HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Mitchell County, North Carolina



BOWEN NATIONAL RESEARCH

June

2026

Job# 25-491

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE

Mitchell County retained Bowen National Research in February of 2026 for the purpose of conducting a Housing Needs Assessment of Mitchell County, North Carolina. While research was primarily completed in the preceding months, the effective date of this study is June 2026.

With changing demographic and employment characteristics and trends expected over the years ahead, it is important for the local government, stakeholders and citizens to understand the current market conditions and projected changes that are anticipated to occur that will influence future housing needs. Toward that end, this report intends to:

- Provide an overview of the present-day Mitchell County.
- Present and evaluate past, current and projected detailed demographic characteristics.
- Present and evaluate employment characteristics and trends, as well as the economic drivers impacting the area.
- Determine current characteristics of major housing components within the market (for-sale/ownership and rental housing alternatives).
- Evaluate ancillary factors that affect housing market conditions and development, including an analysis on the prevalence of residential blight, development opportunities, residential foreclosures, potential residential development barriers (development costs and government regulations), natural disaster impact, identification of potential developers/investors, and a review of housing programs that may be available to address local housing needs.
- Provide housing gap estimates by tenure (renter and owner) and income segment.
- Collect input from community members including area stakeholders and employers in the form of online surveys.

By accomplishing the study's objectives, government officials, area stakeholders, and area housing advocates can: (1) better understand the county's evolving housing market, (2) establish housing priorities, (3) modify, expand, or introduce local government housing policies, (4) attract and encourage residential development and investment, and (5) enhance and/or expand the county's housing market to meet current and future housing needs.

B. GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE

Study Area Delineation

The primary geographic scope of this study is Mitchell County, North Carolina. A full description of the market area and corresponding maps are included in Section III.

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to evaluate the housing needs of Mitchell County, North Carolina and to recommend priorities and strategies to address such housing needs. To that end, Bowen National Research conducted a comprehensive Housing Needs Assessment that considered the following:

- Demographic Characteristics and Trends
- Economic Conditions and Initiatives
- Existing Housing Stock Costs, Performance, Conditions and Features
- Ancillary Factors that Impact the Housing Market (e.g., Residential Foreclosures, Residential Blight, Development Opportunities, Development Costs & Government Regulations, Seasonal/Recreational Housing, and Natural Disaster Impact—Tropical Storm Helene)
- Community Input (via Online Surveys of Stakeholders and Employers)

Based on these metrics and input, housing gaps were identified by affordability and tenure (rental vs. ownership). This Executive Summary provides key findings and recommended strategies. Detailed data analysis is presented within the individual sections of this Housing Needs Assessment.

GEOGRAPHIC STUDY AREA

Primary Study Area (PSA)
Mitchell County,
North Carolina

This Housing Needs Assessment focuses on Mitchell County, North Carolina, referred to as the Primary Study Area (PSA). A variety of data is presented and analyzed for the PSA, and when applicable, compared with the state of North Carolina. A map illustrating the PSA is shown on the right. Detailed maps and study area definitions are provided in Section III of this report.



DEMOGRAPHIC FINDINGS

Numerous demographics were considered as part of this study including both population and household data covering a variety of periods including 2020, 2025 and 2030. The following table summarizes some of the key demographic findings included in this report.

Demographic Category	Key Findings
Overall Household Trends	Demographic projections from 2025 through 2030 indicate that the number of households in Mitchell County will increase by 101 (1.5%), adding to the demand for additional housing.
Households by Age Cohort	Between 2025 and 2030, household growth in Mitchell County is projected to primarily occur among households between the ages of 35 and 44 (11.7%) and those aged 75 and older (13.3%), though marginal growth is projected for households aged 65 to 74 (0.8%).
Renter Households by Income	Between 2025 and 2030, all renter household income cohorts earning less than $75,000 are projected to decrease in the PSA (Mitchell County), while those earning $75,000 or more are projected to increase. Households earning less than $35,000 will continue to comprise a significant share (44.6%) of all renter households within the PSA in 2030. As a result, there will likely be an increase in demand for moderate- to higher-priced rental product in the area, but strong demand for affordably priced rental product in Mitchell County will persist for the foreseeable future.
Owner Households by Income	Between 2025 and 2030, owner household growth is projected to occur among households earning $75,000 or more, with the largest growth (334 households, or 21.3%) projected to occur among owner households earning $100,000 or more. While the increase in household incomes may result in an increase in for-sale housing product primarily priced at $300,000 or more, factors such as substandard housing, housing cost burden, and potential external market support from surrounding areas indicate that demand for product below this price point will persist within Mitchell County. As such, for-sale housing gaps exist for product across all affordability levels within the county.
Households in Substandard Housing	While housing quality issues are not prevalent, approximately 157 total occupied housing units in Mitchell County are either overcrowded or lack complete kitchens or plumbing.
Housing Cost Burdened Households	There are approximately 509 renter households and 895 owner households in the PSA that are housing cost burdened (paying over 30% of income toward housing costs). Of these, 201 renter households and 298 owner households are severe cost burdened (paying over 50% of income toward housing costs). As a result, housing affordability issues are a significant challenge for many of the county's households.

Based on the preceding findings, the overall base of households is projected to grow through at least 2030, with most of the growth occurring among older Millennial (aged 35 to 44) households and seniors (aged 74 and older), and among renter households earning over $75,000 annually and owner households earning over $100,000 annually. While the number (157) of households living in substandard housing is relatively small, a significant number of county households (1,404) are housing cost burdened (paying over 30% of income toward housing costs). These trends and characteristics will influence the housing needs of Mitchell County and have been considered in the housing gap estimates.

HOUSING SUPPLY FINDINGS

Numerous housing supply metrics were considered as part of this study including multifamily rentals, non-conventional rentals, seasonal/recreational housing (including short-term rentals), for-sale housing, and senior-oriented housing. The following summarizes some of the key housing supply findings included in this report.

Housing Supply Category	Key Findings
Multifamily Rental Housing	Eight properties containing 232 total units were surveyed in Mitchell County and operate at an overall 100% occupancy rate, an extremely high occupancy rate that reflects the strength of the local rental market. A total of 76 households are on waiting lists for an available unit. This illustrates that there is significant pent-up demand for multifamily rental housing in the market.
Housing Choice Vouchers	Housing Choice Vouchers are tenant-based (held by a single person/household) vouchers administered by the local housing authority which effectively subsidize a tenant's rent to be equivalent to 30% of their income. There are approximately 215 Housing Choice Vouchers issued within Mitchell County. However, approximately 10 issued vouchers are currently going unused, likely due to holders of these vouchers being unable to obtain a quality affordable rental housing unit that will accept the voucher. There is a total of 48 households currently on the waiting list for additional vouchers, illustrating the demand for government assistance.
Non-Conventional Rental Housing	Non-conventional rentals generally include single-family homes, duplexes and mobile homes and comprise roughly 80% of the rental units in Mitchell County. The nine available non-conventional rentals identified in the county represent a vacancy rate of only 0.8%, well below the 4% to 6% vacancy rate typically found in healthy, well-balanced markets. The available units have overall rents ranging from $1,050 to $3,400, which are unaffordable to a large portion of area renters.
Seasonal/Recreational Housing	In 2024, there were an estimated 954 seasonal/recreational units in Mitchell County, representing approximately 11.0% of all housing units within the county. This is well above the 3.9% share for such units in the state and illustrates the notable role this type of housing plays in the local market. It is worth noting that both the number of such units and the share they represent in the local housing market has declined slightly since 2019.
For-Sale Housing	A total of 576 homes were sold in the county between 2022 and 2025. The median sales price of $300,000 in 2025 is 21.2% higher than the median sales price during 2022. As of late February 2026, a total of 77 homes were identified as being available for purchase in the county, representing an availability rate of just 1.5% (below the 2% to 3% rate typically found in healthy, well-balanced markets). The current median list price of $335,000 is $35,000 (11.7%) higher than the median sales price in 2025.
Senior Care Housing	Only two senior care housing facilities were identified within the county with a total of 80 adult care beds and 117 marketed nursing home beds. While the adult care beds are operating at an 80.0% occupancy rate (below the 91.4% national occupancy rate), the nursing home beds are operating at a 93.2% occupancy rate (above the 83.7% national occupancy rate). Given the significant amount of senior (aged 75 and older) household growth projected for the county, the demand for senior care housing is expected to grow.

The multifamily rentals have no vacancies and non-conventional rentals are operating at an extremely low vacancy rate of just 0.8%. The number of households on multifamily rental property wait lists and the number households on the wait list for Housing Choice Vouchers illustrate the clear pent-up demand for housing, particularly

affordable housing. Despite the fact that seasonal/recreational housing has diminished in both the number of units and the share they comprise of the overall market, the 11.0% share of such housing is significant and it will be important to monitor for the foreseeable future. The limited availability and continued rising costs of for-sale housing illustrate both a challenge and an opportunity in the Mitchell County market. While there are limited senior care housing facilities in Mitchell County, the projected growth among senior (aged 75 and older) households indicates that this market segment should be monitored for development potential.

OTHER HOUSING MARKET FACTORS

Factors other than demography, employment, and supply can affect the strength or weakness of a given housing market. As such, analysis of these factors is provided in Section VII of this Housing Needs Assessment. The following summarizes some of the key findings from evaluating these other housing market factors.

Other Housing Factors	Key Findings
Residential Blight	A total of 51 properties were identified in the county that exhibited signs of exterior blight, with the vast majority located in unincorporated areas of the county. Twenty (20) of the identified homes were characterized as exhibiting severe blight attributes.
Residential Development Opportunities	A total of 23 sites were identified that have the potential to support residential development, with the vast majority (87.0%) located in Spruce Pine. Seven properties include an existing structure (candidates for adaptive reuse), while the balance is comprised of vacant parcels.
Residential Foreclosures	A total of 203 residential foreclosures were filed in the county between 2016 and 2025, with most filed prior to 2020 (the peak was 42 filings in 2016), and very few filings (less than 20 annually) since 2019. Only 20 foreclosures have been filed over the past two years (2024 and 2025).
Development Costs & Government Regulations	Overall, residential development costs (land, labor, utilities, government fees, and property taxes) within the county are lower than most surrounding counties, placing Mitchell County in a good competitive position. Local density requirements in the county favor low-density and single-family home development, but zoning does enable some multifamily development.
Natural Disaster Impact	An estimated total of 1,638 residential units were damaged as a result of Tropical Storm Helene (September 2024), with most (91.7%) consisting of owner-occupied units. A total of 87 owner-occupied units sustained damage of $20,000 or more, while 11 rental units sustained "major damage." The vast majority (1,591, or 97.1%) of damaged homes were in Bakersville and Spruce Pine. In addition to residential home damage, notable economic challenges resulted from substantial disruptions to local businesses and damaged infrastructure.
Developer/Investor Identification	Nearly 50 organizations representing developers, lenders, investors, and philanthropic organizations were identified as potential development partners.
Housing Program Identification	A total of 67 housing programs were identified that include various federal, state, regional and local programs that could be leveraged to assist in addressing local housing issues.

Several of the preceding findings were used to develop recommendations that could potentially be implemented as part of a strategy or plan to address local housing issues. These recommended housing strategies are included within this Executive Summary, starting on page II-6.

HOUSING GAP ESTIMATES

The PSA (Mitchell County) has an overall five-year (2025 to 2030) housing gap of 892 rental and for-sale units at a variety of affordability levels. It is projected that the PSA has a five-year **rental** housing gap of 261 units and a **for-sale** housing gap of 631 units. These housing gaps include new units needed to meet projected household growth, as well as units to address existing households living in substandard housing or households in severe housing cost burdened situations. Additionally, the estimated number of housing units impacted by Tropical Storm Helene that require replacement (based on available FEMA data) are included as a separate demand component for each tenure type. Therefore, housing solutions can include a combination of new construction, repairing existing housing, and providing financial housing assistance. The following tables summarize the approximate housing gaps by affordability level that exist in Mitchell County over the next five years.

	Mitchell County, North Carolina			
	Rental Housing Gap Estimates (2025-2030)			
Percent of Median Income	**≤50%**	**51%-80%**	**81%-120%**	**121%+**
Household Income Range	**≤$39,150**	**$39,151-$62,640**	**$62,641-$93,960**	**$93,961+**
Monthly Rent Range	**≤$978**	**$979-$1,566**	**$1,567-$2,349**	**$2,350+**
Standard Demand Components	83	70	63	34
Disaster Impact	6	2	2	1
Overall Units Needed	89	72	65	35
			Total Rental Housing Gap	**261**
	For-Sale Housing Gap Estimates (2025-2030)			
Price Point	**≤$130,500**	**$130,501-$208,800**	**$208,801-$313,200**	**$313,201+**
Standard Demand Components	0	54	103	387
Disaster Impact	23	18	17	29
Overall Units Needed	23	72	120	416
			Total For-Sale Housing Gap	**631**

As the preceding tables illustrate, the majority (61.7%) of the overall rental housing gap in Mitchell County is comprised of product with rents up to $1,566, which is affordable to households earning up to 80% of Area Median Household Income (AMHI). Among the 161 total units within this combined affordability segment of the housing gaps, approximately one-half (89 units) are for product with rents below $978, with the balance (72 units) comprised of units with rents between $979 and $1,566. However, there are also notable gaps for product affordable to households earning between 81% and 120% of AMHI (65 units) and 121% or more of AMHI (35 units). As such, there are notable gaps for rental units at a variety of affordability levels within the county. Among the for-sale housing gaps in Mitchell County, all home price segments and affordability levels have some level of need. However, the greatest gap appears to be for housing priced at $313,201 or higher (416 units), followed by housing priced between $208,801 and $313,200 (120 units). This distribution of the housing gaps by affordability and income level is not surprising given the projected growth among households earning 121% of AMHI ($93,961) or more over the next five years.

The preceding estimates are based on current government policies and incentives, recent and projected demographic trends, current and anticipated economic trends, and available and planned residential units. Numerous factors impact a market's ability to support new housing product. This is particularly true of individual housing projects or units. Certain design elements, pricing structures, target market segments (e.g., seniors, workforce, families, etc.), product quality and location all influence the actual number of units that can be supported. Demand estimates could exceed those shown in the preceding tables if the PSA changed policies or offered incentives to encourage people to move into the market or for developers to develop new housing product.

Details of this analysis, including methodology and assumptions, are included in Section VIII.

RECOMMENDED HOUSING STRATEGIES

The following outlines actions or initiatives that should be considered or explored for *possible* implementation to help address housing issues in Mitchell County. It is important to point out that financial considerations, legal requirements, government staff capacity/qualifications and outsourcing potential, infrastructure capacity, and other factors may limit the local government from implementing some of the following recommendations. As many of the following recommendations involve complicated processes, the local government will want to seek professional and legal counsel on selected items before pursuing certain initiatives. Additionally, not all of these recommendations need to be implemented, nor do they need to be implemented simultaneously, to effectuate change. In the end, the following recommendations should be used as a guide to develop a formal Action Plan for Mitchell County.

Establish Housing Goals and Priorities

Any housing efforts that are to be made in Mitchell County should start with setting housing goals (both short- and long-term) and establishing priorities for the types of housing issues that should be the focus of local housing efforts.

1. *Goal Setting* – Using the housing gap estimates from this Housing Needs Assessment, local government and housing advocates may want to establish housing goals such as the number of units that should be built and the number of units that should be renovated, possibly on an annual basis or over a five-year time period (corresponding to the five-year housing gaps shown in this report).

2. *Establish Priorities* – Using data included in this report, including community input, local government and housing advocates should establish housing priorities that can include targeted household income levels, populations (e.g., families, seniors, special needs, first responders, etc.), new construction versus renovations/repairs, and geographic locations (municipality versus county).

Capacity Building

Capacity building involves the process of equipping local governments, nonprofits, and community organizations with the staffing, skills, funding, and resources they need to implement housing initiatives and efforts. Capacity building transforms good intentions into functioning, sustainable communities. This can be done using any of the following approaches, or combination of approaches:

1. *Evaluate Internal Capacity of Existing Organization(s)* – While this study did not evaluate the capacity of local government or existing housing organizations in the county and their ability to assume the responsibilities associated with local housing efforts, it is not uncommon in rural markets like Mitchell County for local organizations to lack sufficient staffing capacity to adequately address housing issues. The local government and/or existing housing organizations should assess whether there is sufficient capacity among such groups to take on responsibilities that may be part of a local housing plan or strategy. Mitchell County government groups may want to talk with the High Country Council of Governments, which has a Planner/Housing Coordinator, to explore the possibility of them providing assistance or guidance in housing efforts.

2. *Establish a Housing Coalition/Committee* – Consider re-establishing the now inactive Mitchell County Community Housing Coalition and expand its membership to include a large and diverse mix of public and private sector representatives that can serve to guide and facilitate housing initiatives and efforts in the county and to serve as an advisory body to local governmental organizations. Examples of housing coalitions/committees can be provided upon request.

3. *Hire a Housing Consultant* – Local groups may want to consider hiring a housing professional with housing program and policy knowledge, experience in housing financing resources, and the ability to bring stakeholders and the public together and build consensus toward housing efforts. This person can be hired on a short-term, contractual basis to help the county meet its housing goals. Examples of such positions and job postings can be provided upon request.

Organization Assistance and Partnership Building

Based on the survey of area stakeholders and employers, some of the most commonly cited barriers to residential development in Mitchell County include issues associated with land (availability, costs, and suitability), access to infrastructure, development costs, and financing challenges. There are several organizations that provide financial resources and several housing tools that can be utilized to help support local housing efforts.

1. *Explore Organization Assistance* – Several organizations exist in the region or state that could assist in addressing local housing challenges, particularly those with financial and institutional resources. Nearly 70 programs and/or organizations were identified in Section VII that could potentially support housing preservation and development efforts. Some notable programs that could be leveraged in Mitchell County include the following:

    a. WNC Affordable Housing Loan Fund – www.self-help.org
    b. NC Division of Community Revitalization's CDBG-DR (Disaster Relief funds) – https://www.commercerecovery.nc.gov/about/about-cdbg-dr-funding
    c. State of North Carolina Resilience Exchange – Provides information on dozens of grant opportunities, many of which are tied to infrastructure improvements. https://www.resilienceexchange.nc.gov/find-funding/funding-database
    d. NC Housing Finance Agency, Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program https://www.nchfa.com/
    e. Philanthropic Organizations – Explore grant opportunities with Dogwood Health Trust - https://dogwoodhealthtrust.org/dogwood-health-trust-and-self-help-launch-wnc-affordable-housing-loan-fund/) or The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina - https://cfwnc.org/grants/about-grants

2. *Partnership Building* – Nearly 50 organizations that are active in the Mitchell County area were identified and can serve as potential residential development partners, such as for-profit and nonprofit developers, lenders, investors and other housing organizations. Local government and stakeholders are encouraged to explore and build relationships with various potential development partners that can assist in addressing local housing needs. While numerous organizations are listed in Section VII of this report, local government and stakeholders should also consider involving local employers to discuss housing issues and opportunities in Mitchell County.

Housing Policies, Development Incentives and Tools

There are numerous housing policies, development incentives, and tools available that can serve as possible housing solutions for Mitchell County. While some of these items are listed below, interested parties can also review reputable resources for additional information at Local Housing Solutions (https://www.localhousingsolutions.org/) and Housing Supply Accelerator Playbook (https://www.localhousingsolutions.org/).

1. *Regulatory Policy Considerations* – Based on our review of local land use policies and ordinances, most existing regulatory provisions in Mitchell County are similar to those of other rural communities in western North Carolina and generally favor lower-density single-family home development. Local leaders may want to explore possible changes to land use policies to encourage additional residential development, particularly multifamily projects.

    a. *Modify Zoning to Support Higher-Density Development* – Local officials may want to consider inclusionary zoning, density bonuses, or single-family upzoning which allows for smaller multifamily developments such as duplexes, triplexes, and ADUs. Higher density could also be achieved by making changes to zoning that reduces parking requirements and adjusts maximum building height or building set back requirements.
    b. *Revisit Subdivision Ordinance* – This ordinance, last amended in 2023, provides for residential development density requirements of parcels with or without access to public sewer service. It also provides road width requirements to support emergency vehicle access. It appears that the density limit of one residential unit per 0.75 acres of land for parcels without access to public sewer systems may be a limiting factor in areas outside of Bakersville and Spruce Pine. Mitchell County representatives may want to consider possible modifications that ease density requirements and encourage residential development.

2. *Development Incentives (Reduce Development Costs)* – Residential development cost was one of the most common barriers to residential development cited by respondents in the stakeholder survey conducted by Bowen National Research. While some development costs were specifically linked to land and infrastructure costs, others commonly cited were related to typical fees, labor, and material costs. Some of the more common solutions to lower or offset development costs include the following:

    a. *Lower or Waive Government Fees or Streamline Approval Process* – Local government may want to consider lowering development fees and infrastructure tap fees, or streamlining the planning and building permitting process to speed up the development process and lower costs to developers. Lowering the fees and streamlining the government process could be tied to targeted developments (e.g., affordable workforce housing, first responder housing, etc.).

b. *Offer Infrastructure Assistance* – Local government should consider offering infrastructure assistance (e.g., extending existing infrastructure, sharing in infrastructure costs, etc.) to help reduce costs to developers and encourage affordable residential development.
c. *Sale/Donation of Public or Corporate Land* – Encouraging the sale of publicly owned or corporate owned land, or the donation of such land, for targeted developments (e.g., workforce, seniors, first responders, etc.) can reduce costs and encourage affordable housing development.
d. *Support Construction Trade Workforce Education/Training* – In many rural markets like Mitchell County, the skilled labor force within the construction trade industries is often limited, as is the number contractors. Labor shortages or limited contractors can limit development resources, adding to costs. Local stakeholders should be supportive of community colleges and trade schools, for example, that offer or could offer education in the construction trade industries.

3. *Explore Residential Development/Preservation Tools* – There is a significant number of tools that can be used to address local housing issues. Some of the more common ones, many of which were cited by Mitchell County stakeholders, are summarized below:

a. *Explore the Establishment of a Housing Trust Fund* – Cited as one of the top answers as a possible housing solution in Mitchell County, local government may want to explore the potential benefits of establishing a Housing Trust Fund. In short, Housing Trust Funds use a dedicated revenue source such as recorder fees, real estate transfer fees, or bond funds to support local housing efforts, which can include the development or preservation of affordable housing.
https://nlihc.org/housing-trust-fund-project
b. *Explore the Establishment of a Community Land Trust (CLT)* – A CLT typically involves a nonprofit organization that can acquire and hold land for the benefit of a community in an effort to support and preserve affordable housing. The CLT typically owns the land, while the resident owns the physical building (home), which reduces the costs to the resident.
https://groundedsolutions.org/strengthening-neighborhoods/community-land-trusts/
c. *Explore the Establishment of a Land Bank* – While Mitchell County currently handles tax delinquent and abandoned properties through the county government, it may be worth exploring whether there would be any benefits to establishing a formal land bank in the county. Land banks can be either public or quasi-governmental entities that acquire, hold, repurpose and often sell abandoned or tax foreclosed properties. Land banks often consist of blighted properties suffering from disinvestment. The land bank's end objective is to return underutilized properties to usable properties, thereby increasing tax revenues and diminishing the impacts of blight.

Short-Term Rental (STR) and Seasonal Housing Market

In 2024, approximately 11.0% of all housing units within Mitchell County were classified as seasonal/recreational units (representing both short-term rentals and second homes), which is notably higher than the state share of 3.9%. While not as high as some adjacent counties, the 11.0% share in the subject county is still considered high and likely plays some role in the Mitchell County market that has limited availability among its permanent housing stock.

1. *Monitor STR Supply* – The inventory of short-term rentals should be monitored annually to determine how this housing segment is changing (increases or decreases in volume, changes in occupancy levels, changes in rental rates, etc.). This can be done through the purchase of data from AllTheRooms.com. By monitoring STR housing, the community can better grasp the potential impact it has on the local permanent housing market.

2. *Leverage Benefits of STR Market* – Local government could consider a short-term rental housing tax or a short-term rental housing registry fee to create revenue that can support permanent housing efforts.

Outreach and Marketing

A key part to the success in addressing local housing issues is to engage and educate the public, including local elected officials, on the housing issues the area faces and what they mean to the economic health and overall quality of life in Mitchell County. Additionally, a proactive approach to attract developers, investors and others through an effective marketing campaign will increase opportunities for success.

1. *Support Community Engagement and Education* – Local stakeholders and advocates should consider developing an outreach and education plan to get the community on board with housing efforts. This may include press releases, flyers, online presences, and public events (such as conducting presentations or hosting a housing forum) to educate the public on the key facts regarding local housing issues and opportunities (possibly placing emphasis on the impact housing has on employers and employees). The National Association of Counties provides insight on such efforts through a report on community engagement at: https://www.naco.org/sites/default/files/documents/HousingConnections.pdf

2. *Develop a Marketing Campaign to Attract Developers and Investment* – This study demonstrates a variety of residential development potential (housing gaps) and possible sites for development (23 potential sites). Standard marketing and outreach efforts should be developed to attract interested parties such as developers, investors and lenders. Marketing efforts can identify local housing needs and promote opportunities through published materials (housing brochures or housing trade magazines), an online resource center, or by hosting a Developers' Day.

III. COUNTY OVERVIEW AND STUDY AREA

A. MITCHELL COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

This report focuses on the housing needs of Mitchell County, North Carolina. Created from the annexation of several counties in 1861, Mitchell County is located in the western portion of North Carolina. Mitchell County is bordered by the state of Tennessee to the north, Avery County to the east, McDowell County to the south, and Yancey County to the west. Mitchell County has two incorporated towns: Bakersville and Spruce Pine. The town of Bakersville serves as the county seat of government, while the town of Spruce Pine is the largest municipality by area and population in the county. Spruce Pine also serves as the commercial center of Mitchell County, featuring several local retailers and restaurants in its downtown area. The town of Spruce Pine is located 50 miles northeast of Asheville, North Carolina and 110 miles northwest of Charlotte, North Carolina. Bakersville and Spruce Pine are 11 miles apart, with the campus of Mitchell County High School situated between the two towns along NC-226. Main thoroughfares in Mitchell County include U.S. Highway 19E and North Carolina State Highways 80, 226, 226A, and 261. Notable recreational and cultural facilities within the county include the Blue Ridge Parkway, Bare Dark Sky Observatory, and the Museum of North Carolina Minerals.

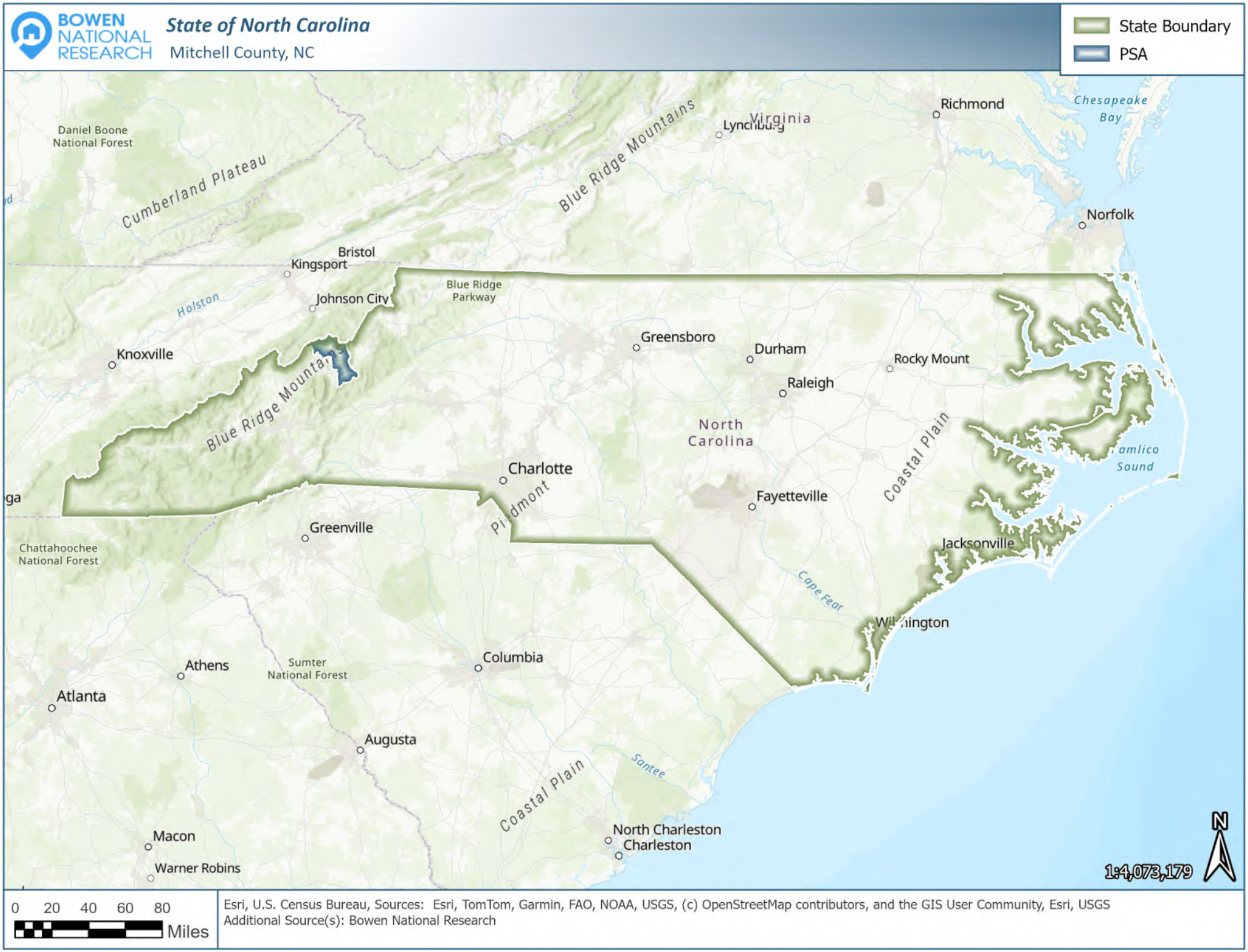
Mitchell County has an estimated population of 14,740 in 2025, a decrease of 163, or 1.1%, since 2020. The county's estimated population density is 66.6 persons per square mile in 2025, which is significantly lower than the state of North Carolina (226.1 persons per square mile). Based on 2025 estimates, 77.2% of the county's households are owner households. Over 80% of rental units are within structures of four or fewer units (including mobile homes), while all owner-occupied units in the county are within these smaller structures (primarily single-family homes) and mobile homes. As shown in the supply section (*Section VI*) of this report, the market offers a variety of housing units in terms of price point. Additional information regarding the county's demographic characteristics and trends, economic conditions, housing supply, and other factors are included throughout this report.

B. STUDY AREA DELINEATION

This report addresses the residential housing needs of Mitchell County, North Carolina. To this end, the evaluation is focused on the demographic and economic characteristics, as well as the existing housing stock, of areas within Mitchell County. The following summarizes the study area used in this analysis.

Primary Study Area – The Primary Study Area (PSA) includes the entirety of Mitchell County. No submarkets were used in this analysis.

Maps delineating the boundaries of the PSA are shown on the following pages.


BOWEN NATIONAL RESEARCH
State of North Carolina
Mitchell County, NC
State Boundary
PSA
Daniel Boone National Forest
Cumberland Plateau
Blue Ridge Mountains
Virginia
Lynchburg
Richmond
Chesapeake Bay
Norfolk
Bristol
Kingsport
Johnson City
Holston
Blue Ridge Parkway
Knoxville
Blue Ridge Mountains
Greensboro
Durham
Rocky Mount
Raleigh
North Carolina
Coastal Plain
Pamlico Sound
Charlotte
Piedmont
Fayetteville
Greenville
Chattahoochee National Forest
Jacksonville
Cape Fear
Wilmington
Athens
Sumter National Forest
Columbia
Atlanta
Augusta
Santee
Coastal Plain
North Charleston
Charleston
Macon
Warner Robins
N
1:4,073,179
0 20 40 60 80
Miles
Esri, U.S. Census Bureau, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Esri, USGS
Additional Source(s): Bowen National Research

BOWEN NATIONAL RESEARCH

Primary Study Area

Mitchell County, NC

PSA



0 1.2 2.4 3.6 4.8 Miles

Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Esri, CGIAR, USGS
Additional Source(s): Bowen National Research

IV. DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

A. INTRODUCTION

This section of the report evaluates key demographic characteristics for the Primary Study Area (PSA, Mitchell County). Through this analysis, unfolding trends and unique conditions are often revealed regarding populations and households residing in the selected geographic area. Demographic comparisons between the PSA and the state of North Carolina provide insights into the human composition of housing markets. Critical questions, such as the following, can be answered with this information:

- Who lives in Mitchell County and what are these people like?
- In what kinds of household groupings do Mitchell County residents live?
- What share of people rent or own their Mitchell County residence?
- Are the number of people and households living in Mitchell County increasing or decreasing over time?
- How has migration contributed to the population changes within Mitchell County in recent years, and what are these in-migrants like?
- How do residents of Mitchell County compare with the residents of the state of North Carolina?

This section is comprised of population characteristics, household characteristics, and demographic theme maps. Population characteristics describe the qualities of individual people, while household characteristics describe the qualities of people living together in one residence. Demographic theme maps graphically show varying levels (low to high concentrations) of a demographic characteristic across a geographic region.

It is important to note that 2010 and 2020 demographics are based on U.S. Census data (actual count), while 2025 and 2030 data are based on calculated estimates provided by ESRI, a nationally recognized demographic firm. The accuracy of these estimates depends on the realization of certain assumptions:

- Economic projections made by secondary sources materialize.
- Governmental policies with respect to residential development remain consistent.
- Availability and general terms of financing for residential development (i.e., mortgages, commercial loans, subsidies, Tax Credits, etc.) remain consistent.
- Sufficient housing and infrastructure are provided to support projected population and household growth.

Significant unforeseen changes or fluctuations among any of the preceding assumptions could have an impact on demographic estimates/projections.

B. POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Population by numbers and percent change (growth or decline) for selected years is shown in the following table. It should be noted that some total numbers and percentages may not match the totals within or between tables in this section due to rounding. Positive changes between time periods in the following table are illustrated in green, while negative changes are illustrated in red.

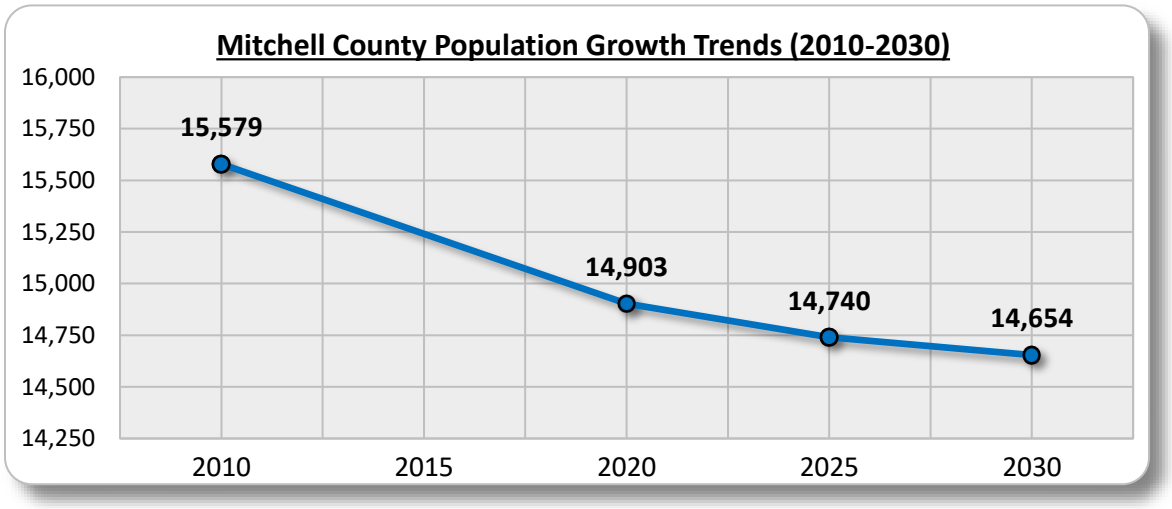
	Total Population				Population Change					
	2010 Census	2020 Census	2025 Estimated	2030 Projected	2010-2020		2020-2025		2025-2030	
					Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Mitchell County	15,579	14,903	14,740	14,654	**-676**	**-4.3%**	**-163**	**-1.1%**	**-86**	**-0.6%**
North Carolina	9,535,473	10,439,380	10,995,750	11,445,135	**903,907**	**9.5%**	**556,370**	**5.3%**	**449,385**	**4.1%**

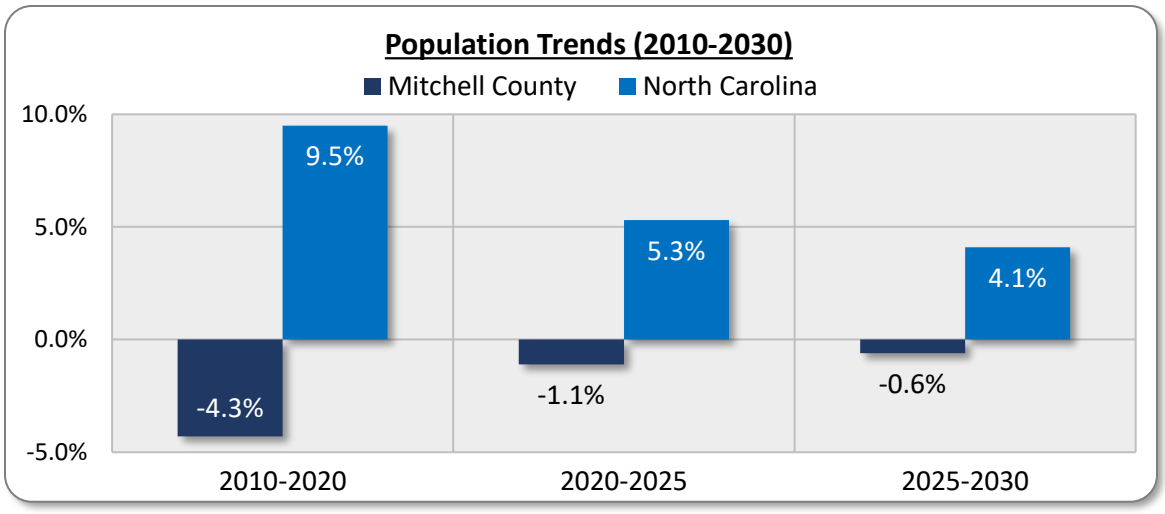
Source: 2010, 2020 Census; ESRI; Bowen National Research

Between 2010 and 2020, the population within the PSA (Mitchell County) decreased by 676 (4.3%), which contrasts with the 9.5% population increase that occurred within the state of North Carolina during the time period. Between 2020 and 2025, the PSA population is estimated to have decreased by 163 (1.1%), and it is projected that the population will further decline by 86 (0.6%) from 2025 to 2030. While the estimated and projected declines in the PSA during both time periods contrast with the 5.3% and 4.1% increases for the state, it is worth noting that the data illustrates a relative slowing in the pace of decline within Mitchell County.

It is critical to point out that *household* changes, as opposed to population, are more material in assessing housing needs and opportunities. Historical and projected household changes for the PSA are covered later in this section starting on page IV-13.

The following graphs illustrate the change in population since 2010 and projected through 2030.





Population densities for selected years are shown in the following table:

	Population Density								
	Population				Area	Persons per Square Mile			
	2010	2020	2025	2030	(Sq. Mi.)	2010	2020	2025	2030
Mitchell County	15,579	14,903	14,740	14,654	221.3	70.4	67.3	66.6	66.2
North Carolina	9,535,473	10,439,380	10,995,750	11,445,135	48,624.1	196.1	214.7	226.1	235.4

Source: 2010, 2020 Census; ESRI; Bowen National Research

The PSA (Mitchell County) has an estimated population density of nearly 67 persons per square mile in 2025, which is substantially lower than the population density for the state of North Carolina (226.1 persons per square mile). While the population density in the northern portion of the county is particularly low (approximately 25 persons per square mile), the population density in the southern portion of the PSA is comparably higher (approximately 130 persons per square mile). Overall, the PSA is predominantly rural with limited areas of higher density, such as those in and around Spruce Pine and Bakersville.

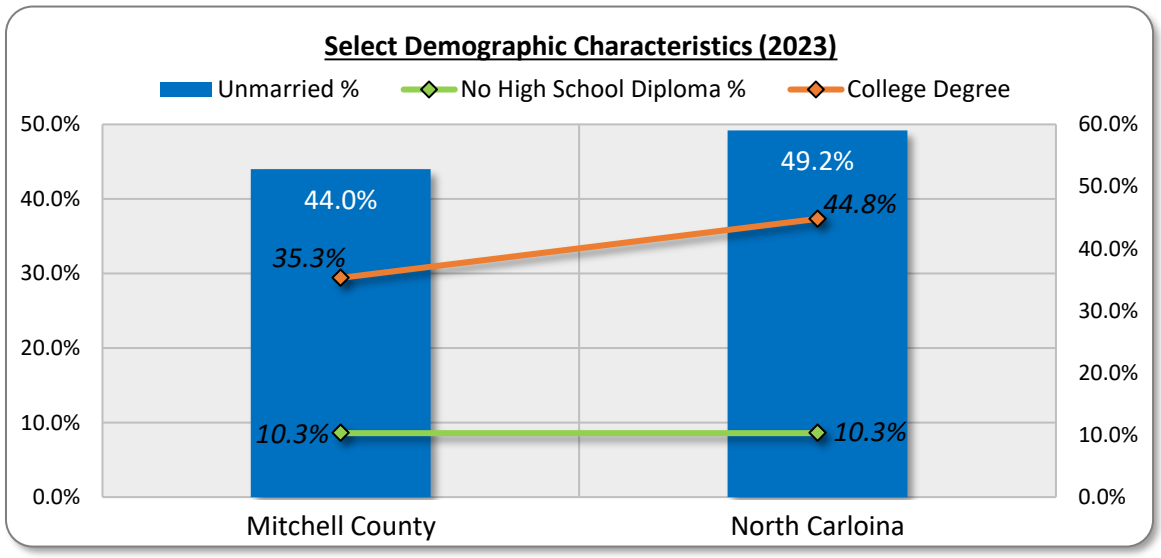
Noteworthy population characteristics for the PSA are illustrated in the following table. Note that data included within this table is derived from multiple sources (2020 Census, ESRI, American Community Survey) and is provided for the most recent time period available for the given source.

	Select Demographic Characteristics			
	Minority Population (2020)	Unmarried Population (2023)	No High School Diploma (2023)	College Degree (2023)
Mitchell County	1,240 (8.3%)	5,617 (44.0%)	1,150 (10.3%)	3,948 (35.3%)
North Carolina	3,950,927 (37.3%)	4,267,603 (49.2%)	744,580 (10.3%)	3,252,342 (44.8%)

Source: 2020 Census; 2019-2023 American Community Survey; ESRI; Bowen National Research

As the preceding table illustrates, racial and ethnic minorities in the PSA (Mitchell County) comprise a significantly smaller share (8.3%) of the overall population as compared to the state share of 37.3%. Among the population of the PSA age 16 and older, 44.0% is unmarried, which is moderately less than the state share of 49.2%. The population share lacking a high school diploma (10.3%) is identical to the state share, while the share of the PSA population aged 25 and older which has obtained a college degree (35.3%) is notably lower than the statewide share of 44.8%. Although the lower share of unmarried population likely has a positive influence on household income (married households are more likely to earn multiple wages), the comparably low share of the population with a college degree likely has a negative influence on household income potential. As illustrated later in this section on page IV-19, these factors likely influence the lower median household income in the PSA.

The following graph compares select population characteristics for the PSA (Mitchell County) and the state of North Carolina.



Migration Patterns

While the analysis in the preceding pages illustrates recent population changes, future population projections, and population characteristics such as race/ethnicity, marital status, and educational attainment, the following data addresses where people *move* to and from, referred to as migration patterns. For the purposes of this analysis, the Census Bureau's Population Estimates Program (PEP) is considered the most reliable source for the components of population change, which includes natural change, domestic migration, and international migration. To evaluate mobility patterns by *age* and *income*, the U.S. Census Bureau's migration estimates published by the American Community Survey for 2024 (latest year available) is utilized, while data from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is used to analyze *county-to-county*

migration *flows*. It is important to note that while county administrative boundaries are likely imperfect reflections of commuter sheds, moving across a county boundary is often an acceptable distance to make a meaningful difference in a person's local housing and labor market environment. The migration data within this section is intended to provide general insight regarding the contributing factors of population change, and as such, gross population changes within this data should not be compared to other tables which may be derived from alternate data sources such as the Decennial Census or American Community Survey.

The following table illustrates the cumulative change in total population for the PSA (Mitchell County) between April 2010 and July 2025.

Estimated Components of Population Change for Mitchell County, North Carolina April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2025

Years	Population Change*	Percent Change	Natural Change	Net Domestic Migration	Net International Migration	Total Net Migration
2010-2020	-700	-4.5%	-844	34	122	156
2020-2025	161	1.1%	-676	720	104	824

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division
*Includes residuals of (-12) and (13) representing the change that cannot be attributed to any specific demographic component

Overall, the population decrease that occurred in Mitchell County between 2010 and 2020 was primarily influenced by natural decrease (more deaths than births). While a natural decrease in the population of 844 occurred during the time period, both net domestic and international migration were positive (34 and 122, respectively). Between 2020 and 2025, net domestic migration increased significantly (720), while net international migration remained relatively stable. Although the components of change data illustrates a slight overall increase in population between 2020 and 2025, which contrasts with the population data presented earlier in this section, it is important to understand that input data for components of change may lag by one or more years depending on the source. As such, the key takeaway as it relates to the components of change data is that population changes in Mitchell County have been historically characterized by natural decrease and positive migration. Natural decrease typically occurs in areas with a notable share of seniors or within areas that have challenges retaining or attracting younger adults. As illustrated later within this section on page IV-14, Mitchell County has a substantially larger share of households that are aged 55 and older compared to the state. Although other factors such as employment can determine where a household ultimately chooses to reside, housing availability and affordability can be key components to this decision.

The following table details the *shares* of domestic in-migration by three select age cohorts for the PSA (Mitchell County) and the state of North Carolina from 2015 to 2024.

Domestic Population In-Migrants by Age, 2015 to 2024		
PSA (Mitchell County)		
Age	**2015-2019**	**2020-2024**
1 to 34	77.1%	37.8%
35 to 54	10.6%	15.0%
55+	12.3%	47.3%
Median Age (In-state migrants)	18.2	42.1
Median Age (Out-of-state migrants)	21.4	59.4
Median Age (PSA)	47.5	48.3
North Carolina		
Age	**2015-2019**	**2020-2024**
1 to 34	64.0%	63.0%
35 to 54	21.1%	21.2%
55+	14.9%	15.8%
Median Age (In-state migrants)	27.4	27.8
Median Age (Out-of-state migrants)	28.7	29.4
Median Age (North Carolina)	39.2	39.6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 & 2024 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates (S0701); Bowen National Research

Between 2015 and 2019, 77.1% of in-migrants to the PSA (Mitchell County) were less than 35 years of age, 10.6% were between the ages of 35 and 54, and 12.3% were aged 55 or older. Between 2020 and 2024, the share of in-migrants less than 35 years of age substantially decreased to 37.8%, while the shares of in-migrants between the ages of 35 and 54 (15.0%) and aged 55 and older (47.3%) both increased. The increase from 12.3% to 47.3% for in-migrants aged 55 and older is particularly noteworthy. Overall, the data illustrates that in-migrants to the PSA in recent years have been increasingly more likely to be middle-aged (35 to 54 years) or seniors (ages 55 and older) as compared to the prior time period. In addition, the share of in-migrants in the PSA aged 55 and older from 2020 to 2024 is much higher than the 15.8% share for the state during the same time period. While the slight majority of in-migrants to Mitchell County in recent years are less than 55 years of age, the increase in senior in-migrants may contribute to ongoing natural decrease of the population, which is consistent with the components of change data provided on page IV-5.

The following table illustrates the annual *net migration flow* (difference between inflow and outflow population) by age cohort for the PSA (Mitchell County) and the state. Note that the number and percent change reflect the *annualized* difference in place of residence for the current survey year versus one prior year for the entire survey period (2020-2024). County numbers are for migration flows into and out of the county, while statewide numbers are for migration flows into and out of the state.

		Annual Net Migration Flow by Age (2020-2024)				
		<18	18-34	35-54	55+	Total
Mitchell County	Number	64	201	-100	377	542
	% Change	2.6%	7.7%	-2.9%	6.5%	3.8%
North Carolina	Number	25,732	57,537	35,396	27,292	145,957
	% Change	1.2%	2.4%	1.3%	0.9%	1.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2024 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates (B07001, B07401); Bowen National Research

Based on the 2024 American Community Survey, migration flows resulted in an annual net population increase for the PSA (Mitchell County) among all age cohorts, except for the population between the ages of 35 and 54, which declined by 100 (2.9%). The largest increase in terms of *number* occurred among individuals aged 55 and older, which increased annually by 377 (6.5%), whereas the largest *percent* increase (7.7%) occurred among individuals between the ages of 18 and 34. The percent increases in population attributed to migration in the PSA for both young adults (ages 18 to 34) and seniors (aged 55 and older) are substantially larger than the respective increases (2.4% and 0.9%) statewide. The combination of a net loss of adults between the ages of 35 and 54, which are typically more likely to have children, and an increase among seniors aged 55 and older due to migration flows influences natural population change within the area.

To further illustrate migration patterns within the PSA (Mitchell County), the following table summarizes the county-to-county migration *inflow* and *outflow* for the PSA from 2022 to 2023. Note that this data is based on the change in home address for IRS tax returns filed in 2022 (previous residence) versus the tax returns filed in 2023 (new address), which is the most current data available for this resource. The percent for each county is the share of the individuals, or population, included on the tax returns for the given county compared to the overall in-migration population. Counties which directly border Mitchell County are illustrated in **red** text.

Top Migration Inflow/Outflow Counties Mitchell County, North Carolina (2022-2023)					
Inflow			Outflow		
County	Number	Percent	County	Number	Percent
Yancey County, NC	128	19.4%	**Yancey County, NC**	129	23.7%
Avery County, NC	66	10.0%	**Avery County, NC**	55	10.1%
McDowell County, NC	60	9.1%	**McDowell County, NC**	55	10.1%
Buncombe County, NC	48	7.3%	Buncombe County, NC	39	7.2%
Other Flows - Same State	174	26.4%	Other Flows - Same State	119	21.9%
Other Flows - Different State	183	27.8%	Other Flows - Different State	147	27.0%
Total	**659**	**100.0%**	**Total**	**544**	**100.0%**

Source: Internal Revenue Service, Statistics of Income (2022-2023); Bowen National Research

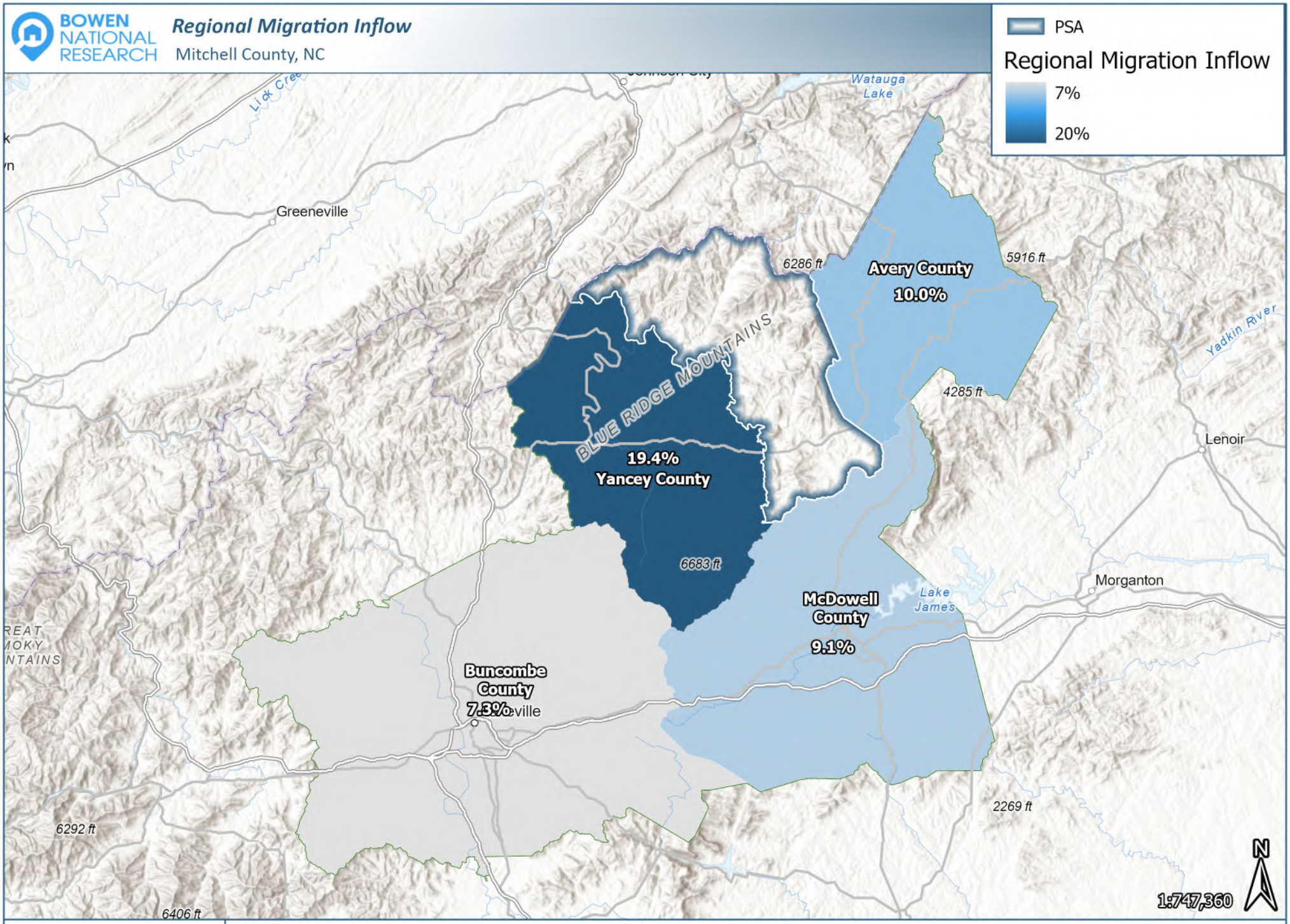
As the preceding table illustrates, three of the top four inflow and outflow counties (Yancey, Avery, and McDowell) directly border Mitchell County, while the fourth county (Buncombe County) is located in the immediate region to the southwest. These four counties collectively account for 45.8% of the total population inflow and 51.1% of the total population outflow for Mitchell County between 2022 and 2023. Given that Tennessee borders Mitchell County to the north, it is not surprising that over one-quarter of inflow and outflow migration is attributed to a different state. Regardless, it is apparent that Mitchell County migration flows are heavily regional-based, which is typical of many markets. While the combined net migration (difference between inflow and outflow) is moderately positive for the top counties, the data illustrates that migration flows from other counties within the state and from areas outside the state are notably positive. This indicates that although a substantial portion of the migration flows for Mitchell County are based in the immediate region, the county also draws in-migrants from a much larger geographic region, illustrating the overall appeal of the area for many households.

Maps illustrating the shares of migration *inflow* and *outflow* by county for Mitchell County from 2022 to 2023 are shown on the following pages.

BOWEN NATIONAL RESEARCH

Regional Migration Inflow

Mitchell County, NC

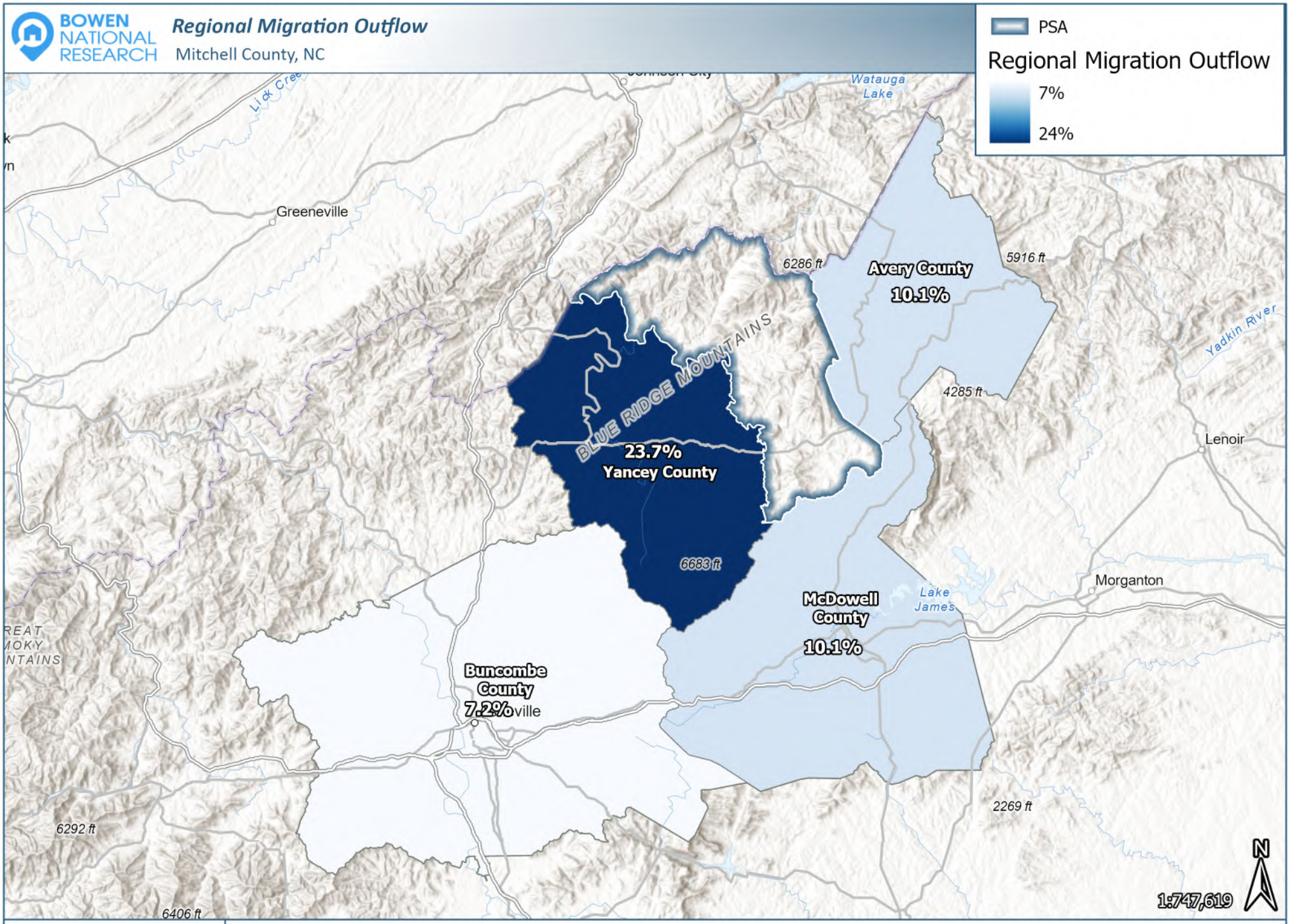


Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Esri, U.S. Census Bureau, Esri, USGS
Additional Source(s): Bowen National Research

BOWEN NATIONAL RESEARCH

Regional Migration Outflow

Mitchell County, NC



0 3.5 7 10.5 14 Miles

Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Esri, U.S. Census Bureau, Esri, CGIAR, USGS
Additional Source(s): Bowen National Research

While the data contained in the previous pages illustrates the recent migration trends for the PSA (Mitchell County) and gives perspective about the age profile and place of origin of in-migrants, it is equally important to understand the income levels of these individuals as they directly relate to affordability of housing. The following table illustrates the *per-person* income distribution by geographic mobility status for in-migrants within each study area. Note that this data is provided for the *population*, not households, ages 15 and above:

Income Distribution by Mobility Status for Population Age 15+ Years*

Area	Mobility Status	<$25,000		$25,000 to $50,000		$50,000+	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Mitchell County	In-Migrants	209	28.9%	278	38.5%	235	32.5%
	Existing Residents	4,516	41.1%	3,445	31.4%	3,020	27.5%
North Carolina	In-Migrants	215,903	39.0%	144,379	26.1%	193,435	34.9%
	Existing Residents	2,400,581	33.5%	1,969,063	27.5%	2,792,847	39.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2024 5-Year American Community Survey (B07010); Bowen National Research
*Excludes population with no income

According to 2024 American Community Survey data, 28.9% of the population that moved to the PSA (Mitchell County) earned less than $25,000 per year, 38.5% earned between $25,000 and $50,000, and 32.5% earned $50,000 or more. Compared to the existing population of the PSA, a larger share of in-migrants earn between $25,000 and $50,000 and $50,000 or more. When the distribution of in-migrants by income for the PSA is compared to the distribution for the state, a substantially larger share of PSA in-migrants earn between $25,000 and $50,000 compared to the 26.1% share of in-migrants to the state with such incomes. Overall, the data illustrates that over two-thirds (67.4%) of in-migrants to the PSA earn less than $50,000 annually. Future housing development should consider the distribution of typical income levels of in-migrants to ensure an adequate supply of income-appropriate housing is available to accommodate households looking to relocate to Mitchell County. Although it is likely that a significant share of the in-migrant population earning less than $25,000 per year consists of children over the age of 15 and young adults considered to be dependents within a larger family, and some of these individuals may live within multiple income households, affordable workforce housing options should also be a consideration in future housing developments within the area.

The following table illustrates the annual *net migration flow* (difference between inflow and outflow population) by income for the PSA (Mitchell County) and the state. Note that the number and percent change reflect the *annualized* difference in place of residence for the current survey year versus one prior year for the entire survey period (2020-2024). County numbers are for migration flows into and out of the county, while statewide numbers are for migration flows into and out of the state. Data includes population age 15 and older.

		Annual Net Migration Flow by Income (2020-2024)				
		<$25,000	$25,000-$49,999	$50,000-$74,999	$75,000+	Total
Mitchell County	Number	191	163	12	107	473
	% Change	3.4%	4.6%	0.7%	7.8%	3.8%
North Carolina	Number	63,642	24,870	14,774	22,209	125,495
	% Change	1.7%	1.2%	1.2%	1.3%	1.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2024 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates (B07010, B07410); Bowen National Research

As the preceding illustrates, positive net migration (difference between inflow and outflow) occurred within the PSA (Mitchell County) across all income cohorts between 2020 and 2024. The largest annual increase (191) occurred among individuals earning less than $25,000, followed by individuals earning between $25,000 and $49,999 (163). In terms of percent change, the largest annual increase (7.8%) occurred among individuals earning $75,000 or more, resulting in a net increase of 107 persons annually for the highest income cohort. When compared to the net percent changes that occurred for the state (interstate migration), all income cohorts within the PSA, except for individuals earning between $50,000 and $74,999, experienced a larger percent increase than the state during the survey period. Overall, this illustrates that the PSA attracted more individuals than it lost in recent years, regardless of income level, and the net percent increases for the majority of income cohorts exceeded the statewide increases. This indicates that Mitchell County is a popular relocation choice for households of varying income levels. In order to maintain this positive migration trend, it is important that income-appropriate housing is available within the PSA to facilitate future in-migration.

Based on an evaluation of the components of population change, migration patterns generally contribute to population growth within Mitchell County, whereas natural change (births versus deaths) is a negative component to population change. The data also illustrates that in-migrants to the PSA in recent years have been increasingly more likely to be middle-aged (35 to 54 years) or seniors aged 55 and older, and a majority of in-migrants have low to moderate incomes. Overall, there is diversity among in-migrants that relocate to the PSA, and a broad range of housing options should be considered when evaluating the overall housing needs within the area.

C. HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

Households by numbers and percent change (growth or decline) for selected years are shown in the following table. Note that decreases are illustrated in red text, while increases are illustrated in green text:

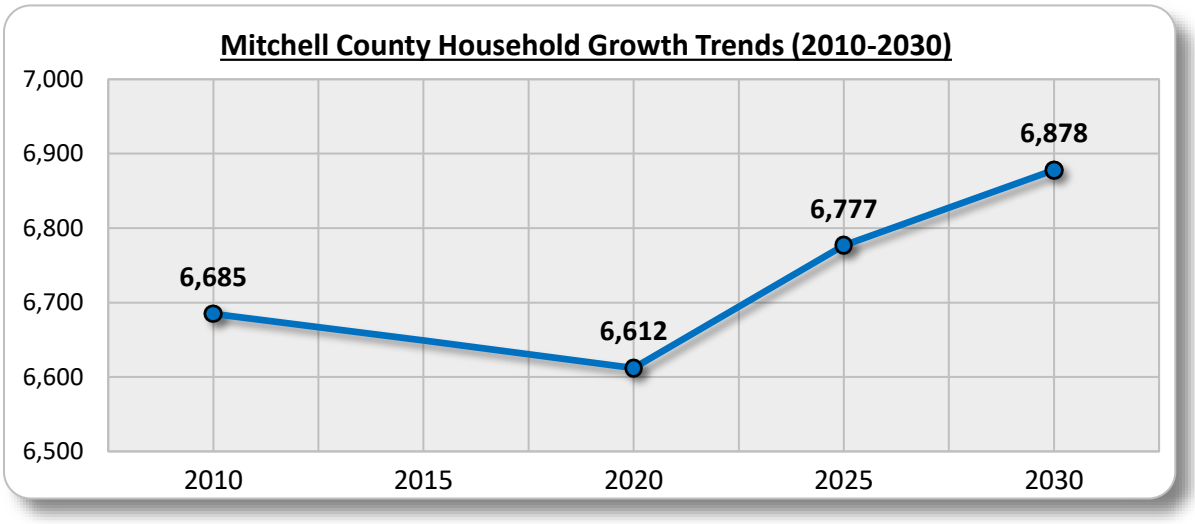
	Total Households				Household Change					
	2010 Census	2020 Census	2025 Estimated	2030 Projected	2010-2020		2020-2025		2025-2030	
					Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Mitchell County	6,685	6,612	6,777	6,878	-73	-1.1%	165	2.5%	101	1.5%
North Carolina	3,745,149	4,160,851	4,489,098	4,740,753	415,702	11.1%	328,247	7.9%	251,655	5.6%

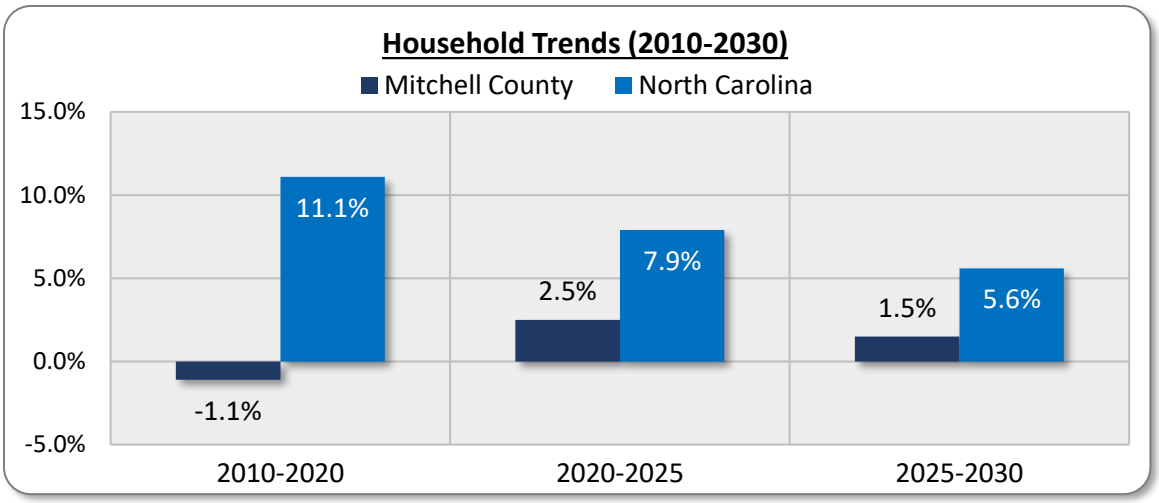
Source: 2010, 2020 Census; ESRI; Bowen National Research

Between 2010 and 2020, the number of households within the PSA (Mitchell County) decreased by 73 (1.1%). This decrease contrasts with the 11.1% increase in the number of households that occurred statewide during the time period. This trend of household decline within the PSA shifted between 2020 and 2025, as the PSA's household base is estimated to have increased by 165 (2.5%). During this time, the state of North Carolina also experienced substantial increase (7.9%) in the number of households. Over the next five years, it is projected that the PSA and state will both experience increases (1.5% and 5.6%, respectively) in the number of households. The recent and projected household growth within the PSA will likely contribute to an increase in housing demand within Mitchell County through 2030.

While household growth or decline typically comprise a significant component of the total housing needs within a market, many other factors can also influence overall housing needs. These factors, which are addressed throughout this report, include: households living in substandard or cost-burdened housing, commuting patterns, pent-up demand, availability of existing housing, and product in the development pipeline.

The following graphs compare household growth between 2010 and 2030:





Household heads by age cohort for selected years are shown in the following table. Note that five-year projected declines are in red text, while projected increases are in green text:

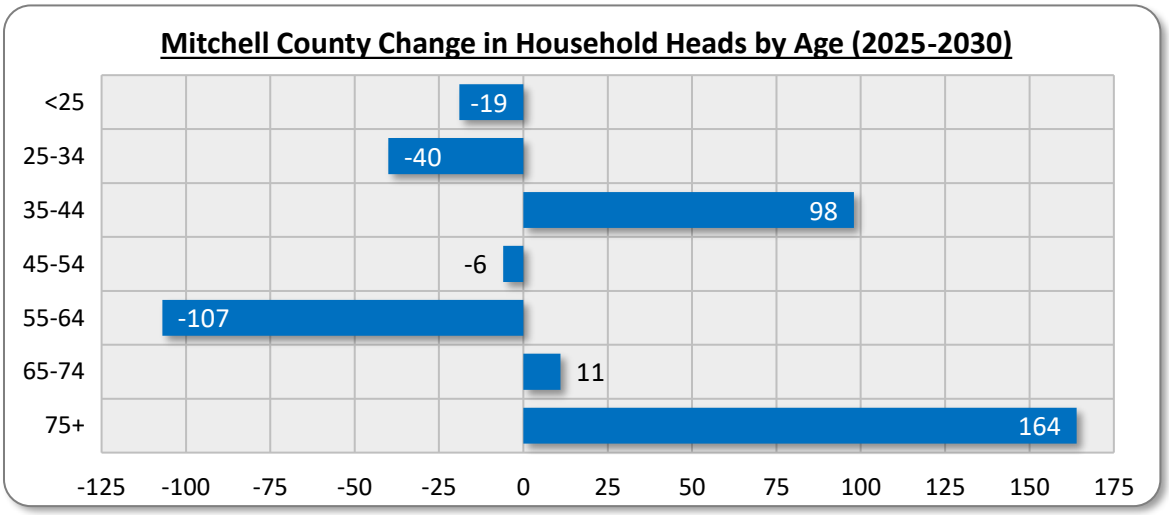
		Household Heads by Age						
		<25	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 64	65 to 74	75+
Mitchell County	2020	200 (3.0%)	657 (9.9%)	766 (11.6%)	1,063 (16.1%)	1,408 (21.3%)	1,395 (21.1%)	1,123 (17.0%)
	2025	191 (2.8%)	695 (10.3%)	839 (12.4%)	1,024 (15.1%)	1,348 (19.9%)	1,443 (21.3%)	1,237 (18.3%)
	2030	172 (2.5%)	655 (9.5%)	937 (13.6%)	1,018 (14.8%)	1,241 (18.0%)	1,454 (21.1%)	1,401 (20.4%)
	Change 2025-2030	**-19 (-9.9%)**	**-40 (-5.8%)**	**98 (11.7%)**	**-6 (-0.6%)**	**-107 (-7.9%)**	**11 (0.8%)**	**164 (13.3%)**
North Carolina	2020	166,754 (4.0%)	621,490 (14.9%)	687,437 (16.5%)	750,223 (18.0%)	804,423 (19.3%)	670,737 (16.1%)	459,790 (11.1%)
	2025	171,419 (3.8%)	664,744 (14.8%)	754,463 (16.8%)	768,520 (17.1%)	807,381 (18.0%)	743,099 (16.6%)	579,423 (12.9%)
	2030	173,835 (3.7%)	685,669 (14.5%)	798,494 (16.8%)	787,328 (16.6%)	797,855 (16.8%)	793,738 (16.7%)	703,788 (14.8%)
	Change 2025-2030	**2,416 (1.4%)**	**20,925 (3.1%)**	**44,031 (5.8%)**	**18,808 (2.4%)**	**-9,526 (-1.2%)**	**50,639 (6.8%)**	**124,365 (21.5%)**

Source: 2020 Census; ESRI; Bowen National Research

In 2025, household heads aged 55 and older comprise more than one-half (59.5%) of all households in the PSA (Mitchell County), with those aged 65 to 74 years comprising the largest share (21.3%) of any single age group within the county. The share of seniors (age 55 and older) within the county is notably higher than the corresponding statewide share (47.5%). Between 2025 and 2030, household growth in the PSA is projected to primarily occur among households between the ages of 35 and 44 (11.7%) and those aged 75 and older (13.3%), though marginal growth is projected for households aged 65 to 74 (0.8%). While a portion of the changes can likely be attributed to existing households aging in place, households entering and exiting the Mitchell County

market are also a factor in the preceding changes in households by age. Overall, the increase among senior households aged 65 and older (175 households, or 6.5%) in the PSA will likely contribute to demand for a variety of senior-oriented housing products, which may include downsizing options with lower maintenance requirements, assisted living, and nursing care. While additional housing alternatives will likely be necessary to accommodate new household growth in the county, the addition of senior-oriented housing has the potential to free up existing housing units to meet the demand of individuals and families.

The following graph illustrates the projected change in household heads by age between 2025 and 2030.



Households by tenure (renters and owners) for selected years are shown in the following table. Note that projected decreases from 2025 are illustrated in red text, while increases are illustrated in green text.

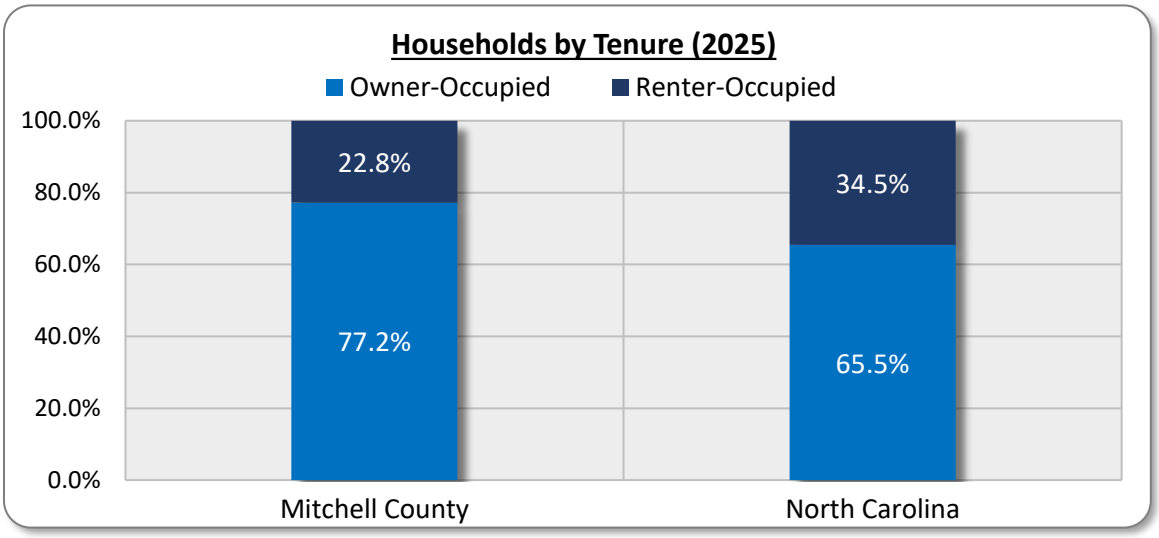
	Households by Tenure								
	Household Type	2020		2025		2030		Change 2025-2030	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Mitchell County	Owner-Occupied	5,027	76.0%	5,234	77.2%	5,369	78.1%	135	2.6%
	Renter-Occupied	1,585	24.0%	1,543	22.8%	1,509	21.9%	-34	-2.2%
	Total	6,612	100.0%	6,777	100.0%	6,878	100.0%	101	1.5%
North Carolina	Owner-Occupied	2,701,405	64.9%	2,939,909	65.5%	3,122,673	65.9%	182,764	6.2%
	Renter-Occupied	1,459,446	35.1%	1,549,189	34.5%	1,618,080	34.1%	68,891	4.4%
	Total	4,160,851	100.0%	4,489,098	100.0%	4,740,753	100.0%	251,655	5.6%

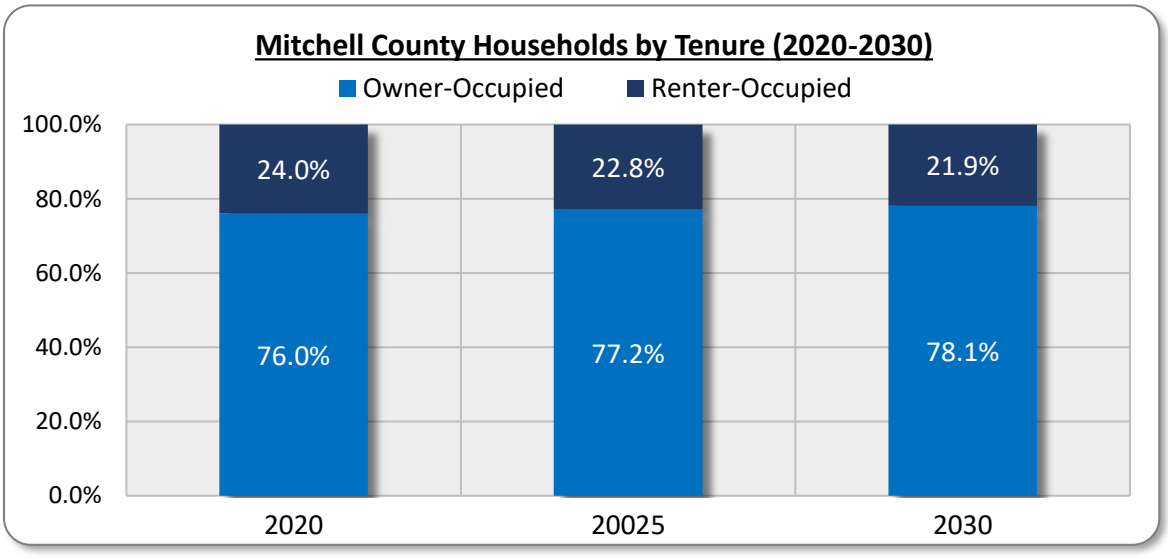
Source: 2020 Census; ESRI; Bowen National Research

In 2025, 77.2% of households in the PSA (Mitchell County) are owner households, while the remaining 22.8% are renter households. This is a notably larger share of owner households when compared to the 65.5% share within the state of North Carolina and represents an increase since 2020. Between 2025 and 2030, owner households in the PSA are projected to increase by 135 households (2.6%), while renter households in the PSA are projected to

experience a moderate decline of 34 households (2.2%). While the projected changes in households by tenure will likely influence housing demand in Mitchell County over the next five years, it is also important to note that local housing market conditions like availability, pent-up demand, substandard conditions, and housing cost burden also influence housing demand for both rental and for-sale housing units, as the existing housing inventory of an area may not adequately satisfy current housing needs.

The following graphs illustrate households by tenure for the PSA (Mitchell County) and the state of North Carolina for 2025 and households by tenure for the PSA for 2020, 2025 (estimated), and 2030 (projected):





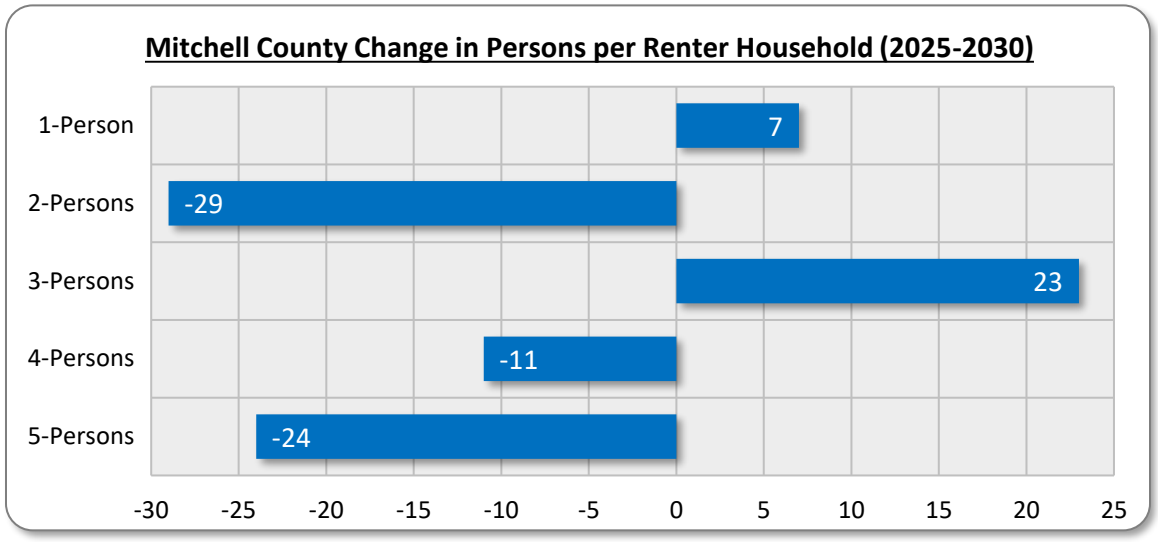
Renter households by size for 2020, 2025 and 2030 are shown in the following table for Mitchell County and North Carolina. Note that 2030 numbers that represent an increase are shown in **green** text, while declines are illustrated in **red** text.

		Persons Per Renter Household					
		1-Person	2-Person	3-Person	4-Person	5-Person+	Total
Mitchell County	2020	636 40.1%	454 28.6%	225 14.2%	151 9.5%	119 7.5%	1,585 100.0%
	2025	662 42.9%	401 26.0%	278 18.0%	130 8.4%	72 4.7%	1,543 100.0%
	2030	**669** 44.3%	**372** 24.7%	**301** 19.9%	**119** 7.9%	**48** 3.2%	**1,509** 100.0%
North Carolina	2020	547,497 37.5%	411,000 28.2%	218,869 15.0%	154,063 10.6%	128,017 8.8%	1,459,446 100.0%
	2025	617,164 39.8%	449,181 29.0%	226,620 14.6%	146,693 9.5%	109,531 7.1%	1,549,189 100.0%
	2030	**663,410** 41.0%	**475,897** 29.4%	**233,715** 14.4%	**144,421** 8.9%	**100,637** 6.2%	**1,618,080** 100.0%

Source: 2020 Census; ESRI; Bowen National Research

In 2025, one- and two-person renter households comprise more than two-thirds (68.9%) of all renter households in the PSA (Mitchell County), with one-person renter households comprising the single largest share (42.9%). The combined share of one- and two-person renter households within the PSA is consistent with the corresponding state share of 68.8%. Between 2025 and 2030, projections indicate marginal growth (1.1%) in one-person renter households within the PSA. While two-person renter households are projected to *decrease* by 29 (7.2%), three-person renter households are projected to *increase* by 23 (8.3%). Four-person and larger renter households are projected to experience a substantial decrease over the next five years, declining by a combined total of 35 households (17.3%). While the projected declines among four- and five-person or larger renter households are noteworthy, this can be influenced by factors like larger households pursuing home ownership rather than renting or multiple dependents leaving the household (e.g., empty nesters). The projected decrease in larger renter households within the PSA is consistent with statewide projections during the time period. Regardless, these projections are a strong indication that rental housing demand within the PSA will likely continue to be heavily focused on smaller rental units (i.e., studio, one-, and two-bedroom) for the foreseeable future.

The following graph shows the projected change in persons per *renter* household within the PSA (Mitchell County) between 2025 and 2030:



Owner households by size for 2020, 2025 and 2030 are shown in the following table for Mitchell County and North Carolina. Note that 2030 numbers that represent an increase are shown in **green** text, while declines are illustrated in **red** text.

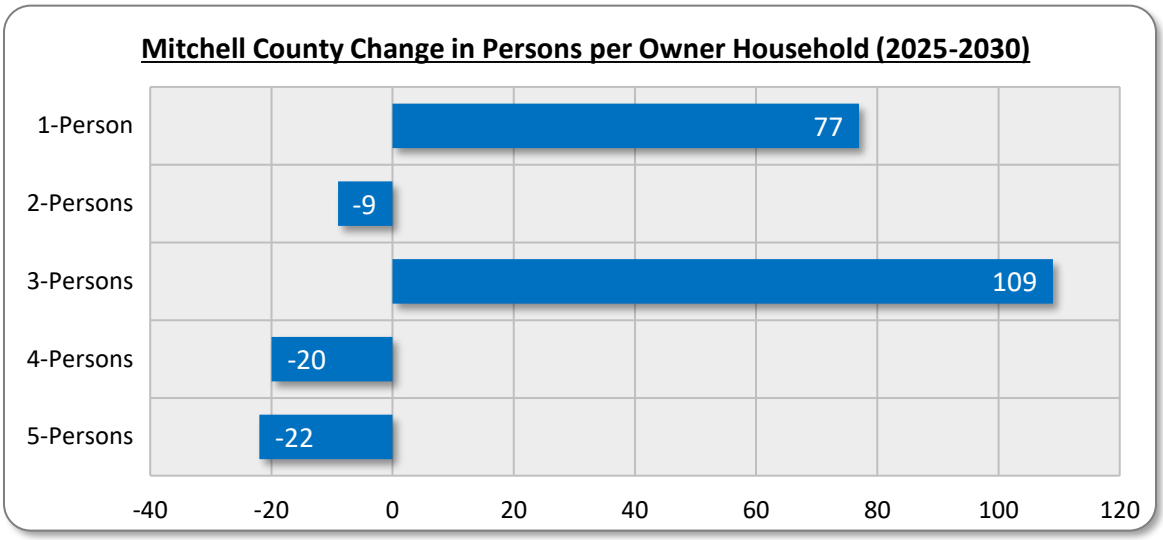
		Persons Per Owner Household					
		1-Person	2-Person	3-Person	4-Person	5-Person+	Total
Mitchell County	2020	1,356 27.0%	2,154 42.8%	734 14.6%	485 9.6%	299 5.9%	5,028 100.0%
	2025	1,486 28.4%	2,116 40.4%	930 17.8%	445 8.5%	257 4.9%	5,234 100.0%
	2030	**1,563** 29.1%	**2,107** 39.2%	**1,039** 19.4%	**425** 7.9%	**235** 4.4%	**5,369** 100.0%
North Carolina	2020	636,547 23.6%	1,026,651 38.0%	436,081 16.1%	362,554 13.4%	239,574 8.9%	2,701,407 100.0%
	2025	701,825 23.9%	1,138,008 38.7%	473,134 16.1%	384,748 13.1%	242,194 8.2%	2,939,909 100.0%
	2030	**750,275** 24.0%	**1,219,757** 39.1%	**501,779** 16.1%	**403,453** 12.9%	**247,409** 7.9%	**3,122,673** 100.0%

Source: 2020 Census; ESRI; Bowen National Research

In 2025, two-person owner households comprise the largest individual share (40.4%) of owner households by size in the PSA (Mitchell County), followed by one-person owner households (28.4%). The combined share of one- and two-person owner households in the PSA (68.8%) is higher than the statewide share of 62.6%. This is likely due, at least in part, to the higher share of senior households aged 55 and older, which are much more likely to be one- or two-person households as compared to younger households. Between 2025 and 2030, two-person and four-person and larger owner households are projected to decline within the PSA, while one- and three-person owner households are

projected to increase. The larger of the two increases is projected to occur among three-person owner households, which are projected to increase by 109 households, or 11.7%. The projected trends within Mitchell County contrast with the projections for the state in that owner households of all sizes are expected to increase in number statewide over the next five years. However, the overall increase in the number of owner households will likely result in an increase in for-sale housing demand in the PSA between 2025 and 2030.

The following graph illustrates the projected change in persons per *owner* household within the PSA (Mitchell County) between 2025 and 2030:



Median household income for selected years is shown in the following table:

	Median Household Income				
	2020 (Census)	2025 (Estimated)	% Change 2020-2025	2030 (Projected)	% Change 2025-2030
Mitchell County	$48,939	$57,719	17.9%	$64,538	11.8%
North Carolina	$57,789	$74,690	29.2%	$84,964	13.8%

Source: 2020 Census; ESRI; Bowen National Research

In 2025, the median household income in the PSA (Mitchell County) is $57,719, which is 22.7% lower than the median household income for the state of North Carolina ($74,690). Between 2025 and 2030, it is projected that the median household income in the PSA will increase by 11.8%, which is a slightly smaller percentage increase than the 13.8% increase projected for the state. As such, the projected median household income of $64,538 in Mitchell County in 2030 will remain substantially lower than the median household income for the state.

The distribution of *renter* households by income is illustrated in the following table. Note that declines between 2025 and 2030 are in red text, while increases are in green text:

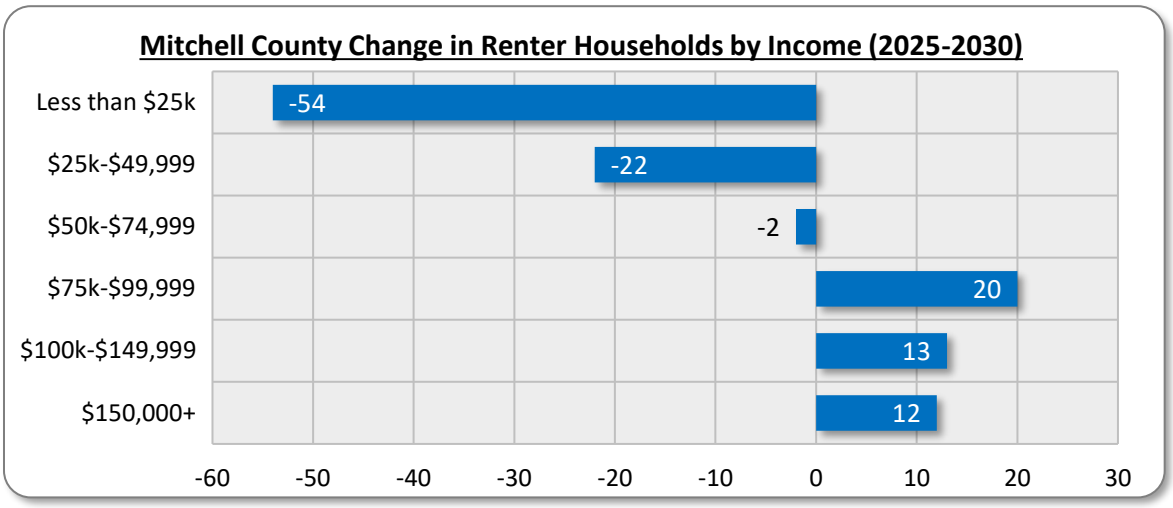
		Renter Households by Income							
		Less Than $15,000	$15,000 - $24,999	$25,000 - $34,999	$35,000 - $49,999	$50,000 - $74,999	$75,000 - $99,999	$100,000 - $149,999	$150,000 & Higher
Mitchell County	2020	309 (19.5%)	286 (18.0%)	335 (21.1%)	179 (11.3%)	299 (18.9%)	125 (7.9%)	47 (3.0%)	5 (0.3%)
	2025	296 (19.2%)	202 (13.1%)	246 (16.0%)	269 (17.5%)	269 (17.5%)	191 (12.4%)	41 (2.7%)	27 (1.8%)
	2030	260 (17.2%)	184 (12.2%)	229 (15.2%)	264 (17.5%)	267 (17.7%)	211 (14.0%)	54 (3.6%)	39 (2.6%)
	Change 2025-2030	**-36 (-12.2%)**	**-18 (-8.9%)**	**-17 (-6.9%)**	**-5 (-1.9%)**	**-2 (-0.7%)**	**20 (10.5%)**	**13 (31.7%)**	**12 (44.4%)**
North Carolina	2020	278,403 (19.1%)	207,784 (14.2%)	197,945 (13.6%)	240,875 (16.5%)	251,278 (17.2%)	133,907 (9.2%)	99,293 (6.8%)	49,961 (3.4%)
	2025	225,304 (14.5%)	150,624 (9.7%)	153,036 (9.9%)	239,333 (15.4%)	300,740 (19.4%)	180,407 (11.6%)	182,481 (11.8%)	117,263 (7.6%)
	2030	212,752 (13.1%)	132,592 (8.2%)	140,566 (8.7%)	231,566 (14.3%)	313,554 (19.4%)	197,794 (12.2%)	221,159 (13.7%)	168,097 (10.4%)
	Change 2025-2030	**-12,552 (-5.6%)**	**-18,032 (-12.0%)**	**-12,470 (-8.1%)**	**-7,767 (-3.2%)**	**12,814 (4.3%)**	**17,387 (9.6%)**	**38,678 (21.2%)**	**50,834 (43.4%)**

Source: 2020 Census; ESRI; Bowen National Research

In 2025, *renter* households within the PSA (Mitchell County) earning less than $15,000 annually comprise 19.2% of all renter households in the area, while nearly one-half (48.3%) earn less than $35,000. These shares are notably higher than the statewide shares (14.5% and 34.1%, respectively), indicating that rental demand in the PSA is likely more heavily concentrated among affordable rental housing alternatives (rents of $875 or less) as compared to the state of North Carolina. While the distribution of more moderate-income renter households ($35,000 to $99,999) is relatively comparable to the statewide distribution, only 4.5% of renter households in the PSA earn $100,000 or more annually. This is substantially lower than the state share of 19.4% for higher-income renter households.

Between 2025 and 2030, all renter household income cohorts earning less than $75,000 are projected to decrease in the PSA, while those earning $75,000 or more are projected to increase. This is broadly similar to projections for the state of North Carolina during this same time period, though an increase is also projected for renter households earning between $50,000 and $74,999 within the state. Despite renter household growth projected to be primarily concentrated among higher-income households, those earning less than $35,000 will continue to comprise a significant share (44.6%) of all renter households within the PSA in 2030. As a result, there will likely be an increase in demand for moderate- to higher-priced rental product in the area, but strong demand for more affordably priced rental product in Mitchell County will persist for the foreseeable future.

The following graph illustrates the change in *renter* households by income for the PSA (Mitchell County) between 2025 and 2030.



The following table illustrates the distribution of *owner* households by income. Note that declines between 2025 and 2030 are in red text, while increases are in green text:

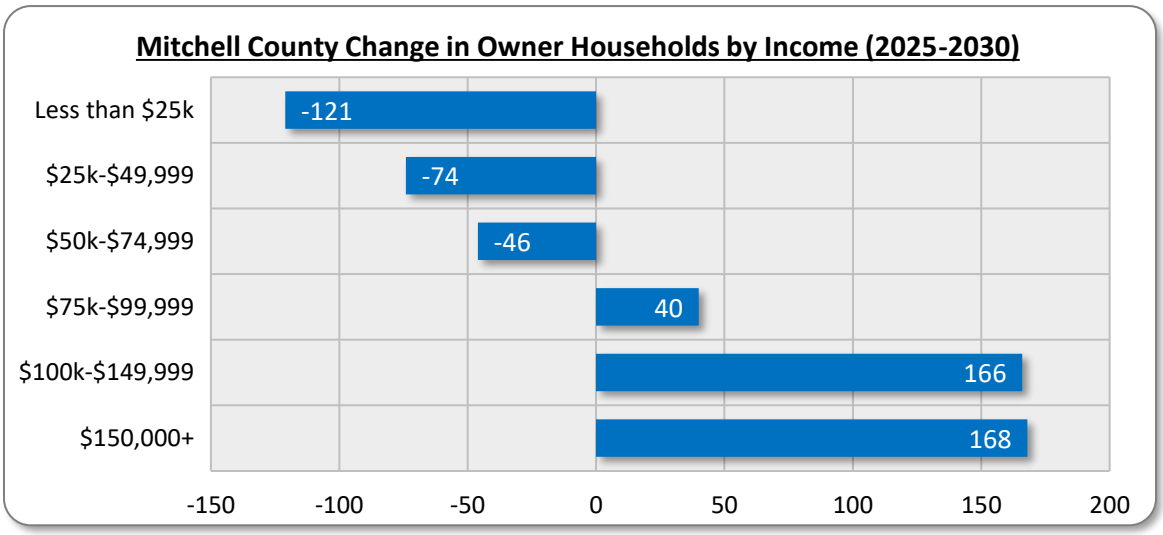
		Owner Households by Income							
		Less Than $15,000	$15,000 - $24,999	$25,000 - $34,999	$35,000 - $49,999	$50,000 - $74,999	$75,000 - $99,999	$100,000 - $149,999	$150,000 & Higher
Mitchell County	2020	620 (12.3%)	398 (7.9%)	412 (8.2%)	840 (16.7%)	1,139 (22.7%)	620 (12.3%)	755 (15.0%)	244 (4.9%)
	2025	452 (8.6%)	439 (8.4%)	294 (5.6%)	778 (14.9%)	976 (18.6%)	726 (13.9%)	964 (18.4%)	607 (11.6%)
	2030	384 (7.2%)	386 (7.2%)	262 (4.9%)	736 (13.7%)	930 (17.3%)	766 (14.3%)	1,130 (21.0%)	775 (14.4%)
	Change 2025-2030	**-68 (-15.0%)**	**-53 (-12.1%)**	**-32 (-10.9%)**	**-42 (-5.4%)**	**-46 (-4.7%)**	**40 (5.5%)**	**166 (17.2%)**	**168 (27.7%)**
North Carolina	2020	181,545 (6.7%)	195,389 (7.2%)	218,285 (8.1%)	327,041 (12.1%)	497,028 (18.4%)	389,548 (14.4%)	471,376 (17.4%)	421,195 (15.6%)
	2025	147,926 (5.0%)	139,087 (4.7%)	163,092 (5.5%)	270,511 (9.2%)	462,390 (15.7%)	376,164 (12.8%)	596,222 (20.3%)	784,517 (26.7%)
	2030	127,707 (4.1%)	113,061 (3.6%)	138,704 (4.4%)	242,547 (7.8%)	447,830 (14.3%)	382,749 (12.3%)	665,590 (21.3%)	1,004,488 (32.2%)
	Change 2025-2030	**-20,219 (-13.7%)**	**-26,026 (-18.7%)**	**-24,388 (-15.0%)**	**-27,964 (-10.3%)**	**-14,560 (-3.1%)**	**6,585 (1.8%)**	**69,368 (11.6%)**	**219,971 (28.0%)**

Source: 2020 Census; ESRI; Bowen National Research

In 2025, households earning between $50,000 and $74,999 comprise the largest individual share (18.6%) of owner households within the PSA (Mitchell County), followed by owner households earning between $100,000 and $149,999 (18.4%). While owner households earning $50,000 or more comprise the majority (62.5%) of all owner households in the PSA in 2025, the PSA has a notably larger share (37.5%) of households earning less than $50,000 when compared to the state share of 24.4%. Between 2025 and 2030, owner

household growth is projected to occur among households earning $75,000 or more, while households earning less than this are projected to decline. The largest growth is projected to occur among owner households earning $100,000 or more, which are projected to increase by 334 households, or 21.3%. These projected trends are consistent with statewide projections between 2025 and 2030. Although some of this increase can be attributed to existing households earning more over the next five years, a portion of the increase will likely be driven by new households entering the market. Regardless, the shift in household incomes may result in an increase in for-sale housing demand for product priced at $250,000 or more, with the most notable increase likely to occur for product priced at approximately $330,000 and higher. These projected changes in owner households by income, along with factors such as existing pent-up demand, substandard housing issues, and housing cost burden, should be considered when evaluating the for-sale housing market in the area.

The following graph illustrates the change in *owner* households by income for the PSA (Mitchell County) between 2025 and 2030.

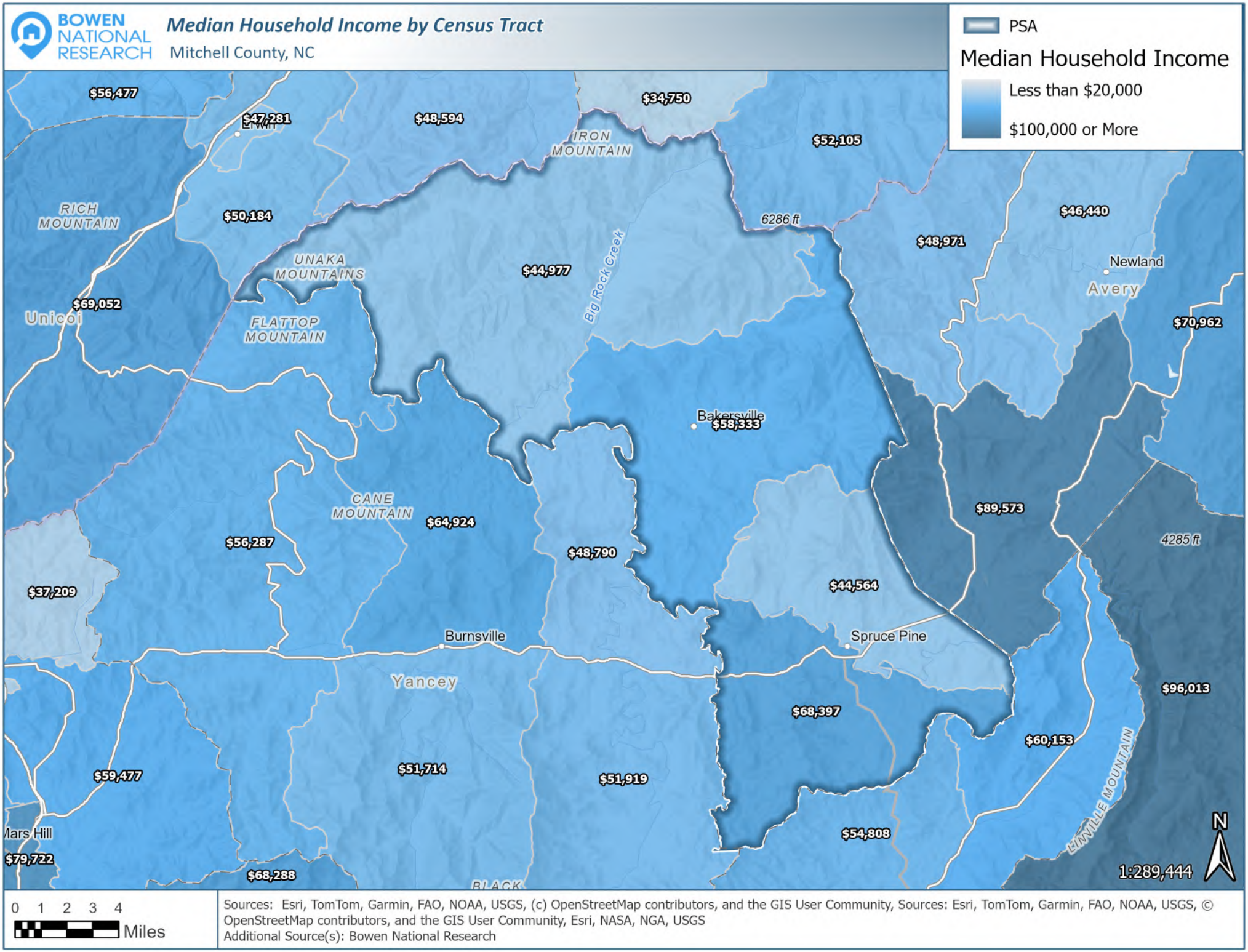


D. DEMOGRAPHIC THEME MAPS

The following demographic theme maps for the study areas are presented after this page:

- Median Household Income
- Renter Household Share
- Owner Household Share
- Older Adult Population Share (55 years and older)
- Younger Adult Population Share (20 to 34 years)
- Population Density

The demographic data used in these maps is based on U.S. Census, American Community Survey and ESRI data sets.

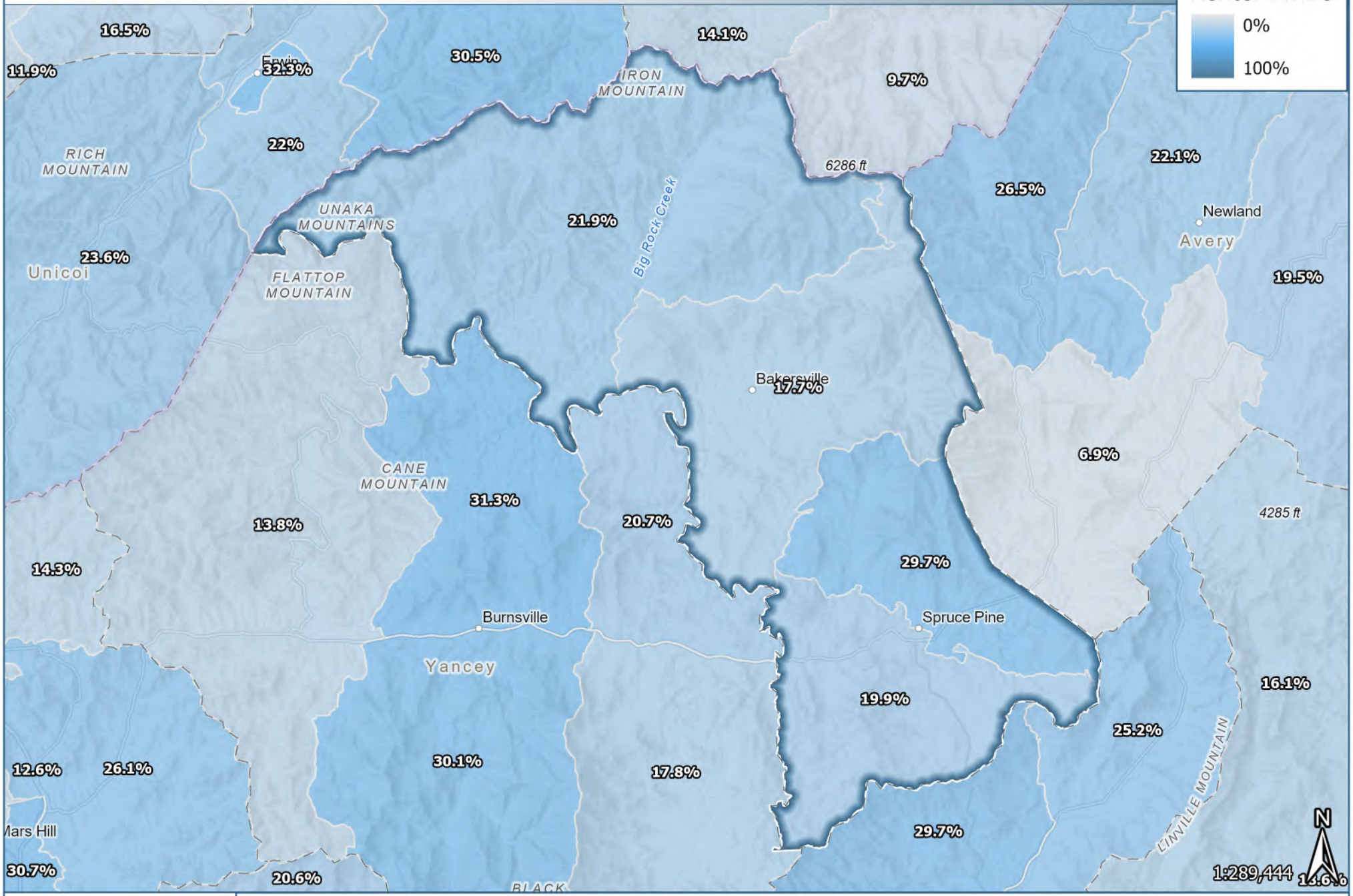


Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS
Additional Source(s): Bowen National Research

BOWEN NATIONAL RESEARCH

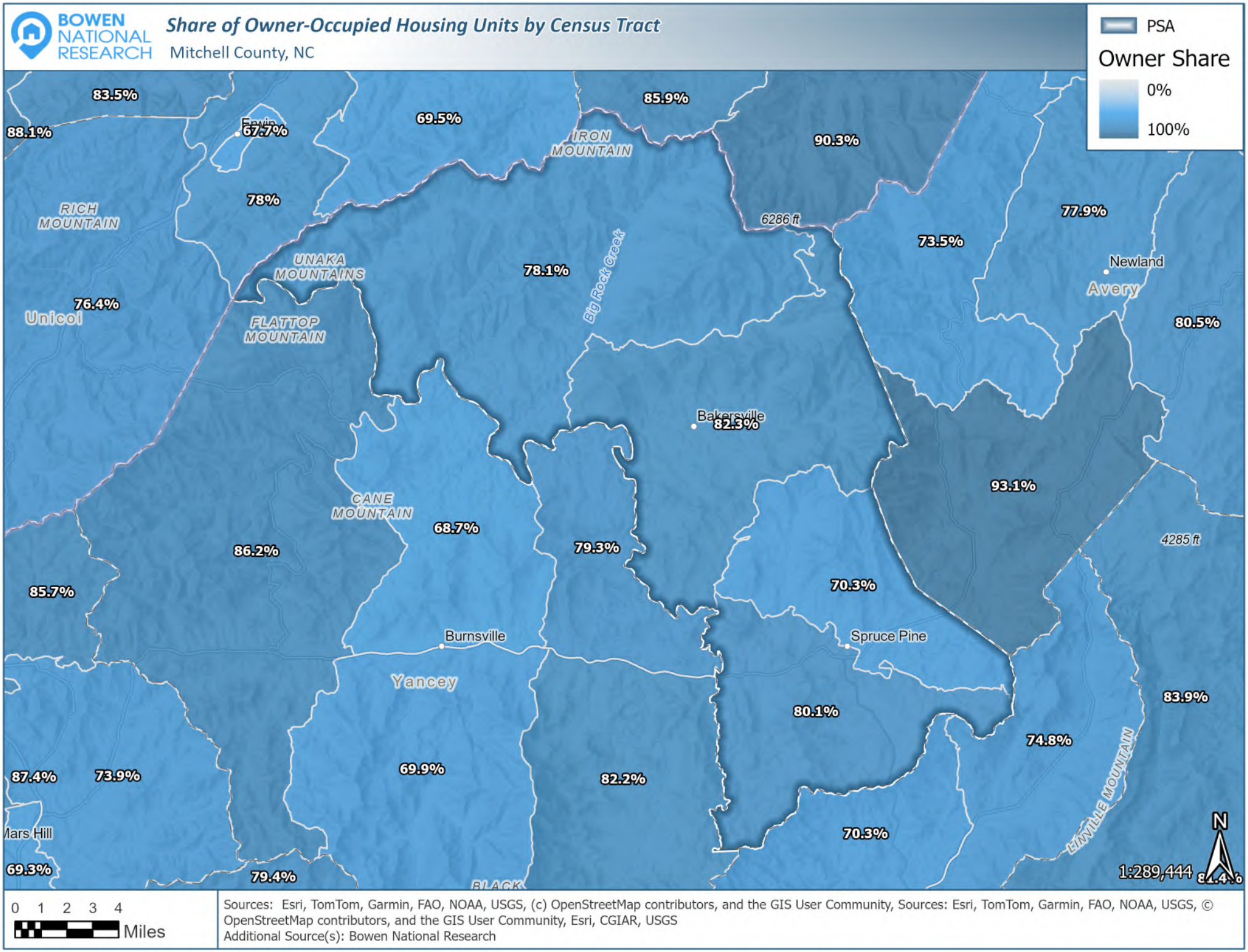
Share of Renter-Occupied Housing Units by Census Tract

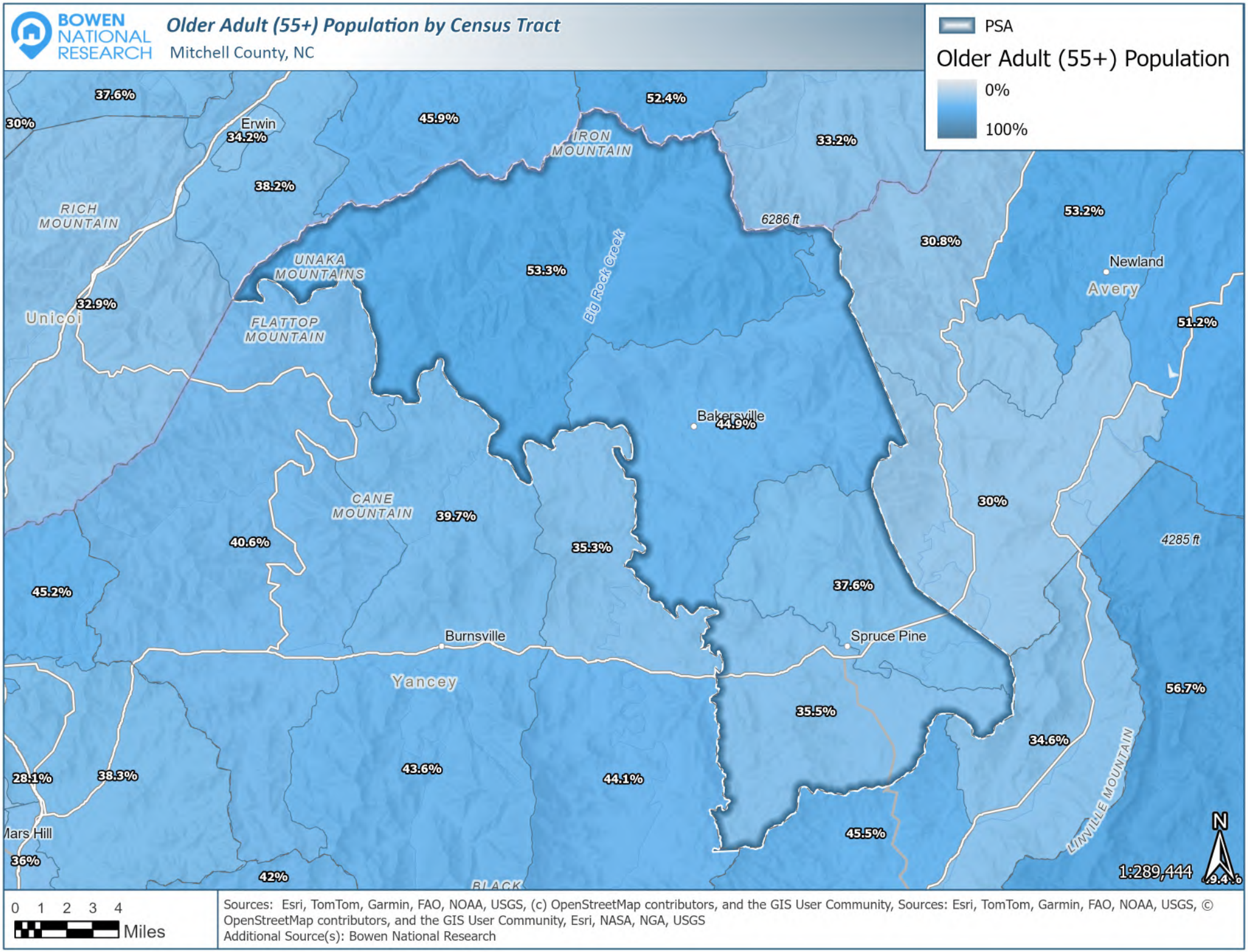
Mitchell County, NC



Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS

Additional Source(s): Bowen National Research

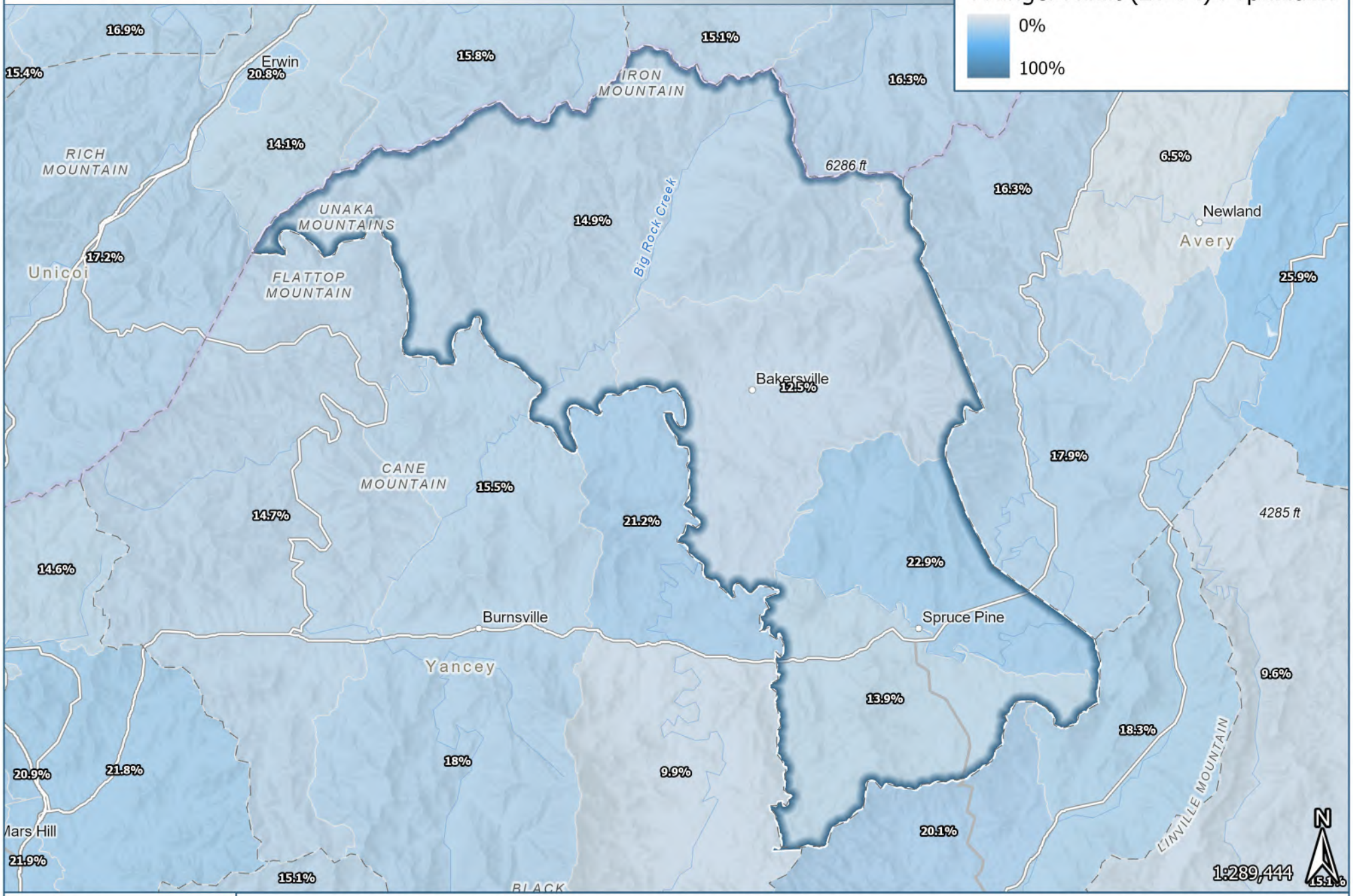

BOWEN NATIONAL RESEARCH
Share of Owner-Occupied Housing Units by Census Tract
Mitchell County, NC
PSA
Owner Share
0%
100%
83.5%
88.1%
67.7%
69.5%
85.9%
IRON MOUNTAIN
90.3%
RICH MOUNTAIN
78%
6286 ft
77.9%
73.5%
UNAKA MOUNTAINS
78.1%
Big Rock Creek
Newland
Avery
76.4%
Unicoi
FLATTOP MOUNTAIN
80.5%
Bakersville
82.3%
93.1%
CANE MOUNTAIN
68.7%
79.3%
4285 ft
86.2%
85.7%
70.3%
Burnsville
Spruce Pine
Yancey
83.9%
80.1%
74.8%
87.4%
73.9%
69.9%
82.2%
LINVILLE MOUNTAIN
Mars Hill
70.3%
69.3%
79.4%
N
1:289,444
0 1 2 3 4
Miles
Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Esri, CGIAR, USGS
Additional Source(s): Bowen National Research


BOWEN NATIONAL RESEARCH
Older Adult (55+) Population by Census Tract
Mitchell County, NC
PSA
Older Adult (55+) Population
0%
100%
37.6%
30%
Erwin
34.2%
45.9%
52.4%
IRON MOUNTAIN
33.2%
38.2%
RICH MOUNTAIN
6286 ft
53.2%
30.8%
Newland
Avery
UNAKA MOUNTAINS
53.3%
Big Rock Creek
32.9%
Unicoi
FLATTOP MOUNTAIN
51.2%
Bakersville
44.9%
CANE MOUNTAIN
39.7%
30%
40.6%
35.3%
4285 ft
45.2%
37.6%
Burnsville
Spruce Pine
Yancey
56.7%
35.5%
34.6%
28.1%
38.3%
43.6%
44.1%
LINVILLE MOUNTAIN
Mars Hill
45.5%
36%
42%
BLACK
N
1:289,444
0 1 2 3 4
Miles
Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS
Additional Source(s): Bowen National Research

BOWEN NATIONAL RESEARCH

Younger Adult (20-34) Population by Census Tract

Mitchell County, NC



0 1 2 3 4 Miles

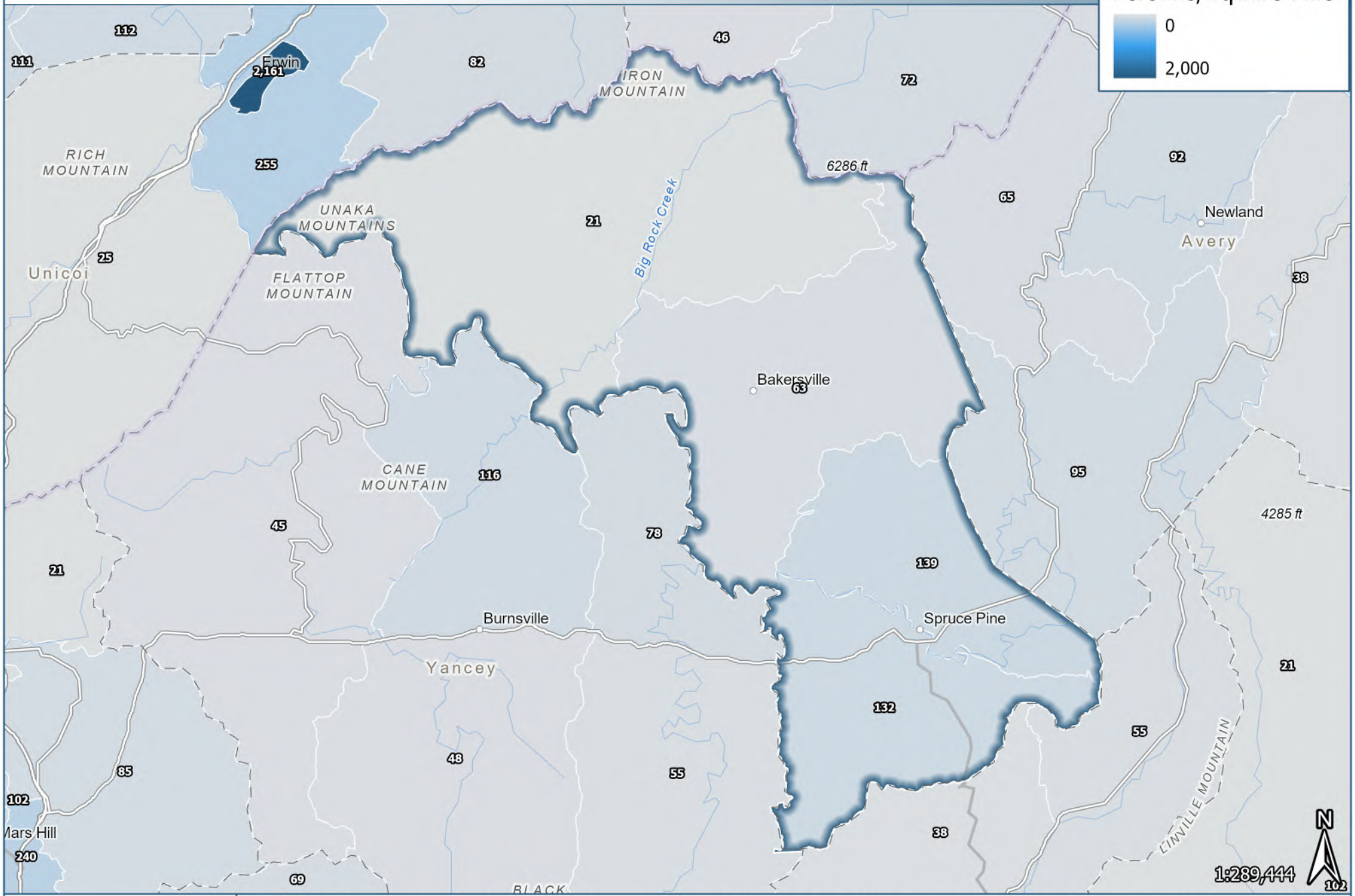
Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Esri, CGIAR, USGS

Additional Source(s): Bowen National Research

BOWEN NATIONAL RESEARCH

Population Density by Census Tract (Persons Per Square Mile)

Mitchell County, NC



0 1 2 3 4 Miles

Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Esri, CGIAR, USGS
Additional Source(s): Bowen National Research

V. ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

A. INTRODUCTION

The need for housing within a given geographic area is influenced by the number of households choosing to live there. Although the number of households in the subject area at any given time is a function of many factors, one of the primary reasons for residency is job availability. In this section, the workforce and employment trends that affect the PSA (Mitchell County) are examined and compared to the state of North Carolina and the United States.

An overview of the Mitchell County workforce is provided through several overall metrics: employment by industry, wages by occupation, total employment, unemployment rates and at-place employment trends. The area's largest employers, economic and infrastructure developments, and the potential for significant closures or layoffs in the area (WARN notices) are also evaluated. In addition, commuting patterns for the PSA, which include commuting modes, times, and commuter flows, are analyzed. It is important to note that the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) performs annual benchmarking adjustments to selected data estimates based on more up-to-date and complete counts on topics related to employment. While this process increases the accuracy of employment data, the benchmarking adjustments and series reconstructions inherently result in changes in historical data. As such, select employment metrics within this section may differ from data sourced prior to the most recent annual benchmarking adjustment.

B. WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

The PSA has an employment base comprised of individuals within a broad range of employment sectors. The primary industries of significance within the PSA include (but are not limited to) health care and social assistance, accommodation and food services, retail trade, public administration and educational services. Each industry within the PSA requires employees of varying skills and education levels. There is a broad range of typical wages within the PSA based on occupation. The following evaluates key economic metrics within the various study areas considered in this report. It should be noted that based on the availability of various economic data metrics, some information is presented only for select geographic areas, which may include the PSA (Mitchell County), the Western North Carolina nonmetropolitan area and/or the state of North Carolina.

Employment by Industry

The distribution of employment by industry sector is shown in the following table. Note that the top industry groups by employment for each area are illustrated in **red** text.

Employment by Industry				
NAICS Group	Mitchell County		North Carolina	
	Employees	Percent	Employees	Percent
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	16	0.3%	26,913	0.6%
Mining	138	2.8%	2,584	0.1%
Utilities	2	<0.1%	21,297	0.5%
Construction	199	4.0%	217,237	4.9%
Manufacturing	**368**	**7.3%**	**377,286**	**8.6%**
Wholesale Trade	70	1.4%	169,375	3.9%
Retail Trade	**896**	**17.9%**	**588,735**	**13.4%**
Transportation & Warehousing	250	5.0%	98,826	2.3%
Information	49	1.0%	95,558	2.2%
Finance & Insurance	128	2.6%	123,332	2.8%
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	68	1.4%	149,175	3.4%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	137	2.7%	261,938	6.0%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	3	0.1%	11,592	0.3%
Administrative, Support, Waste Management & Remediation Services	39	0.8%	102,606	2.3%
Educational Services	**368**	**7.3%**	**350,536**	**8.0%**
Health Care & Social Assistance	**866**	**17.3%**	**695,230**	**15.8%**
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	84	1.7%	84,961	1.9%
Accommodation & Food Services	**495**	**9.9%**	**439,621**	**10.0%**
Other Services (Except Public Administration)	349	7.0%	275,603	6.3%
Public Administration	**483**	**9.6%**	**292,276**	**6.7%**
Non-classifiable	1	<0.1%	6,642	0.2%
Total	**5,009**	**100.0%**	**4,391,323**	**100.0%**

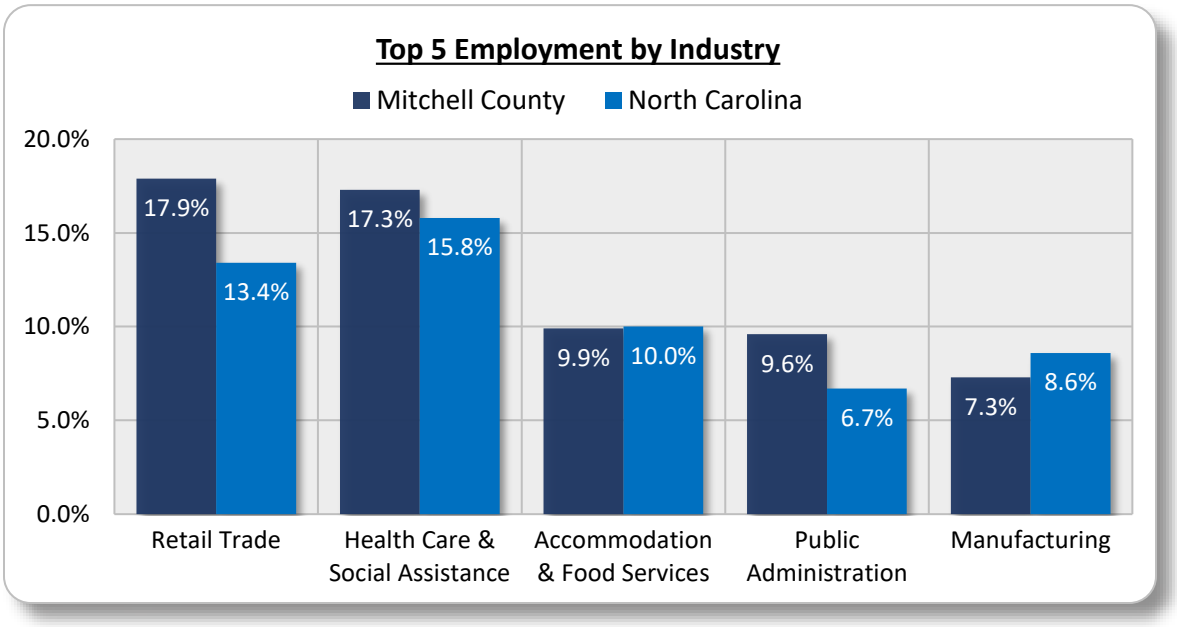
Source: 2020 Census; ESRI; Bowen National Research

Note: Since this survey is conducted of establishments and not of residents, some employees may not live within each market. However, these employees are included in the labor force calculations because their places of employment are located within each market.

