

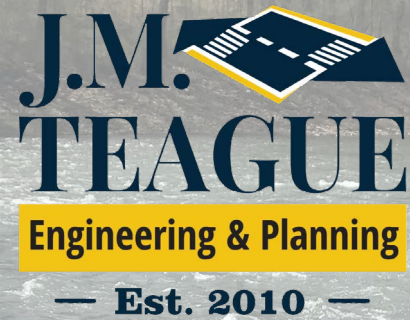
Town of Murphy 2042 Comprehensive Plan



Adopted June 30, 2022

Prepared in 2021-2022 for the
Town of Murphy, North Carolina

by J.M. Teague Engineering & Planning



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TABLE of CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Introduction.....1

Chapter 2: Town Profile.....7

Chapter 3: Community Engagement & Plan Vision.....51

Chapter 4: Future Land Use.....69

Chapter 5: Recommendations.....93

Appendix.....117

LIST of FIGURES

Figure 1) Murphy 15 Mile Radius.....12

Figure 2) Murphy & Cherokee County Population (2010/2020).....13

Figure 3) Population Percentage Change per Decade (1980-2020).....13

Figure 4) Murphy Age Groups.....14

Figure 5) Murphy Male & Female Populations.....14

Figure 6) Murphy Race & Ethnicity.....15

Figure 7) Median Income.....15

Figure 8) Percentage of the Population with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher.....15

Figure 9) Cost-Burdened Households.....16

Figure 10) Average Annual Salaries in NC.....17

Figure 11) Murphy Employment Sectors.....17

Figure 12) Cherokee County Major Employers.....18

Figure 13) Murphy Zoning Districts.....20

Figure 14) Murphy Publicly Owned Parcels.....21

Figure 15) Murphy Topography.....22

Figure 16) Murphy Flood Zones.....23

Figure 17) Cherokee County Commute Patterns.....26

Figure 18) Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT).....27

Figure 19) Murphy Existing Sidewalks & Greenways.....30

Figure 20) Murphy Sewer Infrastructure.....33

Figure 21) Murphy Water Infrastructure.....34

Figure 22) Cherokee County Solid Waste Convenience Centers.....36

Figure 23) Murphy River Walk & Canoe Trails Map.....38

Figure 24) Murphy Open Space.....40

Figure 25) Employment Areas in Cherokee County.....42

Figure 26) Southern Blue Ridge Bike Plan Bicycle Routes (Murphy).....43

LIST of FIGURES, CONT'D

Figure 27) Cherokee County CTP Roadway Recommendations in Murphy.....47

Figure 28) Cherokee County CTP Bicycle Recommendations in Murphy.....47

Figure 29) Cherokee County CTP Pedestrian Recommendations in Murphy.....48

Figure 30) Cherokee County CTP Transit Recommendations in Murphy.....48

Figure 31) Cherokee County Structure Density per Acre.....49

Figure 32) Town of Murphy Website Screen Grab (Comprehensive Plan Update).....53

Figure 33) Online Mapping Tool Comments.....56

Figure 34) Future Land Use Map "Ingredients"71

Figure 35) Future Land Use Map Character Areas.....72

Figure 36) Future Land Use Map (Residential Community).....74

Figure 37) Future Land Use Map (Residential Neighborhood).....76

Figure 38) Future Land Use Map (Town Center).....78

Figure 39) Future Land Use Map (Town Edge).....80

Figure 40) Future Land Use Map (Transitional Mixed Use).....82

Figure 41) Future Land Use Map (River Mixed Use).....84

Figure 42) Future Land Use Map (Corridor Development).....86

Figure 43) Future Land Use Map (Parks & Open Space).....88

Figure 44) Future Land Use Map (Preserved Land).....90

Figure 45) Murphy Future Land Use Map.....91

Figure 46) Recommendations Table.....96

Figure 47) Downtown District Expansion.....98

Figure 48) Types of Accessory Dwelling Unit.....99

Figure 49) Fort Butler Future Land Use.....100

Figure 50) Parking Occupancy Map Example.....103

Figure 51) Valley River Rail Trail Corridor.....107

Figure 52) Valley River Rail Trail Rendering.....108

Figure 53) Future River Mixed Use.....110



Traffic and development on Andrews Road



Chapter 1:
Introduction



Flowers downtown





PLAN PURPOSE

The Town of Murphy’s first Comprehensive Plan results from a collaborative process among Town staff, the project’s Steering Committee, stakeholders, the general public, and project consultants. This Plan builds on previous planning efforts with a refined vision for the future of Murphy at the forefront. It provides policy guidance for land use, transportation, infrastructure, recreation, natural and cultural resources, and other quality of life aspects for residents, serving as the principal planning document for the Town.

Murphy’s 2042 Comprehensive Plan should be used to guide zoning ordinance updates, influence development approvals, support capital investment planning, inform private development decisions, and guide other priorities for the town. It establishes a shared, long-range vision for the Murphy community with goals, objectives, and implementation strategies that have been developed to support that vision. It is intended to be flexible, and it should be updated and amended as appropriate. This Plan is not legally binding, though it does satisfy the requirements under North Carolina General Statutes Chapter 160D for a municipality to maintain a current comprehensive plan in order to retain authority to enforce zoning and development regulations. It also includes the production of Murphy’s first Future Land Use Map to be used in guiding zoning and other land use decisions in a manner that is compatible with the vision for the Town of Murphy. *Murphy’s 2042 Comprehensive Plan* organizes decision-making factors for a variety of challenges, ensures that a plan is in place to justify those decisions and offers reasoning and forethought behind legislative actions and development approval for the next 10-20 years.



Build a unified long-range vision for Murphy



Anticipate future challenge areas



Manage growth
Balance interests
Preserve quality of life



Guide land use, zoning, and policy decisions

PLAN GOALS

- To create a long-range vision for Murphy;
- To address current problems and anticipate future issues;
- To manage Murphy’s growth so that future development is compatible with the Town’s existing character;
- To balance the many interests of Murphy’s residents, business owners, merchants and stakeholders;
- To leverage Murphy’s location for economic development opportunities;
- To sustain a high quality of life for Murphy’s residents;
- To guide land use, zoning, and policy decisions.

PLAN STRUCTURE

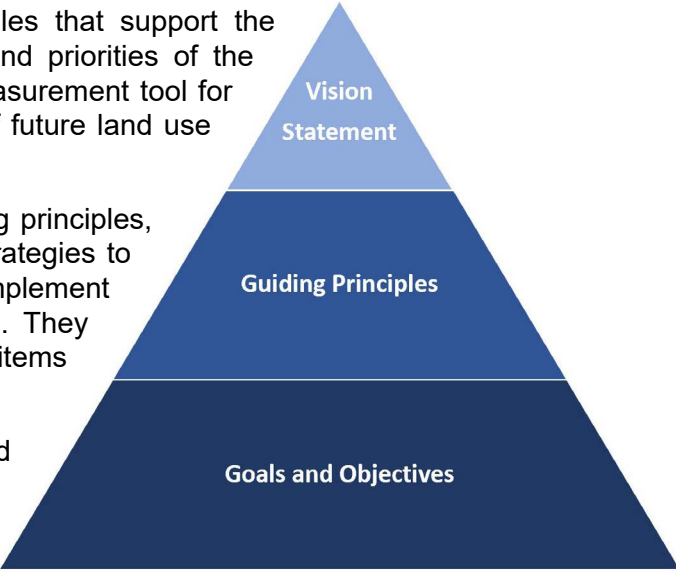
A guiding vision complemented by community-driven goals is central to the development of a meaningful, accessible comprehensive plan. This Plan solidifies a Town-affirmed Vision Statement that describes how the Murphy community wants the town to look, feel, and function in 2042. The Vision Statement is overarching and provides the "30,000 feet" high-level view.



Next, the project team developed Guiding Principles that support the identified vision and define the land use values and priorities of the community. These principles act as an ongoing measurement tool for evaluating the appropriateness and effectiveness of future land use changes and developments.

Goals and objectives build off the vision and guiding principles, identifying specific purpose-driven directives and strategies to move them forward. They provide the direction to help implement the Town’s Comprehensive Plan recommendations. They are more concrete and tangible policy and action items related to each of the Plan’s focus areas.

The vision, guiding principles, and goals and objectives work together to urge Murphy forward into a sustainable future built upon a strong foundation and community support.



Vision Statement

"Murphy is a small mountain town with a strong, vibrant population that cherishes community, embraces the natural beauty that surrounds it, supports and encourages the success of local industry, and fosters artistic creativity."

Guiding Principles

1. Maintain and accentuate the distinct character of Murphy’s historic downtown.
2. Protect and enhance Murphy’s unique natural resources and defining mountain landscapes.
3. Encourage new and creative housing opportunities that meet the needs of multiple generations.
4. Provide high quality of life supported by updated infrastructure and the efficient and effective delivery of public services.
5. Support and sustain an economy that promotes local commerce, tourism, cultural opportunities, and outdoor recreation.
6. Develop a comprehensive, safe, and well-functioning transportation network that accommodates various modes of travel, including walking, biking, and transit.
7. Establish Murphy as a regional destination and focal point for outdoor recreation.





PLAN PROCESS & TIMELINE

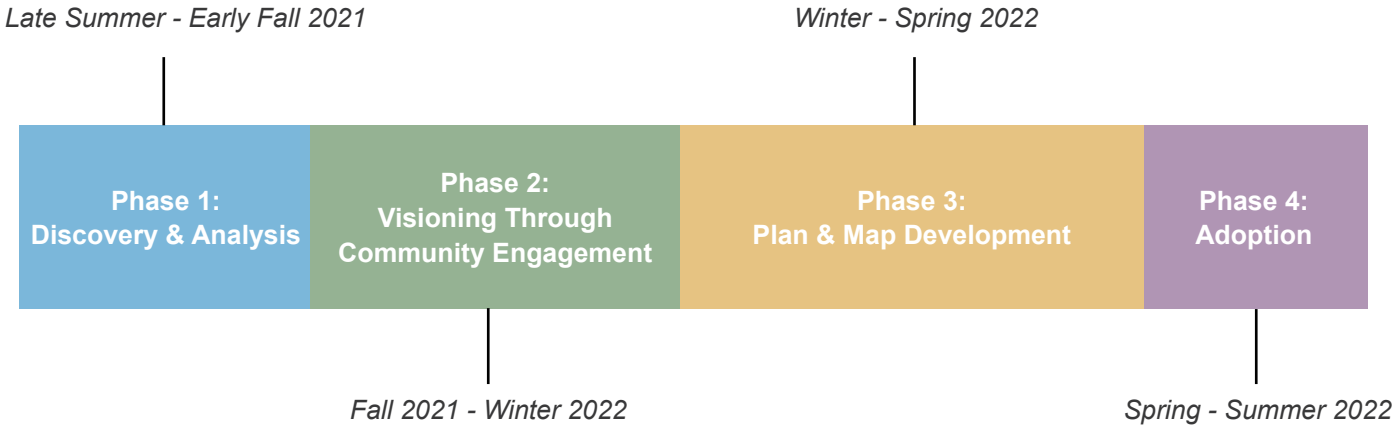
The *Murphy 2042 Comprehensive Plan* was developed over a year-long process through a four-phase process that elicited collaboration between Town staff, Town Council, the Town Planning Board, and community stakeholders.

Over the timeframe of this planning process, the project team conducted demographic research, spatial analysis through various mapping exercises, and a review of previous planning documents. To create a vision for Murphy’s future, the team sought input from stakeholders through extensive community engagement.

Components of public engagement included:

- » Stakeholder Focus Groups
- » 988 Community Survey Responses
- » Descriptive Posterboards at Town Hall
- » Three Steering Committee Meetings

“A good planning process is focused on land use planning, grounded in key data for current conditions and trends, guided by authentic community input, informed by planning best practices, and aligned with practical implementation strategies. Through that process and with an adopted plan, a local government can engage citizens in policy-making, wisely invest public dollars, guide development decisions, qualify for certain grants and government funding, and more.”
- UNC School of Government



With guidance and direction from the Steering Committee, the project team distilled survey responses and community input to identify recommendations for each of the Plan's focus areas. This collaborative planning process builds on past planning efforts and an assessment of existing conditions, resulting in a Comprehensive Plan that contains strategies to guide land use regulations, promote economic development, and direct municipal services.

The *Murphy 2042 Comprehensive Plan* was adopted by the Town Council on June 30, 2022.



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The pedestrian bridge at Murphy River Walk



**Chapter 2:
Town Profile**



Train at the L&N Depot



HISTORY, CHARACTER & REGIONAL CONTEXT

The Town of Murphy is nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains, and the Valley River and Hiwassee River converge a few blocks north of downtown. Murphy, named after North Carolina attorney, jurist, and politician Archibald Murphey, occupies 2.5 square miles in the southeastern part of Cherokee County. It is comparable in size and population to the Town of Andrews, North Carolina, which is the only other incorporated municipality in Cherokee County. Today, Cherokee County is mostly comprised of rural communities, tracts of land owned by the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) and public lands. The Town of Murphy serves as the county seat of Cherokee County and is the westernmost municipality in the state.

Murphy and the surrounding region are rich in natural resources, agriculture, and indigenous history. The Town's origins date back to the 1830s, but the Cherokee Nation has lived and worked the land for thousands of years, with the site of Murphy originally known to the Cherokee as *Tlanusi-yi*, named for "The Leech Place" - a local legend about a giant leech named Tlanusi that lived at the confluence of Valley and Hiwassee Rivers.

The Unicoi Turnpike, which runs through Murphy, extended through the *Tlanusi-yi* area into eastern Tennessee as a footpath established by Native Americans for trading and transportation, connecting the Cherokee lands east of the mountains with what were known to European colonists as the "Overhill Towns" of Tennessee, as well as other lands in Georgia and South Carolina.

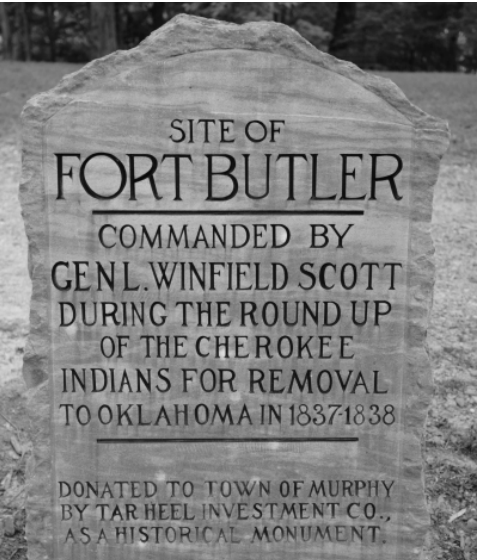
In 1836, the United States Army constructed Fort Butler in present-day Murphy, which served as a significant internment site during the Trail of Tears, whereby the United States government forcibly removed one of the most densely settled areas of the Cherokee Nation from their lands. From there, the Cherokee were taken over the mountains on the Unicoi Turnpike to the main internment camps near Charleston, Tennessee, and their forcible removal to territory west of the Mississippi River. There are no visible remains of Fort Butler, but the site can be visited and historical markers provide facts and interpretation about its history. In addition, the Cherokee County Historical Museum, located in Murphy, provides information about the Trail of Tears.



Murphy in 1938.



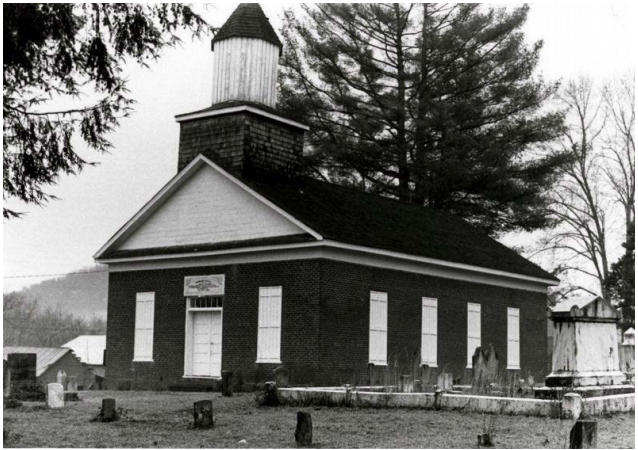
Archibald Debow Murphey.



The Fort Butler Memorial.



The Cherokee County Courthouse.



The Harshaw Chapel and cemetery.

Murphy became the county seat of Cherokee County in 1851. Around that time, Texana "Texas" McClelland and her family established the Texana Community just north of and adjacent to Murphy Town limits. Texana continued to grow as a self-sufficient African American community with thriving businesses. Other nearby smaller unincorporated communities such as Peachtree and Hanging Dog also contribute to the rich local history.

Architect James Baldwin designed the Cherokee County Courthouse, located in downtown Murphy, in a Beaux-Arts style. Built in 1927, it is faced with locally sourced blue marble and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, along with the Robert Lafayette Cooper House and Harshaw Chapel and Cemetery. The county has had multiple prior courthouses; all burned down or were replaced by improved versions. The first court sessions in the county were held at Fort Butler.

The Railroad

Murphy emerged as a prominent location in rail line service in the mid- to late-1800s, serving as the terminus of two train lines. The Mineral Bluff spur line (L&N Railroad) came from North Georgia and the Murphy Branch (Southern Railroad) came from Asheville.

Originally constructed in the 1880s, the Murphy Branch proved to be a popular passenger line, particularly around the turn of the 19th century. Four trains ran from Asheville to Murphy each day during this time period. Passenger rail between Asheville and Murphy became less attractive to travelers over the course of the early 20th century and freight traffic peaked in the 1940s. While the tracks for the Murphy Branch remain today, this line has been idle since the mid-1990s, when the Great Smoky Mountain Railroad discontinued service between Murphy and Andrews. The last train to leave out of Murphy was a trip to Andrews over the July 4 weekend of 1992.

Following the discontinuation of freight traffic on the line, the State of North Carolina purchased the stretch of track between Dillsboro and Murphy to forestall the



The gated trestle on the Murphy Branch railway.

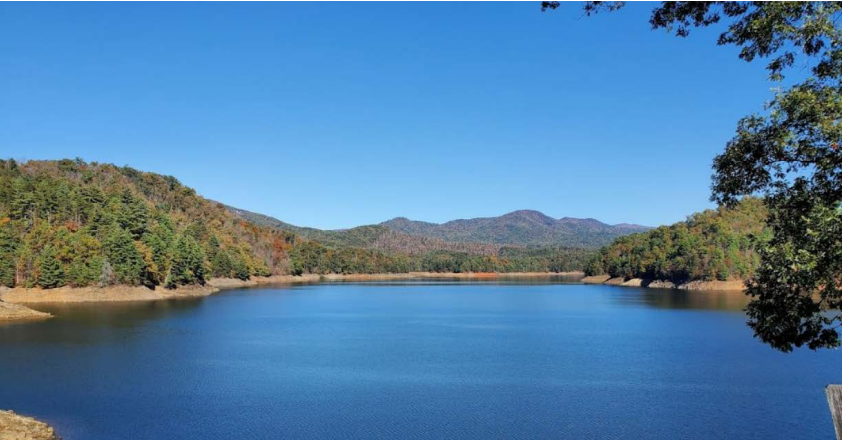


The L&N Depot remains a historical landmark in Murphy.

removal of the track and has commissioned studies to assess viability for reactivation or repurposing into a greenway trail.

The L&N (Louisville & Nashville Railroad, originally the Georgia Railroad) line was removed in the mid-1980s and the station was torn down shortly thereafter. The L&N Depot, located near downtown Murphy on the river, is now owned by the Town of Murphy and is used as a venue for special events. The space is available to the public to rent.

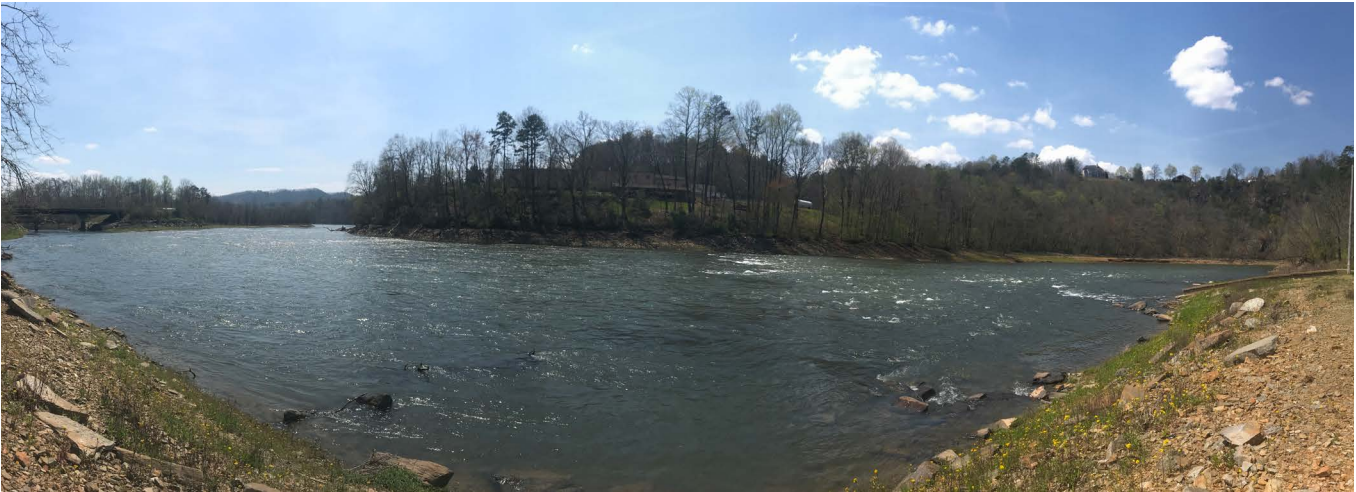
TVA Dams & the Rivers



TVA's Hiwassee Dam and Hiwassee Lake.

The advent of hydroelectric power brought the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) to Murphy early on, impacting the economy, demographics, and landscape of this area dramatically. Farmers and other early settlers were relocated to make way for the Hiwassee Dam and its flooding of the reservoirs. Constructing the dam and another on the North Carolina/Tennessee state line created what is now Lake Hiwassee and Lake Apalachia. This was the beginning of the end of an agricultural based economy, forcing the population to find other work that would pay for the new modern conveniences of electrical power and automobiles.

The Hiwassee Dam is 307 feet high and stretches 1,287 feet across the Hiwassee River. Surrounded by the Nantahala and Cherokee National Forests, the Hiwassee Reservoir serves as a rich habitat for deer, wild turkey, and other animals.



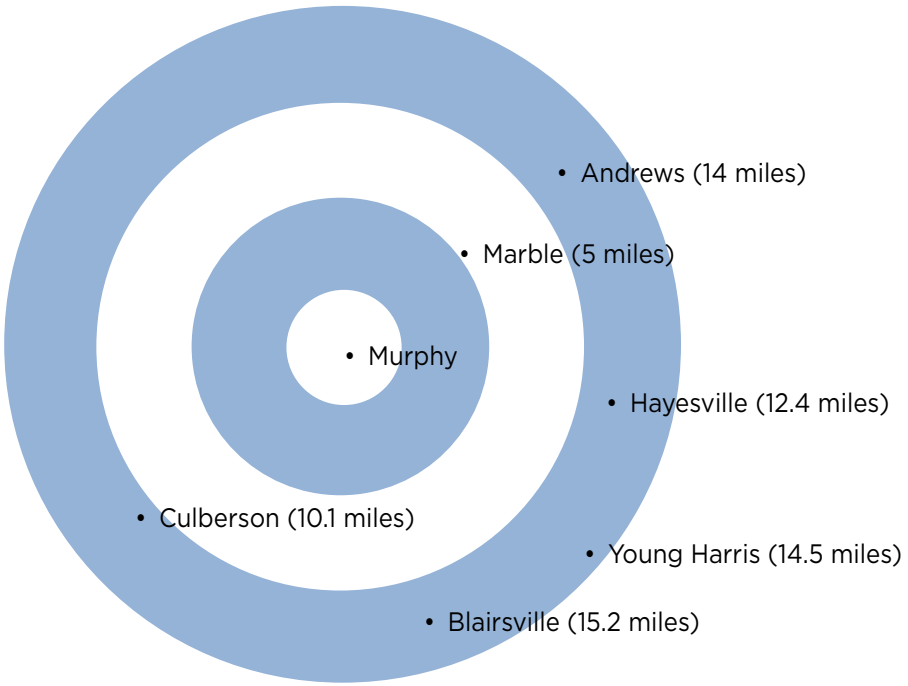
The Hiwassee Reservoir is well suited for canoeing, boating, and learning the basics of whitewater rafting. The flow of water in the reservoir comes from deep below the surface and is chilly, even in the summer. In a year with normal rainfall, the water level in Hiwassee Reservoir varies about 43 feet from summer to winter to provide seasonal flood storage.

It is immediately upstream from Apalachia Reservoir, which features a day-use park that provides access to boating, fishing and paths for exploring the Hiwassee Reservoir and its tributaries.

Regional Context

Murphy's geographical location has helped the community retain its rural, small-town character. It is strategically located at the crossroads of US 19, US 64 and US 74, providing direct and well-maintained access routes eastward through the state as well as southward into Georgia and westward into Tennessee. The ability to reach Murphy from major cities like Knoxville, Chattanooga, and Atlanta within several hours has made it a popular tourism destination for outdoor recreation and relaxation.

Figure 1) Murphy 15 Mile Radius



Cities and populated areas within an approximate 15-mile radius of Murphy.



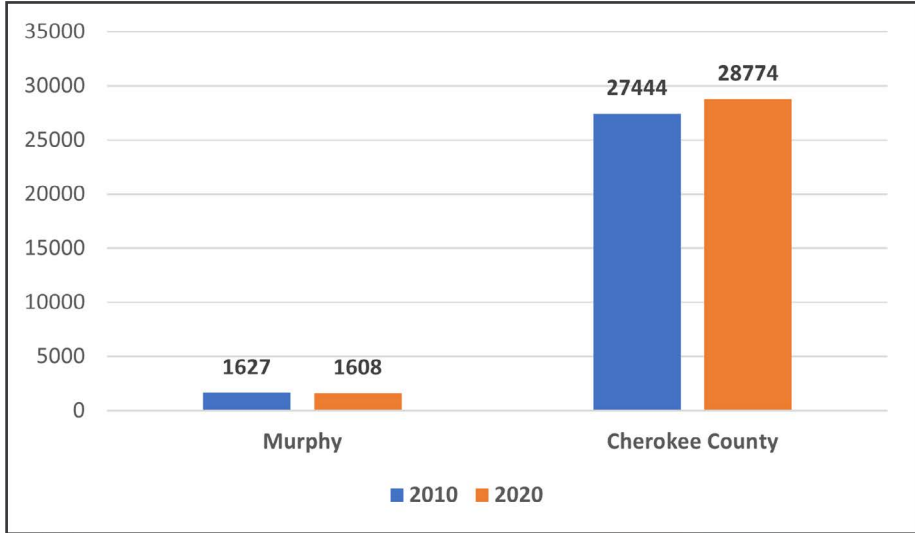
DEMOGRAPHIC & ECONOMIC TRENDS

One of the initial steps in the preparation of Murphy's Comprehensive Plan is the assessment of existing conditions, natural features, infrastructure, and demographics. Before identifying goals for Murphy's future, we must understand the Town and its community as it is today while acknowledging present day is a product of the past. This section provides an overview of relevant demographic and socio-economic data to establish a baseline of existing conditions and identify trends that will affect the community and future growth patterns. The data in this section are from the U.S. Census: the Decennial Censuses through 2020, the American Community Survey (ACS) 2019 and 2015-2019 estimates, and the U.S. Census On The Map Program.

Population

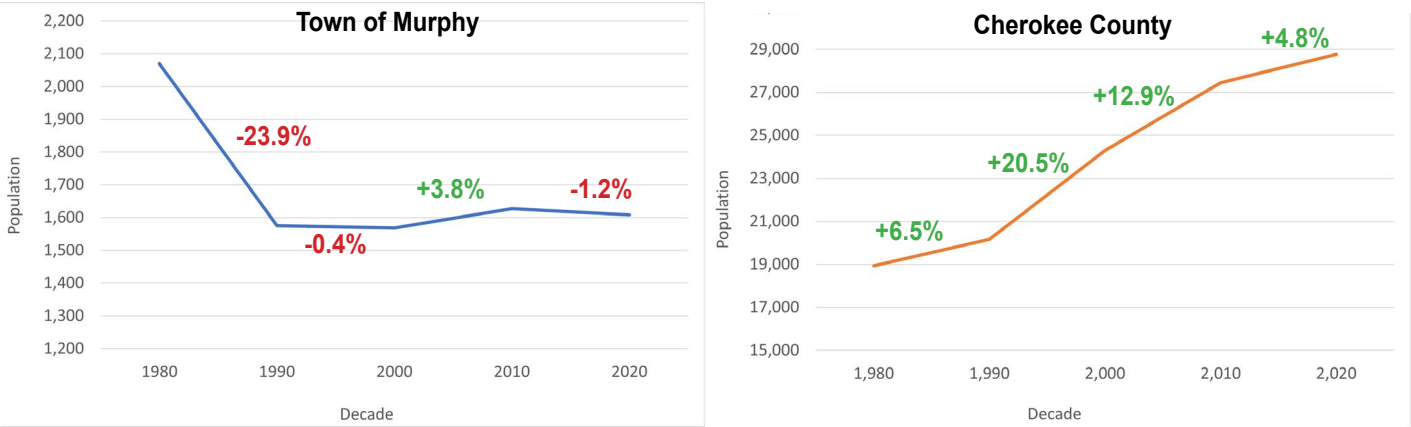
The U.S. Census reports Murphy's 2020 population as **1,608**. This number indicates a slight decrease of approximately 1.2 percent in Murphy's population of **1,627** as reported in 2010. Conversely, Cherokee County increased in population between 2010 and 2020 by approximately 4.8 percent from **27,444** to **28,774**. It is difficult to project growth with the uncertainties such as global pandemics, climate change migration, economic and market factors.

Figure 2) Murphy & Cherokee County Population (2010/2020)



Between 1980 and 1990, Murphy lost nearly a quarter of its population. Since then, population growth across decades has been slow. Murphy saw the largest increase in population between 2000 and 2010; however, the town experienced overall population loss between 2010 and 2020. Meanwhile, Cherokee County has continued to experience an increase in population from decade to decade since at least 1980. The biggest increase occurred between 1990 and 2000 when its population increased by more than 20 percent.

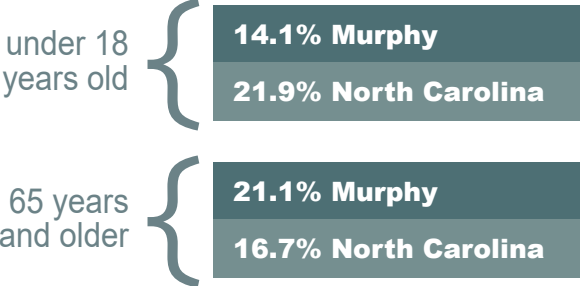
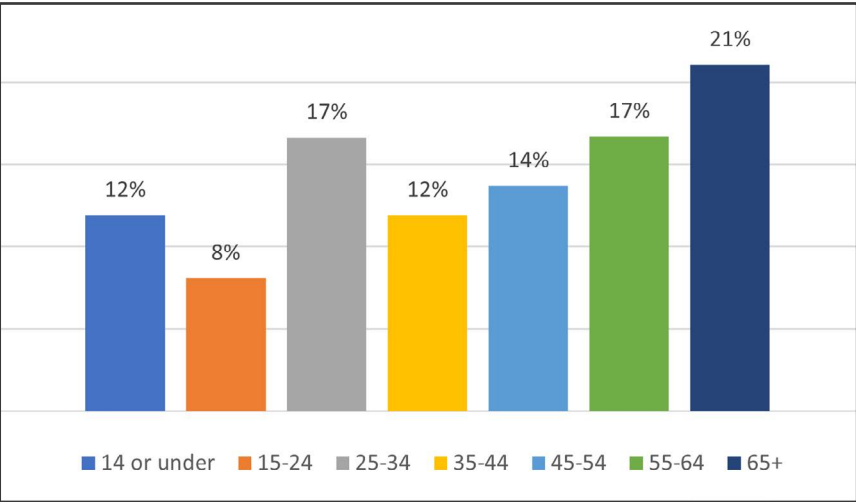
Figure 3) Population Percentage Change per Decade (1980-2020)



Community Composition

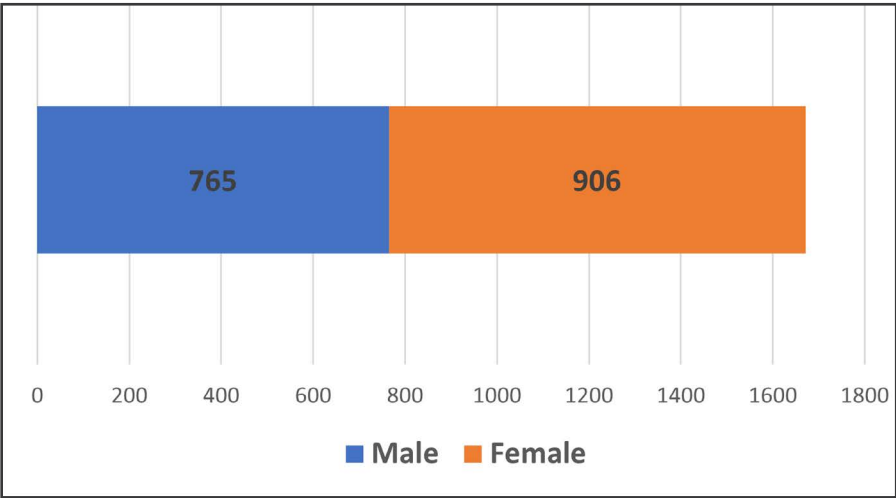
Murphy's population trends relatively older, with its two largest age groups of 55-64 years old and 65+ years old representing 38 percent of the total population. Not suprisingly, the median age of Murphy residents (46.1 years old) is older than the statewide median age (39.1 years old); however, it is younger than Cherokee County's median age (51.5 years old). Murphy is also comprised of fewer children and more seniors as a share of the population compared to the overall statewide population. This data aligns with the trend of retirees and older adults moving to the area and is a significant factor in planning for the Town's future.

Figure 4) Murphy Age Groups



38% of Murphy residents are 55 years old or older.

Figure 5) Murphy Male & Female Populations

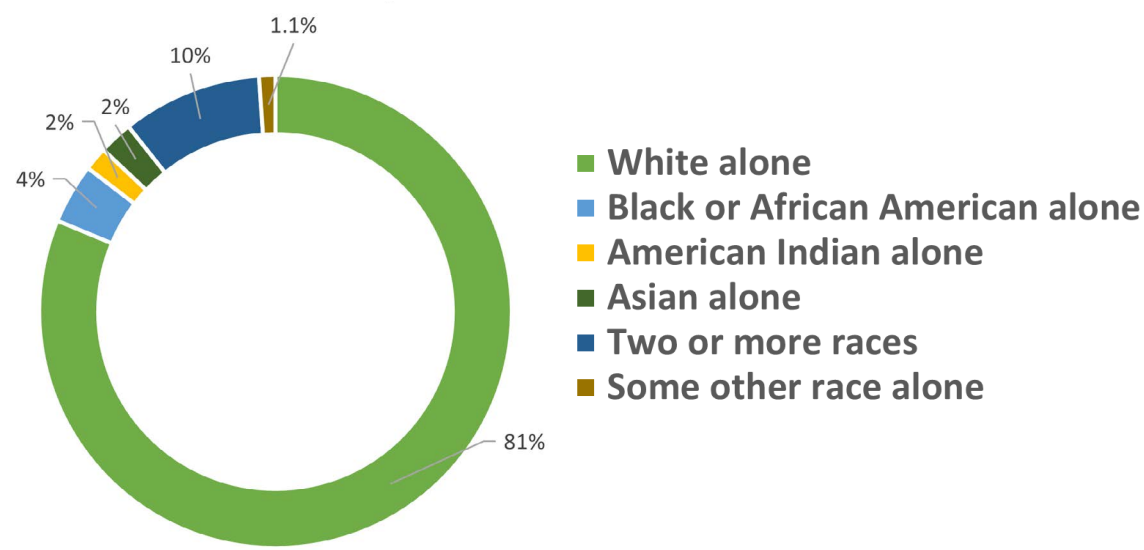


46% MALE

54% FEMALE

The racial and ethnic diversity of Murphy's residents is similar to other small, rural western North Carolina communities and less diverse than the overall state population. Individuals identifying as *white alone* account for 81 percent of the Town's population. Forty-three individuals identified as *Hispanic or Latino (of any race)* in the 2020 U.S. Census.

Figure 6) Murphy Race & Ethnicity



Income & Earnings

The median household income in Murphy is \$30,962, more than \$10,000 lower than the median income for Cherokee County (\$41,438) and just over half the median income across the state of North Carolina (\$57,341). A closer look at these numbers for Murphy reveals that median income for those living in *Nonfamily households* - either a householder living alone or where the householder shares the home exclusively with people to whom he/she is not related - had a median income of just \$17,500. *Married-couple families* had a median income of \$55,694 which is much closer to the state median. Of Murphy's total population, 27.5 percent are classified as living in poverty. Nearly 37 percent of children in Murphy live in poverty.

Educational Attainment

Educational attainment can be an indicator of household income and earnings. For Murphy residents ages 25 years and older, 25.3 percent have a Bachelor's degree or higher. This is a higher percentage than Cherokee County residents (19 percent) but a lower percentage than the state of North Carolina (32.3 percent).

Approximately 61 percent of residents 25 years and older have some level of college participation, even if no degree was earned, and 89.4 percent have graduated high school.

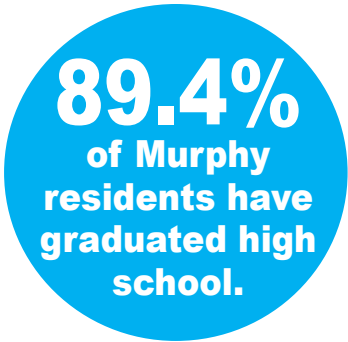


Figure 7) Median Income

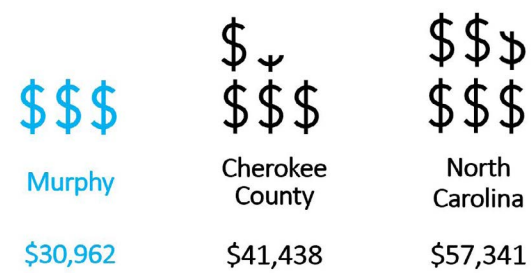
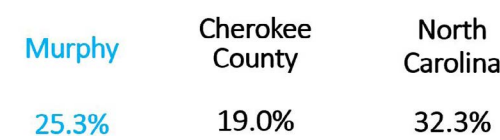


Figure 8) Percentage of the Population with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher



Housing

Murphy has a total of 774 occupied housing units out of 977 total units, equaling a 76 percent occupancy rate. Of the 774 occupied units, 53 percent (410) are *renter-occupied* and 47 percent (364) are *owner-occupied*. Cherokee County has a much higher rate of owner-occupied units (71 percent) compared with renter-occupied units (29 percent).

More than three quarters of Murphy's housing stock is single unit (attached, detached or mobile home). Murphy's housing stock is also aging. Relatively few new housing units have been constructed since 2014, and approximately 74 percent of existing housing stock is more than 40 years old. High occupancy coupled with low rates of construction and an overall aging housing stock can signal a lack of quality available inventory.

In Murphy, 54 percent of renters and 18 percent of homeowners are cost-burdened by their housing, meaning they pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing. This data also suggests that housing affordability is a significant concern for Murphy residents.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development defines cost-burdened families as those "who pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing" and "may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation, and medical care." Severe rent burden is defined as paying more than 50 percent of one's income on rent.

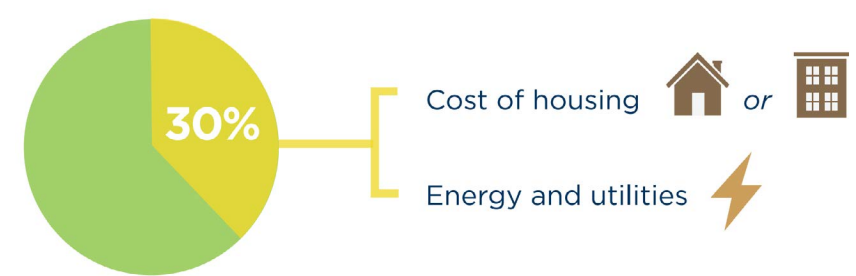


Figure 9) Cost-Burdened Households

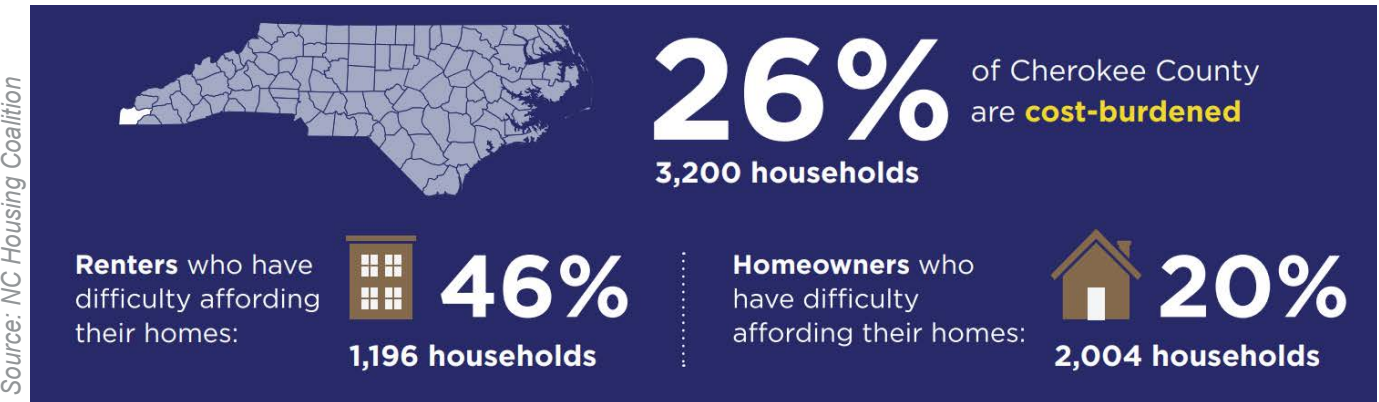
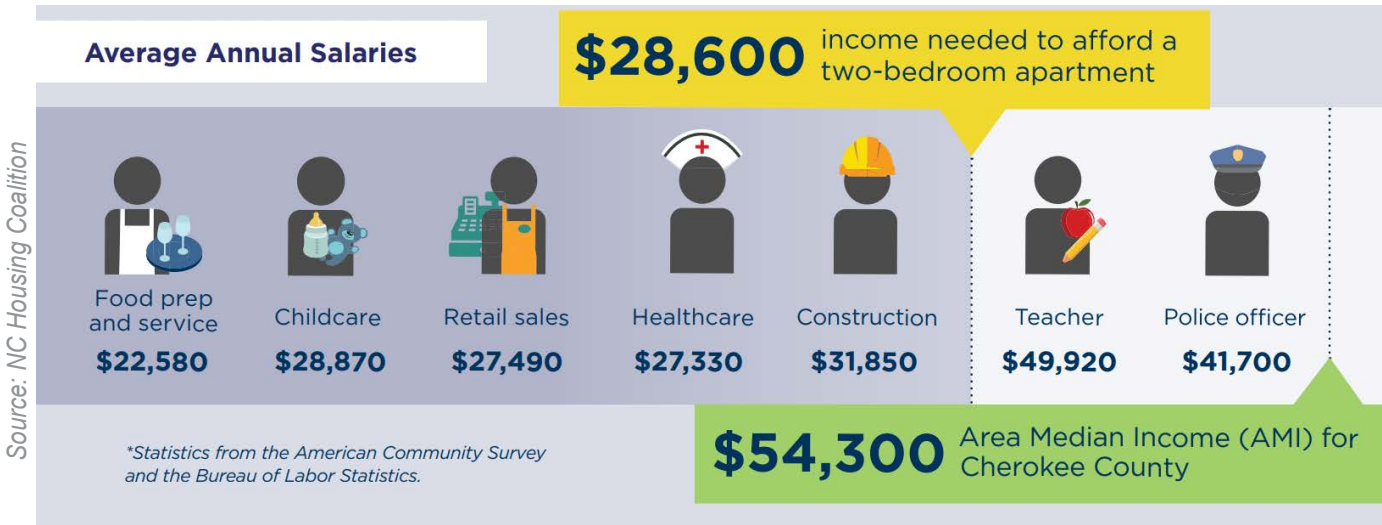


Figure 10) Average Annual Salaries in NC



Employment

Between 2010 and 2018, Murphy experienced an overall loss of 76 jobs. A substantial decrease in jobs associated with Retail Trade occurred - down to 416 jobs in 2018 from 925 jobs in 2010, though it still remains a top employment sector. Public input has also acknowledged this trend, noting that retail outlets now have fewer employees, that the proliferation of online shopping has impacted brick-and-mortar retail, and that Black Friday sales are down significantly for local businesses.

Between 2010 and 2018, Murphy experienced considerable growth in the Accommodation and Food Services, Manufacturing, and Health Care and Social Assistance sectors. Today these four sectors - Retail, Accommodation and Food Services, Manufacturing, and Health Care and Social Assistance - account for 75 percent of the jobs in Murphy. This data supports the notion that Murphy is experiencing an emerging tourism industry and may continue to see growth in hotel development and service industry businesses in all core commercial centers throughout town.

Economic Development

Murphy's acceptance into the NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center's Downtown Associate Community program (DAC) in 2019 provides the Town with available expertise from State staff at the NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center. Murphy can receive downtown revitalization technical assistance services and may have the opportunity to advance to Main Street designation upon successful completion of the program. These efforts will equip the Town with the tools to build a sustainable organizational foundation and conduct strategic economic development planning, which will strengthen Murphy's downtown development efforts.

Figure 11) Murphy Employment Sectors

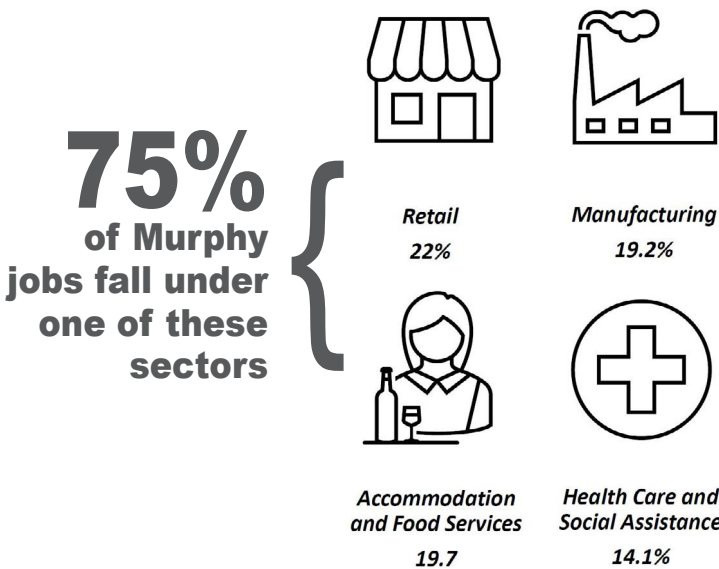
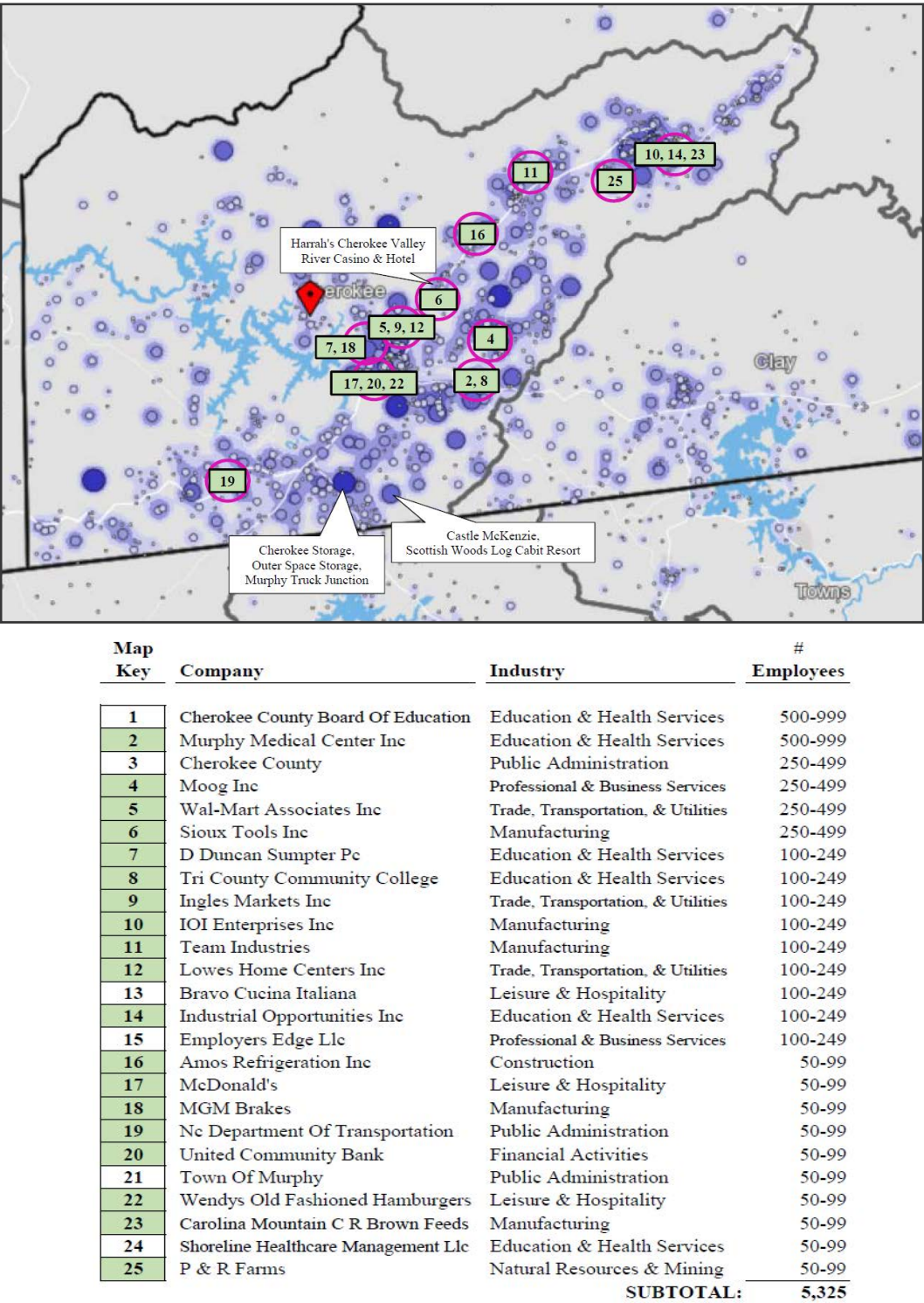


Figure 12) Cherokee County Major Employers



The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians broke ground in 2022 on a \$275 million expansion to the Valley River Casino and Hotel in Murphy. It is expected that the new key features will be a new hotel tower, restaurant, hotel lobby café, spa, and indoor pool. Additional gaming space and more parking would also be added. The expansion would contribute to maintaining competitiveness in the market and makes the Casino one of Murphy's largest employers.

Land Use & Character

Murphy’s town limits encompass a land area of 2.5 square miles. The Town enforces zoning through seven zoning districts:

- F-W (Floodway)
- A-T (Agricultural Transition)
- R-1 (Medium Density Residential)
- R-2 (High Density Residential)
- I-H-C (Industrial/Heavy Commercial)
- H-B (Highway Business)
- G-B (General Business)



Murphy’s walkable downtown, including one of the only 3-story buildings.

