

# 1

## Introduction

- 1. Location..... 1.3
- 2. History of Hendersonville..... 1.4
- 3. Purpose of a Comprehensive Plan ..... 1.6
- 4. Guide to the Comprehensive Plan ..... 1.6
- 5. Planning Process and Themes..... 1.8



This Comprehensive Plan represents a bold initiative by the citizens of Hendersonville to shape the future of their community. After more than a year of research, surveys and community meetings, Hendersonville now has a vision for future growth and development that is grounded in a solid understanding of community conditions, trends and citizen expectations.

This Plan articulates a vision of what Hendersonville wants to become over the next twenty years and describes how to achieve that vision. While long-term and broad in its focus, the plan also includes short-term actions that the City can commence immediately or within the next five years, in furtherance of the long-term vision.

The fact that this is Hendersonville's first Comprehensive Plan represents a milestone in the community's history. Although the City has a successful history of planning (see Figure 1.2a), past plans have been limited to specific issues or subsections of the community. The Comprehensive Plan builds upon these previous efforts and develops a cohesive, coordinated set of recommendations for land use, housing, natural resources, utilities, transportation, cultural resources and community facilities for the entire City as well as adjacent areas.

This chapter introduces the reader to Hendersonville's location and historical context and describes the Comprehensive Plan's purpose, legal basis, contents and the process by which it was created.

#### Figure 1.2a: Previous Planning Efforts

##### City of Hendersonville

- Land Development Plan (1964; major revisions in 1970 and 1980; numerous minor revisions since 1980; most recent amendment is 2002)
- Thoroughfare Plan (1991)
- Southside Development Plan (2002)
- Southside Transportation Study (2006)
- Pedestrian Plan (2007)

##### Regional Planning Efforts

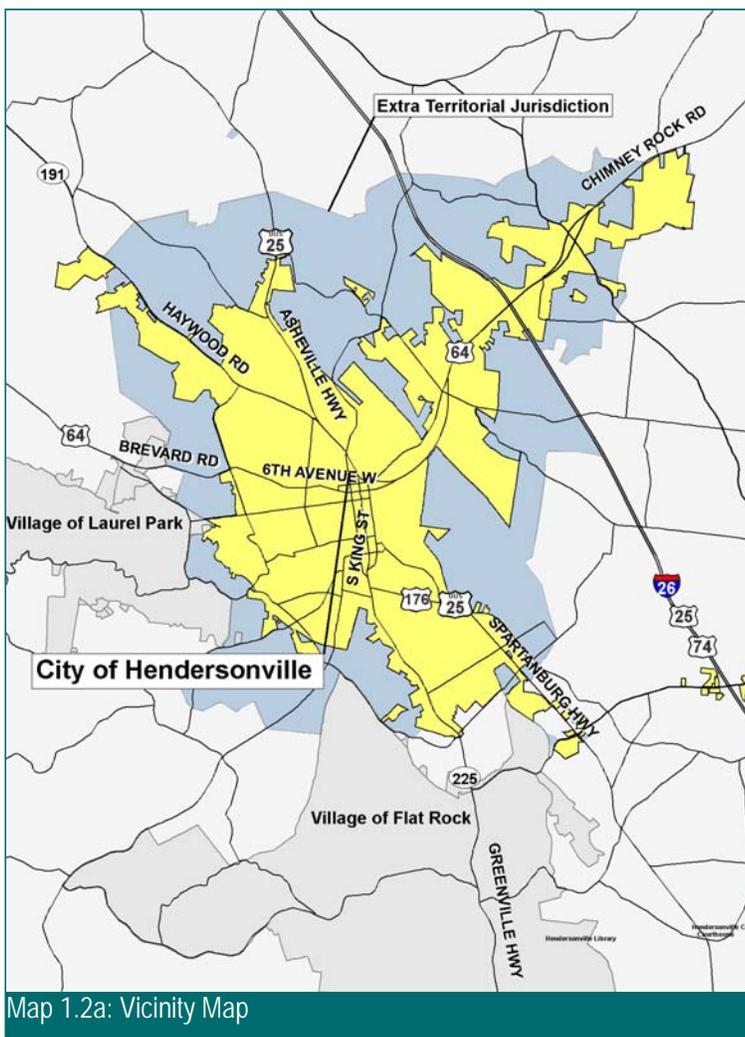
- Henderson County Comprehensive Plan (2004)
- French Broad River MPO Comprehensive Transportation Plan (2008)

