WNC Futures Factory

Josh Hallingse

Intergovernmental Relations

Background

June 4, 2025
EDA NOFO

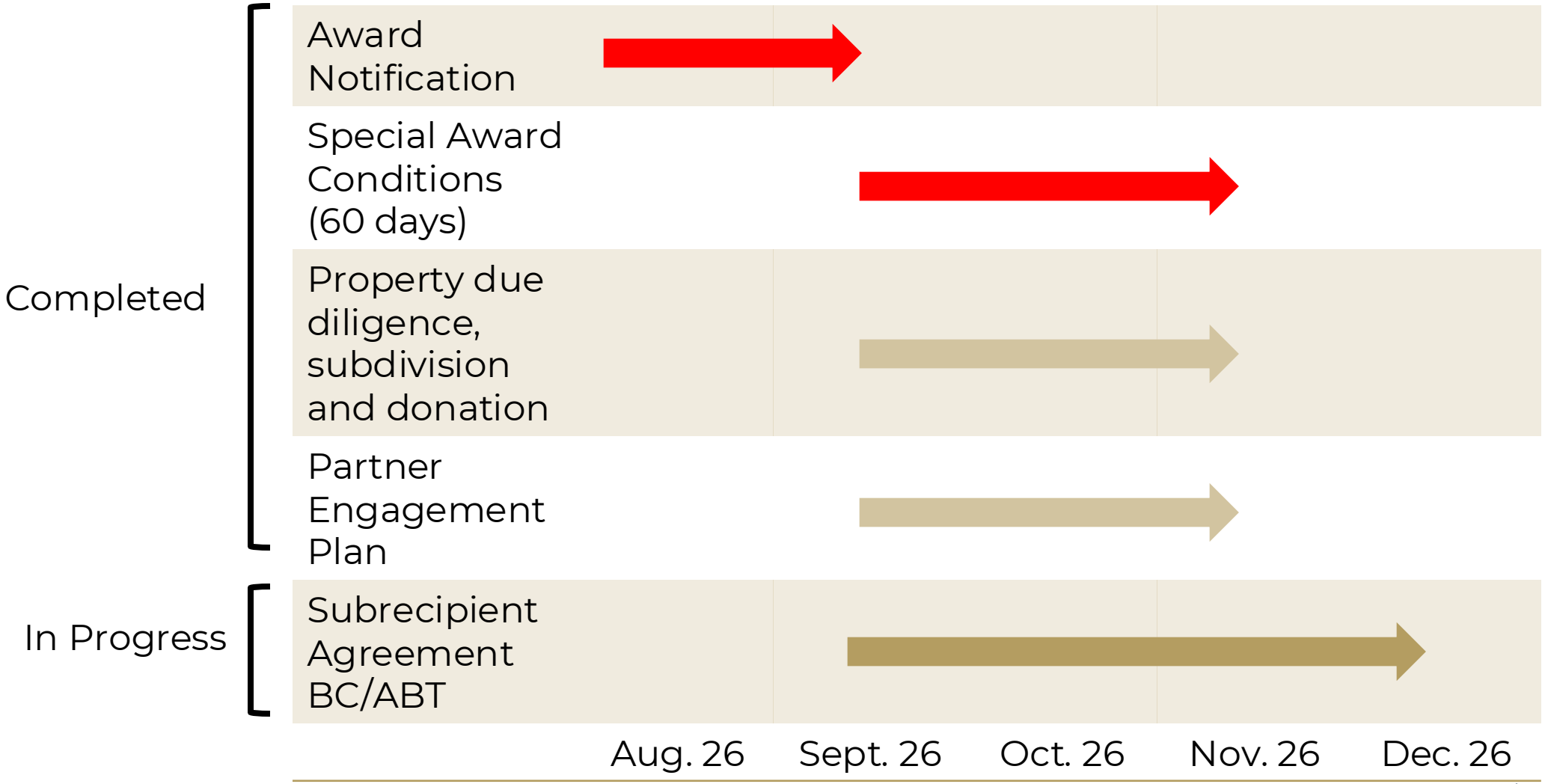
Aug. 19, 2025
Art. 46 Match

Jan. 28, 2026
A-B Tech/BC M.O.U.

