



# SPENCER

## CREATING OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMIES

STRATEGIC PLAN

2023-2028



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# Acknowledgements

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The REDD announced the technical assistance program offering Outdoor Recreation Economy Strategic Planning and Asset Development services in late 2022. Communities from across the state applied to engage with strategic planning services and 34 local governments were accepted to participate. Main Street & Rural Planning (MS&RP) staff, who is responsible for facilitating strategic economic development planning and implementation services, worked with local government staff to communicate the goals of the program, identify local opportunities, and assemble a planning work group.

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**Plan Adoption**

Town of Spencer Board of Aldermen-November  
14th, 2023

# Executive Summary

Through CORE, the Town of Spencer collaborated with the N.C. Department of Commerce, Rural Economic Development Division staff members and local stakeholders through a strategic planning process to identify and develop outdoor recreation assets that present economic growth opportunities. Strategy development focused on leveraging outdoor recreation assets to increase tourism, encourage small business development, enhance quality of life for residents, plan for outdoor recreation asset and infrastructure development, and position communities to grow and attract outdoor gear manufacturing industries. The planning process was tailored to meet the specific needs, goals, and opportunities that local stakeholders identified.

The plan proposes strategies, goals, objectives, and actions that communities can take to increase economic vitality by leveraging outdoor recreation. For the purposes of this strategic planning program outdoor recreation is defined as all recreational activities undertaken for leisure that occur outdoors, with an emphasis on those activities that involve some level of intentional physical exertion and occur in nature-based environments. Furthermore, other community assets and economic institutions that benefit from or complement the outdoor recreation economy are addressed in the plan.

The plan makes a total of 74 recommendations for objectives and actions under 3 priority areas. These priority areas, identified by the local work group, include:

1. **Outdoor Infrastructure:** *Improve and take advantage of existing and future tourism and recreation amenities to enhance quality of life for everyone.*
2. **Communication & Activation:** *Promote and educate residents and visitors about available and potential recreation amenities and environmental stewardship.*
3. **Economic Impacts & Business Support:** *Utilize the community's outdoor assets to improve the downtown, local and regional economies.*

These recommendations should serve as guideposts for the Town of Spencer as it considers future development efforts and should work in collaboration with other planning efforts undertaken by the county and related jurisdictions.

# Background

There is a long tradition of outdoor recreation in North Carolina. From the mountains to the coast and everywhere in between there are incredible landscapes and unique places to pursue a wide variety of outdoor recreation activities. Participation in these activities generates a large economic impact. In recent years statistics show that participation in outdoor recreation is increasing, particularly in the wake of COVID-19.

Continued growth in participation leads to the opportunity for the increased economic impact of outdoor recreation, particularly in rural areas where many of the state's outdoor recreation assets are located. Also, there is great potential to expose and engage people that have historically not participated in outdoor recreation activities at the same rate as others. It is important for all individuals to have the opportunity and access to enjoy recreational pursuits, and to have an opportunity to benefit economically from outdoor recreation. These factors, combined with other on-going outdoor recreation initiatives across the state, make it an ideal time to think critically about how this sector can continue to be leveraged to benefit local economies.

## Economic Impact

Outdoor recreation activity and associated expenditures generate a large economic impact. This is a broad economic sector that comprises a diverse range of industries including manufacturing, retail, arts, entertainment, and recreation, as well as many supporting activities such as construction, travel and tourism, accommodation and food service, and many more.

According to the U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis' Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account, nationwide, in 2021, the outdoor recreation economy represented \$454.0 billion in current-dollar gross domestic product (GDP), or 1.9 percent of the United States' total GDP. The outdoor recreation sector of the economy is growing at a faster rate than the overall economy. "Inflation-adjusted ("real") GDP for the outdoor recreation economy increased 18.9 percent in 2021, compared with a 5.9 percent increase for the overall U.S. economy, reflecting a rebound in outdoor recreation after the decrease of 21.6 percent in 2020. Real gross output for the outdoor recreation economy increased 21.7 percent, while outdoor recreation compensation increased 16.2 percent and employment increased 13.1 percent." Employment in the outdoor recreation industry increased in all 50 states during 2021.

At the state level, outdoor recreation contributed \$11.8 billion in total value-added economic impact to North Carolina's GDP. North Carolina ranked as the 11th highest state in "Value-Added Outdoor Recreation in Total outdoor recreation activities" in 2021. This included employment for over 130,000 individuals that resulted in over \$5.9 billion in total compensation. Employment in key industries within the outdoor recreation sector includes over 8,000 in

manufacturing, 44,000 in retail, 27,000 in accommodation and food service, and over 23,000 in arts, entertainment, and recreation.<sup>1</sup>

### **Outdoor Recreation Participation**

According to the 2022 Outdoor Industry Association ‘Outdoor Participation Trends Report’, “outdoor participation continues to grow at record levels. More than half (54%) of Americans ages 6 and over participated in at least one outdoor activity in 2021, and the outdoor recreation participant base grew 2.2% in 2021 to 164.2M participants. This growing number of outdoor participants, however, did not fundamentally alter long-term declines in high frequency or ‘core’ outdoor participation.”<sup>2</sup>

Studies show that approximately 56% of North Carolinians participate in some form of outdoor recreation each year.<sup>3</sup> This includes more than 22.8 million visitors to North Carolina state parks in 2021 — three million more than any other year on record. Many parks, national forests, and other public recreation areas report increased visitation as well. These numbers represent a solid base of individuals participating in outdoor recreation and contributing to associated economic activity. But there is still room to engage more individuals and continue to increase participation in outdoor recreation, particularly among populations that have not historically participated in outdoor recreation at levels comparable to others. Also, people increasingly want outdoor recreation opportunities convenient to where they live so they can participate on a regular basis without the need to travel long distances.<sup>4 5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis. Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account, U.S. and States, 2021. <https://www.bea.gov/news/2022/outdoor-recreation-satellite-account-us-and-states-2021>

<sup>2</sup> Outdoor Industry Association. 2022 Outdoor Participation Trends Report. <https://outdoorindustry.org/resource/2022-outdoor-participation-trends-report/>

<sup>3</sup> The Citizen-Times. North Carolina outdoor recreation is a \$28 billion industry, poised for further growth. October 11th, 2019. <https://www.citizen-times.com/story/news/2019/10/11/outdoor-economy-conference-asheville-highlights-28-billion-industry/3923846002/>

<sup>4</sup> Headwaters Economics. Recreation Counties Attracting New Residents and Higher Incomes. <https://headwaterseconomics.org/economic-development/trends-performance/recreation-counties-attract/>

<sup>5</sup> Outdoor Foundation. 2022 Outdoor Participation Trends Report. <https://outdoorindustry.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/2022-Outdoor-Participation-Trends-Report.pdf>

# Existing Plans Review

In an effort to complement and build upon subsequent community planning efforts, staff assembled and reviewed other relevant plans and documents. This review provides valuable insight and helps avoid duplication or contradictions of past planning proposals. The following documents were reviewed and considered during the CORE planning process.

## Land Use Plan

In August of 2008, the Board of Aldermen adopted the Town of Spencer, North Carolina Land Use Plan 2025. Per suggestions in that plan and requirements of NCGS 160D, in 2022 the Town reviewed and updated that plan. This update process was done by Town staff and the Town’s Planning Board. Recognizing new trends, the planning effort identified specific areas, corridors, and even individual properties that deserve additional planning scrutiny. As a part of the update, these areas are defined as amendments to Section 5 of the original plan.

## Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan

The Town of Spencer adopted a Parks & Recreation Master Plan in September 2014. Even though system-wide parks & recreation master plans are typically in place for ten years, the Town felt that after only seven years an update to the plan would be beneficial on many fronts and adopted an update in April of 2022. This update is to be used in conjunction with the 2014-2024 Town of Spencer Parks & Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan. As part of the update, it is important to understand what elements of the current park system have been improved or expanded upon because of the plan.

## Bike and Pedestrian Plan

In 2014, the Towns of Spencer and East Spencer received a Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant from the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT). The purpose of the Plan is to evaluate, assess, and make recommendations regarding bicycle and pedestrian needs for the Towns of Spencer and East Spencer for 2015 – 2025. This plan establishes clear, logical, and precise guidelines that can be used for the future development and growth of Spencer and East Spencer’s Bicycle and Pedestrian System. Any good investment provides a beneficial return. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities provide a great return on the investment required to implement if properly planned, built, and maintained. Key benefits include connectivity, health, economic and environmental benefits.



