



BLACK MOUNTAIN

CREATING OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMIES

STRATEGIC PLAN

2023-2028



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The Rural Economic Development Division announced the technical assistance program offering Outdoor Recreation Economy Strategic Planning and Asset Development services in late 2022. Communities from across the state applied to engage with strategic planning services and 34 local governments were accepted to participate. The Town of Black Mountain, NC was among the first local governments to begin the planning process. Rural Planning staff, who is responsible for facilitating strategic economic development planning and implementation services, worked with local government staff to communicate the goals of the program, identify local opportunities, and assemble a planning work group.

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Executive Summary

Through the Community Outdoor Recreation Economy (CORE) program, the Town of Black Mountain collaborated with N.C. Department of Commerce, Rural Economic Development Division staff members and local stakeholders through a strategic planning process to identify and develop outdoor recreation assets that present economic growth opportunities. Strategy development focused on leveraging outdoor recreation assets to increase benefits from tourism, encourage small business development, enhance quality of life for residents, plan for outdoor recreation asset and infrastructure development, and position communities to grow and attract outdoor gear manufacturing industries. The planning process was tailored to meet the specific needs, goals, and opportunities that local stakeholders identified.

The plan proposes strategies and actions that Black Mountain can take to increase economic vitality by leveraging outdoor recreation. For the purposes of this strategic planning program outdoor recreation is defined as all recreational activities undertaken for leisure that occur outdoors, with an emphasis on those activities that involve some level of intentional physical exertion and occur in nature-based environments. Furthermore, other community assets and economic institutions that benefit from or complement the outdoor recreation economy are addressed in the plan.

This is a strategic plan that includes a vision or economic target state, directions to start out in and some first projects to further leverage outdoor recreation activity. It is critical that the assembled Work Group continue to meet, add members as expertise is needed, and be empowered by the local government to implement this plan. The proposed Actions—short and longer term—are expected to evolve as conditions change and opportunities arise but the Work Group should continue to move Black Mountain toward the economic position using the Strategies the group has established.

The Work Group of businesses, elected leaders, professionals and avid recreators undertaking this study were surveyed at the very beginning of the process for their priority economic impact areas and outcomes. The most important benefits to be gained from Black Mountain's Outdoor Recreation assets are to be focused on:

- Increased revenue for existing businesses
- Improving quality of life for residents
- Attracting new business and industry
- Encouraging local entrepreneurship for outdoor recreation businesses

Black Mountain currently serves as the hospitality center for area outdoor recreation activities. In addition to the many recreation programs and Town facilities, one of the Town of Black Mountain's greatest assets is the vibrancy of the commercial core. Critical to the outdoor culture are social and entertainment destinations, a wide range of quality restaurants, expanded activities like those provided by the unique craft and arts businesses and diverse wellness services. Downtown is compact, visually appealing and walkable with back streets and walk-thru alleys. The scale is good for spending time off the bike and out of the car.

Outdoor Activity

Hiking, road and mountain biking and fishing are the most popular outdoor activities for visitors to Black Mountain. Short and easy hikes may be the most requested but local guides and outfitters direct the serious recreator to popular locations like the mountain bike trails at Kitsuma, Heartbreak and Lookout depending on skill level. Hikers can make a day of Catawba Waterfall, Montreat Wilderness, Warren Wilson campus, Curtis Creek, Point Lookout, USFS ridgeline trails and arranged access to trails on Blue Ridge Assembly, Christmount and Ridgecrest property. Many visitors enjoy walking around Lake Tomahawk.

Road Cycling is especially popular on Highway 70 and along the Farm Heritage Scenic Route.

Fishing occurs in stocked areas on the Swannanoa River and in Black and Curtis Creek all with Mountain Heritage Trout designation, as well as at Lake Tomahawk. One Fly Outfitters knows other secret spots! Trout fishing is about to improve as NC Wildlife Resources initiates Delayed Harvest Trout Waters management on some Black Mountain waters this fall (2023) (ncwildlife.org/trout). Veterans Park is also now a stop on the new Blueways Snorkel trail.

Challenges

The Town faces some challenges to growing outdoor recreation impacts.

- The Town does not control the land that ensures it remains a mountain town with 360 degree scenic views nor on which most outdoor recreation occurs.
- There is no direct or easy access into the national forest or onto other public land that supports outdoor recreation experiences from downtown Black Mountain.
- Conference Centers have had issues with groups (some with guides) from the public trespassing onto private land—even to the point of disrupting use by paying guests.
- The current provision of resort-quality amenities and programs may not be financially sustainable or adequately staffed if already planned facilities are implemented.

Opportunities

The Town has recently received two new donated properties soon to undergo master planning and development. Donation directives require that at least one of them be used specifically for

recreation. In addition to any public surveys planned, interviews with area Conference Centers offered some activity suggestions to supplement their offerings and encourage their guests to spend more time in town.

The smaller scale, walkable, energized downtown, with great food and some less-expensive hospitality options makes Black Mountain an attractive alternative to Asheville. Visitors make day trips into Biltmore and other Asheville destinations but return for sustenance and sleep.

This position as a vibrant hospitality center can benefit from potential regional connections. Old Fort and communities to the east are quickly developing the Fonta Flora and Overmountain Victory State Trails with supportive activities that will soon link into Black Mountain. Passenger rail service feasibility analysis includes potential for a stop in Black Mountain.

Outdoor recreation is a lifestyle that meshes with many of the Black Mountain assets and conditions including human scale development, accessibility, historic character, entrepreneurial spirit, appreciation for quality, a strong social network and clean environment.

The Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation is developing a program to increase benefits of parkway visitation in gateway communities—the Town of Black Mountain should continue to be involved to request signage from the parkway into downtown and develop enticing local history, craft, recreation and wellness experiences to share.

Action Strategies

The Economic Positioning statement developed during this process includes Areas of Activity/Action Strategies which mostly fall into three areas of work:

- Developing the structures and funding necessary to keep the existing quality of outdoor amenity and service sustainable, as well as support any new facility development.
- Focusing any new or expanded recreation facilities and activities on better serving residents and the types of guests who already enjoy Black Mountain.
- Using outdoor recreation, and the community's role as a hospitality base, to then develop unique experiences engaging the broader, diverse local economy—arts, history, craft, food, wellness.

As a strategic plan to increase economic impacts in the Town, much attention was given to attracting recreators into the downtown, expanding experiences to include more businesses and increasing rainy day, entertainment and learning opportunities.

#1 Black Mountain – Where Outdoor Journeys Begin is the first strategy and builds on the existing strength of the Town as the hospitality, social and entertainment center. Quality and convenience of food and accommodations need to be continued and expanded. There is a gap in the provision of affordable ‘trail town’ types of accommodations that camps might help to fill. Access to accurate information is important for all visitors as well as residents. That includes sharing information about the many programs, facilities and services already available to residents and guests alike. There is opportunity to expand on existing outdoor education and guide services, including more introductory guidance and access to gear for beginners and youth. Passenger rail would be another way to invite recreators into town—supporting those from the train as well as the Conference Centers arriving without motorized vehicles.

#2 Outdoor Recreation meets Culture and Spirit addresses the uniqueness of Black Mountain as a place to explore and appreciate. History is to be interwoven in outdoor adventures with place markers and informational signage as well as forest walking tours. History and art might also be woven into rest stops in downtown making it a more engaging walking environment for children, seniors. Additional green areas are proposed to provide shade, filter rainwater and act as mini-parks for post-recreation, public, social gathering places. Under this strategy it is also proposed to study and develop new tools and programs with dedicated staff to grow small business and the unique Black Mountain economy.

#3 Together we Steward our Natural Assets is critical for the maintenance and access to wildlands for recreation and Black Mountain’s scenic setting. The Parks and Recreation Department Outdoor Recreation program maintains close partnerships with many of the resource managers and organizes public efforts to build and maintain safe hiking trails as well as nature education. This strategy also supports the ‘green and resilient’ goal in **Elevate Black Mountain** by proposing development of an internal, and then also public-engaging, program to address environmental quality issues with events and partnerships. Partnerships are also proposed for natural asset appreciation and stewardship, building on efforts already in place at the library, museum, schools and with youth and church organizations.

#4 Improve Physical, Social and Spiritual Wellbeing recognizes the importance, made clear during the pandemic, of outdoor recreation for overall health in the community. It proposes to develop unique visitor and resident itineraries or experiences that pair recreation with arts, culture and the services offered by many wellness businesses. It is under this strategy that it is proposed to research and develop new structures and funding sources to maintain the resort-level of amenity available in Black Mountain—natural environment and the downtown. This work pairs with the proposal for dedicated staff to focus on Town economic and business development.

#5 Provide Daily Access/Connections to Outdoor Recreation for All This strategy recognizes the disparity between the steep surrounding terrain and the skill or capacity of most visitors and residents. It also acknowledges the many services offered at surrounding camps and conference center making outdoor recreation available to those of varying abilities. Walkability and bikeability are vital to making the community more hospitable to a broader variety of people including young children. This also supports the Walkable + Livable and Connected + Accessible goals of **Elevate Black Mountain**. Given the size and density of the Town it should be possible to live without a vehicle thus also becoming a perfect destination for passenger rail service visitors. Another proposed action is to develop off-season outdoor events that will bolster visitation to shops during quiet months while also engaging residents in community activities for comradery.

Implementation

It is important for the Work Group to continue meeting and moving ahead with the outlined projects and tasks. The Town Council may decide to request progress reports a couple of times each year. However, to accomplish any new development and management tasks, as well as the many outreach activities required to build an economy, additional staff time will be necessary. Being pro-active in developing an economic sector like outdoor recreation would also benefit from specialized knowledge and passion—as well as regional connections. To grow an economy requires a gardener!

Funding is required to support development as well as maintenance and management of programs and facilities. Various stakeholders and Work Group members have offered ideas for funding streams from considering user fees, ensuring that income-producing activities are built into as many outdoor recreation facilities and experiences as possible, to dedicating a portion of the occupancy tax, developing a business-improvement or municipal services district and other tools to further outdoor recreation economy development.

This line of thought needs further development as implementation moves forward. An economic report from Headwaters Economics, *“The Amenity Trap: How high-amenity communities can avoid being loved to death”* includes a listing of how other outdoor asset-rich communities are raising the funds needed to address these challenges. The report can be found online at: <https://headwaterseconomics.org/outdoor-recreation/amenity-trap/>.



Background

There is a long tradition of outdoor recreation in North Carolina. From the mountains to the coast and everywhere in between there are incredible landscapes and unique places to pursue a wide variety of outdoor recreation activities. Participation in these activities generates a large economic impact. In recent years statistics show that participation in outdoor recreation is increasing, particularly in the wake of COVID-19. Continued growth in participation leads to the opportunity for the increased economic impact of outdoor recreation, particularly in rural locations where many of the state's outdoor recreation assets are located. Also, there is great potential to expose and engage people that have historically not participated in outdoor recreation activities at the same rate as others. It is important for all individuals to have the opportunity and access to enjoy recreational pursuits, and to have an opportunity to benefit economically from outdoor recreation. These factors, combined with other on-going outdoor

recreation initiatives across the state, make it an ideal time to think critically about how this sector can continue to be leveraged to benefit local economies.

Economic Impact

Outdoor recreation activity and associated expenditures generate a large economic impact. This is a broad economic sector that comprises a diverse range of industries including manufacturing, retail, arts, entertainment and recreation, as well as many supporting activities such as construction, travel and tourism, accommodation and food service, and many more.



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account and Regional Economic Accounts.



According to the U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis' Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account, nationwide, in 2022, the outdoor recreation economy represented \$563.7 billion in current-dollar gross domestic product (GDP), or 2.2 percent of the United States' total GDP. The outdoor recreation sector of the

economy is growing at a faster rate than the overall economy. "Inflation-adjusted ("real") GDP for the outdoor recreation economy increased 4.8 percent in 2022, compared with a 1.9 percent increase for the overall U.S. economy, reflecting a deceleration from the increase in outdoor recreation of 22.7 percent in 2021. Real gross output for the outdoor recreation economy increased 7.5 percent, while outdoor recreation compensation increased 9.1 percent, and employment increased 7.4 percent (national table 9)." Employment in the outdoor recreation industry increased in all 50 states during 2022.

At the state level, outdoor recreation contributed \$14.5 billion in total value-added economic impact to North Carolina's GDP. North Carolina ranked as the 11th highest state in "Value-Added Outdoor Recreation in Total outdoor recreation activities" in 2022. This included employment for over 146,000 individuals that resulted in over \$6.8 billion in total compensation. Employment in key industries within the outdoor recreation sector includes

over 7,600 in manufacturing, 51,000 in retail, 27,000 in accommodation and food service, and over 29,000 in arts, entertainment, and recreation¹.

Outdoor Recreation Participation

According to the 2022 Outdoor Industry Association ‘Outdoor Participation Trends Report’, “outdoor participation continues to grow at record levels. More than half (54%) of Americans ages 6 and over participated in at least one outdoor activity in 2021, and the outdoor recreation participant base grew 2.2% in 2021 to 164.2M participants. This growing number of outdoor participants, however, did not fundamentally alter long-term declines in high frequency or ‘core’ outdoor participation.”²

These studies show that approximately 56% of North Carolinians participate in some form of outdoor recreation each year.³ This includes more than 22.8 million visitors to North Carolina state parks in 2021 — three million more than any other year on record. Many parks, national forests, and other public recreation areas report increased visitation as well. These numbers represent a solid base of individuals participating in outdoor recreation and contributing to associated economic activity. But there is still room to engage more individuals and continue to increase participation in outdoor recreation, particularly among populations that have not historically participated at levels comparable to others. Also, people increasingly want outdoor recreation opportunities that are convenient to where they live so they can participate on a regular basis without the need to travel long distances.^{4 5}

Black Mountain Visitors

The most prevalent visitor groups to Black Mountain include retired couples, singles or groups and then families. Anecdotal reports were shared about a growing number of bachelor parties coming to do the many different outdoor activities from a Black Mountain basecamp and also of parents vacationing in Black Mountain while their children attend camp in the area. Visitors to the surrounding Conference Centers do spend free time, or come in early, to spend time in downtown Black Mountain. Many of the visitors explain that they prefer to stay in Black

¹ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis. Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account, U.S. and States, 2022. <https://www.bea.gov/data/special-topics/outdoor-recreation>

² Outdoor Industry Association. 2022 Outdoor Participation Trends Report. <https://outdoorindustry.org/resource/2022-outdoor-participation-trends-report/>

³ The Citizen-Times. North Carolina outdoor recreation is a \$28 billion industry, poised for further growth. October 11th, 2019. <https://www.citizen-times.com/story/news/2019/10/11/outdoor-economy-conference-asheville-highlights-28-billion-industry/3923846002/>

⁴ Headwaters Economics. Recreation Counties Attracting New Residents and Higher Incomes. <https://headwaterseconomics.org/economic-development/trends-performance/recreation-counties-attract/>

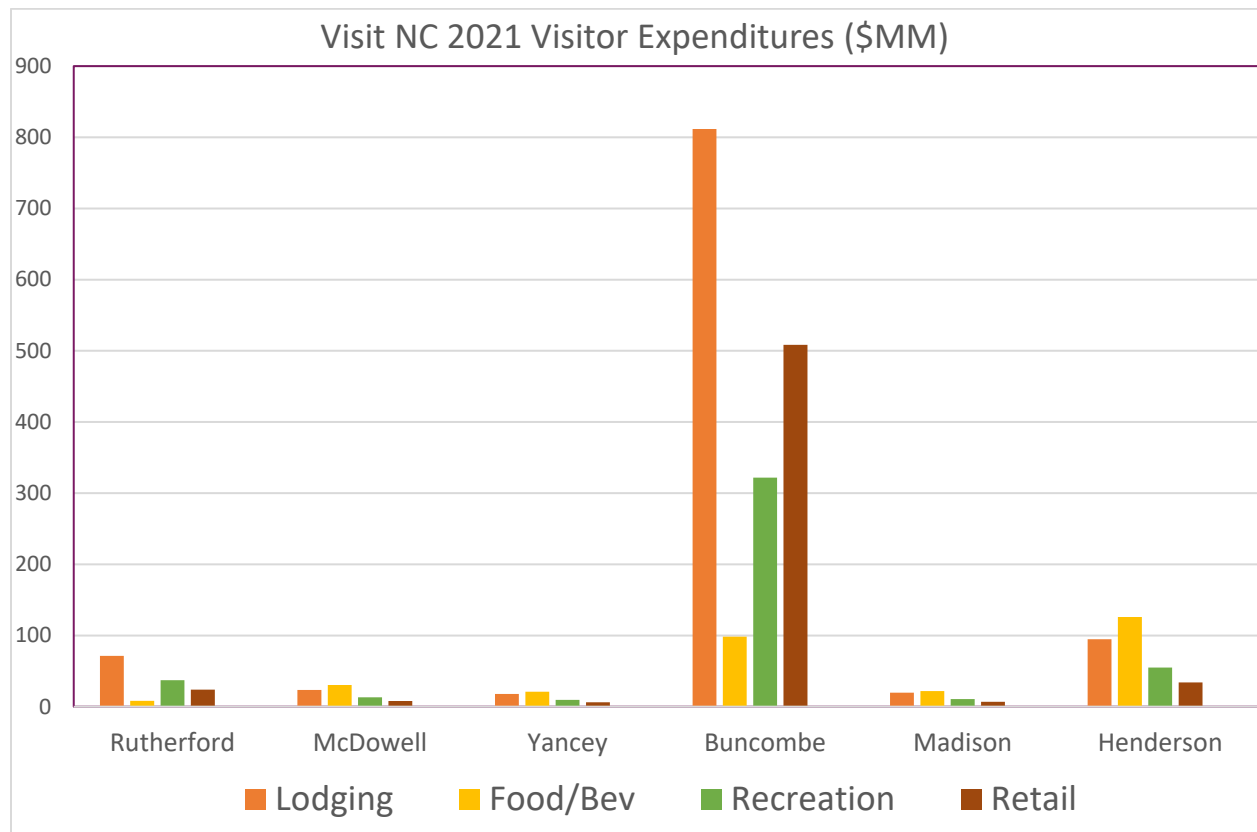
⁵ Outdoor Foundation. 2022 Outdoor Participation Trends Report. <https://outdoorindustry.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/2022-Outdoor-Participation-Trends-Report.pdf>

Mountain and do day trips into the larger and more frenetic Asheville scene as well as to surrounding outdoor recreation destinations.

Setting

The picturesque town of Black Mountain (population 8,452 in 2021) is the first mountain town after climbing the escarpment from Old Fort on Interstate 40 west. The Pisgah National Forest borders the Town to the east and the Blue Ridge Parkway follows the ridgeline to the north. Much of the forested land immediately surrounding the Town is protected watershed and not open for public recreational use. Other land that provides natural scenery is owned and managed by numerous private camps, conference and retreat centers.

The Town has a signature park called Lake Tomahawk with a public golf course, swimming pool, tennis courts, walking trails, senior center, playground and picnic shelter that hosts myriad Town Parks and Recreation programs. The department has forged critical partnerships with several of the surrounding conference centers and camps that allow residents to participate in hiking, fly fishing and other mountain activities on their land. In return the department organizes and leads trail maintenance events that assist the camps with management, improvement and even signage of their backcountry areas.



As is true for communities outside of larger cities, the data we want to use for Black Mountain is skewed by the larger Asheville market within Buncombe County. It is interesting to note the relative heights of the bars for each county as to how visitors spend their money. Henderson County appears to have greater income from food and beverage than Asheville/Buncombe. We know that Black Mountain excels in food and beverage as well as retail sales. The extremely high Buncombe lodging number may reflect the large numbers of downtown Asheville hotel rooms as well as the higher cost of lodging. We also know that Asheville receives more business tourism from large groups—and that this is the sector of tourism that is still recovering after Covid. Recreation in this chart refers to the NAICS for Arts, Entertainment and Recreation reporting. It is challenging with the events and performance facilities in Asheville to glean levels of impact for just Black Mountain. Previous data has been from the Bureau of Economic Analysis' special account that specifically gleans actual outdoor recreation activity and impact.

2021 NORTH CAROLINA REGIONAL VISITOR PROFILE

2021 MOUNTAIN VISITOR SUMMARY

- In 2021, approximately 44.4 million person-trips were taken in North Carolina and the state ranked #5 in the U.S. in terms of domestic visitation. Approximately 12.7 million visitors traveled to the Mountain Region with 73 percent of them being overnight visitors.
- Eighty-eight percent of all mountain visitors (90 percent of overnight visitors) traveled for leisure purposes, while six percent came to conduct business.
- The majority of overnight travelers to the mountains in 2021 visited during the summer and fall.
- The party size for the average mountain visitor party was 2.6 in 2021. 30 percent of travel parties included children under the age of 18.
- The average Mountain Region visitor party trip expenditure was \$662 in 2021. Overnight visitor parties spent \$774 while daytrip parties spent \$303 on average.
- The top states of origin for overnight visitors to the mountains in 2021 were NC, SC, GA, TN, FL, VA, AL, PA and TX.



During the planning process the Director of the Black Mountain/Swannanoa Chamber of Commerce retired. The Chamber has handled visitor services, most tourism and much of local economic development coordination in the past. The Work Group is eager to invite a new Director to participate in plan implementation.

Existing Plan Review

In an effort to complement and build upon subsequent community planning efforts, staff assembled and reviewed other relevant plans and documents. This review provides valuable insight and helps avoid duplication or contradictions with past planning proposals. The following documents were reviewed and considered during the CORE planning process.

2025 Master Plan for Black Mountain Recreation and Parks

February 2017 by Casey Conner, Director, Black Mountain Recreation and Parks. This plan is an update to an initial study prepared in 1992. It provides the Town of Black Mountain with a usable plan to guide its actions and decisions concerning the improvements and development of its parks and recreation system for the next 10 years (2027). With regard to outdoor recreation as discussed in CORE, it recommends development of a district park that includes group picnic facilities as well as campsites, nature trails and possibly an outdoor environmental education center. The greenway system connecting recreation destinations and a new recreation center is also promoted.

Black Mountain by Bike – A Plan for Bicyclists. 2016, Kostelec Planning

Black Mountain by Bike identifies how the community can establish and enhance facilities within its boundaries to serve as physical activity and recreation hubs, create places where residents can access healthy food and reconnect neighborhoods via multi-modal transportation infrastructure and additional programs. It identifies a full range of projects and priorities for implementation. It proposes that bicycling represents 2% of visitor spending to Black Mountain in 2012—with the development of regional trails to the east, that percentage is now higher!

Black Mountain Greenway Master Plan, Benefits, Stewardships, Priorities. March 2019.

The Town of Black Mountain Greenway Master Plan connects desirable destinations using identified opportunities for greenway corridors. The Master Plan connects the public schools to one another and to the major parks in Town. The two (2) campuses of Montreat College are connected to one another and to the center of Town. The Master Plan provides connections to neighboring communities and to regional and state greenways planned to the east and west of Black Mountain.

Elevate Black Mountain - 2021 Comprehensive Plan. Clarion Associates, Chipley Consulting

This most recent of plans includes a vision: *“Black Mountain will be a thriving community with a vibrant downtown surrounded by livable neighborhoods. The town strives to offer everyone the opportunity to live, work, play, access the arts, and be civically engaged. We embrace our community’s special mountain character and unique identity as a foundation for economic development, environmental stewardship, and a future of opportunity.”* There are five focus areas including being Walkable + Livable, Green + Resilient, having a Vibrant Economy, encouraging Civic Engagement and being Connected + Accessible.

Under Vibrant Economy is: Goal 4.3 - **A renowned outdoor tourism destination**

- 4.3.2 Support Marketing efforts that highlight Black Mtn’s natural assets and position as a key destination for outdoor activities
- 4.3.3 Support local outdoor running and biking events

Planning Process

NC Commerce Rural Economic Development Division, Rural Planning staff facilitates the CORE strategic planning process with participation from the local government and an established local work group. This work group is comprised of individuals who have a vested interest in leveraging outdoor recreation to enhance economic development. The planning process employs established planning methods including presenting economic and associated data, asset mapping, economic driver identification, SWOT analysis, stakeholder interviews, business questionnaires, local work group discussions, as applicable. The planning process was tailored to meet the specific needs, goals, and opportunities that local stakeholders identified.

The strategic planning process used in Black Mountain was coordinated by the Town Planning Department who identified and assembled the Work Group of outdoor recreation businesses, elected leaders and Town staff. Work Group meetings were held May 11, June 8, July 13, August 17, September 7 and October 19. They were facilitated by Rural Planning staff.

At the beginning of the process the Rural Planning staff reviewed existing Town plans, toured Town parks and facilities, visited the Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center and viewed many websites to gain an understanding of Black Mountain and existing outdoor recreation activity. A survey was prepared and distributed virtually to the Work Group before the first meeting to gain understanding of the local priorities and desired outcomes for the planning process. The desired outcome priorities were: Increasing revenue for existing businesses; Improving quality of life for residents; Attracting new business and industry; and Encouraging local outdoor entrepreneurship.

Asset-based economic sector development

The planning process included a review of the **outdoor assets**—natural, human, organizational as well as existing activities, tourism patterns, businesses engaged in or with outdoor recreation and existing information sources—virtual and mapped. These assets are the base on which economic expansion can be built. In charts throughout this report ‘OR’ refers to outdoor recreation.

OR Activities	OR Locations	Tourism Activities	Tourism Locations
Hiking	Kitsuma	Shopping	Downtown
Trails + Parks	Montreat	Hiking	Lake Tomahawk
Mountain biking	Lake Tomahawk Park	Biking	Retail
	Greenway	Camping	Epic Cycles
		Eating out	Trails
Missing:	Issues:	Issues:	Econ Industries

Trails	Funding/Sustainability	Traffic + Parking	Tourism
Local Maps	Access	Don't like tourists	Retail
Facilities/Infrastructure	Availability	OR Information	Food/Restaurants
Greenway	Traffic + Access	OR availability	Biking/Hiking

One way to think about this kind of asset-based economy development is to think about everything that is needed to do a particular outdoor activity and then see how much can logically be provided locally. Taking an enjoyable bike ride is an example. It requires everything from mining molybdenum for the frame, molding plastic for a helmet, sewing stretchy bike shorts, having roads and bike paths—with signs, finding directions on the internet and serving energy drinks for breakfast. Some of us like a pie shop halfway in and maybe a hot tub at the end, as well. Challenges to the food supply chain during the pandemic demonstrated the need for this kind of development approach and is now used as a measure of economic resilience and sustainability.

