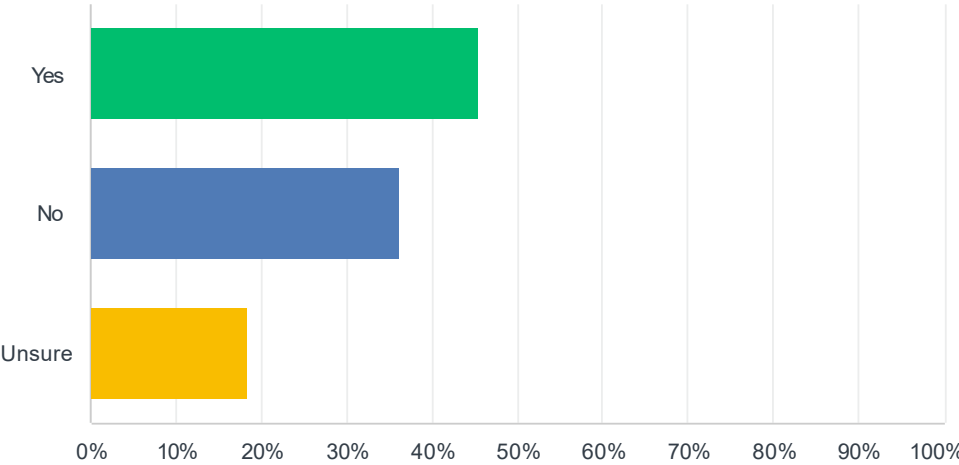
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	45.34%	185
No	36.27%	148
Unsure	18.38%	75
TOTAL		408

Q24 Do you feel there are adequate home rental opportunities in the County?

Answered: 408   Skipped: 236
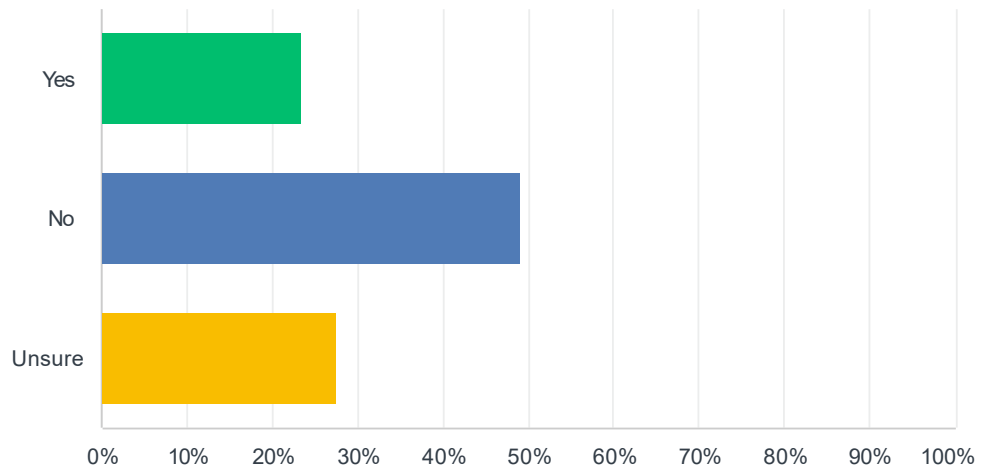
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	23.53%	96
No	49.02%	200
Unsure	27.45%	112
TOTAL		408

Q25 Would you personally choose to rent or own a home if given the option?

Answered: 404   Skipped: 240
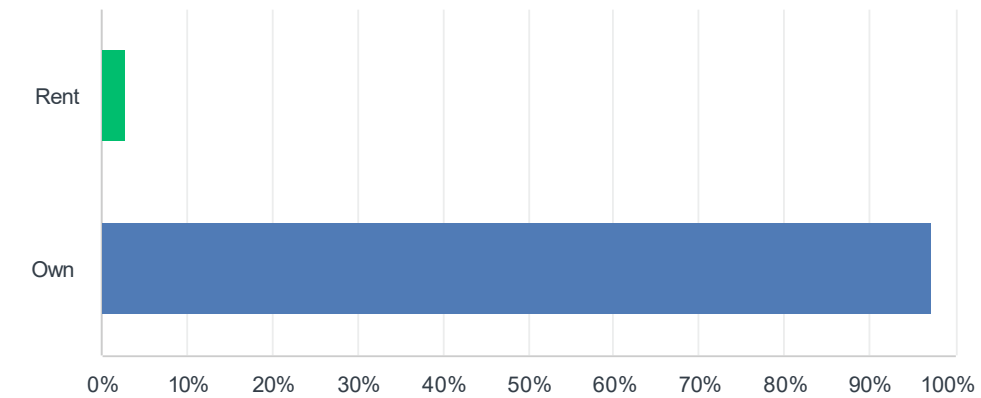
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Rent	2.72%	11
Own	97.28%	393
TOTAL		404

Q26 In your opinion what is the greatest hindrance to housing in Alexander County?

Answered: 370   Skipped: 274
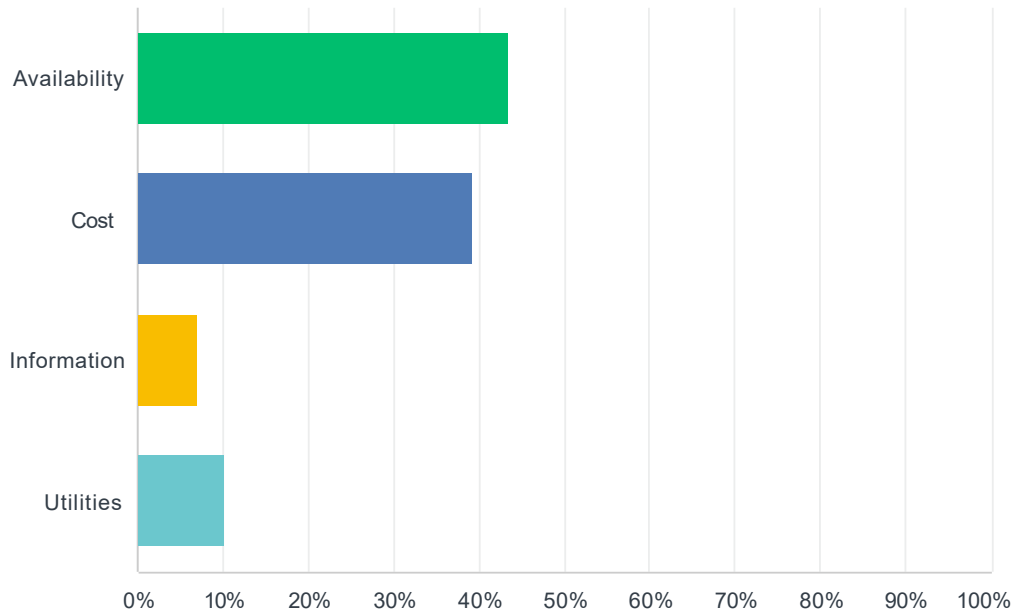
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Availability	43.51%	161
Cost	39.19%	145
Information	7.03%	26
Utilities	10.27%	38
TOTAL		370

Q27 What best describes your primary place of residence?

Answered: 399   Skipped: 245
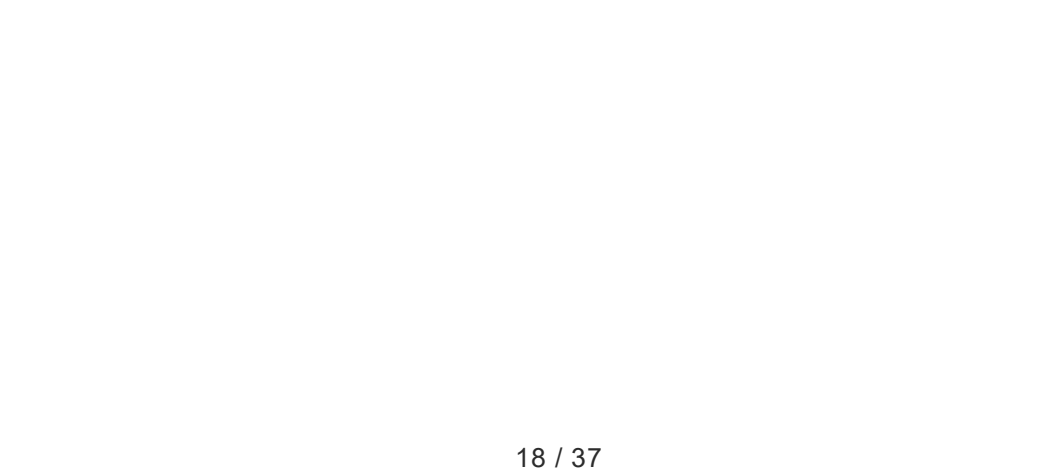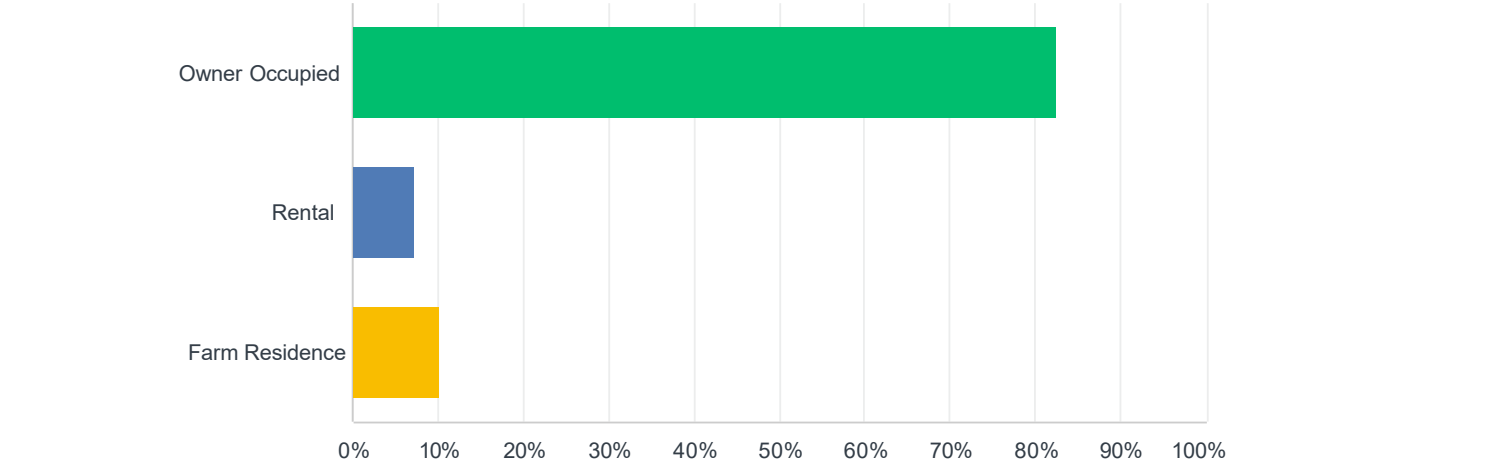
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Owner Occupied	82.46%	329
Rental	7.27%	29
Farm Residence	10.28%	41
TOTAL		399

Q28 How long have you lived in Alexander County? (Number of years)

Answered: 396   Skipped: 248

Q29 Where in the County should new housing be developed?

Answered: 337   Skipped: 307
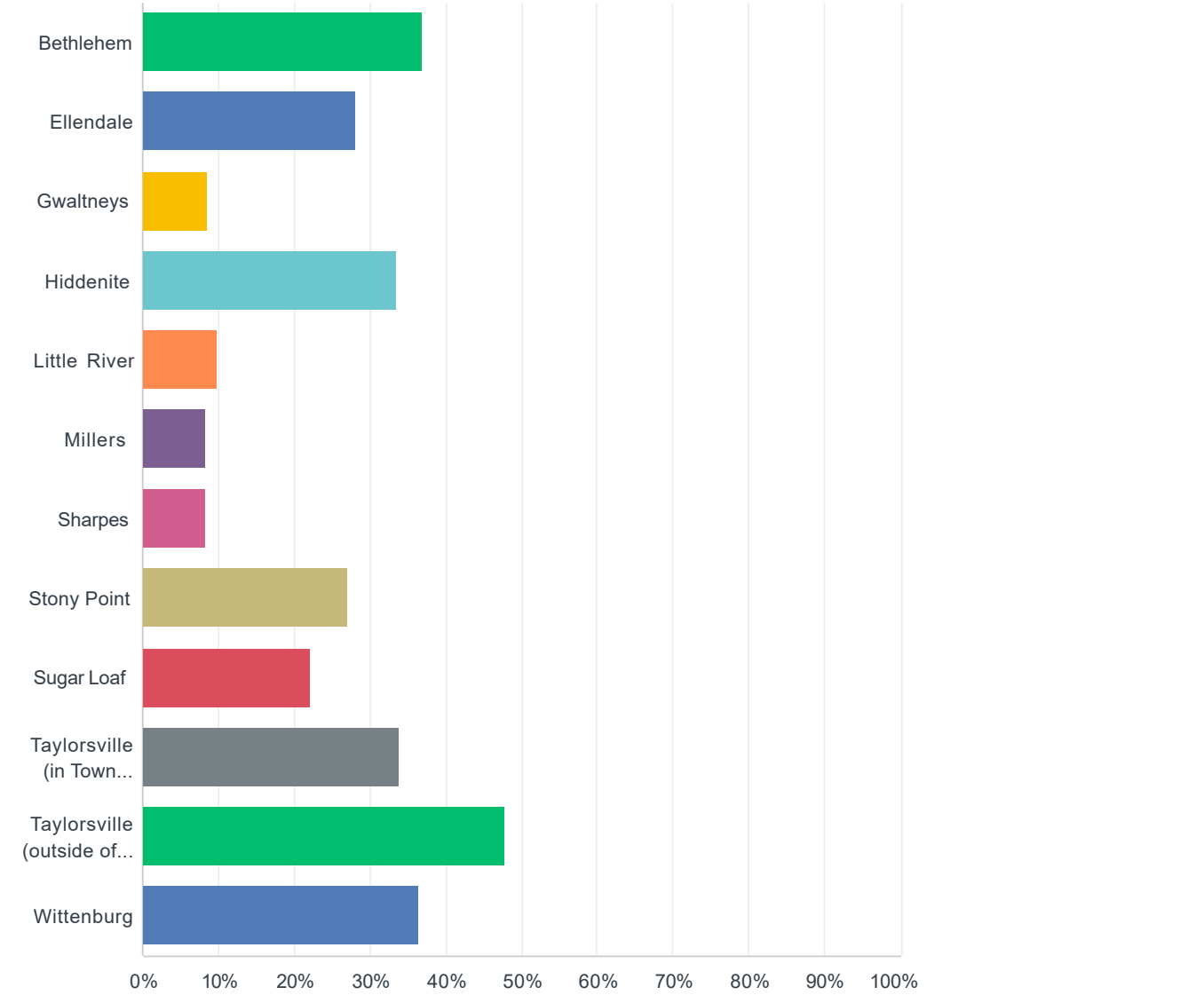
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Bethlehem	36.80%	124
Ellendale	28.19%	95
Gwaltneys	8.61%	29
Hiddenite	33.53%	113
Little River	9.79%	33
Millers	8.31%	28
Sharpes	8.31%	28
Stony Point	27.00%	91
Sugar Loaf	22.26%	75
Taylorsville (in Town Limits)	33.83%	114
Taylorsville (outside of Town Limits)	47.77%	161
Wittenburg	36.50%	123
Total Respondents: 337		

Q30 What kind of housing would you be comfortable with in your area?

Answered: 395   Skipped: 249
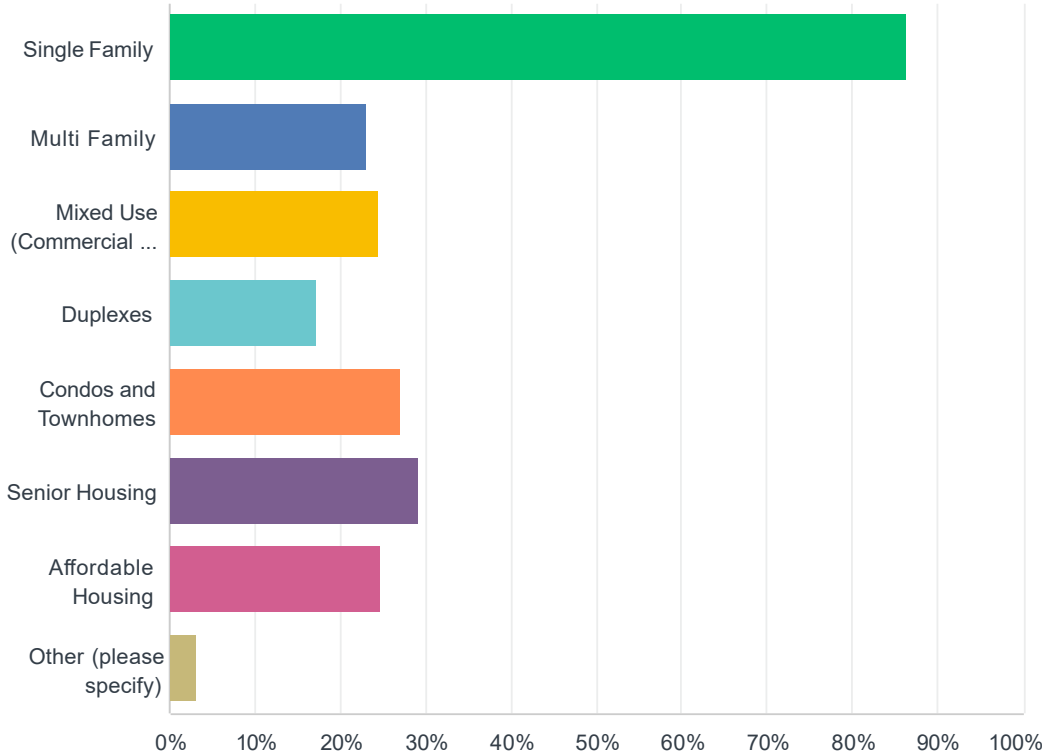
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Single Family	86.33%	341
Multi Family	23.04%	91
Mixed Use (Commercial & Residential)	24.56%	97
Duplexes	17.22%	68
Condos and Townhomes	27.09%	107
Senior Housing	29.11%	115
Affordable Housing	24.81%	98
Other (please specify)	3.29%	13
Total Respondents: 395		

Q31 Are there adequate waste disposal services and convenience center sites in the County?

Answered: 403   Skipped: 241
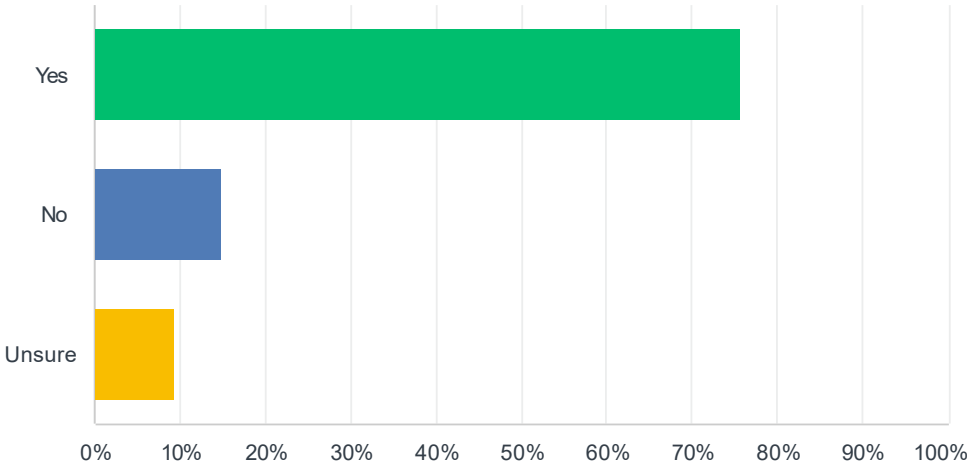
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	75.68%	305
No	14.89%	60
Unsure	9.43%	38
TOTAL		403

Q32 Public water availability is important to the future of Alexander County:

Answered: 405   Skipped: 239
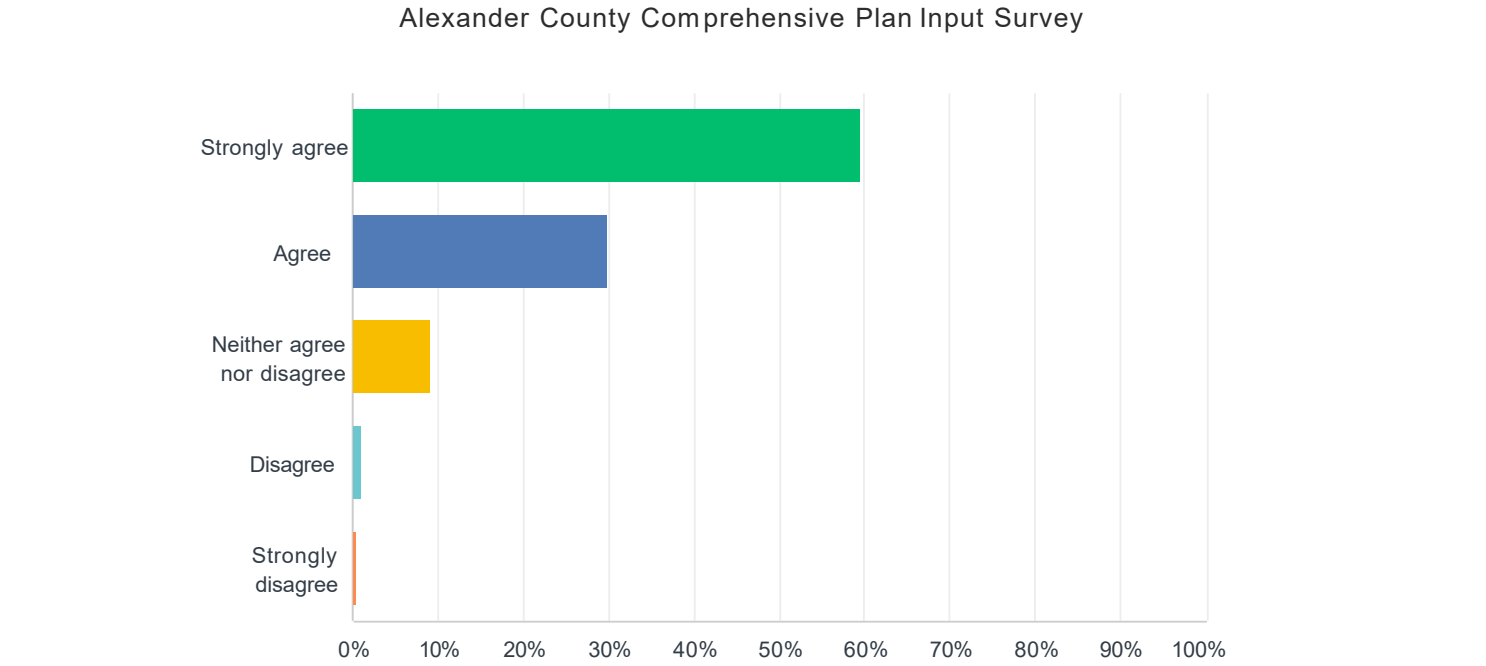
ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Strongly agree		59.51%	241
Agree		29.88%	121
Neither agree nor disagree	9.14%		37
Disagree	0.99%		4
Strongly disagree		0.49%	2
TOTAL			405
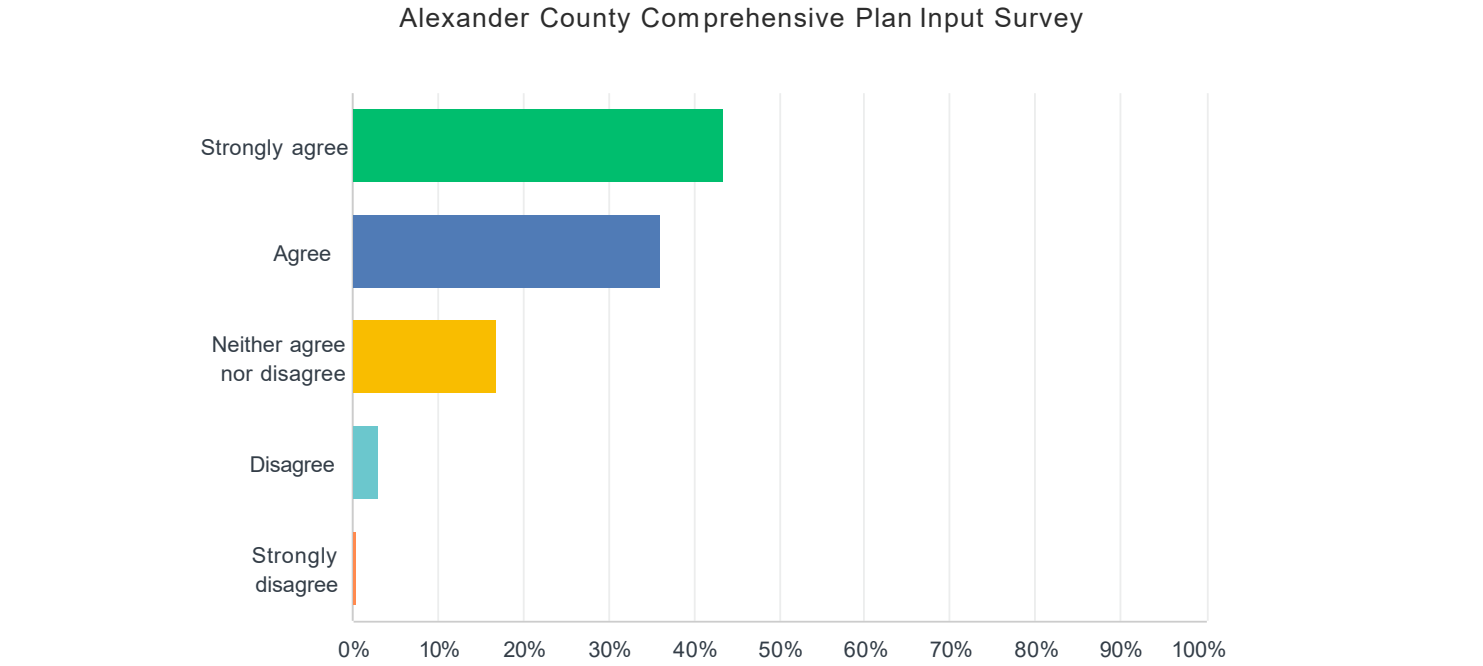
ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Strongly agree		43.56%	176
Agree		36.14%	146
Neither agree nor disagree		16.83%	68
Disagree		2.97%	12
Strongly disagree		0.50%	2
TOTAL			404

Q33 Public sewer availability is important to the future of Alexander County:

Answered: 404   Skipped: 240

Q34 Do you find the following services adequate in Alexander County?
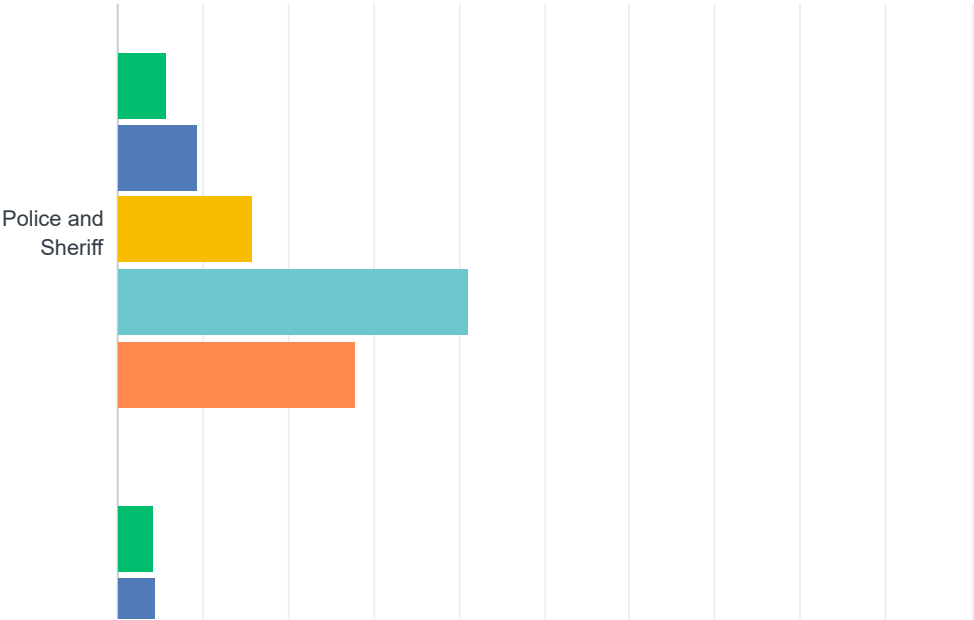
Answered: 404   Skipped: 240

Fire Department

Emergency Medical...

Public Schools

NCDepartment of...

Trash Collection

Collection

County Government...

Public Library

Stormwater and Erosion...