## Setting

The Town of Spencer, population 3,308, is in Rowan County, between Salisbury and the Yadkin River. Located in the heart of the Piedmont and ideally situated just off I-85, Spencer is about an hour's drive from Charlotte, Greensboro, and Winston-Salem. The town was founded in 1905 and named after Samuel Spencer, the first president of the Southern Railway, who is credited with establishing the railroad's mechanical shops in the 1890s. The facility is now home to the North Carolina Transportation Museum which attracts approximately 160,000 visitors annually.

The town boasts a variety of outdoor assets including Stanback Forest, various existing greenways and trails, the Yadkin River district, and plans for an urban greenway that will provide pedestrian transportation routes that will promote alternative methods thorough creation of a network of sidewalks, pathways, and greenways.

Future construction plans include a downtown park, an Environmental Arts Center located within Stanback Forest, historic 8<sup>th</sup> Street ballpark restoration, kayak/boat launch on the Yadkin River, and future park office/maintenance facility.

# Planning Process

Under the REDD, MS&RP Center staff facilitates the CORE strategic planning process with participation from the local government and an established local work group. This work group is comprised of individuals who have a vested interest in leveraging outdoor recreation to enhance economic development. The planning process employs established planning methods including presenting economic and associated data, asset mapping, economic driver identification, SWOT analysis, business questionnaires, local work group discussions, and more. The planning process was tailored to meet the specific needs, goals, and opportunities that local stakeholders identified.

## Situational Analysis

Prior to beginning the planning process, MS&RP Center staff identified and reviewed other local and regional planning projects including the 2008-2025 Land Use Plan, 2014 Bike and Pedestrian Plan, and 2014 Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan with 2022 updates. Spencer staff also prepared a 2023 document “The Big Green Deal” which outlines a list of projects the town has identified that will improve the local recreational economy moving forward. Additionally, staff reviewed demographic and market data sources available to NC Commerce that were used to influence the final recommendations of this report.

## Local Work Group Establishment and Involvement

Prior to the first project meeting, the Spencer CORE work group was asked to complete the Primary Planning Group Initial Questionnaire. This survey was designed by the NC MS&RP Center team to identify the priorities and opinions of the local work group. Results of the survey were shared at the first meeting to encourage and guide the initial discussion.

Beginning in May 2023, NC MS&RP Center staff met with the Spencer CORE work group for a series of discussion sessions which included topics on local outdoor recreation assets and experiences, small business and entrepreneurship, and the outdoor industry. The work group was made up of individuals representing multiple departments within the Town of Spencer government, other governmental parks and recreation departments, the NC Transportation Museum, Spencer outdoor enthusiasts, Spencer festival organizers, outdoor recreation business entrepreneurs, and foundations.

A full outline of the work group meetings can be seen in the table below.

Meeting Date	Topic(s)
May 11, 2023	Meeting #1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of the CORE process</li> <li>• Defining Outdoor Recreation and the OR Economy</li> <li>• Review of Work Group Survey</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update on Current Town of Spencer Projects</li> </ul>
June 15, 2023	Meeting #2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing an Itinerary</li> <li>• Review of Community Survey</li> <li>• Asset Identification Exercise</li> </ul>
July 13, 2023	Meeting #3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vision/Economic Positioning Statement Discussion</li> <li>• Summary of Workgroup and Citizen Surveys</li> <li>• Developing Goals, Objectives, and Actions for Work Plan</li> <li>• Tour of Key Sites</li> </ul>
August 17, 2023	Meeting #4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of Objectives and Actions for the Work Plan</li> <li>• Identifying Potential Projects</li> <li>• Review of Draft Vision Statement</li> </ul>
September 14, 2023	Meeting #5: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Final Draft of Vision Statement</li> <li>• Review Asset Map</li> <li>• Review Final Draft of Goals, Objectives, and Actions</li> </ul>

### Asset Mapping

During the initial work group meeting, staff facilitated an asset mapping exercise to identify key outdoor recreation and related business assets in the community. Following the exercise, MS&RP Center GIS staff created a map of these assets to assist in the planning process. The maps were then shared with the work group and refined throughout the process to ensure accuracy and to provide a geographic visualization of potential project areas.

This map can be found in the appendices of this document.

### Public Engagement

A community-wide survey was conducted as a part of the planning process to gauge community interest in outdoor recreation, opinions of existing and potential outdoor and business assets, economic impacts of outdoor recreation, and local opinions of tourism and community development. The results of this survey were summarized and shared with the local work group at their second meeting and influenced the recommendations in this plan.

A summary of both the community and work group survey can be found in the appendices of this document.

### Vision Statement Development

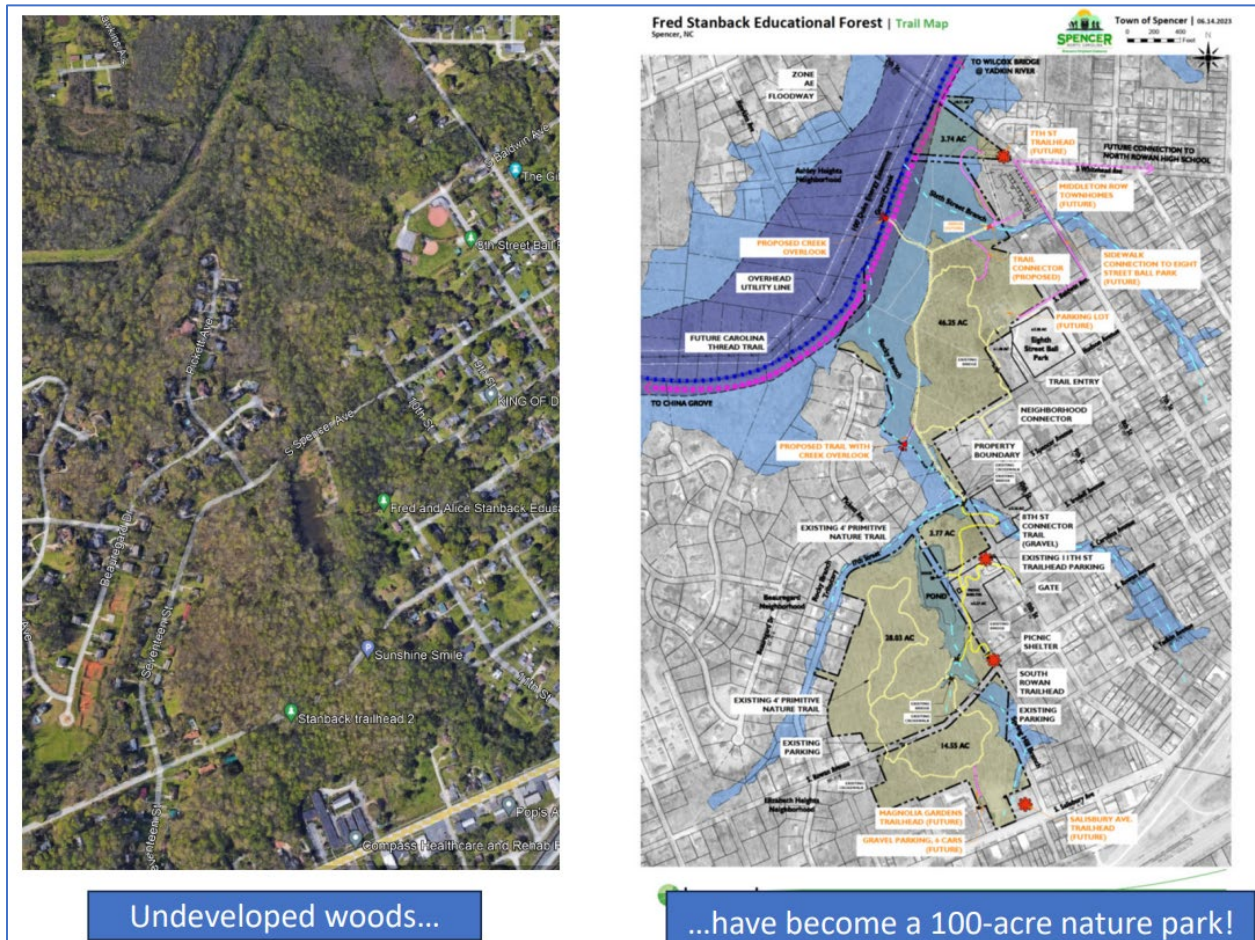
At the second meeting, the local work group was tasked with identifying an overarching vision for this project that would then help to define the goals, objectives, and actions of the final

work plan. The group shared their ideas which were later crafted into a formal statement and shared for additional feedback at later meetings. The final Vision Statement agreed upon by the work group is shared later in this document.

