

# Woodfin Greenway & Blueway - Riverside Park

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*RFP for Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds*

## ***Town of Woodfin***

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# Application Form

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## Question Group

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Buncombe County requests proposals for projects to help the community recover from and respond to COVID-19 and its negative economic impacts.

Buncombe County has been awarded \$50,733,290 in Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (Recovery Funding), as part of the American Rescue Plan Act. To date, Buncombe County has awarded projects totaling \$23,093,499, leaving a balance of \$27,639,791 available to award.

Visit <http://www.buncombecounty.org/recoveryfunding><http://www.buncombecounty.org/recoveryfunding><http://www.buncombecounty.org/recoveryfunding><http://www.buncombecounty.org/recoveryfunding><http://www.buncombecounty.org/recoveryfunding> for details.

This infusion of federal resources is intended to help turn the tide on the pandemic, address its economic fallout, and lay the foundation for a strong and equitable recovery.

Buncombe County is committed to investing these funds in projects that:

- Align to county strategic plan and community priorities
- Support equitable outcomes for most impacted populations
- Leverage and align with other governmental funding sources
- Make best use of this one-time infusion of resources
- Have a lasting impact

Proposals shall be submitted in accordance with the terms and conditions of this RFP and any addenda issued hereto.

[Click here for the full terms and conditions of the RFP](#)

## Organization Type\*

Public

## Nonprofit documentation

If nonprofit, attach IRS Determination Letter or other proof of nonprofit status.

## Name of Project.\*

Woodfin Greenway & Blueway - Riverside Park

## New/Updated Proposal\*

Is this a new project proposal or an updated version of a proposal submitted during the earlier (July 2021) Recovery Funding RFP?

New project proposal

## Amount of Funds Requested\*

\$250,000.00

## Category\*

Please select one:

- Affordable Housing
- Aging/Older Adults
- Business Support/Economic Development
- Environmental/Climate
- Homelessness
- K-12 Education
- Infrastructure and/or Broadband
- Mental Health/Substance Use
- NC Pre-K Expansion
- Workforce

Environmental/Climate

## Brief Project Description\*

Provide a short summary of your proposed project.

The Woodfin Greenway and Blueway (WGB) will offer Woodfin residents greater access to the French Broad River and connectivity to other resources, as well as new recreation options for the 6.9 million locals and visitors who are drawn to the river every year. A collaboration among the Town of Woodfin, Buncombe County and RiverLink, the WGB includes 5 miles of new greenways connecting two parks, an in-stream “Wave” and conservation measures to improve and sustain the river’s health. The expansion and improvement of Riverside Park is a centerpiece of the WGB plan. This project adds 4.5 acres, formerly used as landfill, to the south of the existing park to create a cohesive 8.5-acre park and trail system in a census tract identified as an Area of Persistent Poverty. Woodfin voters endorsed the project overwhelmingly with a 2016 bond referendum. The expected benefits include stronger environmental stewardship, better health and wellness for residents, and a more vibrant local economy.

## Project Plan\*

Explain how the project will be structured and implemented, including timeframe.

The WGB project consists of 3 greenway sections connected by Silver-Line Park and an expanded and improved Riverside Park, within the Town of Woodfin. At Riverside Park, multiple green infrastructure elements will guard the river’s health and minimize environmental impact. To address stormwater drainage, a bioretention treatment swale and bioretention areas in the parking lot and two other areas will mitigate the

effect of the trails, parking area and other hard surfaces by slowing the flow of water and filtering pollutants, including sediment, the primary cause of degraded water quality in the FBR. In addition, the French Broad's bank will be stabilized with plantings and boulder groupings.

To the south of the existing park, the WGB has reclaimed 4.5 degraded acres that were used as a landfill and industrial storage site. The project design includes the excavation, removal and proper disposal of 23,869 cubic yards of landfill materials. The area will be restored to natural grade and replanted with native vegetation. The resulting landform post-excavation will make the site more resilient and less susceptible to the negative effects of flooding. As well, areas of the landfill that remain will be better-stabilized relative to flood hazard.

