



Blowing Rock, North Carolina  
**Sustainable Tourism Management Plan**

January 2022







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## THE FOCUS AND GOALS OF THE PLAN

The focus of this plan is to identify initiatives that will result in helping Blowing Rock become an even better, stronger, more desirable place in which to live, invest, and visit.

More specifically, this plan has been developed to answer the question: “What can be done in Blowing Rock to mitigate the effects that being an extremely popular visitor destination has on the quality of life for local residents, particularly during the peak summer and fall months?”

To address this effort, the team at Roger Brooks International and the Destination Development Association (DDA) were selected to produce this plan. Roger visited Blowing Rock for more than a week during the “shoulder” season (May), and then spent more than three weeks in Blowing Rock during the last weeks of June, through the Independence Day holiday, and well into July, observing traffic, parking, pedestrian access, busy hours and days, wait times at restaurants, lodging occupancies, as well as observing street closures during events (Independence Day Parade, Art in the Park).

This plan focuses primarily on product development initiatives. Blowing Rock, in the long run, will be judged by its product, not its marketing. Marketing will bring visitors to Blowing Rock only once. The key ingredients that bring them back are:

- The primary draw (scenery, Blue Ridge Parkway, Art in the Park...)
- The complementary activities (shopping, dining, entertainment)
- Amenities (parking, visitor information, restrooms, benches...)
- The people they interact with

It’s far less expensive to bring people back than to always seek new, first-time visitors. Blowing Rock is one of the most enjoyable communities in the country in terms of primary draw: the mountains, views, in-town and nearby attractions (Grandfather Mountain, Tweetsie Railroad, Blue Ridge Parkway, the Blowing Rock, Moses Cone, and many others).

Blowing Rock already offers an amazing array of complementary activities, especially for a town of just 1,300 full-time residents. These include thirty or more restaurants, a variety of unique retail shops, and beautiful parks and gathering areas. This is extremely important since the top activity of visitors—not the reason they come, but the primary activity once they arrive—is





## THE TOWN OF BLOWING ROCK: LEAD ROLE

While this plan was commissioned and funded by the Blowing Rock TDA, it's really a Town of Blowing Rock Action Plan. Twenty-two of the twenty-five recommendations in this plan will be implemented by the town, since it controls the streets, land, and public amenities. The TDA, on the other hand, will provide funding, as laid out in this plan, for many of the projects, and will also play an advocacy role in moving the plan forward.

To accomplish the goals in this plan, the Town Council, which is in place to set policy, needs to review this plan and instruct the staff to implement the plan to the best of their ability, and to seek the necessary funding to implement the recommendations outlined here.

All 25 recommendations made in this plan should begin to be implemented in 2022. Yes, you read that right. All 25 should be well underway this year. This does not mean that all 25 will be fully implemented, but all of them should be underway.

Most of these recommendations intertwine with each other. For instance, the Town already has committed to working on and replacing underground utilities in the core downtown area. It only makes sense that widening sidewalks, removing parking along Main Street (85 spaces), and developing a parking deck to accommodate those spaces plus hundreds more, be implemented together rather than as separate projects.

This is a fantastic opportunity for the Town Council to create a lasting legacy for the Town of Blowing Rock, by dramatically improving the quality of life for its citizens: both full-time and part-time residents, while improving the visitor experience.

Additionally, implementation of this plan will increase the tax base of the town, substantially increasing the town's annual revenues, which can, in turn, be used to fund these and other local improvements outside the scope of this plan.

The timing couldn't be better for implementing a plan of this nature: The pandemic has created a huge pent-up consumer demand for travel, of which Blowing Rock has been a direct recipient. This has netted nearly



half-a-million dollar TDA surplus, which in this plan is being directed to offsetting some of the costs of implementation.

In addition, the federal government is investing trillions of dollars towards infrastructure projects, providing grant opportunities for virtually every recommendation in this plan.

When Roger Brooks presented this plan to the Town Council and public, he noted that implementation of this plan would cost approximately \$22 million dollars to fully implement. That includes an \$11 million parking structure.

The parking structure's price tag is self-funding through the creation of parking fees, which can be borrowed against to build the structure, leaving the other \$11 million in projects to be funded from other sources.

Nearly a million dollars of this is being provided by the TDA, by allocating its surplus funds and product development funds (a third of its annual revenues) to this effort.

With nearly \$300,000 a year in product development funding from the TDA, this can be leveraged to cover nearly \$3 million in projects—much like the existing parking structures were funded in downtown Blowing Rock.

This leaves \$7 million, of which much (if not all) could be funded through a number of federal and state grant sources such as the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) and others.

There are several projects in this plan that might be funded through philanthropic means, such as providing naming rights for the two small amphitheaters in Memorial Park and on the shores of Broyhill Park in exchange for funding their development.

All in all, while the numbers may seem large, this entire plan will also increase revenues to the town through increased value of commercial real estate and sales taxes to help offset the management and maintenance of the new projects.

Comparatively, if the town were to build a modest 1,200 seat performing arts center, the cost would be in the \$40 million range. Even developing three or four ball fields with night lighting would cost several million dollars.

All in all, this plan will dramatically improve the quality of life for every Blowing Rock resident, will mitigate the effects of increased tourism spending locally, and will create a lasting legacy for this Town Council and the town's staff.

To secure funding opportunities, the Town may elect to contract with a professional grant writer. The contractor would not only look for federal and state funding sources, but also look at non-profit organizations such as the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and others, and would also promote philanthropic opportunities for some of the initiatives in this plan.

## **THE BOTTOM LINE**

Every elected official in America was put in office to improve the quality of life for its citizens. This includes school boards, planning commissions (chosen rather than elected), town and city councils, governors, and the President of the United States.

This plan does more to improve the quality of life for Blowing Rock residents than any other plan developed for the town in recent memory. And it does it affordably, and without asking residents to support new bond issues (taxes).

Typically councils spend a tremendous amount of their time and energy to fixing things—a reactive approach to making the community better. In this plan, the Town will be taking a proactive approach, for instance, developing a 600-space parking structure versus a 300-space structure. Creating wider sidewalks now, not down the road. Making downtown about people, not traffic. Increasing cultural offerings beyond just shopping and dining.

All of these initiatives will make Blowing Rock one of America's best small towns and a fantastic place to live, work and play.



shopping, dining and entertainment in a pedestrian-friendly, intimate setting: Blowing Rock's downtown.

This is where 80% of non-lodging visitor spending takes place. Blowing Rock does an excellent job of monetizing these “complementary” activities. In fact, downtown eateries and retail shops have become, on their own, a primary draw to Blowing Rock.

Over several weeks, we found the local workforce to be friendly, eager to please, and pleasant. Where Blowing Rock needs vast improvement is in the amenities, particularly public parking, wayfinding, and traffic flow.

Some feel that Blowing Rock suffers from “overtourism,” but we found that not to be the case. “Overtourism” is the inability to mitigate the effects of so many visitors that local businesses cannot accommodate them, lodging is at or exceeds capacity during peak months of the year, the environment is being overrun, and the infrastructure cannot handle the influx of visitors.

The bottom line: Blowing Rock does not suffer from overtourism EXCEPT when it comes to the infrastructure to support local residents, workers, and visitors. It comes down to one primary issue: a severe lack of parking.

Developing this plan included a major effort in reaching out to both full-time and seasonal residents to ask for their input, observations, and suggestions on ways to make the town a more pleasant place in which to spend time during the peak summer and fall months.



## THE PROCESS

The process used to develop this plan included:

- **A Destination Assessment:** A photographic look at Blowing Rock and the surrounding area through the eyes of a first-time visitor, or a person looking to locate to the area, or as an investor. This included visits in both the shoulder-seasons and peak season months.
- **Public outreach:** An online questionnaire, several well-attended public workshops, interviews with local and area stakeholder groups (residents, businesses, lodging, town leadership, schools, home owners, etc.), and conversations with individuals both in person and via email.
- The Roger Brooks Team reviewed the Blowing Rock Tourism Development Authority's **(TDA) annual budgets, lodging tax revenues, capital projects** and expenditures, its marketing efforts, and staffing.
- Brooks also reviewed Blowing Rock's **visitor profile** (who visits the town) dating from 2013 through 2020, as well as quarterly summaries provided to the public by the TDA in 2019, 2020 and 2021.
- The review included a **2020 Fall Season Survey** of local businesses and market research provided by Magellan Strategy Group detailing visitor profiles and how Blowing Rock is perceived by visitors.
- Brooks reviewed the **2021 Advocacy Plan**, and subsequent input from the Blowing Rock Civic Association, the voice for many of the local residents, with a focus on seasonal home owners.
- The Brooks Team reached out to **all lodging properties** seeking monthly occupancy levels to review overnight stays by month—and weekends versus weekday stays.
- Research included **statistical information** from the State of North Carolina's Tourism Office and from other state, regional and national agencies and organizations providing trends, COVID-related information, and **funding resources** for recommended capital projects detailed in this plan.





## HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

This document is an Action Plan as opposed to a Strategic Plan. Instead of concentrating on general strategies, goals and objectives, an Action Plan starts with the vision: In this case, what Blowing Rock will look and feel like in three years, once the recommendations detailed in this plan have been implemented. The Action Plan provides detailed recommendations for specific actions to bring the vision to life.

Each recommendation is placed in chronological order of when its implementation should begin. And for each, the following is provided:

- A title for each recommendation
- When it would begin implementation
- A brief description of the recommendation
- The lead organization or entity charged with its implementation
- An approximate cost to implement it
- Options on how to fund it
- Detailed “how to” information and the rationale for making the recommendation

With a plan of this nature, brevity is important. The table of contents can be used as a checklist, marking off each assignment as the community, and its stakeholder organizations, implement their recommendations. This is a “To Do List” style of plan.

While this plan includes several long-term recommendations, this is a three-year Action Plan. Research has shown that long-term plans tend to end up on a back room shelf gathering dust. Over time, situations change, and so plans need to be adjusted as well to the changing situation.

At the two and a half year mark of this plan, the Blowing Rock TDA should begin developing the next three-year plan.

Finally, this plan is very much like a jigsaw puzzle—each recommendation ties into other recommendations. To see success, you must implement the entire plan with no half-measures, short cuts, or elimination of some of the initiatives outlined in this plan. After all, a puzzle with missing pieces is largely worthless.





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## FINDINGS, FACTS & SOLUTIONS

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The basis for every recommendation in this plan came from numerous sources including:

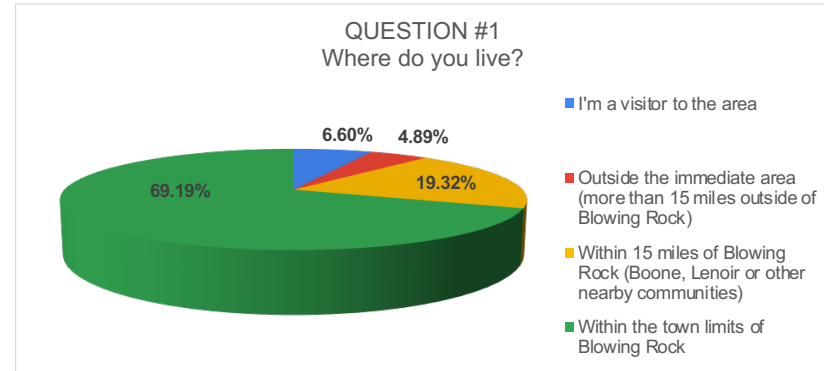
- Outreach with local and area residents
- Input from stakeholder group meetings and one-on-one interviews
- Research into lodging occupancies by month, weekday vs. weekends
- Research into visitor demographics and psychographics
- Review of overnight vs. day-trip visitors
- Seasonality research
- State tourism research (comparative analysis)
- Review of current and past marketing efforts
- Review of past plans and studies



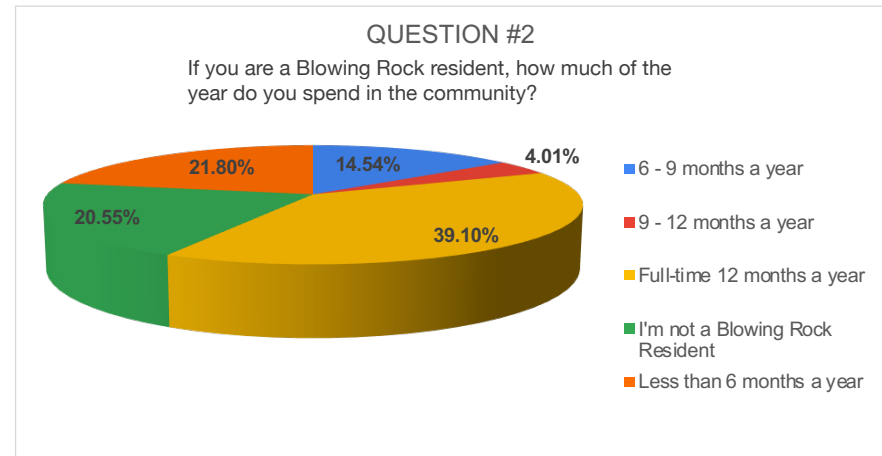


## INPUT FROM LOCAL RESIDENTS

Over a six-week period during the summer of 2021, an online questionnaire was available and promoted to solicit feedback from local residents, area residents, and from visitors. Nearly 500 people responded with 70% of the total responses coming from residents within the town limits of Blowing Rock.

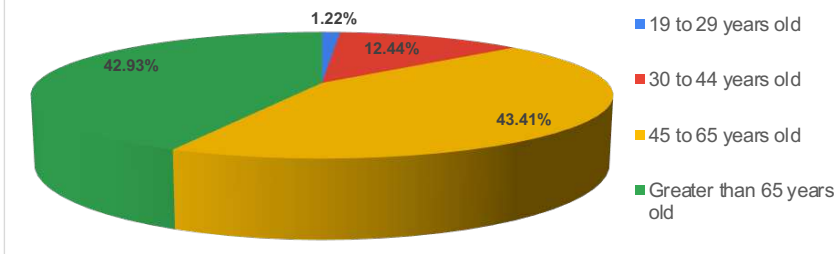


Thirty-nine percent of the respondents live in Blowing Rock full time, twenty percent are not residents of the community, and the balance (41%) are part-time residents of the community.



The only other demographic question was the age range of the respondent. Eighty-six percent of the respondents were 45 years or older.

**QUESTION #3**  
What is your Age Range



The remaining five questions were open-ended, allowing respondents to speak their minds, offer suggestions and ideas, and provide input into this planning effort. The “common responses” you see are a combination of what was noted in the online questionnaire and in interview sessions with local stakeholder groups.

Here are the common themes, per question.

**Question #4:** What are the three things you like best about Blowing Rock (the town) besides its people? We know they’re great.

**Common responses:**

- Outdoor activities
- Quaint, small town charm
- Walkability of downtown
- The weather
- Local shops and restaurants
- Parks and lakes
- Safe and clean

**Question #5:** What are the three biggest challenges you see for Blowing Rock (the town)?

**Common responses:**

- Parking, parking, parking
- Traffic congestion and noise (much due to parking issues)
- Cost of living | lack of affordable housing
- Lack of good-paying jobs
- Just too busy (hard to access restaurants)
- Possibility of the town losing its soul and its small town atmosphere
- Parking, parking, parking
- Parking, parking, parking
- Too many tourists
- Too many tourists

**Question #6:** What do you think Blowing Rock should or could do to make it a better place to live and to visit? Please be specific.

**Common responses:**

- Fix the parking problem
- Improve signage (vehicles and pedestrians)
- More restaurants, allow food trucks
- Better and wider sidewalks, crosswalks, pedestrian signals
- Shops should be open during evening hours
- Overhead power lines: Bury them while you have the chance
- Enforce the speed limit on Hwy. 321
- Enforce the use of Airbnb and short-term rentals
- Develop a dog park downtown
- More activities for young people
- Resident parking permits

**Question #7:** If there was one thing you’d like the town to do right away, to make it an even better place to live, work and play, what would it be?

**Common responses:**

- Add more parking | fix the parking problems
- Crosswalks and sidewalks: more, wider, repair, etc.
- More music in the park, more local talent front and center
- Add bike lanes, bike racks, stroller parking areas
- Add recreation center with pool (year round)
- Have more shops featuring local arts and crafts
- Improve social media footprint for locals

**Question #8:** When friends and family visit you, where do you take them?

What’s the one thing you do, or one place you frequent while they are in the area?

**Common responses:**

- 1) Main Street
- 2) Local shops
- 3) Local restaurants
- 4) Bass Lake
- 5) Hiking local trails
- 6) Cone Manor

Also:

- Memorial and Broyhill Parks
- Price Lake (boating)
- Moses Cone Trails
- Blue Ridge Parkway
- Grandfather Mountain
- Mast General Store
- The Blowing Rock
- BRAHM
- Kilwins Ice Cream

Note: Only two responses noted taking visitors out of the area



**Question #9:** Is there anything else to add?

**Common responses:**

- “How can you improve on perfection?”
- “We love Blowing Rock!”
- “I like the way the leaders have kept the charm of the town”
- Visitors NEED evening activities! Shops shut down at 5:00 or 6:00
- Bury the power lines downtown
- Wayfinding along Highway 321 to downtown
- “Get parking under control”
- “Hosting events we can’t handle or accommodate hurts us...”
- Traffic calming, 321 engine braking, slow the traffic on 321 at Sunset
- Clean streets and sidewalks more often (every couple of days)
- Make Sunset at 321 stand out. Don’t fold to one or two people
- “The positives far outweigh the negatives”

**STAKEHOLDER INPUT**

Over several days, the DDA Team met with local stakeholders including:

- Blowing Rock Civic Association
- Other residents of Blowing Rock
- Town Council
- Education (the school)
- Front line employees
- Lodging properties
- Retail merchants
- Restaurants
- Real estate professionals
- Chamber of Commerce
- The Greenway
- NC Dept. of Transportation
- Blowing Rock TDA board
- Tourism Development Authority staff

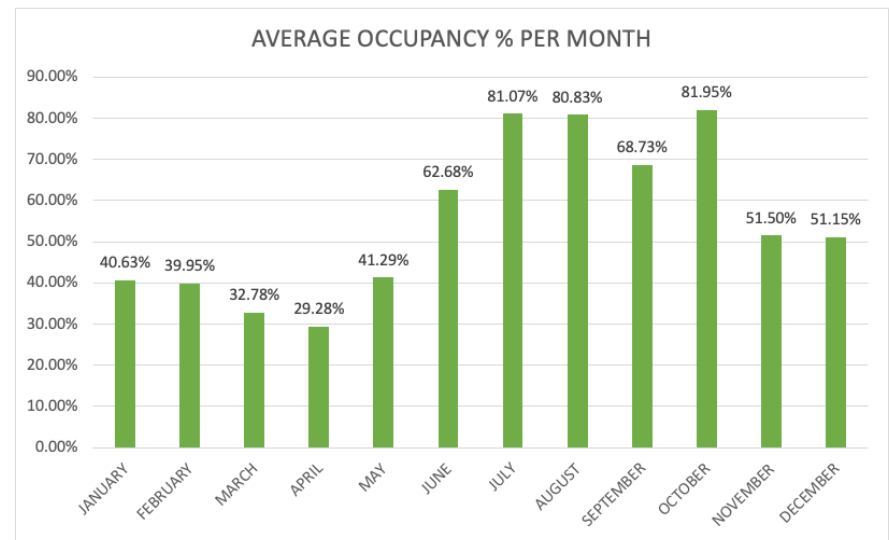
Here are the common challenges presented by these groups:

- Parking at the school is taken up by local employees
- Trash pickup on Thursdays conflicts with school traffic downtown
- There is little or no marketing to home owners
- Antiquated zoning, parking requirement laws
- Every commercial project requires a conditional use permit

- So much red tape, it’s not worth making building improvements
- The rental of town-owned facilities for weddings and private functions negatively impacts parking, facilities availability, and traffic flow and often competes with other public events.
- The town needs better coordination of events

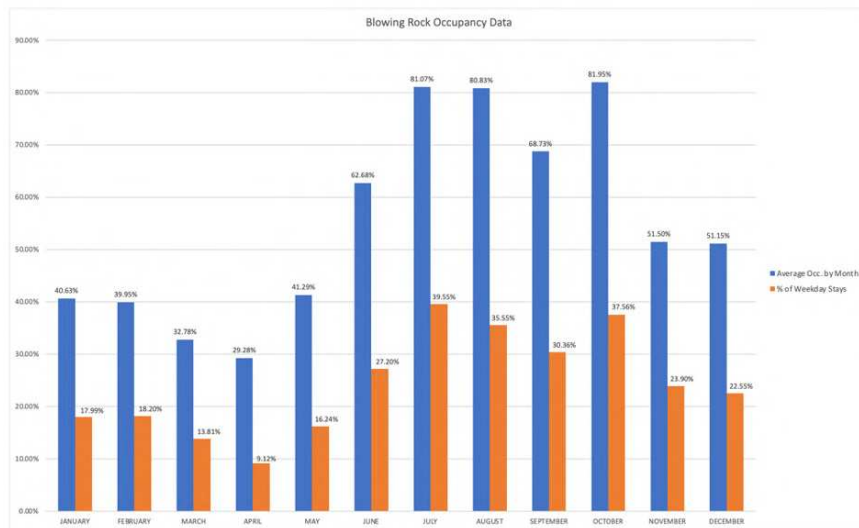
**LODGING RESEARCH**

We were able to secure data from a large portion of local lodging establishments to help guide the marketing effort, and to see if there’s a need to market during the peak season months. The chart, below, shows that even during the peak months of July, August and October, most lodging establishments still have a twenty percent vacancy rate.



The following chart (next page) shows weekday occupancy levels. Even during the peak months, weekday stays only fill between 50% and 55% of the available rooms.

Lodging taxes, across the country, were implemented by the lodging industry to bolster local occupancy levels and, by state law, must be used for the “promotion and development” of the tourism industry.



## OVERNIGHT VS. DAY-TRIP VISITORS

In Blowing Rock there’s still a need to attract overnight visitors every month of the year, with a concentrated effort during the months of November through June, and weekdays during the peak summer and fall months.

There’s no question that Blowing Rock sees a tremendous number of day-trippers—visitors that leave home in the morning, make the trek to Blowing Rock, spend the day, and then head home.

In a perfect world, it would be nice to limit the number of day visitors in favor of those staying in local lodging facilities, but the fact is that the town and its business need them. Without day visitors, the town and its businesses would likely go bankrupt.

Most day-trip visitors are coming to Blowing Rock for the express purpose of “getting away:” a drive into the mountains, and then shopping and dining in the beautiful small town of Blowing Rock. They are coming to Blowing Rock to spend the day and to spend money.

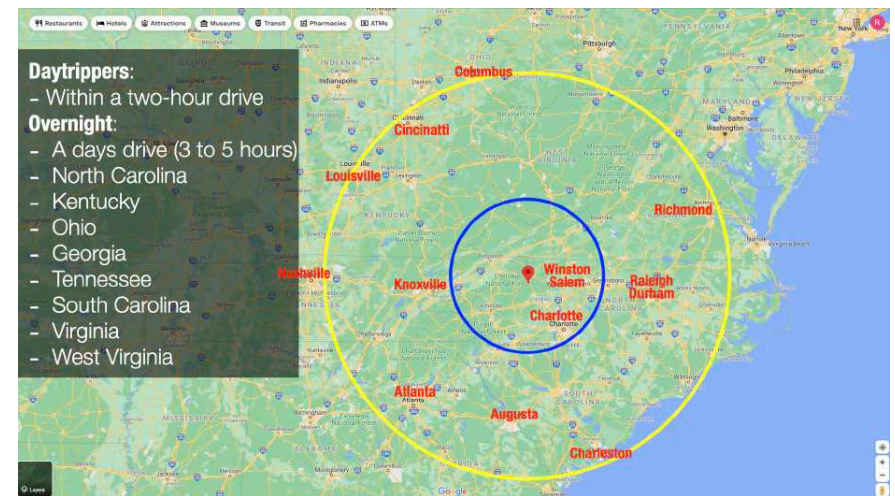
Many overnight visitors are making Blowing Rock part of a larger experience; they are traveling along the Blue Ridge Parkway, or visiting attractions like Grandfather Mountain, Moses Cone Estate, and they are exploring the region.

Both are absolutely necessary to the success of Blowing Rock. It’s far easier to attract day visitors from metropolitan areas such as Charlotte and the Research Triangle—particularly during the shoulder season months.

Most day visitors travel to destinations within a two-hour drive of home. This is referred to as the “Four Times Rule:” People will travel to a destination if there are activities that cater to them and will keep them busy four-times longer than the drive to get there. In other words, if visitors drive two hours to Blowing Rock, does the town offer enough activities to keep them busy for eight hours (4 times the two hour drive)?

And the answer is yes, of course.

The general rule is to attract overnight visitors from population centers of at least a 2.5 hour drive, each way. In other words, the day-trip market would consist of populations within a two-hour drive, and overnight visitors will be from further-away markets. However, these are likely to include a larger experience: the Parkway, or Grandfather Mountain, or Boone and other communities in the region.





So, how can Blowing Rock increase its overnight stays? The town can become the “Hub of the Blue Ridge Parkway experience” by marketing to become THE destination (the place to stay) when people visit the larger region and its attractions. Becoming the “hub” or a visitor’s “base camp” will help Blowing Rock increase its overnight stays, and then each day, these visitors can head out on their “day trips” (typically within a 45-minute drive each direction) starting and ending each day in Blowing Rock.

One challenge to this strategy is the fact that you would be marketing your competing communities and other attractions away from Blowing Rock, and this, of course, is more expensive to do.

The easiest way to increase overnight stays, and limit day-visitors, is to offer things to do during the evening hours. Studies have shown that visitors spend the night where there are activities well into the evening hours.

Even conferences and conventions take place in cities where there is “life after 6:00 pm.” This is why Las Vegas, Orlando, Charlotte, Nashville and other metro areas host the majority of these larger events.

In the case of Blowing Rock, the sidewalks (other than restaurants) “roll up” between 5:00 and 6:00. No one wants to simply head back to their hotel room to watch TV because the town closed up at 6:00.

