

TOWN OF MARS HILL

NORTH CAROLINA

BICYCLE + PEDESTRIAN PLAN



2025



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

STEERING COMMITTEE

- ▶ Nathan Bennett, Town of Mars Hill
- ▶ Bryan Lopez, North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Integrated Mobility Division (IMD)
- ▶ Alexius Farris, NCDOT IMD
- ▶ Hannah Smith, NCDOT Division 13
- ▶ Daniel Sellers, NCDOT
- ▶ Tristan Winkler, French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (FBRMPO)
- ▶ Kaitland Finkle, Land of Sky Regional Council
- ▶ Grainger Caudle, Mars Hill University (MHU)
- ▶ Allen Shelley, MHU
- ▶ Kevin Barnette, MHU
- ▶ Ryan Bell, MHU
- ▶ Larry Davis, Town of Mars Hill
- ▶ Nicholas Honeycutt, Town of Mars Hill
- ▶ Chad Wilson, Town of Mars Hill
- ▶ Nathan Waldrup, Town of Mars Hill
- ▶ Brad Guth, Madison County
- ▶ Daniel Metcalf, Madison County
- ▶ Deana Stephens, Madison County
- ▶ Sherrye Perry, NC Senior Tarheel Legislature
- ▶ Larry Burda, Hot Springs Health Program
- ▶ Sebastian Dunn
- ▶ Lucy Pearson
- ▶ Bill Downey
- ▶ Meredith Doster
- ▶ Lee Hoffman
- ▶ Augusta Jenkins-Gladding

PREPARED FOR

TOWN OF MARS HILL

Nathan Bennett
Town Manager
P.O. Box 368
280 North Main St
Mars Hill, NC 28754
(828) 689-2301



NCDOT INTEGRATED MOBILITY DIVISION

Bryan Lopez
Regional Planning Manager

1 South Wilmington St
Raleigh, NC 27601
(919) 707-2606



PREPARED BY

McADAMS

Allison Anolik
Andrew Hickling, PE
Christopher Normile
Emily Scott-Cruz, AICP
Will Washam



McADAMS

621 Hillsborough St
Suite 500
Raleigh, NC 27603
(919) 361-5000

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

- Project Background **08**
- Vision + Goals **09**
- Active Transportation Benefits **12**

EXISTING CONDITIONS

- Community Demographics **18**
- Existing Conditions **26**
- Previous Planning Efforts **43**
- Policy Review **46**
- Opportunities + Constraints **48**

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Steering Committee + Meetings **56**
- Local News Coverage **61**
- Community Survey **62**
- Pop-Up Event **70**

NETWORK RECOMMENDATIONS

- Design Guidance **74**
- Comprehensive Bicycle + Pedestrian Network **86**
- Prioritization **92**
- Priority Projects **96**

POLICY + PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommended Policies **118**
- Recommended Programs **120**

IMPLEMENTATION

- Key Partners in Implementation **126**
- Action Plan **128**
- Performance Measures **132**
- Funding Resources **133**

APPENDICES

- A: Funding Resources **138**
- B: Community Engagement **158**
- C: Cost Estimates **180**

01

02

03

04

05

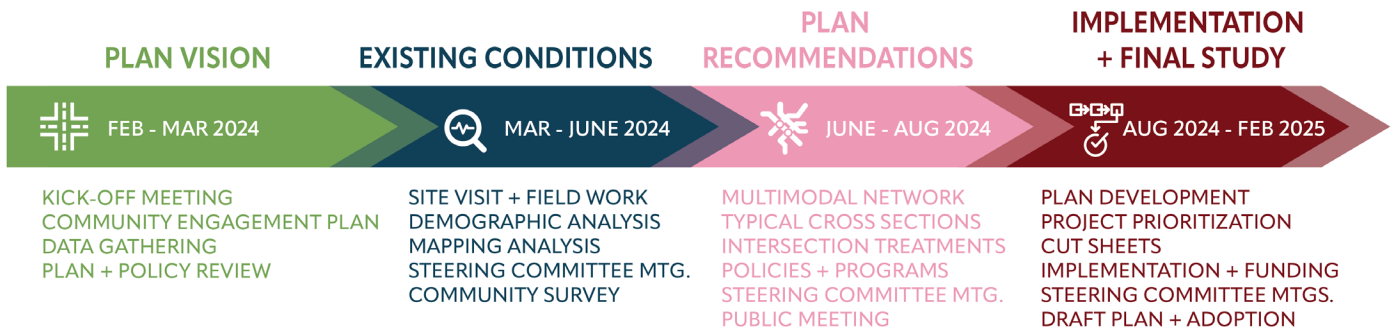
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *Town of Mars Hill Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan* aims to develop a comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian network, with supporting policies and programs, to create a safer, more walkable, and bikeable community. The plan is intended to help the Town of Mars Hill plan for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure as the Town continues to grow, and to create a prioritized network of impactful projects and policy measures that are primed for implementation.

This plan establishes a vision and goals; analyzes existing conditions, opportunities, and constraints; incorporates stakeholder and community input; recommends a bicycle and pedestrian network alongside program and policy guidance; and provides a high-level implementation plan.



WALKING AND BIKING IN MARS HILL

Challenges to walking and biking in Mars Hill center around accessibility, topography, and a lack of safe facilities along key corridors that provide access to community destinations. However, as a small community centered around a university where many students, faculty, and staff walk and bike across campus, Mars Hill has great potential to support walking and bicycling. Sidewalks are in place throughout the downtown and Mars Hill University campus area, as well as corridors extending north and west of downtown. The Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway is a linear park connecting the University to Mars Hill Elementary School, and planning is underway for additional extensions to Bailey Mountain Park and Preserve. New growth occurring brings the prospect of additional multimodal infrastructure.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Throughout the planning process, the Town actively engaged with local stakeholders and the broader community to inform the plan. This collaborative approach integrated diverse user perspectives and experiences to ensure the recommendations reflect the community's needs and priorities.

A steering committee composed of Town, state, University, and other community stakeholders met four times throughout the process to guide the plan and establish a shared vision. Community feedback was collected via a public survey in Spring 2024 and a pop-up event at the First Friday event downtown in August 2024.

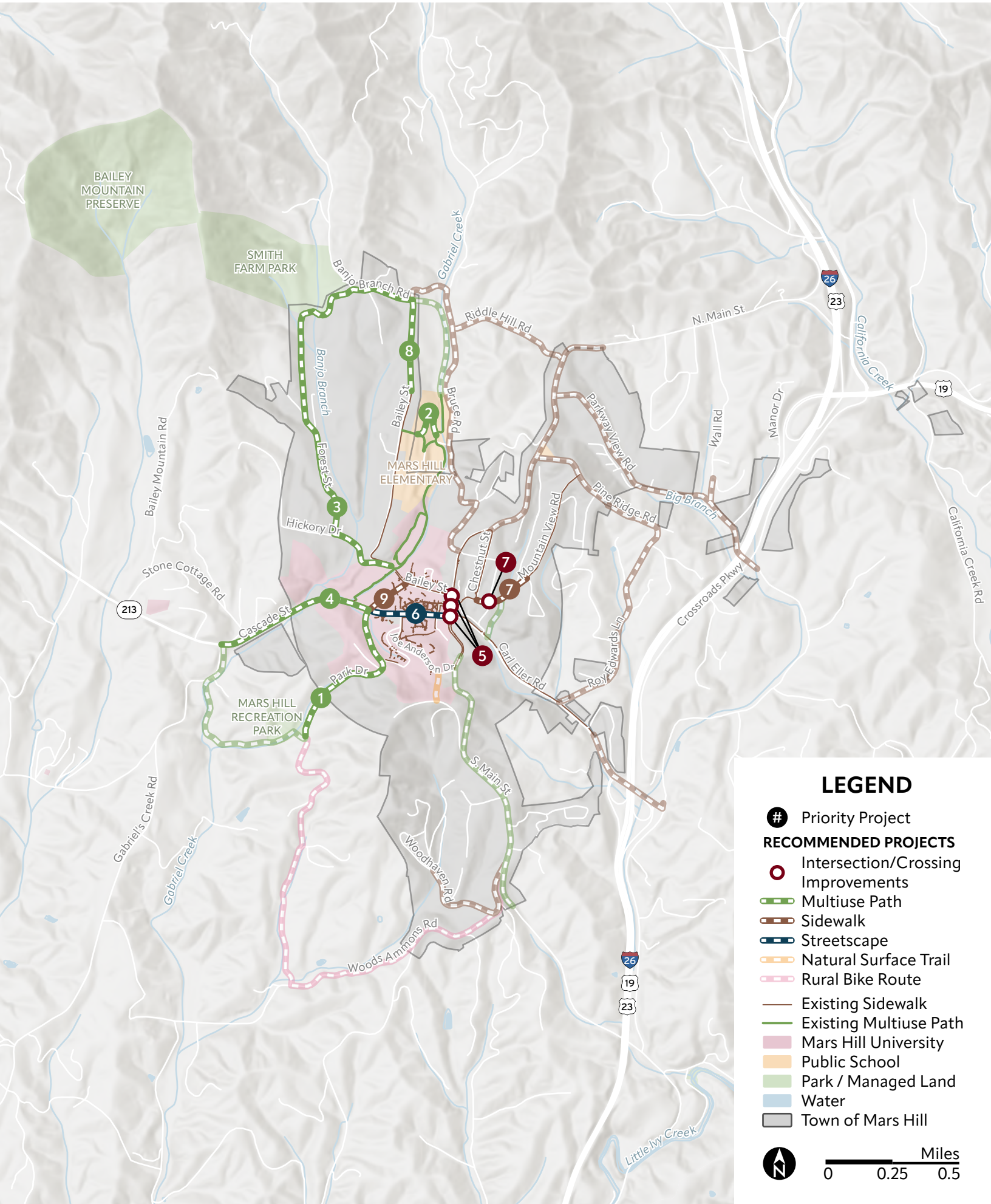
 **536** survey participants

 **408** survey comments

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The *Mars Hill Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan* proposes a network of multimodal facilities connecting to parks, neighborhoods, and across major barriers. Nine projects were identified as priority projects:

- ▶ Priority Project 1: Park Dr Sidepath
- ▶ Priority Project 2: Otis Duck Greenway Realignment
- ▶ Priority Project 3: Banjo Branch Rd/Forest St Greenway
- ▶ Priority Project 4: Cascade St/NC-213 Sidepath
- ▶ Priority Project 5: N. Main St Intersection Improvements
- ▶ Priority Project 6: Cascade St/NC-213 Streetscape
- ▶ Priority Project 7: Mountain View Rd Sidewalk and Intersection Improvements
- ▶ Priority Project 8: Bailey St Sidepath
- ▶ Priority Project 9: Athletic St Sidewalk



LEGEND

- # Priority Project
- RECOMMENDED PROJECTS**
- Intersection/Crossing Improvements
- ▬ Multiuse Path
- ▬ Sidewalk
- ▬ Streetscape
- ▬ Natural Surface Trail
- ▬ Rural Bike Route
- ▬ Existing Sidewalk
- ▬ Existing Multiuse Path
- Mars Hill University
- Public School
- Park / Managed Land
- Water
- Town of Mars Hill



Miles
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01

INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

The *Town of Mars Hill Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan* (the Plan) provides a framework to guide future investments in the Town's bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. The Plan's recommendations, based on a comprehensive analysis of opportunities and constraints, will assist decision makers to prioritize, fund, and implement projects that improve multimodal access to destinations throughout the community. This plan is intended to be a living document that is updated over time.

The following sections are included in this chapter:

- ▶ Project Background
- ▶ Vision + Goals
- ▶ Active Transportation Benefits

WELCOME TO
MARS HILL
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PROJECT BACKGROUND

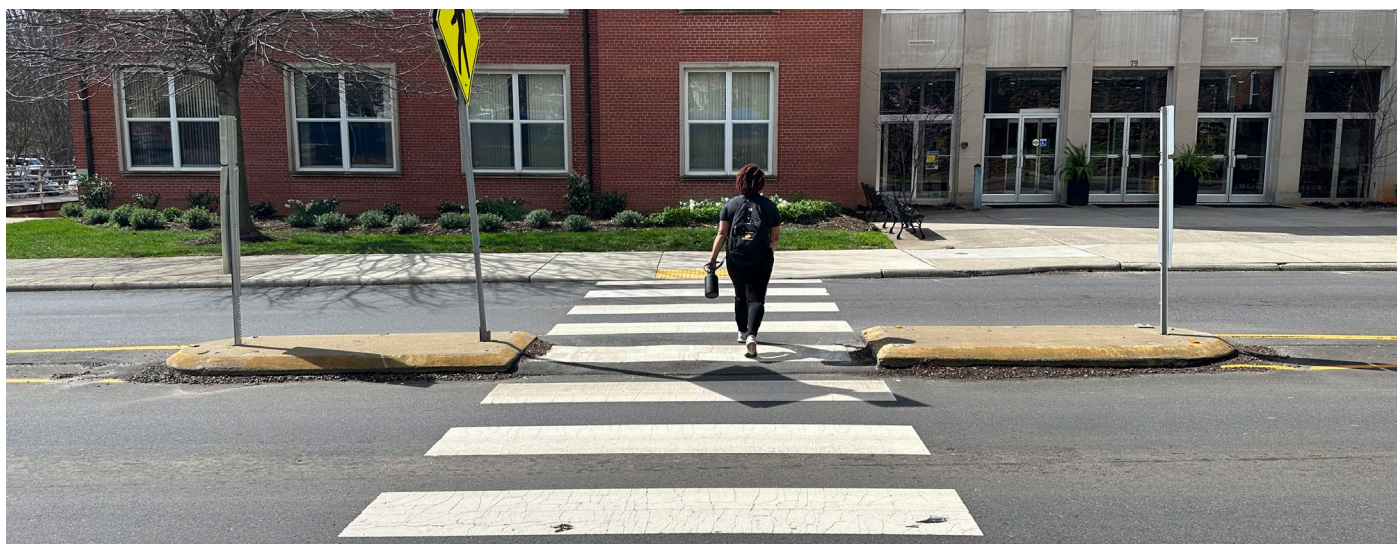
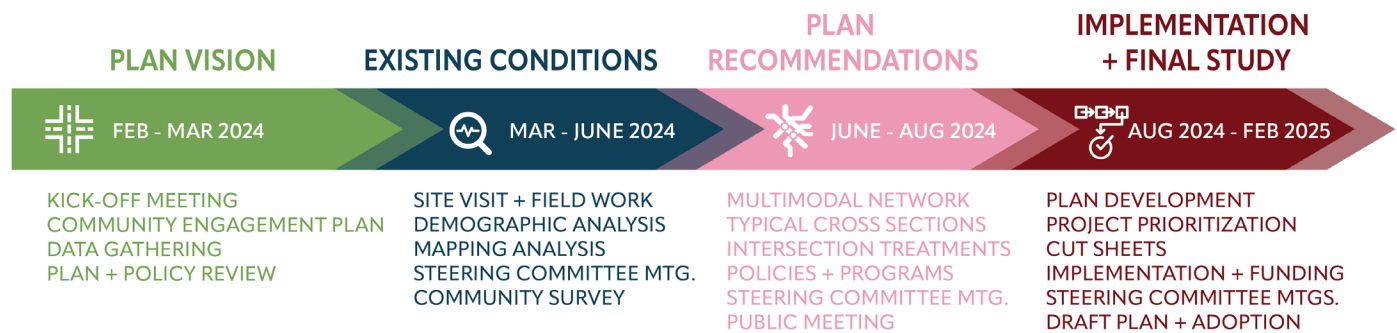
In 2023 the Town of Mars Hill (the Town) received a Multimodal Planning Grant from the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant Initiative to develop a comprehensive plan for bicycle and pedestrian facilities across the community.

This plan establishes a clear vision and goals (Chapter 1); comprehensively analyzes existing conditions, opportunities, and constraints (Chapter 2); incorporates stakeholder and community input (Chapter 3); recommends a bicycle and pedestrian network (Chapter 4) alongside program and policy guidance (Chapter 5); and provides a high-level implementation plan (Chapter 6). The Plan aligns with the content standards for Bicycle and Pedestrians Plans set by NCDOT’s Integrated Mobility Division (IMD).

Throughout the Plan’s development, the Town actively engaged with local stakeholders and the broader community to inform the Plan. A Steering Committee comprised staff from the Town of Mars Hill, Madison County, NCDOT, French Broad River MPO (FBRMPO), Mars Hill University (MHU), alongside bicycle and pedestrian advocates, and local residents met four times to discuss goals, review existing conditions, develop draft recommendations, and review the Final Plan. A community survey and pop-up public meeting during Mars Hill’s First Friday in August 2024 provided additional input on priorities for future bicycle and pedestrian improvements. This collaborative approach integrated diverse community perspectives and ensured the recommendations reflected the community’s needs and priorities.

The project recommendations outlined in this document are eligible for inclusion in Madison County’s Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) and submittal through NCDOT’s prioritization process for inclusion in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

A feasibility study examining an extension of the Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway north to Bailey Mountain Preserve was conducted concurrently to this plan, leading to some shared recommendations. The feasibility study includes greater analysis and conceptual design of some projects recommended in this plan.



A pedestrian crossing Cascade St/NC-213 on the MHU campus.



VISION + GOALS

A vision and a set of goals for the *Mars Hill Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan* were developed through a series of visioning exercises held during the first Steering Committee meeting. The goals of the Plan focus on themes of safety, accessibility and connectivity, equity, economic impact, and project feasibility, and served as a guide throughout the planning process. Community members also echoed these goals during outreach events. The proposed outcomes and recommendations of this plan reflect the goals below.

VISION STATEMENT

"The Town of Mars Hill is a livable community with an accessible and connected network of sidewalks, trails, and bicycle facilities where residents and visitors of all ages and abilities can safely and conveniently walk and bike to their destinations while enjoying mountain landscapes and small-town charm."

GOALS



SAFETY

Address safety concerns related to walking and biking in Mars Hill through the design and maintenance of multimodal facilities, and propose safety improvements at critical intersections, crossings, and corridors.



CONNECTIVITY

Provide seamless connections between existing multimodal facilities and destinations to support walking and biking in Mars Hill, and establish links with neighboring communities in the greater Asheville region.



ACCESSIBILITY + EQUITY

Improve bicycle and pedestrian access to social and economic opportunities in Mars Hill via an active transportation network that comfortably accommodates users of all ages and abilities.



COMMUNITY

Emphasize Mars Hill's natural and cultural landscapes through active transportation facilities that create space for both residents and visitors to engage with the community and appreciate its offerings.



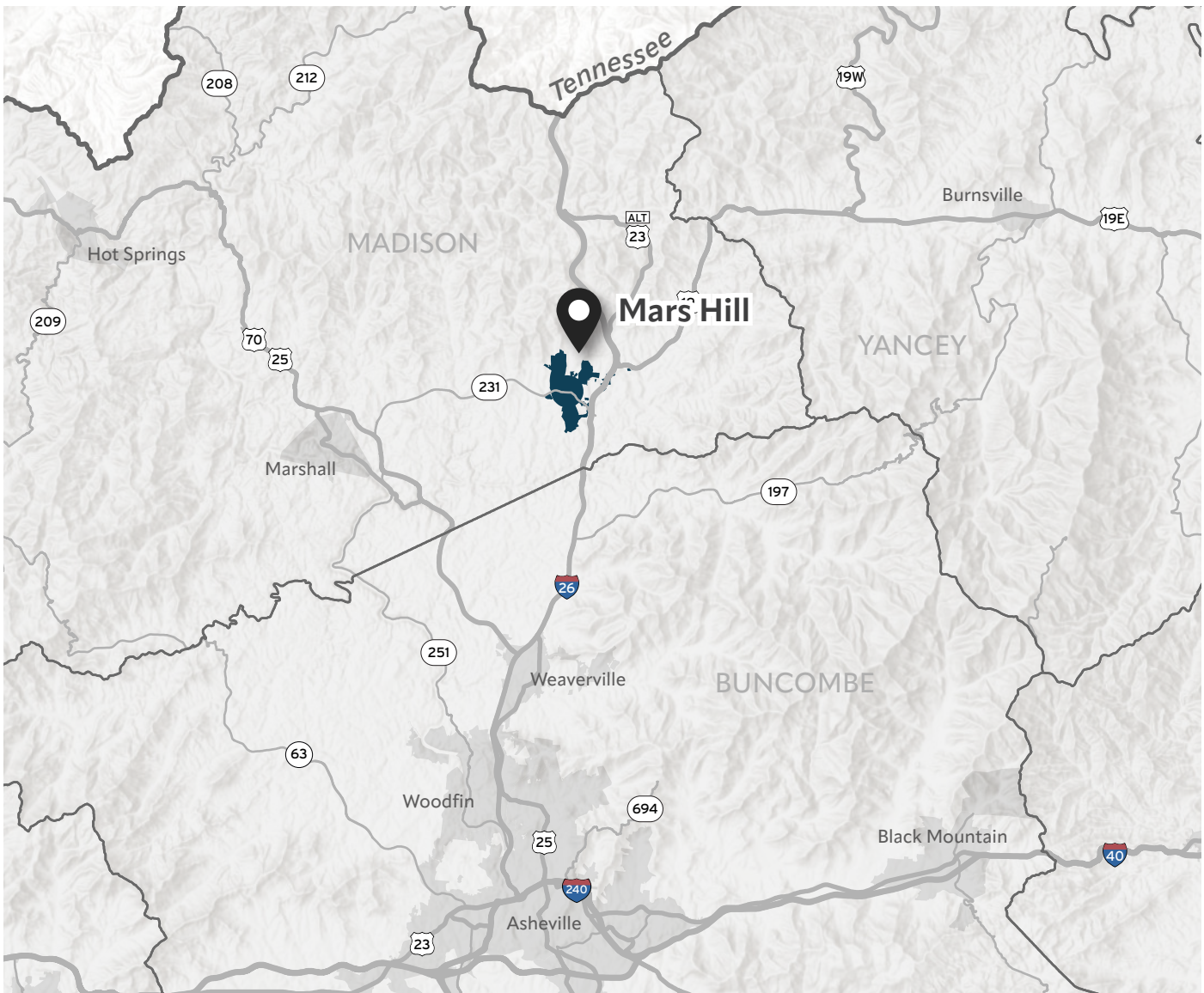
GROWTH

Support the provision of bicycle and pedestrian facilities within future development in Mars Hill, encouraging multimodal travel and sustainable growth patterns that contribute to the small-town charm of Mars Hill.

