



# MINUTES LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE FOR COOPERATIVE ACTION

Commissioners' Meeting Room/Courtroom of the Historic Courthouse  
Main Street | Hendersonville NC 28792  
Tuesday, January 20, 2026 – 3:00 PM

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## MINUTES

<u>City of Hendersonville:</u>	Barbara Volk, Mayor; City Manager; John Connet, City Manager, Brian Pahle, Deputy City Manager; Melinda Lowrance, City Council Member; Jill Murray, City Clerk
<u>Henderson County:</u>	John Mitchell, County Manager
<u>Laurel Park:</u>	J. Carey O'Cain, Mayor; Mark Morse
<u>Village of Flat Rock:</u>	Matt Toner, Vice Mayor
<u>Town of Fletcher:</u>	Preston Blakely, Mayor; Keith Reed, Council Member
<u>Town of Mills River:</u>	Shanon Gonce, Mayor; Sandra Goode, Council Member

### 1. WELCOME

Mayor Barbara Volk called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone.

### 2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Volk led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### 3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There was no public comment.

### 4. CONSIDERATION OF AGENDA

Mr. O'Cain moved, seconded by Ms. Lowrance, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

### 5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – October 21, 2025

Mayor Volk made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

### 6. OLD BUSINESS - None

### 7. NEW BUSINESS

- a. **Opioid Settlement Funds Update Presentation** - *Jodi Grabowski, Henderson County's Strategic Behavior Health Director*

Jodi gave the following high-level PowerPoint presentation.

# Opioid Settlement Funds Update

LGCCA MEETING

JANUARY 20, 2026

JODI GRABOWSKI, DIRECTOR, STRATEGIC BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

## Brief Review of the Opioid Settlement Funding

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### Henderson County will receive almost \$17 million 2022-2038

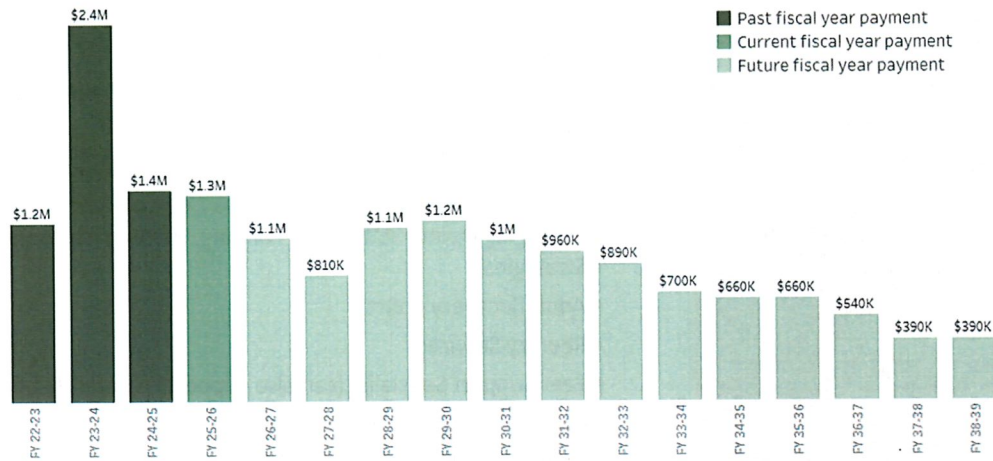
- these funds do not go away
- no need to spend a certain amount per year or even by 2038
- and it can accrue interest along the way

### Use of funds must follow the NC Memorandum of Agreement

- all expenditures must be authorized by the Board of Commissioners before being spent
- funds that are authorized but not spent simply roll back into the fund balance
- all authorizations and reporting are on a public website at [ncopioidsettlement.org](http://ncopioidsettlement.org)



Henderson County is receiving \$16,681,693 in opioid settlement funds from 2022 through 2038.



## Timeline: Planning to Reporting

2022: Substance Abuse Task Force re-convened by Commissioner Lapsley to establish priorities

2022: We received a \$300k grant from Dogwood Health Trust & contracted with two organizations:

- Hope Coalition to help start the Adult Recovery Court
- REAL Academy to help with Strategic Planning with the Community

2023: Jodi started workgroup for Substance Use Strategic Plan

- 18 workgroup meetings
- 5 BOC presentations & 2 Local Government presentations

2023: We "Unlocked Exhibit B"

- allowing us to move forward with all the Strategies prioritized through the Strategic Plan
- & become the 1<sup>st</sup> County in NC to fully fund a Recovery Court with Opioid Settlement Funds

FY24-25: We completed our first full year authorizing all the strategies

- Reporting was submitted (due 9/26/25)
- A PDF of the narrative section is in your packet

## Our work since receiving Opioid Settlement Funds

### Substance Use Action Team:

- 9 community meetings
- A large community event on 9/17/24 called "Beyond Labels" to address stigma

### Created Strategic Behavioral Health Dept.

- Managing Opioid Settlement Funding, subrecipients, and all 12 Strategies
- Adult Recovery Court
- Reentry Services
- Peer Support Specialist (can also support DSS and Health Dept)
- Coordinating MOE fund planning for FY25-26
- Managing other grants as available

