



TOWN OF BLOWING ROCK **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

ADOPTED FEBRUARY 13, 2024



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Special thanks to everyone in the Blowing Rock community that participated in the process.

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SECTION ONE

INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

Town Overview

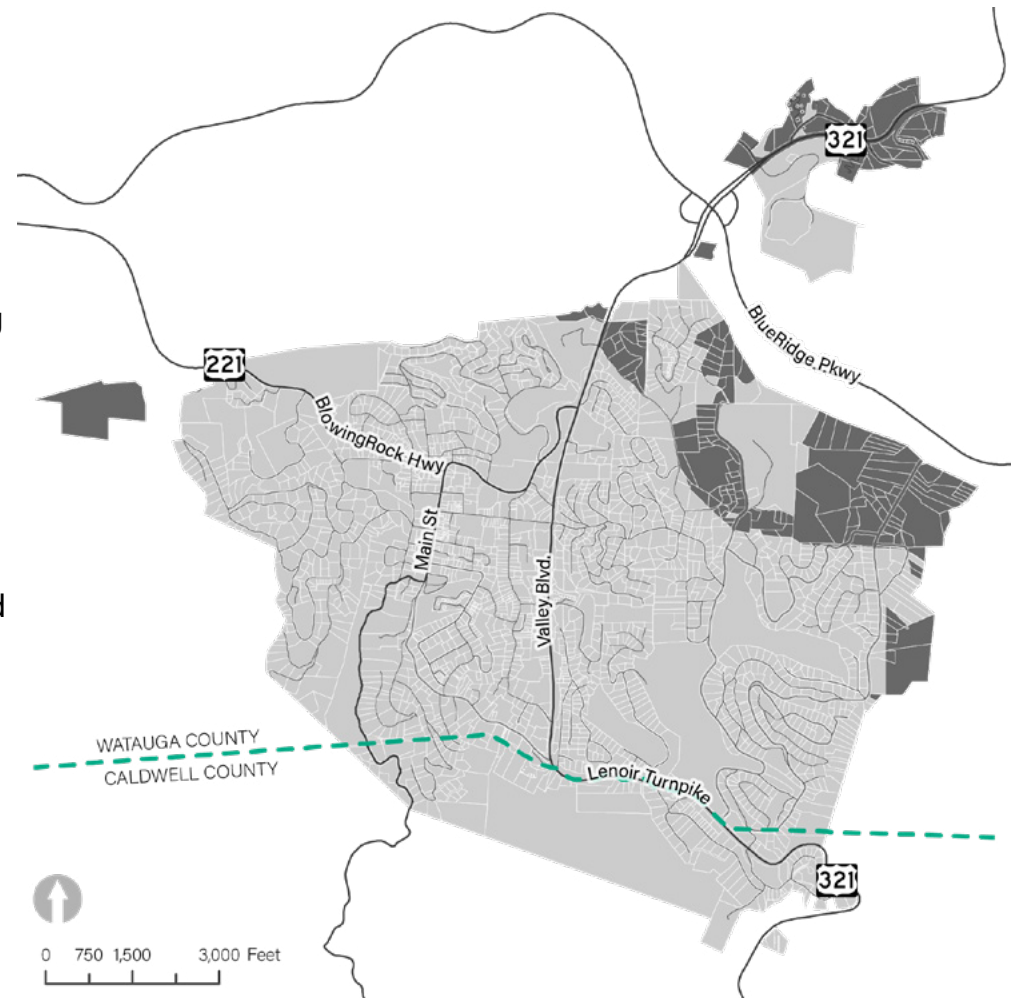
From the unmatched, far-reaching views along the Blue Ridge Parkway, to the quaint storybook mountain village, Blowing Rock is truly deserving of the title: “Crown of the Blue Ridge.”

Blowing Rock is located on the Eastern Continental Divide in North Carolina’s High Country, at nearly 4,000 feet in elevation. Connecting Blowing Rock to the region are US Highways 321 and 221, as well as the majestic Blue Ridge Parkway.

The Town’s year-round population is 1,376 as of the 2020 Census, with seasonal populations more than doubling this count. Over its history, the Town has been a popular tourism destination and second home getaway for residents of the nearby Charlotte and Piedmont Triad metropolitan areas, as well as for visitors from throughout the country.

Blowing Rock is a special place, filled with outdoor recreational opportunities, breathtaking scenery, a charming downtown, and cultural amenities. The Town’s well-known aesthetic characteristics and charm are a staple for this small community, with many families living or visiting Blowing Rock for generations.

This plan encompasses the Town of Blowing Rock, shown in light gray on the map to the right; as well as the Town’s extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ), displayed in dark gray.



Planning Area

-  Town
-  Extraterritorial Jurisdiction

Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is a written expression of the community's goals and desires for the future, serving as a dynamic guide for decision making by the Town's elected and appointed officials, as well as staff. This ten-year update to the 2014 Comprehensive Plan is the result of a ten month process that began in April of 2023.

As with the 2014 Plan, and the 2004 Plan before that, this Plan update has established a ten-year framework for achieving immediate, mid-range, and long-term strategies that will ensure implementation of the Plan.

Previous Comprehensive Plans

Blowing Rock is committed to a long-range planning process, regularly updating the Comprehensive Plan since the Town's first Plan was adopted in 1982.

Comprehensive Plan Adoption History
1982: First Comprehensive Plan Adopted
1993: Comprehensive Plan Update
2004: Comprehensive Plan Update
2014: Comprehensive Plan Update
2024: Comprehensive Plan Update

Planning Process

This Comprehensive Plan update was developed over the course of ten months, beginning in April of 2023. Background research was conducted between the months of May and June, culminating in a public open house, which was held over the course of one day in June of 2023. Approximately 40 residents attended the meeting, with additional residents and business owners participating online.

The draft Plan was prepared between July and October of 2023, with regular meetings of the Comprehensive Plan Subcommittee. The Subcommittee, an eight member group appointed by the Town, helped guide the direction of the Plan update from its initiation.

In October of 2023, another public meeting was held to allow residents and business owners to review the draft Plan and provide additional feedback. Following a final review by the Subcommittee, the adoption process began. The Planning Board reviewed the Plan and recommended adoption to the Town Council in January 2024, and Town Council held a public hearing on February 13, 2024.



Vision

Blowing Rock has a culture and character that is founded on its strong neighborhoods, unique architecture, remarkable natural landscape, tourism-based economy, and small town charm. These have all helped to foster an unparalleled quality of life for residents and memorable experiences for visitors. In the coming years, Blowing Rock aims to promote and improve these qualities, as detailed in the vision statement and supporting principles.

This long-range vision will help to ensure that these key factors contribute to the overall quality of life flourishing over time. This vision is intended to guide the community as it plans for the future and works toward the common goals of ensuring that the character, quality of life, and prosperity of the community are preserved for the future. The vision statement appears in bold green below, and supporting statements follow in italic teal lettering.

The shared vision for the future of the Town of Blowing Rock is one of a vibrant mountain resort community that welcomes all with its charming authenticity and unique sense of place.

As a full service community, residents and visitors will continue to enjoy high-quality services and amenities that make the Town a desirable place to live or visit year-round. Moving toward this vision, the community will embrace change while remaining vigilant to ensure that the Town's unique character and quality of life are not compromised.

With a focus on preserving its historic downtown, quaint neighborhoods, and the natural beauty of the mountain landscape, Blowing Rock will facilitate growth that complements the character of the Town.

As the premier destination for visitors to North Carolina's High Country, Blowing Rock will provide abundant opportunities for outdoor recreation, shopping, dining, lodging, and entertainment in a memorable setting that cannot be replicated elsewhere.

Plan Focus Areas

Through the comprehensive planning process, a set of focus areas emerged. The focus areas identify major themes of the Plan which were used to help guide recommendations, and are expanded upon in the “Our Community” and “Our Future” sections of this Plan. Within each focus area, there is an inherent commitment to the residents of the Town, who are impacted by each of these topics.

Downtown is the heart of Blowing Rock. It’s historic architecture, quintessential shops, and public amenities are at the center of the Town’s charm. As the Town continues to change in the future,

preserving and enhancing this great asset will be important. Within this focus area, the examination of parking needs, aesthetic standards, desired character, tourism, infill development, and historic buildings are all equally important.

Connectivity is the second focus area, and another great feature within Town. Blowing Rock has made considerable improvements to bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in recent years. However, there are still a number of additional enhancements that can be made. As tourism continues to grow in the Town, parking and traffic can often pose problems in Downtown and other portions of the community. Ensuring that residents and visitors can freely move in and around



DOWNTOWN

Preserve and enhance Downtown Blowing Rock as the vibrant cultural centerpiece of the community.

Parking, Aesthetics / Character, Tourism, Infill, Historic Buildings, Pedestrian Experience, Businesses

CONNECTIVITY

Ensure that all residents can freely move in and around the Town through a variety of transportation modes.

Sidewalks, Trails, Bike Lanes, Golf Carts, Roads, Trolleys, and Other Modes



Blowing Rock is imperative for the future of the community. To ensure that the Town of Blowing Rock continues to maintain its unique character and charm, the utmost attention must be given to future development and similar changes in the community. The proper use, appearance, and management of land in and around Blowing Rock will be important going forward, particularly given the limitations on future growth of the Town. Blowing Rock has already dedicated many resources to enhancing design standards and examining similar opportunities to improve the overall appearance of the Town. This should continue in the coming years.

The final focus area is municipal services. The Town will continue to ensure that it is providing a high level of municipal services by regularly examining the need to improve said services. The provision of adequate utilities, management, recreation, and similar services all fall under municipal services. In some cases, such as emergency management, the Town will need to work closely with Caldwell and Watauga Counties to ensure that County services are also meeting the demands of residents.



DEVELOPMENT

Manage the appearance, location, and characteristics of future development so that they complement and enhance the Town of Blowing Rock.

Land Use, Location, Growth Potential, Short-Term Rentals, Aesthetics, Infill, Surrounding Development, Redevelopment

MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Continue to provide high quality public services to the Blowing Rock community and advocate for the improvement of services provided by outside agencies.

Existing Services, Expanded / New Services, County Services



How to Use this Plan

As Town Staff

Town staff will use this Plan to inform major policy changes, capital improvements, and other major projects which should be pursued in the coming years. Town staff should also use this Plan to review and consider proposed developments and similar changes proposed by the public to ensure that approved developments are consistent with the vision for the future of Blowing Rock.

As the General Public

The general public can use this Plan to learn more about the Town of Blowing Rock, and to consider improvements that may enhance the recommendations of this Plan. The general public can also use this Plan to ensure that the vision they helped to create is carried out through all decisions made in the coming decade.

As an Appointed Board or Committee Member

The Planning Board and other appointed board or committee members can use this Plan in a manner similar to the general public. In addition, the Planning Board must look at the future land use map in this Plan, as well as other elements of the Plan, when considering development proposals, rezonings, and similar changes in land use. Per North Carolina Statutes, the Planning Board is required to determine whether all zoning text or map amendments are consistent with the community's adopted Comprehensive plan.

As a Town Council Member

Town Council will use the Comprehensive Plan in a similar manner to the Planning Board, particularly when considering zoning text or map amendments. The Town Council will further use the Plan when considering major policy changes, capital improvements, and similar projects which may be described in the "Implementation" section of this Plan.

As Another Agency or Partner

Other agencies and partners that may work within the Town can review the Comprehensive Plan to provide context of the Town's existing conditions and goals for the future. A number of the recommendations of this Plan will require assistance from outside partners, and the Plan may help to provide information on how outside partners can directly assist the Town in pursuing its vision.

As a Developer

As the Comprehensive Plan establishes a vision and guiding direction for the future of Blowing Rock, developers may find the Plan useful in explaining how potential projects they might consider should be modified to meet the goals of the community. The Plan is particularly helpful in terms of establishing a future land use map with place types that are subject to all of the land within the Town and its ETJ.

Plan Structure

The graphic below illustrates the structure of the 2023 Comprehensive Plan Update for the Town of Blowing Rock. The Introduction includes an overview of Blowing Rock, the planning purpose and process, the Town’s vision and focus areas, and how to use the plan. Our Community provides a summary of major background on the Town in relation to the four focus areas, providing a broad basis for the development of recommendations. Finally, Our Future provides all of the implementation aspects of this Plan.



SECTION TWO

OUR COMMUNITY



OUR COMMUNITY

Downtown

Downtown Blowing Rock is a series of blocks with unique boutiques, art, jewelry, antiques, home decor shops, restaurants, and more. Memorial Park, with its historic landscaping, Town Hall, and the Library are all centered in downtown, accompanied by a new park and recreation of many forms. One can spend an entire day walking between the amenities, activities, and services offered in this small area, and for that reason, it is one of the biggest tourist draws. The section which follows will provide some additional context into what is going on in downtown Blowing Rock.

Tourism

Historically, Blowing Rock has been a major attractor of tourism. For decades, this has been a well-known fact and major attribute of the Town. However, this tourism draw has increased drastically over the last decade, with the Tourism Development Authority's (TDA) occupancy tax revenues increasing from around \$600,000 in 2010 to more than \$1.8M in 2022. During this same year, direct sales at lodging businesses were over \$30M and total visitor spending was in excess of \$90.8M. New lodging properties that opened in 2022 increased the inventory of short-term rental rooms in Town. These included Blowing Rock Manor, a boutique hotel with 20 rooms and The Getaway, its 12-room sister property. The number of Airbnb and VRBO rentals also grew during this time. The Embers, a 40-room boutique hotel, broke ground in 2022, at the corner of Main Street

and US Highway 221, and is anticipated to open in late 2023. Some of the recent revenue growth may be attributed to higher overall room rates, driven by the increased demand and the use of rate management software.