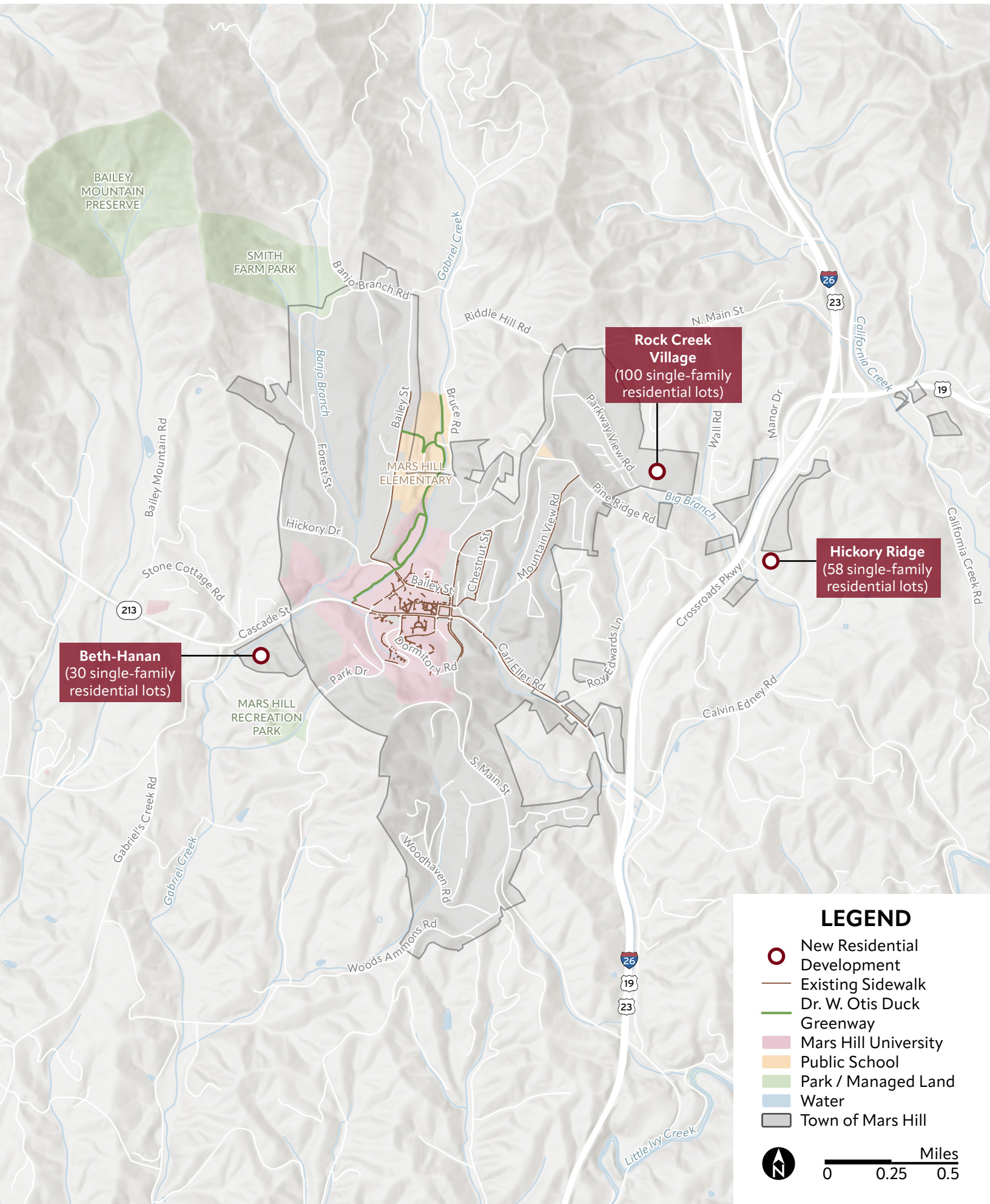
STUDY AREA PROFILE

Mars Hill is a small but growing town of 2,843 residents in eastern Madison County, North Carolina, approximately 15 miles north of Asheville and nine miles south of the Tennessee border. The community is located just off Interstate 26 and is connected by US-19, US-23, and NC-213. Central to the town's history, culture, and economy is MHU, a private liberal arts university founded in 1856 with over 1,000 students. The MHU campus is deeply intertwined with the town, located in the central business district and bisected by key thoroughfares such as NC-213 (Cascade St), Bailey St, and Park Dr. Bailey Mountain Park and Preserve, an 86-acre Town-owned property being converted from farmland to parkland, are located northwest of Town. Mars Hill also operates a small park southwest of downtown, featuring tennis courts, a ball field, and a public swimming pool. Mars Hill is also home to the Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway, a paved trail approximately 1.5 miles in length connecting the university to Mars Hill Elementary School and residences on Bailey St.









In recent years Mars Hill has seen growth due to its proximity to Asheville, resulting in new residential communities such as Rock Creek Village on Parkway View Rd, Hickory Ridge on Calvin Edney Rd, and the Beth-Hanan Community on NC-213.



Mars Hill's location in the Asheville region.



LEGEND

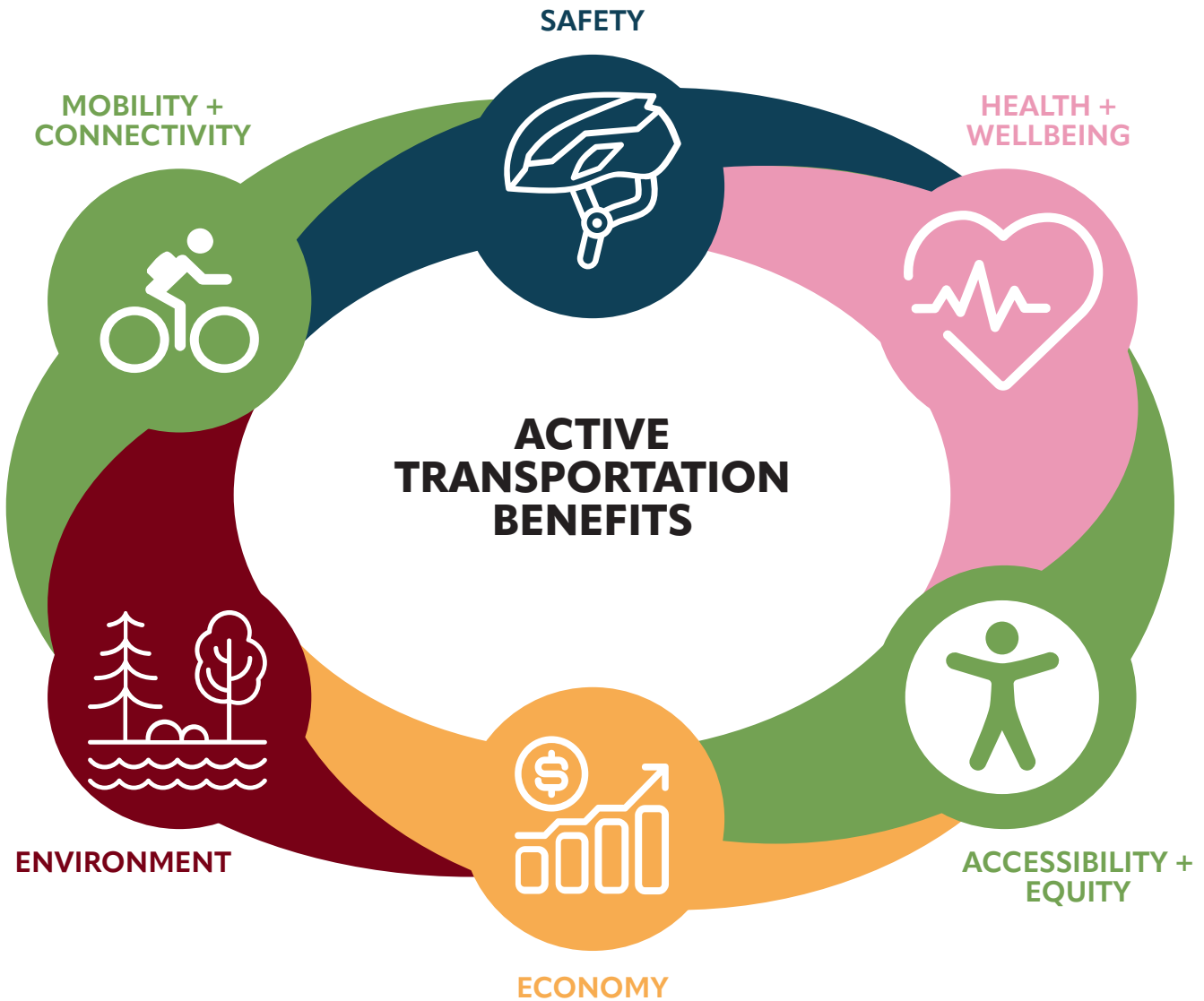
-  New Residential Development
-  Existing Sidewalk
-  Dr. W. Otis Duck Greenway
-  Mars Hill University
-  Public School
-  Park / Managed Land
-  Water
-  Town of Mars Hill



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ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION BENEFITS

Construction of the bicycle and pedestrian facilities recommended in this Plan will provide numerous benefits to its users, including but not limited to enhanced mobility and connectivity, increased safety, improved health and well-being, positive environmental and economic impacts, and equitably improving walking and rolling access to local destinations.





MOBILITY + CONNECTIVITY

...creates alternatives to driving by improving bicycle and pedestrian access to downtown, local businesses, recreational centers, educational institutions, residences, and other points of interest in Mars Hill.

Over 45 percent of US driving trips are less than three miles, and 60 percent are five miles or less.¹ These trips, many of which could be taken by bike or on foot in 20 to 30 minutes, demonstrate the potential for shifting to active transportation modes, especially in small communities such as Mars Hill where most destinations are within a short distance. However, areas where safe and accessible bicycle and pedestrian facilities are lacking hinder residents and visitors from choosing these modes.

Transportation networks that accommodate all modes of travel increase mobility and create safer conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians. Communities that are increasing their active transportation mode share invest in well-connected, multimodal networks that allow people of all ages and abilities to bike and walk to their desired destinations. Investment in active transportation facilities along existing road corridors leverages existing infrastructure and enables more users to connect to their destinations, promoting mobility and catering to the nearly 100 million Americans who cannot drive due to age, disability, or cost.²



SAFETY

...provides dedicated bicycle and pedestrian facilities separated from traffic and high-visibility crossings of road crossings, contributing to a reduction in bicycle- and pedestrian-involved crashes, serious injuries, and fatalities in Mars Hill.

Unsafe conditions, stemming from factors like inadequate separation from vehicular traffic, lack of safe intersection and midblock crossings, and a lack of connectivity, worsen with higher roadway speeds. For example, a pedestrian hit at 31 miles per hour (MPH) faces a five times higher risk of severe injury compared to 16 MPH, emphasizing the need for reduced vehicular speeds in areas with pedestrian activity and separated pedestrian facilities.³ Implementing separated facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians with safe crossing facilities improves safety and encourages cycling and walking. In a study by the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO), seven cities that collectively expanded their bikeway networks by 50 percent between 2007 and 2014 saw usage double and the risk of cyclist fatalities and injuries reduced by half.⁴ Enhancements like high visibility crosswalks and lighting increase user visibility, while programming educates both drivers and active transportation users about how to safely share the road.



HEALTH + WELLBEING

...improves access to safe facilities for walking and biking in Mars Hill, creating opportunities to increase physical activity, improve mental health, reduce risk of chronic disease, and reduce healthcare costs.

Inadequate physical activity worsens health outcomes and contributes to conditions like heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer, and premature death, costing \$117 billion in healthcare expenses annually.⁵ To support physical and mental well-being, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends 150 minutes of moderate exercise per week, achievable through biking and walking.⁵ In North Carolina, bicycle and pedestrian facilities promote healthier lifestyles by providing safe and accessible opportunities for physical activity. A 2018 study by NC State University's Institute for Transportation Research and Education (ITRE) found that each year the three greenways and trails analyzed in the study generate 21.2 million biking miles and 9.8 million walking miles, saving about \$300,000 in healthcare costs and reducing the risk of various diseases.⁶ When communities invest in active transportation facilities like multiuse paths, bicycle lanes, and sidewalks, they invest in the overall health of their communities.



ENVIRONMENT

...encourages eco-friendly modes of transportation, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled in Mars Hill while preserving sensitive natural areas and wildlife habitats.

Between 1990 and 2020, transportation emissions saw the most significant increase of all emissions sectors, accounting for 27 percent of total emissions in 2020, with light-duty vehicles (including most passenger vehicles) responsible for 57 percent of those emissions.⁷ Sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and greenways promote low-carbon modes of transportation, reduce CO² emissions, and lead to environmental cost savings. ITRE estimates that walking and biking on greenways and trails across North Carolina cuts 53.7 million pounds of carbon dioxide (CO²) emissions and 686,000 pounds of motor vehicle emissions annually, amounting to a savings of \$707,000.⁶ Offering safe walking and biking facilities encourages a shift away from driving, especially for short trips, resulting in reduced negative environmental impacts compared to vehicle travel.¹ Greenways also help to preserve and protect natural resources and open space, while improving local ecosystems and mitigating flooding.



ECONOMY

...contributes to increases in local business sales revenue, property values, and recreational tourism, supporting job creation, community development, and sustainable economic growth in Mars Hill.

Many North Carolina communities struggle to attract sustainable economic development. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities such as greenways have a proven track record as economic catalysts, offering opportunities for tourism growth, job creation, increasing property values, and supporting local businesses along greenway corridors. A 2018 ITRE study on multiuse paths in North Carolina revealed that greenways lead to increased sales revenue, job creation, and an annual return of \$1.72 on every \$1 spent on trail construction.⁶ The Great Allegheny Passage, a 150-mile rail-trail connecting Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and Cumberland, Maryland exemplifies the economic benefits of active transportation facilities. In 2019, it had a direct economic impact of \$74.7 million and supported nearly 1,400 jobs, while tourist spending contributed around \$19 million in increased tax revenue.^{8,9}



ACCESSIBILITY + EQUITY

...expands access to employment, shopping, services, and recreation in Mars Hill, creating a mobility network that welcomes and supports users of all ages and abilities while reducing transportation costs.

Inaccessible, unsafe, and poorly maintained transportation networks in North Carolina disproportionately affect vulnerable and disadvantaged users, particularly those who rely on walking, biking, and transit. This hampers access to employment, services, recreation, and other destinations. To address inequality in the transportation system, communities should ensure equitable access to more affordable, safe, and convenient active transportation infrastructure. The recommendations of the *Town of Mars Hill Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan* will strive to create equitable multimodal access to important community destinations, including employment centers, MHU, K-12 schools, parks and recreation facilities, and retail shopping centers. In a 2018 ITRE study, researchers found that trail users reduced their annual transportation costs by \$1.83 million, thanks to improved multimodal facilities that allow safer and more frequent walking and biking.⁶

RESOURCES

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02

EXISTING CONDITIONS

OVERVIEW

The *Town of Mars Hill Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan* considers natural and human environmental conditions, reviews relevant policies and other recent planning efforts, and includes an opportunities and constraints analysis to gain a better understanding of specific needs for the study area. The findings gathered during this analysis were used to inform policy, program, and network recommendations made in the Plan.

The following sections are included in this chapter:

- ▶ Community Demographics
- ▶ Existing Conditions
- ▶ Previous Planning Efforts
- ▶ Policy Review
- ▶ Opportunities + Constraints



COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

Understanding the Town of Mars Hill’s demographic conditions and trends are essential to planning a comprehensive and equitable bicycle and pedestrian network. This analysis also informs the public engagement approach and ensures the recommendations address the diverse needs of the people who live, work, and play in Mars Hill. The following demographic analysis is based on the United States Census Bureau’s 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-year estimates.

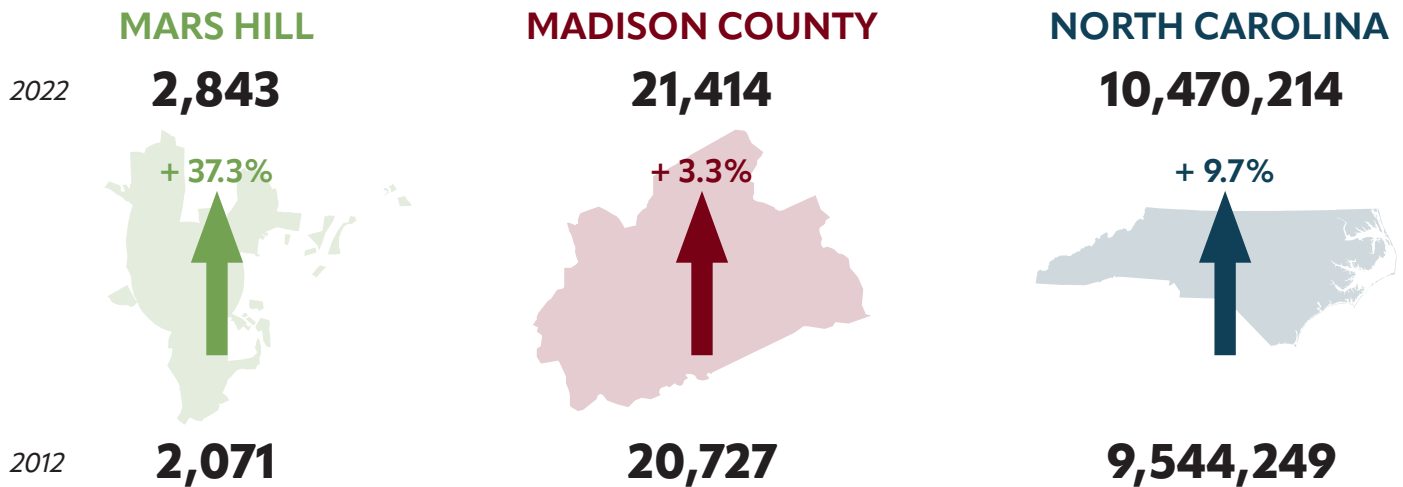
This section includes an analysis of the following factors:

- ▶ Population
- ▶ Age
- ▶ Race + Ethnicity
- ▶ Poverty
- ▶ Income
- ▶ Internet Access
- ▶ Commute Patterns
- ▶ Vehicle Access
- ▶ Employment Density
- ▶ Transportation Disadvantage Index

POPULATION

The population of Mars Hill was 2,071 in 2012, growing to 2,843 by 2022. This marks an increase of 37.3 percent over this 10 year period (an average of 3.7 percent annually). Madison County only saw a 3.3 percent increase in population over the same 10 year period while the State of North Carolina saw a 9.7 percent increase in population. These statistics demonstrate the vibrancy of Mars Hill which is attracting new residents at a much higher rate than both Madison County and the State of North Carolina as a whole.

Sidewalks, greenways, and safe, comfortable bike facilities are key pieces of public infrastructure that support safety, mobility, and quality of life in a growing community and serve as an attractive amenity for business investment and new residents.



AGE

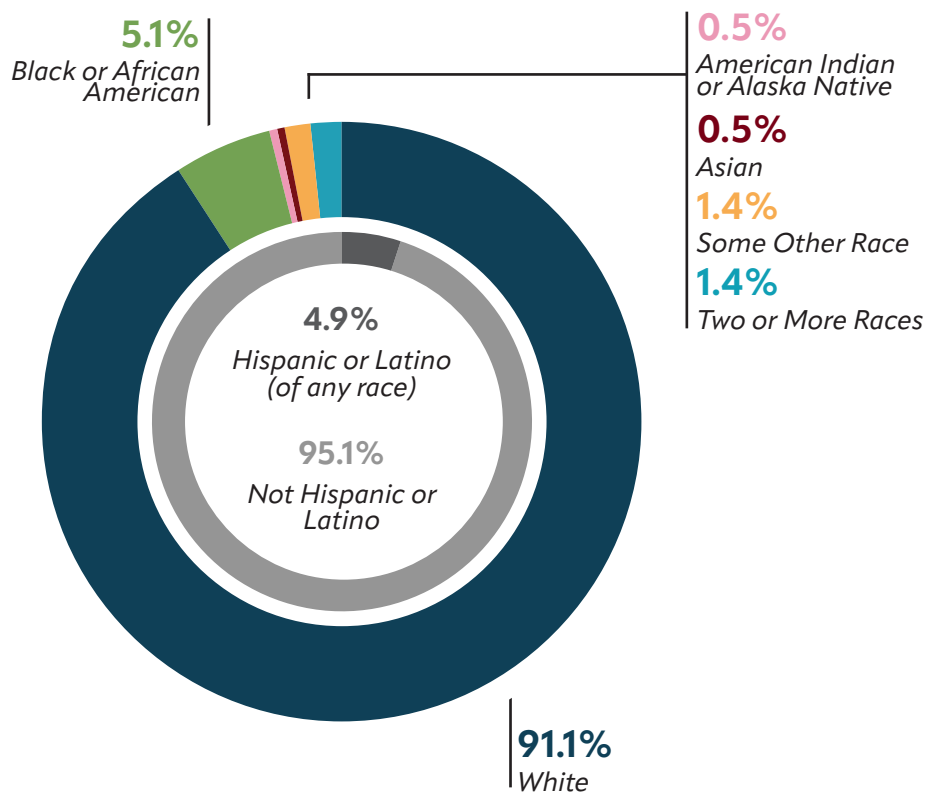
The median age of residents in Mars Hill is 27, and just under 70 percent (68.9 percent) of the Town's population falls between 18 and 64 years of age. This data suggests that the Town has a larger proportion of working-age individuals than Madison County as a whole (59.5 percent). The percentage of residents who are under 18 years old or 65 years or older are 17.1 percent and 14.0 percent, respectively.

