



MAKING MILLS RIVER 2040 Comprehensive Plan



ADOPTED
MAY 27, 2021

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

MILLS RIVER TOWN COUNCIL

Mayor Chae Davis
Mayor Pro Tem Brian Caskey
Councilman Roger Snyder
Councilman Randy Austin
Councilman Brian Kimball

MAKING MILLS RIVER STEERING COMMITTEE

Brian Caskey
Chae Davis
Jim Foster
Elizabeth Jackson
Bob Kramer
Whit Lanning
Bert Lemkes
Ryan Perry
Susan Semrod
Nicole Sweat
Stacy Taylor

MILLS RIVER PLANNING BOARD

James Cantrell
Wayne Carland
Jim Foster
Sherri Hill
Cheryl Janoski
Jeff Moore
Mary Ann Osby
Ryan Perry
Heath Wiggins

MILLS RIVER PROJECT MANAGER

Daniel Cobb, Town Manager

CONSULTANT

Alan Steinbeck, PSG



May 27, 2021

Dear Citizens, Stakeholders, and Elected Officials:

The Town of Mills River incorporated on June 24, 2003. Since this time much has changed in Mills River. From the loss of traditional agricultural producers to the expansion of industry and job growth, to the addition of several large residential subdivisions. The Mills River of today is not the same as the Mills River of 2003.

While change has generally been positive, it has not been without its challenges. With the country poised to move beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, now is the time to set the path for the next generation of Mills River residents.

This Plan – *Making Mills River* – is the result of two years of public input, stakeholder engagement, community outreach, and technical analysis. All this was made possible with support from the Town’s elected and appointed boards. The purpose of this Plan is to ensure Mills River grows in a way which protects the community while encouraging appropriate development in Town.

The goals of this plan outline the community’s priorities of protecting and preserving agriculture and open space as well as investment in the community through infrastructure development and the creation of programs and initiatives to achieve specific outcomes.

With the continued support of elected officials and partnerships with community leaders and service providers, the Mills River of 2040 will be a place everyone will be proud of and will continue its tradition of high quality of life and community preservation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Daniel Cobb". The signature is stylized and fluid.

Daniel Cobb, Town Manager

MISSION

The Town of Mills River is the primary regulatory entity with respect to land use and development decisions within the town. The Town Council has the authority to approve and deny development proposals based on adopted regulations. The Town has a Planning Board that reviews development proposals for consistency with adopted plans. The Comprehensive Plan will help the Town make decisions about the timing and need for public facilities as it works to shape desirable private investment, create new housing and attract diverse economic growth. As a guide for decision making around proposed developments, updates to the Code of Ordinances and public investments in facilities and infrastructure, the Plan helps identify what areas are appropriate for residential, commercial, industrial, and public use. The Town has adopted the following mission statement with respect to its role in creating, administering and responding to the Comprehensive Plan.

Mission Statement

The Town of Mills River strives to offer exceptional quality of life and opportunities for prosperity to its residents, property owners, and businesses.

VISION

The following vision statement for the Comprehensive Plan describes the desired future for 2040 and states the conditions the Town is striving to create through implementing the Plan. The vision can be achieved by adhering to and promoting the following community values as the Town applies the policies, initiatives and future decisions that emanate from the Comprehensive Plan.

Vision Statement

The Town of Mills River will have choices for housing, jobs, and recreation while being a community that is open to new ideas, supportive of community building efforts, and focused towards common goals.

GOALS

1. Protect and enhance the rural and small town character of Mills River
2. Promote preservation of agricultural and natural lands while respecting property rights
3. Manage growth and invest in Mills River to promote land stewardship, community development and fiscal responsibility
4. Provide and maintain exceptional public facilities and services
5. Build infrastructure to support local needs and diverse economic development
6. Encourage housing choices for persons of all ages and different income levels

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STRUCTURE

The Comprehensive Plan is organized into seven functional elements:

- Land Use
- Housing and Neighborhoods
- Natural and Agricultural Resources
- Community Facilities and Services
- Parks and Recreation
- Infrastructure and Economic Development
- Transportation

Each element includes objectives and policies that support the primary goals of the Comprehensive plan. Specific implementation strategies are included in the Plan and associated with the relevant objectives and policies. These text elements function in the following ways:



Objectives are the stated desired outcomes for specific topic areas within each element of the Plan. Objectives define what the Town desires to achieve as a function of the Plan's goals, vision statement and community values.

Policies are the officially adopted policy positions of the Town relative to each identified objective. Policies can institutionalize actions and procedures, provide the basis for changes to the Town policies (e.g. the Code of Ordinances) or define a standard the Town wants to meet relative to its associated objective.

Strategies are the action steps recommended to implement the Plan's objectives and policies. Strategies can be ongoing activities or discrete tasks that are to be undertaken by the Town. Strategies are not to be interpreted as policy, but demonstrate a commitment on the part of the Town to complete these activities as time and resources allow.

STEERING COMMITTEE

The Town created a Steering Committee to provide oversight and direction during the development of the Comprehensive Plan. This Committee was comprised of residents, business owners, property owners and elected officials. The Committee held a series of meetings starting in 2019 and concluding prior to the adoption of the plan. The group was instrumental in designing and responding to public engagement, drafting the Vision Statement, creating and vetting the Goals of the Plan, reviewing and refining Plan policies and strategies, and providing feedback on the Land Use Vision map.



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The Comprehensive Plan is built on and reflects a robust engagement strategy. The Town conducted two major engagement campaigns for the project. The first was in 2019 at the beginning of the project. A survey was conducted that included preferences and opinions around the desired future of the town, what new uses participants wanted to see, appropriate housing types, public infrastructure needs, parks and recreation needs, and perspectives on how the Town should pay for new services and facilities. The results of the sessions were summarized and were an important input to the creation of draft goals for the Plan and the selection of Elements of the plan that needed to be covered. The 2019 engagement campaign also included community workshop efforts to identify where different types of growth and development were appropriate on a map of the Town. The results of this work were one of the factors considered in creating the Land Use Vision map for the Plan.



The second major public engagement campaign occurred in the fall of 2020. Having created draft goals and a preliminary vision statement along with having completed a trends and conditions assessment, the Town hosted a series of online sessions to present these findings. The desired outcomes of the meetings were to vet the goals and vision statement, summarize the factors shaping growth and change in the community, identify and prioritize policy initiatives, and clarify the specific types of development that should be promoted or discouraged in Town. The sessions included an interactive feedback mechanism that allowed for real time results as the Town garnered feedback. The results of the meetings were used to create the policy language of the Plan and shaped the nature of the Land Use Vision map as well.

