

# 2025 Grant Cycle - Phase I Application

Name of Project	Beacon Park
Organization Name	Beacon Foundation
Contact Name	Casey Watkins
Email	casey.watkins@quility.com

## Eligibility

Please complete the questions in this section to confirm your project is eligible for the Tourism Product Development Fund before beginning the application.

Is the applicant a federally recognized non-profit organization or government entity?

Yes

Is the project a festival, cultural event, or other event?

No

Is the grant application for operational expenses only?

No

Is the project located in Buncombe County?

Yes

At the time of application, does the applicant organization have legal control of the property through recorded deed or long-term lease agreement?

Yes

Will the project solely benefit a single lodging owner, lodging property, or be situated on a lodging property?

No

Is the project a major tourism capital project?

Yes

Will the project increase patronage of lodging facilities in Buncombe County by attracting tourists, business travelers, or both, AND further economic development in Buncombe County?

Yes

Will requested grant funds be used for one of the following: (1) Construction of a new location or relocation, or (2) Expansion of an existing location?

Yes

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## Applicant Organization Information

Organization Type	Non-Profit Organization
Organization Phone	(828) 230-2908
Organization Physical Address	204 Whitson ave Swannanoa, NC, 28778
Organization Mailing Address	204 Whitson ave Swannanoa, NC, 28778

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## Primary Contact Information

Please provide the contact information for the primary point of contact for this application.

Name	Katy Post
Title	Beacon Foundation board member
Email	katy.post@quility.com
Phone Number	(828) 691-6334

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## Project Details

Physical Address of Project	204 Whitson Ave Swannanoa, NC, 28778
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**Is your project an expansion of or improvement to an existing facility?**

No

**At the time of application, does the applicant organization have legal control of the property through a recorded deed or long-term lease agreement? If property is owned by a municipal partner, such as the City or County, a non-profit organization may provide a letter of support or other agreement with the municipal partner.**

Yes, the applicant organization has legal control of the property through a long-term lease (Applicant leases the property)

**Please describe your project.**

Beacon Park is a transformative public green space currently in development in the heart of downtown Swannanoa—part of the historic Beacon Blanket mill village. Long defined by its textile manufacturing roots, Swannanoa has faced decades of economic stagnation following the loss of its industrial base. In more recent history, the community was hit hard by Hurricane Helene in 2024, facing widespread flooding, displacement, and loss. Fortunately, Beacon Park sits safely outside the newly established floodplain and sustained little to no damage during the storm, making it one of the few large, accessible parcels of land in the area ready for immediate revitalization. This project seeks to breathe new life into the community by converting a former brownfield into a vibrant regional destination that celebrates outdoor recreation, fosters economic opportunity, and strengthens community identity.

At the heart of the park is a world-class bike facility designed and constructed by Velosolutions, the global leader in urban bike infrastructure. Beacon Park will feature the largest all-wheel facility of its kind in North and South America, designed for accessibility and inclusivity across bikes, skateboards, scooters, and adaptive equipment. The site is expected to draw national and international attention through partnerships with event organizers such as Red Bull, UCI, and USA BMX, while also serving as a critical resource for local youth programming, including after-school events, clinics, and camps.

Additional amenities will include professional-grade outdoor bouldering walls, a one-mile paved walking loop, and a large, open green lawn built to host up to 4,000 people for concerts, festivals, and other cultural gatherings. These community-forward elements are designed to complement Swannanoa's historic character while bringing much-needed economic energy and cultural visibility to this often-overlooked part of Buncombe County.

Beacon Park's location along the proposed Swannanoa River Greenway and the Fonta Flora Trail makes it a key connection point in the region's growing outdoor recreation infrastructure. Anchored in principles of environmental sustainability and stormwater management, the landscape architecture plan is designed to enhance long-term resiliency and sustainability in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene. The project also serves as a model for green development in post-industrial areas.

While the majority of Beacon Park will remain freely accessible to the public, the bike facility will operate under a mission-aligned access model that generates the revenue needed to support ongoing maintenance and reinvestment. 100% of proceeds will be reinvested directly into the park and into the surrounding community through the Beacon Foundation's broader work to promote outdoor equity and long-term community resilience in Swannanoa and beyond.

The development team is currently working toward a grand opening in Fall 2025—a timeline that holds deep symbolic meaning, arriving near the one-year mark since Hurricane Helene. This moment of return and renewal serves as a powerful bookend to the storm's devastation: bringing new life, green space, and joyful gathering back to the very heart of Swannanoa. The opening is envisioned as a regional celebration, drawing residents and visitors from across Asheville and beyond to honor the strength and spirit of this community.

Beacon Park is more than a park—it's a catalyst for inclusive tourism, a magnet for outdoor adventure, and a bold invitation to reimagine the future of small-town Appalachia.

**Provide a detailed description of the project scope of work. For each task / deliverable, include description, cost, and timeline of completion.**

Bike Park - the bike park at The Beacon will feature asphalt paved bike trails with wood features and other elements that support progressive bike skill development. This scope includes engineering, site grading, drainage and stormwater improvements, electric/water/sewer utilities, compacted base layer placement, final asphalt paving, signage/fencing, parking area, and landscaping/lighting. Also included are converted shipping containers to house (1)bike shop, (2)check-in/rental/merchandise, (3)restrooms, and (4)office/meeting space. The total cost of the Bike Park is \$5,165,500.00 and completion is slated for September 2025.