### CORE Strategic Plan Development & Adoption

Building on the Vision Statement, the work group identified three primary focus areas with associated goals, objectives, and actions to be taken to continue moving the outdoor economy in the Town of Spencer forward.

A draft of this document was produced in October 2023 and shared with Spencer staff and work group members for review and comment. Following review, the plan was presented to the Spencer Board of Aldermen on November 9, 2023.



# Plan Implementation, Monitoring, and Evaluation

The Town of Spencer will be responsible for monitoring, evaluation, and reporting accomplishments on the objectives of this plan to the Rural Economic Development Division.

## Plan Implementation

Maintaining a dedicated group to follow through after the planning process to begin addressing goals and objectives outlined in this plan is critical to attaining the potential economic impact of these strategies. This could be the same work group that helped develop this plan, or another similar group that is representative of the community and can advance the goals of this plan. The sustained presence of such a group builds social capital within the group that improves their ability to work together and effectively address common goals.

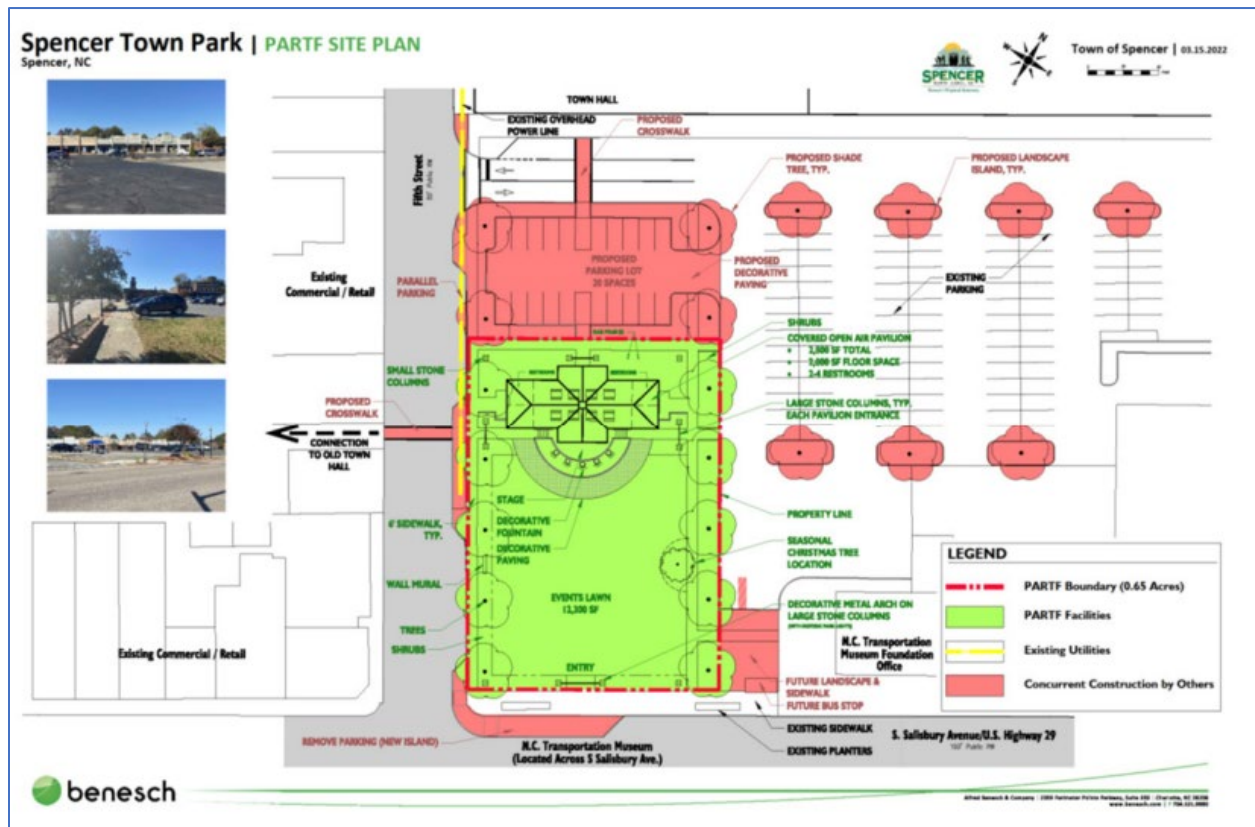
Furthermore, a dedicated group ensures continuity from planning stage through implementation, provides accountability to ensure that objectives are being met, and allows the community to react and respond quickly when an opportunity is presented. But this group should not be the sole entity responsible for implementing all the goals of the plan. Instead, the group should function as a convener and point of contact to connect to other individuals, organizations, and resources to help the broader community achieve these goals. Maintaining a regular meeting schedule will also help increase the effectiveness of the group, and the overall plan.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

Regular monitoring and evaluation to review progress on the goals, objectives, and action steps in this plan, via regular review sessions with the Strategic Planning team and other community stakeholders, is critical to ensuring it remains a viable, living document. REDD staff will periodically communicate and provide assistance as needed to help advance the goals and document the outcomes of the plan.

# Vision Statement

*Located in the heart of the Piedmont, about an hour's drive from Charlotte, Greensboro, and Winston Salem, and cradled by the beautiful Yadkin River, Spencer will continue to grow its economic base by expanding and supporting the local outdoor recreational economy. Emphasizing recreational experiences for all levels of skill, fitness, and ability, Spencer will combine riverfront development, the NC Transportation Museum, Stanback Forest and other amenities to become the center of a region filled with social engagement, family entertainment, healthy lifestyle options, environmental stewardship, and togetherness.*



# Analysis & Recommendations

## Outdoor Infrastructure

**Goal 1: Improve and take advantage of existing and future tourism and recreation amenities to enhance quality of life for everyone.**

**Objective 1.1:** Continue improvements and construction at Stanback Forest including the Carter property.

Action 1.1.1: Prioritize trailhead and trail connector construction sites.

Action 1.1.2: Conduct a feasibility study for an Environmental Art Center and explore construction and financing options.

Action 1.1.3: Develop plans for future park office and maintenance facility.

**Objective 1.2:** Continue advocating for the River Front Development project to contain diverse uses, including outdoor recreation which will contribute to a vibrant and active space.

Action 1.2.1: Create a committee/task force to work with town leadership to explore ideas of what the area should look like and best uses for the community in general.

Action 1.2.2: Develop small area plan/master plan and incorporate best practices from similar redevelopment projects.

Action 1.2.3: Explore options, including a public university or other professional organization, for design renderings/schematics which incorporate community input on best possible uses and potential design for this redevelopment area.

**Objective 1.3:** Develop Grants Creek Blueway.

Action 1.3.1: Develop partnership with NCWRC for additional activities/uses on game lands – for example – primitive camping.

Action 1.3.2: Develop a partnership with Eagle Creek (formerly Cube Hydro) and Three Rivers Land Trust for property.

**Objective 1.4:** Enhance the South Yadkin River Trail.

Action 1.4.1: Develop a kayak/boat launch on the Rowan side of the Yadkin River.

Action 1.4.2: Prioritize ADA accessibility at new access points and existing parks facilities.

Action 1.4.3: Work with partners to strengthen the connection between the Yadkin River Park to the Yadkin River State Trail.

**Objective 1.5:** Continue to pursue the objectives laid out in the Town of Spencer Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master plan.

Action 1.5.1: Incorporate funds into Town of Spencer annual operating budget and capital improvement plan for the purpose of completing objectives in Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan.

Action 1.5.2: Town of Spencer staff and advisory board shall work with Board of Aldermen to prioritize objectives of comprehensive master plan.

**Objective 1.6:** Complete the downtown Spencer Park project and incorporate it into downtown revitalization strategy.

Action 1.6.1: Utilize new park for downtown special events and activities year around.

Action 1.6.2: Incorporate Main Street program principles into downtown revitalization efforts.

Action 1.6.3: Downtown Spencer should be incorporated in future planning of greenway connections and routes. Various points of interest, including downtown, should be noted on all future signage along greenway, and bicycle and pedestrian routes.

