

2025 Grant Cycle - Phase II Application

Name of Project	Enka Recreation Destination Phase 2A
Organization Name	Buncombe County Government
Email	elizabeth.odderstol@buncombenc.gov

Eligibility

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

Applicant Organization Information

Organization Type	Government Entity
Organization Phone	(828) 250-4100
Organization Physical Address	200 College St Asheville, NC, 28801

Primary Contact Information

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

Project Details

Physical Address of Project	58 Apac Circle Asheville, NC, 28806
Is your project an expansion of or improvement to an existing facility?	Yes

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 recorded deed (Applicant owns the property)

Please describe your project in detail.

The Enka Recreation Destination merges tournament quality soccer and baseball fields with an extended greenway network and community recreation amenities. By completing work on the four additional soccer fields and visitor amenities, Buncombe County Recreation Services seeks to continue positioning the Enka Recreation Destination as a premier sports complex and family destination. This project will enable the county to recruit more regional competitive tournaments while meeting the increased local need for athletic sports fields and family-friendly recreation opportunities.

In the aftermath of Tropical Storm Helene, both of these goals are more important than ever. Increasing the number of tournament quality fields at the Buncombe County Sports Park will aid our community's economic recovery and help recover our lost field capacity.

In Phase 2 of the Enka Recreation Destination project, Buncombe County is continuing to develop the Enka Recreation Destination as a dynamic recreation, sports, and family-friendly park complex. The TDA has been a vital partner since the start of our efforts to revitalize the Buncombe County Sports Park, including awards for:

- Phase 1 funding requested in 2018 to build 3 turfed and lighted soccer fields – complete
 - o Enka Heritage Trail – design in progress
- Phase 1B funding requested in 2022 to construct waterline and bathroom – complete
 - o BC Matching Fund projects include dog park, restroom facility with EV charger by field 9, two bocce courts, exercise equipment.
- Phase 2 funding requested in 2023 – Out to bid for construction on 8/2025
 - o BC matching fund projects include fully re-paved complex, safety guardrails, improved park amenities (trash cans and picnic tables), re-designed disc golf course holes

In 2023, Buncombe County Recreation Services submitted an application to begin Phase 2 of the Enka Destination with a \$6 million request and was awarded \$4 million, leaving a \$2 million gap in funding. The county moved forward with a contract for the design and engineering of Phase 2 which includes four turfed fields, three of these with lighting for extended play. Civil Design Concepts (CDC) has been awarded the contract for this project and is working through the bid then permitting of the project with an anticipated start of construction this Fall.

Since the initial application, the \$2 million funding gap to deliver this project has grown exponentially due to rising construction and material costs and the need to prioritize resiliency features post-Helene. Additional resiliency measures have been added, post-Hurricane Helene, to ensure that fields can better withstand weather impacts and come back online quickly after future events. As we look ahead to beginning construction on this second phase, Buncombe County Recreation Services' requests that the TPDF committee fund the remaining \$3.9 million necessary to complete the project which includes an ADA accessible walking path and playground, contact station, new shelter, and fields. We are currently at a stage in implementation where this funding would ensure the County's ability to deliver a completed project in a timely manner and with minimal project mobilization delays, the current funding gap means that the county will have to eliminate a portion of the turfed and lighted fields. Ensuring timely delivery for the Enka Recreation Destination is essential for Buncombe County's ongoing economic recovery, as our community's sporting facilities were significantly impacted by Hurricane Helene.

With additional funding for this project, Phase 2 of the Enka Recreation Destination Project will deliver all four turfed fields, three with lighting, at the Buncombe County Sports Park (BCSP). Along with the accessible walking path, playground, increased seating, contact station, and sheltering area, these assets will not only support sports tourism by building the spaces necessary for leagues to host tournaments,

but will also create a destination that is inclusive and accessible for members of the community and the families visiting. The resiliency features will also enable BCSP to better serve as a community hub in times of need and emergencies. Overall, this project will continue to improve the quality of life for Western North Carolina residents and attract competitive regional tournaments.

We want to recognize the critical role that the Buncombe County Sports Park played in response to Hurricane Helene as it served as one of the largest Comfort Care Stations, food and water distribution sites in the area, and centralized location for FEMA to work directly with community affected by the hurricane. For four full months, the BCSP played a major role in response to provide basic needs for families, while also serving as one of the only recreational facilities that families could utilize post-storm.

