



Chatham County, NC

Legislation Text

File #: 21-4027, **Version:** 1

Vote on a request to approve a grant application to the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) for a Haw River trails corridor/feasibility study.

Action Requested:

Motion to approve a grant application to the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) for a Haw River trails corridor/feasibility study.

Introduction & Background:

In the 2019 Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan, trails were considered the most important facility and had the highest rating between facilities and programs. Within the past year, a Haw River Steering Committee was formed to gauge interest in development trails along the Haw River. The committee set a goal to develop a network of trails and paddle accesses along the Haw River in Chatham County. In order to develop a trail network, a Haw River corridor/feasibility study is needed to create the groundwork for this interconnected trail system. The grant funding will be to finalize an RFP to launch a competitive process to contract a consultant to conduct the study. The Alamance County trails, and the American Tobacco Trail have demonstrated the value of interconnected trail systems. Recent studies show that a \$1 trails investment generates \$1.72 in local business and sales taxes annually. The Haw River Trail Corridor will support the travel tourism sector by bringing a greater appeal to Chatham County trails and boosting the local economy.

Discussion & Analysis:

The agency offering the grant is The U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA). The EDA plays a critical role in facilitating regional economic development efforts in communities across the nation. Through the ARPA allocation the EDA received, several new grants have been created and are now offered by the EDA. Travel, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation is one of these new grant offerings. With the level of development activity occurring along the Haw River, staff recommends looking into the feasibility, opportunities, and costs associated with developing trails in this area. Doing so is consistent with Plan Chatham, the Parks and Recreation Masterplan, the multi-county resolution adopted by Chatham in support of creating trails along the Haw River, and the eligibility requirements of the EDA grant program. The proposed grant, if awarded, will be for \$100,000 and requires a 20% local match. ARPA funding is not allowed to serve as the required local match. The 20% match can be in the form of cash and/or in-kind. Staff believes that approximately \$10,000 of the local match can be accomplished through in-kind contributions, while the remaining \$10,000 can either be funded through either the Health Department or through the Parks Foundation.

How does this relate to the Comprehensive Plan:

Provide recreational opportunities and access to open space.

Budgetary Impact:

Total project cost \$100,000

\$80,000 from EDA grant

\$10,000 from In kind services

\$10,000 from Parks Foundation or Health funding

Recommendation:

Motion to approve a grant application to the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) for a Haw River trails corridor/feasibility study.