

Town of Mars Hill Strategic Plan Update

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Town of Mars Hill Strategic Plan Update 2009

The Town of Mars Hill has developed three long-range planning documents through the years. The first two, a strategic plan and community assessment report, were completed in 1996, while the land use plan was finished in 2001. The Planning Board, along with the Planning Steering Committee, staff at the NC Division of Community Assistance (DCA) and an intern from Appalachian State University Department of Geography and Planning, produced a Strategic Plan of Work that was adopted in 1996. This was done in response to development pressures the Town was facing in the mid-1990s from a variety of factors including the construction of I-26 from the Tennessee state line to the continued growth of the City of Asheville and the Asheville metropolitan area.

The 1996 Plan states, “This *plan of work* is an action oriented document intended to prepare the Town to better manage this change.” The document was organized around nine objectives or topic areas including:

- Community appearance and character
- Economic development
- Downtown development
- Transportation issues
- Housing and neighborhood
- I-26 development policies
- Public safety
- Environmental quality
- Open space

Each objective was discussed in greater detail and then summarized in a policy statement; action items were also listed for each objective. Implementing this comprehensive list of objectives and action items served as the Town’s focus for the next several years.

Another planning document is the HandMade in America “Report on the Community Assessment” that was prepared in 1996, when the Town partnered with HandMade to revitalize the business districts on Main Street and Carl Eller Road. The recommendations from that effort were organized into the “Four Point Approach” (registered mark) from the national Main Street Center, namely: organization, design, promotion, and economic restructuring. Committees were formed to implement these recommendations as well.

The Board of Aldermen then saw the need for a more comprehensive planning effort, and directed the Planning Board to expand the scope of their study. Again working with staff at the Division of Community Assistance, a Land Use Plan was prepared and subsequently adopted in 2001. The Land Use Plan incorporated the framework of objectives and action items from the

1996 Strategic Plan and updated the list to reflect those that had been accomplished as well as adding new objectives.

In early 2008 the Board of Aldermen wanted to prepare another strategic plan. Staff at DCA was contacted to assist with this effort, and the first step involved revisiting the objectives and action items from the HandMade report and 2001 Land Use Plan. The first meeting was held on February 5 2008 with the Mayor, Board of Aldermen, Planning Board, Town Manager, and staff from DCA. A document in table format that had been prepared by DCA staff was handed out with a list of all action items along with space to indicate whether it had been completed, was underway, had been modified, or was no longer relevant. The review process was completed over the course of two meetings (the second took place on 2/19). There was general consensus that many action items have been completed or are underway, while some are no longer relevant. There was also agreement that while many efforts began as the project of a committee, as time passed it often became the sole responsibility of the Town Manger. As a result, worthwhile projects were put on hold due to time constraints. The Board of Aldermen emphasized their commitment to involve more citizens in the planning effort so work could be shared among more interested people. See the results of these meetings in Appendix A of this report.

The staff from DCA recommended Town officials, Planning Board members and staff take part in a visioning exercise and community involvement technique developed by the Institute of Cultural Affairs. This demonstration took place over two meetings in March and April 2008. This question was displayed to focus the discussion: “What do we want Mars Hill to look and be like 10 years from now?” and the following scenario was handed out:

“The year is 2018. Mars Hill has just been recognized as the best small town to live in America. A reporter and photographer from Money Magazine have arrived. They are here to feature Mars Hill in a series on community planning success stories. You have been selected to give them a one-day tour of the area. Your assignment is to tell them about the transformation the community has undergone as a result of the bold and innovative community vision that was created back in 2008. You jot down a list of changes and accomplishments that you want to tell about the community and places to take them for photo shoots.”

The technique involves first brainstorming ideas individually, then having people team up by two or three to merge their lists. Next, half-sheets of paper and magic markers are distributed and people are asked to distill their ideas into short descriptive phrases, for example, “Build more sidewalks.” Through a series of requests from the facilitator such as “pass forward the two most clear ideas; the two that are most different from what’s already up” and the like, all the ideas are eventually placed on a large sticky sheet that serves as a display board. The ideas are gradually grouped together into categories, and then the exercise concludes with the naming of the

categories. This serves as the foundation for the community's vision with specific goals and action items.

The exercise generated many ideas and the Town officials agreed the community at large should be given the opportunity to participate. The consensus was to have two "community planning" meetings so people would have more opportunity to attend; the dates were publicized in a variety of ways. Meetings took place on May 27 and June 10 using the same technique as outlined above. Approximately 30 people attended each meeting and many ideas on a number of topics came from the groups. A common theme among all the meetings was that there was already a great deal of consensus about what needed to be done to make the Town a better place to live.

Staff from the Division of Community Assistance met with a professor from Mars Hill College, Ryan Pickens, who had volunteered to help develop one document to combine the results of the three meetings held between March and June. An explanatory memo with a draft list of categories and action items was sent to the Mayor and Board of Aldermen, Planning Board, and Town Manager for their review before it went out to the people who had attended the meetings in May or June; this document can be found in Appendix B. Quoting from this memorandum, "In general, we tried to use the names of the categories that came out of the meetings, except when we believed a different wording was clearer. In addition, to keep the amount of information from being overwhelming, [we] did not list every single item that came up in the discussion but rather 'hit the highlights' and summarized that major topics. However, the results of the individual meetings do list every item so the information will not be lost."

A total of 54 ideas/action items were generated for the six headings:

- Enhance Economic Development of Town, Downtown and 213 Corridor
- Maintain and Plan for Small Town Quaintness and Atmosphere
- Provide Good, Safe Transportation Choices for All
- Promote and Expand Local Arts, Heritage, and Entertainment
- Capitalize on Relationship Between College and Town
- Create a Greener, Healthier, More Sustainable Community

The community met again on September 8 in the newly-remodeled Town Hall to review the list of action items within the categories, and then to prioritize them; this voting list can be found in Appendix C. All the items were on the sticky sheet used in the community meetings, which had been taped to a wall in the meeting room. Every person was given five dots, numbered one to five. Each person was asked to pick their top five projects, five being the highest priority for them, and then everyone "voted" by placing their dots next to the particular action items. The votes were counted to put the projects into rank order. The list of projects and their votes can be found in Appendix D, "Prioritized List of Combined Projects."

The next part of the meeting was devoted to dividing up into groups according to interest area, choosing a meeting time within the next two weeks, and getting everyone's contact information. Four committees were formed: "Economic and Development and 213 Corridor," "Conservation and Sustainability" (this also combined with an already-functioning committee on water conservation), "Town and Gown," and "Small Town Enhancement." Everyone was informed each committee was expected to make a presentation on a quarterly basis to the Board of Aldermen, and the first report would take place at the December meeting. It was also explained that the Town Manager would not be attending the committee meetings, however he would be available as a resource, as would staff from DCA. Ryan Pickens offered his services as facilitator to help each committee get started.

At the first meeting of each committee, Ryan Pickens discussed basic "ground rules" that have helped committees function well. He passed out a set of materials to each committee member and reviewed what practices have helped groups accomplish their goals. The packet included "The Five Functions/Dysfunctions of a Team," "Effective Teams and Committee Participation," "Committee Positions and Responsibilities," and "Committee Policies and Procedures." Each committee decided on a regular meeting date and time as well as responsibilities. Staff from DCA were also present at the initial meeting of each committee to serve as a resource, emphasizing they would continue to be available for technical assistance as the need arose.