Murphy does not have an extraterritorial zoning jurisdiction (ETJ), nor does it have any historic districts or any codified design standards. Murphy’s downtown is an active social and commercial space populated by a mix of office buildings, banks, churches, retail, and restaurants. Many buildings throughout the downtown core are older, two-story structures that contribute to a small-town character and atmosphere. Downtown commercial vacancy rates are low, signaling that the area is experiencing a resurgence. However, there are opportunities for infill redevelopment and for adding a third story for residential use.

Non-residential land use follows a fairly predictable pattern, with the downtown core zoned as the General Business District, while Highway Business and Industrial and Heavy Commercial Districts follow the spines of high-volume transportation corridors. Residential land use is zoned in a more unconventional way, with higher-density residential zones often situated farther away from Murphy’s downtown core compared to medium-density residential.

Single-family housing is highly prevalent in Murphy’s residential areas. Much of the town’s single-family housing is also situated on sizable lots, keeping overall density relatively low. Limited housing stock, low vacancy rates in residential dwellings, and increasing housing prices have contributed to a high need for workforce housing in town and the surrounding areas. The Town adopted its first minimum housing standards in 2019 and updated its standards in 2021. The addition of these standards to the Town’s ordinances has generated valid complaints regarding substandard housing design, and Town staff believes they will contribute to improving the overall quality of Murphy’s housing stock.

Publicly Owned Properties

As the County seat, Murphy is the location for buildings housing County offices and services as well as Town-owned properties and some federally (TVA) owned properties. Most of these properties are well used and maintained but some offer opportunities for redevelopment or development for uses that would benefit the Town and provide opportunities for its residents and visitors. One of the underused properties is the old rock gym, which has been vacant for some time. The building and property should be evaluated to determine the potential for renovation or redevelopment of the property to enhance recreation programs in the Town.



The old Rock Gym near Konehete Park.

Figure 13) Murphy Zoning Districts

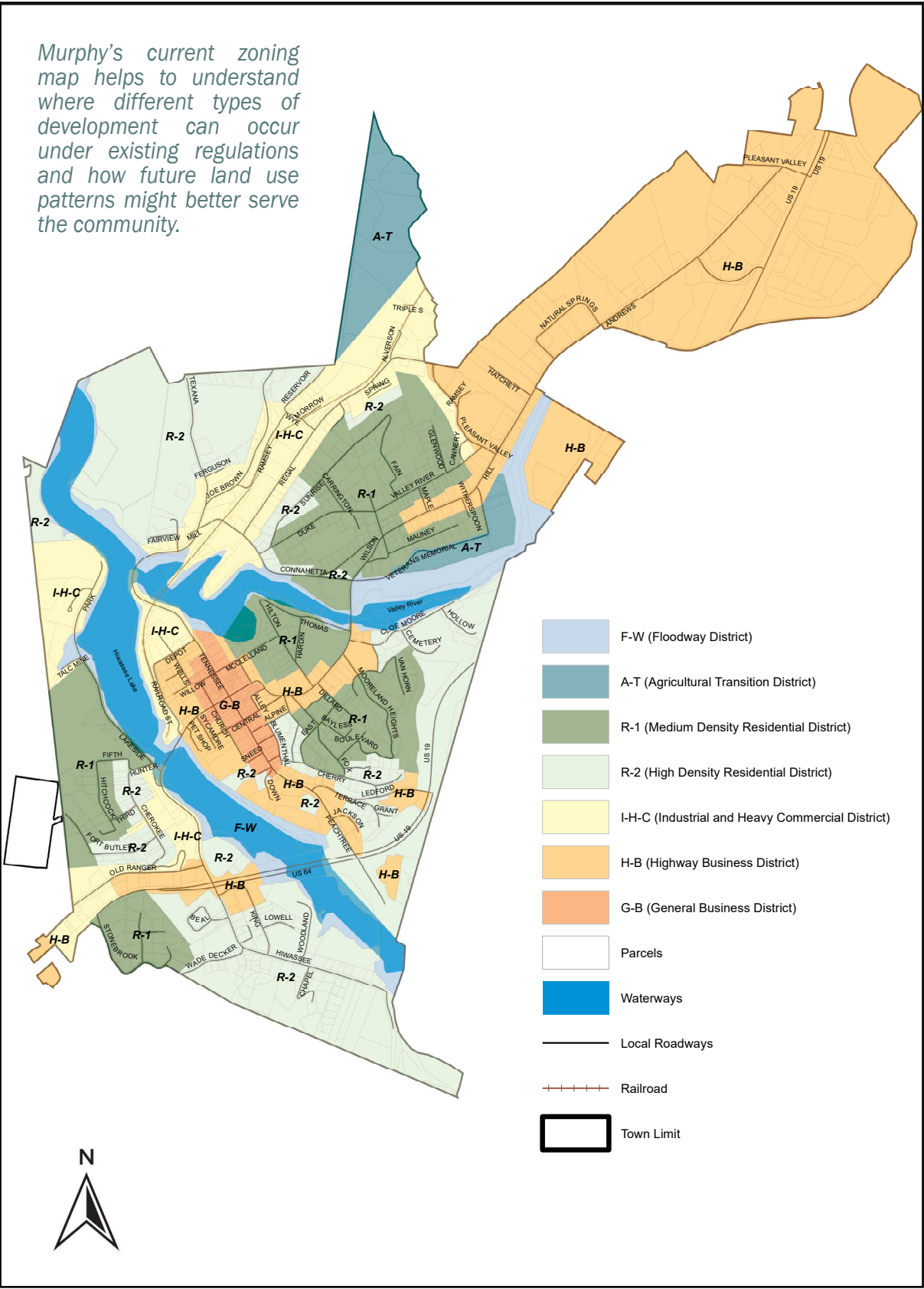




Figure 14) Murphy Publicly Owned Parcels

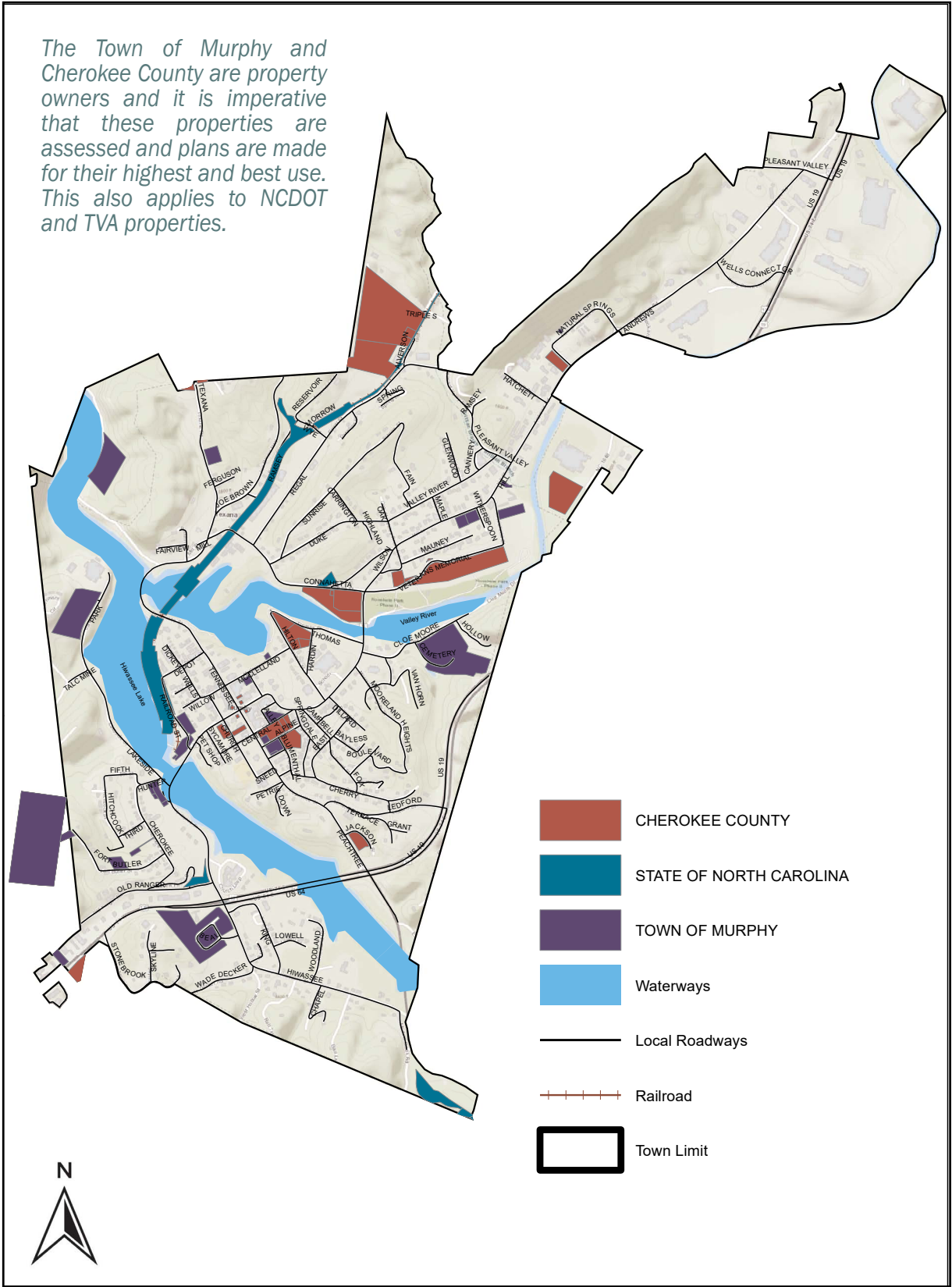


Figure 15) Murphy Topography

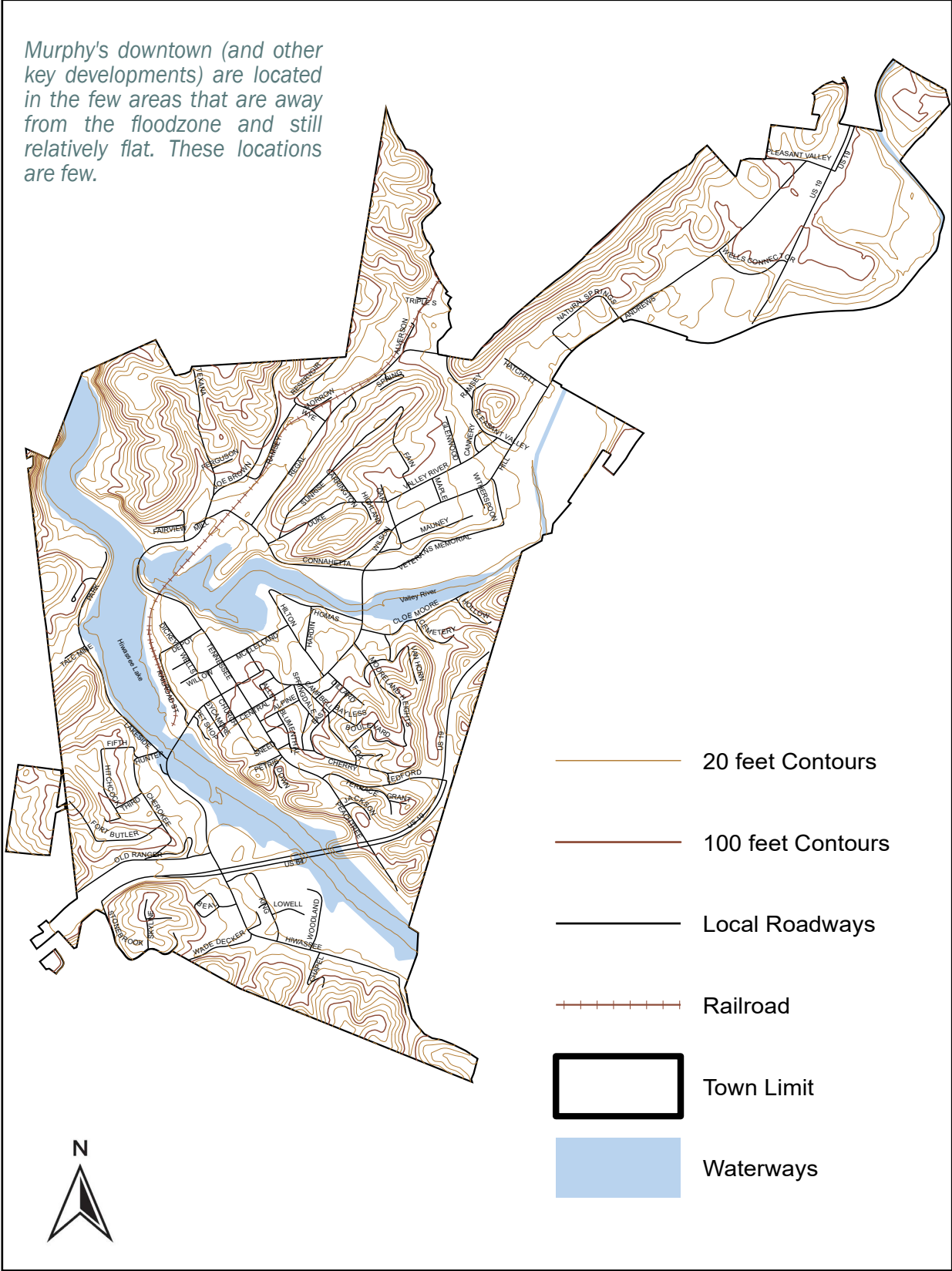
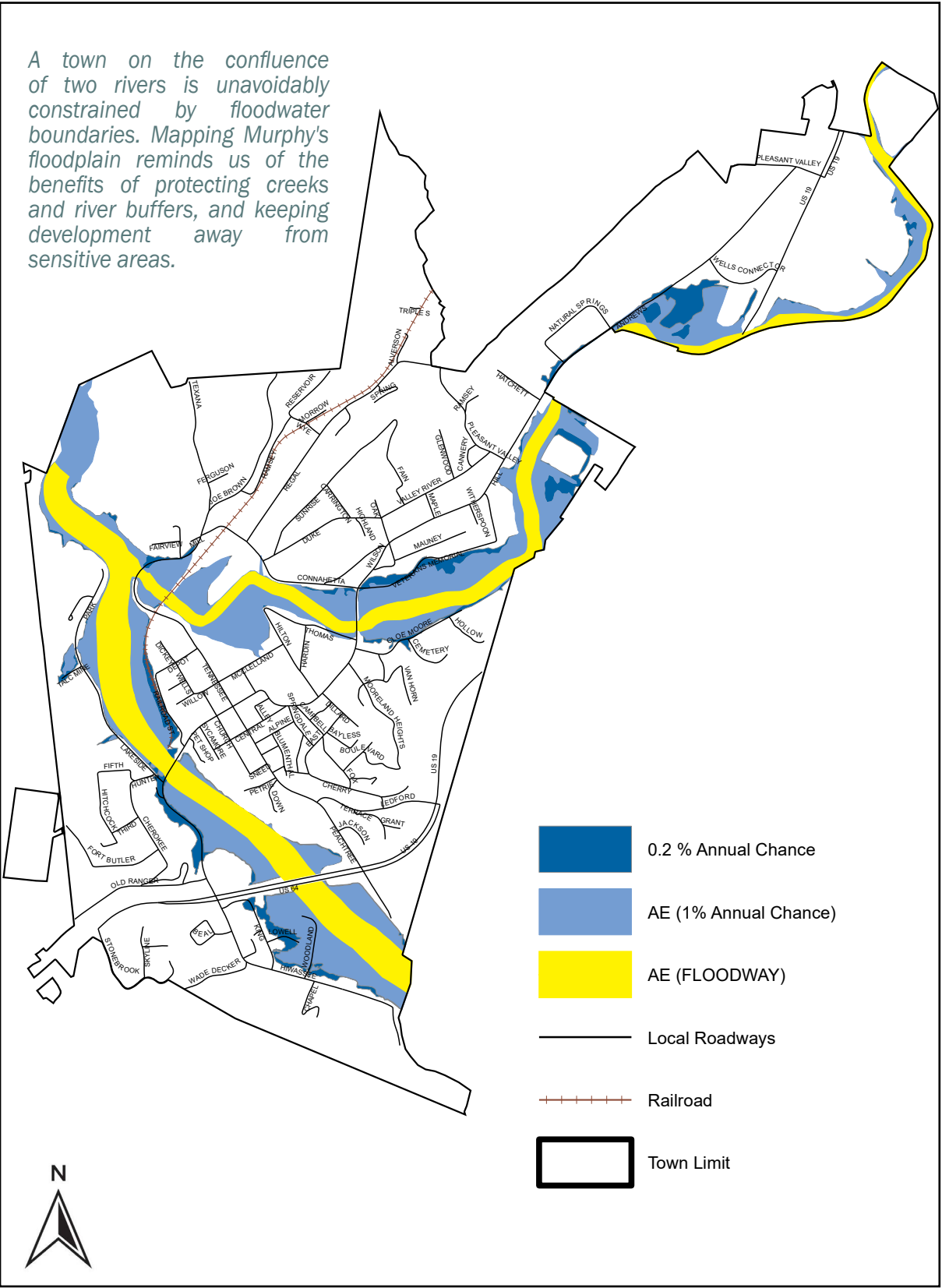


Figure 16) Murphy Flood Zones



The Town of Murphy owns property on Fort Butler Street that may provide an opportunity for development of additional housing or public space. Upon expiration of the deed restriction, the Town should explore the feasibility of developing workforce housing on the property or other good uses of the land.

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) owns most of the property along both the Hiwassee and Valley Rivers in Murphy. Some of these riverfront properties may be suitable for additional public trail facilities and should be evaluated for their capability to provide access to the rivers. The TVA has considered acquisition of a building located next to the old train depot, with plans to construct a dock and boat ramp at this visible and easily accessible location. Following construction of the dock and boat ramp, TVA could lease the facility to a private operator. This enhanced access would provide more opportunity for Murphy residents and visitors to enjoy the river, one of Murphy's great natural assets.

Natural features play a major role in determining development patterns in communities located in western North Carolina and Murphy is no different. Steep slopes are the major natural constraint to development in the Town. Murphy does not have any standards limiting development on steep slopes, but the challenges and cost of developing areas with significant grade changes has resulted in past development being concentrated in areas with less challenging topography. As pressure for new development increases, development may encroach on areas with steeper slopes. Most of the land with steep slopes is zoned residential, which limits intense development on the steeper areas in the Town. However, the residential zoning permits a density that may not be appropriate for land with steep slopes. A review of the steep slopes and consideration of standards limiting the intensity of development and the amount of grading on steep slopes is encouraged.

Flood Areas

The other natural feature impacting development and redevelopment in Murphy is the flood area of the Hiwassee and Valley Rivers. Standards for development and redevelopment within designated flood areas are conditions for the Town's participation in the national flood insurance program, making it either more expensive or impossible to develop these properties. Flood area standards can increase the cost of redeveloping property located in the flood area. However, adherence to these standards enables owners of properties prone to flooding to obtain flood insurance and prohibit development that would increase the potential of flooding other properties. Preservation of flood areas as open space, recreation/park areas, and locations for greenways protect these areas and comply with flood protection standards while enhancing the community by providing more recreational places. The construction of the Murphy River Walk within the river floodway and floodplain is an excellent use of the flood areas, protecting the ability of these areas to accommodate flood waters while enhancing the community and providing recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.

Lack of developable property is one of Murphy's greatest challenges, since the Town has no ETJ and much of the land surrounding Murphy is federally managed, mountainous, or within the floodplain, rendering expansion of the town's footprint nearly impossible. Therefore, creative maintenance and adaptive reuse of existing development patterns is the key to smart growth.



The Hiwassee River.



Opportunities for infill development within the central business district.

Transportation

The Town of Murphy has a diverse transportation system that has the ability to address the needs of a community with a range of needs. The transportation system includes streets and roads, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and transit services. Murphy’s roadway network consists of streets and roads maintained by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) and local streets maintained by the Town.

Approximately 20 miles of combined secondary and primary roadway within Town Limits are maintained by NCDOT. There is not a separate line item for maintenance of the NCDOT maintained Town streets within the NCDOT budget; routine projects are generally funded by NCDOT’s general maintenance budget. Projects currently funded and underway are:

- Asphalt resurfacing of US19 business from SR1398, Old Ranger Road, to SR1368, Pleasant Valley Road; and
- Asphalt resurfacing of SR1326, Peachtree St./Tennessee St., from Ledford St. to bridge 222 just north of town.



Peachtree Street (Unicoi Turnpike) in downtown Murphy.

NCDOT has no additional funded/planned projects within the Town Limits currently. Staff in the NCDOT District Engineer’s office state that asphalt resurfacing of roadways maintained by NCDOT is the major need in Murphy. However, there are some state-funded projects in the State Transportation Infrastructure Program (STIP) nearby.

NCDOT STIP Project List (near Murphy)

- **R-5908:** Modernize US 19/74/129 from US 64 to Casino Parkway (SR 1689). Right-of-way acquisition scheduled for 2026. This will improve the connection between Murphy and Harrah’s Cherokee Valley River Casino.
- **R-5735A:** Improve US 19/64/129 from Petrie Street to the Murphy town limit.
- **R-5735:** Improve US 19/74/129 near the intersection of Hiwassee Street.
- **B-4069:** Replace the bridge (#159) over Hanging Dog Creek on Joe Brown Highway. Right-of-way acquisition and construction in 2023.
- **B-5925:** Replace the bridge (#223) over the Hiwassee River on Old Highway 64 in Brasstown. Right-of-way acquisition in 2023; Construction in 2024.
- **R-5861:** Widen US 19/129 from the Georgia State Line to US 64. This is a key roadway connection to Georgia, so it could have implications for improving capacity and enabling more visitor traffic.
- **R-5847:** Widen US 64 to four lanes divided from NC 141 to Hayesville. This is the main arterial between Murphy and Hayesville and is good for commuters and locals, while accommodating more through traffic. Right-of-way in 2029, and construction will impose significant delays and reroutes.
- **R-5794:** Division 14 program to upgrade intersections to comply with the ADA using Transportation Alternatives funds.

The Town of Murphy Public Works Department maintains the 14.63 miles of local, non-NCDOT streets in Murphy. Powell Bill monies fund about 15% of the Town’s street maintenance expenses, \$56,000 in Fiscal Year 2022, with the rest of the maintenance cost funded by the Town’s general fund. All capital outlay in streets and sidewalks, such as construction of a new sidewalk, is funded by Powell Bill monies. A streets maintenance worker, a full-time position, was hired in early 2022 to maintain the Town’s streets and rights-of-way in the spring, summer, and fall months. No major street/road improvements are underway or planned by the Town, nor are there any major street/road improvement projects identified in Murphy’s Capital Improvements Plan. The Town has 1.22 miles of gravel streets in its roadway system, but it is not economical to pave them at this time.

Commuting & Transit

Despite proximity to Tennessee, Georgia, and South Carolina, most Cherokee County workers commute to jobs within North Carolina, with 44.5 percent staying in the county. Most of these workers travel by car, but some transit services are available for residents of the Town of Murphy. Cherokee County Transit is funded by County and federal dollars, with vans making daily trips throughout the county, including Murphy, Andrews, Marble, and Peachtree. Scheduled trips are made to towns and cities outside the county, including Asheville, Atlanta, Chattanooga, Franklin, Hendersonville, Knoxville, and Waynesville. Advance scheduling is required for these trips. The primary purposes of trips made using Cherokee County Transit are shopping and medical appointments, and there are no fixed-route stops.

Figure 17) Cherokee County Commute Patterns

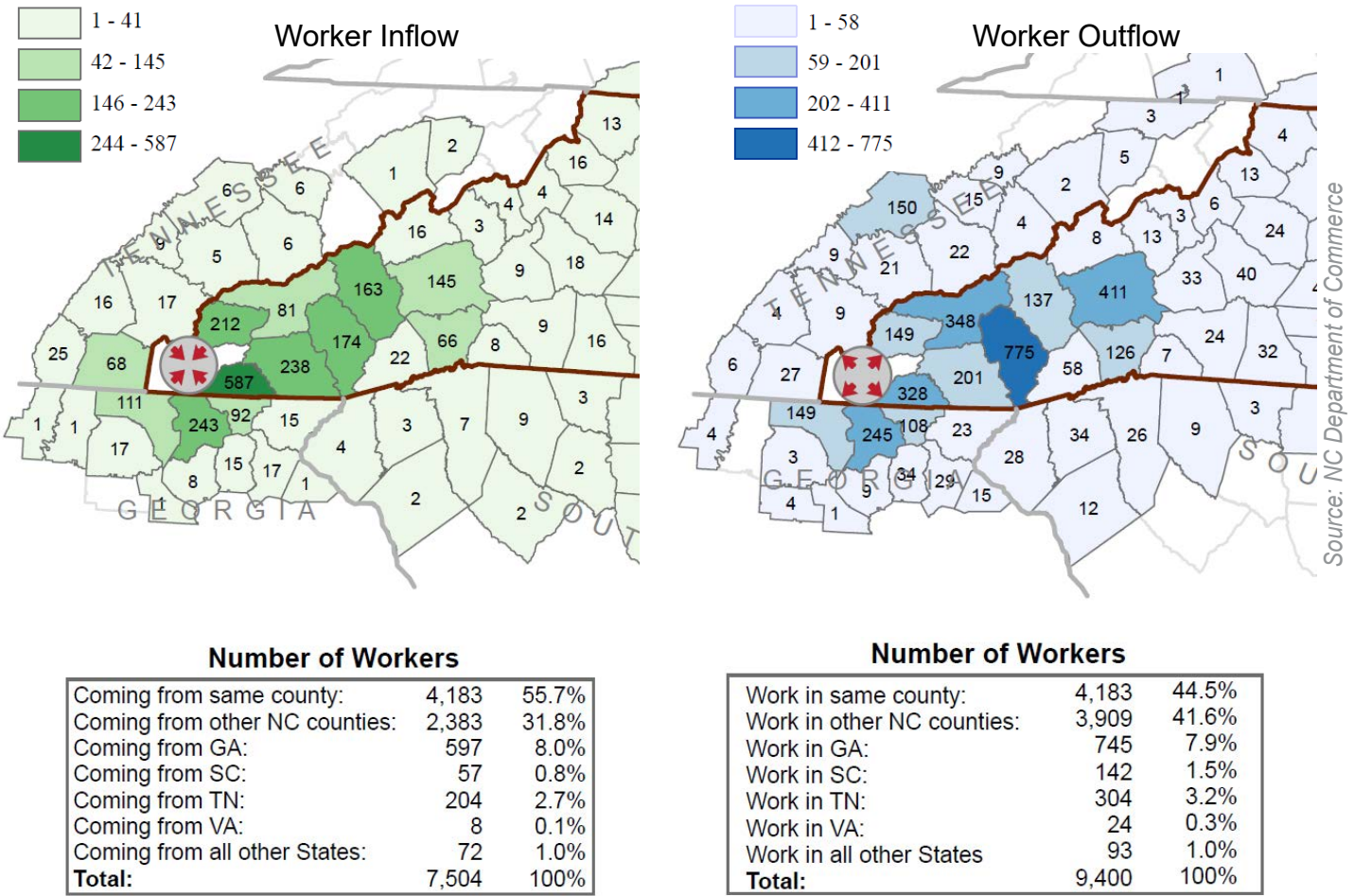
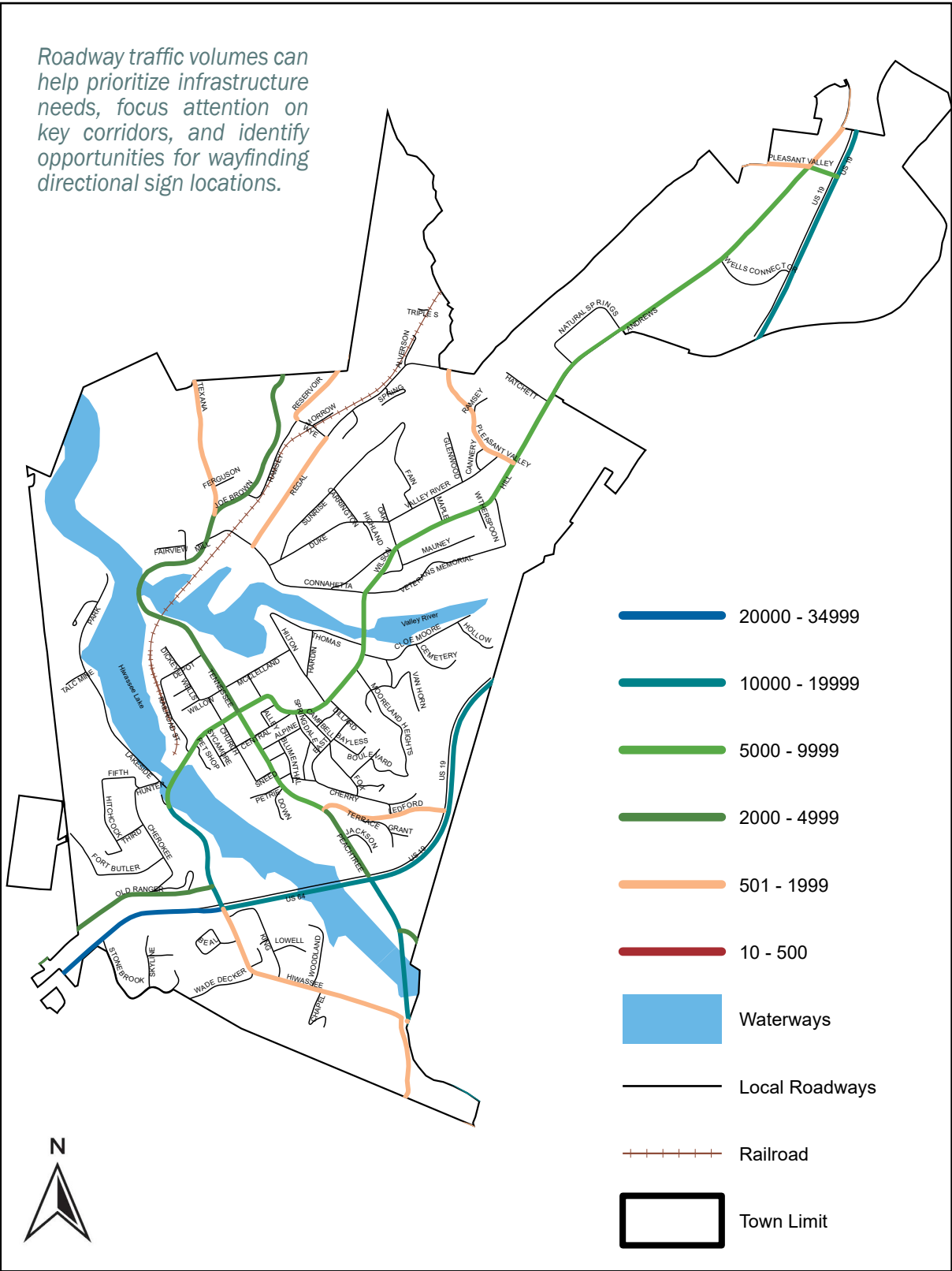


Figure 18) Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)



Annual average daily traffic (AADT) is a measure used in transportation planning and engineering. It is the total volume of vehicle traffic on a roadway for a year divided by 365 days. AADT is a simple, but useful, measurement of vehicle traffic on a section of road.

Multimodal Planning

As walking and bicycling become more popular as a means of transportation, the term "transportation system" must be expanded to include pedestrian and bicycle facilities. It is always useful to assess a town's transportation network, looking at existing infrastructure and short- and long-range local, regional, and state transportation projects to make sure they align with the Murphy's vision for land use and growth. This includes regular review of planned NCDOT projects in the area as well as planning documents such as the *Cherokee County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (2013)* and *Southern Blue Ridge Bicycle Plan (2018)*.



A lengthy pedestrian crossing over five lanes of traffic.

Roadways need to support commerce, existing and future land uses, and multimodal transportation choice. Planning for safety in any transportation network means creating an environment that is comfortable for all users. Complete Streets concepts and accessibility standards should remain at the forefront of this work. Identifying major streets and roads in Murphy helps indicate where more intense development may be appropriate, as it can be served by existing infrastructure.

The Town of Murphy has the foundation for a system of pedestrian facilities that can provide an alternative mode of transportation as well as opportunities for recreation and exercise for Town residents and visitors. Sidewalks provide access to most parts of the Town but gaps in the system and some lack of connectivity limits the ability of the existing sidewalks to provide a viable alternative means of transportation for Town residents and visitors. Many of Murphy's roads, including throughout downtown, are several lanes wide, making crossing on foot an uncomfortable and potentially dangerous challenge.

The maintenance of existing sidewalks and the construction of new sidewalks is funded by Powell Bill monies. Construction of new sidewalks is done on an ad hoc basis, with no plan for sidewalk construction and no recurring funding in the Town's annual budget. All sidewalk construction is funded exclusively by Powell Bill revenues. The Town constructed 1100 linear feet of new sidewalk in 2018, with no new sidewalk constructed since that time. There are opportunities to extend the system to provide pedestrian connectivity to more residential neighborhoods, enabling residents to safely walk from their homes to downtown Murphy.



Murphy's main downtown intersection provides plenty of room for people to gather and wait for the crossing signal.



There are gaps in the sidewalks along major corridors that should be connected to enhance pedestrian safety and offer a viable choice about how to get around. Construction of sidewalks in developed areas is challenging due to the difficulty of obtaining easements or rights-of-way and the location of structures and driveways, but the Town is encouraged to continue its efforts to provide safe pedestrian facilities throughout Murphy. Allocating a certain percentage of Powell Bill revenue to sidewalk construction and maintenance and having a schedule or plan for construction of new sidewalks would enable the Town to address the needs of residents and visitors who wish to walk as a means of transportation or for exercise and recreation.

A greenway along the rivers provides opportunities for more relaxed walking - both a useful transportation choice and a scenic recreational path. Sidewalks connect with the greenway at several locations, making the greenway accessible to many Town residents and visitors. The River Walk also provides bicyclists a safe off-road path, though not all of it is paved. Murphy does not have any bike lanes, but many streets are low-speed and low-volume enough to allow for safe travel by bike.

Some wide Town streets could be realigned to include wider sidewalks, bike lanes, as well as wider sidewalks or reconfigured on-street parking spaces. This could have the effect of creating safer, more comfortable streets for Murphy residents and visitors, without negatively impacting commute times.

Public Parking

Murphy has a lot of on-street parking spaces in its central downtown core - a mix of angled and parallel parking. This is a benefit to local businesses, who rely on customers who can park conveniently (i.e. cheaply and nearby). Several businesses downtown have their own private lots, but many depend on the public street parking.



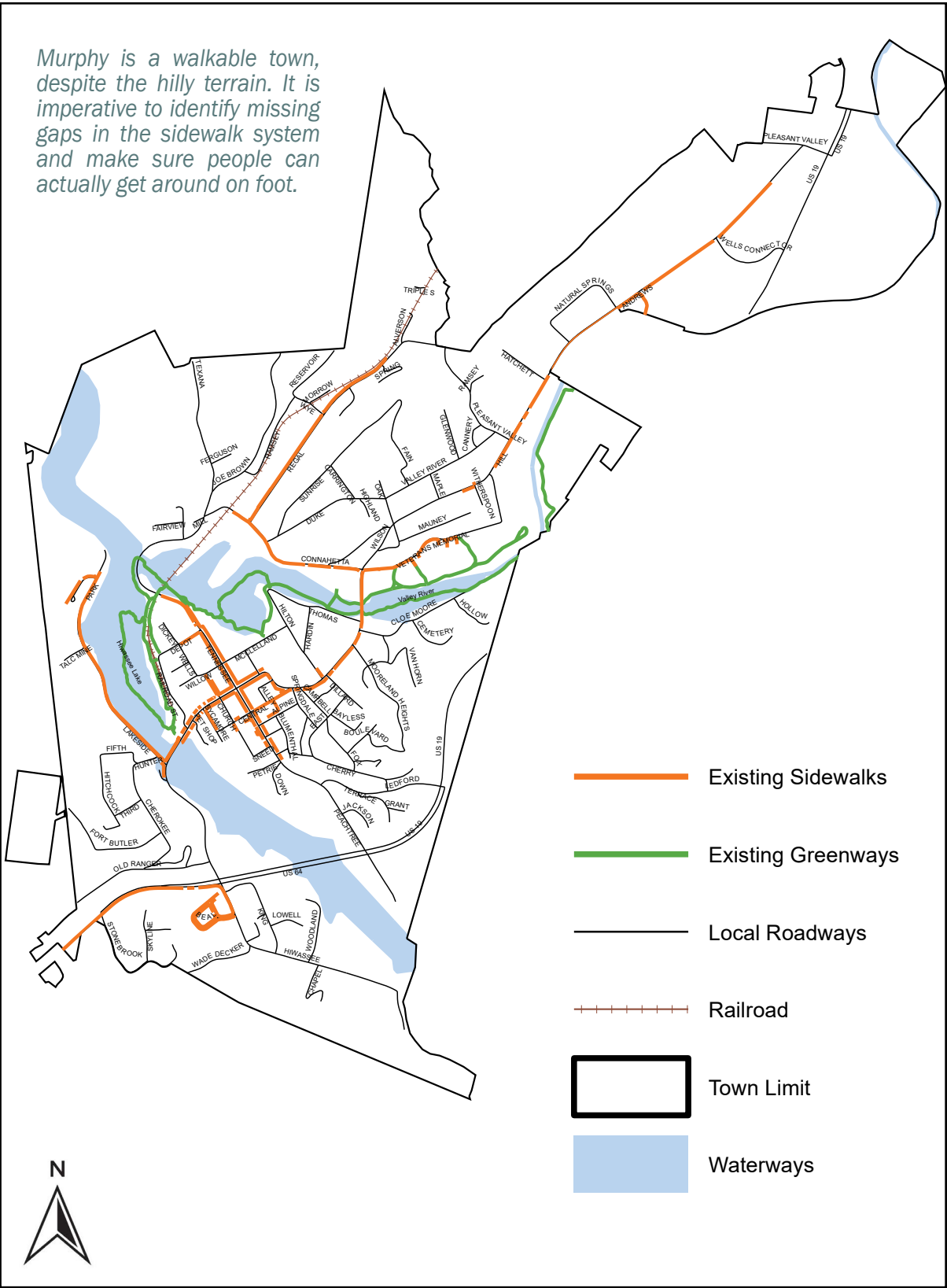
Downtown parking has a number of issues, including visibility of off-street lots and angled street parking that can block both the crosswalk and the travel lane.

Unfortunately, many of the angled spaces do not provide enough room for larger vehicles to park without obstructing the travel lane. This can be dangerous, as cars swerve into other lanes to avoid parked cars. Solutions can range from lessening the angle of the parking spaces to restriping them as parallel parking. Luckily, many of Murphy's roads are wide enough to find appropriate solutions so that all users can be satisfied.

Additionally, the Town should work to identify opportunities for shared use of private parking lots, as well as effective signage to direct visitors to the public surface lots nearby and at Town facilities. An effective parking management strategy using all the available tools can help residents, business owners, and visitors find their way around and easily get where they are going.



Figure 19) Murphy Existing Sidewalks & Greenways





Infrastructure & Public Services

Police & Fire

The Murphy Fire Department provides fire and rescue services to three primary fire districts: Town of Murphy, Murphy Rural, and Murphy Rural Tribal. The Fire Department also provides aid to seven other districts on an as-needed basis. These districts are served by two fire stations. The main station is located off of Valley River Avenue just before crossing the bridge over the Hiwassee River into downtown. A satellite station is located at 125 Natural Springs Drive near Murphy High School. Service coverage extends to approximately 25 square miles. The Fire Chief is the only full-time department staff with approximately two dozen part-time staff.



The Town recently repurposed the former National Guard Armory as a substation for Fire Department to better serve the Murphy Rural District.

The Murphy Police Department currently employs 12 full-time staff, including the Police Chief. The Department is actively involved in numerous community policing initiatives in order to reduce crime and enhance the quality of life for Murphy residents and visitors. Occasionally, officers utilize bike patrol during special Town events. Stakeholder interviews revealed that call volume is up by more than 30 percent over the last two years. As development continues into more remote areas on the outskirts of town, reaching individuals who need police and fire assistance in a timely manner will continue to be a challenge.

Similarly to other cities and towns, Murphy is also dealing with a larger homeless population than previous years that has been spurred by the opioid and methamphetamine crises and exacerbated by the COVID-19 economic turmoil. This issue was highlighted by many survey respondents as a cause for concern due to the perception of decreased safety. People want to feel safe on the River Walk, heading to their car after work, and enjoying an evening downtown. While different solutions are sought by different agencies and organizations, this remains a pervasive problem in Murphy and nationwide.

Electricity

The Town of Murphy distributes electric power produced by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) through the Murphy Power Board. Incorporated in 1953, this Board manages the provision of electricity to more than 5,000 residential and commercial customers, maintaining more than 550 miles of power lines. It maintains a service area encompassing a 10-mile radius around the Town limits.



Board members are appointed by Murphy Town Council and the Board operates off a long-range plan. This plan is focused on maintaining the operation of existing utility infrastructure while finding ways to build capacity in both distribution and service. The Board recently added 35 megawatts to its existing 24 megawatt system and is preparing to add 15 megawatts more in order to keep pace with the significant increase in demand it has experienced in the last several years.



Water & Sewer

The Murphy Water and Sewer Utility was established in the 1910s and currently serves approximately 4,700 customers, both within the town limits and outside the Town. The Town receives water from the Hiwassee River, treats it, and distributes potable water to its customers. The Town operates the water and sewer fund as a separate self-supporting enterprise, with revenues and expenditures accounted for separately from its General Fund. Tap fees and rates are 200% higher outside town limits. The plant has a rated treatment capacity of 2.0 million gallons per day (MGD) but currently pumps approximately .8 MGD. The Town's water distribution system consists of approximately 66 miles of water lines ranging in size from two-inch to 16-inch and has five pressure zones: Texana, Casino, Fain Mountain, Poorhouse Mountain, and Murphy Proper/Peachtree.

The Town's wastewater collection system is comprised of approximately 24 miles of gravity sewer lines ranging from four-inch to 16-inch diameter and approximately 10 miles of sewer force mains ranging in size from 4-inch to 12-inch diameter. There are 15 sewer pump stations in the system, including the No.1 Pump Station, which pumps the entire sewer flow collected to the Town's Wastewater Treatment Plant located on Payne Street across the Hiwassee River. The oldest sections of the sewer system are in the downtown area. These sewer lines were constructed in the 1910s with vitrified clay pipe and brick manholes and need to be upgraded.

The wastewater treatment plant has a treatment capacity of 1.4 MGD (million gallons per day) and average daily use is 0.500 to 0.600 MGD. Excess capacity is available to serve future growth and development. The original wastewater treatment plant was constructed in 1966 and was upgraded in 1987; some of the basins from this construction are still in use. In 2002, the Town completed an expansion of the wastewater treatment plant to convert the facility to a 1.4 million gallon per day sequencing batch reactor plant, and also added influent screening and a sludge dewatering facility. Additional improvements to the plant were made in 2012 to improve operations during peak wet weather flow events. Currently, approximately 800,000 gallons of the daily 1.4 million gallon capacity is used. Murphy's discharge permit allows the Town to discharge into the Hiwassee River.

The overall distribution system is in good shape, with problem areas addressed by on-going improvements. Recent improvements to the system include new water infrastructure from the intersection of Hiwassee Street/US 64W continuing approximately one mile west and new water mains on Regal Street, Campbell Street, Dillard Street, and King Street. There are plans to replace all water infrastructure along Hiwassee Street, Tennessee Street, and Peachtree Street, and along Valley River Avenue for a limited distance from the Town Square. Recent improvements to the sewer system include all new wastewater infrastructure on Regal Street, new pumps at Peachtree School lift station, and installation of bar screens at the Cherokee County Jail and Erlanger hospital.

In 2021 the Town had a thorough study of the water and sewer system's finances, rates, and capital needs prepared. The study, titled Town of Murphy Water and Sewer System Financial Analysis, Capital Improvements Plan, and Rate Study, identified financial strategies and capital improvements needed to enable sound financial standing and the ability to adequately serve its customers over the next ten years. The report identified over \$1.7 million of projects in its Capital Improvements Plan. The yearly costs reach over \$300,000 during some years, which may place pressure upon the system's budget. The largest projects include:

- \$1,050,000 for Ice Plant Lift Station Rehabilitation
- \$1,015,000 for Tennessee Street Water Main Crossing
- \$597,000 for Hill Street Sewer
- \$300,000 for six water pumps
- Upgrading sewer plant





Figure 20) Murphy Sewer Infrastructure

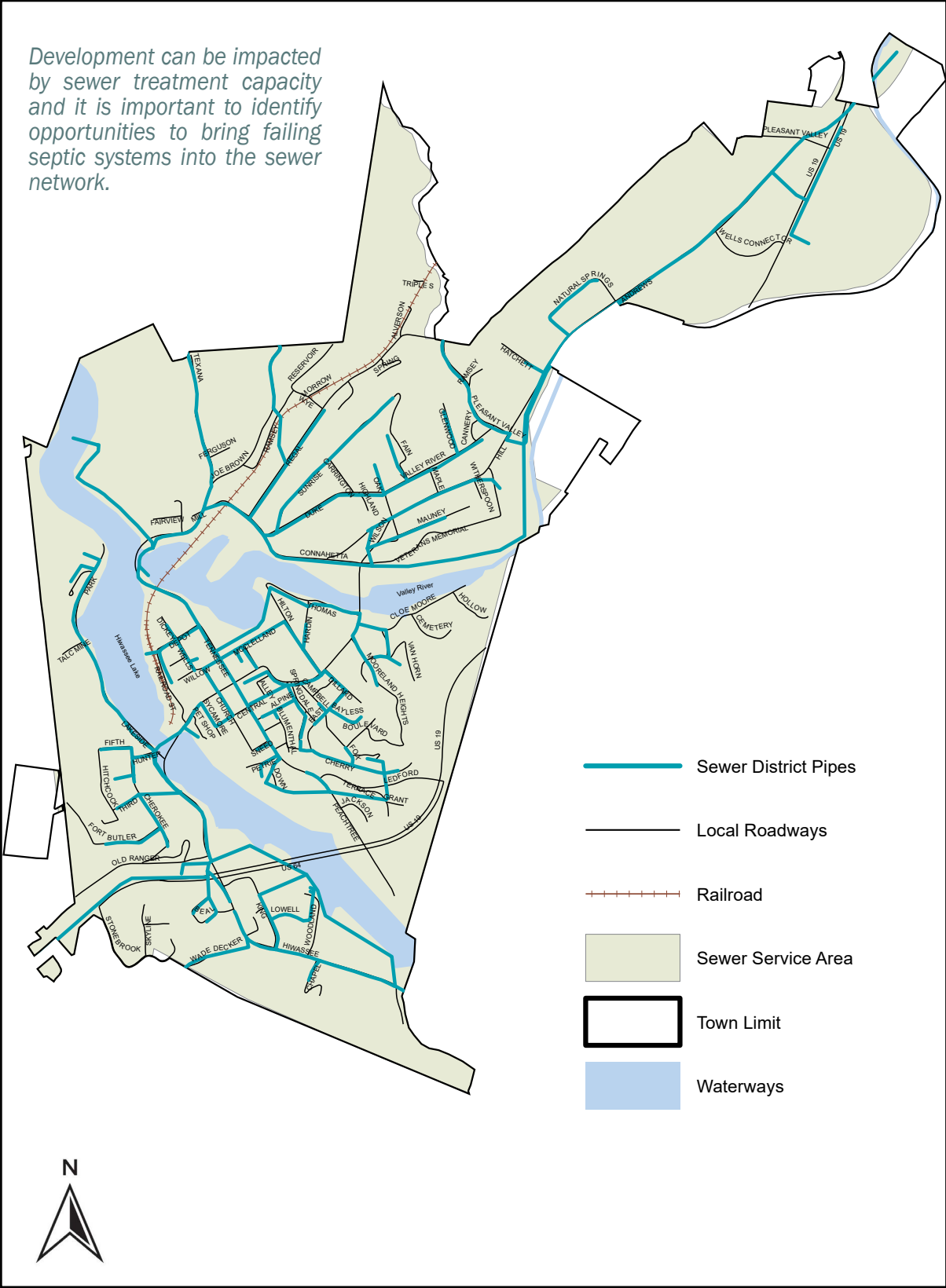
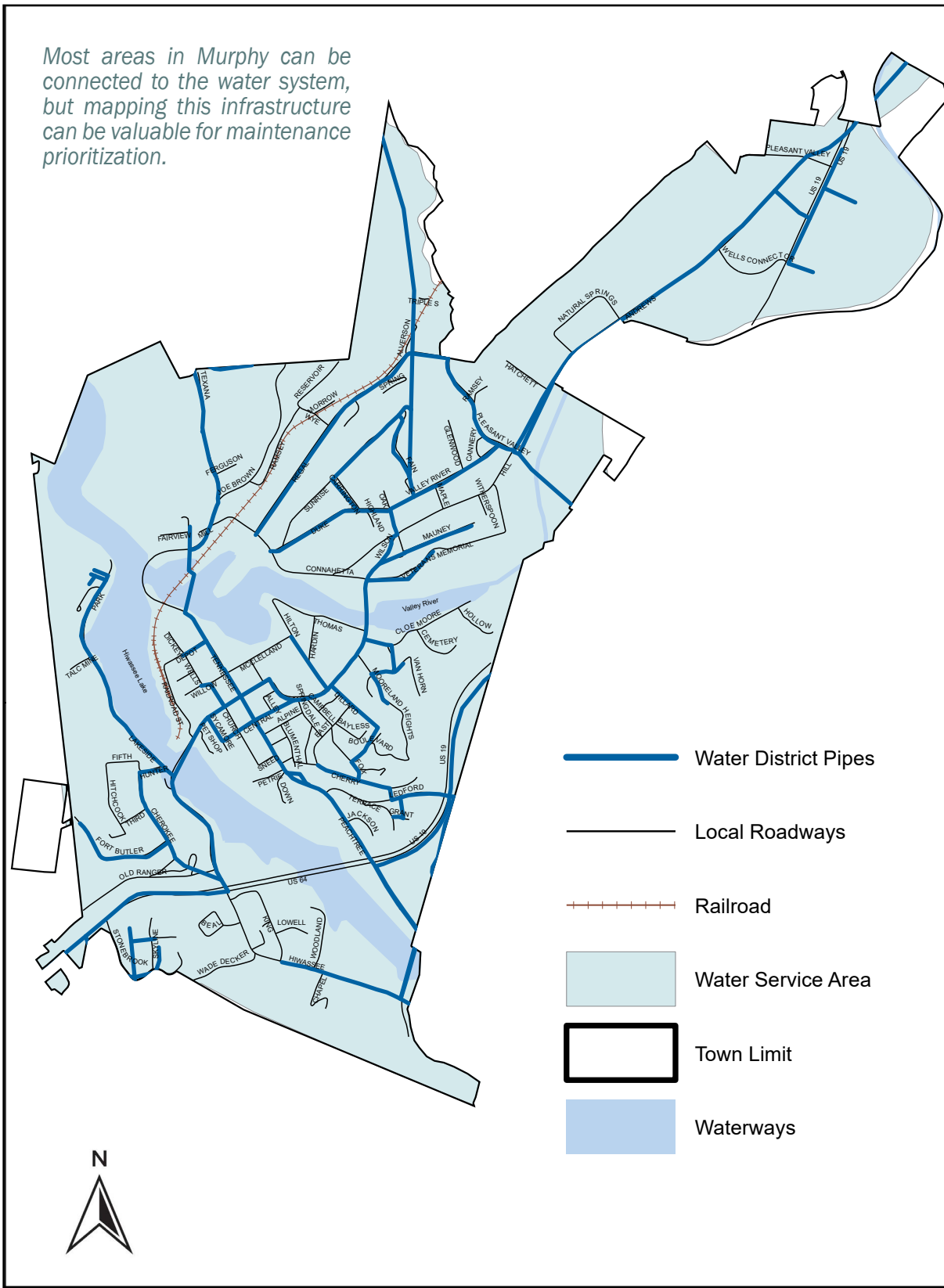


Figure 21) Murphy Water Infrastructure



The Murphy Water and Sewer Utility is well poised to serve growth and development, given the excess capacity of both the water and wastewater treatment plants. On-going maintenance of the existing water distribution system and the wastewater collection system should continue, with the budgeting of funds for the maintenance of the systems continuing. Water distribution lines and wastewater collection lines should be extended to serve those areas within the Town that are identified as appropriate for development but currently lack water and wastewater service. As extension of water distribution and wastewater collection lines is contemplated, consideration must be given to the ability of the area to which provision of water and sewer service is contemplated to accommodate growth and development.