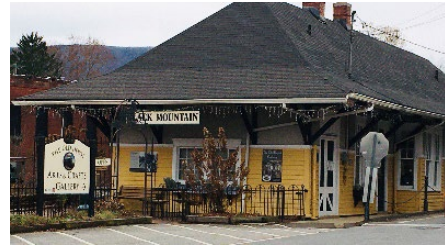
Asset-based economic development is also CED “Community Economic Development”.

“Through its focus on encouraging entrepreneurship, supporting small businesses, and promoting local resources, CED strengthens the economic foundation of communities, making them more resilient to economic shocks. Investments made within the community because of CED strategies also tend to generate a multiplier effect, circulating locally, stimulating further economic activity and creating a positive ripple effect.”

“Community economic development not only improves the overall economic well-being of the community but also enhances social cohesion and quality of life for residents. Ultimately, by harnessing the power of CED, economic development professionals can create sustainable, inclusive, and prosperous communities for the long term.”

The quotes above are taken from this website [CED](#) which offers additional explanation. More traditional economic development—large industrial recruitment is not a major focus in this model. Asset-based development starts with existing strengths so any recruitment efforts may more likely target smaller unique business that fill gaps in a supply chain, meet an experience or quality of life expectation or address a value chain opportunity (using an existing asset like local-harvest mushrooms and adding ‘value’ to it—mushroom pasta sauce). Instead of corporate recruitment such businesses might be developed from within the community or region—perhaps as expansion for an existing business. Sometimes a new specific or destination business might be assisted to locate in Black Mountain, but this is targeted recruitment of a growing small business to complement the existing community.

Because the work plan developed during this process includes many small business support and development activities, as well as the expansion of visitor experiences, additional community economic assets also warrant articulation and gap analysis. These may begin with local food, craft and wellness businesses, history and community assets. Outdoor Recreation asset lists are included in the Appendix at the end of this report. They should not be considered exhaustive. The CORE planning process continued with a traditional SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis. The SWOT served as the basis for discussion and thus the development of the work plans. Strengths include many assets and things that the Town does really well—retail, customer service, variety of goods, food and beer, resort-quality amenities in a “Hallmark” setting, good partnerships between businesses, conference centers, Town and an active Chamber of Commerce. Weaknesses or gaps included seeing return from TDA taxes collected, having no single accurate and coordinated communication source, very little land for development, narrow street rights of way, limited parking, affordable accommodation and transportation options and a sustainable funding source for recreation and amenities. Opportunities and Threats recognize outside forces acting on the Town and often suggest actions and directions for development. Weaknesses and Opportunities are most often linked.



A question about what was sacred to local residents resulted in discussion of the need to safeguard the historic character, scenic setting and small-town atmosphere of Black Mountain as growth occurs. Local history and culture were also sacred to interpret and share along with respecting the carrying capacity of resources and relationships with Conference Centers that allow community access to their trails.

Outdoor Business Input

Three outdoor businesses actively participated in the Work Group. Their insight into the habits and needs of recreators in Black Mountain is very valuable. During the second meeting questions were specifically asked about business needs and observations.

The outdoor businesses were asked:

1. Thinking about your typical customers (who, how many, from where, how long, what they do), what would make Black Mountain an even better destination/experience for them?
2. What would make Black Mountain just perfect for you and your business?

Responses included:

- Need more for kids to do—or maybe organize what there is to do to make it easy for parents to entertain their children, will help expand clientele beyond couples, seniors.

- Greenway completion/separate bike paths would improve bicycle conditions for all levels of riders.
- Could use more primitive campsites by the creek.
- Better parking management – especially on the lower end of downtown.
 - different parking for employees and customers.
 - improve the walking experience from public lot across the railroad tracks.
- Fewer but more strategic signs – direction and information, easier to see.
- Correct GPS directions.
- QR codes at attraction locations to direct users to related retail and services.
- Balanced retail expectations recognizing the seasonal nature of tourism and a base resident population of about 8,450.
- Increased communication and coordination between Town and Businesses.
- Events, activities to possibly extend the season – outdoor festival, bike festival.
- Black Mountain is already a really excellent place to do business!

Conference Center Interviews

It became clear in asset mapping and Work Group discussions that input was needed from the major Conference Centers surrounding the Town. They bring large groups of people to the community, often introducing them for the first time to Black Mountain and western North Carolina. They also control large amounts of land that contribute to the scenic beauty of the Town and are providers of the trails and many recreation facilities used by local agreement for residents to also enjoy. Rural Planning staff contacted four centers and interviewed three.



Conversations with three major Conference Centers:

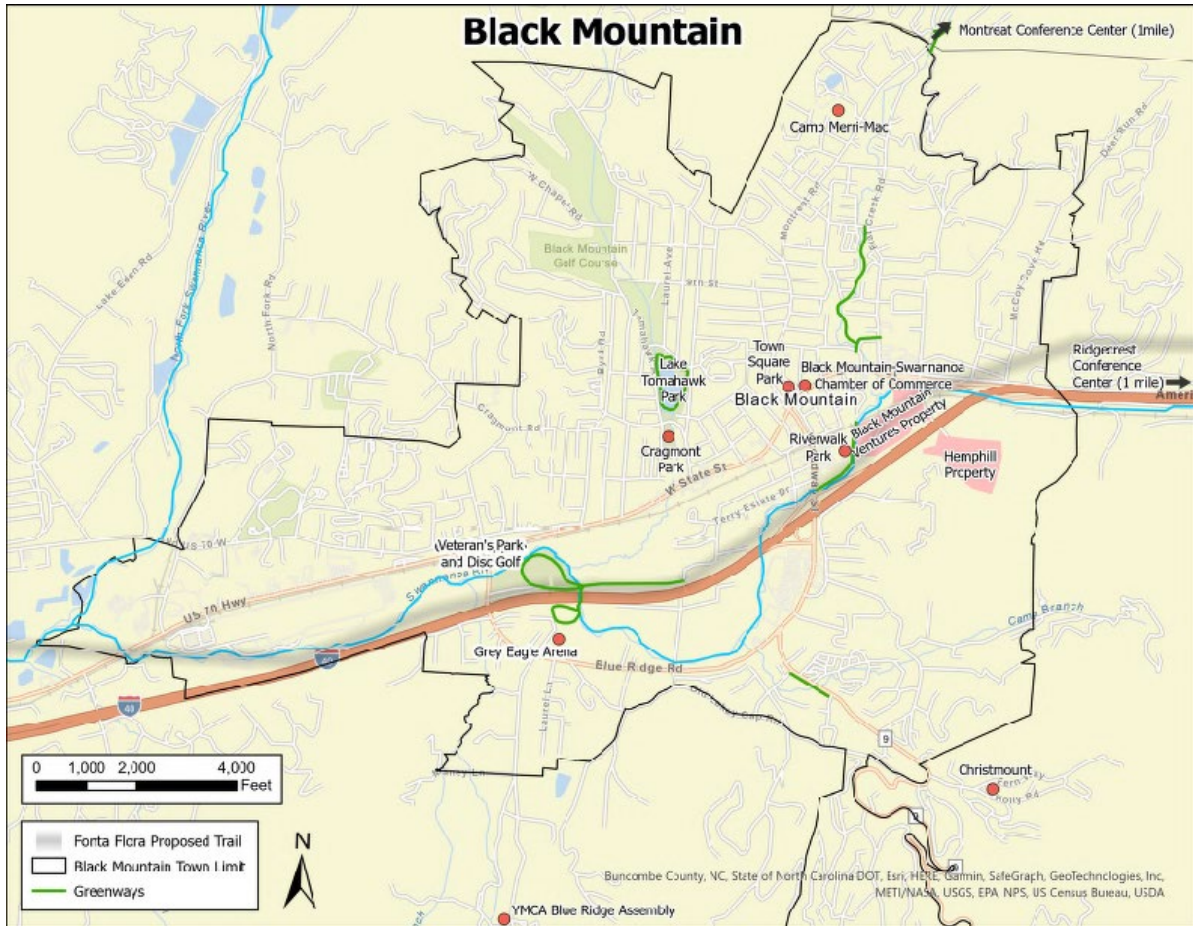
- Black Mountain is a very convenient location for Conference Center guests with direct access off I-40, from the Charlotte airport and for chartered buses.
- All interviewed have signed a non-compete with hotels agreement for accommodations and do not now collect the bed tax that goes to the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority. One of the Centers was possibly interested in re-visiting this agreement to be able to provide hostel-style trail accommodations when large groups are not using their entire facility.
- Staff housing is an issue that is handled differently – one provides on-site housing while another has staff living from Waynesville to Marion as they can find and afford.
- Each Conference Center provides their own group activities, facilities and trails on their property. They expressed no additional similar recreation needs from the Town.

- Two of the three have had issues with groups using their private facilities without consent. The fourth Center had closed its trails to all outside use for this reason and concerns over liability.
- All three would appreciate greater regional communication and coordination of land access and recreator education.
- It was suggested that the Town could help to improve guest visits by providing activities for individual use in off time or to keep guests an extra night – pump track, zipline, etc. The new Glass Center is anticipated to become an attraction for guests.
- Guests do visit and enjoy downtown. Some have favorite destinations (like My Father’s Pizza) that have become a ritual part of their camp experience. Some visitors also buy furniture—as recorded on their delivery slips!
- Many guests (especially those from other countries) have no vehicle and would like to go downtown if there was a shuttle or some direct, off-road bike/walk paths.
- Marketing and growing the guest pool was not an issue for especially two of Centers. They are not recruiting additional business at this time. Traditional off-season has also become busier in recent years.

This input was integral to the development of the strategies and informs their implementation. Many of these stakeholders should be engaged for project development as they provide the most accurate information for user and manager perspectives.

This information can also inform the programming of the new park areas donated to the Town. Family activities, opportunities to try out new sports and build or practice skills are recommended to not only meet the needs of local residents but also encourage Conference Center and Camp guests to spend more time downtown. Filling gaps in mountain sports not already offered at the various camps will also invite further engagement—entry-level mountain bike skills, climbing areas, etc. Although the Swannanoa River is not yet wide enough to support much paddling, it could be used for floating which may appeal more to families.

Rural Planning staff created a basic map of existing recreation facilities and the new properties yet to be planned in the Town. Although many schematic plans and maps have been developed for proposed facilities, the Chamber of Commerce uses photocopied maps from various sources to guide visitors interested in hiking or walking on what is available now. These maps and the Conference Center experience of trespass onto private lands prompted discussion about the quality of information available and need for a more reliable single source for information.



Given the priority of improving incomes for existing businesses and possibly recruiting or developing new businesses and entrepreneurship, a retail market analysis was compiled by Main Street and Rural Planning staff. This is the same analysis used by NC Main Street program communities.



The **Retail Market Analysis** data was provided by Claritas and pulled in March 2023. It addresses an area covered by a radius of six miles from Town Hall in downtown. The radius attempts to capture the spending from households that are most likely to shop regularly in Black Mountain.

Black Mountain has a Retail Surplus of **\$103,011,940!** This means that there is more spending within the six-mile radius of downtown Black Mountain than is expected in a US community or area with similar population of around 23,340. The full report shows which retail activities are especially strong and which have

room for increased capture. A retail gap signals potential for growth while a surplus often highlights an area of existing economic strength—an attractor. These attractors are often clusters of related businesses and can be expanded upon with careful analysis of any gaps for either goods or services to make the cluster more comprehensive.

The three categories below show a **retail gap**—and thus perhaps a more obvious opportunity for growth. The NC Main Street program uses the gap to calculate sales-space growth potential for each item classification. Smaller square footage may suggest that an existing business might add the product to their inventory while larger footage can justify targeted recruitment or development of a new business.

6-Mile Radius Around Downtown

Black Mountain				
Primary Trade Area 6-mile around downtown		DOWNTOWN POTENTIAL		
Business Type	Retail Gap	10% of Retail Gap	Sales/SF	SF
		10%	\$300	Needed
Beer, Wine and Liquor Stores	\$ 1,627,739	\$ 162,774	\$ 300	543
Pharmacies and Drug Stores	\$ 1,656,116	\$ 165,612	\$ 300	552
Limited Service Restaurants	\$ 3,612,780	\$ 361,278	\$ 300	1,204
Total Gap	\$ 6,896,635	\$ 689,664	\$ 300	2,299

The full report with demographics of the population within this radius and much more information is attached in the Appendix. As work plan implementation is undertaken, this information will become more useful and Rural Planning staff is ready and willing to help turn it into recruitment, expansion and business support programs.

Economic Position and Work Plan

An economic positioning statement is important in the identification of how Black Mountain fits within the larger, regional outdoor economy. It articulates what the Work Group saw as the greatest strengths and unique role that the Town plays, and can expand on, for greater benefit. It is visionary as it is stated as an accomplished condition.

Black Mountain is a small-town community where outdoor journeys begin. Surrounded by mountains, outdoor recreation meets culture and spirit. The community works together to steward our natural assets, improve physical, social and spiritual wellbeing, and provide daily access/connections to outdoor recreation for all residents and guests.

The position also includes five underlined strategies or centers of activity that will move the Town toward the accomplishment of the position. The strategies include:

- Where outdoor journeys begin;
- Outdoor recreation meets culture and spirit;
- Together we steward our natural assets;
- Improve physical, social and spiritual well-being; and
- Provide daily access/connections to outdoor recreation for all.

Some additional on-going work and assumptions underlie this economic position. This includes the continued conservation of land and scenic views and continued value of the outdoor recreation lifestyle. It also requires that the community continues to coordinate and work well together and that residents and guests will enjoy similar quality of life conditions. In Black Mountain the quality of life is the attraction that draws visitors and new residents, as well as investment. Visitors come to Black Mountain to “try-on” the local lifestyle.

More information on the evolution of the economic position and strategies can be found in the meeting notes in the Appendix. The work plans are a starting place for action in the coming five years and are expected to evolve as groups further engage in and develop the tasks outlined. This implementation work will identify more specific projects—facilities, programs and even policies. Charts outlining the Strategies, Actions and Tasks as well as designated leadership, partners and a starting timeline can be found on the following pages.

The timeline for actions on the work plan is denoted by letters. **A** actions are to occur during the next 12 months, **B** is the year following (2024-2025), **C** is two to three and a half years ahead, **D** is sometimes in the next five years and finally **O** recognizes work in progress as a need to continue. Three priority projects are noted with a star.

Town of Black Mountain CORE Work Plan


Outdoor Economy Position: Black Mountain is a small-town community where outdoor journeys begin . Surrounded by mountains, outdoor recreation meets culture and spirit . The community works together to steward our natural assets , improve physical, social and spiritual wellbeing and provide daily access/connections to outdoor recreation for all residents and guests.

TOBM: Where Outdoor Journeys Begin	Time	Convener	Possible Partners
<p>Expand on quality hospitality--lodging, dining, etc. <i>Collect and analyze data on current conditions, gaps</i> <i>Expand range of lodging options - experiences, expense</i></p>	O	TOBM Econ Dev Chamber of Commerce	TDA
<p> Improve accuracy and access to outdoor information <i>Assemble comprehensive list of outdoor recreation opportunities</i> <i>Develop a one-stop location for up-to-date information</i> Digital - webpage, app, QR code links Non-tech dependent + differently accessible <i>Wayfinding signage</i> <i>Coordinated Trail marking system</i></p>	A & O	TOBM Rec & Parks Chamber of Commerce	Rec & Parks - Outdoor, G5, Outdoor businesses, Pisgah Map Co., Conference Centers, USFS, Blue Ridge Parkway Fdn
<p>Further Outfit and Educate Recreators (Gear + Skills) <i>Improve access to Gear for beginners, visitors</i> <i>Implement, promote Delayed Fish Harvest program</i> <i>Provide more group education for beginners (residents + guests)</i> Dry land fly casting, fishing technique + equipment, species of fish Mountain bike skills, equipment and safety Orienteering and forest safety Program Hemphill property for such activity - master planning</p>	B & O	TOBM Econ Dev, Outdoor Businesses	Rec & Parks - Outdoor, G5, Montreat, Wildlife Resources Commission, Waypoint Adventures, schools, etc.
<p>Elevate, Share programs, facilities already available <i>Promote P&R programs, partner offerings in one place</i> Community gardening expansion <i>Use PubCorps to encourage volunteering, stewardship</i></p>	A & O	TOBM Rec Parks	Rec & Parks-Outdoor, Chamber, TDA, Library
<p>Begin planning for Passenger Rail <i>Review latest plans, players, prepare Community discussion</i> Identify location challenges + other local issues for solutions <i>Establish leadership for coordinated advocacy</i></p>	A	TOBM Planning, Admin	Town Manager + Council, interested citizens, support from MPO

Outdoor Recreation meets Culture and Spirit	Time	Convener	Possible Partners
<p>Incorporate historical context into recreation locations <i>More events like Museum hikes at more locations</i></p>		Historic Preservation	TOBM Rec&Parks, Historic property

<p><i>Partner to develop + install historic markers</i></p> <p>Identify locations like Trestle Road, In the Oaks house</p> <p>Research stories, photos, design plaque, funding</p>	B	Commission, Swanannoa Valley Museum	TOBM Rec&Parks, historic property owners/managers
<p>Develop dntn public social spaces for post-recreation gathering</p> <p><i>Rest + Entertainment - People-watching, small stage-younger music</i></p> <p><i>Micro-green spots with benches, shade, art, history</i></p> <p><i>Rain garden pauses - rest, education, water quality</i></p>	D & O	TOBM Planning, Downtown Merchants	Property + Business Owners, Town staff, Beautification Committee,
<p>Develop programs, tools to grow small business + culture economy</p> <p><i>Dedicated staff time + work group</i></p> <p><i>Retail Market Analysis, Gap ID, Recruitment/Dev plan</i></p> <p><i>Existing business survey for customer, supply, value chain needs/opps</i></p>	C	TOBM Econ Dev + Planning	Downtown Merchants, Chamber of Commerce

Together We Steward our Natural Assets	Time	Convener	Possible Partners
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<p> Convene partners and facilitate natural assets conversation</p> <p><i>Identify, assemble Partners - Conf Centers, facility managers, volunteers</i></p> <p><i>Identify areas of concern, cooperation opportunities, joint activities</i></p> <p>Develop supplemental facility and activity priorities</p> <p>Discuss land access + information issues, needs</p> <p>Consider coordinated stewardship - volunteer training, tools, events</p>	A & O	TOBM Rec+Parks Outdoor	Conference Centers, USFS, Parkway, conservation trusts, G5 + other trail groups, watershed stewards, Warren Wilson, Community Garden, etc.
<p>Establish a Town Sustainability + Resilience working group</p> <p><i>Evaluate Town goals and current practices</i></p> <p>Stormwater and water quality improvements</p> <p>Hard surface coverage</p> <p><i>Engage public in environmental issues, goals, actions</i></p> <p>Organize events - clean-up, planting, propagation</p> <p>Develop partnerships - churches, retail centers</p>	A	TOBM Planning, Public Works	Consultation as needed - Land of Sky Regional Council, Buncombe Co Sustainability
<p>Develop educational programs for natural asset appreciation + stewardsh</p> <p><i>Offer controlled tour access/hikes for local residents</i></p> <p><i>Partner with library for local resident volunteer perks - PubCorps</i></p>	B	TOBM Rec & Parks	Museum, CES - Master Gardeners, WRC, USFS, Montreat,

Improve Physical, Social, Spiritual Wellbeing	Time	Convener	Possible Partners
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<p>Develop + Package Body-Mind-Spirit Experiences</p> <p><i>Query interested businesses, do services inventory</i></p> <p><i>Create, Promote itineraries</i></p>	C	TOBM Econ Dev, Chamber of Commerce	Local outdoor, craft, arts, wellness + hospitality businesses, TDA
<p>Develop structure to support current recreation + downtown amenities, programming, facilities</p> <p><i>Inventory, evaluate existing level of amenity, staffing, costs, plans</i></p> <p>Consider staffing, need for additional facilities, changing demands</p>	A	TOBM Administration/Budget	TOBM Planning, Rec & Parks + Parks Commission, Chamber, business +

Explore best practices, organizations, programs in other communities


NC Main Street program

Municipal Services/Business Improvement Districts

Staffing levels and ROI

A TOBM Administration/Budget

COMMISSION, CHAMBER, BUSINESS +
Property owners

 **Develop new funding stream(s) for outdoor recreation services**

Research additional revenue streams best practices

TDA allocation options

User fees, sponsorships, scholarships, concession contracts, etc.

Bonds, voluntary levies, etc.

A

Black Mountain Admin, Town
Council

Rec & Parks staff, Park Commission

Provide daily Access/Connections to Outdoor Recreation for All

Time

Convener

Possible Partners

Improve walkability

Continue to implement Walkability Plans

Improve downtown streetscape for pedestrian safety

Streetscape design plan

O

TOBM Planning

TOBM Public Works, Police, NCDOT,
Active Mobility Commission, Business +
Property owners

Improve bike safety

Continue to implement existing plans

Engage biking community in safety + preference research

Research successful bike safety and training programs to implement

Increase bicycle parking in downtown, repair services/stations

O

Cycling businesses + TOBM
Planning

Police, Public Works, Schools,
downtown businesses, cycling groups
and advocates

Explore microtransit to meet downtown + recreation shuttle needs

Inventory downtown, parking, recreation partner shuttle needs

Develop scenarios for feasibility, sustainability testing

B

TOBM Admin, Rec & Parks

HHS, Schools, Senior Center,
Conference Centers, USFS, trail groups,
hiking clubs, etc.

Develop activities to serve families, seniors and all abilities

Catalogue range of experiences/services offered in community,

coordinate into itineraries, identify gaps, target promotions

Incorporate all skills levels into new facility and services planning

Implement rest areas for seniors on easy trails, downtown

Create family experience itineraries

O

TOBM Rec & Parks

Parks Commission, Senior Services,
various Camps, Waypoint Adventures,
Chamber, etc.

Develop additional off-season events and activities

B/C

Chamber of Commerce

outdoor/downtown businesses

Timeline for Implementation codes: **A** = within the next year (2023 – fall of 24), **B** = 12 – 24 months out (2024 – fall of 2025),

C = 24 – 40 months out (2025 – Jan 2027), **D** = sometime in next 5 years (2027 - 2028), **O** = work is on-going



Priority projects for the Work Group are marked with a star.

Plan Implementation, Monitoring, and Evaluation

The Town of Black Mountain will be responsible for monitoring, evaluation, and reporting accomplishments on the actions of this plan to the Rural Economic Development Division. Implementation assistance from Rural Development staff is always available!

Plan Implementation

As noted previously, maintaining a dedicated group to follow through after the planning process and begin addressing goals and objectives outlined in this plan is critical to attaining the potential economic impact of these strategies. This could be the same work group that helped develop the plan, or another similar group that is representative of the community and can further advance the goals of this plan. The sustained presence of such a group builds ‘social capital’ within the group that improves their ability to work together and effectively address common goals. Furthermore, a dedicated group ensures continuity from planning stage through implementation, provides accountability to ensure that objectives are being met, and allows the community to react and respond quickly when an opportunity is presented. But this group should not be the sole entity responsible for implementing all the goals of the plan. Instead, the group should function as a convener and point of contact to connect to other individuals, organizations, and resources to help the broader community achieve these goals. Maintaining a regular meeting and reporting schedule will also help increase the effectiveness of the group, and the overall plan outcomes.

Black Mountain has expressed interest in two other programs that will support implementation.



Building Outdoor Communities (BOC)

The Town of Black Mountain is heading into another planning process, Building Outdoor Communities, made available by Made X Mtns at Mountain BizWorks, a CDFI in Asheville. This seven-month process will hopefully build on the work done by the CORE Work Group with time used partially to further develop projects and implement the work plan. The BOC team is anticipated to be expanded to include many more of the resource and experience providers who can hone the work proposed here. This process may focus more on actual recreation facilities with a tool to be made available to help evaluate the economic impact of investment in new facilities. This group may address issues raised like the need for direct connection from downtown to primary outdoor destinations and the feasibility of ‘training’ facilities like a climbing wall, pump track in downtown or perhaps at one of the new park locations. In

addition to BOC, Made by Mountains also includes the Outdoor Business Alliance and a Marketing/Storytelling program. The Alliance can be a partner in supporting and attracting businesses while the storytelling service will assist in getting Black Mountain in front of the outdoor recreation market.

NC Main Street program

The NC Main Street program is (asset-based) economic development organized around historic assets downtown. There was interest within the Work Group in this program for facilitating the recommended downtown improvements. The program requires that downtown is a National Trust Historic Register District—as Black Mountain is. To implement the program, communities develop four committees addressing organization, design, economic vitality and marketing/promotion. Hiring of a downtown development director is required for participation in the program—possibly part time at first but full time before making application to the Main Street America[®] program (<https://www.mainstreet.org/>). Local organizations are set up under Town government, as a non-profit 501 c3 or c6 or a combination of these. Often a base level of funding comes from establishment of a Municipal Services District or otherwise having a defined area pay an additional fee to support the extra level of amenity and service from the Town. Application to the DAC—Downtown Associate Communities—program to receive support for becoming a NC Main Street community is expected to open again in 2025. Rural Planning staff can arrange an informational session with NC Main Street staff to answer any questions the Town may have. Town staff may also contact nearby Main Street Managers or Downtown Development Directors in Morganton, Hickory, Marion, Forest City and others for firsthand accounts of program establishment and keys to success.

Just as the NC Main Street program requires a dedicated staff person, that staff may also work to implement this plan.

