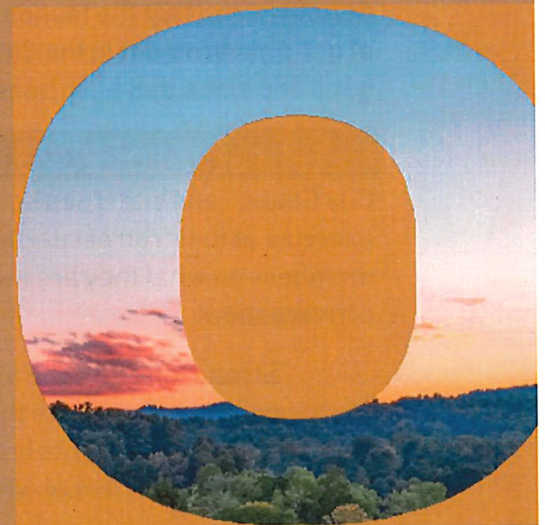




# City of Hendersonville City Council Retreat Summary





## Welcome & Orientation

The City of Hendersonville held Day 2 of its 2024 City Council retreat on Friday, March 15 at the Hendersonville Board of Realtors. The retreat was professionally facilitated by Warren Miller and Drew Finley of Fountainworks, a consulting firm focused on supporting public sector organizations. The retreat revolved around the theme of growth and the phrase “from seed to tree.” John Connet, City Manager, kicked off the day by explaining this theme and sharing some interesting facts from the City Council meeting minutes books. Councilmembers then reflected on a “seed” that was planted in the community in the past that they are proud to see has now grown into a “tree.” Each Councilmember’s response is included below:

Councilmember Jeff Miller – Main Street renovation and Laura E. Corn Mini Golf Course at Edwards Park.

Mayor Barbara Volk – Skate park at Patton Park.

Councilmember Dr. Jennifer Hensley – A long history of good decisions that has led to numerous amenities and a high quality of life in the community.

Mayor Pro Tempore Lyndsey Simpson – The construction and expansion of the Oklawaha Greenway trail.

Councilmember Debbie O’ Neal Roundtree – 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue upgrades and ongoing branding and visioning.

Connet added that the foundation and architecture of City Hall in 1928 represents the embodiment of good government in the City. All Councilmembers agreed that the City boasts a long history of good decisions that have benefited today’s residents, visitors, and businesses.

## Celebration of 2023 Accomplishments

City Council and staff then celebrated key accomplishments from 2023. Staff conducted a similar exercise at their retreat earlier in the year, so this segment focused on hearing from City Council members on what they are most proud of and why. Below are the themes that emerged from the conversation:

**Strong Infrastructure Investment** – Councilmembers mentioned a variety of ongoing and completed projects that represent strong investment in the City’s critical infrastructure. These investments benefit not only City residents but also more than 85,000 people in Henderson County who are served by the City’s utility system.

- *French Broad River Raw Water Intake* – State Revolving Fund loan to keep up with growth and mitigate drought effects.
- *Solids Management Grant (\$14.75 million)* – State appropriation for treatment facility solids management improvements.
- *2 Reported SSOs* – Only two sanitary sewer overflows were reported in 2023.
- *100-Year Water System Anniversary* – Strong investments in the City’s public drinking water system have allowed the system to sustainably grow for over a century.

- *Robust public education campaigns* – [Public education and outreach](#) has grown in recent years with initiatives such as Drinking Water Week, Fix a Leak Week, and Cease the Grease.

Strong Support for City Employees – City Council has advocated for and adopted several policies that provide excellent compensation, benefits, and professional development opportunities for City employees:

- Paid family leave
- 401(k) match
- Excellent medical benefits

Two Councilmembers noted that the City’s paid family leave policy sets the City apart from its employment competitors, and one Councilmember even recounted a story of a City employee who cried tears of joy after learning of the passage of the paid family leave policy. City Council agreed that attracting top talent is important, and competition in the job market is high. This strong support for City employees allows the City to keep up and remain competitive. City employees are the “boots on the ground” who serve and keep the community running.