The town of Springdale, Utah is located at the entrance to Zion National Park and is home to just under 600 full-time residents. Yet, from April through October, virtually every retail shop in town (and there are dozens) is open until 9:00 at night, six days a week. The one day they close early tends to be on Sundays.

The outcome: Springdale has the highest per capita retail sales in the State of Utah. Not bad for a town of 600. And its occupancy levels during those months are much higher than they are in Blowing Rock.

If Blowing Rock began hosting evening concerts, showcased movies on an outdoor screen, had more restaurants with live music during evening hours, hosted stargazing events several days each week, had retail shops open until 9:00 or even 10:00, lodging occupancies would increase, as would weekday stays.

Consider this: A full 70% of bricks and mortar retail shopping takes place after 6:00 pm. This is research from the National Retail Federation.

Consider this: During the day, many Blowing Rock visitors head out to hike world-class trails, kayak in nearby rivers and lakes, sight-see the Parkway, head to Grandfather Mountain, Tweetsie Railway and other nearby attractions. They might be fishing, golfing or immersed in other activities, and then they come back to Blowing Rock to find it largely closed.

Blowing Rock can’t become a “hub” or “base camp” destination until it can provide life after 6:00 beyond just dining. And this is largely why Blowing Rock needs to stay the course with its marketing to both day-trip visitors and overnight stays.

The Blowing Rock TDA would love nothing more than to see its lodging at 90% occupancy, year round, but that can’t happen without creating a night-time economy, which is very difficult to do in a town of fewer than 1,500 residents located in the mountains where weather can be a major impediment.

That being said, there are several recommendations in this plan that can help Blowing Rock increase its overnight stays.

Once again, this plan focuses more on initiatives Blowing Rock can undertake within the next three years to make it an even better place to live, work, invest in and visit.

## **SUMMARY OF INITIAL FINDINGS:**

It was very clear that parking is, by far, the top issue that must be addressed. In fact, after only a couple of hours visiting Blowing Rock, even during the shoulder season months, it was abundantly clear that parking in or close to downtown was grossly inadequate.

Next to parking, other top concerns included narrow sidewalks, lack of pedestrian safety enhancements, and the need for directional signage to local amenities such as public parking, restrooms, and Broyhill Park, which would also help mediate traffic congestion downtown.

In nearly six months of public outreach, interviews, and research, there were no retailers, restaurants, or lodging establishments that said Blowing Rock suffers from overtourism.

In fact, the lodging research shows that even during the peak summer months, there are often weekday vacancies at local lodging facilities, and on an annual basis, there's still a need to put "heads in beds"—filling lodging rooms.

While some local residents feel that all marketing of tourism should stop, that would spell disaster for nearly 100% of local businesses, and it would severely impact the largest portion of the town's tax base.

Blowing Rock has been a popular visitor destination for well over 100 years, and that's not going to change, nor should it change. The tourism economy, and the town's location, have made it a premier place to live, work and play.

What needs to happen is to better accommodate and monetize tourism so it can better coexist with those who call Blowing Rock home. That is what this plan is focused on, and this will make tourism a "sustainable" economic driver.

Perhaps the biggest challenge has been finding the necessary funding in order to tackle these issues. Parking, pedestrian safety, and the other top concerns are certainly not a new issues to Blowing Rock, and much of the frustration has come from lack of long-term solutions and a way to fund those.

## **INITIAL IDEAS FROM LOCAL INPUT**

- A "Local's Night" for residents. Perhaps on Tuesday nights. This might include discounts for local residents at retail shops and restaurants when they show validation that they are local residents, including seasonal residents.

- Remove the parking along the block where Kilwin's is located for public safety: school kids, traffic to and from the school, and the fact that this is a busy intersection with poor visibility.

- Provide police officers, cadets, or concierge volunteers to stroll Main Street during peak days. They would wear either uniforms or shirts identifying themselves and offer guidance and answer questions for visitors.

- Add signage at public restrooms: "If problems, call xxx-xxx-xxxx. Town of Blowing Rock." There's currently no contact information on how to secure assistance or notify local officials of problems at restrooms.

- Perhaps encourage private shuttles to transport visitors from Boone and/or Banner Elk to Blowing Rock and vice versa. A "visitor sharing" opportunity. During the drive, the driver or step-on guide would offer stories, history, and "did you know" facts about the area and its attractions.

- On some occasions, school students could "sell" school lot parking and bottled water to visitors as a fund-raiser. This is a brilliant idea that connects visitors with the fact that Blowing Rock is an actual town where people live and kids attend the local school.

- Cover the tennis court (bubble covers) so they can be used year round.

- Remove the tennis courts to make room for a center stage and a small amphitheater.

- Remove the parking along Main Street (there are 85 spaces currently along Main) and widen the sidewalks, add a bike lane, bike racks, stroller parking spots, additional seating, street trees, and sidewalk cafe dining.

- Create a Downtown Master Development Plan that would address the future of Main Street and Sunset, as well as the side streets in downtown.

- Do NOT remove the ability to offer sidewalk dining. This should be encouraged.

- Do NOT penalize businesses that trade parking for public gathering spaces.

- \$2 per hour parking downtown, instead of just \$1 as initially proposed.

- Create a shuttle and a stronger partnership with the equestrian show which brings 2,700 people to Blowing Rock over 21 days. The show creates a \$7.7 million economic impact to the area.

- Institute shuttle service between App Ski Mountain and Blowing Rock during peak skiing weekends.





- Create a zoning overlay on Main and Sunset, not allowing chains or franchises into the district. Those already in place would be grandfathered in. Having a Subway or Dairy Queen downtown would diminish the quaint, small-town atmosphere, which both local residents and visitors want to keep in place.

- Create a Cultural Affairs Committee to bring in more diversity of visitors, entertainment and cultural depth.

- Create a Business Improvement District for downtown, to create a funding source for some of the recommendations outlined in this plan and for facade improvements and downtown beautification (retail).

- Recruit a fitness center to Blowing Rock. This would be utilized by both local residents and visitors.

- Convert the Mayview Park ball fields to an amphitheater or event venue.

- The town needs a broader variety of ethnic dining options.

- The town should promote healthy living, and then produce periodic 5k and 10k runs and walks to benefit local, regional, and national charities.

- Close Main Street for larger events and parades. **NOTE:** The town actually did this for the Independence Day Parade, which was a resounding success. This also proved that downtown does not need to accommodate vehicles, parking and traffic 24/7, 365 days a year on Main. Parade guests parked across Hwy. 321 and had no issues walking up the hill. The experience made Blowing Rock's 4th of July celebration among the best in the country.

All of these are excellent ideas and many of them are incorporated into this plan, but all of them should be considered, even if implemented outside of this plan.

One thing that came out of all of the public outreach, interviews, the online questionnaire, e-mails, social media posts, and one-on-one communications is that the people of Blowing Rock absolutely love the community, they want it to remain a quaint, picturesque, but successful town and are willing to share it with visitors—even though it can sometimes be a bit challenging to spend time in.

The ideas that were presented during this effort were well thought-out and should be incorporated in future planning efforts for the town.

While there were many complaints, as will always be the case in every community, overwhelmingly, the community realizes that the price of living in a popular resort town will always come with periods where the challenges conflict with every-day life.





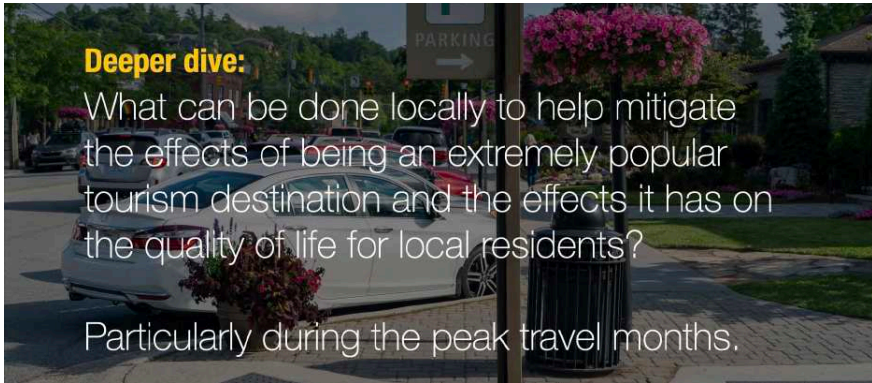
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## THE VISION

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When this plan is implemented, what will the Blowing Rock experience be like? What will people see that's different or better? And will that also create a better experience for local residents?

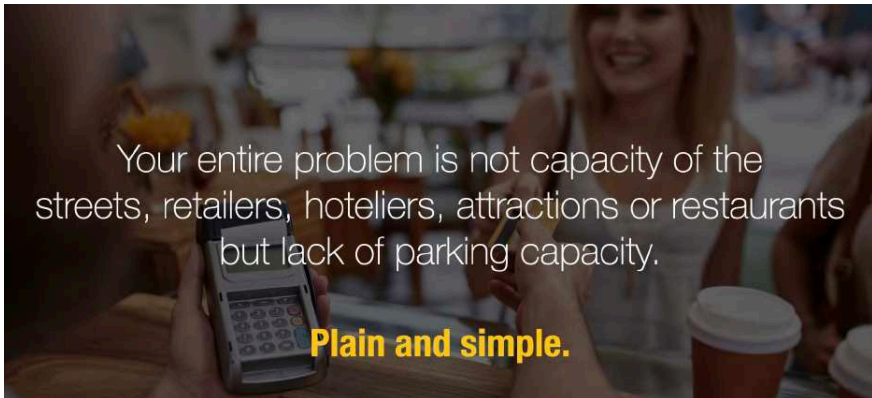




**Deeper dive:**

What can be done locally to help mitigate the effects of being an extremely popular tourism destination and the effects it has on the quality of life for local residents?

Particularly during the peak travel months.



Your entire problem is not capacity of the streets, retailers, hoteliers, attractions or restaurants but lack of parking capacity.

**Plain and simple.**



No wonder local residents, businesses, and customers are frustrated!

## CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING

Public parking spaces downtown: **428** spaces

DOWNTOWN WORKERS	<p>Retail shops: <b>69 x 3 = 204</b></p> <p>Restaurants: <b>14 x 12 = 182</b></p> <p>Real Estate: <b>6 x 4 = 24</b></p>	}	<p><b>413</b> spaces*</p>
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\*Does not include  
Town Hall, Public works & Parks, Chamber & Tourism, the school, Library or banks

This graphic (above) includes the 69 retail shops downtown, with three employees in each at any one time. Some only have one person, while several will have four to five employees there.

The graphic also includes the 14 downtown restaurants, which have at least 12 staff members there at any one time. This is actually very conservative considering that most restaurants have between 14 and 18 staff workers at any one time.

With six real estate offices downtown, if each had two agents and two guests at any one time, they would require 24 parking spaces.

These figures are quite conservative and, in reality, the town does not have enough parking to even accommodate workers, let alone customers. The town has less than half the parking it needs.

## THE BOTTOM LINE

Blowing Rock needs another **600 parking spaces** (with a plan for adding more) AND a **shuttle** from offsite parking.

## THE VISION

Imagine visiting Blowing Rock in June of 2025. As you drive along Highway 321, there are signs directing you to the Blowing Rock Trolley and one of two parking structures. One might be at the Premium Outlets and the other across the street from Sunset, along the highway.

Parking there is easy and convenient with a five-minute free trolley ride into town every 15-minutes. Once you park the car and hop on the trolley, the driver will provide some great information about things to do or the history of the town, and a reason to come back again in another season.

Once you come into town, you're dropped off at the Trolley Stop in front of Memorial Park, and you take a look around. The town is stunningly beautiful with fantastic gardens and smiling pedestrians enjoying the surroundings. You can hear music coming from Memorial Park as you start to explore the town on foot.

There are 14 to 20 foot wide sidewalks with sidewalk cafe dining, stroller parking and bike racks, a bike lane, and no cars parked along Main Street. This town is about people, not traffic congestion and parking, which makes it reminiscent of communities throughout Western Europe.

The shops are lined with benches, pots and planters, and historic buildings are well maintained and beautiful. There are directional signs for pedestrians, pointing to in-town parking locations, public restrooms, and attractions such as Broyhill Park, BRAHM, and the plaza and playground in Memorial Park.

Decorative crosswalks are every half-block, making it easy and safe to get across the street to other shops and eateries. There are street trees in every block providing summer shade—much like you'd see in Greenville, South Carolina, yet in a much more intimate, charming, small-town setting.

The parking area in front of the Blowing Rock Market is now a plaza, full of life, music and food. While the town is busy, sidewalks are not overly crowded because they are twice the width they used to be, and people are obviously enjoying themselves.

When you walk up the steps into beautiful Memorial Park, you'll hear the music coming from the center stage situated in a small amphitheater which

seats about 300 people. This is a great place to sit and enjoy ice cream while listening to the live music or enjoying a theatrical performance.

Blowing Rock is THE model town for all others to emulate. Like Nantucket in Cape Cod, Massachusetts, or Mackinac Island in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, Blowing Rock's incredible downtown is now about people, not cars.

The core recommendations in this plan call for more than doubling the parking currently available, putting more than half the spaces "off-site" with convenient trolley service into downtown.

To pay for the parking structures, a paid parking system would be put in place. For instance, parking downtown might be \$2 an hour up to a maximum of four hours. Parking in the off-site parking structure might cost \$1 per hour up to a maximum of \$5 for each 24-hour period.

Local businesses could purchase discounted parking passes to the off-site garage to give to their employees, incentivizing them to park there as opposed to employees parking downtown at their own cost.

Providing off-site parking for workers will free up hundreds of downtown parking spaces for customers and local residents. There are currently 430 public parking spaces in downtown, yet downtown employs at least 420 workers at any one time, leaving only ten spaces to accommodate customers. And this doesn't include parking for workers at City Hall, the library, Chamber of Commerce, TDA, public works and parks departments, the school, or banks.

This plan includes both vehicular and pedestrian wayfinding (directional signage), decorative crosswalks along Main and Sunset, including mid-block crosswalks.

The 85 parking spaces along Main would be eliminated (the parking structure would have 600 vehicles) to accommodate wider sidewalks, bike lanes, bike racks and stroller parking, and to provide room for sidewalk cafe dining, additional benches and beautification. This would also eliminate the danger of people walking between cars out into traffic and reduce traffic congestion by nearly seventy-percent. The streets would be lined with street trees, and the town would be far more pedestrian friendly while being more beautiful and easier to enjoy.





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## THE PLAN

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The following recommendations, if fully implemented, will make Blowing Rock an outstanding town—one of the very best small towns in America—in which to live, work, invest in, and visit.

Every elected official from the President of the United States, to town council members, school board members, and Chamber board members, have a primary function: To improve the quality of life for their citizens and constituents. The recommendations in this Action Plan are designed to help achieve that goal.

Every one of these includes funding solutions, so all that's needed to bring this plan to fruition is strong leadership from the Town of Blowing Rock (particularly elected officials), the Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce, and Blowing Rock Tourism (your Tourism Development Authority).



**Recommendation #1:** Create the Destination Blowing Rock Team.

**Implementation timeline:** Beginning of 2022

**Leadership:** Town of Blowing Rock

**Approximate cost to implement:** None

**Funding source options:** None required

**Rationale and to-do steps:** As you read through this plan you will see that, initially, there will be several recommended contracts for professional services.

To make sure everyone, locally, is on the same page, pulling in the same direction, we recommend that the town create a stakeholder committee or team to act as the selection committee and sounding board for these contracts as the town works with various contractors.

Contracted assignments include:

- Design/build engineering/architectural firm for a 600-space parking structure
- Parking Management & Revenue Plan
- Downtown Master Development Plan
- Wayfinding system design and installation

All of these will inter-connect, as the Parking Management Plan will require public education and support, and will dovetail to the location and development of the parking structure or structures.

The Downtown Master Development Plan concentrates on public-safety enhancements (decorative and mid-block crosswalks), wider sidewalks, sidewalk cafe dining, downtown seating and beautification, pedestrian wayfinding, facade improvements, and a host of other enhancements.

The Downtown Master Development Plan will dovetail with the creation of a Wayfinding System for both vehicular, pedestrian, and trail signage.

Every recommendation made in this plan is focused on making Blowing Rock an even better place to live, spend time in, invest in, work in and to visit. And every recommendation ties into other recommendations.

This is not a plan to be implemented solely by the Blowing Rock Tourism Development Authority (TDA). While the TDA commissioned this plan to better manage tourism in Blowing Rock, this is a plan that relies on and must largely be implemented by the Town.

The purpose of a Town Council is to set policy, not manage the day to day affairs of the Town, thus the “Destination Blowing Rock” team is a necessity and a conduit between residents, tourism, commercial property owners, businesses, North Carolina DOT, the town council, and other stakeholders in the town’s welfare.

The Team should include:

- Mayor or council representative
- City Manager
- Town Finance Director (if in place)
- Chamber of Commerce
- Blowing Rock TDA
- Downtown Association director (coming up in this plan)
- Downtown property owner
- Lodging owner
- A downtown retailer (or two)
- North Carolina DOT representative
- Blowing Rock Civic Association
- BRAHM or Arts Commission
- Historical Commission (if there is one)
- Village Foundation
- Citizen at Large
- Kiwanis, Rotary or other auxiliary organization
- Blowing Rock Police
- Blowing Rock Parks & Recreation
- Blowing Rock Public Works

This is the team that gets everyone working in unison. This will be vitally important as the town begins to take on major construction projects, not only those included in this plan, but those already underway: underground utilities, traffic control changes, etc.

The Town’s PIO and the TDA’s Social Media Director (next recommendation) would be ad hoc members of this team purely for the purpose of public outreach and the dissemination of information to local residents and visitors.

**Recommendation #2:** Hire a Public Information Officer

**Implementation timeline:** Beginning of 2022 and ongoing

**Leadership:** Town of Blowing Rock

**Approximate cost to implement:** \$70,000 annually including benefits and taxes

**Funding source options:** General fund revenues

**Rationale and to-do steps:** One of the most-mentioned challenges from local residents was that they feel left out of knowing what's happening locally. While the Chamber of Commerce and the TDA both do a lot of outreach to local residents, many people still feel left out of the conversation.

As you implement this plan, and work already taking place throughout the town, it is more important than ever to have a person dedicated to communicating with local businesses and residents alike.

This person should be energetic, enthusiastic, be a very good writer, social media savvy, and an expert communicator. They would be charged with managing the Town's Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts, managing an engaging monthly newsletter mailer to every household and business in the town letting them know of items that might affect them over the next months.

This person will be the "Face of Blowing Rock" and, more often than not, would be on camera, showcasing upcoming events, weather concerns, downtown improvements and construction schedules. They would introduce new businesses and be the conduit between the Chamber of Commerce, Blowing Rock Tourism (the TDA), and other local organizations.

Studies have proven that a two-minute video will have more than ten times the viewing audience than written communication delivered by the same means. The PIO would be media savvy and have video editing and production skills as well.

Currently, the City Manager has to take on this responsibility, working with other staff members, when his time should be allocated to implementing this plan and other initiatives that fill his in-box on a daily basis. We cannot over

emphasize the necessity of this position. The PIO will be the voice of the council and mayor, city staff department heads, police and fire, tourism, the business community, and the Chamber of Commerce. This person will also manage press requests and public alerts (weather, construction, or natural disasters that might affect the area or region) to the media and other sources in the area and in the major markets the community pulls visitors from.

This position, alone, will alleviate many of the challenges that local residents and businesses have voiced throughout this effort.

Over the next several years, the Town will be implementing this plan, among other projects already in the works, including:

- Street and sidewalk improvements
- Traffic control lights, wayfinding signage, and crosswalk enhancements
- The development of a parking structure and trolley service
- Contracting with professionals regarding parking, traffic control, development of a downtown plaza and other projects.
- Implementation of paid parking (new meters and new technologies) where locals can use PIO assistance in learning how to use.

The position of the Public Information Officer is one of the biggest needs Blowing Rock has. This is a full time, year round position, working directly with the City Manager to provide a voice and face for the town.



**Recommendation #3:** Option two or three properties for development of a 600-space parking structure.

**Implementation timeline:** Beginning of 2022 (January through March)

**Leadership:** Town of Blowing Rock

**Approximate cost to implement:** None unless contracted

**Funding source options:** None required

**Rationale and to-do steps:** This is, by far, the town's very top priority when it comes to managing your tourism-based economy.

It is VERY important that the parking structure (or structures) accommodate AT LEAST 600 vehicles. Please remember that more than 420 people work downtown at any one time, with more than that on busy weekends, and yet the town only has 430 public parking spaces.

In other words, with employees parking downtown (nearly 100% of them commute alone) there are practically zero parking spaces for customers, the visitors that make up the town's tax base.

This is why employees tend to park in the school's parking lot, leaving little or no parking for school staff, at churches and in any place they can find.

The 600-space parking structure (or two 300 space garages) should NOT be located in downtown, but located within a short walk or shuttle ride of downtown.

These parking structures should be no further away than Tanger Outlets, which is already borderline of being too far away.

It is critically important that there be a minimum of 600 spaces. That is minimum. Please do not short the needed parking. While 300 spaces would certainly help, it is not a long-term or "sustainable" solution when the town has far less than half the needed parking. While the parking structures in downtown were helpful, they did not solve the parking issue, as just about everyone (locals and visitors) acknowledges.

The town should contract with a real estate representative to secure options to the top two or three best locations for a 90-day period so that initial engineering and environmental studies can be done.

Real estate representation should not disclose that this is for the town, otherwise prices tend to increase, reducing the feasibility of the parking garage.

Additionally, the town should conduct core samples of the town-owned property located at the intersection of Highway 321 and North Main Street. This would be to determine the cost and viability of putting a multi-level parking deck at this location, which would be an easy walk into town, and a very short shuttle ride.

If it is not a feasible site, the town should deed the site back to North Carolina Dept. of Transportation, since it's not a viable site for private-sector development, park or other use.

When it comes to securing property, there should be no more than two sites. One might accommodate 150 spaces with the other having 450 spaces. The ratio does not have to be 50/50 between two sites. Of course, a single site would be best and far less expensive than building on two sites.

Any more than two sites will confuse consumers, make shuttle costs more expensive to operate, and make it difficult to run a single shuttle every 15 minutes (or more often) between the two sites and downtown.

Even before the town options the site, it could work with a real estate agent and engineer to perform a "pre-assessment" of various sites in terms of environmental issues, access and egress, and soil/rock sampling to make sure there is a solid base to build on.

It would be best to have the parking directly adjacent to Highway 321 so that it is obvious to visitors (and could be easily signed) that this is public parking for Blowing Rock visitors. If people KNOW it's there, without any prior planning, it will be much easier to fill and maximize. Otherwise it will be used after visitors find that there's no parking downtown—still allowing the traffic congestions we're trying to avoid with this plan.

**Recommendation #4:** Contract for initial engineering and design of a 600-space parking structure.

**Implementation timeline:** March 2022

**Leadership:** Town of Blowing Rock

**Approximate cost to implement:** Initial cost: \$45,000 and \$2,115,000 for final engineering, design, and permitting (soft) costs.

**Funding source options:** Federal and state infrastructure grants, borrowing from future parking revenues leveraged for this project.

**Rationale and to-do steps:** The town will issue a Request for Proposals for the design and construction (design/build contract) of the 600-space structure.

This would be a two-phase project:

Phase 1 would be to develop an initial design and cost-to-build estimate so that the town can secure the funding, or funding sources, prior to the final design, permitting and construction. The cost estimate should be within ten percent of the final construction cost.

Phase 2 will be the final approval by the town once the final engineering and design work has been completed. Following the approvals, the contractor would secure the necessary permitting and then construction.

Should the parking structure be located in a highly visible area (and hopefully so) it should have a facade that is attractive and fits the overall ambiance of the area. Yes, this will add to the cost, but will be very important. After all, first impressions are lasting impressions, and in this beautiful area of North Carolina, it's VERY important that this structure not be an eyesore.

## Parking shortage for Blowing Rock

The town should have a total of **1,500 parking spaces**

### PARKING STRUCTURE COST

\$23,500 per space x 600 spaces: \$14,100,000

Plus soft costs of 15%: 2,115,000

Total estimated cost: \$16,215,000

Federal transportation grants (30%) (5,000,000)

Net cost of development: \$11,215,000



**Recommendation #5:** Hire a full-time Digital Community Manager

**Implementation timeline:** Winter 2022

**Leadership:** Blowing Rock TDA

**Approximate cost to implement:** \$68,500 annually including taxes and benefits

**Funding source options:** Lodging taxes | TDA funding

**Rationale and to-do steps:** The Town's Public Information Officer's focus is on marketing to local residents, while the TDA's Digital Community Manager primary focus is on communicating with visitors.

Social media is the fastest, easiest and least expensive way to get messages to visitors who are both planning a trip to the town and those already on their way.

Through social media you can, at a moments notice, alert visitors of weather, road, or ski conditions as well as parking updates and alerts such as "In town parking now full, please park at the parking deck located at..."

Social media is also a great way to promote having visitors share their experience via Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and other channels with a focus on promoting the shoulder seasons, special events, and festivals.

For seven months of the year overnight stays (occupancy levels) are at 50% or less, so a key focus for the TDA is to increase shoulder season stays and to convert day visitors to overnight visitors.

While Tracy and Amanda do an excellent job of marketing Blowing Rock and managing tourism, they are managing a million dollar "business" which is a very tall order for just a staff of two. Similarly funded destination marketing organizations will typically have five full-time workers.

Adding a third full-time staff member will allow one to be dedicated to tourism marketing and management, which includes advertising (print, outdoor, and broadcast), visitor research, managing the TDA, assisting with the implementation of the initiatives in this plan, as well as other product development projects.

A second staff member would be dedicated to promotions and public relations: This includes the creation and distribution of the Blowing Rock Guide and other printed materials, website management, content creation (web posts, storylines, photography, itineraries), media pitches (focus on multi-day stays and specialty publications), handling media visits requests, and press releases.

The third staff member, the Digital Community Manager, would be charged with distribution of the content to visitors, providing "up-to-the-minute" notices, taking over management of the YouTube channel, Instagram account, Facebook, Twitter, Tiktok, Pinterest, and other social media channels.

