

MINUTES

City Council Planning Meeting Blue Ridge Energy Corporate Office February 6, 2026 8:30 A.M.

Facilitator: Anthony Starr, Western Piedmont Council of Government.

Participants: Mayor Joseph Gibbons, Mayor Pro-Tem Ike Perkins, Jonathan Beal, Rebecca Dellinger, Ralph Prestwood, Kimmie Rogers, David Stevens, and Crissy Thomas.

City Staff: City Manager Scott Hildebran, City Clerk Lauren Hartley, Finance Director Donna Bean, Fire Chief Norman Staines, Police Chief Andy Wilson, Economic Development Main Street Director Brenda Floyd, Planning Director Hannah Williams, Public Services Public Utilities Director Jeff Church, City Parks & Recreation Director Phil Harper, Communication & Public Information Director Joshua Harris, Planner Matt Duchan, Interim Director of Special Projects and Grants David Coffey, and Community Engagement Coordinator Ashley Smith.

Others in Attendance: Joshua Davis, Retail Strategies (Zoom), Edith Peters, Freese & Nichols, and Taylor Dellinger, Western Piedmont Council of Governments.

Call to Order

Mayor Gibbons welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

On behalf of City Council, Mayor Gibbons presented and read a proclamation proclaiming February 2026 to be Black History Month. (Attached to the minutes)

Mayor Gibbons stated this important meeting is for City Council to establish their priorities for FY2026-27. He thanked City Staff for all of their hard work throughout the year.

Mayor Gibbons introduced Anthony Starr, Western Piedmont Council of Governments, Facilitator, of the session. Mr. Starr reviewed the agenda and ground rules for the meeting.

Mission Statement & Vision Review

Anthony Starr reviewed the Mission Statement and Vision for the City of Lenoir.

The mission of the City of Lenoir:

- To serve our citizens and the community by providing a clean, safe, healthy, and attractive living and business environment, through the efficient delivery of essential city services in a fiscally responsible and equitable manner.
- To identify, prioritize, plan and act on opportunities for preserving and improving the quality of life of all of our citizens and community.

Vision for the City of Lenoir

- We aspire to be the city of choice in Western North Carolina for current and future generations- beautiful, clean and safe.

We will achieve our vision through:

- a healthy economy
- strong businesses
- vital neighborhoods
- a vibrant downtown
- extensive recreational and cultural opportunities

We will preserve Lenoir's friendly, small town atmosphere and celebrate the diversity of our people.

We require a city government that is:

- accessible and engaged with the public
- accountable
- efficient and responsive
- an employer of choice
- forward thinking
- honest and ethical
- inclusive and equitable
- innovative and collaborative
- transparent
- fiscally responsible

City Council made the recommendation to add bullet point "outstanding City services" to the City's Vision Statement.

The updated City of Lenoir Mission Statement and Vision for the City of Lenoir is attached to these minutes as information.

Customer Service Update

Communication & Public Information Director Joshua Harris gave an update of the Customer Service Team report. The Customer Service Team continued their efforts in 2025 by providing:

- new hire orientations
- training and resources
- employee appreciation
- golden ticket awards
- community events

The goal for 2026 is to reinvigorate Customer Service Training for all City employees.

On behalf of the Customer Service Team, Joshua Harris thanked City Council for all of their support.

Mayor Gibbons stated implementing the City's Customer Service Program was one of the best decisions for the City.

The presentation is included in these minutes as information.

City of Lenoir Year in Review Presentation – Mayor Gibbons and City Manager Hildebran

Mayor Gibbons and City Manager Scott Hildebran reviewed a PowerPoint presentation "State of the City 2025 Review".

The presentation is included in these minutes as information.

Population, Housing & Employment Update – Taylor Dellinger, Senior Data Analyst, Western Piedmont Council of Governments

Taylor Dellinger reported that Lenoir's population in 2024 was at 18,814, the unemployment in 2025 was at 4.2%, and the number of workers in 2025 was at 34,718. There was an increase in employment for private health care & social assistance. Lenoir has a high percentage for poverty over the age of 65 at 20.5%. Dellinger shared a map showing the 2023-2025 single-family permits.

The presentation is included in these minutes as information.

East Harper Streetscape – Edith Peters, Senior Transportation Engineer, Freese & Nichols

Edith Peters reported on project information:

- Harper Ave Conceptual Design
- Repurpose center left-turn lane
- Widen sidewalks and add decorative pavers
- Add crosswalks and signage
- Incorporate street trees, landscaping, public art, benches, bike racks, trashcans, lighting
- Rebuild street, curb, and gutter
- Incorporate stormwater infrastructure

Peters said the total project cost is approximately \$10 million and will be further refined in the next design stage.

The presentation is included in these minutes as information.

Greenways/Sidewalks Updates – Jon Hogan, Public Works Director/Hannah Williams, Planning Director

Jon Hogan reported the following on Greenways:

2025 Accomplishments:

- Mattern and Craig Engineers completed design for .25 additional miles of Greenway, this addition created a .50 mile loop around the soccer complex.
- The Zacks Fork Loop construction was completed in May of 2025.

Upcoming Greenway Project:

- Water Life Church
- CubeSmart, Quest4Life and UNC Health Connector
- Google Bridge Connector
- HWY 18/Morganton Blvd. Crossing
- College Ave and Harper Ave. Connector
- BL-0065 Harper Ave and Morganton Blvd Connector

Hannah Williams reported on the following Sidewalk Gap Analysis:

2025 Accomplishments:

- Burger King 500 feet
- Mavis Tire 180 feet

Expected Sidewalk in 2026/2027

- 102 Hospital Ave
- 710 Blowing Rock Blvd

- 2025 Morganton Blvd Outparcel
- Hospital Avenue Sidewalk

The presentation is included in these minutes as information.

Lenoir Retail Update – Joshua Davis, Portfolio Director, Retail Strategies-via Zoom

Joshua Davis reported on the quarterly retail report including focus properties, retail trends, and market overview.

A brief discussion was held regarding the available sites in the City.

The presentation is included in these minutes as information.

Lenoir Housing Update – Hannah Williams, Planning Director

Hannah Williams reviewed the housing update where 71 single-family homes were permitted in 2025 and the ongoing interest in market rate multi-family. Hannah also reported the Western Piedmont Council of Governments will apply on behalf of the City of Lenoir for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)-Disaster Recovery funding for an innovative housing project.

The presentation is included in these minutes as information.

Update – Speaker of North Carolina House of Representative Destin Hall

Destin Hall gave an update on State priorities and said he enjoys working with the City of Lenoir.

Council Priorities & City Accomplishments – Scott Hildebran, City Manager

City Manager Scott Hildebran reviewed the FY2025 Council priorities as listed below and stated that employees continue to be the City's number one asset.

2025 City Council Priorities

1. Continue efforts to offer competitive compensation and benefits for employees to improve recruitment and retention.
2. Develop options to increase code enforcement and improve beautification in three primary areas:
 - Abandoned and neglected housing
 - Dilapidated commercial properties
 - Appearance of downtown buildings
3. Update the Lenoir Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan and improve walkability.
4. Evaluate long-term Downtown parking needs.
5. Continue to fund and support the Water and Sewer Capital Improvements Plan.

The presentation is included in these minutes as information.

Grant Funding/Projects Review – Scott Hildebran, City Manager and Donna Bean, Finance Director

City Manager Scott Hildebran presented the review of Grant Funding/Projects that are underway or pending. Mr. Hildebran reported funding for each project with 42 projects to complete.

The presentation is included in these minutes as information.

Facilitated Discussion-Priorities-Anthony Starr

Anthony Starr asked City Council what weaknesses and concerns require resources or attention.

Weaknesses/Concerns

1. appearance of city corridors to visitors
2. communication gaps/challenges.
3. need more middle housing
4. empty buildings on corridor
5. retaining/attracting city employees

Following a discussion of Council's top concerns, Anthony Starr asked Council to evaluate their concerns for consideration of any new priorities and vote on their top priorities. Following the votes, the top five items were listed below as Council's priorities for 2026.

2026 City Council Priorities

- 1a Continue efforts to offer competitive compensation and benefits for employees to improve recruitment and retention.
- 1b Address corridor appearance and empty commercial buildings through continued code enforcement and beautification of public properties.
- 1c Explore ways to close sidewalk gaps along US 321/Blowing Rock Boulevard by working with North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) & the Greater Hickory Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).
- 4 Continue to develop strategies to attract attainable and affordable housing by promoting the Caldwell County Housing Plan and Living Lenoir 2045 Comprehensive Plan.
- 5 Continue to inform the public about City programs, services, and events, and encourage participation in government.

The 2026 City Council Priorities are attached to these minutes as information.

Wrap-up & Adjourn:

Anthony Starr thanked City Council for the opportunity to preside over the meeting.

Mayor Gibbons thanked Anthony Starr for the great partnership between the City and the Western Piedmont Council of Governments. In addition, Mayor Gibbons thanked City Manager Hildebran for his great leadership, Department Directors and Staff for all their hard work.

Mayor Gibbons stated the City of Lenoir is fortunate to have Scott Hildebran as City Manager.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m.



CITY MANAGER
SCOTT E. HILDEBRAN

CITY OF LENOIR
NORTH CAROLINA

MAYOR
JOSEPH L. GIBBONS

CITY COUNCIL
J. T. BEAL
R.C. DELLINGER
J. I. PERKINS
R. S. PRESTWOOD
K. R. ROGERS
D. F. STEVENS
C. D. THOMAS

Black History Month Proclamation

WHEREAS, since 1976, every United States president has officially designated the month of February as national Black History Month to honor and affirm the importance of Black history throughout our American experience; and

WHEREAS, the United States joins other countries around the world in devoting a month to recognize Black history, including Canada and the United Kingdom; and

WHEREAS, the observance of Black History Month began in 1926, when Harvard-trained historian Carter G. Woodson and Minister Jesse Moorland sponsored the first national Negro History Week, which was celebrated the second week in February, and later in the 1960s as part of the Civil Rights Movement the observance evolved into Black History Month; and

WHEREAS, the 2026 Black History Month theme, "A Century of Black History Commemorations" marks the 100th anniversary of the first Black History Week founded by Dr. Carter G. Woodson in 1926, encouraging reflection on a century of honoring Black History; and

WHEREAS, much of the City of Lenoir's honor, strength, and success can be attributed to the diversity of cultures and traditions that are celebrated by the residents of this great City; and

WHEREAS, African-Americans have played significant roles and made lasting contributions to our City's history and the history of North Carolina's economic, cultural, spiritual and political development, while working tirelessly to contribute to every aspect of American society including business, education, politics, science, and the arts; and

WHEREAS, Black History Month is a time for all Americans to remember the contributions and legacy of those who helped build our nation, fought against prejudice to secure lives of dignity and opportunity for all of our citizens, advanced the cause of civil rights for all Americans, and strengthened our families and communities.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Joseph L. Gibbons, Mayor of the City of Lenoir and the City Council, do hereby encourage all residents to join me in honoring the many contributions made by African-Americans to our City, State, and Nation, and to participate in the many educational and inspirational events celebrating February 2026 as "BLACK HISTORY MONTH."

IN WITNESS THEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the City of Lenoir to be affixed, this the 6th day of February in the year of our Lord two thousand and twenty-six.

SEAL

Joseph L. Gibbons, Mayor



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CITY OF LENOIR MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the City of Lenoir is:

- to serve our citizens and the community by providing a clean, safe, healthy, and attractive living and business environment, through the efficient delivery of essential city services in a fiscally responsible and equitable manner.
- to identify, prioritize, plan, and act on opportunities for preserving and improving the quality of life of all of our citizens and community.

VISION FOR THE CITY OF LENOIR

We aspire to be the city of choice in western North Carolina for current and future generations - beautiful, clean, and safe.

We will achieve our vision through:

- *a healthy economy*
- *strong businesses*
- *vital neighborhoods*
- *a vibrant downtown*
- *extensive recreational and cultural opportunities*
- *outstanding City services*

We will preserve Lenoir's friendly, small town atmosphere and celebrate the diversity of our people.

We require a city government that is:

- *accessible and engaged with the public*
- *accountable*
- *efficient and responsive*
- *an employer of choice*
- *forward thinking*
- *honest and ethical*
- *inclusive and equitable*
- *innovative and collaborative*
- *transparent*
- *fiscally responsible*



2026 City Council Priorities

The City of Lenoir City Council developed the following priorities during its February 2026 Council Retreat.

- 1a** Continue efforts to offer competitive compensation and benefits for employees to improve recruitment and retention.
- 1b** Address corridor appearance and empty commercial buildings through continued code enforcement and beautification of public properties.
- 1c** Explore ways to close sidewalk gaps along US 321/Blowing Rock Boulevard by working with North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) & the Greater Hickory Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).
- 4** Continue to develop strategies to attract attainable and affordable housing by promoting the Caldwell County Housing Plan and Living Lenoir 2045 Comprehensive Plan.
- 5** Continue to inform the public about City programs, services, and events, and encourage participation in government.



Customer Service Team 2026 Report

For Service Beyond Measure in 2025 | By Joshua Harris, Jan. 27, 2026

The mission of the City of Lenoir Customer Service Team is to encourage and equip all city employees to work together to exceed the expectations of our residents, businesses, visitors, and each other, and to motivate our coworkers through support and recognition of a job well done.

The Customer Service Team continued their efforts in 2025 to provide resources to city staff so that we can all deliver “Service Beyond Measure” to the residents and businesses in Lenoir.



MEETINGS

- The Customer Service Team (CST) met monthly throughout the year to plan employee appreciation events, host new hire orientations, create current employee training materials, and to discuss and share citywide service stories.

TRAINING

- CST held nine new hire customer service orientations throughout the year. During each orientation, CST members give an overview of city departments and services, introduce the customer service keys, and set expectations for new employees.

RESOURCES

- In 2025, CST continued hosting a city tent at local festivals. The city tent serves as place where citizens can learn more information about the city, the services offered, job opportunities, activities available, and general information about the festivals.



EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION

- CST hosted our annual Employee Pizza Party at Mulberry Recreation Center in March. In August, we hosted the Fall Employee Appreciation Event at the Lenoir Splash Pad. Employees were invited enjoyed loads of fun, free food, and good company.
- CST also worked with HR to bring back Employee Service Awards. During the fall Employee Appreciation event, CST recognized staff and provided certificates of services and bonus checks to employees.
- For 2026, CST plans on hosting the Pizza Party in the spring and the Employee Appreciation event in August. Location to be determined.
- CST continued giving out employee birthday cards in 2025. Every month, employees with birthdays that month receive a personal birthday card from the city.

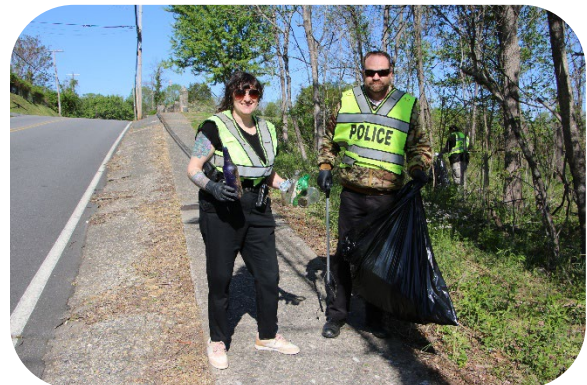


GOLDEN TICKETS

- In 2025, City employees gave out 15 Golden Ticket nominations to their coworkers, about half of the previous year. Golden Tickets are given to employees who go above and beyond to provide service beyond measure.
- A couple years ago, CST began announcing the annual and quarterly Golden Ticket winners at the City Council meetings. This is another way to recognize our employees that go above and beyond their duties!

COMMUNITY EVENTS

- CST organized two Employee Litter Sweeps in 2025. In the spring, City staff collected about 40 bags of litter, and in the fall, we picked up 35 bags. Staff from every department participated.



GOALS FOR 2026

- Continue current employee appreciation programs.
- Explore options for community outreach events.

Comprehensive Customer Service Training Program

One big goal for 2026 is to reinvigorate Customer Service Training for all City employees. The original CST training was started under former City Manager Lane Bailey. For many years after that initial training, City staff and the Customer Service Team kept up a sustained effort to promote customer service training with the organization. Around 2020, our consultant began a phased retirement and concluded his work with the City. Since then, the team has done a great job at managing outreach such as employee appreciation and golden tickets, but we have a lot of new staff who have never went through the original, comprehensive customer service team training.

This year, we think it would be good for our employees to work with an outside consultant once again go through an extensive customer service training program. This training would be mandatory for all staff, including directors, and would include a thorough review of our Customer Service Keys and positive customer service methods. We think this would be a worthwhile way to reenergize the customer service mentality among employees and ensure that the City of Lenoir continues to provide Service Beyond Measure.

CUSTOMER SERVICE TEAM

- **Crystal McCurry**, Police, Co-Chair
- **Joshua Harris**, Administration, Co-Chair
- **Ashley Smith**, Downtown
- **Ty Sturgis**, Fire
- **Autumn Vogler**, Parks & Recreation
- **Juliana Tripician**, Parks & Recreation
- **Garrett Williams**, Public Works
- **Jeff Church**, Public Utilities
- **Scott Lingle**, Public Utilities
- **Jon Hogan**, Public Works



CUSTOMER SERVICE KEYS

- Key 1 - Personable
- Key 2 - Pro-Active
- Key 3 - Effective Communication
- Key 4 - Professionalism
- Key 5 - Timely and Efficient
- Key 6 - Teamwork
- Key 7 - Equitable Service
- Key 8 - Successful Service Recovery



Lenoir's Customer Service Keys

Key #1 Personable

- Be approachable and make a positive first impression
- Demonstrate caring and patience
- Be friendly and outgoing
- Provide polite and helpful service

Key #2 Pro-Active

- Anticipate customer needs
- Make customers feel important
- Go above and beyond – exceed expectations

Key #3 Effective Communication

- Demonstrate positive body language
- Be a good listener
- Keep people updated and informed

Key #4 Professionalism

- Know your job
- Create and maintain a customer friendly atmosphere
- Pay attention to detail
- Be knowledgeable about city services
- Take time and show interest in our customers
- Treat others as you would like to be treated

Key #5 Timely and Efficient

- Be consistent
- Fulfill commitments in a timely manner
- Respond to phone calls and emails promptly

Key #6 Teamwork

- Develop and know your community partnerships
- Provide seamless service between departments
- Deliver good value

Key #7 Equitable Service

- Treat everyone with respect
- Apply policy evenly and fairly
- Be sensitive to the situation

Key #8 Successful Service Recovery

- Listen effectively
- Show empathy and concern
- Take responsibility
- Try to resolve customer concerns
- Follow up promptly



COMMUNICATION & PUBLIC INFORMATION ANNUAL REPORT

Joshua Harris, Communication & Public Information Director, Jan. 15, 2026



Accomplishments in 2025

CONTENT

- **66** news releases
- **5,119** photos
- **27** videos
- **1,010** website updates
- **0** radio interviews/PSAs
- **295** alerts
- **301** questions & answers
- **1,217** form requests
- **12** messages on the electronic sign at the LFD Station 1
- **19** items for Mayor and Council (*resolutions, speeches, etc.*)
- **53** items for Committees (*Customer Service Team & Safety Committee*)

NEWS RELEASES

In 2025, **41,000 active users** viewed City news releases more than **62,800 times**, which is 5.9% of total website traffic for 2025.

The **Top 10** releases from 2025 are:

1. City of Lenoir opens new splash pad, June 14, 2025
2. City building splash pad at Lenoir Rotary Soccer Complex, June 28, 2024
3. Fire Chief promotes three up the ranks, Feb. 7, 2025
4. Caldwell County and City of Lenoir approve economic development incentive for Google, Oct. 23, 2024
5. Andy Wilson to be promoted to Chief of the Lenoir Police Department, June 12, 2025
6. Christmas and holiday events in Lenoir, Nov. 18, 2025
7. Celebrate Independence Day in Lenoir, July 2, 2025
8. Mulberry Recreation Center playground temporarily closed, June 9, 2025
9. City of Lenoir wins drinking water award, Dec. 31, 2024
10. City Council welcomes new canines to the Police Department, March 20, 2025

PHOTOS

Staff created **5,119 photos** while creating new releases, covering city events, attending Council meetings, and more. We used those photos in more than 60 news releases and more than **1,736 social media posts!**



New gym floor at Mulberry Rec



New trees in Downtown Lenoir



Lenoir Police new K9s



New pickleball courts at Mulberry



David R. Horn Education Pavilion



Lenoir Bicycle Festival



Tennis court resurfacing at MLK J. Center



Lenoir Splash Pad Ribbon Cutting



A Tomato Blast at Unity Park & Community Gardens



MLK Jr. Center Renovation



Christmas decorations in Downtown Lenoir

VIDEOS

Staff created **27 videos** in 2025, the majority being Council meetings and events.

All City videos received **101,805 views** with **1,212 hours** of watch time on Facebook and YouTube during the past year.

Staff **live streamed** almost all Council meeting videos. The public was able to watch Council meetings in real time, and the meetings were available online immediately following the stream.



WEBSITE

Staff made **1,010 updates** to www.cityoflenoir.com in 2025. Updates ranged from updating pages, adding documents, adding news releases and calendar events, updating staff, and posting alerts.

The website received more than **546,000 views** from nearly **227,000 unique users**, according to Google Analytics. Most users, 61.5% access the City website from a desktop computer, while 37.6 use a mobile device.

TOP PAGES for 2025 excluding the home page were:

#	Page	Views	Users
1	Payment Options	56,032	19,692
2	Jobs	28,616	18,575
3	Water & Sewer Service	19,782	9,511
4	Lenoir Aquatic & Fitness Center	15,478	8,150
5	Property Taxes	12,990	6,301
6	Calendar	11,810	6,568
7	Search	10,434	4,586
8	Jobs • Concession Attendants, Scorekeepers, Umpires/Referees	8,579	8,593
9	Police	8,519	8,593
10	Jobs • Telecommunications Officer I (Part-time) *	7,910	7,718

ALERTS, QUESTIONS & REQUESTS

In addition to providing content to the public such as news releases, department information, and event updates, the City website can send alerts to the public, and, the public can use the website to ask questions and make requests.

ALERTS

Staff sent out **295 alerts** in 2025 via the website and CivicReady covering topics from meeting notices, agenda packet updates, news releases, job openings, events, and service messages such as road closings and trash collection delays.

QUESTIONS & REQUESTS

The public used the Contact Us form to submit **301 questions** and **1,217 request forms** last year.

	2025	2024	2023	2022
<i>Alerts</i>	295	302	475	360
<i>Questions</i>	301	424	377	332
<i>Forms</i>	1,217	1,142	1,324	1,230

Current forms on the website are:

- ADA Title II Grievance Form
- Additional Garbage Cart Request
- Bulk Collection Request
- Contact Us
- Garbage Cart Issues
- Garbage Collection Request
- LCRR Customer Self-Assessment
- Nuisance Issue Form
- Public Records Request
- Report a Concern
- Utility Bill Payment Plan Application
- White Goods Collection Request

MEDIA COVERAGE

In 2025, City news releases appeared nearly **92 times** in newspapers and more than 170 links on various websites that staff track and follow.



SOCIAL MEDIA & ENGAGEMENT

PAGES

We have 10 primary social media accounts for the City of Lenoir and various departments. The City, Downtown, Fire, Parks & Recreation, and Police have Facebook pages. The City and Downtown have accounts on Instagram. We also have City of Lenoir accounts on X, Nextdoor, LinkedIn, and YouTube.

 City of Lenoir, NC Government

 Downtown Lenoir

 City of Lenoir Fire Department

 Lenoir Parks & Recreation

 Lenoir Police Department

 City of Lenoir, NC

 cityoflenoirnc

 downtownlenoir

 City of Lenoir, NC Government

 City of Lenoir

 City of Lenoir

POSTS

In 2025, City staff made **1,736 social media posts** across our social media channels.

FOLLOWERS

City followers increased from 57,869 at the start of the year to **63,393** at the end of 2025. That's nearly **5,524 new followers**, which is a **9.5% increase**.

For reference, in December 2017, City accounts had 12,906 followers.

We've seen **a 391% increase in followers in the last 9 years**.

Goals for 2026

- Launch Leadership Lenoir Citizens Learning Academy
- Restart staff Communications & Marketing Team with members from various departments
- Work with Public Works to renovate Veterans Plaza in Downtown
- Work with Fire Chief to incorporate an Emergency Communication Plan into our updated Emergency Response and Mitigation Plan
- Continue growth of followers on social media



CITY OF LENOIR FINANCE DEPARTMENT

801 West Avenue
Lenoir, NC 28645

Donna Bean
Finance Director
828-757-2180

Below is a list of goals and objectives the Finance Department was able to accomplish in 2025:

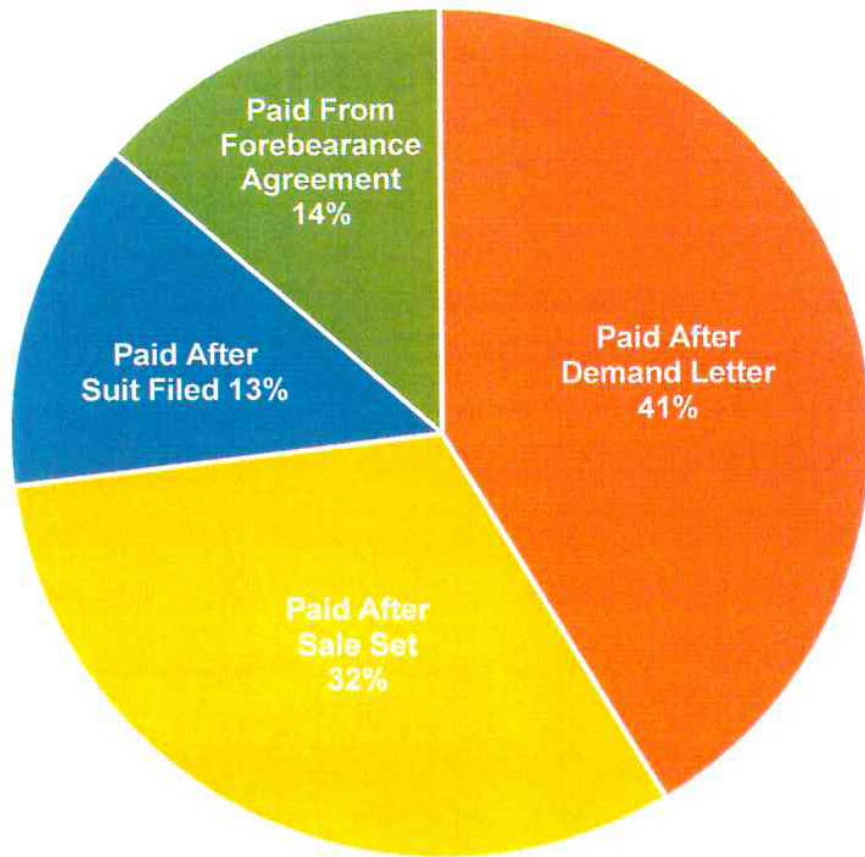
- During 2025, the Collections Department processed over 104,990 transactions totaling over \$26,990,200. The number of transactions was down 4% compared to the prior year and the amount collected was down 2%. Again, the largest percentage of the transactions was water and tax payments. The majority of the transactions were in the form of checks at 89% with cash making up 3% and credit cards being 8%.
- The Finance Department, including Human Resources, continued organizing training for departmental staff to insure all staff had the necessary information to be successful. Topics covered included managing across generations, communications and other areas of importance to those in leadership roles. With the input of the staff, training for 2026 is being developed to cover various leadership areas where staff identified the need for additional training.
- The City of Lenoir was awarded the GFOA Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the 34th year.
- During the past year, our long-time auditor, Eric Bowman retired which was a transition for the Finance Department as Eric had been the auditor for 25+ years.

Billing and Collections

- The Revenue Collector continued working with Metersys, Watersmart and Mueller vendors to improve the meter reading billing process. The Revenue Collector has worked with water staff verifying meter reads to ensure bills continue to be accurate and on schedule. As mentioned in previous years, the Watersmart system provides those customers who utilize it, a robust platform for bill management. At the end of 2025, approximately 10.8% of customers have created accounts in the new system, this is up 1% over last year.
- The City uses the NC Local Government Debt-Set Off Clearing House to assist with the recovery of delinquent debts by offsetting debtors' North Carolina state tax refunds and Education lottery winnings. As long as the debt is \$50 or more and has been delinquent 60 days the process can begin. There is no cost to participate with the NC Debt Setoff Clearinghouse. During 2025, \$26,941.82 was collected compared to 2024 where \$27,113.57 was collected. In total, since 2002, a total of \$737,084.20 has been recovered.
- Strategic Foreclosures have become an important tool for tax collections and code enforcement. Over the past year, 38 new cases were filed and \$54,721.70 was collected due to foreclosure proceedings. A total of \$408,895.63, has been collected since 2017 with 13% of that amount being collected during the current year. During that same time period, 170 cases have been referred and 126 cases were resolved. Of the 126 cases, 46 parcels were set for sale. Of the sales, 31 were sold to 3rd party purchasers and 15 were deeded to the City. These foreclosures have assisted in several nuisance properties being clean up. The chart below provides you with information regarding when, during the foreclosure process, parcels owners paid their taxes.

City of Lenoir Statistics

The Kania Law Firm, P.A.



Analytics for Finance

Activity	2025	2024	Change
Amount of vendor checks written	\$ 32,032,122.00	\$ 29,566,000.00	\$ 2,466,122.00
Vendor checks written	6,053	6,103	(50)
Utility bills generated	117,293	122,856	(5,563)
Amount billed for utilities	\$ 11,030,834.00	\$ 10,264,400.00	\$ 766,434.00
Property taxes levies	\$ 16,030,145.00	\$ 16,687,750.00	\$ (657,605.00)
Payroll checks/deposits processed	8,360	8,222	138
Amount paid in payroll	\$ 14,566,717.00	\$ 13,974,974.00	\$ 591,743.00
W-2 Wage Statements	394	397	(3)
Job applications	275	282	(7)
New water accounts	68	50	18
Worker Compensation claims filed	6	19	(13)
Property and Liability claims filed	20	35	(15)
POs generated	261	276	(15)
IT work orders completed	1,925	1,754	171
Total phone calls to IT support staff extensions	4,000	3,364	636
Email accounts created or deleted	88	71	17
Security cameras maintained	247	198	49
Door access systems maintained	64	40	24
Unifi Servers maintained for cameras and door access devices.	48	32	16
VOIP phones maintained	212	185	27
Desktops/laptops maintained	310	287	23

Human Resources and Payroll

- Staff from Human Resources and Payroll attended several trainings over the past year to prepare for the new overtime rules for the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA).
- Staff began testing a new employee self-services platform and will begin rolling it out to employees by March of 2026.

Risk Management

- During 2025, the Risk Manager took on the Interim role of the Capital Project Manager and has done well in this role. His expertise from his time in the construction industry as well as his time at the City, has made his very effective in this role. During this transition period, the Safety Coordinator has taken on some of the roles of the Risk Manager such as purchase orders and some insurance claims.
- The Risk Manager and the Safety Coordinator assisted with an underground gutter drain piping upgrade and install at the Mulberry Rec Center along with Public Utilities, Building Maintenance and the Streets Department. This was truly a Team Lenoir project. Their ability to self-perform this saved the City thousands of dollars.



- Again, Team Lenoir was able to save funds by working together on a playground improvement project. The Risk Manager, Safety Coordinator, Building Maintenance, Parks and Public Properties and Parks and Recreation pulled together to make this project happen. The team took down the old equipment, installed the new playground set and removed and replaced the mulch at the Mulberry Recreation Center and West End Park.

New Playground at Mulberry Recreation Center



New playground at West End Park



- The Risk Manager and the Safety Coordinator continued to spearhead a targeted focus on safety training and awareness. The Safety Committee completed the audit of all City owned facilities this year under the direction of the Risk Manager and Safety Coordinator. The committee identify safety concerns and has been able to correct several safety issues as well as continuing to work on preparedness plans. Risk Management and the Police Department worked together to get a NCLM safety grant to partially fund the purchase of 60 water filled barricades to provide additional vehicle traffic control and create a safer and more secure event spaces when streets are closed for downtown events. These barricades were used for the first time at the parade in 2025.
- The Risk Manager and Safety Coordinator administered OSHA training via NEOGOV to provide staff with online learning for safety topics as well as FEMA/NIMS training.

Information Technology (IT)

- During the 2025, the Information Technology Department continued to expand, upgrade, and maintain critical network, security, and access control infrastructure across multiple City properties. These efforts supported public safety, operational efficiency, and long-term technology planning.
- IT completed multiple team projects in 2025 which required all IT staff to work diligently to complete various projects such as:

- Multiple network upgrades
- Upgraded desktops/laptops to Windows 11 Operating System since Windows 10 End of Life was October of 2025
- Began transitioning email addresses from ci.lenoir.nc.us to lenoirnc.gov
- Completed Electronic Door Access installations at Lenoir Police Department, JE Broyhill Park, and Broyhill Walking Park
- Designed, constructed, and installed LaserCube chassis for Downtown Stage for Christmas
- Multiple agencies have had major changes in their IT methodologies including Caldwell County and the State Bureau of Investigation (SBI) which involved the entire IT team to transition DCI/SBI from Cisco AnyConnect to Palo Alto Networks GlobalProtect
- As covered in the Police Department's section, Colton Rich, IT staff member, was a former LPD officer which provided a unique opportunity for IT to partner with the Police Department to improve their cybercrime capabilities.
- Several infrastructure upgrades are underway in various phases at year-end:
 - Electronic Door Access installations for all the Fire Department locations
 - SCADA and Camera network overhaul at George Bernhardt Water Treatment Plant, Gunpowder and Lower Creek Wastewater Treatment Plants
- The need to evaluate IT security is constant and the IT Manager continually looks for new ways to improve our systems as 2025 continued the trend of cyber threats for all municipal governments. Fortunately, due to measures already in place, the City was able to remain secure. Daily, the City gets an average of 25+ serious virus threats and an average of 1,000+ phishing attempts. To combat external security threats, IT staff continues to enable multi-factor authentication on critical accounts.

The following IT projects were completed or in progress during the year

Equipment Installed				
Location	Cameras	Door Access	Upgrades	Solar Power
Complete				
Rotary Soccer Complex - Splash Pad	12	2		
Broyhill Walking Park	5			
Lenoir Fire Department - Station 1	3			
Greenway Tunnel	2		1	
Hibriten Mt. Radio Room	1		1	1
Lenoir Police Department		3+		
Downtown Lenoir Free WIFI and Cameras	6		14	
In Progress				
Gunpowder WWTP	1+	1		
Lower Creed WWTP	1+			
Lenoir Fire Department All Stations		3+		
Lenoir Police Department		1+		
Martin Luther King Center	1+			
Lenoir Aquatic and Fitness Center			1+	

- Upon reflection after Hurricane Helene, there were opportunities identified to mitigate IT issues in the event of another disaster. The mitigation action taken in 2025 was to prepare an emergency phone system to allow for City departments to communications during a major phone or power outage. This emergency communications system is easy to deploy in an event where all communications networks go down. This system will allow for the City to be able to communicate internally using Grandstream WIFI phones and other phones that can be set-up in each conference room at each emergency essential city facility. The goal is to avoid outages in communications during a small-scale or large-scale emergency response incident.

Future

- Below is a list of projects, concerns, and impacts the Finance Department plans to focus on in the calendar year:
 - IT plans to continue evaluating the City's hardware and infrastructure needs and continue to look for ways to improve the data infrastructure and identify ways to be as cost efficient as possible. Off-site storage remains a high priority as well.
 - IT will continue to do some simulated disaster recoveries to provide proof that multiple backups of city data can be recovered in a worst-case scenario. The focus is continuing to take a proactive rather than a reactive approach to cyber security and threats.
 - Council and the City Manager have ranked salaries as a priority for several years and again, compensation remains a priority. The COLAs and new pay plan the past few years have made some progress toward closing the pay gap however; there is still work to be done. Feedback from department heads continues to indicate that employees feel positive about the recent attention this item has received from Mr. Hildebran and City Council. Specifically, the bonuses given over the past ten years and the COLA percentages appear to have improved morale. The graduated holiday bonus given the past two years recognized longevity which was received positively. Paying competitive salaries is critical to recruiting and retaining quality employees. New hires seem to be more concerned with immediate return rather than the value of benefits. This is especially true for the millennial generation. City staff is continuing to review the City's current pay plan and hiring practices, with the goal to become more competitive while staying within the framework of the current pay plan.
 - Staff will work to maintain information regarding the 50+ projects identified that the City is working on currently. This number has more than doubled in the few past years.
 - Since the production of pennies ended in 2025, the City will have to determine how to handle the penny shortage.
 - With the growth of AI, it is going to be necessary for the City to determine what uses will be utilized for AI and develop a policy for its use.

City of Lenoir
**Financial Highlights
Year Ended June 30, 2025**

	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>Increase (Decrease)</u>
<u>General Fund</u>			
Cash and investments (including restricted cash)	23,062,366	19,626,284	\$ 3,436,082
Total assets	25,560,225	22,189,455	3,370,770
Fund balance	24,260,505	21,356,498	2,904,007
Total revenues	25,657,698	24,821,646	836,052
Total expenditures	23,342,352	22,514,994	827,358
Other financing sources (uses)	1,083,857		1,083,857
Change in fund balance	3,399,204	2,144,652	1,254,552
Percent of taxes collected	97.1%	97.4%	
Unassigned fund balance as a % of general fund expenditures	93.0%	83.7%	
Total Expenditures by Department:			
General Fund:			
General government	3,704,909	3,712,692	(7,783)
Public safety	12,946,878	12,040,725	906,153
Transportation	2,006,059	2,496,750	(490,691)
Environmental protection	1,101,785	1,305,564	(203,779)
Economic and physical development	768,236	814,866	(46,630)
Cultural and recreation	2,684,800	2,014,713	670,087
Debt service	129,684	129,684	-
<u>Special Revenue Funds</u>			
Cash and investments (including restricted cash)	221,003	2,628,627	(2,407,624)
Total assets	249,835	2,628,627	(2,378,792)
Fund balance	141,900	535,935	(394,035)
Total revenues	4,213,594	3,638,349	575,245
Total expenditures	4,607,629	3,731,411	876,218
Change in fund balance	(394,036)	(93,062)	(300,974)
<u>Enterprise Fund - Water and Sewer</u>			
Cash and investments (including restricted cash)	14,903,501	14,106,587	796,914
Total assets	92,268,872	85,544,720	6,724,152
Net position	62,088,666	61,587,053	501,613
Total revenues	11,446,400	10,879,292	567,108
Total expenditures	10,767,070	10,114,737	652,333
Nonoperating revenues (expenditures)	421,032	198,569	222,463
Change in net position	1,749,792	1,152,244	597,548



Lenoir Fire Department

602 Harper Avenue, N.W.
Lenoir, North Carolina 28645



It is my privilege to submit to you a report reflecting on 2025 and a vision for the future for Lenoir Fire Department. 2025 was another year of change for the department with the retirement of several senior officers. In 2025, Deputy Chief Nelson, Captain White, Captain Dillard and Captain Clark each retired from Lenoir Fire Department. Battalion Chief Bradshaw has announced his retirement for February 1, 2026. Together they had nearly 150 years of combined service to the City of Lenoir. Though I'm excited for them for being able to retire, their knowledge and experience is extremely hard to replace.

Calls for service in 2025 were down from 2024. Calls for 2024 were inflated partly because of Hurricane Helene and the extremely high call volume related to the storm. In 2025, Lenoir Fire Department responded to 3,251 calls for service. This included fifty-three (53) incidents with property loss. The estimated value of property and contents pre-fire was \$43,213,800. The estimated value of fire loss of this property and content is \$2,180,100 which resulted in an estimated potential property and content value saving of \$41,033,700.

All staff are continuing to be encouraged to evaluate ways we may improve our departmental operations that would promote a better service for our citizens. Some of these are reflected in this report below and this evaluation will continue as we move into the future. In addition, several internal committees are being formed in 2026 to help guide our department and its operations into the future.

The following few pages will outline some of the many accomplishments for the department.

Grants / External Funding

In August the department received notification of being awarded a Disaster Relief Grant in the amount of \$50,000. The grant allowed the department to purchase a Polaris Ranger UTV, Enforcer 30 foam suppression system and 25 gallons of Class A/B foam to enhance our wildland firefighting capabilities. The Enforcer 30 produces approximately 600 gallons of finished foam product with 30 gallons of water and 60 ounces of A/B foam concentrate. In addition, the UTV will be able to be used at Downtown events to increase our fire suppression capabilities when streets are closed to vehicles. The total project cost was \$50,206.15 which resulted in a cost of only \$206.15 to the citizens of Lenoir.



Equipment Replacement / Upgrades

VIPER Radio Update and Replacement

Prior to July 1, 2025, all VIPER radios were required to be P25 Phase II compliant. This project was included on the 2024/25 CIP and was completed in May 2025. As part of this project 31 of our current VIPER radios had to be updated and reprogrammed. In addition, 12 new VIPER radios had to be purchased as part of the upgrade. The total cost of this project was \$61,266.86.

Protective Gear Replacement

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) recommends replacement of protective equipment at a minimum of every ten years, or when wear reduces its ability to properly protect our firefighters. To maintain compliance, in 2025 the fire department purchased 6 sets of turnout gear, 14 fire helmets and 20 pairs of firefighting boots. In addition, as part of the SCBA / Turnout Gear upgrades 5 SCBA with spare bottles and masks were purchased. Total cost of this project was \$76,435.70.

Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Replacement

After an evaluation of current Automated External Defibrillator (AED) it was determined that 3 AEDs needed to be replaced. The recommendation by the American Heart Association is to replace AEDs every 8 to 10 years. In addition, our AEDs are serviced and tested annually by Southeastern Biomedical Associates to help ensure their readiness. Total cost of this project was \$8,183.55.

Four Gas Detector Replacement

Four new 4 Ventis Pro5 Gas Detectors were purchased. These replaced aging detectors that were too costly to repair and maintain. In addition, this made all multi-gas detectors within the fire department the same to help simplify operations by staff. Total cost of this project was \$7,147.98.

Thermal Imaging Camera Replacement

Two new Seek Thermal Imaging Camera (TICs) were purchased to increase firefighter safety. These cameras replaced older model TICs that lacked new technology and were having operational issues. Total cost of this project was \$10,094.29.

Fireground Portable Scene Light Replacement

To increase firefighter safety on the fireground new scene lights were included in the 2024/25 CIP. This allowed 22 battery operated scene lights to be purchased and placed on each apparatus. These lights are quicker to deploy compared to older lights and are LED lights which are brighter and more energy efficient. Total cost of this project was \$12,560.91.

New Equipment for Ladder 1

As part of 2025/26 City of Lenoir budget, the replacement of Ladder 1 was approved contingent upon assistance with Blue Ridge Energy in obtaining funds through the government's Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant program (REDLG). In planning for this purchase equipment to be placed on the new Ladder 1 was purchased. This equipment included a Hurst StrongArm, Hurst Combi Tool, SuperVac PPV Fan and Stihl Rescue Saw, Chainsaw and Cut-off Saw. Total cost of this project was \$30,510.44.

UTV Replacement

As part of the 2024/25 CIP a new UTV was approved. The UTV arrived in December 2024, but the project was not completed until spring 2025. The Polaris Ranger had a custom box constructed by All Pro that could carry patients in a stokes basket if needed from locations such as the Greenway. In addition, an Enforcer 10 Suppression System was installed that produces up to 200 gallons of finished foam product with 10 gallons of water and a SCBA bottle. This foam system can be utilized in both the wildland setting and during downtown events when access by a larger fire apparatus would be delayed due to road closures. Total cost of this project was \$45,800.59.



Ranger 1 is on display at SAFRE in Raleigh.

Training is a daily occurrence in the fire service. This year the fire department was able to purchase a forcible entry door that allows firefighters to practice their skills in gaining entry into various style doors. Total cost of this project was \$9,110.00.



Staff training with new forcible entry door.

