# REDUCE TO REBUILD UPDATE

*Presented by*

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Board of Commissioners Briefing

December 2, 2025

# Agenda

- Program Review
- Program Impact
- New Considerations
- Next Steps

# Program Review

# Reduction Criteria

- Beginning June 1st, 2025, Buncombe County has reduced permitting fees for properties impacted by TS Helene that occurred to **primary residences**
  a. A primary residence is defined as the dwelling where occupier:
     i. is registered to vote
     ii. uses the address on federal and state tax returns
     iii. has the address listed on a driver's license, car registration, or other government documents
     iv. has the address on file with the U.S Postal Service
  b. Helene impacted residences are those residential dwellings are within the boundaries of Buncombe County and have been documented by a Buncombe County or Federal Emergency Disaster Agency Damage Assessment with a rating of Destroyed, Major, Moderate, or Minor
  c. The reduction does **not** apply to expansions of a residence or fees relating to Homeowner recovery and lien agents
  d. This reduction shall be in effect for permits applied for through December 31st, 2025

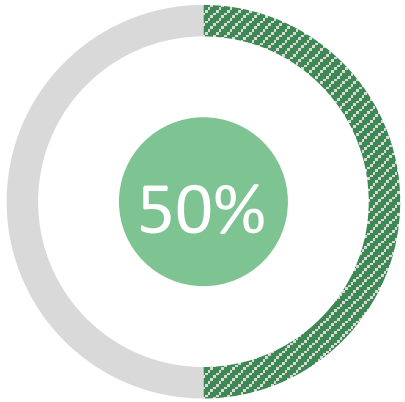
# Departmental Fee Reductions




Air Quality




Permits & Inspections




Planning




Onsite/Waste Water

# Example Permits

*(not exhaustive)*

**Permits & Ins.**

- Residential Additions/Renovations
- Retaining Wall

**Planning**

- Retaining Wall
- Water Supply Watershed

**Air Quality**

- Demolition and Renovation Permit Review
- Renovation – Residential Friable/Non-friable

**Onsite/WW**

- Improvement Permit-Residential
- Existing System Inspection

# Regional Comparison*

- **Buncombe County – 50% Reduced Fees**
- City of Asheville – No Fees
- Town of Black Mountain – Normal Fees
- Haywood County – No Fees
- Henderson County – Normal Fees
- Madison County – No Fees
- Mitchell County – Normal Fees
- Yancey County – Normal Fees
- Waynesville, NC – No Fees