### Resources

- Created webpage for Department with link to Resources
- Printed cards with QR code

## Strategies from Exhibit A

### From Option A

- A1 Collaborative Strategic Planning: dept, staff & expenses
- A2 Evidence Based Treatment: for people in our programs
- A3 Recovery Support Services: Peer Support Specialist
- A4 Recovery Housing: for people in our programs
- A6 Early Intervention: trainings for practitioners in community
  - NEW in 2026:** Intervention Coordinator & funds to expand *Hope Rising*
- A7 Naloxone: for EMS and community
- A8 PORT: Co-response position, materials & vehicle
- A12 Reentry: staff & expenses



**HOPE DEALER**  
Spreading Hope. Inspiring Change.

## Strategies from Exhibit B

### From Option B

#### ***Criminal Diversion / Adult Recovery Court:***

B D3: ARC: program & expenses

#### ***Prevention & Intervention:***

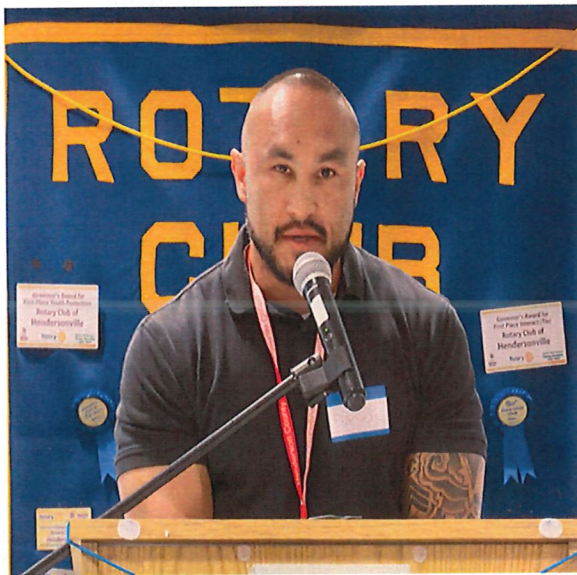
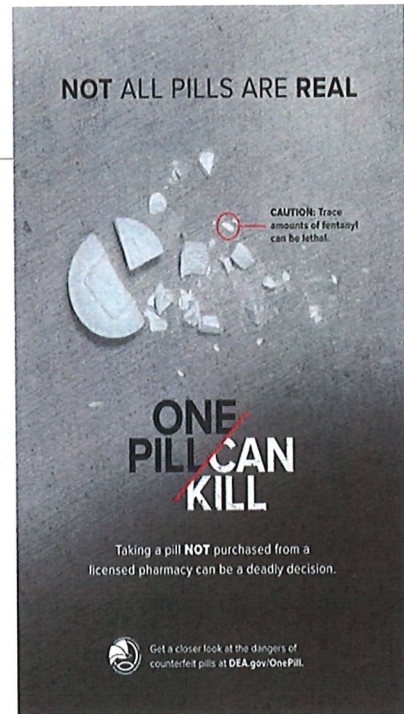
B G1: Media Campaign: One Pill Can Kill

B G9: Camp Glow & STAR Camp

HCPS Alternatives to Suspension Program

“Tall Cop Says Stop” event

B G12: Children & Family Resource Center Navigator



## What's helping

- Growing Recovery *Community*
- Non-profits and Blue Ridge Health
- Hospitals increasing behavioral health offerings
- Better connecting people to help
- Strategies getting results

Example: Adult Recovery Court stats at 1 year, 12 people: working, paying restitution, paying child support, no longer DSS involved, getting family & friends in treatment, & best of all, no longer incarcerated!

# Adult Recovery Court (ARC)



First Recovery Court Graduation, November 12, 2025

Over 19 months this participant:

- Had 250 contacts with ARC staff and Probation Officers
- Completed over 150 hours of Substance Use Disorder treatment & recovery support programming
- Helped Blue Ridge Health create new, more relevant, programming
- Completed more than 50 hours of service work
- Attended 45 ARC court hearings
- Driver's License restored

All while working full time and caring for her 3 kids

## Recovery Month, OD Awareness Day & Safe September Events

We had the opportunity to join with our recovery partners to share resources and join together to fight stigma and support our neighbors.

