

Clay County Comprehensive Plan

Plan Recommendations and Actions

Clay County Comprehensive Planning Committee
8/5/2010



MEMORANDUM

TO: Clay County Board of Commissioners

CC: Paul Leek, County Manager
Dr. Gail Criss, Clay County Comprehensive Plan Committee Chair

FROM: Kristy Carter

DATE: Thursday, August 5, 2010

SUBJECT: Comprehensive Plan

The Clay County Comprehensive Planning Committee (the Committee) adopted its full set of Clay County Comprehensive Plan (CP) policy and action recommendations on July 6, 2010. The Committee adopted recommendations pertaining to agriculture, natural resources, historic and cultural resources, land stewardship, transportation, utilities and community facilities, housing, and economic development. Attached to this memo is the full set of recommendations.

Before addressing the individual strategies, it is first helpful to set the stage with some broad concepts in the CP. Five themes were consistently identified over the past 16 months during which the Committee has met monthly. These themes, applicable to each recommendation area, are:

- 1. *Coordination and communication:*** Better coordination and communication from County department to County department, from County leadership to citizens, from citizen leadership to County leadership, and community group to community group will enhance Clay County's overall use of resources and better unite those who have Clay County's best interests in mind.
- 2. *Connection:*** Fragmentation is common in Clay County--whether the topic is recreation, tourism, transportation planning, or land stewardship. The policy and action recommendations in the CP attempt to connect fragmented elements.
- 3. *Intention:*** In the past, opportunities have come to Clay County, and the County has not had to go outside to market itself or look for opportunities. As times have changed, Clay County now competes with the region, the nation, and the world. In order meet its goals, particularly those tied to economic development, Clay County must intentionally seek out opportunities that will help the County meet the needs of its citizens now and in the future.
- 4. *Education:*** During a CP meeting, Mayor Harrell Moore said, "I've lived here all my life, and I learn something new every time I come to one of these meetings." Clay County has many resources for its citizens. Unfortunately, most are not well known. If the Mayor of Hayesville, who has lived here for well over 60 years, isn't aware of what's available, it is safe to assume that many others are in the dark. The CP looks for ways to increase awareness and to make connections between County services in order to maximize County resources.

5. **Quality of Life:** Overall, people are happy with the quality of life in Clay County. The CP's strategies work to maintain what is good--such as the rural character; and improve what is challenging--such as the lack of good jobs.

The following bullets provide a brief summary of what the Comprehensive Planning Committee aims to accomplish with each set of recommendations presented in the Comprehensive Plan:

- The **Agriculture** strategy, when implemented, will result in the preservation of agricultural and open lands that have long defined the county's rural character. Clay County will connect to the broader region by promoting economic activities that boost the agricultural and overall economies. Finally, an agricultural focus promotes sustainability through a local and regional foods movement by reserving areas for food production and processing.
- The **Natural Resources** strategy will guide County decisions so that natural resources may be protected to the greatest extent possible. The actions will also help determine areas that may not be suitable for development based on environmental opportunities and constraints, including unfavorable soils, floodplains, wetlands, and water resources. Such protection will focus on open space preservation (including parks and green spaces), and promoting development that is suitable for the site on which it is built and conserves as much space as possible.
- The **Historic and Cultural Resources** strategy will protect, develop, and market the historic and cultural resources of the county. The actions make the connection between historic and cultural resources, economic development, and rural character.
- The **Land Stewardship** strategy offers goals and objectives to guide and encourage future development to occur in a manner respects property rights while balancing the county's need to protect natural features and rural character.
- The **Transportation** strategy integrates transportation goals with Clay County's future land use, economic development, rural character, and recreation plans by addressing the safe and effective movement of people and goods.
- The **Utilities and Community Facilities** strategy outlines a framework that allows for the county to plan for expanding services that are responsive, cost effective, and high quality.
- The **Housing** strategy encourages the county to accommodate a wide-range of interests, ages, incomes, and needs within the community.
- The **Economic Development** strategy will result in greater private industry investment; an expanded tax base, and increased employment opportunities, wages, and personal incomes; and an overall increase in community wealth.

Next Steps:

September 2: We will come before the Commissioners at the regularly scheduled September meeting to review the full Comprehensive Plan draft document.

September 2-13: Sometime between September 2 and September 13, we will host a 3-day open house where members of the community are welcome to come and review the full Plan in detail; to ask questions; and to provide feedback. This input will be incorporated into the Plan in time for the Commissioner-led public hearing on September 23.

September 23: We ask that the Commissioners plan to hold a special meeting on September 23 to hold a Commissioner-led public hearing. Public input will be incorporated into the plan in time for a scheduled plan adoption date of October 7.

October 7: On October 7, the completed Clay County Comprehensive Plan is up for a formal vote for adoption.

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AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES CONCEPT PLAN

The agriculture strategy presented in the CCCP, when implemented, will result in the *preservation* of agricultural and open lands that have long defined the County’s rural character. Clay County will connect to the broader region by promoting economic activities that boost the agricultural and overall economies. Finally, an agricultural focus promotes sustainability through a local and regional foods movement by reserving areas for food production and processing.

1. AG-1 Goal: Cooperate in local and regional efforts to preserve agriculture as a component of the regional landscape, economy, and lifestyle.