The committees have been meeting on a regular basis. The following summary details the accomplishments of each committee to date (fall 2009) as well as priorities for the next six months. This information was obtained through the notes kept by the committees as well as telephone interviews with the contact person for each committee.

Economic and Development Committee

The geographic focus of the committee is Main Street and the 213 corridor extending across the Interstate to Bull Creek. The beginning focus was on the projects identified at the September community meeting, including parking, increasing the variety of stores and restaurants, and extending the commercial area across the Interstate. For a better understanding of parking issues and options, the Town hired a consultant to prepare a parking study that built on the work of the Land-of-Sky Regional Council, which had recently done a survey to identify the number and location of parking spaces around Main Street, the college campus, a nearby church and other institutions. The consultant has finished his work and prepared a report, which includes ideas for short-, medium-, and long-term approaches to increase the amount of parking available.

To address the concern of increasing the variety of retail and dining options, the committee partnered with the non-profit HandMade in America to prepare a "consumer survey"

that was mailed in the spring of 2009 to 5,000 residents and business owners identified by examining water bills and voter lists; Mars Hill College students were also targeted. The idea was to identify those people most likely to shop and eat in Mars Hill because they live within a couple of miles of the town. HandMade staff prepared an additional page of questions regarding art and craft purchases and interests. A chance to win prizes was offered to those filling out the survey, and approximately 1,500 were returned. Because of the length of the survey and the opportunity for numerous written comments, tabulating the results has been a long and painstaking task, involving the work of several staff from the Division of Community Assistance. The results were made available by the end of July, and were combined with a market study report also prepared by DCA staff. This report as well as the survey results was presented to the Board of Aldermen in early August. The electronic version of the report is available on the Town's website, and the printed version is at Town Hall. Taken together, this information shows what retail opportunities exist for the Town and will greatly assist the committee in helping existing businesses to expand their product line as well as marketing to new businesses.

The committee has also been involved with the design charrette that took place in January 2009 (a summary is presented later in this document). One of the recommendations was to create an "Arts District" in the basements of buildings downtown, and the committee is exploring ways to implement this proposal. Other future needs include examining possibilities for vacant buildings. A more immediate identified need is for more information to be provided to Town residents regarding the water and sewer capacity and the opportunity for growth.

Small Town Enhancement

The committee has been working on promoting and preserving the Town's historic significance and encouraging better use of downtown. The committee members have explored many ideas to accomplish these goals and objectives and are taking steps to accomplish them, including:

Ensure new construction is in harmony with existing buildings and development

- Make use of expertise on the committee to offer comments on the design of new buildings and retrofits of existing buildings.
- A recent charrette has identified many opportunities and has offered suggestions to establish the necessary design, policy and management tools necessary to bring this about—See "Vision Plan" January 2009.

Make the Town more accessible for pedestrians by implementing the 10-year plan for sidewalks and trails

- Make walking to downtown safe via sidewalks within one-half mile radius; connect disjointed sidewalks leading to downtown so persons with disabilities, parents with toddlers and strollers can walk safely.
- Maintain sidewalks clear of overgrown shrubbery and overhanging car bumpers, which make passage unsafe.
- Make walking to school safe within one-half mile.
- Pave shoulders on Main Street to connect subdivisions (north and south) to downtown Mars Hill.
- Place signs on Main Street and Bailey Street to indicate entrances of the walking trail.
- Have pedestrian crossings marked on Main Street at the steps leading to the library and other locations as appropriate.
- Make the sidewalk adjacent to Carl Eller Rd (NC213) safer by addressing safety concerns for the disabled where needed.
- Provide “bump-outs” at selected intersections:
 - Carl Eller Rd (NC213) and Main, at the Post Office
 - Main St and Mountain View
 - Carl Eller Rd (NC213) and College Street

Make the Town greener and more aesthetically pleasing

- Install flower baskets and resolve issues such as funding; whether to place them on existing poles or new ones; and maintenance (including planting and watering).
- Install flags or banners if baskets are not feasible.
- Deal with littering; explore options such as trash pick-up on Hwy 213 and installing "Do not litter" signs around Town, with fines established.
- Continue discussions with Madison County Arts Council and HandMade in America to explore painting large oil tanks with quilt patterns or other designs.

Have more cultural events downtown

- Encourage the public library and the Madison County Arts Council to hold story-telling and other summer events at the gazebo.
- The Nature Center is considering having presentations for children at the gazebo
- Establish an Arts District; see the charrette's "Vision Plan" January 2009

The committee wishes to partner with other organizations and individuals and welcomes everyone who is interested to join them in continuing this work. They are in the process of identifying and evaluating which projects should be pursued for grant funding; possible funders include USDA Rural Development-- Community Facilities, Community Development Block Grants, NC Commerce, Golden Leaf Foundation, NC STEP and others.

Town and Gown Committee

The committee's main effort has been to improve communication between the Town of Mars Hill and the College. In the past there has been no ready way to get information about what is happening with cultural, sports or other events at either place. By committee members meeting with College officials and working with the Town, there is now a place on the Town's website where information is available. Every month the College public information officer assembles a list of College activities occurring up to 10 weeks in advance that are of interest to the general public, and then transmits this list to the Town; the Town is doing the same for its activities. This has been very successful. However, there is a sizable group of residents who do not have access to a computer, so now the focus is on making the information available on paper. The committee has formulated a system to have cards printed every month and place them in racks at various locations around town including the post office, grocery store, lodging, restaurants and any other places that are interested. The College has agreed to print the cards at what it costs to produce them, and it is possible that a business or other entity would be interested in sponsoring one month's costs in return for an advertising opportunity on the card. The racks themselves also need to be made, and the committee is exploring several possibilities.

The next goals include working with the College to support the Town's efforts in sustainability, water conservation, and beautification. The committee can act as a clearinghouse of information for the other committees on which person or department at the College would be the best contact. For example, there is discussion of having a joint composting facility to serve the elementary school and College cafeteria.

In addition, the committee is acting as a facilitator to help bring live, free music to downtown by combining the efforts and resources of the Merchants' Association, Town, College, and the Madison Arts Council. Two dates were arranged in July and August.

Conservation and Sustainability Committee

This committee had its beginning in early 2008 when a group of local citizens concerned about the continuing drought formed the Water Conservation Group. The objectives were to involve residents, the College, and town government in education programs on water conservation; and to provide a better understanding of the drought's continuing impact on the community. The group worked diligently to educate themselves on conservation issues, and then developed a Water Conservation brochure which was mailed to all households in Mars Hill. Another effort included educating residents on the benefits of rain barrels by having a demonstration of the various options at the new Town Hall; as a result, a number of residents have installed rain barrels at their homes.

When town citizens met in September 2008 to form implementation committees as part of the community planning and visioning effort, the group merged with the "Greener, Healthier, More Sustainable" committee and now has a broader vision. With the addition of new committee members, the College has also become more involved in conservation efforts. Recycling is also becoming an important endeavor. The Town puts out a quarterly newsletter, and the committee has prepared one or two pages on water conservation and sustainability to be included in each issue. A goal of the committee is for the Town to be a model of stewardship not just for Madison County but for other small towns in the region as well.