Proposed improvements include the following recreational facilities: a paved entrance plaza; nearly a mile of hard-surface trails; beach-type access areas; a larger boat launch for small boats/floats; a terraced seating area/amphitheater; a large viewing pavilion; lawn areas for open play; and additional picnic facilities. A new facility with restrooms and changing rooms and a 68-space parking area will be built on the southern section of the park.

The construction of Silver-Line Park represents the first phase of the WGB project, which culminates in that park's grand opening on April 21, 2022. Riverside Park expansion is currently in the design, engineering and permitting phase, to be completed by September 2022. Site preparation—including the environmental remediation described above—will occur over a 6-month period from the fall of 2022 to the spring of 2023. Construction will commence in mid-2023 and should be complete within 18 months. The completion of the three greenway sections by 2025 will tie the entire project together and connect to Asheville's greenways. A proposed in-stream feature adjacent to Riverside Park—the whitewater "Wave"—is an additional project to be addressed during the park's land-based construction. The park's land design assumes and will account for the presence and impact of the Wave.

Project partners include: Buncombe County, which leads greenway development; Asheville-based nonprofit RiverLink, which leads fundraising and outreach efforts; and the Town of Woodfin, which leads park development, provides a dedicated project manager, special projects coordinator and strategic advisors, and convenes an Advisory Committee to provide the community a voice.

## Statement of Need\*

Describe the need that this project will address. Include data to demonstrate the need, and cite the source of the data.

Woodfin is an historically blue-collar town with remnants of what was once a strong manufacturing economy, based along the French Broad River. Riverside Park is located in a census tract identified as an Area of Persistent Poverty (U.S. Department of Transportation), and the Town itself is relatively more diverse and economically disadvantaged than Buncombe County overall. The share of residents identifying as Hispanic is nearly twice as large in Woodfin as in the County (12.9% vs. 6.8%). Other measures include those lacking college degrees (63% vs. 58.6%), those without health insurance (21.4% vs. 14.6%) and those living in poverty (21% vs 14%). (2021, U.S. Census Bureau).

Towns like Woodfin, located at the industrial edges of urbanized areas, are often the least likely to offer opportunities for healthy outdoor recreation and safe multi-modal transportation options. They are also more likely to suffer from environmental inequities, like the dumping of waste materials. Riverside Park Expansion and the greater WGB effort are regionally-important projects that stem from decades of visioning and planning at the broad community level. They represent a course correction after decades of mismanagement of the river ecosystem and failure to nurture the community's relationship with this most valuable natural resource. Key pieces of this history include advocacy and restoration leadership by RiverLink (founded in 1986), development of Asheville's Wilma Dykeman Riverway Plan in 2004, and

creation of the county-level Riverfront Redevelopment Commission, on which Woodfin actively participates, in 2010.

Local demand for the WGB was powerfully demonstrated by the successful \$4.5 million bond referendum, which was approved by 71% of Woodfin voters in 2016 to help fund the WGB, including Riverside Park Expansion. In 2021, approximately 650 public survey respondents voiced their overwhelming support for Riverside Park's completion as a community gathering place along the river.

## Link to COVID-19\*

Identify a health or economic harm resulting from or exacerbated by the public health emergency, describe the nature and extent of that harm, and explain how the use of this funding would address such harm.

The pandemic of 2020-2021 made it impossible to ignore the critical public health role of outdoor spaces and physical activity. Use of Buncombe County Parks rose dramatically during this time. From 2019 to 2021, in the month of March alone, car counters logged a 143% increase in park visitors, from 71,922 to 174,573. While the heavier use of parks is good for the community's health and wellness, the capacity and condition of the current infrastructure, and the environmental impact of its use, are significant vulnerabilities.