- 1.1. Encourage agricultural land preservation and the long-term viability of agriculture in Clay County where landowners have committed to agriculture operations.
- 1.2. Advance the viability of agriculture through promoting agriculture related economic development in the County.
- 1.3. Work with local and regional groups and organizations to preserve farming and farmland in ways that are consistent with the CCCP.
- 1.4. Build and expand the food production and processing economy through helping to more effectively link with potential markets for products. (Foothills Connect model). Options to consider include:
 - 1.4.1.1. Through research and relationship building, position Clay County’s agriculture community to capture a portion of the agriculture related economic clusters in the metropolitan markets. [Food processing in Knoxville, food and beverage manufacturing in Chattanooga, Bio-pharma in Greenville, and Life Sciences/Natural Products in Asheville]. For example Chattanooga has a cluster of food-processing industries—it is possible that Clay County could supply raw products to these processors.
 - 1.4.1.2. The local food movement has gained momentum locally, regionally, and across the nation. Clay County’s agriculture community can take advantage of this growing market. Support the agriculture community to emerge into this market, such as supplying local restaurants and restaurants in the metro areas with farm products from Clay County.

[Foothills Connect model] [Could include raw products or value added products such as jams or cheese].

- 1.5. Work with regional agriculture stakeholders to train property owners interested in small scale, intensive farming.
- 1.6. Adopt and implement the *Farmland Preservation Plan*

2. AG-2 Goal: Adopt policies that balance agriculture preservation with growth and development.

- 2.1. Through changes in the subdivision ordinance and incentives, allow for and encourage compact or conservation development practices to help minimize the use of prime farmland or significant agricultural land.
- 2.2. Through planned infrastructure expansions, encourage a variety of development (commercial, small-scale residential, infill, redevelopment) along the urban corridors (Highways 64 and 69 and Historic Hayesville) to prevent the spread of development in rural areas.
- 2.3. Identify undeveloped prime farmland throughout the County and encourage preservation. Engage in a partnership with the Land Trust for the Little Tennessee to educate property owners on land conservation tools and strategies. If the land is developed, encourage the use of compact or conservation subdivision techniques to minimize soil disturbance.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONCEPT PLAN

The natural resources strategy presented in the CCCP will guide County decisions so that natural resources may be protected to the greatest extent possible. The actions will also help determine areas that may not be suitable for development based on environmental opportunities and constraints, including unfavorable soils, floodplains, wetlands, and water resources. Such protection will focus on open space preservation (including parks and green spaces), and promoting development that is suitable for the site on which it is built and conserves as much space as possible.

1. NR-1 Goal: Protect the exceptional natural resources of Clay County through policies and programs. Preserve the natural features of the area – including Lake Chatuge, the Hiwassee River, streams and creeks, floodplains, groundwater, woodlands, wildlife habitats, and other natural features.

- 1.1. Explore and apply strategies that balance new development with the protection of the natural features and systems important to the County.
 - 1.1.1. Provide resources that enable the Clay County building department and developers to conduct a site analysis on developments that also require a soil erosion and sedimentation control plan [projects that disturb more than an acre of land]
 - 1.1.2. Minimize/discourage building in the floodplain; encourage use of best management practices when building in the watershed or sensitive water areas
- 1.2. Maintain high quality surface and ground waters for drinking, recreation, and natural habitats
 - 1.2.1. Collaborate with the State, other local governments, and other organizations for the protection of water quality in the County.
 - 1.2.1.1. Clay County Government will formally endorse and puts into practice recommendations from the Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition’s Lake Chatuge Plan.
 - 1.2.1.2. Building on the work of the Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition, continue to identify and work with land owners to mitigate non-point source pollution.
 - 1.2.1.3. Encourage vegetative buffers between developed areas and water bodies.
 - 1.2.2. Ensure erosion control techniques are used for protection and continued improvement of water quality.

- 1.2.2.1. Using existing resources and knowledge, offer incentives to those contractors who incorporate best management practices during the development process or take extra measures to protect water quality.
- 1.2.2.2. In the subdivision or soil erosion/sedimentation control ordinance, increase stream buffer minimums around sensitive surface waters and water sources such as High Quality and Outstanding Water Resources, sensitive trout streams, etc.
- 1.2.2.3. Consider a local program supported through cost sharing with other counties.

2. NR-2 Goal: Promote development on steep-slopes in a manner that protects health, safety, public welfare, and property investment.

(NOTE: The scope of the CCCP is too broad to recommend that one of the first tasks of the Clay County Planning Board [to be appointed] should be to research technical details of safe steep-slope development.)

- 2.1. Direct the Clay County Planning Board to evaluate and identify appropriate safety related slope development regulations.
 - 2.1.1. Use the *Mountain Ridge and Steep Slope Protection Strategies* publication as a guide
 - 2.1.2. Anticipate the use of technical assistance (geologist, soil scientist, planners from other communities, etc.)
 - 2.1.3. Evaluate the merits of the trigger guidelines outlined in the *Mountain Ridge and Steep Slope Protection Strategies* publication. (Bulleated below)

- 25% slope: trigger for slope review
- 30% slope: trigger for geotechnical analysis and a more in depth plan review
- 40% slope: building not recommended
- 50% slope: building not allowed

2.1.4. Determine if steep slope regulation should be addressed through:

- a standalone ordinance,
- the subdivision ordinance,
- the soil erosion and sedimentation ordinance,
- or other tool.

3. NR-3 Goal: Develop a network of greenways and parks as a natural resource protection measure.

3.1. Develop a set of tools to designate parks and greenways as a tool for natural resource protection as future County plans are prepared, subdivision plats are proposed, or properties are designated for conservation easements. Partner with developers, property owners, community groups, etc., to ensure that parks and greenways are integrated with their projects.

3.2. Prioritize the development of parks or portions of parks that focus on natural resource preservation and passive, nature-based recreation.