Video creation and production, as a growing communication medium on social media, will be a priority for this individual. This position would also distribute local event and tourism-related business information, on social media as well as partner listings (VisitNC, High Country Host, etc.).

In years past a destination marketing organization could control and orchestrate all messaging and communication channels, and the Blowing Rock TDA has included social media in that work. But as social media has grown, you now have to manage it: Watch what's being said, respond to challenging posts, mitigate complaints, and become the "go to" person with regards to on-the-spot resources and answers.

This position will not only help manage the messaging, but it will encourage conversion to overnight visitation. It will build visitor loyalty, satisfaction, and trust and provide valuable customer interaction and feedback. Dedicated engagement with visitors is powerful: engaged customers spend more.

**The bottom line:**

The TDA needs additional staffing in order to provide quality services for Blowing Rock's visitors, better communication with both local residents and the visiting public, and assistance in converting day-visitors to overnight stays, while also bolstering shoulder season tourism: the months of November through May.

**Recommendation #6:** Contract for development of a Blowing Rock Parking and Shuttle Service Management Plan (or Parking Management Plan).

**Implementation timeline:** April 2022

**Leadership:** Town of Blowing Rock

**Approximate cost to implement:** \$120,000 guesstimate

**Funding source options:** Federal infrastructure grant resources, transportation grants, leveraging future local parking revenues

**Rationale and to-do steps:** While the initial engineering and cost estimates are being developed for the construction of the parking garage(s), this project is to determine the best ways to fund the project.

This would include changing Blowing Rock from free public parking to paid parking, as is done in most other popular visitor destinations. While this may not be popular with some local residents, we believe the trade-off of having traffic congestion cut in half, and opening up in-town parking, makes the cost a good investment.

This project calls for the release of a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to attract expertise in the creation, management, and revenue generation of a town-wide parking management program.

While this plan includes initial estimates of what revenues could be generated to offset the cost of building a \$16 million parking structure, this contract would be charged with verifying those numbers and developing a complete parking “system,” that will also help manage traffic flow.

Included in the Scope of Work should be the following elements:

### 1) PARKING RATE STRUCTURE

Defining the parking rates, time limits, and verifying projected occupancy levels of both in-town and off-site parking structures and publicly owned lots.

As part of this plan, preliminary estimates have been detailed (see boxes, next column) based on \$2 per hour for a maximum of four hours for in-town

## REVENUES Downtown Parking

Paid parking 9:00 to 6:00 daily (9 hours)

\$2 per hour | 4 hour max

- July, Aug @ 90% = \$416,016

- Sept, Oct @ 80% = \$369,792

- Nov. through April @ 40% = \$554,688

- May, June @ 60% = 277,344

Total: \$1,617,840

(242,676) 15% to parking partner

\$1,375,164 annual gross revenues

## REVENUES Parking structure

Paid parking 9:00 to 6:00 daily (9 hours)

600 parking spaces

\$1 per hour up to a max of \$5 per 24-hour period

- 40% annual occupancy

Total: \$432,000 (360 days) gross revenues

Parking shuttle cost: \$310,000 annually

\$122,000 gross revenues after trolley costs

## TOTAL GROSS REVENUES

Downtown parking: \$1,375,164

Parking structure: \$122,000

Gross parking revenues\*: \$1,497,164 annually



parking, and \$1 per hour, with a maximum of \$5 for a 24-hour period at the parking structure. Parking would be free between 6:00 pm and 9:00 am to encourage visitors and locals to spend more time downtown. This, in turn, may help incentivize local businesses to remain open during evening hours and, in turn, convincing more visitors to spend the night. Overnight visitors spend three times that of day visitors, and lodging establishments have their own guest parking lots.

## 2) SPONSORSHIPS

Another supplemental revenue source could be parking structure sponsorships. This is where a company or institution can “adopt” a floor of the garage, painting or mounting murals inside the garage on concrete pillars and walls promoting their goods or services. You might have a floor sponsored by App State, or a regional bank, or even a national brand such as Coca-Cola, Subway, Holiday Inn, or Chevrolet.

This could raise hundreds of thousands of dollars each year (not included in the figures on the next page) and it takes a drab concrete interior and ads graphics and color. Additionally, guests may not remember which floor they're on, but studies have shown they remember brands over numbers or colors.

## 3) EMPLOYEE PERMITS

For those who park in the garage, they will pay a lower rate (\$5 max and only \$1 per hour) incentivizing people to park there and then take the free shuttle coming up into town.

However, one of the keys to this entire program is to convince downtown workers to park there. A program would be set up where employers could purchase monthly parking passes for their employees at that \$5 per day rate or a different rate (to be determined by the Parking Management System contractor).

If employees could park at the garage at no cost to themselves, and shuttle services are provided at 15-minute intervals, employees we talked with said they would park in the garage, without hesitation.

Additionally, the parking structure will keep vehicles out of the rain or snow, creating another benefit to parking in an off-site multi-level parking garage.

The trolley stop, at the garage, would be covered and heated during the colder months.

## 4) PARKING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Selecting or recommending a Parking Management Contractor. Modern parking systems are no longer manual operations where you plop quarters into a meter, but are a combination of digital (guests use an app on their phone to pay for parking), or can use a nearby kiosk (where you can get a parking pass, paying via cash or credit card, and then setting the pass on the vehicle's dash).

There are numerous companies that provide these services. A few are listed in the box, below. They typically provide the kiosks, parking posts or zone and space identifiers (parking guests pay per zone and space number).

A very positive benefit to these app-driven parking systems is that they only take a few minutes to set-up on any mobile device, and they can send a text to the parking guest letting them know, 15-minutes in advance, that their parking time limit is about to expire. At that point, they can, from wherever they are located, add more time via the app, or if they have reached their maximum time limit, will be able to head back to their vehicle.

The parking garage will be different in the fact that guests will pass through a gate, take a ticket from a dispensing machine, and on returning to their vehicle, pay for parking at a kiosk, and then insert the ticket on their way out of the garage.

Typically, there will be a person at the garage (or a number to call) should a person lose the ticket or have issues with the gates. This person also provides security at the garage, which would be supplemented by security cameras managed and overseen by the Blowing Rock Police Department.

### Choices:

- Passport (USA)
- Pango (Israel)
- PayByPhone (Canada)
- Parkmobile (USA)

## 5) PRIVATE PARKING PARTNERSHIPS

The inclusion of church and other private lots into the system. This could open up more than 100 additional in-town private parking spaces that are not used on a daily basis, such as churches. They would also have parking posts with the zone and space number on each, but “meter toppers” (signs on the top of each post) would let guests know that public parking is NOT allowed on Sundays from 9:00 to Noon (or whenever the day and hours are for their services).

In exchange, the institution would receive a “revenue share,” that might range from 50% to 70% of the gross generated revenues. The reason for the property not receiving a larger share is that this program allows the town to hire parking enforcement officers (seven days a week) to manage both public and private lots that are a part of this program. It includes managing the parking posts, and funding the parking vendor who also receives a portion of the revenues in exchange for installing the system at no cost to the town.

The initial revenue projections (previous page) do not include any revenues from these third-party parking resources.

## 6) PARKING ENFORCEMENT

A key element in this program is parking enforcement. In meeting with numerous front-line Blowing Rock employees, we learned that the town does not enforce the collection of parking infractions, and so many people just toss the tickets they receive, knowing they do not have to pay for them.

In this program, several parking enforcement officers would be retained to manage the system, write citations when necessary, and these would need to be enforced through the local court system (which may need to be instituted locally).

Rather than marking tires, they are able to enforce the parking through digital means (using a mobile device) or by reviewing parking passes placed on the dash (by those that do not pay via app).

## 7) SYSTEM EDUCATION

Initially, for many residents (and visitors) not familiar with digital parking payment systems, it can be a challenge to set up the app or use the kiosks. This is where both the town’s Public Information Officer and the TDA’s Social Media Manager would create short “how to” videos so that visitors and locals

can download the app and set it up before they even use a paid parking space.

It may be wise to use the same system used in downtown Boone, so that downtown visitors do not have to learn to use two different systems.

It may also be wise to relax enforcement of the parking fees for the first month of use as locals learn to use the system, and for the first time, actually being required to pay for parking downtown. This period should take no more than 30 days to implement.

## 8) PRIVATE PARKING SIGNAGE

As part of this assignment, the Contractor would also create one or two signage designs for private parking areas. Currently every business with private parking has its own signs, creating sign clutter and confusion among those looking for parking spots.

By having and using a single sign type, it will quickly become clear what parking is private versus public.

These could be provided at no charge (or at cost) to local businesses or institutions with private-only parking.

This would also include the design of “meter toppers” or post toppers for churches and others where public parking is not allowed during certain time periods or days.





## 9) TROLLEY SHUTTLE SYSTEM

This is key to the success of an off-site parking system. Timing is most critical of all. Trolleys (rubber tire trolleys - see photos) must run between the parking garage and a downtown trolley stop at 15-minute intervals or less. And it must run seven days a week, 365 days a year, from 8:00 am to 10:00 pm so that it can be relied upon. Workers come and go every hour of the day, so they will require reliable transportation downtown.

Trolleys can be part of the overall Blowing Rock experience, with the driver offering fun facts to visitors about the area. Even the seating is part of the experience. Please do NOT use busses or utilitarian vehicles for this. The trolleys must be an attraction in themselves. Look at the photos, next column and next page, for examples.

There should be no charge for riding the trolley. It's a benefit of using the parking structure. The trolleys can generate revenues by selling on-board advertising (see photo examples, page 32) and providing brochure distribution. There should be no exterior advertising other than promoting the shuttle service and parking structure.

The photo, below, shows the marketing of the Springdale, Utah shuttle provided for access to the town and Zion National Park.

The photo, top right, is the free shuttle provided to BART riders (Bay Area Rapid Transit) once they reach Walnut Creek, California. The photos, opposite page, below right) are of the private shuttle you will see from time to time in Blowing Rock.



Typically shuttles are managed by the Public Works Department, and full and part-time commercial drivers are hired to operate them. Often school bus drivers are employed to drive these when they are not driving for the school district.

Newer shuttles use natural gas, and some are now being developed using battery technologies.

For this program, Blowing Rock will likely need two shuttles (one running at any one time, two during peak days) plus a third to cover for maintenance, repairs, or for shuttles to major events, like the equestrian show, bringing more customers into downtown.





The Walnut Creek shuttle (left photos) generates more than \$100,000 a year in on-board advertising and brochure distribution.

### 10) TROLLEY STOPS

Currently, during peak months, a shuttle service is provided between Tanger Outlets and downtown, but very few people (even the local workforce) know anything about it. The signs are not clear and are very difficult to find.

It will be VERY important to provide easily identifiable trolley stops, perhaps along the lines of those used in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. (see photos next page) or used in other places around North America.

There would be one stop, with covered access, at the parking garage, perhaps a second one at Tanger Outlets (if it plays a role as part of the parking solution), and one downtown where the angle-in parking is currently provided in front of the 1888 Museum (see photo below). Perhaps the existing information kiosk could be incorporated into the trolley stop. Where the angle-in parking spots are located leaves ample room for the trolley.

All trolley stops should be covered and large enough to accommodate up to 20 people, and should include radiant heating during the colder months. It will be important to remove any perceived resistance or barriers to parking off-site, otherwise people will gravitate to downtown parking, creating less-than-ideal traffic flows.







### 11) TIMELINES

When would all of this take place? To complete this assignment will take the better part of six months, if not longer, meaning the Parking Management Plan would not be completed for implementation in 2022.

Likewise, the opening of a parking structure would probably take place in 2024: 2022 for planning, financing, engineering, design, permitting, and 2023 for construction, with it opening in the spring of 2024.

Paid parking could (and should) begin in the summer of 2023, beginning in April (to give time to educate people of its existence) and to build some funds prior to the parking garage opening.

As much as many local residents would like to see these changes immediately, these are large projects that take a lot of time to develop, fund, and implement. The public sector simply cannot move as fast as we'd like, especially with large-scale projects like this.



Trolleys should run 7 days a week from May through October.



The trolley in Greenville, South Carolina



**Recommendation #7:** Contract for the creation of a Five Year Downtown Master Development Plan

**Implementation timeline:** May 2022 start

**Leadership:** Town of Blowing Rock

**Approximate cost to implement:** \$120,000

**Funding source options:** Federal CDBG grants, partnerships, other federal infrastructure, transportation, planning grant sources.

**Rationale and to-do steps:** Like the Parking Management Plan, this is a very comprehensive planning effort that ties directly in with the Town's plans to address underground utilities and other projects that will affect, primarily, Main Street.

### 1) REMOVE MAIN STREET PARKING

First of all, this would NOT be accomplished until the parking structure is built and in operation, OR if there's an increase of 100 or more additional parking spaces downtown, such as churches and other organizations putting their parking spaces into a revenue-share program, as outlined in the prior recommendation.

There are approximately 85 public parking spaces along Main Street, and removing these will create a number of public-safety improvements, increase retail sales and services (actual case histories have proven this to be true), and create a much improved experience for all visitors and patrons in downtown Blowing Rock.

There are currently issues of overcrowded sidewalks, where visitors will walk in the street as opposed to fighting crowds. We observed hundreds of people, over a few weeks, walking between parked vehicles out into traffic to cross the street, requiring vehicles to brake hard and creating additional traffic congestion.

All of the following initiatives in the Downtown Master Development Plan are made possible by removing these 85 parking spaces and making downtown Blowing Rock about people as opposed to cars, congestion, and traffic.

### 2) WIDEN SIDEWALKS DOWNTOWN

The first initiative would be to widen the sidewalks, creating much improved pedestrian access. By widening the sidewalks on the east side of Main Street by another six feet, the creation of a two-foot landscape buffer between the sidewalk and traffic would be allowed, making downtown more appealing (imagine the landscaping at Memorial Park extending down Main Street where most of the retail is located), and keeping people from jaywalking through the landscape.

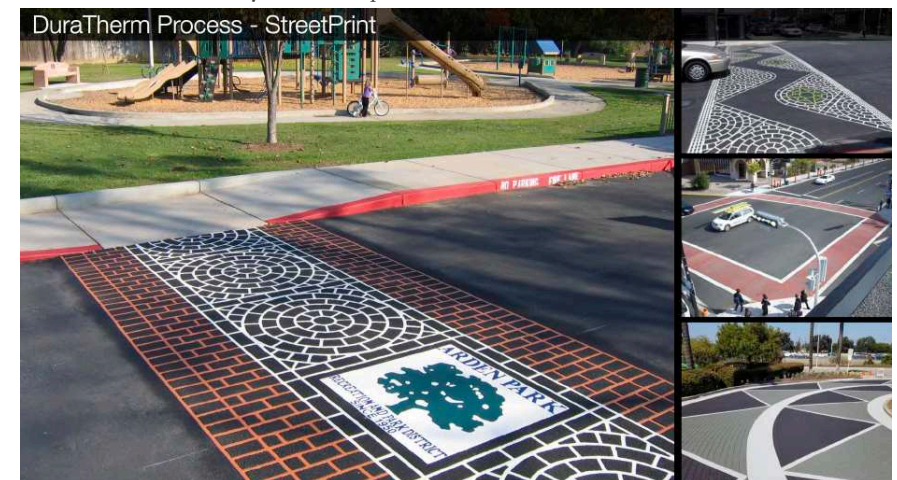
On the west side of Main, a bike lane would be added, and sidewalks would be widened another three feet.

### 3) INTERSECTION BULB-OUTS

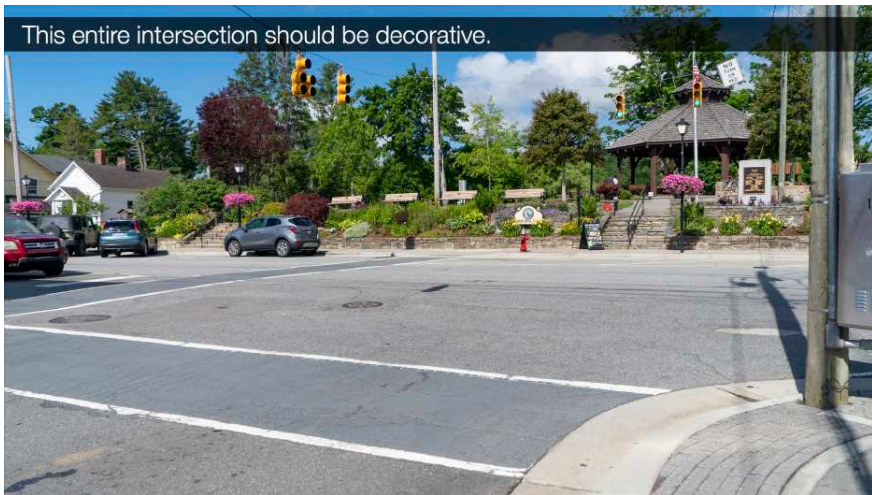
Widening the sidewalks creates a great opportunity to add corner bulb-outs, where people can gather at intersections waiting for their time to cross the street. This also creates a place to add landscaped planters, wayfinding signage, crosswalk signals, and it will increase "traffic calming"—slowing traffic through intersections.

### 4) DECORATIVE AND MID-BLOCK CROSSWALKS

The Master Development Plan would also call for decorative crosswalks as well as mid-block crosswalks, creating a much safer environment for pedestrians. We recommend the use of StreetPrint or the DuraTherm process, where any design can be created and then stamped into the asphalt, with a life of more than 20 years (see photo below).







**5) STREET TREES**

By widening the sidewalks, trees can be placed in the landscape buffer, with additional trees planted so you have a street tree every thirty to forty feet along Main Street. These create shade in the summer months, create an intimate feeling, and can be lit during the winter holiday months. Studies show that shoppers will spend more money where there are street trees.

To see the power of street trees, visit downtown Greenville, South Carolina (see photo below).



**6) BIKE RACKS AND STROLLER PARKING**

Widening the sidewalks will also allow for the placement of bike racks and stroller parking areas, which could be monitored by volunteers (a concierge program) during the peak days. This would be a relief for the restaurants and most of the retail shops downtown.

The Destination Blowing Rock team would work with the Contractor in determining what type and style bike racks as well as other furnishings, fixtures, and equipment, should be placed throughout downtown as part of the Downtown Master Development Plan.

The entire intersection of Main and Hwy. 221 (above) could be decorative, allowing pedestrians to cross from corner to corner when crosswalk traffic lights allow.





## 7) ENCOURAGE SIDEWALK CAFE DINING

Restaurants, ice cream and coffee shops should be encouraged to add sidewalk dining (see photos next page). This would increase capacity at dining establishments, shortening wait times, and it adds to the overall ambiance of downtown. Serving wine and beer in these fenced-off “patios” should be allowed and, in fact, encouraged. Any business that wishes to do this should be presented with a one-page “outline” of what is allowed, and perhaps a one-time permit fee of \$100 per year.

This is a vital ingredient to making downtown become more focused on people, and this will increase retail and restaurant revenues.

Room for ADA access will always be required, and during the winter months, most of the outdoor dining furnishings would be placed in storage.

With this plan, there is a membership in the Destination Development Association, which contains dozens of how-to videos covering each of these recommendations. We encourage the Blowing Rock Team to watch and discuss the video “Sidewalk Dining: The Do’s, Don’ts, and Some Awesome Examples,” which is in the Video Vault under Downtown Revitalization and Development. (See cover shot, bottom right)





### 8) CREATE A ZONING OVERLAY

A Zoning Overlay should be created along Main Street and Sunset to not allow any additional chains or franchises in Blowing Rock's historic district. Having a Subway, Dairy Queen, McDonald's, or Chili's in the heart of a historic downtown (no offense to these businesses) will take away from the unique historic ambiance and appeal of Blowing Rock, removing one of the attractions that draws people to the town. They want and expect a "unique to Blowing Rock" experience and nothing can be more damaging than to allow corporate chains and franchises into the heart of downtown.

### 9) PEDESTRIAN WAYFINDING

Once again, by widening the sidewalks, room is created to add pedestrian wayfinding signage. This signage can be kept historical in nature and will identify public restrooms, in-town parking facilities, visitor information, attractions such as BRAHM and the 1888 Museum, Broyhill Park, and "more to explore" signage to let pedestrians know that there are additional shops to find down streets such as Morris, where some of best shops can be found "off the beaten path."

These signs can also let visitors know that they can access free wifi while in town, along with the URL for the service.

Blowing Rock would only need a few of these signs (to avoid sign clutter). Locate one at each parking structure (including the parking garage if it's within easy walking distance of downtown), at the intersection of Hwy. 221 and Main Street (on opposite sides of the intersection), at Memorial Park, Broyhill Park, at the intersection of Main and Sunset, at Sunset and Hwy. 321, at BRAHM, at Main and Morris Streets, at the downtown trolley stop, and in front of the Chamber of Commerce.



## 10) FACADE IMPROVEMENTS, BENCHES, BEAUTIFICATION

This particular element would be tied to the creation of a Downtown Business Improvement District, which could fund much of this particular element in the Downtown Master Development Plan.

While many of the downtown buildings look very nice, others lack basic maintenance and are in need of improvements. This can include paint, facade repairs, the addition of awnings (which should be encouraged) blade signs (perpendicular retail signage), and better retail and restaurant lighting.

It would also include more beautification efforts such as the addition of 20 to 40 more benches downtown, always positioned at the facade facing out and flanked with pots or planters.

All businesses should be allowed approximately three feet (36") along the facade for the placement of seating, benches, tables and chairs, beautification, and decorative merchandise displays in these exterior spaces.



All too often we noted downtown guests sitting on planters, leaning up against buildings, finding any space available to rest. Rested shoppers spend more, so this is an important element of this plan.

Additionally, studies show that 70% of first-time sales at retail shops, restaurants, B&B's, and other businesses results directly from curb appeal. First impressions really are lasting impressions.

## 11) PLAZA AND STAGE

On the following two pages, you'll see a Main Street redevelopment concept based on these initiatives, plus the addition of a plaza in Memorial Park, on the south end where the lawn is sloped into the beginnings of an intimate amphitheater setting. The stage would sit where the horseshoe pits are currently located, and these could easily and inexpensively be moved to another area of Memorial Park.

A small amphitheater, in the heart of the spending district, is a very important addition for several reasons:

- 1) It can be home to music, theatrical productions, educational speakers, artisans and other activities that will showcase cultural depth, currently hard to find in Blowing Rock. This will also be a great venue to help diversify the visitors Blowing Rock currently enjoys.
- 2) It will bolster evening entertainment, encouraging overnight stays. The primary hours for the stage and amphitheater activities would be during the lunch hours, and from 4:00 pm to about 9:00 pm each night during the peak travel months. Imagine "Movies in the Park" every Monday night, projected on a screen mounted at the back of the stage.

The fact is: Visitors spend the night where there are activities available after dinner. Besides the bar scene. The Memorial Park Amphitheater would provide the venue for this.

It would seat perhaps 200 to 300 people, in an intimate setting, that would include a covered stage with stage and audience (ambient) lighting, a built-in sound and projection system, and a readerboard with schedule of upcoming shows or productions. Even when not in use, the amphitheater's built-in seating will allow for additional gathering areas and places to sit in the park.



## 12) TAKE CONTROL OF MAIN STREET

Finally, the Town of Blowing Rock should take ownership of Main Street from the intersection of Highway 221 and Main to the south entrance of Main along Highway 321.

It is possible the state may require the portion of Main Street between the two state highways to remain a state sanctioned highway.

Taking ownership of Main Street will allow for far easier implementation of all of the recommendations for downtown, the wayfinding system, and other initiatives impacting downtown and Main Street.





In these two renderings (this page and opposite) you can see benches against the facade, facing out, you can see sidewalks that range from four to six feet wider than they currently are, which will provide room for sidewalk dining, stroller parking and bike racks.

Additionally there is a two-foot landscape planter between the sidewalk and traffic except where there are crosswalks. This will help keep people from jaywalking, a current problem.

You can also see (below) a decorative crosswalk. These would be at the intersections, but also mid-block.









This is an initial idea for a small amphitheater in Memorial Park, near the location of the horseshoe pits. It would include seating for approximately 200 to 300 people, with a covered stage, built-in sound and lighting system, and a paver stone patio area in front of the stage - a great place for summer yoga sessions, or additional seating.

The stage can accommodate musical groups, smaller stage productions, and the amphitheater, even where there are no performances, provides a great place to simply sit, relax or have lunch.





**Recommendation #8:** Implement the development of the gateway at the intersection of 321 and Sunset

**Implementation timeline:** Summer of 2022

**Leadership:** Town of Blowing Rock

**Approximate cost to implement:** \$100,000

**Funding source options:** TDA funding

**Rationale and to-do steps:** One of the key elements of this plan, and “managing” tourism, will be to better utilize the intersection of Highway 321 and Sunset Drive.

The Gateway and River Crossing, shown on these two pages, is an excellent “first impression” for Blowing Rock. It creates a sense of place and arrival—a feeling that, “We’ve arrived!” This is a great traffic calming element to slow traffic at this intersection, which was a common complaint heard from local input.

While much of this project has been completed, we recommend that the additional elements, shown in these renderings be completed.

If a neighboring business is concerned that the gateway will block views, the opposite is true. This gateway will attract the attention of all passers-by and draw their attention to Sunset Drive and the businesses at or near the intersection—especially those on the gateway side of the highway.

Currently this intersection is very nondescript. It says nothing about Blowing Rock in terms of creating a good first impression. Since there currently is no wayfinding of any kind along the highway that would direct people to downtown Blowing Rock, a gateway here will help fill that void.