8/31: Back on Track's Overdose Awareness Day event at Jackson Park

9/19: the First Annual WNC Recovery Rally in Asheville

9/21: "Tall Cop Says Stop" & Light the Night 828 at Hvl High School

9/25: Love & Respect's Save a Life Day event in Jackson Park

9/26: Hope Coalition's Week of Hope Youth commitment

9/26: The Free Clinics' Save a Life Day event at Grace Lutheran Church



## Future Concerns

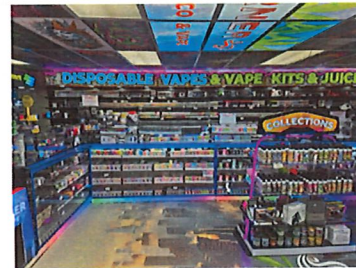
- ❖ Community surveys indicate year over year increases of alcohol use since Covid: % of people who drink excessively:

2018: 9.9%

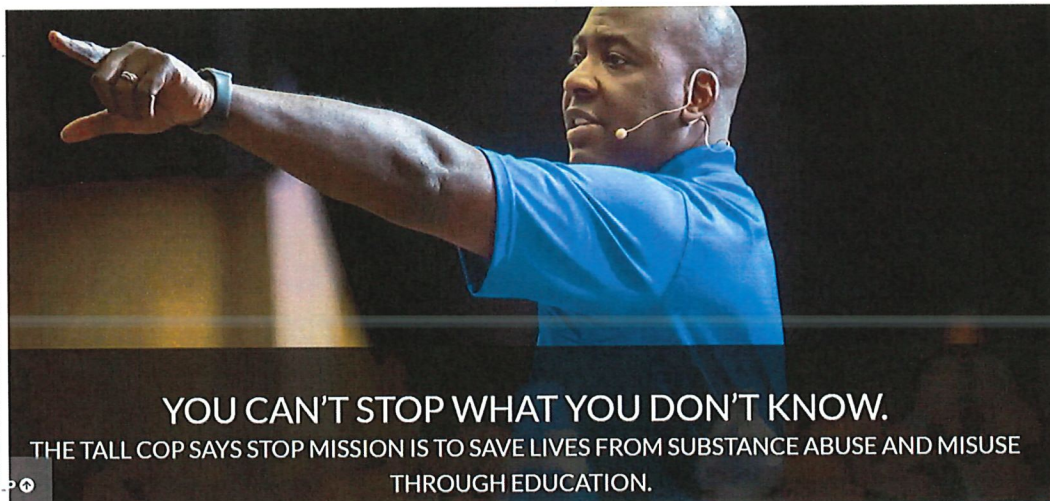
2021: 19.1%

2024: 22.0%

- ❖ Dangerous products getting ahead of policy: Over The Counter (legal) products that aren't regulated...



Tall Cop Says Stop: <https://www.tallcopsaysstop.com/>



## Ongoing and still to come

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Continue the Current Strategies for the Opioid Settlement Funds (see handout)	Work with EMS's Community Paramedic Program/ PSS working with them	Strategic Plan updated every 4 years, next one due 2027	Reentry work alongside Psych Nurse in detention center (MOE funded)
PSS work alongside DSS & Health Dept	RFQ's for Strategies that are cumbersome for the County, but doable for a non-profit	Continue to braid funding to extend life of Opioid Abatement funds	Continue to work with community partners!!



Thank You!

Jodi Grabowski, MACP, LPA  
Director, Strategic Behavioral Health Department  
Henderson County  
828-845-5523  
[jgrabowski@hendersoncountync.gov](mailto:jgrabowski@hendersoncountync.gov)  
[www.hendersoncountync.gov/behavioral](http://www.hendersoncountync.gov/behavioral)

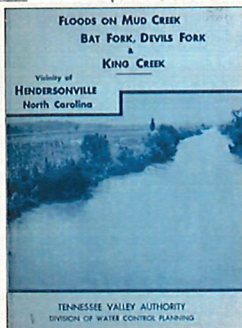
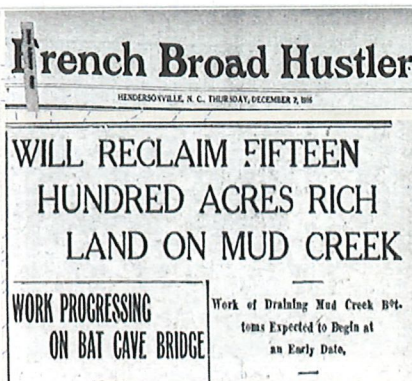
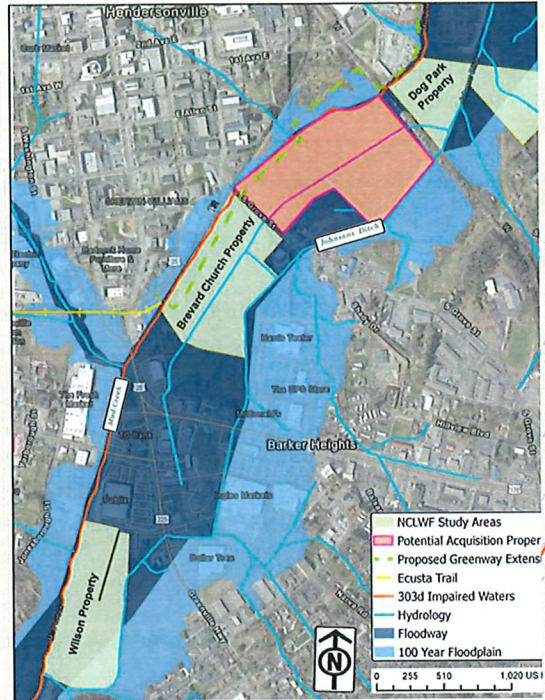
**b. Lower Mud Creek Floodplain Restoration and Flood Risk Reduction – Mike Huffman, Stormwater Director, City of Hendersonville**

Mike gave the following PowerPoint presentation.