Station Upgrades

IT has been working on upgrades to all three stations. These upgrades are required to be able to install the previously purchased new door locks for each station that will increase departmental security. The new locks will increase areas of each station that is lockable to limit access to the public when bay doors are open. Once completed this project will require keycard access to the living quarters at each station and staff will be able to deactivate cards on a single computer.

A new HVAC unit was purchased for the administrative offices at Station 1. This new unit will be more efficient and reliable than current unit.

Equipment Maintenance

In late 2023 a decision was made to move maintenance and repairs to All Pro (A fire truck repair vendor that is currently conducting maintenance for over 100 departments in western North Carolina). From their initial service of apparatus our staff has worked with All Pro to address safety and mechanical issues that need to be completed. This process will take multiple years to complete with safety items being addressed first on each apparatus.

Each year annual tests are required to be completed on the pumps on each truck, aerial test on ladder trucks, fire hose, ground ladders, AEDs and SCBAs. In previous years tests for both ground ladders and fire hose have been conducted by staff. In 2025, the decision was made to have All Pro test all ground ladders. During this test, it was determined that several ladders needed to be replaced due to extensive wear.

Community Involvement

An increased focus on community involvement has been placed on staff. This year staff participated in multiple events with plans on expanding these opportunities in the future. Staff have already started discussions with facilities such as Koinonia Apartments and The Thrive to provide public education to those who may currently be missed. In December 2025 an interactive session was held at The Thrive to allow an opportunity for our senior citizens to learn about fire safety. In addition, a committee is being formed to evaluate and expand our current Community and Risk Reduction programs to include developing a Citizens' Fire Academy with a projected start of Fall 2026.

The department applied with the Office of State Fire Marshal and was approved to participate on June 7th in the North Carolina Smoke Detector Canvas as an extension of our current smoke detector program. This was the second year for Lenoir Fire Department participating in the program and staff were able to install all 36 smoke alarms in a single Saturday. The 2025 campaign limited each participating fire department to 36 smoke alarms.

In addition to the Smoke Detector Saturday canvas, 23 additional smoke detectors were installed within the City of Lenoir. These detectors were provided by the American Red Cross as part of a grant program.

We had seventeen staff members participate in the Spring and fourteen staff participate in the Fall City of Lenoir Litter Sweep.

Staff participated in multiple events within the City of Lenoir. These events include the Blackberry Festival, July 4th Fireworks, Light Up Lenoir, Luminaries, Lenoir Christmas Parade, Turkey Tuesday, Downtown Halloween Spooktackler and the MLK Center Trunk-or-Treat.

Staff assisted with traffic control during the funeral procession for Andy Day, retired Police Chief for the Town of Hudson.

Staff participated in several local summer camps. These included the Keith Owens Firefighter Academy at Gamewell Fire Department and the summer reading and enrichment program at New Covenant UMC.

Collaboration

The Fire Department continued to focus on working with other departments and agencies during the year. During the year, the Police Department and Fire Department had shifts join for breakfast on multiple occasions at Station 1. This gives them opportunities to fellowship and build relationships.



In 2025, Lenoir Fire Department began actively participating with the Safe Kids of Caldwell County. This group is comprised of multiple agencies within Caldwell County with a focus on keeping your kids safe. Additional opportunities to participate in community events will be explored in the future.



Supporting Hickory Fire Department

On June 5, 2025, Hickory Fire Department requested assistance from Lenoir Fire Department following the death of Firefighter Jake Bridges. Jake passed away on shift shortly after returning to the station from a structure fire.

The initial request was for an Engine Company for twenty-four hours. The request expanded to coverage by City of Lenoir Firefighters for multiple twenty-four-hour shifts. In addition, staff assisted Conover Fire Department with displaying the flag at the funeral home when Firefighter Bridges was returned from Baptist.

This tragic event shows the Brotherhood and Sisterhood of the fire service. Within minutes, our staff volunteered to cover twenty-four-hour shifts and drop whatever they may have had scheduled on one of their days off.

City Manager Warren Wood sent the following email to all City of Hickory Fire Department staff:

I spoke with Capt. Hubbard of the Lenoir Fire Department yesterday at Station 6. He told me that the firefighter brotherhood is like no other. He is right, it is legendary, and I saw it firsthand yesterday. Please take advantage of that to seek support from others and to provide it for those who need it. There is nothing I can say that will take the pain away of Jake's passing, but just know that we are also here to provide whatever support you need and we will do the same for Jake's family and loved ones.



Ladder 1 assisting Conover Fire Department with displaying the American Flag.



Lenoir Engine 2 at Hickory Fire Department Station 6.

Training

Training is a daily occurrence for staff at the Lenoir Fire Department. Depending upon the position of an employee at Lenoir Fire Department training requirements vary. During the year, staff documented 16,840 training hours. Topics include EMT in service, firefighter, rescue, fire cause determination, officer and hazardous materials.

In 2025, staff participated in training opportunities, such as:

- Two Chief Officers attended the South Atlantic Fire Rescue Expo in Raleigh.
- Three of our Certified Fire Investigators attended the NC / SC International Association of Arson Investigators Seminar and received 36 hours of training towards their recertification.
- Two firefighters attended a weekend High Angle Rescue class offered by the North Carolina Association of Rescue and EMS.
- Two firefighters attended the first offering of Fundamentals of Fire Investigations offered by the North Carolina Office of State Fire Marshal. In addition, two of our instructors assisted with the scenario burns for this training class.
- One firefighter attended the NC Fire Prevention School.
- Twelve staff members of various ranks completed the 48 hours Technical Rescuer – Trench Rescue certification course.
- Ten firefighters completed the 36-hour Fire and Life Safety Educator (FLSE) Level I certification. Four completed the 36-hour FLSE Level II certification and two completed the 36-hour FLSE Level III certification.
- Eight firefighters completed the 64-hour Driver Operator Aerials certification course.
- Two firefighters completed the weeklong North Carolina Safety and Survival School.

Station Response Districts

In October 2024 after months of evaluating calls within each district a modification was made in the districts of Station 1 and 3. These changes slightly affected the initial response areas of these two districts. Station 3 started being dispatched first to all calls for service on both sides of Blowing Rock Boulevard from Smith Crossroads to Nuway Circle. This includes areas on east side of Blowing Rock Boulevard that had been previously covered by Station 1. As part of this redistricting Green Mountain Park was reassigned to Station 3. These changes were made to eliminate some of the dangerous intersections and road congestion on initial responses from Station 1.

2025 was the first complete year of the new districts. Overall response times were not affected by the distribution of call volume resulted from the change. The chart below shows the comparison of calls originating within each district for 2024 and 2025.

Station	2024	2025
Station 1	2,005	1,801
Station 2	857	772
Station 3	587	679
Total	3,449	3,251



Staff on scene of a fire at JBS Meats.



Engine 1 on scene of machine fire at Harper Plant

Lenoir Fire Department 2026/27 and Beyond

Below is a list of items that will impact Lenoir Fire Department in the physical year 2026-27 and beyond. This list has items that were included last year with relevant updates, and items that have been identified to be added. The staff continue to design a more definitive replacement plan to help with future budget planning. Each of these projects are important to the safety and operations of the fire department, but staff understand the need for prioritizing the projects over multiple years due cost associated with several items:

Goals for 2026/27:

During January 2026 staff of Lenoir Fire Department are being tasked with pursuing several goals for the department. Some of these will take multiple years to fully achieve but will be part of the common mission of all staff within the Fire Department. To help ensure these are obtainable, committee / work groups are being implemented within each area to help guide the department into the future.

These goals are:

- **Strategic Plan:**
 - Complete strategic plan for department to allow input from LFD Staff, City Administration, Elected Officials and the Public to help guide the department into the future.
- **Community Risk Reduction:**
 - Expand public education programs to include facilities not currently served such as Koinonia that are considered “large-loss potential occupancies” by the North Carolina Rating and Response program.
 - Develop and offer a Citizen’s Fire Academy to be able to educate our citizens of department operations and services.
 - Increase completion rates of meaningful and complete prefire plans.
- **Training:**
 - Offer and participate in meaningful facilities training that is two-fold. (Increase firefighter knowledge / skills and obtain ISO credit.)
 - Continue to evaluate new training courses and offerings to enhance staff knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs).
 - Ensure 100% of personnel meet ISO training hour requirements.
- **ISO:**
 - Develop a long-term plan to not only ensure maintaining a Class 2, but determine lacked processes, resources, and/or facilities to obtain a Class 1.
- **Social Media:**
 - Increase presence on various social media sites with relevant and accurate information regarding departmental operations.
- **Recruitment / Retention:**
 - Evaluate and develop strategies to increase retention of current staff and ability to recruit new staff.

Station 1 Sinkhole Repairs

We continued to be concerned with the sinkhole at Station 1. In fall 2025 the sewer replacement portion of project was completed. Though plans for the stormwater replacement are nearing completion, the uncertainty around the entire project does cause concern of staff housed at Station 1. As with the sewer project, a concern for response to emergency calls without delay will be at the forefront of administration as the project gets started. Staff will be fluid in how to respond from Station 1 as they were with the sewer replacement and maintain constant communication

with onsite contractors regarding road closures. The administrative staff continues to update firefighters of the progress of the project and address any concerns with Public Works.

Current Departmental Apparatus Status

NFPA makes recommendations on apparatus replacement based on age of and mileage on apparatus. These recommendations are based upon not only the normal wear and tear on the apparatus, but the enhanced safety features that are installed on the new apparatus. Simple examples are technology in lights from halogen to LED, engine noise level of apparatus and seat belt warning systems. NFPA is only a recommendation but needs to be considered as part of our replacement plan. Our fleet continues to get older and with this we are witnessing increased maintenance costs and out-of-service times due to the number of repairs. The older fleet lacks newer safety appliances that are available on newer apparatus. We are starting to have issues with finding replacement parts on some of our older apparatus as vendors are no longer producing and stocking certain parts. An example is while trying to repair A/C units in some of the older apparatus it was found the needed parts for those units were no longer available, so workarounds had to be developed.

Apparatus maintenance is one of my primary concerns as Fire Chief. Knowing citizen and firefighter safety depends on the availability and dependability of our apparatus is concerning with some of the known issues. Repairs are having to be prioritized based on safety and operability.

Ladder 1 was out of service for 30 days for repairs. These repairs include replacing transmission, replacing turbo, replacing fuel tank, and replacing rear torque arms. Ladder 1 was approved to be replaced but still waiting for approval from external funding. *(Ladder 1 is scheduled for replacement in 2025/26 budget contingent upon receiving funding with REDLG.)*

Ladder 2 was out of service for 14 days for repairs. These repairs include replaced lift cylinders, replaced TCM, multiple air leaks, motor mounts and air conditioning.

Rescue 1 was out of service for 16 days for repairs. These repairs include rear brake replacement, steering knuckle replacement and belt tensioner replacement. In addition, the elevated light tower cannot be repaired due to the inability to find replacement parts.

Engine 1 went to All Pro January 7, 2026 with the intention of it being there for an extended period of time to complete needed repairs. These repairs include multiple electrical / wiring issues, multiple valves leaking, tank water gauge, speedometer and air conditioning unit.

Engine 3 was out of service for 18 days for repairs. These repairs include cab lift cylinder rebuilds, air conditioning and electrical issues which resulted in the truck not properly cranking. A complete rewiring on the starting system is pending once diagrams are received from Sutphen and apparatus availability allows the truck to be out of service for multiple days.

Tower 1 was out of service for 50 days for repairs to include T-handle shifter, hydraulic leak in the stabilizer system and oil cooler. Pending repairs on Tower 1 are bucket controls, which will be an extended repair. Parts for Tower 1 are having to be retrofitted by the manufacturer as the correct replacement parts are sometimes unavailable.

To reduce some of the wear and tear on the current fleet we have adjusted responses to fire alarms and CO alarms in single family residential structures to only 2 Engines and a single Ladder, unless upgraded by a Chief Officer based on information received during dispatch or information gained while enroute. Research is currently being conducted to reduce these numbers further to help longevity on larger apparatus. All current and potential changes will be consistent with NC Rating Requirements.

Short-term Apparatus Replacement Plan

A new Pierce Ascendant 107' Ladder truck was approved as part of the 2025-26 City of Lenoir Budget contingent upon assistance with Blue Ridge Energy in obtaining funds through the government's Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant program (REDLG). To date these funds have not been secured for the replacement of Ladder 1 and reduce dependency on Tower 1 for structures the 100' reach is needed.

Once the replacement of Ladder 1 is complete with the Pierce Ascendant 107' Ladder truck the dependency of Tower 1 will be decreased. The bucket on Tower 1 will still be necessary when completing certain fire scene tasks, but the new Ladder 1 will be able to absorb some of the daily demands on fire alarms to locations that Tower 1 current responds to such as UNC Health Caldwell, J.E. Brohyll Civic Center, Koinonia and Google.

The next need is replacing Engine 1, which is a 2000 model Sutphen. This needs to be done as soon as financially possible due to the rising occurrence of issues. Continuing prior administration's vision of purchasing another Pumper with Rescue style body would replace Engine 1 and help reduce the strain placed on Rescue 1. A truck with a similar design to the truck purchased in 2023 would allow for an increased capacity to carry equipment needed initial on most fire and rescue scenes. Consideration of upgrading to a 2,000 GPM pump in the new Engine 1 would be recommended due to buildings located within the primary district of Station 1 to help ensure capabilities to flow necessary water in the event of a fire.

As part of an apparatus replacement plan, new trends are being explored to help reduce overall long-term cost of for the citizens. Other departments ideas are being explored to see the benefits if they were incorporated at Lenoir. An example is the new QRVs being utilized by the City of Nashville, Tennessee. They are purchaseing a QRV slightly larger than the ones currently being used by the City of Lenoir. In addition to medical calls, Nashville is equipping their QRVs to respond to motor vehicle accidents and light rescue incidents.

Staff Recruitment, Retention and Experience

Nationally there is a trend in the decline of volunteer firefighters. The decline of these volunteers affects us in our recruitment of new paid firefighters. Generally, our new hires are from volunteer fire departments. In addition, due to this decrease in volunteers more of these volunteer departments are hiring full-time paid staff, which increases our competition in recruiting staff.

Staff experience and training are a concern based on recent and future retirements. In 2025, Deputy Chief Nelson, Captain White, Captain Dillard and Captain Clark retired. In addition, Battalion Chief Bradshaw has announced his retirement for February 1, 2026. An Assistant Chief and a Battalion Chief each have enough time to retire. In addition to the retirements Lenoir Fire had resignations for other fire department jobs (3), EMS jobs (1) and private sector job (1).

Together the 2025 retirements and resignations account for over 140 years of service to the City of Lenoir. That experience and knowledge with the City of Lenoir is impossible to replace. Promotions have been made for the three Captain, two Lieutenants and five Driver Operator positions, but a thorough evaluation of the needed skills and knowledge is being finalized for the position left vacant with Chief Nelson's retirement.

In addition to these retirements, Lenoir Fire saw several other firefighters resign for various reasons. With the number of new firefighters, greater emphasis has been placed on basic fire training. Crews have spent more time training on working as a team and the basics of firefighting. This will expand in 2026 as staff will start participating in quarterly off duty shift training at training facilities within the areas. There will be multiple benefits for this training. First, crews will gain confidence in each other's skills and allow them to work as a shift on various fire scene scenarios. Secondly, staff will learn new techniques from instructors from other departments. Thirdly, "Facilities" training will be recorded for each staff person which was one of the deficient areas in last ISO Insurance Inspection. ISO wants 18 hours per firefighter and there are 35 available points in which we received 3.15 points during our last inspection. The addition of these points could potentially add 3 points to our total score in our next insurance rating.

With the number of officer retirements from 2024 to 2026 the need for an Officer Candidate School was recognized. In 2026 this program will be developed and offered to both current and future officers at Lenoir Fire Department. This program will be developed based on the knowledge and skills needed for a new officer and processes as they relate to Lenoir Fire Department. This void is a fire service issue, but one we will locally focus to help us prepare our department for our next round of retirements.

As part of this process succession planning will have to be strategic. We must ensure that we can get employees the needed credentials and experience to be the next person to step up into a higher position. Increased opportunities for training must be explored, and some will require a creative approach to ensure staffing levels are maintained at the minimum level while allowing personnel to attend training. In addition to officer related training, advanced firefighter and rescue skills will need to be developed by less tenured staff as they advance into more senior level positions.

Employee recruitment and retention continue to be a major concern for our organization. The City of Lenoir has been able to make great progress in this area, but as other fire departments have vacancies, they are making similar adjustments to compensation, benefits and schedules. Also, other departments are adding additional positions, which increases opportunities for those seeking a job within the fire service. Turnover is a national issue within the fire service. Surrounding departments are now offering increased / alternative benefits such as different scheduling options to include less annual hours worked per year, contributing to 401k, longevity pay, paying for NC Firefighter and Rescue Squad Workers Pension Fund and / or paying for retiree insurance.

Future hiring practices at Lenoir Fire Department will most likely involve hiring recruits with no prior experience or certifications. After hiring the recruit, we would enroll them in both an EMT class and a Firefighter certification program and pay them while they complete their training. This will open avenues for new recruits that we currently do not take advantage of, but will be a culture change for our department.

Station Renovations and Updates

Station 1 and Station 2 are both needing renovations / updates. Since these stations opened (Station 1 in 1969 and Station 2 in 1974) only moderate renovations and upgrades have been completed. These renovations will not only improve the aesthetics of the facilities for staff, visitors and potential new hires, but include some enhancements to help reduce operational costs.

Renovations at Station 1 would include:

- Replace carpet with laminate flooring.
- Replace wood paneling with sheetrock.
- Redesign the top floor to include area for training room.
- Remodel and update kitchen.
- Remodel and update all restrooms / showers in station.
- Remodel and update dayroom.
- Replace external windows and doors for greater efficiency.
- Add proper insulation.
- Replace bay doors.
- Replace heaters in engine bay.
- Replace roof.
- Add secure access to fire poles.

Renovations at Station 2 would include:

- Replace carpet with laminate flooring.
- Remodel and update kitchen.
- Remodel and update all restrooms / showers in station.
- Paint all current sheetrock.
- Update training room with new technology.
- Replace external windows and doors for greater efficiency.
- Add proper insulation.
- Replace bay doors.
- Add secure access to fire poles.

Cancer Prevention

Firefighters face significantly higher cancer risks, with studies showing a 9% increased cancer diagnosis and 14% higher cancer death rate than the general population. This is primarily from inhaling carcinogens in smoke and soot, leading to higher rates of mesothelioma, testicular, prostate, kidney and skin cancers. Occupational cancer now accounts for about 70-75% of career line-of-duty deaths, surpassing heart disease.

Recently, both the State of North Carolina and United States Government have added additional focus on cancer-related line of duty deaths (LODD) to State and Federal LODD benefits for firefighters.

North Carolina's Firefighter Cancer Benefit Program provides lump-sum payments (\$37,000 per cancer, \$74,000 max) and monthly disability income (75% salary up to \$5,000 for employed firefighters and \$1,500 for volunteers) for diagnosed firefighters effective July 1, 2025, extending to retirees (10 years after retirement date) and covering various cancers. North Carolina firefighters LODD benefits of \$100,000 are also eligible for the following cancers that are

occupationally related to firefighting: mesothelioma, testicular cancer, intestinal cancer and esophageal cancer.

In December 2025, the Honoring Our Fallen Heroes Act was signed into law which expanded the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) program to include certain occupational cancers.

This increase in cancer awareness and prevention must be taken seriously locally by providing as much protection possible for our staff. In 2024, the first sets of turnout gear were purchased at Lenoir that have a cancer barrier (gear shield) inside to limit carcinogens from getting into the gear. There is a slight increase in the cost, but it provides additional protection for our firefighters. Also, this past year respirators were purchased to be utilized by all staff during fire investigations to limit the inhalation of dangers smoke and toxins.

Additional protection measures must be explored in the future to help ensure the safety of our firefighters. Examples of prevention measures are minimizing on-scene exposure (full PPE, SCBA always, immediate gross decon), post-incident hygiene (shower within the hour, clean gear, separate clean/dirty areas), station design, proper gear management (2 complete sets of gear to allow for cleaning) and lifestyle/health (healthy diet, exercise, sleep, regular screenings).

Several of these measures have already been started such as station exhaust systems, monitoring gas readings post-fire prior to allowing SCBA removal and mandatory daily exercise. However, this is an area that is at the forefront of many of our staff and a big concern.

NFIRS to NERIS

The National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) was established by the U.S. Fire Administration around 1975-1976 to collect national fire data. By January 31, 2026, all fire departments are required to transition to the National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS). Lenoir Fire Department made the switch to NERIS on January 1, 2026, to meet this deadline and to allow a yearend change to help with current and future reporting of local data.

NERIS does not require certain data which in turn has caused our selected software vendor (ESO) not to allow input of this data into searchable fields. Instead, data such as property value, property loss value or owner / occupant can only be entered into the narrative of a report which does not allow it to be queried for future reports. Based on the current version of ESO future reports would require each individual call report to be examined to generate data currently being reported.

These concerns have been expressed to both NERIS and our current software provider (ESO). To date ESO's advises the information is not required by NERIS which is why it is not a searchable field. Concern has been expressed to NERIS, though they may not want to information, to help encourage reporting software companies to include these searchable fields for later data to be used locally as they have been in the past. Staff have started to evaluate other reporting software programs to potentially replace ESO to ensure needed statistically data can be compiled.

The short-term concern is the potential of not being able to provide as much data as in recent years. Staff continue to encourage our vendor to add these data fields back into the system along with exploring other vendor products that can provide these data fields in their product.

NC Rating and Response (ISO)

In 2022 Lenoir Fire Department was able to obtain an ISO Class 2 Insurance Rating. Of the possible 105.5 points, Lenoir Fire received an 81.56. The range for Class 2 is 80.00 to 89.99, so the department must be vigilant to ensure we do not revert to a Class 3 and ideally, we would have

a long-term goal on achieving a Class 1. The rating looks at many aspects of a fire department and some such as communications are outside of our control. A review of the documentation from the last inspection outlines how points were distributed. Initially, we are focusing on the items we can control and ones with little to no cost in improving our score.

During the last rating LFD only received 5.73 of the 9 possible points for training. The primary deficiency was lack of training at a training facility. To receive complete credit each staff member must participate in 18 hours of facilities training annually. Beginning in February 2026, staff will start attending once quarterly off duty training at a training facility that meets the NCRRS requirements. With completion of this annual training by all staff and an increased focus on preplans along with a continued focus on current training, all 9 of these possible points are obtainable in future inspections. To help ensure current training meets ISO requirements 6 to 8 hours of online fire related training have been assigned to all staff members to complete while on duty each month. This online training program started in January 2026.

Current Public Works projects, such as the Finley Water Project, should help with some of the areas of water concern. In addition, Fire Department staff and Water Department staff are working on a plan to complete testing of hydrants in areas that have not recently been tested. (As part of the NCRRS process to receive full credit all hydrants must be inspected and flowed annually, and all hydrants must be tested every five years.) Items like testing of hydrants will take multiple years to see the benefit during an inspection.

In addition, conversations have been had with Caldwell County to explore implementation of Emergency Fire Dispatch (EFD) into fire dispatch to allow for increase credit on communications. Also, the proposed communication consolidation could potentially have an effect on this area.

Automatic Aid Agreements for Fire Protection is an additional opportunity to ensure not only appropriate response to fire scenes, but has ISO benefits. The City of Lenoir has multiple volunteer fire departments that borders our boundaries. An agreement with a selected few of these could benefit both the City of Lenoir and that volunteer department. In some instances, these volunteer departments can beat us to certain parts of the City. An agreement could allow for automatic aid of a single truck and crew to all structure fires in the agreed upon districts. Currently, we provide mutual aid that must be requested by these departments, but there is a greater benefit with ISO for an Automatic Aid Agreement. In addition, all other departments in Caldwell County currently provide automatic aid with neighboring departments. This may also be a recruitment tool for future full-time employees as working on a fire scene can help build relationships.



Review of LFD credit during most recent ISO Rating

Evaluated Area	Earned Credit	Credit Available
Emergency Communications		
414. Credit for Emergency Reporting	3.00	3
422. Credit for Telecommunicators	3.20	4
432. Credit for Dispatch Circuits	1.35	3
440. Credit for Emergency Communications	7.55	10
Fire Department		
513. Credit for Engine Companies	6.00	6
523. Credit for Reserve Pumpers	0.00	0.5
532. Credit for Pump Capacity	3.00	3
549. Credit for Ladder Service	4.00	4
553. Credit for Reserve Ladder and Service Trucks	0.41	0.5
561. Credit for Deployment Analysis	6.92	10
571. Credit for Company Personnel	10.11	15
581. Credit for Training	5.73	9
730. Credit for Operational Considerations	2.00	2
590. Credit for Fire Department	38.17	50
Water Supply		
616. Credit for Supply System	25.58	30
621. Credit for Hydrants	2.25	3
631. Credit for Inspection and Flow Testing	5.50	7
640. Credit for Water Supply	33.33	40
Divergence	-1.40	
1050. Community Risk Reduction	3.91	5.5
TOTAL CREDITS	81.56	105.5



Powell Road Live Burn

FIRST RESPONDER / MEDICAL CALLS

The first responder program that was developed in Caldwell County in the early 1980s was started to provide basic medical care by fire departments for instances of true medical emergencies. During this time several dispatch protocols have been in place and followed by local fire departments. The current Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) program that falls under the oversight of Caldwell County was adopted in or around 2005. Since that time the program has not been fully re-evaluated to determine if changes need to be made to the program.

Fire Departments are initially dispatched on calls based on answers given to questions asked by a dispatcher to determine the level of their medical emergency. Unless otherwise advised, when a fire department is dispatched, they respond emergency traffic (lights and sirens). In recent years the calls for service have increased and number of calls that are true emergency have become a lesser percentage of all medical calls. Calls that are now being dispatched as emergency calls are nose bleeds, urinary tract infections, vertigo, sick calls and patients just not feeling well. The concern of the EMD process has been brought to the attention of the Medical Director for Caldwell County due to the increased number of non-emergency type calls staff are being dispatched to respond.

A concern is responding emergency traffic to these calls when a true emergency does not exist. Staff and citizens are placed in danger anytime the fire department responds emergency traffic. In addition, while these calls are important, it does put the department at greater risk of not being able to respond to fire-related calls which is our primary function or being delayed in response due to crews from a different station having to respond.

Call Review in 5 Year Increments

Year	EMS Calls	Fire Related Calls	Total Calls for Service
2005	1,297	765	2,062
2010	1,593	1,027	2,620
2015	1,598	1,297	2,895
2019	1,911	1,204	3,115
2020	975	856	1,831
2025	2,218	1,033	3,251

***2019 was included due to 2020 COVID restrictions for medical calls.*

CLOSING

Thank you for allowing me an opportunity to showcase some of our many accomplishments in 2025 and express our focus on 2026 and beyond. The fire service is a very traditional profession, but staff are being challenged to find a balance between tradition and modernity to ensure we have success in the future.



Downtown Lenoir & Main Street Revitalization

Goals and Objectives

City of Lenoir Main Street Program

and Downtown Economic Development Department

2025

Presented by Brenda Floyd, Downtown Economic Development Main Street Director

In 2025, our focus as the Downtown Lenoir Main Street team was building on the strong partnerships that make our community thrive. Over the past year, our team of two has embraced collaboration, creativity, and connection as guiding principles for our work. Together, we've refined programs, deepened engagement with local businesses and residents, and advanced new initiatives that highlight Downtown Lenoir's unique character and economic potential.

The year ahead offers exciting opportunities to continue this progress. Guided by the City's shared vision for growth and vitality, that celebrates local heritage while encouraging innovation and investment. With the continued support of the City Manager, Council, and our fellow departments, we look forward to another year of partnership, progress, and purpose as we shape the next chapter of Downtown Lenoir's story.



Promotional Efforts and Recognition

- Continued strategic marketing raised awareness about downtown initiatives on local, state, and national level through marketing efforts and participating in award recognition programs.
- The 2025 NC Main Street Conference held in Mooresville, NC in March where four DLDA board members attended and featured in two sessions regarding best practices in promotion and outstanding volunteer programs.
- The Downtown Lenoir Awards were held in April 2025 at the Harper Room where Michelle and Cliff Mahaffey of Tybrisa Books were honored with the Gibbons Award and recognized for their contributions to downtown Lenoir. The Gibbons award recipients have a longstanding impact and are ambassadors for downtown.
- Two ribbon cuttings for new businesses in downtown were performed.
- The LBAB Grants Committee supported one BUILD Grant for \$5k on H. Lewis Price where an apartment renovation was completed.
- Three Downtown properties continue to be monitored by the Lenoir Main Street Program and the National Park Service until 2029 as part of the National Park Service agreement following their 2024 project completion.
- The 35-foot glowing numbers atop Hibriten Mountain were submitted to Main Street America by NC Main Street as an innovative way to commemorate America 250. The display was also shared at the Uplift Tourism Summit for ways that rural communities around NC are celebrating America 250.





Master Plan Implementation

- The Master Plan adopted in 2024 includes strategies as a framework and vision for the downtown and has proved to be a useful tool to communicate the municipality's program and commitment.
- The planning and design principles in the master plan are used as a framework for the annual Main Street workplan. The addition of wayfinding and gateway signage improves connectivity in downtown for pedestrians and motorists.
- The sidewalk study and ordinance adopted in 2025 is an opportunity for downtown businesses to self promote and added connectivity for pedestrians.
- The Harper Streetscape plan with Freese and Nichols completed to include recommendations from the master plan converting to a complete street. This detailed plan illustrates the multi-modal circulation, connectivity and parking framework for neighborhood gateway improvement to downtown. The enhancements in the streetscape plan include improvements that connect the West District for motorists and pedestrians.
- The Campus Project is moving with the selection of a CMAR and support from Mauer Architecture to begin phase 1 that includes the auditorium and gymnasium. Private support to supplement the public investment and awarded grants to move the project forward continue.
- Recommendations in the Master Plan proposed the addition of a pavilion in the West District that is currently under site revision to accommodate stormwater. The Overmountain Victory Trail Pavilion and OVT Support Building are part of the next phase. The planned location adjacent to the Overmountain Victory Trail is well-positioned to provide a site for a host of community gatherings and event types.
- The anticipated one-year construction time begins in February 2026 for the gymnasium and auditorium portions of the campus project.



Public Art: "Time Well Spent" Clock Tower Sculpture

The unique design created by the Executive Director, Joe Bigley of WNC Sculpture Center to blend the creative spirit of Downtown Lenoir and preserve the historic clock. The refurbished O.B. McClintock Co. historic clock has been part of the Downtown Lenoir landscape for more than 100 years. Civil engineering services completed by Mattern & Craig in 2025 were needed to secure a survey, civil site design and structural design to move the project forward.

The project is a public private partnership with half of the cost shared. The fabrication of the structure was completed by Cajahs Machine and Flexible Products in October and transported to WNC Sculpture Center in December where community made tiles will be welded to the structure. Next steps are site preparation with projected installation Q2 2026.

The 220+ tiles placed on the structure have been cataloged for identification to create an interactive attribute for residents and visitors.

Since 2021 the process of this public art project has been captured by a local videographer for a documentary. This LTDA supported project will be used for community education and promotion. The anticipation of the Time Well Spent clock tower in 2026 has spurred interest from NC Main Street for a design award.



Events and Festivals

The Downtown Lenoir Development Alliance nonprofit board serves in advisory capacity for Downtown Master Plan and Entrepreneur Eco-Systems project, participate in Main Street event promotion. In 2023, the DLDA took the production of the Blackberry Festival and the WOOD.FIRE.SMOKE. Artisan Festival. They executed loyalty and business passport programs for downtown businesses.

The passport program will continue in 2026 after more than 400 passports circulated downtown and patronized business for stamps to fill their passports in 2025. The month-long promotion increased February downtown foot traffic by 25% and more than 100 passports visited every stop downtown. The completed passports are entered a drawing for 5 baskets worth \$500 each.



The 24th NC Blackberry Festival in July was a tremendous success, drawing over 19,000 visitors over the course of two days. The Friday visitation was the most visited in 5 years with almost 9k visitors in Downtown Lenoir. Despite the cancellation for weather mid-afternoon Saturday, the overall economic impact of the festival was positive. Generating approximately \$1.7 million in local economic activity and producing \$40k+ in new sales tax revenue. City divisions worked together to plan for a smooth safe festival. The festival footprint required a few revisions for safety this year and an Incident Action Plan was created. Modifications were made for the Kids Zone location, food trucks throughout the footprint and handicapped parking lot locational proved to positive. Promotions for the festival included radio, tv, print, and social media. The 600+ vendor applications for the festival allow for a curated and diverse vendor pool for the festival.

The WOOD.FIRE.SMOKE. Artisan Festival, planned for October 2025 was paused this year and replaced with a holiday market. The financial health of the festival was the biggest consideration and with plans to re-vision and schedule in 2027.

The addition of a branded holiday season in 2025 was created to celebrate the downtown holiday décor and encourage repeat visitation during the holiday season. Repeat visitation to downtown businesses is vital to the health of our small businesses. Lenoir Lights the Way stretched November 21, 2025-January 4, 2026. The 6 week stretch with 10+ community events reflected a 15% uptick in visitation downtown from 2024. To kick off the season a Window Display Contest where residents and visitors could vote for their favorite window display in downtown added to the already festive atmosphere. Three downtown business winners were awarded prizes valuing \$1k+ for promotional use of their small business. The partnership with Caldwell County Schools to put on the Light up Lenoir event was well attended despite being postponed. More than 400 students participated in Light up Lenoir before Mayor Gibbons illuminated the large downtown tree with new topper and ornaments. The addition of a tree to commemorate America 250 stood on the corner of Main Street and West in front of the Veteran's Memorial. The partnership with Caldwell County Smart Start allowed the addition of Storytime with Mrs. Claus the night before the Merry Markey on Main. The Night of Lights Parade had almost 6k in attendance and continues to be a cherished holiday community event with 150 parade units participating. Three improved weekend evenings of Hometown Holiday Carriage Rides were contracted with a local carriage company and had more than 150 riders enjoy the ride through downtown.



In November 2025, a Merry Market on Main was unveiled in downtown on Main Street. This inaugural one-day festival brought 50+ craft vendors into downtown. Incorporated during the Lenoir Lights the Way holiday season, more than 4k visitors attended the vendor booths, holiday demonstrations and entertainment. The vendors at the market were from the region and limited food and beverage vendors were accepted to encourage downtown restaurants to be patronized by market visitors. City Departments support and community partnerships helped shoulder the responsibility of a new festival. The attendance and community support proved the addition to be a positive impact for downtown businesses.

The City of Lenoir vetted applications for over 35 community events in 2025. The continued use of the web-based application, Cognito, makes for seamless internal coordination, an improved user experience and allows document sharing and communication for events. In addition to event applications, Cognito was used for parade applications, downtown business surveys, social district renewals, volunteer sign-ups, canine academy applications and the Christmas window contest.



PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES & EVENTS	
2/1/25	Love Letters for Local
4/5/25-12/7/2025	Lenoir Cruise-Ins
4/11/25	National Pet Day
4/19/25	Bootlegger 100
4/19/25	Arbor Day
4/26/25	Lenoir Bike Festival
5/10/25	Bloom Blast
5/17/25	Downtown Lenoir Dog Day
6/21/25	National Yoga Day
6/27/25	Neon Night Ride
6/6/2025-8/15/25	Friday Night Live
6/19/25	Juneteenth
7/11/25	Blackberry Festival
7/19/25	Crack of Dawn Dash
8/16/25	Sundowner 4 miler
8/29/25	Carolina Tattoo Gathering
10/1/25	Police National Night Out
10/11/25	Fall Bloom Blast
10/31/25	Downtown Halloween Spooktacular
11/21/25	Storytime with Mrs.Claus
11/22/25	Merry Market on Main
12/4/25	Light Up Lenoir
12/5/25	Night of Lights Christmas Parade
12/18,19,20/25	Holiday Hometown Carriage Rides



Downtown Lenoir Event Safety and Improvement Program

- Quarterly events meetings include individualized safety discussion and improvement standards for downtown events.
- Security continues to be a high priority for downtown events through strategic planning with Law Enforcement, Fire Department, Public Utilities and Streets Division for the placement of 'bike gates', heavy equipment, county assets and personnel.
- Risk Management purchased water-filled barricades that can be used for downtown events.
- Collaborated with Lenoir Police Department, Fire Department, Public Works and IT to determine recommended emergency intercom use of Downtown Lenoir's audio system during events.
- Distributed Bicycle safety helmets to participants in need at the Bicycle Festival and Neon Night Ride with Parks and Recreation Department.
- Street lighting, video cameras, and internet hot spots for improved downtown safety.

Downtown Lenoir Social District

- The Downtown Lenoir Social District was adopted in 2023 and requires annual renewals and ongoing education for property and business owners. Maintenance of the Social District boundaries are maintained by the Streets Department. Renewals conducted in 2025 confirmed 6 ABC Licensed locations and 12 non-ABC locations in the Downtown Lenoir Social District. The new renewal process is a user-friendly web-based system for business owners. Each Social District ABC Licensed location in downtown provides their own branded stickers for social district cups so purchasers can freely explore downtown within the social district. For events with alcohol vendors, stickers are distributed for use during the festival. The stickers have information helpful to social district locations as well as law enforcement. Lenoir Police Department continues to schedule downtown shifts during social district hours and downtown events. The defined boundaries and operational guidelines adopted in 2023 are working well and community use continues to grow.



Residential Development and Education

- Two residences/apartments were added to H. Lewis Price in 2025 make 26 units in the municipal service district.
- Downtown property owners and potential downtown property owners are given literature for using Historic Tax Credits if they own or have interest in one of the contributing properties in the historic district. This encourages historic building renovations and residential living options downtown.
- Downtown Lenoir has the best scores for walkability and bike ability in the county. The 2025 Caldwell County Housing Plan shared results from the 2020 Census indicate that Caldwell County population densities are greatest near downtown Lenoir and between US 321 and US 321-A south of Lenoir. Downtown Lenoir is a model for mixed-use development with available parcels updated regularly on the Downtown Lenoir website.
- Inventory of the existing residences in downtown is necessary to re-launch Moving Lenoir to the Second Floor as recommended in the Downtown Lenoir Master Plan. Along with the support of the Planning Department, Fire Department and Economic Development, the inventory was created. Bringing back this initiative in 2026 and improving processes to include identification and retention for reporting will inspire property owners to pursue adding living spaces to vacant and unused second floors in downtown.

Recent Property Acquisitions

Private Property Acquisitions	Date	Formerly
216 Boundary Street: Zafar	11/13/2024	Doris & Dawn Medlin/Charlotte
214 Ridge Street Northwest: The Two Bears Family Trust	2/1/2025	Vanderbloemen & White



Recent Business Openings / Expansions

New Businesses	Date
El Dorado Restaurante y Pupuseria: 104 Main Street	7/2024
The Banquet Shop: 910 West Ave	5/2025
Cork and Barrel: 912 West Ave	5/2025
Sunshine and Chaos: 626 Harper Ave Suite 8	5/2025
CPA: 205 Ridge Street	4/2025
Unique Perfections: 626 Harper Ave	4/2025
Business Expansions	Positions Added
Caldwell Pregnancy Care Center: 210 Ridge Street	3 PT
Liquid Roots: 1048 Harper Ave.	1 PT
J.B. Plaster, Architect: 626 Harper Ave.	1 PT
Wolf Moon Salt Cave: 814 Harper Ave.	11 PT
Appalachian Pediatric Therapy: 214 Ridge St.	1 FT

Vehicular Sculptural Wayfinding and Gateways

In 2022 the plan for wayfinding and gateway signs was created. The wayfinding signs with artistic embellishments were partially installed before the first of the year. The City of Lenoir's Planning Department and Public Works Department finalized the 55 sign wayfinding project after a pause due to NCDOT. Now, pedestrians and motorists can guide themselves to amenities throughout the city. Many of these will guide motorists to downtown and twelve will be installed in downtown. This branded installation demonstrates the city's commitment to public investment, encourages community pride in Lenoir, and guides Highway 321 travelers to turn off and explore.

The 4 remaining gateways signs will round out and complete the 2022 plan. These 12' vertical structures have the same feel as the Smith Crossroads illuminated gateway sign and match the directional wayfinding signage. Locations for the gateway signs are

- Hickory Boulevard/US321 South
- Hickory Boulevard/US321 North
- Wilkesboro Boulevard/Highway 18 East
- Wilkesboro Boulevard/Highway 18 West.



City of Lenoir CIP 2025-2026 Reference:

The addition of holiday enhancements to the downtown area make it an inviting place during the season. The Public Utilities, Maintenance and Downtown Economic Development Departments together vetted custom designs from Carpenters Decorating Company, Inc. The custom additions included the Old Man Winter scene with wonderland trees displayed at the Thomas Sayre Sculpture area. Stage décor to include a backdrop for the laser show and trees created a finished look for downtown holiday events. The laser programming for the show was created by the IT Department and upfitted to dance with the holiday music already playing on the downtown speakers. The large tree used to 'Light up Lenoir' got a custom topper to compliment the existing downtown holiday décor and all new ornaments. A patriotic tree to commemorate America 250 was added to the corner of Main Street and West Avenue in front of the Veteran's Monument. Lastly, many of the twig trees around downtown were replaced.



Looking Ahead: 2026 Goals-Prioritizing new and existing initiatives and executing the Downtown Master Plan.

- Plan downtown programming with equitable accessibility and inclusive design and continue events that stimulate economic activity through engaging the community and visitors
- Partner with DLDA to produce the NC Blackberry Festival, Merry Market on Main and Public Art Projects
- Continue enhancing holiday decor with coordinating embellishments
- Support finalization and maintenance of citywide vehicular and pedestrian wayfinding systems
- Continuing partnerships for safety improvements and event planning with all City of Lenoir Departments
- Continue promoting America 250 federal, state and county initiatives and partnerships for 2026
- Collaborate celebration of celebrating 175 years for the City of Lenoir in 2026
- Facilitate entrepreneurial programs that support downtown businesses and encourage use of the Main Street America small business educational resources and Destination University through North Carolina Main Street
- Collaborate to advance The Campus at the Historic Lenoir High School project as potential event spaces to maximize the use of these city owned properties
- Work towards a facility assessment of the Harper Band Building
- Continue to work with Public Works Department & Parks & Recreation to brainstorm engaging programming for an outdoor farmer's market OVT Pavilion in Downtown
- Relaunch Moving Lenoir to the 2nd Floor, utilize Main Street Facade Program and enhance delivery of recommended processes to current and potential downtown property owners and help to facilitate rehabilitation
- Work collaboratively with the NC Sculpture Center, the Caldwell Arts Council, Public Works, and Administration Staff to complete the TIME WELL SPENT clock tower sculpture for the Downtown Historic Clock and promote and celebrate its completion through engaging community programming
- Monitor, document and report property updates to State Historic Preservation Office regarding the National Park Service/ National Main Street Facade Improvements Grant properties through 2029
- Continue promoting gratis design services to contributing property owners in MSD/Historic Register for facade and 2nd floor residential space designs focusing on historic preservation from Main Street Fellows at UNCG-G
- Collaborate with LTDA contracted marketing team for a unified message to visitors about happenings downtown to include social media, Main to Main Trail Program and printed promotions
- Contribute to Caldwell County Historic Trail efforts and identify historic locations for downtown promotions

The Economic Development Department remains steadfast in its mission to enrich Downtown Lenoir through innovative programs, strategic planning, and community collaboration. Thank you for your continued support, and here's to an exciting 2026 with even greater accomplishments ahead!



