

# Cherokee County Greenways & Trails Master Plan

Trail Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting #3  
July 24, 2024



# Today's Meeting Agenda

- Project Refresher
- Round 1 Public & Stakeholder Feedback
- Trail Typology Refresher
- Draft Trail Network
- Interactive Network Review
- Next Steps



# Project Refresher





**Connectivity to  
destinations**

**Bridge diverse  
demographic  
groups**

**Means of  
commuting &  
transportation**

**Preservation of  
natural space**

**Recreation &  
exercise**

**Educational  
amenities**

**Economic  
development**

**Design & aesthetic  
value**

**Sense of  
community**

**Improve quality of  
life**

**Promote  
walkability**

**Property value  
enhancement**

# **Role of Trail System in Cherokee County**





Winter

Spring

Summer

Fall

2

Analysis of Existing Trail Network  
and Physical Conditions

3

Community & Stakeholder  
Engagement

Trail Advisory  
Committee

3 Open Houses &  
Interactive Map

Pop Up Events

Stakeholder Interviews

3 Open Houses &  
Interactive Map

4

Trail & Greenway  
Network Development

5

Design Standards and  
Guidelines

6

Capital Development  
Program and  
Strategies

7

Draft & Final Plan

WE ARE HERE



# Round 1 Public & Stakeholder Feedback





# Summary

- Between **May 1 and June 30, 2024**, the team held 3 public meetings, attended the Woodstock Farmers' Market and conducted an online survey and interactive mapping activity
- Heard from **roughly 150 people** across the public meetings and pop-up event
- More than **320 survey respondents**, and **93 people** participated in the **interactive mapping**





# Public Meetings



May 9, 2024 - Woodstock



May 14, 2024 - Canton

## Today's Meeting Agenda

- Project Overview
- Overview of Existing Conditions
- Trail Typologies
- Developing a Vision
- Gaps & Opportunities
- Next Steps



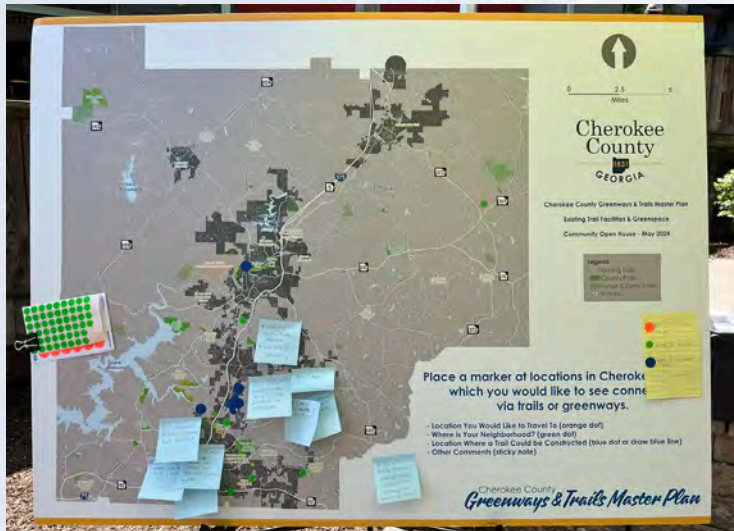
May 16, 2024 - Virtual





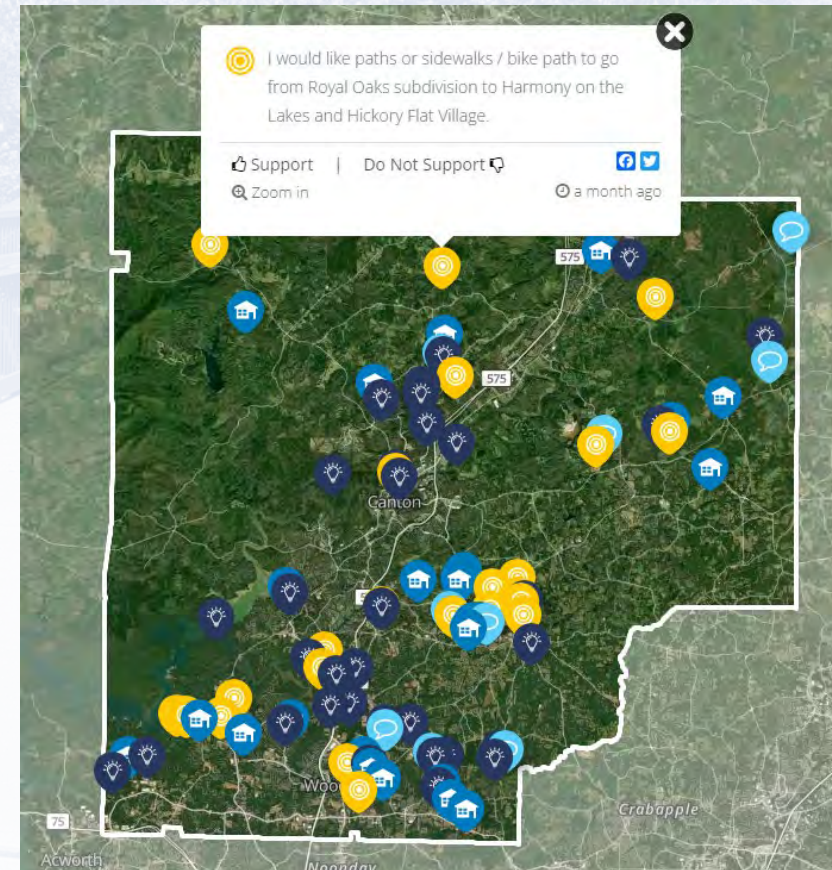


May 11, 2024 - Woodstock Farmers Market



May 11, 2024 - Woodstock Farmers Market

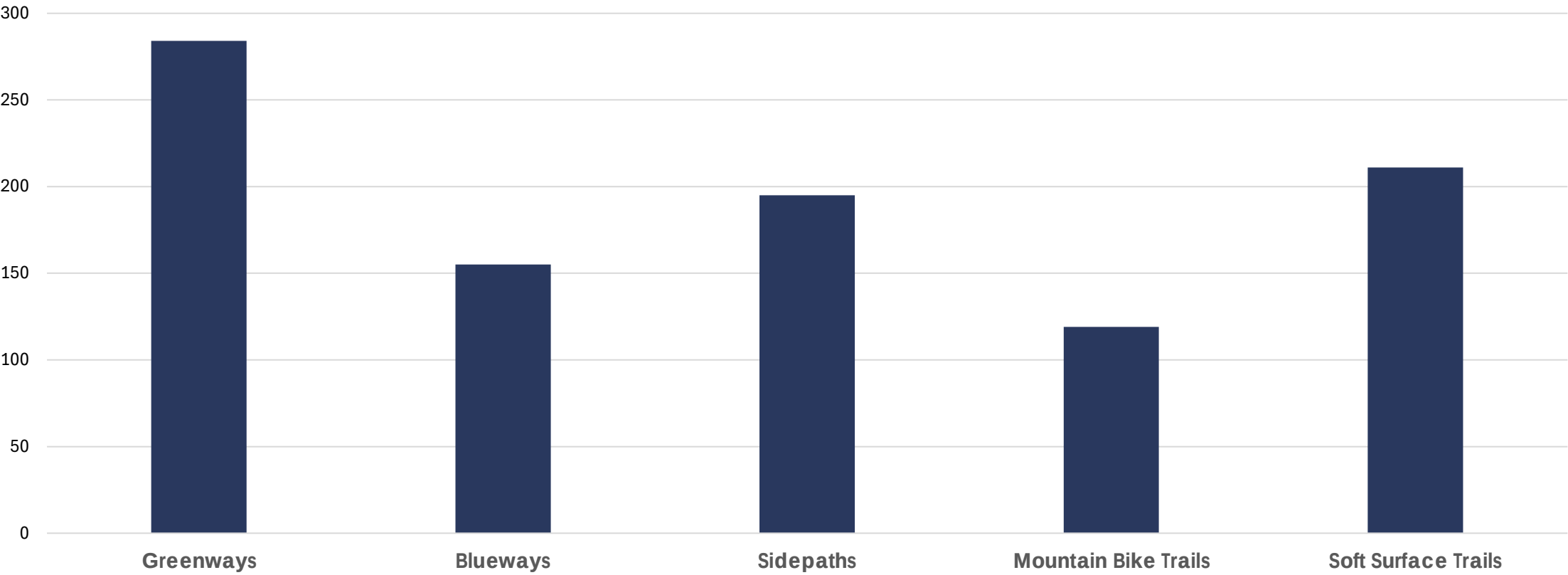
# Other Activities



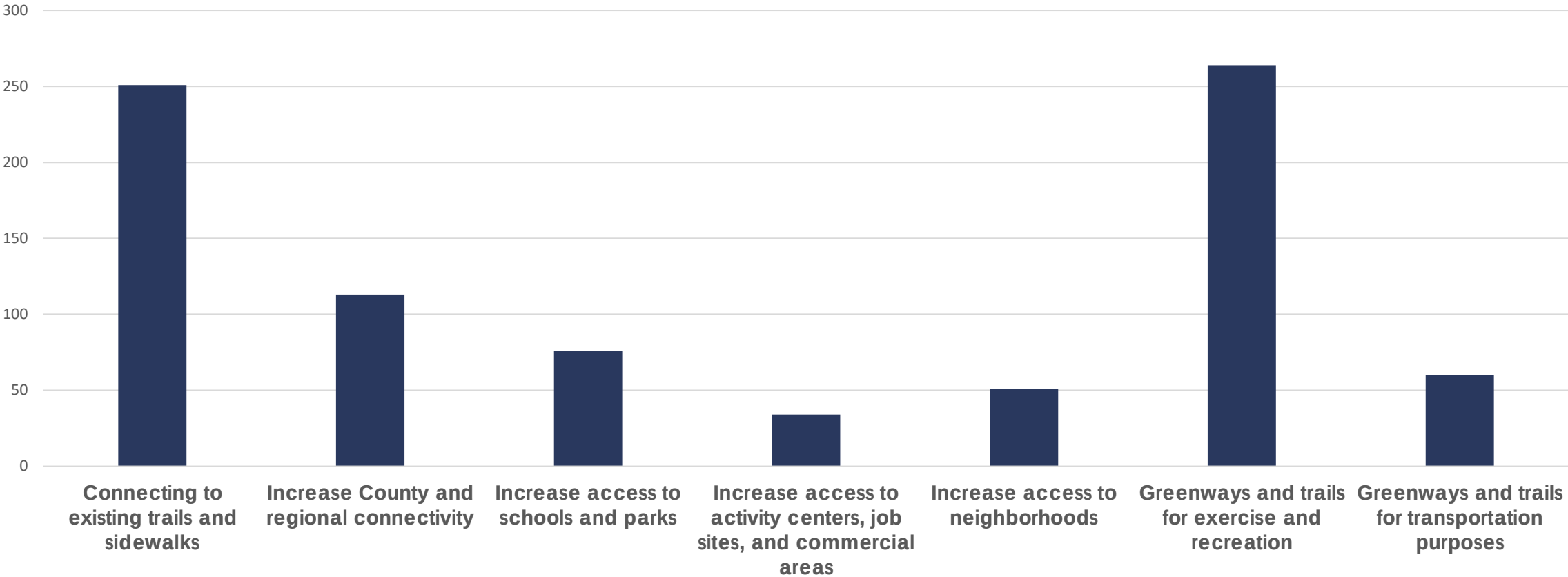
Online Interactive Map & Survey



# Preferred Trail Types



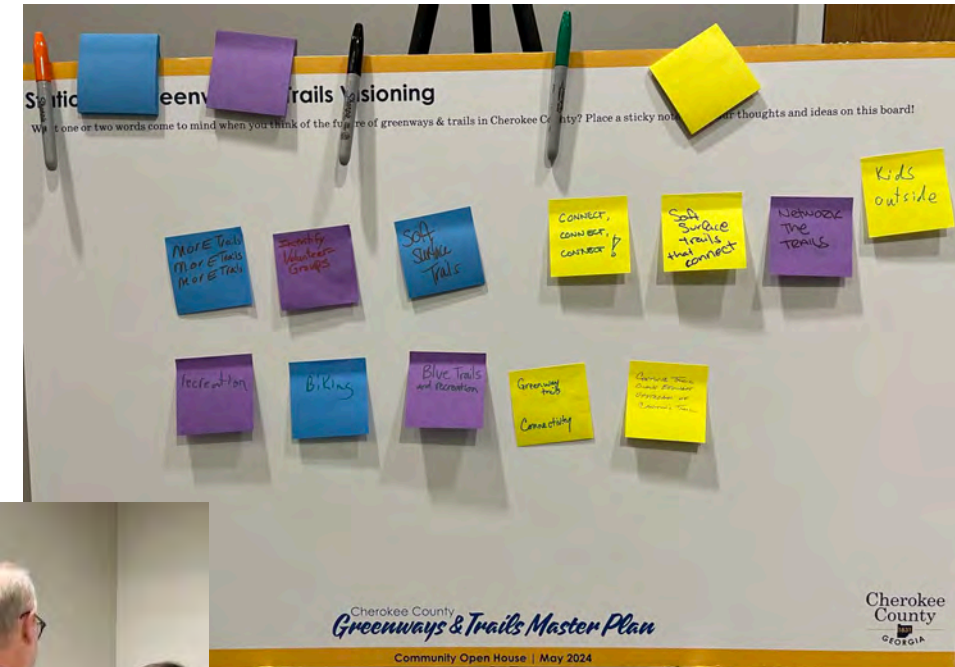
# Priorities for Expanding Greenways and Trails in Cherokee County



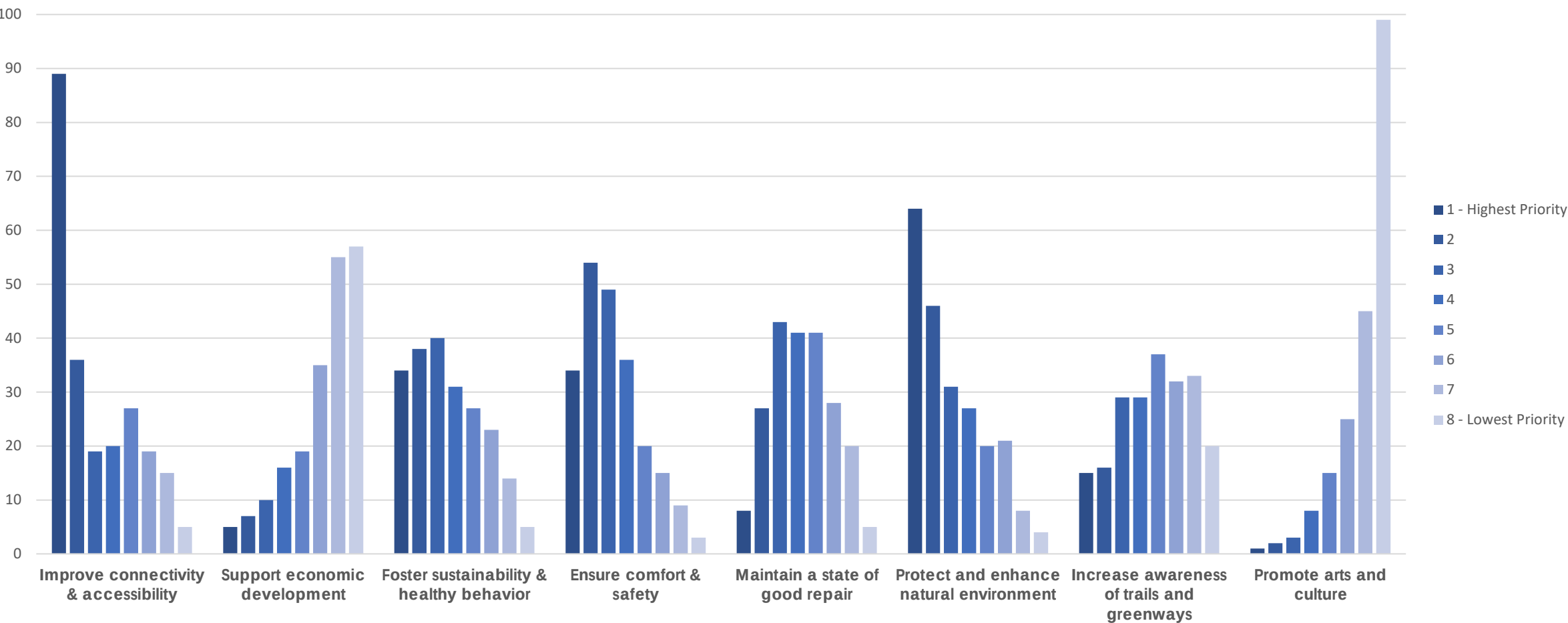


# Themes from Visioning

- Connectivity
- Health
- Nature
- Preservation
- Recreation
- Safety
- Walkability
- Conservation
- Network
- Continuity



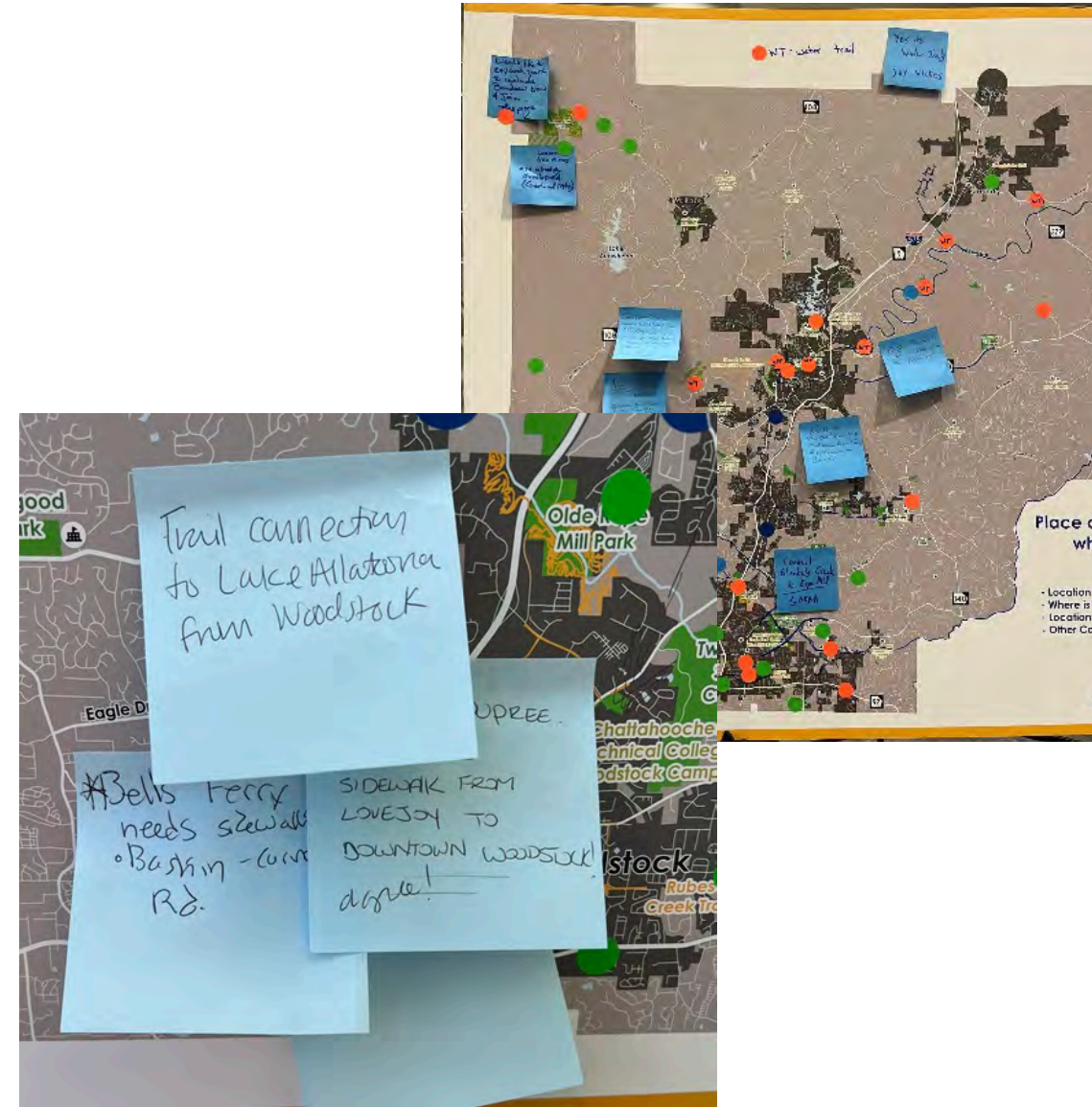
# Guiding Principles





# Gaps and Opportunities

- Flat biking trails
- More soft surface trails
- Something like the Alpha Loop
- Trails in the eastern part of Cherokee County
- Amenities at trailheads
- Countywide greenway for east-west connectivity
- Connecting to greenspaces
- Connecting to existing trails, neighborhoods, and downtowns



# Trail Typology Refresher





# Greenway Trails

- Paved trails (either concrete or asphalt)
- Typically 10 to 14 feet in width
- May also include boardwalks
- Should include lighting and wayfinding and regulatory signage where needed



## Examples in Cherokee County

- Etowah River Trail in Canton
- Heritage Park in Canton
- Noonday Creek Trail in Woodstock
- Rubes Creek Trail in Woodstock
- Range from 6 to 10 feet in width
- Most in good to excellent condition



# Sidepaths (along roads)

- Shared-use paths along public streets
- Should provide a buffer to separate vehicles from bicyclists and pedestrians
- Potential for conflicts at intersections and driveways



## Examples in Cherokee County

- Most are in the Woodstock area
  - Woodstock Parkway
  - Ridgewalk Parkway
  - Towne Lake Pass
- Most have 10-foot widths
- All are concrete and in good to excellent condition





# Blueways

- Navigable waterways for recreational use
  - Canoeing, tubing, or kayaking
- Require access points as well as other amenities
- Also known as water trails



## Examples in Cherokee County

- Etowah River
- Little River
- Existing Launch Sites
  - Etowah River Park
  - Boling Park
  - Olde Rope Mill Park
  - Knox Bridge
  - Fields Landing Park



# Soft Surface Trails

- Usually within established parks
  - However, not all park trails are soft surface
- Can have different tailored uses
  - Hiking trails
  - Equestrian trails
- Typical surfaces
  - Dirt
  - Gravel



## Examples in Cherokee County

- Garland Mountain
- Sequoyah Park
- Hickory Trails Park
- Range from 5 to 15 feet in width





# Mountain Bike Trails

- Trails for off-road bicycle usage
- Typically in steep terrain and wooded areas
- Direction of travel can vary by day of week or time of day



## Examples in Cherokee County

- Olde Rope Mill Park
- Blankets Creek
- Suttalee Trace Greenspace (private)
- Dupree Park
- Reinhardt University
- All are dirt and in good to fair condition

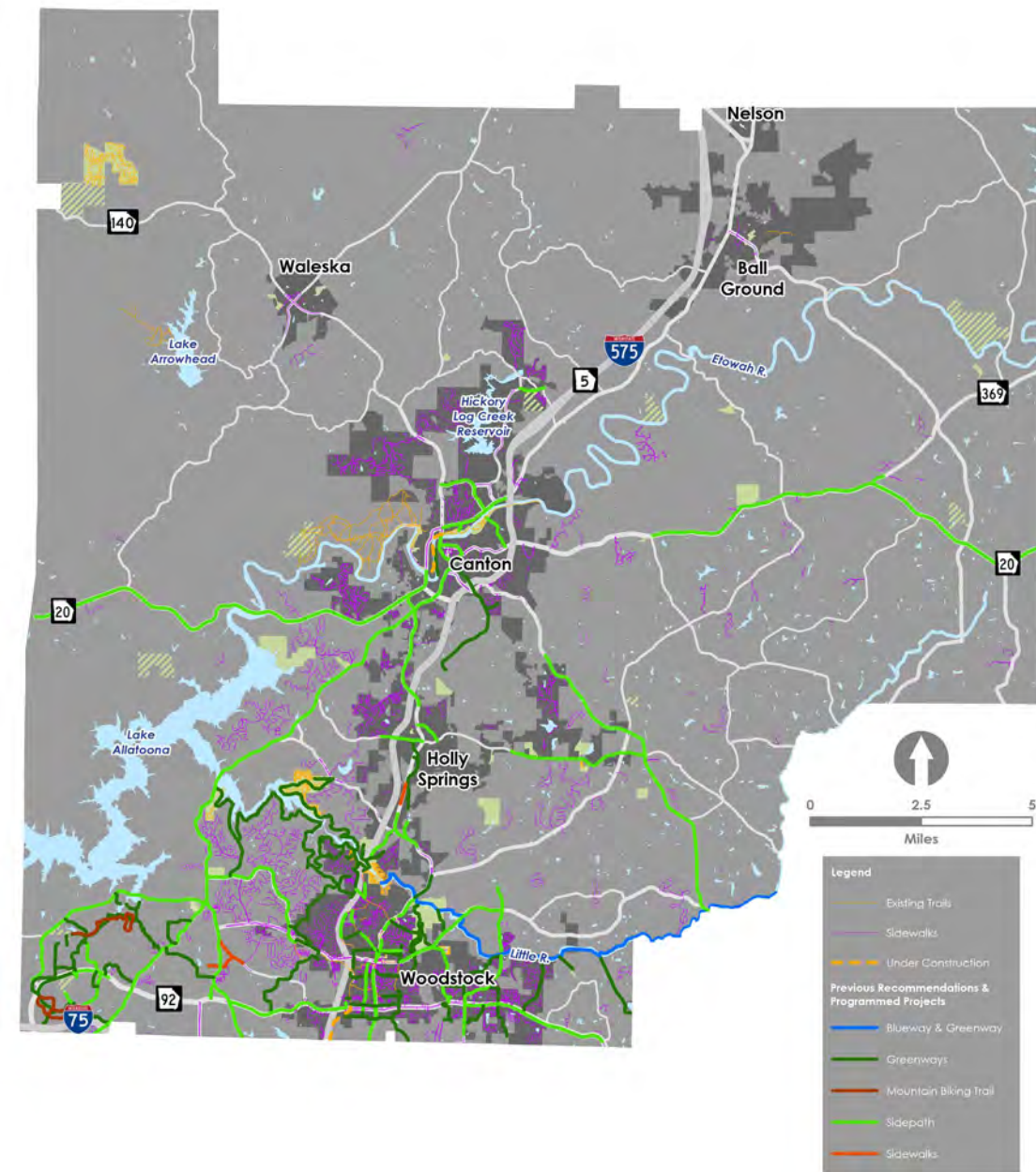


# Draft Trail Network



# Previously Identified Recommendations & Projects

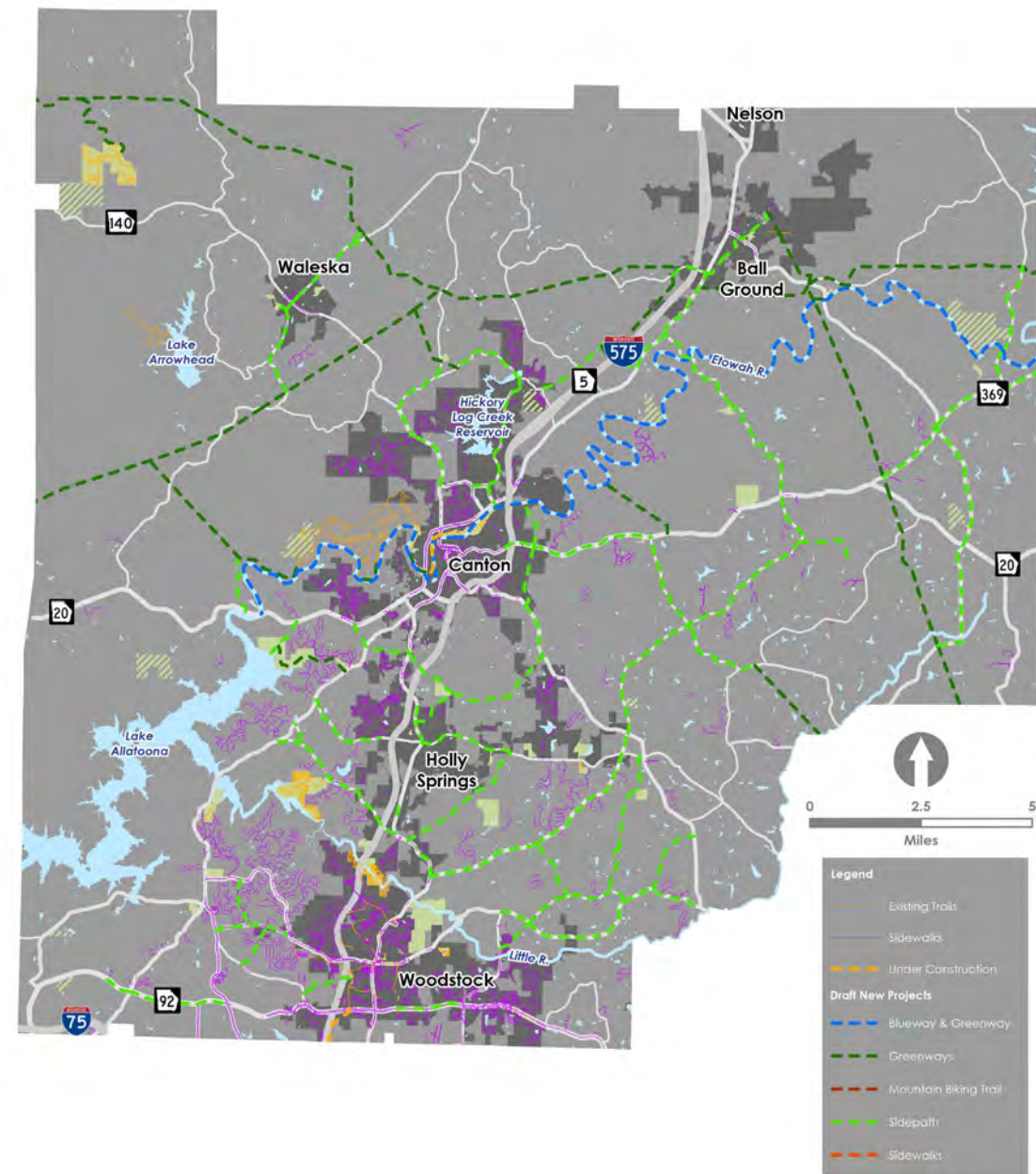
- Previous Plans with trail recommendations
  - Woodstock Greenprints
  - Canton Forward LCI (2016)
  - Canton Transportation Master Plan (2021)
  - SW Cherokee Parks & Trails Plan (2021)
  - NE Cherokee Parks & Trails Plan (2021)
  - Cherokee County CTP (2022)
  - Connect the Creeks LCI (2023)
- Programmed projects
  - Transportation improvement program (TIP)
  - Long-term GDOT projects
  - Cherokee County SPLOST





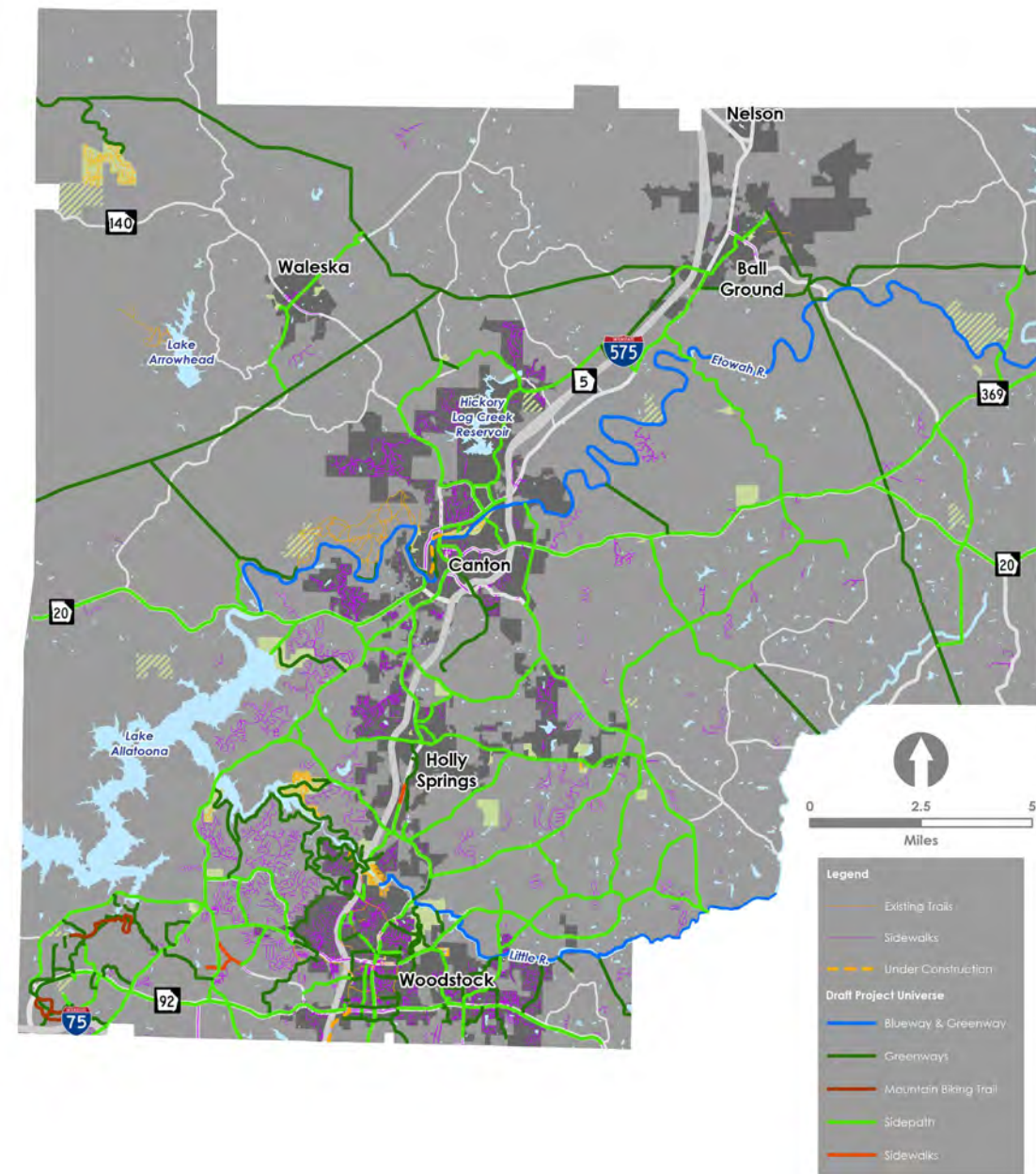
# New Ideas

- Developed through a variety of factors
  - TAC and public input
  - Opportunities for connections to parks, schools & major destinations
  - Regional connections
- Red flag screening process
  - Major utility relocation
  - Pipeline facilities
  - Significant ROW acquisition
  - Bridges and flood prone areas



# Draft Trail Project Universe

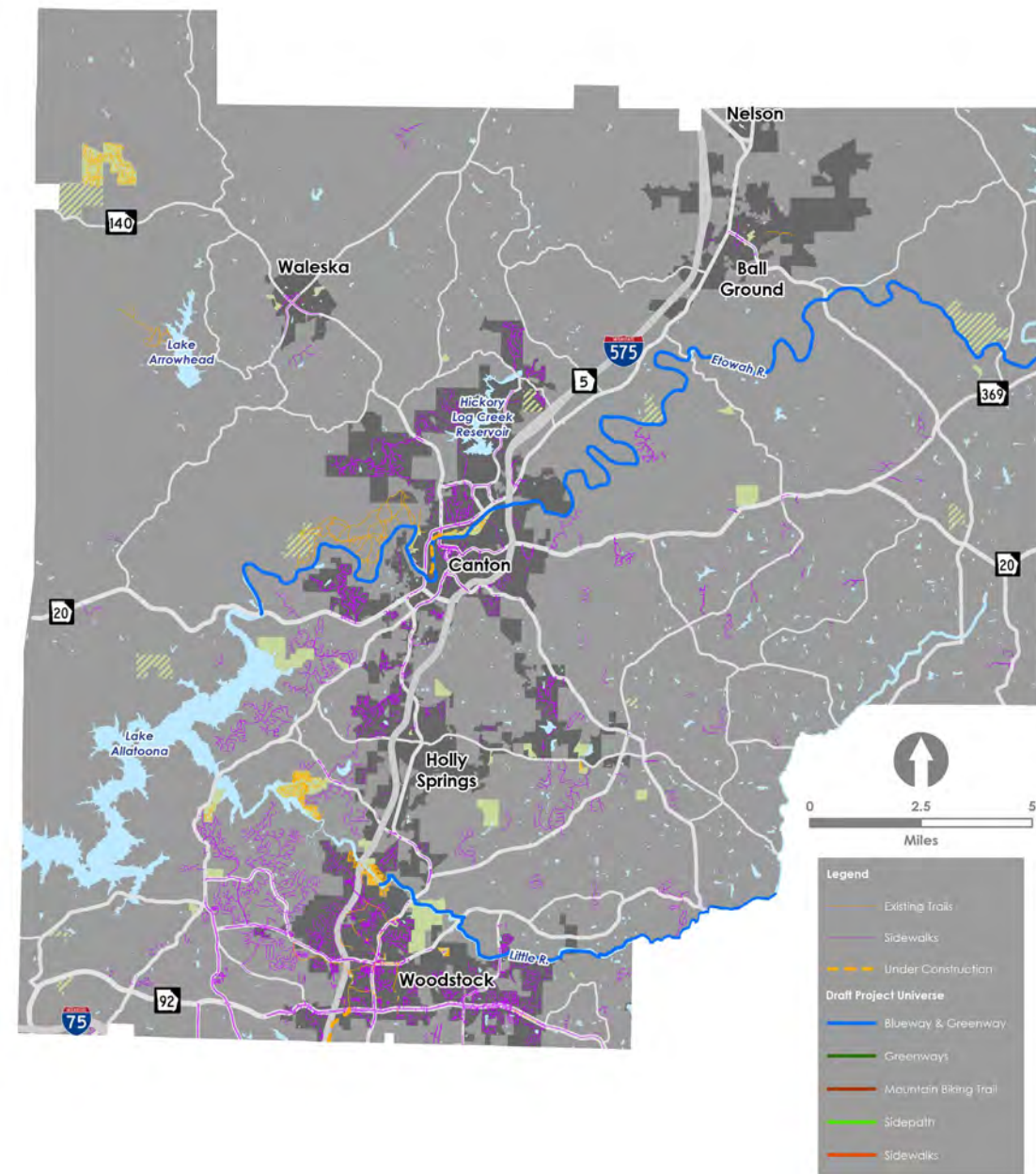
- Previous projects + new ideas = Draft Project Universe
- Over 400 miles of trail projects across County
- Includes the following project types:
  - Blueways & Greenways
  - Greenways
  - Sidepaths
  - Sidewalks
  - Mountain Bike Trails (MBTs) & Soft surface trails