Potential Black Mountain Economic Development staff duties:

- Oversee implementation of this Outdoor Economy plan including identifying and convening partners for various Actions and Tasks. Work with Recreation and Parks.
- Serve as town ambassador and communication channel to the business community.
- Work with downtown business and property owners on downtown streetscape, parking and amenity improvement plans, program and resource needs.
- Work with downtown business and property owners to identify and act on business opportunities and filling service gaps. Develop programs, policy and funding recommendations.
- Serve as liaison with Chamber of Commerce for downtown events and business expansion or support programs. Might also be involved with creating new business-engaged visitor itineraries or such projects.
- Research funding mechanisms and their appropriateness to the various outdoor economy and downtown needs with proposals presented to the Town Administration.
- Research and prepare community for possible NC Main Street program designation.
- Become small-scale downtown re/development facilitator.
- Keep the Town Administration and Council apprised of economic progress and any policy and resource needs for plan implementation.
- Other community economy development duties as assigned.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Regular monitoring and evaluation to review progress on the strategies and action steps in this plan, via regular review sessions with the Work Group and other community stakeholders, is critical to ensuring it remains a viable, living document. Rural Planning staff will periodically check in and offer technical, program and project development assistance to help advance the vision and document the outcomes of the plan.



Economic Focus Areas

Strategy development focuses on leveraging outdoor recreation assets to increase tourism, encourage small business development, enhance quality of life for residents, plan for asset and infrastructure development, and/or position communities to grow and attract outdoor product manufacturing industries. Within these focus areas, broad strategies and specific projects are identified. The Work Group evaluated the proposed Strategies and Actions with regard for affecting the priorities set in the initial survey. The actions proposed are expected to impact these specific economic priorities:

Impacts of Work Plan on Economic Priorities				
Strategy + Action proposed	Increase revenue for Existing Businesses	Improve Resident Q of L	Attract new Business + Industry	Encourage Outdoor Entrepreneurship
TOBM - Where Outdoor Journeys begin				
Continue quality lodging, dining, fueling activity	x		x	
Continue to provide and Improve Access to Information	x	x		
Outfit and Educate Recreators - Best Place for Gear and Guides	x	x		x
Elevate and share what already doing well		x	x	
Begin planning for passenger rail	x	x	x	
Where Outdoor Rec meets Culture and Spirit				
Incorporate more historical context into outdoor activity places		x		
Develop more public social places		x	x	
Develop tools to support/expand small business + cultural economy	x		x	x
Together we Steward our Natural Assets				
TOBM convenes Natural Assets Conversation	x	x	x	x
Establish a Sustainability + Resilience Working Group		x	x	x
Do programming to support greater asset quality and stewardship	x	x		
Improving Physical, Social, Spiritual Wellbeing				
Develop + Package quality body-mind-spirit Black Mtn Experiences	x	x	x	x
Develop structure to support current recreation + downtown amenities, programs, facilities		x	x	
Develop new funding streams for outdoor recreation services	x		x	x
Provide daily access/connections to outdoor rec for all				
Improve Walkability	x	x	x	x
Improve intown Bicycle convenience, safety	x	x	x	
Develop microtransit serving dntn, rec destinations, conf centers	x	x		x
Develop itineraries, packages, facilities for families, kids, various abilities	x	x	x	x
Develop off-season events, activities	x	x	x	x
Evaluate, implement comfort measures for senior recreators	x	x		

In addition to the priorities expressed in the Work Group survey, the economic impacts of proposed actions can also be evaluated as building the model mentioned earlier as established for the CORE process.

This model includes four key areas, including a focus on developing the outdoor “culture” and supporting the lifestyle that is central to this work plan. Examples of the types of work in each of these four areas—perhaps some for future use—are included below in the colored boxes. These are ‘thought prompts’ only and not intended as exhaustive lists of actions.



Tourism and Experiences

The Black Mountain CORE Work Plan includes several actions which will directly help to build the tourism/experience sector of the economy.

Actions with direct focus on Tourism and Hospitality:

- Expand on quality lodging, dining experiences and fueling-up activity.
- Improve the accuracy and access to outdoor information.

To keep visitors longer and increase spending by developing new or improving Visitor experiences:

- Better Outfit and Educate Recreators – Gear + Guides
- Incorporate historical context into recreation locations
- Develop Body+Mind+Spirit experience packages
- Explore microtransit, recreation shuttle needs
- Develop activities for families, seniors, all abilities
- Develop off-season events and activities

If Income from Visitors is an economic priority, actions might include:

- Attract more visitors (*assumes desire and capacity*)
- Additional or targeted Marketing
- Keep existing visitors longer
 - More of existing experiences (longer trails)
 - Different, complimentary experiences (itineraries)
- Increase spending levels of visitors
 - More to spend \$\$ on
 - More expensive offerings
 - More overnight stays
- Town level Occupancy/Resort/Dine tax or other to increase services

Retail and Small Business Development

Increasing Revenue for Existing Businesses was the highest priority for the Work Group. The gray box below includes some tools for increasing business incomes as well as defining

opportunities for new goods and services. Many of the specific Actions in the Work Plan are anticipated to directly improve small business revenue including:

- Develop plans, tools, programs to grow small business + culture economy is a key action!
- Outfit and Educate Recreators presents an income opportunity for new, existing businesses.
- Promotion and Packaging of existing programs and services will also bolster business.

Two Actions encourage businesses to tailor their services or work with other businesses to develop new offerings:

- Develop Body+Mind+Spirit experience packages.
- Develop activities for families, seniors, all abilities.

Several Improvements to the downtown environment will also increase business:

- Improve walkability and Bicycle safety.
- Programs/Structure to improve downtown amenities + more public social spaces.
- Developing off-season events may assist with income stability across the slow season.
- Micro transit/shuttle and eventually Passenger rail will increase the number of shoppers.

Retail/Small Business Strategies may include:

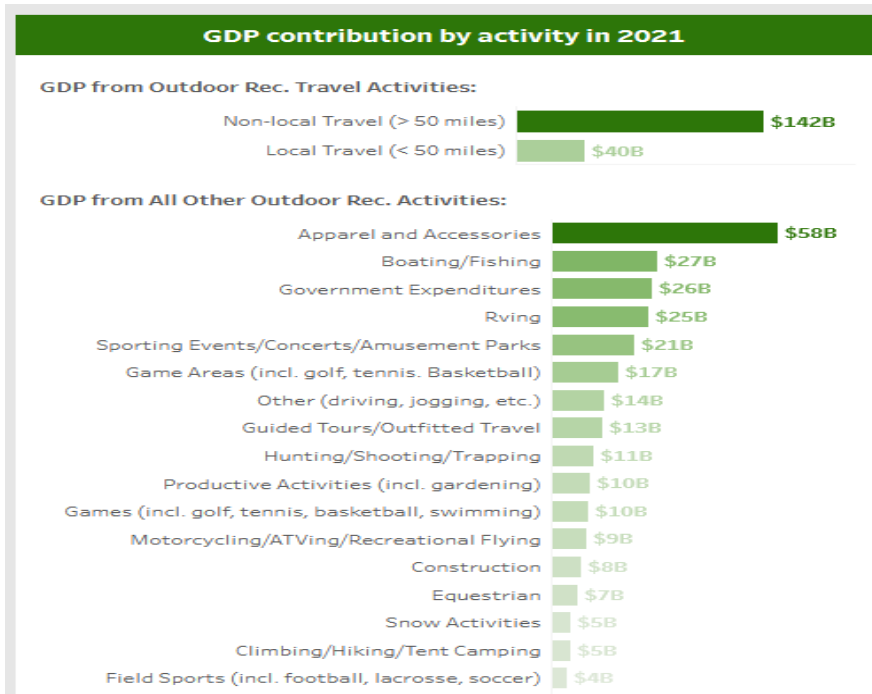
- Develop/Recruit more outdoor businesses to supplement existing
- Identify and fill gaps in goods, services, experiences offered
- Provide support to grow current businesses and incomes
- Develop destination business(es)
- Other

As a team is assembled to take on the Action of *Developing plans, tools, programs to grow small businesses and the culture economy* there are several tools available from NC Commerce Rural Development that might assist. An introduction to the **NC Main Street Program's Downtown Associate Program** can be arranged, access to many Main Street information sources are already available on line at [Economic Vitality | NC Main Street \(ncmainstreetandplanning.com\)](http://EconomicVitality|NCMainStreet(ncmainstreetandplanning.com)). Some information is available in the Appendix as well.

The attached Retail Market Analysis can also be used to evaluate additional goods and service needs and even provide a bit of guidance on how much more is a safe bet for an existing business. There are also many topical videos developed under the Leverage NC program that can be found on the same website under Training/ Resources/Design.

The chart below represents Gross Domestic Product (investment, consumption, government spending and net exports) on the national level. It does not reflect actual local spending by activity. It does, however, highlight the economic importance of travel and hospitality. The traditional rule of thumb is that overnight visitors spend three times as much in a community as

day users. The traditional rule of thumb is that overnight visitors spend three times as much in a community as day users. Lodging and food are critical to capturing and growing the economic



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account and Regional Economic Accounts. Included in a report by Headwaters Economics.

benefits from outdoor recreation. The other dark green bar highlights the importance of proper attire in recreation! Several local businesses are serving this need now. Clothing and sport textiles are part of a growing industry in the state and centered just east from Black Mountain.

Outdoor Recreation Product Manufacturing

There is potential for increased manufacturing of outdoor recreation products, including supply chain materials, across the state of North Carolina. Attention should be paid from the perspective of attracting an existing company to expand their operations in the community, and for a local startup business to emerge. Of the total \$14.5+ billion impact that outdoor recreation contributes to the state’s annual GDP, more than \$2.3 billion of that is contributed from manufacturing. This sector employs over 7,600 people.⁶

If Manufacturing is an economic development priority:

- Find and nurture local makers - most likely micro-preneurs.
- Network businesses – creating culture, density, fluid + skilled workforce.
- Identify support services – build supply chains, local B2B opportunities, recycling.
- Inventory appropriate buildings, locations ready.
- Do targeted recruitment.

⁶ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis. Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account, U.S. and States, 2022. <https://www.bea.gov/data/special-topics/outdoor-recreation>

Example Local manufacturer of outdoor gear:

Tentrax:

Based in Black Mountain, Tentrax has been building lightweight camping trailers since 2001. The off-road capable camping trailers are perfect for the traveling adventurer. Each trailer comes with, among other things, a fold-out tent and bed, aluminum dry box, large and small awning, stainless steel shower and 43-quart freezer/fridge.

Although manufacturing was not specifically a top priority for the Work Group, business development and recruitment is part of the Action of *Develop plans, tools, programs to grow small business + culture economy*. Many of the proposed actions that will positively affect the retail sector may also translate to improvements for the small manufacturing sector as well. Local members of the Outdoor Business Alliance may keep their ears open for fellow members looking to expand in new locations.

The Chamber and Town may work together to identify locations, perhaps back doors, that might be suitable for small manufacturing. They enjoy being part of the action and having access to ‘wind down’ options and trail commutes. Work hard, play hard.

Workforce is key to manufacturers so the Outdoor Culture and Workforce improvement Actions will create a better environment for attracting manufacturers as well. The owner of Defeat socks in Hickory tells the story of planning to relocate but then the community built a trail with wayside picnic area right next to his office. He couldn’t move and leave behind the ability to bike to work, ride over lunch and eat outside while visiting with fellow cyclists.

Outdoor Culture, Workforce and Quality of Life

The priority of Improving the Quality of Life for residents falls under this category. Many outdoor recreators are very social—there is a need to share an adventure to make it real. Therefore developing *more public (and private) social spaces and activities* are critical to supporting an outdoor economy. By bringing this active community together it also exposes local youth to the activities, gear and stories that might one day encourage them to be involved in outdoor recreation as a guide, small business, gear builder, conservationist or advocate.

Many of the Actions and Tasks outlined directly address this outcome:

Improving accuracy and access to outdoor information will serve not only visitors but also local residents who may not have participated in the activities that visitors enjoy. Providing historical context also adds a layer of familiarity and community to a great hike. A sense of community is based on shared knowledge and experiences. *Providing historical context* also

adds a layer of familiarity and community to a great hike. A sense of community is based on shared knowledge and experiences.

Outfit and Educate (Gear and Guides) will serve beginners (residents or guests) who have never enjoyed the experience before and do not have access to expensive gear, much less knowledge on how and where. Without such exposure local residents may not become an engaged workforce for the outdoors or an ambassador for conservation of natural assets.

The *convening of partners and facilitation of natural assets conversation* as well as development of educational programs, volunteer training and activities all add to the strengthening of the outdoor culture. The Town commitment to creating a sustainability and resilience working group will set an example and expectation for outdoor engagement.

Very little is more effective for improving health than making walking and biking part of everyday activity. And a focus on the needs and desires of families, seniors and those with different abilities in those daily activities improves the quality of life for all of Black Mountain.

Walkscore.com provides a measurement of how walkable and bikeable is a community. Using the Town Hall address as a center point, Black Mountain scored a 79 Walkscore meaning that it is very walkable, and most errands can be accomplished by foot. Downtown Black Mountain's Bikescore is 50--or average, meaning it is considered bikeable with some bike infrastructure but not exemplary. Visit <https://www.walkscore.com> for more information.

Just for fun--here is the link to a NC Weekend video that explores Parks and Trails for Health (PATH) using outdoor recreation for improved health for everyone:

<https://video.pbsnc.org/video/parks-and-trails-for-health-drtgez/>

Events, especially in the off-season are a great tool for cementing social relationships within the community around the outdoors and physical activity. This may also be the best time for locals to enjoy the common visitor experiences.

Development of the Outdoor Culture and Workforce may include:

Engage Local Residents:

- Access to the environment, skills and experiences as part of everyday life
- Make it easy to try new things – instruction, access to equipment
- Look for those who are curious – how do things work, why, how to improve
- Offer Entrepreneurial or Problem-addressing opportunities
- Provide access to role models
- Help discover their passion and make it a life focus

Create an outdoor network:

Social opportunities to meet and hang out with people who have the same drive and passion, feature local celebrities to share the challenge and journey, develop mentors and ambassadors.

Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Development

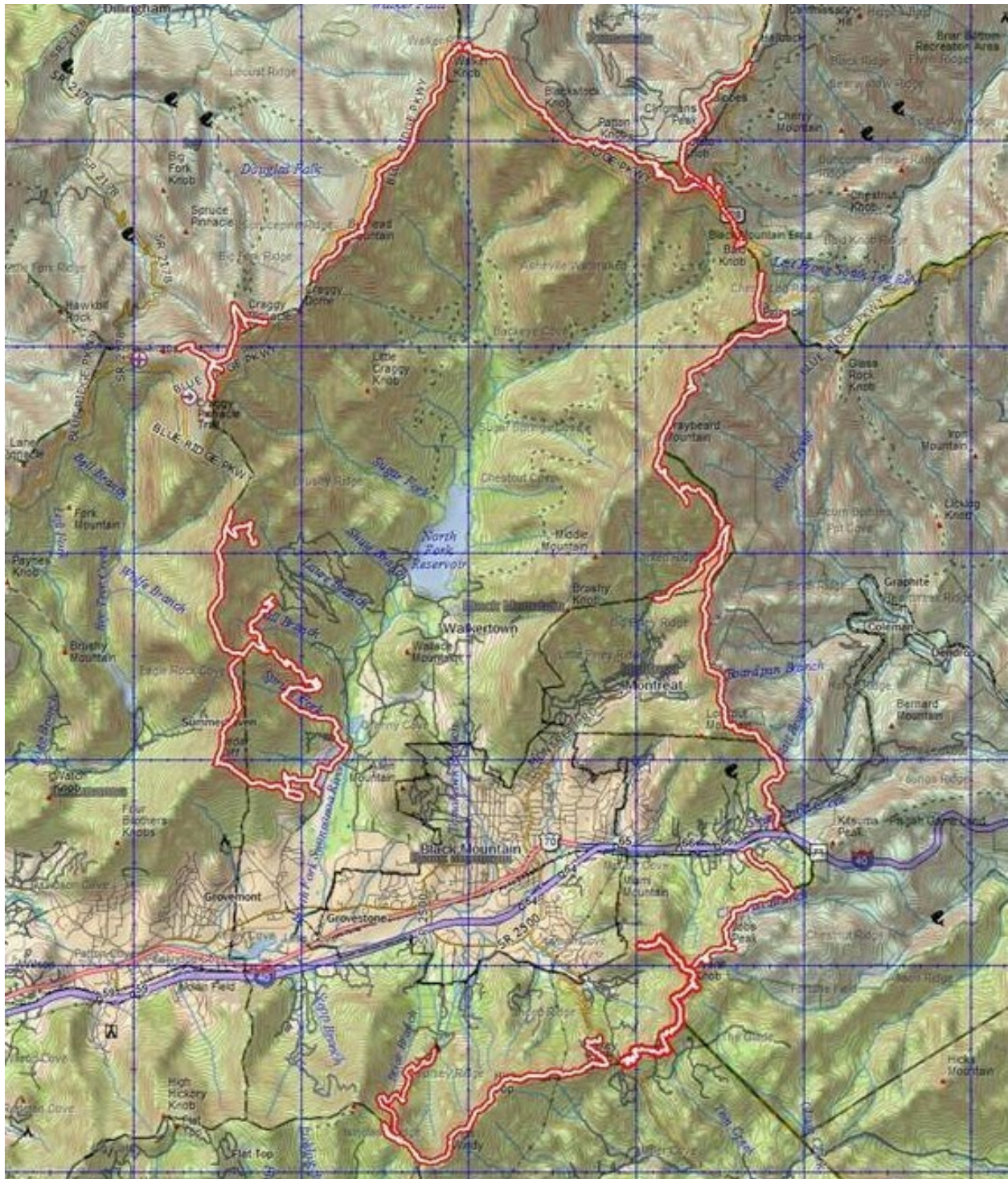
Development of new or improved facilities was not a focus that emerged in this strategic planning process. However, Work Group discussion revealed many needs for new, better, different facilities to support existing and expanded programs and experiences. It is hoped that this will be further developed during the Building Outdoor Communities process.

That said—the many Actions to *Elevate and Share existing programs*, identify *funding and structures to support the high-level of existing amenity* and activity as well as the work with Conference Center partners on resource development and maintenance, will also serve to develop the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure. The Fonta Flora trail extension, greenway and new park development are all part of a seemingly inevitable development of infrastructure.

Focus on the structural and funding models will be critical to the community's ability to also maintain any new infrastructure sustainably. Cost estimates to operate and maintain facilities over time should be requested in master planning for the new park areas as well as trails. Careful design of trails can reduce required maintenance as well as impacts on the natural landscape.

With the increased interest in outdoor recreation since the pandemic, many new sources of grant funding have become available, and are still being developed, in addition to the reliable Land & Water Conservation and PARTF from NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR). The NC DNCR has received new earmark trail funds, the program for which has not yet been developed. This is the result of the Great State Trail coalition work and Year of the Trail recognition. The US Department of Agriculture budget includes funding opportunities for recreation as well. US and NC Departments of Transportation also assist with development of especially walk/bike facilities with additional resources coming online soon.

Local conversation around on-going needs and events might consider user fees, town occupancy tax revenues, facilities rental income, service fees and development of other income streams that might be dedicated to maintenance. Avid trail users and conservationists will continue to be a big part of on-going maintenance and management as well as new development of trails.



Map taken from: Swannanoa Valley Museum & History Center – showing locations of Rim Explorer™ Hikes.
<https://www.history.swannanoavalleymuseum.org/rim-hike-explorer-series/>



APPENDIX



Appendix

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Black Mountain Outdoor Recreation Activities

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Partner w Parks + Rec/Notes</u>
Archery	YMCA
Backpacking Overnight	Nothing organized or promoted
Bicycling (Mountain/BMX)	To come - on recently donated property
Bicycling (Road/Paved Surface)	Farm Heritage Scenic route
Birdwatching	Warren Wilson has activity
Camping (Car, Backpacking, & RV)	Campgrounds, AT impromptu
Camping (Glamping)	
Climbing (Indoor)	Blue Ridge Assembly
Disc golf	Veterans' Park
Fishing (Fly)	Stocked: Swannanoa, Curtis + Black Creeks
Fishing (Freshwater/Other)	Lake Tomahawk stocked
Hiking (Day)	Chamber has list, most visitors - short + easy
Hunting (Rifle/Shotgun/Handgun/Bow)	Bear season in area
Nature Study	Not organized, was Road Scholar program
Nature Photography	Not organized
Skateboarding	Small park behind Montessori
Snorkeling	Part of snorkel trail, sign in Veterans Park
Stand Up Paddling	Could happen – like Asheville
Trail Running	Group of Dads – Montreat then creek dip
Wildlife Viewing	Not organized

Other notes:

- Swannanoa River is not wide enough for paddling although floating is possible.
- Terrain is very steep so forested trails are difficult and access often remote from Town.
- Stream restoration work is underway. Fish are stocked and plans are developed for delayed harvest(location?). Streams have Mountain Heritage Trout designation.
- Parks & Rec/Outdoor Recreation leads hikes year-round, will do plant tours, teaches climbing.
- Hiking often means a walk around Lake Tomahawk.
- Watershed is not open for any kind of recreation.
- AllTrails app often sends people onto private land. Need instead to use local information and maps.

Black Mountain Outdoor Economy Assets

May 2023

OR Facilities/Resources/Attractions

Catawba waterfall hike (under renovation, not short or easy)

Mtn Bike trails – advanced riders at Kitsuma, Heartbreak; Lookout in Old Fort easier

Bicycling along 70 west and greenways

E-Bikes ride in town but need off road

New Park(s) – will be master planned soon! May include open space, trails, mountain biking, other

Swannanoa River is underutilized – could support floating

Community Garden – maxed out, needs more space and recognition

Special interest trails:

Public Art

Storybook – Lake Tomahawk

Treasured Tree

Basecamp for bachelor parties

Hiking Trails (Chamber has a handout!):

Montreat wilderness trails – 0.5mi - 5hrs, all difficulty levels (moderate can be difficult!)

Warren Wilson – 44 trails of varying difficulty

Blue Ridge Assembly

Ridgecrest – Parks + Rec partner, trails open for program use only

Christmount – 9 trails, historic site, Parks & Rec partner/program use

Curtis Creek – Old Fort access

Point Lookout - remote, difficult foot access from town, car via McDowell Co,

with only limited parking

USFS has new ridgeline trails including some accessible locations/views

Town Golf Course and Lake Tomahawk

OR Human + Organizational Assets

Celebrities – Brad Johnson, Brad Dougherty and Roy Williams

TOBM Parks + Rec – Outdoor Rec staff and program partners

Youth Disc Golf team

Black Mountain Parks and Greenways Foundation – 501c3 umbrella for many groups

Greenway & Trails committee

Friends of Lake Tomahawk

G5 Trail Collective – maintain Montreat, organized from Old Fort

Mountain Bike teams at Montreat and Warren Wilson Colleges

Montreat Conservancy (Southern Highlands Conservancy facilitates)

Scouts

Cooperative Extension – River Conservation programs

River Link

Montreat College/Town/Retreat Center

Blue Ridge Assembly (with YMCA)

Other camps—

Seasonal employees

Helicopter parents from camps - vacationing in Town

Outdoor Businesses

Epic Cycles

Take a Hike

One Fly Outfitters

WNC Outdoor Collective – need to check here for local makers as well

Mountain Running

Montreat – offers some fly-fishing equipment rental

Guides – various on-line, some AirBnBs have them, too

Goat Yoga

Outdoor Culture/Hang-outs:

 Lookout Brewery

 Trailhead

 Grange/Railyard

Black Mountain YMCA

Various Camps & Conference Centers

Note—listed on DataAXL but ground-truthed by work group

Painted View Farm (horse boarding, training) – no trail rides or public equestrian activity

Rhinehart Outdoor & Marine... marine equipment & supplies – has moved to Old Fort

Asheville Camper Rental (14 Daniel Lane)- unknown

Pisgah Bike Works (203 Black Mtn...) dealer - closed

Outdoor Manufacturers

None known – need to check with Matt Godfrey w Outdoor Business Alliance

Note – listed on DataAXL and ground-truthed by work group

Keith Nix Knives (Craigmont Rd - nonclassified) makes kitchen knives, not outdoor

Across the Canvas (96 Temple Rd) – listed as wholesale canvas goods - unknown

C W Moose Trading Co (111 W State St) – leather goods in retail but not manufactured

Information sources:

All Trails app – includes private land without acknowledgement

Trail Forks app

Chamber of Commerce printed packet is most accurate but not 'polished'



Downtown Black Mountain Retail Marketplace Snapshot-March of 2023

The purpose of this report is to give Downtown Black Mountain the baseline information for a better understanding of its current market. The NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center Staff studied the retail marketplace data within a 6-mile radius of the downtown area. The retail leakage analysis examines the quantitative aspects of the retail opportunities.

