

It is important that a community has a vision for what it would like its transportation system to look like in the future. It gives shape and direction to the transportation system's future. It answers the question, "*Where do we want to go.*" Goals help to shape how a vision will be achieved. And objectives are specific, measurable steps that can be taken to meet a goal. The Watauga County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) Steering Committee developed a vision statement, goals and objectives for this CTP based on input from many sources, including the following:

- CTP Goals and Objectives Survey results
- Citizens Plan for Watauga County
- Boone Pedestrian Plan
- The Boone 2030 Land Use Plan
- Blowing Rock Comprehensive Plan
- Blowing Rock Downtown Retail Strategy Plan
- Blowing Rock Parks and Recreation Master Plan
- Seven Devils Comprehensive Land Use Plan
- Beech Mountain Land Use Plan

The CTP is, in reality, an extension of these plans, a bringing together of the transportation elements of each one. The vision, goals, and objectives of each of the above plans were kept in mind during the development of the vision, goals, and objectives for this CTP. NCDOT also has a mission statement and goals that are considered during the development of the Watauga County CTP.

Below is the NCDOT Mission Statement and Goals and the Watauga County CTP Vision Statement, Goals and Objectives followed by the vision statement and any transportation related goals and objectives from each of the above mentioned plans.

## **NCDOT Mission Statement**

*Connecting people and places in North Carolina – safely and efficiently, with accountability and environmental sensitivity.*

### **NCDOT Goals:**

- Make NCDOT transportation network safer
  - Make NCDOT transportation network move people and goods more efficiently
  - Make NCDOT infrastructure last longer
  - Make NCDOT organization a place that works well
  - Make NCDOT organization a great place to work
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# Watauga County CTP Vision

September 22, 2011

To develop and maintain a Comprehensive Transportation Plan that promotes and preserves the quality of life and economic vitality of Watauga County and all its municipalities while understanding there is a wide variety of stakeholders to consider. This will be accomplished by providing a financially responsible system that is safe, accessible, environmentally responsible, efficient, and preserves the character of the area while promoting multi-modal connectivity both locally and regionally.

1. Goal: Enhance transportation elements that are important to economic vitality
  - A. Objective: Provide multimodal service to commercial businesses and activity centers<sup>1</sup>.
  - B. Objective: Increase access to transit and non-vehicular modes for University students and for tourists.
    - i. Provide additional information, signs, and maps at key locations.
  - C. Objective: Reduce the mixed use of US 421 (King Street) through downtown Boone by local and through traffic.
  
2. Goal: Be financially responsible with the transportation system
  - A. Objective: Be considerate of the potential life span of improvements
    - i. Measure: Projects should maintain Level Of Service (LOS) D throughout the study horizon of 2040 unless otherwise noted in the study.
  - B. Objective: Perform a planning level cost – benefit analysis over each project's life cycle<sup>2</sup>
  
3. Goal: Provide safe and efficient movement of all transportation modes  
It should be noted that NCDOT has “safety” as one of its Department goals so it is assumed that it is a consideration at all times.
  - A. Objective: Reduce the overall annual average number of vehicular accidents for the county by 5% by 2040.
    - i. Measure: The most recent 3 year crash rate and number of accidents will be used to evaluate.
  - B. Objective: Separate<sup>3</sup>, where possible, pedestrian ways and bike routes from vehicular areas

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<sup>1</sup> **activity centers:** Key activity centers for Watauga County include those listed in the Citizens Plan for Watauga County: the Blue Ridge Parkway, Horn in the West outdoor drama, Hickory Ridge Homestead, Mast General Store, Beech Mountain Resort, Mystery Hill, museums, Blowing Rock, Tweetsie Railroad, and Appalachian Ski Mountain and the following others: Deep Gap, Senior Center, Valle Crucis, parks, Conference center, B&Bs, Todd, Foscoe, ski resorts, Appalachian State University, and schools.