In general, both of the major public engagement campaigns confirmed the Goals of the Plan. There was overwhelming support for maintaining the community character and rural nature of Mills River along with protecting the natural environment. There was strong support for managing growth and allowing for a mix of residential uses. There was also a desire for more business, services and employment. Feedback continues to emphasize new recreational programs and facilities as well.

TRENDS AND CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT

The Town prepared a Trends and Conditions Assessment in conjunction with the development of the Comprehensive Plan. The Assessment included the following topics and findings.

POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT FORECAST

The Town prepared an independent population and employment forecast for 2045 for the purposes of creating the Plan. Estimates include approximately 2,500 new residents and 1,250 new jobs coming to Mills River by 2045. That is a 33% increase over the baseline population of over 7,300 and a 32% increase over the baseline employment of approximately 4,000.

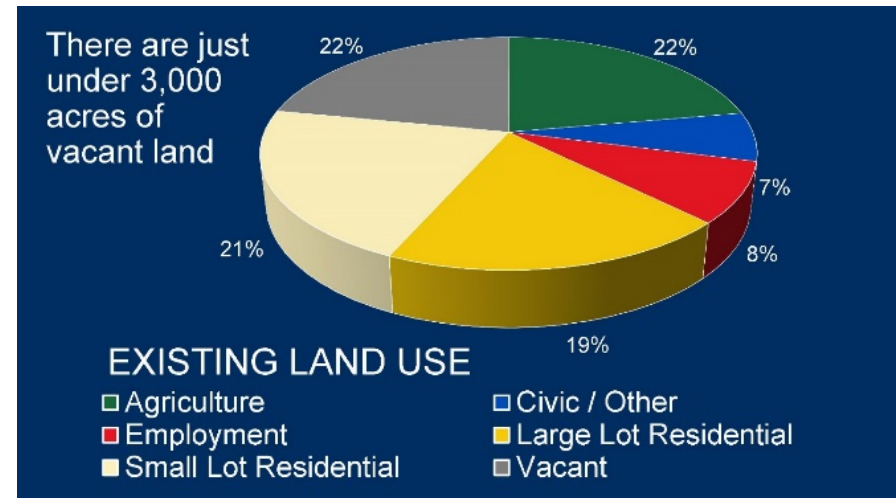
HOUSING DEMAND

The demand for housing in Mills River is anticipated to remain very strong over the planning horizon of the Comprehensive Plan. Research, analysis and feedback from within the community indicated a demand coming from in-migration from other regions of the country and state, regional growth pressures and the relative affordability of the Mills River Market, and the economic attractiveness of the area and the strong employment base in Henderson County and other accessible parts of the region.

Approximately 75% of the existing housing units in Mills River are owner occupied. The indicators at the time the Comprehensive Plan was being created pointed to a continuation of having a high percentage of owner occupied units as most of the market was geared toward single family development. The estimated demand for new housing units is 800 by 2045, which is the equivalent of .8 houses per week and a 25% increase of units over the approximately 3,200 existing housing units within the Mills River limits.

LAND USE AND CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

The Comprehensive Plan included an inventory of land and a land capacity assessment. The purpose of the assessment was to identify how much land was available for development and the relationship of that land to the forecasted growth. The results indicated there are just under 3,000 acres of vacant land from among the 13,436 acres in the Mills River limits. Given the forecasts of population and employment for 2045, it is likely at least 3,000 acres would be used to accommodate this new growth if residential densities and the number of jobs per acre on land used for employment don't increase in Mills River. If this scenario plays out, over one third of the rural land in Mills River will be developed over planning horizon. This rural land includes the 22% that is vacant, 22% that is in agricultural use and 19% that is large lot residential areas of over 2 acres.



KEY ISSUES

Based on the public and stakeholder engagement and the findings of the trends and conditions assessment, the following key issues were identified:

- Land conservation policies and practices will need to be enhanced and expanded in order to achieve the preservation of community character and committed care of the natural environment
- The community will need to resolve the strong sentiment of slow growth and rural preservation with the desire for more goods and services and the development pressures that come from the regional economy
- Mills River's biggest growth management issue and opportunity is accommodating housing in an efficient way that leads to housing choice and land conservation
- Unlike many small towns, Mills River lacks a "quality of place" advantage in a centralized main street district or town center



- Mills River has good access to regional job centers, with a strong relationship to employment opportunities in Henderson County and other parts of the Asheville Region
- The job base and potential for attracting new jobs is strong, but policies and decisions need to leave room for job-oriented development
- Mills River is relatively well rounded for its size in terms of businesses and services, but lacks certain retail and commercial establishments, forcing residents out of town to meet some needs
- There is potential for building a strong visitation economy given regional location and assets, but there is a lack of critical mass of assets
- Mills River has the development pressures and needs of a small town, but the infrastructure of a rural community in most parts of town
- The roadway network has limited connectivity and roads are designed for automobile traffic, not pedestrians and cyclists
- The Comprehensive Plan needs to set the stage for reconsidering zoning categories and taking on a more coordinated approach to infrastructure

Plan Elements

LAND USE

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

NATURAL AND AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

PARKS AND RECREATION

INFRASTRUCTURE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

TRANSPORTATION

LAND USE



Incorporated in 2003, the Town of Mills River is “new” in terms of its status as a municipality. However, the community that is Mills River has been around for over 200 years. Originally established as a farming hub, Mills River was once home to many dairy and small farms.

Over just the last few generations Mills River has transitioned from predominantly traditional agricultural producers and dairy farmers to more refined and efficient methods of growing in greenhouses and controlled environments. Land development has created a slow and steady loss of farmland of all types. Additionally, residential development has seen some of the highest growth rates ever. Furthermore, Mills River is the largest player in economic development in Henderson County. Since 2006 there has been over \$483,000,000 in industrial development resulting in more than 1,100 jobs.

The purpose of this plan element is to provide a road map to guide development to areas best suited to support additional growth. Furthermore, this element outlines specific policies intended to protect sensitive land from industrial, commercial, or residential development for the purpose of preserving farmland and open spaces.

Performance Metrics

- Change in development intensity and density in targeted development areas and other areas
- Change in population, employment, and population to employment ratio.
- New commercial floor area
- Number of approved variances
- Number of zoning compliance permits and other development approvals
- Timeframe for completing zoning compliance permits
- Number of projects approved under architectural standards

Potential Partnerships & Collaborators

- Agribusiness Henderson County
- Asheville Regional Airport
- Land Conservancies
- Duke Energy
- Henderson County
- Henderson County Partnership for Economic Development
- French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Manufacturers and industry representatives
- Metropolitan Sewerage District of Buncombe County
- Mills River Agricultural Advisory Committee
- Mills River Partnership

OBJECTIVE 1.1: Managed Growth to Meet the Goals of the Comprehensive Plan and Provide for the Efficient Use of Land to Accommodate New Development.

