

Bryson City 2045 – Opportunities & Challenges Survey Results

What is your favorite thing about Bryson City?

1	The people.
2	It WAS “uncommon, unspoiled, unhurried”. Now, if you would get rid of the train that would help.
3	Can't choose one...it's people, history, natural beauty.
4	It is small.
5	Weather.
6	The awesome views.
7	Love the small-town feel
8	It's still a small-town feel with lots of family-owned businesses.
9	Small-town feel
10	A small-town full of independent businesses
11	Not in a hurry
12	Quiet evenings
13	
14	Small-town charm
15	
16	Natural Beauty/ proximity to a National Park
17	Small-town feel
18	Small-town atmosphere
19	Recreational Opportunities
20	Outdoor recreation opportunities
21	Quaint, beautiful town with a lot of things to do in the surrounding area.
22	Nature
23	It is the only home I have had. I loved how quiet and authentic it WAS.
24	How clean the town is.
25	My hometown from birth
26	The downtown area provides interesting shops and restaurants for locals and tourists alike without being overly touristy. The locally owned businesses provide a unique hometown feel.
27	The biodiversity and the courage of the local demographic
28	The geography, hospitality, the preservation of buildings and structures. I love the overall look of Bryson City.
29	Island Park
30	The Everett Street area
31	The biodiverse ecosystem it resides in.
32	Walkability
33	Deep Creek
34	the small-town feel
35	The people
36	The views of the mountains
37	Small-town feel in a beautiful setting.
38	The mountains
39	Small-town
40	Being in the mountains. My Church community. Family that is here. The Park being right here.

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What is your favorite thing about Bryson City?	
41	Small-town feel
42	The natural beauty and the people who live here
43	
44	Nothing now. 35 years ago it was NOT crowded and overrun by tourists and their garbage. NOW it is. Sad!!! We now have filthy dead beats (MANY are NOT homeless!) laying around doing drugs all over Bryson City. SAD!!!
45	Use to be the peace and quiet
46	Quaintness
47	Small-town
48	The amount of outdoor beauty and shopping and dining
49	Proximity to interesting and significant natural and cultural areas.
50	
51	Accessibility to activities for all. Small-town feel with so much to offer.
52	The quaintness of downtown
53	Small Tourist Town
54	The small-town feel, bustling downtown area yet space to getaway when you want.
55	Small-town community. Everyone knows everyone. Pedestrian easy. Beautiful town and mountains.
56	Small, friendly, a river runs thru it, borders GSMNP
57	The dense downtown with existing "missing middle" housing with potential for additional infill and less car orientated development and planning with more sidewalks, public transit, and other protections for those not in motor vehicles.
58	The people
59	Small-town life
60	Small-town atmosphere
61	proximity to green natural areas
62	proximity to mountains, size
63	The size and location amongst the Smoky Mountains.
64	Mountain charm
65	The natural beauty and small town charm
66	The people and the view
67	Proximity to nature and small town
68	Great place to raise children but also wonderful to retire !
69	Local Eateries.
70	Not many people
71	Places where it's not crazy crowded.
72	There is a lot of opportunity
73	Community strength and compassion as a whole. Especially neighbor helping neighbor in times of need.

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Where do you see opportunities for improvement?	
1	The walk/dont walk signs are dangerous. The street lights are not bright enough.
2	Get rid of the train. The train is taking over our small town. GET RID of the Train!!!!
3	Bicycle paths
4	traffic issues because of too many visitors
5	Repair sidewalks. Walking is dangerous.
6	Parking, Things for kids and families to do. Ie: A bowling alley, miniature golf, a skating rink for rainy days, a bike path or easy trail.
7	The rec park needs improvement... something for teens to do downtown
8	Coming in from Hwy 74, one of the first buildings people see is a decaying tanning bed place that needs to either be torn down or fixed up if possible.
9	Road maintenance
10	Need a playground in downtown area
11	new shopping center in old Fred's building
12	Kudzu mediation. It's embarrassing!!?
13	Currently it is hard for someone new to start a business in Bryson City. IF you can find a piece of land, you can't get always get water or sewer. WE'VE GOT TO IMPROVE OUR SEWAGE SYSTEM
14	Roadways.
15	Improve sidewalks in downtown
16	Improve water treatment system. Annex properties that already get city water and/or sewer. Stop access to City water and sewer for county residents. Court high paying job employers. Walkability and Bikability in town. Environmentally sound planning for river activities. Electric refuel centers for cars. Expanded Parking in town for all, not just train visitors. Expanded Consideration for seniors. Expanded/ free county-wide mass transportation or Uber type access. Offer meal delivery like grub hub, etc. Expanded collaboration with bordering counties and Cherokee tribe.
17	Adopt and enforce building codes
18	Put some control on the train's stranglehold on the town.
19	Sidewalks, traffic flow
20	Affordable housing, infrastructure
21	Town needs more public parking and public bathrooms
22	Do something about the addicts and homeless.
23	To slow down development.
24	Land use ordinances. Affordable housing
25	resurfacing streets and fight against kudzu takeover
26	Parking
27	housing availability and more sustainable land use (when the mountains are the selling point, it is imperative to keep in mind to maintain biodiversity and greenery)