July 27, 2026
EDA Event

Aug. 6, 2026
Award Notice

Award & Special Conditions Timeline



60 Day: Special Conditions Period

Sept. 1, 2026
-County Commission Approved EDA Grant

Sept. 4, 2026
-Grant Agreement Fully Executed & Submitted

Oct. 29, 2025
-Survey
-Phase 1 ESA
-Property Subdivision Approved

Nov. 3, 2026
-Property Donation
-Partner Plan
-RFQs

Dec. 7, 2026
-Interlocal Agreement

Interlocal Agreement (ILA)

1. Formalize the vision and scope of the project
2. Identify project partners and define roles/responsibilities
3. Satisfy EDA requirements to create an agreement outlining the flow of federal funds/contracts.
4. Create expectations for future agreements, activities and how we expect to navigate potential conflict points
5. Use existing County/A-B Tech SOP to procure partners, pay vendors and serve as the fiscal needs of the project

1. Vision and Scope

- Design and construct a 70,000 SF workforce training & innovation center
  - 18,000 SF Workforce Training Center
  - 52,000 SF Innovation Center
  - Model similar projects: ICAR, Oak Ridge National Laboratories, NCSU Innovation District
- Support regional recovery from T.S. Helene
  - Boost economic opportunity, reskill workforce, position industry for 4.0+ investments
  - Serve an 18-county region
- Other partners:
  - Private sector
  - NC Innovation
  - 6 universities
  - 6 community colleges

*NC General Statute 115D-15.1 c: Acquisition and Construction

- Provides authority to community colleges and county government to negotiate terms for construction among other activities.

2. Partners, Roles & Responsibilities

1. **A-B Tech Community College**
   - Recipient of SCIF funds
   - Co-recipient of the EDA award
   - Owner of WNC Futures Factory
     - Identify & formalize relationship with Operating Partner for Innovation Facility
2. **Buncombe County**
   - Co-recipient of the EDA award
     - Lead development of design/construction
3. ***Land of Sky Regional Council**
   - Grant manager for the EDA award
     - Convener for project team

EDA Capital Stack	
Source	Awarded
Federal Share	$29,219,755
State & Local	$8,195,785
Total Costs	$37,415,450

3. Satisfy Funder Requirements

- Project involves unique blend of local, state and federal funds
- A-B Tech
  - Secured state funding (county-not directly party to this grant)
  - County is a co-recipient on EDA agreement, but funds must flow through A-B Tech
- The structure of grant agreements requires formalization of a subrecipient agreements, so state/federal partners recognize Buncombe County processes and procedures.
  - Without an agreement identified roles/responsibilities not authorized