POLICY 1.1.1: Manage growth and new development to meet the goals, objectives and policies of the Comprehensive Plan and promote quality development.

POLICY 1.1.2: Create policies and conduct other planning and community building efforts to maintain the character and quality of life in Mills River.

POLICY 1.1.3: Limit the types of uses, density of residential development and intensity of commercial development in areas that are not desirable for growth and not well-served by roadway infrastructure and public utilities.

POLICY 1.1.4: Maintain future year population and employment forecasts and land capacity estimates to measure the effectiveness of the Comprehensive Plan and zoning districts to accommodate anticipated and planned residential and non-residential development.

POLICY 1.1.5: Update the Comprehensive Plan every five years including forecasts, land use assessment and policy review.

OBJECTIVE 1.2: Defined Areas where Development is Targeted

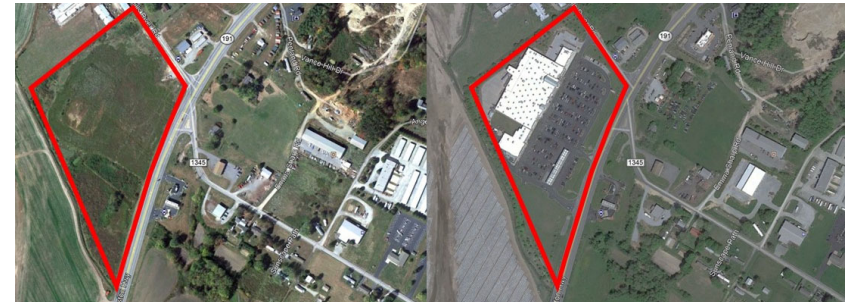
POLICY 1.2.1: Define areas where development will be targeted, create development regulations to define the nature of the development, and ensure infrastructure is available to support the demands created by development in target areas.

STRATEGY: Formulate incentives and benefits for desirable development in targeted development areas for residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural and public uses.

STRATEGY: Participate in the funding and creation of infrastructure required for new development in targeted development areas.

STRATEGY: Draft policies and requirements defining desirable development within targeted development areas.

STRATEGY: Create procedures for the review and approval of development in targeted areas where new projects are providing desirable development and seeking funding or other partnerships with the Town.



Ingles Markets on Highway 280 – Image on left is 2010, Image on right is 2019

OBJECTIVE 1.3: Adoption and Updates of a Land Use Vision Map

POLICY 1.3.1: Adopt and maintain a Land Use Vision map that establishes a vision for growth and development in Mills River.

POLICY 1.3.2: Include in the Land Use Vision future land use categories that clarify the types of development that are desirable, acceptable and least desirable in designated areas.

POLICY 1.3.3: Use the Land Use Vision map as a guide for the formation of land development regulations and update of zoning districts and associated regulations.

POLICY 1.3.4: Refer to Land Use Vision map as a guide in the review of rezoning requests.

POLICY 1.3.5: Update the Land Use Vision map during each five year update of the Comprehensive Plan and as deemed necessary in interim years.

OBJECTIVE 1.4: Consistent and Updated Code of Ordinances and Zoning and Land Development Regulations

POLICY 1.4.1: Maintain the Code of Ordinances to have a clearly defined, statutorily consistent and objective set of development regulations.

POLICY 1.4.2: Create and implement regulations related to use, building location, site design, parking, landscape and signs.

POLICY 1.4.3: Create and implement regulations related to the subdivision of land for residential and non-residential purposes.

POLICY 1.4.4: Conduct a comprehensive review and update of the Code of Ordinances every five years.

POLICY 1.4.5: Enact new and revised land development regulations within the Code of Ordinances on an as needed basis to meet the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

STRATEGY: Update Code of Ordinances to have a consistent, comprehensive and clear set of definitions of terms.

STRATEGY: Revise parking standards to be based on building area and capacity as possible rather than employment and other measures.

STRATEGY: Modify MR Mixed Use zoning district to include clarifying language on how to effectively site more than one residential structure on a single lot.

STRATEGY: Update sign ordinance to complement architectural standards such that new signs minimize impact to rural character.

STRATEGY: Integrate tree preservation considerations into landscape requirements.

OBJECTIVE 1.5: Clearly Defined and Consistently Managed Processes for Development Review

POLICY 1.5.1: Publish a complete set of forms, information on processes and fees on the Town of Mills River website.

POLICY 1.5.2: Officially designate administrator roles as called for in the Code of Ordinances.

POLICY 1.5.3: Review and update fee schedule on an annual basis.

POLICY 1.5.4: Review and present permit activity results and performance metrics on an annual basis.

STRATEGY: Create a series of publications that explain processes and address common questions regarding the applicability of land development regulations.

STRATEGY: Design and publish online information in an interactive map on property characteristics germane to zoning reviews and compliance.

OBJECTIVE 1.6: Land Designated for Specific Uses

POLICY 1.6.1: Maintain zoning districts and associated use requirements that supply an adequate amount and diversity of housing types to accommodate anticipated housing demand.

POLICY 1.6.2: Maintain zoning districts and associated use requirements that maintain land availability for the attraction and accommodation of commercial and industrial uses.

STRATEGY: Track the need for land associated with community facilities and infrastructure and identify opportunities to acquire property and construct projects.

STRATEGY: Update the MR Mixed Use zoning district and other districts as required to clarify mix and appropriateness of different types of residential development.

OBJECTIVE 1.7: Guidelines and Standards for the Character and Appearance of New Development

POLICY 1.7.1: Implement uniform architectural design standards that result in quality, resilient and attractive non-residential structures that maintain rural character.

POLICY 1.7.2: Specify the appropriate size and location of freestanding and wall signs so as to not adversely impact the visual appeal of commercial corridors.

POLICY 1.7.3: Promote the inclusion of natural materials such as stone, wood and brick in new non-residential and multifamily structures.

POLICY 1.7.4: Address the placement of buildings, landscape and buffering to maintain community appearance, view sheds and rural character.

STRATEGY: Prepare architectural and landscape standards to improve interpretation and application with respect to materials and location of requirements.

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

Mills River is home to many single family homes including standalone houses, traditional suburban subdivisions with large lots and low densities, mobile home parks, and large estate lots. Each of these serves a purpose and a segment of the population unique to its residents. Mills River has very few examples of other housing types such as apartments or townhomes.

In order for a community to grow and support the needs of a diverse workforce, housing choices of all types, sizes, and densities must be available. The purpose of this plan element is to identify existing housing types and identify areas in which housing may be provided as well as explore options for development patterns which encourage the preservation of open space by encouraging developments to take advantage of higher density building types.