This demographic breakdown highlights the need to design future bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure with a wide range of ages and physical abilities in mind. The Plan's "AAA" (All Ages and Abilities) network approach ensures younger and older citizens are able to safely and effectively walk and bike as they desire.

	UNDER 18	18 TO 64	65 OR OLDER
Town of Mars Hill	17.1%	68.9%	14.0%
Madison County	17.6%	59.5%	22.9%
North Carolina	21.8%	61.5%	16.7%

RACE + ETHNICITY

Mars Hill is predominantly White (91.1 percent) followed by Black at 5.1 percent. Just over one percent (1.4 percent) of residents are of two or more races and another 1.4 percent are of some other race. The total non-white population of Mars Hill is 8.9 percent of the total population, which is higher than that of Madison County (6.6 percent) and significantly lower than that of the state (35.0 percent). Of the total population, 4.9 percent of Mars Hill residents identify as Hispanic or Latino, a greater share than that of Madison County (2.7 percent) but lower than the state overall (10.0 percent).



POVERTY

Approximately ten percent (9.5 percent) of the Town’s population is living below poverty level. This rate is lower than both Madison County (12.5 percent) and the state (13.3 percent).

When designed and managed thoughtfully, active transportation facilities are a more affordable transportation option, providing access to employment and economic opportunities and improving health and well being. However, the Town and its partners should address challenges like the potential for gentrification to ensure the benefits of new bicycle and pedestrian facilities are shared by all.

	BELOW POVERTY LEVEL	UNDER 50% OF POVERTY LEVEL	BETWEEN 100% AND 149% OF POVERTY LEVEL
Town of Mars Hill	9.5%	6.6%	6.5%
Madison County	12.5%	5.5%	10.3%
North Carolina	13.3%	6.0%	9.1%

INCOME

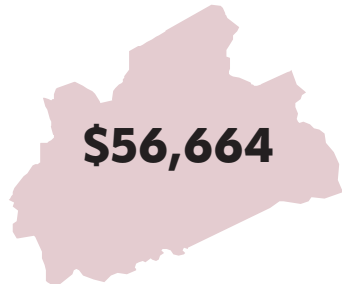
The median household income for residents of the Town of Mars Hill is \$80,833. Overall, this is significantly higher than the median household income of both Madison County (\$56,664) and the state as a whole (\$66,186).

While Mars Hill is relatively affluent, this Plan considers the location and needs of lower-income residents to ensure equitable access to bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

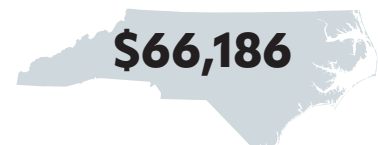
MARS HILL



MADISON COUNTY



NORTH CAROLINA



INTERNET ACCESS

Approximately 13.4 percent of households in Mars Hill lack internet access, which is comparable to the state average of 13.0 percent but less than that of Madison County (21.0 percent).

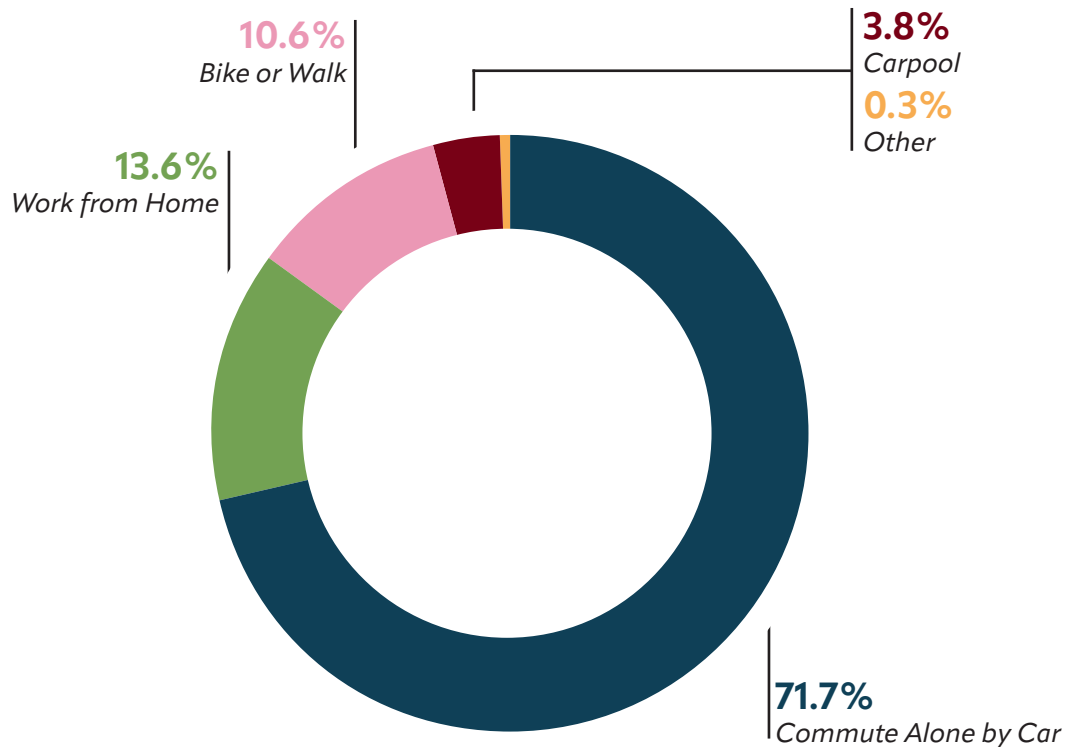
To meet the needs of Mars Hill household without Internet access, this Plan employs more traditional public engagement methods to communicate information about the Plan and collect feedback.

HOUSEHOLDS LACKING INTERNET ACCESS	
Town of Mars Hill	13.4%
Madison County	21.0%
North Carolina	13.0%

COMMUTE PATTERNS

Approximately 72 percent (71.7 percent) of employed residents in Mars Hill commute to work alone by car, fewer than Madison County (78.2 percent) and North Carolina (75.2 percent). Over 13 percent (13.6 percent) of residents work from home and do not commute, while approximately 4 percent (3.8 percent) of residents carpool. Additionally, 10.6 percent bike or walk to work, which is significantly higher than the number of Madison County (2.0 percent) or North Carolina (1.8 percent) residents who bike or walk. Fewer residents commute via another mode (0.3 percent).

The Plan supports the needs and of the relatively high proportion of bicyclist and pedestrian commuters for a well-connected, safe, and accessible active transportation network in the Town.



VEHICLE ACCESS

32.1 percent of households in Mars Hill have access to only one vehicle and approximately sixty-three percent (62.8 percent) have access to two or more vehicles. Approximately five percent (5.1 percent) of households do not have access to a vehicle. These rates of households with access to one or more vehicles are higher than Madison County.

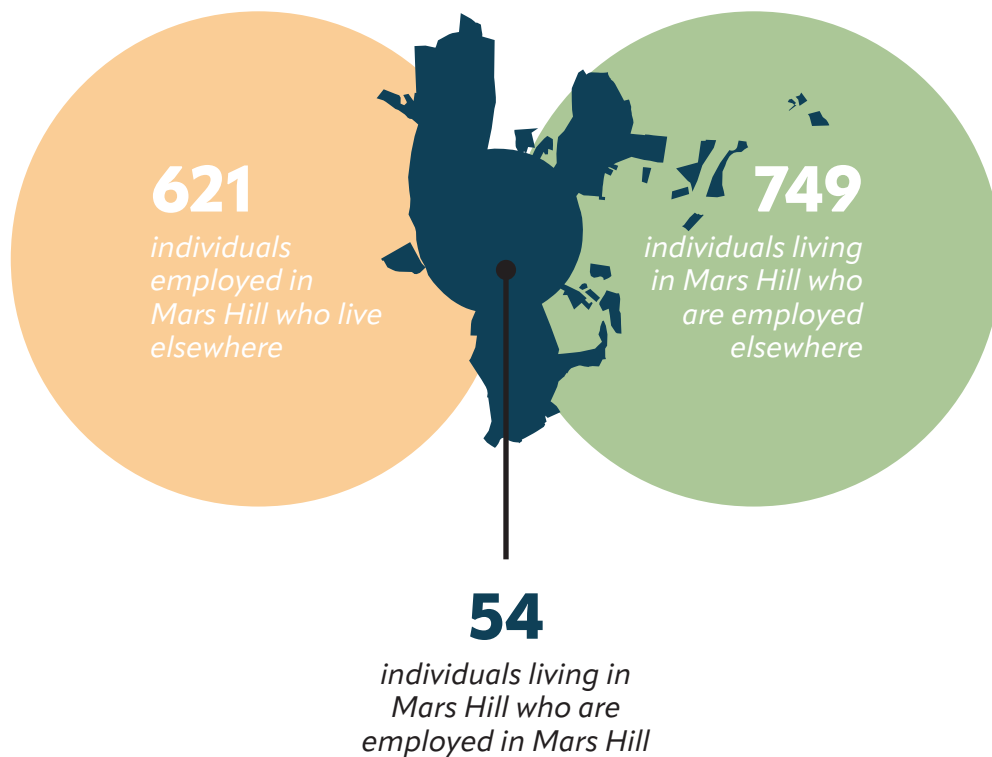
The Plan's recommendations create new and enhanced connections between residential areas and destinations throughout the community to support the transportation needs of households without reliable access to a vehicle.

	ZERO-VEHICLE HOUSEHOLDS	ACCESS TO ONE VEHICLE	ACCESS TO TWO + VEHICLES
Town of Mars Hill	5.1%	32.1%	62.8%
Madison County	4.5%	29.5%	66.0%
North Carolina	5.4%	31.3%	63.3%

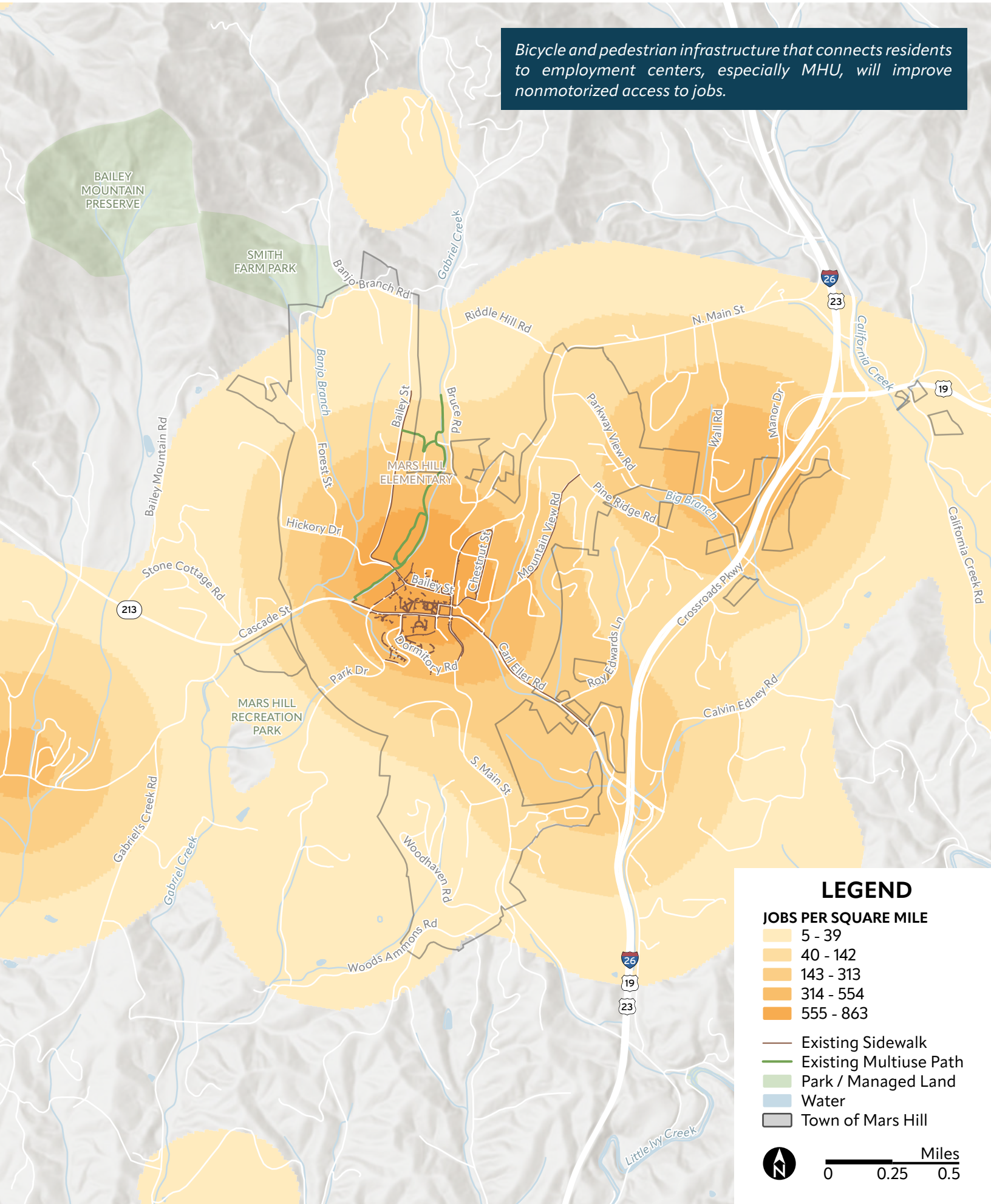
EMPLOYMENT DENSITY

Among working-age residents of Mars Hill, the Educational Services and Health Care and Social Assistance industry sector accounts for 37.1 percent of employed Mars Hill residents, making it the largest economic sector. Within the Town of Mars Hill, jobs are most-densely located in the downtown area around the campus of MHU.

Over 600 individuals employed within the Town of Mars Hill live outside of the Town, while 749 individuals live within the Town but work elsewhere. Only 54 individuals live and work within the Town limits. The proximity of Mars Hill to larger job markets in the Asheville area likely accounts for this commuting pattern. Data from the North Carolina Department of Commerce (2022) shows that MHU is the fourth-largest employer in Madison County, employing between 100 and 249 people.



Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure that connects residents to employment centers, especially MHU, will improve nonmotorized access to jobs.



LEGEND

JOBS PER SQUARE MILE

- 5 - 39
- 40 - 142
- 143 - 313
- 314 - 554
- 555 - 863

- Existing Sidewalk
- Existing Multiuse Path
- Park / Managed Land
- Water
- Town of Mars Hill

Miles
0 0.25 0.5

TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGE INDEX

The Transportation Disadvantage Index (TDI) is a score developed by NCDOT to identify concentrations of populations that face barriers to accessing transportation. TDI is calculated using data from seven socioeconomic indicators:

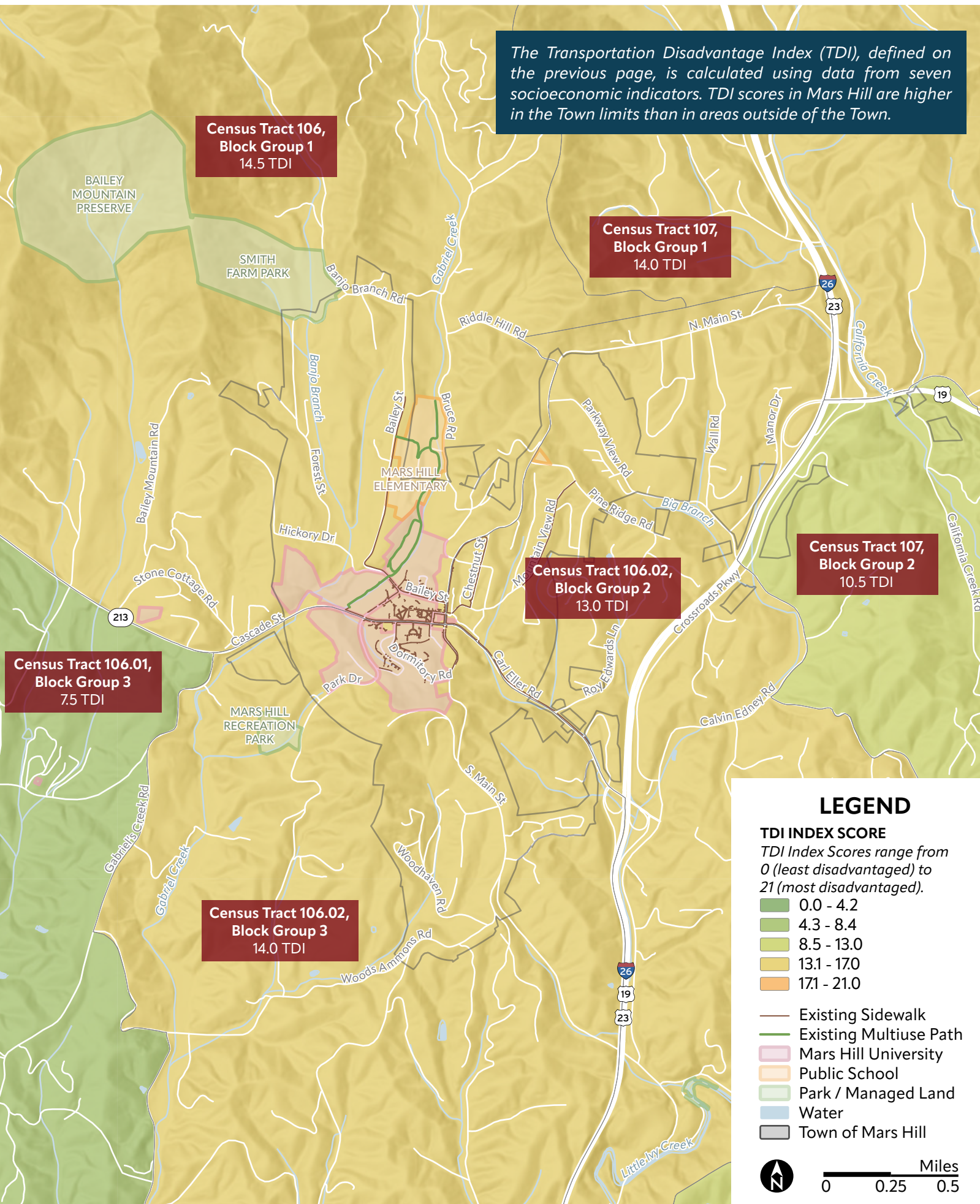
- ▶ Households with no vehicle available
- ▶ Low-income population
- ▶ Disabled population
- ▶ Population aged 15 and under (non-drivers)
- ▶ Population aged 65 and older (seniors)
- ▶ BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, Persons of Color) population
- ▶ Population with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

The TDI is a composite score based on the seven indicators of potential transportation disadvantage. Each U.S. Census block group receives a score between one and three for each TDI indicator based on the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey data (2020, five-year estimate) relative to the State, County, Division, and MPO. The scores are then weighted to reduce double counting and are summarized to provide a score between zero and 21. Higher scores identify populations that are statistically more likely to face barriers in accessing transportation infrastructure and destinations compared to other areas of the state. In the map on the following page, TDI scores in Mars Hill are shown relative to Madison County as a whole.



Gaps in the pedestrian network, such as on Forest St, sometimes force people to walk in the roadway.

The Transportation Disadvantage Index (TDI), defined on the previous page, is calculated using data from seven socioeconomic indicators. TDI scores in Mars Hill are higher in the Town limits than in areas outside of the Town.

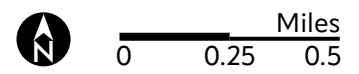


LEGEND

TDI INDEX SCORE
TDI Index Scores range from 0 (least disadvantaged) to 21 (most disadvantaged).

- 0.0 - 4.2
- 4.3 - 8.4
- 8.5 - 13.0
- 13.1 - 17.0
- 17.1 - 21.0

- Existing Sidewalk
- Existing Multiuse Path
- Mars Hill University
- Public School
- Park / Managed Land
- Water
- Town of Mars Hill



EXISTING CONDITIONS

The project team collected data from previous planning efforts, related projects and available geographic information systems (GIS) data covering a range of topics, followed by a one-day site tour on April 12, 2024, to gather additional data. The project team documented existing conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians within the local transportation system, including existing and off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

For both existing facilities along road corridors and at intersections, the project team recorded roadway widths, shoulder treatments, lane markings, and posted speed limits. The project team also made note of opportunities and constraints and observed maintenance issues and unsafe or substandard intersections or crossings. Together the desktop analysis and site visit informed the Opportunities and Constraints Analysis, found at the end of this chapter. This analysis includes photographs from the site visit and accompanying captions.