Objectives for 2009 include:

- Continue to provide conservation information through the town newsletter and website.
- Develop a water conservation display at Town Hall to show water saving devices that residents can install in their homes and businesses.
- Support efforts for the town to structure water rates to encourage conservation by rewarding those using less water and charging higher rates for big water consumers. The Town will be conducting public hearings on revised water rates.
- Submit recommendations to the town leadership for an investigation into leaks in town water lines and develop a plan to repair them. The town is losing one fourth of its treated drinking water from leaks.

- Recommend that the town and Mars Hill College work together to identify a way to monitor the college's water use and develop a program to reduce water consumption. The college uses thirty percent of the town's water supply.
- Investigate feasibility of community composting and water issues related to use of disposals.
- Continue to encourage installing water harvesting/rain barrels in the community.
- Promote recycling by educating residents about the damage to the environment by not recycling, and the cost to tax payers.
- Encourage the "Green Students" at Mars Hill College to educate children attending Mars Hill Elementary School in conservation, recycling and sustainability.

Information From Other Plans

Along with the Strategic Plan, the Town has been working on updating other studies and plans, including a street condition assessment, parking assessment, and water audit. In addition, the Water and Sewer Master Plan has been updated; a summary is presented below. As mentioned earlier, the Town worked with a design firm and held a charrette in January 2009 as part of the NC STEP program. A summary of that program is also presented below.

Water and Sewer Infrastructure

The Town of Mars Hill contracted with McGill Associates, P.A. to prepare a Water and Sewer Master Plan to look at needs for the next 20 years, which was completed in April, 2009. The plan looks at the existing water and wastewater systems, analyzes future system demands, recommends improvements to both systems, and then examines an implementation schedule and financing options. The major findings are summarized below.

Existing water system

- Between 2000 and 2007, the Town's population increased from 1,764 to 1,873, an increase of approximately 0.8 percent per year, about one-half the growth rate of the State as a whole.
- In 2007, the Town provided water to approximately 3,102 customers.
- The average daily demand for the system in 2007 was 0.238 million gallons per day (mgd).
- Approximately one-fifth of this demand was from Mars Hill College.
- The Town owns and operates a 0.8 mgd package type water treatment plant approximately 10 miles north of town at the headwaters of Laurel Creek.
- The existing Laurel Creek watershed owned by the Town provides raw water. The watershed has two raw water reservoirs, which provide storage of raw water prior to treatment and distribution to the Town.
- Treated water is transported by a 13-mile gravity transmission line to the Town's distribution system; much of this line is cast iron and was constructed in the 1920s.
- The Town owns four above-ground water storage tanks, which are filled by water from the treatment plant. The difference in overflow elevations of the tanks creates two pressure zones in the Town's water distribution system, which is comprised primarily of 6-inch and smaller cast iron pipe.

- Most of the Town's water lines were constructed in the early- to mid-1900s, and much of the distribution is undersized.
- A Drought Response Water Audit report prepared by Cavanaugh & Associates, P.A. in July 2008 documented the Town loses approximately 68 gallons per minute (gpm) in its total water system with 68 percent coming from the 13-mile transmission line. The report states in 2007 approximately 38 percent of the Town's water was unaccounted for. A leak analysis was conducted by Cavanaugh and the Town, using sophisticated leak detection equipment. The analysis found the location of a large percentage of the water loss; subsequent repairs have stopped most of these leaks.

Existing sewer system

- In 2007, the Town had approximately 600 connections to the wastewater system, resulting in an average daily flow of approximately 0.165 mgd; most connections are located inside the town limits.
- The wastewater collection system consists of over 16 miles of mostly 8-inch PVC gravity sewer.
- Much of the system was installed in the mid-1980s and is in relatively good condition.
- The Town has eliminated many inflow and infiltration (I&I) sources.
- The Town's permit allows the discharge of up to 425,000 gallons per day of treated effluent into Gabriel Creek located adjacent to the plant. This should take care of the Town's wastewater treatment for many years to come.

Water System Improvements

The report assumes that demands on the Town's water and wastewater systems will increase at a rate of one percent per year through 2029. From 1997 to 2007 the actual rate of increase was approximately 0.35 percent, so this allows for a safety factor to allow for a higher growth rate more in line with that of the rest of the State. Reasons to plan for a higher growth rate in the future include the natural beauty of the area, the presence of Mars Hill College, the Town's location in relation to Asheville, and the completion of the I-26 project which makes the area more accessible for travelers and industries planning to relocate or begin operation. As noted earlier the Town's water treatment plant is capable of treating 0.8 mgd, which means it is projected to be adequately sized to meet the average daily demand assuming a one percent growth rate (0.349 mgd) in 2029 as well as the peak daily demand (0.523 mgd), assuming peak demands are 50 percent greater than average demands.

However, the safe yield of the Laurel Creek Watershed during times of drought is less than the capacity of the treatment plant. In a 1990 study by McGill Associates, P.A., the safe yield was determined to be 0.42 mgd during the 10-year and 0.36 during the 20-year drought. The North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NC DENR) requires that public water systems begin seeking additional water supplies when system demands reach 80 percent of the available supply. Based on the 10-year drought, the Town should begin seeking additional water supplies when average demand reaches 0.34 mgd; this is projected to occur around the year 2025.

The most viable option available for the Town to acquire additional water supplies is to purchase water from the Town of Weaverville. Based on a report prepared for the Town of Weaverville by McGill and Associates, P.A. done in 1999, the Town would have an adequate water supply to supplement the Town of Mars Hill during drought conditions. A pump station and 12-inch water transmission line from the Ivy Creek water treatment plant to the existing Mars Hill system is scheduled to be constructed and operating within two years; it will allow Mars Hill to purchase up to 200,000 gallons of finished water per day from the Town of Weaverville. Total project cost, including construction, equipment, contingencies, engineering, and contract administration costs, is estimated at \$2,000,000. The Master Plan also takes into account estimated annual operation and maintenance (O&M) costs for the next 20 years and calculates what these future costs are today (also called “present worth”), using a formula recommended by the federal Office of Management and Budget. Annual O&M costs associated with the construction of the water line are estimated at \$0.10 per foot; with approximately 20,300 linear feet of water line, the annual O&M cost is \$2,030. There is also a booster pump station with its O&M costs. When all O&M costs for 20 years are added together, it comes to \$56,760.

The highest priority water distribution project identified in the Water and Sewer Master Plan is the replacement of the water transmission line that extends from the water treatment plant to the Town. Approximately 5.5 miles of the southernmost line was installed in the 1920s and is 6-inch diameter cast iron pipe. The Town has experienced numerous main breaks in this line. In order to rectify this problem and save money and water, the Master Plan recommends replacing the old line with approximately 27,000 linear feet of new 8-inch ductile iron water line. The Plan also recommends replacing the line in two phases to make costs more manageable. The first phase, numbered Project W-1 in the Master Plan, would consist of installing approximately 11,800 of water line at a cost of approximately \$1,000,000; the second, W-2, would replace the remaining 15,200 linear feet at a cost of \$1,702,500. The Master Plan estimates the present worth of annual O&M costs to be approximately \$17,800 for Project W-1 and \$22,900 for Project W-2.

