

Transylvania County Community Appearance Initiative

Purpose and Goals

Transylvania County is a special place known for its scenic beauty and excellent quality of life. These features have led to steady increases in population as people move to the County to live, work and visit. Concerns about the appearance and effect of abandoned manufactured homes, junked or abandoned motor vehicles, junkyards, and junk in general have been expressed by County citizens. The concerns include possible adverse effects on adjacent property values, tourism, safety and health, and potential residential and business relocations.

Many citizens are also concerned about the protection of private property rights but are interested in finding ways to help improve the appearance of the County and to help remove accumulated but unwanted junk.

The Transylvania County Comprehensive Plan includes several goals and objectives related to this initiative: 1) Encourage the preservation of aesthetically and economically valuable views and green spaces (Goal 2, Objective 10); Promote the best use of land while protecting citizen's property rights (Goal 7); Promote Best Management Practices for Corridors (Goal 7, Objective 2);

The goals of the Transylvania County Community Appearance Initiative (CAI) are:

- Preserve and protect the natural beauty of Transylvania County
- Preserve and protect property rights
- Promote and protect the health and safety of citizens of Transylvania County.
- Promote economic development while protecting individuals and businesses from burdensome regulations.

Mission

Transylvania County will assist citizens to remove and dispose of abandoned manufactured housing, junked / abandoned motor vehicles and junk. The County will also assist owners of junkyards with vegetative screening efforts. The County will help identify areas for improvement, coordinate efforts and may provide financial assistance in some cases to aid in this effort. The County will provide information for citizens and junkyard owners about the initiative, will establish an advisory council and appoint an administrator.

Scope and Priorities

The initiative will apply to abandoned manufactured homes, junked / abandoned motor vehicles, junk and junkyards visible from state roads. Priority will be given to safety and health and to the major corridors in the County; U.S. 64, U.S.178, U.S. 276, NC 215 and NC 280. The initiative is not intended to apply to junk brought into the County after the beginning of the initiative.

Description of Roles

Advisory Council – Appointed by the County Commissioners, this group periodically reviews applications from citizens requesting assistance and complaints from concerned citizens and prioritizes improvement efforts. The Council also provides guidance for the administrator and reports to the Board of Commissioners. The advisory council shall consist of 9 members and

shall include a representative(s) from: the planning board, the health department, salvage dealers, solid waste, and interested citizens. Member terms are to be staggered initially then run for three years and a maximum of two terms. Initially the planning board member and two citizen members shall serve for 1 year, two citizen members shall serve for two years, two citizen members shall serve for three years and the health department and solid waste department members shall serve continuously.

Administrator – coordinates the improvement efforts, contacts property owners and resources to implement improvement efforts, keeps records of applications for assistance, complaints from citizens and action on each case approved by the advisory council. The administrator will be appointed by the Commissioners/County Manager.

Board of Commissioners – appoints the advisory council, establishes budget and policies governing the initiative.

Citizens – make applications for assistance, comply with initiative standards, communicate concerns, volunteer to support and provide resources for initiative implementation.

Procedures

- Citizens apply to the administrator for assistance under the voluntary initiative or call regarding concerns.
- The administrator keeps records of applications and concerns.
- The advisory council meets periodically (could be monthly to start and quarterly after the initiative is underway) to review applications and concerns and set priorities for the next period. The advisory council and the administrator agree on the approach for improvement efforts for the next period.
- The administrator contacts the property owner and utilizes resources as needed to obtain agreements and waivers of liability and to implement the improvement effort. Records of the action are kept. If payment is needed for any service the administrator verifies the work done and submits a request for payment from the County. A file is kept on each case.

Education / Awareness

The Advisory Council and Administrator will develop an education and awareness program that will include:

- Articles in local newspapers on recycling, Community Appearance Initiative.
- Public service announcements on cable TV.
- County and economic development website to have information about the initiative.
- Service Organizations and Business Associations help publicize.
- Solid Waste Collection Centers distribute initiative information.
- County clean-up week quarterly, including solid waste pick-up and tipping assistance.

Resources

Potential sources of assistance may include the following:

- Commissioners – Approval of: initiative, funds, solid waste equipment, administrative staff
- Solid Waste – equipment, containers, appliance and tire handling
- Salvage Dealers – disposal of vehicles, scrap metal and other salvage materials
- Co-operative Extension / Soil & Water – plantings

- Job Corps – plantings, clean-up
- Grading Contractors / Salvage Dealers – demolition
- Fire Departments – Burning
- NCDENR, NCDOC, NCDOT, USDA, The Rural Center, Congress – Grants
- Public / Environmental groups / Service Clubs – volunteers, fund drives
- TDA - funds
- Private donations / sponsorships
- Other (To Be Determined)

Standards / Regulation

The benefits under this initiative are meant to be a one-time benefit to any property owner. Persons benefiting from this initiative shall agree to prevent further placement or accumulation of abandoned manufactured homes, abandoned motor vehicles or junk on their property. This agreement shall be in writing as determined by the County Attorney. The County shall be entitled to recover any expense benefiting the person who violates this agreement.

Junkyard owners benefiting from this initiative shall agree to maintain junkyard standards as listed below:

- Limit stacking or piling of material to no more than eight feet.
- Maintain a vegetative screen on sides of the junkyard that are visible from a public road.
- Avoid placement of salvage material or vehicles within fifty (50) feet of any water source, pond, lake, creek, stream or river. Use berms or plantings in this buffer zone to help control storm water run-off.
- Avoid placement of material outside the screened area.

Health violations shall be referred to the health department for action under G.S. 130A-19. Illegal dumping violations shall be subject to penalty per the Transylvania County Solid Waste Ordinance section 8.17 and/or referred to the NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Annual Report

The Advisory Council shall issue a report annually describing the initiative's effectiveness, specific results achieved and any issues or non-compliance. Recommendations for making the initiative more effective and efficient and means of addressing initiative deficiencies shall also be included.

Budget

The planning board recommends the following budget items for the first year of the initiative:

- Contract costs for demolition of 10 abandoned manufactured homes
- Landfill fees for 100 tons of solid waste
- Assistance with screening
- Miscellaneous initiative costs (advertising, printing, postage,

The planning board estimates that 7.5 hours per week of administrative time will be needed to conduct this initiative during the first year.

Definitions

Abandoned Mobile / Manufactured Home – a mobile/manufactured home not habitable as a dwelling and not providing complete, independent living facilities including permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking and sanitation or has not received the proper permits to be located within the County's jurisdiction.

Accumulated Junk - junk covering 600 square feet (approximately 20 feet by 30 feet) or more of surface area, in total, whether in one area or several, on the same or contiguous parcels of land.

Junk – Wrecked, scrapped, disassembled, unusable, cannibalized, inoperable, or un-repairable boats, trailers, camping trailers, construction equipment, appliance, vehicle parts, building materials, scrap metal, rope, rags, paper, and rubber.

Junked Motor Vehicle: A motor vehicle that does not display a current North Carolina license plate and may be partially dismantled or wrecked and cannot be self propelled or moved in the manner in which it was originally intended to move.

Junkyard – Any establishment, place of business or place that is maintained, operated or used for storing, keeping buying or selling junk or for maintenance or operation of an automobile graveyard.

Vegetative Screen – An evergreen, continuous and opaque vegetative planting. Vegetation not less than two feet (2') in height shall be planted not more than six feet (6') apart and shall grow to at least six (6) feet in height within four (4) years of planting. Plants should have leaves or foliage at all times of year and shall include, but not be limited to, white pine, hemlock, southern pine, and spruce trees.