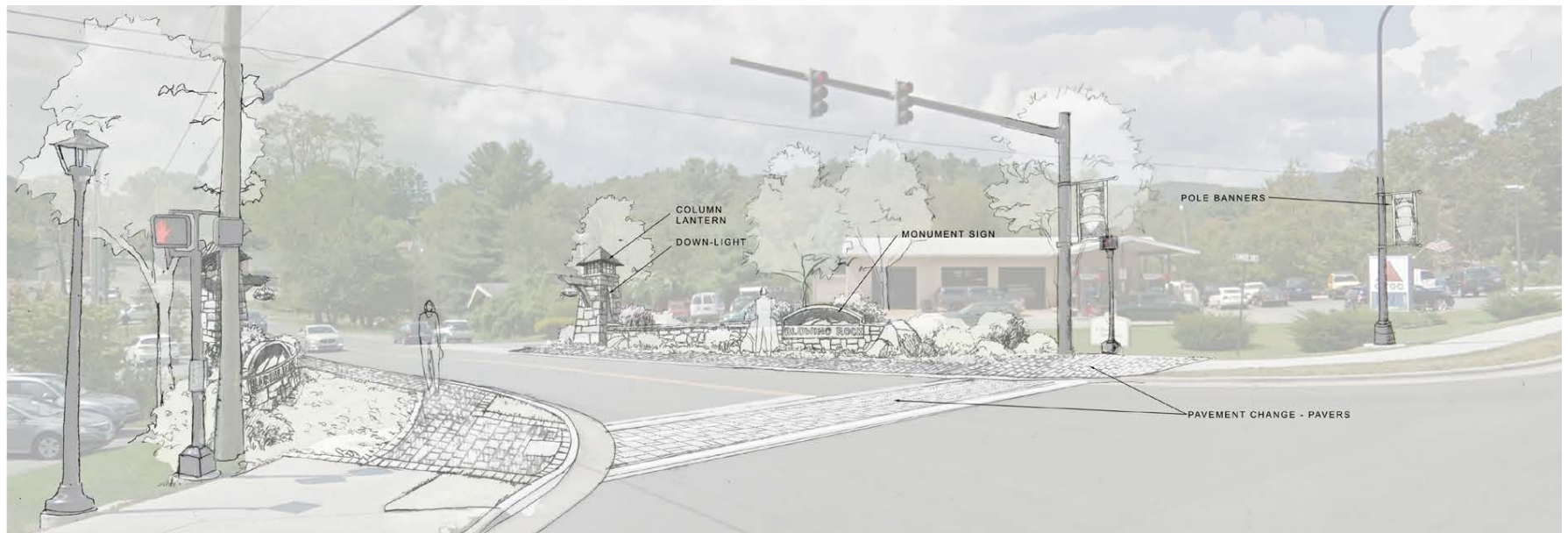
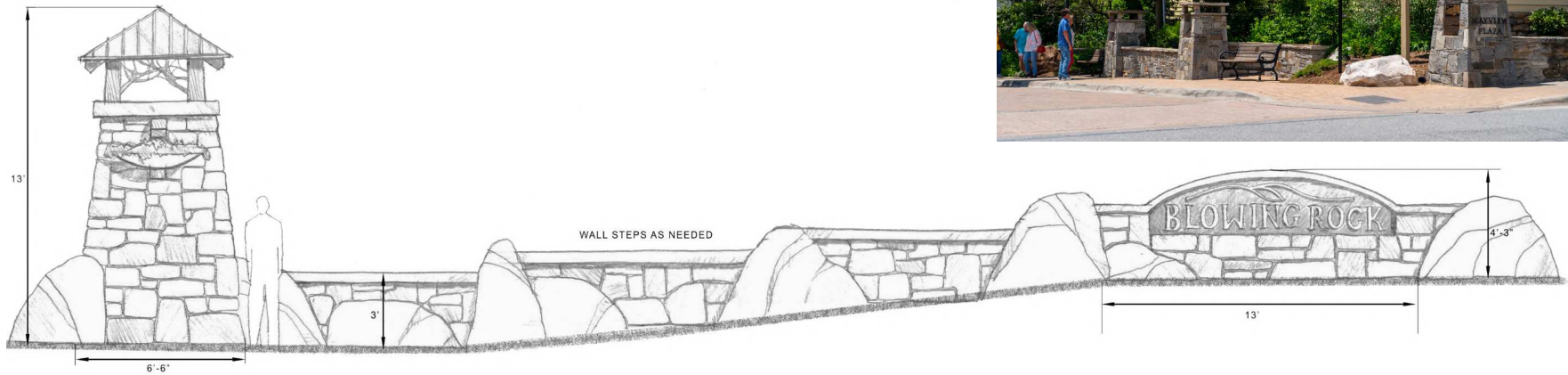
Please do not lessen the impact of the work here. It needs to be as shown with no scaled-down version. Otherwise it’s effectiveness will be greatly diminished and less effective at slowing people down at this intersection.

The plan, as designed, should be implemented as designed.



The Sunset Drive gateway and river crossing, shown on these two pages, should be developed as drawn and not scaled-back. This is the primary intersection to downtown Blowing Rock and the town's "first impression" giving a sense of arrival.

This entrance along with the North Main (from 321) entrance should be the two primary ways into downtown.





**Recommendation #9:** Fill the steps, reduce trip-hazards on the steps between Broyhill Park and downtown

**Implementation timeline:** Spring 2022

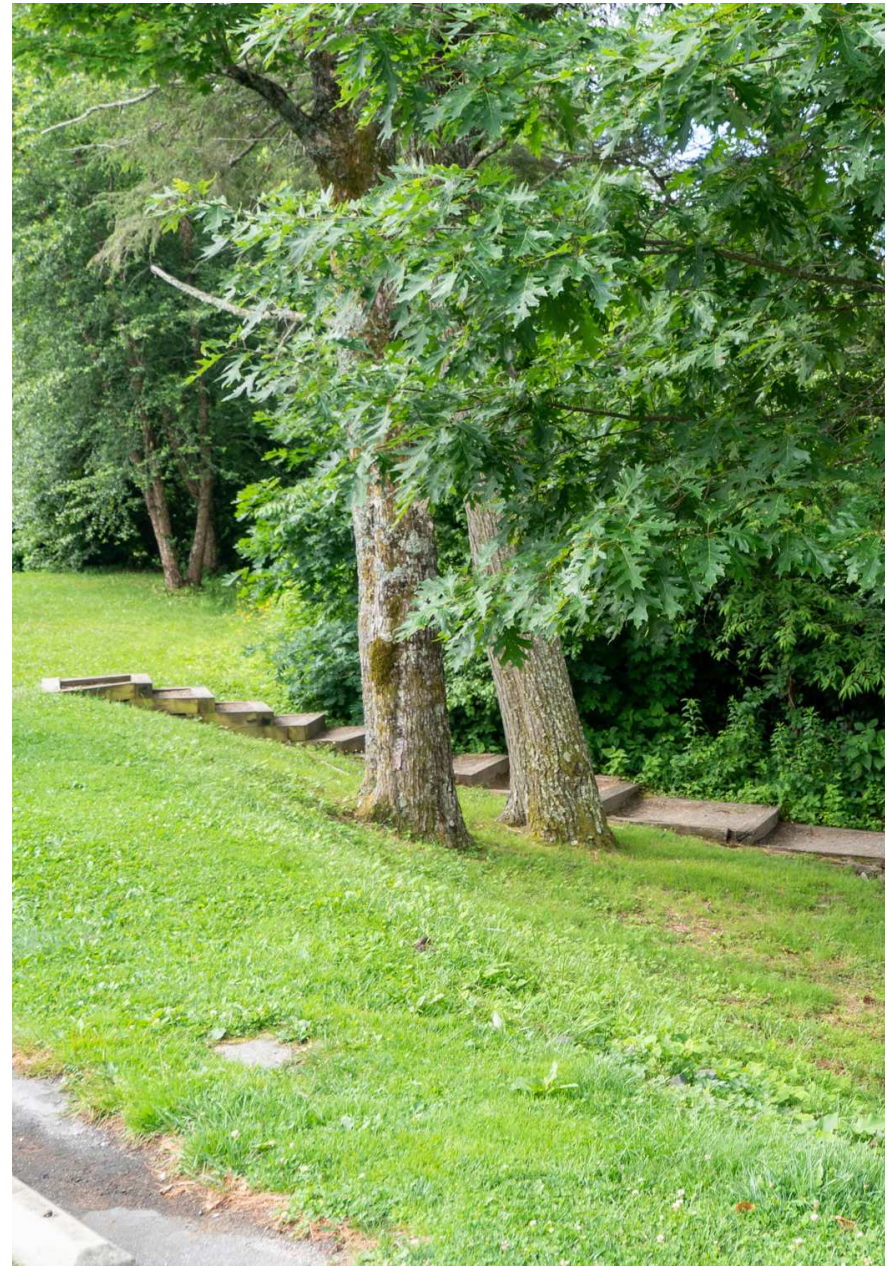
**Leadership:** Town of Blowing Rock

**Approximate cost to implement:** \$300 plus labor

**Funding source options:** General fund revenues

**Rationale and to-do steps:** The steps between downtown and Broyhill Park, in both locations, are in need of improvement and are currently a dangerous trip hazard. Simply adding two yards of 5/8" crushed rock between the steps, and then compacting it, will make these steps far more usable. As you see here and as we observed, pedestrians walk around the steps rather than use them.

This would be an easy fix. The Legion Hill Park Connector project will also provide ADA access, once that project is completed.





**Recommendation #10:** Move the Blowing Rock sign from behind Public Works to a new location for selfies and photo opportunities. Include the hashtag.

**Implementation timeline:** Summer of 2022

**Leadership:** TDA | Town of Blowing Rock

**Approximate cost to implement:** \$20,000

**Funding source options:** TDA capital improvement funding

**Rationale and to-do steps:** The Blowing Rock sign (right) should be moved from this location to a site in Memorial Park. An initial thought would be to place it on the back side of the restroom facilities (below the arrow, bottom right photo).

This provides ample room for people to see it and photograph it. Add the hashtag #LoveBlowingRock to the sign, and a note letting people know there is free wifi downtown.

The sign is a bit larger than the back wall, so perhaps it could be mounted to posts and placed among the gardens, which would add to the appeal of the sign.

Make sure you don't attach it to the chain link fences at the tennis courts. You want whatever's behind the sign to still reflect a positive image of Blowing Rock.

An added benefit of having it in that location, is that it would be facing south, so it would be in the sun most of the time—much better for photography.





**Recommendation #11:** Additions to marketing: printed guide, website, social media channels promoting seasons and “best time to visit.”

**Implementation timeline:** Spring of 2022

**Leadership:** Blowing Rock TDA

**Approximate cost to implement:** Included in current marketing

**Funding source options:** TDA marketing budgets

**Rationale and to-do steps:** We recommend that there be an addition to the marketing materials (digital and printed). BlowingRock.com (the TDA’s marketing website) has several places where it could add “planning your trip” with additional information. Those could be links on the website, or an additional page or two in the Blowing Rock Guide.

This would include:

Seasonal considerations:

- 10-day weather forecast
- Road conditions (weather and construction)
- What to bring, what to wear
- Parking in Blowing Rock
- Special deals, by season

Best time to visit Blowing Rock

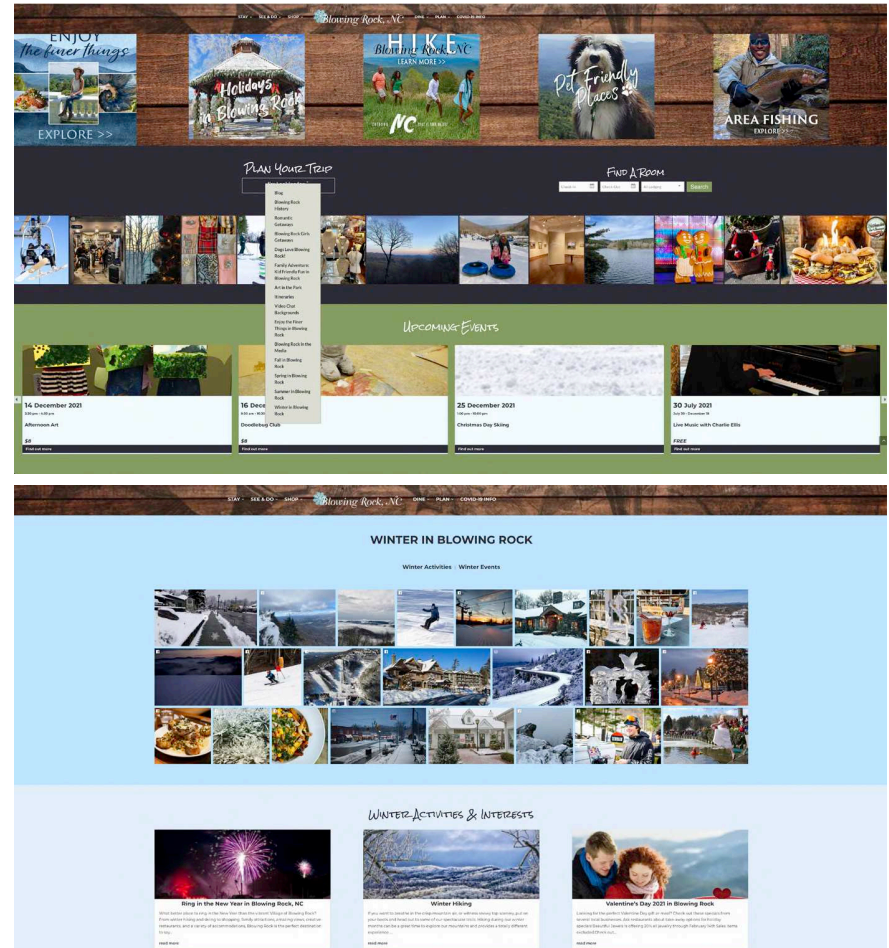
- A page that would highlight special deals, easier parking, no wait times at restaurants, etc.

This page could easily be added to the website with links in the “Plan Your Trip” drop-down menu (right). In this example, we chose “Winter in Blowing Rock” and this would be a great place to offer seasonal considerations and best time to visit. You could also link it from the “See and Do” and “Plan” drop down menus (opposite top left).

In the guide, a “best time to visit and “seasonal considerations” or simply “Seasons” page could provide links to “current conditions” on the website, but could also include and include information about parking and other considerations.

A second option would be to re-format the website and guide into a “Pick your season, then Pick your passion” type of format (opposite, bottom left). Once a website visitor picks the season, it would take them to a page of links offering “advice” as well as “tips” and would also provide links to the top activities available that time of year.

This format lets visitors know that Blowing Rock is open year round, and would offer helpful advice - including how and where to park - with an emphasis on the current peak season shuttle.







## Pick your Season | Pick your Passion



WINTER SPRING SUMMER FALL  
NOV | DEC | JAN | FEB MAR | APR | MAY JUN | JUL | AUG SEP | OCT



## PICK YOUR PASSION

- |                    |                 |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| Winter hikes       | 10-day forecast |
| Downhill skiing    | What to wear    |
| Holiday happenings | What to bring   |
| Shopping & dining  | Road conditions |
| Music & culture    | Parking in town |
| Festivals & events | Special deals   |

**BLOWING ROCK, NC**  
*Guide*

**THE BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY:  
Room to Roam**

Experience up-close encounters with gorgeous natural spaces, directly adjacent to the Village of Blowing Rock. Our town is one of the few located directly on the Blue Ridge Parkway, at Milepost 294.

The Parkway meanders for 469 miles through Appalachia, providing a multitude of plants, animals, views, and historic sites, all relatively untouched by development. It's easy to see why the Blue Ridge Parkway is nicknamed "America's Favorite Drive," so hit the road and get away from the hustle and bustle.

Blowing Rock's section of the Parkway is home to several of the most scenic Parkway treasures.

- MOSES COWE ROAD, MP 294**  
Historic home, 26 miles of carriage trails, Parkway Craft Center and craft demonstrations.
- PRICE PARK, MP 297**  
Price Lake & campground, hiking, picnicking.
- LINN COVE VIADUCT, MP 304**  
Unique s-curve bridge built to preserve the surrounding environment.

**Hiking**  
Surrounded by lush & rugged terrain, Blowing Rock is the perfect place to replace nature.

**Glenn Barney**  
Trail head in downtown Blowing Rock, 800 ft. elevation, 1.2 mi out-and-back trail with waterfalls.

**Moses Cowe Memorial Park**  
2.5 miles of Carriage Trails along the Blue Ridge Parkway at milepost 294.

**Judith Price Memorial Park Trails**  
1.5 miles of trails with strolling, boating and fishing; Milepost 297 on Blue Ridge Parkway.

**Grandfather Mountain State Park**  
12 miles of trails and ranger-led programs year round.

**What's Your Nature?**  
From exciting thrills to peaceful relaxation, our natural places offer recreation for every type of adventurer. The ridges and valleys, meadows and lakes, forests and meadows that provide these experiences are truly irreplaceable. So, it's up to each of us to ensure our actions help preserve these special places. Whatever your preferred adventure, make it your nature to protect NC's outdoor spaces.

**CYCLING & RIDING**  
**RHODDIE BICYCLE OUTFITTERS**  
257 Sunset Drive, Blowing Rock  
828-474-9891 / rhoddiebicycles.com  
Full service bicycle shop with sales, repairs, and fitting services. Ride maps and route planning, too!

**ROCKY KNOB MTN BIKE PARK**  
 Hwy 421, Boone / 828-268-1345  
 rockyknobmountain.com / variety of terrain including highly technical, downhill-only trails as well as an in-line skate flow trail. A full activity area at the park is also in the works.

**CLIMBING & ZIP LINING**  
**CENTER 45**  
200 Den Mac Dr, Boone / 828-268-1000  
center45.com / An indoor facility with an open and energetic bouldering and training environment, baby ropes, training, and yoga classes.

**HIGH GRAVITY ADVENTURES**  
219 Taverette Railroad Ln, Blowing Rock  
828-266-0781 / highgravityadventures.com  
Adventure park with 75+ aerial elements from 10 to 30 ft in the air plus ziplines, the Ninja Ground Course, and Giant Swing! For all ages and levels!

**ROCK DIMENSIONS**  
133 Depot St, Boone / 828-262-3544  
rockdimensions.com / Guided rock climbing and rappelling instruction in the NC mountains. Caving trips in TN. Outdoor climbing tower and high ropes challenge course.

In the Blowing Rock Guide, right after the introduction page, should be a page that includes “seasonal considerations.” It would provide links to current road and weather conditions, as well as a ten-day forecast.

The page could also provide a link to “best places to park once you arrive.”

These could also be promoted on the TDA’s social media channels.

Yes, there is one! The town takes its name from The Blowing Rock, a unique formation overhanging Johns River Gorge and the Pisgah National Forest. The Rock is buffeted by near-constant winds, flamed up from the valley below. According to the Legend of the Blowing Rock, these strong winds carried a Cherokee brave back from the valley below to the arms of his beloved, who was waiting on the Rock as she prayed for his return. The Blowing Rock is known as NC's oldest travel attraction, drawing visitors since before the town was incorporated.

Stop by to experience the inspiring winds and incredible views for yourself!

*The Blowing Rock*

*Taverette Railroad* *Grandfather Mountain*



**Recommendation #12:** Establish a Cultural Affairs Committee

**Implementation timeline:** Summer 2022

**Leadership:** Town of Blowing Rock

**Approximate cost to implement:** \$30,000 each year and ongoing

**Funding source options:** TDA funding

**Rationale and to-do steps:** This is a suggestion that came from local input and is a terrific idea. One thing was abundantly clear in the weeks spent in Blowing Rock, and that was a lack of cultural depth outside of BRAHM.

Recommendation #7 (Downtown Master Development Plan) calls for the creation of an amphitheater and stage in Memorial Park. While this would be managed by the Downtown BID, the Cultural Affairs Committee would actually program this, and other spaces in downtown Blowing Rock.

The \$30,000 a year budget would be used to fund street musicians and musical groups, stage productions, educational sessions, and artisans at work.

Imagine downtown Blowing Rock with magicians in Memorial Park for the kids, and live music on stage every evening. Imagine cooking demonstrations, “Movies in the Park” one night a week, dances, and a variety of other stage acts. Additionally, musicians should be encouraged in spots along Main Street, in outdoor dining areas, etc.

While there is a LOT of talent in Blowing Rock, Boone, and neighboring communities, they are not given much of a chance to showcase their talent. By adding cultural depth, year round, Blowing Rock will attract the highest-spending visitors. The evening entertainment will encourage overnight stays.

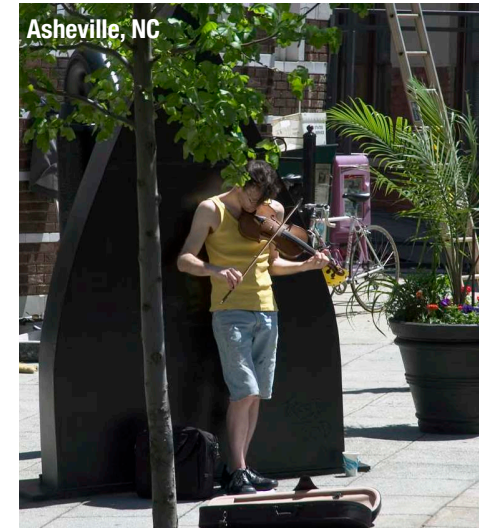
Studies have shown that when consumers meet artists-in-action, they are three times more likely to buy art from them. It makes a personal connection; “I met this artist.” So showcasing potters, painters, craftspeople, fishing lure artists, and glass blowers will help make Blowing Rock North Carolina’s premier arts community, and THAT will attract the very top-spending visitor demographic.





In most cases you would not even need to pay them to set up shop for a few hours or a few days. They would make money selling their creations. Providing the location to sell their creations is the important contribution.

When it comes to street vendors and artisans, often they can be paid along the lines of \$50 to \$80 a day, and then they also make money through tips—passing the hat, as the magician (left) does at the end of each performance.





**Recommendation #13:** Add a brochure distribution kiosk at the “Regional Visitor Center”—App Mountain Visitor Center along Highway 321, Tanger Outlets, and other appropriate locations

**Implementation timeline:** Summer 2022

**Leadership:** TDA

**Approximate cost to implement:** \$3,500 (\$350 each)

**Funding source options:** TDA lodging tax revenues

**Rationale and to-do steps:** The TDA does a fantastic job of making sure the Blowing Rock Guide is available at kiosk locations in downtown, but visitor information should be made available in other locations as well.

A brochure/guide holder, like the one shown below in North Platte, Nebraska would be excellent. For Blowing Rock it could include the North Carolina Travel Guide, Blowing Rock’s guide, and perhaps High Country Magazine or another regional guide. The brochure/guide holder was custom made by a local craftsperson at a cost of approximately \$300. It is made from anodized and powder coated aluminum, with a hinged lid.

Locations might include:

- Tanger Outlets
- Tweetsie Railroad
- App Mountain Ski Area Welcome Center
- App Mountain Ski Area
- The Blowing Rock
- The Chamber of Commerce (replacing the current dispenser)
- Mystery Hill attraction
- The Fossil Museum
- American Legion Building
- Broyhill Equestrian Preserve | Showgrounds
- At the new parking garage

Add a trash receptacle at each of these locations. Yes, it’s sad but true, that sometimes people will grab a brochure, decide it’s not useful and will toss it. And since people are now out of their vehicles, it’s a great opportunity to let them dispose of trash here, rather than tossing it elsewhere or alongside the parking areas.

When trash is picked up (with a set schedule) the person doing so could also stock the brochure/guide holder.



**Recommendation 14:** Contract for the design of a comprehensive Wayfinding System

**Implementation timeline:** Summer of 2022

**Leadership:** Town of Blowing Rock

**Approximate cost to implement:** \$60,000

**Funding source options:** Federal infrastructure and transportation grants, TDA assistance, state grant resources.

**Rationale and to-do steps:** A wayfinding system showcases things we may not know you have, such a public parking, restrooms, visitor information, attractions like BRAHM, the 1888 Museum, Broyhill Park and Mayview Lake, the town’s pool and recreational facilities, nearby equestrian facilities, Bass Lake, access to the Middle Fork Greenway, etc.

The wayfinding system includes vehicular signage, pedestrian wayfinding (included in the Downtown Master Development Plan), and trail signage.

Navigation systems are NOT a substitute for wayfinding, or directional signage. We use wayfinding systems to find places we know exist: “Hey Siri, take me to the Blowing Rock Library.”

There are numerous companies that specialize in “exterior” or “environmental wayfinding,” which is different than institutional wayfinding, which is signage in hospitals, college campuses or malls.

Some of the best include Corbin Design, Axia Creative, Cloud Gehshan, and others. Avoid using graphic design agencies or architectural firms, unless they have staff that specialize in wayfinding systems.

These are designed and built to federal highway standards, which have very strict guidelines. In Blowing Rock there are more signs telling people how to leave, and virtually none helping people get into Blowing Rock. The system is currently “broken” or incomplete creating some of the traffic congestion, confusion, and gridlock during the peak seasons.

The wayfinding system would also include wayfinding along Highway 321, which currently has none until you get to Boone or Lenoire. This is a major challenge for visitors, considering how many people come into Blowing Rock each year.

The system will help mitigate traffic flow as well, directing most visitors up Sunset from Highway 321 as opposed to having them head north from the south end of Main Street, which is a winding road with short sight distances.

As part of the wayfinding system, downtown maps would be created that will match maps provided online and in printed guides, with maps located at parking facilities and in other areas of the town.

