

## MACON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:

The Macon County Comprehensive Plan was Originally adopted on April 26th 2011.



Originally Written by Derek Roland , April 2011

Revised by Matt Mason, April 2016



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**Links to Additional Resources**

- Macon County Comprehensive Transportation Plan
- Macon County Recreation Masterplan
- Pedestrian Connections to the Little Tennessee River Greenway  
Produced by J.M. Teague Engineering
- Franklin Famers Market Feasibility Study:  
Produced by Stacy J. Guffey & Associates
- SCC Masterplan for Macon Campus
- Mountain Elements: mountainwise.org

**Appendices**

- Appendix 1: Macon County Greenway Plan
- Appendix 2: Town of Franklin Sidewalk Masterplan
- Appendix 3: Macon County Bike Routes



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# Blueprint

## Introduction:

### What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A Comprehensive Plan is a document that provides guidance and provides a layout for the community. The Comprehensive Plan is a document full of basic information about Macon County, which includes past history, future goals, and the purpose behind our programs and regulations.

The Comprehensive Plan's most critical role is to establish intents and goals for Macon County and provide a framework for future decisions.

The Comprehensive Plan is designed to provide continuity across time and give successive bodies of the Macon County Commissioners a common framework for addressing land use related issues. Macon County's Comprehensive Plan is a means by which our community can protect our public investments and it allows communities to plan development in a way that protects our valued resources.

The comprehensive plan also serves as a tool to plan development in a way that protects valued resources.

A sound Comprehensive Plan will also provide guidance for shaping our community, promote economic development, and provide a factual and objective basis to support future decisions.

Macon County's comprehensive plan should be a plan that is implemented in order to show residents and developers, the future intentions of our governing body. With our plan in place, our community has a better idea of how to address land use regulations, budgeting, and capital improvement projects in order to achieve our goals and allow positive growth in Macon County.



## Comprehensive Planning for Macon County:



## A Well Planned Community

### General Purpose:

This plan is intended to serve as a decision making guide for governing boards now and in the future. The Comprehensive Plan is a living document that acknowledges the balance between facilitating change within our county, while preserving each communities traditions and Macon County’s natural beauty. The goals and objectives included within this plan are non-regulatory. They serve as a guide and it will be up to elected officials now and in the future to choose the direction(s) to pursue. This comprehensive plan establishes “a vision” that citizens of Macon County have for the future, and recommendations on how to accomplish the goals.



**Mission Statement:** The mission statement for the Macon County Comprehensive Plan, as reflected through the public input process in the original comprehensive plan was as follows:

**“Work together as Maconians to create a dynamic plan that will guide long-term growth and development within the county. Through taking the initiative to plan now, we insure the integrity of our mountain heritage will be preserved, welfare of the citizens will be maximized, our natural environment will continue to flourish, and the economic vitality of Macon County will be sustained, all in ways that benefit the current population as well as generations to come.”**

The mission statement, through the following guiding principles, creates the foundation for the Macon County Comprehensive Plan.

1. Preserve our mountain heritage.
2. Maximize the welfare of our citizens.
3. Allow the natural environment to flourish.
4. Sustain economic vitality and allow our economy to grow in way that does not compromise the rural heritage, and pristine natural environment of Macon County.

**Preserving our Mountain Heritage:** Both natives and newcomers share a common love for Macon County. This common love has become evident as Macon County has continually remained a place that each group is proud to call home. Over the years we have worked together to create a heritage of honor and pride that is unique to our county. The comprehensive plan takes into consideration this priceless heritage. Planning now allows our heritage to be preserved for generations to come, so

**Maximize the welfare of our citizens:** Quality of life is determined by how well you live your life. Do you live in clean safe housing? Are you receiving the proper medical attention when you’re sick? Are your children attending good schools? Quality of life issues such as these will be directly affected by population growth. Realizing that land use is not the only aspect of our society that is affected by population growth, issues such as these need to be addressed in the comprehensive planning process. Education, recreation, healthcare, economic development, childcare, senior citizens, public services and housing are all elements that contribute to our quality of life and have been addressed in this plan aside from land use and transportation.

The availability and level of service provided within each of these areas should grow proportionately with the increasing population. The comprehensive plan provides recommendations to ensure this happens, and attempts to address any issues that could potentially jeopardize the welfare of our citizens.

**Allow the natural environment to flourish:** The natural environment in Macon County and Western North Carolina is an asset which we cannot replace. Our mountains, rivers, wildlife and fertile lowlands create a landscape that remains unchallenged for beauty anywhere in America. We must work together to ensure that the beauty of our landscape is preserved and the natural assets in Macon County are protected.

**Sustain economic vitality and allow our economy to grow in ways that will not compromise the rural heritage, and pristine natural environment of Macon County.** Growth and development, while essential for economic sustainability should take place in ways that are respectful of the landscape, sensitive lands and natural resources. Many of our key environmental assets are now threatened by the unintended consequences of attracting a large amount of people and development to the area as fast as possible. Decision makers on every level, from elected officials to developers and individual property-owners, are often perplexed by what seem



to be competing demands from long-time landowners, newcomers, farmers, developers, realtors, environmentalists, property rights advocates, builders and contractors. The comprehensive plan will help to provide the effective tools needed for implementing approaches that support a healthy economy, strengthen our mountain community, and assure quality of life for all citizens for generations to come.

The comprehensive plan for Macon County contains recommendations from each of the following elements:

1. Land Use & Environmental
2. Healthcare, Childcare & Senior Citizens
3. Economic Development & Public Services
4. Transportation & Housing
5. Education
6. Recreation

The Comprehensive Plan, aside from being a tool for governmental officials, is a guide for the public as well. The comprehensive plan provides the citizens of Macon County with the opportunity to understand the county's long term intentions. Not only does the plan paint a picture for our future, it allows citizens to see where we are now and the road we have taken to arrive at this point, with respect to our population, economy and land utilization.

Below: Macon County's Historical Museum



### The Planning Process

The Comprehensive plan was developed following direction given by the Macon County Board of Commissioners to the Planning Board in January of 2009. In the summer of 2015 the Macon County Board of Commissioners directed the Planning Board to update and revise the Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Board developed subcommittees for each element of the original comprehensive plan. Each subcommittee was assigned a planning board member and they were tasked with reviewing and revising the original comprehensive plan. Each subcommittee presented summaries back to the planning board and then they developed the revised Comprehensive Plan for Macon County.

Once the revised Comprehensive Plan was completed, the Planning Board voted to present the revised Comprehensive Plan to County Manager, Mr. Derek Roland and to the Macon County Board of Commissioners.



The Comprehensive Plan addresses key issues that face most small communities across the country.

**Economic Development:** Which focuses on the economic status of Macon County, past economic issues and future solutions.

**Public Services:** Which focuses on departments that provide public services to our citizens. Some examples include Emergency Management, Sheriff's Office, Fire Departments, Sewer and Water Infrastructure.

**Land Use and Environmental:** Which focuses upon current land use regulations and ideas that could provide land use planning options, while preserving the environment.

**Education:** Which focuses upon the current and future needs of the Macon County Board of Education, the Macon Early College, South Western Community College, and Macon County Public Library.

**Recreation:** Which focus upon the current and future need of additional recreational opportunities in Macon County.

**Healthcare, Childcare and Senior Care:** Which focuses upon the issues facing health care, analyzing and resolving current situations with childcare facilities, and focusing on our population of Senior Citizens.



**Economic Development & Public Services**

Macon County has a long history as a progressive and thoughtful leader of Western North Carolina in the growth and development of businesses. While the economies of neighboring communities have become dominated by the tourism industry, Macon County has remained successful at keeping a relatively diverse local economy. Healthcare, software development, and manufacturing companies compose half of the top ten employers in Macon County. Health Services, Business Services and Retail/Trade business employ nearly 50% of the total local labor force.

The primary economic challenge facing Macon County is the ability to retain and recruit professional talent. While there are typically job opportunities with local employers, they may not be competitive with opportunities in other areas where wages are higher and the cost of living is lower. Existing employers are consistently looking for a labor force with more technical skills and they are looking for them in large numbers. Assuming demand in key areas grow as the national economy recovers, opportunities may be missed because the County and surrounding areas are not well positioned to supply the necessary labor. *(Community Analysis-Macon County EDC May 19, 2009)*

The purpose of the Economic Development Element is to briefly discuss the importance of the Economic Development Commission, and to provide citizens with the necessary information to begin discussions regarding economic development. The Macon County Guide for new business is available for download at [maconedc.com](http://maconedc.com)



**Macon County Economic Development Commission**

The Macon County Economic Development Commission was created in 1984 by the Macon County Commission. The Mission Statement of The Economic Development Commission is as follows: “To improve the economic health and quality of life of the citizens of the Macon County Community, through the creation of capital investment and job opportunities; through the attraction of new business and industry to Macon County, and through assistance to existing businesses and industry in proposed expansion.

Currently there are 12 participants in the Economic Development Commission. The Economic Development Commission has continued working to capitalize on strengths and address weaknesses, all in hopes of putting Macon County in a position to embrace economic development opportunities that will arise in the future .

The Macon Economic Development Commission has created strategic partnerships that promote economic development within Macon County.

**Macon County EDC Strategic Partners**





## PUBLIC SERVICES

The Macon County Public Services segment of the Comprehensive Plan was broken down into 3 categories: Law Enforcement, Emergency Management, and Public Water and Sewer. Throughout the course of the meetings, the committee consulted with officials who were directly involved with the categories being addressed. These individuals pinpointed strengths and weaknesses, and also gave their opinions as to how population growth would directly affect public services.

### Law Enforcement & Emergency Services

Within Macon County, there are three law enforcement agencies: Macon County Sheriffs Department, Town of Highlands Police Department and Town of Franklin Police Department.

The jurisdiction of the Macon County Sheriffs Department lies outside the municipal limits of Franklin and Highlands.

The Macon County Sheriffs Department currently staffs patrol officers, drug investigation,



Recognition of Valor: Sheriff Robert Holland, Alice Bradley, Dep. Audrey Parrish, Dep. Anthony Hopkins, Dep. Blake Buchanan, Sgt. Mike Langley, Cor. Jonathan Phillips, Mike Anderson Dep. Director of NC Center for Safer Schools

criminal investigation, school resources and juvenile detention. Within the jail itself, there are roughly 20 employees including a full-time nurse.

Between 2010 & 2015 the department received approximately 12,000 calls per year. Of the 12,000 calls received, it is estimated that approx. 2,500 come from within the Highlands area.

The average response time to these calls tends to vary. The approximate annual number of calls received by the department does not include individuals who come into the Sheriffs Department to file a complaint.

Drug abuse, particularly that dealing with prescription drugs is on the rise in Macon County. Drug abuse not only affects the health of the user, it leads to a series of other crimes as well. Domestic issues, breaking and entering, according to Sheriff Holland

As the population increases, so will the demand for services offered by the Sheriffs Department. The department will continually need qualified officers to accommodate an increasing need. These officers should be adequately equipped and compensated for their efforts at a rate competitive with surrounding counties in order to retain them. Like staff, facilities should also remain adequate in order to accommodate an increasing number of inmates resulting from population growth.



### Macon County Detention Center

The Macon County Detention Center is comprised of 4 dormitories capable of housing a total of 75 inmates.

Dormitory Type	Max. Capacity
General Population	48
Lockdown	12
Female Population	12
Segregation Cells	3



### Franklin Police Department

The Franklin Police Department has jurisdiction within the municipal limits of the Town of Franklin.

In 2010 the Franklin Police Department relocated to their new facility, which has adequate room for expansion. The facility, located on West Palmer Street, is capable of staffing an additional patrol officers and detectives.

As the town's population continues to increase, problems such as drug abuse and domestic disputes will increase as well. Growth within the police department should keep pace with the increasing number of residents to ensure that the law is adequately enforced.

Other problems for the horizon for the Department include; an inadequate amount of Spanish speaking officers and the continually escalating median age of the population, which demands more services. This is a problem now that will continue to grow with an increasing Hispanic Population. Officers of the Franklin Police Department must continue adapting to the changes in demographics in order to provide the most efficient services possible.



### Highlands Police Department

Highlands Police Department has jurisdiction within the municipal limits of the Town of Highlands. The department has patrol officers, office administrators and an office assistant. According to Chief Harrell, the drug problem in the Highlands area continues to grow. This problem seems to be county wide, as all departments recognize it as a major issue. Lack of Spanish speaking officers is also becoming a problem for the Highlands Police Department due to an increase in the Hispanic population.

Budgeting, inadequate facility size, inadequate personnel and low wages are all problems currently being faced by the Highlands Police Department.

### Macon County Volunteer Fire Departments & Emergency Services

#### Volunteer Fire Departments

Macon County has 11 Volunteer Fire Departments. All departments within Macon County employ full or part-time staff with the exception of 3. Approximately 300 individuals volunteer their time and effort toward protecting the lives and property of Macon County Citizens located within their respective jurisdictions.

The North Carolina Department of Insurance Office of State Fire Marshal requires each volunteer to have a minimum 36 hours of fire fighting training each year. To be a medical responder, volunteers must complete 12 hours of annual medical education as specified by Macon County. The medical education can be included in the 36 hours of fire fighting training, or taken in addition to this training. The decision as to how this education is completed lies with the chief of each volunteer fire department.

Macon County offers no reimbursement to volunteers for attending the required training. The North Carolina Community College system allows volunteers to receive the training fee exempt.



This provision however, has almost been eliminated over the past two years by the State Legislature. Some departments however, do pay a reimbursement to cover things such as fuel, etc. when responding to calls. These reimbursements range from \$5 to \$10 per call, depending on the department.

The delivery capabilities of a fire department are measured and upgraded by providing initial insurance ratings for the department. To accomplish this, the Office of the State Fire Marshall conducts inspections of fire departments, providing ratings as well as coordination for the improvement of ratings to reduce insurance costs for homeowners. (NCDOI) To receive a rating of 9, the department must have minimal equipment and manpower to pass a basic inspection. In order to score an 8 or lower, the department must prove during a four day inspection they complete pre-planning, testing, training and can supply a set amount of water based on necessary fire flows. By successfully completing the inspections the fire department will achieve a lower rating.

**VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT INFORMATION**

Fire Department	# of Trucks	Members	Paid Personnel	Rating
Franklin	10	27	6FT	3(municipal) 4 (elsewhere)
Highlands	13	29	2FT	4(municipal) 5(elsewhere)
Clarks Chapel	8	26	2 FT	6
Otto	9	38	2 FT	6
Burningtown	5	27	1FT, 1PT	8B
Cullasaja	9	27	1 FT	8B
West Macon	9	29	1 FT	7
Cowee	13	38	1 FT, 1PT	8B
Scaly Mtn.	4	21	---	8B
Nantahala	4	35	1 PT	8B
Mountain Valley	12	24	---	9



### Goals & Recommendations

As the population increases, the demand for public services also increases. Responsibility will fall on governing boards now and in the future to continually assess this demand and ensure that the current services accommodate the needs of the citizens. The following recommendations from the Economic Development and Public Services committee will serve as a guideline for governing boards to use as they see fit to help accomplish this task.

1. **Work to ensure that law enforcement/emergency services grow proportionately with increases in population.**

As population continues to change, assessment of services offered by the departments and needs within the community must be evaluated.

See that all departments within law enforcement/emergency services agencies are housed in facilities that increase departmental efficiency. And explore ways to increase efficient response.