4. NR-3 Goal: Increase the amount of private land reserved for conservation.

4.1. Cooperate with and financially support the Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition to protect water quality in the Hiwassee River Watershed, and actively work with the Land Trust for the Little Tennessee as it identifies and begins to acquire property set aside for conservation.

4.2. Work with landowners at the time development is proposed to preserve wooded areas and other environmental features that serve to protect natural resources.

5. NR-5 Goal: Damage to structures from wildfires in Clay County will be reduced

5.1. Cooperate with volunteer fire departments, US Forest Service and home owners to keep structures safe from wildfires.

5.1.1. Support the Forest Service's effort to conduct controlled burns (education, announcements, etc.)

5.1.2. Incorporate a Firewise education program in building department materials, make Firewise education available on County website (A Firewise program encourages proper construction, landscaping, and land clearing in order to prevent structural damage from wildfires)

5.2. Incorporate wildfire knowledge during the steep-slope planning process

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES STRATEGY PLAN

The Historic and Cultural Resources strategy presented in the CCCP, will protect, develop, and market the historic and cultural resources of the County. The actions make the connection between historic and cultural resources and economic development and rural character.

1. HCR-1 Goal: Celebrate and preserve the culture and history of Clay County to advance the County's quality of life, rural character, and potential as a heritage tourism destination.

- 1.1. Preserve and promote existing historical resources.
 - 1.1.1. Work with the State Historic Preservation Office to conduct a thorough study of the county's historic homes, structures, and areas that contribute to the cultural heritage of Clay County.
 - 1.1.2. Explore initiatives to spotlight the history and culture of the county, while enhancing quality of life and the county's potential as a destination.
- 1.2. Integrate historic and cultural activities with travel and tourism and economic development efforts.
 - 1.2.1. Develop a historic and cultural branding campaign to market the history and culture of Clay County and to build the area's potential as a unique and attractive destination.
 - 1.2.2. Cooperate with neighboring communities to spotlight the attractions of the region to market to and capture loop tourists.
 - 1.2.3. Encourage all who are promoting tourism, events, and recreation opportunities to co-market the county as a destination through the internet, brochures, events, and other strategies. (Chamber, TDA, CCCRA, HHMA, Peacock Playhouse, etc.)
 - 1.2.4. Continue to collaborate with entities and organizations working to promote events and attractions in Clay County, and work to raise awareness of these events.
 - 1.2.5. Consider building some type of event grounds near the existing recreation center (land would need to be acquired).
 - 1.2.6. Explore opportunities to attract tourists from the interstate ring that circles Clay County. Advertise Clay County as an ideal place for a day trip.
 - 1.2.7. Coordinate marketing activities with broader regional events and activities.

2. HCR-2 Goal: Promote the revitalization of Historic Hayesville as the historic and cultural center of the community.

- 2.1. Establish a system of community pathways (driving, biking, walking, etc.) and an accompanying wayfinding system that directs people through Historic Hayesville.
- 2.2. Encourage [and support if it does] the Town of Hayesville to complete a current Land Use Plan that complements the goals of the CCCP.
- 2.3. Complete the Historic Courthouse renovation to be re-used in accordance with the *Clay County Historic Courthouse Re-Use Plan*.
- 2.4. Support the CCCRA and the Historic Hayesville Merchants Association's efforts to implement recommendations made in the *Historic Hayesville Market Analysis*.

LAND STEWARDSHIP STRATEGY PLAN

The Land Stewardship strategy presented in the CCCP offers goals and objectives to guide and encourage future development to occur in a manner respects property rights while balancing the county's needs to protect natural features and rural character.

1. **LS-1 Goal: Future growth and development in Clay County will be guided by policies, programs and incentives that encourage development while balancing the County's infrastructure, environmental and rural character preservation needs.**

- 1.1. Adopt an official slate of development goals, that when one or more is met by a developer, enables to developer to access a County incentive(s).

Suggested development goals include:

- Prevent urban-style development in rural areas by developing commercial used in established commercial areas, reusing or rehabilitating existing buildings and in-filling. Urbanized areas include the 64/69 Corridors, the Town of Hayesville), and the rural crossroads.
- Preserve open space through compact or conservation subdivision development.
- Protect mountain views by using good mountainside development design (e.g. earth tone colors, avoid mirrored windows) [County would need to develop education materials.]
- Complete a Clay County Site Assessment to identify context sensitive building placement. [County would need to develop a site assessment program].
- Reduce the overall amount of land disturbance and vegetation removal; establish vegetative buffers that exceed minimum standards.
- Incorporate soil erosion/sedimentation control and/or water quality best management practices [Connect back to Lake Chatuge Action Plan recommendations]
- Incorporate energy efficiency or green building techniques. [Would need to define the standards]

- When building along rural pathways, design the face (what is visible from the road) of the development to fit in with the rural character of the area.

- 1.2. Adopt an official slate of incentives that are available to developers when one or more of the developments goal are incorporated into the development process.

Suggested incentives include:

- Fast track or priority permitting
- Reduced fees.
- Certified "Catchy Name" Development or Recognition program when development best practices are used.
- Water and wastewater connection rebates; subdivision fee reductions, subdivision fast track reviews.

- 1.3. Create a development goal/incentives matrix to match the level of incentive to the goals.

- 1.4. Evaluate the County's building related fee schedule.

- 1.5. Work with the Town of Hayesville to align their zoning ordinance and potential Land Use Plan (if it completes one) with County development goals.