Internet

Broadband is an increasingly important form of infrastructure required to meet the demands of both existing development and new development. Broadband is essential for businesses, governmental operations, students, and the general public - an essential component to improving public safety and public health, an absolute necessity in and outside K-12 classrooms and a vital element in the 21st century world of online communications, entertainment and information. The availability of broadband influences decisions regarding the location of industries, whether to open a business, and the purchase of homes. The Town of Murphy is well served by broadband, with the following providers serving the Town:

- Blue Ridge Mountain EMC
- The Cable Company
- Frontier
- Riverstreet Networks

The service providers have identified the following improvements to enhance broadband service in Murphy:

- The Cable Company plans to replace their coaxial cable with underground fiber
- Blue Ridge Mountain EMC is expanding into the Hanging Dog and Grape Creek areas of Cherokee County with fiber, expanding their service area outside the Town.

The necessity of internet access – highspeed, or not – was laid bare during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some adults could not work, and some children were unable to attend remote schooling or found themselves huddled outside businesses offering free Wi-Fi connections. For instance, the Town of Murphy Library offers free Wi-Fi during regular hours, with service accessible in the library’s parking lot. This is a good amenity, but not a solution for the broader challenge of universal connectivity. The limited availability of free Wi-Fi addresses one of the major issues with broadband – its affordability. Service is becoming more available throughout North Carolina, and continues to expand with COVID-relief funding and the 2021 infrastructure spending bill, but many cannot afford the cost. The inability to afford internet service is one of the most common and pervasive barriers to broadband use.

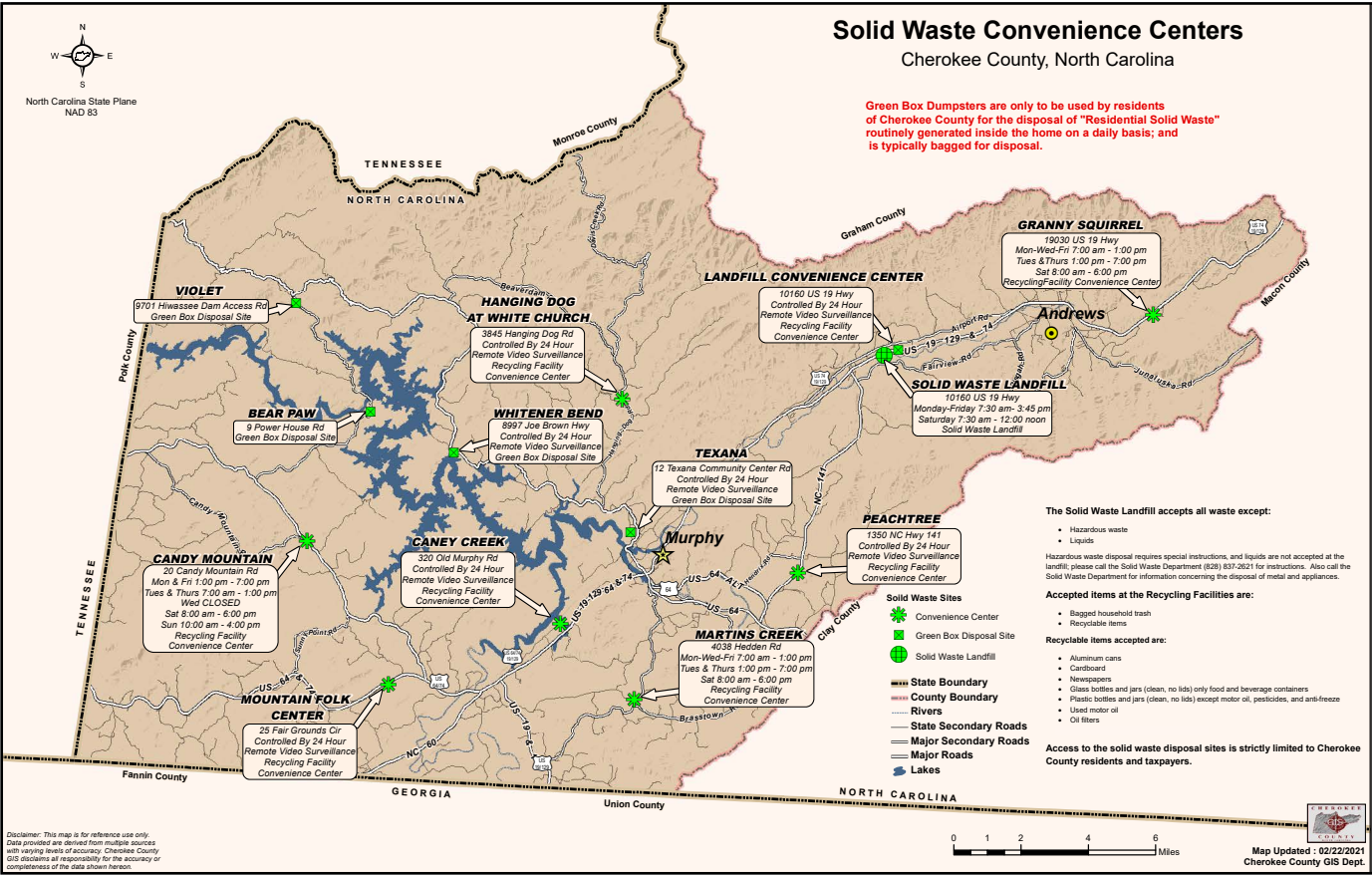
According to a 2019 report addressing the status of broadband by *BroadbandNow*, 39% of North Carolinians have access to 25 megabytes per second (Mbps) download speed and 3 Mbps upload speed at \$60 or less per month. A 2019 study by Oklahoma State University found that only 20% of respondents said they were likely to purchase internet if it were \$50 or more per month, while 74% indicated they would purchase it if it were \$10 per month.

With affordability the most common barrier, the Town of Murphy is encouraged to work with partners to provide free internet access at various locations in the Town. In addition, the Town can help highlight programs like the Federal Communications Commission's Affordable Connectivity Program, which provides a discount of up to \$30 per month toward internet service for eligible households and up to \$75 per month for households on qualifying Tribal lands.

Sanitation

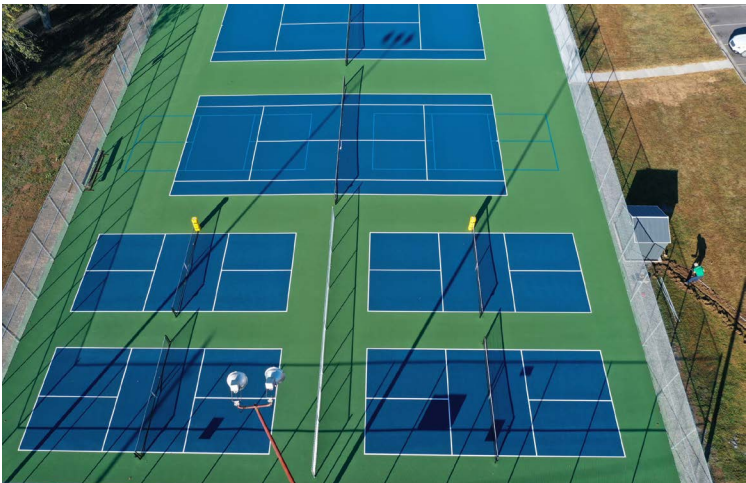
The Town employs a two-person sanitation crew team that provides trash collection services to residents. Trash is collected Monday through Friday according to established sanitation routes. Murphy does not currently offer recycling services. Residents must use Solid Waste Convenience Centers operated by Cherokee County for their recycling needs.

Figure 22) Cherokee County Solid Waste Convenience Centers



Parks & Recreation

Murphy’s geographic location presents an abundance of local and regional recreational opportunities. Downtown Murphy sits near the convergence of the Valley River and Hiwassee River. Public lands surround much of the town and its surrounding areas. In less than an hour drive, Murphy residents and visitors can reach the Nantahala Outdoor Center, Ocoee Whitewater Center, Brasstown Bald, the Appalachian Trail, Jackrabbit Recreation Area, Fires Creek Backcountry Area and numerous access points within the Nantahala National Forest. The Tusquitee Ranger District of the Nantahala National Forest comprises 158,900 acres in southwestern North Carolina. The Tusquitee District Office of the



Konehete Park is a big draw for residents of Murphy, offering a wide range of activities - from ball games to feeding the geese.

Nantahala National Forest is located in Murphy, enhancing residents’ and visitors’ accessibility to the many outdoor recreation opportunities in the region.

Konehete Park is the only public park located within Town limits. The park is owned by the Tennessee Valley Authority and jointly leased to the Town of Murphy and Cherokee County, which maintains the park. Konehete Park provides three pavilions on site that can be reserved for events and numerous facilities including ball fields, basketball courts, fishing areas, a playground, tennis courts, pickleball courts, and walking trails.

Konehete Park is only a short walk from Murphy Elementary School and the Cherokee County Health Department. It is also part of the River Walk trail system.

Murphy River Walk

Murphy River Walk is one of the crown jewels of Murphy. The project was initiated as a multi-phase master plan concept and formally endorsed by the Mayor and Town Council of Murphy as well as the Cherokee County Board of Commissioners in 2002. It was created as a public and private partnership with various groups, including the Town of Murphy, Cherokee County, TVA, NCDOT, and Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition. Since then, the River Walk has seen the successful completion of all phases of basic trail construction between Konehete Park and the L&N Depot.

The beautiful 4-mile greenway encircles the historic town center, winding through the river floodplain's diverse wooded areas on paved, natural surface, and wooden boardwalk trails. The paved portions of the trail are accessible to all, including hikers and bikers. There are numerous access points to

Figure 23) Murphy River Walk & Canoe Trails Map



Murphy River Walk & Canoe Trails are a comprehensive recreational system with room for enhancement and extension.

the trail system, enabling people to hop on and off wherever is most convenient. Some trailheads have small parking areas and are all walkable from Murphy's downtown core.

The trail connects the historic L&N Depot in downtown Murphy to Konehete Park, with various points of interest along the way. Confluence Loop takes you to where the Valley River and Hiwassee River meet and empty into Hiwassee Reservoir. During the summer the high waters sometimes cover up much of the low lying flats along the Hiwassee River, turning a scenic walking area into a popular spot for canoing and kayaking. With several locations to access both the Valley River and Hiwassee River, the town also highlights its Canoe Trail, encouraging residents and visitors to enjoy Murphy's beautiful natural waters.

"Promote public awareness, education and good stewardship of the community's natural, historic, and cultural resources. Serve as a planning, educational, and community-initiated development resource to conserve and renew these unique assets for the benefit of many generations to come."

-Heritage Partners Mission
(Murphy River Walk management)

There is interpretive signage on the trail offering information about the history of the area and local plants and animals, and QR codes that can be read by a smartphone linking to an educational online audio tour.

It is managed and funded by Heritage Partners, a non-profit which continues to undertake enhancement and improvement activities including trail surface maintenance, native landscaping, and interpretive markers. The volunteer River Walk project team continues its work with a host of ongoing maintenance, landscaping, interpretive signage, directional signage, and additional construction projects along the trails. Ecology classes for school students are held on the trail, as are student group work days for hands-on experiences.

The Murphy River Walk is at its heart a community-led volunteer project. The trail is owned by the town but sits on TVA land. The Town of Murphy provides \$7,500 each year for maintenance of the trail and it is sponsored by Heritage Partners. However, it is managed and maintained by volunteers, with only the Konehete Park portion maintained by Cherokee County staff. The River Walk is beloved by Murphy residents, who are proud to highlight the town's natural surroundings and ecological heritage, cherishing the opportunity to enjoy the rivers.



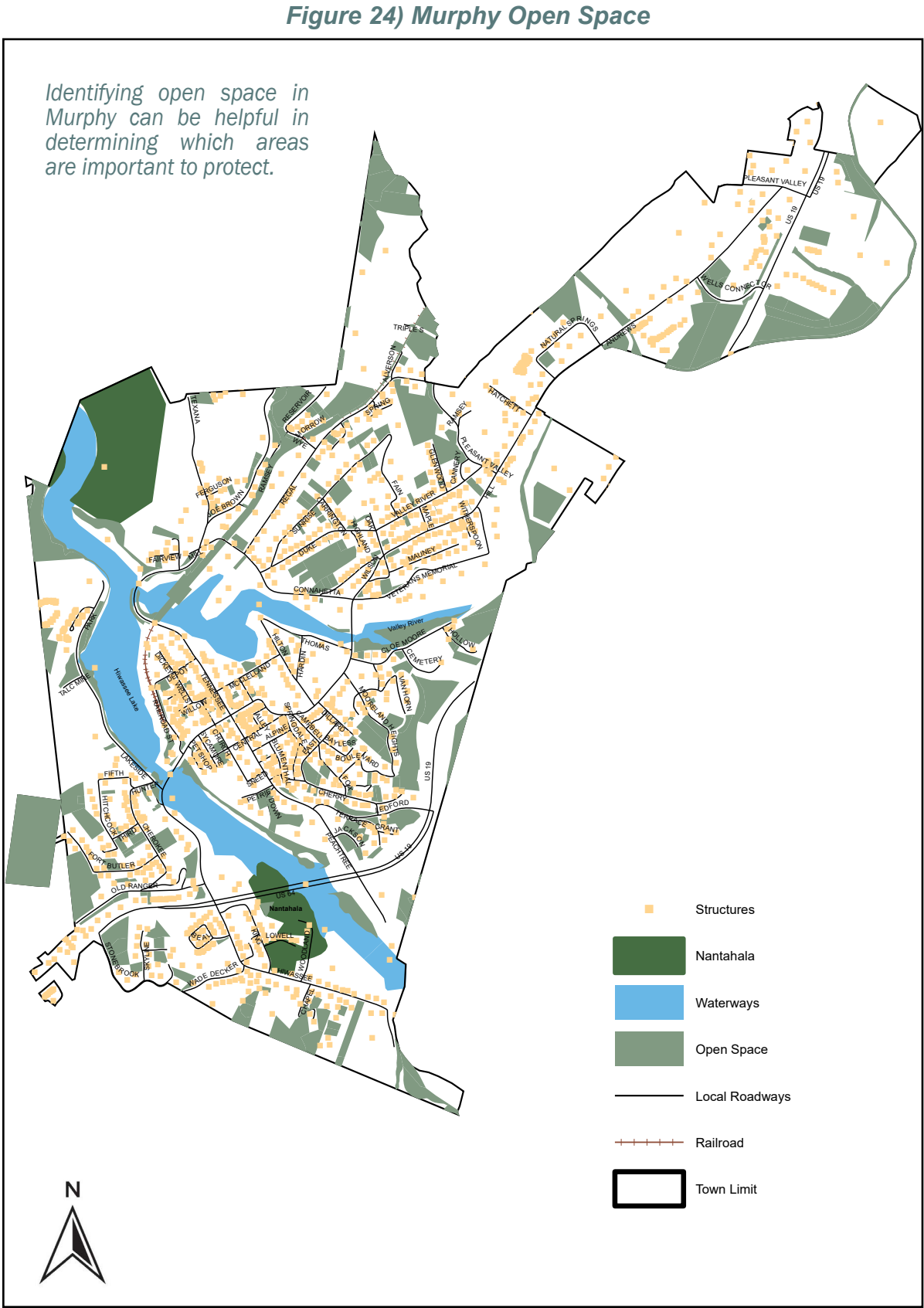
River Walk's boardwalk.



A very important warning sign on the River Walk.



Some trail surfaces are less wheelchair accessible than others.



INFLUENTIAL PLANS & STUDIES

The Town of Murphy does not have a history of engaging in formal planning efforts, and *Murphy 2042 Comprehensive Plan* is the first major, long-range plan initiated by the Town. This section summarizes key recommendations from pertinent plans and studies from Murphy as well as Cherokee County and the Far West region. *Murphy's 2042 Comprehensive Plan* builds upon these previous planning efforts and incorporates relevant recommendations where appropriate.

Downtown Murphy Fall 2020 Consumer Survey

The Town of Murphy became a member of the North Carolina Main Street Program's Downtown Associate Community Program in 2019. As part of this program, the Town administered a survey in October 2020 to consumers visiting downtown Murphy retailers and restaurants. Survey goals included collecting demographics on visitors to downtown businesses, gathering information on "likes" and "dislikes" of different aspects in the downtown area, and soliciting feedback on the future of downtown Murphy. The survey generated 265 responses.

The majority of respondents visited downtown on a weekly or greater frequency basis. Nearly two-thirds of respondents indicated they are at least 45 years old, supporting the identified trend of a growing number of retirees residing in Murphy and the greater Cherokee County area. More than 70 percent of respondents noted an annual household income of \$50,000, compared with 40 percent of Cherokee County residents having an annual household income of \$50,000. This significant contrast aligns with comments the project team heard about Murphy residents' perceptions that downtown is "too expensive" or only for wealthier outsiders, and not residents, to enjoy.

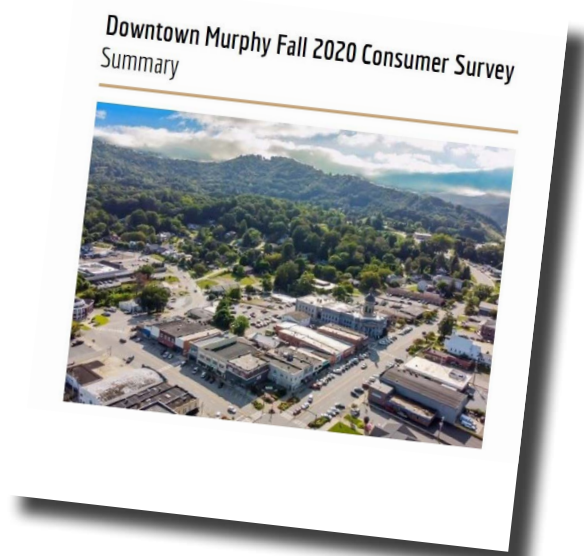
Respondents favored providing incentives for businesses and restoring historic character to enhance downtown and prioritized the creation of additional parking / improving existing parking. They also wanted to see a greater variety and selection of retail and restaurants, more quality festivals and events, and “things for kids to do” downtown. Responses also indicated a collective desire for authentic and varied experiences related to community gathering spaces and outdoor recreation.

Cherokee County Tourism Development Authority Strategic Plan 2019 – 2020 (2019)

The Cherokee County Tourism Development Authority adopted its 2019-2020 Strategic Plan in early 2019. The TDA identified its overall goal as attracting more visitors to Cherokee County for overnight stays. Through this Plan, the TDA categorizes key initiatives intended to achieve this goal under the following classifications: Tourism Promotion, Action Adventure, The Great Outdoors, Mountain Culture, Events & Entertainment, and Overall General.

Several initiatives are Murphy-specific, while others align with opportunities identified by the Town or would likely impact Murphy directly or tangentially. These initiatives include:

- Providing support and promotion of the Murphy Visitor Center and maintain and repair the building as needed.
- Marketing the County to whitewater visitors at the Ocoee & Nantahala.



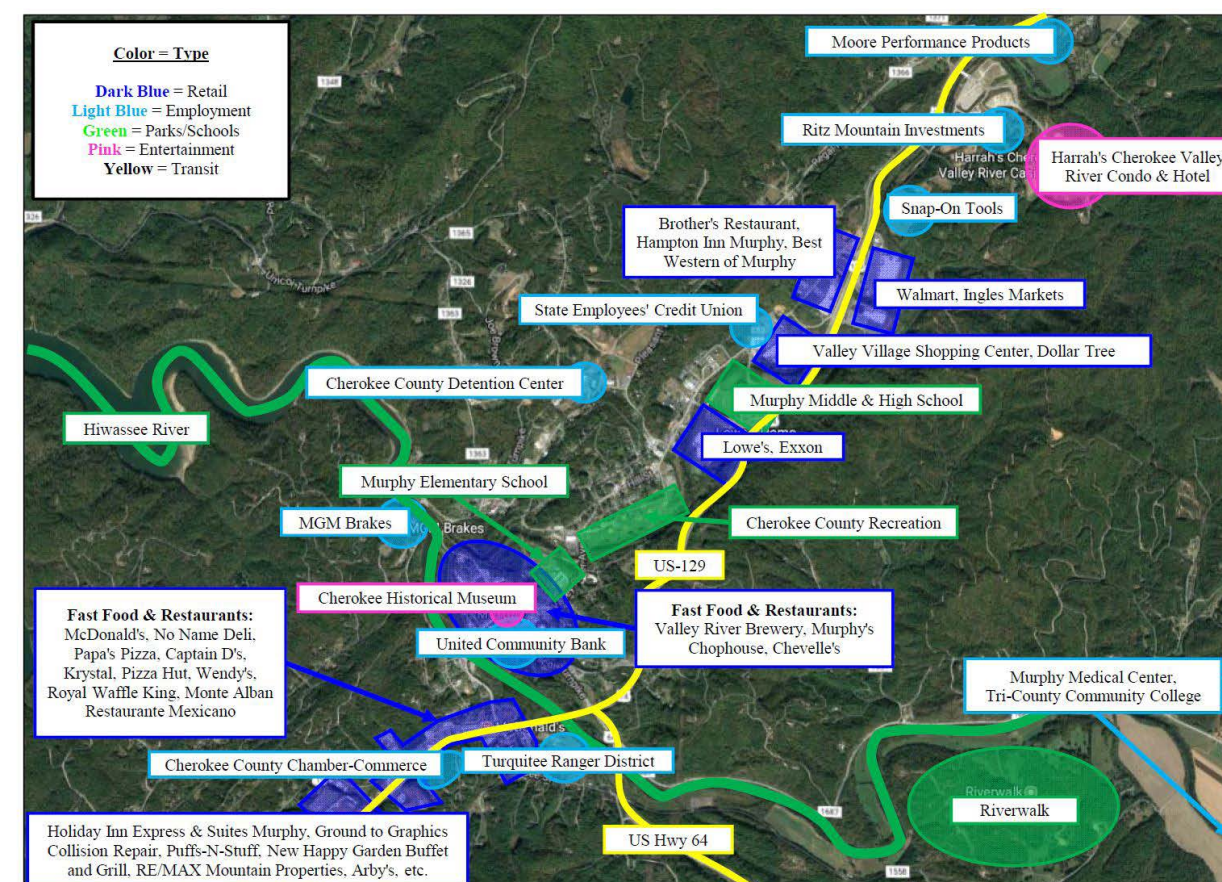
- Exploring opportunities to expand the County's capacity for sports events and tournaments.
- Supporting mountain bike trail initiatives.
- Providing support to the Valley River Arts Guild for out-of-town advertising.
- Continuing a small grants program to help support events and entertainment that meet the goals and objectives of the annual strategic plan.

Multifamily Opportunity & Feasibility Analysis for Cherokee County (2018)

This analysis was completed by The Concord Group (TCG) in 2018 as part of Cherokee County's strategic planning efforts to determine the need for multifamily housing development and identify possible development scenarios. It provides specific focus on Murphy, as the County seat and most populous community within Cherokee County. The analysis notes that existing multifamily housing stock is limited and dated and that the County has experienced minimal development since the 2008 Recession. According to this analysis, no buildings permit applications have been submitted or approved for multifamily housing development within Cherokee County since 2006.

The lack of available and affordable rental housing is attributed to job growth in the area and aging housing stock. Employers such as Harrah's Valley River Casino employ "reasonably transient" individuals often seeking short-term rental options; however, no new rental housing has been added to the Tri-County Region since the casino opened. According to this report, "all of the new housing stock has been upscale single-family homes targeted to second homeowners and retirees." The result is longer commute times or renting older, more expensive single-family homes until new housing units are added.

Figure 25) Employment Areas in Cherokee County



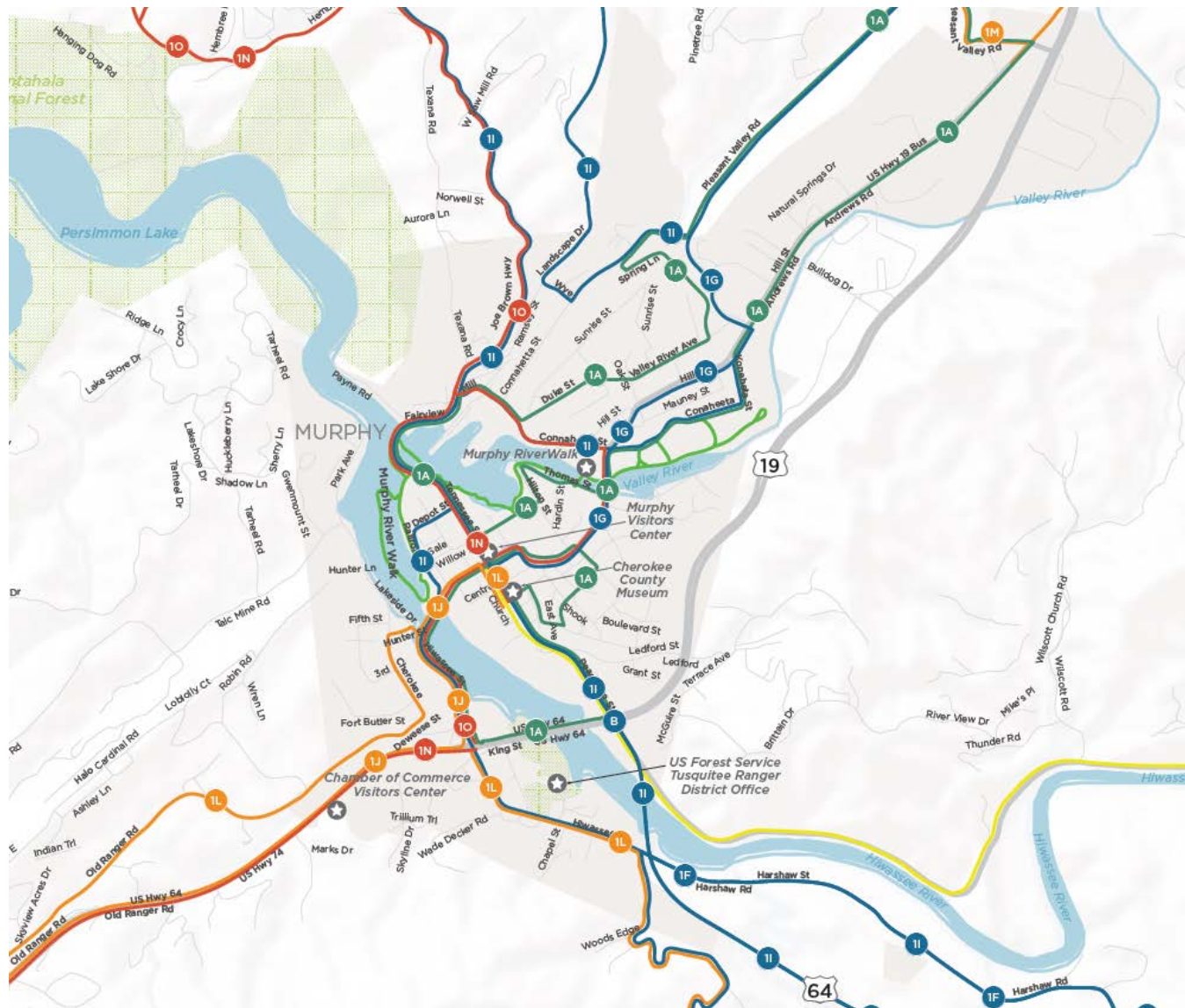
The housing study indicated that, while new positions were available for the workforce, there was limited available (affordable) housing for those workers.

Construction and development costs create challenges in developing more multifamily housing in Cherokee County. The feasibility analysis recommends an initial development that will attract existing residents and those moving to the area for new jobs. It recommends a mix of units to appeal to young professionals, transient workers, renters seeking roommates and families.

Southern Blue Ridge Bike Plan (2018)

The Southwestern Commission Council of Governments received a Bicycle & Pedestrian Planning Grant from the North Carolina Department of Transportation to complete a regional bicycle plan for Cherokee, Clay, Graham and Macon Counties. The Southern Blue Ridge Bike Plan provides a recommended bicycle system plan that includes recommendations for on-road bicycling, greenways, and mountain biking. The focus of this plan is to connect the Far West region as a whole through bicycle infrastructure and safety improvements, and the plan emphasizes the opportunity to generate significant economic impact through tourism, new business development, and enhanced property values by developing a robust and connected regional bicycle network.

Figure 26) Southern Blue Ridge Bike Plan Bicycle Routes (Murphy)



The Southern Blue Ridge Bike Plan featured numerous Cherokee County bike routes, including a loop around Murphy, a tour of TVA dams, and a Main Street to Main Street route between Murphy and Hayesville.

PRIORITY CORRIDORS *for* SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS:

CHEROKEE COUNTY

Old Ranger Road and Old Murphy Road - This plan attempts to route bicyclists along these roads instead of US Highway 64 to the southwest of Murphy. Four recommended routes traverse these roads and they are essential to bicyclist safety in the region. Until US-64 features bicycle lanes, these two roads should be prioritized for safety improvements.

NC-141 - From Marble to SR 1548 (Tri-County Community College and Murphy Medical Center). The Mountains-to-Sea Bike Route and two of this plan's recommended routes follow this road. Safety improvements would help connect Murphy, Marble, and Hayesville.

Airport Road - This road between Marble and Andrews, with three recommended bike routes, is a direct link between towns, connecting churches and schools. Until the Valley River Rail Trail comes to fruition, Airport Road should be prioritized for improvements in bicycle safety. Fairview Road should also be targeted for improvements.

State Highway 294, Lower Bear Paw Road, and Hiwassee Dam Access Road - These roads are pivotal to four recommended bike routes. Connecting US-64 to Hiwassee Dam safely for bicyclists would greatly help bicycle tourism in the county.

Valley River Ave - Five different bike routes come through Murphy from US-64 to Connahetta St.

2nd Street - Up to 9 different bicycle routes use this key downtown street through Andrews.

The Southern Blue Ridge Bike Plan highlighted some needed safety improvements to help make bicycling a more comfortable option in Cherokee County.

The Plan highlighted Old Ranger Road and Valley River Avenue as two key corridors in need of bicycle infrastructure, since many proposed bicycle routes ended up on those two roads for a segment.

A public input survey was deployed to collect information from residents on their bicycling habits and concerns to gain an understanding of potential opportunities for improvement. Results indicated strong interest in bicycling but significant safety concerns which prevent residents from bicycling as frequently as they would prefer.

The plan highlights bicycling successes within the region, which include the Town of Murphy's contributions to developing the Piney Knob mountain biking trails near town. Hanging Dog Trail is also mentioned as a 4-mile out-and-back gravel service road, combined with several planned singletrack loops off the main road. The plan notes that "this trail is seeing more use and that bicyclists are keen to develop the area further for recreation use" and that "Murphy could position itself as a major bicycling hub."

Project recommendations resulting from this plan include utilizing the existing 10-mile rail corridor that stretches from Andrews to Murphy to develop the Valley River Trail and developing regional bicycle routes, with themes such as “Main Streets” that connect two downtowns, to improve bicycle tourism in the area.

The plan also suggests design and policy updates for municipalities, particularly relating to downtown areas. It recommends Murphy update its regulations to contain specific policies that promote bicycling, such as bicycle rack requirements or provisions for traditional neighborhood development. It also recommends adopting a transportation mode hierarchy for Murphy's downtown core to help streamline decision-making and clarify priorities for different areas of the town based on the surrounding land use and transportation plans. Implementation of a pilot project in Murphy's downtown to install back-in angled parking could provide a traffic calming measure and improve safety for bicyclists and motorists. The plan encourages municipalities with Main Streets to organize annual Open Streets events, where the aim is to allow nonmotorized transportation to enjoy full use of the downtown core.

Cherokee County Tomorrow (2015)

A team of consultants lead by TSW completed the first comprehensive plan for Cherokee County, North Carolina. The plan, known as Cherokee County Tomorrow, was funded as part of the Southwestern North Carolina Opportunity Initiative (Opt-In), a regional planning effort also lead by TSW. Significant community involvement was key in a region where planning exercises are not common and can arouse suspicion. Outreach efforts included a week-long workshop involving 175 locals, participation from local elementary and high school students, an online survey, and a variety of public meetings.



Key issues addressed in the plan included health, transportation (including a major highway proposal, Corridor K), job and infrastructure growth, and local agriculture. Much effort was given to how to protect mountain culture, scenic landscapes, and sensitive environmental areas in the face of growth, while also preserving individual property rights.

Detailed plans were developed for a number of key areas to show: how redevelopment could occur around the new casino, how downtown Murphy could make best use of its historic depot, how rural crossroads could develop in a way that respects local character, and how a historic rail corridor could be repaired for freight and excursion service, with a nearby greenway for cyclists.

NCDOT Andrews-to-Murphy Rail Reactivation Study (2015)

The intent of this study was to evaluate the feasibility of reopening the rail line and includes technical studies of infrastructure needs, including the track, bridges, and supporting facilities; projections for costs and repairs; operational considerations; economic forecasts, including a market assessment, economic development potential, and funding sources; and an examination of the return on investment (ROI).

In order to evaluate the potential and viability of tourism, passenger, and/or freight rail on the Andrews to Murphy line, decision-makers and stakeholders examined not only objective measures, such as an economic development analysis, a market assessment, and detailed engineering site/infrastructure repair and cost projections, but also more subjective input, such as stakeholder interviews and comparative case studies. The rail line analysis used the NCDOT-adopted TREDIS (Transportation Economic Development Impact System) model to better understand the freight and ancillary development impacts.

According to the study, the rail line is still in relatively good condition. The track itself consists of lighter rail sections on timber crossties, while the bridges along the track are mostly timber trestles with two steel bridges over the Valley River. All of the bridges are in need of some repair, while culverts and roadway crossings are in need of an upgrade to support rail transportation at the current standard. There are sixty-six (66) roadway-rail crossings including sixty-four (64) at-grade crossings and two grade separated overhead bridges on the Andrews to Murphy section of the rail line.



The Rail Reactivation Study assessed the overall condition of the rail line to determine a rough estimate of the cost to bring the line back to life.



Including project design and incidentals, the total project cost is estimated to be \$17.4 million. In addition, approximately \$5 million of repairs and upgrades to local infrastructure in Andrews and Murphy are recommended to accommodate tourists using the rail service.

The findings of this study indicate that reactivating the Andrews to Murphy rail line to provide freight and tourism rail service would provide an economic boost to Cherokee County and should be considered along with other rail priorities in North Carolina. The railroad is in fair condition, repair costs and environmental considerations are reasonable, local interest tourism potential is high, economic development potential is very promising, and return on investment is reasonable. In fact, the results of this economic analysis indicate a boost to the regional economy of approximately \$60 million and the addition of nearly 1900 jobs over fifteen years - a wage related Benefit-Cost Ratio of greater than 3:1. These estimates include the cost of upgrading the railroad infrastructure (track, bridges, crossings, etc.) and address the broadbased economic benefit to the region as a whole.

Southwestern Commission Regional Trails Plan (2013)

In 2012 and 2013, the Southwestern Commission developed this Regional Trails Plan to be the first ever effort to catalog and plan for a future trail system across the Commission’s seven-county service area. Plan efforts were funded through the North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation’s State Trails Program. The planning process included data collection on existing regional trails, public workshops seeking input on ideas for new trails, and documentation of other trail considerations for the region.

Participants in the Southwestern Commission Regional Trails Plan workshops indicated a strong desire to promote the region as a recreation destination, increase opportunities for mountain biking, designate communities as Trail Towns, and link greenways and trails to schools and parks. The Plan acknowledges the challenges associated with making small towns walkable outside of downtown areas and that mountain bike trails need more broad-based planning to be successful. It provides guidance on ownership and maintenance of trails facilities based on the type of improvements needed and shows that interagency cooperation and a well-established volunteer network are critical in advancing trail development initiatives.

Throughout the development of the Plan, the Murphy River Walk & Canoe Trail was highlighted by participants and agencies as one of four notable projects to learn from and use as inspiration for future trail building efforts. The Plan identified building upon the success of the Murphy River Walk and expanding the Town’s greenway network as a primary opportunity. For example, “User-friendly maps, such as the one contained in the brochure for the Murphy River Walk and Canoe Trail, are critical for encouraging use and helping visitors orient themselves to the community. It is recommended that the region pursue development of a common set of maps of trails for day use that can be distributed to visitor centers, trailheads, area lodging, and restaurants.”

The Plan organizes priorities at regional and county levels. Cherokee County priorities include constructing a trail that links the Murphy River Walk to the Hanging Dog Campground and mountain bike trails. Evaluation of a rails-with-trails or rails-to-trails connection between Murphy and Andrews was also

Murphy River Walk & Canoe Trail

Murphy River Walk
& Canoe Trail

Length: 2 miles
Opened: 2003- phase 1
Total Cost: \$300,000
Volunteer Hrs: 6,000 (to build)
Users: 1,500 to 3,000/mo.

www.heritagepartners.org

Walkers along Murphy’s River Walk wave to canoers on the Hiwassee River. Photo: River Walk

A section of Heritage Partners' Murphy River Walk and Canoe Trail Brochure



identified as a significant opportunity and would be a long-term endeavor requiring either closure of the railway for a rails-to-trails conversion or land acquisition for rails-with-trails joint use in the corridor. The one regional priority involving the Town of Murphy is the development of a paddle trail along the Hiwassee River that would include designation of the River as a paddle trail between Hayesville and Murphy. Workshop participants noted that paddlers currently must stay on the water for long stretches or risk crossing private property at ingress/egress points. Such a project is considered to be regionally significant based on its visibility, likelihood to promote economic development and its multi-county impacts if completed. The Plan includes the Hiwassee Paddle Trail connecting Murphy to Hanging Dog Campground as a project that could be an ideal candidate for applications to grant programs such as the Recreation Trails Program or the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, since they already have some level of analysis completed or funding commitment for implementation.

Cherokee County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (2013)

In June of 2011, the Transportation Planning Branch of the North Carolina Department of Transportation and Cherokee County initiated a study to cooperatively develop the Cherokee County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP), which includes the towns of Andrews and Murphy. This is a long range multi-modal transportation plan that covers transportation needs through 2040. Modes of transportation evaluated as part of this plan include: highway, public transit, rail, bicycle, and pedestrian. This plan does not cover routine maintenance or minor operations issues. Findings of this CTP study were based on an analysis of the transportation system, environmental screening, and public input. The main recommendation for the Murphy area includes:

- **US 19/64/74/129:** Convert the existing five lane section from the end of the existing four lane section to Hiwassee Street to a four lane, divided section with a raised grass median as well as bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.

Figure 27) Cherokee County CTP Roadway Recommendations in Murphy

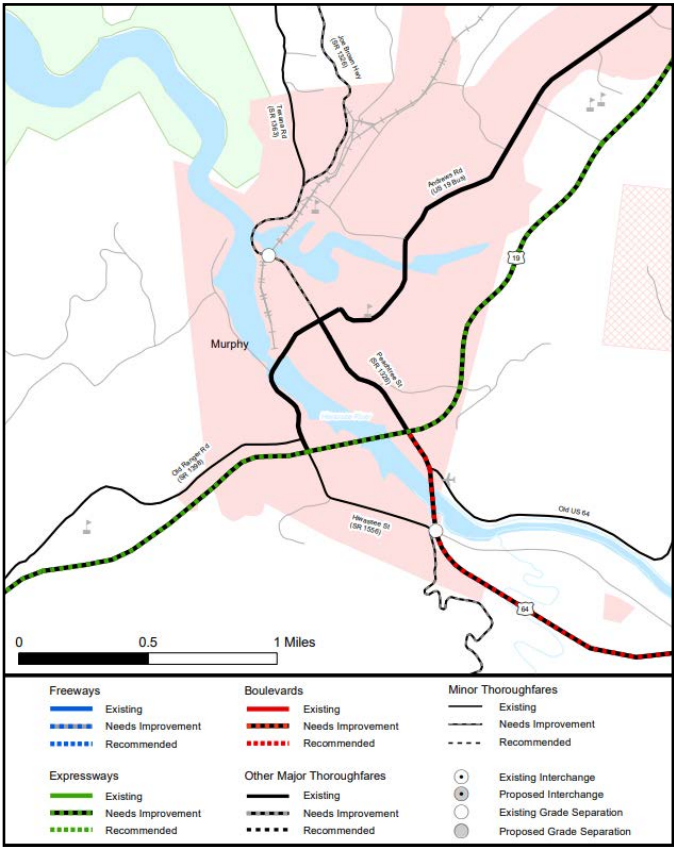


Figure 28) Cherokee County CTP Bicycle Recommendations in Murphy

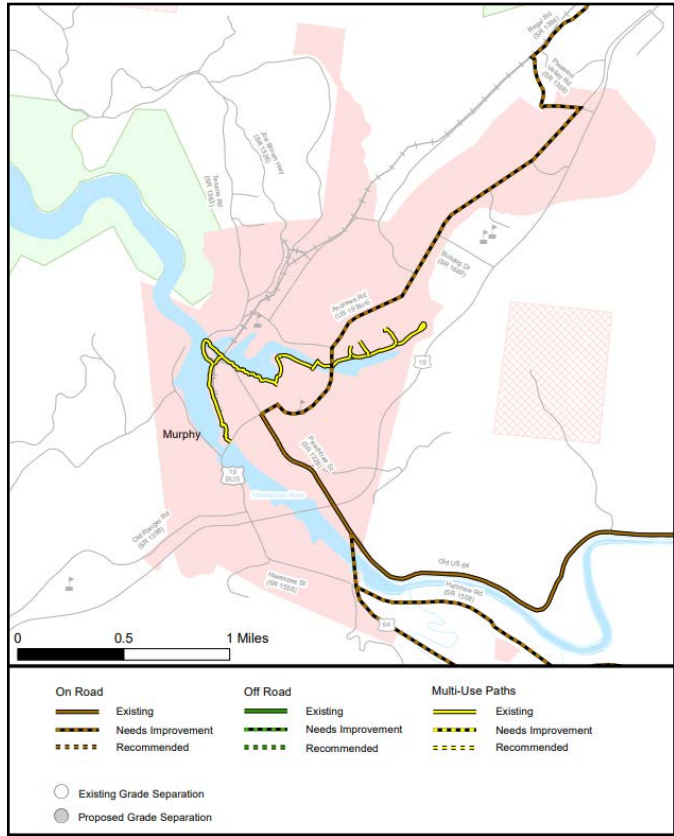


Figure 29) Cherokee County CTP Pedestrian Recommendations in Murphy

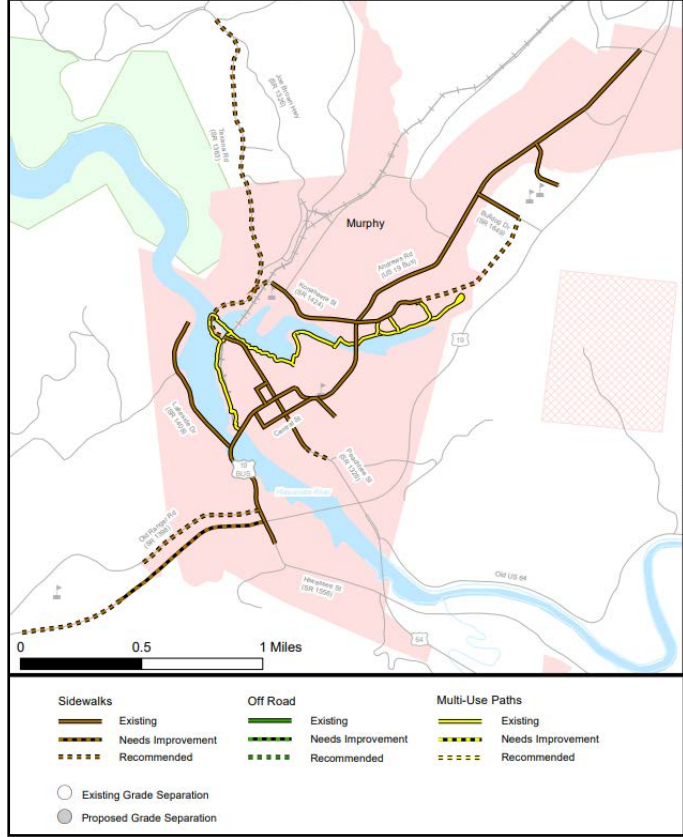
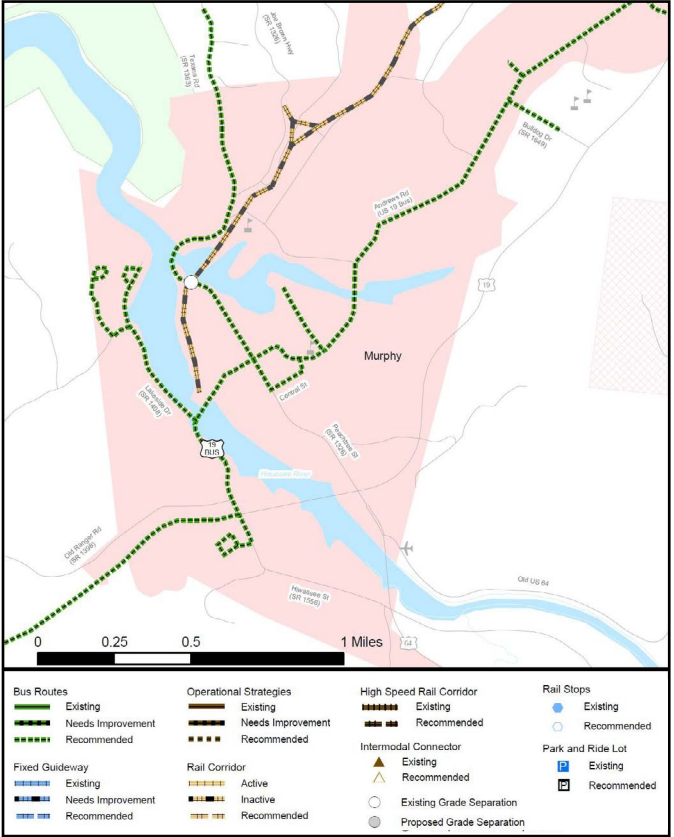


Figure 30) Cherokee County CTP Transit Recommendations in Murphy

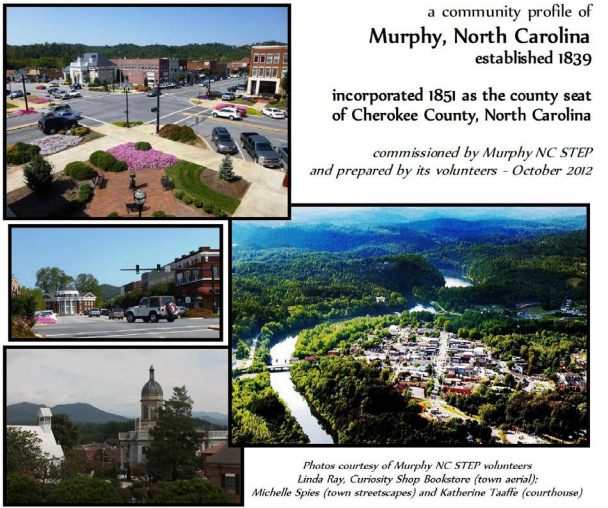


Murphy NC STEP Community Profile (2012)

The Murphy Small Town Economic Prosperity Program (STEP) commissioned completion of a community profile that was prepared by STEP's volunteers in 2012. STEP is a program offered by the NC Rural Economic Development Center that supports economic development, leverages financial support for community projects and initiatives, and offers technical assistance to the Town. STEP's mission is "To utilize existing resources to promote economic growth, foster positive change through education, nurture our cultural heritage, and increase the quality of life for all of those who live, work and visit in the greater Murphy community."

The Community Profile acknowledges:

- A strong public education system in Murphy and the greater Cherokee County.
- Murphy remains a popular place for retirees and families to migrate to due to less traffic congestion, lower crime rates, and lower taxes.
- Murphy offers a wide variety of housing options.
- The Murphy-area job market is limited, and more good paying jobs with good benefits are needed.
- Vacant buildings in the downtown business district and on the "4-lane" present opportunities for new businesses and jobs as well as "things to do" for people of all ages.



- There is an emerging, active arts community that can provide a host of cultural opportunities for residents and visitors.
- Reliable high-speed internet, wireless, and cell phone reception are spotty throughout the area.

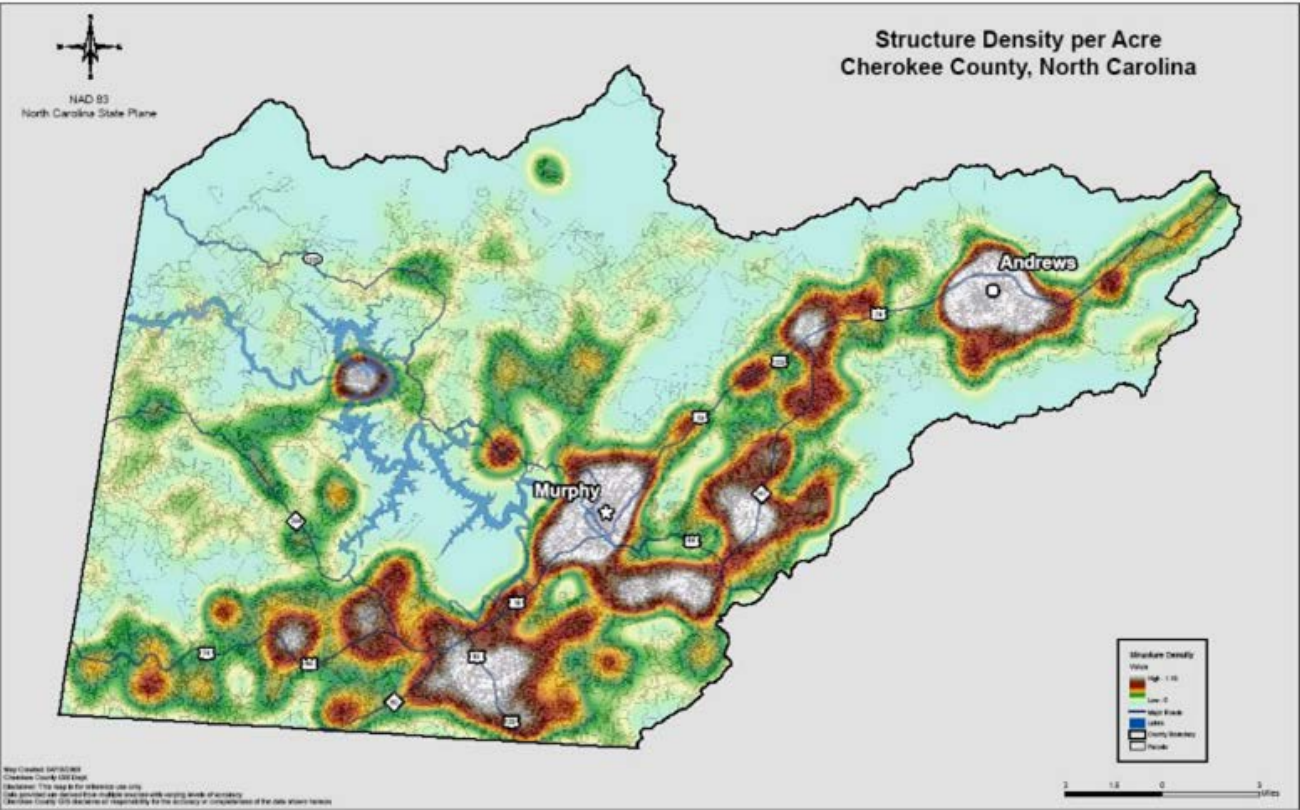
Offering and maintaining a high quality of life is stressed throughout the report which summarizes Murphy’s strengths as *“its small-town atmosphere, the beauty of its natural surroundings, and its culture of individual freedom”*.