The labor force within the PSA (Mitchell County) is based primarily in six sectors: Retail Trade (17.9%), Health Care & Social Assistance (17.3%), Accommodation & Food Services (9.9%), Public Administration (9.6%), Manufacturing (7.3%), and Educational Services (7.3%). Combined, these six job sectors represent 69.3% of the PSA's employment base. This represents a higher concentration of employment among the top six sectors as compared to the 62.5% share for the state. While it is not unusual for smaller geographies to have a higher concentration of employment compared to larger geographical areas, a heavy concentration of employment within a limited number of industries can result in an area being more susceptible to economic downturns with greater fluctuations in unemployment rates and total employment. Although a few of the top industries within the PSA are considered relatively stable industries even during times of economic decline (e.g., Educational Services, Health Care & Social Assistance, and Public Administration), industries like Manufacturing, Retail Trade, and Accommodation & Food Services can be adversely impacted by economic downturn.

Although not among the top industries by share of the labor force, Mining (2.8%) and Transportation & Warehousing (5.0%) comprise disproportionately high shares of the labor force within Mitchell County compared to the statewide shares of 0.1% and 2.3%, respectively. As such, these industry sectors also represent an important component of the local economy despite the comparably smaller overall share of the labor force. Overall, the labor force in the PSA is comprised of a variety of occupations within various industry sectors. This factor influences household income levels in the area and there is likely demand for a variety of housing alternatives at different affordability levels in Mitchell County.

The following graph illustrates the distribution of employment by job sector for the five largest employment sectors in the PSA (Mitchell County) compared with the same employment sectors of the state of North Carolina:



Employment Characteristics and Trends

Typical wages by job category for Mitchell County are compared with those of North Carolina in the following table:

Typical Wage By Occupation Type		
Occupation Type	Mitchell County	North Carolina
Management Occupations	$81,652	$83,502
Business and Financial Occupations	$66,167	$75,383
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	$48,269	$99,461
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	$63,393	$91,465
Community and Social Service Occupations	$54,175	$50,864
Art, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	$20,045	$44,798
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	$48,217	$68,344
Healthcare Support Occupations	$16,972	$31,188
Protective Service Occupations	$62,607	$52,355
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	$8,571	$17,023
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	$14,362	$27,184
Personal Care and Service Occupations	$10,096	$22,082
Sales and Related Occupations	$18,448	$36,976
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	$33,807	$39,274
Construction and Extraction Occupations	$47,719	$40,031
Installation, Maintenance and Repair Occupations	$63,092	$51,419
Production Occupations	$48,333	$40,419
Transportation Occupations	$39,750	$43,799
Material Moving Occupations	$29,111	$29,002

Source: Bowen National Research; American Community Survey (2020-2024)

Most annual blue-collar salaries range from $20,045 to $63,092 within Mitchell County, though some of the listed occupation types have average salaries notably lower (e.g., food preparation, personal care and service, building and grounds maintenance, and healthcare support) than this range. White-collar jobs, such as those related to professional positions, management and medicine, generally have salaries ranging from $48,217 to $81,652. On average, typical wages within the county are 18.0% lower than the overall state wages. White-collar professions in Mitchell County typically earn 26.4% lower wages than those within North Carolina, while blue-collar wages are typically 11.3% lower than the average state wages. Within the county, wages by occupation vary widely and are reflective of a diverse job base that covers a wide range of industry sectors and job skills as well as diverse levels of education and experience. Since employment is distributed among a variety of professions with diverse income levels, there are likely a variety of housing needs by affordability level in the county. As a significant share of the labor force within Mitchell County is contained within health care support, retail trade, accommodation and food services, and public administration, many workers in the area have typical wages that are below $30,000 annually. This will likely contribute to the need for lower-priced housing product.

It is important to point out that the wages cited in the previous table are by single-wage households. Multiple-wage households often have a greater capacity to spend earnings toward housing than single wage earners. Households by income data is included starting on page IV-19.

In an effort to better understand how area wages by occupation affect housing affordability, wages for the top 35 occupations by share of total employment within the Western North Carolina nonmetropolitan area were analyzed. While this data does not include every possible occupation and wage within each sector, the occupations included in this table represent 46.8% of the total employment in the nonmetropolitan area in 2025 and provide a general overview of housing affordability for some of the most common occupations. In addition to Mitchell County, the nonmetropolitan area includes 19 other counties (Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Cherokee, Clay, Cleveland, Graham, Haywood, Jackson, McDowell, Macon, Polk, Rutherford, Surry, Swain, Transylvania, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yancey) in the western region of North Carolina. Although the nonmetropolitan area comprises a large geographical region of 20 counties, each county is generally similar to one another in terms of socioeconomic factors (e.g., median household income, median home value, and median gross rent). According to the 2024 5-Year American Community Survey, the median household income in Mitchell County is $57,602, which is very comparable to the average median household income of $56,919 for the 20 counties in the nonmetropolitan area during the survey period.

Based on the annual wages at the lower quartile (bottom 25%) and median levels, the maximum affordable monthly rent and home price (at 30% of income) for each occupation was calculated. It is important to note that calculations based on the median annual wage mean that half of the individuals employed in this occupation earn less than the stated amount. It is equally important to understand that the supplied data is based on *individual* income. As such, affordability levels will proportionally increase for households with multiple income sources at a rate dependent on the additional income. Affordable rents and home prices for each occupation presented in this analysis that are **below** the two-bedroom Fair Market Rent ($925) or the overall median list price ($335,000) of the available for-sale inventory in the PSA (Mitchell County) as of February 27, 2026 are shown in **red** text, indicating that certain lower-wage earning occupations cannot reasonably afford a typical housing unit in the county.

The following table illustrates the wages (lower quartile and median) and housing affordability levels for the top 35 occupations in the Western North Carolina nonmetropolitan area. Note that the highlighted occupations within this table also appear in the table on page V-8.

Wages and Housing Affordability for Top 35 Occupations by Share of Labor Force (Western North Carolina Nonmetropolitan Area)

Occupation Sector, Title & Wages*					Housing Affordability**			
			Annual Wages		Max. Monthly Rent		Max. Purchase Price	
Sector Group (Code)	Labor Force Share	Occupation Title	Lower Quartile	Median	Lower Quartile	Median	Lower Quartile	Median
Sales and Related (41)	3.2%	Retail Salespersons	$26,590	$30,490	**$665**	**$762**	**$88,633**	**$101,633**
	3.0%	Cashiers	$26,950	$28,700	**$674**	**$718**	**$89,833**	**$95,667**
	1.0%	First-Line Supervisors, Retail Sales	$36,730	$46,400	**$918**	$1,160	**$122,433**	**$154,667**
	0.7%	Sales Representatives, Wholesale	$45,860	$65,940	$1,147	$1,649	**$152,867**	**$219,800**
Food Preparation/ Serving (35)	2.1%	Fast Food and Counter Workers	$23,980	$27,860	**$600**	**$697**	**$79,933**	**$92,867**
	2.0%	Waiters and Waitresses	$18,870	$29,160	**$472**	**$729**	**$62,900**	**$97,200**
	1.7%	Cooks, Fast Food	$22,110	$24,260	**$553**	**$607**	**$73,700**	**$80,867**
	1.6%	Cooks, Restaurant	$29,020	$32,150	**$726**	**$804**	**$96,733**	**$107,167**
	1.0%	First-Line Supervisors, Food Prep	$34,840	$41,600	**$871**	$1,040	**$116,133**	**$138,667**
	0.9%	Food Preparation Workers	$22,780	$28,730	**$570**	**$718**	**$75,933**	**$95,767**
Office and Administrative Support (43)	1.5%	Office Clerks, General	$31,460	$37,450	**$787**	$936	**$104,867**	**$124,833**
	1.2%	Customer Service Representatives	$30,080	$36,970	**$752**	**$924**	**$100,267**	**$123,233**
	1.1%	Secretaries and Admin Assistants	$36,650	$41,410	**$916**	$1,035	**$122,167**	**$138,033**
	1.1%	Bookkeeping/Accounting Clerks	$36,360	$44,920	**$909**	$1,123	**$121,200**	**$149,733**
	0.9%	Medical Secretaries/Admin Assistants	$36,680	$38,750	**$917**	$969	**$122,267**	**$129,167**
	0.7%	First-Line Supervisors, Office/Admin	$46,150	$54,150	$1,154	$1,354	**$153,833**	**$180,500**
Production Occupations/ Transportation (51, 53)	2.2%	Stockers and Order Fillers	$30,930	$36,370	**$773**	**$909**	**$103,100**	**$121,233**
	1.6%	Laborers, Stock, and Material Movers	$33,350	$36,340	**$834**	**$909**	**$111,167**	**$121,133**
	1.5%	Heavy/Tractor-Trailer Drivers	$44,650	$49,460	$1,116	$1,237	**$148,833**	**$164,867**
	1.2%	Miscellaneous Assemblers/Fabricators	$35,730	$41,230	**$893**	$1,031	**$119,100**	**$137,433**
Education, Training, and Library (25)	1.3%	Elementary School Teachers	$47,420	$50,280	$1,186	$1,257	**$158,067**	**$167,600**
	0.9%	Teaching Assistants	$27,310	$28,850	**$683**	**$721**	**$91,033**	**$96,167**
	0.7%	Secondary School Teachers	$47,790	$57,240	$1,195	$1,431	**$159,300**	**$190,800**
Healthcare (29, 31)	1.9%	Registered Nurses	$73,590	$82,100	$1,840	$2,053	**$245,300**	**$273,667**
	1.6%	Nursing Assistants	$33,740	$37,340	**$844**	$934	**$112,467**	**$124,467**
	1.5%	Home Health/Personal Care Aides	$27,920	$30,350	**$698**	**$759**	**$93,067**	**$101,167**
Management/ Business (11, 13)	1.3%	General & Operations Managers	$53,260	$76,810	$1,332	$1,920	**$177,533**	**$256,033**
	0.7%	Accountants and Auditors	$58,660	$74,770	$1,467	$1,869	**$195,533**	**$249,233**
Protective Services (33)	0.7%	Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers	$45,150	$48,390	$1,129	$1,210	**$150,500**	**$161,300**
Installation/ Maintenance/ Repair (47, 49)	1.2%	Maintenance and Repair Workers	$36,750	$44,550	**$919**	$1,114	**$122,500**	**$148,500**
	0.9%	Construction Laborers	$37,440	$42,740	$936	$1,069	**$124,800**	**$142,467**
	0.7%	First-Line Supervisors, Construction	$56,680	$69,610	$1,417	$1,740	**$188,933**	**$232,033**
Bldg./Grounds Maintenance (37)	1.3%	Janitors and Cleaners	$29,730	$33,810	**$743**	**$845**	**$99,100**	**$112,700**
	1.0%	Landscaping and Groundskeeping	$33,920	$36,400	**$848**	**$910**	**$113,067**	**$121,333**
	0.9%	Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	$27,640	$29,440	**$691**	**$736**	**$92,133**	**$98,133**

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Division of Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS), May 2025
*Annual wages listed are at the lower 25th percentile (quartile) and median level for each occupation
**Housing Affordability is the maximum monthly rent or total for-sale home price a household can reasonably afford based on stated wages.

In order to reasonably afford a two-bedroom rental at the Fair Market Rent of $925, an individual would need to earn at least $37,000 per year. As such, the *lower quartile* of wage earners within 24 of the 35 occupations listed in the previous table do not have sufficient wages to afford a typical rental. Many of these occupations, particularly those within the retail and food services industries and support positions within sectors like office administration, education, and healthcare, earn roughly three-quarters or lower of the amount required to afford a typical rental in the market. When wages for each occupation are increased to their respective *median* levels, 15 occupations still do not have the income necessary to afford a typical rental. While a share of these individuals likely live in multiple-income households, this illustrates the reasonable conclusion that a significant portion of households with a single income earned in a variety of occupations in the PSA are likely housing cost burdened.

Housing affordability issues among the listed occupations are much more prevalent when home ownership is considered. In order to afford the purchase of a typical home in the PSA at the median list price of $335,000, an individual would have to earn at least $100,500 per year. As a result, *none* of the top 35 occupations with wages up to their respective median levels have sufficient incomes to afford the purchase of a typical home in the PSA. Even in cases where the median wage for each respective occupation is doubled, 27 of the 35 occupations would still not have the income required to reasonably afford a home at the median list price of $335,000. This illustrates that home ownership is not affordable for a substantial share of workers in the most common occupations in the PSA.

A lack of affordable workforce housing in a market can limit the ability of employers to retain and attract new employees, which can affect the performance of specific industries, the local economy, and household growth within an area. This can be particularly detrimental to a community when employers encounter issues attracting and retaining employees within occupations that are typically considered “essential” services, such as those within the healthcare, education, and public safety or administration sectors.

The following table illustrates the wages (lower quartile and median) and housing affordability levels for the top 25 occupations within the *social service/government, education, healthcare, and public safety sectors* of employment (i.e., essential workers) in the Western North Carolina nonmetropolitan area. While specific shares of the following occupations may vary between Mitchell County and the overall Western North Carolina nonmetropolitan area, the wages are likely very similar throughout the region. As such, the table provides a reasonably accurate indication of housing affordability for essential workers in Mitchell County.

Wages and Housing Affordability for Top 25 Healthcare, Education, Public Safety, or Government Occupations by Share of Labor Force (Western North Carolina Nonmetropolitan Area)								
Occupation Sector, Title & Wages*					Housing Affordability**			
			Annual Wages		Max. Monthly Rent		Max. Purchase Price	
Sector Group (Code)	Labor Force Share	Occupation Title	Lower Quartile	Median	Lower Quartile	Median	Lower Quartile	Median
Community/ Social/ Government Services (21)	0.4%	Postal Service Mail Carriers	$42,390	$57,470	$1,060	$1,437	**$141,300**	**$191,567**
	0.3%	Child/Family/School Social Workers	$47,860	$54,660	$1,197	$1,367	**$159,533**	**$182,200**
	0.3%	Educational/Career Counselors	$45,620	$55,210	$1,141	$1,380	**$152,067**	**$184,033**
Education, Training, & Library (25)	1.3%	Elementary School Teachers	$47,420	$50,280	$1,186	$1,257	**$158,067**	**$167,600**
	0.9%	Teaching Assistants	$27,310	$28,850	**$683**	**$721**	**$91,033**	**$96,167**
	0.7%	Secondary School Teachers	$47,790	$57,240	$1,195	$1,431	**$159,300**	**$190,800**
	0.6%	Middle School Teachers	$47,370	$47,370	$1,184	$1,184	**$157,900**	**$157,900**
	0.5%	Substitute Teachers	$29,920	$32,350	**$748**	**$809**	**$99,733**	**$107,833**
	0.4%	Preschool Teachers	$29,490	$35,480	**$737**	**$887**	**$98,300**	**$118,267**
	0.3%	Bus Drivers, School	$33,350	$35,170	**$834**	**$879**	**$111,167**	**$117,233**
Healthcare Practitioners and Support (29, 31)	1.9%	Registered Nurses	$73,590	$82,100	$1,840	$2,053	**$245,300**	**$273,667**
	1.6%	Nursing Assistants	$33,740	$37,340	**$844**	$934	**$112,467**	**$124,467**
	1.5%	Home Health/Personal Care Aides	$27,920	$30,350	**$698**	**$759**	**$93,067**	**$101,167**
	0.9%	Medical Secretaries/Admin Assistants	$36,680	$38,750	**$917**	$969	**$122,267**	**$129,167**
	0.5%	Medical Assistants	$36,850	$38,490	**$921**	$962	**$122,833**	**$128,300**
	0.5%	Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurses	$58,540	$62,410	$1,464	$1,560	**$195,133**	**$208,033**
	0.4%	Pharmacy Technicians	$36,470	$38,040	**$912**	$951	**$121,567**	**$126,800**
	0.3%	Paramedics	$43,580	$48,110	$1,090	$1,203	**$145,267**	**$160,367**
	0.2%	Emergency Medical Technicians	$36,570	$40,580	**$914**	$1,015	**$121,900**	**$135,267**
	0.2%	Pharmacists	$126,120	$132,130	$3,153	$3,303	$420,400	$440,433
	0.2%	Dental Assistants	$38,590	$47,450	$965	$1,186	**$128,633**	**$158,167**
Public/ Protective Services (33)	0.7%	Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers	$45,150	$48,390	$1,129	$1,210	**$150,500**	**$161,300**
	0.4%	Security Guards	$33,250	$37,170	**$831**	$929	**$110,833**	**$123,900**
	0.4%	Correctional Officers and Jailers	$41,550	$46,440	$1,039	$1,161	**$138,500**	**$154,800**
	0.4%	Firefighters	$29,130	$31,200	**$728**	**$780**	**$97,100**	**$104,000**

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Division of Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS), May 2025
*Annual wages listed are at the lower 25th percentile (quartile) and median level for each occupation
**Housing Affordability is the maximum monthly rent or total for-sale home price a household can reasonably afford based on stated wages.

Among the top 25 social services/government, education, healthcare, or public/protective services occupations by share of labor force in the nonmetropolitan area, 12 of the occupations at their respective lower quartile wage *cannot* afford the typical rental unit in the PSA (Mitchell County) at the two-bedroom Fair Market Rent (FMR) of $925. While only six of these occupations cannot afford the FMR of $925 at the respective *median* wage, all but one occupation (pharmacists) cannot afford the typical for-sale home at the median list price of $335,000 in the PSA. Even in instances where the median wage is doubled, 17 of the occupations still cannot reasonably afford a for-sale home at the median list price in the PSA. Although it appears that the majority of the most common essential workers can afford the typical two-bedroom rental at the respective median wage, nearly all of these workers would require a second income source to potentially afford the typical for-sale home in Mitchell County, and in most instances this second wage would have to be higher than the median wage of the essential occupation. This indicates home ownership may not be

reasonably affordable for some of the most critical occupations in the PSA and can also create challenges for area employers to retain and attract these employees.

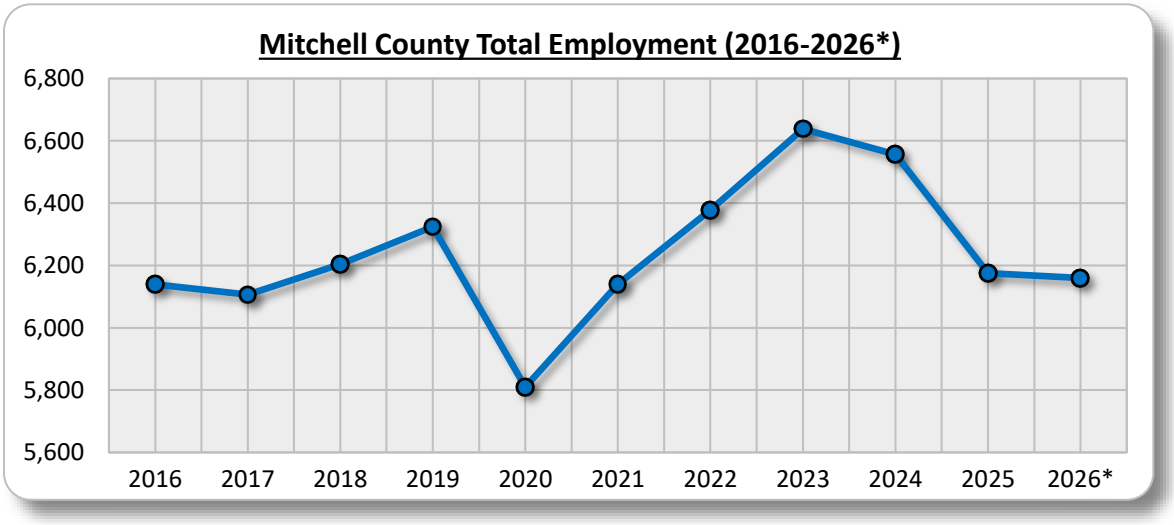
A full analysis of the area housing supply, which includes multifamily apartments, current and historical for-sale product, and non-conventional rentals (typically four units or less within a structure), is included in Section VI of this report.

Employment Base and Unemployment Rates

Total employment reflects the number of employed persons who live within an area regardless of where they work. The following table illustrates the total employment base for Mitchell County, the state of North Carolina, and the United States between 2016 and March of 2026.

	Total Employment					
	Mitchell County		North Carolina		United States	
Year	Total Number	Percent Change	Total Number	Percent Change	Total Number	Percent Change
2016	6,139	-	4,538,202	-	151,436,000	-
2017	6,106	-0.5%	4,637,616	2.2%	153,337,000	1.3%
2018	6,204	1.6%	4,708,294	1.5%	155,761,000	1.6%
2019	6,324	1.9%	4,792,188	1.8%	157,538,000	1.1%
2020	5,810	-8.1%	4,482,629	-6.5%	147,795,000	-6.2%
2021	6,139	5.7%	4,714,601	5.2%	152,581,000	3.2%
2022	6,378	3.9%	4,996,908	6.0%	158,291,000	3.7%
2023	6,638	4.1%	5,088,209	1.8%	161,037,000	1.7%
2024	6,556	-1.2%	5,101,603	0.3%	161,346,000	0.2%
2025	6,175	-5.8%	5,096,783	-0.1%	163,493,000	1.3%
2026	6,160*	-0.2%	5,074,082*	-0.4%	162,342,000**	-0.7%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics
*Through March 2026; **Through April 2026



*Through March 2026

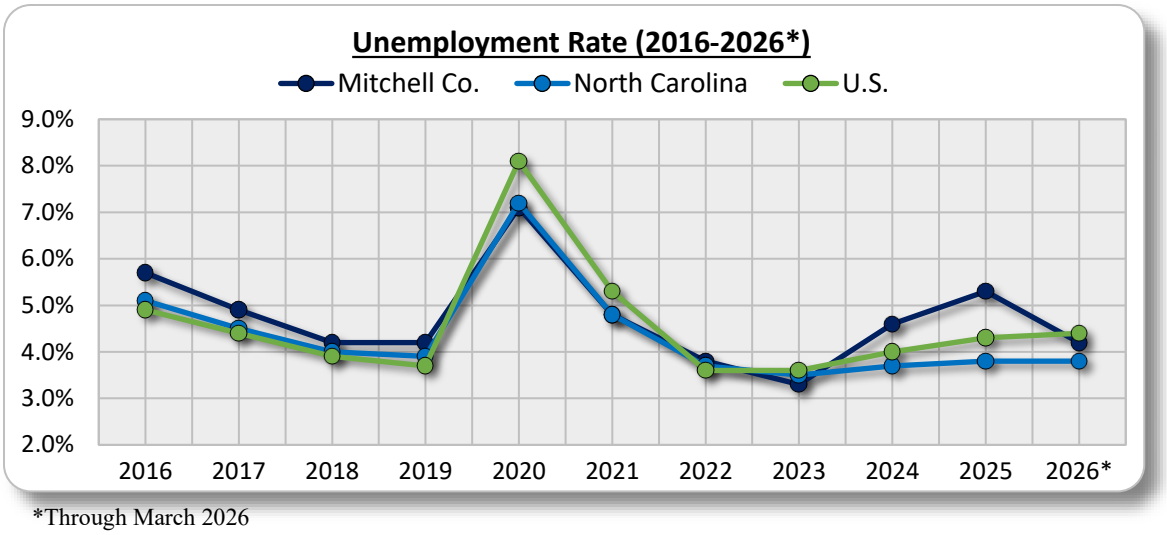
From 2016 to 2019, total employment in the PSA (Mitchell County) increased by 3.0%, or 185 employed persons in the PSA, which is a smaller percentage increase as compared to the state (5.6%) during the time period. In 2020, total employment in Mitchell County decreased by 8.1%, which reflects a higher rate of *reduction* than that for the state (6.5%) and nation (6.2%) during that year. This reduction in total employment during 2020 is largely attributed to the economic impacts related to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022, total employment in the PSA reached 6,378, which exceeded the pre-COVID level in 2019. While a year-over-year increase occurred in 2023 (4.1%), a moderate decline (1.2%) occurred in 2024.

In 2024, the PSA and much of the western North Carolina region was impacted by the remnants of Hurricane Helene (referred to as Tropical Storm Helene throughout this report). The event disrupted regional infrastructure and destroyed a substantial number of homes and businesses. The event resulted in a 5.8% decrease in total employment in the county, or a decrease in total employment of 381. The more notable employment disruptions in Mitchell County include the temporary closures of the Avery-Mitchell and Mountain View correctional facilities, Ingles Supermarket, Bombardier Motor Corporation, and a considerable number of smaller businesses in Spruce Pine. While a few of the larger employers did not reopen until mid-2025 (e.g., Avery-Mitchell Correctional Institution), some of the smaller businesses were forced to close indefinitely. Given the severity of the damage incurred to infrastructure, business locations, and residential units, it is reasonable to conclude that the economy will continue to recover from the impacts for some time. While not reflected in the annual data in the table or graph, it is worth noting that preliminary total employment for February and March of 2026 shows an increase in total employment month over month, indicating that the local labor market may be stabilizing and improving.

Unemployment rates for Mitchell County, the state of North Carolina, and the United States are illustrated as follows:

	Total Unemployment					
	Mitchell County		North Carolina		United States	
Year	Total Number	Percent of Workforce	Total Number	Percent of Workforce	Total Number	Percent of Workforce
2016	373	5.7%	243,142	5.1%	7,751,000	4.9%
2017	315	4.9%	220,100	4.5%	6,982,000	4.4%
2018	273	4.2%	196,676	4.0%	6,314,000	3.9%
2019	275	4.2%	192,479	3.9%	6,001,000	3.7%
2020	444	7.1%	350,162	7.2%	12,948,000	8.1%
2021	308	4.8%	240,153	4.8%	8,623,000	5.3%
2022	254	3.8%	191,585	3.7%	5,996,000	3.6%
2023	223	3.3%	184,149	3.5%	6,080,000	3.6%
2024	313	4.6%	193,594	3.7%	6,761,000	4.0%
2025	343	5.3%	202,822	3.8%	7,314,000	4.3%
2026*	271*	4.2%	200,984*	3.8%	7,525,000**	4.4%

Source: Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics; *Through March 2026; **Through April 2026



*Through March 2026

As the preceding table and graph illustrate, the *annual* unemployment rate in the PSA (Mitchell County) decreased from 5.7% in 2016 to 4.2% in 2019. During this time period, the unemployment rate in the county was slightly higher than the corresponding rates in both the state and nation. In 2020, unemployment increased sharply to 7.1% in the PSA, largely due to the impacts of the pandemic. Between 2020 and 2023, the unemployment rate in the PSA decreased from 7.1% to 3.3%, and it is notable that the PSA rate in 2023 was lower than both the state and national unemployment rates. Although the unemployment rate increased in both 2024 (4.6%) and 2025 (5.3%), much of this increase is likely attributed to the economic impacts that resulted from Tropical Storm Helene. While this represents a measured increase in the unemployment rate in the PSA, it is worth noting that the unemployment rate within Mitchell County through March 2026 has declined to 4.2%, which is slightly below the national unemployment rate of 4.4% and is a positive sign of an improving job market in the PSA.

The following table illustrates the PSA (Mitchell County) monthly unemployment rate since January 2024:

Monthly Unemployment Rate – Mitchell County					
Month	Rate	Month	Rate	Month	Rate
2024		2025		2026	
January	3.3%	January	7.9%	January	4.5%
February	3.2%	February	7.6%	February	4.3%
March	3.2%	March	5.9%	March	3.9%
April	3.1%	April	5.2%		
May	2.7%	May	5.0%		
June	3.0%	June	4.9%		
July	3.4%	July	4.8%		
August	3.7%	August	4.7%		
September	3.4%	September	3.9%		
October	2.7%	October	N/A		
November	10.3%	November	4.2%		
December	9.1%	December	3.6%		

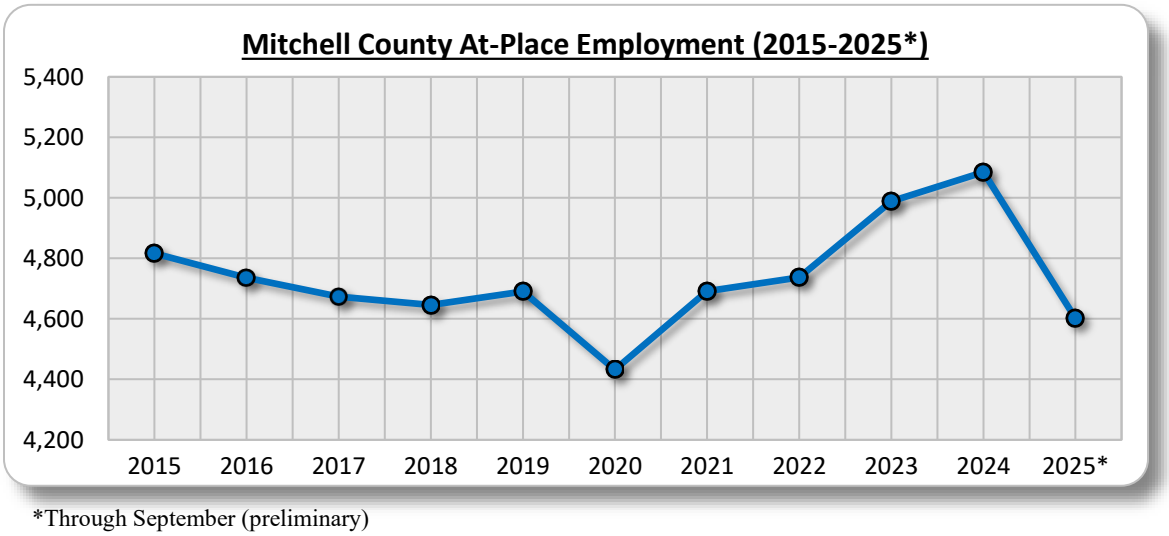
Source: Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics; N/A – Not Available

As the preceding table illustrates, the *monthly* unemployment rate for the PSA (Mitchell County) between January and October of 2024 was historically low (between 2.7% and 3.7%). In November 2024, the monthly unemployment rate increased sharply to 10.3% in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Helene. While the monthly unemployment rate remained elevated through the remainder of 2024 and a large portion of 2025, the rate steadily declined over the course of next several months and declined to 3.9% by September 2025. In December of 2025, the rate decreased to 3.6%, which was the lowest rate recorded since Tropical Storm Helene impacted the area in late 2024. Although the rate was above 4% in both January and February 2026, it decreased to 3.9% as of March 2026. As such, it appears the monthly unemployment rate has generally stabilized at a level only slightly above the rates immediately preceding Tropical Storm Helene.

At-place employment reflects the total number of jobs within the county regardless of the employee's county of residence. The following illustrates the total at-place employment base for the PSA (Mitchell County).

	At-Place Employment Mitchell County		
Year	Employment	Change	Percent Change
2015	4,816	-	-
2016	4,736	-80	-1.7%
2017	4,673	-63	-1.3%
2018	4,646	-27	-0.6%
2019	4,690	44	0.9%
2020	4,432	-258	-5.5%
2021	4,691	259	5.8%
2022	4,737	46	1.0%
2023	4,989	252	5.3%
2024	5,085	96	1.9%
2025*	4,601	-484	-9.5%

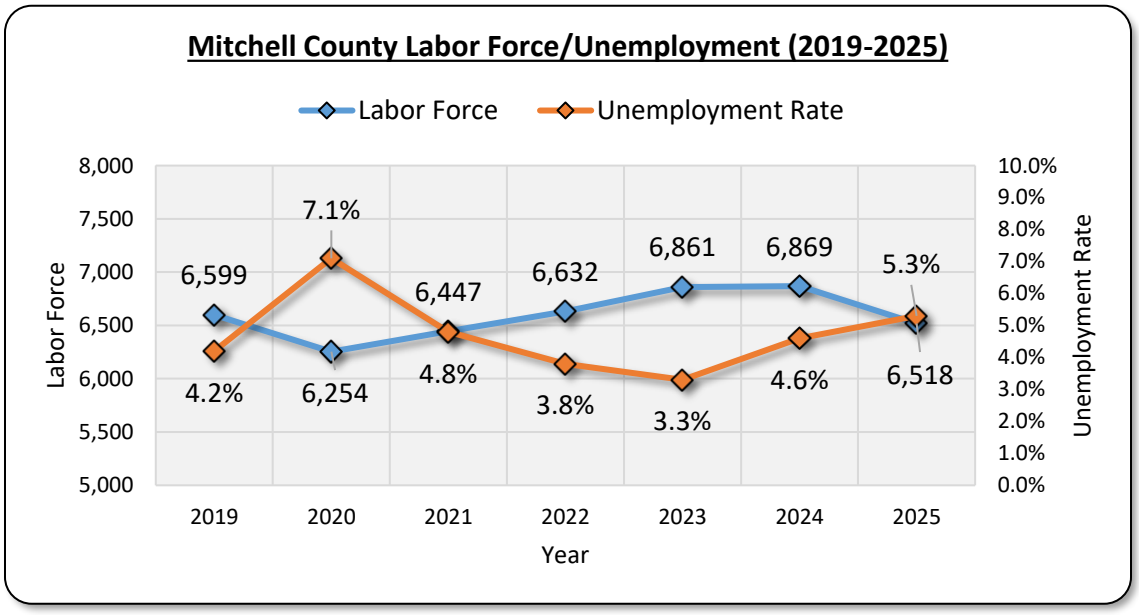
Source: Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics
*Through September (Preliminary)



*Through September (preliminary)

At-place employment (people working within Mitchell County) decreased by 126 jobs (2.6%) from 2015 to 2019. In 2020, at-place employment declined by 258 (5.5%), which can be largely attributed to the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the county made an expedient recovery, and at-place employment returned to the pre-pandemic level by 2021. Between 2022 and 2024, increases in at-place employment continued, increasing by 394 jobs (8.4%) compared to 2021. While the county experienced a substantial increase in at-place employment between 2021 and 2024, the economic challenges created by Tropical Storm Helene resulted in a decrease of 484 jobs (9.5%) in 2025. Although the data illustrates that employment challenges persisted through at least September of 2025, it is worth noting that the two most recent months reported for at-place employment in 2025 (August and September) showed month-over-month increases. This is likely influenced by the reopening of Avery-Mitchell Correctional Institution in July of 2025.

To further illustrate the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and Tropical Storm Helene on Mitchell County, the following graph illustrates the labor force (number of persons 16 years of age or older who are employed or actively seeking work) and unemployment rate trends for the county between 2019 and 2025.



Source: Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

In 2019, the labor force within the PSA (Mitchell County) was comprised of nearly 6,600 individuals, and the unemployment rate was 4.2%. In 2020, the labor force *decreased* by 345 (5.2%), whereas the unemployment rate increased sharply to 7.1% for the year. Following the significant economic impacts of the pandemic, the labor force steadily increased between 2021 and 2023, while the annual unemployment rate declined. Both trends are indicative of a healthy, expanding local economy. The economic impacts of Tropical Storm Helene in late 2024 are

apparent in the data as growth in the labor force stalled before the subsequent decline in 2025. This is noteworthy because, despite fewer individuals in the labor force either working or actively looking for work, the unemployment rate in the PSA increased considerably. This finding correlates with the decreases in both total employment and at-place employment discussed earlier in this section of the report. While it is not completely clear whether the decline in the labor force is the result of individuals relocating outside the county or whether it is the result of seniors choosing to retire, it is clear that the two events in 2020 and 2024 had a negative impact on an otherwise healthy economy.

Data for 2024, which is the most recent data for which full-year numbers are available, illustrates at-place employment in Mitchell County to be 77.6% of the total Mitchell County employment. Although PSA commuting patterns (see page V-21) show that nearly 38% of Mitchell County residents work within the county, the preceding data indicates that there are more employed persons living within the PSA than there are jobs located within Mitchell County.

Based on the preceding analysis, it appears that the economy within Mitchell County was expanding considerably following the pandemic in 2020. However, the extensive physical damage to structures and infrastructure from Tropical Storm Helene in 2024 created a number of unique challenges within the local economy. Although some businesses in the county are permanently closed and others have yet to fully recover, the economic indicators evaluated within this section indicate the economy has generally stabilized and appears to be improving.

C. EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK

WARN (layoff notices)

The Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act requires advance notice of qualified plant closings and mass layoffs. WARN notices were reviewed in March of 2026. According to the North Carolina Department of Commerce, there have been no WARN notices reported for Mitchell County since January 2025 over the past 12 months.

Largest Employers

The 10 largest employers within Mitchell County are summarized in the following table:

Employer Name	Business Type	Total Employed
Sibelco	Mining/Extraction	400
Mitchell County Schools	Education	300
Walmart	Retail	275
Blue Ridge Regional Hospital	Healthcare	250
The Quartz Corporation	Mining/Extraction	185
PRC Industries	Manufacturer	175
Mitchell County	Government	150
Bombardier Recreational Products	Manufacturer	125
Underwood/Weld Trucking	Transportation	80
Whitson's Electric	Construction	35
	Total	**1,975**

Source: Mitchell County Economic Development Commission/Chamber of Commerce; 2025

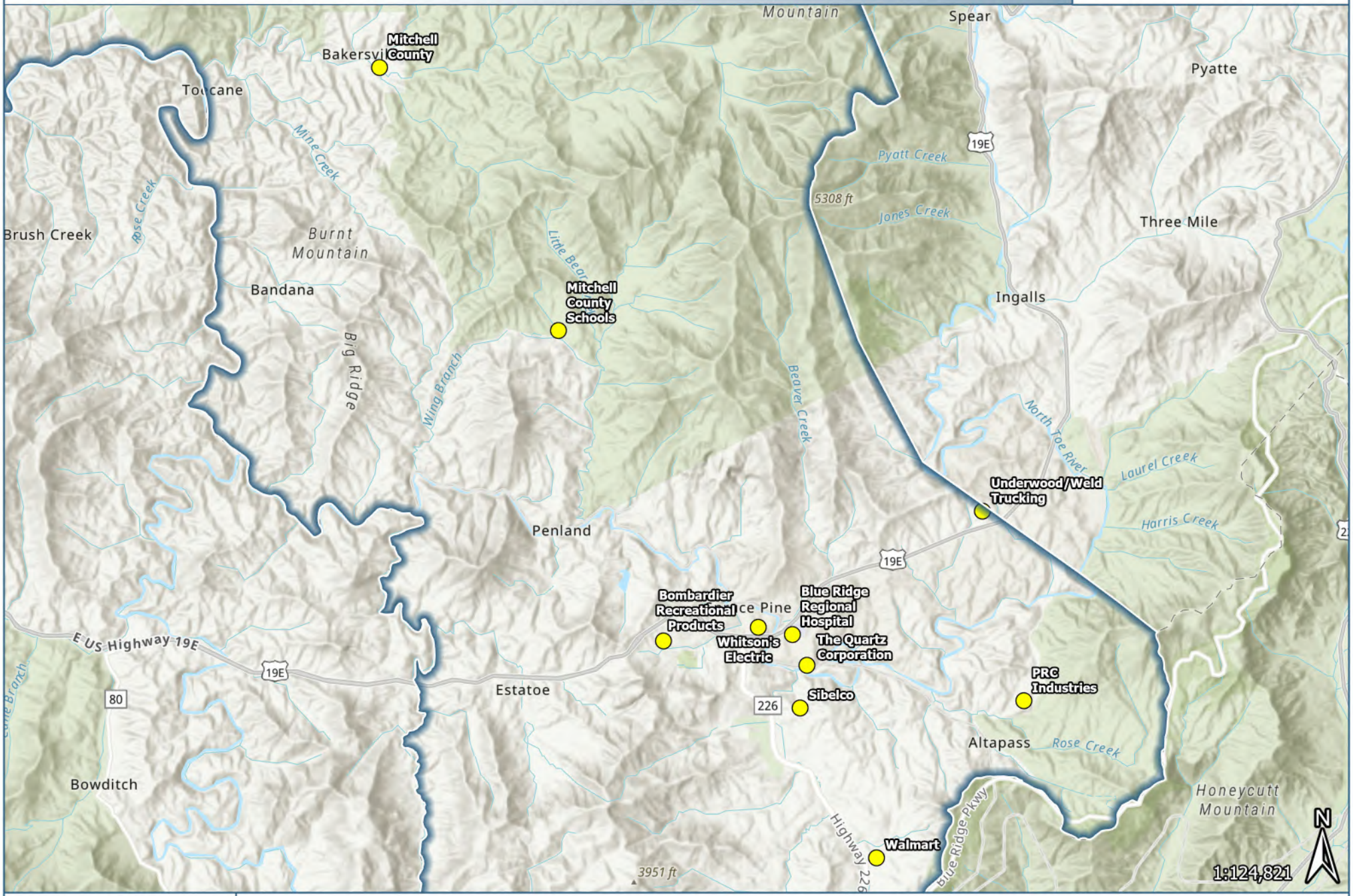
Major employers in the PSA (Mitchell County) are engaged in a variety of business activities including mining/extraction, education, retail, healthcare, manufacturing, government services, transportation, and construction. Some of the top employers are engaged in business activities that are typically stable even during times of economic uncertainty, such as those involved in education, healthcare, and government services. Although mining and manufacturing can be more susceptible to economic downturns, both the mining employers (Sibelco and The Quartz Corporation) are involved in extracting specialized silica and quartz products that are utilized in high-tech manufacturing processes, which continues to be in very high demand. Despite the demand for these raw materials, a layoff was announced for Sibelco in January of 2026 (see page V-17). Similarly, PRC Industries is involved in aerospace and defense sector production, which also helps to partially insulate the company from economic declines that typically have a larger impact on manufacturers that are primarily consumer-based. Whereas a number of occupations at these top employers offer competitive wages, support positions and many occupations in retail offer comparably lower wages. This contributes to the demand for housing that is affordable to households with a wide range of income levels within the county.

A map illustrating the location of the area's largest employers is included on the following page.

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Largest Employers Locations

Mitchell County, NC



Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS

Additional Source(s): Bowen National Research

Economic Development

Economic development can improve the economic well-being and quality of life for a region or community by building local wealth, diversifying the economy, and creating and retaining jobs. Local perspective on the economy as well as notable developments in the area are summarized in this section.

According to a representative with the Mitchell County Economic Development Commission, the economy is stable and there are employment opportunities in the county and surrounding areas.

Mountain Community Health Partnership is constructing a new location in Spruce Pine. The 20,000 square-foot location will serve as the headquarters and offer primary care, behavioral health, and a retail pharmacy. It is expected to create 24 jobs and be completed in fall 2026.

As discussed throughout this section of the report, the impacts resulting from Tropical Storm Helene created a number of economic challenges in the PSA (Mitchell County). While some impacts were short-term, many of the effects following the storm lasted well into 2025 and continue to influence the local economy to some degree.

In 2024, Tropical Storm Helene caused damage to the water system at the Avery-Mitchell Correctional Institution and the Mountain View Correctional Institution. Due to the damage, inmates had to be moved to other locations. Since the facility was empty, guards and custodians were laid off. In early 2025, inmates returned to Mountain View Correctional Institution, and in the summer of 2025, inmates returned to the Avery-Mitchell Correctional facility. Bombardier Motor Corporation of America (Bombardier Recreational Products) was also affected by the tropical storm due to the facility dependence on water for its heating and cooling processes. Approximately 100 people were laid off temporarily. More recently in January 2026, Sibelco Corporation announced it would be laying off a significant number of employees. The time frame of the layoffs and the number of jobs to be affected were not available at the time of this study.

Infrastructure Projects

The following table summarizes major infrastructure projects identified within Mitchell County at the time of this analysis:

Infrastructure Projects – Mitchell County	
Project Name	**Scope of Work, Status, Investment**
CSX	Approximately 60 miles of railbed had to be replaced due to the damage from Tropical Storm Helene. The $400 million project was completed in 2025.
U.S. 19W and N.C. 197	In Mitchell and Yancey counties, approximately 14 miles of U.S. 19W and over 30 miles of N.C. 197 are being repaired due to damage from Tropical Storm Helene. The project includes replacing 18 bridges and reconstructing roadbeds along the Cane and North Toe rivers. The $1.1 billion project is expected to be completed in 2028.

Two notable infrastructure projects were identified within Mitchell County, both of which are direct results from the impact of Tropical Storm Helene. The $400 million CSX railbed repair involved approximately 60 miles of rail and was completed during 2025. The other project, which includes 14 miles of repairs on U.S. Highway 19 West and over 30 miles of North Carolina State Route 197, is currently underway and expected to be completed in 2028. The total valuation of the roadway repairs is $1.1 billion.

For additional information related to the impacts from Tropical Storm Helene, see the Natural Disaster Impacts analysis included in Section VII (Other Housing Market Factors) in this report.

D. PERSONAL MOBILITY

The ability of a person or household to travel easily, quickly, safely, and affordably throughout a market influences the desirability of a housing market. If traffic congestion creates long commuting times or public transit service is not available for people without access to a personal vehicle, their quality of life is diminished. Factors that lower resident satisfaction weaken housing markets. Typically, people travel frequently outside of their residences for three reasons: 1) to commute to work, 2) to run errands or 3) for recreational purposes.

Commuting Mode and Time

The following tables show commuting pattern attributes for each study area:

Study Area		Commuting Mode						
		Drive Alone	Carpool	Public Transit	Walk	Other Means	Work at Home	Total
Mitchell County	Number	5,169	582	8	124	69	438	6,390
	Percent	80.9%	9.1%	0.1%	1.9%	1.1%	6.9%	100.0%
North Carolina	Number	3,659,778	421,098	42,899	80,941	64,599	722,489	4,991,804
	Percent	73.3%	8.4%	0.9%	1.6%	1.3%	14.5%	100.0%

Source: ESRI

Study Area		Commuting Time						
		Less Than 15 Minutes	15 to 29 Minutes	30 to 44 Minutes	45 to 59 Minutes	60 or More Minutes	Work at Home	Total
Mitchell County	Number	1,901	1,908	1,203	446	494	438	6,390
	Percent	29.7%	29.9%	18.8%	7.0%	7.7%	6.9%	100.0%
North Carolina	Number	1,128,832	1,679,591	863,873	316,159	280,861	722,489	4,991,805
	Percent	22.6%	33.6%	17.3%	6.3%	5.6%	14.5%	100.0%

Source: ESRI

Within the PSA (Mitchell County), 90.0% of commuters either drive alone or carpool to work. This represents a larger share of such commuting modes when compared to the 81.7% share of such commuters in the state of North Carolina. While public transit is not a factor in the PSA, the county has a marginally larger share (1.9%) of commuters who walk to work compared to the statewide share

(1.6%), though this represents a very small share of the overall commuters in the county. The overwhelming share of commuters that utilize their own vehicles or carpool to work and the relatively small share of commuters utilizing public transit or who walk to work is typical of most rural areas. It is also noteworthy that only 6.9% of PSA workers work from home. While internet accessibility is not within the scope of this Housing Needs Assessment, 2024 five-year American Community Survey estimates indicate that 15.2% of PSA households do not have internet access, while only 7.5% of households within the state do not have internet access. This disparity likely contributes to the notably lower share of individuals who work from home within the PSA.

Approximately 29.7% of PSA commuters have commute times of less than 15 minutes, and 59.6% of commuters have commute times less than 30 minutes. Both represent larger shares of very short commute times compared to the statewide shares (22.6% and 56.2%, respectively). Conversely, 7.7% of PSA commuters have commute times of 60 minutes or more.

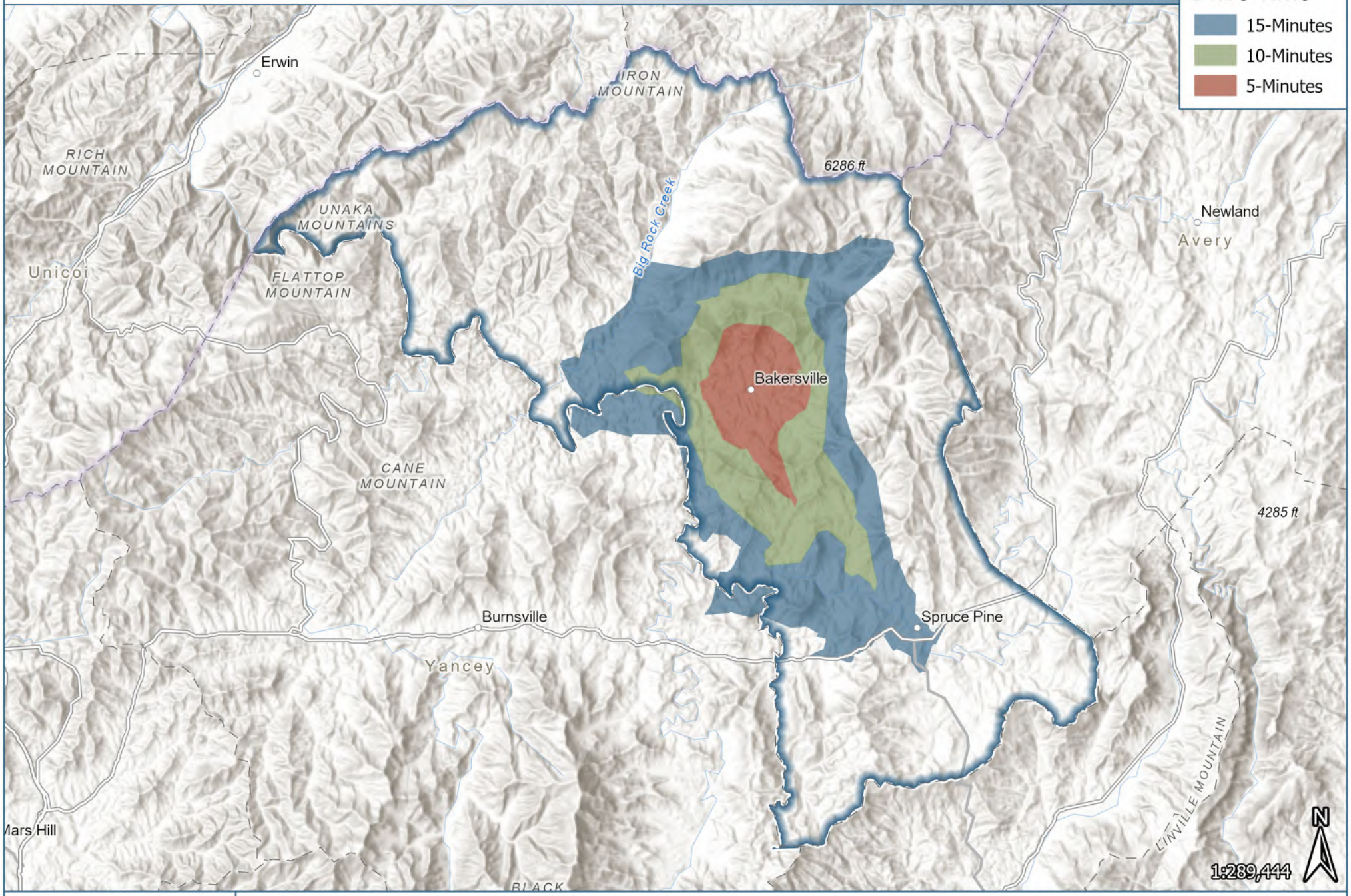
Based on the preceding analysis, the vast majority of PSA commuters utilize their own vehicles or carpool to work. Additionally, while the majority of commuters in the PSA have short commute times of less than 30 minutes, a notable share have commute times of 60 or more minutes.

A drive-time map illustrating travel times from the center of the county seat of Mitchell County (Bakersville) is included on the following page.

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Drive Time From Center of Bakersville

Mitchell County, NC

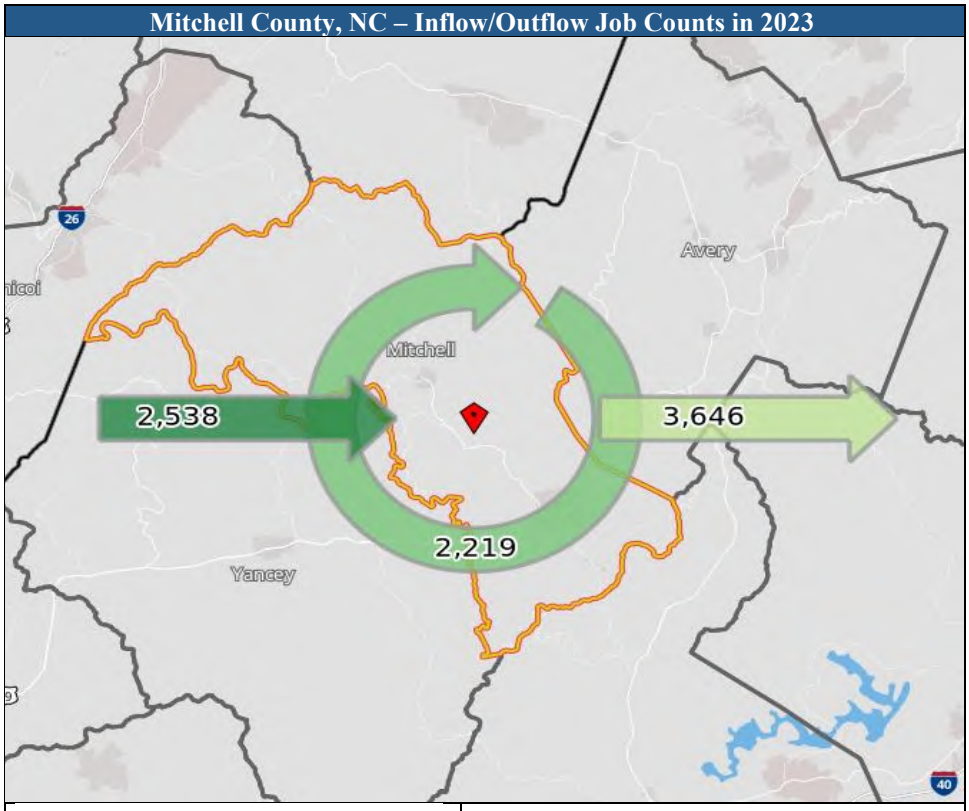


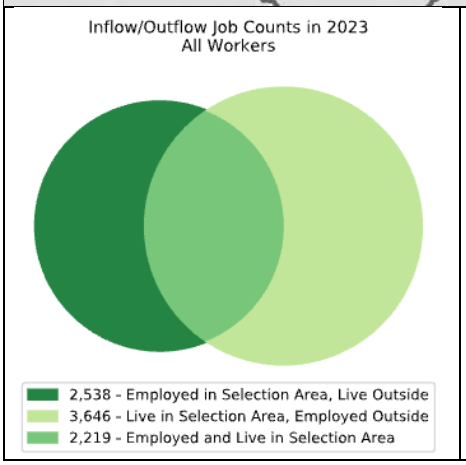
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Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Esri, CGIAR, USGS
Additional Source(s): Bowen National Research

Commuting Inflow/Outflow

According to 2023 U.S. Census Longitudinal Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES), of the 5,865 employed residents of the PSA (Mitchell County), 2,219 (37.8%) are employed inside the PSA, while the remaining 3,646 (62.2%) are employed outside of Mitchell County. An additional 2,538 people commute into the PSA from surrounding counties for employment. These 2,538 non-residents account for 53.4% of the people employed in the PSA and represent a notable base of potential support for future residential development. The following illustrates the number of jobs filled by in-commuters and residents, as well as the number of resident out-commuters.





Inflow/Outflow Job Counts (All Jobs)

	2023 Count	2023 Share
Employed in the Selection Area	4,757	100.0%
Employed in the Selection Area but Living Outside	2,538	53.4%
Employed and Living in the Selection Area	2,219	46.6%
Living in the Selection Area	5,865	100.0%
Living in the Selection Area but Employed Outside	3,646	62.2%
Living and Employed in the Selection Area	2,219	37.8%

Source: U.S. Census, Longitudinal Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES)

Characteristics of the Mitchell County commuting flow in 2023 are illustrated in the following table.

Mitchell County, NC: Commuting *Flow* Analysis by Earnings, Age and Industry Group (2023, All Jobs)						
	Resident Outflow		Workers Inflow		Resident Workers	
Worker Characteristics	Number	Share	Number	Share	Number	Share
Ages 29 or younger	919	25.2%	520	20.5%	399	18.0%
Ages 30 to 54	1,820	49.9%	1,296	51.1%	1,132	51.0%
Ages 55 or older	907	24.9%	722	28.4%	688	31.0%
Earning <$1,250 per month	621	17.0%	514	20.3%	402	18.1%
Earning $1,251 to $3,333	1,122	30.8%	917	36.1%	808	36.4%
Earning $3,333+ per month	1,903	52.2%	1,107	43.6%	1,009	45.5%
Total Worker Flow	**3,646**	**100.0%**	**2,538**	**100.0%**	**2,219**	**100.0%**

Source: U.S. Census, Longitudinal Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES)
Note: Figures do not include contract employees and self-employed workers

Of the county's 2,538 in-commuters, slightly over one-half (51.1%) are between the ages of 30 and 54 years and 43.6% earn $3,333 or more per month ($40,000 or more annually). By comparison, resident outflow workers tend to be slightly younger, but are more likely to earn higher incomes than inflow workers. Regardless, given the diversity of incomes, ages, and occupation types of the nearly 2,538 people commuting into the area for work each day, a variety of housing product types could be developed to potentially attract these commuters to relocate to Mitchell County. A detailed analysis of the area housing market, which includes availability, costs, and product mixture is included in Section VI of this report. The overall health of the local housing market can greatly influence the probability of these in-commuters and other individuals relocating to the county.

VI. HOUSING SUPPLY ANALYSIS

This housing supply analysis includes a variety of housing alternatives. Understanding the historical trends, market performance, characteristics, composition, and current housing choices provide critical information as to current market conditions and future housing potential. The housing data presented and analyzed in this section includes primary data collected directly by Bowen National Research and secondary data sources including American Community Survey, U.S. Census housing information, and data provided by various government entities and real estate professionals.

While there are a variety of housing options offered in the Primary Study Area (PSA, Mitchell County), this analysis focuses on the most common housing alternatives. The housing structures included in this analysis are:

- **Rental Housing** – Rental properties consisting of multifamily apartments (generally with five or more units within a structure) were identified and surveyed. An analysis of non-conventional rentals (typically with four or less units within a structure) was also conducted. In addition, a survey of seasonal/recreational rentals was completed to analyze the effect this housing segment has on the overall rental market.

- **For-Sale Housing** – For-sale housing alternatives, both recent sales activity and currently available supply, were inventoried. This data includes single-family homes, condominiums, mobile homes, and other traditional housing alternatives. It includes stand-alone product as well as homes within planned developments or projects.

- **Senior Care Housing** – Senior care facilities that provide both shelter and care housing alternatives to seniors requiring some level of personal care (e.g., dressing, bathing, medical reminders, etc.) and medical care were surveyed. This includes independent living, multi-unit assisted housing, adult care homes, and nursing homes.

For the purposes of this analysis, the housing supply information is presented for the PSA (Mitchell County) and the state of North Carolina, when available.

Maps illustrating the location of various housing types are included throughout this section.

A. OVERALL HOUSING SUPPLY (SECONDARY DATA)

This section of analysis on the area housing supply is based on secondary data sources such as the U.S. Census, American Community Survey and ESRI. Note that some small variation of total numbers and percentages within tables may exist due to rounding.

Housing Characteristics

The estimated distribution of the area housing stock by tenure (renter and owner) within the study areas for 2025 is summarized in the following table:

		Occupied and Vacant Housing Units by Tenure (2025)				
		Total Occupied	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Vacant	Total
Mitchell County	Number	6,777	5,234	1,543	2,080	8,857
	Percent	76.5%	77.2%	22.8%	23.5%	100.0%
North Carolina	Number	4,489,098	2,939,909	1,549,189	585,968	5,075,066
	Percent	88.5%	65.5%	34.5%	11.5%	100.0%

Source: ESRI; Bowen National Research

In total, there are an estimated 8,857 housing units within the PSA (Mitchell County) in 2025. Of the 6,777 total *occupied* housing units in the PSA, 77.2% are owner occupied, while 22.8% are renter occupied. This distribution of product by tenure within the PSA is more heavily concentrated among owner-occupied housing as compared to the distribution for the state of North Carolina (65.5% owners and 34.5% renters). Within the PSA, 23.5% of all housing units are classified as vacant, which is a substantially higher share of such units when compared to the statewide share of 11.5%. Vacant units are comprised of a variety of units including abandoned properties, rentals, for-sale, and seasonal housing units.

Based on 2020-2024 American Community Survey data, 45.2% of all vacant units in the PSA are seasonal/recreational units, and 41.3% are categorized as "other vacant," which includes foreclosures, dilapidated properties in need of repairs, and abandoned properties. The share of these two vacant categories within the PSA are higher than the corresponding shares for the state of North Carolina (31.3% and 37.0%, respectively). As such, a smaller share of vacant units within the PSA are readily available for permanent occupancy as compared to the state, overall. Given the apparent prevalence of seasonal/recreational units (e.g., short-term rentals, vacation rentals, second homes, etc.) within the PSA, a more refined analysis of this housing type is included later in this section of the report, starting on page VI-18.

The following table compares key housing age and conditions for the study area and the state based on American Community Survey data. Housing units built more than 50 years ago (pre-1970), overcrowded housing (1.01+ persons per room), or housing that lacks complete kitchens or bathroom plumbing are illustrated for each area by tenure (renter or owner). It is important to note that some occupied housing units may have more than one housing issue.

	Housing Age and Conditions (2024)											
	Pre-1970 Product				Overcrowded				Incomplete Plumbing or Kitchen			
	Renter		Owner		Renter		Owner		Renter		Owner	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Mitchell County	585	39.3%	1,860	36.5%	11	0.8%	34	0.7%	33	2.2%	79	1.6%
North Carolina	324,286	21.9%	589,957	20.6%	59,512	4.0%	38,666	1.4%	23,774	1.6%	15,750	0.6%

Source: American Community Survey 2020-2024; ESRI; Bowen National Research

Within the PSA (Mitchell County), approximately 39.3% of renter-occupied housing units and 36.5% of owner-occupied housing units were built prior to 1970. Both shares of pre-1970 housing units are larger than the corresponding shares for the state of North Carolina (21.9% and 20.6%, respectively). Within the PSA, 0.8% of renter households and 0.7% of owner households are overcrowded, while 2.2% of renter-occupied and 1.6% of owner-occupied housing units have incomplete plumbing or kitchens. Compared to the state, there are disproportionally high shares of incomplete plumbing or kitchens within the PSA, whereas overcrowding is less prevalent within Mitchell County compared to the state. In general, housing in the PSA is typically older than housing at the state level, and this older inventory of homes in Mitchell County may contribute to the higher shares of incomplete plumbing or kitchens among both renter- and owner-occupied housing units in the area. Overall, there are approximately 157 substandard housing units (overcrowded units and/or units lacking complete plumbing or kitchens) in the county.

The following table compares key household income, housing cost, and housing affordability metrics for the PSA (Mitchell County) and the state of North Carolina. Cost burdened households are defined as those paying over 30% of their income toward housing costs, while severe cost burdened households pay over 50% of their income toward housing.