2. **Ensure that salaries for law enforcement agencies and emergency service personnel remain competitive with surrounding counties.**



3. **Improve communications coverage throughout Macon County**

- Upgrade current 9-1-1 equipment as needed
- Revise and Update our telecommunication/radio system in order to guarantee adequate coverage for personnel.

4. **Support Volunteer Fire Departments and Volunteer Fire Fighters in Macon County**

- Create an incentive program for volunteer firefighters in order to promote recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters.
- Create a committee that promotes relationships with County leaders, reviews proposed budget increases and help produce annual “status reports” of fire departments.

### EMS

Macon County Emergency Services is under the direction of Mr. Warren Cabe. EMS employs approx. 59 people with 35 being full-time. 9-1-1 Dispatch contains 9 full-time and 3 part-time staff.

9-1-1 Addressing is charged with maintaining the county database, field address work, GIS mapping and sign installation and replacement.

Emergency Management Communication Technicians and Fire Marshals office also fall under the title of Emergency Services.





Water and sewer infrastructure and services are fundamental to the county’s ability to accommodate future growth and development. Currently, water and sewer services within Macon County are controlled by the municipalities. It is crucial that clear policies are established to serve as a guide for future decision making regarding water and sewer in Macon County.



Lake Sequoyah, located in the Town of Highlands currently supplies approximately 2300 customers with water. The facility is capable of producing 1.77 million gallons of water per day. Typically a customer must be located within the town limits and served by existing distribution lines. Currently, there are no major plans for expansion.

The Town of Highlands Sewage Treatment Facility is located at 1184 Arnold Road. Like the water system, all customers typically must be located in the town limits. Approximately 900 customers currently utilize the sewer system at an average of 200K gallons per day. The maximum capacity of the system is 1.5 million gallons per day. With



The Cartoogechaye Creek serves as the public water source for the Town of Franklin. Approximately 3,528 customers both residential and commercial are served by public water utilizing 1.1 to 1.2 million gallons per day. The current facility has a maximum capacity of 4 million gallons per day.

The sewer system for the Town of Franklin recently completed an Inflow and Infiltration Study. The study detects areas within the current system that are subject to storm-water infiltration. Repairing the damaged areas will result in increased plant capacity. The sewer system has a maximum capacity of 1.65 million gallons per day. Today the system serves less than 2,500 customers and runs between 48% and 67% of full capacity utilizing 800K-1.1 million gallons per day. It is important to note that the 1.1 million gallons per day figure accompanies rainfall, indicating that the system is taking in a large amount of storm-water runoff. The Inflow and Infiltration produced repair and replacement options for the Town of Franklin.

### Recommendations

The Economic Development and Public Services Committee acknowledged the excellent service that the Public Water and Sewer Systems provide to the citizens of Macon County. As Macon County experiences future growth, it is imperative that each of the systems remain capable of supporting the population. The committee makes the following recommendations to ensure that these systems remain adequate in the future.

#### Public Water and Sewer:

**1. Take steps to ensure the sewer system is at adequate capacity in advance of need.**

-At 70% capacity, begin planning for future expansion of infrastructure. At 80% to 90% of full capacity, begin to secure funding and implement the infrastructure expansion plan.

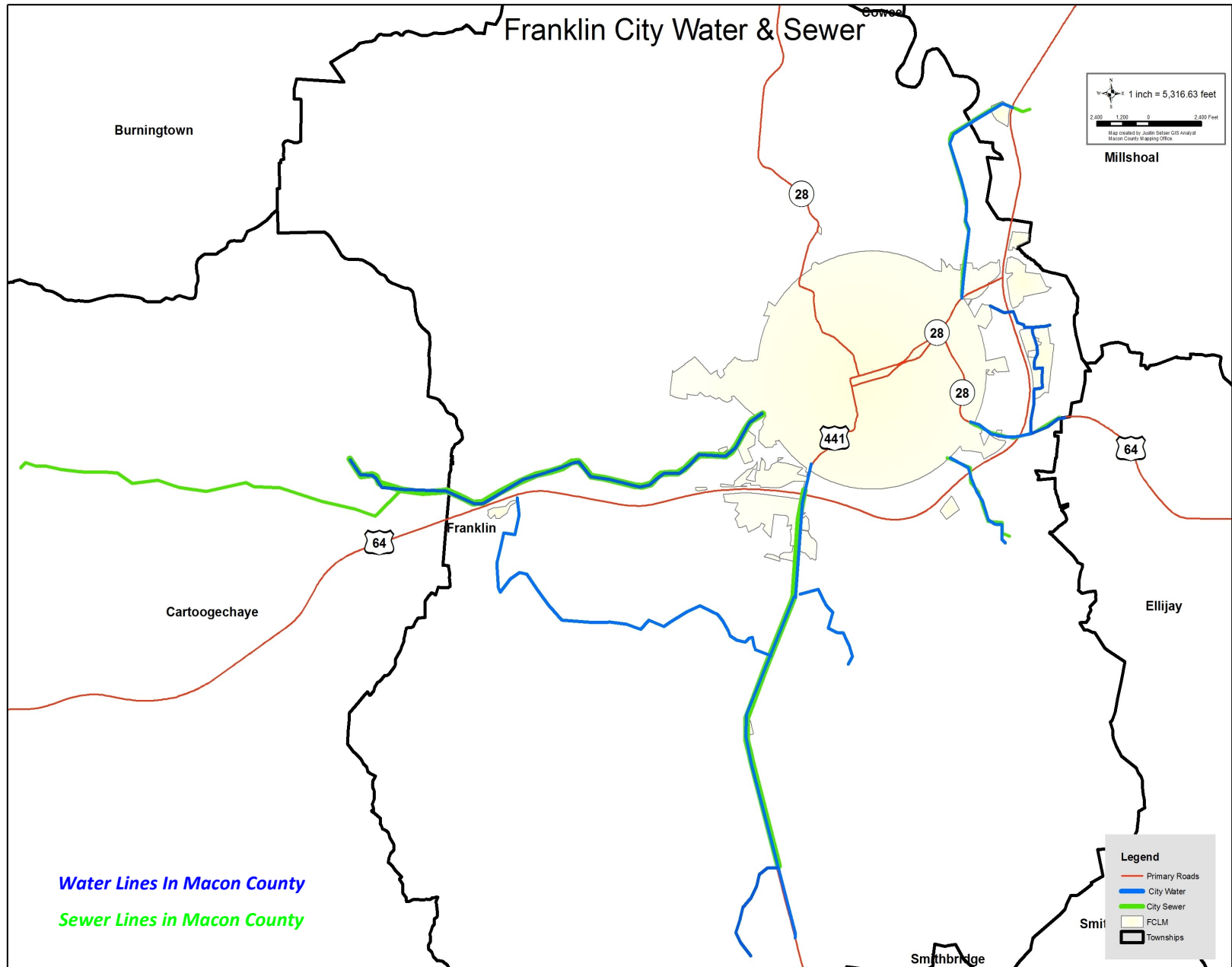
**2. Consider impacts that future extensions of water and sewer systems will have on the rural character of Macon County.**

-Extend water and sewer system only to those areas capable of supporting commercial development or large scale residential development.

**3. Create an accurate GIS database of all public water and sewer infrastructure in Macon County.**

-Database should include Lines, Taps, Meters with sizes, Hydrants, Manholes, Pump Stations and existing easements or rights of way.





Map Courtesy of Macon County Mapping Department.



**Land Use and Environment**

**Introduction:**

The Land Use and Environment element of the comprehensive plan creates natural resource related recommendations. These recommendations work to ensure that the citizens of Macon County continue to enjoy a clean natural environment now and in the years that follow. This element of the plan addresses water quality, critical areas for development, agricultural land promotion/preservation tools, and lastly gives communities and specific areas within the county options for preserving their heritage and rural character for years to come.

**Land Use:** The growth of Macon County is evident, not only from past recorded census data but through the increasing amount of parcelization occurring within the county. Increasing parcelization is a result of population growth. As more people move into the area, property owners further divide their parcels of land, allowing newcomers an opportunity to purchase their own “portion” of Macon County. Over the years parcelization has driven the economy in Macon County creating many jobs in the construction, real-estate, and real-estate development industries.

**Photo at Right:** Glen Choga Lodge (National Register of Historic Places), was built in 1934-35, at a time when Little Choga Road was a major route between Franklin and Murphy, North Carolina. The builders were Alexander Breheurs Steuart and his wife Margaret Willis Hays; they operated the lodge as a summer vacation destination until 1941. Currently the lodge serves as a private summer residence.

*Fig.E1*

**Parcelization 1993-2009**

Year	Improved Properties	# of Parcels
1993	17,980	30,000
2009	25,500	44,000

Source: Macon County Tax Office

From 1993-2009 the total number of parcels in Macon County increased by approximately 47%. Improved Properties over this 16 year time-span are shown to have increased by 42%. In 1993, improved properties accounted for 67% of the total properties in Macon County. In 2009, we see this percentage fall to 57%. (See figure E1)



**Regulations:** Currently Macon County does not have any zoning regulations outside the municipalities of Franklin and Highlands. There are rules in place however, that regulate certain types of development and the extent to which development can occur in certain “critical” areas. Listed below are the land use regulations currently in place for Macon County.

**Subdivision Regulations:**

Macon County’s Subdivision Ordinance- To establish procedures and standards for the development and subdivision of land within Macon County. It is further designed to promote the orderly growth and development of Macon County; for coordination of roads and highways within proposed subdivisions with existing or planned roads and highways and with other public facilities. It is also designed to provide the County Commissioners, Planning Board, Planning Department, Tax Assessor, Land Records Office, Code Enforcement and other local government agencies and officials with information regarding land development taking place in Macon County. This information will assist county officials in projecting the need for various public programs and facilities, in estimating population growth, and in projecting revenue and expenditures.

The Macon County Subdivision Ordinance was originally adopted June 2, 2008.

**Sedimentation and Erosion Control:**

Sedimentation and Erosion Control Ordinance- Regulating certain land disturbing activity to control accelerated erosion and sedimentation in order to prevent the pollution of water and other damage to lakes, watercourses and other public and private property by sedimentation; and establishing procedures through which these purposes can be fulfilled. The Macon county Sedimentation and Erosion Control Ordinance was adopted on November 11, 2001.

**Building Height:**

Building Height Ordinance- Regulate the height of structures in such manner as to promote the public health, safety and welfare. This purpose is achieved by allowing construction of buildings to a maximum height of 48 feet to the eave or four stories above the foundation, whichever is less, with no habitable space located above the 48 feet maximum height. The Macon County Building Height Ordinance was amended on March 9, 2009

**High Impact Land Uses:**

High Impact Land Use Ordinance- To promote the health, safety and general welfare of the citizens of Macon County by diminishing the impacts of certain land uses which, by their nature, produce noise, odors, vibrations, fumes, light, smoke, dust and other impacts which interfere with the quiet enjoyment of adjacent lands and disturb the peace and dignity of the county. The Macon County High Impact Land Uses Ordinance was adopted on December 12, 2005.

**Sexually Oriented Businesses:**

Sexually Oriented Business Ordinance- The Macon County Board of Commissioners is committed to protecting the general welfare of the county through the enforcement of laws prohibiting obscenity, indecency and sexual oriented businesses while preserving constitutionally protected forms of expression. The Board of Commissioners finds that sexually oriented business in certain locations contribute to neighborhood deterioration and blight through an increase in crime and diminution of property values, among other adverse consequences finds that such effects are contrary to the general welfare of the citizens of the county. The Board of Commissioners recognizes that important and substantial governmental interests provide a constitutional basis for reasonable regulation of the time, place and manner under which sexually oriented businesses operate; and therefore, the Board of Commissioners has determined that persons seeking to operate sexually oriented businesses shall be required to observe specific location requirements before they commence business. The Macon County Sexually Oriented Businesses Ordinance was adopted on July 11, 2005.

**Signs:**

Sign Control Ordinance- To guide and regulate the construction and placement of signs in Macon County. It is the intent of this chapter to preserve and maintain the scenic and aesthetic environment of the county in order to protect and promote the tourist industry and the quality of life of the county’s residents and visitors. The amended Macon County Sign Control Ordinance was passed on December 3, 2001.





**Telecommunication Towers:**

Telecommunication Towers Ordinance- Regulate wireless telecommunications facilities in order to protect the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of Macon County. The amended Telecommunications Towers Ordinance was passed on December 3, 2001.

**Critical Areas:**

The “critical” areas in Macon County to which regulations apply are; floodplains, watersheds, protected ridgelines and agricultural lands.

**Special Flood Hazard Areas:** *(See Map Titled Macon County Flood zones Pg. 23)*

A *floodplain* is defined as any land area susceptible to being inundated by water from any source. (Flood Ordinance) Furthermore, a *floodway* is referred to as the channel of a river or other watercourse and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved in order to discharge the base flood without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation more than (1) foot. (Flood Ordinance) Macon County regulates development occurring within each of these “critical areas” through the Flood Ordinance of Macon County.

Flood Ordinance of Macon County- To promote the public health, safety and general welfare and to minimize public and private losses due to flood conditions in flood prone areas by provisions designed to:

- A. Restrict or prohibit uses which are dangerous to health, safety and property due to water or erosion hazards, or which result in damaging increases in erosion or in flood heights or velocities.
- B. Require that uses vulnerable to floods, including facilities which serve such uses, be protected against flood damage at the time of initial construction.

C. Control filling, grading, dredging and other development which may increase erosion or flood damage; and,

D. Prevent or regulate the construction of flood barriers which will unnaturally divert flood waters or which may increase flood hazards to other lands.

E. Control the alteration of natural floodplains, stream channels and natural protective barriers which are involved in the accommodation of flood waters.

The amended Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance was adopted on April 27, 2009.

**Water Supply Watersheds:** *(See Map Titled Macon County Watersheds Pg. 24)*

A *watershed* is defined in the Macon County Watershed Protection Ordinance as the entire land area contributing surface drainage to a specific point. Macon County, through this ordinance regulates development occurring in the watershed areas that contribute drainage to the water supply intake for the Town of Franklin and Town of Highlands.

A *critical area* for watershed purposes is defined as the areas adjacent to a water supply intake or reservoir where risk associated with pollution is greater than from remaining portions of the watershed. The critical area is defined as extending either .5 mile from the normal pool elevation of the reservoir in which the intake is located or to the ridge line of the watershed (whichever comes first); or .5 mile upstream from the intake located directly in the stream or river (run-of-the-river), or the ridge line of the watershed (whichever comes first). Critical watershed areas in Macon County are located pri-

Watershed Protection Ordinance- To protect the critical watersheds of Macon County. The amended Watershed Protection Ordinance was passed on September 9, 2002.

**Protected Ridgelines:** *(See Map Titled Macon County FS and Protected Ridges Pg. 26)*

A protected mountain ridge is a ridge whose elevation is 3,000 feet and whose elevation is 500 or more feet above the adjacent valley floor.

This ordinance regulates the overall height of all structures on certain protected mountain ridges.

**Agricultural Areas:** *(See Map Titled Agri Parcels and Preserved Farmland Pg. 25)*

Farmland has historically remained important to the economic and cultural life of Macon County. The Voluntary Agriculture District Ordinance was passed by the Macon County Board of Commissioners. The purpose of this ordinance is to encourage the voluntary preservation and protection of farmland from non-farm development in Macon County.