Since the Master Plan goes into similar detail for all the water distribution projects, there is no need to repeat all the information here. At the end of the Implementation Schedule section below, Table 1 “Summary of Present Worth Analysis” gives a brief summary of the remainder of

the water distribution projects in the Master Plan as well as wastewater system improvements; for more complete information, please refer to the Plan itself. The project numbering below is the same that is used in the Plan.

Wastewater System Improvements

Based on projected flow rates for the next 20 years, additional treatment capacity will not be needed at the wastewater treatment plant, however there are several improvements to the wastewater collection system that are necessary. The highest priority project consists of replacing an existing vitrified clay sewer line near the wastewater treatment plant, which collects the sanitary flow from approximately 90 percent of the Town's wastewater system. The line is over 40 years old and has numerous cracked and broken joints which contribute to I&I; 600 linear feet of 12-inch gravity sewer line will replace the old line. The Master Plan states that annual operation and maintenance costs are estimated at \$1.00 per linear foot, and again uses the 2.9 percent present worth formula to come up with a figure for the 20 year cost. All costs for the project add up to \$163,196.

It is worth mentioning that Projects S-3, S-4, and S-5 will provide sanitary sewer service to the I-26 and State Highway 213 interchange; along SR 1605 that parallels I-26 south of the Highway 213 interchange; and along SR 1549 and Frontage Road paralleling I-26. These projects will provide for the future growth of the Town. Since the Master Plan goes into greater detail for all the wastewater system improvements, there is no need to repeat all the information here. Please refer to the Table 1 for a summary of the costs for the remainder of the wastewater system improvements.

Implementation Schedule

The Master Plan groups all the water and wastewater projects into three categories. Category One includes projects required to improve the operation of the existing water and sewer systems; they are recommended for implementation in years 0 through 6. Category Two (years 7 through 12) includes projects that are not needed immediately, but are expected to be needed in the near future as the systems grow. Category Three (years 13 through 20) consists primarily of projects needed to expand the existing water and sewer service areas. The Master Plan also examines funding options to pay for these improvements; for more information, please refer to the Plan.

Table 1 Summary of Present Worth Analysis

Project	Estimated Capital Cost	Estimated 20-Year Present Worth for Annual O&M Cost	Total 20-Year Present Worth Cost	Category Number
W-1 (Phase 1 – Water Transmission Line Replacement)	\$1,000,000	\$17,800	\$1,017,800	1
W-2 (Phase 2 – Water Transmission Line Replacement)	\$1,702,500	\$22,900	\$1,725,400	1
S-1 (College Street/Highway 213)	\$ 154,100	\$ 9,096	\$ 163,196	1
S-2 (Pump Station Upgrades)	\$ 150,000	N/A	\$ 150,000	1
S-3 (I-26 and State Highway 213)	\$ 877,450	\$85,000	\$ 962,450	1
Total Category One Costs			\$4,108,846	
W-3 (SR 1357 and Main Street)	\$ 324,500	\$ 4,300	\$ 328,800	2
W-4 (Frontage Road)	\$ 596,500	\$ 8,900	\$ 605,400	2
W-5 (Mountain View Rd., SR 1553, Springside Loop)	\$ 581,300	\$ 7,600	\$ 588,900	2
W-6 (SR 1552)	\$ 443,700	\$ 6,200	\$ 449,900	2
W-7 (South End of Mountain View Rd.)	\$ 466,800	\$ 5,000	\$ 471,800	2
Total Category Two Costs			\$2,444,800	
W-8 (SR 1354)	\$ 650,500	\$ 7,900	\$ 658,400	3
W-9 (SR 1549)	\$ 696,200	\$ 9,800	\$ 706,000	3
W-10 (SR 1609)	\$ 593,700	\$ 7,300	\$ 601,000	3
W-11 (SR 1560 & SR 1559)	\$ 824,200	\$12,100	\$ 836,300	3
S-4 (SR 1605)	\$1,388,750	\$133,700	\$1,522,450	3
S-5 (SR 1549 and Frontage Road)	\$3,105,800	\$363,400	\$3,469,200	3
S-6 (State Highway 213)	\$1,437,800	\$141,200	\$1,579,000	3
Total Category Three Costs			\$9,372,350	
TOTAL ALL COSTS			\$15,835,996	

Mars Hill Charrette

In conjunction with HandMade in America and the NC STEP program, the Town hired Allison Ramsey Architects and Civitech to hold a week-long charrette in January 2009. Quoting from the draft Mars Hill Vision Plan, the document that was produced as a result of the charrette, “The charrette process enables many meetings representing diverse interests to occur over a condensed period of time, concurrent with a team of design professionals meeting in the same space to simultaneously hear and be a part of the meetings while working to develop plans and idea sketches.”

Quoting from the Vision Plan Executive Summary, “Top recommended action items generated through the Town’s Vision Plan charrette address a range of short term, mid-term and long term objectives. These objectives span an array of issues from incremental design intentions, planning regulations and review processes, economic development opportunities, and a long-term civic vision...”

The major recommendations are summarized below:

Next Steps, Top Priorities, and Items to Address

Pedestrian Safety and Walkability Improvements

- Press NCDOT to install Protected Pedestrian Crossings at South Main and NC 213, and at Main and College Streets
 - Add push-button controls and walk signal
 - Re-mark/delineate crosswalks
 - Consider additional surface treatment upgrades

Enhancing Planning and Development Regulations

- Develop a pedestrian safety plan for sidewalk connectivity, travelway separation, and key trail and sidewalk linkages
- Overhaul zoning and development regulations
 - Develop and adopt a Form Based Code
 - Create site plan review standards and procedures
 - Provide handbook for Planning and Zoning Board and elected officials regarding planning, zoning and development regulatory processes
 - Create wayfinding strategies and a sign ordinance
 - Create and adopt a Town Sustainability Plan

Managing Downtown Parking Constraints

- Enforce downtown parking criteria
 - Refine and enforce downtown parking regulations
 - Work with College to develop a joint parking management plan

- Parking user education

Vision for a Civic/Arts District

- Create a Library Walk and Back Street Arts District
- Add stair connection on Library expansion project to replace and improve existing connection

Creating a Town Green

- Pursue strategic land acquisition/swap strategies

Economic Opportunities Analysis

- Perform a specific downtown retail economic analysis and create an economic opportunities plan (economic stimulus)
 - More Visitors Center to downtown storefront
 - Construct a downtown kiosk and visitors' directory
 - Construct a community billboard

College Vision Plan

- Develop a Campus Master Plan
 - Siting and design for an Inn and Conference Center building
 - Planning for a residential village
- Assist Town in developing and enforcing parking management strategies

For additional information, the Vision Plan is available to review in Town Hall; the electronic version of the Vision plan is posted on the Town's website.