	Household Income, Housing Costs and Affordability							
	Total Households (2025)	Median Household Income (2025)	Median Home Value (2025)	Median Gross Rent (2024)	Share of Cost Burdened Households (2024)*		Share of Severe Cost Burdened Households (2024)**	
					Renter	Owner	Renter	Owner
Mitchell County	6,777	$57,719	$267,982	$813	33.0%	17.1%	13.0%	5.7%
North Carolina	4,489,098	$74,690	$334,560	$1,228	44.7%	19.3%	21.6%	8.1%

Source: American Community Survey 2020-2024; ESRI; Bowen National Research

*Paying more than 30% of income toward housing costs; **Paying more than 50% of income toward housing costs

The estimated median home value of $267,982 within the PSA (Mitchell County) is 19.9% lower than the state's estimated median home value of $334,560, while the median gross rent of $813 in the PSA is approximately 33.8% lower than the state's median gross rent of $1,228. While this indicates housing within the PSA is generally more affordable than housing within the state, the median household income for the PSA ($57,719) is 22.7% lower than that for the state ($74,690). Overall, these factors result in a lower share of cost burdened renter households (33.0%) and owner households (17.1%) in the PSA compared to the shares within the state (44.7% and 19.3%, respectively). In addition, 13.0% of renter households and 5.7% of owner households in the PSA are considered *severe* cost burdened (paying more than 50% of their household income toward housing costs). Although the shares of severe cost burdened renter and owner households are less than the corresponding shares at the state, a notable number of households within Mitchell County are challenged by housing affordability issues.

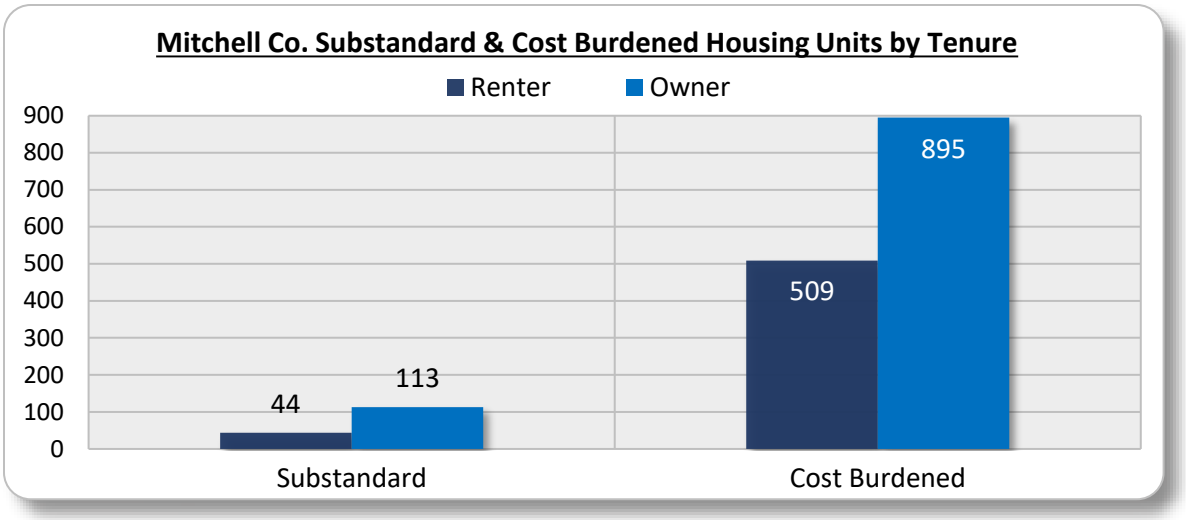
The following table provides the estimated *number* of cost burdened and severe cost burdened households for the study area.

	Number of Cost Burdened/Severe Cost Burdened Households by Tenure (2025)					
	Cost Burdened Households*		Total Cost Burdened	Severe Cost Burdened Households**		Total Severe Cost Burdened
	Renter	Owner		Renter	Owner	
Mitchell County	509	895	1,404	201	298	499
North Carolina	692,487	567,402	1,259,889	334,625	238,133	572,758

Source: American Community Survey 2020-2024; ESRI; Bowen National Research
*Paying more than 30% of income toward housing costs; **Paying more than 50% of income toward housing costs

There are approximately 1,404 total households within the PSA (Mitchell County) that are housing cost burdened (paying 30% or more of income toward housing costs). Of these, 509 (36.3%) are renter households and 895 (63.7%) are owner households. Within the PSA, there are 499 total households that are *severe* cost burdened (paying 50% or more of income toward housing costs). Among the severe cost burdened households in the PSA, 201 (40.3%) are renter households and 298 (59.7%) are owner households. With renter households comprising slightly less than 23% of all households in the PSA but accounting for over 40% of all severe cost burdened households, it is apparent that renter households in Mitchell County are disproportionately affected by housing affordability issues as compared to their owner household counterparts. Regardless, housing affordability should be a key component of future rental and for-sale housing development plans to enhance the overall housing market within Mitchell County.

The following graph illustrates substandard housing (overcrowded or lacking complete kitchens/plumbing) and cost burdened households by tenure (renter or owner) within the PSA (Mitchell County).



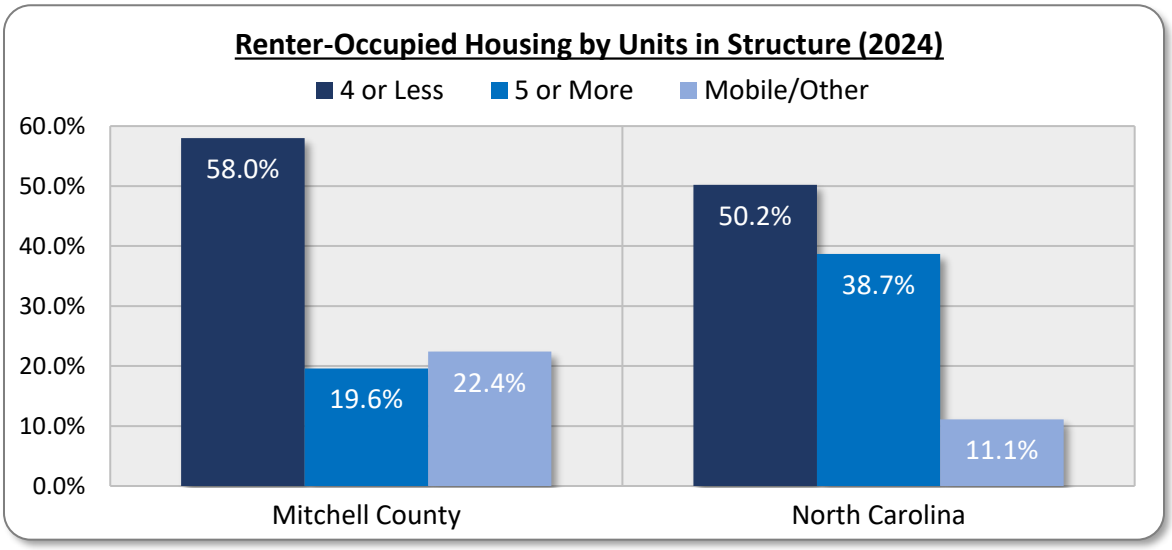
Based on American Community Survey data, the following is a distribution of all occupied housing by units in structure by tenure (renter or owner) for the PSA (Mitchell County) and the state of North Carolina.

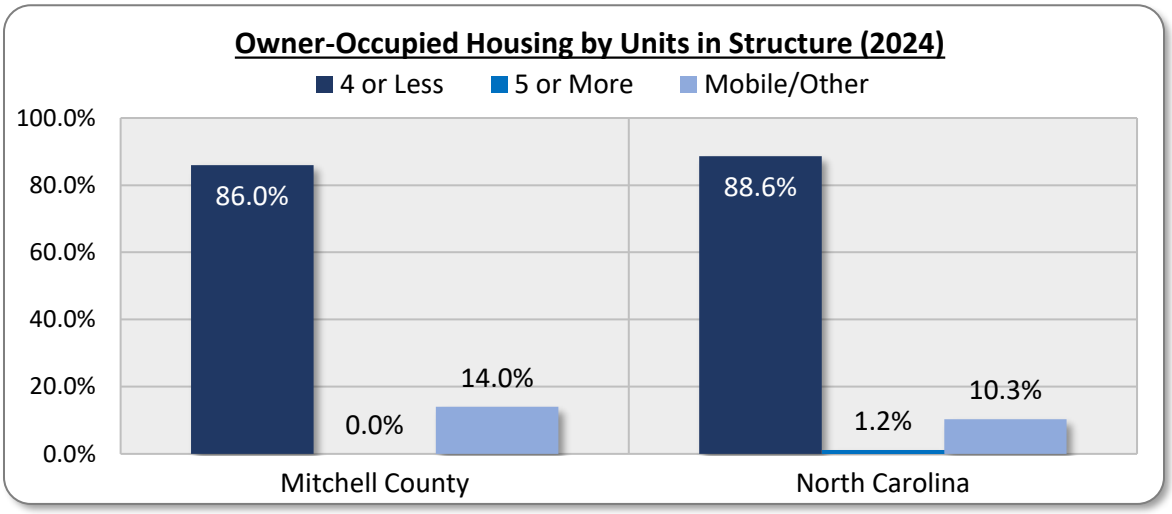
		Renter-Occupied Housing by Units in Structure (2024)				Owner-Occupied Housing by Units in Structure (2024)			
		4 Units or Less	5 Units or More	Mobile Home/Other	Total	4 Units or Less	5 Units or More	Mobile Home/Other	Total
Mitchell County	Number	864	292	334	1,491	4,391	0	712	5,104
	Percent	58.0%	19.6%	22.4%	100.0%	86.0%	0.0%	14.0%	100.0%
North Carolina	Number	742,687	572,176	163,857	1,478,720	2,532,586	33,311	293,392	2,859,289
	Percent	50.2%	38.7%	11.1%	100.0%	88.6%	1.2%	10.3%	100.0%

Source: American Community Survey 2020-2024; ESRI; Bowen National Research

Approximately 80.4% of the *rental* units in the PSA (Mitchell County) are within structures of four units or less and mobile homes (non-conventional rentals), which represent a substantially higher share of such units as compared to the state (61.3%). This is primarily due to the larger share (22.4%) of renter-occupied mobile homes in the PSA compared to the state (11.1%). While this indicates that the vast majority of rental units in the county are within non-conventional rental structures, a notable share (19.6%) of the rental market is comprised of multifamily apartments (within structures of five or more units). By comparison, all *owner*-occupied housing units within the county are within structures of four or fewer units (86.0%) and mobile homes (14.0%). Similar distributions are not uncommon in predominantly rural markets such as the PSA. However, the lack of owner-occupied units within structures of five or more units (condominiums and townhomes) may represent a potential future development opportunity in the PSA. This housing type can, in many instances, offer a lower price point compared to single-family products and can also provide a low maintenance alternative for seniors that may be seeking a more leisurely lifestyle or that wish to downsize.

The following graphs compare the shares of renter- and owner-occupied housing units by units in structure for each study area.





B. RENTAL HOUSING SUPPLY ANALYSIS (BOWEN NATIONAL SURVEY)

1. Introduction

Bowen National Research conducted research and analysis of various rental housing alternatives within the PSA (Mitchell County). This analysis includes multifamily rental properties, non-conventional rental housing, and seasonal/recreational rental housing.

2. Multifamily Rental Housing

Between January and May of 2026, Bowen National Research surveyed a total of eight multifamily rental housing projects containing a total of 232 units within the PSA (Mitchell County). While this survey does not include all properties in the market, it does include the majority of the larger properties. The overall survey is considered representative of the performance, conditions and trends of multifamily rental housing in the market. Projects identified, inventoried, and surveyed operate under affordable housing programs including the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program (generally serving households earning between 51% and 80% of Area Median Household Income), various government-subsidized or HUD programs (generally serving households earning 50% or less of Area Median Household Income), or a combination of such programs. For the purposes of this analysis, projects that operate under the LIHTC program are simply referred to as "Tax Credit" projects. Note that all Tax Credit projects surveyed within the PSA operate with a concurrent government subsidy. Definitions of each housing program are included in *Addendum E: Glossary*.

Housing authorities, property managers or leasing agents for each project were surveyed to collect a variety of property information including vacancies, rental rates, unit mixes, year built and other features. Some properties were personally visited by staff of Bowen National Research and were also rated based on general exterior quality and upkeep, and each property was mapped as part of this survey.

The distribution of the surveyed multifamily rental housing supply by program type is illustrated in the following table.

Surveyed Multifamily Rental Housing – Mitchell County, North Carolina

Project Type	Projects Surveyed	Total Units	Vacant Units	Occupancy Rate
Tax Credit/Government-Subsidized	3	78	0	100.0%
Government-Subsidized	5	154	0	100.0%
Total	**8**	**232**	**0**	**100.0%**

Source: Bowen National Research

Among the eight multifamily projects surveyed in the PSA (Mitchell County), there are three Tax Credit projects with a concurrent subsidy and five projects that operate strictly under a government-subsidized program. One additional government-subsidized project (WNC Mitchell County Group Home) containing six units that serve individuals with a disability was also identified within the PSA, but survey data was not available at the time of analysis. Collectively, the Tax Credit projects with a concurrent government subsidy comprise 78 (33.6%) of the total multifamily units surveyed, while projects that strictly operate under one of the various government-subsidized programs comprise 154 (66.4%) of the surveyed units. It is also worth noting that no market-rate multifamily rental properties were identified in the market. However, there appear to be market-rate rental alternatives among non-conventional rentals, such as houses, duplexes or mobile homes. Such rentals are discussed starting on page VI-14.

All projects surveyed in the PSA are fully occupied, regardless of program type. Typically, in healthy and well-balanced markets, multifamily rentals operate at an overall 94% to 96% occupancy rate. As such, the occupancy rates within the PSA are extremely high and indicate a notable lack of available units. This also illustrates the very high level of demand for multifamily rentals within the PSA, particularly those operating under an affordable housing program. The lack of availability likely creates significant challenges for households seeking multifamily rental options within the PSA. It is also worth noting that a previous Housing Needs Assessment was completed by Bowen National Research in 2021 that included Mitchell County and 17 other counties in western North Carolina. At the time of that survey, the overall occupancy rate for the surveyed multifamily apartments in the PSA was 98.7% with only two vacancies. As such, it appears that availability among the multifamily rental supply in the PSA has been limited for some time.

Overall, limited availability can result in households seeking rental options from the available non-conventional inventory, or it can result in households seeking multifamily rentals outside the county. It can also contribute to cost burden situations (paying over 30% of household income toward housing costs) for some of the most economically challenged households within the PSA.

The eight surveyed properties in Mitchell County are summarized in the following table. Detailed property information is included in *Addendum A: Field Survey of Multifamily Rentals.*

Surveyed Multifamily Rental Housing – Mitchell County, North Carolina									
Map I.D.	Project Name	Type	Year Built/ Renovated	Total Units	Occupancy Rate	Contract Rents (Total Units)			
						One-Br.	Two-Br.	Three-Br.	Four-Br.
1	Cane Creek Village	TAX & SEC 8	2000	24	100.0%	-	$920 (12)	$1,156 (12)	-
2	Deer Park Apts.	TAX & RD 515	1982 / 2003	32	100.0%	$910-$1,040 (8)	$1,150-$1,279 (24)	-	-
3	Mineral City Heights	P.H.	1965	22	100.0%	$287 (6)	$419 (8)	$549 (6)	$647 (2)
4	Mitchell House Apts.	TAX & RD 515	1995	22	100.0%	$745-$795 (20)	$821-$871 (2)	-	-
5	North Toe Apts.	RD 515	1984	31	100.0%	$571-$692 (27)	$616-$772 (4)	-	-
6	River Trail Apts.	RD 515	1984	14	100.0%	$961-$1,188 (4)	$1,031-$1,265 (10)	-	-
7	Sunshine Hill Apts.	SEC 202	1998	25	100.0%	$411 (25)	-	-	-
8	Walnut Avenue Apts.	P.H.	1980	62	100.0%	-	$419 (25)	$549 (31)	$647 (6)
			Total	**232**	**100.0%**				

Source: Bowen National Research
TAX - Tax Credit; SEC – Section; P.H. - Public Housing; RD - Rural Development

As the preceding illustrates, two of the three Tax Credit (TAX) projects within the PSA (Mitchell County) operate concurrently under the HUD Section 515 program, while the third Tax Credit project operates concurrently under the HUD Section 8 program. Among the standalone government-subsidized projects, two operate under the RD515 program, two are Public Housing, and one operates under the HUD Section 202 program (low-income elderly). While each program operates under different parameters, the various programs generally serve households earning 50% or less of Area Median Household Income and provides some type of government subsidy to the project to ensure tenants pay no more than 30% of their income toward housing costs. Regardless of program or bedroom type, all multifamily units in the PSA are occupied. Among the various bedroom types, one- and two-bedroom units collectively comprise approximately three-quarters (75.4%) of the total units, while three-bedroom (21.1%) and four-bedroom (3.4%) units account for the balance of the units. Although the 100.0% occupancy rate indicates an exceptionally high level of demand for affordable multifamily rental units in the PSA, waiting lists maintained at each of the projects for the next available unit indicate there is likely significant pent-up demand.

The following table provides the waiting list details for each of the surveyed projects within the PSA (Mitchell County). Note that some projects provided the number of households on the waiting lists, while others supplied the estimated length of wait in months.

Multifamily Waiting Lists – PSA (Mitchell County)		
Map I.D.	Project Name	Target Market (Waiting List)
1	Cane Creek Village	Families; Section 8 (6-9 Months)
2	Deer Park Apts.	Families; RD 515 (4 HH)
3	Mineral City Heights	Families; Public Housing (Shared: 45 HH)
4	Mitchell House Apts.	Seniors 62+; RD 515 (1 HH)
5	North Toe Apts.	Seniors 62+; RD 515 (17 HH)
6	River Trail Apts.	Families; RD 515 (12-24 Months)
7	Sunshine Hill Apts.	Seniors 62+; Section 202 (9 HH)
8	Walnut Avenue Apts.	Families; Public Housing (Shared: 45 HH)
	Total	**76 HH, 6-24 Months**

Source: Bowen National Research
Occ. – Occupancy; HH – Households

As the preceding data illustrates, each of the eight projects in the PSA maintains a waiting list with at least one household. There is a total of 76 households, combined, on the waiting lists (two projects share a waiting list). In addition, two projects noted an estimated length of wait between six and 24 months for the next available unit. With an overall wait list of at least 76 households and only 238 *total* multifamily rental units in the PSA (includes six units that were not surveyed), it is apparent that there is significant pent-up demand in the area for affordable rental housing, and the existing supply of units is likely not meeting the needs of area households.

Rents for projects operating under federal programs, such as the LIHTC program, are limited to the percent of Area Median Household Income (AMHI) to which the units are specifically restricted. For the purposes of this analysis, programmatic maximum rent limits at 50% of AMHI (typical federal program restrictions), 60% of AMHI, and 80% of AMHI (maximum LIHTC program restrictions) are illustrated in the following table. It should be noted that all rents are shown as *gross rents*, meaning they include tenant-paid rents and tenant-paid utilities.

Maximum Allowable AMHI Gross Rents (2026) Mitchell County, North Carolina					
Percent of AMHI	Studio	One-Bedroom	Two-Bedroom	Three-Bedroom	Four-Bedroom
50%	$686	$735	$881	$1,018	$1,136
60%	$823	$882	$1,057	$1,221	$1,363
80%	$1,098	$1,176	$1,410	$1,629	$1,818

Source: Novogradac & Company LLP

Maximum allowable rents are subject to change on an annual basis and are only *achievable* if the project with such rents is marketable. As a result, the preceding rent table should be used as a guide for setting *maximum* rents under the Tax Credit program, and *achievable* rents should be determined by using individual market data from this report or a separate site-specific market feasibility study.

Projects can be developed under federal programs that use Fair Market Rents or the HOME Program rents. The following table illustrates the 2026 Fair Market Rents and Low HOME and High HOME rents for Mitchell County, North Carolina.

Fair Market Rents and Low/High HOME Rents (2026)
Mitchell County, North Carolina

Studio	One-Bedroom	Two-Bedroom	Three-Bedroom	Four-Bedroom
Fair Market Rents				
$700	$705	$925	$1,134	$1,225
Low/High HOME Rent				
$686 / $700	$705 / $705	$881 / $925	$1,018 / $1,134	$1,136 / $1,225

Source: HUD Office of Policy Development and Research (huduser.gov); Bowen National Research

The preceding rents, which are updated annually, can be used by developers as a guide for the possible rent structures that can be incorporated into projects within Mitchell County.

The potential number of existing subsidized housing units that are at risk of losing their affordable status are also evaluated. Two properties in the county operate as subsidized projects under a current HUD contract. Because these contracts have a designated renewal date, it is important to understand if these projects are at risk of an expiring contract in the near future that could result in the reduction of affordable rental housing stock (Note: HUD contract renewal or expiration dates within five years are shown in red).

Expiring HUD Contracts
Mitchell County, North Carolina

Property Name	Total Units	Assisted Units	Expiration Date	Program Type	Target Population
Sunshine Hill Apartments	25	25	6/30/2030	PRAC/202	Senior
WNC Mitchell County Group Home	6	6	8/25/2033	202/8 NC	Disabled

Source: HUDUser.gov Assistance & Section 8 Contracts Database (Updated 2.4.26); Bowen National Research
PRAC - Project Rental Assistance Contract

While all HUD supported projects are subject to annual appropriations by the federal government, it appears that one of the two projects identified in Mitchell County has an expiration date within the next five years and is at a *potential* risk of losing government assistance in the near future. Given the high occupancy rates and wait lists among the market's surveyed subsidized

properties, it will be important for the area's low-income residents that the project with a pending expiring HUD contract be preserved in order to continue to house some of the market's most economically vulnerable residents.

In addition to project-based government assistance, Housing Choice Vouchers are tenant-based (held by a single person/household) vouchers administered by the local housing authority which effectively subsidize a tenant's rent to be equivalent to 30% of their income. These vouchers can be utilized at non-subsidized properties to increase rental housing options for lower-income households.

Housing Choice Vouchers within the PSA (Mitchell County) are administered by the Northwestern Regional Housing Authority, which also oversees the voucher programs in the counties of Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yancey. According to a representative with the Northwestern Regional Housing Authority, there are approximately 215 Housing Choice Vouchers issued within Mitchell County. However, it was also noted by housing authority representatives that approximately 10 issued vouchers are currently going unused, likely due to holders of these vouchers being unable to obtain a quality affordable rental housing unit that will accept the voucher. There is a total of 48 households currently on the waiting list for additional vouchers. The waiting list is open and annual turnover within the voucher program is estimated at 43 households. This reflects the continuing need for affordable housing alternatives and/or Housing Choice Voucher assistance.

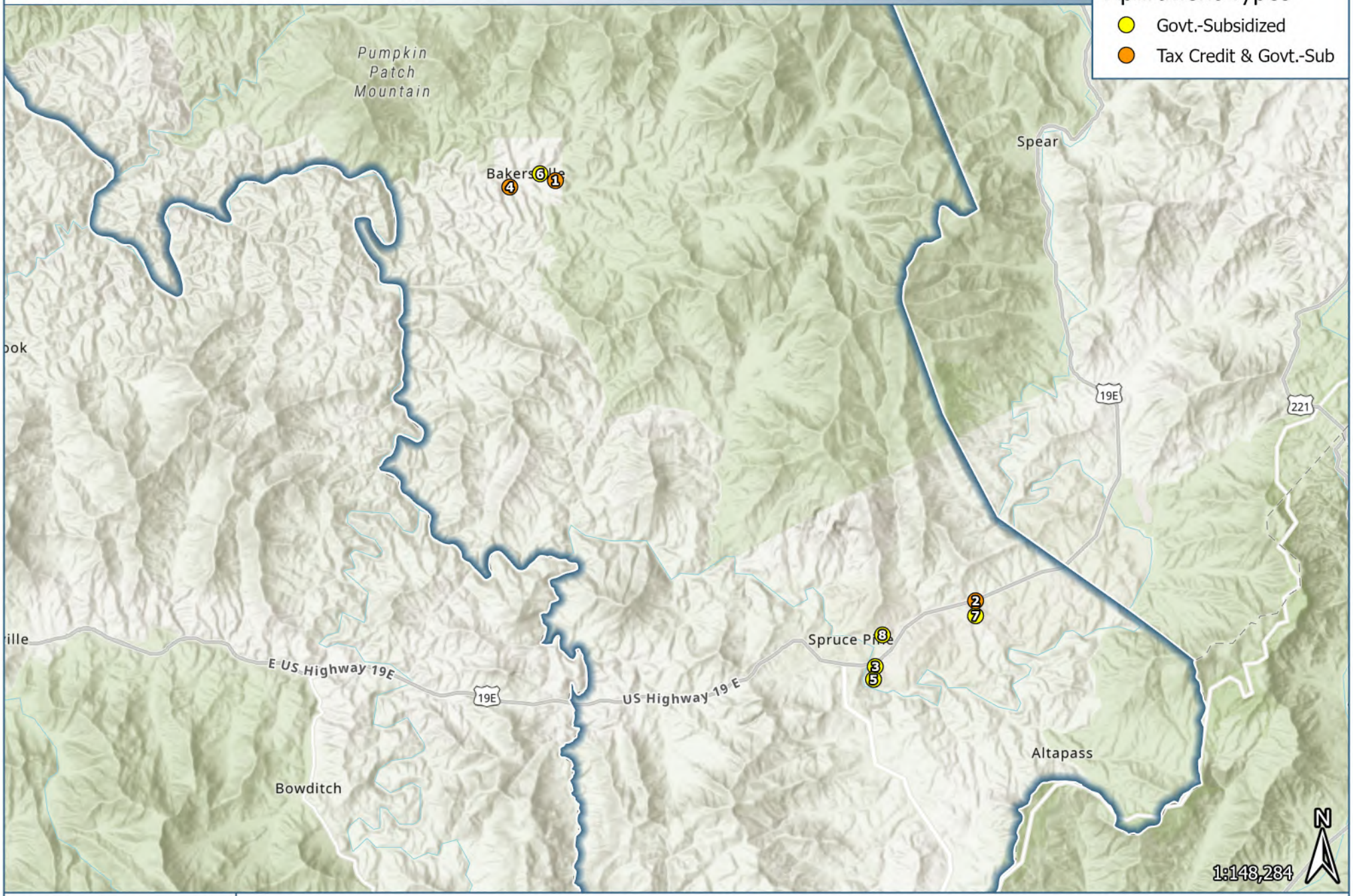
The waiting list for Housing Choice Vouchers combined with the waiting lists and occupancy rates among the multifamily rentals in the PSA are clear reflections of the pent-up demand for additional government-subsidized rental housing assistance and product in the area.

A map illustrating the location of all multifamily apartments surveyed within the PSA (Mitchell County) is included on the following page.

BOWEN NATIONAL RESEARCH

Surveyed Apartment Locations

Mitchell County, NC



0 0.75 1.5 2.25 3 Miles

Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS
Additional Source(s): Bowen National Research

3. Non-Conventional Rental Housing

Non-conventional rentals are generally considered rental units consisting of single-family homes, duplexes, units over store fronts, mobile homes, etc. Typically, these rentals are older, offer few amenities, and lack on-site management and maintenance. For the purposes of this analysis, rental properties consisting of four or less units within a structure and mobile homes are considered to be non-conventional rentals. Based on data from the American Community Survey, the number and share of units within renter-occupied structures is summarized in the following table:

		Renter-Occupied Housing by Units in Structure (2024)			
		4 Units or Less	5 Units or More	Mobile Home/Other	Total
Mitchell County	Number	864	292	334	1,491
	Percent	58.0%	19.6%	22.4%	100.0%
North Carolina	Number	742,687	572,176	163,857	1,478,720
	Percent	50.2%	38.7%	11.1%	100.0%

Source: American Community Survey 2020-2024; ESRI; Bowen National Research

Non-conventional rentals with four or fewer units per structure and mobile homes comprise 80.4% of the local rental housing market in the PSA (Mitchell County), which is substantially larger than the 61.3% share for the state. As such, non-conventional rentals comprise the vast majority of the overall rental market in the PSA. It is also worth noting that the 22.4% share of mobile homes in the PSA is considerably higher than the 11.1% share for the state.

Based on American Community Survey data, the following table summarizes monthly gross rents (per unit) for area rental alternatives within each of the study areas. While this data encompasses all rental units, which includes multifamily apartments, the vast majority of the rental supply in the PSA consists of non-conventional rentals. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the following provides valuable insight into the overall distribution of rents among the non-conventional rental housing units and is primarily reflective of market-rate rental alternatives. It should be noted that gross rents include tenant-paid rents and tenant-paid utilities.

		Monthly Gross Rents by Market (2024)								
		<$300	$300 - $499	$500 - $749	$750 - $999	$1,000 - $1,499	$1,500 - $1,999	$2,000+	No Cash Rent	Total
Mitchell County	Number	113	117	276	377	378	35	0	247	1,543
	Percent	7.4%	7.6%	17.9%	24.4%	24.5%	2.2%	0.0%	16.0%	100.0%
North Carolina	Number	34,682	61,773	148,246	250,820	472,961	310,149	171,944	98,613	1,549,189
	Percent	2.2%	4.0%	9.6%	16.2%	30.5%	20.0%	11.1%	6.4%	100.0%

Source: American Community Survey 2020-2024; ESRI; Bowen National Research

In the PSA (Mitchell County), the largest share (24.5%) of rental units have rents between $1,000 and $1,499, followed by units with rents between $750 and $999 (24.4%) and units with rents between $500 and $749 (17.9%).

Collectively, units with gross rents of less than $1,000 account for 57.3% of all PSA rentals, which is a remarkably higher share of such units when compared to that of the state (32.0%). Overall, this demonstrates the predominance of the lower- and moderate-priced product among the rental units in the market.

Between March and April 2026, Bowen National Research identified nine non-conventional rentals in the PSA (Mitchell County) that were listed as *available* for rent. The nine available rental units in Mitchell County represent 0.8% of the 1,198 total non-conventional rental units in the PSA. The vacancy rate of 0.8% is well below the optimal range of 4% to 6% for rentals, indicating that there is very limited availability of non-conventional rentals the area. While these rentals do not represent all non-conventional units, they are representative of common characteristics of the various non-conventional rental alternatives available in the market. As a result, these available rentals provide a good baseline to compare the rental rates, number of bedrooms, and other characteristics of non-conventional rentals.

The available non-conventional rentals identified within the PSA (Mitchell County) are summarized in the following table.

Available Non-Conventional Rentals – Mitchell County, North Carolina

Bedroom Type	Units	Average Square Feet	Rent Range	Average Rent	Average Rent Per Square Foot
Two-Bedroom	3	1,042	$1,050 - $2,100	$1,517	$1.43
Three-Bedroom	5	1,292	$1,400 - $3,400	$2,080	$1.59
Four-Bedroom	1	2,134	$2,400	$2,400	$1.12
Total	**9**	**Vacancy Rate: 0.8%**			

Source: Zillow

The available non-conventional rentals identified in the PSA have overall rents ranging from $1,050 to $3,400. Among the most commonly available non-conventional rentals in the PSA, three-bedroom units have an average rent of $2,080 and an average size of 1,292 square feet, while two-bedroom units have an average rent of $1,517 and average 1,042 square feet. When typical utility costs ($200 or more) are considered, the two- and three-bedroom non-conventional rentals in the PSA have average gross rents of $1,717 and $2,280, respectively.

With an average gross rent of $2,280, a household would need to have an income of $91,200 or higher to afford the typical three-bedroom non-conventional rental in Mitchell County. As shown in Section IV of this report, 83.3% of the renter households in the PSA have annual incomes of less than $75,000. As such, the vast majority of renter households in the market cannot reasonably afford a typical non-conventional rental in the PSA. Even if a household were able to afford a non-conventional rental at the low end of the preceding rent ranges, there are very limited options among such product.

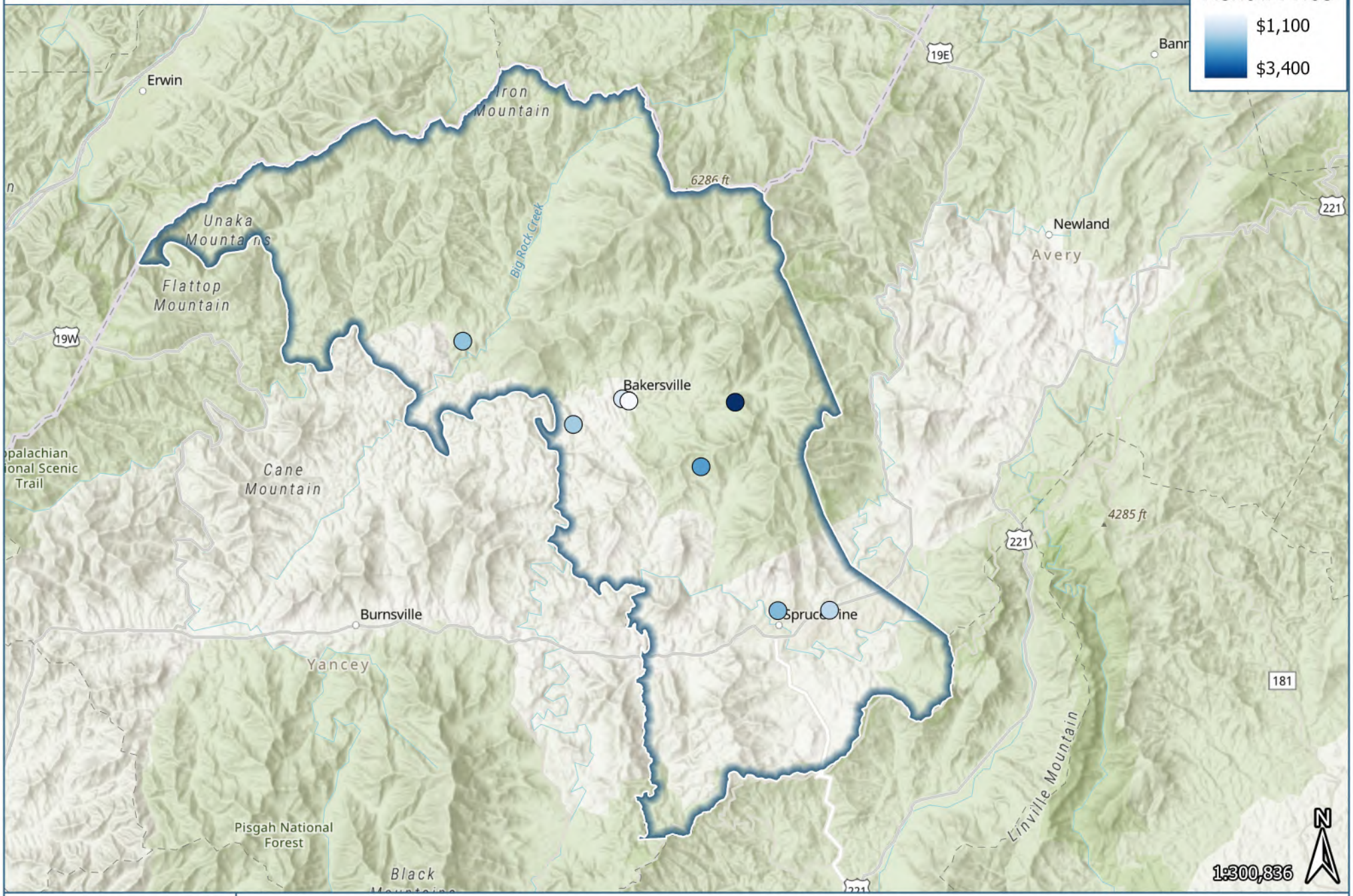
Overall, there is limited availability among the non-conventional rentals within Mitchell County. This was also the case during the 2021 Housing Needs Assessment that included 18 counties in western North Carolina. At the time, no available non-conventional rentals were identified within Mitchell County. The low vacancy rates among the non-conventional rentals and 100.0% occupancy rate among the multifamily rentals in the PSA indicate that households likely experience significant availability challenges, regardless of affordability. This can result in households seeking rental options outside of the county, and in turn, contribute to household decline within an area.

A map illustrating the location of identified non-conventional rentals currently available to rent in the PSA (Mitchell County) is included on the following page.

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Available Non-Conventional Rental Locations

Mitchell County, NC



0 1.5 3 4.5 6 Miles

Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Esri, CGIAR, USGS
Additional Source(s): Bowen National Research

4. Seasonal/Recreational Rental Housing

The PSA (Mitchell County) is a popular tourist destination due to the location within the Blue Ridge Mountains, the variety of outdoor activities in the area, and the local artistry, history, and festivals offered throughout the year. As such, short-term seasonal and recreational rentals and second homes comprise a notable share of the PSA housing market and warrant additional analysis. Specifically, 45.2% of all *vacant* units in the PSA are classified as seasonal/recreational units according to 2020-2024 American Community Survey data. This section of analysis attempts to estimate the influence of short-term rentals and second homes in Mitchell County and the effect this housing segment has on the overall housing market.

In an effort to quantify the influence that seasonal and recreational homes have on the local housing market, and how this influence has changed over time, vacancy status data from the American Community Survey was compiled and analyzed. This data identifies the vacancy type (e.g., for-sale, for-rent, seasonal/recreational, etc.) for vacant housing units in a geographic area. Although this data does not specifically identify whether a seasonal/ recreational housing unit is a short-term rental or a second home, it provides a reasonably accurate estimate for the number of homes that are not readily available for long-term occupancy (rental or for-sale) in the market. While a notable share of these homes relative to the total housing units in an area likely indicates a robust tourism base, it can contribute to housing shortages for permanent residents if long-term housing options are absorbed by this market.

The following table provides the number and share of seasonal/recreational units relative to the total housing units for each area and illustrates the change in relative shares between 2014 and 2024.

Seasonal/Recreational Housing Units (2014-2024)

Study Area	Year	Seasonal/ Recreational Units	Total Housing Units	Seasonal/ Recreational % of Total Housing Units	Change from Prior Reporting Period*
Mitchell County	2014	1,155	8,738	13.2%	-
	2019	1,280	8,831	14.5%	1.3
	2024	954	8,697	11.0%	-3.5
North Carolina	2014	211,054	4,385,668	4.8%	-
	2019	209,886	4,627,089	4.5%	-0.3
	2024	191,878	4,895,668	3.9%	-0.6

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; Bowen National Research
*Percentage point change from prior survey period

As the preceding illustrates, the number of seasonal/recreational units in the PSA (Mitchell County) fluctuated between 2014 and 2024, decreasing by 201 units (17.4%) overall during the time period. While the number of seasonal/recreational units within the state of North Carolina also decreased

during this time period, the percentage decrease within the PSA was notably higher than the 9.1% decrease within the state. Despite the decrease in number, approximately 11.0% of all housing units within the PSA in 2024 are classified as seasonal/recreational units. This is a substantially higher share of such units as compared to the 3.9% share for the state and illustrates the overall influence these housing units have in the local market. However, it is also important to consider that visitor spending within Mitchell County totaled over $45 million in 2024 according to the Economic Impact of Travel on North Carolina Counties, which was prepared for Visit North Carolina by Tourism Economics. As a result, it is apparent that this industry is an important element of the local economy. Based on the preceding data, it appears that seasonal/recreational housing currently comprises a smaller share (11.0%) of the overall housing inventory in the PSA as compared to the shares (13.2% and 14.5%, respectively) during the prior survey periods ending in 2014 and 2019. This suggests that while seasonal/recreational housing units comprise a notable share of the local housing supply, they are not becoming more prevalent. Regardless, it is important that growth within this segment of the housing market is closely monitored to ensure that the availability of permanent housing options for local residents and the area workforce is not adversely impacted in the future.

In order to further understand the evolving influence of seasonal/recreational housing as it relates to *short-term and vacation rentals*, market performance data for the PSA (Mitchell County) was collected and analyzed. This analysis is based on data provided by AllTheRooms, a market intelligence company that provides analytics for short-term rental markets throughout the country. While this data likely does not identify all short-term rental properties within the PSA due to various advertising resources, the data utilizes listings from Airbnb and Vrbo, which are generally considered two of the leading companies in the online marketplace for short-term and vacation rentals. As such, the data illustrated is highly representative of the typical short-term rental housing in the market.

The following table illustrates key market performance data for the short-term rentals (Airbnb and Vrbo) in Mitchell County between January 2023 and April 2026.

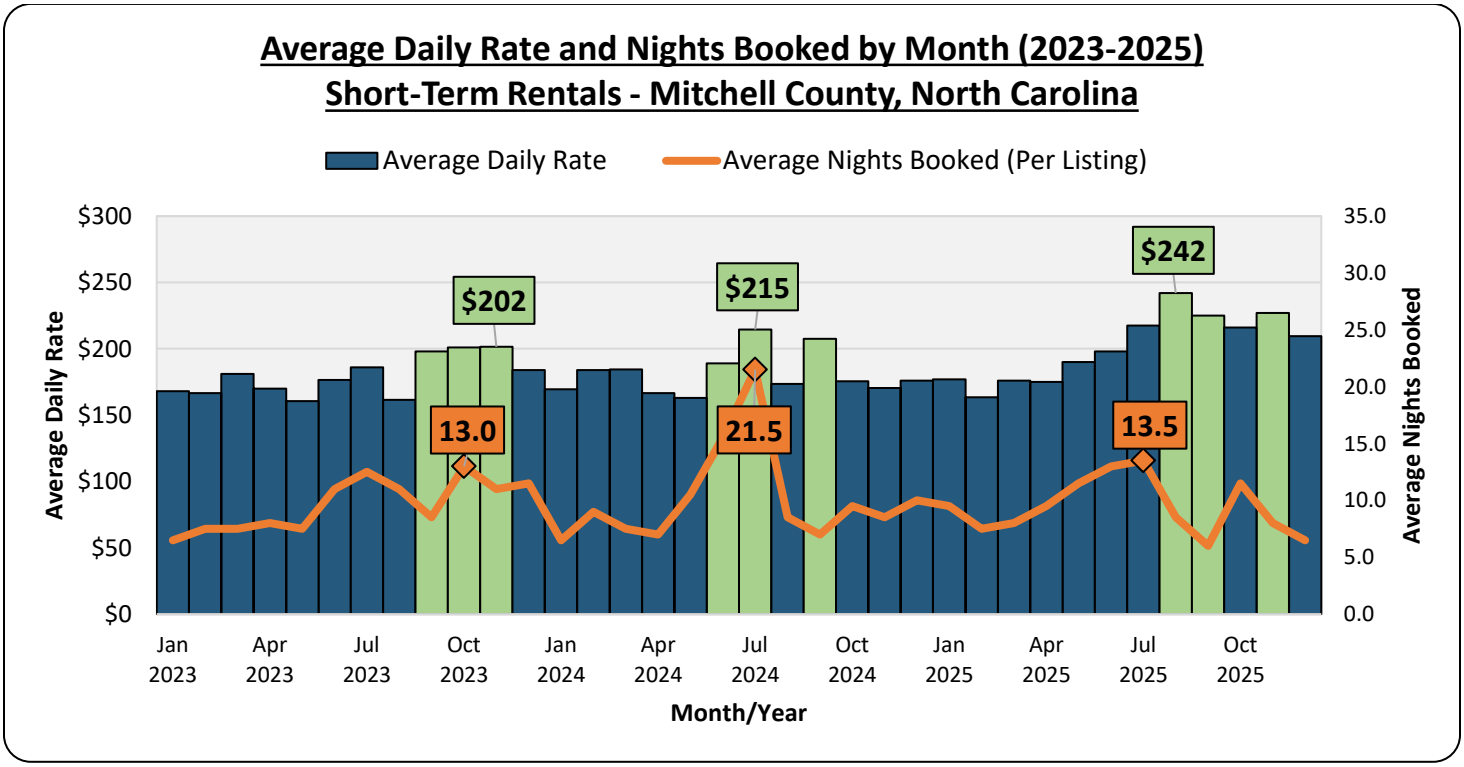
Short-Term Rental Market Performance (2023-2026)
Mitchell County, North Carolina

Metric	2023	2024	2025	2026*	Average (2023-2026)
Average Daily Rate**	$194	$175	$216	$268	$195
Occupancy Rate**	41%	37%	34%	19%	37%
Market Revenue	$3,684,045	$3,261,132	$4,111,768	$916,214	$3,685,648
Available Listings	137	148	164	155	150

Source: AllTheRooms.com; Bowen National Research
*Through April 23, 2026
**Average Daily Rates and Occupancy Rates only reflect Airbnb data (excludes Vrbo)

As the preceding illustrates, there has been an overall increase in the average daily rate, overall market revenue, and number of available short-term rental listings in the PSA (Mitchell County) between 2023 and 2025. Although the average occupancy rate of 34% in 2025 was notably lower than the 41% rate in 2023, the average daily rate in 2025 ($216) was 11.3% higher than the rate in 2023. It should also be noted that the tourism industry was adversely impacted by the remnants of Hurricane Helene (referred to as Tropical Storm Helene throughout this report) in September 2024, which likely influenced the overall declines in market performance that occurred between 2023 and 2024. Given the severity of the damage incurred within the region, it is also likely that this partially constrained 2025 numbers. Regardless, the overall market revenue of approximately $4.1 million in 2025 was a substantial increase over the market revenues experienced in 2023 and 2024. While this data is limited to short-term rentals marketed through Airbnb and Vrbo, the data illustrates the substantial growth in this market segment and provides evidence of the significant financial incentive for owners.

In order to determine the extent to which seasonality impacts the short-term rental industry in the PSA (Mitchell County), the average daily rates and average nights booked (per listing) were analyzed for each month from January 2023 to December 2025. The following graph illustrates the monthly trends for these performance metrics for the short-term rentals (Airbnb and Vrbo) within the study area. The data bars for the three months during each year with the highest average daily rate are illustrated in **green**.



Source: Alltherooms.com; Bowen National Research

As the preceding illustrates, there appears to be a moderate degree of seasonality among short-term rentals within the PSA (Mitchell County). The peak month for average nights booked per listing is generally July, though a secondary peak appears to also occur in October (excluding 2024, due to Tropical Storm Helene). Although this broadly aligns with the months of the highest average daily rates, the seasonality within the PSA is less pronounced than is exhibited in some other markets with a large tourism base. Although the off-season in Mitchell County appears to be during the winter months of January and February, there is a relatively small degree of disparity between most months of the year. Whether it is festivals during certain months of the year, outdoor activities during more temperate months, or the intrinsic beauty of the area during seasonal changes, this indicates there are a wide variety of reasons why individuals choose to visit Mitchell County. This is a positive attribute and contributes to a more stable economy with less seasonal unemployment than other tourist destinations.

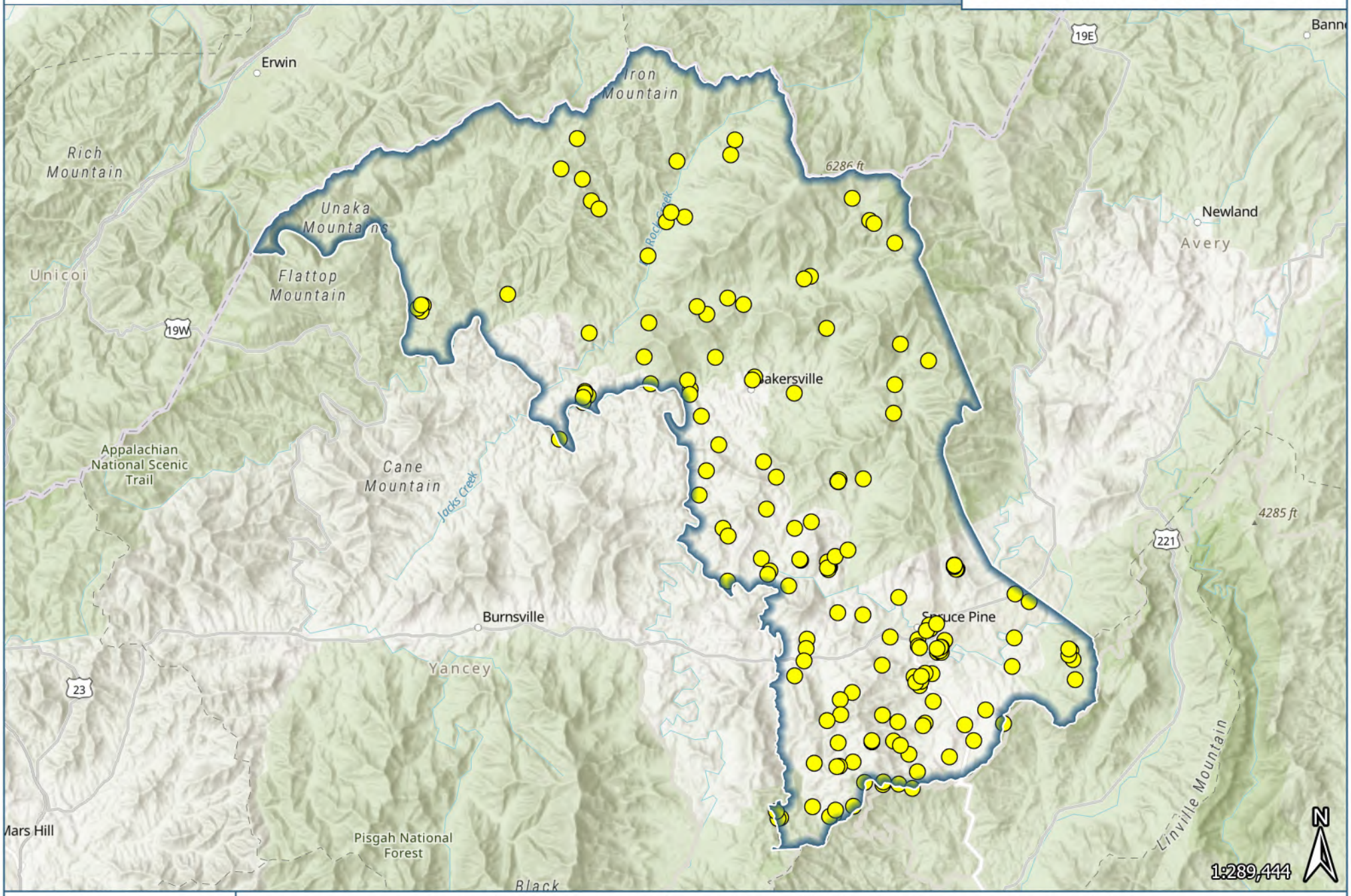
Overall, the analyses included within this section indicate that short-term rentals and second homes in the PSA represent a disproportionate share of the local housing market when compared to the influence of such housing units for the state of North Carolina. However, the data also shows that these units have actually decreased slightly in recent years relative to the overall housing inventory. Market performance metrics point to a strengthening of the market, increasing annual market revenues, and consistent demand during most months of the year. While all these indicators reveal the financial incentive for owners to operate short-term rentals in the area and illustrate the importance of this industry to the local economy, it also shows why these housing units are not available or *affordable* for mid- or long-term occupancy. As such, it will be critical that alternative housing options are readily available to support future household growth and provide affordable housing to the area workforce to support economic development within the area.

The following map illustrates the locations of short-term rentals (Airbnb only) in the PSA (Mitchell County).

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Seasonal/Recreational Rental Locations

Mitchell County, NC



0 1 2 3 4 Miles

Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS
Additional Source(s): Bowen National Research

C. FOR-SALE HOUSING SUPPLY

1. Introduction

Bowen National Research obtained for-sale housing data from Redfin.com for the PSA (Mitchell County). This included historical for-sale residential data and currently available for-sale housing stock. While this sales data does not include all for-sale residential transactions or available supply in the PSA, it does consist of the majority of such product and, therefore, is representative of market norms for for-sale housing product. The for-sale supply does not include foreclosures, auctions, or for-sale by owner housing.

The following table summarizes the available and recently sold homes for the PSA (Mitchell County).

Available/Sold For-Sale Housing Supply – Mitchell County, NC

Status	Number of Homes	Median Price
Available*	77	$335,000
Sold**	594	$272,500

Source: Redfin.com & Bowen National Research
*As of February 27, 2026
**Sales from January 1, 2022 to February 27, 2026

Within the PSA, 594 homes were sold between January 1, 2022 and February 27, 2026 at a median sales price of $272,500. This equates to an average of approximately 12 homes sold per month, or an annualized average of around 144 homes sold during this time. The for-sale housing stock *available* as of February 27, 2026 within the PSA consists of 77 homes with a median list price of $335,000, which is $62,500 (22.9%) higher than the median sales price for homes sold between January 2022 and February 2026.

Detailed analysis of the historical home sales and the currently available for-sale supply, including sales by year, distribution by price, bedroom, and year built, and availability in relation to both historical sales and the overall owner-occupied housing market are included on the pages that follow.

2. Historical For-Sale Analysis

In an effort to understand the health of a for-sale housing market, it is important to understand historical metrics of the for-sale housing supply, including trends in both annual home sales volume (number of homes sold) and annual median home sales price.

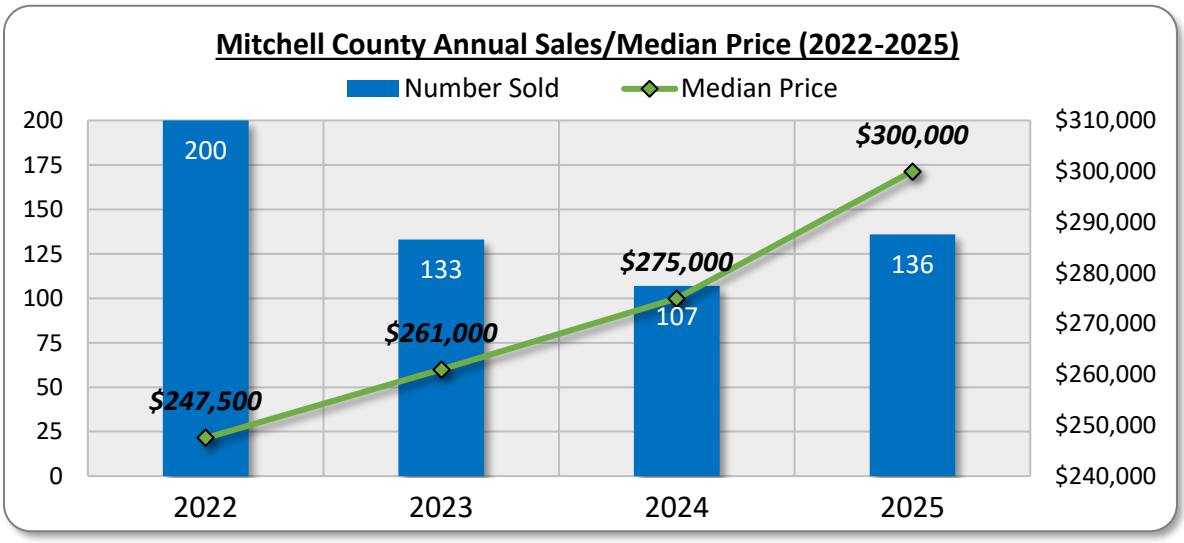
The following table illustrates the annual sales activity from January 2022 to February 2026 for Mitchell County.

Sales History by Year – Mitchell County, NC				
Year Sold	Number Sold	Percent Change	Median Sales Price	Percent Change
2022	200	-	$247,500	-
2023	133	-33.5%	$261,000	5.5%
2024	107	-19.5%	$275,000	5.4%
2025	136	27.1%	$300,000	9.1%
2026*	18	-	$295,000	-

Source: Redfin.com & Bowen National Research
*Sales through February 27, 2026

As the preceding illustrates, the number of homes sold within the PSA (Mitchell County) decreased by 33.5% in 2023 and 19.5% in 2024. In 2025, a total of 136 homes were sold in the PSA, which represents an increase of 27.1% compared to 2024. Despite this notable year-over-year increase, this is still substantially less than the total number of homes sold during 2022. Through February 27, 2026, there have been 18 homes sold in the PSA year-to-date. The median sales price of the homes sold in the PSA during this time period has steadily increased year over year. Notably, the median sales price of $300,000 in 2025 is 21.2% higher than the median sales price during 2022. While the median sales price ($295,000) for the homes sold through February 27, 2026 is less than the median sales price in 2025, it is important to note that this represents a very limited sample size. In addition, the current list price of $335,000 for the available homes in the PSA indicates that the median sales price will likely increase as more homes are sold in 2026. Overall, the data illustrates that the number of homes sold annually has decreased since 2022, whereas the median sales price has increased steadily during this time period.

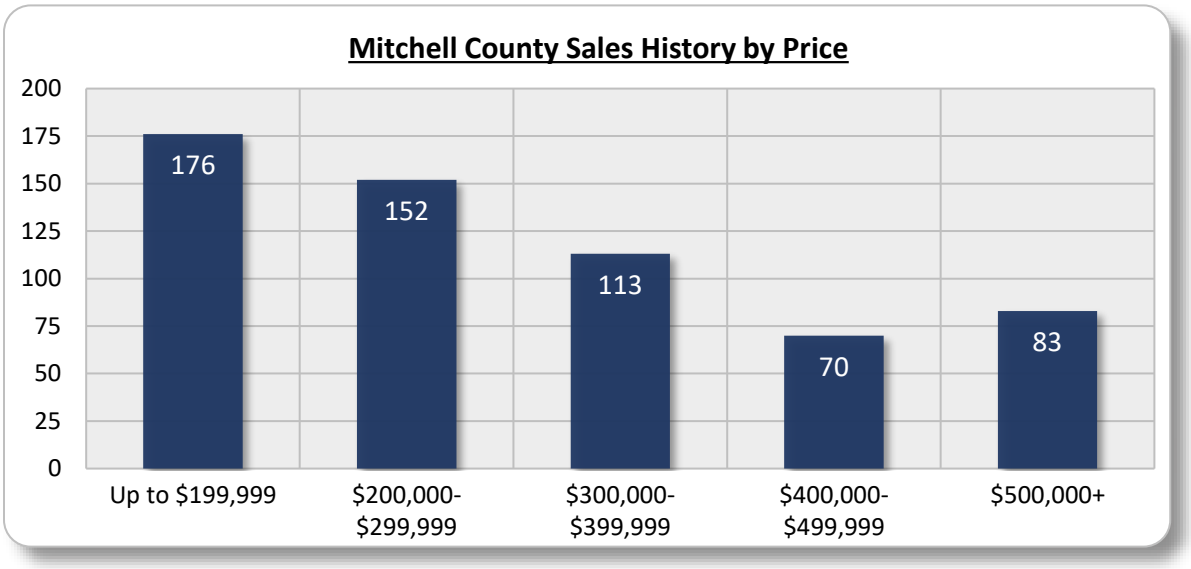
Recent home sales volume and median sales price by year for the PSA (Mitchell County) are illustrated in the following graph:



The distribution of homes sold between January 2022 and February 2026 by *price point* for the PSA (Mitchell County) is summarized as follows:

Sales History by Price – Mitchell County, NC (January 1, 2022 to February 27, 2026)		
Sales Price	Number Sold	Percent of Supply
Up to $199,999	176	29.6%
$200,000 to $299,999	152	25.6%
$300,000 to $399,999	113	19.0%
$400,000 to $499,999	70	11.8%
$500,000+	83	14.0%
Total	**594**	**100.0%**

Source: Redfin.com & Bowen National Research



As the preceding illustrates, home sales by price point in the PSA (Mitchell County) between January 2022 and February 2026 have been concentrated among lower price points (below $300,000). The largest individual share (29.6%) was among homes priced below $200,000, followed by homes priced between $200,000 and $299,999. As such, well over one-half (55.2%) of all home sales during the time period were homes priced below $300,000, a price point that is typically popular among moderate-income households and first-time homebuyers. Although the majority of homes sold in the PSA during this time period were less than $300,000, noteworthy shares (between 11.8% and 19.0%) of sales were distributed among each price point above $300,000. This variety of homes by price point is a positive attribute of the PSA market, as it enables the market to serve a variety of household income levels and different needs or circumstances.

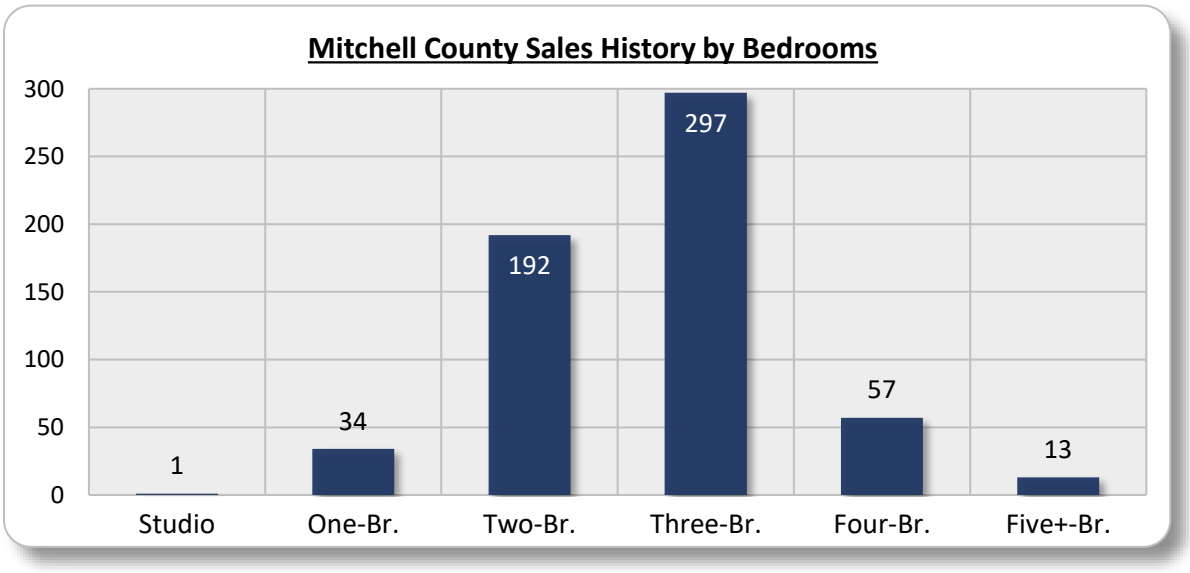
The following table illustrates recent home sales within the PSA by *bedroom type.*

Sales History by Bedrooms – Mitchell County, NC (January 1, 2022 to February 27, 2026)							
Bedrooms	Number Sold	% of Supply	Average Square Feet	Average Year Built	Price Range	Median Sales Price	Median Price per Sq. Ft.
Studio	1	0.2%	607	1960	$85,000	$85,000	$140.03
One-Br.	34	5.7%	789	1973	$50,000 - $475,000	$178,500	$256.22
Two-Br.	192	32.3%	1,284	1970	$30,000 - $1,200,000	$226,000	$188.71
Three-Br.	297	50.0%	1,865	1980	$45,000 - $1,600,000	$305,000	$181.82
Four-Br.	57	9.6%	2,337	1970	$45,000 - $1,400,000	$357,500	$163.40
Five-Br.+	13	2.2%	2,925	1968	$225,000 - $800,000	$425,000	$164.09
Total	**594**	**100.0%**	**1,682**	**1975**	**$30,000 - $1,600,000**	**$272,500**	**$182.08**

Source: Redfin.com & Bowen National Research

Three-bedroom units comprise the largest share of recent sales by bedroom type in the PSA (Mitchell County) and represent one-half (50.0%) of the homes sold between January 2022 and February 2026. The three-bedroom homes have a median sales price of $305,000 ($181.82 per square foot) and have an average size of 1,865 square feet. Two-bedroom homes, which account for the second largest share (32.3%) of recent sales in the PSA, have a median sales price of $226,000. The two-bedroom homes are substantially smaller (average of 1,284 square feet), but have a higher price per square foot ($188.71) despite being slightly older, on average, than the three-bedroom homes (average year built of 1970 versus 1980). Overall, there is a clear relationship between number of bedrooms, square footage, and median sales price within the PSA, and the average year built for most bedroom types is generally 1970 or newer.

Recent home sales by bedroom type in the PSA are shown in the following graph:



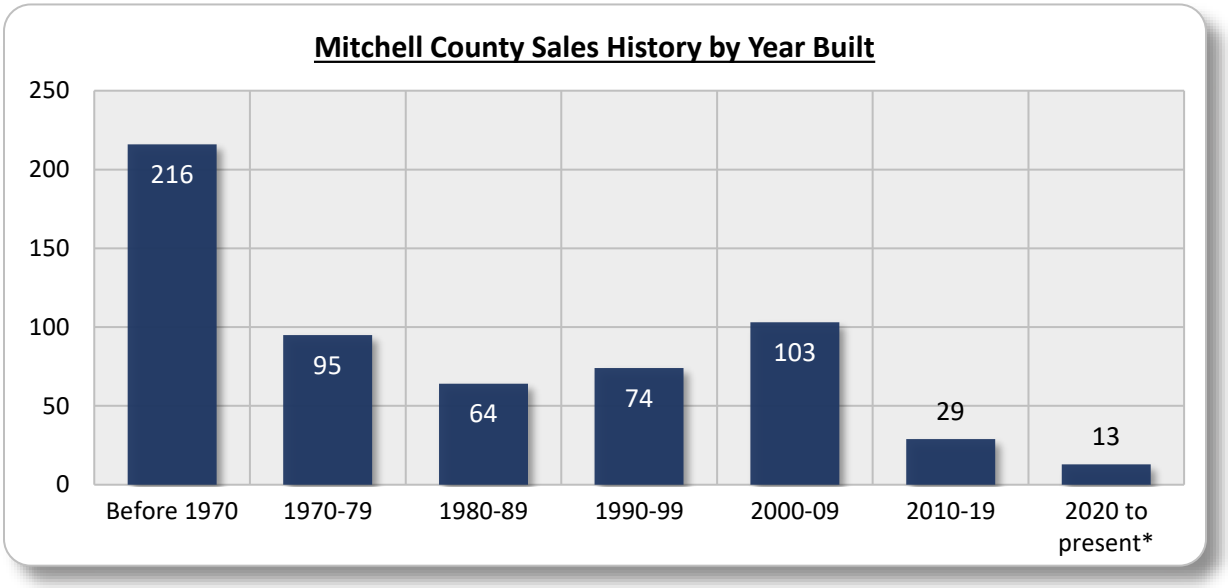
Recent home sales by *year built* for the PSA (Mitchell County) are illustrated in the following table.