Strategic Housing Plan – Two Councilmembers specifically highlighted the major progress the City has made with advancing affordable housing in the community.

- The City is in the early stages of developing a strategic housing plan that will build on those efforts.
- One Councilmember observed that in many ways, “everything circles around housing.”

Laura E. Corn Mini Golf Course at Edwards Park – City Council agreed that this putt-putt golf course is an outstanding entertainment amenity that appeals to families and community members of all ages.





Grants and Special Appropriations – The City has won a wide variety of grants to fund projects across several departments. These grants have allowed the City to maintain a high quality of life without increasing cost of living for residents.

Ecusta Trail – The City's support for the development of the Ecusta Trail, which is a proposed rail trail that will run from Hendersonville to Brevard once complete, is a significant economic development opportunity that will also promote community health and wellness, outdoor activities, and active lifestyles.

- The 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue Streetscape project dovetails nicely with this effort and will include a connection to the Ecusta Trail.

Reduced Crime – The City's Police Chief, Blair Myhand, has led efforts that have reduced crime in the City.

- The Police Department's monthly newsletter keeps the community informed.
- Professionalization and modernization of the Police Department.

ISO Class 1 Rating – The City's Fire Department achieved a Class 1 rating from the Insurance Services Office. This rating is a badge of honor that is only achieved by a select percentage of fire departments across the country.

City staff also highlighted several other accomplishments worth celebrating including demonstrating resilience in surviving the recent cyberattack, hiring a Sustainability Manager, and building the Downtown parking deck.

Collectively, all of these accomplishments showcase the City Council's outstanding leadership and the City's high-quality staff.

## Campfire: What Fuels Us As Leaders

City Council and staff then discussed what fuels them as leaders by reflecting on rewarding and challenging experiences in their careers. They considered the following questions:

1. How did the challenging experiences push you as a leader?
2. How were you tested as a leader during these challenging experiences?
3. Which positive aspects of your leadership style shined through during your rewarding experiences?
4. What did you learn about yourself as a result of these experiences?

Council and staff first reflected on these questions individually, then with a partner, and finally with the whole group. Below are the key takeaways from these conversations:

- There is a positive ripple effect from rewarding experiences. For example, paid family leave benefited not only City staff but also their families.
- Skepticism and negativity push us – A good example is the mini golf course. City Council endured criticism for prioritizing this project, but Council did not waver from their vision and delivered a high-quality amenity that the community loves.



- Showing up and being accessible is important – Sometimes the most important role an elected official can fill is showing up and listening to the concerns of community members. Being accessible and listening to the views of others is important for building trust.
- Regular introspection is important – Introspection is a highly valued quality in a leader and allows us to consistently reevaluate our performance.
- Time management is a challenge – Councilmembers are generally “spread thin” and cannot always attend or participate in everything they would like. Acknowledging and working to manage that tension is important.
- Keeping the long game in mind is important but challenging to communicate to the community. Councilmembers sometimes struggle to demonstrate the value of investing in long-term projects since the benefits of those projects are not yet visible, but will be in the future.
- Cooperation, collaboration, and respect from all Councilmembers has allowed the Council to perform at a high level and develop a strong working relationship with City management.



City Council then reflected on what they see as the most important traits that leaders should embody in their work. Below are the traits that Councilmembers listed:

- Active listening – Connecting with people and truly understanding them and their perspective goes a long way. Your idea is not the only idea.
- Empathy – Placing oneself in someone else’s shoes is a valuable skill and can help balance emotions.
- Thick skin – The ability to endure criticism and not let negative feedback derail leadership efforts is critical.
- Avoid preconceived notions – Keeping an open mind and not prematurely judging people or situations is very important.



## Priorities for 2024

Next, City Council and staff discussed priorities for 2024. The purpose of this segment was to gain clarity on the goal areas that City staff should prioritize in the coming year.