Recreation Administrative Offices (828)757-2165 - Fax (828)758-1315

Lenoir Aquatic & Fitness Center (828)757 2196

Mulberry Recreation Center (828)757-2165

Martin Luther King Center (828)757-2170



Below is a list of goals and objectives Lenoir Parks & Recreation Accomplished in 2025

- Retaining wall at the TH Broyhill Walking Park
- Draining system at Gymnasium relocated at Mulberry Recreation Center
- All lobby-activity room flooring installed at Martin Luther King Center
- All toilets at MLK Center replaced
- Outdoor basketball courts- remodeled with pressure washing – new paint- new benches for seating at Martin Luther King Center.
- All gutters replaced at Martin Luther King Center
- New Exercise equipment added at the Martin Luther King Center
- New HVAC System at Martin Luther King Center
- Both tennis courts at Martin Luther King Center renovated
- New tables and chairs and lettering of facility- ceiling fans added at the Martin Luther King Center
- Parking lot repaved at Martin Luther King Center
- All three parking lots repaved at Rotary Soccer Complex
- New picnic tables and water fountain added at the Splash Pad
- Parking lot at Unity Park repaved
- West End Park- Shelter updated
- West End Park- new playground equipment added to the park.
- New playground equipment and mulch added at Mulberry Recreation Center
- Update the Parks and Recreation master plan – through 2045
- The second phase of renovations has begun with the Aquatic Fitness Center- phase one is complete with the men's locker room- additional restroom in the rear of the facility, added staff breakroom, phase two is just under way.
- We have added adult fall softball this past year- it went really well, with eleven teams.

Updates:

Lenoir High School Property Enhancements:

Renovations on the LHS Auditorium project should be underway really soon. These upgrades are being done with CDBG Funds/ city funding/ other funding. Engineers and contractors have looked at the facilities and submitting quotes for the campus.

Phase one which will include the auditorium renovations as well as the gymnasium renovations should be soon. Phase two which will be the LEO building and the pavilion should be in the early spring of 2026.

Dog Park:

Staff has identified a location for a three track park within the city. Our special projects staff has worked on an all in quote for that project to include ADA assess ability, parking and restrooms. I am working with businessmen/women currently that will hopefully assist with some cost.

Below is a list of concerns and impacts Lenoir Parks & Recreation may incur in 2026:

- Interior of Mulberry Recreation Center, needs walls painted, ceilings painted and New light fixtures and new flooring.
- Exterior doors at Mulberry Recreation Center all needs to be replaced.
- Skate park at Mulberry Recreation Center needs painting.
- Replacing the indoor pool filtration system at Lenoir Aquatic & Fitness Center
- Digital Marquee needed out front at the Mulberry Recreation Center/Administration office to market all the parks and recreation programs along with city programming.
- Outdoor pool cover at the Aquatic Fitness Center
- Resurfacing the basketball court at West End Park.

Highlights for future projects:

- Interior/Exterior Renovations to the Optimist Park Clubhouse.
- Adding picnic tables to West End Park shelter.
- Renovations to MLK Center, Cut/Sand/Paint & Refinish gym floor.
- Adding a deck Tron system to LAFC indoor pool to help with moisture issues.

LAFC Improvements (PARTF Grant):

The Recreation Department was awarded the PARTF Grant on November 1, 2022 in the amount of \$500,000. The grant is a 50/50 matching grant. The total project will be a little over 1 million dollars. This project is nearing completion. The city has three years to complete this project. City staff had to request a six month extension that was awarded by RRS that runs through May 2026

West End Park Improvements:

Renovations to the West End Community Park would include updating shelter and basketball court. This would include adding 4 new picnic tables, two new trash cans, resurfacing the basketball court, replacing some fencing around the court, replace backboards, rims and nets. We may be able to renovate the park by using CDBG funds.

Old City Property – Stage/Prospect Streets (Old Tennis Court Area):

The city owns five or six parcels of land around these streets which at one time had tennis courts and playground equipment on some of the property. The property has not been used in quite a long time. There is no parking at these sites. My suggestion would be to sell the property or possibly work with Habitat for Humanity to see if there is interest.

2025 Facility usage for each facility

	Rentals	Open Gym Y/A- B-Ball	Pickleball play
Mulberry Recreation Center- inside	59	12,000 + year	3,290 + year
		ave 40 per day	14 per day
Martin Luther King Center	21	1,500 + year	2,350 + year
		ave 5 per day	10 per day
Pickleball outside- Mulberry Rec.		30 participants x	
		300 days per year	9,000+ per year
Pickleball Horizon Gym- Jan-March		10 participants per day x	
		3 nights week + 2 sat month	540+ per year
		Total open play	28,680
Aquatic Fitness Center- Inside-Out	76		
Optimist Club House	68		
Shelter rentals -Mulberry/Optimist	46		
Participants for rentals	6,750 +		

Programs**Participants****MLK Center (10)**

Martin Luther King events	3 events		310 participants
Black History Month events	4 events		225 participants
JH Jones Sr. Basketball League	70	8 games	560 participants
Cheer Camp	30	8 games	240 participants
Basketball Camp	40	3 dates	120 participants
Harambee Arts Festival	7 events		650 participants
Trunk or Treat			230 participants
Thanksgiving Dinner			120 participants
Turkey Giveaway			400 participants
Santa Coming to Town	100		100 participants

Total**2,955****Mulberry Recreation Center(6)**

Youth basketball/Cheer program	235	8 games	235 participants
Youth and Adult Tennis Lessons	42	15 clinics	23 participants
Adult basketball league	85	8 games	85 participants
Easter Egg Hunt	300		300 participants
Youth baseball/ Tball/ Softball league	180	8 games	180 participants
Adult Fall softball league	170	8 games	170 participants

Total**993****Aquatic Fitness Center(13)**

Lap Swim	2750		2750 participants
Rec Swim	8910		8910 participants
Leprechaun 5K/10k Race	241		241 participants
Fire Cracker 5K/10K Race	172		172 participants
Water Aerobics	910		910 participants
Floor Aerobics	280		280 participants
Racquet ball	175		175 participants

Weight Room	2300	2300 participants
HS Swim Team	111	111 participants
Kayaking	44	44 participants
Lenoir Makos	52	52 participants
Swim Lessons	118	118 participants
Special Olympics	35	35 participants
	Total	16,098

Special Events(3)		
July 4th Celebration	5000+	5000 participants
Sculpture Celebration	3500+	3500 participants
Christmas Parade	4500+	4500 participants
	Total	13,000

Grand Total participants for the year **61,726**

This number does not reflect the residents/non residents that utilize our parks and Greenway system.

2025 Planning & Community Development Annual Report

City of Lenoir, NC ★ CREATE WITH US

February 2026

1. Executive Summary

The Planning & Community Development Department had a strong and steady 2025, even with staffing transitions, maintaining solid performance in permitting, enforcement, and long-range planning while successfully completing the Living Lenoir 2045 Comprehensive Plan.

Development activity remained active across the city, Planning Board handled a diverse caseload, and floodplain management remained active and on track with previous years. Despite challenges, the department continued advancing placemaking efforts, supporting neighborhoods, and providing reliable service, positioning the team for a productive year ahead.

Planning Staff kicked off 2026 with a department strategic meeting to come together and develop a shared vision based on common values and goals. Planning Staff reviewed City Council's mission and vision statements, and the 2045 Comprehensive Plan vision statement, and drafted their own:

Mission Statement

The mission of Lenoir Planning Department is to guide development fairly and equitably, and to implement the goals of the Comprehensive Plan for the greater Lenoir community while providing reliable, responsive, and collaborative customer service.

Vision Statement

The mission of Lenoir Planning Department is to partner with the Lenoir Community to provide a lasting value that strengthens our built environment for current and future generations.

Values

- Integrity & Fairness
- Community Partnership
- Stewardship & Service
- Knowledge & Education
- Perseverance with Purpose

By grounding their efforts in common goals, the Planning Department is well-positioned to carry forward the goals of the Comprehensive Plan and continue delivering excellent customer service.

2. 2045 Living Lenoir Comprehensive Plan Adoption

The new comprehensive plan was formally adopted by City Council in August 2025 following a collaborative effort led by the Planning Department, Freese and Nichols, and the Comp Plan steering committee. It is a long-range policy document guiding Lenoir's growth and development and an update to the 2007 Comp Plan, reflecting major demographic, economic, and community changes.

The 2045 Living Lenoir Plan establishes a shared vision for Lenoir's future, based on community values and priorities informed by an 18-month public engagement process. The Future Land Use Map, a key component of the Plan, is a high-level guide that uses defined land-use categories to illustrate the city's desired growth pattern and identify the most appropriate future uses for different areas. The Plan supplies an implementation strategy that prioritizes actions, assigns responsibilities, and sets timelines. It serves as a foundation for future ordinance updates, capital planning, and grant applications.

City Council will hear **quarterly updates** on implementation of the plan from Planning Staff at Committee of the Whole. The Comp Plan also serves as the basis of "consistency statements," which are required when approving any changes to the Lenoir Zoning Ordinance and/or Zoning Map. Together, these tools ensure City Council remains closely connected to the plan's implementation and its role in guiding land-use decisions.

3. 2025 At-a-Glance

Quick Permit Stats:

Category	2025 Total	% Change from 2024
Total Permits Issued	316	-4%
Single-Family Homes	71	+45%
Driveway	43	
Accessory & Addition	67	
Manufactured Homes	10	-62%
Site Plan Reviews	9	0%
Non-residential	25	
Floodplain Permits	11	-45%
Sign Permits	32	-20%
Temporary Sign	23	
Zoning Verification	31	

Quick Code Compliance Stats:

Category	2025 Total	Open	Closed
Total	182	62	120
Zoning	59	34	25
Minimum Housing Cases	92	23	69
Floodplain Enforcement	5	1	4
Signs (Permanent and Temp)	23	4	19
Driveway	3	0	3

4. Major Projects & Initiatives

Major Development in Lenoir

A. Current Development

Development Spotlights

Palisades/Southwood Realty – 220 Unit Apartment Complex at 2115 Hickory Blvd planned.

JBS/Swift Beef Company – \$10M freezer expansion project.

Food Lion Upgrades – Food Lion upgraded both Lenoir stores valued at \$1M each.

Caldwell Arts Council – Ongoing renovations to the Arts Council’s new downtown location are valued at \$1.5 million and will likely be phased by floor.

UPS Distribution Center Addition – Added 2,200 square feet and expanded parking.

Other Notable Projects – Precision Landscaping on Hickory Blvd, Exela improvements at various sites, and Appalachian State receiving warehouse and office space at 1437 Blowing Rock Blvd.

B. Code Compliance & Minimum Housing

- **Total cases opened:** 182 (Zoning, Minimum Housing, Sign, and Floodplain)
- **Housing Abatements:**
 - 6 abatement ordinances passed (5 cases started in 2023, 1 started in 2024)
 - 3 Owner-abated properties
 - 10 demolitions totaling \$126,704 (\$101,000 spent in FY25)

- **Mobile Home Park Inspections** – 17 Licenses issued
- **Ordinance Changes to Code Enforcement:**
 - Lenoir Planning contracted N Focus Planning and Design to update Non-residential Minimum Standards (Ch.4) and Minimum Housing (Ch. 10).
 - Staff will implement Non-residential minimum standards enforcement in 2026.

C. Stormwater Program

In March 2025, NCDEQ conducted an audit of the stormwater program and preparedness for 2026 permit renewal. Notices/results of NPDES audits are on hold across NC.

WPCOG stormwater partnership maintains compliance with MS4 Phase 2 NPDES requirements. The WPCOG administers the six minimum control measures including permitting Stormwater Control Measures in new developments, enforcing illicit discharges, and providing opportunities for environmental education and engagement. See the Stormwater Report from WPCOG for more information.

D. Community Development and Placemaking Efforts

- **Vehicular Wayfinding Implementation:** Lenoir obtained final NCDOT approval in August 2025 to install wayfinding signs. The sign manufacturer Rite Lite made the signs in the following three months, and installation began in December 2025. Local artist embellishments will be added once signs are installed.
- **Harper Avenue Streetscape:** Freese and Nichols designed a welcoming and pedestrian friendly corridor into Downtown Lenoir along Harper Avenue between McDonald's and Fire Station 1. Lenoir held an introductory public meeting in June 2025 and a follow up meeting in January 2026 when the final design was completed.
- **Greater Hickory MPO/WPCOG:** Lenoir Planning maintains Technical Coordinating Committee membership, making recommendations in policy direction to the deciding board (TAC). Hannah Williams also participated in the development of two transportation plans this year: The **Western Piedmont Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan 2025** and the **Western Piedmont Transportation Safety Plan**.
- **Retail Strategies:** Retail Strategies provides great insight into the retail trade areas of Lenoir and assists with recruiting national businesses. Planning staff collaborates with Retail Strategies on new development sites and potential brands interested in the Lenoir market.

E. Planning Board, Board of Adjustment, and Historic Preservation Commission

- In 2025, Planning Board met 9 times and held one HPC session, and Board of Adjustment met 2 times.
- **Cases:** 7 Rezoning, 3 Ordinance Amendments, 1 Special Use Permit, 1 Variance
- **Ordinance Amendments**
 - B-7 Multi-family Permitted Uses (ZOA 1-25): clarified that high density multifamily is allowed as a permitted use in B-7.

- Setback Exemption on Historic Lots (ZOA 2-25): reduced side and rear setbacks proportionally to the size of the lot on historic lots.
 - Downtown Sidewalk Use Ordinance (ZOA 3-25): provided outdoor display options for businesses in the downtown MSD and clarified sidewalk café ordinance and social district standards. Planning Board formed a subcommittee and provided outreach opportunities to businesses in developing this ordinance.
-

4. Personnel Updates

- **Matt Bolick** joined Planning staff as Code Compliance Officer in March 2025. Matt has worked for the city for 17 years in the Fire Department and Public Works.
 - **Kim Staines** hired as Planning Technician in September 2025.
 - **Matt Duchan**, Planner/GIS Specialist obtained the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) credential in Jan 2026.
 - **Hannah Williams**, Planning Director finished Municipal County Administration course in May 2025, and attended Civic “Leading for Results” Fellowship Program in Fall 2025.
 - **Teresa Kinney** (WPCOG) assisting weekly with zoning, sign, and floodplain enforcement.
 - **Winifred Rhea-Unruh** served as an intern for Planning and Downtown Development in Summer 2025, providing excellent help to the sidewalk use subcommittee, updating Main Street databases, and mapping city sidewalks and sidewalk gaps.
-

5. Outstanding Long-Term Projects

- **Greenway 911 Location System** – 54 markers created; need to finalize post locations
 - **Neighborhood & Greenway Signs** – Branding and placemaking opportunity
 - **Watershed Property Zoning** – Conditional zoning concept pending
 - **Stormwater Utility Fee** – Framework complete; awaiting policy direction
 - **National Register Districts** – Funding gap of ~\$10,000; need project champion
-

6. Department Budget Requests (FY 2026–27)

Zoning Ordinance Update (Unified Development Ordinance)

Early cost estimate: \$175,000

Demolition & Legal Fees

- Budget for housing demolition and foreclosure is adequate at \$100,000.
- Non-residential building structure code enforcement can lead to vacate and demolish ordinances. While we do not anticipate city abatements in 2026, there may be a need in future years for non-residential building demolitions.

Greenway 911 Signs – \$1,000

- \$25 per sign; approx. 35 signs
-

7. Looking Ahead to 2026

Key Priorities

- Implement Non-Residential Buildings and Structures Ordinance
 - Explore UDO rewrite as recommended by the Comprehensive Plan.
 - Continue foreclosure and abatement efforts
 - Source funding for Harper Avenue Streetscape.
 - Continue to set priorities and goals as listed in the Comprehensive Plan, including neighborhood stabilization strategies in Whitnel and West End.
 - Improved customer service through technology updates, Spanish translation of documents, and cross-training staff on basics of code enforcement and permitting.
-

CITY OF LENOIR YEAR IN REVIEW

FEBRUARY 2026 | www.cityoflenoir.com

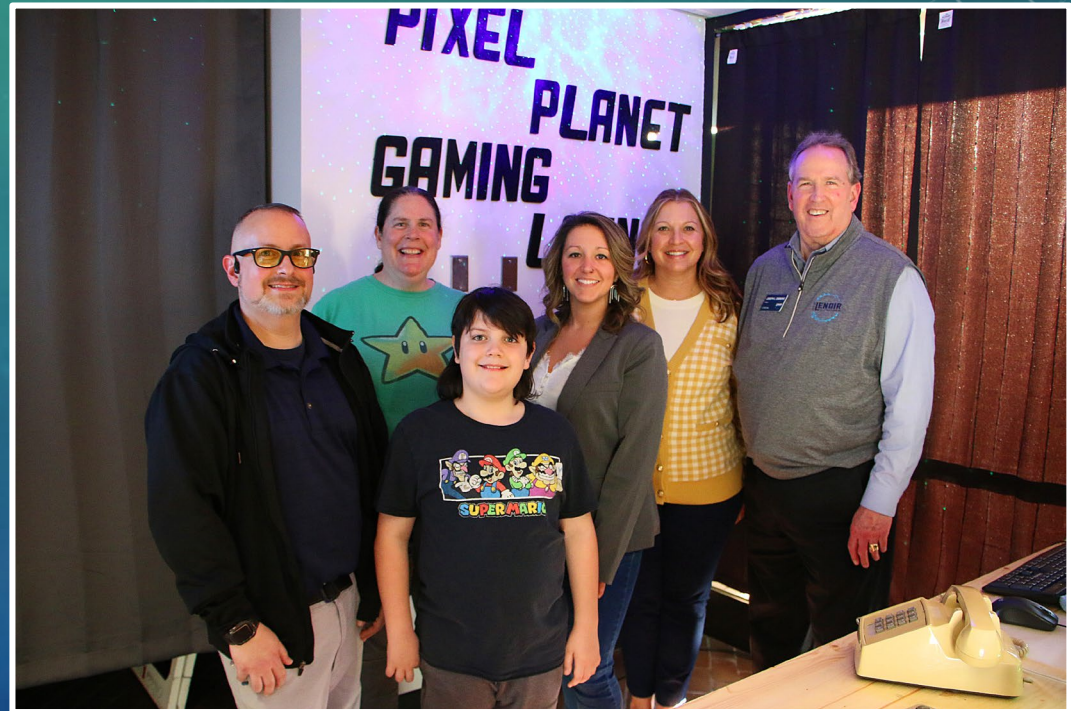


PRIVATE & NONPROFIT INVESTMENT

HOUSING & NEW BUSINESS

PIXEL PLANET

- **February 2025** - Pixel Planet Gaming Lounge opened in February at 130 Church St. NW.



MAVIS TIRE SIDEWALK

- **April 2025** – Mavis Tire completed their new sidewalk in front of their shop on US 321.



WALMART RENOVATION



- **May 2025** - Walmart renovated their store at 935 Blowing Rock Blvd.

UNIQUE PERFECTIONS BOUTIQUE

- **May 2025** - Unique Perfections Boutique opened at 626 Harper Ave.



WINGSTOP



- May 2025 - Wingstop also opened at 1009 Blowing Rock Blvd #110.

CORK & BARREL DELI & THE BANQUET SHOPPE

- **May 2025** - Cork & Barrel Deli and The Banquet Shoppe in Downtown opened in May 30 at 912 West Ave.



BURGER KING GRAND REOPENING



- **June 2025** - Burger King held a Grand Reopening at their location at 102 Blowing Rock.

NEW SIDEWALK AT BURGER KING



NC FARM BUREAU

- **June 2025** - NC Farm Bureau opened their new office at 1201 Wilkesboro Blvd.



LONGHORN STEAKHOUSE

- **November 2025** - LongHorn held a ribbon and steak cutting ceremony Monday, Nov. 3, 2025. The restaurant is located at 975 Blowing Rock Blvd NW.



MOONROCK DISPENSARY & TOBACCO SHOP



- **November 2025** – Moonrock Dispensary & Tobacco opened at 217 N Main St. in Downtown Lenoir.

OTHER NEW BUSINESS & EXPANSIONS

- **Sailer Tobacco & Vape**
(old Krispy Kreme)
- **Hunt Brothers Pizza**
(Convenience store on Connelly Springs Road)
- **JBS Freezer Expansion**
- **Boone Drug Expanded**
- **Master Porta John**
expanded to West Harper

PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT UNDERWAY

IT WAS A STRONG YEAR FOR COMMERCIAL SITE DEVELOPMENT PERMITS.
FOLLOWING ARE SOME CURRENT PROJECTS UNDERWAY.

102 HOSPITAL AVE



- A local property owner is prepping 102 Hospital Ave for development.

SOUTHWOOD REALTY APARTMENTS

- Southwood Realty is building new, market-rate apartments at 2115 Hickory Blvd. The developer is proposing 220 Units, and grading and clearing is in progress.



SOUTHWOOD SITE PLAN



1001 WEST AVE REDEVELOPMENT



- The property owner of 1001 West Avenue is renovating the first floor for multi-use businesses in Downtown Lenoir.

CALDWELL ARTS COUNCIL

- The Caldwell Arts Council is moving ahead with renovations at its new location at 126 Mulberry St SW.



UNC CALDWELL CAPSTONE



- UNC Caldwell is working on many renovations it started in December 2023 as part of its Capstone Campaign. The \$33 million expansion will address critical needs remaining for the hospital. They plan to complete the expansion in March.

GOOGLE EXPANSION

- Google continues work on the expansion on its campus here in Lenoir. In October 2024, Council and Caldwell County approved an economic development incentive package for Google. Google plans to release an official announcement about the expansion in March.



EVENTS

PRIVATE GROUPS AND THE CITY OF LENOIR HOSTED MANY EVENTS IN LENOIR IN 2024!

ANNUAL EVENTS

- Lenoir Bicycle Festival
- Neon Night Ride
- July 4th Fireworks
- North Carolina Blackberry Festival
- Jump Street Drive Music Festival
- Harambee Arts Festival
- Light Up Lenoir
- Drive-Thru Turkey Tuesday
- Storytime with Mrs. Claus
- Merry Market on Main
- Downtown Carriage Rides
- Santa Claus is Coming to Town

LENOIR EVENTS



LENOIR EVENTS



EARTH DAY & ARBOR DAY IN LENOIR

- **April 2025** - In addition to our many annual events, the City hosted a new event in 2025, the Earth Day & Arbor Day Celebration.



PUBLIC INVESTMENT & PROJECTS

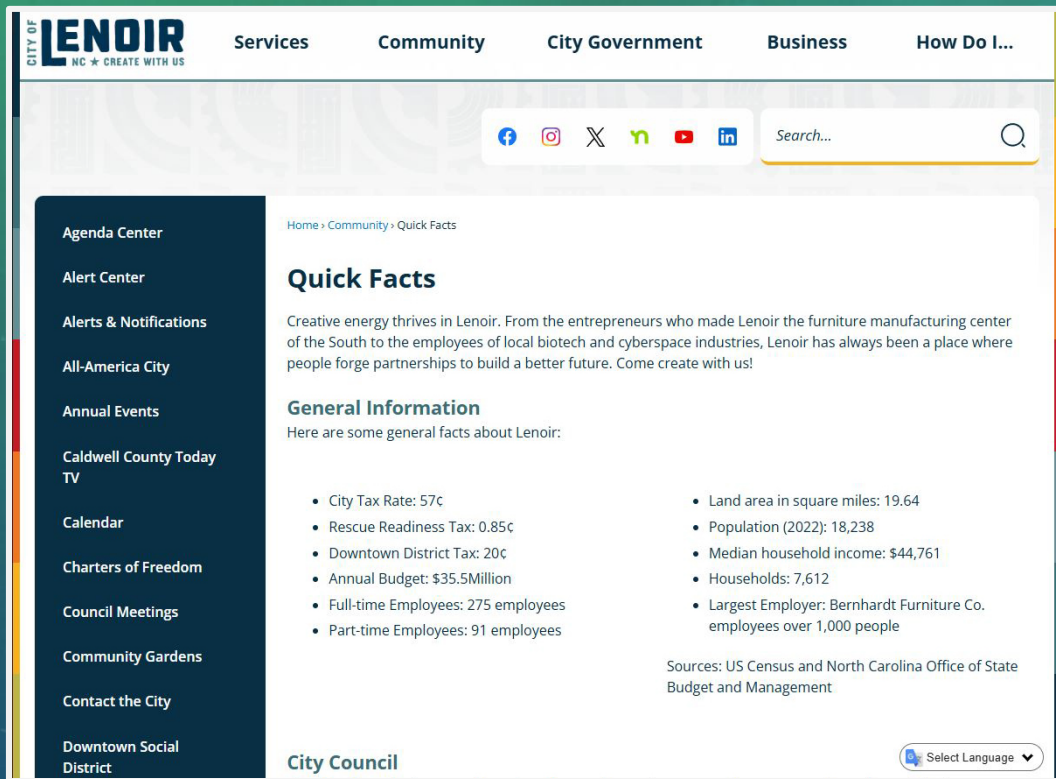
PROJECTS, EVENTS, PROGRAMS IN 2024

DEBRIS SITE ON VIRGINIA STREET

- **2025** – The City leased its property on Virginia Street for debris clean up and processing from Hurricane Helene.



CITY WEBSITE REDESIGN



- **January 2025** - Staff completed a refresh/update to the City website. We brightened up the look and added some more color to the design. The Search bar and City social links are displayed on the homepage and interior pages. The quick link buttons on the homepage will take visitors to the most popular pages on the site, followed by popular links to other pages.

POLE BARN & SALT SHED



NEW GYM FLOOR AT MULBERRY REC



- **January 2025** - After much hard work, City of Lenoir staff opened the Mulberry Recreation Center gym. The gym has a new floor, new basketball hoops, and a new look.

PICKLEBALL INSIDE MULBERRY



DOWNTOWN TREES

- **February 2025** – Public Works planted **16** new trees located at six intersections in Downtown Lenoir - Kwanzan Cherry, Armstrong Maple, Nuttall Oak, and Tree-Form Foster Holly.



TEACHING PAVILION AT UNITY PARK



- **February 2025** – The City completed construction of a new teaching and learning pavilion at Unity Park & Community Gardens.

T.H. BROYHILL WALKING PARK

- **March 2025** – The Broyhill Family Foundation funded and City Public Works staff repaired a repaired a failing retaining wall at T.H. Broyhill Walking Park. The City reworked the wall from a terraced wall to a natural slope with added boulders. The upgrade will also include more landscaping.



NEW LANDSCAPING AT NORTH MAIN



- **March 2025** – Public Works installed new landscaping at North Main Street.

STORM DRAINS AT MULBERRY

- **March 2025** – City Public Works staff replaced the storm drainage from the roof at Mulberry Recreation Center and patched the cuts in the parking lot.



NEW K9S AT LENOIR POLICE



- **March 2025** - The City of Lenoir Police Department introduced its new canines to City Council. The department's K9 teams patrol the streets of Lenoir, and, for the first time, there is a K9 team assigned to Hibriten High School.

MORE PICKLEBALL AT MULBERRY

- **April 2025** – The City added more outdoor pickleball courts at Mulberry Recreation Center. Today there are **12 outdoor courts** at Mulberry and there are a total of **9 indoor courts** between Mulberry, MLK Jr. Center, and the old William Lenoir Middle School.



PAVING AT COMMUNITY GARDENS



- **April 2025** - The City paved the parking lot, added new accessible parking, and paved the lower drive at Unity Park & Community Gardens.

DAVID HORN EDUCATION PAVILION



- **April 2025** – During the Earth Day & Arbor Day Celebration, the City also dedicated the David Horn Education Pavilion.

DAVID HORN EDUCATION PAVILION



GREENWAY LOOP AT SOCCER COMPLEX

- **April 2025** – The City built a new section of greenway to create a half-mile walking loop around the soccer complex. The new section created a half-wile loop at the complex.



SOCCER COMPLEX GREENWAY LOOP



DOWNTOWN LENOIR AWARD

- **April 2025** – Main Street recognized the Downtown Lenoir Award winners Michelle and Cliff Mahaffey of Tybrisa Books. The couple was honored with the Gibbons Award and recognized for their contributions to Downtown Lenoir.



LANDSCAPING AT WEST WIND SENTINELS

- **May 2025** - The City of Lenoir replaced the landscaping at the West Wind Sentinels sculpture on US 321. The landscaping was about 20 years old Public Works staff removed the old material and designed the new landscaping plan. The new landscaping will be easier to maintain and will better showcase the sculpture.



NEW CITY CLERK



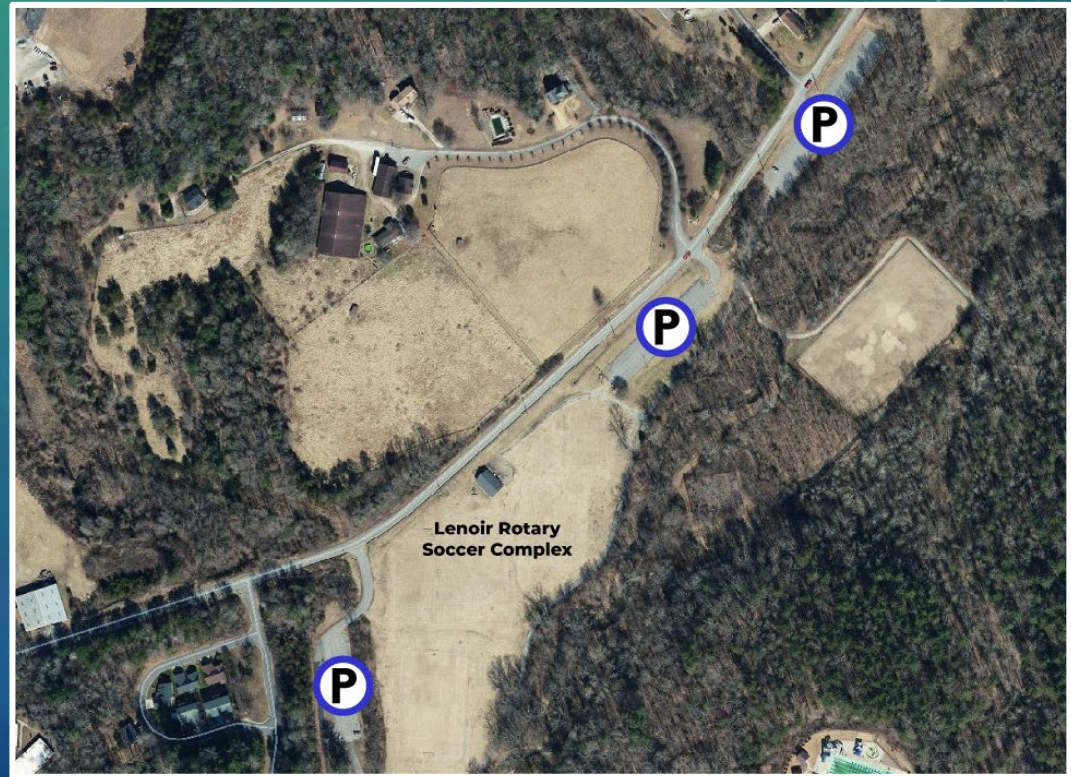
MUNICIPAL & COUNTY ADMINISTRATION GRADS



Hannah Williams

SURFACING & STRIPING OF SOCCER COMPLEX PARKING LOTS

- **June 2025** – The City resealed the asphalt and restriped all three parking lots at the Soccer Complex.



LENOIR SPLASH PAD



- **June 2025** - City Council, staff, and friends opened the new Lenoir Splash Pad at the Lenoir Rotary Soccer Complex. The new splash pad is **1,648 square feet** with **55 sprayers**. The City also built a 20-foot by 20-foot timber framed picnic shelter with four picnic tables and renovated the restrooms.

KIDS PLAYING AT LENOIR SPLASH PAD

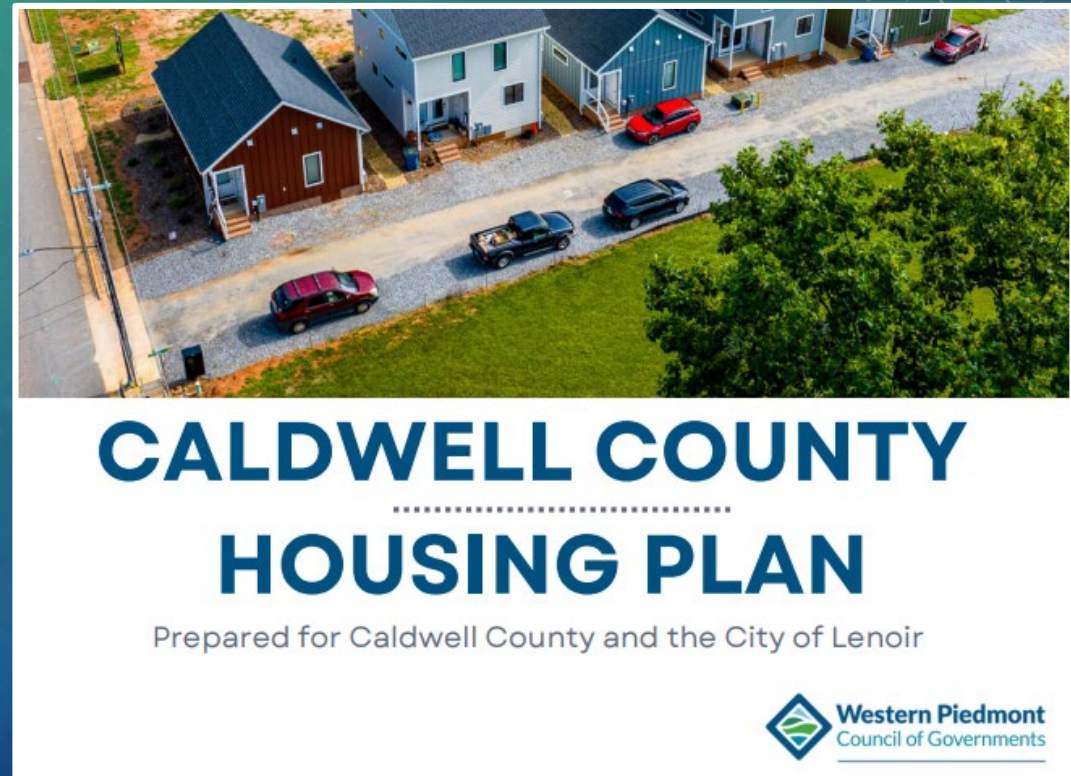


SOCCER COMPLEX RENOVATIONS



CALDWELL COUNTY HOUSING PLAN

- **June 2025** – Caldwell County released a new housing plan for Lenoir and the county. The Plan examines the demographics and housing preferences of potential homebuyers and renters, including an evaluation of real estate market trends. The City helped fund the plan.



ROTARY PEACE POLE AT THE SOCCER COMPLEX



- **June 2025** - Council dedicated a Lenoir Rotary Club Peace Pole at the Lenoir Rotary Soccer Complex. Peace Poles have been planted on every continent in over **200,000 communities**.

NEW PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

West End Park



Mulberry Rec



ROTARY PEACE POLICE AT T.H. BROYHILL WALKING PARK



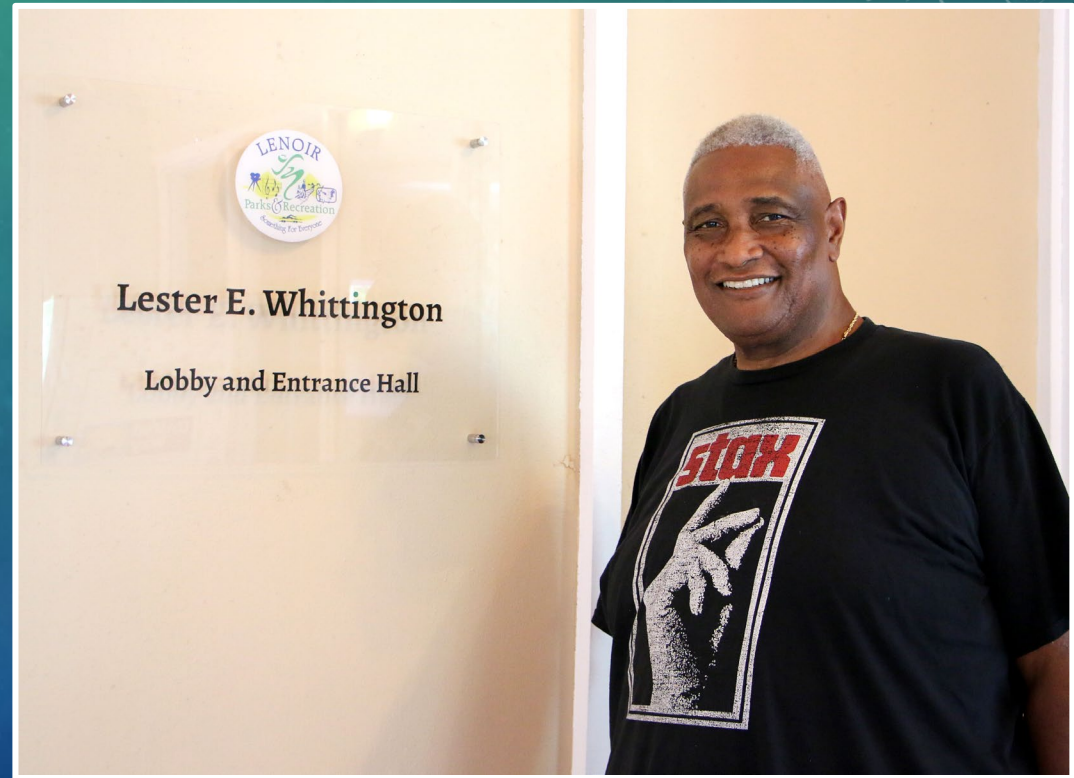
- **July 2025** – Council dedicated a Caldwell Rotary Club Peace Pole for the T.H. Broyhill Walking Park in Lenoir!

NEW POLICE CHIEF



LESTER WHITTINGTON LOBBY

- **August 2025** - The City of Lenoir City Council named the lobby and entrance hall at the Martin Luther King Jr. Center in honor of long-time manager Lester Whittington.



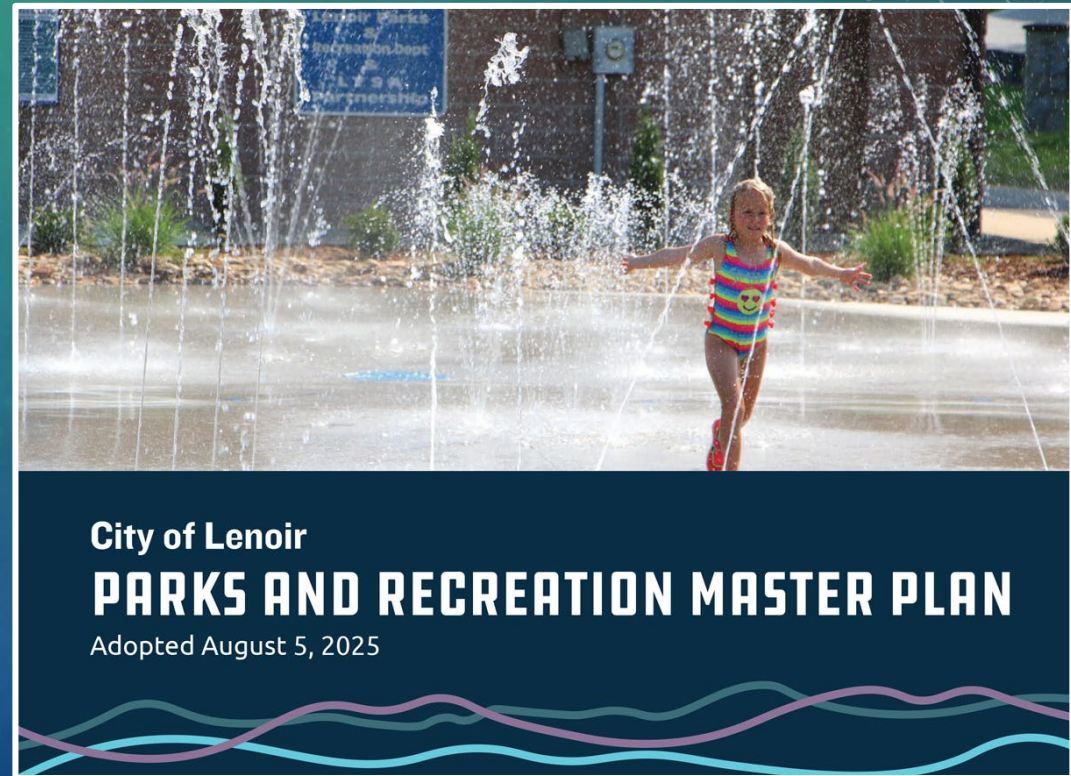
LIVING LENOIR COMP PLAN



- **August 2025** – Council adopted the Living Lenoir 2045 Comprehensive Plan. The plan will guide decisions and development in Lenoir for the next 20 years,

PARKS & REC MASTER PLAN

- **August 2025** – As part of the Living Lenoir Comp Plan, our consultant also created a new Parks & Rec Master Plan. Council also adopted this plan in August.



POWELL ROAD CULVERT REPAIR

- **August 2025** – The City repaired the culvert on Powell Road, added new curb and gutter, and patched the road.



FIRE UTV



- **August 2025** – Fire received a **\$50K Disaster Relief Grant** in the amount. The grant allowed the department to purchase a Polaris Ranger UTV, Enforcer 30 foam suppression system and 25 gallons of Class A/B foam to enhance our wildland firefighting capabilities.

COMMS & PIO DIRECTOR COMPLETES PELA



UNC

SCHOOL OF
GOVERNMENT

OLD SHED ON SEEHORN ST

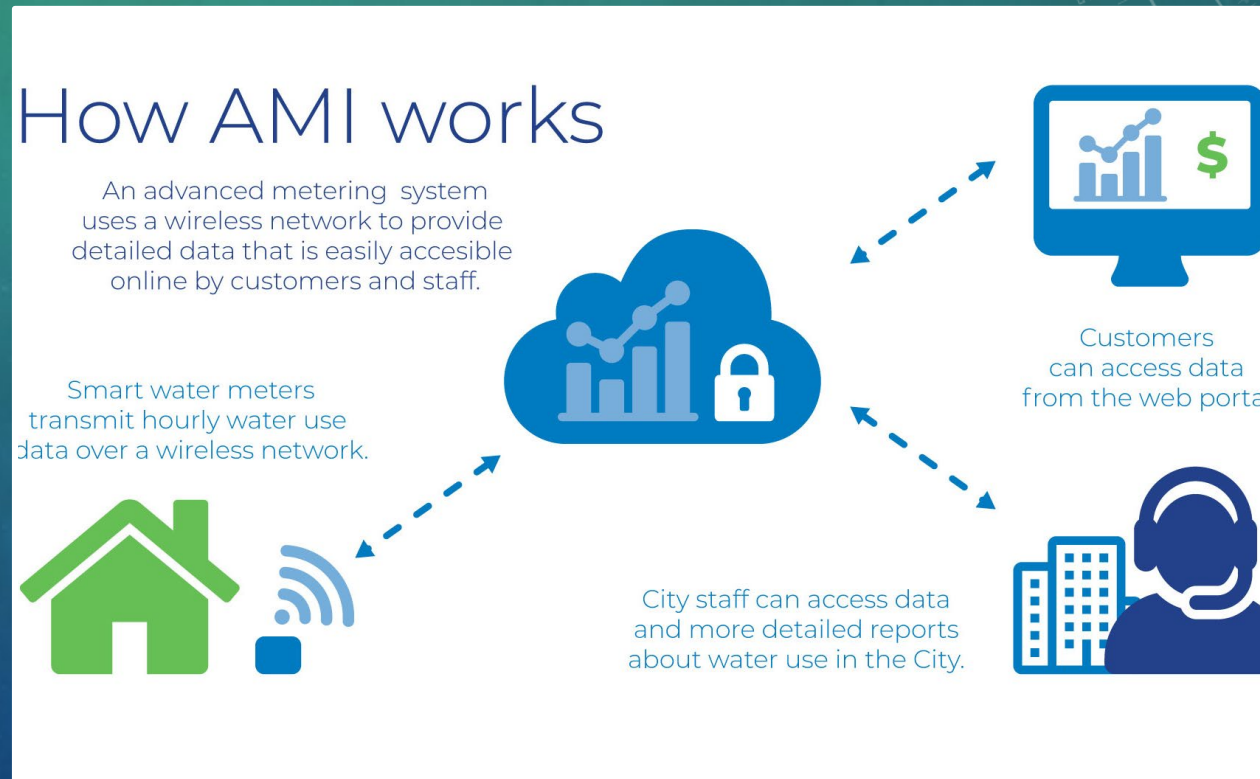


2/5/2026

65

AMI METERING PROJECT CLOSE OUT

- August 2025 – The City closed out the AMI Project in Public Utilities. The project upgraded all the water meters in the city and improved the City's meter reading system. These advanced meters will send usage data to City Hall through a wireless network. This technology is known as Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI).