2. **LS-2 Goal: Improve the County's capacity to incorporate technology and into land stewardship decision making.**

- 2.1. Provide the Building Department, Tax Department, Environmental Health, the CCWSD, and others with the technology training and tools

needed to incorporate technology into their programs and recordkeeping systems.

- 2.2. Convert to an web-based GIS and tax record system that is available to the public

3. LS-3 Goal: Expand the County's Planning and Development Capacity

- 3.1. Establish and train a Clay County Planning Board.
- 3.2. Identify resources to hire a County Planner [or explore options for a contract planner through a private planning firm].
- 3.3. Develop a commercial/industrial development checklist with preferred commercial/industrial development practices.

4. LS-4 Goal: Update the Clay County Land Subdivision Ordinance

- 4.1. Incorporate new hazard mitigation and road standard safety measures as defined on page ___ of the CCCP.
- 4.2. Review the *Ordinance* for technical corrections, clarifications, typographical errors, etc.
- 4.3. Align the *Ordinance* with the CCCP.

5. Land Stewardship Miscellaneous Items:

- Does the county have a technical review team/group for developments: environmental health, building, fire, CCWSD, DOT, etc. → if not then recommend
- Think about whether the planning board should have or technical approval or final approval of subdivision plats
- Develop a comprehensive development checklist that incorporates development goals;
- Digitize all development related ordinances; make them available in one place on the Clay County website

TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY PLAN

The Transportation strategy presented in the CCCP integrates transportation goals with Clay County's future land use, economic development, rural character, and recreation plans through addressing the safe and effective movement of people and goods.

1. T-1 Goal: Develop and maintain an efficient transportation system that includes all modes of transportation and provides the safe and effective movement of people and goods.

- 1.1. Clay County's long-range transportation planning decisions will be made in accordance with the comprehensive plan and future land use map. (Open access to metropolitan areas, preservation of rural routes, alternative transportation options, etc.)
- 1.2. Design future streets and highway improvements to be compatible with existing land uses and complement future land uses as illustrated on the future land use map (i.e. roads in commercial areas support high volume of traffic, roads in rural area have a slower speed)
- 1.3. Support state efforts to redesign Highway 64 into a boulevard and encourage the incorporation of bike and pedestrian pathways at least from Highways 175 to Qualla Road.
- 1.4. Ensure that the 64/69 corridors provide for the effective movement of people and goods to and from the metropolitan areas (access management, planning for traffic flow).

2. T-2 Goal: Clay County residents will have access to bicycle, pedestrian, and alternative modes of mobility.

- 2.1. Design future streets and highway improvements to incorporate bikeway and pedestrian pathways
- 2.2. Develop a Parks, Recreation and Greenways Master Plan to identify a complete pedestrian, bike, and greenway network / Use the Comprehensive Transportation Planning Process to create a Bike/Pedestrian Plan

2.3. Use the resources of Clay County Transportation to increase ridership of the general public

- 2.3.1. Encourage the use of public transportation (Help CCT reach their goal of increased public transportation ridership)
- 2.3.2. Provide support (through advertising, grant assistance, capital planning) to the Clay County Transportation system as they increase their efforts to broaden public transportation efforts
- 2.3.3. Use the CCT as a resource to better connect citizens to the economic opportunities in the broader region.
- 2.3.4. Work toward providing commuter service between Clay County and the metropolitan areas.

2.4. Encourage Town of Hayesville to apply for a Pedestrian and Bike Planning Grant from NC DOT. (Grant only available to municipalities).

3. T-3 Goal: When appropriate, coordinate with neighboring units of government to ensure coordination of transportation planning efforts (primarily Town of Hayesville, Towns County, GA and Cherokee County, NC)

4. T-4 Goal: Integrate energy efficiency and transportation planning

- 4.1. Make transportation planning decisions with energy conservation and energy efficiency in mind.
- 4.2. Increase the use and design of transit, pedestrian, and bikeway with the goal of reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT's).
- 4.3. Enhance road efficiency and function to minimize pollution (i.e. identify and reduce congestion in problem areas)

UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES STRATEGY PLAN

The Utilities and Community Facilities Strategy Plan outlines a framework that allows for the County to plan for expanding services that are responsive, cost effective, and high quality.

1. UCF-1 Goal: Strive to provide high-quality, modern infrastructure to support economic development and an exceptional quality of life for the county

- 1.1. The Clay County Water and Sewer District (CCWSD) will have the capacity to serve customers in urbanized areas, as defined by the Future Land Use Map.
 - 1.1.1. Complete a new water and sewer master plan that is based on the Comprehensive Plan's future land use map and address the following objectives:
 - 1.1.1.1. Capital Improvement Planning: Incorporate CCWSD mid and long term needs with the County's Capital Improvement Planning process and annual budget process.
 - 1.1.1.2. Digitize CCWSD data and digitally record new data to incorporate into the County's GIS for long-term decision-making.
 - 1.1.2. Increase the number of customers who may currently be added to the CCWSD public water and wastewater systems.
 - 1.1.2.1. Where feasible, recruit those on the more expensive Towns County system to the CCWSD systems. Advertise service availability in newspaper, and direct mailings to property owners who are eligible.
 - 1.1.2.2. Identify incentives to encourage connections to the CCWSD.
 - 1.1.3. Maximize existing CCWSD resources
 - 1.1.3.1. Implement water conservation measures
 - 1.1.3.2. Ensure that CCWSD policies are in compliance with the "Drought Bill" (S.L. 2008-143)
 - 1.1.3.3. Incorporate water conservation education materials with bills.
 - 1.1.4. Develop a surface water source
 - 1.1.4.1. Dedicate resources to work through regulatory/land constraints related to constructing an intake on Lake Chatuge.

