

Entry #: 8

Date Submitted: 2/11/2022 4:59 PM

**About**

Gaston County requests proposals from its internal departments for projects to help the community recover from and respond to COVID-19.

Gaston County has been awarded \$43,612,126 in Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (Recovery Funding), as part of the American Rescue Plan Act. This infusion of federal resources is intended to help turn the tide on the pandemic, address its economic fallout, and lay the foundation for a strong and equitable recovery.

Gaston County is committed to investing these funds in projects that:

- Align to county strategic plan and community priorities
- Support equitable outcomes for most impacted populations
- Leverage and align with other governmental funding sources
- Make best use of this one-time infusion of resources
- Have a lasting impact

Please note that applications must be complete before they will be reviewed by the review committee. The committee will prioritize projects that do not supplant regular operational budgets, cost between \$25,000-\$1,000,000, and clearly address a need caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Click here to read the County's ARPA project selection process, including a project ranking methodology.](#)

[Click here to learn more about compliance.](#)

[Click here to learn more about eligible uses of the County's ARPA funding.](#)

**Timeline**

- May 2021: County received initial ARPA funding
- August 31, 2021: Began quarterly financial reporting
- December 31, 2022: Second quarterly report
- December 2024: All funds must be encumbered
- December 2026: All funds must be spent

**Form Instructions**

**Availability:** This form will not close. Submissions will be reviewed in the order they are received.

**Save and Resume Later:** Clicking the Save button (bottom right of form) will save your progress and allow you to either copy or email a personalized link to your in-progress entry. This link may be shared with others. Anyone who has the link to the saved form entry can pick up where you left off and complete your submission.

**Submit:** When your form is complete and ready for review by the ARPA Project Review Committee, click submit. You will not be able to edit the form after you click submit. If you need make any changes to your form after submission, please contact Budget.

**Confirmation Email:** When you click submit, you will receive a confirmation email to the email address listed in the "Primary Contact Personnel Email" field. It will include a copy of your entry details in the body of the email, as well as a link for viewing your submission online, which may be shared with anyone.

**Questions?**

Justin Amos  
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Project Name  
Tryon Waterline Extension

Department Name and Number  
4265 - Public Works

Primary Contact Personnel  
Dan Ziehm

Primary Contact Personnel Email  
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Location of Project (if applicable)  
Bessemer City, 2620 Tryon Courthouse Rd, Bessemer City, North Carolina 28016

Project Category  
5. Infrastructure

**Description of Project**

Project will design and install new waterline to serve the Tryon Community, and Tryon Elementary School, Tryon Park and Recycling Center. Water service could connect to Cherryville or Bessemer City existing service lines. A third option is to tie into a possible future City of Gastonia/Two Rivers Utilities line along Hwy 279/ Dallas Cherryville Hwy. The selected Design Firm will need to assess the alternatives. This project aligns with the County's Strategic Plan in the Community Health, Safety, and Well-Being Focus Area (C2). The project also aligns with EPA's DWSRF Category 2 Transmission & Distribution. The Project falls under the ARPA EC- 5 Infrastructure, 5.11 Drinking Water: Transmission & Distribution.

Project Start Date  
1/1/2022

Project End Date  
6/30/2024

**Project Plan**

In accordance with N.C.G.S. 143-64.31 and following Gaston County's Uniform Guidance Policy and Procedures, an RFQ for Professional Architecture/Engineering Design Services was advertised January 2022, and a selection will be made by February 28, 2022. The project will be taken to the Board, as directed, March 22, 2022. A/E Firm will be given NTP as directed by the Board in April 2022. Project design could take up to 12 months depending on possible right of way acquisition, and coordination based upon the preferred alternative. An Agreement will be executed between Gaston County and the water service provider. Gaston County will be the lead agency on the project. Right of Way acquisition, permitting and Construction could take 12+ months.

**Please explain both the NC state and federal legal authority to undertake this program.**

The County does have the authority to construct water infrastructure, but the County's Attorney will need to verify if NCGS 160A, Article 16 and NCGS 153A, Article 15 are the correct statutes.

**Link to COVID-19**

Stay at home orders and business shutdowns stemming from the early outbreak of COVID have made health, hygiene, and safety a more obvious priority. Residential water usage has increased. However, vulnerable households still lack reliable access to water. Unexpected events from droughts to floods, and social disruptions like COVID, have highlighted the need to bolster the reliability, resilience and sustainability of the water system in this area to provide critical water services under more variable and uncertain conditions. The threat of ground water depletion is more present since the pandemic, and the associated increased residential water usage. Protecting the ground water dependent ecosystems should be considered. This project will provide the community that maintains their own water supply with a protective action for future disruptions and help preserve the natural ecosystem.