This section contains annotated maps that cover the following topics within each consideration focus area:

- ▶ Existing Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities
- ▶ Planned Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities
- ▶ Bicycle + Pedestrian Crashes
- ▶ Fatal + Serious Injury Crashes
- ▶ Intersection Crash Frequency
- ▶ Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)
- ▶ NCDOT Right-of-Way (ROW)
- ▶ Speed Limits
- ▶ State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Projects
- ▶ Highway Maintenance Improvement Program (HMIP) Projects
- ▶ Historic Resources
- ▶ Zoning
- ▶ Utilities + Easements
- ▶ Flooding + Wetlands
- ▶ Voluntary Agricultural Districts (VAD)
- ▶ Topography

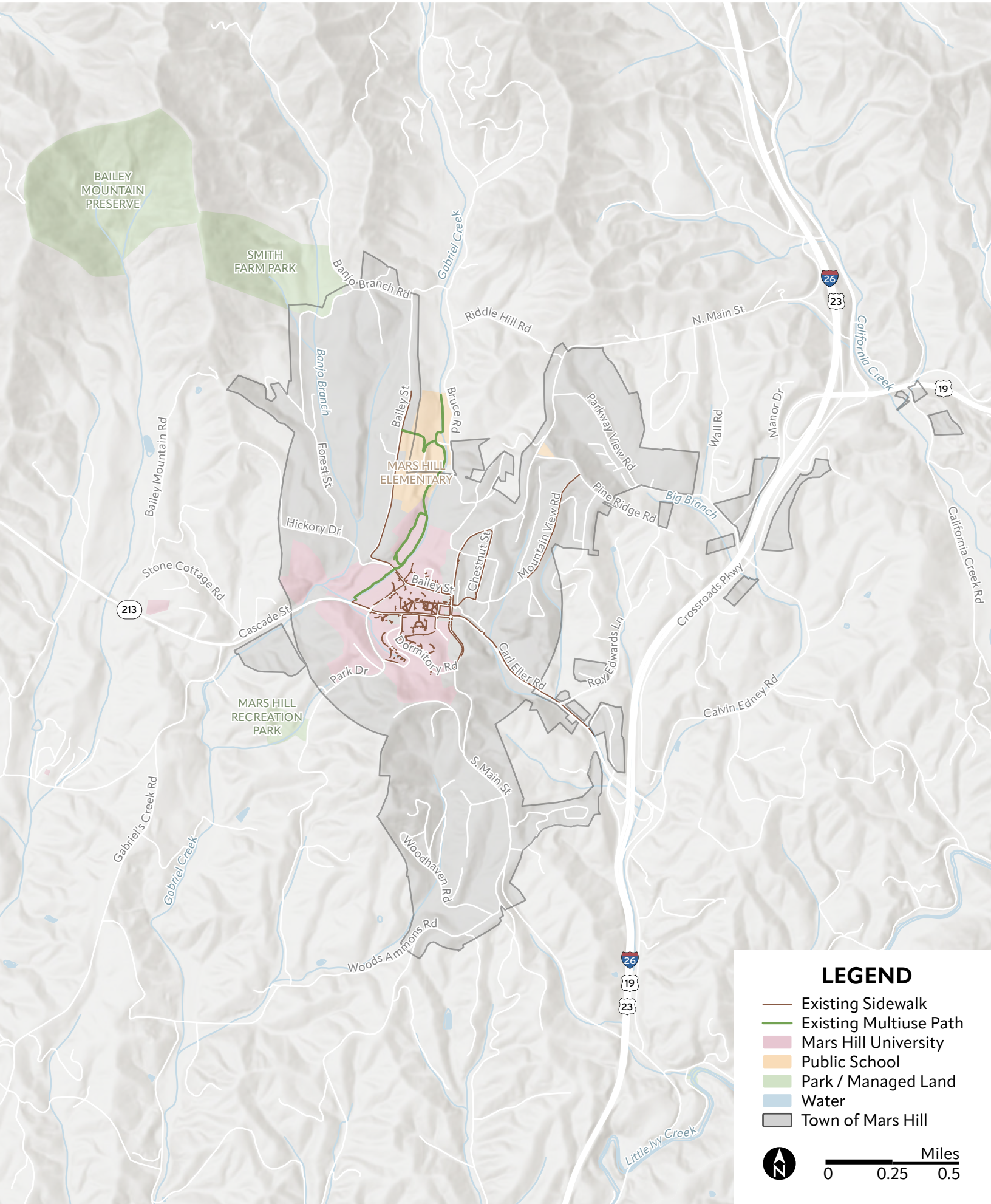


The project team conducted a site visit to evaluate existing conditions in April 2024.








TOWN OF MARS HILL


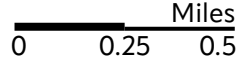
Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan

Existing Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities



LEGEND

-  Existing Sidewalk
-  Existing Multiuse Path
-  Mars Hill University
-  Public School
-  Park / Managed Land
-  Water
-  Town of Mars Hill

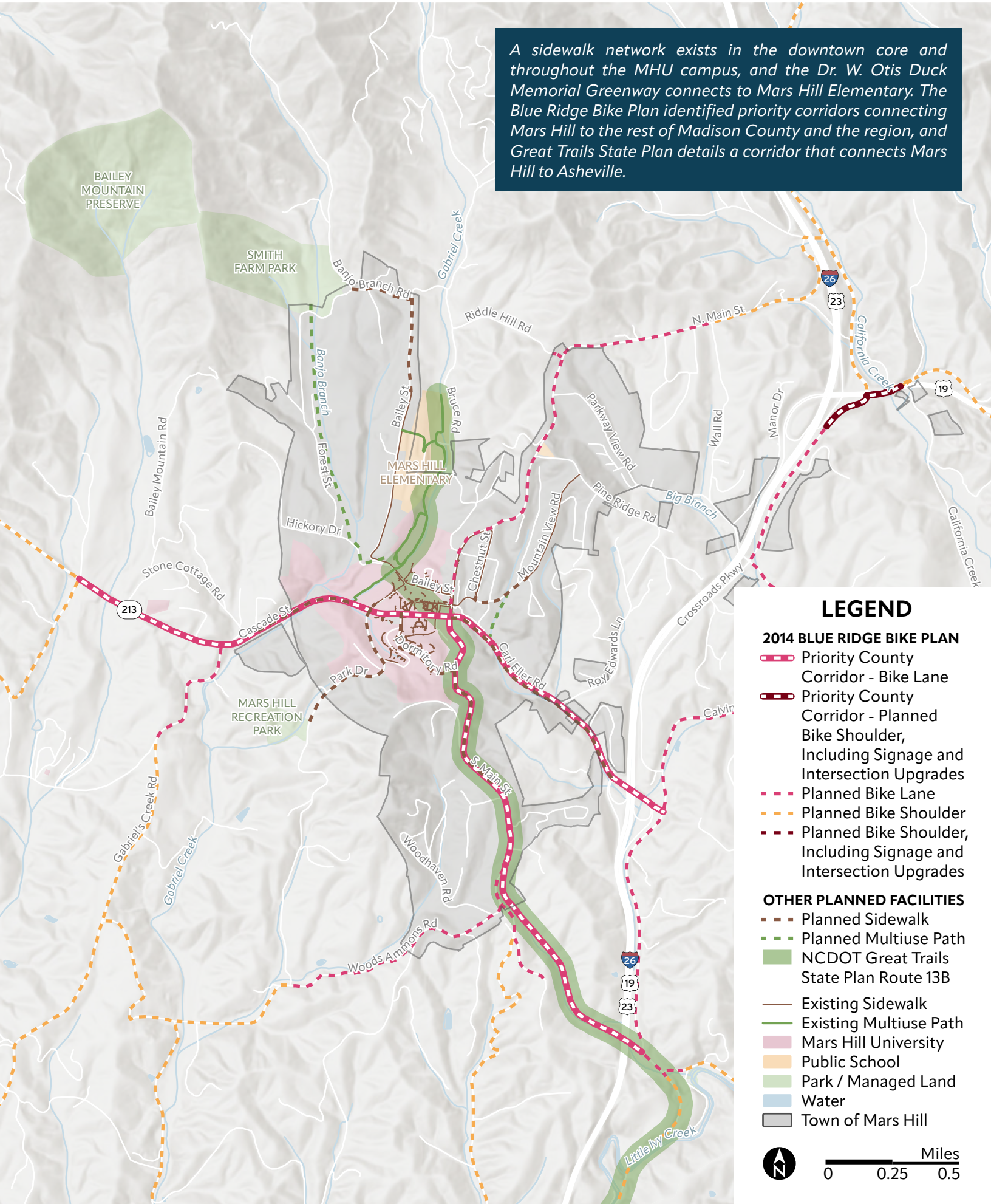
Miles
0 0.25 0.5

TOWN OF MARS HILL

Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan

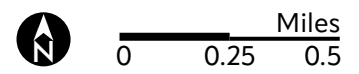
Existing + Planned Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

A sidewalk network exists in the downtown core and throughout the MHU campus, and the Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway connects to Mars Hill Elementary. The Blue Ridge Bike Plan identified priority corridors connecting Mars Hill to the rest of Madison County and the region, and Great Trails State Plan details a corridor that connects Mars Hill to Asheville.

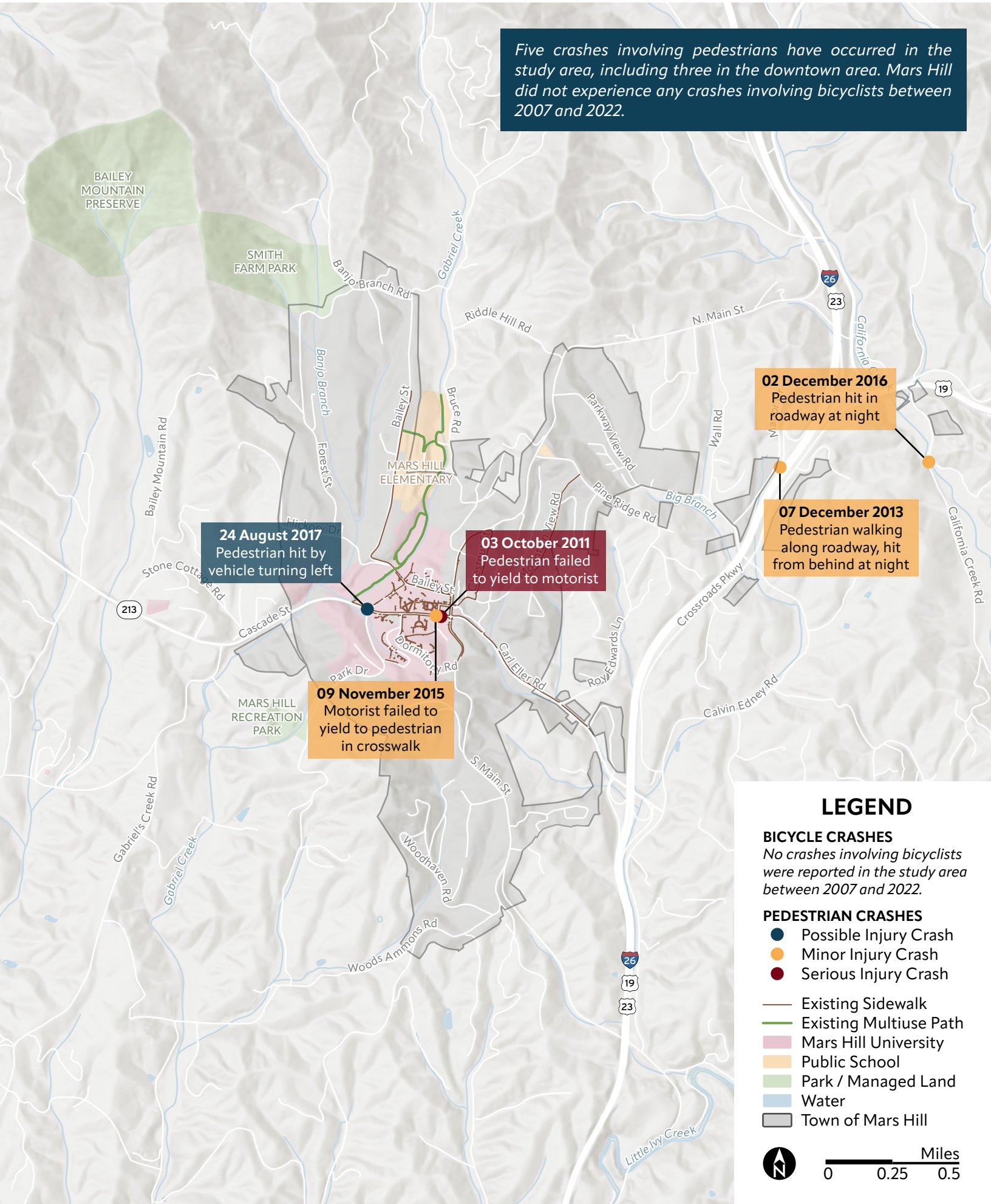


LEGEND

- 2014 BLUE RIDGE BIKE PLAN**
- ▬▬▬ Priority County Corridor - Bike Lane
 - ▬▬▬ Priority County Corridor - Planned Bike Shoulder, Including Signage and Intersection Upgrades
 - - - Planned Bike Lane
 - - - Planned Bike Shoulder
 - - - Planned Bike Shoulder, Including Signage and Intersection Upgrades
- OTHER PLANNED FACILITIES**
- - - Planned Sidewalk
 - - - Planned Multiuse Path
 - █ NCDOT Great Trails State Plan Route 13B
 - Existing Sidewalk
 - Existing Multiuse Path
 - Mars Hill University
 - Public School
 - Park / Managed Land
 - Water
 - Town of Mars Hill



Five crashes involving pedestrians have occurred in the study area, including three in the downtown area. Mars Hill did not experience any crashes involving bicyclists between 2007 and 2022.

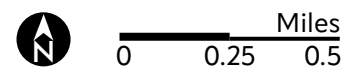


LEGEND

BICYCLE CRASHES
No crashes involving bicyclists were reported in the study area between 2007 and 2022.

- PEDESTRIAN CRASHES**
- Possible Injury Crash (Dark blue)
 - Minor Injury Crash (Orange)
 - Serious Injury Crash (Dark red)

- Existing Sidewalk (Brown line)
- Existing Multiuse Path (Green line)
- Mars Hill University (Pink)
- Public School (Orange)
- Park / Managed Land (Green)
- Water (Blue)
- Town of Mars Hill (Grey)

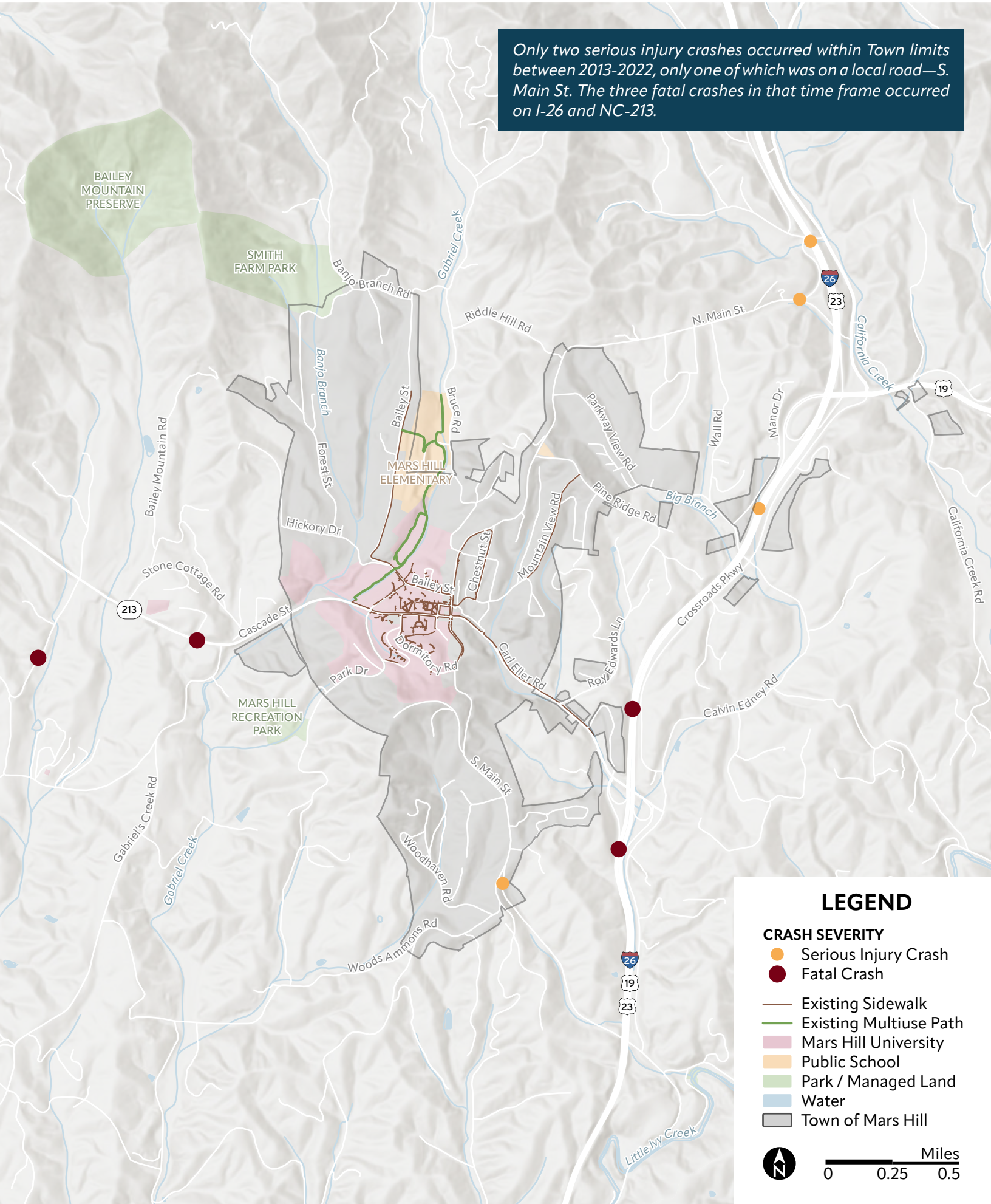


TOWN OF MARS HILL

Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan

Fatal + Serious Injury Crashes (2013 - 2022)

Only two serious injury crashes occurred within Town limits between 2013-2022, only one of which was on a local road—S. Main St. The three fatal crashes in that time frame occurred on I-26 and NC-213.



LEGEND

CRASH SEVERITY

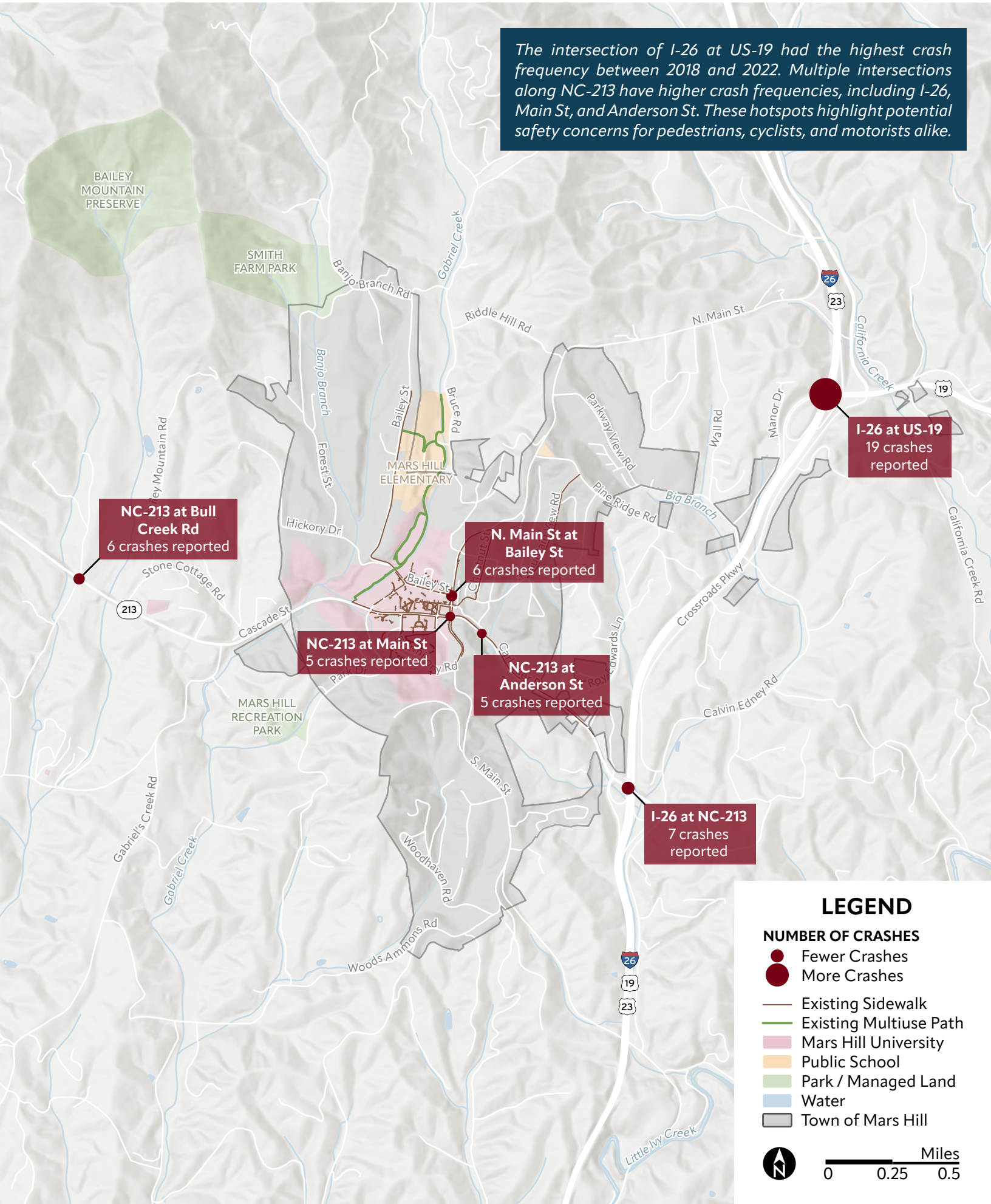
- Serious Injury Crash
- Fatal Crash

- Existing Sidewalk
- Existing Multiuse Path
- Mars Hill University
- Public School
- Park / Managed Land
- Water
- Town of Mars Hill

Miles

0 0.25 0.5

The intersection of I-26 at US-19 had the highest crash frequency between 2018 and 2022. Multiple intersections along NC-213 have higher crash frequencies, including I-26, Main St, and Anderson St. These hotspots highlight potential safety concerns for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists alike.