- 1.1.5. Complete projects that are in-progress and attend to immediate CCWSD needs:
 - 1.1.5.1. Extend sewer line from Hayesville down Highway 69 to state line.
 - 1.1.5.2. Expand wastewater treatment plant
 - 1.1.5.3. Identify resources for back-up generators at all wastewater pumps (giving priority on Riverside and Ingles stations)
 - 1.1.5.4. Rehab the in town sewer line (→need to get the exact location from Layton)

2. UCF-2 Goal: Septic systems and wells in Clay County will be installed and maintained in a manner that protects public and environmental health.

- 2.1. Incorporate septic system and well planning into land suitability analysis (see Land Stewardship)
- 2.2. Digitize Clay County's septic system and well data to aid in long-term decision making. Incorporate into GIS; use GPS technology to digitally map septic systems and wells, failures, problematic areas, etc. (GPS = Global Positioning System—a way to digitally record a geographic point or place by latitude and longitude)
- 2.3. Address septic system and well planning in accordance with steep slope considerations

3. UCF-3 Goal: Clay County will operate a cost effective solid waste program.

- 3.1. Implement the Clay County Solid Waste Action Plan (Summarized as Appendix ___)

- 3.2. Educate community members on the costs associated with solid waste and recycling disposal (use website)
- 3.3. Develop a report to the community to provide update on solid waste disposal goal progress.

4. UCF-4 Goal: Clay County will have a modern and responsive technology backbone.

- 4.1. The Clay County Government will support the building of a broadband network by serving as a facilitator between private and public broadband stakeholders.
 - 4.1.1. Assist private and public stakeholders with prioritizing areas with broadband gaps and with planning to fill those gaps.
 - 4.1.2. Assist with grant writing and resource identification for private and public stakeholders.
 - 4.1.3. Assist with mapping (or build capacity to assist)
 - 4.1.4. Assist with grant research and writing
- 4.2. Develop a wireless communications tower ordinance similar to the cellular tower ordinance. (Recommend using outside assistance)
- 4.3. Ensure that adults in the County have access to technology training
 - 4.3.1. Incorporate access to technology training with workforce development planning
 - 4.3.2. Encourage use of and support Clay County Transportation in carrying out transportation to technology training (e.g. Tri-County Community College, regional higher education centers)
 - 4.3.3. Work with regional higher education centers to bring technology training to the County

5. UCF-5 Goal: Work in partnership with regional education institutions to enhance access to quality education and post-secondary education for County residents, and ensure that training is well aligned with workforce demands.

- 5.1. Construct the new elementary school

5.1.1. Recommended action to be updated as new information is available

- 5.2. Increase the number of Clay County residents attending Tri-County Community College and other higher education institutions
 - 5.2.1. Explore funding opportunities with Clay County Transportation to secure resources to support a school or economic development related transportation program. Focus on evening transportation needs.
 - 5.2.2. Assertively build relationships with regional higher education institutions to bring higher education to the County.
 - 5.2.2.1. Explore funding opportunities to support a local higher education center
 - 5.2.2.2. Identify and secure a location for a training/teaching facility (e.g. computer lab, video conferencing, teaching space)

6. UCF-6 Goal: Ensure that all residents and groups are well served with park, recreation, and open space facilities that meet a variety of County goals, including: health improvement, better quality of life, a tool to attract/retain young people, a tool to attract economic development opportunities, and environmental protection.

- 6.1. Develop a recreation master plan that addresses the following goals:
 - 6.1.1. Increase the variety of public recreation opportunities (e.g. swimming pool, playgrounds, an event facility); include age appropriate activities (kids, families, young adults seniors)
 - 6.1.2. Identify a funding structure that balances affordability with operation costs.
 - 6.1.3. Develop a greenway plan that links recreation areas in the County with one another
 - 6.1.4. Identify land acquisition opportunities
 - 6.1.5. Identify entrepreneurial opportunities (e.g. regional baseball tournaments, private events at a facility)
- 6.2. Partner with non-profits and community organizations to leverage dollars for community recreation and cultural projects.

6.3. See Natural Resources and Transportation Concept Plans for supporting recommendations.

7. UCF-7 Goal: Clay County Government integrates planning with County decision making. (General Statements)

7.1. Coordinate the provision of public services and facilities with other aspects of planning in the County, in particular coordinate the provision of these with planning for future land use.

7.2. Conduct detailed and ongoing studies to support the most efficient and cost effective provision of utilities and community facilities in the County—including wastewater treatment, public water, solid waste, transportation, and public safety.

7.3. Work closely with the Sheriff's office, fire departments, and EMS as the County grows and service needs expand. (Annual goal setting and reporting)

7.4. Plan for capital improvements and needs through a Capital Improvement Planning process that is integrated with the County's annual budgeting process. Things to consider include:

7.4.1.1. Ensuring that the County's services, including fire/EMS, sheriff's office, library, parks and recreation, CCWSD, etc., have adequate staffing, facilities, and equipment capacity to accommodate projected future growth, and that the County has the ability to capture the value associated with such growth to pay for required County services.

7.4.1.2. Determining long-range facilities, equipment, training, and personnel needs for the sheriff's office, fire and EMS, and parks and recreation facilities.

HOUSING CONCEPT PLAN

The housing strategy encourages the County to accommodate a wide-range of interests, ages, incomes, and needs within the community.

