Swannanoa Small Area Plan Update

Presented by

Gillian Phillips

Planning & Development Department

November 18, 2025

Board of Commissioners Briefing

What is covered in this presentation

- ✓ Planning Timeline
- ✓ Update on Partner Roles
- ✓ Engagement so Far
- ✓ Boundary Poll Results
- ✓ Policy Map Concepts
- ✓ SWOT Poll Results
- ✓Vision Statement Creation
- ✓Upcoming Public Engagement

PLANNING TIMELINE



BOARD AND COMMITTEE TIMELINE

Sept. 8	Steering Committee - Intro meeting / Boundary Poll review
Sept. 22	Steering Committee-Review of SWOT Analysis results & Policy map
Oct. 20	Steering Committee-Develop Vision statement
Oct. 20	Planning Board – Update
NOV/DEC	– Digital engagement with the Technical Expertise Committee
Nov. 3	Steering Committee - Refine Vision statement
Nov. 10	Steering Committee - Prepare for design workshops
Nov. 17	BOC - Update
Dec. 15	Steering Committee - Review of Existing Condition Study

PARTNER ROLES

LAND OF SKY REGIONAL COUNCIL

- Planning consulting firm for Swannanoa Plan
- Focus: Assist with research, data analysis, and identifying vision, policies, and action options.

NC WILDLIFE RESOURCES COMMISSION

- $10,000 and 80 hours of technical assistance
- Focus: Conservation-based land use planning with focus on wildlife habitat
- Budget Amendment will go before BOC at November 18th Meeting

APPALACHIAN DESIGN CENTER

Collaborating on public engagement and data sharing

ENGAGEMENT SO FAR

19 in-person engagement events

76+ staff hours at events

273 subscribers to the e-newsletter

How many people took a poll?