Prior to the retreat, City staff sorted the goals within each goal area into four categories: seed, seedling, sapling, and tree. The definitions for each of these four categories are included on page 9 of this summary. City staff plan to regularly update and monitor progress on these goals through the [strategic plan report](#).

City Council conducted a prioritization exercise where they reviewed and ranked their highest priority goal areas for the upcoming year. They also added two new goal areas and made clarifications and adjustments to existing goals and goal areas. Councilmembers each received dot stickers with the following assigned point values:

- 1 Red Dot (5 points)
- 2 Green Dots (3 points each)
- 3 Blue Dots (1 point each)

**Results:** Councilmembers chose from the goal areas listed below. Several clarifications and goal area title changes were made to better reflect the content of the goal areas:

- Strong Infrastructure – 21 total points received
- Compensation, Benefits, and Staff Development – 14 total points received
- Public Safety – 13 total points received
- Strategic Housing Plan – 8 total points received
- Growth Management & Community Character – 8 total points received
- Invest in City Parks – 3 total points received
- Enhance Sustainability Citywide – 2 total points received
- Transportation Planning – 1 total point received
- City Boards & Volunteers – 0 total points received
- Support Downtown Businesses – 0 total points received
- Leverage ¼ Cent Sales Tax
  - Exempted from dot voting exercise since this goal area is a legislative issue that is not directly within City Council’s control.





The list below ranks the goal areas in accordance with the results of the dot voting exercise:



## Goal Areas - Dot Voting Results

- |   |   |    |                                 |
|---|---|----|---------------------------------|
| 1 | Strong Infrastructure                       | 6  | Invest in Parks                 |
| 2 | Compensation, Benefits, & Staff Development | 7  | Enhance Sustainability Citywide |
| 3 | Public Safety                               | 8  | Transportation Planning         |
| 4 | Strategic Housing Plan                      | 9  | City Boards & Volunteers        |
| 5 | Growth Management & Community Character     | 10 | Support Downtwon Businesses     |

Below are the individual voting results for each Councilmember:



Councilmember Jeff Miller

- 1 **Red** Dot = Public Safety
- 2 **Green** Dots = Strong Infrastructure and Compensation, Benefits, & Staff Development
- 3 **Blue** Dots = Strategic Housing Plan, Strategic Housing Plan, and Compensation, Benefits, & Staff Development

Mayor Barbara Volk

- 1 **Red** Dot = Public Safety
- 2 **Green** Dots = Strong Infrastructure and Compensation, Benefits, and Staff Development
- 3 **Blue** Dots = Growth Management & Community Character, Strategic Housing Plan, and Invest in Parks

Councilmember Dr. Jennifer Hensley

- 1 **Red** Dot = Strong Infrastructure
- 2 **Green** Dots = Public Safety and Compensation, Benefits, & Staff Development
- 3 **Blue** Dots = Transportation Planning, Strategic Housing Plan, and Growth Management & Community Character

Mayor Pro Tempore Lyndsey Simpson

- 1 **Red** Dot = Strong Infrastructure
- 2 **Green** Dots = Growth Management & Community Character and Compensation, Benefits, & Staff Development
- 3 **Blue** Dots = Invest in Parks, Enhance Sustainability Citywide, and Strategic Housing Plan

Councilmember Debbie O' Neal Roundtree

- 1 **Red** Dot = Strong Infrastructure
- 2 **Green** Dots = Strategic Housing Plan and Growth Management & Community Character
- 3 **Blue** Dots = Invest in Parks, Enhance Sustainability Citywide, and Compensation, Benefits, & Staff Development

These prioritization results will provide strategic direction and guide City staff as they allocate time, energy, and resources to all of these goal areas and goals.

During this segment, City Council and staff also agreed on several clarifications related to goal area title changes and goal title changes. Below on page 9 is an updated version of the strategic plan report that reflects these changes.