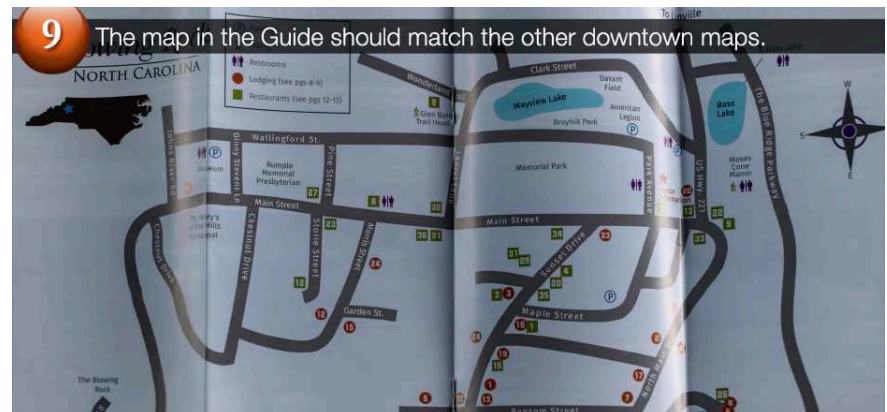
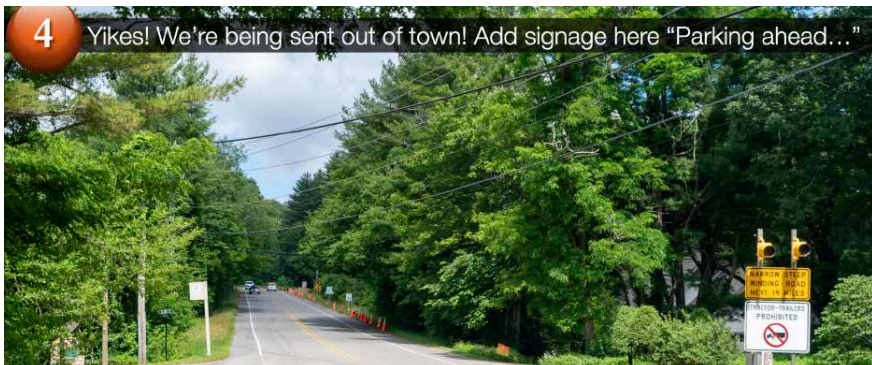
Wayfinding signage is always decorative, matching the ambiance of the town. This project, in itself, should reduce traffic congestion and parking issues by nearly 30%, according to other studied case histories.

The system could even include digital counters to let visitors know how many parking spaces are available at each parking garage. These would be placed among wayfinding signage, not AT the actual garage. We noted numerous times the same vehicles visiting every downtown parking lot, trying to find one that could accommodate their vehicle. One vehicle might be on and off of Main Street several times in just 15-minutes, creating quite the traffic nightmare.

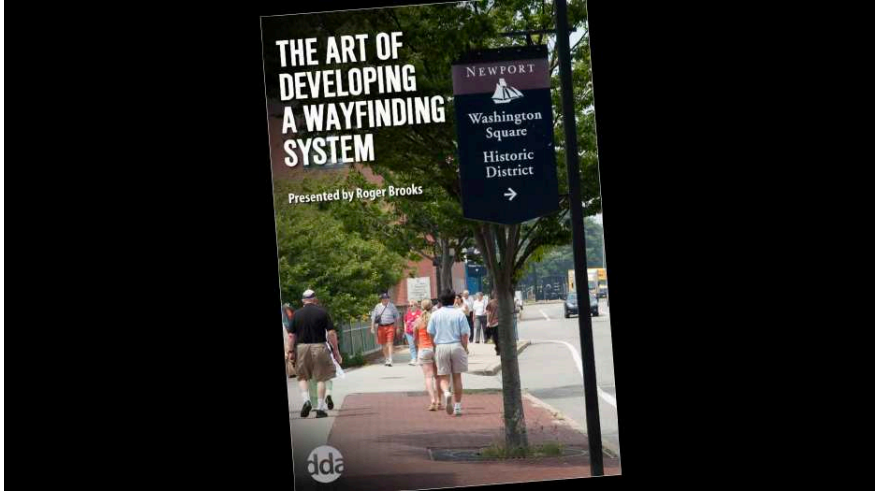
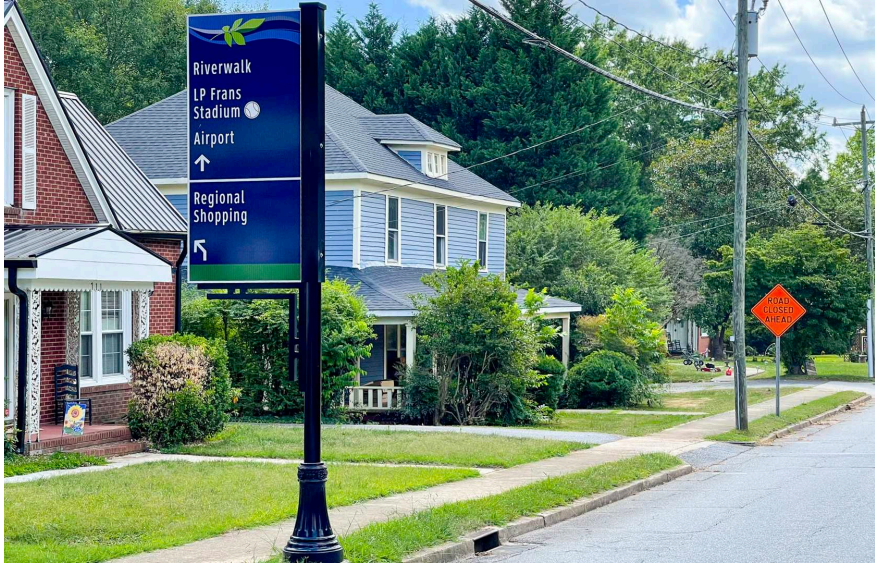
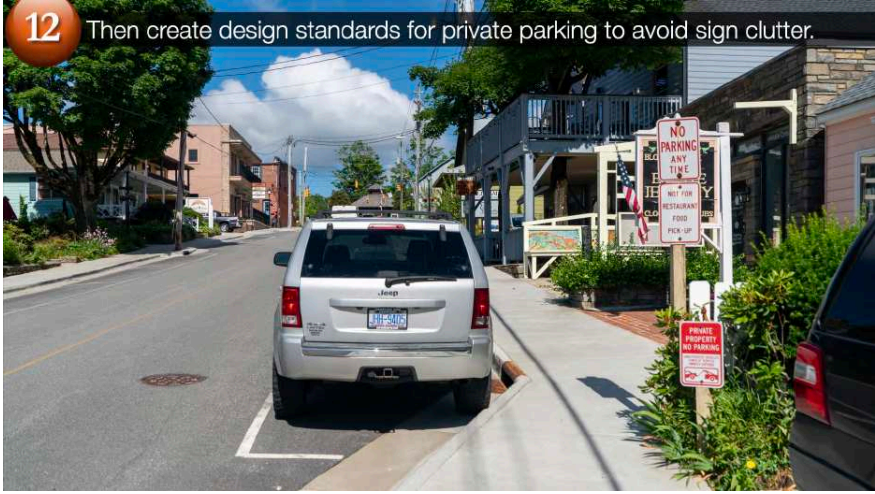




The following images show a few of the suggestions (the numbers on each image) from the Destination Assessment performed in the summer of 2021. All of these will be addressed in the development of a wayfinding system.







We encourage the Destination Blowing Rock to view “The Art of Developing a Wayfinding System,” prior to issuing the Request for Qualifications for wayfinding system design, fabrication and installation. The video can be found in the Destination Development Association’s Resource Center, Video Library, in the Tourism Development section.

The images to the right showcase a couple of examples of vehicular wayfinding.



**Recommendation #15:** Change Maple Street to a one-way (southbound) lane.

**Implementation timeline:** March 2022

**Leadership:** Town of Blowing Rock

**Approximate cost to implement:** \$500 (for new signage)

**Funding source options:** General funds

**Rationale and to-do steps:** During the Assessment process, we suggested changing Maple Street into a one-way street from the post office and public parking lot to Sunset Drive.

This is a narrow street, with a tight turn on Sunset, and by making it a one-way street, confusion and congestion will be reduced on both Maple and Sunset.

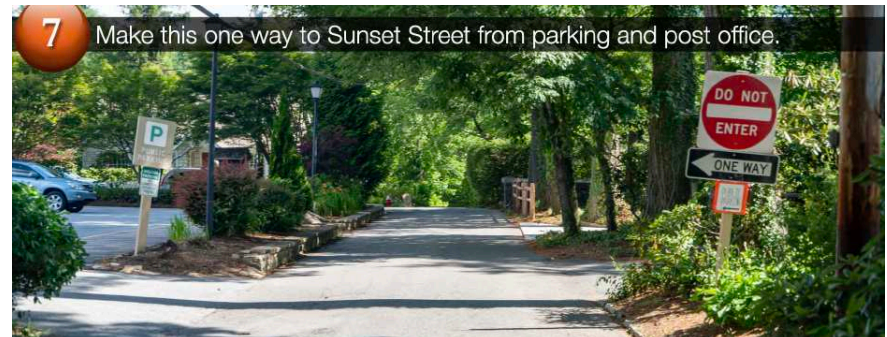
- 1) Remove the Parking sign at the intersection of Maple and Sunset (#6 above right).
- 2) Replace it with a one-way do-not-enter sign. Also paint an arrow on the street pointing south (towards Sunset) in two or three locations between the parking lot and Sunset.
- 3) Then place a parking sign (until the wayfinding system is in place) on Main Street directing visitors down to the public parking area and the post office.
- 4) When visitors come into the parking lot, lower the sign about two feet so it's not in the trees and higher than where typical road signs would be seen (#8 opposite).



6 This points down a narrow alleyway. Lead people here from Main.



Yikes! This is a two-way road? And frustration for post-office visitors.



7 Make this one way to Sunset Street from parking and post office.



8

Lower the signage by two feet.



Absolutely excellent! Great job Market & Wine Shop. Think people, not cars.



**Recommendation #16:** Sign on restrooms: where or who to call

**Implementation timeline:** Spring 2022

**Leadership:** Town of Blowing Rock

**Approximate cost to implement:** Nil

**Funding source options:** Not necessary

**Rationale and to-do steps:** The sign, below, is tacky (no offense) and should be redeveloped. Please avoid scaring people with “Use at your own risk.” We’re sure this is due to the pandemic, but the sign should be updated, professionally designed, laminated, and placed in a frame rather than using red tape as you see here. The restrooms should be open until 10:00 every night during the peak summer months, and a phone number should be included so that users can alert authorities should the facility run out of supplies, or if there’s a clog or other issues.





**Recommendation #17:** Do not penalize businesses for converting street-front parking to pedestrian-only access

**Implementation timeline:** January 2022

**Leadership:** Town of Blowing Rock

**Approximate cost to implement:** None

**Funding source options:** None required

**Rationale and to-do steps:** With the creation of additional parking (private lot partnerships, parking garage) businesses should not be penalized for removing store-front parking. In fact, if anything, they should be rewarded for doing so. As restaurants, throughout town, have added capacity, they are not penalized for adding more parking to accommodate their guests. This rule should apply to every business downtown.

The days of having “x” number of parking spaces per “x” number of square feet ended more than 30 years ago. This is why public parking lots, garages, and partnerships have been the norm all of these years.

Blowing Rock Market (center left) is one example where the front “lot” is being converted into a patio and event space, which is a perfect fit for helping to make downtown Blowing Rock more pedestrian friendly. You want downtown to be about people— not cars, parking and traffic. They should be rewarded for making this change.

It would be great if, across the street (left, bottom), those businesses did the same thing: Replacing store-front parking with patio seating, gardens and beautification.

This will actually reduce congestion (especially at this intersection), assist with traffic flow, and the businesses here will see their retail sales increase as a result. Especially since more than 90% of the retail sales in downtown come from pedestrian traffic. Currently, these businesses are difficult to access either on foot or by vehicle. But with new sidewalks, decorative crosswalks, and outdoor patio, garden and seating spaces, these business will become places to spend time and money.



**Recommendation #18:** Add seating to the gazebo and around Mayview Lake in Broyhill Park.

**Implementation timeline:** Spring 2022

**Leadership:** Town of Blowing Rock

**Approximate cost to implement:** \$2,500

**Funding source options:** General fund revenues

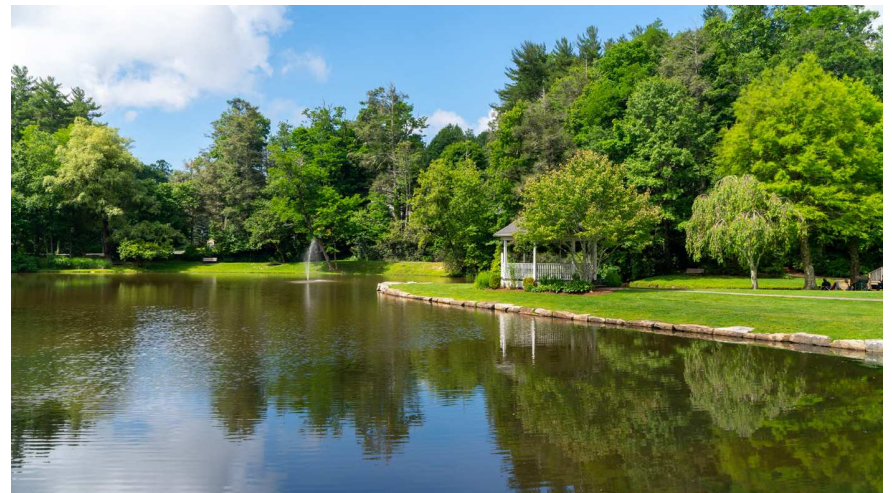
**Rationale and to-do steps:** Broyhill Park is one of Blowing Rock’s best assets. It’s a stunning park and a great way to get a bit of exercise with people walking the trail around the lake.

However, an additional 20 or so benches should be placed along the trail and in the gazebo. Next to each should be a trash receptacle. This is a fantastic location to escape the “noise” of downtown, reflect and relax.

Adding more seating throughout the park will make it an even better experience.

If vandalism has been an issue, consider placing a wireless, battery-operated camera inside the gazebo that would send alerts (using the town’s wifi) to officials. No signage would be needed as vandals look for cameras since it’s their desire to not be caught.

This is one of the most beautiful parks in the Carolinas and should be noted as a “reflection” point for both locals and visitors alike.





**Recommendation #19:** Contract for the creation of a Downtown Business Improvement District (BID)

**Implementation timeline:** June 2022 start

**Leadership:** Town of Blowing Rock | Chamber of Commerce

**Approximate cost to implement:** \$60,000

**Funding source options:** Loan against future revenues, grant funding, general fund revenues

**Rationale and to-do steps:** Every downtown should be a partnership between the public-sector (the town) and property owners and merchants.

The town benefits from an increased tax base (property values) and businesses benefit from increased retail and restaurant sales.

To create a Business Improvement District (BID), the first order of business is to issue a Request for Qualifications for the creation of the BID. One of the best at this is Civitas, based out of Sacramento, California.

When developing the BID, boundaries will need to be established. There might be a primary district and a secondary district, each contributing their “fair share” of the revenues generated in that district. For example, businesses along Main might be levied slightly more than those on Sunset or down Morris or those not in the core area, where the funds would be primarily invested.

The use of the funds needs to be established. We recommend that downtown Blowing Rock (the BID) hire or contract for a full-time Downtown Association Executive Director.

This person will be the voice of downtown, representing both property owners and tenants. This will be needed, and this position would also work with the town’s public information officer and the TDA’s social media manager.

The job description would also include:

- Obtaining beautification services for watering facade-based pots and planters for downtown merchants.

- Managing the Memorial Park Plaza to keep it programmed at least 200 days a year with activities.

- Organizing other downtown events and happenings, such as art walks, the Taste of Blowing Rock, wine walks, First Friday events, and other merchant-driven happenings. This could be a great partnership with the Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce.

- Working with property owners and tenants on facade improvements and other initiatives in this plan.

- Should the power be placed underground (an initiative we fully recommend and support in the creation of this plan), it will require all businesses to re-position where power would now enter their properties. Funding could be put in place to help offset that cost, or put in place to offer zero or low-interest funding of this.

- The BID Director would also work directly with the businesses as utility work proceeds, helping to reduce the impact on local businesses when access is interrupted.

- Creating a buying cooperative for benches, pots, planters, plantings, blade signs, lighting, etc.

It is far easier to sell the BID to businesses and property owners once they know how the money will be used and what’s in it for them. If you can show them a return on the investment, it will be far easier to see the BID come to fruition.

When BIDs are created, they are created WITH downtown businesses and property owners, not by the town and then plopped onto the businesses. Once a budget is set, an assessment program is then established. It can include various factors, like the type of business, square footage, number of employees, and location.

All of this is developed with the property owners and downtown businesses. Historic downtowns, once a 501(c)(3) non-profit is created, can apply for a number of federal and state grants, low and zero-interest loans and other programs only available to downtowns.



It may even be worth looking into becoming a Main Street America community, a part of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Also look at the North Carolina Main Street and Rural Planning Center for assistance.





**Recommendation #20:** Add decorative crosswalks at the intersection at Hwy. 321 and Sunset

**Implementation timeline:** Spring of 2023

**Leadership:** Town of Blowing Rock | TDA | Chamber of Commerce

**Approximate cost to implement:** \$100,000

**Funding source options:** TDA | Transportation grants | NCDOT

**Rationale and to-do steps:** One of the most common complaints from local residents is the speed of vehicles through the intersection of Sunset Drive and Highway 321.

To help slow traffic, we recommend that decorative crosswalks (StreetPrint or DuraTherm process) and a decorative intersection be developed here. This would be visible from a quarter mile away (or further) and will slow traffic considerably through here. It will also form a gateway to downtown Blowing Rock.

The DuraTherm process actually embosses the design (whatever you'd like that to be) into the asphalt, and it has a twenty year life. It can accommodate

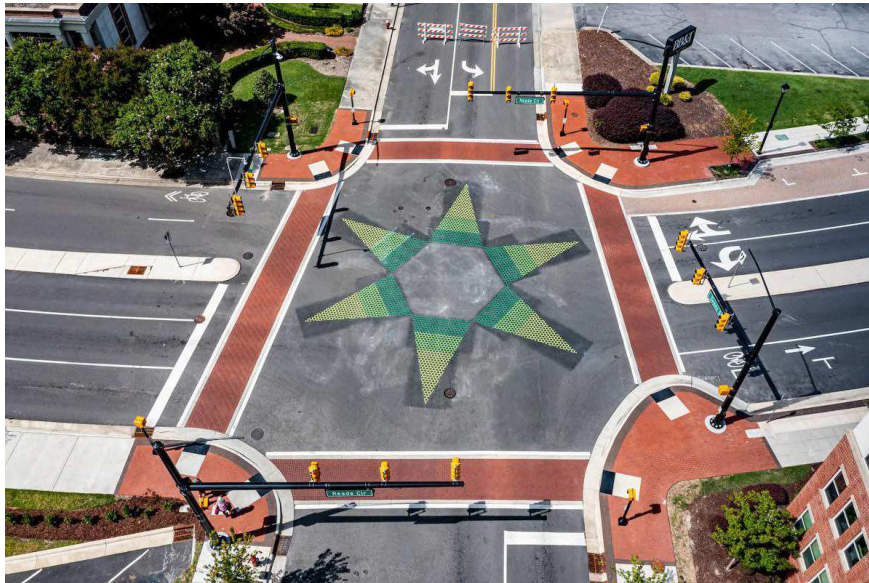
snow removal and heavy traffic since the designs are embedded into the asphalt using a die or vinyl coating rather than paint.

The photos here (below and opposite) provide examples of decorative intersections. Obviously, these would not be designs Blowing Rock would use, but these show examples of the traffic calming capabilities of a decorative intersection.

Once the embossing equipment and “dies” have been put in place, the process can be completed in a single day on one lane of the highway at a time so as not to create major traffic inconveniences.







For Blowing Rock, decorative intersections should be used at Sunset Drive and Highway 321, at Sunset Drive and Main Street, and at Main Street and Highway 221. Doing this at each of these intersections will highlight focal points, make it much safer for pedestrians, and will assist with traffic calming efforts.

The designs could make the intersection look like you're crossing river rock, or it could look like the stacked rock you see in town. From a distance, drivers will think it's going to be actual stone, or river rock, slowing them down considerably as they believe it will be a bumpy portion of roadway. Of course, commuters will learn otherwise, but it's still attractive and a great traffic-calming device.





**Recommendation #21:** Add hashtags at town gateways, other locations

**Implementation timeline:** Spring 2022

**Leadership:** Town of Blowing Rock | TDA

**Approximate cost to implement:** \$2,000

**Funding source options:** TDA funding

**Rationale and to-do steps:** Social media channels, including primarily Facebook and Instagram, are key ingredients to marketing Blowing Rock, yet most visitors would have no idea what identifiers to use when posting their experiences in Blowing Rock. This is your hashtag. Rather than have them guess what it might be, or have them make one up, the hashtag should be included

at all gateway locations. And the hashtag #LoveBlowingRock should be used by the town, Chamber of Commerce, and the Tourism Development Authority.

At each gateway location (and where there are other opportunities, such as the Blowing Rock sign—Recommendation #13) there should be a banner sign stating “Share your experience: #LoveBlowingRock”

This should become part of the sign, so it needs to be professionally fabricated and then added to the sign, becoming part of it. This is most important once visitors come into downtown. Locations: The amphitheater and stage in Memorial Park, at the Blowing Rock selfie sign, in Broyhill Park, at BRAHM, in front of the chamber building, and two or three other locations, including the signage along Highway 321.





**Recommendation #22:** Push the counties to create a Watauga/Caldwell County Housing Authority

**Implementation timeline:** January 2022 and ongoing

**Leadership:** Town of Blowing Rock | TDA | Chamber | Civic Association

**Approximate cost to implement:** None

**Funding source options:** None required

**Rationale and to-do steps:** One of the top priorities for Blowing Rock is to work with Boone and other communities and stakeholder organizations, such as Appalachian State University, to push both Watauga and Caldwell Counties to create a regional housing authority to create “Low-Mod Housing.”

This housing is NOT low-income. In fact, tenants must be employed to secure housing in these developments. Funded by Housing and Urban Development (HUD), they are typically privately developed, and then ownership is turned over to the housing authority with the developer receiving 15% more than the development costs as profit.

While this housing would not necessarily be built in Blowing Rock, there are numerous locations, most closer to Boone, for this type of development.

Where the liquor store is located along Highway 321 would be an excellent place for this type of development. It has easy pedestrian access to downtown Blowing Rock, easy access to the highway, a water feature right there, and these properties look nice and could easily be designed to fit into the community in terms of architectural style.

But there are also numerous other locations, likely far less expensive, for the development of moderate-income housing. Of the front-line workers we interviewed and met, nearly all of them would prefer to live in Boone since it's more affordable, is a college town, and has more big-box retailers and a much stronger night-life than Blowing Rock.

We were surprised to find that there is no Housing Authority in the area, and this should be a top priority considering the fact that this is a tourism-based economy and a university area.



*While these architectural styles may not fit Blowing Rock or Boone, these are both examples of Low-Mod Housing. The top is located in Little Rock, Arkansas and the lower rendering is the housing planned in Oakland, California.*



**Recommendation #23:** Implement the Legion Hill Park Connector plan

**Implementation timeline:** Fall of 2022

**Leadership:** Town of Blowing Rock | Chamber of Commerce

**Approximate cost to implement:** \$1.2 million

**Funding source options:** Federal infrastructure grants | Village Foundation | private-sector funding; various sources

**Rationale and to-do steps:** Spending several weeks in Blowing Rock, we noticed a physical divide between downtown and Broyhill Park. In fact, many visitors don't even know the park exists unless they just happen to see it from a parking deck, or when exploring the area.

This project will maximize the underutilized space between Memorial and Broyhill Parks and the steep terrain there, which is largely overgrown and minimally maintained, with no ADA access. You can see, in the renderings on this page and next, an ADA accessible walkway down to Mayview Lake, and an amphitheater at the lakes shoreline.

Even when there are no performances or activities in the amphitheater, it provides an excellent place for people to simply sit, relax, and enjoy one of the most beautiful parks in North Carolina.

When there are performances, the setting is simply spectacular. Additionally, with a similar-sized amphitheater and stage in Memorial Park, the two gathering spots can each offer a different experience tying the two together.

This project will increase visitor circulation from park to park, provides another activity that will encourage overnight stays (versus day-visits) in Blowing Rock. Overnight visitors spend nearly three times that of day visitors.

The Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce have agreed to provide management and administrative services necessary to bring this project to fruition.



PARK CONNECTOR - PHASE 1

Concept Sketch of Amphitheater and Patio



PARK CONNECTOR - PHASE 1

Concept Sketch of Boardwalk







- LEGEND**
- ① ENTRY PATIO - PAVERS
  - ② WOOD BOARDWALK/RAMP - ADA COMPLIANT
  - ③ LAKE ACCESS STAIRS
  - ④ LAWN
  - ⑤ LAKE OVERLOOK
  - ⑥ PEDESTRIAN CROSSING WITH PAVERS
  - ⑦ PICNIC TABLES UNDER SHELTERED DECK ABOVE
  - ⑧ AMPHITHEATER, SCULPTURE GARDEN, OR MEMORIAL GARDEN
  - ⑨ EXISTING DOCK
  - ⑩ PATIO WITH SEAT WALLS & PERGOLA
  - ⑪ STONE STEPS & BOULDERS
  - ⑫ OVERLOOK
  - ⑬ PRIMARY PARK CONNECTION WALKWAY (TO BE INSTALLED BY TOBR)
  - ⑭ BIRDING & BUTTERFLY GARDEN

DISCLAIMER: THIS PLAN IS CONCEPTUAL ONLY. A SITE SURVEY WILL BE NEEDED TO DETERMINE UTILITIES, EXISTING STRUCTURES, GRADES, FURNITURE, SETBACKS AND OTHER SITE FEATURES. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION MAY NECESSITATE CHANGES TO THE CONCEPT DESIGN. VISION DESIGN COLLABORATIVE P.A. IN NO WAY GUARANTEES THE DESIGN CAN BE CONSTRUCTED AS SHOWN.

**PARK CONNECTOR - PHASE 1**

Jan 7, 2020

Schematic Design





**Recommendation #24:** Implement the History Walk Trail system

**Implementation timeline:** Spring 2024

**Leadership:** Town of Blowing Rock | Chamber | TDA | Village Foundation

**Approximate cost to implement:** \$400,000

**Funding source options:** TDA | Grant funds | Foundation funding

**Rationale and to-do steps:** This is a great project that should be fully implemented for several reasons:

- 1) It meets the objectives laid out in the Town of Blowing Rock Comprehensive Plan
- 2) It provides another activity that will encourage visitors to spend the night in Blowing Rock. The more you have to offer, the further they will travel and the more likely they are to stay longer.
- 3) Historical attractions attract the highest spending visitors.
- 4) Creating “walks” like this, encourages both locals and visitors to spend more time outdoors for a healthier lifestyle. It also spreads visitors out into the larger area, reduces pedestrian crowding downtown.
- 5) Once people learn about the history of the area they are visiting, they will relay interesting stories to others, promoting Blowing Rock in the process, and they become loyal to the destination.