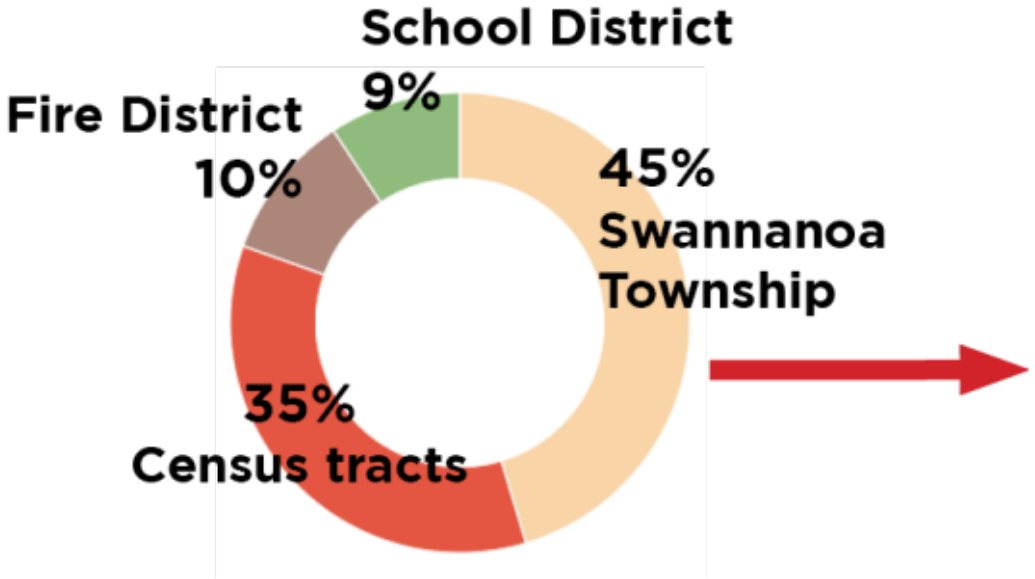
103 - Boundary poll

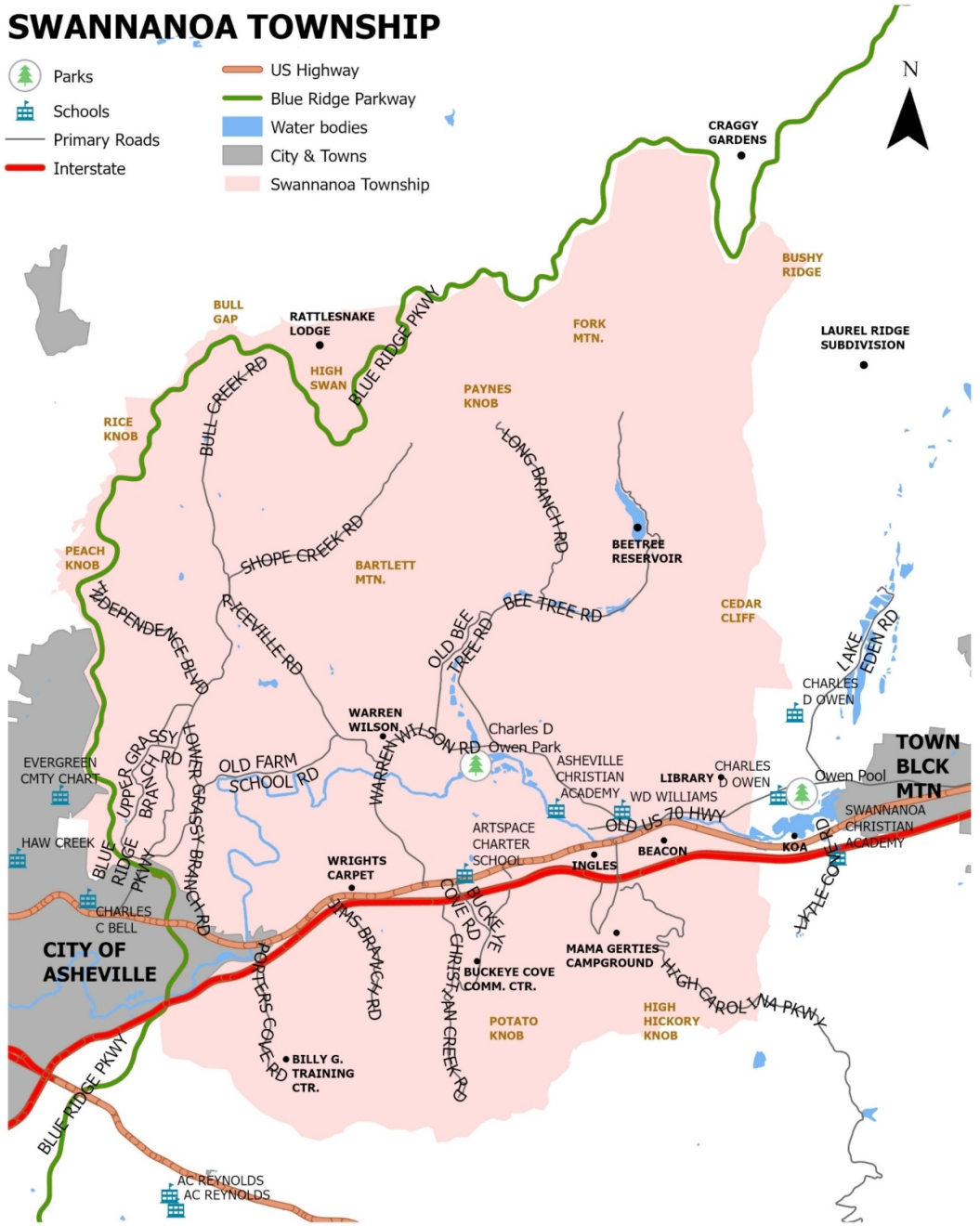
397 - SWOT poll

4/28/25 CAPE Public meeting
5/20/25 Swannanoa Grassroots Alliance
6/7/25 Family Fest at Grovemont
7/7/25 Community Engagement Market
7/10/25 Swannanoa Library – Storytime
7/14/25 Blunt Pretzel Community Market
7/14/25 Swannanoa Communities Together
7/21/25 Community Meal at Valley Hope Church
7/22/25 Pizza with a Planner – Good Co. Pizza
7/23/25 Bounty & Soul Market
7/24/25 Swannanoa Business After Hours
7/28/25 Swannanoa Grassroots Alliance, Terra Nova
7/30/25 Coffee with a Planner – Short Sleeves Coffee
8/4/25 Community Market – AVL Christian Academy
8/5/25 Taco Tuesday – La Bamba Burrito Express
8/5/25 Groovin on Grovemont
8/6/25 MountainTrue Event - Villas at Swannanoa
8/12/25 MountainTrue Event – ArtSpace Charter
8/23/25 Swannanoa Farmers Market

BOUNDARY POLL

- Poll Open: May 8 – July 25, 2025
- Public asked which map option best represented the boundaries of Swannanoa.
- Map used to create an existing conditions study



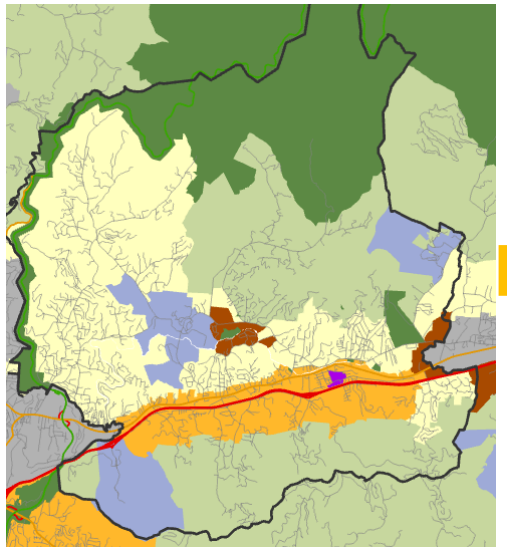


POLICY MAP CONCEPT

Overview:

Comprehensive Plan

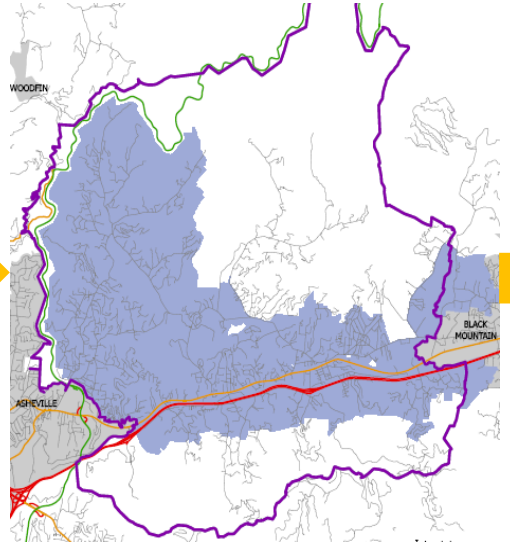
G.E.C Map



Concept:

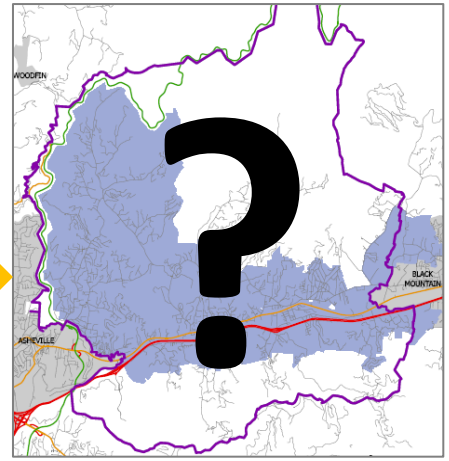
Resilience Boundaries vs.

Swannanoa Highlight Area



Steering Committee Changes

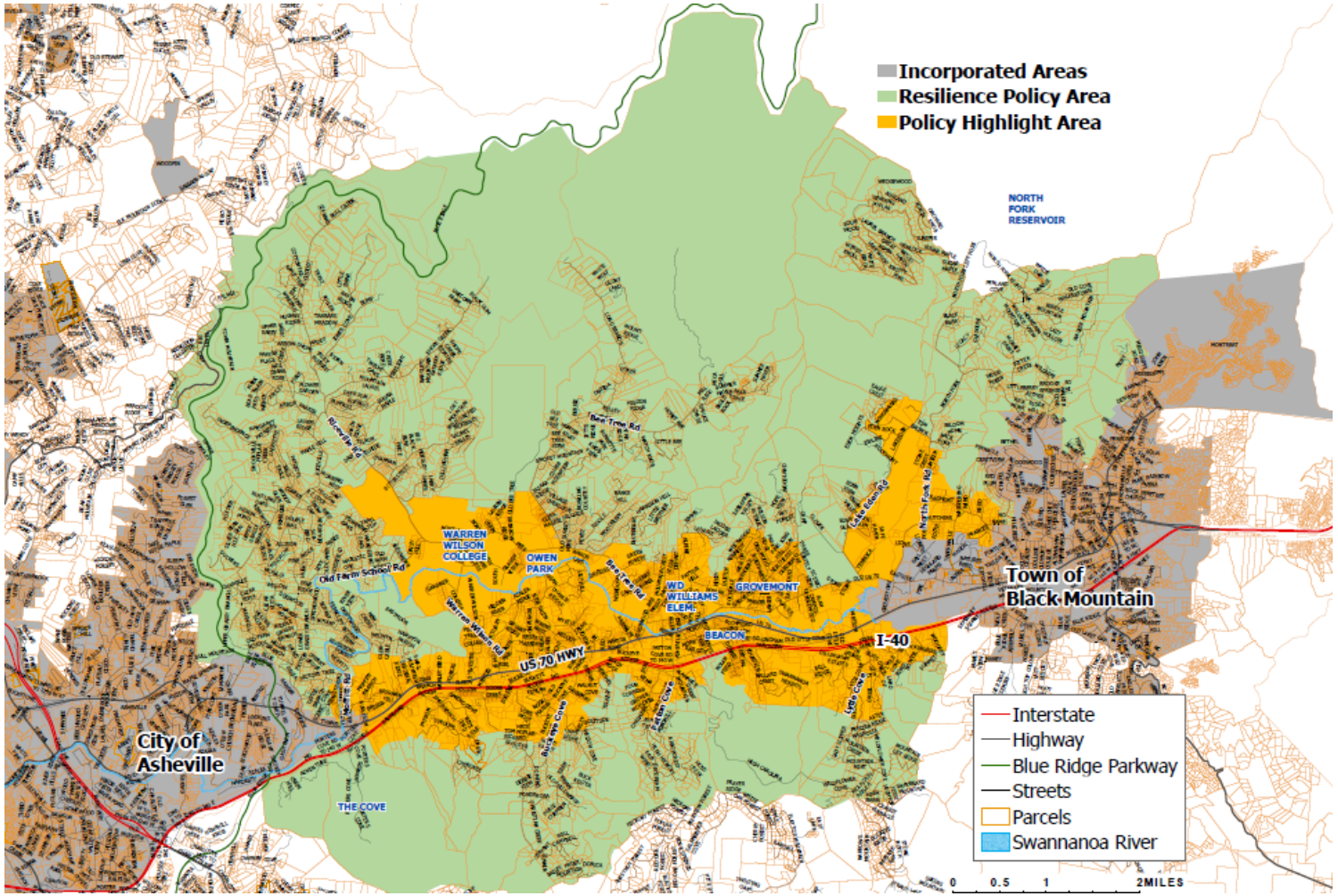
Finalize Policy Map to take to public



DRAFT POLICY MAP

Resilience Policy Area: This area will focus on increasing resilience to be more prepared for future disasters and on protecting the environment.

Policy Highlight Area: The focus will be on creating a vision for this area and addressing community needs. Some examples are housing, sidewalks, parks, businesses, disaster preparedness, and environmental protection.



SWOT Analysis Poll Results

397 people took the poll

72% said they want the County to make major changes to prepare for future disasters



Top 5 things to build resilience over 5-20 years:

- **52%** - Create early warning systems, evacuation plans, & disaster resources
- **47%** - Build more parks and recreation
- **40%** - Create safer roads, bridges, utilities, etc.
- **39%** - Protect wetlands, rivers, and streams
- **39%** - Strengthen stormwater rules to reduce flooding

SWOT Analysis Poll Results

STRENGTHS

1. Community Culture - being neighborly, closeknit, sense of identity.
2. Parks/Trails/Nature/Recreation Opportunities.
3. Local Business Community - Many well-loved places & involvement during recovery.
4. Proximity to Asheville and Black Mountain
5. Educational Institutions - WWC, ACA, Owen High School, etc.

WEAKNESSES

1. Lack of Safe Transportation/Pedestrian Connectivity (Sidewalks, Bike Lanes, Bus Service, Roads, Bridges)
2. Uncleared Debris/Destroyed or Vacant Buildings/Lack of Landscaping
3. Limited Food Access/Food Monopoly
4. Lack/Loss of Business
5. Lack of Gov. Leadership/ Representation/ Incorporation
6. Lack/Loss of Public Services (library, police/security, post office, community programs, fire and rescue, etc.)
7. Lack/Loss/Maintenance of Parks/ Greenways/ Playgrounds

SWOT Analysis Poll Results

OPPORTUNITIES

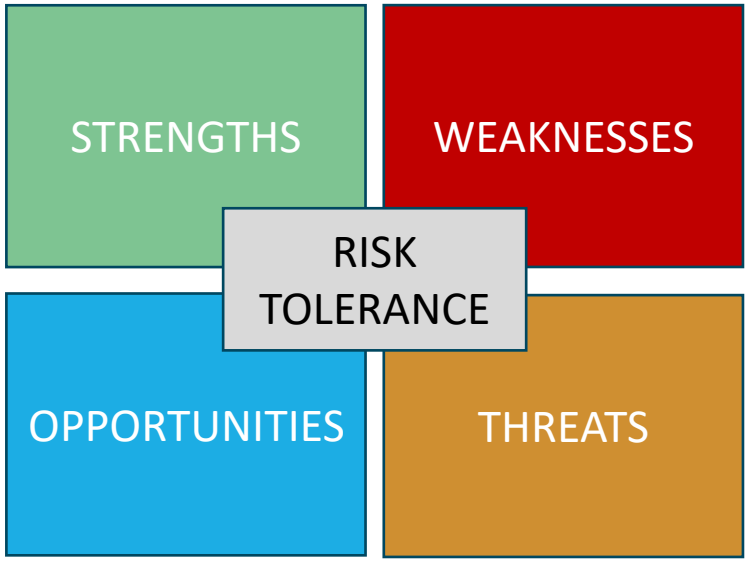
1. Available and Maintained Parks/Greenways/Playgrounds
2. Rebuilding Opportunities (Sustainable, Resilient, Unspecified, etc.)/Beacon Village/Downtown
3. Vibrant/Engaged Community/Community Events
4. New/Good Mix of Business/Local Business/No Chains
5. Food Security/Grocery Stores/Farmers Market
6. Safe Public Transportation (available/maintained Sidewalks, Bike Lanes, Bus Service, Roads, Bridges)
7. Available housing/affordable housing

THREATS

1. Fear of Natural Disasters (Flooding, Landslides, Wildfires, etc.)
2. Limited Food Access/Food Monopoly
3. Uncleared Debris / Destroyed or Vacant Buildings/Lack of Landscaping
4. Lack of Safe Transportation/Pedestrian Connectivity (Sidewalks, Bike Lanes, Bus Service, Roads, Bridges, etc.)

Vision Statement Creation

SWOT ANALYSIS



1. **Analyze Poll results**
2. **Identify Themes**
3. **Evaluate risk tolerance**
4. **Study Comprehensive Plan Vision Themes**

Steering Committee brainstorms Vision Statement options

1 option taken to the public in a poll

Draft Vision Statement

Swannanoa is a resilient, engaged, and welcoming community that honors its history and working-class roots. It is a safe, connected community where people can live, work, and play in harmony with the surrounding mountains and river valley. We foster wellbeing with affordable homes to rent or own, accessible transportation options, and parks and gathering spaces. Local businesses, schools, arts, and agriculture anchor a thriving economy that provides jobs and meets the needs of our residents. Working together, we protect our natural resources for future generations, strengthen our infrastructure, and ensure opportunity and belonging for all who call Swannanoa home.

ENGAGEMENT GAPS

1. 80% of the Boundary poll-takers, and 43% of the SWOT poll takers did NOT answer the demographic questions.

2. 26% of poll-takers did not disclose their relationship to Swannanoa (live/work/travel through, etc.)

3. Always intentional about engagement and reaching out to communities that have not been historically comfortable with engaging in the planning process such as lower income, black community, rural community, and the Hispanic community.

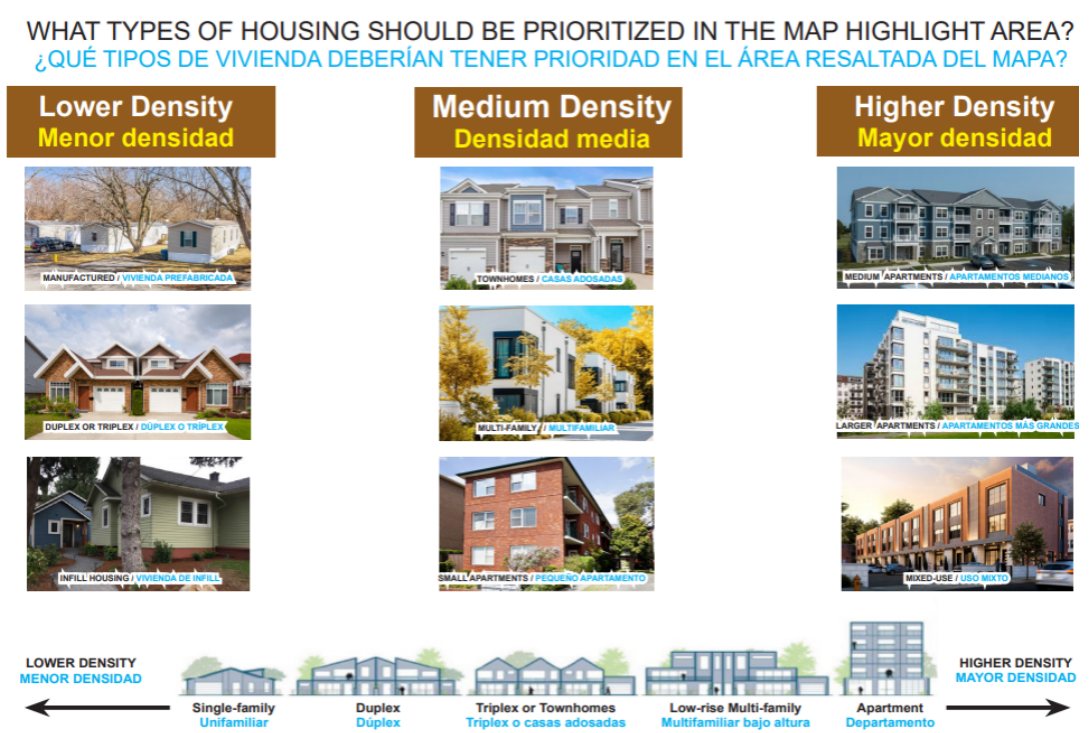
4. Individuals under the age of 26 are not represented.

How We Will Address in Next Phase

- Outreach to Areas Outside the Most Populated Areas (at first through digital means)
- Events at the Elementary School and Warren Wilson College
- Specific outreach to the Hispanic and Faith Communities as a way to reach rural, black, Hispanic, and lower-income residents
- Asking Steering Committees to be Ambassadors for the Plan

UPCOMING PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT – Vision Mapping Phase

- Vision Statement and Policy Map Poll
- December 3 Vision Mapping Event at Owen Middle School
- Pop Up Events
- Events at Schools
- Online Component



BOARD AND COMMITTEE TIMELINE

Sept. 8	Steering Committee - Intro meeting / Boundary Poll review
Sept. 22	Steering Committee-Review of SWOT Analysis results & Policy map
Oct. 20	Steering Committee-Develop Vision statement
Oct. 20	Planning Board – Update
NOV/DEC	– Digital engagement with the Technical Expertise Committee
Nov. 3	Steering Committee - Refine Vision statement
Nov. 10	Steering Committee - Prepare for design workshops
Nov. 17	BOC - Update
Dec. 15	Steering Committee - Review of Existing Condition Study

PLANNING TIMELINE



QUESTIONS?