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Recognizing the need

In early 2012, The City of Hickory recognized that a plan was necessary to economically revitalize the City. Over 45,000 jobs had been lost since 2000. Related to the job loss, and equally as negative, the region had seen 25 percent of its young adults (ages 20 - 44) leave the area. In analyzing these statistics, a plan was born to regenerate the Hickory area and bring in new jobs, and residents, stimulating the local economy.

The Hickory City Council visited leaders from five southeastern cities to learn how those communities are successfully transitioning to new economic realities. Two of those cities faced similar obstacles, Greenville, South Carolina, and Chattanooga, Tennessee. The themes emerging from the success stories included the importance of public investment in the public spaces of their city, the benefit of private/public partnerships, focusing on economic development and redevelopment, providing venues and programming for outstanding special events, and engaging the philanthropic community for their support of activities and projects that will enhance the city.

After those visits, City Council commissioned a group of citizens, known as the Inspiring Spaces Committee, to work with a consultant design firm, Land Design. Together, they formulated a similar strategy; one that focused on the current needs of Hickory. They developed a comprehensive list of projects that will improve the appearance of Hickory. This plan was called Inspiring Spaces, which will help to chart the course for improvements in the public spaces that will bring about revitalization in many areas of Hickory.

Numerous meetings were held to talk to citizens about the Inspiring

Spaces plans. After hearing from over 500 residents, and having an appointed committee of business and community leaders refine and prioritize the projects, Hickory's City Council decided on which projects would rise to the top of the list to be funded. The strategy led to the creation of four major projects: Citywalk, Riverwalk, Streetscapes and Gateways, and a Class A advanced manufacturing park, known as Park 1764.

The Citywalk, which would be developed along Main Avenue from Lenoir-Rhyne University to Downtown Hickory, would continue the growth of company headquarters and professional jobs in the city's central business district. Businesses have already invested over \$30 million in new entertainment, headquarters, and retail shops, along Main Avenue between Lenoir-Rhyne University and Downtown Hickory. Great local companies, like Moretz Enterprises, Hollar Mill, Lenoir Rhyne University, Transportation Insight, Cornerstone United, and Blue Bloodhound have already invested and added jobs. By building a Citywalk that will allow employees to easily connect to the university, shops, services, and their offices, as well as being a great place for all residents to enjoy, the City feels it can continue to attract company headquarters, as well as service and professional jobs, to the central business district to create a place where young adults want to work, live, and play.

A Riverwalk, which would be developed from Geitner Park, along the river, would spur new retail jobs and residential growth. Many of the communities with which Hickory competes for jobs and people have found ways to make their water a competitive asset. Hickory is blessed with a wonderful lake and river, but the community has not yet used the

lake for economic development. By building a Riverwalk from the planned overhaul of Geitner Park, which comes from a monetary donation by the Robert Lackey family, to the L.P. Frans baseball stadium at Winkler Park, the City will create a unique destination in the region. This will provide public access to the lake, and an attractive area for shopping, entertainment, and residential development, between L.P. Frans baseball stadium and the river.

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City Council Quotes

"Even when we set the bond target at \$40 million, we projected that with the various partnerships and grant opportunities that we would probably be investing around \$100 million when all is said and done. We are well on our way to that with thanks to the Kiwanis Clubs, the Lackey family investment, and the Friends of Hickory's support," said Mayor Rudy Wright. "The citizens' support for the bonds, and the partnerships that have developed, make me proud to be the Mayor of this wonderful City."

– Mayor Rudy Wright

This is an exciting time for the City of Hickory and our surrounding communities. Everyone is anxious to see river walk, city walk & streetscape improvements as well as the development of our business park. These bond projects combined with other projects initiated by citizens in our community will greatly enhance our city and our economic future. Thank you to everyone who volunteers and serves our community!

– Hank Guess, Ward 4 Councilman

"This is the best thing to happen to Hickory in a long time. It's something Hickory needs and will be welcomed by all citizenry."

– David Zagaroli, Ward 5 Councilman

Continued from page 3

Another project was designed to improve the City’s major roads and gateways (Streetscapes and Gateways), which are the main entrances to the City, such as Highway 70, Highway 127, Springs Road, Lenoir-Rhyne Boulevard, Old Lenoir Rd, to name a few. The major roadways throughout the city are where many businesses want to locate. Some of the businesses have already invested millions of dollars (i.e. Mike Johnson Toyota, Nissan of Hickory, Holiday Inn Select, Lowes Foods, Walmart Neighborhood Market, 29 North Apartments, and Lowes Home Improvement in Viewmont), and others will make investments and add jobs as the City improves its major roadways. The roadways and gateways are also the “curb appeal” of the City. Improvements will benefit all travelers, encourage private investment, and show prospective business and residents that Hickory is vibrant and well maintained.

Lastly, a new business park for

advanced manufacturing companies, called Park 1764, is planned for development. The City has limited areas for existing business to grow into and where new business can be located. It’s true that Hickory has had many empty manufacturing buildings and most of these are obsolete, and, no longer what new businesses are looking for. Many businesses also want to be in a business park, where, just like a neighborhood, they know what types of industry their neighbors will be and that development will be controlled. Park 1764 is a 178 acre business park that is being developed by Catawba County and City of Hickory.

City Staff spent a large part of early 2014 educating citizens on Hickory’s current economic situation and explaining how their plan and these four projects would help grow and prosper Hickory.

The Bond Referendum

It was apparent that a substantial

amount of money would be necessary to fund such an undertaking, which resulted in a bond referendum that allowed Hickory voters to choose how to move forward. A bond referendum gives residents the ability to vote to allow the City to raise funds through the sale of bonds. A general obligation (G.O.) bond is long-term borrowing in which a City pledges its full faith and credit (taxing power) to repay the debt over a specified term. G.O. bonds are the least costly financing option available to the City for projects.

North Carolina statutes require G.O. bonds to be authorized only by a vote at any general or primary elections in even numbered years. Only Hickory residents, who are registered voters, were able to vote on the bond referendum. November 4, 2014, a \$40 million bond referendum that was divided into two categories was put on the ballot.

One bond order was for \$25 million to cover the costs associated with street and sidewalk improvements, including



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enhanced streetscapes and pedestrian access. A second bond order was for \$15 million and was designated for economic development related costs, which encompasses a broad range of public infrastructure intended to enrich the local economy. The citizens overwhelming voted in support of both.

Since the Bond Referendum passed...

City Council understood that since the bond projects would be funded by Hickory residents, Hickory residents should be able to offer input regarding the projects. Therefore, a Bond Implementation Commission was created. The Commission is made up of 42 diverse, and actively engaged, citizens.

Anyone who lived, worked, or who had a vested interest in the City of Hickory were able to apply for this new commission. More than 170 people expressed their interest. The bond commission is an advisory board to City Council on the bond projects, budgets, timeframes and more, which will continue throughout the entire bond process. There were 28 appointments made from City Council and the Mayor, each having four appointments. 13 more ex officio members came from the City boards and commissions, and one ex officio from the Catawba County Chamber of Commerce, for a total of 42 members.

Also, as part of the initial decisions, City Council hired Freese and Nichols on April 21, 2015, as the professional bond program management firm that has been working with the City and the Bond Commission, to help determine cost estimates, regulatory issues, and some engineering aspects of the projects. They are a 121-year-old municipal engineering firm with 80 percent of their work with cities and towns. Their contract was for a nine-month process from April 2015 to January 2016.