Buncombe County Recreation Services appreciates the TPDF Committee's consideration of the Enka Phase 2 application at this time. Though Buncombe County has committed over \$4.1 million to Phase 2, and much more to the whole Enka Recreation Destination development, we are not able to commit or leverage additional general fund dollars to bridge the funding gap, given the financial impact of Helene on the County's operations and revenues. Additional TPDF funding for this project will ensure that the Buncombe County Sports Park Phase 2 project is fully delivered on schedule and ready to serve our community and support tourism recovery, under both blue and gray skies.

As other funding opportunities become available, Buncombe County will continue to make future investments in the Buncombe County Sports Park that will enhance visitor experience. Projects may include the construction of an office and gymnasium, which would increase capacity for sporting events, and the opening of a second entrance and exit, which would reduce traffic congestion during tournaments.

Construction Scope: To help us understand the size and scope of the project, please provide a detailed description of the scope of work for the physical construction of the project, along with associated costs for each component. As applicable, include number of buildings/structures, materials, square footage, equipment, etc.

In Phase 2, Enka Recreation Destination is building upon tournament quality assets with additional turf, lights, and resilient recreational amenities to solidify the Buncombe County Sports Park as a premier sport park and family destination, an essential asset for community health, and as a travel destination for competitive sports leagues.

To meet this vision for this project, additional turf and lights are a central component that will allow Buncombe County to further engage and invite larger, more diverse audiences to the destination. In a post-hurricane Buncombe County, we are thoughtfully looking to add fields and lighting to grow and sustain the increased demand for soccer and multi-use sports fields. By enhancing and updating grass fields to lighted turf fields, we will be able to increase playable hours both year-round and into the evenings while decreasing maintenance costs.

Increasing the resiliency and safety of this project with elements such as enhanced erosion control measures, solar lighting, and safety guardrails, not only allows for a more sustainable recreational asset, but will continue to serve as an essential asset for Buncombe County as a whole during emergencies. In addition, Buncombe County will be developing several assets for a more family-friendly atmosphere, such as Accessible Playground Assets, an ADA accessible Walking Path, and Accessible Spectator Seating. These assets will not only support sports tourism by creating the spaces necessary for leagues to host tournaments but also create a destination that is inclusive and accessible for members of the community and the families visiting.

Phase 2 of the Enka Recreation Destination is estimated to be a \$26.2 million project. The major elements of the project and their associated costs and timelines are:

- Turfing:
 - o Scope: Fields 3, 4, 5 & 9. Turfing will include safety improvements, such as fencing and stormwater control measures.
 - o Costs: \$5.3 million was the original cost to provide a turf structure to fields 4 & 5-approx. 150,000 SF, Field 3-approx. 69,000 SF, and Field 9-approx. 57,000 SF. Due to current cost escalation at 10% for 2 years and the need for future contingency, the current estimate is \$7,179,845.

- o Timeline of Completion: FY 28
- Lighting:
 - o Scope: Fields 3, 4, & 5
 - o Costs: Musco will be the preferred vendor for this contract to match the lighting existing on fields 1,2, 3and 8. The original price of lighting was estimated at \$595,000.00. Current costs for lighting systems are at \$350,000 per field, bringing current cost estimates for field lighting, adjacent lighting, and contingency to \$1,222,857.
- o Timeline of Completion: FY 28
- Playground
 - o Scope: Address current drainage issues associate with the current playground area.
 - o Costs: Cost estimates for this deliverable is \$950,000. This cost includes drainage design as well as the creation of a new durable playground pad.
- o Timeline of Completion: FY 28
- ADA Accessible Walking Path
 - o Scope: Build an ADA compliant walking path, half mile in length, to increase accessibility to facility
 - o Costs: estimates for ADA permeable walking path are at \$340,000 for a half mile
- o Timeline of Completion: FY28
- Visitor Contact Station & Ranger Office
 - o Scope: Buncombe County sports complex we will be completing the renovation of our park ranger office, bathrooms, and concession stand into a family station park office, and designated First Aid area.
 - o Costs: According to national trends, we expected the renovation of this space at the square feet of 2,900 to cost \$495,000. Current cost at 10% escalation for 2 years brings current cost to \$774,520.
- o Timeline of Completion: FY 28
- Pavilion
 - o Scope: Replacement of outdated picnic shelter structure with a new.
 - o Costs: This new structure will be Sq Ft- 2,400 per Sq Ft originally estimated to cost\$125 cost –for a total of \$324,000. With an expected 25% cost increase we can expect this number to be \$405,000. Current cost at 10% escalation for 2 years brings current cost to \$633,699
- o Timeline of Completion: FY 28
- Resiliency
 - o Scope: Increasing the resiliency and safety of this project.
 - o Costs: Solar, stormwater management, erosion control/stream bank stabilization (estimated \$392,748)

o Timeline of Completion: FY28

To continue growing our capacity to host large tournaments, Buncombe County Recreation Services believes a greater investment in the park’s facilities is necessary. As the park hosts a larger number of major tournaments, our Recreation Services team has found great need for a visitor information center with a designated First Aid station, space for tournament hosts and teams to gather, and recreation opportunities for all family members attending youth sporting events. These facilities will welcome and engage visitors of all ages and leave families with the positive experiences that will encourage them to return in the future.