**These regulations which are currently in place for Macon County help to protect the environment and promote the health, safety and general welfare of the citizens.**



**Recommendations and Goals:**

**1. Implement Stormwater Best Management Practices that require future developments to consider the affects of stormwater.**

**-Create an Educational Program that focuses on the routine maintenance of residential drive-ways.**

-The recommendations should be based on [NCDENR Stormwater BMP Manual](#) and should take into consideration the following:

A. Culvert placement and design should be such that erosion and concentrated flows are minimized.

B. . The percent of impervious surfaces allowed on lots should be controlled.

C. Requirements for vegetative retention and type of vegetation should be established.

**2. Macon County should continue regulating all construction involving land disturbance for residential and commercial construction in the following ways:**

Incorporate construction standards into all existing ordinances, as well as in future ordinances dealing with land disturbance.

-Placement of fill material should meet minimum criteria:

-The area upon which the fill is to be placed should be stripped and grubbed, and all vegetative matter should be removed.

-A bench should be constructed at the toe of the fill.

-The fill material should be free of organic material and vegetative matter.

-Fill material should be placed in lifts determined by NC Engineer.

-Fill material should be required to meet compaction standards.

**Gary Scott, Owner of Appalachian Construction working with a Geologist at Parker Meadows Recreation Complex.**





## Water Quality

### Surface Water

Macon County has four main river systems; the Cullasaja, Cartoogechaye, Nantahala and Little Tennessee River. Each river has origins in high quality first and second order streams flowing off of state and federally managed forest lands. The impacts of erosion and sedimentation downstream from these managed areas increases with population density and business/industrial development.

The Cartoogechaye Creek is the only source of surface water supplying the Town of Franklin potable water treatment and distribution system. Current demands during peak use periods are rapidly approaching maximum withdrawal limits and secondary drinking water sources will need to be identified.

The Town of Highlands drinking water supply currently comes from the Big Creek arm of Lake Sequoyah. Siltation from upstream development is an increasing problem and plans are being formulated to move the water intake site to an area with greater water depth.

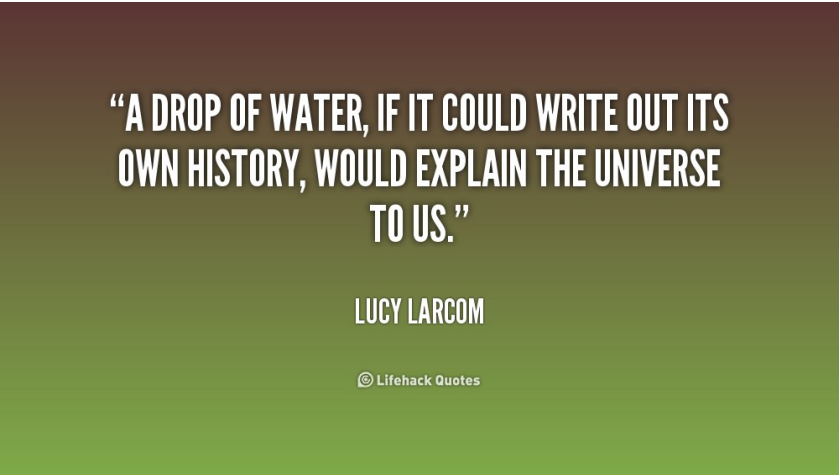
Storm water runoff, from both pervious and impervious surfaces, is having the greatest impact on Macon County surface water quality. The disturbance of any land area that results in reduced water infiltration capability causes immediate downstream effects of both environmental and economic concern.

As surface runoff increases in both volume and velocity, the potential for downstream erosion, exposure to chemical/industrial pollutants, property damage due to flash flooding and the resulting liability issues, also increase. Much of the existing drainage infrastructure in the high density areas of the county is at or near maximum carrying capacity and will require replacement/expansion.

Waste water treatment facilities, both private and municipal, also impact surface and ground water quality and can pose serious human health concerns. Private and community septic systems which are either improperly installed or installed on provisionally suitable soil types, can introduce intestinal bacteria(s) and household chemical pollutants directly into surface and groundwater systems. This can pose a serious health risk to humans and aquatic organisms. The same is true when the capacity of a municipal sewage system is exceeded resulting in the discharge of untreated waste directly into the surface water system.

### Ground Water

Ground water wells are the primary source of drinking water outside of the Franklin and Highlands distribution systems. While some wells experience high concentrations of sulphur, iron or copper, the overall quality of available ground water is very good. The underlying geology of the region is complex and fractured making estimates of water depth and yield highly unpredictable. The recharge areas for ground water aquifers are also unpredictable and can be many miles from the well site. As ongoing geologic and hydrologic research develops a better understanding of the ground water systems in the mountain region, particular attention will need to be given to protecting sensitive recharge areas and regulating well density.



**Pollution Sources**

The two sources of surface and groundwater pollution are point and non-point. Point sources are characterized by concentrated contributions of pollution from high intensity land uses such as industrial process water and municipal sewage. Point source pollution can be minimized by considering potential threats to water quality before locating industrial development and directing growth so that the carrying capacity of sewage systems is not exceeded.

The two primary sources of non-point source pollution in Macon County are development drainage and agricultural run-off. While agriculture has declined significantly the current practice of intensive vegetable farming is still a major contributor to soil erosion, sedimentation, and the introduction of pesticides and herbicides to surface systems. Non-point sources can be dealt with by regulating site selection criteria for new development, minimizing impervious surfaces, construction and maintenance of sedimentation control fences and ponds, and by maintaining vegetation buffer zones adjacent to waterways.

**The Future**

This community is fortunate to be in a mountainous headwaters region where high quality ground and surface water are in good supply. However, this community is also in a region that has seen dramatic climate influences on these water resources. In recent history we have seen severe drought years followed by record rainfall years. When these dramatic fluctuations occur they are intensified by an increasing population, and the associated development and demands for water.

Development and infrastructure planning will need to accommodate “worst case” scenarios to insure the future health and welfare of the people, the integrity of our environment, and the quality of the water we will use and then pass downstream to our neighbors.

**Recommendations:**

**1. Maintain and improve the quality of surface and ground water in Macon County through proper management of point and non-point pollution sources.**

- Meet or exceed State and Federal standards for potable and discharge water.
- Protect groundwater by restricting septic tank systems to appropriate land forms and soil types.
- Meet or exceed state standards for septic system installation and inspection
- Regulate well density and impacts on sensitive groundwater recharge areas.
- Steer future development towards “soft” approaches to storm water management.
- Design drinking and waste-water systems to accommodate “worst case” scenarios for supply and demand.
- Encourage participation in State and Federal stream-bank restoration and vegetation retention programs. (NC Watershed Enhancement Program)
- Incorporate GIS technology to verify and manage wells, onsite wastewater systems, and resources for future planning.

**2. Encourage responsible development which will have acceptable effects on water quality.**


- Coordinate development with appropriate Federal, State and Metropolitan Agencies to insure minimum impact on ground and surface water systems and proper design of adequate water supply and waste water capacities.
- Strictly regulate the location of activities that would adversely impact surface and ground water systems and/or their recreational function, scenic beauty or biological health.

**Agriculture**

For centuries, agriculture has been a way of life for many residents in Macon County. Not only does farmland create a livelihood for some, it adds to the rural character of Macon County, creating an undisturbed landscape for all residents to enjoy.

The 2012 Census of Agriculture reports that 326 farms were located in Macon County. The farms had an average of size of 70 acres, and accounted for 22,684 acres of land. Agriculture Cash receipts from 2014 indicate that the majority of these farms were classified as *Livestock, Dairy and Poultry* which accounted for \$9,089,811 of the total cash receipts. Agricultural farms had cash receipts of \$2,298,210 and government payments of \$50,992. Total Agriculture Cash Receipts for 2014 were \$11,439,013.



MACON COUNTY						
Census of Agriculture - 2012		Crops - 2014	Acres Harvested	Yield	Production	Rank
Total Acres in County	329,964	Corn for Grain: Bu.	470	168	78,900	77
Number of Farms	326	Cotton: Lbs.: Production in 480 Lb. Bales	*	*	*	*
Total Land in Farms, Acres	22,684	Hay, Other: Tons	4,750	1.90	9,100	60
Average Farm Size, Acres	70	Peanuts: Lbs.	*	*	*	*
Harvested Cropland, Acres	4,501	Soybeans: Bu.	*	*	*	*
Average Age of Farmers	60.7	Sweet Potatoes: Cwt.	*	*	*	*
Average Value of Farm & Buildings	\$173,104,000	Tobacco, Burley: Lbs.	*	*	*	*
Average Market Value of Machinery & Equipment	\$15,765,000	Tobacco, Flue-Cured: Lbs.	*	*	*	*
Average Total Farm Production Expense	*	Wheat: Bu.	*	*	*	*
		Livestock		Number	Rank	
		Broilers Produced (2014)		*	*	
		Cattle, All (Jan. 1, 2015)		2,700	58	
		Beef Cows (Jan. 1, 2015)		1,800	56	
		Milk Cows (Jan. 1, 2015)		*	*	
		Hogs and Pigs (Dec. 1, 2014)		*	*	
		Layers (Dec. 1, 2014)		1,200	63	
		Turkeys Raised (2014)		*	*	
		Cash Receipts - 2014		Dollars	Rank	
		Livestock, Dairy and Poultry		9,089,811	76	
Crops		2,298,210	96			
Government Payments		50,992	94			
Total		11,439,013	90			

Currently, there are measures in place on both the county and state levels that assist in protecting and preserving farmland. The Voluntary Farmland Protection Ordinance currently protects 60 parcels of land from non-farm development in Macon County. On the state level, North Carolina General Statute 105-277.3 states that Agricultural, horticultural and forestland are special classes of property and must be appraised, assessed and taxed differently than other lands, barring they meet the requirements set forth in the Statute. Macon County has 876 parcels that are currently classified as “Agricultural” by the Macon County Tax Office. *(See Map Titled Macon County Agri Parcels and Preserved Farmland Pg. 25)*

### Recommendations

**1. Ensure that the Economic Development Commission includes agriculture in its economic development plans for Macon County.**

- Research and Discuss Franklin Farmers Market Feasibility Study for Phillips Street Property. (prepared by Stacy J. Guffey & 7 Associates, May 1st, 2014)
- Provide economic development incentives to agriculture related businesses.

**2. Consider discussing viable options with an organizing agent within the agricultural community to assist in promoting profitable agriculture. In order to market and distribute Macon County’s agriculture products.**



### 3. Promote agriculture education

- Wider variety of agriculture classes in County schools
- Encourage SCC, NC Cooperative Extension Service and NC Agricultural Department to offer classes in:
  - A. Identifying new products and marketing strategies
  - B. Business planning and management
  - C. Grant writing
  - D. Estate planning and other legal issues relevant to farmers
  - E. Provide agricultural technical advice including sustainable forest management

### 4. Promote farmland preservation

- Consider establishing a farmland protection fund
- Promote voluntary agricultural districts
- Ensure that the Present Use Valuation taxation program is fully utilized to best protect farmland.

iNCEntiVE



### Protecting Rural Character

Macon County’s rural character is very unique and important to the residents. There are many communities in Macon County that contain areas that represent our rural character and small town lifestyle. However, there must be a healthy balance between the preservation of rural character and the promotion of development. Communities that contain areas of rural character should foster a balance between healthy commercial/industrial development, and history.

#### Recommendations and Goals

- 1. Promote sound development by properly planning the major corridors into town.**
  - Promote a positive experience for citizens and tourists. Create a “sense of place that everyone is proud of”.
- 2. Consider impacts on rural character in development decisions regarding public facilities.**
- 3. Support communities in their efforts to preserve their rural, historical and cultural heritage.**

