



— VISIT —  
**HAYWOOD**  
WESTERN NC MOUNTAINS

HAYWOOD COUNTY  
TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

April 22, 2026 | Board of Directors Meeting



# — VISIT — HAYWOOD

WESTERN NC MOUNTAINS

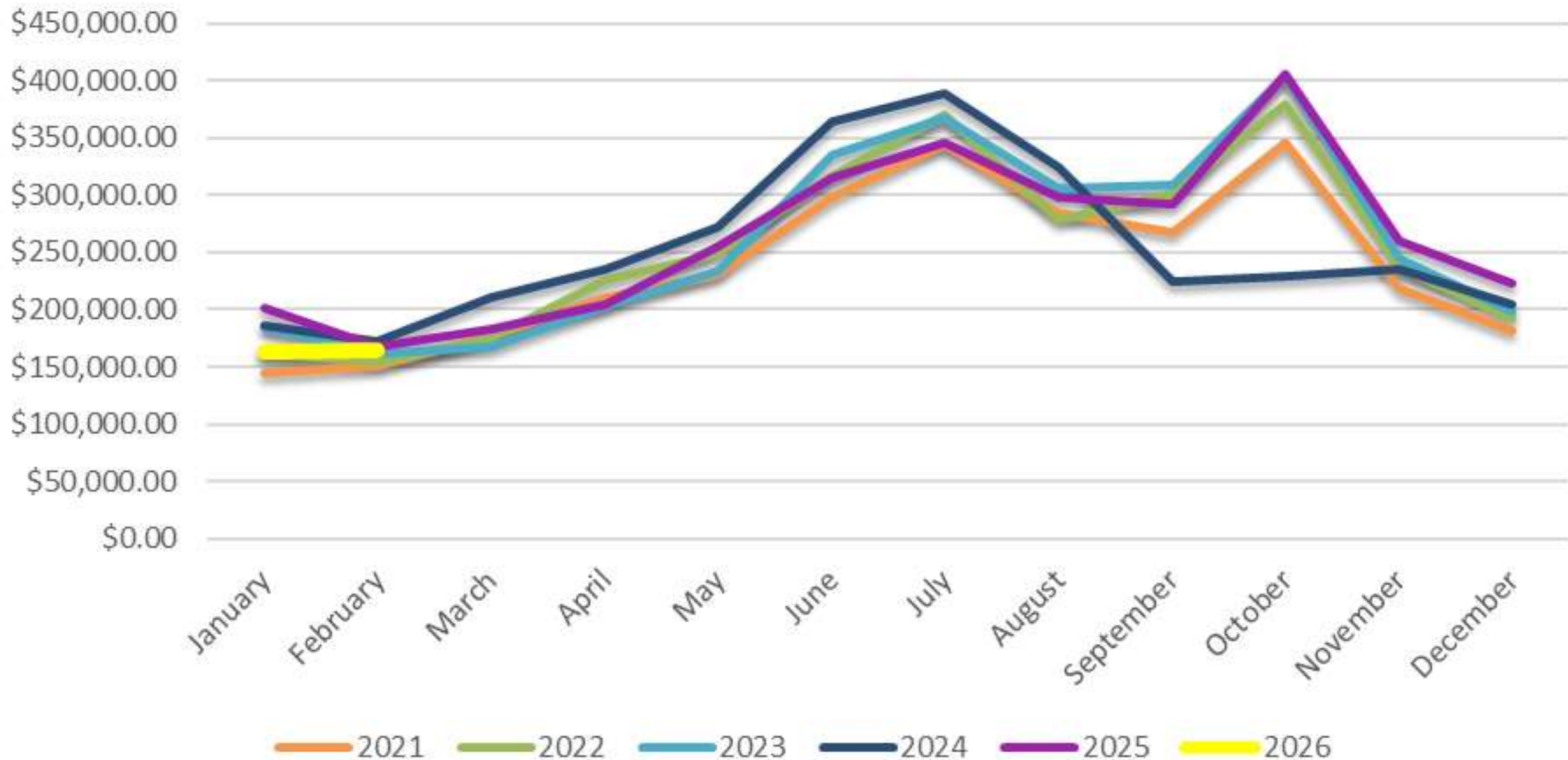
Occupancy Tax & Lodging Data

### Fiscal Year Monthly Occupancy Tax Comparison (Gross)

	<b>2022-2023</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>	<b>2024-2025</b>	<b>2025-2026</b>	\$ Change from Previous Year	% Change from Previous Year
January	\$184,467.69	\$186,374.80	\$201,802.09	\$162,893.11	(\$38,908.98)	-19.28%
Canton	\$15,055.47	\$20,320.83	\$15,212.14	\$13,623.75	(\$1,588.39)	-10.44%
Clyde	\$17,470.28	\$16,150.10	\$11,492.80	\$14,514.62	\$3,021.82	26.29%
Lake Junaluska	\$13,371.82	\$8,856.70	\$15,684.34	\$5,952.10	(\$9,732.24)	-62.05%
Maggie Valley	\$84,230.59	\$86,145.46	\$98,739.45	\$73,493.67	(\$25,245.78)	-25.57%
Waynesville	\$54,339.53	\$54,901.71	\$60,673.36	\$55,308.97	(\$5,364.39)	-8.84%
February	\$162,325.68	\$171,592.82	\$167,308.30	\$165,420.70	(\$1,887.60)	-1.13%
Canton	\$13,852.03	\$17,963.11	\$14,973.41	\$13,621.36	(\$1,352.05)	
Clyde	\$15,802.06	\$13,965.94	\$10,246.79	\$13,826.42	\$3,579.63	
Lake Junaluska	\$13,240.97	\$11,140.80	\$7,753.81	\$9,591.11	\$1,837.30	
Maggie Valley	\$71,592.00	\$78,844.03	\$77,469.39	\$70,314.01	(\$7,155.38)	