**Objective 1.7:** Prioritize connectivity of outdoor amenities and assets in future development.

Action 1.7.1: Greenway connectivity should be prioritized for all future development and economic benefits should be emphasized.

**Objective 1.8:** Develop and implement a maintenance plan that includes environmental stewardship of any new or existing outdoor amenities.

Action 1.8.1: Place recycling bins and other amenities at parks facilities.

Action 1.8.2: Research areas where restroom facilities can be constructed in remote parks areas.

**Objective 1.9:** Find ways to enhance cell and wi-fi connectivity at all Spencer parks and facilities.

Action 1.9.1: Research viability of emergency phones and wi-fi at remote park areas, and potential funding sources.



**Objective 1.10:** Explore options to provide free wi-fi in downtown Spencer.

Action 1.10.1: Research viability of free wi-fi in downtown area by meeting with potential providers to determine costs.

**Objective 1.11:** Pursue philanthropic, governmental, and other external funding sources, including gifts, donations, and grants, to leverage and enhance development of outdoor recreation facilities, parks, trails, and other amenities.

Action 1.11.1: For potential funding sources, utilize the outdoor recreation and outdoor development guide created by the NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center.

Action 1.11.2: Utilize Council of Government (COG) to assist with grant applications and management.

## **Communication and Activation**

***Goal 2: Promote and educate residents and visitors about available and potential recreation amenities and environmental stewardship.***

**Objective 2.1:** Create a Spencer Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and town Parks and Recreation Department.

Action 2.1.1: Present idea of Recreation Advisory Board to the Town of Spencer's Board of Aldermen. The Advisory Board should help monitor and implement the recommendations of the CORE work plan and work with town staff and leadership to pursue objectives outlined in the Spencer Parks and Recreation comprehensive master plan.

Action 2.1.2: Town of Spencer shall develop bylaws and provide administrative support to the Advisory Board.

Action 2.1.3: Recruit CORE workgroup members to serve on Advisory Board.

Action 2.1.4: Town Manager should discuss idea of full-time parks and recreation position with Board of Aldermen during budget process and strive to provide funding necessary for full time position to manage newly formed Spencer Parks and Recreation Department.

**Objective 2.2:** Provide programming that draws new users to Spencer's parks facilities and introduces youth to various outdoor recreation activities.

Action 2.2.1: Provide environmental stewardship education programming at parks facilities.

Action 2.2.2: Develop programming to draw new users to the Town parks facilities for new activities such as competitive events (for example, running and cycling competitions) and social gatherings (for example, food truck rodeos or music and art events).

Action 2.2.3: Ensure balance between quality of life for residents and attracting new visitors to the community.

Action 2.2.4: Prioritize family friendly activities when developing new programming.

Action 2.2.5: Collaborate with Rowan-Salisbury and other area schools to develop programming that brings students and families to parks and provides outdoor recreation exposure.

Action 2.2.6: Emphasize activities that are within walking distance to schools in Spencer.

Action 2.2.7: Identify an opportunity for a large scale, outdoor recreation event that can be hosted in Spencer (possibly related to Race to the River). Incorporate outdoor recreation activities into existing festivals and community events.

Action 2.2.8: Identify ways to utilize historic sites in Spencer along river for an event/tour/etc.

Action 2.2.9: Develop informational materials on all programming and distribute throughout community and schools.

**Objective 2.3:** Develop a comprehensive branding and marketing effort for Spencer parks and facilities that prioritizes outdoor stewardship education.

Action 2.3.1: Continue collaboration with Rowan County wayfinding efforts.

Action 2.3.2: Enhance promotional website for Town of Spencer to include a common landing page for parks and recreation facilities and include QR codes on town signage that points back to website.

Action 2.3.3: Include outdoor stewardship principles such as “Leave No Trace” in any updated branding and marketing strategies.

Action 2.3.4: Tie local marketing efforts with state and regional trail branding and marketing strategies such as the Yadkin River Trail, Piedmont Legacy Trail, Year of the Trail/Great Trails State, etc.

**Objective 2.4:** Continue to support regional collaboration between jurisdictions and organizations for outdoor economy building.

Action 2.4.1: Continue to meet with partner organizations and support cross-jurisdictional projects in Rowan County and the region.

### **Economic Impacts**

**Goal 3: Utilize the community's outdoor assets to improve the downtown, local and regional economies.**

**Objective 3.1:** Increase annual visitation to the North Carolina Transportation Museum.

Action 3.1.1: Improve pedestrian access between downtown Spencer and the Transportation Museum.

Action 3.1.2: Complete the walking trail around the Transportation Museum.

Action 3.1.3: Promote additional special Transportation Museum activities and programs. Work with downtown businesses on promotional events that encourage visitors to patronize the downtown area.

Action 3.1.4: Continue to support and promote Winterfest and other events adjacent to the museum.

**Objective 3.2:** Promote and support existing outdoor recreation-oriented businesses and encourage entrepreneurship in the outdoor sector.

Action 3.2.1: Support the development of the First Community Center of Spencer for a co-working and entrepreneurship space.

Action 3.2.2: Support 5 Star Commissary to attract food trucks and potential food service businesses.

Action 3.2.3: Convene existing outdoor related businesses to foster greater collaboration and support from the town and county.

Action 3.2.4: Strategically develop outdoor recreation assets (trailheads, river access points, etc.) that promote and support development of outdoor recreation-oriented businesses.

**Objective 3.3:** Utilize outdoor recreation assets to attract new businesses and industry to town.

Action 3.3.1: Collaborate with Rowan EDC to promote Spencer's outdoor recreation and other quality of life amenities when recruiting new business and industry.

**Objective 3.4:** Find ways to attract workforce for relevant sectors including hospitality, food service and culinary, recreation, and others.

Action 3.4.1: Develop a partnership with local colleges to attract students from relevant programs- such as culinary, hospitality, recreation, to open businesses or work in Spencer.

Action 3.4.2 Work with Small Business/Entrepreneur program at Rowan Community College to educate students on opportunities in the outdoor recreation industry.

Action 3.4.3: Continue to support and enhance the community garden and farmers market and encourage agricultural entrepreneurs.

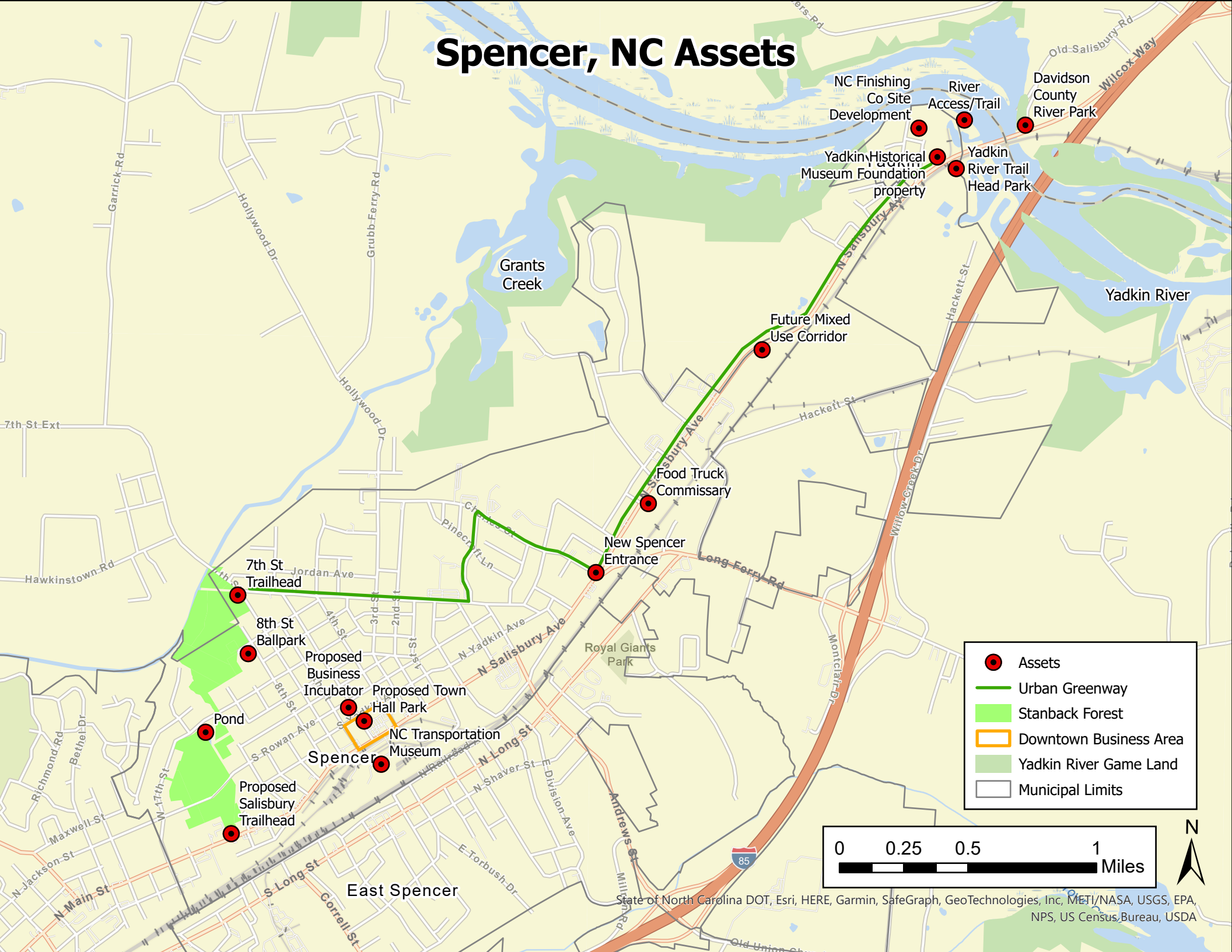
Action 3.4.4: Work with the Chamber of Commerce and local businesses to encourage and promote buy local initiatives.

