

TOWN OF VALDESE
TOWN COUNCIL PRE - AGENDA MEETING
MARCH 31, 2025

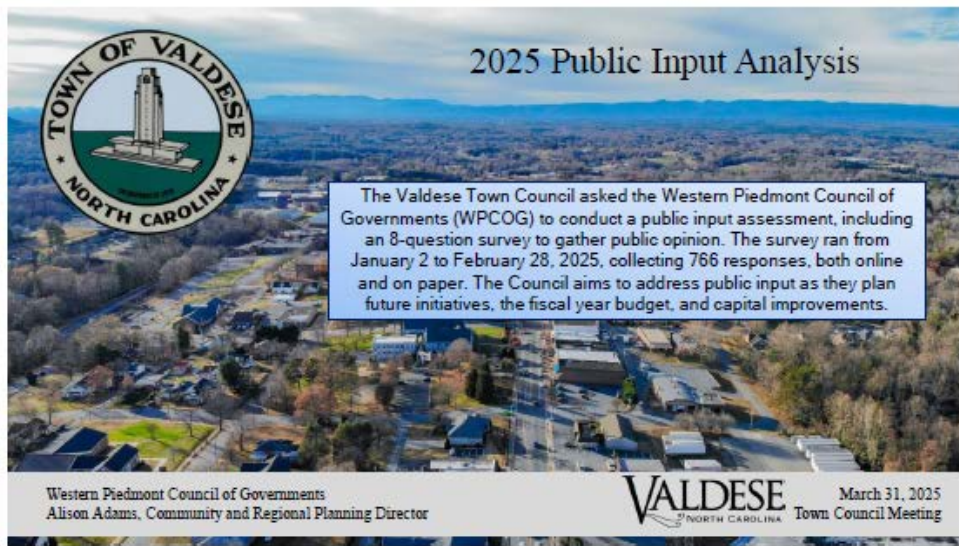
The Town of Valdese Town Council met on Monday, March 31, 2025, at 6:00 p.m., in the Town Council Chambers at Town Hall, 102 Massel Avenue SW, Valdese, North Carolina. The Council meeting was live-streamed on YouTube @townofvaldese. The following were present: Mayor Charles Watts, Mayor Pro Tem Gary Ogle, Councilwoman Rexanna Lowman, Councilwoman Heather Ward, Councilwoman Melinda Zimmerman, and Councilman Glenn Harvey. Also present were: Interim Town Manager Bo Weichel, Town Attorney Tim Swanson, Town Clerk Jessica Lail, and various Department Heads.

Absent:

A quorum was present.

Mayor Watts called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., he offered the invocation and led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

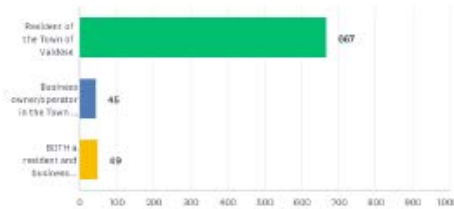
PRESENTATION OF THE 2025 SURVEY RESULTS: Alison Adams, Director of Community & Regional Planning with WPCOG, presented a review of the survey results collected between January 2 and February 28, 2025.



Q1: Participation

Q1 I am a (select one):

Answered: 761 Skipped: 5



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Resident of the Town of Valdese	87.65% 667
Business owner/operator in the Town of Valdese	5.91% 45
BOTH a resident and business owner/operator in the Town of Valdese	6.44% 49
TOTAL	761

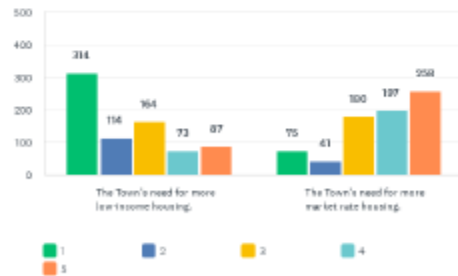
Q2: Importance

- The most important categories for surveyors include citizen input in Town priorities, with 64% rating this as 4 or 5. This was followed by the Drug and Homeless Task Force's advice to the Council, with nearly 52% rating this as 4 or 5 as well. The Street Maintenance Review Committee also ranked high, with 50% of respondents rating this as 4 or 5.
- The remaining categories were split on levels of importance and had a majority of respondents rate them as 1. The Facilities Review Committee had about 38% rate this category as 1 or 2 and 41% rate it as 4 or 5. The Efficiency Task Force had about 40% rate this category as 1 or 2 and 42% rate it as a 4 or 5. Lastly, the Merchants Advisory Committee had about 36% rate this category as 1 or 2, and 44% rate it as a 4 or 5.