Waynesville	\$47,838.62	\$49,678.94	\$56,864.90	\$58,067.80	\$1,202.90	
	<b>\$3,043,483.81</b>	<b>\$3,270,866.51</b>	<b>\$2,932,906.56</b>	<b>\$2,150,971.79</b>	<b>\$174,971.93</b>	<b>8.85%</b>

[Link to Online Version](#)

# YOY Monthly Occupancy Tax Comparison





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Old Business

# Waynesville Recreation Master Plan Grant Extension Request

Original Completion Date: June 30, 2026

New Completion Date: August 31, 2026

Grant Award Amount: \$75,000

*The anticipated completion and adoption dates will occur 2 months later than originally planned due to the comprehensive scope and planning process required.*



# Capital Fund – Internal Transfer

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<b>CAPITAL OUTLAY</b>	<b>Approved Budget</b>	<b>Internal Transfer</b>
Office Furniture/Equipment Purchase	\$2,500	\$5,000
Website Development	\$175,000	\$175,000
Other Capital	\$2,500	\$0
<b>Total Capital Outlay</b>	<b>\$180,000</b>	<b>\$180,000</b>

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New Business

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ADVANCING  
HAYWOOD COUNTY'S  
PUBLIC ASSETS

Haywood County Tourism Development Authority  
April 21, 2026 | Council of Governments Meeting