By reviewing the retail gap, we can:

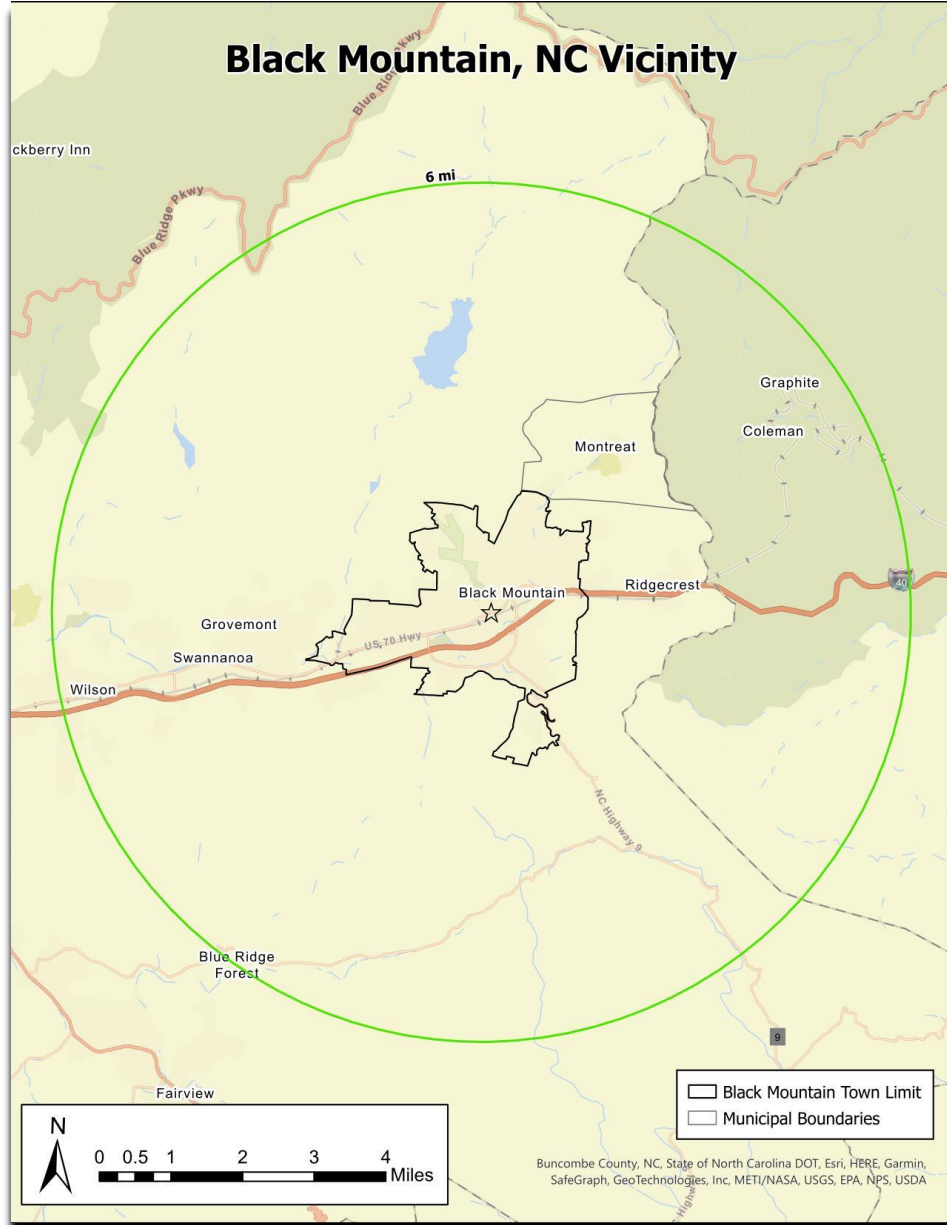
- Understand how well the retail needs of residents are being met.
- Uncover unmet demand and possible opportunities.
- Understand the strengths and weaknesses of the local retail sector.

When consumers spend their dollars outside the specific radii of Downtown Black Mountain this is known as “Retail Gap” throughout this report. Retail Gap or leakage indicates an **unmet demand in the trade area**. This suggests the possibility the community can support additional retail for those business categories. Residents within the specified primary trade areas are purchasing products outside that area indicating opportunity to capture those dollars within the downtown district.

There are also categories for which Downtown Black Mountain is exceeding the local market demand. Those are measured as red numbers on the below report. For the 6-mile radius and minute drive time information, this means that Downtown Black Mountain is exceeding its market potential in these categories. This retail surplus means the community’s trade area is capturing local market plus attracting non-local shoppers. Surplus means the community has possibly developed strong clusters of retail that have broad geographical appeal.

You can also seek additional retail market data that Buncombe County Economic Development or the Land-of-Sky Regional Council of Governments can provide. This report is based on the data collected and should serve as a starting point for your economic vitality efforts.

We highly encourage you to couple this report with consumer surveys to get a complete understanding of the Downtown Black Mountain potential. The NC Main Street and Rural Planning Center can share examples of consumer surveys and assist with this process as needed.



The above Buncombe County map outlines the two trade areas within a 6-mile radius of downtown. Defining the downtown trade area is critical in determining retail opportunities for the downtown market. The NC Main Street & Rural Center staff only reviewed the data within this segment. Downtown Black Mountain should be targeting residents within these two areas. The goal is to capture the retail sales volume leaking to neighboring communities, such as Asheville. The chart below shows total industry summaries for the 6-mile radius to downtown. It details the total retail sales gap, potential 10% capture and retail square footage needed to attract this sales volume.

The sales per square foot column in the charts is the average number based on recent research across the state. Typically, restaurant annual retail sales are higher than \$300 per square foot. There are variables that impact this number such as building owned versus rented, rental rates either higher or lower as well as overall expenses, such as employee wages, insurance, utilities, etc. **Surplus is shown as a red number and retail gap is shown as a black number.**

Distance	Total Retail Gap	10% Capture	Sales/SF	S.F. Needed
6-mile radius	\$6,896,635	\$689,664	\$300	2,299

The above chart shows the aggregate number of potential sales within the 6-mile radius around Downtown Black Mountain. Below you will see these number broken down by retail category.

6-Mile Radius Around Downtown

Black Mountain				
Primary Trade Area 6-mile around downtown		DOWNTOWN POTENTIAL		
Business Type	Retail Gap	10% of Retail Gap	Sales/SF	SF
		10%	\$300	Needed
Beer, Wine and Liquor Stores	\$ 1,627,739	\$ 162,774	\$ 300	543
Pharmacies and Drug Stores	\$ 1,656,116	\$ 165,612	\$ 300	552
Limited Service Restaurants	\$ 3,612,780	\$ 361,278	\$ 300	1,204
Total Gap	\$ 6,896,635	\$ 689,664	\$ 300	2,299

6-Mile Radius Retail Surplus

Category	Retail Surplus
Furniture Stores	\$ 4,798,601
Home Furnishing Stores	\$ 5,648,811
Appliance Stores	\$ 2,205,105
Electronics Stores	\$ 5,682,736
Home Centers	\$ 7,253,678
Paint and Wallpaper Stores	\$ 455,289
Hardware Stores	\$ 2,213,882
Nursery, and Garden Supply Stores	\$ 737,750
Grocery Stores	\$ 32,664,108
Cosmetics and Beauty Stores	\$ 829,449
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores	\$ 3,293,393

Shoe Stores	\$ 2,010,378
Jewelry Stores	\$ 490,313
Luggage and Leather Goods Stores	\$ 562,311
Sporting Goods Stores	\$ 3,087,307
Hobby, Toy, and Game Stores	\$ 1,716,751
Book Stores	\$ 1,512,902
Department Stores	\$ 3,417,308
Florists	\$ 383,373
Office Supply and Stationary Stores	\$ 953,937
Pet and Pet Supplies Stores	\$ 1,387,739
Drinking Places	\$ 524,165
Full-Service Restaurants	\$ 21,182,654
Total	\$103,011,940

The retail surpluses confirm that Downtown Black Mountain is attracting a disproportionate amount of retail sales in these categories and potential exists to attract additional retail and restaurant establishments to take advantage of the additional business potential.

Below are two tables showing the projected sales growth in different commercial categories. This information can help your recruitment process.

6-Mile Measurement

Black Mountain Demand Growth by Retail Store Types				
Primary Trade Area: 6-Mile Radius				
Business Type	2022	2027	Growth	Compound
	Demand	Demand	\$	Rate (%)
Furniture Stores	\$ 5,020,174	\$ 5,476,975	\$ 456,801	2
Home Furnishings Stores	\$ 3,514,719	\$ 4,030,003	\$ 515,284	3
Appliance Stores	\$ 1,333,761	\$ 1,493,586	\$ 159,825	2
Electronics Stores	\$ 4,755,109	\$ 5,300,574	\$ 545,465	2
Home Centers	\$ 14,297,762	\$ 16,727,646	\$ 2,429,884	3
Paint and Wallpaper Stores	\$ 1,026,500	\$ 1,310,589	\$ 284,089	5
Hardware Stores	\$ 2,102,815	\$ 2,464,117	\$ 361,303	3
Nursery, Garden Center and Farm Supply Stores	\$ 2,699,851	\$ 3,066,565	\$ 366,714	3
Grocery Stores	\$ 46,017,766	\$ 52,362,129	\$ 6,344,363	3
Beer, Wine and Liquor Stores	\$ 4,107,961	\$ 4,711,199	\$ 603,238	3
Pharmacies and Drug Stores	\$ 19,735,485	\$ 21,650,614	\$ 1,915,129	2
Cosmetics and Beauty Supply Stores	\$ 1,377,010	\$ 1,515,841	\$ 138,831	2
Sporting Goods Stores	\$ 2,914,211	\$ 2,993,702	\$ 79,492	1
Hobby, Toy and Game Stores	\$ 1,260,702	\$ 1,394,379	\$ 133,677	2
Book Stores	\$ 688,164	\$ 767,377	\$ 79,213	2
Office Supplies and Stationary Stores	\$ 677,501	\$ 775,114	\$ 97,613	3
Pet and Pet Supplies Stores	\$ 1,427,462	\$ 1,652,521	\$ 225,059	3
Drinking Places	\$ 1,698,495	\$ 1,918,195	\$ 219,700	2
Full Service Restaurants	\$ 21,818,429	\$ 24,366,049	\$ 2,547,620	2
Limited Service Restaurants	\$ 18,494,928	\$ 20,604,751	\$ 2,109,823	2
Total Sales	\$ 154,968,805	\$ 174,581,926	\$ 19,613,123	

Note: The compound annual growth rate (CAGR) is the annualized average rate of revenue growth between two given years, assuming growth takes place at an exponentially compounded rate. The most important factor in both charts is the amount of projected growth per category.

Retail Sales per Capita (Source: U.S. Census QuickFacts)

Total retail sales per capita for Black Mountain in 2017 (the last measured year on this site) are \$14,223 which are 20% below the Buncombe County average of \$17,849 but 3.5% above the NC average of \$13,735. Its retail sales per capita are 6.5% below the U.S. per capita average of \$15,224. This is unusual because of the positive demographics seen for Black Mountain, especially in comparison to Asheville seen below.

Asheville’s per capital retail sales are \$38,138 and it produces 76% of all Buncombe County retail sales. A comparison of Black Mountain and Asheville shows some definite advantages for Black Mountain:

	<u>Black Mountain</u>	<u>Asheville</u>
Bachelor’s Degree or higher	60.8%	50.8%
Median Household Income	\$68,333	\$58,193
Poverty Rate	4.8%	12.4%

Black Mountain has more citizens with the higher spending power that comes from higher education, a higher median household income, and less than half the poverty rate of Asheville. All three of the above measurements translate into higher consumer spending power for Black Mountain compared to Asheville.

Black Mountain is a great choice for prospective retailers and restaurateurs planning to locate in the county, based on these measurements and significant consumer sales potential exists in the downtown and community at large. Also, the quality of current Black Mountain retailers, restaurants and breweries speaks volume for the sales potential existing in this community.

The above data can be used to help recruit businesses to Downtown Black Mountain to meet the unmet potential and reduce the retail gap or leakage. The priorities are to first retain, then expand and finally to recruit new businesses. The categories that show the most potential should be focused on within the 6-mile radius of downtown. This data can help existing businesses realize there may be potential to expand to capture additional retail sales.

Tapestry Segmentation identified by ESRI On-Line Business Analyst

We find that studying the Tapestry Segments helps to identify a retail mix based on demographics that could enhance the shopping experience. Tapestry Segmentations provide detailed descriptions of America’s neighborhoods. U.S. residential areas are divided into 67 distinctive segments based on their socioeconomic and demographic composition, then further classifies the segments into LifeMode and Urbanization Groups. Each radius has numerous LifeMode groups for a total of 100%. The detailed information can give Downtown Black

Mountain a sense of who its customer is and insight into how to market to and what types of products to possibly add to existing inventory. By diving deeper into each Tapestry Segment's LifeMode and Urbanization Group there may be an entirely new business that could emerge and possibly be a good fit for downtown.

The information provided reflects the U.S. characteristics. The table below shows the top three segments for each category with brief descriptions. Detailed descriptions are obtained by going to the raw ESRI data's Tapestry information and clicking on each segment for the specific drive times. Visit <http://doc.arcgis.com/en/esri-demographics/data/tapestry-segmentation>

Top 3 Tapestries for each location

Total Community		6-mile radius	
The Great Outdoors	34.5%	The Great Outdoors	28.9%
Senior Escapes	26.7%	In Style	23.3%
Mid-Life Constants	24.9%	Senior Escapes	18.0%

The top segment for the total Black Mountain community and those living within a 6-mile radius of downtown is The Great Outdoors. The top segment for the total community and the third largest for the 6-mile radius of downtown is Senior Escapes. Finally, the third largest segment for the total community is Mid-Life Constants. All three of those will be examined below:

The Great Outdoors	Total Households (U.S.)	1,908,600
	Average Household Size	2.44
	Median Age	47.4
	Average HH Income	\$56,400

WHO ARE WE?

These neighborhoods are found in pastoral settings throughout the United States. Consumers are educated empty nesters living an active but modest lifestyle. Their focus is land. They are more likely to invest in real estate or a vacation home than stocks. They are active gardeners and partial to homegrown and home-cooked meals. Although retirement beckons, most of these residents still work, with incomes slightly above the US level.

SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- 60% have attended college or hold a degree.
- Labor force participation is low at 60%.
- Typical of neighborhoods with older residents, income from retirement and Social Security is common, but residents also derive income from self-employment and investments.
- Residents are very do-it-yourself oriented and cost conscious.
- Many service their own autos, work on home improvement and remodeling projects, and maintain their own yards.

- They prefer domestic travel to trips abroad.

Senior Escapes	Total Households (U.S.)	1,116,000
	Average Household Size	2.20
	Median Age	54.6
	Average HH Income	\$38,700

WHO ARE WE?

Senior Escapes neighborhoods are heavily concentrated in the warmer states of Florida, California, and Arizona. These areas are highly seasonal, yet owner occupied. Many homes began as seasonal getaways and now serve as primary residences. Nearly 40% are mobile homes; over half are single-family dwellings. About half are in unincorporated and more rural areas. Nearly one-fifth of the population is between 65 and 74 years old. Residents enjoy watching TV, going on cruises, playing trivia games, bicycling, boating, and fishing. They are very conscious of their health and buy specialty foods and dietary supplements.

SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- Labor force participation is low, but more than half the households are drawing Social Security income.
- They spend majority of their time with spouse or significant other or alone.
- They are limited by medical conditions but still enjoy gardening and working on their vehicles.
- They take good care of vehicles but haven't bought a new one in over five years.
- They only spend within their means, do their banking in person, and do not carry a balance on their credit card.

Midlife Constants	Total Households (U.S.)	3,086,400
	Average Household Size	2.31
	Median Age	47.0
	Average HH Income	\$53,200

WHO ARE WE?

Midlife Constants residents are seniors, at or approaching retirement, with below-average labor force participation and below-average net worth. Although located in predominantly metropolitan areas, they live outside the central cities, in smaller communities. Their lifestyle is more country than urban. They are generous but not spendthrifts.

SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- Education: 63% have a high school diploma or some college.
- At 31%, the labor force participation rate is low in this market.
- Almost 42% of households are receiving Social Security; 27% also receive retirement income
- Traditional, not trendy; opt for convenience and comfort not cutting edge. Technology has its uses, but the bells and whistles are a bother.
- Attentive to price, but not at the expense of quality, they prefer to buy American and natural products.

- Radio and newspapers are the media of choice (after television.)

AARP Livability Index

The AARP Livability Index for Downtown Black Mountain is 52 on a scale ranging from 0 to 100. The higher the score the more livable the community. Black Mountain ranks above average on this scale. It is important to consider the different index categories, such as health, environment, neighborhood, and opportunity to help you determine what needs to be done to improve this score. Some areas of particular interest include:

The positive.....

<u>Category</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2022 Median U.S. Neighborhood</u>
Housing (46 out of 100)		
Availability of subsidized housing (Units per 10,000)	0	0
Zero-Step Entrances	50.1%	50.1%
Neighborhoods (39 out of 100)		
Access to Grocery Stores & Farmer's Mkts	0 stores or markets	0.0
Access to libraries	0*	0
Access to jobs by transit	0	0
Diversity of Destinations	0.82	.65
Vacancy rate (# of units are vacant)	7%	8.6%
*Black Mountain Dougherty Street library is not acknowledged.		
Transportation (40 out of 100)		
Congestion (Hours per person per year)	20.3	25.5
Crash Rate (Fatal crashes per 100,000 people per year)	6.6	7.7
Frequency of local transit (Buses and trains per hour)	1	0

<u>Category</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2022 Median U.S. Neighborhood</u>
Environment (65 out of 100)		
Regional air quality (Unhealthy air quality days/year)	0	4.37
Local Industrial Pollution (ORSE score from 0 to 9,070)	0	0.00
Drinking Water Quality (% of people exposed to violations)	0.00%	0%
Health (51 out of 100)		
Smoking prevalence (% of adults who smoke regularly)	17.0%	18%
Obesity prevalence (% of adults who are obese)	26.0%	32.2%
Patient Satisfaction (% of patents satisfied)	77.5%	71.8%
Preventable hospitalization rate (Preventable hospitalization rate per 100 patients)	34.4	48.5
Engagement (84 out of 100)		
Broadband cost and speed (% of residents who have high speed and competitively priced internet)	95.1%	93.7%
Opportunity for Civic Involvement (Number of organizations per 10,000 ppl.)	11.2	1.18
Voting Rate (% of people voting)	73.5%	61.9%
Social Involvement Index (Index 0 to 2.5)	1.11	0.96
The negative.....		
Housing (46 out of 100)		
Housing Costs/month	\$1,113	\$1,057

<u>Category</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2022 Median U.S. Neighborhood</u>
Housing (46 out of 100)		
Housing Cost Burden (Percentage of income spent on housing)	18.4%	16.3%
Availability of multi-family housing (% of units are multi-family)	14.9%	18%
Neighborhood (39 out of 100)		
Access to parks	0 parks*	0
Activity Density (Jobs and people per square mile)	549	3,056
Crime rate (Crimes per 10,000 people)	287	217.4
Access to jobs by auto	7,838	44,198
*Riverwalk, Lake Tomahawk and Veteran's Parks are not acknowledged.		
Transportation (40 out of 100)		
ADA Accessible stations/vehicles (% of stations/vehicles ADA accessible)	73.6%	82.9%
Walk trips (# of trips per household per day)	0.63	.073
Household transportation costs (Amount per year)	\$16,555	\$15,331
Speed limits (Miles per hour)	36.9	28.0
Environment (65 out of 100)		
Near-roadway pollution (# of people exposed)	12.02	0.00%

<u>Category</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2022 Median U.S. Neighborhood</u>
Health (51 out of 100)		
Access to exercise equipment (% of people who have access)	75.0%	90.1%
Healthcare Professional Shortage Areas	8	0
Engagement (84 out of 100)		
Cultural, arts and entertainment institutions (Institutions per 100 people)	0.5	8.01
Opportunity (38 out of 100)		
Income inequality (Index from 0 to 1)	0.47	0.46
Jobs per worker (Jobs per worker)	0.74	0.80
High School graduation rate	88.0%*	88.5%
Age Diversity (Index from 0 to 1)	0.72	0.85

*U.S. Census Bureau estimates the Black Mountain high school education rate of 92.9%

Walkscore

Walkscore.com provides a measurement of how walkable and bikeable is a community. Using the 160 Midland Avenue address, Downtown Black Mountain scored a 79 Walkscore meaning that it is very walkable, and most errands can be accomplished by foot.

Downtown Black Mountain's Bikescore is 50 meaning it is considered bikeable with some bike infrastructure is in place.

Visit <https://www.walkscore.com> for more information.

Summary and Recommendations

1. Retail Gap

Retail gaps were only seen in three categories: beer, wine and liquor, pharmacies and limited-service restaurants. This is quite unusual since the measurement does not reach the Asheville market.

2. Retail Surplus

Retail surpluses were seen in many categories, including furniture, home furnishings, appliances, electronics, home centers, paint and wallpaper stores, hardware stores, nursery and garden stores, grocery stores, cosmetics and beauty stores, shoe stores, jewelry, luggage and leather goods, sporting goods, hobby, toy and game stores, book stores, department stores, florists, office supplies pet and pet supplies drinking places and full-service restaurants.

3. Intersection of retail gaps and projected growth.

When you see retail gaps it indicates sales potential being missed and projected sales growth is what is forecasted for a given category. Those categories that show retail gap and strong projected growth should make potential investors more confident in their ability to succeed in Black Mountain.

<u>Category</u>	<u>6-Mile Radius</u>	<u>Projected Growth (2022-2027)</u>
Beer, Wine, and Liquor	\$1,627,739	\$ 600,238
Pharmacies and Drug Stores	\$1,656,116	\$1,915,129
Limited-Service Rest.	\$3,612,780	\$2,109,823

4. Walkability and Bikeability

The Downtown Black Mountain Walkscore of 79 is well-above average. Concerning bikeability, Downtown Black Mountain scores a 50 which is average. You will want to work with the local NCDOT division to incorporate bike lanes into their streets in downtown as well as those controlled by the Town of Black Mountain.

According to a study by real estate advising company Robert Charles Lesser & Co., homebuyers are increasingly looking for green space and trail systems for walking, running and biking. In fact, green space and trail systems were the No. 1 and No. 2 desirable community features in this referenced article---Source: New Home Source:

<https://www.newhomesource.com/learn/top-community-amenities/>

The list is below:

Parks and green spaces

Paved trail systems for walking, jogging, biking, etc.

Note that in addition to the walking and biking trail amenities, the #3 amenity that new homeowners want is:

Main street village centers with retail services and cafes for gathering and socializing

Downtown Black Mountain fits the #3 desired community amenity and will want to see ways to increase walkability and biking options to meet consumer demands.

5. Trip Advisor: Things to Do in Black Mountain

16 of the top 25 things to do by Trip Advisor are located in Downtown Black Mountain. This shows the popularity of the Downtown.

6. Outdoor Recreation



The comprehensive outdoor programming should be marketed throughout the region to draw people to Downtown Black Mountain. Downtown has the retail, restaurant, and brewery amenities to attract those who wish to participate in the programmed and non-programmed activities happening in the community.

7. Downtown Resources

Hilary Greenberg of Greenberg Development Services is creating a business recruitment guide that will be available soon on the Main Street and Rural Planning website. Also, former Main Street Manager Diane Young has created the Downtown Directors' Guide to Working with Development Projects-- <https://www.ncmainstreetandplanning.com/economic-vitality>-- an invaluable resource for downtown revitalization.

There is additional Claritas retail data and the U.S. Census Quickfacts report to support your retail recruitment efforts.

If you have any questions concerning the above information, do not hesitate to contact Ann Bass, ARC Community Economic Development Planner of the Western Region at 828-508-0107 or ann.bass@commerce.nc.gov

Sources: Claritas Retail Data

<http://doc.arcgis.com/en/esri-demographics/data/tapestry-segmentation>
Livabilityindex.aarp.org

Buncombe County map—Glen Locascio, NC Department of Commerce

Pop-Facts® Demographics | Population & Race



Trade Area: 160 Midland Avenue - 6 mi.

POPULATION

23,340

HOUSEHOLDS

9,772

ETHNICITY



6.9%
Index:109

Hispanic/Latino

HISPANIC ORIGIN*



60.0%
Index:99

Mexican

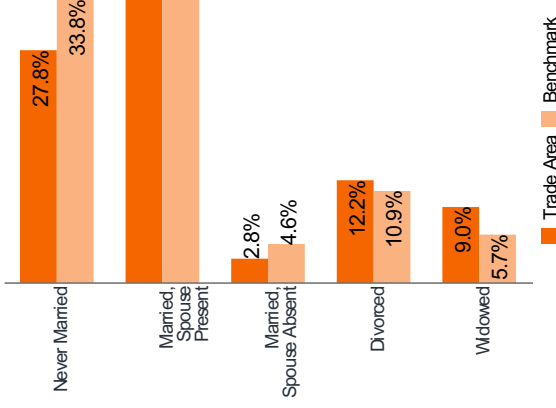
HOME LANGUAGE*



95.5%
Index:122

Only English

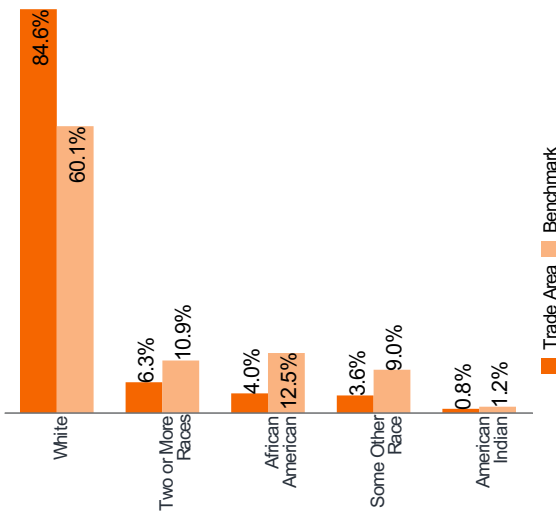
MARITAL STATUS



POPULATION BY AGE

Age	Count	%	Index
0 - 4	1,004	4.3	74
5 - 9	1,075	4.6	77
10 - 14	1,116	4.8	77
15 - 17	742	3.2	83
18 - 20	891	3.8	94
21 - 24	1,015	4.3	84
25 - 34	2,669	11.4	85
35 - 44	2,872	12.3	95
45 - 54	2,801	12.0	100
55 - 64	3,119	13.4	106
65 - 74	3,509	15.0	141
75 - 84	1,710	7.3	140
85+	818	3.5	170

POPULATION BY RACE**



Benchmark: USA

*Top variable chosen from percent composition ranking
 **Top 5 variables chosen from percent composition ranking

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Index Colors:	<80	80 - 110	110+

Pop-Facts® Demographics | Housing & Household



Trade Area: 160 Midland Avenue - 6 mi.