Appendix A
List of Action Items from 1996 and 2001 Plans With Updates

	Completed	Underway and/or On-going	Modified	No Longer Relevant	Not Done/St Needed
<p>Economic Development <u>1996 Strategic Plan</u></p> <p>The Town shall encourage the update of the Industrial Site Survey to ensure that industrial development is located in suitable areas. <i>Comments: Town still does not have an official, state-certified site, but urgency to establish a site has lessened. Discovered Native American artifacts on the property that had been identified as a site on about five of the 20 acres; owner still wants to sell the property.</i></p>		X			
<p>A target business and industry study should be completed which identifies specific businesses and industries which are compatible with the infrastructure capacity and environmental constraints of the Town. These targeted businesses and industries should support existing business and industry in the community. <i>Comments: The Town has worked with the County on this—Mr. A.C. Honeycutt was Chair of Economic Development Board; also worked with Advantage West. Industry usually wants a vacant building to move in to, not just an empty property. (See “Additional Comments”)</i></p>		X			
<p>New businesses and industries which can utilize the educational and research capabilities of Mars Hill College shall be especially recruited. <i>Comments: Worked with County economic development board, but there is not a specific person working on this. Could utilize College for interns. Could Honeywell plant be an incubation center? (See “Additional Comments”)</i></p>		X			
<p>Tourism development which is compatible with the history, culture, topography, and natural resources of the community shall be encouraged. <i>Comments: Town has been active with TDA, County (See “Add .Cmn.”)</i></p>		X			

	Completed	Underway and/or On-going	Modified	No Longer Relevant	Not Done/St Needed
The zoning ordinance shall be used to protect, enhance and encourage economic development. <i>Comment: Underway/on-going.</i>		X			
The Town shall promote coordination of economic development with the various institutions and agencies involved with economic development, including the Madison County Economic Development Board, Western North Carolina Regional Economic Development Commission (WNCREDC), North Carolina Department Commerce (NCDOC) Business and Industry Division, Mars Hill College, and the Division of Community Assistance (DCA). <i>Comment: Coordinating with County Economic Development Board. Need to add "AB Tech" to the list.</i>		X			
The Mars Hill community should strive for a diversified economic development approach which emphasizes existing industrial expansions, expansion of commercial and retail services, promotes and assists locally owned small businesses, and provides support for the existing agricultural sector. <i>Comment: Could do a better job partnering with agricultural community/cooperative extension. Farmers have been hurt terribly by the drought. Is the Town/County accessing Golden Leaf funds properly?</i>		X			
Community Appearance and Character <u>1996 Strategic Plan</u> The identification and preservation of structures, buildings, monuments, lands and neighborhoods of historic value shall be encouraged. <i>Comment: College identified buildings; cooperate with the Town; Richard Dillingham did work for the college.</i>		X			
The Town shall encourage the development of a minimum set of architectural standards for all future developments.		X			

	Completed	Underway and/or On-going	Modified	No Longer Relevant	Not Done/St Needed
<i>Comment: 1997 Charrette had suggestions, college misplaced them. Still could do.</i>					
The Town shall promote the development of a community beautification master plan. <i>Comment: Town has a Master Plan, have it on computer—let the Board see it.</i>		X			
Coordinate planning between the Town and Mars Hill College shall be encouraged. <i>Comment: Underway and on-going.</i>		X			
The Town shall create a community appearance commission which will provide guidance to developers, property owners, and the planning board on issues related to landscaping, site preparation, and overall community appearance. <i>Comment: An Appearance Commission was appointed and was active for a while but is now inactive.</i>					
The significance of trees in providing visual relief, summer cooling and improved air quality shall be recognized through public policies to encourage the preservation of existing trees as well as the planting and maintenance of new trees. <i>Comment: Trees have been planted; the location of some has been controversial.</i>		X			
The Town shall encourage public, private and utility company efforts to place utility wires underground. <i>Comment: Some wires have been relocated.</i>		X			
The Town shall conduct a review of neighboring communities' community appearance, character, and historic preservation standards. <i>Comment: Some work has been done on this.</i>		X			
An abandoned car ordinance shall be developed. <i>Comment: This is very controversial—does the Town need an appearance commission? Are any grants available? Georgetown SC</i>					X

	Completed	Underway and/or On-going	Modified	No Longer Relevant	Not Done/St Needed
<i>was one community whose ordinance was reviewed.</i>					
<u>2001 Land Use Plan Update</u> Complete the historic resources survey in the LUP study area, and ensure the study of any structures inadvertently left out of the original survey. <i>Comment: Still needed.</i>					X
Downtown Development <u>1996 Strategic Plan</u> The Town shall encourage public and private efforts to develop adequate and safe downtown parking. Off-street parking shall be specifically encouraged. <i>Comment: The Town works on parking continuously.</i>		On-going constantly			
The Town shall encourage the development of a Mars Hill Merchants Association. <i>Comment: There has been an offer to facilitate a meeting of the Town's merchants. Also, this is not really up to the Town to do, but up to the merchants themselves</i>					
Downtown activities, festivals, and the like should be encouraged and promoted. <i>Comment: This is on-going.</i>		X			
Downtown development activities should be coordinated between the Town, Mars Hill College, and property owners. <i>Comment: On-going. There is more awareness than there used to be of activities on campus, but the College website is often out of date and more could be done to let people know what is happening. There was discussion of having a sign close to the Interstate that could advertise upcoming events.</i>		X			
<u>2001 Land Use Plan Update</u>		X			

	Completed	Underway and/or On-going	Modified	No Longer Relevant	Not Done/St Needed
The Town shall continue efforts to implement recommendations from the HandMade in America resource team visit to make downtown Mars Hill a viable center for the community for living, shopping, and dining. <i>Comment: On-going.</i>					
Transportation Issues <u>1996 Strategic Plan</u> The Town shall encourage the review and update of the thoroughfare plan. <i>Comment: Process was started while Land Use Plan Update was underway and progress was made, but DOT staff person assigned transferred to another position and then a hiring freeze meant staff was not available to finish. See "Additional Comments" for more info.</i>			X		
Future road construction within the Town shall be examined for the possibility of pedestrian facilities. <i>Comment: On-going. A pedestrian plan has been done, and parts of it have been built. The Town is always interested in extending the network of sidewalks. See "Additional comments."</i>	X	X			
Policies which have the effect of reducing traffic congestion and parking problems in the Town shall be supported. <i>Comment: On-going.</i>		X			
<u>2001 Land Use Plan Update</u> In the context of the thoroughfare plan update now underway, explore the feasibility of traffic calming techniques in the college campus area. <i>Comment: On-going. Some traffic calming devices have been installed, and the need to continue to look at this issue is recognized.</i>	X	X			
I-26 Development Policies <u>1996 Strategic Plan</u> Locating the Interstate 26 North Carolina Visitors Center in or near the	X!				