I-26 at US-19
 19 crashes reported

NC-213 at Bull Creek Rd
 6 crashes reported

N. Main St at Bailey St
 6 crashes reported

NC-213 at Main St
 5 crashes reported

NC-213 at Anderson St
 5 crashes reported

I-26 at NC-213
 7 crashes reported

LEGEND

NUMBER OF CRASHES

- Fewer Crashes
- More Crashes

- Existing Sidewalk
- Existing Multiuse Path
- Mars Hill University
- Public School
- Park / Managed Land
- Water
- Town of Mars Hill

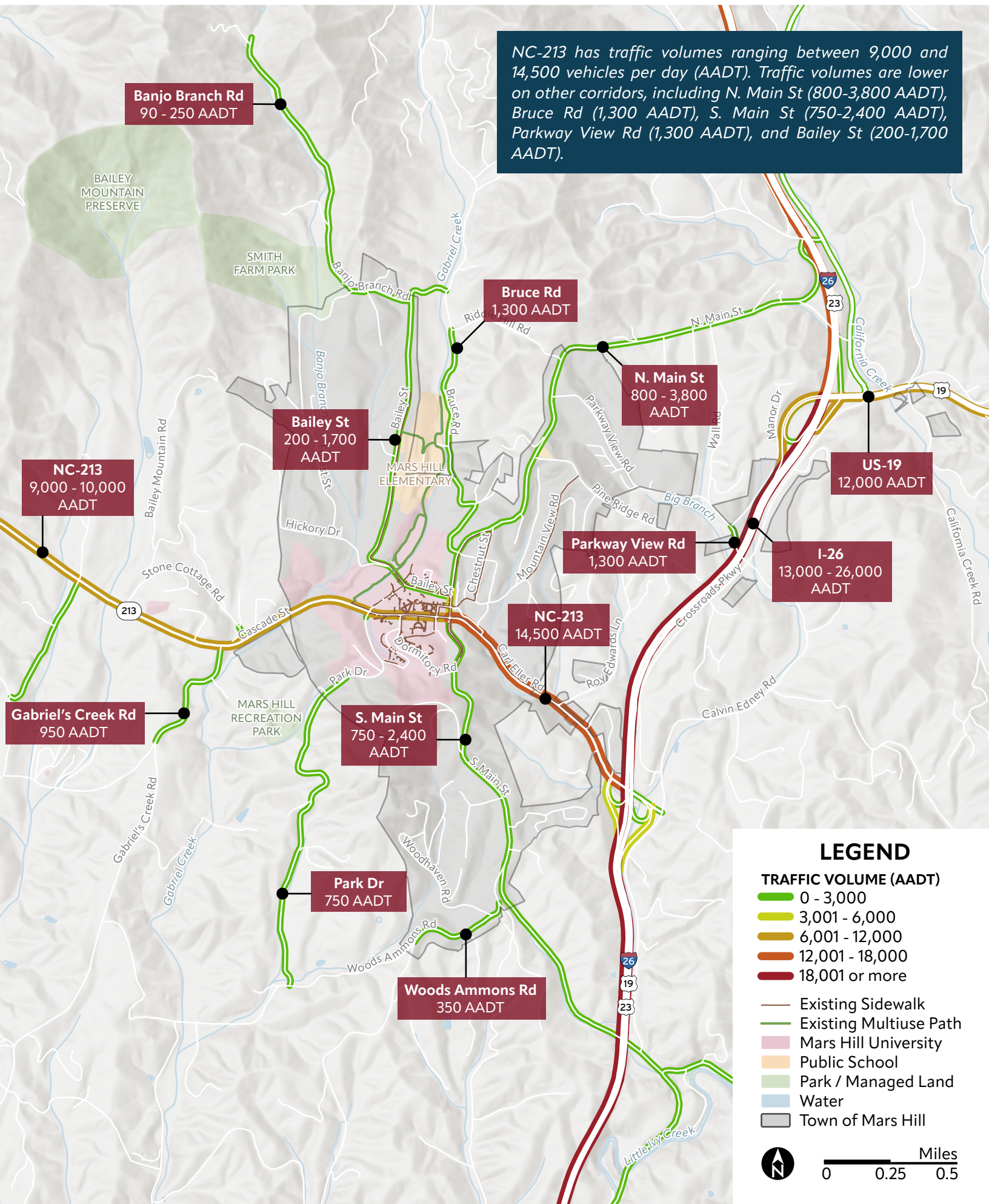
Miles

0 0.25 0.5

TOWN OF MARS HILL Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan

2022 Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) Volumes

NC-213 has traffic volumes ranging between 9,000 and 14,500 vehicles per day (AADT). Traffic volumes are lower on other corridors, including N. Main St (800-3,800 AADT), Bruce Rd (1,300 AADT), S. Main St (750-2,400 AADT), Parkway View Rd (1,300 AADT), and Bailey St (200-1,700 AADT).



LEGEND

TRAFFIC VOLUME (AADT)

- 0 - 3,000
- 3,001 - 6,000
- 6,001 - 12,000
- 12,001 - 18,000
- 18,001 or more

- Existing Sidewalk
- Existing Multiuse Path
- Mars Hill University
- Public School
- Park / Managed Land
- Water
- Town of Mars Hill

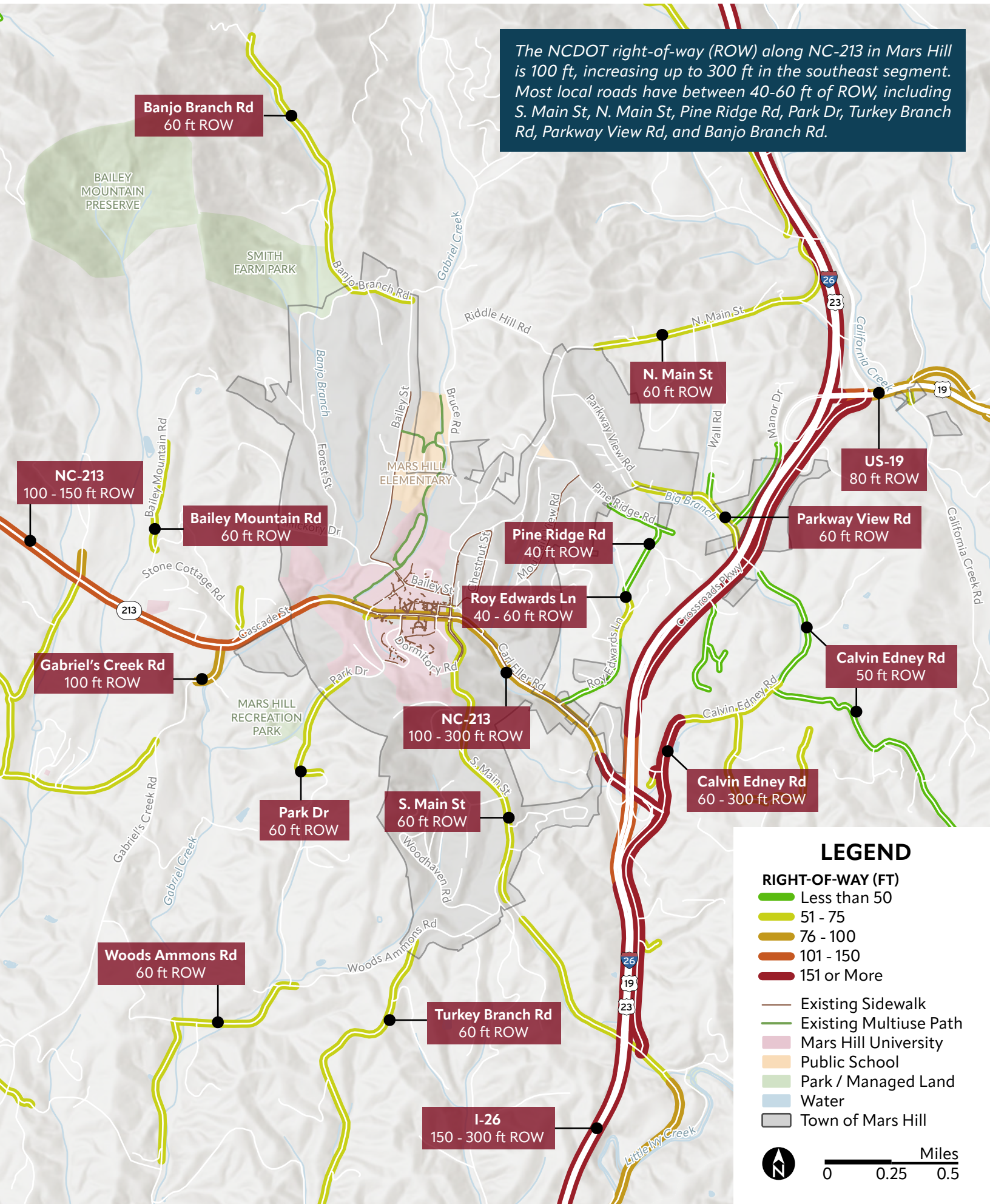
Miles
0 0.25 0.5

TOWN OF MARS HILL

Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan

NCDOT Right-of-Way (ROW)

The NCDOT right-of-way (ROW) along NC-213 in Mars Hill is 100 ft, increasing up to 300 ft in the southeast segment. Most local roads have between 40-60 ft of ROW, including S. Main St, N. Main St, Pine Ridge Rd, Park Dr, Turkey Branch Rd, Parkway View Rd, and Banjo Branch Rd.



LEGEND

RIGHT-OF-WAY (FT)

- Less than 50
- 51 - 75
- 76 - 100
- 101 - 150
- 151 or More

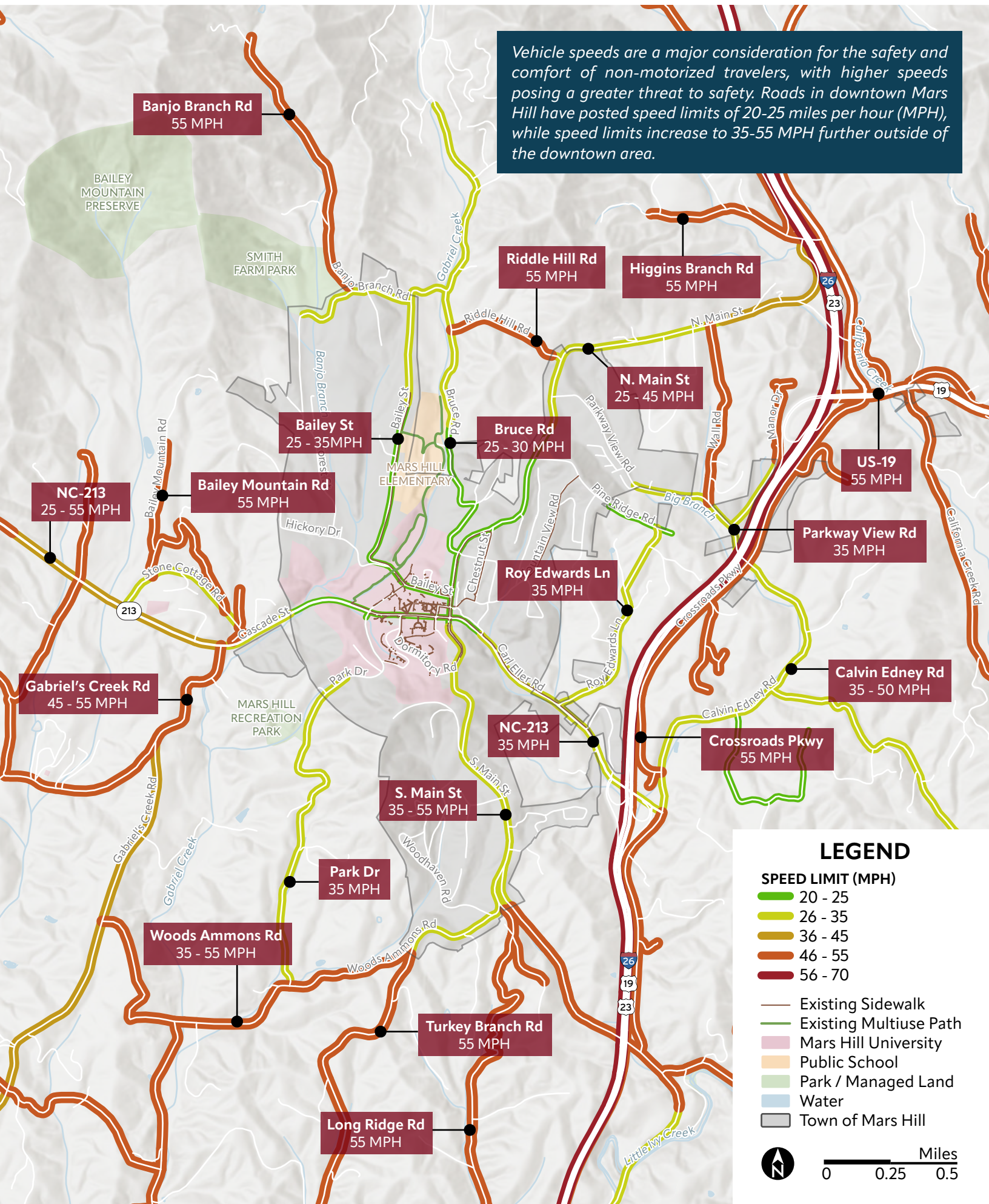
- Existing Sidewalk
- Existing Multiuse Path
- Mars Hill University
- Public School
- Park / Managed Land
- Water
- Town of Mars Hill

Miles
0 0.25 0.5

TOWN OF MARS HILL Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan

NCDOT Speed Limits

Vehicle speeds are a major consideration for the safety and comfort of non-motorized travelers, with higher speeds posing a greater threat to safety. Roads in downtown Mars Hill have posted speed limits of 20-25 miles per hour (MPH), while speed limits increase to 35-55 MPH further outside of the downtown area.



Banjo Branch Rd
55 MPH

Riddle Hill Rd
55 MPH

Higgins Branch Rd
55 MPH

Bailey St
25 - 35 MPH

Bruce Rd
25 - 30 MPH

N. Main St
25 - 45 MPH

US-19
55 MPH

NC-213
25 - 55 MPH

Bailey Mountain Rd
55 MPH

Parkway View Rd
35 MPH

Roy Edwards Ln
35 MPH

Gabriel's Creek Rd
45 - 55 MPH

Calvin Edney Rd
35 - 50 MPH

Crossroads Pkwy
55 MPH

S. Main St
35 - 55 MPH

Park Dr
35 MPH

Woods Ammons Rd
35 - 55 MPH

Turkey Branch Rd
55 MPH

Long Ridge Rd
55 MPH

LEGEND

SPEED LIMIT (MPH)

- 20 - 25
- 26 - 35
- 36 - 45
- 46 - 55
- 56 - 70

- Existing Sidewalk
- Existing Multiuse Path
- Mars Hill University
- Public School
- Park / Managed Land
- Water
- Town of Mars Hill

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

TOWN OF MARS HILL

Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan

State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

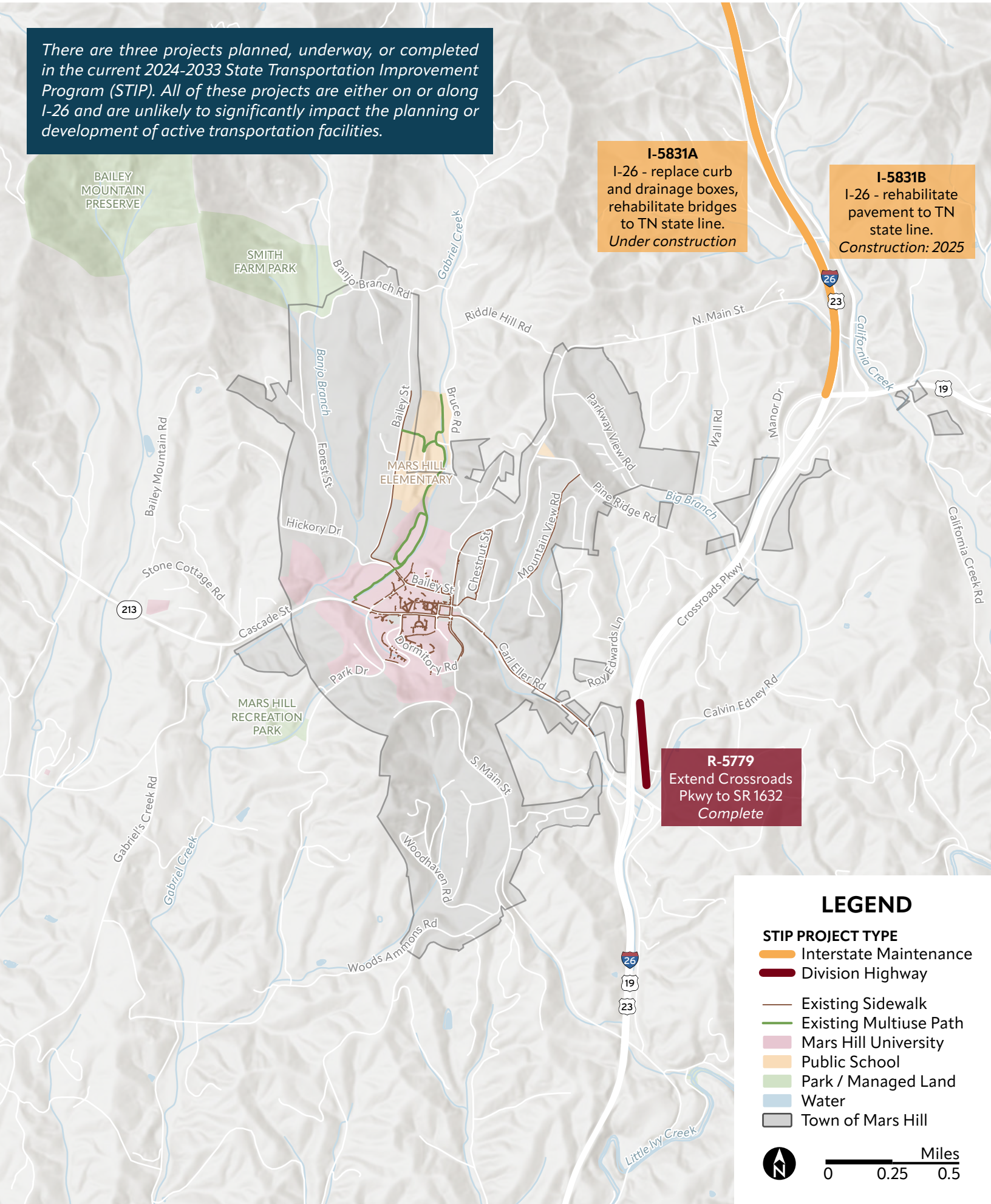
(2024 - 2033)

There are three projects planned, underway, or completed in the current 2024-2033 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). All of these projects are either on or along I-26 and are unlikely to significantly impact the planning or development of active transportation facilities.

I-5831A
I-26 - replace curb and drainage boxes, rehabilitate bridges to TN state line.
Under construction

I-5831B
I-26 - rehabilitate pavement to TN state line.
Construction: 2025

R-5779
Extend Crossroads Pkwy to SR 1632
Complete



LEGEND

STIP PROJECT TYPE

- Interstate Maintenance
- Division Highway
- Existing Sidewalk
- Existing Multiuse Path
- Mars Hill University
- Public School
- Park / Managed Land
- Water
- Town of Mars Hill

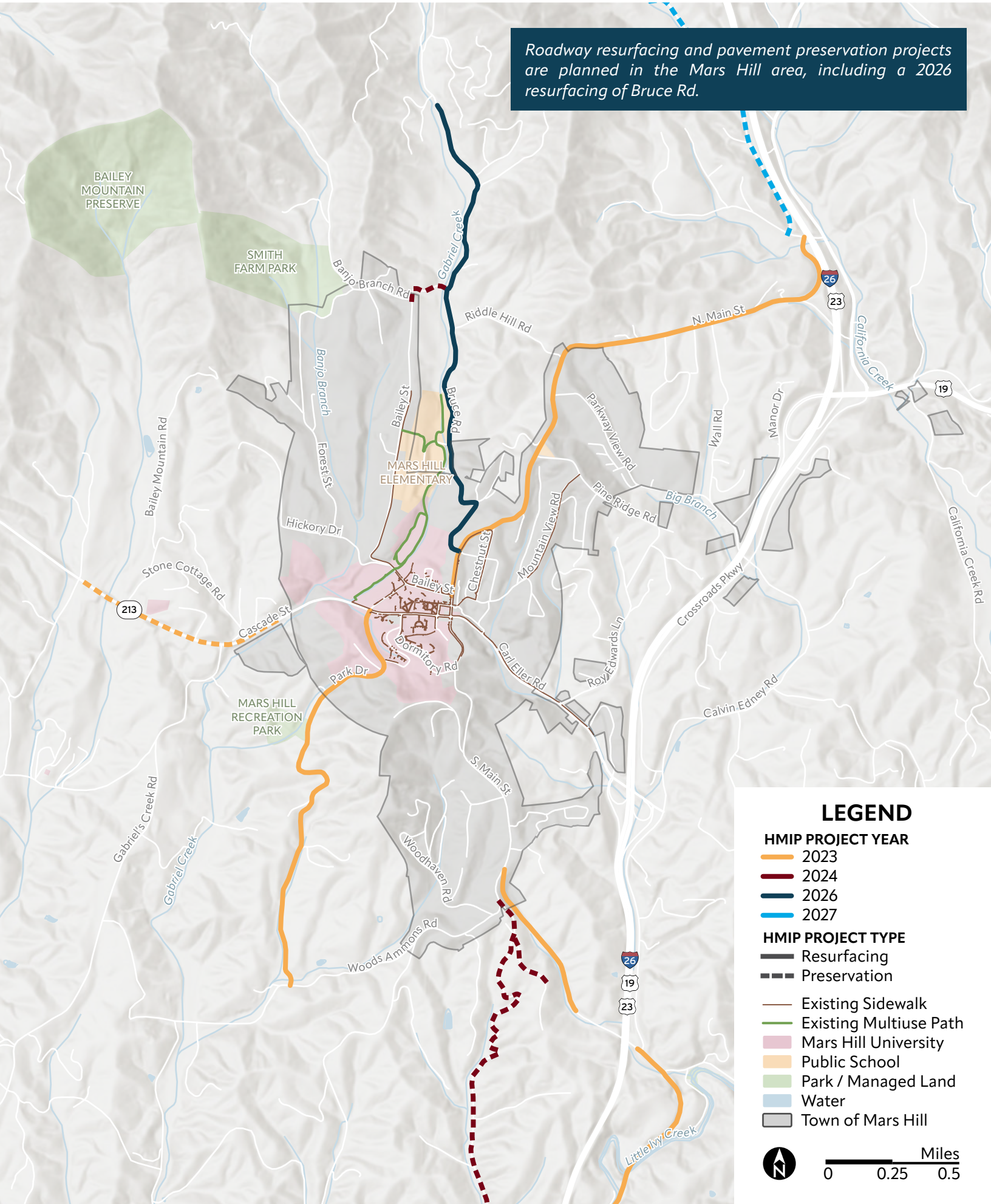


Miles
0 0.25 0.5

TOWN OF MARS HILL Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan

Highway Maintenance Improvement Program (HMIP) (2023 - 2027)

Roadway resurfacing and pavement preservation projects are planned in the Mars Hill area, including a 2026 resurfacing of Bruce Rd.