<sup>2</sup> **Life cycle** cost will be construction cost plus 20 years unless otherwise determined

- i. Measure: An increase in the amount of bike trails and sidewalks that are separated from roads.
  - C. Objective: Consider alternative designs/treatments and access management options when evaluating projects included in the adoption of this plan
    - i. Measure: Number of vehicles stopped at a traffic signal for more than one cycle at an acceptable cycle length
    - ii. Measure: Percent of traffic able to flow at the posted speed
  - D. Objective: Get fixed transit routes down to 30 minute headways in the Town of Boone.
  - E. Objective: Connecting transit service between Boone and other municipalities in Watauga County.
  - F. Objective: Sidewalks should be on both sides of all major roads within the Town of Boone limits.
  - G. Objective: Sidewalks on both sides of primary streets and at least one side of collector streets within municipal limits.
  - H. Objective: Greenway paths between neighborhoods.
  - I. Objective: Install bike lanes or wider lanes with striped shoulders on all arterials.
  - J. Objective: Off-road facilities between the Boone and Blowing Rock.
  - K. Objective: Connect greenways to ASU
  - L. Objective: Traffic should be able to flow at the posted speed except in the CBD areas.
  - M. Objective: A vehicle should not be stopped at a traffic signal for more than one cycle at an acceptable cycle length except in the CBD areas.
  - N. Objective: Alleviate congestion at the intersection of US 321 and NC 105.
- 4. Goal: Pursue measures that reduce vehicular traffic and dependence on personal vehicles.
  - A. Objective: Use park and ride lots at congested areas
    - i. Measure: Increase the number of park and ride parking spaces by 800 spaces.
  - B. Objective: Provide for alternative modes of transportation between the towns of Boone, Blowing Rock, Seven Devils, and Beech Mountain
    - i. Measure: Develop accessible <sup>4</sup>public transportation systems between the county's municipalities by 2020
    - ii. Measure: 10 miles of bike facilities and multi-use paths connecting municipalities by 2040
    - iii. Measure: A twenty percent increase in non-vehicular connector routes between communities and destinations within communities

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<sup>3</sup> *Separate* Bike and Pedestrian facilities will be those where bikes or pedestrians can travel at least 3 feet from the flow of traffic, therefore a 4ft shoulder satisfies but not a 2ft shoulder, even though both are connected to the road. Trails and Paths on their own right of way will of course qualify. Striped bike lanes are preferred versus just a paved shoulder in municipal areas. Paved shoulders on county primary roads are acceptable.

<sup>4</sup> *accessible* is defined as sidewalk within 50 yards and designated bike facilities within 100 yards of transit stops

- C. Objective: Provide a continuous and interconnected system of sidewalks in and around Boone and Blowing Rock.
    - i. Measure: Sidewalks on both sides of the street within **Central Business Districts**<sup>5</sup>(CBD) as topography allows
    - ii. Measure: Percent of streets with sidewalks on at least one side of the street in other areas, but both sides is preferable as topography allows
  - D. Objective: Develop a continuous, direct, and coordinated system of regional bicycle facilities in and throughout Watauga County by 2040
    - i. Measure: Add 25 new miles of total bike facilities in the county
    - ii. Measure: Interconnect bike facilities in county
  - E. Objective: Projects included with the adoption of this plan shall, where possible, enhance interconnectivity and accessibility to major local and regional destinations and activity centers
5. Goal: Ensure connectivity within the County and Region
    - A. Objective: Provide for alternative modes of transportation between towns
      - i. Measure: see 4-B above
    - B. Objective: Develop a continuous, direct, safe, and coordinated system of regional bicycle facilities in and throughout Watauga County by 2040
      - i. Measure: see 4-D above
    - C. Objective: Improve the highways identified as Intrastate and Strategic Highway Corridors to ensure the economic vitality of the region.
      - i. Measure: Reduce travel times, Improved level of service, and improved freight movement.
  6. Goal: Ensure all construction and improvements are compatible with the local character of the area by minimizing **urban features**<sup>6</sup>of road projects
  7. Goal: Consider the needs of and benefits to all stakeholders (Local residents, ASU students, tourist/visitors, seasonal residents)
  8. Goal: Provide an environmentally responsible transportation system. NCDOT considers human and natural environmental impacts during the development of all projects. Water quality and view sheds are extremely important to the County as is the preservation of single family neighborhoods and unique communities as listed in Section 8 of the Citizens Plan for Watauga County.