In addition to the turfed fields and visitor amenities described in this application, Buncombe County Recreation Services is committed to the long-term viability of this facility and will continue to make investments in the Buncombe County Sports Park that will improve services and the visitor experience. Phase 3 of the Enka Recreation Destination will feature projects like sports courts, extended parking, and additional lighting. These future investments will continue to build on the success of this facility, driving tourism and economic development in Buncombe County.

Project Milestones

What is the projected break ground date?

Wednesday, October 1, 2025

What is the projected completion date?

Thursday, October 1, 2026

What is the projected opening date?

Sunday, November 1, 2026

If applicable, please list any additional project milestones. Be sure to include both the date and a brief description of each milestone.

08/01/2024 – Issue RFQ for design and engineering services (Complete)
07/2025 – Design and engineering complete for Fields 3,4, 5,& 9
09/2025 – Construction Begins for Fields 3,4, 5,&9
09/20/2026- Construction Complete
10/2026 - Project Closeout procedures complete and fields open to the public
The project milestones are based on design and construction schedules experienced in phase 1.

Project Financial Information

What type of funding are you requesting?

Grant

What is the total budget for your project?

\$12,060,670

What is your requested funding amount?

\$3,895,321

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	Buncombe County General Funds	\$3,610,934	Committed
Source 2	State Funds	\$500,000	Committed
Source 3			
Source 4			
Source 5			
Source 6			
Source 7			
Source 8			
Source 9			
Source 10			

Total Amount of non-TPDF funding

\$4,110,934

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.

At this time, Buncombe County Government is not in a position to provide additional match for this project. Tropical Storm Helene significantly increased our operating expenses and impacted our ability to further fund the project. The County has researched and sought grant funding from other Economic Development institutions, such as the Appalachian Regional Commission, however their opportunities were not well-suited to sports tourism related projects. As such, we believe that the Tourism Product Development Fund offers the best opportunity to fully fund this project and deliver the additional turfed fields in a timely manner. We appreciate the TPDF Committee's review of this project and the opportunity to participate in Phase II of the grant application. Since the creation of the Enka Recreation Destination, Buncombe County has contributed over \$11.7 million in funds including grants obtained through the NCDOT and State of NC through their ADA Accessible Parks Grant.

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

No sources are contingent on receipt of TPDF funds.

Project Impact

Does your project currently serve (or will serve) visitors to Buncombe County?

Yes

How many total guests do you receive annually, including local residents and out-of-market visitors?

1,356,675

How many out-of-market visitors do you receive annually? Please describe how you define "out-of-market"?

Buncombe County receives 40,700 out-of-market visitors annually. We define out-of-market visitors as those who do not reside within Buncombe County and travel 50+ miles from Ashville to attend tournament and sports events.

What percentage of your out-of-market visitors spend the night in paid accommodations in Buncombe County?

Of the 1,356,675 visitors to the Buncombe County Sports Park, approximately 3% of our overall visitors spend the night in paid accommodations across the county.

What data or methods did you use to develop your visitor and out-of-market visitor estimates? (e.g., historical data, ticket sales, market research)

Buncombe County used historical data and assumed the same number of visits for the first year from FY25. Year 2 assumes a 10% increase in visitation with year 3 at a 6% increase in visitation. This will be tracked using our TRAFX car counter system.

How many days would a typical out-of-market visitor patronize your project during one visit to Buncombe County?

Out-of-market visitors typically use the Enka Recreation Destination facilities two days during their visit.

What percentage of out-of-market visitors to your project do you estimate will stay overnight in paid lodging within Buncombe County?

80%

Describe the market to be served by your project.

Buncombe County Parks and Recreation and our partners seek to serve competitive and non-competitive youth and adult soccer, lacrosse, and ultimate frisbee sporting events that exist in our region and across the state; local sports organizations interested in developing tournaments; and out of town event owners looking for facilities to host their events.

Residents of Buncombe County benefit from turf field play throughout the year through various recreational and competitive leagues and events giving them a sense of ownership and pride in the Enka Recreation Destination. The additional park amenities including the accessible playground and walking track, dog park, community gardens, bocce courts, disc golf course, shelter and exercise equipment make this destination project appealing to families and athletes alike!