Sales History by Year Built – Mitchell County, NC (January 1, 2022 to February 27, 2026)						
Year Built	Number Sold	% of Supply	Average Square Feet	Price Range	Median Sales Price	Median Price per Sq. Ft.
Before 1970	216	36.4%	1,464	$38,000 - $965,000	$220,000	$160.01
1970 to 1979	95	16.0%	1,684	$52,000 - $727,875	$260,000	$167.06
1980 to 1989	64	10.8%	1,695	$30,000 - $1,138,200	$305,000	$189.53
1990 to 1999	74	12.5%	1,899	$70,000 - $1,600,000	$320,000	$181.29
2000 to 2009	103	17.3%	2,028	$45,500 - $1,200,000	$421,900	$226.11
2010 to 2019	29	4.9%	1,637	$122,000 - $850,000	$375,025	$254.24
2020 to present*	13	2.2%	1,354	$219,900 - $475,000	$295,000	$254.44
Total	**594**	**100.0%**	**1,682**	**$30,000 - $1,600,000**	**$272,500**	**$182.08**

Source: Redfin.com & Bowen National Research

As the preceding illustrates, the largest share (36.4%) of the homes sold within the PSA (Mitchell County) between January 2022 and February 2026 were built prior to 1970. While these homes have the lowest median sales price ($220,000) among all development periods, this is partially influenced by the smaller average size (1,464 square feet) compared to nearly all other development periods. Homes built between 2000 and 2009 comprise the second largest share of recent home sales, representing 17.3% of recent home sales. These homes have the largest average size (2,028 square feet) and the highest median sales price ($421,900) of any development period in the PSA. Although homes built prior to 1970 comprise the single largest share of recent home sales, there is a relatively balanced distribution among the various distribution periods. As there is a strong correlation between development period, average size, and median sales price, this offers a wide range of options for potential homebuyers in Mitchell County. However, it is important to note that while the older homes in the PSA may offer a lower price point that is more affordable to lower-income households and first-time homebuyers, these homes may be more likely to require repairs or modernization compared to homes built in later development periods.

Recent home sales by *year built* in the PSA are shown in the following graph:



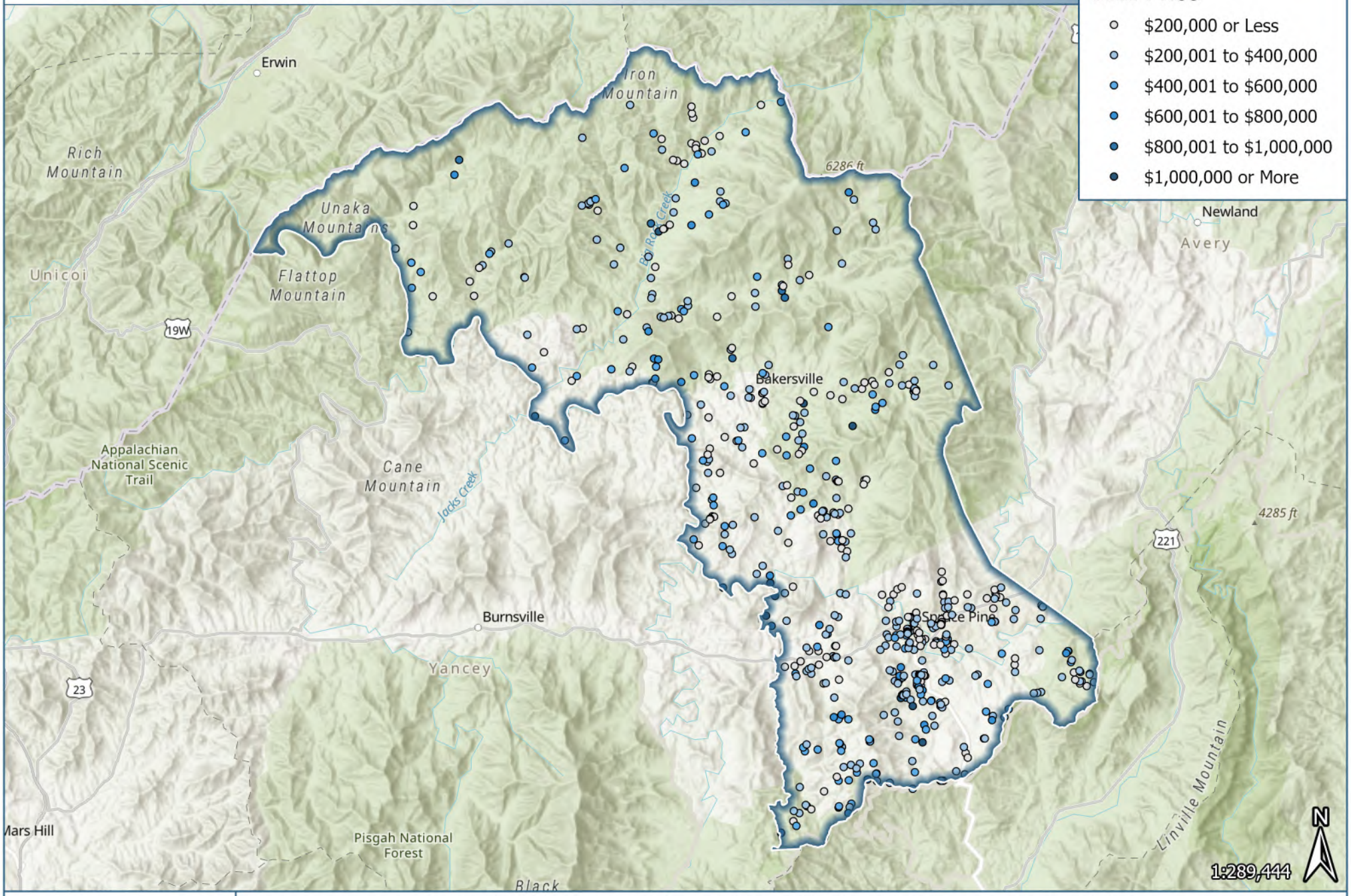
*Through February 27, 2026

A map illustrating the location of all homes sold by price point from January 2022 to February 2026 within the PSA is included on the following page.

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Historical Home Sales by Sale Price

Mitchell County, NC



0 1 2 3 4 Miles

Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS
Additional Source(s): Bowen National Research

3. Available For-Sale Housing Supply

Based on information obtained from Redfin.com, 77 housing units at a median list price of $335,00 were identified within the PSA (Mitchell County) that were listed as *available* for purchase as of February 27, 2026. While there are likely additional for-sale residential units available for purchase, such homes were not identified during research due to the method of advertising or simply because the product was not actively marketed. Regardless, the available inventory of for-sale product identified in this analysis provides a good baseline for evaluating the for-sale housing alternatives offered in Mitchell County.

There are two inventory metrics that are most often used to evaluate the health of a for-sale housing market. These metrics include *Months Supply of Inventory* (MSI) and availability rate. The MSI for Mitchell County was calculated based on sales history occurring between January 2022 and February 27, 2026. This equates to an overall absorption rate of approximately 12 homes per month in the PSA. Based on this monthly absorption rate, the 77 homes listed as available for purchase in the PSA represent approximately 6.4 months of supply. Typically, healthy and well-balanced markets have an available supply that should take about four to six months to absorb (if no other units are added to the market). Therefore, the inventory of available homes in the PSA is considered adequate compared to recent historical sales volume. When comparing the available units with the overall inventory of owner-occupied units (5,234), the PSA has an availability rate of 1.5%. This availability rate is slightly below the healthy range of 2.0% to 3.0% for a well-balanced for-sale/owner-occupied market. As such, the PSA has slightly limited availability of for-sale homes compared to the overall owner-occupied housing inventory.

Given that the availability rate of 1.5% is slightly lower than optimal, it is possible that sales volume has been constrained in recent years. As illustrated earlier on page VI-24, there was notable decrease in sales volume after 2022. However, even using the peak volume of 2022 (approximately 17 units per month), the 77 available units would represent approximately 4.5 months of available inventory. While this indicates there is likely an adequate overall supply of available for-sale units in terms of typical sales volume, the limited number of available homes compared to the overall owner-occupied inventory could be contributing, at least in part, to the steady increase in for-sale pricing that has occurred in the PSA since 2022.

It is worth noting that, at the time of the Western North Carolina Regional Housing Needs Assessment in 2021, there were 56 available for-sale homes in Mitchell County at a median list price of $339,000, representing an availability rate of only 1.0%. While the availability rate appears to have improved slightly since this point in time (June 2021), the median list price of the homes was

remarkably similar to the current median price. However, this appears to have been an anomaly in 2021 as the median sales price for historical sales between January 2022 and February 2026 had a median sales price of $272,500, well below the list price of the available homes during June 2021.

To get a better understanding of housing availability in the PSA, a more refined analysis of available supply by price point, bedroom type, and year built has been conducted.

The following table summarizes the distribution of available for-sale residential units by *price point* for the PSA (Mitchell County) as of February 27, 2026.

Available For-Sale Housing by Price – Mitchell County, NC (As of February 27, 2026)

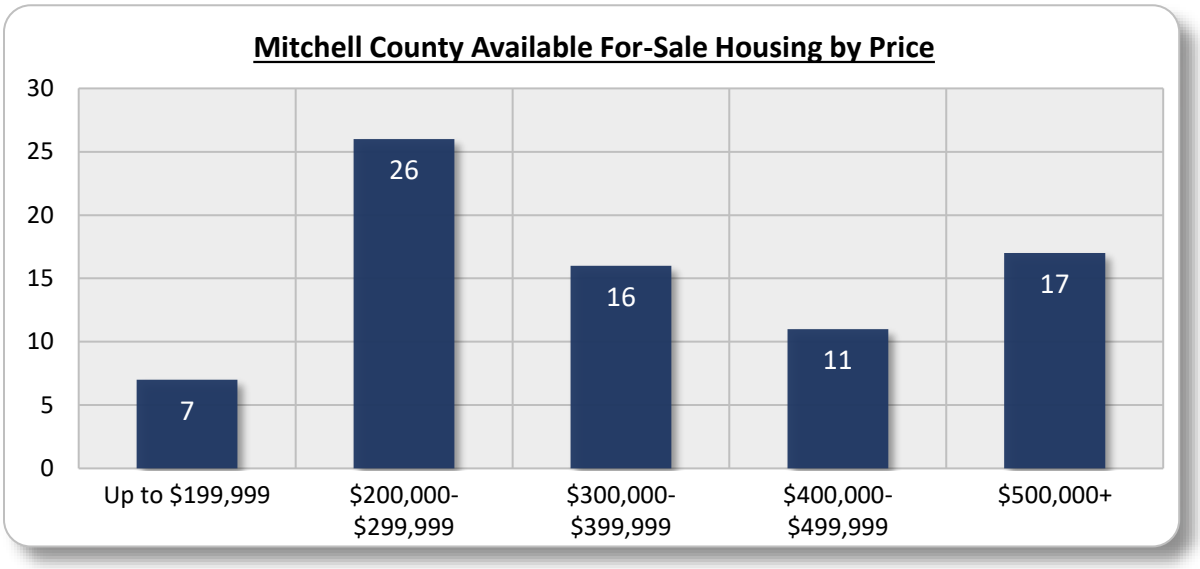
List Price	Number Available	Percent of Supply	Average Days on Market
Up to $199,999	7	9.1%	250
$200,000 to $299,999	26	33.8%	170
$300,000 to $399,999	16	20.8%	94
$400,000 to $499,999	11	14.3%	131
$500,000+	17	22.1%	204
Total	**77**	**100.0%**	**164**

Source: Redfin.com & Bowen National Research

Within the PSA (Mitchell County), the largest share (33.8%) of available for-sale homes by price point are priced between $200,000 and $299,999, followed by homes priced at $500,000 or more (22.1%). Overall, there is a relatively balanced distribution of available homes by price point, but it is worth noting that the 9.1% share of available homes priced below $200,000 is substantially lower than the 29.6% share of such homes from recent historical sales between January 2022 and February 2026. While this may be simply attributed to an overall increase in home pricing within the area, it is also likely that many of the lower valued owner-occupied homes in the area were damaged beyond repair during Tropical Storm Helene, effectively removing them from the housing supply. Similarly, impacts related to the event may also influence the average days on market in the area.

The average days on market for the available homes in the PSA is 164 days, which is considered moderately elevated. Whereas homes priced below $200,000 and homes priced at $500,000 or more have the highest average days on market (250 and 204 days, respectively), homes priced between $300,000 and $399,999 have the lowest average days on market (94 days). There are several homes in the PSA that have been listed in excess of 400 days, and two that have been listed for over 600 days (both priced at over $500,000). While these homes are skewing the averages in some respects, it is quite likely that there are lingering effects of Tropical Storm Helene that are still being realized in both the local economy and the housing market in the PSA.

The distribution of available homes in the PSA by *price point* is illustrated in the following graph:



The available for-sale housing by bedroom type in the study area is summarized in the following table.

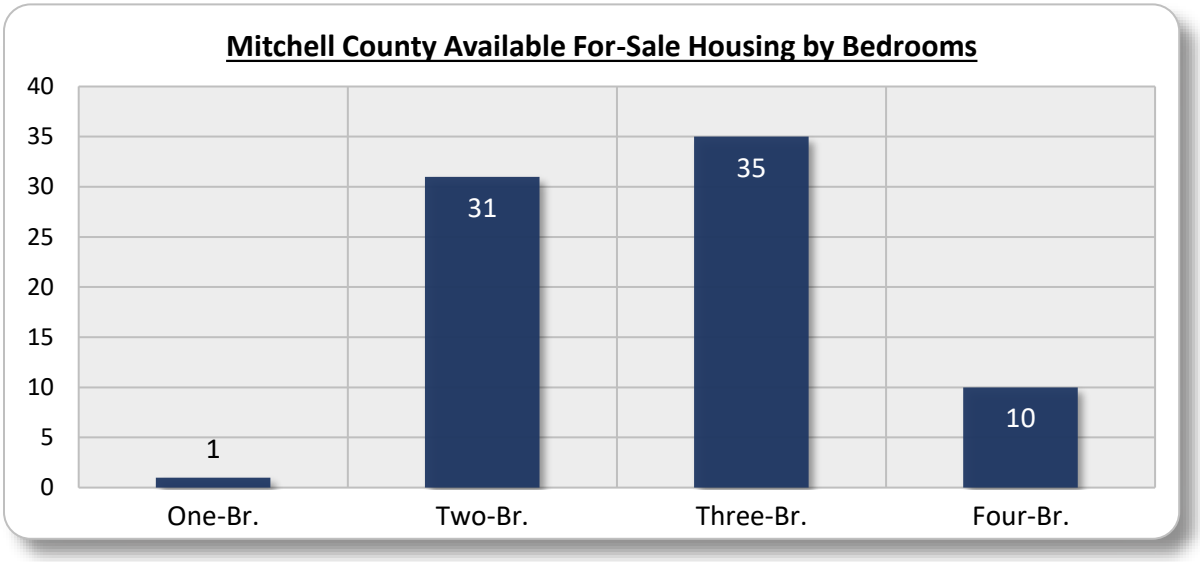
Available For-Sale Housing by Bedrooms – Mitchell County, NC (As of February 27, 2026)

Bedrooms	Number Available	% of Supply	Average Square Feet	Average Year Built	Price Range	Median List Price	Median Price per Sq. Ft.	Average Days on Market
One-Br.	1	1.3%	400	2013	$230,000	$230,000	$575.00	48
Two-Br.	31	40.3%	1,231	1968	$85,000 - $1,599,995	$275,000	$250.00	196
Three-Br.	35	45.4%	1,893	1977	$159,000 - $1,200,000	$399,000	$209.00	132
Four-Br.	10	13.0%	2,797	1995	$335,000 - $1,800,000	$617,500	$217.93	188
Total	**77**	**100.0%**	**1,724**	**1976**	**$85,000 - $1,800,000**	**$335,000**	**$221.67**	**164**

Source: Redfin.com & Bowen National Research

Three-bedroom units comprise the largest share (45.4%) of available for-sale homes in the PSA, followed by two-bedroom units (40.3%). The three-bedroom homes have a median list price of $399,000, average 1,893 square feet, have an average year built of 1977, and average 132 days on market. By comparison, the available two-bedroom homes have a notably lower median list price ($275,000), are much smaller (1,231 square feet), are slightly older (average year built of 1968), but have a higher average days on market (196 days). Overall, two- and three-bedroom homes comprise the vast majority of the available for-sale homes in the PSA, and the share of four-bedroom or larger homes is considered somewhat limited for rural markets. This limits the options for larger families looking to relocate to Mitchell County and may limit household growth potential in the area.

The number of available homes by *bedroom type* in the PSA is shown in the following graph:



The distribution of available homes by *year built* for the study area is summarized in the following table.

Available For-Sale Housing by Year Built – Mitchell County, NC (As of February 27, 2026)

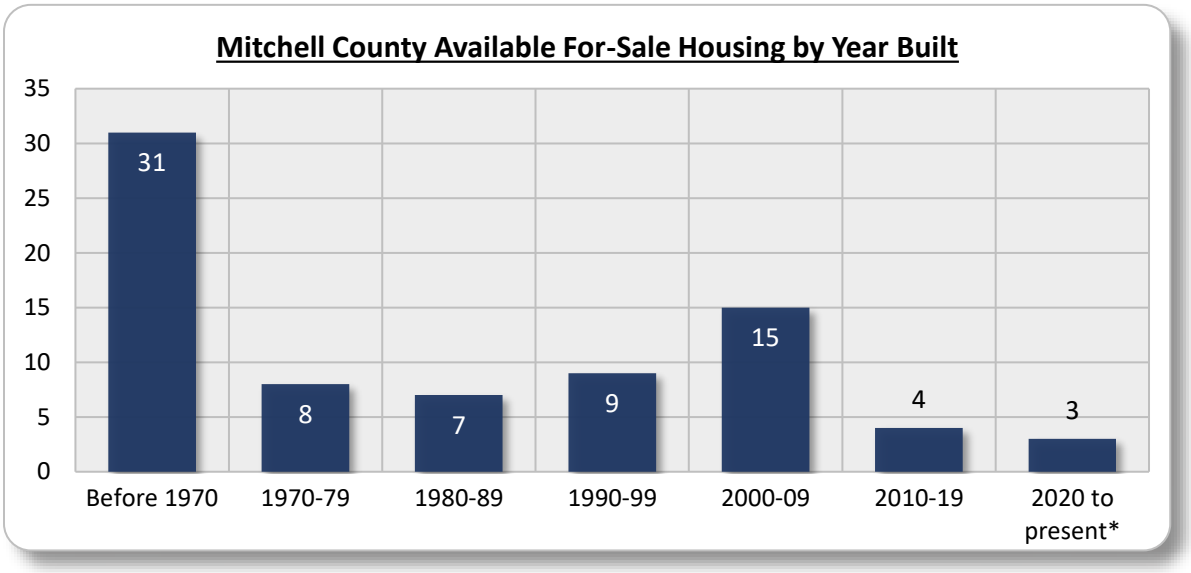
Year Built	Number Available	% of Supply	Average Square Feet	Price Range	Median List Price	Median Price per Sq. Ft.	Average Days on Market
Before 1970	31	40.3%	1,477	$85,000 - $1,599,995	$284,000	$220.28	212
1970 to 1979	8	10.4%	1,641	$199,000 - $467,000	$322,500	$183.88	131
1980 to 1989	7	9.1%	1,488	$239,900 - $480,000	$399,000	$263.67	121
1990 to 1999	9	11.7%	1,936	$159,000 - $1,100,000	$360,500	$221.88	216
2000 to 2009	15	19.5%	2,358	$264,500 - $1,800,000	$485,000	$221.67	109
2010 to 2019	4	5.2%	1,804	$230,000 - $999,900	$542,500	$344.80	71
2020 to present	3	3.9%	1,148	$175,000 - $312,999	$195,000	$208.33	83
Total	**77**	**100.0%**	**1,724**	**$85,000 - $1,800,000**	**$335,000**	**$221.67**	**164**

Source: Redfin.com & Bowen National Research

Within the PSA (Mitchell County), 40.3% of the available for-sale housing stock was built prior to 1970, while product built between 2000 and 2009 represents the second largest share (19.5%). Among the homes built prior to 1970, the median list price is $284,000. Homes built during this development period have an average days on market of 212 days, which is considered high. Given the age of these homes, it is possible that quality issues may be partially influencing the elevated days on market in some cases. Homes built between 2000 and 2009, which comprise the second largest share of available homes in the PSA, have a median list price of $485,000, but only have an average of 109 days on market. In general, the median list price increases for each subsequent development period. The most notable exception is among product built since

2020, which has a median list price of only $195,000. Interestingly, two of the three homes built since 2020 are manufactured homes comprising less than 1,000 square feet in size. Regardless, the data illustrates the prevalence of older homes in the area, and the average days on market among some of the development periods indicates there may be quality issues or secondary factors (e.g., storm damage) influencing the market.

The distribution of available homes in the PSA by year built is shown in the following graph:



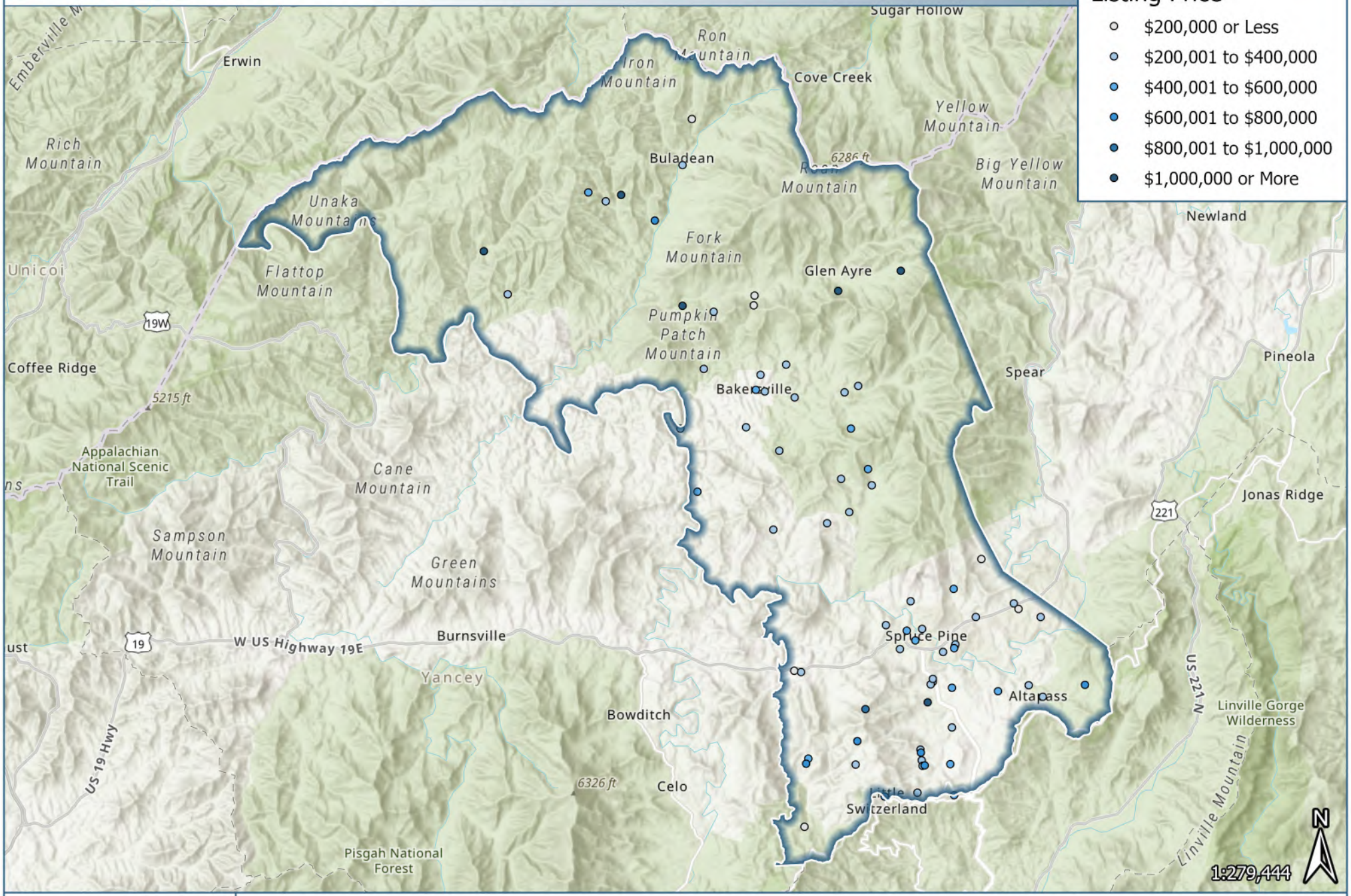
*As of February 27, 2026

A map illustrating the location of available for-sale homes by price point in the PSA (Mitchell County) is included on the following page.

BOWEN NATIONAL RESEARCH

Available For-Sale Housing by List Price

Mitchell County, NC



0 1 2 3 4 Miles

Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS
Additional Source(s): Bowen National Research

D. SENIOR CARE HOUSING

Mitchell County, like areas throughout much of the country, has a large senior population that requires a variety of senior housing alternatives to meet its diverse needs. Unlike traditional rental housing alternatives, senior care housing often draws support from a relatively large geographic area such as a county or region. Among seniors, generally age 65 or older, some individuals are either seeking a more leisurely lifestyle or need assistance with Activities of Daily Living (ADLs). ADLs typically include tasks such as bathing, dressing and medication management. As part of this analysis, four levels of care that typically respond to older adults seeking, or who need, alternatives to their current living environment were evaluated. This includes independent living, multi-unit assisted housing with services, adult care homes, and nursing homes. While each of these housing types, from least assisted to most assisted, are summarized below, only two senior care facilities (one adult care home and one nursing home) were identified and surveyed in Mitchell County.

Independent Living is a housing alternative that includes a residential unit, typically an apartment or cottage that offers an individual living area, kitchen, and sleeping room. The fees generally include the cost of the rental unit, some utilities, and services such as laundry, housekeeping, transportation, meals, etc. This housing type is also often referred to as congregate care. Physical assistance and medical treatment are not offered at such facilities.

Multi-unit Assisted Housing with Services (referred to as *multi-unit assisted* throughout this report) is a housing alternative that provides unlicensed care services along with the housing. Such housing offers residents the ability to obtain personal care services and nursing services through a home care or hospice agency that visit the subject site. Management at the subject project arranges services that correspond to an individualized written care plan.

Adult Care Homes are state licensed residences for aged and disabled adults who may require 24-hour supervision and assistance with personal care needs. People in adult care homes typically need a place to live, with some help with personal care (such as dressing, grooming and keeping up with medications), and some limited supervision. Medical care may be provided on occasion but is not routinely needed. Medication may be given by designated, trained staff. This type of facility is very similar to what is commonly referred to as "assisted living." These facilities generally offer limited care that is designed for seniors who need some assistance with daily activities but do not require nursing care.

Nursing Homes provide nursing care and related services for people who need nursing, medical, rehabilitation or other special services. These facilities are licensed by the state and may be certified to participate in the Medicaid and/or Medicare programs. Certain nursing homes may also meet specific standards for sub-acute care or dementia care.

The Medicare.com and North Carolina Division of Health Service Regulation websites were referenced for all licensed senior care facilities and cross referenced with other senior care facility resources. As such, it is likely that all licensed facilities in the area were identified.

Only two senior care facilities were identified and surveyed in the PSA (Mitchell County). Mitchell House, which is located at 13681 Highway 226 South in Spruce Pine, opened in 2012 and offers 80 adult care home beds. A total of 64 beds were occupied at the time of survey, leaving the remaining 16 beds vacant. This equates to an occupancy rate of 80.0%, which facility representatives state is typical. This is below the 91.4% national median occupancy rate for assisted living facilities according to the 2024 State of Seniors Housing report. Base monthly rates range from $3,600 to $4,800, depending upon the level of care and type of room. The Greens at Spruce Pine, which is located at 218 Laurel Creek Court in Spruce Pine, is the county's only licensed nursing home. The facility opened in 2005 and contains 117 marketed beds, 109 of which are occupied, leaving the remaining eight beds vacant. This results in a 93.2% occupancy rate for the facility, which is considerably higher than the 2024 national median occupancy rate of 83.7% for this facility type. The base monthly rate for this nursing home is $10,950.

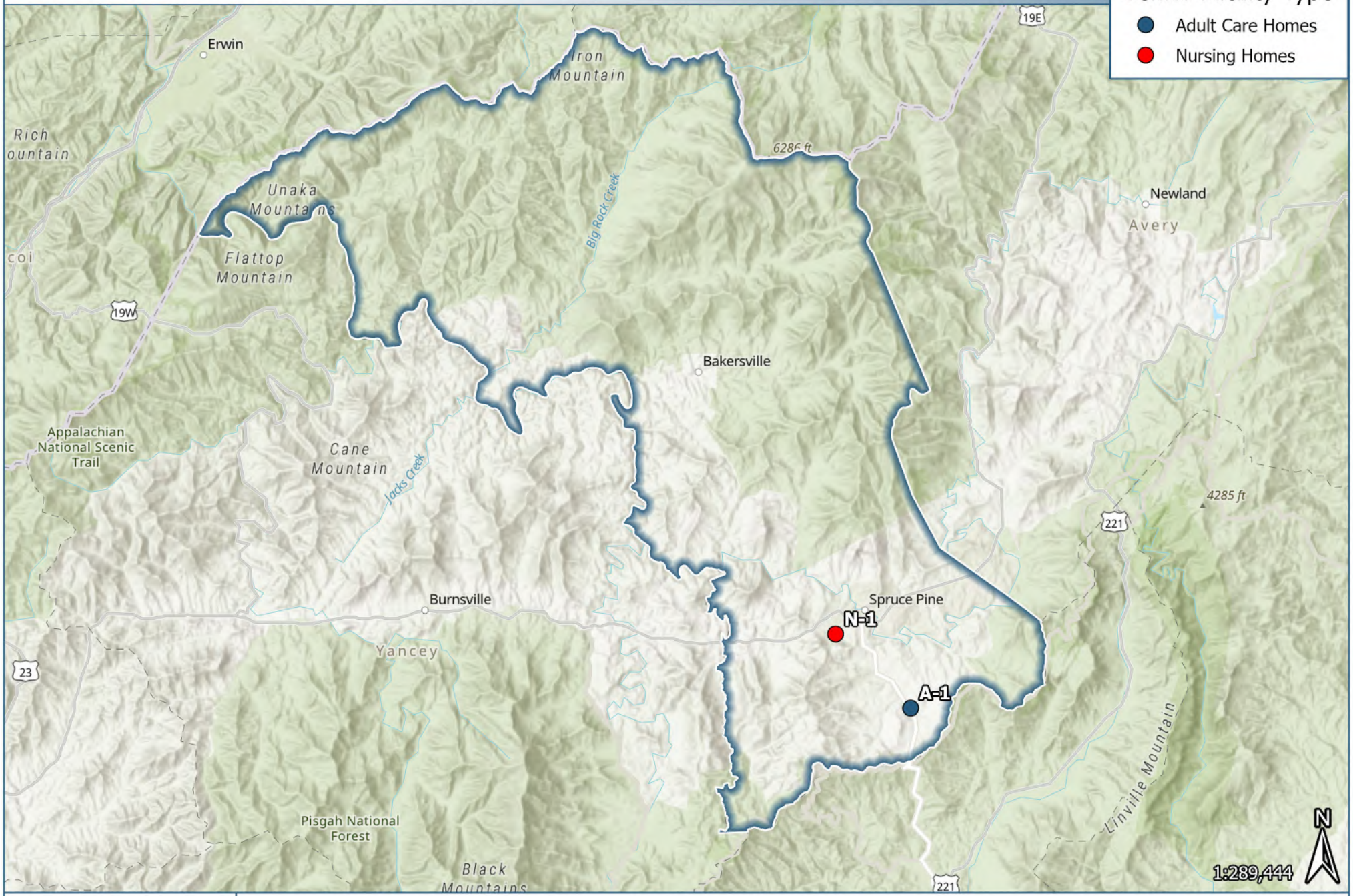
Given the notable projected growth of households aged 65 and older in the PSA over the next five years (175 households, or an increase of 6.5%), it is reasonable to conclude that demand for senior care facilities will likely increase in the county. As the only nursing home in the county is currently 93.2% occupied with only eight vacancies and senior households aged 75 and older are projected to increase by 164 households (13.3%), this may represent a future development opportunity within Mitchell County in the coming years and may be critical in meeting the potential growing demand. It will be important to monitor occupancy levels at Mitchell House to determine if there will be a need for adult care housing in the near future.

A map illustrating the location of the surveyed senior care facilities within Mitchell County is included on the following page.

BOWEN NATIONAL RESEARCH

Senior Facility Locations

Mitchell County, NC



0 1 2 3 4 Miles

Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS
Additional Source(s): Bowen National Research

E. PLANNED & PROPOSED

In order to assess housing development potential, recent residential building permit activity and identified residential projects in the development pipeline within the PSA (Mitchell County) were evaluated. Understanding the number of residential units and the type of housing being considered for development in the market can assist in determining how these projects are expected to meet the housing needs of the market.

The following table illustrates single-family and multifamily building permits issued within Mitchell County for the most recent 10-year period available (2015-2024):

Mitchell County, NC - Housing Unit Building Permits										
Permits	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Multifamily Permits	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
Single-Family Permits	23	29	28	40	25	34	39	40	39	44
Total Permits	23	29	28	40	25	36	39	40	39	44

Source: SOCDS Building Permits Database at https://www.huduser.gov/socds/permits/

A total of 343 residential permits were issued in the PSA (Mitchell County) between 2015 and 2024. With the exception of two multifamily permits in 2020, all residential permits were single-family building permits. Given the notable lack of available rental options in the PSA, the very limited number of multifamily permits issued in the county between 2015 and 2024 is likely directly influencing the rental scarcity in the area. Conversely, the steady number of single-family permits issued since 2020 has likely contributed to a moderate improvement of for-sale availability in the PSA (availability rate of 1.0% in June of 2021 versus 1.5% in February of 2026). This also illustrates the consistent interest in residential development within Mitchell County.

Planned and Proposed Residential Housing Development

Bowen National Research conducted interviews with representatives of area building and permitting departments and did extensive online research and it was determined there are no residential projects either planned for development or currently under construction within the PSA. While the preceding permit data illustrates the steady but measured development of individual single-family homes, the lack of larger development in the pipeline may be influenced by factors other than housing demand. These factors may include availability of larger tracts of land suitable for extensive developments, utility constraints, lack of financing options and/or interest rates, or limited exposure of potential opportunities to outside developers. Note that additional projects may have been introduced into the pipeline since the time interviews and research were completed.

VII. OTHER HOUSING MARKET FACTORS

INTRODUCTION

Factors other than demography, employment, and housing supply (all analyzed earlier in this study) can affect the strength or weakness of a given housing market. The following additional factors influence a housing market's performance and needs, and are discussed relative to the PSA (Mitchell County) and compared with state and national data, when applicable:

- Residential Blight
- Residential Development Opportunities
- Residential Foreclosures
- Development Costs & Government Regulations
- Natural Disaster Impact
- Developer/Investor Identification
- Housing Program Identification

A. RESIDENTIAL BLIGHT

Blight, which is generally considered the visible decline of property, can have a detrimental effect on nearby properties within a neighborhood. Blight can be caused by several factors, including economic decline, population decline, and the high cost to maintain/upgrade older housing. There are specific references to blight within the North Carolina General Statutes. According to Chapter 160A-503 (Definitions), a *"Blighted parcel" shall mean a parcel on which there is a predominance of buildings or improvements (or which is predominantly residential in character), and which, by reason of dilapidation, deterioration, age or obsolescence, inadequate provision for ventilation, light, air, sanitation, or open spaces, high density of population and overcrowding, unsanitary or unsafe conditions, or the existence of conditions which endanger life or property by fire and other causes, or any combination of such factors, substantially impairs the sound growth of the community, is conducive to ill health, transmission of disease, infant mortality, juvenile delinquency and crime, and is detrimental to the public health, safety, morals or welfare.*

According to Chapter 122A-2 (Legislative findings and purposes), which references the role of the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency, *"It is imperative that the supply of residential housing for persons and families of lower income affected by the spread of slum conditions and blight and for persons and families of lower income displaced by public actions or natural disaster be increased; and that private enterprise and investment be encouraged to sponsor, build and rehabilitate residential housing for such persons and families, to help prevent the recurrence of slum conditions and blight and assist in their permanent elimination throughout North Carolina."* The General Statutes also reference blight pertaining to the repair, closing, and/or demolition of unsafe buildings.

Per the terms of this assignment, the survey of residential blighted structures is primarily focused on the two incorporated municipalities in Mitchell County: Bakersville and Spruce Pine. Areas of the county served by primary state highways and county roads were also included as part of the search for blighted residential structures. However, the search for blighted residential structures did not include every street in the county. It should be noted that homes damaged from Tropical Storm Helene were included in this inventory, though no distinction was made between natural blight and hurricane-impacted homes.

Zoning regulations in Mitchell County are not enforced at the county government level. Spruce Pine is the only municipality in the county with zoning regulations. In general, zoning codes enforced within a municipal jurisdiction are implemented in part to prevent areas from becoming blighted. Zoning regulations also specifically note public nuisances for the regulation of signs, buildings, and other structures, as well as for decisions that consider whether a zoning variance should be granted for a property.

The Town of Spruce Pine Code Enforcement Officer is tasked with enforcing zoning regulations to help prevent public nuisances that could potentially lead to residential blight. Public nuisances, as defined by Chapter 14 of the Town of Spruce Pine Draft Ordinances, include excessive vegetation growth of at least 10 inches within 100 feet of a principal structure; accumulation of trash, garbage, waste, or combustible items; open storage of furniture and appliances; and debris from the demolition of structures. The nuisances chapter also outlines procedures that are taken by the Town of Spruce Pine to mitigate public nuisances, including procedures implemented to deal with chronic violators.

There are also references to public health and safety, occupant welfare, and even aesthetic factors throughout various sections of zoning ordinances that would contribute to the general definition of blight even if not specifically defined. In a less defined way, several case types (especially unsecured openings, graffiti, illegal dumping, and older housing code violations) could be considered as indicators of blight, or at least some form of community and property owner disinvestment, though the area may not be blighted by definition.

For the purposes of this analysis, these code violations and definitions were used as initial identifiers of possible blight. Residential properties within the study area that meet any of the following criteria were classified to be blighted. Summary definitions of the most common forms of residential blight are listed as follows:

Boarded Up Structure. This is a building or structure with multiple windows and/or doors that have boards placed on those points of entry and for which it appears the unit has been abandoned and that no work or repair appears to be underway.

Building or Structure Which is in a State of Disrepair. This is a residential structure exhibiting noticeable signs of disrepair or neglect such as, but not limited to, deteriorated exterior walls and/or roof coverings, broken or missing windows or doors which constitute a hazardous condition or a potential attraction to trespassers, or building exteriors, walls, fences, signs, retaining walls, driveways, walkways, sidewalks or other structures on the property which are broken, deteriorated, or substantially defaced, to the extent that the disrepair is visible from any public right of way or visually impacts neighboring public or private property or presents an endangerment to public safety.

Unkempt Property. This is a property showing clear signs of overgrown, diseased, dead, or decayed trees, weeds or vegetation that may create a public safety hazard or substantially detract from the aesthetic and property values of neighboring properties. This may also include properties which have notable refuse or garbage clearly visible from the street or abandoned/broken appliances, cars in disrepair and on blocks, or other items of unused and unsightly property that may be deemed a public nuisance or otherwise detract from the aesthetic and property values of neighboring properties. An unkempt property may also lack a proper access point (i.e., a functional driveway) in order to provide access to the residential structure.

Using the preceding descriptions of blight, Bowen National Research identified properties in Mitchell County that were in various stages of disrepair, abandoned, boarded up or otherwise appeared to be in an unsafe condition. A representative of Bowen National Research personally visited residential neighborhoods within the county, generally evaluating the exterior condition of the occupied and vacant housing stock via a windshield survey. Residential housing stock evaluated as part of this survey consisted of single-family houses and mobile homes.





From this on-site observation, 51 residential units were identified in the county that exhibited some level of exterior blight. It should be noted that the interiors of properties were not evaluated as part of this survey. These 51 residential units represent 0.6% of the 8,857 total housing units in Mitchell County (based on 2025 estimates). Typically, blighted residential units in a county represent less than 1.0% of all

residential units. The 0.6% share of blighted residential properties in the county is relatively low. However, these properties still represent potential nuisances, safety hazards, and are potentially detrimental to nearby property uses and values. As a general guideline, Bowen National Research identified properties that were considered to exhibit visual evidence of exterior deficiencies and disrepair. Several of these structures are boarded up, have missing siding or roof shingles, or show signs of damage that make such units either uninhabitable or represent serious safety or public nuisance issues.

Note that a representative of Bowen National Research did not visit every residential street within Mitchell County. The survey of blighted units primarily concentrated on neighborhoods located within the towns of Bakersville and Spruce Pine as well as major streets and highways within unincorporated areas of the county. A more extensive survey of residential blight within the county would have likely uncovered additional residential units that exhibited characteristics of blight.

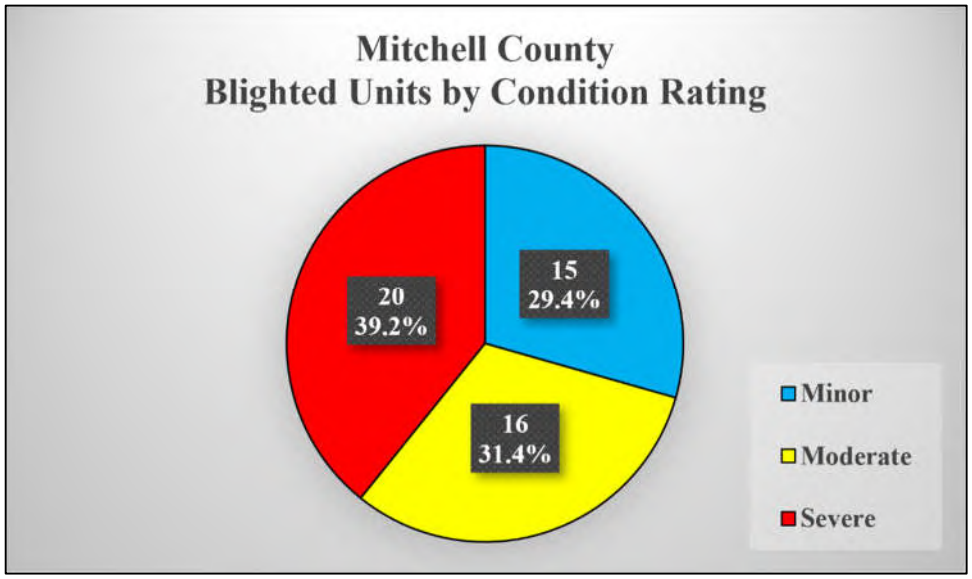
In addition to the overall quantity of blight within Mitchell County, it is also important to understand that the degree to which a housing unit is blighted can vary significantly. For the purposes of this analysis, the blighted structures identified during the neighborhood survey were classified into one of three categories: *Minor, Moderate,* or *Severe*. It should be noted that these classifications are based primarily on qualitative observations of the exterior of each housing unit, and in some cases, pictures from online resources were utilized to supplement the Bowen National Research survey and assign a rating. As such, a qualified inspection of each structure, which is beyond the scope of this assessment and may include evaluation of plumbing and mechanical system operations, structural stability, code compliance and the presence of lead, asbestos, or other environmental factors, is necessary to produce a more accurate estimate of needed repairs. A summary definition of each blight classification used in this analysis is below:

Minor Blight: This is a structure that exhibits mostly cosmetic deficiencies such as peeling paint, minor damage to gutter systems, minor disrepair of trim, soffits or the roof, an unkempt yard, or the excessive presence of clutter or debris on the porch. Without proper mitigation of the existing deficiencies, further deterioration of the structure, which will require more significant repairs in the future, will likely occur. In some instances, this may include properties that have boarded up entryways or windows and appear to be vacant, but no other notable signs of obvious deterioration exist.

Moderate Blight: Structures with moderate blight typically include units with a significant number of cosmetic issues that reduce overall neighborhood appeal, have multiple broken or boarded windows, exhibit early signs of structural degradation to exposed framing or supports, require roof replacement with limited truss repair, or have a notable portion of the siding or masonry in disrepair. Many of these units appear to have been vacant for an intermediate length of time, may have boarded entryways, and a rapid deterioration of the structural integrity of the unit is likely imminent. Repairs to units with moderate blight are typically more extensive and costly, and likely require the services of a licensed contractor.

Severe Blight: Housing units with severe blight show advanced signs of structural deterioration, extensive fire damage, portions of the structure either partially collapsed or at high risk of collapse, signs of extended abandonment, a majority of windows or doors either in disrepair or missing, intrusion of vegetation into the structure, vandalism, indications of major foundation issues, or any structure that is generally unsafe, unsanitary, dangerous, or detrimental to public safety or welfare.

The distribution of blighted units by condition rating is depicted in the following chart:



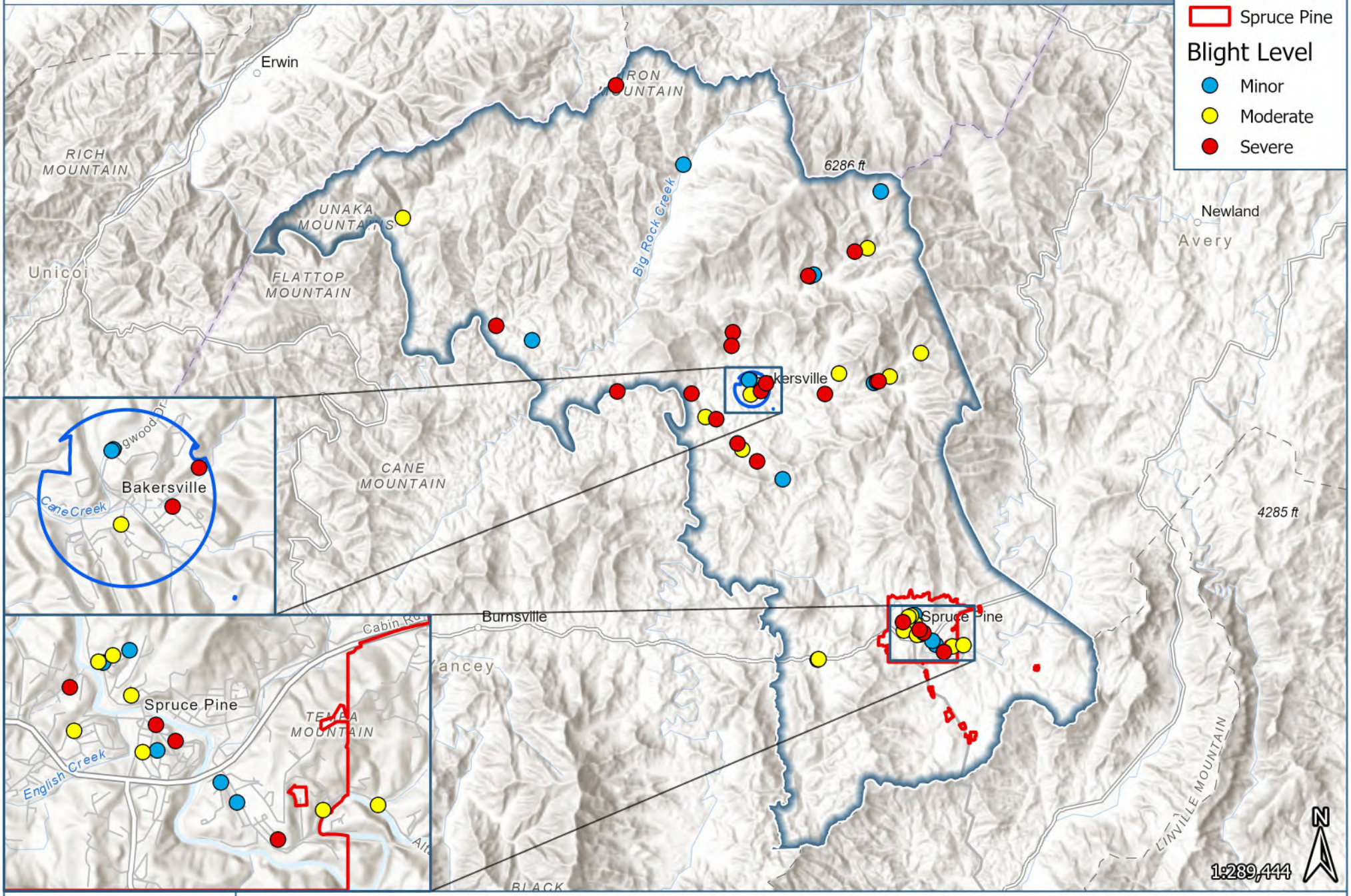
Note that over 70% of the blighted units identified in Mitchell County are classified as either moderate or severe. Moderately blighted units are habitable but show the type of deterioration that could lead to severe blight if not addressed, while severely blighted units are generally not habitable and require extensive renovation or demolition. The overall supply of moderately and severely blighted residential units in the county represents structures in need of significant repair.

A map showing the approximate location and degree of residential blight in Mitchell County is included on the following page.

BOWEN NATIONAL RESEARCH

Residential Blight

Mitchell County, NC



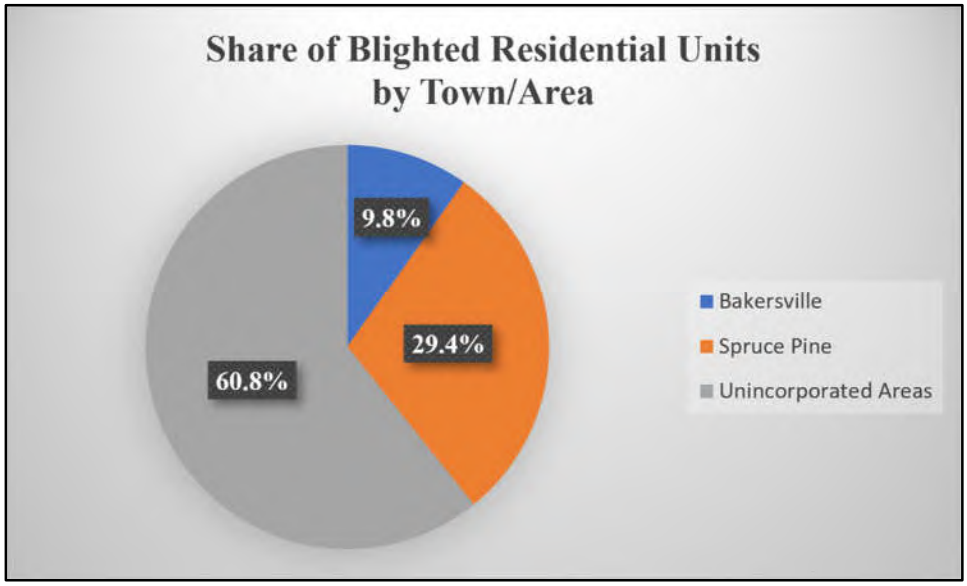
0 1 2 3 4 Miles

Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Esri, CGIAR, USGS, Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS
Additional Source(s): Bowen National Research

The following table illustrates the total number of blighted residential units identified by town or area within Mitchell County. Note that unincorporated areas identified in the table represent areas of the county outside of Bakersville and Spruce Pine.

Town/Area	Number of Units	Share of Units
Town of Bakersville	5	9.8%
Town of Spruce Pine	15	29.4%
Unincorporated Areas	31	60.8%
Total	**51**	**100.0%**

Source: Bowen National Research



As indicated by the preceding table and chart, over 60% of the blighted residential units in Mitchell County were located outside of the towns of Bakersville and Spruce Pine. In fact, only 20 of the 51 blighted units identified in the county are within municipalities. A total of five blighted residential units were identified in the town of Bakersville, representing less than 10% of blighted units in the county. A total of 15 blighted residential units were identified in the town of Spruce Pine, which is the largest town by population and area in Mitchell County.

The following table summarizes streets within towns or areas of Mitchell County that have blighted residential units. Streets that include three or more blighted residential units within the same town or area are displayed in red font.

Blighted Residential Units by Street (Mitchell County)			
Town/Area	Street	Homes Abandoned/ in Disrepair	Share of Blighted Homes
Town of Bakersville	Dogwood Dr.	2	3.9%
	N. Mitchell Ave.	1	2.0%
	Redwood Rd.	1	2.0%
	S. Mitchell Ave.	1	2.0%
	Total	**5**	**9.8%**
Town of Spruce Pine	Altapass Hwy.	2	3.9%
	Berry St.	1	2.0%
	Chapel St.	1	2.0%
	Creed Pitman Rd.	1	2.0%
	E. Tappan St.	1	2.0%
	English St.	1	2.0%
	Fortner Dr.	1	2.0%
	Highland Ave. Ext.	1	2.0%
	Laurel Ave.	1	1.9%
	Summit Ave.	1	1.9%
	Sunny Brook Dr.	4	7.8%
	Total	**15**	**29.4%**
Unincorporated Areas of Mitchell County	Altapass Hwy.	1	2.0%
	Cane Creek Rd.	1	2.0%
	Guy Snyder Rd.	2	3.9%
	Hughes Gap Rd.	1	2.0%
	Ledford Rd.	1	2.0%
	Mine Creek Rd.	2	3.9%
	NC-197	4	7.8%
	NC-226	2	3.9%
	NC-261	8	15.7%
	NC-80	3	5.9%
	Old U.S. Hwy 19 E.	2	3.9%
	Polly Hollow Rd.	1	2.0%
	Sandy Branch Rd.	1	2.0%
	Snow Hill Rd.	1	2.0%
	Snyder Rd.	1	2.0%
	Total	**31**	**60.8%**

Source: Bowen National Research
Note: Percentages may not add up within towns and areas due to rounding; In instances where streets extend into more than one town/area, total number of homes are listed by town/area.

As depicted in the preceding table, the majority of blighted residential units are distributed throughout the unincorporated areas of Mitchell County, which includes all areas outside of the towns of Bakersville and Spruce Pine. Despite the total number of blighted residential units, Mitchell County does not have a notable concentration of blighted units in any one area. NC-261, where a total of eight blighted units are located, is also one of the longest roadways in terms of mileage in the county. Despite the higher number of blighted residential units located along NC-261, it is important to note that there is not a cluster of blighted residential units along this roadway. Regardless, the preceding streets as well as areas noted on the map included earlier in this section illustrate possible geographic areas of focus for mitigation of residential blight within Mitchell County.

B. RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Housing markets expand when the number of households increases, either from in-migration or from new household formations. In order for a given market to grow, households must find acceptable and available housing units (either newly created or pre-existing). If acceptable units are not available, households will not enter the housing market and the market may stagnate or decline. Rehabilitation of occupied units does not expand housing markets, although it may improve them. For new housing to be created, land and/or existing buildings (suitable for residential use) must be readily available, properly zoned, and feasibly sized for development. The absence of available residential real estate can prevent housing market growth unless unrealized zoning densities (units per acre) are achieved on existing properties.

Market growth strategies that recommend additional housing units should have one or more of the following real estate options available: 1) land without buildings, including surface parking lots (new development), 2) unusable buildings (demolition-redevelopment), 3) reusable non-residential buildings (adaptive-reuse), and 4) vacant reusable residential buildings (rehabilitation). Reusable residential buildings should be unoccupied prior to acquisition and/or renovation, in order for their units to be newly created within the market. In addition to their availability, these real estate offerings should be zoned for residential use (or capable of achieving the same) and of a feasible size for profitability.

Based on online and on-the-ground research conducted in May of 2025, Bowen National Research identified sites that could support potential residential development in the PSA (Mitchell County). Real estate listings and information from the Mitchell County Tax Assessor and Mitchell County GIS were also used to supplement the information collected for this report. These potential housing development properties were selected without complete knowledge of availability, price, or zoning status, and the vacancy and for-sale status were not confirmed. Although this search was not exhaustive, it does represent a list of some of the most obvious real estate opportunities in Mitchell County. A total of 23 properties were identified. Of the 23 total properties, seven properties contain at least one existing building that is not necessarily vacant and may require demolition, new construction, or adaptive reuse. The remaining 16 properties were vacant or undeveloped parcels of land that could potentially support residential development. It should be noted that the survey of potential development opportunities in Mitchell County consists of properties that were actively marketed for sale at the time of this report as well as those identified in person while conducting on-the-ground research.

Information on potential housing development opportunity sites in Mitchell County is presented in the following table.

Development Opportunity Sites – Mitchell County, North Carolina						
Map Code	Street Address	Location	Year Built	Building Size (Square Feet)	Land Size (Acres)	Zoning District
1	177 Crimson Laurel Way	Bakersville	1956	2,880	0.61	No zoning
2	143 Crimson Laurel Way	Bakersville	1954	6,378	1.29	No zoning
3	N. Mitchell Ave./Redwood Rd.	Bakersville	-	-	0.61	No zoning
4	322 Old Dale Rd.	Spruce Pine*	-	-	3.68	No zoning
5	Old Dale Rd./Sunny Field Dr.	Spruce Pine*	-	-	13.89	No zoning
6	Parkwood Hills Dr.	Spruce Pine*	-	-	31.03	No zoning
7	Halltown Rd.	Spruce Pine*	-	-	4.39	No zoning
8	Sullins Branch Rd.	Spruce Pine*	-	-	32.94	No zoning
9	14109 S. NC-226	Spruce Pine	2003	3,104	1.87	C-3 Highway Business District
10	State Hwy 226/Meadowlark Ln.	Spruce Pine	-	-	1.62	R-1 Low-Density Residential
11	Sullins Branch Rd.	Spruce Pine	-	-	2.85	R-2 Medium-Density Residential
12	State Hwy 226/Deer Park Lake Rd.	Spruce Pine	-	-	3.22	R-1 Low-Density Residential
13	Sunnybrook Dr./Monte Vista Cir.	Spruce Pine	-	-	1.37	R-2 Medium-Density Residential
14	Phillips Ln.	Spruce Pine	-	-	0.53	R-2 Medium-Density Residential
15	155 Elm St.	Spruce Pine	-	-	0.81	R-2 Medium-Density Residential
16	962 Oak Ave.	Spruce Pine	1951	1,536	0.47	C-1A Central Business Fringe District
17	1119 Oak Ave.	Spruce Pine	-	-	0.50	C-1A Central Business Fringe District
18	U.S. Highway 19E/Cabin Rd.	Spruce Pine	-	-	0.93	C-3 Highway Business District
19	Summit Ave./Spring St.	Spruce Pine	-	-	2.00	C-3 Highway Business District
20	215 Locust St.	Spruce Pine	-	-	0.10	C-1 Primary Business District
21	Altapass Hwy	Spruce Pine	1940	9,548	1.97	I-2 Industrial District
22	Oak Ave./Altapass Hwy	Spruce Pine	1930	18,150	0.54	C-1A Central Business Fringe District
23	55 Altapass Hwy	Spruce Pine	1930/1960	51,730	7.97	I-2 Industrial District

Sources: LoopNet, Realtor.com, Mitchell County GIS, Mitchell County Tax Assessor, Town of Spruce Pine Zoning Ordinance
Note: Total land area includes total building area
*Property is located outside of the Spruce Pine town limits and is not subject to zoning regulations

A total of 23 property sites (both land and buildings) were identified in the PSA that are potentially capable of accommodating future residential development via new construction or adaptive reuse. In some instances, adjacent parcels and/or buildings were adjoined to create one potential site location. The 23 identified properties listed in the preceding table represent over 115 acres of land and approximately 93,000 square feet of existing structure area. Nine of the 23 identified properties are less than one acre in size, which generally restricts the number of residential units that can be built on these properties. In many instances, these smaller lots are located within established residential or commercial areas. These infill lots collectively represent a residential development opportunity in the county, especially since these infill lots are located within established areas with access to utilities and water/sewer infrastructure.

Based on the preceding listings, the availability of potential residential development sites (properties capable of delivering new housing units) within the PSA (Mitchell County) appears to be a potential obstacle to increasing the number of housing units in the county. Reasons for this include, but are not limited to, steep topography (slope) of undeveloped land in the county, lack of access to water

and/or sewer infrastructure, inadequate road infrastructure to support development, and floodplains within established areas of the county. These factors greatly reduce the inventory of land that is potentially available for development in Mitchell County. Note that a stakeholder survey was conducted in Mitchell County as part of this Housing Needs Assessment. The stakeholder survey asked community leaders about housing issues in the county, including barriers to development. Most survey respondents noted that lack of access to public water and sewer utilities were infrastructure issues that limited residential development in the county. In addition, over one-third of stakeholders noted that government assistance with infrastructure issues is among the best options to reduce barriers or obstacles to residential development. A summary of this stakeholder survey is in the Community Input section of this report (Section IX). As Mitchell County has a relatively limited supply of land available for development, the redevelopment of properties within established areas served by water and sewer utilities should be considered as a primary strategy to potentially add more residential units to the county.

As the largest identified properties are located in unincorporated areas, there are not many obvious opportunities to develop large residential or mixed-use projects in Bakersville or Spruce Pine. Despite the lack of larger properties within both municipalities, some of the potential sites in each town include existing buildings or structures. A total of seven properties have at least one existing building or structure ranging in size from 1,536 square feet to 51,730 square feet, potentially enabling the redevelopment of such structures into single-family or multifamily projects. Buildings or structures identified as part of this analysis include retail/commercial buildings, a warehouse building, and industrial buildings. Not all properties containing an existing building or structure may be feasible to redevelop as housing due to overall age, condition, or structural makeup (availability and feasibility of identified properties were beyond the scope of this study).

The following table summarizes the total number of properties and total acreage by location for the 23 identified properties. Note that individual shares in the table may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Number of Properties and Total Acreage by Location
Mitchell County, North Carolina

Location	Number of Properties	Share of Properties	Total Acreage	Share of Total Acreage
Bakersville	3	13.0%	2.51	2.2%
Spruce Pine	20	87.0%	112.68	97.8%
Total	**23**	**100.0%**	**115.19**	**100.0%**

Most development opportunity properties are located in the Spruce Pine area, which serves as the primary commercial area of Mitchell County. By comparison, the town of Bakersville is smaller in area and is largely established, featuring fewer vacant parcels and redevelopment opportunities. The water and sewer infrastructure in Mitchell County is located within the Bakersville and Spruce Pine areas of the county. Unincorporated portions of the county that lack water and sewer utilities were not considered to be areas of focus for this analysis.

The following table summarizes total acreage and overall share of acreage by *zoning district* for the 23 identified properties. Note that individual shares in the table may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Number of Properties and Total Acreage by Zoning District Mitchell County, North Carolina				
Zoning District	Number of Properties	Share of Properties	Total Acreage	Share of Total Acreage
C-1 Primary Business District	1	4.3%	0.1	0.1%
C-1A Central Business Fringe District	3	13.0%	1.51	1.3%
C-3 Highway Business District	3	13.0%	4.8	4.2%
I-2 Industrial District	2	8.7%	9.94	8.6%
R-1 Low-Density Residential	2	8.7%	4.84	4.2%
R-2 Medium Density Residential	4	17.4%	5.56	4.8%
No Zoning	8	34.8%	88.44	76.8%
Total	**23**	**100.0%**	**115.19**	**100.0%**

The town of Spruce Pine is the only area in Mitchell County that has a zoning ordinance. The town of Bakersville and unincorporated areas of Mitchell County are not subject to zoning regulations. The eight properties that are not subject to zoning regulations are located outside of the town of Spruce Pine, with three of these properties located in the town of Bakersville. These eight properties represent over one-third of the total identified properties and over 75% of the total acreage among the development opportunity properties in the county. Therefore, the largest share of acreage identified as potential development opportunities in the county are not zoned for any specific type of land use. The remaining 15 properties identified as part of this analysis are subject to zoning regulations administered by the Town of Spruce Pine. Among these 15 properties, seven properties are within a commercial zoning district, six properties are within a residential zoning district, and two properties are zoned for industrial purposes. While these properties in Spruce Pine represent most of the total identified development sites, they represent less than one-quarter of the total identified acreage. Note that properties zoned for non-residential purposes may require rezoning or a variance in order to maximize residential development.

