

Rutherford County Tourism

April 6th, 2026

- Financial Summary
- Committee Summary
- Rutherford Bound Update - 'Back to Beautiful' campaign

TDA Board Members

Executive Committee

Board Chair: Willard Whitson

1st Vice: Dave Long

2nd Vice: Margaret Annunziata

Treasurer: Spence Romine

Other Members

Dana Bradley (Secretary)

Amy Bridges

Richard Lundy

Debbie Stanfield

Scott Martin

Emily Walker

Jessica Davis

Ex-Officio

Paula Roach

25-26 Financials

Rutherford County Tourism Rolling Financial Forecast					
2025-2026 RFF					
	24-25 Actuals	25-26 Budget	25-26 RFF	Variance	Comments - Variance From Prior Year
Total Revenue:	\$ 2,641,815.71	\$ 1,983,000.00	\$ 1,997,985.27	\$ 14,985.27	
Total Wages and Benefits:	\$ 365,244.11	\$ 333,142.00	\$ 340,806.36	\$ 7,664.36	
Total Marketing and Advertising:	\$ 734,947.20	\$ 800,000.00	\$ 766,443.14	\$ (33,556.86)	Marketing committee to monitor marketing plan
Total Rent and Utilities:	\$ 13,238.71	\$ 15,462.00	\$ 13,765.87	\$ (1,696.13)	
Total Office Expense:	\$ 25,874.62	\$ 33,800.00	\$ 30,922.33	\$ (2,877.67)	
Total Repairs and Maint. :	\$ 3,003.80	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	W/C remains closed due to Helene
Total Travel	\$ 14,195.36	\$ 24,550.00	\$ 19,077.17	\$ (5,472.83)	Travel and meetings ramping back up post Helene
Total Prof/Ins Fees:	\$ 108,932.25	\$ 107,071.00	\$ 107,826.00	755.00	
Total Project / Programs:	\$ 2,765,608.43	\$ 3,346,935.00	\$ 3,346,936.35	\$ 1.35	
Total Expenses	\$ 4,031,044.48	\$ 4,660,960.00	\$ 4,625,777.22	\$ (35,182.78)	
Total Cash Flow (Revenue over Expenses)	\$ (1,389,228.77)	\$ (2,677,960.00)	\$ (2,627,791.95)	\$ 50,168.05	
Cash Fund Balance	\$ 3,775,136.60	\$ 1,097,176.60	\$ 1,147,344.65	\$ 50,168.05	

Marketing and Advertising Breakdown

	24-25 Actuals	25-26 Budget
<u>Marketing and Advertising: 370-00</u>		
Advertising/Marketing	\$ 402,691.98	\$ 432,850.00
Fam. Tours/Media Tours	\$ -	\$ 5,000.00
Website	\$ 63,536.50	\$ 62,856.00
Graphic Designer	\$ 18,018.75	\$ 20,000.00
Marketing & PR Communications	\$ 123,500.00	\$ 119,000.00
Year of the Trail/Requests	\$ -	\$ -
Photography	\$ 38,325.00	\$ 30,000.00
Digital/Social Media/Ad Words	\$ 48,688.00	\$ 50,000.00
Printing Cost / Vacation Guide	\$ 34,895.65	\$ 50,000.00
Other Marketing Costs	\$ 5,288.92	\$ 30,294.00
Total Marketing and Advertising:	\$ 734,944.80	\$ 800,000.00

Project and Program Breakdown

Project / Programs	24-25 Actuals	25-26 Budget
Wayfinding Sign Maint. 510-03	\$ (1,853.00)	\$ -
CIVITAS/Projects 299-01	\$ -	\$ -
Strategic Plan 191-00	\$ 474,732.96	\$ 350,000.00
Strategic Plan Imp. / Funding 191-01	\$ 1,925,206.26	\$ 240,000.00
Strategic Plan-Paddle Trails 510-04	\$ 319,198.27	\$ -
Strategic Plan-Legacy Park	\$ -	\$ 300,000.00
Future Projects	\$ 174,252.14	\$ -
Community Programs 299-11	\$ 46,090.00	\$ 45,000.00
Promotional Events/Group Sales 299-11	\$ -	\$ -
Retire NC/Relocate Rutherford 299-11	\$ -	\$ -
Agritourism 299-11	\$ 54,410.00	\$ 52,000.00
Keep Ru. Co. Beautiful 299-02	\$ 21,773.58	\$ 42,000.00
Total Project / Programs:	\$ 3,013,810.21	\$ 1,029,000.00



Agritourism



- TDA marketing agritourism product and farmer's markets.
- TDA to support county farmer's markets.
- Rutherford County portion of VisitNC Farm App.
- TDA is in partnership with People 1st Tourism to grow agritourism opportunities in Rutherford County.
 - P1T works with farmers to create events to promote agritourism.
 - 3-5 events each month.
 - Many events are selling out.