# Appendix I

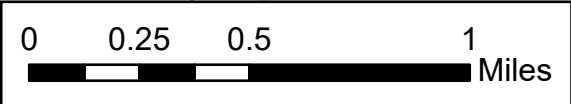
## **Town of Spencer Asset Mapping**

The following map highlights recreation related assets, Stanback Forest, downtown business area, Yadkin River game land, and municipal limits for the Town of Spencer.

# Spencer, NC Assets



- Assets
- Urban Greenway
- Stanback Forest
- Downtown Business Area
- Yadkin River Game Land
- Municipal Limits



NC Finishing Co Site Development  
 River Access/Trail  
 Davidson County River Park  
 Yadkin Historical Museum Foundation property  
 Yadkin River Trail Head Park

Grants Creek

Yadkin River

Future Mixed Use Corridor

Food Truck Commissary

New Spencer Entrance

7th St Trailhead

8th St Ballpark

Proposed Business Incubator

Proposed Town Hall Park

Pond

Spencer

NC Transportation Museum

Proposed Salisbury Trailhead

East Spencer

## Appendix II

### **Spencer Workplan**

The following is the vision statement and workplan developed by the Spencer workgroup.

## Town of Spencer CORE Workplan

**Vision Statement:** Located in the heart of the Piedmont, about an hour's drive from Charlotte, Greensboro, and Winston Salem, and cradled by the beautiful Yadkin River, Spencer will continue to grow its economic base by expanding and supporting the local outdoor recreational economy. Emphasizing recreational experiences for all levels of skill, fitness, and ability, Spencer will combine riverfront development, the NC Transportation Museum, Stanback Forest and other amenities to become the center of a region filled with social engagement, family entertainment, healthy lifestyle options, environmental stewardship, and togetherness.

Outdoor Infrastructure	Communication and Activation	Economic Impacts
<p><b>Goal 1: Improve and take advantage of existing and future tourism and recreation amenities to enhance quality of life for everyone.</b></p> <p><b>Objective 1.1:</b> Continue Improvements and construction at Stanback Educational Forest including the Carter property.</p> <p><b>Objective 1.2:</b> Continue advocating for the River Front Development project to contain diverse uses, including outdoor recreation which will contribute to a vibrant and active space.</p> <p><b>Objective 1.3:</b> Develop Grant's Creek Blueway.</p> <p><b>Objective 1.4:</b> Enhance the South Yadkin River Trail.</p> <p><b>Objective 1.5:</b> Continue to pursue the Objectives laid out in the Town of Spencer Parks and Recreation comprehensive master plan.</p> <p><b>Objective 1.6:</b> Complete the downtown Spencer Park project and incorporate into downtown revitalization strategy.</p> <p><b>Objective 1.7:</b> Prioritize connectivity of outdoor amenities and assets in future development.</p> <p><b>Objective 1.8:</b> Develop and implement a maintenance plan that includes</p>	<p><b>Goal 2: Promote and educate residents and visitors about available and potential recreation amenities and environmental stewardship.</b></p> <p><b>Objective 2.1:</b> Create a Spencer Recreation Advisory Board and town Parks &amp; Recreation Department.</p> <p><b>Objective 2.2:</b> Provide programming that draws new users to Spencer's parks facilities and introduces youth to various outdoor recreation activities.</p> <p><b>Objective 2.3:</b> Develop a comprehensive branding and marketing effort for Spencer parks and facilities that prioritizes outdoor stewardship education.</p> <p><b>Objective 2.4:</b> Continue to support regional collaboration between jurisdictions and organizations for outdoor economy building.</p>	<p><b>Goal 3: Utilize the community's outdoor assets to improve the downtown, local and regional economies.</b></p> <p><b>Objective 3.1:</b> Increase annual visitation to the NC Transportation Museum.</p> <p><b>Objective 3.2:</b> Promote and support existing outdoor recreation-oriented businesses and encourage entrepreneurship in the outdoor sector.</p> <p><b>Objective 3.3:</b> Utilize outdoor recreation assets to attract new businesses and industry to town.</p> <p><b>Objective 3.4:</b> Find ways to attract workforce for relevant sectors including hospitality, food service and culinary, recreation, and others.</p>



<p><i>environmental stewardship of any new or existing outdoor amenities.</i></p> <p><b>Objective 1.9:</b> Find ways to enhance cell and wi-fi connectivity at all Spencer parks and facilities.</p> <p><b>Objective 1.10:</b> Explore options to provide free wi-fi in downtown Spencer.</p> <p><b>Objective 1.11:</b> Pursue philanthropic, governmental, and other external funding sources, including gifts, donations, and grants, to leverage and enhance investment and development of outdoor recreation facilities, parks, trails, and other amenities.</p>		
<p><b>Action 1.1.1:</b> Prioritize trailhead and trail connector construction sites.</p> <p><b>Action 1.1.2:</b> Conduct a feasibility study for and Environmental Art Center and explore construction and financing options.</p> <p><b>Action 1.1.3:</b> Develop plans for future park office/maintenance facility.</p>	<p><b>Action 2.1.1:</b> Present idea of Recreation Advisory Board to Spencer Governing Body. The Advisory Board should help monitor and implement the recommendations of the CORE work plan and work with town staff and leadership to pursue objectives outlined in the Town of Spencer Parks and Recreation comprehensive plan.</p> <p><b>Action 2.1.2:</b> Develop Bylaws and provide administrative support to Advisory Board.</p> <p><b>Action 2.1.3:</b> Recruit CORE workgroup members to serve on Advisory Board.</p> <p><b>Action 2.1.4:</b> Town Manager should discuss idea of full-time parks and recreation position with Board of Aldermen during budget process and strive to provide funding necessary for full time position to manage newly formed Town Parks and Recreation Department.</p>	<p><b>Action 3.1.1:</b> Improve Pedestrian Access between downtown Spencer and the Transportation Museum.</p> <p><b>Action 3.1.2:</b> Complete the walking trail around Museum.</p> <p><b>Action 3.1.3:</b> Promote additional special museum activities and programs and work with downtown businesses on promotional events that encourage visitors to patronize the downtown area.</p> <p><b>Action 3.1.4:</b> Continue to support and promote Winterfest and other events adjacent to the Transportation Museum.</p>