	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE	
The inclusion of citizen input in setting Town priorities.	16.89% 127	6.04% 46	12.35% 94	17.48% 133	47.44% 361	761	3.73	
Facilities Review Committee's advice to Town Council.	30.32% 227	7.20% 56	20.48% 153	17.80% 133	23.43% 175	747	2.96	
Efficiency Task Force's advice to Town Council.	32.62% 244	7.35% 55	18.18% 138	17.85% 132	24.20% 181	748	2.93	
Drug and Homeless Task Force's advice to Town Council.	24.27% 184	7.02% 50	15.44% 117	20.18% 153	32.10% 244	758	3.28	
Merchants Advisory Committee's advice to Town Council.	26.02% 211	7.70% 58	20.05% 153	20.58% 155	23.64% 178	753	3.04	
Street Maintenance Review Committee (yet to be appointed) advice to Town Council	31.75% 240	2.12% 14	14.82% 112	20.12% 152	30.18% 228	756	3.14	

Q3: Housing

- 3) On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the LOWEST and 5 being the HIGHEST, please rate how important each of the following are to you:



- Over half, 60% of respondents, rated the Town's need for more market-rate housing as a high importance by choosing either 4 or 5. Another 24% rated this category as medium importance and chose 3.
- Alternatively, 57% of respondents rated the Town's need for more low-income housing as low importance by choosing either 1 or 2. Another 22% rated this category as medium importance and chose 3.

	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
The Town's need for more low-income housing.	41.70% 314	15.16% 114	21.82% 164	9.71% 73	13.57% 87	752	2.34
The Town's need for more market rate housing.	9.99% 75	5.48% 41	23.52% 180	26.23% 197	34.35% 258	751	3.70

Q4: Independence Day Celebration

4) Please choose your preferred date for the Town to celebrate Independence Day 2026.

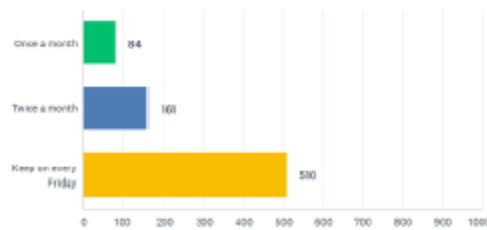


- About 45% of respondents said that they wanted to celebrate Independence Day 2026 on Saturday, July 4th. Another 31% chose Friday, July 3rd, and 23% chose Friday, June 26th.

ANSWER CHOICES	PERCENTAGE	RESPONSES
Friday June 26th, 2026	23.65%	179
Thursday July 2nd, 2026	1.00%	8
Friday July 3rd, 2026	30.65%	232
Saturday July 4th, 2026	44.65%	338
TOTAL		757

Q5: Family Friday Night Schedule

5) How often would you like to have Family Friday Night (FFN) free summer concerts during the months of June - August?

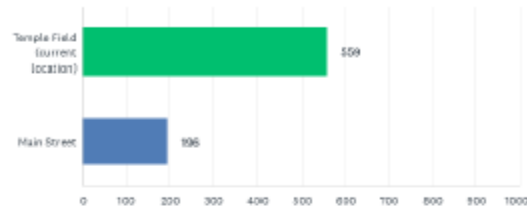


- About 68% of respondents said that they wanted to keep Family Friday Night (FFN) every Friday during June-August.
- Another 21% said they wanted it to occur twice a month, and 11% said once a month.