Zoning Regulations
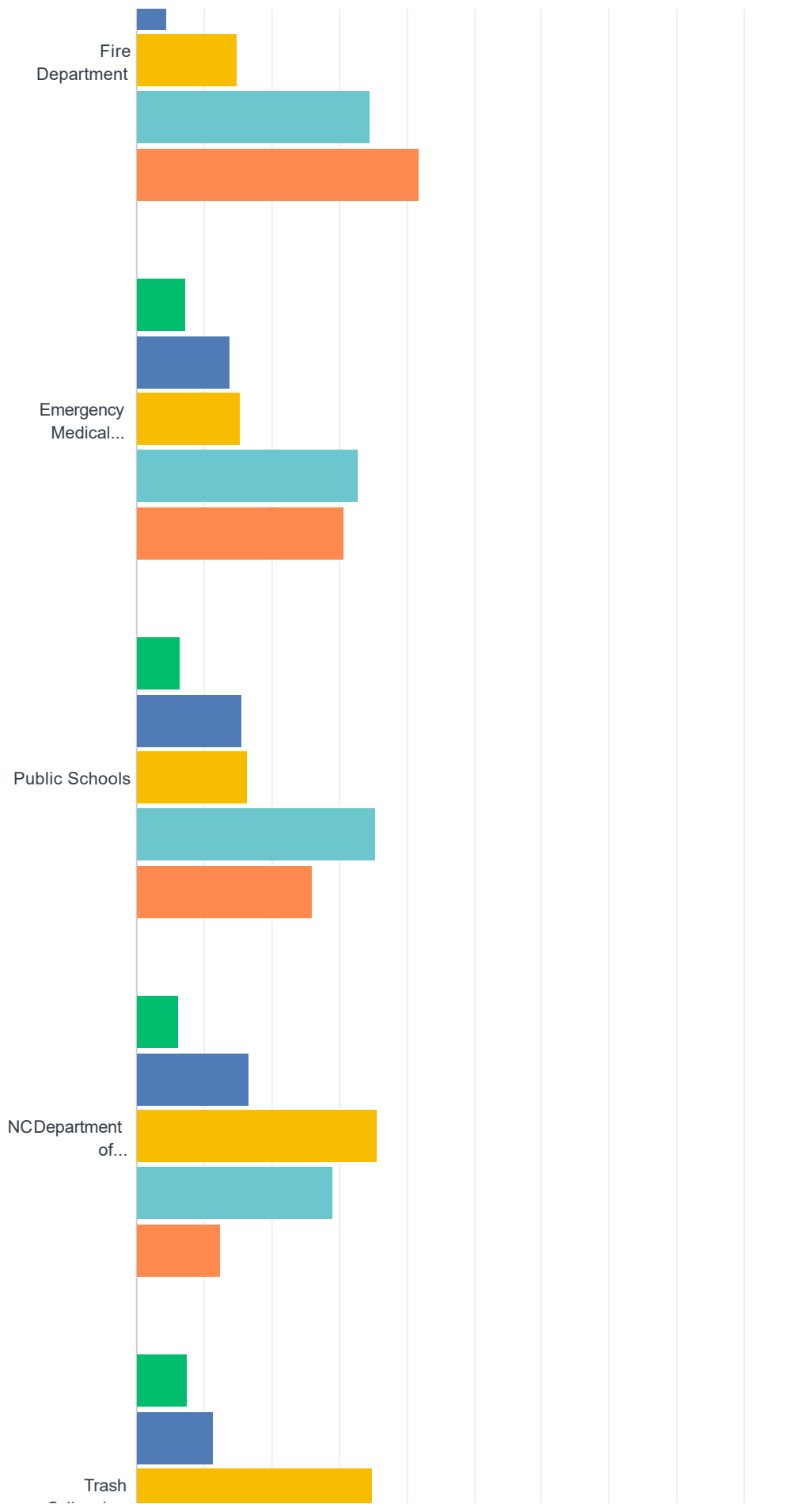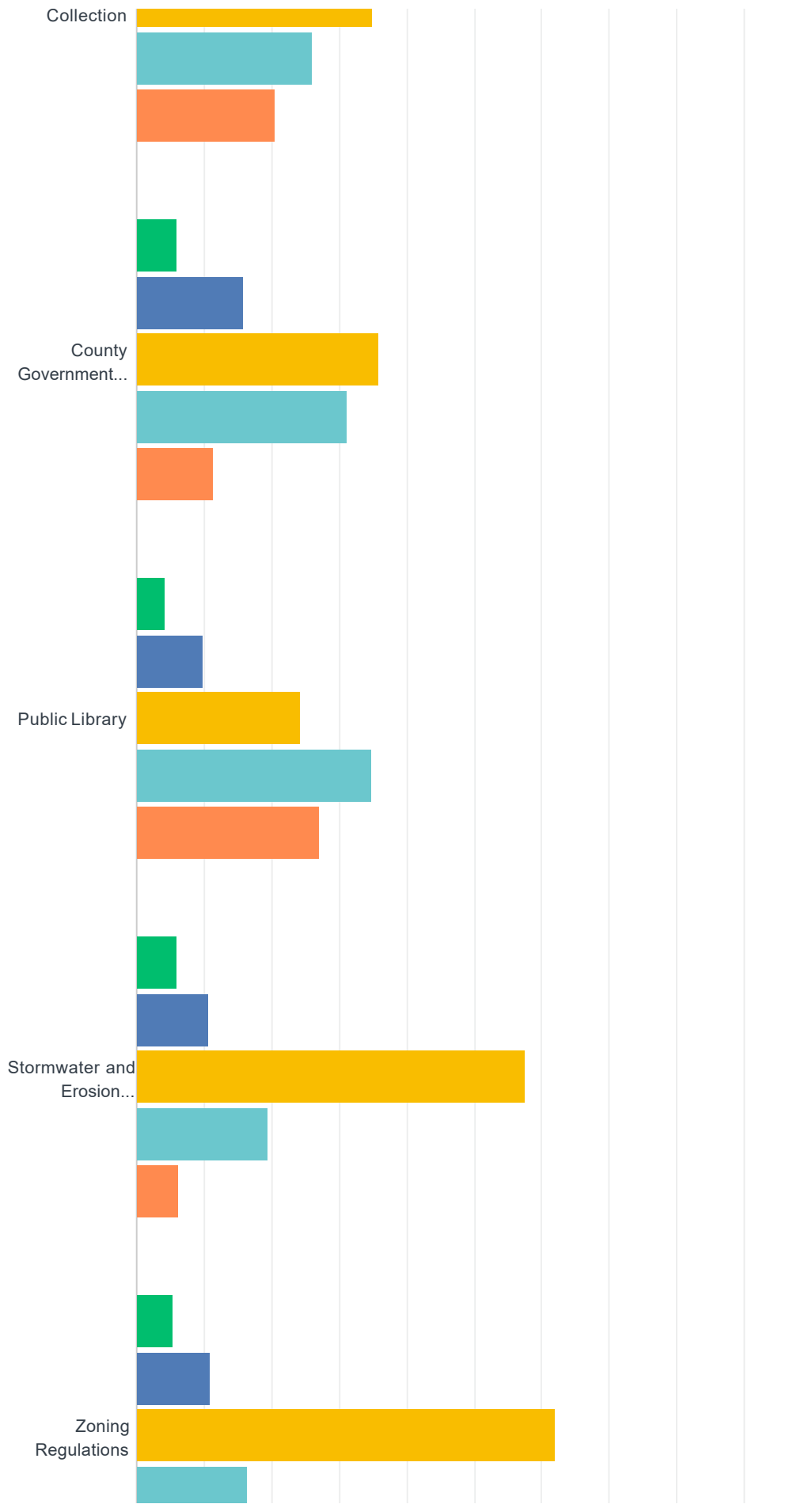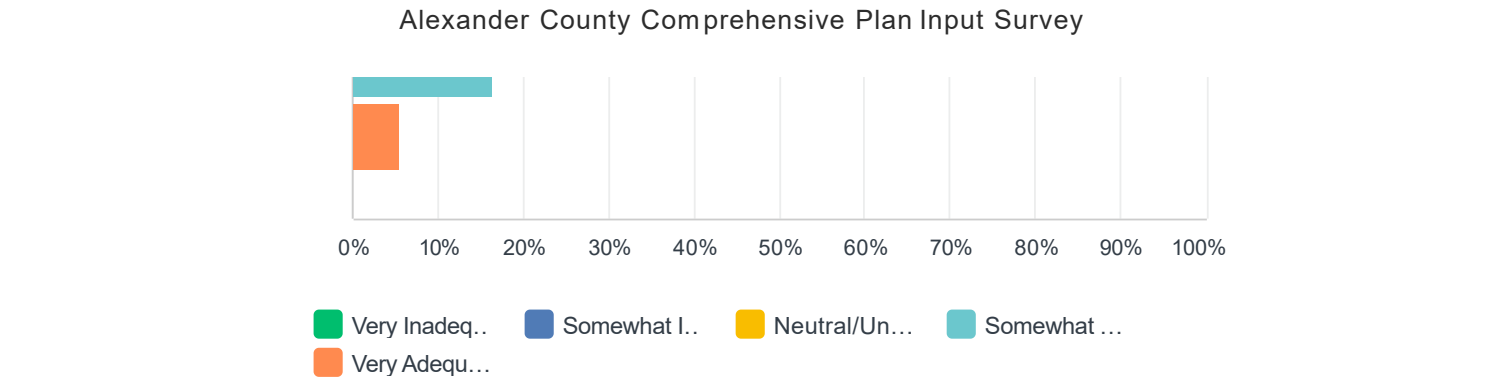
	VERY INADEQUATE	SOMEWHAT INADEQUATE	NEUTRAL/UNSURE	SOMEWHAT ADEQUATE	VERY ADEQUATE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Police and Sheriff	5.74% 23	9.48% 38	15.71% 63	41.15% 165	27.93% 112	401	0.76
Fire Department	4.23% 17	4.48% 18	14.93% 60	34.58% 139	41.79% 168	402	1.05
Emergency Medical Services	7.18% 29	13.86% 56	15.35% 62	32.92% 133	30.69% 124	404	0.66
Public Schools	6.47% 26	15.67% 63	16.42% 66	35.32% 142	26.12% 105	402	0.59
NC Department of Transportation	6.22% 25	16.67% 67	35.57% 143	29.10% 117	12.44% 50	402	0.25
Trash Collection	7.48% 30	11.22% 45	34.91% 140	25.94% 104	20.45% 82	401	0.41
County Government Administration	5.99% 24	15.71% 63	35.91% 144	31.17% 125	11.22% 45	401	0.26
Public Library	4.21% 17	9.90% 40	24.26% 98	34.65% 140	26.98% 109	404	0.70
Stormwater and Erosion Controls	6.00% 24	10.75% 43	57.50% 230	19.50% 78	6.25% 25	400	0.09
Zoning Regulations	5.29% 21	10.83% 43	61.96% 246	16.37% 65	5.54% 22	397	0.06

Q35 Are there any environmental issues of concern in the County?

Answered: 388   Skipped: 256
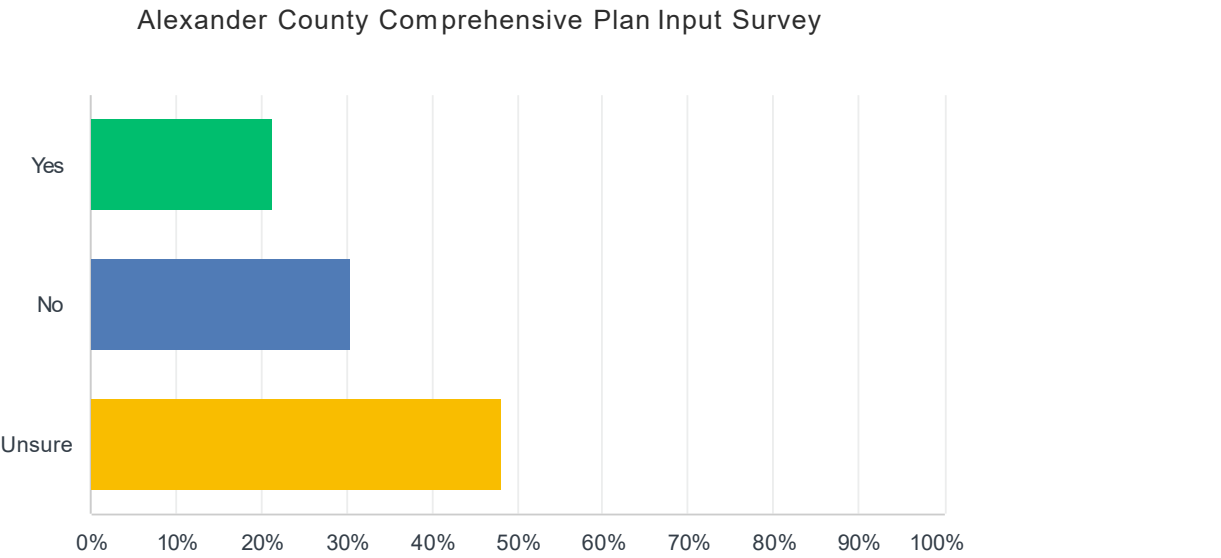
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	21.39%	83
No	30.41%	118
Unsure	48.20%	187
TOTAL		388

Q36 Please explain.

Answered: 84   Skipped: 560

Q37 Are there adequate parks, public waterfront access, recreation, and entertainment opportunities for residents of all ages and groups?

Answered: 395   Skipped: 249
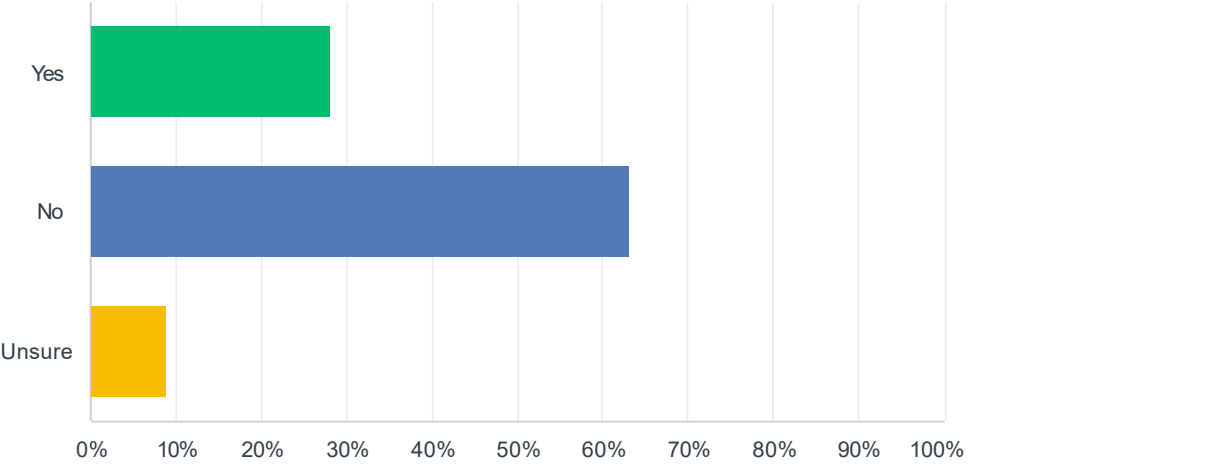
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	28.10%	111
No	63.04%	249
Unsure	8.86%	35
TOTAL		395

Q38 Please explain.

Answered: 187   Skipped: 457

Q39 Do you see a need for more parks in our communities similar to the new Alexander County Courthouse Park in Taylorsville?

Answered: 394   Skipped: 250
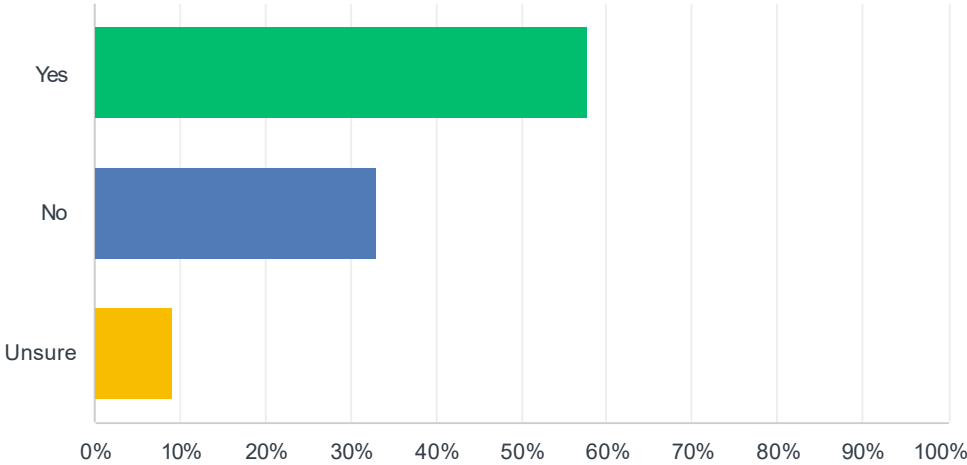
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	57.87%	228
No	32.99%	130
Unsure	9.14%	36
TOTAL		394

Q40 Which natural resources need the most attention in order to improve or maintain the quality of life in Alexander County?

Answered: 351   Skipped: 293
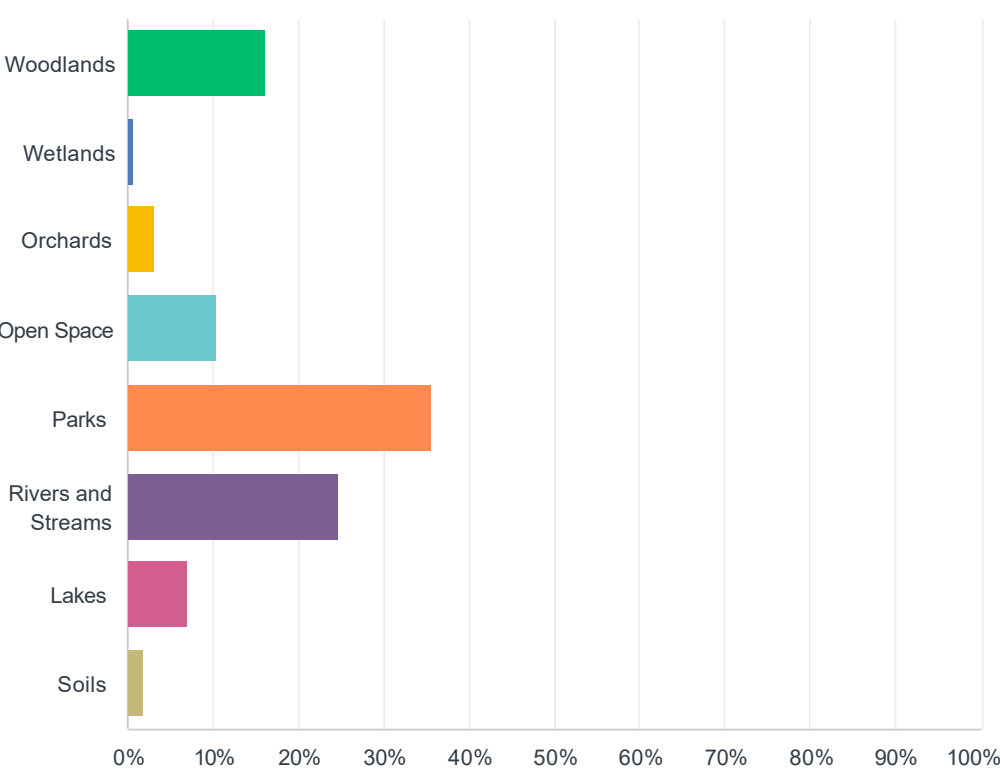
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Woodlands	16.24%	57
Wetlands	0.57%	2
Orchards	3.13%	11
Open Space	10.54%	37
Parks	35.61%	125
Rivers and Streams	24.79%	87
Lakes	7.12%	25
Soils	1.99%	7
TOTAL		351

Q41 What community landmarks are most important to you?

Answered: 161   Skipped: 483

Q42 Are you aware of any historic sites in Alexander County not currently being protected? If so, what are they, and what should be done to protect those sites?

Answered: 72   Skipped: 572

Q43 Would you like to see more of the following cultural resources in Alexander County (check all that apply)?

Answered: 323   Skipped: 321

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Historic Preservation, Museums, and Libraries	44.89%	145
Community Events and Festivals	60.68%	196
Visual and Performing Arts Facilities	30.65%	99
Community Centers	43.65%	141
Sports Facilities and Events	55.11%	178
Total Respondents: 323		
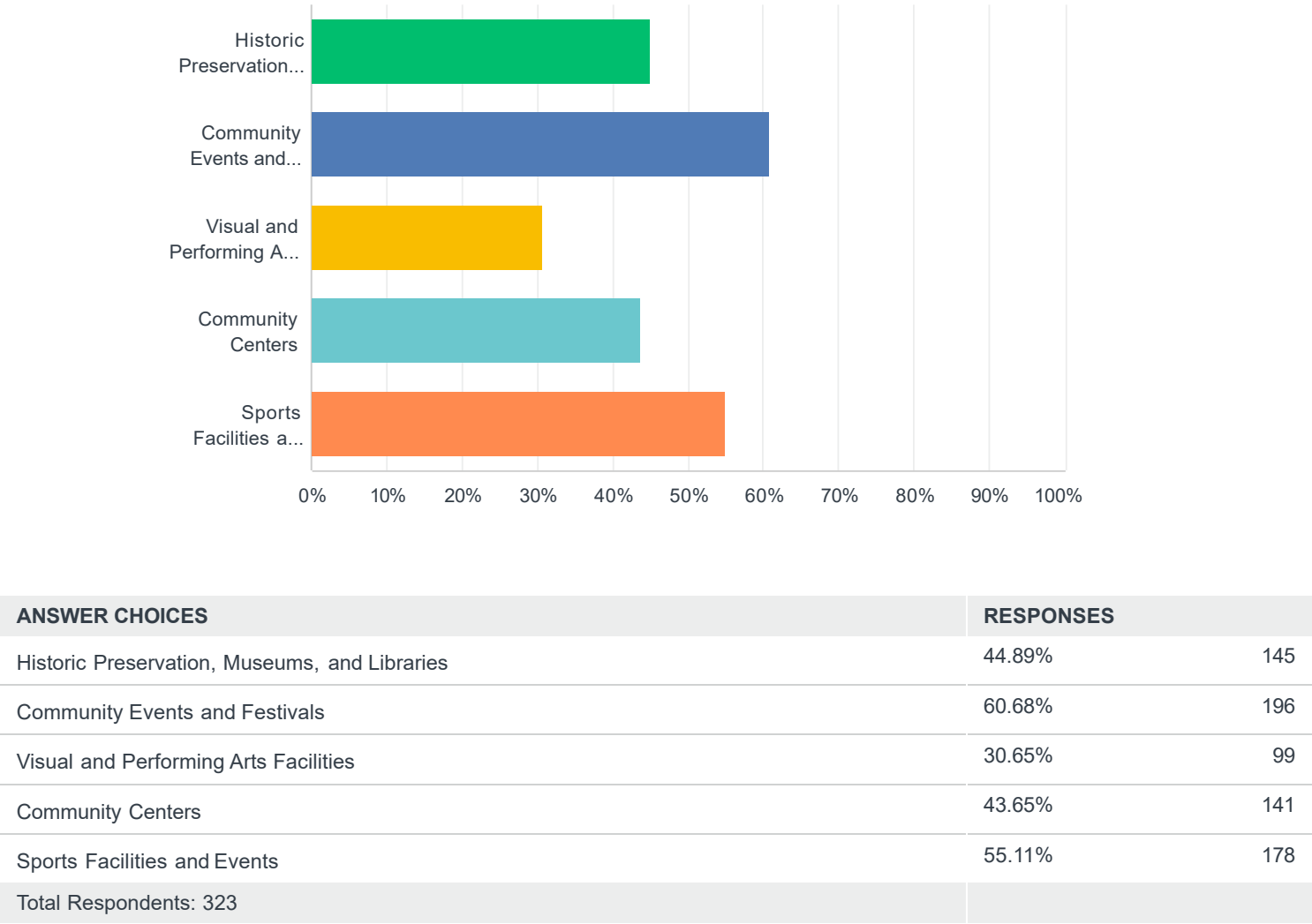
Q44 What community features in Alexander County have the most impact on the County's ability to achieve its "small town feel"? Choose up to three, or none of the above.

Answered: 352   Skipped: 292
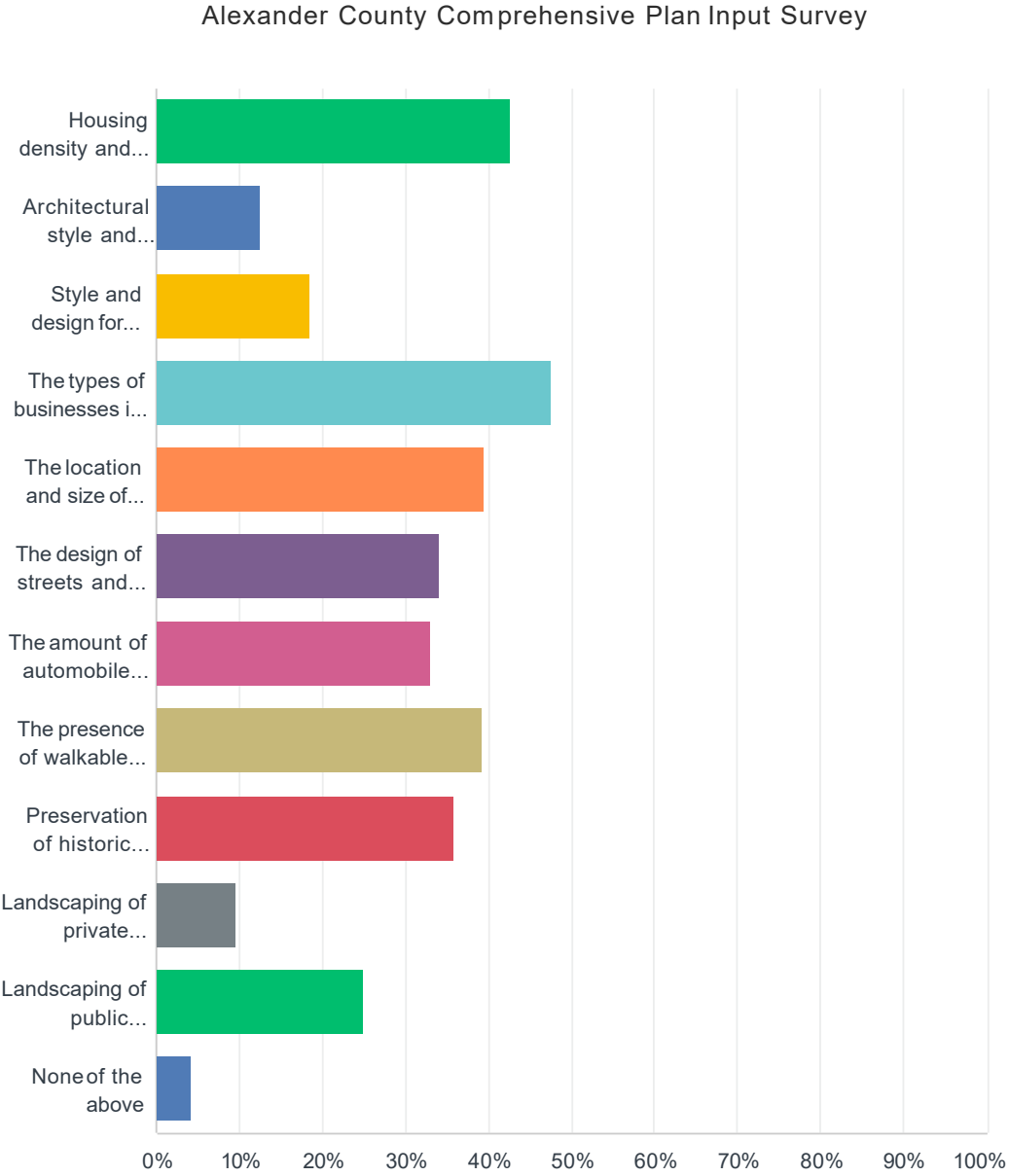
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Housing density and types	42.61%	150
Architectural style and design for housing	12.50%	44
Style and design for commercial uses	18.47%	65
The types of businesses in the County	47.44%	167
The location and size of open spaces in the County	39.49%	139
The design of streets and highways	34.09%	120
The amount of automobile traffic	32.95%	116
The presence of walkable communities	39.20%	138
Preservation of historic buildings and sites	35.80%	126
Landscaping of private development	9.66%	34
Landscaping of public buildings and rights of way	25.00%	88
None of the above	4.26%	15
Total Respondents: 352		

Q45 Why do you choose to live in Alexander County (check all that apply)?

Answered: 345   Skipped: 299
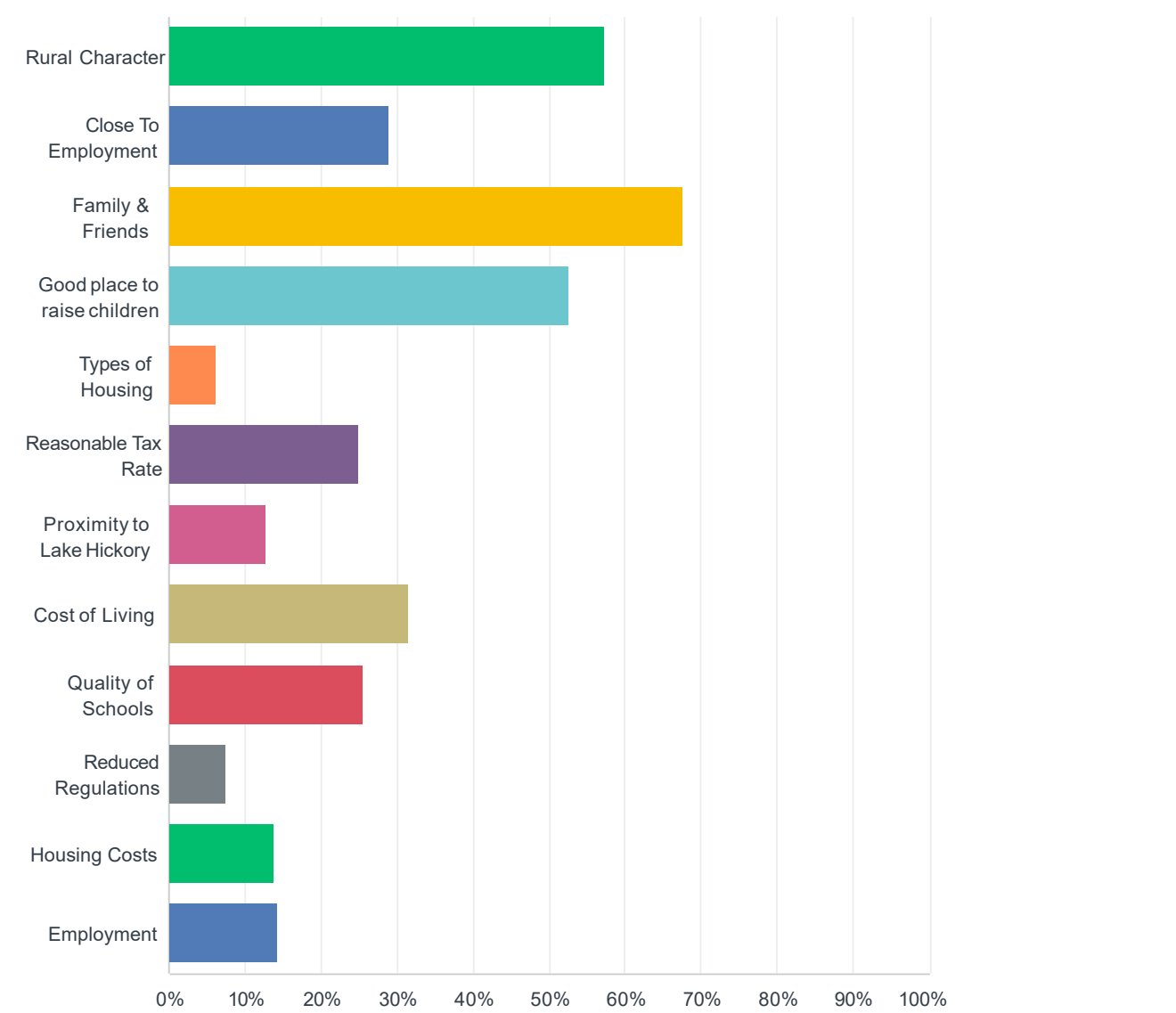
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Rural Character	57.39%	198
Close To Employment	28.99%	100
Family & Friends	67.54%	233
Good place to raise children	52.75%	182
Types of Housing	6.09%	21
Reasonable Tax Rate	24.93%	86
Proximity to Lake Hickory	12.75%	44
Cost of Living	31.59%	109
Quality of Schools	25.51%	88
Reduced Regulations	7.54%	26
Housing Costs	13.91%	48
Employment	14.20%	49
Total Respondents: 345		

Q46 What is your biggest concern about the future of Alexander County?