The Walking Path at The Beacon will be a +/- 1 mile paved multi-purpose greenway within the property for neighbors and visitors to recreate. This scope includes engineering, site grading, drainage and stormwater improvements, compacted base layer placement, final asphalt paving, signage/benches/pavilions, and landscaping/lighting. The total cost of the Walking Path is \$2,680,000.00 and completion is slated for September 2025.

The Event Lawn at The Beacon is a +/- 2.5 acre portion of the property that will house an open lawn with perimeter paths and an area for vehicle circulation/modular stage. This scope includes engineering, site grading, drainage and stormwater improvements, paved pathways, electrical service, and landscaping/lighting. The total cost of the Event Lawn is \$3,514,500.00 and completion is slated for September 2025.

Total Project Cost (+ 10% contingency) = \$12,496,000.00

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## Project Milestones

**What is the projected break ground date?** Monday, April 1, 2024

**What is the projected completion date?** Saturday, September 27, 2025

**What is the projected opening date?** Saturday, October 18, 2025

**Please provide other project milestones, if applicable. Please include the date and the milestone description.**

Additional costs included that are above the base amount of funds requested, include the following:  
\*Permanent Stage for Event Lawn \$500,000 (Q4 2026)  
\*Additional Bathrooms for Event Lawn \$212,000 (Q2 2026)  
\*Artificial Turf for Event Lawn \$1,350,000 (Q4 2026)

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## Project Financial Information

**What type of funding are you requesting?**

Grant

**What is the total budget for your project?** \$12,496,000.00

What is your requested funding amount?

\$5,863,800.00

List the current mix of non-TPDF funding for your project. Include the source, amount, status, and if the funding is contingent on TPDF funds.

	Source	Amount	Status
Source 1	Beacon Foundation Founders	1,915,000.00	In-Hand
Source 2	Beacon Foundation Line of Credit with Hometrust Bank	3,000,000.00	Committed
Source 3	Beacon Foundation Land Value	948,800.00	Committed
Source 4			
Source 5			
Source 6			
Source 7			
Source 8			
Source 9			
Source 10			

Total Amount of non-TPDF funding

5,863,800.00

If the total amount of non-TPDF funding sources listed above is less than the requested TPDF funding amount. Please describe your plan to raise the remaining amount to meet the 1-to-1 funding match requirement.

n/a

If any of the above funding sources are contingent on receiving funding through the Tourism Product Development Fund, please explain below.

n/a

Have you received TPDF funding in the past for this specific project?

No

## Project Impact

Will the project be able to track the number of visitors to the project through ticket sales, registration, surveys, or other similar methods?

Yes

If applicable, how many visitors does your current operation serve annually?

n/a

**What is the estimated number of visitors at your project for YEAR 1 of operation?** 32,000

**What is the estimated number of visitors at your project for YEAR 2 of operation?** 45,000

**What is the estimated number of visitors at your project for YEAR 3 of operation?** 75,000

**What are your visitation estimates based on? (Example: existing customer data, ticket sales, research, etc.)**

The attendance estimates provided are derived from other relevant bike park offerings (RIDE Kanuga) along with data available through the International Mountain Bike Association and National Forest Service data on Pisgah and Nantahala National Forest recreational cycling users. Actual user data will be tracked by bike park ticket sales, a robust CRM marketing package, and event sales.

**How many days would a typical visitor patronize your project during one visit to Buncombe County?** 1 visit per day spent visiting Buncombe County

**What is your estimated percentage of visitors to this project who will stay overnight in Buncombe County in paid lodging?** 50%

**Please describe your current or expected audience.**

Our expected audience includes the growing all-wheels community—cyclists, skateboarders, scooter riders, adaptive riders, and others—as well as individuals and families seeking open space for recreation, outdoor arts, and cultural events. The demand for accessible, outdoor gathering spaces became especially clear during the COVID-19 pandemic and has only increased in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene. Beacon Park is designed to offer meaningful experiences for all ages and ability levels—from beginners to seasoned riders—and aims to foster inclusivity and connection on a local, regional, and global scale.

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## Terms of Agreement

Please read each of the following statements and acknowledge that you understand and agree to them by checking the boxes. Applications cannot be submitted unless this field is completed.

### Disclosure for the Public Record

As a public authority, the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority is subject to Chapter 132 of the North Carolina General Statutes. Therefore, any and all aspects of this application must be made available by the BCTDA to any party, public or private, upon request without exception. If you are concerned that the distribution of any of your application materials may do irreparable damage to you, your organization, or associated parties, the BCTDA highly recommends that you seek alternative funding in lieu of TPDF funds.

**Project Monitoring**

I hereby acknowledge that if I am awarded TPDF funding, I will be required to submit an annual report by January 15 of each year during the term of the agreement, with the term commencing on the effective date and continuing for four years after the completion date. Reports include marketing plans and methodologies for capturing annual and out-of-market visitation, up-to-date room night projections, and copies of survey instruments used for data among other requirements.

**BCTDA Marketing**

I hereby acknowledge that certain information from my application, such as the project description, timeline, and leadership, may be used by the BCTDA at its sole discretion for the promotion and marketing of the TPDF program and the region as a tourism destination.

**Completed Application**

I hereby acknowledge that I have completed this application in good faith and have done so in full compliance with the law. I have made no attempt to falsify or misconstrue facts or data anywhere in this application. The information contained in this application is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

**Terms and Conditions**

Accepted