# Haywood County Destination Master Plan

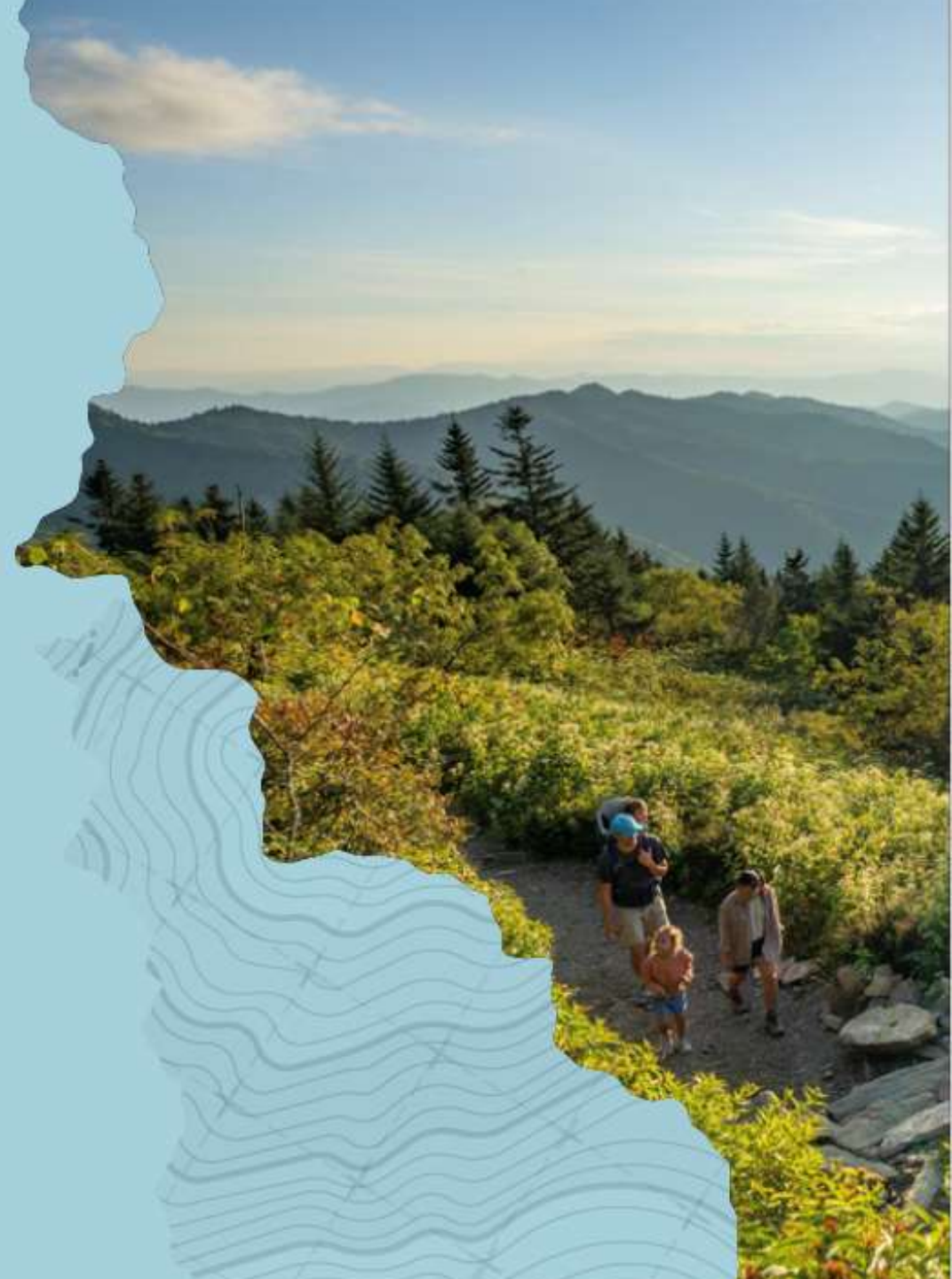
**2026-2035**

Adopted 12.04.2024

An Actionable Roadmap to Seize  
Our Successful Tourism Future

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*Destination Master Plan Full Digital Version*





# Collaborative Approach

A diverse 17-person Steering Committee was formed, featuring representatives from across Haywood County, encompassing key sectors such as attractions, outdoor recreation, stewardship, retail, lodging, and food & beverage. This committee, working in conjunction with HCTDA staff and the Board of Directors, collaborated closely with the advisory teams. Their collective expertise and local insights were pivotal in steering the strategic direction of the Destination Master Plan, ensuring that it aligns with regional goals and harnesses innovative, sustainable practices to enhance the Haywood County's tourism landscape.