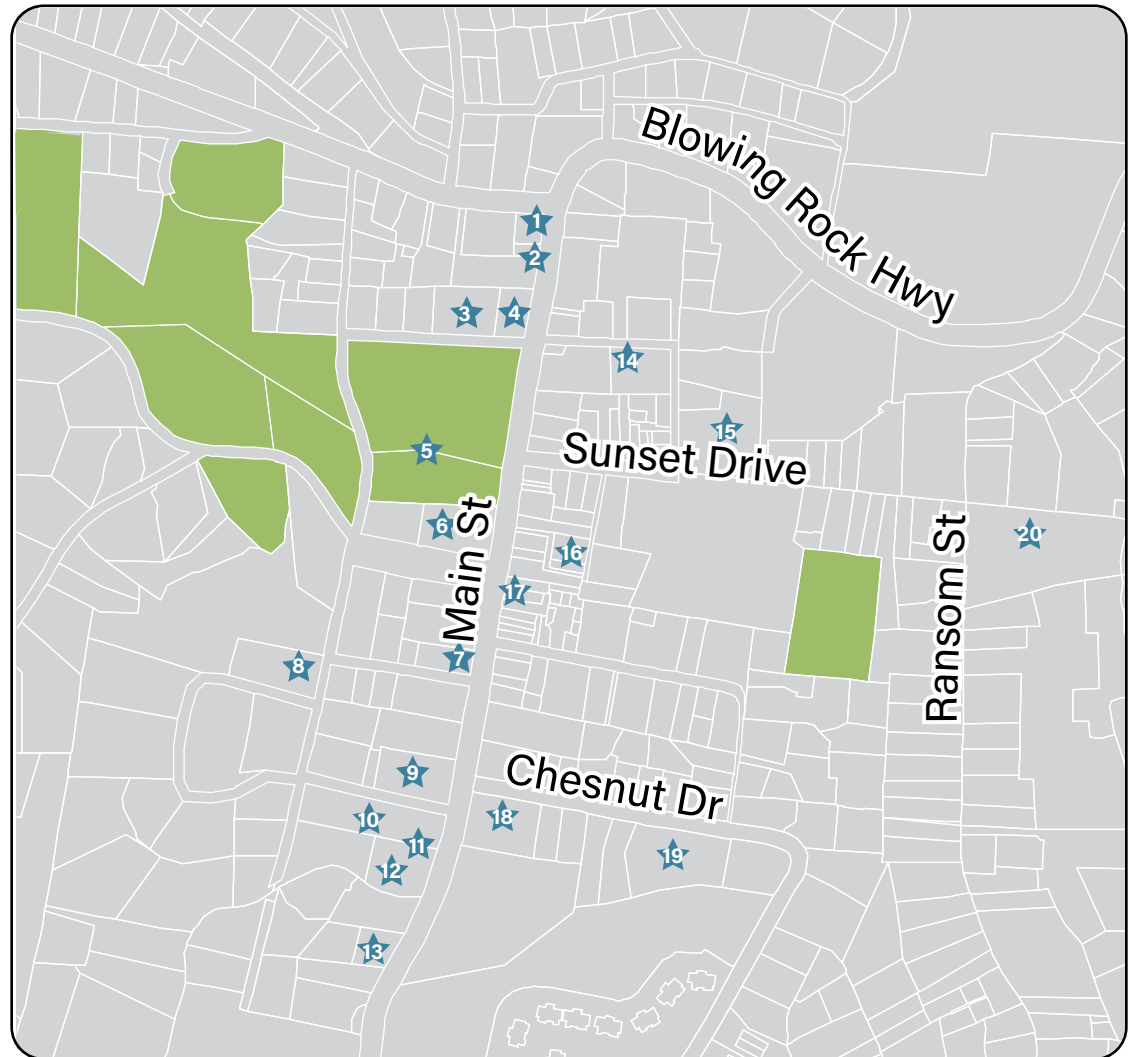
According to the 2022 Sustainable Tourism Management Plan, weekday occupancy levels, even during the peak months, were less than 81%. This indicates that while the tourism marketing is booming, the seasonal lodging establishments in Blowing Rock are not at capacity much of the time. Some of this could have to do with a large number of day-trip visitors, driving in from places like Charlotte, spending the day, and driving back home. An additional element could be visitors who are staying outside of the Town but visiting the downtown area and other amenities while staying nearby.

Within 100 miles of the Town, there are more than 7 million residents who could be inclined to take a day trip to Blowing Rock. By 2026, this is anticipated to grow to more than 7.5 million residents. Given the limitations of providing lodging for an infinite number of visitors, continuing to attract day-trippers is an important economic development strategy.

Cultural Resources

The Blowing Rock Historical Society identifies and recognizes buildings and sites within the community that are significant because they are of historic importance, of a particular architectural style, and / or are related to the Town's legacy. This is done through a historical marker program, which includes approximately 20 markers downtown. Online, one can access a Downtown Blowing Rock Historical Marker Walking Tour, which directs those interested in these sites, shown to the right, as well as background information on their significance. There are also 21 markers as part of the Blowing Rock History Walk around Broyhill Park.

Parks and recreation areas are highlighted in green on this map. From left, this includes Davant Field and Rotary Pavilion, Robbins Pool, Broyhill Park, Mayview Lake, Glen Burney Falls Trail, Annie Cannon Gardens, Blowing Rock City Park, Memorial Park, and the Blowing Rock School fields. Legacy Trail, which follows Main Street, as well as other sidewalks, provide access to these sites.



Blowing Rock Historical Society Markers

- | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| ★ 1 Rainey Service Station | ★ 6 Martin House | ★ 11 Edgewood Cottage | ★ 15 Inn at Ragged Gardens | ★ 18 St. Mary of the Hills |
| ★ 2 R.S Reinhardt Building | ★ 7 Schenck House | ★ 12 Springhaven Inn | ★ 16 Randall Memorial Building | ★ 19 Davant Residence |
| ★ 3 Town Hall and Chamber of Commerce | ★ 8 Creekside | ★ 13 Methodist Church of BR | ★ 17 Sonny's Grill | ★ 20 First Baptist Church |
| ★ 4 Winkler Service Station | ★ 9 Rumble Presbyterian Ch. | ★ 14 BR Ice House | | |
| ★ 5 Memorial Park | ★ 10 BRAHM | | | ■ Recreation |

Parking

Downtown parking, and the challenge of the Town providing it in an amount sufficient to meet demand, has long been a major topic of discussion. According to the Town's recent Sustainable Tourism Management Plan, downtown Blowing Rock has a deficit of around 600 public parking spaces.

This comes from an analysis from the Tourism Management Plan, reproduced below, showing that the number of spaces required for employees of downtown's most prevalent businesses are creating current demand that is almost equal to the available public supply.

Note that this near deficit is reached before adding in all of the customers, visitors, delivery drivers, and others who create additional demand on parking, particularly for the highly visible and convenient on-street spaces.

While this deficit is most obvious in the busy tourism seasons, the ongoing growth of year-round tourism and popularity of the Town for day-trips is adding pressure on the Town to add capacity and better manage existing downtown parking resources.

PARKING SUPPLY

Public Parking Spaces Downtown: 428 spaces

PARKING DEMAND*

Retail Shops: 69 shops x 3 employees = **207 spaces**

Restaurants: 14 restaurants x 12 employees = **182 spaces**

Real Estate Offices: 6 offices x 2 employees & 2 customers = **24 spaces**

**Note: Excludes Demand from Customers & Visitors*

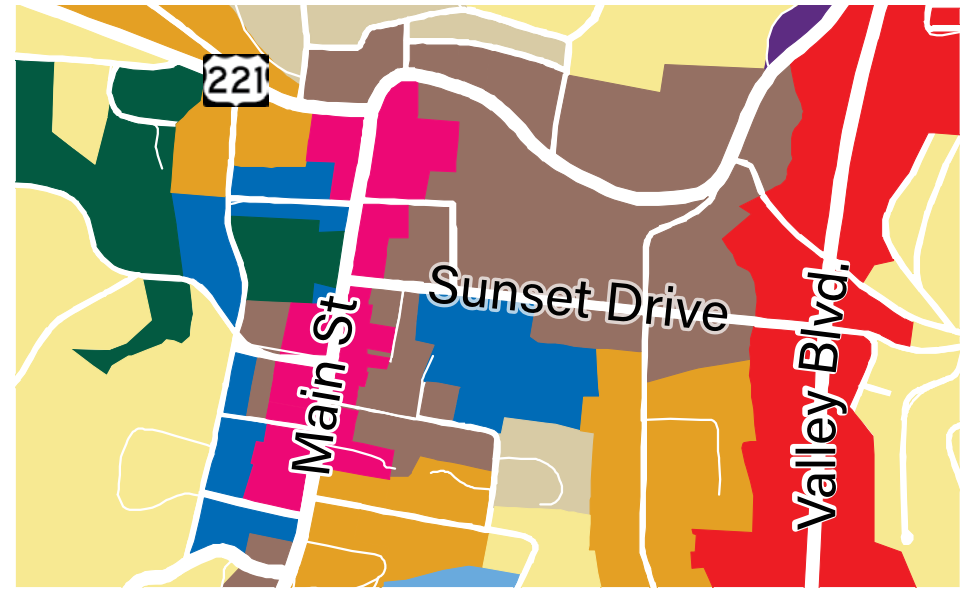
Supply = 428 public spaces

Demand = 413 spaces

Land Use and Design Standards

The majority of downtown is zoned either Central Business or Town Center. However, additional zoning districts in and adjacent to downtown include Parks / Green Space, High Density Residential, and Office / Institutional. Most design aspects, including building height, setback, open space requirements, tree protection, retaining walls, and alley requirements are specified for the Central Business and Town Center districts, which are guided primarily by their relationship to Main Street, Sunset Drive, and Hwy-221 (Blowing Rock Highway). A generalized version of this map is shown to the right. As shown, much of the area fronting Main Street is zoned Town Center, while many of the properties behind these and along Sunset Drive are zoned Central Business, Office / Institutional, or High Density Residential.

Within these districts, there are notable differences. For instance, the east side of Main Street is largely the older commercial fabric that you would think of when you consider a historic downtown - small, attached buildings. Yet, on the west side of Main Street, properties tend to have larger, newer, separated properties with greater setbacks from the street. Given these differences, there has been an interest in instituting separate design standards between these two portions of the Town Center zoning district. While there was an attempt to draft such standards previously, it was never adopted into the Town's Land Use Code. The Code does permit new development to match the building footprint of existing structures, when properly surveyed beforehand.



Zoning Districts (Generalized)

- Parks / Green Space
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Hospital / Medical Complex
- Office / Institutional
- Planned Unit Development
- General Business
- Central Business
- Town Center

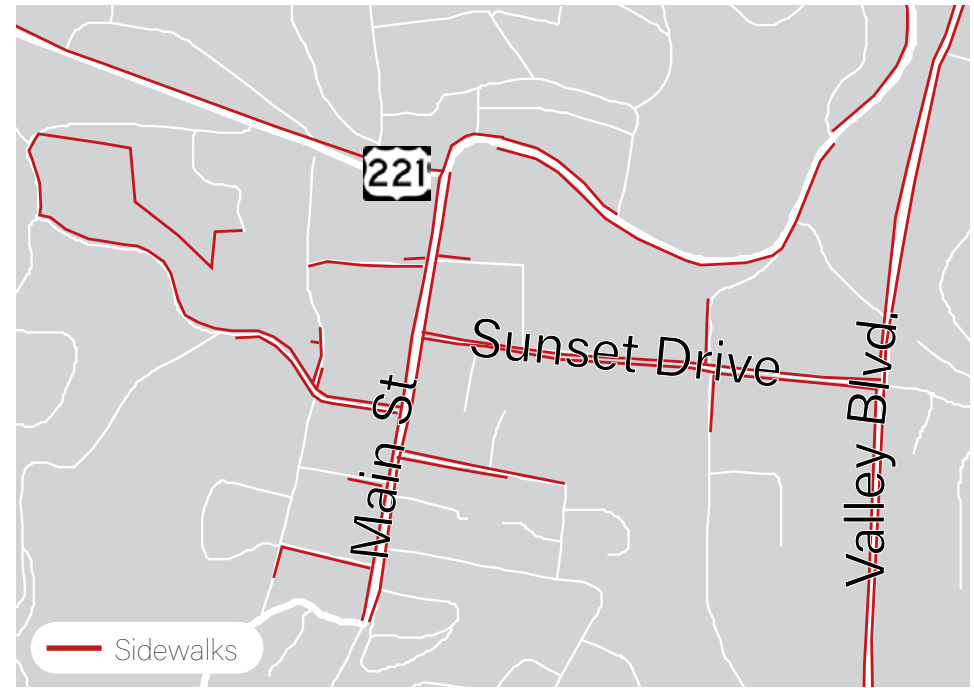
In the Town Center and Central Business Districts, the maximum building height is just 30 feet, though there are a series of additional standards which more specifically address the height of buildings in downtown, including their relation to the street and adjacent structures. As part of this planning process, it has been determined that the

building height standards in downtown should be modified to better meet the desires of residents and business owners.

Walkability - Getting There

The two main corridors in downtown, Main Street and Sunset Drive, have sidewalks on both sides of the road for the entirety of the downtown area. A number of the connecting streets, including Laurel Lane, Park Avenue, and Morris Street also have some level of sidewalks. However, many of the small connecting streets lack these pedestrian facilities. With new development, such as the Blowing Rock Art and History Museum, additional sidewalks have been constructed, but the area outside of these major corridors lack pedestrian facilities. Because of limited rights-of-way and necessary on-street parking, the sidewalks that do exist tend to be relatively narrow when considering the level of pedestrian traffic in downtown. For instance, Main Street's sidewalks average around seven to eight feet in width. Given the amount of tourism traffic the Town experiences during the season, many residents have expressed issues moving through downtown on foot.

Major pedestrian connections outside of downtown include Sunset Drive to Valley Boulevard, both of which were recently improved to include sidewalks on both sides of the street; as well as connections to Mayview and Bass Lakes through a series of sidewalks and trails. Additional pedestrian connections are planned through the extension of Middle Fork Greenway but there is a need for a comprehensive pedestrian network plan such as a Master Pedestrian and Bike Plan.



Commercial Activity

Much of downtown Blowing Rock is composed of commercial uses, including shops, restaurants, and other businesses. At the time of this writing, there are about one dozen restaurants in downtown and about twice as many shops, including womens and mens apparel stores, gift shops, boutiques, and home decor stores. Non-commercial uses downtown include Memorial Park and adjacent recreational amenities, Town Hall and the Library, some offices, churches, museums, and homes.

The Town has a Chamber of Commerce, which provides business-related services in an effort to promote the local economy and advocate for the business community. The Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce's mission is to promote, protect, and improve business through the cultural, social, and economic development, growth and sustainability of Blowing Rock while preserving the charm and character of the village. Though the Chamber focuses on businesses, residents may also become members. The Chamber sponsors many events each year, many of which take place in downtown. Some notable events include Art in the Park, summer concert series, socials, and community clean up days. The Chamber is separate from Town governance.



During this planning process, a number of residents indicated an interest in developing additional restaurants. However, the cost of buying or leasing buildings downtown may be prohibitive for new restaurateurs as the seasonal variability of customers limits year-round income generation.



Downtown Highlights

Tourism Influences

- Tourism in downtown Blowing Rock has increased in recent years. This trend is likely to continue in the future.

Cultural Resources

- Despite many cultural resources and historic markers downtown, there are no properties or sites on the National Register of Historic Places. There's interest in preservation but property owners have not participated in National Register nomination.

Parking Impacts

- Additional downtown parking is needed but the method for providing it has been contested. This will need to be resolved.
- Parking is largely a seasonal problem, as many residents and visitors do not stay for winter in the mountains.

Land Use and Design Standards

- There is interest in strengthening design standards downtown.