"Freese and Nichols has worked with many cities over the years to help deliver bond programs and projects for their respective citizens. None of these other Bond Programs has had the extensive level of public involvement like in Hickory," said Charles Archer

with Freese and Nichols. "All of the projects in Hickory's Bond Program are intended to help add value to the quality of life in the city. The role of the Bond Commission, representing the many facets of the community, will help ensure the projects that are delivered do meet the expectations of the city's citizens. Archer added, "Freese and Nichols is proud to be a part of this very inclusive process."

Over the past year, as the process of planning and prioritization of each bond project has been taking place, the 42 member Bond Commission was divided into subcommittees for three of the projects, Citywalk, Riverwalk, and Streetscapes/Gateways. Each subcommittee concentrated on their project. They were tasked with determining the priorities of each project and how to work within the budget of \$35.5 million that was established for the three projects, reserving approximately \$5 million for Business Park 1764. From the outset, Park 1764 was not part of the Bond Commissions work. Because it is a project specifically targeted to unique business use and a joint venture with Catawba County; City, County and Economic Development Corporation staff have been working on that specific project.

What does Crafting Hickory mean?

The name "Crafting Hickory" is more than an emblem, or logo, it's an initiative under the 'Life. Well Crafted.' brand. The Crafting Hickory logo becomes a member of the family of logos that work together to promote all the positive events, projects, and programs happening in Hickory.

The "Crafting Hickory" initiative includes the following projects, ideas, and concepts:

- Bond Projects – Citywalk, Riverwalk, Streetscapes/Gateways, and Park 1764
- Projects that are part of Operation: No Vacancy and community appearance projects
- The proposed Deidra Lackey Memorial Park at Geitner-Rotary Park
- Future Friends of Hickory Downtown Park

- Future Kiwanis Park Splash Pad
- Greater Hickory Tennis Association Hickory City Park improvements
- Bruce Meisner Park at Cloninger Mill Road
- Future civic and business partnership projects
- The various projects under the broader "Innovate Catawba" initiative
- It also encompasses the Inspiring Spaces Plan and ideas from the community's "Boost Hickory" campaign.

The Future...

With wrapping up 2015, the focus was to complete the preliminary prioritization work and cost estimates for each project, and, then, move to the design phase. "The Bond Commission

Continued on page 6

City Council Quotes

"This is one of the most exciting times for Hickory's future growth. We had overwhelming support from the voters, great input from our bond commission members and I look forward to starting the first project. It is a long process but the benefits of the projects will be worth the wait!"

– Jill Patton, Ward 6 Councilwoman

"The bond issue is one of the major reasons I wanted to join City Council. It is something I am passionate about and my intention is to see that the money is spent well for the City."

– Vernon Tarlton, Ward 2 Councilman

"Our age demographic 18-44 (and under 9), in significant decline. Our property values are also stagnant. We must build jobs to grow population and grow population to build jobs. We must invest particularly in attracting and retaining career builders, business starters and family growers. Our Bond project is a comprehensive, well-researched and tactical plan to bring new jobs, grow our economy, improve our streets, and protect our home values."

– Brad Lail, Ward 1 Councilman

"We encourage people to visit Hickory, because they will experience "life well crafted" here and all the new projects under Crafting Hickory only helps build upon that."

– Danny Seaver, Ward 3 Councilman

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worked to create a recommendation to disburse the \$35.5 million between the three projects. That recommendation went to City Council for approval in January, 2016, in which City Council approved the final recommendation by the Bond Implementation Commission. The next step is to move into the design phase,” said City Manager Mick Berry.

For 2016, year two of the bond process, the main focus will be to design and engineer the projects and the possible hiring of construction firms for some projects. When the design phase begins, the City will put out a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) from companies who are interested in designing the projects. As the projects are designed and engineered, Requests for Proposals (RFP) for contractors will take place. While the desire is for local companies to perform a large part of the work, state law requires the City hire the most qualified professionals and low bid contractors. The \$40 million in bonds that are funding the projects will need to be borrowed within seven years from the referendum being passed, per North Carolina local government laws and policies. The City cannot borrow the bond money until the bids are in hand from the contractors who will build the projects.

Some projects will be easier to design than others. The Streetscapes/Gateways are tentatively scheduled for four to six months of design work, while the Riverwalk design is slated for six to nine months, and the Citywalk is roughly nine to 12 months of design time.

“The passage of the Bond referendum was really elating and from that moment, we’ve felt a sense of urgency to get these projects built quickly,” Berry said. “We want to see and experience the end result right now, but the reality is that there are significant regulations that must be met in regard to the railroad, lake access, and North Carolina Department of Transportation rules. It’s a time consuming process that we are methodically working through. Seeing the actual bond projects come to life does not happen overnight. These are long-term projects. We will continue to measure twice and cut once to ensure the best outcome for each project,” added Berry. 



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Hickory's Bond Implementation Commission Went to Work

The Mayor and Hickory City Council approved the Bond Commission and appointed its 42 members at the February 3, 2015 Hickory City Council meeting.

The bond commission is an advisory board to City Council on the bond projects, budgets, timeframes and more, which will continue throughout the entire bond process. To keep continuity on the commission, but also allow for new members to be appointed, members were appointed to staggered terms. Length of term for the initial members was randomly selected and each member can be reappointed to one full 3 year term.

The Mayor and City Council appointments and length of term for each of the initial appointees were:

Mayor Rudy Wright appointed Allison Holtzman (3 years), Mike Thomas (2 years), Stacey Rash (3 years), and Charlie Dixon (1 year).

Ward 1 Councilman Brad Lail appointed Nick Walden (3 years), Vernon Tarlton (2 years), Katherine Rogers (3 years), and Michael Bell (1 year).

Ward 2 Councilman Bruce Meisner appointed Jennifer Clark (1 year), Blake Watts Jr. (2 years), Jennifer Beane (3 years), and Gayle Schwarz (3 years).

Ward 3 Councilman Danny Seaver appointed Anthony Laxton (1 year), James Tilton (3 years), Patricia Bowman (3 years), and Norman Cook (2 years).

Ward 4 Councilman Hank Guess appointed Jerisha Farrer (3 years), Susan Walker (3 years), Ed Farthing (1 year), and David Roberts II (2 years).

Ward 5 Councilman David Zagaroli appointed Burk Wyatt (3 years), Sherrill (Frank) Young (1 year), Jeffrey Hale (3 years), and R. Alan Barnhardt (2 years).

Ward 6 Councilwoman Jill Patton appointed Julie Chang (3 years), Robert Dickerson (2 years), Alan Jackson (3 years), and Paige Brigham (1 year).

Each of the City's boards and commissions held special meetings to appoint their ex officios to the Bond Implementation Commission. Each of the boards and commissions appointed one ex officio each, totaling 13.