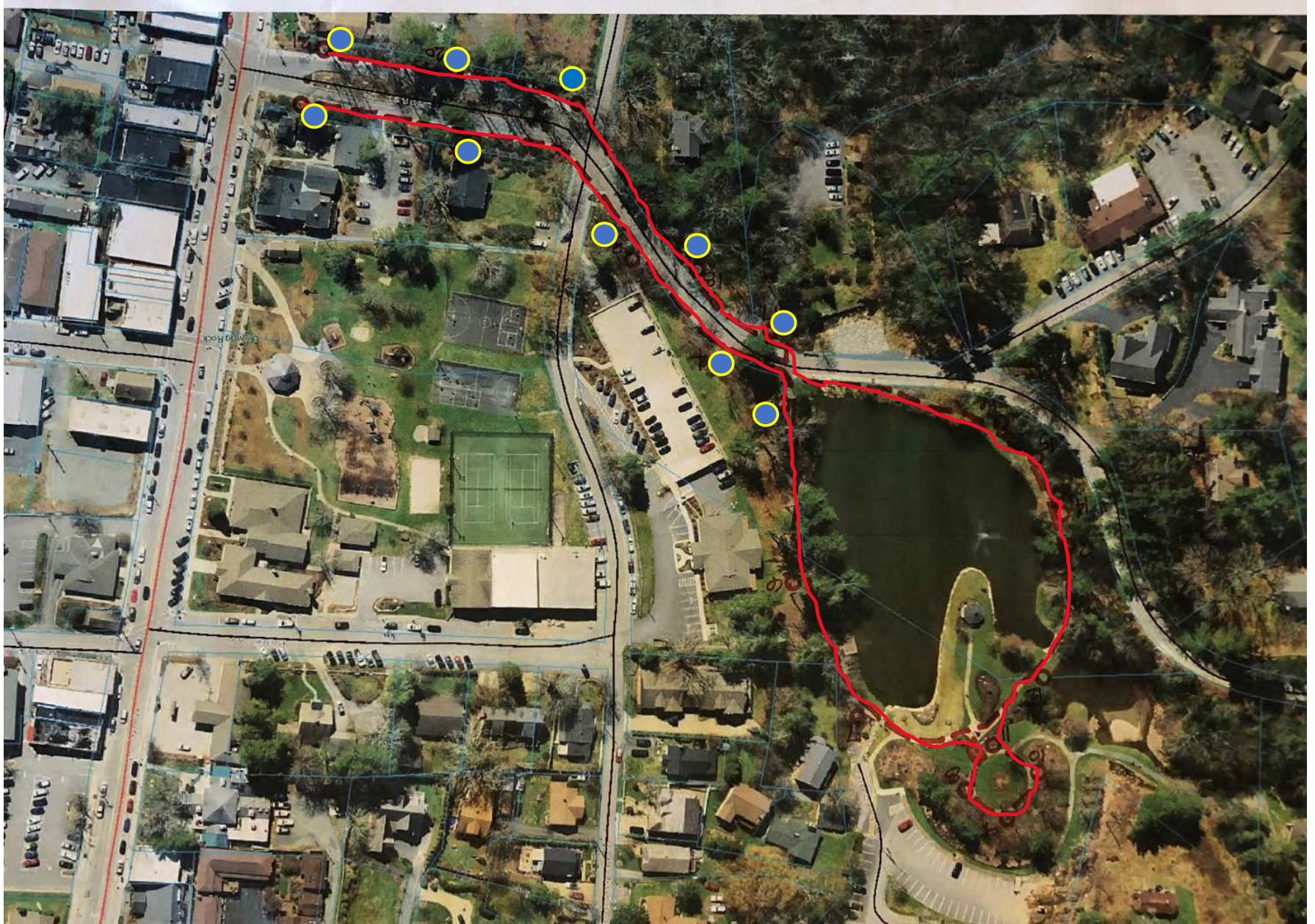
## Materials / Maintenance & Installation



Town of Blowing Rock - History Walk Station Concept  
April 19, 2021

OPTION B







**Recommendation #25:** The use of lodging taxes

**Implementation timeline:** Spring 2024 and ongoing

**Leadership:** Town of Blowing Rock | Blowing Rock TDA

**Approximate cost to implement:** None

**Funding source options:** None required

**Rationale and to-do steps:** The use of lodging taxes, according to state law, in summary, is for the promotion and development of tourism. Lodging properties initially allowed municipalities, counties and state tourism organizations to tax their customers for the purpose of increasing overnight stays in their facilities.

This still is true today. And, by state law, seventy-percent of those funds are to be used to market the destination—in this case, Blowing Rock.

This does not necessarily mean bringing in more visitors, but marketing in a way that will create additional overnight stays, longer stays, repeat visits, and to bolster shoulder season tourism (weekdays, winter months).

The Blowing Rock Tourism Development Authority actually spends less than the 70% minimum, and reviewing budgets shows that a full third of the lodging taxes are being spent on “tourism development,” and that some dollars are being spent for non-tourism items.

One use of lodging tax dollars we noted was the mowing and maintenance of the right-of-ways along Highway 321 in Blowing Rock. This is NOT what these funds are intended for, nor will it increase overnight stays or even increase tourism spending. Nor does it help “manage” tourism—the purpose of this plan.

We recommend that the TDA no longer fund this, nor other uses that do not directly 1) increase overnight stays, 2) increase local spending by visitors, 3) does not assist in managing tourism (wayfinding, most of the recommendations in this plan), and 4) and does not mitigate areas that affect quality of life for local residents.

This particular expense should be managed and facilitated by the North Carolina Department of Transportation, who owns the right of way, or by the Town of Blowing Rock, who maintains other public right of way areas.

However, first impressions are lasting impressions, so we do believe items such as this need to be taken care of.

All too often, lodging taxes are seen as “free money,” but nothing could be further from the truth. These funds have strings tied to them, and their usage is clearly spelled out.

There are people in Blowing Rock who believe more of these funds should be dedicated to tourism mitigation, and we, respectfully, disagree. The TDA is already spending more than \$300,000 a year to this effort, but please keep in mind that they are a “Destination Marketing Organization,” with a primary purpose of putting “heads in beds.”

The TDA already spends 100% of its marketing budget to that goal, with a very strong focus on increasing shoulder season lodging occupancies, and weekday occupancies during the busier months (see billboard examples, opposite).

We heard from several local sources that Blowing Rock suffers from too many day visitors. Once this plan is fully implemented, the town will have the capacity to handle the number of day visitors it has, with room to grow.

That being said, none of the marketing is geared to day-visits. But being located within a day-trip drive of more than seven million people, day-trip tourism will always be a large portion of the visitors Blowing Rock hosts.

This plan is really geared to mitigate the effects of hosting day-visitors since lodging properties already have their own off-street parking, and most are located where guests are able to simply walk a few minutes into the heart of downtown.

### **THE ONE-TIME USE OF SURPLUS FUNDS**

That being said, the Blowing Rock TDA has a fund balance that exceeds what is required of the organization, and this total is somewhere in the neighborhood of \$500,000. We recommend that this one-time Fund Balance

be dedicated to projects outlined in this plan. These funds would be used at the discretion of the TDA board as to how the funds would be specifically spent—not necessarily as prescribed by state law with 70% dedicated to marketing and 30% towards product development projects. This would only apply to the Fund Balance over and above the balance needed to maintain one-half of a year’s operating budget.

In other words, each year the TDA sets a budget and projected lodging tax revenues. Should the revenues exceed the expected income, and expenditures stay within the budget, the excess funds could be dedicated, at the discretion of the board, for product development, marketing, or other purposes that will mitigate or further enhance tourism in Blowing Rock.

This would, of course, need to be approved by the State of North Carolina, which has enacted the use of lodging taxes.

It should be clear that this would ONLY apply to fund balances above and beyond projected revenues and expenses (a surplus, so to speak), while still leaving a “rainy day” fund balance plus operational expenses.

Lodging taxes, at the core, are to be used for the “promotion and development of tourism.” That should ALWAYS hold true for these funds as well. The “development” of tourism can include many of the projects outlined in this plan as long as it will:

- Enhance the visitor experience (parking, shuttles, wider sidewalks, wayfinding, benches, etc.)
- Encourage shoulder-season tourism
- Increase overnight stays (providing evening entertainment, etc.)
- Increase multi-day stays (festivals, events, additional activities...)

For each and every expenditure, make sure it passes these four requirements of state law with regards to lodging taxes.

**Bottom line:**

Lodging tax dollars should not be used as grant funds, nor should they be used for purposes that do not directly assist in marketing or managing tourism spending locally.

One other initiative that should be considered in the use of the Fund Balance is the creation of a **Blowing Rock Branding, Development & Marketing Plan** for the town.

Branding is not about logos and slogans, but what you want Blowing Rock to be known for—beyond THE Blowing Rock. What is it that sets Blowing Rock apart from other Appalachian mountain towns? Is it the arts? Culture? Music? Food? Nightlife?

The reason this is important is that this plan would determine:

- Who you want to attract (lifestyle or psychographics).
- The primary and secondary markets.
- Your unique selling proposition (beyond shopping and dining in a scenic destination, being along the Parkway).
- How best to position Blowing Rock to bolster shoulder season, weekday overnight stays, and multi-day stays.
- And how to market the community to mitigate peak season tourism, and enhance shoulder season tourism.

In local feedback, there’s been some concern about WHO Blowing Rock is attracting as visitors. The Branding, Development & Marketing Action Plan would make this a priority. In essence this plan includes:

**BRANDING** (Finding your Unique Selling Proposition)

**DEVELOPMENT & MARKETING** (what needs to be done to attract the desired visitor) (how to convince the desired visitors to spend time in Blowing Rock, shifting from peak to shoulder season tourism)

**ACTION PLAN** (the to-do list)

It includes a set of “Brand Graphics” (logo, taglines), key and secondary marketing messaging, a marketing, advertising and publicity plan, product development initiatives (so that you “own” your brand and can deliver on the promise it represents). All successful brands are built on product, not marketing. Marketing will only bring people to you once. Product (the experience) is what brings them back.





*Blowing Rock, NC*

**Stay Home. Travel Later.**  
Visit us virtually at [BlowingRock.com](http://BlowingRock.com)



*Blowing Rock, NC*

**ELEVATE YOUR WINTER**  
**On the Slopes & In the Shops**

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The billboard examples you see here (both pages) are all designed to increase shoulder season stays in Blowing Rock, and the program has been successful.

One recommendation we'd make is to eliminate the use of the hashtag #ParkwayTown, since that could include many other towns. Instead, we recommend using #LoveBlowingRock. When a person types in the words "Blowing Rock," they are three times more likely to remember it.

The effort is promoting Blowing Rock more than the Parkway or any town along its 500 mile length.







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## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

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INCLUDED HERE ARE:

- Citizen comments from the online questionnaire
- Parking structure cost outlook for 2021 (From WGI)
- Day-trip and overnight market demographics



## ADDITIONAL NOTES FROM THE DESTINATION ASSESSMENT

Creating parking partnerships could include not only churches and existing businesses, but temporary use of private lots, as in the two examples noted during the Destination Assessment. These could be leased by the town, for perhaps \$1 a month, with a 30-day cancellation agreement so that the owner can develop them. Meanwhile, these could add another 40 to 60 parking spaces in downtown, the town would maintain them, and they should fall under the towns umbrella insurance. Additionally, doing this will turn lemons into lemonade as these sights are currently very unattractive.

The photos, below, show the DuraTherm (or StreetPrint) process of stamping designs into asphalt streets, creating decorative crosswalks that also provide traffic-calming. In the lower photo, you can see the crew working on the far side of the street. Within minutes of stamping one side, the crew moves and the street is immediately opened back up to traffic. The photo (opposite) shows one design used in Los Angeles.

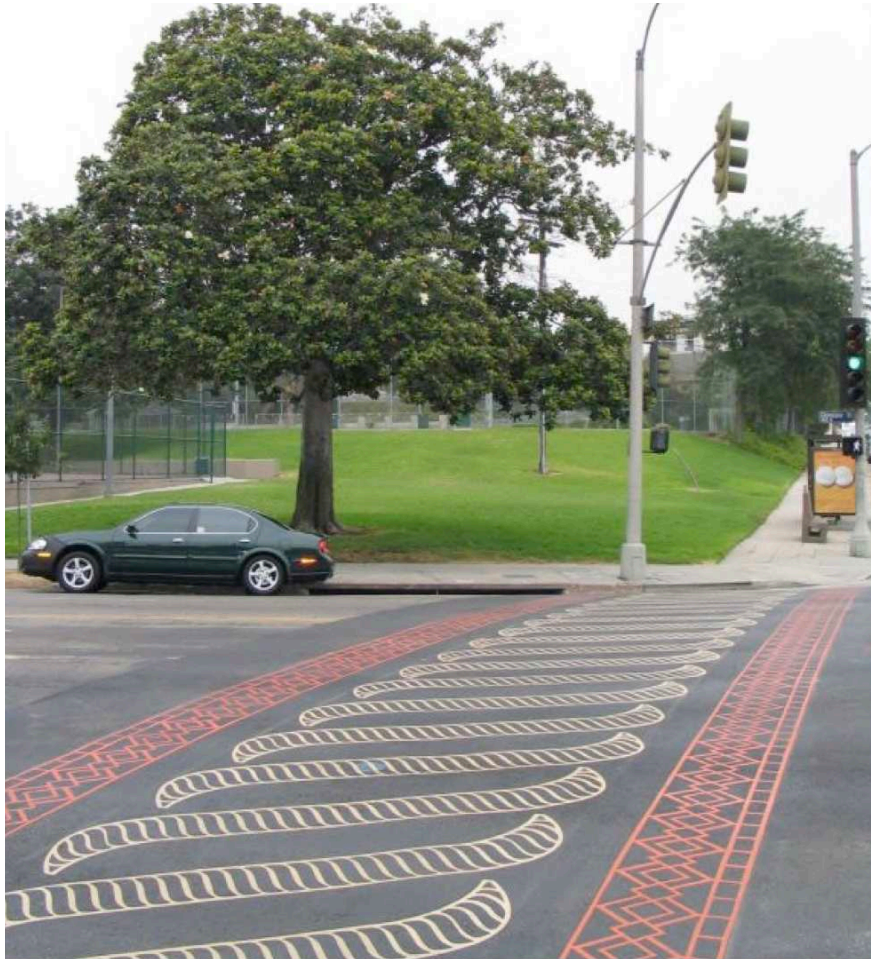




Most visitors to a vibrant downtown will spend an average of four hours enjoying shopping, dining and entertainment. Downtown parking limits need to be changed to four hours, from three. It simply doesn't make sense to chase customers away before they are done spending money in your downtown.

Generally, the purpose of two and three-hour parking limits was to discourage downtown workers from parking in time-limited spaces, but in Blowing Rock they are quite aware that there are no enforced penalties for exceeding the three hour limit.

Finally, this plan addresses the need to include four-hour limits for in-town parking, and no time limits at the off-site parking structure.





## CITIZEN INPUT FROM ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE (last question)

Is there anything else to add?
Is there a way for the city to have a sales tax which would stay with the city? i read about how our county tax is not evenly distributed (dont know if this is true) This could help fund some of these things. We bought here for the same reasons people visit this town.
I'm concerned that the idea of making parking cost money would make an already long commute even more difficult for employees.
It should not be allowed for people to dye Broyhill Pond blue for wedding photos.
I'd like for the town leaders to be more protective of our town's charm and character, through planning and zoning as well as ordinances. New buildings should strictly adhere to codes that would ensure that the quaintness endures. I think that's why people come here!
I also would like to see us be kept spectacularly clean — trash receptacles, sidewalks, public restrooms, awnings over front doors on Main Street — should be gleaming. That would complement our fabulous plantings! And we should always be planting trees to replace our aging tree canopy.
I have lived in 2 other seasonal resort towns with limited peak seasons. NONE of them kept such early closing hours. Visitors often keep longer hours where they stroll downtowns after dinner, window shop and actually shop! It's part of the vacation experience upon which our merchants don't capitalize. Maybe they make enough money as is but they are sending vacationers elsewhere !
Good luck!
Town Council to identify new revenue from businesses and property owners to fund cost of tourism like paid parking and BID tax districts.
Love you guys and love love love what you do
Assure progressive thinkers on council. Woops, that's our job. M
No longer a peaceful place to visit.
Infrastructure, hide the wires, raise property taxes.
Thank you for the opportunity to share.
as a business owner....it feels like its us vs them, business owners vs residents. they dont realize the business brings in the taxes the residents wants to spend.
Y'all rock!!!!
Whatever happened to the plan to add entrance at Sunset?
The Town needs to quit kicking the can down the road and address the parking issue.
This is Candice Cook with the High Country Visitor Center (you know- the one located by the Blue Ridge Parkway bridge!). I'm sorry I didn't get to attend a listening sessions, but I wanted to share that I think a better sign to get people onto Main Street from 321 is the most important thing the town can do to help visitors. Other notes: Many people that drop in say that a waiter or shop recommended a visit to our center, but they had a hard time finding us. Also on the topic of wayfinding, it would be great if the town map had points on it for our visitor center, Mystery Hill and App Ski Mountain (currently is just shows Tweetsie Railroad and The Blowing Rock) as we always write them in and they are major tourism landmarks that people get lost trying to find. Thank you for your time!
Change is happening and we never like it. We have too many people in the world in general and after Covid they all want the outdoors, clean air, freedom and beauty. We have to control building, encourage involvement, support and constantly recognize service and promote our business and government people to join service and be an example.
Quit talking and planning and actually implements some thoughtful researched initiatives.
Blowing Rock use to be a summer tourist town, winter's are milder now so it's become a year around tourist destination. We need to get parking under control and make it easier to walk or bike around. Wider path/sidewalks, maybe a trolley car would be a cool look making it's loop from Tweetsie to the outlets and around town and the restaurants along 321. Good luck! Thanks for helping!

In the past, financial caution has caused the Council to limit its expenditures to short-term visions (2-story parking structures instead of more, for example, missing strategic property purchases because prices seemed high at the time, only to find that prices were REALLY high later). I'm hoping the present exercise will allow more long-term strategic planning.
Blowing Rock is a great place to live. Safe and beautiful
Tourism is critical to our economy and needs to be nurtured but the town needs to prioritize quality of life for the full time residents.
Growth is inevitable but we have to find a way to handle the pedestrians and parking issues!!!
Bike lanes on 221
My family has been living here for 3 generations, and the crowds and traffic have become like July 4 all year round. The town keeps adding events throughout the year to encourage more visitors. We should not continue to encourage numbers that the town cannot handle. Things are out of balance in favor of the local merchants. I visit uptown 1-2 times a year to go to Village Cafe or BRAHM, that is it. And I live within 8 minutes walking distance.
fewer t shirt merchants
the town needs to be sensitive about property taxes
this is a fantastic town and really appreciate the leadership to do this study thank you for listening support strict zoning and appropriate fees charged for new development to help maintain infrastructure and keep the Town a beautiful place
The town is absolutely quaint and the town does a beautiful job with flowers! Keeping that charm is important to keeping visitors coming back.
We keep looking at the big picture and a lot of times the small things do not get fixed.
Don't be afraid to commit funds to design and implement the parking/shuttle/wayfinding solutions. This is an affluent community, and I suspect we will all step up to help fund approaches that are well-designed.
Our work to bring in tourists has been too successful. We avoid downtown from Friday until Monday morning.
I cannot over emphasize the importance of thoughtful, sustainable "progress"- I have been coming to Blowing Rock for 60 years and owned property here for 20 years. It is an incredibly special place. Each of us has an obligation and the responsibility to be good stewards of the Town.
Seriously consider how to make BR more effective for homeowners.
One lane auto traffic through Mayview so that you'd have room for walkers
Blowing Rock is great and the people that have ushered town to this point have done an incredible job. Thanks to them. And hopefully the next generation of leaders can take the torch of preservation and caring into the future while also being progressive enough to not be left behind by mountain towns already considering their next 'customers.' - Logan Rowell
My family has come to Blowing Rock for 6 generations. It is the most special place to us. However, it is losing so much of what makes it special primarily due to the town council focusing on the shop retailers and tourists rather than the loyal, taxpaying residents who are the fabric of our town. Unless we can better manage the tourists and shop owners, we are at risk of losing future generations that may elect to make other charming mountain locals their home.
I do not want parking meters in our town
Please level the playing field and take some of the power away from the retailers.Repeal the hotel tax that allows them to advertise. I want them to prosper but this is too much. It is out of balance. I am seriously thinking about selling my house and going to Linville which is much quieter.
Yes! We love this place God gave us. Let's keep it loveable!!
Great presentation and I would love to see these move forward.
Really can't believe we don't have a Starbucks in downtown BR or off 321. Although I personally don't visit that franchise much, I know many in my family would. As well as many of our friends Would really like for BR to actively pursue a high end grocery chain such as Fresh Market too

Horse show
Please save this Village
The runoff from the Town into Chetola Lake is unacceptable - the coffer dam at Chetola needs to be dredged!
YES! 1) RE Main Street; get the power lines, etc underground, 2) solve our ambulance issue NOW, and 3) somehow enforce or design traffic speed reducers and air brake noise on 321. There have to be digital or electronic ways to accomplish these two goals on 321 without having to hire many more police. Make BR become known as a speed trap! The word would get around within the trucking community and those speeding to Boone for whatever reason like back to college or to attend fall football games, etc.
Consider more revenue from tourists to help infrastructure of Town
It's a beloved place- don't make it so easy for people to get to the town. Make people pay to park. Stop catering to the retailers who actually want more people to come- make it a walking town with paid parking somewhere else. Eliminate cars if possible.
We need to have the streets/sidewalks cleaned on a regular basis. Its embarrassing to walk down beautiful Main Street and see ice cream, trash, spilled drinks and food, etc. staining the sidewalks - and your shoes sticking to the sidewalk....
I know it can be tough for a small destination town like BR. I think the local people who represent the town do the best they can with the amount of funds they have to work with
The mayor needs to lead and not let the Town Council embarrass themselves and the town during public meetings. The town manager is most competent and professional, he is hampered by the actions of the Town Council
Wonderful ideas have been presented to the Town Council, leading me to have confidence that this Paradise will be ever more enjoyable in the years to come. A big shout-out to the council for the new sidewalk being laid to Bass Lake!
Not all growth is good.
Decide what we want to be. It seems like we want to appeal to everyone and we don't know our target market. We love living in BR...the weather, hiking, the people...but the town has become so stale and crowded we almost never go downtown.
Special parking for residents.
Thank you Mayor and elected officials for keeping BR safe and sound
Honestly. A Rec ctr. for the kiddos. The space that we have here is awful and the money that is in this town... no question there should be a bigger Rec ctr. Why not occupy the downstairs area of the same Rec ctr? BR has NO public gym.
Please encourage planned, carefully controlled development and charge a fee for parking and provide additional parking. thank you!!
Use the KISS METHOD
KEEP WHAT EVER YOU DO AS SIMPLE AS POSSIBLE. THE WORLD MAY WANT TO COME HERE NOW BUT THEY HAVE TO GET IN LINE.
Its sort of like having sex, don't try to use it All up in one night
Every place changes, I realize that; but change can be regulated and controlled. You must be doing something right since the town is overfilled with people every summer, but at a certain point, those people will find less crowded places to go. We really need to encourage young, funky new businesses in the town and that's not possible if they have to pay \$3,000 per month rent. There are a lot of closed up shops in town, if you really walk around; some of this is just due to retirements, but Blowing Rock is in danger of becoming a giant senior citizen center; we need new blood (and no, I'm not young). I've just about given up on it, but there are still some things worth saving in the town and the winters are relatively quiet. Talk to business owners, not real estate developers or rich summer people.

Listen to Roger Brooks and give credibility to his recommendations.
We have a wonderful town!
I don't know how you deal with the horrific miles of traffic backup on all the surrounding highways when thousands of tourists drive back and forth to the Blue Ridge Parkway, as happened last fall, but that is an extreme negative for many reasons.
Would love for town garbage pick up to dump trash cans rather than pick garbage bags out of can leaving anything loose remaining in trash containers to be cleaned out by home owner. It needs to be spelled out if everting needs to be in a trash bag.
Allowing more than the wealthy to participate
I hope BR stops catering to the one day visitors who buy ice cream and leave!
We have a treasure in our town and we need to stay vibrant without being overwhelmed with tourists. Keep the balance
Not one thing. How can you improve on perfection.
We absolutely love the beauty of blowing rock. We have become slightly frustrated with the overcrowding.
I believe there should be a Large effort to bridge the bypass and Main Street. The bypass businesses have been hit hard due to the lengthy road construction and delayed of the roads well as the landscape of the road completely changing putting bussiness below road. Making accessibility and visibility a challenge. I also believe there should be efforts getting parking off Main Street especially owners and employees. I believe there should be a more aggressive approach to completing the Middle Fork trail from BR to Boone.
Keep up the good work!
The hanging baskets on Main Street were especially pretty this year. The efforts the town makes to make Blowing Rock beautiful are really appreciated. Every time I drive down Main Street I thank heaven I live in such a pretty little town.
Thanks for all you do yo make our Townna delight yo live in
Need more intelligent town commissioners. Can not believe some of what I've heard during town meetings. DON'T CHANGE the feel of Blowing Rock by allowing over development. Residential developers need to provide garages. Some of us want to live here year round and need garages. We aren't looking for vacation homes.
It is hard to get public input at city council meetings. Too structured process. It is irritating
I compliment the town on its efforts to date.
this is a great town with a few traffic issues and a few summer folks with attitude
Our town is turning into a small Gatlinburg. It's sad to see so many people crowded into such a small area. It's losing its charm and the reason we moved here 10 years ago.
Thank you for helping our town!
Our family has been coming to Blowing Rock every spring and summer for over 70 years ( 6 generations) and we love the town and our home here in the mountains. The items you have identified and those that I have pointed out would really be helpful to our continued enjoyment of Blowing Rock. I do not live in the corporate limits but have a Blowing Rock zip code and we do all our primary shopping and restaurant visits in Blowing Rock.
The Town Council needs more "At Large" members...(perhaps seasonal residents).
Have a "taste of Blowing Rock" — to sample food from all of the great restaurants in an outdoor setting.
Stop encouraging tourist.
Thanks for asking!
I would like to see a music venue, and finish greenway trail!!