Community  
Engagement of

**more than 2049**

Haywood stakeholders, leaders, residents, visitors and more.



*The process included community open houses, specialized workshops, one-on-one interviews, and an extensive new survey of residents and both past and prospective visitors to Haywood County.*

# PIGEON RIVER

RECONNECTING THE COMMUNITIES OF HAYWOOD COUNTY TO THE LIFEBLOOD OF THE REGION

PREPARED FOR

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PREPARED BY:



# Proposed Opportunity & Vision

## Opportunity

*Reconnecting Haywood County to the Pigeon River, fostering economic growth, community engagement, and environmental stewardship.*

## Vision

# ***A River For All***



# SPRUCE STREET AT PIGEON RIVER | HAYWOOD COUNTY, NC

Clyde River Hub: Fostering Community and Outdoor Connections



## CONCEPT PLANS

## INSPIRATION IMAGES



### CONCEPTUAL COST ESTIMATE - SPRUCE STREET PIGEON RIVER ACCESS

DESCRIPTION: CONCEPTUAL COST ESTIMATE FOR SPRUCE STREET RIVER ACCESS SITE IMPROVEMENTS

ESTIMATE BY: CCW

DATE: 7/17/2024

REVISED: 8/2/2024

CHECKED BY: BLS

QUANTITY	UNITS	PRICE	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
1	LS	\$225,811.22	MOBILIZATION (10% OF CONSTRUCTION COST)	\$225,811.22
1	LS	\$44,276.71	CONSTRUCTION SURVEYING	\$44,276.71
1	LS	\$241,000.00	CLEARING, GRUBBING, AND GRADING	\$241,000.00
4000	LF	\$4.50	LIMIT OF DISTURBANCE / TREE PROTECTION FENCE	\$18,000.00
10958	SF	\$3.75	GRAVEL PAVING IN GARDENS AND ALONG SHARED STREET	\$41,092.50
29461	SF	\$25.00	PERMEABLE PAVING FOR SHARED STREET	\$736,525.00
27406	SF	\$10.00	CONCRETE PATH / PAVING	\$274,060.00
325	SF	\$100.00	RIVER ACCESS	\$32,500.00
5049	SF	\$9.00	ASPHALT PARKING LOT	\$45,441.00
2319	LF	\$43.00	CURB AND GUTTER	\$99,717.00
1	LS	\$160,000.00	GENERAL AMENITIES (TRASH CANS, BENCHES, CAFÉ SEATING, DRINKING FOUNTAINS, ETC)	\$160,000.00
3	EA	\$50,000.00	SHIPPING CONTAINER BUILDINGS (FOR EDUCATIONAL SPACE AND OUTFITTER)	\$150,000.00
700	SF	\$15.00	RAISED CROSSING	\$10,500.00
1	LS	\$70,000.00	DOG PARK	\$70,000.00
1	LS	\$50,000.00	COMMUNITY GARDEN IMPROVEMENTS	\$50,000.00
1	LS	\$25,000.00	CROSSWALK IMPROVEMENTS	\$25,000.00
1	EA	\$10,000.00	GATEWAY WAYFINDING	\$10,000.00
1	LS	\$250,000.00	GENERAL LANDSCAPING (LAWN, TREES, ETC)	\$250,000.00
<b>ITEMS COST:</b>				<b>\$2,483,923.43</b>
CONTINGENCIES		30.0%		\$745,177.03
DESIGN SERVICES*		15.0%		\$372,588.51
<b>TOTAL ESTIMATED COST</b>				<b>\$3,601,688.97</b>