Walkability - Getting There

- While pedestrian connections exist in and around downtown, the pedestrian experience could be improved.

Commercial Activity

- Downtown hosts a number of shops, restaurants, and other commercial enterprises but there is a desire for additional restaurants and store hours could be more standardized.



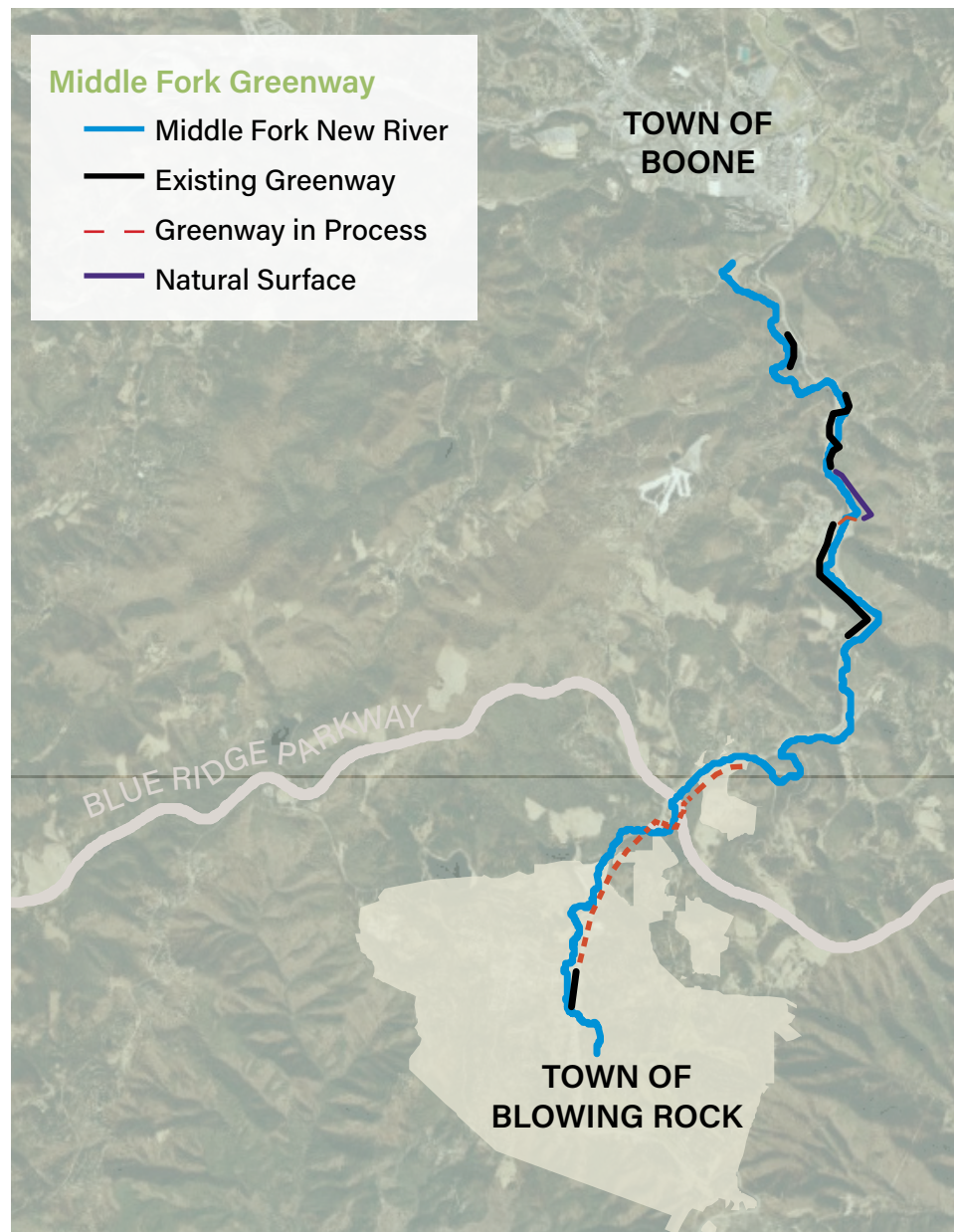
Connectivity

This section provides information related to the multiple modes of transportation that exist within the Town of Blowing Rock.

Transportation Modes

The primary modes of transportation in Town are private automobile and walking. While the downtown area has a relatively rigid grid street network, the majority of Town has winding roads, due to their location in the mountains. Many of the downtown streets and primary road corridors have sidewalks or trails that parallel them, while neighborhood streets tend to lack pedestrian amenities. Golf carts are another mode of transportation used by residents, particularly within neighborhoods. There are also a number of recreational trails within the Town, and which connect the Town to other locations.

For many years, there has been an interest in growing the regional trail networks. Of particular note is the plan for Middle Fork Greenway, a multi-use recreational trail being developed to connect Blowing Rock to Boone. This greenway is a project in partnership with the Blue Ridge Conservancy, the Town of Blowing Rock, the Town of Boone, and Watauga County. The project is broken into six segments, with one in Blowing Rock, one in Boone, and four in between these two communities. A rendering of the trail is shown to the right, and additional information is included in the walking / hiking trails section.

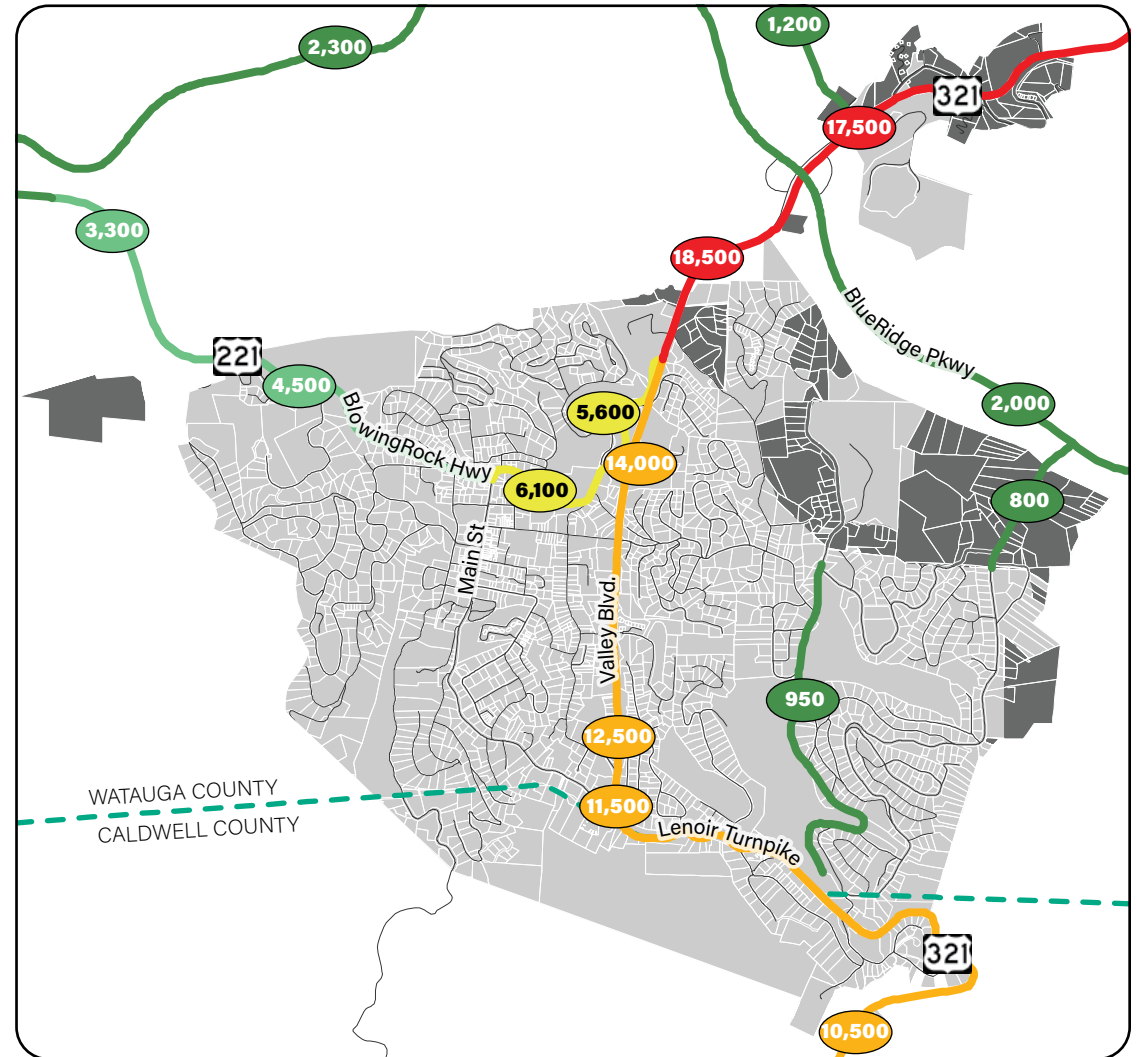


Average Daily Traffic

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) collects average annual daily traffic (AADT) counts on all major state roads. Those for which traffic counts are collected in and around Blowing Rock are shown to the right.

The greatest amount of traffic is on US-321, particularly on the northern edge of Town, where more than 18,000 trips are made each day. Just over 6,000 of these trips continue into Town along US-221 / Blowing Rock Highway, with considerably less traffic outside of the Town limits.

The majority of the roads within Town are small, local roads, for which traffic count data is not collected.



Average Annual Daily Traffic (2021)

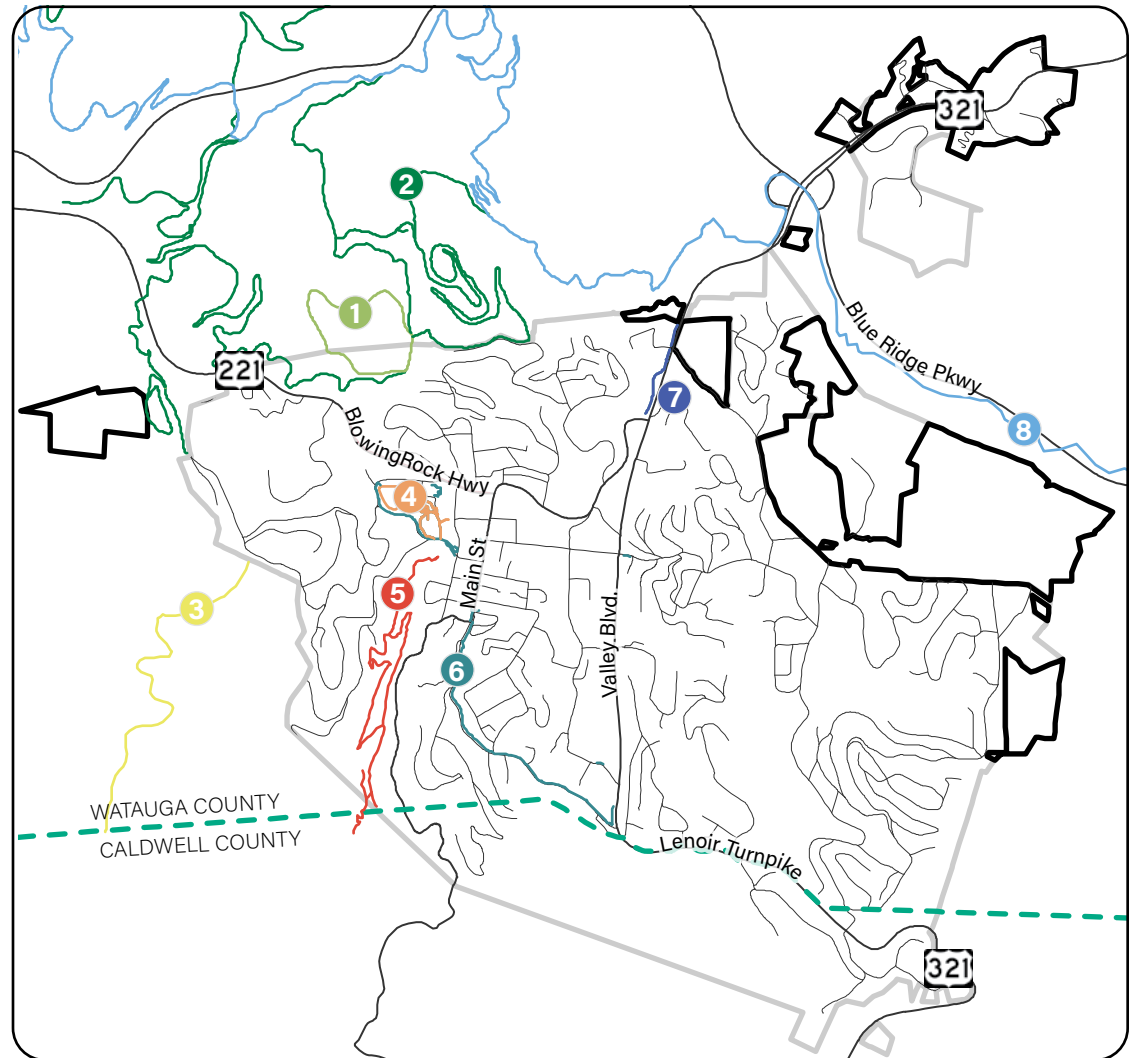
- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| — 0 - 2,500 Trips Per Day | — 10,001 - 15,000 Trips Per Day | ■ Town Limits |
| — 2,501 - 5,000 Trips Per Day | — 15,001 or More Trips Per Day | ■ Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) |
| — 5,001 - 10,000 Trips Per Day | — Roads Without Traffic Counts | |

Walking / Hiking Trails

There are a number of walking and hiking trails in the Town and in the surrounding area. Those within the map extent of this Plan are shown to the right. The Bass Lake Loop, the Moses Cone Park Carriage Trails, and the Mountains to Sea Trail connect to miles of additional trails that are part of the Forestry Service's network associated with the Blue Ridge Parkway. The trails identified on this map with the labels "1," "2," "3," and "8" are owned and / or maintained by the federal government.



The Middle Fork Greenway, which is only partially complete, will eventually connect the Town to Boone, paralleling US-321 for approximately 6.5 miles. This trail will connect to the existing Boone Greenway, creating over 15 miles of contiguous trail.

Additional trails within the Town provide connections between the regional trails, downtown Blowing Rock, and residential neighborhoods.



Trail Routes

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| 1 Bass Lake Loop | 5 Glen Burney Trail |
| 2 Moses Cone Park Carriage Trails | 6 Legacy Trail |
| 3 USFS Trail | 7 Middle Fork Greenway |
| 4 Broyhill Park Walking Trail | 8 Mountains to Sea Trail |

- | |
|---|
|  Town Limits |
|  Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) |

Connectivity Highlights

Transportation Modes

- Residents have expressed an increased desire for pedestrian connectivity through additional sidewalk, trail, and greenway connections.
- There is an opportunity to expand the regional greenway network through the implementation of the Middle Fork Greenway.
- Some sidewalks within Town could be improved through expanded width, upgrading paving, and removing obstacles.