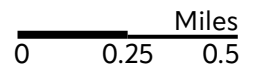
LEGEND

HMIP PROJECT YEAR

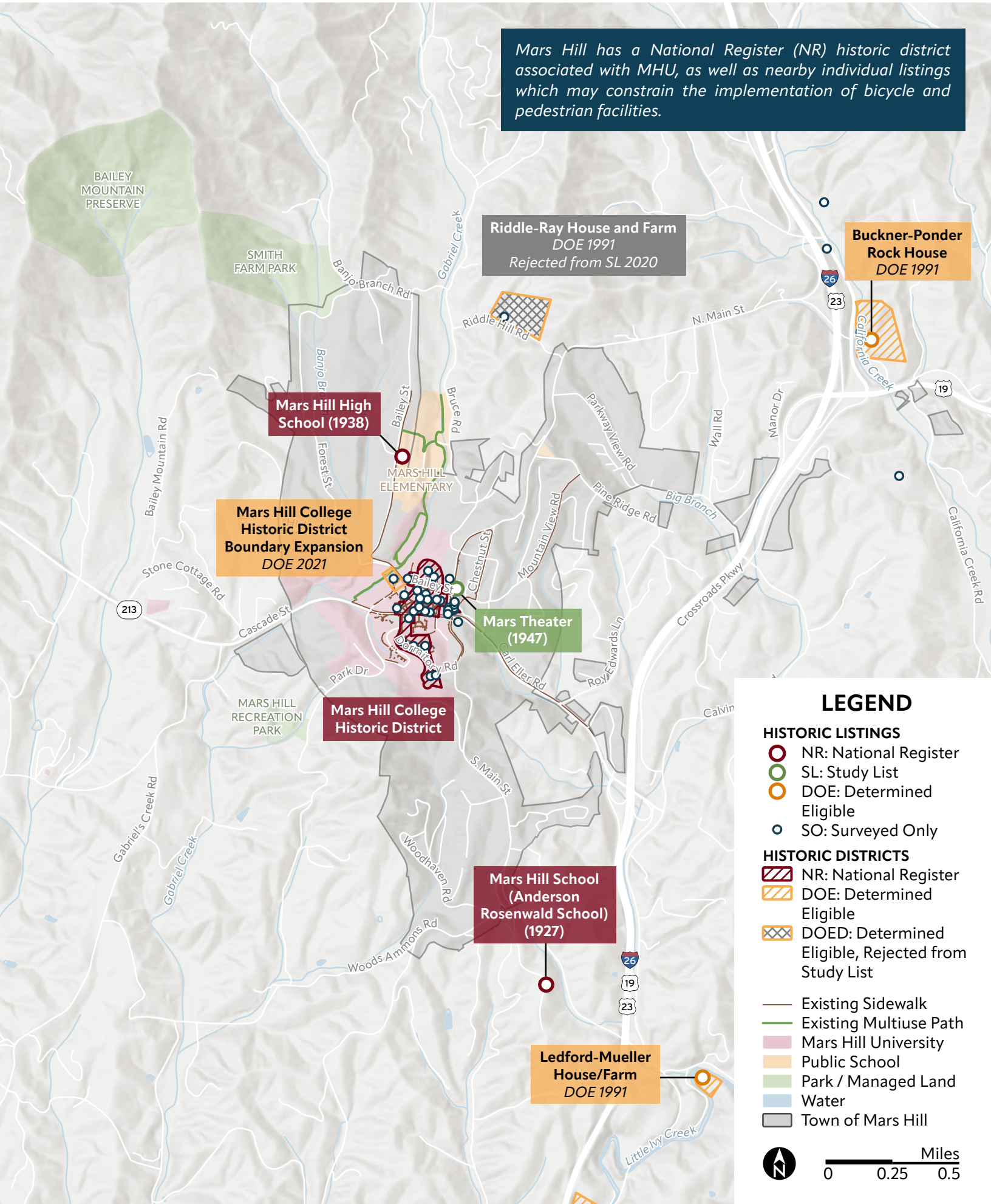
- 2023
- 2024
- 2026
- 2027

HMIP PROJECT TYPE

- Resurfacing
- Preservation
- Existing Sidewalk
- Existing Multiuse Path
- Mars Hill University
- Public School
- Park / Managed Land
- Water
- Town of Mars Hill



Mars Hill has a National Register (NR) historic district associated with MHU, as well as nearby individual listings which may constrain the implementation of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.



LEGEND

HISTORIC LISTINGS

- NR: National Register
- SL: Study List
- DOE: Determined Eligible
- SO: Surveyed Only

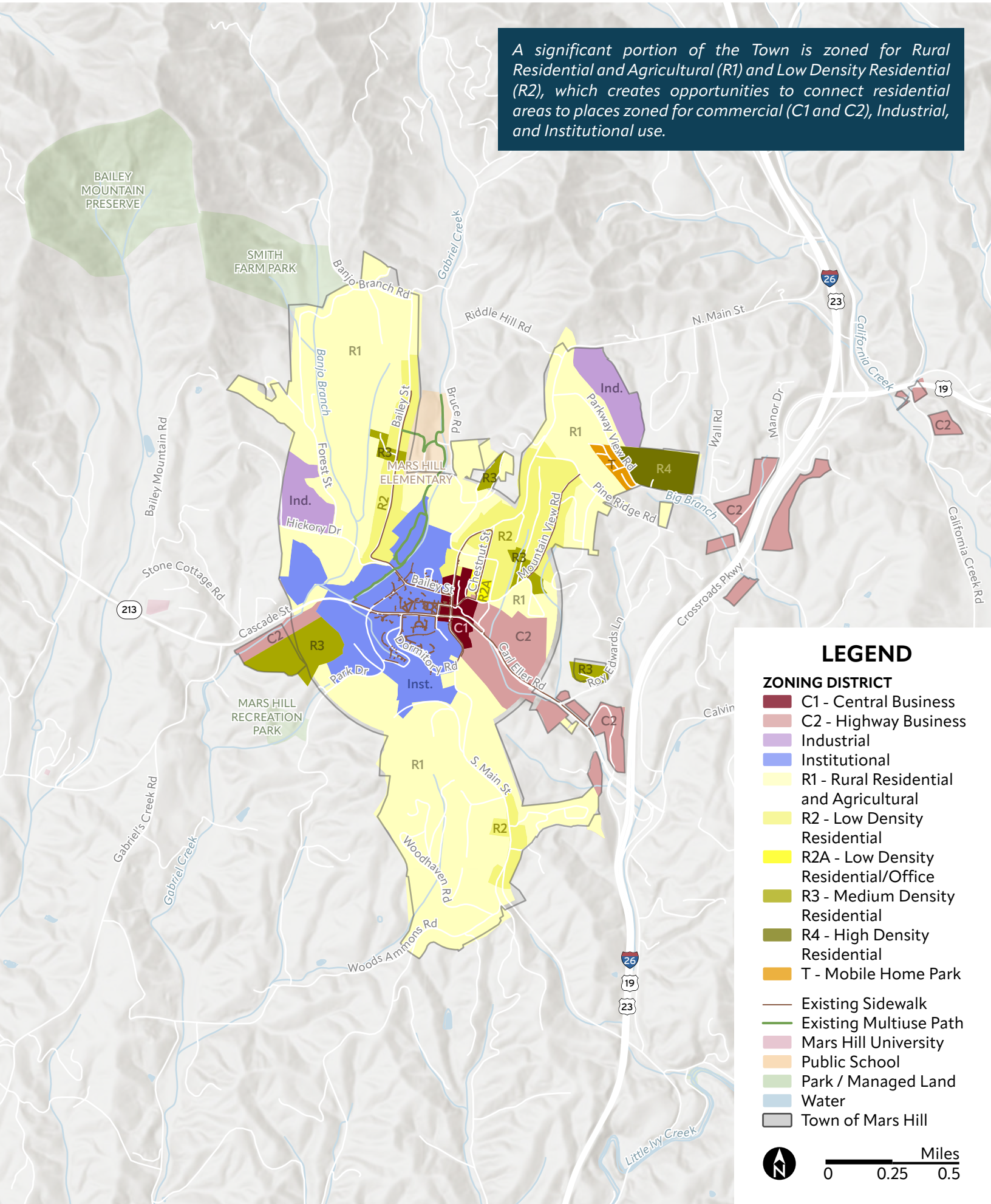
HISTORIC DISTRICTS

- ▨ NR: National Register
- ▨ DOE: Determined Eligible
- ▨ DOED: Determined Eligible, Rejected from Study List

— Existing Sidewalk
 — Existing Multiuse Path
 ■ Mars Hill University
 ■ Public School
 ■ Park / Managed Land
 ■ Water
 ■ Town of Mars Hill

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

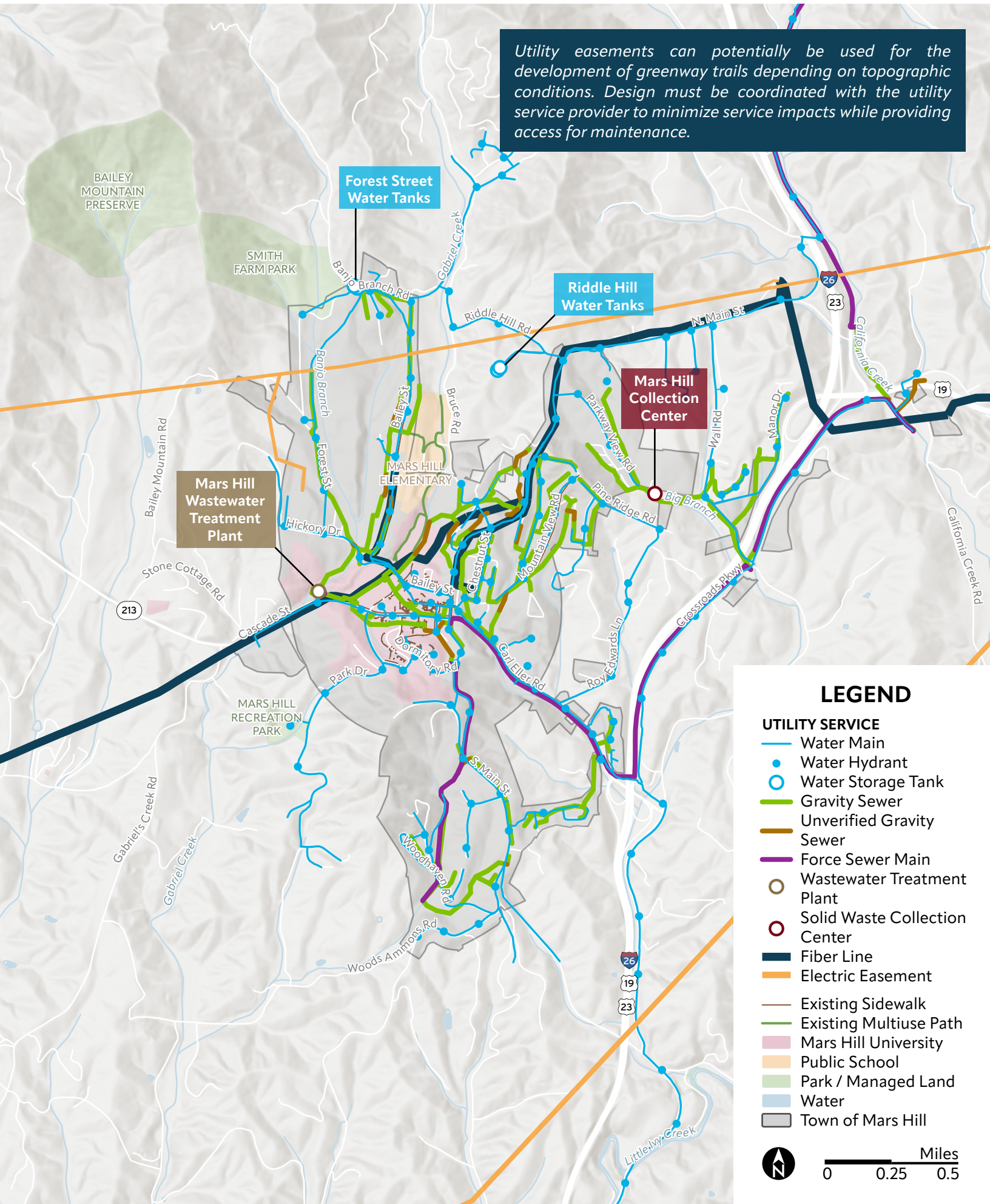
A significant portion of the Town is zoned for Rural Residential and Agricultural (R1) and Low Density Residential (R2), which creates opportunities to connect residential areas to places zoned for commercial (C1 and C2), Industrial, and Institutional use.



LEGEND

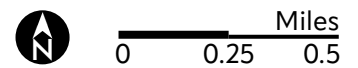
- ZONING DISTRICT**
- C1 - Central Business
 - C2 - Highway Business
 - Industrial
 - Institutional
 - R1 - Rural Residential and Agricultural
 - R2 - Low Density Residential
 - R2A - Low Density Residential/Office
 - R3 - Medium Density Residential
 - R4 - High Density Residential
 - T - Mobile Home Park
- Existing Sidewalk
 - Existing Multiuse Path
 - Mars Hill University
 - Public School
 - Park / Managed Land
 - Water
 - Town of Mars Hill

Utility easements can potentially be used for the development of greenway trails depending on topographic conditions. Design must be coordinated with the utility service provider to minimize service impacts while providing access for maintenance.

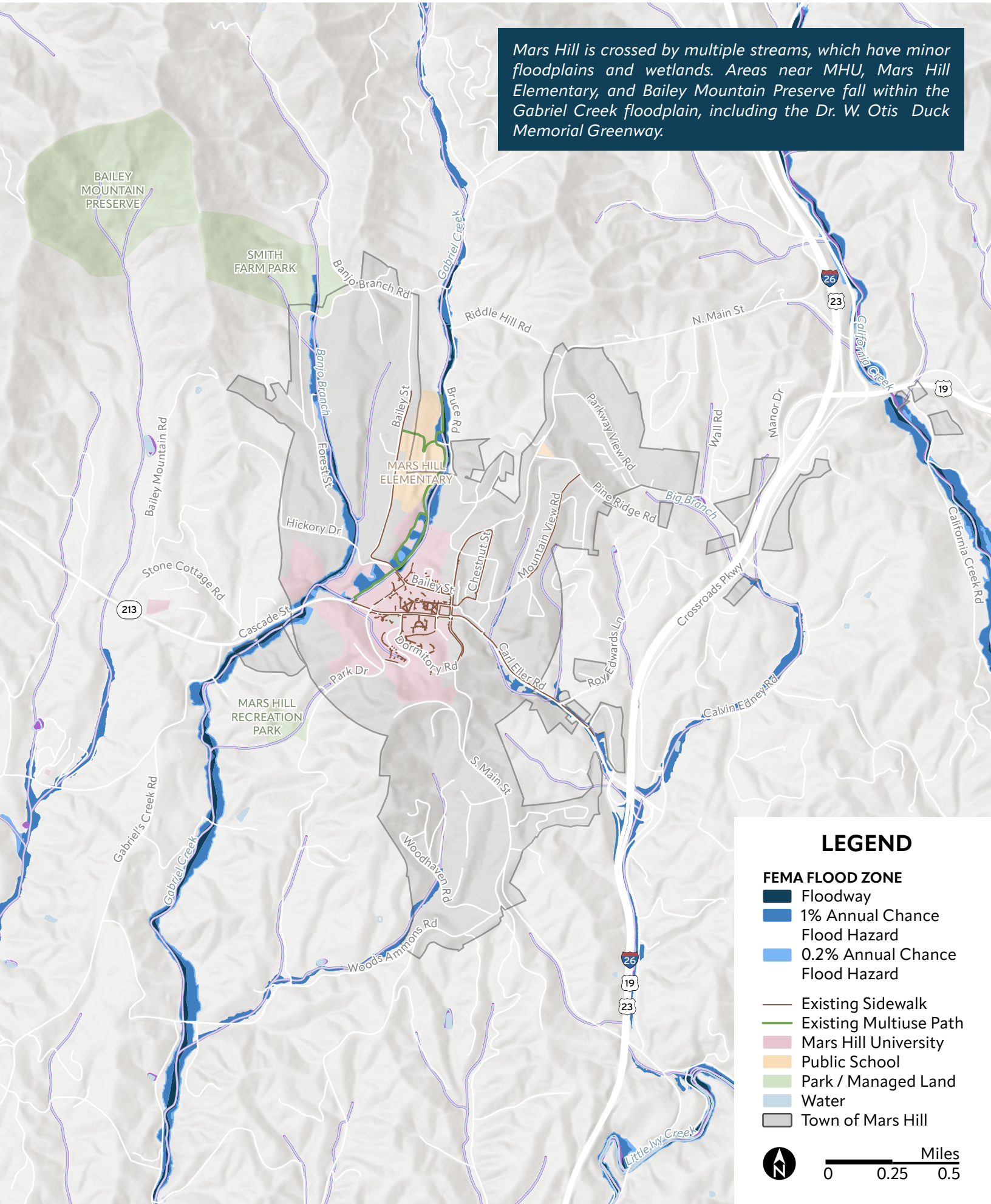


LEGEND

- UTILITY SERVICE**
- Water Main
 - Water Hydrant
 - Water Storage Tank
 - Gravity Sewer
 - Unverified Gravity Sewer
 - Force Sewer Main
 - Wastewater Treatment Plant
 - Solid Waste Collection Center
 - Fiber Line
 - Electric Easement
 - Existing Sidewalk
 - Existing Multiuse Path
 - Mars Hill University
 - Public School
 - Park / Managed Land
 - Water
 - Town of Mars Hill

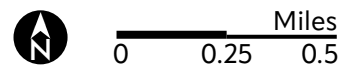


Mars Hill is crossed by multiple streams, which have minor floodplains and wetlands. Areas near MHU, Mars Hill Elementary, and Bailey Mountain Preserve fall within the Gabriel Creek floodplain, including the Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway.

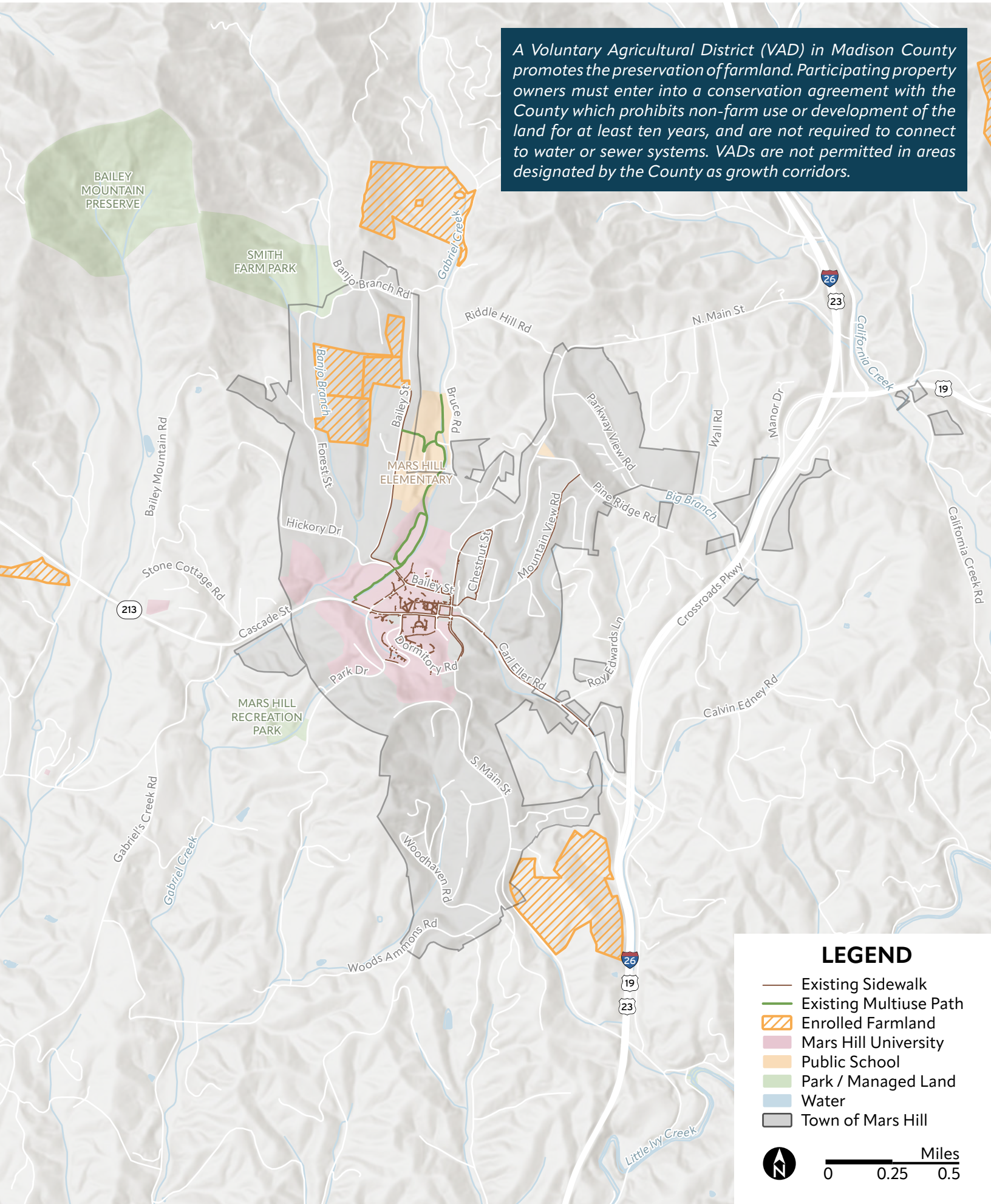


LEGEND









- FEMA FLOOD ZONE**
- Floodway
 - 1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
 - 0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
- Existing Sidewalk
 - Existing Multiuse Path
 - Mars Hill University
 - Public School
 - Park / Managed Land
 - Water
 - Town of Mars Hill




A Voluntary Agricultural District (VAD) in Madison County promotes the preservation of farmland. Participating property owners must enter into a conservation agreement with the County which prohibits non-farm use or development of the land for at least ten years, and are not required to connect to water or sewer systems. VADs are not permitted in areas designated by the County as growth corridors.