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.

Disclsoure 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

2025 Grant Cycle - Phase II Application

Many of these questions will build on the Phase I application and some of the questions are the same. For ease of the application, we recommend you have your Phase I submissions on hand to copy / paste and modify from there. Please reach out to our team if you have any questions along the way.

Primary Contact Information

Name of Person Completing the Application	Elizabeth Odderstol
Title	Economic Development Program Analyst
Phone Number	(828) 203-5685
Federal EIN Number	56-6000279
Organization Mailing Address	200 College St, 3rd Floor Asheville, NC, 28801

Briefly describe your organization's mission and the history of the organization.

1. Mission

Buncombe County’s vision for our community, as outlined in our current Strategic Plan, is to foster a caring community in harmony with its environment where residents succeed, thrive, and realize their potential. Specifically, the County seeks to achieve this with a three-pronged mission to:

- promote a health, safe, well-educated, and thriving community with a sustainable quality of life
- provide effective and efficient government our residents can trust
- and deliver needed services through a responsive workforce committed to excellence, integrity, and teamwork.

The Enka Recreation Destination Phase 2 project fully aligns with the County’s vision and mission by delivering a family-friendly recreation asset, where visitors and residents alike can participate in competitive tournaments and enjoy our community’s excellent outdoor recreation.

2. History

The geographic region that is now Buncombe County was home to many indigenous towns including a settlement at the confluence of the French Broad and Swannanoa Rivers on the present-day Biltmore Estate. Western North Carolina was primarily occupied by the Cherokee People but was also home to other indigenous cultures like the Catawba People. In the early 18th century, the estimated population of the Cherokee People was 36,000. By 1770, however, only about 7,000 Cherokees remained. A series of smallpox outbreaks not only caused a massive population to decline but also forced the relocation and consolidation of Cherokee towns throughout the southern mountains.

As the populations of the westernmost sections of the extant Burke and Rutherford counties continued to attract Scots-Irish, German, and Dutch settlers, residents petitioned the State Legislature to form a new county. The measure passed in 1791, and a small group of wealthy landowners formed Buncombe County’s first local government in 1792. At the time of its creation, the jurisdiction of Buncombe County encompassed most of the western part of the State. It was so large that it was often called the “State of Buncombe.” The county seat, originally called Morristown, was re-named Asheville in 1793 to honor Governor Samuel Ashe.

In 1989, the county adopted the council-manager form of government and appointed the first County Manager, Steve Metcalf. We now have seven county commissioners elected to four-year staggered terms. They must reside in specific districts and are elected by voters in those districts, except for the board chair and at an at-large position.

Since the 1980s, Buncombe County has continued to attract visitors. More than 10 million people make their way to Buncombe County each year, and tourism remains one of the primary drivers of economic

growth. As of the 2020 census, Buncombe County is home to more than 269,000 residents and continues to grow.

Identify and describe any pending legal action against you or your organization that would threaten the ability of the applicant to complete this project. If none, enter "N/A".

N/A

Is your organization formally registered with the IRS and State of North Carolina and is it in good standing? If not, please explain below.

Yes

List the key leadership of your organization and project. Please also include a description of each individual's specific role with the project. (You can list up to 6 people.)

	Name	Primary Company / Organization	Role
Key Leadership of Project or Organization #1	Allison Dains	Buncombe County	Director, Parks and Recreation
Key Leadership of Project or Organization #2	Timothy Love	Buncombe County	Assistant County Manager
Key Leadership of Project or Organization #3	Avril Pinder	Buncombe County	County Manager
Key Leadership of Project or Organization #4	Joseph Guseman	Buncombe County	Recreation Project Manager
Key Leadership of Project or Organization #5	Elizabeth Odderstol	Buncombe County	Economic Development Program Analyst
Key Leadership of Project or Organization #6	Tyler Henry	Buncombe County	Grants Manager

If applicable, identify any current partnerships your organization holds with other organizations that are related to this project. Include the name of the organization and nature of the partnership.

Buncombe County partners closely with the Asheville Buncombe Youth Soccer Association (ABYSA) to schedule and manage the competitive soccer tournaments that take place at the Enka Recreation Destination. ABYSA and Buncombe County Parks and Recreation have an established relationship through a management agreement. Though ABYSA will not take part in the construction of the fields and amenities included in this application, they will be instrumental in ensuring the Enka Recreation Destination's increased capacity yields more play time and tournament events.

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

Describe the value of your project to tourism in Buncombe County.