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Where do you see opportunities for improvement?	
28	Although I love the old fashioned ways of my hometown I definitely believe it would be in the Town's best interest to make some updates. For example, we do have a few options for food but adding some more variety or maybe even trendy cuisines would be nice and also have some of the modern delivery apps to compliment it. Maybe adding more family friendly attractions like bowling, roller skating, arcades. To some it may sound silly but I think it would be super beneficial considering we are a tourist town and I believe the locals would quite enjoy more things to do within the city limits.
29	Someone needs to tear down Valley Village and put in more shops, restaurants, etc.
30	The area between Everett and the island park is a great opportunity for downtown growth.
31	There needs to be more protection for the environment and a greater focus on investing in the community.
32	More walking/biking options
33	<p>-Focus on the River front. It's a great asset! So many businesses have their back sides to the river. Kudos to Mountain Layers with a deck over looking the River, though it also looks down on the pilings of an abandoned building. So many other businesses don't take advantage of it.</p> <p>-Focus on Fly fishing, hiking, and outdoor activities. Good start on that...museum, aquarium, fish statues... maybe fish painted on sidewalk to follow the fish trail.</p> <p>-Shops and restaurants...not enough quick restaurants downtown for families catching the train or for a nice ladies lunch outside. Run down or irrelevant shops downtown. Make it a friendly, touristy downtown. Locals shop outside of downtown anyway.</p> <p>P.s. I do love this town, just suggestions</p>
34	i would love an update to our library
35	Traffic patterns, parking, affordable housing.
36	cleaning up of the houses that are falling apart and surrounded by trash in the area.
37	<p>Traffic flow: Moving the train check in from the old depot further down the tracks by the train parking would eliminate tourists from dilly-dallying across Everett St to check in. Thereby helping alleviating traffic delays. The old depot could be a gift shop/cafe.</p> <p>Add a traffic light on Everett St by the depot which would help with traffic flow when the high school gets out.</p> <p>Overall impression of BC: Clean up or demolish rubbishy buildings like the old ice house which, besides being an eyesore is such a hazard.</p> <p>Parking: There is precious little available parking during the tourist season. I almost never go to Bryson during this time.</p> <p>River access: So much could be done to take advantage of the Tuck through town. A river walk or bike route would be such a great addition and could be used by locals and tourists alike.</p> <p>Zoning: Let's get a handle on what can be built, where. Have laws that builders must remediate run off and limit impervious cover.</p>
38	Some roads could use some work
39	Affordable housing, year round pool / indoor walking area