## Section 1.1. Location

The City of Hendersonville encompasses approximately 6.9 square miles on a plateau about 2,200 feet above sea level. The City lies at the southern edge of the Blue Ridge Mountains, 40 miles north of Spartanburg and 22 miles south of Asheville on Interstate 26 (Map 1.2a).

The Town of Laurel Park is to the west of the City. Its city limits abut Hendersonville's ETJ. The Village of Flat Rock is south of the City. The central, northern point of Flat Rock's village boundary is surrounded by the City's ETJ. Otherwise, the two jurisdictions' boundaries do not meet.

Hendersonville is within the Asheville Metropolitan Statistical Area. Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) are geographic areas defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget and used for collecting, tabulating and publishing Federal statistics and data. There are currently 363 MSAs identified in the United States. MSAs reflect urban core areas with populations of at least 50,000. These areas include the county in which the urban core is located along with adjacent counties that have a high degree of social and economic integration measured by commuting and employment activities. The Asheville MSA includes Buncombe County, Haywood County, Henderson County and Madison County.



## Section 1.2. History of Hendersonville

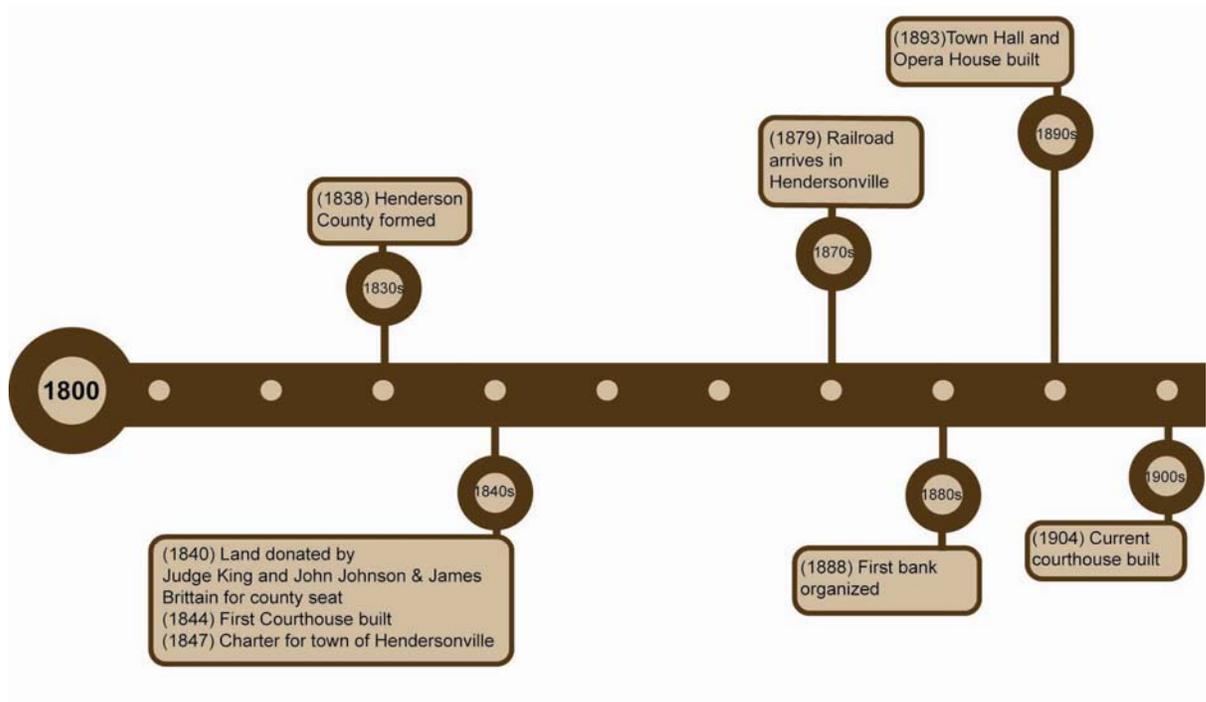
Henderson County was home to the Cherokee Indians until the 1785 Treaty of Hopewell. Settlers began to move into the area in the late 1700s, and newcomers included Revolutionary war veterans who received land grants to encourage settlement in the area.

