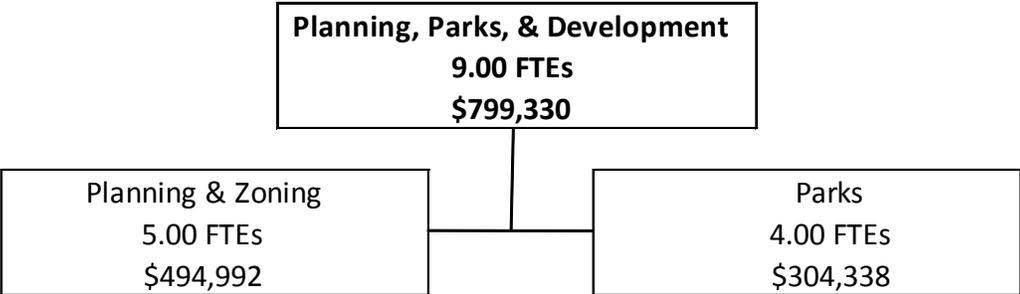


**Catawba County Government**



# Planning, Parks, & Development

Summary

	2010/11 Actual	2011/12 Current	2012/13 Requested	2012/13 Approved	Percent Change
<b>Revenues</b>					
Charges & Fees	\$60,753	\$80,994	\$81,619	\$81,619	1%
Local	0	0	0	0	0%
State	0	25,000	0	0	0%
Miscellaneous	35	500	500	500	0%
From Community Development	0	0	0	0	0%
General Fund	823,590	779,183	776,198	717,211	-8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$884,378</b>	<b>\$885,677</b>	<b>\$858,317</b>	<b>\$799,330</b>	<b>-10%</b>
<b>Expenses</b>					
Personal Services	\$737,189	\$708,054	\$703,012	\$645,325	-9%
Supplies & Operations	147,189	177,623	155,305	154,005	-13%
Capital	0	0	0	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$884,378</b>	<b>\$885,677</b>	<b>\$858,317</b>	<b>\$799,330</b>	<b>-10%</b>
<b>Expenses by Division</b>					
Planning & Zoning	\$601,215	\$583,798	\$554,025	\$494,992	-15%
Parks	283,163	301,879	304,292	304,338	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>884,378</b>	<b>885,677</b>	<b>858,317</b>	<b>799,330</b>	<b>-10%</b>
<b>Employees</b>					
Permanent	11.00	10.00	10.00	9.00	-10%
Hourly	2.40	1.70	2.00	2.00	18%
<b>Total</b>	<b>13.40</b>	<b>11.70</b>	<b>12.00</b>	<b>11.00</b>	<b>-6%</b>

## Budget Highlights

The Planning, Parks, and Development budget includes the County's planning and zoning efforts and the operations of the County Parks. The department's overall budget decreased 10 percent from Fiscal Year 2011/12, primarily as a result of elimination of a position as well as the completion of a \$25,000 State grant from the North Carolina Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund. Traditional planning workload remains lower than in previous years due to the economic downturn, with declines of 50 percent in residential zoning permits, 54 percent in rezoning request, and 55 percent in subdivision plats from 2007 levels. To right-size the department with this workload, one planner position is eliminated. Despite this reduction in staff, the department will maintain its expedient review times for all development related requests and projects.

## **Performance Measurement**

### **Fiscal Year 2012/13**

The Planning, Parks, and Development department's outcomes for Fiscal Year 2012/13 continue to focus on quality customer service, community assistance, quality of life, and promoting development. Planning continues to provide timely review of all planning-related requests/projects, participate in regional planning efforts, implement Community Development Block Grants through contracts with the Western Piedmont Council of Governments, and review the Unified Development Ordinance to ensure a balance between the private interest and the public good.

New outcomes for the department this year include participation in a trail construction school put on by the Carolina Thread Trail organization, completion of a Highway 150 corridor plan to prepare for increased development, and increasing the number of public farm tours/events to promote agri-tourism and locally produced foods. Another notable new outcome is to apply for the National Flood Insurance Program's Community Rating System to reduce the County's current rate classification. If successful, this will allow affected Catawba County citizens to save 5 percent on flood insurance premiums.

Parks' outcomes continue to focus on increasing the number of patrons who visit the three County parks, using volunteers to complete Park improvement efforts, and hosting educational and school programs to increase awareness of and participation in the preservation of Catawba County's natural heritage. The division eliminated its outcome surrounding a 90 percent satisfaction rating on its customer survey due to low patron participation.