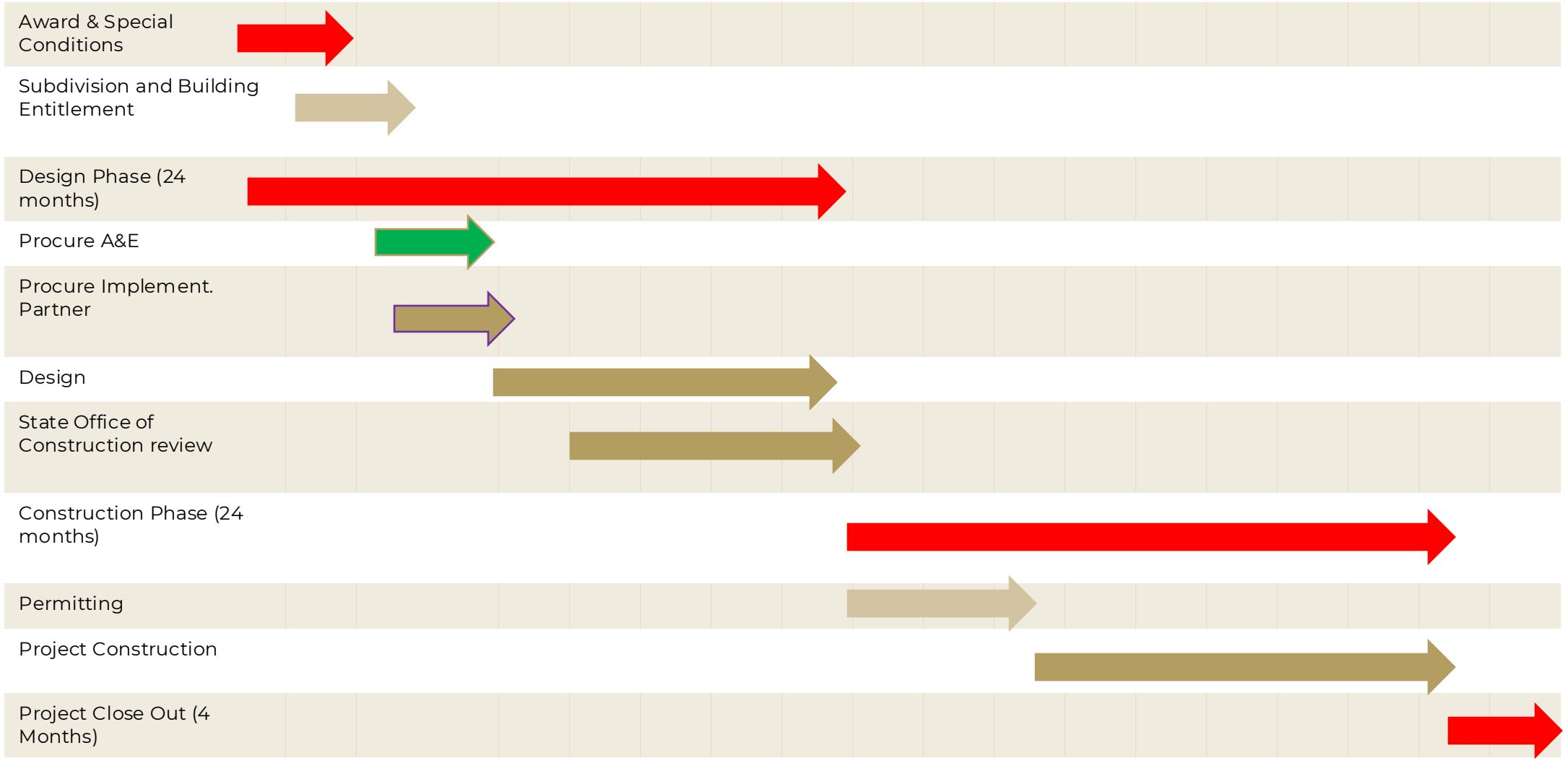
4. Future Agreements/Expectations

- Formal strategy and operations plan
  - A-B Tech to develop a strategy & operations plan to achieve financial stability
  - Benchmark similar projects in other parts of the country
- Agreement with future operating partner
  - Manufacturing USA
  - Other research/innovation consortiums
- Envisions opportunities for future tenant leases or revenue models
- Federal and state funds are restricted:
  - EDA/SCIF must be used for construction (no A-B Tech/County salaries)
  - Future revenue generated by an operations agreement, tenant lease or other income streams must be redirected back into the WNC Futures Factory
  - Identifies opportunities for grant requests to federal, state, 501c3 and other non-county entities to assist with additional upfit and operational needs
- A-B Tech/County will ensure each entity is appropriately engaged.

5. Leverages Existing Procedures

- NC General Statute 115D-15.1 c: Acquisition and Construction
  - Provides authority to community colleges and county government to negotiate terms for construction among other activities.
- Buncombe County
  - General Services-Lead procurement
  - Finance to receive, review and process vendor pay applications
  - Submit county documentation to A-B Tech which then can be transmitted to EDA/SCIF for reimbursement
  - Buncombe County Article 46 to be used to compensate General Services for project manager expenses