# Lower Mud Creek Floodplain Restoration and Flood Risk **Reduction**

- + History and Need
- + Overview of the Lower Mud Creek project
- + Project planning and funding
- + What it delivers for the community
- + Current Status

2022 NCLWF Flood Risk Reduction Grant Project Map



## History and Need

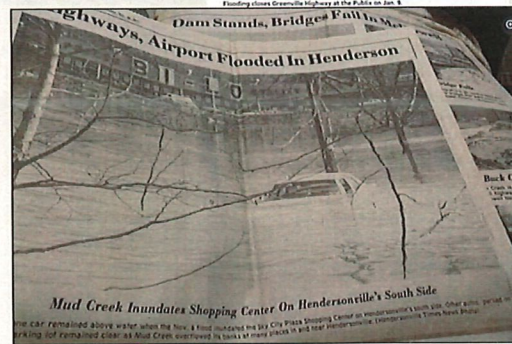
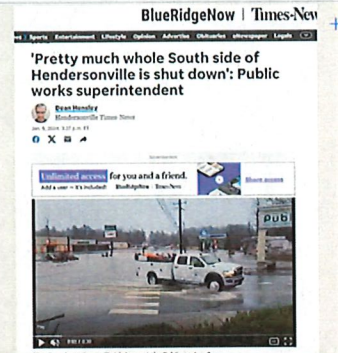
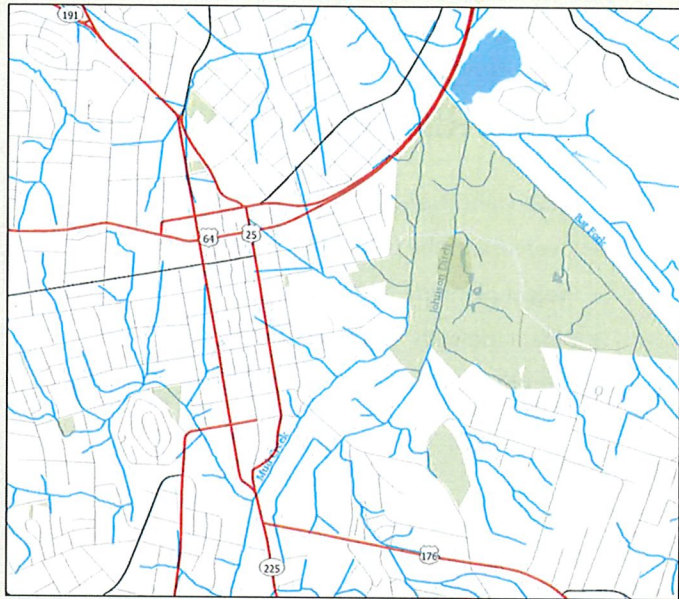
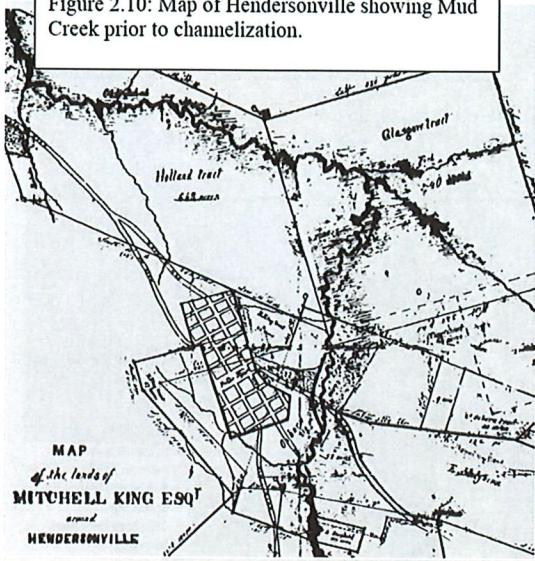


Figure 2.10: Map of Hendersonville showing Mud Creek prior to channelization.



- + Large-scale channelization of Mud Creek occurred between 1840 and 1890
- + Major floods of 1916, 1940, and 1964 caused much concern, leading multiple stream channelization and dredging projects = **incised streams with no connection to floodplain & higher velocity flooding**

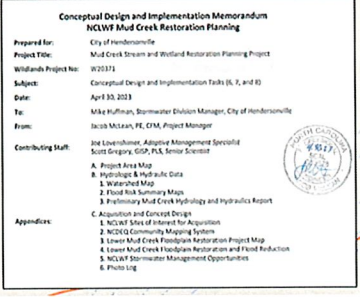
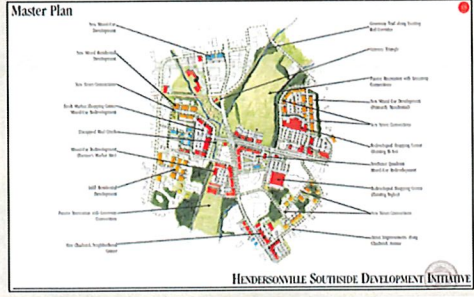
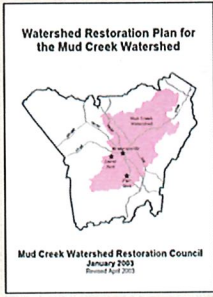
- + Heavy commercial development within floodplain/floodway 1960-1975 = **Loss of flood storage and increased flood risk**
- + Increase in impervious surfaces and stream modifications
- + Filling of floodplain and wetlands