Population: 23,340 | Households: 9,772

MEDIAN AGE OF HOUSEHOLDER

58

Index: 109

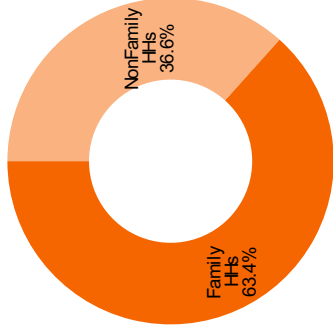
PRESENCE OF CHILDREN*

26.5%

Index: 79



HOUSEHOLD TYPE



HOUSING TENURE



71.6%

Index: 111

Own



28.4%

Index: 80

Rent

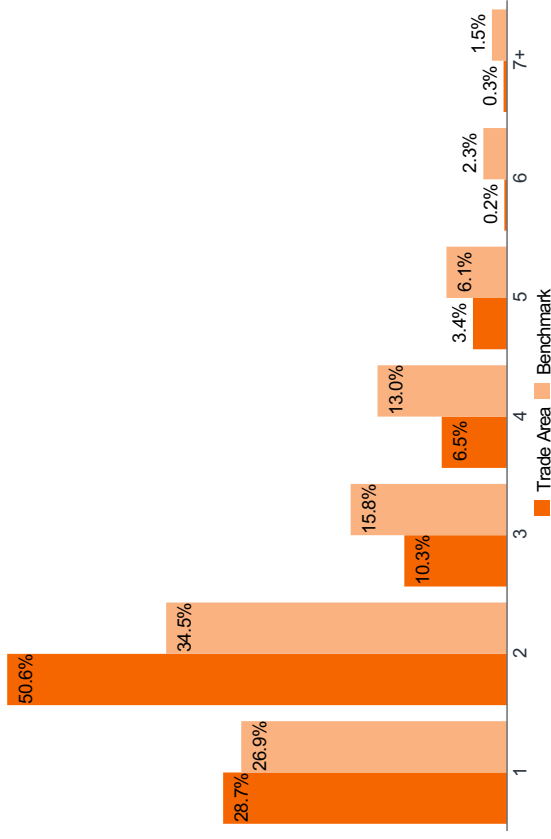
AGE OF HOUSING**



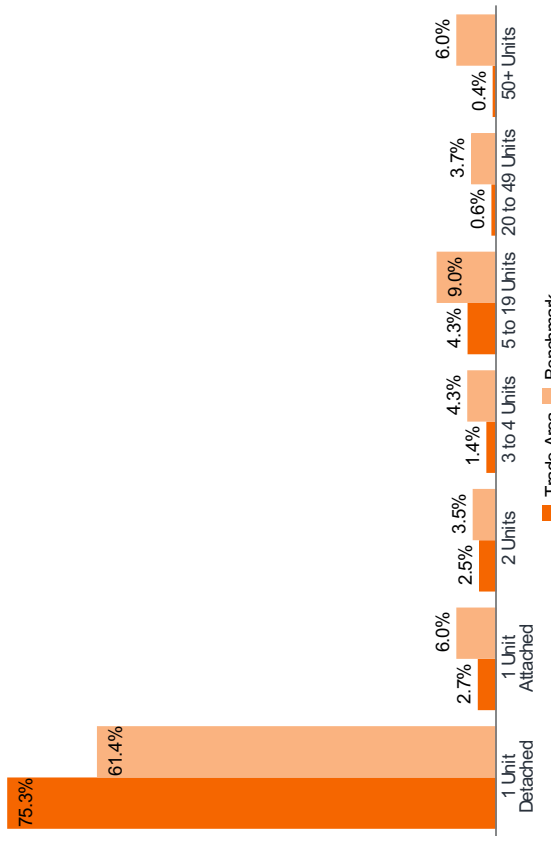
19 - 28 years old

% Comp.: 16.5 Index: 120

HOUSEHOLD SIZE



HOUSING UNITS IN STRUCTURE



Benchmark: USA

*Uses the variable "Households with people under age 18"

**Chosen from percent composition ranking

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Index Colors:	<80	80 - 110	110+

Pop-Facts® Demographics | Affluence & Education



Trade Area: 160 Midland Avenue - 6 mi.

Population: 23,340 | Households: 9,772

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT: TOP 2*



30.9%
Index: 115

High School Graduate



22.7%
Index: 113

Bachelor's Degree



0.6%
Index: 21

Bachelor's degree or higher



93.7%
Index: 103

At or above poverty

EDUCATION: HISPANIC/LATINO

POVERTY STATUS

HOUSEHOLD INCOME



Median Household Income

\$53,829

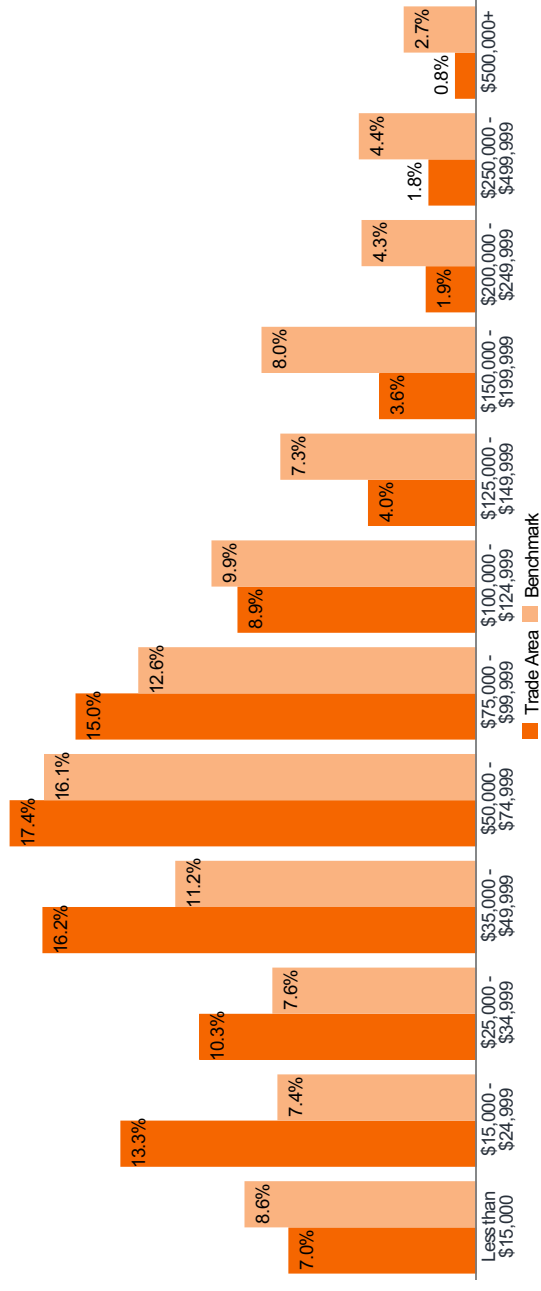
Index: 73

Average Household Income

\$73,644

Index: 70

HOUSEHOLD INCOME DISTRIBUTION



Benchmark: USA

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(<https://claritas.easpolight.com/Spotlight/About/3/2023>)

*Ranked by percent composition

Index Colors: <80

80 - 110

110+

Pop-Facts® Demographics | Employment & Occupation



Trade Area: 160 Midland Avenue - 6 mi.

Population: 23,340 | Households: 9,772

OCCUPATIONAL CLASS*



White Collar

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE



Percent of civilian labor force unemployed

METHOD OF TRAVEL TO WORK: TOP 2*

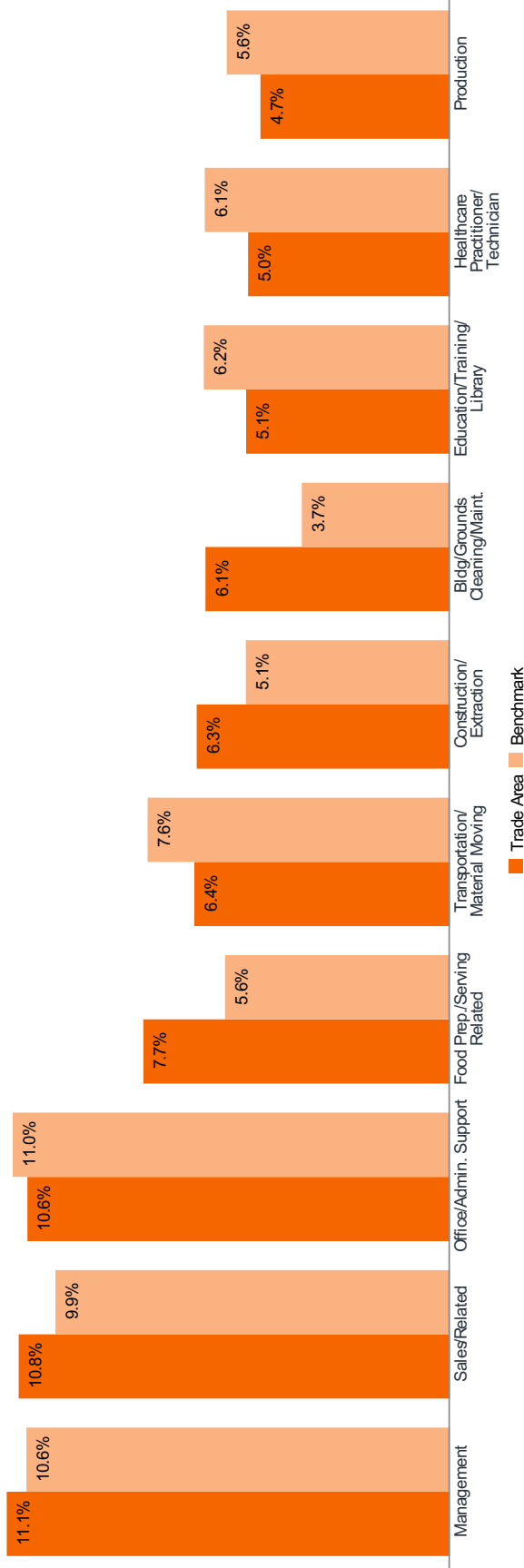


Travel to work by **Driving Alone**



Travel to work by **Walking**

OCCUPATION: TOP 10*



Benchmark: USA

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*Chosen from percent composition ranking

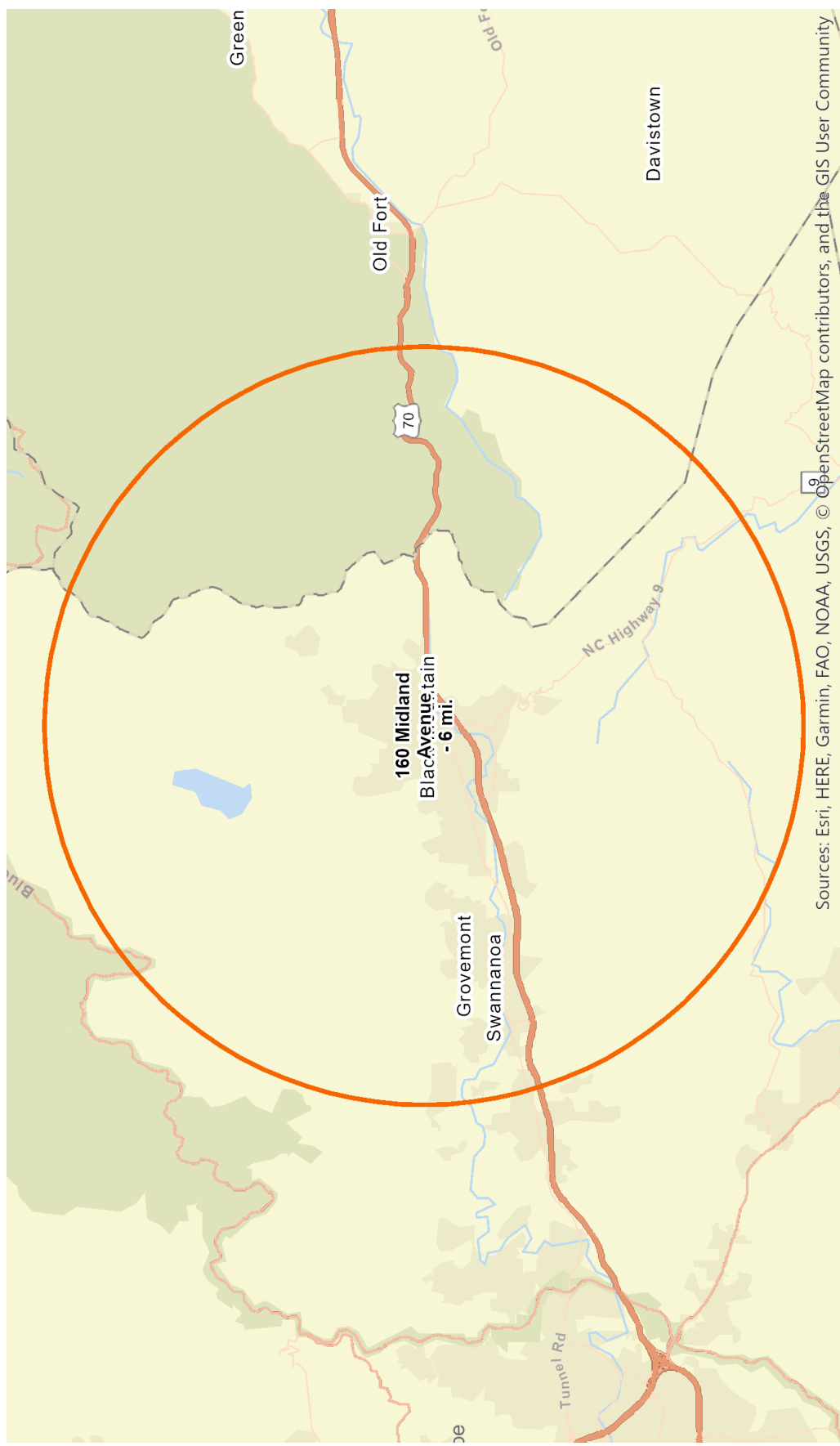
Index Colors:	<80	80 - 110	110+
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Pop-Facts® Demographics | Map



Trade Area: 160 Midland Avenue - 6 mi.

Population: 23,340 | Households: 9,772



Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community ©2006-2023 TomTom

Trade Area: 160 Midland Avenue - 6 mi.



POPULATION

The population in this area is estimated to change from **22,974** to **23,340**, resulting in a growth of **1.6%** between 2020 and the current year. Over the next five years, the population is projected to grow by **3.1%**.

The population in the base area is estimated to change from **331,449,281** to **334,500,069**, resulting in a growth of **0.9%** between 2020 and the current year. Over the next five years, the population is projected to grow by **2.1%**.

The current year median age for this area is **46.0**, while the average age is **45.2**. Five years from now, the median age is projected to be **47.4**.

The current year median age for the base area is **39.2**, while the average age is **40.2**. Five years from now, the median age is projected to be **40.3**.

Of this area's current year estimated population:

84.6% are White Alone, **4.0%** are Black or African American Alone, **0.8%** are American Indian and Alaska Nat. Alone, **0.7%** are Asian Alone, **0.1%** are Nat. Hawaiian and Other Pacific Isl. Alone, **3.6%** are Some Other Race, and **6.3%** are Two or More Races.

Of the base area's current year estimated population:

60.1% are White Alone, **12.5%** are Black or African American Alone, **1.2%** are American Indian and Alaska Nat. Alone, **6.2%** are Asian Alone, **0.2%** are Nat. Hawaiian and Other Pacific Isl. Alone, **9.0%** are Some Other Race, and **10.9%** are Two or More Races.

This area's current estimated Hispanic or Latino population is **6.9%**, while the base area's current estimated Hispanic or Latino population is **19.9%**.



HOUSEHOLD

The number of households in this area is estimated to change from **9,566** to **9,772**, resulting in an increase of **2.2%** between 2020 and the current year. Over the next five years, the number of households is projected to increase by **3.7%**.

The number of households in the base area is estimated to change from **126,817,580** to **128,298,155**, resulting in an increase of **1.2%** between 2020 and the current year. Over the next five years, the number of households is projected to increase by **2.4%**.

Benchmark: USA

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Trade Area: 160 Midland Avenue - 6 mi.



EDUCATION

Currently, it is estimated that **11.1%** of the population age 25 and over in this area had earned a Master's Degree, **2.4%** had earned a Professional School Degree, **1.5%** had earned a Doctorate Degree and **22.7%** had earned a Bachelor's Degree.

In comparison, for the base area, it is estimated that for the population over age 25, **9.1%** had earned a Master's Degree, **2.2%** had earned a Professional School Degree, **1.5%** had earned a Doctorate Degree and **20.2%** had earned a Bachelor's Degree.



INCOME

The average household income is estimated to be **\$73,644** for the current year, while the average household income for the base area is estimated to be **\$104,972** for the same time frame.

The average household income in this area is projected to change over the next five years, from **\$73,644** to **\$81,243**.

The average household income in the base area is projected to change over the next five years, from **\$104,972** to **\$118,758**.



HOUSING

Most of the dwellings in this area (**71.6%**) are estimated to be **Owner-Occupied** for the current year. For the base area the majority of the housing units are **Owner-Occupied** (**64.4%**).

The majority of dwellings in this area (**75.3%**) are estimated to be structures of **1 Unit Detached** for the current year. The majority of the dwellings in the base area (**61.4%**) are estimated to be structure of **1 Unit Detached** for the same year.

The majority of housing units in this area (**16.5%**) are estimated to have been **Built 1990 to 1999** for the current year.

The majority of housing units in the base area (**14.6%**) are estimated to have been **Built 1970 to 1979** for the current year.

Trade Area: 160 Midland Avenue - 6 mi.



LABOR

For this area, **160 Midland Avenue - 6 mi.**, **97.9%** of the labor force is estimated to be employed for the current year.

The employment status of the population age 16 and over is as follows:

0.1% are in the Armed Forces, **49.9%** are employed civilians, **1.1%** are unemployed civilians, and **48.9%** are not in the labor force.

The occupational classification for this area are as follows:

21.6% hold blue collar occupations, **55.4%** hold white collar occupations, and **23.0%** are occupied as service & farm workers.

For the civilian employed population age 16 and over in this area, it is estimated that they are employed in the following occupational categories: **1.2%** are in Architecture and Engineering, **2.7%** are in Arts, Entertainment and Sports, **3.4%** are in Business and Financial Operations, **1.9%** are in Computers and Mathematics, **5.1%** are in Education, Training and Libraries, **5.0%** are in Healthcare Practitioners and Technicians, **2.6%** are in Healthcare Support, **1.1%** are in Life, Physical and Social Sciences, **11.1%** are in Management, **10.6%** are in Office and Administrative Support.

1.7% are in Community and Social Services, **7.7%** are in Food Preparation and Serving, **0.7%** are in Legal Services, **2.1%** are in Protective Services, **10.8%** are in Sales and Related Services, **3.8%** are in Personal Care Services.

6.1% are in Building and Grounds Maintenance, **6.3%** are in Construction and Extraction, **0.6%** are in Farming, Fishing and Forestry, **4.2%** are in Maintenance and Repair, **4.7%** are in Production, **6.4%** are in Transportation and Moving.

For the base area, **USA**, **95.3%** of the labor force is estimated to be employed for the current year.

The employment status of the population age 16 and over is as follows:

0.4% are in the Armed Forces, **60.1%** are employed civilians, **3.0%** are unemployed civilians, and **36.5%** are not in the labor force.

The occupational classification for the base area are as follows:

21.3% hold blue collar occupations, **60.5%** hold white collar occupations, and **18.2%** are occupied as service & farm workers.

For the civilian employed population age 16 and over in the base area, it is estimated that they are employed in the following occupational categories: **2.0%** are in Architecture and Engineering, **2.0%** are in Arts, Entertainment and Sports, **5.4%** are in Business and Financial Operations, **3.3%** are in Computers and Mathematics, **6.2%** are in Education, Training and Libraries, **6.1%** are in Healthcare Practitioners and Technicians, **3.3%** are in Healthcare Support, **1.0%** are in Life, Physical and Social Sciences, **10.6%** are in Management, **11.0%** are in Office and Administrative Support.

1.8% are in Community and Social Services, **5.6%** are in Food Preparation and Serving, **1.1%** are in Legal Services, **2.2%** are in Protective Services, **9.9%** are in Sales and Related Services, **2.7%** are in Personal Care Services.

3.7% are in Building and Grounds Maintenance, **5.1%** are in Construction and Extraction, **0.6%** are in Farming, Fishing and Forestry, **3.1%** are in Maintenance and Repair, **5.6%** are in Production, **7.6%** are in Transportation and Moving.

Retail Market Power® | Opportunity Gap by Retail Store Types



Trade Area: 160 Midland Avenue - 6 mi.

	2023 Demand (\$)	2023 Supply (\$)	Opportunity Gap/Surplus (\$)
Totals			
Total retail trade including food and drink (NAICS 44, 45 and 722)	447,249,405	509,498,039	-62,248,635
Total retail trade (NAICS 44 and 45)	398,194,669	441,496,506	-43,301,837
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers			
Motor vehicle and parts dealers (NAICS 441)	106,602,572	78,129,443	28,473,129
Automobile dealers (NAICS 4411)	91,692,870	50,766,856	40,926,014
New car dealers (NAICS 44111)	81,639,361	41,649,237	39,990,123
Used car dealers (NAICS 44112)	10,053,509	9,117,618	935,890
Other motor vehicle dealers (NAICS 4412)	7,900,031	10,499,427	-2,599,396
Recreational vehicle dealers (NAICS 44121)	2,674,311	182,481	2,491,830
Motorcycle, boat, and other motor vehicle dealers (NAICS 44122)	5,225,720	10,316,946	-5,091,226
Boat dealers (NAICS 441222)	1,690,794	165,106	1,525,688
Motorcycle, ATV, and all other motor vehicle dealers (NAICS 441228)	3,534,925	10,151,840	-6,616,915
Automotive parts, accessories, and tire stores (NAICS 4413)	7,009,671	16,863,160	-9,853,488
Automotive parts and accessories stores (NAICS 44131)	4,435,402	9,801,077	-5,365,675
Tire dealers (NAICS 44132)	2,574,270	7,062,083	-4,487,813
Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores			
Furniture and home furnishings stores (NAICS 442)	8,534,893	18,982,305	-10,447,412
Furniture stores (NAICS 4421)	5,020,174	9,818,775	-4,798,601
Home furnishings stores (NAICS 4422)	3,514,719	9,163,529	-5,648,811
Floor covering stores (NAICS 44221)	1,711,451	3,841,992	-2,130,541
Other home furnishings stores (NAICS 44229)	1,803,268	5,321,538	-3,518,270
Window treatment stores (NAICS 442291)	82,408	235,739	-153,331
All other home furnishings stores (NAICS 442299)	1,720,860	5,085,799	-3,364,939
Electronics and Appliance Stores			
Electronics and appliance stores (NAICS 443)	6,088,870	13,976,711	-7,887,841
Household appliance stores (NAICS 443141)	1,333,761	3,538,866	-2,205,105
Electronics stores (NAICS 443142)	4,755,109	10,437,844	-5,682,736
Building Material and Garden Equipment and Supplies Dealers			
Building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers (NAICS 444)	28,913,851	49,365,628	-20,451,777
Building material and supplies dealers (NAICS 4441)	25,479,581	45,189,618	-19,710,037
Home centers (NAICS 44411)	14,297,762	21,551,440	-7,253,678
Paint and wallpaper stores (NAICS 44412)	1,026,500	1,481,789	-455,289
Hardware stores (NAICS 44413)	2,102,815	4,316,697	-2,213,882
Other building material dealers (NAICS 44419)	8,052,505	17,839,693	-9,787,188
Lawn and garden equipment and supplies stores (NAICS 4442)	3,434,270	4,176,010	-741,740
Outdoor power equipment stores (NAICS 44421)	734,419	738,409	-3,989
Nursery, garden center, and farm supply stores (NAICS 44422)	2,699,851	3,437,601	-737,750
Food and Beverage Stores			
Food and beverage stores (NAICS 445)	53,610,709	81,245,649	-27,634,940
Grocery stores (NAICS 4451)	48,115,396	78,765,427	-30,650,031
Supermarkets and other grocery (except convenience) stores (NAICS 44511)	46,017,766	78,681,873	-32,664,108
Convenience stores (NAICS 44512)	2,097,631	83,554	2,014,077
Specialty food stores (NAICS 4452)	1,387,352	0	1,387,352
Meat markets (NAICS 44521)	428,879	0	428,879
Fish and seafood markets (NAICS 44522)	168,187	0	168,187
Fruit and vegetable markets (NAICS 44523)	287,017	0	287,017
Other specialty food stores (NAICS 44529)	503,268	0	503,268
All other specialty food stores (NAICS 445299)	239,004	0	239,004
Beer, wine, and liquor stores (NAICS 4453)	4,107,961	2,480,222	1,627,739
Health and Personal Care Stores			
Health and personal care stores (NAICS 446)	22,837,525	27,252,649	-4,415,124
Pharmacies and drug stores (NAICS 44611)	19,735,485	18,079,369	1,656,116
Cosmetics, beauty supplies, and perfume stores (NAICS 44612)	1,377,010	2,206,459	-829,449
Optical goods stores (NAICS 44613)	474,948	1,505,549	-1,030,601
Other health and personal care stores (NAICS 44619)	1,250,082	5,461,272	-4,211,189
Food (health) supplement stores (NAICS 446191)	440,967	258,036	182,930
All other health and personal care stores (NAICS 446199)	809,116	5,203,235	-4,394,120
Gasoline Stations			
Gasoline stations (NAICS 447)	31,383,876	27,190,546	4,193,330

Benchmark: USA

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Retail Market Power® | Opportunity Gap by Retail Store Types



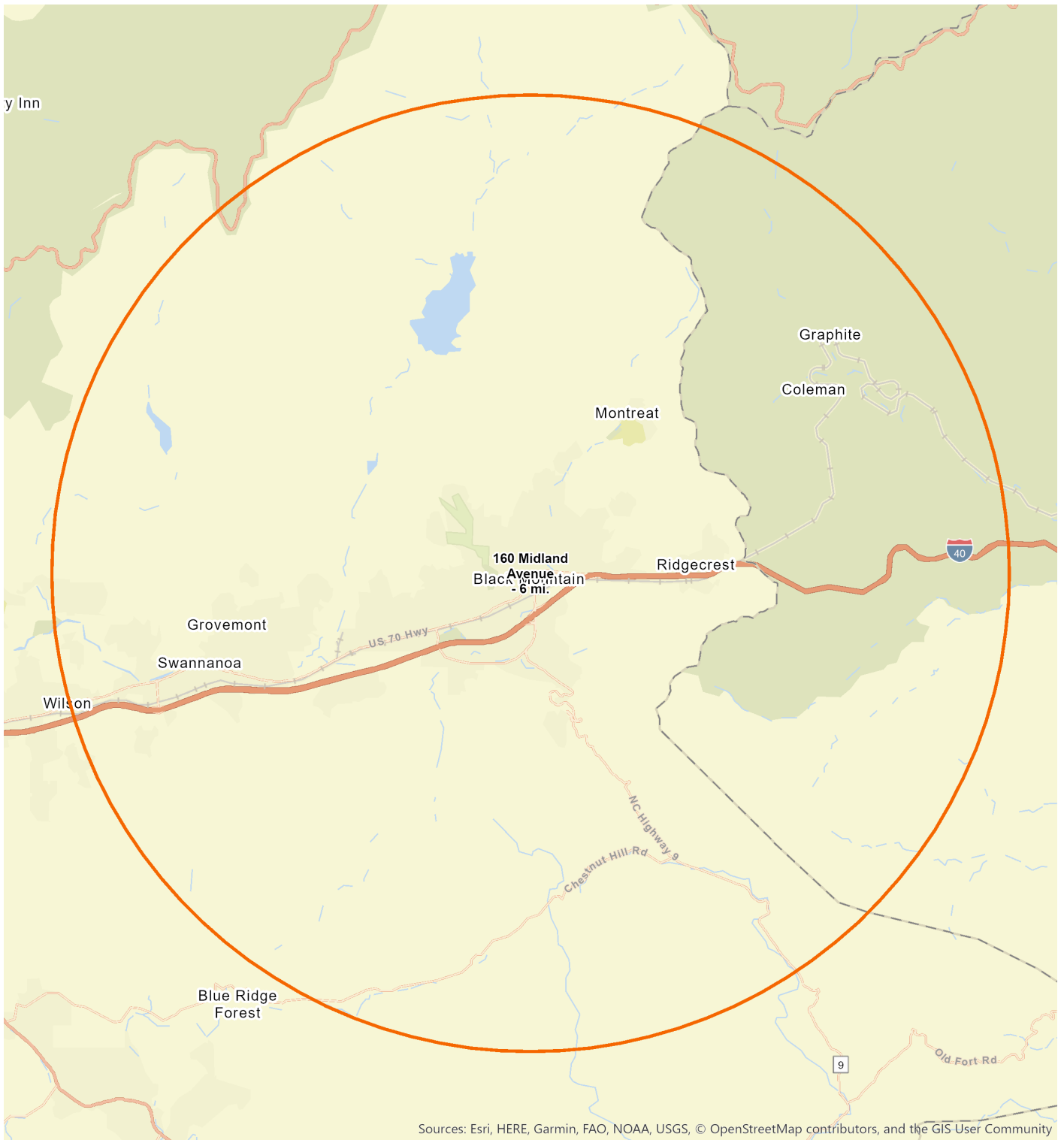
Trade Area: 160 Midland Avenue - 6 mi.