Estimated Design/Construction Timeline



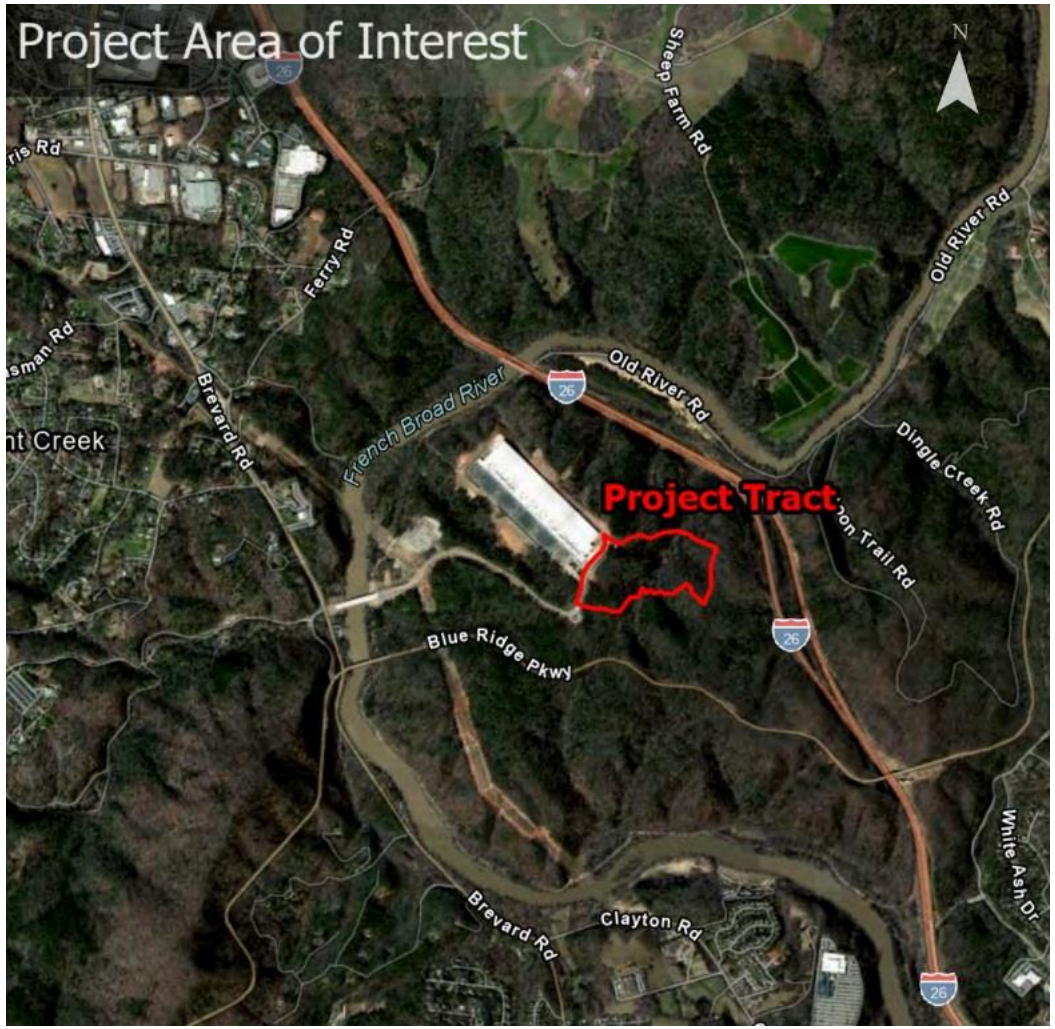
Next Steps

- Interlocal Agreement
  - 12/7 Regular Meeting: Staff will return to request Board authorization to enter into the Interlocal Agreement
  - Begin procurement process:
    - Buncombe County will lead:
      - Architecture, Engineering and Construction Services
    - A-B Tech will lead procurement for:
      - Operating Partner for the Innovation Facility

Team Recognition

County	A-B Tech	Land of Sky	Other
• Finance • Planning • Strategic Partnerships • General Services • CAPE • Legal • IGR • Register of Deeds	• President's Office • C-Suite • Foundation • Finance • Facilities • Legal	• Grants Management	• NC Innovation • Asheville-Buncombe EDC • Public Universities • NC Community Colleges • EDA • State Office of Construction • Biltmore Farms • Manufacturers • Peer EDO's

Questions


Project Area of Interest
N
Sheep Farm Rd
Old River Rd
Ferry Rd
Brevard Rd
French Broad River
Old River Rd
Project Tract
Dingle Creek Rd
Blue Ridge Pkwy
White Ash Dr
Brevard Rd
Clayton Rd