Average Daily Traffic

- The highest trafficked road in Blowing Rock is Valley Boulevard / US-321. While about 14,000 trips occur per day on this segment in the center of Town, around 18,000 trips occur on this segment just north of Blowing Rock.
- Between 2015 and 2021, there was an increase in traffic on every road segment for which data is collected in Town.

Walking / Hiking Trails

- There is a significant trail network outside of Blowing Rock, particularly north of the Town, linked to the Blue Ridge Parkway and the Moses Cone Estate. Within Town, there are also multiple trail connections but there is room for additional improvement.
- The development and extension of the Middle Fork Greenway could be a significant multi-modal improvement for residents of the Town and nearby communities.



Development

This section provides some highlights of facts and trends relevant to those elements which impact future land use and development in and around the Town.

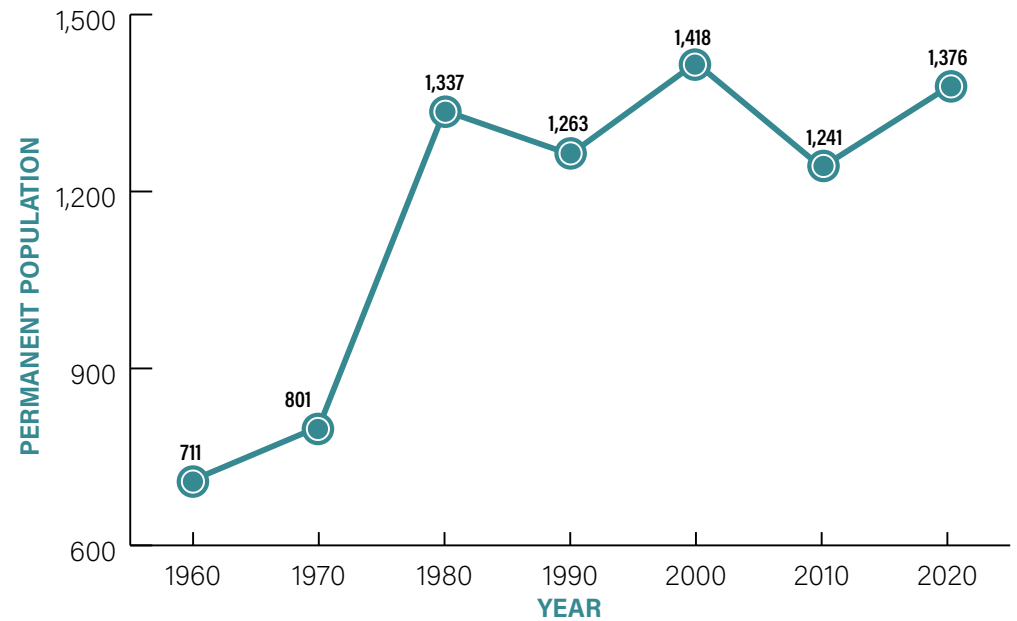
Population Change

Population

According to the United States Census, Blowing Rock experienced its greatest rate of growth between 1970 and 1980, when the population increased from 801 people to 1,337 permanent residents. Since this time, the population has fluctuated, ranging from around 1,240 to almost 1,420 residents.

The 2020 Census estimated that the Town's population was 1,376, comparable to the highest populations in its history. This does not consider the influx of almost 3,000 people who live in Blowing Rock seasonally. (This is based on an estimated 1,232 seasonal housing units with an average household size of just over two people per unit). This also does not fully consider increases in the population that may have been experienced due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Permanent Population Counts (United States Census, 1960 - 2020)

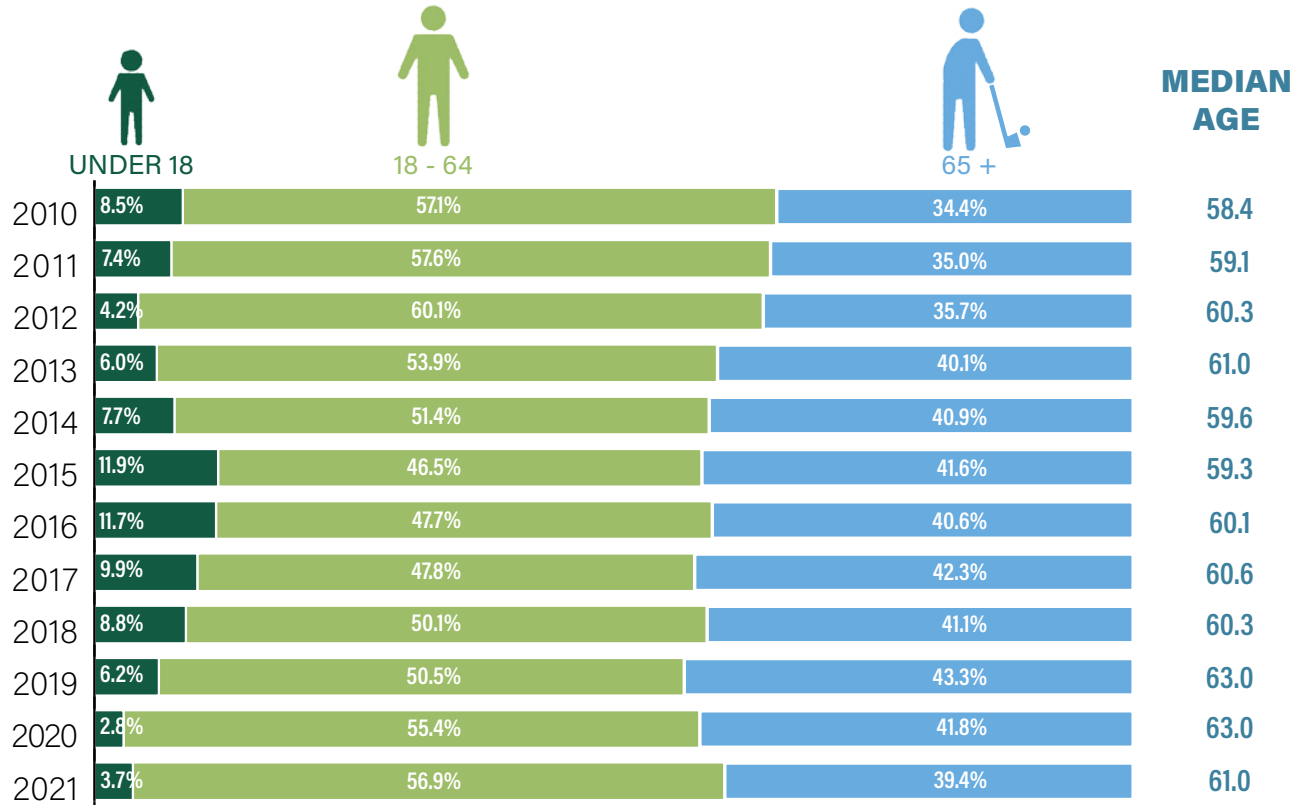


Age Cohorts

The portion of Blowing Residents who are children (under the age of 18) has historically been small. While the Town did see an increase in this population between 2014 and 2017, the portion of children in Town has declined in recent years. The working age population (18 - 64 years old) has remained between 50% and 60% of the total population, with the portion of the population over the age of 65 years old continuing to constitute approximately 40% of the Town's population.

This skews the median age of Town residents significantly upward, with the median resident being 61 years old in 2021. This median age is much higher than similar communities, which would typically cause some concerns for public services. Growth around the Town, however, has continued to provide a sufficient population of young residents to justify maintaining local schools, although there has been a recent downward trend in their share of the overall population.

Age Cohorts and Median Age (American Community Survey, 2010 - 2021)



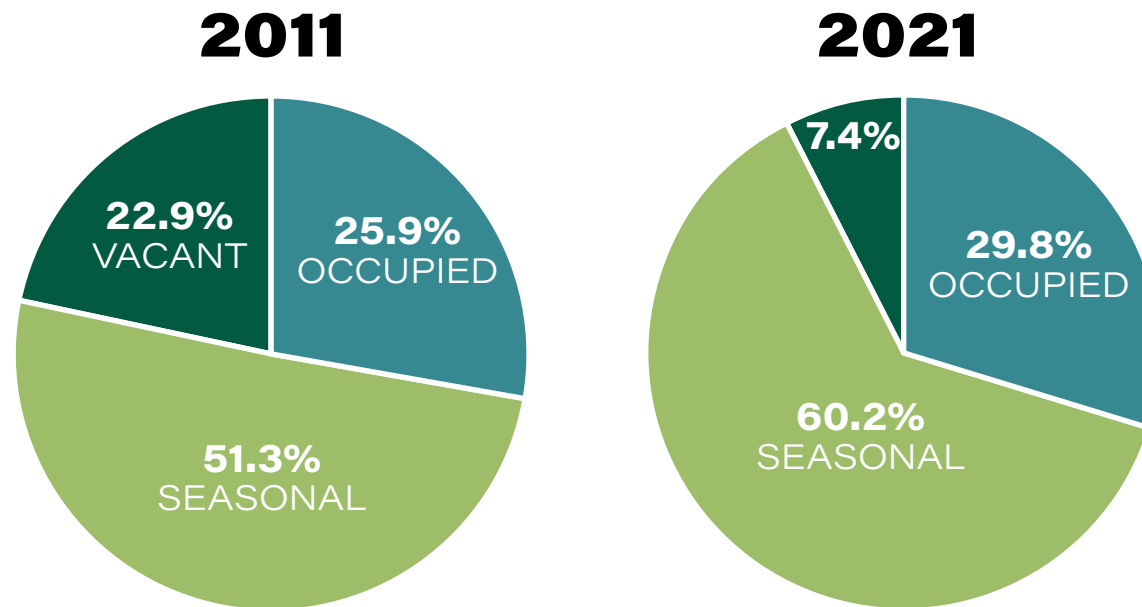
Housing Occupancy

Seasonal residency has been a constant factor in Blowing Rock, where large portions of the population reside in town for only part of the year. The summer and fall are the busiest seasons, with these seasonal residents more than doubling the Town's population.

While this level of seasonal residency is a historic trend, it has increased in recent years, with approximately 60% of housing units being occupied seasonally in 2021.

During this time period, year-round occupancy has also increased, causing the number of truly vacant homes to decrease significantly between 2011 and 2021. The actual vacancy rate of 2021 (7.4%) is close to indicating a potential demand for new housing (which is typically described as vacancy rates below 5%). It is possible that the real vacancy rate is in fact lower, as the high seasonal residency rate may reduce participation in the American Community Survey.

Housing Occupancy and Vacancy Rates (American Community Survey, 2011 & 2021)

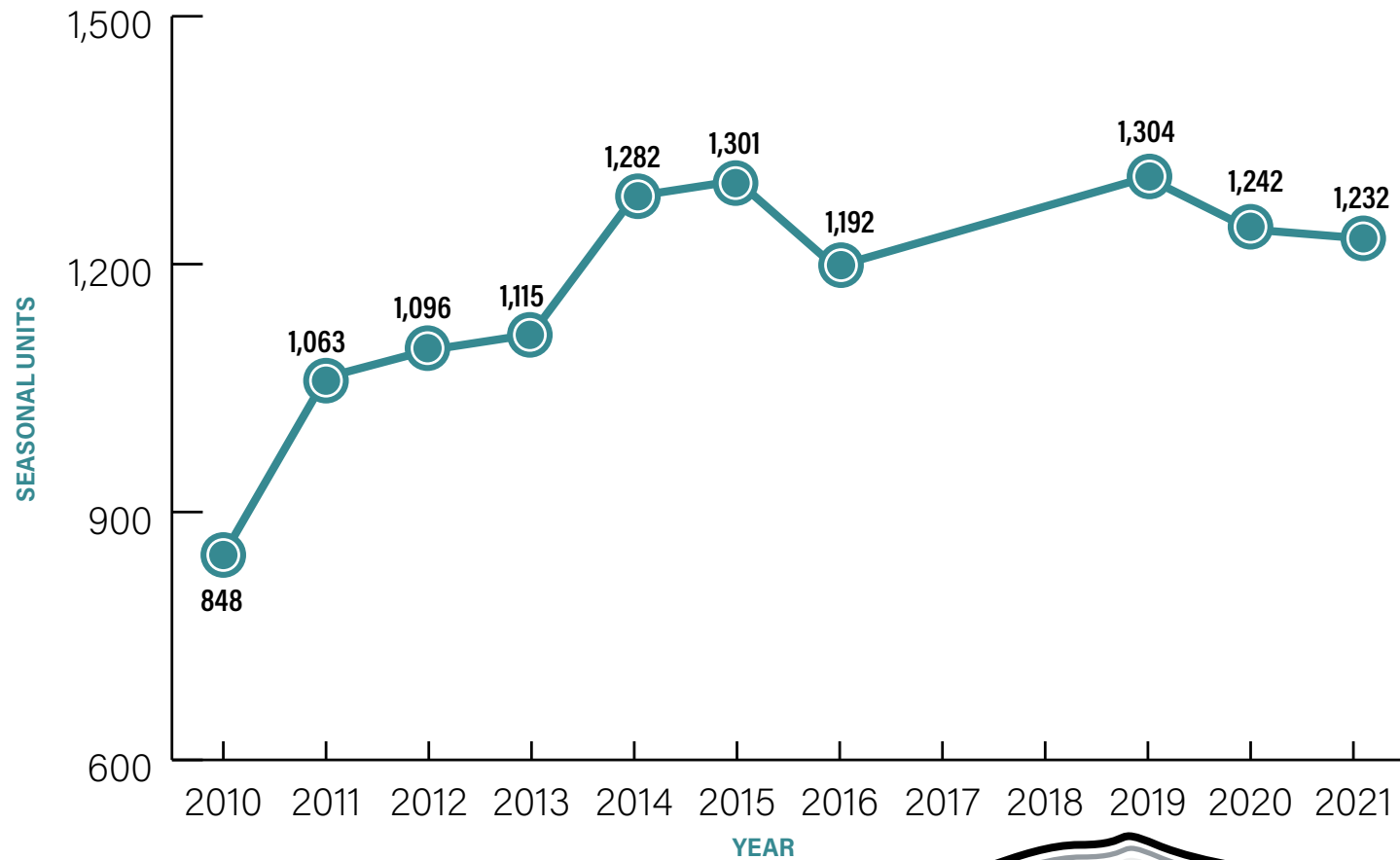


Seasonal Homes

As mentioned on the previous page, many of the housing units in Blowing Rock are occupied seasonally. This chart shows the overall number of homes used seasonally in the Town over the past decade. It can be seen that the number of seasonal units has increased by approximately 300 units since 2010.

