

PROPOSED AGENDA

To be held Tuesday, March 22, 2022 at 5:30 p.m.

PUBLIC MEETING

Town of Biltmore Forest Planning Commission

Paul Zimmerman, Chair

Dawn Grohs, Vice-Chair

Kenneth Hornowski

Michael Flynn

- A. Introduction of Planning Commission Members (Mr. Paul Zimmerman, Chair)
 - B. Review Executive Summary of Planning Commission Survey
 - C. Review Vision, Goals, and Strategies – DRAFT
 - D. Public Comment
 - E. Adjourn
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TO: Jonathan Kanipe, Town Manager, Board of Commissioners
FROM: Biltmore Forest Planning Commission
SUBJECT: Executive Summary – Fall 2021 Resident Survey

DATE: 29 December 2021

An online and paper survey of Biltmore Forest residents was completed between Oct 30 and Dec 13, 2021 in order to guide the Planning Commission in making recommendations for long term goals to the Board of Commissioners. A total of 238 households responded, which is considered to be an excellent sample of the approximately 650 households in Biltmore Forest.

RESULTS:

1. The weighted Overall Satisfaction Rating was **84**, which is outstanding and in line with results from past research conducted among residents. The rating scale was a standard Excellent, Very Good, Good, Fair and Poor Scale.
2. Residents were asked to rate a series of attributes on the same scale. The weighted results are below:

Attribute (How would you rate Biltmore Forest for being a Town...)	Weighted Average
... that protects mature trees and the tree canopy	74
... where it is safe to walk	66*
... that you are proud to live in	89
... that has a professional/competent Police Force	93
... that has a professional/competent Public Works Dept.	93
... that gives you confidence that Zoning Ordinances are consistently enforced	66*
... where there are plans to guide future development	64*
... where there are appropriate Parks to use and enjoy	76
... that is enjoyable for people of all ages	80
... that has effective speed management	69*
... where there are Social activities	68
... where there are guidelines for buffering between neighbors and high traffic zones	63*
Overall Average Rating for all attributes	75
*...a significant number of residents rated this attribute Fair or Poor	

3. Residents were then asked to answer a hypothetical question about directions the Town could take on a series of possible actions.

Rating	I'd like MORE of this %	Current Level is Adequate %	I'd like LESS of this %
Walking Trails within existing Parks	56	41	3
Enforcement of Zoning Ordinances	34	59	6
Speed Humps	21	53	26
Upgrading Park Activity Structures for Children	40	56	4
Enforcement of Speeding	31	66	2
New Planting of Hardwood Trees (Oak, Maple, Walnut, etc) along Roads	64	34	2
Forbidding Clear Cutting for any reason	49	44	7

4. Voluntary Comments were asked as the second question. These comments helped to clarify WHY residents gave the ratings that they did. A brief sampling of comments in key areas are given below:
- TREES:** "The beauty of the Forest make me sigh 'ahh' every time I enter the Town"; "Don't let people cut down dozens of tree at once"; "Too many trees are disappearing"; "We should encourage new homeowners to invest in slow growing long lived trees and native plants"; "We used to be a forest. That is disappearing quickly"; "Our beautiful hardwood trees are dying from ivy growing on them"; "...allowing more clearing and bigger square footage...makes us no different than many other communities"
 - WALKING:** "If you're not going to cut back foliage to make driving and walking safer, stop saying you will!"; "It would be nice to have a walking path in Town"; "There have been times I have been almost pushed off the road or hit by cars AND cyclists"; "I wish there were sidewalks"; "...encroachment of vegetation along the roadside makes certain shoulders impossible"; "Roads need to be safer for autos, bicyclists and pedestrians by clearing side easements...this is a dangerous situation at present for which the Town is liable".
 - SPEED:** "I feel there are people who drive too quickly on Eastwood and I have been almost hit..."; "Why was digital speed monitor taken down at Chauncey Circle and Niagara?...you sure as hell can afford to leave it there permanently!"; "Some residents and golf course users drive too fast and aggressively"; "Speeding needs attention", "I continue to see idiots towing their horse trailers driving at 40mph on their way to the equestrian center".
 - PARKS/PUBLIC SPACES:** "Much of the public areas of BF look tired...and unkept. A concerted effort is needed to get us back to the preeminent neighborhood of Asheville"; "Need to invest in Parks and in saving the Hemlocks"; "We should have updated playgrounds, nicer parks and landscaping, benches, and a town sign!"; "I would like to see more Park improvements at some point"; "I wish the parks were cleaned up regularly"; "We need a dog park"; "The parks are shabby and many of the residents don't keep their yards groomed – giving the Town an unkept look".