# Blueways & Greenways

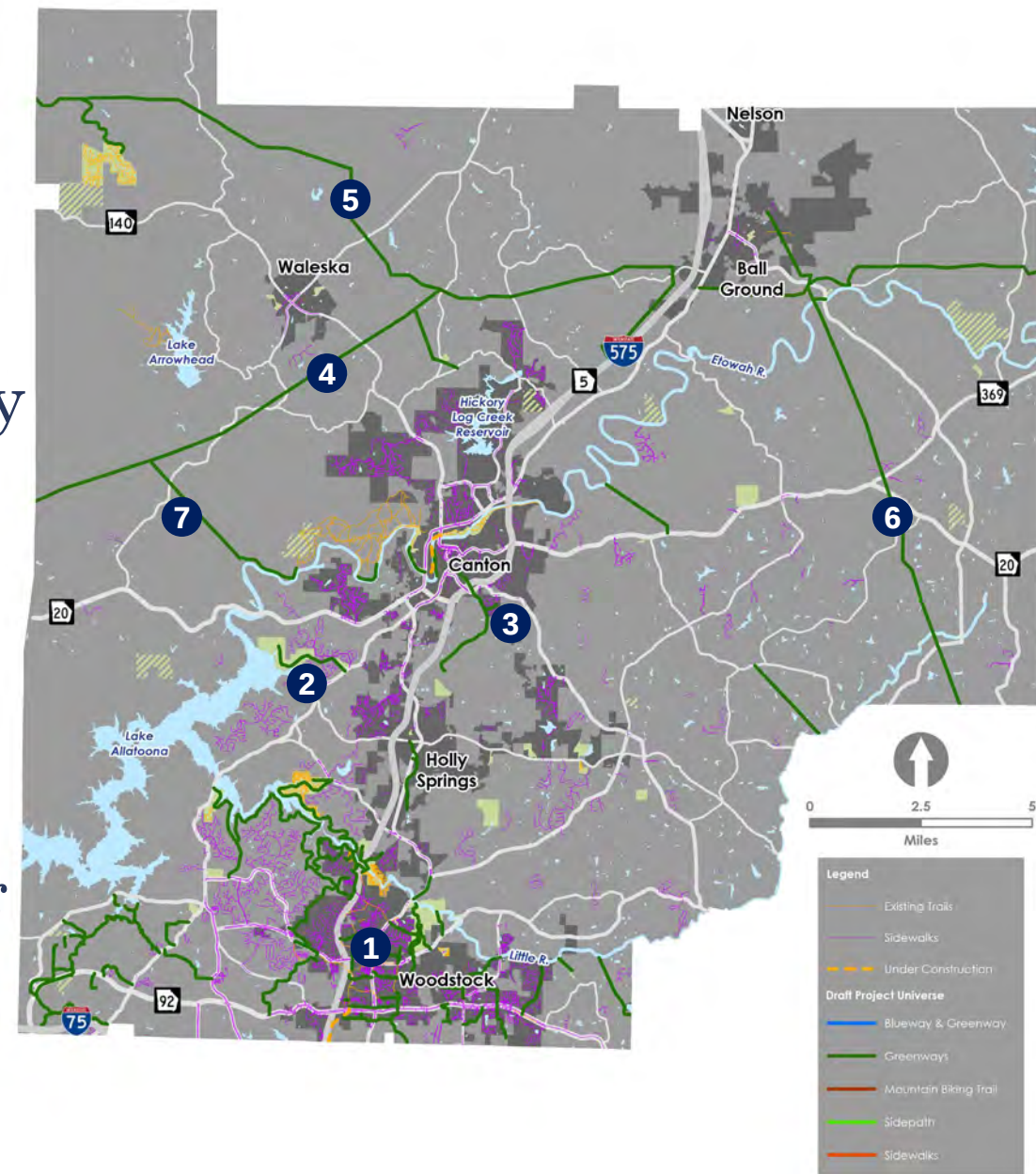
- Combination of water trails and greenways along two rivers
  - Etowah River
  - Little River
- Will require further study to determine feasibility





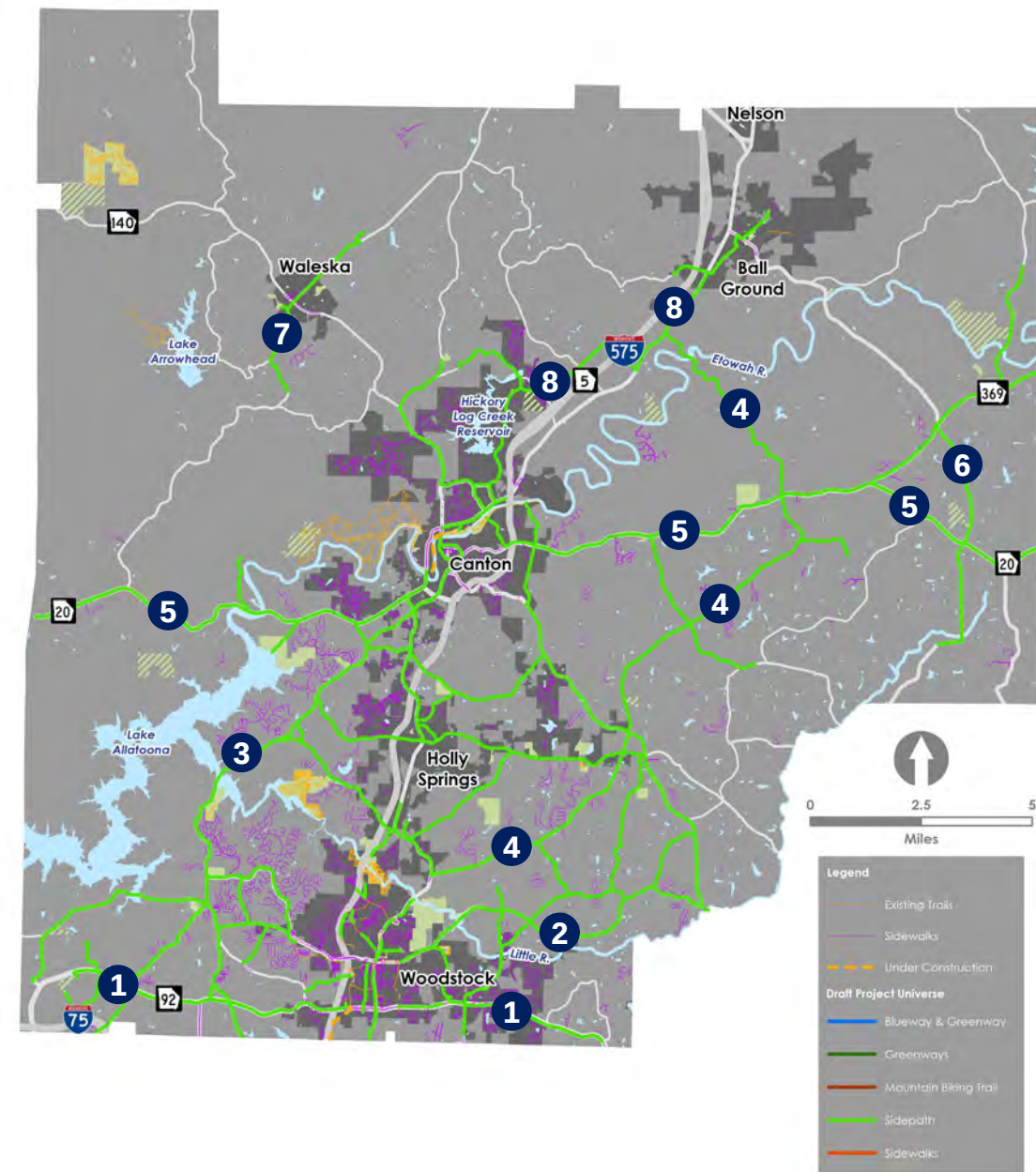
# Greenways

- Intended to provide both intercounty and regional connectivity
- Notable examples
  - 1) Woodstock Greenprints trail system
  - 2) Downing Creek Greenway
  - 3) Canton Rail Trail
  - 4) Cartersville to Ball Ground Connector
  - 5) Northern Cherokee Greenway
  - 6) Milton Connector
  - 7) Northwest/Shoal Creek Greenway



# Sidepaths

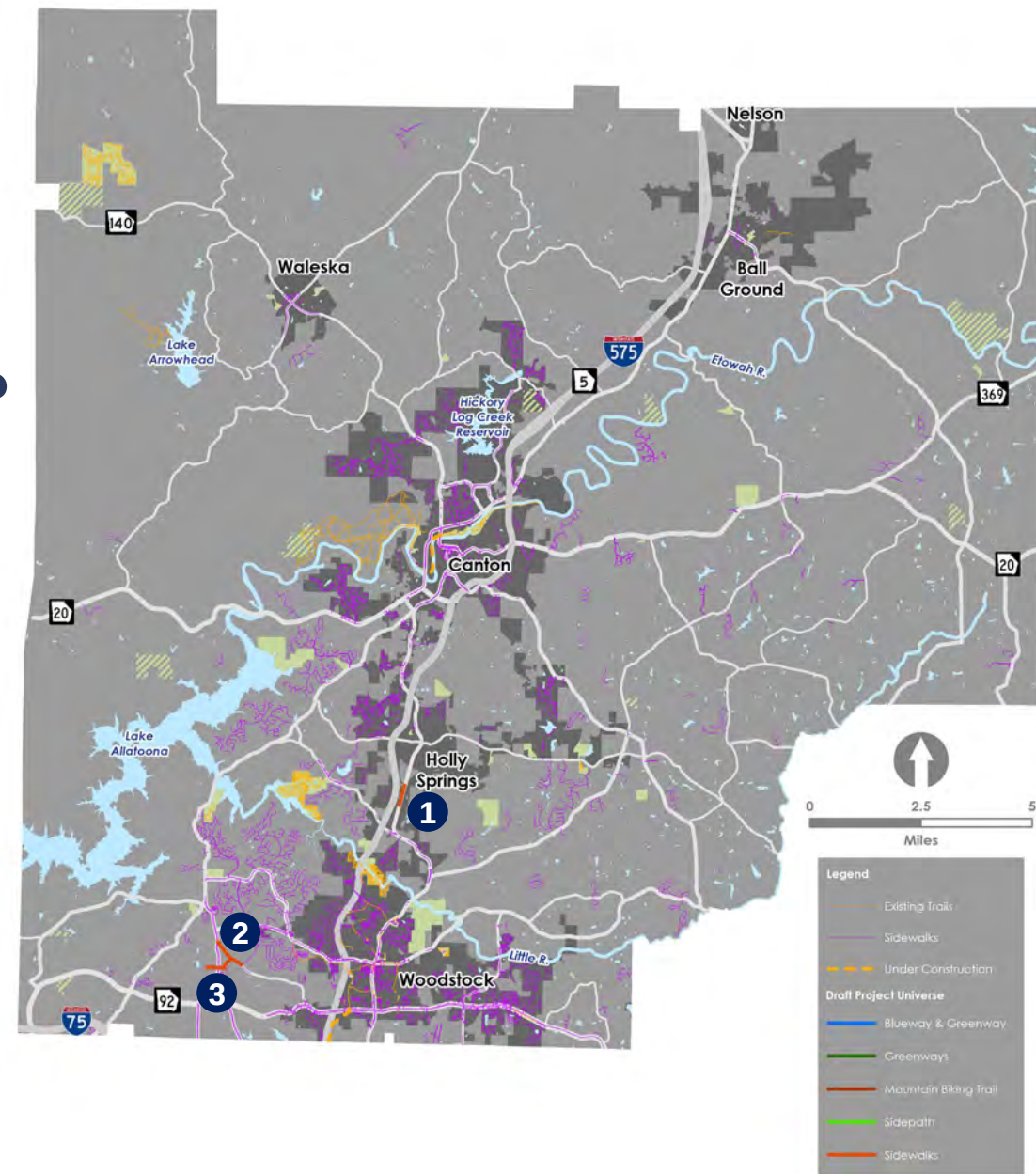
- Connections to parks and schools from residential areas and activity centers
- Notable examples
  - 1) SR 92
  - 2) Arnold Mill Road
  - 3) Bells Ferry Road
  - 4) East Cherokee Drive
  - 5) SR 20
  - 6) Free Home Connector
  - 7) Waleska-Reinhardt Connector
  - 8) PATH 575 from Canton to Ball Ground





# Sidewalks

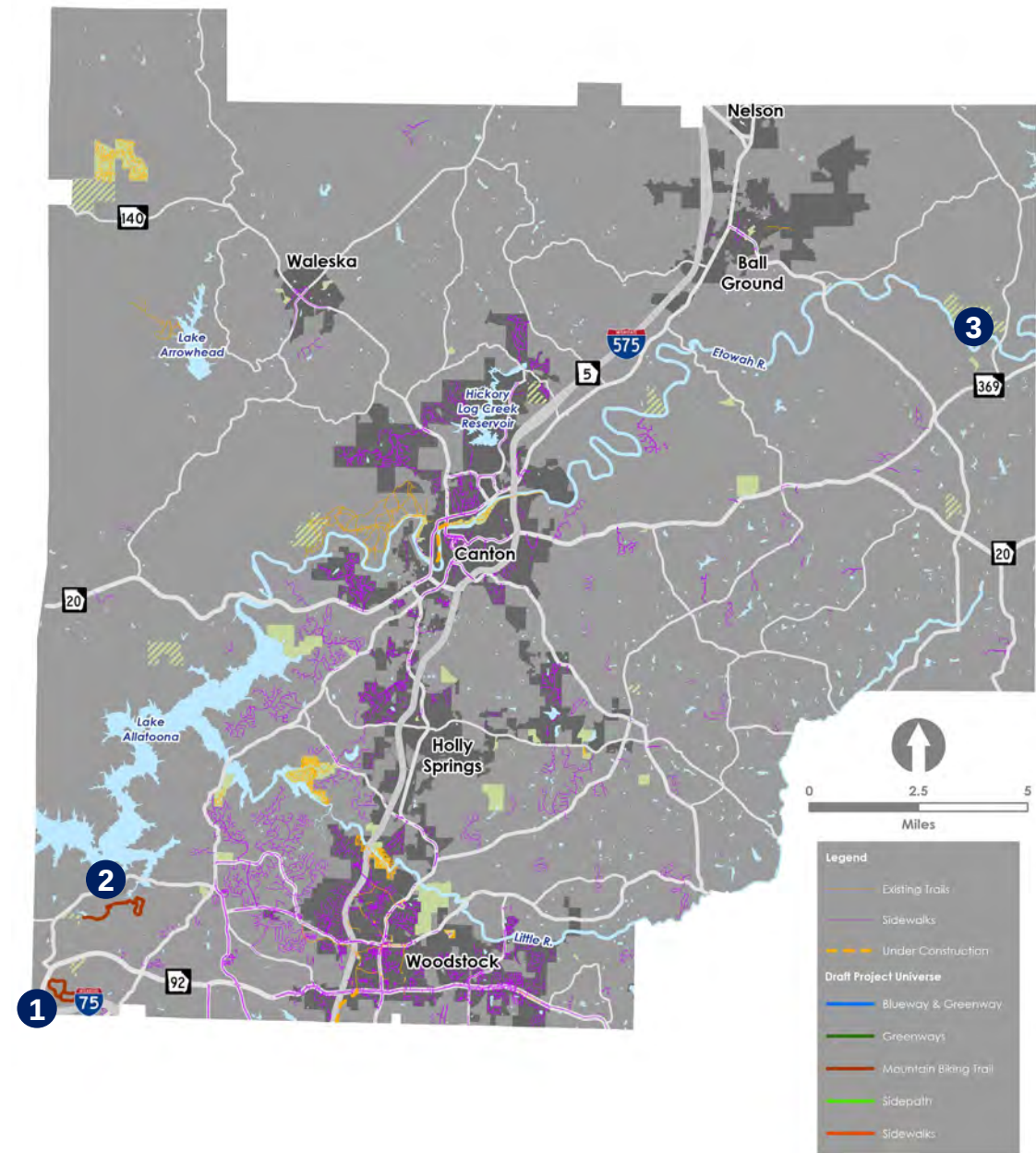
- Projects from Cherokee County CTP (2022)
  - Incorporated into Trails Master Plan
- Examples
  - 1) Holly Springs Parkway Sidewalks
  - 2) Bascomb Carmel Road Sidewalks
  - 3) Buice Lake Parkway Sidewalks
- Sidepath projects deemed infeasible can be demoted to sidewalks





# Mountain Bike Trails & Soft Surface Trails

- County well served by MBTs within existing parks
- Projects largely stem from other plans and studies
- Examples
  - 1) Clark Creek MBTs
  - 2) Kellogg Creek MBTs
  - 3) Yellow Creek Road Conservation Area MBTs



# Interactive Network Review Exercise & General Discussion

Breakout sessions: 30 minutes total - Join each station for 10 minutes apiece:

- Central Cherokee County
- Southeast Cherokee County
- Southwest Cherokee County

Groups report back on general discussion themes





# Next Steps



# Upcoming Milestones

- Stakeholder Interviews Ongoing
- Revise Recommended Trail Network
- Develop Trail Design Guidance
- Project Prioritization & Capital Development Program





# TAC Meeting Proposed Timeline

1. Listening/visioning – (in-person March 4)
2. Review of inventory, gaps and barriers (virtual mid-April)
3. Drafting trail network (in-person July)
4. Design guidelines (virtual early September)
5. Prioritization, Capital Development Program (in-person mid- to late-October)
6. Review draft plan (virtual early December)





# Next TAC Meeting

- September - Date TBD – aiming for week of September 9<sup>th</sup>
- Virtual
- Topic: *Trail design guidelines*





# Questions & Contact Information

**Bryan Reynolds** – Community Services Agency Director

[bdreynolds@cherokeega.com](mailto:bdreynolds@cherokeega.com)

770.345.6238

**Eric Lusher, AICP** – Consultant Team Project Manager

[eric.lusher@greshamsmith.com](mailto:eric.lusher@greshamsmith.com)

678.268.4285







## CHEROKEE COUNTY GREENWAYS & TRAILS MASTER PLAN

### TRAIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC)

Meeting Date: July 24, 2024 | 1:00-3:00pm

Location:

Topic: Trail Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting #3 Summary

#### Attendees

Eric Lusher – Gresham Smith, Consultant Project Manager  
Andrew Smith – Gresham Smith  
Allison Bell – VHB  
Samantha Henry – GDOT District 6  
Bryan Reynolds – Cherokee County Community Services  
Catherine Long – Cherokee County Planning & Zoning  
Margaret Stallings – Cherokee County Planning & Zoning  
Steve Shrout – Cherokee County Recreation & Parks  
Geoff Morton – Cherokee County Manager  
Heath Tippens – Cherokee County Office of Economic Development  
Erin Honea – City of Holly Springs  
Greg Powell – Cherokee Area Transit Service  
Mitch Hamilton – Cherokee County School District  
Pam Carnes – Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce  
Chris Luly – City of Ball Ground  
Steve Pressley – Cherokee County Recreation & Parks

#### Summary

##### 1. Meeting Overview & Project Refresher

- i. Eric Lusher, consultant project manager from Gresham Smith, gave a brief project refresher including plan goals and objectives, the role of a trail system in Cherokee County, and the project schedule.

**Genuine Ingenuity**



## **2. Round 1 Public & Stakeholder Feedback**

- a. Eric gave an overview of feedback received from the first round of public meetings in May (including two in-person meetings in Canton and Woodstock and a virtual meeting), an online survey and mapping activity, and a pop-up event at the Woodstock Farmers Market on May 11<sup>th</sup>.
- b. Between May 1 and June 30, 2024, the team held 3 public meetings, attended the Woodstock Farmers' Market and conducted an online survey and interactive mapping activity. The team heard from roughly 150 people across the public meetings and pop-up event. Additionally, there were more than 320 survey respondents, and 93 people participated in the interactive mapping.
- c. Eric went over key takeaways from these activities including the following:
  - i. Over 280 respondents want to see more greenways across the County.
  - ii. The top two priorities for expanding greenways and trails in Cherokee County include connecting to existing trails and sidewalks and using greenways and trails for exercise and recreation.
  - iii. Top words emerging from the visioning exercise include connectivity, health, nature, preservation, recreation, safety, walkability, conservation, network, and continuity.
  - iv. Guiding principles were ranked and the top choice was improving connectivity and accessibility.
  - v. Eric went over some gaps and opportunities identified by the public and stakeholders such as more trails in the eastern part of Cherokee County, amenities at trailheads, and connecting to parks, schools, neighborhoods, and downtowns.

## **3. Trail Typology Refresher**

- a. Allison Bell with VHB gave a brief refresher on the five trail typologies based on existing trail infrastructure in Cherokee County, including greenways, blueways, mountain bike trails, sidepaths, and soft surface trails. Each type was defined with a brief description, key characteristics, and notable examples in Cherokee County. This content was also shared during the previous TAC meeting held virtually in April.





#### **4. Draft Trail Network**

- a. Andrew Smith with Gresham Smith then discussed the first version of the draft universe of trail projects. He began by identifying previously identified recommendations from adopted plans and studies (such as the Cherokee County CTP), programmed projects in the transportation improvement program (TIP), and then supplemented with new ideas developed by the consultant team.
- b. New ideas were developed by utilizing TAC and public input, identifying opportunities to connect parks, schools, and major destinations, and establishing regional connections to adjacent counties. These ideas went through a rigorous red flag screening process that identified at a high level (low, medium, or high) the potential for major utility relocation, crossing pipeline facilities, right-of-way acquisition, and flooding potential, among other characteristics.
- c. This version of the draft trail network contained approximately 400 miles of trail projects across the County by each of the five trail typologies. Andrew went over notable examples by each typology.

#### **5. Interactive Network Review Exercise**

- a. Andrew, Allison, and Eric each led group discussions focusing on clusters of trail projects in central, southwest, and southeast Cherokee County, respectively. The following questions were posed to members of each breakout group.
  - i. What do you consider as your favorite trail projects in this area of the County?
  - ii. Are there destinations in the County that you feel are not being served by this draft trail network?
  - iii. Are there projects in these areas of the County that should be prioritized or removed from the network altogether?
- b. The maps of each of the three portions of the county were marked up with notes on trail projects that should be added, removed, or rerouted (see attachments).

#### **6. Action Items & Next Steps**

- a. The next TAC meeting will be held the week of September 9<sup>th</sup> and be conducted virtually. This meeting will discuss draft trail design guidance.
- b. The consultant team will take feedback from the TAC as well as County staff to make adjustments and then prioritize projects to identify approximately five priority

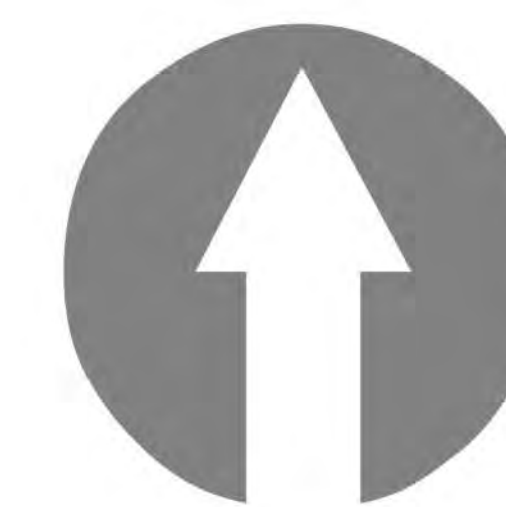
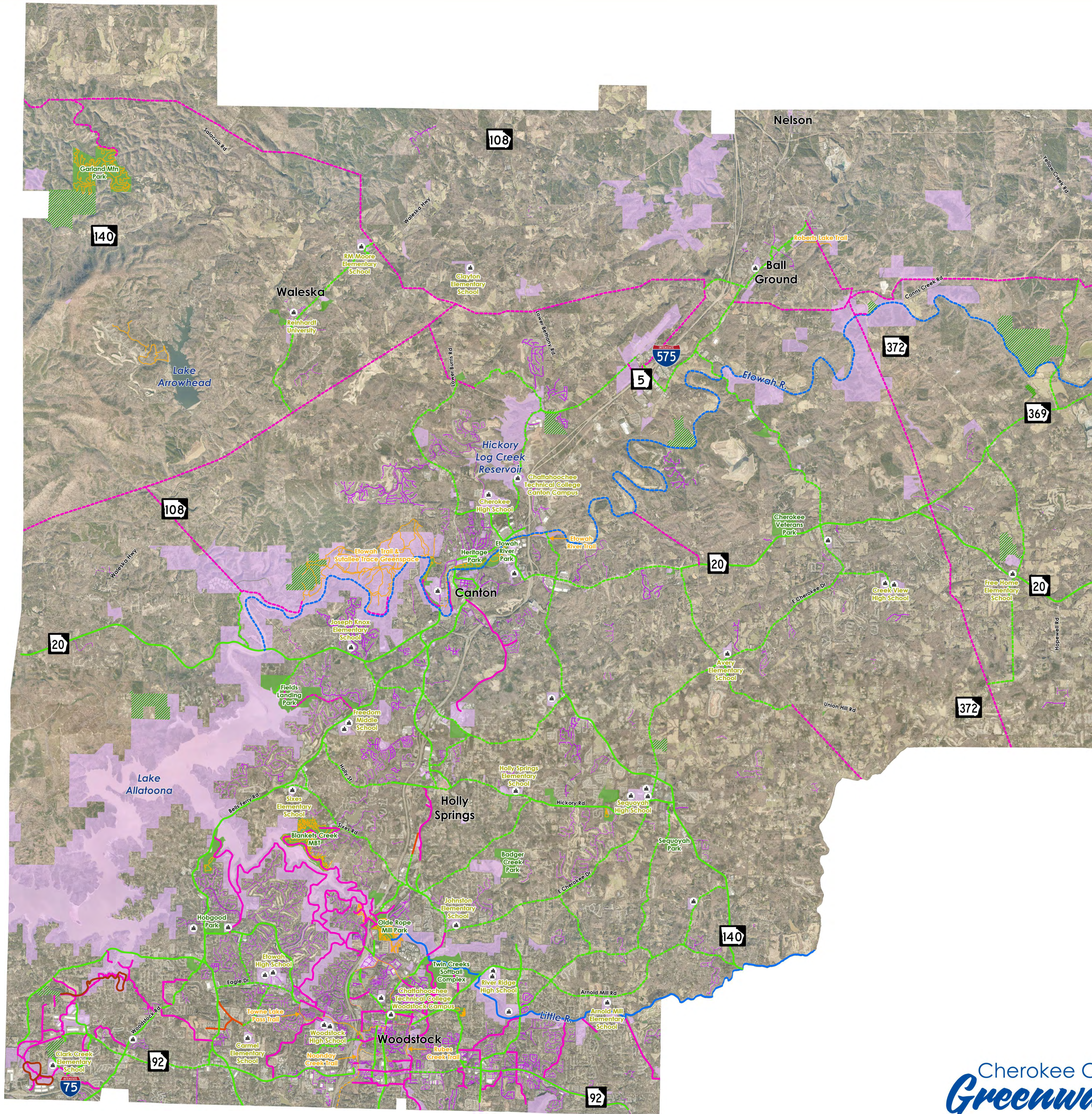


trail projects across the County, a mid- to long-term list, and an aspirational list of projects. These lists will comprise the draft capital development program for the Cherokee County Greenways & Trails Master Plan.

### **Attachments**

- Final TAC #3 Meeting Presentation
- DRAFT Countywide Trail Network
- Photos of the Breakout Maps
  - o Central Cherokee County
  - o Southwest Cherokee County
  - o Southeast Cherokee County





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Miles

# Cherokee County

1831

## GEORGIA

Cherokee County Greenways & Trails Master Plan

Trail Advisory Committee Meeting #3

**DRAFT** Recommended Trail Network

July 24, 2024

- Legend**
- Existing Trails
  - County Parks
  - Future County Parks
  - Schools
  - Public Property
  - Under Construction
- Draft Project Universe**
- Previous Recommendations & Programmed Projects**
- Blueway & Greenway
  - Greenways
  - Mountain Biking Trail
  - Sidewalk
  - Sidewalks
- New Draft Recommendations**
- Blueway & Greenway
  - Greenways
  - Mountain Biking Trail
  - Sidewalk
  - Sidewalks

Cherokee County  
*Greenways & Trails Master Plan*



Legend

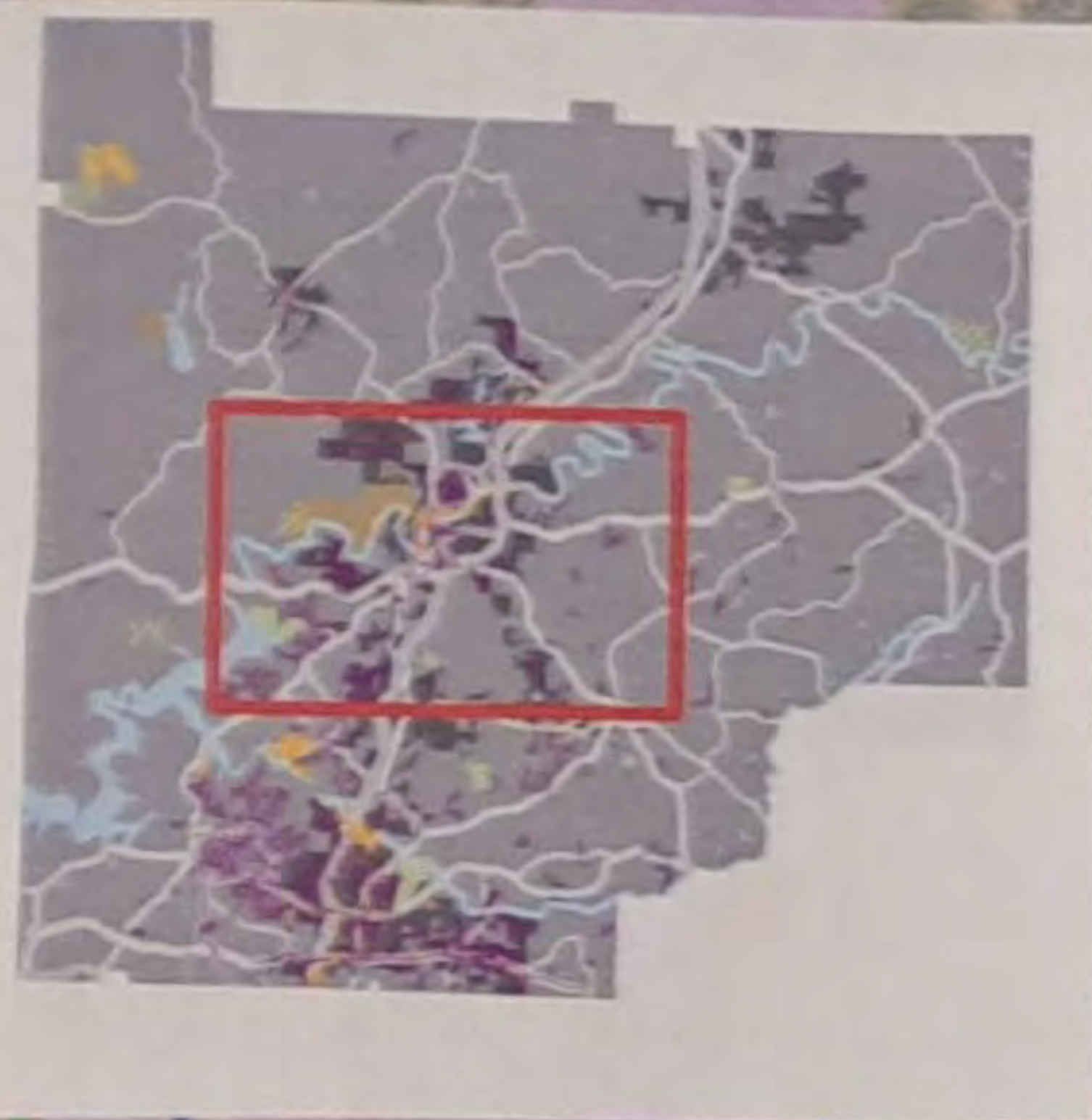
- Existing Trails
- Sidewalks
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- Under Construction

Previous Recommendations & Programmed Projects

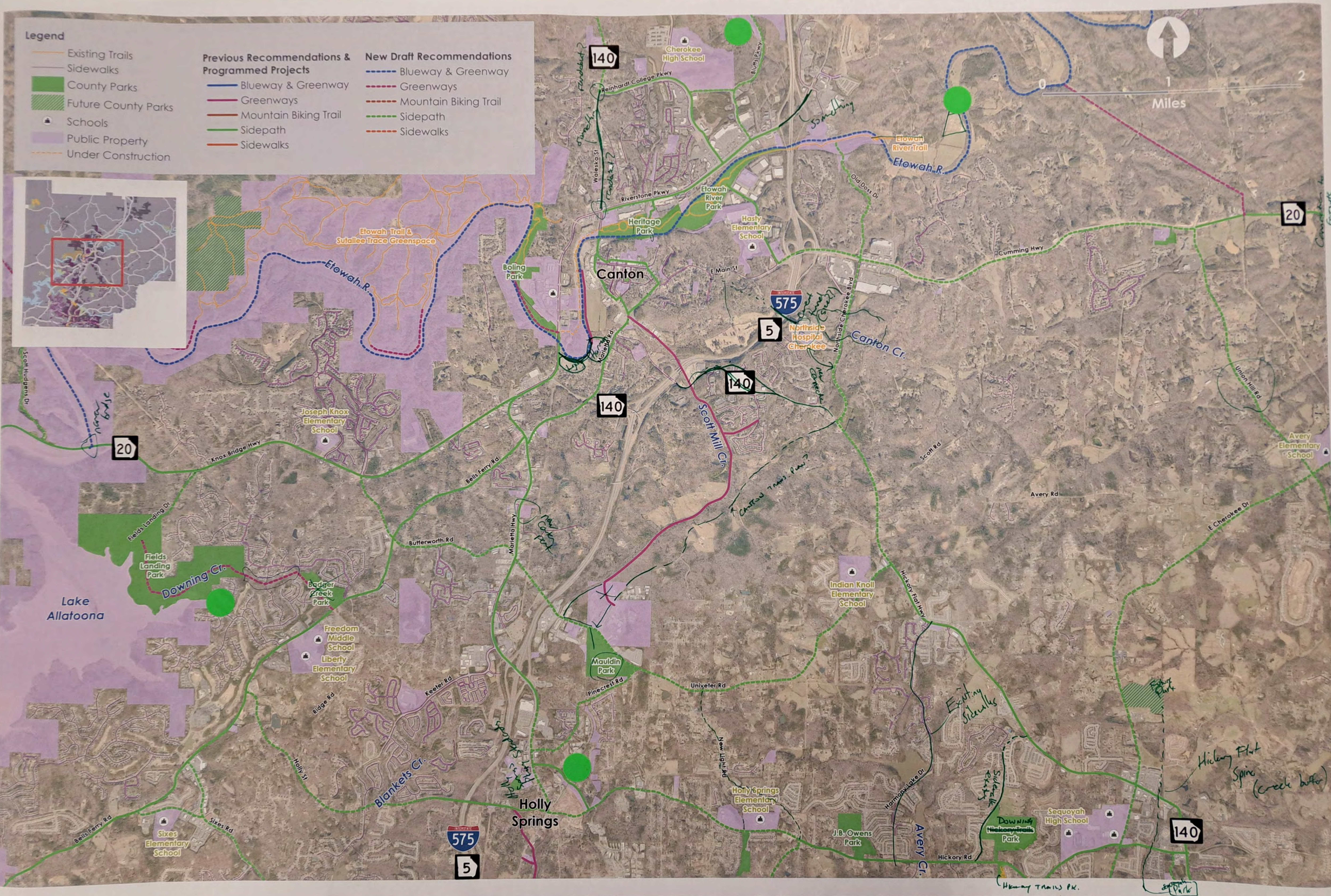
- Blueway & Greenway
- Greenways
- Mountain Biking Trail
- Sidepath
- Sidewalks