Sports tourism and tournaments are a well-known draw for visitation. According to the Sports Events & Tourism association, "As of 2021, sports events and tourism accounted for \$39.7B in direct spending, \$12.9B in tax revenue, and a total economic impact of \$91.8B in the United States. Additionally, over 650,000 people are employed within this industry in some capacity."

The Enka Recreation Destination already has a typical tournament attendance of 2706 attendees per

event, including players and spectators, and will continue to drive more sports tourism as fields come online. With the loss of 4 turfed fields at the JBL Complex, by bringing additional products online, Buncombe County and the TDA will create a more resilient and sustainable sport tourism market in Western North Carolina. Due to the substantial investment from the TDA, the Buncombe County Sports Park (BCSP) has already greatly increased its capacity and even exceeded the second-year goal we listed in our 2023 application. The 2024 goal was to reach 1,064,985 visitors, and in that year BCSP had 1,356,666 visitors to the park.

If any of the above milestones have changed from what was provided in your Phase I application, please provide an explanation for the change. (If no changes, please enter "N/A")

N/A

When will TPDF funds first be required? Fall 2025

If your project will not begin construction within 18 months of the award notification, please explain why securing funding at this stage is essential to the project's success.

N/A

Does a project similar to yours already exist in Western North Carolina? If so, please identify the project(s) and how your project will draw new or additional overnight visitors.

Though turf fields exist sporadically throughout the area, the integration of the turfed fields that we are proposing BCSP with those at the John B. Lewis Soccer Fields through our partnership with ABYSA will give access to a total of 10 turfed fields collectively. This creates the opportunity for larger, more diverse tournaments to occur within our region. These turfed fields offer a level of weather resilience that allows us to target and draw tournaments during typically “down times” in the Winter and early Spring, bringing visitors to the area outside of the busy Summer and Fall months for a more well-rounded tourist influx throughout the year.

The International Sport Complex in Canton has similar amenities to the BCSP but is tailored to the baseball/softball community. There are no destination projects in the region that integrate the multi-use/soccer fields and amenities that Buncombe County Parks and Recreation seek to create with the Enka Recreation Destination. Our proposal for additional turfed fields with lighting, increases tournament play to draw a larger audience while providing family-friendly enhancements to the project. Families and individuals will be able to enjoy an accessible playground, walking path, additional seating, sheltered areas, and increased staff accessibility with the visitor contact center. Visitors will also be able to enjoy existing opportunities for exercise on outdoor equipment, a disc golf course, and bocce courts. At the Enka Recreation Destination, a family can harvest food from the community garden and play with their dog at the dog park, all in one location.

Has a feasibility study been completed for this project? Yes

What are your project and/or organizational goals, and how will you determine if you met them?

The Enka Recreation Destination creates a premier and unique recreation destination with competitive and tournament quality sports fields serving as a driver of economic development and regional athletic competitions and events. With the addition of 4 turfed and 3 lighted fields, we seek to increase tournament participation projected by ABYSA using the Event Impact Calculator by 6% each year, with one new event added each year.

To determine if we meet these goals, we will measure usage, engagement, and community impact using a two-pronged approach for measurement: use of TRAFX counter system and the Event Impact Calculator to track tournaments and events offered with participation numbers.

We track and monitor the number of individuals attending our parks via our TRAFX vehicle and pedestrian counter system. The TRAFX system delivers time-stamped visitation data that can be directly linked to events.

Through our partnership with ABYSA, we also have historical data with participation numbers for tournaments and events. We will continue to track the number of teams and participants and translate the increased participation into an increase in room night visitations using the EIC for tournaments and events. In calendar year 2024, Asheville Buncombe Youth Soccer Association (ABYSA) hosted 11 weekend tournament events and accounting for over 27,000 hotel nights.

Adding turfed fields will yield further increases in both participation and room nights. In partnership with ABYSA, Buncombe County Parks and Recreation will continue to produce complete and reliable tournament and Event Impact Calculator (EIC) data.

If any of the above funding sources are grants, please provide a description of the expenses covered by each grant.

N/A

What is the estimated annual cost to operate and maintain the project? Who will be responsible for ongoing operations and maintenance?

Buncombe County Parks and Recreation will be responsible for the ongoing operations and maintenance of the Enka Recreation Destination and accounts for approximately 10% of the annual operation expenses of \$850,000. All costs will be a part of the Parks and Recreation regular operating budget. ABYSA has the management agreement for the BCSP through 2027 which includes the direct maintenance of the sports fields alone but does not include certain repairs.

What is the LEAST amount of TPDF Funding your project could receive without significant changes to the project scope? \$3,502,573

Project Marketing Plan

Describe the target audience for your project.