The Community Profile provides U.S. Census population information for 2000 and 2010 for the Town of Murphy, the STEP project area (defined by Census blocks within a five-mile radius), the Murphy 28906 zip code, and Cherokee County. While the Town of Murphy’s population increased by 3.8 percent from 2000 to 2010, the STEP project area’s population increased by more than 23 percent which indicates more developable land is available on the outskirts of town rather than inside Town limits.

Cherokee County Farmland Protection Plan (2008)

In 2008, Cherokee County was awarded a grant from the North Carolina Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund to develop a County-wide Farmland Preservation Plan and establish practices that will protect and preserve the valuable farm soils of Cherokee County. The result is a comprehensive written report including recommendations for an actionable farmland protection plan. This plan centers on the goal: *“To maintain the rural character and economic diversity of Cherokee County, first by increasing the profitability of, and opportunities for, agricultural land uses, and second by supporting landowners who favor keeping their land in agriculture.”*

Figure 31) Cherokee County Structure Density per Acre



A map from the Cherokee County Farmland Protection Plan shows how development patterns follow topography, with existing towns constrained by waterways and slopes by percent of grade. This helps illustrate that most prime farmland is located in the same areas where structural density is highest. Areas colored in green are of optimal slope gradient for farming, housing, commercial, and transportation activities.

This plan provides a general overview of land use patterns, including population and housing trends. It notes that while Cherokee County has experienced a moderate rate of growth in recent decades that is lower than that of North Carolina as a whole, recent population increases can be attributed to an influx of retirees moving to the area. This also supports population age breakdowns that skew older; nearly 20 percent of Cherokee County’s population was over 65 compared to a state rate for rural counties of 13.5 percent. The plan also notes Cherokee County’s high home ownership rate of more than 82 percent and low rate of housing considered unaffordable at less than 15 percent. However, new residential development has trended towards construction of expensive retirement home and second homes, adding nuance to the County’s demographics. Interestingly, the plan’s land use analysis shows that more than 46 percent of non-federal land in Cherokee County is owned by persons living outside of the County.

The Towns of Andrews and Murphy have zoning ordinances that allow farm operations to be located within certain districts, but Cherokee County operates under an “unrestricted, open market land use policy” due to its lack of zoning and other land use regulations. This plan acknowledges the need for a coordinated County-wide comprehensive land use plan and planning process to address pressures associated with population growth and land scarcity.

Cherokee County created a Voluntary Agricultural District (VAD) ordinance in 1995 that encourages and protects commercial agriculture. VADs provide benefits to farmers who are willing to restrict non-agricultural development on their property for 10 years. A VAD requires a minimum of 20 contiguous acres of qualified farmland, or of two or more qualified farms which contain a minimum of 20 acres and are located within one mile of each other. As of 2008, Cherokee County had yet to establish a single VAD.



Murphy River Walk



Chapter 3:
Community Engagement & Plan Vision



Valley River Arts



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This chapter documents the public engagement process and demonstrates how public feedback has directly led to the vision, guiding principles, goals, and recommendations. The *Murphy 2042 Comprehensive Plan* project planning process embodied a truly comprehensive approach where each layer of engagement built upon previously gathered input so that the next layer of engagement intentionally refined the feedback collected. Efforts were made to gather responses from a cross-section that was representative of the Town's demographics.

Stakeholder Interviews

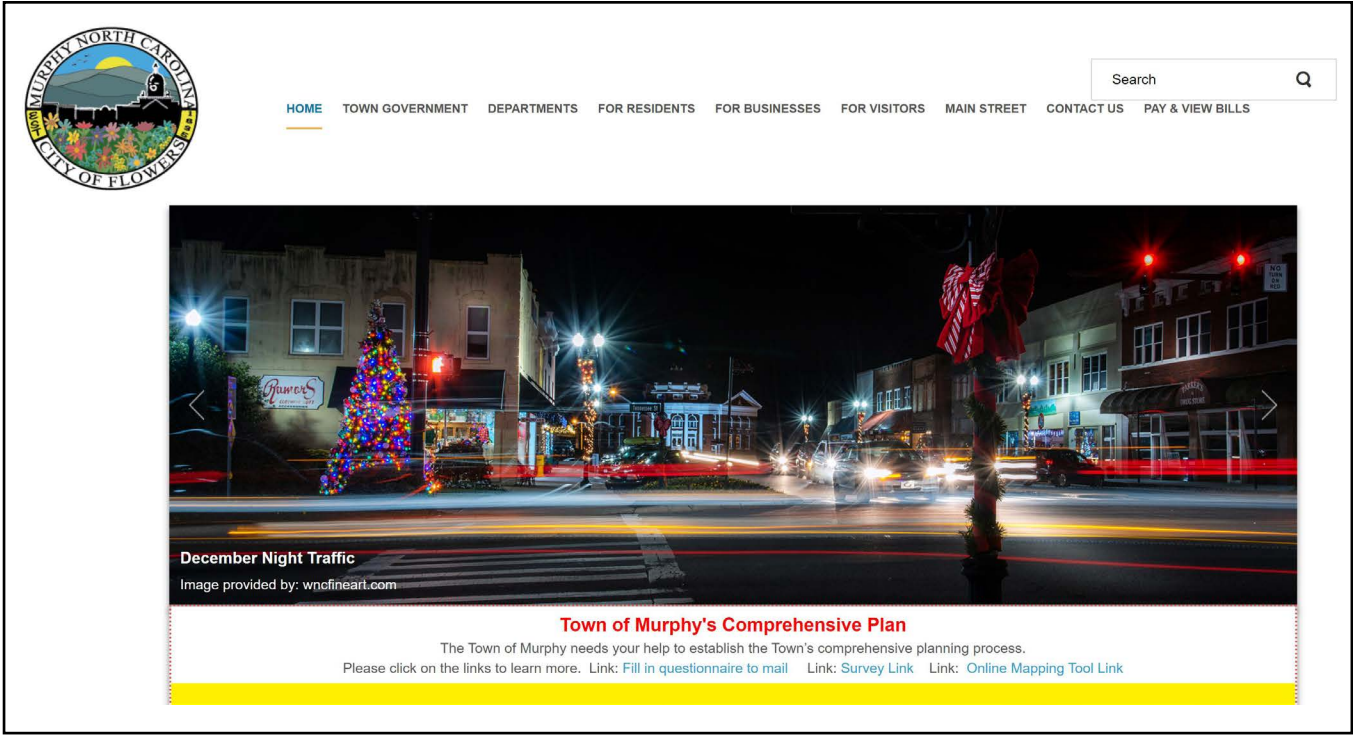
Over the course of one full day, the project team sat down for interviews with a diverse group of Murphy community members. Participating stakeholders included Town staff, Town Planning Board representatives, educators, community leaders, economic development and tourism officials, and representatives from the outdoor recreation community.

These conversations provided a foundation in understanding current trends and concerns and identifying opportunities and constraints warranting further investigation. They helped inform the structure of the Plan's focal points and gave the project team the vital local perspective necessary to build a planning document reflective of the community's challenges and opportunities.

Community Engagement Summary

- » Targeted stakeholder interviews
- » Steering Committee meetings
- » 988 Public Survey responses
- » 284 Interactive Online Mapping comments
- » Mobile visioning drop-in exhibit
- » Project updates on Town website and social media

Figure 32) Town of Murphy Website Screen Grab (Comprehensive Plan Update)



The Town regularly provided relevant project updates on its website in an effort to keep the *Murphy 2042 Comprehensive Plan* project at the forefront of the public's interest.

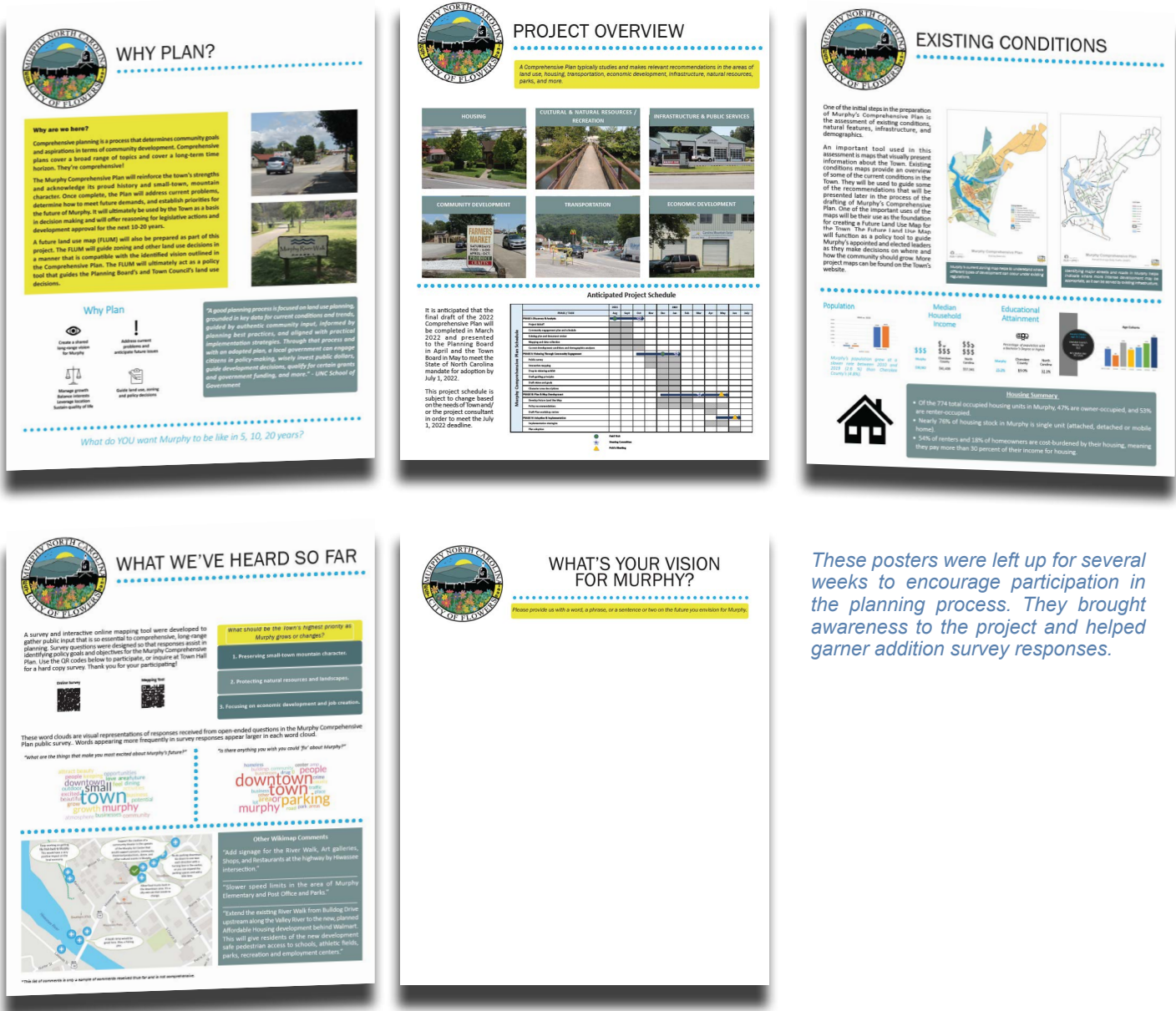
Project Steering Committee

A 10-person Steering Committee was formed of residents, business owners, and members of appointed boards. The Steering Committee met several times during the project to guide the efforts and to provide input into the drafting of the *Murphy 2042 Comprehensive Plan*.

Mobile Visioning Exhibit

A mobile visioning exhibit was created as a way for the Town to take engagement materials to the people. Exhibit materials included five posters with Plan information, where passersby could learn about the project and provide pressing thoughts and creative ideas.

These poster boards gave people an opportunity to learn about the plan process, understand the reasons for planning in the first place, offer feedback via write-in comments, and access the survey and online mapping tool.



These posters were left up for several weeks to encourage participation in the planning process. They brought awareness to the project and helped garner addition survey responses.

Survey and Interactive Mapping

A survey and interactive online mapping tool were developed to gather public input that is so essential to comprehensive, long-range planning. The 14-question survey asked respondents about their visions and priorities for the Town. Survey questions were designed so that responses assist in identifying policy goals and objectives for the *Murphy 2042 Comprehensive Plan* and were made available in digital and print formats. Town staff also included hard copy surveys in the Town's December 2021 water bill mailings.

✓

Keep

✗

Toss

+

Create

Along with the survey, people had the option to add comments to an interactive online map. The map, advertised alongside the survey with its own QR code, gave people three "buttons" to add to a map of Murphy. They could pinpoint something they wanted to keep (i.e. something they love about Murphy), something they wanted to get rid of, and/or something new they thought would be a good idea. The interactive online mapping tool enabled respondents to geo-locate opportunities and challenges and leave individualized comments.



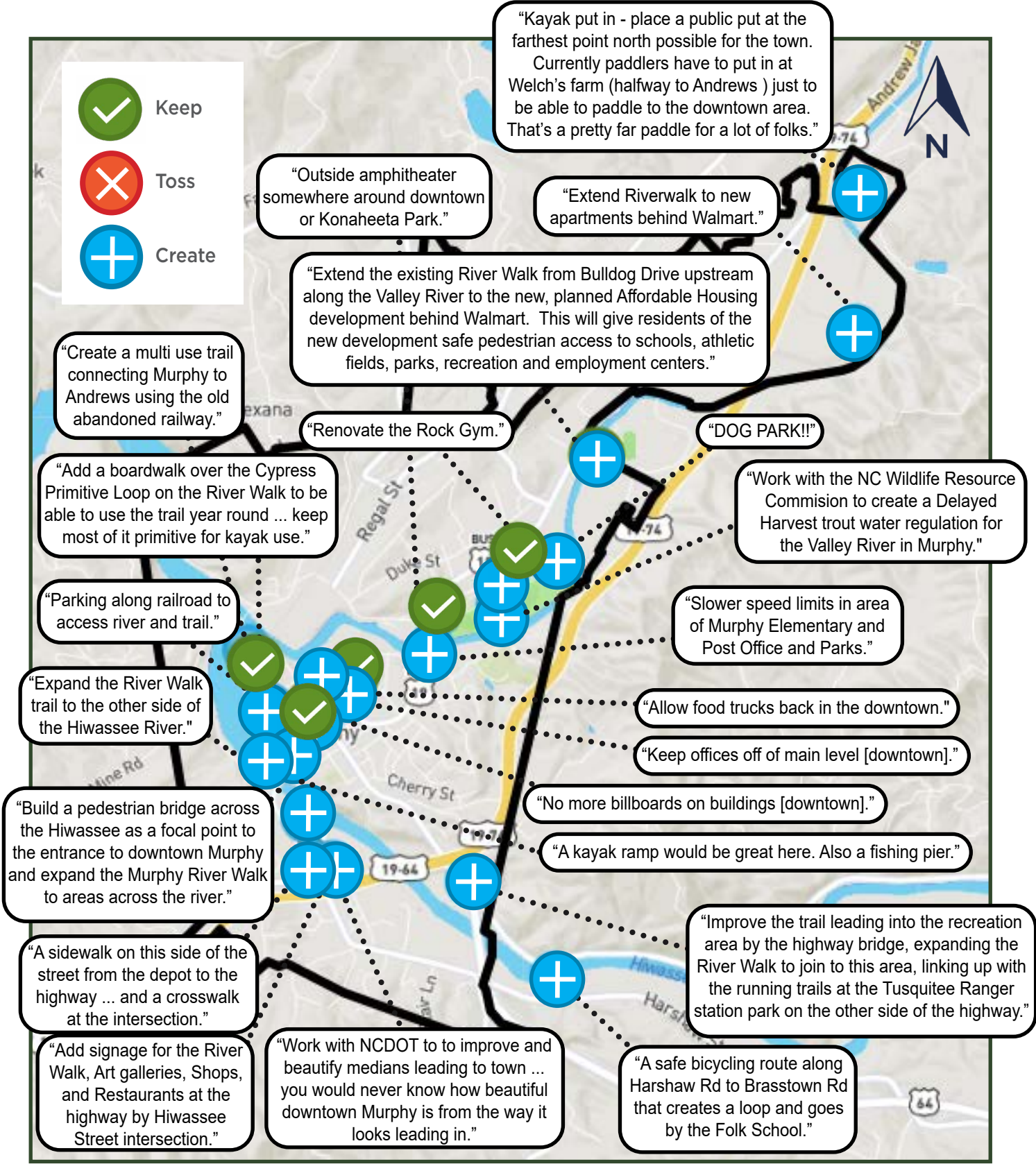
A one-page flyer was developed for Town staff to distribute and "get the word out" about the project. The flyer included QR codes for the online survey and mapping tool so that individuals could access either directly from their mobile devices.

What should be the Town's highest priority as Murphy grows or changes?

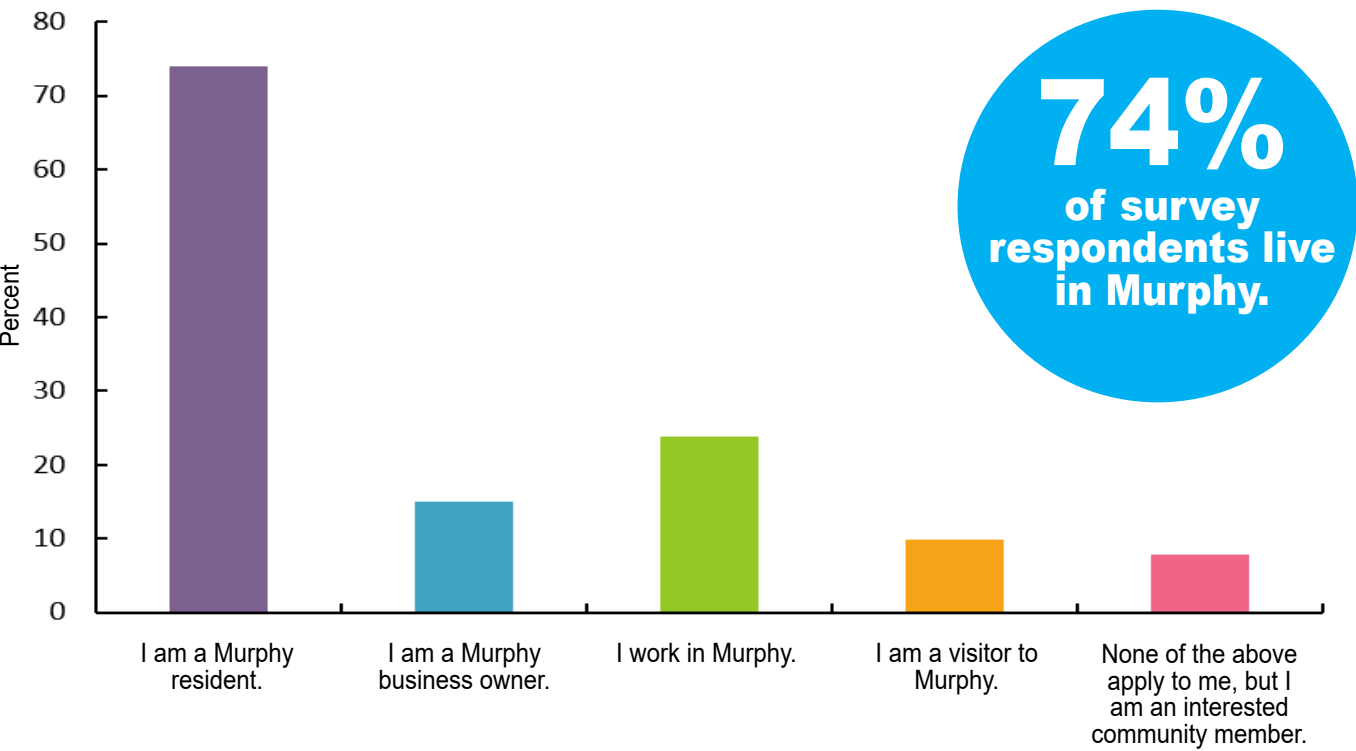
KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Preserving small-town mountain character.
2. Protecting natural resources and landscapes.
3. Focusing on economic development and job creation.

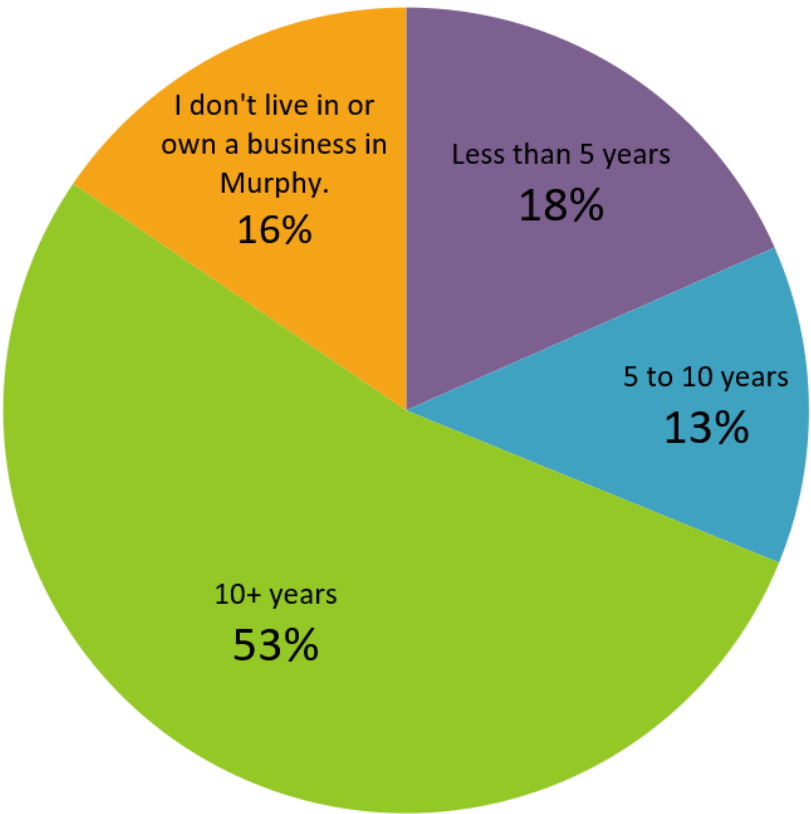
Figure 33) Online Mapping Tool Comments



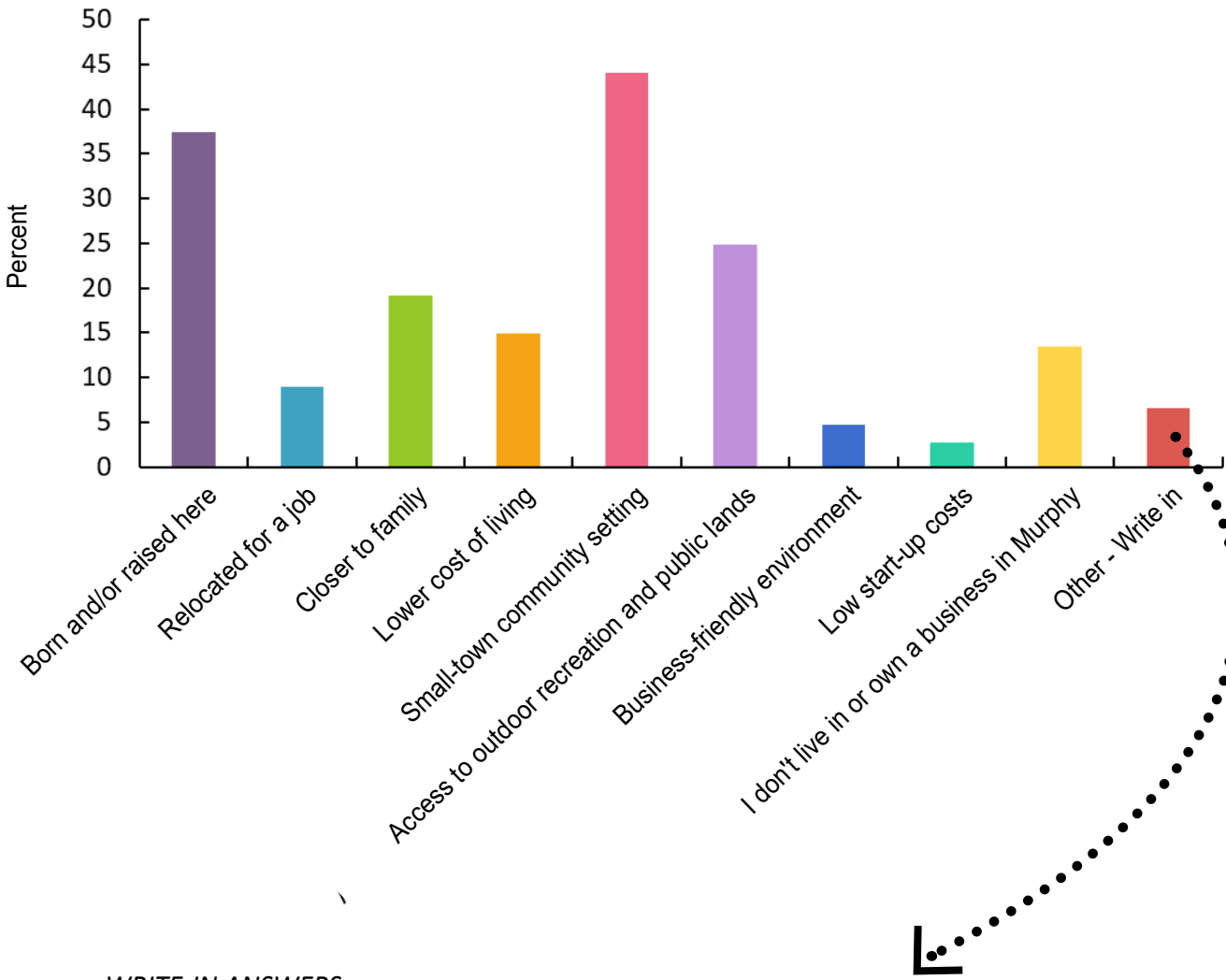
1.) Which statement best describes you? *Select all that apply.*



2.) How long have you lived in or owned a business in Murphy?



3.) If you live or own a business in Murphy, what are the reasons that affected your decision to live or open your business here? *Select all that apply.*

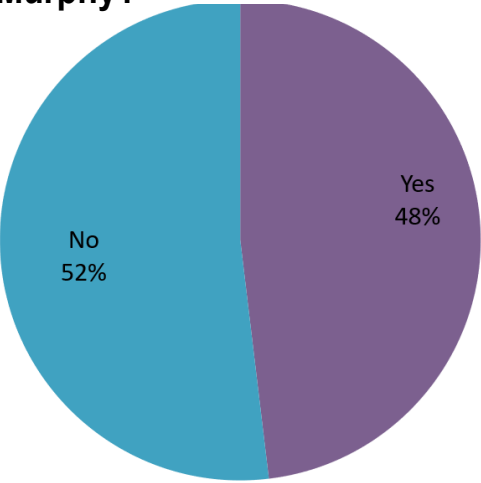


WRITE-IN ANSWERS:

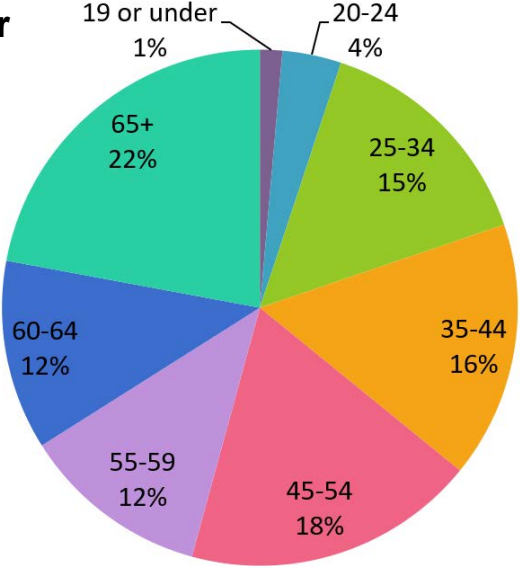
- Beautiful setting, great people
 - Bought grandparents' land
 - Clean air and water. Open minded locals. Outdoor recreation
 - Found a cabin on a creek and bought it!
 - Mountain living
 - Proximity to John C Campbell Folk School
 - Proximity to the John C Campbell school
 - Raised here
- Retired liked the area
 - Retiree
 - River Walk trails
 - Spouse is from murphy
 - The John Campbell folk school
 - The beauty, the slower pace of life, the friendly people
 - The folks here, the natural beauty
 - Wanted out of the big concrete jungle!

NOTE: This represents a sample of responses for Question 3. For a complete list of write-in responses, please see the Appendix.

4.) Do you pay property taxes to the Town of Murphy?



5.) What is your age range?



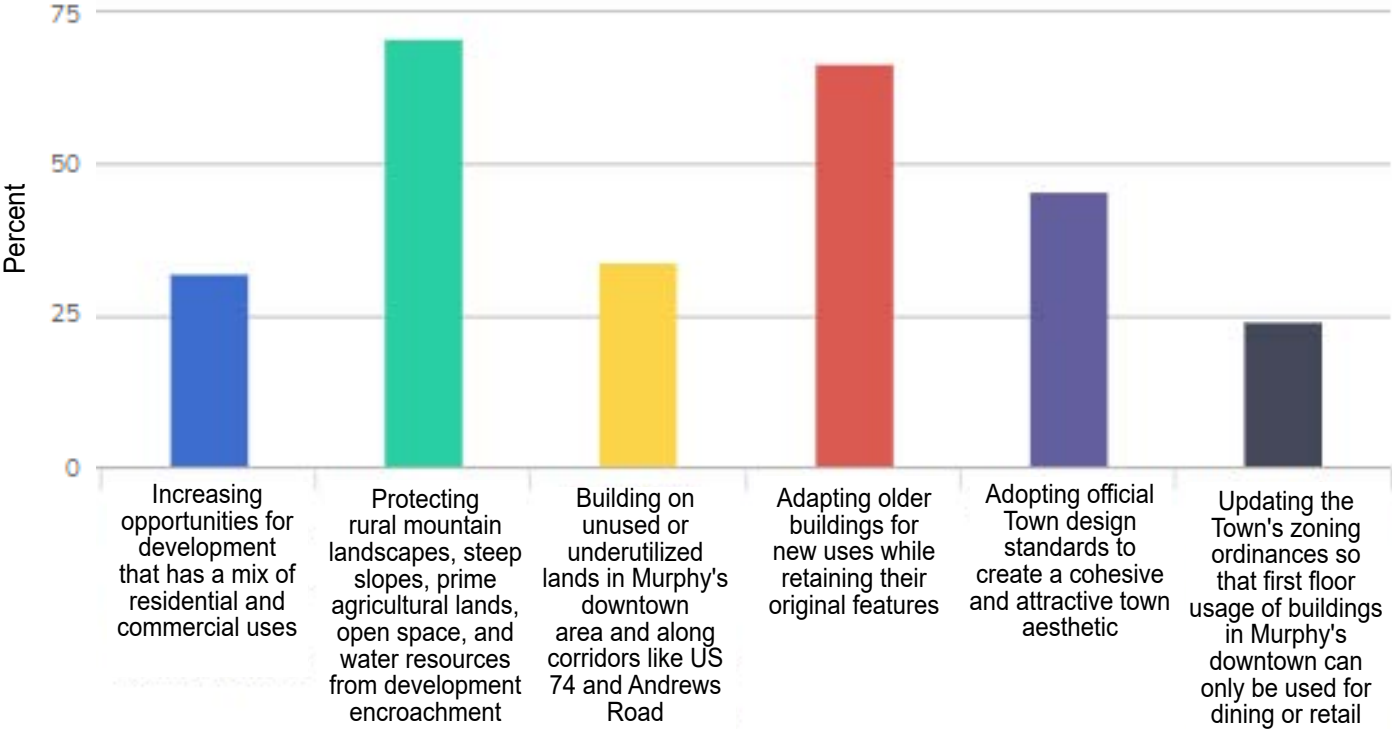
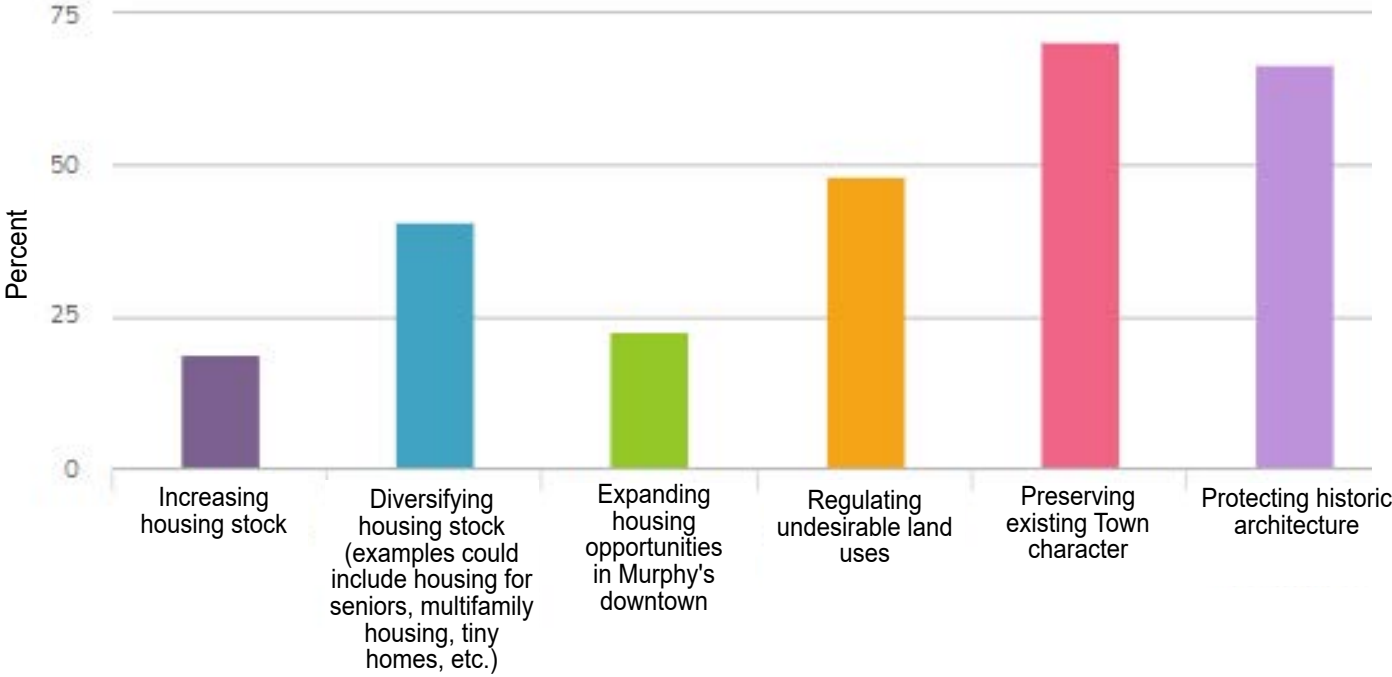
6.) What should be the Town’s highest priority as Murphy grows or changes? (Rank in order from 1-11 with 1 being the most critical priority.)

Item	Overall Rank	Rank Distribution
Preserving small town mountain character	1	<div><div></div></div>
Protecting natural resources and landscapes	2	<div><div></div></div>
Focusing on economic development and job creation	3	<div><div></div></div>
Managing population growth and new development	4	<div><div></div></div>
Expanding access to parks, trails, and open space	5	<div><div></div></div>
Upgrading water/wastewater infrastructure and improving public services	6	<div><div></div></div>
Attracting younger residents, visitors, and business owners	7	<div><div></div></div>
Promoting access to affordable and diverse housing options	8	<div><div></div></div>
Improving transportation infrastructure, including bicycle and pedestrian facilities	9	<div><div></div></div>
Providing incentives to encourage new businesses to locate in the downtown	10	<div><div></div></div>
Keeping taxes low and reducing municipl services [police, fire, streets]	11	<div><div></div></div>

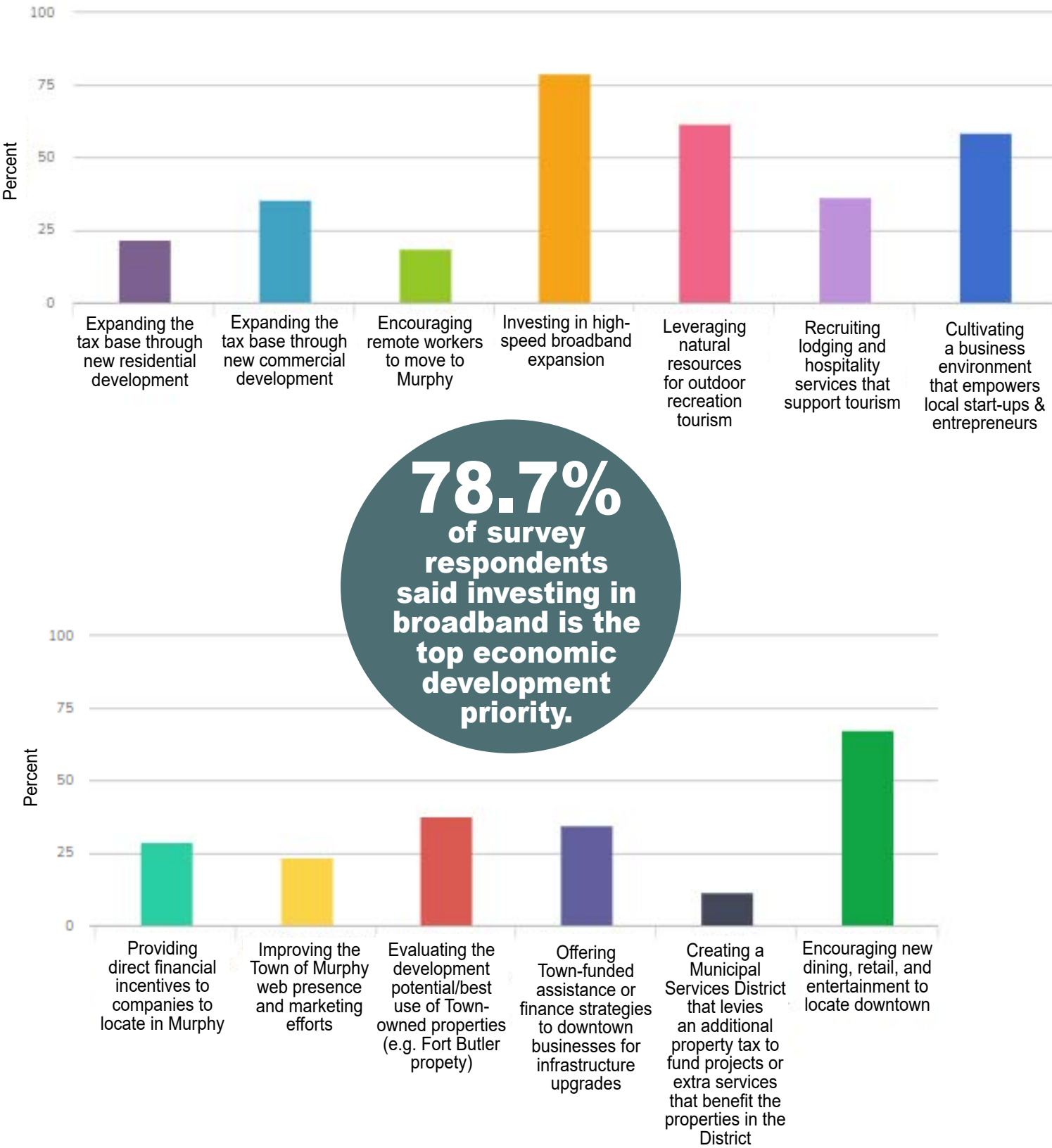
Lowest Rank

Highest Rank

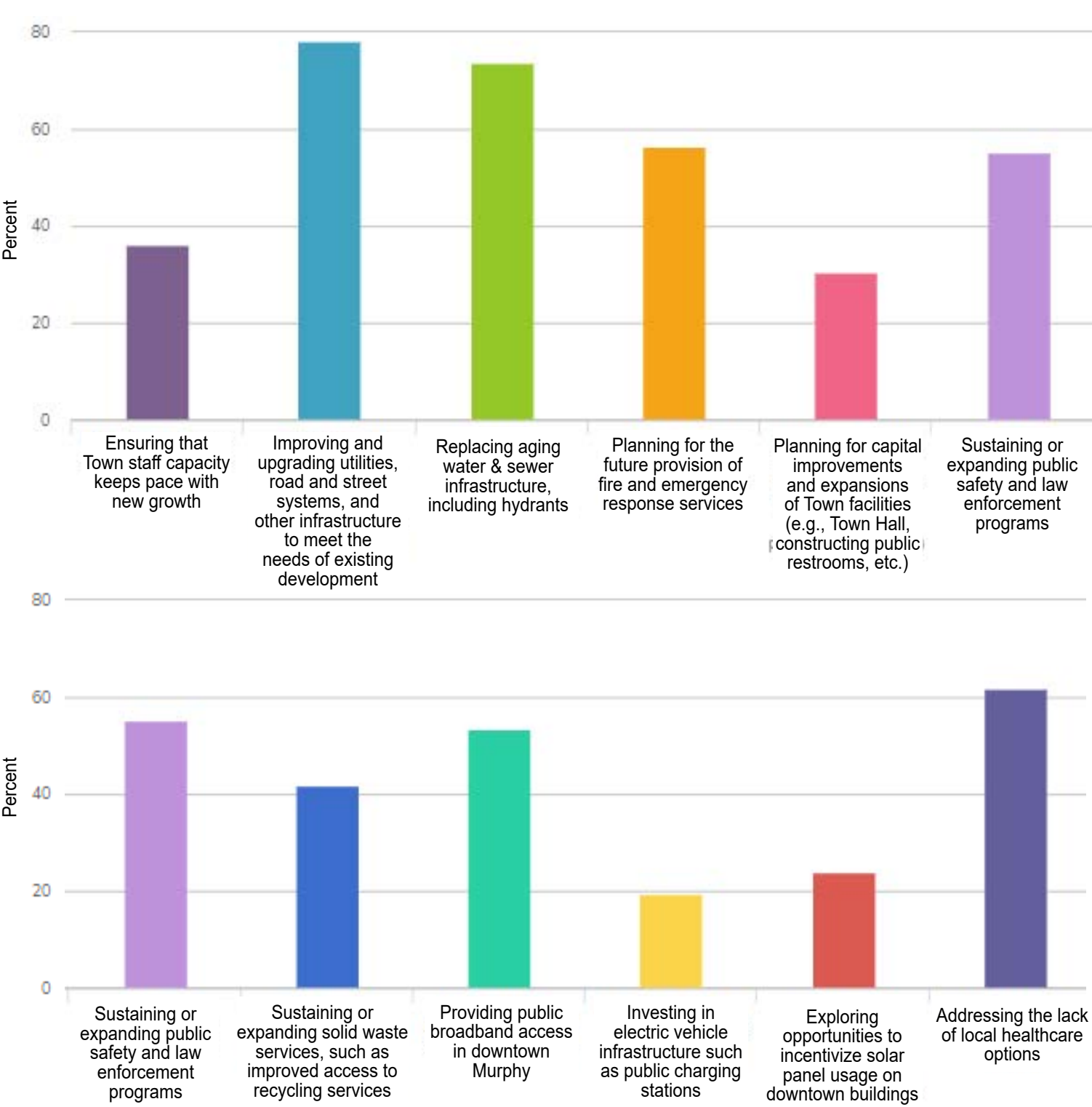
7.) What should be the six (6) most important Land Use & Development priorities for the Town of Murphy? Please select no more than six.



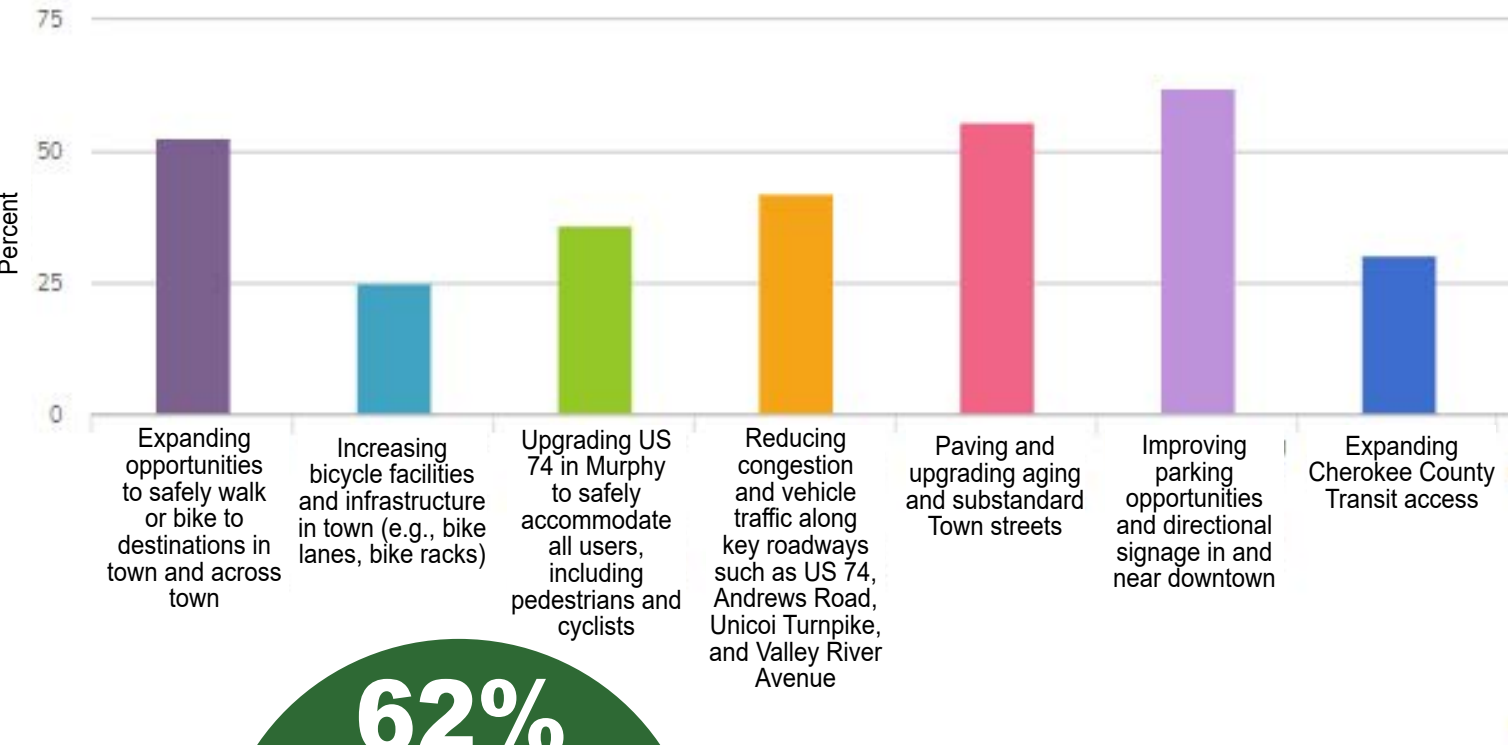
8.) What should be the six (6) most important Economic Development priorities for the Town of Murphy? Please select no more than six.



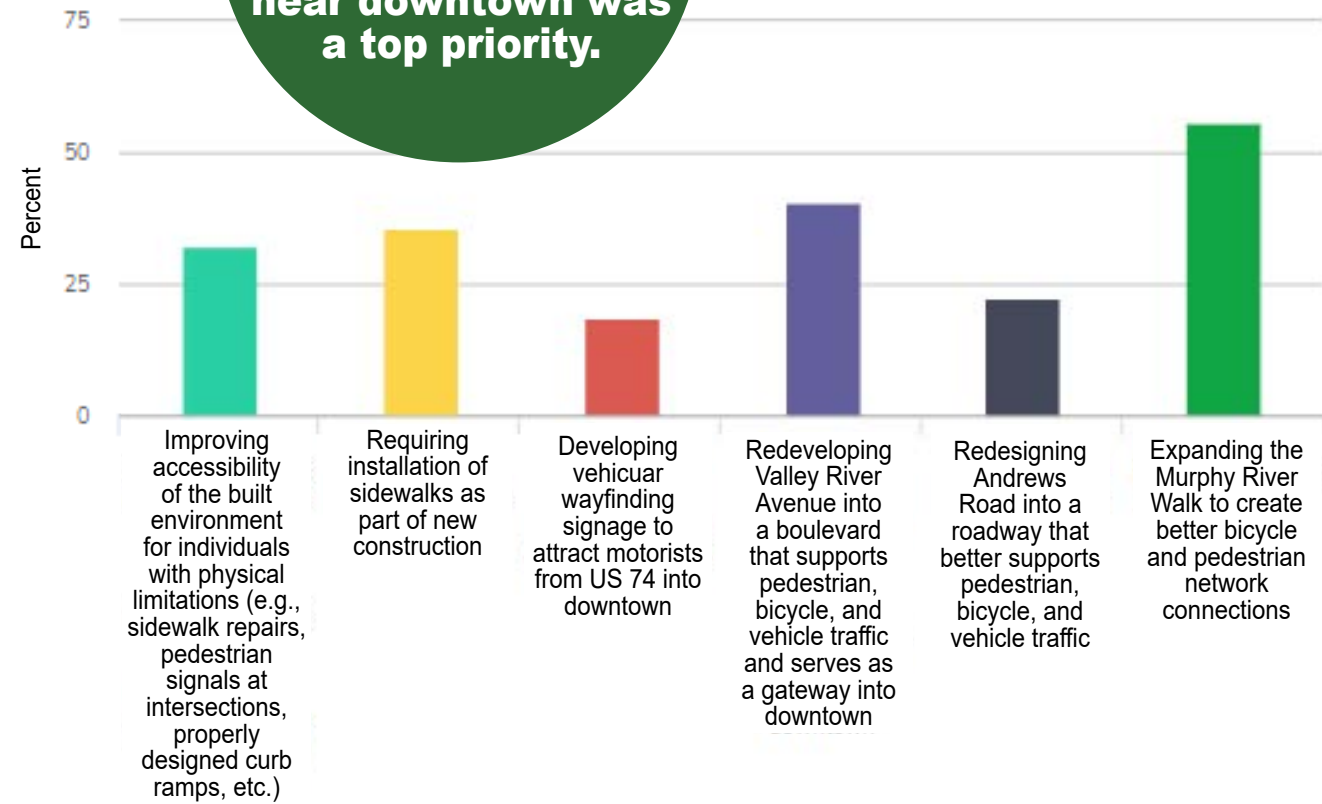
9.) What should be the six (6) most important Infrastructure & Service priorities for the Town of Murphy? Please select no more than six.