	2023 Demand (\$)	2023 Supply (\$)	Opportunity Gap/Surplus (\$)
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores			
Clothing and clothing accessories stores (NAICS 448)	16,259,635	19,553,028	-3,293,393
Clothing stores (NAICS 4481)	11,039,686	11,270,077	-230,391
Men's clothing stores (NAICS 44811)	422,050	485,113	-63,064
Women's clothing stores (NAICS 44812)	2,084,022	2,037,250	46,772
Children's and infants' clothing stores (NAICS 44813)	503,615	677,102	-173,487
Family clothing stores (NAICS 44814)	6,536,419	6,211,479	324,940
Clothing accessories stores (NAICS 44815)	549,761	582,201	-32,440
Other clothing stores (NAICS 44819)	943,819	1,276,932	-333,114
Shoe stores (NAICS 4482)	1,810,737	3,821,115	-2,010,378
Jewelry, luggage, and leather goods stores (NAICS 4483)	3,409,212	4,461,836	-1,052,623
Jewelry stores (NAICS 44831)	2,289,236	2,779,549	-490,313
Luggage and leather goods stores (NAICS 44832)	1,119,976	1,682,287	-562,311
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Musical Instrument, and Book Stores			
Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, and book stores (NAICS 451)	5,311,561	12,213,308	-6,901,747
Sporting goods, hobby, and musical instrument stores (NAICS 4511)	4,574,712	10,012,241	-5,437,529
Sporting goods stores (NAICS 45111)	2,914,211	6,001,518	-3,087,307
Hobby, toy, and game stores (NAICS 45112)	1,260,702	2,977,453	-1,716,751
Sewing, needlework, and piece goods stores (NAICS 45113)	152,276	279,930	-127,654
Musical instrument and supplies stores (NAICS 45114)	247,524	753,341	-505,817
Book stores and news dealers (NAICS 4512)	736,849	2,201,066	-1,464,218
Book stores (NAICS 451211)	688,164	2,201,066	-1,512,902
News dealers and newsstands (NAICS 451212)	48,685	0	48,685
General Merchandise Stores			
General merchandise stores (NAICS 452)	46,609,426	58,151,794	-11,542,368
Department stores (NAICS 4522)	5,721,565	9,138,872	-3,417,308
Other general merchandise stores (NAICS 4523)	40,887,861	49,012,922	-8,125,060
Warehouse clubs and supercenters (NAICS 452311)	37,035,580	44,499,254	-7,463,673
All other general merchandise stores (NAICS 452319)	3,852,281	4,513,668	-661,387
Miscellaneous Store Retailers			
Miscellaneous store retailers (NAICS 453)	7,857,875	18,526,118	-10,668,244
Florists (NAICS 4531)	396,460	779,833	-383,373
Office supplies, stationery, and gift stores (NAICS 4532)	1,471,961	2,409,501	-937,540
Office supplies and stationery stores (NAICS 45321)	677,501	1,631,438	-953,937
Gift, novelty, and souvenir stores (NAICS 45322)	794,460	778,063	16,397
Used merchandise stores (NAICS 4533)	1,100,702	3,126,746	-2,026,043
Other miscellaneous store retailers (NAICS 4539)	4,888,751	12,210,038	-7,321,287
Pet and pet supplies stores (NAICS 45391)	1,427,462	2,815,201	-1,387,739
Art dealers (NAICS 45392)	679,956	1,331,045	-651,089
Manufactured (mobile) home dealers (NAICS 45393)	470,823	2,449,383	-1,978,560
All other miscellaneous store retailers (NAICS 45399)	2,310,510	5,614,409	-3,303,898
Tobacco stores (NAICS 453991)	779,003	1,336,907	-557,904
All other miscellaneous store retailers (except tobacco stores) (NAICS 453998)	1,531,507	4,277,501	-2,745,994
Non-store Retailers			
Non-store retailers (NAICS 454)	64,183,876	36,909,327	27,274,549
Electronic shopping and mail-order houses (NAICS 4541)	61,602,949	30,803,650	30,799,299
Vending machine operators (NAICS 4542)	333,878	0	333,878
Direct selling establishments (NAICS 4543)	2,247,049	6,105,677	-3,858,628
Fuel dealers (NAICS 45431)	1,237,514	5,071,562	-3,834,048
Other direct selling establishments (NAICS 45439)	1,009,534	1,034,115	-24,581
Food Services and Drinking Places			
Food services and drinking places (NAICS 722)	49,054,736	68,001,534	-18,946,798
Special food services (NAICS 7223)	3,747,792	4,255,022	-507,229
Food service contractors (NAICS 72231)	2,962,804	923,333	2,039,471
Caterers (NAICS 72232)	708,619	3,301,104	-2,592,485
Mobile food services (NAICS 72233)	76,369	30,584	45,785
Drinking places (alcoholic beverages) (NAICS 7224)	1,698,495	2,222,661	-524,165
Restaurants and other eating places (NAICS 7225)	43,608,448	61,523,851	-17,915,403
Full-service restaurants (NAICS 722511)	21,818,429	43,001,083	-21,182,654
Limited-service restaurants (NAICS 722513)	18,494,928	14,882,148	3,612,780
Cafeterias, grill buffets, and buffets (NAICS 722514)	471,550	691,166	-219,616
Snack and non-alcoholic beverage bars (NAICS 722515)	2,823,542	2,949,455	-125,913

Benchmark: USA

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Trade Area: 160 Midland Avenue - 6 mi.



Retail Market Power® | Demand Growth by Retail Store Types



Trade Area: 160 Midland Avenue - 6 mi.

	2023 Demand (\$)	2028 Demand (\$)	Growth (\$)	Compound Annual Growth Rate (%)
Demand by Store Type				
Total demand for retail trade including food and drink (NAICS 44, 45 and 722)	447,249,405	497,146,524	49,897,119	2.14
Total demand retail trade (NAICS 44 and 45)	398,194,669	442,426,305	44,231,636	2.13
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers				
Motor vehicle and parts dealers (NAICS 441)	106,602,572	117,592,610	10,990,038	1.98
Automobile dealers (NAICS 4411)	91,692,870	100,371,795	8,678,925	1.82
New car dealers (NAICS 44111)	81,639,361	89,432,318	7,792,957	1.84
Used car dealers (NAICS 44112)	10,053,509	10,939,478	885,969	1.70
Other motor vehicle dealers (NAICS 4412)	7,900,031	8,938,469	1,038,438	2.50
Recreational vehicle dealers (NAICS 44121)	2,674,311	3,083,661	409,350	2.89
Motorcycle, boat, and other motor vehicle dealers (NAICS 44122)	5,225,720	5,854,808	629,088	2.30
Boat dealers (NAICS 441222)	1,690,794	1,947,401	256,607	2.87
Motorcycle, ATV, and all other motor vehicle dealers (NAICS 441228)	3,534,925	3,907,407	372,481	2.02
Automotive parts, accessories, and tire stores (NAICS 4413)	7,009,671	8,282,346	1,272,675	3.39
Automotive parts and accessories stores (NAICS 44131)	4,435,402	5,241,650	806,248	3.40
Tire dealers (NAICS 44132)	2,574,270	3,040,696	466,426	3.39
Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores				
Furniture and home furnishings stores (NAICS 442)	8,534,893	9,506,978	972,085	2.18
Furniture stores (NAICS 4421)	5,020,174	5,476,975	456,801	1.76
Home furnishings stores (NAICS 4422)	3,514,719	4,030,003	515,284	2.77
Floor covering stores (NAICS 44221)	1,711,451	2,062,490	351,039	3.80
Other home furnishings stores (NAICS 44229)	1,803,268	1,967,513	164,245	1.76
Window treatment stores (NAICS 442291)	82,408	80,044	-2,364	-0.58
All other home furnishings stores (NAICS 442299)	1,720,860	1,887,469	166,610	1.86
Electronics and Appliance Stores				
Electronics and appliance stores (NAICS 443)	6,088,870	6,794,160	705,290	2.22
Household appliance stores (NAICS 443141)	1,333,761	1,493,586	159,825	2.29
Electronics stores (NAICS 443142)	4,755,109	5,300,574	545,465	2.20
Building Material and Garden Equipment and Supplies Dealers				
Building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers (NAICS 444)	28,913,851	33,924,471	5,010,620	3.25
Building material and supplies dealers (NAICS 4441)	25,479,581	30,035,736	4,556,155	3.35
Home centers (NAICS 44411)	14,297,762	16,727,646	2,429,884	3.19
Paint and wallpaper stores (NAICS 44412)	1,026,500	1,310,589	284,089	5.01
Hardware stores (NAICS 44413)	2,102,815	2,464,117	361,303	3.22
Other building material dealers (NAICS 44419)	8,052,505	9,533,384	1,480,879	3.43
Lawn and garden equipment and supplies stores (NAICS 4442)	3,434,270	3,888,735	454,465	2.52
Outdoor power equipment stores (NAICS 44421)	734,419	822,170	87,751	2.28
Nursery, garden center, and farm supply stores (NAICS 44422)	2,699,851	3,066,565	366,714	2.58
Food and Beverage Stores				
Food and beverage stores (NAICS 445)	53,610,709	61,042,300	7,431,591	2.63
Grocery stores (NAICS 4451)	48,115,396	54,752,050	6,636,654	2.62
Supermarkets and other grocery (except convenience) stores (NAICS 44511)	46,017,766	52,362,129	6,344,363	2.62
Convenience stores (NAICS 44512)	2,097,631	2,389,921	292,290	2.64
Specialty food stores (NAICS 4452)	1,387,352	1,579,051	191,699	2.62
Meat markets (NAICS 44521)	428,879	486,830	57,951	2.57
Fish and seafood markets (NAICS 44522)	168,187	191,060	22,873	2.58
Fruit and vegetable markets (NAICS 44523)	287,017	328,125	41,108	2.71
Other specialty food stores (NAICS 44529)	503,268	573,036	69,768	2.63
All other specialty food stores (NAICS 445299)	239,004	270,784	31,780	2.53
Beer, wine, and liquor stores (NAICS 4453)	4,107,961	4,711,199	603,238	2.78
Health and Personal Care Stores				
Health and personal care stores (NAICS 446)	22,837,525	25,176,767	2,339,242	1.97
Pharmacies and drug stores (NAICS 44611)	19,735,485	21,650,614	1,915,129	1.87
Cosmetics, beauty supplies, and perfume stores (NAICS 44612)	1,377,010	1,515,841	138,831	1.94
Optical goods stores (NAICS 44613)	474,948	642,145	167,197	6.22
Other health and personal care stores (NAICS 44619)	1,250,082	1,368,166	118,084	1.82
Food (health) supplement stores (NAICS 446191)	440,967	483,455	42,488	1.86
All other health and personal care stores (NAICS 446199)	809,116	884,711	75,596	1.80
Gasoline Stations				
Gasoline stations (NAICS 447)	31,383,876	36,871,348	5,487,472	3.27

BenchmarkUSA

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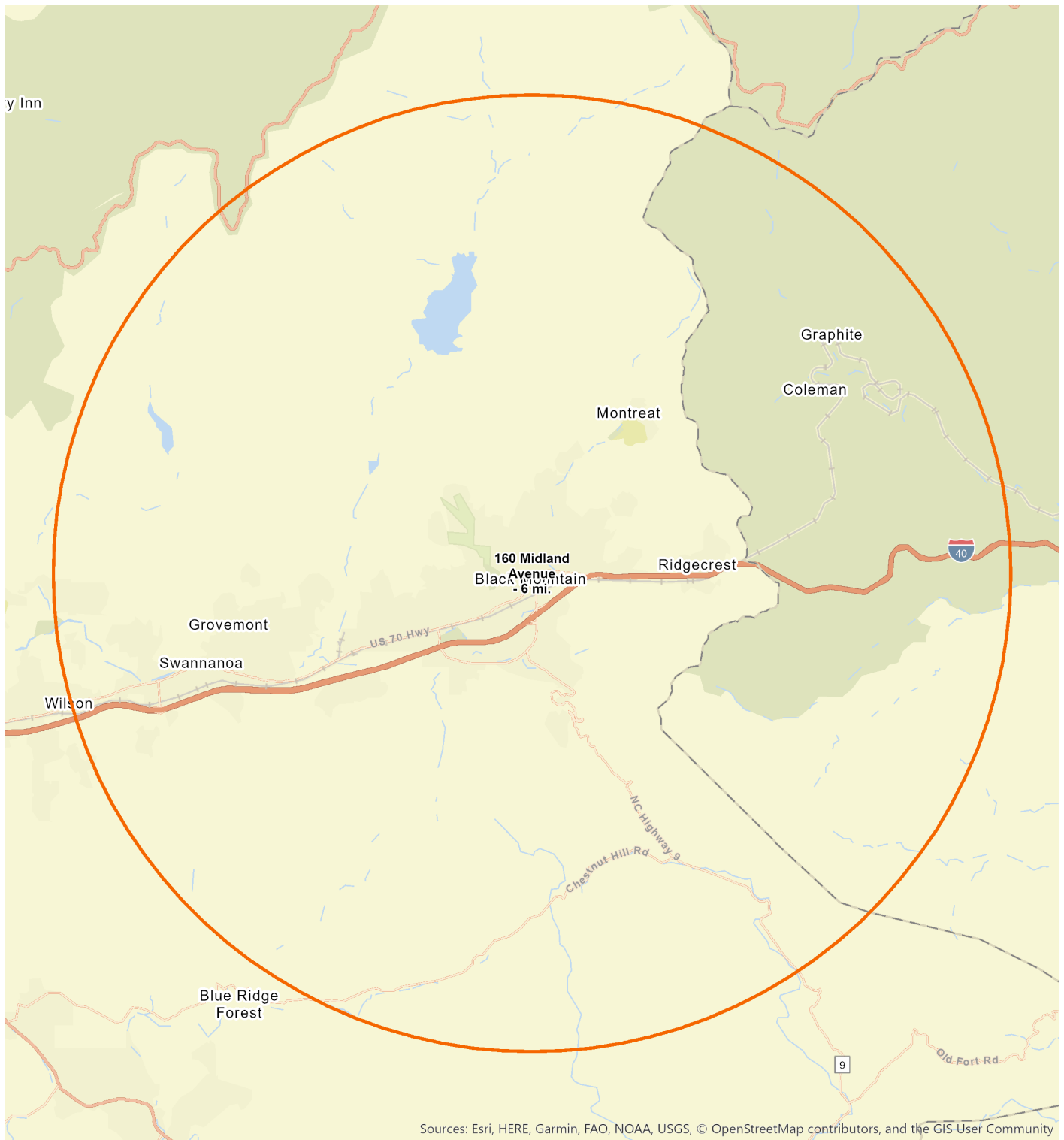
Trade Area: 160 Midland Avenue - 6 mi.

	2023 Demand (\$)	2028 Demand (\$)	Growth (\$)	Compound Annual Growth Rate (%)
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores				
Clothing and clothing accessories stores (NAICS 448)	16,259,635	15,721,530	-538,105	-0.67
Clothing stores (NAICS 4481)	11,039,686	10,587,085	-452,601	-0.83
Men's clothing stores (NAICS 44811)	422,050	387,416	-34,634	-1.70
Women's clothing stores (NAICS 44812)	2,084,022	1,993,312	-90,710	-0.89
Children's and infants' clothing stores (NAICS 44813)	503,615	494,288	-9,327	-0.37
Family clothing stores (NAICS 44814)	6,536,419	6,306,145	-230,274	-0.71
Clothing accessories stores (NAICS 44815)	549,761	514,423	-35,338	-1.32
Other clothing stores (NAICS 44819)	943,819	891,502	-52,316	-1.13
Shoe stores (NAICS 4482)	1,810,737	1,740,704	-70,032	-0.79
Jewelry, luggage, and leather goods stores (NAICS 4483)	3,409,212	3,393,740	-15,472	-0.09
Jewelry stores (NAICS 44831)	2,289,236	2,341,979	52,744	0.46
Luggage and leather goods stores (NAICS 44832)	1,119,976	1,051,761	-68,215	-1.25
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Musical Instrument, and Book Stores				
Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, and book stores (NAICS 451)	5,311,561	5,636,878	325,317	1.20
Sporting goods, hobby, and musical instrument stores (NAICS 4511)	4,574,712	4,815,340	240,628	1.03
Sporting goods stores (NAICS 45111)	2,914,211	2,993,702	79,492	0.54
Hobby, toy, and game stores (NAICS 45112)	1,260,702	1,394,979	133,677	2.04
Sewing, needlework, and piece goods stores (NAICS 45113)	152,276	149,710	-2,566	-0.34
Musical instrument and supplies stores (NAICS 45114)	247,524	277,549	30,025	2.32
Book stores and news dealers (NAICS 4512)	736,849	821,538	84,689	2.20
Book stores (NAICS 45121)	688,164	767,377	79,213	2.20
News dealers and newsstands (NAICS 451212)	48,685	54,161	5,476	2.15
General Merchandise Stores				
General merchandise stores (NAICS 452)	46,609,426	51,324,456	4,715,030	1.95
Department stores (NAICS 4522)	5,721,565	5,569,091	-152,474	-0.54
Other general merchandise stores (NAICS 4523)	40,887,861	45,755,366	4,867,504	2.27
Warehouse clubs and supercenters (NAICS 452311)	37,035,580	41,460,898	4,425,318	2.28
All other general merchandise stores (NAICS 452319)	3,852,281	4,294,467	442,186	2.20
Miscellaneous Store Retailers				
Miscellaneous store retailers (NAICS 453)	7,857,875	8,640,483	782,609	1.92
Florists (NAICS 4531)	396,460	442,979	46,519	2.24
Office supplies, stationery, and gift stores (NAICS 4532)	1,471,961	1,619,917	147,956	1.93
Office supplies and stationery stores (NAICS 45321)	677,501	775,114	97,613	2.73
Gift, novelty, and souvenir stores (NAICS 45322)	794,460	844,803	50,343	1.24
Used merchandise stores (NAICS 4533)	1,100,702	1,118,416	17,713	0.32
Other miscellaneous store retailers (NAICS 4539)	4,888,751	5,459,172	570,421	2.23
Pet and pet supplies stores (NAICS 45391)	1,427,462	1,652,521	225,059	2.97
Art dealers (NAICS 45392)	679,956	689,159	9,204	0.27
Manufactured (mobile) home dealers (NAICS 45393)	470,823	543,134	72,311	2.90
All other miscellaneous store retailers (NAICS 45399)	2,310,510	2,574,358	263,848	2.19
Tobacco stores (NAICS 453991)	779,003	893,305	114,302	2.78
All other miscellaneous store retailers (except tobacco stores) (NAICS 453998)	1,531,507	1,681,053	149,546	1.88
Non-store Retailers				
Non-store retailers (NAICS 454)	64,183,876	70,194,323	6,010,446	1.81
Electronic shopping and mail-order houses (NAICS 4541)	61,602,949	67,348,244	5,745,295	1.80
Vending machine operators (NAICS 4542)	333,878	380,998	47,119	2.67
Direct selling establishments (NAICS 4543)	2,247,049	2,465,081	218,032	1.87
Fuel dealers (NAICS 45431)	1,237,514	1,339,625	102,110	1.60
Other direct selling establishments (NAICS 45439)	1,009,534	1,125,456	115,922	2.20
Food Services and Drinking Places				
Food services and drinking places (NAICS 722)	49,054,736	54,720,219	5,665,483	2.21
Special food services (NAICS 7223)	3,747,792	4,159,015	411,223	2.10
Food service contractors (NAICS 72231)	2,962,804	3,284,269	321,465	2.08
Caterers (NAICS 72232)	708,619	789,662	81,042	2.19
Mobile food services (NAICS 72233)	76,369	85,084	8,716	2.19
Drinking places (alcoholic beverages) (NAICS 7224)	1,698,495	1,918,195	219,700	2.46
Restaurants and other eating places (NAICS 7225)	43,608,448	48,643,009	5,034,560	2.21
Full-service restaurants (NAICS 722511)	21,818,429	24,366,049	2,547,620	2.23
Limited-service restaurants (NAICS 722513)	18,494,928	20,604,751	2,109,823	2.18
Cafeterias, grill buffets, and buffets (NAICS 722514)	471,550	525,314	53,765	2.18
Snack and non-alcoholic beverage bars (NAICS 722515)	2,823,542	3,146,895	323,353	2.19

Benchmark: USA

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Trade Area: 160 Midland Avenue - 6 mi.



Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

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Report Details

Name: Executive Dashboard
Date / Time: 3/20/2023 8:08:58 AM
Workspace Vintage: 2023

Trade Area

Name	Level	Geographies
160 Midland Avenue - 6 mi.		N/A

Benchmark

Name	Level	Geographies
USA	Entire US	United States

DataSource

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Retail Market Power® - 2023 Estimates and 2028 Projections	Environics Analytics U.S. Census Bureau U.S. Bureau of Labour Statistics Data Axle	©2023 Environics Analytics (https://claritas.easpotlight.com/Spotlight/About)
Retail Market Power® - Growth Variables	Environics Analytics U.S. Census Bureau U.S. Bureau of Labour Statistics Data Axle	©2023 Environics Analytics (https://claritas.easpotlight.com/Spotlight/About)



CREATING OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMIES (CORE)

Town of Black Mountain
Notes from Work Group Meeting #1
8:30am, May 11, 2023

In attendance: Jessica Trotman, TOBM Planning Director; Sharon Tabor, Chamber of Commerce Director; John McFerrin, Take a Hike; Doug Hay, TOBM Councilmember; Michael Roberts, Epic Cycles; Susan Faw, One Fly Outfitters; Josh Henderson, TOBM Parks & Recreation Director; Russell Cate, TOBM Planning; Paul Moon, Land of Sky Regional Council and Ann Bass, NC Commerce, Rural Economic Development.

The meeting started with introductions and outdoor encounter stories. The group learned not to use a food bag as a pillow when camping under the stars!

Ann Bass with NC Commerce introduced the CORE program, offered by NC Commerce Rural Economic Development and funded by US EDA, with slides. For this effort outdoor recreation is defined as leaning toward human-powered, natural resource-dependent activity. A list of the types of activities available in Black Mountain was edited with further additions and changes expected through the planning process. A listing of outdoor economy assets was also started with the anticipation that additions and changes will be made. Both lists are attached to these notes.

Paul Moon from Land of Sky Regional Council talked briefly about the Building Outdoor Communities (BOC) program starting in August in which Black Mountain will represent all of Buncombe County! That program is organized by Mountain BizWorks, funded by the Appalachian Regional Commission, and includes the development of an economic impact tool being developed by Appalachian State University. This CORE process will lay some groundwork for BOC.

For the purposes of the CORE program the outdoor economy includes everything that is needed to be able to experience a satisfying recreational experience—from equipment research and development to parking and trails, appropriate attire, specialized gear, maps/apps, guides, repair, social downloading and even luck.

Four primary areas for outdoor economic development were outlined—tourism/experiences, retail/services, manufacturing and culture/workforce development. A Work Group survey had three pre-meeting responses showing four priority areas for achieving benefits from Black Mountain's outdoor recreation assets:

- Increase revenue for existing businesses
- Encourage local entrepreneurship in outdoor business
- Attract new business and industry
- Improve the quality of Life for Residents of Black Mountain

The product of this process is a strategic work plan to accomplish economic goals as will be determined by the work group.

