



**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING  
MONDAY, MAY 18, 2015, 7 P.M.  
ROBERT E. HIBBITTS MEETING ROOM  
1924 COURTHOUSE, NEWTON, N.C.**



The Board adopted an updated Catawba County Parks Master Plan after hearing a report. These are recommended updates to the County's 2007 Parks Master Plan, which was created in consultation with the County's Parks Advisory Committee with input from the community through five public forums and a survey. The Plan provides a guideline for future development, subject to available resources.

The mission of Catawba County Parks is to preserve Catawba County's unique and diverse natural heritage through education and conservation while providing quality passive recreation and wellness opportunities. The County's goal is to offer passive recreation opportunities to supplement active recreation programs provided by municipalities in the county.

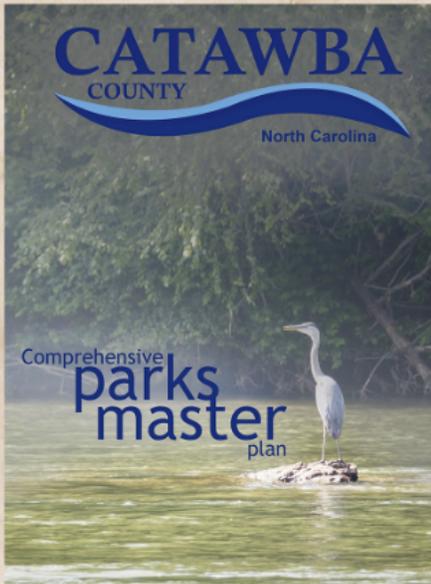
The County's Parks Division was created in 1999 with the opening of Riverbend Park, preserving 450 acres for passive recreation. Bakers Mountain Park was opened in 2002, preserving 189 acres on Catawba County's most prominent elevation and the location of the county's largest mature forest. In 2008, Catawba County renovated and began operating the 9-acre St. Stephens Park. Potential future parks include a 598-acre Mountain Creek Park, located on Lake Norman, and an approximately 50-acre Bunker Hill Covered Bridge Park at the site of the bridge maintained by the Catawba County Historical Association.

Catawba County adopted the first Parks Master Plan in December 2007. The State Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) and other grant providers require plan updates every ten years. Since 2007, the County Parks system has flourished and gained patronage. Recent events, including acquisition of the acreage for the Mountain Creek Park along with the adoption of the Carolina Thread Trail Plan, helped create the need to update the Master Plan. The next update is anticipated to be completed by 2025.

You may scroll down to see the presentation given to the Board

CONTACT: DAVE HARDIN, PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER 465-8464

*Parks help  
grow quality  
of life*



**Catawba  
County**

**Board of  
Commissioners  
Meeting**

**May 18, 2015**

**CATAWBA**  
COUNTY

North Carolina

Comprehensive  
**parks  
master**  
plan

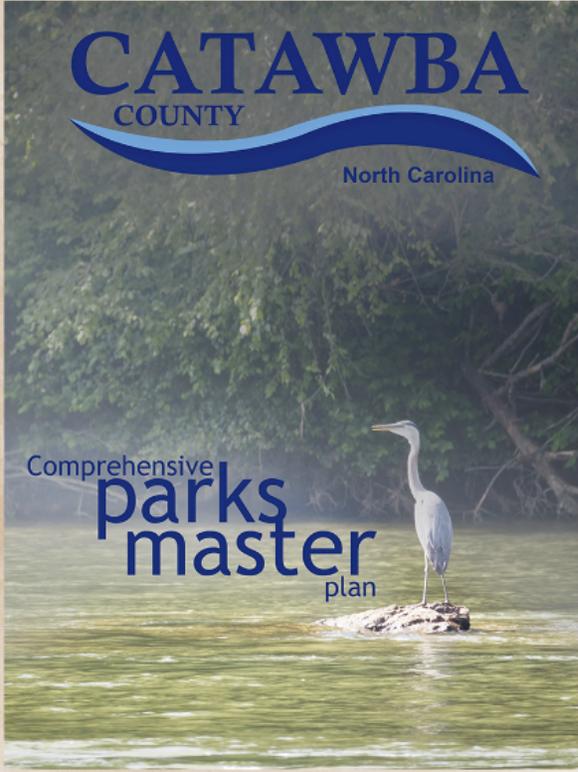


# Catawba County

## Board of Commissioners Meeting

**May 18, 2015**

*Parks help  
grow quality  
of life*



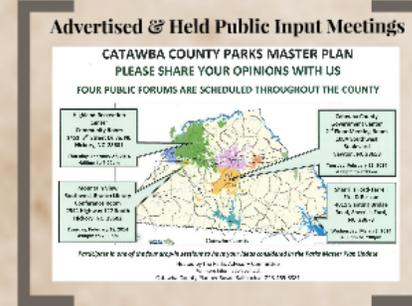
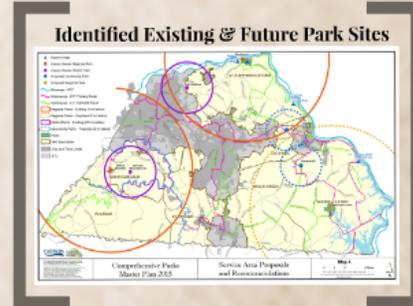
**Catawba  
County**