PLANNING STAFF



Kim Staines

MLK JR. CENTER RENOVATIONS



- **September 2025** – The City completed many renovations at the Martin Luther King Jr. Center. Updates included new floors, gym equipment, HVAC upgrades, ADA improvements, and new surfacing on the tennis and basketball courts.

MLK CENTER RENOVATIONS



SIGNAL REMOVAL AT COLLEGE & MULBERRY



- **September 2025** - The City removed the traffic signal at the intersection of College Avenue and Mulberry Street in Downtown Lenoir. The new stop sign improves traffic flow at the intersection.

EMPLOYEE LITTER SWEEP

- **September 2025** – City staff held the annual fall litter sweep. About ***40 people*** from Downtown, Finance, Fire, Parks and Rec, Planning, Police, Public Works, and Public Utilities picked up ***35 bags of litter***.



EMPLOYEE LITTER SWEEPS



FLOCK CAMERAS

- **September 2025** –Police staff installed 14 FLOCK cameras in Lenoir.



RED ROOF INN CONSENT ORDER



- **October 2025** - Police staff and the NC ALE were able to get a consent order with Red Roof Inn. The order will help with complaints at the hotel and reduce calls for service to the location.

NEW PLANTERS



- **October 2025** – As part of Bloom Blast, Public Works installed 16 new planters in Downtown and along Harper Avenue.

PENNELL STREET STORM DRAIN REPAIR

- **November 2025** – The City repaired a storm drain on Pennell Street. The new 36-inch storm drain culvert pipe, new catch basins, and new curb and gutter should improve stormwater drainage in the area.



POLICE DRONES

- **November 2025** - Police Department also procured additional drones for Patrol use. These drones assist in locating suspects, missing persons, and runaway juveniles, as well as enhancing security at special events, schools, and athletic events.

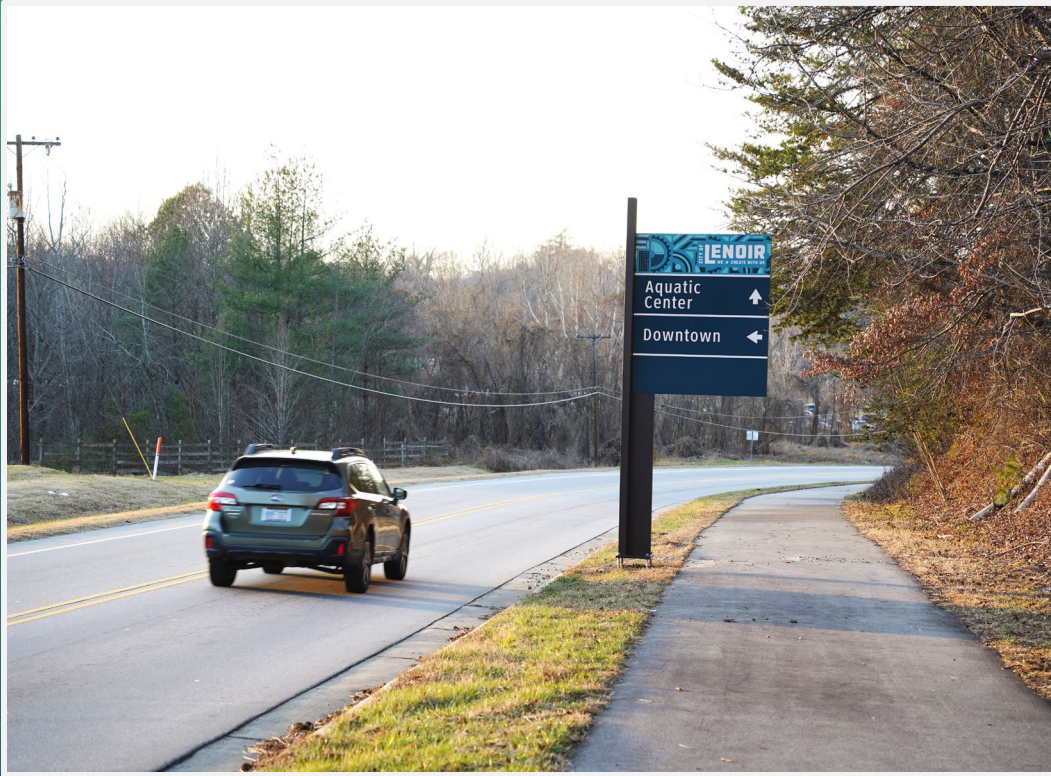


WAYFINDING SIGNS!



- **December 2025** - Contractors working for the City of Lenoir started installing more than 50 new wayfinding signs in the City. The signs will direct residents and visitors to public buildings and local amenities.

WAYFINDING AROUND LENOIR



MORE CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS

- **Fall 2025** – The City installed more Christmas decorations in Lenoir including new lights at the gateway sign at Smith Crossroads.



CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS



PLANNING DIRECTOR COMPLETES LEADING FOR RESULTS



UNC

SCHOOL OF
GOVERNMENT

NCLM RISK MANAGEMENT REVIEW AWARD

- **December 2025** – The North Carolina League of Municipalities presented Lenoir Police Chief Andy Wilson with a Risk Management Review Award. The program assesses a police department's adherence to best practices, court decisions, and policies and procedures related to high-liability activities in law enforcement.



THE NORTH CAROLINA LEAGUE OF MUNICIPALITIES

Recognizes

Lenoir Police Department

For completing the Law Enforcement Risk Management Review and proactively serving the community in a professional manner while taking steps to minimize risks to our citizens and officers

Presented - October 22nd, 2025



WORKING AS ONE.
ADVANCING ALL.

NEW COUNCILMEMBER



LEAF COLLECTION

- **December 2025** – Public Works completed all three leaf pickups by **12/31/2025**. Staff continued to check routes through January.



SIDEWALK ORDINANCE



A-Frame signs only along remaining clearance



North Main Street



West Avenue

These sidewalks are wide enough for temporary sidewalk cafes, outdoor displays, and A-Frame signs; permanent sidewalk cafes are not allowed.

Sidewalk Segments between 12-14.999'

- **December 2025** – Council approved a new sidewalk ordinance for Lenoir. The ordinance expands on the existing sidewalk café ordinance and allows for permitted outdoor displays for other uses beyond eating and drinking establishments.

STREET PAVING

- **December 2025** – Public Works supervised resurfacing of ten (10) streets in the City of Lenoir. Streets paved include: Rocky Top, Powell Rd, Sharon Av, Woodland Pl, Greenvalley Pl, Ideal Dr, Locust Pl, Ridgewood Pl, Cambridge Ct, Coventry St.



REMOTE MOWER



- **December 2025** – Public Works bought a remote-controlled mower for hard to reach properties in the City. One employee can cover areas in a few hours that would previously take four people a day to mow. The new mower is also much safer for employees.

RIDGE STREET SEWER PROJECT

- **January 2026** – Contractors completed the Ridge Street Sewer Project. This was the first step to fill the sinkhole by Fire Station 1.



GREAT SOCIAL MEDIA!



- **January 2026** – Staff created a fun and engaging social media post about staying off the road during the icepocalypse. The post used humor to encourage people not to drive on ice. “It's always refreshing to see government offices have a little fun on social media.” - Comment

WHO'S THAT IN DOWNTOWN?



PROJECTS UNDERWAY

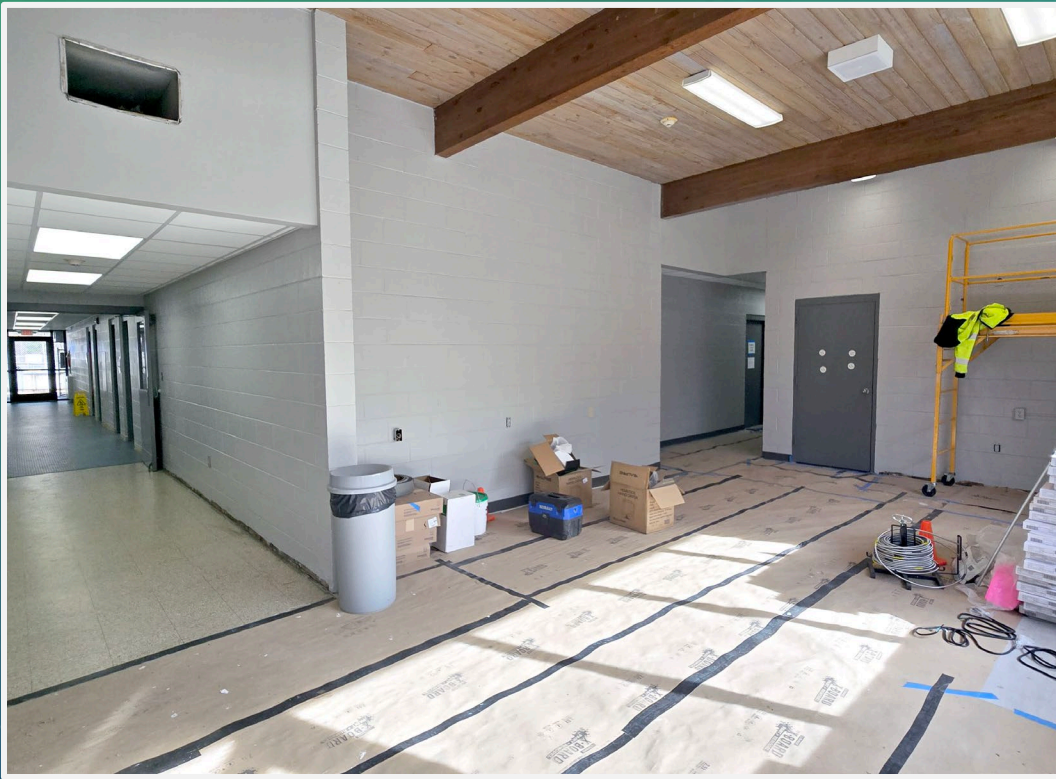
THE CITY HAS SEVERAL PROJECTS IN CONSTRUCTION.

LEADERSHIP LENOIR CIVIC LEARNING ACADEMY

- **February 2026** – The City opened applications for a new civic learning program. The academy will start in March. The program will be an opportunity for people to learn a great deal about City of Lenoir government.



LAFC RENOVATIONS



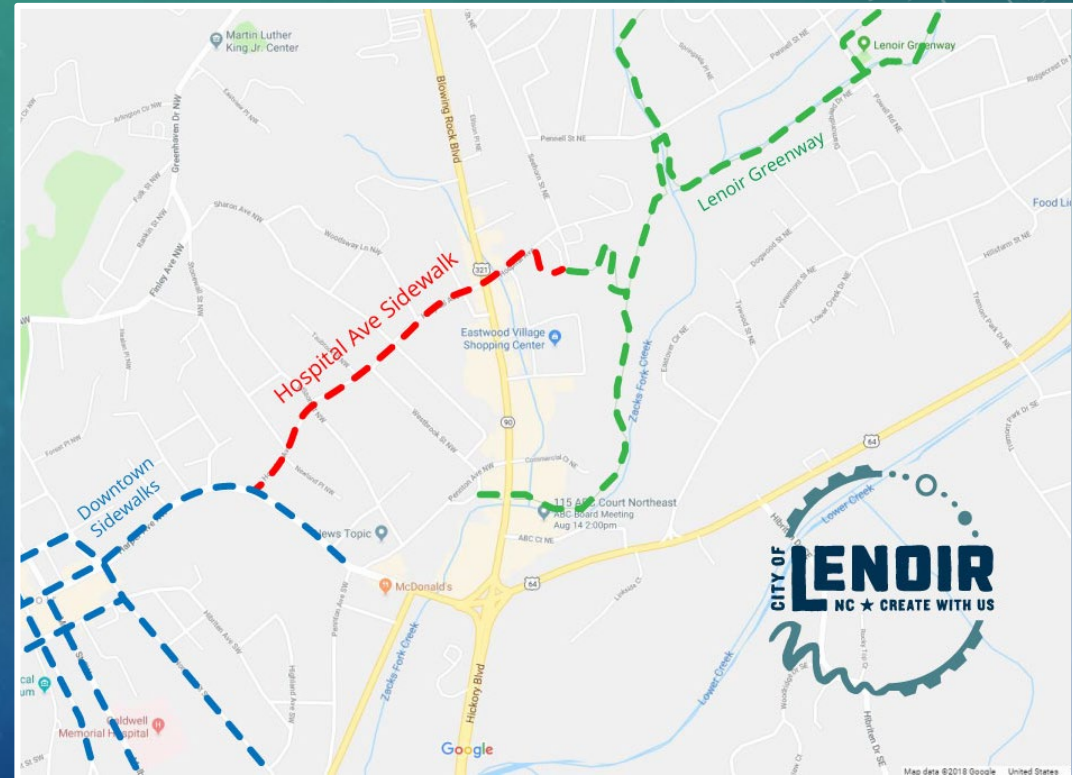
- **October 2025** - The City of Lenoir has started renovating the Lenoir Aquatic & Fitness Center. The City plans to update several features at the facility. Contractors will add a new family locker room, family restroom, hallway, and more.

LAFC RENOVATIONS



HOSPITAL AVENUE SIDEWALK

- **January 2026** - Construction will start soon on the long-awaited on Hospital Avenue Sidewalk Project. The new sidewalk will increase safety and connectivity for residents and visitors in Lenoir.



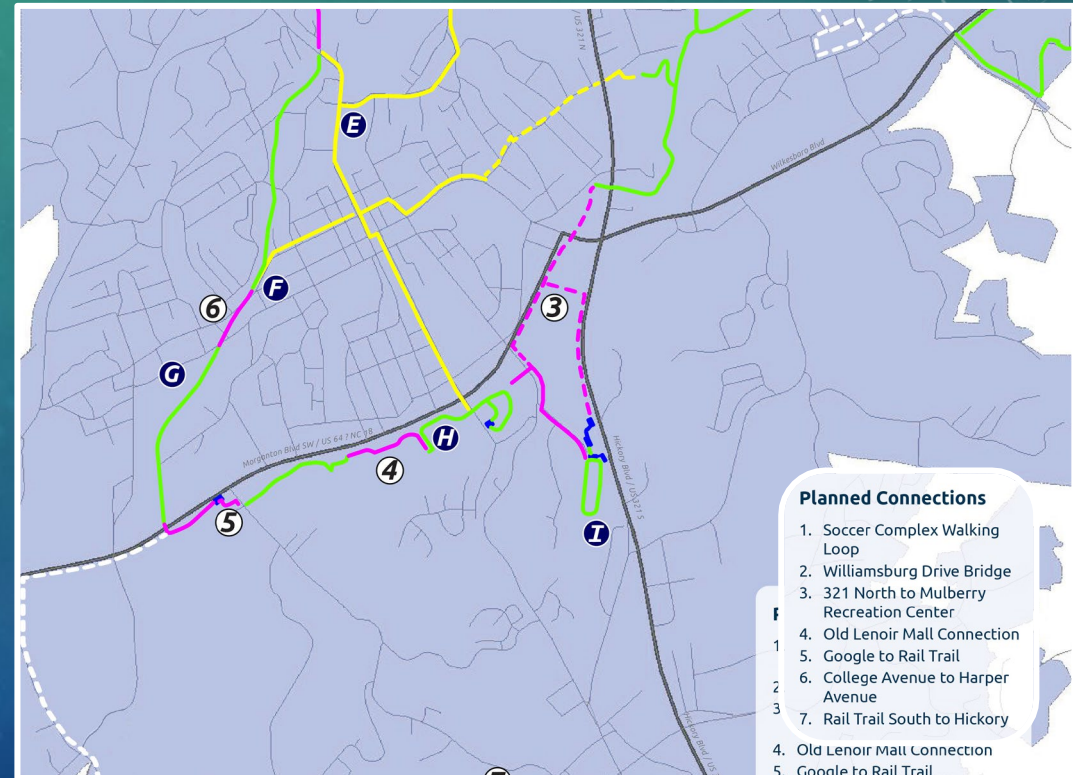
GATEWAY SIGNS



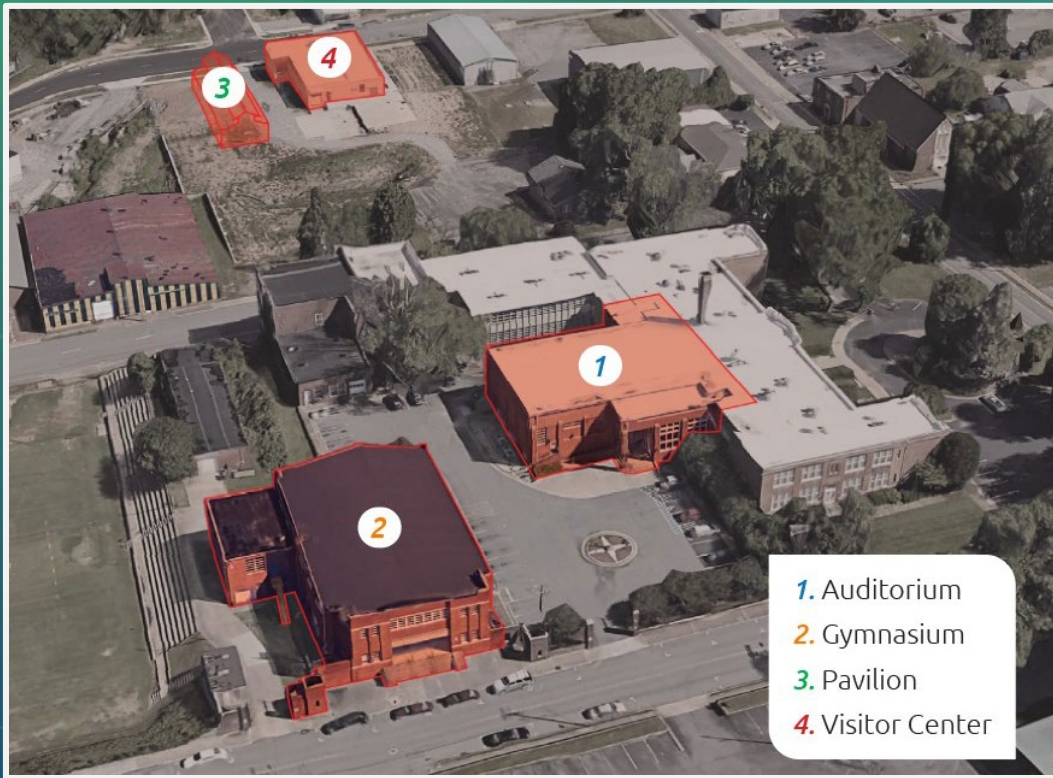
- **January 2026** - Council approved bids for gateway signs. The signs are designed by Destination By Design and welcome people to Lenoir.

GREENWAY EXTENSIONS

- Staff are working on several greenway extension projects including extending the greenway along Morganton Boulevard, connecting the greenway in Downtown Lenoir, and connecting the northeast section to Mulberry Recreation Center.



THE CAMPUS



- In December, Council approved \$5.8 million dollars to renovate The Campus. Phase 1 will include updates to the auditorium and gym. Constructions will start next week.

THE CAMPUS

185

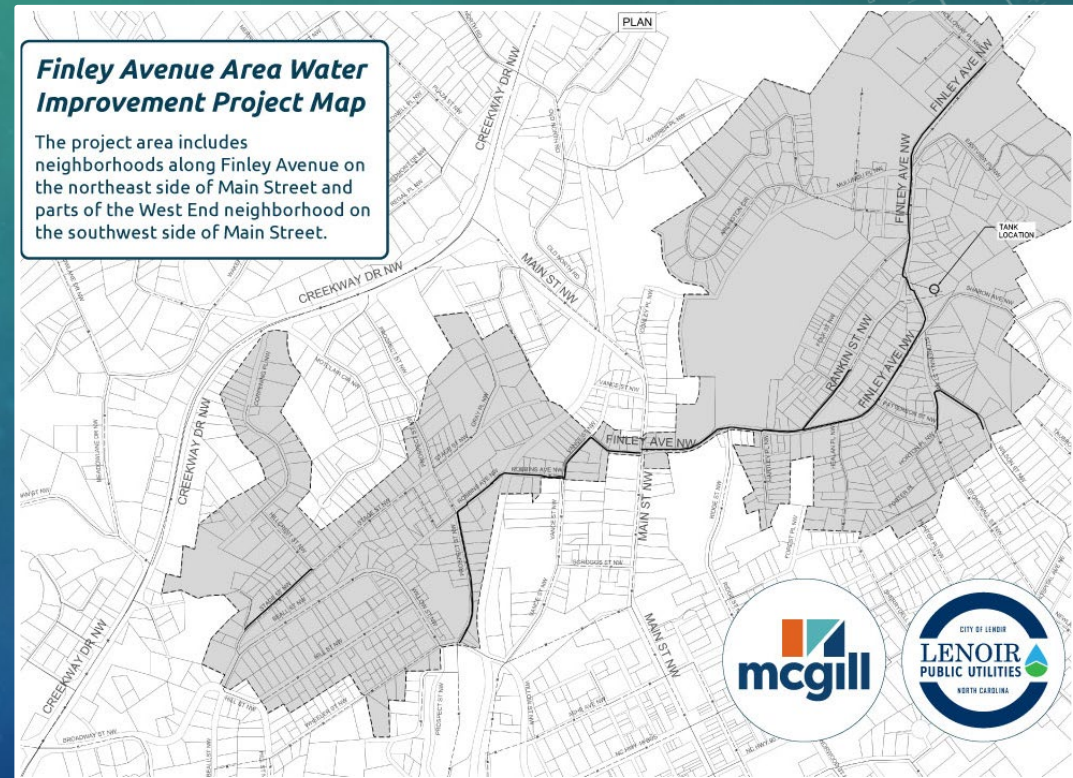


2/5/2026

100

FINLEY AVENUE WATER IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

- The Finley Avenue Area Water Improvement Project will improve water pressure in the Finley Avenue area of Lenoir. The **\$9.4 million** project includes building a new elevated water tank and installing new water lines. The new water tank will be located beside the current tank at 345 Finley Ave. NW.



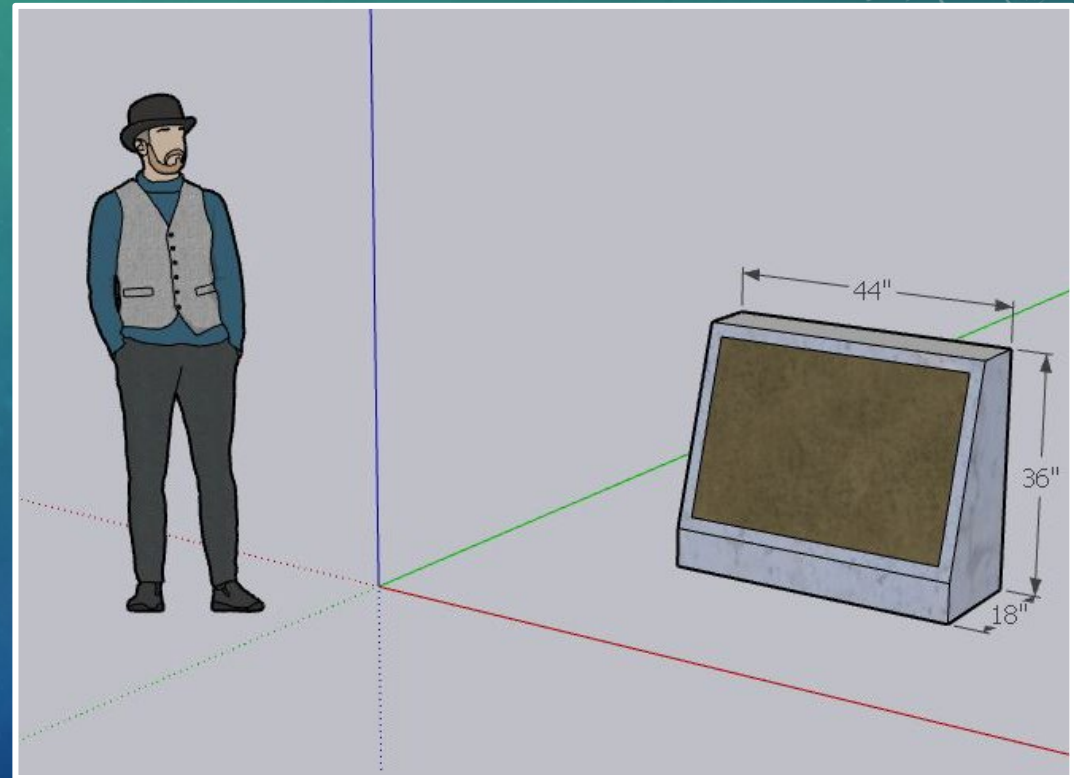
DOWNTOWN CLOCK TOWER



- Work continues on the new clocktower for Downtown Lenoir. The City has restored the clock, and is waiting for the community tiles to be welded to the tower before installing this spring or summer.

VETERANS PLAZA RENOVATION

- Staff are working to complete the Veterans Plaza Renovation in Downtown Lenoir this spring. The new monuments and bronze plaques have arrived. Staff must still remove all the old pavers, install footings and new pavers, and then place the new monuments.



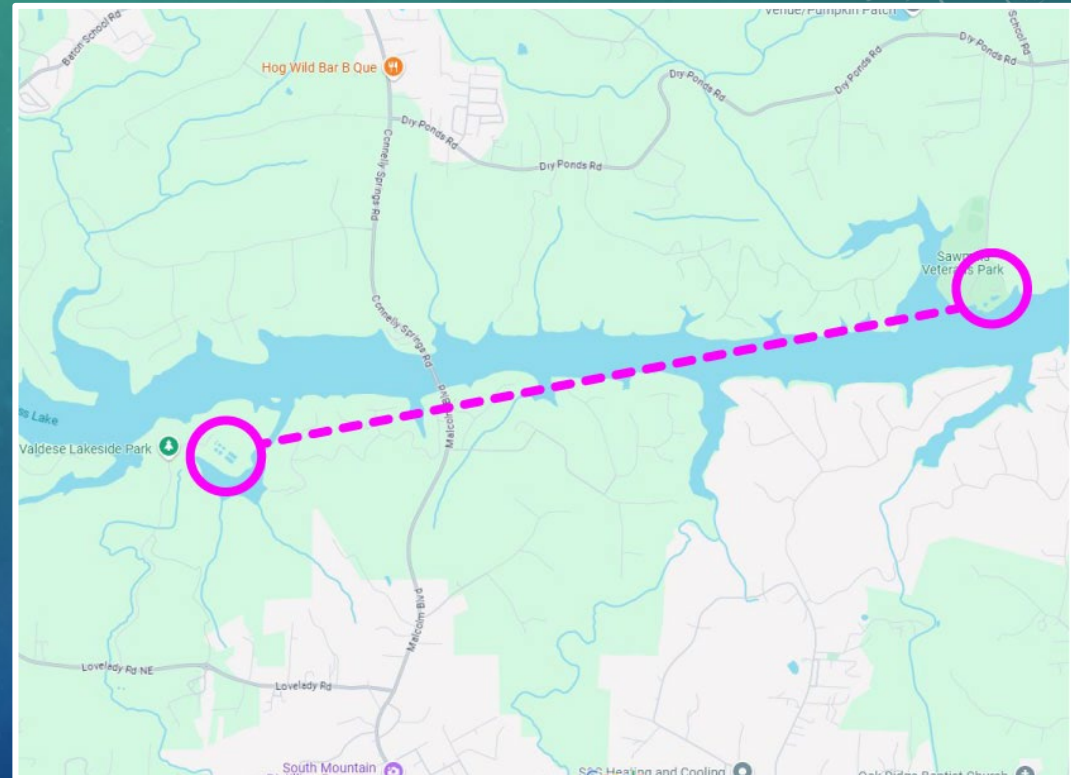
WATER PLANT FLASH-MIX BASIN REPAIR



- This project includes concrete repairs and replacement of old equipment. This project is nearing completion. Freyssinet, Inc. is the general contractor. The consulting engineering firm of SKA, Consulting Engineers, is providing McGill Associate consultation services for this project.

LENOIR-VALDESE WATER INTERCONNECT

- The City received funding in the amount of approximately **\$17 Million** through Session Law 2023-2024 to construct a water interconnection between the City of Lenoir and the Town of Valdese. McGill Associates are the design engineering firm. The design team just completed the preliminary engineering phase of the project and has entered into the design phase.



HARPER AVE STREETSCAPE PLAN



- **January 2026** – Planning held a community meeting to discuss the Harper Avenue Streetscape Project. The plan would renovate Harper Ave into a complete street that includes multi-modal circulation, connectivity, and parking framework for neighborhood gateway improvement to downtown

HARPER AVE STREETScape MEETING



CUSTOMER SERVICE TRAINING

- Around 2020, our consultant began a phased retirement and concluded his work with the City. The team has done a great job at managing outreach such as employee appreciation and golden tickets, but we have a lot of new staff who have never went through the original, comprehensive customer service training. We think it would be good for our employees to work with an outside consultant once again to go through an extensive customer service training program. This training would be mandatory for all staff, including directors.



AMERICA 250 EVENTS & PROMOTIONS



- **2026** – The City of Lenoir plans to celebrate America 250 with new pole banners, events, and other America 250-themed promotions. For example, the Lenoir Bicycle Festival will feature a red, white, and blue logo this year.

CITY OF LENOIR *BY THE NUMBERS*

SOME INTERESTING STATISTICS FOR 2025

COMMUNICATIONS & PUBLIC INFORMATION

BY THE NUMBERS



- **101,805** video views
- **5,119** photos
- **1,736** social media posts
- **1,010** website updates
- **66** news release



DOWNTOWN *BY THE NUMBERS*



- **35** community event applications vetted
- **24** events & promotional activities
- **11** new businesses and expansions
- **2** new residences for a total of **26 in Downtown Lenoir**

FINANCE *BY THE NUMBERS*



- **117,293** utility bills
- **104,990** transactions totaling **\$26.9 MILLION**
- **8,360** payroll checks
- **6,053** vendor checks
- **394** W-2s
- **275** job applications



FIRE *BY THE NUMBERS*

- **3,251** calls for service
 - 2,218 medical calls
 - 1,033 fire-related calls
- **16,840** training hours
- **\$41 Million** property value saved



IT *BY THE NUMBERS*



- **1,925** work orders completed
- **247** security cameras maintained
- **88** email accounts created/deleted
- **48** servers maintained for cameras & keycard access

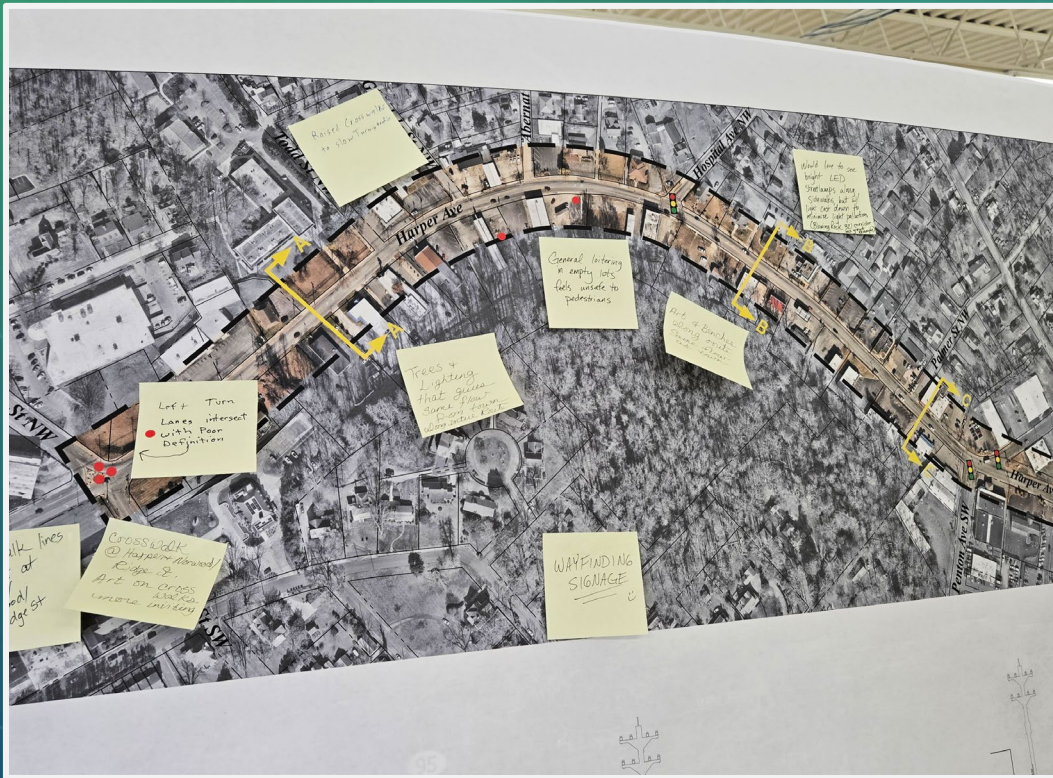


PARKS & RECREATION *BY THE NUMBERS*

- **61,726** participation in programs & events
- **595** participants in basketball & cheer camp at MLK & mulberry
- **300** kiddos at Easter Egg Hunt
- **118** swim lessons at LAFC



PLANNING *BY THE NUMBERS*

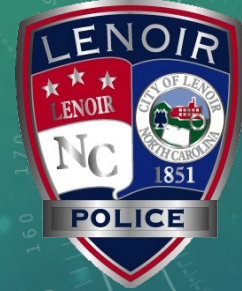


- **316** permits issued
- **182** code compliance cases opened
- **71** single-family home permits
- **59** zoning violations abated
- **6** City-abated properties

1325 UNDERDOWN AVE

 **CITY OF LENOIR**
PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT





POLICE *BY THE NUMBERS*

- ***\$2.68 million*** seized in illegal narcotics including assistance to other agencies
- ***10,409*** training hours
- ***39,566*** calls for service
- ***2,327*** pieces of evidence processed
- ***250*** properties investigated, ***177*** successfully abated



PUBLIC UTILITIES *BY THE NUMBERS*



- More than **2.2 BILLION** gallons of water treated
- **1.26 BILLION** gallons of wastewater treated
- Maintained **219 miles of water line.**
- Maintained **215 miles of sewer line.**



PUBLIC WORKS *BY THE NUMBERS*

- **7,100** tons of garbage collected
- **10** streets/sections paved
- **128** burials and **153** cemetery plots sold
- **53** off-site vehicle service calls
- **16** soccer and baseball fields painted
- **16** new planters in Downtown Lenoir



THANK YOU TO TEAM LENOIR!

- City Manager
- City Clerk
- Communication & Public Information
- Finance / HR / IT
- Fire
- Parks & Recreation
- Planning
- Police
- Public Utilities
- Public Works
- Special Projects



Lenoir and Regional Population Employment and Housing Updates

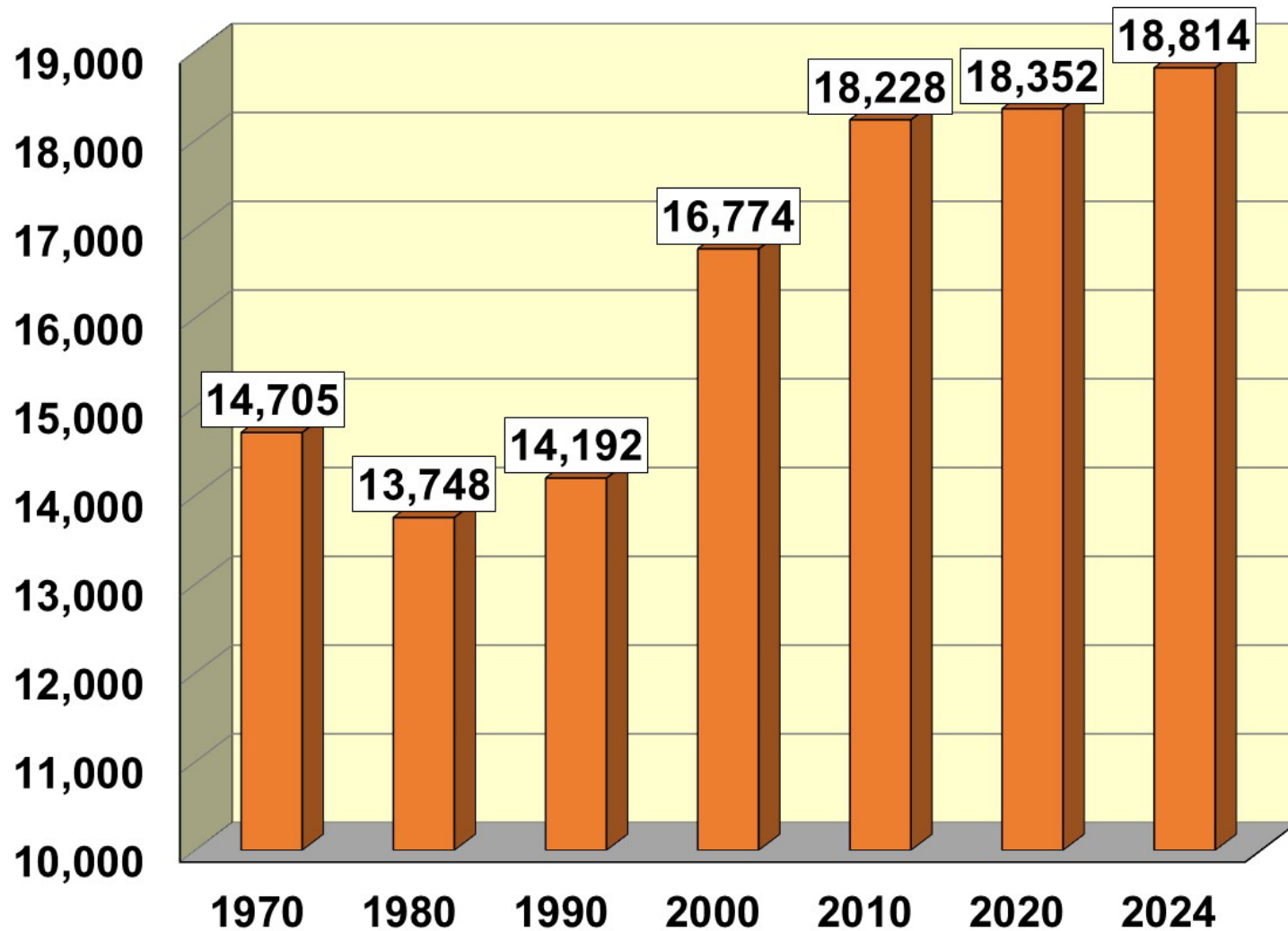
Lenoir Council Retreat
February 6, 2026

Lenoir Population Trends



Lenoir Population, 1970 to 2024

210



Source: 1970-2020 Census, US Census Bureau;
2024 Estimate from NC Office of Management and Budget.