The second Thursday of each month was set as the regular meeting date with a starting time of 8am until 10am. The next meeting is June 8 and will be held at the Town Hall.

Black Mountain Outdoor Recreation Activities

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Partner w Parks + Rec/Notes</u>
Archery	YMCA
Backpacking Overnight	Not organized
Bicycling (Mountain/BMX)	To come on recently donated property
Bicycling (Road/Paved Surface)	Farm Heritage Scenic route
Birdwatching	Warren Wilson has activity
Camping (Car, Backpacking, & RV)	Campgrounds, AT impromptu
Camping (Glamping)	
Climbing (Indoor)	Blue Ridge Assembly
Disc golf	Veterans' Park
Fishing (Fly)	Stocked: Swannanoa, Curtis Creek, Black
Creek	
Fishing (Freshwater/Other)	Lake Tomahawk stocked
Hiking (Day)	Chamber has list, most visitors - short + easy
Hunting (Rifle/Shotgun/Handgun/Bow)	Bear season in area
Nature Study	Not organized, used to be Road Scholar
program	
Nature Photography	Not organized
Skateboarding	Small park behind Montessori
Snorkeling	Part of snorkel trail, sign will be in Veterans Park
Stand Up Paddling	Could happen – like Asheville
Trail Running	Group of Dads – Montreat then creek dip
Wildlife Viewing	Not organized

Other notes:

- Swannanoa River is not wide enough for paddling although floating is possible.
- Terrain is very steep so forested trails are difficult and access often remote from Town.
- Stream restoration work is underway. Fish are stocked and plans are developed for delayed harvest(location?). Streams have Mountain Heritage Trout designation.

- Parks & Rec/Outdoor Recreation leads hikes year round, will do plant tours, teaches climbing.
- Hiking often means a walk around Lake Tomahawk.
- Watershed is not open for any kind of recreation.
- AllTrails app often sends people onto private land. Need instead to use local information and maps.

Black Mountain Outdoor Economy Assets

OR Facilities/Resources/Attractions

Catawba waterfall hike (under renovation, not short or easy)

Mtn Bike trails – advanced riders at Kitsuma, Heartbreak; Lookout in Old Fort easier

Bicycling along 70 west and greenways

E-Bikes ride in town but need off road

New Park(s) – will be master planned soon! May include open space, trails, mountain biking?

Swannanoa River is underutilized

Community Garden – maxed out

Special interest trails:

Public Art

Storybook – Lake Tomahawk

Treasured Tree

Basecamp for bachelor parties

Hiking Trails (Chamber has a handout!):

Montreat wilderness trails – 0.5mi to 5hrs, all levels of difficulty (although moderate can be difficult!)

Warren Wilson – 44 trails of varying difficulty

Blue Ridge Assembly

Ridgecrest – Parks & Rec partner, trails open for program use only

Christmount – 9 trails, historic site, Parks & Rec partner/program use

Curtis Creek – Old Fort access

Point Lookout - remote, difficult foot access from town, car via McDowell County access, limited parking)

USFS has new ridgeline trails including some accessible locations/views

Town Golf Course and Lake Tomahawk

OR Human + Organizational Assets

Celebrities – Brad Johnson, Brad Dougherty and Roy Williams

TOBM Parks + Rec – Outdoor Rec staff and program partners

Youth Disc Golf team

Black Mountain Parks and Greenways Foundation – 501c3 umbrella for many groups

Greenway & Trails committee

Friends of Lake Tomahawk

G5 Trail Collective – maintain Montreat, organized from Old Fort

Mountain Bike teams at Montreat and Warren Wilson Colleges

Montreat Conservancy (Southern Highlands Conservancy facilitates)

Scouts

Cooperative Extension – River Conservation programs

River Link

Montreat College/Town/Retreat Center

Blue Ridge Assembly (with YMCA)

Other camps—

Seasonal employees

Helicopter parents from camps - vacationing in Town

Outdoor Businesses

Epic Cycles

Take a Hike

One Fly Outfitters

WNC Outdoor Collective – need to check here for local makers as well

Mountain Running

Montreat – offers some fly-fishing equipment rental

Guides – various on-line, some AirBnBs have them, too

Goat Yoga

Outdoor Culture/Hang-outs:

 Lookout Brew

 Trailhead

 Grange/Railyard

Black Mountain YMCA

Various Camps & Conference Centers

Note—listed on DataAXL but ground-truthed by work group

Painted View Farm (horse boarding, training) – no trail rides or public equestrian activity

Rhinehart Outdoor & Marine... marine equipment & supplies – has moved to Old Fort

Asheville Camper Rental (14 Daniel Lane)- unknown

Pisgah Bike Works (203 Black Mtn...) dealer - closed

Outdoor Manufacturers

None known – need to check with Matt Godfrey w Outdoor Business Alliance

Note – listed on DataAXL and ground-truthed by work group

Keith Nix Knives (Craigmont Rd - nonclassified) makes kitchen knives, not outdoor

Across the Canvas (96 Temple Rd) – listed as wholesale canvas goods - unknown

C W Moose Trading Co (111 W State St) – leather goods in retail but not manufactured

Information sources:

All Trails app – includes some private land without acknowledgement

Trail Forks app

Chamber of Commerce printed packet is most accurate



CREATING OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMIES (CORE)

Town of Black Mountain
Notes from Work Group Meeting #2
8:00am, June 8, 2023

In attendance: Jessica Trotman, TOBM Planning Director; Sharon Tabor, Chamber of Commerce Director; John McFerrin, Take a Hike; Doug Hay, TOBM Councilmember; Alice Berry, TOBM Councilmember; Michael Roberts, Epic Cycles; Josh Henderson, TOBM Parks & Recreation Director; Russell Cate, TOBM Planning; Paul Moon, Land of Sky Regional Council and Ann Bass, NC Commerce, Rural Economic Development.

The work group started by reviewing notes from the first meeting and especially offering status information on businesses from a state list that appeared to have an outdoor audience—especially manufacturing and retail. The meeting notes now reflect the information provided.

The importance of the many conference centers and camps to the stability and sustainability of the Town and economy was noted. Josh Henderson will provide Ann Bass the names of his partners at these organizations for stakeholder interviews. If other critical voices are not at the table, work group members are encouraged to pass along their names and contact information for an interview and input into this planning process.

The primary exercise of the meeting was a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) applied to the outdoor economy. Results are as follows:

Strengths – What does Black Mountain do really well in the outdoor recreation world?

Customer service – local people get high marks for being friendly and helpful

Provide a good array of equipment in retail stores

Provide a diversity of retail within walking distance

Have an active downtown – no need to recreate something like many other towns

Do food and beer really well!! Have good array of outdoor seating opportunities.

Is a “Hallmark” community –

- events and setting like Hallmark movie,
- an urban community in the form of a village
- not Asheville – compact, small-scale, walkable, safe, approachable

Offers resort quality amenities to residents – events, Parks and Rec programs, outdoor activity facilities, organized sport programs

Really nice public restrooms – easy to access
Excellent partnerships for use of natural landscapes – Christmount, Montreat, etc.
Density of conference centers and camps bring in people from everywhere, great exposure for Town
Array of environmental resources – Swannanoa River, streams, forests, viewsheds
Team-playing merchants and staff – will send customer to another shop if can't fill need
Chamber of Commerce has established practices to fill every need! – Lost & Found

Weaknesses/Challenges – What is missing or could be done better?

Buncombe County TDA is supposed to be marketing Black Mountain, Town sees little return for bed tax collected

Communication

- between organizations – find best place to post info,
- so much going on so is hard to keep current
- Target groups use differing media sources – radio, newsletters, apps
- Facebook page mistaken as Town page
- Town website “limited” but being updated before fall

Funding sources for new facilities/programs and also sustainability of existing

Space – little land available and very few large tracts in Town

Parking needs management

- Have plan – need staff for enforcement, program development
- Employee parking areas made easy and safe

Bikepaths desired but only have Bikelanes for lack of space in street ROW

Workforce housing

Affordable accommodations and transportation options

Greenway costs – to complete, to improve, to maintain

Opportunities – what gaps can Black Mountain fill?

Trail-town accommodations – low cost, trail appropriate

- Hostel
- Offer Conference rooms between conferences at discount

Shuttle services

Workforce/affordable housing for long term

Continue implementation of greenway plans – patience required!

Reclaim TDA funding – Buncombe Co TDA

- Form new E Buncombe Co TDA
- Require greater investment outside of Asheville from existing TDA

Offer more equipment rentals – especially bicycles, fishing equipment, etc.

Possible more guide services?? – new mountain bike guides coming soon!

New properties and upcoming planning processes

Oversupply of short-term rentals causing reversion to longer term rentals

Season is getting longer

Willing and qualified volunteers – retirees with skills and knowledge, college students

- Chamber has volunteer opportunity listing – need to match with interest

Change in train track use from Canton closure

- Passenger rail – stop in Black Mtn between Marion and Asheville (adds an hour)
- Rail trail

Film and Movies

Threats – what outside conditions are working against us?

Climate change – greater storm impacts

Inflation – cost of everything increasing and already high

Developable land in Town boundaries

Housing market

Some local industry opposition (film)

Aging population/age distribution and future economic impacts

Levels of activity – carrying capacity to maintain quality of the experience

Future of Asheville dependence or linkage

Sacred – what is not to be changed, shared or may already be endangered?

Access to trails on partner camp lands – controlled use

Downtown as community social center – walkable, small scale, friendly

Mindful use of resources – carrying capacity and sustainability

Local history and culture

The outdoor businesses were asked:

- Thinking about your typical customers—who, how many, from where, how long, what they do...What would make Black Mtn an even better destination/experience for each of them?
- What would make Black Mtn just perfect for you and your business?

Discussion included:

Need more for kids to do—or maybe organize what there is to do to make easy for parents, expand clientele beyond couples, seniors

Greenway completion/separate bike paths would improve bicycle conditions for all level of riders

More primitive campsites by the creek

Better parking management – especially on lower end

- employees and customers
- improve walking experience from public lot across the railroad tracks

Fewer but more strategic signs – direction and information, easier to see

Correct GPS directions

Add QR codes at attraction locations to direct users to related retail and services

Balance retail recognizing seasonal nature and base population of only 8,000

Increase communication between Town and Businesses

Consider events, activities to possibly extend the season – outdoor festival, bike festival

It is already a really excellent place to do business!

The next meeting is scheduled for 8am – 10am on Thursday, July 13 at either Town Hall or the Fire Station training room. Russell Cate will direct us!



NORTH CAROLINA
**DEPARTMENT of
COMMERCE**

CREATING OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMIES (CORE)

Town of Black Mountain
Notes from Work Group Meeting #3
8:00am, July 13, 2023

In attendance: Jessica Trotman, TOBM Planning Director; Sharon Tabor, Chamber of Commerce Director; John McFerrin, Take a Hike; Alice Berry, TOBM Councilmember; Susan Faw, One Fly Outfitters; Josh Henderson, TOBM Parks & Recreation Director; Russell Cate, TOBM Planning; Glen Locascio and Ann Bass, NC Commerce, Rural Economic Development.

The meeting began with a review from the last meeting. Some themes included hospitality improvements and options, continuing greenway implementation, developing season extending activities and improving communications.

Glen Locascio from Rural Planning had prepared a base for asset mapping. Suggestions included blurring the line for the Fonta Flora Trail, removing a single business name and adding existing trails, routes and greenways. The Conference Centers will be added as they fit on the map.

Ann Bass shared some numbers from a Retail Market Analysis done by a Commerce colleague in March. Black Mountain has a \$103M retail surplus! This means that more money is spent in retail in Black Mountain than is expected from a community of the same size elsewhere in the US. There is a retail gap (not matching the anticipated demand/spending) in only three retail categories—Beer, Wine & Liquor Stores; Pharmacies & Drug Stores; and Limited Service Restaurants—totaling almost \$6.9M. This information becomes more useful if the group and Town decide on a strategy to increase retail. Copies will be made available.

Conversations with three of four major Conference Centers: Montreat, Y Blue Ridge Assembly and Christmount...a few of the points made:

- Black Mountain is very convenient location for CC guests – airport, I-40
- Non-compete with Hotels for accommodation – two do not have rooms to rent even when no large group is in-house, one may be interested in re-visiting for hostel activity
- Staff housing – one has on-site, another has staff living from Waynesville to Marion

- All three would appreciate greater regional coordination of land access and education
- CCs Provide own group activities and trails
 - Could use more activities for individual use in off time/extra night – pump track, zipline, etc. Glass Center anticipated to become an attraction for guests.
- Guests do visit downtown – have favorite destinations. Some buy furniture!
 - Many guests (Int'l) have no vehicle and would go downtown more if was a shuttle or direct back-route on bike/walk paths

Discussion from conference center stakeholder report:

Accommodation Non-compete is agreement with TDA

Staff housing – Dorothy Walsh camp has an abandoned dorm, owners not interested in redevelopment at this time

There is a need for alternative recreation (non-programmed, individual) as mentioned by stakeholders but expanded to include maybe:

- Indoor basketball
- Bowling
- Skating rink
- Putt-putt
- Simulation sport
- Sticks for Kids – golf

Other stakeholders to contact:

- Melissa Whitaker – Ridgecrest
- Adam Boyd – Camp Merrimac – Expeditions
- Rockmont - ? – has fall programming (otherwise just summer camps for kids)

Economic Positioning (what is Black Mountain's unique role in the outdoor economy?)
notes from the Wall: (categories are mine—let me know if I missed the point!)

“Community” –

- Hometown feeling
- Front Porch
- Is like coming home
- Safe, Refuge
- Rocking Chairs, cozy feeling
- Nest, Cradle, Retreat
- Pragmatic
- Welcoming town to wrap an outdoor experience around
- Multi-generational; Recreation for all ages and stages/abilities
- Retirement community

Connections

- Link Outdoor + Cultural + People
- Nature, Self, Healing
- Culture + Nature + Recreation =TOBM
- Connect + Explore + Reflect + Mountains/Nature (perspective) = TOBM
- A Terminal for/The Bosom of adventure
- Mountains meet Main Street (Marion slogan)
- Arts + Crafts history/Black Mountain College

Nature/Reflection/Wellness

- Let the Spirit explore
- Rock and Reflect
- Celebration of Natural World
- Creativity, Innovation
- Spirituality
- Where wonder/wander finds its Way
- Breathe it in/Mountain air
- Off the beaten path
- Music, Celebration
- Wellness, Health economy
- Transformation
- Where mountains meet the sky

Anticipated Outdoor Project Activity – next seven years

- Hemphill property – campsites, mountain bike park
- Fishing – delayed harvest
- Greenways – Fonta Flora
- Need a Recreation/Community Center (Youth)
- Sport complex concept
- Generally need green space – lack of available land in town

Center

- Where your Journey begins, Adventure starts here
- Portal
- Surrounded by Mountains (360 degrees) – a nest in
- Where wander finds its way
- Basecamp, Hub
- Energy (vortex)

Economic Position Work in Progress—

Economic Position:

Black Mountain is a small-town community where outdoor journeys begin. Surrounded by mountains, outdoor recreation meets culture and spirit.

The daily lives of all residents and guests include opportunities to recreate, rejuvenate, express ourselves, reflect and retire.

The community works together to steward our natural assets, improve physical, social and spiritual wellbeing and provide daily access/connections to outdoor recreation for all residents and guests.

Centers of Activity/Strategies: (I am just assuming this might be the kinds of *economic* project activities the group proposes)

- Steward natural resource base
- Easy, convenient connections (trails) between town (businesses) and resources
- Improved general wellness – recreation/culture/spirit - for all residents + guests
 - Just thinking that this might include work on new packaged experiences, access via equipment, training programs...integration of the arts/spirit in outdoor places and activities, new markets to reach
- Education/Information – coordinated, accurate, respects resource providers

Or...

Economic Position:

Black Mountain is a small-town community where outdoor journeys begin. Surrounded by mountains, outdoor recreation meets culture and spirit. The community works together to steward our natural assets, improve physical, social and spiritual wellbeing and provide daily access/connections to outdoor recreation for all residents and guests.

Centers of Activity/Strategies: (I am just assuming this might be the kinds of project activities the group proposes)

- Journeys begin – info, equipment, training, hospitality, services...hub
- Experiences melding outdoor recreation with arts, culture and spirit (health + wellness)
- Stewardship of natural resource base - act as a convener and organizer of stewards
- Easy, convenient connections, daily access (trails, shuttle) between town (businesses) and outdoor resources (might include car-less living) - for all residents + guests (accessibility, diversity)



NORTH CAROLINA
**DEPARTMENT of
COMMERCE**

CREATING OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMIES (CORE)

Town of Black Mountain
Notes from Work Group Meeting #4
8:00am, August 17, 2023

In attendance: Jessica Trotman, TOBM Planning Director; Alice Berry, TOBM Councilmember; Susan Faw, One Fly Outfitters; Josh Henderson, TOBM Parks & Recreation Director; Clint Bowman, TOBM Recreation Program; Russell Cate, TOBM Planning; Ann Bass, NC Commerce, Rural Economic Development.

The meeting began with a review from the last meeting. To refresh our memories the group looked at the vision statement and strategies in the Elevate Black Mountain plan, the priorities from the initial work group survey and themes from the July meeting. Those themes included:

Hospitality Improvements

- *Less expensive accommodations – trail town – hostel, conf center rooms*
- *Transportation options to/from recreation – shuttle*
- *More equipment rentals*
- *Other Guided experiences – more Guides*
- *Kids activities*

Greenway Implementation – recreation also non-automotive transportation

Season Extender Activities – winter, events

Improved Communications – Town + Businesses, Community + Visitors

Unified message, legitimate source

Navigation issues – GPS and QR code info opportunities

Glen Locascio from Rural Planning had prepared a base map for outdoor asset mapping. Josh noted other Town parks and facilities for Glen to include.

The main task for the meeting was to make changes as needed to the draft economic positioning statement and especially to finalize the strategies that make up the position and will serve as the basis for our work planning.

Draft Economic Position:

Black Mountain is a small-town community where outdoor journeys begin. Surrounded by mountains, outdoor recreation meets culture and spirit. The community works together to steward our natural assets, improve physical, social and spiritual wellbeing and provide daily access to outdoor recreation for all residents and guests.

Centers of Activity/Strategies: (This is a sample of types of potential project activities the group may consider under each strategy.)

- Journeys begin – info, equipment, training, hospitality, services...hub
- Experiences melding outdoor recreation with arts, culture and spirit
- Steward our natural assets
- Improve physical, social and spiritual wellbeing
- Easy, convenient connections, daily access (trails, shuttle) between town (businesses) and outdoor resources (might include car-less living) - for all residents + guests (accessibility, diversity)

Economic Position – Ann asked about whether 'meets culture and spirit' and 'improving physical, social and spiritual wellbeing' were too close and should be combined. This led to a suggested "A Place to leave the world behind" discussion – culture and spirit, Grey Eagle spiritual association, various aspects of health and wellness but no combination seemed to work. It was decided that "culture" refers to the culture/history of place while physical, social and spiritual wellbeing...pertains to the individual.

The group began an exercise of listing the kinds of improvements that could be made under each of the strategies in the economic position. Here are the notes from the flip charts:

Outdoor Journeys Begin

Continue quality lodging and dining, plus fueling-up activity

Continue to provide and improve information—maps, website

Best place to find Gear and Guides

- Improve access to Gear – solve issues of damage, hours of return, etc.
- Implement and promote Delayed Fish Harvest
- Provide more 'mass education' (groups) to introduce residents and visitors to outdoor rec activities and use of equipment (Parks& Rec) i.e.
 - On dry land fly fishing practice
 - Beginner mountain biking
 - Orienteering and forest safety
 - Hemphill opportunity?
- MicroTransit (small electric buses) with service between downtown and recreation locations, conference centers
- Improve intown bicycle safety –
 - Educational programs - bikers, school kids, car drivers...
 - Improve physical conditions – wider bikeable sidewalks, safer street crossings and other options respecting the narrow road ROW
- Provide bike racks and bike parking

Outdoor recreation meets Culture and Spirit

Elevate, expand/improve, promote, share what already doing

- Promote/expand Community Garden as outdoor activity – has waiting list
- Expand use of PubCorps to encourage volunteering

Develop more Social spaces for post recreation gathering – public space

Consciously support/expand small business and cultural economies

- Dedicated staff person
- Resource lists (ecosystem)
- Recruitment and expansion
- Cohesive voice

Incorporate more historical context in outdoor activity places

- Additional events like the museum hikes – additional outdoor locations
- Partner to develop/install historic markers in significant places like Trestle Road, In the Oaks house, etc.

Begin planning for Passenger rail

- Discussion on becoming a stop – need for advocacy
- Identify issues against and consider solutions
 - location of “station” for drop off and blocking of traffic for duration

Steward our Natural Assets

Town as coordinator/facilitator of natural assets conversation (Parks & Rec?)

- Area Conference Center land management and access convening
- Proper promotion of use and activities
- Resident use and activity schedules
- Volunteer assistance and development

Develop a Sustainability and Resilience Working Group

- Internal Town goals and practices
 - Storm water management
 - Reducing hard surface coverage
- Resident programs and involvement, education opportunities
 - Clean-ups, planting, propagation
- Partnerships with local organizations
 - Church parking lot surfaces

Install Trash Trout(s) on Swannanoa to assist with water quality and clean-up

(Might see if a local manufacturer could fabricate as demand exceeds supply)

Education to support a culture shift – how to affect asset quality

Physical, Social and Spiritual Wellbeing

Need space to support current programming

- Gatherings to do activities that focus beyond the self

Figure out how to make the high level of amenity currently offered in the Town fiscally sustainable

- Staffing plan
- Diverse revenue streams

Improve the outdated perceptions of working with Town -

Improve streetscapes to support greater walkability

- Encourage people to get out of their vehicles
- Address scale of actual walkable area on current sidewalks – utilities, signs, shade, seating, etc.

Consider Main Street program and structures for funding downtown amenities

- Municipal Service District or Business Improvement District fees
- Town economic development staff person – less reliance on Chamber volunteers

Create new East Buncombe TDA to better capture and serve east of Asheville

Develop quality Black Mountain experiences

- Itineraries that include recreation with wellness – healthy eating, spa services, arts activities, etc.

Better promote what is going on and available in the Town already

- Programs + Facilities
- Consult existing outdoor and social businesses regarding what their customers want and need (*support businesses and improve customers' experiences*)

Daily access to outdoor (activity) for all residents and visitors

Yet to be completed!

Consider physical connections, accessibility, range of destinations

Define outdoor recreation/activity broadly – being present/active in nature?

At the next meeting the work group will finish project identification for this last strategy and after some review, establish priority actions to be pursued in the coming couple of years (up to five). The priorities will get additional work planning attention—who to undertake, how quickly, partnerships and resources needed.

BOC reminder – Initiation cohort kick-off will be held in TOBM (Town Hall) on Wednesday August 23, 10-12.

Next CORE meeting is set for **Thursday, September 7**, 8 – 10am at Town Hall.

Post Meeting Note:

Ann stopped by to visit Lincoln Walters at the WNC Outdoor Collective. She will share meeting notes with him and maybe Mr. Walters can be recruited to participate in the Building Outdoor Communities process!



NORTH CAROLINA
**DEPARTMENT of
COMMERCE**

CREATING OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMIES (CORE)

Town of Black Mountain
Notes from Work Group Meeting #5
8:00am, September 7, 2023

In attendance: Jessica Trotman, TOBM Planning Director; Alice Berry, TOBM Councilmember; Josh Henderson, TOBM Parks & Recreation Director; Clint Bowman, TOBM Recreation Program; John McFerrin, Take a Hike; Michael Roberts, Epic Cycles; Russell Cate, TOBM Planning; Ann Bass and Glen Locascio, NC Commerce, Rural Economic Development.

The meeting began with a review of work planning progress from the last meeting. Four of the five Strategies for accomplishing the Outdoor Economy position had been addressed with ideas for needed projects.

Economic Position:

Black Mountain is a small-town community where outdoor journeys begin. Surrounded by mountains, outdoor recreation meets culture and spirit. The community works together to steward our natural assets, improve physical, social and spiritual wellbeing and provide daily access to outdoor recreation for all residents and guests.

The group continued the exercise of listing the kinds of improvements that could be made under the final strategy in the economic position—Provide daily access and connections to outdoor recreation for all residents and guests. Here are the notes from the flip chart:

Daily access to outdoor (activity) for all residents and visitors

Moved over from other strategies:

- Improve Walkability
- Improve Bicycle Safety
- Develop Microtransit

Improve signage, wayfinding, add QR codes for current information

Provide access to up-to-date information – paper and on-line for target users

Create a comprehensive outdoor recreation list and keep up-to-date

Develop webpage as one-stop location for outdoor recreation – links to providers

Consider accessible communications source for all

Build on, engage existing local programs offering outdoor access for all abilities

Evaluate and implement comfort measures to accommodate senior recreators
Develop Family-friendly itineraries and facilities
Continue implementing the Greenway and Walkability Plans – Flat Creek to In the Oaks connector construction starting soon

The work group then used dots to “vote” for those actions they deemed most critical, of highest priority or the best place to start. Priority results:

- 6 Convene Partners for natural assets maintenance, conservation and coordinated programming.**
- 5 Improve accuracy and access to outdoor information – lists, signs, websites, etc.**
- 5 Explore funding sources including an East Buncombe TDA or fund.**
- 2 Provide more historical context in recreation places.
- 2 Develop tools and programs to grow the small business and cultural economy.
- 2 Establish a Town Sustainability and Resilience workgroup (internal).
- 2 Improve Bicycle Safety.
- 2 Begin planning for passenger rail service.
- 1 Continue/Expand Outfit + Educate Recreators – beginners, gear, guides
- 1 Develop more public social spaces.
- 1 Explore microtransit service options.
- 1 Elevate + Share what already doing well.
- 1 Expand educational programming supporting natural asset appreciation and participation.
- 1 Develop funding + organizational structures to support the high level of amenities in recreation and downtown.
- 1 Improve accessibility and coordinate existing programs for seniors, families and those with different abilities.