Keep Rutherford County Beautiful

- Fall 2025 Litter Bowl
 - 6 Schools
 - 241 Volunteers
 - 2,415 lbs collected
 - REACH was winner
- Paid Litter Pick-Up
 - 63.5 miles
 - 296 bags collected



Rutherford Trails Collaborative

- Rutherford County
- Carolina Climbers Coalition
- Chimney Rock State Park
- Rutherford County TDA
- Town of Lake Lure
- RHI Legacy
- Foothills Conservancy
- Conserving Carolina
- Rutherford Outdoor Coalition



America 250



Current Events

- Town of Rutherfordton Over Mountain Victory Man Statue (America 250 grant). Unveiling 4th of July.
- 4th of July weekend fireworks
- 4th of July weekend American Jet Ski Association
- Rutherford County Schools essay contest



Film Committee



- Committee established
- Scope of work being presented to TDA board as part of the 26-27 budget to include:
 - Website
 - Assets
 - Management
 - Plan



Community Programs

- TDA continues to support marketing all community festivals and event
- Events sponsored in 2025-2026 Fiscal Year:
 - The Rumble
 - Bill's Creek Community Center Music Day
 - Jet Ski Tournament
 - Cherry Bounce Festival
 - Hot Nights Cool Rides
 - Forest City Owls
 - Food, Art, and Brew
 - Hometown Holidays



OVERVIEW OF CURRENT MARKETING EFFORTS

TRADITIONAL MEDIA

Our State Magazine (print & digital)

Blue Ridge Outdoor Magazine

Blue Ridge Country Magazine

Visit NC Travel Guide

Visit NC Guides

- Cycling Guide
- Birding Guide

DIGITAL MARKETING

Pay Per Click

Digital TV- Hulu, Roku, Etc.

- Atlanta, GA

YouTube PreRoll

Programmatic Advertising

Native Advertising

SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING

Boosted Posts

A/B Creative Testing

Static Ads

GIF Ads

Video Ads

ROMANTIC ASHVILLE PARTNERSHIP

Featured Listings

Social Media Posts

Organic Content

Email Mentions



America 250



Current Events

- Town of Rutherfordton Over Mountain Victory Man Statue (America 250 grant). Unveiling 4th of July.
- 4th of July weekend fireworks
- 4th of July weekend American Jet Ski Association
- Rutherford County Schools essay contest
- More to come..



Rutherford County Commissioners

April 6, 2026

Don Cason, Executive Director
Rutherford County TDA





the agency

ANGLE



C. TEDDY

CONSULTING, LLC

Engaging Organizations in Strategic Philanthropy





11 PLANNED

Community projects



14 COMPLETED

Funded & Built

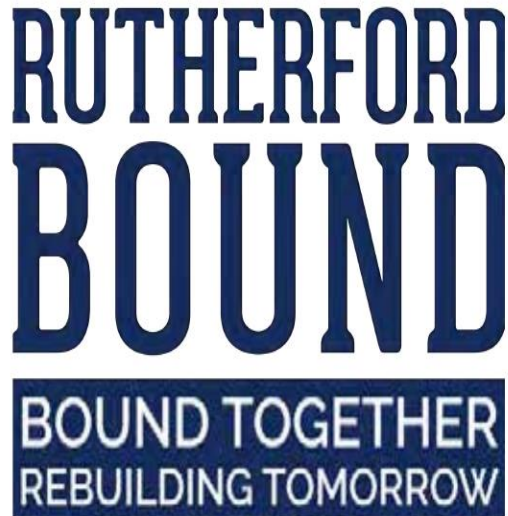


\$30 MILLION

Raised for projects

Funding Summary: March 2026

PROJECT FUNDING TOTAL			\$	30,095,323
	G	GRANTS	\$	16,553,810
	L	LOCAL GOVERNMENT	\$	5,648,941
	T	RUTHERFORD COUNTY TDA	\$	6,795,000
	O	OTHER PRIVATE AND MISC. DONATIONS	\$	1,097,572