**Board of  
Commissioners  
Meeting**

**May 18, 2015**

# Parks

## Plan *Process*



**Distributed a Survey & Organized the Results**

**Main Reasoning for Visiting Parks**

- Outdoor Nature Experience (70%)
- Wellness/Physical Fitness/Exercise (56%)
- Wellness/Psychological Health/Relaxation (34%)

**Desired Future Events**

- Allow space for musical events hosted by others (49%)
- Wellness/physical fitness session (31%)
- Art in the Park Event (30%)

**Times People are Most Likely to Visit the Parks**

- Saturday & Sunday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (80%)
- Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (25%)
- Friday & Saturday after 5 p.m. (70%)
- Monday-Thursday after 5 p.m. (50%)

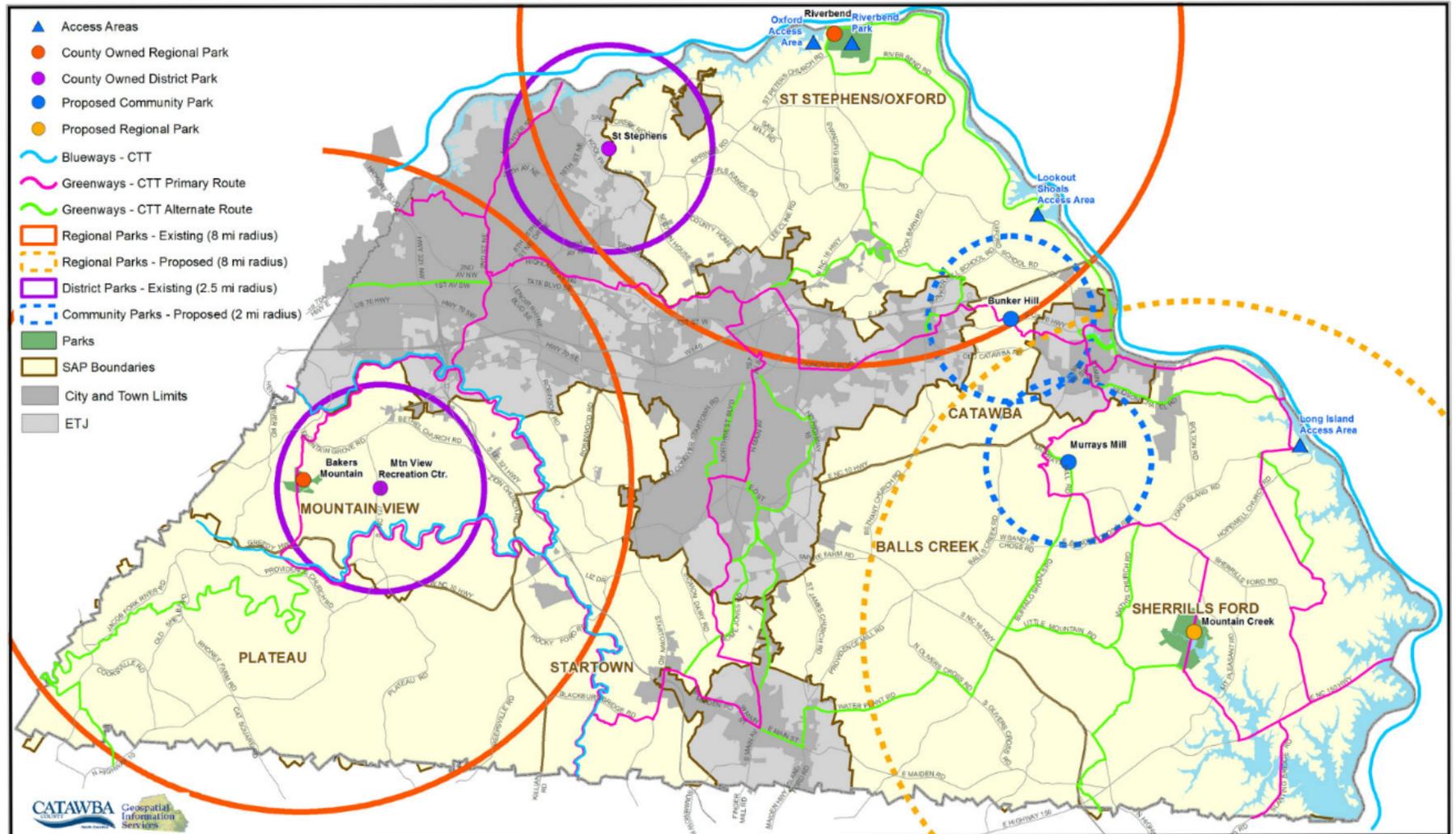
**Requested Changes to Existing Parks**

- Increase days/hours of operation (56%)
- Enhanced/expanded trails (49%)
- Expanded picnic/sitting areas (33%)

**Development of Future Parks**

- Bunker Hill Covered Bridge (43%)
- Mountain Creek (33%)
- Murray's Mill (24%)

# Identified Existing & Future Park Sites



CATAWBA Geospatial Information SERVICES