New Draft Recommendations

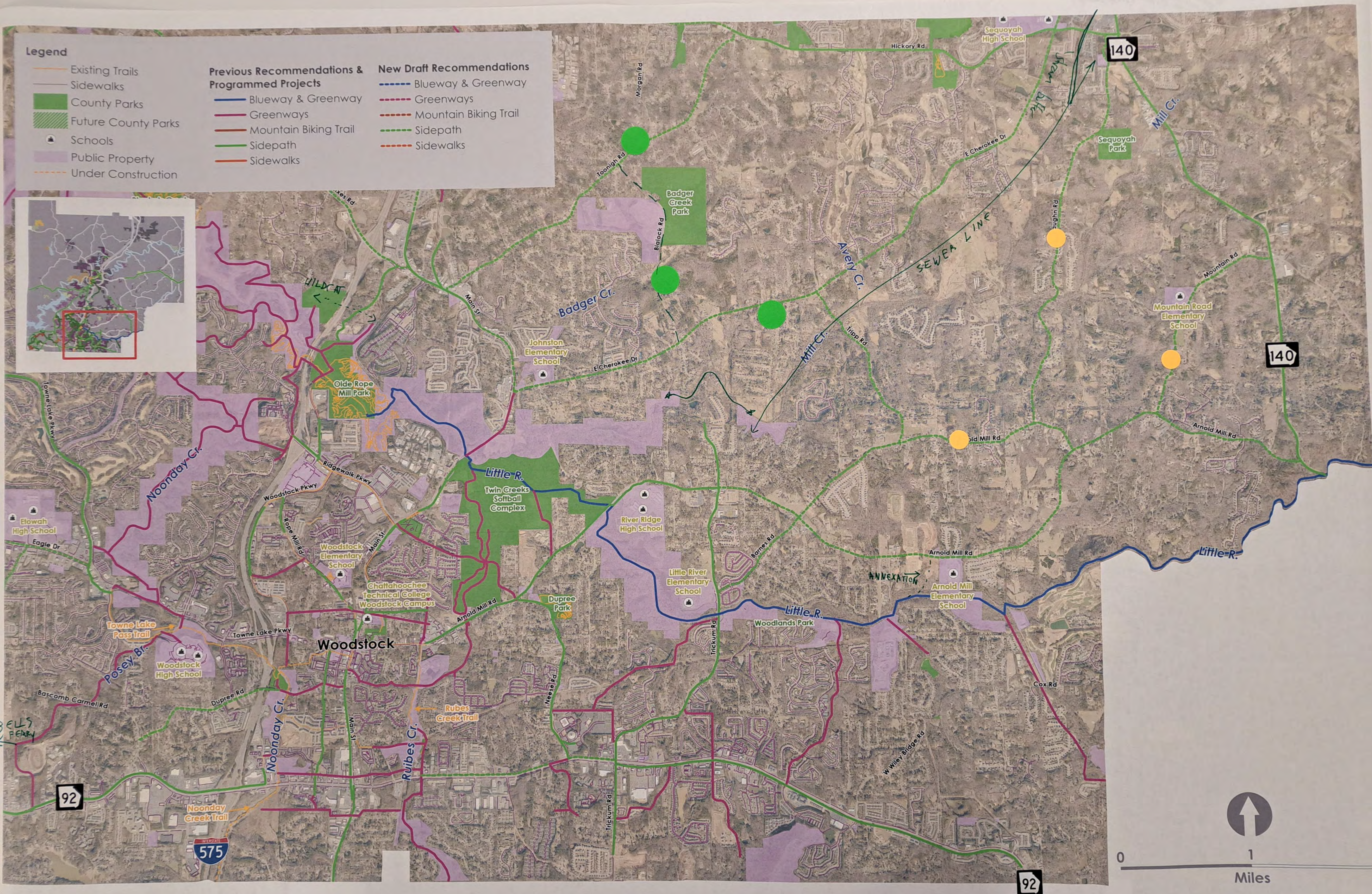
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Miles









Legend

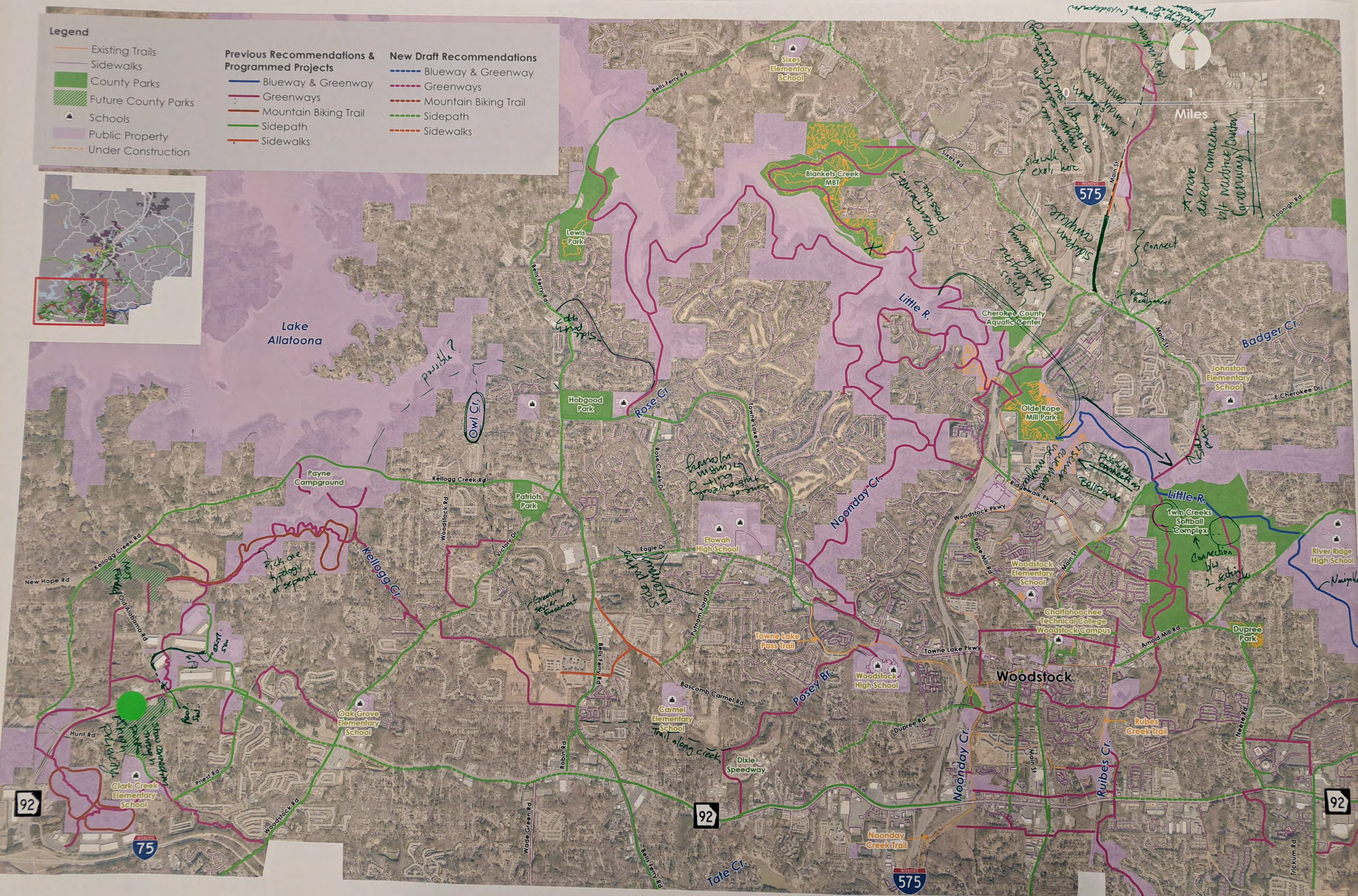
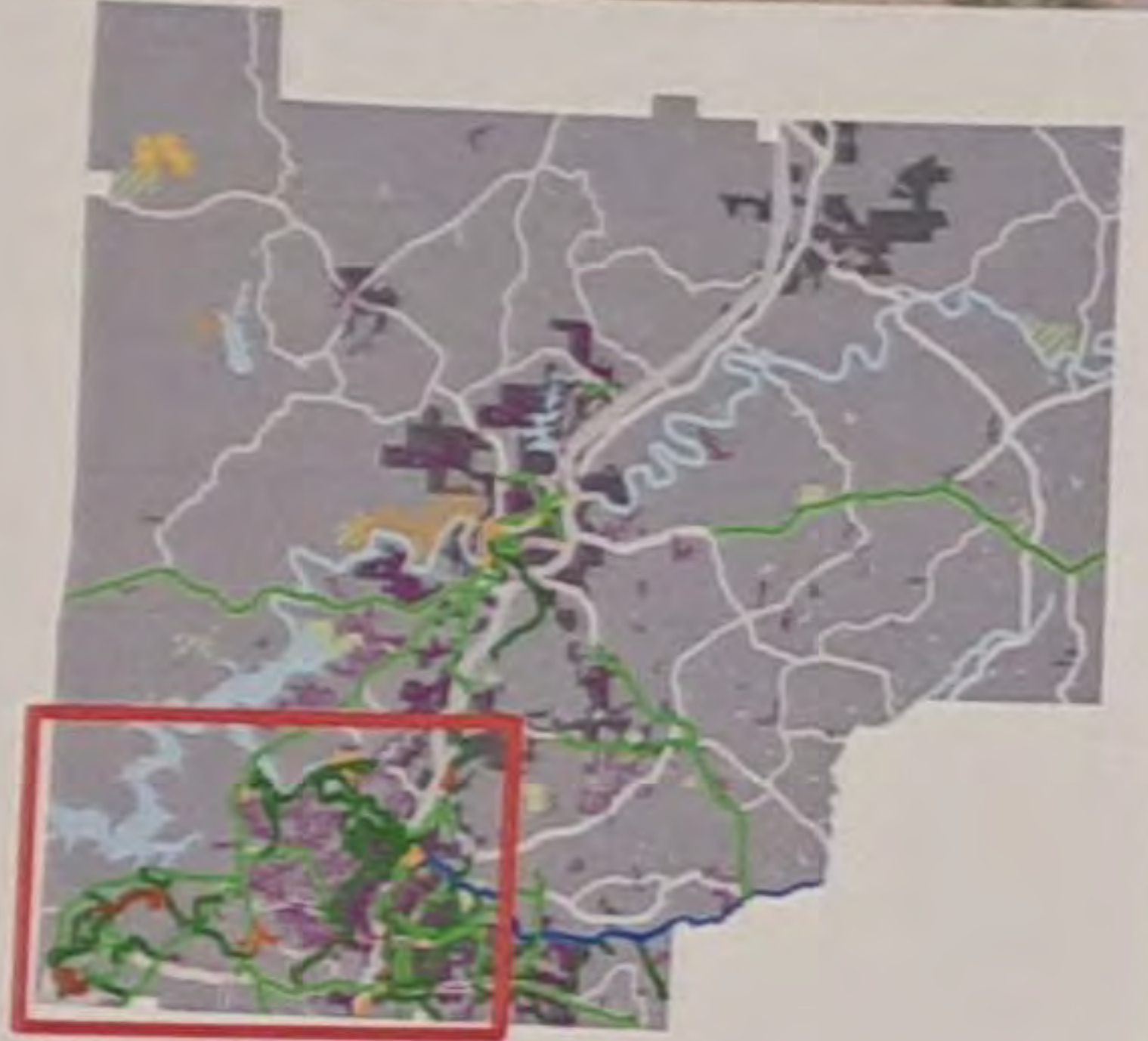
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Previous Recommendations & Programmed Projects

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- Mountain Biking Trail
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- Sidewalks

New Draft Recommendations

- Blueway & Greenway
- Greenways
- Mountain Biking Trail
- Sidepath
- Sidewalks





Cherokee County  
*Greenways & Trails Master Plan*

Trail Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting #4  
September 13, 2024



# Today's Meeting Agenda

- Project Overview and Update
- Design Guidelines by Trail Type
- Overview of Amenities and Wayfinding
- Project Evaluation/Prioritization
- Next Steps





# Mentimeter Instructions

- [www.menti.com](https://www.menti.com)
- Use code 9171 8682





# Please share your name & organization

Mitch  
HamiltonCherokee  
County School District

Bryan Reynolds  
Cherokee County

Margaret Stallings  
Cherokee County  
Planning & Zoning

Heath TippensCherokee  
Office of EcD

Steve ShroutCherokee  
Recreation & Parks

Chris LulyCity of Ball  
Ground

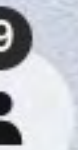
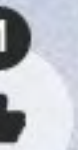
Eric LusherGresham  
Smith

Catherine Long  
Cherokee County  
Planning and Zoning



# Please share your name & organization

Andrew Smith -  
Gresham Smith





# Project Overview and Update





# Objectives

Work across boundaries, with local jurisdictions and community members to develop a prioritized list of projects that align with overall County goals and objectives to create a trail and greenway system that promotes economic development, recreation, and transportation.



**A Vision and Goals to Guide Future Development**

**Document Existing State of Greenways & Trails**

**Promote Decision-Making Grounded in Guiding Principles and Best Practices**

**Recommend Design Criteria and Guidelines**

**Recommend Future Connections and Extensions in Coordination with Municipalities, Neighboring Cities, and Counties**

**Provide Guidance on Partnerships, Funding, Operations & Maintenance**

**Identify Priority Corridors and Projects**





Winter

Spring

Summer

Fall

2

Analysis of Existing Trail Network  
and Physical Conditions

3

Community & Stakeholder  
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WE ARE HERE

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Capital Development  
Program and  
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Draft & Final Plan





# Design Guidance





# User Profiles

## Successful trail and greenway systems:

- Provide a range of experiences for a variety of users
- Get people to and from destinations
- Promote safety and comfort
- Include amenities, signage, wayfinding, and art

### Casual Socializing

- Wider paths for side-by-side
- Areas to pull off and chat
- Access to public spaces, retail, restaurants, streets, and other trails
- Water, seating, shade, art, bike parking, visual interest

### Utilitarian Trips

- Space for passing
- Minimize out-of-direction travel
- Access to neighborhoods, employment, transit, shops, streets, and other trails
- Water, lighting, trash cans, fixit stations, bike parking

### Exercise/Fitness

- Space for passing
- Longer, continuous segments
- Water, shade, trash cans, dog waste stations, visual interest, exercise equipment
- Vehicle parking

### Nature/Outdoor Enjoyment

- Context sensitive design
- Varied terrain and settings
- Quiet places for rest
- Access to parks, greenspace
- Rich sensory experiences
- Water, seating, shade, trash cans
- Vehicle parking





# Key Resources

- American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO)
- Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT)
- Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE)
- US Access Board - PROWAG

## Peer Communities and Case Studies

- Razorback Greenway (Northwest Arkansas)
- Swamp Rabbit Trail (South Carolina)
- Root River/Harmony-Preston Valley Trail (Minnesota)
- Olde Town Conyers Trail (Conyers, GA)
- Hard Labor Creek State Park (Morgan County, GA)
- Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area (Metro Atlanta, GA)
- Mission Boulevard Linear Park (Hayward, CA)





# Greenway Trails

## Use Cases:

- Primarily recreation with some commuters, utilitarian trips
- All modes: pedestrians, bicyclists, dog walkers, strollers, skaters, wheelchairs, etc.



*Silver Comet Trail*

## Considerations:

- Range of users and potential for speed differential (e.g., walking vs. biking)
- Potential for higher volumes
- Environmental constraints
- Routing/alignment, since they don't usually follow roads
- Connectivity to other trails, paths, greenways
- Access for people on foot, bike, and in cars
- Safety and security





# Greenway Trails

## Design Guidance

- Typically paved (concrete or asphalt), with boardwalk where needed
- Width: 10-14 ft
- Shoulder width: 3-5 ft graded, 2 ft min.
  - 5 ft recommended if along water
- Vertical clearance: 10 ft, 8 ft min.
- ADA compliant slopes and grades



*Root River Trail  
(credit: gydlrgre)*





# Greenway Trails

## Additional Guidance

- High visibility crosswalks at roads
- Centerline striping as needed
- Lighting and wayfinding and regulatory signage where needed
- Cameras, call boxes, mile markers can aid in emergencies
- Amenities: water fountain, trash cans, seating, shade, pull-offs, bike parking, and vehicle parking where appropriate



*Razorback Greenway  
(credit: JAllison, via TrailLink)*





# Greenway Trails



10' vertical clearance  
(8' min)

Wayfinding and  
directional signage,  
distance markers

10-14' width  
Materials: concrete, asphalt, or boardwalk

3-5' shoulder  
(2' min)





# Greenway Trails

Multi-functional lighting  
helps keep people on the  
trail

Optional centerline stripe  
to separate direction of  
travel

Space for people to pull  
off the trail for rest,  
socializing, or taking a call

10-14' width  
Materials: concrete, asphalt, or boardwalk  
3-5' shoulder  
(2' min)





# Greenway Trails

Wayfinding, directional  
signage, or distance  
markers



Consider handrails on  
boardwalk sections where  
appropriate  
(if boardwalk is 30" or more  
above grade)

10-14' width  
Materials: concrete, asphalt, or boardwalk





# Which of the greenway images resonates most with you?

6



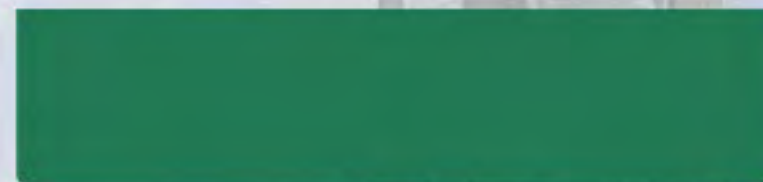
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Greenway 1



Greenway 2



Greenway 3



# Sidepaths (along roads)

## Use Cases:

- Primarily utilitarian with some recreation trips
- All modes: pedestrians, bicyclists, dog walkers, strollers, skaters, wheelchairs, etc.

## Considerations:

- Range of users and potential for speed differential (e.g., walking vs. biking)
- Connections between residential, commercial, and other areas of interest
- Potential conflict points, driveways, and intersection treatments
- Safety and separation from travel lanes
- Wayfinding and access points
- Potential for speed differential
- Road design standards may conflict with best practices for user comfort



*Concord Road, Smyrna, GA*





# Sidepaths

## Design Guidance

- Similar design to greenways
- 5 ft buffer between travel lanes and trail if speed limit >35 mph
  - If < 5ft, a physical barrier should be used
- 2 ft horizontal clearance from fixed objects
- Minimize curb cuts, driveway crossings



*Alpha Loop Trail  
(credit: Google)*





# Sidepaths

## Additional Guidance

- Design intersection treatments based on traffic and trail volume, speed (separation distance, signalization, pavement markings, etc.)
- Lighting, wayfinding, and regulatory signage where needed
- Optional furniture zone against commercial buildings where appropriate
- Cameras, call boxes, mile markers can aid in emergencies
- Amenities: water fountains, trash cans, seating, shade, public art



*Bells Ferry Road*





# Sidepath

Trees provide shade

Branded wayfinding and etiquette signage to communicate location, distance to destinations, and rules for trail use



5' buffer  
(2' min in constrained areas)

10-14' width  
Materials: generally concrete





# Sidepath



Lighting for safety can also provide visual separation from travel lanes

Opportunity for wayfinding signage

Optional planting or furniture zone in commercial areas

10-14' width  
Materials: generally concrete

5' buffer  
(2' min in constrained areas)





# Sidepath



Detectable warning strips signal road crossings to pedestrians and cyclists

Highly visible crosswalk markings signal the presence of bicycles at crossings

Optional centerline stripe

10-14' width  
Materials: generally concrete





# Which of the sidepath images resonates most with you?

3



Sidepath 1

5



Sidepath 2

0



Sidepath 3



8





# Soft Surface Trails

## Use Cases:

- Primarily recreational – hiking, exercise, experiencing nature
- Modes: hikers, dog walkers, trail runners – in some cases can be shared by mountain bikers or equestrians

## Considerations:

- Biker/hiker conflicts
- Environmental or natural resource impacts
- Accessibility for safety and security
- Erosion and drainage issues
- Private property constraints
- Single track vs. bi-directional use



*Tweetsie Trail*  
(Credit: PurduePeterson, via TrailLink)





# Soft Surface Trails

## Design Guidance

- Typically dirt, gravel, or crushed aggregate
- Single-track trails: 18-24 inches wide
- Double-track trails: width varies
- Follow natural contours of the land
- Average grade of 10% or less is sustainable on most soils and for most users
- 0.5-3% grades for better bicycle handling, to allow drainage, and prevent erosion



*Walking Path in East Cobb Park*





# Soft Surface Trails

## Additional Guidance

- Avoid fall lines (shortest route down a hill – where water flows) and avoid flat areas (where water pools)
- 8 ft min vertical clearance (higher for equestrian trails)
- Directional signage and mile markers can aid with routing and wayfinding, include rules and regulations to discourage use in wet conditions
- Consider a directional by-day policy to limit conflicts and reduce tread wear patterns



*Johnson Ferry North (Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area)*





# Soft Surface Trail

Gentle slope allows  
water to drain

Compacted earth  
tread

Sufficient buffer or shoulder  
between trail and trees or  
objects

18-24" width





# Soft Surface Trail



Variable width





# Soft Surface Trail



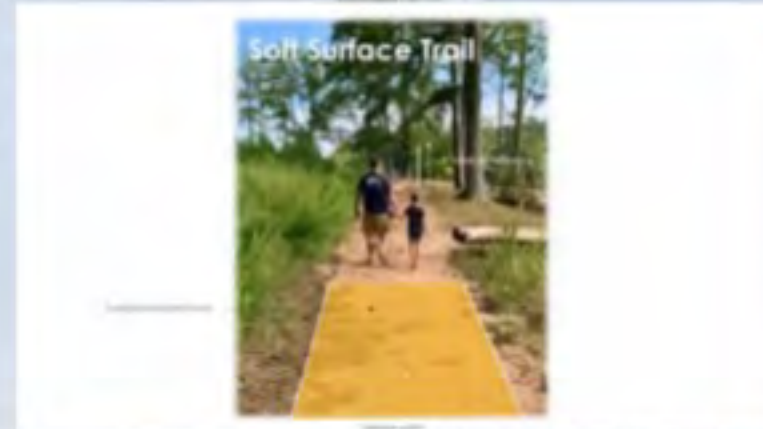


# Which of the soft surface trail images speaks most to you?

6



1



0



Soft Surface 1



Soft Surface 2



Soft Surface 3



# Mountain Bike Trails

## Use Cases:

- Exclusively recreational
- Modes: mountain bikers, some hikers depending on location

## Considerations:

- Biker/hiker conflicts
- Environmental or natural resource impacts
- Accessibility for safety and security
- Erosion and drainage issues
- Day-of-use policies



*Allatoona Creek Park  
(Credit: Jeff Barber, SingleTracks.com))*

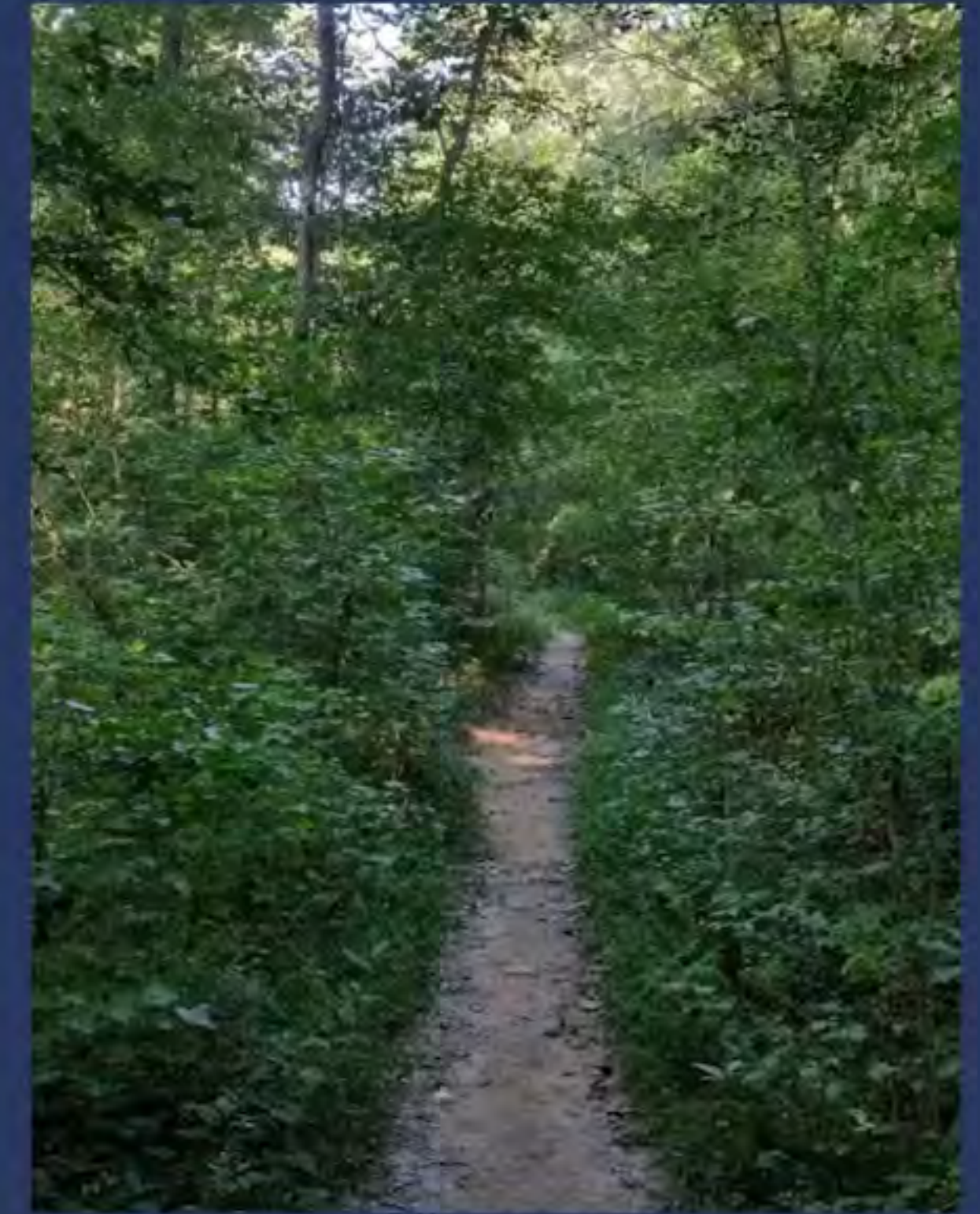




# Mountain Bike Trails

## Design Guidance

- Compacted earth tread
- Width varies considerably, mainly based on course difficulty (12"- 72")
- Trail gradient should not be greater than half the grade of side slopes ("the half rule")
- Average trail grade of 10%; max. may vary between 15-25% depending on site
- Trail tread sloped from hillside at 3-4%
- Provide and follow rolling contours



*Sope Creek, Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area*





# Mountain Bike Trails

## Additional Guidance

- Provide varied terrain to maintain cyclist interest (incline, declines, rocks, ruts, gravel, etc.)
- Maintenance due to wear and tear
- Environmental considerations - erosion
- Cost of maintenance varies greatly
- Parking for vehicles



*Allatoona Creek Park  
(Credit: MTB Atlanta)*





# Mountain Bike Trail



Compacted earth tread  
Moderate grade

Sufficient width for two  
bikes to pass





# Mountain Bike Trail

Optional amenities



Sloped trail allows  
water to drain



Obstacles and varied  
terrain increase  
difficulty and cyclist  
enjoyment



*Driftwood Trail Allatoona Creek Park  
(Credit: PKRohnert, via Trailforks.com)*

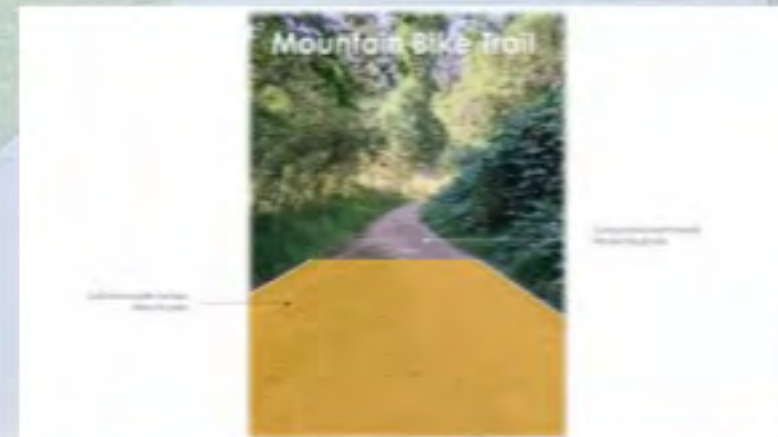




# Which of the mountain bike trail images speaks most to you?

1

7



Mountain Bike 1



Mountain Bike 2

1



8





# Blueways

## Use Cases:

- Exclusively recreational
- Modes: kayaks, canoes, rafts, tubes

## Considerations:

- Water flow and volume
- Access points
- Emergency / first responder access
- Distance and time between put-in/pull-out locations



*Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area*





# Blueways

## Design Guidance

- Access point frequency: every 5 miles or less
- Gangway or ramp slope: 5-8.33% at water's edge
- Staging area: firm and stable
  - Width: 6-12 ft, 5 ft min.
  - Length: 25+ ft
  - Enter boats parallel to dock, from the side
  - Space to turn around 16 ft+ canoe



*Bull Sluice Lake, Sandy Springs*





# Blueways

## Additional Guidance

- Short distance from parking to launch or unloading area if parking further
- Information kiosks at access points, also print and online materials
  - Maps, mileage, difficulty, water level
- Safety markers along route
- Range of signage, tailored for location and purpose
- ADA standards for accessible design



*Credit: NC Growth's Field Guide to Blueways*





# Blueway



Opportunity for  
signage

Ample space to  
turn around





# Blueway

Shade for resting

Parallel greenway for  
improved access and  
visibility

Sufficiently wide and  
flat staging area

Reinforced banks provide  
seating and ability to  
launch boats and rafts







Stable platform for  
viewing and access

Textured ramp with  
moderate grade

Regulatory  
signage



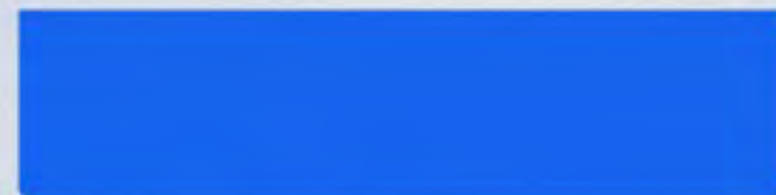


# Which of the blueway images speaks most to you?

2

1

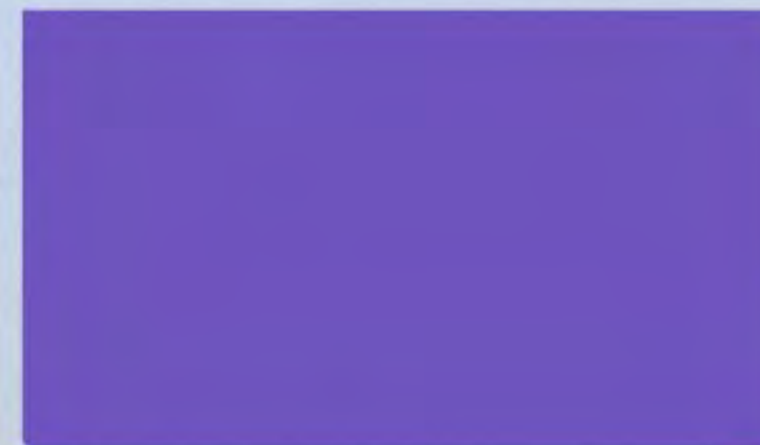
5



Blueway 1



Blueway 2



Blueway 3



# Is there anything missing from the design guidance that you would like us to consider including?

Viewing platforms

All good images. Each could be appropriate depending on the surrounding environment.



