PEDESTRIAN PLAN UPDATE

William High

Planning & Development

OVERVIEW

- Plan Development Background
- Review of Public Engagement
- Recommendations and Projects
- Next Steps

PLAN DEVELOPMENT BACKGROUND

PLAN HISTORY

- Originally proposed as “Multimodal Plan” to begin FY22
- Repurposed as “Pedestrian Plan”; contracted in FY25

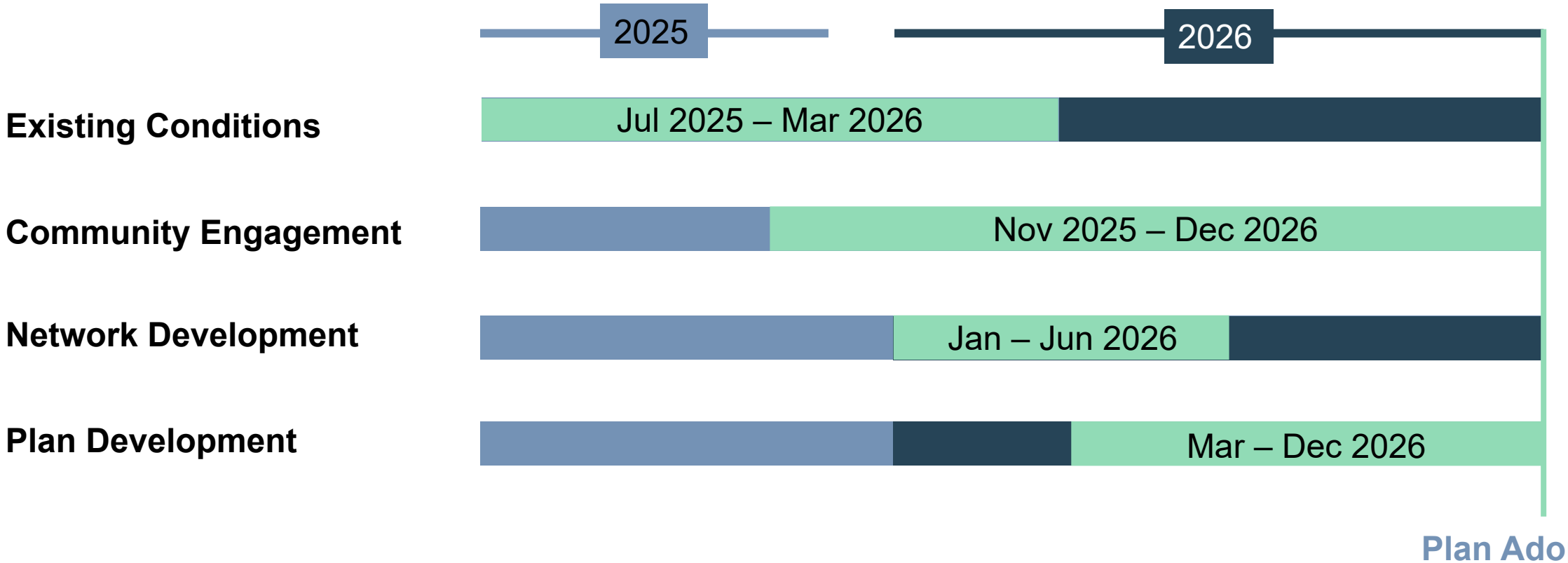
PLAN STAKEHOLDERS

External Stakeholders (Steering Committee)

- French Broad River MPO
- Municipal Representatives
  - City of Asheville
  - Town of Biltmore Forest
  - Town of Weaverville
  - Town of Woodfin

Internal Stakeholders (County Departments)