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Where do you see opportunities for improvement?	
40	Affordable housing, getting homeless off streets, train runs not happening when school is letting out, train not sitting blocking roads to the back streets for many reasons, parking at ends of crosswalks be motorcycle parking only..you can not see pedestrians because of vehicles and it is dangerous, at least fill in chunk holes in roads that have given cars damage , roads need work bad, if the weeds can't be cut all over at least cut them at ends of roads so cars can see to pull out safety, safe sidewalk for kids to walk from school, needing a place for our kids. I tried for years to get a Youth Center but ..it never had the support of the community by enough ,. Yes, we have the Rec Park and very lucky to have it. The kids need something to keep them busy and off the streets when they get older. Organized sports need to be Affordable to ALL children. I just think our kids and locals need first priority before tourists.
41	More parking, better traffic flow around train depot, more affordable housing
42	law enforcement, internet, housing, extra taxes for part time residents, vacation homes, vacation rental
43	
44	Please get rid of the drugs and people sleeping on the pic-nic tables in town. Please regulate the train zombies. Please REGULATE the TRAIN! Zoning should have happened 30 years ago. Look at the filthy, empty trailer next to the engine shop on the east end of town. Horrible! TAX all the overnight rentals. TAX all the overnight rentals. TAX the tourists more!
45	I don't think the train should be allowed to block access to the hospital
46	Local housing
47	Roads - paving and routing
48	Access or parking along Everett St, some small towns even shut down their streets on Fridays and Saturdays to allow for outdoor dining and safe crossing open flow exploring of the town. A parking garage would be out of place and damage the look and feel but maybe taking down some old buildings to allow for parking , or a trolley
49	Increased use of the Tuck River corridor to enhance resident quality of life and tourism.
50	
51	Dining!! Defiantly more restaurants for breakfast or dinner.
52	I would love to see more family friendly areas such as parks for children. Turning some of the run-down properties into a viable business would also help.
53	Renovation of existing properties, zoning improvements to mandate razing of certain properties, fully utilize Island Part
54	river walk, cohesive downtown area, better non tourist shops, wider road to deep creek
55	The river should be more of a focal point. Crosswalk lights. are a little confusing. If the pedestrian has the green light with traffic the pedestrian walk light does not come on, it should always come on when it's legal to cross not just when someone pushes the button.
56	River front/ island park family use

Where do you see opportunities for improvement?	
57	<p>Yes parking is always an issue for a tourist town, but the question of why we need so much parking is rarely asked. More dense infill, more sidewalks down highway 19 to both Ingles and to Darnell's. Along with a sidewalk up Fontana road to the HS. Increased public transit availability around the county and region would help improve both literal, and socio-economic mobility. Ideally, Bryson City would have a passenger train line connecting it to the amtrack system, allowing tourists to arrive, and allowing locals to travel both without motor vehicles. Along with the narrowing of the lanes on Everett, main, and slope streets to make way for larger sidewalks. Veterans BLVD commits the horrendous sin of being a "Stroad", being both a through road and a street with businesses connected directly with driveways, and needs to go on a diet to truly be on a more human scale, as in its current state, it is inhospitable to humans. The intersections of Everett & Main, Main & Veterans BLVD, Everett & Mitchell ideally would have separate light cycles for pedestrians and motor traffic, especially for Main & Everett where right turn traffic onto Everett heading into town from hwy 19 gets a protected right turn arrow at the same time that the crosswalk from the corner with BCO to the old courthouse gets the walking man signal, creating unnecessary conflict and potentially dangerous situations due to poor design. Everett Street, in addition to going on a diet and increasing sidewalk space, needs protected crosswalks, meaning that ideally they would 1. Act as a traffic calming measure, aka speed bump, to slow drivers down, and 2. Have a buffer on both sides of the crosswalk to prevent pedestrians being hidden behind parked vehicles, especially large SUVs and trucks. As well as adding two more crosswalks on Everett Street, one on the bridge, and another between the intersection of Mitchell and Everett, and the existing crosswalk near the turn in for island street. Speaking of island street, the area surrounding island park has an immense amount of wasted potential, and will not meet its potential without adequate roads, sidewalks, and lighting. This does not mean to make the road 50 feet wide to allow for faster travel, but to make a small side street with street parking. The city should also enact a parking lot maximum size, to helpfully get the train to build a parking deck instead of taking up a large portion of town with an awful dirt parking lot, in the middle of downtown.</p>
58	There needs to be better parking. One way streets would help with the traffic flow.
59	Work seriously to be far less dependent on the Great Smoky Mountains Railroad; it is a bully, and shows little to no interest in the welfare of the community. This is more on the County than the town.
60	things for young people to do, lower income housing, parking, library replacement
61	Internet access, library services, removal of dilapidated, abandoned houses and buildings, removal of abandoned cars and vehicles. Litter pick up.
62	Bike train to Dillsboro and Cheokee along the river
63	More infrastructure for residents and tourists. A river walk for example. Better traffic management with GSMR.
64	Traffic flow and parking
65	Ability to walk or ride bike through town to run errands. A greenway along the river would make town accessible from end to end without a car.
66	Stop letting people do what they want just because they have a big name
67	Less litter
68	Parking, becoming almost impossible to go to town and do business