This map product was prepared from the Catawba County, NC, Geographic Information System. Catawba County has made substantial efforts to ensure the accuracy of locations and labeling information contained on this map. Catawba County promotes and recommends the independent verification of any data involved on this map product by the user. The County of Catawba, its employees and agents disclaim, and shall not be held liable for any and all damages, loss or liability, whether direct, indirect or consequential which arises or may arise from this map product or the use thereof by any person or entity.

Comprehensive Parks Master Plan 2015

Service Area Proposals and Recommendations

Map 4

0 1 2 4 Miles

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Date Saved: 12/12/15



# Riverbend Park



*450 acres*

- Natural surface trails
- Paved trails (future)
- Boat, canoe, kayak access
- Dog park
- Primitive camping (future)

# Bakers Mountain Park

- Trail related: natural surface trails, paved trails, and trail improvement
- More educational programming
- Primitive camping (future)
- Community meeting room (future)



*189 acres*

# St. Stephens Park

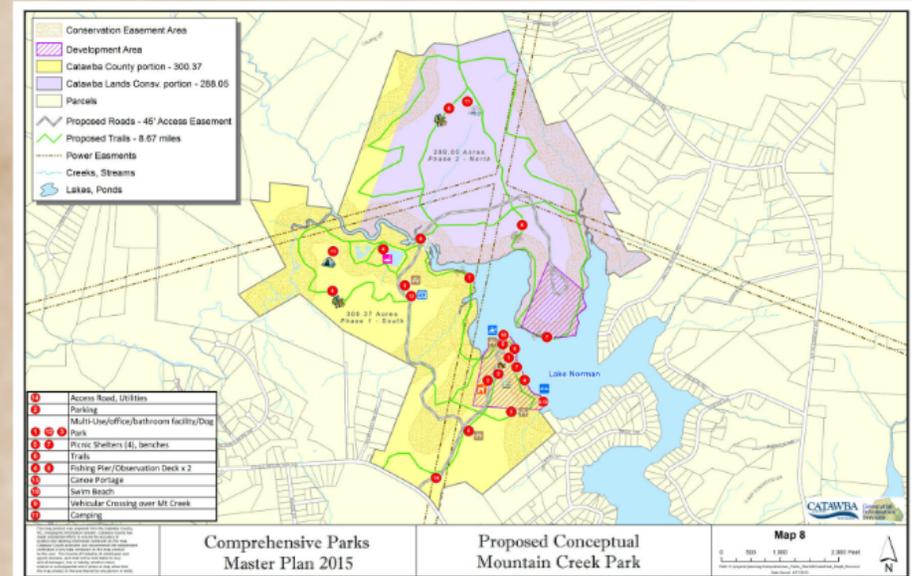
- Dog park
- Natural surface trails
- Small dog park (future)
- Paved trails (future)