Given that there are several housing development sites within the PSA (Mitchell County) that can potentially support new residential development, the location within the PSA where new residential units will have the greatest chance of success is the next critical question. While outside the scope of this study, the desirability of a particular neighborhood or location is influenced by proximity to work, school, entertainment venues, recreational amenities, retail services, dining establishments, and major roadways. As such, sites within or near established municipalities are likely conducive to new residential units due to the proximity of existing infrastructure, area services and employment opportunities.

The availability of infrastructure, including water, sewer, roads, electric power, natural gas, and broadband, is a critical factor in determining where real estate development occurs. As higher population densities and taller, multistory structures are directly correlated with lower housing costs, areas of Mitchell County with

municipal water and sewer utilities have a unique opportunity to accommodate housing that is affordable and attainable. For example, developers of Low-Income Housing Tax Credit properties are generally unwilling to submit applications for projects that are not served by public water and sewer utilities, which generally limits multifamily development in areas outside of cities and towns. Access to public utilities and the area's utility capacity were not considered as part of this study and would require engineering services to assess public utility factors that ultimately impact the viability of a site to support residential development.

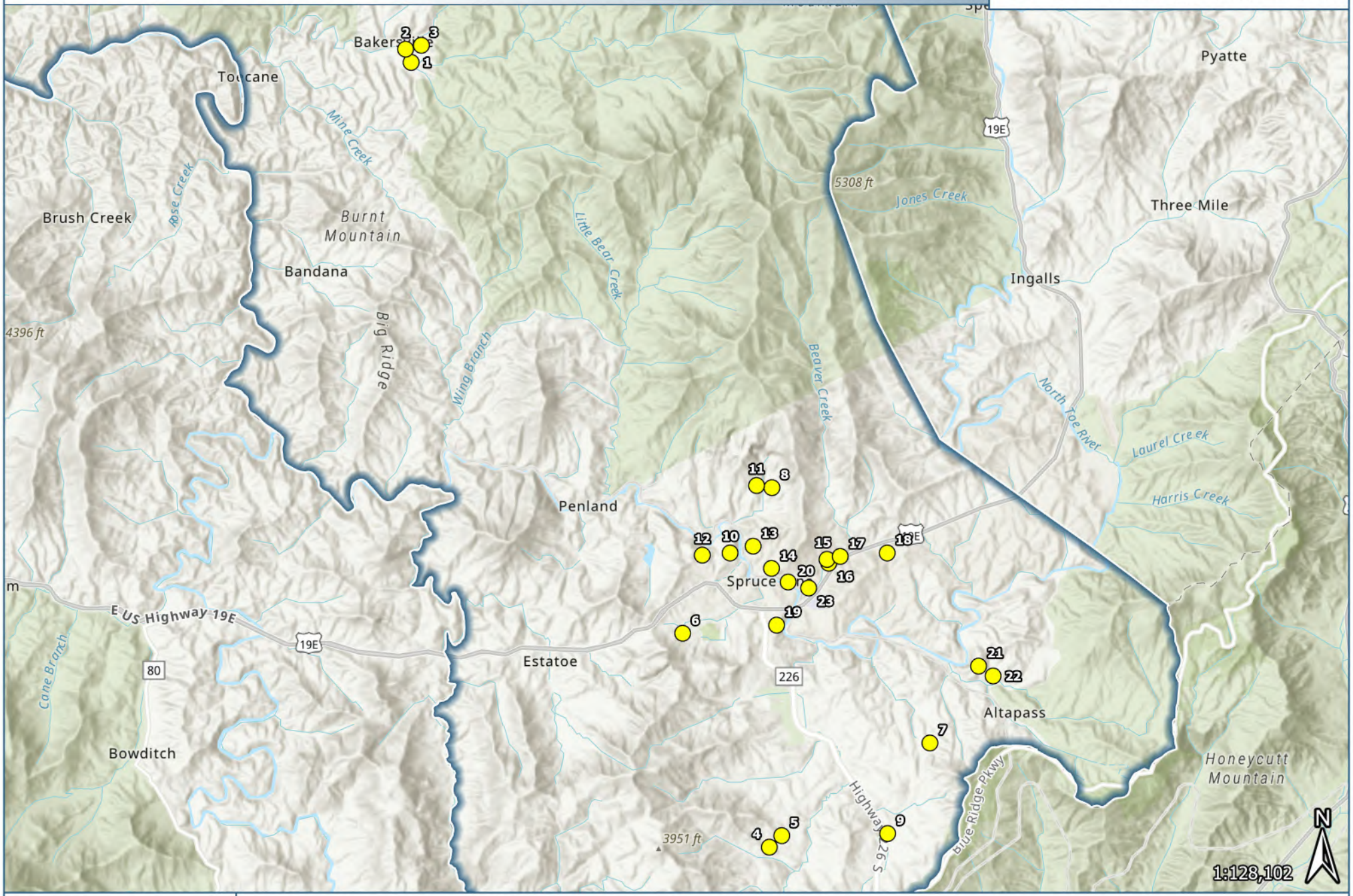
It is critical to point out that the properties identified in this section do not represent a complete list of all properties that are available for residential development. There are likely additional sites, both parcels and buildings, within Mitchell County that could be placed on the market and made available for development. Future housing strategies may involve public outreach efforts to encourage property owners to notify a designated organization (e.g., local government or economic development representatives, a land bank/land reuse agency, local Habitat for Humanity officials, local housing department/authority representatives, etc.) of properties that may be made available for purchase and subsequent development opportunities.

A map illustrating the location of the 23 potential housing development opportunity properties is on the following page. The Map Code number in the summary table on page VII-10 is used to locate each property.

BOWEN NATIONAL RESEARCH

Development Opportunity Locations

Mitchell County, NC



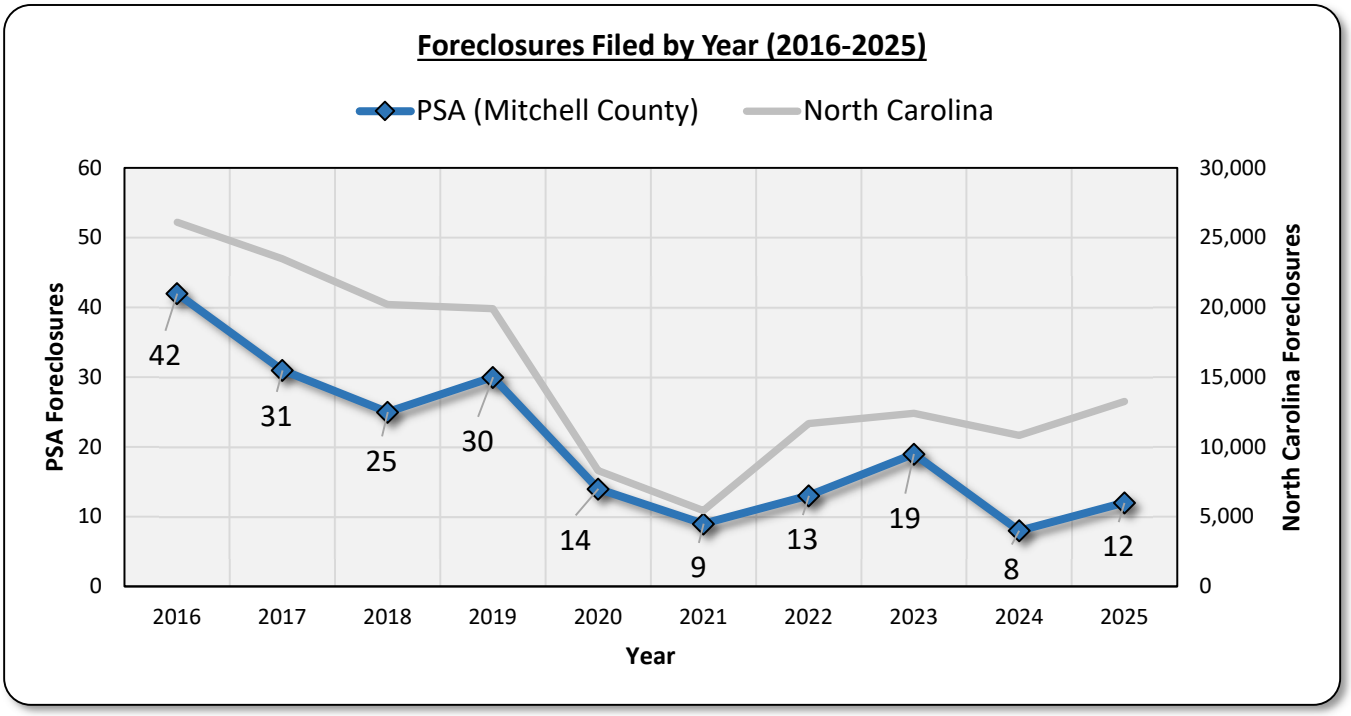
Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS
Additional Source(s): Bowen National Research

C. RESIDENTIAL FORECLOSURES

Understanding the degree to which residential foreclosures occur can often reveal other economic and housing related issues that exist within an area, such as housing affordability, unemployment issues, and the relationship between local wages and housing costs. In addition, an examination of historical trends in an area will determine if foreclosures are increasing or decreasing over time. Because foreclosures can limit a resident's ability to secure housing in the future and possibly contribute to homelessness, foreclosures can be an important factor to assess in the overall housing needs for a community. This section of analysis compares the degree to which foreclosures occur in the PSA (Mitchell County) and if foreclosures are increasing or decreasing over time. An abnormally high rate or increasing volume of residential foreclosures can be an indicator of housing challenges or deficiencies in a market. When applicable, data for the state of North Carolina is used for comparison purposes.

The following table and graph illustrate annual foreclosure filing activity from 2016 to 2025 for the PSA (Mitchell County) and the state of North Carolina. Note that data provided by the North Carolian Judicial Branch includes *both* residential and business foreclosure filings and does not represent the number of foreclosures *granted*.

Foreclosures Filed by Year (2016-2025)*										
Study Area	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
Mitchell County	42	31	25	30	14	9	13	19	8	12
North Carolina	26,121	23,478	20,201	19,904	8,302	5,439	11,672	12,415	10,816	13,245



Source: North Carolina Judicial Branch (nccourts.gov)
*Includes civil case foreclosure filings for homes or businesses

A total of 203 foreclosures were filed within the PSA (Mitchell County) during the 10-year period between 2016 and 2025, reflecting an annual average of 20.3 filings per year. From the peak of 42 foreclosures filed in 2016, the number of foreclosures filed each year generally declined between 2016 and 2019. Beginning in 2020, foreclosure activity decreased significantly within Mitchell County and the state. This is due in large part to federal moratoria and statewide limitations on foreclosures that were enacted in response to the economic effects from the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, foreclosure proceedings in the PSA and state were exceptionally low in 2021, but increased moderately in both 2022 and 2023. In 2024 and 2025, foreclosures within the PSA remained well below the 10-year average. Overall, the data illustrates that foreclosure activity in the PSA has generally declined since 2016. While an increase occurred during 2022 and 2023, this was likely a market correction driven by the expiration of temporary moratoria. Given that the graph trend lines for the PSA and state are remarkably similar over the course of the 10-year period, it is reasonable to conclude that the majority of foreclosure activity in Mitchell County is driven by larger macroeconomic factors rather than local economic challenges. Regardless, the health of the local economy can drastically influence foreclosure activity within the PSA, and large-scale disruptions to the local economy such as those experienced after Tropical Storm Helene can increase foreclosure activity over time.

D. DEVELOPMENT COSTS AND GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS

This section evaluates potential financial and regulatory barriers to residential development in Mitchell County. For the purposes of this analysis, potential financial barriers to development include land costs, labor costs, utility installation costs, property taxes, and overall development costs, all of which can impact whether or not a residential project is built. Regulatory barriers include current zoning policies that dictate the type and size of residential development that is permitted.

Development Costs

Land costs, including acquisition costs and taxes, factor into the development of real estate and could be a potential barrier to development. When land costs are bundled into construction costs, a greater picture emerges of overall development costs. Availability of land suitable for development, which typically includes access to utilities and municipal water and sewer, also affects land costs.

A common barrier to development is the *lack of available land* within a municipality or county for a large-scale residential project, especially within established areas. The type of vacant parcel needed for a large-scale residential project typically has to meet several criteria in order to be shovel-ready, including availability of utilities, a location outside of a designated flood zone, and proximity to community services. Once these factors are considered, the number of available parcels suitable for development is often diminished. This in turn drives up prices for land that meets most or all of these criteria.

As part of this analysis, a search was conducted for vacant land sales in Mitchell County from May 10, 2021 to April 21, 2026. Note that property sales on acreage that included buildings or structures were excluded from this analysis. Based on this criteria, a total of 311 *vacant* land sales were identified in Mitchell County during this five-year period. Land prices for properties sold in Mitchell County during the period ranged from $2,026 to $125,592 per acre with a *median sales price of $10,547 per acre*. The low median sales price per acre reflects the sale of raw land that was located outside of established municipalities and did not include access to natural gas, water, or sewer utilities.

To supplement this recent sales data, information on vacant properties that are *currently listed* for sale in the PSA (Mitchell County) and surrounding North Carolina counties was obtained. List prices for the properties identified in the PSA range from $3,776 to $295,697 per acre with a *median list price of $25,470 per acre*. Vacant land listings as of June 5, 2026 are summarized in the following table for Mitchell County and surrounding North Carolina counties.

Median List Price Per Acre of Vacant Land by Area (As of June 5, 2026)					
County	Number of Listings	Median Acreage	Median List Price Per Acre	Average Days on Market	Share of Listings with HOA fee
Mitchell	104	2.92	$25,470	209	38.5%
Avery	385	1.38	$189,900	212	79.8%
Buncombe	722	1.49	$102,881	292	45.0%
Burke	390	1.41	$40,861	457	50.0%
Caldwell	355	2.32	$34,188	387	55.8%
Madison	206	2.45	$29,653	541	60.3%
McDowell	376	2.23	$25,746	348	60.9%
Watauga	515	1.70	$67,017	295	64.3%
Yancey	161	1.50	$29,324	408	60.2%

Source: Redfin, Bowen National Research
HOA – Homeowners Association
Note: Active listings include properties with pending or contingent status

While the PSA (Mitchell County) has the lowest median list price ($25,470) compared to the eight surrounding North Carolina counties, the PSA also has the lowest number of vacant land parcels listed for sale. Additionally, Mitchell County has the lowest share (38.5%) of vacant land listings that require a Homeowners Association (HOA) fee, meaning that a lower share of available land is within an existing subdivision or allotment that is subject to additional fees. By comparison, most of the vacant land listings in seven of the eight surrounding counties are located in subdivisions or allotments that include HOA fees. Based on this listing data, the residential housing market in Mitchell County is not as developed as surrounding counties, indicating that real estate developers or potential landowners appear to have more options for residential development in surrounding North Carolina counties.

Note that a Stakeholder Survey was conducted as part of this Housing Needs Assessment (Section IX). As part of this survey, nearly 80% of stakeholders indicated that the *availability of buildable land* and the *cost of land* were each considered to be common barriers to residential development in Mitchell County. In addition, most stakeholders noted that *land not suitable for development* due to steep slopes, lack of septic, etc. was also a common barrier to residential development. All of these factors influence the cost and availability of land for residential development in the county.

Labor costs and availability of skilled and qualified labor are also important considerations in development costs. Mitchell County is part of the Western North Carolina nonmetropolitan area according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). According to BLS data, the annual mean wage for construction and extraction occupations in the Western North Carolina nonmetropolitan area is $51,490. This is a lower annual mean wage for these occupations than the annual mean wage offered in the state of North Carolina ($54,950). Annual mean wages for construction and extraction occupations in the Western North Carolina nonmetropolitan area range from $36,730 for helpers of all other construction trades (excluding carpenters, electricians, pipelayers, plumbers, pipefitters, and

steamers) to $72,140 for first-line supervisors. Note that construction and extraction occupations account for approximately 47 out of every 1,000 jobs in the Western North Carolina nonmetropolitan area, as compared to approximately 40 out of every 1,000 jobs statewide.

The following table illustrates the employment number, share, and corresponding annual mean wages for detailed occupations within the construction and extraction sector for the Western North Carolina nonmetropolitan area, the Hickory-Lenoir-Morganton Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), the Asheville MSA, and the state of North Carolina.

Typical Wages by Detailed Construction & Extraction Occupations

Occupation Type	Western North Carolina nonmetropolitan area (includes Mitchell County)			Hickory-Lenoir-Morganton MSA			Asheville MSA			North Carolina		
	Employment		Mean Wage	Employment		Mean Wage	Employment		Mean Wage	Employment		Mean Wage
	Number	Share		Number	Share		Number	Share		Number	Share	
First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades & Extraction Workers	1,880	18.1%	$72,140	640	17.3%	$72,400	1,080	16.1%	$73,750	32,460	18.2%	$77,320
Carpenters	1,130	10.9%	$44,760	250	6.8%	$50,450	750	11.2%	$52,620	13,480	7.6%	$50,510
Tile & Stone Setters	60	0.6%	$42,590	--	--	--	50	0.7%	$50,080	680	0.4%	$45,990
Cement Masons & Concrete Finishers	160	1.5%	$44,730	70	1.9%	$41,660	140	2.1%	$43,920	4,610	2.6%	$47,210
Construction Laborers	2,320	22.4%	$44,140	800	21.6%	$44,210	1,340	20.0%	$46,740	35,620	20.0%	$45,250
Paving, Surfacing & Tamping Equipment Operators	110	1.1%	$44,070	60	1.6%	$46,430	100	1.5%	$48,150	1,940	1.1%	$49,230
Operating Engineers & Other Construction Equipment Operators	1,320	12.7%	$49,580	370	10.0%	$51,160	510	7.6%	$50,070	16,580	9.3%	$52,310
Drywall & Ceiling Tile Installers	30	0.3%	$41,740	--	--	--	60	0.9%	$47,210	1,520	0.9%	$45,060
Electricians	1,110	10.7%	$54,930	570	15.4%	$55,970	860	12.8%	$56,720	21,640	12.1%	$56,850

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) – May 2025
MSA – Metropolitan Statistical Area; N/A – Not Available (Estimates not released for occupation type); (--) Data not included for occupation type
Note: Total reflects only Construction and Extraction occupations illustrated in this table; Construction and Extraction occupations not related to building construction were excluded

(Continued)

Typical Wages by Detailed Construction & Extraction Occupations												
Occupation Type	Western North Carolina nonmetropolitan area (includes Mitchell County)			Hickory-Lenoir-Morganton MSA			Asheville MSA			North Carolina		
	Employment		Mean Wage	Employment		Mean Wage	Employment		Mean Wage	Employment		Mean Wage
	Number	Share		Number	Share		Number	Share		Number	Share	
Painters, Construction, & Maintenance	270	2.6%	$45,760	130	3.5%	$39,200	210	3.1%	$44,720	5,220	2.9%	$44,900
Pipelayers	210	2.0%	$43,880	100	2.7%	$43,830	160	2.4%	$47,570	3,830	2.1%	$47,990
Plumbers, Pipefitters, & Steamfitters	490	4.7%	$53,840	330	8.9%	$53,370	460	6.9%	$56,120	14,510	8.1%	$56,720
Roofers	90	0.9%	$48,060	80	2.2%	$45,860	110	1.6%	$51,090	3,060	1.7%	$50,030
Sheet Metal Workers	110	1.1%	$49,090	70	1.9%	$50,160	110	1.6%	$55,340	2,780	1.6%	$54,560
Structural Iron & Steel Workers	100	1.0%	$56,160	--	--	--	--	--	--	2,000	1.1%	$53,250
Helpers – Carpenters	50	0.5%	$39,940	--	--	--	--	--	--	650	0.4%	$40,420
Helpers – Electricians	420	4.1%	$39,020	160	4.3%	$39,910	340	5.1%	$41,590	6,770	3.8%	$40,990
Helpers – Pipelayers, Plumbers, Pipefitters, & Steamers	190	1.8%	$39,420	N/A	N/A	$39,000	140	2.1%	$41,470	3,070	1.7%	$42,240
Helpers – Construction Trades, All Other	30	0.3%	$36,730	--	--	--	--	--	--	550	0.3%	$39,110
Construction & Building Inspectors	220	2.1%	$61,130	70	1.9%	$66,620	280	4.2%	$66,490	6,490	3.6%	$69,070
Miscellaneous Construction & Related Workers	60	0.6%	$44,930	--	--	--	--	--	--	1,010	0.6%	$48,700
Total	**10,360**	**100.0%**	**$51,490**	**3,700**	**100.0%**	**$51,790**	**6,700**	**100.0%**	**$53,870**	**178,470**	**100.0%**	**$54,940**

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) – May 2025
MSA – Metropolitan Statistical Area; N/A – Not Available (Estimates not released for occupation type); (--) Data not included for occupation type
Note: Total reflects only Construction and Extraction occupations illustrated in this table; Construction and Extraction occupations not related to building construction were excluded

Based on a comparative analysis of wages in the construction sector depicted in the preceding table, the Western North Carolina nonmetropolitan area has lower wages for construction occupations than the nearby Hickory-Lenoir-Morganton and Asheville MSAs and the state of North Carolina. As labor wages are a component of overall labor costs, lower construction wages may contribute to lower residential development costs for future projects in Mitchell County compared to other nearby areas. However, nearly 75% of stakeholders surveyed as part of this Housing Needs Assessment (Section IX) indicated that the cost of labor/materials are common barriers to residential development in Mitchell County. While *labor wages* appear to be slightly lower compared to nearby MSAs and the state of North Carolina, these lower wages may be offset by higher costs related to materials and equipment, which contribute to total *development costs* for a residential construction project.

Utility costs for natural gas and electric service, specifically the cost to tap into or run utility services at a specific location, also factor into overall development costs. Fees paid by the developer or contractor to establish natural gas and electric service are typically passed on to the buyer upon completion of a single-family house. The total price of a new residential home often includes tap fees for water, sewer, electric and natural gas utilities, which can vary by location. In Mitchell County, Duke Energy Progress provides electric service to the entire county, while French Broad Electric Membership Corporation (EMC) also provides electric service to the northern and central portions of the county, including Bakersville. Piedmont Natural Gas provides natural gas service to Mitchell County.

Standard rates assessed by Duke Energy Progress for residential electric service customers include a basic customer charge of $14.00 per month and electric usage billed at $0.12623 per kilowatt-hour (kWh). Note that the standard usage rate of $0.12623 is for the first 800 kWh of electricity between the months of October and April. Any usage above 800 kWh during these months is billed at a lower rate ($0.11623 per kWh). Electric utility customers in the French Broad EMC service territory pay a basic facilities charge of $25.00 per month and an electric charge of $0.12900 per kWh for a primary residence. Piedmont Natural Gas Company assesses a monthly customer charge of $10.00 per month and an energy charge of $2.00 per therm (approximately 100 cubic feet of natural gas) for residential customers during summer months and $2.08 per therm during winter months. The listed electric and natural gas service rates for residential customers are the same throughout each utility's respective service areas in North Carolina.

The Town of Bakersville and the Town of Spruce Pine provide water and sewer (wastewater) services to town residents as well as select areas outside of the town limits. Note that customers located outside of each town pay higher rates for water and wastewater utility service compared to town residents.

The water and wastewater (sewer) rates for Mitchell County municipalities and fees for comparable municipalities in surrounding counties are listed in the following table.

Water and Wastewater (Sewer) Fees Mitchell County and Surrounding Areas					
County	Location/Provider	Water Base Rate	Water Volume Charge	Sewer Base Rate	Sewer Volume Charge
Mitchell	**Town of Bakersville (inside town limits)**	**$25.00***	**$1.50/500 gal**	**$25.00***	**$1.50/500 gal**
	Town of Bakersville (outside town limits)	**$35.00***	**$3.00/500 gal**	**$35.00***	**$3.00/500 gal**
Mitchell	**Town of Spruce Pine (inside town limits)**	**$20.00****	**$6.88/1,000 gal**	**$20.00****	**$8.13/1,000 gal**
	Town of Spruce Pine (outside town limits)	**$20.00****	**$9.38/1,000 gal**	**$20.00****	**$10.63/1,000 gal**
Yancey	Town of Burnsville (inside city limits)	$27.24**	$9.13/1,000 gal (next 1,000 gal)	$27.24**	$9.13/1,000 gal
	Town of Burnsville (outside city limits)	$54.48**	$18.26/1,000 gal (next 1,000 gal)	$54.48**	$18.26/1,000 gal (next 1,000 gal)
Rutherford	Town of Spindale (inside town limits)	--	--	$18.75	$10.40/1,000 gal
	Town of Spindale (outside town limits)	***	***	$37.25	$20.80/1,000 gal
Rutherford	Broad River Water Authority (BRWA)	$32.60	$6.15/1,000 gal (next 19,000 gal)	***	***
Rutherford	Town of Rutherfordton (inside town limits)	***	***	$22.39	$6.52/1,000 gal (up to 500K gal)
	Town of Rutherfordton (outside town limits)	***	***	$67.17	$19.56/1,000 gal (up to 500K gal)
McDowell	City of Marion (inside city limits)	$23.04	$3.84/1,000 gal	$27.96	$4.66/1,000 gal
	City of Marion (outside city limits)	$57.50	$9.49/1,000 gal	$69.79	$11.51/1,000 gal

Source: Town of Bakersville, Town of Spruce Pine, NC Water and Wastewater Rates Dashboard, and nearby municipalities and water/sewer authorities
*Town of Bakersville water/sewer base rates cover the first 4,000 gallons of water usage
**Town of Spruce Pine water/sewer base rates cover the first 3,000 gallons of water usage
(--) Town of Spindale charges an annual base fee for sewer; Calculated as a monthly base rate in table
***BRWA provides water service to the towns of Spindale and Rutherfordton

Water and wastewater rates for Bakersville and Spruce Pine customers are competitively priced compared to water and sewer systems in municipalities of nearby and adjacent counties. Note that utility systems in both towns have a two-tiered pricing structure in which customers that reside outside the town limits pay higher rates for water and sewer service. Base fees and consumption rates for water/wastewater customers in Bakersville and Spruce Pine are within the low end of the range of nearby water/wastewater providers. While the preceding utility fees would generally only be the responsibility of a tenant/homeowner, they have been presented to illustrate fees associated with typical utilities in Mitchell County should a developer decide to include the utility costs/expenses into the cost of rent for a multifamily property.

Water and sewer connection fees (commonly referred to as tap fees) and system development fees were also verified for Bakersville and Spruce Pine and compared to fees in nearby and adjacent counties. These connection (or tap) fees are typically paid by homebuilders and developers during the construction process. Utility departments for both the Town of Bakersville and the Town of Spruce Pine assess *water and sewer tap fees* for new customers living within town limits as well as for customers residing in adjacent and nearby areas within Mitchell County. The

residential water tap fee assessed by the Town of Bakersville is $750 for ¾-inch water meter and $750 for a 4-inch sewer connection. The Town of Spruce Pine does not include fees for water and sewer taps on its website, stating that *all water and sewer taps will be made at actual cost*. The Town of Spruce Pine also notes that a cost estimate will be provided before work begins and any cost changes will be disclosed before completion of work.

The following table summarizes water/sewer tap fees and associated impact fees for towns in Mitchell County and comparable municipalities in nearby counties.

Water/Wastewater (Sewer) Tap Fees and Impact Fees
Mitchell County and Nearby/Adjacent Counties

County	Location/Supplier	Water Tap Fee	Wastewater/ Sewer Tap Fee	Water Impact Fee	Wastewater/ Sewer Impact Fee
Mitchell	**Town of Bakersville**	**$750**	**$750**	**--**	**--**
Mitchell	**Town of Spruce Pine**	**Actual Cost**	**Actual Cost**	**--**	**--**
Yancey	Town of Burnsville (inside town limits)	$1,000	$1,000	*	*
	Town of Burnsville (outside town limits)	$1,250	$1,250	*	*
Rutherford	Town of Spindale	--	$750**	--	--
McDowell	City of Marion (inside city limits)	$1,070	$1,080	$3.88/gal/day	$4.61/gal/day
	City of Marion (outside city limits)	$2,675	$2,700	$3.88/gal/day	$4.61/gal/day
Avery	Town of Newland	$1,500***	--	--	--
Rutherford	Broad River Water Authority	$1,425	--	--	--

Source: Town of Bakersville, Town of Spruce Pine and adjacent/nearby municipalities
Tap fees reflect a ¾-inch water meter and a 4-inch sewer tap unless otherwise noted; Fees do not include utility deposits
*System Development Fee (SDF) fees assessed by Town of Burnsville to cover past and current costs for water/sewer service;
*Fee schedule for Burnsville states "SEE DIRECTOR" for SDF fees.
(--) Service not provided or fee not assessed.
**Town of Spindale assesses an additional $100 sewer tap fee per unit in a multifamily complex
***Town of Newland tap fee does not include the cost of installation

Tap fees to establish water and sewer service vary significantly between municipalities, counties and utility providers. The Town of Bakersville has lower tap fees for customers compared to nearby water/sewer systems. Some nearby water systems also charge impact fees to new customers in addition to tap fees, including the Town of Burnsville and the City of Marion. These impact fees, commonly referred to as System Development Fees (SDF) in North Carolina, are generally assessed to account for future growth of a water or sewer system. By comparison, Bakersville and Spruce Pine do not charge impact fees to new water and sewer customers. The combination of tap fees and impact fees to establish water and sewer service can increase the overall cost of a new residential unit.

Government Development Fees in the form of permit fees levied by municipal or county governments also factor into development costs. In an attempt to better understand these cost factors, the base fees for a new single-family residential structure were compiled for a home built in Mitchell County. The Mitchell County Building & Fire Inspections Department assesses residential building permit fees based on the total square footage of a building or structure. Residential building fees in Mitchell County (as of July 1, 2026) are $225 for the first 1,000 square feet of a building or structure and $0.25 for each additional square foot. A plan review fee of $40 is also assessed in addition to the building permit fee, while electrical

and mechanical/plumbing permits have a base fee of $100. Note that residential structures built in Mitchell County may also require a certificate of zoning in the town of Spruce Pine, which carries additional fees.

The following table shows overall building permit fees for a 2,000 square foot single-family home in Mitchell County and surrounding cities, towns, and counties.

Permit Fees for a 2,000 square foot Residential Building or Structure (Mitchell County and Surrounding Areas)					
Location	Building Permit Fee	Zoning and/or Plan Review Fees	Electrical Permit Base Fee*	Mechanical Permit Base Fee*	Plumbing Permit Base Fee*
Mitchell County	**$485**	**$40**	**$100**	**$100**	**
Town of Burnsville (Yancey County)	$360	$190	$100	$100	**
Buncombe County	$650	$50	**	**	**
Caldwell County	$900	$25	$75	$75	$75
Madison County	$757	$55	$88	$88	$88
McDowell County	$1,100	--	**	$115	$115
Watauga County	$600	$40	$75	**	**

Note: Permit fees rounded to the nearest dollar; Mitchell County fees as of July 1, 2026
Building permit fee for Mitchell County includes a $10 Homeowner Recovery fee
*Electrical, mechanical, and plumbing permit fees reflect base fee only; Unit/fixture charges not included in total
**Electrical, mechanical, and/or plumbing permit fees included as part of building permit fee

Mitchell County has lower building permit fees based on square footage compared to surrounding North Carolina counties, while corresponding permit fees for electrical, mechanical and plumbing components are consistent with fees in these surrounding areas. Mitchell County and some surrounding counties offer combination (combo) permits, which allow builders and contractors to pay a lower combined fee for electrical/mechanical/plumbing inspections. Based on the review of residential building permit fees in Mitchell County, it does not appear that these factors represent deterrents or barriers to residential development in the county. Note that this is not a complete representation of fees impacting new residential construction in Mitchell County and surrounding areas. The preceding table is only a representation of fee similarities and differences for common components.

Property taxes applied to the development of real estate can also factor into overall development costs. *Property taxes* vary by county in North Carolina, based on municipality, school district, fire and police protection services, and special taxing districts. Each county establishes its own base tax rate for all properties, then additional taxes and assessments are applied based on municipality, school district location, and special tax districts (if applicable). According to information provided by the North Carolina Department of Revenue, the base property tax rate is $0.5600 per $100 valuation in Mitchell County. For a home valued at $300,000, the *base* property tax would be $1,680 per year.

The following table illustrates the property tax millage rates for Mitchell County and its two municipalities (Bakersville and Spruce Pine):

Tax Millage Rates (Fiscal Year 2025-2026) for Mitchell County			
County/Municipality	Tax Millage Rate (County)	Tax Millage Rate (Municipality)	Combined Tax Millage Rate
Mitchell County	$0.5600	--	**$0.5600**
Town of Bakersville	$0.5600	$0.4400	**$1.0000**
Town of Spruce Pine	$0.5600	$0.4600	**$1.0200**

Source: North Carolina Department of Revenue – FY 2025-26 Property Tax Rates
Millage rates per $100 of taxable value
Fire department assessment districts and special tax districts not included in table
The lowest tax millage rates reflected in **blue font**; The highest tax millage rates reflected in **red font**

Base tax millage rates in Mitchell County range from a low of $0.5600 per $100 valuation for county residents outside of a municipality to $1.0200 per $100 valuation in the town of Spruce Pine. Note that Bakersville property owners pay a slightly lower tax rate of $1.0000 per $100 of property value. Bakersville and Spruce Pine property owners pay the base county tax plus the municipal tax, meaning that these property owners pay a much higher property tax rate. Note that unincorporated areas of each county are only subject to the county tax millage rate and therefore have lower tax millage rates than Bakersville and Spruce Pine property owners.

In addition to the base tax rates, Mitchell County property owners are also subject to special district property taxes based on location. Special district property taxes in Mitchell County consist of fire department assessments and service district assessments. Mitchell County has a total of seven fire department districts, with all seven of these districts assessing a tax rate of $0.0800 per $100 of property value. There are also five special service districts in Mitchell County. Four of the five districts assess property at $0.0450 per $100 of value, while the remaining district (Parkway Service District) assesses at a higher rate ($0.0800 per $100 of value). Combined, the two special districts add $0.1250 to $0.1600 per $100 of property valuation to the overall tax bill for Mitchell County property owners.

The following table illustrates the overall range and median property tax millage rate figures for Mitchell County and nearby counties in North Carolina. Note that the "base" tax figure shown in the table is the base county tax rate outside of municipalities.

Property Tax Millage Rates (FY 2025-26) Mitchell County and Adjacent/Nearby North Carolina Counties			
County	**Combined Tax Millage Rates***	**County**	**Combined Tax Millage Rates**
Mitchell	**$0.5600 (Base)** **$1.0000 (Median)** **$1.0200 (High)**	Madison	$0.3600 (Base) $0.7075 (Median) $0.7900 (High)
Avery	$0.4000 (Base) $0.7800 (Median) $1.0500 (High)	McDowell	$0.5675 (Base) $0.9875 (Median) $1.1625 (High)
Buncombe	$0.5466 (Base) $0.8916 (Median) $0.9766 (High)	Watauga	$0.3180 (Base) $0.8290 (Median) $1.0500 (High)
Burke	$0.5550 (Base) $0.9050 (Median) $1.0800 (High)	Yancey	$0.5200 (Base) $0.7800 (Median) $1.0400 (High)
Caldwell	$0.4975 (Base) $0.8975 (Median) $1.0225 (High)		

Source: North Carolina Department of Revenue – FY 2025-26 Property Tax Rates

Base property tax rates in adjacent and nearby counties for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 range from a low of $0.3180 in Watauga County to a high of $0.5675 in McDowell County (per $100 in valuation). Using the same $300,000 home as an example, the annual property tax bill would range from $954.00 to $1,702.50 in these adjacent and nearby counties. By comparison, the annual property tax bill for a $300,000 home in Mitchell County ($0.5600 per $100 in valuation) is $1,680, which is higher than seven of the eight surrounding counties in the region. Municipal property taxes in North Carolina, which are paid by property owners within municipal boundaries, are paid in addition to county property taxes. Municipal property tax rates vary considerably within adjacent and nearby counties and range from $0.0500 to $0.6500 per $100 in valuation. Note that the tax rates within the preceding table reflect a combination of county and municipal tax millage rates for comparison purposes.

A clearer picture emerges when comparing property tax assessment rates with median residential property values in Mitchell County. Based on information obtained on the for-sale housing market in the county, the median sales price for a home that sold during 2025 was $300,000. Annual property taxes for a home valued at $300,000 would range from $1,680 to $3,060 depending on location within the county (not including special district property taxes). Compared to nearby and adjacent counties, this is an overall higher property tax bill for a similarly valued home ($300,000). In most cases, the difference in base and median property tax millage rates between Mitchell County and nearby counties are not significant. In addition, most of these nearby counties have a *maximum* tax millage rate that

exceeds the highest tax millage rate in Mitchell County ($1.0200 per $100 in valuation). Overall, it appears that property taxes in Mitchell County are not excessively high compared to the surrounding region and likely do not have a significant adverse influence on residential development.

Residential Zoning

Residential zoning codes generally dictate the type of housing that is built within a particular area. The Town of Spruce Pine is the only area within Mitchell County that has zoning regulations. Spruce Pine has a Zoning Ordinance that includes zoning districts for properties within its jurisdiction. The following table is a summary review of zoning regulations in the town of Spruce Pine:

Zoning Districts – Town of Spruce Pine

Town of Spruce Pine, North Carolina – Zoning Districts	
Zoning District	**Description**
R-1 Low-Density Residential District	Provides for quiet, livable, low-density single-family neighborhoods. Commercial and industrial uses are prohibited in this zoning district. Permitted residential land uses include family dwellings and basement/garage apartments. Single-wide mobile homes are considered special uses subject to residential dimensional requirements.
R-2 Medium-Density Residential District	Provides for quiet, livable, medium-density single-family and multifamily neighborhoods. Single-family and multifamily dwellings are permitted within this zoning district. Single-wide mobile homes are considered special uses subject to residential dimensional requirements.
R-3 High-Density Residential District	Defined as a high-density residential area of the town where single-family and multifamily dwellings are commingled. The R-3 zoning district also includes certain open areas where similar residential development will likely occur. Permitted land uses include family dwelling units and multifamily dwelling units. A single trailer subject to residential dimensional requirements is considered to be a special use within this zoning district.
T-1 Trailer and Trailer Park District	Permits the development of trailer parks and minimizes detrimental effects of said developments on existing land uses. Approval of trailer parks is contingent upon an application for rezoning to a T-1 district submitted to the Town Planning Board. Trailer parks must have a minimum of five acres with a maximum density of nine trailers per acre. Trailer parks cannot be located in business or commercial zones.
C-1 Primary Business District	Encourages the construction of and continued use of the land for local commercial and services uses. Development will occur in such a manner as to minimize traffic and parking congestion. **No residential land uses are permitted by right in this zoning district. Residential uses in the C-1 zoning district require a special permit.**
C-1A Central Business Fringe District	Provides for the orderly development or transition of predominantly residential or vacant areas into commercial areas. A preliminary plan shall be submitted to the Board of Adjustment for the use and development of all or part of a property in this zoning district. **No residential land uses are permitted by right in this zoning district.**
C-2 Neighborhood Business District	Defined as certain commercial areas that are primarily designed to serve nearby residential areas. Boarding houses and tourist homes are permitted by right in this zoning district.
C-3 Highway Business District	Provides for orderly expansion of businesses catering to the motoring public and businesses needing major highway frontage. Tourist homes are permitted within this zoning district.

Source: Town of Spruce Pine Zoning Ordinance

(Continued)

Town of Spruce Pine, North Carolina – Zoning Districts	
Zoning District	**Description**
I-1 Industrial District (light)	Certain lands more suited for industrial use than residential use, but situated where existing or prospective residential development is in close proximity on one or more sides of the district. Large setbacks are required in this district and landscaping in keeping with residential areas is encouraged. **No residential land uses are permitted by right in this zoning district.**
I-2 Industrial District (heavy)	Certain lands suitable for industrial development where certain operations could adversely affect nearby properties. Purpose of this district is to permit the normal operations of almost all industries except those that would be detrimental to adjoining properties (e.g., noxious industries or industries that deal with hazardous products). **No residential land uses are permitted by right in this zoning district.**
M-1 Medical Arts District	Defined as an area in which a hospital, doctors' and dentists' offices, pharmacies and other health-related establishments or offices can be near each other for the convenience of the general public and the medical and dental professions. Commercial and professional activities not directly related to the medical arts are excluded. Homes for the aged and nursing homes are permitted within this zoning district.
PS-1 Public Safety District	Areas primarily designed to house public safety facilities for Spruce Pine and vicinity. **No residential land uses are permitted by right in this zoning district.**

Source: Town of Spruce Pine Zoning Ordinance

Residential land uses in the town of Spruce Pine are generally restricted to residential zoning districts. A zoning district also exists specifically for trailer parks (T-1), in which the minimum size of a development is five acres and the maximum density is nine trailers (units) per acre. The C-1 zoning district does allow residential land uses by special permit, though the specific types of residential uses are not clearly defined by the zoning ordinance. Several non-residential zoning districts do not permit any residential land uses by right. However, a few non-residential zoning districts do permit residential uses such as boarding houses, tourist homes, and senior living facilities.

Note that the Town of Spruce Pine is in the process of rewriting its zoning ordinance. According to information posted on the Town website, the Town of Spruce Pine holds monthly meetings with the High Country Council of Governments. These monthly meetings began in June 2025, and the review process is expected to last 14 to 18 months.

Permitted residential land uses within the Town of Spruce Pine zoning districts are shown in the following table.

Permitted Residential Land Uses within Zoning Districts Town of Spruce Pine, North Carolina						
Land Use Type	Zoning Districts					
	R-1	R-2	R-3	T-1	C-1	C-1A
Single-family dwellings/Family dwellings	P	P	P	--	--	--
Basement/garage apartment	P	--	--	--	--	--
Mobile home/trailer (single-wide/single trailer)	S	S	S	P*	--	--
Multifamily dwellings	--	P	P	--	--	--
Residential use (not listed in table)	--	--	--	--	S	--
Tourist homes	--	--	--	--	--	--
Homes for the aged	--	--	--	--	--	--
Nursing home	--	--	--	--	--	--
Land Use Type	Zoning Districts					
	C-2	C-3	I-1	I-2	M-1	PS-1
Single-family dwellings/Family dwellings	--	--	--	--	--	--
Basement/garage apartment	--	--	--	--	--	--
Mobile home/trailer (single-wide/single trailer)	--	--	--	--	--	--
Multifamily dwellings	--	--	--	--	--	--
Residential use (not listed in table)	--	--	--	--	--	--
Tourist homes	P	P	--	--	--	--
Home for the aged	--	--	--	--	P	--
Nursing home	--	--	--	--	P	--

Source: Town of Spruce Pine Zoning Ordinance
Legend: P = permitted use; S = special use; -- prohibited use.
*Subject to standards listed in Section 104 of Zoning Ordinance

Single-family dwellings (also described as family dwellings in the zoning ordinance) are permitted in the R-1, R-2, and R-3 zoning districts in the town of Spruce Pine. Multifamily dwellings are permitted in the R-2 and R-3 zoning districts. The T-1 zoning district was specifically created for the development of trailer parks and is subject to additional requirements listed in Section 104 of the zoning ordinance. Individual mobile home units/trailers may also be permitted as a special use in the R-1, R-2, and R-3 districts and are subject to residential dimensional requirements.

The non-residential zoning districts were established primarily for commercial, industrial, or institutional purposes. Several zoning districts do not permit any residential land uses. However, zoning districts C-1, C-2, C-3, and M-1 allow limited residential land uses by permit or by special use. While these districts do not allow single-family homes or trailers, these non-residential zoning districts do permit tourist homes, nursing homes and homes for the aged.

Lot area requirements, setbacks and building height restrictions for zoning districts in Spruce Pine are listed in the following table:

Lot Area, Density, Setbacks and Building Height Requirements (Zoning Districts)
Town of Spruce Pine, North Carolina

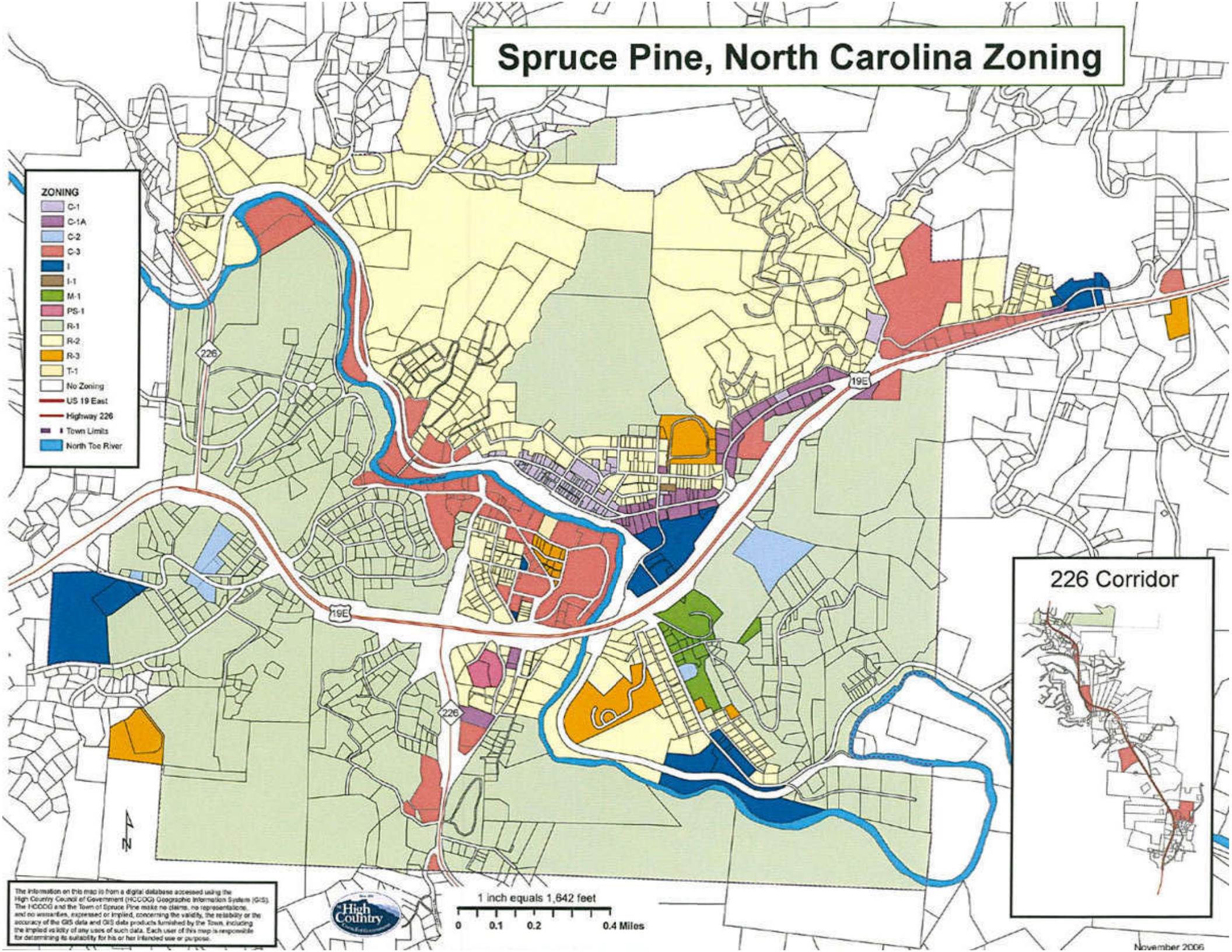
Zoning District		Minimum Lot Area	Minimum Lot Area per Dwelling Unit	Minimum Frontage	Front Yard Setback	Side Yard Setback	Rear Yard Depth	Maximum Building Height
R-1 Low-Density Residential District	Single-Family	20,000 sf	20,000 sf	100 ft.	50 ft.	15 ft.	25 ft.	35 ft.
	Two-Family	40,000 sf	20,000 sf	100 ft.	50 ft.	15 ft.	25 ft.	35 ft.
R-2 Medium-Density Residential District	Single-Family	10,000 sf	10,000 sf	75 ft.	35 ft.	12 ft.	30 ft.	35 ft.
	Two-Family	20,000 sf	10,000 sf	75 ft.	35 ft.	12 ft.	30 ft.	35 ft.
	Multifamily	20,000 sf*	7,500 sf*	75 ft.	35 ft.	12 ft.	30 ft.	56 ft.
R-3 High-Density Residential District	Single-Family	6,000 sf	6,000 sf	60 ft.	25 ft.	8 ft.	20 ft.	35 ft.
	Two-Family	8,000 sf	4,000 sf	60 ft.	25 ft.	8 ft.	20 ft.	35 ft.
	Multifamily	8,000 sf**	3,000 sf**	60 ft.	25 ft.	8 ft.	20 ft.	56 ft.
T-1 Trailer and Trailer Park District		5 acres	4,840 sf	--	60-75 ft.	60-75 ft.	60-75 ft.	--
C-1 Primary Business District		--	--	25 ft.	--	--	--	35 ft.
C-1A Central Business Fringe District		***	***	25 ft.	10 ft.	--	--	35 ft.
C-2 Neighborhood Business District		N/A	N/A	25 ft.	25 ft.	20 ft.	20 ft.	35 ft.
C-3 Highway Business District		N/A	N/A	--	50 ft.	--	20 ft.	35 ft.
I-1 Industrial District (light)		N/A	N/A	--	75 ft.	50 ft.	50 ft.	35 ft.
I-2 Industrial District (heavy)		N/A	N/A	--	--	--	--	56 ft.
M-1 Medical Arts District		10,000	--	75 ft.	10 ft.	5 ft.	5 ft.	70 ft.
PS-1 Public Safety District		--	--	25 ft.	10 ft.	10 ft.	10 ft.	35 ft.

Source: Town of Spruce Pine Zoning Ordinance
Legend: ft = feet; sf = square feet; N/A = Not Applicable; (--) = Not Listed
*For R-2 multifamily, an additional 20,000 square feet of lot area and an additional 7,500 square feet per dwelling unit is required for each household over two persons for which a dwelling unit is provided
**For R-3 multifamily, an additional 8,000 square feet of lot area and an additional 3,000 square feet per dwelling unit is required for each household over two persons for which a dwelling unit is provided
***For C-1A district, minimum lot square footage shall be 2.5 times greater than size of building
Note: 5 acres in the T-1 district reflects minimum size for entire trailer park; 4,840 sq ft reflects 9 units per acre; Trailers must be minimum of 15 ft apart within trailer park; Trailers must be minimum of 60 ft from centerline of minor street or minimum of 75 ft from centerline of major street
Note: Open space requirements for each zoning district are factored into maximum gross density

As shown in the preceding table, residential zoning districts have a wide variety of lot and building standards based on residential project type. Minimum lot areas in the residential zoning districts range from 3,000 square feet to 20,000 square feet per dwelling unit depending on the type of residential structure to be built. Minimum lot widths and setback requirements generally correlate to density standards for each of the residential zoning districts, as the R-3 zoning district has minimum lot sizes and setback requirements that permit higher-density development of single-family homes, duplexes, and apartment buildings. The minimum lot size of 3,000 square feet per multifamily dwelling unit in the R-3 district would permit up to 13 units per acre to be developed. In conclusion, residential zoning districts in the town of Spruce Pine permit a variety of unit types to be built and the lot areas, maximum gross density, setbacks, and building height requirements do not appear to be overly restrictive and do not appear to be barriers to residential development. However, the residential land uses permitted in commercial zoning districts are very limited, which may prevent the development of mixed-use properties that include residential units.

A zoning map for the Town of Spruce Pine is included on the following page. Zoning information for individual parcels within the Spruce Pine town limits can also be viewed on the Mitchell County GIS website.

Spruce Pine, North Carolina Zoning



The information on this map is from a digital database accessed using the High Country Council of Government (HCCOG) Geographic Information System (GIS). The HCCOG and the Town of Spruce Pine make no claims, no representations, and no warranties, expressed or implied, concerning the validity, the reliability or the accuracy of the GIS data and GIS data products furnished by the Town, including the implied validity of any uses of such data. Each user of this map is responsible for determining its suitability for his or her intended use or purpose.

November 2006

Subdivision Ordinance

North Carolina General Statutes §160D-801 et seq. *authorizes local governments to regulate the subdivision of land within its jurisdiction*. For this purpose, Mitchell County has a Subdivision Ordinance that regulates the creation of residential subdivisions in the county. The most recent version of the subdivision ordinance was adopted in July 2023. According to Article III of the ordinance, the purpose of the subdivision ordinance is to *a) provide orderly growth and development, b) assure adequate roads and utilities to subdivisions, c) provide for erosion control and minimize sedimentation pollution, d) assure proper legal description, identification, and recordation of subdivided land, e) establish procedures and standards for subdivided land, and f) promote health and public safety*. This ordinance governs the creation and regulation of residential subdivisions containing six or more lots within the county. Regulations include, but are not limited to, establishing a minimum road width for streets within a subdivision, ensuring that streets can sustain the weight of fire response vehicles, and water and septic system compliance based on North Carolina regulations. The subdivision ordinance does not apply to smaller subdivisions with less than six parcels or the division of land under certain circumstances (such as probating a will, settling an inheritance, or division of land between immediate family members).

This ordinance establishes roadway construction standards and defines the type of roadways to be created as part of a subdivision, including private roads, public roads, access roads, and cul-de-sacs. The ordinance states that all roads serving a subdivision are completed before the transfer of lots, unless the developer issues a performance bond (i.e., a financial guarantee that the roads will be completed). Soil erosion and sedimentation control plans shall also be submitted by the developer of a subdivision before development activity begins. The Mitchell County GIS website includes a layer that illustrates the location of subdivisions within the county. Information contained in the GIS includes characteristics for subdivisions including the location, parcel numbers, addresses, acreage, and establishment of these subdivisions. The subdivision ordinance, accessible from the Mitchell County website, also includes links to required applications for subdivision review and a checklist for use by developers to ensure that all necessary paperwork and materials are submitted as part of the application process.

In addition to establishing standards for single-family lots, the subdivision ordinance also establishes standards for multifamily development in the county. Per the ordinance, the maximum density for multifamily housing is 43 units per acre for properties with access to municipal sewer utilities. Minimum parking standards for multifamily housing are 1.75 parking spaces per unit. The maximum density for multifamily housing in areas not served by municipal sewer utilities is much lower (one unit per 0.75 acres). Due to a much lower maximum density standard for areas not served by municipal sewer, these regulations largely restrict multifamily development to areas within Bakersville and Spruce Pine, which are the only two areas served by municipal sewer in Mitchell County. In addition, the subdivision ordinance also includes restrictions on the lease, sale, or conveyance of multifamily housing unless municipal sewer has been extended to the property boundary.

The Mitchell County Subdivision Ordinance addresses future development in areas served by municipal water and sewer utilities as well as those areas not served by such utilities. The maximum density of 43 units per acre for multifamily buildings is very high, especially considering the lack of multifamily development in the county. Aside from the towns of Bakersville and Spruce Pine, the remaining portion of Mitchell County is outside of municipal boundaries. The subdivision ordinance establishes necessary standards for these areas, especially considering development challenges in the county related to topography/slope and road access (especially for emergency response vehicles).

Conclusions

Potential financial and regulatory implications are important components to consider for residential development and have a direct impact on whether residential projects are built. Some factors that influence residential development may be favorable while others can impede the process. Understanding the key components within the study area supports sustainable growth and development by recognizing existing strengths and identifying and mitigating potential challenges.

The following table summarizes notable contributing cost development factors and compares Mitchell County with other surrounding North Carolina municipalities and counties. Note that a contributing factor that is considered to be a potential strength and/or aligns with other area metrics is denoted by a "✓," while a potential deficiency is denoted by an "X."

	Comparative Summary of Contributing Cost Development Factors Mitchell County, North Carolina	
	Contributing Factor	**Comments**
✓	Median *List* Price of Vacant Land	Median price for current listings of vacant land per acre in Mitchell County ($25,470) is lower than surrounding North Carolina counties ($29,324 to $189,000 per acre).
✓	Mean Annual Wage – Construction Jobs*	The mean annual wage ($51,490) is lower than the state of North Carolina's mean annual wage ($54,940) for Construction & Extraction occupations.
✓	Water/Sewer Tap Fee	The water and sewer tap fees for Bakersville ($750 each) are at the bottom of the range ($750 to $2,700) of surrounding municipalities and utility districts. The water and sewer tap fees for Spruce Pine are at actual cost, which would likely place these fees within the range of surrounding municipalities and utility districts.
✓	Water/Sewer Impact Fee	The towns of Bakersville and Spruce Pine do not assess water or sewer impact fees to customers.
✓	Building Permit Fee	The building permit fee ($485) for a 2,000-square-foot home is within the lower end of the range ($360 to $1,100) for a similar home constructed in other surrounding areas.
✓	Base Property Tax Rate	The base property tax rate in Mitchell County ($0.5600 per $100 of valuation) is at the high end of the range ($0.3180 to $0.5675 per $100 of valuation) compared to surrounding North Carolina counties. However, most of these nearby counties have a *maximum* tax millage rate that exceeds the highest tax millage rate in Mitchell County ($1.0200 per $100 in valuation).

*Mean annual wage is for the Western North Carolina nonmetropolitan area as defined by U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Residential development costs associated with vacant land costs, utility costs, government fees, and taxes/assessments vary between the PSA (Mitchell County) and surrounding North Carolina municipalities and counties. The median list price of available vacant land in Mitchell County is $25,470 per acre, which is lower than all surrounding North Carolina counties. The lower list prices per acre for vacant land in the PSA is reflective of a higher share of raw land not serviced by water and sewer utilities compared to surrounding counties. Water and sewer tap fees for customers within Bakersville are at the low end of the range of fees for municipalities and water utility systems in surrounding areas outside of Mitchell County. Spruce Pine assesses water and sewer tap fees at actual cost, which would likely place these fees within the range of water and tap fees in surrounding areas. The *base* property tax rate in Mitchell County is at the high end of the range of surrounding North Carolina counties, while data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates that construction labor rates within the Western North Carolina nonmetropolitan area (which includes Mitchell County) are lower than those reported for the state of North Carolina.

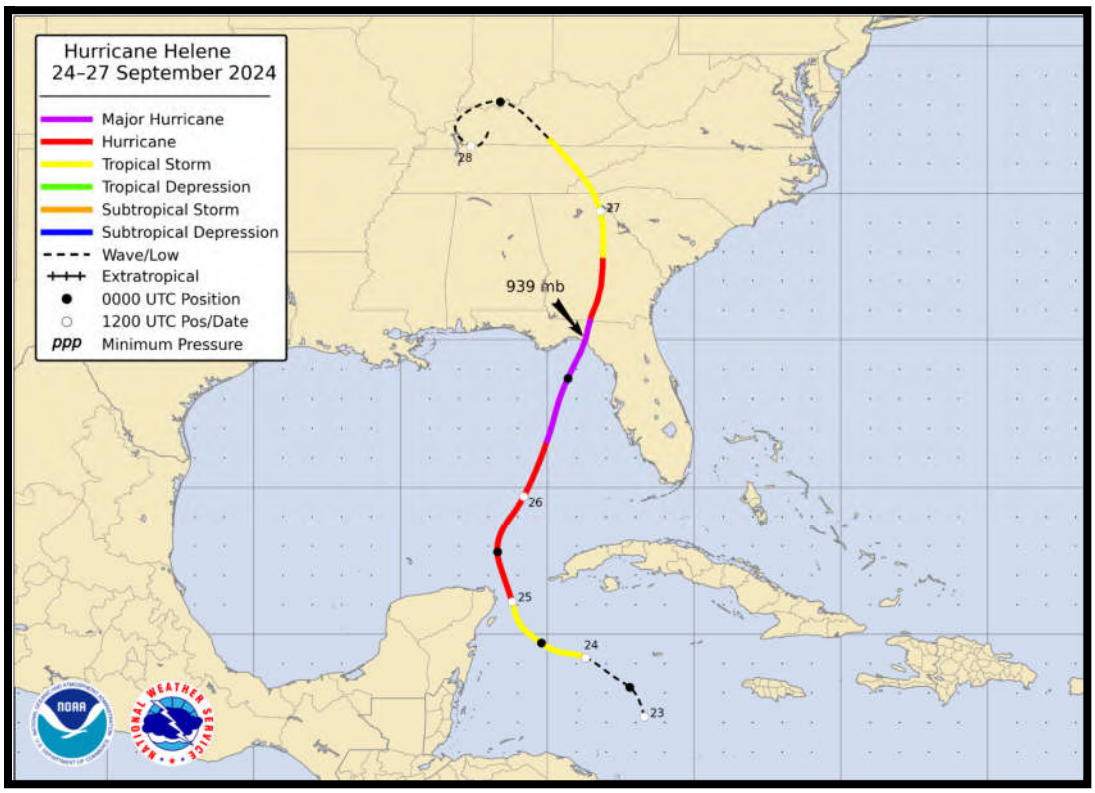
Properties in the town of Spruce Pine are subject to zoning regulations that are contained within the Town's Zoning Ordinance. All three residential zoning districts in Spruce Pine (R-1, R-2, R-3) permit single-family detached homes by right, while the R-2 and R-3 districts permit multifamily residential development. Commercial zoning districts in Spruce Pine generally do not permit residential land uses, with the exception of the C-1 district. Overall, local residential zoning ordinances appear to favor single-family and lower density multifamily residential development. Mitchell County also has a Subdivision Ordinance that applies to all areas of the county. The most recent version of this subdivision ordinance was adopted in 2023. This ordinance regulates the development of subdivisions of six or more lots in the county. Regulations include, but are not limited to, the construction and placement of roadways, impact of topography/slope, and the establishment of soil erosion and sedimentation plans related to land disturbance. While areas of the county outside of Spruce Pine are not subject to zoning regulations, the Mitchell County subdivision ordinance helps to regulate residential development throughout the county. The subdivision ordinance greatly limits the number of units per acre for parcels lacking access to water and sewer infrastructure. This, in turn, likely deters higher density residential development in the rural areas of the county.

Overall, it does not appear that development costs have been a significant barrier to residential development in the PSA (Mitchell County), as land costs and construction labor wages are generally lower compared to surrounding counties and areas. It does appear that the low number of *suitable* vacant properties available for development within the PSA may pose some challenges for developers to build housing that would be affordable for lower- and moderate-income households. As such, the county government may want to explore incentives and/or provide assistance to developers of affordable housing. There may be some value to re-evaluate the county's subdivision ordinance that could make it easier for developers to do higher residential density.

E. NATURAL DISASTER IMPACT

In September 2024, the remnants of Hurricane Helene (referred to as Tropical Storm Helene throughout this report) impacted western North Carolina. After making landfall as a Category 4 hurricane in the Big Bend Region of the Florida Gulf Coast, Helene moved north through Georgia and South Carolina before arriving in North Carolina as a tropical storm. Helene produced significant rainfall throughout western North Carolina, which resulted in 1,000-year flood events in some counties. As a result, a disaster declaration was made for 39 counties in the western portion of the state. According to the final National Hurricane Center report on Hurricane Helene (originally published in March 2025), a total of 85 people died in North Carolina as a direct result of Helene. These deaths were attributed to freshwater flooding (77 deaths) and wind (eight deaths). Among these deaths, three were within Mitchell County, according to the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services.

The following map, provided by the National Hurricane Center, outlines the overall track of Helene:



Source: National Hurricane Center (Hurricane Helene report)

According to statistics provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), a total of 1,638 housing units were damaged in Mitchell County by Tropical Storm Helene, or approximately 18.5% of all housing units in the county.

The following table summarizes the number of housing units by tenure (owners vs. renters) that sustained damage in the storm according to FEMA statistics:

Number of Residential Units Damaged by Tropical Storm Helene Mitchell County, North Carolina				
Owner-Occupied Damaged Units	Share of Damaged Units	Renter-Occupied Damaged Units	Share of Damaged Units	Total Damaged Units
1,502	91.7%	136	8.3%	1,638

Source: FEMA

The vast majority (91.7%) of the 1,638 units that sustained damage in the storm were owner-occupied housing units. However, this is not surprising given that owner-occupied units comprise over 77% of all occupied housing units in the county. Based on this overall damage estimate, 28.7% of all *owner-occupied* units in the county were damaged during the event. By comparison, 136 renter-occupied housing units were damaged, representing a notably smaller share (8.8%) of the total rental inventory in the county. As such, it is apparent that damage was widespread throughout the county.