Performance Metrics

- Percent of town covered by small area plans
- Change in amount and percentage mixed of housing unit types
- Number of dwelling units permitted and constructed
- Change in average lot sizes for town lot and rural residential development
- Housing affordability according to market prices and median household income

Potential Partners & Collaborators

- Agribusiness Henderson County
- Community Foundation of Western North Carolina
- Dogwood Health Trust
- Duke Energy
- First Citizens Bank
- Henderson County
- Land of Sky Regional Council
- Manufacturers and industry representatives
- Metropolitan Sewerage District of Buncombe County
- North Carolina Department of Commerce
- North Carolina Department of Transportation
- North Carolina State elected officials
- The Housing Assistance Corporation
- The Partnership for Economic Development
- Western Carolina Community Action

OBJECTIVE 2.1: Completed Small Area Plans

POLICY 2.1.1: Inventory conditions, issues and needs at the neighborhood level through public engagement, technical analysis and assessment of trends and conditions.

STRATEGY: Adopt a schedule for and create small area plans for Mills River.

OBJECTIVE 2.2: Variety and Mix of Housing Types

POLICY 2.2.1: Allow for a variety of housing types including single family dwellings, apartments, multiple unit buildings, townhomes, condominiums, accessory housing and manufactured homes.

POLICY 2.2.2: Allow for specialized group housing, senior housing and other managed living arrangements.

POLICY 2.2.3: Establish and maintain development regulations for tiny homes, cabins and small-format housing.

POLICY 2.2.4: Maintain development regulations for recreational vehicle parks, camps and other temporary stay arrangements including what is allowed and how their use will be monitored and regulated.

POLICY 2.2.5: Establish zoning districts and targeted development areas that specify the types of housing allowed in different areas within Mills River.

STRATEGY: Audit the Code of Ordinances for issues affecting the ability to implement different housing types and prepare recommendations for making the regulations consistent, clear and implementable.

OBJECTIVE 2.3: Appropriate Residential Lot Sizes and Densities

POLICY 2.3.1: Maintain regulations for residential lot sizes appropriate for new single family development in rural and neighborhood-oriented areas for lots at or under two acres.

POLICY 2.3.2: Create and maintain standards for estate lot residential development for lots larger than two acres.

POLICY 2.3.3: Maintain policies specifying allowable densities for residential uses other than single family dwellings.

POLICY 2.3.4: Create policies that allow for cluster development and conservation subdivisions for the purposes of providing open space or preserving natural areas.

POLICY 2.3.5: Define requirements for lot sizes and densities associated with townhome development.

OBJECTIVE 2.4: Successful Maintenance of Residential Areas, Existing Neighborhoods and Subdivisions

POLICY 2.4.1: Ensure zoning districts and other land development regulations limit the negative impact of non-residential, non-agricultural development on residential development relative to traffic, noise, smell, light, hours of operation, and pollutants and contaminants.

POLICY 2.4.2: Ensure new neighborhoods and subdivisions are adequately resourced to manage land and infrastructure maintenance issues for common areas and roads.

POLICY 2.4.3: Apply site design regulations that optimize ease of common area and private road maintenance.

POLICY 2.4.5: Define housing types appropriate for existing residential lots.

STRATEGY: Update subdivision regulations to allow for administrative approval of small scale commercial subdivisions.

OBJECTIVE 2.5: Minimum Standards for Housing Quality and Safety

POLICY 2.5.1: Assist in identifying and rectifying substandard housing.

STRATEGY: Seek funding sources for housing repairs and renovations where substandard housing conditions exist.

OBJECTIVE 2.6: Complete Guidance for Subdivision and New Housing

POLICY 2.6.1: Maintain clear guidance on the subdivision of property for the purposes of creating residential lots for development.

POLICY 2.6.2: Establish regulations linking housing development to lot size, number of units allowed per lot, accessory structures and site access considerations.

POLICY 2.6.3: Specify conditions under which housing and other development is allowed without having to subdivide property.

OBJECTIVE 2.7: Allowance for Housing within a Mix of Other Uses

POLICY 2.7.1: Define areas where housing can be built in conjunction with non-residential development.

POLICY 2.7.2: Create land development regulations that specify the number, type, density and arrangement of buildings where residential and non-residential uses are allowed on a lot or tract of land.

POLICY 2.7.3: Stipulate methods for measuring housing density when built in conjunction with non-residential development.

POLICY 2.7.4: Allow for horizontal mixed use and vertical mixed use within buildings where housing and non-residential can exist in the same building in defined areas of the Town.

STRATEGY: Update zoning districts to better clarify the allowable mix of residential and non-residential under different conditions.

OBJECTIVE 2.8: Availability of Workforce and Affordable Housing

POLICY 2.8.1: Define workforce housing and establish goals for the provision of workforce housing in Mills River.

POLICY 2.8.2: Monitor and manage the supply of workforce housing in Mills River.

OBJECTIVE 2.9: Incentives for Desired Housing

POLICY 2.9.1: Pursue opportunities to provide financial and other incentives for desired housing developments where market rate solutions are not available.

POLICY 2.9.2: Consider opportunities to work with housing developers proposing projects seeking tax credits to create affordable housing.

NATURAL AND AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

Mills River is home to an incredible wealth of natural and agricultural resources that provide scenic views, recreation opportunities, clean air and water, wildlife habitat, and economic development opportunities. These resources contribute to the high quality of life Mills River enjoys and serve to define the area's rural character.

As pressure increases to develop more and more land, Mills River will be faced with difficult decisions regarding how to best find a balance between the demand for additional land for homes, roads, stores, and services, with issues of environmental sustainability, community character, and preservation of farm land.

Striking this balance is critical to protecting the high quality of life our residents expect. The Mills and French Broad Rivers, along with their various tributaries, create floodplains to the south and east while the steep slopes of the Blue Ridge Mountains of Pisgah National Forest rise to the north and west. These floodplains and steep slopes are sensitive lands, largely unsuitable for development. As suitable land becomes scarcer pressure to develop in these sensitive areas will only increase, which will prompt the need for Mills River to be more proactive in land conservation and preservation practices.



Performance Metrics

- Amount of preserved land held in conservation status
- Number of trees protected and planted by ordinance, incentives and initiatives
- Change in accessibility to goods and services from residential areas
- Change in amount of land in agricultural production

Potential Partners & Collaborators

- Agribusiness Henderson County
- Appalachian Regional Commission
- Community Foundation of Western North Carolina
- Conserving Carolina and other land conservancies
- Land of Sky Regional Council
- Mills River Agricultural Advisory Committee
- Mills River Partnership
- North Carolina Wildlife Resource Commission

OBJECTIVE 3.1: Natural Lands Preservation

POLICY 3.1.1: Seek opportunities to preserve forested land, lowlands and wetlands and critical habitat through land purchase arrangements, conservation easements or other measures.