LEGEND

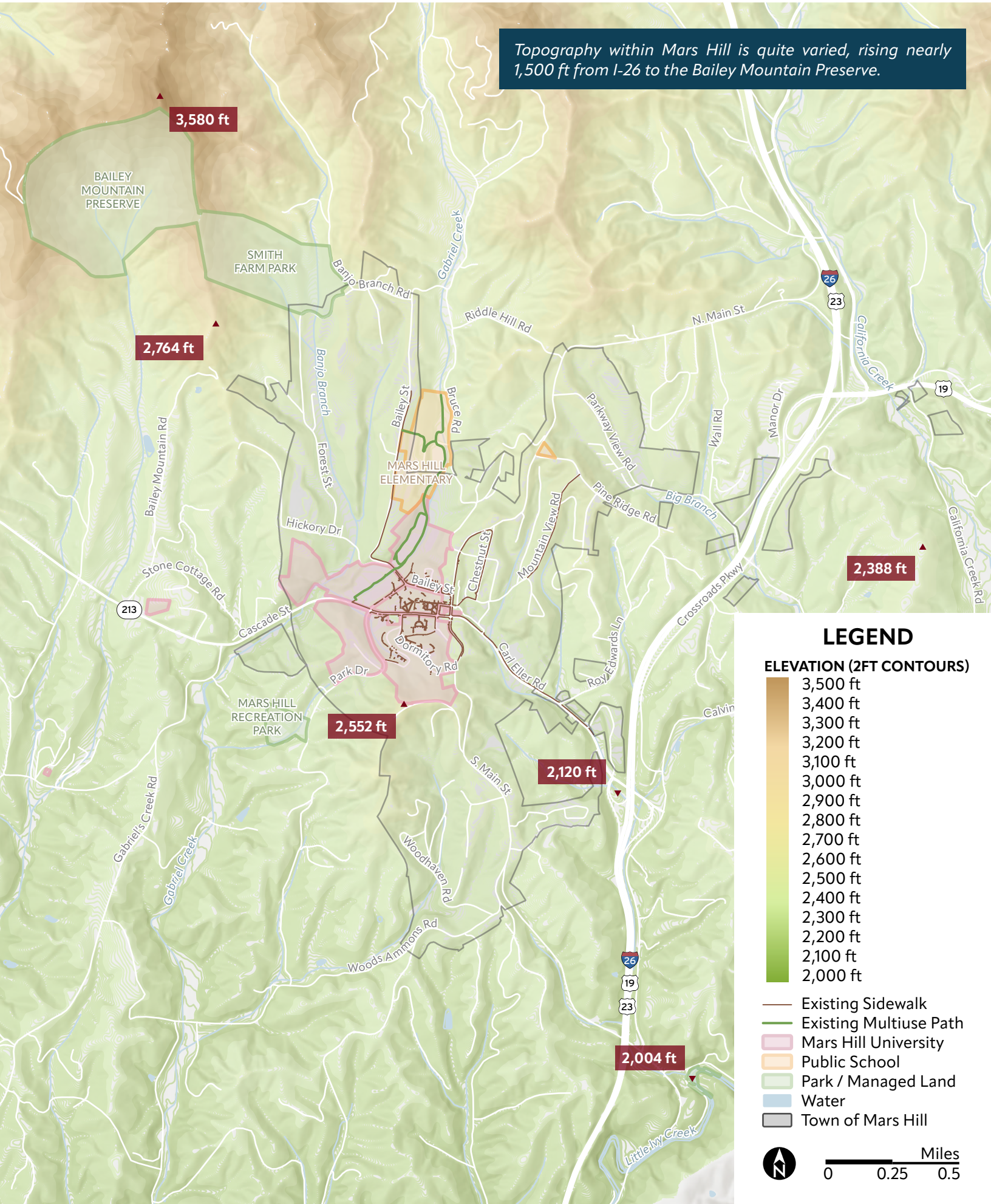
-  Existing Sidewalk
-  Existing Multiuse Path
-  Enrolled Farmland
-  Mars Hill University
-  Public School
-  Park / Managed Land
-  Water
-  Town of Mars Hill



Miles

0 0.25 0.5

Topography within Mars Hill is quite varied, rising nearly 1,500 ft from I-26 to the Bailey Mountain Preserve.



LEGEND

ELEVATION (2FT CONTOURS)

- 3,500 ft
- 3,400 ft
- 3,300 ft
- 3,200 ft
- 3,100 ft
- 3,000 ft
- 2,900 ft
- 2,800 ft
- 2,700 ft
- 2,600 ft
- 2,500 ft
- 2,400 ft
- 2,300 ft
- 2,200 ft
- 2,100 ft
- 2,000 ft

- Existing Sidewalk
- Existing Multiuse Path
- Mars Hill University
- Public School
- Park / Managed Land
- Water
- Town of Mars Hill



Miles
0 0.25 0.5

PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS

Planning is an iterative process that continuously builds on past recommendations and studies. The Town of Mars Hill, Madison County, and regional and state partners have prioritized multi-modal connectivity in planning efforts over the years. The following table provides a summary of key bicycle and pedestrian recommendations from previous plans and studies that are relevant to the Town of Mars Hill's *Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan*.

PLAN/STUDY	KEY RECOMMENDATIONS
Mars Hill Pedestrian Plan (2007)	This plan provides the Town with a better understanding of pedestrian needs and priorities. Key pedestrian corridors are identified, including: N. Main St and S. Main St, NC-213 through MHU to Ingles, Mountain View Rd, Bailey St, the "Loop" (Bailey St to Bruce Rd to N. Main St), Anderson St, and Chestnut St. Additionally, main origins and destinations for pedestrian travel/activity are identified: Mars Hill Elementary, Ingles, Town Hall and Main St businesses, the library, MHU, and Moore Auditorium. The plan also identifies sidewalk and greenway projects and intersection improvements in the short-, medium-, and long-term time frame, along with ancillary facilities and programs for consideration.
Town of Mars Hill Street Condition Report (2009)	This plan develops a priority ranking system for repairing and resurfacing Town streets. The 10 miles of streets are divided into three sections—northwest, northeast, and south—and are rated on a scale of one to five based on the percentage of each pavement condition present, including cracking, potholes and patching, surface deformation, surface defects, and miscellaneous distresses. The plan determines that the Town's street system is in good condition overall. In 2009 dollars, the estimated repairs prioritized were a little less than \$2 million, with only three street segments receiving the lowest score for overall pavement condition, all Town-maintained roads that are 16 ft or wider.
Smith Farm Plan (2019)	This plan highlights the connection between the natural landscape and cultural aspect apparent to rural life with the goal to preserve open space into the future, improve ecological health and biodiversity, and address the challenges of managing large-scale landscape maintenance in congruence with the easement terms. The plan guides the development of the Town-purchased, 86.71 acre Smith Farm property, adjacent to the Bailey Mountain Preserve conservation area. This development will benefit Mars Hill residents and tourists by enhancing recreational opportunities and ultimately connecting to the Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway.
Mars Hill Parks and Recreation Plan (2019)	This plan presents a framework and policy to guide the Town in future planning for parks, recreational facilities, and programs. The plan identifies short-term strategies that will build success over the long-range for the community and focuses on high-level initiatives rather than specific, detailed actions. The plan recommends the following implementation actions: (1) Renovate and improve existing facilities for a variety of ages and abilities, (2) Develop a maintenance plan for existing facilities, (3) Develop programming based on the needs of the community, (4) Identify financing options for facility improvements, (5) Develop a marketing plan for parks and programs, (6) Implementation of site plan for site Smith Farm property, (7) Identify additional sites for other needed amenities such as ball fields, gymnasiums, trails, playgrounds, and fitness centers as the community desires, and (8) Improve connectivity options between parks and recreation opportunities and downtown Mars Hill.

PLAN/STUDY	KEY RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>Madison County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) (2012)</p>	<p>This plan identifies multimodal system improvements to address future mobility needs and represents a long-term vision for how the transportation network should evolve. Among the major recommendations from the Madison County CTP is a multi-use path along NC-251 from Buncombe County to US 25/70 east of Marshall. Proposed pedestrian improvements in Mars Hill include the following sidewalks: along on the south side of NC-213 from I-26 interchange to S. Main St; along NC-213 from Athletic St to Brooks St; Bailey St from Banjo Branch Rd to Bearwood St; Dormitory Rd from NC-213 to S. Main St; Mountain View Rd, from Cemetery Dr to Chestnut St; and S. Main St from Dormitory Rd to Woods Ammons Rd.</p>
<p>FBRMPO Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) (2008)</p>	<p>The FBRMPO Transportation Plan identifies recommendations to multimodal transportation systems in Buncombe, Haywood, and Henderson Counties. This plan is intended to ensure that the region's transportation system is developed in a coordinated and efficient manner that anticipates future needs and minimizes negative impacts on communities, cultural resources, and the natural environment.</p>
<p>FBRMPO Congestion Management Process (2018)</p>	<p>This Federally mandated process for the Asheville region incorporates methods for addressing congestion amidst environmental, fiscal, and constraints in the region and presents unique opportunities to promote alternative transportation systems for congestion management.</p>
<p>FBRMPO Coordinated Public Transportation and Human Services Transportation Plan (2018)</p>	<p>This Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (CPT-HSTP, also known as Locally Coordinated Plan or LCP) was developed to serve both the FBRMPO planning area as well as the Land of Sky Rural Planning Organization planning area, covering the counties of Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania in Western North Carolina. This plan is required by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for the programming of various Federal monies (Sections 5307, 5310, 5317, SAFETEA-LU, FAST Act, etc.) for the region. The LCP's purpose is to document the needs of the counties for potential funding as transit operators, local government, and other transportation providers, striving to improve the regional transportation system. Among other recommendations, the CPT-HSTP identifies the need to: Increase and/or improve bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure connecting to bus stops and stations (E-1), Study areas with pedestrian and bicycle safety issues (E-2), Improve roadway crossings for pedestrians near bus stops (E-3), and Improve bicycle accommodations on-bus and near bus shelters (E-4).</p>
<p>Blue Ridge Bike Plan (2014)</p>	<p>The Blue Ridge Bike Plan provides a regional vision for bicycle facility development in Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Madison, Swain, and Transylvania counties. Within Madison County, priority bicycle corridors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Priority Corridor #1: NC-213/Hayes Run Rd to S. Main St, a 10-mile corridor that connects Marshall and Mars Hill and provides an east-west bicycle route in central Madison County. This recommendation includes a bicycle lane in Mars Hill from Calvin Edney Rd to Bull Creek Rd. ▶ Priority Corridor #3: S. Main St to Beech Glen Rd, adding 2 miles of bike lanes and linking downtown Mars Hill, MHU, the library, and shopping areas to popular recreational routes in eastern Madison County and Weaverville. ▶ Priority Corridor #4: I-26 Intersection at Crossroads Pkwy will improve 0.42 miles of the intersection at Exit 9 in Mars Hill to improve visibility of bicyclists due to high speed ingress and egress of vehicles at I-26. <p>The plan also recommends adopting a Complete Streets policy, encouraging education and enforcement programs alongside infrastructure improvements to protect bicyclists, and considering ordinance changes to include providing bicycle facilities/amenities within the community and in new developments.</p>

PLAN/STUDY	KEY RECOMMENDATIONS
Hellbender Trail Plan (2020)	<p>The Hellbender Trail Plan identifies a regional trail network, aiming to knit together existing and planned infrastructure from the local to the regional level. By building on existing and planned infrastructure to provide active transportation options to all ages and abilities, the Hellbender Trail Network proposes a way to meaningfully connect communities and destinations while promoting the unique aspects of the FBRMPO region for mobility, access, improved health, and economic development. In creating the Hellbender Trail, existing/planned trail segments were evaluated based on whether they (1) connected multiple communities in at least 2 counties and (2) would connect to each other. After combining different segments, a total of 150 miles of trails were identified—14 built, 23 potentially funded, 6 being engineered, 37 being studied, and 70 other. The resulting Hellbender Regional Trail System network consists of four “lines”: Orange, Green, Blue, and Gold. The most relevant line for Mars Hill is the Orange Line, a North to South connection from Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway in Mars Hill to Hendersonville and intersects with every other line in the network, connecting Mars Hill, Weaverville, Woodfin, Asheville, Mills River, Fletcher, and Hendersonville.</p>
Wildlife Crossings Plan (2023)	<p>This report identifies specific geographic areas and wildlife crossing types that can be incorporated into larger transportation planning process such as NCDOT’s Strategic Transportation Prioritization (SPOT). Various locations are identified in Mars Hill, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ MadCo6 and MadCo7: 3-mile corridor with a cluster of crash sites on NC-213 and I-26 to US-25/70, just west of Mars Hill, which is recommended to have 24 inch x 24 inch Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) warning signs installed ▶ MadCo8: 1-mile corridor with a cluster of crashes headed east, which is recommended for the installation of deflection fencing 0.5 miles north/south of the bridge to encourage crossing via bridge (S. Main St/Forks of Ivy Rd)
FBRMPO 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2020)	<p>The FBRMPO Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) is a fiscally constrained plan for transportation needs in the Asheville region through 2045. One goal of the MTP is to improve multimodal transportation through investments in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Recommendations include encouraging member governments to require bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in new developments, increasing coordination between transportation and land use, and following Complete Streets guidelines based on best practices for facility design. There are three projects identified in the MTP within Mars Hill:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Banjo Branch Greenway (BP134539): Construct a new multi-use path on Forest St from Hickory Dr to Banjo Branch Rd. ▶ Add Sidewalks (BP134538): Add sidewalks along Bailey St from Bearwood Dr to Forest St. ▶ Modernize Bruce Rd (HD134511): Upgrade Bruce Rd from Main St to Bailey St, adding sidewalk and bike lane.
NCDOT Corridor Enhancements & Aesthetics NC 213 – Mars Hill (2018)	<p>This document provides guidance for the aesthetics and enhancements surrounding I-26 and NC-213 in Mars Hill. The plan includes quality assurance guidance for permits, certificates, soil pH, plant schedules, shrubs and transplanted trees, sod, sequencing and scheduling guidance for how to implement guidance, instructions for the products to use, and guidance on execution of the plan. Various intersections have different recommendations—from removing existing trees and backfilling with soil to installing commercial landscape edging along sidewalks, mulching trees individually, and planting trees in staggered rows.</p>

PLAN/STUDY	KEY RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>NCDOT Great Trails State Plan (2022)</p>	<p>NCDOT’s Great Trails State Plan, completed in 2022, helps to identify priorities of existing trail users. Among the top destinations for current users are local and regional parks (#1), small towns and rural communities (#3), and river, lake, and beach access points (#4). There is only one recommendation in Madsion County in the Great Trails State Plan, identifying a gap where connection is desired but specific route planning does not exist. The plan identifies a gap in segment 13B Asheville to Madison County, which connects Weaverville to Mars Hill. The plan also emphasizes key design features including the need for wayfinding and branding, roadway crossings with traffic calming features or median refuges, and the need to coordinate with developers.</p>

POLICY REVIEW

The following table provides a summary of key federal, state, and local policies from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), NCDOT, and the Town of Mars Hill that may guide or impact the development of Mars Hill’s bicycle and pedestrian network.

POLICY	KEY POLICIES
<p>Town of Mars Hill Zoning Ordinances</p>	<p>The Town of Mars Hill establishes the intent for a pedestrian-oriented village for the Central Business District (C-1); notes that where a loading space is adjacent to a public sidewalk or other pedestrian way, it shall be so located, arranged, and improved with curbs or other barriers, as to provide adequate protection for pedestrians; in C-1, no vegetation can overhang any sidewalk below 7 feet 6 inches above the grade of the sidewalk and no visual obstructions shall be within 10’ of street ROW lines or 15 feet of intersections.</p>
<p>NCDOT Complete Streets Policy (2019)</p>	<p>The NCDOT Complete Streets Policy Update was adopted by the Board of Transportation in August 2019. This policy requires NCDOT to consider and incorporate multimodal facilities in the design and improvement of all transportation projects in North Carolina. The adopted CTP is considered the controlling plan for the identification of nonmotorized facilities to be evaluated as part of a roadway project. The CTP may include and/or reference locally adopted plans for public transportation, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and greenways. Bicycle, pedestrian, and public transportation facilities that appear in the CTP directly or by reference will be included as part of the proposed roadway project, and NCDOT is responsible for the full cost of the project. Bicycle, pedestrian, and transit facilities incidental to a roadway project where a need has been identified through the project scoping process but not identified in an adopted plan may be included in the project. Inclusion of these incidental facilities requires the local jurisdiction to share the incremental cost of constructing the improvements based on population thresholds. The policy also establishes maintenance responsibility for active transportation facilities. Bicycle, pedestrian, and transit improvements inside a municipal boundary are subject to local maintenance. Projects that have not completed environmental review prior to August 2019 are subject to the Complete Streets Policy.</p>



POLICY	KEY POLICIES
<p>NCDOT Roadway Design Manual (2021)</p>	<p>The latest edition of the NCDOT Roadway Design Manual was adopted in 2021 and recently updated in April 2022. This document outlines engineering design requirements for design of roadway facilities within the NCDOT ROW and relies heavily on established engineering standards, such as the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Green Book, guidance documents from the FHWA, and other engineering design references. Section 4.14, Pedestrian Facilities, provides a detailed overview of the design requirements for sidewalks and multi-use paths built along NCDOT roadways. Guidance includes topics such as minimum width, minimum vertical clearance, minimum railing height, roadway crossings, grade separation, and Curb ramps. Together, these factors will influence future design and construction of any portion of the greenway within NCDOT ROW. Additionally, NCDOT has a clear zone requirement for its roadways. The clear zone is defined as "The unobstructed traversable area provided beyond the edge of the traveled way is termed the clear zone. This area is used for the recovery of errant vehicles and includes shoulders, bike lanes, and auxiliary lanes." The width of the clear zone requirement varies based on the traffic volume, design speed, and cross slope of shoulder for the roadway in question.</p>
<p>FHWA Guidance on Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation (2011)</p>	<p>Under the US Department of Transportation (DOT) Policy Statement on Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation, "The DOT policy is to incorporate safe and convenient walking and bicycling facilities into transportation projects. Every transportation agency, including DOT, has the responsibility to improve conditions and opportunities for walking and bicycling and to integrate walking and bicycling into their transportation systems...transportation agencies are encouraged to go beyond minimum standards to provide safe and convenient facilities for these modes." There are no Federal laws or regulations that prohibit shared use paths or bicycle use along or near Interstate highways or other freeways. Bicycle and pedestrian accommodations may be allowed on Interstate and other major highways and freeways. Bridges are essential in any transportation network, and many Interstate or other freeway bridges often are the only possible bridges across rivers, canyons, railroads, other highways, or other major barriers. Major highway bridges often are necessary links for nonmotorized transportation networks.</p> <p>Under 23 U.S.C. 217(g), transportation plans must consider bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 23 U.S.C. 217(g) Planning and Design: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▷ 1. In General. --Bicycle transportation facilities and pedestrian walkways shall be considered, where appropriate, in conjunction with all new construction and reconstruction of transportation facilities, except where bicycle and pedestrian use are not permitted. ▷ 2. Safety considerations. --Transportation plans and projects shall provide due consideration for safety and contiguous routes for bicyclists and pedestrians. Safety considerations shall include the installation, where appropriate, and maintenance of audible traffic signals and audible signs at street crossings.

OPPORTUNITIES + CONSTRAINTS

Through a desktop analysis of existing conditions and a site visit conducted on April 12, 2024, the project team identified a set of opportunities and constraints for the bicycle and pedestrian network in Mars Hill. The following section provides a summary of the opportunities and constraints of existing facilities that informed the development of Mars Hill's recommended bicycle and pedestrian network. Numbered locations on the map on the facing page correspond with the location of photos for specific opportunities and constraints included in the section below.