In the 1840s, travelers on the Buncombe Turnpike, currently Main Street of Hendersonville, inundated the town promoting vast development. Main Street was part of that development and its architecture was consistent with the period, Neoclassical and Tapestry, for

commercial and government use. In 1844, Henderson County's Greek Revival courthouse was put into service. Judge King specified that Main Street should be 100 feet wide so that "a carriage and four horses could turn around without backing."

Hendersonville was incorporated as the county seat of Henderson County in 1847 and was named for Leonard Henderson, chief justice of the state Supreme Court.

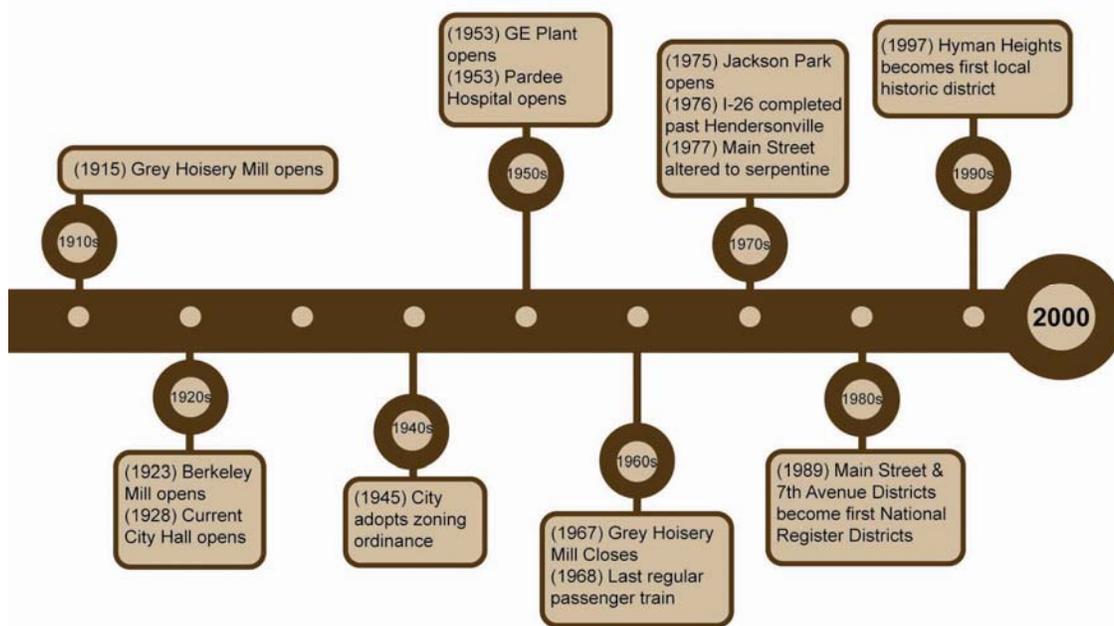
Early on, Hendersonville hosted summer visitors seeking relief from the heat of the South. In 1879 the first steam engine came up the Saluda Mountain Grade to the Hendersonville Train Depot.