## FY24 Status Update Categories

Seed = Goal is still being evaluated for next steps. Funding or staffing resources may not be available to advance this goal at this time.

Seedling = Goal has made some progress. However, there are still larger steps that need to be taken. Funding availability or staffing resources may be slowing this goal down.

Sapling = Goal is well on its way to being achieved. Funding and staffing resources are available to bring this goal to life. Final steps are being evaluated or executed to achieve the goal.

Tree = Goal has been achieved and is ready to be celebrated.





**Invest in City Parks**

Goal	Status	Notes
24.1.a Issue a Parks Bond	Seedling	Currently awaiting completion of the Parks and Greenways Master Plan. Next steps include prioritizing and formalizing a list of projects to include in a general obligation bond issuance including funding strategies.
24.1.b Plant Trees in Flood Plain	Seedling	City Staff have completed a tree canopy study which will help guide strategies around improving canopy within the City. The City owns and will acquire several parcels in floodplain areas that could potentially be used for canopy improvements.
24.1.c \$.01 of Occupancy Tax	Seed	Staff have not engaged external stakeholders in the allocation of the remaining 1% occupancy tax available to the TDA.
24.1.d Take Care of Existing Parks	Seedling	The draft master plan identifies existing park maintenance and improvement as a high priority and ranks many of the existing parks in below average condition. The City has allocated CIP funding to existing parks including budget for Patton Park and Sullivan Park. Sullivan Park stream restoration project will be completed in 2024.
24.1.e Splash Pad Ribbon Cutting	Seedling	The City is working with Kiwanis to fundraise for a new splash pad at Patton Park. A location has been identified and staff are working through logistics to build and operate the facility next to Patton Pool. The City does not have adequate funding at this time to build the facility.
24.1.f Signage for Parks	Seedling	New signage has been included in the Laura E. Corn mini-golf course. This signage followed the branding of the wayfinding signs throughout the City. New Main St. signage is being installed following the same brand. There is a need to establish a branding manual for park signage moving forward.
24.1.g Improve and Expand Parks	Sapling	The City recently opened the reimagined Edwards Park and Laura E. Corn mini-golf. The Clear Creek Greenway will be completed in the next 18 months. In addition, there is a property along the Clear Creek Greenway and one along Bat Fork Creek near Jackson Park that will be acquired for open space/passive recreation. Additionally, the Lower Mud Creek Flood Mitigation project will provide further passive recreation including installation of a portion of the Above the Mud greenway. Once the Above the Mud Feasibility Study is completed in FY24, funding will continue to be pursued for the full construction of the

		greenway (connecting the Ecusta to the Oklawaha). An 18-hole disc golf course will be completed in 2024 at the northern end of the Oklawaha Greenway.
24.1.h Park on S. Main St.	Seed	Provided City Council with conceptual plan options for a S. Main St. park which will help improve direction on how to proceed with transportation projects occurring in that area. Currently, funding has not been identified to move forward with a S. Main St. park.
24.1.i More Bike Racks	Sapling	New City projects include bike racks as part of the design and construction. Some new areas that include bike racks are City Ops, Fire Station #1, Edwards Park, and S. Main St. More detail needs to be developed on future bike rack locations through allocations in the City's budget process and further collaboration with area non-profits.
24.1.j Striping S. Main St. for Bikes	Sapling	Staff are bidding the project for completion in 2024. This will improve access to and from the Ecusta Trail via Main Street, provide additional parking spaces, and add bike corrals.



**Strategic Housing Plan**

Goal	Status	Notes
24.2.a Complete Strategic Housing Plan Including Stakeholder Input	Seedling	Strategic Housing Plan has not begun however funding is in place. Heard input around this goal throughout comp. plan outreach.
24.2.b Incentives for Developers	Seed	Strategic Housing Plan has not begun however funding is in place.
24.2.c More Affordable Housing	Seedling	The Strategic Housing Plan and Housing Committee will help further define this goal.
24.2.d Workforce Housing	Seedling	The Strategic Housing Plan and Housing Committee will help further define this goal.
24.2.e Resolution for Housing Authority Powers	Sapling	Legal is drafting the resolution which is expected to be adopted by June 30 <sup>th</sup> , 2024.
24.2.f Housing at all Price Points	Seedling	City Council entitled 681 Units in 2023. The Strategic Housing Plan and Housing Committee will help further define this goal.

