

to plan, locate the best site, develop funding strategies, design, permit, and administer construction for a new treatment plant.

In accordance with NC General Statute 143-64.31 (Procurement of Architectural, Engineering, and Surveying Services), staff developed an RFQ and, on January 23, 2025, posted it on the County's website. The responses were received on February 12, 2025.

The following firms submitted Statements of Qualifications: Kimley-Horne and WithersRavenel. The responses are available at the Historic Courthouse in the office of the County Engineer or online on the County's RFP page.

The selection committee comprised Andrew Griffin (Facility Services Director) and Marcus Jones, PE (County Engineer). A detailed review of the firms was conducted based on the criteria established within the RFQ. Based on their responses and further investigations, staff recommend WithersRavenel as the most qualified firm.

Pending Board approval, staff will negotiate an agreement with the selected firm and return it to the Board for approval. The scope of this agreement will be to perform the necessary planning for the plant replacement, including size and location.

Commissioner Egolf clarified the county did not purchase the Etowah Sewer to make a profit. Mr. Jones agreed, explaining that it operates an enterprise fund, meaning it generates its own revenue to cover expenses. It is a separately maintained fund, and the goal is to recommend a budget with fees that align with its cost. Additionally, owning the system allows the county to apply for grants that are unavailable to privately owned systems. Replacing the treatment plant will be a significant expense, and grants will help keep customer rates affordable. Jones noted that rates for the Etowah sewer system have not increased in fifteen years, which is unrealistic given rising operational costs. Currently, rates are about half of what surrounding sewer systems charge. He emphasized that residents outside of the service area will not be responsible for funding the sewer system.

Motion: Chairman Lapsley made the motion the Board approve the selection of WithersRavenel as the most qualified responding firm to perform engineering services for the Etowah Sewer System Treatment Plant replacement. All voted in favor, and the motion carried.

Edneyville (Clear Creek Sewer System)

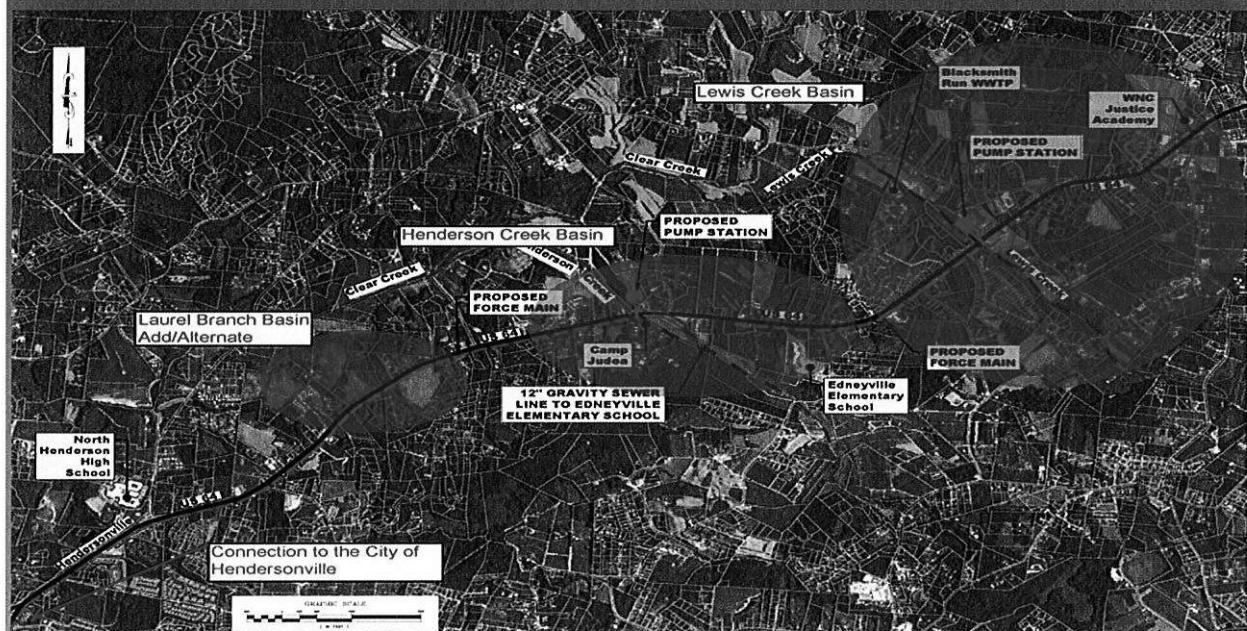
The Edneyville (Clear Creek Sewer) project aims to connect Edneyville Elementary School, the last public school in the county without public sewer, to the system. He said having all public schools on public sewer was a significant achievement from an engineering perspective. The project has an aggressive schedule to meet the December 2026 funding deadline for ARPA grants that are providing a large share of funding for the project. The system must be built and completed by the deadline. However, there is a little bit of a buffer in that there is some private or county money from the Edneyville project and the Justice Academy Fund balance enterprise fund. Jones said the project was nearing a phase requiring the Board's direction on easement acquisition. Due to the tight timeline, traditional negotiations with each property owner are not feasible, so eminent domain will be used to grant immediate property access. However, owners will still have the opportunity to negotiate compensation. With 86 affected properties, all owners have been contacted by WGLA and the appraiser. The project's aggressive schedule drives the decision.