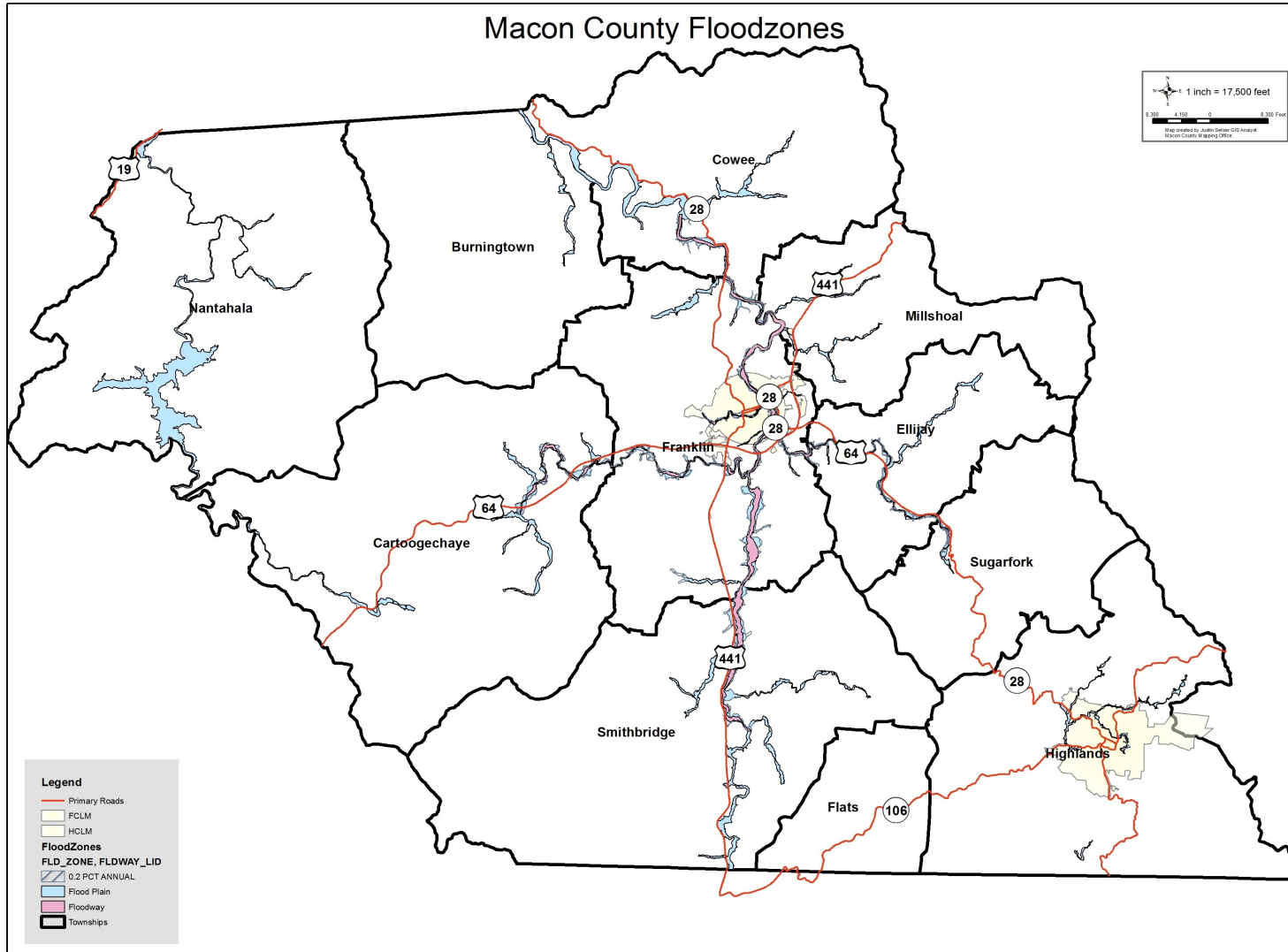


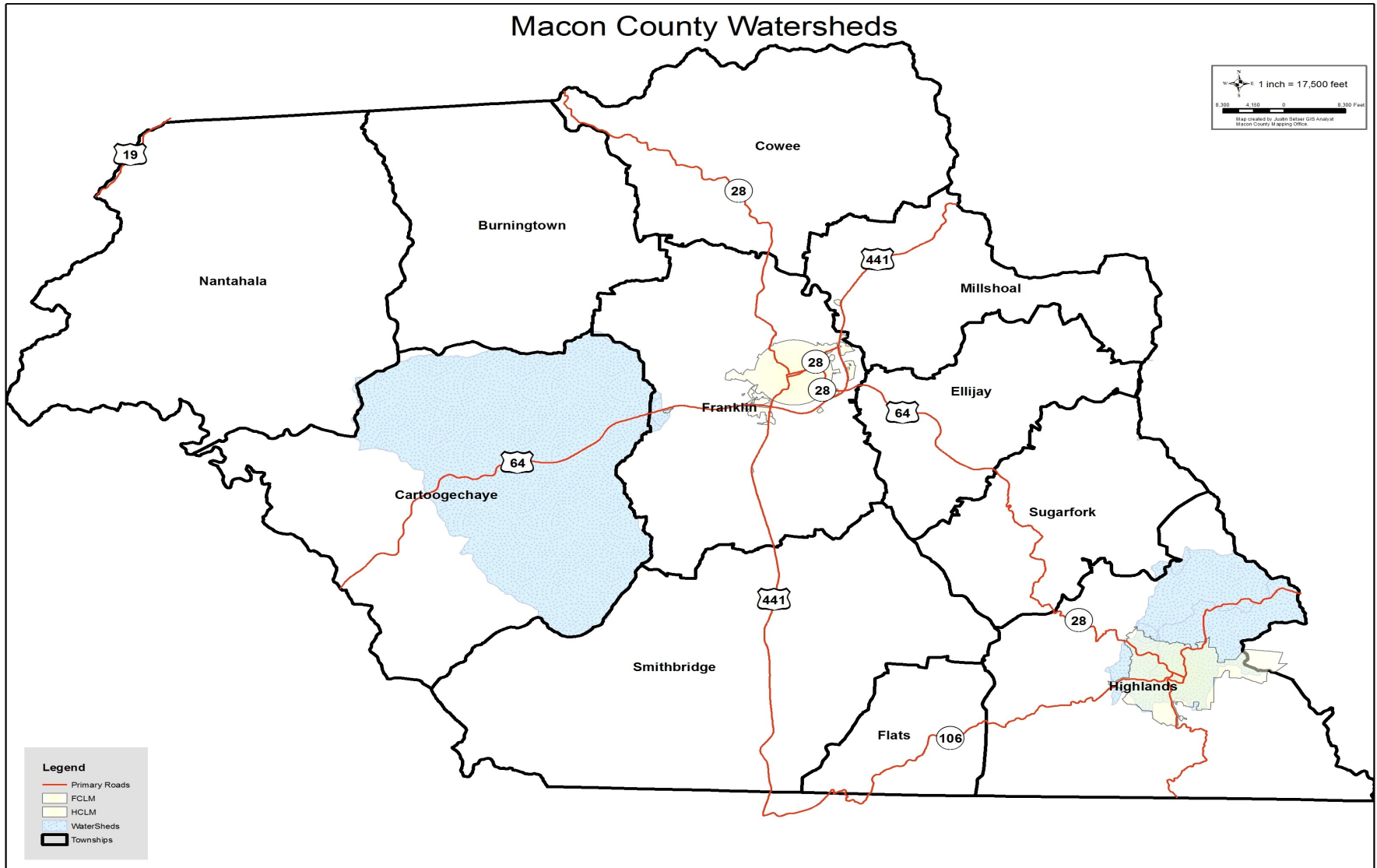
In 2006, an initiative began in Western North Carolina to mount quilt squares throughout Madison and Ashe counties. After more than 100 quilts were spread around those two counties, Macon County became the first far western county to undertake the project. Now completed, the Macon County leg of the quilt trail features 25 quilt squares waiting to be discovered on homes, barns and businesses throughout the county.

**Article Written by Brittney Raby**

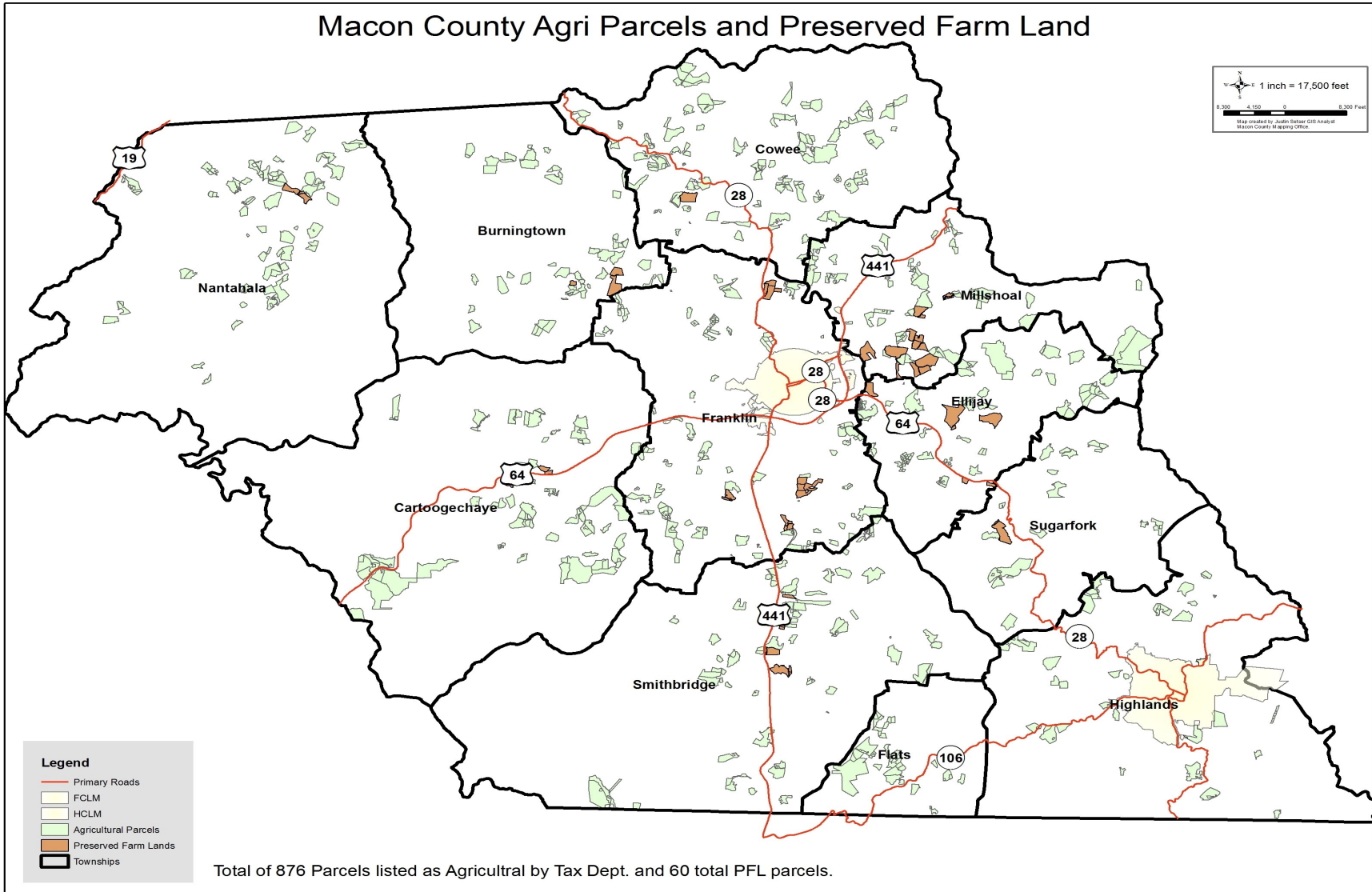
Published by Macon News, 4.16.15

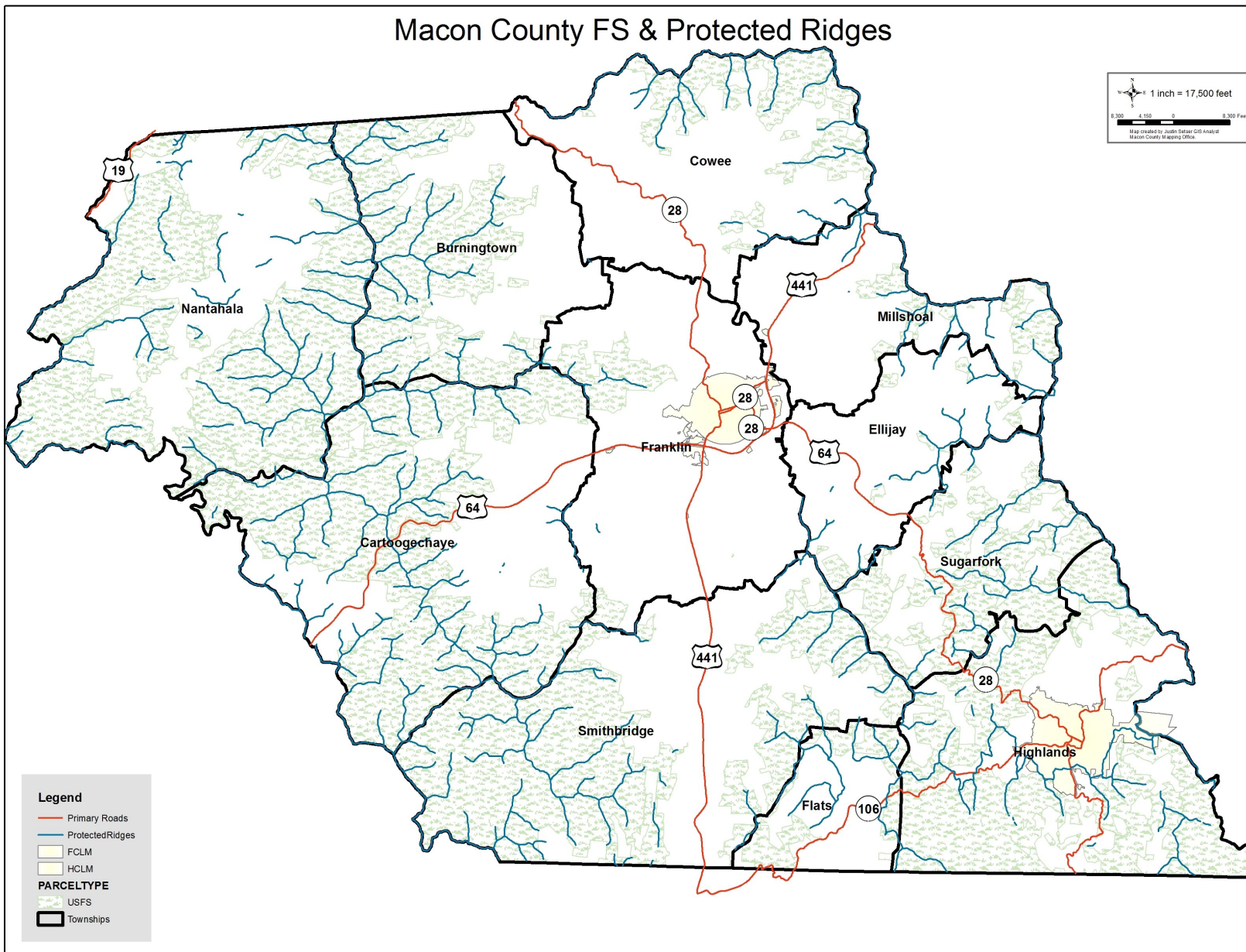












## Education

### Introduction

Educational opportunities are a primary consideration when a business contemplates locating or expanding in Macon County. If we do not adequately fund and provide above average quality of life enrichment programs then prospective businesses and citizens may decide not to invest here which would limit future job opportunities for the students we educate.

Due to computer technology, we no longer are competing in local markets for job growth. We must be on par or above, in the global market. America is declining in its test scores and motivation to be the number one nation in the world in technological innovations, patents and manufacturing capabilities. The challenge facing us is that we must do better at educating and motivating our students on multiple levels.

Creating a dedicated funding source for education is also critical to the future growth and goals of being an above average community.

-In 2011 the Macon County Board of Education had many multiple issues that were focused upon in the original plan. From 2011-2015 their Number one recommendation was to identify and resolve all past due maintenance requirements. Number two was to fund a preventative maintenance program in order to reduce repair costs. Appendix 2 discusses the renovation needs at Franklin High School, 90% of the required repairs have been completed with the exception of the Media Center/Cafeteria.

Appendix 3 discusses renovation needs at Nantahala School, where almost 100% has been completed. Additional renovations also took place at Highlands School, and Union Academy.

### **Education is vital and must have reasonable and consistent operational income both at the k-12 level and also at the post secondary level.**

-Since 2011 Southwestern Community College has developed a long range Master Plan which includes moving the entire campus to Siler Road. The Master Plan is a forward thinking design that will allow SCC to grow exponentially for decades. In my opinion SCC is very close to becoming a large scale community college that will benefit all residents in WNC. The Master Plan is broken into multiple phases situated on the Siler Rd campus, which also incorporated the public library and Macon Early College.

-The most astonishing factor that we discovered is that funding for our public schools and community college usually comes from the same location which means that SCC and Macon County Public schools are fighting over the same dollars. To promote a future educated workforce, planning efforts for future education requirements must include opportunities for our public school system as well as Southwestern Community College. Strong positive planning in the name of education will produce



At Right: Cecil L. Groves Center, Southwestern Community College at the Macon Campus



**MACON COUNTY SCHOOLS**  
In the Best Interest of Students



**MACON COUNTY SCHOOLS (1941 to 2015)**

Prior to 1941 Macon County was using one room school houses located within each community. Consolidation of these one room school houses to improve efficiency and safety began in OTTO.