**Growth Management and Community Character**

Goal	Status	Notes
24.3.a Right Density	Seedling	The comp. plan will identify areas suitable for density. Need further definition through a development ordinance.
24.3.b Support Density for Affordability	Seedling	Further definition of 24.3.a will help identify strategies for density bonuses associated with affordability and market rates. The strategic housing plan will have influence and strategies for this goal.
24.3.c Right Height	Seedling	The Downtown Master Plan will lay the foundation for right height guidelines.
24.3.d Develop Style Guidelines/Overlays	Seedling	The Downtown Master Plan will lay the foundation for style guidelines.
24.3.e Pursue Form Based Code	Seedling	The Downtown Master Plan will lay the foundation for form-based code guidelines.
24.3.f More By-Right Development	Seedling	The comp. plan will define what we desire in certain areas of the City. Need further definition through a development ordinance.
24.3.g Look for Other Commercial Centers	Seedling	The comp. plan has identified underutilized properties as well as scoring commercial suitability of parcels. Staff is also looking at areas for public investment (parks, infrastructure, etc....) that will help encourage commercial development.
24.3.h		Complete Comprehensive Plan. The County just adopted their comprehensive plan this week. The goal should be to bring the County and the City's plans together over time.
24.3.i		Start Unified Development Ordinance



**Transportation Planning**

Goal	Status	Notes
24.4.a Issue a Transportation Bond	Seed	This goal is in its infancy as many plans need to be completed prior to moving forward. An intermediate step may be to leverage a G.O. Bond for existing NCDOT projects that require City funding.
24.4.b Street Cut/Repairs Efficiency	Seedling	Timing between pavement cuts and repair of cuts has improved in the last year due to more efficient use of Cityworks. Staff are continuing to evaluate efficiencies for this program and are tracking more data in Cityworks to provide insights on how to further improve.
24.4.c Traffic Calming Policy	Seed	Staff are exploring the option to produce this study with in-house engineering staff. S Main St project includes road diet and bike lanes thereby incorporating traffic calming.
24.4.d Improve Pavement Condition Score	Seedling	Pavement condition score will be updated this year. This will guide future funding use. 7 <sup>th</sup> Avenue Streetscape project will be completed. The 4 <sup>th</sup> /Ashe Water & Sewer Improvement Project will include the repaving of several streets thereby improving pavement condition scores. As part of an initiative to more closely coordinate infrastructure CIP projects, staff will work to efficiently complete underground improvements ahead of resurfacing. Staff are proposing an increase in the motor vehicle fee to put additional resources behind street resurfacings.
24.4.e Traffic Impact for New Development	Seed	Staff have an on-call agreement with Kimley-Horn for City led traffic impact analysis.

<p>24.4.f Better Connectivity/Flow</p>	<p>Seed</p>	<p>The French Broad River MPO received a Safe Streets for All grant from USDOT to develop a Safety Action Plan for the five-county area (Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania counties.) Developing this plan will provide a path toward a safer transportation network and enable our region to apply for implementation funds through USDOT. City staff have been involved in the selection of a consultant to complete this study and local stakeholders will be involved throughout its completion. The Action Plan should be completed by late 2024 and projects will be identified that could then be applied for funding. S Main Street project will be completed to connect pedestrians/bicyclists from the Ecusta to downtown. Above the Mud Feasibility Study will be completed to help boost funding applications to connect the Ecusta to the Oklawaha. There is a Saluda Grade Feasibility Study to be completed this year that will do the same for that project. Both projects would form a transformational greenway/transportation network. City Council needs to let the French Broad River MPO and Division Engineer know that multimodal transportation is a priority. There is an important economic development piece of pedestrian and bike infrastructure.</p>
<p>24.4.g Narrow King Street</p>	<p>Sapling</p>	<p>Design and traffic modeling data has been prepared by Kimley-Horn and City is awaiting confirmation from NCDOT that the City can construct the narrowing and sidewalk project from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> Avenues once funds are available in the City budget.</p>
<p>24.4.h Address Motor Vehicle Accidents</p>	<p>Seedling</p>	<p>City Police have enhanced their traffic unit in recent years, but funding constraints have made it unlikely to expand staffing in the coming year. Motor vehicle accidents were down 3% in 2023. There have been three pedestrian fatalities in the last 30 days, all on US Highway 64. This is outrageously outside the norm.</p>