Implementation of the railroad promoted more rapid growth for Hendersonville, bringing a steady flow of travelers to the town. These travelers spurred the development of Hendersonville as a thriving mountain town for secondary and vacation homes of the rich. The railroad also allowed for the shipping of the County's agricultural produce and for commercial, manufacturing, lumber and agricultural expansion of the area.

1890 sparked a revitalization of Hendersonville's Historic District on Main Street, providing growth for the City while maintaining its roots. During the 1920s, the Druid Hills neighborhood was developed one mile north of the town limits and was annexed into Hendersonville in 1968. The Hyman Heights neighborhood was also developed in the 1920s. The Historic Downtown was entered into the National Register of Historic Places in March 1988. Today, the area is home to over 120 shops and restaurants that attract tourists and residents.



### Section 1.3. Purpose of a Comprehensive Plan

A Comprehensive Plan is an important tool for local government decision makers, citizens, and developers that provides:

- An analysis of **development opportunities and constraints**
- A **road map** that recommends where, how, and when the community should grow
- A **multi-faceted public participation process** that creates consensus and promotes civic involvement
- Policies that promote **sustainable and high-quality development** that preserves and enhances quality of life and minimizes environmental impact

City staff and policy makers can use the plan as a framework to guide development-related decisions, such as zoning amendments, planned development reviews, capital improvements, and greenspace acquisition. Developers can use the plan to identify where various forms of development will be supported by the City. Citizens can use the plan to understand how growth will affect them, and identify ways in which they can contribute to the betterment of the community.

#### Legal Basis

A Comprehensive Plan is also a valuable legal instrument in supporting efforts to manage growth and increase community quality of life. Although the State of North Carolina does not mandate the preparation of a Comprehensive Plan, the state's General Statutes state that zoning must be "in accordance with a comprehensive plan" (G.S. 160A-383). The General Statutes require the Planning Board and City Council to issue statements determining whether proposed zoning amendments are consistent with an adopted comprehensive plan.

Based on this statute, it is in a community's best interests to have an updated plan that accurately reflects the community's vision and goals.

### Section 1.4. Guide to the Comprehensive Plan

As summarized in Figure 1.4a, the Comprehensive Plan document includes an introduction, seven policy chapters and an Implementation chapter. Separate documents that are related to the Comprehensive Plan include the Existing Conditions Report and Executive Summary.

#### Figure 1.4a: Comprehensive Plan Organization

[Existing Conditions Report](#)  
(separate document)

[Executive Summary](#)  
(separate document)

[Comprehensive Plan \(main document\)](#)

- Introduction (Chapter 1)
- Policy Chapters
  - Chapter 2: Population and Housing
  - Chapter 3: Natural and Environmental Resources
  - Chapter 4: Cultural and Historic Resources
  - Chapter 5: Community Facilities
  - Chapter 6: Water Resources
  - Chapter 7: Transportation and Circulation
  - Chapter 8: Land Use and Development
- Implementation



## Existing Conditions Report

This report is a separate document that was completed early in the planning process. It documents an analysis of social, economic and physical conditions that affect the future growth of Hendersonville, including a market analysis completed by Economics Research Associates. The report also provides documentation of the public input process, which included a community survey and numerous public meetings and workshops. The key findings of this report are summarized in the “Issues and Opportunities” component of each policy chapter in the Comprehensive Plan.

## Executive Summary

This document offers a concise, brochure-style summary of the Comprehensive Plan that the City can provide to citizens, developers, and anyone else who is interested in the plan but does not have time to read the entire plan document. By quickly conveying the plan’s key recommendations, the Executive Summary helps to promote the Comprehensive Plan and increase its usage among a broad audience.

## Comprehensive Plan Document

Below is a summary of the contents and purpose of each chapter in the main Comprehensive Plan document:

### Introduction (Chapter 1)

This chapter provides an overview of Hendersonville’s location and history along with the Comprehensive Plan’s purpose, legal justification, organization, and creation process.