POLICY 3.1.2: Establish funding mechanisms that allow the Town to collaborate with other entities in land preservation activities.

POLICY 3.1.3: Include natural lands preservation guidance in subdivision regulations that promote cluster development or open space preservation.

POLICY 3.1.4: Allow for and encourage habitat-promoting landscape treatments within landscape standards.

STRATEGY: Identify and maintain an inventory of natural lands and other assets that provide ecosystem services.

STRATEGY: Create policies for grading that minimize the permanent reshaping of the landscape through soil removal or fill.

STRATEGY: Create guidance that minimizes potential adverse economic impacts when making land preservation decisions.

OBJECTIVE 3.2: Protection of Trees and Forested Areas

POLICY 3.2.1: Promote land disturbance and site development practices that limit unnecessary tree removal and deforestation.

POLICY 3.2.2: Conserve existing trees and forested areas by promoting their use in buffer zones between uses.

POLICY 3.2.3: Establish guidelines for tree plantings on site for new development and redevelopment projects where land development regulations call for perimeter plantings, interior plantings and residential buffers.

STRATEGY: Pursue tree plantings in and adjacent to public rights-of-way and private roads.

STRATEGY: Plant, maintain and track health of trees on Town property.

STRATEGY: Consider seeking the Tree City USA designation, which requires best management practices in forest and tree maintenance.

OBJECTIVE 3.3: Watershed and Water Quality Protection

POLICY 3.3.1: Continue working with Henderson County on the coordination of the Water Supply Watershed permitting process.

POLICY 3.3.2: Establish site development practices that limit the impact of peak stormwater events relative to water flow and quality in commercial and residential areas.

POLICY 3.3.3: Coordinate with Henderson County on establishing and maintaining erosion control measures during site development.

POLICY 3.3.4: Undertake and promote erosion control and stormwater management practices on Town property and other public land.

STRATEGY: Identify and maintain list of sensitive water resources. Example: trout streams, perennial streams, and other associated resources.

OBJECTIVE 3.4: Limited Air, Noise and Light Pollution

POLICY 3.4.1: Promote the use of energy sources in buildings, vehicles and equipment that limit point source pollution or air pollution in general.

POLICY 3.4.2: Encourage neighborhood design techniques that limit the effects of highway and other noise in residential areas.

STRATEGY: Limit the offsite impacts of industrial and commercial noise and emissions on neighboring properties through land use regulation and other measures.

STRATEGY: Establish and implement lighting standards for site development, rights-of-way and public land that limit light pollution.

OBJECTIVE 3.5: Practices that Result in Energy Conservation and Efficiency

POLICY 3.5.1: Increase the availability of electric vehicle charging stations and promote electric vehicle use.

POLICY 3.5.2: Encourage the use of alternative fuels in buildings and the transportation system.

POLICY 3.5.3: Make regulatory accommodations to allow alternative forms of energy production while limiting impacts to community appearance and character as well as viewshed.

POLICY 3.5.4: Promote the use of energy efficient design practices in neighborhood, site and roadway design.

POLICY 3.5.5: Prioritize public investments that have energy conservation and efficiency characteristics.

POLICY 3.5.6: Invest in roadway network improvements that reduce trip length and make travel paths more efficient.

POLICY 3.5.7: Continue to seek alternative forms of energy for Town facilities.

POLICY 3.5.8: Design Town facilities to be energy efficient.

STRATEGY: Audit Town facilities for energy usage and identify potential strategies to reduce energy consumption or use alternative sources of energy.

STRATEGY: Create a schedule of upgrades to include lighting, heating, cooling and other systems.

OBJECTIVE 3.6: Agricultural Lands Conservation and Sustaining Agricultural Economy

POLICY 3.6.1: Encourage the use and improved utility of the County's Voluntary Farmland Preservation Program.

POLICY 3.6.2: Maintain the bona fide farm exemption from site development regulations relative to agricultural uses.

POLICY 3.6.3: Inventory and account for farmland that is in active agricultural use.

POLICY 3.6.4: Continue to promote the local and regional agricultural economy and food network in economic development initiatives and investments.

POLICY 3.6.5: Promote land uses and infrastructure that supports the local agricultural and food economy.

POLICY 3.6.6: Integrate farmland conservation considerations into natural lands preservation, parks and recreation and other related initiatives.

STRATEGY: Manage and facilitate an Agricultural Advisory Committee for the purposes of identifying issues and potential strategies the Town can implement to conserve agricultural land and sustain the local agricultural economy.

STRATEGY: Create an agricultural lands conservation initiative to include financial and other incentives to promote the voluntary conservation of land and continuation of agricultural uses.

STRATEGY: Facilitate local food network development strategy to include identifying Town's role in sustaining a farmers market, increasing the capacity of local farmers to increase production and sales, and expanding local markets for individual, business and institutional buyers.



COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES



Through allocating funding each year, the Town of Mills River ensures core services are provided to its residents, business owners and property owners. These include law enforcement, fire protection, zoning, recreation, library services and street lights. The Town offers a wonderful park with walking trails, basketball courts, a baseball field, a dog park, pavilions and playgrounds. The Town has parks and recreation staff that operate and maintain these and other Town facilities. The Town's primary building asset is Town Hall, where staff members provide services and where the Town's elected and appointed boards meet. Housed within Town Hall is the Mills River Branch of the Henderson County Public Library.

This element seeks to ensure the community receives exceptional services and is home to well designed and functional facilities. This is achieved by continually reviewing methods of service delivery, which services are provided, and with whom the Town should partner to achieve these outcomes.

Performance Metrics

- Amount of capital expenditures by Town
- Level of service standards for public safety
- Change in tax base relative to new development

Potential Partners & Collaborators

- Appalachian Regional Commission
- Asheville Regional Airport
- Blue Ridge Community College
- Broadband providers
- Dogwood Health Trust
- Duke Energy
- French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Golden Leaf Foundation
- Henderson County
- Henderson County Chamber of Commerce
- Henderson County Schools
- Henderson County Sheriff's Office
- Land of Sky Regional Council
- Metropolitan Sewerage District of Buncombe County
- Mills River Farmers Market
- Mills River Fire Department
- North Carolina Department of Transportation
- Health Care Providers
- The Housing Assistance Corporation
- Henderson County Partnership for Economic Development
- Tourism Development Authority
- Western Carolina Community Action

OBJECTIVE 4.1: Regular Capital Improvements Programming and Budgeting

POLICY 4.1.1: Create and maintain capital projects needs for Town owned and managed facilities and assets.

POLICY 4.1.2: Prepare annual budget in coordination with capital improvement needs and priorities.