**Leverage a 1/4 Cent Sales Tax**



Goal	Status	Notes
24.5.a Educate and Lobby	Seed	Council has advocated with our local state legislators for this potential revenue source. Staff continue to provide data around the impacts of this revenue source.

**Compensation, Benefits, & Staff Development**

Goal	Status	Notes
24.6.(1).a Keep Employees Moving Up Grades	Sapling	Career ladders are almost completed for all departments across the City.
24.6.(1).b Increase COLA to Keep Up with Market	Seedling	City cost of living adjustments are beginning to fall behind the living wage growth and will continue to lag without additional revenues. Incremental increases in the City's merit pay has stalled in FY25.

**City Boards & Volunteers**

Goal	Status	Notes
24.6.(2).a Value/Celebrate Boards	Sapling	Appreciation event to become an annual occurrence.
24.6.(2).b Educate Boards	Seedling	A training was conducted this year and recorded for future board use. Additional trainings are needed to be formalized across all boards.
24.6.(2).c Clarify Ordinances and Simplify Roles	Seedling	Updates to the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance will aim to reduce the number of Conditional Rezoning required to be heard by the Planning Board and others. The updated tree ordinance has helped clarify the Tree Board's role. City Council priorities should be City board priorities. Council sets strategic vision for City with input from Boards.

**Enhance Sustainability Citywide**

Goal	Status	Notes
24.6.(3).a Explore Merging Boards	Tree	Staff explored this opportunity but does not feel it is feasible at this time.
24.6.(3).b Incorporate Sustainability in Comp. Plan	Tree	There was a clear focus on sustainability during comp. plan input and drafting.
24.6.(3).c Finalize Sustainability Plan	Sapling	The Sustainability Plan and development of City building/facility efficiency standards are underway.
24.6.(3).d Update and Strengthen Tree Ordinances	Tree	City Council will consider the new tree ordinance in April 2023.

Goal	Status	Notes
24.9.a Support NeighborWoods Program	Tree	Continued support and funding for this program are strong. Future years are expected to bolster additional plantings through a new fee in lieu of tree plantings in the tree ordinance.
24.9.b Increase Tree Budget	Tree	Continued support and funding for this program are strong. Future years are expected to bolster additional plantings through a new fee in lieu of tree plantings in the tree ordinance.

**Support Downtown Businesses**

Goal	Status	Notes
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24.10.a Establish Legal Authority	Tree	The City now works through the Friends of Downtown to provide façade and pivot grants to downtown businesses and property owners.
24.10.b Allocate More Funds to Program	Sapling	The City, through the Friends of Downtown, is currently allocating \$30,000 a year to this program. It would be ideal to create a target performance indicator to identify when this goal has been completely met.
24.10.c HIIP Program	Sapling	The City in partnership with Mountain Bizworks has started a small business loan and incubator program called the Downtown Opportunity Fund. The shared office spaces are scheduled to open this year. The fund has \$400k of seed funding available.