### **Fiscal Year 2011/12**

At mid-year, all of Planning, Parks and Development's outcomes are on target and expected to be achieved by year end. Achievements include:

- Four rezonings, 13 non-residential site plans, 196 residential zoning permits, 1 variance application, 2 expansions of non-conforming use applications, 2 final plats, 21 exempt subdivision plans, 6 family subdivision plans, and 6 minor subdivision plans were all reviewed and approved within their target timeframes.
- Staff continues to implement the Scattered Site, Urgent Repair, and Individual Development Account Community Development Block Grants. Specific successes include 13 emergency repairs completed, 1 relocation/clearance completed, 2 rehabilitations completed, and down-payment assistance for 6 first-time homebuyers.
- Initiating the Greenway Trails Advisory Committee, which is charged with implementing the Carolina Thread Trail Master Greenway Plan adopted in the previous fiscal year.

- As of December 31, 2011, County parks had been used by 52,902 patrons, a 7.1 percent increase over Fiscal Year 2010/11 attendance for the same time period.
- One hundred seventy-one volunteers have provided 688.5 hours of volunteer service to the parks, nearly reaching Parks' goal of 750 hours for the entire fiscal year.

### **Fiscal Year 2010/11**

Planning continued its focus on customer service for Fiscal Year 2010/11 by expeditiously reviewing development-related requests/projects within target timeframes. For example, all rezoning requests and reports were submitted to the Planning Board 7-10 days prior to the scheduled public hearing, non-residential site plans were approved within 10 working days, and minor and family subdivision plans were reviewed within 10 working days.

The department continued to contract with the Western Piedmont Council of Governments to increase affordable housing opportunities and ensure safe housing for low-to-moderate income people by aiding in the administration of State Scattered Site, Urgent Repair, and Individual Development Account Community Development Block Grants. Specific accomplishments include clearing and relocating one house, rehabilitating two houses, completing 12 emergency house repairs, and assisting four first time homeowners to purchase a home.

A high priority for Planning is facilitating economic development, and the department completed an initial draft of a Highway 16 corridor development plan, as well as a green development corridor around the County's Eco-Complex which was approved by the Board of County Commissioners in July 2011. It additionally worked to implement the new Voluntary Agricultural District program, and was successful in having the Town of Catawba and City of Claremont adopt the plan, with others in the process of adopting. Planning's Agri-Tourism day was a marked success as well, with approximately 1,000 visits to nine participating farms.

Parks exceeded its target attendance of 81,000 patrons, by having 101,280 visitors throughout the year. Volunteer hours continue to be strong as well, with approximately 663 volunteers donating 2,195.75 hours of service. This far exceeds its target participation of 500 hours. Educational efforts remain a high priority for the County's Parks, and the division had 3,630 patrons participate in educational programs throughout Fiscal Year 2010/11, exceeding its target of 800 participants.

To provide the best service possible, Parks piloted a customer satisfaction survey to collect data on citizen satisfaction with the County's parks. Data from this survey revealed that while patrons are overall satisfied with the Parks system, a recurring complaint is the limited hours of operation due to a budgetary cutback in hours.

## PLANNING & ZONING

### Statement of Purpose

Conduct a comprehensive planning program, including the administration of the Unified Development Ordinance and the development and implementation of long-range planning studies. The planning program is designed to promote and maintain the orderly physical growth and development of Catawba County which serves to improve the quality of life for its citizens and provide economic development opportunities within the County.

### Outcomes

1. Provide quality customer service by expeditiously and accurately reviewing development-related requests/projects through the completion of the following:
  - a. Processing of all rezoning requests and preparation of report(s) and recommendation(s) for submittal to the Planning Board no later than 10 days prior to the scheduled public hearing. Recommendations from the Planning Board to the Board of Commissioners will be forwarded after the public hearing.
  - b. Reviewing and approving of complete non-residential site plans within 10 working days by independently reviewing plans and serving as a member of a technical review team to comprehensively review non-residential site plans and coordinate comments.
  - c. Reviewing and approving of completed applications for residential zoning permits in coordination with the Permit Center for questionable situations (i.e. floodplain, topography, setback issues) within two working days.
  - d. Reviewing of special use, variance, and nonconforming applications with submittal of staff reports to the Board of Adjustment within 45 days of receipt of complete application.
  - e. Reviewing of preliminary and final major subdivision plats and field checking final subdivisions for drainage, street layout, and other required improvements as specified in the Unified Development Ordinance within 10 working days of application date and providing reports to the Subdivision Review Board.
  - f. Reviewing of minor and family subdivision plans to ensure compliance with the Unified Development Ordinance within 10 working days.
  
