Owen Park Recovery

November 4, 2025

Presented by: Allison Dains – Parks & Recreation Director

Overview and Request

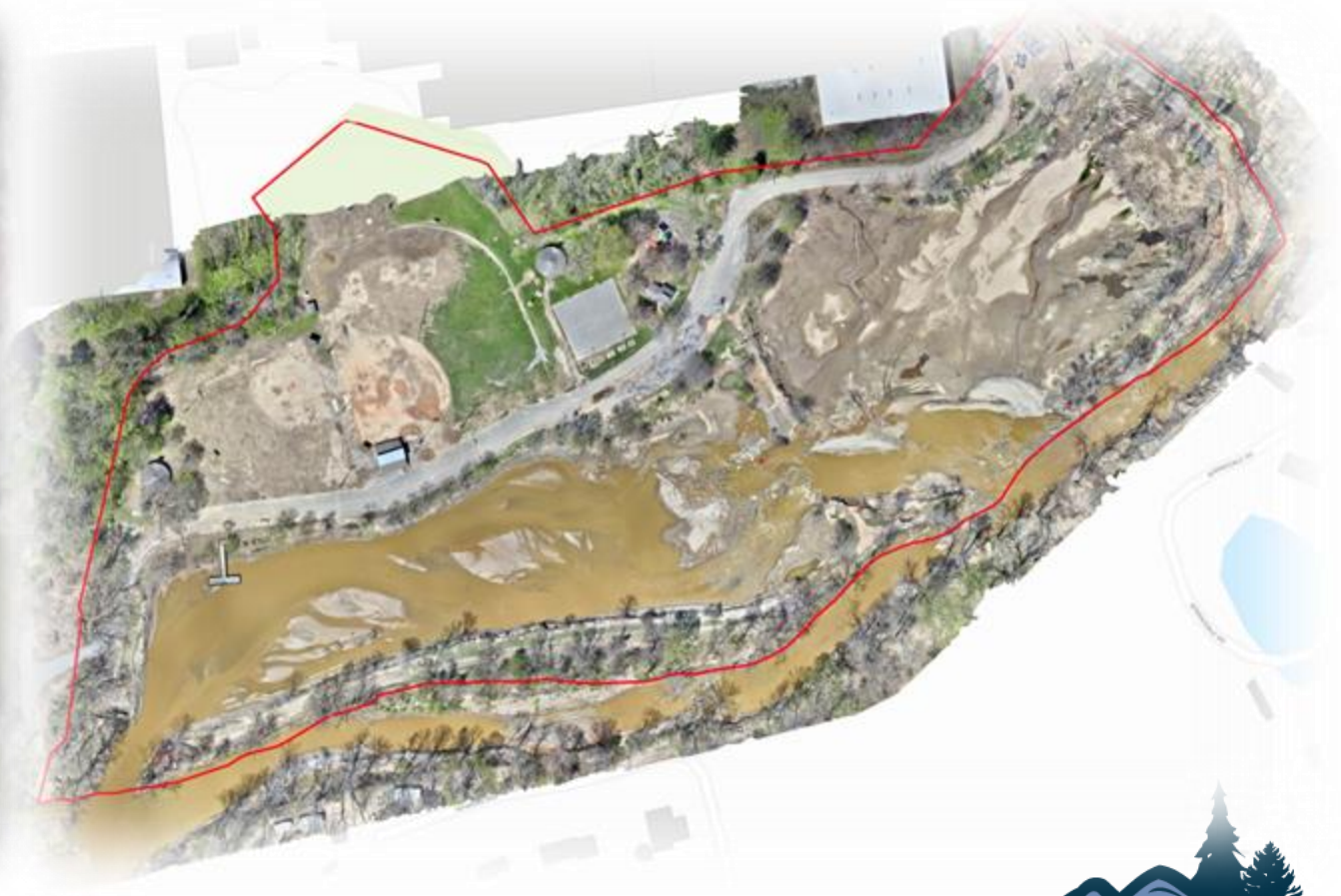
- Owen Park Status
- Process for rebuilding
  - Approach
  - Steps – procurement
- Request for a motion to approve the contract

Owen Park

Before



After



The Damage

Owen Park experienced catastrophic damages after the Swannanoa River breached its banks through the ponds and shifting toward the park.