## Public Safety

- a. Enhance Downtown Safety Program
  - Civilian traffic investigators – apprenticeship program
  - Hire part time while they go to college through the CJ Fellows program
  - Then appoint them as officers
- b. Explore Social Worker Co-responder Models and Crisis Response
  - Intern social worker to build program at no cost to the City (through Western Carolina University)
  - Councilmember Simpson said this goal should move to the top
  - Councilmember Jennifer Hensley noted that it is important for police to be present when people are blatantly breaking the law
  - Crisis Intervention Training (CIT)
    - Designed as a diversion program.
    - Has not been a focus in the police department in the past.
    - McDonald’s homicide highlighted the need for this training (Jacklyn Reed).
    - Might mean that officers spend an hour on a call instead of 15 minutes.
    - Social worker co-responders provide the right tool for the job. Using just police officers for crisis intervention is like using a Phillips head screwdriver when we need a socket wrench.
    - Review of body-worn camera footage from a recent shooting demonstrated that officers need to work on managing crime scenes and dealing with victims and victims’ families. Officers face an extreme emotional response in crisis situations. They can be viewed as uncaring if they try to do their law enforcement job instead of dealing with the pain that is happening.
    - People are unpredictable in crisis and things can change fast. We need to keep people safe.
- c. Maintain ISO 1 Rating
- d. Explore QRV Option for Medical Response
- e. Expand Code Enforcement Capacity
  - Burned property is an issue.
  - Work through complex code enforcement projects.
  - Planners have less capacity to do code enforcement.
  - City has not taken a proactive approach to the commercial building code.
  - As rents go up and retail changes, there is an opportunity to be proactive with code enforcement and avoid blight.

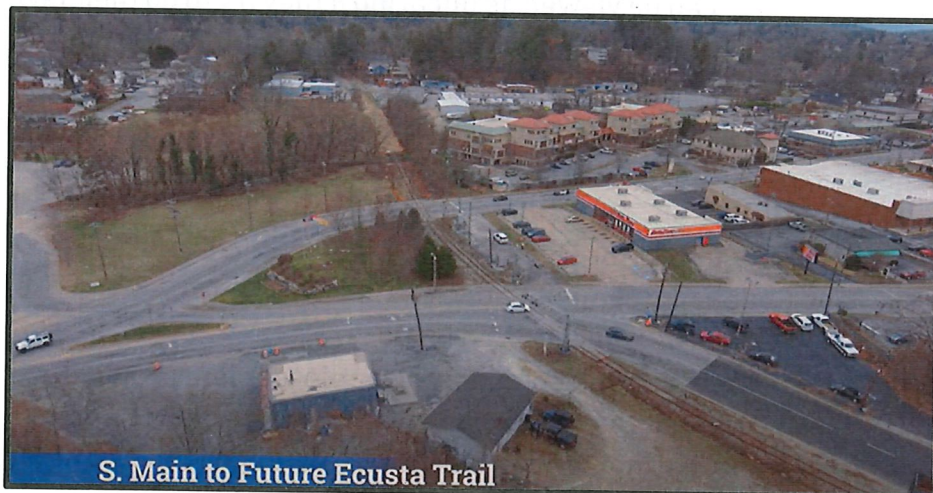
- There are renters who are living in substandard homes countywide.
  - Property owners need to maintain properties. If they do not, there should be legal consequences.
  - Letting buildings fall apart affects everyone.
- f. Strengthen Commercial Maintenance Code
  - g. Vacant Property Registration
  - h. Expand Installation of Cameras throughout Public Areas, Especially in Downtown
    - Be careful about how we increase police presence in Downtown
    - Make sure we be careful with interactions with the homeless population
  - i. Continued Flooding Response Process Improvements

### Strong Utility Infrastructure

- a. Continue Projects to Further Reduce Sanitary Sewer Overflows (SSOs).
- b. Dedicate Funding Plan for Treatment, Distribution, and Collection Master Plans for Water and Sewer.
- c. Dedicate Funding for Projects Resulting from the Stormwater Master Plan.
- d. Expand Water Treatment Plant to 15 MGD.
- e. Funding for Projects from Stormwater Master Plan.