	Completed	Underway and/or On-going	Modified	No Longer Relevant	Not Done/St Needed
Town shall be encouraged. <i>Comment: This has been accomplished!</i>					
The Town shall encourage a detailed review of interchange development, including possible impacts of development under current zoning regulations. <i>Comment: The Town has worked with the County EDC on this issue, and efforts are on-going.</i>		X			
The significance of major roadway entrances into Town as measures of community image and quality shall be recognized through signage, architecture, landscape and other visual improvements. <i>Comment: Landscape plantings along the corridor have taken place, and additional conversations with DOT have occurred. See "A.C."</i>	X	X			
The Town shall take steps to coordinate all land use planning efforts related to the I-26 corridor with the I-26 Corridor Association. <i>Comment: Corridor Association no longer exists.</i>				X	
Housing and Neighborhood <u>1996 Strategic Plan</u> Compact neighborhoods with multiple residential options, mixed with commercial and community facilities, and reserved open spaces shall be encouraged. <i>Comment: Planning Board will be getting direction from Aldermen to look at mixed-use districts.</i>		X			
Residential development which preserves the natural features of the site, including existing topography, streams, wetlands and trees will be promoted through development policies. <i>Comment: This is a duplicate of a goal under Open Space and Recreation category.</i>		X			
<u>2001 Land Use Plan Update</u>					
Amend the zoning and subdivision ordinances to allow mixed use developments.		X			

	Completed	Underway and/or On-going	Modified	No Longer Relevant	Not Done/St Needed
<i>Comment: This is a duplicate of first item in this category.</i>					
Public Safety <u>1996 Strategic Plan</u> The Town shall encourage the development of additional pedestrian crosswalks, especially in the campus area. <i>Comment: Some have been provided, and there is on-going work; this is also very closely related to traffic-calming discussed earlier.</i>	X	X			
The Town shall encourage the development of sidewalks and safety signage on heavily used pedestrian areas such as Bailey Street and Bruce Road. <i>Comment: Some work has been done, and more is needed.</i>	X	X			
The Town shall work towards the development of a paid Fire Department staff. <i>Comment: This has been done!</i>	X!				
Public Utilities <u>1996 Strategic Plan</u> Extensions of water and/or wastewater services that may result in uncoordinated, dispersed development and costly provision of these and other urban services shall be discouraged. <i>Comment: Board of Aldermen has looked at revising policies; this is on-going.</i>	X	X			
The Town shall explore all options in order to identify a new or alternative water supply which will meet future water demands. <i>Comment: Town is exploring connecting to Weaverville water system.</i>		X			
The Town shall develop a Capital Improvements Program to facilitate long-range planning for the extension of utilities and for updating and improving existing lines. <i>Comment: Engineering firm is working on this now.</i>		X			

	Completed	Underway and/or On-going	Modified	No Longer Relevant	Not Done/St Needed
The Town shall conduct a feasibility study for annexation of areas outside the current Town limits which currently have water and/or wastewater collection services. <i>Comment: Alan Lang with NCDCA worked with the Town on this, however, the areas they looked at didn't meet the standards for annexation as specified in the General Statutes because there was too much undeveloped land. Darhyl, not sure which box to check here.</i>					
Environmental Quality <u>1996 Strategic Plan</u> Reuse, recycling and resource recovery programs shall be made accessible and convenient options within the Town. <i>Comment: This has been done; schools are getting some of the funds generated by recycling.</i>	X!				
Measures to improve the reduction of litter shall be encouraged. <i>Comment: Town requests prison help when it is available; "Adopt a Highway" used to be used more, but State is very difficult to work with, has many restrictions on this program and it is less popular now.</i>		X			
Development on ridge tops and steep slopes shall be discouraged. Where development occurs, stringent performance standards shall be met. <i>Comment: This is not so relevant for the Town; don't have many protected ridges/steep slopes in Town's jurisdiction.</i>				X	
The Town shall investigate storm water management issues and plan accordingly. <i>Comment: This is difficult to do, and still needed.</i>					X
Measures to promote water conservation shall be encouraged. <i>Comment: A lot has been done to monitor water use; Town has been working to detect leaks in the system; on-going effort.</i>	X	X			
<u>2001 Land Use Plan Update</u>		X			

	Completed	Underway and/or On-going	Modified	No Longer Relevant	Not Done/St Needed
The pattern of future land use will be based partly upon the existing, proposed, and potential extensions of infrastructure including plans for water and sewerage services, utilities, highways, and roads. <i>Comment: On-going.</i>					
The pattern of future land use will also be based upon the suitability of land for development, including consideration of soil conditions, slopes, hydrology, floodplain, prime and important farmland, wetlands, public water supply watersheds and wellheads, surface waters and groundwater, plant and animal resources, and other areas of environmental concern. <i>Comment: This is underway and being worked on continually.</i>		X			
The pattern of future land use will encourage a walkable community as much as possible to safeguard air quality. <i>Comment: This is underway and being worked on continually.</i>		X			
Where development on ridge tops and steep slopes does occur, have regulations for stringent performance standards including guidelines for best management practices. <i>Comment: This is underway and being worked on continually.</i>		X			
Investigate development regulations to address light pollution and glare off-site. <i>Comment: The difficulty here is how to measure the glare and how to enforce the regulations; specialized equipment is needed to monitor and enforce; this is still relevant.</i>					X
Open Space and Recreation <u>1996 Strategic Plan</u> Development of a system of greenways shall be encouraged. The use of natural corridors such as streams, floodplains and secondarily man-made corridors such as utility rights-of-way shall be emphasized. <i>Comment: On-going; some work has been done; Town has a trail and is</i>	X	X			

	Completed	Underway and/or On-going	Modified	No Longer Relevant	Not Done/St Needed
<i>looking at where it can be extended. Darhyl—is this right?</i>					
The preservation of open space shall be encouraged. <i>Comment: On-going.</i>		X			
Future open space and recreational areas should serve multiple users. <i>Comment: On-going.</i>		X			
Provision of open space and recreational facilities shall be encouraged in private development and through intergovernmental and public/private partnerships. <i>Comment: On-going.</i>		X			
2001 Land Use Plan Update Water Quality Through the comprehensive land use planning process, the Town will strive to be eligible for state loans and grants for construction wastewater treatment works, wastewater collection systems, and water supply systems. <i>Comment: On-going; a lot has been done in this area.</i>	X	X			
Whenever possible, the Town will promote on-site design and construction practices that will mitigate development’s impact on water quality through the use of appropriate stormwater management measures including stormwater wet detention basins, infiltration basins and trenches, vegetative filters, curb cuts and other measures to direct runoff through vegetated areas. <i>Comment: County has done a lot in this area; on-going.</i>	X	X			
To maintain quality public water supply, the Town will comply with the local water supply plans required under NCGS 143-355(1) and, with assistance from the state Division of Water Resources, DENR, will periodically update the local water supply plan. <i>Comment: On-going; plan must be revised and updated every 5 years.</i>		X			
Ensure that the Town’s water quality initiatives are coordinated with and complement the French Broad Basinwide water quality plan.		X			

	Completed	Underway and/or On-going	Modified	No Longer Relevant	Not Done/St Needed
<i>Comment: On-going; plan must be revised and updated every 5 years.</i>					
<u>HandMade in America Small Towns Program</u> Recommendations from the 1996 Community Assessment Report					
Organization <i>Interim:</i> Establish a Steering Committee to set up a larger, community-based organization. <i>Comments for entire Organization section: This was done—Steering Committee was set up—and there was a lot happening for a while. Then the Committee/community backed off and the Town kept doing the work for a while but over time the Town didn't stay as active. A town this small works off grant funding because there isn't money available in the general fund, and revenues are needed to accomplish projects. HandMade helped the Town acquire grants. Darhyl—please check wording here.</i>					
Develop a work plan for the permanent organization.					
<i>Permanent:</i> Transition the Steering Committee into a permanent non-profit, community-based organization with broad representation from the four sectors of the community.					
<i>Committees:</i> Establish standing committees to accomplish the work of the permanent organization.					
<i>Staffing:</i> Identify people and in-kind contributions to staff the permanent community-based organization.					