# Overview of Amenities and Wayfinding





# Amenity and Wayfinding Themes

- Information, Directional and Wayfinding
- Safety, Security and Etiquette
- Educational Interactive and Technologically Enhanced
- Comfort and Convenience
- Recreation and Leisure
- Fitness and Exercise
- Sustainability





|                                          |  | Trail Typologies                                                                                            |                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                              |                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Theme                                    |  | Greenways                                                                                                   | Sidepaths                                                                                                               | Soft Surface Trails                                                                                          | Mountain Bike Trails                                                                                        | Blueways                                                                                                         |
|                                          |  | <br>Informational Signage | <br>Multifunctional Charging Station | <br>Wayfinding            | <br>Route Information    | <br>Route Information         |
| Informational and Directional Wayfinding |  | <br>Interactive Nodes     | <br>Interactive Nodes                | <br>Rest Stop Kiosk      | <br>Route Information   | <br>Life Jacket Station       |
| Safety Security Etiquette                |  | <br>Shade Structure     | <br>First Aid Kits                 | <br>Bike Helmet Rentals | <br>Adaptive Trail Use | <br>Watercraft Wash Station |



| Trail Typologies                                       |                        | Greenways                                                                                                                   | Sidepaths                                                                                                     | Soft Surface Trails                                                                                                | Mountain Bike Trails                                                                                              | Blueways                                                                                               |
|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Theme                                                  |                        |  <p>Augmented Reality Supported Paths</p> |  <p>Kinetic Walkways</p>   |  <p>Soundscapes</p>             |  <p>Augmented Reality</p>      |  <p>Bird Blinds</p> |
| Educational<br>Interactive<br>Technologically Enhanced |                        |  <p>Bike Share Stations</p>              |  <p>Interactive Nodes</p> |  <p>Trail Difficulty Board</p> |  <p>Overlooks</p>             |                                                                                                        |
|                                                        | Comfort<br>Convenience |  <p>Native Landscapes</p>               |  <p>Water Stations</p>   |  <p>Public Seating</p>        |  <p>Bike Repair Stations</p> |  <p>Pavilions</p> |



|                                              |  | Trail Typologies                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                |                                                                                                           |
|----------------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Theme                                        |  | Greenways                                                                                                    | Sidepaths                                                                                                                      | Soft Surface Trails                                                                                         | Mountain Bike Trails                                                                                           | Blueways                                                                                                  |
| Recreation<br>Leisure<br>Fitness<br>Exercise |  | <br>Fitness Trails         | <br>Formal Playscapes                       | <br>Council Rings        | <br>Skills Park             | <br>River Rest Stops   |
|                                              |  |                                                                                                              | <br>Lighting (locations and hours may vary) |                                                                                                             | <br>Dark Sky Observation   | <br>Observation Decks |
| Sustainability                               |  | <br>Rain Water Harvesting | <br>Solar Charging Stations                | <br>Living Green Walls | <br>Bike Washing Stations | <br>Kayak Rentals    |
|                                              |  |                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                |                                                                                                           |



# What elements of wayfinding or amenities are most important to you?

Informational & directional signage

3.2

Safety, security & etiquette (or regulatory)

4.3

Educational or interactive features

3.3

Comfort and convenience features

3.3

Exercise and fitness features

2.8

Sustainability elements

3.0



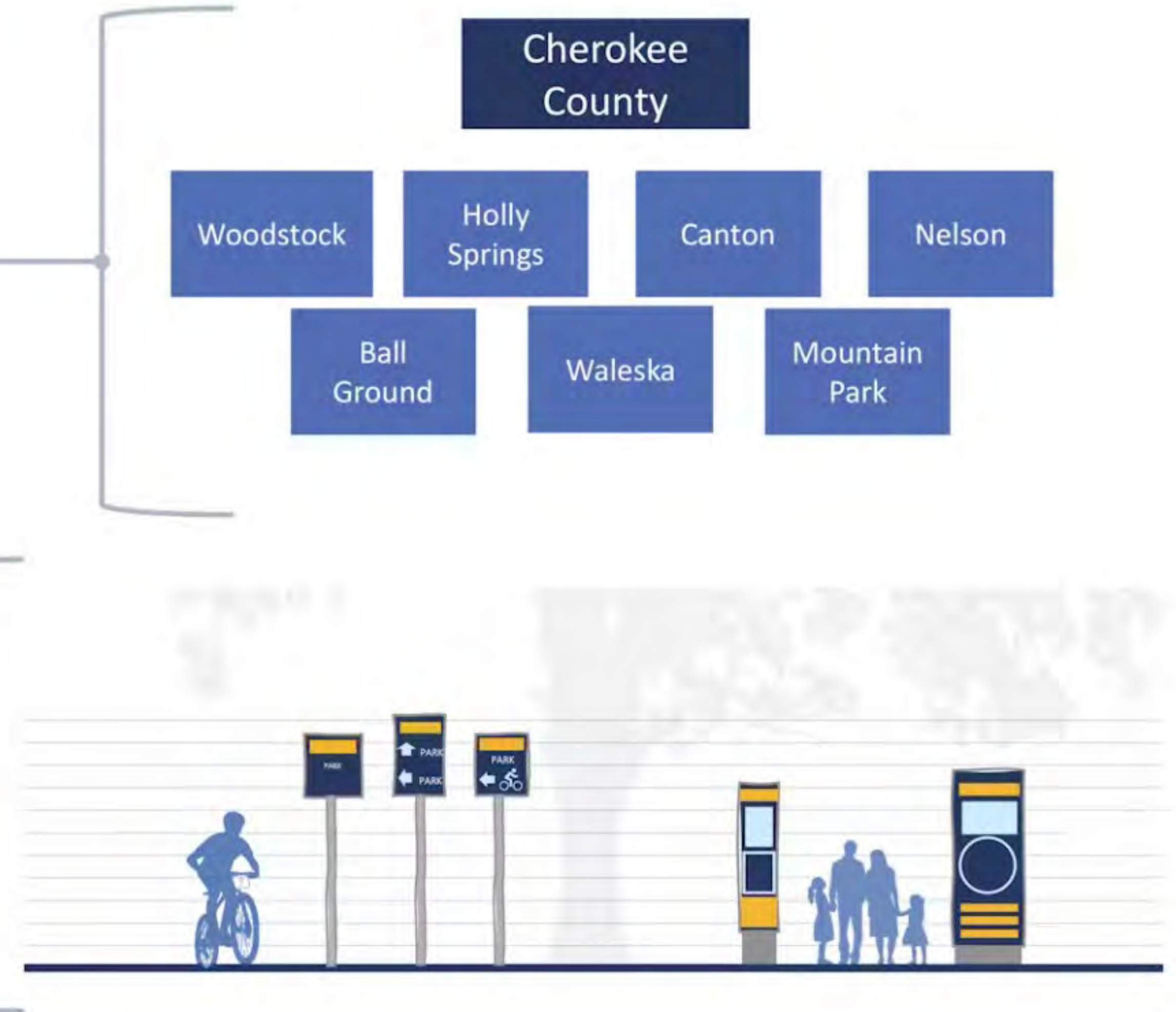
6





# Design Guidelines Considerations

- Branding
- Placement
- Guidance
- Clearance Requirements
- Regulations





# Additional Considerations

- Meaningful Nodes
  - Cultural
  - Ecological
  - Historical
- Trail Crossings
  - Sidepath to Greenway
  - Sidepath to Blueway
  - Greenway to Blueway
  - Greenway to Mountain Bike
  - Sidepath to Sidewalks
  - Self-Intersecting





# Project Evaluation/Prioritization





# Why Prioritize?

- We have identified over 200 possible trails. Surely, we can't do it all!
- Intention is to identify trail implementation in short-, mid-, and long-term timeframes
- Provide guide for next immediate steps



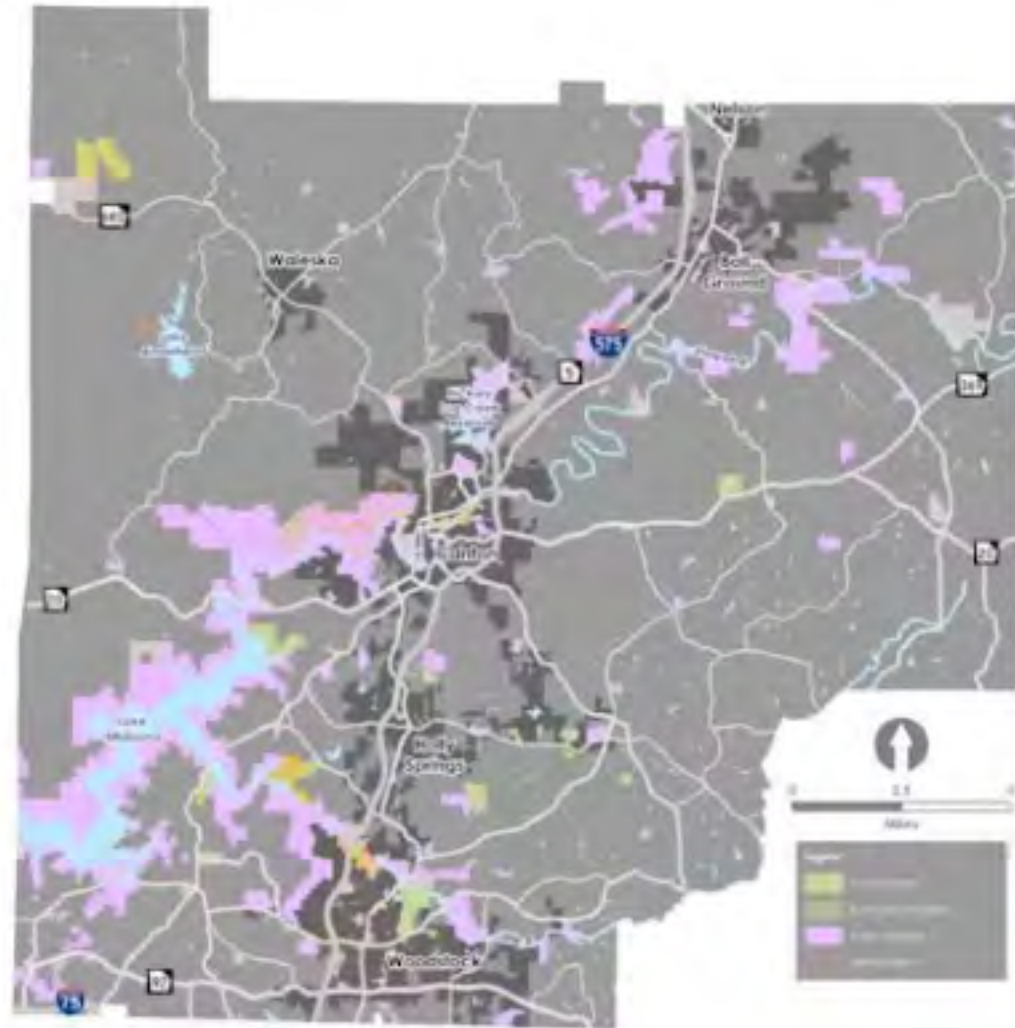


# Overall Approach to Prioritization





# Overall Approach to Prioritization



Public v.  
Private Land  
Ownership

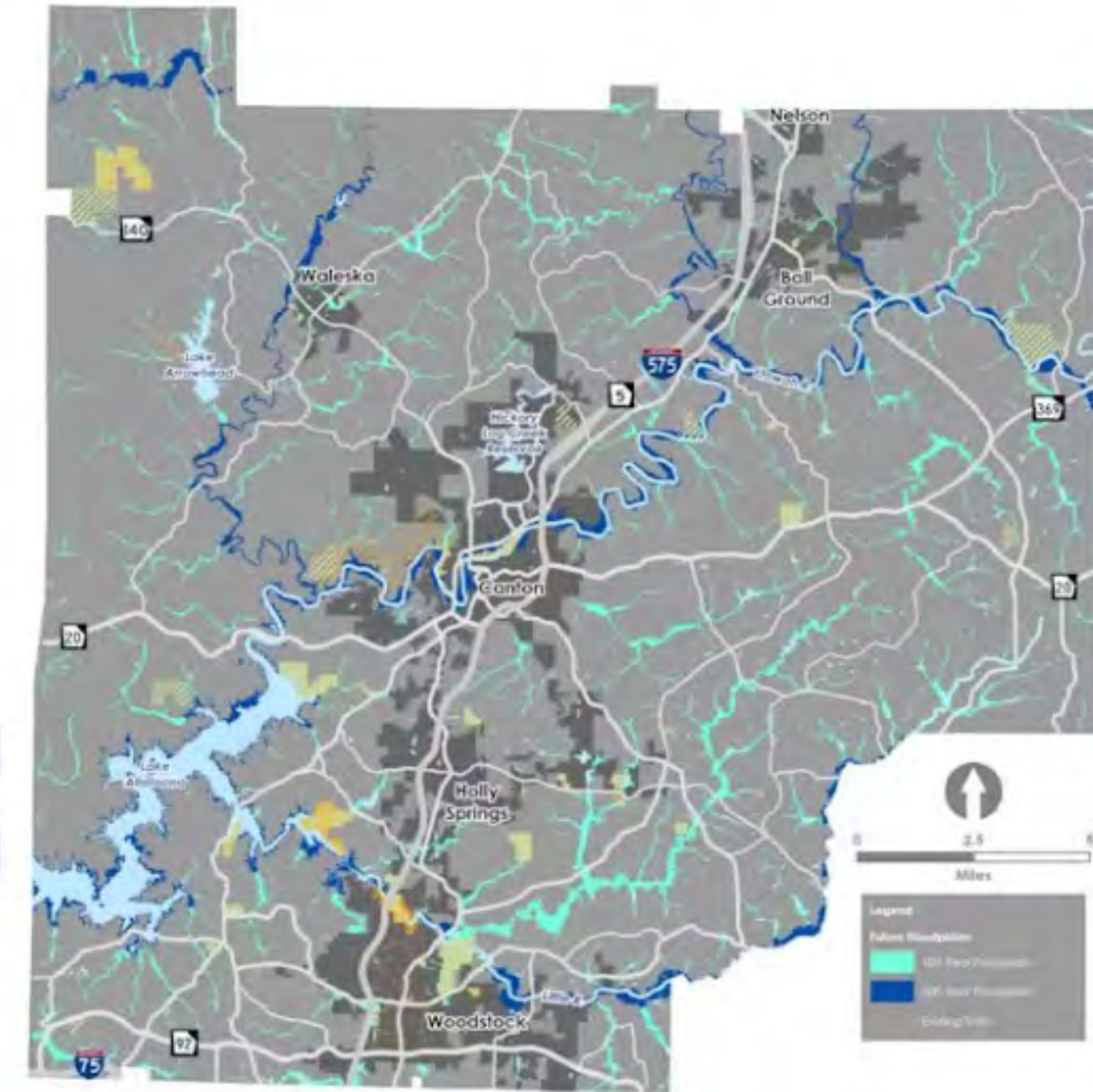


Topography



Anticipated Project Complexity  
likelihood of utility relocation and/or coordination with  
railroads and federal agencies

Environmental  
Screening

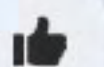




**Do you think the 4 Implementation Ease factors should be weighted equally? *(yes/no)***



■ 6 Yes  
■ 0 No



6





**If it was up to you, how would you weight the 4 Implementation Factors? Put them in priority order – highest to lowest.**

**1st**



**Topography**

**2nd**



**Project  
complexity**

**3rd**



**Public vs  
private land**

**4th**



**Environmental  
screening**

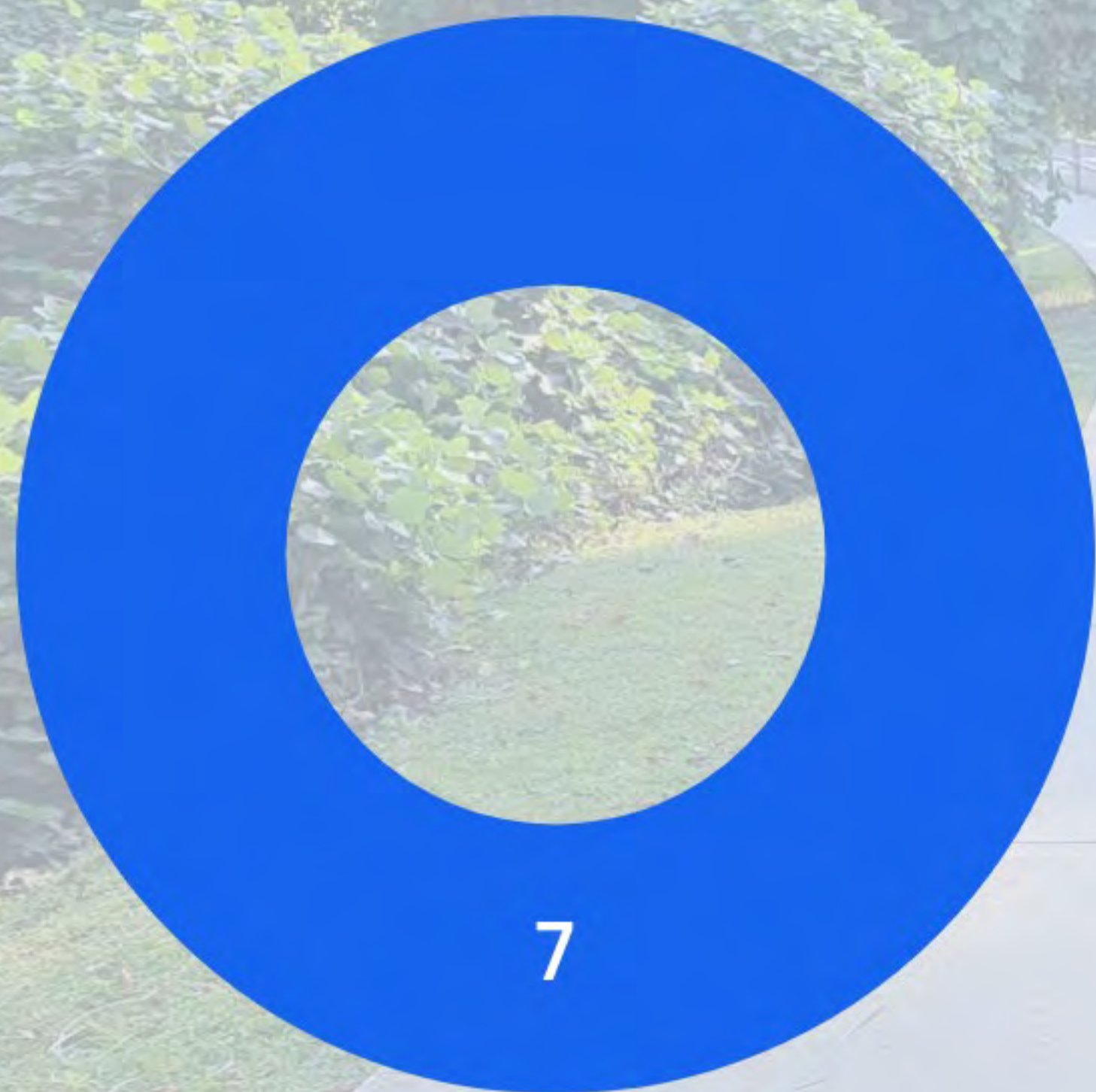


# Overall Approach to Prioritization

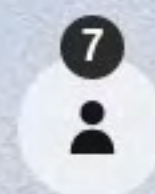
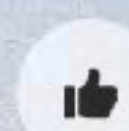




**Do you think the 2 Community Support factors should be weighted equally? *(yes/no)***

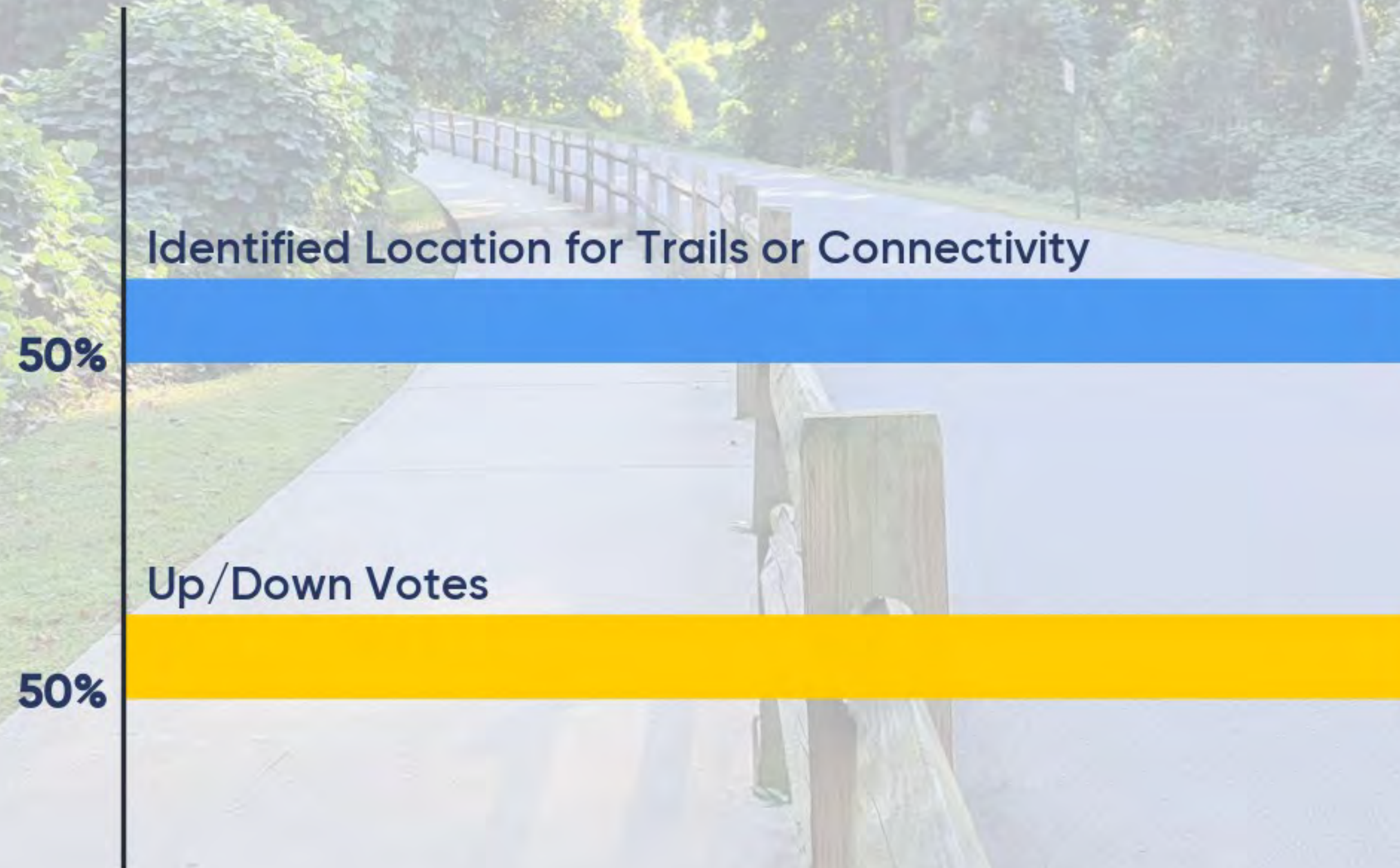


■ 7 Yes  
■ 0 No





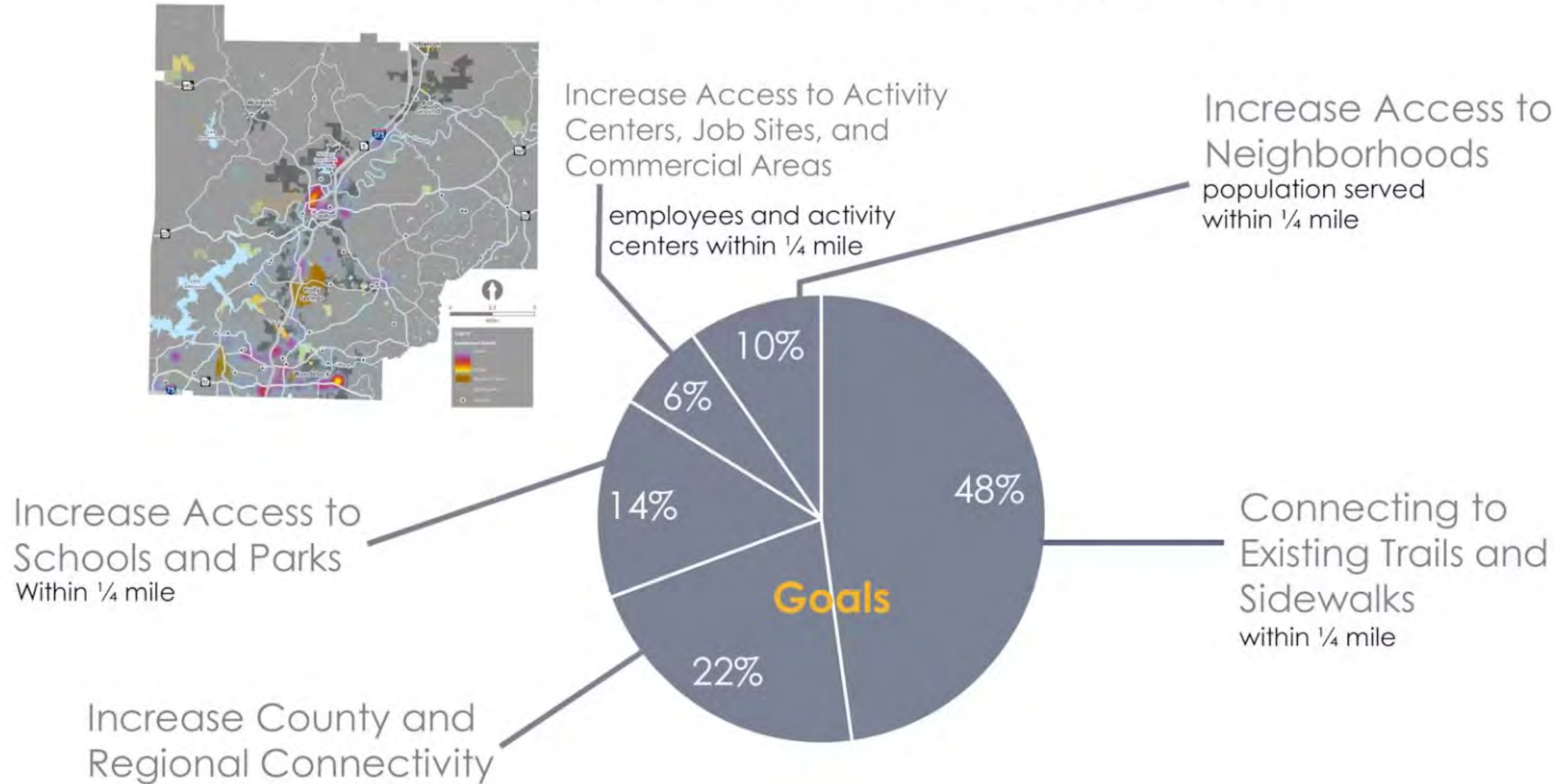
**If it was up to you, how would you weight the 2  
Community Support factors? Enter a percentage for  
each, out of 100.**





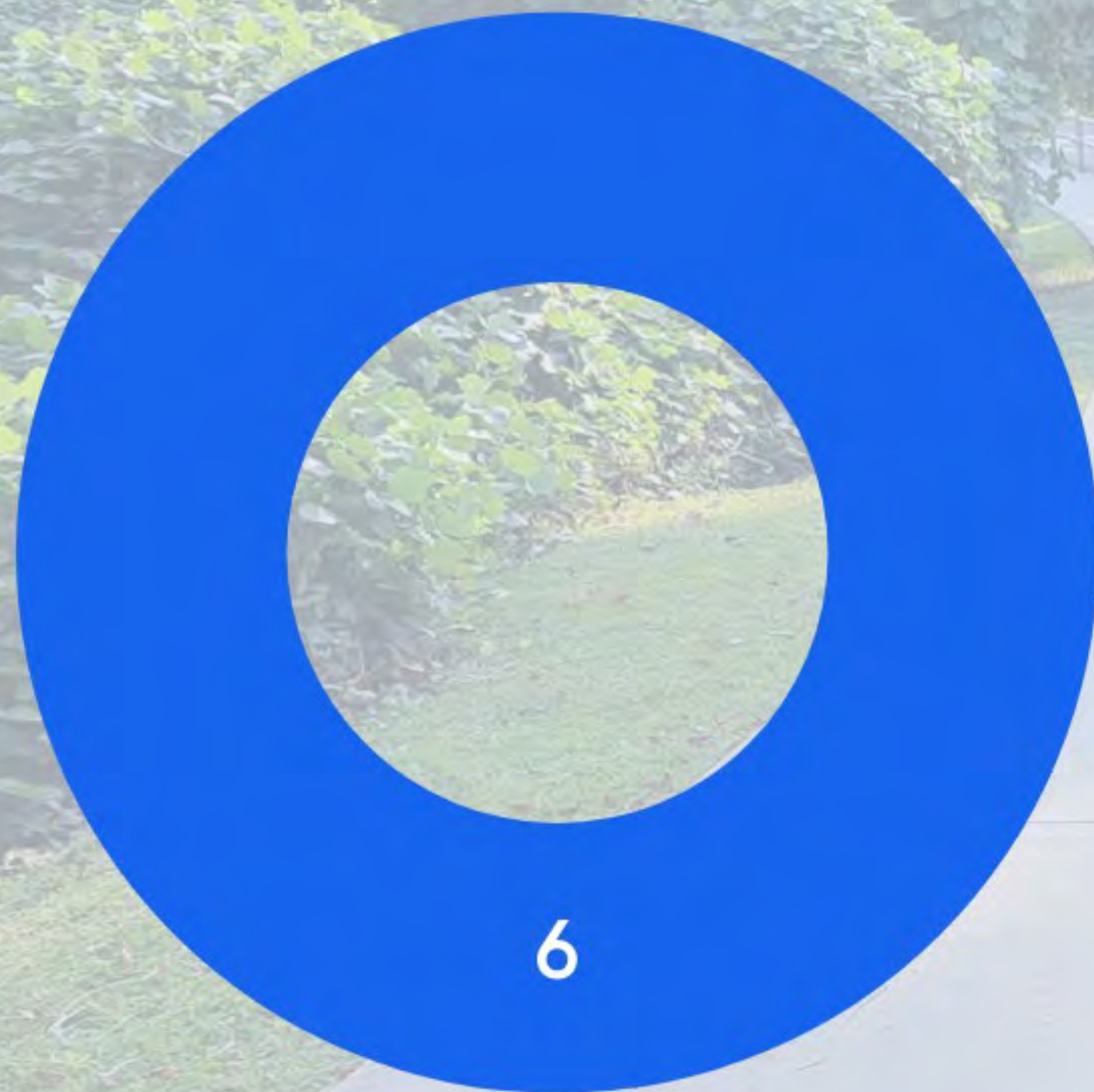
# Overall Approach to Prioritization

\* weighting based on previous ranking of priorities





**Do you agree with the current weighting of the 5 Goals (based on previous TAC and community feedback) or do you prefer weighting them equally?**



■ 6

Weight based on previous TAC and community feedback

■ 0

Weight equally



6





# Overall Approach to Prioritization





# Next Steps





# TAC Meeting Proposed Timeline

1. Listening/visioning – (in-person March 4)
2. Review of inventory, gaps and barriers (virtual mid-April)
3. Drafting trail network (in-person July)
4. Design guidelines (virtual early September)
5. Prioritization, Capital Development Program (in-person, October 29?)
6. Review draft plan (virtual early December)





# Upcoming Milestones

- Finalize stakeholder interviews
- Finalize updates to Trail Network
- Develop initial cut of Prioritization Process
- Lots of Public Meetings
- Capital Development Program
- Draft the Plan!





# Upcoming Events

## Pop Up Events:

- 10/4 – Canton First Friday
- 10/12 – Great Pumpkin Festival

## Community Meetings

- 10/23 – drop in style open house @ Bridgemill Fire Station
- 10/29 – drop in style open house @ LB Buzz Ahrens Jr. Recreation Center
- 10/30 – virtual public meeting

## Online Engagement

- 10/4 through 10/31





# Questions & Contact Information

**Bryan Reynolds** – Community Services Agency Director

[bdreynolds@cherokeega.com](mailto:bdreynolds@cherokeega.com)

770.345.6238

**Eric Lusher, AICP** – Consultant Team Project Manager

[eric.lusher@greshamsmith.com](mailto:eric.lusher@greshamsmith.com)

678.268.4285







## CHEROKEE COUNTY GREENWAYS & TRAILS MASTER PLAN

### TRAIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC)

Meeting Date: September 13, 2024 | 10:30am – 12:00pm

Location: Virtual (Microsoft Teams)

Topic: Trail Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting #4 Summary

#### Attendees

Eric Lusher – Gresham Smith, Consultant Project Manager  
Andrew Smith – Gresham Smith  
Ashley Crespo-Calamia – VHB  
Bryan Reynolds – Cherokee County Community Services  
Catherine Long – Cherokee County Planning & Zoning  
Margaret Stallings – Cherokee County Planning & Zoning  
Steve Shrout – Cherokee County Recreation & Parks  
Heath Tippens – Cherokee County Office of Economic Development  
Greg Powell – Cherokee Area Transit Service  
Mitch Hamilton – Cherokee County School District  
Chris Luly – City of Ball Ground  
Steve Pressley – Cherokee County Recreation & Parks  
Kayla Husted - GDOT

#### Summary

##### **1. Meeting Overview & Project Refresher**

- a. Eric Lusher, consultant project manager from Gresham Smith, gave a brief project refresher including plan goals and objectives, the role of a trail system in Cherokee County, and the project schedule.

##### **2. Design Guidance**

- a. Andrew Smith with Gresham Smith provided an overview of the proposed design guidance for greenways and trails within Cherokee County. He began with a discussion on user profiles to have in mind when planning a successful trail and greenway system which provides a range of experiences, get people to and from

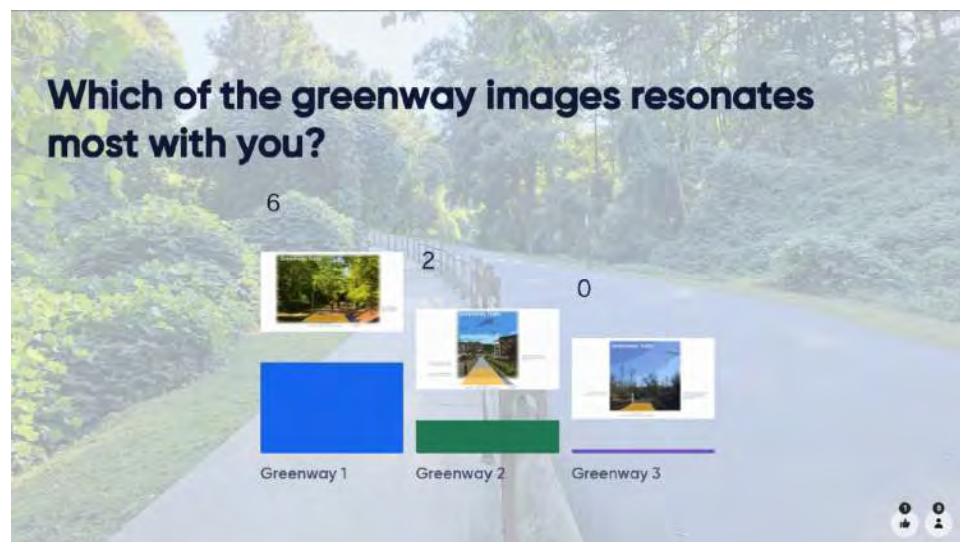
**Genuine Ingenuity**





destinations, promote safety and comfort, and include amenities, signage, and wayfinding. The user profiles Andrew mentioned are casual socializing, utilitarian trips, nature/outdoor enjoyment, and exercise/fitness.

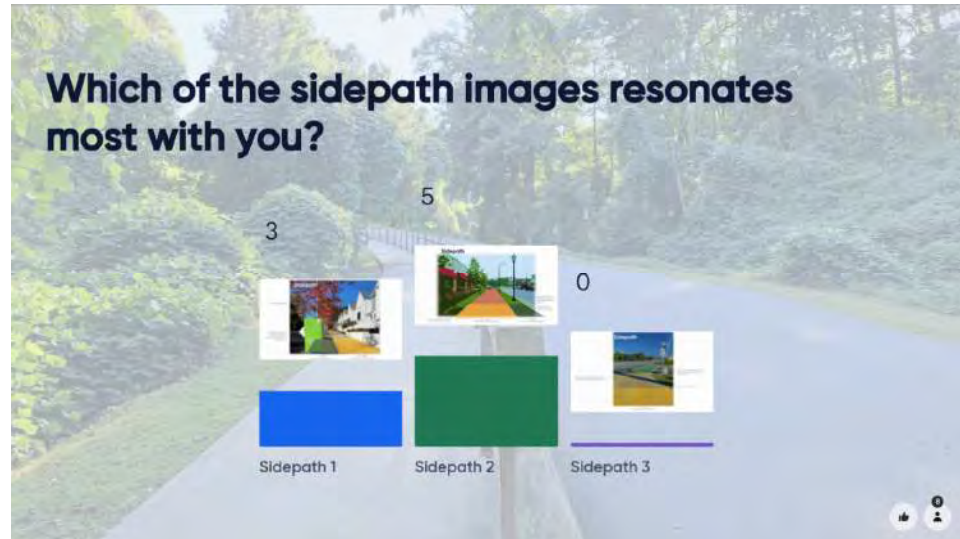
- b. Andrew went over use cases, considerations, design, and additional guidance for greenways, sidepaths, soft surface trails, mountain bike trails, and blueways.
- c. Each typology also included two to three examples of representative imagery which attendees then voted on to determine which they felt resonated with them most in terms of implementing in Cherokee County. The results are as follows:
  - i. Greenway Trails



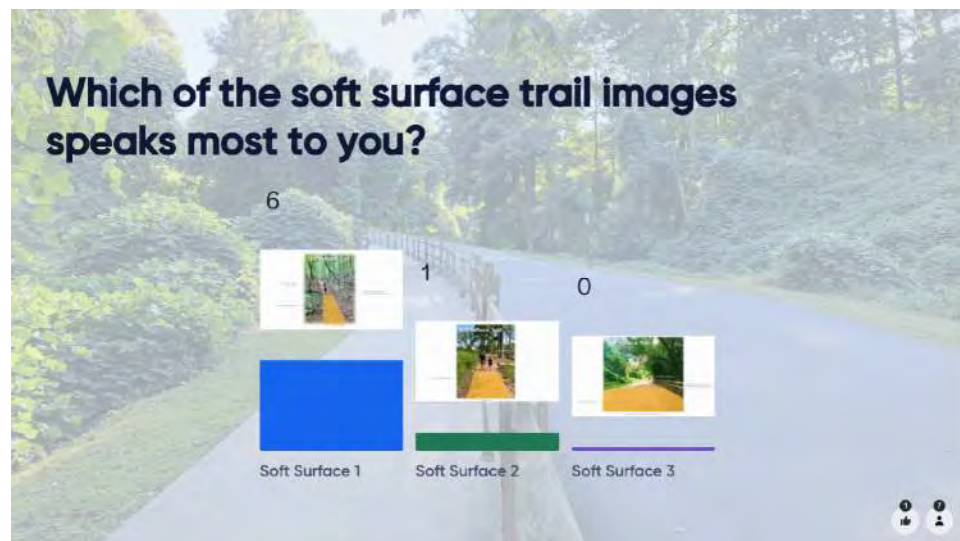




ii. Sidepaths



iii. Soft Surface Trails



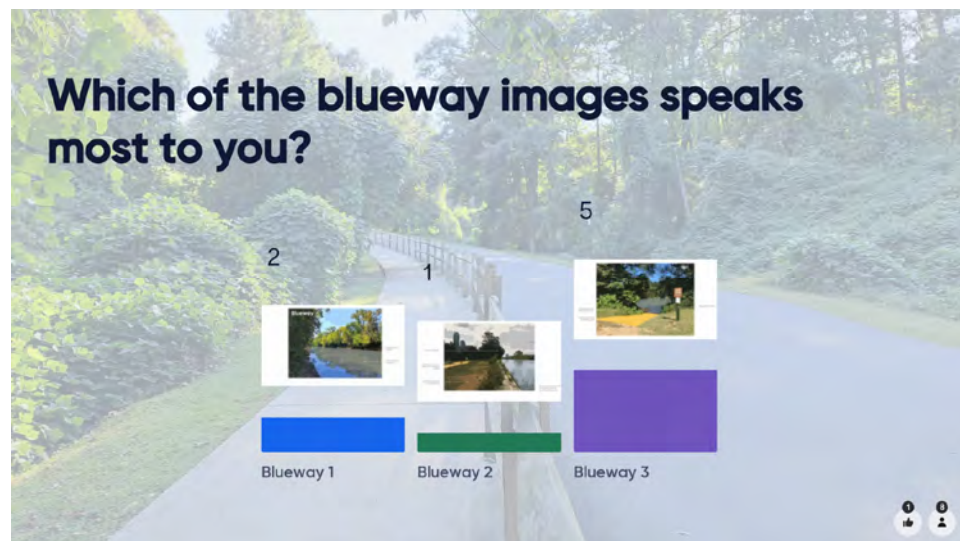




iv. Mountain Bike Trails



v. Blueways



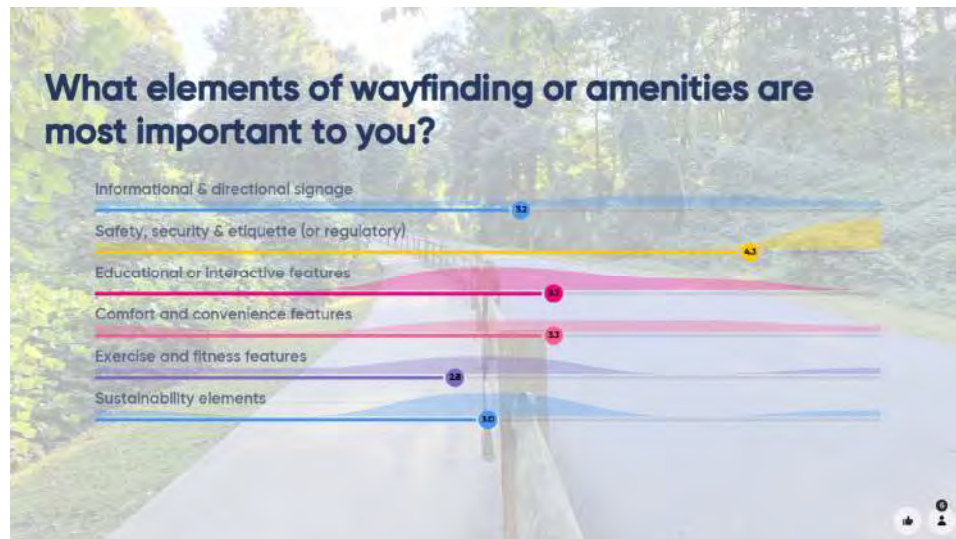
- vi. Lastly, Andrew asked attendees if there was anything missing from the design guidance that the consultant team should consider including and the main feedback received was that the images are each appropriate depending on the surrounding environment. There was also a desire for viewing platforms across different trail types.