PLAN TIMELINE

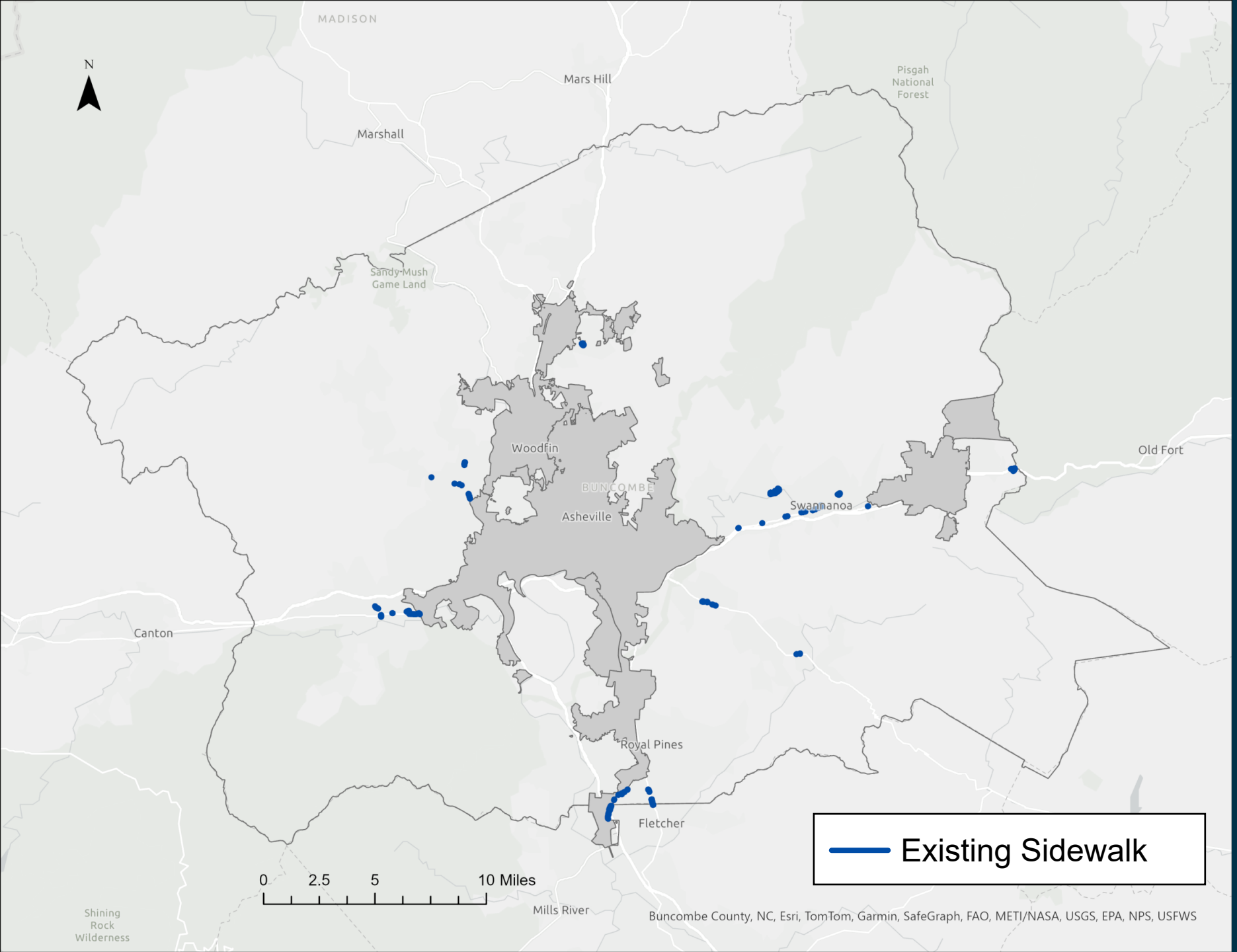


WHY WE ARE HERE

- 6 pedestrian deaths annually (average, 2020 to 2024)
- Unincorporated Buncombe continues to suburbanize
- Growth of unincorporated sidewalk network requires consideration of and commitment to maintenance

- Pedestrian Plan allows for:
  1. Access to federal funds
  2. Implementation of NCDOT Complete Streets Policy

FEW EXISTING SIDEWALKS



NCDOT COMPLETE STREETS POLICY

- Directs NCDOT to consider and incorporate several modes of transportation when building new projects or making improvements to existing infrastructure
- Benefits:
  - Makes it easier for travelers to get where they need to go;
  - Encourages use of alternative forms of transportation;
  - Builds more sustainable communities;
  - Increases connectivity between neighborhoods, street, and transit systems;
  - **Improves safety for pedestrians**, cyclists, and motorists.