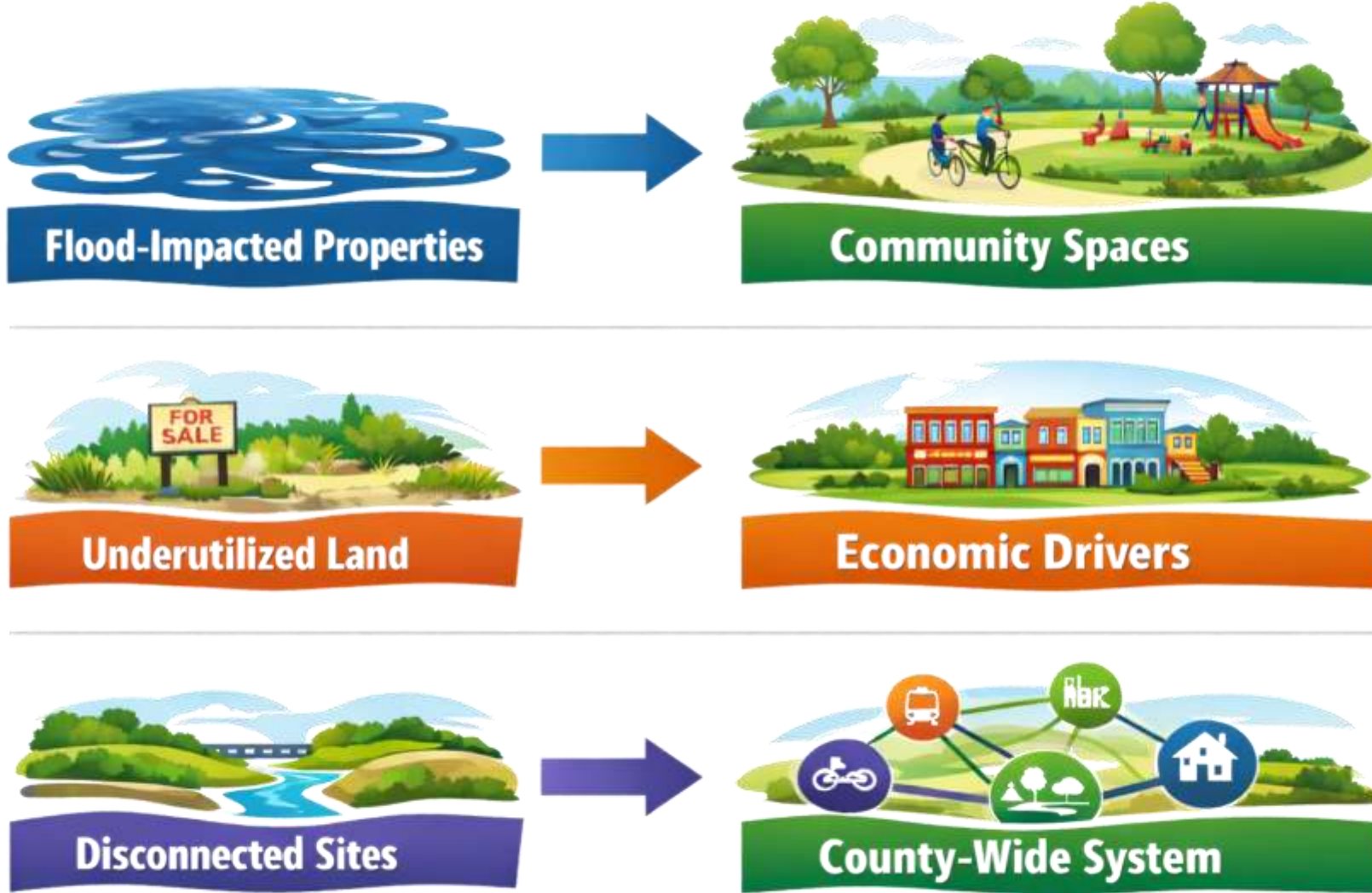
NOTES: THIS ESTIMATE DOES NOT INCLUDE THE COST OF ITEMS THAT HAVE NOT YET BEEN DEFINED AT THIS STAGE OF DESIGN, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO: LIGHTING, RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITION, UTILITY WORK, EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL, TRAFFIC CONTROL, OR A SIGNAL WARRANT STUDY.