### 3. Overview of Amenities and Wayfinding

- a. Ashley Crespo-Calamia with VHB went over different amenities and wayfinding features that are applicable to each trail typology. The themes covered included information, directional, and wayfinding; safety, security, and etiquette; educational interactive and technologically enhanced; comfort and convenience; recreation and leisure; fitness and exercise; and sustainability.
- b. Following this portion of the presentation, Ashley asked participants to rank on a scale of 1 to 5 what elements of wayfinding or amenities are most important, and the top ranked element was “safety, security, and etiquette.”



### 4. Project Evaluation/Prioritization

- a. Eric went over the proposed project prioritization framework which consists of weighing three factors equally including goals, implementation ease, and community support. Eric went over each of the three components of the framework in further detail.
- b. Eric explained that implementation ease will consist of four equally weighed elements (25% each):
  - i. Public v Private Land Ownership
  - ii. Topography
  - iii. Environmental Screening





- iv. Anticipated Project Complexity
- c. Eric discussed community support and how identified locations for trails/connectivity and up/down votes for each project will be weighted equally under this category.
- d. The goals category includes specific weighting based on previous community and TAC feedback. The TAC confirmed this weighting should be used as follows:
  - i. Connecting to Existing Trails and Sidewalks (within ¼ mile) – 48%
  - ii. Increase County and Regional Connectivity – 22%
  - iii. Increase Access to Schools and Parks (within ¼ mile) – 14%
  - iv. Increase access to neighborhoods (population served within ¼ mile) – 10%
  - v. Increase Access to Activity Centers, Job Sites, and Commercial Areas (within ¼ mile) – 6%

## 5. Next Steps

- a. Eric concluded the presentation by discussing upcoming milestones and next steps, including the 5<sup>th</sup> TAC meeting which is tentatively scheduled for October 29<sup>th</sup> to present preliminary prioritization results and the capital development program.
- b. Upcoming events Eric listed include the following:
  - i. Pop-Up Events
    - Canton First Friday – Friday, October 4<sup>th</sup>
    - Great Pumpkin Festival – Saturday, October 12<sup>th</sup>
  - ii. Community Meetings
    - Bridgemill Fire Station – Wednesday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>
    - LB Buzz Ahrens Jr. Recreation Center – Tuesday, October 29<sup>th</sup>
    - Virtual Community Open House – Wednesday, October 30<sup>th</sup>
  - iii. Online engagement through the Social Pinpoint page will be open from October 4<sup>th</sup> through October 31<sup>st</sup>.

## Attachments

- Final TAC #4 Meeting Presentation



Cherokee County  
*Greenways & Trails Master Plan*

Trail Advisory Committee Meeting #5  
October 29, 2024



# Today's Meeting Agenda

- Project Overview and Update
- Trail Type Refresher
- Draft Network Recommendations & Priority Projects
- Breakout Groups
- Next Steps





# Project Overview and Update





# Objectives

Work across boundaries, with local jurisdictions and community members to develop a prioritized list of projects that align with overall County goals and objectives to create a trail and greenway system that promotes economic development, recreation, and transportation.



**A Vision and Goals to Guide Future Development**

**Document Existing State of Greenways & Trails**

**Promote Decision-Making Grounded in Guiding Principles and Best Practices**

**Recommend Design Criteria and Guidelines**

**Recommend Future Connections and Extensions in Coordination with Municipalities, Neighboring Cities, and Counties**

**Provide Guidance on Partnerships, Funding, Operations & Maintenance**

**Identify Priority Corridors and Projects**





Winter

Spring

Summer

Fall

2

Analysis of Existing Trail Network  
and Physical Conditions

WE ARE HERE

3

Community & Stakeholder  
Engagement

3 Open Houses &  
Interactive Map

Stakeholder Interviews

Pop Up Events

3 Open Houses &  
Interactive Map

Trail Advisory  
Committee

4

Trail & Greenway  
Network Development

5

Design Standards and  
Guidelines

6

Capital Development  
Program and  
Strategies

7

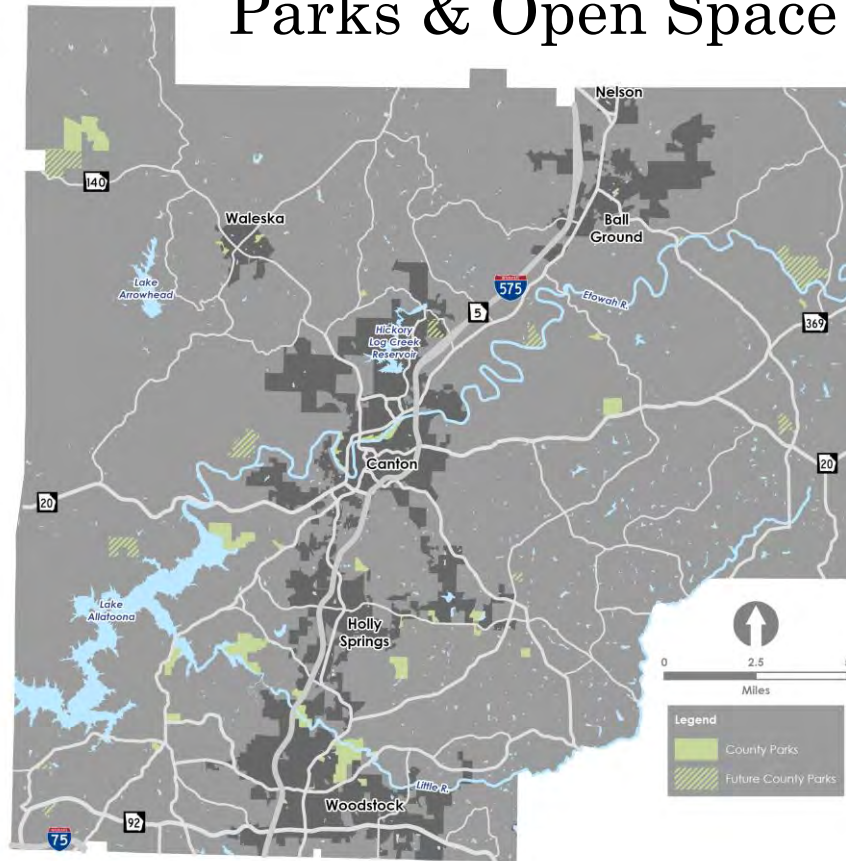
Draft & Final Plan



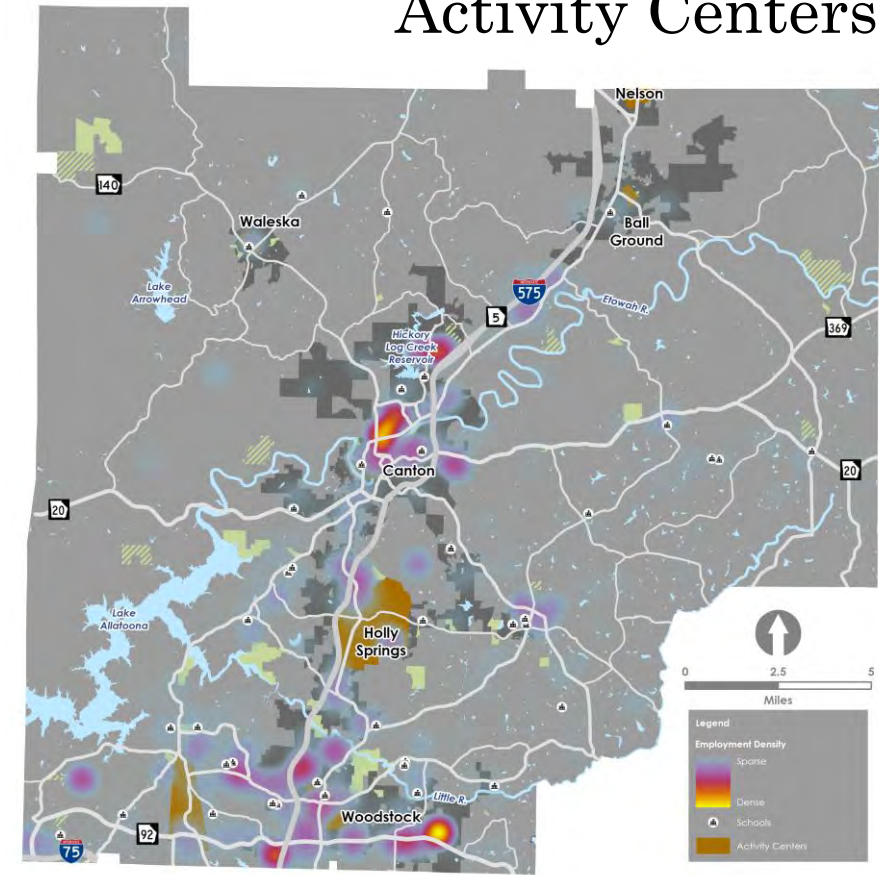


# Existing Conditions: Points of Interest

## Parks & Open Space



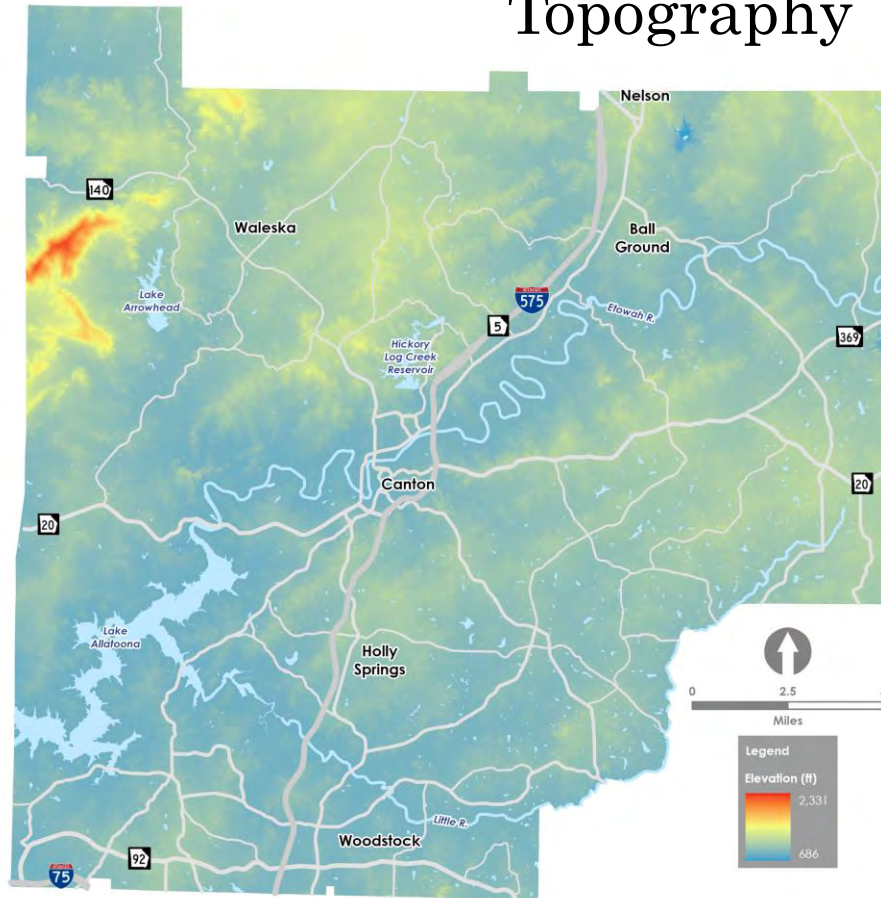
## Activity Centers



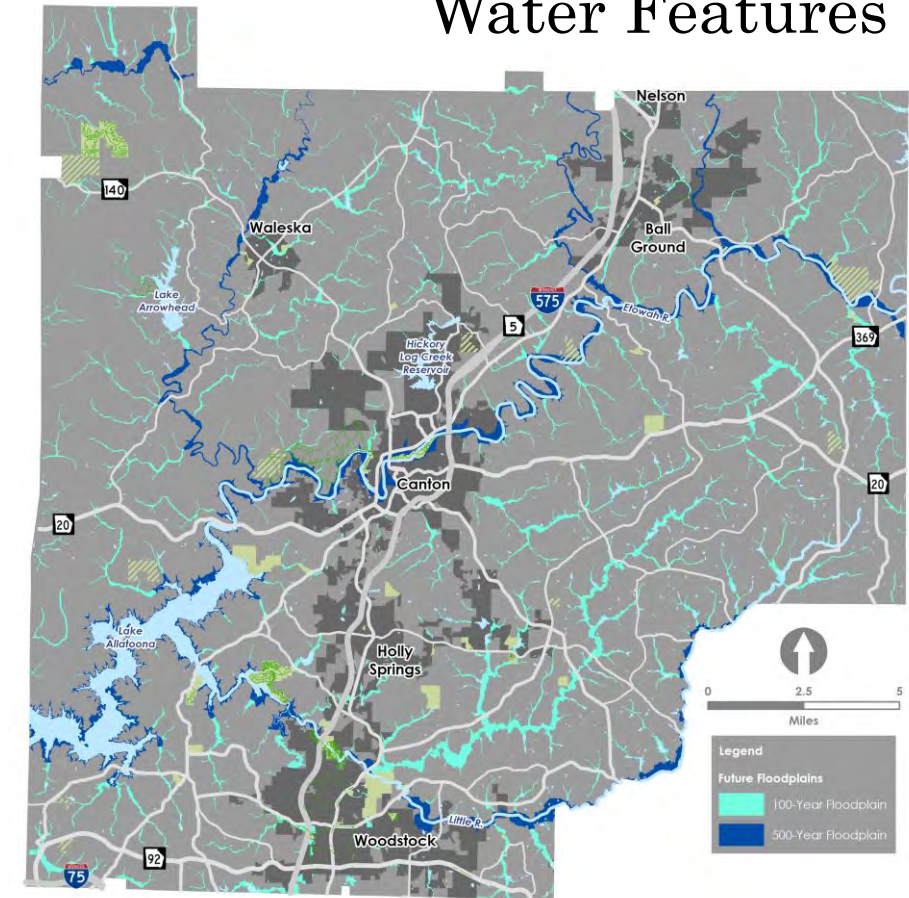


# Existing Conditions: Natural Features

## Topography



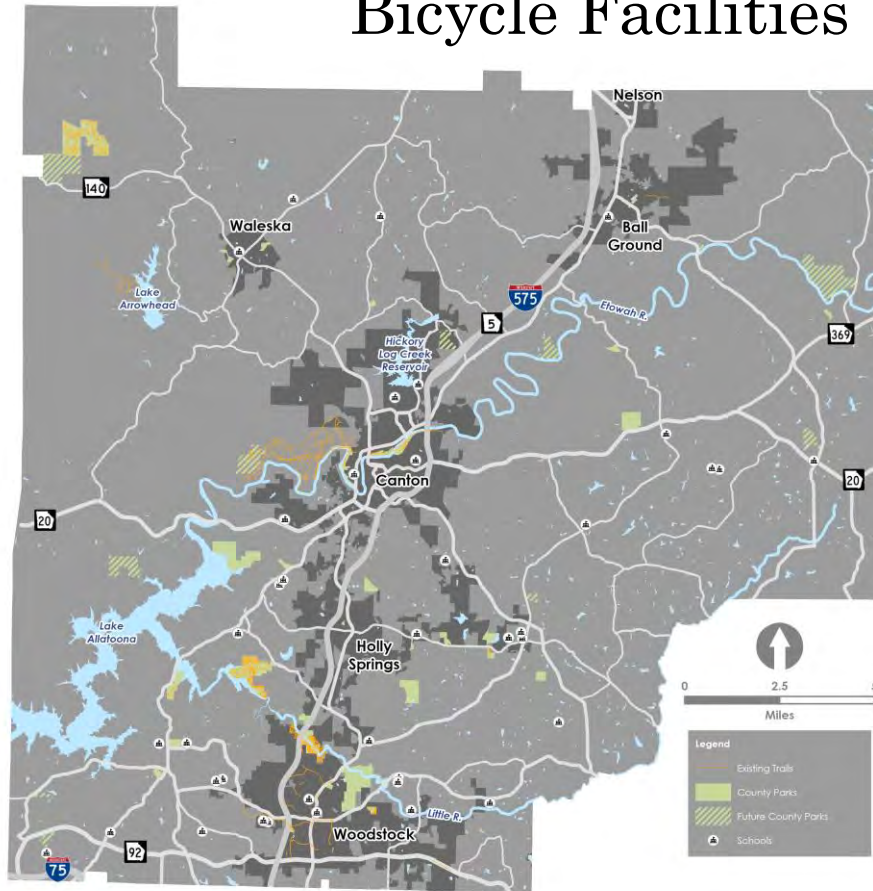
## Water Features



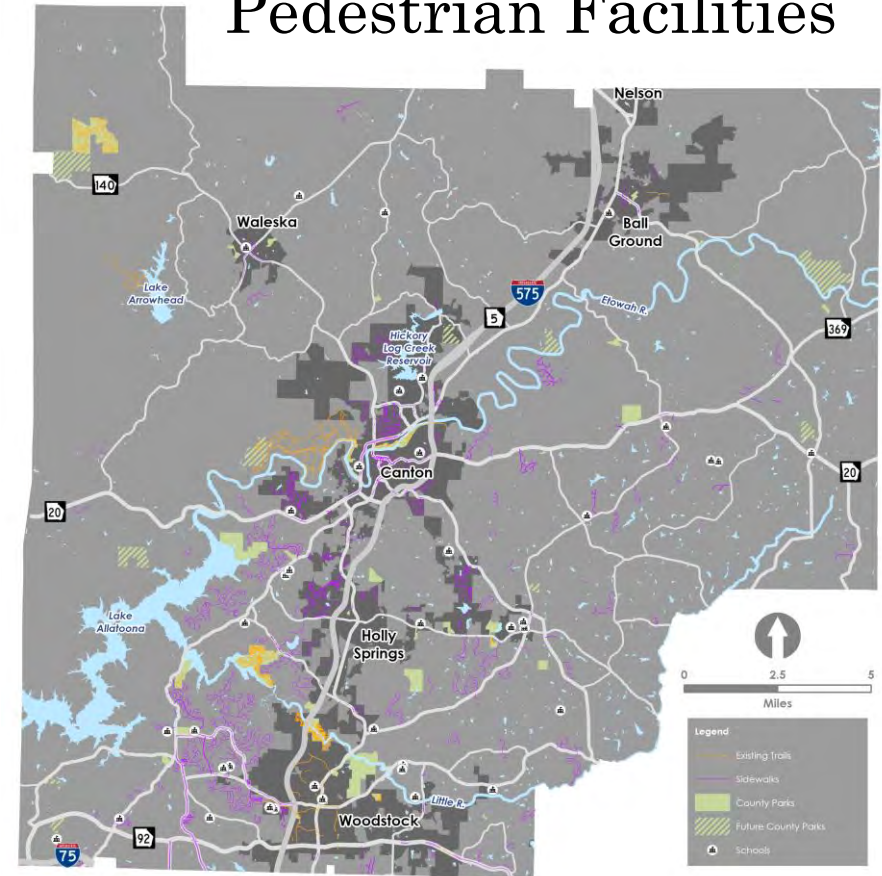


# Existing Conditions: Existing Infrastructure

## Bicycle Facilities



## Pedestrian Facilities





# Round 1 Engagement Activities



May 9, 2024 - Woodstock



May 14, 2024 - Canton



## Cherokee County Greenways & Trails Master Plan

Virtual Community Open House

May 16, 2024

Virtual Public Meeting



May 11, 2024 - Woodstock Farmers Market



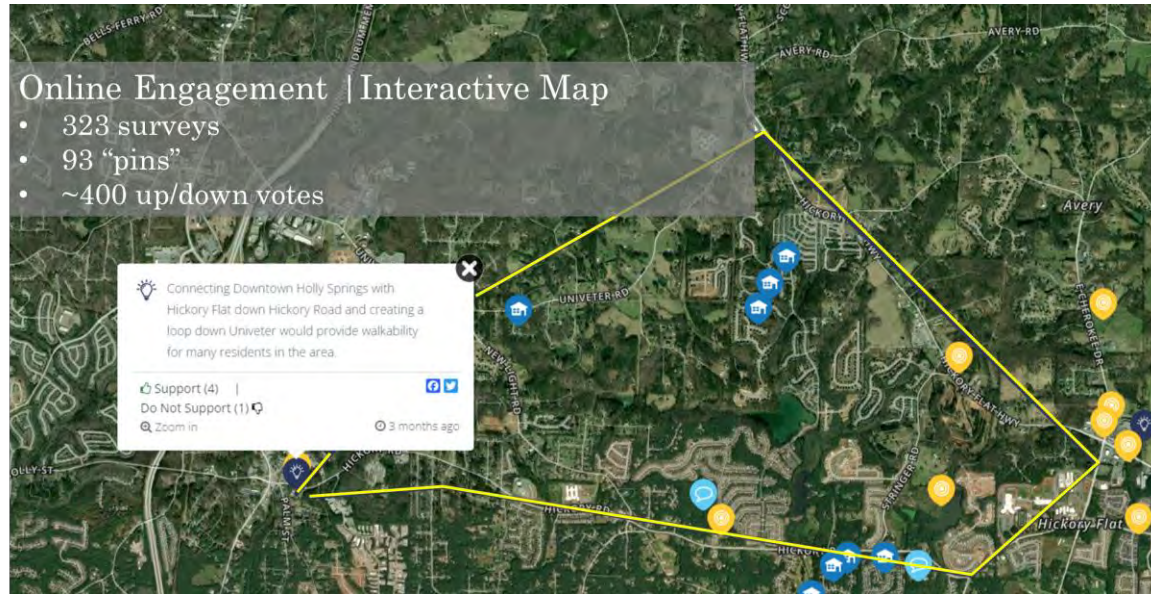
Cherokee County  
*Greenways & Trails Master Plan*

Trail Advisory Committee Meeting #5  
October 29, 2024

Cherokee County  
1831  
GEORGIA

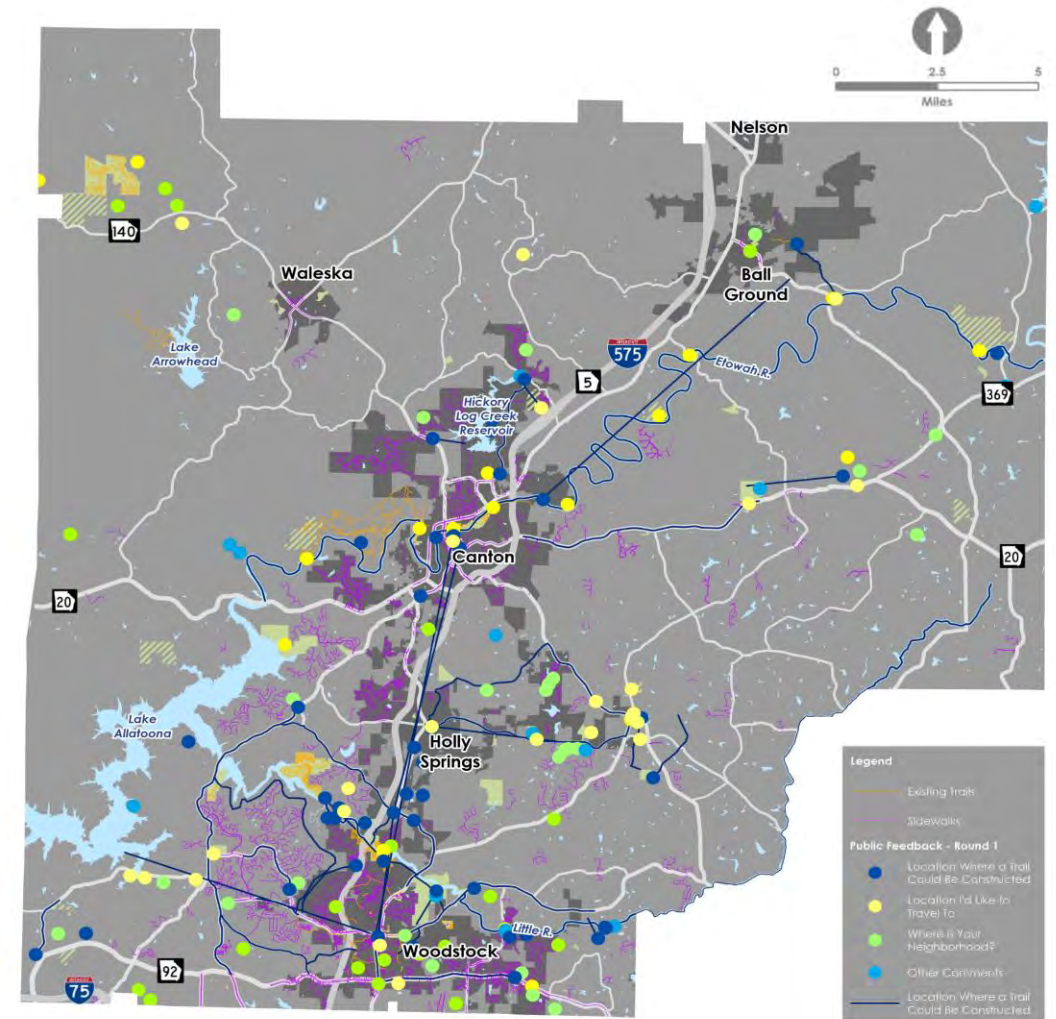


# Round 1 Feedback Received



## Themes From Visioning

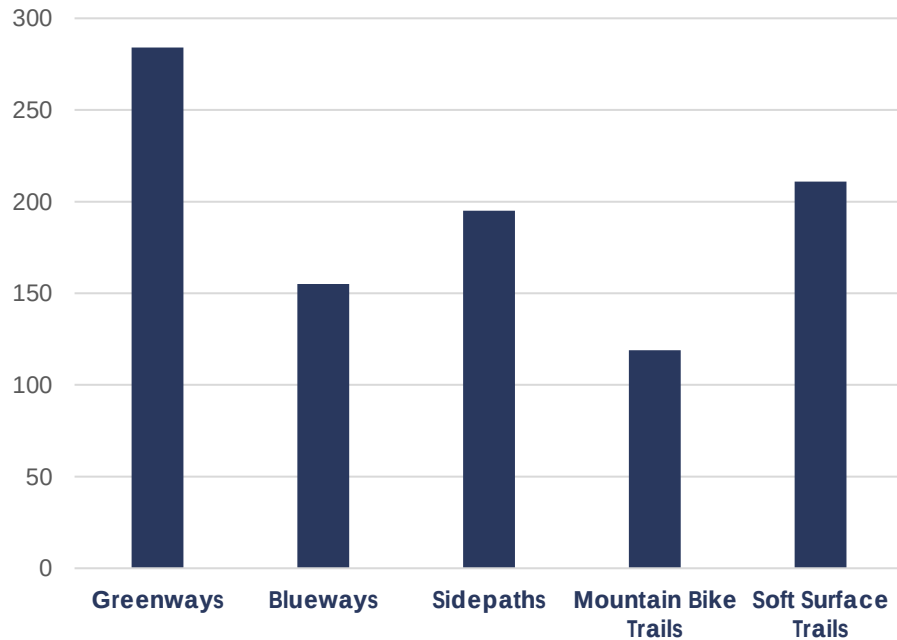
- Connectivity
- Health
- Nature
- Preservation
- Recreation
- Safety
- Walkability
- Conservation
- Network
- Continuity



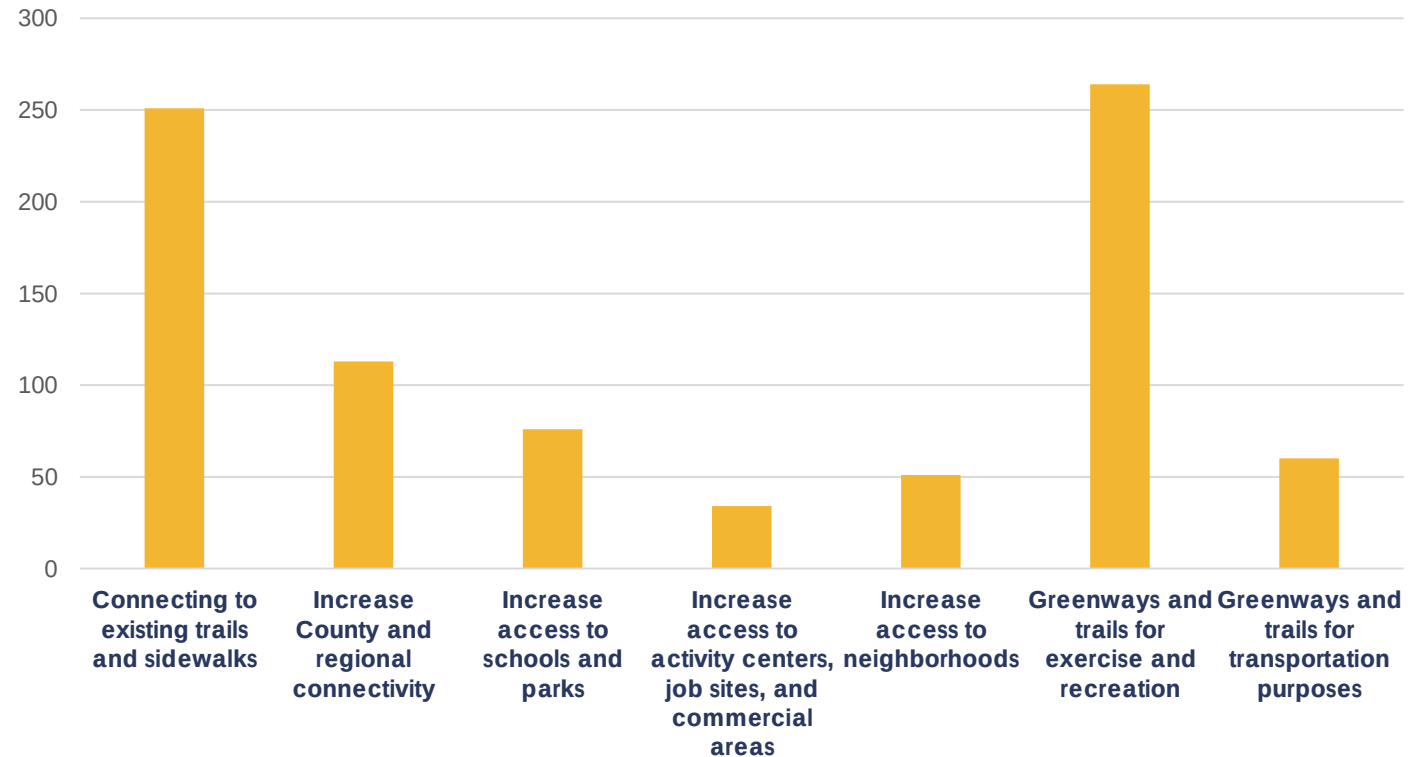


# Round 1 Feedback Received

## Preferred Trail Types



## Priorities for the Network





# Trail Types Refresher





# Greenway Trails



10' vertical clearance  
(8' min)

Wayfinding and  
directional signage,  
distance markers

10-14' width  
Materials: concrete, asphalt, or boardwalk

3-5' shoulder  
(2' min)





# Sid path

Trees provide shade

Branded wayfinding and  
etiquette signage to  
communicate location,  
distance to destinations,  
and rules for trail use



5' buffer  
(2' min in constrained areas)

10-14' width  
Materials: generally concrete





# Soft Surface Trail





# Mountain Bike Trail

Optional amenities



Sloped trail allows  
water to drain



Obstacles and varied  
terrain increase  
difficulty and cyclist  
enjoyment



*Driftwood Trail Allatoona Creek Park  
(Credit: PKRohnert, via Trailforks.com)*







Stable platform for  
viewing and access

Textured ramp with  
moderate grade

Regulatory  
signage



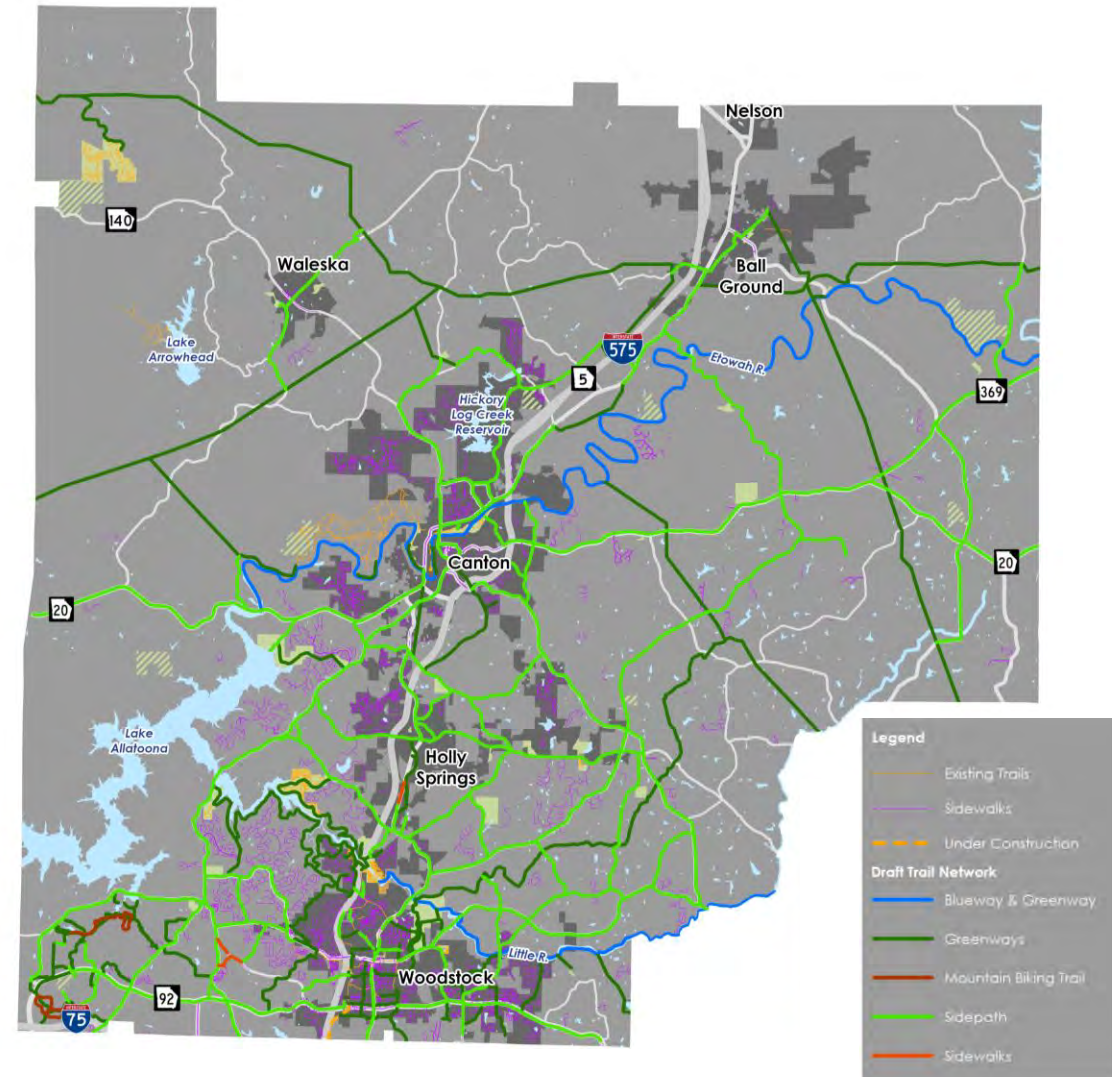
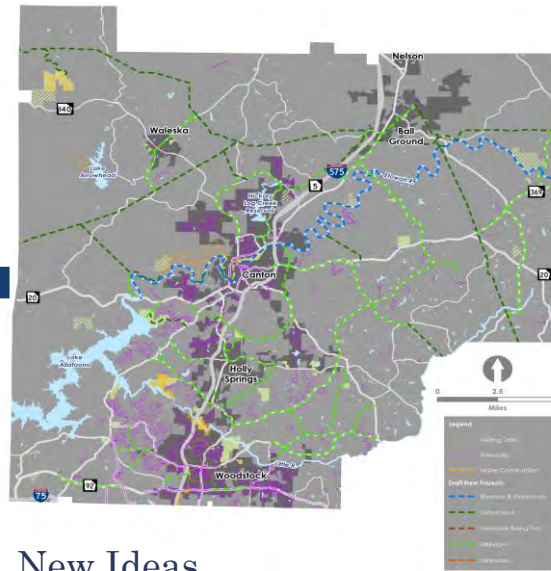
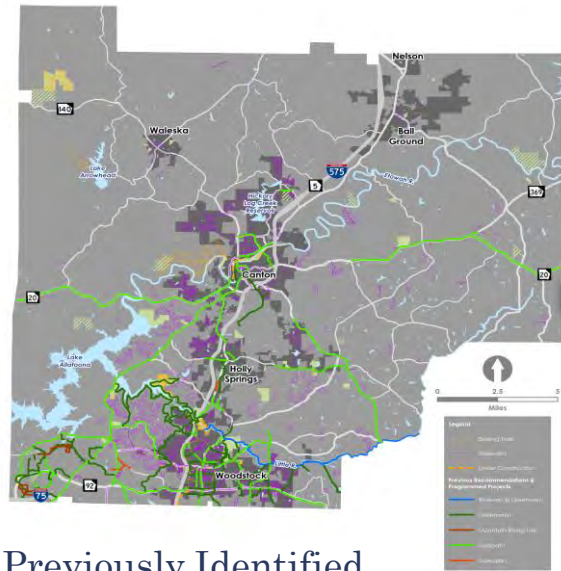


# Draft Network Recommendations & Priority Projects





# Draft Recommendations Components





# Overall Approach to Prioritization

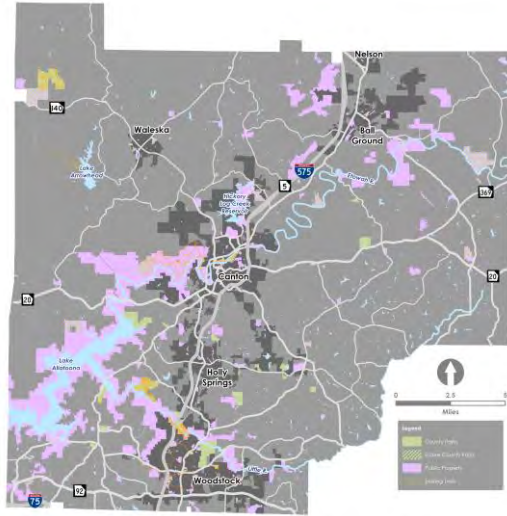
## Why Prioritize?