REVIEW OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

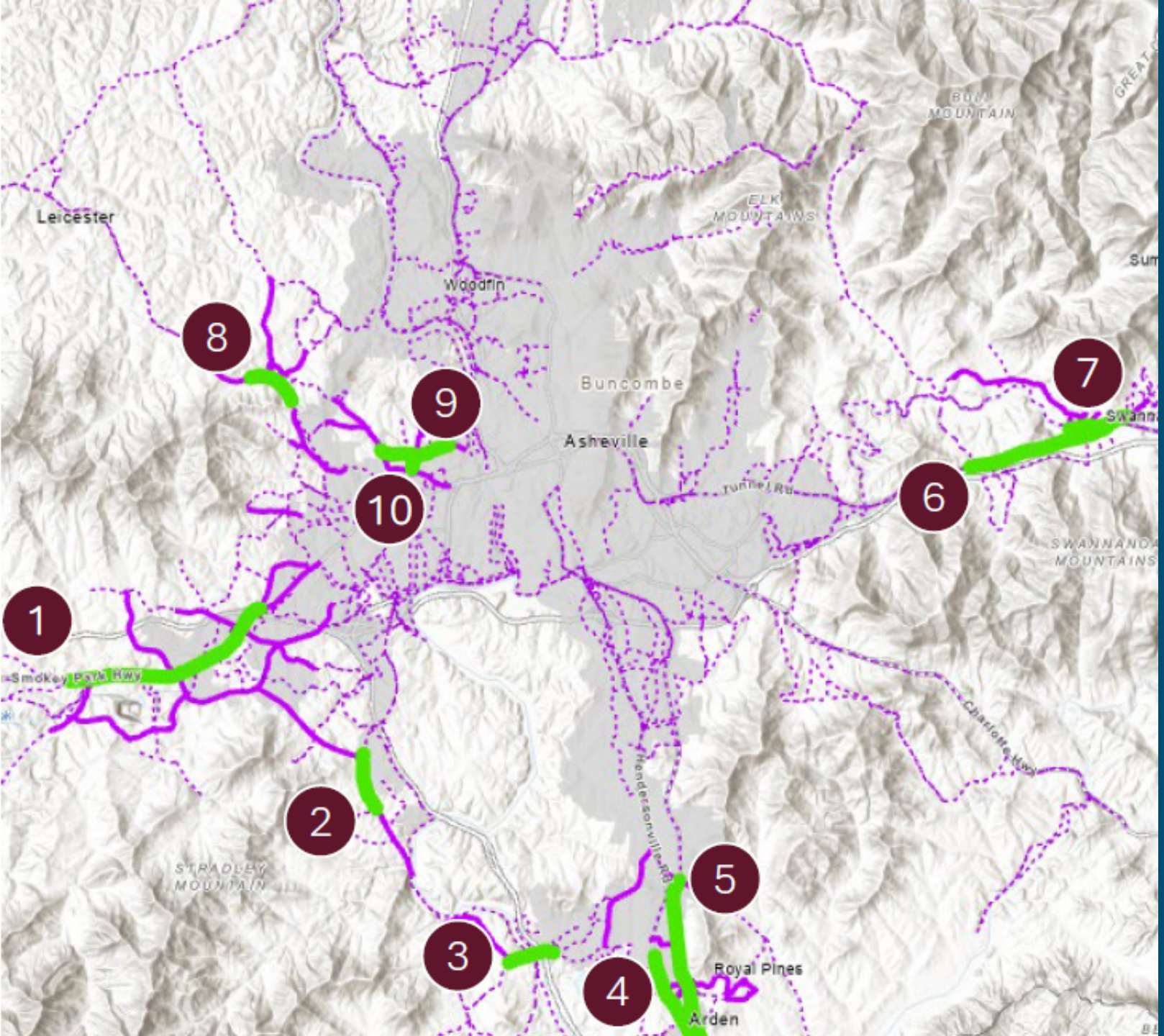
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- Steering Committee:
  - Formed December 2025
  - Meetings December, April, and July
- Pedestrian Plan Public Meetings:
  - March: Land of Sky RC
  - August: Enka Candler Library
- Additional Engagement:
  - Swannanoa Small Area Plan, Owen Park Meeting, Buncombe County Parks Plan
  - Interdepartmental discussion
  - Meetings with NCDOT, municipal partners, and other counties

