

# MANNA FoodBank New Facility: Built by the Community, For the Community

---

*RFP for Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds*

## ***MANNA FoodBank***

---

Ms. Cindy Threlkeld  
627 Swannanoa River Rd  
Asheville, NC 28805

[jmclean@mannafoodbank.org](mailto:jmclean@mannafoodbank.org)  
O: 828-299-3663  
F: 828-299-3664

## ***Ms. Laura Blockel***

---

MANNA FoodBank  
627 Swannanoa River Road  
Asheville, NC 28805

[lblockel@mannafoodbank.org](mailto:lblockel@mannafoodbank.org)  
O: 8282993663  
F: 828-299-3664

# Application Form

---

## *Question Group*

---

Buncombe County requests proposals for projects to help the community recover from and respond to COVID-19 and its negative economic impacts.

Buncombe County has been awarded \$50,733,290 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.

Buncombe 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

Proposals shall be submitted in accordance with the terms and conditions of this RFP and any addenda issued hereto.

[Click here for the full terms and conditions of the RFP](#)

## **Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds\***

Name of Project.

MANNA FoodBank New Facility: Built by the Community, For the Community

## **Amount of Funds Requested\***

\$2,000,000.00

## **Recovery Fund Eligible Category\***

Please select one:

Assistance to households

## **Brief Project Description\***

Provide a short summary of your proposed project.

In 2019, MANNA identified the essential need for a new facility due to serious safety issues, capacity limitations, flooding threats and the potential site encroachment from a greenway project. Our limited capacities were strained beyond critical mass as we rapidly reorganized our operations to provide enough food for the exponential number of people seeking assistance because of COVID. To adjust, we leased separate

warehouse space in Buncombe Co. Therefore, we entered into a contract to purchase 24 acres of land in Swannanoa on which to build a larger, safer facility.

Since the onset of COVID, MANNA has distributed 32.5 million pounds of food assistance in WNC. 28% of this distribution went to residents of Buncombe, enough food for 7.6 million meals. MANNA is requesting a one-time investment of \$2 million, 11-12.5% of our overall construction cost, to help build a larger, safe and sustainable food bank to meet the long-term needs of people facing hunger in Buncombe Co. and in WNC.

## Project Plan\*

Explain how the project will be structured and implemented, including timeframe.

MANNA is using a design-build approach for this project in order to construct a new affordable and efficient facility. In collaboration with volunteers, partner food distribution agencies, staff, board, and the community, we are now beginning the design phase of a new 100,000 square foot food bank and possible community garden. We have recently hired the local firm, Beverly Grant, as our General Contractor. This project is projected to be completed in the first quarter of 2023.

Internally, the design phase is being led by MANNA's Chief Executive Officer, Hannah Randall, a Certified Project Management Professional. The implementation phase will be led by Rudi Sommer, MANNA's Facilities and Safety Manager.

Currently, MANNA is in the due diligence phase of acquiring a 24-acre parcel located at 3 Old Bee Tree Rd Swannanoa, NC. The geotechnical and Phase 1 Environmental investigations are complete, and the Phase 2 Environmental Report is expected in mid-July. This parcel is part of a larger 40+ acre tract that includes a Brownfield application and remediation due to an industrial solvent spill from a previous owner. This parcel will be subdivided before the sale of the property. Our plan is to be able to beneficially reuse this land to build a food bank for the betterment of our community.

MANNA is committed the values of equity, diversity, and inclusion as we undertake this project. This focus was key to our selection of Beverly Grant as our General Contractor for this project. Our Facilities Committee and Board of Directors valued the firm's commitment to hire local workers and to their employment practices that highlight their priorities of equity and diversity. Additionally, we have reached out to another funder to increase our capacity to hire local and minority owned subcontractors throughout the project.

MANNA is also committed to building practices that benefit the environment. Therefore, we are planning to use green building materials and to install renewable energy features. MANNA is already a community leader in our recycling and food rescue efforts. In our present facility, we recycle all possible packaging, paper, or organic materials. What little food waste is incurred in our operations is donated to area farmers for feed.