The Enka Recreation Destination is designed to attract various audiences who have non-competitive and competitive recreation needs. Upgrades to the BCSP will provide accessible recreation options for diverse age groups and mobility levels, enabling opportunities for a wide range of ages and abilities.

Moreover, this project is designed to be family-friendly, appealing to all ages from toddlers to senior citizens. By providing a space where there are numerous opportunities for recreation, family members can be close to one another while supporting each other in various activities. By creating synergy between multiple target audiences, we foster demand by focusing on accessible recreation and athletic facilities. Buncombe County Parks and Recreation believes that cultivating active lifestyles and creating safe spaces for families to recreate is essential for a healthy community and a culture that will keep visitors returning to our destination.

The turf fields will attract a target audience that includes youth and adult competitive sports teams from across North Carolina, as well as travel teams from nearby states, specializing in soccer, lacrosse, and ultimate frisbee. Additionally, we aim to attract local sports organizations interested in hosting tournaments, out-of-town event owners seeking large sports event venues, and Buncombe County residents with various recreational interests including league play. These efforts will generate overnight stays and encourage repeat visits.

How do you plan to reach your target audience?

Buncombe County Parks and Recreation will reach our target audience by collaborating closely with our project partners and resident adult and youth sports teams. ABYSA is a key stakeholder and currently manages the athletic fields at the Buncombe County Sports Park through a management agreement. The County will work with ABYSA to focus on recruiting youth and adult recreation leagues and tournaments to the area, leveraging their expertise and proven marketing strategies within the soccer tournament world. Their efforts are professional, effective, and centered around understanding decision-making factors for clubs and administrators for soccer, lacrosse, ultimate frisbee and other field sports.

ABYSA's strong relationships and proven track record have earned them return business with North Carolina Youth Soccer Association (NCYSA) and their adult counterpart, NCASA, including multiple state cup weekends per year for well over ten consecutive years. Their investment in a dedicated Tournament Director and resources for program directors ensures a quality product to promote. Through these established relationships, news of the new fields at BCSP will quickly spread amidst clubs in the region.

Additionally, we will continue marketing efforts, using social media, print materials, communications, and a strong presence throughout the county to reach those living, working, and playing in the area. The Parks and Recreation Department has a designated communications specialist through the County Communications and Public Engagement Team. This staff member's primary responsibilities are focused on marketing recreation opportunities and programs throughout the county and across the region.

We will also capitalize on Asheville's reputation as a tourist destination by advertising in regional publications and through the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA).

How much do you plan to invest in marketing annually? How much will be invested outside the Asheville market? (Out-of-market is defined as 50 miles or more from Asheville.)

Buncombe County's Communication and Public Engagement Department services all county operations, including for marketing services, and has a total budget of \$695,971. There are additional advertising dollars within some departments such as Parks and Recreation, which has a \$5,000 marketing budget. Approximately 10% of that budget is invested toward out-of-market visitors.

Our primary investment is in the staff who execute tournament business. Staff resources have been designated through the management agreement to prioritize our sports tourism impact. ABYSA also employs a graphic artist that manages our website and produces marketing materials. Additionally, the ABYSA Executive Director serves on the board of the Asheville Buncombe Regional Sports Commission (ABRSC), another key partner in attracting events to Buncombe County. ABYSA and the Parks and Recreation Department assist with ABRSC's more traditional marketing approaches by helping develop materials that highlight the Buncombe County Sports Park and its amenities.

Tournament exchange relationships with US Youth Soccer affiliated associations are likewise critical to the marketing plan for BCSP, producing overnight visitors for established and new events. They have tournament exchange reciprocal agreements with Greensboro YSA< Charlotte Soccer Academy, North Carolina FC Raleigh, USA Mount Pleasant SC, Discoveries Rock Hill SC, FC Alliance Knoxville, and Unite FA Atlanta. These agreements account for over 150 teams' participation in ABYSA's four annual invitational tournaments and contribute immensely to marketing efforts.

Who will implement the marketing plan?

The implementation of the marketing plan will be a collaborative effort between Buncombe County Parks and Recreation and our project partners. The County employs an Information and Communications Specialist whose primary focus is working with the Parks and Recreation Department and our community partners to advertise, highlight and champion all department initiatives and programs.

Each partner organization will be responsible for independently implementing their respective marketing plans and working collaboratively with the County. This approach allows for reflexive and agile marketing strategies that specifically target the market segments served by each organization. This collaboration will drive park usage and ensure integration of marketing efforts.

Please describe the demographics of your current guests, if possible.