- Rebuild of Owen Park remains a priority project for the county
- “2 Phase” approach for project







Phase I – Rebuilding Owen Park

Phase I

- **Engineering –** park will be re-engineered and designed to stabilize the riverbank and create a more resilient park
  - **Civil engineering:** Develop plans for grading, drainage, and stormwater management
  - **Environmental Assessment:** Analysis of site including potential hazards
  - **Sustainability and Resiliency**
    - Restored riverbanks and planning for future weather events, improved water retention
  - **Accessibility:** Adherence to all relevant regulations

- **Design Development** –Community engagement to reimagined a park that best suits community needs

Phase I

- **Project Scope & Needs Assessment** – Parks' purpose and needs of the community it serves
  - **Opportunities and Challenges** – physical, environmental, and utility and infrastructure
  - **Community Outreach** – input from residents, organizations, and stakeholders.
  - **Conceptual designs-** created based on gathered information, designers create high-level drawings
  - **Schematic designs** – refinement of selected concept including park's elements, spatial relationships and how residents move through the space
    - Layout and elements
    - Material selection

Phase II - Completing a Park

Phase II

- **Construction Documentation**–Detailed blueprints with final set of plans, specifications, and construction cost estimates.
  - Technical drawings and specifications
  - 100% Construction drawings
  - Budgeting – detailed cost estimate for the entire project and allocated funds

- **Permitting** – final documents are submitted to local authorities and agencies for review and approval to ensure compliance with all building codes and regulations

Phase II

- **Bidding and contractor selection**– Required public bid process
  - Contract negotiations and final contract
  - Board of Commissioners approval

- **Construction** – site preparation and park is built to final design and construction documents
  - Final inspection – Certificate of Occupancy to open the park

Collaboration

Internal

- **Planning Department** – Swannanoa Small Area Plan
- **Strategic Partnerships Department** – Passive Recreation Lands GO Bonds; Grant opportunities
- **CAPE** – Targeted community outreach and communications plan
- **Helene Recovery Office** – Project implementation
- **Finance and Budget** – Funding strategies

External

- **FEMA Public Assistance** – Damage inventory & funding
- **Friends and Neighbors of Swannanoa (FANS)** – Stakeholder
- **Swannanoa Grassroots Alliance** – Stakeholder
- **Warren Wilson College** – Stakeholder
- **Swannanoa Community Council** – Stakeholder
- **Swannanoa Valley Lions Club** - Stakeholder

Note: Project aligns with the Buncombe County Helene Recovery Plan

Contract

Parks and Recreation Department put out an RFQ for the Engineering and Design of Owen Park:

- **Received 11 submittals**
  - Review and Scoring
  - Contract negotiations

- **Hoerr Schaudt** - Chicago-based design and engineering firm selected; strives to elevate public expectations by finding new ways to integrate landscape into the public dialogue
  - Contract for services = $448,980
  - Contract will complete Phase I
  - Cost Estimates for next phase
    - Funding – FEMA PA

Next Steps

- **Project Kickoff**
  - Phase I expected to be completed by the end of August 2026
- **Develop a draft timeline**:
  - Engineering and Design Development
  - Community Engagement
  - Contract Documents
  - Request for Proposal development - Construction
  - Board approval of Contracts
  - Construction
  - Grand Re-Opening
- **Engineering and Environmental Assessment**
  - Survey
  - Site Evaluation
- **Community Engagement**
  - Work with CAPE Team on an engagement and communications plan
  - Participate in current engagement opportunities with Swannanoa

Contract Approval

- Motion to approve the contract with Hoerr Schaudt in the amount of $448,980 for the Engineering and Design of Owen Park

Questions?