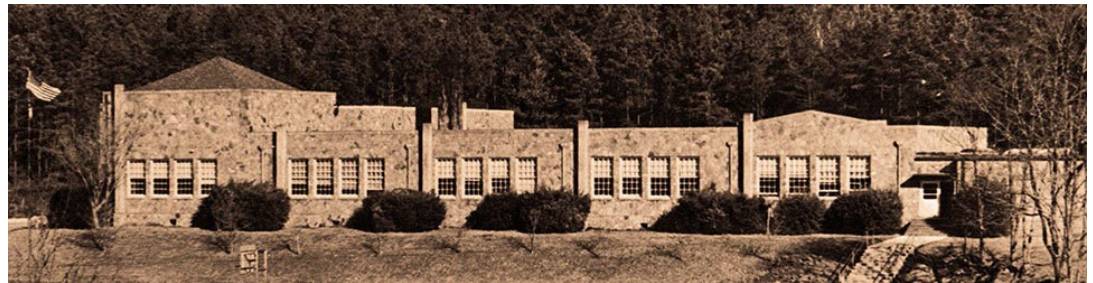
1941	Otto	(Sold)
1942	Cowee	(Historic Cowee School Arts and Heritage Center)
1948	Cullasaja	(Sold)
1950-51	Cartoogechaye	(Sold)
	East Franklin	
	Highlands	
	lotla (Present site of lotla Valley Elementary)	
	Nantahala	
	Union (Presently called Union Academy)	
	Franklin High School	

1953-56 New Additions added for:

- Cartoogechaye- 1 classroom
- Cowee- 2 classrooms + cafeteria
- Cullasaja-2 classrooms
- East Franklin- 4 classrooms
- Franklin High School- 7 classrooms + gym
- Highlands- 2 classrooms
- Nantahala-4 classrooms + shop
- Otto- Cafeteria

1963	Franklin High School Gym Annexation
1963-69	Franklin High School- Cafeteria extension and Fine Arts Building
1972	Franklin High School- Careers Center
1977	Macon Middle School
1984-89	Renovations to all schools
1987-88	Nantahala Play Ground

1992	Franklin High School Vocational Building
2000	Franklin High School English Building
2001	South Macon Elementary
2002	Cartoogechaye Elementary
2009	Macon Early College
2010	Mountain View Intermediate
2012	Renovate Nantahala School & East Franklin Elementary School
2013	Renovate FHS Gymnasium
2015	Renovate Union Academy and Highlands School



Top: Historic Photo Of Cowee School

*Historic Cowee School* ARTS & HERITAGE CENTER





## MACON COUNTY SCHOOLS

In the Best Interest of Students

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-The most astonishing factor that we discovered is that funding for our public schools and community college usually comes from the same location. Which means that SCC and Macon County Public schools are fighting over the same dollars. To promote a future educated workforce, planning efforts for future education requirements must include opportunities for our public school system as well as Southwestern Community College. Strong positive planning in the name of education will produce young educated graduates ready for to begin new careers here in Macon County.



**Education Goals:**

**1. Create an adequate Capital Outlay Budget for Maintenance and Repairs.**

-Adequate Capital Budget Line Items are essential in order to properly maintain and repairs our existing structures. Schools like South Macon Elementary are aging quite rapidly, however they need to continue to be usable structures for at least 20 more years.

**2. Create a revenue stream that supports the replacement of textbooks and technology needs at all educational levels.**

-Funding for textbooks has been virtually eliminated, a revenue stream must be created in order to begin purchasing textbooks for our students. And with the rapid increase in the use of technological devices, financial support for future technological needs must be addressed.

**3. Promote and fund Southwestern Community College's master planning efforts and begin construction of Phase I.**

-Southwestern Community College has developed a long range masterplan that must be incorporated into Macon County's decisions to promote higher education. (See SCC Masterplan in Appendix \*\*\*)

**4. Study the viability of relocating Franklin High School versus upgrading at existing campus.**

-The issues we face with relocating, or upgrading FHS in place are challenging. Due to the sheer size of the campus and the required acreage it is very important for the Macon County Planning Board to address the possible issues and solutions facing the future campus of Franklin High School.

**5. Expand and Renovate Macon Early College**

-MEC must be expanded in order to handle current and future needs. MEC must be incorporated into the Masterplan developed by SCC or incorporated into future masterplans for FHS. Macon Early College is a great example of forward thinking progress that should be maximized to its fullest potential.

**6. Begin renovations at Macon Middle School**

**7. Develop a school safety task force that will consider future safety needs and develop a school safety program. (SRO's, security camera integration, etc.)**

-Unfortunately, school safety task forces are a requirement that must be addressed in the future. School Resource Officers are a great asset used to protect school age children. An Additional step should include synchronizing security cameras with MCSO and Macon County Emergency Management, in order to control all emergency situations.



**Recreation:**

-Recreational activities are significant and it is imperative to reflect on the value of recreational activities for citizens of Macon County. Since 2011 Macon County renovated our public pool and developed a new recreational complex.

-The development of Parker Meadows Recreational Complex provides walking trails, baseball and softball fields, soccer fields, and fishing opportunities... all while creating a significant economic impact for Macon County.

-The public pool renovation created an updated and state of the art facility for competitive swimming events and recreational swimming.

-In 2008, trout anglers had a total economic output of 178 million dollars in North Carolina while attracting 93,000 anglers from across our state and other states.

-In 2015, the NC Wildlife Resources Commission stocked the Nantahala River with 20,500 rainbow, brook and brown trout. (Third highest stocking number in the state with Tuckasegee river in Jackson County being number one.) Macon County has a prime opportunity to promote trout fishing here and begin creating a county wide program called Mountain Heritage Trout Waters, and by doing this we will promote tourism and economic development similar to the Towns of Sylva, Dillsboro, Bryson City and Waynesville.



Photo Courtesy of Chris Hanners



-In 2015, Macon County had approximately 700 children from the ages of 6-15 playing organized basketball. The recreation department struggles to find adequate gym space for all teams needing to practice and play basketball games. There is a huge need for adequate gym space in Macon County and the construction of a large multipurpose building with two full scale gym floors should be considered. Once basketball is completed in the spring, this space could be used to play indoor soccer, play volleyball, practice baseball on rainy days, host workout stations, host gymnastic events or dance recitals, and host or assist in hosting large gathering events similar to our 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration or gun shows.

Recreation is an important chapter of the comprehensive plan that can promote healthy lifestyles, and recreational activities while creating a significant economic impact for citizens in Macon County.

walking/biking trails.

### RECREATIONAL FACILITIES IN MACON COUNTY

Macon County Veterans Memorial Recreation Park (30.3 acres) with a 40+ year old 18,000 sq. ft. Community building, an outdoor swimming pool, tennis courts, baseball, softball, volleyball, walking trail, etc.

-Industrial Park Recreational Facility (16.0 acres) for soccer and baseball.

-Cullasaja Park (17.3 acres) for football and soccer practice.

-Buck Creek Recreation Complex (6.0 acres) for baseball and soccer.

-Nantahala Recreation Park (27.0 acres) for baseball, soccer and tennis.

-Little Tennessee Greenway (170 acres) Playground, picnic shelters and walking/ biking trails.



Aerial Image of Parker Meadows Recreational Complex: Photo Courtesy of Chris Hanners





**Transportation:**

The Comprehensive Transportation Plan is North Carolina’s new multi-modal transportation plan format and process. A CTP is a mutually adopted legal document between the state and a local area partner. When adopted by the North Carolina Department of Transportation it represents the state’s concurrence with locally identified transportation needs. A CTP replaces thoroughfare plans that have been in place since the 1950’s. Both the process and product of a CTP are different than the thoroughfare plan. Unlike the traditional thoroughfare plan, the CTP is a multi modal plan that identifies the entire existing and future transportation system, including highways, public transportation, rail, bicycle and pedestrian facilities needed to serve the anticipated travel demand. The plan strengthens the connections between an areas transportation plan, adopted local land development plan and community vision.

The local Comprehensive Plan is a key player in the CTP process. It is required that a county have in place a locally-endorsed land development plan prior to adoption of a CTP by the North Carolina Department of Transportation. The Transportation element of the Comprehensive Plan illustrates to the NCDOT that Macon County has a vision for the future. The recommendations proposed in this element of the plan will serve as a guide for the NCDOT when planning for future transportation needs in our area

**Macon County Roadways**

Macon County accounts for 673.37 miles of the Total State Highway System in North Carolina. These roads are divided into two separate categories; Primary Roads and Secondary Roads.

**Primary Roads**

A primary road is defined by the NCDOT as being all Interstate, NC, and US numbered Highways. 96.96 miles or roughly 14% of the State Highway System in Macon County is Primary Roads. Of the 96.96 miles 12.92 miles of primary roads are located within the municipal limits of Franklin and Highlands. 84.04 miles of primary roads in Macon County are considered “non-municipal”. The Primary Roads that run through Macon County are as follows:

1. **US 441**
2. **US 64**
3. **US 19/74**
4. **NC 28**
5. **NC 106**



Traffic counts on these primary roads have fluctuated over the past decade. To illustrate this fluctuation, location counts were chosen from the NCDOT Traffic Count Maps and compared on an annual basis from 1999-2008. It is important to note that the counts were taken from the same locations each year.

US441S location- south of the Intersection at Franklin Plaza Shopping Center

US441N location- north of Watauga Road at the base of Cowee Mtn.

US64W location- immediately east of Mill Creek Road

US64E location- immediately west of Ellijay Road

NC106 location- at Georgia line

NC 28 location- immediately southeast of River Bend Road

US 19/74 location- Only a small portion of this road lies in Macon County, 1 count site present.



Location	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
441S	26000	24000	23000	21000	25000	26000	25000	23000	21000	19000
441N	16000	14000	16000	15000	18000	16000	17000	18000	18000	16000
64W	5300	6200	7200	6300	6200	5800	5900	6000	3800	5900
64E	8400	6700	7300	7100	6800	6500	7000	5200	----	6900
19/74	3500	3600	3600	3200	----	----	----	----	5200	----
106	----	4300	2900	2600	----	----	----	----	3000	4000
28N	6300	6500	7000	6600	6200	4300	6000	4000	7000	7900

Fig. TH1 Source: NCDOT AADT maps

Note: ---- count unavailable at location

### Secondary Roads

A secondary road is defined by the NCDOT as being any state-maintained road, other than those in the state primary system. Unnumbered roads, such as school driveways, state university campus roads, or rural fire department drives are not included.

86% of state roads in Macon County belong to the secondary road system. Secondary roads account for 576.41 miles in Macon County. 554.63 miles of secondary roads lie outside the municipal limits of Franklin and Highlands. Of the 576.41 miles of secondary roads 115.17 miles remain unpaved.



Alternate Modes of Transportation in  
Macon County



**Greenway:**

In 1997 Duke Power Company acquired land located in the floodplain along the Little Tennessee River to construct a power line through Franklin. Upon completion of the power line project Duke Power Company deeded this land to Macon County. The acquisition of this land by Macon County marked the beginning of the Greenway. Today almost 50% of the Greenway lies within this transmission line easement.

In 2001 “Friends of the Greenway” was formed. “FROGS” headquarters is located alongside the Greenway where they continue to assist in the fundraising and management of the trail system.

Since its introduction, the Greenway has been an asset to the citizens of Macon County. The trail offers recreation opportunities for people of all ages. The 13 ft. wide trail is approximately 5 miles long beginning at Arthur Drake Road and reaching almost to the Macon County Recreation Park. Located along the trail are recreation areas, picnic shelters, exercise equipment, fishing piers, gardens, and other amenities for all to enjoy.

Not only does the greenway offer entertainment and recreation for Macon County Citizens, it serves as an alternate mode of transportation throughout the Town of Franklin. Using the Greenway one can access areas including but not limited to; East Franklin Shopping Center, Southwestern Community College, and the Macon County Public Library. As the population continues to grow, means of “environmentally friendly” transportation will become increasingly important. Alternate modes such as the Greenway serve as a prime example of this type of transportation and should continue being considered in future transportation planning. *(see map of Greenway Appendix 1)*

**Municipal Sidewalk Systems**

Both the Town of Franklin and Town of Highlands have sidewalk master plans in place. Sidewalks offer connectivity within the municipalities that affords citizens with yet another option of “environmentally friendly” transportation. Sidewalks while providing an alternate means of transportation within the municipalities, also serve as a way to boast the small town, rural heritage that is unique to the Town of Franklin and Town of Highlands. *(see sidewalk plans (Appendix 2)*

**Macon County Transit:**

Macon County Transit uses a fleet of 12 vehicles ranging from 6 passenger minivans to 16 passenger Light Transit Vehicles. 8 of these vehicles as of 2010 are lift equipped. The MCT Staff consists of a Director, Office Manager, Dispatcher, Operations Supervisor, 4 full time drivers and 10 part time drivers (one of which covers the Nantahala area). MCT offers a variety of services to all citizens.

- Medical Transportation:
- Adult Day Care (Macon County Senior Services)
- Congregate Nutrition Meals (Macon County Senior Services)
- Dialysis Treatments
- Sheltered Workshop (MCH & Webster Enterprises)
- Medical Transports for Nursing Homes
- Employment Transportation – limited availability based on space and times
- General Transportation (shopping, etc.)
- SCC and WCU Transports
- Veterans Transports





**Macon County Airport:**

The Macon County Airport encompasses 122 acres in the Iotla Valley. Initially the airport consisted of a single terminal and hanger building. In 1980, the county subsidized three rows of additional T-Hangers. The FBO, Neil Hoppe and Peggy Milton financed another set of ten T-Hangers on the far end of the property. In 2002 a new Terminal Building was constructed. The new facility is approximately 5,000 square feet. The Old Terminal Building is currently occupied by a limited Forest Service Staff that is responsible for a single helicopter used in fire fighting.

The Macon County Airport underwent a runway extension in 2011. The increase in business jet traffic, along with other aircraft performance factors necessitated a longer runway at the airport to increase the airport’s safety, utility and accessibility. The runway extension involved an additional 600 ft., feet as well as improvement to the Runway Safety Area. The current runway has deficient Runway Safety Areas. A RSA is a prepared surface designed as a safety overrun for aircraft unable to stop on the available runway pavement following an arrival to the airport or upon aborting a takeoff attempt for emergency reasons.

**Macon County Bike Routes:**

Macon County is home to countless miles of designated bike routes. The bike routes stretch to all ends of the county, offering natives and newcomers an opportunity to experience the beauty of Macon County while exercising. Aside from a means of exercise, bicycles are an energy efficient, environmentally friendly transportation option. As the population continues to rise, with more Americans becoming environmentally and health conscious, this option could become more viable in the future. (See bike Routes Appendix 3)

**Recommendations and Goals**

By planning for and creating a multi-modal transportation system we are ensuring that our mountain heritage is preserved, the natural environment will continue to flourish and the economic vitality and social welfare of our citizens is maintained. As the population increases, so will demands on the current transportation system. Recommendations contained within this section of the Comprehensive Plan work toward satisfying the needs of Macon County citizens now and in the future by providing, safe accessible and environmentally friendly transportation.

**1. Implement Corridor Planning while minimizing impact on the mountain landscape, environment, cultural/historical sites, and prime agricultural land.**

- Design so the natural landscape is dominant
- Use diverse means to achieve safety, including access management, traffic calming, accepting of slower speeds, turn lanes - not just standard widening and realignment.
- Identify problem areas and correct using the diverse methods above
- Provide for pedestrian and bike safety.
- Design to avoid sprawling development, encourage development around existing commercial corridors. Retain rural character.
- Preserve sense of place.

**2. Recognize that development and communities, influence roads and vice versa. Coordinate planning for roads with planning for appropriate development.**

- Coordinate road design and improvements with planned and existing land use.
- Access management needs to be implemented on commercial corridors that will experience growth in the future to preserve mobility.
- Adequate access should be provided to all institutions.

