

BUNCOMBE COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA

FRENCH BROAD RIVER
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
A PROGRAM OF LAND OF SKY

Buncombe County Pedestrian Plan

Steering Committee Meeting #2 | April 22, 2026

McAdams

EQUINOX
balance through proper planning



Agenda

01 Quick Recap + Updates

02 Engagement Round 1

03 Ranking Projects

04 Next Steps



01 02 03 04

Quick Recap + Updates

Buncombe Ped Plan Team

Quick Recap

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Gyulnara Ashari
- Molly Coffey
- Caitlin Constantine
- Scott Dickens
- Jennifer Dreisbach
- Julie Judkins
- Megan McCreary
- Brighid O'Keane
- Christopher Reese
- Kara Wheeler
- Billie Breeden
- Harry Buckner
- Lucy Crown
- James Eller
- Shannon Tuch

BUNCOMBE COUNTY PROJECT LEADERSHIP

- William High
- Chloe Donohoe
- Angelica Tyler
- Haylee Madfis

FRENCH BROAD RIVER MPO PROJECT LEADERSHIP

- Hannah Bagli
- Tristan Winkler

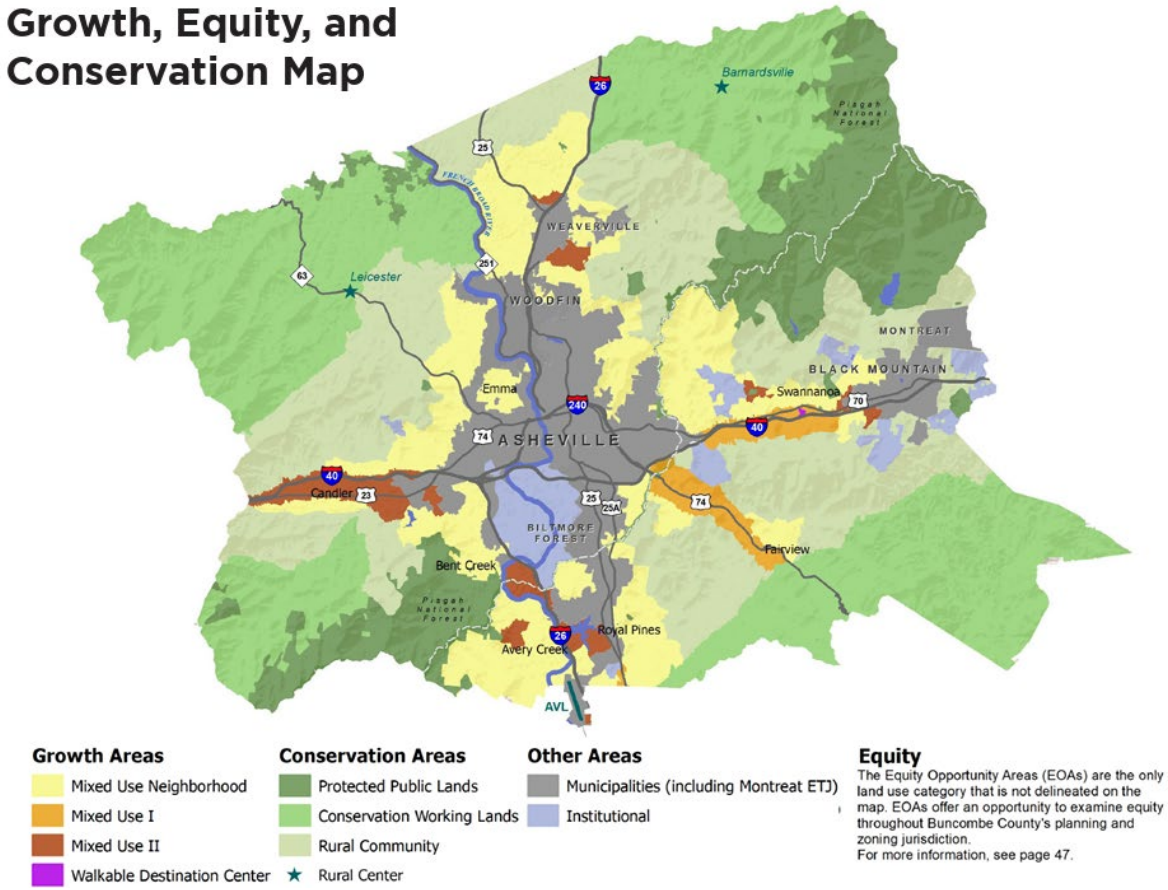
MCADAMS

EQUINOX
balance through proper planning

The Why + What

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

- Most Buncombe municipalities have plans for people walking – the County does not
- Growth happening in areas outside municipalities
  - And! County does not have the tools to build + maintain sidewalks
- People need to walk in these urban areas
- The County is in the business of managing growth in urban areas with no municipality without the tools to do so



Growth, Equity, and Conservation (GEC) Map
Buncombe County Comprehensive Plan

Project Overview

How Sidewalks Get Built



City/ Town

e.g., Wood Ave (Asheville)

NCDOT

e.g., Fairview Rd (East Asheville)





Private Develop.

e.g., Smokey Park Hwy

County



Project Overview

County Planning



Concurrent Planning Efforts
Buncombe County

CONCURRENT PLANNING EFFORTS

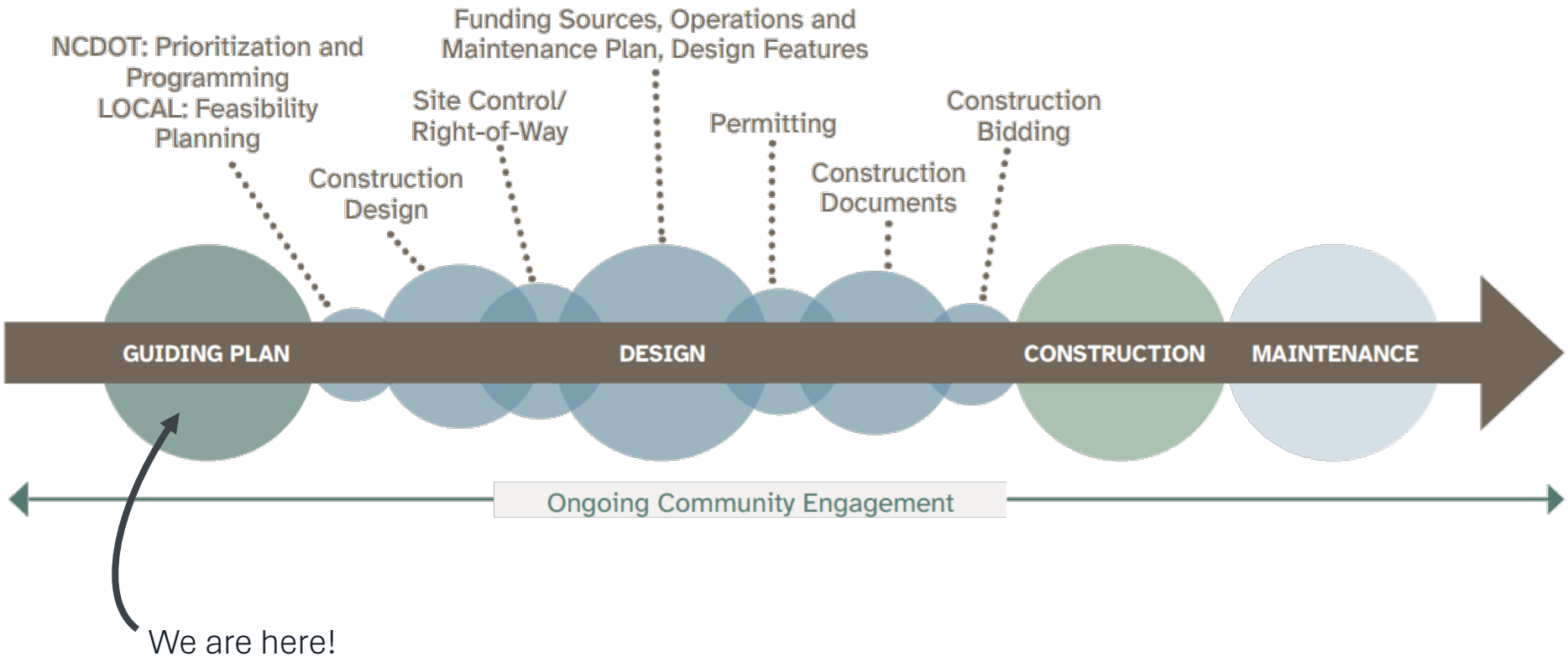
- Pedestrian Plan
- Envision Buncombe Long Term Recovery Plan
- Parks + Recreation Master Plan
- Swannanoa Small Area Plan
- Community Plans
  - Beacon Plan
  - Swannanoa Recovery Plan

OUR FOCUS

- A strategic and prioritized approach to answer:
  "Where do we need sidewalks + crossings?"

Big Picture

Lifecycle of a Transportation Project



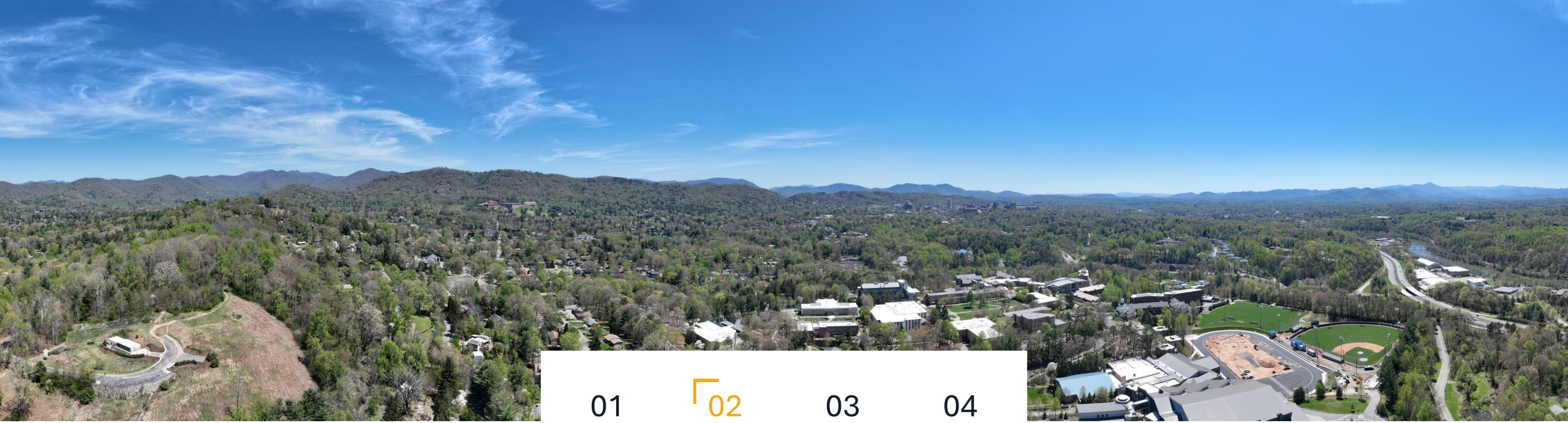
Q1 Update

WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO

- A lot of community outreach!
  - 1 online survey
  - Podcast episode
  - 4 email campaign messages
  - Paths Forward video short
  - 4 social media posts
  - 1 community event (3/9)
  - Presence at THRIVE Asheville Event (3/14)
  - Presence at Owen Park Event (3/30)
- Analyzing 1,000s of bits of feedback
- Project ranking



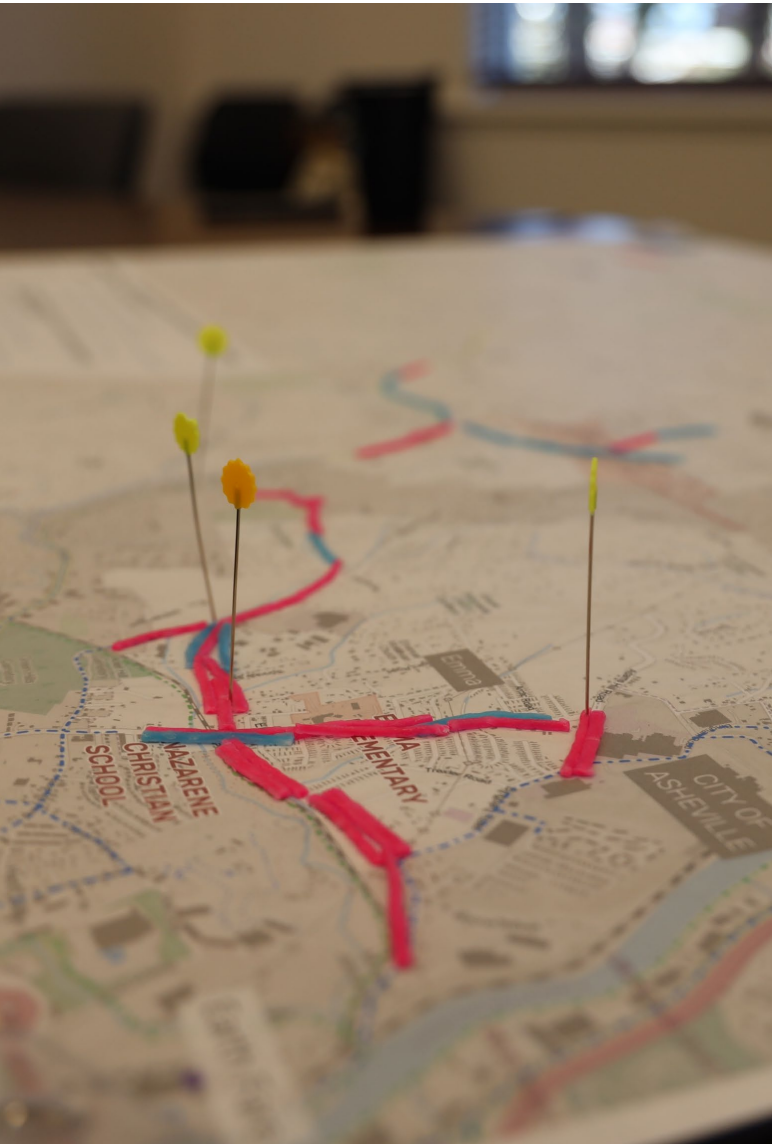
Instagram / Facebook Post
March 5, 2026



Engagement Round 1

Community Open House

March 9, 2026









Community Open House

March 9, 2026







Online Survey

LIVE: January 14 – March 20, 2026

RESPONSE SUMMARY

1,469
total visitors!