Answered: 249   Skipped: 395

Q47 What do you think is missing from Alexander County?

Answered: 345   Skipped: 299
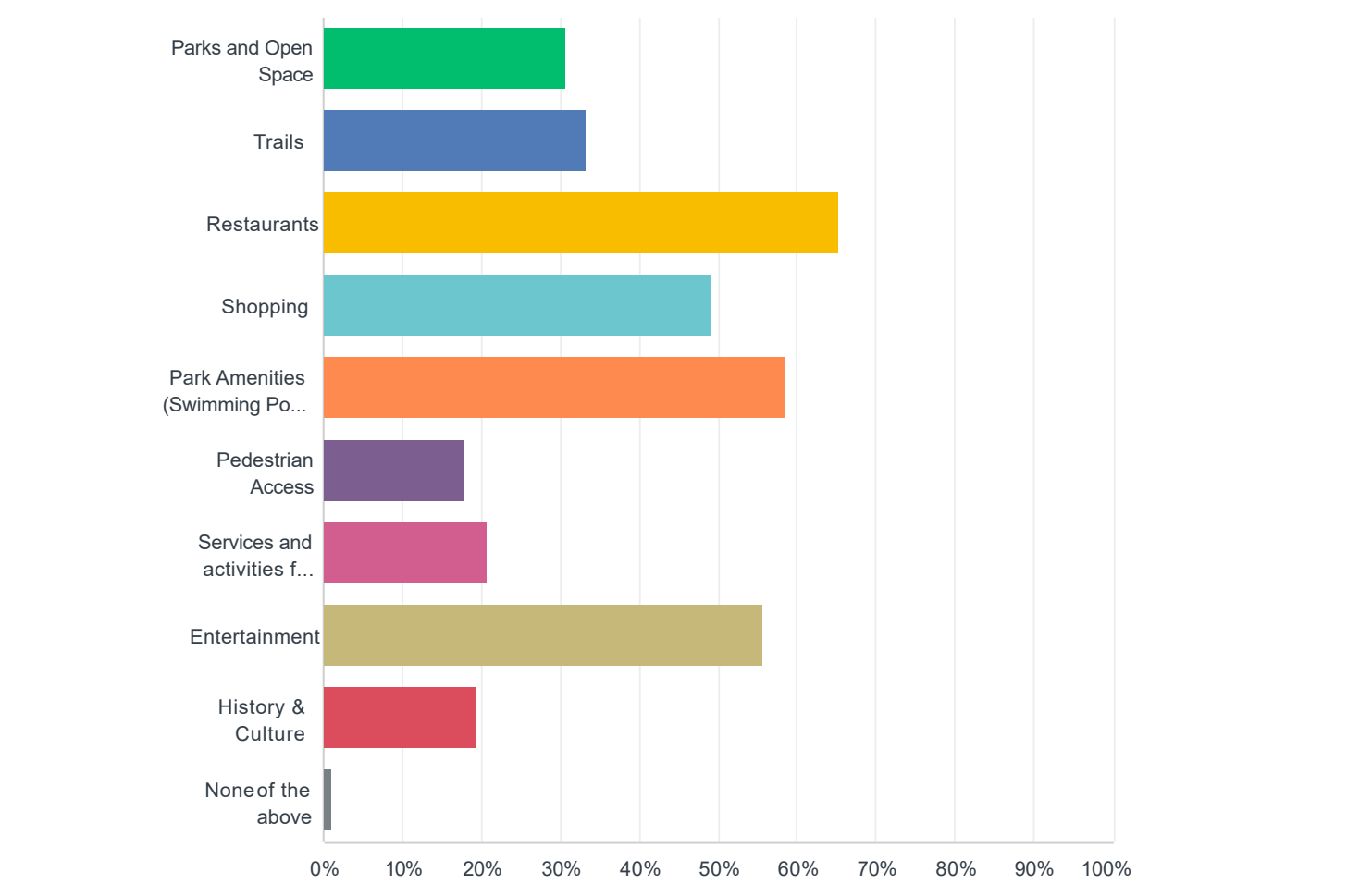
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Parks and Open Space	30.72%	106
Trails	33.33%	115
Restaurants	65.22%	225
Shopping	49.28%	170
Park Amenities (Swimming Pool, Tennis Courts, Ball Fields, etc.)	58.55%	202
Pedestrian Access	17.97%	62
Services and activities for senior citizens	20.58%	71
Entertainment	55.65%	192
History & Culture	19.42%	67
None of the above	1.16%	4
Total Respondents: 345		

Q48 Is there anything you would like to add that you haven't addressed in the questions above?

Are there changes or improvements that should be made to the County's land use regulations?

Open-Ended Response

- Need bonds to revitalize town of taylorsville.
- Update schooling. Update the park, more activities for families.
- Yes. Get rid of all the abandoned mobile homes
- Someone needs to tear down the hospital for more useful for the community.
- I see too many trees taken down from large areas and practically nothing is done in their place - looks like scarred land. Examples are on 127 and Heritage Farm Road.
- We need to focus on bringing life and business to our area before everyone leaves
- Education and better review of development in the special flood hazard areas.
- Prohibit gun ranges in residential areas
- I think farmers clear-cutting land to pay for the properties is sickening. There is far too many open pastures. We dont need more. There should be a limit to how much land is stripped of trees. The tax breaks given for farmers to keep spending their money is leading to them buying up random parcels all over the county, stripping the native vegetation away, and fencing it in for livestock or spraying it with Round-up for crops we dont need. So we all get to be slowly killed by glyconate as it infiltrates the soil and water. The wildlife have nowhere to live and no native plants/grasses to eat.....all so the big farms around here can shirk their tax responsibilities. I prefer to see protected land, tree farms, sustainable agricultural practices. Dumping Round-up on everything and calling it soil/erosion protection is absolutely stupid.
- Everyone and everything should begin each day with the mindset of room for improvement. There is always room to improve. Without improvement there is no growth. When you continue to make the same choices you always get the same results.
- I would like to see more restrictions on multi-unit homes in the Bethlehem area. The facilities (small park, small library, etc) are sufficient for a small community but not a quickly expanding population, and many of us live here because it is NOT as crowded as Hickory.
- You should be able to build something on your on land. Without so many restrictions.
- More sewage access rather than septic.
- Keeping Alexander County "clean" Businesses and residences need to be maintained. The free landfill Saturday and recent shredder, etc. days are so beneficial to the public and encourage proper disposal of materials. Could the free landfill day be offered more often?
- It would be good for homes that have a significant amount of trash in their front yard to clean up the trash
- No one should be allowed to have a build up of trash, vehicles, junk, etc on their land and fines and time allowed to clean up should be enforced in a quicker time.
- Farmland should be preserved more and not allowed to be converted into residential developments, unless they are large acreage tracts. This will protect the green space that has brought people to our county over the years and not overload the peace milled water supply systems that feed our county.

- The county not being able to dictate how I use my private land personally but not commercially. I should not have to obtain a permit for every little thing I do on my property. That's a money racket.
- Could have been a major retirement place but chicken houses everywhere.
- I feel we have enough solar farms. We need room for agriculture.
- More soccer fields
- I'm not sure, but they probably need updating at least.
- Need more greenways, recreation and improved transportation.
- There is a lack of soccer fields in comparison to other ball fields
- I would love to see the addition of a rec center that includes proper indoor basketball courts, a soccer complex (the only sport in the county that has 500+ students that play and no proper field to play on in recreation sports), an indoor swimming facility that our high school students can also use for practice and meets. It would be beneficial for the rec center to include small games such as ping pong, racquetball, etc. An outdoor skate park would be used by many year round.
- Yes. If it's my land I should be able to place the garage wherever I want.
- Add and improve opportunities in the Stony Point and Hiddenite areas.
- Protect the agriculture industry.
- Only in the historical sites. Need to save those areas.
- Better planning for industrial/commercial zoning
- Balance between maintaining small town feel and increasing commercial/retail business
- I feel a person should be able to use or build on their own property in any way they choose.
- Protect forest and streams
- Yes. Enforce current zoning ordinances .
- More parks and public spaces, as well as space for music and outdoor gatherings.
- More mixed commercial residential zones and less single family residential
- Do not infringe on citizens rights. Do not allow foreigners to own land.
- Do not infringe on peoples right to do as they see fit on their land that they have owned for decades !
- We should change zoning to promote multi family and mixed housing to add density to commercial areas. This will increase the housing supply and promote business growth at the same time.
- Yes - they are outdated
- Safer environment.
- Allow manufactured homes to be placed on land more affordable housing options
- I think the old hospital should b tore down an used for a big swimming pool for the high school for swim meets an have for the county to have a county pool
- We need a Soccer complex.
- I am not familiar with the land use laws, but I like Taylorsville's current land use, which appears to me to be primarily agricultural. I would like to see taylorsville remain agricultural. I don't want it to become another Mooresville or Huntersville.
- Safety concerns need to be addressed with the citizens in the county.
- NOT BE AT THE DISCRETION OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS!

- There aren't enough parks. I have to drive to Hickory to take my kids to a playground using their tax money. What do I get for my taxes? Everything goes to Taylorsville
- County needs soccer facilities
- Yes....there needs to be improvements made.
- should be more favorable to density. Also believe we need to have some regulations for shotting guns. Something common sense, like so far away from road/structure.
- How about more restrictions when it comes to burning. this may have nothing to do about county's regulations but the public. I've noticed the burning of materials that from the color of the smoke I can only assume is full of carcinogens. Can the County help some of these folks get the stuff to where it needs to go for either recycling or a safer healthier way to dispose of certain materials
- The county needs dedicated soccer fields!! A soccer complex would be ideal. The county has a very large amount of recreational players for soccer each season that surpasses any other recreational sport numbers.
- No developer should be able to say, or record, that the development will eventually be a "forced" HOA. When a development is "built out". The builder should be allowed to send a notice to all current owners that there will be a meeting, on a date to be set, for all home/property owners to decide if they want to have an HOA. The vote to become an HOA must be based on 80% yes of all owners, not just those present.
- Perhaps commercial endeavors should be restricted to commercial areas and not mingled with residential and agricultural areas.
- As the county's growth along the NC127 corridor increases, it would be wise to institute regulations/guidelines about appearance and safety on artery-facing properties. Junkyards and cars on blocks do not give the right impression of our county and they lower the value of neighboring properties.
- There is always room for improvements.
- Drop all the ridiculous fees for every single thing anyone wants to do to improve their own property.
- Regulate growth
- restrictions that only allow structures to be built in line with a house or behind it (from the road) should be reviewed. This limits the usability of the land.
- The county needs to access the land use regulations and make businesses want to come into the county, large businesses coming into the county will bring more money in and allow for positive growth into the 21st century
- Lands shouldn't be restricted to growth opportunities. When trying to build or grow property zoned incorrectly, paying to have something changed and being required to represent it for review is ridiculous (e.g., changing property along Hwy 127 from residential to highway commercial). We also need more designs to property use restrictions that influences growth where we need it, example being multi family zoning (affordable housing), recreational zones (soccer fields, baseball, softball, etc.), industrial zones, etc. We need infrastructure that supports these zones (e.g., sewer, water, high speed internet, etc). We are so far behind in the county and our growth is uncontrollable at the moment and we need to get ahead of it.
- Same more acreage for farming
- More one on one case flexibility, not one size fits all cases

- Recreation facilities such as family campgrounds, not just a trail or facility like Dusty Ridge Access currently has, but a large family campground along Lake Hickory should be a top priority. Alexander County is the only county along a lake that does not have a family campground with tent sites and RV sites with full electric & water hookups and a waste water dump station. Wilkes, Catawba, Burke, & Caldwell all have family campgrounds although the ones in Wilkes County are operated by the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers. Couldn't Alexander ask for federal funding and operations along Lake Hickory for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to build and operate? That way it would not be such a burden on county taxpayers. We have enough sports ballfields, how about a nice place to enjoy nature, swimming access, and relaxation from the daily grind without having to travel to another county to do so?
- Update zoning based on higher level county growth plans. Don't require every individual to submit re-zoning requests when those could be done in larger batches.
- I took this survey in hopes to: point out the lack of high speed internet through the most rural areas of the county. Get some control on the increasing population, automobile traffic, and decreasing small town feels. Request a public pool and somewhere that is safe for teenagers to hangout/have fun without getting into trouble.
- Less churches, more retail and industry
- Removal of vacant homes after being vacant for 3 years!
- everything is pretty in line... agriculture gets a 90% discount on property taxes, seems a bit high
- Always telling what you can do or not do !
- More intensive visioning through regulation, and adherence and impetus on following said visioning.
- Improvements are needed on existing land being used by the county and town. Existing property's owned by our municipalities are looking run down and dilapidated.
- We could use more restaurants in Bethlehem. And some shops.
- County needs to quite utilizing leased property and utilize the property owned or sell the property if it will not be utilized.
- No Gun Range!!!
- promote mixed use, encourage affordable housing
- Add more public restrooms like the Portland Loo public restroom

If you have a land use you would like to encourage not listed above, list it here.

Open-Ended Response
- We need a Greenway in Alexander County along the river from hwy 64/90 Bridge to hwy 16 bridge...is possible location
- Hospital
- More available apartments and housing
- Elder care. Child care. Homeless shelter for bathing, safety checks for mental illness
- More protected unviolated natural habitat land.
- Recreation for our special needs community
- Leisure entertainment

- Greenway trail
- Wildlife preservation
- A venue for events
- Public Schools
- We need public facilities that support outdoor recreation such as soccer and basketball. We also need an indoor aquatic facility.
- We need more opportunities for families to move to the Northeast part of our county.
- access to reliable internet
- Quality restaurants and Theatre (non-school property) to bring in outside music and entertainment
- Wineries
- Solar energy production, organic farming
- Bowling alley
- A facility dedicated towards soccer and other sports outside of baseball and softball.
- A facility dedicated towards soccer and other sports outside of baseball and softball.
- Parks/open public space, as well as a few more social gathering places such as bars, music venues, etc.
- I want to Encourage a walkable city with multi family housing. Research shows it makes residents happier and healthier
- We need up to date recreational complexes!
- Neighborhoods
- Sports/Soccer Complex for the community.
- Soccer complex
- Soccer complex
- Traditional single family subdivisions.
- Wildlife Zones, Protected Areas
- A sheriff's sub-station in Bethlehem. High growth, lots of traffic with more to come.
- Need to work on the infrastructure, access to high speed internet, water/sewer etc
- Public Swimming Pool
- Soccer fields
- Sell it back to private citizens.
- A public pool would be great.
- Tiny house dwelllings approved
- More things to do as a family with kids
- A rural gun range so my next door neighbor won't target practice for 4 solid hours like he did on Sunday, May 7, 2023. I have adrenal gland cancer & my daughter works 2nd shift at Craftmaster Furniture and someone shooting their gun almost every day of the week & weekend drives me nuts! I don't feel good anyway due to radiation treatments & chemotherapy!
- Public pool, hotel
- Less churches, more retail and industry
- Nature and Wildlife preservation if it doesn't fall under "parks"
- Education

- Take a page from our surronding counties and invest in parks, bike and mountain bike trails and social districts.

If you have a land use you would like to discourage not listed above, list it here.

Open-Ended Response

- Mobile home parks, chicken houses in residential areas, businesses that are an eyesore on main roads
- Multifamily
- Churches
- I encourage all growth for the county
- Do we need another Starbucks, really? And at an already busy congested intersection.
- Gun ranges
- Sick of farmers stripping acres and acres of land for their own greed and poisoning everything with Round-up. No more chicken houses on wells. Those are inhumane to poultry and completely decimate the water table.
- County buying land and not using
- Hugh Apartments complex
- Less industrial, more inviting.
- Housing Developments
- Developers building housing development with cookie cutter houses right on top of one another
- Solar farms
- Trailer parks
- Houses,
- Solar and wind farms
- Would not like to see housing development behind Wittenberg Springs subdivision!
- There's more churches than people in this county. Please no more churches
- Churches, laundry mats
- No thrift-type stores
- Retirement centers
- Solar panels and wind farms
- Residential, multi family. Without proper utilities, etc. in place, it causes concern. Current example, the apartment complexes on 127 south before the Catawba County Bridge. Will there be a stoplight for those going southbound that fly through that area allowing safe left hand turns. And what happens when the expansion of 127 occurs?
- low cost multi unit housing or overcrowded single family
- multi family low income housing
- Extensive use of toxic chemicals in farming
- Pig farm
- We have enough farm land, and industrial space is not conducive to the small town feel of AC.

- poultry farms and anything else that contaminates our ground water and streams
- poultry farms and anything else that contaminates our ground water and streams
- No apartments
- Multi family residential
- No lodging.
- I vehemently oppose housing developments.
- solar "farms"
- Bars
- Multi family residential
- Solar farms. Not taxable
- Mobile home parks, churches
- Churches and housing development
- Cluster or high density subdivisions.
- HOA developments
- Discourage the abandonment of structures. Give a timeline for removal/repair.
- It doesn't need to try to turn into Hickory or Charlotte! That is why a lot of people love the county!
- Manufacturing facilities that emit smells
- Resident uh
- Bars
- Government should not own land.
- Chicken Farms
- No more bars. Main street is already full of drunks. Let's not have more.
- Church
- No big name hotels
- Churches
- Gun target practicing in a sub-division where numerous homes exist! At the very least, limit it to 1 hour per day!
- Less churches, more retail and industry
- No more churches.
- no more multi family units
- Low trip production Highway retail and Dollar Generals.
- school, churches, parks and libraries
- Schools, libraries, parks, churches
- Highly discourage high capacity housing developments. Do not become like Iredell County.
- Low income housing
- Solar farms
- Anymore Prisons
- Trailer parks
- No more residential. Our county will be overcrowded and we do not have the capability to accommodate the needs of public safety with the influx of residents. It takes away from the small town feels.
- Low income housing

- Fast Food Restaurants
- Gun range
- retail over industrial. We don't want the county resources being exploited

What specific roads or intersections do you think NCDOT should improve in Alexander County, and why?

Open-Ended Response

- 4 land 64/90
- Rocky Face Church Road upkeep due to the fact that it leads to the park. The intersection off of Hwy 16 to Vashti Rd and Daniels Lumber.
- School entrance/exits - turning lanes, stop lights, etc. - safety reasons
- Intersection at Millersville Baptist Church coming out of the church. This is a dangerous intersection.
- Intersection of Millersville Road and Hwy 16 south. Very hard to enter Hwy 16 from Millersville Road.
- NC127
- Hwy 90 E and W, Hwy 16 and Hwy 64
- Hwy 127
- Millersville and 16. It's a dangerous intersection
- Paving Robinette Road
- Intersections near Hiddenite elementary blockages from trees tend to be more dangerous than most. Overall very well constructed roads and minimal road wear
- Chigger Ridge and 127. The intersection by Evans Drug is in need of a Left arrow out of Chigger Ridge.
- Millersville & Hwy 16 - way too many cars on both roads trying to get out, Traffic signal. Pave County Home Road for detours if needed
- Smith Farm Road, it's horrible and dangerous.
- Hwy 127, Hwy 16
- Lentz Road. It is full of potholes.
- Hunter Bridge Rd. People speed up & down this rd. I think speed bumps should be installed.
- Intersection of 64 and Boston road.
- 127 and Rink Dam - see above. Easier, less complicated access to 321.
- You need a stop light at Valley & Wendy's before someone gets hurt. Lose the light by Arby's. We need to keep our roads in much better repair
- Intersection of Millersville and Hwy 16. How many people are we going to let die at that intersection before we do something???
- Hwy 127, Hwy 16
- 127
- Work on paving the many dirt roads that are dead end but yet school busses must travel and turn around
- 127 and Rink Dam needs a green arrow to turn onto rink dam rd   127 widened

- NC 127 & Rink Dam Rd.
- Robinette Rd! Up the hill across from Suncrest water park! It needs paving! It ruts out so bad with all the motorcycle trailers traveling through and when it rains it makes it worse! I cannot keep my vehicles lined up for this!
- Millersville/Hwy 16
- 16 south at Millersville needs a traffic signal.
- 64-90 Safety Beautician
- Widen 16   Millersville and 16 intersection traffic light
- Hwy 127 and 64/90 needs a light. Too many people run the stop sign. Entrance from West Middle School to Hwy 127. Too congested in Am and Pm.
- Goble road and Hiddenite Church road intersection.   Goble road and Sulphur springs road intersection
- Every intersection on Hwy 64 especially in the eastern end of Alexander County needs stop lights.
- Intersection of Church Rd and Rink Dam Rd needs a stop light due to school traffic
- 16 & Millersville
- There needs to be a left turn arrow headed southbound on 127 at the intersection of 127 and Rink Dam Rd.
- Bethlehem school rd and 127. Due to people not being able to turn onto theses two roads is very difficult especially during morning drop off and afternoon pick up.
- Church Rd
- All of them.
- The intersection of 127 and rink dam road needs a protected left turn. The intersection of rink dam road and Wittenberg springs needs something? Maybe a traffic light. There are lots of accidents there. I haven't noticed a decrease with the decreased speed limit (although I greatly appreciate the lower speed limits - thank you).
- Hwy 127 is dangerous.
- Hwy 16 and Church Road
- Millersville & HWY 16 needs a light or round about. Many accidents have occurred there. Not sure about others.
- Hwy 127
- Paul Payne Store Rd is too narrow and painters with paving company simply painted around crumbling edges. Millersville Rd had a lot of heavy industrial traffic with speed always an issue.
- Widening of highway 127 and 16
- Intersection of Golf Course Lane and 64/90. Lots of horrible accidents happen here and many near misses.
- Sidewalk continuity in many places around Taylorsville
- Some of the roads in the rural communities
- Westbound traffic on Main Street like to turn right on red heading toward Hwy 16 North whenever they don't have the right-of-way.
- Old mountain road, needs a bike path, too many people ride bikes and I've seen many near misses
- Hwy 16

- Paynes dairy. It's used daily for trash in and out of county and residents need a better road and some help from the county to pick up all the trash left by users
- The intersection of Hwy 16 and Millersville Rd. Many accidents have occurred at this intersection.
- NC 16, 127,
- 127 at Bethlehem School....needs a stop light during school session and a right hand turn lane from Heritage Farm road onto 127 in Bethlehem
- NC 16 S from Catawba County to Highway 64 NC 127 from Catawba County to Icard Ridge Rd at West Alexander Middle.
- Hwy 16 from the river dam to the Valero gas station. Too much traffic and accident. People speed to much and we have kids and pets. And the traffic is heavy during clock out time for people who come out of precision materials.
- Hwy 16/ Millersville
- Stoplights in downtown need to be adjusted to shorter waits going thru town.
- Highway 16 leading into Alexander from Catawba County. This is a major roadway that I believe needs to be widened and worked on to provide access to and from our county.
- Millersville/16
- Hwy 90, and Hwy 16. School buses travel these roads during the school year. The roads, in some places, are very narrow. Two large vehicles meeting, especially a bus, is extremely dangerous.
- Definitely Rink Dam and Hwy. 127. This is SUCH a dangerous intersection!!
- Intersection of Hwy. 127 and Rink Dam left turn needs a green arrow. Much more traffic coming through now with recent improvements (new gas station, Vault, etc.).
- The intersection at county home road needs a light, it is so dangerous to turn out there!
- NC Hwy 127 & Bethlehem School Road- lots of traffic at school times NC Hwy 16 & Millersville Road- lots of traffic at school times, will decrease some when MCA moves, but will need to address Hwy 16 and intersection with new school then too
- The intersection of 1st Ave SW and 2nd ST. SW should be a 4-way stop.
- 1st Ave SW and 2nd street SW should be a foru way stop.
- 127 and rink dam road. Also 127 widening.
- Millersville Road and Highway 16 South.
- Land Cemetery lane services 9 homes and chicken houses (including 3 off of land cemetery on all uphill drive). THe road is state maintained however, it is dirt and when it is wet has hazardous conditions and is very slick. There is a curve on that road that has caused accidents/near accidents due to the narrowness of the road and it being a blind curve. The potential to collide with a chicken truck with my kids in the car on the way to school is not a great start to the day. (This may be a state matter, not sure.)
- Rink dam & 127
- Main street
- I grew up in Iredell and work there. Alex Co does an awesome job compared to them. Roads are in great shape, in my opinion. Need a traffic light at Millersville and Hwy 16. Also, need the "be prepared to stop flashing signs before the traffic light at Millersville at Hwy 64 like they have at 64 and Old Mtn.

- 191 Lackey Rd, Hiddenite It is a dirt road and is often times in poor shape. It is dangerous when people that don't live on the road drive through at high speeds sideways.
- The intersection at Millersville and 16 because they now have a school. Also they have had a lot of accidents at this spot over the years.
- Liledoun is dangerous in the curves.
- SMITH GROVE CHURCH ROAD
- Country roads need signs, houses/mailboxes need numbers!
- Liledoun & Church Rd and Corner store and liledoun
- Millersville and HWY 16
- 127 - main road to Hickory, interstate, 321, etc
- A Light at Millersville and 16 intersection.
- HWY 16 at Walmart
- Millersville and 16 is too dangerous
- The intersection of Millersville Rd and Liberty Church Rd. Also, Millersville Rd and Hwy 16. Both of these intersections need lights due to traffic jams that encourage people to pull out in front of fast-traveling vehicles.
- Millersville intersection with 16 needs a light
- Millersville and HWY 16 North, dangerous, speeding traffic, school traffic.
- The intersection at Millersville and 16 should have a red light.
- Asphalt all roads none of this gravel and tar.
- Rink Dam and areas on the border of Alexander. Lots of people travel out of county to work. Not a ton of people travel to the middle to work.
- school roads and intersections need traffic lights
- Crossways on Hwy 16 need lights, flow of traffic around schools that reflect the population growth experienced
- Highway 16 at Millersville needs a light. Hwy 90 and White Plains Rd. needs a light
- Hunters Ridge Rd. There are numerous families living on this road who work and pay taxes in Alexander County, yet the road is not maintained by the county or state. This is causing damage to our properties and vehicles. Most of us are unable to receive basic services such as home internet, US Mail Delivery.
- Light at Millersville & Hwy 16 intersection.
- Wittenburg Springs neighborhood has not been paved in 10 years. Needs done now before it gets too bad
- 127 highway and bridge. Rink Dam Road and 127 intersection and Teague Town Rd and 127 because of traffic. Bethlehem School intersection.
- Highway 16 South
- 127. Way over crowded for too much traffic
- NC 127. Rapid growth, numerous businesses, esp. in Bethlehem.
- rte 127 and bridge
- rte 127 and bridge across lake hickory
- Stop light at Bethlehem Elementary School
- Lackey Road. One of the only I paved roads in the county. It is a state maintained road but hardly ever is maintained.
- Millersville Rd and Hwy 16 S intersection. Too much traffic during school drop off and pickup
- Rink Dam at Hwy 127, Rink Dam at Heritage Farms, Teague Town at Hwy 127 due to BBC parking lot.
- Basically all bridges
- should be a turning lane in the new 127 road work not an median
- Potentially putting a light at the end of Millersville Rd, at the intersection of millersville and NC 16. That intersection is sometimes complicated.
- Nc 16
- Hwy 16 entering Catawba Co. needs an additional bridge
- Hwy 16 into Catawba Co. needs another bridge for heavy traffic and maintence
- 127 and 64/90
- Paul Payne Road near Macedonia Road
- Millersville meets 16. With the school there now it is a very dangerous intersection. There needs to be a light there.
- Millersville/16 intersection could benefit from a light to help cut down on wrecks
- Hill top at Bun Chapman's garage is dangerously blind
- Intersection of 127 and Rink Dam Rd. We need turn signals in all directions. Also, leaving Lowes Foods on the Rink Dam Rd side is very dangerous. So many people are taking chances there.
- Put a light at Millersville Rd and Hwy 16
- Highway 90 Hwy 16 Hwy 127
- Church Road, it is extremely rough in spots.
- Hwy 16. Church Rd.
- The Intersection of Teague Town Road and 127 at the Bojangles and Bethlehem Baptist Church.
- Town Park needs a crosswalk for families to cross from the parking lot. Millersville Rd & Hwy 16 Intersection
- Hwy 16 south
- Main Ave could use street marking improvements and clearly marked crosswalks. Hwy 16 from the Hwy 90 intersection to Hwy 64 needs a sidewalk.
- US Highway 64-90 W From Friendship Church Road to the River Bridge. This area has multiple blind spots located at Ned Herman Road, Herman Road at Sipe Lumber, etc. Along with these blind spots speeds in this area should be reduced due to traffic entering the highway within the forementioned blind spots, as well as Sipe Lumber Employees and Customers crossing the highway multiple times throughout the work day. At the least traffic should be slowed from Ned Herman Road to Bowman Rd, But with that said I know that there have been multiple incidents occur along this highway from Church Road intersection to the Golf Course Road intersection. Additional areas of concern include areas in and around the county schools where car rider lines extend into the roadway.
- Recalibrate all of the stop lights on Main Street in town. At times you get stopped at every single one of them.
- None
- Millersville and 16 intersection.
- Hwy. 127 in Bethlehem needs widened.
- Millersville Rd / NC Hwy 16 S Hwy 127 / Hwy 90 W

- Vashti Road was just relaxed which took well over 6 months to complete. It already has holes in the pavement at the intersection of Vashti Road and Daniels Ridge road near Lona Daniels Loop. The big dips and water traps were not fixed at all and may even be worse. That was a poor waste of money.
- Dirt roads
- I think 127 should be 4 lanes all the way to 90 and 90 needs 4 lanes too. Also the intersection of 127 and rink dam rd has been a dangerous intersection for years and has only gotten worse with the bar there and foot traffic walking across rink dam from lowes parking. Something needs to be done before someone gets killed there.
- 64/90 & Boston Road....needs a Stop light...very Dangerous crossing
- I live in downtown, and people speed on our streets, in spite of temporary speed bumps. It makes it more dangerous to take our children for walks.
- A stop light at the end of Millersville road
- NC Hwy 127. 4 lanes, no grassy median!
- Light at millersville church/school
- Heritage Farm/127
- Intersection of Millersville Rd and NC hwy. 16 needs traffic lights.
- Pop Davis- Center Street intersection
- Liledoun and 90 intersection   Too much going on.
- county home rd
- Daniel's Lumber/Jolly Cemetery road needs caution lights and bushes/trees cut back. Many accidents there over the years and I've had many people nearly pull out in front of me there.
- More try roundabouts
- Millersville and Hwy 16. Very dangerous. Hard to pull onto hwy 16.
- Lines need to be painted on ALL roads !!! Reflectors added to ALL roads
- 64-90 and 127
- Millersville and 16 South. All the bad accidents that happen here.
- HWY 90 and Hwy 127. Church Rd at Hwy 90.
- Intersection at Millersville Rd and Hwy 16. With the school there and traffic trying to turn from Millersville Rd onto Hwy 16 and school traffic trying to turn it is very dangerous
- Millersville & HWY 16, accidents and high speed due to hills on both sides.
- Rink Dam and HWY 127. Need Left turn off 127 onto Rink Dam. Then need to prohibit left turns out of shopping center. Need to put a flashing yield sign in better location for people making right turn off 127 onto Rink Dam
- Traffic light at south end of Willie McCloud Rd (closest to Blankenship Rd) and NC Hwy 127. Traffic light at intersection of NC Hwy 127 and 64/90 West.
- Please move ahead with the NC 127 project. Don't let the debate over a center medium slow down the process. It takes years and the people are coming, so fast-track it.
- Intersection of Rink Dam Rd and 127. Left turn signal needed when turning onto Rink Dam from south bound 127.
- 16 and Millersville, too many accidents County Home and 16, hard to get out of
- Us 64, Nc 90,
- Turn lanes for the intersection of Hwy 127 and Icard Ridge Road (for West Junior High)

- NC 127/US 64-90, Antioch Ch. Rd./NC 127 Hwy
- All of them. There should be a stop light at 64/90 bypass an Boston road. Way to many wrecks there.
- Hwy. 16 Has potential for industry.
- Sulphur Springs and Vashti Rd intersection
- Remove the ability to turn right on red at the main light beside McDonald's. So many almost wrecks happen there
- Paul Payne Store Rd
- Bethlehem Elementary/127 needs stop light.   Teague Town turning onto Cedar Woods needs "car approaching" signal.
- Millersville & 16 needs a light.
- Bethlehem School Road
- Repave and rebuild what we have. Also, leave us soke dirt roads.
- Millersville and 16 intersection needs a stop light
- There should be a stoplight and/or turn lane at the intersection Millersville Rd and HWY 16 S. There have been numerous accidents that have occurred there and it takes a significant amount of time to pull out from Millersville Rd on to 16.
- Hwy 127 into Bethlehem as new plan, but no median, we would be at a disadvantage to our competition in Viewmont. We want growth, not a funnel to Hickory.
- As much as I hate the thought of another stop light on 16, the Millersville/16 intersection is a nightmare and should be addressed.
- Vashti Road and all roads in the northern Part of the county, this community is just as important as the Bethlehem area
- Put a stoplight at millersville road and highway 16 intersection
- Millersville going to 16, 127 highway speed higher than 45 in certain areas
- Add stoplight to 16/millersville- dangerous.
- 127 Bridge - it is old and only 2 lanes
- Millersville and 16 interchange
- More walk ways, another section to get to the highway instead of going through 16 or 127
- Richie/ Sam Hefner road in Bethlehem. Too much through traffic for type of road.
- I feel like there needs to be a red light at the white plain/Hwy 90 intersection. It can go to caution light when not in school months but that's a dangerous intersection during school hours
- NC Hwy 16 S
- NC Hwy 127 where all the zig-zagging curves have been since horses & wagons drove our roads. I know the county is working on improving NC127 in Bethlehem, but it needs improving and straightening in the Ellendale community by removing all of the curves on the northern end of NC Hwy 127 between the Ellendale county garbage convenience center & Willie McLeod Road where it comes out on NC127 just before Teague-Mundy Cemetary.
- Land Cemetery -- This is a dirt road, numerous houses have been built. Rain makes this road muddy, multiple cars of slid off road due to wet weather.
- Cheatham Ford and 90. Very dangerous intersection. Also the small v one past hiddenite school.
- All healing springs and. 64
- It's actually the one thing this backwards county does decent on.