### Policy Chapters (Chapters 2-8)

The seven policy chapters articulate the vision and recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan in each of seven topical areas, including Population and Housing, Natural and Environmental Resources, Cultural and Historic Resources, Community Facilities, Water

Resources, Transportation and Circulation, and Land Use and Development.

Each chapter includes:

- A description of its **purpose**
- A summary of planning **issues and opportunities** relevant to the chapter’s topical area. This component summarizes information from the Existing Conditions report.
- **Vision Statement:** The overarching policy that guides decisionmaking in each topic area. The vision statement describes an ideal end condition that will be realized when the Comprehensive Plan is successfully implemented.
- **Goals:** Broadly described, long-term ends toward which programs or activities are directed.
- **Strategies:** Specific policies and recommendations that help to achieve each goal.
- **Actions:** Measures that the City and/or its partners can use to implement each strategy and, ultimately, realize the goals and vision. Action statements also appear in the Implementation chapter.

### Implementation (Chapter 9)

This chapter provides an action plan for implementing the Comprehensive Plan and describes potential resources available to the City. The action plan lists all Action items described in the Policy Chapters and identifies a priority level, implementation timeframe, responsible party, and implementation resource for each item.

### **Comprehensive Plan Maintenance**

A Comprehensive Plan is a flexible, living document that can adapt to changing conditions. The Action items and implementation resources listed in this plan are merely recommendations and do not represent a finite list of possibilities. It is possible that additional resources and approaches may become available over time that help to implement a given strategy or goal.

Additionally, the goals and strategies themselves, as well as the Transportation and Future Land Use plans, are subject to amendment. Changes in state or federal policies, broader economic trends, or demographic shifts may necessitate changes in the City's priorities. The Comprehensive Plan should undergo a thorough review every five years to assure the continuing relevance of its vision statements, goals and strategies.

Between the five-year reviews, the Planning Department and Planning Board should continuously monitor implementation and review the appropriateness of the plan's recommendations. Additionally, citizens are permitted to petition City Council for revisions to the plan through a formal application process. In reviewing potential plan revisions, the Planning Board should ensure that the revisions are supported by a thorough analysis of existing conditions.

### **Section 1.5. Planning Process and Themes**

A community-driven process of discovery and dialogue produced the Comprehensive Plan. As a result, the plan reflects Hendersonville citizens' values and visions for the future. Professional analysis of demographic and market data and physical characteristics merged with community input from surveys, Steering Committee meetings and charrettes to inform the plan's recommendations. Figure 1.5a summarizes the key components of the planning process, and Table 1.5a summarizes the schedule. The following discussion describes each step and the parties involved in the process.