RUTHERFORD BOUND **\$30,095,323**

RHI Legacy Soccer Park **\$17,400,000**

\$47,495,323

RUTHERFORD BOUND -- COMPLETED PROJECTS

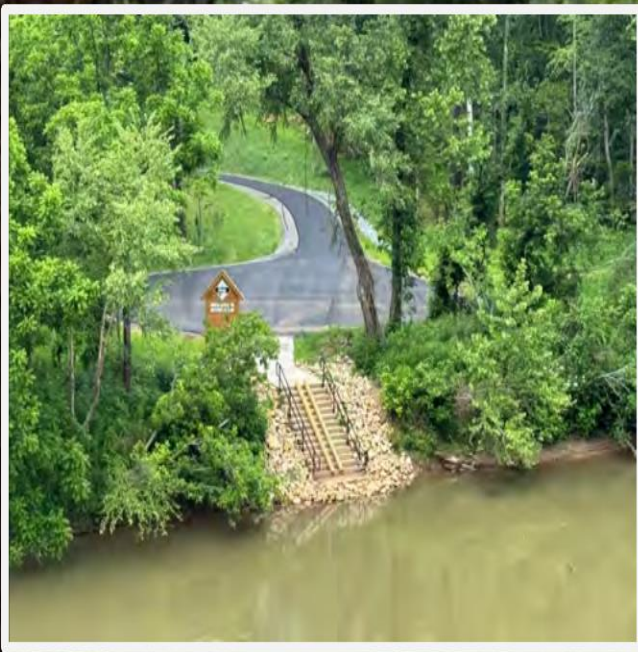
1. Chimney Rock Village: Phase I Streetscape
2. Chimney Rock Village: Boulders Trailhead
3. Lake Lure: Boat Slips and Boardwalk
4. Lake Lure: Town Center Walkway
5. Lake Lure: Buffalo Creek Park Trailhead
6. Lake Lure: Morse Park Gazebo & Overlook
7. Broad River Paddle Trail Accesses (2)
8. Rutherfordton: Kiwanis Park
9. Rutherfordton Norris Park
10. Forest City: Highway 74 Bridge Enhancements
11. Spindale: Phase I Streetscape
12. Spindale: North Slope Skate Park
13. Thermal Belt Rail Trail Enhancements: Public Art
14. Legacy Soccer Park



RUTHERFORD BOUND -- CURRENT PROJECTS

1. Chimney Rock Village: Streetscape
2. Lake Lure: Morse Park Improvements
3. Rutherfordton: 2nd and Main Streetscape
4. The Factory!
5. Forest City: Park Square Depot (Farmers Market)
6. Ellenboro: Colfax Cotton Gin Park
7. Ellenboro: Railroad Depot Museum
8. Symphony of Rutherford County: Future Home & Event Space
9. Thermal Belt Rail Trail Enhancements
10. Purple Martin Greenway Enhancements
- II. Rutherford County Trails Collaborative: Various Projects





BROAD RIVER PADDLE TRAIL

BOATING ACCESS AREAS

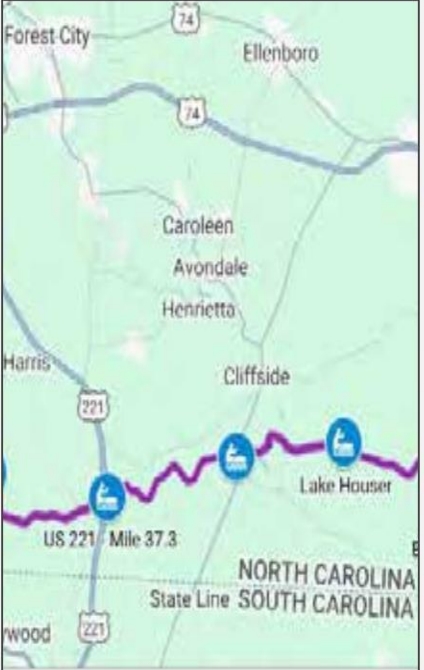
Total Funding: **\$718,750**

(100% grant-funded)

Current Status: **Complete**

Next Steps: **Operation & Maintenance**

Ribbon-Cutting: **July 11, 2025**



HWY. 221-A RIVER ACCESS



HWY. 221 RIVER ACCESS





NORTH SLOPE SKATE & RIDE



Cost Estimate: \$2,710,000
Current Status: Complete
Ribbon-Cutting: October 30, 2025





NORRIS PARK



Cost Estimate:

\$1,850,000

Current Status:

Complete

Ribbon Cutting:

March 7, 2026

NORRIS PARKS PARTNERS



THE FACTORY!