POLICY 4.1.3: Identify and maintain special purpose funds for capital improvements related to facilities, infrastructure and other initiatives as needed.

STRATEGY: Provide opportunity for public review, requests, and comment of capital improvement elements and priorities.

OBJECTIVE 4.2: Town Government Adequate Facilities and Quality Services

POLICY 4.2.1: Maintain and expand Town Hall to have adequate space for official meetings of elected and appointed officials, staff, and public meetings.

POLICY 4.2.2: Provide Town services at levels and quality of service to meet the administrative, programmatic, project-related and policy-focused needs of the community.

POLICY 4.2.3: Work with local nonprofits to support community needs not being met through other means and solicit requests for funding on an annual basis.

STRATEGY: Actively identify needs not being met in the community and pursue nonprofit partnerships and initiatives to address issues.

OBJECTIVE 4.3: Expanded Tax Base and Long Term Fiscal Responsibility

POLICY 4.3.1: Promote development that expands the tax base and assists in sustaining the financial position of the Town.

POLICY 4.3.2: Develop and employ policies and decision-making guidance and procedures that ensure long term fiscal responsibility is considered when making service-related, programmatic, land use, policy and capital improvements decisions.

POLICY 4.3.3: Assess tax base and long term fiscal responsibility considerations in all changes to the zoning element of the Code of Ordinances and all updates to the Comprehensive Plan.

POLICY 4.3.4: Establish and maintain zoning categories and land available for development that will ensure the long term fiscal health of the Town.

STRATEGY: Create methods and metrics for assessing the impact of decisions on the tax base and the long term fiscal health of the Town, including anticipated changes in property value and anticipated costs of infrastructure, facilities, maintenance and operations.

OBJECTIVE 4.4: High Quality Law Enforcement and Fire Protection Services

POLICY 4.4.1: Continue to ensure law enforcement services are available to maintain public safety and an adequate level of service and response time.

POLICY 4.4.2: Continue to work with Mills River Volunteer Fire Department on the provision of services to maintain adequate level of service.

POLICY 4.4.3: Coordinate with stakeholders on the location and future expansion of police and fire stations and services to meet the needs of continuing and planned growth.

OBJECTIVE 4.5: Primary School Capacity and Efficient Location

POLICY 4.5.1: Conduct regular coordination with Henderson County Public Schools to plan for adequate school capacity and the location of new public school sites.

OBJECTIVE 4.6: Preservation, Care and Provision of Historical and Cultural Assets

POLICY 4.6.1: Identify policies, programs and investments that preserve and provide care for the Town's historical and cultural assets.

POLICY 4.6.2: Sustain partnership with the Henderson County Public Library System to operate a Mills River Library branch location.

POLICY 4.6.3: Implement programs, events and interpretive installations that promote the historical and cultural assets of Mills River.

STRATEGY: Create an inventory and needs based work program for historical and cultural assets that focuses on restoration, repair, acquisition and maintenance while identifying partnerships and management arrangements among organizations.

STRATEGY: Update historical and cultural asset inventory and work program every three years and consider work program items in the Town's annual budget cycle.

OBJECTIVE 4.7: Plan for Town Center Development

POLICY 4.7.1: Create a plan for a Town Center to accommodate future facilities needs for the Town of Mills River in conjunction with residential, commercial and recreational uses.

POLICY 4.7.2: Identify the need for additional land to effectively plan the Town Center.

PARKS AND RECREATION



Mills River established the first amenities in Mills River Park in 2011. The number of visitors and offerings within the park have grown steadily. At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic the importance of parks and recreation opportunities became even more apparent. During a time of lockdowns and business closures in 2020 the Mills River Park remained extremely busy and provided an outlet for those unable to work out in gyms, attend school, and for those seeking socially-distant human interaction.

It is important to acknowledge the service parks and recreation provide to the Town and its impact to economic development. The parks and recreation component of this plan is intended to recognize and encourage the long term growth and development of the Town's parks and recreation facilities and programs. This element serves as a guide to the long term growth and development of not only physical development such as picnic shelters or bike paths, but also from a programmatic perspective. Town-sponsored events, coordination with the public schools, and services to the elderly are crucial to the cohesiveness of a community.

Performance Metrics

- Level of service standards for recreational facilities
- Level of usage of recreational facilities
- Revenue and operating costs for recreational facilities

Potential Partners & Collaborators

- Blue Ridge Bicycle Club
- Breweries (Sierra Nevada, Bold Rock, Mills River Brewery, Burning Blush)
- Conserving Carolina and other land conservancies
- Dogwood Health Trust
- Henderson County
- Henderson County Schools
- North Carolina Forest Service
- North Carolina Wildlife Resource Commission
- Tourism Development Authority



OBJECTIVE 5.1: Master Plan Updates and Implementation

POLICY 5.1.1: Maintain and implement the Town of Mills River Parks and Recreation Master Plan and any future adopted additions and changes.

POLICY 5.1.2: Perform major update to the Parks and Recreation Master Plan every five years.

POLICY 5.1.3: Integrate parks and recreation capital improvements needs into the annual budget cycle.

POLICY 5.1.4: Consider impact on Mills River Park when revising adjacent development proposals.

STRATEGY: Seek outside funding opportunities such as the North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, the Dogwood Health Trust, Pisgah Health Foundation, or other programs and organizations, as well as individual contributions or local fundraising efforts.

OBJECTIVE 5.2: Parks and Recreation Facilities Improvements, Operations and Maintenance

POLICY 5.2.1: Establish, track and maintain a level of service standard for parks and recreation facilities to serve the existing and future population.

POLICY 5.2.2: Support the availability, access and management of blueways in Mills River for recreational purposes.

POLICY 5.2.3: Create and manage recreational programs for persons of all ages and abilities.

POLICY 5.2.4: Track usage of parks and recreation facilities and consider demand in the creation of new facilities and services.

STRATEGY: Expand outdoor recreation facilities and programs including sports, exercise, play and leisure.

STRATEGY: Establish a connected system of greenways, trails and other multimodal facilities for the purposes of recreation, exercise and connecting people to recreational facilities.

STRATEGY: Maintain parks and recreation capital account for the purposes of expanding, upgrading and maintaining facilities.

STRATEGY: Conduct annual user counts and usage surveys to track level of park visitation, level of facility usage and user satisfaction.

OBJECTIVE 5.3: Coordination of Parks and Recreation Efforts among Stakeholders

POLICY 5.3.1: Coordinate with other stakeholders and partners on the availability, expansion and maintenance of parks and recreation facilities in and near Mills River.

POLICY 5.3.2: Promote public use parks, trails and other recreation facilities in conjunction with new development and new neighborhoods.