The ex officio boards and commissions appointments are as follows:

Business Development Committee, Dana Chambers.
 Citizens Advisory Committee, Michael L. Holland.
 Community Appearance Commission, Charles Hayes.
 Community Relations Council, Adelia Esperanza Parrado-Ortiz.
 Hickory International Council, Hani Nassar.
 Hickory Regional Planning Commission, Shauna O'Brien
 Historic Preservation Committee, Tom Dobbins.
 Library Advisory Board, Carolyn Sinclair.
 Parks and Recreation Commission, Dean Proctor.
 Public Art Commission, Jennifer Helton.
 Recycling Advisory Board, Norm Meares.
 University City Commission, Ryan Edwards.
 Youth Council, Andrew Howard.

The Catawba County Chamber of Commerce appointed Will Locke as their ex officio.

At the Bond Commission's first meeting, Burk Wyatt was appointed as the Chair and Allison Holtzman as the Vice-Chair of the overall Bond Commission.

"As a 20 year citizen of Hickory, I want to see our

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community grow and prosper. I believe these projects are key in seeing Hickory revitalized and in securing private development and increased jobs for our residents,” said Wyatt. “It’s a privilege to chair this commission and help navigate the process for the fruition of these projects.”

At the May 6 meeting, the following members were appointed as the Chair and Vice-Chair of each Subcommittee. The Chair of the Citywalk Subcommittee is Frank Young and the Vice Chair is Mike Thomas. The Riverwalk Subcommittee Chair is Charlie Dixon and Mike Bell is the Vice Chair. The Streetscapes and Gateways Subcommittee Chair is Rob Dickerson and Paige Brigham is the Vice Chair.

The purpose and intent of the Citywalk Subcommittee is to guide the development of the project through all remaining stages of planning and development. An initial conceptual plan was developed for the Citywalk by Land Design, the City’s initial contracted design firm that developed the Inspiring Spaces Plan, which guided the Subcommittee in its further refinement of the proposed project. In addition, the Citywalk Subcommittee developed recommendations for the Bond Commission to consider, specifically addressing how to connect the Citywalk with the Riverwalk. Initial Citywalk Subcommittee members included Dana Chambers, Jennifer Clark, Tom Dobbins, Ed Farthing, Jennifer Helton, Alan Jackson, Will Locke, Katherine Rogers, Carolyn Sinclair, Mike Thomas, James Tilton, Susan Walker, and Frank Young.

The Riverwalk Subcommittee guides the development

of the Riverwalk through all stages of conceptual planning and development. Initial Riverwalk Subcommittee members included Alan Barnhardt, Mike Bell, Patricia Bowman, Charlie Dixon, Jerisha Farrer, Allison Holtzman, Andrew Howard, Norm Meres, Hani Nassar, Shauna O’Brien, Adelia Parrado-Ortiz, Dean Proctor, Stacey Rash, and Vernon Tarlton.

Streetscapes and Gateways Subcommittee guides the development of Streetscapes and Gateways through the remaining stages of planning and development. Initial Streetscapes and Gateways Subcommittee members included Jennifer Beane, Paige Brigham, Norm Cook, Rob Dickerson, Ryan Edwards, Jeff Hale, Charlie Hayes, Mike Holland, Anthony Laxton, David Roberts, II, Gayle Schwarz, Nick Walden, Bee Watts, and Burk Wyatt.

The Subcommittees developed recommendations for the Bond Commission to consider, in accordance with the ordinance, specifically for their projects. In January 2016, Freese and Nichols, along with members of the Bond Commission, presented their final recommendation to City Council at a Council Workshop meeting. At that time, City Council accepted the final recommendation and requested a public hearing, which was held on February 2, 2016. After the public hearing, City Council reaffirmed their support of the Bond Commission’s recommendation and thanked them for the many hours of hard work. The Council discussed the next steps in the process and looked forward to the Bond Commission’s recommendations on project timing and firms to develop the detailed designs and engineering plans.



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"I thought that it was important to be a part of the Bond Commission to further our community. I bring with me insights into how education through the Catawba Science Center and the SALT block, in particular, can be a part of reinventing the community in the future. There are so many things in Hickory, but sometimes it feels that they are disconnected from each other and people don't know about them. The Hickory Bonds gives us the opportunity to combine our strengths to collaborate to reach our full potential and to tell our unique story of Hickory. They have been one of those catalyst events that we can all join around to craft and tell our story."

- Alan Barnhardt, Catawba Science Center

"My husband took me to Greenville, South Carolina where a similar Riverwalk, and other improvements, revitalized the city into an amazing community with good jobs and plenty of opportunity for younger people. When I saw that, I was SOLD. I own a home in the Green Park neighborhood of Hickory. I believe my property value will rise in the future as a result of this bond referendum, and the great things we will do. I am a busy person but I am glad to serve on the Bond Commission, because I believe it will make Hickory a better place to live for all people." - Susan Smith Walker, Assistant Executive Director of Exodus Homes

"I wanted to be a part of the Bond Commission to try to help make Hickory a better place to live."

- Charles Dixon, Patrick, Harper & Dixon, LLP

"I care about this city and am interested in doing whatever I can to assist us in growing a creative and business friendly culture. I believe that the investments and improvements that the bond is making possible have the potential to make Hickory a more vibrant and exciting place to do life. These improvements are a great investment in our collective future in my view."

- Jeff Hale, President at Protection Products, Inc

"Hickory has solid potential in becoming a great city, not only for families, but for millennials, as well. The Bond Projects positions the foundation and groundwork to bring out that potential that many of us have longed for. This will be a long process, but it will also be a rewarding one at that."

- Anthony Laxton, Operations Planner at Transportation Insight

"The Riverwalk project, combined with the Lackey Family project, will be the largest impact to our parks in our past history or for the next 100 years. The impact of the Bond Projects will be seen for the next 100 years."

- Dean Proctor, United Beverages of NC, LLC

"Our family has observed for years the lack of pedestrian friendly roadways in our community. We live in the North East area of Hickory and there are very few sidewalks or bike lanes. I have enjoyed representing the North East community and having a voice on the bond commission Streetscapes and Gateways subcommittee. I am enthusiastic about the progress that the bond commission has made thus far. It is evident that the improvements to our community will make our city safer for pedestrians and motorists, aesthetically more appealing, and hopefully lure more businesses to our area as well as young people."

- Jennifer Beane, Catawba County Schools

"There is a palpable positive energy in Hickory right now, and there are so many people throughout the city working to build on that energy. What you realize, by serving on the Bond Commission, is that all of us have such tremendous optimism for our city. I don't think we're especially unique in our enthusiasm. After all, every Hickory resident wants to be proud of their hometown. The plans that are underway and the creative methods to seek additional funding are just extraordinary. I'm incredibly impatient to see it all come to fruition."

- Carolyn Sinclair, Owner of Adrienne's Boutique



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Bond Commission Represents the Community

Patricia Bowman

Pat Bowman is a relatively new citizen of Hickory and she's determined to learn as much about the city as possible. She loves the extended sense of community that serving on the Bond Commission and Riverwalk committee has given her. After moving here, she quickly learned what the city has to offer, and set to work building connections, especially in Ridgeview, where she saw a need for better communication.

She has over 20 years of experience as a teacher, spanning both elementary schools and colleges. Those years spent teaching imparted her with excellent communication and organization skills. When she moved to Hickory, the lack of communication in the Ridgeview community was of immediate concern to her. She quickly set to work, establishing the Ridgeview Informer, which strove to inform, improve, and unite the neighborhood.

Bowman has participated in Hickory's Neighborhood College and Citizen's Police Academy. Both are unique programs that allows citizens to learn about the City and the Hickory Police Department.