In order to provide additional perspective on the location and severity of damage sustained during the storm, additional data was compiled from FEMA. The following table shows the number of damaged residential units, as well as the degree of damage, by ZIP code for owner- and renter-occupied housing units in Mitchell County.

Number of Damaged Residential Units Inspected by FEMA (Tropical Storm Helene) Mitchell County, North Carolina										
Area	ZIP Code	Damaged Owner-Occupied Units	Damage Amount				Damaged Renter-Occupied Units	Damage Level		Total Damaged Units
			$1 - $10,000	$10,000- $20,000	$20,001 - $30,000	$30,000+		Moderate	Major	
Bakersville	28705	701	539	122	30	10	56	53	3	757
Burnsville	28714	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Green Mountain	28740	40	24	8	2	6	0	0	0	40
Little Switzerland	28749	4	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	4
Newland	28657	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Spruce Pine*	28777	754	607	108	18	21	80	72	8	834
County Total		**1,502**	**1,175**	**240**	**50**	**37**	**136**	**125**	**11**	**1,638**

Source: FEMA
*Includes (1) owner-occupied unit in Penland (28765)

Among the 1,638 residential units in the PSA (Mitchell County) that were damaged and subsequently inspected by FEMA, the overwhelming majority were within Bakersville (757 units) and Spruce Pine (834 units). Among the owner-occupied units in the PSA, 1,175 units (78.2%) sustained damage of up to $10,000, and 240 units (16.0%) sustained damage between $10,000 and $20,000. While considerably less significant in terms of share, 87 units (5.8%) sustained damage of $20,000 or more, with 37 of these units having at least $30,000 in damage. While the preceding FEMA data does not specifically designate whether a structure was destroyed, it is reasonable to conclude that some of the housing units with damage exceeding $20,000 require replacement rather than repairs. Among the renter-occupied

housing units, it is noteworthy that *all* 136 damaged units were within either Bakersville or Spruce Pine. In total, 125 rental units (91.9%) sustained moderate damage, while 11 rental units were considered to have major damage.

Given the substantial impact on the local housing supply, owner-occupied housing units with damages exceeding $20,000 and renter-occupied units that sustained "major" damage are used as a proxy for housing units that were likely deemed unrepairable or destroyed. As these units represent unmet housing needs within the county, they are included as a separate demand component in the housing gap estimates in Section VIII of this report.

In total, FEMA approved nearly $13.7 million within Mitchell County through the Individuals and Households Program (IHP). Of this, approximately $12.5 million was approved for homeowners and $1.2 million was approved for renters.

The following table summarizes the distribution of approved FEMA IHP funds for Mitchell County by tenure type, jurisdiction, and fund type.

Approved FEMA IHP Funds by Area and Assistance Type – Tropical Storm Helene
Mitchell County, North Carolina

Owner Households					
Area	**ZIP Code**	**Repairs/ Replacement**	**Rental Assistance**	**Other Needs**	**Total Approved**
Bakersville	28705	$3,318,121	$95,637	$2,742,196	$6,156,393
Burnsville	28714	$14,903	$0	$10,101	$25,003
Green Mountain	28740	$357,313	$6,114	$237,375	$600,802
Little Switzerland	28749	$3,540	$0	$18,504	$22,044
Newland	28657	$2,338	$0	$750	$3,088
Spruce Pine*	28777	$2,601,772	$98,263	$3,023,990	$5,724,960
Owner Households Total		**$6,297,987**	**$200,014**	**$6,032,916**	**$12,532,290**
Renter Households					
Area	**ZIP Code**	**Repairs/ Replacement**	**Rental Assistance**	**Other Needs**	**Total Approved**
Bakersville	28705	N/A	$9,145	$438,260	$447,405
Burnsville	28714	N/A	$0	$750	$750
Green Mountain	28740	N/A	$0	$11,100	$11,100
Little Switzerland	28749	N/A	$0	$1,050	$1,050
Newland	28657	N/A	$0	$0	$0
Spruce Pine	28777	N/A	$25,420	$670,428	$695,848
Renter Households Total		**N/A**	**$34,565**	**$1,121,588**	**$1,156,153**

Source: FEMA
N/A – Not Applicable (Renter households are not eligible for repair/replacement funds)
*Includes (1) owner-occupied unit in Penland (28765)

While roughly one-half (50.3%), or $6.3 million, of the approved funds for homeowners was for repairs or replacement through the IHP, approximately $200,000 was for rental assistance and over $6 million was for other needs (e.g., personal property, transportation, medical, dental, funeral, etc.). In regard to the distribution of approved funds for renter households, $34,565 was for rental assistance and over $1.1 million was for other needs. Although this data illustrates the notable damage that occurred to residential housing units in the county, it is important to consider that FEMA payments are measurements of federal assistance

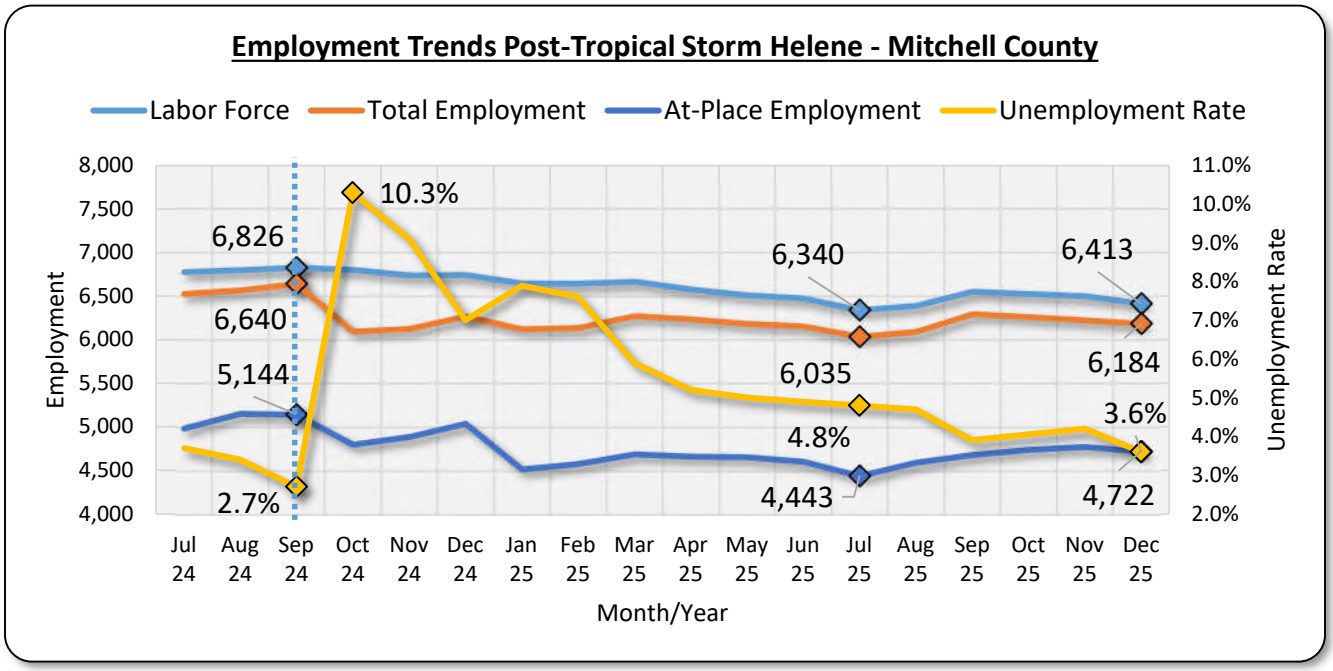
provided and do not capture the full extent of damage to residential units as many claims are handled through private insurance. It is also worth noting that as of May 8, 2026, nine properties within Mitchell County were acquired by FEMA for $2.4 million. These are typically properties that have been impacted by multiple floods or landslides. This reduces the financial burden on the property owners and also increases the resiliency of the community by protecting it from future events and returning the areas to green spaces.

A map showing the number of damaged units within Mitchell County by ZIP code is included on page VII-43.

In addition to the residential impacts from the storm, a substantial number of commercial, industrial, and governmental entities, as well as infrastructure systems, were severely damaged or destroyed within Mitchell County. While some of the damage and business closures were short-term, many of the impacts from the storm persisted well into 2025. Some of the larger impacts to employers and infrastructure include:

- ***Mountain View Correctional Institution*** – Inmates were relocated to other areas of the state and personnel at the facility were temporarily laid off. The facility houses nearly 900 inmates and was reopened in January 2025.
- ***Avery-Mitchell Correctional Facility*** – Inmates were relocated to other areas of the state, but reopening of the facility was further complicated by electrical issues and fire damage to backup systems. The facility reopened in July 2025, but due to staffing shortages, only 217 inmates were initially reintroduced to the facility, much fewer inmates than the full capacity of 816.
- ***Ingles*** – The location in Spruce Pine serves as the area's primary grocery store. Due to extensive damage, three locations in the region have remained closed into early 2026. In February 2026, the company announced that the Spruce Pine, Swannanoa (Buncombe County), and Morganton (Burke County) locations are planned to reopen sometime during 2026 and 2027.
- ***Bombardier Motor Corporation*** – Due to water dependency as part of the manufacturing process, approximately 100 workers were temporarily laid off in early 2025.
- ***CSX Railbed Repairs*** – Approximately 60 miles of CSX railbed had to be replaced following the damage from the storm. The $400 million project was completed in 2025.
- ***U.S. 19W and N.C. 197*** – Approximately 14 miles of U.S. 19W and 30 miles of N.C. 197 were repaired in Mitchell and Yancey counties due to storm damage. The $1.1 billion project is expected to be completed in 2028.
- ***Sibelco Corporation*** – In January 2026, the company announced it would be laying off employees. While the reduction in the workforce for Sibelco does not appear to be directly connected to Tropical Storm Helene, the announcement is noteworthy as Sibelco is one of the largest employers in Mitchell County.
- A number of small businesses in downtown Spruce Pine sustained heavy damage. Multiple news outlets reported that at least four businesses would not reopen and many others would have to secure funding to rebuild before reopening.

Given the severity of the widespread damage to businesses and critical infrastructure, it is not surprising that many of the primary economic indicators related to employment were negatively impacted. To better understand this effect, the following graph illustrates the labor force, total employment, at-place employment, and unemployment rate for Mitchell County between July 2024 and December 2025.



Source: Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

As the preceding illustrates, the unemployment rate immediately preceding Tropical Storm Helene in September 2024 was 2.7%. After the storm impacted Mitchell County in late September, the unemployment rate increased sharply to 10.3% in October. Similarly, there was a substantial decrease in both total employment (employed residents) and at-place employment (jobs physically located within the county) in October. While both metrics remained relatively stable and the unemployment rate decreased moderately throughout the remainder of 2024, a secondary drop in total employment and at-place employment occurred in January 2025. This corresponds to the layoffs at Bombardier Motor Corporation, though other business closures and a lag in employment reporting likely contributed to the decrease. Between January 2025 and July 2025, the unemployment rate steadily decreased while both total employment and at-place employment only declined marginally. It is noteworthy that between September 2024 and July 2025, the labor force within Mitchell County (sum of employed persons and persons actively seeking employment) steadily declined to 6,340. This represents a decrease in the labor force of 486 persons (7.1%) in only 10 months. While some of this may be attributed to seniors choosing to retire, this likely indicates that individuals relocated outside of Mitchell County due to economic conditions. This is also evidenced by the decrease in at-place employment (701, or 13.6%) during the same time period.

In July 2025, Avery-Mitchell Correctional Facility reopened with reduced staffing, which likely contributed, at least in part, to the improvement in all four employment metrics. Since July 2025, it appears that the local economy has generally improved and continues to recover. Based on economic trends immediately preceding the impact of Tropical Storm Helene and the expedient recovery of the local economy following the pandemic in 2020, it is reasonable to conclude that the local economy will continue to improve moving forward, particularly as infrastructure repairs are completed and new businesses are introduced to the economy.

As part of this Housing Needs Assessment, community input was gathered in the form of online surveys of area stakeholders and employers (see Section IX – Community Input). A series of questions specific to the impacts of Tropical Storm Helene were posed to stakeholders. Overall, 84.2% of area stakeholders believe that the natural disaster had a "significant" adverse impact on Mitchell County, while the remaining 15.8% indicated the event had a "moderate" impact. Among the various types of impacts, infrastructure was rated as the most significant impact, followed by economic issues (jobs, employers, etc.), environmental issues (downed trees, debris, water quality, stream degradation, etc.), and damaged or destroyed housing. The infrastructure impact cited by respondents aligns with data provided in the State of North Carolina Action Plan that indicates 404 private roads and bridges within the county were in need of replacement or repair. As such, Mitchell County was ranked fifth within the state for this impact metric. At the time of the survey (April and May of 2026), the majority of stakeholder respondents indicated that housing (89.5%), environmental issues (79.0%), and infrastructure (57.9%) were issues that still need to be addressed, and nearly one-half (47.4%) believe issues impacting the local economy (jobs, employers, etc.) still need to be addressed. As such, both the economic data and sentiment from area stakeholders indicate that many facets of Mitchell County were adversely impacted by the storm, and some of these impacts still persist presently.

For a complete analysis of the Mitchell County economy, including occupations, wages, economic announcements, and commuting patterns, refer to Section V (Economic Analysis).

In an effort to support long-term recovery efforts following Tropical Storm Helene, nearly $1.43 billion in recovery funds was allocated to North Carolina through the Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR). The North Carolina Department of Commerce (NCDOC) was tasked with the oversight of the recovery efforts. In addition to the Division of Community Revitalization within the NCDOC, the Governor's Recovery Office for Western North Carolina (GROW NC) and the Governor's Advisory Committee on Western North Carolina Recovery were created to provide cross-agency vision and to establish a committee of over two dozen public and private sector representatives to provide recommendations on recovery efforts for housing, infrastructure, small business, and other areas of need.

As Mitchell County was identified by the U.S. Office of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as one of 16 counties within Western North Carolina that were Most Impacted and Distressed (MID), many entities within Mitchell County qualify for relief through the programs offered by the CDBG-DR, and in some instances, may receive priority consideration for project requests.

The following table summarizes the specific RenewNC disaster recovery programs administered by the North Carolina Department of Commerce. Note that a link to each program website is provided by clicking on the program name.

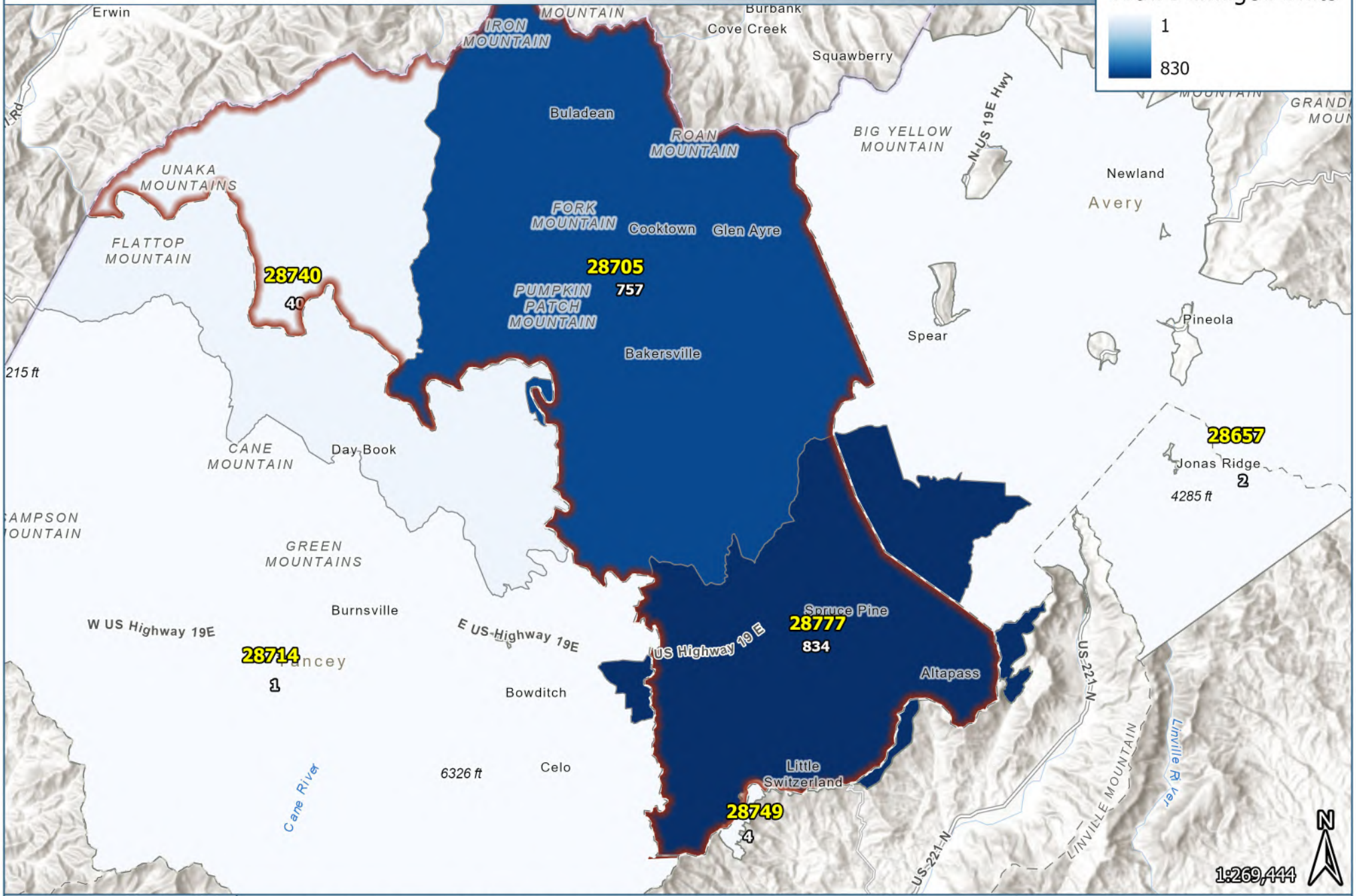
RenewNC Disaster Recovery Programs North Carolina Department of Commerce – As of June 23, 2026			
Program	**Description/Eligibility***	**Application Status**	**Notes**
Single-Family Housing Program	Single-family owner households; priority given to low- to moderate-income families, homes with seniors aged 62 and older, children, and/or disabled, and homes located in HUD-MID counties	CLOSED (January 31, 2026)	A total of 335 applications for the program were received from Mitchell County
Small Rental Rehabilitation Program	Rental property owners with small properties (one to four units) targeting low- to moderate-income households in the 28 HUD- and state-designated MID counties	OPEN	A total of two (2) applications were received from Mitchell County
Multi-Family Construction and Repair Program: Non-LIHTC	Multifamily properties with five or more rental units that do not qualify for or receive Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) through NCHFA	PRE-SCREENING OPEN	Eligible applicants include: for-profit and nonprofit developers, public housing authorities, local governments, and joint ventures of such entities
Workforce Housing for Ownership Program	Incentivizes development of workforce housing (AMHI up to 80%) by qualified applicants within HUD-MID counties	START TBA	Local governments, public, private, and nonprofit organizations, CHDOs and CBDOs eligible
Commercial District Revitalization Program	For eligible local governments and nonprofit organizations to revitalize designated commercial districts that sustained damage	OPEN (Aug. 4, 2026)	Priority given to HUD-MID counties, but state-MID counties eligible
Community Infrastructure Program	Competitive grant program providing funds for infrastructure projects linked to disaster impacts with emphasis on resiliency and risk reduction	PRE-SCREENING OPEN	Eligible applicants include local governments in the HUD- or state-MID counties

Source: NC Department of Commerce, Community Revitalization
*Additional program details and eligibility may apply
MID-Most Impacted and Distressed; AMHI-Area Median Household Income; NCHFA-North Carolina Housing Finance Agency; TBA-To Be Announced; CHDO-Community Housing Development Organizations; CBDO-Community Based Development Organizations

BOWEN NATIONAL RESEARCH

Damaged Residential Units by ZIP Code (Mitchell County)

Mitchell County, NC



0 1 2 3 4 Miles

Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS
Additional Source(s): Bowen National Research

F. DEVELOPER / INVESTOR IDENTIFICATION

Given the scope and variety of housing challenges that exist within Mitchell County, the community would benefit from encouraging the involvement of both public and non-public entities to develop and invest in the numerous housing development opportunities that exist in the county and its municipalities. To that end, Bowen National Research has compiled a list of various residential developers, philanthropic organizations, investors/lenders, and federal and state housing finance organizations that are active in North Carolina, with an emphasis on western North Carolina. In some cases, links to membership directories are provided given the extensive list of organization members that could be included. Each organization's name, website (or phone number) and type of entity are provided in the following table.

Entity Name	Website
Housing Developer	
Fitch Irick Development	https://www.fitchirick.com/
Gateway Development Corporation	https://www.thegatewaycompanies.com/
Greystar	https://www.greystar.com/
Harmony Housing Affordable Development, Inc.	https://www.hhad.org/
Mitchell-Yancey Habitat for Humanity	https://www.mitchellyanceyhabitat.org/
KRP Investments, LLC	None Found; Phone: 336-817-9400
Opportunities South	None Found; Phone: 919-417-0125
Pivotal GP Holding, LLC	None Found; Phone: 513-256-3810
RYSE Construction	https://www.ryseconstruct.com/
Sanctuary Developers, LLC	https://sanctuarydevelopers.com/
Solstice Partners	None Found; Phone: 919-610-7883
Volunteers Of America of The Carolinas	https://www.voa.org/offices/volunteers-of-america-carolinas
WDT Development, LLC	None Found; Phone: 252-432-1445
Weaver-Kirkland Housing	www.weaver-kirkland.com
Western NC Housing Partnership	https://wnchousing.org
WJR NC Partners II, LLC	None Found; Phone: 404-226-2591
Workforce Homestead	None Found; Phone: 828-351-9151
Wynnefield Forward, LLC	None Found; Phone: 336-906-1854
Housing Investor/Lender	
Atlantic Bay Mortgage Group	www.atlanticbay.com
Churchill Stateside Group	https://csgfirst.com
Community Affordable Housing Equity Corporation (CAHEC)	www.cahec.com
Greystone Affordable Housing Initiatives	www.greystone.com
Homestar Financial Corporation	www.homestarfc.com
HomeTrust Bank	https://htb.com
HUD Lenders (list of all)	www.hud.gov/program_offices/housing/sfh/lender/lenderlist
Movement Mortgage	https://movement.com
North Carolina Housing Finance Agency	www.nchfa.com
PNC Bank	www.pnc.com
RedStone Equity Partners	https://rsequity.com
State Employees Credit Union	https://www.ncsecu.org
United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)	www.rd.usda.gov/wv
Wells Fargo	www.wellsfargo.com

Entity Name	Website
Qualified Opportunity Zone Investors	
Blueprint Southeast OZ Fund	None Found; Phone: 404-281-1254
Capital Square	None Found; Phone: 404-229-5645
CEI-Boulos Capital Management	None Found; Phone: 401-533-0580
Economic Innovation Group	https://eig.org/opportunityzones/resources
Enterprise Community	www.enterprisecommunity.org/opportunity360
Housing Assistance Corporation	www.housing-assistance.com
Javelin 19	www.javelin19.com
Origin Investments	https://origininvestments.com
Pinnacle Partners	www.pinnacleoz.com
Pintar Investment Company	https://pintarinvestmentcompany.com/our-portfolio
Smart Growth America	https://Smartgrowthamerica.org
Strategic Rivermont Fund Manager, LLC	www.thestrategicgroup.com
Foundations/Nonprofits	
Amy Wellness Foundation	https://amywellnessfoundation.org/
Community Foundation of Western North Carolina	https://cfwnc.org
Dogwood Health Trust	https://dogwoodhealthtrust.org
Northwestern Regional Housing Authority	https://nwrha.com/
WAMY Community Action	https://wamycommunityaction.org

The preceding list of nearly 50 organizations representing potential residential development partners in the area is not exhaustive, as there are certainly other organizations that could be participants in supporting residential development projects in Mitchell County. Mitchell County representatives may want to research other resources to identify developers and investors, such as contacting real estate brokers, North Carolina Economic Development Association, North Carolina Housing Coalition, North Carolina Bankers Association, and Affordable Housing Investors Council.

G. HOUSING PROGRAM IDENTIFICATION

This section summarizes the various federal/national, state, and county/regional programs that could be used to potentially support the development and preservation of housing in Mitchell County. Note that hyperlinks for each organization/program are provided when available.

In addition to the following identified housing programs, a summary of *disaster relief programs* created in response to Tropical Storm Helene is included earlier in this section of the report on page VII-42.

Programs, Initiatives, and Incentives (**Federal/National**)

Federal/National Housing Programs		
Organization/Program	**Description**	**Eligibility**
VASH Program	The VASH program is in partnership with the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program to help veterans and their families obtain permanent housing	Homeless veteran; Agree to participate in case management program
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development	Offers links for homeownership assistance programs and various loans available; Resources help find affordable rental housing for families and seniors; Resources help with utility costs	Each program has various qualifications
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services	Federally funded programs that reduce the costs related to home energy bills, energy crises, weatherization, minor energy-related home repairs and more	Income Based
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs	North Carolina Division of Veterans Affairs reviews forms and then forwards to U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Program helps veterans, service members, and surviving spouses to purchase a home or refinance a loan; Benefits and services are also available to build, improve, or keep current home; Offers several loan options	Veteran or surviving spouse of service member who died in the line of duty; Service-related disability
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs	Special Home Adaptation (SHA) grant helps purchase, build, or change a veteran's permanent home (defined as a home they plan to live in long term); Can receive up to $25,350 in grant funds for Fiscal Year 2026	Applicant or a family member owns or will own the home; Have a qualifying service-connected disability
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs	Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) is available for veterans and service members (with select service-connected disabilities) to purchase or change a home to meet their needs; Examples include installing ramps or widening doorways; Qualifying applicants can receive up to $126,526 for Fiscal Year 2026	Experienced loss of limb, breathing or respiratory injuries, blindness, or certain severe burns
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs	If applicants receive a Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) grant (mentioned above) or the Special Home Adaptation (SHA) (mentioned above) they can apply for Temporary Residence Adaptation program that helps the veteran adapt to their disability needs	Have received an SAH or a SHA grant and are temporarily living in a family member's home that needs altered to meet the service member's disability

Federal/National Housing Programs (CONTINUED)		
Organization/Program	**Description**	**Eligibility**
Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society	Financial assistance for rent and offers interest-free loans and grants	Active duty or retired Sailor or Marine, eligible family member with military ID, surviving spouse, or reservist on extended active duty of 30 days or more
Navy Housing	Provide support and guidance to service members and their families to obtain safe, affordable, and adequate housing; Navy Housing Service Centers facilitate communication with landlords about lease, maintenance, health, or safety issues	Not provided.
Housing and Services Resource Center	Offers links and resources for housing assistance for both renters and owners; some programs specifically designated for people with a disability or older adults	Each program has various eligibility requirements
United States Department of Agriculture	Provides several loan and grant options to help with housing; Home Repair Loan and Grants (Section 504 Home Repair); Mutual Self-Help Grants; Rural Housing Site Loans; Housing Preservation Grants; Multifamily housing programs; Single-Family Housing Direct Home Loans (Section 502 Direct Loan Program); Single-Family Housing Guaranteed Loan Program	Mutual Self-Help Grants are for government nonprofit organizations, federally recognized Tribes, or private nonprofit organizations; Other programs for qualified homeowners who must participate in building their home
United States Department of Agriculture	Section 515 loans are made by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Housing and Community Facilities Programs Office; Borrowers use the funds to purchase buildings or land to build or renovate buildings for affordable housing	Individuals, partnerships, limited partnerships, for-profit corporations, nonprofit organizations, limited equity cooperatives, Native American tribes, and public agencies; Borrowers must not be able to obtain credit elsewhere that will allow them to charge affordable rents
USDA Loan Program	Zero money down loan option to buy an existing, new or proposed construction home, townhome, condominium or manufactured home	Income based; Home must be in a rural area
Housing Preservation Grant	Offers financial assistance programs including electric programs, energy programs, multifamily housing programs, single-family housing programs, water and environmental programs	Income based; Each program has various eligibility requirements
Operation First Response Family Assistance Program	Provides emergency assistance for a variety of needs including rent/mortgage, utilities, etc.	Active-duty service member or first responder, Gold Star Family, or surviving family of active-duty first responder
Operation Homefront Critical Financial Assistance Program	Various programs include housing assistance, permanent housing programs, and utilities	Income based; Must have DD214 if discharged or provide line of duty documentation if deployed
Salute, Inc.	One-time financial aid for rent/mortgage and utility bills	Post 9/11 veteran or active-duty service member; detailed requirements listed on website
Purple Heart Homes	A 501(c)(3) nonprofit; Provides home modifications or secures rental housing for veterans with a disability	Must have Service-Connected Disability Rating; Copy of Veterans Affairs Award Letter and ratings letter; Proof of income
Operation Finally Home	A non-partisan/nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that provides mortgage-free homes to veterans, first responders and their families; Provides modifications to homes of wounded, ill and injured military veterans, first responders, or their surviving spouses/families; The program has built over 300 homes in 39 states	Veteran or first responder that has been wounded, ill or injured during service

Federal/National Housing Programs (CONTINUED)		
Organization/Program	**Description**	**Eligibility**
Project EverGreen	Provides lawn and landscape services for military families across the United States; Includes pest control, mosquito and fire ant control, snow removal and leaf clean-up	Over age 65; Military veteran, disabled or under-resourced individuals or families
Rainbow	Rainbow Housing Assistance Corporation is a nonprofit organization which provides housing programs for residents of rental housing across the country	Each program has various qualifications
Tunnel to Towers Foundation	The foundation provides mortgage-free homes to Gold Star and fallen first responder families, as well as the Smart Home Program that is used to build homes for the specific needs of first responders and service members that have been injured during duty	Families (with young children) of law enforcement officers or firefighters that died due to 9/11 related illness; Families (with young children) of service members who died in service to country
Mortgage Forbearance	Forbearance process allows banks and lenders to reduce loan payments, suspend payment for a certain amount of time, or allows borrowers to make payments on regular mortgage before paying the amount that is in default; Several lenders also have assistance programs	Default on mortgage due to salary reduction, job loss, medical emergency, or other qualifying crisis
Water Well Trust	501(c)(3) organization; Offers financing to low-income households nationwide for wells and/or septic systems; Primarily for rural homeowners that do not have public water supply	Must own home; No reliable source of public water; Does not exceed 60% of the median non-metropolitan household income for the state
Grant and Per Diem Program	Provides grants to support community-based organizations that serve veterans experiencing homelessness; Program helps fund the renovation, purchase or construction of transitional housing; Improves safety for veterans; Increases availability of individual transitional housing units; Offered annually as funding permits	Funding awarded to programs determined to be the most qualified
National Center for Healthy Housing	A national nonprofit organization that that helps those that live in substandard housing through research, advocacy, training and capacity-building	None

Programs, Initiatives, and Incentives (**State**)

State Housing Programs		
Organization/Program	**Description**	**Eligibility**
Southeast Non-Profit Housing	Offers Farm Housing Grant Program, Emergency Assistance Service, Permanent Housing Development, housing education and counseling for farm workers and their families	Each program has various eligibility requirements
Duke Energy of North Carolina Weatherization Program	Services may include sealing air leaks or duct work, installing insulation, replacing existing lighting with energy-efficient bulbs, repairing or replacing heating and cooling systems, or refrigerator replacement (maximum $1,000)	Income based; Must be a North Carolina resident with a Duke Energy account
NC Home Advantage Mortgage	Down payment assistance; Can receive up to 5% of the loan amount	Income restriction; First-time home buyer; Must occupy home within 60 days of purchase; Credit score of 640
NC 1st Home Advantage Down Payment	A 0%, deferred second mortgage; Up to $15,000 for down payment assistance; Complete forgiveness at the end of 15 years	Income restriction; First-time home buyer; Must occupy home within 60 days of purchase; Credit score of 640
North Carolina Housing Finance Agency	Public agency that finances affordable housing opportunities; Programs include federal HOME Program, Essential Single-Family Rehabilitation Program; Transitions to Community Living Voucher, Targeting Program, Key Rental Assistance, Homeowner Assistance Fund (has helped more than 10,000 residents), Integrated Supportive Housing, etc. Provides resources for down payment assistance, low-cost mortgages, rehabilitation of substandard homes, and foreclosure prevention assistance; Urgent Repair Program received $8.8 million in 2024, and more than 310,700 affordable homes and apartments were financed totaling $31.9 billion	Each program has various qualifications
NC Department of Health and Human Services	Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) is a federally funded program that offers one-time assistance for heating bills January 1 through March 31; Households with an elderly person aged 60+ or person with a disability are also eligible for assistance in December	Income based
North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services	Services offered include, but are not limited to, finding rental housing, aiding with foreclosure, ramp installment for homeowners, and identifying grants/loans for home repairs	Persons with extremely low-income level; Homeless; Persons or family member with a disability
North Carolina's Opportunity Zones	Program created to spur investment in low-income communities through tax benefits; The program provides tax incentives for qualified investors to re-invest unrealized capital gains into low-income areas throughout North Carolina and across the country; Mitchell County has one Census Tract designated for this program (9503)	Poverty rate is typically 20% or greater in these areas or household incomes are less than 80% of the area's median income; Multifamily housing is an eligible product under this program
North Carolina Housing Coalition	Listing of affordable housing locations, counseling services, Homeownership Assistance Program and resources such as Habitat for Humanity	Each program has various requirements

State Housing Programs (CONTINUED)		
Organization/Program	**Description**	**Eligibility**
Energy Saver North Carolina	The North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality is partnered with Everblue; Everblue provides an online application for homeowners to apply for home energy upgrades	Income based
Military Missions in Action	501(c)(3) nonprofit North Carolina-focused organization that provides housing modifications such as construction of wheelchair ramps, roll-in-showers, widening doorways, and lowering cabinets and countertops	Veterans with disabilities, active-duty military, or veterans with dependent children that have special needs
North Carolina Community Action, Incorporated	Works in collaboration with partners to provide aid for short-term expenses and bills, home weatherization, heating/cooling services, credit rebuilding, foreclosure prevention counseling, home repair loans; Senior citizens or very low-income households may also qualify for home repairs such as plumbing, roof, insulation, etc.; Has served 106,059 North Carolinians	Income Based
Veterans Services of the Carolinas	Organization is a division of Asheville Buncombe Community Christian Ministry and helps veterans and their families prevent homelessness, maintain their current housing, helps find new and affordable housing, offers temporary rental assistance and security deposit, and helps pay utilities	Income cannot exceed 50% of the area median income; Homeless or at risk for homelessness
North Carolina Heros Fund and Financial Hardship Grant	Support for expenses such as mortgage/rent or repairs	Active-duty or veteran with permanent residency in North Carolina; Injury during recent deployment that impacted financial situation and VA disability payments have not begun; Unusual financial strain during deployment
Arc of North Carolina	The Arc provides support to people with an intellectual or developmental disability and their families and helps find a safe, accessible, and affordable home	Must have an intellectual or developmental disability or a severe and persistent mental illness
Division of Environmental Assistance and Customer Service	Offers an Abandoned Manufactured Home Grant Program that assists counties in North Carolina in the removal of abandoned manufactured homes and adheres to strict requirements mandating the removal of metal and materials banned from disposal (tires, mercury thermostats, fluorescent lights)	Eligibility is based on each county's tier designation as determined by the NC Department of Commerce
North Carolina Department of Commerce	Offers grants and funding for revitalization of neighborhoods; Programs include Neighborhood Stabilization for areas responding to high foreclosure rates, Recovery Housing Program for those recovering from substance use disorder, Preservation and Reinvestment Initiative for Community Enhancement (PRICE) Program helps support residents living in manufactured housing and manufactured housing communities	Each program has various requirements

State Housing Programs (CONTINUED)		
Organization/Program	**Description**	**Eligibility**
North Carolina Environmental Quality	Weatherization Assistance Program helps low-income households in North Carolina save energy, reduce utility bills, and stay safe in their homes	Income below 200% of federal poverty guidelines or households receiving cash assistance payments under Work First or Supplemental Security Income; Program prioritizes elderly, individuals with disabilities, and families with children
Community Services Block Grant	Funded services to help with housing and utilities	Income Based
North Carolina National Guardsman Survivors' Outreach Fund	One-time financial assistance for temporary housing and utilities; Grant does not exceed $500	Surviving family member of a soldier/airman that died during active duty in the NC National Guard
NC National Guard Soldiers and Airmen Assistance Fund	Financial assistance for shelter, mortgage, utilities, and other necessities; Grant not to exceed $500	Must be a soldier, airmen in NC National Guard
RAO Community Health/Housing Deposit Assistance/Short Term Rental Assistance	Funds used to assist with paying rent and utility bills	Must have HIV/AIDS
North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources	Offers tax credit incentives to rehabilitate historic buildings for either residential (non-income producing) or income-producing projects	Rehabilitation must exceed $10,000 within a 24-month period; Rehabilitation must meet set standards
Vaya Health	Offers several programs such as TCL Program (community-based supportive housing) and Independence Project (combination of short-term rental assistance and supportive services)	Each program has various requirements
Legal Aid of North Carolina	Veterans Law Project provides legal services to homeless veterans and veterans at risk of homelessness	Income based
Impact NC	Connects churches and individuals who want to help with volunteer mission projects in North Carolina	None

Programs, Initiatives, and Incentives (**County/Regional**)

County/Regional Housing Programs		
Organization/Program	**Description**	**Eligibility**
Community Development Block Grant	Offer a Scattered Site Housing Rehabilitation Program; Select counties can apply for a Community Development Block Grant; Funding goes toward home repairs	Home must be located within the county; Home cannot be in the floodplain; Income based; Applicant must own and occupy the property full time
The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina	Provides grant opportunities to organizations and agencies that improve the quality of life for area residents and communities in the Western NC region.	Must be a 501(c)(3) organization or public agency serving one of the 18 counties in the Western NC region.
Dogwood Health Trust Grantmaking Support	Offer grant opportunities to advance the priorities of housing, education, economic opportunity, and health & wellness; 2026 grant opportunities include: Stronger Organizations, Organizational Capacity Building and Collaboration & Innovation, and Digital Opportunities	Available to organizations that serve the 18-county region in Western North Carolina
Emergency Management	Due to downed trees in Mitchell County, there is a risk of wildfires; Links are provided so homeowners can make their property more fire resistant	None
Social Services	Provides links for energy assistance resources	Income based; Home must be in the county
Mitchell-Yancey Habitat for Humanity	Builds new homes for families in need and operates a home repair program	Income based; Applicant must live in substandard housing; Applicant must help build home; Ability to pay a low-interest mortgage; Live within Mitchell or Yancey counties
Mitchell County Community Housing Coalition	Collaborates with other agencies, churches, civic, and volunteer organizations to combine ideas and resources to improve housing for low-income population	Income based
Rebuild Center Spruce Pine	Volunteers that help families whose homes need repair after impact of Tropical Storm Helene	None
Northwestern Regional Housing Authority	The Northwestern Regional Housing Authority accepts applications for the Section 8 Housing program for seven counties; The program provides very low-income families, the elderly and the people with a disability with safe, affordable and sanitary housing; Also offers other resources for housing; Currently manages one affordable property in Mitchell County	Income based; At least one member of the family is a U.S. citizen or eligible immigrant
Spruce Pine Housing Authority	Offers Public Housing; Currently operates one property that offers 84 units for families, seniors, or people with a disability	Income based; Requirements dependent on applicants' housing needs
Hospitality House Northwest N.C. Outreach Center	Offers several resources for families that need housing assistance, permanent supportive housing and other housing needs in Avery, Mitchell and Yancey counties	Income based: Requirements dependent on applicants' housing needs
NC4Vets	Addresses housing needs within Mitchell County and oversees various housing assistance programs; Administers federal housing programs such as Section 8 vouchers	Each program has various requirements

County/Regional Housing Programs (CONTINUED)		
Organization/Program	**Description**	**Eligibility**
North Carolina Healthy Homes	List of resources and organizations specific to Mitchell County that address housing hazards and provide housing assistance; Offers information regarding lead paint, asbestos, mold issues, radon, carbon monoxide and other possible home issues	None
WAMY Housing Program	The program helps low-income households make homes safer and more energy-efficient; Offered in Watauga, Avery, Mitchell, and Yancey counties; Services are available to homeowners including mobile homes; Also offers a weatherization program for homeowners and renters	Income based
Western North Carolina Affordable Housing Loan Fund (WNC AHLF)	The WNC AHLF is a regional financing tool that helps create and preserve affordable rental housing across 18 counties in Western North Carolina. The Fund provides flexible bridge and gap (mezzanine) financing to nonprofit and for-profit developers, helping them acquire, build, rehabilitate, and preserve housing for households earning 80% of Area Median Income (AMI) or below	Must be located in one of the following NC counties: Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania, and Yancey or the Qualla Boundary

Overall, a total of 67 programs (or organizations) were identified that could potentially be accessed to support housing preservation and development efforts in Mitchell County. This includes 26 federal/national programs, 26 state programs, and 15 county/regional programs. These programs, initiatives and incentives cover a variety of purposes, are available on a community or individual household level, and have various eligibility requirements. Advocates and/or residents should explore, utilize, and promote programs that best fit the county's goals. It is important to note that this listing of various housing programs likely does not include all such programs that are available. Therefore, area advocates may want to conduct additional research to determine if other programs or initiatives are available.

VIII. HOUSING GAP ESTIMATES

INTRODUCTION

This section provides five-year housing gap estimates for both rental and for-sale housing within the PSA (Mitchell County). The assessment includes demand from a variety of sources and focuses on the housing needs of Mitchell County, though consideration is given to potential support that may originate from outside the county. It is also critical to note that housing gap estimates do not always correlate to *new housing units*, though it is not uncommon for the addition of housing units to comprise a substantial part of addressing housing gaps within a market. Other efforts, which do not necessarily require additional housing units, may include addressing housing quality (substandard housing) and housing affordability (severe cost burden). In reality, the successful reduction in the housing gap will likely involve various housing initiatives from a wide cross section of area stakeholders.

Housing to meet the needs of both current and future households in the market will most likely involve multifamily, duplex, and single-family housing alternatives. There are a variety of financing mechanisms that can support the development of housing alternatives such as federal and state government programs, as well as conventional financing through private lending institutions. These different financing alternatives often have specific income and rent/price restrictions, which affect the market they target.

The market's ability to support rental and for-sale housing was evaluated based on four levels of income and affordability. While there may be overlap among these levels due to program targeting and rent/price levels charged, specific income stratifications that are exclusive of each other were established in order to eliminate double counting demand. HUD's published income limits for Mitchell County were used.

The following table summarizes the income and housing affordability segments used in this analysis to estimate potential housing demand.

Household Income/Wage & Affordability Levels				
Percent AMHI	Income Range*	Hourly Wage**	Affordable Rents***	Affordable Prices^
≤50%	≤$39,150	≤$18.82	≤$978	≤$130,500
51%-80%	$39,151-$62,640	$18.83-$30.12	$979-$1,566	$130,501-$208,800
81%-120%	$62,641-$93,960	$30.13-$45.17	$1,567-$2,349	$208,801-$313,200
121%+	$93,961+	$45.18+	$2,350+	$313,201+

AMHI – Area Median Household Income
*Based on HUD limits for Mitchell County, NC (4-person limit)
**Assumes full-time employment 2,080 hours/year (Assumes one wage earner household)
***Based on assumption tenants pay up to 30% of income toward rent
^Based on assumption homebuyer can afford to purchase home priced three times annual income after 10% down payment

While different state and federal housing programs establish income and rent restrictions for their respective programs, in reality, there is potential overlap between windows of affordability between the programs. Those who respond to a certain product or program type vary. This is because housing markets are highly dynamic, with households entering and exiting by tenure and economic profile. Further, qualifying policies of property owners and management impact the households that may respond to specific project types. As such, while a household may prefer a certain product, ownership/management qualifying procedures (i.e., review of credit history, current income verification, criminal background checks, etc.) may affect housing choices that are available to households.

Regardless, the preceding income segmentations were established as the ranges that a typical project or lending institution would use to qualify residents, based on their household income. Ultimately, any new product added to the market will be influenced by many decisions made by the developer and management. This includes eligibility requirements, design type, location, rents/prices, amenities, and other features. As such, the estimates assume that the rents/prices, quality, location, design, and features of new housing product are marketable and will appeal to most renters and homebuyers.

A. HOUSING GAP DEMAND COMPONENTS

The primary sources of housing gap demand (rental and for-sale) include the following:

- Household Growth (Includes Changes in Household Income)
- Units Required for a Balanced Market
- Substandard Housing
- External (Outside Mitchell County) Commuter Support
- Severe Cost Burdened Households
- Step-Down Support
- Disaster Impact (Damaged/Destroyed Housing Units)

Since this report is on the specific housing needs of the PSA (Mitchell County), the housing demand estimates are focused on the metrics that only impact this area.

New Household Growth

In this report, household growth projections from 2025 to 2030 are based on ESRI estimates. This projected growth was evaluated for each of the targeted income segments. It should be noted that changes in the number of households within a specific income segment do not necessarily mean that households are coming to or leaving the market, but instead, many of these households are likely to experience income growth or loss that would move them into a

higher or lower income segment. Furthermore, should additional housing become available, either through new construction or conversion of existing units, demand for new housing could increase.

Units Required for a Balanced Market

The second demand component considers the number of units a market requires to offer balanced market conditions, including some level of vacancies. A healthy ***rental*** market requires approximately 4% to 6% of the rental market to be vacant, while a healthy ***for-sale*** housing market should have approximately 2% to 3% of its inventory available. Vacancies allow for inner-market mobility, such as households upsizing or downsizing due to changes in family composition or income, and for people to move into the market. When markets have too few vacancies, rental rates and housing prices often escalate at an abnormal rate, homes can get neglected, and potential renters and/or homebuyers can leave the market. Conversely, an excess of rental units and/or for-sale homes can lead to stagnant or declining rental rates and home prices, property neglect, or existing properties being converted to rentals or for-sale housing. Generally, markets with low vacancy rates often require additional units, while markets with high vacancy rates often indicate a surplus of housing. For the purposes of this analysis, a vacancy rate of ***5% for rental*** product and ***3% for for-sale*** product has been utilized to establish balanced market conditions.

Substandard Housing

Housing gap estimates take into consideration that while some properties are adequately maintained and periodically updated, a portion of the existing stock reaches a point of functional obsolescence over time. These housing units likely require extensive repairs or modernization, or in some instances, it may be more practical and cost effective to build new housing units. This demand component comes in the form of units that are either substandard (lacking complete plumbing and/or are overcrowded) or units expected to be removed from the housing stock through demolitions. Based on demographic data included in this report, approximately 2.2% of ***renter*** households and 1.6% of ***owner*** households in the PSA (Mitchell County) are living in substandard housing (e.g., lacking complete plumbing or are overcrowded). Lower-income households live in substandard housing conditions more often than higher-income households, which has been accounted for in the gap estimates. While households living in substandard housing units are housed, such households have been considered in the demand estimates as the estimates are reflective of the PSA's needs to address all housing deficiencies within the county.

External Commuter Support

Market support can originate from households not currently living in the market. This is particularly true for people who work in Mitchell County but commute from outside of the county and would consider moving to Mitchell County, if adequate and affordable housing that met residents' specific needs was offered. Currently, there are limited *available* housing options in the market. As such, external market support will likely be created if new housing product is developed in Mitchell County.

Based on experience that Bowen National Research has in evaluating housing markets throughout the country, it is not uncommon for new product to attract as much as 50% of its support from outside of county limits. As a result, it is assumed that a portion of the demand for new housing will originate from the 2,538 commuters traveling into the PSA (Mitchell County) from areas outside of county limits. For the purposes of this analysis, a conservative demand ratio of up to 20% for an individual affordability level for the PSA was used to estimate the demand that could originate from outside of Mitchell County. This potential support base from new households (originating from commuters) is in addition to the household growth projections discussed earlier in this section.

Severe Cost Burdened Households

HUD defines severe cost burdened households as those paying 50% or more of their household income toward housing costs. While such households are housed, the disproportionately high share of their income being utilized for housing costs is considered excessive and often leaves little money for impacted households to pay for other essentials such as healthy foods, transportation, healthcare, and education. Such financial burdens often lead to housing instability (e.g., not paying rent or mortgage) that can result in evictions, foreclosures, or homelessness. Therefore, households meeting these criteria were included in the estimates.

Step-Down Support

It is not uncommon for households of a certain income level (typically higher income households) to rent or purchase a unit at a lower price point despite the fact they can afford a higher priced unit/home. Using housing cost and income data reported by American Community Survey, a portion of this step-down support has been applied to lower income demand estimates. In some instances, step-down support constitutes a large portion of total demand, as upwards of 90% of households with moderate and higher incomes within the county pay less than 30% of their income toward housing costs.

Development Pipeline

In terms of the development pipeline, only residential units (rental and for-sale) currently in the development pipeline that are planned or under construction and do not have a confirmed buyer/lessee are included. Projects that have not secured financing, are under preliminary review, or have not established a specific project concept (e.g., number of units, pricing, target market, etc.) have been excluded. Likewise, single-family home lots that may have been platted or are being developed have also been excluded as such lots do not represent actual housing units which are available for purchase. Any existing vacant units are accounted for in the "Balanced Market" portion of the demand estimates.

While the preceding describes the typical methodology used to incorporate product in the development pipeline into the housing gap estimates, it should be noted that there were no such rental or for-sale housing projects identified in the development pipeline. As a result, this component had no impact on the final housing gap calculations used in this study.

Disaster Impact

As part of this analysis, estimates were provided on the number of homes that were destroyed or had major damage as a result of Tropical Storm Helene in September of 2024. While a substantial portion of the homes within Mitchell County were damaged to some degree, according to data reported by FEMA, 87 *owner*-occupied housing units had estimated damages of over $20,000 and 11 *renter*-occupied units were classified as having "major damage." These estimates were used as proxies for the number of housing units likely needing replaced. Because data is not available on household incomes or the housing costs of the damaged units, the subject market's distribution of household incomes by tenure were applied to the number of damaged homes to derive estimates on replacement at various housing affordability levels. Additional details of the housing impact from Tropical Storm Helene are included in Section VII of this report.

It is also important to understand that the housing gap estimates contained within this report are representative of the needs to cure all housing deficiencies within the county. As such, reducing the housing gap will likely involve a variety of housing initiatives, which may include new construction, adaptive reuse of existing structures, various programs to address substandard housing conditions, and financial or other assistance programs to reduce housing cost burden and improve housing affordability. Specifically, these estimates demonstrate the total estimated housing gaps over the five-year projection period (2025 to 2030) to meet the demands of the market based on the demand components detailed in the preceding pages. These estimates also assume that a wide variety of product (both rental and

for-sale) is developed within each income segment, in terms of unit designs, bedroom type, amenities offered, etc. throughout all portions of the county. It is unlikely the number of units needed as calculated by the demand estimates will be developed during the projection period due to infrastructure limitations, regulatory or governmental policies, funding availability, etc. As such, the following housing gap estimates should be utilized as a guide for future development to determine the greatest need by affordability level within the rental and for-sale segments within the county's housing market.

B. RENTAL HOUSING GAP ESTIMATES

The following table summarizes the ***rental*** housing gaps for Mitchell County by affordability level.

	Mitchell County, North Carolina			
	Rental Housing Gap Estimates (2025-2030)			
Percent of Median Income	**≤50%**	**51%-80%**	**81%-120%**	**121%+**
Household Income Range	**≤$39,150**	**$39,151-$62,640**	**$62,641-$93,960**	**$93,961+**
Monthly Rent Range	**≤$978**	**$979-$1,566**	**$1,567-$2,349**	**$2,350+**
Standard Demand Components	83	70	63	34
Disaster Impact	6	2	2	1
Overall Units Needed	89	72	65	35
			Total Rental Housing Gap	**261**

Source: Bowen National Research

Based on the preceding demand estimates, there is some level of rental housing demand among all household income levels within Mitchell County over the five-year projection period. Overall, there is a housing gap of 261 rental units in the county over the next five years. While the overwhelming majority (95.8%) of these gaps are driven by standard demand components, a small portion (4.2%) is attributed to damage resulting from Tropical Storm Helene. The majority (61.7%) of the overall rental housing gap in Mitchell County is comprised of product with rents up to $1,566, which is affordable to households earning up to 80% of Area Median Household Income (AMHI). Among the 161 total units within this combined affordability segment of the housing gaps, over one-half (89 units) are for product with rents below $978, with the balance (72 units) comprised of units with rents between $979 and $1,566. However, there are also notable gaps for product affordable to households earning between 81% and 120% of AMHI (65 units) and 121% or more of AMHI (35 units). As such, there are notable gaps for rental units at a variety of affordability levels within the county.

While the housing gaps among the lower affordability levels (80% of AMHI or less) are more heavily influenced by issues related to housing quality and affordability compared to the higher affordability cohorts, the need for additional units to establish balanced market conditions and to accommodate potential external market support are notable influences of the rental housing gaps across all affordability levels. Overall, there are likely a number of

different approaches that will be required (new construction, addressing substandard housing, reducing cost burden, etc.) to address the rental housing gap, and the combination of approaches will likely vary among housing units targeting different income segments.

Based on the survey of rental alternatives in Mitchell County, there appears to be pent-up demand for attached non-conventional rentals (e.g., duplexes, triplexes, etc.) and larger multifamily rentals (traditional apartment projects) in the area. With the projected household growth estimates and changes in household compositions (e.g., household size, ages, etc.) over the next five years, it appears that up to 40% of the demand for new rental housing could be specifically targeted to meet the needs of area seniors, though a project could be built to meet the housing needs of both seniors and families concurrently. For general-occupancy projects, a unit mix of approximately 40% one-bedroom units, 40% two-bedroom units, and 20% three-bedroom units should be the general goal for future rental housing. Senior-oriented projects should consider unit mixes closer to 50% for both one- and two-bedroom units each. Additional details of the area's rental housing supply are included in *Section VI* and may serve as a guide for future rental housing development design decisions.

C. FOR-SALE HOUSING GAP ESTIMATES

The following table summarizes the ***for-sale*** housing gaps for Mitchell County by affordability level.

	Mitchell County, North Carolina			
	For-Sale Housing Gap Estimates (2025-2030)			
Percent of Median Income	**≤50%**	**51%-80%**	**81%-120%**	**121%+**
Household Income Range	**≤$39,150**	**$39,151-$62,640**	**$62,641-$93,960**	**$93,961+**
Price Point	**≤$130,500**	**$130,501-$208,800**	**$208,801-$313,200**	**$313,201+**
Standard Demand Components	0	54	103	387
Disaster Impact	23	18	17	29
Overall Units Needed	23	72	120	416
			Total For-Sale Housing Gap	**631**

Source: Bowen National Research

The overall for-sale housing gap in the county is approximately 631 units over the five-year projection period. Overall, 86.2% (544 units) is attributed to standard demand components and 13.8% (87 units) is attributed to damage resulting from Tropical Storm Helene. While all home price segments and affordability levels have some level of need, the greatest gap appears to be for housing priced at $313,201 or higher (416 units), followed by housing priced between $208,801 and $313,200 (120 units). This distribution of the housing gaps by affordability and income level is not surprising given the projected growth among households earning $93,961 or more over the next five years. While household growth projections drive a large portion of the overall gaps among the highest affordability level (121% or higher of AMHI), the need for

additional units to establish balanced market conditions, replacement housing, and units needed to accommodate potential external market support are more influential factors for the gaps among the affordability segments between 51% and 120% of AMHI. While the projected decline in owner households earning 50% or less of AMHI results in the absence of for-sale gaps among this affordability level, there are notable potential development opportunities across the remaining affordability levels within Mitchell County.

In terms of product design, a variety of for-sale product could be successful in Mitchell County. While the local housing market is currently dominated by single-family owner-occupied housing and there is significant demand for such product, there are likely opportunities to develop additional housing types in the area. Based on current and projected demographics and the survey of area housing alternatives, a combination of one- and two-bedroom condominium units could also be successful, particularly if located in the more populated areas of the county and near key community services or areas of concentrated employment. Such product could be in the form of townhome or rowhouse product. Additionally, detached or attached single-story cottage-style condominium product, primarily consisting of two-bedroom units, could be successful in serving area seniors, particularly those seeking to downsize from their single-family homes. Smaller detached units or duplexes may be a product to develop in some of the smaller infill lots within the county's population centers of Bakersville and Spruce Pine. Larger, traditional detached single-family homes catering to families could be successful in this market, particularly product serving moderate- and higher-income households (incomes above 80% of AMHI), though affordable for-sale housing product (generally with a price point up to $209,000) for lower-income and first-time homebuyer households would also do well in this market. Such product should primarily consist of three-bedroom units, with a smaller share of four-bedroom or larger units. While the development of new for-sale housing at this lower price point will likely be a challenge due to land and construction costs, some existing housing product that is affordable to lower-income households may become available if seniors choose to downsize into newly developed housing units. The for-sale housing supply of Mitchell County is summarized in *Section VI* and can provide additional details of project concept considerations for future for-sale product in the county.

In most markets, if there is support for new housing at a particular price point or concept and such product is not offered in a specific area, households may leave the area to seek this housing alternative elsewhere, defer their purchase decision, or seek another housing alternative. This is also true in instances where a household is currently living in a substandard housing unit or in a housing cost burden situation. Additionally, households considering relocation to the PSA (Mitchell County) may not move to the PSA if the housing product offered does not meet their needs in terms of pricing, quality, product design, or location. As such, the PSA housing stock may not be able to meet current or future demand, which may limit the market's ability to serve

many of the households seeking to purchase a home in the PSA. This can also limit the size of the local labor force and restrict economic growth within an area. Regardless, opportunities exist to develop a variety of product types at a variety of price points and concurrently improve housing conditions and affordability. The addition of such housing and the introduction of housing initiatives (e.g., housing repair and/or modernization programs, rental housing code enforcement, financial assistance, etc.) will better enable Mitchell County to attract and retain residents (including local employees), as well as seniors, families, and younger adults.

D. CONCLUSIONS

In summary, with an overall housing gap of 892 units, there are a variety of different housing needs within the PSA (Mitchell County). While there is potential support for a variety of residential development alternatives (new construction) in the PSA, a portion of the rental and for-sale housing gaps could possibly be addressed through various programs to improve substandard housing conditions and housing cost burden situations among the existing housing inventory. It is important to understand that the housing demand estimates shown in this report assume no major changes occur in the local economy and that the demographic trends and projections provided in this report materialize. As such, the demand estimates should be considered conservative and serve as a baseline for development potential. Should new product be developed, it is reasonable to believe that people will consider moving to Mitchell County, assuming the housing product is aggressively and effectively marketed throughout the region.

It is critical to understand that the estimates provided in this report (both rental and for-sale) include potential units of demand/need by targeted income level. The actual number of units that can be supported will ultimately be contingent upon a variety of factors including the location of a project, proposed features (i.e., pricing, amenities, bedroom type, unit mix, square footage, etc.), product quality, design (i.e., townhouse, single-family homes, or traditional rental units), management and marketing efforts. As such, each targeted segment outlined in the tables included in this section may be able to support more or less than the number of units shown in the table. The potential number of supportable units should be considered a general guideline to residential development planning.

Disclaimer: The housing gap estimates shown in this report are a reflection of the market's housing needs, assuming *all housing issues* considered in the estimates were addressed. While the housing gaps could be addressed by the addition of new housing, some housing issues could be addressed through the repair of substandard or poor-quality housing and/or through additional financial assistance (e.g., Housing Choice Vouchers) for households struggling with housing affordability. Therefore, a combination of approaches could be implemented to address a variety of housing issues.

Given the local market's housing issues (e.g., need for new/additional housing, housing quality, and housing affordability) vary greatly and there are multiple approaches that can be used to address a single housing issue, it is difficult to pinpoint the degree to which each possible combination of initiatives should be implemented. Regardless, the following table attempts to distinguish the approximate share that each housing issue represents of the overall housing gaps by tenure. Note that these estimates include replacement housing units attributable to damage from Tropical Storm Helene.

Housing Issues Relative to Overall Housing Gaps by Tenure Mitchell County, North Carolina		
Housing Issues	Share of Rental Housing	Share of For-Sale Housing
New Housing Needs	~62%*	~80%*
Housing Quality	~11%	~10%
Housing Affordability	~27%	~10%

*New construction could potentially address 100% of all housing issues, although this is highly unlikely due to limitations in the market (e.g., lack of developable sites, limited funding resources, limited developer capacity, limited infrastructure capacity, etc.)

The preceding estimates may help local decision makers, developers and housing advocates to determine the degree to which various housing approaches (e.g., new construction, repair or replacement of substandard housing, assistance provided directly to residents or to properties, etc.) should be part of future housing efforts.

Lastly, these housing gaps are *not* intended to demonstrate the number of housing units an individual *site* could support. Individual projects on individual sites can pull support from areas smaller or larger than the study area used in this report. Therefore, individual projects should be evaluated on their own merits, which can be assessed through a site-specific market feasibility study.

IX. COMMUNITY INPUT RESULTS

To gain information, perspective and insight about Mitchell County, North Carolina housing issues and the factors influencing housing decisions by its residents, developers and others, Bowen National Research conducted targeted surveys of two specific groups: Stakeholders and Employers. These surveys were conducted between April and May of 2025 and questions were customized to solicit specific information relative to each segment of the market that was surveyed.

The surveys were conducted through the SurveyMonkey.com website. In total, 31 survey responses were received from a broad cross section of Mitchell County. The following is a summary of the two surveys conducted by Bowen National Research.

Stakeholder Survey – A total of 19 respondents representing community leaders (stakeholders) from a broad field of expertise participated in a survey that inquired about common housing issues, housing needs, barriers to development, and possible solutions or initiatives that could be considered to address housing on a local and/or county level.

Employer Survey – A total of 12 respondents representing some of the area's largest employers participated in a survey that inquired about general employee composition, housing situations and housing needs. The survey also identified housing issues and the degree housing impacts local employers.

It should be noted that the overall total number of respondents for each survey indicates the number of individuals that responded to at least one survey question. In some instances, the number of actual respondents to a *specific* survey question may be less than these stated numbers.

Given the extent to which the remnants of Hurricane Helene (referred to as Tropical Storm Helene throughout this report) impacted Mitchell County and the surrounding region, specific questions related to this event were also included, when applicable.

Key findings from the surveys are included in the following pages.

A. STAKEHOLDER SURVEY RESULTS

A total of 19 area stakeholders from a broad range of organization types participated in the housing survey with the following results. Note that percentages may not add up to 100.0% due to rounding or because respondents were able to select more than one answer.

Stakeholder respondents were asked to provide the type of organization they represent. A total of 19 respondents provided input to this question with the following distribution. Note: Respondents were able to select more than one organization type.

Stakeholder Respondents by Organization Type					
Type	Number	Share	Type	Number	Share
Government (Local/State/Federal)	11	52.4%	Community Action Agency	1	4.8%
Nonprofit Organization	8	38.1%	Elected Official	1	4.8%
Business/Employer/Private Sector	5	23.8%	Housing Authority	1	4.8%
Economic Development Organization	2	9.5%	Housing Developer/Builder	1	4.8%
Education/Higher Education	2	9.5%	Realtor (Association/Board of Realtors/Etc.)	1	4.8%
Landlord/Property Management	2	9.5%	Other	3	14.3%
Social/Supportive Service Provider	2	9.5%			

Stakeholder respondents were asked to provide the degree that certain housing types by price point are needed in Mitchell County. Respondents were asked to determine whether there is *high need, moderate need,* or *minimal need* for each of the listed housing types, resulting in a weighted score. A total of 19 respondents provided feedback to this question with the following results.

Housing Needs by Housing Type (Price Point)			
Housing Type	Weighted Score*	Housing Type	Weighted Score*
Rental Housing (Less than $750/month)	90.3	For-Sale Housing ($300,000-$399,999)	51.5
For-Sale Housing (Less than $200,000)	84.7	Rental Housing ($1,500-$2,000/month)	36.8
For-Sale Housing ($200,000-$299,999)	77.9	For-Sale Housing ($400,000 or more)	32.4
Rental Housing ($750-$999/month)	76.4	Rental Housing (More than $2,000/month)	26.5
Rental Housing ($1,000-$1,500/month)	54.2		

*High Need = 100.0, Moderate Need = 50.0, Minimal Need = 25.0

Stakeholder respondents were asked to provide the level of demand for specific housing styles within Mitchell County, resulting in a weighted score. A total of 19 respondents provided feedback to this question with the following results.

Housing Demand by Housing Style			
Housing Style	Weighted Score*	Housing Style	Weighted Score*
Ranch Homes/Single Floor Plan Units	87.5	Low Cost Fixer-Uppers (Single-Family Homes)	66.7
Duplex/Triplex/Townhomes	84.2	Manufactured/Mobile Homes	61.1
Multifamily Apartments	82.9	Accessory Dwelling Units/Tiny Houses	59.7
Traditional Two-Story Single-Family Homes	77.8	Mixed-Use/Units Above Retail (Downtown Housing)	58.3
Condominiums	72.2	Single-Room Occupancy (SRO)	47.2

*High Need = 100.0, Moderate Need = 50.0, Minimal Need = 25.0

Stakeholder respondents were asked to identify the five most common housing issues experienced in Mitchell County. A total of 19 respondents provided insight to this question with the following distribution.