Located in the heart of Woodfin, Riverside Park is small, outdated and in need of structural repair, ecological restoration, and a more flood-resistant design. Once its improvement and expansion are complete, the park will be a key asset to residents, a demonstration of Woodfin's outdoor recreation vision and conservation values, and an economic engine that may be more resilient in the face of future pandemics.

Based on the region's demographics and other communities' experiences with similar facilities, an estimated 400,000+ people per year will use the greenway network in Asheville and Woodfin, and many will begin / end in or visit Riverside Park given its convenient location and co-location with the Wave. Local outfitters estimate that on-water recreation on the French Broad River is currently at about 100,000 annual users and growing. The five current public access sites along the river are often overcrowded and Woodfin has just one.

The proposed improvements will generate high usage, which will create jobs and increase revenue for new and existing outdoor recreation-based businesses (rentals and sales of canoes, kayaks, tubes, bicycles and fishing gear, lessons and tours) as well as food and drink vendors in and near Riverside Park. Once completed and connected to Asheville's greenways, Riverside Park and the Wave could draw an average of 1,000 people daily (based on data from the Swamp Rabbit Trail and American Tobacco Trail).

## Population Served\*

Define the population to be served by this project, including volume and demographic characteristics of those served.

The Town of Woodfin has a population of 7,936, of which 77.5% identify as White, Non-Hispanic. Those who identify as Hispanic represent 12.9%. Of the remaining, 4% identify as Asian, 2.1% African-American, 1.2% American Indian or Alaskan Native and 2.2% identify with Two or More Races. The foreign-born population is 8.7%, higher than the 6% foreign-born in Buncombe County and 7.3% in Asheville. Woodfin's poverty rate of 20.9% is significantly higher than the County's (13.9%) and its median household income of \$50,794 is 8% lower than the County median. Despite having a less economically-advantaged population, median gross rent is 15% higher in Woodfin than in Buncombe County as a whole. One bright spot is that economic activity in Woodfin is, by one measure, relatively more inclusive. Of all businesses in the Town, 16%

are minority-owned, compared to just 10% in Asheville and 7% in the County. (2012-2021, U. S. Census Bureau)

## Results\*

Describe the proposed impact of the project. List at least 3 performance measures that will be tracked and reported. If possible, include baselines and goals for each performance measure.

The expansion and improvement of Riverside Park, and the protections against flooding and erosion it requires, represent our single largest step toward fulfilling the WGB vision. The WGB's long-term impacts include enhanced quality of life, multi-modal connectivity to work and school, better health and wellness and economic opportunity. The Town will track the project's near-term impact in Riverside Park in terms of: 1) overall usage; 2) usage by Woodfin residents; and 3) benefit to the river, measured as erosion control and reduction in sedimentation.

## Evaluation\*

Describe the data collection, analysis, and quality assurance measures you will use to assure ongoing, effective tracking of contract requirements and outcomes.

The Town of Woodfin does not currently have a system for tracking use of parks and greenways. We will establish a system to be used at Riverside Park. Monthly car and pedestrian counts conducted while the park is still open, prior to site preparation and construction, will establish baselines. We will set usage goals for the completed park with reference to these baselines. We will also conduct periodic surveys of park users to track demographics and shares of users residing in Woodfin, in Buncombe County outside of Woodfin and outside of the County.

Once the design is finalized and the environmental reviews complete, we will establish a list of goals for the health of the section of the French Broad River that Riverside Park borders. A Certified Erosion Prevention & Sediment Control Inspector (CEPSCI) will take baseline measurements and conduct periodic inspections to measure against those goals.

## Equity Impact\*

How will this effort help build toward a just, equitable, and sustainable COVID-19 recovery? How are the root causes and/or disproportionate impacts of inequities addressed?