- 1. H-1 Goal: Encourage continued investment, improvement, and maintenance in existing residential areas within the County.**
- 2. H-2 Goal: Encourage thoughtful neighborhood design principles and standards to ensure that new neighborhoods reflect the rural character of the County.**
 - 2.1. Offer guidelines to help developers determine appropriate locations for neighborhoods incorporating conservation design or traditional neighborhood design principles.
 - 2.2. Encourage walkable housing development near Hayesville and in rural crossroads.
- 3. H-3 Goal: Encourage new housing development, or housing rehabilitation, that accommodates the existing and emerging needs of the County**
 - 3.1. Encourage use of age-in-place housing opportunities to accommodate the region's aging population.
 - 3.2. Encourage a developer to construct senior multi-family housing project to accommodate the needs of the aging population.
 - 3.3. Encourage housing for potential target groups such as young professionals and the 55+ age cohorts.
- 4. Engage local, regional, State and Federal sources of assistance to maintain and improve residential structures.**
 - 4.1. Continue to make available programs to provide assistance with housing maintenance and rehabilitation for targeted areas and groups through Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and non-profit programs.
 - 4.2. Consider a study to identify concentrated areas in need of rehabilitation.
 - 4.3. Engage and support organizations working to strategies to promote home-ownership.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT PLAN

The economic development strategy presented in the CCCP, when implemented, will result in greater private industry investment. Strategies will also result in an expanded tax base; increased employment opportunities, wages, and personal incomes; and an overall increase in community wealth.

1. ED-1 Goal: As the lead economic development organization, the Clay County Economic Development Commission (EDC) will enhance Clay County's capacity to engage in economic development activities.

- 1.1. Define, form, and appoint members to the new Clay County EDC (EDC Charter).
- 1.2. Designate financial and other resources to support the work of the EDC
 - 1.2.1. Designate funding for a paid economic development position within the County to support the work of the Economic Development Commission. Encourage the Town of Hayesville to assist with funding.
 - 1.2.2. Designate resources for this staff person and a two to three volunteer team to obtain economic development training.
 - 1.2.3. Develop a dedicated revenue stream for economic development efforts
- 1.3. Adopt and implement an aggressive “go out and find it” business development and recruitment program. (Don’t wait for opportunities to come to knocking; go out and start knocking on doors—both locally and regionally).
 - 1.3.1. Actively participate in and benefit from regional economic development initiatives, forums, conferences, etc.
 - 1.3.2. Actively pursue and develop businesses that provide high-quality, high-paying employment opportunities and strong tax base.

2. ED-2 Goal: Clay County strengthens its economy by branding and marketing itself as the region's hub of economic activity.

- 2.1. Develop a Clay County economic development image that promotes Clay County's economic development strengths.
 - 2.1.1. Develop a high quality economic development marketing package.
 - 2.1.2. Develop a high quality economic development web presence.

- 2.1.3. Designate resources for travel, trade shows, conferences, etc.

2.2. Improve business related information and data

- 2.2.1. Implement a business licensing program, with a nominal fee, to document and benchmark businesses growth.
- 2.2.2. Integrate economic development data with the Clay County GIS.
- 2.2.3. Identify and track metrics or benchmarks to measure success of economic development efforts.
- 2.2.4. Ensure that the latest community data is available (use the CCCP as a benchmarking tool).
- 2.2.5. Add the information to the economic development web presence.

3. ED-3 Goal: Clay County's strengthens its capacity to engage in economic development activities by maximizing existing economic development resources.

- 3.1. Engage economic development resource providers in County economic developers and generate economic development vision buy-in.
 - 3.1.1. Reserve slots on the EDC for key economic development resource providers.
 - 3.1.2. Link to economic development resources providers from the economic development web presence to promote to potential and existing business, and to citizens.
- 3.2. Support other organizations engaged in economic or community development efforts.
 - 3.2.1.1. Consider direct funding (grants) or an annual contract process where economic development partners contract to assist the County in certain economic development or public purpose activities.
- 3.3. Engage with existing workforce development partners to accomplish County economic development goals.

- 3.3.1. Use workforce development resources to inventory and profile the skills of area workers to use business recruitment tool.
 - 3.3.2. Engage with the Southwest Workforce Development Board to identify, learn, and market opportunities that benefit Clay County’s workforce.
 - 3.3.3. Work with local educational institutions and schools to promote opportunities for technical based training that contributes to regional employment opportunities.
- 3.4. Assertively to work and collaborate on efforts to bring higher education opportunities to Clay County
- 3.4.1. Research the potential of higher education learning center, similar to that in Morganton, NC.
 - 3.4.2. Maintain and active and facilitative role with public groups and private interests that are working to close broadband gaps.
4. **ED-3 Goal: Clay County’s strengthens its economy through implementation of economic development building block strategies.**

4.1. Build Clay’s Economy through Economic Infrastructure

- 4.1.1. Inventory, develop, and market the County economic development physical assets (buildings, transportation assets, infrastructure, etc.).
 - 4.1.1.1. Develop marketing materials for the Clay County Industrial Park; add the Park to the County’s economic development web presence .
 - 4.1.1.2. Inventory vacant buildings appropriate for economic development activities. (Commercial, Office, Industrial, etc.)
 - 4.1.1.2.1. Identify those buildings that may be eligible for the Rural Center’s Building Reuse Funds.
 - 4.1.1.2.2. Market availability of buildings; consider a vacant building program where owners can register their building with the County’s Economic Development Commission.
 - 4.1.1.2.3. Link home based or expanding business to vacant buildings and/or encourage space sharing to reduce business overhead.