Bowman believes that it is our responsibility, as citizens, to be involved, "The only way to find out anything is to be involved. If you aren't involved you have to put up with whatever else people choose."

Bowman is, also, a member of the Community Relations Council, and the Board of Directors for Habitat for Humanity and Young People of Integrity.

She is embarking on a new career, moving away from teaching. If you are in need of a curious, active, straight-talker with a large skill set, she might be a great fit for your company.

She is excited to contribute to the improvement of the city she now proudly calls home.



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Dr. Dana Chambers

Dr. Dana Chambers is a Hickory doctor, who is focused on our community. For more than 15 years, she has cared for residents of Hickory, and has a strong understanding of what citizens need and want. She is an active member of the Business Development Committee, and sees the plans of the Bond Commission as a great attractor to the area. She serves on the Citywalk subcommittee and her enthusiasm is always a lift of energy for the committee.

Dr. Chambers moved to Hickory in the late 1990s at the completion of her training. She chose this area because she saw great potential here, and she loved the foothills. By 1998, she'd started her family practice, Generations Family Medicine, on 29th Avenue NE. She sees entire generations of families and enjoys the deeper understanding of our community this gives her.

"My older patients want Hickory to thrive and they want their kids and grandkids to be able to be here, so it was very exciting to see that support of the bond. It's exciting for me to be part of this," she said.

Dr. Chambers is a member of the Business Development Committee. This is a group that serves the Hickory City Council in an advisory position. The committee works together to support economic development in our city to increase employment and job growth. She brings her knowledge and passion about increasing business opportunities in Hickory to the Bond Commission.

Dr. Chambers thinks the city's planned improvements are important. She says, "A big part of family medicine is prevention. This plan will get Hickory moving, and then health will improve." She runs regularly, and she knows the area near Main Avenue needs much improvement. She's excited about the Citywalk, and the businesses that will fill in some of the commercial spaces on the route.

She is proud that Hickory put faith in the Bond Program. "We know this money won't be enough, and we'll need some private investors to come help with that," she said. "Citizens like me, and community leaders, are looking to get private investors interested."



Rob Dickerson

Rob Dickerson is a Hickory resident who is passionate about his community and enthusiastic about biking. He's been a cyclist for almost 30 years and is very active in Hickory's biking circles. He is serving as Chairman of the Streetscapes and Gateways sub-committee.

Several years ago, Dickerson joined the Hickory Velo Club, a local group dedicated to biking. He's now the Vice President, and the group gathers on Tuesdays and Thursdays to ride together. Their main focus has always been to advocate for rights of all cyclists, both on trail and road. They aim to raise awareness of cyclists on a local level, to increase safety for all.

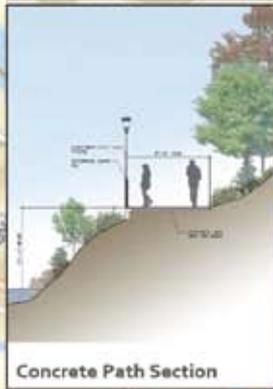
Being part of the group expanded Dickerson's sense of community, and also spurred him to advocate for cyclists when conversations began during the Inspiring Spaces planning. As those conversations developed, and Inspiring Spaces developed into a detailed plan, his interest and involvement didn't wane.

Dickerson's wife, Karen, is also an avid cyclist, but she was missing out on rides, because she needed to stay home with the couple's daughter. She saw a gap - an underserved population. Together, they worked to start Pedals to Pub to fill that gap. The group meets monthly, at Honor Ale House, in the newly renovated Hollar Mill, and rides together. This ride, unlike most in the area, is family-friendly. It's casual and comfortable-most participants wear t-shirts, shorts and a helmet instead of full cyclist gear. The ride is ten miles, touring the heart of Hickory. It touches on many of the places that are part of the bond projects, like the future Citywalk and Riverwalk. This event has proven to be a valuable addition to the community.

Dickerson and his wife are happy to raise their daughter in Hickory. Like all parents, they want to provide a better future for her. He is proud to serve on the Bond Commission. He wants to be part of improving our city, and he's pleased to do so in a tangible way.

Dickerson is invaluable to the team. His enthusiasm about cycling is contagious and he represents the needs of cyclists well. Because Hickory is striving to be more walkable and accessible by bicycle, the knowledge he holds will help craft excellent spaces for everyone to enjoy.

