

Hickory Nut Gorge

RECOVERY PLAN

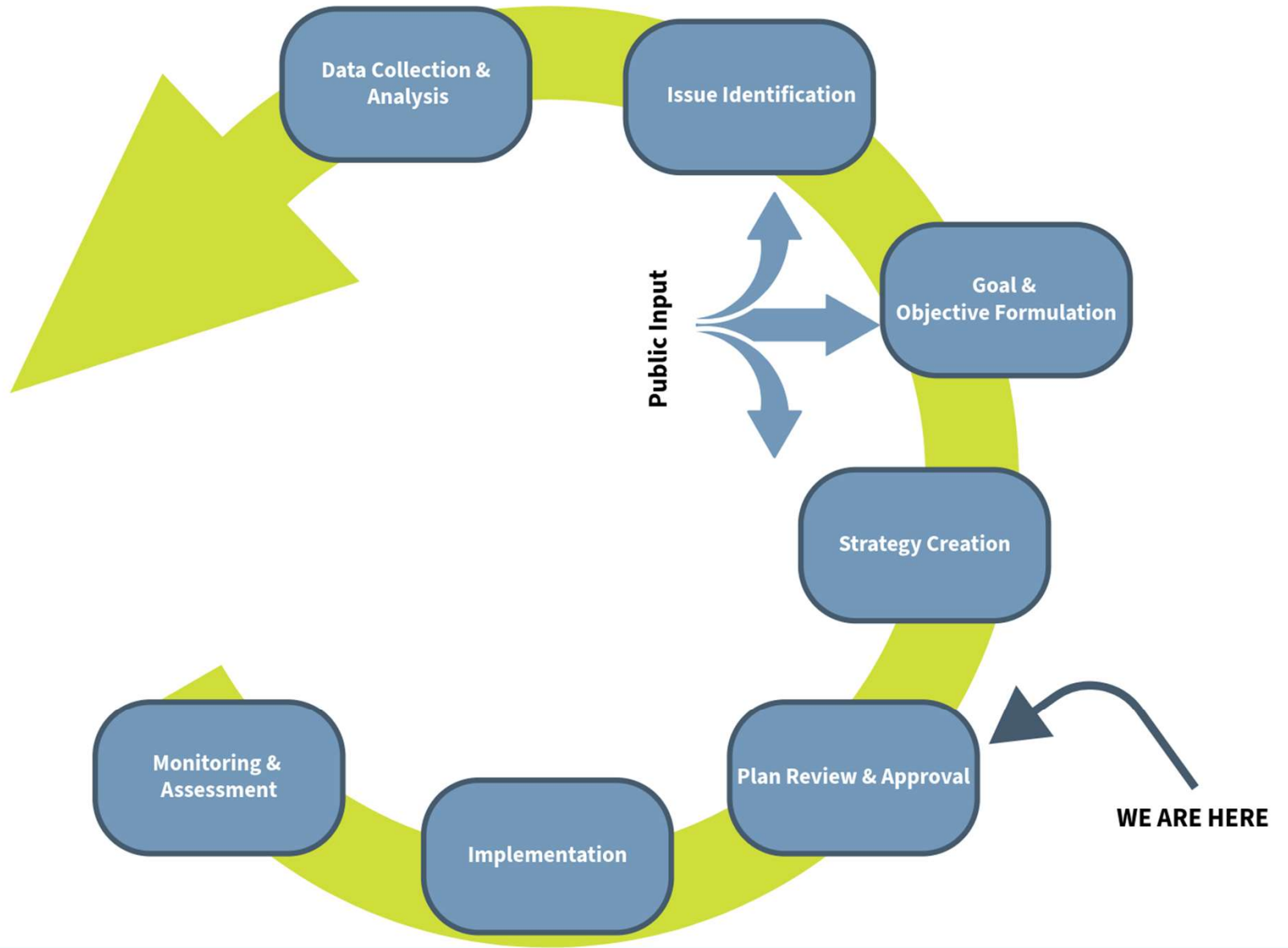




PLAN OVERVIEW

- The Hickory Nut Gorge Recovery Plan is a plan looking 5 – 10 years into the future
- Recovery includes restoring what can be restored, planning for future flooding events, and envisioning an improved built environment based on public input
- This plan was drafted using public input from HNG Community Group, the two community meetings, and the survey.
- The plan's steering committee voted unanimously to recommend approval by the Planning Board and BOC.

Community Plan Process



BACKGROUND

- May 5, 2025 – BOC selected Equinox for the project
- June 2, 2025 – BOC appointed nine members of the public to an advisory committee for the plan (met six times)
- July 30, 2025 – Survey was opened for community input; received 180 responses, with 70% of respondents identifying as full-time residents
- August 19, 2025 – Staff held a community input meeting - there were over 100 attendees



BACKGROUND

- September 2, 2025 – Staff gave an update to the BOC regarding plan progress
- November 6, 2025 – Staff held another community input meeting for folks to give feedback on draft plan recommendations
- December 8, 2025 – HNG Community Group voted unanimously to recommend plan approval
- January 15, 2025 – Planning Board reviewed the draft plan