Additionally, one of the many important factors in our critical need for a new facility is driven by the fact that our current facility is located in a 100-year flood plain neighboring the John B. Lewis Soccer Complex. In just the past 5 years, MANNA has endured two floods. As essential workers, the imminent threat to our campus if flooding is a risk to our operations and ability to deliver food to people in need.

## Statement of Need\*

Describe the need that this project will address. Include data to demonstrate the need, and cite the source of the data.

A new facility will help MANNA better address the problem of food insecurity in Buncombe County and across WNC. MANNA's mission is to involve, educate, and unite people in the work of ending hunger in WNC. We believe that access to adequate food is a human right. MANNA distributes food to all people in need without discrimination.

Poverty precipitates food insecurity. In Buncombe County, 12.3% of the population lives below the poverty level (ACS, 2014-2018). Another harsh reality confronting many low-wage workers is the fact that Asheville has the highest cost of living in North Carolina (CCER, 2020). In contrast, the per capita income in Asheville is lower than the state and national averages (US BEA, 2019). This ever-widening gap between low wages and high expenses strains limited budgets to the breaking point. WNC Health Network (WNCHN) reports that 25.5% of adults in Buncombe County “often or sometimes ran out of food and did not have money to buy more”. Assistance from a food pantry can help people stretch their budgets to pay for other basic needs like rent, utilities, or health care.

Food insecurity is strongly associated with chronic disease and poor health outcomes, both of which disproportionately affect productivity and earning potential. Long-term food insecurity can also affect learning, physical, and mental health (USDA, 2017). Communities that focus on public health can reduce health care costs, improve quality of life, and reduce inequalities in health outcomes in disadvantaged populations” (CDC, 2017). Sadly, 88% of our clients reported in a survey that they “bought the cheapest food available, regardless of the nutritional value, in an attempt to reduce cost.” MANNA is committed to providing nutritiously balanced food to support the health of those we serve. By providing more nutritious food, MANNA is addressing the health inequities that disproportionately plague people in poverty to positively impact the social determinants of health.

### [Link to COVID-19\\*](#)

Identify a health or economic harm resulting from or exacerbated by the public health emergency, describe the nature and extent of that harm, and explain how the use of this funding would address such harm.

Funding from Buncombe County will help MANNA to continue our mission of providing nutritious food to the record number of residents who were plunged into a financial crisis overnight because of the health and economic consequences of COVID-19. Asheville ranks 9th in the nation in midsize cities with the highest percentages of leisure, retail, and hospitality-related workers, industries that were hardest hit by the pandemic. In a matter of days, the lines of people seeking assistance from our pantries, many for the first time in their lives, increased by an astounding 61%. During this crisis, MANNA distributed 9,170,975 pounds of food assistance in Buncombe County, 28% of our total distribution. 69% of this food was healthy staples and 29% was fresh produce. Since March of 2020, MANNA has served an average of 38,200 people every month in Buncombe County.

COVID also disproportionately impacted communities of color in Buncombe County. 15% of the county’s COVID cases occurred among Hispanic people, though they comprise 6.5% of the county’s total population (USA Facts, 2021). Additionally, Census Bureau Pulse Survey show that even as the pandemic eases, Black and Hispanic people are twice as likely to report food insecurity than their White counterparts (June, 2021).

The timeline for economic recovery for so many people in Buncombe County is uncertain. As of this May, we are still serving over 40% more people monthly than prior to the pandemic. Historical research about the Great Recession tells us that people in poverty will be the slowest to regain lost ground. MANNA is fully committed to supporting our most vulnerable neighbors in Buncombe County as long as necessary.

## Population Served\*

Define the population to be served by this project, including volume and demographic characteristics of those served.

The beneficiaries of MANNA's programs are the thousands of people experiencing food insecurity in Buncombe County and WNC, many of whom commute to work in Buncombe from across the region. Additionally, a study by UNC Chapel Hill reported that 15% of Buncombe County workers earning under \$48,000 commute from other counties (2010). Regional surveys show that as many as 1 in 4 people in Buncombe County, or 66,000 residents, struggle to afford enough food for the entire month. (WNCHN, 2020). Even pre-COVID, Buncombe County was experiencing a socio-economic perfect storm as the gap between income and cost of living continued to widen. When basics expenses compete for a limited income, food purchases lose out and the rent eats first (NYT, 2020).

Special populations are particularly at risk for food insecurity. Seniors are the fastest growing demographic in Buncombe County. 14.6% of seniors in Buncombe have incomes below 125% of the poverty level, putting them at higher risk for hunger (ACS, 2019). Single women raising children are also among the most vulnerable residents for food insecurity, as 32% of single mothers in Buncombe County live below 125% of poverty level (ACS, 2019).

Disparities along racial lines point to lingering systemic barriers that unduly affect people of color. In Buncombe County, 26.3% of the Black population and 46.6% of the Latino population live below 125% of the poverty level, compared to 16.5% of the White population (ACS, 2019). As a corollary, Black and Latino people are two times more likely to face food insecurity the White population (Census Bureau, June 2021). At MANNA, we measure every decision that we make through the lens of whether it will increase or decrease disparities in our communities. (Strategic Plan, 2020). We are committed to the equitable distribution of our resources to ensure that disadvantaged and marginalized people have equitable access to adequate and nutritious food.

## Results\*

Describe the proposed impact of the project. List at least 3 performance measures that will be tracked and reported. If possible, include baselines and goals for each performance measure.

1. This project will result in a completed food bank built by our community, for our community. MANNA has selected Beverly-Grant, a Buncombe County firm, as our General Contractor for this project. Beverly Grant was specifically chosen because of their commitment to hiring locally and their dedication to employment practices of equity and diversity. MANNA also intends to hire at least 90% local and/or minority sub-contractors with the same priorities. Additionally, we plan to continue our successful history of partnering with prison work release and community service programs and employing formerly incarcerated people.

2. MANNA currently leases offsite warehouse space for dry storage. We also constantly operate four refrigerated trailers in our parking area for additional cold storage. Parking is very limited and presents daily safety hazards. As our food distribution has grown, so has the number of large trucks that enter and exit our facility on busy Swannanoa River Rd., posing serious safety concerns. This project will result in the cancellation of the warehouse lease and the decommissioning of the inefficient refrigerated trailers, dramatically increasing staff and energy efficiency in distributing food under one roof. Additionally, MANNA intends to use green building practices and pursue renewable energy solutions throughout this project.

3. MANNA is committed to increasing access to food in high-need communities by developing new delivery modalities and improving the design of our programs. We also have been identified as the Lead for Food Insecurity in the Healthy Opportunities Pilot for WNC, a first-in-the-nation initiative conceived to invest in improving the Social Determinants of Health in order to change the health outcomes for Medicaid

recipients, over half of whom are children. MANNA will administer nine food security and nutrition related services that will serve as a model for the future of national health care.

## Evaluation\*

Describe the data collection, analysis, and quality assurance measures you will use to assure ongoing, effective tracking of contract requirements and outcomes.

1. The direct economic benefits to Buncombe County will be measured by:
  - Number of local workers employed
  - Percentage of local and/or minority subcontractors hired
  - The local economic benefit to the Buncombe County labor force as measured overall wages and benefits of those employed in the construction project
    - Qualitative and quantitative records of efforts to employ workers from marginalized populations
  
2. A larger, more efficient and sustainable facility will allow MANNA to safely distribute nutritious food assistance to people in need. Progress will be measured by:
  - Number of new green technologies installed and the types of green building materials used
  - Pounds of food distributed in Buncombe County
  - Percentage of fresh produce distributed in Buncombe County
  - Number of people served in Buncombe County
  - Qualitative testimonies from our Partner Agencies and those with lived experience
  - Review and report of MANNA's internal safety records
  
3. Measurement of the Equity of MANNA's Food Distribution will be measured by:
  - Delivery of Healthy Opportunities Pilot services
  - Number of distribution sites in high-need Buncombe County communities.
  - Pounds of food delivered to those sites
  - Pounds of produce delivered to those sites
  - Number of people served

## Equity Impact\*

How will this effort help build toward a just, equitable, and sustainable COVID-19 recovery? How are the root causes and/or disproportionate impacts of inequities addressed?

Support for MANNA's new facility project will improve our services to marginalized communities in Buncombe Co., and WNC. COVID continues to disproportionately impact Buncombe's Black and Hispanic populations, as both communities are twice as likely to experience food insecurity. At the beginning of the pandemic, MANNA rapidly scaled up our food distributions to meet the escalated need and to effectuate equitable outcomes in neighborhoods of color that were unduly burdened by the health and economic consequences of COVID.

To preserve the dignity of those we serve and to minimize any barriers to access, MANNA requires only a self-declaration of need to receive food assistance. Additionally, MANNA intentionally sources culturally preferred food items for distribution. For example, our food deliveries to Latino neighborhoods include an abundance of fresh produce with choices like cilantro, tomatillos, and poblano peppers and preferred staples like dried beans, tortillas, and rice, in addition to milk and eggs.

Disturbingly, Black people in Buncombe County are three times more likely to die from diabetes and 1.5 more likely to die from heart disease than their White counterparts (WNCHN, 2020). FDA Commissioner, Dr. Scott Gottlieb, said that “Improving the nutrition and diet of Americans would be a transformative effort toward reducing the burden of many chronic diseases, ranging from diabetes to cancer to heart disease.” MANNA is committed to providing more nutritious plates of food to influence the long-term health outcomes and well-being of high-risk populations.

MANNA actively advocates for non-partisan policy change on national, state, and local levels. As a member of Feeding America, MANNA claims a national voice for policy changes that improve the lives of those we serve. Our CEO, Hannah Randall, is the Board Chairman for Feeding the Carolinas, a two-state council that addresses policy issues surrounding systemic hunger and food insecurity.

## Project Partners\*

Identify any subcontractors you intend to use for the proposed scope of work. For each subcontractor listed, indicate:

- 1.) What products and/or services are to be supplied by that subcontractor and;
- 2.) What percentage of the overall scope of work that subcontractor will perform.

Also, list non-funded key partners critical to project.

MANNA's Full Project Partners are:

- Beverly-Grant, Inc.- General Contractor to lead the design and construction of this project.
- Civil Design Concepts, PA- Provide civil engineering and lot development plans for the project.
- Bunnell Lammons Engineering- Provide geotechnical investigation and reports.
- Quible & Associates, P.C.- Provide Phase 1 and 2 environmental investigations and reports.
- Dewey Property Advisors- Provide real estate transaction and construction consulting services.
- Marshall, Roth, & Gregory Law Firm- Provide real estate and legal services.

Non-funded partners that will be critical to this project are MANNA's 243 partner agencies, 115 of which are located in Buncombe County, will influence the design and functionality of our new facility. One example of many is that we have received feedback from our Buncombe County agencies who are equipped to pick up their orders at MANNA, that they would like a covered area over the docks where they load their trucks to accommodate year-round weather conditions. Another important example of valuable input that we have received which addresses both safety and efficiency concerns is our need for both incoming and outgoing loading docks. As we diligently move forward through the next phases, important feedback from our staff, massive volunteer corps and community partners will have influence in the ultimate design of our new facility. Throughout this process MANNA will solicit feedback about features that have the potential to improve the efficiencies, functionality and safety of our operations.

## Capacity\*

Describe the background, experience, and capabilities of your organization or department as it relates to capacity for delivering the proposed project and managing federal funds.

MANNA has considerable experience managing sizeable projects, delivering results, and reporting on grant expenditures at the federal, state, and local levels. We have accurately and successfully managed federal contracts for many years with the USDA and more recently, the SBA. On the State level, MANNA has stewarded multi-year contracts with NC DHHS and State-appropriated funding sources. MANNA is a successful sub-recipient of North Carolina's first-in-the-nation health and wellness Medicaid expansion pilot,

Healthy Opportunities. MANNA services a broad portfolio of national, state, and local funding from private foundations and regularly meets all the contractual requirements of accounting and reporting for these grants.

MANNA's 20-member Board of Directors (BOD) will provide the final authorization for this building project. Our BOD members are elected and volunteer their time to serve on the board. MANNA's BOD is comprised of a diverse membership with a wide range of community experiences. All of MANNA's financial activities are regularly monitored and audited by an independent accounting firm.

At the inception of this initiative, MANNA established a Facilities Leadership Committee that is comprised of key construction industry partners, several knowledgeable Board members, key operations and facilities staff, and MANNA's Senior Leadership Team. This committee will continue to oversee this project until completion. Our Chief Executive Officer, Hannah Randall, is a Certified Project Management Professional and is leading the design phase of the construction. The implementation phase will be led by Rudi Sommer, MANNA's Facilities and Safety Manager.

## Budget\*

Provide a detailed project budget including all proposed project revenues and expenditures, including explanations and methodology. For all revenue sources, list the funder and denote whether funds are confirmed or pending. For project expenses, denote all capital vs. operating costs, and reflect which specific expenses are proposed to be funded with one-time Buncombe County Recovery Funds.

Download a copy of the budget form [HERE](#). Complete the form, and upload it using the button below.

Final Buncombe County Recovery-Funds Budget NF 7.15.21.pdf

## Special Considerations\*

Provide any other information that might assist the County in its selection.

Buncombe County MANNA FoodBank-Bee Tree-Bulletin Set.pdf

A strategic partnership between Buncombe County and MANNA FoodBank to make this new facility possible for all those in need, will be an investment that will positively impact the lives of people living in poverty for decades to come. The synchronicity of Buncombe County's vision for "A caring community in harmony with the environment where citizens succeed, thrive and realize their potential" aligns perfectly with MANNA's values and our vision for a hunger-free Western North Carolina.

The construction of a larger facility is one of many steps in MANNA's strategic plan to address the crisis of food insecurity. MANNA will leverage our core competencies in food distribution and our collaborative community partnerships to engage diverse groups of people to broaden awareness of the consequences of food insecurity and to improve the health and well-being of the people we serve. Through stewardship, innovation, and collaboration, we will equitably address hunger for people facing it today while working to strengthen our network and outreach to shorten the line tomorrow.

In all our work, MANNA is guided by our core values of accountability, integrity, compassion and collaboration. We are committed to approaching each decision with a focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion. MANNA believes that having enough food is a basic human right. We will distribute our resources with an equity lens to ensure that we get food to the people who need it most. MANNA will impact the health of the residents of WNC through nutrition education and by distributing healthier food. Through advocacy, MANNA will continue to educate the public, especially decision-makers, on crisis of hunger in WNC, to inspire people to implement constructive actions to solve this unacceptable problem.

Together, our strategic partnership to make this facility possible, will allow us to continue to feed people today, feed people tomorrow and will help pave the way for feeding people for a lifetime.

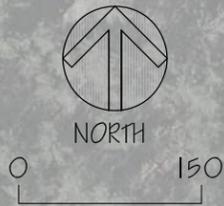
## File Attachment Summary

---

### *Applicant File Uploads*

- Final Buncombe County Recovery-Funds Budget NF 7.15.21.pdf
- Buncombe County MANNA FoodBank-Bee Tree-Bulletin Set.pdf





**SUMMARY**

BUILDING AREA: 100,000 SF  
PARKING SPACES: 150

- SEWER CONNECTION WILL REQUIRE EXTENSION AND EASEMENT THROUGH PARENT PARCEL TO CONNECT TO EXISTING LINE ON WARREN WILSON ROAD.
- EXISTING OVERHEAD POWER LINES ALONG FRONTAGE
- PORTION OF THE EAST HALF OF THE PARCEL IS WITHIN THE FLOODPLAIN AND FLOODWAY.
- STREAMS LOCATED ON SITE REQUIRE 30' BUFFER. RECOMMEND THE STREAMS BE FIELD DELINEATED TO DETERMINE EXACT LOCATIONS.
- CURRENT PARCEL IS PENDING BROWNSFIELD STATUS AS OF 5/4/2018. ADDITIONAL RESEARCH IS NEEDED TO VERIFY DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS.



**MANNA - OLD BEE TREE  
SITE CONCEPT  
MARCH 2021**



PROJECT AREA

OLD BEE TREE RD (SR#2418)

WARREN WILSON RD (SR#2416)

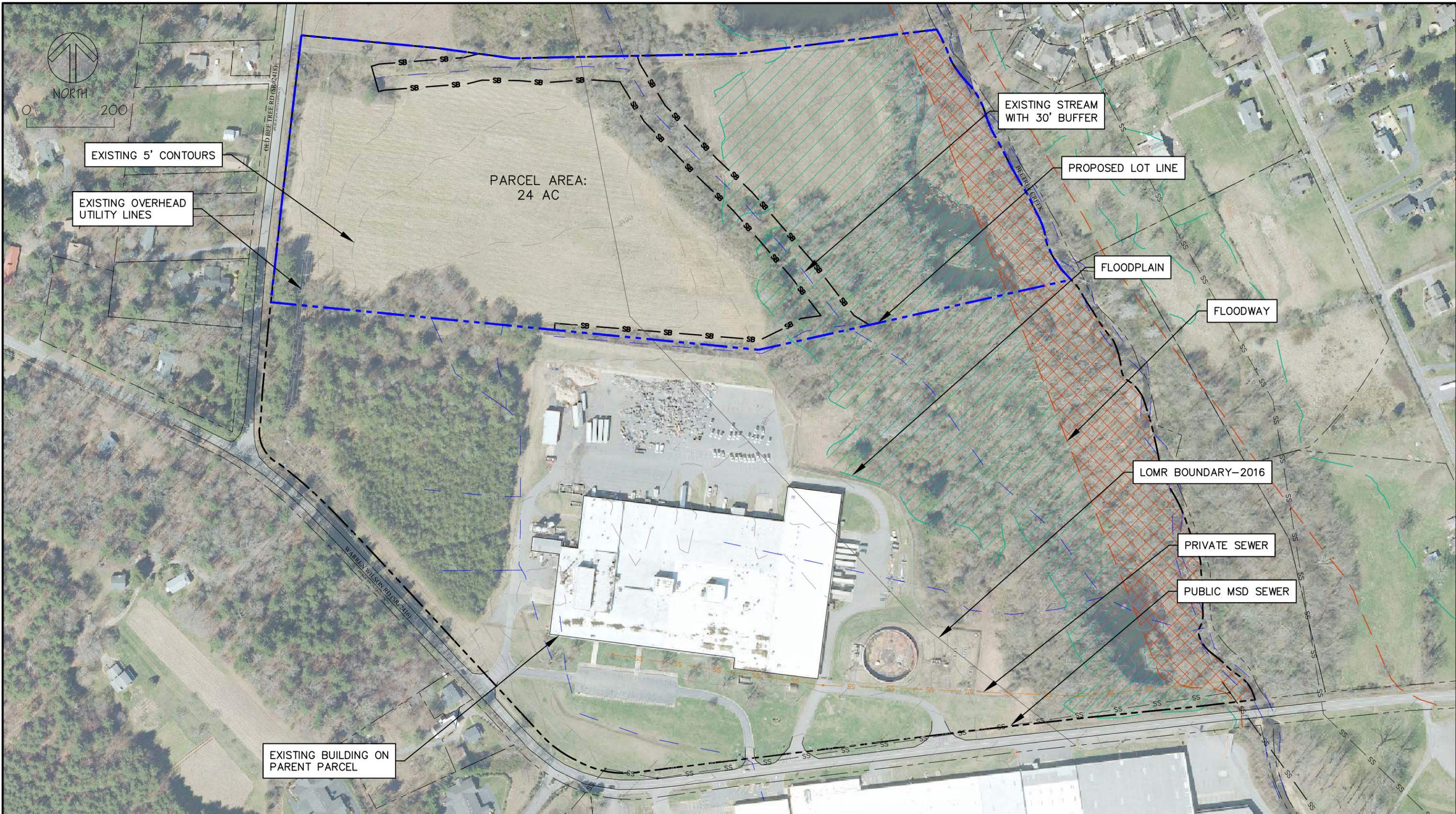
BEE TREE CREEK



NORTH

0 200

**MANNA-OLD BEE TREE  
AERIAL BULLETIN  
MARCH 2021**



**UNIT SUMMARY**

SEWER LENGTH: 1285'



**UNIT SUMMARY**

BUILDING AREA:	100,000 SF
BUILDING EXPANSION:	76,000 SF
PARKING:	152
PARKING EXPANSION:	±140