Lenoir Population by Age Group, 2020 to 2020-2024 ACS

211

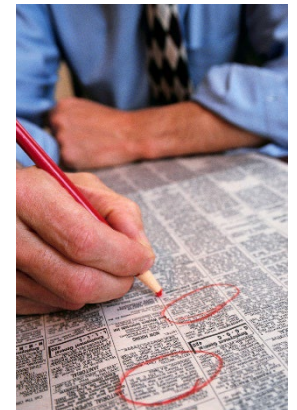
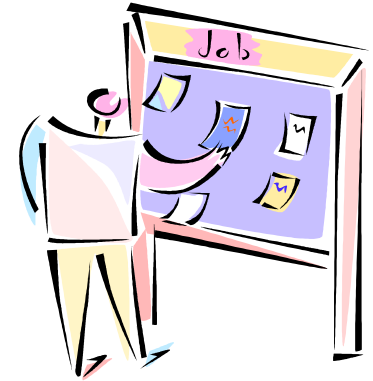
Age Group	2020 Census	2020-2024 ACS Estimate	Change 2020 to 2020-2024	% Change 2020 to 2020-2024
Under 5 Years	1,056	1,257	201	19.0%
5 to 9 Years	1,093	783	-310	-28.4%
10 to 14 Years	1,138	1,036	-102	-9.0%
15 to 19 Years	1,189	914	-275	-23.1%
20 to 24 Years	1,003	949	-54	-5.4%
25 to 34 Years	2,209	2,166	-43	-1.9%
35 to 44 Years	2,166	1,848	-318	-14.7%
45 to 54 Years	2,328	2,435	107	4.6%
55 to 59 Years	1,221	1,235	14	1.1%
60 to 64 Years	1,226	1,477	251	20.5%
65 to 74 Years	2,096	2,424	328	15.6%
75 to 84 Years	1,166	1,312	146	12.5%
85 Years & Over	461	463	2	0.4%
Total	18,352	18,299	-53	-0.3%

Caldwell County Population Projections by Age Group, 2024-2044

212

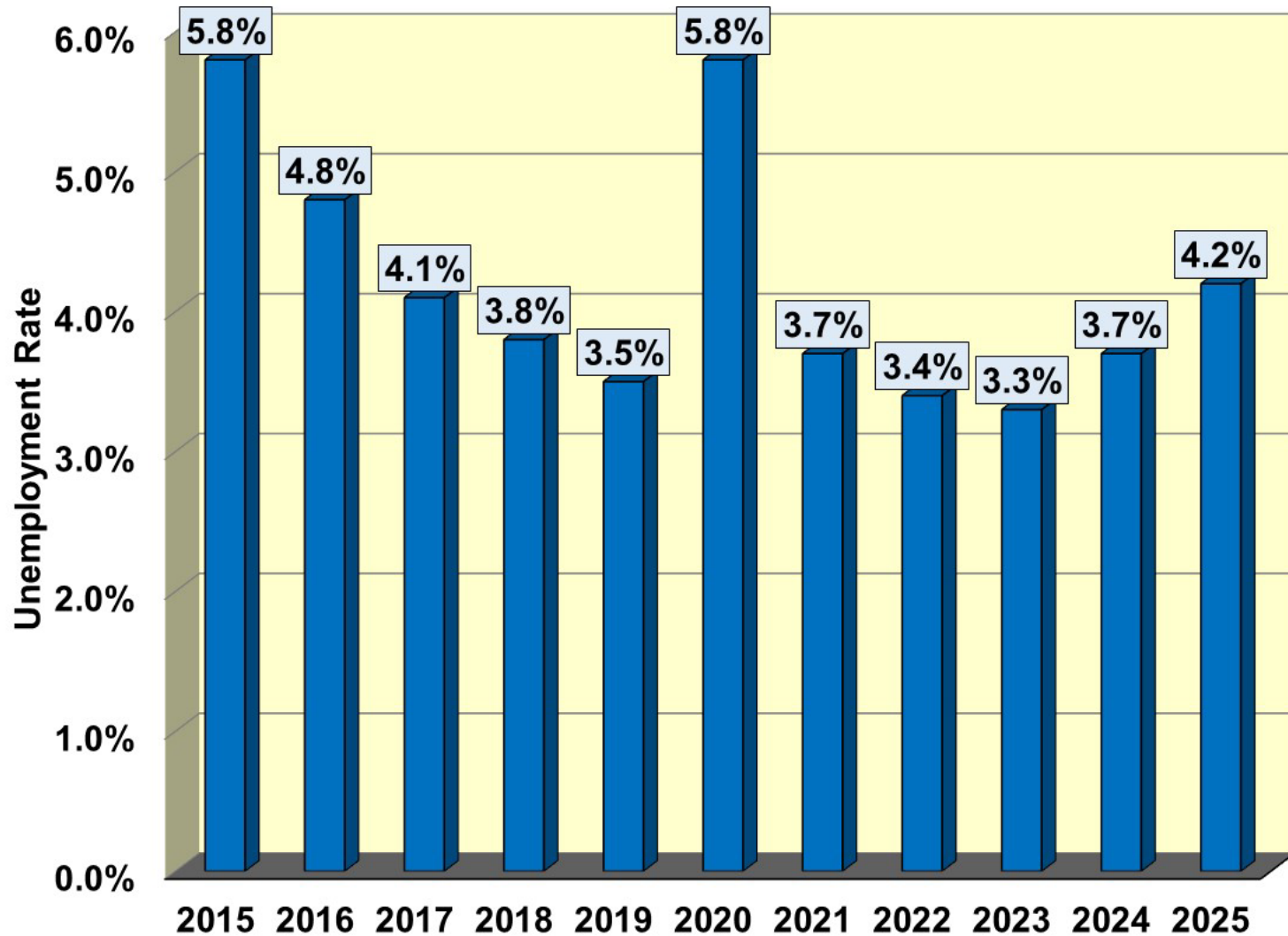
Age Group	2024 Estimate	2044 Projection	Change 2024-44	% Change 2024-44
Under 5 Years	3,835	3,904	69	1.8%
5 to 9 Years	4,316	4,104	-212	-4.9%
10 to 14 Years	4,553	4,371	-182	-4.0%
15 to 19 Years	5,215	4,624	-591	-11.3%
20 to 24 Years	4,566	4,437	-129	-2.8%
25 to 34 Years	10,092	10,308	216	2.1%
35 to 44 Years	9,284	11,409	2,125	22.9%
45 to 54 Years	10,535	11,313	778	7.4%
55 to 59 Years	6,046	4,981	-1,065	-17.6%
60 to 64 Years	6,175	4,524	-1,651	-26.7%
65 to 74 Years	10,330	9,303	-1,027	-9.9%
75 to 84 Years	5,887	7,331	1,444	24.5%
85 Years and Over	1,502	2,648	1,146	76.3%
Total	82,336	83,257	921	1.1%

Caldwell County & Lenoir Unemployment, Labor Force, and Industry by Employment Trends



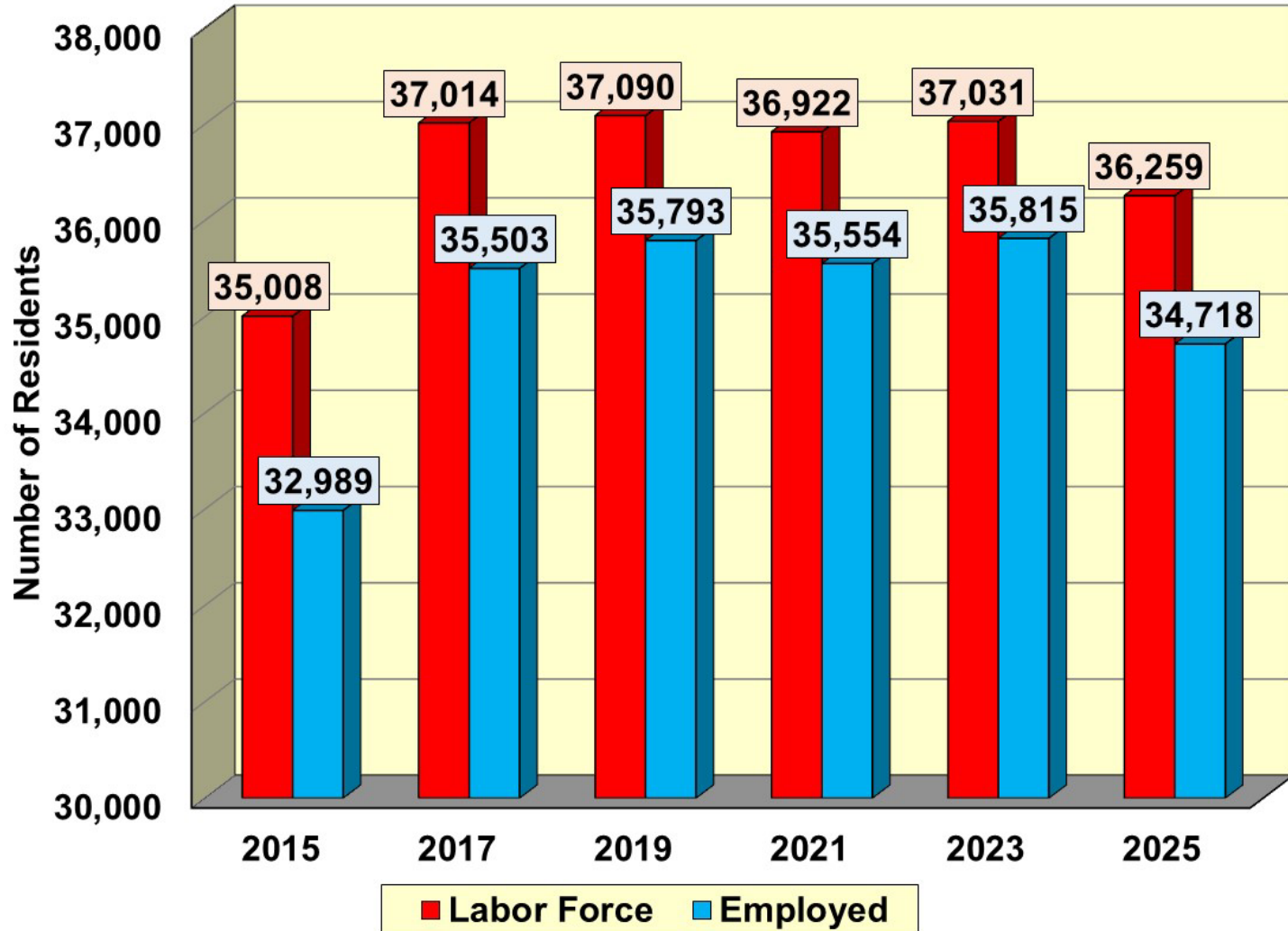
Caldwell County Unemployment Rates- November 2015-November 2025

214



Caldwell County Labor Force and Number of Employed Workers, November 2015-November 2025

215

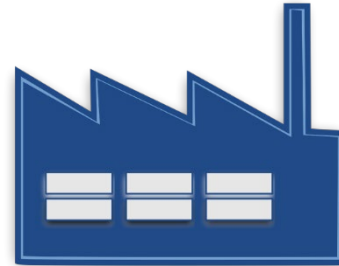


Lenoir Employment by Industry, 2020-2024 ACS

216

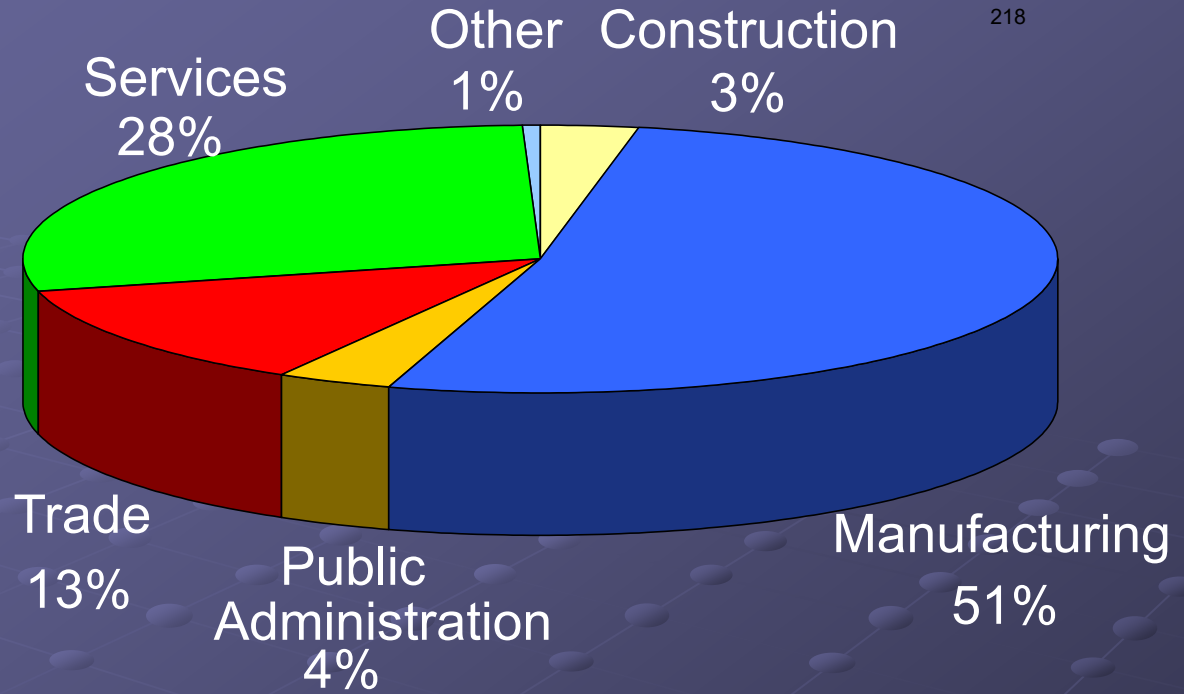
Industry	2020-2024 ACS	% of Employed Population
Employed Population	7,652	100.0
Agriculture	1	0.0
Construction	502	6.6
Manufacturing	1,102	14.6
Wholesale Trade	240	3.2
Retail Trade	825	10.9
Transportation/Warehousing/Utilities	409	5.4
Information	52	0.7
Finance/Insurance/ Real Estate	382	5.1
Professional Services	897	11.9
Education and Health Care	1,896	25.1
Arts/ Entertainment/Recreation	715	9.5
Other Services	330	4.4
Public Administration	211	2.8

Hickory MSA and Caldwell County Employment by Industry



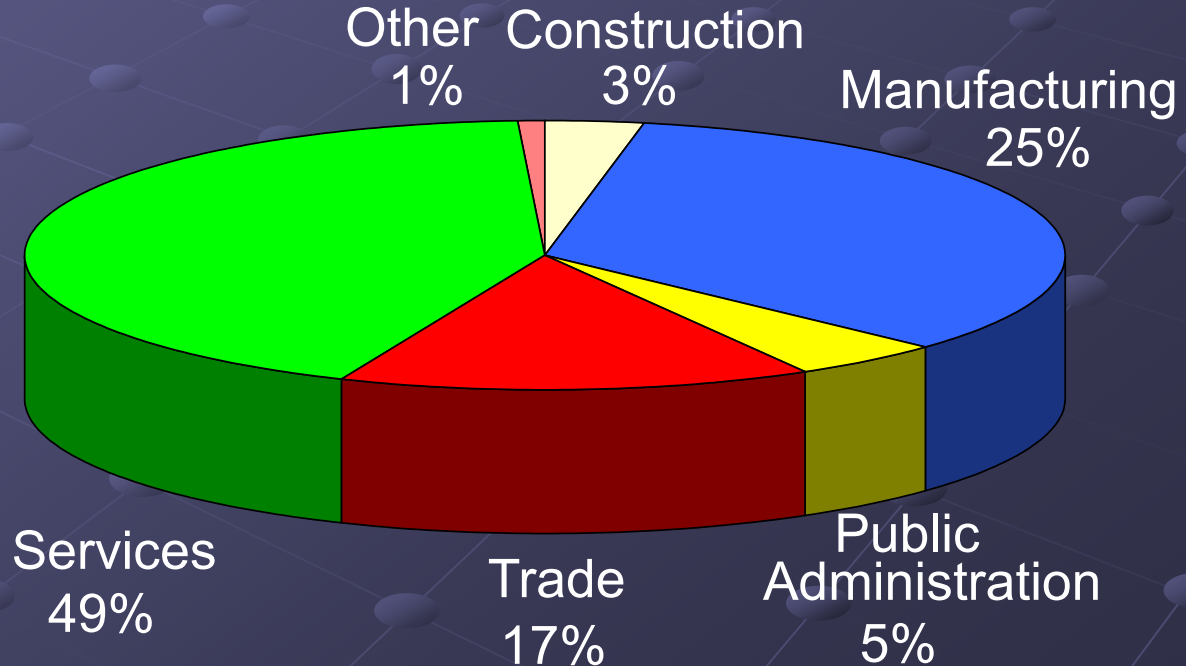
Hickory MSA Employment Distribution

Hickory Metro Jobs 1990



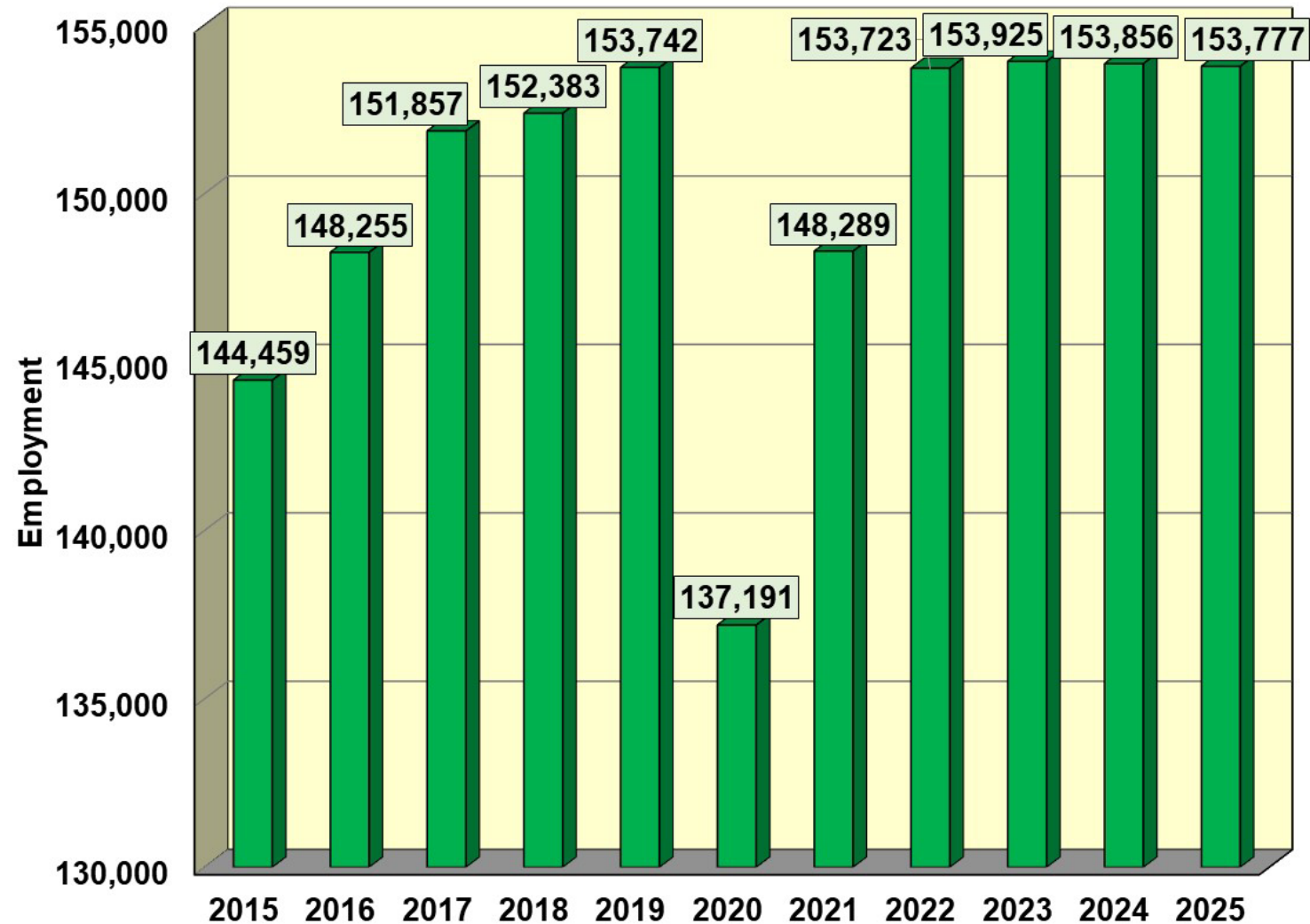
Source: Labor and Economic
Analysis Division, NC
Department of Commerce.

Hickory Metro Jobs 2025



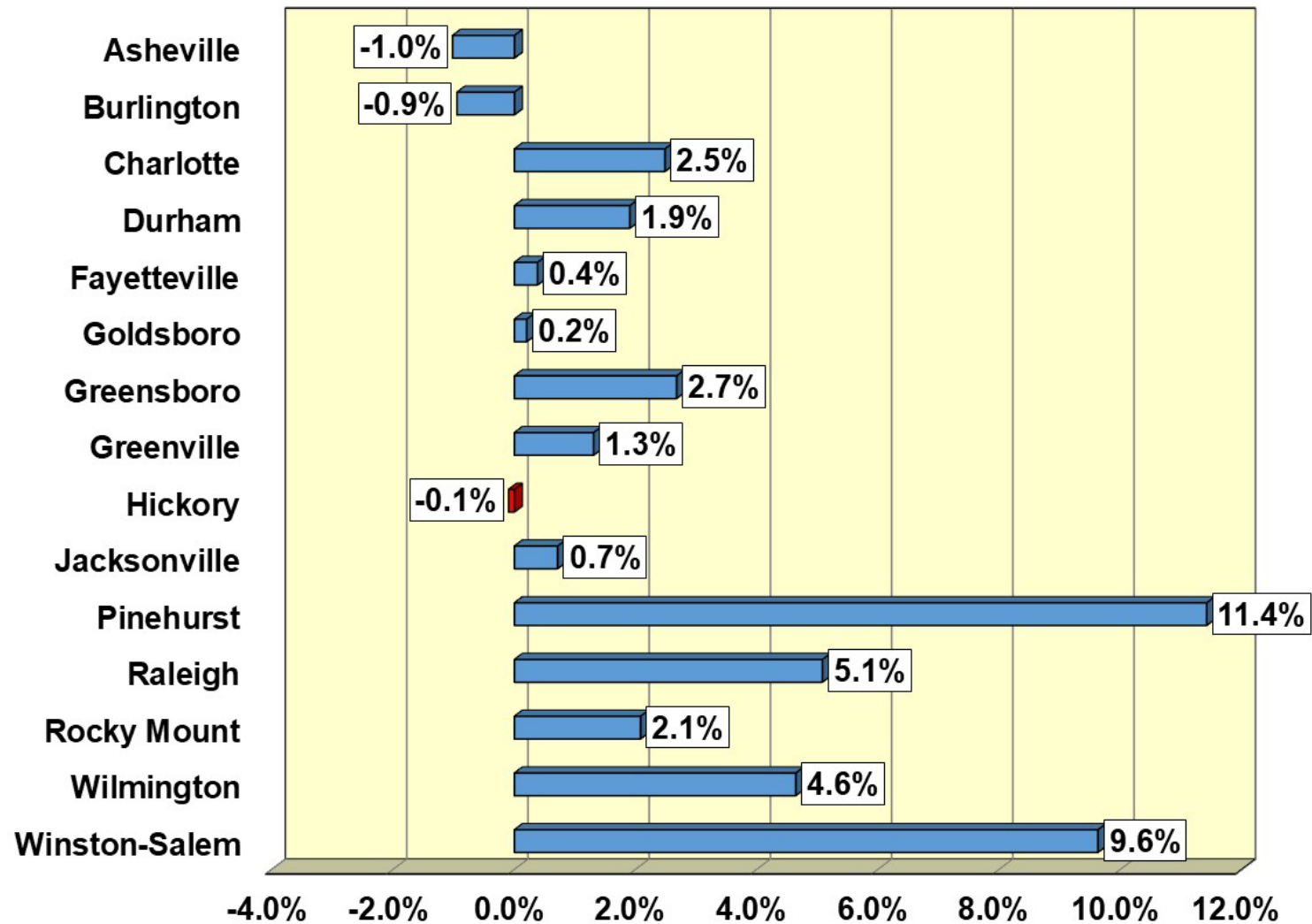
**2023 US
Manufacturing: 9%**

Hickory MSA Employment, 2nd Qtr. 2015-2nd Qtr. 2025

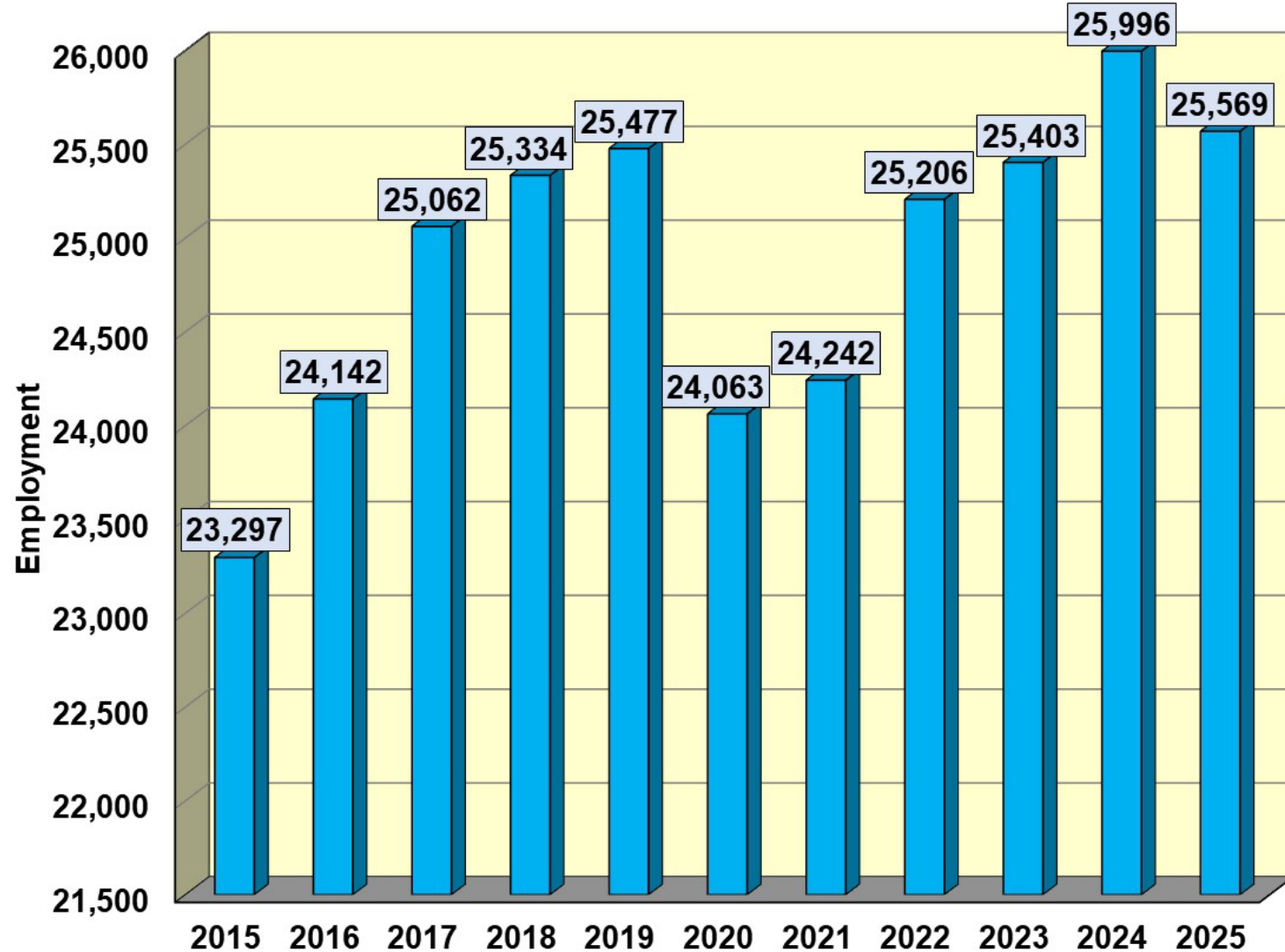


NC MSA Employment Change by Percentage, 2nd Quarter 2023-2nd Quarter 2025

220



Caldwell County Employment, 2nd Qtr. 2015-2025

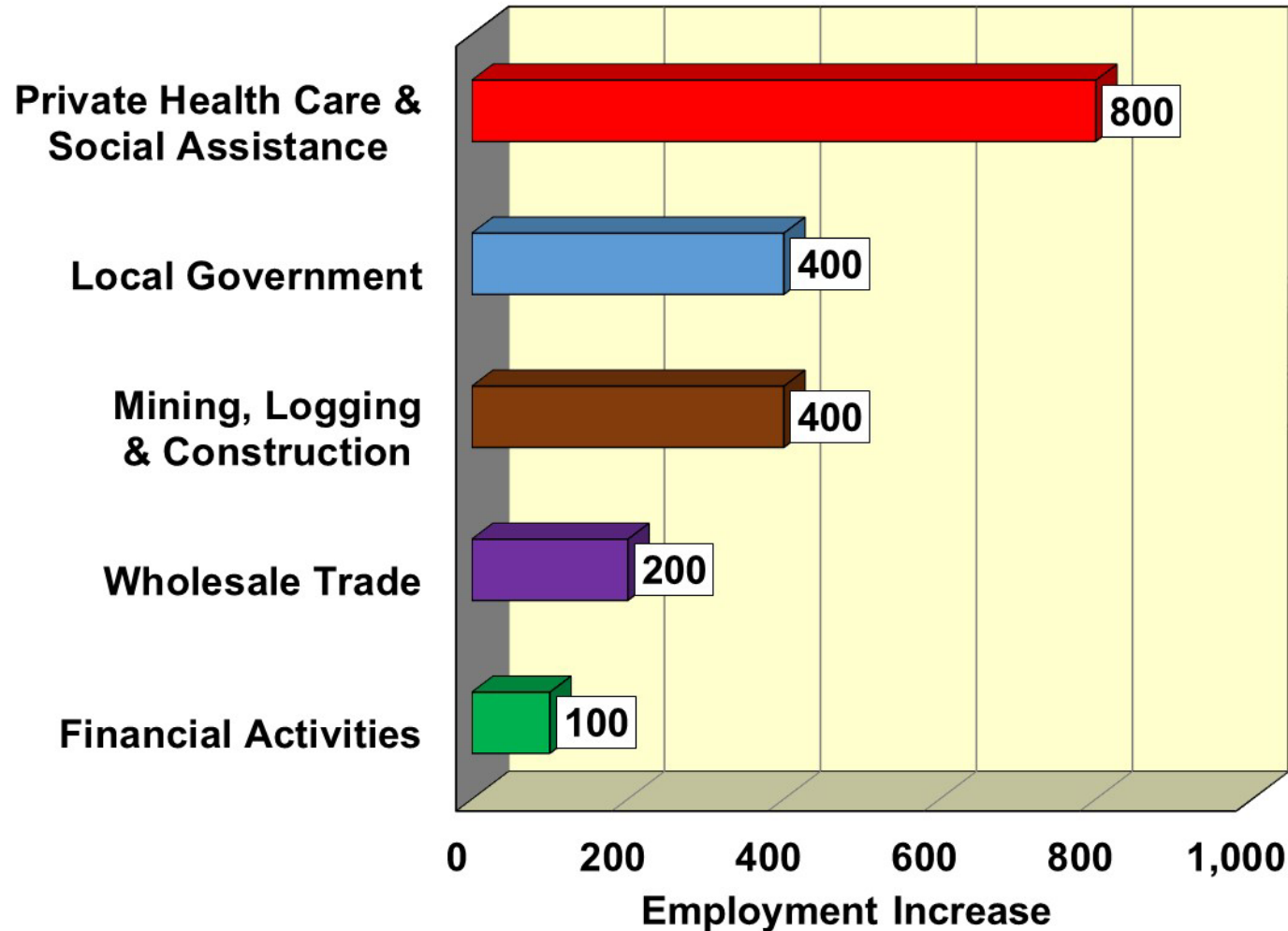


Recent Employment Trends November 2024- November 2025

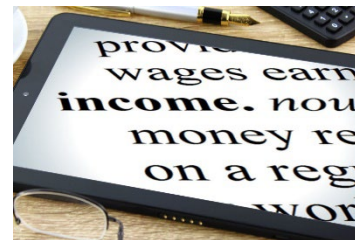


Hickory MSA Job Gains by Sector, November 2024-2025 (Current Employment Statistics)

223



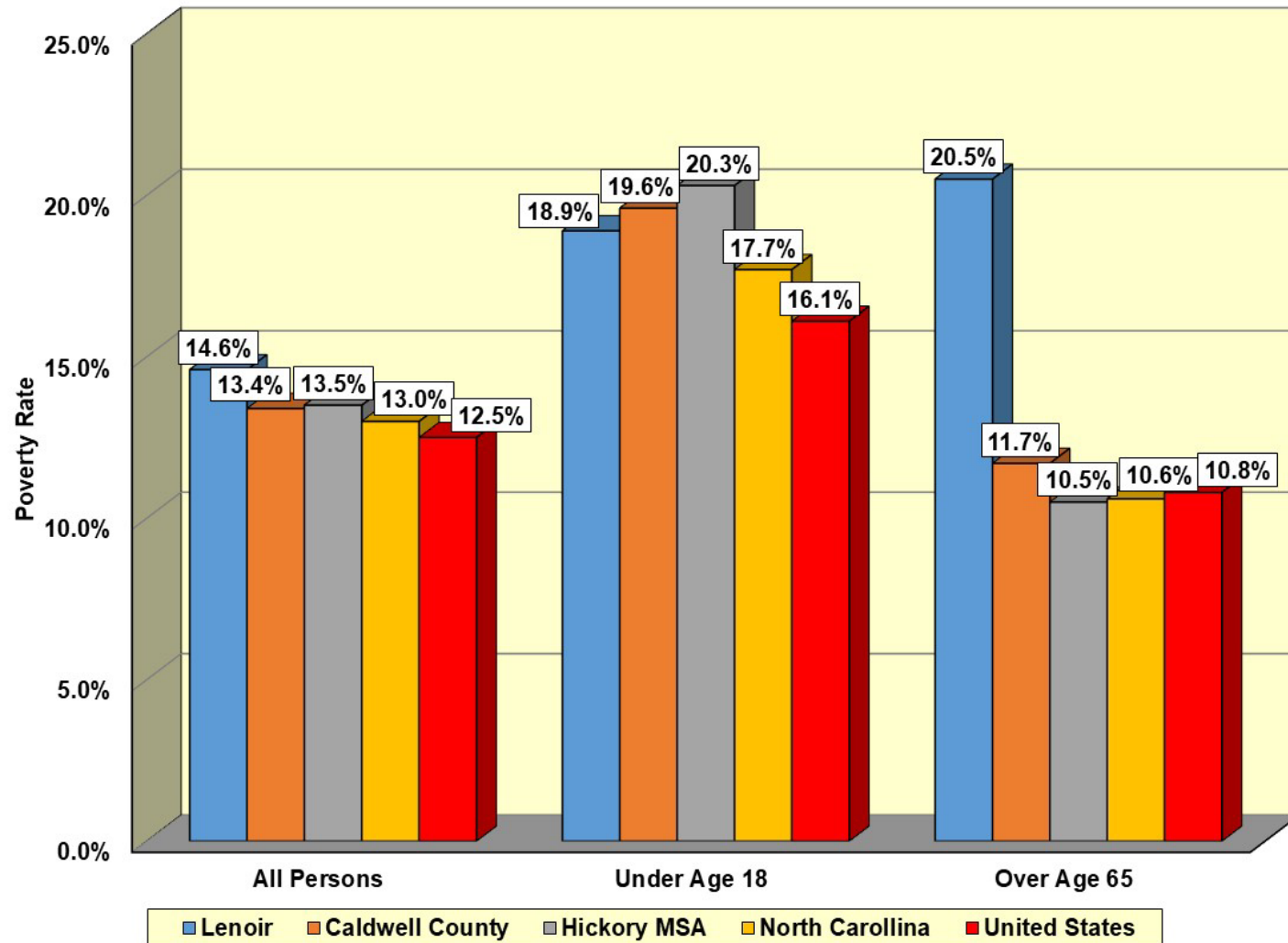
Lenoir Income and Poverty Levels



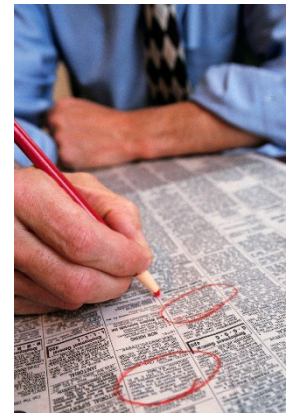
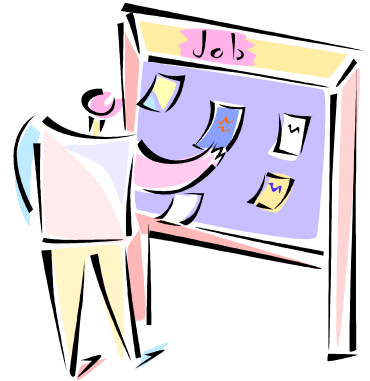
Lenoir Income Statistics, 2020-2024 ACS ²²⁵

Households	2020-2024 ACS	% of Households
Total Households	8,199	100.0
Households Earning Less than \$25,000	1,482	18.0
Households Earning between \$25,000 and \$50,000	2,138	26.1
Households Earning between \$50,000 and \$100,000	2,523	30.8
Households Earning more than \$100,000	2,056	25.1
Median Household Income	\$49,910	

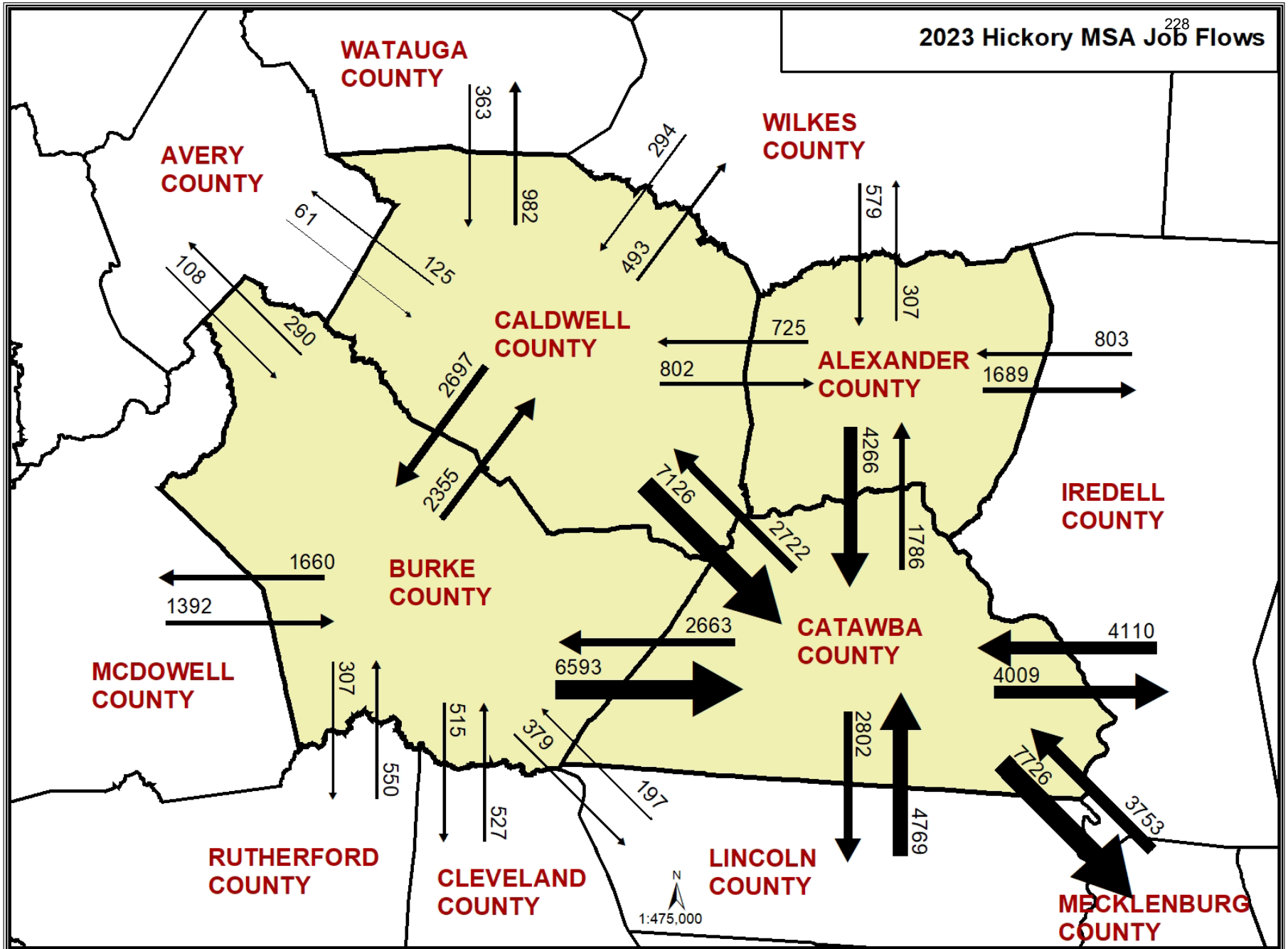
Poverty Rate Comparisons, 2020-2024 ACS



Hickory MSA and Caldwell County Job Market



2023 Hickory MSA Job Flows²²⁸



Hickory MSA Unemployed Persons and Number of Job Openings by County, July 2025

County	Number of Unemployed (Not Seasonally Adjusted)	Number of Job Openings	Number of Unemployed Persons per Job Opening
Alexander	573	294	1.95
Burke	1,511	1,291	1.17
Caldwell	1,356	995	1.36
Catawba	2,787	4,502	0.62
MSA Total	6,227	7,082	0.88

Caldwell County Job Openings by Occupation and Advertised Wage Rates, December 2025 (Top 10 by Number of Job Openings)

Occupational Title	Job Openings	Entry Level Wage*	Mean (Average) Wage	Median Wage	Experienced Wage
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	261	\$53,183	\$80,445	\$70,470	\$117,253
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	76	\$38,010	\$44,707	\$45,531	\$50,719
Sales and Related Occupations	75	\$27,213	\$51,337	\$33,280	\$87,500
Production Occupations	72	\$35,769	\$46,054	\$44,262	\$57,824
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	66	\$38,227	\$52,192	\$51,356	\$67,248
Management Occupations	66	\$52,171	\$72,883	\$67,594	\$97,121
Healthcare Support Occupations	59	\$32,184	\$38,079	\$33,342	\$46,572
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	52	\$27,040	\$30,869	\$32,240	\$34,013
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	44	\$36,441	\$42,611	\$45,531	\$46,835
Community and Social Service Occupations	41	\$44,899	\$57,690	\$62,291	\$68,891

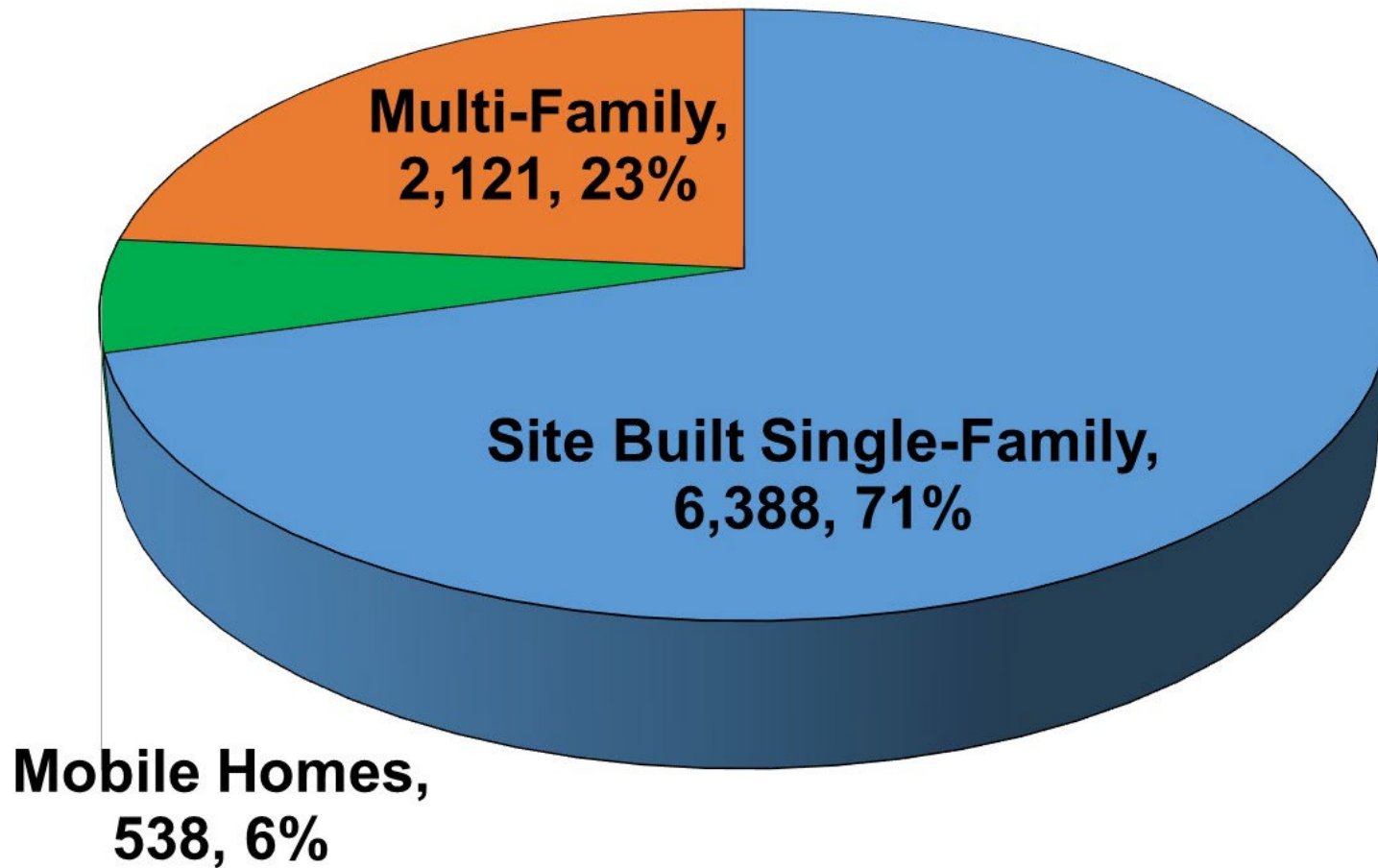
*Occupation Type for 619 Job Openings in Caldwell County Could Not Be Determined
Source: NC Works Online, NC Department of Commerce 2026.