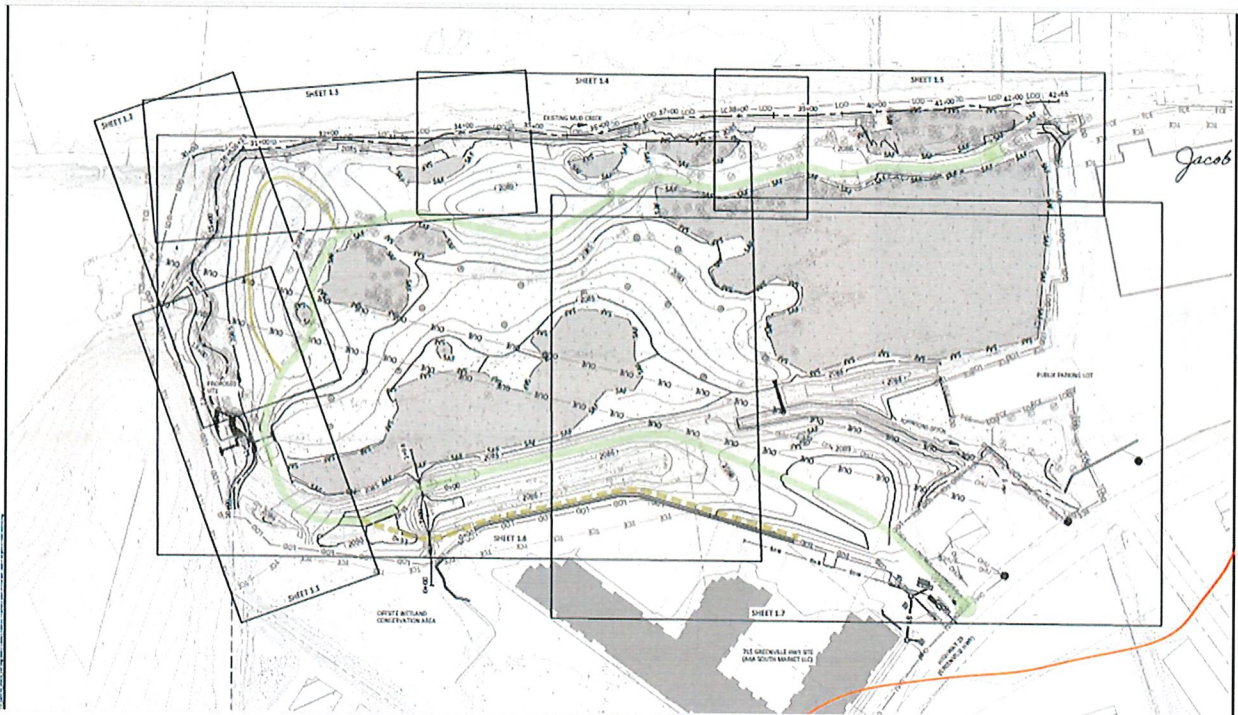
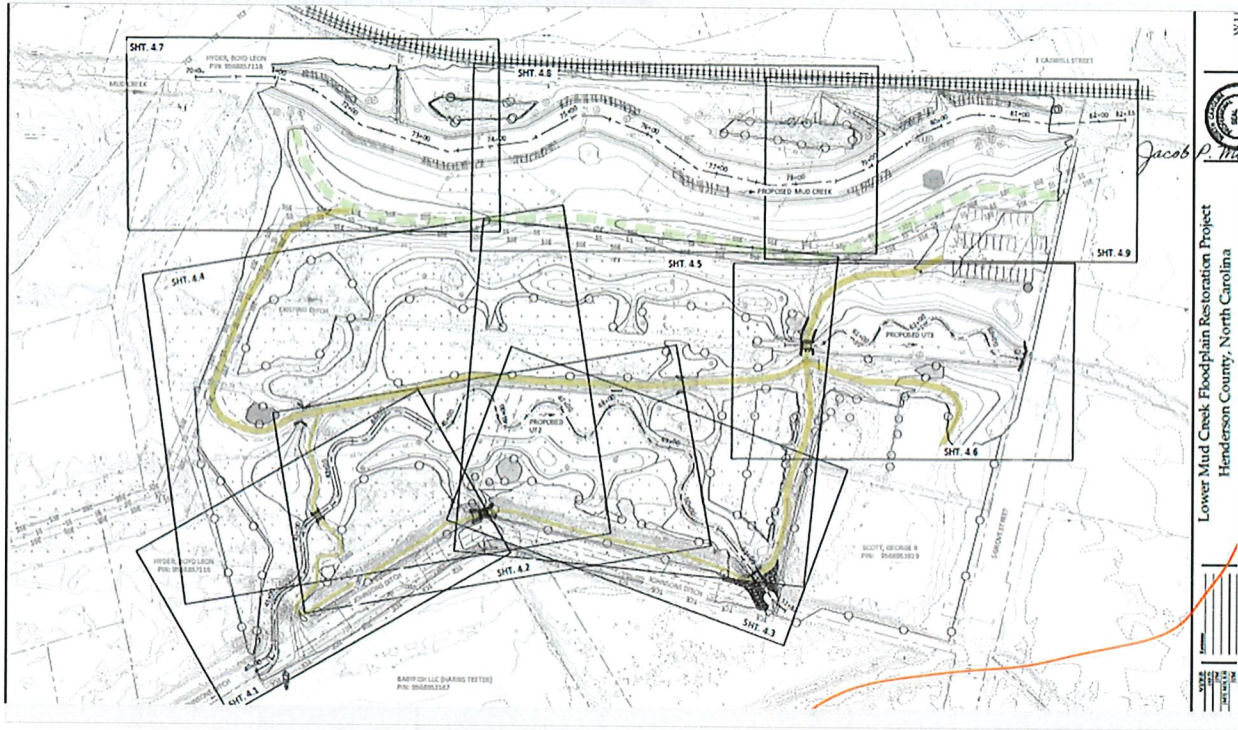
# Project Overview