ANSWER CHOICES	PERCENTAGE	RESPONSES
Once a month	11.13%	84
Twice a month	23.32%	168
Keep on every Friday	67.55%	510
TOTAL		756

Q6: Family Friday Night Location

6) Where would you rather have Family Friday Night (FFN) free summer concerts?

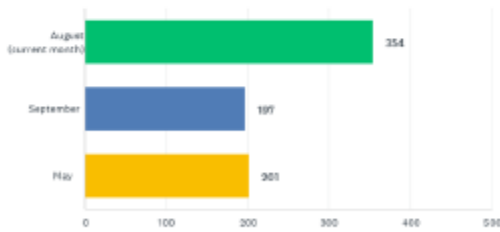


- 74% of respondents said that they want to continue having Family Friday Night concerts at Temple Field.
- 26% of respondents said that they want to have the summer concerts on Main Street.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Temple Field (current location)	74.04%	559
Main Street	25.96%	196
TOTAL		755

Q7: Waldensian Festival

7) Please select your preferred month for future annual Waldensian Festivals beginning in 2026.



- 47% of respondents said that they wanted to have the annual Waldensian Festival in August.
- Almost 26% chose to have the festival during September, and 27% chose to have the festival during May.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
August (current month)	47.07%	354
September	26.20%	197
May	26.73%	201
TOTAL		752

Q8: Communication

8) Which of the following is the most convenient way for you to receive Town news and event notifications?



RESPONSE CHOICES	PERCENTAGE	RESPONSES
Social media	39.21%	298
Town's website	14.58%	107
Live streams and recordings of Town Council meetings	10.82%	83
Inserts included with water/sewer bill	35.39%	272
TOTAL		760

- The majority of respondents, 39%, responded that social media was the most convenient way for them to receive Town news.
- This was followed by 36% choosing inserts included with water/sewer bills, 14% choosing the Town's website, and 11% choosing live streams and recordings of Town Council meetings.

Public Input Survey Takeaways

- Majority of people who took the survey are **residents** of Valdese.
- Most important to residents – **community input**, **homelessness** taskforce advice, and **street maintenance** review.
- The Town is interested in more **market rate housing**.
- Independence celebration was preferred on the 4th of July (Sat), but not far behind the 3rd of July (Fri).
- Family Friday Night should be kept as is (**every Friday night**) and 74% want it at **Temple Field**.
- The **Waldensian Festival** should remain in **August**.
- Most convenient way to receive Town news – **social media** and **inserts** in the water/sewer bill.

Questions?

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF APRIL 7, 2025 PRELIMINARY AGENDA:

CONSENT AGENDA: Mayor Watts noted the items on the Consent Agenda.

APPROVAL OF PRE-AGENDA MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 24, 2025

APPROVAL OF REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 3, 2025

NEW BUSINESS:

PUBLIC HEARING – REZONING ON DIXIE AVE NW Ashley Young, Interim Planner from WPCOG, presented a rezoning request submitted by Mark Morgan of Morgan and Associates, LC—the same developer behind Tron's Place. The request is to rezone a property located at 0 Griffin Avenue (with primary access proposed from Dixie Avenue NW) from M-1 (Manufacturing) to R-8 (Residential) to allow the construction of a 48-unit apartment complex in two three-story buildings. The proposed development would

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include one-, two-, and three-bedroom units and amenities such as sidewalks, a clubhouse, playground, picnic area, outdoor seating, and on-site dumpster and recycling services. Units would be income-restricted, with estimated eligibility ranging from 40% to 80% of the area median income (AMI), targeting around 60%. This figure is not yet finalized and is dependent on the developer's financing model. The applicant will be available to address income thresholds during the upcoming public hearing.

The Planning Board recommended approval by a vote of 5–0. Although the request is inconsistent with the Future Land Use Map, which designates the parcel as M-1, it aligns with the Town's adopted vision for increasing housing diversity.

Council expressed concerns regarding:

- Lack of prior notification to Council about the request
- The growing concentration of income-restricted housing in Valdese
- Potential impacts to tax revenue and property values
- Public concerns and inquiries already being received

Council requested additional data ahead of the public hearing, including acreage and unit counts for all existing low-income housing developments in Valdese, associated tax revenue, and any tax incentives or agreements currently in place.