- We have identified over 200 possible trails. Surely, we can't do it all!
- Intention is to identify trail implementation in short-, mid-, and long-term timeframes
- Provide guide for next immediate steps

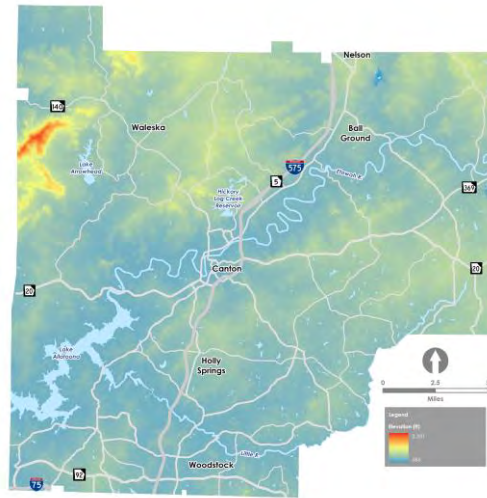




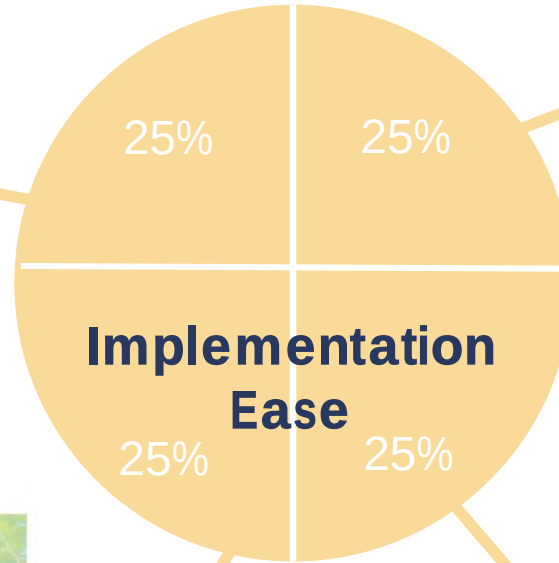
# Overall Approach to Prioritization



Public v.  
Private Land  
Ownership

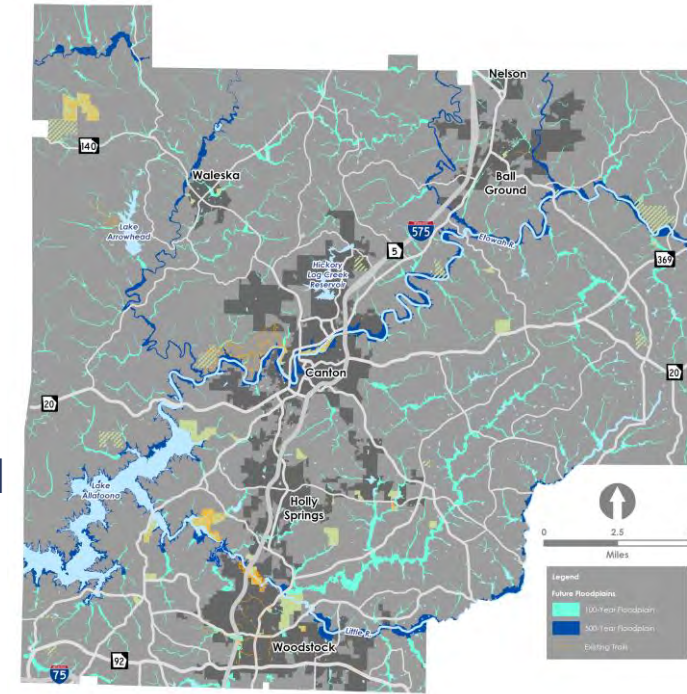


Topography



Anticipated Project Complexity  
likelihood of utility relocation and/or coordination with  
railroads and federal agencies

Environmental  
Screening

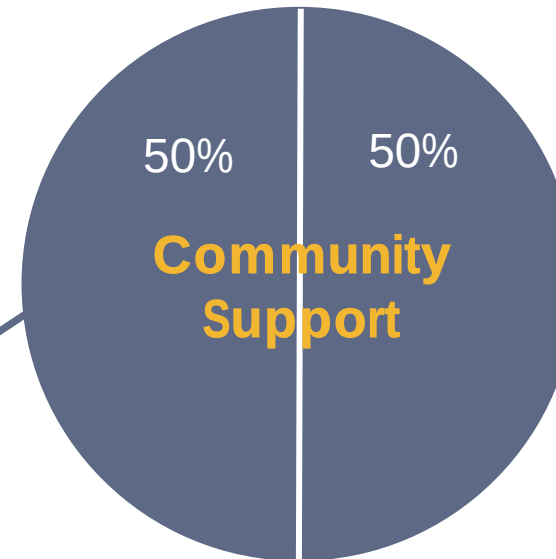




# Overall Approach to Prioritization



Identified Location for  
Trails or Connectivity



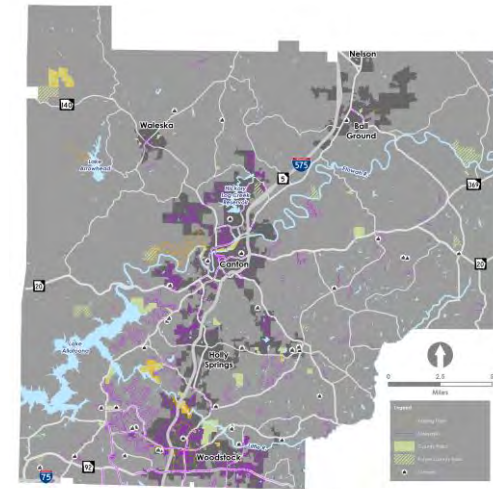
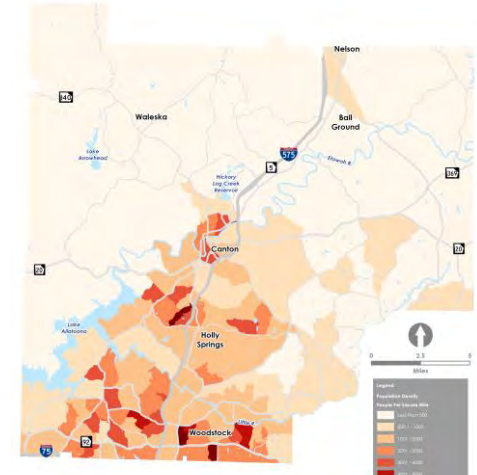
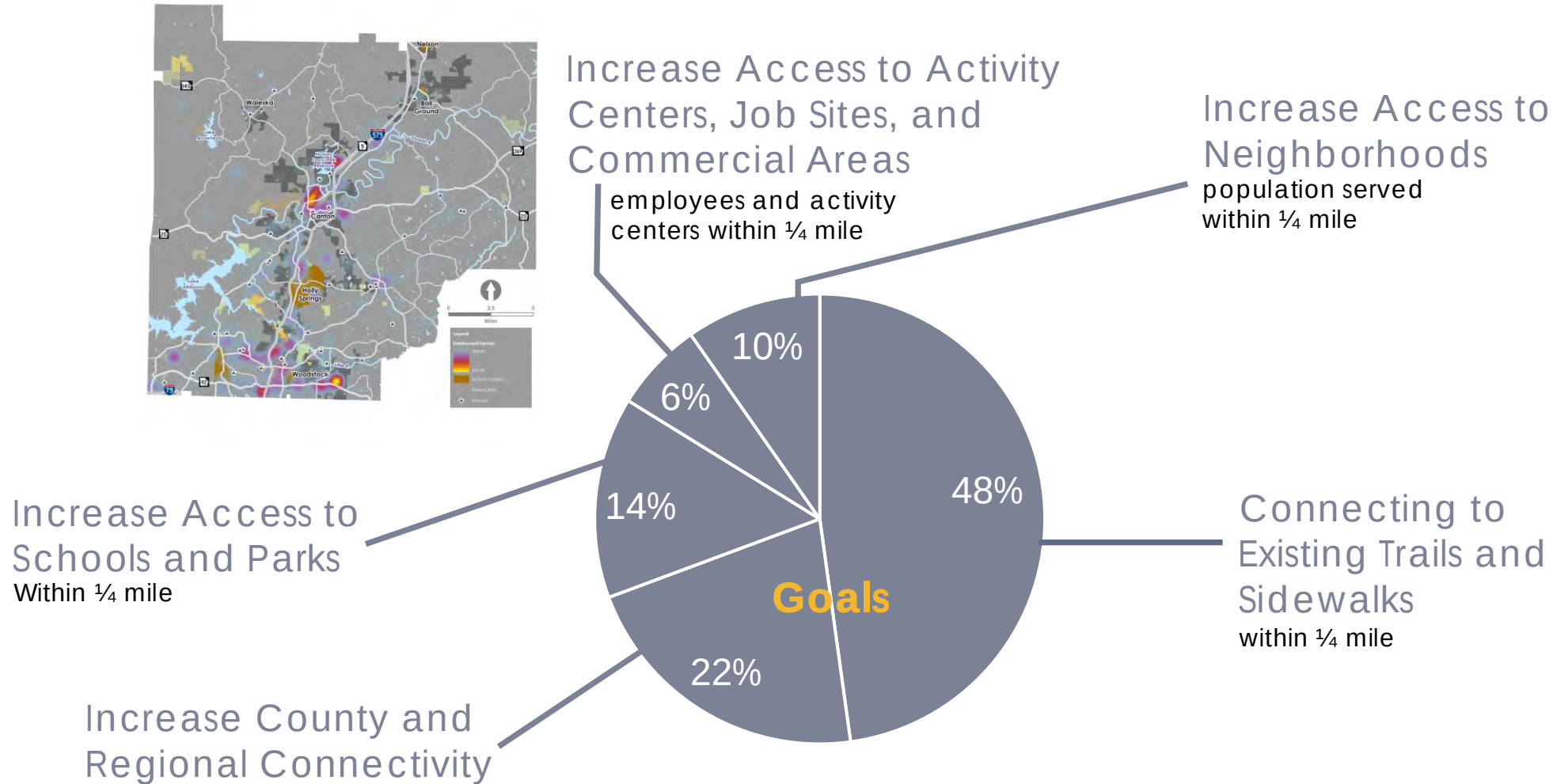
Up/Down  
Votes on Projects





# Overall Approach to Prioritization

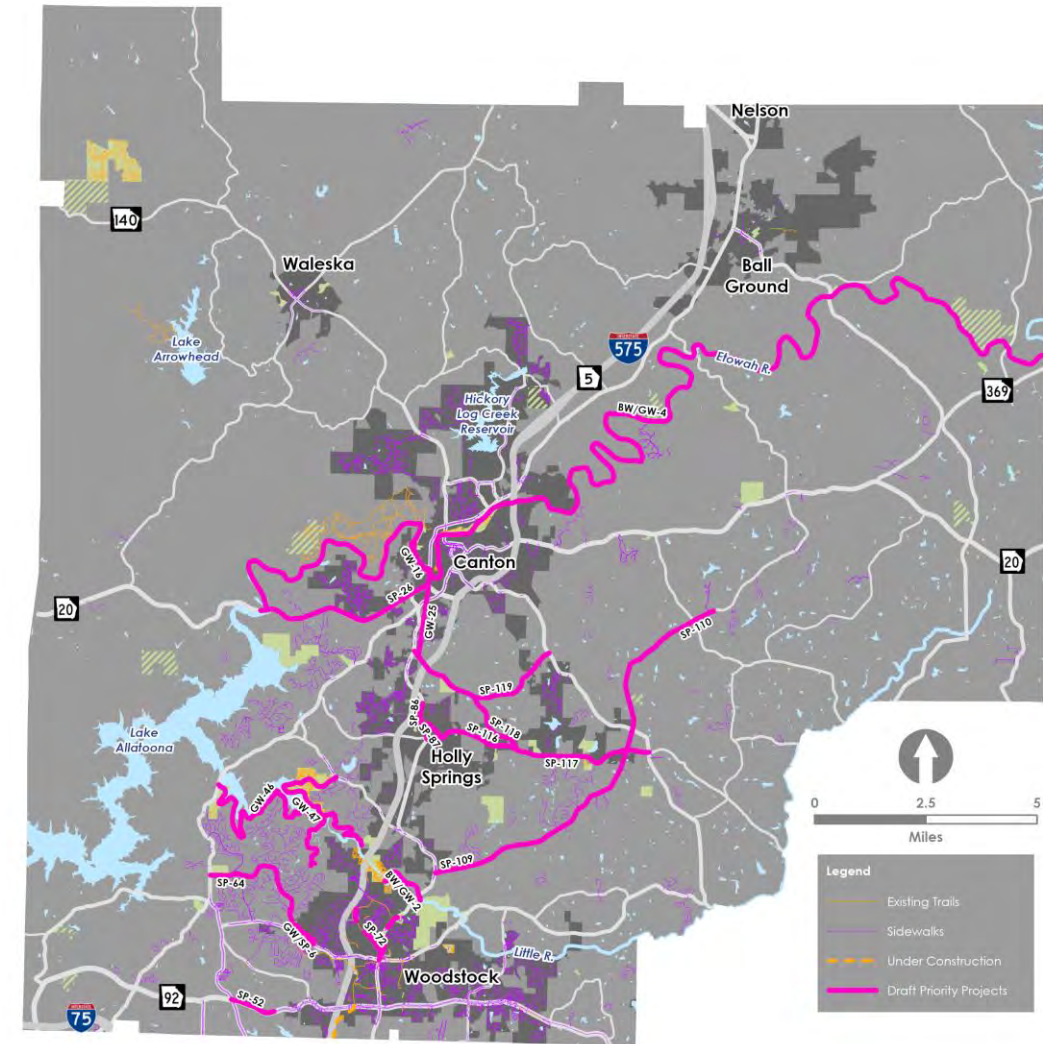
\* weighting based on previous ranking of priorities





# Draft Priority Projects

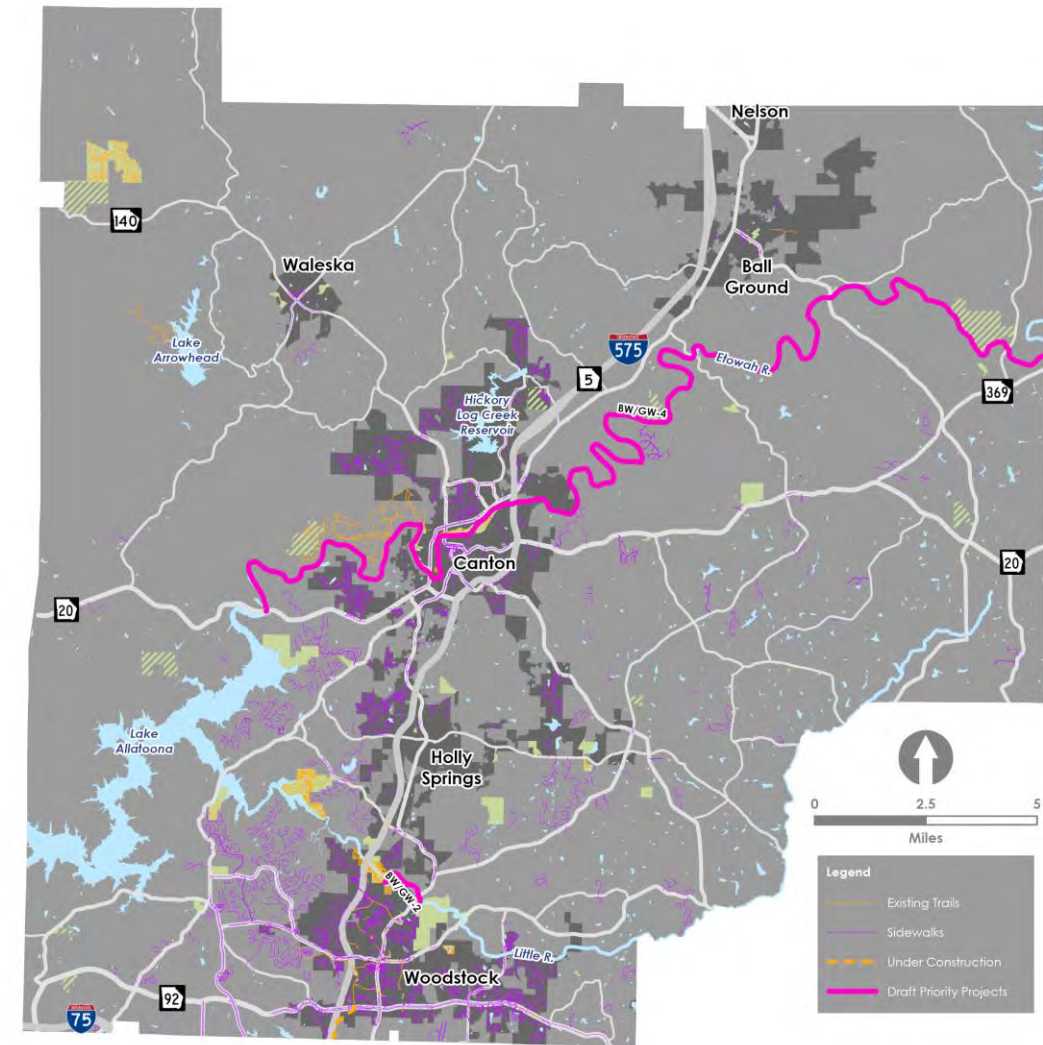
- Scores ranged from 44 to 230 (out of 300 possible points)
- 20 projects (or top 10 percent) of recommendations
- Consists of:
  - 2 blueway/greenway projects
  - 4 greenway projects
  - 1 greenway/sidepath project
  - 13 sidepath projects





# Priority Blueways

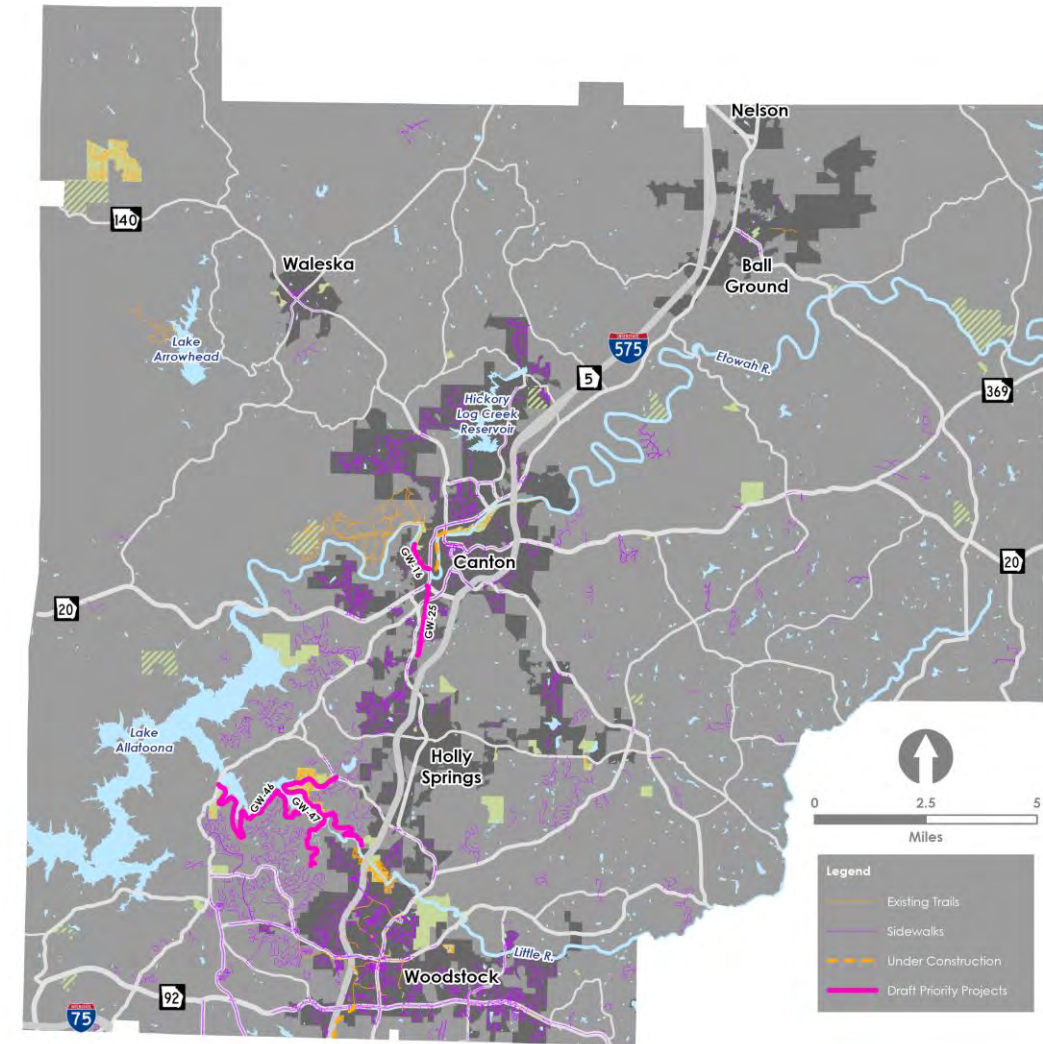
- Etowah River Blueway (BW/GW-4)
  - Newly proposed project
  - From Knox Bridge to Forsyth County Line
  - Connects to both existing and proposed access points
- Trestle Rock Trail (BW/GW-2)
  - From Woodstock Greenprints
  - Connects Olde Rope Mill Park to JJ Biello Park/Twin Creeks Softball Complex





# Priority Greenways

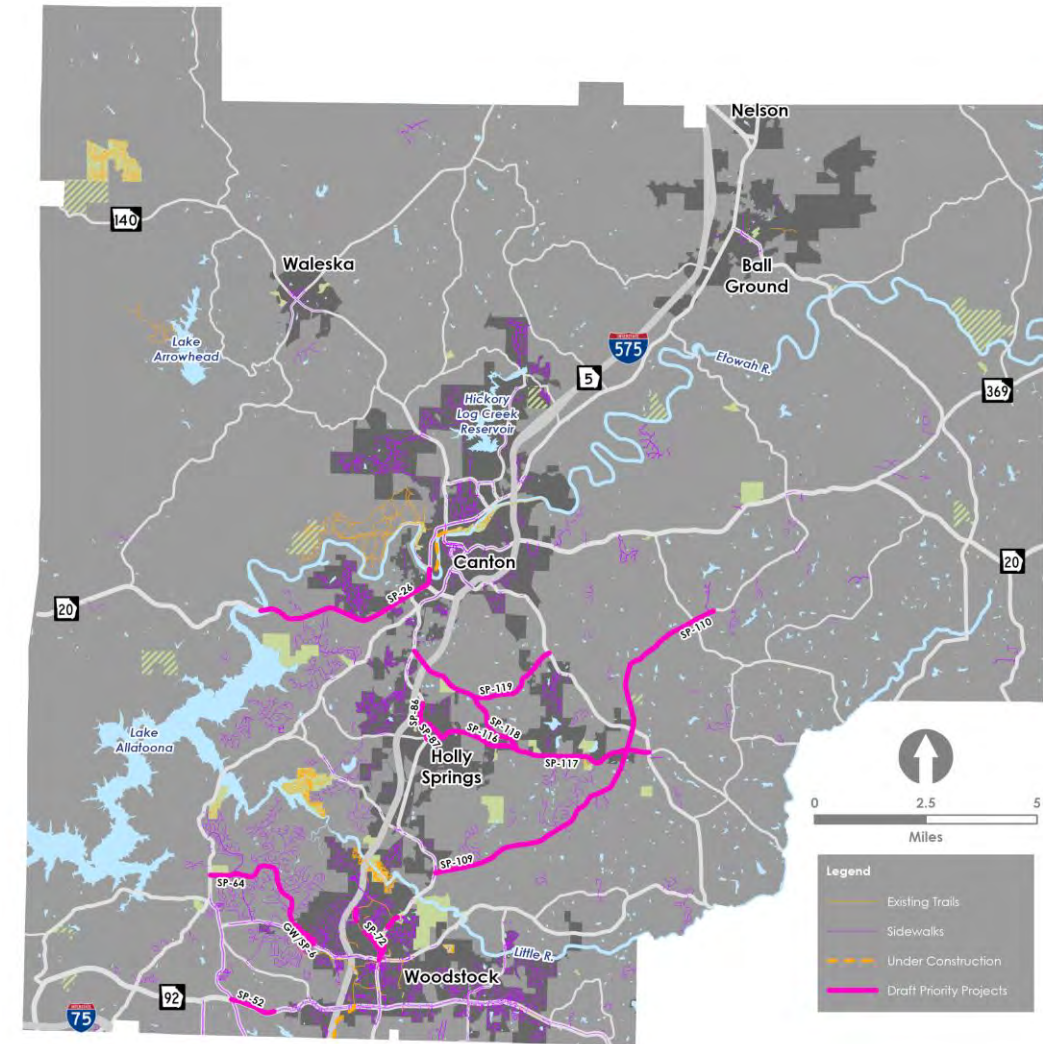
- Etowah River Trail - Boling Park (GW-16)
  - Newly proposed project!
- Canton Utility Easement Trail (GW-25)
  - Canton Transportation Master Plan
- Lake Allatoona Loop - Bells Ferry Road to Noonday Creek Trail (GW-46)
  - Woodstock Greenprints
- Blankets Creek Connector (GW-47)
  - Woodstock Greenprints





# Priority Sidepaths (1/3)

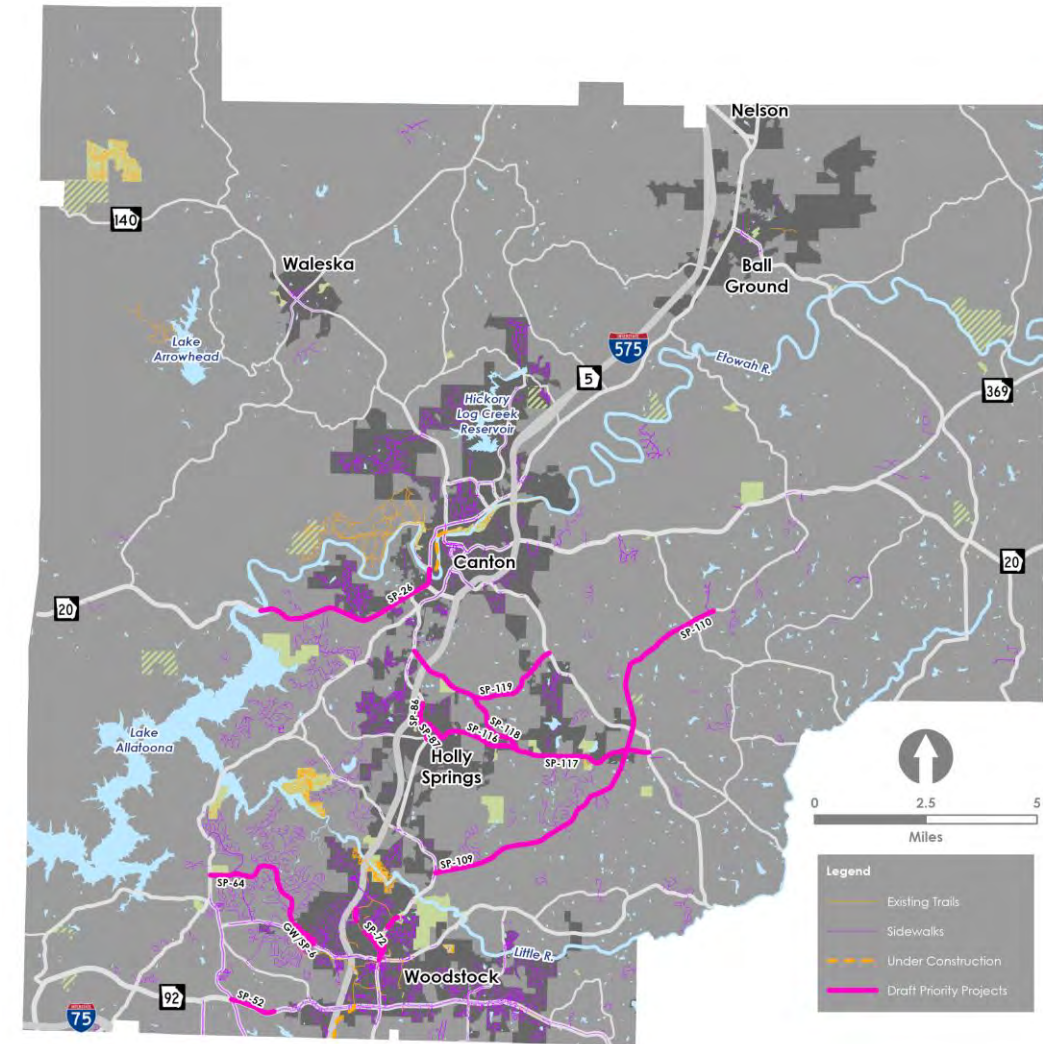
- Southwest Cherokee
  - Towne Lake Pass (GW/SP-6)
    - Woodstock Greenprints
  - SR 92 - Segment 4 (SP-52)
    - Cherokee CTP
  - Towne Lake Parkway (SP-64)
    - Cherokee CTP & Woodstock Greenprints





# Priority Sidepaths (2/3)

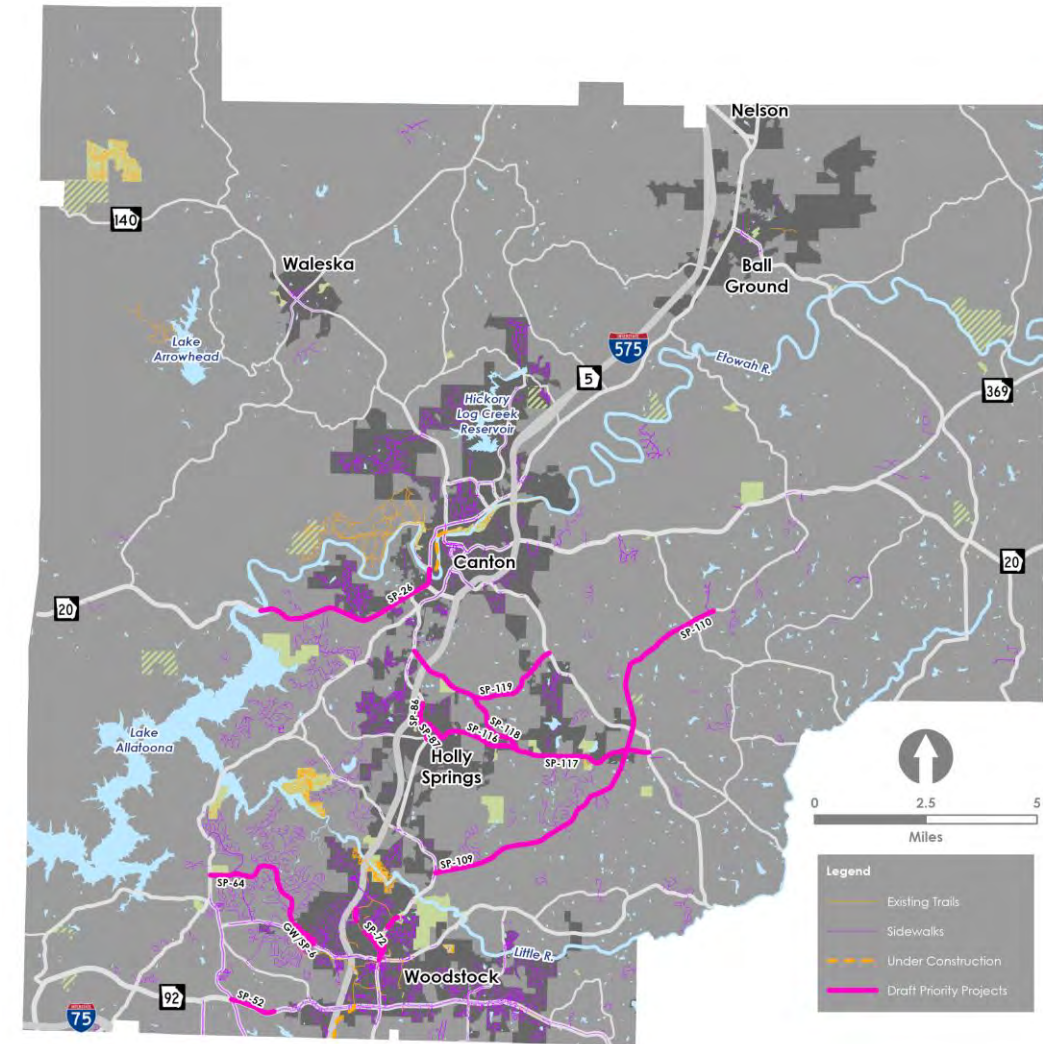
- Southeast Cherokee
  - Rope Mill Road - Downtown Woodstock to Woodstock Outlet Mall (SP-72)
    - Woodstock Greenprints
  - Education Connector Trail/Main Street - Segments 1 & 2 (SP-78)
    - Cherokee CTP & Woodstock Greenprints
  - Newly proposed projects
    - East Cherokee Drive - Segment 1 (SP-109)
    - East Cherokee Drive - Segment 2 (SP-110)





# Priority Sidepaths (3/3)

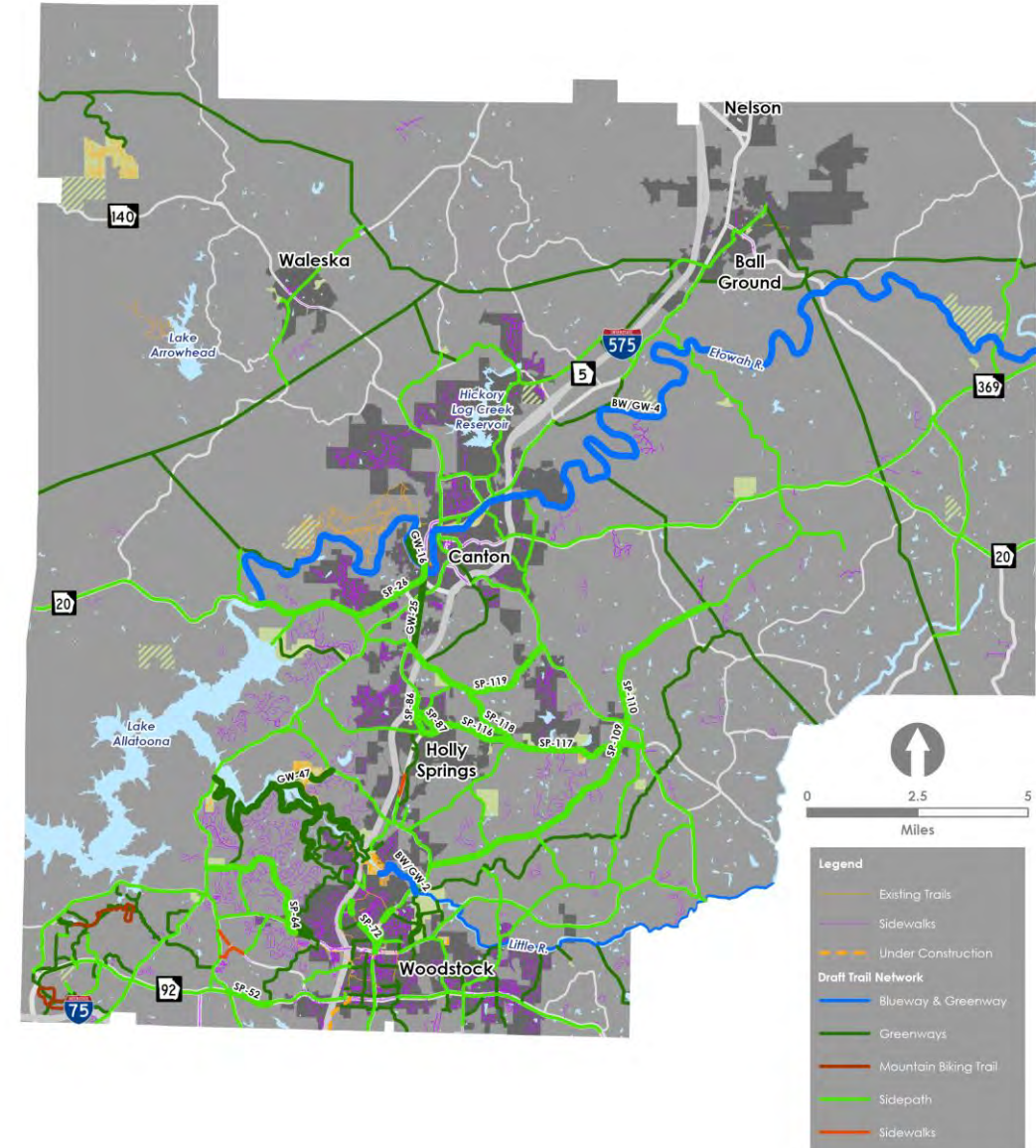
- Central Cherokee
  - Hickory Springs Parkway (SP-87)
    - Implement with programmed TIP project
  - Newly proposed projects!
    - Holly Springs Parkway - Segment 4 (SP-86)
    - Hickory Road - Segment 1 (SP-116)
    - Hickory Road - Segment 2 (SP-117)
    - New Light Road (SP-118)
    - Univeter Road (SP-119)
    - SR 20 - Segment 3 (SP-26)





# Summary

- Top 20 projects will comprise of Short-Term Project list (1-10 Years)
- Other project tiers
  - Mid-Term Projects (10-20 Years)
    - 97 projects
  - Long-Term Projects (20+ Years)
    - 102 projects





# Breakout Groups

Float around the room to check out different areas of the County and draft recommendations and priority projects:

- Southeast Cherokee
- Southwest Cherokee
- Northwest Cherokee
- Northeast Cherokee
- Central Cherokee





# Next Steps & Discussion





# Round 2 Engagement Activities

## Pop-Up Events to Promote Community Meetings

- ✓ Canton First Friday – 10/4
- ✓ Great Pumpkin Fest – 10/12

## Public Meetings

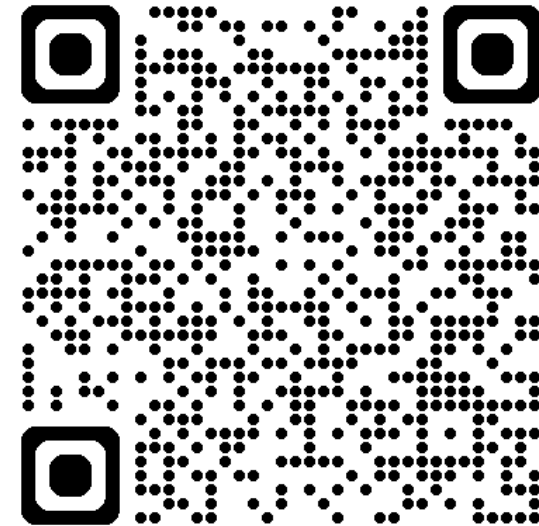
- ✓ Meeting # 1 – Bridgemill Fire Station – 10/23
- ☐ Meeting #2 – LB “Buzz” Ahrens Jr Rec Center – 10/29
- ☐ Meeting #3 - Virtual– 10/30





# How to Provide Comments

- Scan the QR code to visit the project website
- Use the interactive map to zoom in on individual potential projects and provide your feedback and comments
- **Deadline is this Thursday - October 31, 2024!**



Or go to  
<https://greshamsmithplanning.mysocialpinpoint.com/cherokeecountygtmp>





# Upcoming Milestones

- Finalize Prioritization and Sequence of Investments
- Develop Draft Capital Program
- Prepare Draft Plan!
- Final TAC Meeting – Week of 12/2 or 12/9 (Virtual)





# Questions & Contact Information

**Bryan Reynolds** – Community Services Agency Director

[bdreynolds@cherokeega.com](mailto:bdreynolds@cherokeega.com)

770.345.6238

**Eric Lusher, AICP** – Consultant Team Project Manager

[eric.lusher@greshamsmith.com](mailto:eric.lusher@greshamsmith.com)

678.268.4285





Cherokee County  
*Greenways & Trails Master Plan*

Trail Advisory Committee Meeting #6  
December 5, 2024



# Today's Meeting Agenda

- Project Overview
- Review of Draft Recommendation Options
- Next Steps





# Project Overview and Update





# Objectives

Work across boundaries, with local jurisdictions and community members to develop a prioritized list of projects that align with overall County goals and objectives to create a trail and greenway system that promotes economic development, recreation, and transportation.



