

**REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION**  
**HENDERSON COUNTY**  
**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**MEETING DATE:** November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022

**SUBJECT:** East Flat Rock Park Accessibility Grant Application

**PRESENTER:** Christopher Todd, Business and Community Development Director

**ATTACHMENTS:** 1. Map showing improvement areas  
2. Project Narrative

**SUMMARY OF REQUEST:**

Over the last six months staff has been working with Friends of East Flat Rock and the community at large to develop improvements to the East Flat Rock Park. Through these meetings two priorities were developed. The first is to create an accessible pathway from the upper parking lot to the bathrooms and playground. The second is to upgrade the playground equipment to be more accessible and inclusive, allowing for children of all ages and abilities to play together.

Staff have reviewed the current needs in all our parks and feel that the priorities that have been laid out for East Flat Rock Park would be a great fit for the Accessibility for Parks grant. Awards for the grant will be announced in the Spring of 2023. Once a contract is entered for a Accessibility Grant the awardee has 3 years to complete the project and to fund the match. The Accessibility Grant is a one-to-five match, and it is one of the only grants available to fund recreational amenities at this level. The total project cost is budgeted at \$613,930 for both the pathways and playground improvements.

**BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:**

Should the Board wish to apply for this grant opportunity, the Board is requested to authorize County staff to submit a grant application and all necessary documents for the improvements to East Flat Rock Park.

Suggested Motion:

*I move that the Henderson County Board of Commissioners authorize staff to submit the Accessibility Grant for improvements as detailed for East Flat Rock Park.*

## Description and Justification for the East Flat Rock Park Project

Local Government: Henderson County

Population Served: Primarily children with disabilities

**Description:** Henderson County is proposing to improve Accessibility to East Flat Rock Park by:

Renovating the older portion of the playground with new playground pieces that are inclusive to all children and their parents. This would also include a poured-in-place rubber surfacing.

Removing the old walkway into the park and replacing it with an accessible ramp that gives full access to all sections of the park, including the playground, the shelters, the basketball court, the bathrooms, and the rest of the walking trail. Handicap parking spaces would be added to the top of the parking lot where there previously was no access. Areas along the walking trail that surrounds the park will be widened and flattened to allow for easier access for those with mobility problems.

East Flat Rock Park is located on the corner of Blue Ridge Road and Spartanburg Highway in the unincorporated area of East Flat Rock in Henderson County, NC. The population of East Flat Rock is 5,757, however this park is frequently used by those in Flat Rock and Hendersonville as well. It is the second most visited park in all of Henderson County. This park has a soccer field, a gazebo and shelter that can be reserved, a walking trail, a playground, bathrooms, and a basketball court. The location of the park was previously managed by East Flat Rock Elementary School and was acquired by Henderson County Parks and Recreation in the early 1990's after the school had shut down.