*9 acres*

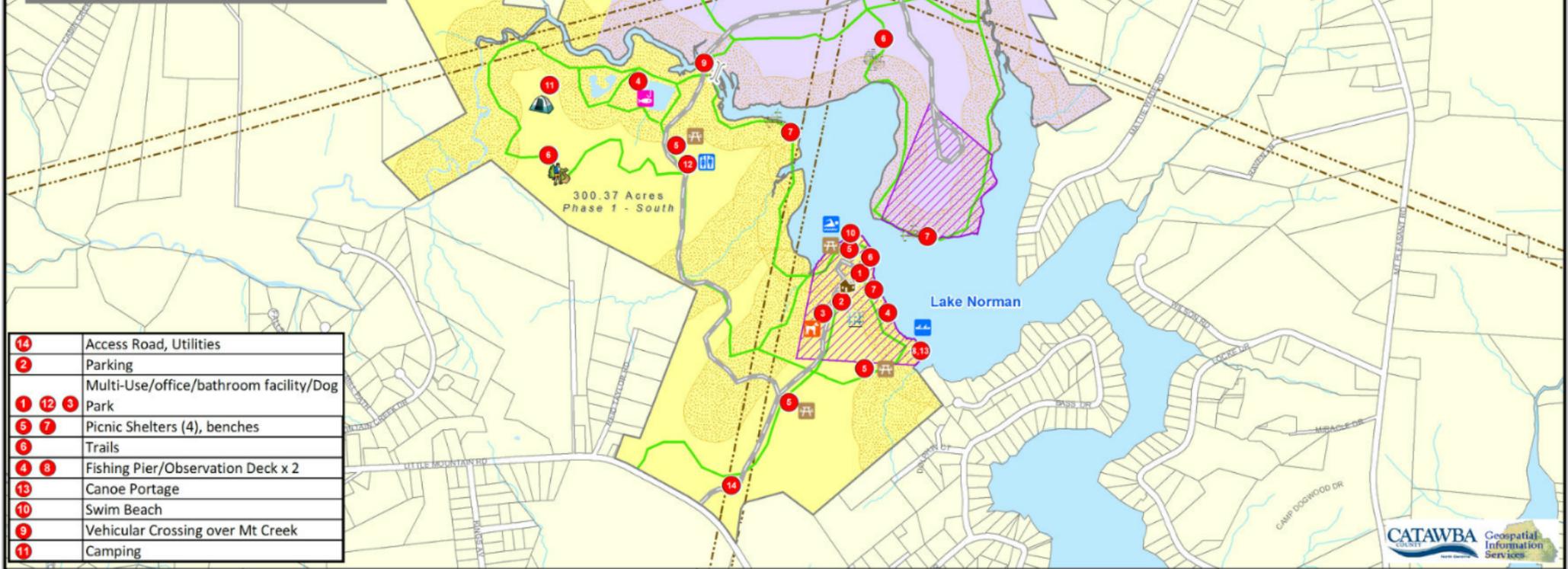
# Mountain Creek Park (Future)

- Water related amenities: boat/canoe/kayak access, fishing
- Trails: natural surface, paved, and mountain biking
- Picnic tables and shelters
- Primitive camping, dog park, and equestrian trails



*589 acres*

-  Conservation Easement Area
-  Development Area
-  Catawba County portion - 300.37
-  Catawba Lands Conserv. portion - 288.05
-  Parcels
-  Proposed Roads - 45' Access Easement
-  Proposed Trails - 8.67 miles
-  Power Easements
-  Creeks, Streams
-  Lakes, Ponds



<b>14</b>	Access Road, Utilities
<b>2</b>	Parking
<b>1 12 3</b>	Multi-Use/office/bathroom facility/Dog Park
<b>5 7</b>	Picnic Shelters (4), benches
<b>6</b>	Trails
<b>4 8</b>	Fishing Pier/Observation Deck x 2
<b>13</b>	Canoe Portage
<b>10</b>	Swim Beach
<b>9</b>	Vehicular Crossing over Mt Creek
<b>11</b>	Camping

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## Comprehensive Parks Master Plan 2015