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Where do you see opportunities for improvement?	
69	"Coordination with the County on managing growth issues. Establish zoning and a comprehensive land development code, along with funding for enforcement. Allow for grandfathering, but establish expiration dates for grandfathered parcels.
70	Identify areas for development/redevelopment for low cost housing and incentivize it with tax abatement, or secure HUD grant funding. We will never get to “live here, work here” without finding a solution to affordable housing in our city and county. "
71	Less people coming
72	We need more shops and businesses
73	for local government to upgrade our streets, sidewalks, water & sewer

Where do you see challenges or concerns?	
1	Some of the back streets and alleys
2	Bryson City has become the trains bitch and it is VERY concerning. Stop letting the train take over!!!
3	Balance between locals and tourism
4	Roads and infrastructure can't the influx of visitors and new people moving here. Need to consider decreasing the level of promotion.
5	Traffic
6	See opportunities above, Our lack of sidewalks outside of downtown. Our existing parking spaces are too small.
7	The homeless population... the train area... people not using crosswalks... more sidewalks
8	The biggest complaints I hear from visitors is a lack of public bathrooms downtown. From residents and visitors both, complaints about internet service are very common.
9	Littering roadways with stick in the ground signage. Food trucks could get excessive and take away from local business owners who pay to have brick and mortar establishments.
10	Love seeing the improvements- need better internet and resources for children
11	roads and bridges
12	Kudzu kills property values too
13	Sewage, traffic flow, outdated infrastructure
14	Need more restaurants
15	Homeless people living in public areas, and asking residents and visitors for money
16	Resistance to change. Dislike of tourists. Dislike of government and/or regulations.
17	Roads are crumbling, trash everywhere, abandoned buildings, overgrown weeds, homeless people
18	Too many tourists.
19	The train schedule/traffic flow, especially as school lets out. The north-east side of town ends up grid locked.
20	
21	Infrastructure is old and needs replacing before additional development can occur.
22	Do something about the addicts and homeless.
23	Bryson city is unrecognizable from even 5 years ago. Nature is what makes bryson, and I am concerned about over development. I am also concerned about what I would call a housing crisis for locals. Expedited gentrification is whats happened.
24	Management of resources.

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Where do you see challenges or concerns?	
25	Kudzu growing out of control, because only maintained not controlled. Causes extra work for town employees and residents.
26	There is a danger of Bryson City becoming loved too much. It will be a challenge to maintain the quaint charm as tourist pressure increases.
27	There is no quality, affordable housing options, we exploit deep creek and other attractions in the area, only caring about money and not caring about the footprint and amount of traffic these sites are being exposed too There is no quality affordable internet, the public library is an afterthought to the tourists (but county commissioners don't care because by keeping the local populace ignorant and uneducated that just means more money to line their pockets)
28	Parking is a bit of an issue in the Town. It is quite clustered along the streets and many times local employees are knocked out of parking spots at their place of work due to no parking regulations and none of the signs are legally enforced. It is very dangerous when a family with small children began to walk out onto a crosswalk but you almost hit them because they were not visible behind the vehicles parked along the streets. Designated parking lots or enforced signs would be a major help.
29	Plumbing and water systems in Swain County
30	As always, traffic and parking
31	When our tourism based economy caters too much to visitors, local communities and natural resources are harmed.
32	No zoning
33	Clean up abandoned and run down places around town... burnt out funeral home across from new hotel, house with no roof and old trailer at Kirkland Creek rd. Make the entries into town welcoming!
34	i am concerned about gentrification of existing spaces for the convenience of tourists
35	Political division, people working together for the greater good of us all
36	Need to put limits on some of the types of buildings, ex. Dollar Generals, Storage units, etc
37	Affordable housing. It's getting more and more difficult for people to find a place to live that they can afford.
38	Not losing the original feel of the town
39	Infrastructure, water, affordable rentals
40	How taxes and money is used.
41	No affordable housing, rent or own
42	Housing prices for local residents, purchase and rental.
43	Affordable housing! There isn't any to speak of right now. Service people need options.
44	The train. Drugs. Deadbeats using free electricity at the pic-nic tables at the Admin Building, sleeping their and leaving their drugs/garbage/filth.
45	Drugs homelessness
46	Local housing
47	Access to Island park
48	congestion and traffic flow getting into down town
49	Conservative populace resistant to change.
50	
51	Ahh, the old guard has been running the town for decades. They do not like change or new folks moving in and making things change. However, I am seeing a huge influx of new young people which will be fantastic for the town.
52	Too many abandoned vehicles, houses and trash on the highways and even in the city limits. This give a very bad impression of our town if we cannot keep it clean and in good condition.
53	Compliance with revised zoning
54	many local residence want NO change and that is bad for everyone. Stop complaining and do something