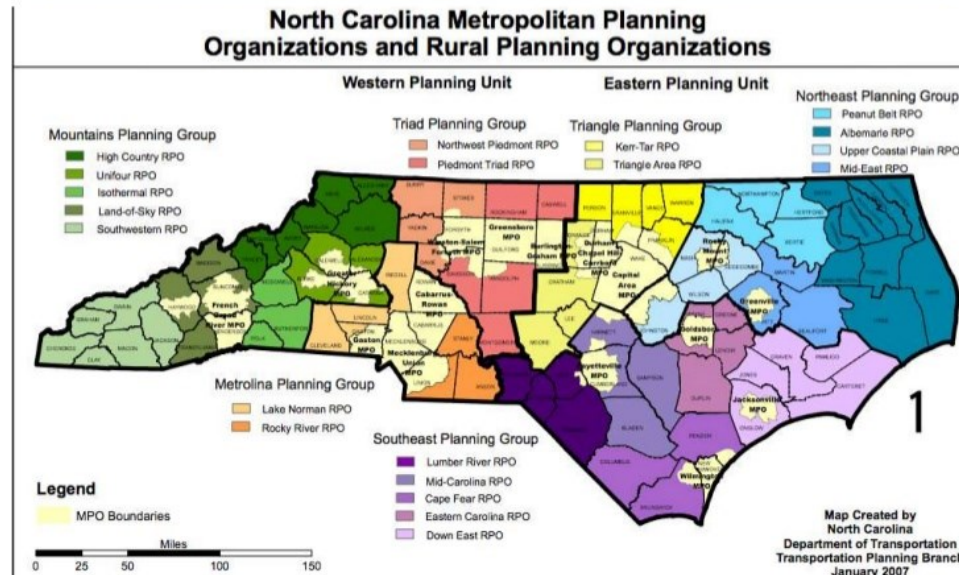


**3. Promote growth and development patterns that reduce trip length, emissions and congestion**

- Utilize multi-modal transportation planning.
- Integrate development review with transportation planning. Review subdivision ordinance for pedestrian friendly transportation (bike, transit, walking) and implement.
- Encourage growth of local and regional public transportation. Support locally developed plans.
- Build streets and roads for connectivity (eliminate cul-de-sac concept, keep transportation moving).
- Improve mobility options for aging and disabled populations.
- Establish funding sources to aid DOT in funding of sidewalks and other enhancements.
- Incentives for development closer to existing commercial centers around Franklin and Highlands. Eliminate sprawl on main thoroughfares.
- Encourage and promote mixed use development.
- Create Greenway Master Plan. (explore Rails to Trails).

4. Continue to support the Rural Planning Organization (RPO) by delegating staff to the two committees, the Transportation Advisory Committee and the Technical Coordinating Committee, which sets the regional transportation priorities for Macon, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Swain and Jackson Counties.
5. Update the NCDOT Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) as the Macon County Comprehensive Plan is updated, or following any major land use changes within the municipalities or the County.

## NCDOT: METRO & RURAL PLANNING ORGS TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BRANCH



**Housing:**

The purpose of the Housing Element in the Macon County Comprehensive Plan is to make recommendations necessary to maintain a diverse range of housing opportunities for all Macon County residents.

General Housing Characteristics in  
Macon County

An occupied housing unit is defined by the Census Bureau as any housing unit that is the usual place of residence of the person or people living in it at the time of enumeration, even if the occupants are only temporarily absent; for example, away on vacation. Occupied housing units can further be broken down into two categories; Owner-occupied and Renter-occupied. Housing units that are not occupied are considered vacant. The diagrams below provide an illustration of how the general housing characteristics in Macon County have changed from 1990-2008.



Fig. TH2

	1990	2000	2006-2008
<b>Total</b>	17,174	20,746	23,121
<b>Owner Occupied</b>	8,143 (47%)	10,432 (50%)	11,666 (50%)
<b>Renter Occupied</b>	1,691 (10%)	2,396 (12%)	3,361 (15%)
<b>Vacant</b>	7,340 (43%)	7,918 (38%)	8,094 (35%)
<b>Average Household Size</b>	2.11	2.28	2.05

Source: US Census Bureau



**Recommendations and Goals**

**1. Improve sub-standard housing for betterment of health, safety and community**

- Study existing health codes and assess for adequate and proper enforcement
- Continue and expand programs that provide for proper disposal of abandoned and unused mobile homes.

Create a minimum housing standards ordinance as set forth by NCGS 160A-441.

**2. Promote high density and cluster housing in areas where this development can best be accommodated.**

- Encourage public and private partnerships to create housing developments
- Encourage mixed use development that integrates residential and commercial facilities to meet the daily needs of residents and reduce the need for travel.

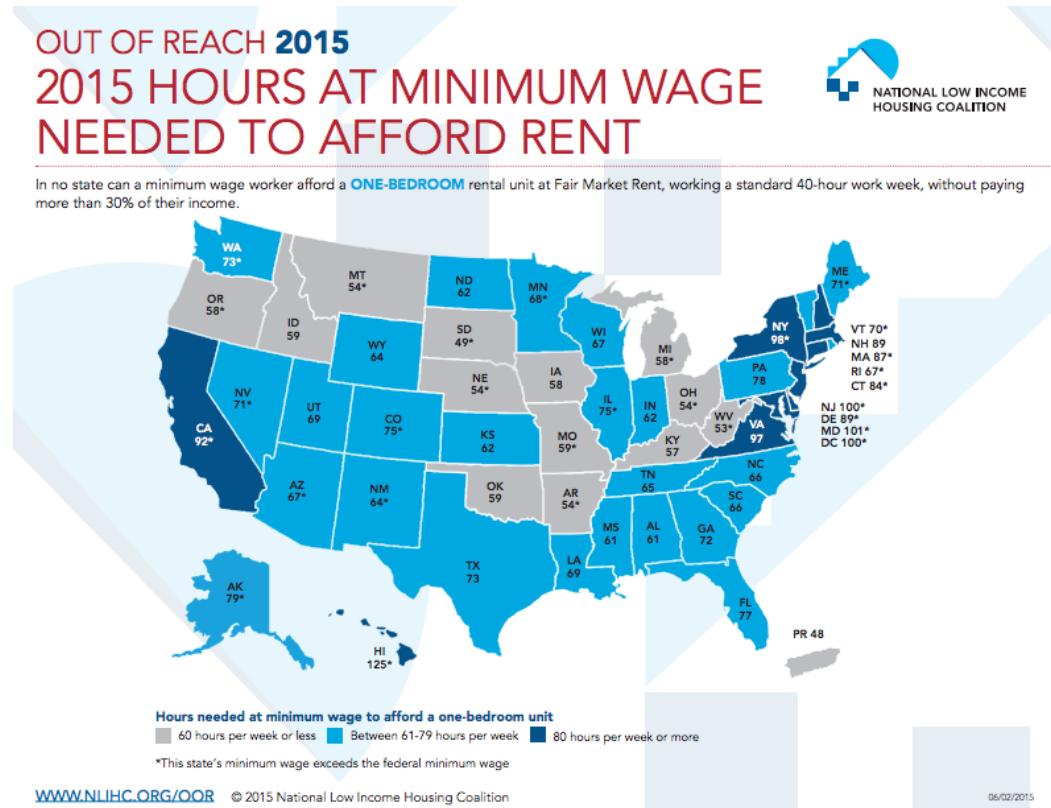


**3. Promote a variety of housing opportunities for all ages and income levels.**

- First time home buyers
- Rental home choices
- Retiree
- Assisted Living
- Affordable Housing Options
- Walkable/Livable Communities

**4. Create a standard for manufactured housing requirements that reduces the amount of antiquated manufactured houses permitted in Macon County.**

- Manufactured homes should have an age cap in order to prevent dilapidated mobile homes from being permitted and creating a minimum housing issue.



**Healthcare, Senior Care & Child Care**

Macon County provides quality healthcare to all citizens residing in the county. Two hospitals serve Macon County as well as a locally based Air Ambulance service that supports regional medical facilities. Specialists covering all medical disciplines are available in the county. A wide variety of medical and dental practices are located throughout Macon County, including an Urgent Care Center and 2 free clinics in the Franklin and Highlands areas.

**Hospitals**

**Angel Medical Center: Mission Health**

Angel Medical Center is located in Franklin North Carolina. The hospital is licensed for 59 beds but currently operates as a Critical Access Facility, having 25 beds available. Of the 25 beds, 6 are in the Intensive Care Unit, 14 are classified as medical/surgery, and 5 are reserved for women and children. According to hospital administration, 70% is the average occupancy rate for the 25 available beds. The average length of stay for patients in Angel Medical Center is 4 days.

Angel Medical Center employs roughly 425 people. Approximately 61 doctors are affiliated with the facility. Unaffiliated doctors can however, refer patients to Angel Medical Center.

The recruitment of doctors specializing in OBGYN care, Urology, Orthopedics, etc. is a growing issue for Angel Medical Center. Often times, patients are forced to leave Macon County to receive specialist treatment. Aside from recruitment of specialists, issues revolving around mental health patients continue to present problems for Angel Medical Center.

**Highlands-Cashiers Hospital**

Highlands-Cashiers Hospital strives to be an integral part of the community. The facility provides premier healthcare for all who enter. The staff at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital seeks to treat anyone who is in need of help without regard for their ability to pay.



**Highlands-Cashiers Hospital  
& Fidelia Eckerd Living Center**





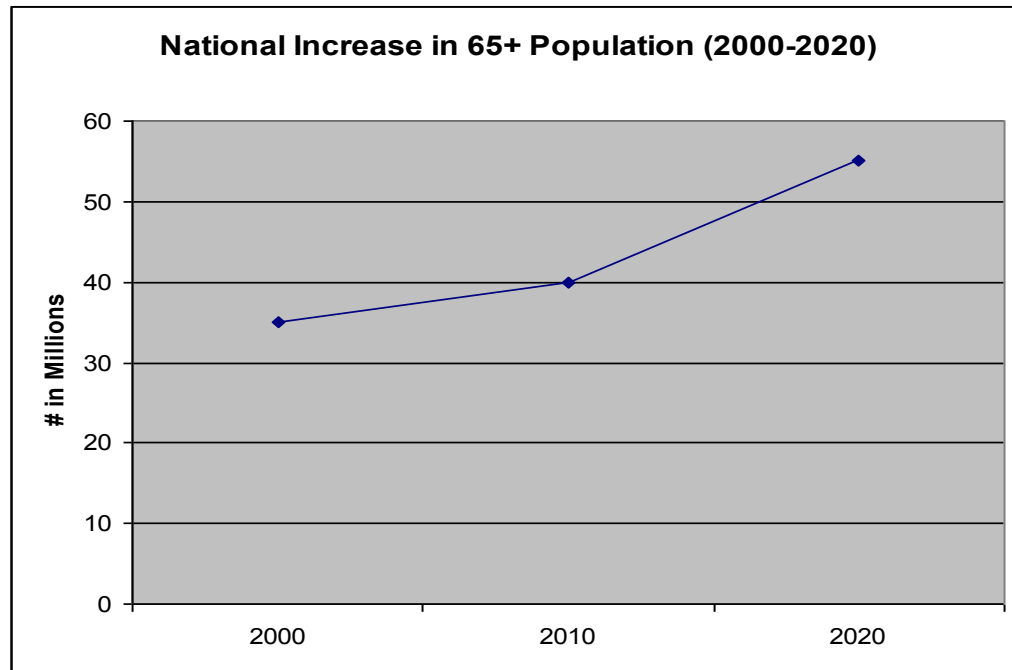
Fig. HCS1

**Senior Care**

In 2009 the Administration on Aging, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services released “A Profile of Older Americans: 2009.” Among the Highlights of the report:

- Nationally, the older age group will triple in number by 2050. During the next decade, one American will turn 60 years old every seven seconds.
- Nationally, over one in every eight people is considered to be an “older American.”

The population 65 and over will increase from 35 million in 2000 to 40 million in 2010 and then to 55 million in 2020.



Source: A Report on Healthy Aging in Macon County, North Carolina

Macon County has historically remained an attractive location for retirees. The mild climate, distinct seasons and “small town” atmosphere undoubtedly appeal to the older population. In 2029 20% of Macon County’s population is expected to be over the age of 65. Furthermore, the 55+ population is expected to make up approximately 32% of the total population.

The age of the workforce in Macon County is also indicative of the aging population. A Report on Healthy Aging in Macon County, North Carolina shows that approximately 45% of the workforce in Macon County is over the age of 45. 20% of this number is projected to be over the age of 55 according to the report.

The 55+ age group is never expected to fall below 30% of the total population over the next 20 years. It is imperative that this age group be considered in all future planning endeavors.



**Nursing/Assisted Living Facilities**

Macon County currently has three Skilled Nursing Facilities and two Assisted Living Facilities. A Skilled Nursing Facility is a place of residence for individuals who require constant nursing care and have significant deficiencies with activities of daily living. Residents in a skilled nursing facility may also receive physical, occupational, and other rehabilitative therapies following an accident or illness. Assisted Living Facilities, unlike Skilled Nursing Facilities do not staff registered nurses or doctors. Therefore, these facilities do not house patients who are dependent on intravenous drugs, feeding tubes, ventilators etc. While each of these facilities provide a high level of care and supervision to aging adults, the Skilled Nursing Facilities often carry a higher price tags, as they provide on-site professional medical care.

**Skilled Nursing Facilities**

**Macon Valley Nursing and Rehabilitation Center** is a Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation Facility that has been operating in Macon County for over two decades.

Macon valley has a total of 200 rooms in the facility.

**The Fidelia Eckerd Living Center** is an 84 bed facility with 4 private and 40 semi-private rooms. FELC accommodates the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual needs of every resident. The facility actively seeks to be accredited by the same rating agency that rates hospitals throughout the state, even though it is purely voluntary. FELC is connected to the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital so that emergency and acute care is readily available. Each resident is assigned a primary care physician who recommends a plan of medical treatment, supervises diagnostic as well as therapeutic procedures, and personally prescribes required medication.

**Assisted Living Facilities:**

**Grandview Manor**

Grandview Manor has been in operation for 53 years in Macon County. The facility has a capacity of 52 and generally has approximately 49-51 occupants. The facility will be expanding in the near future to accommodate 30 more occupants, increasing the capacity to 82. The population at Grandview Manor, according to administration, is comprised mainly of elderly people suffering from simple physical injuries and Alzheimer's. The base monthly tuition for this facility is \$1,900 per month.

**Chestnut Hill Senior Living Community**

The Chestnut Hill Senior Living Community is a facility for individuals over the age of 55. The facility is divided into a 26 unit assisted living wing, a 20 unit independent lodge, containing 1, 2 and 3 bedroom facilities, and 36 independent cottages that are spread throughout the 34 acre site. The marketing director estimates that Chestnut Hill is currently operating at 60% of full capacity. The Chestnut Hill Senior Living Community operates on a monthly rental program with tuition ranging from \$2,900 to \$5,000 per month. This tuition is inclusive of meal programs.

**The Franklin House**

The Franklin House was constructed in 2014 and is devoted to Senior Living.

The Franklin House offers Companion and Private room accommodations, on-site beauty salon & barber shop, private spa, full service housekeeping, on call physicians, social programs, etc.

The Franklin House also, has a wing of the facility dedicated to Alzheimer patients.



### Homecare:

Homecare agencies provide in-home care to senior citizens who are in need. Currently, there are 4 agencies within Macon County that provide homecare. The agencies are as follows:

Grandview Assisted Living Services

Companion Home Health

Angel Home Health

Western Home Health

### Macon County Senior Services

*“Partnering to promote, protect and strengthen our community.”*

The Macon County Senior Services Center offers a variety of services to seniors in Macon County. The new center located at 108 Wayah Street provides a spacious, open environment for all seniors to enjoy. The facility operates Monday-Friday from 8:00 am. to 5:00 pm. Below are services this facility provides.

Community Resource Center- A single point of access for information and assistance on services offered in the county. The CRC serves not only seniors but young adults, families and people with disabilities as well.

Congregate Meals- Nutritionally balanced meals served Monday- Friday. Socialization, activities, speakers and special occasion events are all part of the Congregate Meals Program.