We do not have exact demographics of all of our current guests however we believe that the demographics of our visitors are representative of Buncombe County demographics as a whole where 89.4% of the population is white, 6.1% is black or African American, 1.5% is Asian, 7.5% is Hispanic or Latino, 0.6% is American Indian and Alaska Native and 2.3% is two or more races. 17.5% of County population is between the ages of 5 and 18 years old and 56.4% between the ages of 19 to 64 years old with 21.6% of the population being over the age of 65.

Please describe the methods your organization uses to calculate total annual visitation and to distinguish out-of-market visitors.

Calculations of total visitors are made using the TRAFX System Car Counter and through partnership with ABYSA, who manages field usage and tracks events and registration data.

Out-of-market visitation is determined by using the Event Impact Calculator (EIC) to analyze tournament registration data. The nature of the competitive sports tournament registration process is robust and produces reliable data for input to the EIC.

How will your project drive increased patronage of lodging facilities in Buncombe County by attracting tourists, business travelers, or both?

The Enka Recreation Destination will increase patronage of lodging facilities in Buncombe County by greatly improving the recreational amenities available, increasing playable hours, and creating more opportunities for recruiting competitive and non-competitive sporting events. Field capacity limitations have often played a heavy role in limiting tournament size. A number of existing tournaments are ripe for expansion and could easily attract more teams with the increased field capacity. By increasing tournament capacity and attracting new events, the Enka Recreation Destination will also increase the number of overnight visitors to an estimated 6% year over year to the EIC produced by ABYSA as their estimation does not currently include the 4 additional turfed fields gained through this project.

Please provide your estimated total number of guests—both local and out-of-market—for each of the first three years of operation. Also include an estimated percentage for out-of-market visitors for each year.

	Total Guests (Local + Out-of-Market)	Percentage of Out-of-Market Visitors
Year 1	1390567	3
Year 2	1529624	4
Year 3	1621401	5

How will future visitation to the project be tracked? Please specify the methods you plan to use (e.g., ticket sales, registrations, surveys, or other tracking tools).

In the future, Buncombe County will continue to use the TRAFX Car Counter System as well as data obtained and managed by ABYSA for tournaments.

Please describe how you came up with the above estimate for the number of days a typical out-of-market visitor would patronize your project during one visit in Buncombe County.

Tournament events are played on Saturday and Sunday, so our visitors typically patronize the fields two times in one visit and spend at least two nights in Buncombe County, as tournaments begin early on Saturday mornings.

Will your project draw out-of-market visitors to Buncombe County during identified periods of need for lodging room nights?

The turfed fields will enable sporting events to take place at the Enka Recreation Destination during all seasons with extended playability into the evenings due to the addition of lights. Turf field playability remains strong during the Winter months and early Spring when the rainy season comes into play.

What methodology do you plan to implement to determine the project's impact upon lodging once the project opens?

Buncombe County and our partners will continue to employ the methods described above to track visitors, event participation, and overnight stays.

After your project opens, how many new, permanent full-time positions do you anticipate your project will generate that are directly related to the project?

2

After your project opens, how many new, seasonal or part-time positions do you anticipate your project will generate that are directly related to the project?

4

Alignment with Strategic Imperatives and Destination Brand

Please describe how the project is aligned with each of the four strategic pillars of Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority. [Learn more about the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority's Strategic Imperatives.](#)

How does your organization and proposed project complement and support the strategic imperative of: Delivering Balanced and Sustainable Growth?

The Enka Recreation Destination project is "Delivering Balanced Recovery and Sustainable Growth" by delivering tourism assets that will increase the number of sporting fields in our community with sustainability, resiliency, and accessibility in mind. Improving field conditions with AstroTurf will enable Buncombe County to keep the fields open during all seasons, increasing playable hours and ensuring Buncombe County Sports Park is better able to weather future inclement events. Another key factor is that eleven of the twelve events hosted at the BCSP in collaboration with ABYSA in 2023 have a ten-year or longer history in our community. These events have grown, hand in hand, with availability of quality facilities to play. Increased artificial turf with field lighting capacity will allow existing events to grow by 10% by year two and an additional 6% in year three. Additionally, the county will be able to work with Airstream Ventures to bring new and varied events to Buncombe County with the addition of the 4 new field capacity. Additional turfed and lighted fields will allow for a minimum of one new tournament event, each year, during the first three years of operation, with a modest estimated 1,500-room night impact for each of the three new events.

How does your organization and proposed project complement and support the strategic imperative of: Encouraging Safe and Responsible Travel?

Buncombe County will encourage safe and responsible travel at the Enka Recreation Destination by providing recreational opportunities that respect and protect the natural and cultural resources of this area. By enhancing existing facilities, we seek to promote sustainability and minimize the negative impacts of further development. Through thoughtful, target planning, we are designing elements and creating enhancements at the park that work to restore Hominy Creek's natural beauty and preserve culturally significant elements, such as our River Cane Conservation at Buncombe County Sports Park.