Approved: April 7, 2025

Clear Creek Project Update

- ◆ Commissioners directed staff and consultants to proceed with Option 3 for the Clear Creek project.
 - Pump stations at Lewis Creek and Henderson Creek with gravity sewer to serve as much of the basin as possible.
 - Add/alternate for a pump station and gravity sewer in the Laurel Branch Basin.
 - Force main connection to the City of Hendersonville system.

Clear Creek Option 3



Project Update

- ◆ Design for the proposed improvements is almost complete.
- ◆ Permitting is underway or will be underway soon.
- ◆ Easement plats and appraisals are underway.
- ◆ Advertise for bids late spring/early summer.
- ◆ Construction could begin this summer.

Chairman Lapsley asked if the City of Hendersonville would handle wastewater from the project area. Mr. Jones confirmed this was an option under the Mud Creek Agreement, and the City had agreed to accept the flow. Lapsley clarified that while the City may receive the wastewater, the sewer system's operation and maintenance will remain under county control.

Comprehensive Plan Update

Chairman Lapsley explained that having a comprehensive plan is a state requirement; all counties and municipalities must have one. In Henderson County, each municipality—including Fletcher, Mills River, Laurel Park, Flat Rock, and the City of Hendersonville—has its own comprehensive plan to direct development within its boundaries.

Mr. Lapsley noted that the previous Board had begun implementing the comprehensive plan in August but faced setbacks with Hurricane Helene and legislative action by the General Assembly. The plan was developed over three years with extensive public input. A key concern from residents was controlling urban sprawl – preventing high-density residential, commercial, and industrial development from spreading beyond municipal boundaries into unincorporated areas. Mr. Lapsley emphasized that the Board's role is to manage growth in the county's unincorporated areas. Urban Sprawl is less of a concern for most municipalities, as they have enough undeveloped land to accommodate growth. However, the City of Hendersonville is nearly fully developed, leaving little room for expansion. To address the problem of urban sprawl, the commissioners directed the planning board to rewrite the land development code and the associated zoning map.

The Commission launched a Farmland Preservation program led by Commissioner McCall. A task force was formed, and meetings with the agricultural community led to a major state grant application. While progress is being made, achieving significant results will take time.

Mr. Lapsley said that the Commission faced an unexpected roadblock when the General Assembly included a clause in the State Budget Bill preventing counties from downzoning land without the property owner's consent. This halted efforts to reduce density as outlined in the comprehensive