## Proposed Conceptual Mountain Creek Park

**Map 8**

0    500    1,000    2,000 Feet

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# 589 acres

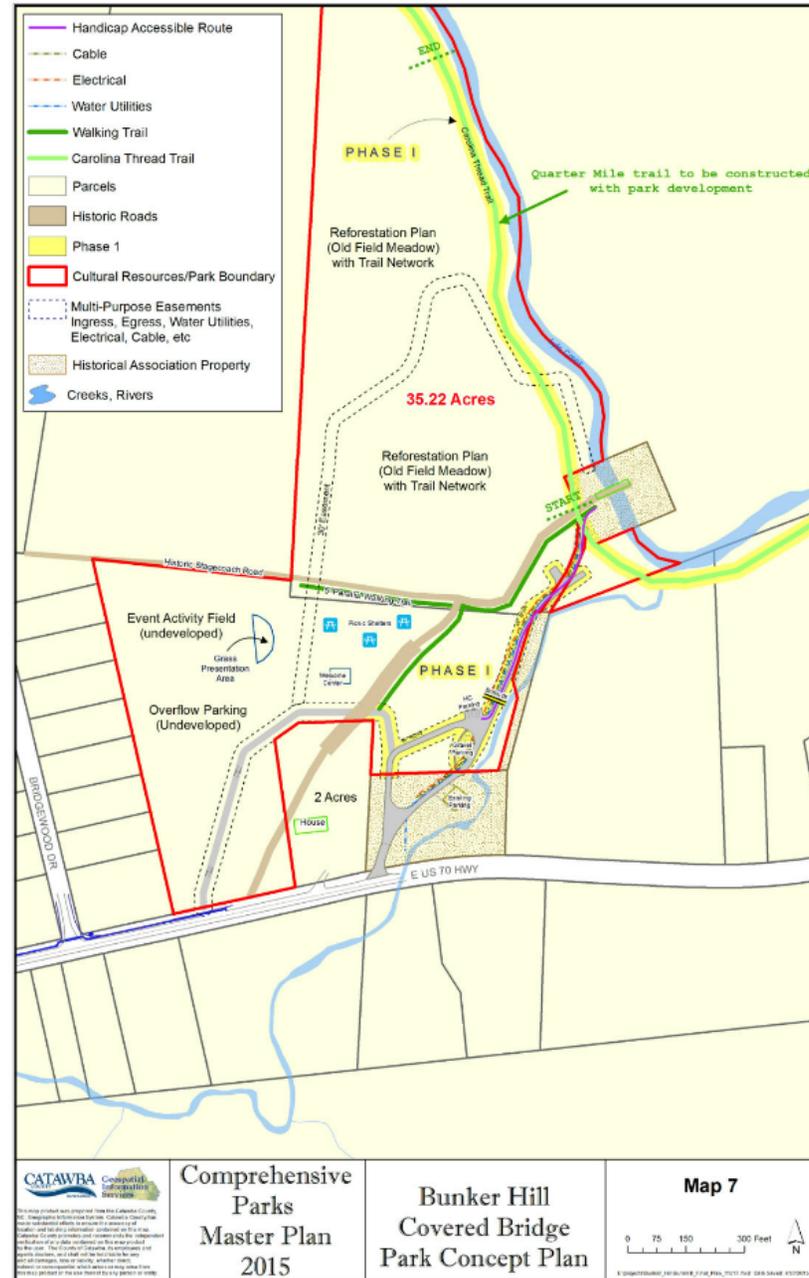
# Historical Association-Bunker Hill Covered Bridge (Future)



*45 acres*

- Trails: paved trails, and natural surface trails
- Educational programs/guided tours/historical interpretation
- Community meeting/ education center and interpretative signage
- Restrooms, picnic facilities, and an outdoor amphitheater