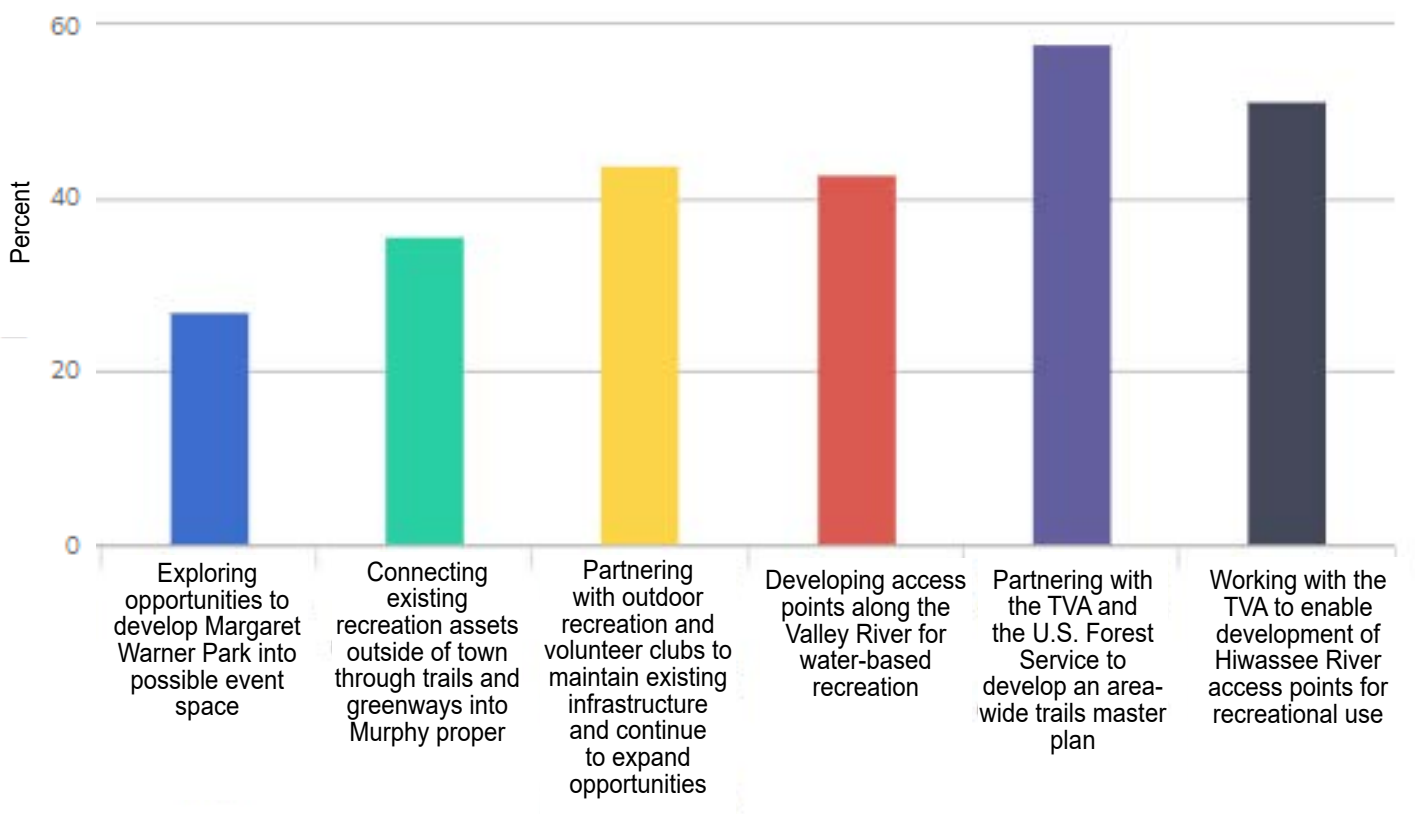
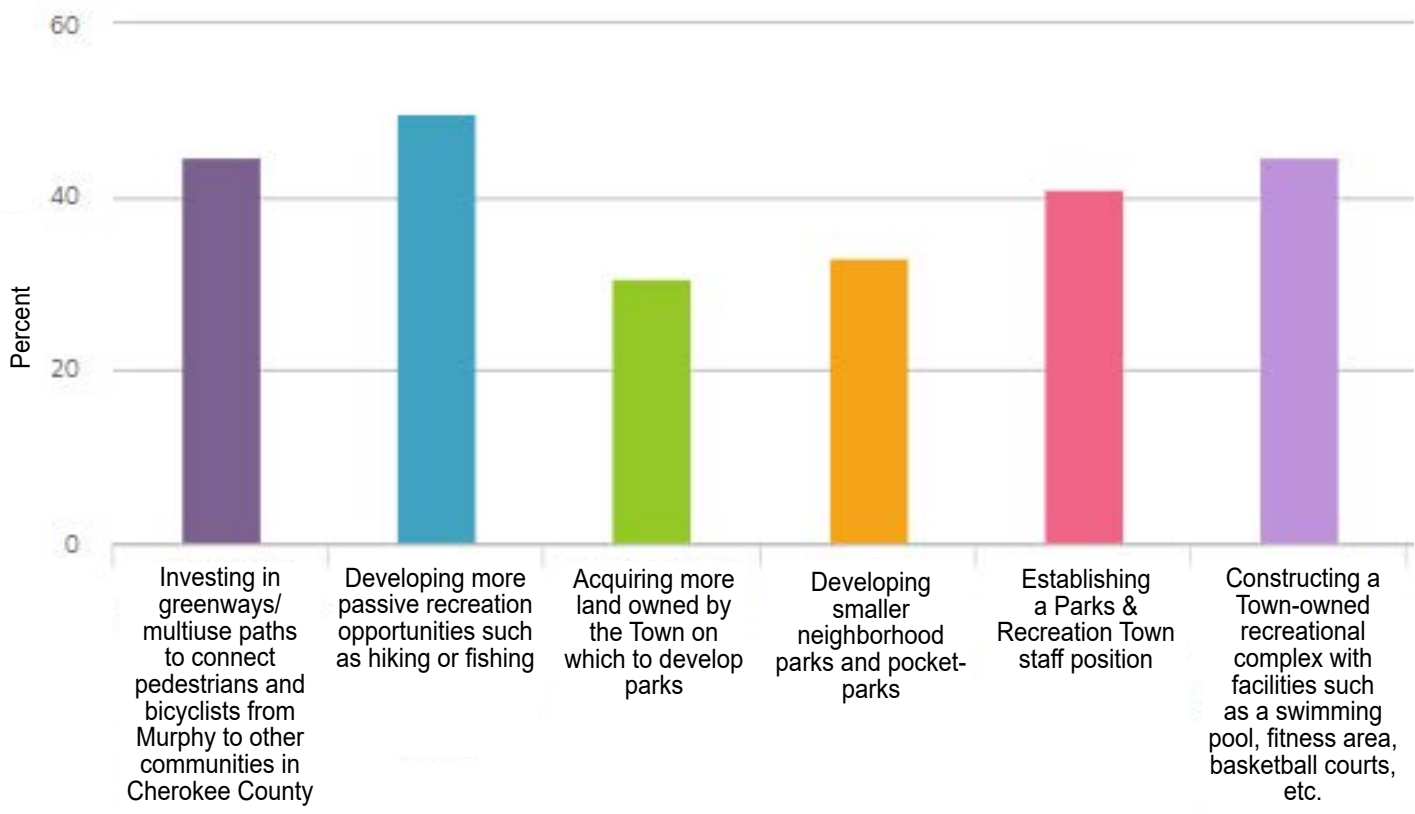
10.) What should be the six (6) most important Transportation & Mobility priorities for the Town of Murphy?? Please select no more than six.



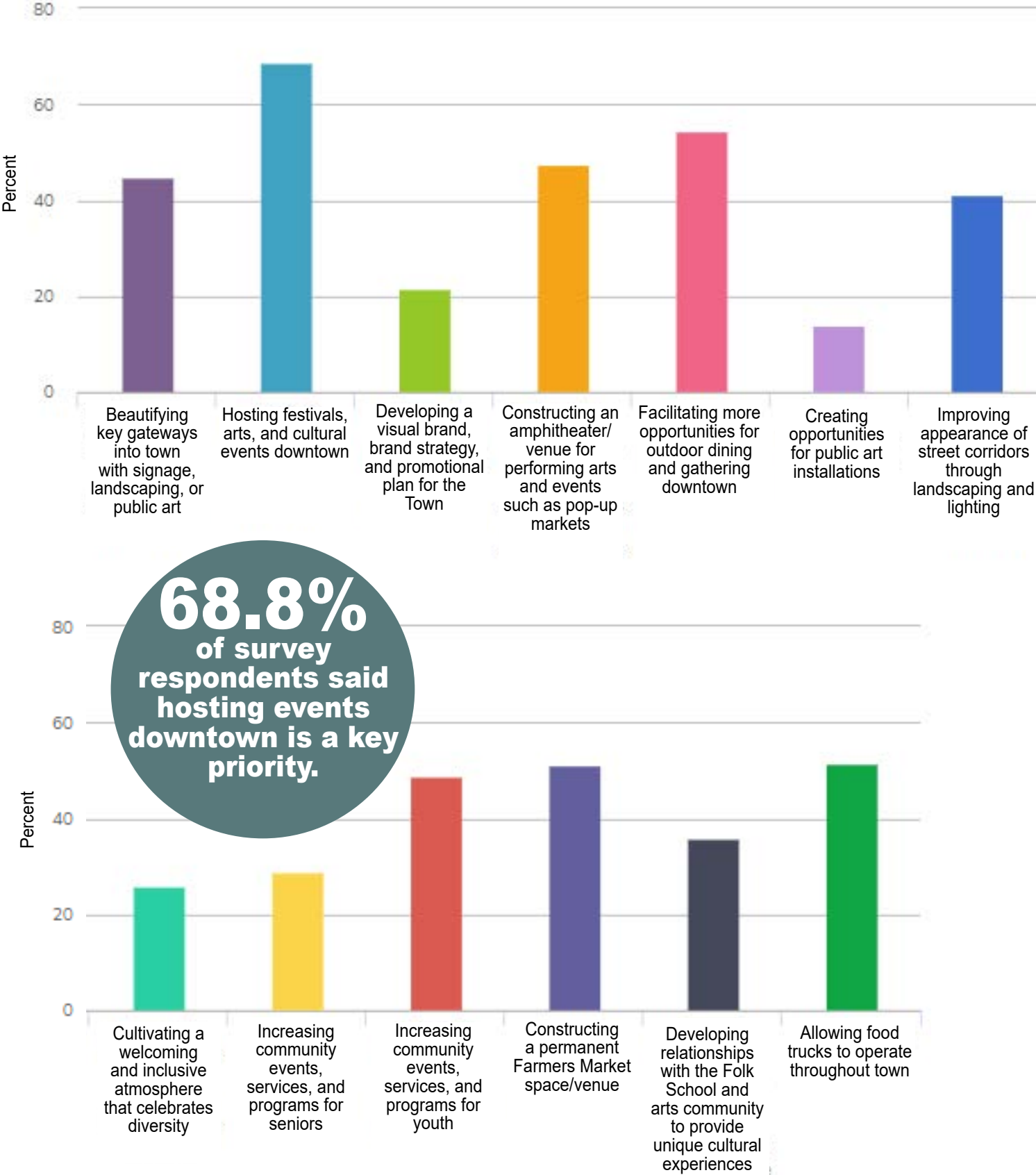
62%
of survey
respondents said
improving parking
opportunities in or
near downtown was
a top priority.



11.) What should be the six (6) most important Parks & Recreation priorities for the Town of Murphy? Please select no more than six.



12.) What should be the six (6) most important Community Development priorities for the Town of Murphy? *Please select no more than six.*



13.) What are the things that make you most excited about Murphy's future?

NOTE: This represents a sample of responses for Question 13. For a complete list of write-in responses, please see the Appendix.

"The opportunities the town has to continue to be one of the best small towns in America."

"The new Mayor & Town Council, our current Town Manager! It's moving forward in the best hands. We are growing and on top of it!"

"A vision that encourages growth while maintaining the small town charm."

"The growth and the opportunities that would be provided to our youth."

"Embracing tourism as our major industry. Hiking, bicycling, boating, fishing.... All take advantage of our natural beauty without destroying it."

"Remaining strong!"

"The volunteer organizations that have creative ideas to make Murphy a tourist and arts destination."

"I would love for my daughters to come back here to raise their families after college."

"Expanding recreational activities, both indoor and outdoor."

"More housing and dining."

"Murphy has wonderful natural recreational assets and a diverse economy."

"Maintaining small town atmosphere."

"Giving Murphy a facelift but keeping its character and history intact."

"Support tourism but making it manageable with parking and traffic."

"I want to keep my hometown feeling like a thriving hometown."

"The future possibilities of more dining options, music/event venues, and outdoor activities."

"Love to see railway made into a greenway trail."

"Potential for increase broadband access to create a draw to working professionals."

"Cultural events."

"Young people and families moving here."

"Expanding sidewalks and pedestrian access to downtown."

"I'm excited about progressive leaders who love Murphy and are willing to embrace change and creative ways to expand rather than bring 'industry' here."

"More businesses geared towards the actual residents of Cherokee County."

"Combining the historic charm with an eco-friendly future."

"Expanding sidewalks and pedestrian access to downtown."

"Abandoned rail line would make a great 'Rails to Trails' facility that will bring visitors and new businesses to downtown"

"Broadband access and electric vehicle charging stations should absolutely be a part of our future vision."

"Great people!"

"Outdoor dining (having a beer with my pizza and dog)."

"Location, weather, community spirit and leadership that looks to the future."

14.) Is there anything you wish you could “fix” about Murphy that wasn’t covered in previous questions?

NOTE: This represents a sample of responses for Question 14. For a complete list of write-in responses, please see the Appendix.

“It is going to be crucial for the town to maintain/upgrade infrastructure as well as other public services in order to keep up with the growing number of residents/visitors to the area.”

“Parking parking parking parking parking ... in that order!”

“Continued focus on decreasing the drug problem, and must have more housing and public transit options!”

“The town of Murphy needs more parking spaces to help proactively accommodate growth & tourism.”

“Improve Murphy without completely remaking it.”

“Lower the speed limit throughout town to 25mph.”

“Handicapped parking [and accessible] crosswalks.”

“Better rehab programs for drug addicts.”

“Offer incentives to fix up unoccupied and disheveled buildings, homes, and land.”

“Pass a law prohibiting highway billboards.”

“Aesthetic guidelines related to preserving our downtown buildings.”

“We need NEW retail.”

“An indoor pool for kids.”

“Establish an architectural review committee and stop allowing all of the metal buildings along 64/74.”

“More parks/playgrounds for children.”

“We need more patrol officers on the streets.”

“More affordable housing!”

“Have community vegetable gardens, a place for comedy shows, plays, poetry / folklore readings, live music ... open the park up to live music every weekend and open air movie nights.”

“Make Murphy appealing to visitors and residents with good roads, jobs and outdoor recreation, and the people will come.”

“We need living spaces on second floor of downtown.”

“I would like to see Hanging Dog recreation area to become a thriving campground linking the town of Murphy to the area with a multi purpose trail and improve the recreation services that already exist.”

“Volleyball areas, frisbee golf, [and] places to ride bikes.”

“We need a dog park!”

“Open door policy to mayor and commissioners.”

“Helping the hospital and its growth is very important to this area.”

“Increase support for non-profit organizations.”

“Improve ways to promote local activities via the Scout or municipal website.”

“Staying on top of the sewer infrastructure and getting as many people off of septic systems as possible.”

Plan Vision & Guiding Principles

A guiding vision complemented by community-driven guiding principles is central to the development of a meaningful, accessible comprehensive land use plan. A successful vision encompasses what community members most value about Murphy, captures a shared image of what the community wants Murphy to become, and inspires people to work together to achieve that vision. It is forward thinking. This vision articulates ways of understanding and describing the desired future expressed by the Murphy community. It should be used by the community, Town staff, and elected officials to guide development of goals, objectives, and policies and will serve as the prism through which future proposals and actions will be evaluated. It acts as the *Murphy 2042 Comprehensive Plan* touchstone.

Vision Statement

"Murphy is a small mountain town with a strong, vibrant population that cherishes community, embraces the natural beauty that surrounds it, supports and encourages the success of local industry, and fosters artistic creativity."

Guiding Principles

1. Maintain and accentuate the distinct character of Murphy’s historic downtown.
2. Protect and enhance Murphy’s unique natural resources and defining mountain landscapes.
3. Encourage new and creative housing opportunities that meet the needs of multiple generations.
4. Provide high quality of life supported by updated infrastructure and the efficient and effective delivery of public services.
5. Support and sustain an economy that promotes local commerce, tourism, cultural opportunities, and outdoor recreation.
6. Develop a comprehensive, safe, and well-functioning transportation network that accommodates various modes of travel, including walking, biking, and transit.
7. Establish Murphy as a regional destination and focal point for outdoor recreation.



The Valley River is a designated hatchery-supported public mountain trout water



Chapter 4: Future Land Use



Natural area along the Murphy River Walk near the tennis courts



Future Land Use Map Framework

Existing conditions regarding land use, zoning districts, historic development patterns, public infrastructure, environmental conditions, recreation/civic/cultural assets, and public input all factor into the development of a future land use map (FLUM).

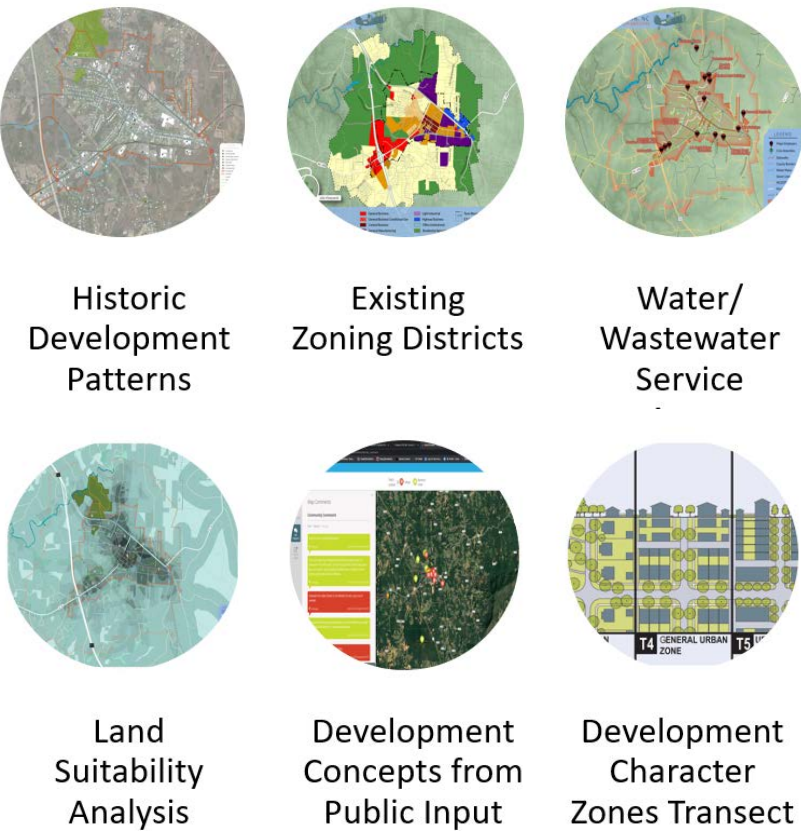
Murphy’s Future Land Use Map is informed by:

- The Town’s historic development patterns
- Existing land use policy, such as existing zoning districts and ordinances
- Current water/wastewater service areas
- Environmental factors such as topography and flood zones
- Development preferences and future goals articulated during Stakeholder interviews, Steering Committee meetings, and public engagement

The FLUM is a policy tool. It is intended to be used in guiding Murphy’s appointed and elected leaders as they make decisions on where and how the community should grow. The FLUM is different from the Town’s zoning map which is a regulatory tool. Murphy’s zoning map is a visual representation on which local and state regulations apply to parcels of land organized into Town-specific zoning districts. However, the FLUM and Town zoning work together – the Future Land Use Map influences and informs zoning as a way to achieve desired growth patterns identified by the Town and its stakeholders.

The FLUM helps to provide a framework for orchestrating appropriate patterns of development and conservation throughout Murphy’s planning jurisdiction. When Town staff, the Planning Board, and Town Council consider specific development requests like re-zonings or zoning ordinance amendments, they should be doing so with the Future Land Use Map in mind to determine whether the request is consistent with the policy vision that is articulated by the comprehensive Future Land Use Framework.

Figure 34) Future Land Use Map "Ingredients"



The FLUM is not an exact prediction of future land use patterns. Instead, it approximates what the community may look like if population, housing, and employment forecasts prove true, and if land policies, implemented to reach the desired future, are successful - a vision of a possible future. It becomes the local governing body’s responsibility to implement policies that help to make the community’s vision a reality.

Character Areas

The Murphy Future Land Use Framework is organized according to nine Development Character Areas. These areas are illustrated by the rural-urban transect, which establishes a spectrum of land classification that relates density and intensity of development potential to environmental conditions and existing human settlement patterns.

They address land use, but are also intended to direct growth according to character and intensity, rather than strictly on separation of uses.

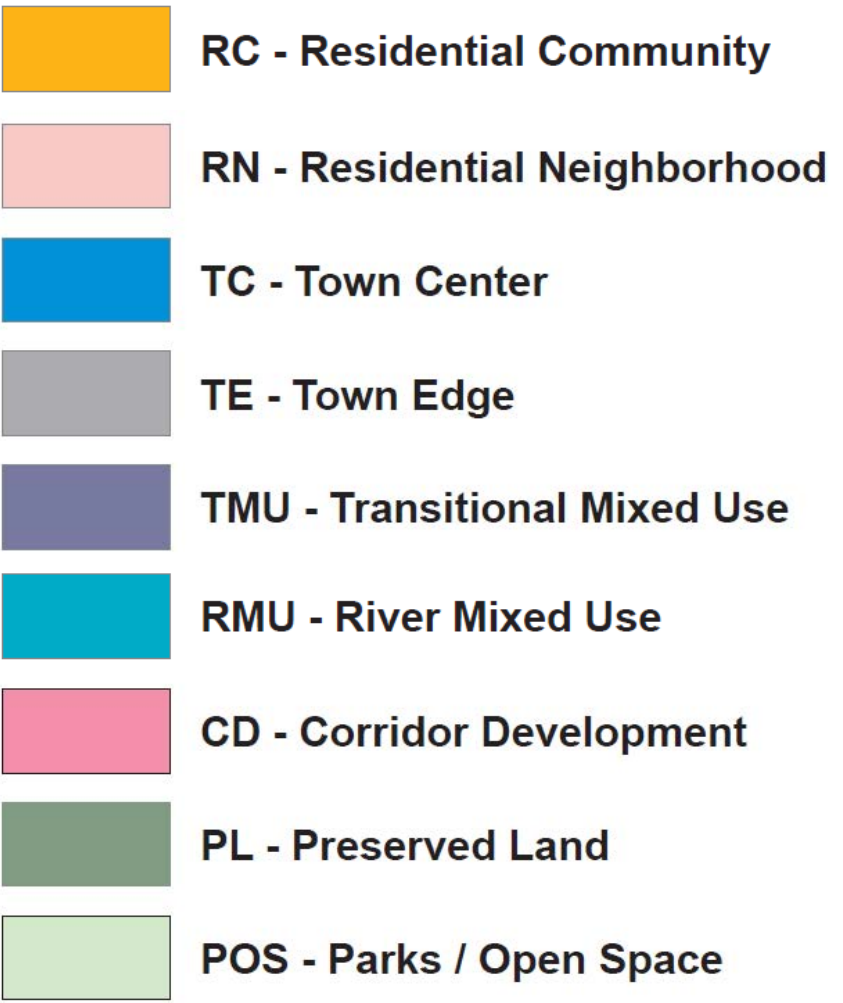
The Murphy Comprehensive Plan Character Areas were established based on how these areas are identified and taking into consideration: location, existing land uses, suitability for future land uses, as well as the type of land uses that were proposed through public input and the type of land uses that would be encouraged within these locations. Additionally, the community recognizes Downtown Murphy as the heart of the community. Land use decisions should protect and promote this valuable community asset.

The nine Character Areas represent development patterns that share similar attributes of environmental and built character within the Town’s planning jurisdiction. Shared attributes of the built environment include:

- the size and type of buildings and their relationship to the street;
- the street and block pattern;
- supported transportation modes;
- the intensity of land use; and
- density of development.

The Character Areas are intended to provide a guide for land use and zoning that directs growth according to character and intensity of use.

Figure 35) Future Land Use Map Character Areas



RC - RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY

This Character Area accommodates higher density residential development, including multi-family housing. Water, wastewater, and other infrastructure necessary to serve the denser residential land uses are available to properties in this classification or can easily be extended.

Access to primary transportation corridors should be provided for Residential Community properties. Pedestrian connectivity is recommended for development in this Character Area.

Land Uses:

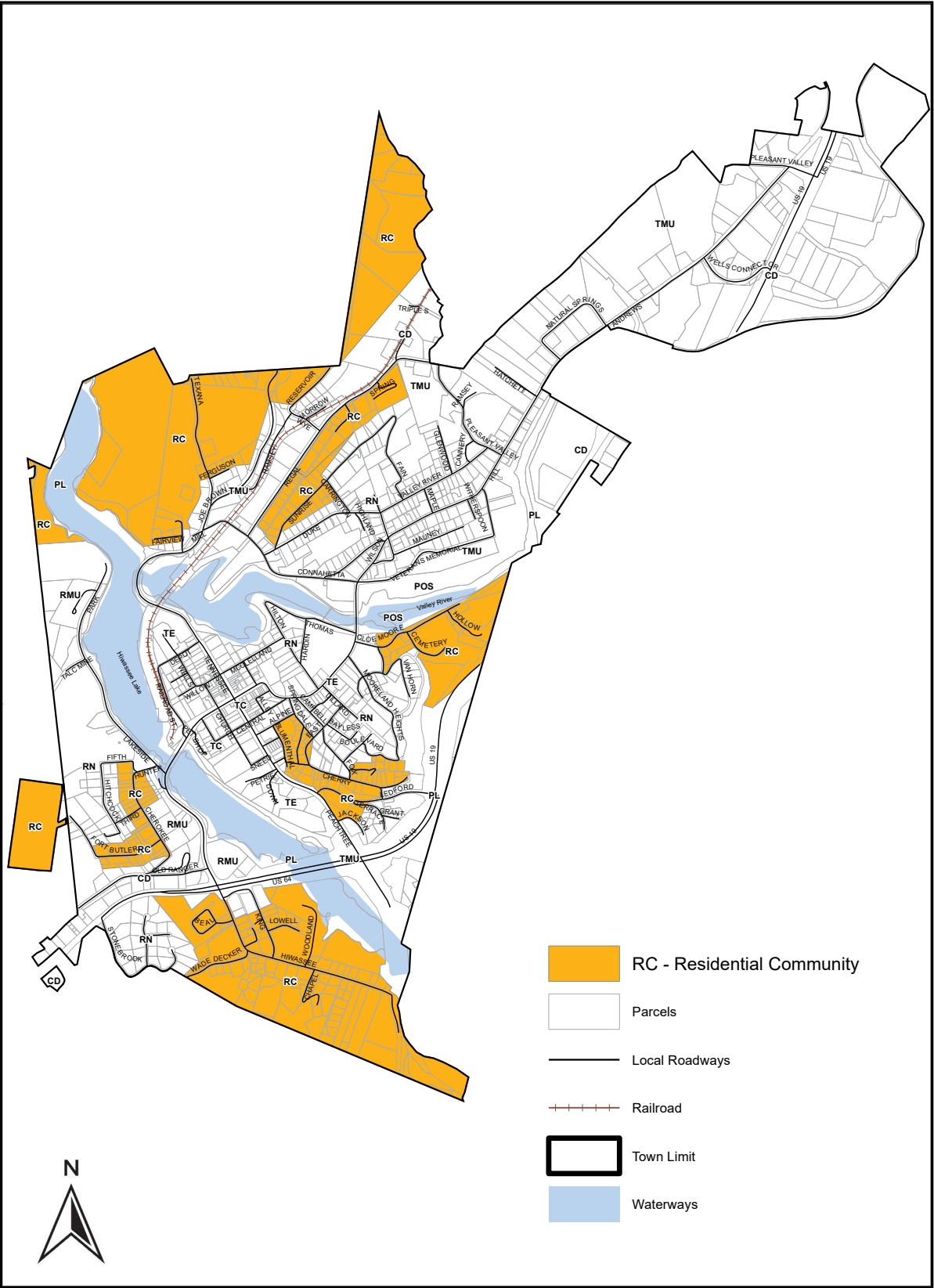
- Medium density (8 du/ac max) mixed residential developments with:
 - Single-family
 - Townhomes
 - Condos
 - Neighborhood-scale multi-family

Built Form:

- 1 to 3 story residential
- Small to medium lots
- Medium to shallow front setbacks
- Parking or garages located on side or rear of buildings
- Pedestrian connectivity (sidewalks or greenways) internally and externally required for projects with 25+ dwelling units



Figure 36) Future Land Use (Residential Community)



RN - RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD

The Residential Neighborhood Character Area accommodates traditional single family residential development at low to medium densities. In order to enable sensitive development of challenging properties, such as those with steep slopes, conservation subdivisions are permitted in this Character Area.

Duplexes are permitted on a limited basis in recognition of the need for more housing choices in Murphy.

Land Uses:

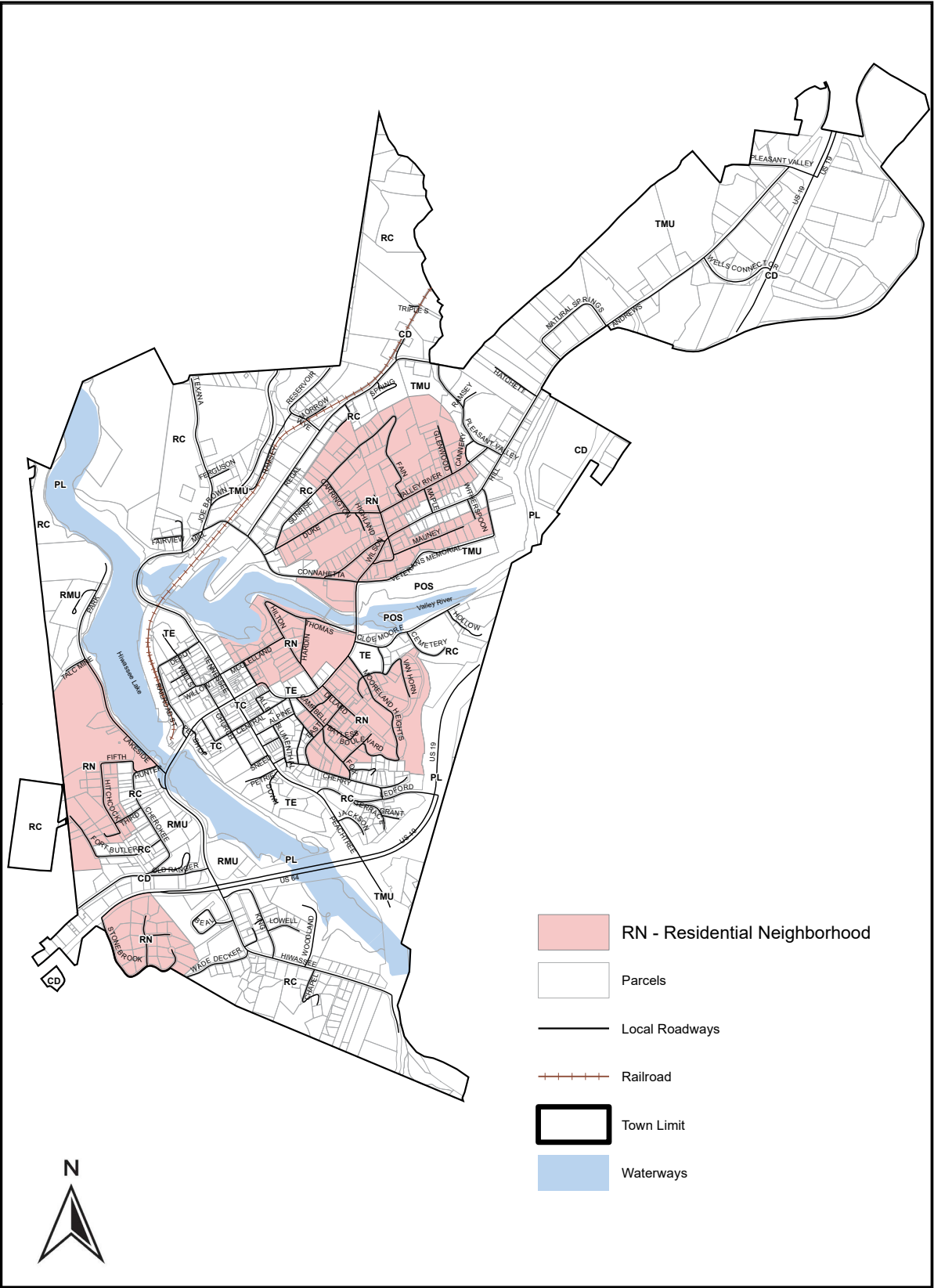
- Low to medium density-per-acre developments that preserve open space
- Single family
- Low intensity shared neighborhood amenities

Built Form:

- Conservation subdivisions
- Cluster development with preservation of open space/sensitive areas
- Medium to large lots
- Low density (4 du/ac max)
- 1 to 2.5 story buildings
- Vehicles are primary transportation mode; safe & walkable streets encouraged
 - Sidewalks or greenways required for larger development (25+ dwelling units)



Figure 37) Future Land Use (Residential Neighborhood)



TC - TOWN CENTER

The Town Center classification is characterized by a dense, compact street grid, a well-developed pedestrian network, and readily-available water and wastewater infrastructure. This Character Area is predominantly comprised of traditional mixed-use buildings. Parking is provided on street and in public and private lots rather than by individual building owners.

The Town Center is well provided for in terms of urban services, making it the most efficient and fiscally responsible area for redevelopment or development of underutilized land.

Land Uses:

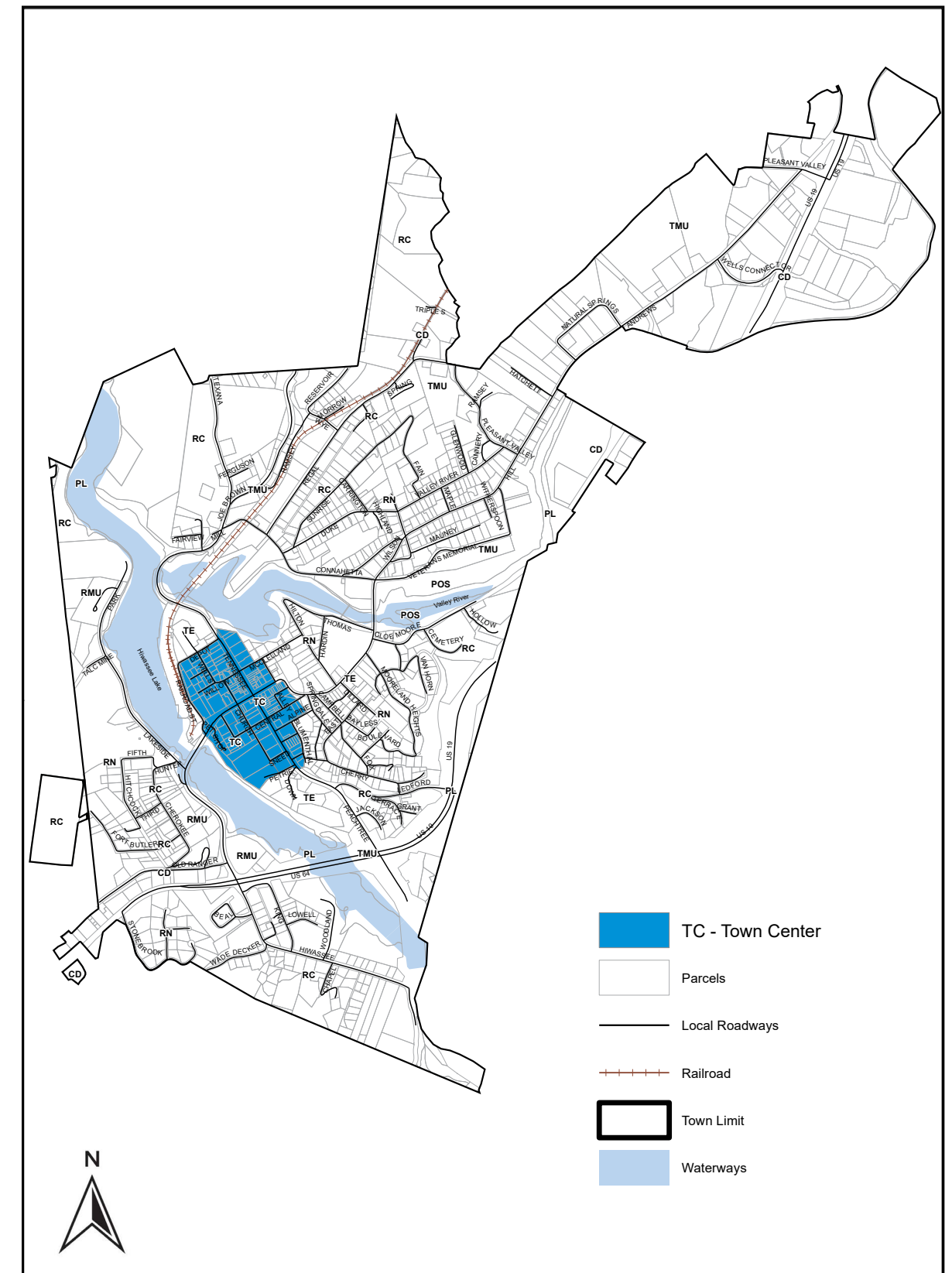
- Mixed-use buildings with office, institutional, commercial, entertainment, dining, and/or residential
- Public buildings
- Public spaces such as parks, community spaces, and amphitheaters

Built Form:

- Mixed uses
- Build to line (front)
 - *Zero side and rear lot lines when not adjacent to single family residential*
- Setback and buffer when adjacent to single family residential
- 3 story/45 feet max height
 - *Transition stepback height when adjacent to single family residential*
- No off-street parking required
- Design guidelines/standards
- Residential encouraged on upper floors
- Streetscape requirements strongly encouraged
- No residential density standards
- Pedestrian connectivity (sidewalks or greenways) internally and externally required with new development and major redevelopment
- Minimum height – 2 stories
- Maximum floor area per use – 20,000 SF



Figure 38) Future Land Use (Town Center)



TE - TOWN EDGE

The Town Edge classification is characterized by a compact street grid that enables easy access to properties. A basic sidewalk system provides the foundation for pedestrian access to properties within the Character Area. Water, wastewater, and other physical infrastructure are readily available.

A variety of building types, including mixed use, are found in this Character Area. Parking may be provided on street and by individual businesses. The Town Edge provides for the expansion of the Town Center through the development and redevelopment of properties in this Character Area.

Land Uses:

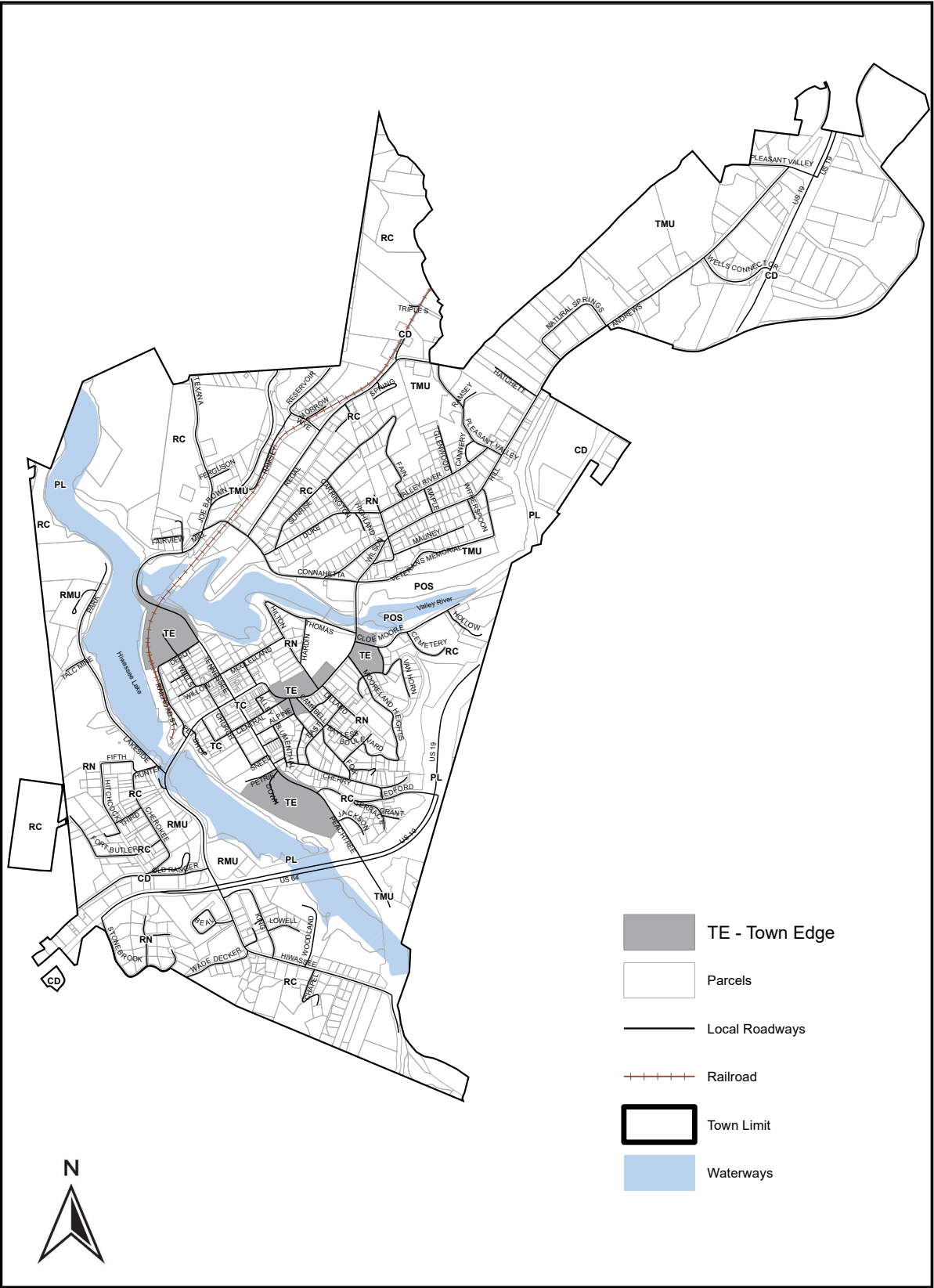
- Mixed Uses with commercial, office, institutional, craft/artisan industrial, entertainment, dining, and/or residential
- Mixture of uses vertical or horizontal
- Single family and multi-family residential

Built Form:

- Shallow front setback
- Zero side yard unless adjacent to residential then 10 feet
- Minimum (10 feet) rear setback unless adjacent to single family residential
 - *Setback (20 feet) and buffer when adjacent to single family residential*
- Parking beside or behind structures, with parking at rear preferred
- Shared parking encouraged
- Multi-family permitted
- Streetscape requirements
- Pedestrian connectivity (sidewalks or greenway) internally and externally required with new development and major redevelopment
- Maximum floor area per use – 75,000 SF



Figure 39) Future Land Use (Town Edge)



TMU - TRANSITIONAL MIXED USE

The Transitional Mixed Use Character Area is characterized by a shift in land uses, typically but not always from less intense uses to more intense ones. This Character Area accommodates a mix of uses.

This area is characterized by access to adequate infrastructure to serve the range of land uses, although in some cases the infrastructure may need to be upgraded or extended to serve properties in this Character Area.

Land Uses:

- Maker-space, artist studios, craft/artisan manufacturing
- Small-scale industrial
- Mixed-use buildings with office, institutional, commercial, entertainment, and/or dining
- Residential

Built Form:

- Mixed uses
- Craft industrial and artist studios permitted
- Preservation of flood areas/setback from streams and river
- 3 stories/45 feet maximum height
- Open space standards
- Pedestrian connectivity (sidewalks or greenways) internal & to adjacent sites

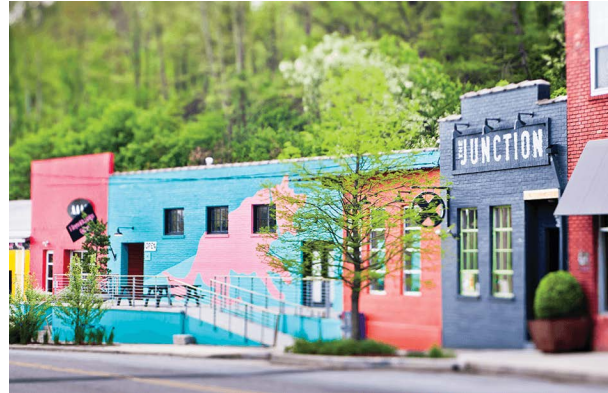
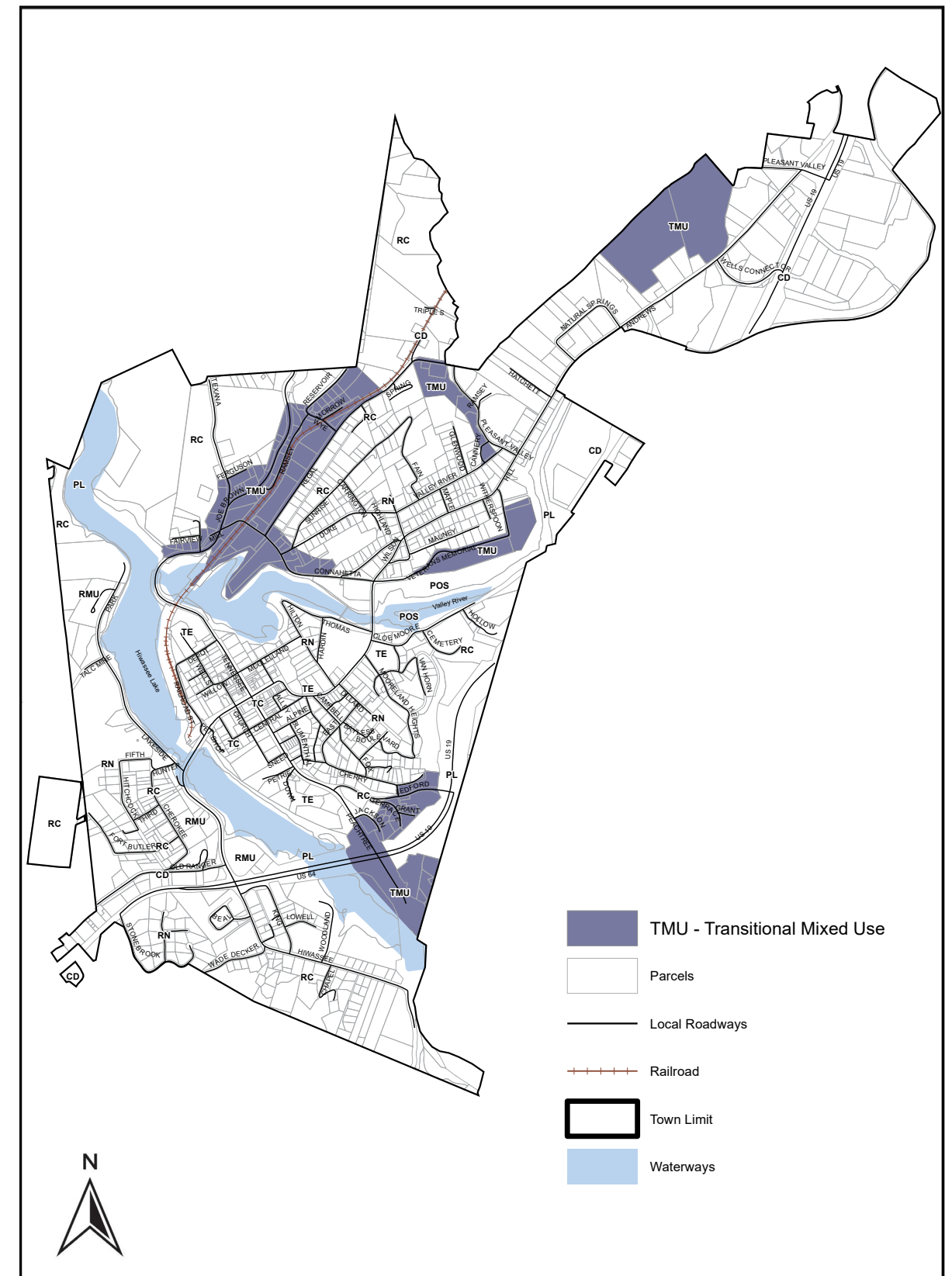


Figure 40) Future Land Use (Transitional Mixed Use)



RMU - RIVER MIXED USE

This Character Area acknowledges the proximity of properties to the rivers in Murphy and the opportunities for both traditional and innovative land uses that relate to the river. Open space standards provide opportunities for Murphy residents and visitors to enjoy the rivers.

While the River Mixed Use area accommodates a range of land uses, it also requires development standards to protect properties from flooding.

Land Uses:

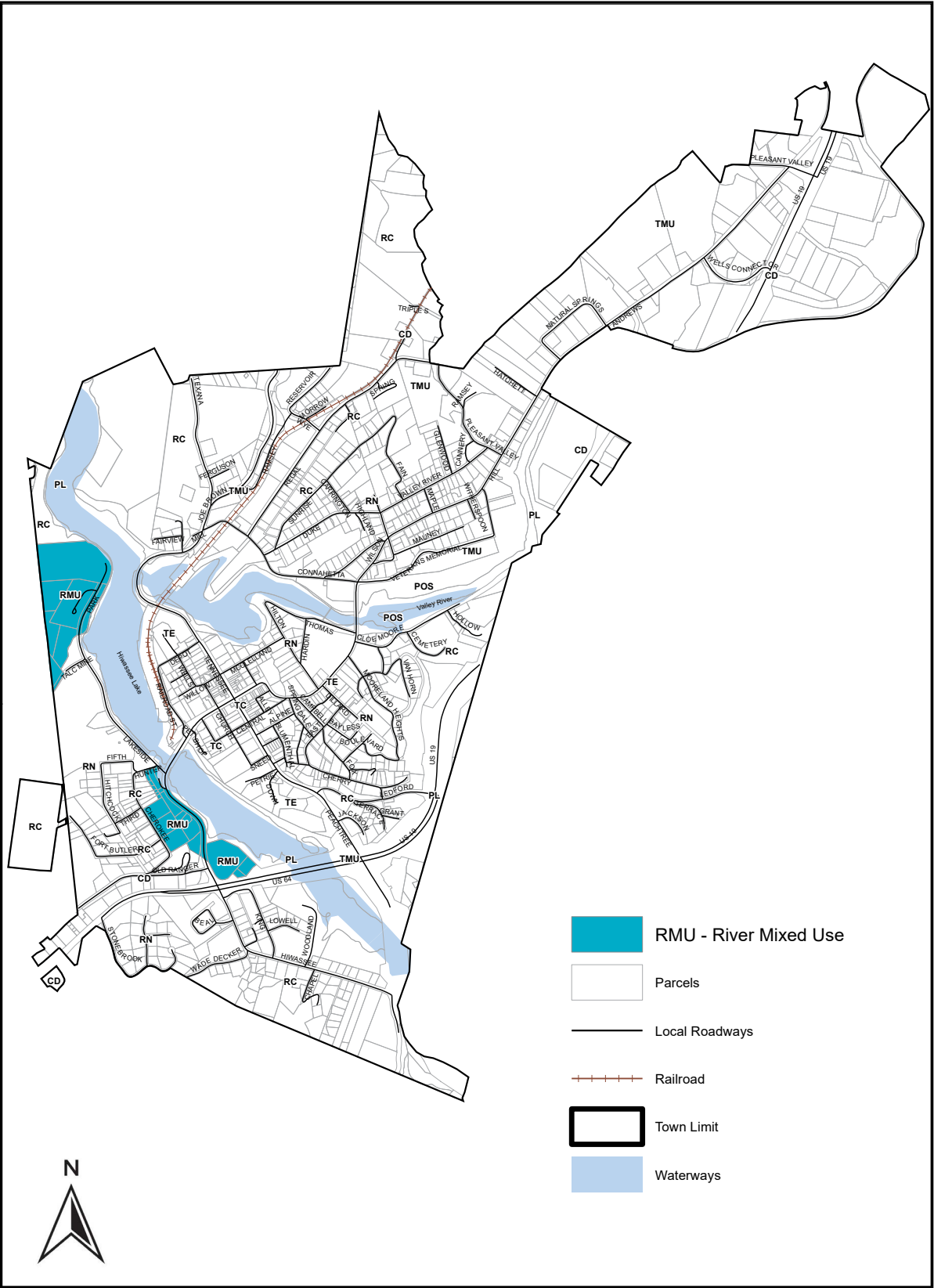
- Maker-space, artist studios, craft/artisan manufacturing
- Mixed-use buildings with office, institutional, commercial, entertainment, residential, and/or dining
- Vertical and horizontal mixed use

Built Form:

- Mixed uses
- Craft industrial and artist studios permitted
- Office uses
- Preservation of flood areas/setback from streams and river
- 2 stories/35 feet maximum height
 - Height required for flood protection not counted as part of building height for buildings in the flood fringe
 - 3 stories/45 feet maximum height for buildings with minimum 20% of gross floor area dedicated for residential use
- Open space standards to provide parks and preserved land
- Pedestrian connectivity internal & to adjacent sites



Figure 41) Future Land Use (River Mixed Use)



CD - CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT

The Corridor Development classification is characterized by land uses that cater primarily to vehicular traffic. Development that is one lot deep and abutting primary transportation corridors is typical for this Character Area.