- McLain rd/64 intersection. Accidents.
- Millersville at NC16 needs a traffic signal, NC127 widening will be great when finished but wish it was a center turn lane instead of grass median, traffic signals in town need to have sensors instead of timers
- Hwy 16 at KFC to accommodate more growth happening in the Wilkes County area with the race track being revived.
- 127 all the way to 64 /90 traffic congestion all the time !
- 16 South because this will be where growth is concentrated and already needs attention due to congestion
- Bethlehem school rd and 127. The road West middle school and 127. Dangerous intersections during school hours
- Shadetree and 16 16 and the new Millersville school 16 and the current Millersville church/school
- US64-NC90/NC16 Millersville /NC-16 64/ Boston Road
- Old Wilkesboro Rd, NC-16 North, and Liledoun Rd-due to traffic
- Old Wilkesboro Road, Hwy 16, Liledoun Road
- Paul Payne Store Road it sucks. It has so many bumps but the NCDOT sucked at pacing it last time. It needs to be fixed right.
- Stop using recycled asphalt when "fixing†€ roads. It's terrible for vehicles.
- 64/90 and 127 - very dangerous 64 and Millersville Road - Dangerous Millersville Road and NC 16 South - dangerous
- Maintenance and upkeep of back road examples like river church rd and small back roads
- NC Hwy 127 at Bethlehem Elementary and 127 at Rink Dam Road. Super busy intersections and need a dedicated green arrow turning left onto Rink Dam from 127 S
- Millersville/hwy 16 intersection
- NC Hwy 16 south and NC Hwy 127
- Hwy 16 from Catawba to Taylorsville.
- Old Highway 90 and Highway 64/90 in front of the old Ellendale school, improve it to how it used to be! Drumstand road seems really narrow right through the heavily populated area. And the sides of the roads in a lot of places are getting pretty overgrown. Church road with all the patched cracks in the road, is horrible!
- Millersville and hwy 16 needs a stoplight
- The potholes along the side of most roads in vashti
- Church road Paul Payne store road
- Paul Payne Store Rd, Drumstand Rd, County Line Rd. These roads are in desperate need of repairs. These roads are high traffic, and simple tar and gravel paving is not doing the job. Months after they are done they are just as terrible as before.
- Hwy 127 is a very rough road to drive on. This is most noticeable when transporting patients via ambulance services.
- 127 & Rink Dam Rd. If you're heading south on 127 and turning left onto Rink Dam road, you can get caught at the light for an eternity waiting on oncoming traffic.
- The intersection at Millersville Rd ans HWY 16 would greatly benefit from a traffic light to help improve safety and traffic flow.

- Back roads need some attention.
- Icard Ridge Road and all extensions. Traffic around schools are dangerous.
- Little Roundtop Dr is falling apart. Sides of the road are being overgrown and are breaking apart.
- North Carolina 127 specifically in Bethlehem. Traffic condition is terrible.
- Millersville Rd
- Rink damn - 127 - 16
- Millersville Rd & Hwy 16. A light would make it a safer.
- Intersection of 64 and 127. Line of site needs to be improved.
- Intersection of Millersville Rd & Hwy 16 Sand Hwy 16 N needs more turn lanes
- Piney Grove needs repaved so there is sufficient watershed. Hydroplaning is an issue. Three Forks church rd, needs to be widened!
- 64/90 has a lot of accidents
- 64 / 127 needs at least a caution light if not stoplight
- The intersection of Hwy 64-90 and Hwy 127. This intersection is extremely dangerous with cars constantly running the stop sign
- NC90 through business district should restrict semi trucks. 2. Millersville @ NC16S
- All roads paved over and over with the tar/gravel mixture they don't last and become dangerous with potholes
- NC16S widening project to three lanes with turn lane in the middle. Addition of Millersville Christian Academy on 16S needs to be considered and begin planning as the traffic at 16 and Millersville is not well designed.
- Hwy 16 South - Friendship Church Road Intersection turn lanes face each other and block view so that the northbound turning lane can't see southbound traffic if a southbound vehicle is in the turning lane.
- Make Hwy 16 four lanes.
- bus service
- Fewer lights in town. We have more lights than Lenoir. A round about at 16 and main would save time and fuel cost. It would also create cleaner air since cars would be idling less.

What would be the one major suggestion you would make to improve the economic development potential of your county?

Open-Ended Response

- Bring in industry or jobs for the county....
- Establish a hospital!!!!!
- Job training leading directly to better paying jobs
- Tax breaks to new businesses.
- As a public school employee, enrollment has declined over the last 15-20 years, largely due to the furniture industry leaving during the last recession. The prison has brought jobs as well as Paragon films. There has to be a focus on bringing in more sustainable, long-term jobs where people are willing to move here and stay and raise their families.
- High tech jobs

- More retail options besides Walmart
- Medical facility
- More use out of abandoned buildings
- A music venue to attract travel and business from other counties and areas
- The way to draw larger business's is tax incentives...see Greenville SC
- Build more shell buildings and get more industry. Get more involved with high school and cvcc for career training and internships
- Change the mindset that what we have now is good enough. If we are not growing, we are dying. Surrounding counties have stepped up to the plate and we should do the same.
- More businesses
- Fund public education
- Affordable housing for low income people/families.
- Quit saying "everyone will have internet connection" and actually make it happen
- We need to stop living in the past and being a sleepy little town - we need to step into the 2000's
- To no longer accept that was we have now is acceptable. If Alexander is not growing, it will die. Do some serious, strategic planning. If it means traveling to other counties to find out what is working for them, then be proactive and make visits to other counties. Take what is learned and bring back to Alexander County.
- More places for residents to spend their money
- Get the drugs out!
- Stop making it do easy to live off of DSS. People around here dont want to work because they literally can get everything they want through the government...rent, smart phones, food, health care, power & water paid for. Its a joke how the mentality around here is that the government should be keeping everyone up.
- Recreation inclusive parks pool
- All season entertainment for children
- Stop hiring friends.for.jobs and hire people.to actually get things moving !
- Hospital is needed
- We need more things that are open on Sundays-restaurants, local businesses, etc.
- Rec center or options for kids. Something to draw families to our area instead of out of town to surrounding counties.
- Reduce property taxes. It's absolutely asinine that Alexander County has the highest property tax rate behind Wake and Mecklenburg in the entire state. We pay high taxes and for what? The recreation areas are garbage, Taylorsville and SugarLoaf Elementary schools are falling down, there's no public transportation or utility service, and the Bethlehem community is STILL paying a premium for water/sewer that we were told would be gone 10 years ago.
- Create a more friendly environment for families
- Bring more jobs
- Modernize amenities, better parks, walking trails
- More businesses.
- Focus on incentivizing small businesses, focus on workforce training and incentivizing businesses to hire local, actively recruit liveable wage industries

- We live in the Gem of NC- quit thinking industrial and make AC a destination for food, drink, concerts, hotels/lodges. Yellow Deli has figured it out. Farm to Table. We have all the ingredients.
- Invest in sewer expansion. Expand industrial sites. Provide more outdoor recreation because there are no national or state parks here and no national forest.
- Lodging/hotel
- Bring in better restaurants and some family type entertainment venues.
- Build/create an amusement property such as theatre, pickle ball courts, bowling alley.
- People are moving here for the small town feel I believe and that's what we've always been and I don't see why it should change but bringing industrial jobs back that may have been lost over the years with good benefits and pay would be a start. Growing up here, the vast majority of family and friends here in the county worked in factory jobs. They went to church and weren't the richest but they were comfortable. Still some factory work and some still plenty comfortable, some just making dumb choices with money, or won't hold down a job giving factory a negative look. Improve the factory work.
- I am not sure how it impacts economic development overall, but I feel emphasis on sports is disproportionate to the attention the county gives to other facets of life.
- Improve the appearance of Downtown area
- A revitalization of downtown. We need a heart to the county. Car dealerships seem to monopolize major land space in what should be community building space.
- Concentrate business development around recreation areas/opportunities.
- Get more retail options in our county (not fast food restaurants and car parts businesses)
- New refacing of downtown buildings and businesses in Taylorsville; in hopes to bring in better quality businesses that the local citizens could and would support
- Continue to provide incentives over time for industries that appreciate their workers with benefits.
- Bring in retail, restaurants, entice growth along 64 or 90, many vacant buildings on 90...
- Lower taxes to get more industry
- increase VRBO opportunities and promote natural beauty and gemstone history and Lucas Mansion
- Better parks
- We need something for families to do on a large scale. A movie theater or bowling alley. These could also be utilized by schools for reward trips. Adding a pool at the YMCA- like Hickory and Wilkes - would also be helpful.
- keep going - great County Commissioners who are focused on growth
- encourage the development of industrial sites in other areas of the county instead of the current industrial park, or in Wittenberg, Bethlehem area. "share the wealth" with attracting businesses to different areas such as the SugarLoaf area.
- More jobs
- Tax the churches
- Find ways to showcase our counties talents and treasures. Local Talent Show on the Ruritan Stage, and other events to bring the Town of Taylorsville back to life. Revitalize Town and Work in Conjunction with the Town to bring businesses back to Town.

- Can we please get more businesses here so that we don't have to drive out of town for retail, food and entertainment.
- Small Business Incentives
- Grow other areas in our county other than Bethlehem. We need quality lodging
- Improving downtown. There is nothing inviting about it
- Find public education
- Improving the roads would be extremely helpful.
- More job opportunities for people with college degrees and above.
- Chamber of Commerce
- Chamber of commerce.
- Better planning and promotion of County
- Improve public facilities such as parks, add a pool for high school/public use, downtown needs a facelift - better sidewalks, more restaurants, nicer storefronts. This would attract more people with jobs, incomes to the area which in turn could increase taxes. All pouring back into the improvement of the town/county and increasing wages for local workers/public service officers.
- People want to stay in Alexander county. Young people move back when they start having a family of their own. Our county lacks facilities that retain younger families. We want recreation facilities that everyone can use year round. Soccer fields and indoor basketball courts that coaches of recreation sports can use for practices and games instead of relying on the gyms inside of our schools. I've been locked out of the gym many times and had to cancel practice because we didnt have anywhere to practice. We want to stay in Alexander county, but so many other neighboring counties and communities have better facilities for their youth. Thats a huge drawback. We've participated in neighboring communities recreation departments just so we can have proper training facilities. Proper facilities in Alexander county would also bring in potential income for hosting tournaments.
- Invest in things for children/families to do together!!
- Agricultural growth
- More attractions to draw tourism dollars for local revenue. Would also add more jobs to area
- The next county improvement should be the support we show to our public schools. Good schools draw families and promote growth.
- Allow more businesses to open. There are so many empty buildings around Taylorsville & there is so much potential for revenue, if there were businesses in them.
- Move more from center of county out to larger population communities. People go to Hickory because it is easier than going to T'ville
- Fair tax evaluation instead of the inflated one created by crisis
- A fair tax evaluation of properties and not one that is falsely inflated from a crisis
- Aesthetics
- We need affordable housing options built in the Eastern part of the county.
- affordable housing options
- I would suggest a soccer complex. My children are too old for rec ball but want to continue to play soccer. We drive 45 minutes to closest soccer complex for them to play.

- Place more focus on the edges of the county. Most or your growth is on the borders and quit focusing on the Town. Your people are on the county borders near other bigger places than the town could ever imagine.
- We need internet service providers, specially in the Stony Point area. People often forget about this side of the county and there is great need in the area
- Focus on tourism. Improve downtown Taylorsville--buildings, sidewalks, etc..
- Focus more on development that will appeal to young families, parks/recreation, retail, schools
- Our county leadership should be aggressively seeking out national and international businesses to build and invest in Alexander County. We must attract support services that would make our county more attractive to those companies, such as Hotels, restaurants and perhaps an airport capable of handling business jet traffic. Also, I strongly feel we are in an excellent location geographically to support tourism...this has been beneficial to other counties.
- Define and promote unique qualities of the county (history, geotourism, local artisans, etc)
- Bringing in businesses that would attract growth and employment.
- Progress thinking leaders. You have to spend money to make money. Build it and they will come.
- Attract or incentivize an industry that offers above wages
- keep small town vibe
- Bridge the gap of wealthy and poor.
- Bethlehem needs its own municipal government
- While economic development is important we must look at the effects of growing businesses that bring in crime from surrounding counties. Having a small town has its benefits and we must remember the bigger we allow the county to become the more issues we will have to address which costs money.
- New leadership
- senior jobs
- Lean more into outdoor recreation to increase tourism
- Industrial worker training to provide technically trained employees
- Eliminate tax breaks for non-exempt farms
- Do away with tax breaks on non-bonafied farms and undeveloped lands.
- I think the continued expansion and promoting of our outdoor recreational activities allows small businesses to open and thrive due to out of county money coming in. Keeping manufacturing jobs in the county is another priority.
- Roads
- To bring more things in. There is nothing to do but go eat.
- As you know our population has decreased and without good jobs coming to the county it will continue to decrease. We have needed more jobs to maintain the population, but now with so many young people leaving a new workforce is needed. Only a high paying industry will lure workers back.
- Spend money wisely
- Stop being afraid to move forward. Make taylorsville somewhere people WANT to visit not HAVE to visit
- More sit down restaurants
- Internet Access should be more available and affordable

- More places to eat
- Build things to make residents spend money locally rather than cross county lies to spend in Iredell, Caldwell or Catawba Counties.
- Keep Propert investing in our public schools so we are creating a skilled workforce to attract more businesses
- Lower taxes
- Offer incentives for businesses to come.
- Have somewhere the kids can go an have fun other than leaving the county to do it
- Use the money wisely.
- Create a sports complex for recreational games to take place.
- Retail spaces
- Continued improvement and investment in the downtown Taylorsville area. Improved streetscaping, increased walkability, more dining establishments to encourage people to come downtown and shop.
- Get rid or or redo our old buildings. Then make them more useful
- Revitalize the Town of Taylorsville and our county in a way that will attract both old and young. Improve parking and encourage shopping, and dining. Currently the majority of the county travels outside of the county for these activities. All in all create an environment within the Town of Taylorsville that will attract those local, and those from afar. Our town and county have great potential, but we must find that niche to reignite the spark of what Taylorsville used to be when local youth would cruise main street and families would make Saturday trips to town where they would visit Smithy's store and purchase locally. All in all personally I would like to see the County work in partnership with the Town to improve the Town and Matheson Park to attract local and neighboring business to our area.
- County wide public transportation.
- I would love to see more businesses in the empty storefronts. I'm not sure why they're empty so I suppose my suggestion would be to discover why and address that problem head on
- Something for the younger generation to do.
- Renew downtown physical appearance and attract actual full time businesses there.
- Hire a full time grant writer that can perform and find money to help supplement projects around the county.
- Higher wages
- provide more opportunity for young adults to do around here (particularly in town)
- More options for restaurants
- Better internet providers in rural areas of the county
- It is time for Taylorsville downtown to grow and become similar to downtown hickory. We need more craft cafes and shops. We also need a lowes hardware in alexander county desperately. We are a community of hardworkers and do it yourselfers. The supplies should not be a 30 minute drive. We also need better healthcare choices-id really like yo see a hospital return to the area but if not, at least another, more quality urgent care. The urgent care in taylorsville is subpar.
- Public transportation
- MORE CURRENT AND BETTER QUALITY INTERNET SERVICE FOR ALL!

- Better incentives for new businesses
- Keep taxes low and fund public schools to attract other businesses and families
- Keep people buying in country
- The downtown area has so much potential. It would be nice to see the area restored.
- Reface and bring the downtown area up to date and provide more for youth.
- Recruit developers to our picturesque Brushy Mountains and vastly under utilized lake front
- Sports/Soccer Complex for the community.
- Upkeep of area
- Less tax loopholes for religious organizations
- Sell old furniture buildings for new business
- A working hospital so you don't have to go to Hickory, Statesville or Wilkesboro to be cared for.
- More tourism
- Need a committee composed of tax payers from all walks of life in Alex. Co. and not just payed county employees to be able to have a true reflection of what the community and all citizens of Alex. Co. think, feel and the needs that arise in their walk of life in Alex. Co..
- focus on what needs to be done, too often it is a competition to state how great we are
- More businesses and higher paying jobs. I've never been able to work in the county because of the wage level vs other counties
- Nuclear reactors
- Internet throughout the county
- Adding more Recreation sights (ex: Mountain Bike/ hiking trails) would bring more visitors to our county and they would spend money here! Look at Burke or Catawba
- Increase public school funding as businesses look at the education system.
- Not having the highest tax rate in the state.
- reinvest in small businesses
- More renovations to Taylorsville downtown, fixing up sidewalks, adding landscaping, and offering more events in town to drive foot traffic into downtown.
- Get better internet in the rocky face area
- Lower property taxes (including real and personal)
- Encourage the incorporation of Bethlehem to give businesses a more focused source of help with growth. Residents of Bethlehem are insured by rates of either the Taylorsville or Hickory ZIP codes, which means the safer drivers and better maintained homes in this community are paying higher rates. Same would be true of commercial businesses locating/starting in Bethlehem.
- More job training in high school. Attract more tech companies to invest in locating to Alexander County.
- Encourage growth.... Look at Kernersville NC over the past 10 years and study and understand the reasons why it is doing a great job growing and keeping a small town high quality of life feel.
- To have something in the county to keep people in the county
- Increased funding for tech education. Fewer restrictions/requirements for liquor/beer licenses.
- Lower taxes
- the curb appeal needs to improve in order for businesses to want to occupy the useable buildings

- Please keep this a small town. If people want a fast pace of want certain accomodations then they can move where they are in other counties
- Build a waste water plant to serve the county
- Quit living in the past and move forward. People need to be open to change and growth and we need people in positions of power and authority who are open to change and growth.
- More restaurants that serve alcohol. More restaurant choices.
- Christianity has always improved the development of every nation. Economies flourish when people are encouraged to work, paid honest wages, and not consistently rewarded for fathers alternative.
- Lower price grocery option in Bethlehem (Aldi)
- the downtown area looks tired. The buildings are beautiful, but they need a facelift. fresh paint, clean windows, signage for storefronts would go along way. It could be more inviting.
- If Taylorsville offered more entertainment (theater, roller rinks, bigger parks with bike and hike trails, etc) I would visit town more often to spend my money.
- Keep Alexander county small . We do not have to be like surrounding counties
- Make our county a place where stores and restaurants want to come in and build business here
- Incentives for hiring residents, Expanded government jobs, more grants for education
- Take notes from other local counties'/towns' success and implement similar ideas.
- Create more soccer fields so rec sports can be offered to kids older than 13.
- The county needs to be more supportive for growth, help people get things going, building and permits needs to be more supportive and partner for growth, they are not a place that just takes money for permits, they are the gate keeper to growth and needs to support people trying to make change. Land needs to be available to support the growth we need in the spaces we want it as well, zoning restrictions are a joke with commercial property currently zoned residential but grandfathered in, prime highway property zoned residential, no plan for how the communities will support growth if it does come, could our schools handle a increase, do we have activities to keep people here, etc. who is the counties big brother, competition, aspiration that we can compare against?????
- Increase local restaurants (not chains if possible)
- Rec Center
- Do more for the farmers /Ranchers
- More things to do with children, restaurants other than fast food
- Don't tax your citizens to death trying to keep up with the Jones. We are not Mecklenburg County.
- Adding more restaurants an more retail stores to shop at
- Focus on activities for kids and teens.
- Movie theater, bowling alley, arcade room, entertainment.
- More non profit agencies
- More business friendly environment
- I think we need sports themed things for teenagers to do in the county.
- Push for outlet mall or other retail at the property across from Iredell Family Care Center
- Tourism and tourist attractions, movie filming like Wilmington offers, shuttle service, and/or commuter flight service to Hickory Airport to provide connector flights to and from Douglas International Airport. Many large businesses don't want to locate in cities that don't have access to national and worldwide airline flights.
- Developers tell me Alexander County is the most difficult county around to build and develop due to regulations. County government needs to be supportive and promote development.
- Cap off rent prices to the value of the property.
- Use the old down town spaces for restaurants
- Increase housing options and quality of life options. If we can't employ folks here, at least market yourself as a "bedroom community" to the surrounding counties that do offer higher paying job opportunities.
- Less churches, more retail and industry
- More infrastructure for the center of the county instead of just Bethlehem
- Bring Lowes and Chick-fil-A to Alexander county.
- Spend some money to revitalize downtown area to encourage business growth.
- higher starting wages, especially for industrial jobs
- improve quality of life options for families and individuals to want to move to the county or even stay here
- Keep the small town and farms in tact that surround it. Feed off the tourism of surrounding counties along with creating new tourism options that benefit the whole population.
- Grow a strong downtown.
- Bringing Industry back
- Bring in more jobs
- Learn about the workforce behind our workforce. Lack of high quality child care affects every workforce. When child care centers are struggling to keep their doors open it impacts the workforce in our county. When they have to close because of being short staffed it has a ripple effect. Other businesses will have to close because their employees miss work because they have no one to care for their children. Using local dollars to aid the child care crisis benefits the economic development of Alexander County.
- growth as a suburb of Hickory
- Develop existing properties to draw people, similar to what hast been done by West Jefferson and others.
- Infrastructure, sewer, water It may already be in place, will not support substantial increased industrial growth. Businesses look at these services to provide adequate fire protection and environmental needs to treat waste.
- Move in ready industrial sites
- Utilize the vacant properties for business and industrial develop currently available
- Utilize the vacant properties for business development and industrial development. Currently available.
- Make the streets look nicer and make it look more updated. I think we need to add more things to keep people that grew up here living here.
- Improve agricultural development, elevate small farm business, cultivate more farmers markets and encourage affordable sustainability for families.
- More skilled labor that is willing to work
- We need to build better place for tourists

- Small town feel remaining
- Major employers in the county should reside in the county and help support our local government and participate in local civic organizations
- Establish a Chamber of Commerce to recruit new businesses
- a revived and renovated downtown/Main Street
- Do something about all the people who think they drive racecars LOL!
- Go solar
- Access to better internet
- Promotion of the county
- Absolutely #1 thing needs to be internet services throughout the entire county.
- PUSH GROWTH! Most people in the county don't live inside city limits so they can't complain about not being "rural enough". If Alexander county had more to do, its residents wouldn't have to drive to surrounding counties to do literally anything other than sit in the Walmart parking lot.
- More retail business/entertainment and advertising of such.
- More business/restaurants
- Provide incentive for outside corporations to make use of some land to improve technologies. Like google, tesla, ibm, etc
- A place that offers large gatherings with multiple activities I.e Bo's family entertainment in Lenoir.
- Reign in the drug problem, clean up blighted homes in the county.
- Growth in all aspects
- Keep up the good work at we baab industrial dr
- Alexander should find it's niche. We shouldn't try to grow like Iredell or Catawba. Our county is unique and most people love it the way it is. Growth in certain areas is a good thing but along with growth comes problems. More crime, increased population, etc. we should be focusing on sustainable growth with a conservation/agri tourism outlook. Use the resources we have-don't reinvent the wheel. Similar to West Jefferson/Ashe County.
- Internet/cable/phone options throughout the entire county
- I would like to see more done in the downtown area. More businesses brought in to fill up empty buildings. Uniformed cosmetic changes to the downtown area and see more promotion of the activities we do have like Rocky Face, the splash pad, area retail and restaurants. Lots of things have helped the downtown area but definitely would like to see more growth and development here.
- Internet service improvement
- Internet
- We need to grow so the tax base can grow to ease the burden on the citizens.
- Healthcare
- Create spending opportunities for visitors. One million dollar investment of a park and swim beach in Bethlehem may not guarantee additional investments. They could come to these parks and turn back around and invest in Hickory. Invest in Taylorsville and center of the community. Focus on a renovation of the downtown area to allow for improved night life with nice dining options, breweries, escape rooms, axe throwing, wine and art places, indoor batting cages, etc.

all in walking distance of town. Build a park that will attract people from around. Create a greenway walking/biking trail. Build a rope course at Rocky Face that charges an additional fee. Families can hike and have an additional option adding funding. Food truck festivals or parking area. Build a drive in movie theater that charges for admission and concessions that could attract others to the area. Courthouse park is nice but should have been needed parking for town. Splash pad could have been a joint investment with the town of Taylorsville and added to Matheson Park.
- Other counties and towns have done downtown revitalization. The new park downtown is great, but will still like restaurants and atmosphere downtown like neighboring counties. This could also be accomplished with a mixed use community with single/multifamliy housing and commercial district together elsewhere in the county.
- Increase county employees' wages. Emergency, police and essential workers need a big increase in pay
- entertainment for citizens.
- Advertisement why it's better to work here
- promote tourism in the downtown area
- There needs to be more spaces for families and adults to spend time outside. Cub Creek is a great example of a space made for kids and adults. Pickle ball courts would ba a positive addition.

What do you think would improve the quality of life in your community?

