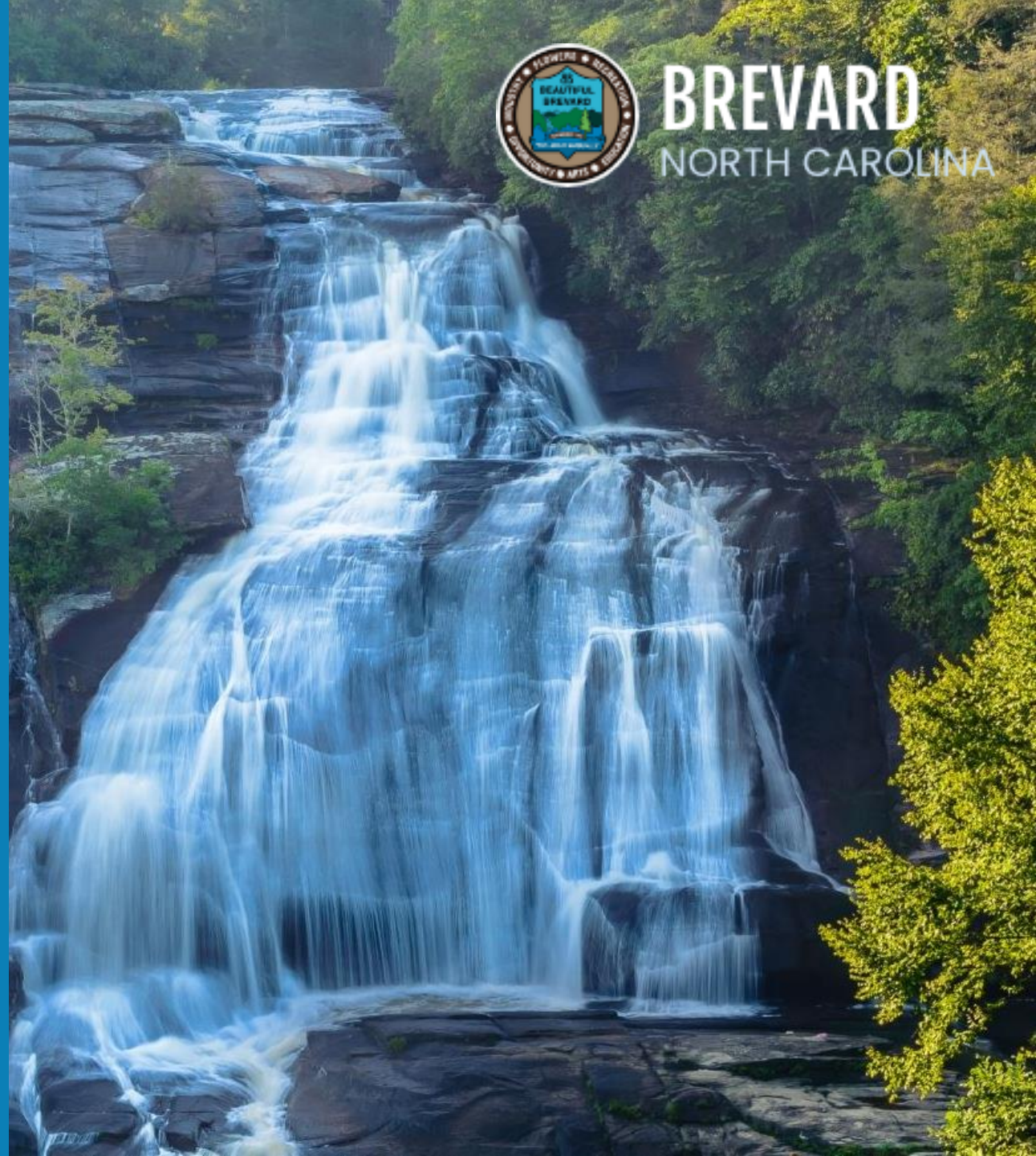
Ecusta Trail

Mayor Maureen Copelof

June 2024



City of Brevard (COB) Expanding Role

- March 2015, Res 2015-03 City Council officially supports Ecusta Trail
- June 2021, Res 2021-21 establishes city's intent to "take the lead" as primary government agency for the trail in Transylvania County
  - Critical to have government entity overseeing trail in order to obtain grant funding
  - Transylvania County declined a key role
  - City decides to assume responsibility (securing funding, overseeing construction and managing public use) for entire 8 miles of trail in Transylvania County. Long linear park 100 feet wide and 8 miles long. Only a few hundred yards are actually within City of Brevard boundary
- December 2021, Res 2021-58: Establishes Brevard/Transylvania County Ecusta Trail Advisory Board
- June 2022 City signs 50-year lease with Conserving Carolina

Federal Funding Sources

- Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) Grant $1M for engineering. Grant application approved based on connecting the Ecusta Trail to Pisgah National Forest.
- National Significant Federal Lands & Tribal Projects (NSFLTP) grant $21.4M awarded based on connecting Ecusta Trail into Pisgah National Forest
  - Regional grant request with funding for both Brevard and Henderson sections
  - Construction only (no engineering)
- Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability & Equity (RAISE) grant $24.5M
  - Construction only, no engineering
  - Regional grant for both Brevard and Henderson County
- All 3 federal grants being administered by NCDOT

Other Federal, State & Local Funding Sources

- Friends of Ecusta Trail: $3.3M local donations and $7.5M in state funding. Amounts support both Henderson County and Transylvania County side of trail.
- Transylvania TDA: $1M pledge.
- Henderson County has other unique funding only applicable to HC: STBG Funding $15.5M: HC TDA pledged funding

- Trail funding is a mixture of types of funds, some with restrictions and other funding that is more flexible.

Ecusta Trail Advisory Board

- Chartered December 2021
- Oversee the financing and construction of trail
- Membership crafted to bring key stakeholders together
  - Majority of membership outside agencies: County, FOET, Conserving Carolina, TDA
  - Mayor as co-chair to facilitate regional coordination
  - Parks & Trails Chair as co-chair to ensure cross linkage and communication between ETAB and Parks & Trails Committee
  - Chairs of ETAB and RTAC attend each others meetings
- Focus on regional aspect of trail
  - Creation of seamless 19 mile trail with common branding/policies/user experience

Accomplishments & Challenges

- Accomplishments:
  - Funding for both design/engineering and construction received
  - 30% engineering completed and ready for review
  - Strong regional relationship established

- Challenges:
  - Multiple funding sources…some with restrictions
    - Federal and state grant funding limited to the 19-mile rail footprint/ 100 ft right of way
  - Different timelines to operational status
    - Henderson County First 6-mile section will be operational 2 years earlier than Brevard section
    - Decisions that we thought were in the future need to be made now…decisions that both Brevard and Henderson County need to agree upon.
    - Branding Decision