55.7%
of survey respondents walk every day

Biggest concerns:

1. There aren't sidewalks that connect to my destinations
2. Traveling along major roads feels uncomfortable
3. Crossings on major roads feel uncomfortable

People want to walk — but most feel they simply cannot do so safely today.

Walking is described as: *"unsafe," "harrowing," "terrifying," "a nightmare," "playing Frogger," "a warzone," "life-threatening," "not even an option."*

Online Survey

Key Themes



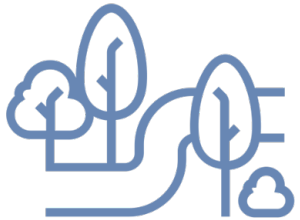
- Safety is the overwhelming concern



- Lack of sidewalks and continuous networks



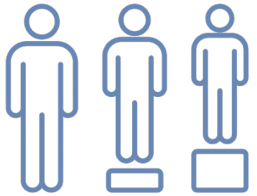
- Disconnected destinations
  - *Schools, grocery stores, libraries, parks, bus stops, jobs, and small businesses*



- Strong support for greenways and multi-use paths



- Desire for action (not just planning)



- Equity, access, and car dependence
  - *Low-income residents, older adults, students walking to school, and people with disabilities or low vision*

Online Survey

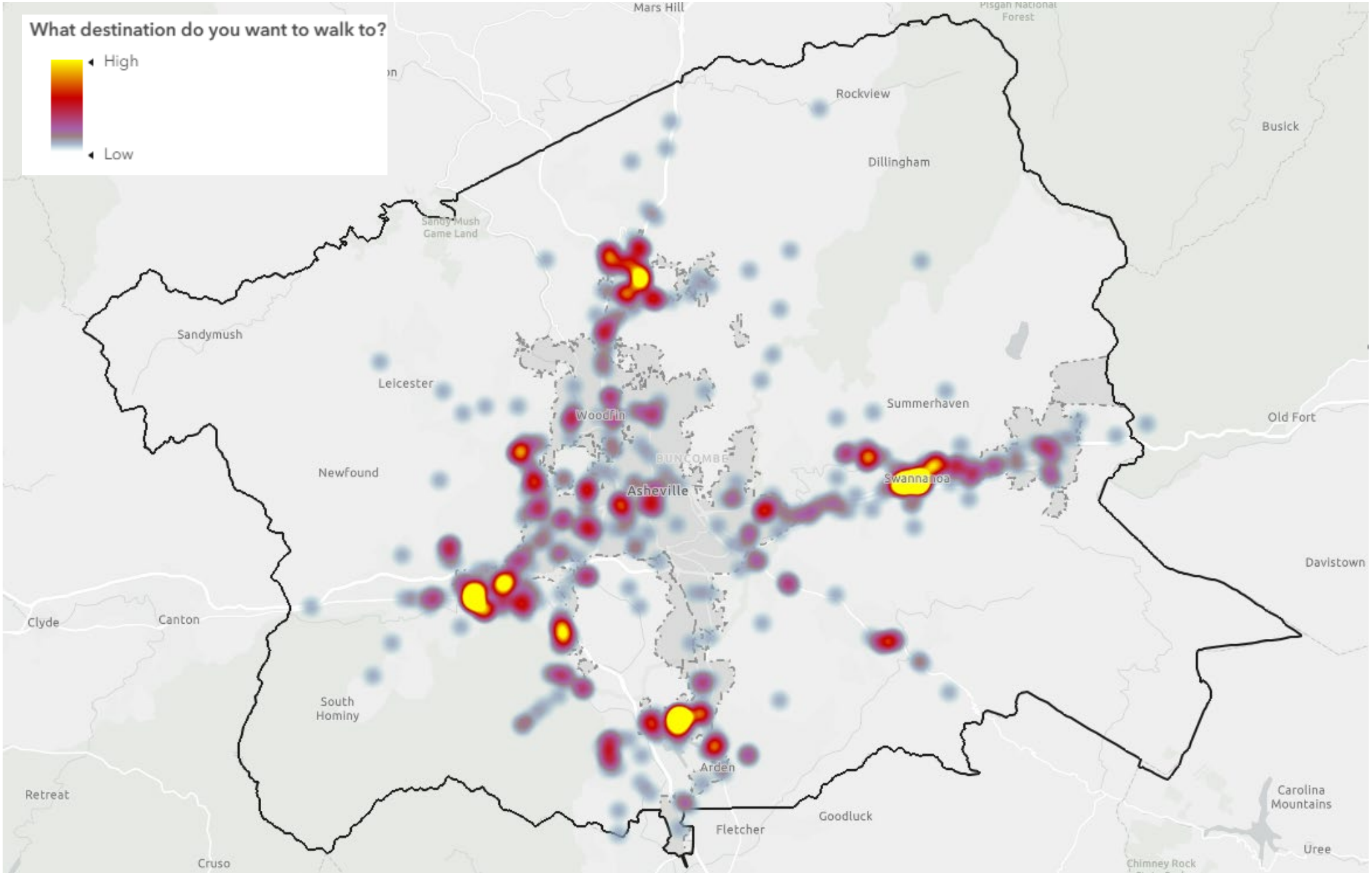
Challenging Areas

- US 70 / Tunnel Road corridor *(East Asheville ↔ Swannanoa ↔ Black Mountain ↔ Oteen)*
- Old US 70 *(Swannanoa / Grovemont area)*
- Warren Wilson Road & Bee Tree Road
- Springside Road / Overlook Road
- Sweeten Creek Road
- Brevard Road
- Smokey Park Highway
- Sand Hill Road / Sardis Road
- Merrimon Avenue
- Justice Ridge Road
- Riverside Drive
- Hendersonville Road
- Monticello / Monte Vista / Asbury Road corridors
- New Leicester Highway

People Want to Walk to...

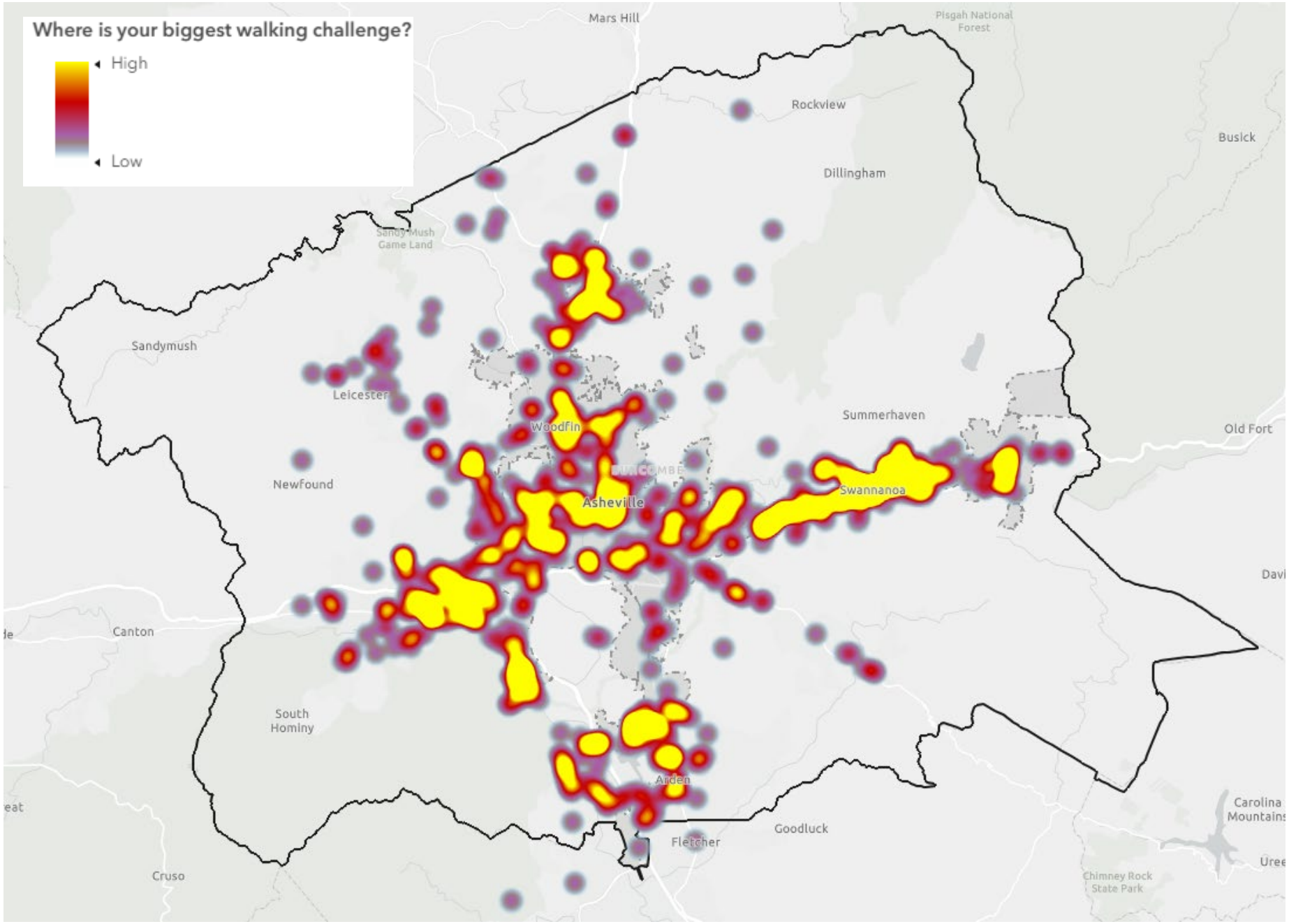
- Schools *(especially multi-school corridors)*
- Grocery stores *(Ingles, Food Lion, Walmart)*
- Bus stops and transit routes
- Libraries and community centers
- Parks, greenways, and rivers
- Downtown Swannanoa, Beacon Village, Grovemont
- Local businesses and jobs

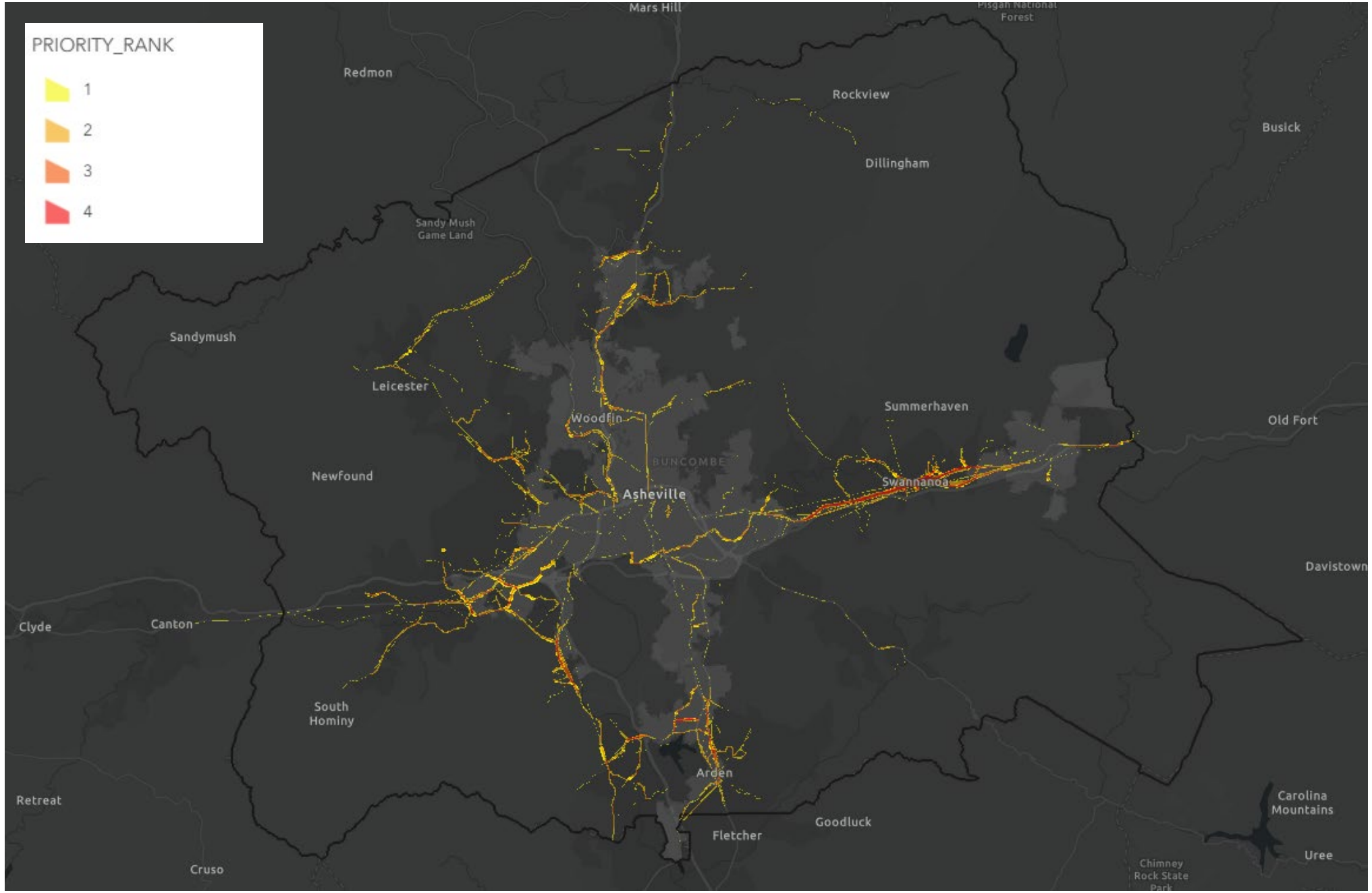



What destination do you want to walk to?
High
Low
Mars Hill
Pisgah National Forest
Rockview
Busick
Dillingham
Sandy Mush Game Land
Sandymush
Leicester
Woodfin
Summerhaven
Old Fort
BUNCOMBE
Newfound
Asheville
Swannanoa
Davistown
Clyde
Canton
South Hominy
Arden
Retreat
Carolina Mountains
Goodluck
Fletcher
Uree
Cruso
Chimney Rock

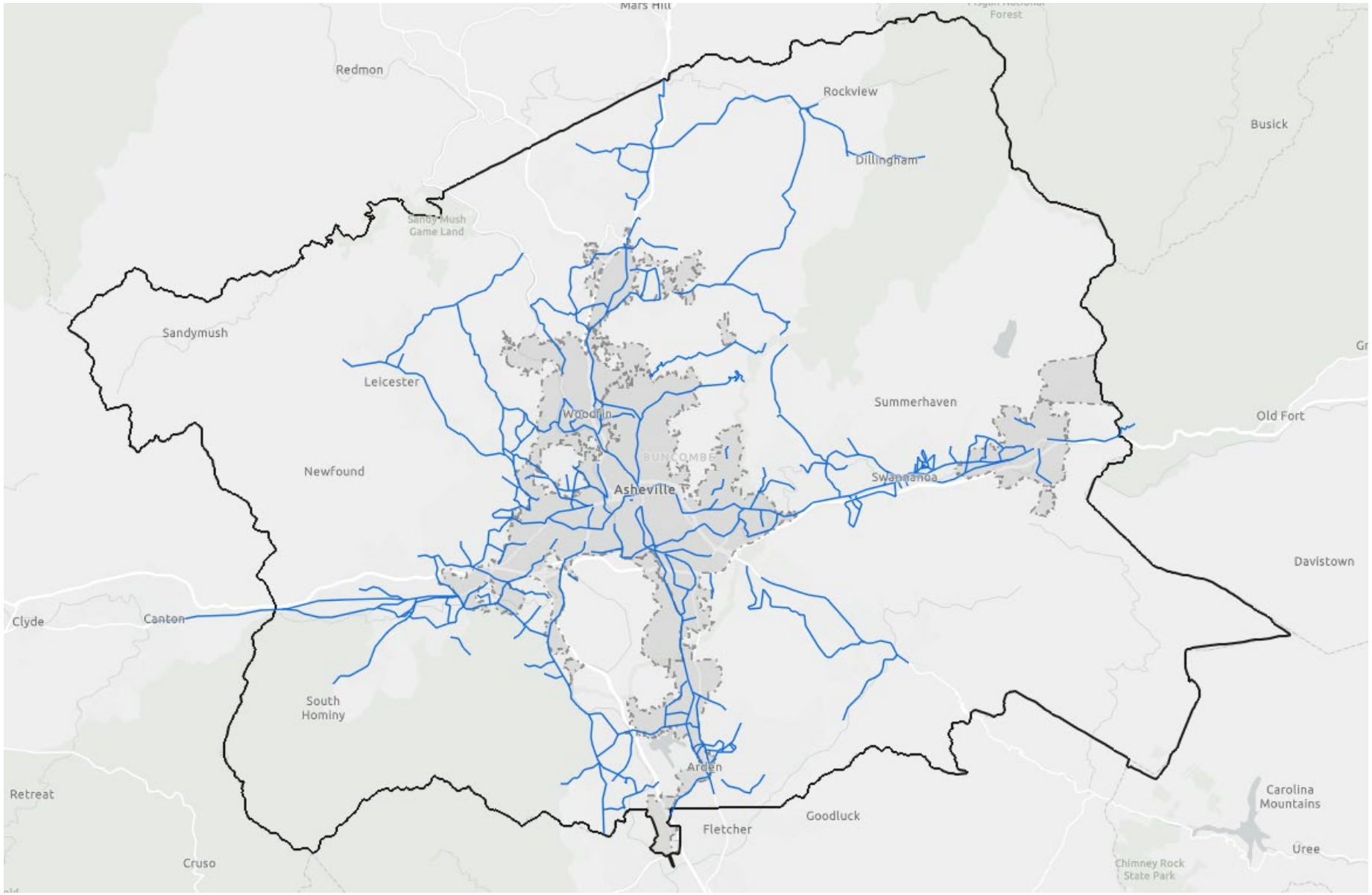
Online Survey

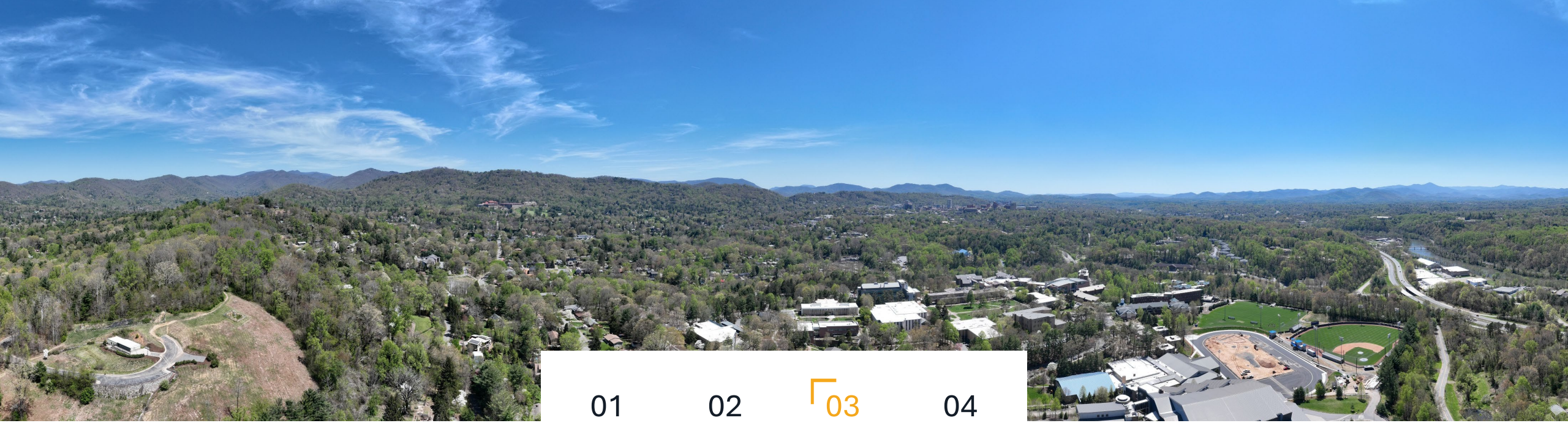



Where is your biggest walking challenge?
High
Low
Mars Hill
Pisgah National Forest
Rockview
Buslck
Dillingham
Sandy Mush Game Land
Sandymush
Leicester
Woodfin
Summerhaven
Old Fort
Newfound
Asheville
Swannanoa
Canton
South Hominy
Alden
Goodluck
Fletcher
Carolina Mountains
Chimney Rock State Park
Cruso


PRIORITY_RANK
1
2
3
4
Mars Hill
Pisgah National Forest
Redmon
Rockview
Busick
Dillingham
Sandy Mush Game Land
Sandymush
Leicester
Woodfin
Summerhaven
Old Fort
BUNCOMBE
Newfound
Asheville
Swannanoa
Davistown
Clyde
Canton
South Hominy
Arden
Retreat
Carolina Mountains
Goodluck
Fletcher
Uree
Cruso
Chimney Rock State Park

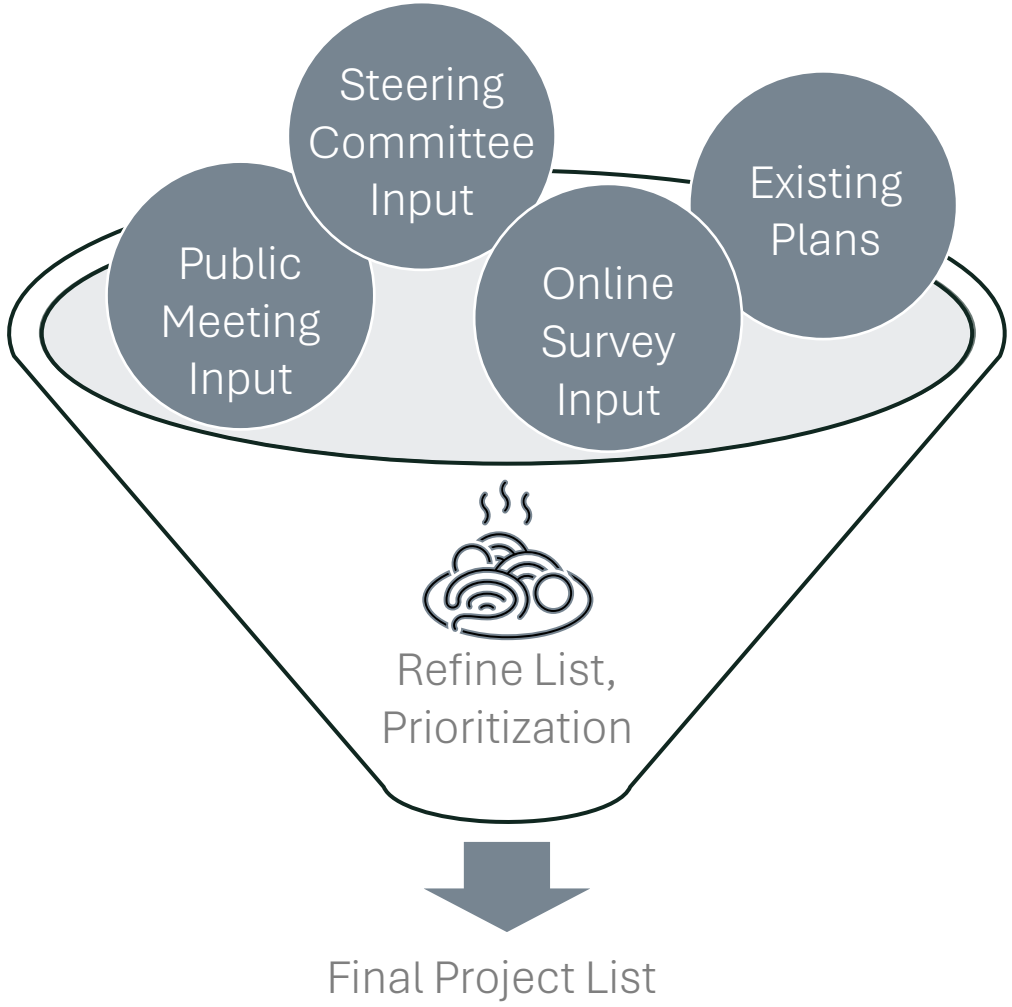
Community Feedback Lines





Ranking Projects

Network Development

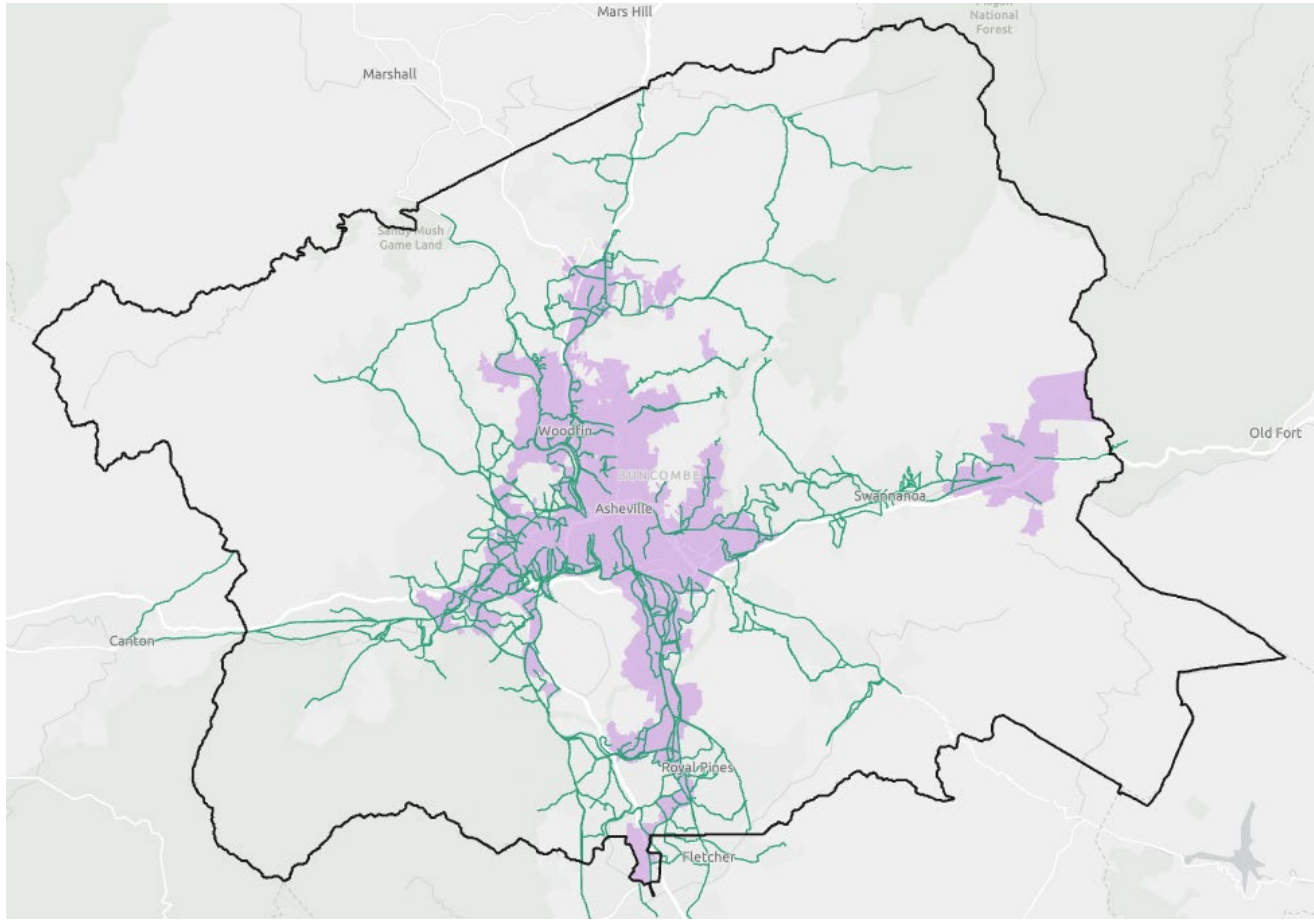


The Spaghetti

A Lot of Lines

ALL PROPOSED LINEAR PROJECTS

- Comprised of:
  - Lines from previous plans
  - Lines from prior Buncombe project identification efforts
  - Community feedback
- What we're trying to achieve: sorting projects
  1. Top 10 projects (**Core**)
  2. Influential supporting projects (small area sidewalk networks) (**Supporting**)
  3. All other projects (becomes part of the final plan) (**Additional**)
- Picking the top 10 projects is hard!



Project Cutsheets

WALK BIKE WOODFIN

[EXAMPLE]

PRIORITY PROJECT 3: JONESTOWN ROAD

At the intersection of Jonestown Road and Elk Mountain Drive, three essential community destinations are in proximity: Woodfin Elementary, Roy Pope Park, and Town Hall. This project would upgrade existing sidewalks and crossings, and add a new section of sidewalk to these destinations, thereby improving the walking experience in the area.

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

Location:

Jonestown Road at Elk Mountain Drive

Facility Type:

Long-Term Recommendation (if major roadway reconstruction occurs, this is the ideal condition):

- Riverside Drive to Elk Mountain Road: sidewalk one side
- Key crossing upgrades
- Neighborhood traffic calming treatments

Near-Term Recommendation (highest priority elements):

- Upgrade existing sidewalks and crossings
- Add new section of sidewalk connecting Town Hall and park (see Exhibit 1)
- Neighborhood traffic calming treatments combined with Vine Street to provide connection to Riverside Drive *(not included in the cost estimate)*

Crossing Treatments:

High visibility crossings and school crossing at park with rectangular rapid flashing beacon

Implementation Partners:

Town of Woodfin and Buncombe County Schools

Planning Level Cost Estimate*:

$1,140,000

**Opinion of Probable Construction Cost represents the typical construction costs in 2025 dollars and is based on preliminary linear feet of the proposed facility type. Cost does not include escalation, ROW, engineering, survey, construction administration, landscaping, etc. These additional costs can vary greatly based on project complexity and funding source.*

EXISTING CONDITION



Source: McAdams

CROSSING TREATMENT EXAMPLE



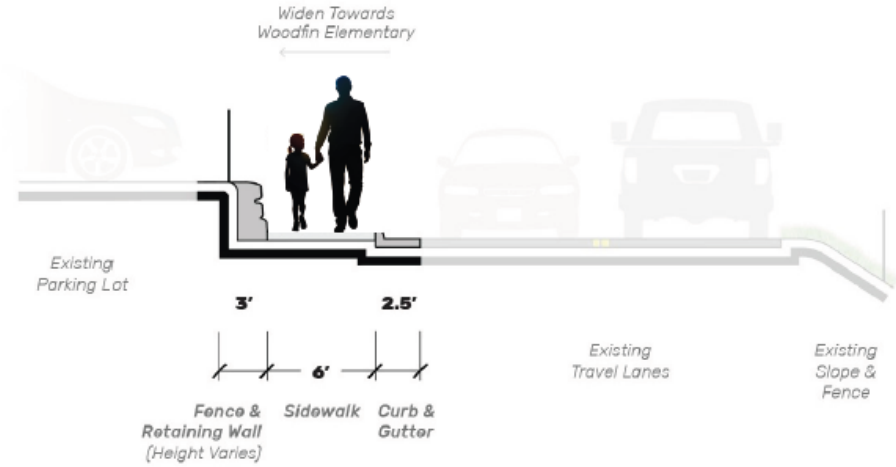
Source: McAdams

Image 64. Jonestown Road at Elk Mountain Road (Near-Term Recommendations)



Source: McAdams

PROPOSED CROSS SECTION (NEAR-TERM)



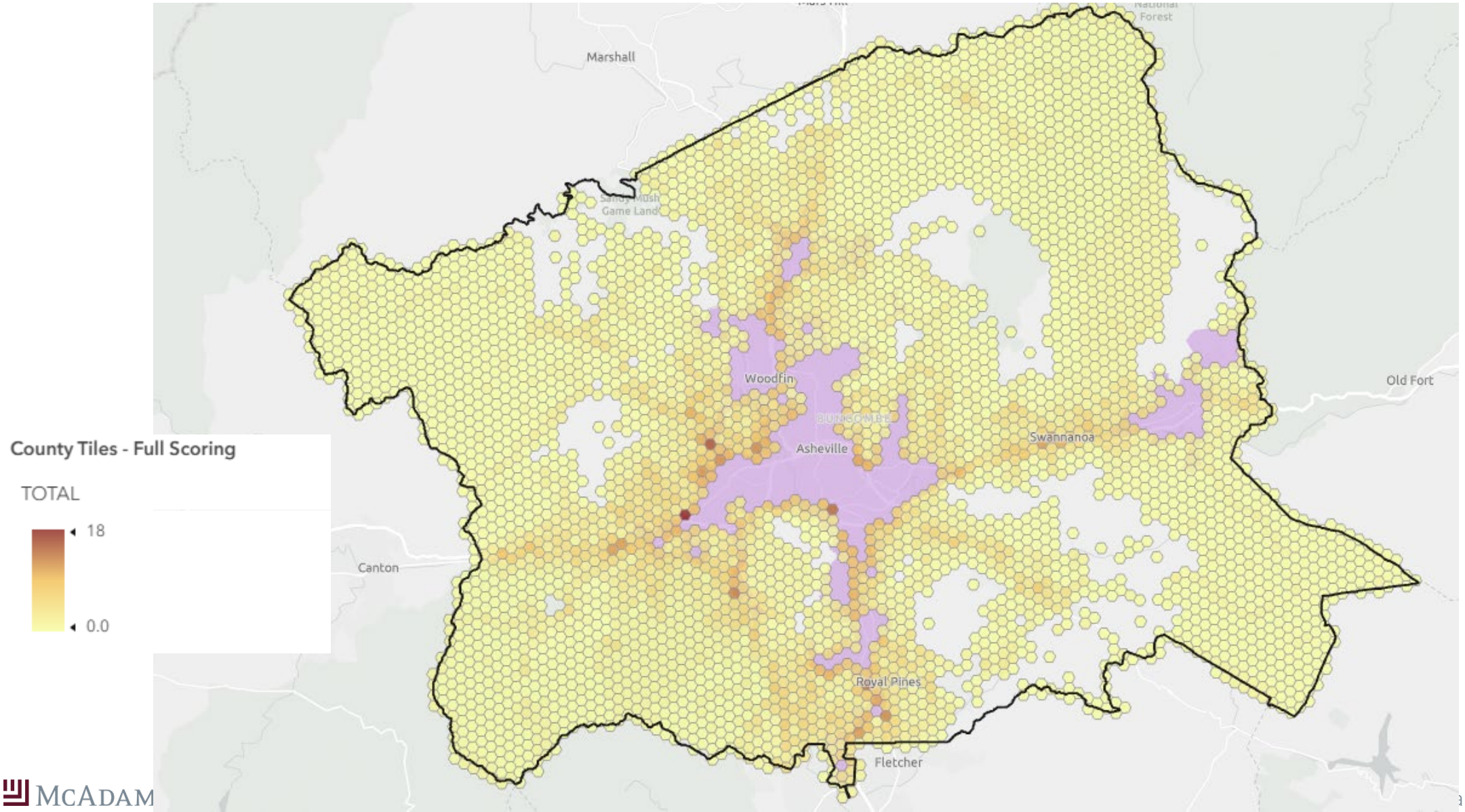
MCADAMS

Round 1 Scoring

- **Accessibility**
  - Proximity to schools, transit connectivity
- **Equity**
  - Equity areas, affordable housing
- **Safety Impact**
  - HIN and reported crashes
- **Connectivity + Demand**
  - Connection to employers, intersection density, address point density
- **Land Use + Development**
  - Growth projections

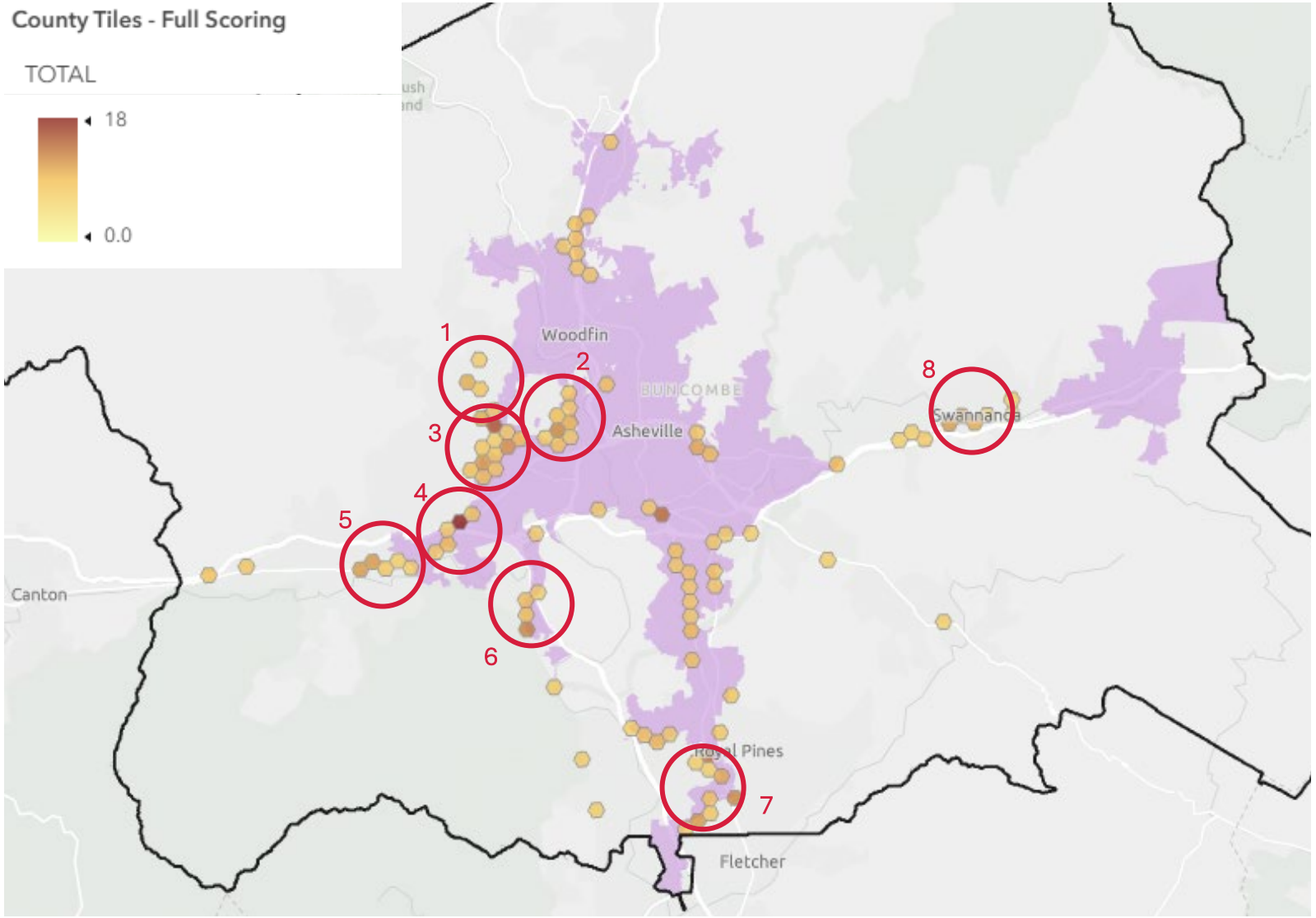


Round 1 Scoring



Priority Areas

Round 1 Score: Greater than 7



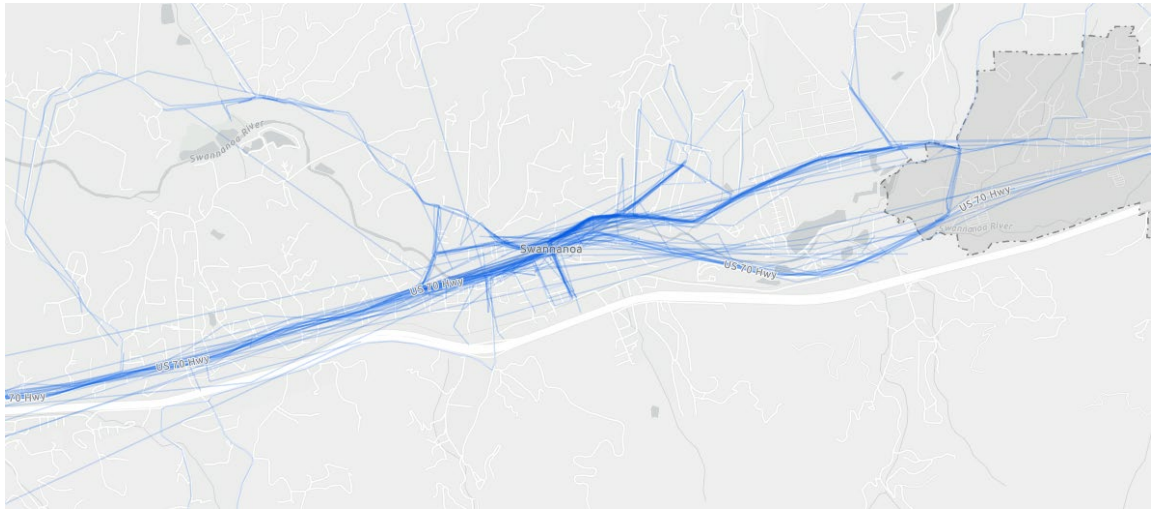
TOP 9 AREAS

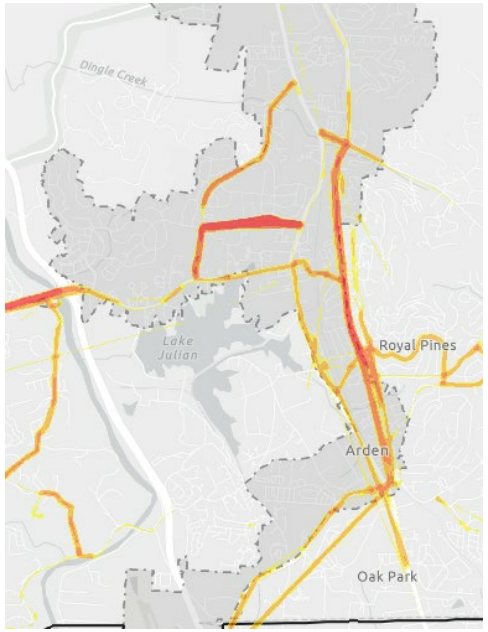
1. Erwin School Area
2. Emma
3. West Asheville @ County
4. Smokey Park Hwy / Sardis
5. Candler
6. Brevard Rd
7. Royal Pines / Arden
8. Swannanoa

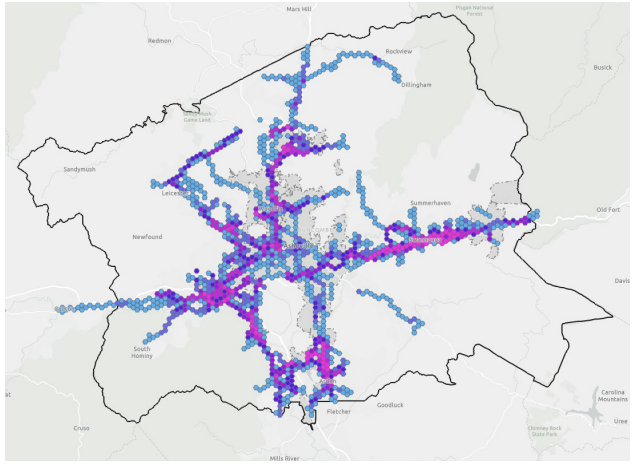
Community Feedback Lines

INCORPORATING PUBLIC INPUT

- Use the “heat” to guide prioritization
- More lines = higher the score
- Community feedback included:
  - Maptionnaire responses (1,016)
  - Steering Committee 1
  - Public Meeting sticky strings



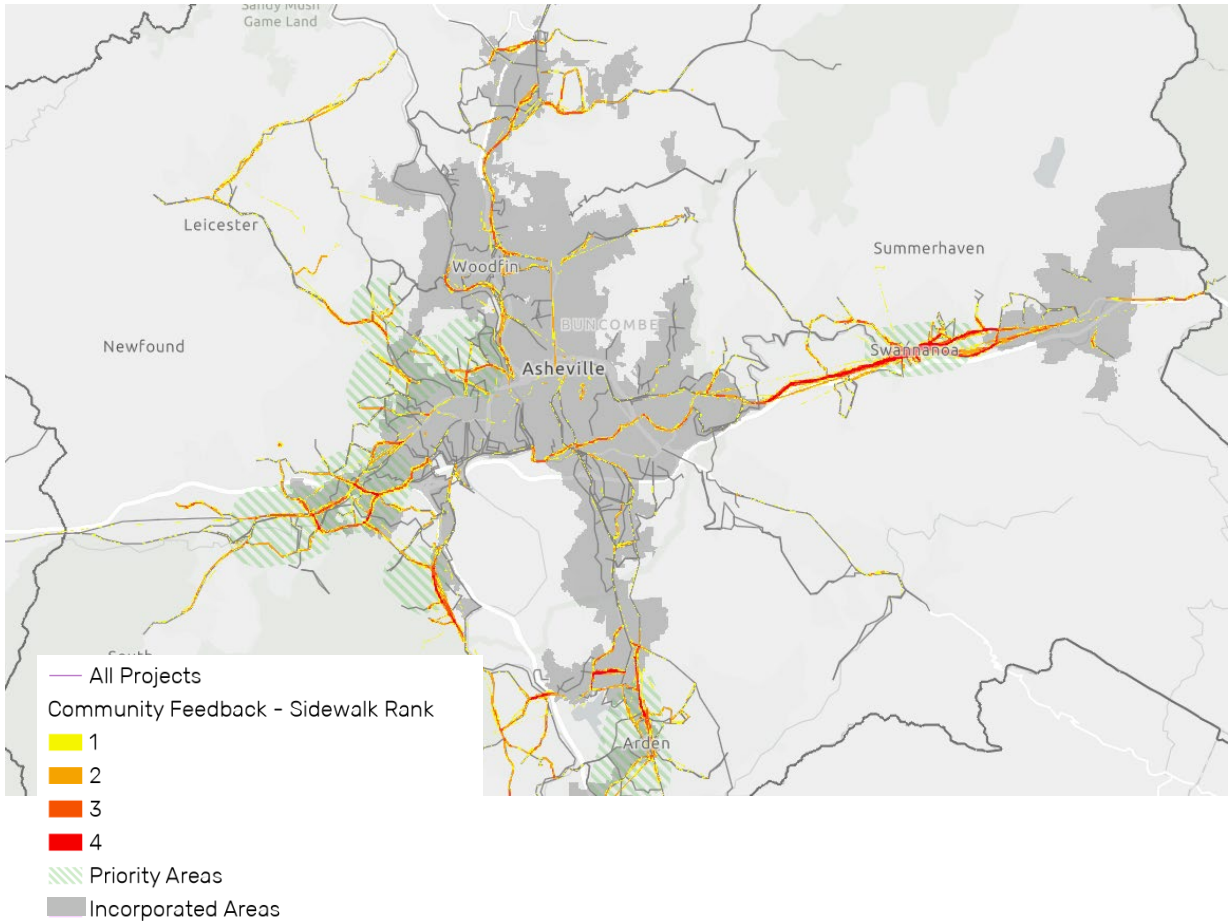




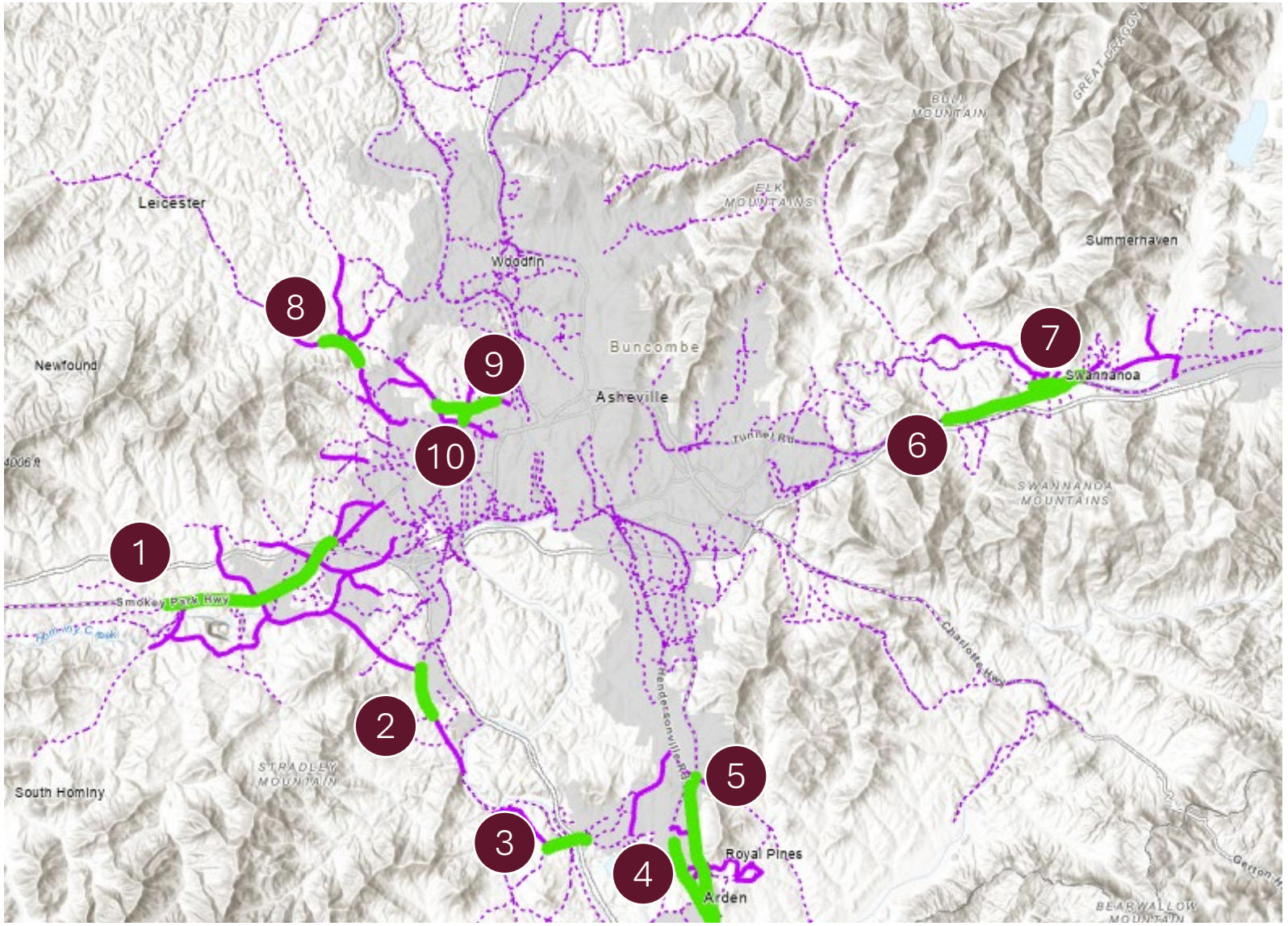
Ranking Projects

KEY STEPS

1. Use Priority Areas to focus on top projects
2. Consult Community Feedback to guide further ranking
3. Assign groupings:
   - **Core Project**: a sidewalk or multi-use path that, if missing, will make it impossible to create a small area network.
     - This may be hard to build
     - These will be cutsheets
   - **Supporting Project**: sidewalks that build off core projects and comprise a small area sidewalk network.
     - Should implement with or after a core project
     - These will be highlighted as sidewalk small area plans
   - **Additional Project**: all other projects in the county system.



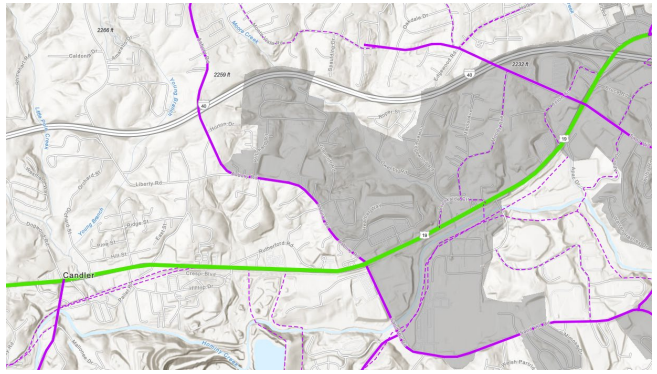
Ranking Projects



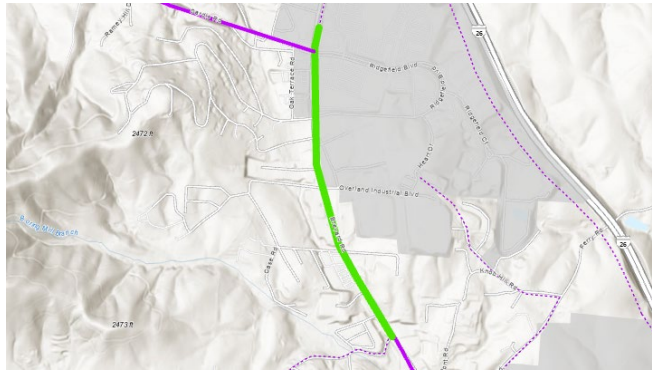
Projects 1-6

No Particular Order

Core
Supporting
Additional



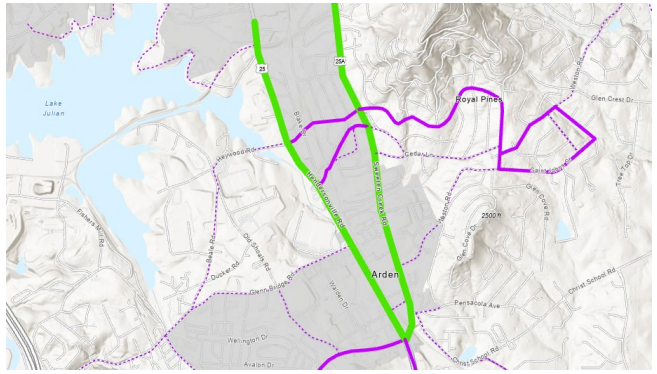
1 - Smokey Park Hwy



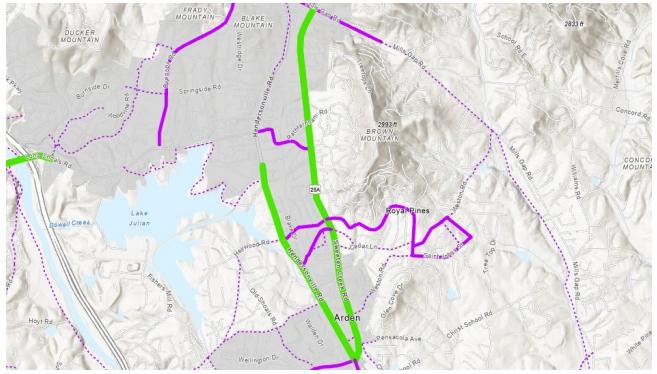
2 - Brevard Rd



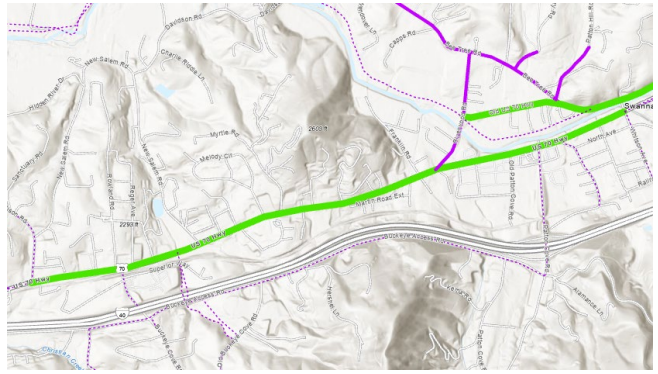
3 - Long Shoals Rd



4 - Hendersonville Rd



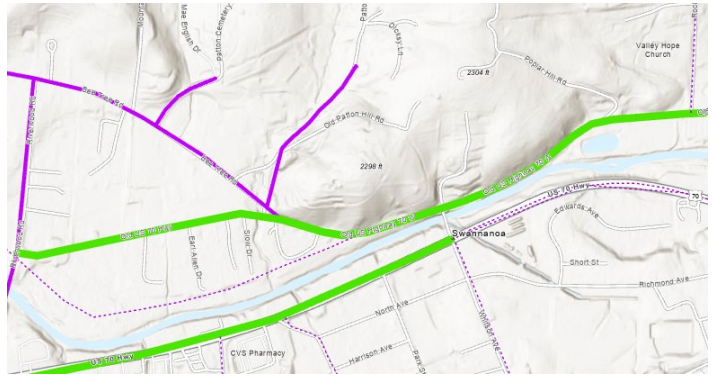
5 - Sweeten Creek Rd



6 - US 70

Projects 7-10

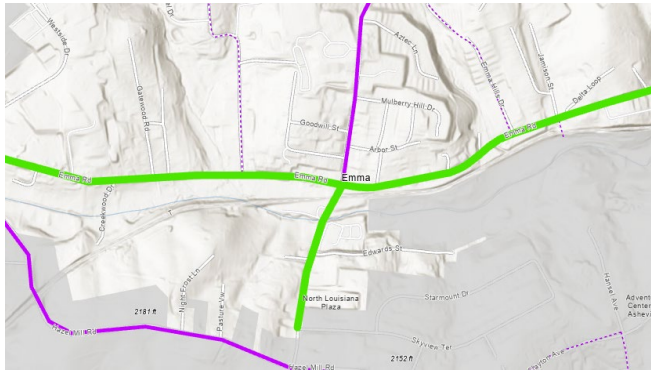
No Particular Order



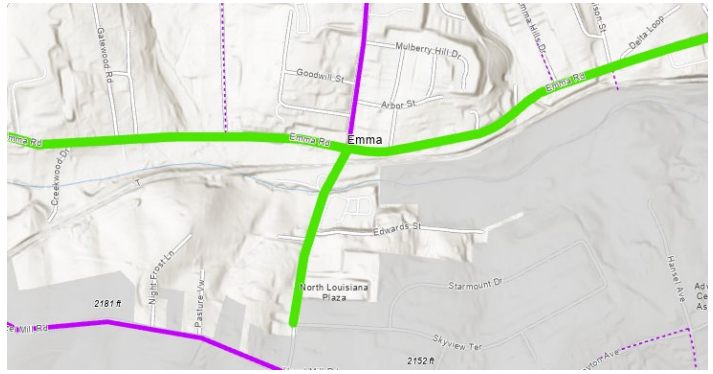
7 - Old US 70



8 - New Leicester Hwy



9 - Emma Rd



10 - N Louisiana Ave

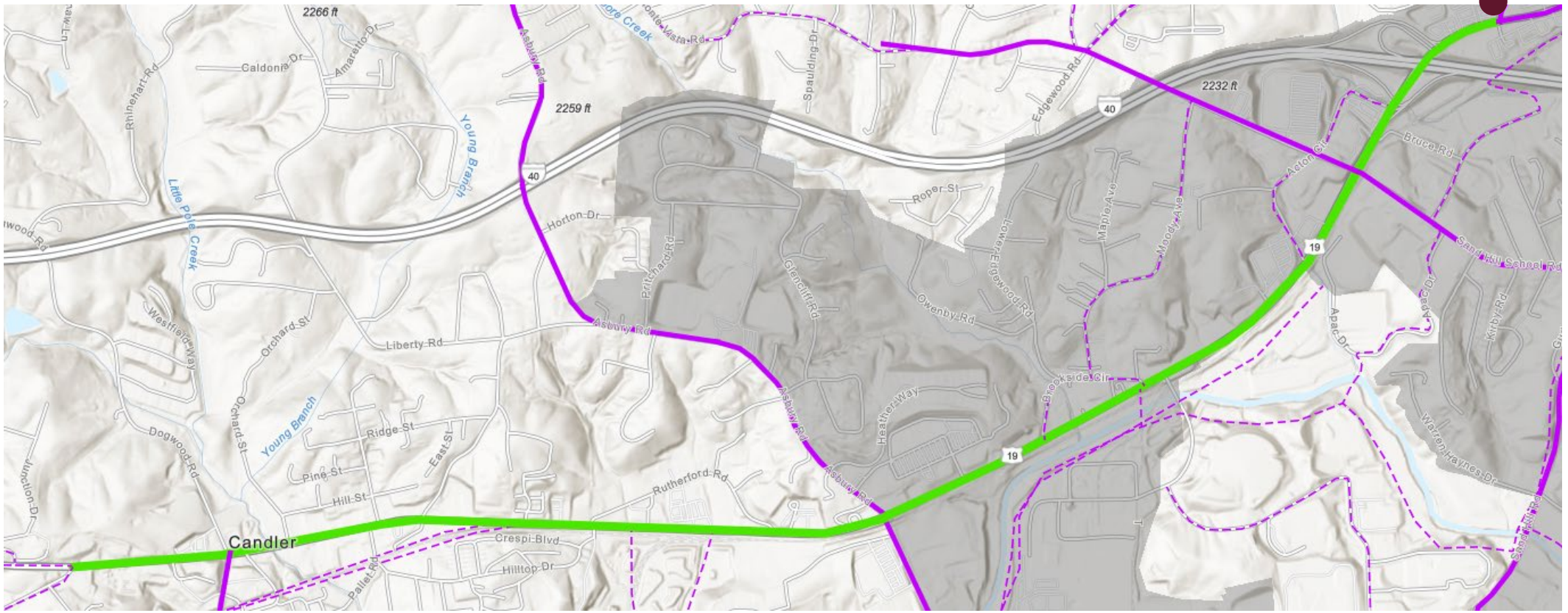
Smokey Park Hwy

Project 1

Core
Supporting
Additional

Sidewalk Ends

LIMITS: OLD HAYWOOD RD – OLD US 19 23

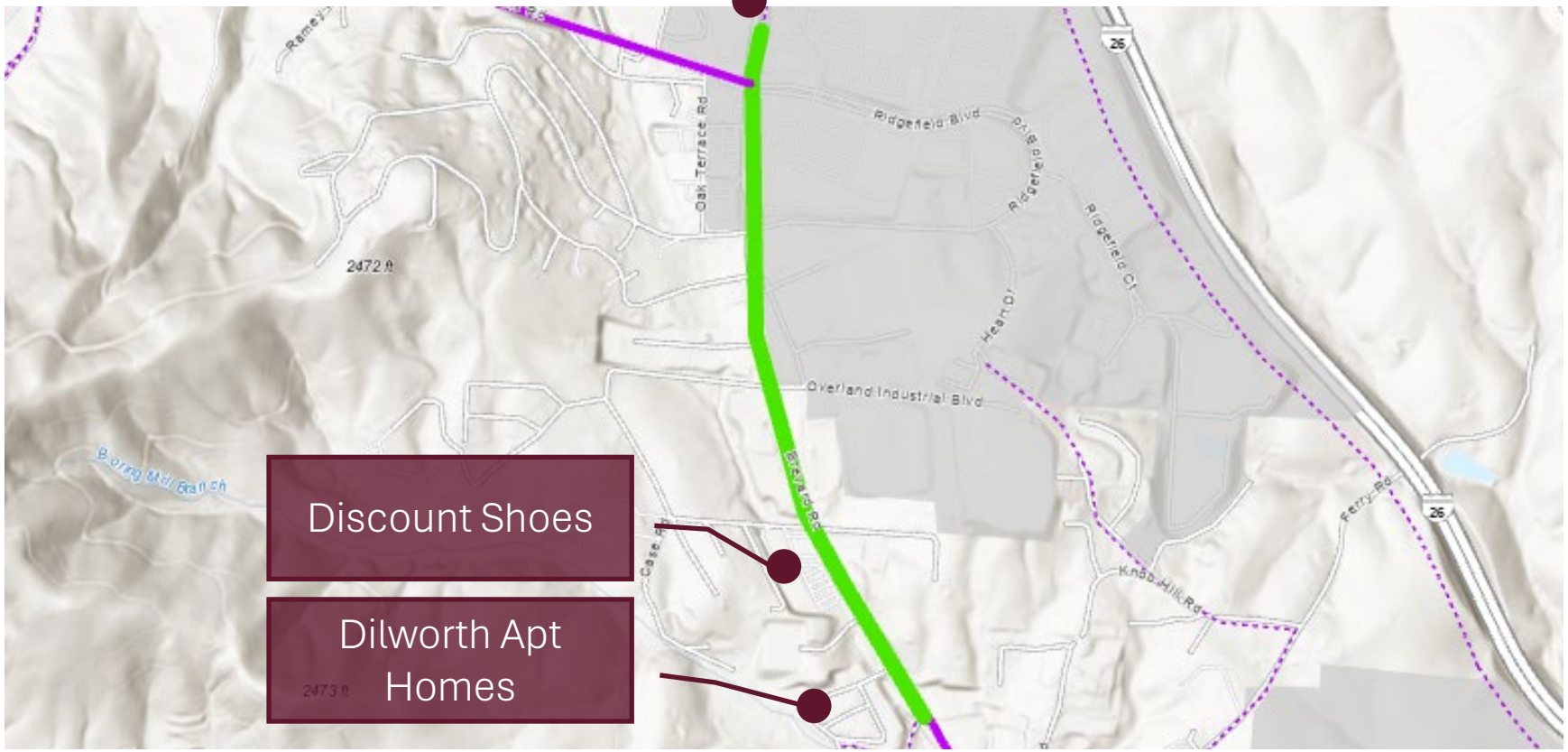


Brevard Rd

Project 2

Core
Supporting
Additional

LIMITS: EXISTING SIDEWALK – POLE CREASMAN RD



Long Shoals Rd

Project 3

Core
Supporting
Additional

LIMITS: CLAYTON RD TO EXISTING SIDEWALK

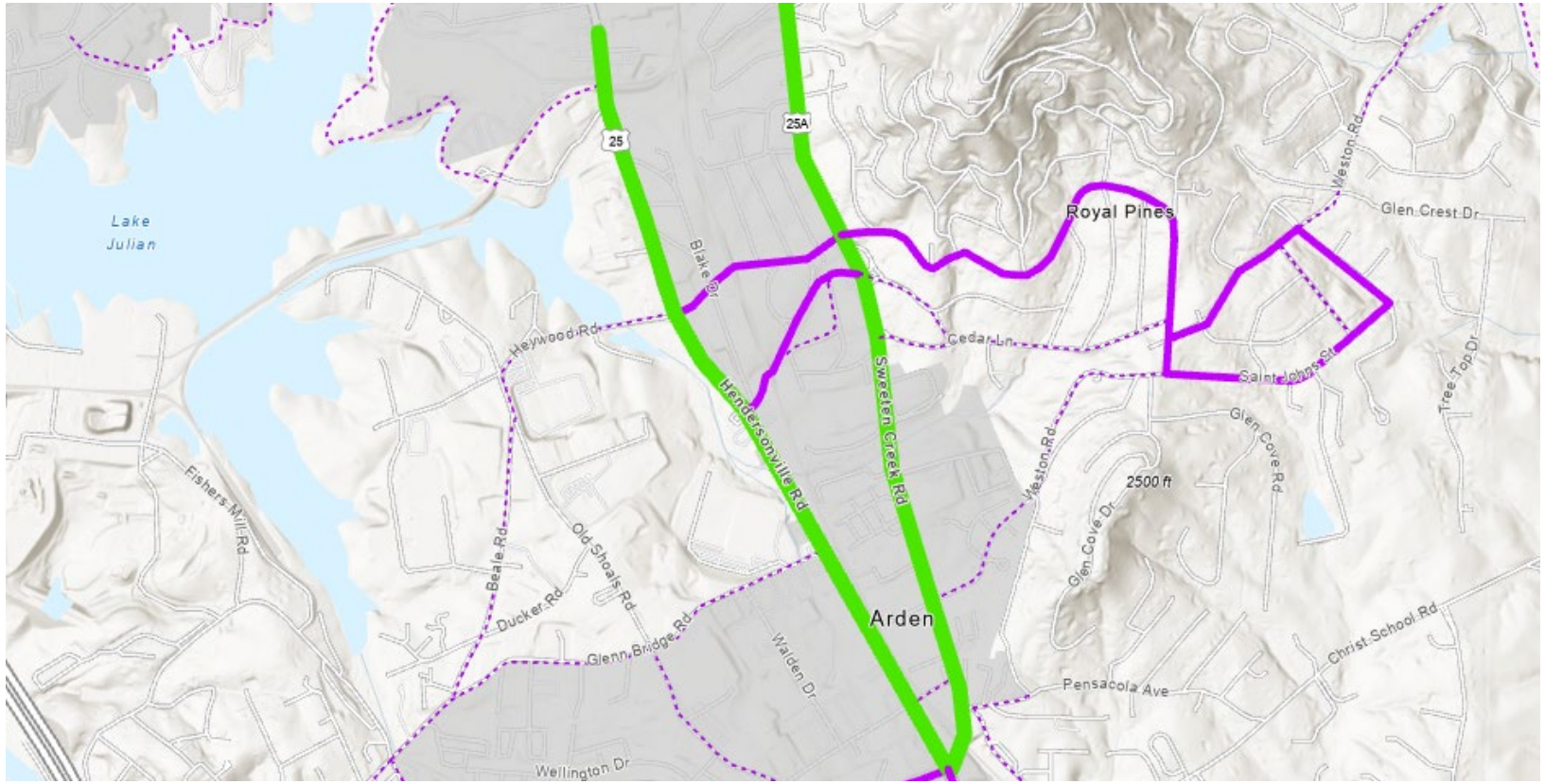


Hendersonville Rd

Project 4

Core
Supporting
Additional

LIMITS: EXISTING SIDEWALK – SWEETEN CREEK RD

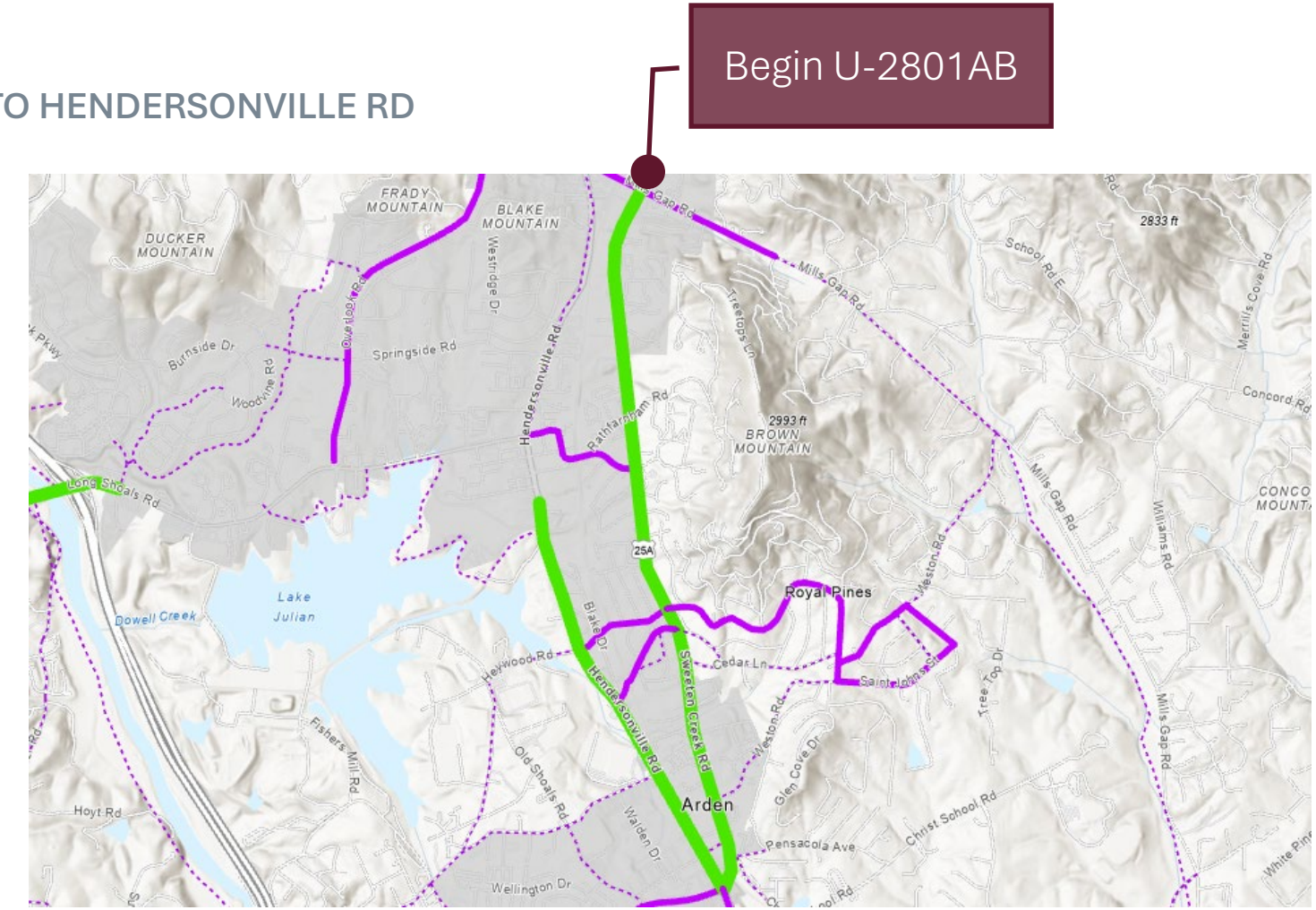


Sweeten Creek Rd

Project 5

Core
Supporting
Additional

LIMITS: MILLS GAP RD TO HENDERSONVILLE RD



US 70

Project 6

Core
Supporting
Additional

LIMITS: WHITSON AVE TO WARREN WILSON RD

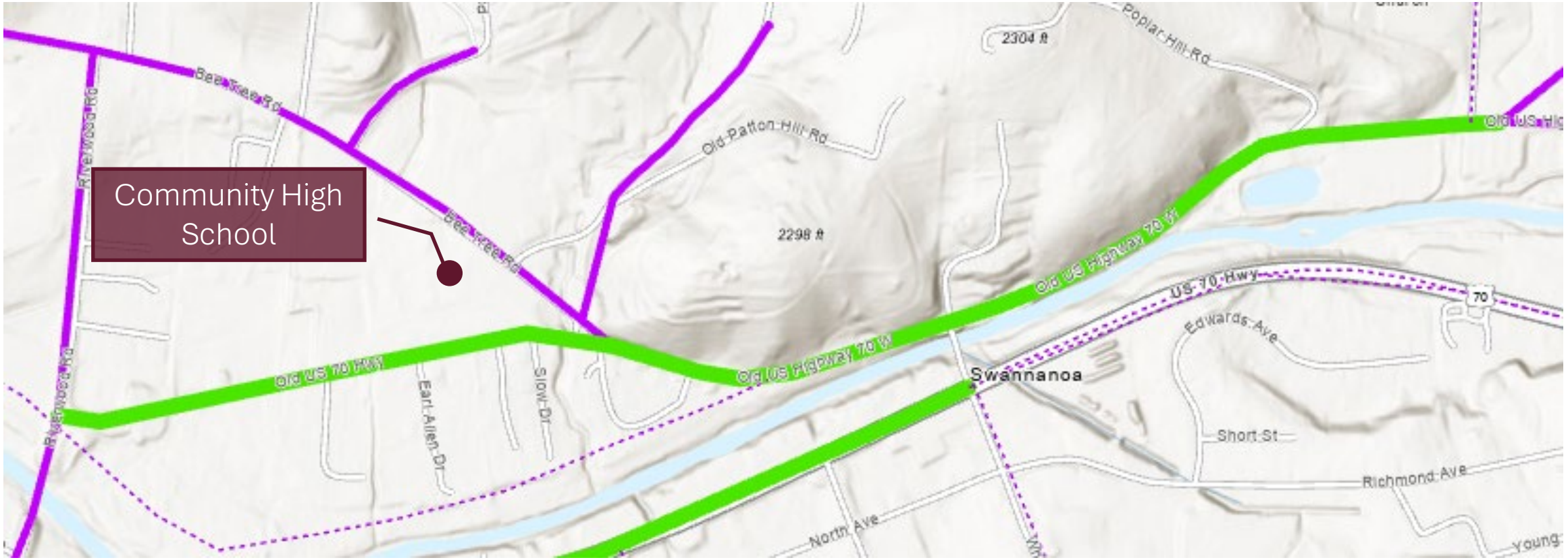


Old US 70

Project 7

Core
Supporting
Additional

LIMITS: RIVERWOOD RD TO GROVEMONT AVE



New Leicester Hwy

Project 8

Core
Supporting
Additional

LIMITS: EXISTING SIDEWALK – APPALACHIAN MTN HEALTH



Emma Rd

Project 9

Core
Supporting
Additional

LIMITS: HAZEL MILL RD TO BINGHAM RD



N Louisiana Ave

Project 10

Core
Supporting
Additional

LIMITS: EXISTING SIDEWALK – EMMA RD



Group Discussion

What Do You Think?

- Any adjustments to the Core Projects?
- Do the Supporting Projects represent your community's network needs?
- Anything missing?

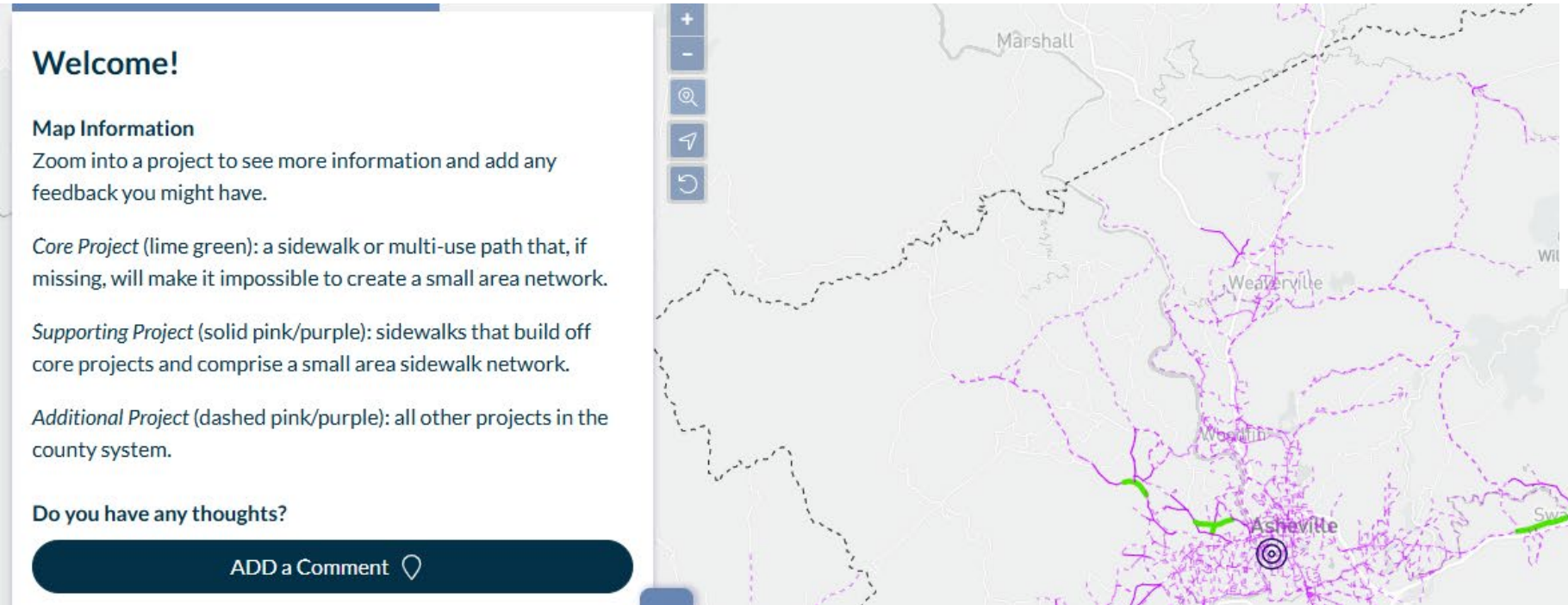


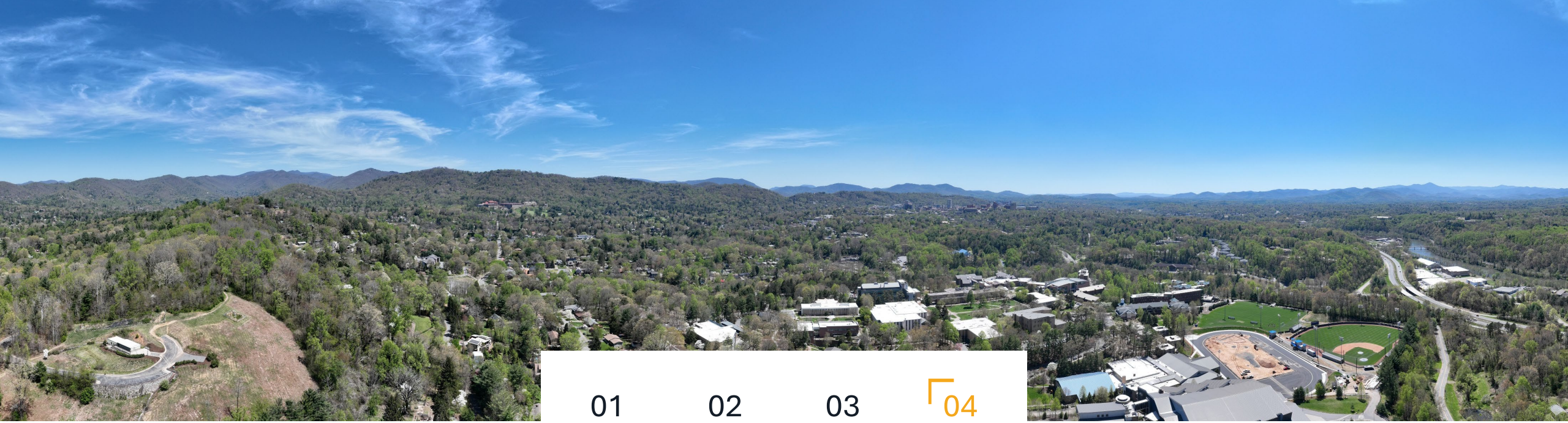
Feedback

What do we need to know?

MAPTIONNAIRE

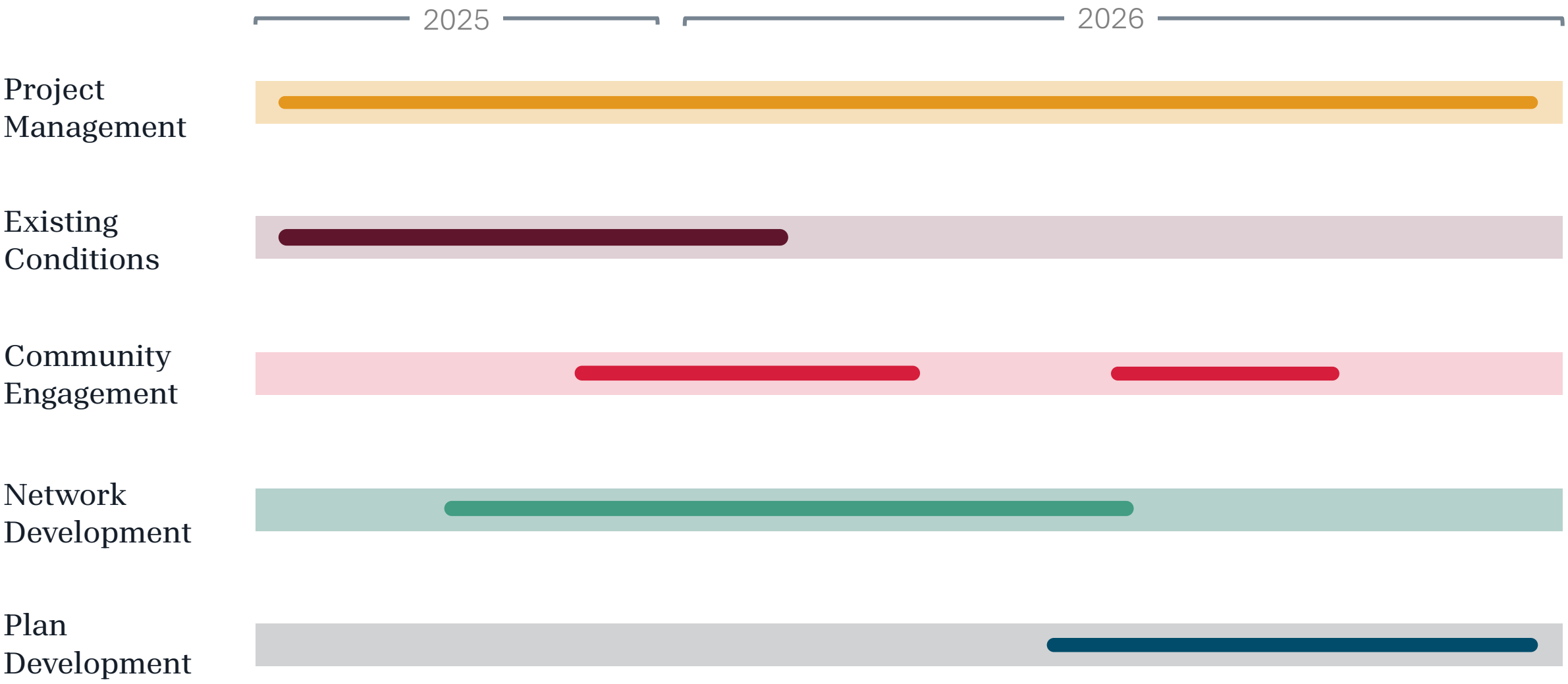
- https://app.maptionnaire.com/q/networkdevelopment





Next Steps

Schedule


2025
2026
Project Management
Existing Conditions
Community Engagement
Network Development
Plan Development

Next Steps

- **May**
  - *Focus Group Meetings* (4)
  - Refine top 10 projects
- **June**
  - Begin developing top 10 project cutsheets
  - *Steering Committee meeting #3*
- **July**
  - *Public Meetings Round #2, #3 and Online Survey*





Thank you

McAdams