Public parks and greenways are shared assets that can help mitigate income-based disparities in health and quality of life. However, access to green spaces increases property values and can drive up housing costs, resulting in gentrification and even greater inequity. The Town of Woodfin and our WGB project partners are sensitive to the inherent risks of public investments of this type and to the concerns of the "just green enough" movement, which argues against over-investment in green amenities at the expense of other equity-focused interventions. We are committed to balancing our efforts to improve Woodfin's environment, quality of life and economy with support for policies and programs that will ensure the availability of affordable housing in the Town and will engage our most vulnerable populations.

## Project Partners\*

Identify any subcontractors you intend to use for the proposed scope of work. For each subcontractor listed, indicate:

- 1.) What products and/or services are to be supplied by that subcontractor and;
- 2.) What percentage of the overall scope of work that subcontractor will perform.

Also, list non-funded key partners critical to project.

Equinox Environmental, a local planning and environmental design firm, is designing Riverside Park's expansion and improvement. This contract represents approximately 10% of the scope of work (by cost). The general contractor and subcontractors that will execute site preparation and construction will not be identified until the project is put out to bid. The subcontracting categories and estimated project share of each are as follows: General Contractor - Site Prep, Grading, General Site Work - 77%; Plumbing - 1%; Electrical - 3%; Pavilion Delivery & On-site Construction - 4%; Prefabricated Restroom Delivery and Installation - 4%; Geotechnical Engineering - 0.5%; Utility Services - 0.5%.

Key partners critical to the project include Buncombe County and RiverLink.

## Capacity\*

Describe the background, experience, and capabilities of your organization or department as it relates to capacity for delivering the proposed project and managing federal funds.

In recognizing the complexities of a project like the WGB, the Town of Woodfin hired a dedicated project manager in 2021. The project manager reports to the Town Manager and coordinates among all project partners. A cross-functional team of town staff and contractors has responsibility for delivery of the project and for management of local, state, and federal funds.

The Town of Woodfin project team:

Town Manager Shannon Tuch has 20+ years of leadership experience working for the City of Asheville in the area of land use and community development.

Project and Facilities Manager Luke Williams leveraged nearly 19 years of civil engineering experience to oversee a \$40 million project portfolio for a major regional manufacturer.

Finance and Budget Director Sheri Powers has 30 years of leadership experience working for Buncombe County Sheriff's Office and other local governments in NC and Florida, where she utilized her accounting and business experience to successfully administer state and federal grants and oversee capital projects.

Planning Director Adrienne Isenhower has 10+ years of experience in local government with an emphasis on the areas of land use and stormwater programming.

Grant Writer Rich Amory (contractor) has 17+ years across a broad range of human services, focusing in the areas of grants administration, data analysis, program research, and outcome evaluation.

Special Projects Consultant Eric Hardy (contractor) has nearly 29 years of leadership experience working for several NC and SC local governments with an emphasis on financial and project management.

To date, the Town has been awarded \$1.34 million in grants for Riverside Park and the Wave from the NC Departments of Environmental Quality and Parks and Recreation, as well as from the Asheville-Buncombe

Tourism Development Authority. Collectively, the project team continues to comply with reporting and performance requirements of these generous grantors.

## Budget\*

Provide a detailed project budget including all proposed project revenues and expenditures, including explanations and methodology. For all revenue sources, list the funder and denote whether funds are confirmed or pending. For project expenses, denote all capital vs. operating costs, and reflect which specific expenses are proposed to be funded with one-time Buncombe County Recovery Funds.

Download a copy of the budget form [HERE](#). Complete the form, and upload it using the button below.

WGB\_Recovery-Funds-budget-template.xlsx

## Special Considerations\*

Provide any other information that might assist the County in its selection.

The main stem of the French Broad River up to Craggy Dam, just north of Riverside Park, is currently on the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality's draft 303(d) list, under the Clean Water Act. It is anticipated that this section will soon be officially listed as an "impaired" waterway, due to an excess of fecal coliform bacteria. Conserving the French Broad for future generations depends on the coordinated efforts of public and private entities throughout the watershed.