Cost Estimate: \$4,400,000

Current Funding: \$4,200,000

Funding Gap (Δ): **\$200,000**

Current Status: Construction

Next Steps: Continue Fundraising

FOREST CITY: PARK SQUARE DEPOT



Cost Estimate: \$2,400,000

Current Funding: \$2,400,000

Current Status: Construction

Next Steps: Ribbon-Cutting

ELLENBORO: COLFAX COTTON GIN PARK



Cost Estimate: \$1,400,000

Current Funding: \$1,400,000

Current Status: Construction

Next Steps: Ribbon-Cutting



CHIMNEY ROCK: STREETSCAPE



Cost Estimate: **\$5,500,000**

Current Funding: **\$5,500,000**

Current Status: **Storm Recovery**

Next Steps: **Construction**

LAKE LURE: MORSE PARK



Cost Estimate: **TBD**

Current Funding: **\$1,210,000**

Current Status: **Storm Recovery**

Next Steps: **Construction**





LEGACY SOCCER PARK

PROJECT PARTNERS

RHI Legacy Foundation

Town of Forest City

Rutherford County

Rutherford Co. Soccer Association

Rutherford County TDA

PROJECT FUNDING

RHI Legacy Foundation: \$13.5 Million

NC State Appropriation: \$2.5 Million

Rutherford County Tourism Development Authority: \$1,400,000

TOTAL: \$17,400,000

CURRENT STATUS

Construction Complete

Grand Opening - March 20, 2026

DESTINATION
 BY DESIGN





PROJECT PARTNERS



Rutherford Trails

THERMAL BELT RAIL TRAIL & PURPLE MARTIN GREENWAY

CURRENT STATUS: DESIGN & IMPLEMENT TRAIL ENHANCEMENTS

NEXT STEPS:

- *Implement TBRT Enhancement Projects (Public Art, Signage, Crossbuck Fencing, Commercial Connectivity)*
- *PMG Land Acquisition & Extensions / Connectors*



Rutherford Trails Collaborative

- Rutherford County
- Carolina Climbers Coalition
- Chimney Rock State Park
- Rutherford County TDA
- Town of Lake Lure
- RHI Legacy
- Foothills Conservancy
- Conserving Carolina
- Rutherford Outdoor Coalition



RB Communications Update

BOUND TOGETHER BUILDING TOMORROW

Find a Project



ALL PROJECTS

Rebuild & Restore **Chimney Rock** and **Lake Lure** [Learn More](#)



Broad River Paddle Trail Accesses: Ribbon-Cutting

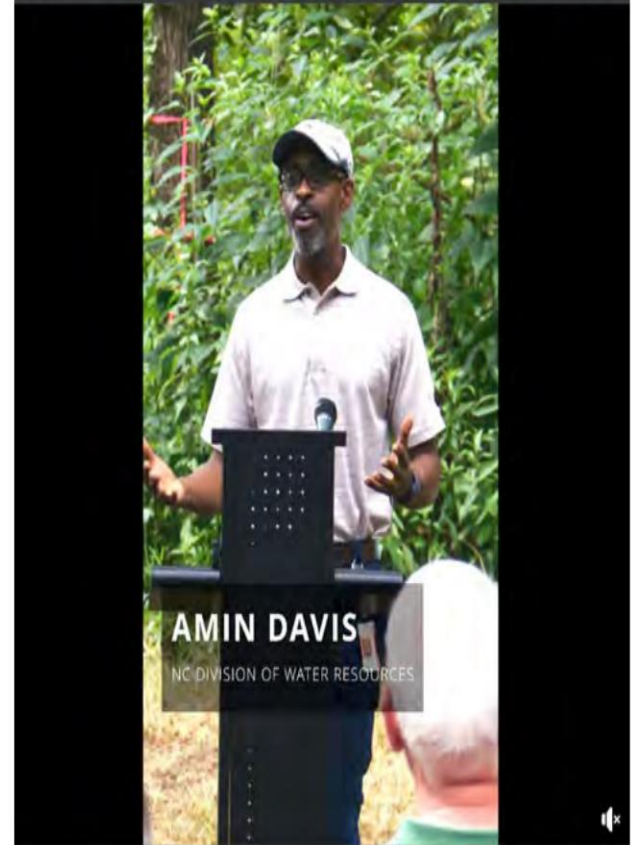


Broad River Access Opens: A New Chapter for Recreation in Rutherford County



Rutherford Bound
September 22, 2025

The Broad River has always been special. Now it's easier than ever to enjoy it with the completion of two new boating accesses as part of the expanding Broad River Padd... See more



AMIN DAVIS
NC DIVISION OF WATER RESOURCES

RUTHERFORDBOUND.COM
Broad River Paddle Trail [Learn more](#)

Eric Woolridge, Erin Welsh and 159 others 7 comments 24 shares



JERRY STENSLAND
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RUTHERFORD OUTDOOR COALITION

Cotton Gin Park: Groundbreaking



Coming to Ellenboro: Colfax Cotton Gin Park



ELLENBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

Rutherford Bound
November 26, 2025

Ellenboro's Colfax Cotton Gin Park is officially underway.
... See more

You, Eric Woolridge, Erin Welsh and 179 others
12 comments 34 shares

Like Comment Share

View more comments

Mary Jaeger-Gale
This project is very exciting for Rutherford County! Congratulations!
16w Like Reply

North Slope Skate & Ride: Event + Promotion



The town of Spindale proudly celebrates the official ribbon-cutting of North Slope Skate & Ride park as a destination where skaters, bikers, families and community come together.