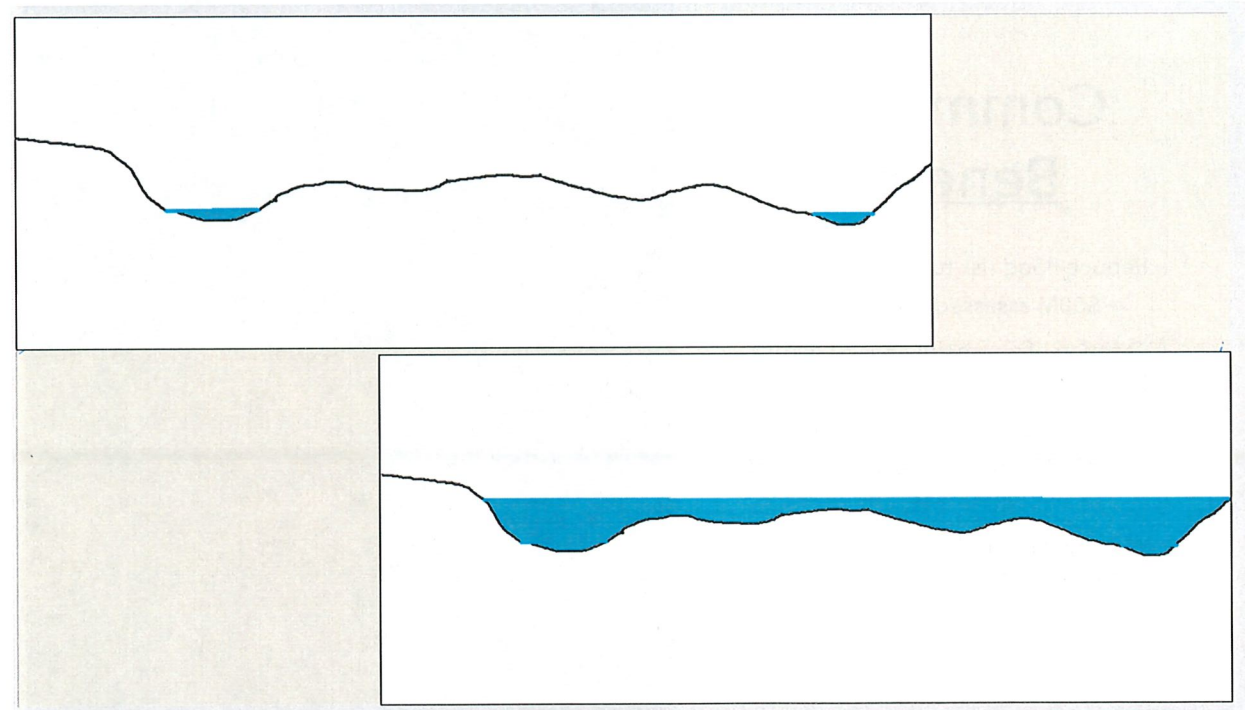
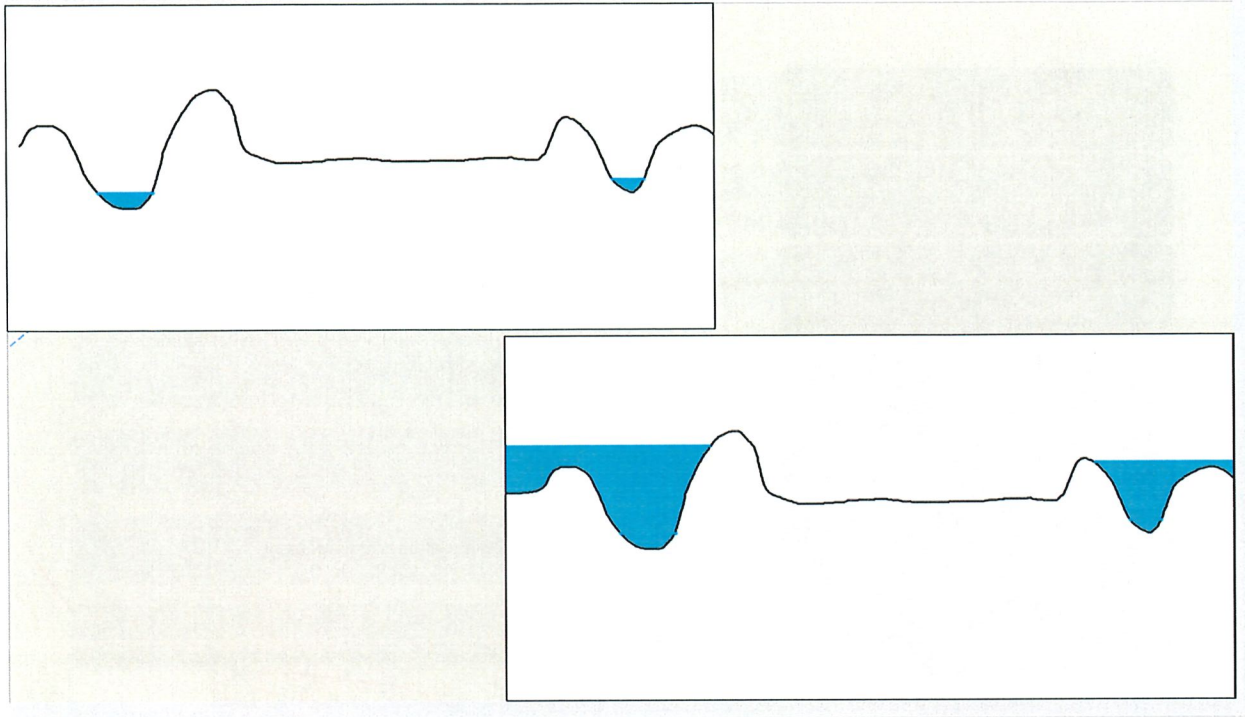
- + Restoring natural floodplain functions along Mud Creek in the southside of Hendersonville
- + Reconnect floodplains
- + Restore over 3,000 linear feet of streams,
- + Enhance 20+ acres of wetlands and riparian areas
- + Create passive recreation and greenspace amenities for community