It's starting to feel like residents are an afterthought in the town's decision making. We shoulder the burden of higher taxes for plans to attract more tourists, (park improvements, talk of new parking decks, etc) when many of us residents would prefer to see fewer tourists. I don't know what the answer is, but I've at least temporarily stopped asking friends to visit us from out of town because of how overcrowded and unpleasant the central town corridor has become. I've stopped shopping on Main Street, which used to be my go to for unique gifts for friends (Etsy and other online marketplaces get the money that used to go to Main St. businesses). I go out to eat much less than I used to, and that's not because of the pandemic but because of the throngs of tourists here. I still love living here, but if tourism continues to grow unchecked and if the town management continues to so clearly prefer needs of tourists over needs of those of us who live and work here, those feelings will change.
There were few surprises in Brooks' presentation, although I wonder how he didn't figure out some of his suggestions are not going to happen—undergrounding, for instance. Nice, but...
Quit doing surveys and take care of obvious needs and opportunities!
Flowers
Main Street flowers so lovely on the walkway , of Main street, the park hill, the homes
We have limited space for tourist, we continue to want more, with no where to go. Only have so much space. Parking is always a problem. Old saying, be careful for what you wish for.
Love it
I know parking is an issue and needs to be addressed
We are not inside the town limits for tax purposes but have a 28605 zip code (Misty Mountain) and recognize we won't be paying property taxes to pay for improvements. However, we consider Blowing Rock our town. So much so I watched over an hour of the presentation beginning at about the 30 min point. I thought the suggestions were great-especially about signage, parking and shuttles. I felt they were practical yet could add to the charm of downtown rather than detract. This is where we go to church, buy groceries, eat out etc. We fell in love with the charm and natural beauty the first time we set foot here and are for anything that will enhance our experience and the experience of others without losing Blowing Rock's identity. I often say it's like living in a Hallmark movie set. We love it here!
Love it here but like anywhere else it's becoming all about money
While downtown restaurants are varied and mostly good, the retail is (with a few exceptions) tired and lacking. Some new business are promising, the coffee shops and the newest retail are looking fresher. Would love to see more local artist galleries in the mix.
Really can't believe we don't have a Starbucks in downtown BR or off 321. Although I personally don't visit that franchise much, I know many in my family would. As well as many of our friends
Would really like for BR to actively pursue a high end grocery chain such as Fresh Market too
No more hotels needed, add a nice Chinese and Italian restaurants
Our town staff and workers are the best! Let's give them the tools they need to take us to another level of charm.
I am grateful for an accomplished and caring city manager and mayor.
While not a resident, I have worked in Blowing Rock since 1987.
More input from full time residents
BLOWING ROCK is a very unique place...I count it a blessing to live here...and a blessing for everyone who visits...
Working towards affordable housing for more inclusive population dynamics - I love BR but residentially it is an "older" community -
Having just visited a Colorado town very similar to ours, it was quite noticeable that they are strict about appearance and efficient in maintaining it. Creating and encouraging a walking environment rather than driving and then parking would relieve problems.
Blowing Rock is beautiful, but we don't go to town during high seasons. Overcrowded with tourists and traffic. But we love it and wouldn't live anywhere else in the High Country.
Yes. I avoid Main Street at all costs because of the difficulty getting to where I intend. And, with any kind of disability, it's nearly impossible and not worth the attempt.

We love Blowing Rock. I am very appreciate that our community is always striving to be better as well.
My family loves being part time residents of BR
I love Blowing Rock and am happy that so many are attracted to the area. I'd just like to see the quality of the shopping increase and more local restaurants with views.
I honor and respect greatly the people who lead this town who have lived here for generations. They have the irreplaceable experience of knowing Blowing Rock over generations. They can see what works and what doesn't in ways newer residents can't. But I'm not sure they fully recognize homeowners who are not full time also care deeply about the community, share many of the same goals, and want our voices to count along with our tax dollars. We need more communication between Town leadership/management, more visibility of meetings, etc. (easier in the age of Zoom.) As a long time part-time resident, now more so in retirement, with family roots in surrounding counties going back generations, the town I fell in love with years ago is losing some charm. I have lots of empathy for day-trippers. It's all I could afford for years. Sadly, I feel disenfranchised from downtown. The closest I can park is my house. Fine, if I'm not shopping for something too heavy to walk home with. I have LOVED downtown. I rely more on my neighborhood now for that camaraderie than strolling into shops on Main St.
I feel town council has increasingly turned towards the dollars from day visitors with less interest in maintaining a sense of community with all taxpayers. I can't state strongly enough that I feel a disconnect with downtown that I never felt before. I am not the only one! I know many part-time AND FULL-TIME people who feel this way. I can't fault the merchants for wanting to keep the dollars flowing. They've had to endure the historic events of the Great Recession and COVID. Owners are our friends and neighbors. There has to be a balance. When you can't find a parking space, can't get a reservation in a restaurant you've frequented for years, have to dodge speeding cars driving through your neighborhood because WAZE is directing them away from 221, you know it's a changed place. A number of suggestions Mr. Brooks has made about cars, crosswalks, powerlines etc. have seemed so self-evident, for so long, to so many. I care deeply about what Blowing Rock is going to look like when the next generation of my family members want to have homes here because they've grown up loving to visit. The town has been doing many things right for a long time. Here's hoping it continues.
(P.S. I'm sure Mr. Brooks discovered Mayview Park is a neighborhood. However, please visit the town lay-down yard (dump) on Cone Rd. between 221 and Laurel Lane. Neighbors and other concerned citizens had a commitment of over \$100,000 to purchase land to move it, reclaim the stream that was covered over, and turn it into a public greenspace/park. The Perry's have built an extraordinary venue in "The Car Barn" nearby on Cone Rd. and graciously opened it for fund-raising events that benefit Blowing Rock and the surrounding communities. How welcoming is it to people arriving for a gala event, especially if they are new to the area, to drive past this eyesore? What a disconnect. Yes, these events are for privileged folks BUT they raise money for the town, as well as surrounding communities who need it and who should never be forgotten. It's an eyesore NO ONE on Town Council would be willing to have located in their neighborhoods. Why aren't they willing to move it? Because "It's always been there." Yes, it's not the town's
The Strom Water Run-Off Project on Chestnut is a HUGE success and improvement. GREATLY appreciated!
I would like to see greater emphasis on attracting more affluent residents to town.
We've had these surveys before with some effect, especially the infrastructure improvements, but the Council has overstepped the use of the bond money we authorized. I'd like to see some better use of this money on what it was intended for.
Not one thing. How can you improve on perfection.
We love Blowing Rock!
The Holiday Inn at the gateway to BR is a horrific eyesore
We love visiting Blowing Rock and it's friendly people.
I've lived here my whole life, I work in Blowing Rock and live in Vilas. I love this area and I'm so grateful to get to live here as opposed to just visiting when I can.
Pick up big iron post with concrete bottom laying on NE corner of Goforth & Sunset
We love BR
You're doing a good job
I hope this goes to listening ears. It's no longer a joy to live in Blowing Rock.

Make a bigger deal of the sightings of the Brown Mountain Lights.  
Hop on the bandwagon of the hit series "Outlander" as the story ends up in North Carolina.

Love Blowing Rock but needs more parking and affordable housing

My parents honeymooned at Cliff Dwellers over 50 years ago. Now, I will be honeymooning in the area in October with my new husband! It's a great place for generations of families.

We love Blowing Rock and don't want it to lose the charm!

I ❤️ Tracy brown

From a tourism and resident standpoint, the local restaurants and shops are one of the strongest assets to the town. Watching the removal of available parking within walking distance of Main Street is concerning: it seems like it will both push on-street parking into residential areas as well as discourage older and physically challenged people from visiting the businesses in the core of town. We should do both small things and big things to make the town accessible while still keeping it walkable.

Small: We could improve traffic by restriping the signal at Main Street & US 221 (needs a separate EB right-turn lane) – again thinking about visitors, when there is a 0.5 to 1.0 mile queue on US 221 from Main Street, it is a way of discouraging visitors.

Big: New parking structure perhaps at USPS / Wells Fargo private lots or another location perhaps closer to US 321 & Sunset Drive.

Strive to keep the town safe, small, beautiful and charming as it has been for years. Too much commercialization will ruin it.

Love Blowing Rock (we live down the mountain about 30 miles away)

I'd love to own a vacation log home there !

Thanks

We love Blowing rock!

Remember what made us what we are. Make it a special place...and, not another "Dollywood."

I love this town ❤️

More restaurants is always a good idea and a book store would be awesome

Love this place. Keep it small. Keep it local.

Keep it independent and quirky. Love Gideon and Neaco. Love being outdoors. One gets a sense of greater purpose there.

Yes, get safe ways to cross hwy 321

Dog park

We love it here.

Thank You

Slow traffic and noise abatement

Workers cannot afford to live in or near BR - then they can't find a parking place when they get here. Wealthy, rude, "entitled" white people abound - it would be nice to have a code of conduct that we require EVERYONE to abide by. The Golden Rule would be a start.

Thank you for doing this study.

Blowing Rock has not protected its year round residents. Sadly.

I believe if there is a way to help our new locals understand how to adjust to living in a tourism town - such as the reason we have 25 amazing restaurants is because of our tourists so let them enjoy them on Friday and Saturday while we support them during the week. Instead of becoming the new resident who wants to close the gate after you arrived why not adjust life somewhat and really enjoy the benefits of living in our amazing "tourists" town!

We love Blowing Rock. keep up the good work!

Please protect our village from becoming Gatlinburg or Myrtle Beach.

Expanding down town would be nice But with out controlling the CUP process then you have Gatlinburg

I love the idea of the parking facility at N. Main and 321. I like the suggestion of the design and functionality. Great use of the eye sore property. This town needs to embrace true long term planning that the elected officials can be held accountable to rather than just the old cliché of keeping the charm of the past.

We are new full time residents after 3 years as seasonal residents. We love Blowing Rock 'S charm. We know planning for growth is required to maintain that charm.

Appreciate what the people who came before us created.

BR is a sensitive geographical and ecological area. Actions taken by the town impact residents and visitors, but BR's location on the continental divide means the town's actions significantly impact the air and water quality of millions of people down the mountain.

The Blowing Rock Market on Main Street (formerly a gas station) is hitting is all the right "notes" for attracting residents and visitors to downtown. I love we are pet-friendly.

I love Blowing Rock. I've lived here for over 40 years and appreciate the community, the school, the shops, and our neighborhood. Please save our town!

It's a great town to live in year long...feel very blessed.

More dedicated bike lanes.

I am glad to see more local businesses come back to shops on the Parkway. Farmers Market could be bigger Need more affordable housing for folks who work in town.

I love Blowing Rock and want it to stay quaint and beautiful. I am happy the sidewalk to bass lake is finally happening

Wish there was a really nice entry to town on Valley Blvd and Sunset

We loved it there.

Don't change too much

Enforce a strict motorcycle noise ordinance.

Developers think they are improving Blowing Rock with new hotels, neighborhoods etc. Blowing Rock is hard to improve on- people love it's charm but the town leadership & developers think they need to improve it with new construction. They are business people not interested in bettering BR! They are bettering themselves. I've been a member of this community since 1959.... The best thing the town can do is control growth in town & leave its charm alone. BR does need to be gentrified.

We just love this little town.

Avoid turning into 'Pottersville' (a la the movie 'It's a Wonderful Life'); BR citizens helping each other day to day, and their personal relationships, is far more important than getting more and more monetary profits.

Keep making the improvements that Blowing Rock has always has made to make it more attractive and a place I want to live. The leadership at all levels do a terrific job.

I like the way the leaders have kept the charm etc. I hope Blowing Rock never become another Asheville. That worries me since this area is mostly Democrats. Hope they will stay strong and not give into the liberal left

I am very concerned that too many outside people are being brought in to "help" us decide what our town should be. I am concerned that the Town Council and Mayor no longer listen and respond to the wants and needs expressed by the citizens of Blowing Rock. Especially the permanent citizens.

Sometimes I wonder why we're still here. On the bright side, real estate prices are increasing so now might be a good time to sell. 😊

We love Blowing Rock!

Wake up city council,

Keep our lovely small town feeling

Nice space

Quit talking about going these things as they have for the past 25 years and start doing them!

I like the way the leaders have kept the charm etc. I hope Blowing Rock never become another Asheville. That worries me since this area is mostly Democrats. Hope they will stay strong and not give into the liberal left



Been living here a long time. The changes have been phenomenal. Blowing Rock is forever more a noisy, busy, touristy, crowded little town. But as a regular traveler around the U.S., I see it happening to every other similar type of town that has unique features or natural beauty or significance. Certainly there are many good improvements over the years. Some new sidewalks, more and better restaurants, park improvements, general beautification projects, (we continue to have a great public works dept!). Would like the town to add more green spaces, instead of allowing every remaining square inch of undeveloped land to be made into townhomes and mini hotels.
We love Blowing Rock. keep up the good work!
We love this town
Possibly add some new and diverse festivals. How about a fiddlers fest?
I hope that we can always keep our small town aesthetic here in BR.
Leadership mindset to shift from attracting tourism dollars to Quality of Life measures.
Thank you for taking a hard look at all of this!
Because of the above, the cost of actually living in Blowing Rock is going through the roof. For instance, the Town just announced a 10% increase in the the cost of water and sewer services.
We live just outside but much closer to B.R. than Boone. I do not want to live in downtown B.R. as many of friends do, because I don't want to be trapped by the traffic.
Thanks for doing this!
Preserve history and heritage
We are seeing a lot of younger families. Those families grew up in a different time. I think slowly adjusting events and ideas to cater to people that grew up in the 80s, 90s and later will keep things fresh and exciting for the new families visiting this area. I do not want Blowing Rock to fall into the category of a sleepy, old folks town. : )
Perhaps more seating around playground for families to be close to their children
We are grateful to be part of such a lovely, friendly and vibrant community.
For newer, affluent seasonal residents, you came here because of who we are. Don't change Blowing Rock, let Blowing Rock change you. Leave your needs for power and control at home.
Get the sidewalk to Bass Lake finished by September, which is the latest communicated date for completion.....and there is no way that will happen since there doesn't seem to be anyone ever working on the project!
Very worried that we are over building. Don't want us to turn into a "Hilton Head" type of mountain town. Deeply concerned that the planned hotel beside Speckled Trout and Morningside will be an eyesore, and traffic problem for residents. Concerned about vacant land adjacent to Chetola and its planned development. Is the town to become wall-to-wall buildings?
We would hope that all residents will receive this survey as there are many who are not members of the Chamber who are concerned.
As a past retail worker and current owner of both residential and commercial property in Blowing Rock, I have seen the good, the bad and the ugly of downtown. The positives FAR outweigh any negatives. As I said above, the key is to continue to improve the experience for visitors downtown. We have great shops. We have great restaurants. Both of which thrive when foot traffic is strong. The park is awesome! We have some wonderful downtown accommodations. I believe that if we can focus on making access to all of these great establishments easier by improving the municipal parking facilities it will be a home run that will further insure the bright future I see for Blowing Rock.
Speeding on 321 and Main st is a major issue
I think the Valley Blvd/Sunset intersection needs to improve with a keen eye on what comes of the old Scotchman convenience store and the small vacant lot that's most often been used as a car lot for 20+ years (more recently the lot had moped rentals, then was the home of a "psychic." None of those business build community pride at one of the main roads leading to downtown. Across the street, I'm fine with the Citgo station and the offices on the corner, if better things can come to the old car lot and Scotchman. I know these are tough issues and tough fixes. Thanks for the opportunity to express some thoughts.

Our visitors need something to do in the evening. Most of our stores close by 5-6:00PM. The city needs to think about how to provide activities that entertain our visitors in the summertime after the businesses close. You can only eat so much ice cream. Thanks for reading my comments.
Covid sent us the wrong profile visitor, BR needs to address. The local property owners and full time residents should be more of a priority
We hope to move there soon, we love it so much.
Our visitors need something to do in the evening. Most of our stores close by 5-6:00PM. The city needs to think about how to provide activities that entertain our visitors in the summertime after the businesses close. You can only eat so much ice cream. Thanks for reading my comments.
Maybe locals deals?
there needs to be inexpensive fun for when it rains.
We are former Blowing Rock property owners. Rented an intown home for the summer. Have found the town to be very crowded. Our impression is that the town we loved for 11 years is very different from the one we left 5 years ago. Maybe biggest difference is what we perceive as the lack of attention to detail. To us, it looks messier.
The Greenhill road speeding and cut through traffic continues to be a problem. the 3 way stop sign at Greenhill circle is not working as half do not even stop or slow down. It would be helpful for the white lines to be painted more clearly. Where is our law enforcement? Also 55 mph on 321 - most of the cars are speeding making it very dangerous to exit any side street.
Thanks for asking....
We love Blowing Rock!!
I think our Chamber of Commerce does an outstanding job for the limited space we have. It's a fun place 🇺🇸🇩🇪🇫🇷
Beautiful area, let's keep it that way.
Blowing Rock is a great place to live and I feel blessed to call it home. I don't understand the people that move here and then try to change it.
Grandfather Mtn.
I applaud your effort for asking the locals' opinions
Over Development with businesses like the Rainey Lodge/Embers project, that require variances and Town Code Loop Holes (parking, greenspace, frontage road/building heights) will destroy what makes Blowing Rock Blowing Rock. — It became what it is by being a family oriented place that generations of families would come to and live. Instead it is being turned into another Asheville - a town that is ruled by Developers vice the people who actually live and work here.
Thank you for the opportunity to voice my concerns.
I am a year round resident who moved here 6 years ago from Raleigh. We love the small town atmosphere and community. But we are seeing a dangerous change even in the short time we have been here. Unfettered and uncontrolled development will irreversibly change BR for the worse. The citizens, via their elected officials on the Town Council, need to have the final say in development. Currently, the planning board and Town Council are essentially a rubber stamp to anything a Developer proposes. This is due to how the Conditional Use Permit system is written. This needs to be changed ASAP.
We feel our once charming little town is being "sold out" in favor of increasing tourism
The tourism draw in conjunction with the increased short term and peak season housing development pressures will eventually overwhelm the authentic small town feel of Blowing Rock. If you don't believe me, try to find a parking space on an event weekend in the summer. The exorbitant cost of dining, housing, and even some shopping will eventually drive all 12 month residents from the town they knew and loved. It will become a version of the Catskills - a seasonal playground reserved for only the wealthy. How sad will that be?
Keep providing feedback on this effort to all residents. Don't drop this..
All of the awnings along Main Street need to be power-washed.

We have always been a tourist town, we always will be, things cycle out, give it three years and the prices and crowds will calm down.
We are new full time residents after 3 years as seasonal residents. We love Blowing Rock 'S charm. We know planning for growth is required to maintain that charm.
We have loved being summer residents of Blowing Rock for almost 20 years. I am happy that the town leadership is carefully studying what makes this village so special. We all want to keep it that way. I would feel safer having an ambulance here in Blowing Rock.
We have loved being summer residents of Blowing Rock for almost 20 years. I am happy that the town leadership is carefully studying what makes this village so special. We all want to keep it that way. I would feel safer having an ambulance here in Blowing Rock.
I appreciate the regard given to town residents in this process
Keep BR beautiful!
Blowing Rock is an amazing place to work, go to school, and raise a family. I hope we are able to stay in this community longterm.
Blowing Rock used to be a charming and quaint village, but over the past 20 years this has changed substantially and not always for the good of the town or community. Places do need to grow and that will always involve change, but it has to take place with careful thought and consideration for all to enjoy. Many of the newer buildings on Main Street are grossly out of proportion with surrounding business and restaurant buildings. The multi use building across from Towne Tavern a perfect example. Parking is an issue as is just navigating Main Street, Sunset and 221 many weekends. Those of us who live in Blowing Rock know how to avoid going through town, but tourists do not. To me, making Sunset Drive the "gateway" to the town is ridiculous. Gateways should be off 321 past Tanger coming from Boone and off 321 at Blowing Rock Furniture coming from Lenoir. Sunset Drive is one of the worst offenders as far as traffic and parking is concerned.
Blowing Rock should organize a climbing competition at the Blowing Rock boulders as a way to attract young people to the area.
Perhaps consider developing a cultural affairs committee, which could focus on initiatives to increase the town's Diversity and Inclusion efforts.
We need to be careful of the amount & quality of building that is done. Need to achieve proper balance of residential growth and business growth
We are starting to choke



# PARKING STRUCTURE COST OUTLOOK FOR 2021



## PARKING STRUCTURE COST OUTLOOK FOR 2021

Rob McConnell, PE, Vice President, WGI  
Raymond Smith, PE, Vice President, WGI

WGI specializes in parking structure planning and design, and for more than 40 years, we maintained a database of construction costs from hundreds of parking facilities of varying sizes and scopes throughout the country. Since 2003, publishing our annual parking structure construction cost report provides an important planning tool for owners, contractors, and design teams.

The disruptions from COVID-19 during 2020-21 created industry-wide uncertainty and challenges for predicting construction costs. Using the best industry sources as a guide, we analyzed the data and prepared our parking structure outlook for the year. For this forecast, we only omit the cost of parking structures that are completely or significantly below grade since their cost is much higher. The cost data is assigned factors based on the time of bidding and location of the parking structure. The time factor is based on the Building Cost Index (BCI), published by *Engineering News-Record* (ENR). The location factor is taken from the yearly edition of the *RS Means Building Construction Cost Data*. Applying these two factors to actual construction cost data adjusts the cost to a current national basis, and from that we determine the national median. The national median can then be re-adjusted to reflect a median construction cost in almost every city in the United States.

As of August 2021, our statistical data indicates that the median construction cost for a new parking structure is \$25,700 per space, or \$76.70 per square foot; a 15.8% increase from 2020 when the median cost was \$22,200 per space. The table on the following page lists

the 2021 median parking structure construction costs in various U.S. cities with the lowest cost in Jacksonville, the highest in New York, and Detroit at the national median index of 100.0.

Please note that the construction cost data does not include costs for items such as land acquisition, architectural and engineering fees, environmental evaluations, materials testing, special inspections, geotechnical borings and recommendations, financing, insurance, owner administrative and legal, or other project soft costs. Soft costs are typically about 20% of construction costs but can be higher for owners who allocate their internal costs directly to the project.



Four-level, 326-space, CIP PT parking structure. This garage was designed for future expansion and included glass-enclosed stair towers for optimal passive security. The parking facility provides crucial additional parking for the VA Sierra Nevada, Reno, NV campus.

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### FOR COMPARISON, A MEDIAN-COST PARKING STRUCTURE TODAY TYPICALLY INCLUDES:

- 8'-6" to 8'-9" wide parking spaces
- Precast concrete superstructure
- Precast concrete façade with a single integral color and basic reveal pattern or basic thinstep brick
- One or two elevators and stairs open to the interior, and clad with exterior glass curtain wall
- Standard wayfinding and signage
- Shallow-spread footing foundations
- All above-grade construction
- Open parking structure with natural ventilation; without mechanical ventilation or fire sprinklers
- Minimal or no grade-level commercial space
- Standard parking access and revenue-control system
- Standard energy efficient LED lighting

### OVERALL PARKING STRUCTURE CONSTRUCTION COST WOULD BE HIGHER THAN THE MEDIAN IF IT INCLUDES THESE ENHANCED FEATURES

- 9'-0" wide parking spaces or larger for improved user comfort
- Cast-in-place post-tensioned concrete superstructure for lower maintenance costs
- Architectural façade with adorned precast, brick, metal panels, and other materials
- Stormwater management including on-site retention/detention
- Deep foundations such as caissons or piles
- Below-grade construction
- Enclosed stair towers due to local code requirements
- Enclosed parking structure without natural ventilation where mechanical ventilation, fire sprinklers, and fire-rated stair shafts are required
- Flexibility for future parking/building expansion, or incorporation of roof-level photovoltaic ("solar") panels
- Service life in northern/coastal regions beyond a standard 50 to 60 years
- Grade-level commercial space
- Mixed-use development where the parking is integrated with office, retail, residential, or other uses
- Custom wayfinding and signage system
- ParkSmart® Certification following the Green Business Certification, Inc. (GBCI) program
- Energy efficient LED lighting with occupancy and photocell computer-control system
- Electric vehicle charging stations
- Enhanced parking technology
- License-plate recognition
- Parking-guidance system
- Car-count system with variable-message LED signs
- WiFi and cellular services
- Solar-energy collection
- Building Management System



Building Management Systems are often used to help manage technology.