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<sup>5</sup> Central Business District for Boone will be “Primary Growth Area” and “Secondary Growth Area” from the “Boone 2030 Land Use Plan” adopted in 2009. For Blowing Rock it will be the “Town Center” as defined in chapter 1.D in the 2004 Comprehensive Plan.

<sup>6</sup> **urban features**: include street lights, signs, billboards, concrete medians, types of retaining walls, and other features that do not maintain the mountain character

## **Citizens Plans for Watauga County (Watauga County Comprehensive Plan 2010)**

Watauga County's goal is to achieve an efficient and balanced transportation system that combines motorized and non-motorized modes of transportation. Specific objectives include:

- An efficient and integrated multi-modal transportation system.
- A transportation system that is affordable and accessible to all users.
- A multi-modal transportation system that supports future development and preserves community character.
- A regionally integrated transportation planning process.

### **Specific Transportation/Planning Related Recommendations in the Plan:**

1. Resolve the issue of routing for a Boone Bypass, which is considered to be the top transportation priority by the public.
2. Priority should be given to the following projects: Hwy 194 to four-lane from US 421 to Howard's creek Road, and multi-lane from Howard's creek Road to Jack Hayes Road.
3. US 421 N to multi-lane from Boone to the intersection of US 421/US 321 in Vilas.
4. NC 105 S to multi-lane from the Boone municipal limits to Avery County.
5. Multi-lane US 421 S (King Street) from Hardin Street to NC 194.
6. Multi-lane Old US 421 from US 421 S to the high school.
7. NCDOT should schedule paving of all public gravel roads to NCDOT standards as feasible.
8. Provide more parking areas for bicycles at ASU and in business areas.
9. Encourage ASU to consider further limiting the number of students who can bring their vehicles to the University campus. A balanced approach incorporating both new parking areas and limiting students having vehicles on campus would help alleviate traffic congestion.
10. Adopt minimum standards for new and redesigned roads that specify the creation of bicycle lanes and sidewalks that promote safe alternatives.
11. Encourage a study by NCDOT to ascertain where and if roundabouts might be utilized to enhance traffic flow and reduce congestion.
12. Watauga transportation corridors (US 321, US 421, and NC 105) are also economic "Gateways" into the County and are critical to the County's economic future. Watauga County should guide development and protect the integrity and potential of these key strategic economic corridors. Provide attractive, as well as functional, "Gateways" into Watauga County. Development within these "Gateway Corridors" would be accessible by highways and streets, which are developed to urban standards, having capacities to accommodate increasingly complex volumes of traffic.
13. Fully develop and promote the greenways concept such as the new greenway connector near the new high school, trails, parks and other eco-tourism assets.

14. Promote eco-tourism, defined as “environmentally responsible travel and visitation to natural area,” in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features).
15. Preservation of designated unique communities.
16. Managing change initiatives should acknowledge the presence of sensitive natural areas, such as floodplains, wetlands, unique natural assets and areas exhibiting excessively steep topography, and strive to protect these areas from development, which would damage such resources or diminish their integrity.
17. The “quality of life” theme should be reflected in all aspects of planning.

## **Town of Boone, North Carolina Pedestrian Plan**

2010

The Town of Boone adopted the *Boone 2030 Land Use Plan* in 2009, and two of the five vision statements relate directly to pedestrian planning. They hold true for the Pedestrian Plan.

- “We will have a vibrant, attractive, walkable, bikable and transit-friendly community that is financially, socially, and environmentally sustainable.”
  - “Our vibrant downtown and the university is surrounded by strong neighborhoods, successful and beautiful corridors, and an easily accessible university campus.”
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## **Boone 2030 Land Use Plan**

Adopted October 2009

### ***Statement of Vision: Boone 2030***

1. We will have a vibrant, attractive, walkable, bikable and transit-friendly community that is financially, socially and environmentally sustainable.
2. Our high country heritage is honored through our attention to aesthetic beauty, promotion of our culture and protection of our natural resources.
3. We are a community of strong (and economically) diverse neighborhoods, successful and beautiful commercial corridors, a vibrant downtown, and high quality educational institutions (all levels).
4. We are a regional center for commerce, health care, and education.
5. Our vibrant downtown and the University is surrounded by strong neighborhoods, successful and beautiful commercial corridors, and an easily accessible University campus.