\*DESIGN SERVICES ENCOMPASS THE DESIGN AND/OR ENGINEERING DEVELOPMENT OF PLANS NEEDED TO LAYOUT HARDSCAPE AREAS AND PLANTING AREAS AND SPECIFY SITE FURNISHING LOCATIONS, AS WELL AS DESIGN SURVEY COSTS.

# Spruce Street, Clyde:

## Clyde’s Opportunity to Foster Community and Outdoor Connections

# Turning Challenges Into Assets



# A Rare Window of Opportunity Haywood County

- **Destination Master Plan adopted**
- **Strong alignment across communities**
- **Tourism is a major economic driver**
- **Increasing demand for outdoor recreation & water access**
- **Growing inventory of public land from flood buyouts**
- **Need to rebuild and reimagine impacted areas**
- **Opportunity to create resilient, community-focused assets**

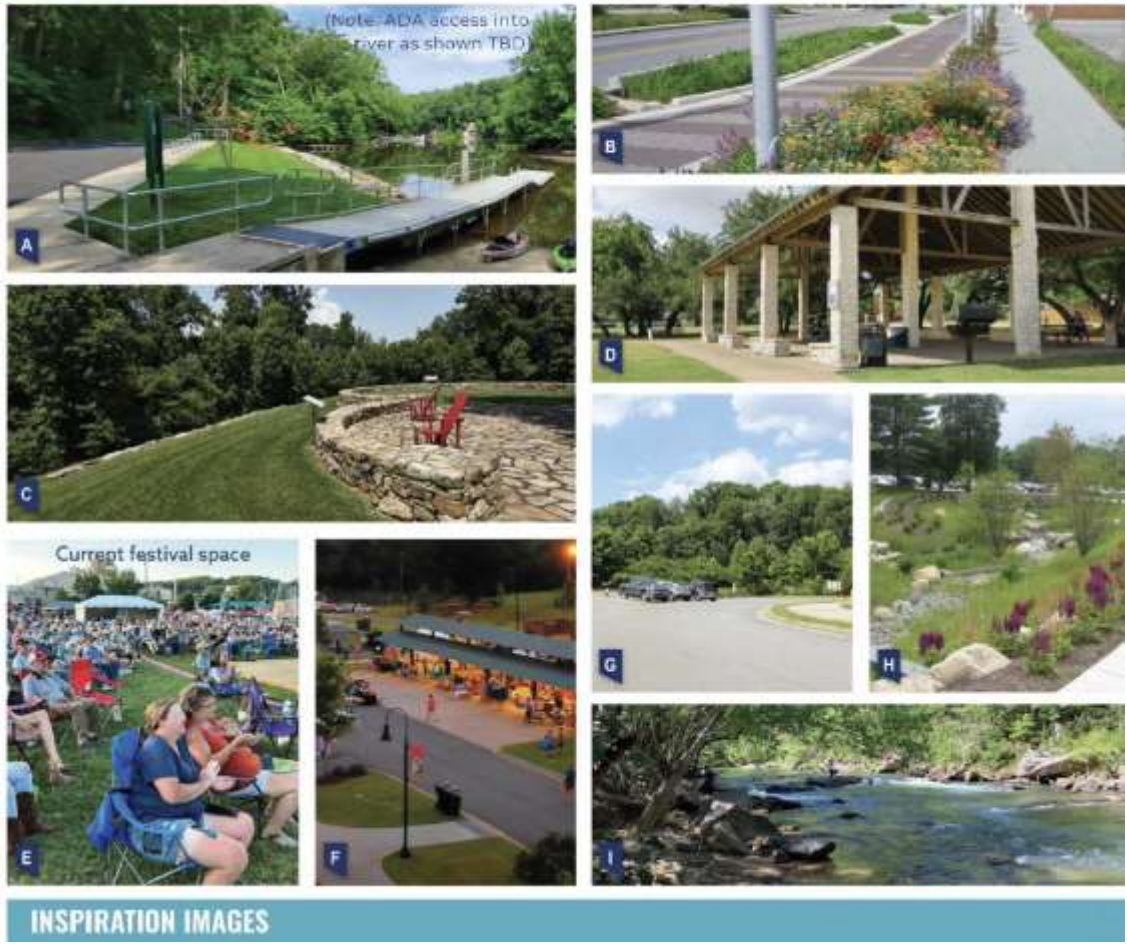
# PARK STREET PIGEON RIVER ACCESS | HAYWOOD COUNTY, NC