	Completed	Underway and/or On-going	Modified	No Longer Relevant	Not Done/St Needed
Request that the college provide release time for faculty and administrative staff to service the organization.					
<i>Budget:</i> Explore the feasibility of creating a Municipal Service District (MSD) to include the I-26 interchange, 213 corridor, and downtown.					
<i>Scope:</i> Coordinate all projects and revitalization efforts with action items identified in the Town's strategic plan.					
Design <i>Carl Eller Road:</i> Implement the Route 213 corridor landscape improvement plan developed by NCDOT. <i>Comment: This has been done.</i>	X				
Develop a base map of Carl Eller Road and Main Street that includes property lines and building footprints, to be used in future planning and design projects. <i>Comment: This has been done.</i>	X				
A sidewalk plan should be developed in conjunction with the Corridor Improvement Plan that leads from the farthest business on Route 213 into downtown. <i>Comment: This has been done.</i>	X				
The sign ordinance for the Town should be re-written and should make a strong distinction between what is allowed in the 213 business district and downtown. <i>Comment: This is still relevant.</i>					X

	Completed	Underway and/or On-going	Modified	No Longer Relevant	Not Done/St Needed
The Town should consider building into its zoning a requirement for landscaping of new businesses and parking lots. <i>Comment: This has been done.</i>	X				
Develop gateway entrances on Route 213 as you enter downtown. <i>Comment: This has been done and the issue continues to be studied.</i>	X	X			
<i>Downtown:</i> Develop a long-range urban or streetscape plan for downtown that is coordinated with the College's long-range campus landscaping/development plan. <i>Comment: A lot has been done and the issue continues to be studied.</i>	X	X			
Conduct an historic resource survey, and prepare a master plan for protection and renovation of historic structures and landscapes. <i>Comment: Some buildings have been identified, and the College has had some work done. Some responsibility lies with the individual property owner.</i>	X	X			
Identify potential sites for parking in downtown. <i>Comment: Some work has been done, and the issue is continually being looked at.</i>	X	X			
Review the existing parking ordinance. <i>Comment: This is done on an on-going basis.</i>		X			
Identify potential park and open space sites, and coordinate with the "Open Space & Recreation" components of the Town's Strategic Plan. <i>Comment: This is done on an on-going basis.</i>		X			
Begin planning immediately to bury all overhead wires. <i>Comment: Some lines have been buried; this is done on an on-going basis.</i>	X	X			
Coordinate all design-related activities with the newly appointed Mars Hill Appearance Commission. <i>Comment: The Appearance Commission was started and then became less active. They did work on a landscape plan for the Town and</i>					X

	Completed	Underway and/or On-going	Modified	No Longer Relevant	Not Done/St Needed
<i>worked on other projects; still needed.</i>					
Coordinate with the Town government and business community to develop a program of incentives that will encourage compliance with development ordinances. <i>Comment: This is still needed; none in place in now.</i>					X
Economic Restructuring <i>Carl Eller Road:</i> Stringent requirements for landscaping and sign controls should be expected by the developers of the interchange properties. <i>Comment: It's a challenge when there are clustered businesses and perhaps a group sign is what is needed; could do a group sign for the plaza; this issue still needs attention.</i>		X			X
Businesses should be advertised on the NCDOT interstate logo program, rather than tall pylon signs or billboards. <i>Comment: This has been done.</i>	X				
The design recommendations to link the interstate interchange to downtown and the college by landscaping are imperative to overcome the appearance problems on NC 213. <i>Comment: This has been done; it is also on-going.</i>	X	X			
Develop a marketing plan and a vision for the 213 corridor and the downtown district. <i>Comment: This has been done.</i>	X				
Gather pertinent data on all properties on NC 213 and in the downtown district. <i>Comment: This is on-going.</i>		X			
Retain existing businesses and seek new ones. <i>Comment: This is on-going.</i>		X			
<i>Downtown:</i> Pursue a program to encourage the renovation or adaptive reuse of downtown properties.		X			

	Completed	Underway and/or On-going	Modified	No Longer Relevant	Not Done/St Needed
<i>Comment: This is on-going; many businesses are tenants in their buildings and so they have limited say over how building is maintained, renovated, etc.</i>					
Develop and implement a strategy for funding the revitalization effort. <i>Comment: Town can't favor one part of town over another. Darhyl—have I worded this correctly? Also, not sure which box to check:</i>					
Promotion <i>Image:</i> Develop a promotions/marketing committee that includes representatives from the downtown and the Route 213 businesses, the Town and the college. <i>Comment: This was done some time ago Darhyl—the rest of my notes on this one don't make sense: "changed over time." Any thoughts?</i>	X				
The Mars Hill community organizations should develop a logo and a stance line or descriptive "catch" phrase. <i>Comment: This was done—developed the Town seal that is used now.</i>	X				
Develop a shopping, dining, service and information guide. <i>Comment: This was done at one time, but the brochure becomes out of date quickly; County is doing this yearly—still on-going.</i>	X	X			
Explore the feasibility of developing signage or information kiosks to help visitors with directions, location of individual businesses, and so on. <i>Comment: Madison County Visitors' Center is downtown, and Town supports it; College has done a good sign.</i>	X				
Develop a calendar of events for the Mars Hill area. <i>Comment: This is done in the newsletter, tried—could could be better; electronic sign near Interstate interchange like Woodfin's could be helpful, but it needs to be tasteful. Darhyl—not sure my notes here are correct.</i>	X				
<i>Retail Promotions and Assistance:</i>					

	Completed	Underway and/or On-going	Modified	No Longer Relevant	Not Done/St Needed
Shop windows and displays should be changed regularly and maintained. <i>Comment: Not the Town's responsibility.</i>					
Develop shopping bags and merchant buttons to be printed with the new logo and stance line on one side, and individual business stickers on the other side. <i>Comment: Although this is not the Town's responsibility, it did happen; shopping bags were done.</i>					
Develop business assistance programs through the Chamber of Commerce to assist in customer service, window decorating, small business advertising, and other programs as needed by merchants. <i>Comment: Not the Town's responsibility.</i>					
Add more traditional and fine crafts to the retail mix. <i>Comment: Not the Town's responsibility; farmers' market. Darhyl, I'm not sure what "farmers' market" is doing here, but it's in my notes.</i>					
<i>Tourism:</i> Restaurants should develop menus and hours for play-goers so they can eat dinner, then attend the play. <i>Comment: Not the Town's responsibility.</i>					
Merchants should keep their shops open late on theater nights to cater to the theater-goers. <i>Comment: Not the Town's responsibility.</i>					
Develop a volunteer organization to assist in manning the Chamber of Commerce office on a regular basis. <i>Comment: Now open on a regular basis.</i>	X!				
Keep the Chamber of Commerce office open five to six days a week with set, dependable hours. <i>Comment: This has been done.</i>	X!				
A Chamber Business After Hours should be developed and held regularly to allow members to network and get acquainted.	X!				