- Home Delivered Meals- Meals are delivered to homebound individuals who need assistance with nutritional health. A dedicated volunteer will deliver noon time meals Monday-Friday.
- In Home Services: Personal care, grocery pick-up, medicine pick-up, light housekeeping, paying bills and caregiver relief.
- STARR- A registry for high risk individuals in the county that shares important information with emergency responders.
- Project Lifesaver- A radio transmitter that can help aid in the location of individuals prone to wander.
- Care Dependent Sheltering Registry- A registry that identifies individuals in the county that may require special needs during a disaster.
- SHIIP Services- Senior Health Insurance Information Program offers objective information about Medicare.
- Caregiver Support Group- A group meeting that offers support, education and community resources to caregivers.
- Caregiver Connection- Adult Day Care program designed to relieve the caregivers of disabled adults and our older population to enable individuals to remain in their home.

### Activities for Macon County Seniors

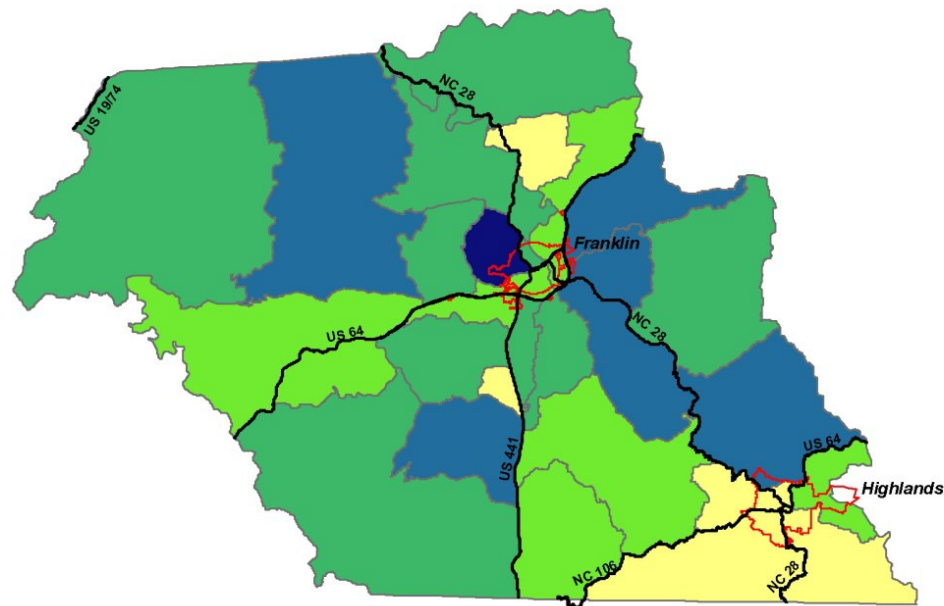
Macon County offers a variety of activities for senior citizens to participate in. The Macon County Senior Games is sanctioned by the North Carolina Senior Games Inc. This organization was established in 1990 to create a year round health promotion and education program for adults 55 years of age or better. Every spring, over 60,000 participants in North Carolina are active in local Senior Games Competitions. Macon County operates one of the 54 sanctioned local Senior Games Programs. Athletes and artists who qualify at local games are invited to attend the State Finals in the fall. Every two years, State Final winners who qualify can represent North Carolina in the National Senior Games. In 2009, over 300 seniors participated in the Senior Games.

In addition to the Macon County Senior Games, active seniors in the Franklin, North Carolina area are involved year 'round in sporting events, classes, fundraisers and local events like the Halloween Carnival and Christmas Parade.



## Number of Residents 65 Years and Older by Block Group

*Macon County, North Carolina*

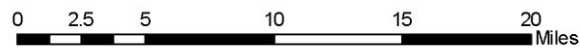


**Legend**

- Primary Roads
- ▭ Towns

**Age - 65 Years and Older**

- ▭ 64 - 114
- ▭ 115 - 182
- ▭ 183 - 251
- ▭ 252 - 338
- ▭ 339 - 454



The accessibility of quality, affordable healthcare is extremely important to all individuals. As individuals age more healthcare services are generally required, making the topics of Healthcare and senior citizens closely related. For this reason, it was difficult to separate the recommendations from these two elements. Recommendations for the Healthcare and Senior Citizens elements of the Comprehensive Plan are listed below .

**Recommendations and Goals**

**1. Create a Healthy Active Environment in Macon County by building Active Living Communities**

- Add more Sidewalks as roads are upgraded
- Add Bike Trails as roads are upgraded
- Emphasize fitness whenever possible with new

**2. Emphasize Worksite Wellness**

- Encourage employers to encourage employees to be active.
- Encourage employers to facilitate fitness activities prior to work, after work, and during breaks.

**3. Consider seniors when developing fitness centers and in coordination of activities that will facilitate healthier and longer lives for our residents.**

- Continue to support senior games
- Plan for seniors at all levels, including field trips, activities and events for Alzheimer’s, etc.
- Work with existing recreation facilities to promote senior health, i.e. reduced rates for seniors, etc.
- Encourage new facilities to be senior friendly, and affordable.



**4. Support the Free Care Clinics, the Medication Assistance Program, the local hospitals, and the Macon County Public Health Center**

- Support the development of a Collaborative Network to coordinate the services being provided to the low-income, uninsured county residents by the safety net providers that currently exist or that may be developed in the future.
- Assist in writing grants and providing letters of support for any grants that are available for these services and other services that can assist the underserved medical needs of our residents.
- Commit to provide some fixed amount of dollars that can be used to provide services in any of these areas, at times when other sources are insufficient to meet the needs.

**5. Work with community providers to improve quality of care by implementing management tools that ensure the use of best practices; manage high-risk patients and high-cost services; and incorporates accountability.**

**6. Promote livable, senior friendly communities - the vast majority of Americans want to remain in their communities as they age (report on aging). This in turn saves them and “us”, being taxpayer’s, money in the long run.**

- Work to make Macon County a “Livable & Senior Friendly” Community.
- Work with developers, realtors and contractors - educate them on senior friendly housing communities.
- Educate businesses on avenues they can explore to become “Senior Friendly.”
- Develop appropriate housing options for seniors - Macon County’s workforce has a high number of senior citizens. This group of citizens needs appropriate housing options that are affordable.
- Conduct a feasibility study for appropriate and affordable senior housing options in Macon County.

**7. Cooperate fully with acceptable entities that are trying to add assisted living or independent living facilities in Macon County.**

- Encourage the accommodation of water and power needs for these entities.
- Provide tax break incentives to encourage investment by these entities into Macon County.



**8. Devote more time and hours to senior recreation in Nantahala.**

**9. Coordinate events in Nantahala and Highlands with Senior Center in Macon County.**

**10. Make someone from Macon County Senior Center available 2 days a month in Nantahala and Highlands.**



# CHILD CARE



## Child Care

Quality child care, whether in the home or in licensed child care centers, provides a positive nurturing environment and age-appropriate development activities and education for the children of working parents long before the child enters the public or private school systems. Affordable and available child care for Macon County's working parents is on the same level of importance as affordable housing and affordable health care. The benefits of quality child care are realized not only by the children and their parents, but by employers of the parents as well. *(Childcare Issues Committee report)* Macon County should explore all means necessary to ensure that quality childcare is available to accommodate a growing population



## Childcare Issues Committee

The Macon County Childcare Issues Committee was appointed in February 2009, and has worked to fully explore the issues involving child care. The committee involved every type of expert, resource, and related stakeholder to gain information, make conclusions and offer recommendations.

The committee gathered and consolidated information for public review, developed conclusions based on research and offered specific recommendations to address the issues identified. The work of the committee was compiled into a report and presented to the Commission on January 25, 2010. The report suggests a short-term solution of a new infant/toddler center and identifies the need for long-term incentives to grow the child care capacity in Macon County at a rate consistent with the projected growth in the population and workforce.

Acknowledging the amount of expertise and work that went into the creation of this document, the Healthcare/Childcare/Senior Citizens Committee of the Macon County Comprehensive plan relied heavily on this report as a resource in their recommendation making process.

## Benefits of Early Childhood Education

*(Childcare Issues Committee interim Report)*

Childcare industry generates \$1.77 billion annually and provides over 47,000 jobs in NC.

Macon County Childcare industry generates approximately \$4.8 million in annual revenues and provides 178 jobs in local economy.

Cornell University study found that every \$1 spent for childcare services generated \$1.84 in local sales and service industries

Children with early childhood education are better prepared for school system.

Children having quality preschool and early learning experiences are well prepared for school system.

Employees with adequate childcare are more likely to be on time for work, lower absenteeism and less distracted on the job.



Access to affordable, quality childcare provides businesses with considerable benefits, increasing the bottom line including: Lower employee turnover, reduced tardiness and absenteeism, increased employee performance, higher employee morale and commitment, lower training and recruiting costs.

For a more complete description of the benefits provided by Early Childhood Education, please refer to the Childcare Issues Committee Interim Report (Available at Macon County Planning Department.)

**Childcare Issues in Macon County**  
*(Childcare Issues Committee Interim Report)*

The CIC Interim Report sheds light on 8 issues currently being faced by “Maconians” with regards to Childcare. The issues are as follows:

**1. Availability**

- Throughout the child care industry, the accepted rule of thumb is that adequate capacity is defined as having child care slots available to one-half (50%) of the child population.
- Macon County is estimated to have a 0-5 yr. old population of 2,161 and a child care industry capacity of only 678 children (31%).
- Capacity shortfall in infant-toddler care 0-2 yr. old is more acute.
- In 2008 0-2 population was 1,147 with only 210 child care slots available (173% shortfall).
- 8 of the licensed centers are located in and operated by Macon County Schools for the express purpose of serving the after school needs of school aged children.

**2. Coverage**

Few Macon County Child Care Programs provide full-time hours matching the parents work schedules. Most church and private centers mirror the public school schedules. This makes it difficult for those parents working outside of the period between 8am and 4pm.

**3. Financial Support**

- Federal tuition support is available for low-income families in Macon County
- The State of North Carolina Department of Human Services also provides subsidized support for low income families.

The problem lies for those families earning above the guidelines. To qualify for tuition support from the Department of Human Services for instance a family of three must earn below \$40,176. The NC Dept. of Housing and Urban Development reported the 2008 median household income for a family of three in Macon County to be \$44,000

**5. Provider Turnover**

- Since 2005, ten home centers and four child-care centers have gone out of business in Macon County. During this same time period, only 7 new centers have started.



**6. Cost**

- Quality Childcare is expensive

**Program License Rating**

<b>(Subsidized Rates)</b>	<b>Home</b>	<b>Center</b>
5 Star Infant/Toddler Care	\$547/ mo.	\$784/ mo.
2 Star Infant/ Toddler Care	\$398/ mo.	\$445/ mo.
5 Star Care- 3 year old	\$421/ mo.	\$590/ mo.
1 Star Care- 3 year old	\$335/ mo.	\$368/ mo.
Private Pay Rates- Under 2	\$473/ mo.	\$746/ mo.

**6. Quality (Ratings range from 1 to 5 stars)**

- State Agencies stress quality ratings, encouraging centers to earn the rating of 4 and 5 stars. Additional quality carries a significant price tag for providers.
- Quality incentives while in existence, do not equal the loss of tuition resulting from having to reduce enrollment or add staff to achieve the higher star ratings.
- Macon County Centers are rated as follows:
  - ✦ 5 Star Centers- 9
  - ✦ 4 Star Centers- 2
  - ✦ 3 Star Centers- 3
  - ✦ 2 Star Centers- 2
  - ✦ 1 Star Centers- 1

17 + 1 Exempted Religious Program

1 Special Provisional

2 Temporary Provisional

There are 17 licensed childcare centers in Macon County, 2 that are provisionally licensed and 1 religious programs is exempted. Of these programs two (2) are home centers operated with a regulated limit of 8 children total (only 2 of which can be an infant and a maximum of 5 school age children)

**7. Projected Growth**

- The Economic Opportunity Institute projects that in the next ten years, 85% of the workforce will be working parents, spending more time on the job than compared to 20 years ago.
- 2007 - 2029 the (0-14) population is projected to increase by 3%. It is reasonable to assume that the infant/toddler population will grow at the same rate. Should a younger workforce be successfully attracted to the county, the infant/toddler population will grow even faster.

Based on population projections and without significant new initiatives by Macon County to encourage a similar rate of growth in the local child care industry, the current shortage in infant/toddler child care capacity will grow to 750 children and families needing care where none will be available.

**8. The “Squeeze” on Parents**

- Many Macon county families with preschool children have incomes greater than those required to qualify for either Free or DHHS subsidized child care.

Non-working parents, other than full-time students, receive no financial help from either subsidy program.

For a further description of the issues being faced by parents regarding childcare in Macon County, please refer to the Childcare Issues Committee Interim Report (Available at the Macon County Planning Department)





Childcare Facilities in Macon County

- Children’s Discovery Center – Temporary - 25
- Covenant Childcare Center – Five Star Center - 19
- Great Beginnings Lutheran Preschool – Five Star Center - 50
- Highland Community Child Development Center – Four Star Center - 66
- Iotla Valley Preschool – Five Star Center - 18
- Kim’s Kids Daycare Center – Temporary - 29
- Leap Into Learning – Five Star Center - 18
- New Horizons Center for Children and Families – Sp Prov License - 400
- Pam’s Daycare – Two Star Home CC - 8
- Prentiss Preschool – One Star Center - 12
- Pruett House Family Center – Five Star Center - 24
- Ready Set Go Preschool Program – Five Star Center - 18
- Stella Haire’s Daycare Home – Two Star Home CC - 8
- Trimont Christian Academy – Four Star Center - 230
- Up, Up, and Away Cartoogechaye School – Five Star Center - 18

**Recommendations and Goals:**

There are many issues currently facing the childcare industry in Macon County. As indicated in the Child-care Issues Committee Interim Report, our county is already experiencing a drastic shortfall in terms of childcare availability. We must work together as citizens of Macon County to ensure that this shortfall does not continue to spiral out of control. The Healthcare/Childcare/Senior Citizens committee makes the following recommendations to help ensure that childcare availability remains adequate now and in the future.

1. **Encourage the local government to provide on-going support and assistance as needed for the Childcare industry in Macon County, now and in the future.**
2. **Ensure that the EDC makes childcare a top priority when recruiting new business into Macon County.**



- Develop financial incentives for providing childcare.
- Financial incentives are also needed to sustain the small home centers currently serving the county, to encourage the growth of new child care centers in Macon County, and to encourage individuals and businesses to become child care providers. The goal is to eliminate the current shortages in preschool child care capacity and to stimulate and maintain a healthy local childcare growth rate.
- Work with surrounding counties that have incorporated childcare mechanisms into their economic development efforts.



**3. Provide on-going support for the Childcare industry in Macon County**

- Create an endowment fund for the Macon County childcare industry in the future. Solicit public and private financial support, as well as grants to build a community endowment.

Use annual endowment income for purposes such as training for private childcare providers, creating new or upgrading existing facilities, and to create financial grants for new providers during the first three years of operation.