Buildings are typically single use, with horizontal mixed use common. Water, wastewater and other physical infrastructure is available to serve development in this Character Area. Pedestrian access is not a priority in this Character Area but does enhance the development pattern and should be required.

Land Uses:

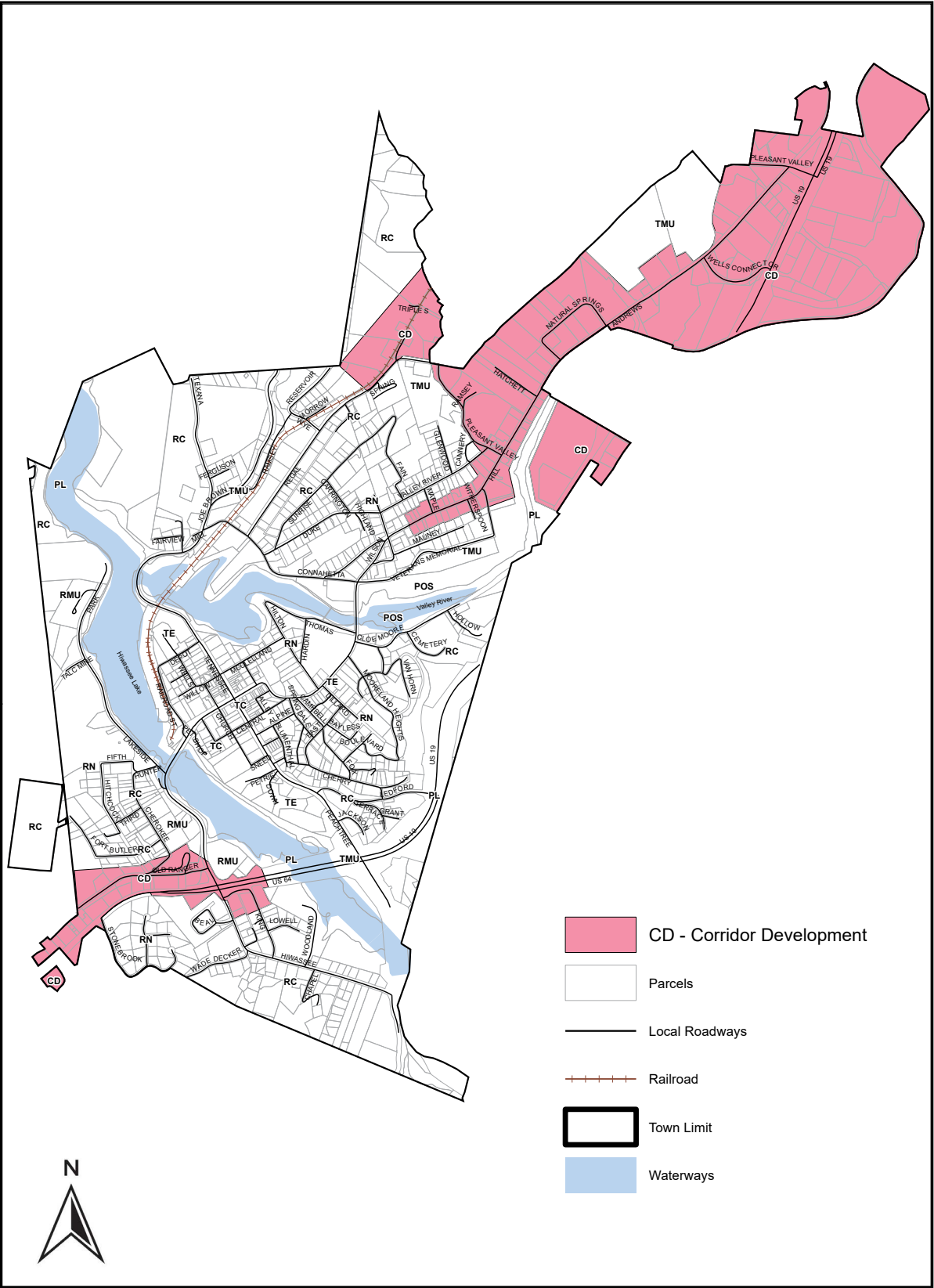
- Large commercial centers
- Mix of uses permitted
- Large multi-family development permitted
- Craft/artisan and light industrial

Built Form:

- Located along major roadways
- Minimum (15 feet) front setback
- Minimum (10 feet) side yard
- Access controlled to preserve capacity of roadways
- Off-street parking required
- 3 stories/45 feet max height
- Street trees and parking lot landscaping
- Landscaped buffer adjacent to residential
- Pedestrian connectivity (sidewalks or greenways) internally and externally required



Figure 42) Future Land Use (Corridor Development)



POS - PARKS/OPEN SPACE

This Character Area includes publicly-owned nature preserves, parks, greenway corridors, and all lands that serve a recreation purpose. The Parks/Open Space classification includes conserved lands under the control of government or private conservation/preservation agencies. These lands provide recreational, educational, and ecotourism opportunities.

Land Uses:

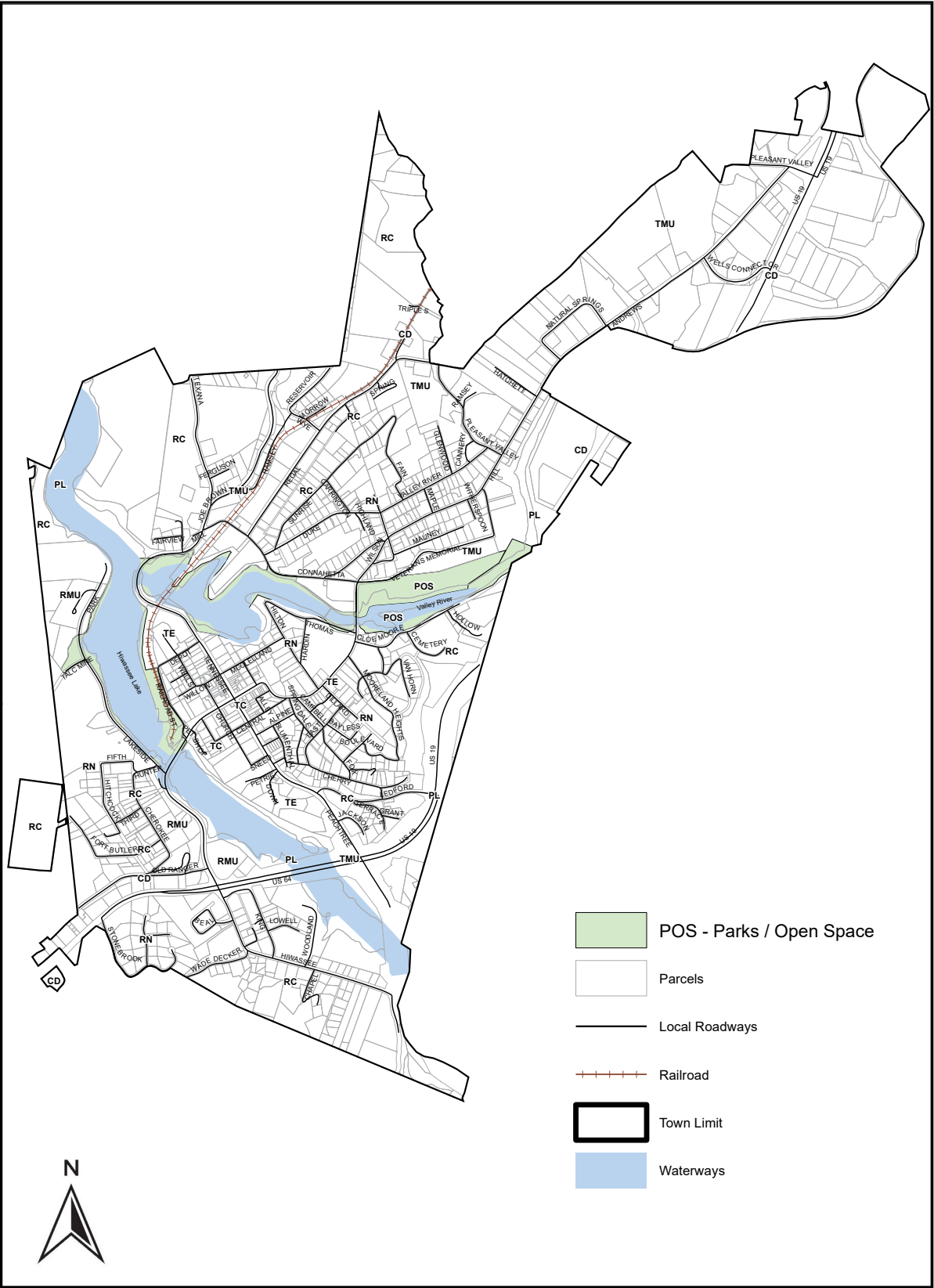
- Parks & Public Lands
- Greenways & Trails
- Public River-Access Facilities
- Natural Resource Based Passive Recreation
- Forestry & Agriculture

Built Form:

- Buildings & structures support parks, recreation, cultural activities, and public utilities
- 1 to 2 story buildings
- Prioritizes trails & greenways for transportation and recreation



Figure 43) Future Land Use (Parks & Open Space)



PL - PRESERVED LANDS

The Preserved Lands Character Area is comprised of wetlands, riparian buffers, environmentally sensitive areas, and undevelopable areas of highway right-of-way whose conservation contributes to ecological health and scenic preservation.

Appropriate properties in this Character Area could potentially transfer to the Parks/Open Space Character Area for development as a public park or small-scale river access facility.

Land Uses:

- Preserved Open Space
- Riparian Buffer
- Wetlands
- Major Highway Right-of-way
- Public River-Access Facilities
- Gateway & Wayfinding Signage

Built Form:

- Undeveloped and/or restored, healthy native habitat
- Minimal development to support recreation, river access, and signage



Figure 44) Future Land Use (Preserved Land)

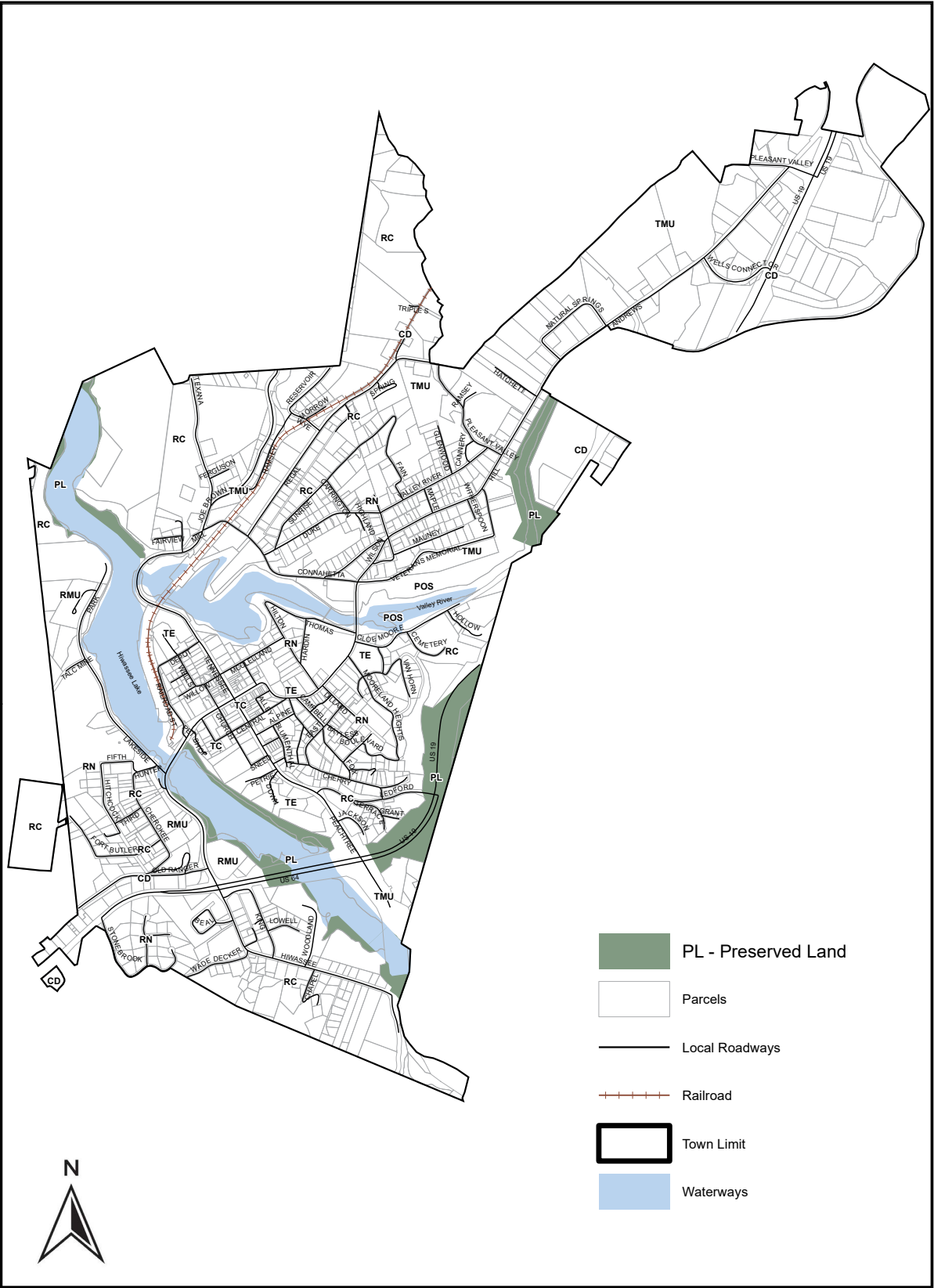
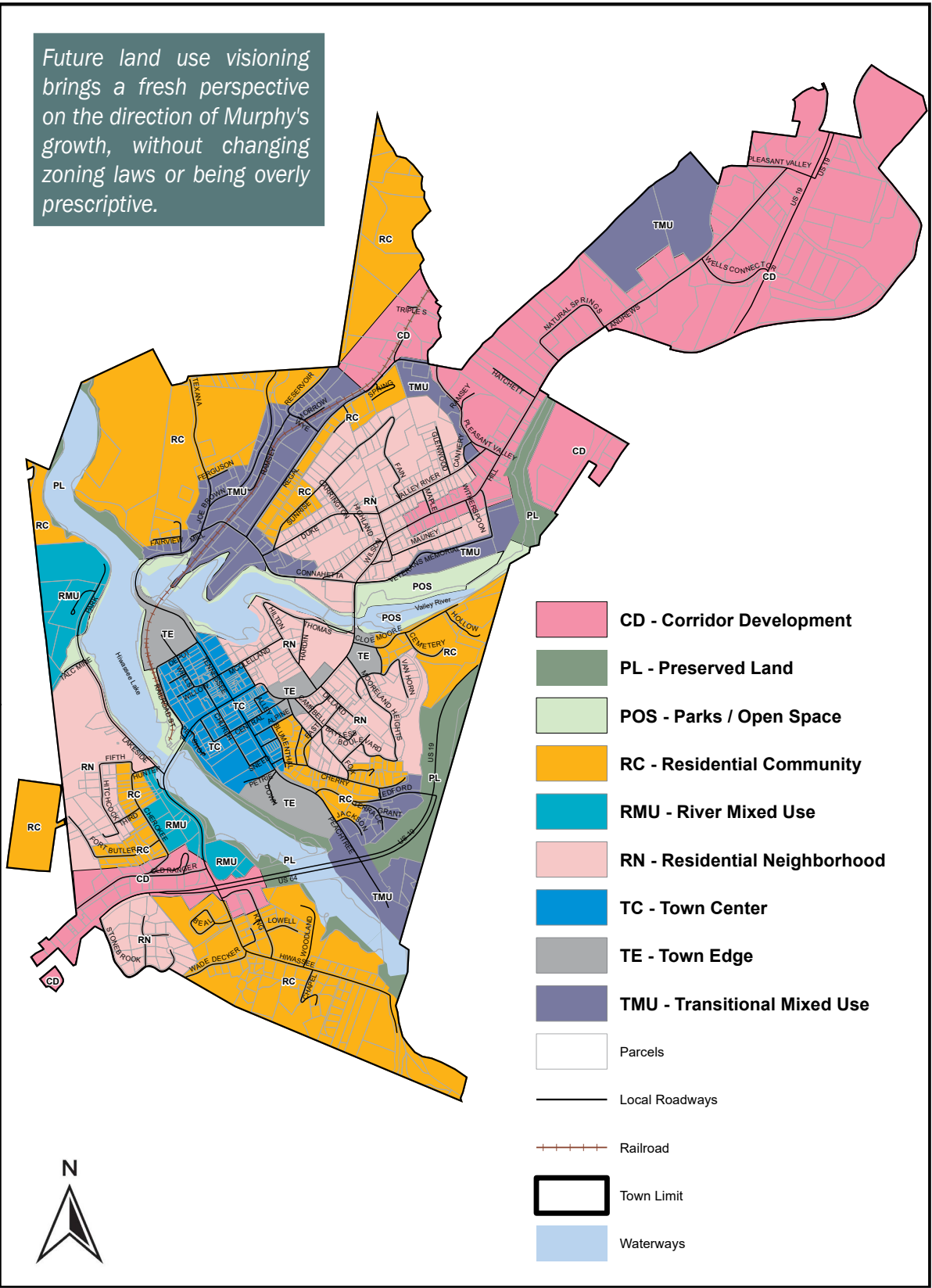


Figure 45) Murphy Future Land Use Map



The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) is to be used as a policy tool to guide zoning, rezoning, and development decisions. Decisions regarding land use are not mandated by the FLUM, the proposed land uses are recommendations only.

Mapped on the FLUM are the character areas as previously described, with these descriptions guiding the drafting of the FLUM. Existing development, infrastructure, and zoning were considered in the mapping of the character areas on the FLUM, as were desired future land uses. A number of land uses are identified as appropriate for each character area, with the building form for each character area describing the type of development considered appropriate for that character area.

While the FLUM is intended to serve as a guide for zoning, rezoning, and development decisions and not mandate the zoning or development pattern, a well-crafted FLUM can serve as useful tool in making these decisions.



Murphy's walkable downtown

Chapter 5: Recommendations



Murphy River Walk at Konehete Park

RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter offers policy recommendations and strategies related to land use and housing, natural resources and parks, economic development, infrastructure, and mobility.

The policy recommendations provide overarching guidance on key topics. Individual strategies provide more specific direction for different areas of Murphy, revisions to regulations, programs, and projects. Recommendations are divided into four (4) sections:

1. Land Use
2. Transportation & Infrastructure
3. Parks & Recreation
4. Community Development

Murphy is governed by a Mayor-Council form of government. The Mayor and Town Council have the responsibility of not only formulating Town policy but also actually operating the gears of government.

The Murphy Comprehensive Plan is intended to be used on a regular basis as Murphy's Town Council, Planning Board, and staff make decisions about public and private development, redevelopment, capital improvement, and other decisions that affect the Town. The point is to align future Town decisions with the goals, strategies, and overarching vision of this plan.

Review of development proposals and decisions by the Planning Board and Murphy's Town Council should reference the vision and relevant recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan. As the Town thinks about capital improvement projects, this plan should be used as a tool to support those investments and provide a basis for ongoing budget discussions and grant pursuits. The Town of Murphy's Planning Board and Town Council should also use the Comprehensive Plan to ensure clear and consistent interpretation of the Plan as it relates to development decisions.

Meanwhile, property owners and developers should also consider the goals and strategies in this plan when making land planning and investment decisions, aligning their designs with Murphy's vision and priorities for each distinct part of town and engaging the public to make sure that new development matches land use and density needs.

Ultimately, policies and recommendations in the plan are intended to be flexible and fluid, and the Murphy Comprehensive Plan should be updated and amended as appropriate - at least every 5-10 years. As projects, policies, and programs develop over time they may not look exactly like the images in the document, but they should address the intent of the plan and reflect the community's vision for the future of Murphy.

Recommendations for goals and actions provide the direction to help implement the Comprehensive Plan, underpinned by the Guiding Principles outlined earlier in the Plan document. The following goals and actions are not in any particular order of priority but instead are meant to cover the full spectrum of topics.

Figure 46) Recommendation Table

ID	Recommendation	Timeframe	Cost
LU 1	Create a new zoning district for downtown Murphy.	Short-Term	Staff time
LU 2	Differentiate between the General Business district and the Highway Commercial district.	Medium-Term	Staff time
LU 3	Update the Town's Zoning Ordinance Standards for ease of use.	Short-Term	Staff time
LU 4	Allow more flexibility for residential property owners.	Medium- to Long-Term	Staff time
LU 5	Support land use planning and transparency.	Ongoing	Staff time
LU 6	Plan for success at Fort Butler.	Medium- to Long-Term	\$\$
LU 7	Meet Police and Fire staffing needs to ensure service provision as development pressures continue on the outskirts of town.	Ongoing	\$\$\$
INF 1	Continue making Murphy a more walkable town.	Ongoing	\$\$\$
INF 2	Focus on effective parking solutions.	Long-Term, Ongoing	\$\$\$
INF 3	Enhance Tennessee Street & Peachtree Street.	Long-Term	\$\$\$
INF 4	Highlight gateways into town.	Medium- to Long-Term	\$\$
INF 5	Conduct a pavement condition survey of all Town roadways to help assess maintenance needs and prioritize repairs.	Short-Term	\$
INF 6	Consider appropriate signs in Murphy.	Medium-Term	\$\$
INF 7	Support and help finance EV charging stations.	Ongoing	\$
INF 8	Continue to perform water and sewer upgrades downtown.	Short-Term, Ongoing	\$\$
REC 1	Build a Murphy-to-Andrews multiuse trail.	Long-Term	\$\$\$
REC 2	Construct an amphitheater.	Medium-Term	\$\$-\$
REC 3	Improve access to the rivers.	Medium-Term	\$\$
REC 4	Continue to maintain, improve, and extend Murphy River Walk.	Ongoing	\$\$-\$-\$
REC 5	Embrace outdoor recreational tourism as a major industry.	Ongoing	\$\$-\$
REC 6	Diversify recreational options for children.	Long-Term	\$\$-\$-\$
REC 7	Evaluate the need for a full-time Parks & Rec staff position with the Town of Murphy to achieve community goals and aspirations.	Short- to Long-Term	\$\$
CD 1	Ensure free Wi-Fi throughout town.	Medium-Term	\$
CD 2	Revisit the Town's branding and design.	Medium-Term	\$\$
CD 3	Cultivate Murphy's dining options.	Short-Term, Ongoing	\$
CD 4	Help sustain the Farmer's Market.	Ongoing	\$\$
CD 5	Become a Main Street America town.	Medium-Term	Staff time
CD 6	Invigorate Murphy through placemaking.	Ongoing	\$
CD 7	Evaluate options for the Rock Gym building.	Medium-Term	\$\$
CD 8	Continue to prioritize infill development.	Ongoing	Staff time
CD 9	Support Cherokee County Transit services for regional employees.	Ongoing	\$



LAND USE

RELEVANT GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- Maintain and accentuate the distinct character of Murphy’s historic downtown.
- Protect and enhance Murphy’s unique natural resources and defining mountain landscapes.
- Encourage new and creative housing opportunities that meet the needs of multiple generations.

Goal LU 1: Create a new zoning district for downtown Murphy.

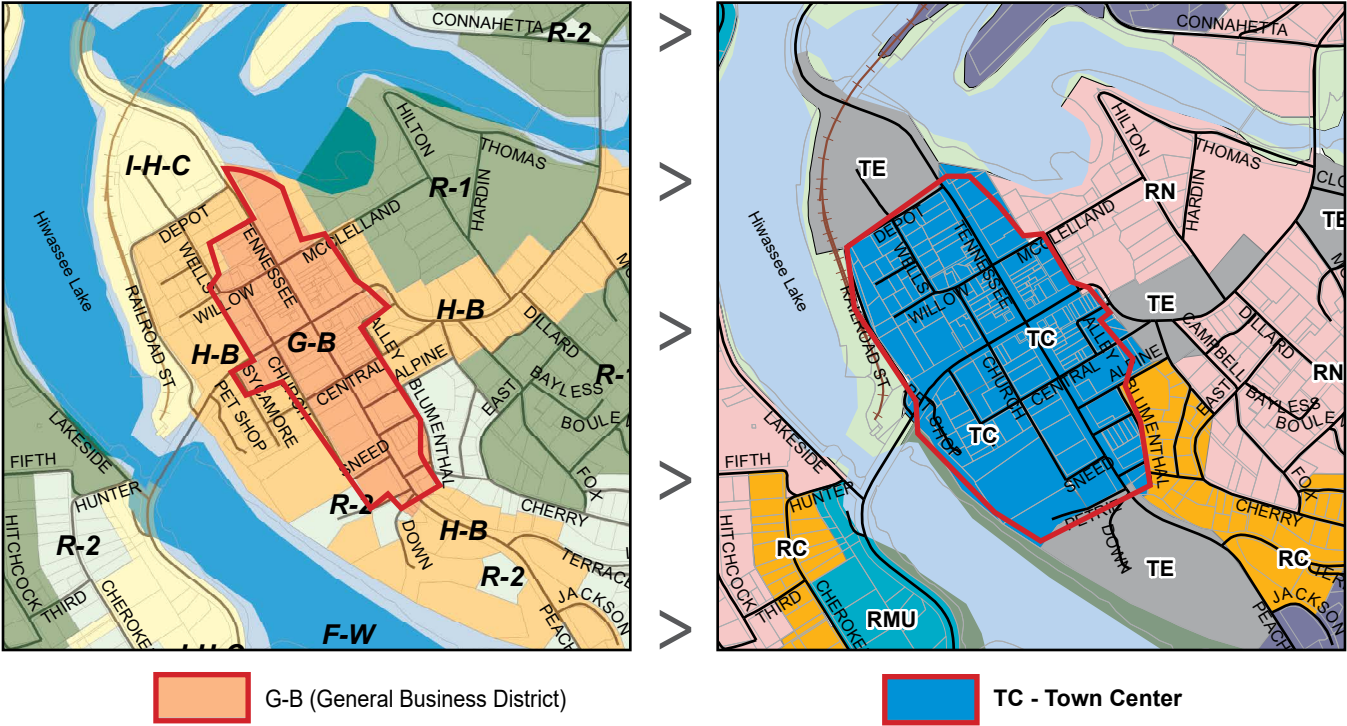
- LU 1.1:** Amend the Town's Zoning Map to include a "Town Center" zoning district.
- Use the Future Land Use Map to identify the right area for this new district and identify benefits and challenges to formalizing an official Town Center and its scale.
 - Rezone multiple General Business and Highway Business parcels to "Town Center", making sure to generally keep parcels the same zoning district on opposite sides of each street.
- LU 1.2:** Amend the Town's Zoning Ordinance to include a "Town Center" zoning district.
- Include intent language that describes the goals for having a designated Town Center and what this zoning district is intended to encompass in terms of building scale/massing, land use, and activity.
 - The Town Center District should include the following parameters:
 - No front or side setbacks
 - Reduced or no off-street parking requirement
 - Residential use without a density limit
- LU 1.3:** Encourage infill development in the town center and more two- and three-story structures.

Goal LU 2: Differentiate between the General Business district and the Highway Commercial district.

- LU 2.1:** Amend the Town's Zoning Map to keep Highway Business farther away from downtown.
- Rezone multiple Highway Business parcels close to the downtown core to General Business.
- LU 2.2:** Amend the Town Zoning Ordinance's "General Business" zoning district.
- Amend the intent language for General Business to reflect the desire for this district to be a commercial sector that is an "intermediate" zone between the downtown core (Town Center) and periphery (Highway Commercial), a clear "Town Edge" designation and role.
 - While not as permissive as the proposed Town Center, allow the following in the General Business district:
 - Reduced parking requirements
 - Reduced setback requirements



Figure 47) Downtown District Expansion



Goal LU 3: Update the Town's Zoning Ordinance Standards for ease of use.

- LU 3.1:** Amend Section 153.005B to allow replacement of individual manufactured homes.
- LU 3.2:** Amend Section 153.007 to include a definition of each use permitted.
- Add graphic elements and imagery to support use descriptions.
- LU 3.3:** Amend Section 153.021 to remove regulations/standards from the list of permitted uses and create a separate section for standards (so they are all in one place and easy to locate in a table format).
- LU 3.4:** Amend Section 153.022 to list all permitted uses in each zoning district instead of referring to a prior district list (e.g., "all uses permitted in R-1").
- LU 3.5:** Create a new table of permitted uses with all zoning districts in one place for ease of use.
- LU 3.6:** Include all dimensional standards in each zoning district description.
- LU 3.7:** Use broader categories of uses for commercial districts (e.g., "retail" uses instead of listing specific businesses like "flower shop" or "convenience store").

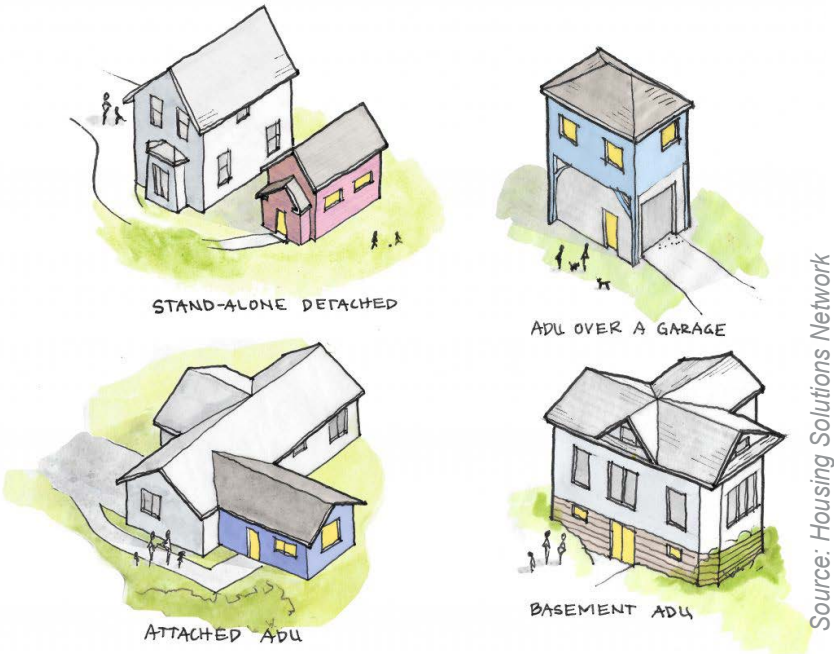
Goal LU 4: Allow more flexibility for residential property owners.

- LU 4.1:** Consider permitting accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in all residential districts, with appropriate standards.
- LU 4.2:** Restructure Murphy's residential zoning districts to alleviate restrictions and incentivize higher density residential closer to the town center.



Figure 48) Types of Accessory Dwelling Unit

- Amend R-1 to "Low Density Residential" (from Medium Density Residential).
 - Single-family housing permitted
 - Minimum 10,000 square foot lot area
 - ADUs permitted
- Amend R-2 to "Medium Density Residential" (from High Density Residential).
 - Single-family housing permitted
 - Minimum 5,000 square foot lot area
 - ADUs permitted
- Create a new R-3 "High Density Residential" district.
 - 10-12 dwelling units per acre allowed
 - Single-family and multifamily housing permitted
 - No minimum square foot lot area



Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) can be an effective, elegant tool to build more affordable housing in Murphy. Allowing these uses throughout town gives people opportunities to support their extended family, boost their income through rentals, and have greater flexibility with their own housing choices.

LU 4.3: Remove the Agricultural Transition (A-T) District altogether but allow agricultural uses in the proposed R-1 "Low Density Residential" district.

Goal LU 5: Support land use planning and transparency.

- LU 5.1:** Create a Board of Adjustment that is wholly separate from the Planning Board.
- The Planning Board serves as an advisory board to Town Council for rezonings, and major subdivisions, and amendments to the Town Zoning Ordinance. The Planning Board can also spearhead planning studies.
 - The Board of Adjustment would serve as a quasi-judicial board, making decisions on cases such as applications for variances and special use permits. Quasi-judicial decisions must be made according to very strict parameters - finding of facts and exercising judgement and discretion in applying predetermined policies to specific situations. Having a board solely for these cases is helpful and can support transparency goals.
- LU 5.2:** Amend Section 153.136A to require rezoning applications be submitted at least thirty (30) days prior to the Planning Board meeting at which they will be heard.
- Consider including a QR code on each notice sign so passersby (and neighbors) can easily access more information about the project or case.



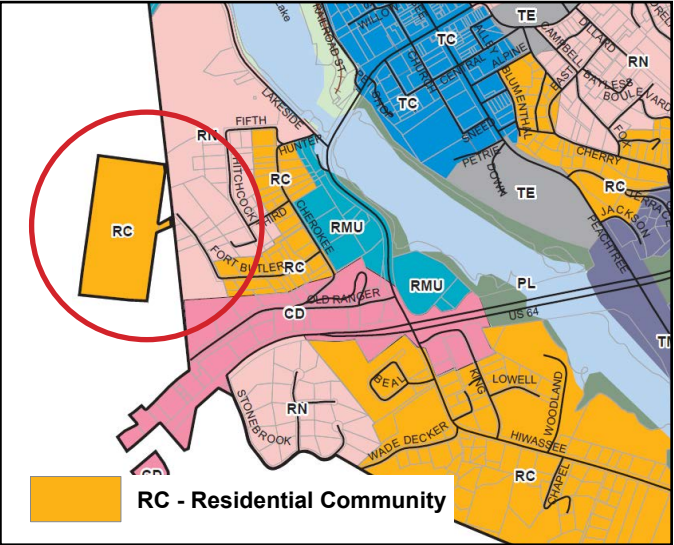
It is important for Murphy residents to know when zoning issues are being discussed and have enough notice to make time to attend a Planning Board meeting.

- This will allow sufficient time for Town staff to post the required public notice (including notice in the newspaper, letters to adjacent property owners, and a visible sign on the property).

Goal LU 6: Plan for success at Fort Butler.

- LU 6.1:** Create a site plan for the 18.83-acre Town-owned Fort Butler property in order to identify the best use of the land for the community, once the deed restriction has passed.
- The Future Land Use Map identifies this parcel as "Residential Community" and suggests that adding housing to this area is important and would fit with the adjacent residential neighborhood. Lot sizes vary in this area, but it is predominately single-family residences.
 - Developing this site as medium- to high-density residential could require infrastructure improvements and investments such as:
 - Bolstering Fort Butler Street to accommodate increased vehicular traffic.
 - Secondary access to the property from Old Ranger Road (BUS 19).
 - As a cultural/historical site, the Town could consider adding amenities to recognize the significance of the site and allocate a portion of the property as recreational - walking paths and other park facilities - if the community is supportive.

Figure 49) Fort Butler Future Land Use



Goal LU 7: Meet Police and Fire staffing needs to ensure service provision as development pressures continue on the outskirts of town.

- LU 7.1:** Use Police bicycle patrols in the downtown core regularly to encourage interaction and dialog with community members and visitors.
- LU 7.2:** Increase Police bicycle patrols of Murphy River Walk for drug use and other criminal activity to help make sure that trail users feel safe.
- Continue to work alongside local homelessness and addiction support groups to help Murphy residents receive the proper care and assistance they need.
- LU 7.3:** Regularly assess Fire Department long-term needs, especially as development pressures continue on the outskirts of town, possibly expanding their scope and reach.
- Conduct an inventory of local streets to identify any problematic steep slopes and address those issues.



TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

RELEVANT GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- Provide high quality of life supported by updated infrastructure and the efficient and effective delivery of public services.
- Develop a comprehensive, safe, and well-functioning transportation network that accommodates various modes of travel, including walking, biking, and transit.

Goal INF 1: Continue making Murphy a more walkable town.

INF 1.1: Apply for a grant through NCDOT's Integrated Mobility Division for a Murphy Pedestrian Plan to guide extension of sidewalks and greenways to increase pedestrian connectivity and that can be used in applying for grant funds.

- Determine feasibility and benefits for regional greenway projects like the Murphy-to-Andrews rail trail.
- Identify gaps in the existing sidewalk network to prioritize small-scale, low-budget recommendations.

INF 1.2: Conduct an ADA Self-Assessment & Transition Plan to evaluate accessibility deficiencies and prioritize improvements along key corridors and intersections.

- Make sure that all curb ramps are ADA-compliant and that railroad tracks are traversable.
- Prioritize sidewalk projects based on slope, width, current usage, and condition.
- Ensure that enough of the Murphy River Walk surface materials are suitable for wheelchair users and that access to the trail system is accessible.
- Identify needs in on-street parking and surface parking lots.
 - Make sure each municipal parking lot facility has the required number of accessible parking spots (including van-accessible spaces).
 - Ensure that accessible parking on the street is directly connected to ADA-compliant curb ramps so people can get from their car to the sidewalk.



Accessibility is essential for any thriving community. An ADA Self-Evaluation & Transition Plan will identify barriers and coordinate a plan to address these issues in Murphy.



INF 1.3: Add shade trees to downtown streets.

- Convert areas on downtown streets where parking does not fit and existing on-street parking spaces at regular intervals into bulbouts (curb extensions) with shade trees and other plants.
- Encourage downtown businesses set back from the street front to plant trees in the front yard.
- Support developments with green roof designs and encourage that feature in site plans.
- Make sure all public parking lots (new designs and retrofits) have shade trees (e.g., "x" trees per parking space).



INF 1.4: Work with the Southwestern Region RPO and NCDOT Division 14 to submit Murphy pedestrian and greenway projects to the state Highway Maintenance Improvement Program (HMIP) or State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP).

INF 1.5: Continue to work with NCDOT to construct sidewalks along both sides of US 74 (Andrew Jackson Highway) west of Valley River Avenue.

- Couple sidewalk design with access management to limit the number of driveways along this section of roadway, making driving safer and walking more comfortable.



A simple yet effective step towards making Murphy's downtown even more beautiful, inviting, and cooler in the summer months is to plant trees along the main streets.

INF 1.6: Dedicate ten percent (10%) of Powell Bill funds each year to constructing and maintaining sidewalks and greenways.

Goal INF 2: Focus on effective parking solutions.

INF 2.1: Invest in the Town's existing surface parking lots.

- Provide sufficient lighting in all public parking lots.
- Provide directional (wayfinding) signage identifying the locations of public parking lots.
- Encourage downtown business owners and employees to park in lots, not on the street (which should be reserved for short-term parking for deliveries and visitors/patrons).
- Make sure to maintain all Town surface lots (repaving and painting regularly, planting shade trees where feasible, and redesigning layouts if necessary).



Signs to nearby surface parking lots can help people find a spot and avoid the frustration of lack of on-street parking spaces.





INF 2.2: Rethink angled street parking to make sure it is the best design.

- A more acute angle could be appropriate in some areas, while parallel parking might be safer in some instances.

INF 2.3: Conduct a downtown Murphy parking study to gauge demand and identify solutions.

- The study should collect turnover data to see how long people are parking in prime spaces to assess whether changes should be made to time limitations.
- Parking availability data should be collected to see which lots and street corridors are most in-demand and where additional parking should be added.
- This study should identify possible locations for future public parking lots (and even multi-level parking decks), giving the Town options for investing in infrastructure and planning for increased demand.

INF 2.4: Work with individual downtown property owners to share surface parking lots.

- Prioritize businesses with large existing lots and regular hours (e.g., banks, churches, etc.) to allow for public parking on premises during times when the business is closed.
- Allow adjoining businesses to share parking spaces to meet any minimum requirement (e.g., a coffee shop and a brewery might share parking because their hours do not overlap).

INF 2.5: Work with Cherokee County to plan for a future multi-level parking structure behind the courthouse building (accessed via Bill Hughes Avenue and/or Alpine Street).

- This could consolidate several existing parking lots for Town/County staff and make use of the change in elevation to accommodate several levels of parking, with alternate access points.
- Consider a "wrapped" parking structure, with opportunities for retail frontage and housing in the design.

Figure 50) Parking Occupancy Map Example



A parking study can illuminate on-street parking areas where demand is not as high, and help determine whether new restrictions (or even metering) are warranted in certain locations. It can help the Town come up with a target occupancy rate - perhaps somewhere around 85%.



Source: Kilbourne Group

When exploring options for a future parking deck, it would be beneficial to wrap residential units and/or commercial space around the deck to maximize use of the land while hiding the more urban, concrete views of the deck itself.



INF 2.6: Add bicycle parking downtown.

- Consider amending the Town zoning ordinance (Section 153.046) to include bicycle parking requirements for multifamily dwellings, schools, libraries, and other uses.
- Institute a Town-funded bike rack program whereby local business owners can apply for bike rack installation in the public right-of-way (e.g., the sidewalk in front of their business) for their patrons.
- Work with the TVA and Cherokee County to ensure that all park facilities accommodate bicyclists by installing bike racks at key locations along the Murphy River Walk and Konehete Park.

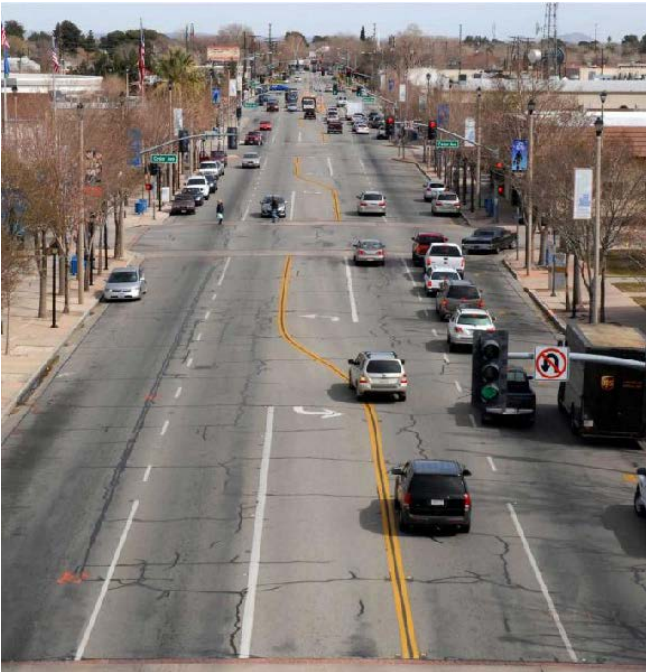


Custom bike racks can reinforce the Murphy's brand and highlight distinct parts of town: the River Walk, downtown, etc.

Goal INF 3: Enhance Tennessee Street & Peachtree Street.

INF 3.1: Work with NCDOT on a lane reconfiguration along Unicoi Turnpike (Tennessee Street and Peachtree Street) through downtown Murphy.

- Consider keeping the roadway width but restriping to one lane each way, with bike lanes and dedicated loading zones for large trucks.
 - If placed adjacent to the vehicular lanes, bike lanes can serve as a buffer between moving vehicles and parked cars.
 - If placed adjacent to the sidewalk, bike lanes will be safer (encouraging more people to use them) and will provide a buffer between parked cars and people walking.



The streets downtown are wide enough for creative thinking about ways to make downtown Murphy more aesthetically pleasing, improve parking, add landscaping, and make it safer for people walking and riding bicycles.

Source: Project for Public Space





- INF 3.2:** Develop a streetscape plan for this corridor to envision a safer, more aesthetically pleasing street.
- Establish a set of typical sections for future improvements along the corridor that focuses on enhanced visual quality and increased pedestrian safety.
 - Include plans for shade trees along the sidewalk by adding curb extensions at regular intervals.
 - Identify opportunities to improve the on-street parking configuration.
 - Decide whether parallel or angled parking makes the most sense along each segment.
 - Determine an appropriate percent for the angle of parking spaces with safety as the primary goal.
 - Make sure that wheelchair accessible parking spaces are plentiful and have direct access to the sidewalk via ADA-compliant curb ramps.
 - Make sure that crosswalks are highly visible and midblock pedestrian crossings are safe.

- INF 3.3:** Enforce the 20mph speed limit along downtown corridors.
- Set up movable speed sensor arrays to remind people to slow down as they approach the town center.

Goal INF 4: Highlight gateways into town.

- INF 4.1:** Work with NCDOT to beautify medians leading into town.
- Much of the center turn lane on Valley River Avenue is not used (since development is limited along the corridor), so could easily be modified to include a landscaped area with trees.
 - The median along US 19/74/129 (Andrew Jackson Highway) used to have shrubs along much of its length near Murphy. The Town and Cherokee County should work with NCDOT to replant the corridor with appropriate trees, bushes, and wildflowers.
 - Options considered should also include replacing low volume dedicated turn lanes with pedestrian safety intersections that incorporate improved crosswalk visibility, signage, and landscaping.
- INF 4.2:** Develop a Valley River Avenue corridor study to ensure that this gateway to downtown is aesthetically attractive, enables safe travel, and encompasses all modes of transportation.
- Reference the Future Land Use Map to think about appropriate land uses along this corridor.
 - Work with the TVA to plan for expanded river access and trail amenities near Valley River Avenue.



An attractive, landscaped median can create a beautiful boulevard into a community, showcasing Murphy as a destination.



- INF 4.2:** Apply for grant funding through the TDA or other sources to design and install "Welcome to Murphy" gateway monuments at each key roadway into town, and explore options for other public art.

Goal INF 5: Conduct a pavement condition survey of all Town roadways to help assess maintenance needs and prioritize repairs.

Goal INF 6: Consider appropriate signs in Murphy.

- INF 6.1:** Amend the Town zoning ordinance (Section 153.060) to bolster sign standards in Murphy.
- Reduce the maximum height of signs from 50' to 35'.
 - Add more detail to sign standards (square footage of signs, sign lighting, standards for monument signs, etc.)
 - Include graphics and imagery to support and provide clarity.
 - Adhere to content-neutral sign standards (per Reed v. Town of Gilbert).
- INF 6.2:** Continue to prohibit billboards (off-premise advertising signs) in the General Business district, but expand that prohibition to the proposed "Town Center" district.
- Seek further restrictions on billboards in alignment with the Future Land Use Map, limiting new billboards to the prescribed "Corridor Development" areas and possibly the "Town Edge" areas.

- INF 6.3:** Pursue grant funding through the TDA and other sources for a Wayfinding Master Plan.
- Signs should incorporate the Murphy brand and iconography.
 - Signs should be oriented to guide drivers into downtown Murphy and to various sites within town limits, with directions for shops, dining, parks, and lodging.
 - The sign system should include design and location of gateway signs, public parking signs, and pedestrian wayfinding (along the River Walk and throughout downtown).
 - The Wayfinding Master Plan should align with NCDOT parameters for placing signs in rights-of-way.



Wayfinding signs are a great way to highlight the town's brand, bring visitors to the town center, and showcase community pride.

Goal INF 7: Support and help finance EV charging stations.

Goal INF 8: Continue to perform water and sewer upgrades downtown.





PARKS & RECREATION

RELEVANT GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- *Protect and enhance Murphy’s unique natural resources and defining mountain landscapes.*
- *Support and sustain an economy that promotes local commerce, tourism, cultural opportunities, and outdoor recreation.*
- *Establish Murphy as a regional destination and focal point for outdoor recreation.*

Goal REC 1: Build a Murphy-to-Andrews multiuse trail.

REC 1.1: Adopt a resolution of support for the conversion of the abandoned rail line between Murphy and Andrews into a recreational multiuse trail.

- *Work alongside the Town of Andrews to confirm a resolution from their Board of Aldermen.*

REC 1.2: Identify grant funding sources to commission a feasibility study of the corridor's conversion to a recreational trail.

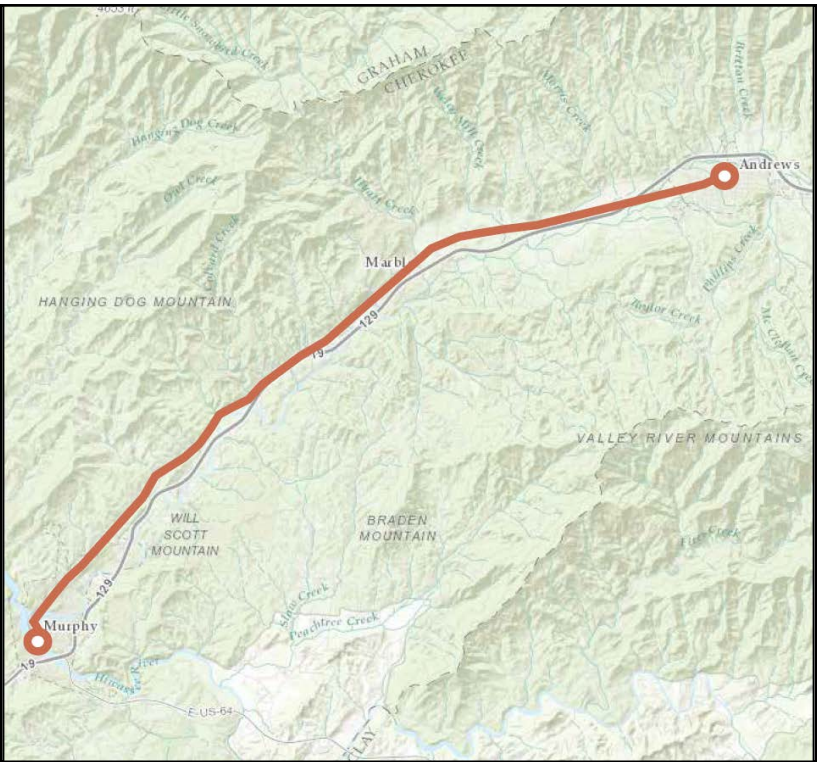
- *Analyze existing bridges and roadway crossings to assess the estimated cost of repair or replacement.*
- *Quantify the economic benefit from tourism potential based on studies of nearby trails (e.g., Virginia Creeper).*
- *Ascertain willingness of adjacent property owners to accommodate the potential changes in easement parameters and identify possible locations for trailhead amenities.*

- *Use the Future Land Use Map character area descriptions to help make decisions about land use along this corridor. The FLUM shows it as "Transitional Mixed Use" along Regal Street and "Corridor Development" further away from the town center.*

REC 1.3: Work with a branding and design team to create an appropriate name and logo for the trail, incorporating local history and iconography where applicable.

REC 1.4: Collaborate with partners to create a "Friends-of-the-Trail" group, which can work to build community support, raise funds, and maintain a newsletter to highlight progress.

Figure 51) Valley River Rail Trail Corridor



The Southern Blue Ridge Bike Plan identified this rail-trail as the Valley River Rail Trail, a key project recommendation.



Figure 52) Valley River Rail Trail Rendering



Source: Southern Blue Ridge Bicycle Plan

The Valley River Rail Trail would open up new possibilities for recreational use, connections between several destinations in Cherokee County, and development opportunities.

- *Identify high-profile "champions" from the area who can add legitimacy and visibility to the project.*
- *Consider incorporating into a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization to receive direct donations.*

REC 1.5: Partner with the Town of Andrews, Cherokee County, and NCDOT to negotiate memoranda of understanding between agencies pertaining to trail management, maintenance, and funding for construction.

REC 1.6: Work with the U.S. Forest Service to establish a clear connection between the Piney Knob trails and the proposed Murphy-to-Andrews rail trail.

- *Coordinate design of a trailhead near Piney Knob Hill with parking facilities.*

REC 1.7: Leverage funding opportunities associated with the North Carolina Great Trails State Master Plan to establish proposed greenways that connect to Murphy, especially this greenway project but also a proposed trail between Murphy and Hayesville.



A rail-with-trail arrangement works within the existing railroad right-of-way, building a regional trail alongside the train tracks instead of replacing them altogether. This could be a viable solution.