The river's health is inextricably tied to local determinants of health, but it will also determine the quality of recreational experiences it offers and will powerfully influence the next phase of Woodfin's development. The Town is extremely grateful for the County's partnership in the WGB project. By identifying it as a top priority, the County has elevated a local, small-town effort to a project of regional significance.

Running water has shaped the Southern Appalachian landscape for 270 million years and has made the region home to over 10,000 species of flora and fauna. It is recognized as one of the most biodiverse places on Earth. The new and expanded Riverside Park will connect the public to this story, allowing residents and visitors to walk the path of the French Broad River through time. Educating ourselves about where the river has been and what it has created will inevitably shed more light on the importance of protecting our rivers today. It will be a space that brings the community together to learn about the forces of nature that have influenced and inspired us to call this place home.



## File Attachment Summary

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### *Applicant File Uploads*

- WGB\_Recovery-Funds-budget-template.xlsx

## Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Proposed Project Budget

<b>Organization Name:</b>	Town of Woodfin
<b>Project Name:</b>	Woodfin Greenway & Blueway - Riverside Park
<b>Amount Requested:</b>	\$250,000

Proposed Project Revenue Funder	Amount	Confirmed or Pending?	Notes
Proposed Buncombe COVID Recovery Funds	\$ 250,000.00	Pending	
Woodfin General Obligation Bond proceeds	\$ 2,445,816.10	Confirmed	
Woodfin General Fund contribution	\$ 151,600.00	Confirmed	
Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority TPDF grant	\$ 140,000.00	Confirmed	
NC Parks and Recreation Trust Fund	\$ 400,000.00	Confirmed	
NC Department of Environmental Quality / Water Resources Development Grants	\$ 200,000.00	Confirmed	
List other sources here			
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List other sources here			
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 3,587,416.10</b>		

Proposed Project Expenses	Proposed Recovery Funds	Other Funds	Total	Capital or Operating Expense?	Notes
Land Acquisition		\$ 600,000.00	\$ 600,000.00	Capital	4.5 acres to south of existing park, acquired from Waste Pro
Design Costs		\$ 585,538.00	\$ 585,538.00	Capital	Fees already paid to Equinox Environmental
Site Grading and Preparation	\$ 95,963.55	\$ 1,609,353.85	\$ 1,705,317.40	Capital	Mobilization; Clearing & Grubbing; Removal/Crushing In Place Of Rigid Pavement; Demo And Haul Off (Structures And Debris); Earthwork (Rough Grading, Excavation And Haul Off); Import Structural Fill For Areas Of Over-Excavation; Fine Grading; MSD Man Hole Set To Grade; Duke Light Pole Removed; Soil Testing; Pavement Subgrade Stabilization; Building Subgrade Stabilization; Pipe Culvert Stabilization; Tree Protection Fence; Invasive Removal Inlet Protection; Outlet Protection; Ditch Outlet Protection; Construction Entrance (Mudmat); Concrete Washout; Reinforced Silt Fence; Reinforced Swale (Includes Erosion Control Matting, 3' Width); Erosion Control Matting (100% Biodegradable, North American Green); Rock Check Dams; Sediment Traps; (Includes Baffles); Temporary Diversion Ditch; Temporary Slope Drain Pipe; Temporary Seeding (Includes Straw); Cofferdam (Non-Motorized River Access); Temporary Stone Check Dams-Culvert Installation; Temporary Stone Check Dams-Stream Crossing; Bypass Pumps, Piping, Filter Bag, And Dissipator
Erosion Control	\$ 19,336.86	\$ 324,288.14	\$ 343,625.00	Capital	