The Town has a Short-Term Rental (STR) Ordinance which requires all residential dwelling units which are made available to rent for a duration that is less than 28 consecutive days to meet certain standards. Such properties must acquire a zoning permit from the Town to operate an STR and the unit must provide certain parking and safety features. STRs do not include the use of a home by other family members who are not exchanging compensation for a stay.

Number of Seasonal Housing Units (American Community Survey, 2010 - 2021)

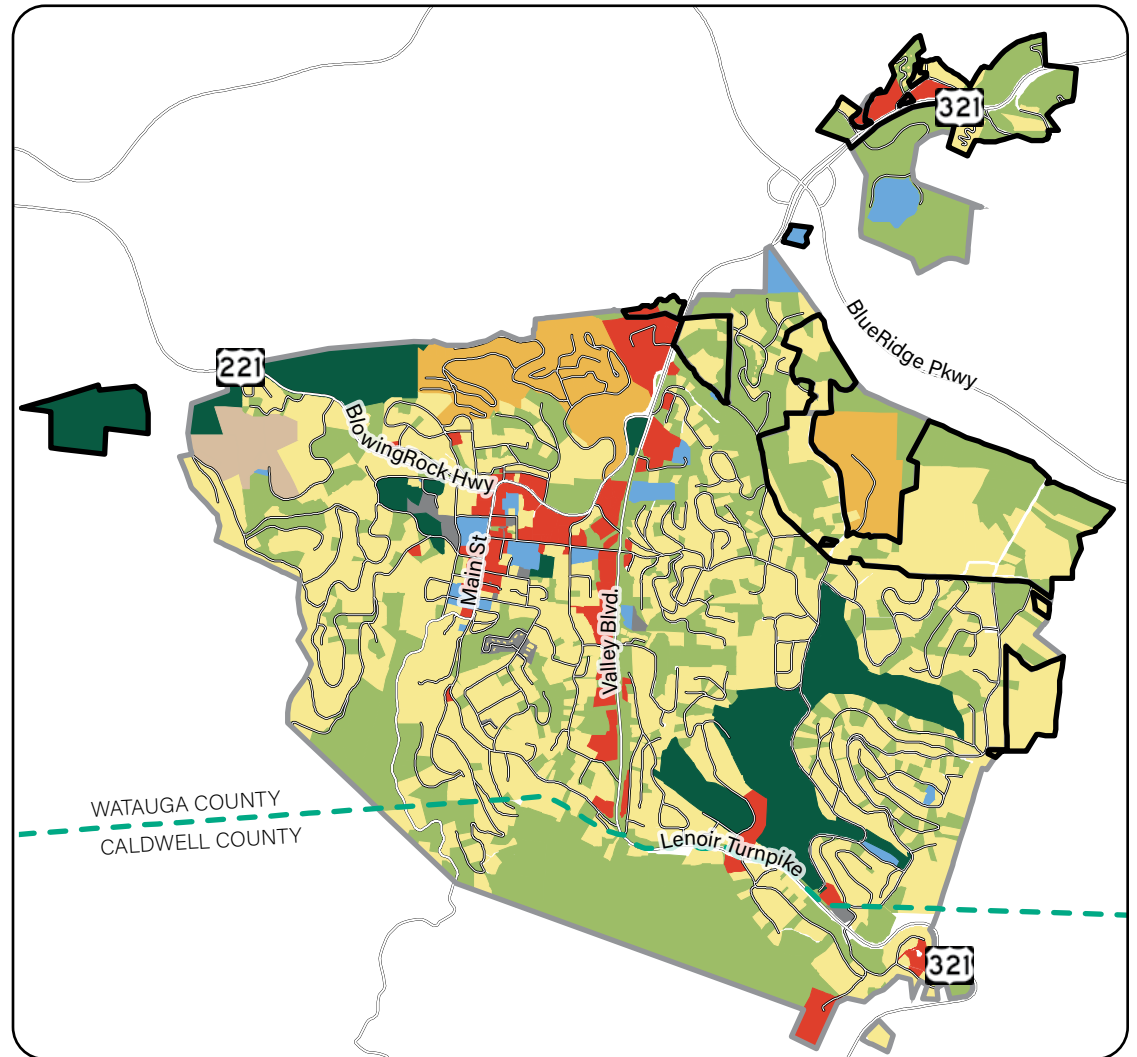


Land Use

Existing Land Use

More than 40% of the land in the study area (Town limits and ETJ) is currently used for residential purposes. More than one-third is considered to be undeveloped, largely due to steep topography that makes it difficult or impossible to develop. The next greatest use of land is recreation and open space, which accounts for more than 9% of the total study area. Approximately 6% of the area is used as resorts (Chetola and the Blowing Rock Conference Center) and more than 5% is used for commercial purposes (stores, offices, etc.).

Less than 2% of the land is used for civic / institutional uses, such as schools and government offices; and just over 1% is used for equestrian purposes. A small portion of the land is dedicated exclusively to parking (0.6%).



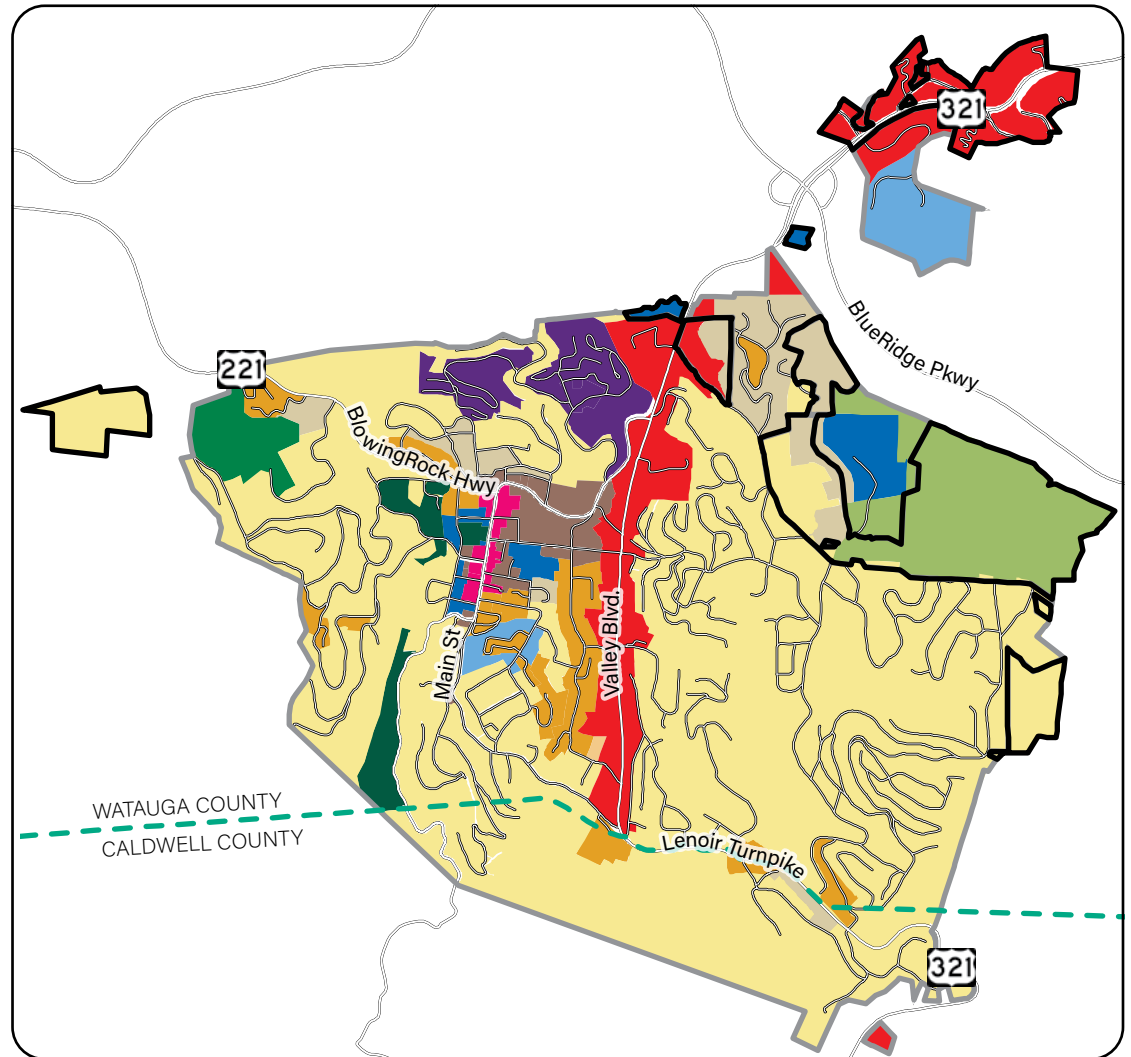
Existing Land Use



Zoning

There are 13 base zoning districts in the Town of Blowing Rock. In addition to these districts, any base district can be modified slightly by becoming a conditional zoning district. Conditional districts are districts with conditions voluntarily added by the applicant and approved in a legislative procedure by the Board of Commissioners in accordance with State Statutes. For the purpose of simplification, conditional districts are not shown on this map. There are also two overlay districts which are not shown here: the Short-Term Rental Overlay District and the Floodplain and Floodway Districts.

Much of the Town is zoned for residential purposes, with the Low Density Residential district being applied to the largest area. There is also significant area zoned for commercial purposes, particularly as General Business along Valley Boulevard and US-321, and as Central Business and Town Center in downtown and adjacent areas.



Zoning Districts (Generalized)

 Horse Show Grounds	 Medium Density Residential	 Office / Institutional	 Central Business
 Parks / Green Space	 High Density Residential	 Planned Unit Development	 Town Limits
 Residential Agriculture	 Mobile Homes / Parks	 General Business	 Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ)
 Low Density Residential	 Hospital / Medical Complex	 Town Center	

Short-Term Rental Areas

As mentioned previously, there are a large number of seasonal residents and visitors in town for a significant portion of the year. In addition to a number of, generally smaller, hotels and motels, the Town permits homes to be used as short-term rentals (STRs). The Town does this through their allowance in nonresidential zoning districts, as well as a Short-Term Rental Overlay District, as established in the Land Use Code. The purpose of this zoning overlay is to provide areas within the underlying multi-family residential zoning districts that are appropriate for short-term residential rental uses.

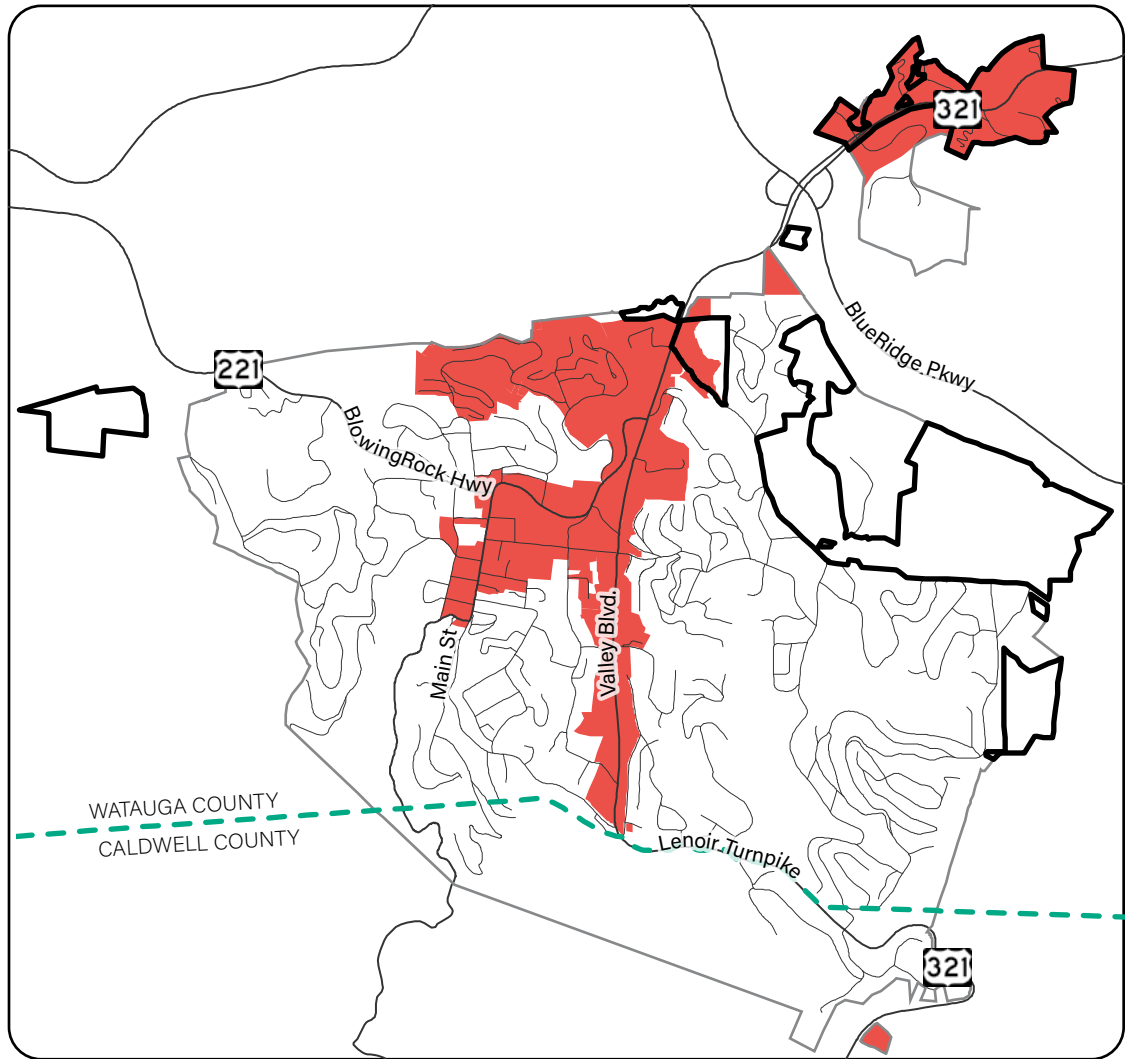
The map on the following page displays the areas permitted for short-term rental uses in the Town and its planning jurisdiction. This includes all of the GB, O-I, CB, and TC zoning districts, as well as at Chetola Resort and the Royal Oaks Condominiums.

Short-term rentals are not permitted in the other areas of the Town and its ETJ, although a property owner, or group of owners, could petition for the application of the overlay district if the underlying base zoning district meets the requirements of the Land Use Ordinance.

The Town of Blowing Rock levies an occupancy tax equal to 6% of gross receipts derived from the rental of any room, lodging, or accommodation furnished by a hotel, motel, inn, residence, or similar place within the corporate limits of the Town.

This tax also applies to rentals by home owners through third party booking agencies such as VRBO, Airbnb, Wimdu, Homeaway, and others. However, the tax does not apply to accommodations furnished by nonprofit charitable, educational, benevolent, or religious organizations when furnished to further their nonprofit purposes.