180 Responses

70% Full-time
residents

16% Part-time
residents

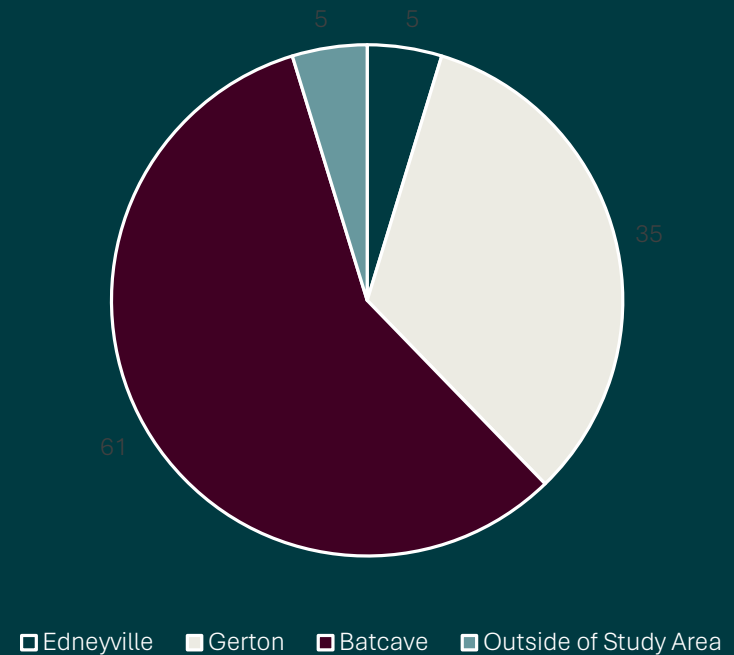
10% Business
owners

49% Property owners

14% work or volunteer locally

Most respondents identified as living in Bat Cave, with Gerton being the second most identified group.

% Responses by Community Association



SURVEY SUMMARY



PUBLIC INPUT MEETING #1

- Meeting was held in late August
- Over 100 attendees
- Received over 200 input points on activity maps
- Comments focused on:
 - Rebuilding infrastructure to be more resilient
 - Finishing the trail connections in Florence Preserve
 - Creating river access in Bat Cave
 - Implementing new, safe recreation opportunities in the low-lying areas

PLAN THEMES



Environment



Infrastructure



Emergency Preparedness



Recreation



Community



Land Use



Housing



Tourism & Economy



PUBLIC INPUT MEETING #2

- Meeting was held in November
- Over 50 attendees
- Participants prioritized recommendations they previously submitted. The top five are:
 - Strengthen Support For Volunteer Fire Department
 - Integrated Forest Recovery & Hazard Fuel Reduction
 - Bat Cave Recreation Corridor
 - Restore Stream Channel & Floodplain Along The Rocky Broad
 - Convenience & Recycling Center

RECOMMENDATIONS

- There were over 46 recommended projects based on input from the first public meeting and survey results, as well as following discussions with the HNG Community Group, Henderson County staff (EM, Planning, etc.), and the project consultants.
- The recommendations are organized by recovery theme and arranged from highest priority to lowest priority in each theme.
- The prioritized recommendations are listed as high-level summarizations of multiple projects that make up each individual recommendation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Tier One Priority Projects are the top priority projects that both the HNG Group and the public voted as most important

Tier One Priority Projects

Ranking	Project	Theme
1	Strengthen Support For Volunteer Fire Department	 Emergency Preparedness
2	Integrated Forest Recovery & Hazard Fuel Reduction	 Emergency Preparedness
3	Bat Cave Recreation Corridor	 Recreation
4	Restore Stream Channel & Floodplain Along The Rocky Broad	 Environment
5	Convenience & Recycling Center	 Infrastructure
6	Hickory Nut Gorge Regional Recreation Plan	 Recreation
7	Bearwallow Mountain Road Paving & Drainage Project	 Infrastructure

RECOMMENDATIONS

Tier Two Priority Projects are those that were identified independently as most important by the HNG Group or by the public

Tier Two Priority Projects

Ranking	Project	Theme
8	Siren Alert System & Public Education Campaign	 Emergency Preparedness
9	Strategic Buyout Parcel Reuse Plan	 Land Use
10	Rocky Broad River Park	 Recreation
11	Bridge, Culvert, & Erosion Control Improvements	 Infrastructure
12	Signage Package	 Tourism & Economy
13	Reestablish Upper Hickory Nut Gorge Community Center As A Community Hub (To Include Community Park & Memorial Garden)	 Community
14	Reedy Patch Creek Enhancements	 Environment
15	Restore Stream Channel & Floodplain Along Hickory Creek	 Environment
16	Middle Fork Road Reconstruction	 Infrastructure
17	Explore A Landslide Early Response And Monitoring System	 Emergency Preparedness

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations are organized into 8 themes. A table for each theme summarizes the projects needed to achieve the recommendations.
- Potential costs are high-level estimates. A feasibility study is required to evaluate exact costs.

Project Name	Brief Description of Project	Priority	Potential Key Stakeholders	Potential Partners	Potential Cost
<i>Projects Sub-Group by Type (i.e. Roads & Bridges)</i>					
<i>Individual project recommendations within the theme, grouped by project type.</i>	<i>There is a table for each of the 8 themes. A more detailed description of each project will follow the tables.</i>	<i>High, medium, or low, determined by community input.</i>	<i>These are the people / agencies responsible for implementing the project.</i>	<i>These are the people / agencies who are good resources.</i>	<i>Cost estimate to implement the project. Implementation will depend on funding availability.</i>



NEXT STEPS

- Planning Board will make a recommendation for approval or denial.
- The Board of Commissioners will then hold a public hearing that will follow NC notice requirements.
- If the Commissioners adopt the plan, it does not mean that all recommendations will be implemented. Many recommendations will require further study and consideration at the Board's discretion.



QUESTIONS

To view the entire plan, please visit
www.HNGPlan.org