**Statement of Need**

The Tryon Community, along with Tryon Elementary School, is currently served by groundwater wells or community well systems extracting drinking water from the groundwater table. Past droughts and mining activities in the area have resulted in a shortage of sufficient drinking water and, subsequently, many drinking wells have gone dry. With a new proposed mining operation, this issue may become worse for the community. A nearby subdivision has at least one well that exceeds the nitrate level of 10 mg/L. This area was farmland for many years. There are still seven large chicken houses located less than ½ mile from the school and the subdivision. There is no room on the school property for another well to service the school. The school has had to create water storage on site, and transport it in from other locations for school usage. Currently the school tests the drinking water for contaminants daily. The safety and quality of the private well water is the responsibility of the owners. If there is a Duke Energy power outage in the community, the well pumps will not function, and the school, businesses and residents will be without water.

**Population Served**

Tryon Elementary School is located on Tryon Courthouse Road, between Bessemer City and Cherryville. Tryon Elementary School is a Title I school and serves approximately 345 children in grades PK-5. 51.1% of the students are considered economically disadvantaged. The Community and school are located in 2022 Census Tract 305.02. Population is 3581 down 4%.

**Results**

Gaston County Environmental Health reports that there are numerous private wells in the areas within a 1-mile radius of Tryon Elementary School. The private wells, that serve 1 or 2 houses, do not have to meet state or federal drinking water standards and are not required to be sampled except at the time of installation. Community wells are sampled on a regular basis and are required to be chlorinated and meet state and federal drinking water standards. In this same area, there are three known or previously known contamination sites with underground tank incidents. Gaston County will partner with either Cherryville, Bessemer City or City of Gastonia to waive tap fees and educate residents on public water.

**Evaluation**

If the water is provided by Two Rivers Utilities, they will be able to provide data from their annual drinking water quality report as well as any new connections made to the constructed system and the revenue they collect. County Environmental Health will have data relative to monitoring the wells in the area for contaminations. Cherryville or Bessemer City will also be able to provide information depending on where the water comes from.

**Equity Impact**

The pandemic reminded us that far too many Americans, disproportionately low-income people and people of color, lack the essential components of healthy communities: affordable healthcare, safe parks, clean air and safe drinking water to name a few. Underserved populations and neighborhoods may have the greatest pandemic recovery needs. Of the 29 public elementary schools in Gaston County, Tryon Elementary and one other elementary school is served by well water. Funding this waterline project will deliver safe and affordable water to a vulnerable community and the elementary school that serves it.

**Project Partners**

Gaston County will pursue an Agreement with the water provider and possibly Gaston Schools to partner in a successful project that provides the community with safe clean drinking water.

**Capacity**

Currently there are 3 full time project coordinators. Cary Rodriguez has 20+ years of Local government Project management experience and will be managing the project from design through construction and close out. She is dedicated to managing projects with Federal Funding and works closely with Finance to ensure proper monitoring and reporting is achieved. Her experience with federal funds to date includes CMAQ projects and FTA projects.

**Special Considerations**

COVID-19 has reinforced the importance of access to safe and reliable water. With Grant funding, and partnerships with Gaston County Schools and Two Rivers Utilities, the County can prioritize addressing the lack of infrastructure in disadvantaged areas. COVID related impacts on residential water usage may begin to reach pre-COVID levels, but there could be long term impacts if more people continue to work from home, or unemployment remains high.

The Department of Treasury Compliance & Reporting Guidance Part 1, C.2.d Investments in Water Sewer and Broadband indicates that recipients may use SLFRF award funds to cover costs incurred for eligible projects planned or started prior to March 3, 2021, provided that the project costs covered by SLFRF award funds are incurred after March 3, 2021. Furthermore, Part 1 D.8 directs recipients to follow Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200.317 through 2 CFR 200.327.

The EPA Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) Eligibility Handbook identifies six broad categories of eligible projects. This project falls under Category 2 – Transmission and Distribution: New water main extensions to serve existing residents not served by a safe supply of potable water (this includes installation of the service line up to premise plumbing). THE DWSRF also states that "Eligible costs include actual pre-construction (planning and design, including costs associated with obtaining project authorization and issuance/execution of the loan) and construction costs that are directly associated with the project and issuance of the loan." And, "Costs for acquiring land are eligible only if the land is needed to locate eligible project components and the land is acquired from a willing seller."

Which of the County's three strategic focus areas best describes the purpose of this request?