**4. Explore the implementation of a central intake for childcare providers.**

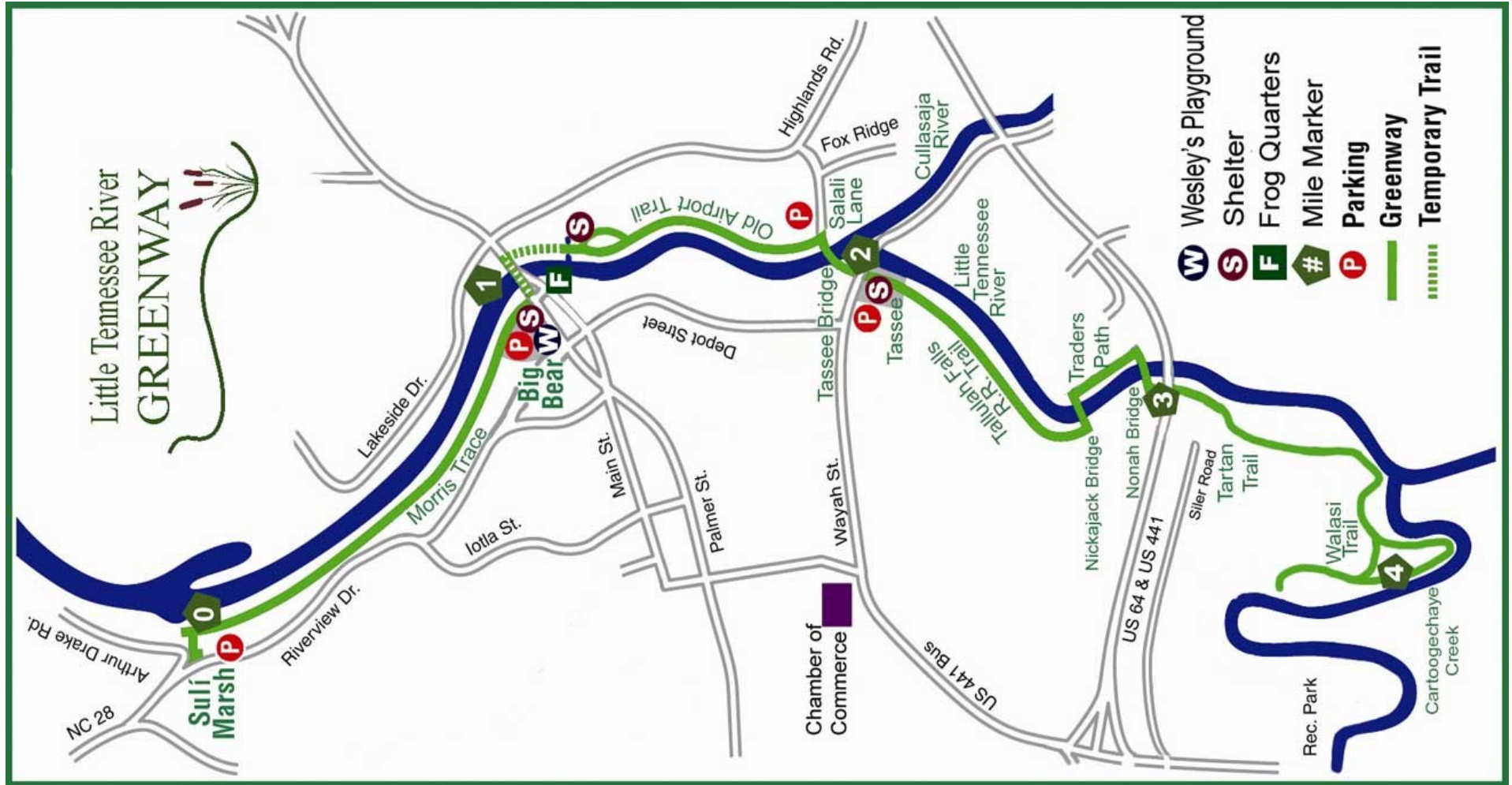
- Work with surrounding counties, finding out who currently uses the central intake system for childcare.

**5. Create an initiative with Region A to address Childcare Issues on a local and regional level.**

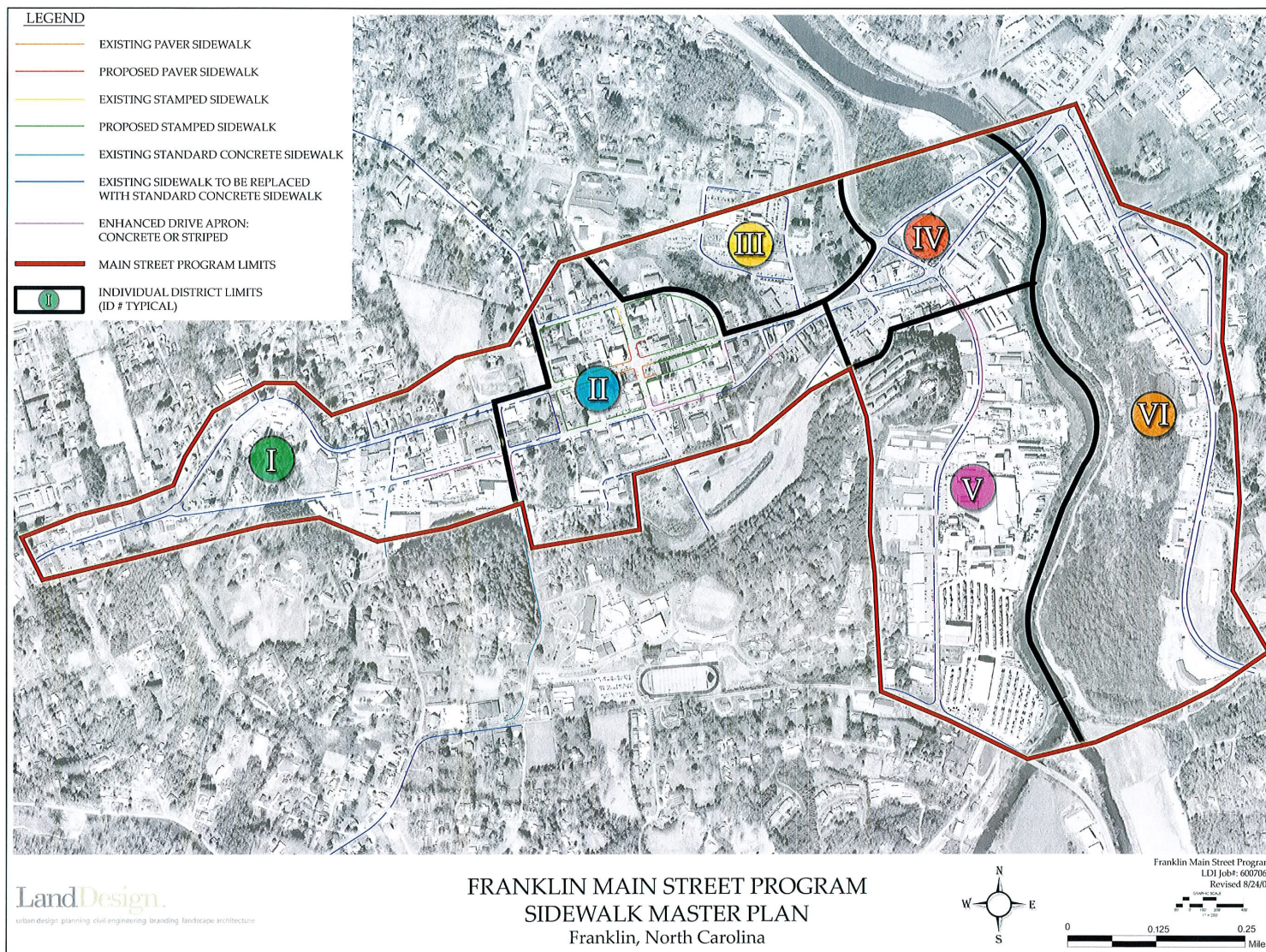
**6. Create an incentive program through SCC or Macon County that provides business management and child care training for child care providers.**



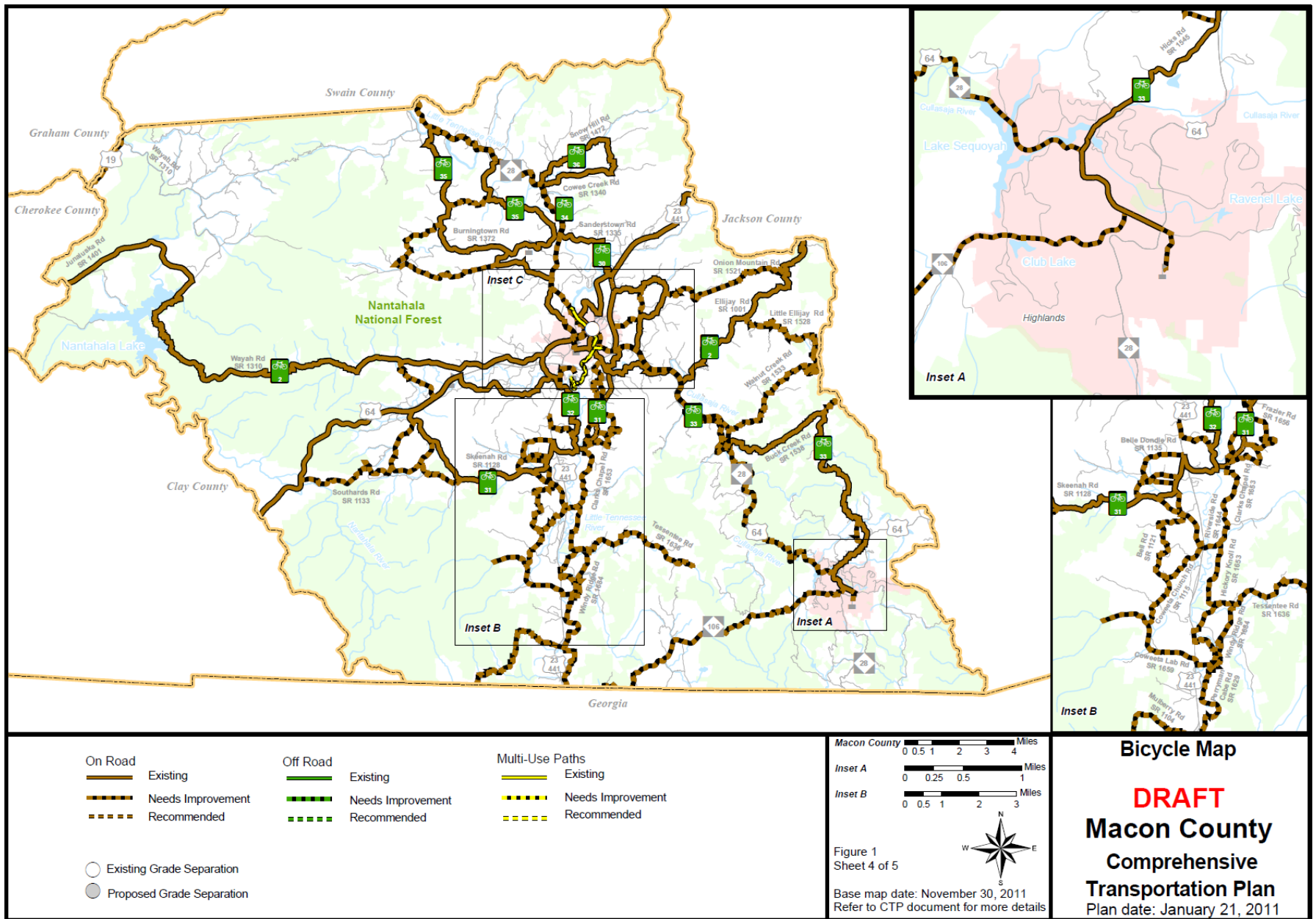
Appendix 1: Little Tennessee River Greenway Plan

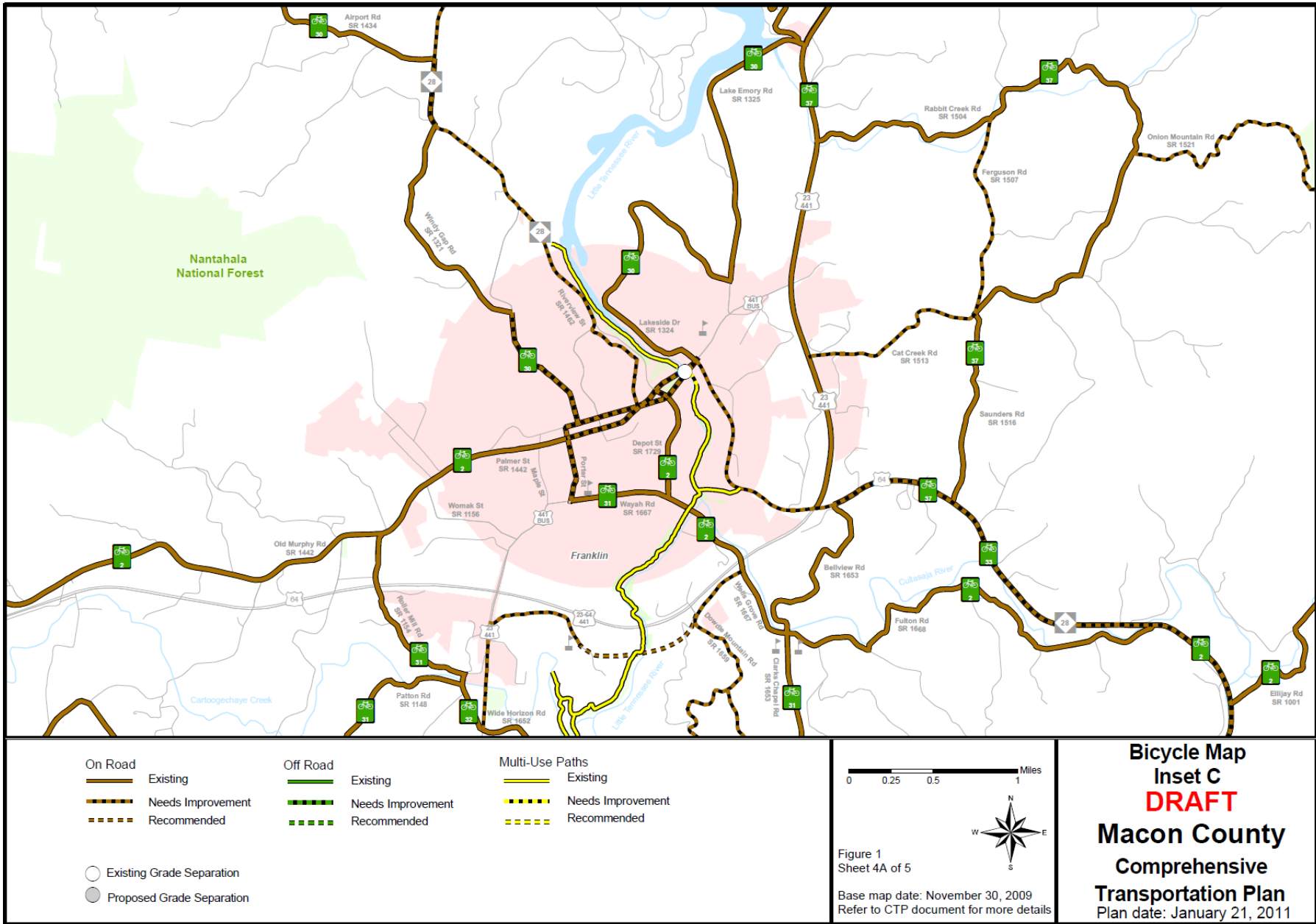


Appendix 2: Town of Franklin Sidewalk Plan



Appendix 3: Macon County Bike Routes





**Conclusion:** In conclusion this document should be used as a master planning tool which is designed to guide the future actions of community leaders, and elected officials. The comprehensive plan for Macon County presents a vision of the future, with long range goals and objectives for activities affecting Macon County Government.



Dry Falls: Nantahala National Forest