Hickory MSA and Lenoir Housing Profile

Housing Unit Trends



Lenoir Housing Distribution, 2020-2024 ACS²³²



Hickory MSA New Residential Building Permits, 2023-2025

233

	2023	2024	2025
County	Single-Family Units	Single-Family Units	Single-Family Units
Alexander	101	94	124
Burke	265	306	387
Caldwell	285	248	282
Catawba	1,003	1,321	1,265
MSA Total	1,654	1,969	2,058
	2023	2024	2025
County	Multi-Family Units	Multi-Family Units	Multi-Family Units
Alexander	0	2	5
Burke	63	154	36
Caldwell	2	0	0
Catawba	453	667	593
MSA Total	518	823	634
	2023	2024	2025
Region	Total Units	Total Units	Total Units
MSA Total	2,172	2,792	2,692

Western Piedmont (Hickory MSA) Site Built Single-Family Permits, 2023-2025

● Site-Built
Single-Family Permits



Municipal Limits



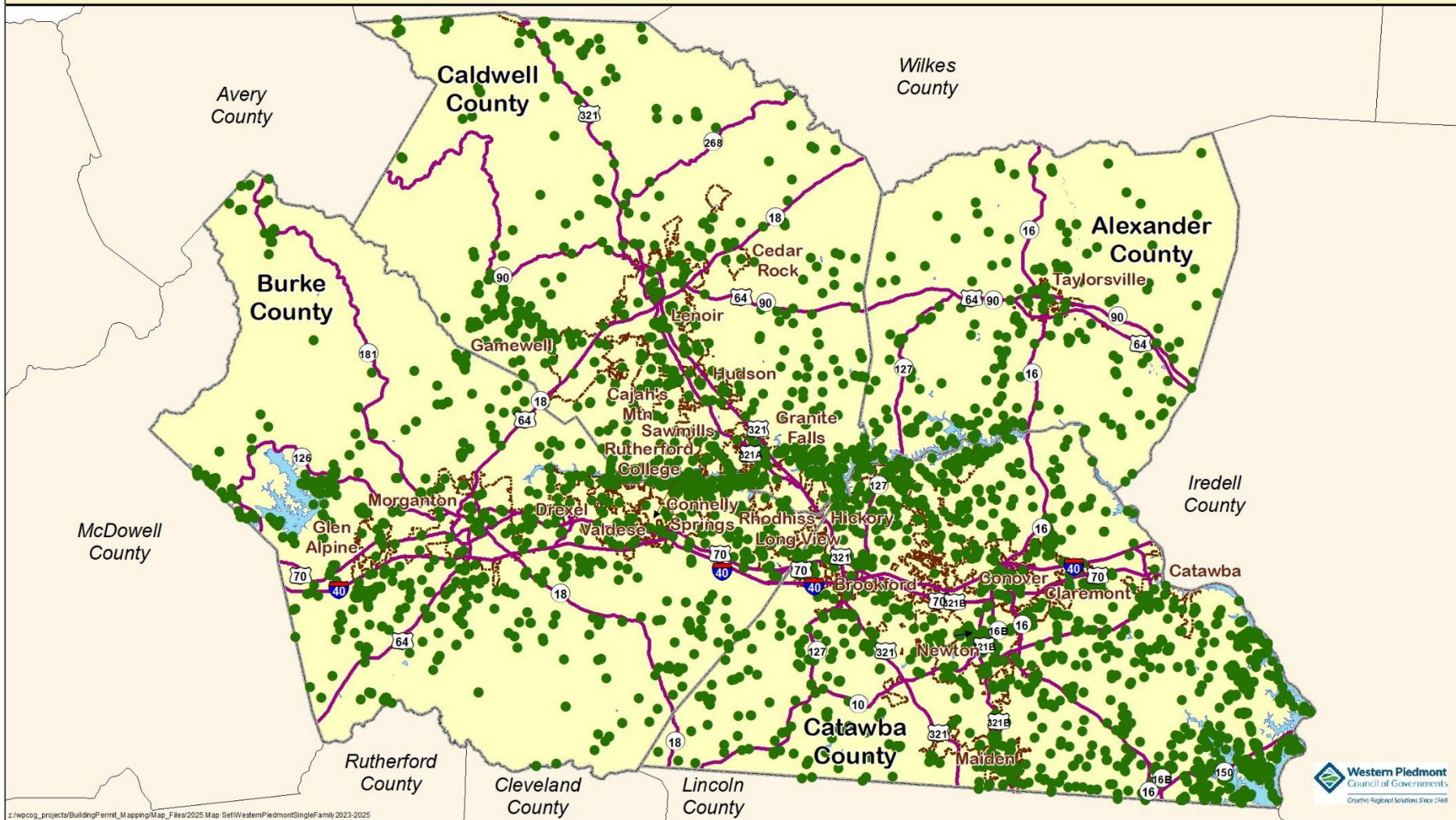
Major Roads



Other Roads



0 1.5 3 6 Miles



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Caldwell County Site Built Single-Family Permits, 2023-2025

235

● Site-Built
Single-Family Permits



Municipal Limits



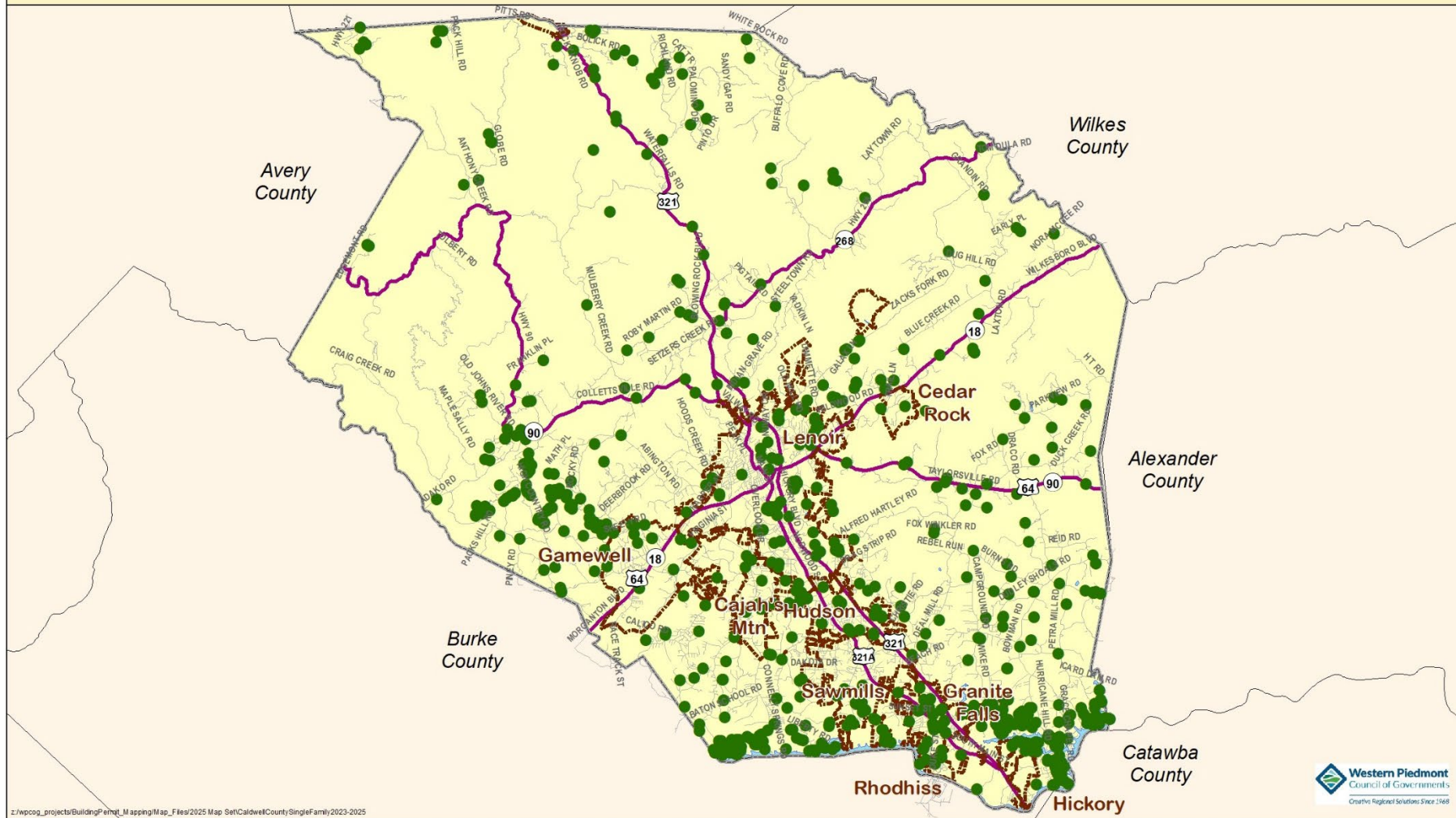
Major Roads



Other Roads



0 1.25 2.5 5 Miles



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Lenoir Area Site Built Single-Family Permits 2023-2025



Counties/Municipalities Exceeding 1% Growth Target, 2023-2025 Average

237

- Catawba County All
- Brookford
- Catawba Town
- Connelly Springs
- Conover
- Glen Alpine
- Hickory
- Hudson
- Maiden
- Newton
- Rutherford College
- Valdese
- Catawba County Town Municipal
- Hickory MSA

Western Piedmont (Hickory MSA) Site Built Single-Family Permits, 2025²²⁸

● Site-Built
Single-Family Permits



Municipal Limits



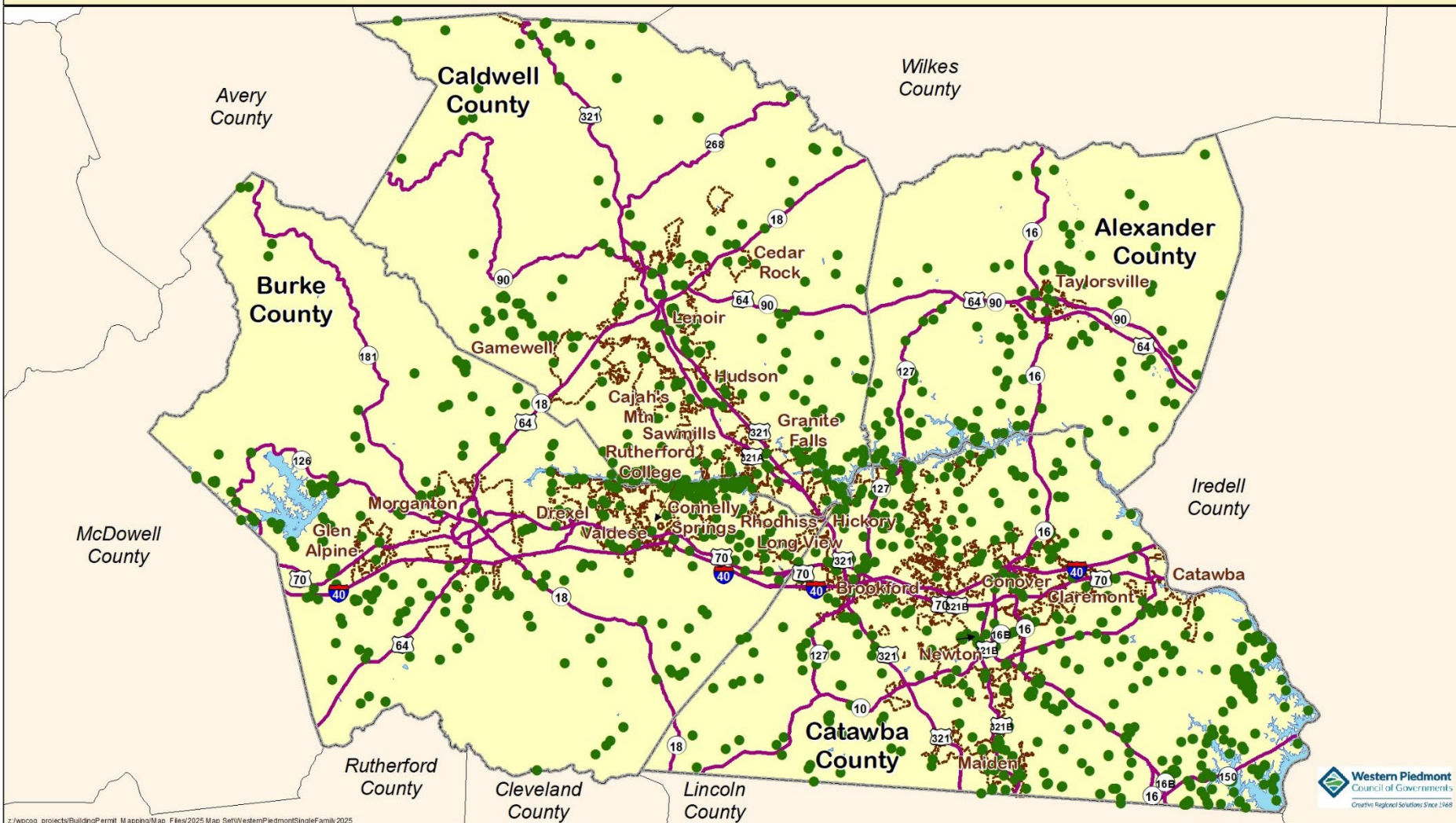
Major Roads



Other Roads



0 1.5 3 6 Miles



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Caldwell County Site Built Single-Family Permits, 2025

239

● Site-Built
Single-Family Permits



Municipal Limits



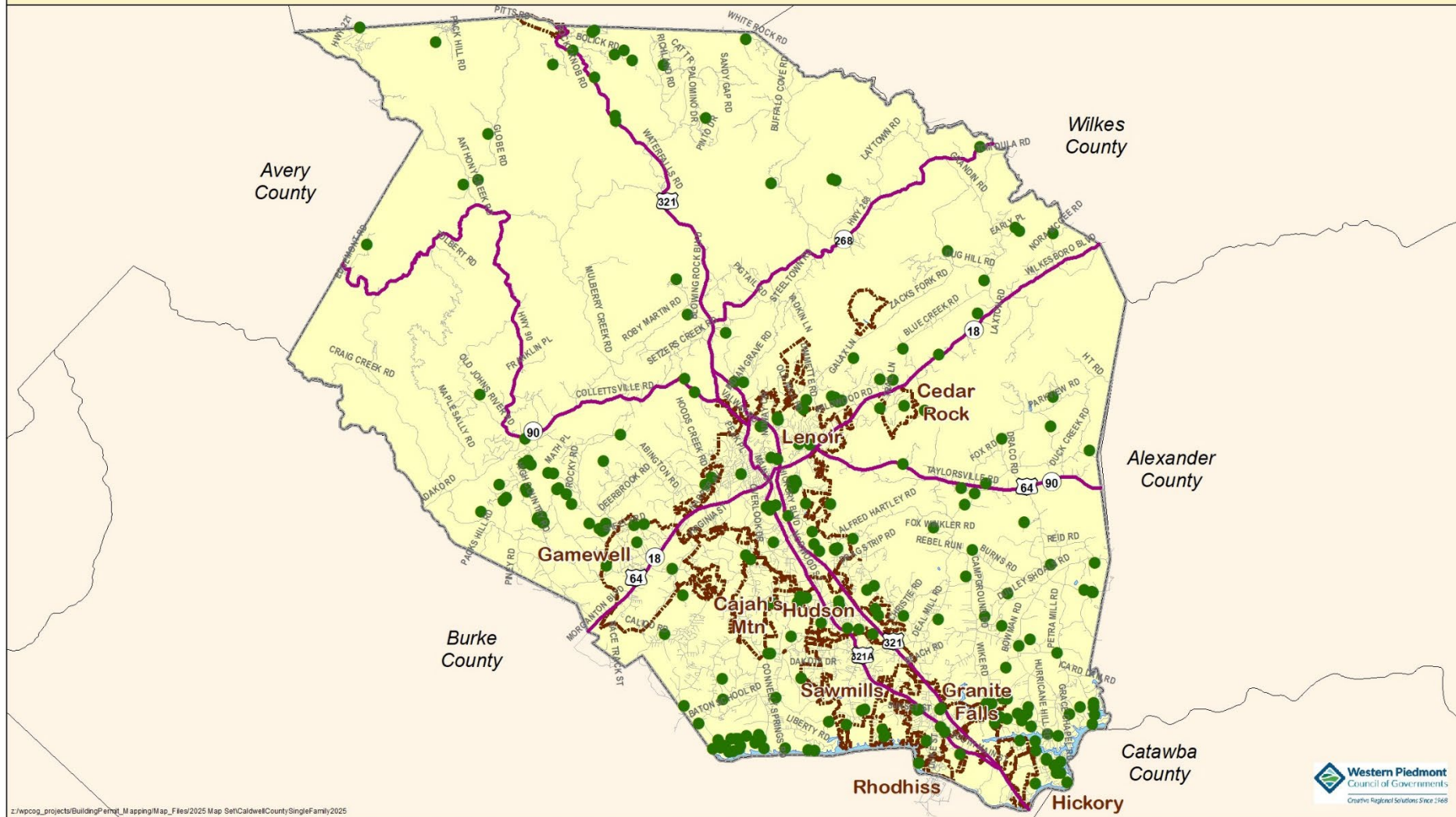
Major Roads



Other Roads



0 1.25 2.5 5 Miles



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Lenoir Area Site Built Single-Family Permits 2025



Counties/Municipalities Exceeding 1% Growth Target, 2025

241

- Burke County All
- Catawba County All
- Brookford
- Catawba Town
- Cedar Rock
- Connelly Springs
- Conover
- Hickory
- Hildebran
- Maiden
- Newton
- Rutherford College
- Waldese
- Burke County Town Municipal
- Caldwell County Town Municipal
- Catawba County Town Municipal
- Hickory MSA

Local Market Update for December 2025

A research tool provided by the Canopy Realtor® Association
FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT A REALTOR®

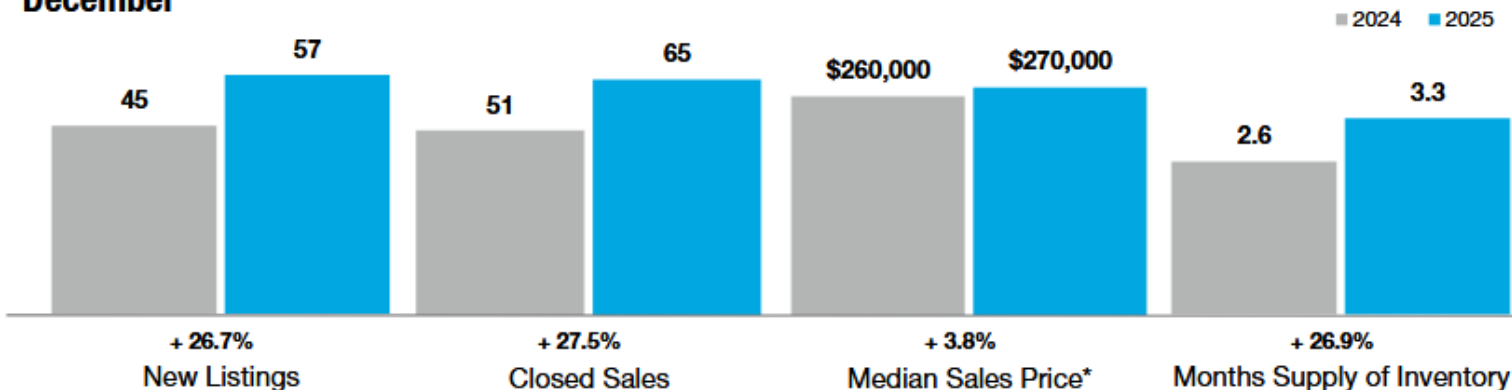
Caldwell County

North Carolina

Key Metrics	December			Year to Date		
	2024	2025	Percent Change	Thru 12-2024	Thru 12-2025	Percent Change
New Listings	45	57	+ 26.7%	953	1,075	+ 12.8%
Pending Sales	49	48	- 2.0%	745	785	+ 5.4%
Closed Sales	51	65	+ 27.5%	748	776	+ 3.7%
Median Sales Price*	\$260,000	\$270,000	+ 3.8%	\$255,990	\$267,000	+ 4.3%
Average Sales Price*	\$284,596	\$335,536	+ 17.9%	\$317,926	\$329,616	+ 3.7%
Percent of Original List Price Received*	93.1%	92.0%	- 1.2%	95.6%	93.7%	- 2.0%
List to Close	83	89	+ 7.2%	80	87	+ 8.7%
Days on Market Until Sale	38	52	+ 36.8%	38	47	+ 23.7%
Cumulative Days on Market Until Sale	43	55	+ 27.9%	41	54	+ 31.7%
Average List Price	\$308,250	\$377,780	+ 22.6%	\$358,489	\$371,340	+ 3.6%
Inventory of Homes for Sale	162	219	+ 35.2%	--	--	--
Months Supply of Inventory	2.6	3.3	+ 26.9%	--	--	--

* Does not account for sale concessions and/or downpayment assistance. | Percent changes are calculated using rounded figures and can sometimes look extreme due to small sample size.

December



Local Market Update for December 2025

A research tool provided by the Canopy Realtor® Association
FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT A REALTOR®

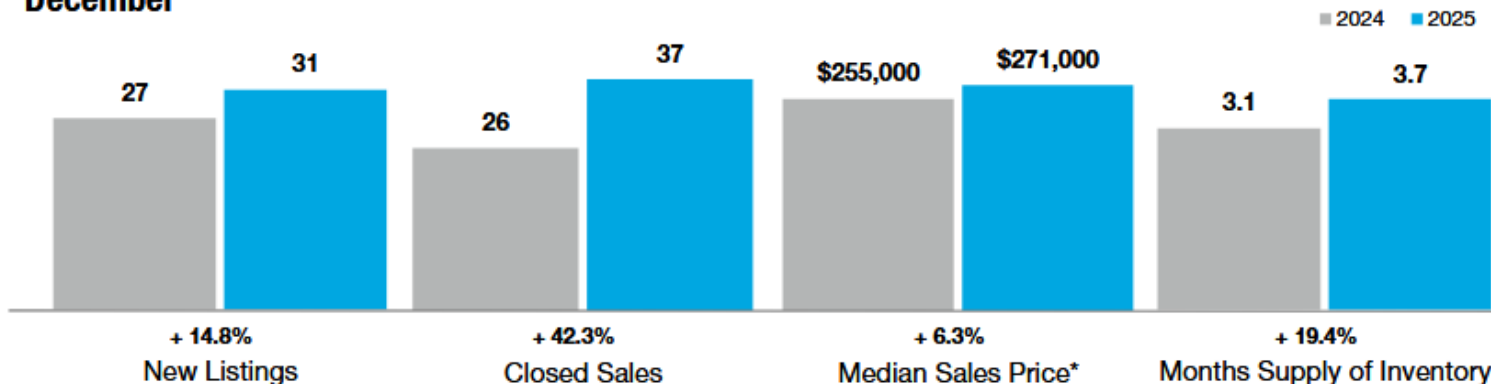
Lenoir

North Carolina

Key Metrics	December			Year to Date		
	2024	2025	Percent Change	Thru 12-2024	Thru 12-2025	Percent Change
New Listings	27	31	+ 14.8%	537	605	+ 12.7%
Pending Sales	26	18	- 30.8%	408	437	+ 7.1%
Closed Sales	26	37	+ 42.3%	410	439	+ 7.1%
Median Sales Price*	\$255,000	\$271,000	+ 6.3%	\$248,000	\$253,000	+ 2.0%
Average Sales Price*	\$281,104	\$339,853	+ 20.9%	\$303,487	\$303,368	- 0.0%
Percent of Original List Price Received*	92.2%	91.9%	- 0.3%	95.0%	92.8%	- 2.3%
List to Close	69	92	+ 33.3%	82	92	+ 12.2%
Days on Market Until Sale	29	55	+ 89.7%	37	52	+ 40.5%
Cumulative Days on Market Until Sale	36	60	+ 66.7%	42	61	+ 45.2%
Average List Price	\$312,828	\$294,403	- 5.9%	\$340,375	\$351,937	+ 3.4%
Inventory of Homes for Sale	107	133	+ 24.3%	--	--	--
Months Supply of Inventory	3.1	3.7	+ 19.4%	--	--	--

* Does not account for sale concessions and/or downpayment assistance. | Percent changes are calculated using rounded figures and can sometimes look extreme due to small sample size.

December



Questions?



Harper Ave Streetscape

February 6, 2026

Agenda

- 1 Project Information
- 2 Community Input
- 3 Conceptual Design
- 4 Next Steps

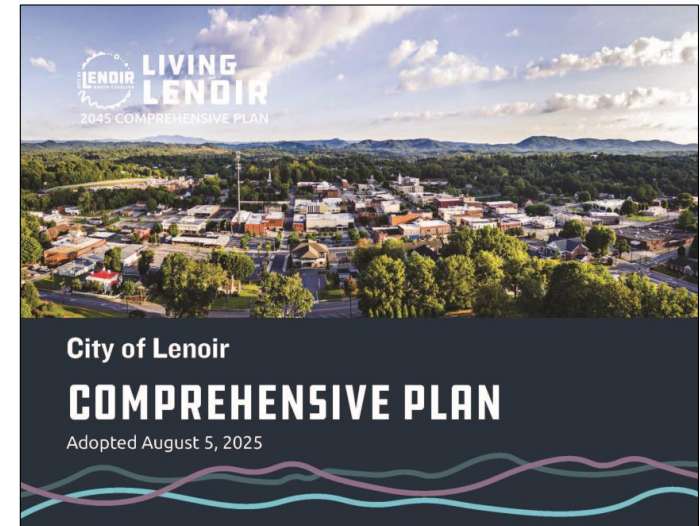
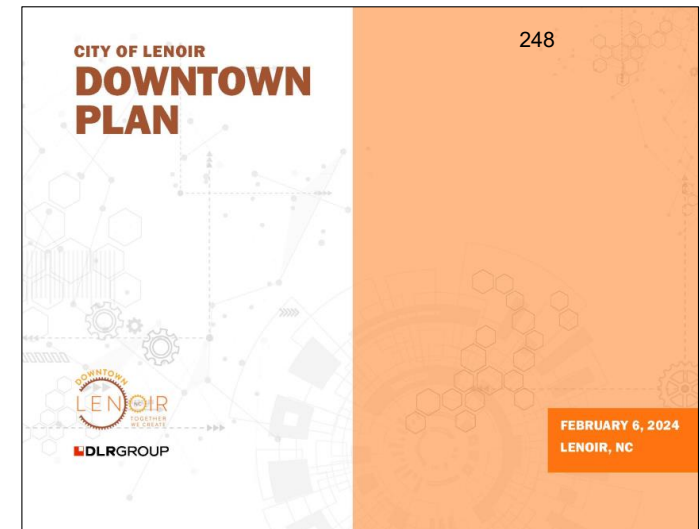


Project Information



Background

- Downtown Master Plan Implementation Item
 - Beautify entrance coming into downtown
 - Encourage downtown tourism
- Comprehensive Plan Implementation
 - Improved pedestrian infrastructure and safer crossings
 - Enhance community appearance and add street trees
 - Support local, small businesses
 - Stormwater management to increase resiliency from storm events



Project Information

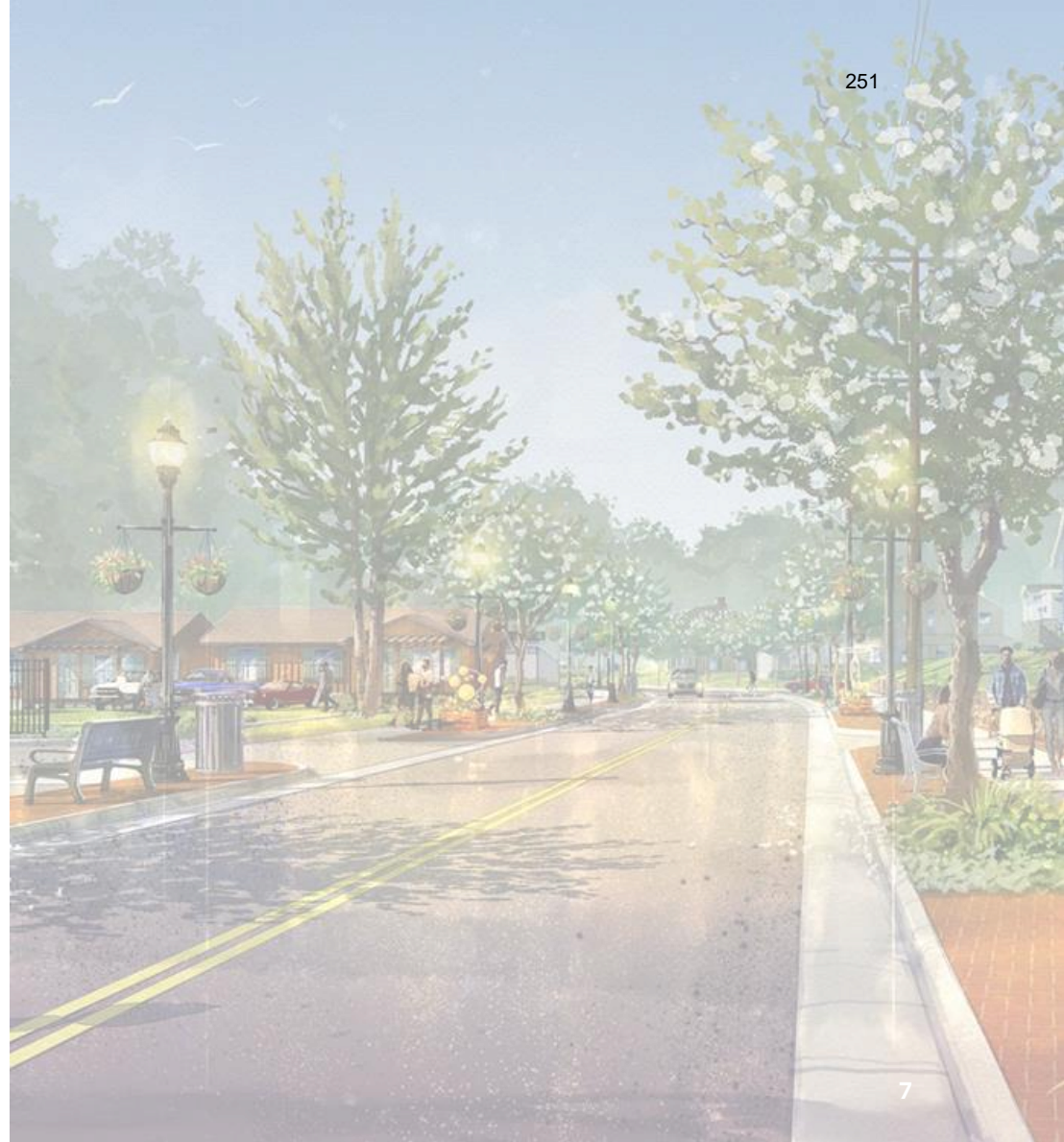
- Harper Ave Conceptual Design
- Repurpose center left-turn lane
- Widen sidewalks and add decorative pavers
- Add crosswalks and signage
- Incorporate street trees, landscaping, public art, benches, bike racks, trash cans, lighting
- Rebuild street, curb, and gutter
- Incorporate stormwater infrastructure





Existing Conditions

Community Input

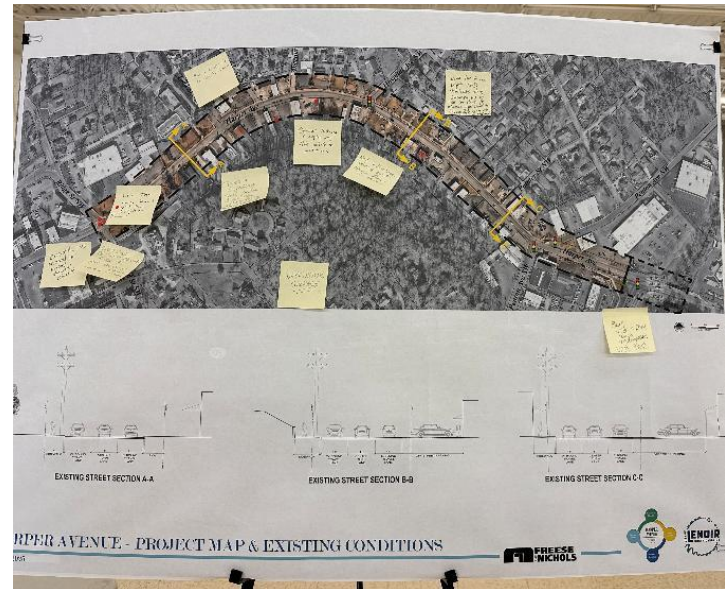


Community Input

- Community Meeting #1 on 6/17/2025
 - 23 people signed in
 - Overview of the project
- Community Meeting #2 on 1/6/2026
 - 13 people signed in
 - Detailed review of the project
- Future Engagement

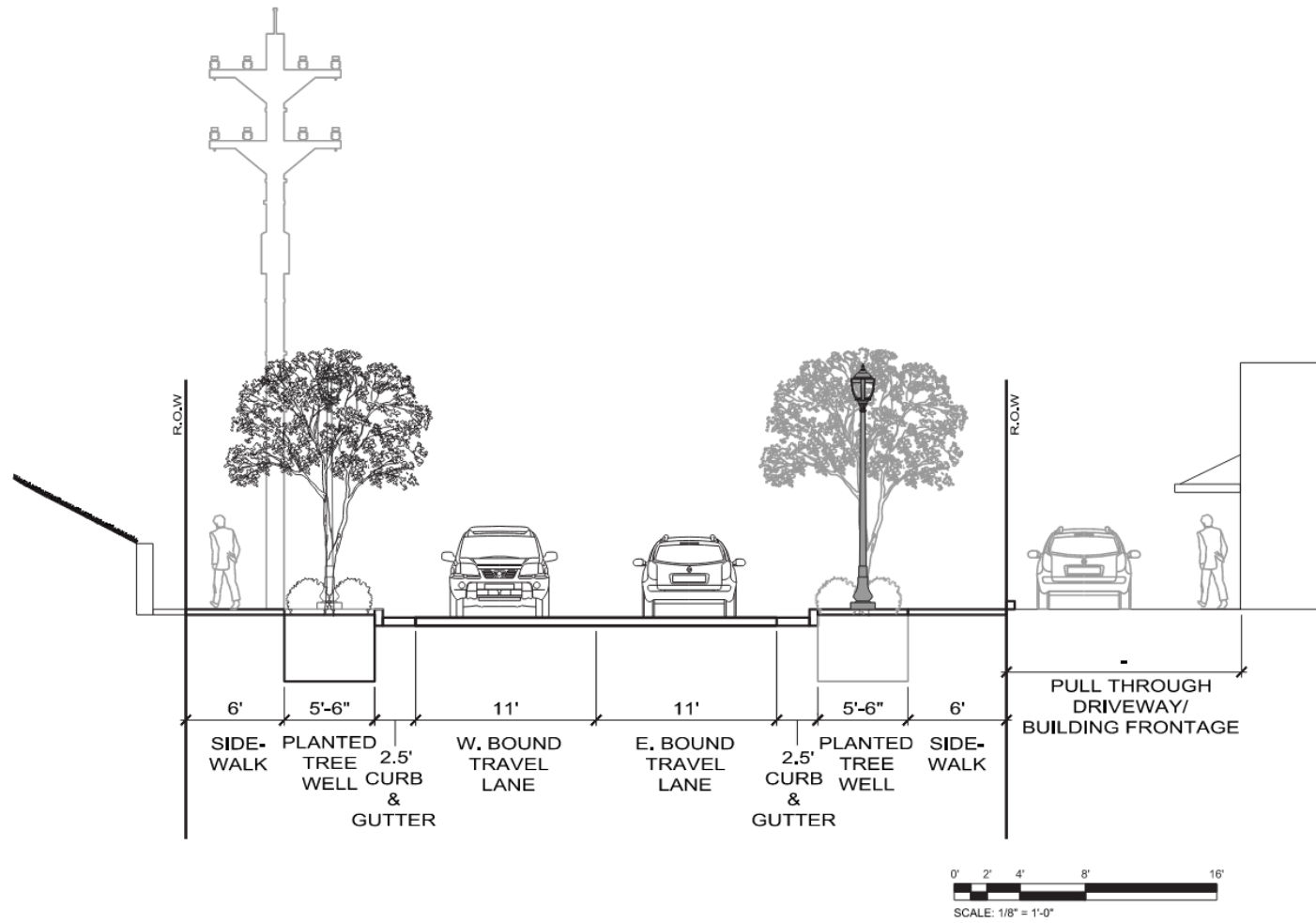


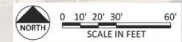
252



Conceptual Design





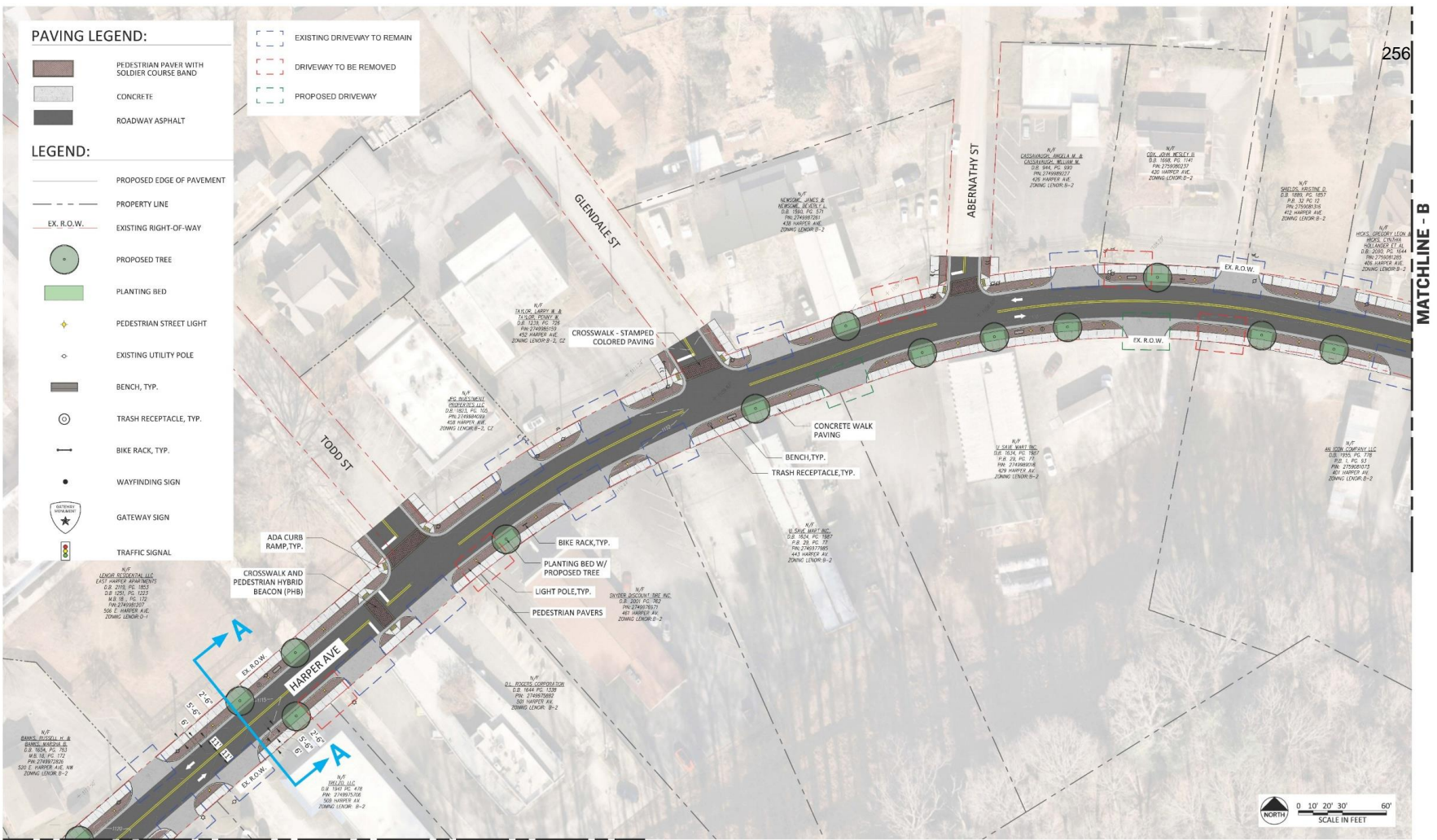


October 31, 2025

HARPER AVENUE STREETSCAPE CONCEPT PLAN - OPTION 1

CITY OF LENOIR, NORTH CAROLINA





MATCHLINE - A

MATCHLINE - B

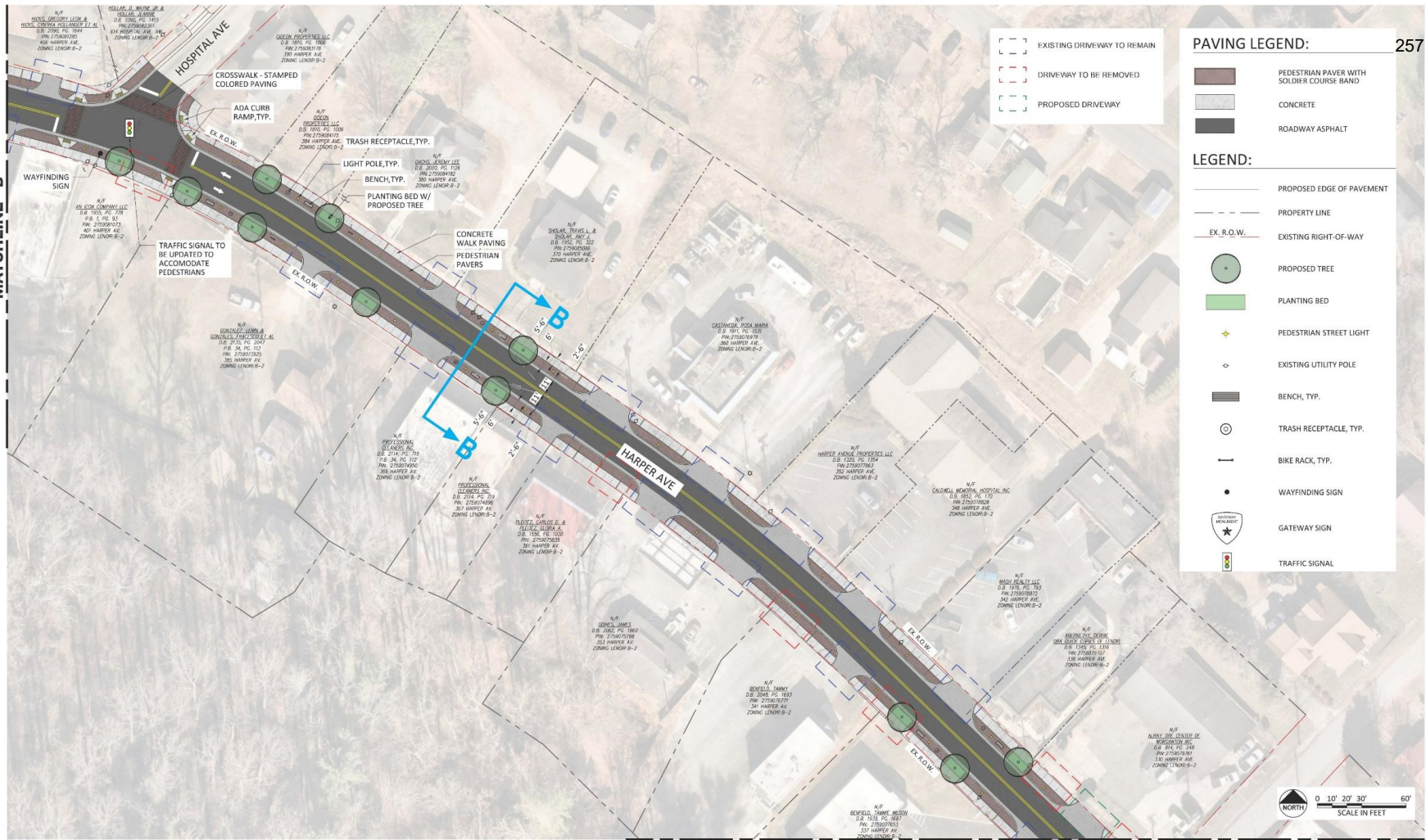
*This exhibit is conceptual in nature, and not intended for project permitting or construction. October 31, 2025

HARPER AVENUE STREETSCAPE CONCEPT PLAN - OPTION 1CITY OF LENOIR, NORTH CAROLINA

FREESE NICHOLS



MATCHLINE - B



MATCHLINE - C

- EXISTING DRIVEWAY TO REMAIN
- DRIVEWAY TO BE REMOVED
- PROPOSED DRIVEWAY

PAVING LEGEND:

- PEDESTRIAN PAVEMENT WITH SOLID COURSE BAND
- CONCRETE
- ROADWAY ASPHALT

LEGEND:

- PROPOSED EDGE OF PAVEMENT
- PROPERTY LINE
- EXISTING RIGHT-OF-WAY
- PROPOSED TREE
- PLANTING BED
- PEDESTRIAN STREET LIGHT
- EXISTING UTILITY POLE
- BENCH, TYP.
- TRASH RECEPTACLE, TYP.
- BIKE RACK, TYP.
- WAYFINDING SIGN
- GATEWAY SIGN
- TRAFFIC SIGNAL