#### **Comprehensive Plan Committee Meetings**

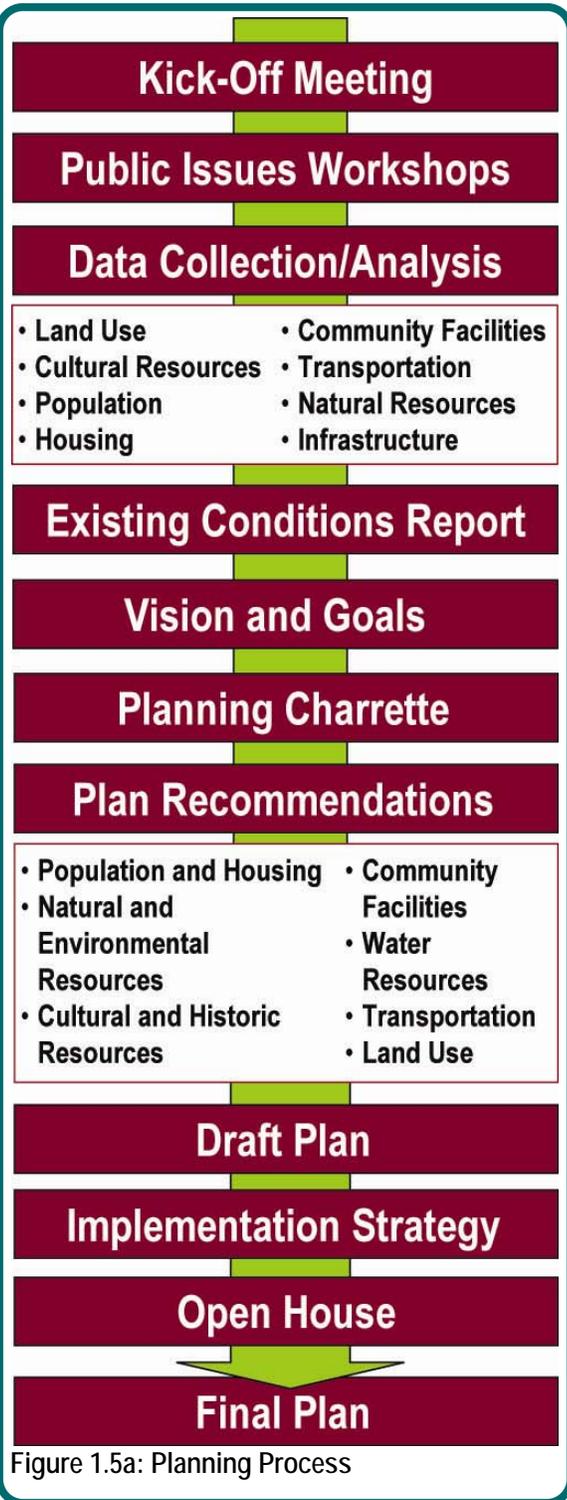
The Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC) was created to maintain public input for the development of the Hendersonville Comprehensive Plan. The committee has met numerous times throughout the planning process to provide input into the planning process.

Each meeting has hosted a different topic to aid in the discussion and help with the development of the vision and goals for the plan. This process keeps the committee informed on each element of the Plan, as well as bringing more knowledge to light for discussion purposes.

#### **Kick-off meeting**

A Kick-Off meeting was conducted to begin the planning process with the public's interests in mind. Staff, consultants, Comprehensive Plan Committee members, and members of the public were in attendance to discuss the process, schedule and responsibilities facing Hendersonville. Included at this meeting was a preliminary discussion of issues and opportunities for the City,

which formed the basis for the subsequent Public Issues/Vision Workshop.



## Public Issues/Visioning Workshops

This step sought citizen input on the existing trends, opportunities and constraints within the community. The process identifies various issues, ideas, concepts and desires that form the framework for specific recommendations for the Comprehensive Plan.

Each of the two Public Issues/Visioning Workshops included an introduction and informative presentation, followed by citizens asking questions and voicing their opinions about Hendersonville's future. The discussion progressed into a hands-on activity where citizens separated into groups. Each group had quadrant maps illustrating the City as a whole, on which participants were asked to list the issues and opportunities facing Hendersonville,

Table 1.5a: Schedule

Meetings	Date
Kick Off Meeting	Oct. 2, 2007
Public Issues Workshop #1	Nov. 14, 2007
Public Issues Workshop #2	Nov. 17, 2007
CPC Meeting #2	Dec. 5, 2007
CPC Meeting #3	Feb. 6, 2008
<i>Existing Conditions Report Submitted</i>	<i>Mar. 14, 2008</i>
CPC Meeting #4	Apr. 2, 2008
City Council Meeting #1	Apr. 10, 2008
Planning Board Meeting #1	Apr. 14, 2008
CPC Meeting #5	June 4, 2008
Charrette (CPC Meeting #6)	July 12, 2008
<i>Draft Vision &amp; Goals Submitted</i>	<i>July 2008</i>
Apple Festival	Aug. 29-31, 2008
CPC Meeting #7	Aug. 25, 2008
CPC Meeting #8	Nov. 5, 2008
<i>Draft Plan Submitted</i>	<i>Nov. 26, 2008</i>
CPC Meeting #9	Dec. 3, 2008
Planning Board Meeting #2	Jan. 12, 2009
Open House	Jan. 24, 2009
City Council Meeting #2	Feb. 19, 2009
<i>Plan Adoption</i>	<i>Apr. 9, 2009</i>



and identify where they would like to make improvements.