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Where do you see challenges or concerns?	
55	Keeping the river banks cleaned out. Parking is always a concern. What is the Smokey Mountain RR going to do with the property next to the station?
56	Becoming Gatlinburg
57	People don't like change, and a complete overhaul like is needed would cost tens of millions and take at least two decades to truly realize.
58	Parking. Too many people "visitors" for our town to handle.
59	See comment on opportunities for improvement
60	Funding
61	Childcare, traffic control, water and sewage
62	funding. jobs that provide a living wage
63	Not enough long term housing opportunity. Not enough infrastructure to manage the crowds that arrive seasonally.
64	Keeping the charm, while accommodating the visitor traffic.
65	Too many similar businesses in the downtown area.
66	Got to get passed everyone that's family favoritism
67	Political divisiveness
68	Crosswalks are confusing and poorly lit,
69	Change is hard for many of us. The mindset of "this is my land and the government can't tell me what to do with it". Implementing change will take leadership from our elected officials.
70	More People Coming
71	Jobs
72	a concern for government takeover, telling us what we can and can't do with our properties.
73	<p>#1 Sewer and water upgrades.</p> <p>#2 Keep the hours of operation for the dump to remain open to accommodate working people and be open on holidays to accommodate visitors as well as locals.</p> <p>#3 To change the train schedule so it doesn't coincide with school traffic</p> <p>#4 To keep railroad crossing open especially coming off Deep Creek</p> <p>#5 For a property owner that doesn't live within the city limits to be able to vote. Especially since we are double taxed.</p> <p>#6 To have adequate grocery and supply stores to accommodate all local and people visiting Bryson City.</p> <p>#7 New restaurants and industry!</p>

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How do you feel about zoning districts to guide land development?	
1	Mostly negative - I think zoning could hurt our Town., I think clean up of alleys and some of the back street, try to get rid of abandoned buildings.
3	I don't know - I would need more information., However it's zoned, do NOT want a version of Gatlinburg!!
12	Mostly positive - I think zoning could help our Town., Grass trimming and trash hoards need to be taken care of.
13	I'm in favor of some ordinances to help force the hand of some folks to clean up their junk piles within the city limits
23	Mostly positive - I think zoning could help our Town., Limit airbnbs.
25	Zoning would help if properly enforced
27	<p>Mostly positive - I think zoning could help our Town., ZONING LAWS ARE GOING TO BE NEEDED FOR OUR RIPARIAN BUFFERS, sedimentation is the number one pollutant to our mountain streams, what is the point of stocking our streams if the water is not capable of cohabiting life in them???? What is the point of these smoky mountains if every mountain side is covered in gawdy McMansions??? We have some of the HIGHEST LEVELS OF TEMPERATE BIODIVERSITY RIGHT HERE IN WNC YET LETS KEEP BUILDING REBTAL CABINS AND AIRBNBS,</p> <p>Shame on the powers that be in Swain county for CONSTANTLY putting profits before the local populace and these precious mountains. These past couple of years I have seen unprecedented rates of unsustainable development for what???? A quick dirty buck. The life that these mountains hold is like no other and in a few years when Bryson is Gatlinburg 2.0 we're gonna be sorry that we didn't implement by laws restricting development....are we gonna keep developing right to the park border? Where is the point of no return?</p> <p>Shame on the powers that be in Swain county for CONSTANTLY putting profits before the local populace and these precious mountains. These past couple of years I have seen unprecedented rates of unsustainable development for what???? A quick dirty buck. The life that these mountains hold is like no other and in a few years when Bryson is Gatlinburg 2.0 we're gonna be sorry that we didn't implement by laws restricting development....are we gonna keep developing right to the park border? Where is the point of no return?</p>
28	I think zoning could help the Town remain beautiful but I do think it will spark an issue with some locals. If you own a property there is an aspect of being able to do what you please with that property that I respect.
48	Mostly positive - I think zoning could help our Town., there should be no condos and no big buildings to deter from the small town feel
56	Mostly negative - I think zoning could hurt our Town., Limited restrictions, market should dictate best use