Open Space Bond: Passive Recreation Lands Criteria

Presented by
Jill Carter, Open Space Bond Manager

September 15, 2023
Agenda

• Status of Open Space Bond
• Passive Recreation Lands
  • Overview: Public Input
  • Eligibility Criteria
  • Weighted Criteria
  • Advisory Board Recommendations & Next Steps
Open Space Bond Process

$30M

- Passive Recreation Lands
- Greenways
- Conservation Easements

- PRL Application Development Underway
- Greenways Criteria Adopted
- Conservation Easement Criteria Adopted
Publicly-accessible land, outdoor space, waterbodies, and corridors where passive recreational activities place minimal stress on a site’s resources in a designated area.

As a result, these lands can provide ecosystem services and are highly compatible with natural resource protection and recreational activities that require minimally prepared facilities.

**Types of Activities:** Hiking, non-motorized biking, birding, natural playgrounds, fishing, photography, other low-impact recreation
PRL Criteria
Development & Approval Process

- Passive Recreation Lands Subcommittee provided input and feedback (May)
- Stakeholder groups provided input and feedback (May)
- Public meeting to solicit criteria input and feedback (June)
- Public Input Survey Live (May – August)
- Spanish-language focused community outreach (July – August)
- Passive Recreation Lands Subcommittee review refined criteria (August)
- Passive Recreation Lands Subcommittee final review and recommendation (September)
- Env. Subcommittee Review of criteria (September)
- Present PRL Criteria to Commission at Briefing (October)
- Present PRL Criteria to Commission (Fall 2023)
Open Space Bond: Greenways, Conservation, and Recreation

In November 2022, Buncombe County voters had the opportunity to vote on the Open Space Bond, a funding project that would increase conservation of...
The Public Engagement Process

**Media Coverage**

- Buncombe County leaders seeking community input about future of recreation lands
- Shape the outdoors: Buncombe County seeks public ideas on passive recreation development

**Community Meetings**

- Community members discussing and participating in recreation discussions

**Online Survey**

- Passive Recreation Lands Community Survey

---

9/13/2023
Overview of Public Input

### Ranking of Initial Proposed Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>Conservation and Environmental Impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>Feasibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4</td>
<td>Equity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5</td>
<td>Costs and Leveraging of Funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#6</td>
<td>Alignment with County Plans and Needs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Additional Proposed Criteria

1) **Safety**: including separating use of trails, safety from crime, safe wildlife interactions

2) **Wildlife Protection**: Protecting habitats, biodiversity, protecting native species

3) **Cleanliness**: including trash and dog waste removal, waste receptacles, removal of invasive species

4) **Maintenance**: including trail maintenance, safety patrols, management of parks
Qualifying Criteria

Approved Qualifying Criteria
Answered as a Yes/No Question

• Project Scheduling/Timeline
  • Funds must be allocated within 7 years of Bond

• Geographic Location
  • Project must be located within Buncombe County

• Long-Term Maintenance/Management Plan
  • Project must include a plan for long-term maintenance and management
Weighted Criteria

Scored on a scale (e.g., projects with more considerations for safety receive higher safety score)

- Conservation and Environmental Impact – 20%
- Feasibility – 20%
- Accessibility – 15%
- Equity – 15%
- Long-Term Management and Maintenance – 10%
- Costs and Leveraged Funding – 10%
- Alignment with County Plans/Needs/Other Priorities – 5%
- Safety – 5%
## Weighted Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conservation and Environmental Impact – 20%</th>
<th>Feasibility – 20%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low-impact improvement techniques</td>
<td>Partner/Stakeholder/Community Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection of wildlife habitats, native species, pollinator gardens</td>
<td>Age/Completeness/Availability of Feasibility Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management of stormwater and runoff</td>
<td>Topography, hydrology, other geographic features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree canopy preservation and restoration</td>
<td>Status of design, land ownership, implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contiguous conserved lands / contribution to wildlife corridors</td>
<td>Need for additional structures (e.g., bridges, bathhouses, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area of land conserved</td>
<td>Estimated time until completion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecosystem and bio-diversity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection and restoration of aquatic resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational opportunities on local wildlife</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Weighted Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accessibility – 15%</th>
<th>Equity – 15%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADA accessibility</td>
<td>Directly serves traditionally underserved communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity to public transportation opportunities</td>
<td>Proximity to existing or planned low-income and senior housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity to downtown areas / population hubs</td>
<td>Engagement of public in project design/implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathroom facilities and drinking fountains available</td>
<td>Location within traditionally disadvantaged, unincorporated communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walkability/Bikeability</td>
<td>Cultural and historical significance of project site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking availability</td>
<td>Inclusion of host communities in project planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility for seniors</td>
<td>Consideration and mitigation of potential negative impacts on local community (gentrification, traffic, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connectivity to other trail systems, greenways, etc.</td>
<td>Located in areas with limited access to similar lands</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BUNCOMBE COUNTY
Weighted Criteria

Management/Maintenance – 10%
- Invasive species management
- Trash and litter management plans
- Need for on-site staff, patrols, etc.
- Plan for trail maintenance, erosion control
- Use of low-impact maintenance techniques
- Community engagement in park maintenance
- Inclusion of experienced land managers

Costs and Leveraged Funding – 10%
- Inclusion of planning-level contingencies
- Ratio of funding leveraged from non-Bond sources
- Up-to-date project cost estimates
- Efficient allocation of costs
- Is the project fully-funded, including Bond funds?
- Plan for long-term maintenance/management costs?
## Weighted Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alignment with County Plans – 5%</th>
<th>Safety – 5%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alignment with County Comprehensive Plan, Parks &amp; Rec Master Plan, or other strategy</td>
<td>Designed to mitigate potential conflict between different users (e.g., bikes and hikers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alignment with regional/municipal plans</td>
<td>Considerations for crime prevention (e.g., safety patrols, emergency call kiosks, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution to regional wildlife conservation approaches</td>
<td>Clear signage for trails and other features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not identified by existing plan but recognized as new county-wide need</td>
<td>Education regarding wildlife encounters and safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Areas for shade/rest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Availability of easy-to-use maps / navigation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
09/07/2023 – Passive Recreation Lands Subcommittee

Voted to recommend the proposed passive recreation lands criteria for the bond funds.
TENTATIVE NEXT STEPS & TIMELINE

- **OCTOBER 2023**: Criteria brought to Board of Commissioners
- **FALL 2023**: Application Development
- **EARLY 2024**: Application Window Open
- **Spring 2024**: Project Proposal Review & Selection
Next Steps

October 3rd – BOCC Briefing