Open-Ended Response

- Greenway and better paying jobs
- More schools
- Get rid of the methadone clinic
- Trash clean up. The country roads are covered in trash. Better internet options. There are almost none in the country. Make the dump and convenience center free. That may help with the littering.
- Quality jobs that would keep people working in Alexander County and not simply living here and traveling through multiple counties to work.
- Practice the Golden Rule.
- More places (putt-putt, arcade) for family time.
- Growth but keep the small town vibe
- availability of reliable, affordable and quality internet
- Adding recreational activities for kids and families to do.
- Most importantly more available housing for the people who love this county and do not want to leave because of low availability
- More recreational activities, expand the library, have CVCC offer more special interest courses, better internet access, more activities for children and youth
- Restaurants and shopping

- I like the quality of our life here. Idk...
- Arrest the large drug dealers instead of the small guys
- Time is money and quality of life. When we gave to travel out of county for services....restaurants, grocery shopping, retail, etc., time has been used that takes away from other obligations and commitments. In my opinion, stress has increased and quality of life has decreased.
- Better wages
- Finding public education so the financially insecure have the chance for a quality education
- Having a local hospital
- More retail and variety decent restaurants
- Better internet options and availability in all areas of the county
- We need growth - options in restaurants, shopping, things to do - why do we always have to go to another town for basic items (movies, better restaurants, shopping)
- We need more walking trails. All we really have is the trail at Eastpark. Would love to expand. We have rocky face which is awesome but sometimes you just need an extra day flat walk
- More restaurants, more retail businesses. Now, we have to travel for these things. We need to save our residents money and time by giving choices within Alexander Couny. Now we have to travel. Time is money and it takes time to have to travel out of county.
- I think that RockyFace, the splash pad, parks and other free activities are great things that really add to our area. I am excited for the new lake park.
- More parks places to ride bikes and ball fields
- Safe walking trails
- We need a hospital here!
- Less empty run-down buildings in town. Make able-bodied people work or stop the free DSS hand-outs. The town of Tay is so ugly. People go to Gatlinberg because it's pretty. There are flowers and shops and places to eat, places to walk, places to visit. Taylorsville looks like garbage. I would like my town to be a pretty place to live.
- More police presence drug and alcohol education
- To be able to shop and entertain kids without driving 45+ minutes to another county.
- More.outdoor activities
- Medical care
- More diversity.
- Better management by the commissioners or just new commissioners all together
- It's pretty good here where we live
- More things to do
- More family-oriented and family friendly businesses and facilities, a larger library in Bethlehem (although we LOVE the library now too), swimming pool
- Better education and more investment in public - not private! - schools.
- Lower rents. Rental prices are ridiculous.
- Higher paying job availability.
- Available/affordable mental health options (Behavioral Therapy Availability) in schools and to the public, and more attention to drug problem - in particular Meth and Opiates-(Not Suboxone Treatment)

- Better restaurants and family venues.
- Availability of a good grocery store
- Better job opportunities and affordable housing
- Rules about developers coming in and buying land that's been in the same family for generations and turning into housing developments.
- Endeavors that encourage citizens to reflect on our history, values, noble attributes, and desire to preserve those things.
- Expanding and improving water and sewage access for ease of current and future developments and home improvements. Also, incentivizing businesses, restaurants, art venues, and entertainment venues to set up shop in down town Taylorsville.
- Better communication with citizens in ways that common folks can understand why certain development aspects matter more than others. That might help "grease the wheels" of progress and make change less contentious.
- Retail options besides Walmart
- Questions #20 & #21
- Providing safe public areas and protecting residents is still a high priority. Thank you to all our law enforcement and first responders!
- Having some fast food restaurants along highway 64 or 90, a bus system along these main corridors, a bike path on old mountain road, too many people ride a bike and it's unsafe,
- More police presence
- Address crime and increased drug use
- It's pretty good
- A hospital
- It's all good. Just make sure our school standards remain HIGH and concentrate on EDUCATION and SPORTS- Don't Go WOKE
- More social and recreation outlets
- Sidewalks, walkable communities
- Improve access to recreational possibilities for all, by following the 2008 Comprehensive plan and partnering with local organizations to provide an indoor pool for the citizens of the county while also improving greenway and blue way recreational access.
- Better paying jobs
- Better health care and additional recreation spaces (i.e. walkways, greenways, parks, fields)
- More community involvement activities
- Mental health services, medical services, childcare and prek for all
- I think it is about the best any where. If drinking alcohol was removed, it would be even better.
- More recreational opportunities for kids
- Wider streets!!!! Especially on Rink Dam Road and in Wittenberg Springs subdivision. The streets in the subdivision are terrible and need to be re-done!
- More quality shopping areas and restaurants close by (in Bethlehem community)
- well planned development, in areas where it is wanted and concentrated
- More opportunities to do things with my family
- Stop cramming businesses into spaces that have little or no parking.
- Recreation, better infrastructure

- If it hasn't been made clear yet, recreation facilities for our youth including a soccer complex would improve the quality of life in our community.
- Things for children/teens to do for fun
- Low cost activities for kids and families
- Limiting commercialization
- Competitive wages so people can afford to stimulate local economy
- I am just not sure what has happened that is enabling so many people to go without a job. Businesses are struggling because of the lack of work force.
- Alexander Coh as a great quality of life. I would request to put more money-not less money- into public schools. We don't want the high quality of our schools to suffer.
- Our county is lopsided - families, business and schools need to see efforts to give all communities the same opportunities, parks etc.
- Quality of life in our community could be improved by adding more family oriented facilities/services. I'd like to see places we could take our children and have fun with them aside from driving to the closest parks near us with equipment that hasn't been updated since the 1990s unless it was donated. Our children don't really have anything to do around the community & therefore resort back to electronics for stimulation.
- More police presence & a park that was more than baseball, soccer, etc .... water park/pool would be nice.
- An organization to help with physical and mental health of children and adults that is so desperately needed for all individuals throughout our society.
- Competitive wages to keep people from traveling to surrounding counties to work
- More housing = more workforce = increased industry, but we need someone to invest in the community housing projects.
- We need to take care of our children and citizens in ALL areas of the county.
- more options for entertainment
- Support public education!
- Please invest in our public schools. Our children are our future!!! Alexander County Schools are very important and I believe that our county government should help and support Alexander County Schools.
- More parks or things to do outside of town.
- Walking trails! We got 2 great ones! Rocky Face and Riverbend
- Internet Service, Transportation, more opportunities for employment
- Additional recreational facilities
- Less crime, getting rid of the drug clinic in town and the hotel. Stop letting people live off the system.
- To invest in something that families could enjoy together. A waterpark, movie theatre, bowling, something that we could do for fun and give the youth options for free time. We could also host events at the fairgrounds that would allow families things to do within our community.
- Better parks and recreation facilities and things to do with young kids
- More opportunities for children
- Bringing business to our county is crucial; tech is the future of our nation and world, so in my opinion, attracting such businesses would be a win. One only has to take a glance at Catawba

- County to see proof of this; they have secured their future with companies such a as Apple, ComScope, Microsoft, Corning and others. If we don't grow and improve, we will stagnate and remain a quaint little place to drive though on the way to surrounding counties that have the business and industry people want and need and the services they require.
- Continue to improve the look of Taylorsville. Work on the power lines through town--which are an eye-sore.
- Broadband
- Access to high speed internet
- Sewer service
- All soccer facility. It does not need to be as big as Henry Fork River soccer complex in Hickory, but we definitely need more space for soccer. Would free up baseball and softball fields at the same time.
- limit excessive growth and or the wrong kind of growth
- better roads
- Help center for the elderly, disabled, and vulnerable under privileged
- More hiking trails and parks
- Municipal authorities
- Stuff for people to do besides meth
- Dedicated athletic fields for all sports with lights. Money dedicated to expand and enhance library services throughout the county.
- Dedicated athletic fields for all major sports for both practice and games with lights to allow wider range of days and times for competition. Money dedicated to expand and enhance library services throughout the county.
- senior care
- More music festival type deals, as well as just overall public space.
- More parks and walkable areas
- Better jobs
- Stop ground water and stream pollution from poultry farming
- All big ticket expenditures should be voted on
- I think Alexander county desperately needs a soul to be brought back to the town of taylorsville in the form of more recreational opportunities to create a space people want to be. I also would like to see expansion of existing parks and even opening new ones to further increase recreation.
- Having more recreational opportunities
- Lower taxes
- Free lunch and breakfast for our kids. DSS truly taking care of our children.
- The park was good. No just continue to develop the town to bring in more businesses outside of women's boutiques
- More opportunities for us he community to get together and meet new people.
- Internet Access should be more available and affordable
- More places to eat
- More services for AIG students in ACS to retain children that are gifted or above average in education.

- Internet access for all residents.
- Lower taxes & more medical / mental health services
- Defeat the drug problem
- More things for the youth of the community to bring young families into the community and retain people raised in the community.
- Safe highways to bike, run, and walk on. More parks.
- Add Pickleball Courts
- More opportunities for children and young families.
- More biking/walking friendly, more places to eat and shop locally that aren't fast food or Walmart.
- Redistricting the elementary schools. Hiddenite is far too over populated. My address should be part of stony point, but hiddenite
- The quality of life could be improved by investing in our communities. This includes our fire departments, Recreation, and Parks, along with economic development. In reference to local fire department funding. The county should provide funding for emergency personnel staffing 24/7, 365 days a year. This would allow for personnel to respond to emergencies sooner than the current format where volunteers must respond to their station to then drive apparatus to the scene. This funding should look to assist with funding a centrally located department with a minimum of 2 staff per day but preferably 3 staff as one will be required to drive and for a safety factor 2 personnel need to be operating together. County Recreation improvements are another quality of live improvement that is needed in this county. Although currently there is rocky face park located in the county. The county needs a centrally located recreation facility in the county. Within this facility there should be enough courts and outdoor fields to host local and travel ball tournaments. These tournaments will provide the ability for added revenue while allowing citizens to cheer on the hometown team without the added expense of traveling. Additionally the county has no competitive pool for citizens to compete in. At this time the High School is having to Bus Student Athletes to Wilkes County to compete in competitive swimming. The improvement of county recreation complexes to expand and improve all fields of play. Especially Soccer! Currently within the county soccer is limited to field access. The fields of play are overused and have multiple worn places on the field from excessive use. Soccer played in the Northern end of the county is played at Salem park which is a church park, and due to growing interest in the sport. Citizens must park across the road at the church and walk across the highway to the fields. With this highway being a major thoroughfare in the county. Traffic passes through this area at a high rate of speed, and citizens crossing this highway include young children all the way up to grandparents. Greenway improvements should be made to allow for safe avenues to walk, bike, and or mountain bike in the county. Along with greenway trails the county should explore the creation of mountain bike trails as a added recreational draw to our area. The city of Hickory has had success with their trail system located near the riverwalk as there is limited access to trails of that nature in our area. Matheson Park, and or JayC Park upgrades could improve recreational access to citizens within the county. Look to improve the parks to add pickle ball courts, basketball, and volleyball courts. With this addition a equipment facility could be placed on site with an attendant to allow residents to rent or checkout items such as pickle ball paddles and balls, basketballs, and volleyballs. This type of park is located in blowing rock and could provide citizens the opportunity to explore outdoor activities where they

may otherwise limited to their ability to do so. In addition to the above forementioned areas. The improvement of utility access to citizens and businesses could improve quality of life while attracting business and other potential opportunities to our area.
- Having a more vibrant Main Street that would encourage walking
- To prevent neighbors from having to leave Alexander county to have fun with their family.
- More downtown recreation and youth and night activities.
- Transportation options for Seniors and elderly and health care options
- opportunity for higher wages
- bringing back the importance of togetherness, whether it's with family, social groups, to encourage that social aspect that is very much needed and gone since COVID
- More resources for the Alexander Sheriff's Office.
- More options for children
- Better internet providers in rural areas of the county
- See above. I do believe there is potential for parks to be improved. Taylorsville has put a nice park in town but the rest of the parks need work. I'd also like to see some development between bethlehem and Taylorsville. There is a long stretch with no gas station or anything else. There is a couple of old gas stations that are inoperable but it's time to improve.
- Affordable reliable internet
- MORE HOUSING FOR SENIORS
- Reliable affordable internet services
- Family entertainment options (indoor rec facilities for basketball, batting cages, volleyball, soccer and arcade/bowling/indoor play like Bos)
- More activities
- Fix sidewalks/make it easier to walk around downtown and surrounding neighborhoods; help homeless who walk downtown streets on a daily basis
- Not having to drive to Hickory for everything
- Sports/Soccer Complex for the community.
- The amount of garbage along the roads needs to be addressed and enforced
- Massive effort to drastically reduce drug related crimes.
- Soccer complex and recreation facilities
- More medical care providers
- More entertainment options
- More public school funding
- More community involvement....Reasons to come together as a whole.
- more sidewalks, more things to do in the evening
- Sidewalks
- More public recreation areas around the lake for public use. A mountain bike park/ hiking trails would also be nice. We would not have to travel to surrounding counties.
- More Democrats
- We have a good quality of life.
- Fight drugs!
- Higher wages

- As suggested above, additional outdoor spaces small walking tracks or larger greenway. Also improving Taylorsville Downtown to encourage more businesses to open.
- Better internet
- If Board of Supervisors would support residents from being bullied by the likes of Homestead-Shook (Dent Allison) and help with getting NCDOT to maintain state roads in the residential neighborhoods like Wittenburg Springs Subdivision.
- A leash law for dogs; no vehicles parked on wrong side of the roadway or where they obstruct the view of other drivers
- Do something about the loud cars and gunfire commonly heard while in your own backyard. Hard to enjoy peace and quiet with people acting a fool all around you.
- Cleanup abandoned and dilapidated properties in Taylorsville. Hold property owners accountable for the maintenance of their property. Sidewalk expansion around Matheson Park. Enforcement of the noise ordinance.
- Growth and investing in the schools and providing things to do and places to go for the youth. Encouraging growth downtown Taylorsville. Promoting your strengths as a destination, Hiddenite mines, apple picking etc. Make this a destination that people want to come visit stop and stay awhile. Not just a dot on the map as it is now
- Having things to do instead of traveling out of county
- Having more shopping options and food options available so you don't have to travel out of county
- Public rec center and modern library
- Recreational activities
- Better wages & safer communities
- Create local jobs with competitive wages
- parks
- Internet, water
- Expand Dusty Ridge park. Sell Rocky waste park
- More places to eat, shop and things to do. Things that would bring all ages and races together as a community.
- More things for families and singles to do in our county so it can grow like wilkesboro did
- Husbands and fathers acting like adults and training their children to do the same.
- More local parks / splashpad / activities toward our side of the county.
- safe bike (not mountain bike!) and walking trails. We have the river bend park and trails which are beautiful. There is no safe place to ride a bike on the road.
- Community pool, better parks that include bike and hike trails
- More educational grants. It's hard to go back to school. It's hard to find a job without certain classes. This leads to more people out of work and more jobs that aren't being filled.
- More places to spend weekends. Alexander County suffers from a huge lack of things for people to do after work hours.
- Increased entertainment and recreation options within the county.
- More stuff for families to do
- We need amenities. I'd love to stay in our county when looking for entertainment and fun. We need a theater, bowling alley, skating rink, or other option geared toward preteens and teens.

- Education and opportunities for work
- Increase parks and recreation development (community pool, arts facilities, public gym, etc)
- Greenway
- More community activities! The summer concert series, the festivals, the new courthouse park have all been incredible let's keep it up! Let's add more!
- A small country store to keep from having to go farther out of the community
- Quit clearcutting so much land
- Equality among all people .
- Something to improve quality of life for the older demographic.
- More night life
- Provide places/activities for family fun.
- The ability to keep my children in alexander county to have fun and enjoy friends without having to leave taylorsville
- Having more activities and events for the community, more developments with pools, Gyms
- Road improvements
- Public Basketball court
- Easier access to affordable internet and cable.
- More access to high speed internet
- As stated previously, a family campground with 7 days per week access to tent & RV full hookups & wastewater dump station would provide relaxation, fishing, swimming, and tourism, all along Lake Hickory, etc.
- County is in desperate need of Recreation Facilities, sports needs are primarily Soccer, Basketball and Swimming. How can county compete with other counties if we don't provide basic Recreation services? Businesses won't come because the people aren't attracted to this area.
- Less greed. But that isn't something that can be controlled unfortunately.
- Actual neighborhood policing. It would be wonderful to actually see a patrol car randomly cruise through all neighborhoods. Sometimes that would be enough to prevent some of the property crime that takes place in the community.
- Less churches, more retail and industry
- More options for food and retail in the center of the county
- Less abandoned houses, more patrol deputies.
- Eliminate the drug rings in the county and work to solve the homeless crisis in the county.
- Medical facility
- I'm pretty happy here
- Family Rec center such as Highland Rec in Hickory -- this offers so many opportunities to all ages and groups
- Alexander County has been the best quality of life I've seen coming from living in Lenoir and Myrtle Beach. But I'd say keep the serenity of the farms and rural lands as much as you can because that is what drew me to hopefully live out my remaining days here and provide a peaceful place for my father to do the same.
- I would like to see the town/county allow our local brewery to offer a beer garden during festivals or concerts.

- Jobs and lower taxes Alexander county has no Industry or stores other than Walmart .
- Additional high quality child care
- continuation of growth in relation to growth of Hickory
- More school funding!
- A strong retail and tourism base.
- Substantial increase in services such as water, sewer, trash pickup, police, ems, and fire. Hospital
- More restaurants in town. Cleanup the older buildings in town. More activities more central to down instead of everything being in Bethlehem
- More parking in taylorsville
- Better paying jobs
- Better paying jobs
- We definitely need better internet services especially for the rural parts. Something for the homeless population. And maybe tear down the old hospital and add another one.
- Trails, walking spaces, outdoor family spaces in outer county (outside downtown).
- Greater pride in community
- To get new county commissioners. For them not to all be chicken farmers
- Better internet access, home cooking options
- It's perfect right now
- County employees and residents should be legal citizens of the unites states
- A few good places you could go for dinner and socialize with other people
- If police actually did something about people in these wannabe racecars and these irritating semitrucks and their obnoxious loud exhaust.
- Sidewalks
- Giving us something to do
- More things to do
- Better roads, access to internet, increased wages, lower taxes.
- Lower taxes and more funding to fire departments & emergency services
- Internet services. Public services and safety have difficulty navigating in the most rural areas of the county. Children in these areas will need internet services as school curriculums focus around the web.
- Have more to do. Have anything to do other than sit at home. I work in Hickory and when I get home I don't want to drive all the way back just to find something to do and get something to eat that isn't a burger and fries.
- More for children to do
- The addition of a recreation center for Alexander county, parks, walking trails/greenway
- Enforcement/presence of law enforcement. I love my community - but it has been becoming increasingly dangerous (robberies, break-ins, drugs, reckless drivers). Excessive speeding especially on Hwy 127 at any given time, everyday.
- Having more attractive dining and shopping locally and better parks. We could greatly use mountain biking trails in our area.
- As a paramedic in this county, working 24 hour shifts, I would love to have somewhere that offers food past 11 pm at night. The long nights of running calls all night require us to stop for coffee and a snack in other counties.

- Better parks, restaurants, leisure, public pool, shopping
- More things to do
- No new businesses
- Growth in all aspects
- A park where young active people can play team sports, basketball/ultimate frisbee etc
- It seems crime is on the rise as populations increase in our county. I think the drug problem in our county should be dealt with full force.
- Need something more than just one urgent care center. Many times this location is closed or close searly. Need to put more focus on emergency health care options.
- It's pretty good as is
- Internet
- Healthcare
- Invest in emergency services. More officers with decent pay improving security. Investment in fire service to allow some of the busy departments to be staffed 24 hours and hire additional staff for events. Work with the community college to allow them to fund a training facility versus investing money on leased property.
- County Park with greenway or walking trails, picnic area, play ground. Wittenburg has nothing in the way of community park or area other than Dusty Ridge which is primarily ball fields. Also, Alexander County has both river and lakes in it, but no parks on the water like what Catawba County and Hickory City have.
- Reasonably priced adult ed
- Parks and recreation facility, soccer complex (fields), camping, and hiking
- Alexander county to have own water system!! Why do we pay City of Hickory!!! Stupid
- Greenway or something to promote tourism

Are you aware of any historic sites in Alexander County not currently being protected? If so, what are they, and what should be done to protect those sites?

Open-Ended Response
- Family cemeteries need to be identified and maintained throughout the county
- I have heard that maybe the courthouse is going to be moved. This made me very concerned about our downtown area and loosing the few businesses we maintain.
- Cemeteries
- Sulphur Springs
- The old hotel should be on the National Registry. The Lucas Mansion has preservation needs.
- Taylorsville Elementary gym, stony point gym; maintain
- The downtown area of Taylorsville has made great strides in saving and utilizing that area. I encourage more assistance toward that end.
- Happy Plains

- Hiddenite center I like.
- Taylorsville Elementary School (Taylorsville HS)
- Original dig site of W. E. Hidden when he aided in discovery of Hiddenite
- I'm not aware of any . Maybe Lucas Mansion in hiddenite but I think it is protected.
- Black Oak Ridge School. Nothing is being done to protect the building or site currently. It would serve children well today to be able to see what 2 generations past had for a school building
- Hiddenite Arts & Heritage Center, not sure what's being done to protect this site.
- Hiddenite, Stony Point
- The first house in the county (on Glass Road) is in ruins. It's covered in kudzu and falling in. The old hospital where many of us were born has become an internet joke with it's dumb haunted house crap. Fix it up!
- All Healing Springs Hotel
- Hotel Alexandria
- Less churches, more retail and industry
- The Mock House the oldest brick house in Alexander County. Also the house of Phyllis Alexander. It is over 250 years old and used to be the plantation owned by Thomas Snoddy. Robin Rogers bought the land and gave Phyllis Alexander lifetime rights. I fear that it will be torn down after Phyllis passes away.
- Abandoned cemeteries on private property need to be located with GPS coordinates and reported to the N.C. State Archeology Office to prevent future development destroying these sites.
- With the exception of the Hiddenite Center, I don't think any are being protected.
- I am unaware of any historic sites within Alexander County.
- The old Mock House on Mock House Lane. I have been told it's the oldest masonry home in the county dating back to the early 1800s.

What is your biggest concern about the future of Alexander County?
Open-Ended Response
- Growth and age of population
- The town need to be revitalized.
- Too much growth unregulated, pricing generational residents out of AC and too many non residents moving in
- Empty buildings in town. Run down appearance of some businesses in town. Over crowding of schools.
- County commissioners cutting public school funding. Surrounding counties all have a higher percentage of their budget allotted to their public school systems (ranging from 15-21%). Surrounding counties are investing considerably in the future of children and their education. Alexander County is doing the exact opposite. Surrounding counties are consistently giving increases to the public school budget. The increase for the 23-24 budget from the commissioners increased due to the percentage they were required to match for two capital school projects (approximately $450,000).

- Over population. Increase in crime.
- Traffic on NC127
- Having shopping and entertainment opportunities but being able to maintain the small town feel.
- The lack of drug control, the lack of police presence, the lack of accountability of our communities to Biblical truths.
- Keeping employment opportunities here to keep our families here
- Boring
- My concern is that the school system is squeezing pennies as much as they can but it feels as though the school board and the commissioners aren't working together on the same side.
- Concerns of over planning/over building. This is a good town with good people. More building/more business also means more people. That's not what we need in this community. We need unity within our own population.
- Available housing
- The unwillingness of the citizens to invest in the county.
- Bethlehem community being annexed to Catawba County
- Drugs worsening Loss of farmland
- That we are just going to be a number added to the poorest rural county in the state. I want to be proud of where I live.
- Lack of funding in public education. It is good right now but will fall if funding goes to private and is not supplemented
- Need more variety of businesses and restaurants
- Not keeping up with modernization of the times.
- We are not growing - all of our growth is moving away because they don't have anything to keep them here, we are 30 mins away from almost everything
- Being resident to change and growth. Staying with the good ole boy mentality and not being an open minded welcoming community.
- I would like to see it thrive and we seem to talk of closing so many things. It is scary to me. I do not know how to fix that or I would offer a solution. Moving the courthouse would be a huge hit to our downtown area for sure that I do not know how to recover the loss.
- the lack of planning by all areas of the county
- That you will choose to be 20 years behind rather than visualize the future
- No future planning a fear of knee jerk reaction to please "popular " people
- Embezzlement
- That Taylorsville is going to turn into the slums....empty, trashy, run-down buildings with homeless people everywhere and drugs & crime rampant. County and town management practices have been absolute garbage for too long. Stop incentivizing laziness.
- Drug use
- Falling behind and not continuing to develop
- The schools
- Jobs
- Need more minority presence in schools, economic development, housing development
- Not enough to do for growth

- Shrinking tax base. lack of businesses
- Too many developments
- The school system
- I don't want to see it overcrowded and more importantly, I don't want to see the population growth outpace the county's ability to care for its citizens.
- Thinking industrial over tourism, hospitality. Study Yadkin Valley.
- That we don't expand and diversify the industrial base.
- Farming has been the backbone of this county. I worry that future generations will liquidate the farm land and all of the folks moving into the area from Charlotte/Troutman/Mooresville/Statesville will bleed over into the county (which is already happening), increasing cost of housing, crime rate, etc.
- I am concerned most about the amount of drugs entering our county.
- medical treatment
- All the homeless people drifting in. We don't have to the services to help them all. All the poor folks in the county who've always been here or have moved here and don't try to better themselves.
- Loss of moral compass. That is protected by encouraging churches/programming, civic groups for the greater good, organizations that keep our history protected.
- Missing opportunities for growth
- High drug use among young people. Not enough quality opportunities for young people to see a future here in AC.
- Too many residents who don't understand how beneficial certain types of development can be. These folks hold us back and some of them are in leadership positions.
- I think the property tax payers in Alexander County bear a huge economic burden due to the lack of economic development plans. I don't think it is aggressive enough or communicated very well.
- Understanding that can have new growth in business, cultural & recreation facilities but continue to have a "small town feel". Leadership or citizens don't seem to recognize this
- Spiritual growth   Sense of community investment in people, neighbors
- Too much land being used up...farms being sold off for development or housing, We won't progress in some areas, that would benefit the community. Since moving here I don't see a bowling alley, movie theatre, open venue for outdoor free concerts, concern about lack of bike paths on major highways or roads like old mountain road. So many vacant buildings near hiddenite and along many area near 90.
- Getting so far behind the other surrounding counties.
- Liberal thinkers
- Families will move away because there aren't enough things for them to do.
- No growth
- Alexander County must find a way to increase funding in a manner that provides the resources needed to provide a nurturing environment for the adolescent members of this county and their families with the goal of retaining them when they reach the age of setting out on their own. Currently most of the younger generation make statements along the lines of that they do not

- like it here and that it is boring. If the county can retain these younger populations they may present a better chance of retaining them for a little while longer.
- To much growth especially with apartments, multiple housing units and developments
- That Bethlehem will continue to grow and the rest of the county will not grow causing Bethlehem's crime rate to rise and the community to suffer from overcrowding. I fear that Bethlehem could eventually become like the neighboring Hickory area. I am also concerned that the Alexander County Schools will not be a priority.
- Homeless, drug activity
- Funding public schools and staff
- I am afraid it will become too large and unsafe, like surrounding areas that have nearly daily shootings.
- Getting too big too fast. Also, I must mention that traveling in Alexander County is DANGEROUS! Way too many people speed horrendously, follow too closely, drive while on their cell phone, etc. Believe it or not, this is my personal biggest concern!!
- that we will grow/develop more than a lot of us want to and it'll not be a small town community anymore
- the drug problem
- The rampant drug problem, and lack of growth.
- Lack of infrastructure to support growth
- We are not contributing enough to our public schools
- My biggest concern about the future of Alexander County is that we will have to continue to participate in neighboring counties recreation departments instead of our own. Recreation facilities play a large role in the quality and enjoyment of a sport. Without those proper facilities the students miss out on achieving their potential. I would like to keep the majority of my dollars in this county, but there aren't a lot of options to do so when it comes to entertainment and food.
- Space
- Too much commercialization
- Economic opportunity
- The needs in the community. We have many that are struggling, complacent with where they are, addicted, and neglecting children.
- That it is not growing. People do not want to come to our county.
- generational fade...Are young people returning to Alex. Co. after college? Are they starting families here?
- I fear that people will still rely on the Catawba & Iredell counties for employment opportunities (they pay higher than our county can - look at our dss salaries vs theirs), and shopping.
- No new growth because our public schools seem to be less important than parks, lake access and churches
- Not having successful town businesses.
- Schools closures, lack of available funds and lack of new staff.
- I am concerned that all of our sustainable development is in the western part of the county, which creates a greater divide between equitable opportunities.