# Project Planning







NC Division of Water Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$1.9M</li> <li>• Stream &amp; Floodplain Restoration</li> </ul>
NC Land and Water Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$1.2M Stream &amp; Floodplain Restoration</li> <li>• Property Acquisition</li> <li>• Water Control Structures</li> </ul>
NC Flood Blueprint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$600,000 - Stream &amp; Floodplain Restoration</li> </ul>
Water Resources Development Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$250,000 Water Based Recreation (Trails)</li> </ul>
GoldenLEAF Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$250,000 - Phase 2 Design</li> </ul>
City of Hendersonville	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$200,000 (In-Kind) Project Administration &amp; Management</li> </ul>
<b>Total Budget</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>\$4.2M</b></li> </ul>

## Community Benefits

- + Reduce flood risk to 93 properties
  - + \$60M assessed value
- + Creation of approximately 20-acre feet flood storage
- + Passive recreation and connectivity
  - + 2500 LF paved greenway & 1600 LF natural surface trail
- + Water quality and aquatic ecosystem enhancement



## Current Status



Substantial Completion at  
Brevard Church Site -  
**March 2026**



Beginning construction at  
Wilson Site - January 2026



Begin design of Phase 2 -  
Summer 2026

## Questions?

Michael Huffman

[mhuffman@hvlnc.gov](mailto:mhuffman@hvlnc.gov)

### 8. UPDATES

a. **City of Hendersonville** – Mayor Volk mentioned that staff had a Planning Retreat a couple of weeks ago and City Council will have a Planning Retreat in in March. Also, in March at the primary election we are going to have a request for a General Obligation Bond for Transportation purposes on the ballot. We cannot lobby for or against, but we hope the

citizens will consider the information and go out and cast their vote. On February 7<sup>th</sup>, there will be a T-Rex parade, T as in “tiny” in downtown. Rather than large floats there will be wagons crafted by woodcrafters and people and businesses can purchase one and decorate it so get your Mardi Gras thinking caps on of how you can decorate a small float and those will be pulled up and down the sidewalks, not down the middle of Main Street and we hope we get lots of people to construct a float and lots of people to cheer them on. On April 18<sup>th</sup>, we will have Hendo EarthFest so you will be hearing more about that soon.