The public hearing is scheduled for the April 7, 2025, meeting.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 7, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.

APPROVAL OF CONTRACT PROPOSALS FOR ENGINEERING SERVICES FOR BERRYTOWN WATERLINE CDBG-I PROJECT Paul Teague, Community & Economic Development Administrator with WPCOG, informed Council that the Town of Valdese has been awarded a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) from the NC Department of Environmental Quality and the NC Department of Commerce for waterline improvements in the Berrytown community. Following a formal request for qualifications process, McGill Associates was selected to provide engineering services for the project.

A contract proposal in the amount of \$423,500 has been submitted by McGill Associates, covering engineering design, permitting, surveying, bidding and award support, and construction observation and administration. All costs will be reimbursed through grant funds.

A formal contract is expected to be submitted to the Town for legal review and will be included in the next meeting's agenda packet.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 7, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.

APPROVAL OF BUDGET AMENDMENT – WATER PLANT FILTER INSPECTION & REHAB Interim Town Manager Bo Weichel presented a proposed budget amendment of up to \$115,000 for inspection and rehabilitation of the Water Plant's six filters, which are over 25 years old and showing significant wear. The amendment will cover immediate repairs to keep the filters operational and support exploratory work needed in preparation for the upcoming water plant upgrade project. Mr. Weichel noted actual costs are expected to be lower but will depend on conditions found during the inspection. McGill Associates will provide additional details and an update on the overall Water Plant upgrade project at the next meeting.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 7, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.

APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE 2024 LOCAL WATER SUPPLY APPROVED PLAN Mr. Weichel will be presenting a Resolution to accept the NCDEQ-approved 2024 Local Water Supply Plan. This is an annual requirement, and the Town is on schedule with this year's submission.

RESULT: PLACED ON THE CONSENT AGENDA AT THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 7, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.

APPROVAL OF CAPITAL PROJECT ORDINANCE AMENDMENT – POOL STRUCTURE Mr. Weichel will be presenting a Capital Project Ordinance Amendment related to the pool dome structure approved at the previous meeting. The amendment includes funding for the dome purchase and installation, ADA

compliance work by Houck Contracting, site work by Moss-Marlow, and a storage solution for the dome. Council requested a breakdown of the total cost to be included in the next agenda packet.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 7, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.

APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING UPSET BID PROCESS FOR THE SALE OF TOWN-OWNED PROPERTY – 341 RODORET ST N Mr. Weichel will be presenting a Resolution to initiate the upset bid process for the sale of Town-owned property located at 341 Rodoret Street North. The parcel is approximately 0.82 acres in size. An offer of \$7,500 has been received, compared to the appraised value of \$7,697. If approved, the Resolution would begin a 10-day advertisement period. If no qualifying upset bids are received, a resolution for the sale could be considered at the May meeting. A map of the property will be provided at the next meeting.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 7, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.

APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING UPSET BID PROCESS FOR THE SALE OF TOWN-OWNED PROPERTY – 800 PINEBURR AVE SE Mr. Weichel will be presenting a Resolution to initiate the upset bid process for the sale of Town-owned property located at 800 Pineburr Avenue SE. The parcel is approximately 14.91 acres, with a portion under Duke Energy right-of-way that limits usability. An offer of \$134,490 matching the tax value was received from a real estate investment group, with plans to potentially develop market-rate town homes or condominiums. A special use permit would be required before development, and obtaining the permit would be a contingency of the sale. Council was reminded that even if no upset bids are received, they are not obligated to sell the property.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 7, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.

FY 24-25 YEAR-TO-DATE FINANCIALS Mr. Weichel stated that the upcoming financial report will include year-to-date statements for the General Fund and Utility Fund, along with updates on tax collections and the status of invested funds. The report will reflect 67% of the fiscal year, covering activity through the end of February. A full financial package will be included in the agenda materials, and Mr. Weichel will highlight key figures at the next meeting.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 7, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.