2021 CONSTRUCTION COST ▲ 15.8% FROM 2020			
City	Index	Cost/Space	Cost/SF
Albuquerque	871	\$22,385	\$66.81
Atlanta	89.2	\$22,924	\$68.42
Birmingham	86.4	\$22,205	\$66.27
Boston	114.3	\$29,375	\$87.67
Charlotte	87.0	\$22,359	\$66.73
Chicago	119.5	\$30,712	\$91.66
Cincinnati	89.9	\$23,104	\$68.96
Cleveland	95.0	\$24,672	\$73.64
Denver	91.5	\$23,516	\$70.18
Dallas	86.0	\$22,302	\$65.97
<b>Detroit - Median</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>\$25,700</b>	<b>\$76.70</b>
Houston	86.6	\$22,256	\$66.43
Indianapolis	92.3	\$23,721	\$70.80
<b>Jacksonville - Lowest</b>	<b>84.0</b>	<b>\$21,588</b>	<b>\$64.43</b>
Kansas City, MO	99.3	\$25,520	\$76.17
Las Vegas	105.4	\$27,088	\$80.85
Los Angeles	118.8	\$30,532	\$91.12
Miami	85.1	\$21,871	\$65.28
Minneapolis	107.0	\$27,499	\$82.07
Nashville	89.0	\$22,873	\$68.27
New Orleans	85.0	\$21,845	\$65.20
<b>New York - Highest</b>	<b>132.2</b>	<b>\$33,975</b>	<b>\$101.40</b>
Oklahoma City	84.8	\$21,794	\$65.05
Philadelphia	115.8	\$29,761	\$88.82
Phoenix	87.0	\$22,359	\$66.73
Pittsburgh	100.7	\$25,980	\$77.24
Portland, OR	103.2	\$26,522	\$79.16
Richmond	88.8	\$22,822	\$68.11
St. Louis	100.6	\$25,854	\$77.16
Salt Lake City	90.5	\$23,259	\$69.42
San Diego	109.4	\$28,116	\$83.91
San Francisco	129.8	\$33,359	\$99.56
Seattle	106.7	\$27,422	\$81.84
Tampa	84.8	\$21,794	\$65.05
Washington, D.C.	95.5	\$24,544	\$73.25
<b>National Median</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>\$25,700</b>	<b>\$76.70</b>

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## PARKING INDUSTRY 2021 CONSTRUCTION ECONOMIC FORECAST



Four-level, 399-space, precast parking structure. This garage is located off the historic courthouse square in the City of Oxford, MS. This garage offers convenient parking for visitors and employees of local businesses, especially during Ole Miss fall football season and Double Decker Festival in the Spring.

Construction in the United States saw unprecedented challenges in 2021 as we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic. Material and labor shortages are the new normal, resulting in cost increases for both design and construction. Challenges in the construction market prior to the pandemic were headlined by skilled and unskilled labor shortages in the construction trades, tariffs, and international trade relationships. Today, those challenges still exist, are more pronounced, and are now joined by material production, manufacturing, and shipping bottlenecks and the ongoing and often intermittent government restrictions intended to curb the spread of COVID-19. Turner Construction reported price spikes in material costs for lumber, steel, copper, aluminum, PVC, and gypsum although — heading into Q3 — raw material costs appear to be returning to earth.

The global pandemic certainly impacted every asset class in some manner. Urban core office buildings, hotels, education, and the retail sector were all negatively impacted by a decrease in new project starts. Richard Branch, chief economist for Dodge Data & Analytics (“Dodge”) told ENR that, “the dollar value of hotel construction starts fell 46% in 2020, to \$9.7 billion... in 2021 Dodge forecasts an additional 7% decline.” Meanwhile, healthcare, industrial/warehouse, and residential construction all saw increases in activity. After falling 26% in 2020, overall forecasts for commercial construction are mixed, with a consensus that office and hotel construction will remain depressed while other types of commercial buildings will show modest increases over last year. Dodge posits that parking structure starts will increase by 4% during the year, possibly linked to the forecast growth of retail, healthcare, and transportation buildings.

This past March 2021, President Biden signed into law the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Passage of ARPA promoted communities around the country to start developing strategies for how to win and spend American

Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding. ARPA provided \$350 billion for state, local, territorial, and tribal governments to address COVID-19-related economic impacts. Building infrastructure is notably eligible for ARPA funding, specifically including construction or enhancement to medical and educational facilities. The Congressional Budget Office projects real GDP growth of 6.7%, but coupled with that, many economic models show inflation of more than 2.5% persisting through 2023.

On the horizon, in the Fall of 2021, are two potential infrastructure bills currently making their way through Congress; potentially totaling over \$4.5 trillion in broadly classified infrastructure spending. Should one or both infrastructure bills become law, we would anticipate an increase in construction costs and labor challenges for construction markets.

Finally, construction starts and spending will be uneven across the country. Speaking to ENR, Jay Bowman of FMI Corp. suggested, we believe correctly, that, “geography will be a defining characteristic of the post-pandemic recovery. Although this always has influence on how recessions and expansions are experienced, it will be much more pronounced [this time].”<sup>1</sup> Geographic differences due to different political policies, that were and continue to be adopted at state and local levels to curb COVID-19 infections, are a significant factor in the recovery of local construction markets.

### COST DRIVERS: Features That Impact the Cost of a Parking Structure



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## SUMMARY

What does this mean for the new parking structure construction and the median construction cost for these facilities in 2021 and near term? The short answer is costs are going up. We believe that nearly all local markets will see an increase in the construction cost of parking facilities over 2020, primarily due to the increase in the cost of manufactured goods and the increasingly acute skilled and unskilled labor shortages, more so than due to an increase in overall demand. Meanwhile, above-average demand will play a significant factor in markets that experienced greater post-pandemic population growth than the already-expected net population growth, and construction will be necessary to accommodate that growth. As previously mentioned, WGI's cost model shows a construction cost increase of 15.8% over last year, but most economic indicators suggest that this trend will not continue at this pace but is expected to increase at a more normal 3% to 5% through 2022 and 2023.

The parking professionals at WGI are happy to assist with the planning and budgeting of your next parking structure. **If you have any questions or would like specific cost information for your area, contact Raymond Smith at Raymond.Smith@WGInc.com and Rob McConnell at Rob.McConnell@WGInc.com. Or call us at 800.FYI.PARK (800.394.7275).**

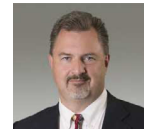
As a multidisciplinary solutions-providing consulting firm, WGI has 20 offices in seven states, serving an active client base in 30 states, specializing in the following disciplines: parking facility design and engineering, building restoration and structural engineering, mobility planning, transportation engineering, land development/municipal engineering, traffic and transportation engineering, geospatial and land surveying, subsurface utility engineering, landscape architecture, environmental sciences and water resources, architecture, land planning, and MEP engineering. In 2021, ENR ranked WGI #175 — up 12 places — on its list of the Top 500 Design Firms, while at the same time naming WGI its 2021 Design Firm of the Year in the southeast United States.

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## LET'S TALK.

For more information about this study or to have a conversation with one of our experts, please contact us:



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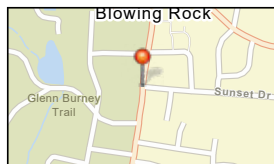
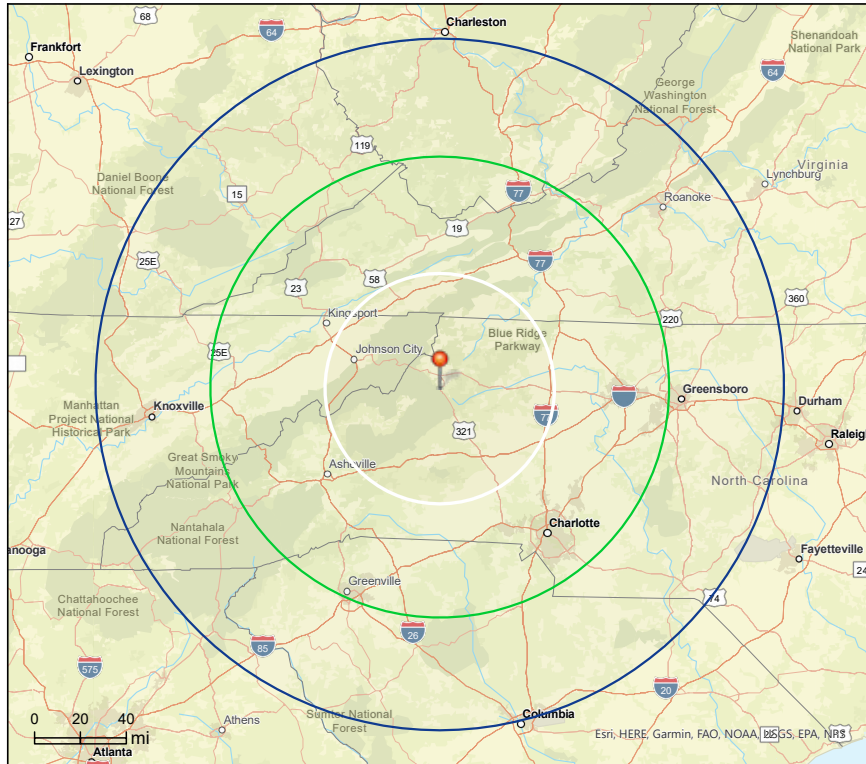
# DAY-TRIP & OVERNIGHT STAY DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION



## Site Map

1070-1094 Main St  
 1070-1094 Main St, Blowing Rock, North Carolina, 28605  
 Rings: 50, 100, 150 mile radii

Prepared by Esri  
 Latitude: 36.13310  
 Longitude: -81.67820



November 29, 2021



## Demographic and Income Comparison Profile

1070-1094 Main St  
 1070-1094 Main St, Blowing Rock, North Carolina, 28605  
 Rings: 50, 100, 150 mile radii

Prepared by Esri  
 Latitude: 36.13310  
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	50 miles	100 miles	150 miles
<b>Census 2010 Summary</b>			
Population	1,078,659	6,366,490	11,289,863
Households	438,674	2,538,803	4,504,533
Families	294,034	1,708,177	3,024,692
Average Household Size	2.38	2.45	2.44
Owner Occupied Housing Units	313,105	1,769,635	3,144,952
Renter Occupied Housing Units	125,569	769,168	1,359,581
Median Age	41.2	38.9	39.1
<b>2021 Summary</b>			
Population	1,123,629	7,160,903	12,467,961
Households	459,508	2,855,519	4,979,995
Families	302,119	1,886,901	3,282,633
Average Household Size	2.37	2.46	2.44
Owner Occupied Housing Units	333,181	1,964,821	3,445,280
Renter Occupied Housing Units	126,326	890,698	1,534,715
Median Age	43.9	41.0	41.3
Median Household Income	\$47,689	\$55,388	\$53,644
Average Household Income	\$64,566	\$78,372	\$75,361
<b>2026 Summary</b>			
Population	1,142,243	7,530,139	13,003,094
Households	468,028	3,003,013	5,195,970
Families	305,956	1,974,184	3,407,124
Average Household Size	2.37	2.46	2.45
Owner Occupied Housing Units	342,626	2,075,431	3,620,913
Renter Occupied Housing Units	125,402	927,581	1,575,057
Median Age	45.0	41.7	42.1
Median Household Income	\$52,551	\$61,219	\$58,925
Average Household Income	\$72,731	\$88,406	\$84,905
<b>Trends: 2021-2026 Annual Rate</b>			
Population	0.33%	1.01%	0.84%
Households	0.37%	1.01%	0.85%
Families	0.25%	0.91%	0.75%
Owner Households	0.56%	1.10%	1.00%
Median Household Income	1.96%	2.02%	1.90%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2021 and 2026.

November 29, 2021



## Demographic and Income Comparison Profile

1070-1094 Main St  
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Rings: 50, 100, 150 mile radii

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Latitude: 36.13310  
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2021 Households by Income	50 miles		100 miles		150 miles	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<\$15,000	61,154	13.3%	309,246	10.8%	597,437	12.0%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	53,539	11.7%	287,707	10.1%	523,755	10.5%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	54,395	11.8%	286,021	10.0%	499,048	10.0%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	68,754	15.0%	390,319	13.7%	683,347	13.7%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	85,502	18.6%	529,020	18.5%	911,057	18.3%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	54,327	11.8%	361,683	12.7%	625,230	12.6%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	52,905	11.5%	380,001	13.3%	640,581	12.9%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	15,140	3.3%	146,289	5.1%	240,529	4.8%
\$200,000+	13,792	3.0%	165,223	5.8%	258,990	5.2%
Median Household Income	\$47,689		\$55,388		\$53,644	
Average Household Income	\$64,566		\$78,372		\$75,361	
Per Capita Income	\$26,477		\$31,315		\$30,163	

2026 Households by Income	50 miles		100 miles		150 miles	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<\$15,000	54,164	11.6%	278,752	9.3%	539,808	10.4%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	48,583	10.4%	264,424	8.8%	481,111	9.3%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	50,857	10.9%	271,289	9.0%	474,280	9.1%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	67,334	14.4%	384,631	12.8%	673,875	13.0%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	88,435	18.9%	554,801	18.5%	951,176	18.3%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	59,891	12.8%	401,892	13.4%	690,618	13.3%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	62,873	13.4%	455,960	15.2%	762,109	14.7%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	19,479	4.2%	190,897	6.4%	311,256	6.0%
\$200,000+	16,411	3.5%	200,357	6.7%	311,719	6.0%
Median Household Income	\$52,551		\$61,219		\$58,925	
Average Household Income	\$72,731		\$88,406		\$84,905	
Per Capita Income	\$29,874		\$35,316		\$33,986	

Data Note: Income is expressed in current dollars.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2021 and 2026.

November 29, 2021



## Demographic and Income Comparison Profile

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Rings: 50, 100, 150 mile radii

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Longitude: -81.67820

2010 Population by Age	50 miles		100 miles		150 miles	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Age 0 - 4	59,276	5.5%	397,404	6.2%	694,165	6.1%
Age 5 - 9	62,121	5.8%	411,091	6.5%	714,625	6.3%
Age 10 - 14	65,482	6.1%	417,722	6.6%	729,434	6.5%
Age 15 - 19	72,808	6.7%	427,358	6.7%	772,074	6.8%
Age 20 - 24	71,041	6.6%	392,016	6.2%	732,452	6.5%
Age 25 - 34	120,625	11.2%	787,144	12.4%	1,373,652	12.2%
Age 35 - 44	144,565	13.4%	900,391	14.1%	1,546,346	13.7%
Age 45 - 54	160,718	14.9%	938,263	14.7%	1,658,082	14.7%
Age 55 - 64	146,632	13.6%	798,210	12.5%	1,444,231	12.8%
Age 65 - 74	99,658	9.2%	507,261	8.0%	916,739	8.1%
Age 75 - 84	55,506	5.1%	282,499	4.4%	513,453	4.5%
Age 85+	20,228	1.9%	107,131	1.7%	194,609	1.7%

2021 Population by Age	50 miles		100 miles		150 miles	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Age 0 - 4	53,678	4.8%	392,829	5.5%	672,923	5.4%
Age 5 - 9	58,477	5.2%	421,524	5.9%	721,402	5.8%
Age 10 - 14	61,208	5.4%	437,337	6.1%	748,063	6.0%
Age 15 - 19	64,558	5.7%	426,201	6.0%	750,489	6.0%
Age 20 - 24	66,660	5.9%	418,286	5.8%	754,605	6.1%
Age 25 - 34	137,310	12.2%	927,750	13.0%	1,599,071	12.8%
Age 35 - 44	134,765	12.0%	914,290	12.8%	1,557,451	12.5%
Age 45 - 54	145,464	12.9%	933,064	13.0%	1,593,438	12.8%
Age 55 - 64	161,622	14.4%	966,992	13.5%	1,704,609	13.7%
Age 65 - 74	142,480	12.7%	792,420	11.1%	1,421,935	11.4%
Age 75 - 84	72,264	6.4%	390,460	5.5%	694,346	5.6%
Age 85+	25,143	2.2%	139,748	2.0%	249,630	2.0%

2026 Population by Age	50 miles		100 miles		150 miles	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Age 0 - 4	53,365	4.7%	411,410	5.5%	696,411	5.4%
Age 5 - 9	57,433	5.0%	431,711	5.7%	731,610	5.6%
Age 10 - 14	63,223	5.5%	459,130	6.1%	781,219	6.0%
Age 15 - 19	68,552	6.0%	459,185	6.1%	805,898	6.2%
Age 20 - 24	63,470	5.6%	418,591	5.6%	749,264	5.8%
Age 25 - 34	121,472	10.6%	918,985	12.2%	1,545,884	11.9%
Age 35 - 44	143,116	12.5%	982,080	13.0%	1,667,254	12.8%
Age 45 - 54	142,459	12.5%	938,907	12.5%	1,599,668	12.3%
Age 55 - 64	157,827	13.8%	971,457	12.9%	1,687,459	13.0%
Age 65 - 74	150,386	13.2%	866,017	11.5%	1,545,185	11.9%
Age 75 - 84	92,659	8.1%	514,155	6.8%	912,519	7.0%
Age 85+	28,281	2.5%	158,512	2.1%	280,722	2.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2021 and 2026.

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## Demographic and Income Comparison Profile

1070-1094 Main St  
1070-1094 Main St, Blowing Rock, North Carolina, 28605  
Rings: 50, 100, 150 mile radii

Prepared by Esri  
Latitude: 36.13310  
Longitude: -81.67820

2010 Race and Ethnicity	50 miles		100 miles		150 miles	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
White Alone	972,442	90.2%	5,043,821	79.2%	8,887,199	78.7%
Black Alone	48,214	4.5%	855,014	13.4%	1,647,417	14.6%
American Indian Alone	3,082	0.3%	25,110	0.4%	49,302	0.4%
Asian Alone	13,675	1.3%	115,992	1.8%	181,885	1.6%
Pacific Islander Alone	563	0.1%	3,119	0.0%	5,139	0.0%
Some Other Race Alone	25,279	2.3%	211,732	3.3%	324,974	2.9%
Two or More Races	15,404	1.4%	111,703	1.8%	193,947	1.7%
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	48,946	4.5%	416,532	6.5%	644,364	5.7%

2021 Race and Ethnicity	50 miles		100 miles		150 miles	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
White Alone	987,807	87.9%	5,426,335	75.8%	9,457,711	75.9%
Black Alone	55,220	4.9%	1,038,355	14.5%	1,906,588	15.3%
American Indian Alone	4,055	0.4%	30,651	0.4%	59,050	0.5%
Asian Alone	19,236	1.7%	193,404	2.7%	294,122	2.4%
Pacific Islander Alone	753	0.1%	4,331	0.1%	7,156	0.1%
Some Other Race Alone	34,334	3.1%	297,465	4.2%	451,478	3.6%
Two or More Races	22,224	2.0%	170,361	2.4%	291,855	2.3%
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	66,313	5.9%	590,159	8.2%	904,140	7.3%

2026 Race and Ethnicity	50 miles		100 miles		150 miles	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
White Alone	991,097	86.8%	5,568,176	73.9%	9,661,703	74.3%
Black Alone	57,238	5.0%	1,128,094	15.0%	2,028,975	15.6%
American Indian Alone	4,525	0.4%	33,475	0.4%	63,703	0.5%
Asian Alone	22,190	1.9%	240,340	3.2%	361,081	2.8%
Pacific Islander Alone	855	0.1%	4,985	0.1%	8,212	0.1%
Some Other Race Alone	39,948	3.5%	349,355	4.6%	528,602	4.1%
Two or More Races	26,390	2.3%	205,714	2.7%	350,818	2.7%
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	76,722	6.7%	698,212	9.3%	1,065,174	8.2%



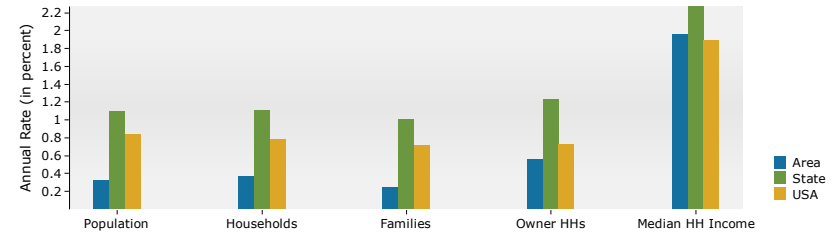
## Demographic and Income Comparison Profile

1070-1094 Main St  
1070-1094 Main St, Blowing Rock, North Carolina, 28605  
Rings: 50, 100, 150 mile radii

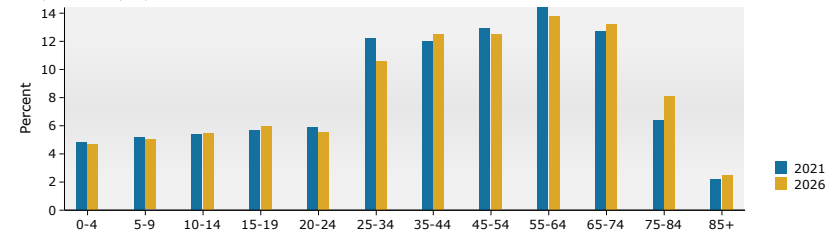
Prepared by Esri  
Latitude: 36.13310  
Longitude: -81.67820

### 50 miles

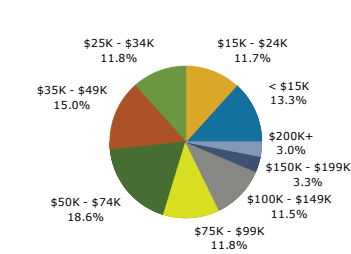
#### Trends 2021-2026



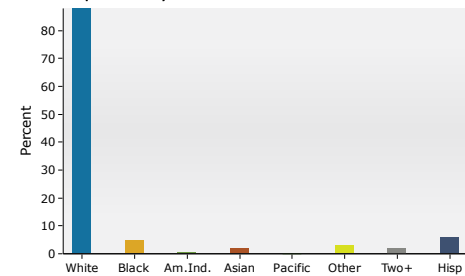
#### Population by Age



#### 2021 Household Income



#### 2021 Population by Race



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2021 and 2026.

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Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2021 and 2026.

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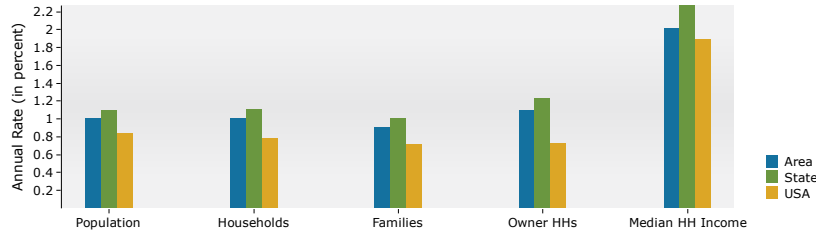
## Demographic and Income Comparison Profile

1070-1094 Main St  
1070-1094 Main St, Blowing Rock, North Carolina, 28605  
Rings: 50, 100, 150 mile radii

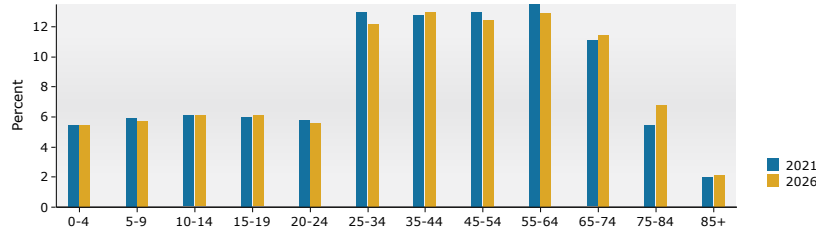
Prepared by Esri  
Latitude: 36.13310  
Longitude: -81.67820

### 100 miles

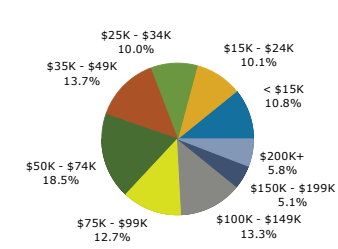
#### Trends 2021-2026



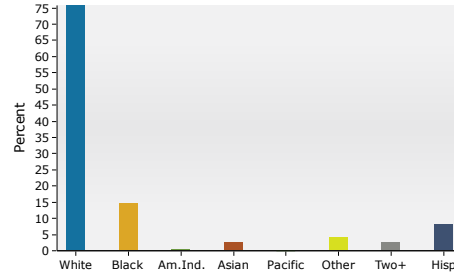
#### Population by Age



#### 2021 Household Income



#### 2021 Population by Race



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2021 and 2026.

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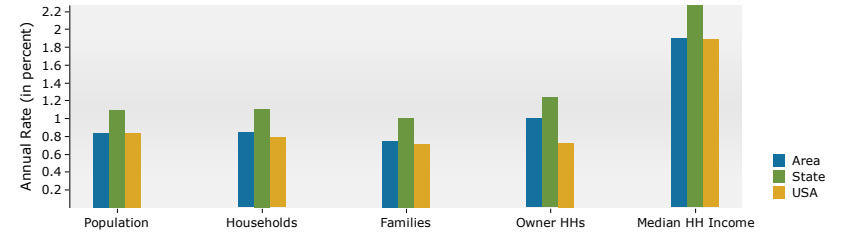
## Demographic and Income Comparison Profile

1070-1094 Main St  
1070-1094 Main St, Blowing Rock, North Carolina, 28605  
Rings: 50, 100, 150 mile radii

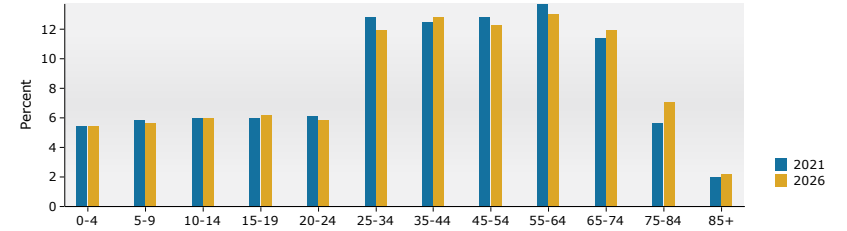
Prepared by Esri  
Latitude: 36.13310  
Longitude: -81.67820

### 150 miles

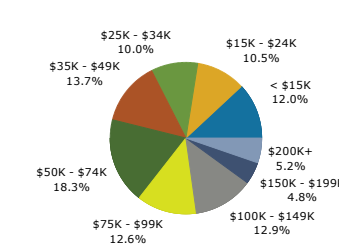
#### Trends 2021-2026



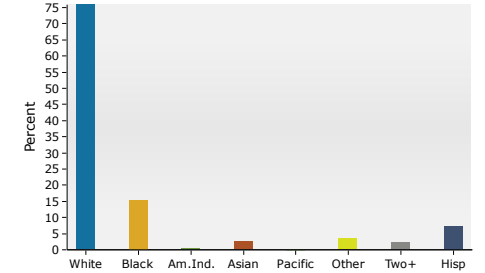
#### Population by Age



#### 2021 Household Income



#### 2021 Population by Race



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2021 and 2026.

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