Four actions received no votes: continue implementing Greenway/Walking plans; improving walkability; develop/package body-mind-spirit experiences and expand quality hospitality.

Additional discussion included:

- Consideration of building community outdoor engagement from within via:
 - Special, controlled access tours
 - Locals wristbands at festivals
 - Partnering with library for local perks and programs
 - Creating an app 28711 with resident targeted information
 - Adapt ‘AVL Today’ to ‘TOBM Today’
- Need to engage Chamber Interim Director in implementation plans
- Need for a regional map including Conference Center Trails and conditions
 - Engage G5 Collective from Old Fort in Mountain Bike Mapping
- Passenger Rail feasibility study update due in October
 - Need to get serious or forget about it

- New interchange at Blue Ridge Road in 2026 may change access options
- Additional public spaces can serve many purposes
 - People-watching stations - entertainment
 - Micro green spots with benches and shade, art, history
 - Rain garden pauses – rest, education and water quality

The final planned CORE meeting is set for **Thursday, October 19**, 8 – 10am at Town Hall. The agenda will be to review the draft work plan for the final report.



CREATING OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMIES (CORE)

Town of Black Mountain
Notes from Work Group Meeting #6
8:00am, October 19, 2023

In attendance: Jessica Trotman, TOBM Planning Director; Alice Berry, TOBM Councilmember; Josh Henderson, TOBM Parks & Recreation Director; Clint Bowman, TOBM Recreation Program; Russell Cate, TOBM Planning; Paul Moon, Land of Sky Regional Council; and Ann Bass, NC Commerce, Rural Economic Development.

This meeting had two main tasks for the Work Group:

1. Finalize the Work Plan matrix with timelines, conveners and partnerships.
2. Consider development of activity itineraries as a way of defining business opportunities and service gaps.

The many additions and changes to the work plan are included in the CORE Report.

Itineraries were suggested for various visitors (and residents, too) during summer, spring/fall, winter and on rainy days. Differing age groups were considered to capture different abilities and interests. Groups included:

- Group of 3-7 people ages 20 – 35
- Couple between 20 and 35 years of age
- Couple between the ages of 35 and 55
- Family group including Parents and Teenagers
- Family group including Grandparents, Parents and Children ages 4–10
- Couple(s) – retired Seniors (this group was not modelled during the exercise)

Itinerary inclusions:

Breakfast – at campsite, Cousins, Blue Ridge Biscuit Company, Dripolator, Open Oven, Louise's, Denny's, hotel continental buffet, Starbucks, Four Sisters

Morning activity – Montreat (3 hrs) hiking or biking or swimming, golf (2-4 hrs) or disc golf, shop (3 hrs.), Museum, Escape room, Farmers Market (2 hrs), library/read in room (2 hrs), fly fishing (all day), drive to River Arts, Biltmore (+ hrs), Hipcamp sweat lodge

Lunch – picnic if hiking/biking, On the Summit, Cousins Cuban, Trailhead, Ole's, Sake, Taco Billy's, Veranda, Grange, eat in Asheville (if there)

Afternoon activity – shop downtown, walk around Lake Tomahawk (1 hr), Thrift Stores (2 hrs), hike in Montreat (3 hrs), NC Glass Center or pottery making (2-3 hrs), disc golf, got

to pool, Mt. Mitchell drive, naptime, Blue Ridge Parkway drive, Folk Art Center, rent bikes + drive them to trails, hang out at The Station

Dinner – Ole's, Pure + Proper, Trailhead, BBQ, My Father's Pizza, Goldfinch, Grange, Thai Basil, somewhere in Asheville

Entertainment – The Station (music), movie at hotel/AirBnB, Asheville music or art film at Fine Arts Theater, Haunted walking tour, Railyard, Museum, Monte Vista Christmas trees, Silverados, White Horse, Pisgah Brewery

Lodging – Hampton Inn, KOA/Campground, AirBnB, Quality Inn, Super 8, B&B in town

Not all of the itineraries included regular outdoor recreation! Sharing of the experiences did uncover some frustration with adequate activity in several categories which can offer some guidance for further development of (outdoor) recreation and visitor services in general.

Itinerary needs:

Entertainment options – evenings mostly (assuming recreation during the day!)

option for younger people, - smaller stage with different kinds of music

alternatives to the Grey Eagle in Asheville

arcade

maker activities – glass shop coming, pottery, other options for kids, too

movie theater

record store, used book store – evenings, rainy days

special events are great entertainment but only available certain days

evening hours at the Swannanoa Valley Museum, library

Alternative Active Activities

putt-putt golf

roller skating rink

bowling alley

Outdoor recreation

day-long outing options mostly IN Black Mountain

pump track

climbing gym, bouldering area

safe bike route to Asheville River Arts District

Hospitality

early morning breakfast – alternative to Dripolator

more hotels + less expensive cool weather options to camping

kid-friendly lodging and restaurants – more space to run

concierge service to make custom itineraries for people

need for naps – easy access to lodging

Indian food option

carry-along picnic lunches

spa services for visitors

Next step – Ann will complete a draft report and work plan to circulate for comments. When complete will present to Town Council. Then—the implementation work begins!



ORGANIZATION

Involves Creating a Strong Foundation For a Sustainable Revitalization Effort, Including Cultivating Partnerships, Community Involvement, and Resources for the District

Downtown Associate Community Program Benefits

- ◆ **Partnership with the NC Main Street and Rural Planning Center:**
 - ◇ North Carolina cities are selected through a competitive process to participate in the DAC program therefore;
 - ◇ Selected communities become partners with the North Carolina Department of Commerce, Rural Economic Development Division, and the NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center in a long-term economic development effort that has a proven positive impact on investment and job creation.
 - ◇ Downtown Associate Community programs (DAC) are limited in number and therefore receive focused and personal attention from the Center's staff.
 - ◇ Investment: The State of North Carolina invests approximately \$50,000 in on-site visits, training and technical assistance within the first three years of participation in a local DAC program. After the initial start-up phase, the community may be eligible to move up to the Main Street program for continued assistance.
- ◆ **Training:**
 - ◇ Selected communities are eligible to attend and participate in the NC Main Street Conference, Main Street Basic Training, Board and Committee Training, Main Street Orientation, Main Street Managers' Meetings and Bi-Annual Regional Meetings. Often the staff brings in nationally renowned speakers and statewide leaders in the field for the NC Main Street conference, annual directors meeting and basic training.
- ◆ **Technical Assistance:**
 - ◇ The North Carolina Main Street and Rural Planning Center's staff guides selected communities, based on best practices, through the following:
 - ◇ Development of a complete property and business inventory
 - ◇ Identifying community assets
 - ◇ Identifying economic drivers
 - ◇ Stakeholder and Partner identification
 - ◇ Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
 - ◇ Vision Forum that leads to a carefully written five-year vision statement and typically 1-4 economic development strategies
 - ◇ Downtown implementation plan, based on the vision and economic development strategies and implemented through the Main Street Four Point Approach®
 - ◇ Creation of an organizational structure to implement the plan
 - ◇ Volunteer development
 - ◇ Guidance and resources on ways to find and develop financial resources
 - ◇ Bimonthly direction and instruction on the tasks required for program progression
 - ◇ Bimonthly and annual Review and Assessment based on the program checklist
 - ◇ Review and assistance with any existing projects and programs
- ◆ **Extensive experience:** The North Carolina Main Street Staff has collectively 80 years of Main Street experience including two staff who have undergone the National Main Street Center's intensive certification program. The NC Main Street Staff is considered among the nation's leading downtown development authorities. Collectively, the NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center staff has extensive experience in organizational development and nonprofit management, architecture, historic preservation, planning, building rehabilitation, investment tax credits, incentive programs, marketing, image and special event development. Also in communications and a range of other pertinent areas.
- ◆ The NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center's staff conducts an annual program assessment and a collection of statistical data for review and analysis.
- ◆ **Network:**
 - ◇ Participating DAC programs can take advantage of and participate in a special network of Main Street cities statewide from which they learn best practices, techniques and strategies for downtown development, and share and receive information through our Main Street listserv.



ORGANIZATION

Involves Creating a Strong Foundation For a Sustainable Revitalization Effort, Including Cultivating Partnerships, Community Involvement, and Resources for the District

Downtown Associate Community Program Requirements

Downtown Associate Community Program Information and Requirements:

The Downtown Associate Community program was created under the NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center of the Rural Economic Development Division, NC Department of Commerce, to better assist communities in developing two areas of work prior to designation as a NC Main Street community. The DAC program is designed to:

- ⇒ Build a sustainable downtown organization that will support Main Street initiatives.
- ⇒ Complete a full asset-based strategic planning process to help the community fully understand its economic development strategies and the actions for implementation.
- ⇒ Create an economic positioning/vision statement with up to four economic development strategies
- ⇒ Create a plan of work focused on implementation of the economic development strategies that will transform downtown.

The Downtown Associate Community (DAC) is a **two year process**. Only communities that **fully participate** in the DAC program and **meet the outlined benchmarks within two years** will be eligible to move up to designated Main Street status. Our NC Main Street (NCMS) staff will work directly with the local DAC Coordinator and a core team of volunteers to help each community create a program that will lead to designation. The Director of the NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center reserves the right to deny designation at the end of the two-year process or to withdraw services of the NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center to the community if the DAC community is not completing the outlined work or demonstrating interest in completion of outlined work. Likewise, the local DAC program may at any time during the two-year process elect to terminate this relationship with the NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center.

The next three pages outline the expectations and requirements of the Downtown associate Community program. In addition there is a **Basic Best Practices Guide** that we strongly encourage each committee to follow. The more a community puts into place these best practices the more likely a community will succeed. Moving up to NC Main Street status ties your community to the National Main Street/Main Street America® program as North Carolina is the coordinating program for this prestigious program that began in 1979.

“Main Street is a business, and the more you treat the Downtown Associate Community program and subsequently the Main Street program as a business through the establishment of basic best practices, the more successful your downtown will be because you will be prepared for opportunities when they arise.”

Liz Parham, Director, NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center

DAC Program Requirements, pg. 2

The following are the requirements that each community is expected to complete before becoming a designated NC Main Street community. These expectations must be completed within two years of the time a town is designated a Downtown Associate Community Program.

- ◆ **Budget:** the town must budget **annually a minimum of \$5000** upon acceptance into the DAC program. This is to cover the travel of NCMS staff to your community as well as your coordinator's training and attendance at the annual NC Main Street conference and Director's meeting. There should also be some funding for smaller implementation projects during this two year time frame as well.
- ◆ **A Downtown Associate Community (DAC) Coordinator will be in place** at the time of acceptance to the DAC program to lead the program.
- ◆ **A coordinator must be hired within the first 18 months. Failure to do so will disqualify the community from achieving Main Street designation.** Please consider this when applying to the DAC program and when establishing a budget for the DAC program. The requirements for a Director area as follows:
 - ◇ Communities with a population 5,000 to 9,999 may hire a full-time equivalent (20 hours Main Street and 20 hours in another department).
 - ◇ If the community is 10,000+ in population a full-time Main Street Director must be hired. A full-time position is 40 hours a week.
 - ◇ Communities with 50,000 or more are not accepted into the DAC program, but if your population surpasses 50,000 after being accepted, your city remains in the program. Communities with a population of less than 5,000 may hire a part time employee. Part time is not preferable as this work is economic development and to do economic development well, it should be full-time.
- ◆ **Join the National Main Street Center as soon as notified of acceptance** in the DAC program, <http://www.mainstreet.org/getinvolved/membership>
- ◆ **Sign up and attend virtual NCMS orientation** for new directors/coordinators within the **first two months**.
- ◆ **Provide the DAC Coordinator's email for NCMS Listserv:** ONLY the primary contact for your program will be added and must be changed with each new DAC program coordinator. Coordinator will learn more about the NCMS Listserv during orientation.
- ◆ **Attend the mandatory four Main Street Basic Trainings within the first 18 months of DAC participation and will not move up if trainings are not completed.** If there is a change in Coordinator during the two-year DAC program period, the **new Coordinator is required to attend all four trainings**. Any time there is a change with the coordinator position the new coordinator must attend the basic trainings. These trainings cover the Main Street Four-Point Approach™ to revitalization's Best Practices in-depth.
 - ◇ Organization—held annually in August the day before the Directors Meeting
 - ◇ Design—held in the fall
 - ◇ Promotion— held in the winter
 - ◇ Economic Vitality—held in the spring
- ◆ **Directors Meeting:** Is **mandatory for the Coordinator**. Attendance is **required for the entire 2.5 days**. This training, held once a year in August typically the first full week beginning on a Wednesday, is invaluable to the coordinator. Please make sure to block this time on the coordinator's calendar prior to accepting the position and does not schedule vacation, or other training during this time. **Non-attendance will negate** the community's standing in the DAC program.
- ◆ **Regional Meetings:** Held the first full week of May and November is mandatory for new DAC Coordinators. If the coordinator is unable to attend due to illness or an emergency, a substitute may

DAC Program Requirements, pg. 3

- ◇ **DAC Meeting Expectations:** NC Main Street Staff to coordinate a virtual meeting schedule that suits both parties. In order to move communities to Main Street designation within the two year time frame **communities will meet with NCMS Staff on a monthly basis for the first six-eight months.**
- ◆ **Virtual Meetings:** 1.25 hours per month unless otherwise specified or agreed that a longer time frame is needed.
 - ◆ **Public presentation:** 15-20 minutes dedicated to presenting information on one of the four-points to the general public. Following that presentation the public can either stay on line or they may elect to leave the meeting.
 - ◆ **Following the public presentation:** 30-40 minutes of strategic planning with the core team.
 - ◆ **Time with coordinator:** One-on-one with the coordinator and the NCMS staff to review progress on information gathering and any other information that needs to be shared. 15-20 minutes.
- ◆ **Downtown Associate Community (DAC) Kick-Off** will be a public 1.5 hour meeting to inform the public of the DAC program and benefits of the Main Street program.
- ◆ **Prior to Kick-Off:** the NCMS team will meet with the coordinator and core team as well as tour the downtown district and surrounding neighborhoods.
- ◆ **Vision Forum:** NCMS Staff will come in person to facilitate this two hour public meeting after the strategic planning with the Core Team/Steering Committee has been completed.
- ◆ **DAC Program Coordinator is responsible for** publicizing, promoting, and inviting the public to the presentation portion of the meeting.
- ◆ **DAC Program Coordinator will work with and respond to NCMS Staff** member(s) to create an agenda for the DAC meeting. The NCMS staff takes the lead on creating an agenda for all DAC meeting within the first two years, but expects the DAC Coordinator to review, respond, make copies, and publicize the meetings.
- ◆ **When meeting in person:** DAC Coordinator is responsible for establishing a regular meeting place large enough for the public meetings, and space for the Core Team Members following the public meeting.
- ◆ **DAC Coordinator may be responsible for providing as needed** materials for meetings: flip charts, markers, and easels for meetings and **must provide a screen or other appropriate place** to show PowerPoint presentations. NCMS Staff will provide the projector.
- ◆ **All lodging for NCMS Staff will be pre-arranged and paid for one week prior** to NCMS Staff traveling to the town. **Business class lodging is required;** however, in cases where lodging may be a challenge, a Bed and Breakfast or an Inn may be considered, but please confirm with NCMS Staff before booking. **Separate rooms for each NCMS staff is required.** Lodging confirmation should be sent to NCMS Staff one week prior to the meeting. **We will email the travel guidelines two weeks before the initial in person visit.**
- ◆ **Mileage and Meals for NCMS Staff travel:** Towns will be invoiced for NCMS Staff mileage and meals within one week after traveling to your community. Communities are charged at the current state rate for mileage and meals. Payment to the NC Department of Commerce is **due within 30 days from receipt of invoice.**

*When meeting in person we ask that all CDC/Health guidelines be followed to insure the safety of the public.

DAC Program Requirements, pg. 4

Required Materials/Documentation List:

- ♦ **An annual budget** one due with application, one due **by July after the first full year** of the program demonstrating the city's commitment to fund the program at a sustainable level
- ♦ **Proof of National Main Street membership** sent to NCMS Staff within first month. Go to this website to join: <http://www.mainstreet.org/getinvolved/membership>
- ♦ **Past studies of the downtown district such as:** Market studies, strategic plans and development plans within first two months preferably sent with the DAC application.
- ♦ **National Register or Study List documentation** within first two months preferably sent with the DAC application.
- ♦ **If a non-profit will be managing the DAC program** please provide a copy of the following within the first two months.
 - ◇ Articles of Incorporation for the organization
 - ◇ Bylaws for the downtown organization
 - ◇ Policy and Procedures for the organization
 - ◇ Tax exemption status for the organization
- ♦ **Final map of the downtown district** which include if applicable clear identification of National Register or Local Historic District, Municipal Service District or Downtown Overlay District and include key downtown anchors and any physical natural boundaries to the downtown (highways, railways, rivers, etc.) within first three months. *A map is sent with the application, but there are times the boundary isn't finalized at the time of the application.
- ♦ **Submit:** Walk Score for Downtown— <https://walkscore.com> within first three months.
- ♦ **Submit:** AARP Livability Index-<https://livabilityindex.aarp.org> within first three months.
- ♦ **Complete a property, building and parking inventory** within the first six months of selection in the DAC program. NCMS staff will provide a template for adding the information.
- ♦ **Core Team/Steering Committee** names should be finalized and submitted to the NCMS Staff within the first six months of DAC selection.
- ♦ **Complete the Economic Development Work Plan** within the first 12 months of DAC selection. *The NCMS staff will guide this process.
- ♦ **Complete the Consumer Survey** within the first 12 months. Survey is provided by NCMS Staff. The exception to this is if one has been done within two years of acceptance into the DAC program.
- ♦ **Vision forum** held within the first 18 months of being accepted into the DAC program.
- ♦ **Complete the Plan of Work following the Forum:** this may be done either in person or virtually depending on best use of time. Will require the full Core Team/Steering Committee. In person it typically takes 3-4 hours. Virtually it is broken into three to four 1.25 hours per meeting. NCMS Staff will facilitate this process, but DAC Coordinator is responsible for finalizing and submitting an approved final plan of work to the NCMS Staff. **Complete within the first 20 months** of DAC designation.

Town of Black Mountain CORE Work Plan


Outdoor Economy Position: Black Mountain is a small-town community where outdoor journeys begin . Surrounded by mountains, outdoor recreation meets culture and spirit . The community works together to steward our natural assets , improve physical, social and spiritual wellbeing and provide daily access/connections to outdoor recreation for all residents and guests.

TOBM: Where Outdoor Journeys Begin	Time	Convener	Possible Partners
<p>Expand on quality hospitality--lodging, dining, etc. <i>Collect and analyze data on current conditions, gaps</i> <i>Expand range of lodging options - experiences, expense</i></p>	O	TOBM Econ Dev Chamber of Commerce	TDA
<p> Improve accuracy and access to outdoor information <i>Assemble comprehensive list of outdoor recreation opportunities</i> <i>Develop a one-stop location for up-to-date information</i> Digital - webpage, app, QR code links Non-tech dependent + differently accessible <i>Wayfinding signage</i> <i>Coordinated Trail marking system</i></p>	A & O	TOBM Rec & Parks Chamber of Commerce	Rec & Parks - Outdoor, G5, Outdoor businesses, Pisgah Map Co., Conference Centers, USFS, Blue Ridge Parkway Fdn
<p>Further Outfit and Educate Recreators (Gear + Skills) <i>Improve access to Gear for beginners, visitors</i> <i>Implement, promote Delayed Fish Harvest program</i> <i>Provide more group education for beginners (residents + guests)</i> Dry land fly casting, fishing technique + equipment, species of fish Mountain bike skills, equipment and safety Orienteering and forest safety Program Hemphill property for such activity - master planning</p>	B & O	TOBM Econ Dev, Outdoor Businesses	Rec & Parks - Outdoor, G5, Montreat, Wildlife Resources Commission, Waypoint Adventures, schools, etc.
<p>Elevate, Share programs, facilities already available <i>Promote P&R programs, partner offerings in one place</i> Community gardening expansion <i>Use PubCorps to encourage volunteering, stewardship</i></p>	A & O	TOBM Rec Parks	Rec & Parks-Outdoor, Chamber, TDA, Library
<p>Begin planning for Passenger Rail <i>Review latest plans, players, prepare Community discussion</i> Identify location challenges + other local issues for solutions <i>Establish leadership for coordinated advocacy</i></p>	A	TOBM Planning, Admin	Town Manager + Council, interested citizens, support from MPO

Outdoor Recreation meets Culture and Spirit	Time	Convener	Possible Partners
<p>Incorporate historical context into recreation locations <i>More events like Museum hikes at more locations</i></p>		Historic Preservation	TOBM Rec&Parks, Historic property

<p><i>Partner to develop + install historic markers</i></p> <p>Identify locations like Trestle Road, In the Oaks house</p> <p>Research stories, photos, design plaque, funding</p>	B	Commission, Swanannoa Valley Museum	TOBM Rec&Parks, historic property owners/managers
<p>Develop dntn public social spaces for post-recreation gathering</p> <p><i>Rest + Entertainment - People-watching, small stage-younger music</i></p> <p><i>Micro-green spots with benches, shade, art, history</i></p> <p><i>Rain garden pauses - rest, education, water quality</i></p>	D & O	TOBM Planning, Downtown Merchants	Property + Business Owners, Town staff, Beautification Committee,
<p>Develop programs, tools to grow small business + culture economy</p> <p><i>Dedicated staff time + work group</i></p> <p><i>Retail Market Analysis, Gap ID, Recruitment/Dev plan</i></p> <p><i>Existing business survey for customer, supply, value chain needs/opps</i></p>	C	TOBM Econ Dev + Planning	Downtown Merchants, Chamber of Commerce

Together We Steward our Natural Assets			
	Time	Convener	Possible Partners

<p> Convene partners and facilitate natural assets conversation</p> <p><i>Identify, assemble Partners - Conf Centers, facility managers, volunteers</i></p> <p><i>Identify areas of concern, cooperation opportunities, joint activities</i></p> <p>Develop supplemental facility and activity priorities</p> <p>Discuss land access + information issues, needs</p> <p>Consider coordinated stewardship - volunteer training, tools, events</p>	A & O	TOBM Rec+Parks Outdoor	Conference Centers, USFS, Parkway, conservation trusts, G5 + other trail groups, watershed stewards, Warren Wilson, Community Garden, etc.
<p>Establish a Town Sustainability + Resilience working group</p> <p><i>Evaluate Town goals and current practices</i></p> <p>Stormwater and water quality improvements</p> <p>Hard surface coverage</p> <p><i>Engage public in environmental issues, goals, actions</i></p> <p>Organize events - clean-up, planting, propagation</p> <p>Develop partnerships - churches, retail centers</p>	A	TOBM Planning, Public Works	Consultation as needed - Land of Sky Regional Council, Buncombe Co Sustainability
<p>Develop educational programs for natural asset appreciation + stewardsh</p> <p><i>Offer controlled tour access/hikes for local residents</i></p> <p><i>Partner with library for local resident volunteer perks - PubCorps</i></p>	B	TOBM Rec & Parks	Museum, CES - Master Gardeners, WRC, USFS, Montreat,

Improve Physical, Social, Spiritual Wellbeing			
	Time	Convener	Possible Partners

<p>Develop + Package Body-Mind-Spirit Experiences</p> <p><i>Query interested businesses, do services inventory</i></p> <p><i>Create, Promote itineraries</i></p>	C	TOBM Econ Dev, Chamber of Commerce	Local outdoor, craft, arts, wellness + hospitality businesses, TDA
<p>Develop structure to support current recreation + downtown amenities, programming, facilities</p> <p><i>Inventory, evaluate existing level of amenity, staffing, costs, plans</i></p> <p>Consider staffing, need for additional facilities, changing demands</p>	A	TOBM Administration/Budget	TOBM Planning, Rec & Parks + Parks Commission, Chamber, business +

Explore best practices, organizations, programs in other communities


NC Main Street program

Municipal Services/Business Improvement Districts

Staffing levels and ROI

A TOBM Administration/Budget

COMMISSION, CHAMBER, BUSINESS +
Property owners

 **Develop new funding stream(s) for outdoor recreation services**

Research additional revenue streams best practices

TDA allocation options

User fees, sponsorships, scholarships, concession contracts, etc.

Bonds, voluntary levies, etc.

A

Black Mountain Admin, Town
Council

Rec & Parks staff, Park Commission

Provide daily Access/Connections to Outdoor Recreation for All

Time

Convener

Possible Partners

Improve walkability

Continue to implement Walkability Plans

Improve downtown streetscape for pedestrian safety

Streetscape design plan

O

TOBM Planning

TOBM Public Works, Police, NCDOT,
Active Mobility Commission, Business +
Property owners

Improve bike safety

Continue to implement existing plans

Engage biking community in safety + preference research

Research successful bike safety and training programs to implement

Increase bicycle parking in downtown, repair services/stations

O

Cycling businesses + TOBM
Planning

Police, Public Works, Schools,
downtown businesses, cycling groups
and advocates

Explore microtransit to meet downtown + recreation shuttle needs

Inventory downtown, parking, recreation partner shuttle needs

Develop scenarios for feasibility, sustainability testing

B

TOBM Admin, Rec & Parks

HHS, Schools, Senior Center,
Conference Centers, USFS, trail groups,
hiking clubs, etc.

Develop activities to serve families, seniors and all abilities

Catalogue range of experiences/services offered in community,

coordinate into itineraries, identify gaps, target promotions

Incorporate all skills levels into new facility and services planning

Implement rest areas for seniors on easy trails, downtown

Create family experience itineraries

O

TOBM Rec & Parks

Parks Commission, Senior Services,
various Camps, Waypoint Adventures,
Chamber, etc.

Develop additional off-season events and activities

B/C

Chamber of Commerce

outdoor/downtown businesses

Timeline for Implementation codes: **A** = within the next year (2023 – fall of 24), **B** = 12 – 24 months out (2024 – fall of 2025),

C = 24 – 40 months out (2025 – Jan 2027), **D** = sometime in next 5 years (2027 - 2028), **O** = work is on-going



Priority projects for the Work Group are marked with a star.