<p><b>Action 1.2.1:</b> Create a committee/task force of interested citizens to work with town leadership to explore ideas of what the area should look like and best uses for community in general.</p> <p><b>Action 1.2.2:</b> Develop small area plan/master plan and incorporate best practices from similar redevelopment projects.</p> <p><b>Action 1.2.3:</b> Explore options, including a public university or other professional Organization, for design renderings/schematics which incorporate community input on best possible uses and potential design for this redevelopment area.</p>	<p><b>Action 2.2.1:</b> Provide environmental stewardship education programming at parks facilities.</p> <p><b>Action 2.2.2:</b> Develop programming to draw new users to parks facilities for new activities such as competitive events (for example, running and cycling competitions) and social gatherings (for example, food truck rodeos or music and art events).</p> <p><b>Action 2.2.3:</b> Ensure balance between quality of life for residents and attracting new visitors to the community.</p> <p><b>Action 2.2.4:</b> Prioritize family friendly activities when developing new programming.</p> <p><b>Action 2.2.5:</b> Collaborate with Rowan-Salisbury and other area schools to develop programming that brings students and families to parks and provides outdoor recreation exposure.</p>	<p><b>Action 3.2.1:</b> Support the development of the First Community Center of Spencer for a co-working and entrepreneurship space.</p> <p><b>Action 3.2.2:</b> Support 5 Star Commissary to attract food trucks and potential food service businesses.</p> <p><b>Action 3.2.3:</b> Convene existing outdoor related businesses to foster greater collaboration and support from the town and county.</p> <p><b>Action 3.2.4:</b> Strategically develop outdoor recreation assets (trailheads, river access points, etc.) that promote and support development of outdoor recreation oriented businesses.</p>
<p><b>Action 1.3.1:</b> Develop partnership with NCWRC for additional activities/uses on game lands – for example – primitive camping.</p> <p><b>Action 1.3.2:</b> Develop a partnership with Eagle Creek (formerly Cube Hydro) and Three Rivers Land Trust for property.</p>	<p><b>Action 2.2.6:</b> Emphasize activities that are withing walking distance to schools in Spencer.</p> <p><b>Action 2.2.7:</b> Identify an opportunity for a large scale, outdoor recreation event that can be hosted in Spencer (possibly related to Race to the River). Incorporate outdoor recreation activities into existing festivals and community events.</p> <p><b>Action 2.2.8:</b> Identify ways to utilize historic sites in Spencer along river for an event/tour/etc.</p> <p><b>Action 2.2.9:</b> Develop informational materials</p>	<p><b>Action 3.3.1:</b> Collaborate with Rowan EDC to promote Spencer’s outdoor recreation and other quality of life amenities when recruiting new business and industry.</p>

	<p>on all programming and distribute throughout community and schools.</p>	
<p><b>Action 1.4.1:</b> Develop a kayak/boat launch on the Rowan side of the Yadkin River.</p> <p><b>Action 1.4.2:</b> Prioritize ADA accessibility at any new access points and existing parks facilities.</p> <p><b>Action 1.4.3:</b> Work with partners to strengthen the connection between the Yadkin River Park to the Yadkin River State Trail.</p> <p><b>Action 1.5.1:</b> Incorporate funds into Town of Spencer annual operating budget and Capital Improvement plan for the purpose of completing objectives in Parks and Recreation comprehensive plan.</p> <p><b>Action 1.5.2:</b> Town of Spencer staff and advisory board shall work with Board of Aldermen to prioritize objectives of Comprehensive master plan.</p> <p><b>Action 1.6.1:</b> Utilize new park for downtown special events and activities year around.</p> <p><b>Action 1.6.2:</b> Incorporate Main Street principles into downtown revitalization efforts.</p>	<p><b>Action 2.3.1:</b> Continue collaboration with Rowan County wayfinding efforts.</p> <p><b>Action 2.3.2:</b> Enhance promotional website for Town of Spencer to include common landing page for parks and rec facilities and include QR codes on town signage that points back to website.</p> <p><b>Action 2.3.3:</b> Include outdoor stewardship principles such as “Leave No Trace” in any updated branding and marketing strategies.</p> <p><b>Action 2.3.4:</b> Tie in local marketing efforts with state and regional trail branding and marketing strategies such as the Yadkin River Trail, Piedmont Legacy Trail, Year of the Trail/Great Trails State, etc.</p> <p><b>Action 2.4.1:</b> Continue to meet with partner organizations and support cross-jurisdictional projects in Rowan County and the region.</p>	<p><b>Action 3.4.1:</b> Develop a partnership with the local colleges to attract students from relevant programs-culinary, hospitality, recreation, etc.-to open businesses or work in Spencer.</p> <p><b>Action 3.4.2:</b> Work with Small Business/Entrepreneur program at Rowan Community College to educate students on opportunities in the outdoor recreation industry.</p> <p><b>Action 3.4.3:</b> Continue to support and enhance community garden and farmers market and encourage agricultural entrepreneurs.</p> <p><b>Action 3.4.4:</b> Work with the Chamber of Commerce and local businesses to encourage and promote buy local initiatives.</p>

**Action 1.6.3:** Downtown Spencer should be incorporated in future planning of greenway connections and routes. Various points of interest, including downtown, should be noted on all future signage along greenway, and bicycle and pedestrian routes.

**Action 1.7.1:** Greenway connectivity should be prioritized for all future development and economic benefits should be emphasized.

**Action 1.8.1:** Place recycling bins and other amenities at parks facilities.

**Action 1.8.2:** Research areas where restroom facilities can be built in remote parks areas.

**Action 1.9.1:** Research viability of emergency phones and wi-fi at remote park areas, and potential funding sources.

**Action 1.10.1:** Research viability of free wi-fi in downtown area by meeting with potential providers to determine costs.

**Action 1.11.1:** For potential funding sources, utilize the outdoor recreation and outdoor development guide created by the NC Main Street and Rural Planning Center.

**Action 1.11.2:** Utilize Council of Government (COG) to assist with grant applications and management.

The *goals, objectives, actions, and tasks* refer to the following definitions:

**Goals** are general guidelines that explain what you want to achieve. They are usually long-term and represent global visions, such as “grow the local economy.”

**Objectives** define strategies or implementation steps to attain the identified goals. Unlike goals, objectives are specific, measurable (number, timeframe, percentage), and may have a defined completion date.

**Actions** are steps taken to achieve a specific objective. Therefore, implementing a strategic goal typically involves implementing a series of actions along the way.

**Tasks** are used to create a step-by-step list that will help you accomplish each action. Tasks are short-term and are typically achievable within 1 year of implementation.

# Appendix III

## Funding and Resource Guide

The following is a guide of potential funding sources and other resources for outdoor recreation and outdoor economy development created by the NC MS&RP Center staff to assist CORE communities in implementation.



**NORTH CAROLINA MAIN STREET AND RURAL PLANNING CENTER  
POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES AND RESOURCES  
FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION AND OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
(Revised August 2023)**

*\*\* The NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center recommends contacting listed entities directly for more information about their programs. The inclusion of a program on the list is not an endorsement by the NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center. \*\**

<b>Program</b>	<b>Purpose/Description</b>	<b>Grants/Resources</b>	<b>Match</b>	<b>Website/Contact</b>
NC Land & Water Fund	These grants have been used in all 100 N.C. counties to help ensure clean drinking water, protect natural habitat and preserve our unique natural and cultural resources for future generations.	Grants – Funding Amounts Vary	Not Specified	<a href="https://nclwf.nc.gov/apply">https://nclwf.nc.gov/apply</a>
Department of Natural and Cultural Resources - <b>The Land and Water Conservation Fund</b>	The LWCF provides matching grants to local governments to assist with public park and recreation projects. LWCF grants can be used to acquire land for a public park; to develop outdoor recreation and support facilities; or a combination of both. A project must be located on a single site.	Grants – Funding Amounts Vary	An applicant must match the grant with a minimum of 50 percent.	<a href="https://www.ncparks.gov/about-us/grants/land-and-water-conservation-fund">https://www.ncparks.gov/about-us/grants/land-and-water-conservation-fund</a>
North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF)	Awards matching grants to local governments for parks, public beach access, and improvements in state parks. The statewide program helps local	Grants - The North Carolina General Assembly funds PARTF each year at different levels.	1:1 Match for Local Government Projects; Funds also available for NC State	<a href="https://www.ncparks.gov/more-about-us/parks-recreation-trust-fund/parks-and-recreation-trust-fund">https://www.ncparks.gov/more-about-us/parks-recreation-trust-fund/parks-and-recreation-trust-fund</a>