- I'm concerned that some areas of our county (ex: Bethlehem) are outgoing their ability to support their growth. I am also concerned that areas like Hiddenite do not offer enough housing to support their communities, impacting school enrollment.
- Our small town feel will go away.
- My biggest concern is for the future of Alexander County and that is our CHILDREN! We need to support public schools!!!! Every child deserves the best education! Please make public schools a priority and help our future leaders by investing and helping Alexander County Schools.
- Leadership
- That it will loose it's small town feel and agricultural resources because of development and poor planning.
- I worry about the drug problem here. What does the future look like for the children being exposed to this lifestyle? It is a problem and seems to be worsening.
- Too much development to the point of losing small town feel
- The lack of support for funding public schools. If the county is not creating jobs then the schools will die.
- Random development where nothing is planned is my concern. We have a clean slate now. We need to plan what we want to look like in 10-20 years.
- Educating and developing a wo
- poorly planned growth, high density housing, infrastructure, roads
- poorly planned development development that overwhelms services growth at all costs
- Lack of community planning , inadequate governmental support for Bethlehem
- Wasteful spending, too many new multi family dwellings/ housing developments, the desire for some people, including county leadership, to turn Alexander county into Catawba county. We have been able to maintain our way of life for a long time because we are a small county with a small population. When we forget that and start trying to be a big city the county will be forever changed for the worse.
- I do not want the county to loose the small town feel.
- The county loosing the small town feel
- high taxes/Hickory taking over/to much housing moving in
- Growing too large. Alexander county has been, and should always be, a small foothill town. I advocate for more amenities and things to occupy free time, but that cannot come at a cost of the country side.
- Maintaining population of our young educated citizens
- Corruption
- I'd like to see Alexander county grow but in a way that will benefit long time residents. We should use new tax revenue brought in by growth to expand public access and recreation. We should also use the money to provide free breakfast and lunch to every kid in ACS. Prioritize the community over businesses.
- Letting the town get run down
- Illegal Immigration
- Keeping our young people here in the county. Both of my kids moved away because lack of job opportunities
- Getting over populated.
- The inability to develop commercially and economically
- Losing small town feel
- It's young people.
- I want to ensure that resources are distributed equitably in the county. All residents, regardless of their income, deserve access to tax-paid amenities like parks and biking trails.
- Excessive tax rate
- Outsiders moving in!
- Public Schools
- No affordable housing for young couples
- High tax rate, what funds are spent on, the focus of the County mainly being in Bethlehem, over staffing of county agencies.
- Becoming to populated and losing its small town fee.
- I'm concerned that Alexander County will become a bedroom community to Hickory and other surrounding town. I worry that Alexander County will pay taxes for infrastructure for housing and other development, but people will continue to work, shop and recreate in surrounding counties.
- We have no new growth in the county. For decent health care, shopping, dining and basic employment; residents have to go outside of the county. We do not see young familys moving into the county.
- Preserving our county in a manner that holds us accountable to our small town feel. While finding ways to bring revenue into our county and provide needed services to the citizens in which our county serves. Seek to grow the County EDC commission to allow it to operate like a Chamber of Commerce. Encourage local businesses to come together and help share ways of how our county can grow.
- It will overdevelop and no longer have affordable housing.
- Too conservative and opposed to modernization.
- I am afraid Alexander county will get overdeveloped and will lose its character, becoming yet another suburb of Charlotte - like all the towns along the I-77 corridor.
- Keeping the small town feel but also adequately offering an eventful downtown that is attractive. I know this is the town of Taylorsville but it is in Alexander County and our main town. So its important for it to be welcoming to visitors.
- Rise of homeless people
- Alexander county does not seem to be growing economically. Many of the young adults are not coming home and although we are consider a "retirement" community, we don't have the amenities to attract our retirement communities (ie: infrastructre and access to specialized care)
- That our children will grow up and move away due to lack of things to do here
- Crime-specifically drugs
- I am concerned about all the multi family housing that is being put up in bethlehem as well as what I've heard will be a 200 home senior living only off heritage farm. AC/bethlehem roads cannot handle that traffic. I also believe that AC I'd a family focused community and I worry what kind of people apartment living will being in. I also worry about the bars being put in right next to residential areas. The vault is a large reason why I sold my home in wittenburg springs. I am not anti alcohol- but that bar is not family friendly like a place such as the tap room. It is a lot

- of trashy drunks and the owner treats families like they don't belong there. That is not a good bar/restaurant for AC.
- Most of the industry/employment opportunities are geared toward the trade industry and I believe we are inadequately preparing or encouraging workers for this.
- Public schools not being adequately funded!
- Rising taxes and keeping the county up to date
- Low return on investment. Catawba and Iredell Counties have developed certain towns and communities that fund the majority of needs. The tax rates are ever decreasing because the BOCC decisions to focus growth in those areas to maximize revenues. The proposed tax rates are nearly HALF of what Alexander's proposed rate is.
- Sports/Soccer Complex for the community.
- Lack of activities for kids/youth
- It not being maintained or lack of progress to compete with neighboring counties that prioritize recreation and parks.
- Need better leadership....
- lack of forward thinking
- To play competitive sports i have to go outside of Catawba county.
- Liberal ideologies being pushed in schools and at our county libraries
- The school system being safe and well staffed so kids can learn. Lack of investment in the county Rec dept. our fields and parks. Build soccer fields.
- Lack of Progress and willingness to grow & change
- The slowing of support for public education.
- Growing to fast. Trying to get development at the cost of all citizens. Developers should pay their own way/have take down schedules to meet incentives for any development.
- the widening of hwy 127 will cause problems with trying to navigate around bethlehem businesses and be a danger to everyone
- No clear vision for the future. We need to capitalize on the advancement of Wilkes and build out along that area so workers and businesses have places to go.
- Overdeveloped I, too many apartment buildings, destroying forests and natural land and overcrowding
- Stagnant growth and employment opportunities in the county. The industrial park in eastern Alexander County is a great asset and I hope it continues to grow.
- Safe Roads. In order to assist the safety of new drivers, Seniors, the busy working person, Bicycles should be legally banned on all roads with a posted speed limit of 35mph and above, that do not have a shoulder, such as Rink Dam Road. People, over age 18 and purchase a bike that cost over $500.00 should be taxed $100.00 per year that goes towards building bike lanes. Any organized bike activity on roads with speed limit over 35mph, need to have a permit and an escort vehicle, and be required to pull over, as necessary to allow traffic backed up behind them to pass.
- Increasing taxes; lack of amenities such as those found in Hickory or Wilkesboro; apparent abundant drug use amongst the population
- Don't allow Bethlehem to become just a bedroom community to Hickory with little connection to the rest of the county. Without emphasis on the needs of younger families (housing,
- shopping, parks/playgrounds) Bethlehem will over time become nothing but older homes with a dying population.
- Loss of businesses.
- Lack of encouragement of growth and economic losses to surrounding areas will make it be a lower quality of life and less desirable to live work and play here.
- Political leadership
- Nothing here to do we need more entertainment especially for smaller kids and teenagers example public swimming pool, movie theater we need more food options and we need more shopping options
- Little emphasis on technology and tech based vocational training
- Medical care is still a challenge. EMS does a wonderful job but everyone has to be transported out of the county. I am most concerned that we have a decreasing number of long term care options within the county. There is no assisted living without memory care at all.
- No growth
- The county is being led by individuals who are more concerned about how to line their pockets than putting the counties money back into the community for overall growth and prosperity for future generations.
- The push to be like these big cities around us. We will never be hickory, Statesville, etc., but we can be a great place to live for those who may work in those cities.
- Rising crime and rising drug use
- Lack of planning
- Illegal drug use/ abuse and crime
- Factories
- What once was appalling, is now protected and encouraged. Morality among the youth is deplorable. Abortion and sexual immorality is only increasing.
- Growing too large and more concerned with industrial/chain type feel than providing things for current residents who want to live in a small town.
- Drawing in the wrong people to such a nice place.
- Concerned for too much growth and lose small town appeal
- The county and town are to focused on Alexander county staying with the small town feel, the county and town need to be expanded and be a place that attracts visitors and commerce opportunities. There are ample ways to draw crowds traveling the highways into the business areas of the county to further increase revenue in the county and town
- Few jobs. We're having to go out of county to find jobs.
- A growing older population combined with a diminishing younger population.
- Stuck in 1950's
- Our dollars will continue going to other counties and our children will leave and choose areas that offer more.
- Shotgun approaches with outsider influence, if you moved here and want to implement something from where you moved away from that's a concern (e.g., business continuity plans for restrictions to signs, front facing, landscaping, etc.). "I love where I live, but let's implement these things where I had to move away from because I didn't have an opportunity
- Maintaining small town feel

- The prices of homes
- No growth
- The drugs, and what is being pushed down throats of public school students
- I'm afraid that the bringing in of new Factories will cause destruction of this beautiful county's infrastructure and hometown feel
- Racial equality
- Where it is going with the huge tax jump we just received
- No growth
- People leaving because lack of interest and not much here
- Over crowding in the middle and high school
- Increase of substance abuse, mental health issues and homeless
- Employment
- Horrible school system
- Everyone chooses to spend their money in surrounding counties on weekends because of lack of entertainment, we need to keep people in Alexander county so money is spent here rather than elsewhere. Especially concerning kids, teenagers specifically.
- No change, the fact that we don't try anything different than what we have done for the last 25-30 years!
- Too much of old thinking that progress is bad. Too many people that feel like things need to stay the same.
- Staying behind neighboring towns in things to enjoy so people want to live in this area. Alexander County is a boring place to live if you don't enjoy community sports. That's all there is to do!
- Future needs to contain growth to provide residents access to better services but growth needs to maintain the small town feel that we love about Alexander County.
- Overloaded with migrants and not enough places to live. We're already struggling with so many families becoming a homeless community with the insane rent prices for homes not been updated or not having enough homes period.
- Drugs
- A county seat cannot be maintained indefinitely with residential taxes as the predominate source of funds. If we don't locate other income sources, how is the county seat going to continue to exist.
- Less churches, more retail and industry
- Down Town area drying up no growth in the middle of the county. To much priority placed on Bethlehem
- Farm land being developed by churches and developers. Increase of crime (drugs/theft)
- Growing too big and becoming a large city feel with lots of traffic
- declining population, Hickory annexing Bethlehem, hard drugs
- the limited thinking in old school approaches to business and growth opportunities
- More crime and traffic.
- Lack of growth due to closed minded officials
- That we will not find the happy medium between poverty and prosperity

- That we will lose they younger generation to surrounding counties because of inadequate opportunities for employment, housing and availability of child care.
- Brain drain, I live in the county but refuse to work in it due to poor educational settings. Getting left behind by surrounding counties, where Hickory was in top 25 of places to live Alexander county is a back water beyond the area's closest to lake. Individuals want Alexander County to remain what it was 50 years ago, instead of looking forward to growing with Hickory area
- Lack of school funding
- The lack of forward thinking by the county commissioners.
- Money not being spent wisely and the way the community thinks it should be spent. Some leaders in the county don't have a good sense in where the money should be spend in this county when it could be used elsewhere for better things to benefit the citizens of the county. Also the fact of the buildings being so ran down and no attention being given to preserve them.
- Housing inflation
- That the county will change and lose the "small town" community feel
- That it will change and lose the small town atmosphere.
- My concern is that too many of our people are moving and never coming back and too many Yankees and West Virginians are moving in. They are completely different and not what we need in this county. They know nothing about our people, our faith, our town, and our way of life. We are family!
- Very concerned about the future of the Ancestry Association and the county's ability to preserve and share its history. There is no historic society or even someone in charge of the historical collection at the library. This county has a deep history (much of which is shared by Iredell and Wilkes) and it needs to available for future generations.
- Tax rates and public schools
- We are not moving forward in growth and development
- Drugs taking over
- Population growth from other counties spilling into the rural areas of Alexander county. Housing developments taking over beautiful open farmland.
- That it will just die and become part of the surrounding counties â€¦ . Since some of the services seem to be controlled by them anyway
- Population growth
- no growth and the perceived aging population
- Funding being spent where it doesn't need to be and people taking county officials positions just for popularity.
- That it will slowly die off and places like hickory will take businesses away
- That unused buildings will continue to deteriorate. That more buildings in our downtown area will leave.
- Gaining internet access throughout the entire county and having more places for families and teenagers to hang out without trouble.
- That we're not going to grow. Businesses and banks choose demographics that have a high growth rate. If we can't get businesses to build in the county, the 3 banks in the county will leave because how do banks make money? LOANS. If loans aren't being taken out by businesses and individuals in a community, why would a bank open a new branch there? And if we can't get

- banks to come to the county, businesses are going to go across county lines to conduct their business.
- Too many people moving in
- The area is not growing at the pace of surrounding counties
- That private schools will cause our public schools to close.
- It never seems to keep up with the speed of technology or community trends. Alot of the old ways are good...but usually most residents travel outside of Alexander county for retail and entertainment. Even just to camp with the kids---we have to go elsewhere.
- Crime
- Too many outside people wanting to move here.
- Funding for all emergency services with a main focus of fire departments.
- School closing
- Nothing to keep people here
- Drugs
- Economy
- The push for growth will overtake the rural appeal of the county. Land will be split and fragmented for housing and development. Open spaces will be lost. Agricultural will loose out to development. The county will become like other growing counties.
- Increased services   Soccer fields
- People moving out of the county. Many young people seem to be leaving for the larger cities that offer more recreation and more food and beverage options.
- Too much growth
- Balancing growth vs. keeping the small town feel
- Healthcare
- Constant development in Bethlehem and neglecting the center of the county. Lack of investment in emergency services.
- Education
- To be taken over by Catawba county!!!
- lack of proactive vision. Takes forever for anything visionary to happen. Courthouse park and services building are the best 2 projects in the past 30 years.
- Declining young population, affordable housing

Is there anything you would like to add that you haven't addressed in the questions above?

Open-Ended Response

- Greenway
- Better infrastructure. All of Alexander county should have access to affordable internet. We had to drive to schools and sit in parking lots to utilize internet late at night in dimly lit parking lots.

- Thankfully our church was able to get Spectrum and we were able to go there, but spent all day and some very late nights there, sometimes into the wee hours of the morning only to turn around and do it again bc our daughter went to AEC. We were finally able to get Open Broadband and that was a nightmare in itself. The customer service and lack of communication on their part is terrible. We need access to county water and sewer access as well.
- TRASH CLEAN UP on country roads.(Mostly beer cans) DUI check points.
- With each passing day our history and our culture is being taken away from us, and it makes the people of this community angry. Hard Working individuals built this town with their blood, sweat and tears. We must respect the past generations, while teaching the new generations about their community and culture.
- Water on Barrett Mt.   Sewer too
- I wish those who can make change gets totally focused and committed to our Alexander County. We are losing our young people for bigger and better places to live and raise families. I understand it is a huge job to work on aligning with other counties to make Alexander County comparable to our neighbors. I also understand it is a huge mountain to climb and that we did not get in this situation overnight. But, I have confidence that with the right momentum and focus, this can be accomplished. I guess what I am saying is do we really want to be identified as a sleepy little town.
- Need more access lanes to pick up children at schools.
- A new survey needs to be done for internet connectivity. Who has and doesn't have it. At what level is the connectivity? Need updates on the three companies expanding into the county.
- I really enjoy the music in the park. It has been a great addition. Free forms of entertainment are wonderful for everyone.
- Protection of wildlife when expanding
- I am excited about the new county manager. I hope the mindset of everyone is transformed from lack to prosperity.
- With the fabulous auditorium, beautiful Rocky Face, and land that is stunning, we can be a destination.
- More leeway for homeowners to add what they need
- I feel that what is lacking is a sense of pride in our home town. Our county has a rich history and the fact that our geologically rich culture needs to be emphasized both to the public and in schools. After all... the largest Emerald found in North America was found in our county. A gem museum or county museum would be a nice addition. It seems that sports overshadow everything. AND...we have a lot to be proud of in that realm as well. It is nice to see the county and town working together to meet needs of the county. I feel that politics have held us back from progressing into the future.
- Bring back some of the sensibility and common sense that the generation from the Great Depression had. Good hardworking men who loved God and worked hard and didnt depend on a handout. Didn't have all the ridiculousness that plaques us now. The original folks who founded and built Alexander County would roll in their graves if they could.
- I wish the citizens of Alexander County were more progressive in their thinking...
- Thank you for the survey, for reviewing the data.
- Love the community feel
- ALEXANDER COUNTY - GREAT LEADERSHIP- MOVING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

- Continue to support Alexander County Schools. We need a community gym, soccer fields, and softball/baseball field complexes. If we build these spaces people will come.
- My only other suggestion would be, think before you act. Don't do it because everyone else is.
- We seem to have an unusually high incidence of problems with water and sewer issues.
- Taylorsville needs sidewalks, to allow access to walking around town and neighborhoods.
- SOCCER COMPLEX! :)
- Grew up in Iredell. So glad we chose Alexander to live in and raise our children!
- One of the most important contributors to the quality of life and the small town feel is the scenic views! Along with that, the Brushy Mountains. Maybe the government should consider creating viewsheds? (They are like watersheds but for views)
- Help our public schools and show that our future is as important as you say!!!
- We won't be able to grow as a community if things stay as they are. Lets provide emergency health care which we lack. So let's really think and be real for a momment of all the Needs in alexander county. Lets improve what we have the lack of before we can ever look at growth in our community. I live outside of city limits and I know Water isn't accessible to all of our community and that's just pitiful to say the least. Let's fix our community needs before fulfilling our wants!!
- We need to welcome ALL people, not just those able to pay for $500,000+ homes. There is a place for quality rentals throughout the county. We also have to encouragement employment opportunities that are not just agricultural or furniture. We lose middle class workers to neighboring counties.
- There is a great option for a public pool and park on Cheatham Ford Rd.
- The county is in desperate need of better soccer fields and parks/playgrounds/recreation for young kids.
- Find something that will draw in tourism and promote it (history of: furniture, textiles, agriculture, gems/minerals, pottery, railroad, music, sports, etc.). MUST encourage hotels, campgrounds, multiple quality B&Bs. I'm on the board of the Newton PAC. I am amazed at our sell-out performances that bring many people from out of county AND out of state! Local officials in Catawba don't seem to be aware (or don't care) about the weekly traffic that comes to the area just for the shows--they have few quality places to eat and no (in Newton) places to stay.
- Need bike lanes throughout the county. Cyclists love our rolling hills. We need to make it safer on our highways for them.
- growth for the sake of growth is not good
- I am very disappointed in whoever decided it was a good idea to include "non binary" on the gender portion of the survey.
- I'd like to see housing inside the town of taylorsville to star created a vibrant and walkable town. I'd also like to eventually see rail that connects taylorsville with hickory or Charlotte or other areas.
- A large Recreational complex for rec sports. Our children are playing soccer on the back of a baseball field. We have to fix this!
- In reference to Entertainment within our county. Several years ago there was a College Wood Bat summer league team that competed at ACHS. The team known as the Appalachian Moonshiners went on to win the championship that year. On that team were several ACHS

- graduates who were provided the opportunity to again compete in front of their family and friends. The following year the team did not compete. I find it interesting how a team competes in it's inaugural season while winning the conference as well, and then following that year never come back. I would like to see the county look into something of this nature to provide local family friendly entertainment for families. Along with the request for someone to look into the above mentioned opportunity for our county. A high school legion team could be a more realistic and less cost incurred for startup. When I graduated from ACHS in 2009. Taylorsville Legion Post sponsored a Legion baseball team. Now to my understanding our legion team is disbanded which is such a shame since we have some talented ball players come through our county and they are unable to be afforded the opportunity to compete in front of friends and family as they were able to do during the school season.
- AC is a great area but it is time to develop past bethlehem. To do this, roads need to be expanded and not just to Richey Rd. All of 127 and really 90. Taylorsville desperately needs a lowes hardware and another grocery store- Aldo would be great. As well as more restaurants. I look forward to what the future brings in this community!!
- The link to these surveys should be posted at every business in Alexander County. Businesses in Taylorsville come and go without anyone ever noticing because the majority of the county population doesn't visit Taylorsville anymore
- Sports/Soccer Complex for the community.
- Soccer complex!!!
- Rural roads being paved in pea gravel is ridiculous and shreds tires in no time. We go through tires like underwear here on Black Oak Ridge.
- More recreation trails!!! Mountain biking!!!!
- I think I have covered everything!
- Grow at a manageable rate. Set a goal of no more than 2% a year and do not raise taxes for the developers to make the County grow. Development will happen when we are ready. They can and will pay for the infrastructure when development is right.
- What currently makes Alexander County more appealing than some of the surrounding areas? Why would someone choose to come to or visit Alexander County? How can we encourage positive growth? Why are we not investing in positive activities/things to do for our youth etc.
- Concerned about the deforestation of Barretts Mountain. Our rural landscape is very important to maintain.
- Though magisterial encouragement of Christian principles will not gain popularity with men, on the last day, only One opinion will matter.
- The county and town government is so concerned with not applying additional taxes to taxpayers. Not raising taxes hinders the raising of pay for law enforcement officer therefore it is hard to retain officer and bring new officers in filling vacancy's or growing the departments. This is not what the county and town should be doing this is a disservice to the residents and safety and well-being for everyone in the county and town should be government officials priority however they are more concerned with being able to say "we have low tax rates"
- I love the things going on at the square. I want to see our community come together more. I'd also like to see more services for the low income and elderly communities. We have so little to help them. Mental health is a crisis in our community, and we have to depend on one office that does little to help. We need more for mental health.

Appendix 2: Economic Data

Alexander County, NC (37003)   Prepared by Esri
Alexander
Geography: County

	Alexander Cou...
Population Summary	
2010 Total Population	37,198
2020 Total Population	36,444
2020 Group Quarters	1,492
2023 Total Population	36,241
2023 Group Quarters	1,492
2028 Total Population	36,071
2023-2028 Annual Rate	-0.09%
2023 Total Daytime Population	30,457
Workers	10,860
Residents	19,597
Household Summary	
2010 Households	14,425
2010 Average Household Size	2.50
2020 Total Households	14,408
2020 Average Household Size	2.43
2023 Households	14,447
2023 Average Household Size	2.41
2028 Households	14,568
2028 Average Household Size	2.37
2023-2028 Annual Rate	0.17%
2010 Families	10,338
2010 Average Family Size	2.94
2023 Families	10,030
2023 Average Family Size	2.90
2028 Families	10,079
2028 Average Family Size	2.86
2023-2028 Annual Rate	0.10%
Housing Unit Summary	
2000 Housing Units	14,098
Owner Occupied Housing Units	75.0%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	18.2%
Vacant Housing Units	6.8%
2010 Housing Units	16,189
Owner Occupied Housing Units	69.1%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	20.0%
Vacant Housing Units	10.9%
2020 Housing Units	15,960
Vacant Housing Units	9.7%
2023 Housing Units	16,003
Owner Occupied Housing Units	69.0%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	21.3%
Vacant Housing Units	9.7%
2028 Housing Units	16,066
Owner Occupied Housing Units	70.0%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	20.7%
Vacant Housing Units	9.3%
Median Household Income	
2023	$57,632
2028	$65,570
Median Home Value	
2023	$175,565
2028	$238,344
Per Capita Income	
2023	$33,340
2028	$39,222
Median Age	
2010	40.8
2023	43.3
2028	44.7

Data Note: Household population includes persons not residing in group quarters.Average Household Size is the household population divided by total households.

Persons in families include the householder and persons related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. Per Capita Income represents the income received by all persons aged 15 years and over divided by the total population.

Source: Esri forecasts for 2023 and 2028. U.S. Census Bureau 2000 and 2010 decennial Census data converted by Esri into 2020 geography.

Alexander County, NC (37003)   Prepared by Esri
Alexander
Geography: County

	Alexander Cou...
2023 Households by Income	
Household Income Base	14,447
<$15,000	8.2%
$15,000 - $24,999	9.6%
$25,000 - $34,999	10.0%
$35,000 - $49,999	14.1%
$50,000 - $74,999	20.3%
$75,000 - $99,999	13.0%
$100,000 - $149,999	14.1%
$150,000 - $199,999	5.3%
$200,000+	5.3%
Average Household Income	$83,477
2028 Households by Income	
Household Income Base	14,568
<$15,000	7.1%
$15,000 - $24,999	7.9%
$25,000 - $34,999	8.4%
$35,000 - $49,999	12.5%
$50,000 - $74,999	19.8%
$75,000 - $99,999	13.6%
$100,000 - $149,999	16.7%
$150,000 - $199,999	7.2%
$200,000+	6.7%
Average Household Income	$96,957
2023 Owner Occupied Housing Units by Value	
Total	11,036
<$50,000	9.6%
$50,000 - $99,999	12.2%
$100,000 - $149,999	20.4%
$150,000 - $199,999	15.2%
$200,000 - $249,999	17.6%
$250,000 - $299,999	7.8%
$300,000 - $399,999	6.9%
$400,000 - $499,999	3.8%
$500,000 - $749,999	1.9%
$750,000 - $999,999	3.3%
$1,000,000 - $1,499,999	1.1%
$1,500,000 - $1,999,999	0.2%
$2,000,000 +	0.0%
Average Home Value	$223,743
2028 Owner Occupied Housing Units by Value	
Total	11,248
<$50,000	6.2%
$50,000 - $99,999	5.6%
$100,000 - $149,999	9.7%
$150,000 - $199,999	12.0%
$200,000 - $249,999	21.6%
$250,000 - $299,999	12.6%
$300,000 - $399,999	12.8%
$400,000 - $499,999	7.8%
$500,000 - $749,999	4.0%
$750,000 - $999,999	5.7%
$1,000,000 - $1,499,999	1.8%
$1,500,000 - $1,999,999	0.2%
$2,000,000 +	0.0%
Average Home Value	$303,276

Data Note: Income represents the preceding year, expressed in current dollars.Household income includes wage and salary earnings, interest dividends, net rents, pensions, SSI and welfare payments, child support, and alimony.

Source: Esri forecasts for 2023 and 2028. U.S. Census Bureau 2000 and 2010 decennial Census data converted by Esri into 2020 geography.

Alexander County, NC (37003) Prepared by Esri
Alexander
Geography: County

	Alexander Cou...
2010 Population by Age	
Total	37,198
0 - 4	5.9%
5 - 9	6.3%
10 - 14	6.4%
15 - 24	11.3%
25 - 34	11.8%
35 - 44	14.3%
45 - 54	15.5%
55 - 64	13.3%
65 - 74	9.1%
75 - 84	4.6%
85 +	1.4%
18 +	77.3%
2023 Population by Age	
Total	36,241
0 - 4	4.9%
5 - 9	5.6%
10 - 14	6.0%
15 - 24	10.3%
25 - 34	12.2%
35 - 44	13.2%
45 - 54	13.4%
55 - 64	14.1%
65 - 74	12.5%
75 - 84	6.1%
85 +	1.6%
18 +	80.1%
2028 Population by Age	
Total	36,071
0 - 4	4.8%
5 - 9	5.3%
10 - 14	6.1%
15 - 24	10.6%
25 - 34	10.5%
35 - 44	13.1%
45 - 54	13.3%
55 - 64	13.7%
65 - 74	12.6%
75 - 84	7.9%
85 +	2.0%
18 +	80.0%
2010 Population by Sex	
Males	18,824
Females	18,374
2023 Population by Sex	
Males	18,593
Females	17,648
2028 Population by Sex	
Males	18,517
Females	17,554

Source: Esri forecasts for 2023 and 2028. U.S. Census Bureau 2000 and 2010 decennial Census data converted by Esri into 2020 geography.

October 16, 2023

Alexander County, NC (37003) Prepared by Esri
Alexander
Geography: County

	Alexander Cou...
2010 Population by Race/Ethnicity	
Total	37,198
White Alone	89.6%
Black Alone	5.5%
American Indian Alone	0.3%
Asian Alone	1.0%
Pacific Islander Alone	0.0%
Some Other Race Alone	2.3%
Two or More Races	1.4%
Hispanic Origin	4.3%
Diversity Index	26.0
2020 Population by Race/Ethnicity	
Total	36,444
White Alone	85.8%
Black Alone	5.3%
American Indian Alone	0.4%
Asian Alone	1.1%
Pacific Islander Alone	0.0%
Some Other Race Alone	2.8%
Two or More Races	4.6%
Hispanic Origin	5.0%
Diversity Index	32.8
2023 Population by Race/Ethnicity	
Total	36,241
White Alone	85.1%
Black Alone	5.4%
American Indian Alone	0.4%
Asian Alone	1.2%
Pacific Islander Alone	0.0%
Some Other Race Alone	3.0%
Two or More Races	4.9%
Hispanic Origin	5.4%
Diversity Index	34.3
2028 Population by Race/Ethnicity	
Total	36,071
White Alone	84.1%
Black Alone	5.4%
American Indian Alone	0.5%
Asian Alone	1.4%
Pacific Islander Alone	0.0%
Some Other Race Alone	3.3%
Two or More Races	5.4%
Hispanic Origin	5.9%
Diversity Index	36.6
2010 Population by Relationship and Household Type	
Total	37,198
In Households	96.9%
In Family Households	83.9%
Householder	27.8%
Spouse	21.5%
Child	29.6%
Other relative	2.8%
Nonrelative	2.2%
In Nonfamily Households	13.0%
In Group Quarters	3.1%
Institutionalized Population	3.1%
Noninstitutionalized Population	0.1%

Data Note: Persons of Hispanic Origin may be of any race. The Diversity Index measures the probability that two people from the same area will be from different race/ethnic groups.
Source: Esri forecasts for 2023 and 2028. U.S. Census Bureau 2000 and 2010 decennial Census data converted by Esri into 2020 geography.

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Alexander Cou...

2023 Population 25+ by Educational Attainment	
Total	26,515
Less than 9th Grade	3.7%
9th - 12th Grade, No Diploma	9.2%
High School Graduate	33.0%
GED/Alternative Credential	8.1%
Some College, No Degree	16.5%
Associate Degree	12.9%
Bachelor's Degree	11.8%
Graduate/Professional Degree	4.8%
2023 Population 15+ by Marital Status	
Total	30,238
Never Married	27.0%
Married	55.5%
Widowed	7.8%
Divorced	9.7%
2023 Civilian Population 16+ in Labor Force	
Civilian Population 16+	16,829
Population 16+ Employed	95.5%
Population 16+ Unemployment rate	4.5%
Population 16-24 Employed	10.2%
Population 16-24 Unemployment rate	10.6%
Population 25-54 Employed	61.9%
Population 25-54 Unemployment rate	3.6%
Population 55-64 Employed	20.2%
Population 55-64 Unemployment rate	5.5%
Population 65+ Employed	7.6%
Population 65+ Unemployment rate	0.5%
2023 Employed Population 16+ by Industry	
Total	16,072
Agriculture/Mining	2.4%
Construction	8.2%
Manufacturing	26.8%
Wholesale Trade	1.5%
Retail Trade	11.7%
Transportation/Utilities	8.5%
Information	0.9%
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	2.8%
Services	32.4%
Public Administration	4.7%
2023 Employed Population 16+ by Occupation	
Total	16,072
White Collar	46.4%
Management/Business/Financial	14.1%
Professional	15.9%
Sales	6.5%
Administrative Support	9.9%
Services	11.5%
Blue Collar	42.1%
Farming/Forestry/Fishing	0.3%
Construction/Extraction	5.8%
Installation/Maintenance/Repair	4.0%
Production	19.7%
Transportation/Material Moving	12.3%

Alexander Cou...

2010 Households by Type	
Total	14,425
Households with 1 Person	24.1%
Households with 2+ People	75.9%
Family Households	71.7%
Husband-wife Families	55.4%
With Related Children	22.1%
Other Family (No Spouse Present)	16.3%
Other Family with Male Householder	5.4%
With Related Children	3.2%
Other Family with Female Householder	10.9%
With Related Children	6.9%
Nonfamily Households	4.2%
All Households with Children	32.7%
Multigenerational Households	3.9%
Unmarried Partner Households	5.9%
Male-female	5.2%
Same-sex	0.6%
2010 Households by Size	
Total	14,425
1 Person Household	24.1%
2 Person Household	37.0%
3 Person Household	17.0%
4 Person Household	13.5%
5 Person Household	5.5%
6 Person Household	1.8%
7 + Person Household	1.1%
2010 Households by Tenure and Mortgage Status	
Total	14,425
Owner Occupied	77.6%
Owned with a Mortgage/Loan	46.2%
Owned Free and Clear	31.3%
Renter Occupied	22.4%
2023 Affordability, Mortgage and Wealth	
Housing Affordability Index	136
Percent of Income for Mortgage	18.3%
Wealth Index	73
2010 Housing Units By Urban/Rural Status	
Total Housing Units	16,189
Housing Units Inside Urbanized Area	13.0%
Housing Units Inside Urbanized Cluster	12.4%
Rural Housing Units	74.6%
2010 Population By Urban/ Rural Status	
Total Population	37,198
Population Inside Urbanized Area	12.7%
Population Inside Urbanized Cluster	14.5%
Rural Population	72.8%

Community Profile

Alexander County, NC (37003)
Alexander
Geography: County

Prepared by Esri

	Alexander Cou...
Top 3 Tapestry Segments	
1.	Southern Satellites (10A)
2.	Salt of the Earth (6B)
3.	Rooted Rural (10B)
2023 Consumer Spending	
Apparel & Services: Total $	$23,593,409
Average Spent	$1,633.10
Spending Potential Index	74
Education: Total $	$16,969,620
Average Spent	$1,174.61
Spending Potential Index	65
Entertainment/Recreation: Total $	$45,169,765
Average Spent	$3,126.58
Spending Potential Index	83
Food at Home: Total $	$80,033,050
Average Spent	$5,539.77
Spending Potential Index	81
Food Away from Home: Total $	$41,604,691
Average Spent	$2,879.82
Spending Potential Index	77
Health Care: Total $	$95,939,380
Average Spent	$6,640.78
Spending Potential Index	90
HH Furnishings & Equipment: Total $	$33,760,227
Average Spent	$2,336.83
Spending Potential Index	79
Personal Care Products & Services: Total $	$10,226,547
Average Spent	$707.87
Spending Potential Index	74
Shelter: Total $	$257,680,138
Average Spent	$17,836.24
Spending Potential Index	72
Support Payments/Cash Contributions/Gifts in Kind: Total $	$38,308,878
Average Spent	$2,651.68
Spending Potential Index	85
Travel: Total $	$24,996,165
Average Spent	$1,730.20
Spending Potential Index	77
Vehicle Maintenance & Repairs: Total $	$15,867,807
Average Spent	$1,098.35
Spending Potential Index	84

Data Note: Consumer spending shows the amount spent on a variety of goods and services by households that reside in the area. Expenditures are shown by broad budget categories that are not mutually exclusive. Consumer spending does not equal business revenue. Total and Average Amount Spent Per Household represent annual figures. The Spending Potential Index represents the amount spent in the area relative to a national average of 100.
Source: Consumer Spending data are derived from the 2019 and 2020 Consumer Expenditure Surveys, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Esri.
Source: Esri forecasts for 2023 and 2028. U.S. Census Bureau 2000 and 2010 decennial Census data converted by Esri into 2020 geography.