RECOMMENDATIONS & PROJECTS

PROJECT SELECTION GUIDELINES

- High Injury Network (all)
- High-volume high-speed roads (except Emma projects)
- Connect to transit (most connect to ART or Mountain Mobility Trailblazer)
- Provide access (most connect shopping, commercial areas, employment, homes, and recreation)
- Seek to address significant gaps in the walking network
- Seek to meet high demand for walking connections
- All are constrained by existing development, topography, road network, and easements constrain project selection



PRIORITY PROJECTS

1. Smokey Park Highway
2. Brevard Road
3. Long Shoals Road / Clayton Road
4. Hendersonville Road
5. Sweeten Creek Road
6. US Highway 70
7. Old US Highway 70
8. New Leicester Highway
9. Emma Road
10. North Louisiana Avenue

*These are not rank-ordered but are numbered for reference.

PRIORITY PROJECTS

- Ideal:
  Sidewalk One Side;
  Multi-use Path One Side
- Minimum:
  Sidewalk One Side

Project	Length (Miles)
1. Smokey Park Highway	3.50
2. Brevard Road	1.00
3. Long Shoals Road/Clayton Road	1.50
4. Hendersonville Road	1.75
5. Sweeten Creek Road	2.75
6. US Highway 70	2.25
7. Old US Highway 70	1.00
8. New Leicester Highway	1.25
9. Emma Road	1.50
10. North Louisiana Avenue	0.25

EXAMPLE PRIORITY PROJECT: SMOKEY PARK HWY

Major regional corridor serving daily needs

Constraints:
- Existing bridge structures
- Numerous driveway crossings
- Creeks
- Topography

Transit connections (Mountain Mobility)

Plan references:
- Asheville GAP (Greenway, ADA, Pedestrian Plan)
- 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)