# Bunker Hill Site Plan



Comprehensive  
Parks  
Master Plan  
2015

Bunker Hill  
Covered Bridge  
Park Concept Plan

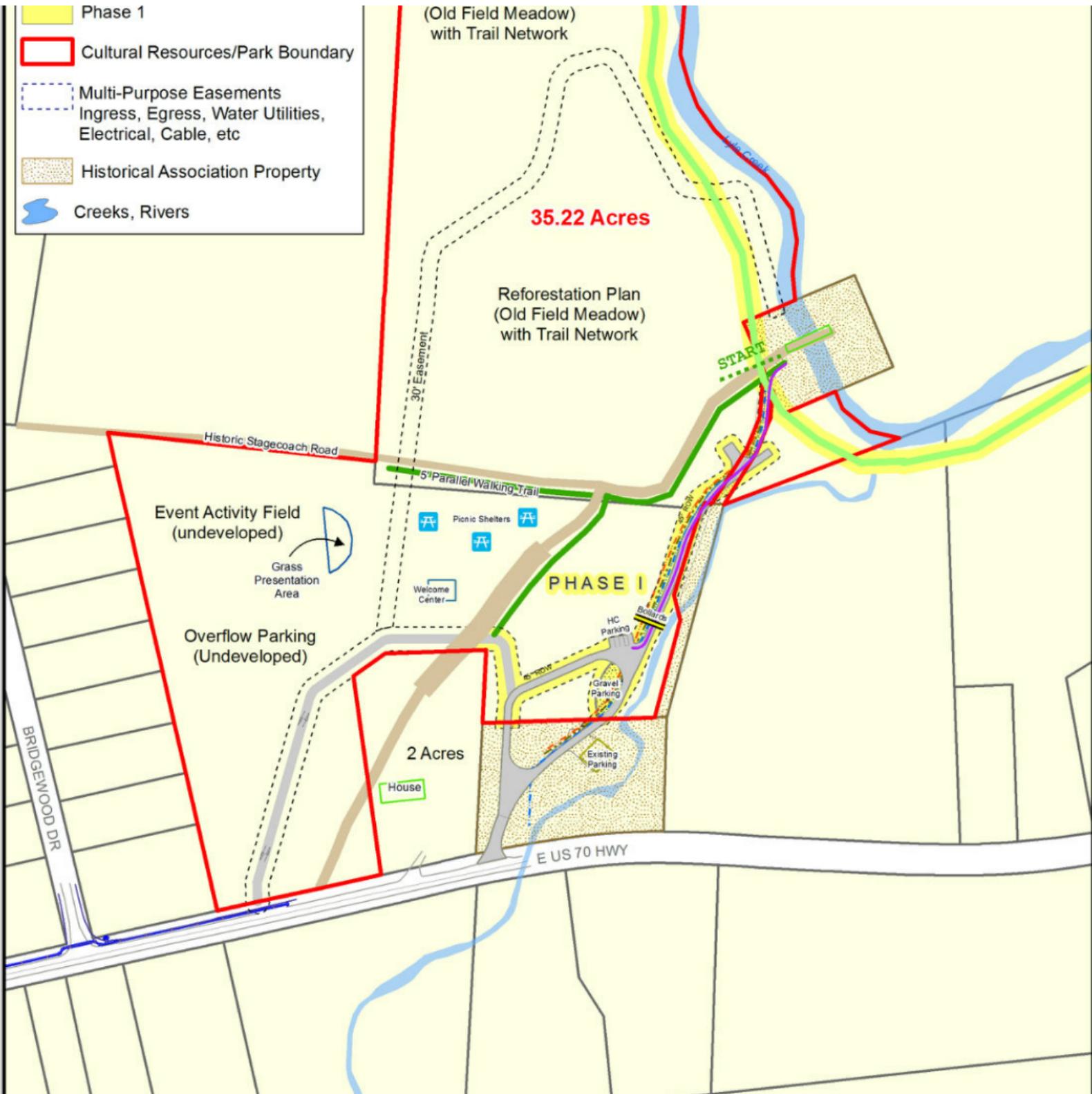
Map 7

0 75 150 300 Feet

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- Phase 1
- Cultural Resources/Park Boundary
- Multi-Purpose Easements  
Ingress, Egress, Water Utilities,  
Electrical, Cable, etc
- Historical Association Property
- Creeks, Rivers



# Historical Association- Murray's Mill (Future)



- Guided tours/historical interpretation
- Trails: paved trails and natural surface trails
- Community garden and picnic shelters

# Economic

- ***Increased budget/grant dollars-*** For every \$1 appropriated in the national parks budget, \$4 is generated for local economies
- ***Attracting top talent-*** High-tech companies must demonstrate high recreational opportunities to enhance quality of life to prospective employees.
- ***Tax benefit-*** commonly referred to as "proximate value", is the percent of increase of private housing or business as a result of proximity to park land.

# Health



*Riverbend Park*

- ***Access to outdoor space-*** reduces obesity, diabetes, cancer, etc.
- ***Passive park-usage-*** reduces stress, depression, hypertension, and improves cognitive function

# Tourism

- ***Increased stays-*** the existence of trails near lodging places increases occupancy
- ***Bicycle/Pedestrian-Based Tourism and Greenways-*** the number of people who feel comfortable walking or riding bicycles is a measure of quality of life in that area



*Baker's Mountain Park*

# Environmental

- **Wildlife habitat-** open space provides habitats for a wide variety of species
- **Reduced pollution-** the ability to travel by trail reduces the air pollution caused by automobiles
- **Protection of waterways-** open space filters pollutants and eroded soil from run-off



*St. Stephens Park*

# Educational



*Baker's Mountain Park*

- ***Additional preservation funding-*** people are drawn to adjacent historic and cultural sites
- ***Outdoor Classrooms-*** affords students the full "hands-on" experience with nature
- ***Increased Accessibility-*** trails link sites together making it easier for students to travel from site to site