Goal REC 2: Construct an amphitheater.

- REC 2.1:** Identify a suitable location for a small amphitheater downtown or near the river.
- Work with Cherokee County to explore converting one of the Konehete Park ballfields on Veterans Memorial Lane into an outdoor amphitheater for use as a music venue/stage for performances. This location would need designated parking.
 - Collaborate with a downtown property owner or acquire a parcel downtown to host outdoor seating as either a temporary or permanent outdoor stage venue for events.
 - A downtown amphitheater could be designed at the existing municipal public parking lot on Bill Hughes Avenue/Alley Street if a multilevel parking garage was constructed behind the County Courthouse building.
 - Establish a policy to mitigate noise complaints; either limiting activity to regular business hours or working with adjacent residential property owners on a solution.



A small amphitheater in or near downtown would be a welcome addition for local residents, offering music and stage performances to support cultural arts festivals and drawing visitors to town. Preferred locations would have sufficient parking, a green lawn, shade trees, and access to the river, but there is potential for smaller (even temporary) venues in the heart of downtown.

Goal REC 3: Improve access to the rivers.

- REC 3.1:** Work with owners of property along the Valley River to secure additional access points for boating, fishing, and other recreational pursuits.
- REC 3.2:** Work with TVA to design and construct additional river access points along the Hiwassee River
- REC 3.3:** Upgrade the existing pedestrian bridge (Murphy River Walk's link to Konehete Park) to provide better accessibility and space to linger and enjoy the views, fish, etc.



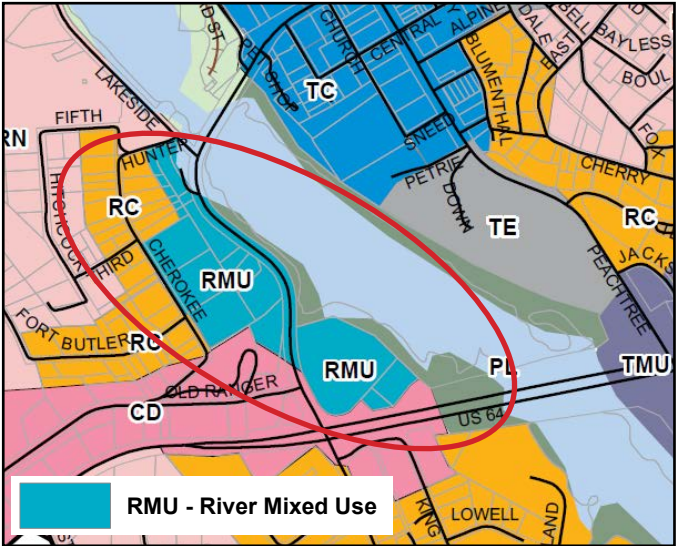
Additional access points to the Hiwassee and Valley Rivers can support the outdoor recreation economy and showcase one of Murphy's main assets, while building assets for residents.



Goal REC 4: Continue to maintain, improve, and extend Murphy River Walk.

- REC 4.1:** Work with property owners (including TVA) to extend the River Walk along the south side of the Valley River as far as possible, with a goal of creating a safe, accessible bicycle and pedestrian path between Konehete Park and Murphy High School and Middle School.
- Begin planning for a multiuse path segment (approximately 0.6 miles) along Pleasant Valley Road that would link the Murphy River Walk near the ballfields to the proposed Murphy-to-Andrews rail trail.
- REC 4.2:** Work with property owners (including TVA) to extend the River Walk along the south side of the Hiwassee River from the boat ramp on Valley River Avenue to the US Forestry Department property on Woodland Drive.
- Refer to the Future Land Use Map's vision for "River Mixed Use" along this section and "Preserved Land" directly on the river.
 - Make sure this segment would be visible from US 19/74/129 (Andrew Jackson Highway).
- REC 4.3:** Identify the funding potential and optimal locations for a new pedestrian bridge across the Hiwassee River, creating an iconic structure that links the proposed "River Mixed Use" areas to the Town Center.

Figure 53) Future River Mixed Use



Goal REC 5: Embrace outdoor recreational tourism as a major industry.

- REC 5.1:** Highlight outdoor recreational tourism amenities in marketing efforts.
- While the "City of Flowers" slogan helps promote the civic, cultural, and mixed-use center of Murphy's downtown, there are many other creative ideas to spotlight the mix of recreational opportunities in town.
 - Promote Murphy's unique location at the confluence of two rivers with beautiful TVA dam reservoirs nearby, appealing to boaters and fishermen. Recognize that "boaters" applies to a wide variety of people.
 - Continue to emphasize the bountiful protected natural areas near Murphy, with hiking and mountain biking trails, campgrounds, and more.
 - Continue to bring awareness to the Murphy River Walk and the proposed Murphy-to-Andrews rail trail.
- REC 5.2:** Support new and existing recreational tourism businesses as an economic development priority.
- Underscore the diversity of activities under the "recreational tourism" umbrella.
 - Hiking, bicycling (including mountain biking), boating, fishing, birding, and other active and passive recreational activities each bring different benefits to a variety of people.
 - Make sure that Town of Murphy and Cherokee County parks and trails facilities capitalize on the diversity of possible offerings, combining facility types to cater to multiple user groups.

- REC 5.3:** Continue to strengthen the Town of Murphy's partnership with the US Forest Service and TVA to be able to maximize use of the rivers, reservoirs, and adjacent land for recreational opportunities.
- REC 5.4:** Partner with TVA and the US Forest Service to develop an area-wide trails master plan (hiking and mountain biking).



REC 5.5: Build capacity through partnerships with outdoor recreation and volunteer clubs to maintain existing infrastructure and continue to expand.

Goal REC 6: Diversify recreational options for children.

REC 6.1: Prioritize funding and construction of another playground in town.

- Include facilities for accessible and adaptive play at Town parks.

REC 6.2: Explore options to construct a splashpad downtown.

- This could be coordinated with designs for an amphitheater, offering amenities for different user groups throughout the day.

REC 6.3: Work with Cherokee County on identifying a suitable location for a skate park.

Goal REC 7: Evaluate the need for a full-time Parks & Recreation staff position with the Town of Murphy to achieve community goals and aspirations.

REC 7.1: Identify Cherokee County staffing needs and collaborate on an effective strategy to meet them.

REC 7.2: Prioritize park maintenance as a funding line item or as a Town staff resource, while also allocating resources to parks and recreation planning.



Increasing the range of recreational options is important because it demonstrates support for different families and life stages, recognizing that toddlers and teenagers have different needs.



An accessible playground can help ensure that all of Murphy's residents feel included and have a place to play, no matter their age or ability. Newer playground designs are exciting and diverse and provide unique spaces for children.



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

RELEVANT GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- Maintain and accentuate the distinct character of Murphy’s historic downtown.
- Support and sustain an economy that promotes local commerce, tourism, cultural opportunities, and outdoor recreation.

Goal CD 1: Ensure free Wi-Fi throughout Town.

CD 1.1: Work with local government partners to provide multiple points of Wi-Fi access.

- Locations should include schools, parks, the library, and other municipal/county sites.
- These Wi-Fi hubs should be available at no cost and 24/7, with limited range outside the building.

CD 1.2: Develop a map of free Wi-Fi hotspots throughout town.

- Identify local business partners who are willing to participate and include them on the map.

CD 1.3: Partner with internet providers to set up free Wi-Fi in and around the Town Square area.

- Leverage state and regional grants to support this effort.
- Permit installation of necessary equipment on streetlights and municipal building rooftops.



Goal CD 2: Revisit the Town's branding and design.

CD 2.1: Fund the design of a comprehensive Town of Murphy rebranding package.

- Include an updated Town logo, which continues to capitalize on the "City of Flowers" slogan and iconography, but expands the design element to also highlight the rivers.
- Make sure there are variations on the theme (color palette, motifs) and alternatives for use with promotional materials for Town-sponsored events, decorations, and wayfinding signs.
- Work on efforts to distinguish Murphy’s downtown by applying branding to tangential items such as bike racks, street tree grates, garbage cans, street signs, and public parking signs.

Goal CD 3: Cultivate Murphy's dining options.

CD 3.1: Embrace food trucks in Murphy.

- Allow permits for food trucks in commercial and mixed-use districts in Murphy.
- Establish a regular food truck event where at least 3-4 food trucks set up on a consistent and rotating



basis to provide alternate dining options for locals and visitors (without overlapping with the Town of Andrews' "Food Truck Fridays").

- Work with event planners to make sure that most or all festivals and outdoor music gatherings in Murphy are able to host a food truck by coordinating/streamlining the permit process.

CD 3.2: Support local restaurateurs in developing new businesses and franchises within town limits.

CD 3.3: Encourage mixed use developments downtown to make available more ground-level square footage to support retail and dining businesses (with office space and residential uses upstairs).

Goal CD 4: Help sustain the Farmer's Market.

CD 4.1: Work with coordinators establishing a venue with adjacent parking.

- Identify property downtown that can accommodate both vendors and parking.
- Establish a temporary street closure for the market downtown.
 - Peachtree Street (between Valley River Avenue/Hiwassee Street and Central Street/Bill Hughes Avenue)
 - Church Street (between Willow Street and Valley River Avenue/Hiwassee Street).



Recurring festivals and art walks like Murphy Spring Festival and Murphy Art Walk are great ways to show community pride, bolster regional visibility, and promote local artisans and crafters. Promoting and expanding the Saturday Farmer's Market and establishing a regular food truck event can also be beneficial to the community.

Goal CD 5: Become a Main Street America town.

CD 5.1: Continue to pursue Main Street status to leverage economic development resources and the opportunity to connect and network with small towns across the country.

CD 5.2: Promote downtown as Murphy’s primary civic, cultural, and mixed-used center.



- Consider allocating funds to create a culturally rich arts community through collaborative relationships, financial support, and strengthening local arts organizations, artists, and cultural activities.

CD 5.3: Help build a Merchant's Association for Murphy to spearhead events and strategies for business owners to support each other.

Goal CD 6: Invigorate Murphy through placemaking.

CD 6.1: Continue to create pedestrian-only alleyways, with benches, bike racks, lighting, murals/artwork, flowers/landscaping, etc.

CD 6.2: Collaborate with local business owners on a permit process to reallocate on-street parking into outdoor seating for their business.

CD 6.3: Work with property owners to make use of underutilized parcels or portions of parcels downtown, finding cost-effective ways to add outdoor seating and green space - temporarily or long-term/permanent.

CD 6.4: Pursue grant funding for public art, highlighting local creatives through sculpture, murals, and other temporary or permanent installations.

- Sponsor artwork that highlights Murphy's unique aspects and promotes town pride.

Goal CD 7: Evaluate options for the Rock Gym building.

CD 7.1: Conduct due diligence to determine the potential for renovation of this facility and, if renovation of the building is not feasible, options for redevelopment of the property should be explored.

Goal CD 8: Continue to prioritize infill development.

CD 8.1: Consider the creation of a range of Economic Development Incentives to fund infrastructure for infill development within downtown Murphy for projects that meet Town redevelopment goals and that, based upon evaluation of financials, could not occur without incentives.

CD 8.2: Work with property owners and local creatives to install temporary amenities on vacant parcels downtown.

- Murals, sculpture, and other artwork can bring attention to the area's creative culture.

- Setting up seating for public use and stringing lights between buildings can activate a vacant parcel.

- Movable planters with trees and flowers can help keep an aesthetic standard for downtown.

Goal CD 9: Support Cherokee County Transit services as an economic development tool for regional employees.

CD 9.1: Coordinate with Cherokee County and NCDOT on park-and-ride locations along US 74.

CD 9.2: If County Transit develops fixed-route bus service, work to include stops in downtown Murphy and other employment centers and help establish well-maintained shelters at key stops.



Recurring festivals and art walks are great ways to show community pride, bolster regional visibility, and promote local artisans and crafters. Promoting and expanding the Saturday Farmer's Market and establishing a regular food truck event can also be beneficial to the community.



A sign for public parking downtown

APPENDIX



Flowers at a pedestrian crossing downtown



Additional Resources:

Town of Murphy

www.townofmurphync.com

Southwestern Commission Council of Governments

www.regiona.org

North Carolina League of Municipalities

www.nclm.org

Here We Grow (WNC) Case Studies

www.herewegrownc.org/case-studies

UNC School of Government

www.sog.unc.edu

Cherokee County, NC

www.cherokeecounty-nc.gov

Town of Andrews, NC

www.andrewsnc.org

Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce

www.cherokeecountychamber.com

Cherokee County Tourism Development Authority

www.visitccnc.com

Cherokee County Schools

www.cherokee.k12.nc.us

Tri-County Community College

www.tricountycc.edu

North Carolina Department of Transportation

www.ncdot.org

North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management

www.osbm.state.nc.us/ncosbm/facts_and_figures



North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources

daq.state.nc.us

North Carolina Employment Security Commission

www.ncesc.com

North Carolina Department of State Treasurer

www.nctreasurer.com

U.S. Census Bureau

www.census.gov

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

www.nrcs.usda.gov

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

www.fws.gov

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

usace.army.mil

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

www.fema.gov





Write-In Answers to Survey Question 3

3.) If you live or own a business in Murphy, what are the reasons that affected your decision to live or open your business here? *Select all that apply.*

- Retirement *in Hickory NC and moved to Murphy in 1999.*
- Beautiful setting, great people.
- Better climate
- Bought grandparents' land
- Clean air and water. Open minded locals. Outdoor recreation.
- Family was born and raised here
- Found a cabin on a creek and bought it!
- God brought us here to Pastor.
- I do not live in Murphy full time. I do own a home there and visit every other weekend
- I don't have to drive far to town or work
- I have a part time home here. Wanted a mountain home.
- I have worked in Murphy for over 40 years
- I live in Blairsville
- I live in Brasstown
- I live in Marble
- I live in Peachtree.
- I live in martins creek but am in Murphy all the time
- I moved here for peace of mind which has been RUINED BY CRYPTO MINING ON HARSHAW RD.
- JCCFS proximity
- John Campbell Folk School
- Live in cherokee county
- Love this area of NC
- Mountain Beauty
- Mountain living
- Mountain scenery
- Moved here in 1996, a resident originally from Graham County
- My family has had a house here since 92 or 93. Decided to take over the family vacation house and take care of it and make a living here.
- My father grew up in Murphy and his parents and grandparents were from Murphy. I grew up
- No business like mine around this area
- Proximity to John C Campbell Folk School
- Proximity to the John C Campbell school
- Raised here
- Retired liked the area.
- Retiree
- River Walk trails
- Spouse is from murphy
- The John Campbell folk school
- The beauty, the slower pace of life, the friendly people
- The folks here, the natural beauty
- To be near the folk school and folk school community
- Unique business opportunity
- Vacation home
- Wanted out of the big concrete jungle!
- We own land and are building a home. Hopefully future business owner in Murphy and resident.
- We plan to have a second home in Murphy
- community business
- convenience to work, businesses
- daughter working at casino
- live on the outskirts of Murphy
- love this area of NC
- own home-visit regularly
- shop was for sale
- the people
- was moved here as a teen by parents



Write-In Answers to Survey Question 13

3.) If you live or own a business in Murphy, what are the reasons that affected your decision to live or open your business here? *Select all that apply.*

- Not sure, am still new here. *residents and visitors.*
- The new Mayor & Town Council, our current Town Manager! It's moving forward in the best hands. We are growing and on top of it!
- The potential for growth. The residents
- Attracting more remote workers to consider Murphy as a wonderful place to live. These remote workers would bring their money and diverse views that would rejuvenate the town.
- The opportunities the town has to continue to be one of the best small towns in America. Some things the town could consider to attract residents/ visitors to the downtown area are: 1) have a Friday or Saturday night concert in town during the spring, summer, and fall months and allow vendors, food trucks, etc. to set up. 2) Find a way to get the rail road back to Murphy. This would have a significant impact on the local economy as visitors could get off the train at the Depot and shop/eat at downtown shops and restaurants. I feel like this would be especially popular in the fall when the leafs are changing and around Christmas time. The Smokey mountain railroad in Bryson City already reenacts the Polar Express around Christmas time. Murphy would be a great place for this to come because those on the train could experience the beautiful downtown Christmas decorations.
- The growth and the opportunities that would be provided to our youth. There is currently nothing that attracts our youth to return to Murphy. No jobs, no event venues, no recreational facilities.
- Embracing tourism as our major industry. Hiking, bicycling, boating, fishing.... All take advantage of our natural beauty without destroying it. Our River Walk is a perfect example of how using natural facilities can both enhance quality of life for our residents and attract tourism. That little trail brings hundreds of visitors to Murphy on a regular basis. Just think what converting our abandoned Rail Road into a multi use pedestrian trail would do for us! There would be nothing like it anywhere nearby, creating a unique tourist attraction that would equally benefit our
- New officers that are interested in helping Murphy grow into a updated town.
- I love Murphy! I was born and raised here and now have a business downtown. I believe we can capitalize on our beauty and ample resources to truly make Murphy a destination not only for tourism but for economic development.
- We moved here from PA because we wanted to retire to a mountain town that had it all so are very excited to see what is right around the corner!
- The volunteer organizations that have creative ideas to make Murphy a tourist and arts destination. Becoming a full-fledged Main Street USA town that is eligible for grants to beautify downtown and create more opportunities for outdoor recreation, dining, and the arts.
- More available housing, many more great restaurants, and increased public transit options!
- Growth downtown. Being known for great restaurants and boutique
- Murphy has a multitude of opportunities for growth and attracting businesses.
- Nothing. Tired of the infighting. I am excited about the new breakfast place opening . Not happy about the rentals downtown. Enjoy the small town feel, don't want Murphy to be a Blue Ridge or Gatlinburg!
- I'm not sure about the future but I would love for my daughters to come back here to raise their families after college. Murphy is wonderful town that I feel will grow in the right direction.
- I would love to see the railroad turned into a bike path. Or see more bike plates in the area.
- Making downtown an eventful place with a fun, family atmosphere like the art walk nights. Expanding recreational activities, both indoor and outdoor
- Hope it stays small like community. But we do need other places to eat more affordable. But also nice restaurant that fair on prices





Write-In Answers to Survey Question 13, Cont'd

- More local businesses establishing themselves in Murphy and adding to the character of the town.
- Murphy needs a better park with surveillance similar to Meeks park
- I'm not at all, I have lived here my whole life and my whole life this has been a small town but now all of these people are moving here and we are losing what makes this town special. The expansion and constant construction going on in and around downtown Murphy is absolutely awful and these companies we've hired to do it are dragging these jobs out much longer than needed. The people moving here are stealing what is special about our Appalachian culture because we are starting to cater to their needs instead of the needs of families who have lived here for generations. We need to start thinking how we can preserve our small town aura because once it is gone we can never get it back.
- Maintaining small town atmosphere.
- Murphy has wonderful natural recreational assets, and a diverse economy.
- There seems to be a lot of conservative presence that believes firmly in Jesus Christ.
- Feel of a small community while offering some nice amenities downtown. Need more trendy business to attract more outsiders to come visit.
- Hopefully growth in housing and/or apartments. Murphy is growing and the housing isn't growing with it. The town/county is so against growth that everyone around us is flourishing except us.
- More housing and dining.
- Innovation, potential for growth, job opportunities
- Maintain the small town feel . Manage traffic.
- Giving murphy a facelift but keeping its character And history intact, small town with more opportunity for safe family oriented activity, attracting more retail and dining facilities which are done in excellence, outside dining rooftop or balcony, directory signage with lighting improvements, accessibility for biking and bike lanes, rails to trails, support tourism but making it manageable with parking and traffic, roundabout and build a parking garage.
- Hoping for animal control officer to help with abused animals and ones in need of help. Our county is one of the highest rated in nc for abuse. Disgusting behavior
- The potential for having the ability to grow tremendously while maintaining the small town feel. Downtown needs to have a zoning ordinance so buildings look more uniform--4 lane between new road red light and Wal-Mart needs major development. So much potential for growth--hope it actually starts. We need to adapt to what people want/look for when visiting and moving to an area.
- I love the small town feel. We can really keep that and update and upgrade what we have.
- Economic growth while keeping the small town charm
- I'm not very excited about Murphy's future. I love our little town, but it is standing still as every town around us grows. Downtown is a disaster with parking on the street. We need high paying jobs to come to this area. My husband and I moved away for a time because plants closed and the only way to make a good wage was to move. Murphy needs leadership that will encourage growth in the county while maintaining a quaint feel in the downtown area. Take examples from what's happening in Blue Ridge.
- Murphy has grown so much since I was a kid and I'm excited to see what it continues to grow into. I would love to see more outdoor recreation activities, outdoor spaces for live music/hanging out, and more activity options for the youth.
- As a true local, I am hopeful that we are beginning to recognize the need for population growth and industry. This is key to attracting a tax base that will create more economic opportunity for locals.
- Remaining strong!
- I love seeing our town grow but knowing people are interested in keeping its natural charm is a big bonus
- The town is growing so fast!! And we welcome growth and opportunity!
- Future growth while maintaining our small town atmosphere.
- Increasing family activities and parks around



Write-In Answers to Survey Question 13, Cont'd

- town
- Seeing what new businesses and restaurants come about.
- Promoting new businesses
- Keeping the small town vibe that we all love and remain here for. However, growing the possibility of events and things to enjoy in our small town without all the extra people brought in
- I want to keep my hometown feeling like a thriving hometown.
- The future possibilities of more dining options, music/event venues, and outdoor activities.
- Change and growth. When comparing our downtown to our surrounding neighbors, ours has a lot more to be desired. Murphy has been stagnant and holding on to old ideals that inhibit growth and tourism and for that the business here have suffered. I am so glad to see this survey and the potential for change.
- With the natural landscape and multiple opportunities to expand parks and recreational areas, it will invite economic growth for our community.
- Murphy has a unique opportunity to be a small, rural, mountain town that is keyed in to the incredibly important topics of diversity, equity, and inclusion. If we want to stand out amongst the crowd and attract a strong, vibrant, useful, tax paying population then focusing on those elements in conjunction with the natural beauty and ability to work from home will create a powerfully attractive force. My friends who mostly moved to large cities around the country desperately want out. They want to live the idyllic life that they see me taking part in here. But we have to have a place to put them, and we have to be capable of supporting their remote work needs. We're almost there, and it is the direction of the future.
- Attracting more activities to the area
- Expansion and diversity
- Expansion and welcoming of new business.
- Clean up the streets and parking
- To be honest not much right now. It seems that Murphy isn't making any progress to prepare for the future.
- I am hopeful that there will be more opportunities for arts and outdoor activities
- keeping a small town feel while keeping up with the rest of the world
- I wish Murphy was the way it was when I growing up. Slow and peaceful
- Cultural diversity & open-mindedness
- Not much. I came here to visit family all my life. This was my vacation spot. I decided not to leave one visit and raise a family here. It's beginning to look a lot like a big city. I see a mini Chattanooga or Atlanta on the rise and it makes me cry!!! Our natural beauty should be maintained and upheld as our attraction.
- Implementation of a comprehensive development plan
- Sprawl from Blue Ridge will open the area to art, wealth and diversity.
- We have a wonderful opportunity to utilize our existing tourism base and expand upon it. Biking, kayaking/rafting, fishing, and other outdoor activities should be facilitated. For instance, the piney mtn. trails and the hanging dog campground trails are already existing, better ways to facilitate use and encourage tourism for those would be wonderful.... Pressure should be applied to the county to do something with Hanging Dog campground, there is no reasonable public camping in Cherokee County! Rather than SELLING our mountains to outside interests we can be capitalizing on them for OUR future and OUR income while preserving them for our kids!
- When the vacationers go away
- The Riverwalk extension past the bridge over the river into Andrews I would love to see that corridor be improved I own land on that track
- The possibility of making Murphy THE town to come to.
- Love to see railway made into a greenway/trail
- Maintaining our small town atmosphere
- More things for children to do. Splash pad, toddler playground etc. We cater More towards the senior community and forget about our



Write-In Answers to Survey Question 13, Cont'd

- younger families.
- We are lucky to live in such a beautiful place with plenty of outdoor recreational opportunities. Growth must be managed to enhance and maintain those opportunities.
- Maintaining Murphy's heritage and beauty with minimal growth and change to the downtown region in areas that will take away from the original beauty of the original landscape.
- Folk school, river walk, walkable downtown, farmers market, art projects, festivals, natural areas
- Small town access to parks and and nature area
- I am hoping that the Downtown area can grow and provide opportunities for businesses to grow while keeping with a small town feel... make it someplace visitors will want to come to.. build the hiking and waterways area to attract more ppl.
- Making some improvements but keeping our small town charm!
- The area is so beautiful. Neighboring towns have fantastic public recpark facilities such as towns county clay County. Would love to see public lake beach, public pool, public splash pad.
- Potential for increase broadband access to create a draw to working professionals, the utilization of our beautiful historic downtown to increase dining (especially outdoor dining) and event opportunities, expanding sidewalks and pedestrian access to downtown
- Young people and families moving here.
- I love how it has the small town charm with the old buildings and what makes Murphy, Murphy. I want it to keep that charm but we need growth
- Getting young people to the area that can work in new businesses and restaurants. Affordable housing opportunities to support young people who will be our driving work force. I'm excited about progressive leaders who love Murphy and are willing to embrace change and creative ways to expand rather than bring "industry" here.
- Potential for growth. Murphy has long prioritized the aging population with the recent development of Blue Ridge we lose the opportunity to profit

- from those who visit due to the lack of dining options and "down-town" Life that blue ridge offers. Develop down town for young/middle age adults to be proud of and enjoy working for attracting those who visit or move into the area keeping them in our community helping to fund our own resources. You attract what you advertise. So if down town Murphy is full of antique stores and craft shops and 1 or 2 restaurants then you limit who will want to be in down town. Make it appoint to attract the young and older adults
- I would love to see more parks and expanded walking and hiking paths. The restoration of the hiking trails on the lake at Hanging Dog campground should be a top priority
- One thing I didn't see mentioned and I've always thought it would be fabulous. I wish we would see the track reopened. Murphy would boom. Bring the trains back. Open up the depot again. Open up little shops along the tracks. I've lived here since 1988. Murphy is in my blood. I've watched this town grow through the years but NOTHING like it has in the past two years. I'm excited to see what positive growth is in our future.
- Keeping it a close knit small community- this is why we moved here The small Feeling is imperative No big corporations- local local local working together
- This survey shows Murphy leaders care about what residents want. I am excited to see the changes that result. Murphy is amazing now and can be even better!
- Always remember, we're a Little country town. We love our families, but most importantly we love our Lord.
- Downtown growth
- No reason Murphy couldn't be next Silicon Valley, if attract business and support infrastructure/ recreation to attract employees
- It's potential and ability to attract young adults, children, and families.
- I remember a time when it felt safe to walk in town. Due to the increasing amount of drug activity it makes our town unsafe and not desirable. We need to relocate the homeless



Write-In Answers to Survey Question 13, Cont'd

- shelter and terminate the meth clinic. There is people sleeping on park benches. No amount of infrastructure will matter if we do not take care of our main problems.
- I was born and raised here in Hiwassee Dam, and I've always loved my hometown. It's getting so I don't recognize it though and I'd like to see less cheap tourist traps, and more businesses geared towards the actual residents of Cherokee County.
- Opportunity for younger generations to want to move back.
- Taking care of the existing citizens and making sure safety is a priority
- The idea that our leadership is younger and hopefully more open to ideas for improvements. I hope that leadership is more open to improving our communities sports facilities for our kids.
- -more tax revenue coming into town with all the growth
- I love our little town and I think it looks great but I'm pretty excited about it looking even better in the future. I would love to see the train come but I know that will probably not happen.
- Bike trails on level ground. Art work statues in strategic areas for pictures. Outdoor dining areas
- I was hoping for the train system to be revived to go back and forth to Andrews to bring more business/visitors to the down town stores in each area. I look forward to more festivals in Murphy for people to shop/mingle. eg Tree lighting, Spring Fling, July 4th etc.
- Not sure
- Growth
- Historic preservation. Public transportation that is handicapped accessible. Affordable housing. Activities for seniors and teens
- I'm too new of a resident to be able to answer this question.
- New businesses coming to downtown
- I want to see Murphy maintain its hometown atmosphere and not focus on getting bigger but keeping the small town feeling I grew up with. I want kids to feel safe and families to stay in town.
- new resturants and shops. Seeing a community

- pool that seniors can use.
- Our new leader, Mayor Tim Radford, and his approach to improve our town
- Dining and shopping opportunities
- The recent response of citizens to develop enforceable noise ordinances and zoning laws to check unregulated development such as crypto mines and other onslaughts that compromise citizens properties and quality of life.
- We need zoning so that there are less decapitated metal buildings. We need to look like we are proud of our town. Think Blue Ridge Georgia but on a smaller scale.
- To keep the small town feel and appearance even though growth, which is happening now, is inevitable. We need to make the provisions for all this growth to try to keep things moving as smooth as possible. I would rather see the growth happen on the main roads outside of town, like grocery stores and retail shops, local owned businesses.
- Hoping to preserve the small community feel, but we need more shopping opportunities. Good example is the town of Whitefish, Montana. Look it up!! Also, PLEASE make out entrance corners on 64 into town cleaner and with landscaping. Too much litter and not inviting.
- More restaurants and night life
- Growth and opportunities for gainful employment.
- I like the thought of an amphitheater going downtown, or just a downtown event center where locals can gather, maybe live music and craft fairs
- This survey as it indicates serious thought about where to take this town and area.
- I think a measured and well thought out approach to growth is the plan. I have friends that have lived in Blue Ridge Ga, for 15 years and are selling their house and moving away due to congestion and what they term "growth for the sake of growth". I think a well balanced approach to growth with retail, hospitality, and infrastructure can be possible if the town planners do not deviate from a growth plan that





Write-In Answers to Survey Question 13, Cont'd

- would put infrastructure, parking, social services, and public services (police, fire, etc) under stress. Blue Ridge might be the perfect example of what NOT to do...go there on a weekend and try to park your car...crazy busy in a smallish footprint and actually too many opportunities for meals, shops, etc...they've lost the "small town" charm and atmosphere and now it's a hodgepodge of businesses and not well laid out or planned in my opinion. We are a small town and growth needs to be integrated with thought and a build able to handle increased traffic.
- Growth and opportunity
 - We hope that Murphy will continue to maintain a vibrant small town community feel while expanding opportunities for people to enjoy our beautiful area.
 - increased diversity and more welcoming atmosphere
 - Murphy's location with it's lakes and mountains. Nature is everywhere. I love Murphy's downtown area with all it's restaurants and festivals. It's not overly commercialized like other nearby towns.
 - To see how great Murphy can be.
 - Watching the area grow bringing in more restaurants and recreation.
 - The downtown area continues to grow. The improvements to the 4 lane will be great as well. The new high school will bring growth opportunities. Yet the town has still maintained the "small town mountain" feel. Would be great if the GSMR would extend to Murphy or run a different line out of Murphy!
 - Improving, maintaining and making Murphy more user friendly and welcoming for people that already live, work and play here. The rest will follow.
 - Controlled growth.
 - I hope that we can get the train in here as it will bring business and people to Murphy
 - Old town flavor
 - Would love to see the community grow like Blue Ridge but manage the growth to maintain the small town feel. No condos, bit coin mines and try to clean up the ugly street side coming into town on 74. It is truly an eyesore.
 - Still small town atmosphere.
 - Local eats, things to do, [the fact that] you are asking what public wants being proactive
 - A vision that encourages growth while maintaining the small town charm. Would love to see bike trails as well as other outdoor activities as a focus. Also the parking downtown has to be addressed for businesses to grow and succeed.
 - You are interested in asking the population for input. Affordable housing is an important issue as well as public transportation.
 - The small town feel and the friendly people.
 - Sense of community
 - Keeping the small town feeling
 - The City of Flowers is uniquely well situated to propel itself forward as a true gateway to the Appalachian Mountains. Specifically, the Downtown corridor provides direct access to the Hanging Dog Loop, which is a unique quilt work of communities that offers some unparalleled, beautiful, scenic, and historic infrastructure that deserves to be appreciated. I believe that if the town carefully manages a development plan which fosters the growth of a welcoming, aesthetically homogeneous downtown corridor focused on preserving the historic buildings, and simultaneously provides resources to promote the recreation opportunities present along the Unicoi turnpike and Joe brown highway, outdoor enthusiasts would be delighted to visit our town. Having moved here to escape the heavily touristed and overdeveloped coastal scene, I am naturally hesitant to see the Town in a position that would become too overly dependent on tourism. However, because Murphy is only about 2 hours from several large metropolitan areas, if we were to invest in providing high speed internet access to more neighborhoods, promote the aesthetic of a small-town, pedestrian friendly city, encourage the development of recreational opportunities, and preserve the historic charm of downtown, the Town could reliably foster an environment that supports individuals who wish to work from home. This would help maintain the Town's finances by providing reliable tax-income



Write-In Answers to Survey Question 13, Cont'd

- from home owners as well as mitigate the possible cultural harm of relying too heavily on tourism. I am very excited to see how we move forward from here!
- I am excited to actually bring a new restaurant to downtown, and I'm hoping others will follow suit.
 - Beautification of downtown, downtown parking, dog parks, hiking & kayak river access put in's. A music venue to host local talent!
 - Keeping government small, avoiding taking feel-good grants that require more government intrusion and regulations; stopping the need to change everything in these beautiful mtns. Hands off, this survey is an eye opener as to how willing Murphy is willing to sell their souls for the almighty gov money. Just stop
 - Not sure
 - Growth to encourage visitors to the area
 - To see the town grow but into a more wholesome positive place to be.
 - The potential for growth.
 - We love walking around downtown and seeing the beautiful flowers and landscaping. We also enjoy the farmers market and antique stores.
 - Combining the historic charm with an eco friendly future. Access to more trails and outdoor recreational and attracting businesses.
 - The beauty of the land and the wildness of the surrounding area. As a senior retiree I love the absence of traffic but the presence of most anything I might need to enjoy life here. Being 2 hours from most everything commercial is a blessing to me. If those things get closer, then Murphy becomes the exact thing I fled when I moved here. I am pleased to have this opportunity to convey my thoughts and am excited that Murphy is making a comprehensive plan that is more forward-looking for its citizens. Broadband access and electric vehicle charging stations should absolutely be a part of our future vision. Please.
 - Growth in tourism to keep property taxes low.
 - More retail choices for grocery and home goods. More dining opportunities other then fast food. No more auto parts stores.
 - It's tranquil beauty and country charm! However we do need to control ,stifle and stop the meth And drug addiction that's running rampant in our beautiful town And the level of crime that it's causing!
 - New roadways that hopefully lead to less traffic/ accidents. Also better parking for downtown.
 - Keeping Murphy a small town feel with many more opportunities for outdoor recreation like camp grounds, nature trails, and walking paths, but with more business/entertainment/ restaurant opportunities for community members, especially youth and seniors, so as to keep locals from moving away for better opportunities. Murphy is becoming too touristy and traffic excess is a problem that I hope will be addressed.
 - Growth and more opportunities for people to make a living. Also promoting Murphy as a place to come and have fun and eat great food. We need some big box stores.
 - Keeping the small town appearance.
 - Keep the mountain town feeling- do NOT grow into The Highlands or Cashiers- crowded and snooty!
 - A thoughtful plan that anticipates growth. Continuing to develop our beautiful downtown and our wonderful natural resources.
 - Growth of new things that are useful to the community
 - I just hope that Murphy does not lose its small town appeal. That is why we moved here. There are plenty of big cities to choose from, but the feel of family and community that Murphy has is unique! Let's keep it that way.
 - That we are starting to pay attention to bad business abuse like bitcoin mining operations
 - Really nothing. The homeless population is terrible. No more sidewalks are needed through Andrews rd all that walk that path are homeless and drug addicts. The riverwalk is questionable in the early evenings and still lots of rough people during the day. I even had a friend who's bike, with training wheels, was stolen when left for 10 mins. All the traffic in town is terrible and the school facilities are a joke (which I realize is not



Write-In Answers to Survey Question 13, Cont'd

- the Towns decisions). Continuous poor decisions by the entire county has significantly put this town in a terrible spot. I realize it's going to grow no matter what but the people we are attracting are not the ones we want. Old, cheap retired people to fill up the poorly built spec cabins that everyone is building. Nothing is quality and we have invested in a geriatric generation that doesn't even have money to put into our community (\$89k spec cabins). My husband and myself were born and raised here and are working on a 5 year plan to get out of business and move. That is my honest opinion.*
- *would love to go back to the family feel this town used to have the no hurry lazy life. Not the self-entitled tourist feel that it is now*
 - *Cultural events*
 - *The cultural winds of change I am seeing from things like this survey and the well thought out questions and delivery.*
 - *I'm excited for the growth in the area as my business is in siding and window installation. We also build single family residences. Would love to see the River walk turn not more of a hub for locals and the many visitors. I'm also a photographer so I see the potential this beautiful space could have. In the afternoons or early mornings it can be a scary place for ladies to travel alone so a few lights would be a great idea. Can't wait to see what's to come with!! Can't wait for the work along the main roadways are finished. I've heard a few visitors complain how much of an eye sore it is right now. That it's not as inviting to come downtown because of it and that the parking situation is bad especially with longer trucks parked in front of businesses. Want to keep that small town inviting feel for everyone especially for generations to come!*
 - *Town is busy again., Especially on the weekends. So much potential.*
 - *electric charging stations for cars*
 - *Needs more parking, too crowded for most events for people who have limited mobility.*
 - *More activities for youth, young adults, and outdoor dining*
 - *Adding to downtown - restaurants and stores.*
 - *Better parking for downtown. Not constant road closure. Hopefully less packed , but more fun things to do for the young and old. Love farmer markets. And outdoor things.*
 - *Very little, the current disaster that is the road work on the highway, coupled with the destruction of roadside landscaping makes the place an eyesore for passers by. The town center is too small for events and there is little parking for attendees. The idea of attracting remote workers and gentrification of existing residential areas, coupled with the rabid disdain against affordable housing is forcing poorer residents away from the county and attracting people who contribute markedly less to the local economy long term.*
 - *Developing a downtown with lots of shopping and dining options*
 - *More places to eat*
 - *The new Mayor, open to creating a vision and understanding change is coming and it is time to make tough decisions about what we look like in 10-20 years.*
 - *Hoping to keep the friendly, small town, relaxed atmosphere while offering quality services and making the most efficient use of tax dollars.*
 - *Maintaining the beautiful downtown*
 - *Keeping it a small town.*
 - *Abandoned rail line would make a great "Rails to Trails" facility that will bring visitors and new businesses to downtown and will add considerable revenue to the city and county.*
 - *I love the small town feel.*
 - *The revitalization of the downtown area and the new high school.*
 - *Staying a small mountain town community.*
 - *keeping it's Hometown country appeal ,but at the same time growing with the times and keeping unique spots and shops and offering more diversity in the arts and such*
 - *More incentives for Mom and Pop stores in downtown.*
 - *Being that I was born and raised in Murphy, living here for the past 23 years, I am not currently*



Write-In Answers to Survey Question 13, Cont'd

- excited about Murphy's future. This was always such a nice small town in my eyes growing up, but with all of the new expansion the town is going downhill quickly. The more the town expands, the more new people come in bringing drugs and other chaos to our once safe small town.*
- *The potential of growth and developments within the town*
 - *Seeing our Downtown grow and providing opportunities for businesses to succeed. Cleaning up old buildings that have been left to become an eyesore.*
 - *More dining options*
 - *Develop the old l & n depot to provide a riverwalk restaurants etc. Requires infrastructure.*
 - *I would like to see Murphy close down the streets on Saturday night. Allow people to shop, eat and visit with one another. Have food trucks, music, tables set up. I would also like for someone to open up a lunch counter like Parkers had.*
 - *Keeping the small-town feel, while maintaining and improving the appearance of the town through proper maintenance.*
 - *Amazing little town, with unlimited possibilities but need more events. A brand, trademark, something that unique and unifies our town.*
 - *Small time feel with world class amenities and access to the natural beauty that surrounds the town*
 - *More places to eat... please keep small town living*
 - *Small town feel. However it is getting worse. Needs to keep the small town everyone knows everyone feel.*
 - *Bringing in more small businesses to Downtown. Keeping the friendly hometown feel it has. Also, would like to see areas created for the youth. Ages. 10 to 16 to have place to go n do things. Hangout, board games, creative activities, arts, and Events. Family oriented at Times as well. Would like to see at Konahetta Park, Stationary exercise equipment for all ages to do. Like other places have a Senior Park that has physical equipment for them to move with.*
 - *Continuing a small town atmosphere in our rural community.*
 - *I was born and raised here. I live in marble but come to murphy all the time. I love my small town. We need to keep it safe, and to have that hometown Norman Rockwell feel about it.*
 - *Murphy staying the old home town mountain hideaway.*
 - *Upgrade's, our town has very little growth. Need to attract more young people to the area, not a retirement home. Businesses makes money. Expanded opportunities, updating existing buildings, and parking lots to increase its natural beauty while not over expanding and turning it into a Blue Ridge with paid parking and to many people!*
 - *The new businesses coming and the way that old structures have been updated (Legends).*
 - *Opportunities to attract income for Murphy by utilizing all water & rivers for recreational opportunities*
 - *Ensuring the possibilities of an attractive viable Downtown with great shopping, dining and entertainment is realized and our town becomes safer and more aesthetically pleasing. Have the right, proven and successful leaders particularly a proven leader and visionary as our City Manager*
 - *Zoning*
 - *how you will address the noise issue of the bitcom business that is coming into the area. Which is disturbing the taxpaying citizens who support this towns economy*
 - *I would love to see more things happen to make Murphy enjoyable for the residents, so that we don't have to travel to have things to do, but without overdeveloping it and bringing in too many tourists. Also need to make improvements to properly care and provide for our current residents before bringing in more residents.*
 - *hopefully making it easier to get thru town...the population is growing too fast*
 - *Great little town. Love to spend more time there either having dinner or having a cocktail.*
 - *Outdoor recreation while keeping the natural beauty of my small home town. Making it safe for pedestrians of all types. Festivals and farmers*





Write-In Answers to Survey Question 13, Cont'd

- markets for a small town makes the community come together and able to financially help the local population at the same time.
- Right now not a lot, until the homeless shelter is removed from the home and the problem of homeless and drugs are removed from our town nothing will help. The river walk is unsafe even in the day with homeless hanging out there until the shelter reopens, also the library and there is a steady flow of people going through Harshaw Cemetery to the river.
 - Keeping small town atmosphere.
 - Keeping Murphy's history and mountain town charm while creating a prosperous, safe, clean, scenic and unique welcoming town for tourists and residents to visit, enjoy and live.
 - Increase in population bringing money to the town. The money would be best used to highlight outdoor recreation and activities that many move here to enjoy.
 - I would love to see hwy 74 beautified with paint jobs, murals, landscaping, no more metal buildings, decrease ugly signs, have the whole town as well as local artists invited to help work with owners of businesses to help accomplish this.
 - Increase kids activities, Rec sports, pool access, playgrounds, Dining options NOT consolidating the high schools
 - The possibility of protecting our resources like rivers & trails while utilizing them in a way that brings short-term tourism to the area. Ordinances restricting billboards & digital signs!!! Retail/dining spaces downstairs, living spaces upstairs will be awesome.
 - synergy, diversity and more entertainment for the residents.
 - The vision in which the town's elected officials want for the residents
 - Sewage issues need fixed
 - Adding new retail options. Making all buildings that are street level retail space only. No more hippy shops. .some have been in town FOREVER!!! No more antique shops. I would like to keep the town's charm. If people want something else..go to a city! Change the banners..why have picture of street lights on street lights? The logo should be only thing on the banners. The flowers are beautiful. If folks want artsy..go to folk school. Don't turn the town into artsy.. hippy. It's bad enough already. We need the old charm back!!!!
 - Increasing diversity
 - Expansion. Seeing more people enjoy our beautiful town. Seeing more businesses make our town home.
 - The new Mayor!
 - I hope the decision makers for the town understand, and agree that while Murphy is growing, we must preserve it's small town atmosphere, and history. If that ever disappeared, we would never get it back.
 - Keep the culture, history, values, keep it where locals can still afford to live here
 - High speed Internet
 - New business opening!
 - Growth but keeping the small town mindset. Growth in emergency services needs to happen. Glad this was addressed in this form.
 - the possibility of growth, to create sustainable jobs and housing solutions for all.
 - To see Murphy develop while maintaining the small community feel and without negatively affecting the businesses already located downtown.
 - Expansion of all the outdoor recreational activities and infrastructure including a dog park.
 - Continued "Hometown" feeling. Potential better use of the park for community events. Happy to see that the town is open for community suggestions and moving away from the comment "it's always been done this way". There's ways to keep the hometown feeling and at the same time modify to keep our little town from dying off.
 - The jobs and places to live that people can afford. Murphy residents are not rich. We dont have good jobs available
 - Progressive ideas such as this survey. A leadership team that understands the importance of how growth & tourism can affect our community and



Write-In Answers to Survey Question 13, Cont'd

- plan accordingly.
- The growth
 - Growth and job creation
 - The fact that our town council is interested and taking this survey.
 - Seeing all the new development taking place downtown and along Hill street. Many former derelict and run down properties have been vastly improved.
 - Any efforts that bring in businesses that eliminates the need to have to travel to places like Blairsville or Blue Ridge.
 - Murphy is a beautiful area. Growth is a good thing and will increase revenue to the town as a whole. The one thing I didn't really see was an option for requirements of building owners along the 4 lane to maintain their properties to make our town more inviting. The gambling halls are an eyesore. We have a casino. The flea markets should be required to maintain all the licenses regular businesses do including proper payment of state and local sales taxes. The county is losing thousands each year.
 - The new possibilities and things to do
 - Possibilities are endless
 - More diversity!
 - Increasing weekend and nighttime transportation. Updating utility resources. Increasing senior citizen involvement. Upgrading law enforcement salaries and personnel. Upgrading safety in outlying areas of downtown boundaries. Marketing town attractions and businesses. Market small town living with big incentives.
 - That someone is actually asking about what residents want!
 - Finally branching out to newer people and things and trying to modernize and better the overall culture of Murphy.
 - Would love to expand our park area for the youth.
 - keeping the small town atmosphere with more activities for family
 - More things for younger kids to occupy their time to keep them out of trouble. Out door activities, skating rink, indoor basketball/volleyball
 - Improvement for The Rock gym. Our youth DESERVE better!
 - We finally have some leaders in place that care enough about our community to make some much needed changes in order to keep pace with other surrounding communities. I applaud the efforts to make Murphy (and even Cherokee county) a better place to live because it seems like past folks have been to afraid of change.
 - Acute downtown area with shops and restaurants. A recreational building with programs for our youth.
 - The possibility that it could become a more sustainable town through greener infrastructure makes me most excited about Murphy's future.
 - Possibility of much needed evolution for residents but maintaining the small town atmosphere that is the heart of why we live here. We do need updated infrastructure and many attractions for our residents (youth and seniors) to enjoy, but let's approach this as an opportunity to care for our own rather than cater and entice outsiders to have incentives we don't offer locals.
 - New life in downtown in the form of businesses and restaurants.
 - School leaving city limits and those buildings being used for municipal purposes.
 - Building something for our Rec ball kids
 - They growth and opportunities of our town for our children and grandchildren.
 - Growth of the city and future development.
 - Town management with progressive mindset. This survey itself speaks volumes to the concepts that Murphy will grow/improve and that it needs to be intentional about its growth/improvement.
 - Murphy is poised for so much growth - it's in a great location, has a unique downtown, and is close to so many "major cities." However, it's charm and rural character are its main appeal. I'm so excited for Murphy to have more options for residents and employees. (Right now, it feels like you're locked into one job or you have to leave.) I just hope that it doesn't lose its charm and tight-knit community feel. I don't want to see Murphy become like Blue Ridge, GA or Sevierville,



Write-In Answers to Survey Question 13, Cont'd

- TN by catering to tourists and banking on its secluded mountain environment.*
- Location, weather, community spirit and leadership that looks to the future.*
- You are finally asking the resident's what is important for our future growth.*
- Potential for growth and the existing strengths/ natural beauty the area already possesses.*
- Murphy has SO much potential to become one of the best small towns of the south! The location is excellent, we have all of the "necessities"--we just need to put some more thought and effort into the town itself and what will really draw and keep people here. Thank you for sending this survey--it's exciting!*
- Location and consistent leadership*
- Rivers are the best resource for growth. Friendly folks.*
- Welcoming more businesses while maintaining our unique beauty and atmosphere*
- Enforcing TOTAL NOISE ABATEMENT and STOPPING CELL PHONE DISRUPTION at the Harshaw Rd. crypto mining facility. Murphy/ Cherokee Co. should NEVER have allowed this to happen.*
- That Everybody would be more unified and work together to make Murphy a better place.*
- Having a new mayor that welcomes the public's input*
- Community involvement*
- New business & diversity with maintaining the small town atmosphere & management of traffic congestion.*
- That they are doing this!!*
- I'm excited about what Murphy has the potential to be. We are at a critical moment...this can be an adorable, prosperous town with the correct amounting planning and development.*
- I would like to see a lot more bicycle friendly roads*
- The focus on improving pedestrian and bike traffic. Connection and beautification of Andrews Rd. There is so much potential there. I don't want Murphy to be a 'car' town which isolates community members and just looks ugly. I like the idea of connecting residential areas with safe paths to town and a stronger focus on our rivers and mountains.*
- Because of the growth and changes that I've seen in the past I know that we can make even greater things happen in the future. Rails to trails (I was an advocate of the train however I believe that didn't happen for a reason because I now see that this would be far and above better) would be a huge advantage to our area especially if we tie it into the existing Riverwalk (which was a wonderful addition to our area) and add pedestrian/bicycle lanes throughout downtown and beyond, Especially to Piney knobs trails. Outdoor dining and bringing the arts to the outside spaces in downtown.*
- The potential to attract to the younger generations, and for Murphy to be able to host street fairs, and more outdoor venues.*
- The new leadership from the Mayor's office bringing fresh perspectives and approaches.*
- Leadership that is realizing that Tourism is a viable industry for our area that will support strong economic growth while maintaining the natural beauty and quality of life that make Murphy special.*
- Outside recreation opportunities*
- The development of a Rails to Trails path for bicycling and walking from Murphy to Andrews. The expansion of the River Walk along the Hiwassee River. The MAX, Murphy Art Xplosion, outdoor art installations. The ideas for promotions of Murphy for tourism and the creation of a beautiful downtown with art galleries, shops, and restaurants and cafes with outdoor seating. The expansion of the pedestrian-only alleys with benches, bike racks, flowers, art, and a music program. The creation of a logo and promotions of our trails, art center, kayak and canoe put-ins on the rivers, all to attract visitors and to give local residents a better quality of life.*
- Retaining small town atmosphere*
- Taxes are too high already so don't do anything foolishly expensive.*



Write-In Answers to Survey Question 13, Cont'd

- Mixed use development along river. Bike friendly roads and greenways. Infrastructure improvements keeping pace with growth. Outdoor dining ie. having a beer with my pizza and dog.*
- More recreational opportunities including linking trails from downtown Murphy to piney knob trails, hanging dog recreation area, Andrews and TRI county community college. Making Murphy NC a pedestrian and bicycle friendly city.*
- Rails to trails project.*
- Focus on ecotourism. Build the rails to trails from Murphy to Andrews and beyond. Take a look at what the city of Anniston, AL has done leveraging mountain biking for ecotourism. Also look at how the Tanglefoot rails to trails has impacted northeast MS.*
- historic preservation*
- The simple fact that you are gathering information and making plans to improve our lovely community*
- Young folks and families moving to the area, Out of towners moving to the area, Arts and culture, Ordinances for a cohesive feel and to preserve Murphy's history and charm, Diversity, Natural spaces for preservation and recreation, Recycling pickup for all materials, Safe bike paths and safe biking on roads.*
- Murphy needs a plan. I hope to see a future that encourages tourists to come to Murphy, spend money in cool shops and restaurants in town, and have easy access to trails and rivers/lakes. No more Bit Coin mines!!*
- That we have the possibility to grow our town in a sustainable, environmentally-sound way. Specifically with the chances of housing development as well as a new recycling program.*
- New leadership and people moving to the area that will support art and businesses.*
- Just do rails to trails*
- That it has the potential to become a thriving arts and crafts center, while maintaining its small town mountain flavor.*
- This survey makes me hopeful. Sprawl from Blue Ridge makes me hopeful as well. We have branded ourselves as anti-vaccine gun nuts and that's mortifying to me and people who visit me here. We have to show up better as a community.*
- Willingness of civic involvement*
- Without affordable housing and decent healthcare options, there's not much about Murphy's future to be excited about. If we don't create a structure to take care of people, the town will never fulfill a potential. Whether you see this as an art community, an eco-tourist destination, a technology hub, or a place for industry to root... Without good infrastructure and community resources, all those things will wither on the vine.*
- The beauty of spring makes me love to be in Murphy. Improved roadways, additional green spaces, planning for the future with prior planning to keep it the attractive community it is now.*
- Planning for the future.*
- Murphy is attracting a new population of motivated young people who want to see this area thrive. I'm excited for the possibilities of creating a more bicycle and pedestrian friendly town. We have the opportunity now to install that kind of infrastructure now, and it will attract more tourism and economic growth.*
- inclusiveness, you don't have to be from Murphy to be accepted*
- I look forward to Murphy embracing a diverse and inclusive atmosphere. I would love for us to be known as an outdoor lovers paradise and to back that up with robust recycling programs and alternative energy, clean food, and good use of outdoor spaces.*
- Community events*
- new ideas that are progressive moving away from the good ole boy hiarchy. Open and inviting new growth rather than a keep out mentality.*
- Hopeful that folks will keep at it to make the community ever better*
- I am excited to see new small businesses moving into town as the empty buildings and old store fronts are depressing. Keep promoting new small retail and restaurant businesses!*
- The potential to expand on all the great things*





Write-In Answers to Survey Question 13, Cont'd

- our town has to offer. Starting downtown and then into greenways etc.
- Great little mountain town with growth potential if managed correctly.
- The expanding Murphy!!
- Bike/ walking path to Andrews using railroad corridor. Attracting more tourists while still protecting our natural and small town environment.
- This survey!
- Possibility of rail trail with old DOT rail corridor - would be unique in the region.
- Hopeful for more businesses downtown.
- I'm excited to see the town grow and possibly become larger so we could have more places to eat or have more establishments for entertainment.
- Low taxes, make it constitutional carry, promote start up businesses with tax breaks for the first 5 years downtown, change zoning to either retail or dining downtown instead of law offices and government buildings.
- Expansion.
- It can be a greater regional HUB for activities, economic development and cultural opportunities for North Carolina and Georgia.
- I would to atleast twice a month letting our teens cruise town. We need more business to attract teens such as bowling alleys, skate way, dances for our younger give them something to do. Expand corp. jobs and corp. restaurants into our area.
- That someone has actually come up with a plan for future development. We have lived here 30 years and have tried multiple times to improve town resources and look to the future. With the growing population, it is time to be realistic and grow in a positive direction. this is a beautiful area and revitalizing and taking care of existing structures and land is priority right now. I am excited there is a group of people willing to make changes (positive changes) for the good of Murphy and not let Murphy continue to deteriorate, like it has for the past 30 years
- That there is a survey
- Prioritizing nature conservation in Murphy, improving public transportation and ability to commute/travel by bicycle, and putting more arts in the downtown.
- it's historic nature, small town atmophere
- The awesome leadership that we have in town, including Chad Simons and Laura Lachance. Also, the River Walk is a fantastic asset. The town has good energy; many visitors have said this to me.
- Growth
- Maybe the streets will be paved; buildings cleaned or painted
- Improved infrastructure while preserving charm;
- I am from Germany, but now I love it here! The decorated Xmas tree on the downtown square was absolutely beautiful.
- Restaurants and retail downtown
- 1. The idea that some are wanting to modernize w/o losing old town feel. 2. small town! 3. New businesses opening 4. downtown (except for 4 land downtown).
- Possible train venue, growing home construction
- Downtown development Additional housing having two rivers running through city limits
- The willingness of Murphy to improve and move forward
- The fact that Murphy is at the junction of two rivers Its small town flavor The beauty of the area
- Murphy would do well to attract nice restaurants to the area. As a person that is going to purchase a second home in Murphy that would be desirable. We love the small town feel of Murphy. Blue ridge has copied downtown Atlanta. Very sad.
- It has an old time home feeling.
- Need more grocery stores like Target. We need more choices like Restaurants and bakeries
- Great effort! Thanx Natural resource Great way to provide a priority plan
- Growth and the opportunity to grow!
- Tim Radford is mayor
- Murphy is really becoming a place to visit



Write-In Answers to Survey Question 13, Cont'd

- for downtown shopping, dining and outdoor activities
- Low taxes
- Not a single thing. More should be put into helping the people who are born here than helping new population to move here. We are not a big city. Stop trying to make Murphy the new Asheville.
- I was more excited before I took this survey. Seems the same question is asked 3 or 4 different way in each category. 1. No, I do not want more regulations, rules, or paying more people to tell us what we can and cannot do. 2. No, I do not want to destroy the appeal of Murphy by changing dramatically what this is. 3. Was this survey originated by the town or copied off some millennial wish list?
- Getting to see changes and improvements to our beautiful town
- The town's diverse economic base, with retail and manufacturing, makes our community more secure. We need to continue improving outdoor recreational assets, such as riverwalk and Piney knob bike trails
- I appreciate the transit system for seniors, so much. Great people! Please dont mess with the river anymore. Get the train coming through again. That would really help tourism.
- Developing locations for performances (both local and out of town performers). Developing opportunities to both share as an artist and/or appreciate art. More music, dance, art. Attracting and maintaining a creative community of all ages and diversity. People of all walks of life feeling comfortable/safe living here and visiting here.
- A plan to make Murphy more attractive
- It's location. It's people
- Increase traffic provides funding possibilities to preserve historic architecture of the town.
- Please please PLEASE, get something in here for teens and young adults
- Having a new sheriff and hopefully a possibility to address local values and use what's already available more progressively and in a way that promotes and rewards effort and progress
- Exciting how much Murphy is growing. We love people that are from all over the place. We love new businesses and new opportunities, especially that benefit and help food trucks and food carts (like us, sweet pigs hot dogs!!) Really hoping we can make more parks and recreational areas in nature. The nature is the best part about this part of NC. Also need way more parking that is actually designed properly. And new businesses that are exciting and bring life to downtown.
- Developing the RAILS TO TRAILS project. Partnering more w/ MAC and John Campbell Folk School. Keeping unprofessional signage out of Murphy, particularly from realtors. Many of guests have commented on the negative image that comes from this big, ugly signage. Stop allowing ugly, metal pop up buildings along the highways; low class and poorly maintained retail buildings give a negative image of the town.