Improving Downtown Canton's River Access & Flood Resiliency



## From Plan to \$1.5 Million in Canton

- Plan provided clear visuals & realistic cost estimates
- Focused on flood resilience & community use
- Result: Haywood Waterways secured \$1.5M for downtown river access
- Funding included recovery, resilience, and outdoor economy sources



Prepared Projects Get Funded

# The Gap We Need To Solve

## What We Know:

- Funding follows prepared projects
- Visual plans & cost estimates are critical
- It took ~2 years to fund one prepared project

## Where We Are Today:

- Highly competitive funding environment
- Lack of construction-ready designs
- No county-wide vision connecting projects
- Public land remains underutilized without a plan

# A County-Wide Project Development Initiative

**We will move Haywood County from ideas to fundable, buildable projects by:**

- ✓ Advancing 5+ priority sites to implementation-ready design
- ✓ Creating clear visuals, cost estimates, and phased plans
- ✓ Developing grant-ready project packages
- ✓ Connecting projects into a cohesive, county-wide system



# Stronger Communities, Stronger Economy



- ➔ Investing in smart use of publicly owned land
- ➔ Improving quality of life for residents
- ➔ Strengthening our local economy and creating opportunities for local businesses
- ➔ Supports a strong visitor economy that benefits local businesses
- ➔ Helps replace lost tax base over time
- ➔ Creates a clear, unified vision for investment

# Funding & Partnership

## Leveraging Investment

- TDA proposed FY26-27 funding of \$300,000
- Partnership with Haywood Waterways
- Pursuing additional grant funding

## With Success:

- ➔ Expand the number of sites evaluated and advanced
- ➔ Develop more detailed, construction-ready designs
- ➔ Strengthen competitiveness for major funding opportunities
- ➔ Accelerate the path from planning to construction



# Built Through Cross-County Collaboration

- Advisory committee guiding priorities and process
- Cross-county partnership across all towns
- Cross-sector collaboration (public, nonprofit, and conservation)

**Bryant Morehead, Haywood County**

**Jodi Ferguson, Haywood County**

**Elli Flagg, Haywood County**

**Byron Hickox, Canton**

**Sam Dunbar, Canton**

**Joy Garland, Clyde**

**Sam Cullen, Maggie Valley**

**Noah Taylor, Maggie Valley**

**Ken Howle, Lake Junaluska**

**Elizabeth Teague, Waynesville**

**Luke Kinsland, Waynesville**

**Preston Jacobsen, Haywood Waterways**

**Hanni Muerdter, Southern Appalachian  
Highlands Conservancy**

**Greg Szenas, Trout Unlimited**

**Duane Vanhook, Haywood Soil & Water**

**Case Brown, HCTDA Board Member**

**Corrina Ruffieux, HCTDA Executive Director**

# Timeline & Next Steps

- April 22: RFQ released
- Summer: Firm selection & contract negotiations
- August 26: HCTDA Board approves contract
- September 1: Contract begins
- Fall-Winter: Project begins, site development & community engagement

# From One Project to a County-Wide System

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- ❖ Proven success in Canton
- ❖ Opportunity to scale across all communities
- ❖ Positioned to compete—and win—funding