Given the significant impact that tourism has on Blowing Rock's economy, these short-term rental areas provide many benefits to the Town. However, in order to maintain the small town feel of the community, residents have expressed an interest in preventing the further growth of areas which are permitted for short-term rental use.



Short-Term Rental Areas

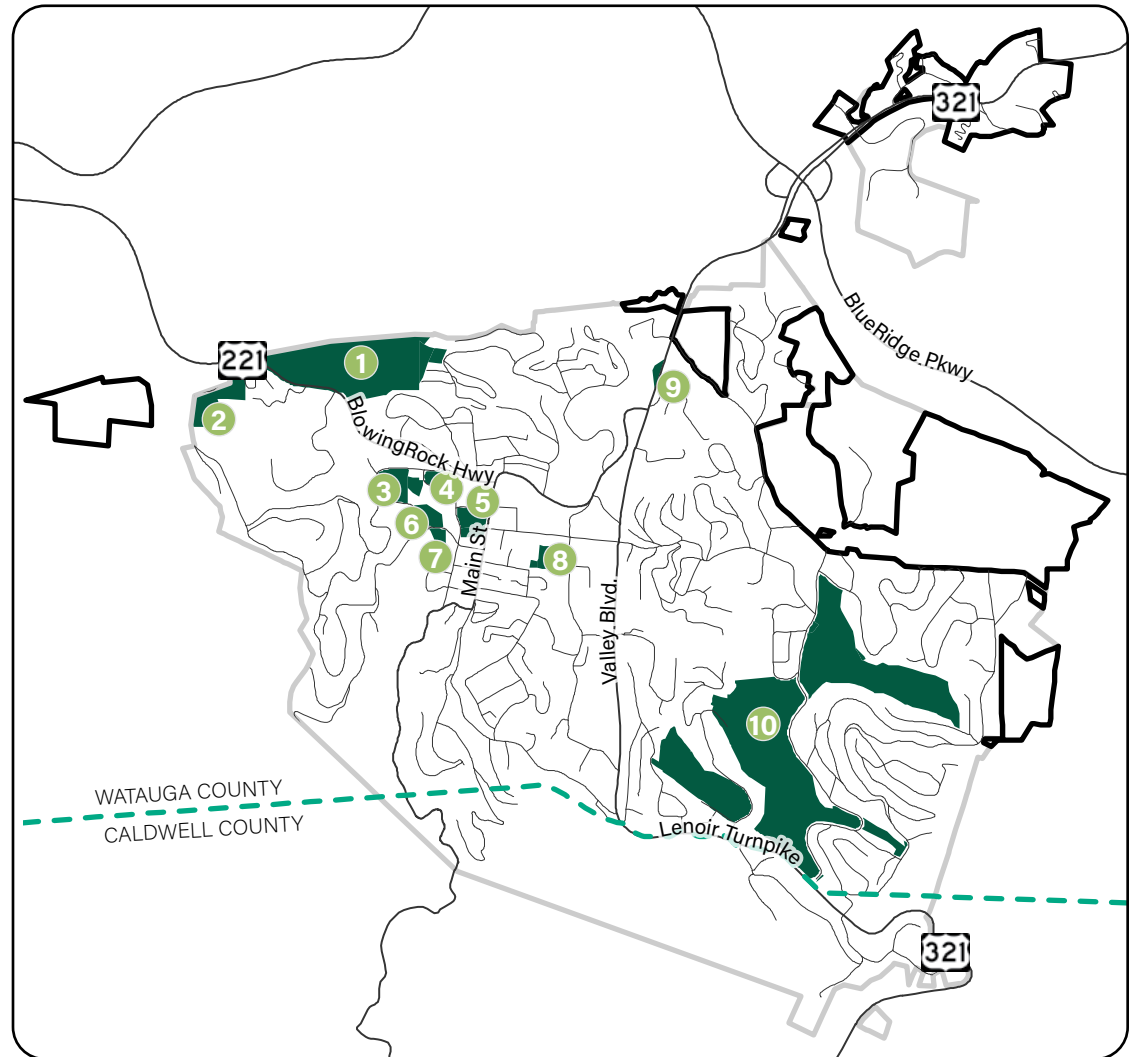
- Short-Term Rental Areas
- Town Limits
- ETJ

Parks, Recreation, and Natural Resources

Parks and Recreation

The parks and recreational areas in the Town are shown on the map to the right. While some of these are small in scale, such as Blowing Rock School Park and Annie Cannon Gardens; a number of these amenities are quite large, such as Bass Lake and Moses Cone Memorial Park, which is almost 50 acres inside of the Town limits. This park also connects to miles of trails and additional recreational resources that are tied into the Blue Ridge Parkway. As mentioned before, almost 10% of the total study area is dedicated to parks and recreational uses.

In addition to those resources inside of the Town, Blowing Rock is surrounded by a wide variety of additional recreational amenities, particularly due to its presence along the Blue Ridge Parkway. The vast majority of the land surrounding the northern half of Blowing Rock (much of the Watauga County land) is owned by the United States government and is protected forestland.



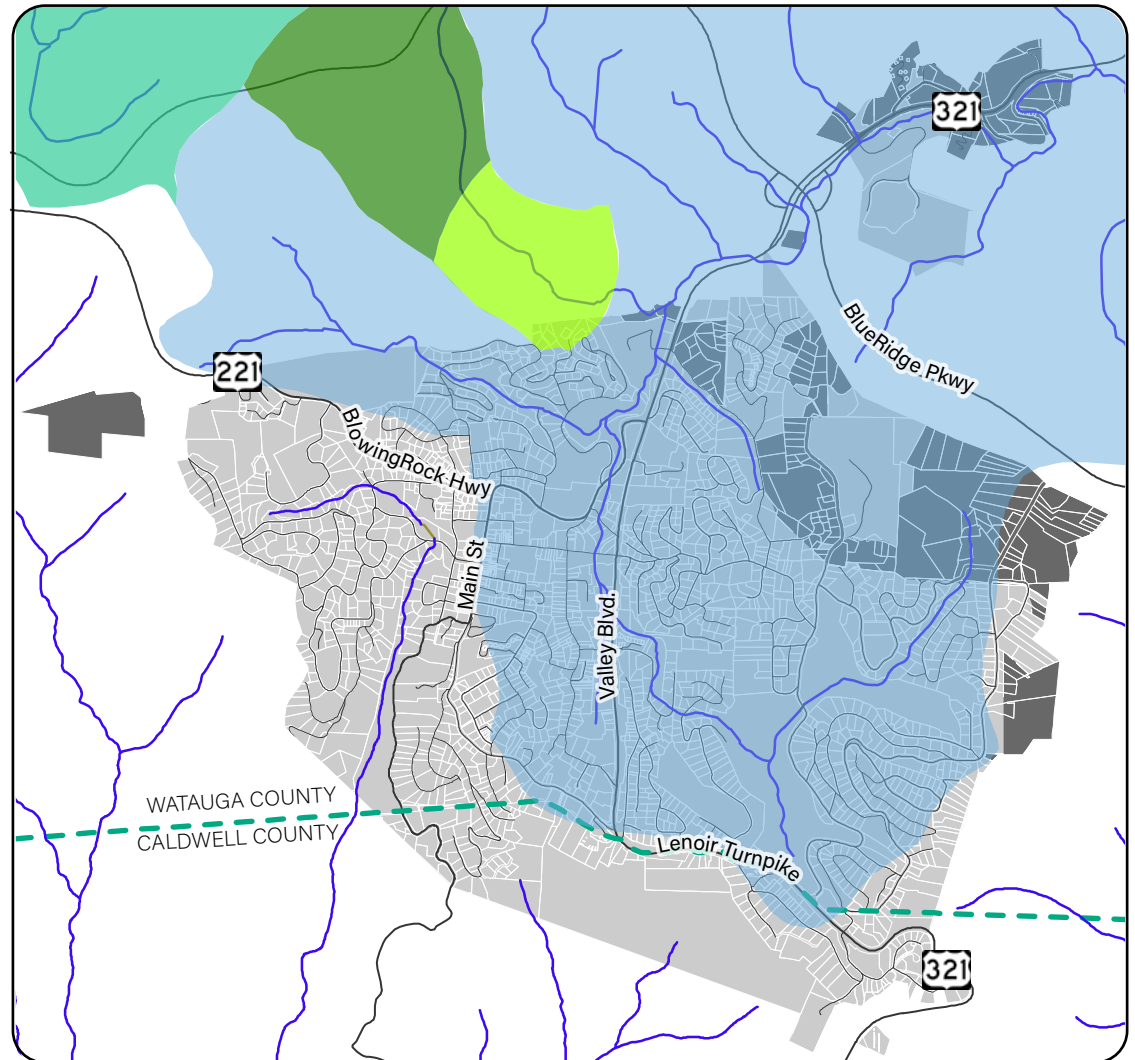
Parks and Recreation

- | | | | |
|---|------------------------|---|--|
| 1 Bass Lake and Moses Cone Memorial Park | 4 Robbins Pool | 8 Blowing Rock School Park | Recreation Areas |
| 2 Broyhill Equestrian Preserve | 5 Memorial Park | 9 Middle Fork Greenway Trailhead | Town Limits |
| 3 Davant Field and Rotary Pavilion | 6 Broyhill Park | 10 Blowing Rock Country Club | Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) |
| 7 Annie Cannon Gardens | | | |

Natural Resources

Much of the northern part of Blowing Rock is within the South Fork New River protected watershed. This watershed serves as drinking water to the Town of Boone, and thus has some particular concerns related to water quality. Some of the streams within this watershed, including most of the streams in Town, are considered to be impaired. These streams, which pass through Blowing Rock Country Club, downtown, and Chetola, are negatively influenced by the presence of biological pollutants and ambient chemicals, including pavement, runoff, animal waste, sediment, metals, pesticides, and petroleum.

Due largely to the topography of Blowing Rock, there are few flood hazard areas in Town. Those that do exist generally follow US-321, particularly along the stream that parallels the road. Additional floodplains cut along the stream that runs through Blowing Rock Country Club, as well as the stream that runs north of Blowing Rock Highway. All of these floodplains are generally small in size, buffering major stream bodies.



Designated Water Supply Watersheds

- | | |
|---|--|
|  Winkler Creek (WS-II / Protected) |  South Fork New River (WS-IV / Protected) |
|  Flat Top Branch (WS-II / Critical) |  Town Limits |
|  Flat Top Branch (WS-II / Protected) |  Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) |

Development and Redevelopment Potential

Despite Blowing Rock being relatively built-out, there are a number of development and redevelopment opportunities throughout the study area. A few notable areas have a high likelihood to redevelop, including underutilized properties along Valley Boulevard and areas adjacent to downtown. There are a number of older hotels and motels in Town which create significant redevelopment opportunity should they come up for sale. Many of these are concentrated along Sunset Drive and Blowing Rock Highway, between downtown and Valley Boulevard.

Along Valley Boulevard, a few significant commercial properties are already being redeveloped. Similar redevelopment projects are likely to continue occurring, in conjunction with the development of a number of parcels which remain undeveloped today; such as those shown here, north of and across from the intersection of US-321 and Possum Hollow Road.

As any development or redevelopment project moves forward, the Town will need to work closely with involved parties to ensure that future development aligns with the visions of the Town. One manner in which this should be done is through requiring the donation and or development of land for the Middle Fork Greenway extension that is planned to run along Valley Boulevard. The Town should also ensure new development appropriately considers the eventual greenway development in its design plans, particularly by fronting development toward a future greenway corridor.



Alpine Village Inn



Shoppes on the Parkway

Development Highlights

Population and Growth

- The Town's population has increased minimally over the last decade, and has been relatively static since 1980.
- While the Town's permanent population is less than 1,500 residents, there are almost 3,000 additional residents who live in Blowing Rock seasonally.
- The number of seasonal residents has increased in recent years.
- It is likely that both the permanent and seasonal populations will continue to increase marginally in the coming years.

Land Use Impacts

- There are more than 700 acres of land currently undeveloped in the Town of Blowing Rock and its extraterritorial jurisdiction. While much of this is undevelopable, there is potential for infill development in a number of neighborhoods and commercial areas.
- Residential land uses and zoning districts are attributed to the largest portion of the Town and ETJ.
- Commercial uses and zoning districts are generally concentrated along US-321, in downtown, and in the area between these two locations.
- Describe growth potential (including surrounding area)

Recreational and Natural Resources

- There are large number of recreation areas in and around Blowing Rock, and there is an opportunity to amplify these resources.
- More than half of the Town is within a protected watershed and a number of the streams in this watershed are impaired.



Municipal Services

Municipal Services

Municipal services provided by the Town of Blowing Rock include administration, planning and inspections, parks and recreation, police, fire and rescue, street maintenance, sanitation and recycling, and utilities. The Town has mutual aid agreement for emergency services / ambulance.

Administration

The Town operates under the Council / Manager form of government. Under this form of government, the Town Council is the legislative body for the community and makes broad policy decisions. The Town Manager, who is appointed by the Council, is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Town government. They supervise all department heads and Town staff, prepare a recommended budget for the Council's consideration, serve as the chief advisor for the Council on policy and administrative matters, and implement the Council's policy decisions.

The Finance Office is responsible for the accounting of all revenues and expenses for the Town. This department handles real estate tax billings and collections, utility billings and collections, business licenses, occupancy tax collections, and payroll. In addition, this department maintains the accounting system and records, is the custodian of official Town records, maintains cemetery records, and provides secretarial support through the recording and preparation of minutes for the Town Council.

Planning and Inspections

The Planning and Inspections department is responsible for promoting the public health, safety, and welfare of property owners and the general public through the issuance of permits, inspections, and code enforcement. The Director of Planning and Inspections is responsible for review and analysis of sign permits, site plans, special use permits, and coordination of input from other Town departments. The Director is also involved in the review and revision of the Town's land use controls (land use plan, zoning code, subdivision code, sign code, etc.), as well as code enforcement. The Administrative Assistant acts as Secretary to the Planning Board and Board of Adjustment, and provides additional support in regard to the processing of sign permits and code enforcement. The Building Inspector, who is responsible for the administration and enforcement of the N.C. State Building Code and the Town's minimum housing code, is also within this department. This department also administers the federal flood damage protection regulations in association with the National Flood Insurance Program.

Parks and Recreation

The Parks and Recreation department is responsible for planning, maintaining, and operating all of the municipal parks and recreation facilities and programs. This department is also responsible for the landscaping in Broyhill Park, Annie Cannon Gardens, Memorial Park, and other Town-maintained planting areas.

Landscaping

The Town funds a landscaping department, managed within the Parks and Recreation department, who is responsible for the maintenance and enhancements of the Town's grounds. This includes mowing, fertilizing, hardscapes, tree planting, mulching, and similar assignments. There are four full-time employees assigned to this department, including the Landscape Director, Landscape Specialist, and two Landscape Technicians.