POLICY 5.3.3: Partner with others in the use of Town buildings and facilities for the purpose of making recreational programming available.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The development of a sustainable economy in Mills River is vitally important to the long term growth of the town. In order to achieve this it is essential the Town support growth and development of many different forms. The desired outcomes of the Town's economic development activities and infrastructure investments are that residents can find jobs and afford to live in the community, businesses are able and encouraged to open, remain, and grow in the community, and everyone can expect quality services and infrastructure.

Access to water and wastewater treatment has enabled Mills River to become what it is today. The Town must continue its partnerships with local and regional water and wastewater providers to ensure Mills River grows in such a way as to achieve a sustainable future.

Looking beyond traditional public services the Town must play an active role in deployment of high speed internet to all of its residents, both as an economic development tool and also as a practical matter to ensure students and remote workers are able to study and work from home. Remote working capabilities are a draw for certain segments of the workforce. Providing residents a choice of where to work for quality of life reasons will keep Mills River competitive in this arena.

Performance Metrics

- Change in area of coverage for water and sewer service
- Supply of land for employment-oriented uses
- Job profile by employment type
- Level of activity of visitation economy
- Local spending and gaps in retail and professional services
- Real estate transactions
- Level of investment by type by change in property tax valuation
- Number of restaurants
- Permits issued by Town Council district

Potential Partners & Collaborators

- Agribusiness Henderson County
- Appalachian Regional Commission
- Broadband providers
- City of Hendersonville
- Dogwood Health Trust
- Duke Energy
- First Citizens Bank
- Golden Leaf Foundation
- Henderson County Chamber of Commerce
- Manufacturers and industry representatives
- Metropolitan Sewerage District of Buncombe County
- North Carolina Department of Commerce
- North Carolina Department of Transportation
- North Carolina Rural Center
- The Partnership for Economic Development

OBJECTIVE 6.1: Quality and Accessible Internet Access and Communications Services

POLICY 6.1.1: Promote the availability of internet and communications service.

POLICY 6.1.2: Maintain public internet access at Town Hall and Mills River Park.

POLICY 6.1.3: Encourage expansion of high speed internet throughout Town.

STRATEGY: Expand internet access on properties managed by the Town and open to the public.

STRATEGY: Partner with internet service providers to deploy broadband infrastructure.

OBJECTIVE 6.2: Adequate Capacity to Support Job Development

POLICY 6.2.1: Consider the availability and capacity of land to support job development in land development review and policy formation.

POLICY 6.2.2: Maintain zoning categories that allow for job-oriented uses.

POLICY 6.2.3: Make adequate provision for business formation, working and operating small businesses in residential areas.

POLICY 6.2.4: Implement policies and investment decisions that will maintain the health of existing industries.

POLICY 6.2.5: Continue coordinating activities with institutions and organizations that provide workforce development and educational resources.

OBJECTIVE 6.3: Promotion of Site Redevelopment and Building Reuse

POLICY 6.3.1: Maintain policies and regulations that promote the redevelopment of property and building reuse.

POLICY 6.3.2: Allow flexibility in parking and other site requirements that promote building reuse.

POLICY 6.3.3: Clarify conditions under which building improvements and redevelopment activities require compliance with development standards for new construction.

OBJECTIVE 6.4: Diversified and Resilient Local Service Economy

POLICY 6.4.1: Participate in state, regional and local efforts and partnerships to support new investment in commercial enterprises.

POLICY 6.4.2: Prioritize economic development initiatives and investments that support the presence and diversification of essential services.

POLICY 6.4.3: Identify land suitable for commercial development and maintain an adequate supply of developable land to support new investment.

POLICY 6.4.4: Promote the expansion of the visitation economy in creating and implementing policies, making investment decisions and undertaking economic development initiatives.

TRANSPORTATION

Investments in transportation and other infrastructure are critical for Mills River to remain a desirable and competitive community of choice. The major component of this element is the system of highways, streets, sidewalks, and greenways that allow traffic of people and goods to move through Mills River by vehicle, bike, or on foot. Transportation systems affect not only the ability to get from one place to another, but also impact land use decisions, economic development initiatives, housing choices, air and water quality, and much more.

Mills River is served by two state highways, NC 191 and NC 280. These main transportation arteries, Haywood Road and Boylston Highway respectively, are set up to serve regional traffic bound to or through the central region of Mills River. There is a lack of alternative routes for moving around town, with the result being heavy traffic on these corridors. The nearest interstate is I-26, located just one and one half miles from Mills River's northernmost section of town and approximately 11 miles from its southernmost boarder with Transylvania County.

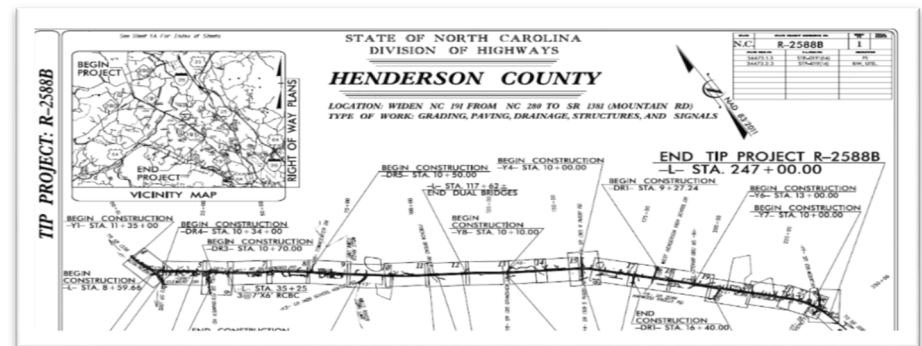
Mills River Park is home to approximately one and one half miles of greenway. No other public greenways or trails exist within the Town. This is an important missing component of the transportation network. In order to accommodate anticipated growth in population, it must be recognized that Mills River needs a balanced transportation system that not only moves vehicles safely and efficiently, it also needs to provide residents and visitors the opportunity to conveniently and safely use a variety of transportation choices.

Performance Metrics

- Change in amount of roadway mileage by type
- Change in amount of sidewalk and multi-use path infrastructure
- Level of congestion at intersections
- Traffic volumes on primary roadways
- Pedestrian and cycling counts by specific location
- Change in number of crashes

Potential Partners & Collaborators

- Agribusiness Henderson County
- Appalachian Regional Commission
- Asheville Airport
- Blue Ridge Bicycle Club
- Duke Energy
- French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Golden Leaf Foundation
- North Carolina Department of Transportation
- Henderson County Partnership for Economic Development



OBJECTIVE 7.1: Successful Planning and Coordination

POLICY 7.1.1: Identify and prioritize transportation improvements in a transportation needs plan for Mills River that is updated each year.