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Business Summary

Alexander County, NC (37003)
Alexander
Geography: County

Prepared by Esri

Data for all businesses in area	Alexander Cou...
Total Businesses:	1,033
Total Employees:	10,792
Total Residential Population:	36,241
Employee/Residential Population Ratio (per 100 Residents)	30

by SIC Codes	Businesses Number	Percent	Employees Number	Percent
Agriculture & Mining	41	4.0%	201	1.9%
Construction	82	7.9%	322	3.0%
Manufacturing	58	5.6%	2,459	22.8%
Transportation	36	3.5%	198	1.8%
Communication	8	0.8%	27	0.3%
Utility	2	0.2%	25	0.2%
Wholesale Trade	28	2.7%	389	3.6%
Retail Trade Summary	206	19.9%	3,150	29.2%
Home Improvement	15	1.5%	130	1.2%
General Merchandise Stores	13	1.3%	328	3.0%
Food Stores	28	2.7%	248	2.3%
Auto Dealers & Gas Stations	44	4.3%	170	1.6%
Apparel & Accessory Stores	5	0.5%	24	0.2%
Furniture & Home Furnishings	21	2.0%	1,468	13.6%
Eating & Drinking Places	46	4.5%	638	5.9%
Miscellaneous Retail	34	3.3%	144	1.3%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate Summary	77	7.5%	281	2.6%
Banks, Savings & Lending Institutions	18	1.7%	122	1.1%
Securities Brokers	9	0.9%	21	0.2%
Insurance Carriers & Agents	20	1.9%	67	0.6%
Real Estate, Holding, Other Investment Offices	30	2.9%	71	0.7%
Services Summary	357	34.6%	2,938	27.2%
Hotels & Lodging	3	0.3%	7	0.1%
Automotive Services	37	3.6%	113	1.0%
Movies & Amusements	15	1.5%	53	0.5%
Health Services	36	3.5%	545	5.1%
Legal Services	15	1.5%	45	0.4%
Education Institutions & Libraries	23	2.2%	988	9.2%
Other Services	228	22.1%	1,187	11.0%
Government	81	7.8%	774	7.2%
Unclassified Establishments	57	5.5%	28	0.3%
Totals	1,033	100.0%	10,792	100.0%

Source: Copyright 2023 Data Axle, Inc. All rights reserved. Esri Total Residential Population forecasts for 2023. Esri forecasts for 2023 and 2028.
Date Note: Data on the Business Summary report is calculated using **Esri's Data allocation method** which uses census block groups to allocate business summary data to custom areas.

October 16, 2023

Business Summary

Alexander County, NC (37003)
Alexander
Geography: County

by NAICS Codes	Businesses Number	Businesses Percent	Employees Number	Employees Percent
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	22	2.1%	76	0.7%
Mining	1	0.1%	7	0.1%
Utilities	1	0.1%	20	0.2%
Construction	84	8.1%	331	3.1%
Manufacturing	64	6.2%	2,482	23.0%
Wholesale Trade	27	2.6%	386	3.6%
Retail Trade	154	14.9%	2,468	22.9%
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	33	3.2%	120	1.1%
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	16	1.5%	1,443	13.4%
Electronics & Appliance Stores	2	0.2%	6	0.1%
Building Material & Garden Equipment & Supplies Dealers	15	1.5%	130	1.2%
Food & Beverage Stores	24	2.3%	223	2.1%
Health & Personal Care Stores	8	0.8%	68	0.6%
Gasoline Stations & Fuel Dealers	11	1.1%	50	0.5%
Clothing, Clothing Accessories, Shoe and Jewelry Stores	6	0.6%	26	0.2%
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, & Music Stores	23	2.2%	61	0.6%
General Merchandise Stores	16	1.5%	341	3.2%
Transportation & Warehousing	25	1.6%	171	1.6%
Information	14	1.4%	65	0.6%
Finance & Insurance	47	4.5%	209	1.9%
Central Bank/Credit Intermediation & Related Activities	18	1.7%	121	1.1%
Securities & Commodity Contracts	9	0.9%	21	0.2%
Funds, Trusts & Other Financial Vehicles	20	1.9%	67	0.6%
Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	35	3.4%	85	0.8%
Professional, Scientific & Tech Services	59	5.7%	255	2.4%
Legal Services	15	1.5%	45	0.4%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	4	0.4%	10	0.1%
Administrative, Support & Waste Management Services	27	2.6%	107	1.0%
Educational Services	23	2.2%	980	9.1%
Health Care & Social Assistance	67	6.5%	874	8.1%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	15	1.5%	52	0.5%
Accommodation & Food Services	50	4.8%	660	6.1%
Accommodation	3	0.3%	7	0.1%
Food Services & Drinking Places	47	4.5%	653	6.1%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	173	16.7%	716	6.6%
Automotive Repair & Maintenance	33	3.2%	103	1.0%
Public Administration	84	8.1%	810	7.5%
Unclassified Establishments	57	5.5%	28	0.3%
Total	1,033	100.0%	10,792	100.0%

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Demographic and Income Profile

Alexander County, NC (37003)
Alexander
Geography: County

Summary	Census 2010	Census 2020	2023	2028
Population	37,198	36,444	36,241	36,071
Households	14,425	14,408	14,447	14,568
Families	10,338	-	10,030	10,079
Average Household Size	2.50	2.43	2.41	2.37
Owner Occupied Housing Units	11,188	-	11,036	11,248
Renter Occupied Housing Units	3,237	-	3,411	3,320
Median Age	40.8	-	43.3	44.7

Trends: 2023-2028 Annual Rate	Area	State	National
Population	-0.09%	0.53%	0.30%
Households	0.17%	0.68%	0.49%
Families	0.10%	0.60%	0.44%
Owner HHs	0.38%	0.78%	0.66%
Median Household Income	2.61%	3.37%	2.57%

Households by Income	2023 Number	2023 Percent	2028 Number	2028 Percent
<$15,000	1,190	8.2%	1,031	7.1%
$15,000 - $24,999	1,384	9.6%	1,157	7.9%
$25,000 - $34,999	1,441	10.0%	1,230	8.4%
$35,000 - $49,999	2,034	14.1%	1,826	12.5%
$50,000 - $74,999	2,935	20.3%	2,879	19.8%
$75,000 - $99,999	1,884	13.0%	1,987	13.6%
$100,000 - $149,999	2,044	14.1%	2,433	16.7%
$150,000 - $199,999	764	5.3%	1,055	7.2%
$200,000+	771	5.3%	970	6.7%
Median Household Income	$57,632		$65,570	
Average Household Income	$83,477		$96,957	
Per Capita Income	$33,340		$39,222	

Population by Age	Census 2010 Number	Census 2010 Percent	2023 Number	2023 Percent	2028 Number	2028 Percent
0 - 4	2,209	5.9%	1,787	4.9%	1,741	4.8%
5 - 9	2,337	6.3%	2,047	5.6%	1,928	5.3%
10 - 14	2,388	6.4%	2,169	6.0%	2,206	6.1%
15 - 19	2,380	6.4%	1,965	5.4%	2,125	5.9%
20 - 24	1,809	4.9%	1,758	4.9%	1,685	4.7%
25 - 34	4,390	11.8%	4,413	12.2%	3,790	10.5%
35 - 44	5,335	14.3%	4,787	13.2%	4,726	13.1%
45 - 54	5,777	15.5%	4,853	13.4%	4,798	13.3%
55 - 64	4,946	13.3%	5,120	14.1%	4,932	13.7%
65 - 74	3,397	9.1%	4,547	12.5%	4,560	12.6%
75 - 84	1,714	4.6%	2,216	6.1%	2,848	7.9%
85+	516	1.4%	579	1.6%	732	2.0%

Race and Ethnicity	Census 2010 Number	Census 2010 Percent	Census 2020 Number	Census 2020 Percent	2023 Number	2023 Percent	2028 Number	2028 Percent
White Alone	33,324	89.6%	31,284	85.8%	30,859	85.1%	30,319	84.1%
Black Alone	2,043	5.5%	1,932	5.3%	1,942	5.4%	1,954	5.4%
American Indian Alone	98	0.3%	144	0.4%	149	0.4%	163	0.5%
Asian Alone	360	1.0%	392	1.1%	435	1.2%	501	1.4%
Pacific Islander Alone	12	0.0%	5	0.0%	5	0.0%	5	0.0%
Some Other Race Alone	838	2.3%	1,009	2.8%	1,074	3.0%	1,179	3.3%
Two or More Races	523	1.4%	1,678	4.6%	1,777	4.9%	1,950	5.4%
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	1,601	4.3%	1,836	5.0%	1,957	5.4%	2,131	5.9%

Data Note: Income is expressed in current dollars.
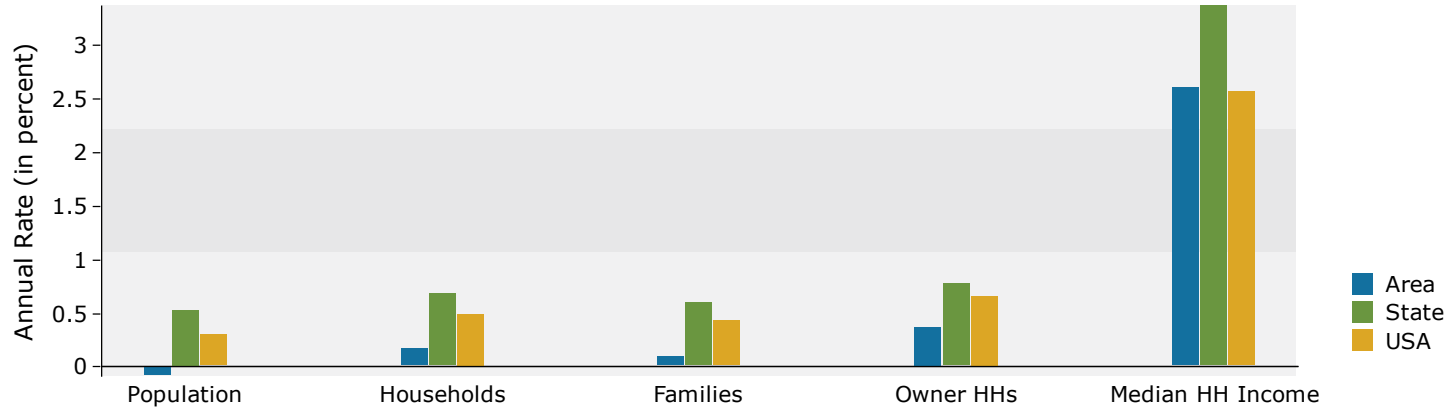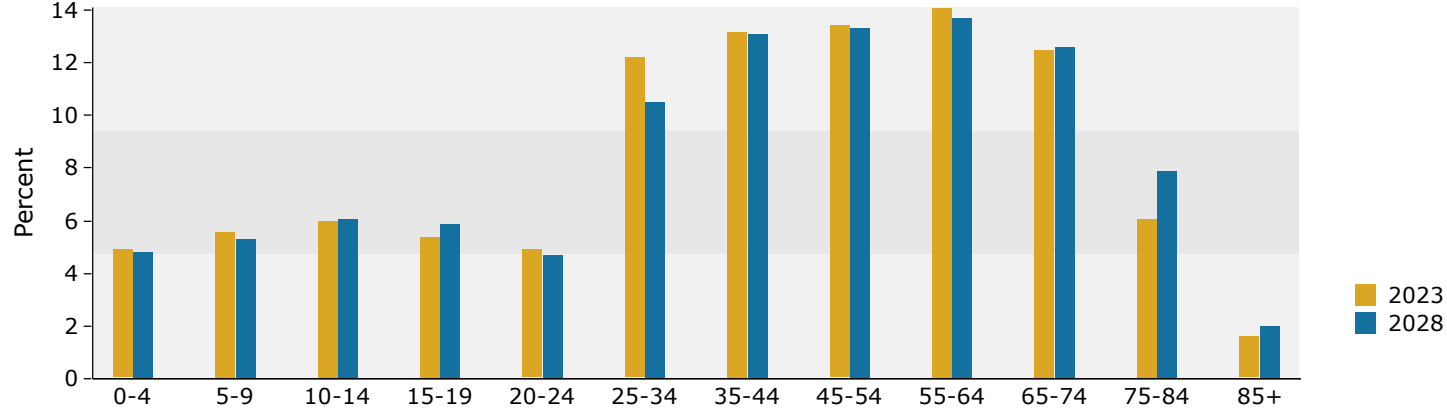
Alexander County, NC (37003)
Alexander
Geography: County

Prepared by Esri

Trends 2023-2028

Population by Age

2023 Household Income
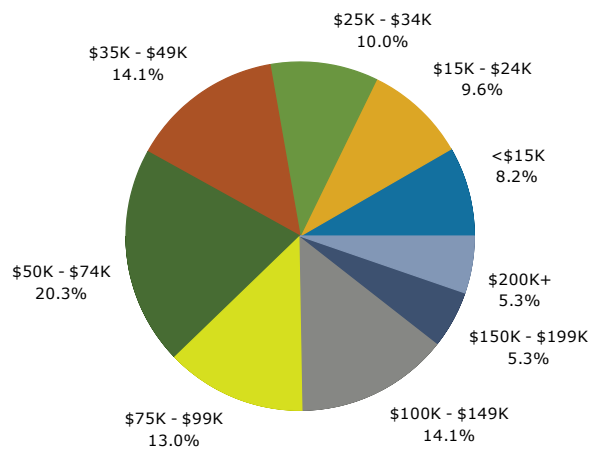
2023 Population by Race
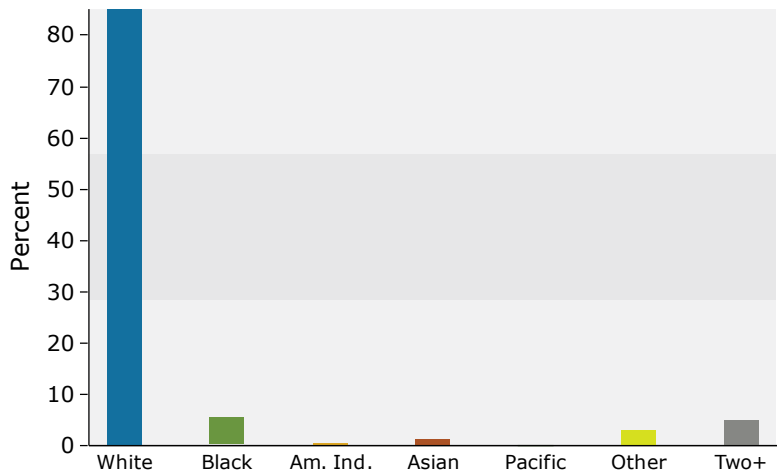
2023 Percent Hispanic Origin: 5.4%

Alexander County, NC (37003)
Alexander
Geography: County

Prepared by Esri

Demographic Summary	2023	2028
Population	36,241	36,071
Population 18+	29,014	28,862
Households	14,447	14,568
Median Household Income	$57,632	$65,570

Product/Consumer Behavior	Expected Number of Adults	Percent	MPI
Did Banking in Person/12 Mo	15,974	55.1%	106
Used Bank of America Bank/12 Mo	2,752	9.5%	61
Used Capital One Bank/12 Mo	2,310	8.0%	79
Used Chase Bank/12 Mo	3,249	11.2%	57
Used Citizens Bank/12 Mo	713	2.5%	130
Used Citibank Bank/12 Mo	1,158	4.0%	69
Used PNC Bank/12 Mo	1,163	4.0%	98
Used U.S. Bank/12 Mo	950	3.3%	80
Used Wells Fargo Bank/12 Mo	3,088	10.6%	75
Used Credit Union/12 Mo	8,005	27.6%	106
Used Local/Community Bank/12 Mo	5,414	18.7%	159
Did Banking by Mail/12 Mo	1,060	3.7%	114
Did Banking by Phone/12 Mo	3,078	10.6%	98
Did Banking Online/12 Mo	16,255	56.0%	95
Did Banking by Mobile Device/12 Mo	12,985	44.8%	93
Used ATM or Cash Machine/12 Mo	17,574	60.6%	96
Used Direct Deposit of Paycheck/12 Mo	17,663	60.9%	103
Did Banking w/Paperless Statements/12 Mo	12,080	41.6%	98
Have Interest Checking Account	11,703	40.3%	103
Have Non-Interest Checking Account	11,720	40.4%	106
Have Savings Account	20,959	72.2%	98
Have Overdraft Protection	9,675	33.3%	100
Have Auto Loan	8,585	29.6%	120
Have Education Personal Loan (Student Loan)	2,497	8.6%	93
Have Personal Loan (Not for Education)	1,745	6.0%	140
Have 1st Home Mortgage	10,776	37.1%	98
Have 2nd Mortgage (Home Equity Loan)	1,186	4.1%	92
Have Home Equity Line of Credit	854	2.9%	80
Have Personal Line of Credit	1,937	6.7%	121
Have 401(k) Retirement Savings Plan	6,725	23.2%	95
Have 403(b) Retirement Savings Plan	1,236	4.3%	80
Have Roth IRA Retirement Savings Plan	3,676	12.7%	80
Have Traditional IRA Retirement Savings Plan	4,792	16.5%	87
Own Any Securities Investment	14,598	50.3%	94
Own Any Annuity	1,291	4.4%	101
Own Certificate of Deposit (More Than 6 Mo)	1,385	4.8%	100
Own Shares in Money Market Fund	1,841	6.3%	77
Own Shares in Mutual Fund (Bonds)	1,984	6.8%	80
Own Shares in Mutual Fund (Stocks)	3,243	11.2%	82
Own Any Stock	3,321	11.4%	76
Own Common Stock in Company You Don`t Work For	2,600	9.0%	75
Own U.S. Savings Bonds	1,746	6.0%	85
Own Investment Real Estate	1,502	5.2%	104
Own Vacation or Wknd Home	1,014	3.5%	79
Used Lawyer/12 Mo	3,572	12.3%	113
Used Real Estate Agent/12 Mo	2,132	7.3%	91
Used Financial Planner/12 Mo	2,696	9.3%	86
Own 1 Credit Card	5,858	20.2%	111
Own 2 Credit Cards	5,263	18.1%	96
Own 3 Credit Cards	3,274	11.3%	86
Own 4 Credit Cards	2,188	7.5%	85
Own 5 Credit Cards	1,782	6.1%	108
Own 6+ Credit Cards	2,654	9.1%	87

Product/Consumer Behavior	Expected Number of Adults	Percent	MPI
Carry Credit Card Balance: 1-Never/Rarely	11,606	40.0%	95
Carry Credit Card Balance: 2-Sometimes	5,540	19.1%	103
Carry Credit Card Balance: 3-Usually/Always	5,144	17.7%	96
Avg $1-110 Monthly Credit Card Expenditures	3,866	13.3%	116
Avg $111-225 Monthly Credit Card Expenditures	2,182	7.5%	98
Avg $226-450 Monthly Credit Card Expenditures	2,343	8.1%	87
Avg $451-700 Monthly Credit Card Expenditures	2,666	9.2%	100
Avg $701-1000 Monthly Credit Card Expenditures	2,249	7.8%	95
Avg $1001-2000 Monthly Credit Card Expenditures	2,848	9.8%	84
Avg $2001+ Monthly Credit Card Expenditures	2,665	9.2%	83
Own 1 Debit Card	16,039	55.3%	102
Own 2 Debit Cards	4,751	16.4%	96
Own 3+ Debit Cards	1,317	4.5%	87
Avg $1-90 Debit Card Monthly Expenditures	1,576	5.4%	91
Avg $91-180 Debit Card Monthly Expenditures	1,557	5.4%	84
Avg $181-225 Debit Card Monthly Expenditures	1,322	4.6%	84
Avg $226-450 Debit Card Monthly Expenditures	3,019	10.4%	108
Avg $451-700 Debit Card Monthly Expenditures	3,122	10.8%	115
Avg $701-1000 Debit Card Monthly Expenditures	2,653	9.1%	117
Avg $1001-2000 Debit Card Monthly Expenditures	2,201	7.6%	116
Avg $2001+ Debit Card Monthly Expenditures	808	2.8%	103
Own or Used Any Credit/Debit Card/12 Mo	26,775	92.3%	99
Own or Used Any Major Credit/Debit Card/12 Mo	25,474	87.8%	99
Own or Used Any Store Credit Card/12 Mo	8,548	29.5%	93
Have Credit/Debit Card w/Airline Miles Rewards	2,648	9.1%	67
Have Credit/Debit Card w/Cash Back Rewards	11,815	40.7%	88
Have Credit/Debit Card w/Hotel/Car Rental Rewards	930	3.2%	73
Have American Express Green Card in Own Name	441	1.5%	72
Have American Express Blue Card in Own Name	1,183	4.1%	70
Have American Express Gold Card in Own Name	752	2.6%	78
Have American Express Platinum Card in Own Name	576	2.0%	60
Have Discover Card in Own Name	4,903	16.9%	94
Have MasterCard Standard Card in Own Name	5,849	20.2%	95
Have MasterCard Gold Card in Own Name	881	3.0%	112
Have MasterCard Platinum Card in Own Name	1,839	6.3%	108
Have MasterCard Debit Card in Own Name	6,818	23.5%	109
Have Visa Standard or Classic Card in Own Name	8,216	28.3%	90
Have Visa Gold Card in Own Name	596	2.1%	88
Have Visa Platinum Card in Own Name	2,556	8.8%	89
Have Visa Signature Card in Own Name	2,334	8.0%	77
Have Visa Debit Card in Own Name	14,118	48.7%	96
Paid Bills by Mail/12 Mo	11,322	39.0%	124
Paid Bills in Person/12 Mo	6,208	21.4%	148
Paid Bills by Phone Using Credit Card/12 Mo	5,654	19.5%	114
Paid Bills by Auto Charge to Credit Card/12 Mo	7,705	26.6%	92
Paid Bills by Auto Deduct from Bank Acct/12 Mo	13,201	45.5%	106
Wired or Sent Money/6 Mo	4,638	16.0%	81
Wired or Sent Money w/Bank Wire Transfer/6 Mo	1,109	3.8%	65
Wired or Sent Money w/MoneyGram/6 Mo	482	1.7%	87
Wired or Sent Money w/Money Order/6 Mo	1,524	5.3%	102
Wired or Sent Money w/Western Union/6 Mo	644	2.2%	63
Wired or Sent Money w/USPS/6 Mo	1,151	4.0%	101

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Product/Consumer Behavior	Expected Number of Adults	Percent	MPI
Used Apple Pay Digital Payment Svc/30 Days	2,637	9.1%	65
Used Cash App Digital Payment Svc/30 Days	1,724	5.9%	89
Used Google Pay Digital Payment Svc/30 Days	1,641	5.7%	88
Used PayPal Digital Payment Svc/30 Days	10,211	35.2%	109
Used Samsung Pay Digital Payment Svc/30 Days	330	1.1%	69
Used Venmo Digital Payment Svc/30 Days	4,113	14.2%	68
Used Visa Checkout Digital Payment Svc/30 Days	906	3.1%	82
Used Zelle Digital Payment Svc/30 Days	2,354	8.1%	49
Used Oth Digital Payment Svc/30 Days	778	2.7%	106
Did Manual Tax Preparation	5,324	18.3%	100
Used H&R Block Software to Prepare Taxes	2,102	7.2%	104
Used TurboTax Software Program to Prepare Taxes	5,208	17.9%	96
Used Online Program/Service to Prepare Taxes	6,518	22.5%	110
Used H&R Block Online to Prepare Taxes	1,110	3.8%	110
Used TurboTax Online to Prepare Taxes	3,566	12.3%	110
Used H&R Block On-Site Tax Svc to Prepare Taxes	1,097	3.8%	111
Used CPA or Oth Tax Prof to Prepare Taxes	5,220	18.0%	98
Personally/Jointly Acq 401(k)/403(b) Loan/12 Mo	746	2.6%	116

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	Alexander Cou...
Population Summary	
2010 Total Population	37,198
2020 Total Population	36,444
2020 Group Quarters	1,492
2023 Total Population	36,241
2023 Group Quarters	1,492
2028 Total Population	36,071
2023-2028 Annual Rate	-0.09%
2023 Total Daytime Population	30,457
Workers	10,860
Residents	19,597
Household Summary	
2010 Households	14,425
2010 Average Household Size	2.50
2020 Total Households	14,408
2020 Average Household Size	2.43
2023 Households	14,447
2023 Average Household Size	2.41
2028 Households	14,568
2028 Average Household Size	2.37
2023-2028 Annual Rate	0.17%
2010 Families	10,338
2010 Average Family Size	2.94
2023 Families	10,030
2023 Average Family Size	2.90
2028 Families	10,079
2028 Average Family Size	2.86
2023-2028 Annual Rate	0.10%
Housing Unit Summary	
2000 Housing Units	14,098
Owner Occupied Housing Units	75.0%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	18.2%
Vacant Housing Units	6.8%
2010 Housing Units	16,189
Owner Occupied Housing Units	69.1%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	20.0%
Vacant Housing Units	10.9%
2020 Housing Units	15,960
Vacant Housing Units	9.7%
2023 Housing Units	16,003
Owner Occupied Housing Units	69.0%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	21.3%
Vacant Housing Units	9.7%
2028 Housing Units	16,066
Owner Occupied Housing Units	70.0%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	20.7%
Vacant Housing Units	9.3%
Median Household Income	
2023	$57,632
2028	$65,570
Median Home Value	
2023	$175,565
2028	$238,344
Per Capita Income	
2023	$33,340
2028	$39,222
Median Age	
2010	40.8
2023	43.3
2028	44.7

Data Note: Household population includes persons not residing in group quarters. Average Household Size is the household population divided by total households.

Persons in families include the householder and persons related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. Per Capita Income represents the income received by all persons aged 15 years and over divided by the total population.

Source: Esri forecasts for 2023 and 2028. U.S. Census Bureau 2000 and 2010 decennial Census data converted by Esri into 2020 geography.

	Alexander Cou...
2023 Households by Income	
Household Income Base	14,447
<$15,000	8.2%
$15,000 - $24,999	9.6%
$25,000 - $34,999	10.0%
$35,000 - $49,999	14.1%
$50,000 - $74,999	20.3%
$75,000 - $99,999	13.0%
$100,000 - $149,999	14.1%
$150,000 - $199,999	5.3%
$200,000+	5.3%
Average Household Income	$83,477
2028 Households by Income	
Household Income Base	14,568
<$15,000	7.1%
$15,000 - $24,999	7.9%
$25,000 - $34,999	8.4%
$35,000 - $49,999	12.5%
$50,000 - $74,999	19.8%
$75,000 - $99,999	13.6%
$100,000 - $149,999	16.7%
$150,000 - $199,999	7.2%
$200,000+	6.7%
Average Household Income	$96,957
2023 Owner Occupied Housing Units by Value	
Total	11,036
<$50,000	9.6%
$50,000 - $99,999	12.2%
$100,000 - $149,999	20.4%
$150,000 - $199,999	15.2%
$200,000 - $249,999	17.6%
$250,000 - $299,999	7.8%
$300,000 - $399,999	6.9%
$400,000 - $499,999	3.8%
$500,000 - $749,999	1.9%
$750,000 - $999,999	3.3%
$1,000,000 - $1,499,999	1.1%
$1,500,000 - $1,999,999	0.2%
$2,000,000 +	0.0%
Average Home Value	$223,743
2028 Owner Occupied Housing Units by Value	
Total	11,248
<$50,000	6.2%
$50,000 - $99,999	5.6%
$100,000 - $149,999	9.7%
$150,000 - $199,999	12.0%
$200,000 - $249,999	21.6%
$250,000 - $299,999	12.6%
$300,000 - $399,999	12.8%
$400,000 - $499,999	7.8%
$500,000 - $749,999	4.0%
$750,000 - $999,999	5.7%
$1,000,000 - $1,499,999	1.8%
$1,500,000 - $1,999,999	0.2%
$2,000,000 +	0.0%
Average Home Value	$303,276

Data Note: Income represents the preceding year, expressed in current dollars. Household income includes wage and salary earnings, interest dividends, net rents, pensions, SSI and welfare payments, child support, and alimony.

Source: Esri forecasts for 2023 and 2028. U.S. Census Bureau 2000 and 2010 decennial Census data converted by Esri into 2020 geography.

2010 Population by Age	Alexander Cou...
Total	37,198
0 - 4	5.9%
5 - 9	6.3%
10 - 14	6.4%
15 - 24	11.3%
25 - 34	11.8%
35 - 44	14.3%
45 - 54	15.5%
55 - 64	13.3%
65 - 74	9.1%
75 - 84	4.6%
85 +	1.4%
18 +	77.3%
2023 Population by Age	
Total	36,241
0 - 4	4.9%
5 - 9	5.6%
10 - 14	6.0%
15 - 24	10.3%
25 - 34	12.2%
35 - 44	13.2%
45 - 54	13.4%
55 - 64	14.1%
65 - 74	12.5%
75 - 84	6.1%
85 +	1.6%
18 +	80.1%
2028 Population by Age	
Total	36,071
0 - 4	4.8%
5 - 9	5.3%
10 - 14	6.1%
15 - 24	10.6%
25 - 34	10.5%
35 - 44	13.1%
45 - 54	13.3%
55 - 64	13.7%
65 - 74	12.6%
75 - 84	7.9%
85 +	2.0%
18 +	80.0%
2010 Population by Sex	
Males	18,824
Females	18,374
2023 Population by Sex	
Males	18,593
Females	17,648
2028 Population by Sex	
Males	18,517
Females	17,554

Source: Esri forecasts for 2023 and 2028. U.S. Census Bureau 2000 and 2010 decennial Census data converted by Esri into 2020 geography.