257

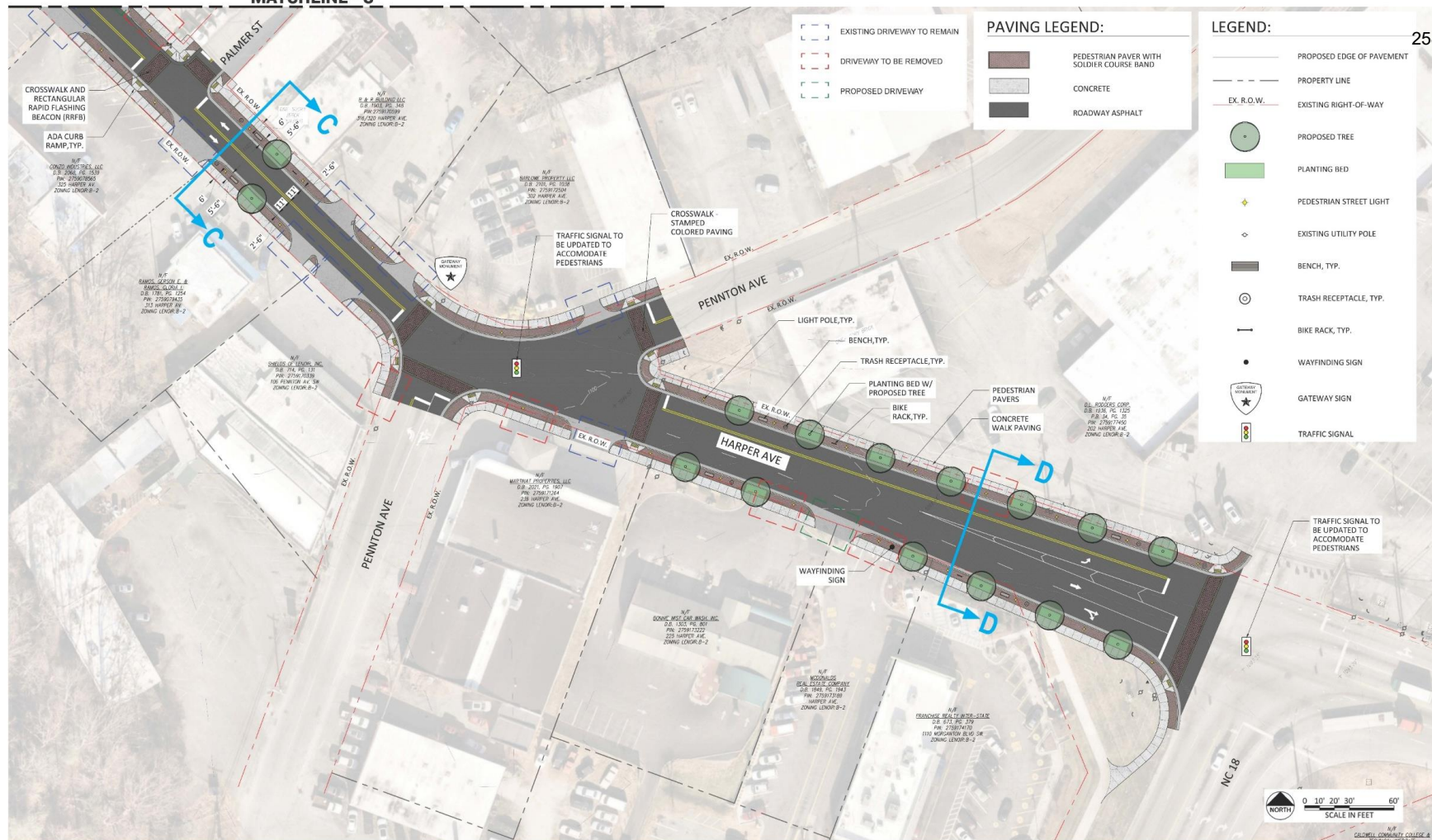
*This exhibit is conceptual in nature, and not intended for project permitting or construction. October 31, 2025

HARPER AVENUE STREETSCAPE CONCEPT PLAN - OPTION 1

CITY OF LENOIR, NORTH CAROLINA

FREESE NICHOLS





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HARPER AVENUE STREETSCAPE CONCEPT PLAN - OPTION 1

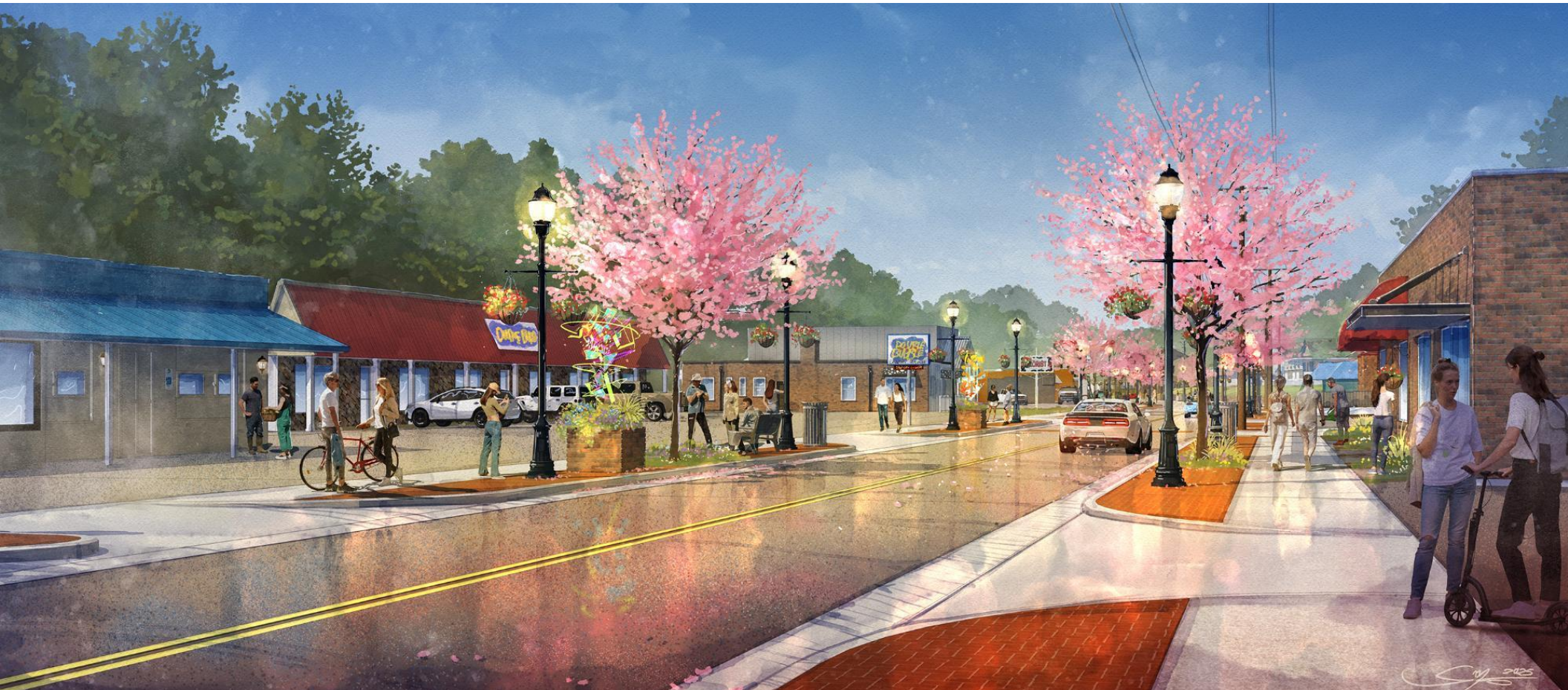
CITY OF LENOIR, NORTH CAROLINA

FREESE NICHOLS



Pennton Avenue Simulation

Conceptual Renderings



Conceptual Renderings



Cost Estimate

- Total Project Cost: Approximately \$10 million
 - \$800k for stormwater improvements
 - \$225k signal upgrades
 - Contingency: 25%/ \$1.8 million
 - Cost Escalation Factor: 5%/ \$473,000
- Costs are based on concept and will be further refined in the next design stage

Next Steps



Next Steps

- Project Funding
- Near-term improvements
- Community Input
- Full Design
- Construction

LIGHTING



Classic Acorn Style Ped. Light with Banner Arms



Mounted Hanging Planters

DECORATIVE PAVING



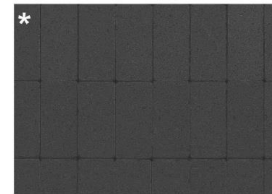
Red Clay Brick Pavers - Parkway



Red Clay Brick Pavers - Interior Field w/ Herringbone Pattern



Clay Brick Pavers - Herringbone Pattern w/ Soldier Course Banding



Charcoal Clay Brick Pavers - Soldier Course Pattern for Edge and Banding

SITE FURNISHINGS



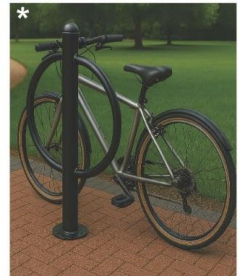
6' Black Metal Bench (To Match Downtown)



Black Metal Trash Rec. (To Match Downtown)



City Planters (Alternate To Provide At Bldg. Frontage)



Black Metal Bike Rack (To Match Downtown)



City of Lenoir Greenway

2025 Update

2025 Accomplishments

- ▶ Mattern and Craig Engineers completed design for a .25 additional miles of Greenway that currently connects Zacks Fork Parking Lot #2 to existing greenway, the splash pad and restroom facilities. This addition created a .50 mile loop around the soccer complex.
- ▶ The Zacks Fork Loop construction began in April of 2025 and was completed in May of 2025 prior to the opening of the splash pad.



Zacks Fork Loop: Construction

Grading work began in April of 2025

Zacks Fork Loop:

The Zacks Fork Loop was completed in May of 2025

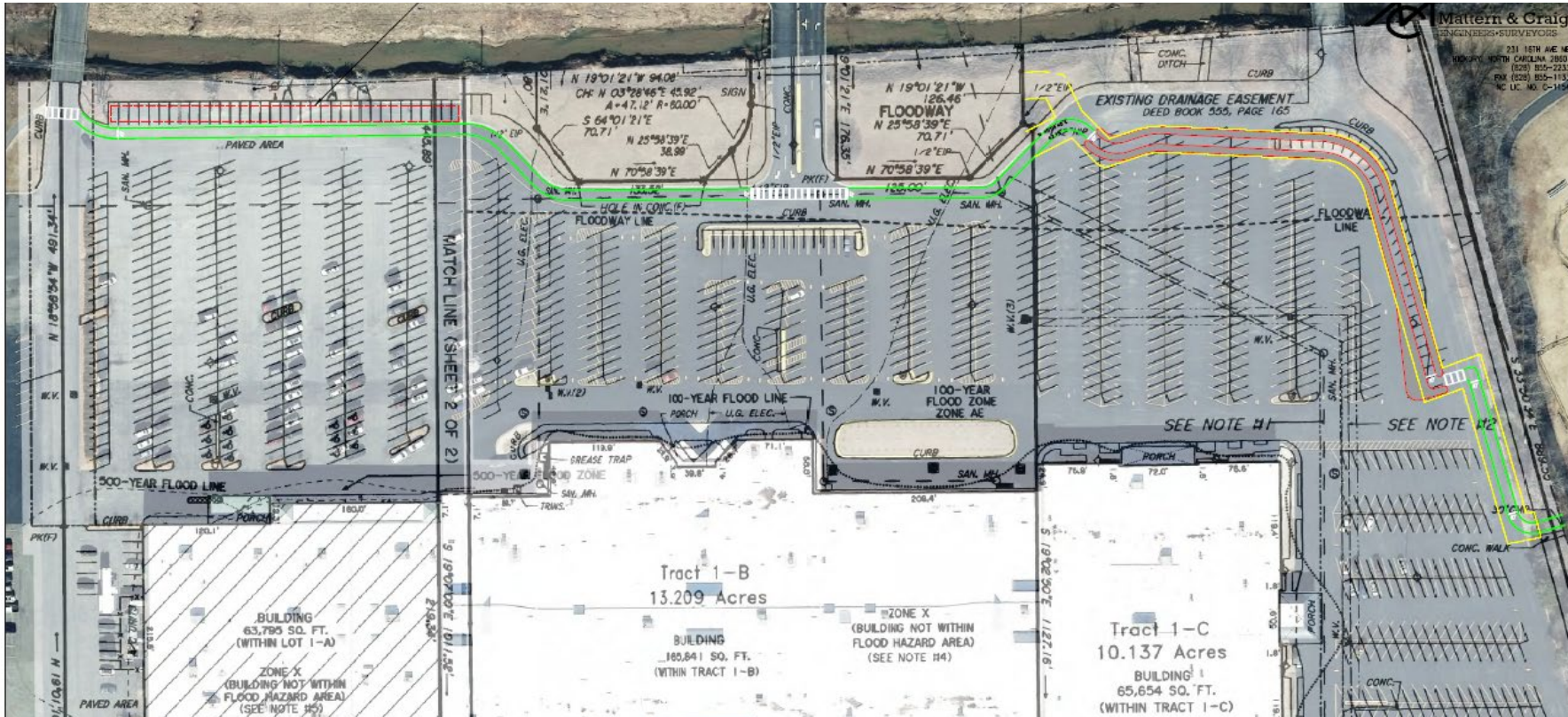




Upcoming Greenway Projects:

Projects Designed and Currently in Design Phase

- ▶ Water Life Church, CubeSmart, Quest4Life and UNC Health Connector
- ▶ Google Bridge Connector
- ▶ HWY 18/Morganton Blvd. Crossing
- ▶ College Ave and Harper Ave. Connector
- ▶ BL-0065 Harper Ave and Morganton Blvd Connector



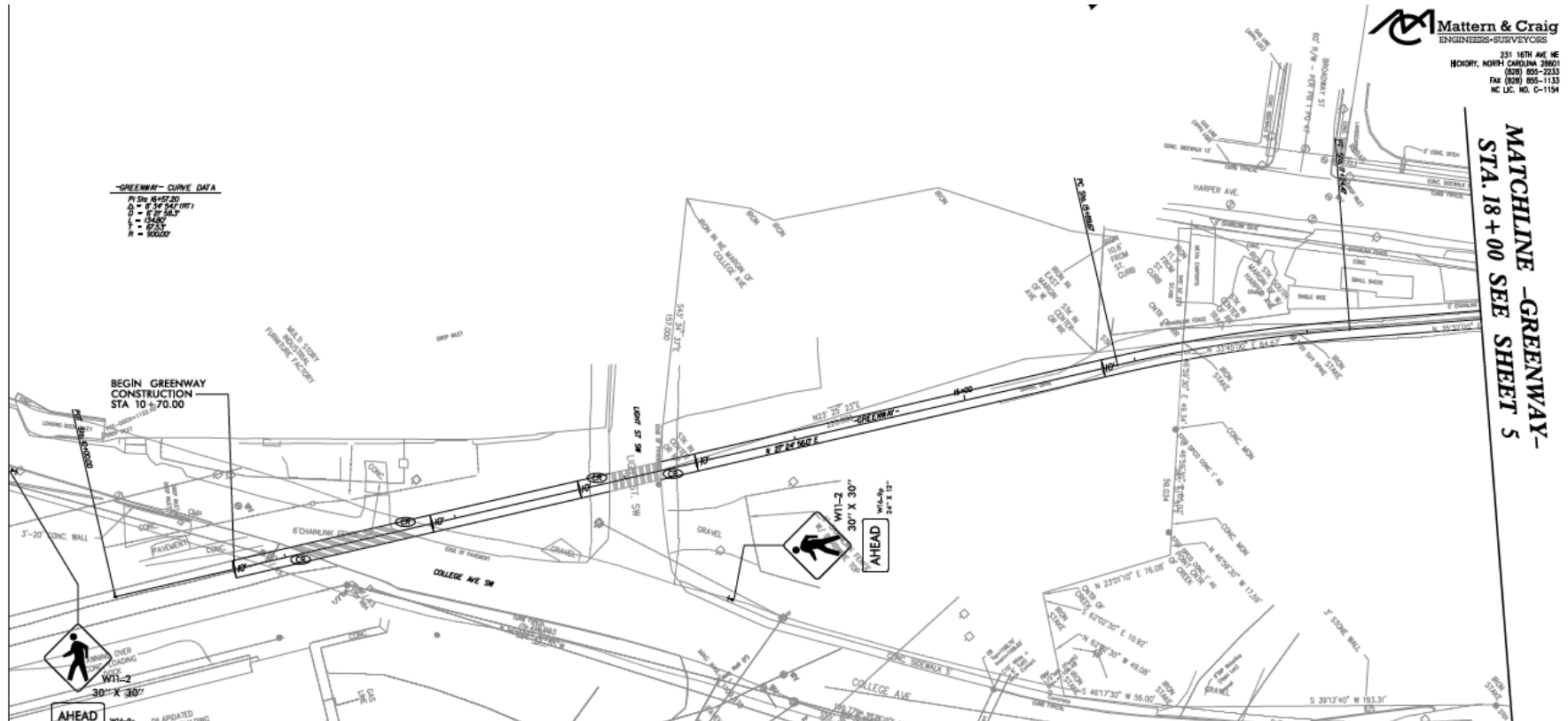
Water Life Church, CubeSmart, Quest and UNC Health Connector

Mattern and Craig Engineers completed design in 2023. To date the, we have installed the concrete island/delineator at the Water Life end of the project. This project is mainly striping along existing asphalt. However, the project has been on hold due to ROW acquisition with the Quest property owner.



Google Greenway Connector & NC 18 Crossing

Construction design for this connector is complete and will bid in early spring of 2026. Plans for the NC 18 crossing that will connect the Google Connector to the RTP or Rail Trail Project were submitted to NCDOT for review. While NCDOT is not very supportive of a mid-block crossing Mattern and Craig will submit design and encroachments for a mid-block crossing utilizing an RRFB (Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon) and pedestrian striping in spring of 2026.



College Avenue and Harper Street Connector

Construction design is complete for this section of greenway enhancements. This portion is primarily pedestrian striping and signage as well as new greenway that will connect existing RTP trail on College Avenue to Harper Avenue. This part of the project will also be bid along with the Google connector as part of one Greenway Bid Package.



BL-0065 Morganton Boulevard Connector

This project is LAP (Locally Administered Project) funded project with FHWA and NCDOT. This portion of greenway will connect existing greenway at 321/Pennnton Avenue to Morganton Boulevard, T.H. Broyhill Walking Park and ending at Mulberry Recreation Center. This project has been updated in the STIP (State Transportation Improvement Plan) due to NCDOT funding allocation. The current schedule is PE/Engineering: 2026; ROW: 2026/2027 Utilities: 2027 and Construction: 2028 Programmed funding is \$2,168,000.00. We plan to have the RFOLI out for advertisement in early spring.

QUESTIONS?

Sidewalk Gap Analysis

Update 2025

Background

- ▶ Sidewalk construction is required for all new non-residential, attached single family, and multi-family structures and developments located in all districts except industrial districts
 - ▶ Substantial Improvements also require sidewalk participation
 - ▶ Fee in lieu is approved by Planning Director in special circumstances



Sidewalk Accomplishments in 2025

- ▶ Burger King
 - ▶ Northeast corner of Smith Crossroads
 - ▶ 500 ft
- ▶ Mavis Tire
 - ▶ 675 Blowing Rock Blvd
 - ▶ 180 ft



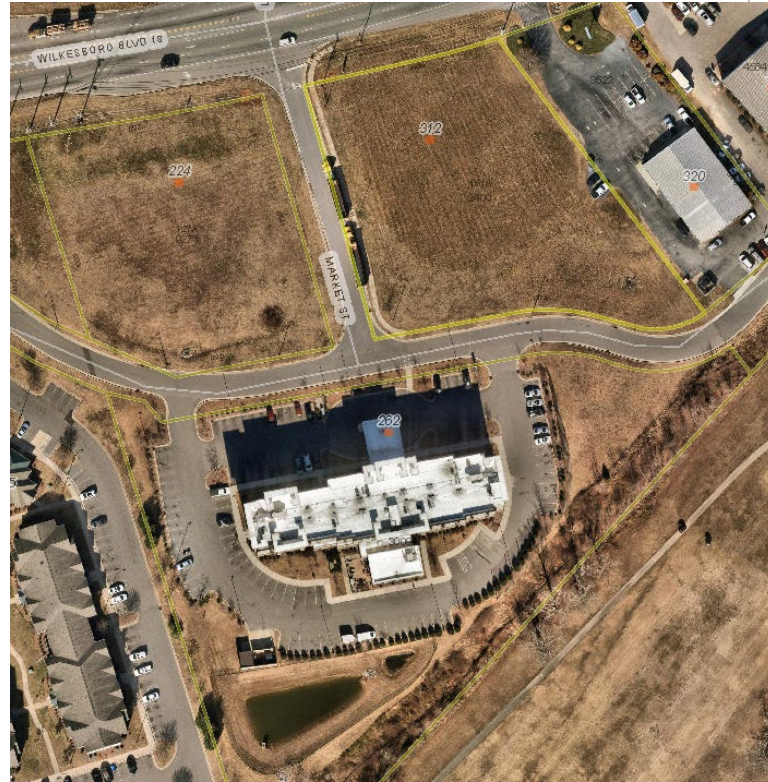
Expected Sidewalk in 2026/2027

- ▶ 102 Hospital Avenue (adjacent to Mavis Tire)
- ▶ 710 Blowing Rock Blvd (Strange property)
- ▶ 2025 Morganton Blvd Outparcel (Fairvalue Grocery)
- ▶ Hospital Avenue Sidewalk



Future Redevelopment Sites

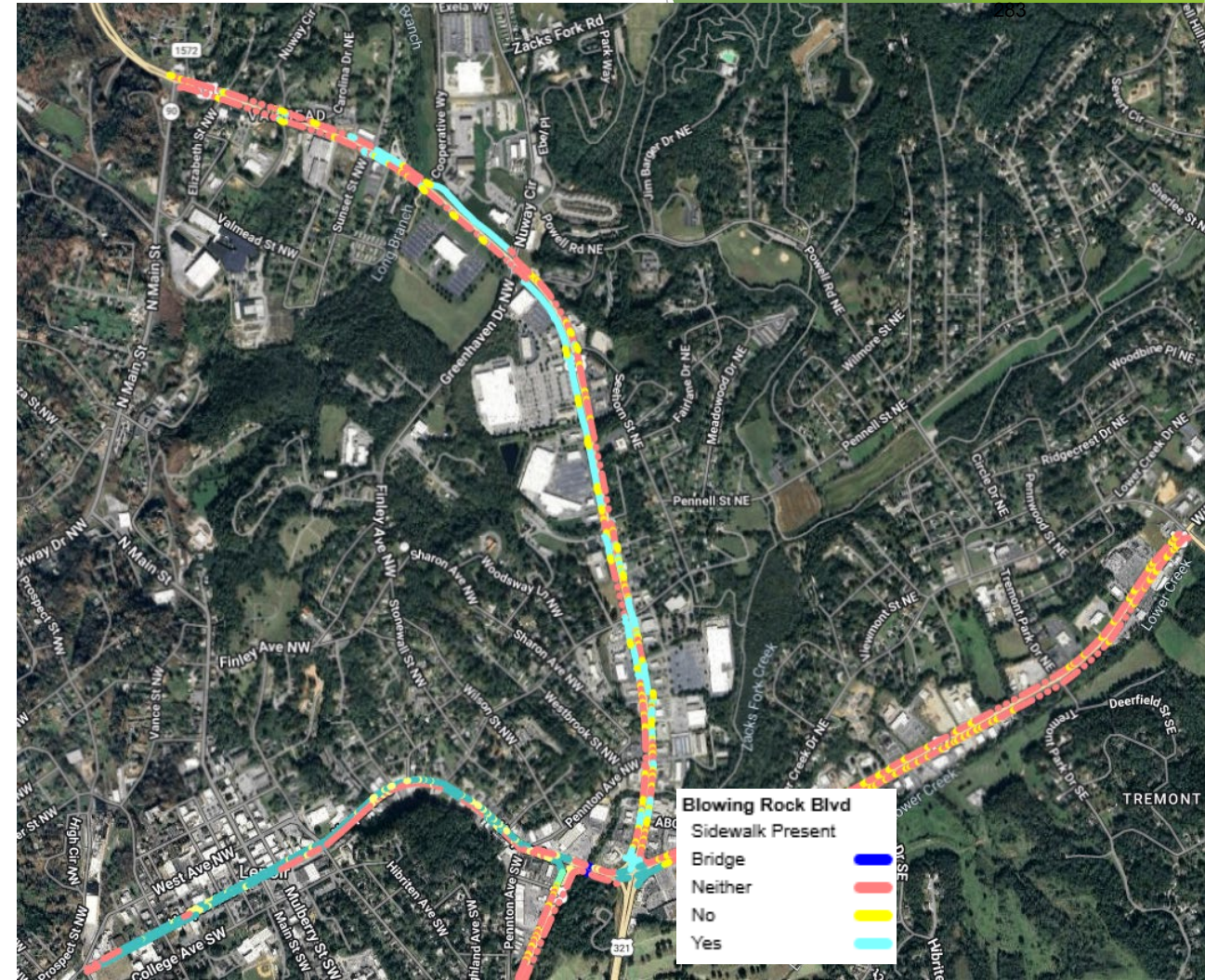
- ▶ Apartment Developers under contract
- ▶ Hotel Developer under contract
- ▶ Retail site on the market at Blowing Rock Blvd and Nuway Cir
- ▶ 1501 Norwood St (Fairway Shopping Center)
- ▶ Lowe's Outparcels on Hickory Blvd (fund payment)
- ▶ Hampton Inn Outparcels on Wilkesboro Blvd



US-321 Gaps

- ▶ Blowing Rock Blvd in Lenoir (Wilkesboro Blvd to N. Main) - 2.2 miles
- ▶ Sidewalk gaps:
 - ▶ West side missing 5,605 feet (1.06 miles)
 - ▶ 27 driveways lacking crosswalk
 - ▶ East side missing 6,219 feet (1.17 miles)
 - ▶ 30 driveways lacking crosswalks
 - ▶ Missing crosswalks: 5 major intersections

<https://diamondMaps.com/map.ashx?key=999999260204155138540>



Wilkesboro Blvd/NC-18 Gaps

- ▶ Wilkesboro Blvd in Lenoir (321 to 64) - 1.5 miles
- ▶ Sidewalk gaps:
 - ▶ North side missing 5087 feet (.96 miles)
 - ▶ 33 driveways lacking crosswalk
 - ▶ South side missing 5497 feet (1.04 miles)
 - ▶ 38 driveways lacking crosswalk
- ▶ Missing crosswalks:
 - ▶ 3 major intersections (north)
 - ▶ 4 major intersections (south)



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Morganton Blvd/NC-18 Gaps

- ▶ Morganton Blvd in Lenoir (Harper Ave. to Southwest Blvd.) - 2.75 miles
- ▶ Sidewalk gaps:
 - ▶ West/North side missing 2.67 miles of sidewalk
 - ▶ all driveways lacking crosswalk
 - ▶ East/South side missing 2.73 miles of sidewalk
 - ▶ all driveways lacking crosswalk
- ▶ Missing crosswalks: 5 major intersections



Reminder Greenway planned along southside of Morganton Blvd

<https://diamondMaps.com/map.ashx?key=999999260204155257629>

Key Issues

- ▶ Total sidewalk gaps:
 - ▶ US-321 (2.23 miles of missing sidewalk)
 - ▶ Wilkesboro Blvd (2 miles of missing sidewalk)
 - ▶ Morganton Blvd (5.4 miles of missing sidewalk)
- ▶ Safety concerns:
 - ▶ Numerous driveways and streets without crosswalks.
 - ▶ Inconsistent sidewalk sizes and conditions.
- ▶ Pedestrian connectivity remains limited.



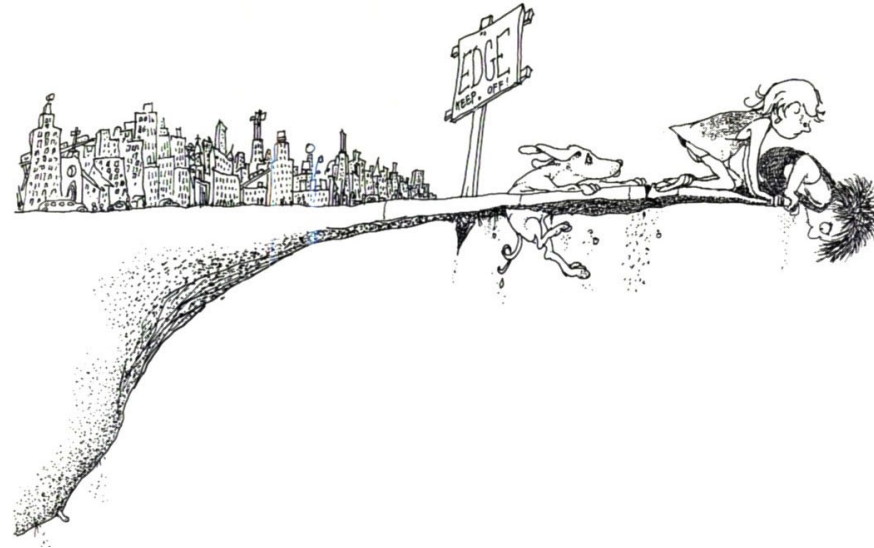
Shown: pedestrian “desire line” along Blowing Rock Blvd near intersection with Hospital Avenue, May 2024.

Priority Segments

- ▶ The corridors explicitly mentioned are all identified as high priority in the City's Pedestrian Plan (2012)
 - ▶ US-321
 - ▶ Harper to Pennton (Dairio to Fast Stop Gas Station)
 - ▶ Commercial Ct to Walgreens @ Hospital
 - ▶ Many recommended segments have been addressed through site development requirements (Dairio, Biscuitville, Burger King update, Mavis Tire, Chipotle/Aspen Dental, Valvoline/T-Mobile)
 - ▶ US-64/NC-18
 - ▶ Mulberry to Edgewood Drive (Little Caesar's to Bonnie Mist)
 - ▶ Wilkesboro Blvd
 - ▶ 321 to Lower Creek Drive
- ▶ Driveways, especially connecting multiple commercial sites need crosswalks
- ▶ Natural paths have been created due to foot traffic on areas without sidewalks along the three main corridors
- ▶ Street to street sidewalks

Sidewalk Fund Update

- ▶ Total Charged
\$301,220.56
- ▶ Total Received since September 2016
\$215,637.65



Next Steps

- ▶ Continue to enforce sidewalk construction along commercial corridors when/where required
- ▶ Self-perform shorter gaps in priority areas identified in Pedestrian Plan
- ▶ Contract out sidewalks over bridges or near greenway
 - ▶ Taco Bell/Hannah's BBQ area



Quarterly Business Report

Retail Recruitment Update



Joshua Davis
Portfolio Director



Zach Price
Retail Development
Coordinator

Retail Win!

Regional QSR

We're excited to announce that there's officially an executed lease along Highway 321!

Our team began recruiting this retailer in the fall of 2024, following the company's announcement of significant expansion plans.

Throughout this process, we evaluated multiple potential sites and shared extensive market data to support their site selection efforts.

In February 2025, a close friend of our firm informed us that he held the listing for a former QSR along this corridor. Based on our understanding of their desired market positioning, we immediately presented this site to their real estate team.

From there, we connected the listing broker with their team to initiate negotiations. While the process included several challenges and the lease took nearly a year to finalize, we remained actively engaged with both parties, providing support wherever possible.

We are thrilled that an agreement was reached and look forward to welcoming them to the Lenoir market later this summer!



Quarterly Business Report

Current Interest & Ongoing Conversations

Full-Service Restaurant

This national full-service restaurant has been apart of the handful of full-service restaurants that are expanding in the Carolinas.

We shared the old Dodge City Steakhouse with their corporate team and unfortunately, they turned it down due to not being able to use the 2nd generation space (too large of a space) and it not being economically sound for them to tear it down and rebuild.

Regional C-Store

Initially expressed interest in the corner outparcel owned by Lowe's Hardware at the intersection of McLean Drive and US-321. Their primary question centered on the feasibility of a right-in/right-out driveway along McLean Drive, which is a DOT-controlled roadway. We directed them to our DOT contact to evaluate access feasibility.

They indicated they would only require approximately half of the parcel; however, Lowe's preference is to sell the outparcel in its entirety. Their team noted the potential to develop the site for their use and consider a future subdivision. We also discussed our partnership with RS, and they confirmed it would be acceptable to share their contact information, with the possibility of a complementary QSR locating adjacent to the site.

Ultimately, they decided to passed on the Lowe's outparcel due to access constraints. Following this decision, we presented another outparcel opportunity, which was also declined.

In December, we shared the Hampton Inn outparcel, to which they responded that they remain in discussions internally, but nothing is concrete at this time. They continue to evaluate questions related to access, pricing, and the timeline available to close.



Quarterly Business Report

Current interest & Ongoing conversations

Fast Casual
Restaurant

The previous deal that they brand was working in the market fell through due to the developer not believing there was enough money to be made at this specific site. Regardless, they are still interested in the market and will entertain additional options to consider in 2026.

A regional broker/developer informed us that he would circle back with the brand and look at doing a BTS (build to suit) with his group as he is fine with what the margins were going to be.

National C-Store

REDACTED conducted a site visit during Q4 and expressed that they liked the site itself; however, they were disappointed by the level of traffic observed during their visit. At that time, the opportunity was considered a “50/50,” with a decision expected the following week.

Later in the same quarter, REDACTED advised that the site would need to be reviewed further with their market planning team and noted that, due to their hesitation, their process would likely move more slowly. They also indicated that if another offer were to materialize, it may be prudent to engage with that party.

As a result of this feedback and the extended decision timeline, the opportunity was ultimately declined and REDACTED shifted its focus to an alternative site.



Quarterly Business Report

Focus Properties



As we transition into 2026, our team will be prioritizing a select group of properties with the strongest potential to attract national retail interest.

Below is a shortlist of the sites we will be focusing on in the first few quarters of the year. Those of which, generated the most traction and momentum in 2025 and leading into the new year.

954 Blowing Rock Blvd – 2nd Generation Full-Service Restaurant

- We've pitched this restaurant to a few groups since it's closing. REDACTED and REDACTED are two of which we've gotten feedback from thus far.

Big Lots Vacancy – North Hill Plaza

- We're hoping a lease will be finalized soon to backfill this space. The vacancy came down to a few of our national REDACTED brand prospects consideration.

Bargain Hunt Vacancy – Eastwood Village Shopping Center

- We've been in touch with the broker for this space as he's informed us that they are working to get a signed lease to backfill the vacant space. Currently, all parties are being confidential about the prospective user as to not cause market disruptions.

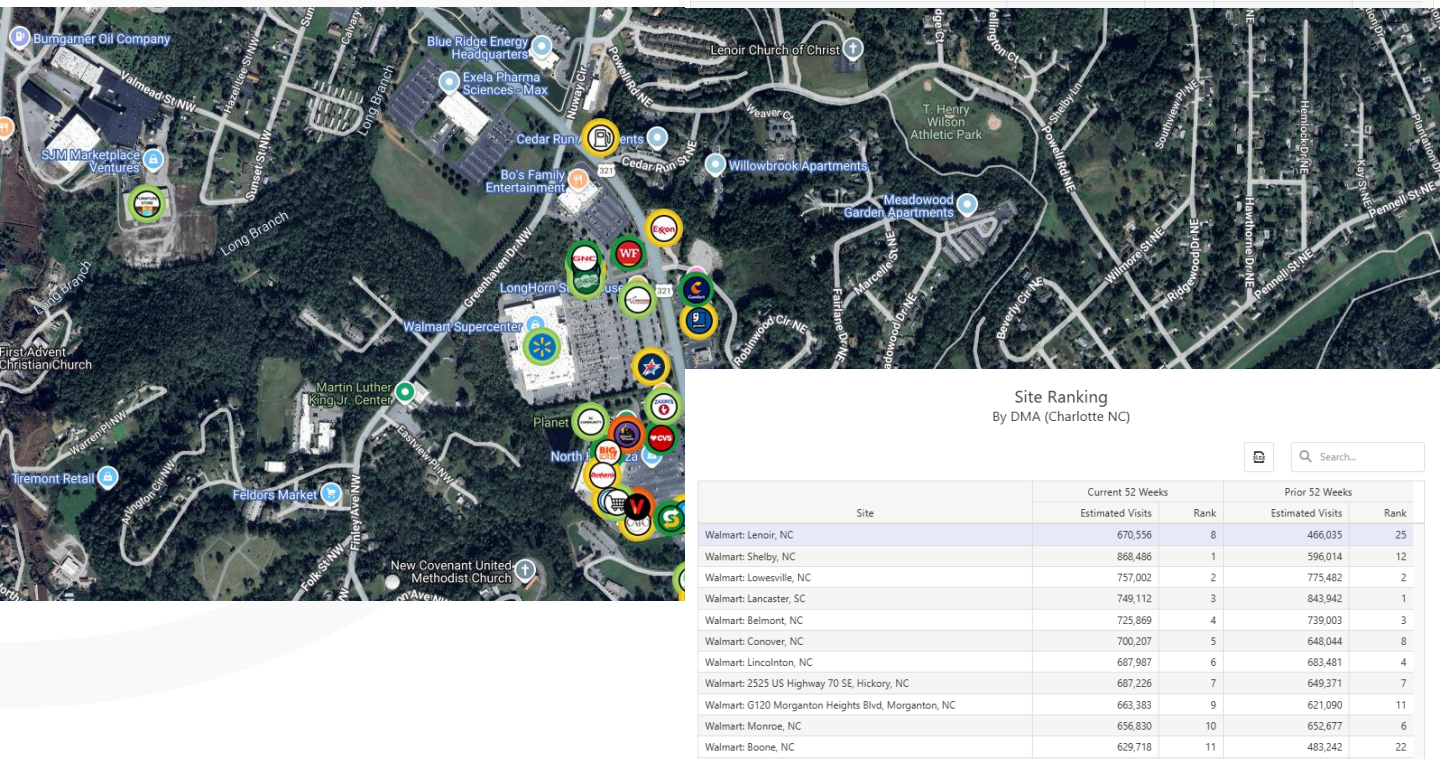
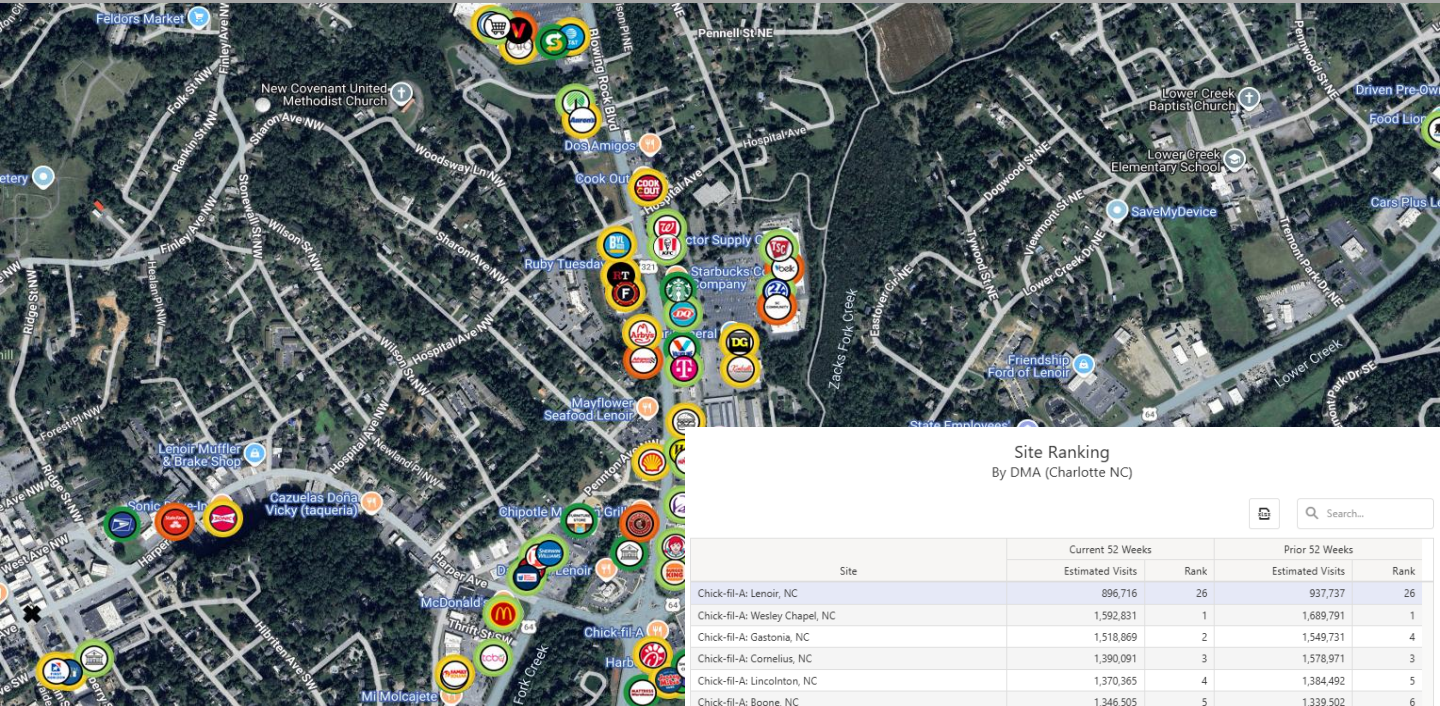
1.19 Acre Pad – Blowing Rock Blvd

- An entire ~2.2-acre site is being evaluated off Blowing Rock Blvd. While a ~1 acre of the parcel is already accounted for, the remaining 1.19 acres will be available for an additional complementary brand as well.



Quarterly Business Report

Mobile Data Insights – Highway 321





2026 Retail Trends & Market Overview

Key Takeaways

1

Grocery chains leading retail expansion with aggressive store openings and remodel investments across both states

2

QSR sector dominated by chicken concepts (Raising Cane's, Dave's Hot Chicken) with explosive visit growth and development pipelines

3

Burger and steakhouses showing strong growth, particularly Freddy's and the Darden Restaurant Group with major multi-unit development agreements

4

Commercial real estate market strengthening with 40%+ YoY sales growth, improving capital availability, and favorable rate environment

5

Population growth and business friendly municipalities are positioning the Carolinas as prime targets for continued retail and restaurant expansion

Grocery Sector Expansion

Food Lion

- 4 New stores announced for opening in early 2026
- Expansion tied to \$500 million capital investments in Charlotte area remodels

Harris Teeter

- Expansion centered around their newest Clemson location and migrated throughout the eastern/central region of South Carolina.
- Focused on expanding in regions where they already service neighboring areas via distribution warehouses

Publix

- Targeting markets with established market shares and several in the pipeline in the Carolinas.
- Publix is on pace to opening 43 new stores annually, making them one of if not the most aggressive grocer in this category.

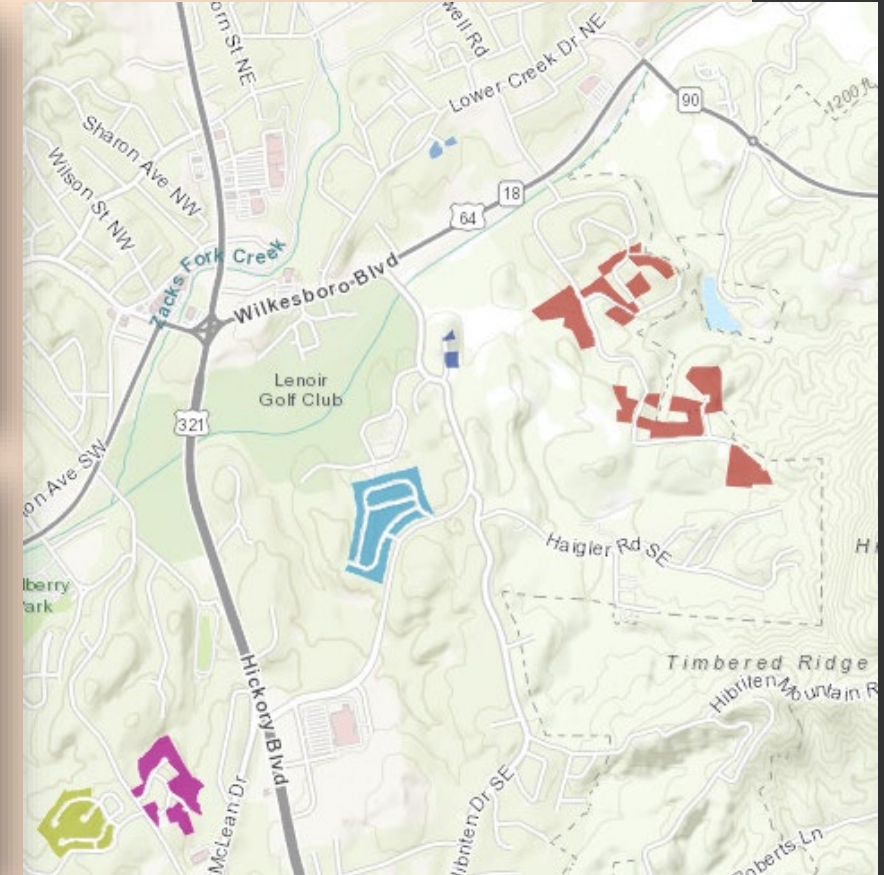
Lenoir Housing Update

February 6, 2026

City Council Strategic Retreat

Single-Family Housing

- In 2025, 71 single-family home permits were issued
- As of February 2026, 51 of the 71 (71%) house permits also issued building permit from CCBI
- Neighborhoods are steadily being built out
 - Summerhill
 - Huntington Woods
 - Park View
 - Stonecroft
 - Georgetown Estates
 - Olde Farm





Multi-Family Housing

Market Rate Multi-Family

299



Palisades of Lenoir

- 2115 Hickory Blvd
- 220 Units Proposed
- Grading and clearing in progress



Steele Cotton Mill

- 1201 Steele St
- 60 Units Proposed
- Utility Relocation Grant applied for in January – award notice by March.