POLICY 7.1.2: Continue active participation in the regional transportation planning process overseen by the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization.

POLICY 7.1.3: Conduct ongoing coordination with NCDOT on planned projects, project scoping, funding and design.

STRATEGY: Assist in communicating upcoming and ongoing transportation projects with Mills River stakeholders.

STRATEGY: Assess the feasibility of establishing a transportation department within the Town for the purposes of owning and maintaining roads.

OBJECTIVE 7.2: Context Appropriate Design and System of Multimodal Facilities

POLICY 7.2.1: Define context areas that are rural, neighborhood-oriented, commercial and industrial.

POLICY 7.2.2: Specify what types of transportation facilities are desired for each context area.

POLICY 7.2.3: Encourage transportation facility design strategies appropriate for each context area.

STRATEGY: Document context areas, facility types and roadway design strategies in a transportation policy map and set of guidelines for all modes of transportation and facility types.

STRATEGY: Consider seeking Bicycle Friendly Community designation.

OBJECTIVE 7.3: Standards for Roadway Design and Minimum Requirements

POLICY 7.3.1: Maintain standards for new roads built in conjunction with land development.

POLICY 7.3.2: Coordinate standards development with NCDOT roadway standards and typical sections.

POLICY 7.3.3: Ensure roadway right-of-way standards for new roads are met at the time of property subdivision.

STRATEGY: Update standards in the Code of Ordinance to include minimum standards for public and private use including right-of-way, travel way width, and materials.

OBJECTIVE 7.4: Complete, Connected and Safe Roadway Network

POLICY 7.4.1: Administer parking standards for commercial, industrial and residential development.

POLICY 7.4.2: Ensure road and access drive connectivity between and among commercial development that fronts major roads.

POLICY 7.4.3: Optimize the safe functioning of the transportation network through the provision of facilities, geometric design, traffic control and signs and markings.

POLICY 7.4.4: Provide pedestrian paths connecting sidewalks in the right-of-way to building entrances.

STRATEGY 7.4.5: Use available crash data to identify intersections with potential safety issues and recommend strategies to improve conditions.

OBJECTIVE 7.5: Transportation Facilities Mitigating the Impact of New Development

POLICY 7.5.1: Specify conditions where new development projects require traffic impact analysis in conjunction with development review process.

POLICY 7.5.2: Maintain guidance on the methods and assumptions required for traffic impact analysis.

POLICY 7.5.3: Coordinate mitigation measures for transportation impacts identified by the Town with NCDOT and other stakeholders.

STRATEGY: Identify and document in Code of Ordinances conditions under which a traffic impact analysis needs to be prepared in conjunction with new development.

STRATEGY: Define required methods and methodological assumptions for conducting traffic impact analysis.

STRATEGY: Propose mitigation strategies for project-related demand that address safety, traffic and the need for multimodal facilities.

OBJECTIVE 7.6: Transportation Funding Initiatives

POLICY 7.6.1: Assist in identifying priorities in partner transportation agency plans and processes.

POLICY 7.6.2: Identify, set aside and prioritize Town funds for use in building and maintaining transportation infrastructure not otherwise funded through state, federal or regional initiatives.

LAND USE VISION MAP

The Land Use Vision map establishes a framework for shaping future development patterns in the Town of Mills River. The map is a policy tool that is used in formulating land development regulations, making current planning decisions, and prioritizing public investments. As the Town works to approve, incentivize or discourage particular types of development in different areas, the map will be used as a guide for decision making.

The land use vision map is not a regulatory map. The zoning categories in the Code of Ordinances dictate the allowable uses and specific development regulations that apply to each development proposal. As the Code of Ordinances is maintained and updated, the underlying zoning district and other zoning ordinance regulations should align as closely as possible to the categories in the land use vision map.

LAND USE VISION MAP CATEGORIES

The Land Use Vision map includes the following land use categories.

Commercial Crossroads

These areas are intended to promote retail and services in the rural area of Mills River that is south on Boylston Highway.

Community Center

This category is to promote a mix of uses to include commercial, residential, industrial and agricultural. Residential types can include single family and multifamily development.

Industrial and Employment

These areas are intended to be reserved for non-residential, employment-oriented uses. Uses will include larger operations such as light industry, warehousing and logistics.

Mixed Residential

Single family development, low density multifamily development and neighborhood-oriented uses and businesses are encouraged in these areas.

Rural Residential

This category emphasizes maintaining the rural character of the community. Development will include a mix of agricultural uses, rural homesteads, low density single family development, and low intensity employment uses.

LAND USES BY CATEGORY

Each category in the Land Use Vision has specific land uses that should be promoted, allowed or discouraged. The following priorities apply to each category.

	Desirable	Acceptable	Not Desirable
Community Crossroads	Retail; Services	Civic and Community; Parks and Public Space; Trails and Recreation; Schools; Restaurants; Agriculture	Residential
Community Center	Civic and Community; Parks and Public Space; Trails and Recreation; Schools; Retail; Restaurants; Office; Duplexes; Townhomes; Apartments	Services; Institutional; Agriculture	Industrial; Estate Lots
Industrial and Employment	Light Industry; Office	Heavy Industry; Utilities; Services; Trails and Recreation	Residential; Civic and Community; Parks and Public Space; Schools; Retail; Restaurants; Agriculture
Mixed Residential	Parks and Public Space; Trails and Recreation; Schools; Single Family Residential; Duplexes	Civic and Community; Institutional; Retail; Restaurants; Office; Townhomes; Estate Lots; Agriculture	Industrial; Services; Apartments
Rural Residential	Parks and Public Space; Trails and Recreation; Agriculture; Estate Lots	Civic and Community; Schools; Single Family Residential	Industrial; Commercial; Multifamily

EXISTING LAND USE

The Town maintains an Existing Land Use map with categories of residential development, agricultural land, commercial, civic/public and vacant land. This map is included for reference and changes to the map will be tracked for the purposes of reporting the performance metrics associated with the Plan.

CONSERVATION MAPS

The Town has identified flood prone areas, areas around creeks and streams, and other natural and agricultural areas that should be protected from development. The following maps are included for reference and for use in implementing the policies and strategies of the Comprehensive Plan:

- Flood Zones
- Watershed Protection Areas
- Topography and Slopes
- Soils

Conservation Overlay

One potential implementation tool for addressing conservation goals is the creation of a conservation overlay in the Code of Ordinances. The function of a conservation overlay would be to regulate development so that it does not directly and adversely impact natural systems or agricultural operations. Specific policies will be considered after the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. Those include, but may not be limited to stream buffers, limiting development in flood prone areas, limiting development and land disturbance in areas of steep slopes, employing erosion control measures, managing stormwater through site design, and protecting critical habitats.