Community health, safety, and wellbeing

**Budget**

**Attachments**



A\_Tryon\_ES\_ARPA\_Map\_2.pdf  
1.38 MB



**Revenues**

Untitled	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26
	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Revenues:	Costs Sum				
	\$0.00				

**Expenditures**

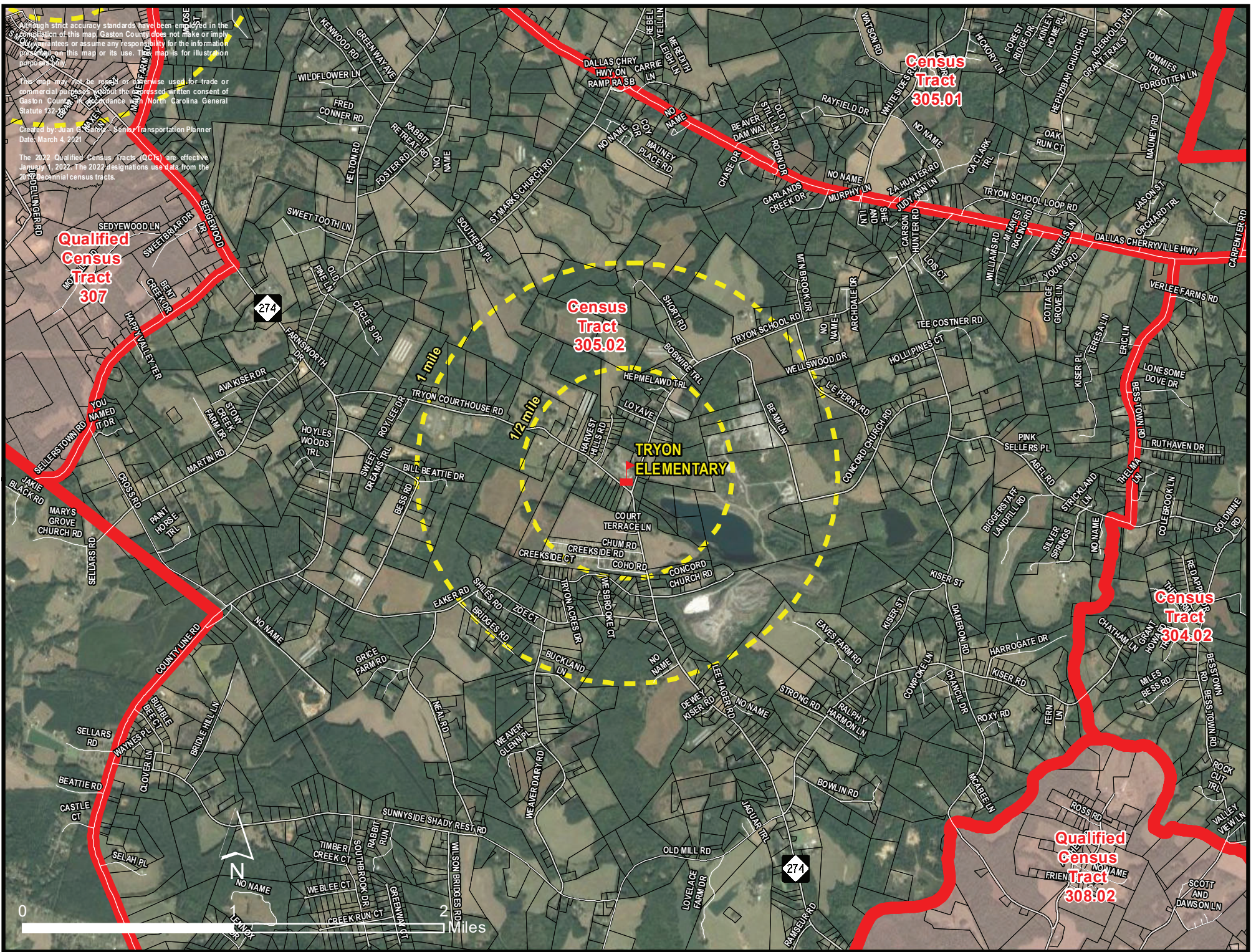
Untitled	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26
	\$500,000.00	\$1,979,250.00			
	\$500,000.00	\$1,979,250.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Expenditures:	Untitled				
	\$2,479,250.00				

Although strict accuracy standards have been employed in the preparation of this map, Gaston County does not make or imply any warranties or assume any responsibility for the information presented on this map or its use. This map is for illustration purposes only.

This map may not be used for any purpose used for trade or commercial purposes without the expressed written consent of Gaston County in accordance with North Carolina General Statute 132-28.3.

Created by: Juan Carlos Soto, Senior Transportation Planner  
Date: March 4, 2021

The 2022 Qualified Census Tracts (QCTs) are effective January 1, 2022. The 2022 designations use data from the 2019 Decennial census tracts.



**Qualified  
Census  
Tract  
307**

**Census  
Tract  
305.02**

**Census  
Tract  
305.01**

**Census  
Tract  
304.02**

**Qualified  
Census  
Tract  
308.02**

**TRYON  
ELEMENTARY**

1 mile

1/2 mile