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Staff Reports

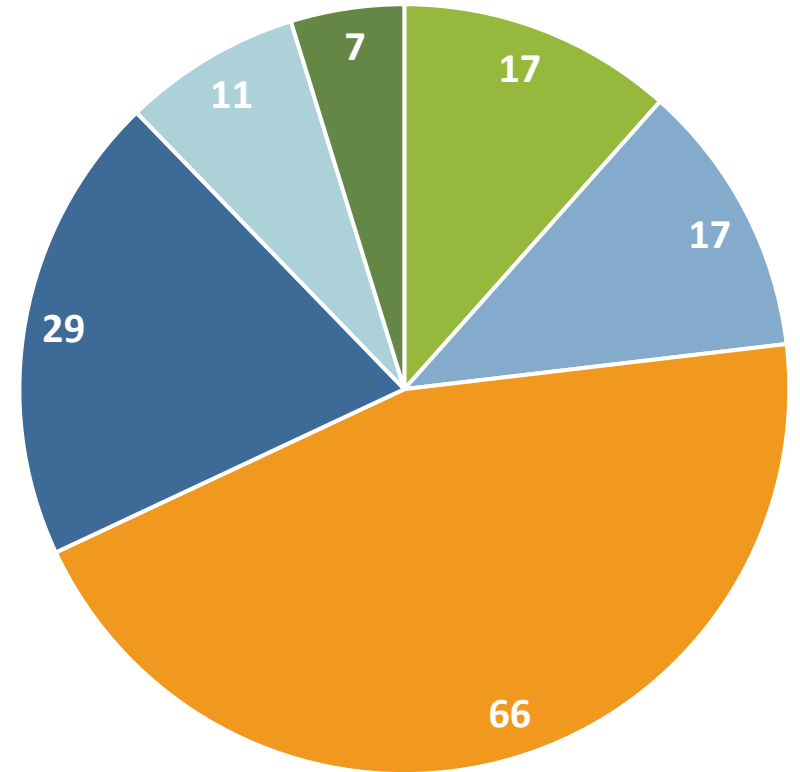
# Fat Burger Month Recap



- **222 Participants** = 39% increase from 2025 (160).
- Preliminary consumer survey feedback is very positive.

Highest Prize Tier Achieved (# of Burgers Eaten)

- Raffle (1-2)
- Sticker Pack (3-5)
- T-Shirt (6-9)
- Mason Jar (10-14)
- Baseball Hat (15-19)
- Elk Bucks (20+)





**INSPIRING TRAVEL**  
THROUGH RESPONSIBLE JOURNALISM

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# SATW 2026 Annual Convention

Join us for four days of networking, storytelling, and mountain magic in Haywood County, NC.

[Register Now](#) | October 4–8, 2026



**2026 ANNUAL CONVENTION**

[SATW Registration](#)

# Satellite Media Tour



**17 TV Interviews | 39,626,242 Total Impressions**

<https://muckrack.com/broadcast/savedclips/view/b0epLUpvDx>

# Our State Magazine



# T-Shirt Contest

- Nearly 1,000 votes cast in round 1 of voting
- Top 5 designs (below, tentative) move onto the final round, open 4/29-5/13:

Vote at [VisitHaywood.com/TShirt-Contest](https://www.visithaywood.com/TShirt-Contest)





# **MOUNTAIN MORNINGS**

**May 7 | The Warren Center, Lake Junaluska | 8:30-10AM**

Join us for a special Mountain Mornings to celebrate National Travel & Tourism Week. We will highlight this year's milestones, announce Fat Burger Month winners, hear from Visit NC, and share what's ahead. Breakfast & Mimosa Mocktails will be provided!



**NATIONAL TRAVEL & TOURISM WEEK**



# May Meeting - Reminders

- FY 2026-2027 Budget Forum
- Grant Discussion & Approvals
- FY26-27 Agency Contracts

A scenic photograph of three hikers on a mountain trail. In the foreground, a young woman with braids, wearing a pink shirt and black leggings, is stepping up a rocky ledge. Behind her, a woman in a white shirt and blue jeans is also climbing. To the left, a man in a dark shirt and khaki pants is walking towards them. The background shows rolling green mountains under a blue sky with wispy clouds.

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**Next TDA Board Meeting:  
Wednesday May 27, 2026  
Haywood Community College, Hemlock Board Room**