Most Common Housing Issues			
Issue	**Share**	**Issue**	**Share**
Limited Availability	84.2%	Lack of Down Payment for Purchase	21.1%
Rent Affordability	84.2%	Lack of Rental Deposit (or First/Last Month Rent)	21.1%
Home Purchase Affordability	73.7%	High Cost of Maintenance/Upkeep	15.8%
Outdated Housing (Need to Modernize)	36.8%	Overcrowded Housing	10.5%
High Cost of Renovation	36.8%	Lack of Access to Public Transportation	10.5%
Investors Buying Properties and Increasing Rents/Prices	36.8%	Absentee Landlords	10.5%
Substandard Housing (Quality/Condition)	31.6%	Failed Background Checks	5.3%
Conversion of Housing Units into Vacation/Seasonal Rentals	31.6%		

Stakeholder respondents were asked to rank the priority that should be given to specific housing construction types in Mitchell County. Respondents were asked to determine whether each housing construction type is a *high priority, moderate priority,* or *low priority,* resulting in a weighted score. A total of 19 respondents provided feedback to this question with the following results.

Priority of Housing Construction Types	
Construction Type	**Weighted Score***
New Construction	88.2
Repair/Renovation/Revitalization of Existing Housing	81.6
Clear Blighted/Unused Structures to Create Land for New Development	77.8
Mixed-Use (Residential with Commercial)	51.5
Adaptive Reuse (i.e., Warehouse Conversion to Residential)	45.8

*High Priority = 100.0, Moderate Priority = 50.0, Low Priority = 25.0

Stakeholder respondents were asked to identify common barriers or obstacles that exist in Mitchell County that limit residential development. A total of 19 respondents provided feedback to this question with the following distribution.

Common Barriers/Obstacles to Residential Development			
Barrier/Obstacle	**Share**	**Barrier/Obstacle**	**Share**
Availability of Buildable Land	79.0%	Housing Converting to Short-Term/Vacation Rentals	31.6%
Cost of Land	79.0%	Lack of Parking	26.3%
Cost of Labor/Materials	73.7%	Neighborhood Blight	15.8%
Land not Suitable for Development (Steep Slopes, Lack of Septic Suitability, etc.)	63.2%	Concern for Natural Hazards	5.3%
Financing	47.4%	Lack of Community Services	5.3%
Cost of Infrastructure	42.1%	Lack of Public Transportation	5.3%
Development Costs	42.1%	Land/Zoning Regulations	5.3%
Lack of Investors/Developers/Expertise	42.1%	Local Government Regulations ("Red Tape")	5.3%
Lack of Infrastructure	36.8%	Other	5.3%

The respondent that selected "Other" and provided an open-ended response indicated that *the lack of municipal water* was a specific barrier or obstacle to residential development in the county.

Stakeholder respondents were asked what infrastructure issues exist within Mitchell County that limit residential development. A total of 19 respondents provided feedback to this question with the following distribution.

Infrastructure Issues Limiting Residential Development			
Issue	**Share**	**Issue**	**Share**
Lack of Access to Public Water Utilities	57.9%	Developer Fees to Access Sewer Services	21.1%
Lack of Access to Public Sewer Utilities	57.9%	No Impact/No Opinion	21.1%
Lack of Access to Gas Utilities	26.3%	Developer Fees to Access Gas Services	15.8%
Lack of Affordable High-Speed Internet Access	26.3%	Lack Of Access to Electric Utilities	10.5%
No/Limited Water Service Capacity	26.3%	Developer Fees to Access Electric Services	10.5%
No/Limited Sewer Service Capacity	21.1%	Other	5.3%
Developer Fees to Access Water Services	21.1%		

The respondent that selected "Other" and provided an open-ended response indicated there are no infrastructure barriers in the county that limit residential development.

Stakeholder respondents were asked to identify what they believe represents the best options to reduce or eliminate barriers to residential development in Mitchell County. A total of 19 respondents provided insight to this question. The following illustrates the top responses.

Best Options to Reduce Barriers/Obstacles to Residential Development	
Initiative	**Share of Respondents**
Housing Gap/Bridge Financing	52.6%
Collaboration between Public and Private Sectors	36.8%
Establishment of a Housing Trust Fund (Focuses on Preservation/Development of Affordable Housing)	36.8%
Government Assistance with Infrastructure	36.8%
Establish Rental Registry	31.6%
Educate the Public on the Importance of Different Types of Housing	26.3%
Educate the Public on Importance of Housing	21.1%
Expand Grant Seeking Efforts	21.1%
Inform/Educate Development Community on Local Opportunities	21.1%
Tax Abatements/Credits	21.1%

Stakeholder respondents were asked to identify the most critical factors in the geographical location of new residential development. A list of factors was supplied and respondents were asked to select up to three answers. A total of 19 respondents provided feedback to this question with the following distribution. The following illustrates the top responses.

Critical Factors in Geographical Location of New Residential Development	
Factor	**Share of Respondents**
Access to Infrastructure (Water/Sewer/High-Speed Internet)	73.7%
Proximity to Work	57.9%
Proximity to Community Services (Shopping, Entertainment, Recreation, Etc.)	47.4%
Surrounding Land Uses/Neighborhoods	26.3%
Access to Highways/Thoroughfares	21.1%
Quality of Schools	21.1%
Quality of Life	21.1%
Access to Public Transit	10.5%

Stakeholder respondents were asked to identify items or initiatives that should be areas of focus in Mitchell County. A list of various items/initiatives were provided and respondents were also given the opportunity to provide an open-ended response. A total of 19 respondents provided insight to this question with the following results.

Areas of Focus in Mitchell County	
Item/Initiative	**Share of Respondents**
Developing New Housing	84.2%
Accessibility to Key Community Services (e.g., Healthcare, Childcare, Etc.)	57.9%
Renovating/Repurposing Buildings for Housing	57.9%
Adding Community Services (Shopping, Entertainment, Recreation, Etc.)	52.6%
Removal/Mitigation of Residential Blight	31.6%
Critical Home Repair	10.5%
Addressing Crime	5.3%
Improving Public Transportation	5.3%
Unit Modifications to Allow Aging In Place	5.3%
Other	5.3%

The respondent that selected "Other" indicated that *the expansion of infrastructure* should be an area of focus within Mitchell County.

Stakeholder respondents were asked to rate the degree to which Tropical Storm Helene adversely impacted Mitchell County (includes overall impact to housing, infrastructure, economics, schools, etc.). A total of 19 respondents provided input to this question with the following results.

Tropical Storm Helene Degree of Adverse Impacts	
Degree of Impact	Share of Respondents
Significant Impact	84.2%
Moderate Impact	15.8%
Minimal Impact	0.0%
No Impact	0.0%
Unknown	0.0%

Stakeholder respondents were asked to rank the degree (highest to lowest) to which Tropical Storm Helene impacted specific items (e.g., infrastructure, economics, environmental, etc.) within Mitchell County, resulting in a weighted score. A total of 19 respondents provided feedback to this question with the following results. Note that the highest rated item was assigned a benchmark score of 100.0, while all remaining items were assigned weighted values relative to the benchmark.

Impacts of Tropical Storm Helene	
Item Impacted	Weighted Score*
Infrastructure (Water, Sewer, Electric/Gas, Etc.)	100.0
Economics (Jobs, Employers, Etc.)	90.8
Environmental (Downed Trees, Debris/Garbage, Water Quality, Stream Degradation, Etc.)	89.8
Housing (Damaged/Destroyed)	84.9
Schools (Damaged/Destroyed, Disruption of Classes, Etc.)	70.8
Community Services (Stores, Post Office, Banks, Etc.)	65.6
Public Services (Emergency Services, Meals on Wheels, Public Transit, Etc.)	64.1

*Highest rated item = 100.0; score for remaining items relative to highest rated item

As the preceding illustrates, stakeholder respondents believe that Tropical Storm Helene most negatively impacted area infrastructure (water, sewer, electric/gas, etc.), the economy (jobs, employers, etc.), the environment (downed trees, debris/garbage, water quality, stream degradation, etc.), and housing (damaged/destroyed).

Stakeholder respondents were asked to identify the items impacted by Tropical Storm Helene that *still need to be addressed*. A total of 19 stakeholder respondents provided feedback to this question with the following distribution.

Remaining Impacts/Issues from Tropical Storm Helene	
Impact	Share of Respondents
Housing (Damaged/Destroyed)	89.5%
Environmental (Downed Trees, Debris/Garbage, Water Quality, Stream Degradation, Etc.)	79.0%
Infrastructure (Water, Sewer, Electric/Gas, Etc.)	57.9%
Economics (Jobs, Employers, Etc.)	47.4%
Community Services (Stores, Post Office, Banks, Etc.)	21.1%
Public Services (Emergency Services, Meals on Wheels, Public Transit, Etc.)	5.3%

As the preceding illustrates, stakeholder respondents overwhelmingly indicated that damaged or destroyed housing (89.5%) is the largest remaining issue from Tropical Storm Helene, though environmental issues (79.0%) and infrastructure (57.9%) were also cited as remaining issues by the majority of respondents.

Stakeholder respondents were asked to identify specific *housing* issues created or influenced by Tropical Storm Helene that continue to exist in Mitchell County. A total of 19 respondents provided feedback to this question with the following results.

Specific Housing Issues Created/Influenced by Tropical Storm Helene	
Issue	**Share of Respondents**
Insufficient Housing Available	89.5%
Housing is Not Affordable	79.0%
Damaged Homes Remain Unrepaired/Unaddressed	68.4%
Federal/State Disaster Funds Related to Housing are Still Needed	57.9%
Federal/State Disaster Funds are Not Getting Distributed Sufficiently/Timely	52.6%
Destroyed Homes Have Not Been Cleared	47.4%
Temporary FEMA Housing is Still Needed	15.8%
Shelter Housing (Homeless Shelters, Transitional Housing, Etc.) is Limited	15.8%

The majority of stakeholders indicated that Tropical Storm Helene either created or partially influenced (i.e., further complicated) housing availability, affordability, and quality (damaged homes remain unrepaired/unaddressed). The majority of stakeholders also indicated that federal/state disaster funds are still needed and these funds are not being distributed in a sufficient/timely manner.

Stakeholder respondents were asked to provide additional insight about housing challenges and/or opportunities that exist within Mitchell County. Two stakeholders provided an open-ended response to this question. While the need for *affordable housing* was cited by one respondent, the other respondent indicated that *there have been discussions and planning, but action needs to be taken to move forward*.

Stakeholder Survey Conclusions

Based on the feedback provided by area stakeholders, it appears that limited availability and affordability (home purchase and rent) are the most common housing issues in Mitchell County. Stakeholders indicated there is a significant need for a variety of housing types, including: ranch style/single floor plan units, duplex, triplex, and townhomes, multifamily apartments, traditional two-story homes, and condominiums. While moderately priced rental ($750 to $999) and for-sale ($200,000 to $299,999) products are in high need according to respondents, affordable units with rents less than $750 and for-sale homes priced below $200,000 are the most needed products in the county. The construction of new housing units, repairs and renovations of existing units, and clearing of blighted structures for development were rated as the highest priorities in terms of construction types. The availability of buildable land, the cost of land, and the cost of labor and materials were cited as the most common barriers to residential development, while the lack of access to public water and sewer appear to be the most common infrastructure issues in terms of residential development within the county. As a result, the access to infrastructure was rated as the most critical factor in the location of new housing development. Whereas housing gap or bridge financing was cited as the best option to reduce barriers to development, collaboration between public and private sectors, establishment of a housing trust fund, and government assistance with infrastructure were also frequently cited as ways to reduce barriers. Overall, stakeholders indicated that new housing development should be a top area of focus.

Given the broad destruction of homes, businesses, and infrastructure in Mitchell County that resulted from Tropical Storm Helene in 2024, questions related to the disaster impact were also posed to area stakeholders. Overall, 84.2% of the respondents indicated that Tropical Storm Helene had a “significant impact” on the county. Infrastructure was rated as the item that was most impacted by the natural disaster, though respondents also indicated that the local economy, general environmental health, and damaged or destroyed housing units were also items that were substantially impacted. In terms of lasting impacts, the vast majority of respondents believe that damaged or destroyed housing units are the most persistent issue to date. As such, it is not surprising that area stakeholders believe that housing availability and affordability were specific issues that were either created or influenced by Tropical Storm Helene.

The following table summarizes the top stakeholder responses.

Stakeholder Summary

Mitchell County, North Carolina Summary of Stakeholder Survey Results		
Category	**Top Needs / Issues**	**Consensus**
Housing Needs by Type (Price Point)	• Rental Housing (Less than $750/month) • For-Sale Housing (Less than $200,000) • For-Sale Housing ($200,000-$299,999) • Rental Housing ($750-$999/month)	**90.3*** **84.7*** **77.9*** **76.4***
Housing Needs by Style	• Ranch Homes/Single Floor Plan Units • Duplex/Triplex/Townhomes • Multifamily Apartments • Traditional Two-Story Single-Family Homes • Condominiums	**87.5*** **84.2*** **82.9*** **77.8*** **72.2***
Common Housing Issues	• Limited Availability • Rent Affordability • Home Purchase Affordability • Outdated Housing (Need to Modernize) • High Cost of Renovation • Investors Buying Properties and Increasing Rents/Prices	**84.2%** **84.2%** **73.7%** **36.8%** **36.8%** **36.8%**
Priority by Construction Type	• New Construction • Repair/Renovation/Revitalization of Existing Housing • Clear Blighted/Unused Structures for New Development	**88.2*** **81.6*** **77.8***
Common Residential Barriers	• Availability of Buildable Land • Cost of Land • Cost of Labor/Materials • Land Not Suitable for Development (Steep Slope, Septic Suitability, Etc.)	**79.0%** **79.0%** **73.7%** **63.2%**
Infrastructure Issues Limiting Residential Development	• Lack of Access to Public Water Utilities • Lack of Access to Public Sewer Utilities • Lack of Access to Gas Utilities • Lack of Affordable High-Speed Internet Access • No/Limited Water Service Capacity	**57.9%** **57.9%** **26.3%** **26.3%** **26.3%**
Best Options to Reduce Barriers	• Housing Gap/Bridge Financing • Collaboration between Public and Private Sectors • Establishment of a Housing Trust Fund • Government Assistance with Infrastructure	**52.6%** **36.8%** **36.8%** **36.8%**
Critical Factors in Location of New Residential Development	• Access to Infrastructure (Water/Sewer/High-Speed Internet) • Proximity to Work • Proximity to Community Services (Shopping, Entertainment, Recreation)	**73.7%** **57.9%** **47.4%**
Areas of Focus	• Developing New Housing • Accessibility to Key Community Services • Renovating/Repurposing Buildings for Housing • Adding Community Services (Shopping Entertainment, Recreation, Etc.)	**84.2%** **57.9%** **57.9%** **52.6%**
Overall Impact of Tropical Storm Helene	• Significant Impact • Moderate Impact	**84.2%** **15.8%**
Items Impacted by Tropical Storm Helene	• Infrastructure (Water, Sewer, Electric/Gas, Etc.) • Economics (Jobs, Employers, Etc.) • Environmental (Downed Trees, Debris/Garbage, Etc.) • Housing (Damaged/Destroyed)	**100.0*** **90.8*** **89.8*** **84.9***

*Denotes weighted score

(Continued)

Mitchell County, North Carolina Summary of Stakeholder Survey Results		
Category	**Top Needs / Issues**	**Consensus**
Issues Remaining from Tropical Storm Helene	• Housing (Damaged/Destroyed) • Environmental (Downed Trees, Debris/Garbage, Water Quality, Etc.) • Infrastructure (Water, Sewer, Electric/Gas, Etc.) • Economics (Jobs, Employers, Etc.)	**89.5%** **79.0%** **57.9%** **47.4%**
Specific Housing Issues Created/ Influenced by Tropical Storm Helene	• Insufficient Housing Available • Housing is Not Affordable • Damaged Homes Remain Unrepaired/Unaddressed • Federal/State Disaster Funds Related to Housing are Still Needed • Federal/State Disaster Funds (Not Distributed Sufficiently/Timely)	**89.5%** **79.0%** **68.4%** **57.9%** **52.6%**

*Denotes weighted score

B. EMPLOYER SURVEY RESULTS

A total of 12 representatives from area employers responded to the housing survey with the following results. Note that percentages may not add up to 100.0% due to rounding or because respondents were able to select more than one answer.

Employer respondents were asked to describe the primary business activity of their business. A total of 12 employers provided a response to this question with the following results.

Employer Respondents by Primary Business Type					
Business Type	**Number**	**Share**	**Business Type**	**Number**	**Share**
Public/Government	2	16.7%	Hospitality/Lodging	1	8.3%
Education	2	16.7%	Manufacturing	1	8.3%
Professional (Accounting, Legal, Etc.)	1	8.3%	Technology	1	8.3%
Healthcare	1	8.3%	Other	3	25.0%

Employers that selected "Other" indicated that their business was involved in *outdoor recreation, petroleum sales/convenience store*, and *banking*.

Employer respondents were asked to approximate the number of people they employ locally. A total of 12 employer respondents provided feedback to this question. Based on the survey responses, approximately 880 individuals are employed by these companies. The number of persons employed by the respective companies ranges from a low of only one employee to as many as 200 employees. The following table shows the distribution of companies by number of individuals employed.

Distribution of Employers by Number of Employees		
Number of Employees	**Number of Employers**	**Share of Employers**
Less than 25	5	41.7%
25 to 99	2	16.7%
100 to 199	4	33.3%
200 or More	1	8.3%

Employer respondents were asked to approximate the number of employees by employment status (part-time, full-time, seasonal). A total of 12 respondents provided feedback to this question with the following distribution of employees by employment status.

Share of Employees by Employment Status	
Employment Status	**Share of Employees**
Full-Time	70.7%
Part-Time	20.6%
Seasonal	8.8%

Employer respondents were asked to approximate the number of *new jobs by annual wages* that their company will create over the next three years. A total of 12 respondents provided feedback to this question. The following table summarizes the estimated number of new jobs by annual salary range.

Estimated New Jobs Created by Annual Salary (Next Three Years)		
Annual Salary	**Number of New Jobs**	**Share of New Jobs**
Less than $25,000	11	11.6%
$25,000 to $50,000	50	52.6%
$51,000 to $75,000	19	20.0%
$76,000 to $100,000	10	10.5%
More Than $100,000	5	5.3%
Total	95	100.0%

As the preceding table illustrates, employer respondents estimate the creation of approximately 95 new jobs in Mitchell County over the next three years. Nearly two-thirds (64.2%) of the new jobs have estimated salaries of $50,000 or less, 30.5% have estimated salaries between $51,000 and $100,000, and the remaining 5.3% have estimated salaries of more than $100,000. The estimated number of new jobs represents considerable job creation in the area with a notable share having substantial wages. However, many of the positions earn low to moderate wages. It is important to note that these respondents only represent a portion of the area's employers, and the estimates are based on current economic conditions, which can change for variety of reasons at any point in time.

Employer respondents were asked to identify the three most common housing issues or challenges experienced by their respective employees. Employers could select options from a list of common housing issues that was provided or provide an open-ended response. A total of 12 respondents provided feedback to this question with the following distribution.

Housing Issues/Challenges Experienced by Employees		
Housing Issue	**Number**	**Share**
Lack of Available Housing	8	66.7%
Unaffordable Rental Housing	7	58.3%
Unaffordable For-Sale Housing	6	50.0%
Lack of Quality Housing	4	33.3%
Housing is Far From Work	3	25.0%
Lack of Modern Housing	2	16.7%
Renovation/Repair Costs	2	16.7%
Housing Doesn't Meet Employee's Needs	1	8.3%
Housing is Not Near Transit	1	8.3%
High Renter/Homeowner Insurance Costs	1	8.3%
Other	1	8.3%

One respondent noted that *there is housing and available land, but it is overpriced*.

Employer respondents were asked if housing issues have adversely impacted their business in the past couple of years. Among the 12 total respondents to the question, **four** (33.3%) indicated that housing has adversely impacted their business, **seven** (58.3%) did not know, and **one** indicated that housing issues have not adversely impacted their business.

Employer respondents were then asked how the housing issues that their employees or prospective employees experience are impacting the company. Employers could select from a list of impact options or provide an open-ended response. A total of 12 respondents provided feedback to this question. The following table illustrates the distribution of responses.

Impacts for Employers Resulting from Housing Issues		
Impact	**Number**	**Share**
Difficulty Attracting Employees	7	58.3%
Difficulty Retaining Employees	3	25.0%
Unknown	3	25.0%
Other	1	8.3%

The employer that selected "Other" noted that housing issues in the area *drive up the cost of living,* which *forces wages to go up.*

Employer respondents were asked if additional housing were provided in the area that adequately served the needs of employees, to what degree would this increase the likelihood that their company would employ more people over the next three years. A total of 12 respondents supplied answers to this question with the following distribution.

Likelihood of Increasing Number of Employees if Adequate Housing Available		
Likelihood	**Number**	**Share**
Much More Likely	5	41.7%
Somewhat Likely	2	16.7%
Not Likely/No Impact	2	16.7%
Unknown	3	25.0%

The majority (58.4%) of respondents indicated they would hire more employees if local housing issues were resolved.

Employer respondents were asked to describe the type of housing assistance their respective company provides to its employees. A total of 12 respondents provided feedback to this question. Nine respondents (75.0%) indicated that their company does not currently provide any type of housing assistance. Among the three respondents whose companies currently provide housing assistance, types of assistance include *relocation expenses for select positions (rare occurrence), temporary workforce housing (healthcare occupations),* and basic *workforce housing*.

Employer respondents were asked what type of assistance, if any, their company might *consider providing* to employees to assist with housing. A total of 12 respondents provided feedback to this question with the following results. Respondents could select more than one answer.

Employer Provided Housing Assistance Consideration		
Type of Assistance	**Number**	**Share**
None	6	50.0%
Other	3	25.0%
Housing Counseling/Placement Services	2	16.7%
Housing Relocation Reimbursement	2	16.7%
Partnering In/Developing Employee Housing	1	8.3%

Among employers that selected other and provided feedback, one indicated that the rental market has no options and the other respondent indicated that their *Human Resources (HR) department informally connects individuals with local realtors.*

Employer respondents were asked to assign a level of importance to future government housing programs, policies, or incentives that could be implemented to assist employees with housing or address the market's housing issues. Respondents were asked to indicate whether the specific program, policies, or incentives are the *most important, somewhat important, least important, or not applicable*, resulting in a weighted score. A total of 12 respondents provided feedback to this question with the following results.

Importance of Government Housing Programs, Policies, or Incentives	
Type	Weighted Score*
New Housing Development/Redevelopment	95.8
Renter Assistance	68.8
Direct Government Investment in Land for Workforce Housing (Land Banking)	60.4
Development of More Public Housing	60.4
Homebuyer Assistance	58.3
Housing Assistance for Public Employees (Police, Fire, Teachers, Etc.)	58.3

*Most Important = 100.0, Somewhat Important = 50.0, Least Important = 25.0, Not Applicable = 0.0

One respondent noted that *public/private partnerships for mixed-use development that includes housing options* should be a consideration as it can *keep costs down*.

Employer respondents were asked to identify the three most needed housing products by price point for their employees. A total of 11 respondents provided feedback to this question with the following results.

Most Needed Housing Products by Price Point		
Product (Price Point)	Number	Share
Moderate Market-Rate Rental Housing ($750-$1,250/month)	9	81.8%
Entry Level/Workforce For-Sale Housing (Below $200,000)	8	72.7%
Affordable Rental Housing (Under $750/month)	6	54.6%
Moderate For-Sale Housing ($200,000-$300,000)	5	45.5%
Higher-End Market-Rate Rental Housing (Above $1,250/month)	1	9.1%

Employer respondents were asked to identify the three most needed housing types for their respective employees. A total of 12 respondents provided insight with the following distribution of responses.

Most Needed Housing Products by Type		
Product Type (Owner/Rental)	Number	Share
Single-Family Homes (Owner)	10	83.3%
Single-Family Homes (Rental)	8	66.7%
Multifamily Apartments	4	33.3%
Duplex/Townhome (Owner)	4	33.3%
Mobile Homes	3	25.0%
Duplex/Townhome (Rental)	2	16.7%
Condominiums (Owner)	2	16.7%
Condominiums (Rental)	1	8.3%
Short-Term/Seasonal Housing	1	8.3%

Employers were asked to provide any comments regarding housing issues and needs that impact employees in the area. A total of five respondents provided additional insight through an open-ended response. Among the respondents that provided feedback, comments included: *the need for renovation and repair programs for low- to moderate-income families—many are inherited properties; additional repair costs and accelerated aging has occurred due to harsh weather events (e.g., Tropical Storm Helene); setting a goal of affordable homeownership to promote sustainability for the community, businesses, and employees; the need for affordable and readily available non-conventional rentals (e.g., single-family homes, duplexes, etc.) based on area wages; educating the public on the impacts that a lack of affordable housing creates in terms of employees and school enrollment; the substandard conditions of available for-sale properties; and the conversion of permanent housing units to temporary rentals or vacation homes.*

Employer Survey Conclusions

Based on estimates from the employer respondents who participated in the survey, 95 new jobs are expected to be created among their respective companies over the next three years. Nearly two-thirds (64.2%) of the jobs have estimated salaries of $50,000 or less, while 30.5% have estimated salaries between $51,000 and $100,000, and only 5.3% have estimated salaries of $100,000 or higher. Approximately 58% of employer respondents indicated that their companies would be more likely to hire additional personnel if adequate housing were available within the area. In addition, over one-half (58.3%) of respondents have had difficulty attracting employees due to local housing issues. The most common issues experienced by employees include the lack of available housing, unaffordable rental and for-sale housing, the lack of quality housing, and housing being located far from their place of employment. Despite these issues, three-quarters (75.0%) of employers do not currently provide any type of housing assistance, and one-half (50.0%) would not consider providing assistance in the future. Among the respondents that indicated they would consider providing assistance, housing counseling or placement services and housing relocation reimbursement were the two types of assistance most frequently considered. The development of new housing or redevelopment, renter assistance programs, direct government investment in workforce housing (i.e., land banking), and the development of more public housing were ranked by the employers as the highest priorities in terms programs, policies, or incentives. However, homebuyer assistance programs and housing assistance for public employees (e.g., police, fire, teachers, etc.) were also ranked as having moderate importance. While the vast majority of respondents believe single-family for-sale homes are the most needed product in the market, two-thirds (66.7%) of respondents indicated that single-family rentals (i.e., non-conventional rentals) were in high need, and one-third (33.3%) indicated multifamily rentals and duplex or townhome for-sale product were in high need. Rentals priced between $750 and $1,250, entry level or workforce for-sale housing priced below $200,000, affordable rental housing (under $750), and moderately priced for-sale housing ($200,000 to $300,000) were rated as the most needed housing products in terms of pricing.

Overall, it is apparent that employers within Mitchell County believe there are a variety of housing issues within the county, and in some cases, these issues are creating additional challenges for area businesses and even preventing the creation of local jobs. As such, employers rated various programs, policies and incentives as at least moderately important and the development or redevelopment of housing as the highest priority. Regardless, feedback from the local employers indicates that single-family rental and for-sale homes at affordable and moderate pricing are the most needed types of housing development within Mitchell County.

The following table summarizes the top employer responses:

Employer Summary

Mitchell County, North Carolina Summary of Employer Survey Results		
Category	**Top Needs / Issues**	**Consensus**
Estimated New Job Creation (Next Three Years)	• Estimated **95** Total New Jobs (Next Three Years – 12 Respondents) • Less than $50,000 Annual Wages • $51,000 to $100,000 Annual Wages • $100,000+ Annual Wages	 **64.2%** **30.5%** **5.3%**
Housing Issues/Challenges Experienced by Employees	• Lack of Available Housing • Unaffordable Rental Housing • Unaffordable For-Sale Housing • Lack of Quality Housing • Housing is Far from Work	**66.7%** **58.3%** **50.0%** **33.3%** **25.0%**
Impacts for Employers Resulting from Housing Issues	• Difficulty Attracting Employees • Difficulty Retaining Employees • Unknown • Other (Business Cost of "Forced Wage Increases")	**58.3%** **25.0%** **25.0%** **8.3%**
Likelihood of Increasing Number of Employees if Adequate Housing Available	• Much More Likely • Somewhat Likely • Not Likely/No Impact • Unknown	**41.7%** **16.7%** **16.7%** **25.0%**
Employer Provided Housing Assistance	• Do Not Currently Provide Housing Assistance • Provide at Least One Type of Assistance	**75.0%** **25.0%**
Housing Assistance Consideration	• Would Not Consider Providing Any Assistance Programs • Housing Counseling/Placement Services • Housing Relocation Reimbursement • Partnering In/Developing Employee Housing	**50.0%** **16.7%** **16.7%** **8.3%**
Importance of Government Programs, Policies, or Incentives	• New Housing Development/Redevelopment • Renter Assistance • Direct Government Investment for Workforce Housing (Land Banking) • Development of More Public Housing • Homebuyer Assistance • Housing Assistance for Public Employees (Police, Fire, Teachers, Etc.)	**95.8*** **68.8*** **60.4*** **60.4*** **58.3*** **58.3***

*Denotes weighted score

(Continued)

Mitchell County, North Carolina Summary of Employer Survey Results		
Category	**Top Needs / Issues**	**Consensus**
Most Needed Housing Products by Price Point	• Moderate Market-Rate Rental Housing ($750-$1,250/Month) • Entry Level/Workforce For-Sale Housing (Below $200,000) • Affordable Rental Housing (Under $750/month) • Moderate For-Sale Housing ($200,000-$300,000)	**81.8%** **72.7%** **54.6%** **45.5%**
Most Needed Housing Products by Type	• Single-Family Homes (Owner) • Single-Family Homes (Rental) • Multifamily Apartments • Duplex/Townhome (Owner) • Mobile Homes	**83.3%** **66.7%** **33.3%** **33.3%** **25.0%**

*Denotes weighted score

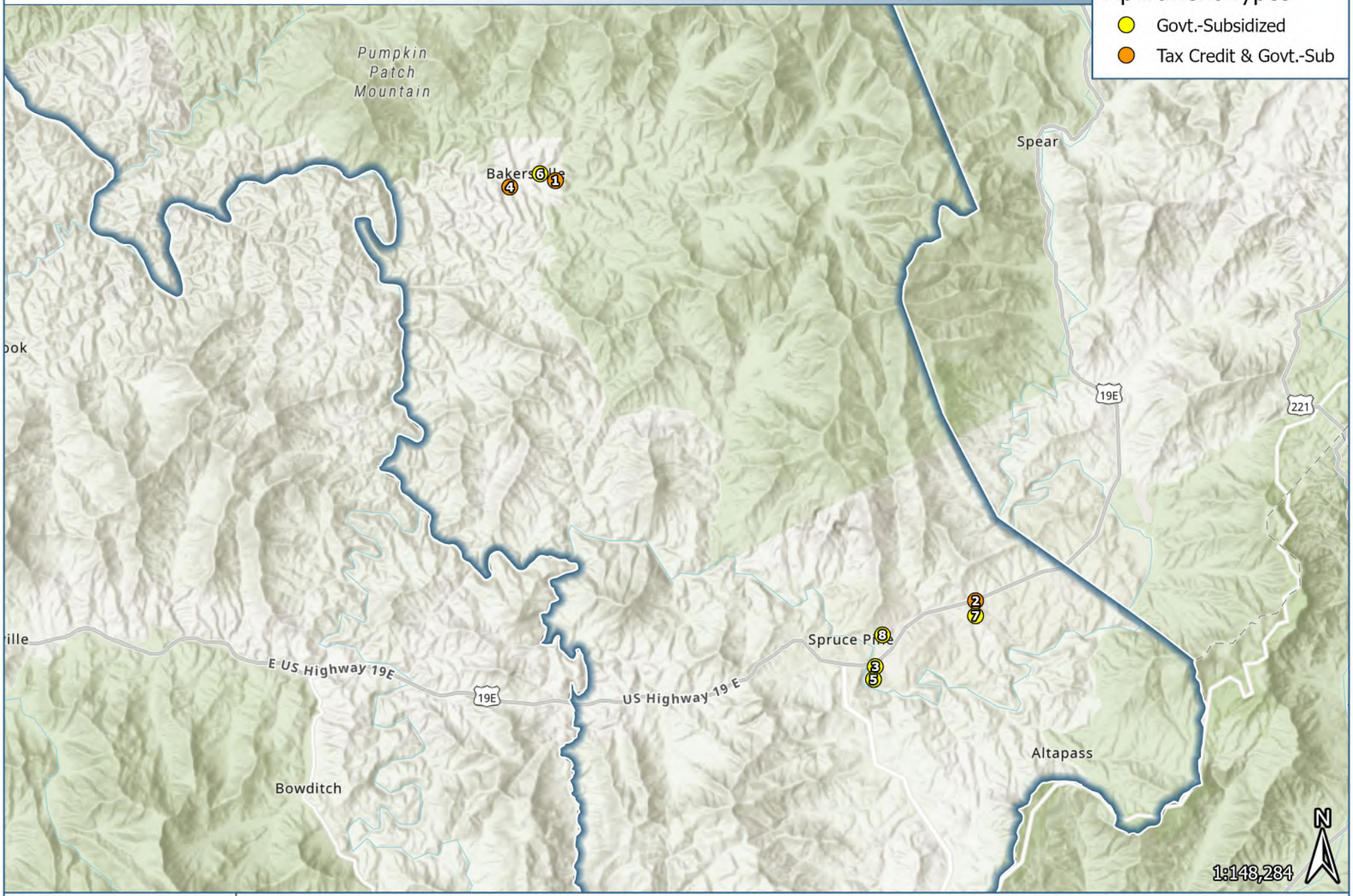
ADDENDUM A:

FIELD SURVEY OF MULTIFAMILY RENTALS

BOWEN NATIONAL RESEARCH

Surveyed Apartment Locations

Mitchell County, NC



0 0.75 1.5 2.25 3 Miles

Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS
Additional Source(s): Bowen National Research

Map ID	Property	Prop Type	Quality Rating	Year Built	Total Units	Vacant	Occ. Rate	Distance To Site*
1	Cane Creek Village	TGS	B	2000	24	0	100.0%	N/A
2	Deer Park Apts.	TGS	B	1982	32	0	100.0%	N/A
3	Mineral City Heights	GSS	C+	1965	22	0	100.0%	N/A
4	Mitchell House Apts.	TGS	B	1995	22	0	100.0%	N/A
5	North Toe Apts.	GSS	B	1984	31	0	100.0%	N/A
6	River Trail Apts.	GSS	B	1984	14	0	100.0%	N/A
7	Sunshine Hill Apts.	GSS	B+	1998	25	0	100.0%	N/A
8	Walnut Avenue Apts.	GSS	B-	1980	62	0	100.0%	N/A

Comparable Property
Senior Restricted
(MRR) Market-Rate
(MRT) Market-Rate & Tax Credit
(MRG) Market-Rate & Government-Subsidized
(MIN) Market-Rate & Income-Restricted (not LIHTC)
(MIG) Market-Rate, Income-Restricted (not LIHTC) & Govt-Subsidized
(TAX) Tax Credit
(TGS) Tax Credit & Government-Subsidized
(TMI) Tax Credit, Market-Rate, Income-Restricted (not LIHTC)
(TIN) Tax Credit & Income-Restricted (not LIHTC)
(TMG) Tax Credit, Market-Rate & Government-Subsidized
(TIG) Tax Credit, Income-Restricted (not LIHTC) & Govt-Subsidized
(INR) Income-Restricted (not LIHTC)
(ING) Income-Restricted (not LIHTC) & Government-Subsidized
(GSS) Government-Subsidized
(ALL) Tax Credit, Market-Rate, Govt-Subsidized & Income-Restricted

1 Cane Creek Village

101 Rhododendron Cir., Bakersville, NC 28705

Contact: Jackie
Phone: (828) 688-3744



Total Units: 24 UC: 0 Occupancy: 100.0% Stories: 3 Year Built: 2000
BR: 2, 3 Vacant Units: 0 Waitlist: 6-9 mos AR Year:
Target Population: Family Yr Renovated:
Rent Special: None
Notes: Tax Credit; HUD Section 8

2 Deer Park Apts.

100 Biggerstaff Rd., Spruce Pine, NC 28777

Contact: Kelly
Phone: (828) 765-6467



Total Units: 32 UC: 0 Occupancy: 100.0% Stories: 2 Year Built: 1982
BR: 1, 2 Vacant Units: 0 Waitlist: 4 HH AR Year:
Target Population: Family Yr Renovated: 2003
Rent Special: None
Notes: Tax Credit; RD 515, has RA (32 units). Property renovation planned for 2027

3 Mineral City Heights

210 Feldspar St, Spruce Pine, NC 28777

Contact: Patty
Phone: (828) 765-9182



Total Units: 22 UC: 0 Occupancy: 100.0% Stories: 1 Year Built: 1965
BR: 1, 2, 3, 4 Vacant Units: 0 Waitlist: Shared; 45 HH AR Year:
Target Population: Family Yr Renovated:
Rent Special: None
Notes: Public Housing

4 Mitchell House Apts.

1 Richmond Dr., Bakersville, NC 28705

Contact: Leslie
Phone: (828) 688-4497



Total Units: 22 UC: 0 Occupancy: 100.0% Stories: 1,2 Year Built: 1995
BR: 1, 2 Vacant Units: 0 Waitlist: 1 HH AR Year:
Target Population: Senior 62+ Yr Renovated:
Rent Special: None
Notes: Tax Credit; RD 515, has RA (22 units)

5 North Toe Apts.

300 Feldspar St., Spruce Pine, NC 28777

Contact: Salvadore
Phone: (828) 765-9182



Total Units: 31 UC: 0 Occupancy: 100.0% Stories: 1,2 Year Built: 1984
BR: 1, 2 Vacant Units: 0 Waitlist: 17 HH AR Year:
Target Population: Senior 62+ Yr Renovated:
Rent Special: None
Notes: RD 515, has RA (31 units)

- Comparable Property
- Senior Restricted
- (MRR) Market-Rate
- (MRT) Market-Rate & Tax Credit
- (MRG) Market-Rate & Government-Subsidized
- (MIN) Market-Rate & Income-Restricted (not LIHTC)
- (MIG) Market-Rate, Income-Restricted (not LIHTC) & Govt-Subsidized
- (TAX) Tax Credit
- (TGS) Tax Credit & Government-Subsidized
- (TMI) Tax Credit, Market-Rate, Income-Restricted (not LIHTC)
- (TIN) Tax Credit & Income-Restricted (not LIHTC)
- (TMG) Tax Credit, Market-Rate & Government-Subsidized
- (TIG) Tax Credit, Income-Restricted (not LIHTC) & Govt-Subsidized
- (INR) Income-Restricted (not LIHTC)
- (ING) Income-Restricted (not LIHTC) & Government-Subsidized
- (GSS) Government-Subsidized
- (ALL) Tax Credit, Market-Rate, Govt-Subsidized & Income-Restricted

6 River Trail Apts.

7 Mitchell Ave., Bakersville, NC 28705

Contact: Melissa
Phone: (828) 682-9526



Total Units: 14 UC: 0 Occupancy: 100.0% Stories: 1,2 Year Built: 1984
BR: 1, 2 Vacant Units: 0 Waitlist: 12-24 mos AR Year:
Target Population: Family Yr Renovated:
Rent Special: None
Notes: RD 515, has RA (14 units)

7 Sunshine Hill Apts.

106 Sunshine Hill St., Spruce Pine, NC 28777

Contact: Pattie
Phone: (828) 765-9182



Total Units: 25 UC: 0 Occupancy: 100.0% Stories: 3 w/Elevator Year Built: 1998
BR: 1 Vacant Units: 0 Waitlist: 9 HH AR Year:
Target Population: Senior 62+ Yr Renovated:
Rent Special: None
Notes: HUD Section 202 PRAC

8 Walnut Avenue Apts.

11 Fairground St, Spruce Pine, NC 28777

Contact: Patty
Phone: (828) 765-9182



Total Units: 62 UC: 0 Occupancy: 100.0% Stories: 1,2 Year Built: 1980
BR: 2, 3, 4 Vacant Units: 0 Waitlist: Shared; 45 HH AR Year:
Target Population: Family Yr Renovated:
Rent Special: None
Notes: Public Housing

Comparable Property
Senior Restricted
(MRR) Market-Rate
(MRT) Market-Rate & Tax Credit
(MRG) Market-Rate & Government-Subsidized
(MIN) Market-Rate & Income-Restricted (not LIHTC)
(MIG) Market-Rate, Income-Restricted (not LIHTC) & Govt-Subsidized
(TAX) Tax Credit
(TGS) Tax Credit & Government-Subsidized
(TMI) Tax Credit, Market-Rate, Income-Restricted (not LIHTC)
(TIN) Tax Credit & Income-Restricted (not LIHTC)
(TMG) Tax Credit, Market-Rate & Government-Subsidized
(TIG) Tax Credit, Income-Restricted (not LIHTC) & Govt-Subsidized
(INR) Income-Restricted (not LIHTC)
(ING) Income-Restricted (not LIHTC) & Government-Subsidized
(GSS) Government-Subsidized
(ALL) Tax Credit, Market-Rate, Govt-Subsidized & Income-Restricted

ADDENDUM B:

NON-CONVENTIONAL RENTALS

Available Non-Conventional Rentals – Mitchell County, North Carolina								
Address	Community	Housing Type	Price	Square Feet	Price Per Square Foot	Number of Bedrooms	Number of Bathrooms	Source
4 Hemlock Court	Bakersville	Mobile Home	$1,400	1,032	$1.36	3	2.0	Zillow
41 Azalea Street	Bakersville	Single-family	$1,400	1,025	$1.37	2	1.0	Zillow
43 Azelea Street	Bakersville	Single-family	$1,050	900	$1.17	2	1.0	Zillow
255 Fuller Huskins Road	Bakersville	Single-family	$2,400	2,134	$1.12	4	2.0	Zillow
1793 Harrell Hill Road	Bakersville	Single-family	$2,000	1,200	$1.67	3	1.0	Zillow
120 Gage Branch Road	Bakersville	Single-family	$1,900	1,120	$1.70	3	1.0	Zillow
462 Little Mountain Road	Bakersville	Single-family	$3,400	1,675	$2.03	3	2.0	Zillow
82 Tempie Mountain Road	Spruce Pine	Single-family	$1,700	1,431	$1.19	3	2.0	Zillow
337 Phillips Lane	Spruce Pine	Single-family	$2,100	1,200	$1.75	2	2.0	Zillow

ADDENDUM C: METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

A. METHODOLOGIES AND SOURCES

The following methods were used by Bowen National Research.

Study Area Delineation

The primary geographic scope of this study is Mitchell County, North Carolina. An overview of the market area and corresponding maps are included in Section III.

Demographic Information

Demographic data for population, households, and housing was secured from ESRI, the 2010 and 2020 U.S. Census, the U.S. Department of Commerce, and the American Community Survey. This data has been used in its primary form and by Bowen National Research for secondary calculations. All sources are referenced throughout the report. Estimates and projections of key demographic data for 2025 and 2030 were also provided.

Employment Information

Employment information was obtained and evaluated for various geographic areas that were part of this overall study. This information included data related to wages by occupation, employment by job sector, total employment, unemployment rates, identification of top employers, and identification of large-scale job expansions or contractions. Most information was obtained through the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Bowen National Research also conducted numerous interviews with local stakeholders familiar with the area's employment characteristics and trends.

Housing Component Definitions

This study focuses on rental and for-sale housing components. Rentals include multifamily apartments (generally five+ units per building), non-conventional rentals (single-family homes, duplexes, units over storefronts, etc.), seasonal/recreational rental housing, and senior care housing (e.g., assisted living, nursing homes, etc.). For-sale housing includes individual homes, mobile homes, and projects within subdivisions.

Housing Supply Documentation

Between January and May 2026, Bowen National Research conducted telephone research, as well as online research, of the area's housing supply. Additionally, market analysts from Bowen National Research traveled to the area in May 2026, conducting research on the housing properties identified in this study, as well as obtaining other on-site information relative to this analysis.

The following data was collected on each multifamily rental property:

1. Property Information: Name, address, total units, and number of floors
2. Owner/Developer and/or Property Manager: Name and telephone number
3. Population Served (i.e., seniors vs. family, low-income vs. market-rate, etc.)
4. Available Amenities/Features: Both in-unit and within the overall project
5. Years Built and Renovated (if applicable)
6. Vacancy Rates
7. Distribution of Units by Bedroom Type
8. Square Feet and Number of Bathrooms by Bedroom Type
9. Gross Rents or Price Points by Bedroom Type
10. Property Type
11. Quality Ratings
12. GPS Locations

Non-Conventional (e.g., single-family homes, duplexes, mobile homes, etc.) rental information includes collected and gross rent, bedroom types, square footage, price per square foot, and total available inventory.

Short-term (seasonal/recreational) rental data includes the share of seasonal/recreational rentals compared to the overall rental supply, annual revenue, seasonal trends and other data points.

For-sale housing data includes details on home price, year built, location, number of bedrooms/bathrooms, price per-square-foot, and other property attributes. Data was analyzed for both historical transactions and currently available residential units.

Senior care facilities were also surveyed in the market area, including assisted living facilities and nursing homes. Information gathered includes total beds, vacancies, fees/rents, unit mix by bedroom type, square footage, unit features/amenities, and services.

Other Housing Market Factors

Other factors that may impact the housing needs of the subject market were evaluated, including the prevalence of residential blight, development opportunities (potential sites), local development costs and government regulations, the impact of natural disaster, identification of potential development/investment partners, and identification of housing programs that support the development and preservation of housing.

Housing Gap Estimates

Based on the demographic data for both 2025 and 2030 and taking into consideration the housing data from the field survey of area housing alternatives, the potential number of new housing units that are needed (housing gap) can be projected.

The metrics used in the demand estimates for rental and for-sale housing units include renter and owner household growth, the number of units required for a balanced market, substandard housing, commuter/external market support, severe cost burdened households, step-down support, and homes impacted by natural disaster. Vacancies reported among both renter- and owner-occupied housing alternatives and applicable units in the development pipeline are considered as part of this analysis. Ultimately, estimates are provided for the number of units that are needed (housing gap) by different income segments, rent levels, and purchase price points within the subject market.

Community Engagement

Bowen National Research conducted online surveys to solicit input from area stakeholders and employers within the Mitchell County area. Overall, 31 respondents participated in the surveys, providing valuable local insight into the housing challenges, issues, and opportunities in the area. The aggregate results from these surveys are presented in Section IX.

B. REPORT LIMITATIONS

The intent of this report is to collect and analyze significant levels of data for Mitchell County, North Carolina. Bowen National Research relied on a variety of data sources to generate this report. These data sources are not always verifiable; however, Bowen National Research makes a concerted effort to assure accuracy. While this is not always possible, the efforts of Bowen National Research provide an acceptable standard margin of error. Bowen National Research is not responsible for errors or omissions in the data provided by other sources.

Bowen National Research has no present or prospective interest in any of the properties included in this report and has no personal interest or bias with respect to the parties involved. Compensation for Bowen National Research is not contingent on an action or event resulting from the analyses, opinions, or use of this study. Any reproduction or duplication of this study without the expressed approval from Mitchell County or Bowen National Research is strictly prohibited.

ADDENDUM D: QUALIFICATIONS

The Company

Bowen National Research employs an expert staff to ensure that each market study includes the highest standards. Each staff member has hands-on experience evaluating sites and comparable properties, analyzing market characteristics and trends, and providing realistic recommendations and conclusions. The Bowen National Research staff has national experience and knowledge to assist in evaluating a variety of product types and markets.



Primary Contact and Report Author

Patrick Bowen, President of Bowen National Research, has conducted numerous housing needs assessments and provided consulting services to city, county and state development entities as they relate to residential development, including affordable and market-rate housing, for both rental and for-sale housing, and retail development opportunities. He has also prepared and supervised thousands of market feasibility studies for all types of real estate products, including housing, retail, office, industrial and mixed-use developments, since 1996. Mr. Bowen has worked closely with many state and federal housing agencies to assist them with their market study guidelines. Mr. Bowen has his bachelor's degree in legal administration (with emphasis on business and law) from the University of West Florida and served as the past Chairman of the National Council of Housing Market Analysts (NCHMA).

Housing Needs Assessment Experience		
Location	**Client**	**Completion Year**
High Country, NC (4 Counties)	NC REALTORS	2022
Evansville, IN	City of Evansville, IN - Department of Metropolitan Development	2022
Barren County, KY	The Barren County Economic Authority	2022
Kirksville, MO	City of Kirksville	2022
Rutherfordton, NC	Town of Rutherfordton	2022
Spindale, NC	Town of Spindale	2022
Wood County, WV	Wood County Development Authority & Parkersburg-Wood County Area Development Corporation	2022
Yancey County, NC	Yancey County	2022
Cherokee County, NC	Economic and Workforce Development, Tri-County Community College	2022
Rowan County, KY	Morehead-Rowan County Economic Development Council	2022
Avery County, NC	Avery County	2022
Muskegon, MI	City of Muskegon	2023

Housing Needs Assessment Experience (CONTINUED)		
Location	**Client**	**Completion Year**
Firelands Region, OH	Firelands Forward	2023
Marshall County, WV	Marshall County Commission	2023
Lebanon County, PA	Lebanon County Coalition to End Homelessness	2023
Northern, MI (10 Counties)	Housing North	2023
Muskegon County, MI	Community Foundation for Muskegon County	2023
Mason County, MI	Mason County Chamber Alliance	2023
Oceana County, MI	Dogwood Community Development	2023
Allegan County, MI	Allegan County Community Foundation	2023
Bowling Green, KY	City of Bowling Green	2023
Fayette County, PA	Fay-Penn Economic Development Council	2023
Tarboro, NC	Town of Tarboro	2023
Southwest Region, WV (10 Counties)	Advantage Valley	2023
Lake County, MI	FiveCap, Inc.	2023
Owensboro, KY	City of Owensboro	2023
Burke County, NC	Burke County	2023
Charleston, WV	Charleston Land Reuse Agency	2024
Huntington, WV	Huntington Municipal Development Authority	2024
Cabarrus, Iredell, Rowan Counties, NC	Cabarrus, Iredell and Rowan County Housing Consortium	2024
Carolina Core Region, NC (21 Counties)	NC Realtors	2024
Shiloh Neighborhood, NC	Dogwood Health Trust	2024
Muhlenberg County, KY	Muhlenberg Economic Growth Alliance	2024
Macon County, NC	Macon County	2024
Statewide Kentucky	Kentucky Housing Corporation	2024
Clarksville, TN	Clarksville Montgomery County Regional Planning Commission	2024
Stone County, MO	Table Rock Lake Chamber of Commerce	2024
Dakota County, MN	Dakota County Community Development Agency	2024
Independence County, AR	Batesville Area Chamber of Commerce	2024
Statewide North Carolina	NC Chamber	2024
Northeast, MI (11 Counties)	Target Alpena Development Corporation	2024
Tampa Region, FL (3 Counties)	Greater Tampa REALTORS and Pinellas REALTOR Organization/ Central Pasco REALTOR Organization	2024
Hopkinsville, KY	City of Hopkinsville	2024
New River Gorge Region, WV	New River Gorge Regional Development District	2025
Evansville, IN	City of Evansville, Department of Metropolitan Development	2025
Johnson City, TN	City of Johnson City	2025
Ottawa County, MI	HOUSING NEXT	2025
Grand Rapids, MI	HOUSING NEXT	2025
East Central Region, MI (8 Counties)	Eastern Michigan Council of Governments (EMCOG)	2025
Asheville Region, NC (4 Counties)	Land of Sky Regional Council	2025
Kent County, MI	Public Policy Associates	2025
Florence, SC	City of Florence	2025
Franklin, TN	Williamson County Association of REALTORS	2025
Berrien County, MI	Cornerstone Alliance	2025
Lewis County, WV	Lewis County Economic Development Authority	2025
Dayton, OH	County Corp	2026
Fairmont, WV	WV Community Development Hub	2026
Downtown Dayton, OH	Downtown Dayton Partnership	2026
Evansville, IN	City of Evansville, IN - Department of Metropolitan Development	2026
Yellow Springs, OH	Village of Yellow Springs	2026

The following individuals provided research and analysis assistance:

Christopher Bunch, Market Analyst, has more than two decades of experience in conducting both site-specific market feasibility studies and broader housing needs assessments. He has conducted on-site market research of a variety of housing product, conducted stakeholder interviews and completed specialized research on housing market attributes including the impact of military personnel, heirs and estates, and other unique factors that impact housing needs. He holds a bachelor's degree in geography from Ohio University.

Desireé Johnson is the Director of Operations for Bowen National Research. Ms. Johnson is responsible for all client relations, the procurement of work contracts, and the overall supervision and day-to-day operations of the company. Ms. Johnson also coordinates and oversees research staff and activities. She has been involved in the real estate market research industry since 2006. Ms. Johnson has an Associate of Applied Science in Office Administration from Columbus State Community College.

Pat McDavid, Market Analyst, has conducted housing research for housing needs assessments completed throughout the country. Additionally, he is experienced in analyzing demographic and economic data in rural, suburban and metropolitan communities. Mr. McDavid has been a part of the development of market strategies, operational and fiscal performance analysis, and commercial, industrial and government (local, state, and federal) client consultation within the construction and manufacturing industries. He holds a bachelor's degree in educational studies from Western Governors University.

Jody LaCava, Research Specialist, has more than a decade of real estate research experience. She has extensive experience in surveying a variety of housing alternatives, including rental, for-sale, and senior housing. She has experience in conducting on-site research of real estate, evaluating existing housing properties, conducting interviews, and evaluating community services. She has been involved in industry leading case studies, door-to-door resident surveys and special needs housing research.

Sophia Narotski, Research Specialist, has conducted housing research and data collection in rural and urban markets. She is experienced with all levels of rental housing, senior care facilities, and non-conventional rental housing. Ms. Narotski conducts interviews with local economic development departments, chambers of commerce, planning officials, social supportive providers and housing authority representatives. She holds an Associate of Arts in Sociology from Columbus State Community College.

In-House Researchers – Bowen National Research employs a staff of in-house researchers who are experienced in the surveying and evaluation of all rental and for-sale housing types, as well as in conducting interviews and surveys with city officials, economic development offices and chambers of commerce, housing authorities and residents.

No subconsultants were used as part of this assessment.

ADDENDUM E: GLOSSARY

Various key terms associated with issues and topics evaluated in this report are used throughout this document. The following provides a summary of the definitions for these key terms. It is important to note that the definitions cited below include the source of the definition, when applicable. Those definitions that were not cited originated from the National Council of Housing Market Analysts (NCHMA).

Area Median Household Income (AMHI) is the median income for families in metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas, used to calculate income limits for eligibility in a variety of housing programs. HUD estimates the median family income for an area in the current year and adjusts that amount for different family sizes so that family incomes may be expressed as a percentage of the area median income. For example, a family's income may equal 80% of the area median income, a common maximum income level for participation in HUD programs. (Bowen National Research, Various Sources)

Available rental housing is any rental product that is currently available for rent. This includes any units identified through Bowen National Research's survey of affordable rental properties identified in the study areas, published listings of available rentals, and rentals disclosed by local realtors or management companies.

Basic Rent is the minimum monthly rent that tenants who do not have rental assistance pay to lease units developed through the USDA-RD Section 515 Program, the HUD Section 236 Program and the HUD Section 223 (d) (3) Below Market Interest Rate Program. The Basic Rent is calculated as the amount of rent required to operate the property, maintain debt service on a subsidized mortgage with a below-market interest rate, and provide a return on equity to the developer in accordance with the regulatory documents governing the property.

Contract Rent is (1) the actual monthly rent payable by the tenant, including any rent subsidy paid on behalf of the tenant, to the owner, inclusive of all terms of the lease (HUD & RD) or (2) the monthly rent agreed to between a tenant and a landlord (Census).

Cost overburdened households are households that pay more than 30% or 35% (depending upon source) of their annual household income toward housing costs. Typically, such households will choose a comparable property (including new affordable housing product) if it is less of a cost burden.

Elderly Person is a person who is at least 62 years of age as defined by HUD.

Elderly or Senior Housing is housing where (1) all the units in the property are restricted for occupancy by persons 62 years of age or older or (2) at least 80% of the units in each building are restricted for occupancy by households where at least one household member is 55 years of age or older and the housing is designed with amenities and facilities designed to meet the needs of senior citizens.

Extremely low-income is a person or household with income below 30% of Area Median Income adjusted for household size.

Fair Market Rent (FMR) are the estimates established by HUD of the gross rents (contract rent plus tenant paid utilities) needed to obtain modest rental units in acceptable condition in a specific county or metropolitan statistical area. HUD generally sets FMR so that 40% of the rental units have rents below the FMR. In rental markets with a shortage of lower priced rental units HUD may approve the use of Fair Market Rents that are as high as the 50th percentile of rents.

Frail Elderly is a person who is at least 62 years of age and is unable to perform at least three "activities of daily living" comprised of eating, bathing, grooming, dressing or home management activities as defined by HUD.

Garden apartments are apartments in low-rise buildings (typically two to four stories) that feature low density, ample open space around buildings, and on-site parking.

Gross Rent is the monthly housing cost to a tenant which equals the Contract Rent provided for in the lease plus the estimated cost of all tenant paid utilities.

Household is one or more people who occupy a housing unit as their usual place of residence.

Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8 Program) is a federal rent subsidy program under Section 8 of the U.S. Housing Act, which issues rent vouchers to eligible households to use in the housing of their choice. The voucher payment subsidizes the difference between the Gross Rent and the tenant's contribution of 30% of adjusted gross income, (or 10% of gross income, whichever is greater). In cases where 30% of the tenant's income is less than the utility allowance, the tenant will receive an assistance payment. In other cases, the tenant is responsible for paying his share of the rent each month.

Housing unit is a house, apartment, mobile home, or group of rooms used as a separate living quarters by a single household.

HUD Section 8 Program is a federal program that provides project-based rental assistance. Under the program, HUD contracts directly with the owner for the payment of the difference between the Contract Rent and a specified percentage of tenants' adjusted income.

HUD Section 202 Program is a federal program which provides direct capital assistance (i.e., grant) and operating or rental assistance to finance housing designed for occupancy by elderly households who have income not exceeding 50% of the Area Median Income. The program is limited to housing owned by 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations or by limited partnerships where the sole general partner is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Units receive HUD project-based rental assistance that enables tenants to occupy units at rents based on 30% of tenant income.

HUD Section 236 Program is a federal program which provides interest reduction payments for loans which finance housing targeted to households with income not exceeding 80% of Area Median Income who pay rent equal to the greater of Basic Rent or 30% of their adjusted income. All rents are capped at a HUD-approved market rent.

HUD Section 811 Program is a federal program which provides direct capital assistance and operating or rental assistance to finance housing designed for occupancy by persons with disabilities who have income not exceeding 50% of Area Median Income. The program is limited to housing owned by 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations or by limited partnerships where the sole general partner is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Income Limits are the Maximum Household Income by county or Metropolitan Statistical Area, adjusted for household size and expressed as a percentage of the Area Median Income (AMI) for the purpose of establishing an upper limit for eligibility for a specific housing program. Income Limits for federal, state and local rental housing programs typically are established at 30%, 50%, 60% or 80% of AMI.

Low-Income Household is a person or household with gross household income between 50% and 80% of Area Median Income adjusted for household size.

Low-Income Housing Tax Credit is a program to generate equity for investment in affordable rental housing authorized pursuant to Section 42 of the Internal Revenue Code, as amended. The program requires that a certain percentage of units built be restricted for occupancy to households earning 80% or less of Area Median Income, and that the rents on these units be restricted accordingly.

Market vacancy rate (physical) is the average number of apartment units in any market which are unoccupied divided by the total number of apartment units in the same market, excluding units in properties which are in the lease-up stage. Bowen National Research considers only these vacant units in its rental housing survey.

Mixed-income property is an apartment property containing (1) both income restricted and unrestricted units or (2) units restricted at two or more income limits (i.e., low-income Tax Credit property with income limits of 30%, 50% and 60%).

Moderate Income is a person or household with gross household income between 40% and 60% of Area Median Income adjusted for household size.

Multifamily Housing is a structure that contains more than two housing units.

New owner-occupied household growth within a market is a primary demand component for new for-sale housing. For the purposes of this analysis, growth between 2025 and 2030 is evaluated. The 2025 households by income level are based on ESRI estimates that account for 2020 Census counts of total households for each study area. The 2025 and 2030 estimates are based on growth projections by income level by ESRI. The difference between the two household estimates represents the new owner-occupied households that are projected to be added to a study area between 2025 and 2030. These estimates of growth are provided by each income level and corresponding price point that can be afforded.

Non-Conventional Rentals are housing structures with four or fewer rental units.

Overcrowded housing is often considered housing units with 1.01 or more persons per room. These units are often occupied by multigenerational families or large families that need more appropriately sized and affordable housing units. For the purposes of this analysis, the share of overcrowded housing from the American Community Survey is used.

Pipeline housing is housing that is currently under construction or is planned or proposed for development. Bowen National Research identifies pipeline housing during telephone interviews with local and county planning departments and through a review of published listings from housing finance entities such as NCHFA, HUD and USDA**.**

Population trends are changes in population levels for a particular area over a specific period of time which is a function of the level of births, deaths, and net migration.

Potential support is the equivalent to the *housing gap* referenced in this report. The *housing gap* is the total demand from eligible households that live in certain housing conditions (described in Section VIII of this report) less the available or planned housing stock that was inventoried within each study area.

Project-based rent assistance is rental assistance from any source that is allocated to the property or a specific number of units in the property and is available to each income-eligible tenant of the property or an assisted unit.

Public Housing or Low-Income Conventional Public Housing is a HUD program administered by local (or regional) housing authorities which serves Low- and Very Low-Income households with rent based on the same formula used for HUD Section 8 assistance.

Rent burden is gross rent divided by adjusted monthly household income.

Rent burdened households are households with rent burden above the level determined by the lender, investor, or public program to be an acceptable rent-to-income ratio.

Replacement of functionally obsolete housing is a demand consideration in most established markets. Given the limited development of new housing units in a study area, homebuyers are often limited to choosing from the established housing stock, which can be considered old and/or often in disrepair and/or functionally obsolete. There are a variety of ways to measure functionally obsolete housing and to determine the number of units that should be replaced. For the purposes of this analysis, Bowen National Research applied the highest share of any of the following three metrics: cost burdened households, units lacking complete plumbing facilities, and overcrowded units. This resulting housing replacement ratio is then applied to the existing (2025) owner-occupied housing stock to estimate the number of for-sale units that should be replaced in the study area(s).

Restricted rent is the rent charged under the restrictions of a specific housing program or subsidy.

Single-Family Housing is a dwelling unit, either attached or detached, designed for use by one household and with direct access to a street. It does not share heating facilities or other essential building facilities with any other dwelling.

Standard Condition: A housing unit that meets HUD's Section 8 Housing Quality Standards.

Subsidized Housing is housing that operates with a government subsidy often requiring tenants to pay up to 30% of their adjusted gross income toward rent and often limiting eligibility to households with incomes of up to 50% or 80% of the Area Median Household Income. (Bowen National Research)

Subsidy is monthly income received by a tenant or by an owner on behalf of a tenant to pay the difference between the apartment's contract rent and the amount paid by the tenant toward rent.

Substandard housing is typically considered product that lacks complete indoor plumbing facilities. Such housing is often considered to be of such poor quality and in disrepair that it should be replaced. For the purposes of this analysis, Bowen National Research used the share of households living in substandard housing from the American Community Survey.

Substandard conditions are housing conditions that are conventionally considered unacceptable which may be defined in terms of lacking plumbing facilities, one or more major systems not functioning properly, or overcrowded conditions.

Tenant is one who rents real property from another.

Tenant paid utilities are the cost of utilities (not including cable, telephone, or internet) necessary for the habitation of a dwelling unit, which are paid by the tenant.

Tenure is the distinction between owner-occupied and renter-occupied housing units.

Townhouse (or Row House) is a single-family attached residence separated from another by party walls, usually on a narrow lot offering small front and backyards; also called a row house.

Vacancy Rate – Economic Vacancy Rate (physical) is the maximum potential revenue less actual rent revenue divided by maximum potential rent revenue. The number of total habitable units that are vacant divided by the total number of units in the property.

Very Low-Income Household is a person or household with gross household income between 30% and 50% of Area Median Income adjusted for household size.

Windshield Survey references an on-site observation of a physical property or area that considers only the perspective viewed from the "windshield" of a vehicle. Such a survey does not include interior inspections or evaluations of physical structures.