- 4.1.2. Ensure the provision of adequate infrastructure to accommodate economic expansion (as designated on FLUM).
 - 4.1.2.1. Identify business needs and barriers involving infrastructure improvements; support policies and actions to improve infrastructure.
 - 4.1.2.2. Plan for accessible and efficient transportation options for the movement of people and goods.

4.2. Build Clay’s Economy through Strengthening and Growing Existing Industry

- 4.2.1. Increase the availability and accessibility of business development services.
 - 4.2.1.1. Coordinate with economic development stakeholders to develop a “no wrong door for economic development”; make sure all business support provides have the knowledge to provide a basic level of assistance.
 - 4.2.1.2. Annually update the “Resource Guide to Starting a Business” and ensure its continuous distribution in paper and electronic formats.
- 4.2.2. Increase availability of and access to capital.
 - 4.2.2.1. Work with local banks, Clay County Government, and other stakeholders to create a small business loan pool or a revolving loan fund.
 - 4.2.2.2. Target businesses on the verge of growing and link them to capital (bank loan pool, Rural Center’s Capital Access program, SBA Loans, etc.)
- 4.2.3. Prepare for potential economic shifts by maintaining strong communication with the county’s major employers to assess their current and projected future needs including utility, infrastructure, land, and labor force needs.
 - 4.2.3.1. Continue to expand upon development and implementation of systematic methods for contacting businesses to identify their needs and direct them to resource providers.
 - 4.2.3.2. Promote retention and growth of existing businesses within the County.

4.3. *Build Clay's Economy through Regional Opportunities*

- 4.3.1. Leverage the County's connection to metropolitan areas to bolster economic opportunities in Clay County
 - 4.3.1.1. Intentionally reach out to business leaders in the metro areas to remain abreast of economic trends in the metro areas
 - 4.3.1.2. Encourage the expansion of commercial and industrial opportunities within the County to enhance the County's role as a regional economic center.
- 4.3.2. Establish links between local employers (new and existing) and regional opportunities
 - 4.3.2.1. Development of a skilled workforce that can accommodate local and regional employers
- 4.3.3. Intentionally reach out to regional health care facilities to increase their presence in Clay County, both as a service to Clay County residents and as an employment base.

4.4. *Build Clay's Economy through Emerging Industries*

- 4.4.1. Explore and pursue business enterprises and production processes that relate to renewable energy and solar
- 4.4.2. Build the County's economy around place paced assets that provide competitive advantaged to the County and the region—for instance food, bio-based products, outdoor recreation, etc.
- 4.4.3. Explore and recruit business that manufacture outdoor recreation products (a growing industry in Western North Carolina)

4.5. *Build Clay's Economy through Small Business and Entrepreneurship*

- 4.5.1. Promote entrepreneurship to grow the economy from within the community—this will complement business attraction.
 - 4.5.1.1. Promote and strongly support entrepreneurship education

- 4.5.1.2. Identify and promote successful business accomplishments and/or growth to foster an environment of entrepreneurship and innovation

- 4.5.2. Encourage entrepreneurs and businesses to use existing business service providers to obtain financing, business plan creation, market research and planning, human resource polices and procedures, operations management, understanding financial cash flow and reports, develop new products, and government procurement
- 4.5.3. Intentionally link small business owners and entrepreneurs to regional opportunities.
- 4.5.4. Incorporate small business owners and entrepreneurs with the EDC and its activities.
- 4.5.5. Establish a (or build a partnership with and existing) micro-enterprise assistance program that includes business training, technical assistance, and low-interest financing
- 4.5.6. Become a Certified Entrepreneurial Community through AdvantageWest's program¹.

4.6. *Build Clay's Economy through Maintaining and Enhancing the County's Quality of Life*

- 4.6.1. Undertake initiatives to grow, retain, expand, and attract business to the County that maintain and enhance the quality of life in Clay County
- 4.6.2. Promote a strong and inviting image of the County (Attractive communities, cultural activities, restaurants, parks and recreation, etc.)

¹
http://www.advantagewest.com/content.cfm/content_id/227/section/entrepreneur

- 4.6.2.1. Enhance and add amenities to attract a talented workforce, including: a variety of housing options; open space, trails, recreation and entertainment; a strong technology backbone; a diverse community that welcomes outsiders; provide opportunities for young professionals to be involved in the community
- 4.6.2.2. Provide a community that is attractive to a wide range of individual's critical to the County's economic health—including young professionals, workforce, and executives