2. To improve the quality of life for the citizens of the County in terms of the environment, open space, and mobility, the Planning Department will actively participate in the shaping and molding of planning projects of a local or regional nature. Examples of such projects include the Metropolitan Planning Organization, Catawba River Study Committee, Unifour Recreation and Open Space Task Force, Air Quality Committee, Lake Norman Bicycle Route Taskforce, and Public Health's Eat Smart, Move More Committee.

3. Increase affordable housing opportunities and ensure safe housing for low-to-moderate income persons by administering the following Scattered Site, Urgent Repair, and Individual Development Account Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) with assistance from the Western Piedmont Council of Governments:
  - a. Scattered Site CDBG – Close out the third allocation of the \$400,000 grant by rehabilitating six substandard units owned by low/moderate income elderly homeowners and providing emergency repairs to a minimum of 10 homes.
  - b. Urgent Repair CDBG – Close out the \$37,500 grant by providing minor repairs for seven housing units owned by low/moderate income elderly homeowners.
  - c. Individual Development Account (IDA) CDBG – Close out the \$70,000 grant by providing down payment assistance to 6-10 first-time homeowners.
4. To continue implementation of the adopted Carolina Thread Trail (CTT) Master Greenway Plan, Planning will participate in the Trail Construction School offered by the Carolina Thread Trail organization to learn about methodologies and technical skills to oversee volunteer trail construction groups.
5. Ensure the County's Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) promotes orderly growth, provides a balance between the private interest and the public good, and is easily understood by the building community by evaluating the UDO on an annual basis to determine any recommended amendments to be presented for consideration by the Board of Commissioners. The focus of the amendments for Fiscal Year 2012/13 will be promoting development and encouraging new opportunities for business creation.
6. To prepare for increased development along the Highway 150 corridor in light of planned infrastructure improvements such as the introduction of public sewer availability, Planning will complete the Highway 150 Corridor Plan by March 2013. This plan evaluates existing land use plans and regulations along the corridor and identifies ways to provide for new economic development opportunities.
7. Promote agricultural sustainability and increased farm production by:
  - a. Increasing the number of public farm tours/events from 9 to 12, and creating a new website to identify agri-tourism farm sites. These tours and events were started in June 2011, and are an excellent tool to promote public understanding of the importance of farming and locally produced foods.
  - b. Completing the Farm & Food Sustainability Plan by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of Fiscal Year 2012/13. This plan will establish strategies to promote new markets for agricultural products, encourage a new generation of farmers, and evaluate current policies/regulations to ensure compatibility.
8. To provide additional levels of public safety, reduce property loss, and minimize community disruption from the effects of flooding, Planning will apply to the

National Flood Insurance Program's Community Rating System to reduce the County's flood insurance rate class one level (currently level 10, reduce to level 9). By a reduction in one level of rate class, County citizens will receive a 5 percent reduction on their flood insurance premiums.

9. Promote the preservation and historical heritage of the County's cultural resources by partnering with the Catawba County Historical Association to lead a team of volunteers in building at least  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile of trails at the Murrays Mill Historic District.
10. To strike a balance between economic competitiveness, business opportunities, and high quality of life in Catawba County, Planning will collaborate with municipal planning staff, managers, and elected officials to develop a set of agreed upon urban growth strategies by May 2013.

## **PARKS**

### **Statement of Purpose**

Provide recreational opportunities for the citizens of Catawba County through the operation and development of parks and the preservation of open space. Environmental education and the preservation of Catawba County's unique natural heritage are the primary goals of the Parks Division. These goals will be accomplished through the execution of the Comprehensive Parks Master Plan. Implementation steps will incorporate projects, programs, goals, objectives, strategies, and opportunities as called for in the Plan. Development and expansion of facilities will arise as staffing and resources are available.

### **Outcomes**

1. Parks will ensure that Catawba County citizens have access to quality educational, recreational, and physical activities. This will be measured by maintaining Parks annual attendance at a minimum of 100,000 patrons, as evidenced by traffic counter statistics/sign-in sheets and the quarterly Parks Division report. Particular effort will be placed on volunteerism and service to educational institutions.
2. Achieve 750 volunteer labor hours in order to complete Park improvement projects, promote environmental stewardship education, reduce operating costs, and increase community involvement. In an effort to involve youth, these projects will include school and scouting groups when possible. This will be completed as evidenced by the volunteer/project log, sign-in sheets, and the quarterly Parks Division report.
3. Host educational, interpretive, and school programs with no less than 1,600 patron participants. The goal of these programs is to share environmental/interpretive information, promote physical activity, and broaden public awareness and participation in the preservation of Catawba County's unique natural heritage.