**A Vision and Goals to Guide Future Development**

**Document Existing State of Greenways & Trails**

**Promote Decision-Making Grounded in Guiding Principles and Best Practices**

**Recommend Design Criteria and Guidelines**

**Recommend Future Connections and Extensions in Coordination with Municipalities, Neighboring Cities, and Counties**

**Provide Guidance on Partnerships, Funding, Operations & Maintenance**

**Identify Priority Corridors and Projects**





Winter

Spring

Summer

Fall

2

Analysis of Existing Trail Network  
and Physical Conditions

WE ARE HERE

3

Community & Stakeholder  
Engagement

3 Open Houses &  
Interactive Map

Stakeholder Interviews

Pop Up Events

Trail Advisory  
Committee

3 Open Houses &  
Interactive Map

4

Trail & Greenway  
Network Development

5

Design Standards and  
Guidelines

6

Capital Development  
Program and  
Strategies

7

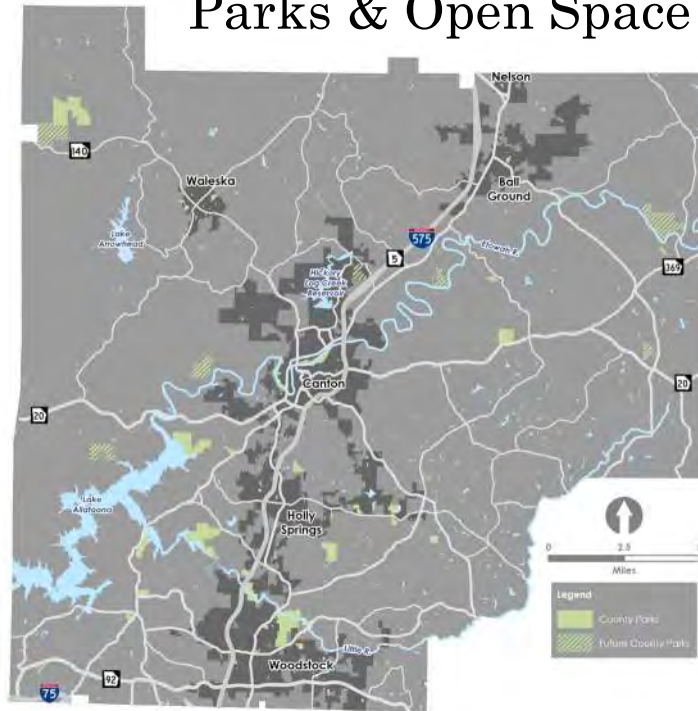
Draft & Final Plan



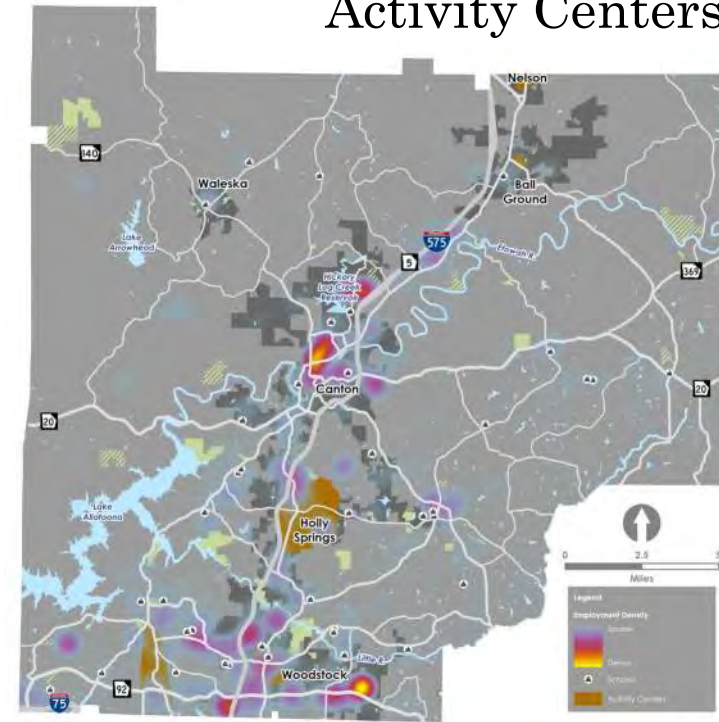


# Existing Conditions: Points of Interest

## Parks & Open Space



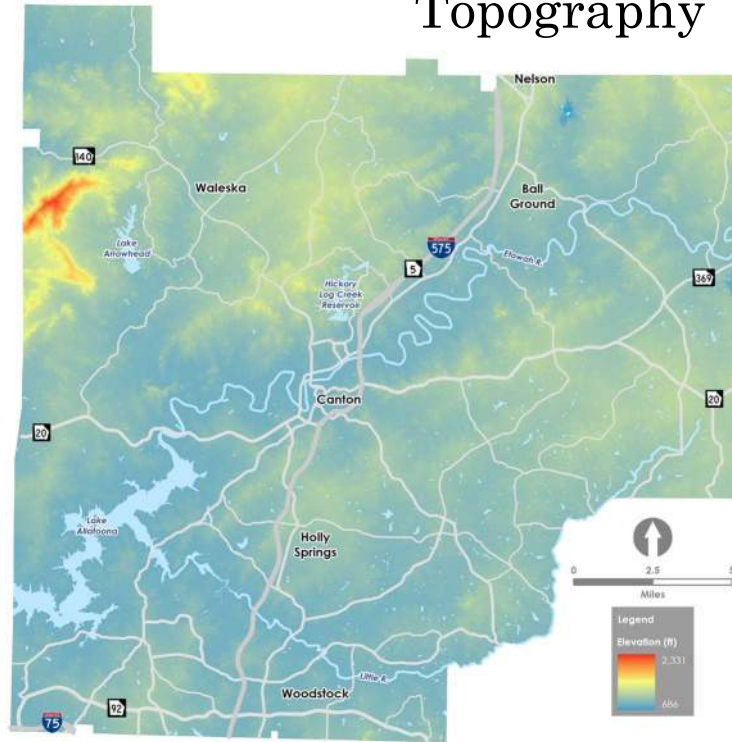
## Activity Centers



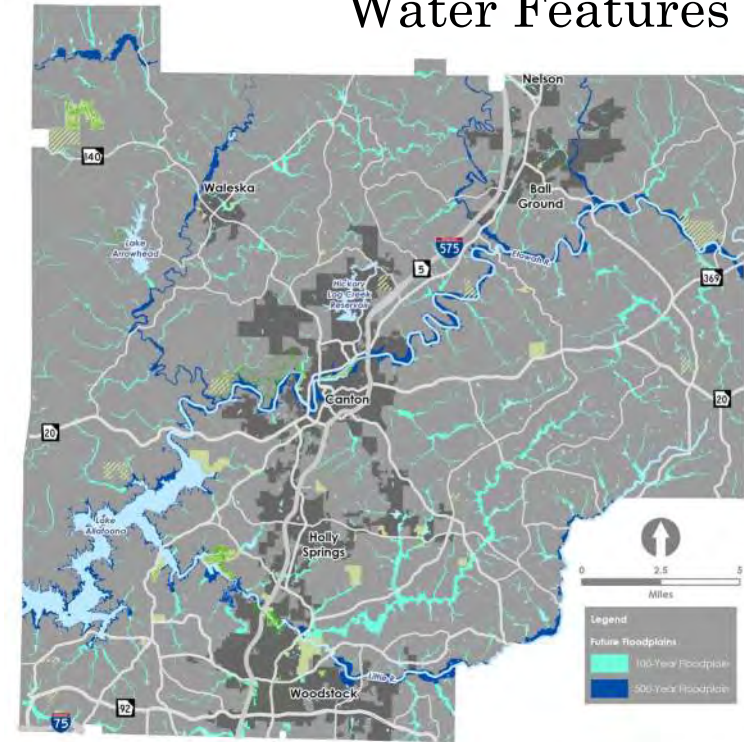


# Existing Conditions: Natural Features

## Topography



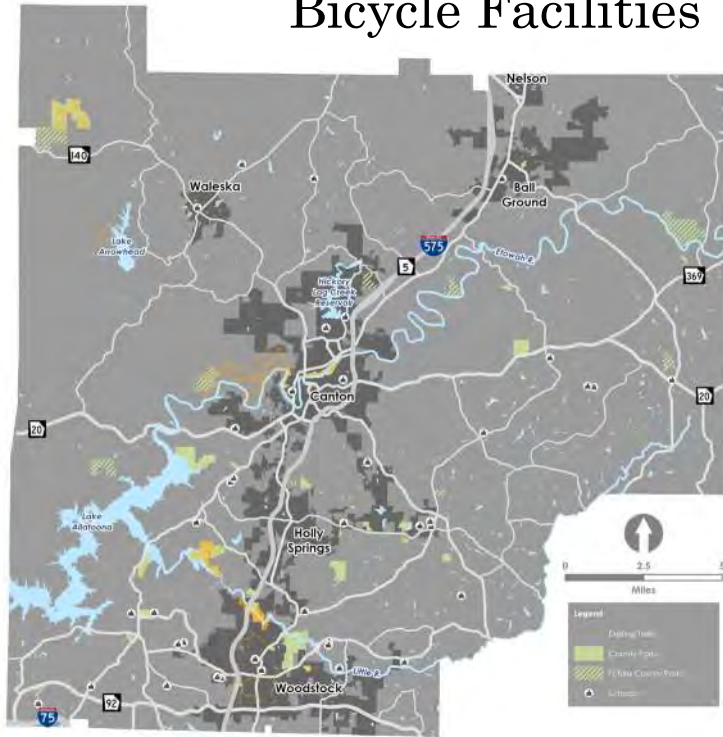
## Water Features



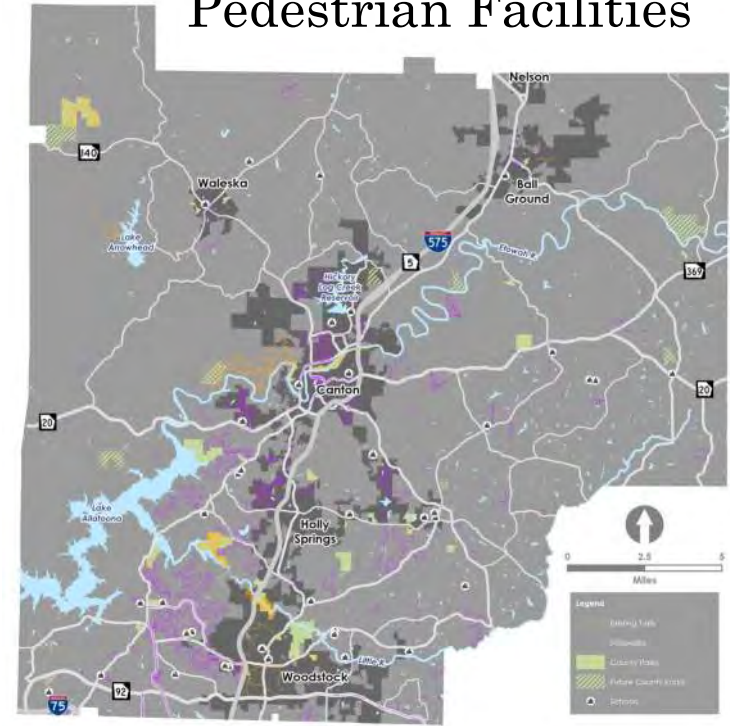


# Existing Conditions: Existing Infrastructure

## Bicycle Facilities



## Pedestrian Facilities





# Round 1 Engagement Activities



May 9, 2024 - Woodstock



May 14, 2024 - Canton



May 16, 2024

Virtual Public Meeting

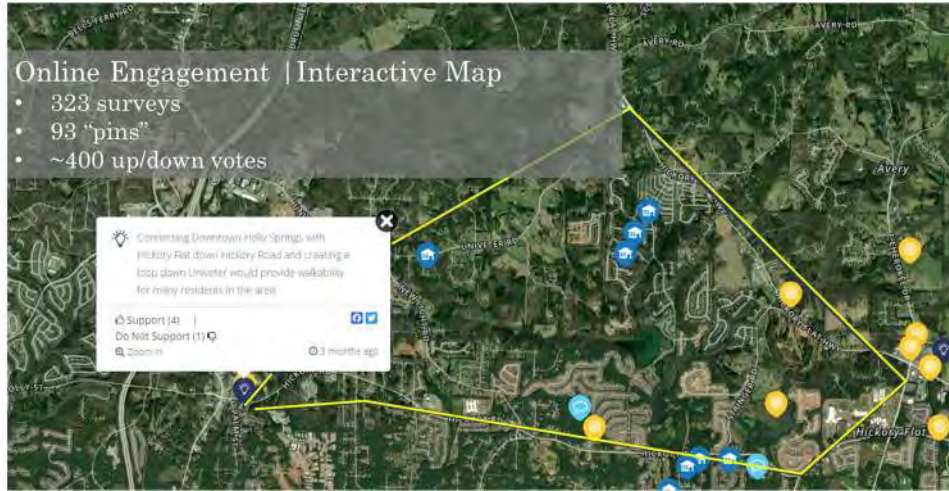


May 11, 2024 - Woodstock Farmers Market



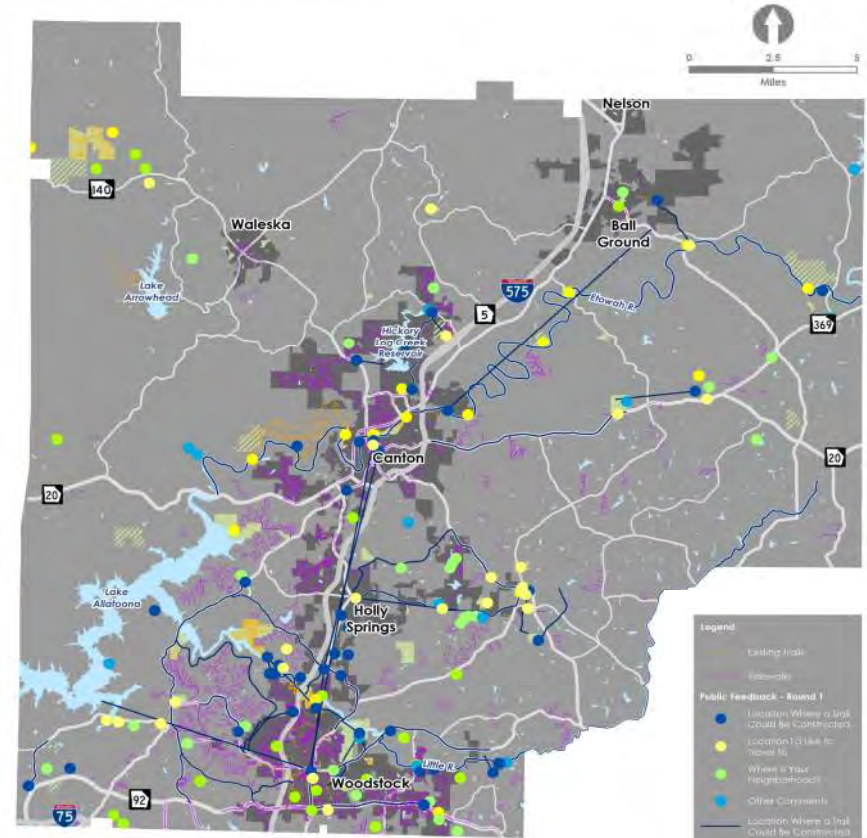


# Round 1 Feedback Received



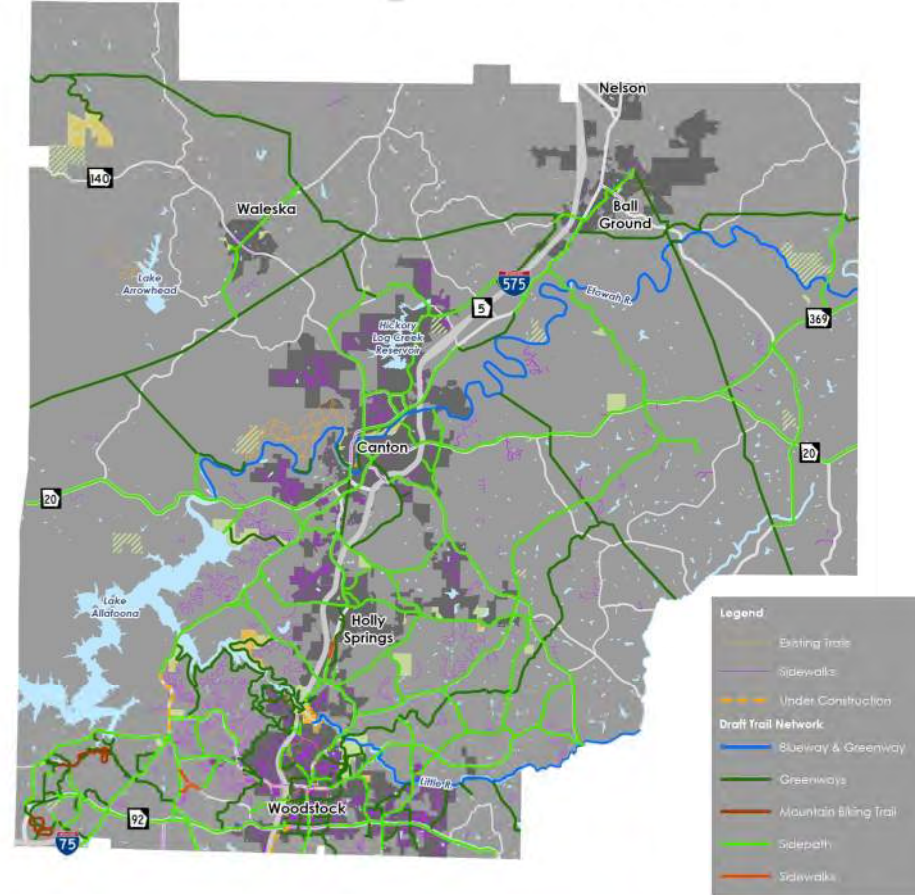
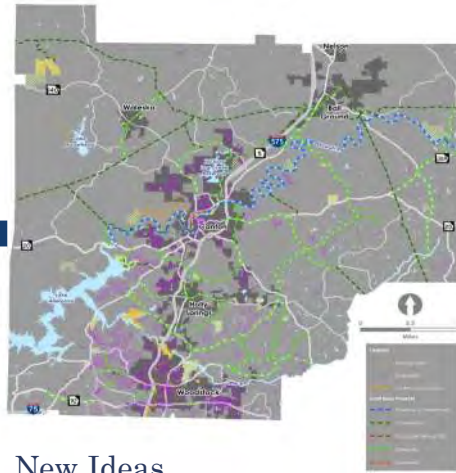
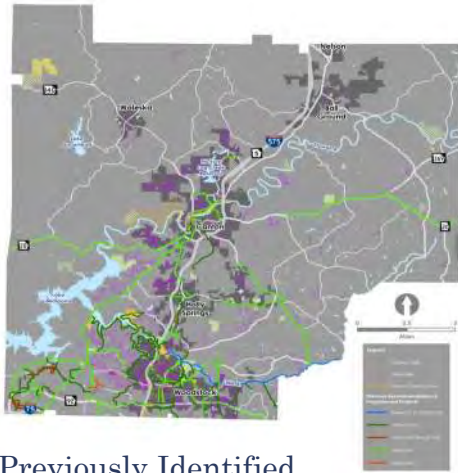
## Themes From Visioning

- Connectivity
- Health
- Nature
- Preservation
- Recreation
- Safety
- Walkability
- Conservation
- Network
- Continuity





# Draft Recommendations Components





# Overall Approach to Prioritization

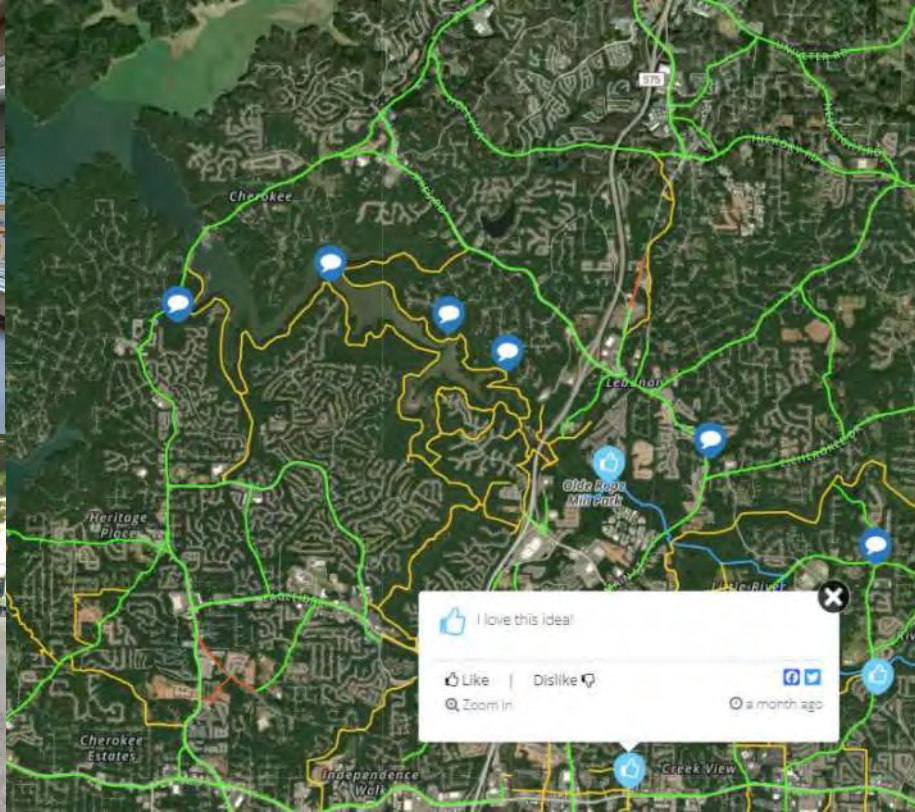
## Why Prioritize?

- We have identified over 200 possible trails. Surely, we can't do it all!
- Intention is to identify trail implementation in short-, mid-, and long-term timeframes
- Provide guide for next immediate steps





# Round 2 Engagement Activities



## Pop-Up Events to Promote Community Meetings

- Canton First Friday – 10/4
- Great Pumpkin Fest – 10/12

## Public Meetings

- Bridgemill Fire Station – 10/23
- LB “Buzz” Ahrens Jr Rec Center – 10/29
- Virtual– 10/30

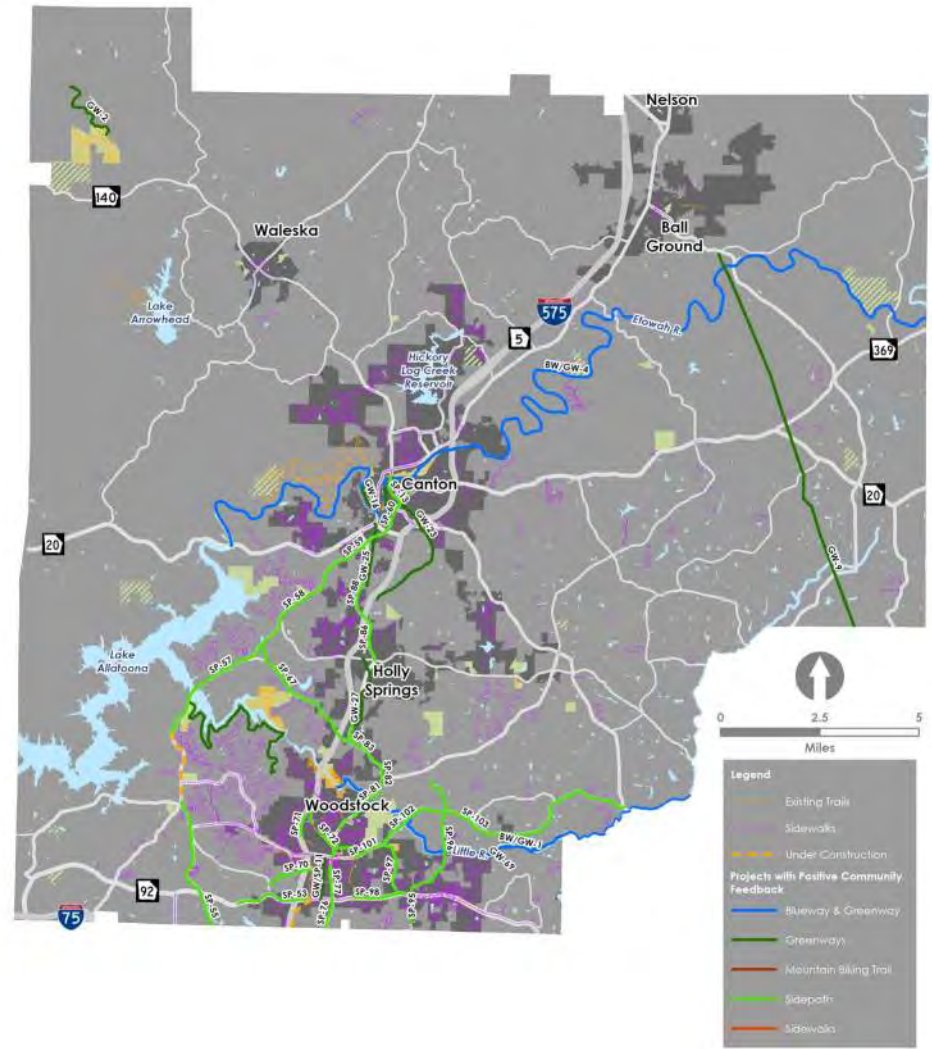
## Online/Social Pinpoint (Oct 4-31)





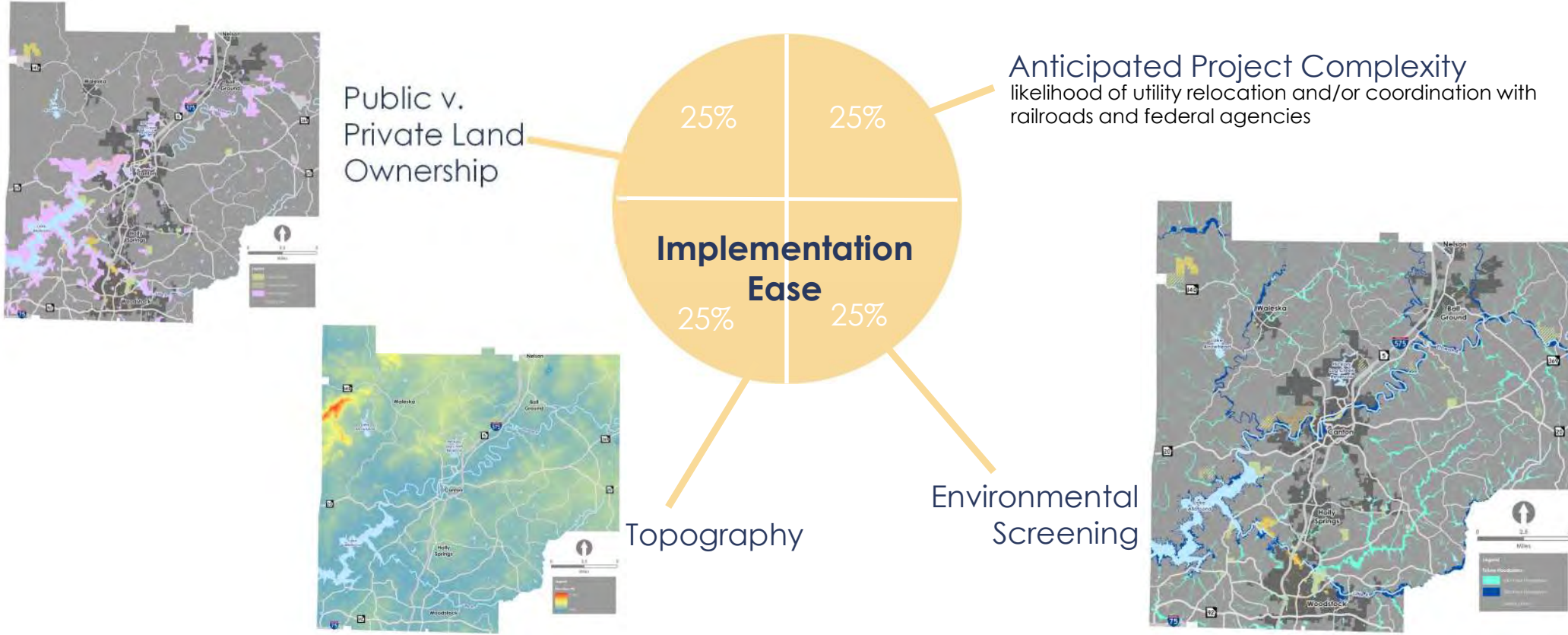
# Round 2 Engagement Activities

## Upvoted projects



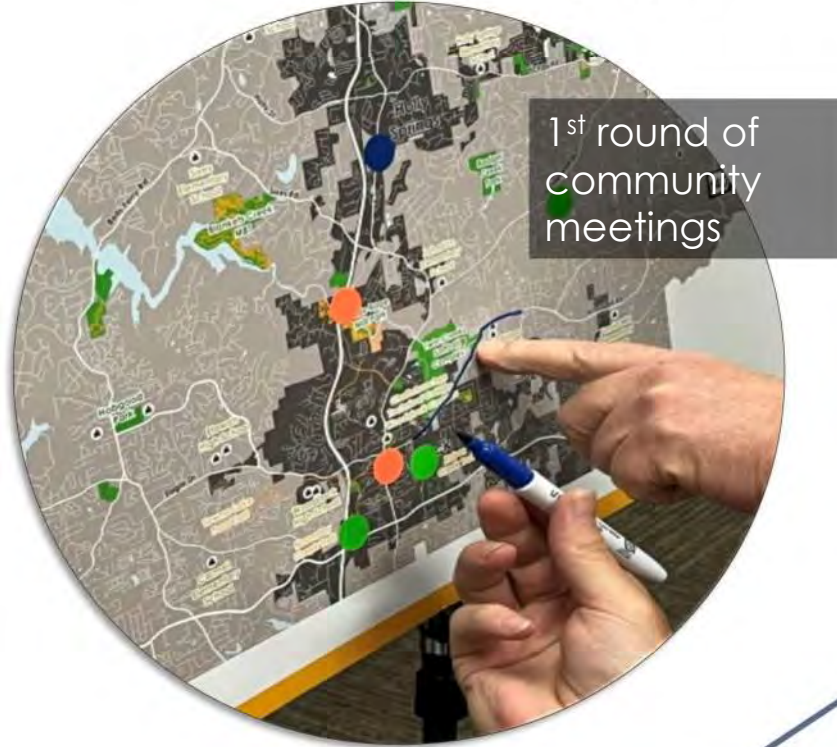


# Overall Approach to Prioritization

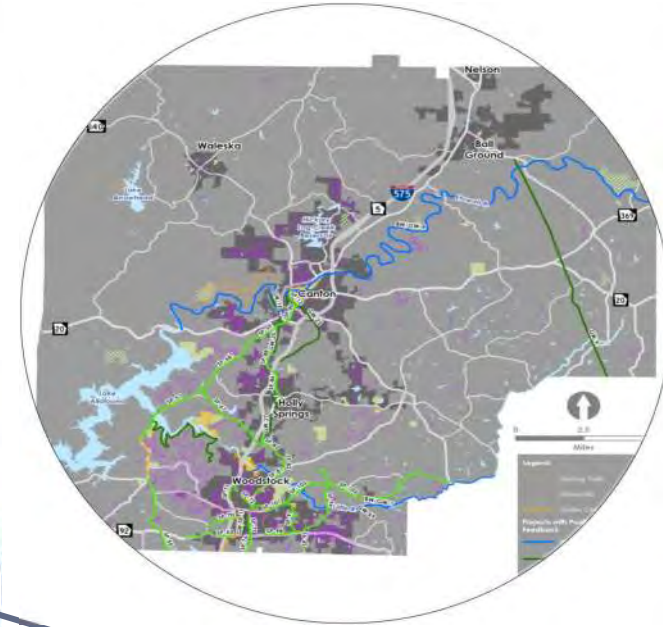




# Overall Approach to Prioritization



Identified Location for  
Trails or Connectivity



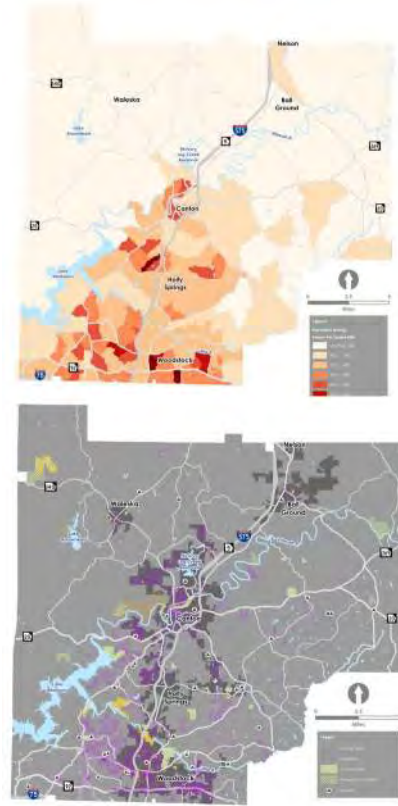
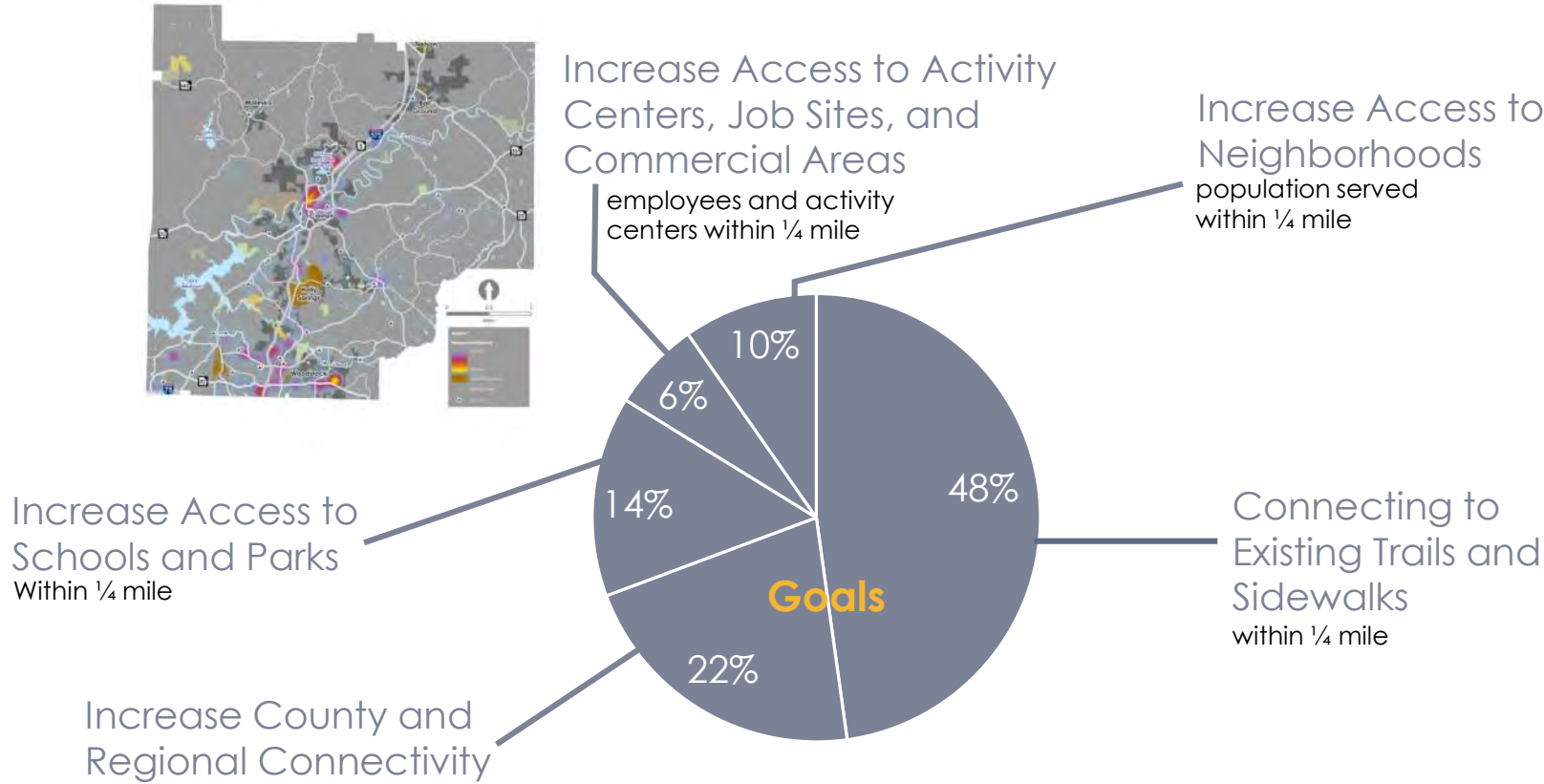
Up/Down  
Votes on Projects