Write-In Answers to Survey Question 14

14.) Is there anything you wish you could “fix” about Murphy that wasn’t covered in previous questions?

- Drug problem.
- No. I felt like everything was pretty well covered. I love the survey, thanks for doing this!!
- No
- It is going to be crucial for the town to maintain/ upgrade infrastructure as well as other public services in order to keep up with the growing number of residents/visitors to the area. If Murphy continues to attract more people (which is likely) we need to have the infrastructure in place to support that so people want to come back. Furthermore, public safety staffing/ resources will need to be considered as more visitors/ residents to the area increases the probability of the need for these individuals/ services.
- N.A.
- Traffic through town is too fast. 35 MPH along Valley River Ave, past Murphy Elementary, Post Office, Murphy Health Club, Konehete Park, etc is too fast. It endangers our kids and folks using the parks in the area. Even at 35, there is no enforcement and cars/trucks routinely travel in excess of 50 MPH through that area. Cut the speed limit to at least 25 and install a 4-way stop at Valley River & Cloe Moore, a busy exit for the Post Office. There have been many accidents in that area, including a fatal crash a couple years ago.
- We need to address the major drug problem we currently have and the number of homeless people we have walking the streets.
- The homeless population and drug problems are a major concern to me as a business owner. I hate that it is so bad in our beautiful town and I worry that it could discourage businesses moving in to downtown if we don't get it under control.
- I have been picking up way too much trash on the sides of the roads which included a lot of drug needles so I would love to figure out a way to help those people!!
- Lower the speed limit throughout town all the way to Walgreens to 25mph. Add a 3-way stop at Valley River Ave, Cloe Moore, and Thomas

Street with a 'warning' sign at the top of the hill at the Presbyterian Church. Add 'Cyclists May use entire lane' throughout town where lanes are substandard width, especially at Valley River bridge, adding bright blue paint to roads with bicycle symbols on pavement. Creating a much more bicycle friendly town to encourage cycling, especially in support of the route to Piney Knob. Changing our town logo to something that reflects our beautiful environment, two rivers, and artsy community. 'Town of Two Rivers'... 'Murphy loves the arts'...

- Continued focus on decreasing the drug problem, and must have more housing and public transit options!:)
- Get the cows out of the Hiwassee River
- The town of Murphy needs more parking spaces to help proactively accommodate growth & tourism.
- No, just more shopping opportunities and recreational opportunities
- Creatively turn the landscape together in a way that entices the visitor to keep walking in town. For example, making the sidewalks an art creation that continues in different patterns throughout town.
- downtown parking
- Cut some bushes or tree limbs in places.
- Murphy needs a safe park system and better shopping allow outlet mall to come to area. Be a place that people want to travel to not leave to shop other places!
- Raise taxes on new residents of Cherokee county and do more to preserve the beautiful land we have because once it's gone we as the small town of Murphy are gone
- More cultural events
- Downtown traffic pattern needs to be re-evaluated, and local homeless shelter poses a tremendous challenge to local police department and downtown businesses. The shelter does not offer any rehab services, and operates with



Write-In Answers to Survey Question 14, Cont'd

little accountability to the community in which it operates. The local shelter now serves nationwide homeless people, incentivizing more homeless people that our community cannot support. They do not even offer mental health/substance abuse counseling for residents that need it - or mental health screenings; no employment accountability, nothing!!!!

- The road work that has been going on for over a year is pointless, they have done an awful job and wasted our money
- Good job outlining a vision plan.
- Property taxes that residents in town have to pay.
- No
- Downtown growth
- Parking, parking parking parking parking parking parking parking parking parking, in that order
- Improve Murphy without completely remaking it.
- The dumpy side streets and homes that hurt the asthetic of the town. Traffic markings, we need a cop on a bike or a horse for downtown area.
- No
- People holding on to their land and preventing the expansion and growth of Murphy. We have the space to make this place something pretty great! Few more grocery store options (not dollar stores), an event center, something for the youth-trampoline park, escape room, some chain restaurants.
- We also need to work on cleaning up crime in and around the downtown area and park.
- Downtown parking and more restaurants
- It would be nice if it had an overall look that was cohesive. We also are severely lacking on parking for the downtown businesses.
- A focus on cleaning up the park and maintaining it better. As a Murphy resident I should be able to enjoy our park rather than having to drive to Union county GA for a clean well maintained recreation space for my family.
- Focused on youth and recreational activities for them!

- The drug and homeless problem I feel there are way to many people out on drugs walking our streets and that's not appealing to locals or visitors
- Downtown parking.
- Better parking opportunities downtown.
- No
- No
- Leave the center of town alone with the red lights like the are and do not put a round about in. Parking spaces could be a little wider in front of some businesses because some spaces are not as wide as other spaces.
- A lot of concerns were covered in the survey. I would love to see more diversity embraced.
- The amount of drugs that are now in Murphy are becoming a big problem.
- There needs to be a parking garage or lot for the public to use for downtown businesses.
- Murphy seems to be more focused on catering to out of towners than residents, business owners in the city limits should get to vote on issues, crime and the homeless
- Not in the space provided or in the context of this survey. Feel free to contact me directly at 828-557-9072. It's more than just a paragraph.
- Drugs
- Better Rehab programs for drug addicts.
- Handicap parking in handicap crosswalks And parking striping seriously lacking clean up the alleyways of debris and weed growth
- Parking
- I would like for the leaders to focus on developing sports opportunities that includes ALL sports, not just football.
- no
- Take it back to simple times
- Cultural education. Provide classes so natives to this area can learn about cultures around the world, to expand their minds and hearts.
- Fix up, offer incentives for unoccupied and disheveled buildings, homes, and land.





Write-In Answers to Survey Question 14, Cont'd

- More parking downtown
- Parking has to be addressed. Murphy needs to use an empty lot to prepare for what they want to attract in the next 20 years.
- Parking is on everyone's mind.... I'd love to see some traffic lights from McDonalds headed out of town on 64/74 towards ranger, certain days the traffic is getting really bad and with no reasonable way to cross the median, people are going to get hurt without the breaks in traffic that stop lights would create.
- Leave it as is.
- Paint the old bridge going over the river for the new walking and bike trail
- Parking issues..lack of parking primarily. One way rules and no trucks in certain areas are not followed and not ticketed.
- NO
- The horrific traffic mess at McDonald's
- Gear projects towards the younger families.
- Pass a law prohibiting highway billboards to remove visual pollution and enhance our town's mountain charm.
- Opening up of a Community building for downtown Murphy that could be used as a large venue meeting center, hosting large gatherings for weddings, dinners, events but rented out much like every other community in this county has for large business meetings but down town Murphy does not have one per say titled a community club!
- I'd like to see a central plaza where people of all ages can come together. Outdoor cafes with more variety and healthier options.
- More outdoor eating areas access to more music venues
- Give it the appeal like other small towns around here. Come up with incentives for small businesses to open, antique craft stores.
- I have lived here my whole life and if I wanted to live in a big city I would move there. I love the small town vibes that we have here and I don't want to see that charm disappear. I also own a business in downtown and think that our focus

should be improving on what we already have in town and seeing what can be revised without having to change the historical buildings. Also, there isn't enough downtown parking spaces to accommodate people as it is now. Look into creating more parking down at the L&N deopt while adding a museum there that shares information about the train and other facts about our area this would be a nice attraction. Then offer a fun train ride on the back road from the depot up to downtown that way it won't clog up traffic and it uses the road that's already there saving money on construction to use somewhere else. Dropping off people in town will encourage shopping and dining!

- Drugs and crime
- Crosswalks at McDonald's intersection for access to downtown and sidewalks on business side along highway 74. The attempt to cross traffic is dangerous.
- Helping the youth, putting something in to divert from drugs
- If Murphy continues to grow, there will need to be more parking downtown. I think a small parking garage or tearing down old buildings that don't meet code, in order to create more space would be nice. A nice indoor swimming facilities would be nice too, but that may have been addressed in one of the questions.
- Attempt to grow Murphy similarly to blue ridge. It doesn't have to be so touristy but attracting middle age adults with an enjoyable down town life can all Murphy to grow in other areas of need. 25-55 are the working age people who want to have a place to enjoy themselves when not working. Limit their travel keep them around.
- Old ideas that seem to hold the town back. Fesitvals like The 4th of July could be huge yet seem to plod along year after year with very poor planning. Everyone should be involved. There should be a most patriotic pet pagent. An award in the schools for best artwork that gets displayed at the courthouse then shown in the parade. There should be live music in the park during the day. This should be a day for family to celebrate our freedom. I've watched it fall apart every year. The fireworks display goes up in 10



Write-In Answers to Survey Question 14, Cont'd

- minutes and it's over. This is once of the saddest celebrations around. This needs to be fixed.
- Just the bed for affordable housing.
- No... I moved to Murphy because I loved it AS IS. I knew I'd be giving up some things from the bigger city and I'm good with it. Its worth it for what I get.
- Ban all the arcades and lottery places...it makes our town look trashy.
- Aesthetic guidelines related to preserving our downtown buildings
- Add awesome climbing gym or other feature to lure visitors
- I wish that the lake put in area downtown was developed into an area similar to Hiwassee's beach and playground. The ultimate goal would be to compete with Blue Ridge by developing more downtown attractions near the depot.
- I would allow bow hunting for groundhogs. Also I would like to see any new construction in the town share the same aesthetic as we currently have.
- We need multilevel parking garage by courthouse that you can charge for.
- Nothing discussed about the transient population/homelessness. Nothing discussed about minimum housing standards. Nothing discussed about foot patrol or bike patrol officers. Nothing discussed about abandoned/neglected properties. Before we spend to bring people here, fix what is here!
- We need a facility for our young people. A place for them to do recreational activities outside of school. A place where we can have sports tournaments and camps so that we don't have to always use the school facilities.
- Make fl residents take a driving road test before you give them a NC driver license
- More places to eat
- There needs to be more options for our youth. The Rec fields need major work and are a prime opportunity to fix up, hold tournaments and bring in revenue for restaurants, hotels and shopping in our town.

- I would like to see a more community effort to help with the ever growing drug problem . Maybe have meetings with the local police and deputies to try to come up with a plan. And also have like a neighborhood watch type thing.
- Parking areas
- I would like to see signs stating 'compact cars only' along the road by Chevelles, Main Street USA... Too many large trucks parked there and sticking out into traffic.
- Billboards and strip malls off the main highway.
- Parking changes are needed around chevelles. Large vehicles shouldn't be parked on roadways
- Auto traffic and parking solutions
- Downtown parking.
- We SO need more reliable Internet.
- No
- Keep the traffics and parking situation under control. Large Truck and cars clock entire lanes in downtown and we can't get through
- there are a lot of old metal builings along 74 ,that should be taken down or at least landscaping in front of them. ...these take away the beauty of the mountains. The last thing we need is more dollar stores...
- Housing options for the homeless population
- Downtown streets and storefronts have a dingy appearance.
- Areas of town, like the River walk, where undesirables hang out and harass visitors
- The desire to add yet another tourist train to this region is a costly pipe dream that will never materialize. Better to develop a rails to trails bicycle/ walking trail that would cost a fraction of a tourist train, and be a unique destination for bicycle enthusiasts and walkers.
- See last comment
- clean the hiwassee river and sewer that spills into it. keeping the water edges clean from garbage.
- Yes, better, cleaner landscaping in and around town. More inviting. A restaurant on the river! Regulate downtown business operations hours. Some are sketchy with hours.





Write-In Answers to Survey Question 14, Cont'd

- Drug problem
- Zoning laws need to be implemented. No business should be able to build a business among housing communities under the guise that it's a "farm." Crypto Farms are not agricultural and takes away from the beauty of the area. Just because you grow a nearby crop does not constitute a farm. While they are entitled to create a business, it is the Town's duty to ensure such businesses are set up in a way not to affect home values. There is plenty of land in this town such that can or should be designated as commercial use.
- The bitcoin mines! At Nana only it's an eyesore, but the noise pollution is terrible and not the reason we moved here. Not sure why we the people were not included in the vote to allow or not allow them in Cherokee County, this is absurd
- #1. Littering, garbage, and lack of "code" where garbage, junk, abandoned cars, etc. is allowed to accumulate on private property #2. Murphy needs a leash law and better animal protection services. Too many irresponsible "pet" owners that think free range dogs are a good thing for the town. #3. I believe if the illicit drug problem isn't addressed in a formal way the problem will get more severe and all the negativity that goes with it...petty crime, reduced property values, and will impact our ability to attract good businesses and opportunities. I think the law enforcement in the area does the best they can, but catching drug users is closing the barn door after the horses get out. We need professional interdiction programs and officers perhaps that will look beyond arrests and work with kids before they get into the drug scene..I know the DARE program was just reinstated and that as well as first offenders mandatory rehab programs might help early on.
- regulation of eyesore rural properties
- I have to wonder what bringing a passenger train into Murphy would do for it's economy. If not a train, something else that could be distinctly "Murphy".
- More parking.
- Need more options for eating out other than fast food.
- Too many vacant buildings! Need to get businesses in them. Improve/upgrade the old shopping centers out Andrews road.
- Parking and congestion I believe was mentioned. I've noticed a spike in theft and substance abuse.
- Crime still needs to be a concern and area of focus.
- New bitcom
- Co working spaces for remote workers who need access to high speed internet
- Greater police presence on the 4 lane to encourage following the speed limit. More restaurants.
- More manufacturing job opportunities
- No
- Please dont allow any development of bitcoin mining!
- I wish people from Florida who live here and say they are just part timers, just to keep from paying any taxes besides property taxes would stop. That is really unfair for the other residents of Cherokee Co
- I would like it very much if the Town had some way to encourage highway-front businesses to maintain themselves to a certain degree. It's very saddening and disheartening to see collapsing or dilapidated structures from the highway as I don't believe they properly represent the best interest of our charming home.
- Dog parks, amplitheater for outside events & safer traffic slow on 64W.
- Less government overreach
- The steet lights in town. Attractive but not practical. Roads in downtown are dark at night. Pedestrian safety needs to be considered. Cant see people crossing road until your almost on them.
- Establish an architectural review committee and stop allowing all of the metal buildings along 64/74.
- Murphy needs a Krispy Kreme
- I 100% believe there should be a program for addicts. A place for them to go to when they have hit rock bottom and want help
- More budget for public service, such as police,



Write-In Answers to Survey Question 14, Cont'd

- due to the growing population and as well as homeless population. The larger the population, the more crime will occur.
- More parks/playgrounds for children. More public transportation (electric bikes), trolley system that runs on a route.
- Any progress would be good but maintain its historical condition
- Thanks for this opportunity
- Downtown traffic pattern.
- Get an Aldi for lower price and competition to Ingles and Walmart. Clean up Save a lot shopping center and UGO shopping centers.
- Yes it's excessive use of drugs in our community and the level of crime it's creating! And although I appreciate unrestricted properties some of them have just carried it way too far which has become such an eyesore for visitors and local residents alike driving down our beautiful country roads to see nothing but trash sprawled out for hundreds of feet on individuals properties!
- There definitely needs to be something done about the parking situation downtown. I feel like a lot of people avoid going downtown because of the terrible parking.
- Does the town of Murphy on a street sweeper and is it in working order? Could anything be done to add to trash receptacles and or cigarette butt receptacles.
- Open Hanging Dog campground back up for locals to use.
- Yes, more money going for cleaning up the highways and local building.
- Restore old buildings in town.
- No
- Higher quality restaurants would be great.
- Traffic flow downtown is not good. Right hand lanes are not usable because the parked vehicles take up the lane.
- Murphy Fire goes full time paid
- More investment in great innovative organizations like the learning center
- Well I think I summed up my opinion in the last question.
- Improve high paying job availability. Attract large companies back into the area.
- The events that would be held should always be kid friendly instead of the adult and adult beverage venues.
- get rid of the trouble-causing casino
- I'd like there was a shopping
- Making downtown business and tourist friendly. Utilizing the train depot and proximity to the Hiwassee confluence to attract water sports tourism in the warmer months.
- Traffic!
- Homeless situation that has started to happen recently.
- Wish road construction/repair would more faster..finish!
- Regular trash pickup around the park and boat ramp. Better uses of property around the depot, like pavilion over the river, beach and picnic behind Depot with pull-in parking along railroad. WORK WITH TVA. Required regular pressure washing or painting of downtown buildings. No more billboards in downtown area, not on buildings, sign boards, or tractor trailers. WORK WITH DOT to beautify medians leading into town. Shorten up sidewalks downtown so traffic can safely pass by cars and trucks extended into street especially at chevells. Weeds regularly cut in town parking lot and other areas. Town crew designated for litter pick-up weeding on side street right of ways. Everything cheap or free that town can do.
- drugs
- Lack of parking, especially for delivery vehicles and people not using the crosswalk.
- A dog park in Murphy!!!!
- How hard it is getting through Murphy. Need cleaner restaurants/workers.
- Better more affordable housing. I don't pretend to have the expertise to know how to solve it off of the top of my head, but permanent residents are the backbone of any community and increased catering to over wealthy seasonal residents and



Write-In Answers to Survey Question 14, Cont'd

- remote workers will only worsen the town's situation in the long term. Their contribution to the local good is a fickle one. While housing prices and essential goods continue to increase in price wages are stagnant. Town center businesses are still paying well below poverty line wages. Residents are increasingly travelling out of county or state for jobs.
- The angled parking downtown is so dangerous and the crosswalks are ignored by pedestrians
 - Don't restrict new businesses to open downtown, especially dining and shopping options
 - Somewhere else to shop other than Walmart, like Target, or any other superstore.
 - Diagonal parking is so dangerous
 - Create a "safe" mountain community through ordinances and zoning to keep business such as Video arcades aka drug dens outside of our community. Make the police responsible for the work they do such as ticket accidents and when responding to calls they actually can be effective. Create a police force that keeps our hiking and biking trails safe. I am more inclined to drive to Ocoee to hike then use our in-town hiking. I feel safer 14 miles in the woods then I do 14 feet in on our trails. It deeply saddens me ,but, I have been approached by myself on our local trails by, what appeared to be, unstable people who could cause harm. Foot patrol or bike patrol police.
 - Murphy isn't broken. While anything can be improved, I have no issues with Murphy.
 - No
 - A red light at the end of Conahetta street by the wellness center. More activities for our youth
 - No
 - Lack of internet.
 - No
 - More affordable housing!
 - Plant trees and foliage in the median areas of 64 and 74. Removing what was there originally was a major disappointment. The trees and crepe myrtles that were originally there was what attracted me to the area. Too tired of billboards, road signs, etc... Bring back the nature and beauty of the mountains
 - I pretty much bike ride everywhere...so bike racks would be nice instead of using a lamp pole
 - The LOUD AND OBNOXIOUS eyesore crypto mine on Harshaw and the one being built in Ranger. Shut them down. Don't allow our peaceful area to be overrun with energy zapping Chinese data mining.
 - -Stop expanding on the woodlands -Keep Murphy "off the map" -Stop trying to grow a town that has no room to actually grow
 - Investment into public safety and allow more building upgrades
 - The increasing rise in drug use and crime related to drugs.
 - Young people need places to go for fun.
 - NO
 - Not that I would write here
 - Parking
 - Either expand the parking along the road, to allow pickups to completely get out of the lane, or restrict parking to shorter vehicles only.
 - Our town has been hyper focused on expanding opportunities for our adult populations and groups in previous years. Moving forward we need to create opportunities for growth and development of our youth programs.
 - Parking is the biggest problem
 - Ohv trails for atvs, side by sides, etc
 - More sit down restaurants and close the casino!!!!
 - Keep drive thru traffics to four lane not in middle of town.
 - Downtown light! The four way stop is getting more dangerous.
 - More opportunities for young adults.
 - Opportunity for the youth to have a Safe Place to hangout. Inside and out. Access the Hiawasee River at the bridge with park like setting to eat and sit at. Perhaps place for Food trucks.
 - Focus on promoting all business in Murphy, not just downtown areas.
 - No
 - Absolutely nothing!



Write-In Answers to Survey Question 14, Cont'd

- Schools! Cherokee county is one of the biggest, there for build 2 schools east and west! Their for you bring in young people for Murphy and Andrews, if not both towns will go down hill even more than it is now. Nothing here to keep the people here.
- Not enough affordable housing for service and hospitality workers with low pay. This must be addressed before attracting more tourism. Quality of life for those already living here must come first.
- All the traffic and folks moving in
- Keep the "gaming" places out! Keep the mining places out!
- I wish the restaurants were able to be open more consistently.
- Theater & tubing for recreation
- The leadership and vision.
- No
- We all need to step up and keep the local gov aware of changing times and make them do research before they approve any type of business deals that will impact the town or county as a whole. Be mindful when you work on what you change and the laws you ask to make how it will affect everyone not only here and now but down the road.
- I haven't been here long enough to know of anything I don't like, with the exception of the bitcoin mines. I live very close to the one being built in Ranger and will be VERY ANGRY if I have to hear that racket all the time. I'll be damned if I'm gonna sit idly by and let corporate greed ruin my quality of life. I bought this place at an overinflated price specifically for its quiet and peaceful location. If I can't enjoy it, and my property value goes down due to constant noise pollution there will be Hell to pay! We need the town's help to force this company to provide effective sound barriers, since it's too late to stop the development!!!!
- No
- Restrict commercial businesses on highway 74 to those that would interest vacationers and cause them to stop for a while in the Murphy area. Keep and maintain the old town feel of downtown. Add a commercial area on the riverfront for restaurants, boutiques, etc.
- Cleaning up the road side junkyards all over this town.
- Renovate the buildings in town, keeping them with businesses, and making sure the quaint feel remains.
- Our rivers use is underused. This town should be hopping with kayakers, fishermen etc.
- Yes the drug and homeless problem in town! The homeless shelter needs to be removed from our town. If you don't have a homeless shelter they will go elsewhere and ours boasts to be the only one for a large area!
- Keeping Murphy's small town charm and atmosphere!
- Downtown is lovely and I'm so proud to be part of it. The approach to downtown Hwy 64 and the metal buildings are an eyesore. Commercial properties meeting a "visual code" would help beautify our city. Otherwise, I love Murphy!
- I feel police should be more of a presence. We need more patrol officers on the streets, not supervisors or administrative. All of the improvements listed won't matter if crime is not stopped especially as the town grows it will get worse and that will only prohibit the town's future. I've lived in places before where the police would keep a car parked at the shopping center parking lots at various times just to be a visible presence, it made the employees and customers feel safe especially at night. When they are not needed on a call, they should spend their time patrolling the town and being a friendly presence. A community oriented policing should be enacted for the need of the town. It would be nice to see the officers walking from the department around the town sqaure engaging with the citizens in a professional and friendly way showing concern for the businesses and citizens. Being proactive not reactive.
- Ordinance for no smoke shops downtown. Promote an active downtown with shops and dining instead of law offices thrift stores.
- Less outsiders moving in and changing us





Write-In Answers to Survey Question 14, Cont'd

- Have community vegetable gardens, community flower gardens, classes for foraging local mushrooms and wild plants that are edible, classes on making medicinal tinctures and medicinal herbs, a place for comedy shows, plays, poetry / folklore readings, live music. Open park up to live music every weekend, open air movie nights. Volleyball areas. Frisbee golf. Create places to ride bikes.
- Recent overcrowding of people moving here and see more people not coming who contribute positively to the economy or are aggressive drivers or rude in stores or want to "change" the simple life here
- Bathrooms & parking. Too many lawyers in downtown. Not enough diverse retail or restaurants. We need living spaces on second floor of downtown.
- sidewalks on 74, where the restaurants are for joggers, pedestrians walking and bicyclists. Places and a venue for live music.
- Animal control...I don't have an issue with animals running loose as long as they don't represent an issue to a residents life, property or other pets. And no I won't hurt an animal because it's owner doesn't give a damn.
- Sewer issues major issues
- Yes, as I just mentioned. Get rid of the hippy.. artsy stuff!!! Bring back the old town charm. If people want hippy, artsy & diversity...go back to the city!! We have too many hippy shops!! We need NEW retail.
- No
- Murphy needs to draw young, enthusiastic investors and their families. The downtown needs to provide more parking to accommodate these businesses. Businesses won't come if there isn't anywhere for prospective customers to park.. therefore not patronizing their establishment. That being said the biggest thing that needs to be done is the town joining with the county in regulating the main road leading into Murphy, Hwy 64. It gives the first appearance of Murphy. The "casinos" and the businesses not maintaining their storefronts is increasing. People and businesses want the quaint feel a small mountain town gives not a flea market ridden, gaming facility over run area.
- Bring back the fountain and roundabout in downtown
- A "Historic District" guideline for new buildings, or businesses being constructed downtown. Including requirements pertaining to the architecture that would retain the overall look of the town amongst the older existing historical buildings.
- Change its governmental system. The same people have ran it for decades and it shows. One timed red light, shit parking, no businesses allowed to come if they want to serve alcohol, nothing for people in the 18-35 year old market to enjoy.
- No
- The median along 19/74 looked much more welcoming when we moved here 5 years ago. Visit Peachtree City near Atlanta and see how they have their medians done. It's beautiful. We are the gateway to the smokey mountains and should reflect that more in our landscaping through Murphy. Make it look welcoming again.
- Give new franchise businesses 10-15 years tax free when they move in. Why are we not blairsville?
- Get rid of school consolidation. I know the commissioners voted for it but they clearly are not representing the people they serve because absolutely no one I know wants anything to do with it except the families that are getting money put into their pockets.
- Drug addiction issues within population and corrupt law enforcement/government.
- The downtown development director is going to need more help when this plan moves toward fruition. That should be incorporated in the fiscal planning.
- With a significant amount of dog owners in our community, it would make sense to have a dog park in Konehete Park. This would create a greater sense of community and another setting for social gatherings outdoors.
- Downtown Murphy has the perfect set up for



Write-In Answers to Survey Question 14, Cont'd

- multiple street or park festival events on a regular schedule. For example, Cleveland TN has a great monthly car show where families can gather, see the cars, school bands, etc. Murphy should use this as an example. We have a beautiful park that the town could take advantage of for community scheduled events. Parking downtown is an issue but the park area has great advantages for events. Also, there needs to be advertisement of events prior to the date. The newspaper does a terrible job of highlighting what's going on in town prior to events along with new business growth. The Town of Murphy needs to have someone highlight this to promote events. WKRK is good but not everyone listens to gospel music full time. Possibly banners or signs indicating future events.
- The drug and alcohol problem
- No
- Helping the hospital and its growth is very important to this area and is not even mentioned.
- More underground utilities to alleviate the powerlines. Especially out Andrews Road to Hampton Inn
- I think we need more zoning laws to preserve the historic downtown by preventing architecture losses to modern styles and also to address derelict and unused storefronts.
- Bring in National Restaurant chains such as Applebee's, Chili's, or Olive Garden. City leaders should make contact with a company like Costco to inquire about building a store in this community.
- The one thing I didn't really see was an option for requirements of building owners along the 4 lane to maintain their properties to make our town more inviting. The gambling halls are an eyesore. We have a casino. The flea markets should be required to maintain all the licenses regular businesses do including proper payment of state and local sales taxes. The county is losing thousands each year.
- N/A
- Nothing right now
- Open door policy to mayor and commissioners. Increase support for non-profit organizations.
- Help line for town residents without internet access. Back to basics educational experience.
- Do something about the "short" parking spaces in front of Chevelles and across street. Have to stop and get in other lane to get by long trucks.
- Regulate and restrict small-town businesses to only things that would give truly benefit to the community and avoid over saturation in any given area (i.e. too many Mexican restaurants, too many hair studios, too many car washes).
- Crime and drugs are out of control. Reduce some of the light pollution in Murphy from billboards, etc.
- The drug problem
- Lack of public restrooms
- Our youth need more attention. They are the ones that suffer the most.
- When I go to other communities, it's obvious where their priorities. In particular, the public rec facility that our youth have had to endure for decades is humiliating. Take a trip to Hayesville, Blairsville, or Blue Ridge and see what kind of programs are offered to their youth. We do have nice pickle ball courts for the retirees.
- This was covered, but the "junk" along the River needs cleaned up and a rec center needs to be built for our youth.
- I wish that Murphy could provide more opportunities for children to get a better education. Our education system could be better if there were more people invested in creating a better future for the younger generations in Murphy.
- Child care is a huge crisis. We need affordable and exceptional childcare in a really bad way in Murphy.
- Lack of overall economic development!
- Education and childcare- only one option to select anything about new families- but without expanding childcare it won't happen.
- Jobs. Attract companies, to attract housing developments, to attract business and development. Let's grow this town!
- Cleaning up the drug useage and sex trafficking





Write-In Answers to Survey Question 14, Cont'd

- that's happening right in front of our faces!*
- The taxes.
- No
- *I wish Murphy's downtown had more options for outdoor space. The Riverwalk is so hidden and overgrown that it doesn't feel well utilized unless you're down by Konahetta. I wish I could have somewhere outdoors near downtown to eat my lunch or meet with friends and family. I also think Murphy should stop emphasizing downtown as an art destination or place for public art and direct people to the Folk School. They've already got that covered and do it so well. Want to make sure they're around for a long time, as it brings a lot of tourists to Murphy but folks who appreciate the mountain ways and culture....not people who want our downtown to be open on nights and on Sunday afternoons so they can party.*
- *Fixing the sidewalks on Hill Street and Andrews Road. Also embrace the concept of a "rails to trails" route between Murphy and Andrews. In every community I've seen, that has that type infrastructure there seems to be a positive impact. I believe people of all ages appreciate places to enjoy the outdoors and to exercise. And that attracts both youth and seniors to the area.*
- *Parking is a big problem especially when there are events going on.*
- *Expand electric capacity to lower cost of electricity*
- *I wish there was more regulation with the types of structures/businesses that are allowed to be placed in city limits such as excessive unsightly storage units along main roads, houses that have excessive junk/cars parked in their yards, dilapidated housing in city limits in need of repairs off main roads. I do think there has been an influx of homeless people or people with substance abuse problems that are wandering our streets and river walk/parks which deter women and families with children. Elderly people would like to see more access to healthcare specialists.*
- *While it's not happening within city limits, cryptocurrency mining is a cancer in our county and in Appalachia in general and is completely counterproductive to all of the goals listed in this survey. It allows people who don't even live here to profit while destroying quality of life for residents and the "small mountain town way of life". I wish it would be discontinued completely.*
- *Willingness to be different and not try to be the next blue ridge.*
- *Poor "getting started " resources for new folks. Utilities are high.*
- *The parking situation is a disaster. There isn't enough room on the roads downtown to accommodate parked consumers as well as traffic*
- *Outlaw the crypto mining facility on Harshaw rd. My cellphone and computer are affected ever since this facility growth was empowered by Murphy Electric, the City of Murphy and the County of Cherokee. Surrounding counties have taken steps to keep crypto mining facilities out of their counties--why didn't Murphy/Cherokee???*
- *The recreation department for kids and young adults is lacking. There should be a Rec center for kids to be able to go and play basketball and be active, instead of having to go to Towns or Fannin County in order to enjoy indoor facilities. The parks and rec department should also offer men's league and coed softball-flag football-basketball leagues.*
- *I wish that Everyone would work together and not try to run every business out of town.*
- *There is nothing else to add to this survey but I would like to say how beautiful downtown Murphy looks Spring through Fall. Keep up the good work!*
- *We need a dog park! It doesn't have to be big & fancy like Blairsville, just as long as it is a fenced in location with maybe a little shade like Sylva :)*
- *Focus is on downtown and tourism. There is more to our town than just the downtown. Tourism is key but we must also find ways to attract and keep good jobs to maintain economic stability during off peak seasons. We have a critical need for childcare. Getting people out of the home and into the workforce generates more income for the permanent resident population to support the local economy. It may help with the area's drug problem, as well, by giving people a purpose and a responsibility instead of just sitting at home.*



Write-In Answers to Survey Question 14, Cont'd

- Traffic & parking
- *More cooperation between Murphy and Cherokee county governments.*
- *Influx of homelessness in our city limits: As a matter of safety for the community, the appearance to visitors, & outlook going forward if the situation is not controlled.*
- *More events/small festivals food, music and beverage centered. Murals in downtown for social media photo opportunities.*
- *Most of the options seem to be increasing taxes, which actually inhibits growth and business. To some degree, that's a Cherokee county problem, but it's one Murphy needs to think about too.*
- *Bars should be allowed to have pool tables!*
- *Great survey. Good ideas!*
- *Our online presence is pretty pathetic and not cohesive at all.*
- *Traffic!!*
- *I would like to see a focus to clean up the Hwy 74 businesses facades as one comes into Murphy from the west. It does not present a picture of Murphy in a positive manner.*
- *Downtown had deteriorated since recession and needs revitalization with new businesses*
- *I believe that leadership of Murphy is on the right track and even though changes may come slowly, the future is bright.*
- No
- *Change the negativity that many locals have about being tourism-centered and not wanting to see any change. A stagnant town is a dying town. Informing everyone about the wonderful potential of having a trail system spanning all the way to Andrews along the abandoned railroad track by giving everyone the real story about economic benefits and costs, to make them understand that bringing back a train is not feasible in any way and will never happen. We need to use this wonderful asset to create a beautiful trail that everyone can use, locals and visitors alike!*
- *Make it more attractive to young people by lowering taxes and making it easier to start a business.*
- No.
- *I would like to see a stronger partnership with the USFS and TVA to be able to utilize the recreational opportunities of their/our land around the area. I would like to see Hanging dog recreation area to become a thriving campground linking the town of Murphy to the area with a multi purpose trail and improve the recreation services that already exist. I would like to see better recreational river accesses to the Valley and Hiwassee rivers.*
- No.
- *Stop the crypto mines*
- *historic preservation*
- *Animal control and protection*
- *Not consolidating schools, Recycling services (pick up, accepting all materials, incentivising recycling), I would love to see a broader selection of businesses and restaurants (like Indian, Thai), No crypto mining.*
- *No more Bit Coin Mines!!*
- *No, except for an emphasis on the river walk with its safety and upkeep*
- *Regulations on building new businesses here. What is that noisy bit coin mining business from China off the 4 lane? It's noisy and does not serve our local economy. Sometimes Murphy feels very random and not much strategic planning goes into much. It would be nice to get new county commissioners in office that are more educated and don't want to move back to a 1950's era of economic industry.*
- *Not really, improve internet connection and push for Rails to Trails*
- No
- *Absolutely! We need billboard zoning and a campaign to undermine the hatred and gun culture that has flourished here. It would be terrific if we didn't perpetuate the hillbilly stereotype of the last 100 years.*
- *Prohibit political signage*
- *Success comes from creating an environment where people thrive. If I could fix one thing about this area, it would be to stop people from trying*





Write-In Answers to Survey Question 14, Cont'd

- to shape a specific vision for a community filled with individuals. Instead of focusing on our vision of the future, we should focus on how to create a healthy, thriving environment for people. People will then create a future beyond anything describable in a 10 minute survey. What does a community of people need? Food and shelter security, and access to education. This is the long view. Everything else is just a bandaid.
- That gun billboard portrays a negative image of town. Make Murphy appealing to visitors and residents with good roads, jobs and outdoor recreation, and the people will come. I previously lived in the area for 16 years, returning recently because I love the feel of the place. The hospital decline in services is not encouraging me to stay.
 - Slow the traffic down at the appropriate square. Thank you.
 - I think if Murphy had a community gathering space like Hayesville's square, it would be a wonderful way to be able to bring our community together at it's downtown core. Creating safe ways to bike or walk there would add to the feeling of a cohesive community.
 - empty, deteriorating buildings
 - Murphy is challenging for pedestrians. It's also not biker-friendly. I would love for this to be a place people feel safe biking and for it to have dedicated biking trails connecting it to surrounding areas. Drop in spots on the river are a GREAT idea.
 - Parking, sidewalks, bike lanes
 - We owned a business here 20 years ago and continue to live in the nearby community. I wish Murphy had back then what it has now and more. Progression is finally happening. congrats!
 - Housing problems seem to be exacerbated by the number of second homes and air bnbs in the area. Putting some regulations on these property types, especially air bnb's, might help long-term.
 - The lack of outdoor dining options! Its the chophouse or bust!
 - Improve ways to promote local activities via the Scout or municipal website.
 - 1.--providing benefits for seniors; lowest fee or free of charge --housing for seniors --health/ medical care for seniors --no taxes for seniors 2. Reducing water & electric service charges-it is too much higher cost!
 - More high speed internet, Tv services and cell phone coverage.
 - I would invest in Internet and Cell coverage and expansion. That in itself would draw more people. In Florida and GA you can get 1000 mhps internet? then you can get ? mbps internet here. Internet and cell is top priority for young people and business. Zoning is also important for bringing in new business and young people.
 - >improving/expanding the museum downtown, heritage/history expansion >do not know if it exists, but some kid of committee/interface with the casino to draw more youth and bring more business expansion to Murphy "Without a vision, the people perish"
 - BROADBAND ACCESS! Frontier is terrible and Murphy Cable is snobby...
 - Coordinate with TVA to enable riverfront businesses eg restaurants, etc. eg in the random building next to the historic depot.
 - I wish that town ordinances we're enforced better. My neighbor has chickens in town limits. There's an abandoned car on my road.
 - This area could be a real travel destination area if the town would invest in a mountain type them for the town. Their is too many old run down buildings and eye sores that need to fixed or torn down. Murphy has so much potential to be an active happening small town if the right investments were made back into the community. We need desperately a new grocery store other than Ingles. The population boom is too much for this town to support. The housing shortage also is terrible.
 - High speed internet for all areas of Murphy. Probably around 75% of Murphy will not be considered for potential residents due to the lack of reliable and high speed internet.
 - Need a greater marketing presence on the WEB
 - We need to reunite Andrews and Murphy. It's the same county. We should have never got rid of Cherokee county Rescue Squad I understand



Write-In Answers to Survey Question 14, Cont'd

- the fire dept. do this now. REopen Hanging Dog campground
- More recreational opportunities for youth. the lack of recreation has created a youth population which is unhealthy physically and mentally and socially. Youth needs include clubs, groups and facilities outside of school. A community pool (which is affordable), a recreation center that is up-to-date, and organized recreational opportunities. this will help to decrease the drug and alcohol problem in this area, as well as, create a healthy living environment for our you and future adults. People of all ages need places to play!
 - I would like to see less loitering by drunks and drug addicts. No smoking in doorways and stop littering including cigarette butts. The bump in the road in front of Murphy Building Supply needs to be illuminated. I'd like to see sidewalks free of weed growth. As for a venue for Performing Arts, indoors works for me to eliminate noise complaints.
 - There needs to be a focus on drug and alcohol rehabilitation. There's VERY few sources in this community. Therefore, young people have nothing to turn to but a life of crime and drugs. Littering is a problem. Lack of a county/town funded pool and recreation/fitness center is a problem. The lack of job opportunities and activities for young people and families is a problem.
 - 1. crack down on drugs "Law Enforcement" 2. Zoning to keep properties neat and clean 3. 64/74 road into Murphy looks bad with commercial development (no class)
 - Crypto currency mining unchecked
 - Need to annex Tarheel area
 - I noticed under the infrastructure category there was no mention of signage (of any type or size). when I first moved to Murphy, the one thing that was so disappointing was the billboards and the signage were so distracting. This was such a disappointment to such a beautiful little town in the mountains. The one outstanding location was the corner at McDonalds with the city monument. Such a loss that it has been destroyed! Several years ago, I served on a city project where the purpose was to improve our image, economy and tourism. i do care about the future of Murph and would be willing to help in any way. Sandra Ball 828-837-8321
 - --Tried and failed constructing recreational facilities, swimming pool, etc. (written in on question 11) --#1 need: (question 9) is addressing the lack of local healthcare options --crime and drugs (question 14)
 - can you do something about kudzu
 - The continued building of metal buildings along 74 make coming into Murphy look unattractive--once people get downtown they are surprised to see how nice Murphy is
 - I think the infill development and parking concerns are the biggest needs, as well as staying on top of the sewer infrastructure and getting as many people off of septic systems as possible.
 - When the city digs up your yard to install a water line, the yard is repaired to its original condition
 - Please see notes on: #10-Redesign parking so that parked cards/trucks do not bottleneck traffic #11--Improve public safety along Riverwalk and park--call boxes, cameras, etc
 - Please start using the street sweeper, and 8 foot long arm mower again. Return historical markers back for public view. There were no Xmas lights on the bridge across the river!!! They were always strung in the past. Thanks for asking!
 - A map of Murphy with space for notes; highlighting spots of interests (shops, eaterieis, waterfalls, "walk"-ways parks.....)
 - Regulate the cows access to the Hiwassee River. It is disgusting. We kayak and swim in it. The river flows to downtown and needs to stop the pollution the cows cause. It would have been nice to have a web address to access this survey. I'm not savvy with QR codes;
 - Parking
 - Traffic control coming east into Murphy. US 743 is almost like a race-track. No speed limit enforcement! Even though limit from about Wendy's to McDonalds is 35 mph, very few stay close to it (both locals and out of towners). Lived just off 74 for six years. and almost can



Write-In Answers to Survey Question 14, Cont'd

- count on both hands the number of people who I have seen stopped. Also need to stop people from using turning lant to drive from Wendy's to McDonalds.*
- *re: #6 have been requesting for years a state park at Ft. Butler*
 - *Tourism train High-end RV park for tourists Aggressively "stamp Out" illegal drugs-DEA! Retain our youth by creating ways to encourage living and working in Murphy and larger community. Thanks for asking!*
 - *More recreational and employment opportunities for young people so we can retain them*
 - *Traffic, garbage on private property, especially around our elementary school. Trash on the streets, trash on property seems to be overwhelming the beauty of Murphy.*
 - *A code enforcement program to clean up junk in people's yards. Minimum standards for commercial businesses. Example would be not steel structures. Many counties and towns require the business to be attractive*
 - *A mall We need more places to shop for clothes and crafts stores like Michaels*
 - *The one area of attention needed (you barely touched on) is a huge effort to suppress the drug trade--more police, detectives; judges who issue long and immediate sentences. why have we never had or requested) a federal drug task force? We feel this should be your highest priority. Close to downtown music venue needed (re: Hayesville, Hiwassee)*
 - *An indoor pool for kids. We need indoor creation for our children such as basketball courts indoors! Would like to see the roundabout back in the downtown intersection. The traffic would flow much better.*
 - *Good restaurants with good food. More clothing shops*
 - *Meth abuse programs. Building a muti-tiered parking structure for downtown*
 - *Bring us more food options Revoke the pool table ban*
 - *The leash law. this needs to be enforced! I am disabled and can't 'clean' up after the neighbors' animals making messes in my yard. There's nowhere that will help with this problem. The buck is constantly passed from one department to another. The noise ordinance. The needs to be enforced! There's no excuse for revving engines and loud banging at 3 a.m. in the morning. This is terrible on the street I live on.*
 - *Train-#1 Why nothing in this survey about a train? Income from that would provide funds to do many of the things proposed in this survey. We have enough 'diverse' directed incentives elsewhere, do not make Murphy just another 'also ran' town.*
 - *We need more parking in downtown.*
 - *Town needs to encourage more oversight/ accountability from homeless shelter, since it burdens taxpayer provided services*
 - *Get rid of the homeless shelter, parking, out town looks like a hodge podge of building fronts--go back to their original look; do more for the residents of Murphy that's who you serve, there needs to be an auditorium, this may be the schools responsibility. Keep the town with good moral character. There's enough bars now--Don't encourage any perversion to come in and take over; Take care of the drug problem. Make it where you can fire a gun in the city limits if you're protecting yourself, family, property or someone else.*
 - *Block off at least three parking spaces at edge of driveway (in front of Atty office) into Hiwassee Street apartments (Murphy Housing) or put up a light. Is impossible to see oncoming traffic from street and bank. (A terrible accident waiting to happen)*
 - *Make sure that a diverse community feels not only welcome and safe living here, but is also represented in the committees/staff that are making these decisions for the town of Murphy.*
 - *Safety and security in the streets of Murphy*
 - *Trash on the roadways.*
 - *I hope that as the town of Murphy continues, inevitably, to grow and expand, that our desire for development does not overshadow our desire to care for the land and especially to care for the most vulnerable people in our society, and I hope*



Write-In Answers to Survey Question 14, Cont'd

- that our strategies for development are equitable and just and work to benefit all residents, not just the rich. I hope that "progress" in Cherokee County does not mean pushing those who are impoverished or experiencing homelessness or struggling with addition further and further to the margins — because that is not true progress but merely ignoring real problems and real people who deserve dignity and care. I hope that we actually take the time to consider how to care for the most vulnerable in our society and that we devote resources toward solutions and include the voices of the vulnerable in creating those solutions.*
- *Wording of questions was tilted to a specific agenda. Reduced individual taxes does not necessarily require reduction of services, but other resources are available.*
 - *More housing and jobs for the middle class. Not just low income housing with a income cap.*
 - *Make less judgment on people who have had struggles and address ways to improve quality of life for working families and youths through better options for entertainment*
 - *Parking in downtown. It is designed very poorly. And we need spaces to hangout. I think y'all covered most of it! We need more diversity in businesses. Tired of only having Walmart and ingles. The other "grocery" stores do not count. We need a target. We need wholesale stores like BJS or sams club, Costco. Tired of repetitive businesses opening. Why do we need 10 auto part stores?*
 - *Promoting the town and local events for resident and visitors w/ on line newsletters and posts. Look at what Blue Ridge, GA and Blairsville, GA do w/ their community outreach. Murphy does little to nothing.*





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