The celebration included the ribbon-cutting, riding demos, giveaways, plus a great turnout from residents and supporters as we opened this exciting new chapter for the Town of Spindale.



Norris Park: Event + Promotion



Norris Park officially opened to the community on Saturday, March 7, 2026, with a Grand Opening Celebration in Rutherfordton.

Residents, partners, and local leaders gathered to mark the moment—spending the morning exploring the park, trying out the new disc golf course, and taking in the site's history and natural setting. The project reflects a continued investment in outdoor spaces that bring people together and create new opportunities to get outside and play. Residents, partners, and local leaders gathered to mark the moment—spending the morning exploring the park, trying out the new disc golf course, and taking in the site's history and natural setting. The project reflects a continued investment in outdoor spaces that bring people together and create new opportunities to get outside and play.



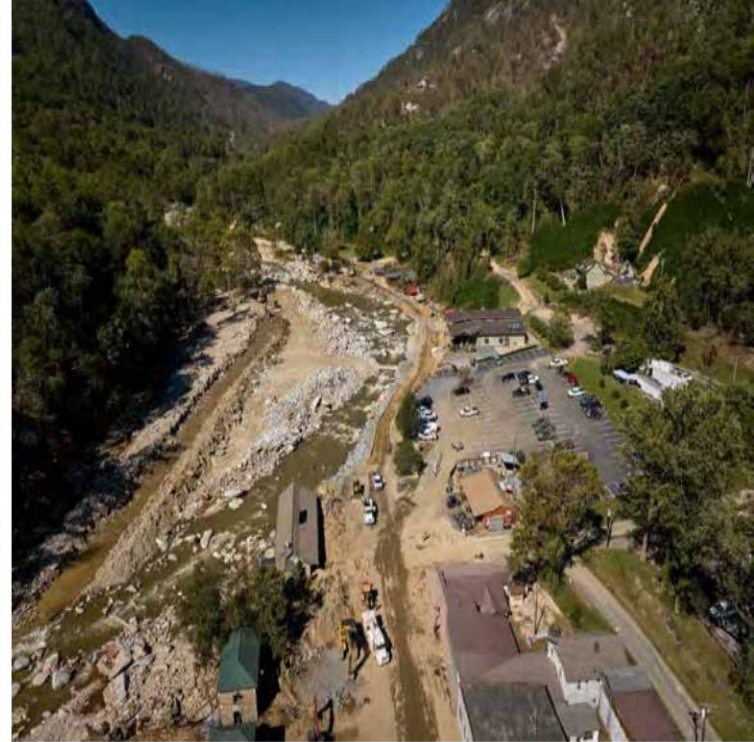
Legacy Soccer Park: Grand Opening







RAISE the ROCK
CHIMNEY ROCK RECOVERY ACTION PLAN



RAISE *the* **ROCK**
CHIMNEY ROCK RECOVERY ACTION PLAN



LEGEND

- Existing Buildings
- Proposed Buildings
- Proposed Restrooms



PROJECT AREAS

<p>Public Capital Improvement Projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Rocky Broad River Restoration 2 Rocky Broad Riverwalk 3 Village Streetscape 4 Village Square 5 Riverwalk Plaza & Recreation Area 6 Historic State Park Plaza & Overlook 7 Hickory Nut Gorge State Trail Connector 	<p>Village-Owned Commercial Infill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 East Village Infill 2 West Village Infill 	<p>Privately-Owned Commercial Infill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Riverside West 2 Main St West 3 Main St East 4 Terrace Drive 5 Village Square Infill 6 Alternate Infill Design
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EMERGING PRIORITIES: The BIG 3

1 RIVER RESTORATION & RIVERWALK PRELIMINARY ENGINEERING (ESMERALDA TO CHIMNEY ROCK RIVER PARK)



2 COMMERCIAL INFILL EAST IMPLEMENTATION



3 VILLAGE STREETScape



ROCKY BROAD RIVER RESTORATION - EAST

DESTINATION BY DESIGN



RAISE *the* **ROCK**
CHIMNEY ROCK RECOVERY ACTION PLAN



ROCKY BROAD RIVER RESTORATION - EAST

DESTINATION BY DESIGN



RAISE the ROCK
CHIMNEY ROCK RECOVERY ACTION PLAN

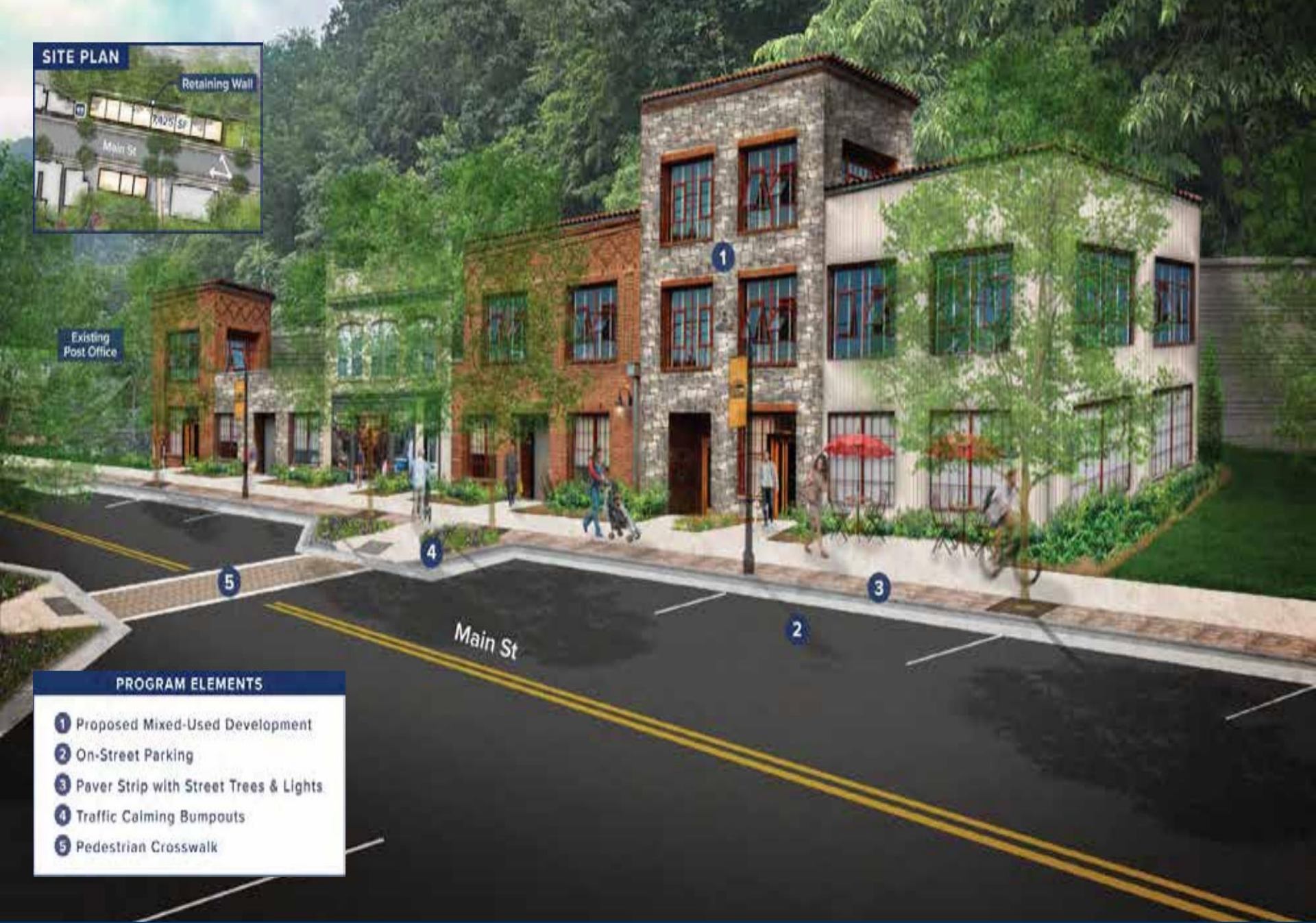


COMMERCIAL INFILL EAST - EXISTING CONDITIONS

 **DESTINATION BY DESIGN**

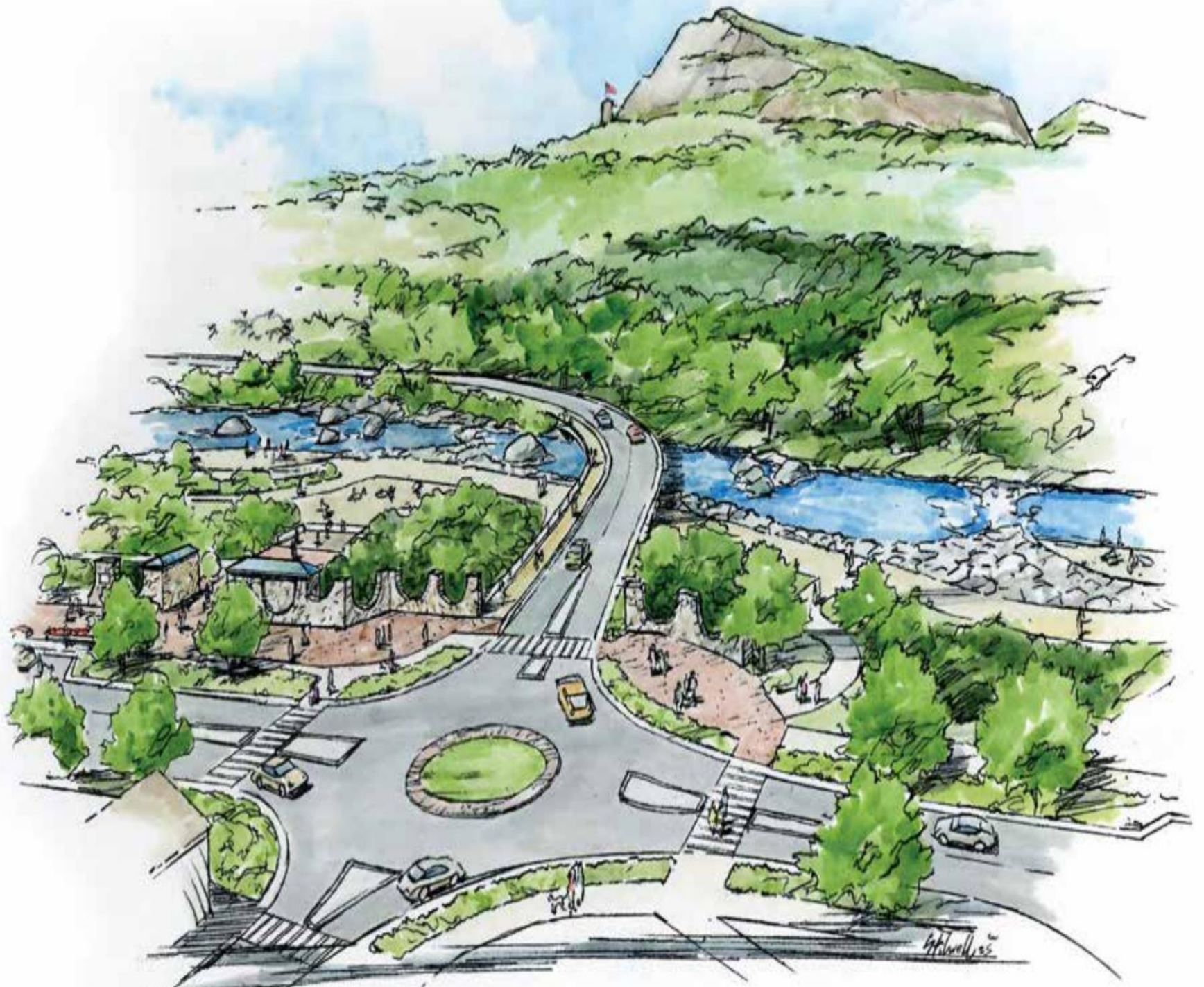


RAISE *the* ROCK
CHIMNEY ROCK RECOVERY ACTION PLAN



- PROGRAM ELEMENTS**
- 1 Proposed Mixed-Used Development
 - 2 On-Street Parking
 - 3 Paver Strip with Street Trees & Lights
 - 4 Traffic Calming Bumpouts
 - 5 Pedestrian Crosswalk

COMMERCIAL INFILL EAST - PROPOSED

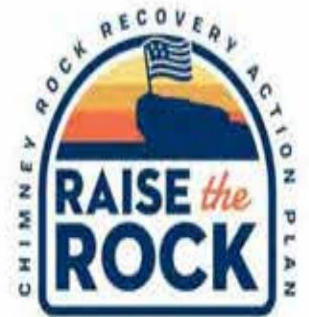
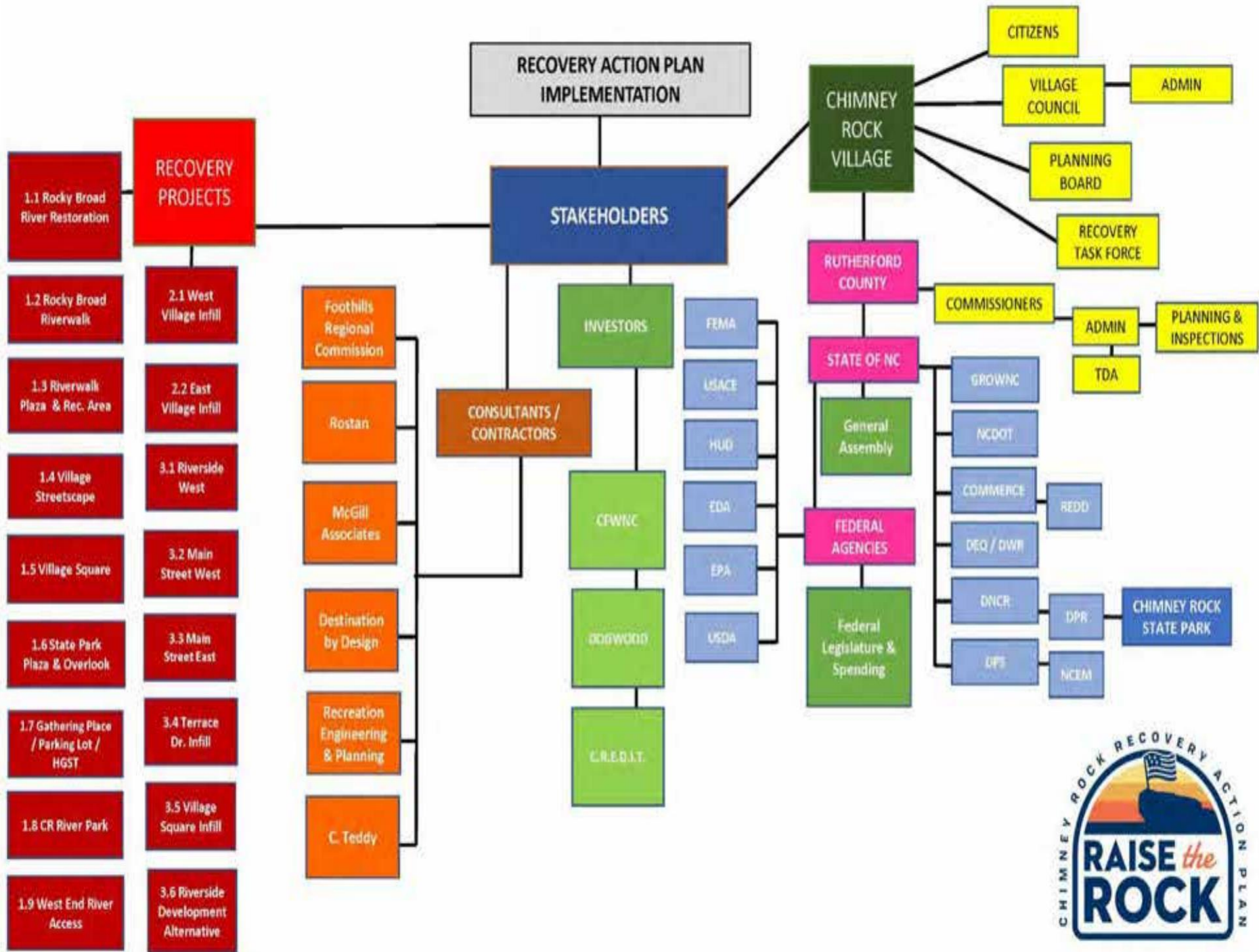


Raise the Rock - Return on Investment

Completed in the summer of 2025, the Raise the Rock Recovery Action Plan is currently being used to effectively pursue external funding for recovery projects throughout the Village.

Chimney Rock Village has strategically leveraged over \$20 million in secured and prospective recovery funding, including:

- **\$110,000** – NC Department of Public Safety, Disaster Mitigation Fund (applied for)
- **\$200,000** – Community Foundation of WNC, Emergency Disaster Relief Grant (awarded)
- **\$477,500** – Dogwood Health Trust, Collaboration and Innovation Grant (awarded)
- **\$5,500,000** – NC Department of Commerce, Small Business Infrastructure Grant Program (awarded)
- **\$2,000,000** – Dogwood Health Trust, matching funds for the USEDA Grant Program (committed)
- **\$13,000,000** – US Economic Development Administration (USEDA) Grant Program (applied for)



**Thank You
Again!**