# Overall Approach to Prioritization

\* weighting based on previous ranking of priorities





# Recommendations

| Projects by Tier                | Option A<br>(\$1M/year) |              | Option B<br>(\$5M/year) |               |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|---------------|
|                                 | # of Projects           | # of Miles   | # of Projects           | # of Miles    |
| Short-Term (0-10 Yrs)           | 15                      | 52.25        | 17                      | 72.89         |
| Mid-Term (10-20 Yrs)            | 6                       | 22.16        | 17                      | 39.26         |
| Long-Term (20-30 Yrs)           | 7                       | 11.90        | 25                      | 32.60         |
| <b>Total 0-30 Year Projects</b> | <b>28</b>               | <b>86.31</b> | <b>59</b>               | <b>144.74</b> |
| Aspirational                    | 190                     | 339.65       | 159                     | 281.21        |

**TOTAL TRAIL NETWORK – 425.96 miles**





# Recommendations – Short Term (0-10 Years)

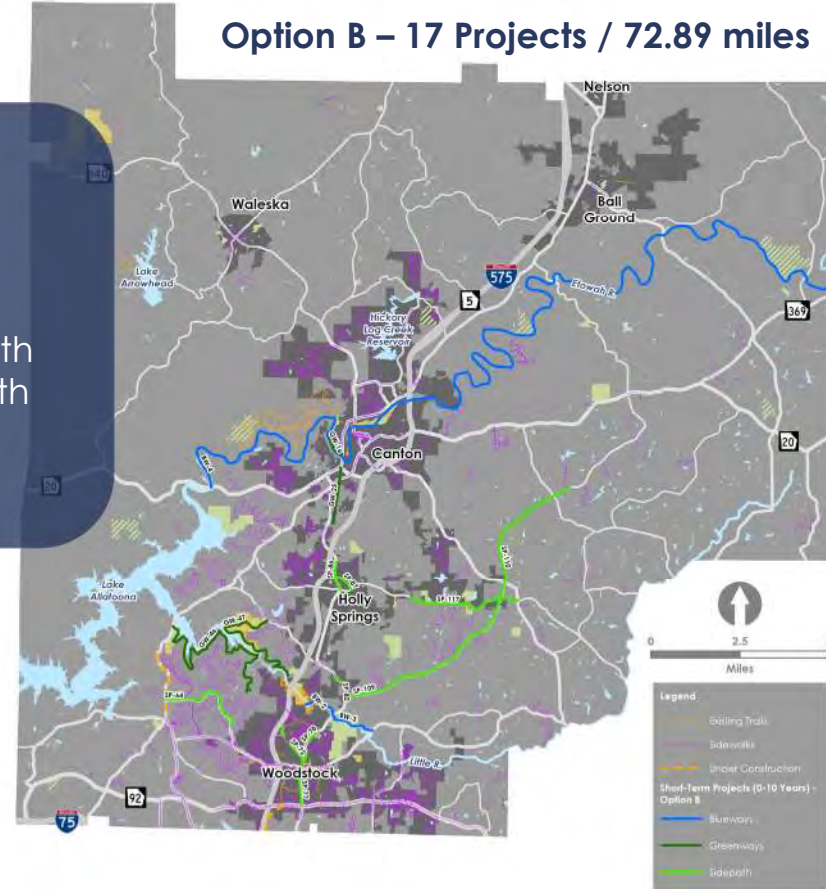
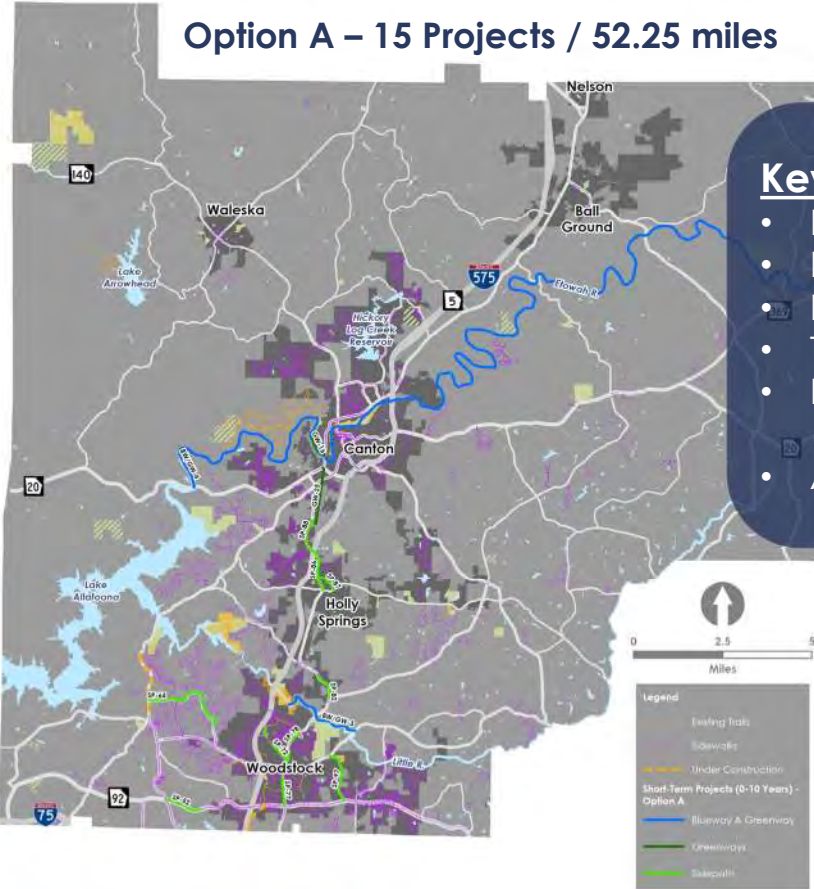
Draft

Option A – 15 Projects / 52.25 miles

Option B – 17 Projects / 72.89 miles

## Key Projects

- Etowah River Blueway
- Little River Blueway
- Holly Springs Sidepath
- Towne Lake Pkwy Sidepath
- East Cherokee Dr Sidepath (B only)
- Allatoona Loop (A only)





# Recommendations – Mid Term (10-20 Years)

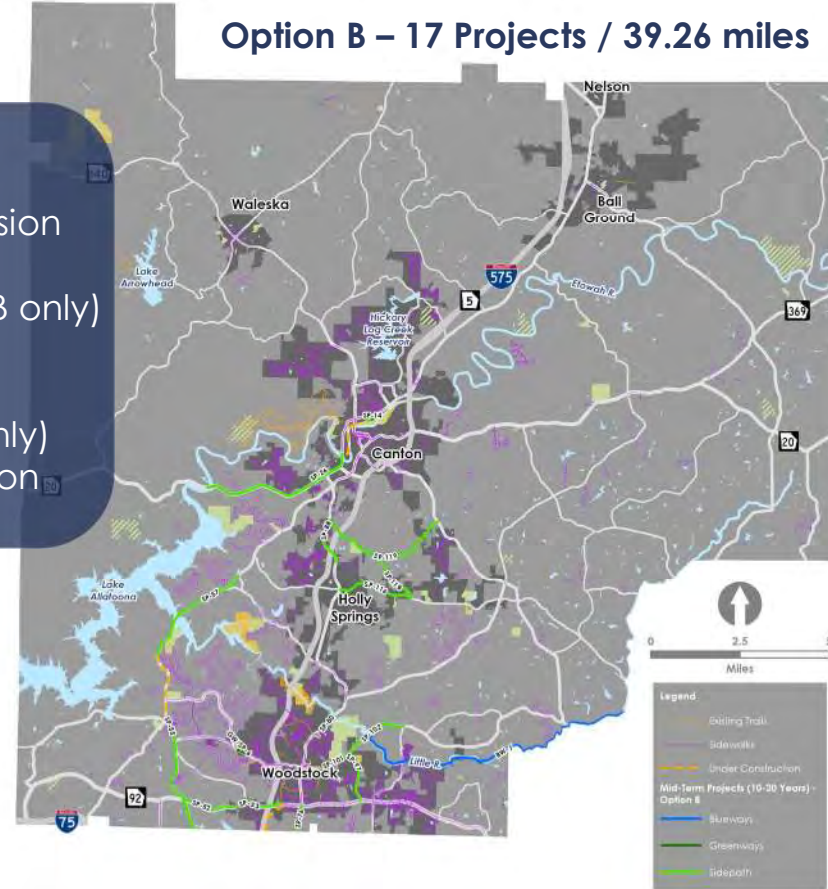
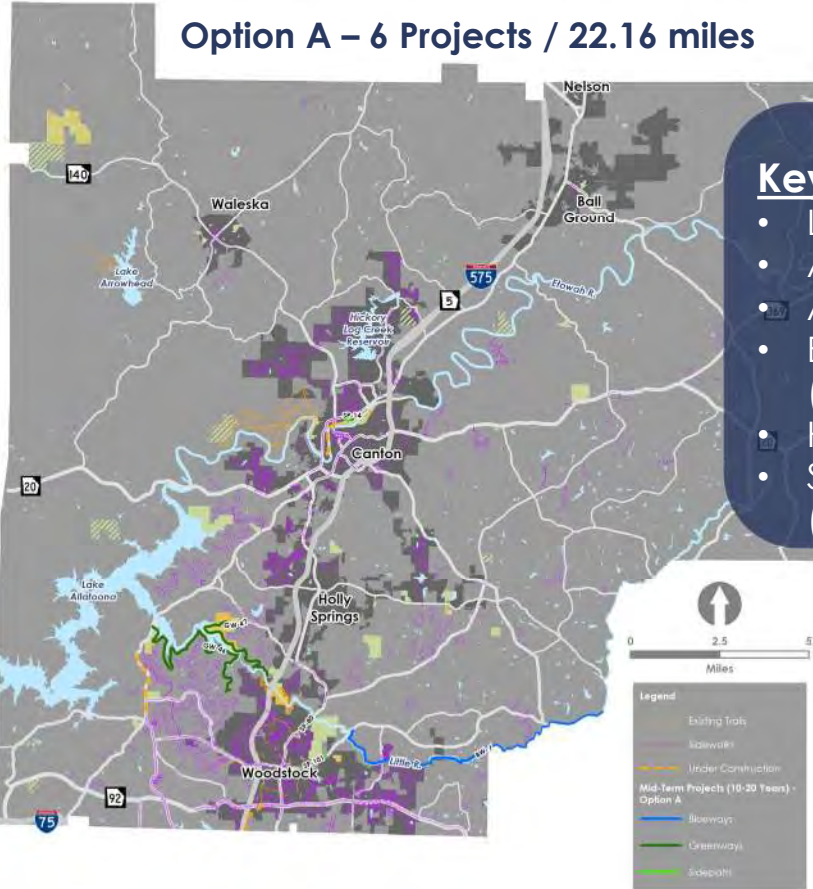
Draft

Option A – 6 Projects / 22.16 miles

Option B – 17 Projects / 39.26 miles

## Key Projects

- Little River Blueway Extension
- Allatoona Loop (A only)
- Arnold Mill Rd Sidepath (B only)
- Bells Ferry Rd Sidepath (B only)
- Hickory Rd Sidepath (B only)
- SR 20 Sidepath w/o Canton (B only)





# Recommendations – Long Term (20-30 Years)

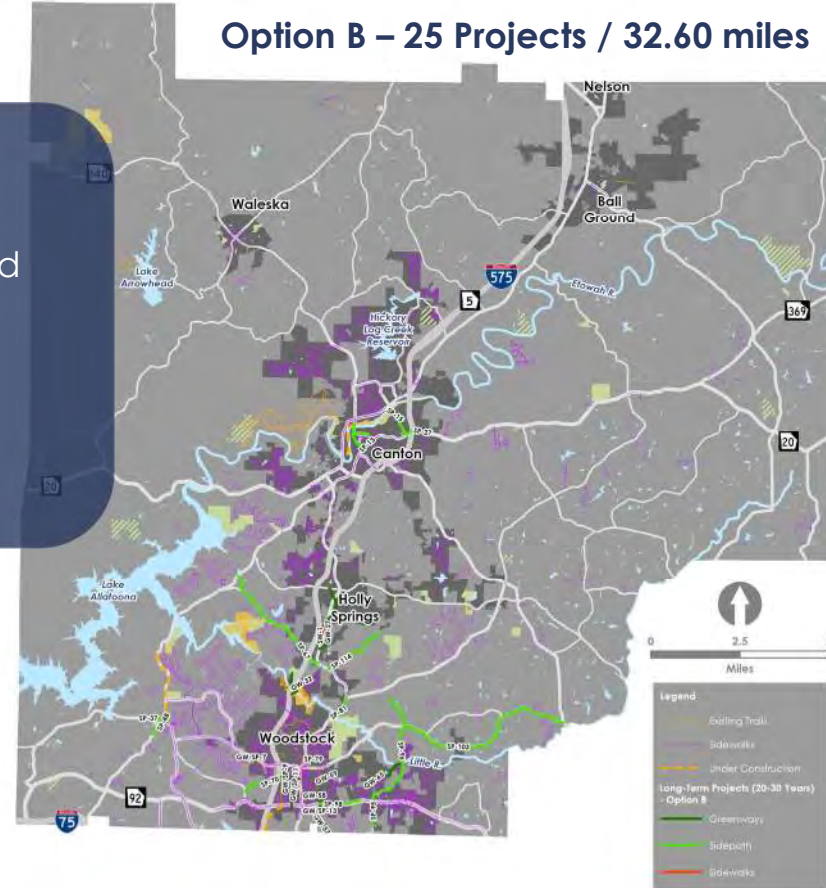
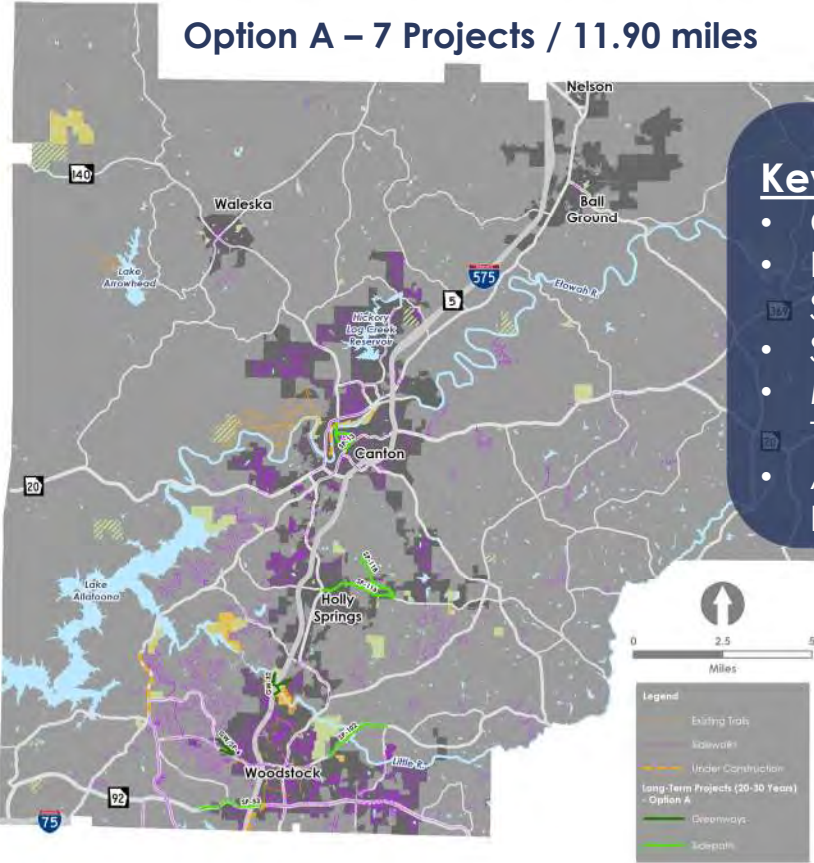
Draft

Option A – 7 Projects / 11.90 miles

Option B – 25 Projects / 32.60 miles

## Key Projects

- Canton Greenway Loop
- Hickory Rd & New Light Rd Sidepath (A only)
- SR 92 Sidepath (A only)
- Mill Creek Connector via Trickum Rd (B only)
- Arnold Mill Rd Sidepath Extension (B only)





# Recommendations – 30-Year Trail Plans

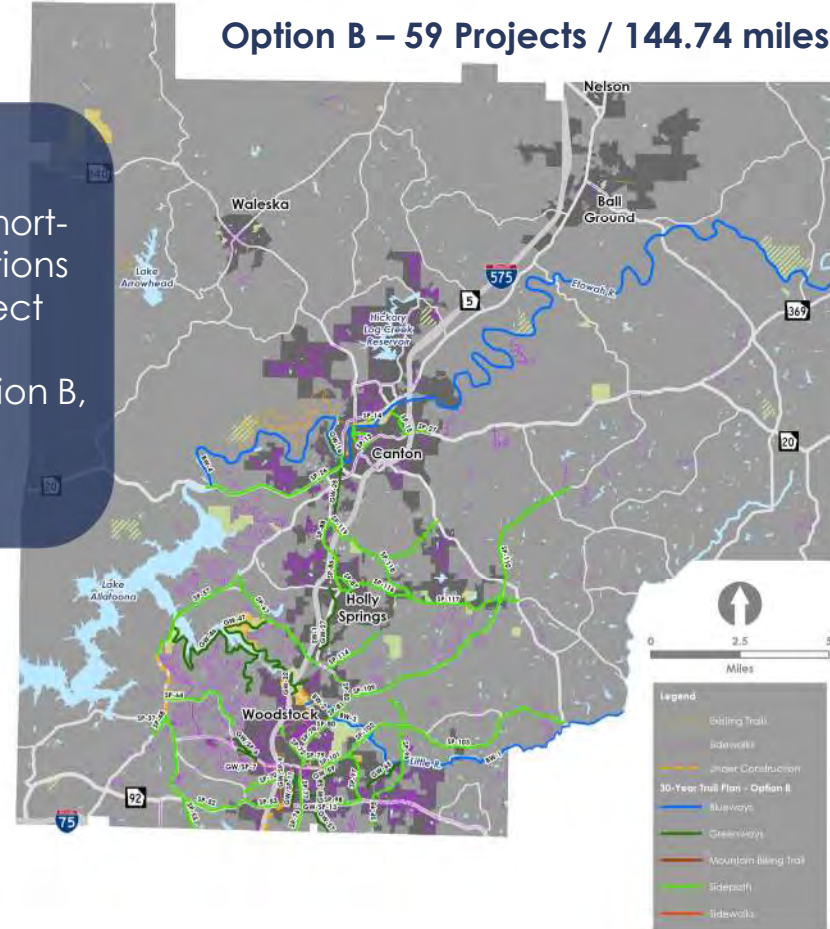
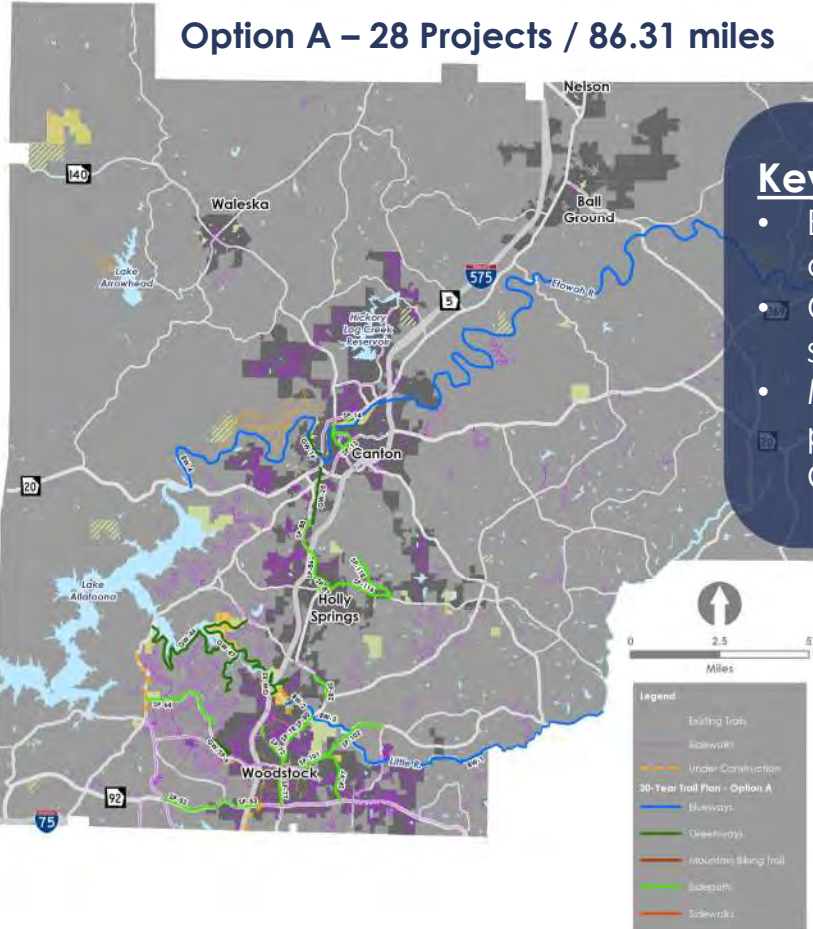
Draft

Option A – 28 Projects / 86.31 miles

Option B – 59 Projects / 144.74 miles

## Key Takeaways

- Blueway projects in the short- and mid-term in both options
- Option A has higher project share in Cities
- More connectivity in Option B, particularly in southern Cherokee County





# Next Steps





# Upcoming Milestones

- Finalize list of recommended projects – by December 13, 2024
  - County staff reviewing and coordinating with municipal partners
- Finalize draft plan – tentatively by December 20, 2024
- Request adoption of plan – tentatively January 21, 2025
- Start implementing!





# Questions & Contact Information

**Bryan Reynolds** – Community Services Agency Director

[bdreynolds@cherokeega.com](mailto:bdreynolds@cherokeega.com)

770.345.6238

**Eric Lusher, AICP** – Consultant Team Project Manager

[eric.lusher@greshamsmith.com](mailto:eric.lusher@greshamsmith.com)

678.268.4285







## CHEROKEE COUNTY GREENWAYS & TRAILS MASTER PLAN

### Stakeholder Interview Notes

#### **Western and Southwestern Cherokee County & Adjacent Jurisdictions**

Date: July 16, 2024

#### Attendees

- Erin Thoresen, Gresham Smith
- Andrew Smith, Gresham Smith
- Jeff Drobney, City of Kennesaw
- Laura Beall, Cobb County
- Alisha Smith, Town Center CID

#### **Key Notes**

1. Prioritize connecting destinations such as parks, schools, employment centers, social places, and existing trails. Signage is crucial for people to understand where the trails are and where they lead to.
2. Consider areas like Noonday Creek Trail, Reinhardt University, the Etowah River, the existing mountain biking areas, the parks throughout the County, and along SR 92 / Alabama Hwy for new trails.
3. Consider the value in connecting to employment centers. In the Town Center CID, the company Vanderlande located on Chastain Meadows Parkway specifically because they wanted their employees to have access to the Noonday Creek Trail. It is an amenity for employees and makes their location desirable.
4. Successful trail projects often involve partnerships with external agencies or groups, such as nature groups, biking groups, or outdoor recreation advocates. Education, engagement, and transparency with the public about the project process is also essential.
5. Coordination with external agencies, especially environmental groups, should be done early on in the process. Also, educate community members about the appropriate and allowable uses of the trails.
6. When it comes to trail materials or design, manage permeable pavement effectively as it can quickly become impermeable. Projects have typically used traditional materials like asphalt, concrete, boardwalks.

**Genuine Ingenuity**





## **Eastern Cherokee County & Adjacent Jurisdictions**

Date: July 19, 2024

### Attendees

- Erin Thoresen, Gresham Smith
- Andrew Smith, Gresham Smith
- Robert Dell-Ross, City of Milton
- Jeff Littlefield, City of Roswell
- John Cunard, Forsyth County

### **Key Notes**

1. Cherokee County is seeking suggestions for new greenways, trails, and access points. There were discussions about connecting Cherokee's pedestrian and bicycle accommodations across the Fulton County and Forsyth Countyline.
2. There is uncertainty along the SR 140 corridor. Attendees know GDOT is going to widen it, and they want to see if Cherokee's pedestrian and bicycle accommodations can be carried across the Fulton County line. It will be easier to point to an adopted plan (such as this one). For example, if they are going to ask for sidewalks or trails, it will be easier if that is documented in a plan.
3. Milton's rural areas are considering non-concrete surfaces for trails, while Roswell does not have immediate plans to connect to Cherokee. Forsyth County is working on a mid-range project to connect Cherokee, Forsyth, and Dawson.
4. Both Milton and Forsyth County face challenges in gaining public support for connecting neighborhoods via power line easement due to concerns such as property acquisition, security, and funding.
5. The idea of golf cart connectivity is being explored in Crabapple, Roswell and Milton, despite some public resistance.
6. Regarding trail materials, Milton considers crushed gravel for off-road trails, Roswell uses pervious pavement for stormwater management, and the Roswell Riverwalk trail is maintained by the parks department.





## **SORBA Woodstock**

Date: July 2, 2024

### Attendees

- Allison Bell, VHB
- Bob Liggett, SORBA Woodstock

### **Key Notes**

1. The priority is to fill in the gaps of the existing infrastructure, including the connection between Cherokee and Cobb, and providing easy connections to trail systems from neighborhoods.
2. There is a need for wider sidewalks on Sixes Road and mixed-use opportunities in NE Cherokee for equestrians, mountain bikers, hikers, and walkers.
3. The Glen Haven community is working on adding signage to their trail head, and there is a desire to make facilities as inclusive as possible.
4. There is a lack of understanding about the existing trail infrastructure and its benefits, and more communication and education are needed.
5. New greenways and trails should prioritize underserved areas such as Holly Springs and Canton's Mill area. The BeltLine was mentioned as a unique example that can be mimicked in Cherokee County on a smaller scale.
6. Barriers to biking and walking include lack of knowledge, the need to drive to trail locations, and concerns about road safety and parking. Olde Rope Mill and Blankets Creek are only a mile apart but cannot connect them because of property lines etc. – but a lot of folks will access it via a “machine connector” trail – known as the “Epic” that is over 30 miles of riding – it is extremely difficult. SORBA has talked about having an event for this trail.
7. SORBA has also been working with parks and recreation staff on the Yellow Creek project in northeastern Cherokee County – this could be a mix of opportunity for equestrians and mountain bikers as well as an opportunity for hikers and walkers, too. There was discussion about how this can fit into the overall network.
8. Safety and awareness are big concerns when it comes to non-motorized transportation options.
9. Advocacy organizations are seeking infrastructure that helps members access mountain bike trails without a car, fill in the gaps in the trail system, and increase public awareness about existing resources.





## **Cherokee County Airport Authority**

Date: July 10, 2024

### Attendees

- Heather Mase, VHB
- Dick Hall, Cherokee County Airport Authority

### **Key Notes**

1. The Airport Authority plays a role in the county's overall transportation system but does not directly influence the development of greenways and trails.
2. The county has seen major growth, including in airport operations, with recent projects to improve the runway and terminal building.
3. Interactions between departments for trail and greenway infrastructure planning are limited, with the focus on operating the airport.
4. Trails need to be convenient and access has to be adequate and make sense, including providing a safe parking area. If it does not fill a definable need, it will not be used – the county needs to target the folks who are most likely to use it.
5. Potential challenges for expanding greenways and trails include topography, landowner rights, and safety, with the airport not being considered a viable connection point.





## **Southern Company**

Date: July 22, 2024

### Attendees

- Andrew Smith, Gresham Smith
- Allison Bell, VHB
- Andrew Young, Southern Company
- Trae Heard, Southern Company
- Joshua Coberly, Southern Company

### **Key Notes**

1. Georgia Power is interested in partnering in the planning, building, and construction of trails but needs to ensure access to transmission lines.
2. They are willing to facilitate discussions with other utilities, if necessary.
3. Gas companies might have different stances due to the nature of their underground infrastructure.
4. Most transition lines are easements, not owned properties.
5. Southern Company has guidelines for what they will or will not allow near utility lines or within a certain distance of an existing structure.
6. Major concerns discussed include access, safety (lighting), and the approval of any earthworks due to underground anchors.
7. Long, linear encroachments directly under conductors and the center of easements are major red flags and may have more difficulty being implemented in the long run.
8. There were no specific locations identified as suitable for greenways or trails, although some difficult areas were noted.
9. Georgia Power has previously worked on trails in Gwinnett County, Sandy Springs/Roswell, BeltLine, PATH foundation, Columbus.
10. The organization is open to feedback on the feasibility of conceptual plans for routes as concept and design of individual trail projects are developed.





## **Cherokee County Sheriff's Office**

Date: August 23, 2024

### Attendees

- Erin Thoresen, Gresham Smith
- Lindsey Harris, Cherokee County Sheriff's Office, Intelligence division
- Frank Reynolds, Cherokee County Sheriff's Office
- Major Walter Jones, Cherokee County Sheriff's Office Narcotics Unit
- Chief Thomas Pinons, Cherokee County Sheriff's Office
- Margaret Stallings, Cherokee County Planning and Zoning Director, Cherokee County
- Bryan Reynolds, Cherokee County Community Services Agency Director

### **Key Notes**

1. Staff from the Sherriff's Office emphasized the importance of an effective overall trail network from the standpoints of considering evacuation protocols, services, and technology for patrols.
2. They are developing a real-time crime center with cameras, CAD system, and drones to provide information to officers.
3. They plan to use drones to check surrounding areas, look for missing people and monitor emergency situations remotely.
4. The Sherriff's Office wants to set up a system of cameras along trails, connected to the real-time crime center, with consistent emergency location markers.
5. The need for proper lighting and signage, including the use of solar-powered devices, was discussed.
6. The importance of having a security plan with adequate call boxes, panic buttons, and cameras was highlighted.
7. A trail app was suggested to help people know their last known location and provide a way to look at their last known location in case of emergency.
8. The Sherriff's Office plans to have a patrol system for day use areas, possibly a park ranger program, and also considering similar systems for fire services.
9. River access was discussed, considering the ability of the Sherriff's Office and Fire Services to respond on the river.
10. Additional suggestions for a future countywide trails system include enacting ordinances prohibiting overnight stays or camping, for example. It would also be beneficial to examine adding tag readers, cameras, lighting, etc. as a first step. Then that sets a precedent for any new trails that are built.





## **Cherokee County Fire Services**

Date: August 27, 2024

### Attendees

- Erin Thoresen, Gresham Smith
- Bryan Reynolds, Cherokee County Community Services Agency Director
- Eddie Robinson, Cherokee County Fire Services Chief

### **Key Notes**

1. Cherokee County Fire Services Agency's main concerns are easy access to trails and greenways for all terrain vehicles (ATVs) and other smaller emergency vehicles, not having to travel more than 0.5-0.75 miles between access points, and a clear marking system for location identification.
2. The trails should be designed keeping in mind the specifications of their units such as weight, turning radii, and widths.
3. In cases where it is not possible to maintain the desired distance between access points, agreements with private property owners are signed to facilitate access during emergencies.
4. The agency emphasized the use of a national grid system for wayfinding. There are apps available to help users know their location on the trails.
5. For water trails and access to the Etowah River, Fire Services needs a hard surface with a reasonable slope for access. They are planning to enhance their services to respond to water issues due to an increase in water activities.
6. Fire Services runs a safety program with USACE providing life jackets at certain locations.
7. They prefer areas with good cellular service over call boxes for emergencies, and would like to have AEDs around the trails, though they acknowledge this may be subject to vandalism.
8. Fire Services appreciate the idea of a more holistic approach to the trail system, and they are willing to review the draft language before it is finalized.





## **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)**

Date: August 27, 2024

### Attendees

- Eric Lusher, Gresham Smith
- Andrew Smith, Gresham Smith
- Steve Shrout, Cherokee County
- Margaret Stallings, Cherokee County
- Corbin Martin, USACE
- Daniel Blankenship, USACE

### **Key Notes**

1. The project team began with a brief presentation on the planning effort with emphasis on greenway trails on USACE property along Lake Allatoona and the Little River.
2. USACE's involvement in the project is considered crucial due to the need for coordination and inspection of potential impacts as well as interest from the public to better connect to the lake from elsewhere around Cherokee County.
3. Trail ideas pass through a mixture of public and private property, with specific alignments not yet defined. This is a master planning effort and further study will be needed on many recommended projects before they are designed and constructed.
4. USACE takes its role in wildlife management seriously and will consider all proposals, especially those concerning Lake Allatoona and USACE property.
5. The team is still in the visioning phase, with further discussions needed once more specific trail details are proposed following this plan's adoption.
6. USACE has a master plan that outlines how lands around Lake Allatoona are used, which can be referred to for understanding feasibility.
7. Certain areas, like Fields Landing, are leased to Cherokee County by USACE, and these details can also be found in the master plan for the Lake Allatoona area.
8. The team seeks USACE's support and understanding of impacts to their property to further the trail vision.