

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Frank Rogers, County Administrator FJR

FROM: Nina Rezai, Economic Development Director

SUBJECT: Recreation Opportunity Assessment

DATE: November 17, 2025

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### BACKGROUND

In 2025, several County-led projects in Seneca Commerce Park kicked off, new projects have been identified, and there has been an increased interest in the property by private developers.

*100,000 square foot shell building* - In March, Economic Development staff hosted many distinguished members of the community, as well as supportive partner organizations, to celebrate the groundbreaking, signifying the kickoff of the project. Immediately following the event, the site work of moving the dirt around lots J, K, and L to create a pad-ready site for the shell building and the neighboring site began. This work continued consistently and is now complete. The sitework on lots J&K received grant funding from the Southeast Crescent Commission (SCRC) and the Tobacco Revitalization Commission (TRRC).

The building design also continued through the summer, led by Architectural Partners, who has been under contract to design and administrate the shell building project. They were selected through an RFP in 2024. On October 20, 2025, the invitation for bid on Phase 1 construction of the building was posted, and a non-mandatory preconstruction meeting was held on October 28, 2025, with over 10 interested contractors in attendance. The project will be awarded at the January 6, 2026, meeting. Phase 2 of construction will bring utility into the building, finish out the floors, walls, and fixtures for the prospective business tenant. That will commence once a tenant is identified.

*45,000 square foot shell building* - The Campbell County Industrial Development Authority kicked off a smaller shell building project at 293 Ewing Drive. Coleman Adams was selected to construct the building, and Cornerstone Bank provided financing for the construction. The building construction kicked off in April, and phase one of construction is nearly complete. The entire project was paid for with IDA funds.

With these projects underway, staff presented the Board of Supervisors with another project in March to look toward the next development to prepare for in Seneca Commerce Park. The utility for water and sewer did not reach the end of Ewing Drive, leaving Lots D, E, and V without water service; Lots D and E also did not have sewer access. The project was estimated to be \$1.2M and staff advised that more than half of it could be provided by grant funding from the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, if the 136 acres adjoining Ewing Drive were rezoned to

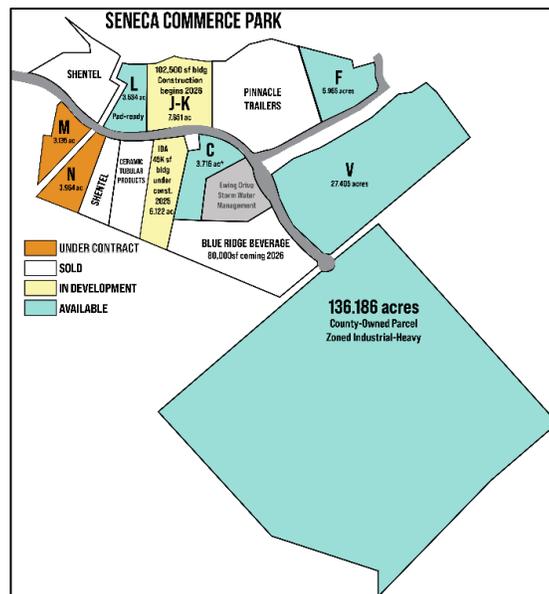
Heavy Industrial as well. The funding agency focuses on creating large business-ready sites (meaning a minimum of 55 contiguous acres).

In March, the Board of Supervisors approved the rezoning request, knowing it was a catalyst to extend the needed utility for both types of users in the park. The recreation community left assured that there would be consideration for future investments in the park to maintain recreational attractions on the property.

Following the full application process and two presentations on the project, the Virginia Economic Development Partnership determined that the water and sewer extension project would not be an appropriate use of the funds. Instead, they presented Campbell County with a \$300,000 grant to conduct a master planning and due diligence report on the property. The due diligence engineering report will return an engineer's assessment of the environmental conditions, geotechnical engineering report, examination of the presence of historic sites (if applicable), and provide an evaluation of the costs to bring the property to a business-ready standard. This would include the estimated cost for road, water, power, and making a pad-ready site on the 136 acres. Master planning will establish the highest and best use for the property and determine the best configuration of the utility, potential sites, as it aligns with the lay of the land.

Upon learning that the request for funding to assist with the water and sewer extension was essentially declined, staff quickly submitted the same request to the TRRC and the SCRC to layer grant funding. In September, the TRRC approved a \$439,275 grant to go towards the project. SCRC decisions have been delayed, as they are a federal funding program.

Amid the first grant decision being made, Blue Ridge Beverage announced its intention to relocate its Lynchburg Division to Seneca Commerce Park on ~14 acres that would be served by the new waterline, and the project became imperative. With the approval of the sale, the Board approved funding the utility extension to ensure it happens. Soon after this announcement, Integrity Mechanical announced its intention to develop a ~35,000 square foot warehouse on Lots M&N.



## **DISCUSSION**

In addition to the 136 acres that served as the focus of the recreational amenities, Campbell County also owns 40 acres that extend from where lot F is to Gough Road (43-10-F and 43P-1-19). Many claim that this property has considerable environmental constraints, but it has never been included in any of the master planning for either recreational or industrial use. Lot F has become less interesting since the ability to secure Virginia Department of Transportation economic access funding to pave Sallie Trail hinges on there being more than three driveways to come off the road. Currently, it serves as a small parking area for walking trail users. Recognizing additional acres that need to be considered in this master planning exercise and knowing there was interest in continuing to incorporate recreational amenities in the master plan of Seneca Commerce Park, staff sought out services to facilitate gathering and consolidating the input to be able to deliver a potential civil engineering firm a prioritized list of amenities to include where space and topography permit.

The Virginia Tech Center for Economic and Community Engagement prepared the attached outline for the recommended approach. Their Recreation Opportunity Assessment spans a 2.5-month time frame to cover several phases of work as follows:

- **Month 1:** Project kick-off and gathering of data, reviewing background materials provided by Recreation and Economic Development Staff.
- **Month 2:** Case Studies and Stakeholder Interviews
- **Month .5** – Facilitation workshop and Recommendations Delivered (to be scheduled for January 2026)

This approach was recommended to provide the recreation community with an opportunity to work representatives of Economic Development and the Board of Supervisors to begin this next planning phase with buy-in from all invested parties.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The recommendation is to authorize staff to execute the agreement with Virginia Tech to conduct the Recreation Opportunity Assessment and nominate two members of the Board of Supervisors to participate in the feedback session alongside two members of the Industrial Development Authority and Recreation Advisory Council.

Attached:

- A. Campbell County Recreation Opportunity Assessment Proposal from Virginia Tech Center for Economic Development and Community Engagement
- B. Financial Breakdown of Project Estimates and Committed Grant Funding
- C. Parcel Information on 43-10-F and 43P-1-19