***Liveable Transportation Principles in Plan:***

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

***Transportation related Projects/Tasks in the Land Use Plan:***

1. Adopt and apply livable transportation principles
2. Advocate for the low build alternative to Daniel Boone Parkway
3. Consider capital improvements for downtown including: improved pedestrian and intersection safety; consider reverse angle parking, and consider a festival street section for Howard Street.
4. Conduct a parking study for downtown.
5. Implement planned pedestrian and bicycle improvements with the US 421 widening.
6. Consolidate driveways and develop cross-parcel connections along US 321.
7. Consider a plan for an urban boulevard for US 321
8. Implement pedestrian and bicycle improvements to US 321 corridor.
9. Reallocate space on Rivers and Hardin Streets to other modes of transportation.
10. Provide additional roadway connections and safety upgrades.
11. Continue to improve and expand AppalCART services, information, shelters, and bicycle racks.
12. Establish park-and-ride facilities to be introduced at community gateways.
13. Expand regional bus services to additional locations.
14. Complete a pedestrian master plan.
15. Make pedestrian accessibility changes to the unified development ordinance as recommended in the smart growth audit.
16. Prioritize sidewalk construction around identified nodes and key pedestrian routes.
17. Improve pedestrian safety at intersections and crossings.
18. Develop bicycle facilities as part of proposed or planned roadway projects.
19. Complete a bicycle master plan.
20. Develop and expand greenways.
21. Plan and implement the Middle Fork Greenway.
22. Link neighborhoods and destinations with paths and greenways.
23. Investigate boardwalks or elevated walkways in order to reduce the need for retaining walls with sidewalks.

***Projects/Tasks for the Downtown area that relate to Transportation:***

24. Develop a new signage & wayfinding package.
25. Enhance streetscapes and introduce street furnishings.
26. Daylight the creek south of Howard Street and create a downtown park area.

27. Consider extending Appalachian Street as a through street or path.
28. Develop shared parking structures in partnership with the University.
29. Create a green pedestrian alley/public space between King and Howard Streets.

***Projects/Tasks for Focus Areas that relate to Transportation:***

30. Various development/redevelopment model sites which exemplify the principles of mixed-use, pedestrian-orientation, compact development/infill, and conservation subdivision.
  31. Establish, expand, enhance potential park-n-ride facility at ASU off-campus parking lot.
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# Town of Blowing Rock 2004 Comprehensive Plan

Adopted March 9, 2004

**Vision Statement:** In 15 years, Blowing Rock, North Carolina, will continue to be a special mountain resort community, along the blue Ridge, that has maintained and retained its sense of place and history. Its diverse architecture, appreciation for and compatibility with nature, walkability, compactness, safety, and civic pride make it welcoming to residents and visitors. Blowing Rock will be well-maintained and design-conscious without sacrificing its authenticity and diversity.

**Mission Statement:** To protect the small town character of Blowing Rock by limiting its physical growth, by influencing the quality of that growth, and by preserving and enhancing those attributes that contribute to its unique character.

## **Action Statements:**

1.B.7. AS new residential areas and subdivisions are developed, the new streets should be aligned with existing streets so that there is free circulation within a neighborhood and between adjoining neighborhoods. The only exceptions shall be for significant physical limitations imposed by the site topography, the occasional cul-de-sac located within a network of connecting streets, or where the resulting effect of connecting adjoining streets would be to encourage the use of such streets by substantial through-traffic.

1.B.8. Provide for sidewalks or other pedestrian traffic in residential neighborhoods where appropriate, especially in neighborhoods within walking distance of the downtown area; or in neighborhoods within walking distance of other attractions such as national parks or other public recreation.

## **Mission Statement: Town Center Land Use and Development**

To maintain the quality, character, and economic vitality of the Town Center through appropriate land use controls, parking improvements, sidewalk improvements, landscaping improvements, and park improvements.

1.D.13 Designate the Town Center as a “walking district”

3.17. Tie the Glen Burney Trail to the Cone estate and National Park Service “Mountain to the Sea’ Trail system. (Recreational and Cultural Resources)

Mission Statement (Transportation): To encourage the development and maintenance of safe and efficient roads through sensible transportation principles that most effectively serve all Blowing Rock citizens.