More Apartment Interest

- Zack's Fork Area
- Potentially 25-30 unit
- Local Developer

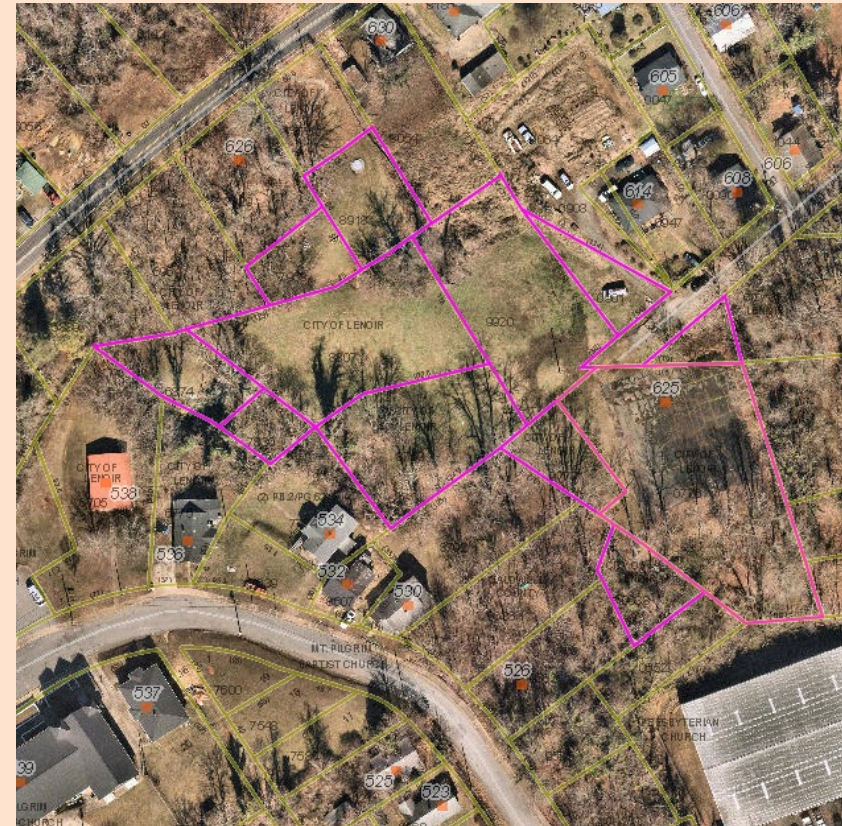
Affordable Multi-Family



- A Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Apartment Project is highly likely to be funded in Caldwell County this year.
 - 5+ years since last project
 - Hurricane Helene
 - Tier 1
- At least one LIHTC Developer has a property under contract in Lenoir.
 - 70-80 units intended on his site
 - Rezoning Public Hearing Required

Affordable Duplex/Single Family

- CDBG-Disaster Recovery funding available to address impacts from Helene
- WPCOG will apply on behalf of City of Lenoir, focusing on building housing on City-property.
 - West End property
 - Foreclosures
- First public hearing prior to grant application - February 17, 2026



Adaptive Reuse

- West Lenoir Elementary
 - Preservation NC could help source a buyer of historic properties to redevelop the school into housing without compromising architecture
 - Built in 1935, closed in 2022
 - Sold to current owner in 2023
 - Owner started seeking inquiries in 2025



COUNCIL PRIORITIES & CITY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

City of Lenoir employees worked to implement and achieve City Council's priorities set during your 2025 Council Retreat.



2025 Council Priorities



1. Continue efforts to offer competitive compensation and benefits for employees to improve recruitment and retention.
2. Develop options to increase code enforcement and improve beautification in three primary areas:
 - Abandoned and neglected housing
 - Dilapidated commercial properties
 - Appearance of downtown buildings
3. Update the Lenoir Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan and improve walkability.
4. Evaluate long-term Downtown parking needs.
5. Continue to fund and support the Water and Sewer Capital Improvements Plan.

1. Continue efforts to offer competitive compensation and benefits for employees to improve recruitment and retention.

- Developed a structured training and certificate compensation.
- Continued to offer a graduated and increased holiday bonus to recognize employee's longevity.
- During the past 10 years, we have made significant progress in improving employee salaries. For example, during that time, the starting pay for a Firefighter I has risen by 99% and the starting pay for a Patrol Officer I has risen by 109%.
- Provided 3.75% COLA to all full-time employees.
- Absorbed a 27% increase in health insurance costs
- Absorbed Local Government Retirement increases of 0.75% for general employees and 19% for law enforcement.



2. Develop options to increase code enforcement and improve beautification - Abandoned and neglected housing

- Sent 38 properties sent to foreclosure during 2025.
- The Police Department targeted enforcement efforts led to the investigation of 250 properties for a variety of nuisance violations. Of these cases, 177 were successfully abated either by the property owner or by the City of Lenoir.
- Planning had six abatement ordinances passed and three owner abated properties.
- There were 10 demolitions totaling \$126,704. Of the 182 cases opened in planning, 92 were minimum housing cases in 2025 which is up from 34 in 2024 (171% increase).



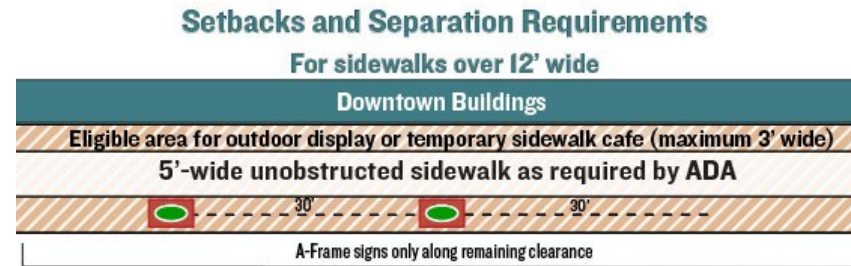
2. Develop options to increase code enforcement and improve beautification - Dilapidated commercial properties

- Between Police, Fire and Planning, there were 10 commercial property cases worked with five of those being in the Whitnel area.
- LPD/ALE Consent Order with Red Roof Inn
- Updated Residential Minimum Housing code.
- Planning contracted N Focus Planning and Design to update Nonresidential Minimum Standards and staff plans to implement enforcement of those standards in 2026
- Continued to contract with WPCOG for code enforcement.



2. Develop options to increase code enforcement and improve beautification - Appearance of downtown buildings

- Via a walk through of Downtown, staff has evaluated some of the buildings and the new Non-residential Minimum Standards should help with this focus.
- Public Works beautification projects:
 - North Main Street
 - New planters
 - Harper Avenue Streetscape Plan



North Main Street

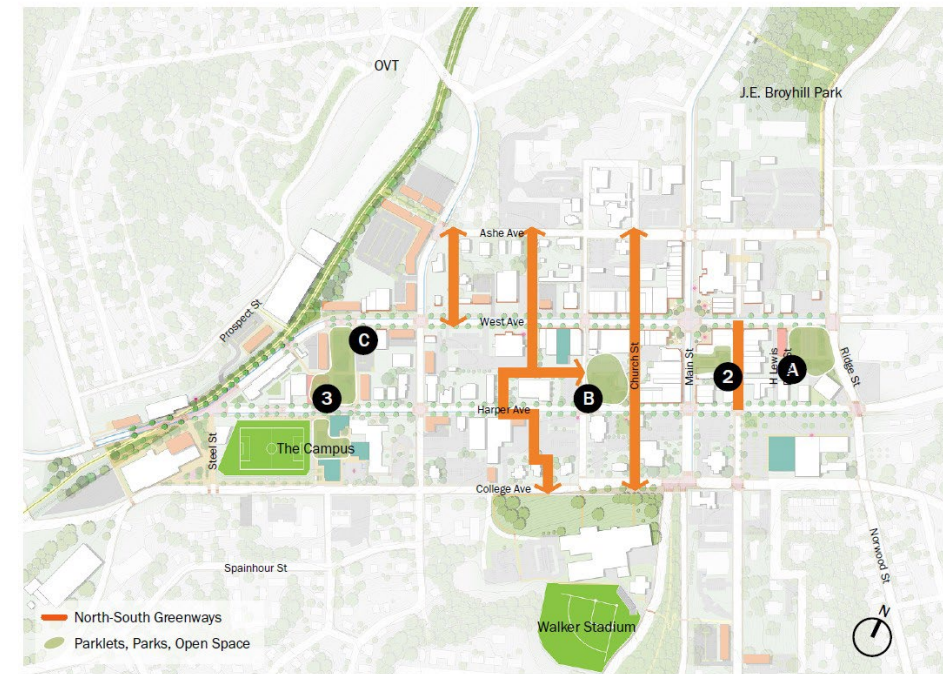


West Avenue

3. Update the Lenoir Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan and improve walkability.

- Council adopted the Downtown Lenoir Comprehensive Plan and a new Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Both plans include recommendations to improve walkability in Downtown Lenoir and the City.
- Sidewalk Gap Study
- Greenway Extensions

Placemaking, Open Space, and the Public Realm



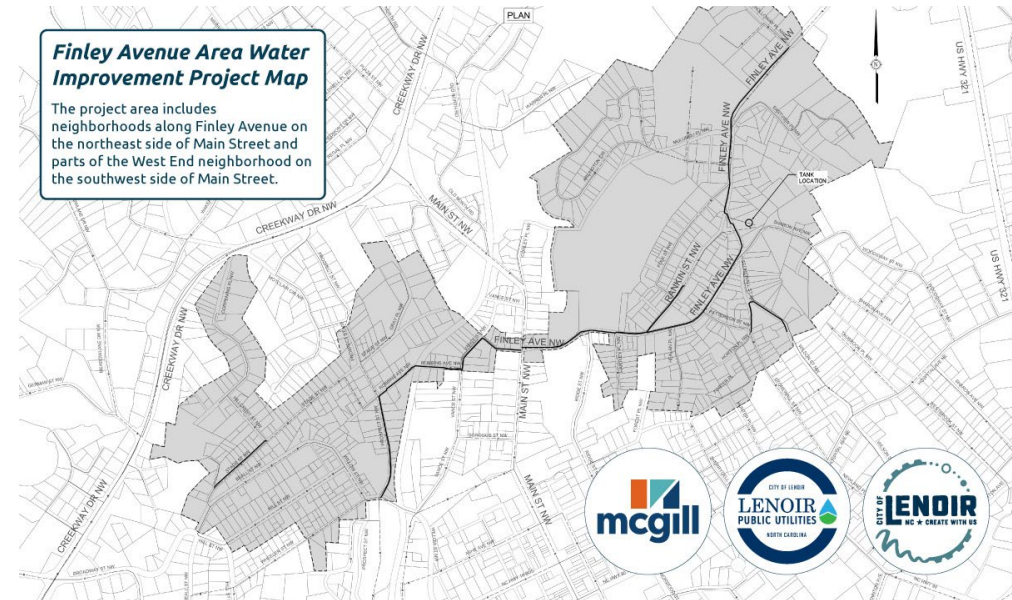
4. Evaluate long-term Downtown parking needs.

- The City continues to evaluate and address parking needs in Downtown. Although we don't have a parking problem in Downtown, staff plans to add parking for The Campus by acquiring two parcels from College Avenue Baptist Church. We're also renewing the lease with First Baptist Church to maintain current municipal parking lots in Downtown Lenoir.



5. Continue to fund and support the Water and Sewer Capital Improvements Plan.

- The City continued work on **10** Water and Sewer projects amounting to over \$36 million dollars in improvements. This includes the Finley Avenue Area Water Improvement Plan and upcoming Lenoir-Valdese Interconnect Project.



Questions?



CITY PROJECTS

The City has **\$132.9 Million** in projects in the pipeline.



Project Funding Approved 95% - 100% Completed

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Community Garden Teaching/Learn Pavilion | 1. Mulberry/West End Playground Improvements |
| 2. Comp Plan | 2. Parks and Recreation Master Plan |
| 3. MLK Center Improvements | 5. TH Broyhill Walking Park Retaining Wall Replacement |
| 4. Mulberry Pickleball Court Conversion | |

\$815,500



LHS Campus Project Funding

- Pavilion/Farmers Market
- Gym at the Campus at Historic LHS
- Lenoir High School Campus (Auditorium/Gymnasium)
- Lenoir High School Campus (Auditorium/Gymnasium)
- Total Gym and Auditorium

\$9,834,316



Project Funding Approved - Underway

- AIA SEWER
- AIA WATER
- Aquatics Center (LAFC)/Rotary Soccer Complex
- Brownfield Assessment Grant - #2
- Clock Tower
- Downtown Veterans Monument Plaza Improvements
- Finley Avenue Area Water Project
- Gateway Signs (4) Phase #3
- Greenway Expansion
- Harper Avenue Sewer Line Replacement
- Harper Avenue Streetscape - Conceptual
- Harper Avenue Streetscape - Implementation
- Hospital Avenue Sidewalk
- Lead Service Line ID and Replacement - Phase 2



Project Funding Approved - Underway

- Lead Service Line ID and Replacement - Phase 3
- Lenoir Fire Sinkhole - Building Stabilization - Stormwater Repair
- Lenoir Fire Sinkhole - Sewer Line Repair - Ridge Street
- Lower Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant Process Basin
- OVNHT Greenway Link
- Stormwater Mapping
- Stormwater Planning Grant
- Water Interconnection Project Lenoir Valdese
- Wayfinding Signs
- West End Community Park Upgrades

\$57,174,737



Project Funding - Approved But Not Started Or in the Planning Phase

- Downtown Signalization Improvements - Two Way Streets
- Greenway Bridge
- Greenway LAPP Project

\$3,691,658



Funding Opportunities Application Submitted

- Arrowood Bridge Replacement
- EPA-Community-Wide Assessment Grant
- EPA Brownfield - Clean-up Grant
- Lenoir Resilience Wastewater Infrastructure/Sewer Outfall Upgrade
- OVT Connector Greenway and Sidewalk Project
- Steel Street Mills
- Whitnel Water Transmission Main Replacement - Phase #1

\$19,680,991



Pending Projects

- Water Project - Hwy 18
- Hickory Water interconnect

\$42,600,000



Total Projects

Excluding the first slide, the City has

- ***42 projects*** to complete
- totaling ***\$132,981,702.***

Questions?



City of Lenoir - Projects										
Project	Funding Source	START/END DATE	TERMS	Description	Grant/ Loan Amount	City Match	ARPA/SCIF	LTDA/CDBG	Other	Total Cost
Project Funding Approved - 95% - 100% Completed										
Community Garden Teaching/Learn Pavilion	OSBM	10/23/2024	Funds appropriated by the General Assembly. The funds must be spent by 10-2025	The City received \$125,000 in state allocated funding for this project for constructions of a Community Garden Teaching/Learn Pavilion partnership with Appalachian State University. In 2018-2019 the City partnered with the local Master Gardeners Association and Appalachian State University to design a covered pavilion addition for the Unity Park & Community Garden (UPCG). The final design, completed by architectural design studio students, was crafted through site visits, community research, and input from UPCG stakeholders. Completed			125,000.00			125,000.00
Comp Plan	City Funding	TBD	Funding from Operating funding.	Funding will need to allocated for a Comprehensive Plan Consultant to assist planning staff with visualizing development in Lenoir over the next 20 years. Estimated cost of \$125,000. Complete		125,000.00				125,000.00
MLK Center Improvements	OSBM	10/23/2024	Funds appropriated by the General Assembly. The funds must be spent by 10-2025	The City received \$300,000 in state allocated funding for this project for improvements to the MLK Center. A wide variety of planned improvements to the interior and exterior of the Martin Luther King Jr. Recreation Center were packaged into a single Request for Proposals (RFP) and advertised for bids in June 2024. This project is 95% complete. Painting should be complete in the first quarter of 2026.			300,000.00			300,000.00
Mulberry Pickleball Court Conversion	Local Funds	11/1/2024 thru 2/28/2025		The City programmed renovation funds to improve existing court areas at MRC. During the design process a decision was made to expand the pickleball court offerings by reconfiguring the existing courts and adding new courts in the additional space, yielding a total of 12 courts. Complete		87,000.00				87,000.00
Mulberry/West End Playground Improvements	Local Funds	3/1/2025		This project includes replacement or new installation of select pieces of playground equipment at the City's Mulberry Rec. Center and West End Community Park. Complete		71,000.00				71,000.00
Parks and Recreation Master Plan	ARP Funds	3-21/Encumbered by 12-24, Spent by 12-26	ARPA Revenue Replacement option - funds must be obligated by December 31, 2024 and spent by December 31, 2026	ARPA funding will be allocated for a Parks and Recreation Master Plan to assist staff with CIP development and planning over the next 20 years. Estimated cost of \$50,000. This plan was combined with the Comp Plan. Complete			50,000.00			50,000.00
TH Broyhill Walking Park Retaining Wall Replacement	Broyhill Foundation	11/1/2024 thru 3/30/2025		The City requested 50,000 in funding assistance from the Broyhill Foundation to replace failing cross-tie retaining walls at TH Broyhill Park. The project was redesigned after reviewing initial bids and will now feature a naturalized approach with boulder walls and outcrops. Complete	50,000.00	7,500.00				57,500.00
Subtotal					50,000.00	290,500.00	475,000.00	-	-	815,500.00
LHS Campus Project Funding										
Pavilion/Farmers Market	State Allocated Funds/LTDA Appropriation	4/1/2022	State Funds were appropriated in the General Assembly. LTDA funding allocated 2-23.	The City received a state grant for a OVT Farmer's Market Pavilion adjacent to the Campus in the amount of \$450,000. The LTDA allocated \$50,000 for this project as well. The City purchased the property for \$70,000. #10232. The City acquired an adjacent .24 acre property from Lenoir Building Supply in December 2025. The property borders the Pavilion property on the west side. The property acquisition has allowed for changes in the site design and significant cost savings in stormwater management for the project.			450,000.00	50,000.00	3,500,000.00	4,000,000.00
Gym at the Campus at Historic LHS	OSBM	10/23/2024	Funds appropriated by the General Assembly.	The City received \$1,000,000 in state allocated funding for this project for improvements to the gym at The Campus at Historic LHS. #10234 Funding from CDBG will be used for phased improvements to the auditorium in the Historic Lenoir High School.			1,000,000.00			1,000,000.00
Lenoir High School Campus (Auditorium/Gymnasium)	Rural Downtown Transformation Grant/LTDA Appropriation	12/22/2025	RDTG Funds must be obligated by December 31, 2024 and spent by December 31, 2026, LTDA funding allocated 2-23	The City received grant funding of \$580,000 for this project for major renovations to the LHS Campus. The LTDA allocated \$50,000 for this project as well. Construction is planned to start in February 2026.	580,000.00			50,000.00		630,000.00
Lenoir High School Campus (Auditorium/Gymnasium)	Rural Infrastructure Authority	4/24/2025		The City received a \$325,000 grant for the renovation of the LHS Gymnasium and Auditorium for improved accessibility, and the construction of a 4,300-square-foot covered outdoor pavilion as a part of the expansion of the Over Mountain Victory Trail.	325,000.00					325,000.00
Lenoir High School Campus	State Allocated Funds/LTDA Appropriation	7/15/1905	Funds appropriated by the General Assembly.	The City received \$1,000,000 in state allocated funding for this project for major renovations to the LHS Campus. Final cost estimates to be determined. State Funding Project #10235.			1,000,000.00	302,380.00	2,576,936.00	3,879,316.00
Total Gym and Auditorium					905,000.00	-	2,000,000.00	352,380.00	2,576,936.00	5,834,316.00
Subtotal					905,000.00	-	2,450,000.00	402,380.00	6,076,936.00	9,834,316.00
Project Funding Approved - Underway										
AIA SEWER	DEQ	Awarded 2/21/23	Begin 8-21-23	This grant would pay for a detailed inventory and assessment of the entire sewer system. Work on this project continues. Approximately 40% completed	200,000.00					200,000.00
AIA WATER	DEQ	Awarded 2/21/23	Begin 8-21-23	This grant would pay for a detailed inventory and assessment of the entire water system. Work on this project continues. Approximately 45% completed	200,000.00					200,000.00
Aquatics Center (LAFC)/Rotary Soccer Complex	PARTF Grant/ARP Match	11-22/10-25	Grant for \$500,000 and City match using ARPA funds of \$590,375.and local fund of \$269,710. Grant period November 1, 2022 to April 1, 2026	This grant will fund much needed upgrades and renovations at the LAFC and the Rotary Soccer complex. Some of the updates include a splash pad and picnic shelter at the Rotary Soccer Complex, a complete renovation of the locker rooms, new flooring throughout the building, including the pool deck, new LED lighting, and a new decktron system to reduce the moisture inside the building. Given the complexity of interior modifications necessary to create accessible restroom spaces, and the existing layout of the abutting locker room floor plan, the City decided to use the “Design-Build” method of project delivery to complete the interior renovation project. J.M. Cope, Inc was contracted for design-build services for this project in January of 2025. The project was originally slated for completion in October 2025. The splash pad was completed and designs for the LAFC were approved and construction began. The Aquatics Center remodel should be complete in March of 2026. Improvement include renovations of the locker rooms, creation of an ADA accessible locker room, new flooring throughout the building, new LED lighting, new paint throughout the building, new full size doors to access the racquet ball courts, new breakroom, and a new hot tub being installed on the indoor pool deck. The new projected completion date is March of 2026.	500,000.00		590,375.00		269,710.00	1,360,085.00
Brownfield Assessment Grant - #2	United States Environmental Protection Agency	7-22/9-26	\$500,000 in grant funding for grant period of July 1, 2022 to September 30, 2026	The City was awarded a second EPA Brownfield assessment grant in the amount of \$500,000.00 to complete the work at the old Broyhill site and several other sites in Lenoir including the former American and Efrid location, Steele Cotton Mill and the LHS Campus. Project 97% complete.	500,000.00					500,000.00
Clock Tower	Donation	In progress	Donor is working on designs with staff	The funds will cover a sculpture to hold the historic clock on the square. This project will be funded by a private donations. This projects is in progress. The initial fabrication of the tower is complete.		8,300.00			78,725.00	87,025.00
Downtown Veterans Monument Plaza Improvements	OSBM	10/23/2024	Funds appropriated by the General Assembly.	The City received \$200,000 in state allocated funding for this project for improvements to the Downtown Veterans Memorial Plaza Improvements. Final cost estimates to be determined. Planning is underway. The design is complete and bids have been awarded.			200,000.00			200,000.00

City of Lenoir - Projects										
Project	Funding Source	START/END DATE	TERMS	Description	Grant/ Loan Amount	City Match	ARPA/SCIF	LTDA/CDBG	Other	Total Cost
Finley Avenue Area Water Project	State Allocated Funds	2022/2024	Allocation of nonrecurring funds appropriated for the 2022-2023 fiscal year from the Clean Water and Drinking Water Reserve. Funds must be obligated by December 31, 2024 and spent by December 31, 2026 (S.L. 2022-74)	This project was identified and placed in the CIP several years ago. Its will improve the low pressure concerns in the area around the Finley water tank through system improvements that create a medium pressure zone in the specified area. Preliminary engineering has been completed and the report was used for a funding application that was submitted to the State Revolving Loan Fund in the fall of 2020. The first application was declined. The applications was resubmitted after making several changes to the scope of the project. The project was not funded by the State Revolving Loan Fund. The project was approved for funding utilizing APR funds allocated at the state level in 2022. Bids were awarded to TP Howard's Plumbing Co., Inc, Caldwell Tanks, Inc. and McGill Associates, PA Certification No. 1 has been partially submitted after completion of the water main work on the tank site.		2,491,360.00	6,948,640.00			9,440,000.00
Gateway Signs (4) Phase #3	LTDA and Local Funds	TBD	TBD	Funding for four entry signs at the City Limit entrances. Funding was received from the LTDA for the design phase. Rite Lite Signs was awarded the contract for the Phase II Gateway Project. There will be a contract addendum for Destination by Design for \$41,477 on the February 3, 2026 City Council agenda. This will cover the design, survey and administrative work for the fourth sign location (Valmead) that was not included in the original contract.		469,749.00		100,000.00		569,749.00
Greenway Expansion	State Allocated Funds	4/1/2022	Funds were appropriated in the General Assembly.	The funds will be utilized to expand the City's greenway network with the goal of having a connected network of greenway trails and multiuse paths. The funding for this allocation will be used to expand the greenway by joining greenway sections across the City as well as connectivity to the Over Mountain Victory Trail. Staff worked with Mattern & Craig Engineers to design a .50-mile Greenway loop that connects the Zack Fork restroom facility and Splash pad to existing greenway and parking. Greenway was installed in April of 2025 just prior to Splash Pad opening.			750,000.00			750,000.00
Harper Avenue Sewer Line Replacement	Enterprise Funds	TBD		The City of Lenoir lists the proposed project titled the Harper Avenue Sewer Line Replacement Project the current CIP and included in the current fiscal year's budget. The Harper Avenue sewer replacement project general involves the replacement of approximately 2,000 linear feet of an existing 8-inch diameter gravity sewer line that is a contributor to inflow and infiltration and has limited capacity due to pipe degradation. Additionally, the project may include the replacement and/or the remediation of manholes. A Request for Qualifications process was initiated and three firms submitted qualifications. These firms were Goodwyn Mills Cawood, McGill Associates, Wetherill Engineering. After review of the qualifications, the City awarded the contract to McGill Associates. Work is scheduled to begin once the weather breaks.		726,820.00				726,820.00
Harper Avenue Streetscape - Conceptual	Operating & SCIF	TBD		The project includes a conceptual streetscape plan for upgrading the Harper Avenue streetscape from NC-64 to Ridge Street NW that attracts and welcomes visitors from the highway into Downtown Lenoir. Harper's Ave is a city owned Street with two travel lanes and a center turn lane. The proposed study area is approximately 3,300 linear feet. Freese and Nichols, Inc., will provide services for the City of Lenoir. Staff worked with Freese Nichols, and the public to complete a Conceptual Streetscape plan for Harper Ave. from Ridge St. to Morganton Blvd. Conceptual Design was presented at Public Meeting on Wednesday January 7, 2026.		198,511.00				198,511.00
Harper Avenue Streetscape - Implementation	TBD/SCIF 10236	TBD		The project includes implementing the streetscape plan for upgrading the Harper Avenue streetscape from NC-64 to Ridge Street NW that attracts and welcomes visitors from the highway into Downtown Lenoir. Harper's Ave is a city owned Street with two travel lanes and a center turn lane. The proposed area is approximately 3,300 linear feet.			2,000,000.00		8,200,000.00	10,200,000.00
Hospital Avenue Sidewalk	NCDOT	6-17/TBD	Federal Highway Administration Funds \$3,469,863.56 with \$2,536,000 from grants and \$933,863.56 city match Estimates were revised in 2025.	The Hospital Avenue Sidewalk Project was funded by a grant and local funds to engineer, design, acquire rights-of-way, relocate utilities, and construct sidewalks on Hospital Avenue. This project is ongoing. The initial LET in December 2024 received no bids. In February of 2025, the LET was sent out again and the construction contract was awarded to Neil Grading Construction. Construction is set to begin in Feb of 2026. The budget was amended in May of 2025 to a total of 3,469,863.56.	2,536,000.00	200,000.00	234,000.00		499,863.56	3,469,863.56
Lead Service Line ID and Replacement - Phase 2	NC Division of Water Infrastructure	TBD	500,000 loan approved -300,000 forgiven. Project #SRF-D-LSL-0037.	The City submitted a Lead Service Line Identification and Replacement Grant application with the NC Division of Water Infrastructure for Assistance for Lead Service Line Identification and Replacement for the project in order to develop a comprehensive Lead Service Line Inventory and to construct, plan or conduct a study of the needs in the community regarding lead service line replacements. This application will also assist in meeting new EPA requirements regarding lead service line replacements. The City was approved for a 0% interest loan not a grant for \$500,000 with 60 % forgiveness up to a maximum of 300,000. The City received another 0% loan in the amount of 1,000,000 to continue this project.	500,000.00					500,000.00
Lead Service Line ID and Replacement - Phase 3	NC Division of Water Infrastructure	TBD	1,000,000 loan approved and forgiven 7-17-25. Project # 01-14-010	The City submitted a Lead Service Line Identification and Replacement Grant application with the NC Division of Water Infrastructure for Assistance for Lead Service Line Identification and Replacement for the project in order to develop a comprehensive Lead Service Line Inventory and to construct, plan or conduct a study of the needs in the community regarding lead service line replacements. The loan will provide funding up to \$1,000,000. This application will also assist in meeting new EPA requirements regarding lead service line replacements. The City was approved for a 0% interest loan for \$1,000,000 and the principal was forgiven. North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) has accepted a proposal for Lenoir to conduct computerized predictive modeling to assist in the required lead and copper inventory requirements. A revised contract to include the work to develop the predictive model program is being prepared by Freese and Nichols.	1,000,000.00					1,000,000.00
Lenoir Fire Sinkhole - Building Stabilization - Stormwater Repair	ARPA Funds/OSBM	ARPA - 3-21/ Encumbered by 12-24, Spent by 12-26 OSBM - 10-23 start	ARPA Revenue Replacement option - funds must be obligated by December 31, 2024 and spent by December 31, 2026. OSBM - Funds appropriated by the General Assembly.	The City received \$500,000 in state allocated funding for the Lenoir Fire Dept Building Stabilization that will be used for the repair of the sinkhole at Fire Station 1. ARPA will cover 623,843.15 of the project. Engineering plans have been completed to repair the sinkhole. The City has \$1,123,843.15 in hand. The LFD Infrastructure Repair Project was LET in May 2024. No bids were received and project was not rebid. After conversation it was decided to seek alternative design solutions for public utility (water, sewer) relocation. The utility relocation portion of this project will be bid out separate of the infrastructure repair and building stabilization portion of the project. (See below) Engineers are currently working on the plans. WK Dickson (ARDURRA Group) has completed stormwater design updates based on the Ridge Street Sewer Relocation Project. Updated Engineers estimate is \$2,324,000.00 for construction. Project will let on January 30, 2026 with a bid opening date of March 5, 2026.		1,450,157.00	1,123,843.00			2,574,000.00

City of Lenoir - Projects										
Project	Funding Source	START/END DATE	TERMS	Description	Grant/ Loan Amount	City Match	ARPA/SCIF	LTDA/CDBG	Other	Total Cost
Lenoir Fire Sinkhole - Sewer Line Repair - Ridge Street	Enterprise Funds			The utility relocation portion of this project will be bid out separate of the infrastructure repair and building stabilization portion of the project. Once utility relocation plans have been finalized, the infrastructure repair/stabilization design will be updated and LET for bid. In an attempt to simplify the LFD Infrastructure Repair (sinkhole) project and attract more potential bidders, the replacement and/or relocation of approximately 900 linear feet of sanitary sewer was removed from the original project scope. After a review of alternatives and a feasibility study by McGill Associates, a relocation of the sanitary sewer infrastructure within the project footprint was authorized by City staff. The new design, performed by McGill Associates, includes replacement of existing sewer main north of West Avenue and relocation/re-routing of sewer main from West Avenue to Ridge Street and Harper Avenue. This portion of the project is complete.		1,200,000.00				1,200,000.00
Lower Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant Process Basin	DEQ	7/23/2025	2.62% interest for 20 years	The Process Basin at the Lower Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant is in need of upgrades. The City of Lenoir requested statements of qualifications from engineering firms to evaluate their professional civil engineering qualifications in accomplishing the subject project in accordance with the Request for Qualifications (RFQ). The City has been approved to receive CWSRF funding for the subject project. The subject project will address the ammonia NOV's by replacing the mixers, diffusers, and air piping within the Process Basins and blowers to support efficient and effective Biological Nutrient Removal (BNR). The subject project includes the replacement of mixers in the anaerobic, anoxic, and aeration basins, replacement of diffusers in the aeration basins, replacement of air piping that feeds the diffusers, replacement of all three (3) blowers, concrete repairs to treatment basins, and all associate electrical wiring, conduits, instrumentation, and panels for this equipment. The upgrades and equipment replacements will not increase the treatment capacity, 6.0 MGD, of the WWTP. The City received qualifications from the engineering firm of McGill Associates.	5,600,000.00					5,600,000.00
OVNHT Greenway Link	RTP Grant	12-20/TBD	Spring 2020 Recreational Trail Program Grant of \$250,000 with \$62,500 city match	The City of Lenoir received a \$250,000 Recreational Trails Program grant to design and build three street crossings along the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail (OVNHT) that runs through downtown. The total project cost to design and build the crossings is \$312,500. The grant is \$250,000 and the City is matching the grant with \$62,500 in local, in-kind contributions. Mattern and Craig Engineers have completed 60% Construction Plans as of January 2026. Some ROW acquisition will be required which will be managed by M&C.	250,000.00	62,500.00				312,500.00
Stormwater Mapping	Local Funds	3/1/2023	City contracted with the WPCOG to pay \$183,044.00 during the period beginning March 1, 2023, and ending December 31, 2025. Billing will begin July 1, 2023, and occur on a monthly basis of \$6,101.46 .	In order to renew the NPDES permit by June 2026, the City will be required to provide a map of the entire stormwater system. The City's MS4 is partially mapped (approximately 20%), and there was no additional mapping of MS4 infrastructure this year. It is likely that the Lenoir area will be audited for permit compliance prior to the renewal of the permit, so the WPCOG has recommended that the majority of the MS4 should be mapped by June 2025. It is anticipated that this will be funded from the General Fund Operating Budget over the next three years. To date FNI has completed the stormwater inventory piece of this grant. FNI has also completed a drainage study along the Harper Ave Streetscape footprint (Morganton Blvd. to Ridge St.). Remaining funds will be utilized for additional drainage studies within the city.		183,044.00				183,044.00
Stormwater Planning Grant	DEQ/Stormwater Planning Grant (LASII) -North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality utilizing American Rescue Plan funding	Approved 7-18-23 must be spent by 12-26	ARPA funding - funds must be obligated by December 31, 2024 and spent by December 31, 2026.	The City of Lenoir applied for a Stormwater Planning grant in the amount of \$400,000. The City of Lenoir has identified three top stormwater system priorities to address that will further position the City to better manage and plan for the operations of the city-wide stormwater system. The priorities and associated strategies were developed by the City staff and consultants from Freese & Nichols, Inc. The City was awarded \$248,640 in funding from the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality utilizing American Rescue Plan funding. Ongoing	248,640.00					248,640.00
Water Interconnection Project Lenoir Valdese	OSBM	10/23/2024	Funds appropriated by the General Assembly.	The water distribution system analysis identified a possible interconnection of the Lenoir water system with a neighboring utility in the region. A more detailed engineering review of this project is being finalized. This will generally include the construction of approximately 4 miles of 20-inch diameter water transmission main between the Town of Valdese's Water System and City of Lenoir's Water System, including a Lake Rhodhiss water main crossing, a water pump station with standby generator, valves, hydrants, master meter, water main connections, and all related appurtenances The City received a direct appropriation of \$17,000,000 (less loan fees)through the NC General Assembly in the 23-24 state budget to fund the undertaking of this project. This project is being designed by McGill currently. The Interconnect project is in the surveying, design, and easement acquisition phase. Survey field work and mapping has been completed for the Valdese Water Treatment Plant site. Survey field work is in progress for the Waterfront Club and Caldwell Timber properties. The community meeting for Waterfront Club was held on January 22, 2026. The city will meet with the owners of the property for the proposed Water Booster Pump Station.			17,000,000.00			17,000,000.00
Wayfinding Signs	NC Commerce Tourism Grant/ARC		GRANT, TBD, LTDA funding allocated 2-23	Grant funding for a wayfinding system to provide information regarding attractions, municipal amenities and local businesses. Signs will encourage travelers on 321 to visit downtown, the LHS Theater Auditorium and Recreational Fields, Mountain Bike Trails, OVT Trails, Greenway, MLK and Aquatic Center - to name just a few. LTDA allocated \$50,000 FY 2023 and \$100,000 in FY 2024. The signs are in the process of being installed.	250,000.00	37,000.00	142,500.00	200,000.00		629,500.00
West End Community Park Upgrades	Local Funds	3/1/2025		Several improvements to the West End Community Park are programmed for FY24-25, including shelter repairs and upgrades, basketball court repairs, and walkway repairs. These improvements will compliment the addition and relocation of playground equipment installed in 2025. Ongoing		25,000.00				25,000.00
Subtotal					11,784,640.00	7,052,441.00	28,989,358.00	300,000.00	9,048,298.56	57,174,737.56
Project Funding - Approved But Not Started Or in the Planning Phase										
Downtown Signalization Improvements - Two Way Streets	OSBM	10/23/2024	Funds appropriated by the General Assembly. The funds must be spent by 10-2025	The City received \$300,000 in state allocated funding for this project for Downtown Signalization Improvements and two-way streets in the downtown area. The signal light at College and Mulberry was removed in 2025.			300,000.00		1,170,000.00	1,470,000.00
Greenway Bridge	FEMA	TBD	TBD	Greenway Pedestrian Bridge is part of Lenoir Greenway multi-purpose path/trails for outdoor activities that was damaged during hurricane Helene..	53,658.00					53,658.00

City of Lenoir - Projects										
Project	Funding Source	START/END DATE	TERMS	Description	Grant/ Loan Amount	City Match	ARPA/SCIF	LTDA/CDBG	Other	Total Cost
Greenway LAPP Project	Surface Transportation Program Direct APPT Fund		Funding for Connection Project Segments 1 through 5 in the amount of \$2,167,750 and the City committed up to \$433,550 as a cash match for the selected Lenoir Greenway Extension	Park Connection Project proposes the addition of five (5) greenway segments that will provide connectivity to existing and future greenway segments and segments currently under construction. The total proposed segments have a length of 7,225 LF or approximately 1.37 miles. The proposed greenway segments run parallel to existing right of ways and crosses through sections of private property. In 2024, the Design was completed, M&C is working to secure Right Of Way from adjacent property owner (Lenoir Building Supply) in order to build this Greenway Connector. Greenway LAP Project: BL-0065 STIP Project Scheduling was pushed to 2006 in 2025. We have updated the project schedule and it has been amended on the STIP. New project schedule is PE/DESIGN:FFY26, ROW:FFY27, UTILITY:FFY27, CONSTRUCTION: FFY28 .	1,734,400.00		433,600.00			2,168,000.00
Subtotal					1,788,058.00	-	733,600.00	-	1,170,000.00	3,691,658.00
Funding Opportunities - Application Submitted										
Arrowood Bridge Replacement	FEMA BRIC	TBD	TBD	The Public Works Director worked with consultant, Mattern and Craig, to develop a FEMA grant application for replacement of the Arrowood Street Bridge. The application process began in November, 2021, with intermediate submission deadlines in November, December, and a final submission deadline in January, 2022. The application includes a funding request for \$525,000 (70%), and notice of award, if successful, should occur in July, 2022. The Grant was not funded but was resubmitted Fall of 2022 and was not funded. Two new grant applications were submitted in 2025 for this project and decisions haven't been made yet regarding the funding.					834,000.00	834,000.00
EPA-Community-Wide Assessment Grant	North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Brownfields Redevelopment Section	TBD	TBD	Application was made for a U.S. EPA Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant that will focus on the assessment of the Former Harper Plant #2, Southeastern Adhesives, and Marine Technology Solutions sites.	500,000.00					500,000.00
EPA Brownfield - Clean-up Grant	North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Brownfields Redevelopment Section	TBD	TBD	The City applied for a Brownfield Clean-up grant for 429 College Avenue, SW through the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Brownfields Redevelopment Section.	500,000.00					500,000.00
Lenoir Resilience Wastewater Infrastructure/Sewer Outfall Upgrade	FEMA BRIC	TBD	TBD	FEMA made available a grant opportunity for funding projects that improves or mitigates infrastructure that is located in flood hazard areas. The Utilities Department, working with the Western Piedmont COG, identified a potential project and submitted a grant application for 75% funding with a 25% local match. The project would involve the construction of an equalization basin to equalize the flow during severe rain events and a new septic tank receiving station at the Lower Creek Wastewater Treatment Facility. In addition, funds have been requested to replace the sewer line that follows Zack’s Fork Creek from Pennell Street to the soccer complex on Zack’s Fork Rd. The total project cost is The City of Lenoir is dedicated to contribute 25% of the overall cost, amounting \$2,400,000.00, as matching funds from the Enterprise Fund for this \$9,600,000 project.. The sewer line replacement is currently in the Utilities Department CIP. The equalization basin is part of a larger renovation project for Lower Creek also identified in the current CIP. The Grant was not funded but was resubmitted in the Spring of 2024 and remains unfunded. The City applied for a Hazard Mitigation Grant for 719,097.75 in June of 2025 and has not heard yet regarding approval and is also waiting for the final ruling regarding the BRIC grant.	7,200,000.00	2,400,000.00				9,600,000.00
OVT Connector Greenway and Sidewalk Project	NC Great Trails State Grant Program	TBD	TDB	This funding application was submitted 11.12.24 and includes a request of \$497,994 (66% project cost) for construction of greenway and sidewalk connections from Harper and West Avenue to Willow Street and the OVT Pavilion project. The grant was submitted to Great Trail late 2024. We have not been awarded any Great Trails funds.	497,994.00	248,997.00				746,991.00
Steel Street Mills	NC Commerce Small Business Infrastructure Grant Program (SmBIZ)	TBD	TBD	The City, with the assistance of the WPCOG, applied for a grant is through NC Commerce Small Business Infrastructure Grant Program (SmBIZ) to assist a local developer relocate a stream that runs underneath their historic building. This stream relocation will require the City of Lenoir to make infrastructure changes to allow for proper runoff of stormwater to avoid flooding in the area, which could affect area businesses. It is proposed to reroute the stormwater from College Avenue and Harper Avenue to join the infrastructure just West of Steele Street. A concrete junction box will be constructed under Steele Street where the corrugated piping begins to connect the stormwater from both College Avenue and Harper Avenue into this box. Completing this project will result in improved stormwater management and allow for the redevelopment of the property for much needed housing. This property is a locally designated Historic Landmark and is on the National Register of Historic Places. This downtown area is also located in a US Qualified Opportunity Zone.	500,000.00					500,000.00
Whitnel Water Transmission Main Replacement - Phase #1	Infrastructure Funds or SRF Funding - TBD	TBD	TBD	This project was identified in the water distribution system analysis as a top priority project. It would replace the existing 20 inch line from the water plant to Sawmills with a 24 inch line. A funding resolution was passed on 10/7/25 to apply for funding.					7,000,000.00	7,000,000.00
Subtotal					9,197,994.00	2,648,997.00	-	-	7,834,000.00	19,680,991.00
Pending Projects										
Water Project - Hwy 18	TBD	TBD	TBD	Fund water line upgrade to improve the water pressure on Morganton Blvd. (HWY 18) and the Fairview area. The total project cost is estimated to be approximately \$2.6 million.					2,600,000.00	2,600,000.00
Hickory Water interconnect	TBD	TBD	TBD	Exploring the possibility of interconnecting with Hickory for a back-up water supply. Estimated costs \$40,000,000 to \$70,000,000.					40,000,000.00	40,000,000.00
Subtotal					-	-	-	-	42,600,000.00	42,600,000.00
Grant Total					23,725,692.00	9,991,938.00	32,647,958.00	702,380.00	66,729,234.56	133,797,202.56