Police

The primary functions of the Police Department are the preservation of public peace and order, the prevention and detection of crime, the apprehension of offenders, and other responses to requests for assistance. The Blowing Rock Police Department employs a staff of 11 full time sworn police officers and 1 civilian support services coordinator. The full time staff is supplemented by a seasonal parking enforcement officer and a number of part time-reserve sworn police officers.

Fire and Rescue

Blowing Rock Fire & Rescue is chartered as a private organization distinct and separate from the Town. However, in recognition of the vital public importance of the services, the Town shares in funding the staffing and operations. The Town owns the centrally located Station #1 on Valley Boulevard in which Blowing Rock Fire & Rescue is headquartered. Blowing Rock Fire & Rescue owns a sub-station

located west of the Town on US 221 and a sub-station located east of town on Aho Road. Both substations are operated and fully funded by Blowing Rock Fire & Rescue.

The Town funds most of the career staffing and Blowing Rock Fire & Rescue supports in partially reimbursing the Town for employee costs as well as contributing to the debt service for Station 1 from district revenues. Blowing Rock Fire & Rescue provides fire inspections, public education programs, and emergency response of all types with 24-hour coverage. The roster has many certified Rescue Technicians, certified Firefighters, EMTs and Paramedics. Blowing Rock Fire & Rescue provides fire and rescue service to the Town of Blowing Rock, the Blowing Rock Fire District and the North Caldwell Fire District.

The Property Protection Class rating is a 4 in the town limits and for any property in the district that is within five miles of a station and within 1,000 feet of a rated water supply. Properties in the rural district that are within 5 miles of a fire station are rated as Class 9S. Blowing Rock also provides a 9E rating for properties located more than five but less than six miles from a station. The entire Blowing Rock District is 58 square miles and includes areas in both Watauga and Caldwell County and within the Town of Blowing Rock.

Street Maintenance

The Street Division is one of the operating divisions of the Public Works department. The division is primarily responsible for the maintenance of the Town's street system. Typical work activities include street maintenance, painting and striping, sidewalk maintenance, cleaning of ditches, right-of-way clearing, sweeping of Town streets, patching pot holes, adding gravel to unpaved streets, snow removal, and leaf removal. The division maintains over 25 miles of road surface, and also has a contract with the North Carolina Department of Transportation to remove snow and surface treatment another 4.2 miles of roadway, for which the Town is reimbursed. Street division employees also assist with solid waste collection, the mowing of Town property, concrete finishing, and the installation and maintenance of the water and wastewater systems.

Sanitation and Recycling

The Sanitation and Recycling division is responsible for the collection of solid waste from all residences and most commercial properties in Blowing Rock. Residential pick-up is once per week and is collected curbside. Commercial service is offered three days per week. General weekend pick-up is also provided along Main Street and in Memorial Park. In addition, the Sanitation and Recycling division collects commercial recycling once per week.

The solid waste is hauled to a transfer station at the Watauga County Landfill in Boone. Watauga County charges the Town a tipping fee of \$49.00 for each ton of commercial solid waste that is

delivered to the landfill. The County does not charge a tipping fee for residential solid waste because each residential property owner is assessed an annual disposal fee on the County property tax bills. Based upon a study that was conducted, approximately 76% of the solid waste generated by the Town is commercial solid waste, and the remaining 24% is residential solid waste.

The Town charges a solid waste fee for commercial establishments to cover the tipping fees that the Town pays for the disposal of commercial solid waste. The disposal fee assessed to each business is based on the size or type of solid waste container for that business. The disposal fee is intended to reimburse the Town for the commercial tipping fees that are assessed by the County.

The Town provides curbside recycling pick-up as well, collecting paper, plastic, glass, and aluminum / steel cans on a weekly basis. Cardboard pick-up is not provided but can be dropped off at the Watauga County Convenience Center, which is located on US-221 at the Aho site.

Within the Town of Blowing Rock, it is mandatory that businesses participate in the Town's recycling program. The Sanitation division collects the recyclable materials (cardboard and glass) once per week from small volume businesses, and then hauls them to the Watauga County Recycling Center. Large volume businesses must privately contract for cardboard and glass recycling dispensers.

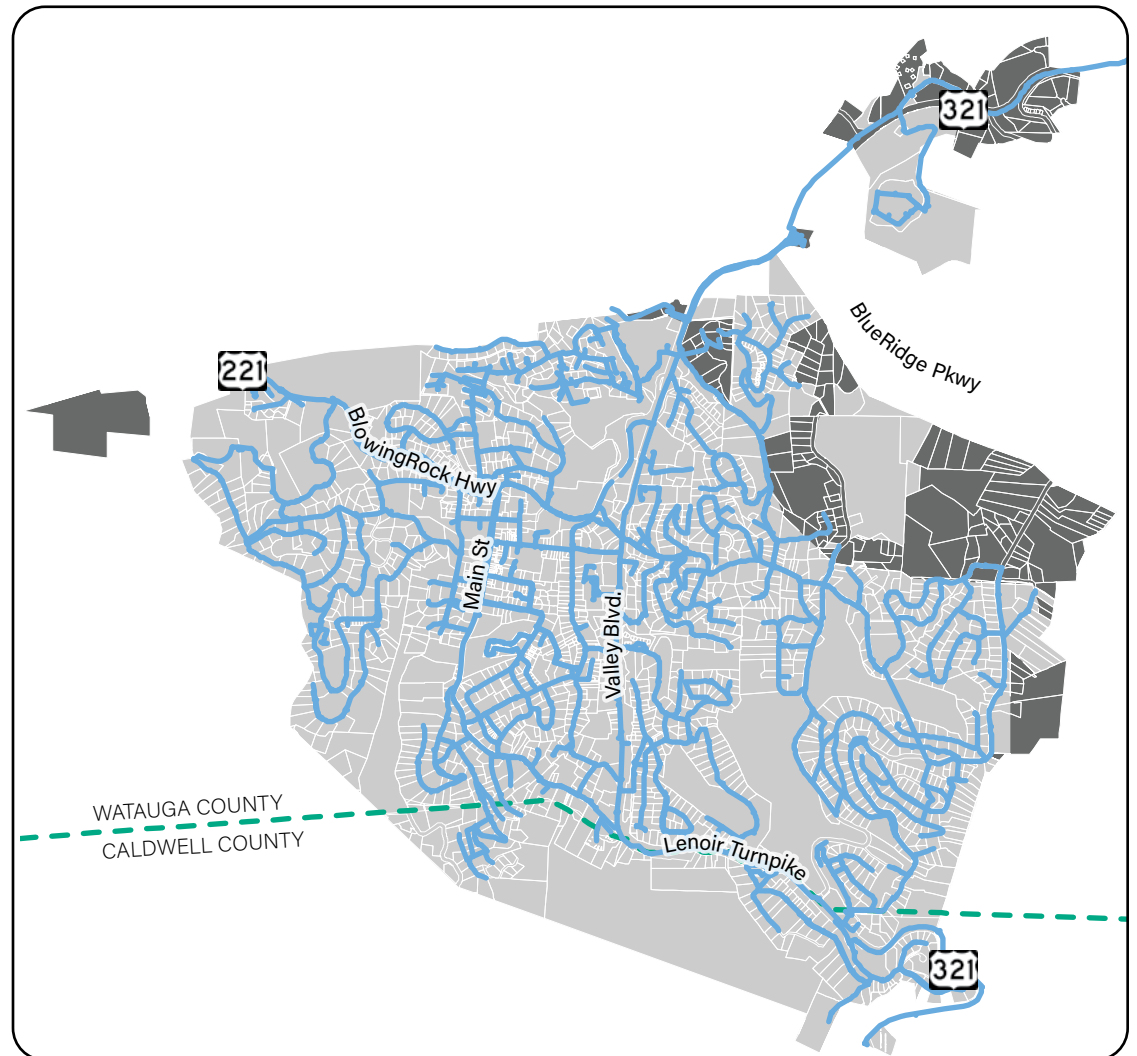
Utilities

Water Service

The Town of Blowing Rock has a water treatment plant with the capacity to process 1.0 million gallons per day (MGD). This capacity can be expanded to 2.0 MGD. The treatment plant was constructed in 1978 and receives water from the Town's 45 million gallon reservoir on Brickhouse Creek, with Chetola Lake serving as a backup water source during times of drought. The plant is located along US-321, just south of the Blue Ridge Parkway.

The Town's water service area is entirely south of the water treatment plant, as finished water is pumped to a high elevation and then allowed to gravity feed into the service area. The Green Hill tank is the means of control at the highest point of the system and has a capacity of 3.0 MGD. A number of pressure reducing valves have been placed throughout the system to control maximum pressures for residents. The water lines within the Town's system are shown on the map to the right.

The Town also has a water interconnection with the Town of Boone that is available for use, if needed.



Water Service

— Water Lines

■ Town Limits

■ Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ)

Wastewater Service

The Town of Blowing Rock operates a wastewater treatment plant which is located between the reservoir and US 321. The wastewater treatment plant discharges to the Middle Fork of the New River and is rated for a capacity of 0.8 MGD, but could be expanded to a treatment capacity of 1.2 MGD.

The wastewater treatment plant was constructed in 1960 and was refurbished and expanded in 1989. The facility is fed by four sewer lift stations that handle the entire volume of wastewater generated by the community. The facility is of concrete construction and is set up for extended aeration treatment. The plant operators sample the water discharge every day and also send samples to an independent testing lab three times per week to ensure environmental compliance. The sewer lines within the Town's service area are shown on the map to the right.



Sewer Service

— Sewer Lines

■ Town Limits

■ Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ)

Municipal Service Highlights

Municipal Services

- The Town provides administration, planning and inspections, parks and recreation, police, street maintenance, sanitation and recycling, water, and wastewater services.
- The Town's fire and rescue services are provided by a private organization distinct and separate from the Town.
- Blowing Rock Fire & Rescue provides emergency medical response in the Watauga portion of Town, and throughout its fire district.

Utilities

- The Town provides water service to the majority of properties within its limits. The water treatment plant is located on the northern edge of Town, along US-321, and is capable of being expanded.
- The Town's water system is interconnected with the Town of Boone's, which is available for use as needed.
- The Town provides wastewater service to much of the Town, though to a more limited geography than water service. The wastewater treatment plant is currently rated to treat 0.8 MGD, but can be expanded to a capacity of 1.2 MGD.



SECTION THREE

OUR FUTURE



OUR FUTURE

Vision and Plan Objectives

Comprehensive Plan Vision Statement

The shared vision for the future of the Town of Blowing Rock is one of a vibrant mountain resort community that welcomes all with its charming authenticity and unique sense of place.

In addition to the core vision statement, there are also a series of supporting statements, as explained on page 3 of the Plan. The vision sets the overall direction of the Plan, and is implemented through a series of objectives and implementation strategies. Though these are numbered, there is no explicit prioritization for the recommendations of this Plan. On at least an annual basis, the Town should review the recommendations and identify those which should be prioritized in the Town's budget and work plans for departments and advisory boards. The majority of the recommendations are tasks which should be completed by the Town government, including the Council, Planning Board, and staff. When a recommendation should be completed by another entity, it is noted.

Over time, as circumstances change, the Town should review the recommendations of this Plan, ensuring that they are being completed, and that they continue to meet the needs of the community. As with all previous Comprehensive Plans adopted by the Town, this document should be updated regularly, particularly when there is a need for new strategies or when there is a significant change in desired or anticipated development patterns, major infrastructure projects, or similarly impactful changes on the horizon.

Plan Objectives

The four focus areas presented at the beginning of this plan (Downtown, Connectivity, Development, and Municipal Services) provide a framework around which recommendations are organized. For each focus area, there is a plan objective that will guide the Town as it considers additional changes and improvements in the coming years. The plan objectives and supporting implementation strategies are presented on the following pages.



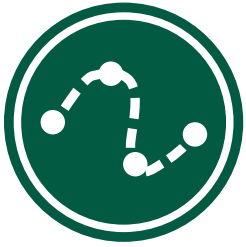
DOWNTOWN OBJECTIVE

Preserve and enhance Downtown Blowing Rock as the vibrant cultural centerpiece of the community.

Downtown Implementation Strategies

1. Revise zoning and architectural design regulations to differentiate between the contexts of the east and west sides of Main Street.
2. Utilize a more illustrative approach to the implementation of design regulations for the downtown area.
3. Provide technical assistance to the owners of historic properties who are interested in preserving, restoring, or adapting them to a new use.
4. Work to broaden the appeal of the community as a tourist destination for a wider demographic, with a particular focus on attracting younger families.
5. Enhance and promote the historic walking trail and similar cultural offerings in downtown.
6. Explore establishing a social district within downtown to provide more opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy an alcoholic beverage outside of a restaurant or drinking establishment in a designated public area, such as the sidewalks and outdoor seating at the park.
7. Study the intersection of Main Street and Sunset Drive to identify and implement solutions which would improve pedestrian safety and traffic flow.
8. Implement the recommendations of the Downtown Parking Management Study and update the study regularly to incorporate changes that occur over time.
9. Seek funding to provide additional public parking.
10. Study the feasibility of developing a local shuttle system for use during peak times of year.
11. Study the feasibility of eliminating on-street parking on the east side of Main Street, incrementally or as feasible from Storie Street to the Post Office, to provide wider sidewalks and enhance the experience for residents and downtown visitors. This strategy would need to be implemented in conjunction with the development of additional parking elsewhere.
12. Coordinate with the Chamber of Commerce to incentivize standardized business hours downtown to expand the hours in which downtown is active.
13. Seek assistance from the Chamber of Commerce to develop solutions to the downtown employee parking issue.
14. Consider developing a Municipal Service District in downtown Blowing Rock to help fund downtown projects and services.

** Note that many of these implementation strategies are interrelated, such as the provision of additional parking and the need to widen sidewalks.*



CONNECTIVITY OBJECTIVE

Ensure that all residents can freely move in and around the Town through a variety of transportation modes.

Connectivity Implementation Strategies

1. Develop and implement a community-wide pedestrian and bicycle master plan.
2. Develop and implement a plan for the construction and maintenance of pedestrian facilities.
3. Work with property owners, developers, the National Park Service, and the North Carolina Department of Transportation to provide better physical connections (sidewalks, trails, etc.) to connect the Town to outdoor recreational opportunities in the area.
4. Require the preservation of greenway corridors in conjunction with the subdivision or development of land as identified on existing plans, including plans for the connection of the Middle Fork Greenway. Amend 16-33.3 to require all new development to provide easements for trails identified in Town Plans to include a fee in lieu where appropriate.
5. Support the construction of the Middle Fork Greenway and develop plans for extending the trail through the Town.
6. Strengthen the language in the golf cart ordinance to improve the safety of these being operated on the roadways.
7. Design and construct an ADA sidewalk from the community pool, up Legion Hill, to Town Hall.
8. Prioritize funding to pave shoulders on Green Hill Road from US-321 to Blue Ridge Parkway.
9. Prioritize funding to extend US-321 bike lanes to Sandy Flat.