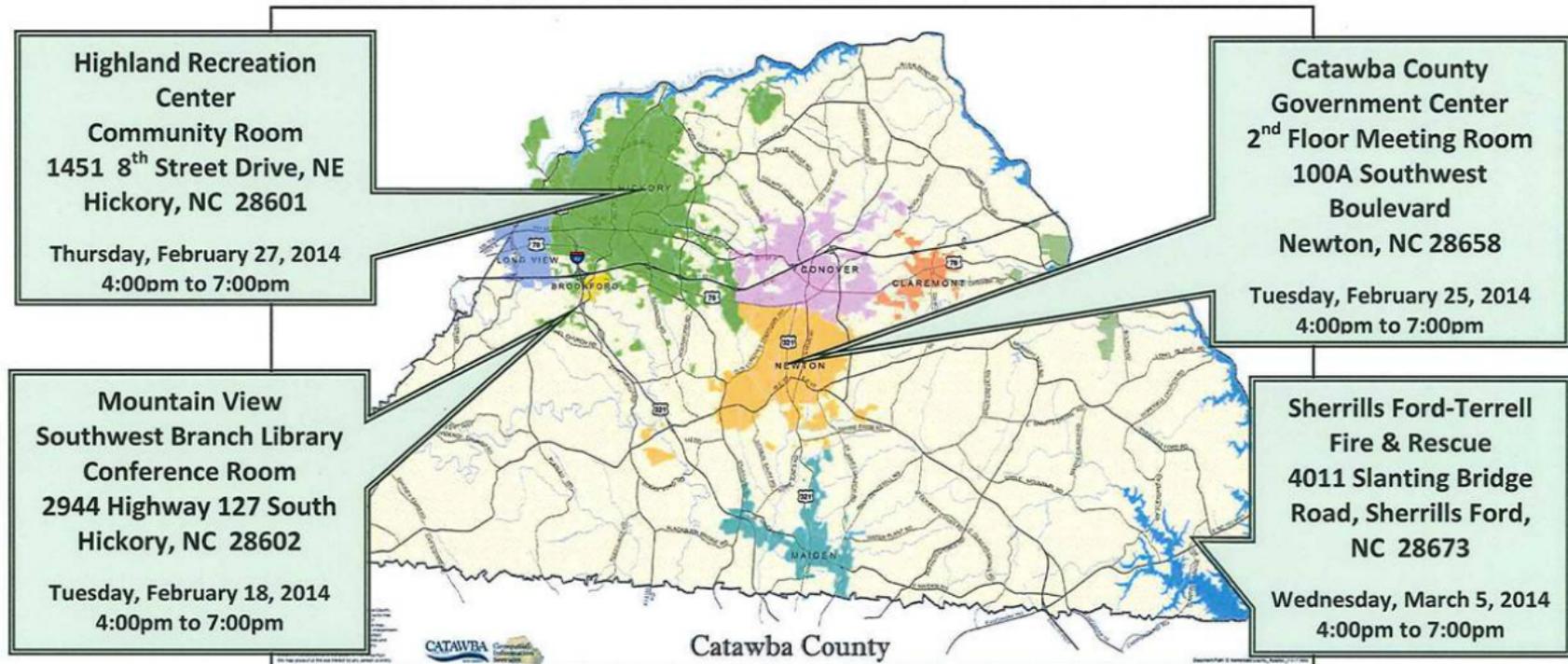
# Key Changes from the 2007 Plan

- Less data-driven
- Population and demographic data updated
- Additions to Parks system
- Formalized an Advisory Board
- Site plan revisions
- Updated maps
- **More public participation**

# Advertised & Held Public Input Meetings

## CATAWBA COUNTY PARKS MASTER PLAN PLEASE SHARE YOUR OPINIONS WITH US

FOUR PUBLIC FORUMS ARE SCHEDULED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY



*Participate in one of the four drop-in sessions to have your ideas considered in the Parks Master Plan Update*

Hosted by the Parks Advisory Committee

For more information contact

Catawba County Planner Susan Ballbach at 828-465-8381

# Distributed a Survey & Organized the Results

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# Plan Recommendations Summary

- Open parks on a **six-day a week** schedule
- **Open Historical Association-Bunker Hill Covered Bridge Park**
- **Open Mountain Creek Park** in the **southeast area** of the County
- Add **more trails** & maintain existing trails
- **Expand** picnic and sitting areas
- Add **interpretative signage**
- Continue to **propose & implement** concepts to help the park system **provide health, educational, & economic benefits**
- **Allow events** featuring music, astronomy, art & physical fitness
- Continue to **expand partnerships**, particularly with the schools
- **Develop** a consistent **guided environmental & historical education program**
- Add a community **meeting/educational room** at **Bakers Mountain**

# Staff Priorities

CATEGORY-OPERATIONS				
ITEM	TOPIC	TIMEFRAME	PRIORITY	COST
1.	Operating Hours and Staffing	Anticipated start-up 7-1-15	High	\$90,500 ± (Additional Cost to operate 3 parks 6-days. Depending on funding availability)
2.	Update/Complete Beneficial Park Planning related Documents.	Long Term 3 Years and Beyond	Medium	No additional cost anticipated—if item #1 under Category-Operations is approved effective 7-1-15.
3.	Facility and Program Accessibility (Mountain View Recreation Center)	Short Term 6 to 18 Months	Medium	No additional cost anticipated.
		Long Term 3 Years and Beyond	Medium	To be determined based on future cost estimates scheduled within the CIP.