## Seeing What We Are Celebrating: Drone Video

At lunchtime, City Council and staff watched a [drone video](#) that displayed progress on important City projects. This video provided an opportunity for City staff to inform Council of the work that went into bringing these projects to fruition.

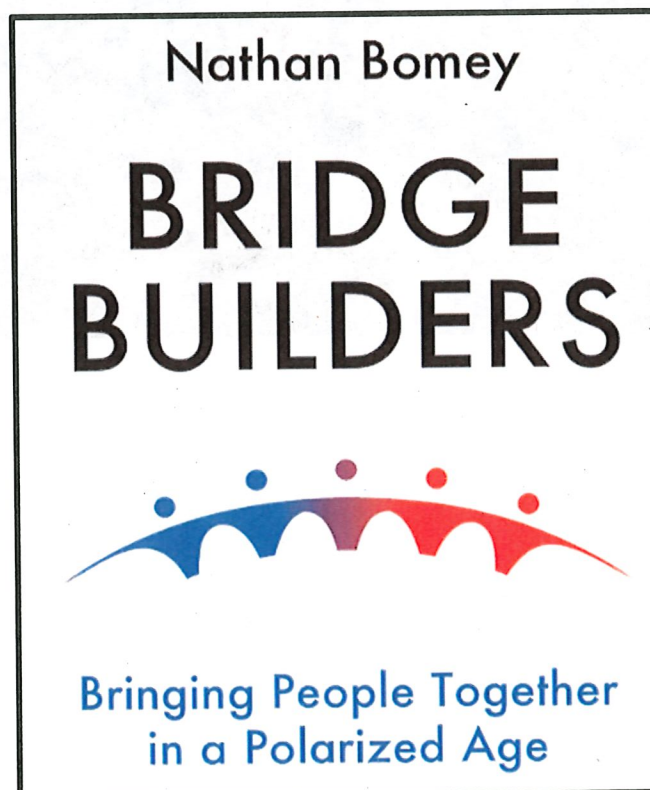




## Preparing Ourselves as Leaders for the Year Ahead

To conclude the day, City Council and staff prepared themselves for the upcoming year, which they anticipate will be disruptive and stressful in many ways. The conversation revolved around two key themes: remaining resilient and building bridges. City leadership will soon convene a book club where they will read and reflect on Nathan Bomey's *Bridge Builders: Bringing People Together in a Polarized Age*. During this segment, City Council and staff discussed strategies for remaining resilient and building bridges:

- Provide deadlines and timeframes – For example, an email requesting that someone review important information can appear urgent if a deadline is not attached to it.
- Provide more notice for events – Organizing events requires a lot of planning and coordination. Communicate early and often about event details.
- Correct misinformation – Whether during public comment at a City Council meeting or on social media, combat misinformation with accurate information.
- Be conveners – Connect and bring together passionate community leaders to solve complex problems such as childcare.
- Do what is right, even when it is tough – Support each other and make ethical, smart decisions (even if those decisions may be unpopular to some).
- Be persistent – Keep bringing important issues to the table. Saying no does not mean an idea is not valid. Continue to highlight important issues that need to be addressed.
- Do not bear the burden of attempting to solve everything – The City deals with many wicked issues that do not have easy answers or solutions. With most (if not all) of these issues, the City will play an important role in developing solutions. However, in many cases, City Council and staff are simply one piece of the solution.





## Next Steps & Adjourn

- City staff will make updates to the strategic plan and report back to Council.

John Connet thanked City Council and staff for their participation and the retreat adjourned. Let the seeds be planted and grow!

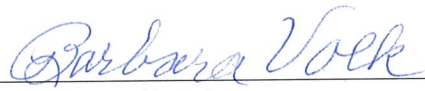




## Appendix

### Parking Lot

City leaders placed the topic of parking in the parking lot. Parking will be discussed at an upcoming City Council meeting.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Barbara Volk, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jill Murray, City Clerk

