

**From:** [Sarah Myers](#)  
**To:** [Rachael Sawyer](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Follow-up Info  
**Date:** Monday, September 9, 2024 4:33:54 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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Good Afternoon.

Would you please share the following with the Passive Recreation Lands Subcommittee?

Thank you so much for your time and attention to all of this.

Sarah

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An Update on the Weaverville Watershed Project  
September 9, 2024

Dear Passive Recreation Lands Subcommittee,

Thank you very much for your diligence and care through this Open Bond project process. Considering the ongoing conversations around parking and safety on Elk Mountain Scenic Highway, the Town of Weaverville would like to share the following assurances with this committee.

### **Project Commitment**

The Town of Weaverville is committed to the Weaverville Watershed Trails and Nature Preserve project, converting the property that houses our former municipal water supply into an important and valuable community asset for the North Buncombe community.

### **Community Engagement**

We have always planned for community engagement on this project. To meet this goal, we are planning to host two pre-construction, public input sessions led by a professional facilitator to engage stakeholders.

During these sessions we will gather feedback, opinions, and ideas on the project design and park operations in order for us to optimize our plans and best serve the community. We want to be good neighbors, and we will ensure that neighboring residents, Town residents, and community organizations participate in these sessions. We know this process will create a stronger project.

### **Parking Plans**

We understand the concerns regarding parking off Elk Mountain Scenic Highway. In response to neighbor feedback, we intend to move the initial planned parking area further East on Elk Mountain Scenic Highway. To best understand parking area placement and capacity, we are committed to

hiring a traffic planning firm to conduct a traffic study and assess anticipated capacity need. We will then have an Engineer develop sound drawings considering the grade, steep slope, needed capacity, and stormwater management considerations. To minimize after hours use, we plan to incorporate a gate to the parking area to have the ability to close off parking access when the park is closed. We are working with the Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy and NC Land and Water Fund to be sure we are meeting the expectations of our conservation easement and being mindful of the anticipated parking need.

### **Potential Project Alterations: Land Donation and Buffer Request**

Since the last meeting of the subcommittee, we have been presented with an opportunity and a request from Elk Mountain Scenic Highway Residents. These two items do not change the overall project scope or our funding request and have the potential to alleviate some project concerns. If additional funding is needed to explore these options, the costs would be assumed by the Town or additional grants.

A neighboring property owner has offered us a generous land donation. Our acceptance of this donation requires due diligence as we investigate the feasibility of integrating the land into the existing design, and consider the proposal to move the parking to this area. The property is not under a conservation easement, and is accessed via Upper Herron Cove Rd./Silver Fir Rd. We are consulting with our Town attorney on required steps, and plan to work with a Land Attorney with Easement expertise to assess creating property access and parking on the land donation parcel.

The Town has also received a request from an abutting homeowner to not develop any trails or parking within a 300 foot buffer from abutting residences. We will explore this idea with our Trail designer for trail feasibility and emergency response experts to ensure that this would not inhibit emergency response in the park.

### **Additional Anticipated Spending**

As you've noticed in this statement, we mention additional costs we anticipate as we activate this project. These costs include a traffic study (estimate: \$10-15,000), facilitated public input sessions (estimate: \$500 - \$1,500), staff time researching land donation needs and next steps, and engineering plans for parking areas (cost unknown at this time - we hope to rely heavily on staff time and volunteer experts to develop this). All of these costs will be assumed by the Town of Weaverville.

The Town of Weaverville is committed to providing safe and enriching public access use on this property. We believe a multi-use park in the Northern part of the County would be an asset to the greater good and the County as a whole. We are interested in partnering with the community to ensure the park is a community resource and asset for years to come. Thank you again for your time and your work.

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**From:** Rachael Sawyer <Rachael.Sawyer@buncombecounty.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 9, 2024 8:29 AM  
**To:** Sarah Myers <smyers@weavervillenc.org>  
**Subject:** Follow-up Info

Hello Sarah, does the Town of Weaverville plan to submit any follow-up information for the Passive Recreation Lands Subcommittee? The packet for the September 17 meeting will go out either tomorrow afternoon or Wednesday morning.

Thanks,



**Rachael Sawyer**

She/Her

Buncombe County

Strategic Partnerships Director

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