CATEGORY - PROGRAMMING				
ITEM	TOPIC	TIMEFRAME	PRIORITY	COST
1.	Education	Ongoing	High	No additional cost anticipated—if item #1 under Category-Operations is approved effective 7-1-15.
2.	Birding Activities	Ongoing	Low	No additional cost anticipated—if item #1 under Category-Operations is approved effective 7-1-15.

CATEGORY - OUTREACH				
ITEM	TOPIC	TIMEFRAME	PRIORITY	COST
1.	Stewardship/Volunteerism Programs	Ongoing	Medium	No additional cost anticipated—if item #1 under Category-Operations is approved effective 7-1-15.
2.	Donations	Ongoing	Medium	No additional cost anticipated.
3.	Expand Parks Marketing and Communications Effort	Mid Term 18 to 36 Months	Medium	No additional cost anticipated—if item #1 under Category-Operations is approved effective 7-1-15.
4.	Connectivity through Greenways, Blueways, Bike Paths, and Sidewalks	Ongoing	Medium	No additional cost anticipated—if item #1 under Category-Operations is approved effective 7-1-15.
5.	Partnerships & Intergovernmental Cooperation	Ongoing	Low	No additional cost anticipated—if item #1 under Category-Operations is approved effective 7-1-15.

CATEGORY – CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS				
ITEM	TOPIC	TIMEFRAME	PRIORITY	COST
1.	Riverbend Park	Short Term 6 to 18 Months to Long Term 3 Years and Beyond 18 to 36 Months	High	\$218,040 ± (Dependent on funding availability)
2.	Bakers Mountain Park	Mid Term 18 to 36 Months to Long Term 3 Years and Beyond	High	\$65,950 ± (Dependent on funding availability)
3.	Historical Association Bunker Hill Covered Bridge Park and Greenway (Future)	Mid Term 18 to 36 Months to Long Term 3 Years and Beyond	High	\$1,100,000 ± 2014 Estimates (Dependent upon future funding availability)

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ITEM	TOPIC	TIMEFRAME	PRIORITY	COST
4.	Mountain Creek Park (Future)	Long Term 3 Years and Beyond	High	\$1,700,000 ± 2014 Estimates (Dependent upon future funding availability)
5.	Contiguous Property Acquisition	Ongoing	Medium	Cannot be pre-determined—will be reflected based upon future offers and negotiations also subject to availability of funds.
6.	Green Buildings	Long Term 3 Years and Beyond	Medium	Costs to be determined in future CIP schedule—subject to availability of funds.
7.	St. Stephens Community Park	Long Term 3 Years and Beyond	Low	No additional cost anticipated—within the next five years.
8.	Murray's Mill (Future)	Long Term 3 Years and Beyond	Low	Costs to be determined in future CIP schedule (grant dependent). Subject to availability of funds.

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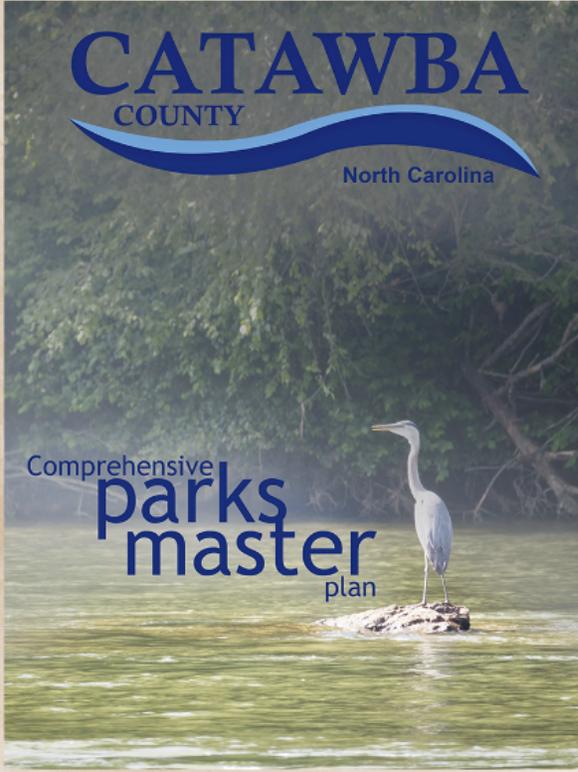
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# Recommendation

- Catawba County Parks Advisory Committee recommended the Plan on October 8, 2014
- Planning Board recommended the Plan to the Board of Commissioners on October 27, 2014
- Board of Commissioners consider adoption of the Parks Master Plan on May 18, 2015

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County**

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