CONCLUSIONS:

- Biltmore Forest has maintained an extremely high satisfaction rating and many residents state that they are proud to live here.
- Police and Public Works both received an exemplary rating, with strong positive comments from residents for the Police, Public Works, and Administration for their friendliness and efforts.
- The areas of Walking Safety, Speed Management, Buffering Guidelines, Consistent Enforcement of Zoning Ordinances, and Plans to Guide Future Development were all rated significantly lower than the average.
- Voluntary Comments on **Walking** tended to focus on desire for walking trails and clearing hazardous right of way plantings.
- Voluntary Comments on **Speed** were not specific other than the need to control it better
- Whereas the rating for **Protecting the Tree Canopy** was average, there were a significant number of comments about the need to replace trees, prevent clear cutting, and manage ivy invasion. This appears to be a case where people LIKE the forest (hence the higher rating) but don't want to lose it (negative voluntary comments)
- Similarly, whereas the rating of the **Parks** was average, there were again significant comments about them looking shabby and needing updating. I believe the rationale is similar to the Trees rating.

Submitted 29 Dec 2021 for the Planning Commission: Toya Hauf, Dawn Grohs, Michael Flynn, Ken Hornowski, and Karen Cragnolin.



Paul Zimmerman
Planning Commission Chair

Draft Comprehensive Plan for Biltmore Forest: Vision/Goals/Strategies
Revised March 9, 2022

Overall Vision	GOAL	Possible Policy/Strategy
Biltmore Forest will be the most livable residential community in Western North Carolina. It will embrace its historical founding and character while giving all residents the opportunity to live, work and play in an open and supporting environment.	Maintain our open and transparent Board of Commissioners, Town Administration and Administrative Committees (Board of Adjustment, Design Review Board, and Planning Commission)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain and improve the Town websites to make it easier to find and access meeting dates and meeting results 2. Maintain Easy Access to the Town Manager. 3. Continue to have time at each meeting for resident input. 4. Continue regular and special written newsletters to all residents.
	Maintain the Effective Community Policing capabilities of the Biltmore Forest Police Force	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain a visible presence at key intersections during high traffic periods. 2. Evaluate alternative methods to reduce average speed on roads 3. Continue to support residents for special issues and needs 4. Continue to Support Asheville Police as requested on issues that affect Biltmore Forest.
	Maintain the Effective and Responsive Public Works Department	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain the current level of Brush, Leaf and Trash services while ensuring employee safety and health. 2. Maintain current plans to clear public spaces, improve stormwater runoff and improve road safety conditions (berms, line-of-sight, right of ways) 3. Evaluate methods to evaluate tree coverage using available satellite data

	<p>Protect and improve the existing Tree Canopy of Biltmore Forest (Grohs)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Significantly more Hardwood Trees should be planted each year, with the Town planting trees on public land and making about 50 hardwood trees available for homeowners to plant each year. 2. Require that trees removed must be replaced with hardwoods to maintain or improve the percentage of tree canopy coverage. 3. Develop a budgeted ivy eradication program. 4. Prohibit clear cutting outside a 40ft distance from a home.
	<p>Improve Walking and biking Safety on Streets in Biltmore Forest (Hornowski)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify streets with the highest level of pedestrian usage and increase Police presence and speed enforcement on those streets. 2. Work with Board of Commissioners to evaluate the possibility of dedicated bike or pedestrian path on Vanderbilt or Stuyvesant Roads, per the 2022 Transportation Study. 3. Working with homeowners whenever possible, remove landscaping that encroaches the 5 or 10 ft setback and/or reduces line-of-site visibility for drivers and walkers--- giving pedestrians a place to step off the road as necessary. 4. Evaluate and improve the condition of the road berms and setbacks to eliminate drop-offs and ruts. Plant grass as necessary to eliminate mud.
	<p>Develop New Off-street Walking Paths in Biltmore Forest (Flynn)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a plan for walking paths that join existing Parks or allow walking within one park.

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Ensure the paths are easily accessible to people with special needs and have adequate places to rest (benches or use of existing historical bus stops)
	<p>Ensure existing Zoning Ordinances are equitably enforced (Grohs)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hire a person who has enforcement as their primary responsibility. 2. Ensure the Town management and government will support and encourage enforcement. 3. Develop a clear table of Consequences (Fines, etc) for Non-compliance.
	<p>Control speeding by reducing the average speed on Town Streets (Hornowski)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Add Stop signs at Intersections where they are needed and have been approved, e.g., Busbee and Vanderbilt 2. Increased enforcement of existing Speed limits 3. Increased presence of speed monitors where speeding is a problem.
	<p>Support optimal enjoyment of Public Parks and public spaces (Flynn)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue plans for Greenwood Park upgrades and other park invasive plant removal 2. Establish a team of residents to evaluate all parks and public spaces for upgrades to play structures, electrical (to better support Food Trucks), trashcans and water access. 3. Develop a prioritized list of needed maintenance and upgrades identified in step 2 4. Regularly add new mulch, sand or turf in Parks, as necessary. Repair traffic island curbing as needed. 5. Renovate roofs and structural components of all bus stops as needed.

	Communicate Better with New Residents (Grohs)	1. Prepare a brochure outlining key facts, procedures, and ordinances for new residents.
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