	governments reach their park and public access goals to improve the quality of life in their communities.		Parks projects and the Coastal and Estuarine Water Beach Access Program	
<b>Program</b>	<b>Purpose/Description</b>	<b>Grants/Resources</b>	<b>Match</b>	<b>Website/Contact</b>
NCDNCR, Division of Parks and Recreation - <b>Recreational Trails Program Grant</b>	The intent of the RTP is to help fund trails and trail-related recreational needs at the State level for projects that are construction ready for grant funding.	Grants – past grant amounts awarded between \$10k-\$100k	Past years have required a 25% Match of RTP Funds Received	<a href="https://trails.nc.gov/trail-grants/apply-grant">https://trails.nc.gov/trail-grants/apply-grant</a>
NC Department of Environmental Quality, Division of Marine Fisheries - <b>Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) Program</b>	The BIG program is a federal grant program, administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, that provides funding to states for the construction, renovation, and maintenance of boating infrastructure facilities for transient recreational vessels at least 26 feet long that are operated, leased, rented, or chartered primarily for pleasure. Boating infrastructure means the structures, equipment, accessories, and services that are necessary or desirable for a facility to accommodate eligible	Grants - Two tiers: State (up to \$200,000) and National (up to \$1.5 million).	Yes – 25% cost share / match. In-kind services, materials, and other contributions are allowed for the cost share / match.	<a href="https://www.deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/marine-fisheries/grant-programs/nc-boating-infrastructure-grant-program">https://www.deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/marine-fisheries/grant-programs/nc-boating-infrastructure-grant-program</a>



	<p>vessels. Transient vessels are those passing through or by a place, staying up to 15 days. Projects completed using BIG funds must provide public access but may be publicly or privately owned. The NC Division of Marine Fisheries is the lead agency for BIG in North Carolina. Both publicly owned and privately-owned marina facilities that are open to the public are eligible to apply for funding, including private marinas, local municipalities, state agencies, or other non-governmental entities.</p> <p><b>Note: No announcement yet for 2024 grants.</b></p>			
<p>National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) - <b>America the Beautiful Challenge</b></p>	<p>Intended to streamline grant funding opportunities for new conservation and restoration projects around the U.S., the America the Beautiful Challenge consolidates funding from multiple federal agencies and the</p>	<p>Grants - Approximately \$85 million</p>	<p>Non-federal match helps demonstrate broad support for the project and may be required by the federal funding requirements. Dependent of</p>	<p><a href="https://www.nfwf.org/programs/america-beautiful-challenge">https://www.nfwf.org/programs/america-beautiful-challenge</a></p>

	private sector to enable applicants to conceive and develop large-scale projects that address shared funder priorities and span public and private lands.		federal agency funding.	
<b>Program</b>	<b>Purpose/Description</b>	<b>Grants/Resources</b>	<b>Match</b>	<b>Website/Contact</b>
U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) – <b>Transportation Alternatives</b>	Provides funding for a variety of generally smaller-scale transportation projects such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities; recreational trails; and more.	Grants	Variable	<a href="https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation_alternatives/">https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation_alternatives/</a>
U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) – <b>Recreational Trails Program</b>	Provides funds to the States to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both nonmotorized and motorized recreational trail uses.	Grants – Funding Amounts Vary	Not Specified	<a href="https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/">https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/</a>
National Forest Foundation – <b>Matching Awards Program</b>	The MAP program supports action-oriented projects that enhance outdoor experiences, forest and ecosystem health, and engage local communities in caring for their public lands.	Grants – Funding Amounts Vary	1:1 nonfederal cash match	<a href="https://www.nationalforests.org/grant-programs/map">https://www.nationalforests.org/grant-programs/map</a>
US Fish & Wildlife Service - <b>Wildlife</b>	Programs that distribute funding annually to state	Grants – Funding Amounts Vary	Not Specified	<a href="https://www.fws.gov/program/wildlife-and-sport-fish-restoration">https://www.fws.gov/program/wildlife-and-sport-fish-restoration</a>

<b>and Sport Fish Restoration (WSFR) Program</b>	agencies and Tribes to manage fish, wildlife, and habitats, evaluate and enhance species of greatest conservation need, and provide recreational opportunities for fishing, hunting, shooting, and boating. Local governments and orgs. may have to partner with state agencies to access these funds.			
<b>Program</b>	<b>Purpose/Description</b>	<b>Grants/Resources</b>	<b>Match</b>	<b>Website/Contact</b>
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation – <b>Acres for America</b>	Walmart’s Acres for America program stands today as the leading public-private land conservation partnership in the United States. The partnership began in 2005, when Walmart and NFWF joined forces to establish Acres for America as a groundbreaking effort to support and catalyze the conservation of lands and wildlife habitat of national significance, and to benefit local communities and local economies.	Grants – Funding Amounts Vary	All grant awards require a minimum 1:1 match of cash or contributed goods and services.	<a href="https://www.nfwf.org/programs/acres-america">https://www.nfwf.org/programs/acres-america</a>
Outdoor Heritage NC - <b>North Carolina Schools</b>	Created to address the main barrier to getting kids outside during the	Grants – Funding Amounts Vary	Not Specified	<a href="https://www.outdoorheritage.nc.gov/grants/">https://www.outdoorheritage.nc.gov/grants/</a> For questions, contact <a href="mailto:ohac.grants@nc.gov">ohac.grants@nc.gov</a>

<b>Go Outside (GO) Grant</b>	school day – funding. Qualifying for grants require instructors demonstrate how the experience will address topics currently being taught in class and that the experience meets the goals of the Outdoor Heritage Trust Fund plan.			
<b>Program</b>	<b>Purpose/Description</b>	<b>Grants/Resources</b>	<b>Match</b>	<b>Website/Contact</b>
Department of Natural and Cultural Resources - <b>Accessibility for Parks Grant</b>	Can be used to build accessible facilities or adapt existing facilities that meet the unique needs of children and veterans with physical and developmental disabilities.	Local governments can request a maximum of \$500,000 with each application.	An applicant must match the grant with \$1 of local funds for every \$5 of grant funds. The value of in-kind services, such as volunteer work, cannot be used as part of the match.	<a href="https://www.ncparks.gov/about-us/grants/accessibility-parks-grant">https://www.ncparks.gov/about-us/grants/accessibility-parks-grant</a>
Department of Natural and Cultural Resources - <b>Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program</b>	The purpose of the program is to provide grants to acquire and/or develop public lands for outdoor recreation purposes consistent with the purposes of LWCF, but with the further specific goals of funding projects that:	Grants – Funding Amounts Vary	ORLP grant projects must be cost-shared with non-federal funds at a minimum ratio of 1:1.	<a href="https://www.ncparks.gov/about-us/grants/outdoor-recreation-legacy-partnership-program">https://www.ncparks.gov/about-us/grants/outdoor-recreation-legacy-partnership-program</a>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are located within or serve an Urbanized Area (population of 50,000 or more) as designated by the Census Bureau from the 2010 Census; and</li> </ul> <p>Are in, or are directly accessible to, neighborhoods or communities that are underserved in terms of parks and recreation resources and where there are significant populations of people who are economically disadvantaged.</p>			
<b>Program</b>	<b>Purpose/Description</b>	<b>Grants/Resources</b>	<b>Match</b>	<b>Website/Contact</b>
<b>NCDOT - IMD Feasibility Studies Program</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feasibility studies for eligible project types including paved trails, greenways, shared-use paths, sidepaths, and sidewalks.</li> </ul>	Grant – Funding Amounts Vary	A local match is not required; however, it may be a factor to consider for a competitive grant cycle.	<a href="https://connect.ncdot.gov/municipalities/PlanningGrants/Pages/IMD-Feasibility-Studies-Program.aspx">https://connect.ncdot.gov/municipalities/PlanningGrants/Pages/IMD-Feasibility-Studies-Program.aspx</a>
The Conservation Fund – <b>Resourceful Communities’ ‘Creating New</b>	Resourceful Communities’ small-grant program, the Creating New Economies Fund (CNEF), provides direct investment in	Grants - Grants cannot exceed \$15,000. There is no minimum amount that must	Not Specified	<a href="https://www.conservationfund.org/our-work/resourceful-communities/grants-and-other-resources">https://www.conservationfund.org/our-work/resourceful-communities/grants-and-other-resources</a>

