

Eason, Arlissa

From: Shiny Lman <legologan3@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, May 12, 2024 10:11 PM
To: County Clerk
Subject: [External]Message for the County

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Dear Mecklenburg County Commissioners and County Manager Diorio,

Thank you for helping grow our park and recreation system by allocating \$50M for land acquisition in each of the last two budget cycles.

Let's not lose momentum! To build on these investments, this year I urge you to:

- Support all of the staff-recommended Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) FY2029 projects.
- Support funding for new staff positions as identified in the MeckPlaybook and requested by staff for FY2025.
- Sustain momentum for land acquisition by budgeting at least \$50M but ideally \$75M to increase land available for additional parks, greenways, nature preserves, and recreation centers.
- Increase funding for maintenance of Park and Recreation properties, both developed and undeveloped.

As our population continues to grow rapidly in Mecklenburg County, so does the need to expand and maintain greenways, parks, nature preserves, and recreation centers.

Due to underinvestment in the past, many residents have limited access to park and recreation opportunities.

In fact, in 2023, [a study by The Trust for Public Land](#) showed that **only 38% of Mecklenburg County residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park**. The median for the top 100 most populous U.S. cities is 74%. We must and can do better.

Increasing our investment in our park and recreation system will not only improve access for more residents but will also:

- Provide local job opportunities.
- Encourage active lifestyles and reduce health costs.
- Make our community more resilient by helping mitigate flooding.
- Help clean our air and reduce our contribution to the climate crisis.
- Increase community cohesion and help reduce crime.
- Improve quality of life and livability.
- Build community by providing gathering places for neighbors, families, and friends.

In short, the value of parks and recreation far outweighs the dollars invested.

Please continue to grow our investment so everyone in our community can enjoy these benefits.

Sincerely, Logan Harrison

(864) 360-3337