The walking trail includes educational elements, sharing about the importance of river cane to the Cherokee community and its essential functions protecting our waterways. The Enka Recreation Destination extends environmental sustainability beyond its geographic scope by helping greenway, park and recreation users foster a deeper connection with nature and inspiring conversations on recreation as a tool for preservation.

How does your organization and proposed project complement and support the strategic imperative of: Engaging and Inviting More Diverse Audiences?

The Enka Recreation Destination’s amenities have been designed with accessibility in mind and will increase access to recreation activities for all ages and abilities, engaging and inviting a wider audience. Buncombe County’s commitment to accessibility is reflected in the enhancement of ADA-accessible trail access, the renovation of the playground, and improvements to the shelter and concession stand. These updates will position the Buncombe County Sports Park as a premier sports complex and family destination, sought after for tournaments and welcoming to all families and individuals.

The Buncombe County Parks and Recreation team also works to expand recreational opportunities in all communities through our Community Outreach and Recreation Experiences (CORE) program. CORE expands recreation in Buncombe by working with community centers, non-profits, and outdoor recreation partners to bring recreational programming to underserved and rural communities. The amenities at Buncombe County Sports Park and the CORE programming will allow us to make field sports accessible through targeted programming, financial aid programs, and collaborative programs through non-profit organizations.

How does your organization and proposed project complement and support the strategic imperative of: Promoting and Supporting Asheville's Creative Spirit?

Buncombe County Parks and Recreation seeks to promote and support Asheville’s creative spirit by allowing for tournament and recreational sports and inviting families, spectators, and visitors to engage the natural and cultural heritage of the area through enhanced playground areas, informational and education heritage displays of existing native river cane, and opportunities to engage in wellness activities. The updates to BCSP, including renovated state-of-the-art facilities and improved amenities, differentiates the park as a destination that inspires visits and welcomes new opportunities to partner with creative neighboring businesses via space availability, event partnerships, and more. While in town for a weekend tournament, out-of-market visitors to the Enka Recreation Destination will also patronize creative endeavors across all sectors, including hotels and Buncombe’s local food and beverage scene.

Required Supporting Documentation

Proof of Legal Site Control of the Property: May provide copy of 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.

 BCSP. CountyOwnership.pdf

Proof of non-profit organization status through a filed IRS Form 990

 Federal Tax Status.pdf

List of your organization's Board of Directors and affiliations

County Commissioners

[Link County Commissioners Page](#)

Staff		
Name	Title	Phone
Ball, Drew	District 3	828-333-7286
Edwards, Amanda	Chair	828-250-4005
Horton, Jennifer	District 1	828-250-4004
Moore, Martin	District 2	828-250-4010
Sloan, Parker	District 3	828-367-9636
Wells, Terri	District 2	828-250-4008
Whitesides, Al	District 1	828-250-4006

[Return to Staff Directory](#)

Government Websites by [ChicPlus](#)

Select Language
[Google Translate](#)

Drawings, photos, or renderings related to the project (optional).



Enka Recreation Destination Marketin... .pdf

Completed Room Night Calculator



Buncombe County Room Night Calcul... .xlsx

Project Budget - if possible, budget line items should align with the scope of work provided in the "Project Financial Information" section of this application. Please provide the project budget in a Microsoft Excel or Word format (.xls, .xlsx, .csv, .doc, .docx).



TPDF Phase 2A Budget - 8.1.25.xlsx

Proof of non-TPDF funds raised to date for the project. Example documents can include the following: commitment letters, account statements that show available cash in a dedicated checking account, cancelled checks from funders, loan documents, or any other evidence demonstrating proof of other funds to be used for the Project.

Fiscal Year 2025 Capital Project Fund... .pdf


Most recent Statement of Activities or Income Statement showing current year-to-date actual revenues and expenses compared to year-to-date budget and a year-end projection.

FY25 Revenues, Expenses.pdf

Prior year Statement of Financial Activity showing previous year's total actual revenues and expenses compared to approved fiscal year budget.

Annual Comprehensive Financial Rep... .pdf

Statement of Financial Position or Balance Sheet showing current position and beginning year position.

Statement of Financial Position.pdf

Letters of recommendation (up to 3) regarding your organization's ability to lead this project to success.

Enka Recreation Destination - Beer Cit... .pdf

Enka Recreation Destination - ABASA -pdf

Enka Recreation Destination - ABRSC -pdf

Terms of Agreement