Policy Statements (Transportation):

6.1 Encourage sharing of driveway cuts along major streets and roads to allow these streets to serve primarily as safe traffic movement corridors, or, alternatively, to maximize curb frontage for on-street parking.

6.2 Develop a balanced, multi-modal transportation system, (i.e. walking, biking, transit, park and ride, and vehicular traffic) that will enhance mobility for all citizens, reduce automobile dependence, and preserve/enhance the character of Blowing Rock.

***Action Statements (Transportation):***

6.3 The Route 321 Bypass, from South Main Street to North Main Street, should be improved to include curb and gutter, sidewalks, coach lights, landscaping, and proper DOT-standard driveway connections with curb stops to promote the village character and public safety. The Town Should insist that the improvements be built to “parkway” standards, including landscaped medians, curb and gutter, sidewalks, street trees, and decorative coach0-style lights.

6.4 Coordinate and synchronize all traffic lights to create a more efficient movement of traffic.

6.9 Connect all streets to adjacent developments and discourage cul-de-sacs.

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# **Blowing Rock Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan; 2005-2025**

Adopted January 11, 2005

## **Transportation related recommendations:**

- Add Pedestrian connection from Main Street to Bass Lake
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## **Blowing Rock Downtown Retail Strategy 2009**

Traffic Flow: working cooperatively with the North Carolina Department of Transportation, the Town should continuously work to accommodate safe traffic flow and enhance pedestrian safety in keeping with Downtown's pedestrian scale, comfort, walkability, and character, without reducing on-street parking.

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## **Town of Seven Devils Comprehensive Land Use Plan**

Amended November 9, 2009

The Town of Seven Devils is a residential and recreational community whose citizens and governance are committed to managing its growth, with a primary focus on owner-occupied single-family homes and on the preservation and enhancement of the distinctive and irreplaceable natural beauty of its mountain setting.

The Town of Seven Devils is committed to managing its expenditures to ensure maximum benefit to its taxpayers. Primary focus is on services that provide for public health and safety.

The Town of Seven Devils is committed to exploring and developing cooperative relationships with neighboring communities.

The Town of Seven Devils ensures that all citizens are treated with respect, dignity, and fairness. All citizens are kept informed on issues relating to community development and governance, and they have opportunities to participate actively.

The Town of Seven Devils Town management, Town Council, and boards enforce all ordinances promptly and impartially. The ordinance structure is reviewed, monitored, and revised as necessary to reflect and support this Vision of the community. The Town Council, all boards, commissions, committees, Town administrative departments and other groups created or supported by Town Council ensure that their activities reflect commitment to achieving and sustaining this Vision.

**General Mission Statement:**

The Town of Seven Devils' mission is to preserve, protect, and enhance those gifts of Nature that make up the unique quality of our Town and its environs and ensure that all values inherent in the Town Vision Statement are realized and reflected through the enactment, revision, and enforcement of supporting ordinances, appropriate Town action and other measures as may be necessary.

**Objective:** The Town of Seven Devils conserves, protects, restores and enhances the natural beauty of its setting and minimizes disturbances to the natural environment.

**Action Plan:**

The Town Manager should identify and implement the process to determine how best to provide safer roadways, including signage.

**Objective:** The Town of Seven Devils fosters and encourages the continued growth of a sense of community within the Town and surrounding area.

**Action Plan:**

The Town of Seven Devils' representatives to the High Country Municipal Association should encourage collaboration on transportation, communication, aesthetics, and shared recreational opportunities.

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## **Land Development Plan, Beech Mountain, N.C.**

February 1982

**General Goals:**

To provide for orderly and progressive development within Beech Mountain, enhancing and accentuating the existing favorable qualities of the Town and improving those features that detract from the most beneficial development of the Town;

- 1) To promote the coordinated growth and development of the Town of Beech Mountain;
- 2) to preserve the town of beech Mountain's identity as a unique resort community;
- 3) To provide for orderly residential growth;
- 4) To capitalize on existing facilities serving the needs of the community and to provide more and better facilities when and where needed.
- 5) To protect the environment and ecology of the area.