** Note that many of these implementation strategies are interrelated, such as planning, developing, and maintaining pedestrian facilities.*



DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE

Manage the appearance, location, and characteristics of future development so that they complement and enhance the Town of Blowing Rock.

Development Implementation Strategies

1. Review and amend parking requirements established in the Land Use Code, including parking standards, provisions for satellite parking, and similar requirements, to ensure that parking is adequately regulated.
2. Identify areas of transition between high and low intensity development and proactively amend the Zoning Map to implement sound transitional land use regulations.
3. Develop a plan that identifies scenic views that are vulnerable to development and explore options to work with conservation organizations or similar groups to preserve these irreplaceable views.
4. Encourage historically compatible architectural designs and site features into plans for new development within historic areas.
5. Identify annexation priorities and establish policies to incentivize annexation.
6. Amend the building height standards for the Town Center and Central Business Districts to more adequately address mass, scale, and elevation.
7. Facilitate a public private partnership for the development of workforce housing.
8. Study parking performance standards for all short-term rental and lodging uses.
9. Do not expand short-term rental as a permitted use in single family residential districts.
10. Amend 16-16.40 to allow for trails and parks within the 30 foot stream buffer.
11. Explore Division of Water Resources and other grants for stream bank restoration and trail development.
12. Utilize the Future Land Use Map when considering any development proposal, rezoning request, or similar proposal to ensure that the future use of land is consistent with the vision for the Town's future.
13. Require ground floor occupancies in the Town Center zoning district to be active and pedestrian oriented, such as retail, restaurants, and similar uses.
14. Proactively collaborate with the owners of large / prominent sites (such as Shoppes on the Parkway) on their plans for development and redevelopment.
15. Amend the Land Use Code to require the use of native, non-invasive species in landscaping and screening associated with development activity, and adopt a policy requiring the use of native, non-invasive species for all landscaping installations on Town-owned property.

** Note that many of these implementation strategies are interrelated, such as the recommended ordinance amendments.*



MUNICIPAL SERVICES OBJECTIVE

Continue to provide high quality public services to the Blowing Rock community and advocate for the improvement of services provided by outside agencies.

Municipal Services Implementation Strategies

1. Continue to implement the recommendations of the adopted Water and Sewer Facilities Plan and update the plan on a regular basis.
2. Develop, maintain, and improve stormwater management and drainage throughout the Town.
3. Maintain a reasonable amount of free and / or reduced parking for residents' use and access to cultural facilities, parks, and recreation areas.
4. Coordinate with Watauga and Caldwell Counties to improve ambulance services and response times.
5. Identify opportunities to underground utilities throughout Town, particularly in downtown/commercial areas.
6. Work with cell service providers to expand the availability of small cell wireless infrastructure in the Town.
7. Develop an evacuation plan for the Town of Blowing Rock, to help prepare residents for potential emergency hazards.
8. Explore the establishment of a public enterprise fund to implement a stormwater management program.

** Note that many of these implementation strategies are interrelated, such as the establishment of an enterprise fund and improving stormwater management.*

FUTURE LAND USE FRAMEWORK

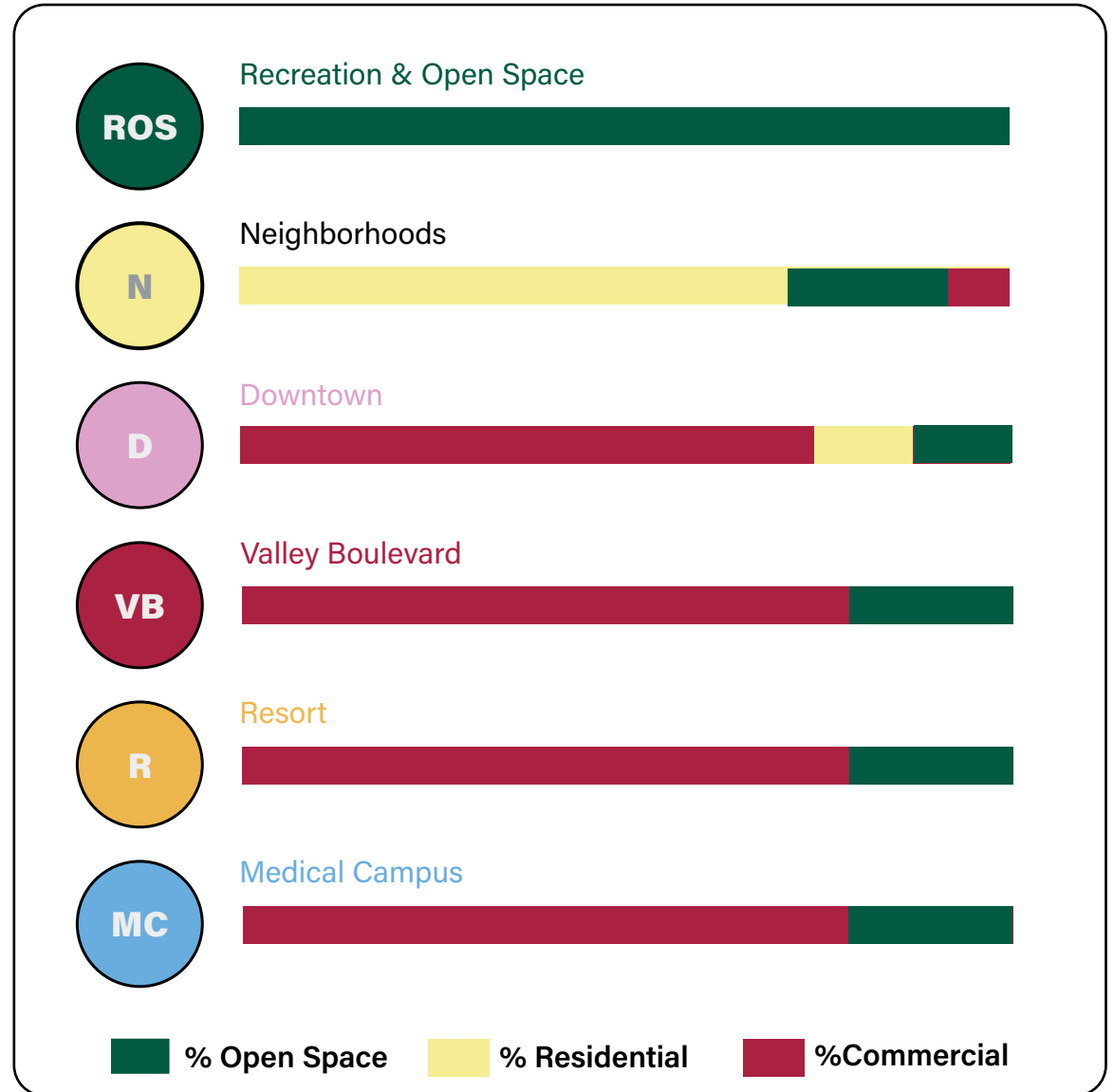
The Future Land Use Map displays a generalized version of the future land uses within Town. These uses are described by areas of influence. For each area, a set of desired uses, character, and other elements are described.

Future Land Use Areas

There are six generalized Future Land Use Areas within the Town of Blowing Rock. These are described below and on the following pages.

Recreation & Open Space

The Recreation & Open Space category is assigned to areas which are anticipated to be permanently reserved for the purposes of recreation or access to open areas / wilderness. Areas which have significant slopes that are difficult to access or develop are also reserved as Recreation & Open Space on the Future Land Use Map. Public access should be encouraged by providing vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian connections to these sites. Within Recreation & Open Space areas, pedestrian connections should be prioritized, especially in the form of recreational trails.

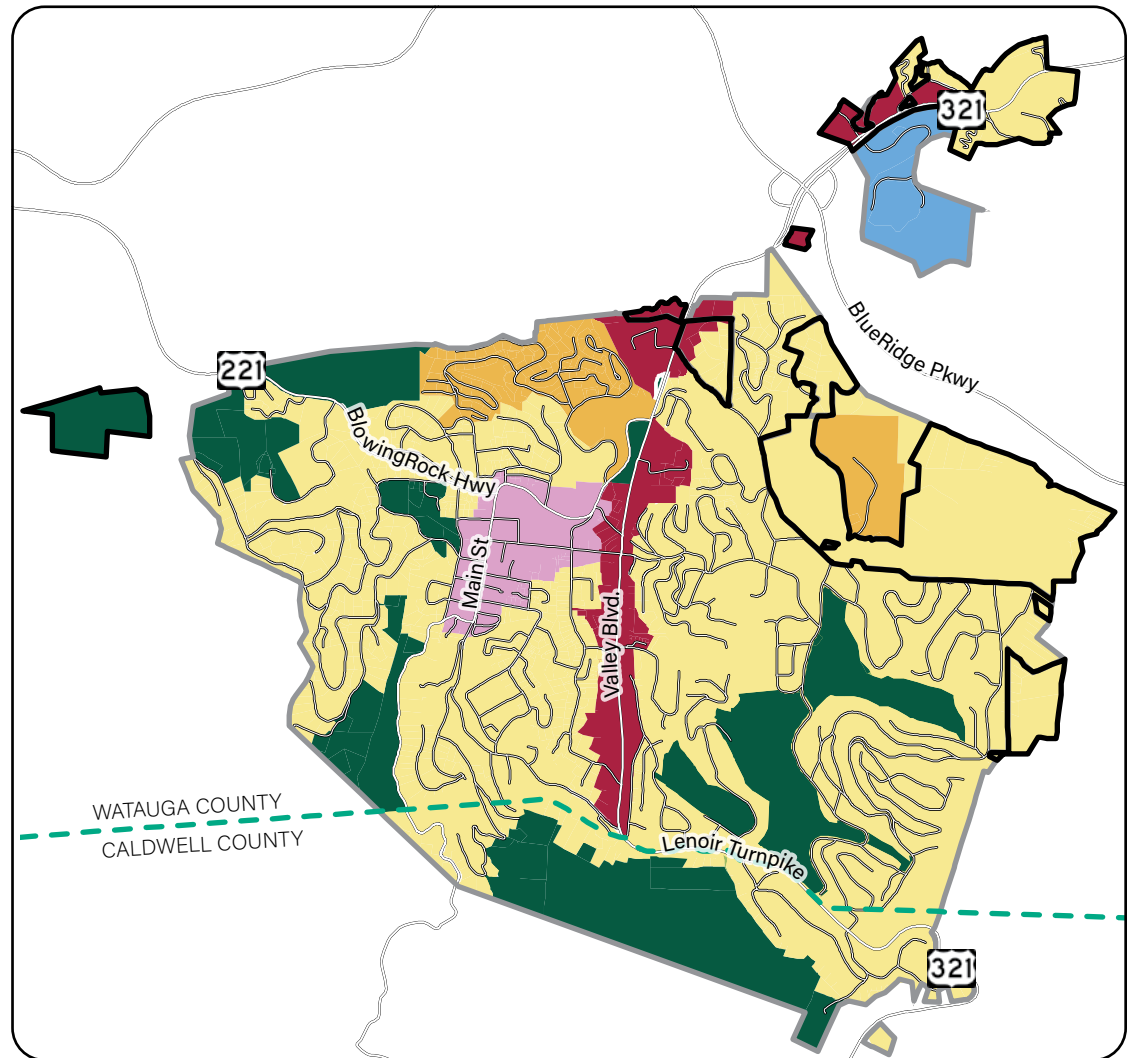


Future Land Use Map









As mentioned on the previous page, the Future Land Use Map depicts six generalized place types, each of which has a particular character ascribed to it. Though the Future Land Use Areas do generally permit certain land uses, there is leniency in terms of specificity. The Town's adopted Zoning Map dictates more specific standards about uses and land use regulation, while the Future Land Use Map provides general direction for future development in Town.

In instances where the Zoning Map does not match the Future Land Use Map, the Town should consider rezoning properties as appropriate. The Town staff, Planning Board, and Council should consider the Future Land Use Map when reviewing any development proposal, rezoning request, or similar decision to ensure that any development or redevelopment action taken corresponds with the vision for the future of Blowing Rock.

The six general Future Land Use Areas are shown on the map to the right.



Future Land Use Areas

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
|  Recreation & Open Space |  Resort |  Town Limits |
|  Neighborhoods |  Medical Campus |  ETJ |
|  Downtown | | |
|  Valley Boulevard | | |

Neighborhoods

The largest portion of the Town is designated as Neighborhoods. These are largely residential in nature and are predominantly existing residential communities. Future development within Neighborhoods should match the character of existing neighborhoods, and while commercial spaces may be permitted in certain circumstances, such as in the Country Club and along the southern edge of Valley Boulevard, commercial should generally not be permitted in the middle of Neighborhoods. Open space should be promoted within Neighborhoods, particularly in places where steep slopes prohibit development. While the primary mode of transportation within Neighborhoods is private automobile, pedestrian and bicycle facilities should be required when feasible.

Downtown

The Downtown future land use category includes the Main Street corridor and adjacent areas along Sunset Drive within the historic core of Blowing Rock. Downtown is primarily commercial and civic in character with a number of secondary permanent and seasonal residential uses. Within Downtown, the primary cultural and civic destinations include Town Hall, the Library, Memorial Park, Blowing Rock School, Blowing Rock Art & History Museum, several historic churches, and other civic and cultural sites and organizations. The retail and restaurant focused businesses thrive within a pedestrian oriented environment that incorporates transportation accommodations for private vehicles, shuttles, and golf carts.

Valley Boulevard

Valley Boulevard, also known as US-321, serves as the gateway into the Town. As such, it is primarily a commercial corridor, largely providing transportation for private automobiles. However, supporting uses, as well as facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists should also be promoted in areas along this corridor. Future open space should primarily be provided through the development of the Middle Fork Greenway extension, and buildings should front along either US-321 or the greenway. Recommendations of the Valley Boulevard Study (2020) should continue to be pursued in this area.

Resort

The Chetola Resort and the Blowing Rock Conference Center are identified as Resorts on the Future Land Use Map. These areas are stand-alone, campus-type sites which provide a mixture of commercial, hotel, and conference center type uses. While the internal design and use of these sites is relatively unique, the ability to access them from other portions of Town should be protected.

Medical Campus

The Medical Campus land use category is applied to the Davant Medical Clinic and related medical uses on the northern edge of Blowing Rock. This area is intended to continue supporting medical and institutional uses in the future, to ensure adequate medical services are available to residents. Similar to Resorts, the Medical Campus is a stand-alone, campus-type site. The primary transportation connections to the Medical Campus are automotive, though internal pedestrian connections may be provided.