2025 **Walkability Study and Findings**

Overview:

The Heart of Brevard (HOB) Walkable Center Assessment, led by HOB's Built Environment Committee, evaluates the full Heart of Brevard district, including key gateways and entry points. This process identifies priorities to improve accessibility, safety, walkability, and vibrancy across the area. Using a customized smartsheet™ mobile app, participants—including HOB board members, committee members, and city council representatives—document real-time observations, findings, and photos of critical issues. The most recent assessment, conducted in December 2024, builds on previous evaluations, with findings summarized in this document.

On-the-Ground Evaluation:

Four HOB Built Environment assessment teams evaluated specific portions of downtown Brevard, defined by the current Municipal Service District (MSD) boundaries and its gateways. Each team assessed their assigned area using the following framework:

- **Safety Issues**
- **Maintenance Issues**
- **Enhancement Recommendations** (e.g., adding trash bins, bike racks)
- **Aesthetic Recommendations**
- **Other Observations** (for issues that don't fall into the above categories)

Participants and Teams:

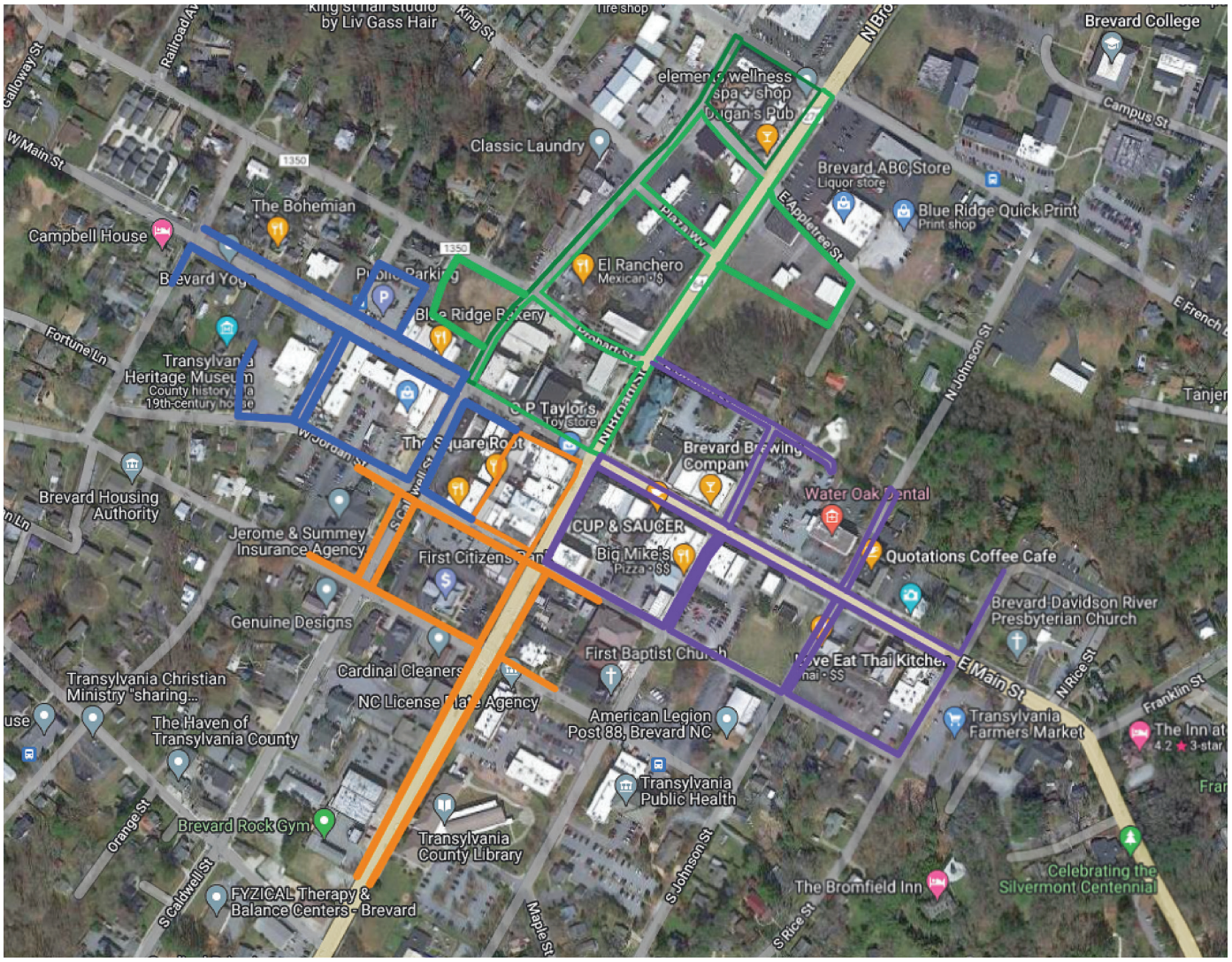
For this year's assessment, the HOB Built Environment Committee recommended including members from city committees directly impacting downtown, specifically:

- **Downtown Master Plan Committee:** Gary Daniel and Pamela Holder
- **Public Safety Committee:** Aaron Baker and Mac Morrow
- **Public Works Committee:** Mac Morrow and Lauren Wise

Each assessment team included Built Environment Committee members, HOB staff, and city representatives as needed. Teams were assigned specific downtown sections and entryways, marked by color-coded areas on the attached map:

- **Purple Team:** Maggie DeLap (Leader), Mac Morrow, and Kevin McDonald
- **Blue Team:** Maureen Copelof (Leader), Anna Davis, and Pamela Holder
- **Green Team:** Leroy Walters (Leader), Lauren Wise, and Aaron Baker
- **Orange Team:** Nicole Bentley (Leader), Paul Wilander, and Gary Daniel

Walkability Study Area:



Findings:

The teams identified 236 findings, with approximately 60 marked as critical or "Red" priorities related to safety and accessibility. Some critical issues—such as missing or uneven brick pavers, damaged sidewalk expansion joints, deteriorating light poles, and displaced mulch—were so widespread that only a few instances were recorded to represent recurring problems.

These findings were reviewed by City of Brevard Public Works leadership, including Wesley Shook and T.J. Aldridge, along with HOB representatives Nicole Bentley and Billy Parrish. The most urgent issues were categorized using the following priority matrix:

Red – Level 1: Immediate safety, liability, or accessibility issues requiring urgent action
Red – Level 2: High-priority issues in high-traffic areas needing expedited attention
Red – Level 3: Significant concerns in medium- to low-traffic areas with moderate urgency
Red – Level 4: Lower-priority issues in less-trafficked areas
Yellow: (Moderate Priority): Includes some less urgent safety issues, focusing on areas with lower traffic and non-critical needs.
Green: (Lowest Priority/Enhancements): Improvements that enhance aesthetics or efficiency, when future resources allow.

Top Priority Categories for City Funding and Resources:

The HOB Built Environment Committee identified seven critical areas requiring public infrastructure investment:

1. **Brick Paved Areas:** Widespread deterioration causing trip hazards and diminishing the area's appearance
2. **Concrete Sidewalks:** Numerous damaged sidewalks posing safety hazards
3. **Street Trees:** Many older trees require pruning or replacement due to poor condition
4. **Tree Wells:** Poor maintenance leading to safety issues and unsightly conditions
5. **Mulched Areas:** Erosion and poor upkeep leading to aesthetic and drainage concerns
6. **Light Poles & Street Standards:** General deterioration from long-deferred maintenance

Top Priority Categories for Private Sector Reinvestment and Maintenance:

HOB will connect with eligible property owners to encourage them to apply for our annual grant opportunities. These grants are specifically available to businesses and property owners within the HOB district, with a focus on projects that enhance the appearance of both individual properties and the downtown district.

Two areas were identified for private sector focus:

1. **Landscaping & Outdoor Areas:** Overgrown landscaping, deteriorating retaining walls, and poor trash management
2. **General Cleanliness & Building Maintenance:** Attention needed for cleanliness, building condition, and poorly maintained downspouts

Conclusion:

The Heart of Brevard continues to benefit from a strong partnership with the City of Brevard's Public Works Department. The department consistently addresses critical issues, even with limited resources. Notably, of the **184 issues identified in the February 2024** assessment related to city-owned assets, **46 have already been resolved** by Public Works.

Heart of Brevard looks forward to working closely with the City of Brevard in ensuring that our unique and historic city center remains the successful economic engine and iconic heart of the city.

Example Data Entry:

The Built Environment Committee members categorized the 236 findings into 4 categories: Enhancement Recommendations, Maintenance, Aesthetic Recommendations and Safety.

Below is an example of a documented Safety issue:

	]?	Photo	Description	Location	Location Description	Public	Is This a Safety Issue?	Classification	Trip Hazard	Priority	Priority Numbering
10			Tree well is uneven and loose. Bricks and cinderblocks are creating a trip hazard.	35.233255 -82.734537	Directly in front of Bracken Mountain Bakery	Public	Yes	Safety	☑	●	1

Understanding the Numbers:

We also examined additional classifications, including whether the issue posed a trip hazard, and we logged the data accordingly to differentiate between public and private concerns. We will present the complete report and provide a copy of our collected data.