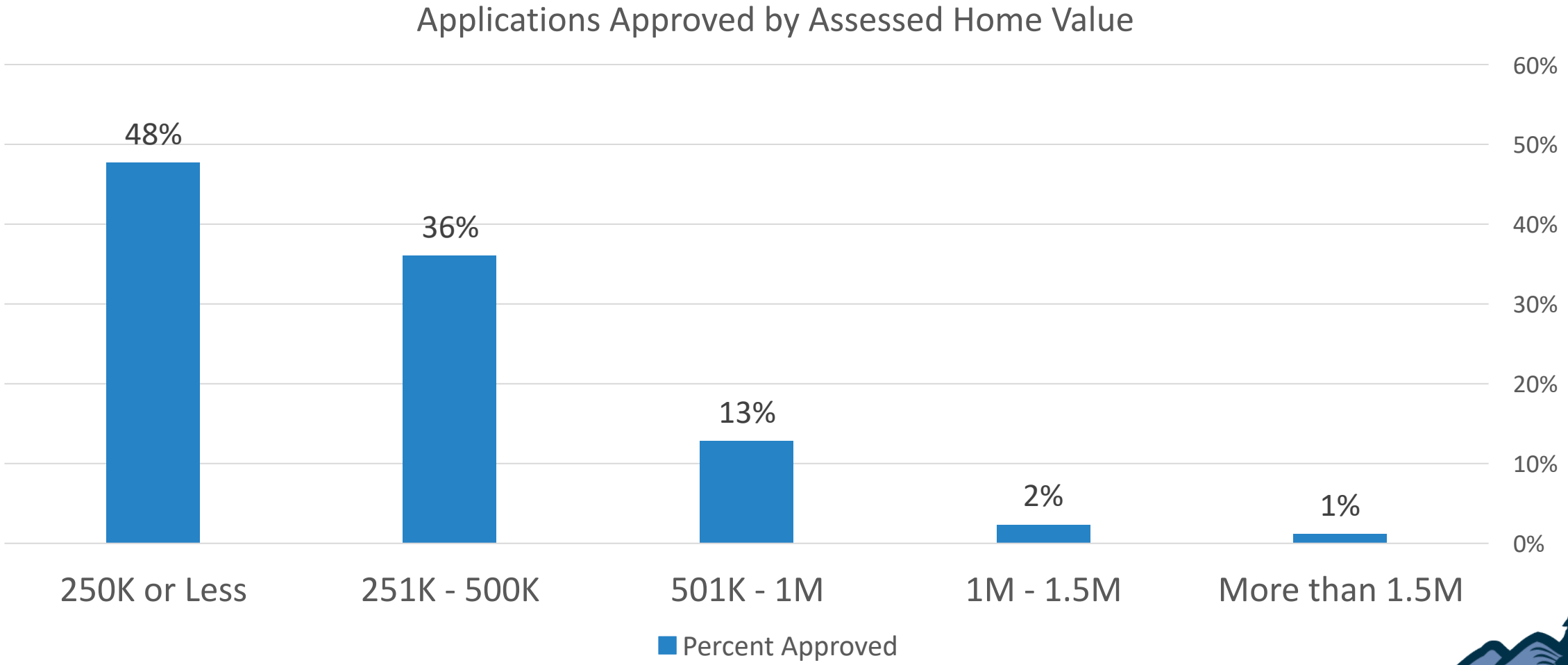
**For Helene Related Projects - As of 11/1/2025*

# Program Impacts

# Program Impact

- Buncombe County received 6,019 applications for a reduced permit fee across the four (4) permitting departments
  - Permits & Inspections
  - Air Quality
  - Environmental Health
  - Planning
- 472 applications (8%) met the program criteria
- Overall financial impact to County Revenues to date has been $25,992

# Program Impact



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- 56% of permit reduction recipients were for homes that were below the 2021 median assessed value of ~$300,000.
- 62% of permit reduction recipients lived in the following townships:
  - Swannanoa (24%)
  - Limestone (18%)
  - Fairview (12%)
  - Reems Creek (8%)

# Impact Summary

- Impacts on County Revenues have been far below initial projections
- The policy and internal procedures that guide this program established good internal controls to ensure that those who would be most in need of assistance were able to take advantage of it

# Bridges

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- North Carolina Private Road and Bridge Program (NC-PRB) was established to assist property owners across western North Carolina with damages from Helene.
  - In accordance with The Disaster Recovery Act of 2025 - Part I, NC-PRB will prioritize repairs to private roads or bridges that:
    - Are the sole access for emergency services to residential properties occupied by the property owner for over six months of the calendar year
    - Provide access to multiple residential homes, recreation or commercial facilities
  - Application period for partial reimbursement will remain open until February 28th
- Residential Bridges, those that allow ingress/egress to residential communities, were not within the scope of the initial policy
- State has requested an extension and a request for 100% fee waiver

# Financial Impact

- Approximately 67 – 119 bridges would be eligible for a 100% waiver.
  - Each bridge provides ingress/egress to multiple households
- Bridges are permitted not on a fixed fee schedule, but by the value of the project
  - The average project cost for a bridge that fits this criteria has been $438,000[1]
  - The average fee forfeited would be $4,015
  - There would be no impacts to Plan Review Fees
- The potential financial impact could be between $134,503 - $269,005

[1]Using the last 14 permitted bridge projects as a sample

# Next Steps

# Sunset or Sequel?

- This program is set to expire on December 31st, 2025

- Board considerations:
  1. Allow program to expire
  2. Extend program to a date certain – as currently designed
  3. Extend program to a date certain – expand scope and increase waiver amount
     - Clear inclusion of the North Carolina Roads & Bridges Program in the program
       - Retain Plan Review Fee
     - 100% waiver for all permit fees (non-retroactive) for Helene related damage
       - Original eligibility criteria remains