Lackey Project



Concrete Path Section

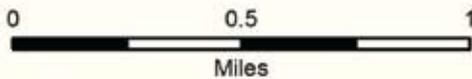


 Riverwalk

 Gateway

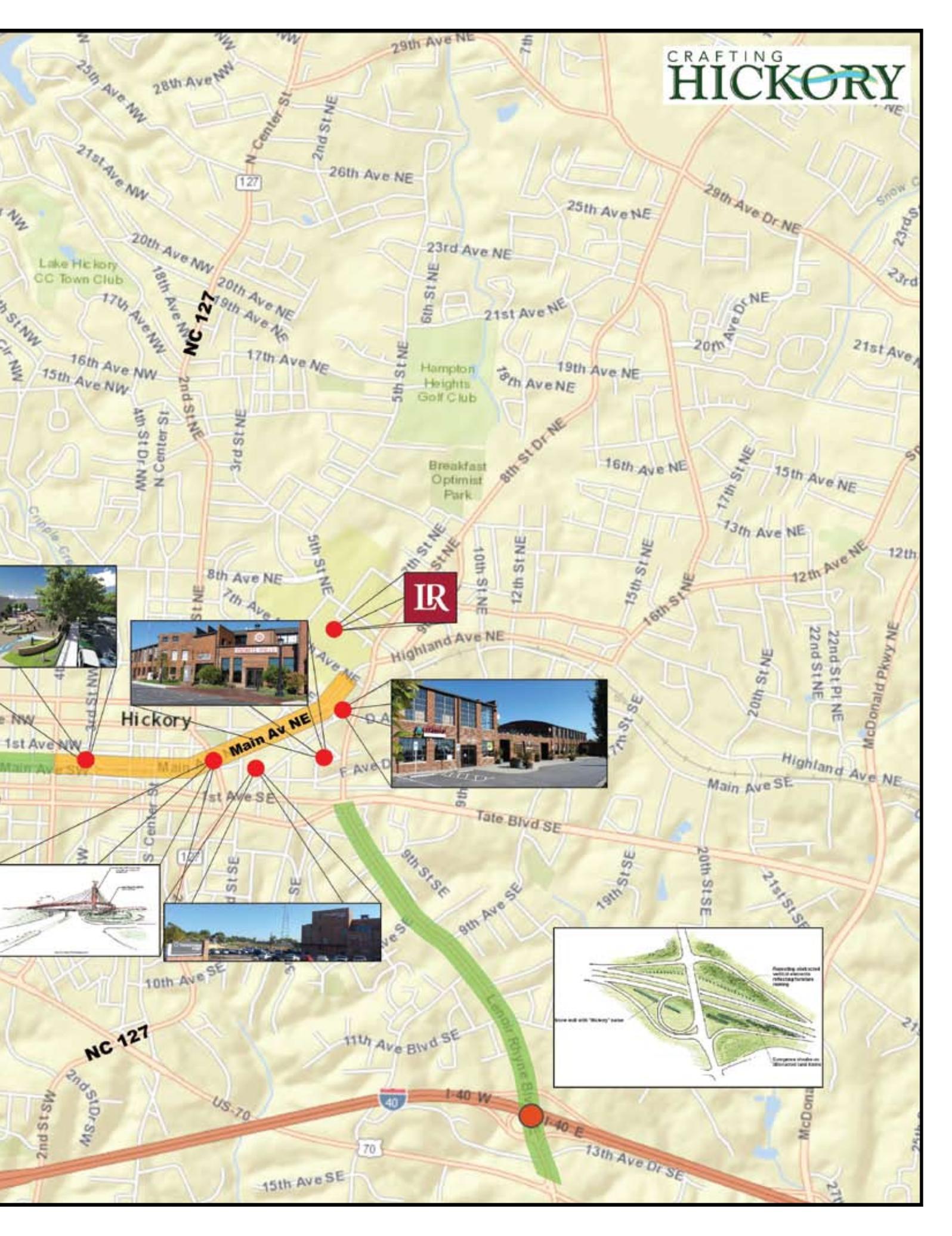
 Citywalk

 Streetscape



Miles

CRAFTING HICKORY



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Charles Dixon

Charles Dixon is a long time Hickory resident with a true desire to constantly make Hickory a better place. He is a faithful steward of the community, and worked tirelessly to educate residents and promote the Bonds. His vision of a better Hickory, and his desire to increase wealth and prosperity, has encouraged him to serve as the chairman for the Riverwalk Subcommittee.

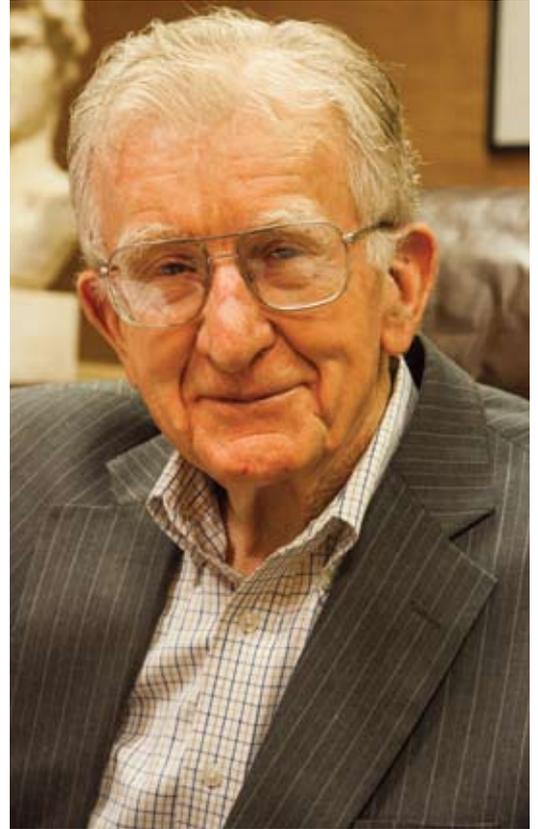
Dixon and his wife came to Hickory in 1952, with a law degree from Harvard Law School and marriage certificate, both freshly printed and signed. He's raised four children here and is an active member of the community. He's a member of First Presbyterian Church and enjoys his membership in the Hickory Kiwanis Club. He served for many years as the lawyer for Catawba Valley Medical Center and continues his 63 year career as a Hickory lawyer at Patrick, Harper & Dixon, LLP.

It's thanks to Dixon that the Hickory Museum of Art has many of the works of Harold "Doc" Egerton in its permanent collection. Egerton invented the electric flash and was a pioneer in photography that employed its use. Doc was Dixon's father-in-law, and he spent time in the community, as his grandchildren grew up. Egerton visited schools and museums during those years, and upon his death, Dixon donated a collection of 39 pieces.

Dixon explains why the Bond is important, "We all want to leave the place better than we found it when we came."

"The new improvements are a great thing. It has real promise of having a great effect. I've been pleased at how diligent the bond commission is working. Everyone is taking it seriously and doing the best they can. We don't have enough money, but that's the case everywhere. If you have too much money, then talk to us at the Bond Commission," he says as he smiles, confident about the future.

"We'll find the money and we'll keep adding to it. We don't have to do it all at one time. I think looking back, 20 years from now, it'll be a milestone."



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Nick Walden

Nick Walden grew up in Caldwell County before moving to Hickory, as a teenager. He feels a tremendous sense of community here. As a young man with growing family, he represents a key demographic of the population and his input is invaluable to the team. Walden is a banker in the area, and an active member of Hickory Young Professionals.

He works with People's Bank, headquartered in Newton, in the commercial lending section, working to help small and medium business in our community. He considers it his duty to improve the region by thoughtful application of his talents in his chosen field. It makes him happy to help local business, and he recognizes how new businesses spur the whole city's growth.

Walden enjoys his membership in Hickory Young Professionals, an organization that aims to provide opportunities for young professionals to excel professionally, socially, and economically. This has helped him form many excellent relationships and strengthens his sense of community. Walden was selected to join this commission because of his dedication to Hickory Young Professionals, in which he has served as the Chair for two consecutive years.

His wife, Janice, works at HSM in Hickory and is, also, an excellent citizen. The two have twin infant girls. One of the goals of the bond projects is to attract young families to this area. The Waldens are experiencing life as a young family in Hickory and can offer unique perspectives about how to improve our community.

The Waldens also graduated from the City's Neighborhood College program in 2012. This program helped them gain an insider's look at Hickory's City government and the individuals that run it.

Walden is excited to be working on this project. "I can't imagine anything bigger would happen in Hickory in my lifetime, and it's great to be part of it," he said. He expects for the work to get harder, as they group hammers out the many details in the coming months. He's ready for the challenge, and happy to be of service. 

Final Recommendation from Bond Commission

Throughout the more than 66 meetings that have been held through January 2016, much data and input about the projects was collected from the Bond Commission, City Council, City staff, and the public. FNI organized the data, identified shared priorities, and ultimately formulated two options from which the Bond Commission could choose. At the January 13 meeting, the Bond Commission chose "Combined Option A" by a majority vote of over 80 percent.

"There are two aspects to our recommendation: one, those projects to be funded out of the bond proceeds, and two, those projects to be funded as additional or supplemental funding becomes available," said Burk Wyatt, Chair of the Bond Implementation Commission. Wyatt continued with giving a thank you for the opportunity to work with City Council and staff on behalf of the citizens of Hickory on these strategic investments in the City's bright future. "We appreciate the trust and faith you have placed in the Bond Commission."

The final recommendation from the Bond Commission was presented to City Council at the January, 19, 2016 workshop, with a public hearing held on February 2, 2016. City Council voted unanimously to approve the final recommendation from the Bond Commission, which included Riverwalk Option Two.

"Combined Option A," totaling \$35.55 million, consists of the following projects:

- Riverwalk Option Two, which is a combination of a boardwalk at the lake that transitions into the surrounding landscape. (\$8.5 million)
- Citywalk from Lenoir Rhyne University, down Main Avenue, and past Union Square, along the railroad tracks (\$11.2 million) will also feature a pedestrian bridge (\$1.7 million), added amenities along Main Avenue and Union Square (\$1.3 million), and realignment at 2nd Avenue NE (\$.9 million).
- Streetscapes will consist of improvements at Lenoir Rhyne Boulevard (\$3.2 million), Old Lenoir Road (\$4.4 million), and a north and south connection between the Citywalk and the Riverwalk (\$3.6 million).
- Gateway features will be placed at Lenoir Rhyne Boulevard and I-40 (\$.5 million), US 321 and Clement Boulevard (\$.15 million), and US 70 and US 321 (\$.1 million).

Additional Projects (if additional funding becomes available - in priority order):

- NC 127 Streetscape
- City Walk Depot Station Parking and Improvements
- Riverwalk Option 1

"We want people from around the state, from other states, to see this project and to recognize, "Hey that's Hickory, North Carolina. Let's go there. Or, they are going down 321...let's stop there. Let's spend some money. I want to move there." That's the point of this," said Bond Commission Member Frank Young in his presentation to City Council at January 19's workshop.

With that decision the next step is design phase in 2016.

Riverwalk

The Riverwalk is designed to have substantial pedestrian access, letting people view and experience the water, as they make their way along the Riverwalk. It also includes a recreation/entertainment area near the Highway 321 bridge. The exact type and use of this space will be determined by the Riverwalk Subcommittee with the help of professional designers. Future phases will seek to extend the Riverwalk beyond the bridge, connecting to L.P. Fran Stadium and creating retail and residential opportunities along Highway 321.

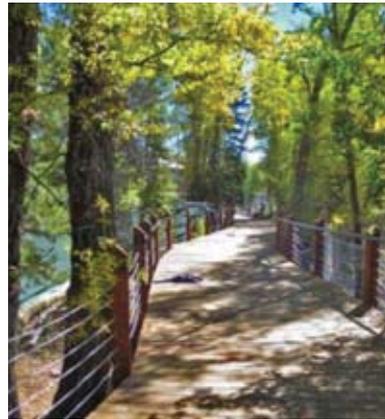
The Riverwalk’s boardwalk and path is slated to be roughly three miles that run along Lake Hickory through the City parks, along the water. One point will start at the Deidra Lackey Memorial Park, where Geitner Park is being renovated. The other point begins at the Highway 321 bridge, which is slated for renovation through the North Carolina Department of Transportation in the upcoming years.

At the July meeting, Freese and Nichols presented the conceptual drawings for the Riverwalk project. “We have looked at the constraints and opportunities at the parks, along the lake,” said Charles Archer, FNI account manager.

“The river is a destination area and an important linkage for the City,” said Matt Milano, FNI landscape architect.

The Riverwalk is a comprehensive water front trail system. “We wanted to develop an artful system that is expressive and inspiring, increase connectivity to existing points of interest, and make the southern portion of the Riverwalk a destination space,” added Milano.

Some of the concepts include a combination concrete



path and deck section over the water, low level pedestrian lights, including architectural character into the railing and decking, and overlooks that will have backless benches for best full visual ability that will be steel to match the rails.

At the end of the first year of the bond process, City Council was presented with three options for the Riverwalk. Each option varied in costs and proximity to the lake. Each option allowed the opportunity to have lake views with access to the scenic City parks that the Riverwalk will encompass.

The final recommendation that was presented by the Bond Commission to City Council is a combination of a boardwalk at the lake that transitions into the surrounding landscape and is budgeted at \$8.5 million.

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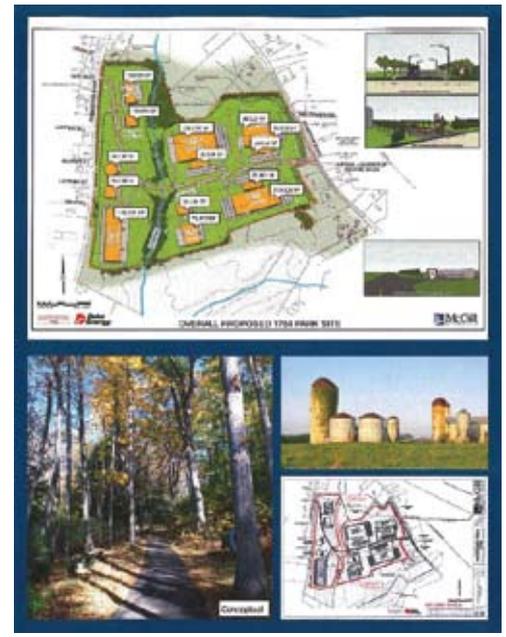
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Park 1764 Overview



Park 1764 is a joint venture between Catawba County and the City of Hickory. The mission is to develop a business park compatible with the surrounding community and to promote a harmonious development for job creation for Catawba County citizens. Park 1764 is an upscale business park, just under 200 acres, located south of CVCC, between Robinwood Road and Startown Road, with excellent access to Interstate 40 and Highway 321. Additionally, natural lands will be set aside within the park for permanent conservation and covenants will be established to protect the park environment and the adjacent community. \$5 million of the bond funds are earmarked for the City's portion of the development costs.

History

In the early 1760's, an industrious German named Ulrich Krauter arrived at a German community established by Heinrich Weidner at Muddy Creek, a tributary to the South Fork of the Catawba River. Weidner was Catawba County's first settler. In 1764, the British Crown granted Krauter (Crowder) 450 acres as part of the Granville Proprietary. Crowder had development plans for this property, and started selling lots in Ulrichsburg, a section of the Crowdertown/Crowder's Town parcel, with the sale of 16 lots of 9/10 acre each. A popular 1886 map of Catawba County locates Crowder Town Stock Farm and Crowder Town Road along Muddy Creek and identifies John B. Lutz, the foundation for one of the most notable and unique Jersey dairy operations in the State. By the early 1900's, five of their children established separately owned and operated, but "one in purpose" dairies known as the "Dutch Dairy Farm #1 – 6", with the unifying theme of the co-op "to create bargaining power, reach outside markets, increase prices, reduce cost per unit, establish uniform standards, improve quality, and enhance the ability to specialize, make long range plans, and gain relationships."

Dutch Dairy Farm #1: Henry P. Lutz, wife Sarah and family

Dutch Dairy Farm #2: W. Raymond Lutz, wife Bessie and family

Dutch Dairy Farm #3: Lewis H. Seitz, wife Alice Lutz and family

Dutch Dairy Farm #4: John B. Lutz, wife Barbara, daughters Mattie and Sarah

Dutch Dairy Farm #5: Avery L. Baker, wife Ida Lutz and family

Dutch Dairy Farm #6: J. Ottis Lutz, wife Essie and family

The family is still involved in this property and interested in preserving the name and the heritage of these lands, and developing it in a way the industrious Ulrich Krauter may have originally intended.

Park 1764 Details

- Park 1764 will be the only Class A Business Park in the entire region and will appeal to international and upper-end business opportunities creating higher technology jobs, a substantial opportunity unlike any other in the area.
- Park 1764 is patterned after Treyburn Business Park in rural Durham County - a clean, high-end, two-lane rural environment.
- Covenants and restrictions will be in place to maintain low-impact, eco-sensitive development appropriate to the rural setting.
- Distribution centers and heavy manufacturing will not be allowable uses within the park.
- Annexation of surrounding properties will not be facilitated by the development of Park 1764.
- Views will be shielded.
- Only necessary turn/deceleration lanes that are needed for current or future developments are planned.
- Natural lands will be set aside within Park 1764 for permanent conservation and there will be access to public walking trails.
- Every 100 jobs created in the park equates to 177 jobs throughout the community.
- The financial impact 100 new jobs is equal to handing \$1 to every citizen in both North and South Carolina (and half of Tennessee!) and asking them to spend it in Catawba County.