### **Data Analysis/Existing Conditions Report**

The Data Analysis/Existing Conditions component of the process included an analysis of socio-economic and physical conditions, as well as documentation of community input. Included in the report is an analysis of the Comprehensive Plan Survey.

The City of Hendersonville mailed 5,459 surveys to all residential properties located within the City limits and the City Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) that have individual water meters on November 5, 2007. Those surveys included questions regarding park facilities, transportation, visual appearance, housing, commercial and economic development. 1,031 surveys were completed, representing a respectable 19% response rate.

### **Vision and Goals**

The project team at this point was able to create the Vision and Goal statements, which form an organizational framework for the plan's recommendations in each chapter. CPC members and City staff reviewed the statements.

### **Charrettes**

The charrettes were an interactive visioning workshop conducted to develop detailed plans for key issues. The charrettes address citywide issues such as transportation, open space, natural resources, and land use. The charrettes also focused on subareas of the City that citizens identified as critical to the future of Hendersonville.

### **Plan Recommendations/Draft Plan/Implementation Strategies**

At this point the project team was able to develop detailed recommendations for each goal, and ultimately create the draft plan. The draft plan included

implementation strategies and resources for each recommendation. The draft was provided to the CPC as well as City department heads for review.

### **Open House**

The open house, open to the public, offered citizens an opportunity to view the draft plan in an informal setting. Several display boards summarized and illustrated the plan's recommendations while consultants and City staff were available to answer questions and record comments. Input from the open house was used to determine whether revisions to the plan were needed prior to formal adoption.

### **Adoption**

Although not required by State law, formal adoption by the Planning Board and City Council formalizes the community's support for a Comprehensive Plan and helps to build support and advocacy for its implementation. The Hendersonville Planning Board and City Council were involved throughout the planning process. Both groups met after the completion of the Existing Conditions Report to review progress and offer comments prior to the drafting of the plan. Both groups also reviewed the draft plan document after the public input process and offered comments for revisions prior to plan adoption.



July 12, 2008 Charrette



## **Comprehensive Plan Themes**

The Comprehensive Plan reflects issues that are important to Hendersonville citizens and leaders. Throughout the planning process, participants repeatedly expressed interest in the following themes:

### Multi-modal Transportation System

The plan includes several goals and strategies for improving community walkability, bikeability, and transit access, in addition to roadway improvements. Citizens are interested in living in a community that encourages all modes of travel, not just automobiles.

### Housing Diversity

Housing affordability has become a challenge in Hendersonville. Citizens and businesses wish to have a range of housing in order to make Hendersonville more affordable and provide workforce housing that helps to attract businesses and reduce commute times.

### Green Infrastructure

Hendersonville's mountain setting and surrounding natural areas are what attract residents and visitors to the area. Proper stewardship of natural and environmentally sensitive areas helps to preserve these scenic amenities, while helping to conserve clean water supplies, protect citizens from flooding and erosion, and provide recreation opportunities. Citizens are interested in creating a continuous system of green infrastructure that preserves sensitive areas and provides greenways that link neighborhoods and parks.

### Heritage preservation

History and cultural amenities are a source of pride for Hendersonville citizens. Efforts to preserve and build upon these resources will help to maintain this pride while promoting a sense of community and identity and boosting tourism.

### Infill development

Little vacant land remains within the City of Hendersonville. Citizens support growth if it is commensurate with the City's ability to provide services and infrastructure in a sustainable manner. Infill development and redevelopment offer a means of growing inward, redeveloping existing underdeveloped properties with higher densities where infrastructure and services are already available. This form of growth also prevents additional consumption of agricultural land and natural areas. Although the Comprehensive Plan supports growth into surrounding areas at a sustainable rate, infill development is a pervasive theme that is reflected throughout.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK