



TOWN OF BLOWING ROCK

1036 Main Street • Post Office Box 47 • Blowing Rock, NC 28605

TO: Mayor Lawrence and Members of the Town Council
FROM: Scott Fogleman, Town Manager
SUBJECT: Support for Middle Fork Greenway Grant Application
DATE: January 13, 2015

The Middle Fork Greenway Association (MFGA) is spearheading a project that includes in total a 6.5 mile pedestrian and cycling path that will run from the Town of Blowing Rock to the Town of Boone. It is planned to generally be constructed along the corridor of Highway 321 and the Middle Fork of the South Fork of the New River.

The MFGA has identified a possible grant offered through the North Carolina Clean Water Resources Division of the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NCDENR) to assist with construction of the greenway along the frontage of the property currently being developed for the Chestnut Ridge Post Acute Care Facility. This portion of the greenway is approximately 1,935 feet long. The amount of grant funds being requested is \$171,300 and the estimated total project costs are \$687,000.

The MFGA has agreed to raise the funds necessary to provide the matching requirement and to do the majority of the detailed work should this grant request be approved by the State. A local government agency is required to sponsor grant requests. This particular section of the greenway runs through the corporate limits of the Town of Blowing Rock along the property owned by Appalachian Regional Healthcare System which is being developed for the Chestnut Ridge Post Acute Care Facility.

The attached grant application documentation includes additional details including maps of the overall greenway and a resolution in support of the grant.

Water Resources Development Grant Resolution for Middle Fork Greenway

WHEREAS, the Town of Blowing Rock desires to sponsor the construction of a section of the Middle Fork Greenway crossing the property owned by Appalachian Regional Healthcare Systems (ARHS); and whereas, this 1,935 foot section of the greenway will follow the river within an easement provided by ARHS, the easement area providing a buffer for filtering water runoff from the hospital development and highway 321; and whereas, the Middle Fork Greenway is a developing 6.5 mile pedestrian/cycling path connecting Blowing Rock and Boone which, in addition to preserving natural areas and stream buffers along the river, will provide safe and accessible avenues for better health and recreation; and whereas, the greenway will enhance the local economy by providing tourists a pedestrian and cycling experience connecting to interesting destinations and attracting businesses that are in keeping with the vision for development of the corridor; and whereas, this particular section is a critical link in connecting the new Post-Acute Care Facility (PACF) site to the Blue Ridge Parkway and Mountains-to-Sea Trail, as well as to the entrance of the Town of Blowing Rock; and whereas, there is a window of opportunity to construct this section of the greenway more cost effectively while construction of the new PACF infrastructure is underway,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

- 1) The Town of Blowing Rock requests the State of North Carolina provide financial assistance to the Town of Blowing Rock in the amount of \$171,300 or 50 percent of the construction costs (or non-federal portion), whichever is the lesser amount;
- 2) The Town of Blowing Rock assumes full obligation for payment of the balance of the construction costs (or non-federal portion);
- 3) The Town of Blowing Rock will obtain all necessary State and Federal permits;
- 4) The Town of Blowing Rock will comply with all applicable laws governing the award of contracts and the expenditure of public funds by local governments;
- 5) The Town of Blowing Rock will supervise construction of the project to assure compliance with permit conditions and to assure safe and proper construction according to approved plans and specifications;
- 6) The Town of Blowing Rock will obtain suitable spoil disposal areas as needed and all other easements or rights-of-way that may be necessary for the construction and operation of the project without cost or obligation to the State;
- 7) The Town of Blowing Rock will assure that the project is open for use by the public on an equal basis with no restrictions;
- 8) The Town of Blowing Rock will hold the State harmless from any damages that may result from the construction, operation and maintenance of the project;
- 9) The Town of Blowing Rock accepts responsibility for the operation and maintenance of the completed project.

Adopted by the Blowing Rock Town Council this 13th day of January, 2015.

Clerk to the Council

Mayor

Water Resources Development Project Grant Program
Electronic Application

Instructions: Download and complete this form through Item I. Email the form as an attachment, along with Items II through V, to jeff.bruton@ncdenr.gov.

Date: December 31, 2014

Project Name: Town of Blowing Rock - Middle Fork Greenway: ARHS Section

Water Body: Middle Fork of the South Fork New River

County: WATAUGA **River Basin:** NEW

Coordinates in WGS-84 (-EW d.ddd, NS d.ddd) -81.658 36.151

Eligible Purpose: WATER-BASED RECREATION

Amount Requested: \$ 171,300 Is the amount being requested the same as the amounts provided in the: Resolution YES? Budget YES?

I. Sponsor and Primary Contact Information - (It is the applicant's responsibility to update this information as necessary.)

Project Sponsor (from Resolution)

Unit of Local Government Town of Blowing Rock
Signatory (Name and Title) J.B. Lawrence, Mayor
U.S. Postal Mailing Address Town of Blowing Rock
P.O. Box 47
Blowing Rock, NC 28605
Ten-digit Telephone Number 828-295-5200
Email Address

Primary Contact

Name Scott Fogleman, Town Manager
U.S. Postal Mailing Address Town of Blowing Rock
P.O. Box 47
Blowing Rock, NC 28605
Ten-digit Telephone Number 828-295-5200
Email Address scott.fogleman@townofblowingrock.com

II. Official Resolution:

III. Project Narrative:

IV. Project Plan and Location Map:

V. Project Budget:

**Town of Blowing Rock – Middle Fork Greenway: ARHC Section
Project Narrative
Water Resources Development Project Grant Application
December 2014**

The Town of Blowing Rock will be constructing a multi-use greenway of approximately 1,935 feet across property owned by Appalachian Regional Healthcare System (“ARHS”), which is currently developing a Post-Acute Care facility. Longer-term plans include the possibility of senior housing. The greenway segment will pass under a street bridge being constructed by the NC Department of Transportation as part of the access into the facility from U.S. 321, near the Blue Ridge Parkway.

ARHS has agreed to provide easements and other assistance in connection with the greenway. NCDOT is constructing the access bridge to accommodate the greenway.

The Town will be working with the Middle Fork Greenway Association (“MFGA”), which is a partnership between High Country Pathways, Inc., a nonprofit organization which promotes, constructs and maintains transportation/recreational trails, and the Blue Ridge Conservancy, which acquires land rights and conducts other activities related to the conservation of land and natural resources.

The ARHS segment will become a part of the approximately 6.5 mile Middle Fork Greenway (“MFG”). The MFG is an emerging multi-use greenway connecting the towns of Blowing Rock and Boone along one of the headwaters of the New River. A written Master Plan for the MFG is in place and the MFGA is pursuing its construction in partnership with the three local governments; Blowing Rock, Boone and Watauga County. Approximately one mile of the greenway has already been completed (“Phase One”). A number of landowners along the 6.5 mile corridor have either provided easements/donations or have indicated a willingness to do so. In areas where there are gaps, alternative routing options exist, including NCDOT rights-of-way.

The ARHS segment is part of Phase Two of the MFG, which runs from the ARHS property, through National Park Service property, then connects to the entrance of the Town of Blowing Rock. The National Park Service property will provide a connection to the Blue Ridge Parkway and the state’s Mountains-to-Sea Trail. The Blue Ridge Parkway has approved the project and is working with the MFGA to finalize arrangements through the Parkway land. From the Parkway going south, the MFG will use NCDOT right of way to connect with the sidewalks near Shoppes on the Parkway. The Town and MFGA are working with NCDOT to finalize the terminus arrangements and the right of way agreements.

The MFG will be built in the New River Basin. To the extent possible, it follows the routing of the Middle Fork of the South Fork of the New River (the “Middle Fork”). It will connect with the existing 3.5 mile Boone Greenway, which essentially follows the South Fork of the New River. Plans have been developed for the eventual construction of a South Fork Greenway, connecting with the western end of the Boone Greenway and proceeding to the Town of Todd. Collectively this network of greenways has been preliminarily labeled as the “New River Headwaters Trail.”

The MFG will be a resource available to all residents of the High Country and all visitors to the region. The health benefits of such a resource are clear and have been tangibly recognized through the easement being granted by ARHS and by the several planning grants that have been received through the Appalachian Health Department. The recreational benefits are evidenced by the support for the

greenway not only from the sponsoring organizations, but from such partners as the Boone Area Cyclists and High Country Recreation. The MFG is a part of the Boone Area Outdoor Recreation Plan completed in 2011. More generally, the benefits of greenways for health, quality of life and as a tourism sector economic goal has been recognized in the Citizens' Plan for Watauga County, finalized in 2010. The economic benefits, especially from the positive effects on tourism, have been recognized by grants received from the Blowing Rock and the Watauga County Tourism Development Authorities and the support of the Blowing Rock and Boone Area Chambers of Commerce. One of the significant reasons the idea for the MFG arose in the 1990's was to promote the social interaction among neighbors along the route between Blowing Rock and Boone, which has been affected by the construction of the "four lane" (i.e. U.S. 321). It is also recognized that the connection between the campus of Appalachian State University in Boone with the Town of Blowing Rock will greatly enhance the interaction between the students and the Town.

From the beginning and along the entire route of the MFG, protection of the river and the maintenance of riparian buffers has been a significant part of the planning. This continues to be the case with the ARHS segment. The easement to be granted by ARHS will be sufficiently wide to allow construction of the greenway outside a 30-foot buffer zone from the top of the riverbank, where possible. While the boundaries of the easement are being finalized, we believe the easement area will average 100 feet from the top of bank, providing a zone where development will not be possible and in which stream bank stabilization/restoration, vegetative buffers and other efforts to minimize nonpoint source pollution can be implemented. Thus both the quality of the river and the green space will be improved and maintained.

The MFGA has in the past worked with Clean Water Management staff, with the NC Extension Service and with private stream bank restoration consultants. We will continue this practice with the ARHS segment. On other sections, in addition to advice and funding related to the enhancement of water quality, MFGA is participating with the New River Conservancy on several stream bank restoration projects and the Conservancy will be consulted on this segment as well. The clean-up and other maintenance responsibilities assumed by the Town of Blowing Rock with the assistance of the MFGA will assist in making sure that any future pollution is minimized.

Budget Discussion

The MFG is being created through partnerships with local governments (Blowing Rock, Boone and Watauga County), landowners, public grant programs and private funders. The ARHS segment proposed herein is being made possible by the dedication of an easement by the hospital, cooperation with NCDOT, cash and in-kind donations from Blowing Rock and private donors that are particularly interested in the connection of the greenway with regional healthcare facilities. The following describes the sources of funding from the submitted budget:

Town of Blowing Rock - \$25,000 from the Tourism and Development Authority and in-kind staff oversight totaling \$7,400 of value

ARHS – An easement area of approximately 4.4 acres valued at the price per acre paid by the hospital for the site - \$266,500

Private donors – Of the \$216,800 of Other Non-Federal Cash Match, \$55,000 has been secured to date. Conversations are underway with other major private funding sources, in addition to multiple individual

donors, to raise the remaining \$161,800. We expect to have commitments for the funds by late February 2015 and will provide an update to NC Water Resources at that time.

The budget for this project has been developed in consultation with our planning and design consultant, Destination by Design, who has been heavily involved in the MFG master plan, as well as design and engineering for the completed portion of the MFG (Phase One) and for the proposed Phase Two section.

Maps

Enclosed are the following three maps:

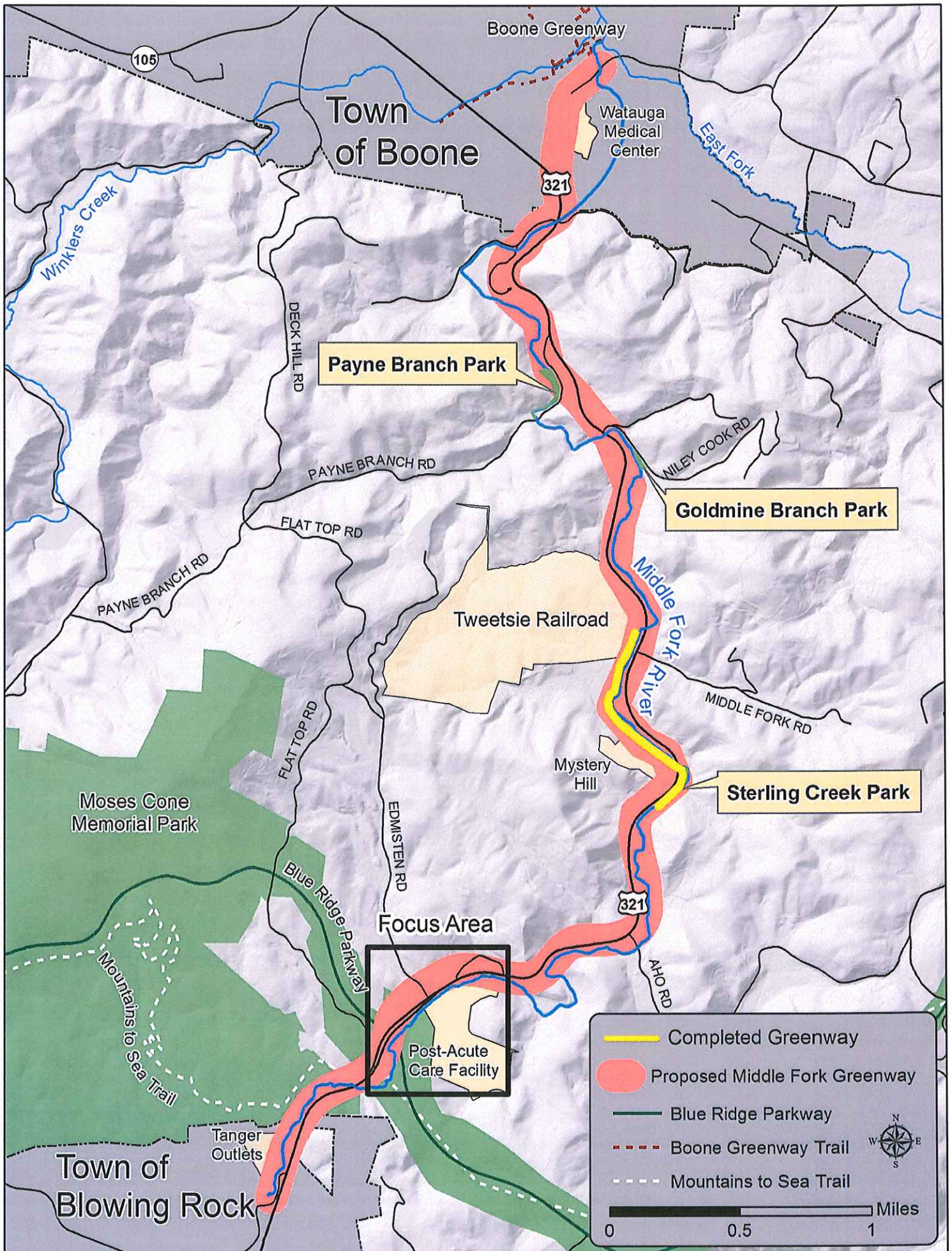
- 1) a schematic drawing of the entire 6.5 mile Middle Fork Greenway which will connect to Blowing Rock at the south and Boone's existing 3.5 mile greenway to the north.
- 2) an ortho map showing the connection between the subject project and the existing Phase One, which includes connections to Tweetsie Railroad, Mystery Hill and Sterling Creek Park.
- 3) an ortho map showing Phase Two of the MFG including the ARHS segment, the National Park Service segment and the connection to the Town of Blowing Rock.

Resolution

The enclosed resolution from the Town of Blowing Rock is on the agenda for the Town Council's January 13 meeting. We will provide an update on the Council's action after that meeting.

Project Name: Town of Blowing Rock

	DWR	Local Match	Other Non-Federal Match	Federal Contribution	Match Totals	Category Totals
1% Administration						
Cash					-	-
In-kind		5,000			5,000	5,000
7% Design						
Cash		25,000	20,500		45,500	45,500
In-kind					-	-
1% Permitting						
Cash			10,000		10,000	10,000
In-kind					-	-
0% Survey						
Cash					-	-
In-kind					-	-
2% Construction Oversight						
Cash			15,000		15,000	15,000
In-kind					-	-
36% Construction						
Cash	123,050		123,050		123,050	246,100
In-kind					-	-
12% Construction Materials						
Cash	42,500		42,500		42,500	85,000
In-kind					-	-
2% Plant Materials						
Cash	5,750		5,750		5,750	11,500
In-kind					-	-
0% Education						
Cash					-	-
In-kind					-	-
0% Monitoring						
Cash					-	-
In-kind		2,400			2,400	2,400
39% Land						
Cash					-	-
In-kind			266,500		266,500	266,500
Cash Sub-total	171,300	25,000	216,800	-	241,800	413,100
In-kind Sub-total		7,400	266,500	-	273,900	273,900
DWR Total	171,300				515,700	687,000
Match Total + DWR Total	687,000				75.07%	= % of Totals
Local Match/DWR Total	75.07%					



Middle Fork Greenway Tweetsie to Tanger

Tweetsie
Railroad

Sterling
Creek Park

321





Blue Ridge Parkway

Middle Fork
of South Fork
of New River


Hospital
Property

Tanger Outlet
Stores
Blowing Rock


Legend:

-  Constructed Greenway
-  Planned Greenway
-  Mountains-to-Sea Trail
-  Hospital Property

Scale:

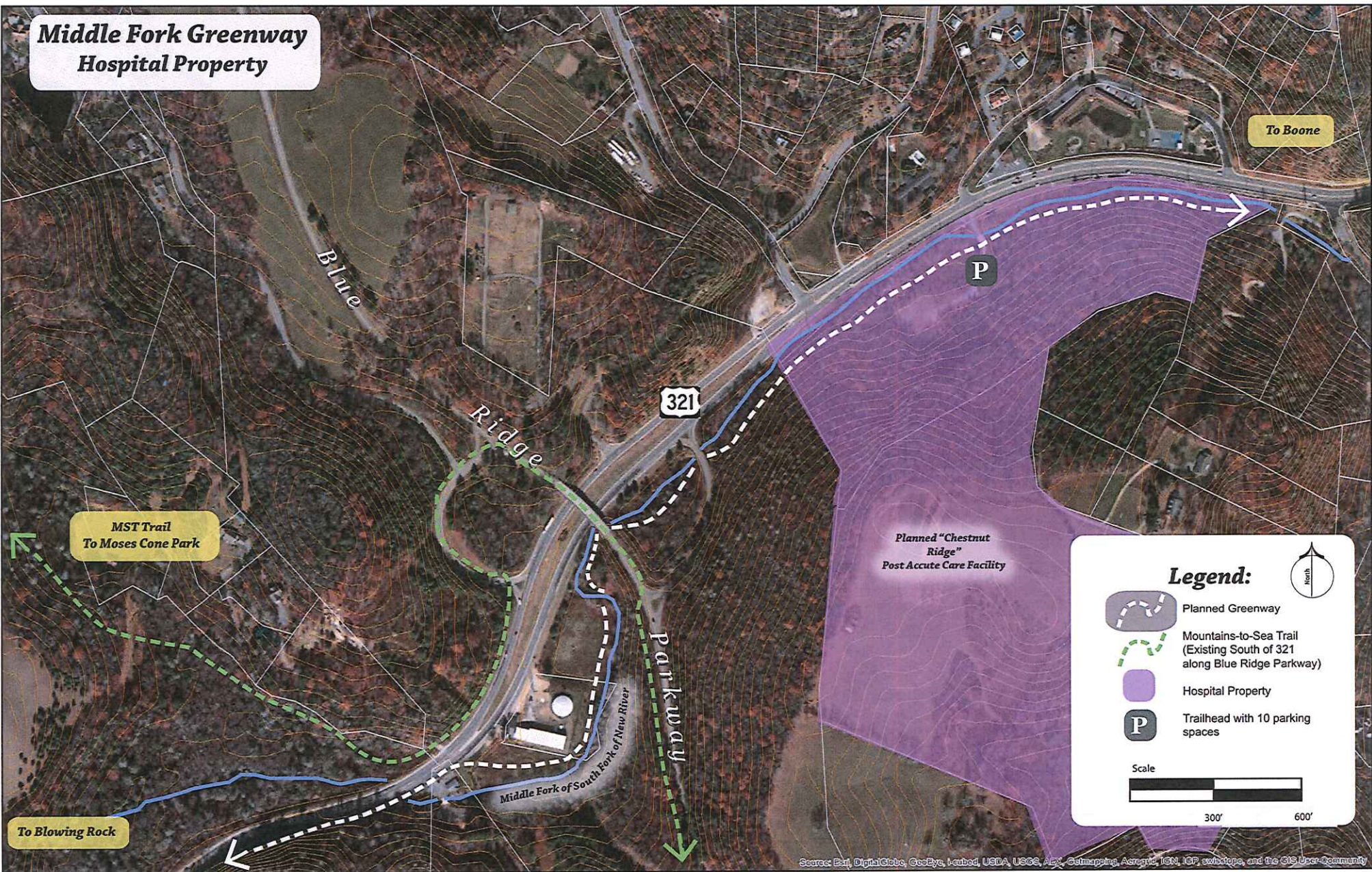


1000' 2000'



Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Iacsis, USDA, USGS, ABX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community

**Middle Fork Greenway
Hospital Property**



MST Trail
To Moses Cone Park

To Boone

To Blowing Rock

321

P

Planned "Chestnut
Ridge"
Post Acute Care Facility

Legend:

- Planned Greenway
- Mountains-to-Sea Trail (Existing South of 321 along Blue Ridge Parkway)
- Hospital Property
- Trailhead with 10 parking spaces

Scale

300' 600'

Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, iSat, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community