Streetscapes and Gateways



Recognizing that the City's major thoroughfares are adequate public transportation, but no longer competitive, the City realized that this is an area that needed improvement. In the communities that Hickory competes against for jobs and for population, we recognize that streets that have better pedestrian access are more aesthetically pleasing, and the importance of gateways, especially on Interstate 40 and Highway 321. As people are moving through the Hickory area, there is something there at those exits that tells people they have arrived, that they are at a destination. Wayfinding or better signage is also a critical piece of enhancing our commercial centers.

The initial phase of Streetscape improvements will consist of improvements at Lenoir Rhyne Boulevard (\$3.2 million), Old Lenoir Road (\$4.4 million), and a north and south connection between the Citywalk and the Riverwalk (\$3.6 million). Gateway



features will be placed at Lenoir Rhyne Boulevard and I-40 (\$.5 million), US 321 and Clement Boulevard (\$.15 million), and US 70 and US 321 (\$.1 million). Additional projects, if additional funding becomes available, may include the NC 127 Streetscape.

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Citywalk

A main focus of the Citywalk is to create destinations for jobs and headquarters, service, and professional opportunities in the City's Central Business District. There are locations, along the Citywalk, that are viable for headquarters, urban residential units, commercial services, and retail jobs.

Many employers who seek to grow their company by employing college graduates and others, who fit that 20 to 30 year-old demographic, recognize that their employees want to work in an urban setting. Many of them, who work in this area of the City, want to bike or walk to work. They want to take their lunch break and go into a downtown setting. The Citywalk encourages that, giving Hickory a competitive advantage that helps to recruit professional jobs and headquarter opportunities.

The Citywalk is a link from Lenoir-Rhyne University through the downtown area and continues the mill redevelopment and corporate headquarter opportunities that have already taken place, along this corridor. The Citywalk is comprised of 1.2 miles of pedestrian, bicycle, roadway, streetscape, safety, signage, signalization, intersection, crosswalk, and public meeting space improvements. The estimated costs of the Citywalk with the amenities and the realignment at 2nd Avenue NE totals \$15.1

million.

In 2015, the City applied for the TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) Discretionary Grant program that is reviewed and awarded by the Department of Transportation (DOT) to assist with the funding of the Citywalk. Hickory requested \$22 million in TIGER funds and will commit \$5.5 million in local funds.

Although the City did not receive this funding in 2015, City Staff fully intend to resubmit an application for a future TIGER Grant and believe the City will be better positioned to receive funds by presenting the completed Citywalk design. "The Citywalk is a multi-year project and our next step is to complete its design," said City Manager Mick Berry. "We've already received an \$800,000 grant to be used for the design process, so the lack of TIGER funds will not hinder the Citywalk's progress." If awarded in the future, this grant will assist with completion of the Citywalk project.

Additionally, due to the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) through the NC Department of Transportation (NCDOT), the City will receive \$9.6 million that is earmarked for the Citywalk project. These funds are slated to be available in 2020, which was accelerated from the original 2023 date.



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How will the bond projects be paid for?

There are a range of sources that go into making these projects a reality. Federal and state grants, fees and gifts from the community, but ultimately, the largest investment will be new businesses. The community determined that the City should move forward with the investments by voting "Yes" to the \$40 million bond referendum. City Council with the recommendations from the Bond Implementation Commission will decide which projects that will move forward first, as well as the costs of each project.

How do bonds work? Bonds are repaid through increased property tax. Cities in North Carolina can only levy taxes and fees, as authorized by the State. The only tax the City Council controls is the property tax to repay debt and take care of other operations of the City, so property taxes would be increased gradually as the bonds are issued and need to be repaid. The bonds are being used to be able to pay for the projects through tax dollars that Hickory residents will pay back through their taxes. The tax increases do not happen all at once. As the City issues the bonds, the taxes will be increased.

City residents, who pay property taxes, will see their incremental tax increases over the next seven to 10 years, as the bonds are issued. All property owners, both business, home, and rental property, located in the city now or in the future, will pay for the bonds. People who own vehicles and live in the city will, also, pay for the bonds.

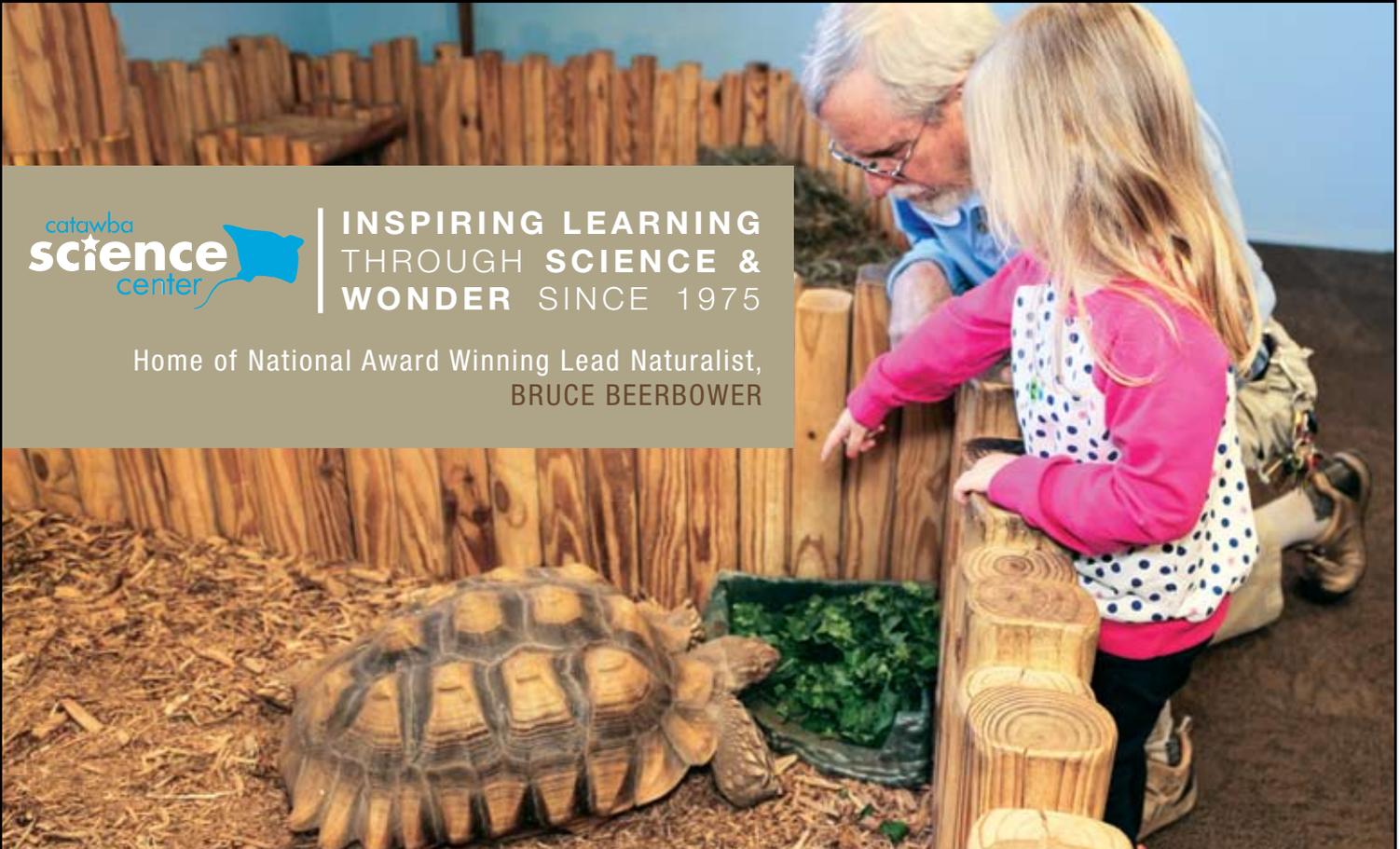
The City anticipates the debt to be issued, beginning in 2017. The amount of debt that is issued will depend on the priority of the projects and the total costs of each project.