STATUS OF ONGOING OR APPROVED PROJECTS

- i. **Public Safety Facilities Update** Mr. Weichel provided an update on the Public Safety Buildings project, specifically regarding the timeline and selection process for the contractors. He shared that a review panel was established and a scoring matrix was developed for evaluating firms interested in the project. The scoring matrix, which will be included in the agenda packet, was used to assess potential contractors. Based on the scoring, three firms were selected for interviews, which were conducted on March 27. The project is progressing on schedule, and the goal is to make a recommendation to the council at the May meeting, assuming the contractor can finalize a contract and have it reviewed by Attorney Swanson. Mr. Weichel emphasized that the timeline for the project is contingent upon finalizing the contract and ensuring that all legal and logistical details are addressed.

However, Councilman Harvey raised concerns regarding the selection process, noting that it was conducted without the full involvement or awareness of the Council. He expressed discomfort with the transparency of the process, particularly the fact that only some evaluators had significant experience in hiring general contractors for large-scale projects. He questioned the method used to narrow down the firms to three, as some ratings were close, and suggested that this process could have been more statistically sound.

Councilman Harvey also proposed that, as the council will ultimately be making the final decision, they should have more involvement in the next steps. He recommended that the council be given the opportunity to meet with the three finalists, hear their presentations, and ask questions directly. He suggested this be

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done in a single session, with each firm providing a half-hour presentation followed by a half-hour Q&A.

The council discussed the proposal, and there was general consensus that they should meet with the top three firms to ensure they are fully informed and involved in the decision-making process. It was noted that two evaluators who had experience with large-scale projects were unable to participate in the initial round of interviews, and it was suggested they could be included in the next phase of the review process.

Mr. Weichel confirmed that the top three firms had already been notified of their finalist status, while the other four firms had been informed, they did not make the cut. He assured the council that, should they decide to meet with the finalists, the evaluations would be conducted in a public meeting, and the two evaluators who missed the first round would be invited to attend.

The council agreed to schedule the presentations from the three finalists, noting that this would likely take place after the week of April 14, given other meetings already planned. Mr. Weichel indicated that he would work on coordinating the schedule for this session.

- ii. **Water Plant Upgrade Project/Lenoir Interconnect Project** McGill Associates will speak to this at the April 7, 2025, meeting.
- iii. **Town Manager Search Process** Mayor Watts noted that Council will be going into Closed Session to discuss the Town Manager Search Process.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 7, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.

LAPP FUNDING DISCUSSION Councilman Harvey provided an update on the LAP (Local Assistance Program) funding, which allocates federal funds to pedestrian improvements within the Greater Hickory Metropolitan area. Last year, the Town applied for \$3.6 million, but only part of the proposal was accepted. The Town returned the funds at the last meeting, and this year, there is \$4.6 million available, including both the original allocation and the funds returned by the town.

Potential uses for the funds include sidewalk construction, bicycle improvements, and traffic signal upgrades. Councilman Harvey highlighted a couple of areas downtown that lack sidewalks such as Rodoret Street at the corner of Town Hall up to the Carolina Street, and Main Street to St. Germain Ave, which could be potential candidates for funding. The deadline for submitting applications is May 2, 2025, and staff will need to complete some design work to submit the proposals.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 7, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.

INTERIM MANAGER'S REPORT Interim Town Manager Bo Weichel will report at the April 7, 2025, meeting.

CLOSED SESSION: At 6:48 p.m., Councilwoman Ward made a motion to go into Closed Session Pursuant to NC General Statute 143-318.11(a)(6) to consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, conditions of appointment, or conditions of initial employment of an individual public officer or employee, seconded by Councilwoman Lowman. The vote was unanimous.

At 7:54 p.m., Councilwoman Lowman made a motion to go out of Closed Session, seconded by Councilwoman Zimmerman. The vote was unanimous.

ADJOURNMENT: At 7:55 p.m., there being no further business to come before Council, Councilman Harvey made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilwoman Lowman. The vote was unanimous.

Town Clerk

Mayor

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