**b. Village of Flat Rock** - Matt Toner said that they have received some money from FEMA for cleanup in the park from Helene, about \$130,000 so far and that’s just part of the money we are looking at. We are still in the process of working with them to fund the erosion that occurred in King Creek which is on the west side of the park. Over the holidays, we held our first ever food drive in the village and it was organized by one of our council members, Emily Whitmire. We collected over 500 pounds of food which was donated to the Interfaith Assistance Ministry. There were cash contributions as well and we are going to turn that into an annual event. Tax collections were up by over 96% so that seems to be going quite well. On the budget side, we have completed audits of last year’s budget, and we will start next year’s budget next month. Finally, we are working with a landscape architecture group, Equinox, to develop a landscaping project along the south side of the park and that road project from Ingles over to 225. We have seen the first take on that, and Council has not taken any action on it yet.

**c. Town of Fletcher** – Preston Blakely said that things have been pretty quiet but we’ve recently updated our five-year CIP for 2026 to 2031 and are prioritizing our infrastructure of parks, city vehicles and we kicked off our budget season and had our first budget workshop in January and heard expectations from department heads so we’ll see how that process continues to go. Finally, we will have our father/daughter dance on February 7<sup>th</sup> and we expect it to be successful and probably sell out. Keith Reed added that the Police Department is full for the first time in a long time.

**d. Town of Mills River** – Shanon Gonce said that they were fortunate enough to get Mr. Moffet to pass a local bill so that we could finish the UDO that we started. We are right in the middle of it, and you can imagine looking at rezoning 22 square miles but all we can do is encourage everyone to keep coming and keep talking and we will try to figure out how it suits everyone as best possible. We are trying to keep Mills River as rural as possible and keep as much farmland as possible, so a lot of people say we are backing up as a town because we are not building. So, I just encourage any of the municipal leaders who have any advice, we are willing to listen because we are way over our heads in this, but we are moving forward. Ms. Goode added that the library and town hall got repainted and recarpeted and it looks beautiful and there is a lot that goes in to moving a library, but our town staff managed that magnificently and we are looking fresh out there and waiting on spring.

**e. Town of Laurel Park** – J. Carey O’Cain said that they continue to be extremely frustrated with the response that we are getting from FEMA. I equate it to FEMA has borrowed the playbook from the insurance companies. First of all, I think their attitude is


deny, then after denial, they make it so difficult for you to go through the hurdles. The hurdles are multiple and each one they have to sign off on and its just increasingly frustrating. I was very disappointed when I saw the news that western North Carolina had received \$138 million dollars and this was going to solve things for our future. That's BS! Our problem is 60 billion and 138 million dollars does not touch it, and I am frustrated as hell. We are wrapping up our UDO right now and we are getting our reports back. We have had it open to the public to complete the survey and that survey shut off yesterday and I was very pleased with our response rate. Coming up, there is a documentary on January 29<sup>th</sup> and its called the Chapel Hill Two Step and it's a documentary that's put together by a videographer, a very famous videographer out of Atlanta, Keith Donovan and this was funded by an anonymous donor so again, it's on January 29<sup>th</sup> beginning at 7:00pm at the high school. They are charging \$19.26 because it is the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that auditorium and I'm speaking as an alumni. On February 5<sup>th</sup> we have a special FEMA meeting to review where we stand. I believe our town manager meets with FEMA once or twice a week, every week for the last year and a half with very little results. We have our budget workshop beginning on February 19<sup>th</sup> to have an initial overview of what our taxes are going to be. We may have to look at it from the standpoint of "ok we have a \$15 million dollar problem and if we are not going to get any FEMA help, we might have to go to plan B and figure out how to fund it ourselves.

**f. Henderson County** – County Manager John Mitchell said I will tell you that we are in the same boat that a lot of you are in and it is that time of year where we try to figure out what the budget is going to look like. Tomorrow, Commissioner Egolf and the other commissioners are going to sit up here and go from the beginning of the book to the end of the book and take a look at our expenditures thus far at fifty percent of the way through the year. Id like to report to this group that both property tax and sales tax are strong this year and our revenue projections across the board are good and strong. We have seen lots of good work by NCDOT, it is not as quick as folks might wish and tomorrow there is a Transportation Advisory Committee and we are going to review some of those things. Debris continues to be a serious problem in the county. We signed a contract with the State of North Carolina to do debris work. We are unsatisfied with that and are working with our legislators in the governor's office to try and get some more equipment on the ground, especially in areas like Bat Cave and Gerton. We will likely have a special call meeting at the beginning of February to hear the results of the Hickory Nut Gorge Recovery Plant which is available on the internet and the Planning Board is working through that. In closing, with regards to the Ecusta Trail, which has been up and running for about 6 months, we are working through our mutual park, and it is going well down there. I appreciate this group's time and energy and will answer any questions.


**9. REMINDER OF NEXT MEETING** – *April 21, 2026 hosted by the Village of Flat Rock*

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 4:04 p.m.

  
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Barbara G. Volk, Mayor  
City of Hendersonville

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jill Murray, CMC, NCCMC  
City Clerk  
City of Hendersonville