2010 Population by Race/Ethnicity	Alexander Cou...
Total	37,198
White Alone	89.6%
Black Alone	5.5%
American Indian Alone	0.3%
Asian Alone	1.0%
Pacific Islander Alone	0.0%
Some Other Race Alone	2.3%
Two or More Races	1.4%
Hispanic Origin	4.3%
Diversity Index	26.0
2020 Population by Race/Ethnicity	
Total	36,444
White Alone	85.8%
Black Alone	5.3%
American Indian Alone	0.4%
Asian Alone	1.1%
Pacific Islander Alone	0.0%
Some Other Race Alone	2.8%
Two or More Races	4.6%
Hispanic Origin	5.0%
Diversity Index	32.8
2023 Population by Race/Ethnicity	
Total	36,241
White Alone	85.1%
Black Alone	5.4%
American Indian Alone	0.4%
Asian Alone	1.2%
Pacific Islander Alone	0.0%
Some Other Race Alone	3.0%
Two or More Races	4.9%
Hispanic Origin	5.4%
Diversity Index	34.3
2028 Population by Race/Ethnicity	
Total	36,071
White Alone	84.1%
Black Alone	5.4%
American Indian Alone	0.5%
Asian Alone	1.4%
Pacific Islander Alone	0.0%
Some Other Race Alone	3.3%
Two or More Races	5.4%
Hispanic Origin	5.9%
Diversity Index	36.6
2010 Population by Relationship and Household Type	
Total	37,198
In Households	96.9%
In Family Households	83.9%
Householder	27.8%
Spouse	21.5%
Child	29.6%
Other relative	2.8%
Nonrelative	2.2%
In Nonfamily Households	13.0%
In Group Quarters	3.1%
Institutionalized Population	3.1%
Noninstitutionalized Population	0.1%

Data Note: ersons of Hispanic Origin may be of any race. The Diversity Index measures the probability that two people from the same area will be from different race/ethnic groups.
Source: Esri forecasts for 2023 and 2028. U.S. Census Bureau 2000 and 2010 decennial Census data converted by Esri into 2020 geography.

Alexander County, NC (37003)
Alexander
Geography: County

Prepared by Esri

	Alexander Cou...
2023 Population 25+ by Educational Attainment	
Total	26,515
Less than 9th Grade	3.7%
9th - 12th Grade, No Diploma	9.2%
High School Graduate	33.0%
GED/Alternative Credential	8.1%
Some College, No Degree	16.5%
Associate Degree	12.9%
Bachelor's Degree	11.8%
Graduate/Professional Degree	4.8%
2023 Population 15+ by Marital Status	
Total	30,238
Never Married	27.0%
Married	55.5%
Widowed	7.8%
Divorced	9.7%
2023 Civilian Population 16+ in Labor Force	
Civilian Population 16+	16,829
Population 16+ Employed	95.5%
Population 16+ Unemployment rate	4.5%
Population 16-24 Employed	10.2%
Population 16-24 Unemployment rate	10.6%
Population 25-54 Employed	61.9%
Population 25-54 Unemployment rate	3.6%
Population 55-64 Employed	20.2%
Population 55-64 Unemployment rate	5.5%
Population 65+ Employed	7.6%
Population 65+ Unemployment rate	0.5%
2023 Employed Population 16+ by Industry	
Total	16,072
Agriculture/Mining	2.4%
Construction	8.2%
Manufacturing	26.8%
Wholesale Trade	1.5%
Retail Trade	11.7%
Transportation/Utilities	8.5%
Information	0.9%
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	2.8%
Services	32.4%
Public Administration	4.7%
2023 Employed Population 16+ by Occupation	
Total	16,072
White Collar	46.4%
Management/Business/Financial	14.1%
Professional	15.9%
Sales	6.5%
Administrative Support	9.9%
Services	11.5%
Blue Collar	42.1%
Farming/Forestry/Fishing	0.3%
Construction/Extraction	5.8%
Installation/Maintenance/Repair	4.0%
Production	19.7%
Transportation/Material Moving	12.3%

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	Alexander Cou...
2010 Households by Type	
Total	14,425
Households with 1 Person	24.1%
Households with 2+ People	75.9%
Family Households	71.7%
Husband-wife Families	55.4%
With Related Children	22.1%
Other Family (No Spouse Present)	16.3%
Other Family with Male Householder	5.4%
With Related Children	3.2%
Other Family with Female Householder	10.9%
With Related Children	6.9%
Nonfamily Households	4.2%
All Households with Children	32.7%
Multigenerational Households	3.9%
Unmarried Partner Households	5.9%
Male-female	5.2%
Same-sex	0.6%
2010 Households by Size	
Total	14,425
1 Person Household	24.1%
2 Person Household	37.0%
3 Person Household	17.0%
4 Person Household	13.5%
5 Person Household	5.5%
6 Person Household	1.8%
7 + Person Household	1.1%
2010 Households by Tenure and Mortgage Status	
Total	14,425
Owner Occupied	77.6%
Owned with a Mortgage/Loan	46.2%
Owned Free and Clear	31.3%
Renter Occupied	22.4%
2023 Affordability, Mortgage and Wealth	
Housing Affordability Index	136
Percent of Income for Mortgage	18.3%
Wealth Index	73
2010 Housing Units By Urban/Rural Status	
Total Housing Units	16,189
Housing Units Inside Urbanized Area	13.0%
Housing Units Inside Urbanized Cluster	12.4%
Rural Housing Units	74.6%
2010 Population By Urban/ Rural Status	
Total Population	37,198
Population Inside Urbanized Area	12.7%
Population Inside Urbanized Cluster	14.5%
Rural Population	72.8%

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Alexander Cou...

Top 3 Tapestry Segments	
1.	Southern Satellites (10A)
2.	Salt of the Earth (6B)
3.	Rooted Rural (10B)

2023 Consumer Spending	
Apparel & Services: Total $	$23,593,409
Average Spent	$1,633.10
Spending Potential Index	74
Education: Total $	$16,969,620
Average Spent	$1,174.61
Spending Potential Index	65
Entertainment/Recreation: Total $	$45,169,765
Average Spent	$3,126.58
Spending Potential Index	83
Food at Home: Total $	$80,033,050
Average Spent	$5,539.77
Spending Potential Index	81
Food Away from Home: Total $	$41,604,691
Average Spent	$2,879.82
Spending Potential Index	77
Health Care: Total $	$95,939,380
Average Spent	$6,640.78
Spending Potential Index	90
HH Furnishings & Equipment: Total $	$33,760,227
Average Spent	$2,336.83
Spending Potential Index	79
Personal Care Products & Services: Total $	$10,226,547
Average Spent	$707.87
Spending Potential Index	74
Shelter: Total $	$257,680,138
Average Spent	$17,836.24
Spending Potential Index	72
Support Payments/Cash Contributions/Gifts in Kind: Total $	$38,308,878
Average Spent	$2,651.68
Spending Potential Index	85
Travel: Total $	$24,996,165
Average Spent	$1,730.20
Spending Potential Index	77
Vehicle Maintenance & Repairs: Total $	$15,867,807
Average Spent	$1,098.35
Spending Potential Index	84

Data Note: Consumer spending shows the amount spent on a variety of goods and services by households that reside in the area. Expenditures are shown by broad budget categories that are not mutually exclusive. Consumer spending does not equal business revenue. Total and Average Amount Spent Per Household represent annual figures. The Spending Potential Index represents the amount spent in the area relative to a national average of 100.
Source: Consumer Spending data are derived from the 2019 and 2020 Consumer Expenditure Surveys, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Esri.
Source: Esri forecasts for 2023 and 2028. U.S. Census Bureau 2000 and 2010 decennial Census data converted by Esri into 2020 geography.

Demographic Summary	2023	2028
Population	36,241	36,071
Population 18+	29,014	28,862
Households	14,447	14,568
Median Household Income	$57,632	$65,570

Product/Consumer Behavior	Expected Number of Adults	Percent	MPI
Went to Family Restaurant/Steak House/6 Mo	20,061	69.1%	105
Went to Family Restaurant/Steak House 4+ Times/30 Days	6,242	21.5%	105
Spent $1-30 at Family Restaurant/Steak House/30 Days	2,112	7.3%	109
Spent $31-50 at Family Restaurant/Steak House/30 Days	2,854	9.8%	115
Spent $51-100 at Family Restaurant/Steak House/30 Days	4,847	16.7%	112
Spent $101-200 at Family Restaurant/Steak House/30 Days	2,919	10.1%	103
Spent $201+ at Family Restaurant/Steak House/30 Days	1,253	4.3%	88
Spent $1-100 at Fine Dining Restaurants/30 Days	780	2.7%	89
Spent $101-200 at Fine Dining Restaurants/30 Days	407	1.4%	60
Spent $201+ at Fine Dining Restaurants/30 Days	334	1.2%	57
Went for Breakfast at Family Restaurant/Steak House/6 Mo	3,034	10.5%	102
Went for Lunch at Family Restaurant/Steak House/6 Mo	5,244	18.1%	111
Went for Dinner at Family Restaurant/Steak House/6 Mo	13,282	45.8%	105
Went for Snacks at Family Restaurant/Steak House/6 Mo	352	1.2%	86
Went on Workday to Family Restaurant/Steak House/6 Mo	9,189	31.7%	106
Went on Weekend to Family Restaurant/Steak House/6 Mo	10,941	37.7%	103
Went to Applebee`s/6 Mo	4,169	14.4%	108
Went to Bob Evans/6 Mo	900	3.1%	138
Went to Buffalo Wild Wings/6 Mo	2,021	7.0%	86
Went to California Pizza Kitchen/6 Mo	156	0.5%	38
Went to Carrabba`s/6 Mo	635	2.2%	112
Went to The Cheesecake Factory/6 Mo	1,199	4.1%	67
Went to Chili`s Grill & Bar/6 Mo	2,580	8.9%	98
Went to Cracker Barrel/6 Mo	4,897	16.9%	172
Went to Denny`s/6 Mo	1,352	4.7%	82
Went to Golden Corral/6 Mo	1,478	5.1%	174
Went to IHOP/6 Mo	1,941	6.7%	94
Went to Logan`s Roadhouse/6 Mo	1,010	3.5%	201
Went to Longhorn Steakhouse/6 Mo	2,097	7.2%	131
Went to Olive Garden/6 Mo	4,376	15.1%	111
Went to Outback Steakhouse/6 Mo	2,273	7.8%	111
Went to Red Lobster/6 Mo	1,816	6.3%	101
Went to Red Robin/6 Mo	1,229	4.2%	84
Went to Ruby Tuesday/6 Mo	782	2.7%	163
Went to Texas Roadhouse/6 Mo	4,020	13.9%	130
Went to T.G.I. Friday`s/6 Mo	439	1.5%	69
Went to Waffle House/6 Mo	2,257	7.8%	177
Went to Fast Food/Drive-In Restaurant/6 Mo	26,812	92.4%	102
Went to Fast Food/Drive-In Rest 9+ Times/30 Days	12,198	42.0%	108
Spent $1-10 at Fast Food Restaurant/30 Days	1,069	3.7%	89
Spent $11-20 at Fast Food Restaurant/30 Days	2,633	9.1%	108
Spent $21-40 at Fast Food Restaurant/30 Days	4,899	16.9%	102
Spent $41-50 at Fast Food Restaurant/30 Days	2,934	10.1%	109
Spent $51-100 at Fast Food Restaurant/30 Days	6,051	20.9%	102
Spent $101-200 at Fast Food Restaurant/30 Days	4,271	14.7%	119
Spent $201+ at Fast Food Restaurant/30 Days	1,496	5.2%	99
Ordered Eat-In Fast Food/6 Mo	6,899	23.8%	116

Data Note: An MPI (Market Potential Index) measures the relative likelihood of the adults in the specified trade area to exhibit certain consumer behavior or purchasing patterns compared to the U.S. An MPI of 100 represents the U.S. average.
Source: These data are based upon national propensities to use various products and services, applied to local demographic composition. Usage data were collected by MRI-Simmons in a nationally representative survey of U.S. households. Esri forecasts for 2023 and 2028.

Product/Consumer Behavior	Expected Number of Adults	Percent	MPI
Ordered Home Delivery Fast Food/6 Mo	2,647	9.1%	68
Take-Out/Drive-Thru/Curbside Fast Food/6 Mo	19,040	65.6%	112
Ordered Take-Out/Walk-In Fast Food/6 Mo	5,069	17.5%	78
Bought Breakfast at Fast Food Restaurant/6 Mo	11,694	40.3%	116
Bought Lunch at Fast Food Restaurant/6 Mo	16,967	58.5%	109
Bought Dinner at Fast Food Restaurant/6 Mo	16,305	56.2%	104
Bought Snack at Fast Food Restaurant/6 Mo	3,597	12.4%	93
Bought from Fast Food Restaurant on Weekday/6 Mo	20,438	70.4%	107
Bought from Fast Food Restaurant on Weekend/6 Mo	15,117	52.1%	99
Bought A&W/6 Mo	603	2.1%	101
Bought Arby`s/6 Mo	7,308	25.2%	141
Bought Baskin-Robbins/6 Mo	525	1.8%	58
Bought Boston Market/6 Mo	216	0.7%	38
Bought Burger King/6 Mo	9,499	32.7%	117
Bought Captain D`s/6 Mo	1,983	6.8%	244
Bought Carl`s Jr./6 Mo	566	2.0%	42
Bought Checkers/6 Mo	823	2.8%	115
Bought Chick-Fil-A/6 Mo	10,023	34.5%	105
Bought Chipotle Mexican Grill/6 Mo	2,260	7.8%	49
Bought Chuck E. Cheese`s/6 Mo	178	0.6%	59
Bought Church`s Fried Chicken/6 Mo	834	2.9%	89
Bought Cold Stone Creamery/6 Mo	619	2.1%	76
Bought Dairy Queen/6 Mo	6,151	21.2%	140
Bought Del Taco/6 Mo	505	1.7%	53
Bought Domino`s Pizza/6 Mo	4,714	16.2%	101
Bought Dunkin` Donuts/6 Mo	3,343	11.5%	78
Bought Five Guys/6 Mo	2,273	7.8%	80
Bought Hardee`s/6 Mo	3,295	11.4%	222
Bought Jack in the Box/6 Mo	1,032	3.6%	53
Bought Jersey Mike`s/6 Mo	1,579	5.4%	75
Bought Jimmy John`s/6 Mo	1,427	4.9%	84
Bought KFC/6 Mo	6,314	21.8%	126
Bought Krispy Kreme Doughnuts/6 Mo	2,003	6.9%	100
Bought Little Caesars/6 Mo	4,301	14.8%	127
Bought Long John Silver`s/6 Mo	1,298	4.5%	189
Bought McDonald`s/6 Mo	15,911	54.8%	109
Bought Panda Express/6 Mo	2,458	8.5%	70
Bought Panera Bread/6 Mo	2,692	9.3%	72
Bought Papa John`s/6 Mo	2,924	10.1%	124
Bought Papa Murphy`s/6 Mo	890	3.1%	86
Bought Pizza Hut/6 Mo	4,378	15.1%	123
Bought Popeyes Chicken/6 Mo	3,618	12.5%	90
Bought Sonic Drive-In/6 Mo	5,543	19.1%	162
Bought Starbucks/6 Mo	4,317	14.9%	73
Bought Steak `N Shake/6 Mo	1,147	4.0%	135
Bought Subway/6 Mo	7,731	26.6%	123
Bought Taco Bell/6 Mo	9,056	31.2%	115
Bought Wendy`s/6 Mo	9,004	31.0%	118
Bought Whataburger/6 Mo	2,160	7.4%	126
Bought White Castle/6 Mo	495	1.7%	69
Bought Wing-Stop/6 Mo	406	1.4%	41

Data Note: An MPI (Market Potential Index) measures the relative likelihood of the adults in the specified trade area to exhibit certain consumer behavior or purchasing patterns compared to the U.S. An MPI of 100 represents the U.S. average.
Source: These data are based upon national propensities to use various products and services, applied to local demographic composition. Usage data were collected by MRI-Simmons in a nationally representative survey of U.S. households. Esri forecasts for 2023 and 2028.

October 16, 2023

Product/Consumer Behavior	Expected Number of Adults	Percent	MPI
Went to Fine Dining Restaurant/6 Mo	2,641	9.1%	75
Went to Fine Dining Restaurant/30 Days	2,000	6.9%	76
Went to Fine Dining Restaurant 2+ Times/30 Days	876	3.0%	73
Used DoorDash Site/App for Take-Out/Del/30 Days	1,860	6.4%	55
Used Grubhub Site/App for Take-Out/Del/30 Days	733	2.5%	46
Used Postmates Site/App for Take-Out/Del/30 Days	109	0.4%	22
Used Restrnt Site/App for Take-Out/Del/30 Days	5,504	19.0%	86
Used Uber Eats Site/App for Take-Out/Del/30 Days	628	2.2%	34
Used Yelp Site/App for Take-Out/Del/30 Days	225	0.8%	47

Data Note: An MPI (Market Potential Index) measures the relative likelihood of the adults in the specified trade area to exhibit certain consumer behavior or purchasing patterns compared to the U.S. An MPI of 100 represents the U.S. average.
Source: These data are based upon national propensities to use various products and services, applied to local demographic composition. Usage data were collected by MRI-Simmons in a nationally representative survey of U.S. households. Esri forecasts for 2023 and 2028.

October 16, 2023

Demographic Summary		2023	2028
Population		36,241	36,071
Population 18+		29,014	28,862
Households		14,447	14,568
Median Household Income		$57,632	$65,570

Product/Consumer Behavior	Expected Number of Adults or HHs	Percent of Adults/HHs	MPI
Apparel (Adults)			
Bought Men`s Clothing/12 Mo	18,339	63.2%	103
Bought Women`s Clothing/12 Mo	15,466	53.3%	103
Bought Shoes/12 Mo	21,803	75.1%	101
Bought Fine Jewelry/12 Mo	5,895	20.3%	99
Bought Watch/12 Mo	3,890	13.4%	97
Automobiles (Households)			
HH Owns or Leases Any Vehicle	13,742	95.1%	104
HH Bought or Leased New Vehicle/12 Mo	1,433	9.9%	98
Automotive Aftermarket (Adults)			
Bought Gasoline/6 Mo	27,521	94.9%	105
Bought or Changed Motor Oil/12 Mo	17,675	60.9%	119
Had Vehicle Tune-Up/12 Mo	7,143	24.6%	99
Beverages (Adults)			
Drank Non-Diet (Regular) Cola/6 Mo	12,092	41.7%	113
Drank Beer or Ale/6 Mo	10,539	36.3%	92
Cameras (Adults)			
Own Digital Point and Shoot Camera/Camcorder	3,357	11.6%	105
Own Digital SLR Camera or Camcorder	3,084	10.6%	98
Printed Digital Photos/12 Mo	8,333	28.7%	106
Cell Phones (Adults/Households)			
Bought Cell Phone/12 Mo	10,182	35.1%	100
Have a Smartphone	26,839	92.5%	99
Have Android Phone (Any Brand) Smartphone	13,092	45.1%	117
Have Apple iPhone Smartphone	14,100	48.6%	86
HH Owns 1 Cell Phone	3,845	26.6%	87
HH Owns 2 Cell Phones	6,214	43.0%	110
HH Owns 3+ Cell Phones	4,133	28.6%	99
HH Has Cell Phone Only (No Landline Telephone)	10,024	69.4%	101
Computers (Households)			
HH Owns Computer	11,729	81.2%	95
HH Owns Desktop Computer	5,491	38.0%	95
HH Owns Laptop or Notebook	9,568	66.2%	94
HH Owns Apple/Mac Brand Computer	2,332	16.1%	67
HH Owns PC/Non-Apple Brand Computer	10,393	71.9%	101
HH Purchased Most Recent Home Computer at Store	5,618	38.9%	100
HH Purchased Most Recent Home Computer Online	3,496	24.2%	88
HH Spent $1-499 on Most Recent Home Computer	2,791	19.3%	122
HH Spent $500-999 on Most Recent Home Computer	2,927	20.3%	100
HH Spent $1K-1499 on Most Recent Home Computer	1,301	9.0%	74
HH Spent $1500-1999 on Most Recent Home Computer	454	3.1%	68
HH Spent $2K+ on Most Recent Home Computer	459	3.2%	59

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Product/Consumer Behavior	Expected Number of Adults or HHs	Percent of Adults/HHs	MPI
Convenience Stores (Adults)			
Shopped at C-Store/6 Mo	20,321	70.0%	110
Bought Brewed Coffee at C-Store/30 Days	3,482	12.0%	100
Bought Cigarettes at C-Store/30 Days	2,703	9.3%	153
Bought Gas at C-Store/30 Days	14,725	50.8%	129
Spent $1-19 at C-Store/30 Days	1,846	6.4%	86
Spent $20-39 at C-Store/30 Days	2,817	9.7%	99
Spent $40-50 at C-Store/30 Days	2,251	7.8%	100
Spent $51-99 at C-Store/30 Days	2,027	7.0%	114
Spent $100+ at C-Store/30 Days	8,333	28.7%	137
Entertainment (Adults)			
Attended Movie/6 Mo	9,307	32.1%	87
Went to Live Theater/12 Mo	1,322	4.6%	67
Went to Bar or Night Club/12 Mo	3,788	13.1%	80
Dined Out/12 Mo	15,227	52.5%	101
Gambled at Casino/12 Mo	2,693	9.3%	87
Visited Theme Park/12 Mo	3,216	11.1%	95
Viewed Movie (Video-on-Demand)/30 Days	2,496	8.6%	78
Viewed TV Show (Video-on-Demand)/30 Days	1,519	5.2%	69
Used Internet to Download Movie/30 Days	1,313	4.5%	75
Downloaded Individual Song/6 Mo	5,501	19.0%	94
Used Internet to Watch Movie/30 Days	7,657	26.4%	77
Used Internet to Watch TV Program/30 Days	4,795	16.5%	75
Played (Console) Video or Electronic Game/12 Mo	3,433	11.8%	92
Played (Portable) Video or Electronic Game/12 Mo	1,790	6.2%	93
Financial (Adults)			
Have 1st Home Mortgage	10,776	37.1%	98
Used ATM or Cash Machine/12 Mo	17,574	60.6%	96
Own Any Stock	3,321	11.4%	76
Own U.S. Savings Bonds	1,746	6.0%	85
Own Shares in Mutual Fund (Stocks)	3,243	11.2%	82
Own Shares in Mutual Fund (Bonds)	1,984	6.8%	80
Have Interest Checking Account	11,703	40.3%	103
Have Non-Interest Checking Account	11,720	40.4%	106
Have Savings Account	20,959	72.2%	98
Have 401(k) Retirement Savings Plan	6,725	23.2%	95
Own or Used Any Credit/Debit Card/12 Mo	26,775	92.3%	99
Avg $1-110 Monthly Credit Card Expenditures	3,866	13.3%	116
Avg $111-225 Monthly Credit Card Expenditures	2,182	7.5%	98
Avg $226-450 Monthly Credit Card Expenditures	2,343	8.1%	87
Avg $451-700 Monthly Credit Card Expenditures	2,666	9.2%	100
Avg $701-1000 Monthly Credit Card Expenditures	2,249	7.8%	95
Avg $1001-2000 Monthly Credit Card Expenditures	2,848	9.8%	84
Avg $2001+ Monthly Credit Card Expenditures	2,665	9.2%	83
Did Banking Online/12 Mo	16,255	56.0%	95
Did Banking by Mobile Device/12 Mo	12,985	44.8%	93

October 16, 2023

Product/Consumer Behavior	Expected Number of Adults/HHs	Percent of Adults/HHs	MPI
Grocery (Adults)			
HH Used Bread/6 Mo	13,831	95.7%	101
HH Used Chicken (Fresh or Frozen)/6 Mo	10,273	71.1%	102
HH Used Turkey (Fresh or Frozen)/6 Mo	2,400	16.6%	112
HH Used Fish or Seafood (Fresh or Frozen)/6 Mo	8,525	59.0%	98
HH Used Fresh Fruit or Vegetables/6 Mo	12,603	87.2%	99
HH Used Fresh Milk/6 Mo	12,541	86.8%	105
HH Used Fish or Seafood (Fresh or Frozen)/6 Mo	8,525	59.0%	70
Health (Adults)			
Exercise at Home 2+ Times/Wk	12,124	41.8%	85
Exercise at Club 2+ Times/Wk	2,603	9.0%	76
Visited Doctor/12 Mo	23,387	80.6%	101
Used Vitamins or Dietary Supplements/6 Mo	18,890	65.1%	98
Home (Households)			
HH Did Home Improvement/12 Mo	6,126	42.4%	108
HH Used Maid/Prof Cln Svc (+ Furn/Carpet)/12 Mo	3,906	27.0%	89
HH Purchased Low Ticket HH Furnishing/12 Mo	3,527	24.4%	99
HH Purchased Big Ticket HH Furnishing/12 Mo	3,812	26.4%	93
HH Bought Small Kitchen Appliance/12 Mo	3,864	26.7%	102
HH Bought Large Kitchen Appliance/12 Mo	2,634	18.2%	112
Insurance (Adults/Households)			
Currently Carry Life Insurance	16,403	56.5%	111
Personally Carry Any Med/Hosp/Accident Insur	25,041	86.3%	101
Homeowner Carries Home/Personal Property Insurance	20,199	69.6%	113
Renter Carries Home/Pers Property Insurance	2,331	8.0%	67
HH Has 1 Vehicle Covered w/Auto Insurance	3,869	26.8%	87
HH Has 2 Vehicles Covered w/Auto Insurance	4,682	32.4%	99
HH Has 3+ Vehicles Covered w/Auto Insurance	5,062	35.0%	133
Pets (Households)			
HH Owns Cat	4,873	33.7%	146
HH Owns Dog	7,979	55.2%	140
Psychographics (Adults)			
Represents adults who "completely agree" with the statement:			
Am Interested in How to Help Env: 4-Agr Cmpl	4,194	14.5%	78
Buying American Is Important: 4-Agr Cmpl	12,335	42.5%	132
Buy Based on Quality Not Price: 4-Agr Cmpl	3,983	13.7%	91
Buy on Credit Rather Than Wait: 4-Agr Cmpl	3,530	12.2%	95
Only Use Coupons Brands Usually Buy: 4-Agr Cmpl	3,277	11.3%	102
Will Pay More for Env Safe Prods: 4-Agr Cmpl	2,507	8.6%	71
Buy Based on Price Not Brands: 4-Agr Cmpl	8,715	30.0%	111
Am Interested in How to Help Env: 4-Agr Cmpl	4,194	14.5%	78
Reading (Adults)			
Bought Digital Book/12 Mo	5,371	18.5%	98
Bought Hardcover Book/12 Mo	7,427	25.6%	95
Bought Paperback Book/12 Mo	9,465	32.6%	96
Read Daily Newspaper (Paper Version)	3,770	13.0%	85
Read Digital Newspaper/30 Days	10,938	37.7%	74
Read Magazine (Paper/Electronic Vers)/6 Mo	24,149	83.2%	96

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Product/Consumer Behavior	Expected Number of Adults or HHs	Percent of Adults/HHs	MPI
Restaurants (Adults)			
Went to Family Restrnt/SteakHse/6 Mo	20,061	69.1%	105
Went to Family Restrnt/SteakHse 4+ Times/30 Days	6,242	21.5%	105
Spent $101-200 at Family Restrnt/SteakHse/30 Days	2,919	92.4%	102
Went to Fast Food/Drive-In Rest 9+ Times/30 Days	12,198	42.0%	108
Ordered Eat-In Fast Food/6 Mo	6,899	23.8%	116
Ordered Home Delivery Fast Food/6 Mo	2,647	9.1%	68
Take-Out/Drive-Thru/Curbside Fast Food/6 Mo	19,040	65.6%	112
Ordered Take-Out/Walk-In Fast Food/6 Mo	5,069	17.5%	78
Television & Electronics (Adults/Households)			
Own Tablet	15,688	54.1%	92
Own E-Reader	3,512	12.1%	84
Own E-Reader/Tablet: Apple iPad	8,356	28.8%	77
HH Owns Internet Connectable TV	6,219	43.0%	100
Own Portable MP3 Player	3,234	11.1%	100
HH Owns 1 TV	2,208	15.3%	84
HH Owns 2 TVs	4,161	28.8%	102
HH Owns 3 TVs	3,396	23.5%	103
HH Owns 4+ TVs	3,566	24.7%	110
HH Subscribes to Cable TV	3,534	24.5%	72
HH Subscribes to Fiber Optic TV	297	2.1%	39
HH Owns Portable GPS Device	3,427	23.7%	114
HH Purchased Video Game System/12 Mo	906	6.3%	78
HH Owns Internet Video Device for TV	7,335	50.8%	97
Travel (Adults)			
Took Domestic Trip in Continental U.S./12 Mo	15,346	52.9%	98
Took 3+ Domestic Non-Business Trips/12 Mo	4,318	14.9%	107
Spent $1-999 on Domestic Vacations/12 Mo	4,131	14.2%	104
Spent $1K-1499 on Domestic Vacations/12 Mo	1,767	6.1%	96
Spent $1500-1999 on Domestic Vacations/12 Mo	1,132	3.9%	102
Spent $2K-2999 on Domestic Vacations/12 Mo	1,045	3.6%	91
Spent $3K+ on Domestic Vacations/12 Mo	1,863	6.4%	97
Used Intrnt Travel Site for Domestic Trip/12 Mo	1,325	4.6%	82
Took Foreign Trip (Incl Alaska & Hawaii)/3 Yrs	6,718	23.2%	70
Took 3+ Foreign Trips by Plane/3 Yrs	1,066	3.7%	50
Spent $1-999 on Foreign Vacations/12 Mo	1,456	5.0%	65
Index: Spent $1K-2999 on Foreign Vacations/12 Mo	608	2.1%	68
Spent $3K+ on Foreign Vacations/12 Mo	788	2.7%	64
Used General Travel Site: Foreign Trip/3 Yrs	1,005	3.5%	55
Spent Night at Hotel or Motel/12 Mo	12,735	43.9%	97
Took Cruise of More Than One Day/3 Yrs	2,720	9.4%	93
Member of Frequent Flyer Program	5,351	18.4%	67
Member of Hotel Rewards Program	7,652	26.4%	91

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Workforce Profile

Alexander

Analysis Type: Community Area

Occupation Type	Occupation Code	Employee Count	Avg. Annual Wage	Avg. Hourly Wage
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	17	1,340	$69,842	$34.00
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	27	1,187	$45,050	$22.00
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	37	2,604	$25,900	$12.00
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	13	3,572	$64,833	$32.00
Community and Social Service Occupations	21	1,324	$45,358	$22.00
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	15	1,581	$69,267	$34.00
Construction and Extraction Occupations	47	3,700	$37,700	$18.00
Education, Training, and Library Occupations	25	4,263	$41,033	$20.00
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	45	402	$28,975	$14.00
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	35	7,554	$21,225	$10.00
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	29	4,022	$74,500	$37.00
Healthcare Support Occupations	31	2,717	$26,942	$13.00
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	49	4,000	$42,725	$21.00
Legal Occupations	23	350	$65,842	$32.00
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	19	450	$56,967	$28.00
Management Occupations	11	5,012	$103,875	$51.00
O¨ce and Administrative Support Occupations	43	12,031	$34,100	$17.00
Personal Care and Service Occupations	39	2,826	$24,625	$12.00
Production Occupations	51	16,119	$33,883	$16.00
Protective Service Occupations	33	1,581	$36,167	$18.00
Sales and Related Occupations	41	9,322	$38,442	$19.00
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	53	9,955	$32,125	$16.00