<b>Economies Fund (CNEF)</b>	community-based efforts. Seed money supports a range of projects: eco- and heritage tourism, youth conservation programs, farmers markets, alternative energy production and more.	be requested for consideration, however, grants average \$8,000-\$12,000.		
<b>Program</b>	<b>Purpose/Description</b>	<b>Grants/Resources</b>	<b>Match</b>	<b>Website/Contact</b>
Athletic Brewing Co. – <b>Two for the Trails</b>	ABC donates 2% of sales to protect and restore trails, and other projects that enhance access to the outdoors. Any registered LLC eligible, with preference given to 501(c)(3) non-profits.	Grant – Funding Amounts Vary	Not specified	<a href="https://athleticbrewing.com/pages/two-for-the-trails">https://athleticbrewing.com/pages/two-for-the-trails</a>
Fox Factory Trail Trust	Provide grants to organizations helping to preserve the places we love to play. The goal is to bring together diverse communities to build, maintain, and expand access to trails for both mountain biking and power sports. 501(c)(3) Non-Profits eligible.	Grant – Funding Amounts Vary	Not Specified	<a href="https://www.trailtrust.com/">https://www.trailtrust.com/</a>
NCDEQ – <b>Water Resources Development Grant Program</b>	This program provides cost-share grants and technical assistance to local governments in NC. Applications for grants are accepted for 7 eligible	Grant – Funding Amounts Vary depending on project type - \$200,000 maximum	50 percent matching limit	<a href="https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/water-resources/water-resources-grants/water-resources-development-grant-program">https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/water-resources/water-resources-grants/water-resources-development-grant-program</a>

	project types: general navigation, recreational navigation, water management, stream restoration, water-based recreation, Natural Resources Conservation Service Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) stream restoration projects and feasibility/engineering studies.	recommended for "State & Local Projects"		
<b>Program</b>	<b>Purpose/Description</b>	<b>Grants/Resources</b>	<b>Match</b>	<b>Website/Contact</b>
T-Mobile Hometown Grants program	T-Mobile is committing up to \$25 million over the next 5 years to support small towns across America by funding community projects. Program will help fund projects to build, rebuild, or refresh community spaces that help foster local connections in your town. For example, this might include the town square pavilion, a historic building, an outdoor park, a ball field, etc.	Grants – maximum \$50k per town	Not specified	<a href="https://www.t-mobile.com/brand/hometown-grants">https://www.t-mobile.com/brand/hometown-grants</a>
NCDEQ – Div. of Coastal Management - <b>Coastal</b>	Provides matching grants to local governments for projects to improve pedestrian access to the	Grants	Local Match Required	<a href="https://www.deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/coastal-management/coastal-management-beach-waterfront-access-program/beach-waterfront-access-grants">https://www.deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/coastal-management/coastal-management-beach-waterfront-access-program/beach-waterfront-access-grants</a>

<b>Management Beach &amp; Waterfront Access Program</b>	state's beaches and waterways. Eligible applicants include local governments in the 20 coastal counties and their municipalities that have public trust waters (ocean, estuarine or riverine waters) within their jurisdictions.			
<b>Program</b>	<b>Purpose/Description</b>	<b>Grants/Resources</b>	<b>Match</b>	<b>Website/Contact</b>
PeopleForBikes Community Grant Program	The PeopleForBikes Community Grant Program supports bicycle infrastructure projects and targeted initiatives that make it easier and safer for people of all ages and abilities to ride. PeopleForBikes accepts grant applications from non-profit organizations with a focus on bicycling, active transportation or community development; from city or county agencies or departments and from state or federal agencies working locally.	Grants - up to \$10,000	Do not require a specific % match, but do look at leverage and funding partnerships very carefully. We will not consider grant requests in which PFB funding would amount to 50% or more of the project budget.	<a href="https://www.peopleforbikes.org/grant-guidelines">https://www.peopleforbikes.org/grant-guidelines</a>
North Carolina Community Foundation	The North Carolina Community Foundation (NCCF) is the only statewide community foundation serving North	Grants	Each grant resource administered by the NCCF will	<a href="https://www.nccommunityfoundation.org/">https://www.nccommunityfoundation.org/</a>



	Carolina and has administered over \$243 million in grants since 1988. With more than \$440 million in assets, NCCF sustains over 1,200 endowments and partners with a network of affiliates to award grants and scholarships in communities across the state.		have different specifications.	
Occupancy Tax used for non-marketing purposes	Will be dependent of legislation that dictates how local occupancy tax dollars are allocated.	Tax	n/a	Consult local Tourism Development Authority or comparable board regarding how local occupancy tax funds are collected and allocated.
<b>USDA-RD - Community Facilities Direct Loan &amp; Grant Program</b>	This program provides affordable funding to develop essential community facilities in rural areas. An essential community facility is defined as a facility that provides an essential service to the local community for the orderly development of the community in a primarily rural area. Funds can be used to purchase, construct, and / or improve essential community facilities, purchase equipment and	Grants and Loans	Varying match rates dependent upon various factors	<a href="https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities/community-facilities-direct-loan-grant-program/nc">https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities/community-facilities-direct-loan-grant-program/nc</a>

	pay related project expenses.			
<b>Program</b>	<b>Purpose/Description</b>	<b>Grants/Resources</b>	<b>Match</b>	<b>Website/Contact</b>
East Coast Greenway Alliance - <b>Complete the Trails Program</b>	The Alliance is seeking proposals for trail projects that can successfully apply CTP funding towards expanding the East Coast Greenway State Trail. This grant is for the purpose of planning, construction, promotion, and maintenance of component trails of the North Carolina Trails System.	Grant	Not Specified	<a href="https://www.greenway.org/complete-the-trails-nc">https://www.greenway.org/complete-the-trails-nc</a>
Project Fit for America	Project Fit for America is a national 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that works at the grassroots level with schools and frontline educators to create new opportunities for kids to be active, fit, and healthy as part of the everyday school experience. The organization works with communities to bring in funding, equipment, teacher training, curriculum, and the resources schools need to get kids fit and foster a	For the fee listed, Project Fit for America will provide outdoor and indoor play equipment, lesson plan support materials, curriculum, and more.	N/A	<a href="https://projectfitamerica.org/pfa-program-summary/">https://projectfitamerica.org/pfa-program-summary/</a>

	love of movement. The total funding required to sponsor a two-year pilot and model school program is \$18,206.			
<b>Program</b>	<b>Purpose/Description</b>	<b>Grants/Resources</b>	<b>Match</b>	<b>Website/Contact</b>
Hydro Flask® Parks for All	Parks for All supports the development, maintenance, and accessibility of public green spaces so people everywhere can live healthier, happier, and more fulfilled lives. Through Parks for All, Hydro Flask®, in partnership with the Outdoor Foundation, offers grants and product donations (insulated stainless steel drink bottles with the Parks for All logo) to nonprofits dedicated to building, restoring, maintaining, or providing access to parks and recreational public lands and/or beaches and coastal areas. <b>Note: Application deadline for product donations is April 30, 2023. Cash grant</b>	Grants and product donations	Not specified.	<a href="https://www.hydroflask.com/parks-for-all">https://www.hydroflask.com/parks-for-all</a>

	application round will open August 2023			
Program	Purpose/Description	Grants/Resources	Match	Website/Contact
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC)	RTC's Trail Grants program helps organizations and government agencies accelerate their trail network plans. The program is open to non-profit organizations as well as state, regional, local or tribal agencies working to support, develop and activate local and regional trail networks.	Grants – Funding Amounts Vary	Not Specified	<a href="https://www.railstotrails.org/our-work/grants/">https://www.railstotrails.org/our-work/grants/</a>
Community Development Block Grant – <b>Neighborhood Revitalization Program</b> (CDBG – NR)	Infrastructure and public improvements that support existing housing in the designated area (e.g., streets, sidewalks/pedestrian ways, curbs and gutters, parks, playgrounds, greenways, water and sewer lines, flood and drainage improvements, and trees).	Grants – Maximum \$950k	The CDBG-NR Program does not have a matching fund requirement.	<a href="https://www.commerce.nc.gov/about-us/divisions-programs/rural-economic-development-division/community-development-block-grants-cdbg">https://www.commerce.nc.gov/about-us/divisions-programs/rural-economic-development-division/community-development-block-grants-cdbg</a>

In addition to the above list, the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable (ORR) in partnership with Oregon State University has compiled a list of national outdoor recreation funding and technical assistance resources. Some resources may be duplicated between the MS&RP and ORR

resource guides. The inclusion of a program on the list is not an endorsement by the NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center. This list of resources is available via the below link:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Ucp7AQQQTHa8x0eWYL-ID53AvJU628dE/view>