US 19/23 (Smokey Park Hwy) at NC 151 (Pisgah Hwy)/Dogwood Rd
Looking East

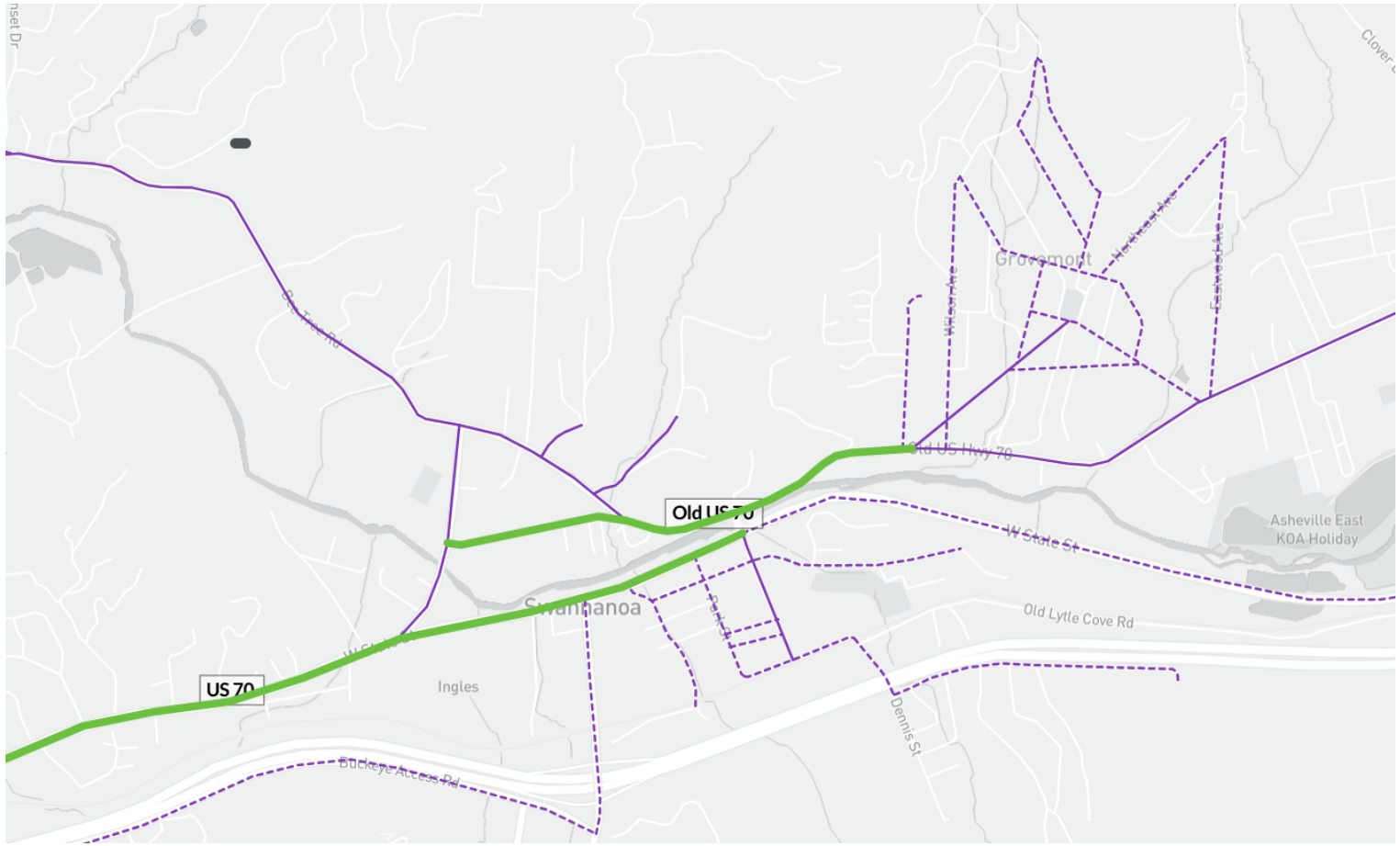
- Planting strip/buffer width varies based on amount of available ROW.



SUPPORTING & ADDITIONAL PROJECTS

- Projects that are recommended but not high-priority
- Included projects will be eligible for NCDOT Complete Streets road improvements and federal funding
- Benefit of the Pedestrian Plan is the NCDOT will cover the cost of construction of sidewalk infrastructure where it is shown in a plan (provided the local government agrees to take on maintenance)

EXAMPLE SUPPORTING & ADDITIONAL PROJECTS



Priority Project

Supporting Project

Additional Project

SHORT-TERM NEXT STEPS

- October & November: Final Draft edits as needed
- December: Board of Commissioners reviews plan and considers adoption
- January: FBRMPO considers adoption

FUTURE NEXT STEPS

- Establish County Policies on Sidewalks
  - Development requirements
  - New projects
  - Maintenance
- Apply for funding as relevant
- Incorporate recommendations into NCDOT projects

QUESTIONS