### **Justification:**

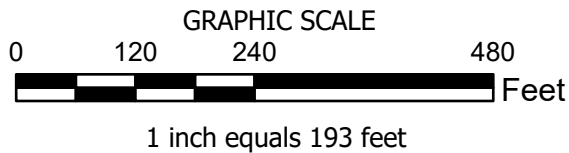
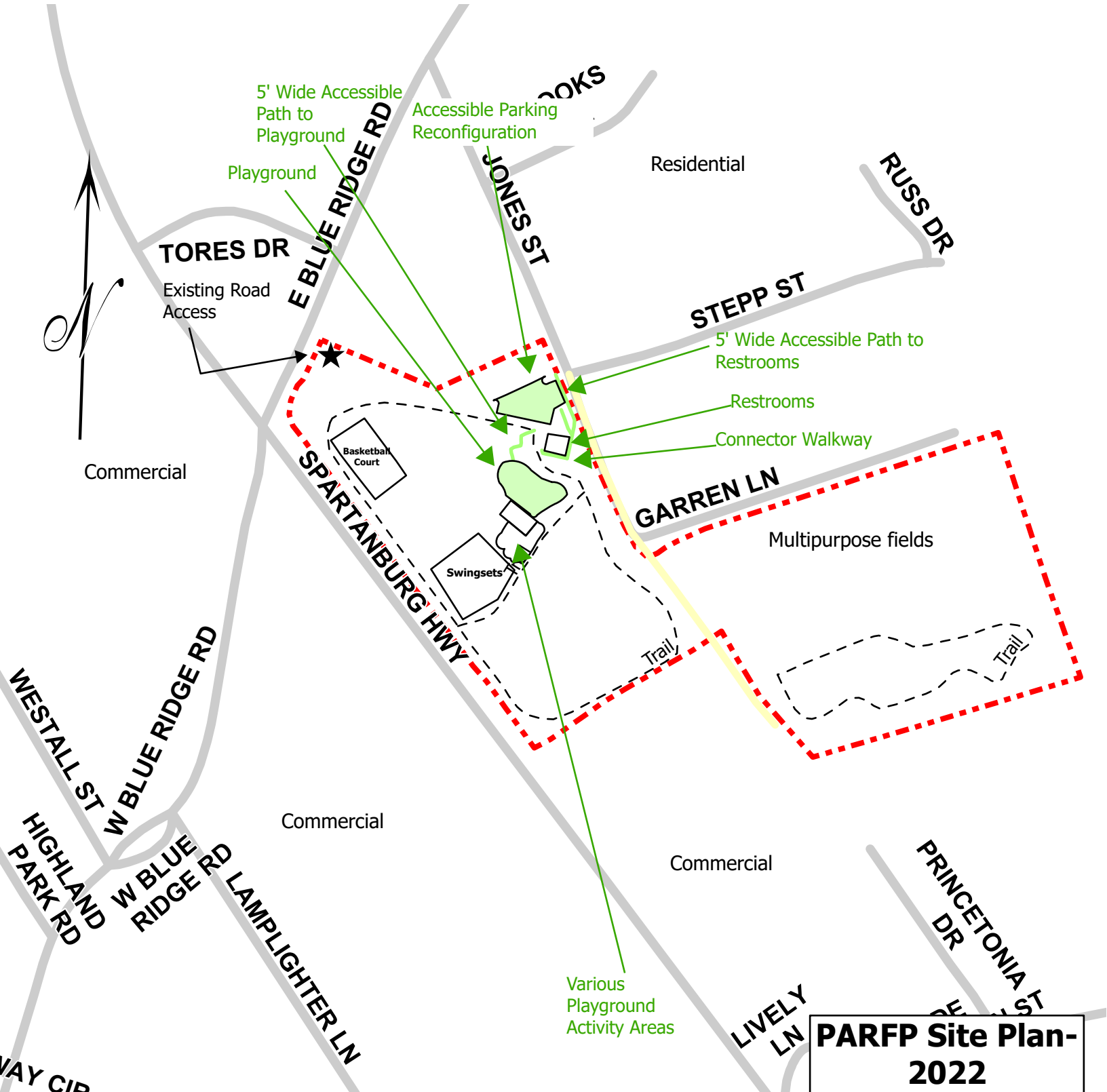
East Flat Rock Park is frequently used by those of varying ages in the East Flat Rock community. Although there is currently a ramp from the upper parking lot, it is not ideal due to the steepness and limited access to the park. In order to provide the most direct path into the park that is a tolerable steepness, we would need to do some grading, and extend the length of the walkway. We would also like to increase the width of the trail that circles the park and flatten any areas that could pose a risk of falling to ensure this is a safe pathway. In its current condition, accessing almost all sections of the park is made difficult for anyone with mobility issues. This would grant full, unrestricted access to the basketball court, the bathrooms, the playground, the shelters, and the walking trail the circles the park.

The playground at East Flat Rock Park is almost 30 years old. This was a spectacular playground for the most of its lifespan, however its age is clear through both the wear that is visible and the pieces being exclusive to able bodied children. Despite this, the playground is still heavily used, but it provides barriers for people in the community with disabilities. The mulch that is currently beneath the playground is not a friendly surface for children or their parents who rely on wheelchairs or other mobility devices. A small section of this playground has been updated for ages 2-5. This section of the playground is used more frequently than the older section likely due to the unique new playground pieces that are more inclusive and provide a more challenging and exciting experience for the kids. The community would like to see the rest of the playground updated with inclusive equipment to better meet its needs. There is not currently a fully inclusive playground in the area and with this park being the second most used in Henderson County, we would like to provide amenities that are attractive and accessible to all of its users and to attract those who have been unable to use it in its current state.

The community of East Flat Rock recognizes the need for improvements to this park. An inclusive multigenerational park will promote outdoor recreation for the whole community in an environment where they feel safe and comfortable.

# East Flat Rock Park Development

Henderson County North Carolina



## PARFP Site Plan-2022

- Park Boundary
- Existing Facilities
- PARFP Request
- PARFP Request Connectors
- Easement