The property tax rate would increase incrementally an additional eight cents per \$100 value over seven years and remain in place until the bonds are paid off. Example: The average home in Hickory is valued at \$150,000 and currently pays \$70.81 per month in City property tax. The monthly payment would gradually increase from \$70.81 to \$80.81 per month over seven years and then remain at \$80.81 per month until the bonds are paid off, which is approximately 20 years.



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A Gift to the Community

The Robert Lackey family of Hickory announced in August 2014 that they would be working with the City on improving approximately 20 to 30 acres of the waterfront at the City-owned Geitner-Rotary Park and the parks that link to it, through a multi-million dollar monetary contribution, to establish a memorial for Deidra Lackey, Robert Lackey's late wife. This memorial gift to the City of Hickory and the community is the single largest donation in the City's history. The renovated park will be at one end of the City's future Riverwalk, one of the bond projects.

The Lackey family hired TSW Architecture out of Atlanta to design the park. The project encompasses 18.9 acres of Rotary-Geitner Park for the new Deidra Lackey Memorial Park. The idea was to create a public event space, conservatory, related gardens, and trails, while maintaining or replicating current items into the new design.

"Mrs. Lackey loved kids and ministering to kids. She loved gardening and flowers. She loved the conservatory at the Biltmore," said Mr. Lackey. In thinking of a way to capture Mrs. Lackey's memory, Mr. Lackey and his family thought, "Maybe what we need to do is build a park in her memory." From there Mr. Lackey looked all over the City for land and found what he said was a "perfect piece of land" to create a memorial to his wife, but also to create an Inspiring Place for the entire City to enjoy. "We look forward to partnering with the City and making it a beautiful place for Hickory," said Mr. Lackey.

"On behalf of all the people of Hickory who will benefit from this, I want to express appreciation for this generosity of the Lackey family and creating what is certainly an "Inspiring Space" of the type envisioned by our current ongoing initiative," said Hickory Mayor Rudy Wright.

At the May 12, 2015 joint meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Hickory City Council, they

both voted, unanimously, to approve the conceptual plans that were presented and moved forward. The park's ground breaking is slated to take place in 2016.

In the Master Plan, TSW has designed some excellent amenities for this park. They are designing with the attitude to be "green" wherever possible. They are interested in allowing the property to be a teaching ground on how ecology works from the green perspective.

A formal processional leads to the entry of a Lake House that is designed to be functional day or night with meeting rooms, office space, a back patio area, and an amphitheater leading to an event dock. The Lake House is planned to be where the current building is located at the Rotary-Geitner Park.

A canopy bridge that is a walking bridge, encompassed in the trees above the park, leads to a Conservatory. An elevator that is located outside the Lake House provides access to the bridge. The Conservatory will have two outdoor spaces, which include an observational deck and patio.

"I can't think of a single project that is as exciting as this, and I don't know of anywhere else that has a project like this," said David Carter, President of Carter Consulting Group, the City's consultant who is assisting the City in reviewing the agreements on this project due to his prior experience in private/public partnerships of this type.

"This project comes at a great time," said Mayor Rudy Wright, referring to this project coming at the same time the Bonds are moving forward within the City of Hickory. "I can't imagine a more perfect way to show that the people of Hickory craft things right," added Mayor Wright. "We thank the Lackeys, again, for their dedication and commitment to Hickory. There aren't many City's that will have something like this."



The Kiwanis Park Splash Pad

The City of Hickory and two local Kiwanis Clubs, Hickory Kiwanis Club and Western Catawba County Kiwanis Club, have partnered to build a splash pad at Kiwanis Park, located at 805 6th SE Street, Hickory, NC 28602.

“It is an inclusive location, and accepting of the diversity in the community. We truly believe that it will attract a lot of kids,” said Steve Aaron, representative of the Kiwanis Club.

“Kiwanis International celebrates its 100 year anniversary in 2015 and our club was looking for a way to celebrate the anniversary that would have large impact on our local community,” said David Parsons, representative of the Western Kiwanis Club. “When the idea of both local Kiwanis clubs, partnering with the City of Hickory, was presented to us, it seemed like a perfect way to accomplish that.”

“Our goal is to raise \$100,000 to assist with the building of the splash pad at Kiwanis Park,” added Parsons. “Since our clubs were involved in the fundraising effort for the Zahra Baker All-Children’s Playground at Kiwanis Park, this seemed like a natural extension of that effort. The \$100,000 goal seemed like it fit well with the celebration of our 100 year

anniversary. Our hope is that the splash pad will be used and enjoyed for many years to come by children and adults of all ages.”

“The Hickory Kiwanis Club is delighted to participate in fundraising for the Splash Pad at Kiwanis Park,” said Bruce Blackburn, Chairman Splash Pad Committee Hickory Kiwanis Club. “We are very proud of the Zahra Baker Playground at Kiwanis Park and feel the addition of the Splash Pad will enhance the play experience for the children of our City.”

The City and the Parks and Recreation Department broke ground on this project on January 27, 2016. The goal is to have the splash pad opened by summer 2016.



The Friends of Hickory

Friends of Hickory is an organization of private citizens, dedicated to investing in the welfare and prosperity of the City of Hickory and its surrounding communities. The Friends of Hickory hope to foster a sense of community pride, support existing resources within the City, and develop new projects that will have a positive impact on the lives of all residents and visitors. They would like their efforts to help improve the quality of life, attract new residents to our community, and improve the local economy.

The Friends of Hickory’s first project is the development of a downtown park that will incorporate play space, an interactive water feature, an attractive place to sit and

enjoy, as well as a place where children can explore the unique “unrestricted play” equipment and cool themselves with an interactive water feature. The historic downtown area currently attracts a wide variety of businesses and visitors to Hickory. The addition of a park will add to the appeal of shopping, dining, and doing business on Union Square, offering an active destination for our youngest visitors and their families.

Over the past year, The Friends of Hickory have researched playground equipment and park designs to create something innovative and unique to Hickory. The playground park is slated to be built in 2016. They hope to break ground in April.



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The next few years will be an exciting time for the residents of Hickory and the surrounding area. Hickory is an important part of our story and we are proud to be part of this community's history – and its future.

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