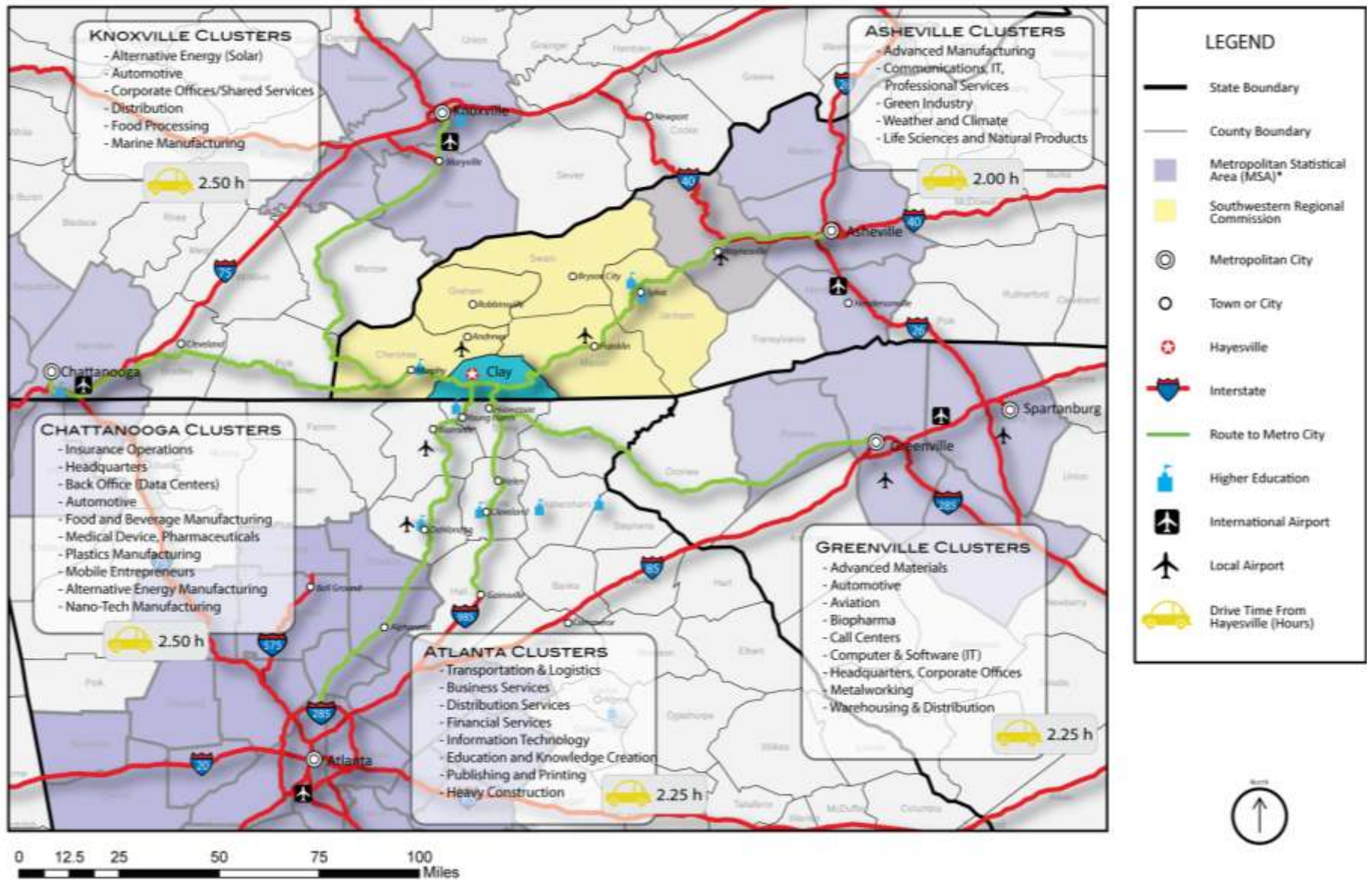
4.7. Build Clay's Economy through Downtown and Community Revitalization

- 4.7.1. Where appropriate, assist downtown stakeholders with their efforts to implement recommendations from the Historic Hayesville Market Analysis
- 4.7.2. Endorse Hayesville's NC Small Town Main Street application in 2011.
- 4.7.3. Pursue community development efforts that promotes employment growth through community revitalization (e.g. Historic Clay County Courthouse Rehabilitation)
- 4.7.4. Ensure that community development and revitalization organizations are incorporates with EDC activities.

4.8. Build Clay's Economy through Tourism Development and Outdoor Recreation

- 4.8.1. Coordinate and collectivity brand and market Clay County tourism resources
 - 4.8.1.1. Thoroughly inventory the County's tourism resources (activities, events, services, lodging, etc.)
 - 4.8.1.2. Develop a strong travel and tourism marketing plan
 - 4.8.1.2.1. Target tourism materials to specific types of visitors and destination seekers, e.g. cyclists, anglers, art and craft collectors, etc.
 - 4.8.1.2.2. Identify a single tourism web portal of activities and events
 - 4.8.1.2.3. Connect to regional tourism activities.
- 4.8.2. Implement a regional tourism strategy that highlights heritage, outdoor activities, arts, agriculture, events, etc. – investigate Loop Tourism models from other communities;
 - 4.8.2.1. Assertively market tourism resources using the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area.
- 4.8.3. Coordinate with tourism resource providers to record local travel and tourism data
- 4.8.4. Support the TDA in efforts to Collect taxes on private rentals
 - 4.8.4.1. Support the TDAs efforts to educate property owners on the collective benefit of increased TDA funds.

Clay County Regional Opportunities



IMPLEMENTATION PLAN <PROVIDE MORE DETAIL ONCE PLAN IS MORE DEVELOPED>

Expand the leadership capacity of the Board of County Commissioners.

- Increase the number of county commissioners from three to five

Increase Opportunities for Community Member Involvement

- Planning Board (and Board of Adjustment if needed)
- Appointed/Ad Hoc Taskforces

Implement new or improved communication tools

- Appoint someone (and obtain appropriate training) to regularly update County website
- Compile and distribute an Annual Report to the Community –use comprehensive plan goals as the basis.
- Digitize and catalog on website all land development regulations, County ordinances, policies, etc.
- Improve overall data recording and reporting (Benchmarking incorporated into Annual Report)
- Minutes of other boards and task force's on website, names of members posted

Clay County will operate efficiently.

- Review fee structures to ensure that the fee attached to the service corresponds to the actual cost of the service, e
- Identify capital deficiencies and needs to create a capital improvement plan (CIP); use the CIP as a community education tool; develop an overall capital funding strategy
- Designate a funding stream set aside for matching funds (grants, projects), and to quickly take advantage of opportunities that benefit the community.