Paving and Circulation	\$ 55,632.18	\$ 932,977.82	\$ 988,610.00	Capital	Pedestrian Asphalt Surface (Includes 8" Depth CABC (3/4" Max Aggregate Size with Fines) and 2" Asphalt); Vehicular Asphalt Surface (Includes 8" Depth CABC (3/4" Max Aggregate Size with Fines) and 4" Asphalt); Concrete Curb (6"); Concrete Curb (4", Mountable); Pedestrian Concrete Paving - Fiber Reinforced, 6" Thickness, 2" CABC; Concrete River Form Ribbon; Vehicular Concrete Paving - 8" Thickness, 8" CABC; Traffic Calming (Domes); Precast Concrete Wheel Stops; Vehicular Guardrail Safety Railing; Painting & Striping (Parking Spaces, Arrow Striping, Stop Bars); Grass Pave (Trailer Parking); Stepping Stones (In Parking Stormwater); Grand Stair Case With Integrated Ramp
Site Elements / Equipment	\$ 12,983.34	\$ 217,736.66	\$ 230,720.00	Capital	Bike Rack; Bollard; Boulders (Terrace); Boulder (Terrace Installed); Boulders (Landscape); Boulder (Landscape Installed); Quarry Discount; Concrete Headwall; Boulder Wall (Avg Wall Height 2', Max Height 4'); Picnic Tables; Concrete Benches; Enhanced River Access; Grills; Lighting; Playground; Culvert Slide; Slack Line; Rock Scramble; Mud Kitchen and Creek Play; Traffic Signage (Installed Per Spec), Interpretation & Wayfinding; Entrance Sign; Playground Sign; Exit (K-2900), ADA Parking Sign (K-1449), Trailer Parking Signage; Directional Signage; Educational Signage; Interpretive Site Elements; Accessibility Elements; Detectable Warning Plate (2' Width); Accessible Ramps
Structures	\$ 42,807.08	\$ 717,894.92	\$ 760,702.00	Capital	Overlook Pavilion; Lower Pavilion (Pre-Fabricated); Restroom (Pre-Fabricated); Site-Built Changing Rooms; Cladding Prefab Restrooms; Cladding Of Existing Restroom; Stream Crossing (Bedding, Culvert, Stone Headwall and Railing)
Utility Services	\$ 4,466.68	\$ 74,908.32	\$ 79,375.00	Capital	Water; Sewer; Site Work (Including Electrical Service, Hot-Box, And Pad)
Planting	\$ 9,640.04	\$ 161,667.96	\$ 171,308.00	Capital	Site Planting (5311 Conservation Mix / Grass Seed Mix (ERNMX-114), 3 & 5 Gallon Shrubs); Swales (NC Mountains Riparian Buffer Mix (ERNMX-304)); Plaza (1 Gal Perennials, Grasses, And Groundcovers, 3 Gal Shrubs, 5 Gal Shrubs); Riverbank Restoration (Live Stakes, NC Mountains Riparian Buffer Mix (ERNMX-304)); Trees; Wetlands (Plugs (4" Root Depth), 1 Gallon Perennials, 3 Gallon Shrubs); Lawn; Mulch (Shredded Hardwood)
Stormwater and Drainage	\$ 9,170.27	\$ 153,789.73	\$ 162,960.00	Capital	18" Pipe, HDPE, Creek Bed In Hardscape; Concrete Drop Inlet, Installed; Sub-Surface Storage; Constructed Wetland (2,560 SqFt); Pocket Wetlands, Includes Soil Mix And Preparation (3,565 SqFt)
Construction Observation		\$ 138,000.00	\$ 138,000.00	Capital	Construction Administration; Soil Testing and Monitoring; AT&T Review; Additional Design, Survey and Permitting Fees
Contingency		\$ 888,523.48	\$ 888,523.48	Capital	20% of site preparation and construction costs
List expenses here			\$ -		
List expenses here			\$ -		
List expenses here			\$ -		
List expenses here			\$ -		
List expenses here			\$ -		
List expenses here			\$ -		
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List expenses here			\$ -		
<b>Total</b>			\$ 6,654,678.88		