	Completed	Underway and/or On-going	Modified	No Longer Relevant	Not Done/St Needed
<i>Comment: Not the Town's responsibility, but Chamber does this.</i>					
<i>Special Events:</i> Downtown and Route 213 businesses should host an "Open House" for Mars Hill, with refreshments and entertainment if possible. Darhyl—I don't have any notes about this and the following two items. Any thoughts on what I should say?					
Develop specials for students to encourage them to do business in Mars Hill.					
Businesses should be encouraged to participate in all festivals in Mars Hill.					



North Carolina Department of Commerce

Michael F. Easley, Governor

James T. Fain, III, Secretary

Appendix B

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Mayor of Mars Hill and Members of the Board of Aldermen; the Chairman and Members of the Planning Board; and the Mars Hill Town Manager

FROM: Virginia Faust, AICP, North Carolina Division of Community Assistance

SUBJECT: Results of Community Visioning Meetings

DATE: June 23, 2008

On the following pages you will find a draft proposal for combining the three separate meetings that were held between March and June into one grouping. Ryan Pickens, Glenn Rhodes and I got together to see if we could merge the results, and this is our attempt.

In general, we tried to use the names of the categories that came out of the meetings, except when we believed a different wording was more clear. In addition, to keep the amount of information from being overwhelming, I did not list every single item that came up in the discussion but rather "hit the highlights" and summarized that major topics. However, the results of the individual meetings do list every item so the information will not be lost.

This is only a draft, and your thoughts and comments are appreciated.



Revised category names Thursday June 19, 2008

Enhance Economic Development of Town, Downtown and 213 Corridor

- Increase the variety of stores, restaurants
- Revitalize appearance of buildings, landscaping
- Encourage locally-owned businesses
- Improve signage
- Create more visible welcome center
- AB Tech expansion in Mars Hill
- Retail/business complex across I-26 intersection
- Small industrial center established
- Local restaurants featuring Madison farmers and recipes
- Evaluate parking needs and create necessary parking

Maintain and Plan for Small Town Quaintness and Atmosphere

- Keep open space, especially gazebo
- Design streets so they look like rooms: trees along the streets give a feeling of enclosure, buildings are placed close to the sidewalk and have awnings, there are benches
- Floral hanging baskets are placed along streets
- Keep rural areas – farmlands
- Main Street clean-up with ordinances to comply
- Town boundaries need to be studied

Provide Good, Safe Transportation Choices for All

- More sidewalks, bike lanes and paths
- Increase safety by giving priority to pedestrians
- Create adequate parking
- Connect north/south of town across 213 with access for pedestrians
- Public transit connecting Marshall, Weaverville, Mars Hill, Asheville and beyond

Promote and Expand Local Arts, Heritage, and Entertainment

- Local events utilize the gazebo (music, storytelling and the like)
- Update, complete library, be multi-purpose, with green technology demonstrations
- Increased emphasis on Farmers Market
- Feature local artisans and crafts people
- SART booming year round
- Celebrate hooked rug industry
- Music and dancing downtown
- Preserve and market our local history and heritage

- Establish historic district
- Active recreational activities for all age groups
- Fenced-in dog park
- An active outdoor recreation/community center
- Park with children’s play area
- New golf course

Capitalize on Relationship Between College and Town

- Central community bulletin board, “MarsHill.com”
- Website showing College activities for upcoming year
- College more involved in communicating upcoming events to the town as well as plans for future
- Community is highly involved in cultural events at College

Create a Greener, Healthier, More Sustainable Community

- Conserve and preserve water supply
- Model community water, energy sustainability
- Increased emphasis on recycling
- Environmental infrastructure: solar panels, rain barrels, LED stoplights
- Green building codes/guidelines
- Involve schools and College in health-wise initiatives
- Retirement communities around downtown
- Thriving senior center in rock school
- New jobs with living wages—ideally, green technology

Establish Creative Strategies for Implementing the Strategic Plan

- Encourage community pride and participation
- We collaborate: government, college, businesses, citizens
- Community involvement
- Strategic plan that is “user-friendly”
- Animal control

Appendix C Voting List

Combined List of Ideas from Community Meetings

Enhance Economic Development of Town, Downtown and 213 Corridor

- Increase the variety of stores, restaurants
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- Create more visible welcome center
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- Town boundaries need to be studied

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- Celebrate hooked rug industry
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- Preserve and market our local history and heritage
- Establish historic district
- Active recreational activities for all age groups
- Fenced-in dog park
- An active outdoor recreation/community center

- ___ Park with children's play area
- ___ New golf course

Capitalize on Relationship Between College and Town

- ___ Central community bulletin board, "MarsHill.com"
- ___ Website showing College activities for upcoming year
- ___ College more involved in communicating upcoming events to the town as well as plans for future
- ___ Community is highly involved in cultural events at College

Create a Greener, Healthier, More Sustainable Community

- ___ Conserve and preserve water supply
- ___ Model community water, energy sustainability
- ___ Increased emphasis on recycling
- ___ Environmental infrastructure: solar panels, rain barrels, LED stoplights
- ___ Green building codes/guidelines
- ___ Involve schools and College in health-wise initiatives
- ___ Retirement communities around downtown
- ___ Thriving senior center in rock school
- ___ New jobs with living wages—ideally, green technology

Appendix D

Mars Hill Community Meetings **PRIORITIZED LIST OF COMBINED PROJECTS** Overall Priorities

- Evaluate parking needs and create necessary parking (86)
- Increase the variety of stores, restaurants (47)
- Town boundaries need to be studied (44)
- Retail/business complex across I-26 intersection (43)
- Conserve and preserve water supply (38)
- Model community water, energy sustainability (34)
- More sidewalks, bike lanes and paths (33)
- Create adequate parking (28)
- Public transit connecting Marshall, Weaverville, Mars Hill, Asheville/beyond (28)
- Encourage locally owned businesses (25)
- Keep rural areas – farmlands (23)
- Preserve and market our local history and heritage (21)
- Community is highly involved in cultural events at College (19)
- Main Street clean-up and ordinances to comply (18)
- Small industrial center established (17)
- Keep open space/especially gazebo (17)
- Revitalize appearance of buildings, landscaping (13)
- Local events utilize the gazebo (music, storytelling, etc.) (13)
- Music and dancing downtown (12)
- Increase safety by giving priority pedestrians (11)
- Thriving senior center in rock school (11)
- New jobs with living wages/ideally, green technology (11)
- Improve signage (10)
- Central community bulletin board, “Mars Hill.com” (9)
- Increased emphasis on recycling (9)
- Design streets so they look like rooms: trees along the streets give a feeling of enclosure, buildings are placed close to the sidewalk and have awnings, there are benches (8)
- Feature local artists and crafts people (8)
- Establish historic district (8)
- Environmental infrastructure: solar panels, rain barrels, LED stoplights (8)
- SART booming year round (7)
- College more involved in communicating upcoming events to the Town as well as plans for the future (7)
- Update complete library, be multi-purpose, with green technology demonstrations (6)
- An active outdoor recreation/community center (5)
- Green building codes/guidelines (4)
- Active recreational activities for all groups (3)
- AB Tech expansion in Mars Hill (2)
- Local restaurants featuring Madison farmers and recipes (2)
- Connect north/south of Town across 213 with access for pedestrians (2)
- Park with children’s play area (1)