GENERAL OPPORTUNITIES

- ▶ The town is growing with several new residential developments. Opportunities exist to connect new developments to the Town's activity centers, parks, and employment centers.
- ▶ Residential growth is expected to continue in Mars Hill which presents an opportunity to add bicycle and pedestrian facilities along development frontages and within developments if the zoning ordinance contains proper provisions for this infrastructure.
- ▶ Many streets in Mars Hill have low traffic volumes (between 200 and 2500 AADT). Low volume streets provide opportunities for more comfortable walking and biking experiences and flexibility for the implementation of walking and biking infrastructure.
- ▶ Regional and statewide planning efforts, including the Great Trails State Master Plan, Blue Ridge Bike Plan, and the Hellbender Trail Master Plan, envision bicycle and pedestrian connections to other communities in the region; this Plan will further develop these concepts. Regional bicycle and pedestrian connections to Weaverville (to the south) and Marshall (to the west) can be investigated further through this planning effort.

GENERAL CONSTRAINTS

- ▶ Steep slopes exist along many streets in Mars Hill, making sidewalk and greenway construction difficult due to excessive fill material and retaining walls depending on the condition along each particular corridor.
- ▶ Mountain topography creates challenges for street grid connectivity which leaves the main collector streets as the only option for bicycle and pedestrian connectivity in many cases.
- ▶ Mars Hill has limited local funding resources for new large infrastructure projects, frequently relying on partnerships with other agencies and grant funding.

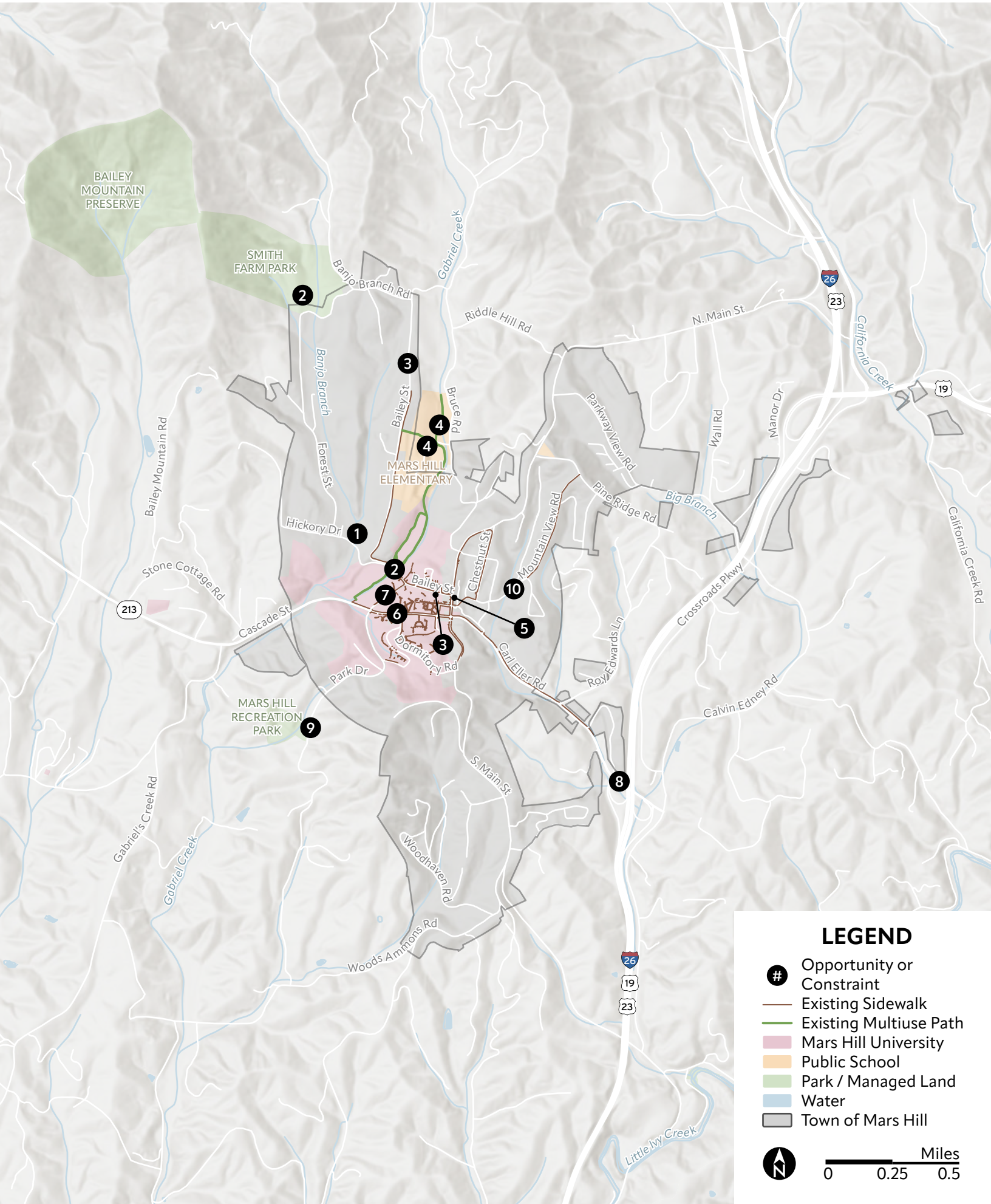
These conditions require a creative approach to be used which leverages connectivity where available and evaluates the tradeoffs of bicycle and pedestrian facility placement when projects advance to design.



Looking north on Banjo Branch from Hickory Dr.

1. BANJO BRANCH STREAM CORRIDOR

Banjo Branch is a stream which begins on the eastern slopes of Bailey Mountain and flows south through Bailey Mountain Park and Preserve into Mars Hill, joining with Gabriel Creek behind the MHU tennis facility. This corridor provides an opportunity for a high quality pedestrian and bicycle experience connecting the university area, Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway, and Bailey Mountain Park and Preserve. Connecting these destinations is an opportunity for a regionally significant greenway or trail experience connecting to existing hiking trails to the summit of Bailey Mountain. Concurrent with the development of this Plan, the Town is completing a greenway feasibility study for this corridor.



LEGEND

- #** Opportunity or Constraint
- Existing Sidewalk
- Existing Multiuse Path
- Mars Hill University
- Public School
- Park / Managed Land
- Water
- Town of Mars Hill



Miles
 0 0.25 0.5

2. WALKING LOOP CONNECTING DOWNTOWN TO BAILEY MOUNTAIN PARK AND PRESERVE, MARS HILL ELEMENTARY, AND THE DR. W. OTIS DUCK MEMORIAL GREENWAY

The Town’s Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee has previously identified this loop as a priority, and a feasibility study for this loop is being undertaken concurrently with this plan. This is an opportunity to improve connections to Mars Hill’s natural environment for both residents and visitors.



Bailey St at Gabriel Creek and the Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway.



Trails at Bailey Mountain Park and Preserve continue to the summit of Bailey Mountain.

3. BAILEY STREET

Bailey St runs along a relatively flat ridge and connects to Banjo Branch Rd on its north end and Hickory Dr on its southern end. Bailey St provides access to the Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway via the existing greenway connection at Mars Hill Elementary School. Grades are favorable along Bailey St to add sidewalk north of the existing sidewalk terminus.



Looking north on Bailey St near Mars Hill Elementary.



Bailey St is constrained near downtown and the MHU campus with a retaining wall and steep slopes.

4. DR. W. OTIS DUCK MEMORIAL GREENWAY

The existing Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway is an incredible asset to the Mars Hill community. Opportunities exist to increase its value by improving connections to the network such as redesigning the connection to Bailey St through the Mars Hill Elementary School campus to provide a more accessible grade and a wider facility.



Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway near Bruce Rd.



A greenway connection to Mars Hill Elementary School puts trail users on the roadway shoulder with little space.

5. N. MAIN STREET AND BAILEY STREET PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS

This intersection in the heart of downtown Mars Hill does not have Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-accessible ramps or marked crosswalks for pedestrians to cross N. Main St. Parked cars can also provide visual obstructions for drivers and pedestrians as pedestrians attempt to cross N. Main St. Opportunities exist to shorten the crossing distance for pedestrians and create an accessible crossing by reducing turn radii and potentially removing an on-street parking space.



Crosswalks and accessible curb ramps are available to cross Bailey St at N. Main St.



There is no marked crosswalk or accessible curb ramp to cross N. Main St at Bailey St.

6. CASCADE STREET/NC-213

The town and NCDOT have implemented midblock crossings along this important arterial that bisects the MHU campus. However, there are still opportunities to calm traffic and widen sidewalks along this corridor by taking advantage of narrowing very wide travel lanes, widening sidewalks, and potentially adding street trees.



A pedestrian crosses Cascade St at Joe Anderson Dr, where existing travel lanes are as much as 18 ft wide.

7. ATHLETIC STREET

The Town of Mars Hill and MHU have worked together to create pedestrian space within Athletic St by removing on street parking and striping a pedestrian walkway. Opportunities exist to continue this walkway north as Athletic St serves as an important pedestrian route within the MHU campus.



A pedestrian walkway designated on part of Athletic St provides an innovative solution to expand the network.

8. NC-213 BRIDGE OVER I-26

The NC-213 bridge over I-26 is the only connection between regional transit service at the Mars Hill Park and Ride Lot and downtown Mars Hill and MHU. The space available on the existing bridge deck can allow for flexibility in accommodating a comfortable facility for bicycles and pedestrians, connecting the park and ride lot to the existing sidewalk on NC-213 near JF Robinson Ln.



NC-213 looking east toward the bridge over I-26, where opportunity exists to reallocate space on the bridge deck.

9. MARS HILL RECREATION PARK

The Mars Hill Recreation Park is a great asset to the community and located only six-tenths of a mile from the terminus of the Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway at Cascade St, and less than a mile from downtown Mars Hill. Opportunities exist to provide a pedestrian and bicycle connection to this community asset, along with bicycle recreation features within the park itself.



The Mars Hill Recreation Park is a key destination for walking and biking in Mars Hill.



Slope conditions adjacent to the roadway present a challenge for developing bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

10. SIDEWALK GAPS TO ACCESS DOWNTOWN

There are opportunities to close sidewalk gaps to provide a continuous sidewalk network between the downtown core and neighborhoods within walking distance of downtown. A notable example is Mountain View Rd between Valley St and Chestnut St.



Sidewalks on NC-213 create a pedestrian connection between downtown and commercial areas to the east.



The sidewalk on Mountain View Rd ends at Valley St, creating a gap between residential areas in the northeastern portion of Mars Hill and downtown.



03

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

OVERVIEW

Community engagement plays a vital role in every planning process. The most effective plans are firmly rooted in the realities and visions of the communities that create them. The *Mars Hill Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan* relies heavily on input from community members, Steering Committee members, supporting agencies, and non-profit organizations to inform Mars Hill's proposed multimodal network, encompassing various forms of active transportation and recreation opportunities for visitors and residents alike.

The following sections are covered in this chapter:

- ▶ Steering Committee + Meetings
- ▶ Local News Coverage
- ▶ Community Survey
- ▶ Pop-Up Event



STEERING COMMITTEE + MEETINGS

Central to the development of the *Mars Hill Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan* was the Steering Committee, composed of representatives from the Town of Mars Hill, Madison County, NCDOT, FBRMPO, and MHU, as well as local residents and community groups. The Steering Committee met four times throughout the project and provided key oversight, guidance, and input to the development of the plan. Each meeting was held virtually using Microsoft Teams.

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- ▶ Kevin Barnette, Madison County School Board
- ▶ Ryan Bell, MHU, Mars Hill Parks and Recreation Board, and Friends of Bailey Mountain
- ▶ Nathan Bennett, Mars Hill Town Manager
- ▶ Larry Burda, Hot Springs Health Program
- ▶ Grainger Caudle, MHU
- ▶ Larry Davis, Mars Hill Alderman
- ▶ Meredith Doster, Mars Hill resident
- ▶ Bill Downey, Madison County Chamber
- ▶ Sebastian Dunn, Blue Ridge Bike Club
- ▶ Alexius Farris, NCDOT IMD
- ▶ Bryan Lopez, NCDOT IMD
- ▶ Brad Guth, Madison County Economic Development Director
- ▶ Augusta Jenkins-Gladding, Mars Hill Planning and Zoning Board
- ▶ Daniel Metcalf, Madison County Public Transit Director
- ▶ Lucy Pearson, Mars Hill resident
- ▶ Sherrye Perry, Mars Hill resident
- ▶ Daniel Sellers, NCDOT
- ▶ Hannah Smith, NCDOT District 13 Planning Engineer
- ▶ Deana Stephens, Madison County Health Department
- ▶ Nathan Waldrup, Mars Hill Fire Chief
- ▶ Chad Wilson, Mars Hill Chief of Police
- ▶ Tristan Winkler, FBRMPO Director
- ▶ Kaitland Finkle, Land of Sky Regional Council

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #2

The second Steering Committee meeting was held on Wednesday, August 7, 2024. The meeting provided Steering Committee members with an overview of community engagement results and introduced an ongoing greenway feasibility study that aligns with recommendations in this Plan. Draft network recommendations, program and policy recommendations, and prioritization criteria were also presented for feedback.

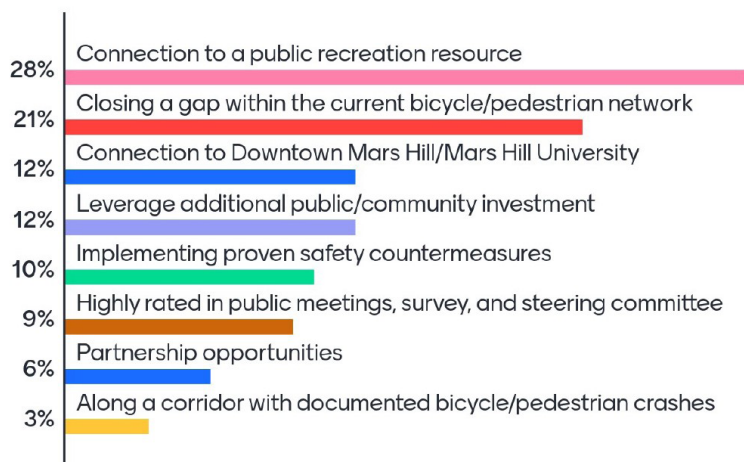
Key themes that emerged from the meeting include:

- ▶ Regular maintenance to ensure bike lanes or shoulders are kept clear of debris is key to making users feel safe and comfortable bicycling in Mars Hill.
- ▶ Steering Committee members ranked factors related to bicycle and pedestrian connectivity as the most important elements of a prioritization scoring system, followed by project opportunity factors and safety.
- ▶ Connections to parks and recreation centers ranked highly among Steering Committee members' priorities, and members encouraged routing off-street wherever possible on these segments to elevate user safety.

Criteria Category Ranking Exercise



Prioritization Criteria Weighting Exercise



Steering Committee members ranked draft prioritization categories (top) and criteria (bottom).

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #3

The third Steering Committee meeting was held on Wednesday, September 25, 2024. The meeting provided Steering Committee members with an overview of the final bicycle and pedestrian network recommendations, as well as prioritization criteria and methodology. Prioritization scores for each project in the recommended network were presented, along with a proposed priority tier system.

Key themes that emerged from the meeting include:

- ▶ The recent roadway construction on Schoolhouse Ln resulted in a new alignment for the Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway connector to Bailey St. Steering Committee members agreed that it is an improvement over previous conditions, but the grade of the new trail is steep and additional improvements could be made.
- ▶ A narrow roadway and limited ROW along Park St may pose challenges to implementing a full-width sidepath between Cascade St/NC-213 and the Mars Hill Recreation Park.
- ▶ Steering Committee members expressed concerns with speeding and roadway conditions on Bailey St through the campus of MHU, suggesting safety improvements.
- ▶ Steering Committee members ranked the nine highest-scoring projects, revealing broad support for intersection improvements along N. Main St in downtown.



Steering Committee members ranked the nine highest-scoring projects in the prioritization exercise.

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #4

The final Steering Committee meeting was held on Wednesday, January 08, 2025, and included a presentation of the draft plan for Steering Committee members, focusing on priority project cutsheets and implementation strategies.

Key themes that emerged from the meeting include:

- ▶ Steering Committee members are supportive of efforts to improve walking and bicycling in Mars Hill, and are actively working with the Town to pursue additional grant funding.
- ▶ A separate feasibility study for an extension of the Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway recommends detailed alignments for some of the projects included in the *Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan*.

Town of Mars Hill
BICYCLE + PEDESTRIAN PLAN

DRAFT PLAN REVIEW
Chapter 4: Network Recommendations

PRIORITY PROJECT #1: PARK DR SIDEPATH

This project will create a 10 foot wide sidepath along the west side of Park Dr between Cascade St/NC 213 and the Mars Hill Recreation Park. The path will connect to existing sidewalk at the campus of MHSU, proposed sidewalk on Cascade St, and a proposed multiuse path along Gabriel Creek. The width of the path may be reduced in sections constrained by topography, ROW, or other design factors.

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

LOCATION:
West side of Park Dr between Cascade St/NC 213 and Mars Hill Recreation Park

Total Length:
3,500 ft, 0.66 miles

Facility Type:
Sidepath (typical width 10 ft, may be reduced as needed)

Intersection Treatments:
New crosswalk markings at Thomason Dr and Physical Plant Rd

Implementation Partners:
NCCOIT (maintains roadway), Town of Mars Hill, MHSU

Planning Level Cost Estimate:
\$1,685,000

PRIORITIZATION FACTORS

Connects to Activity Center: 20/20
Connects to a Public Recreation Resource: 20/20
Closes a Gap in the Current Bicycle and Pedestrian Network: 10/20
Improves Area with Crash History: 10/10
Reduces Bicycle and Pedestrian Exposure: 0/5
Addresses Public Safety: 10/10
Advances a Regional Connection: 10/10
Leverages Community Investments: 0/5
Total: 84/100

TYPICAL CROSS SECTION

Callouts:

- Existing high-visibility crosswalks at Cascade St/NC 213 provide connectivity to MHSU and the City Park Community.
- Steep slopes adjacent to roadway may be treated by grading required to install sidewalk and associated retaining wall.
- Coordinate with MHSU and Western North Carolina State University on potential sidewalk impacts to the road and campus.
- Point through mapping of Project from 8/2019 to 10/2024 to determine final path location to address final grade requirements.
- Setback to existing roadway and structure on 100' common CR.
- Steep conditions in front of the town court of the Mars Hill Recreation Park may require construction of retaining wall.

Cutsheets

- Location
- Length
- Facility Type
- Intersection Treatments
- Partners
- Cost estimate
- Prioritization Factors
- Annotated Map

Allison Anolik

BL
+9
 Lopez, B...

Steering Committee members received an overview of the draft plan at the final Steering Committee meeting.

LOCAL NEWS COVERAGE

The Mars Hill *Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan* received coverage in local news coverage, including an August 28, 2024 article in *The News-Record* summarizing the draft recommendations shared at the pop-up event held earlier that month.

MARS HILL NC 28754-0368


The News-Record

AUGUST 28, 2024
SERVING MADISON COUNTY SINCE 1901
PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

BIKE, PEDESTRIAN PATHWAY PROJECT



The town of Mars Hill is currently receiving recommendations from residents on its bike and pedestrian pathway project, which it aims to have finalized by January 2025. One of the most popular recommendations is to augment the Otis Duck Greenway. JOHNNY CASEY/THE NEWS-RECORD & SENTINEL

Madison in talks for \$327K flooring project

**County's main landfill
station is in need of a
big floor upgrade**

Johnny Casey
Asheville Citizen Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

MARSHALL - Madison County's main landfill station is in need of a big floor upgrade, as the county heard updates on proposed major renovations to the flooring.

Solid Waste Director Sam Lunsford appeared before the Madison County Board of Commissioners to discuss the project Aug. 13, adding that the project will cost roughly \$327,000.

According to Lunsford, the bid from Osborn Contract Services is for \$314,000, plus an additional \$13,000 for new asphalt out front of the station to be paid to French Broad Paving.

Lunsford said the transfer station's concrete slab floor at the main landfill, located along Rudisill Road in Marshall, would need to be repaired.

"What's needing to be done to the repair for the floor is not something that's not all of a sudden came up," Lunsford said, adding that the county noticed the floor's wear and tear began appearing roughly in 2011.

"The county got a bid 13 years ago to repair the floor," Lunsford said. "So, this is something that the landfill has had on its radar, that's going to have to be done at some point."

According to Lunsford, roughly a year ago, the right-hand side of the landfill station typically sees more wear and tear because it is where the push wall operates.

"That wear is getting down to where the original concrete was poured, and the rebar," Lunsford said. "When we noticed

Mars Hill hears from 536 residents on recent proposal

Johnny Casey
Asheville Citizen Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

MARS HILL - With the town of Mars Hill experiencing the most residential growth of any Madison County township, the town has taken efforts to ensure residents' safety, as it is currently working on a bike and pedestrian pathway project.

On Aug. 2, Land of Sky Regional

Council hosted a pop-up meeting with the public during First Fridays in Mars Hill to gather feedback from local residents about the project.

According to Mars Hill Town Manager Nathan Bennett, roughly 65 residents dropped in at the booth operated by Land of Sky Aug. 2.

Residents reviewed the number of draft recommendations to offer their opinions on them.

The bike and pedestrian plan, of which French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization is also a partner, is being coordinated by the McAdams Group, a full-service civil engineering, landscape architecture, transportation and geomatics firm headquartered in Raleigh.

According to Bennett, there are roughly 15 draft recommendations being considered. Those recommendations include:

- Enhanced crosswalks.
- Potential bike corridors being added to existing facilities where existing right of way and shoulders would allow.
- Expanded sidewalk networks.
- Extending the Otis Duck Greenway.

Those four recommendations were the most popular brought by residents, according to Bennett.

"That's probably the most popular thing that we've come out of this study

See **PATHWAY**, Page 3

See **FLOORING**, Page 6

COMMUNITY SURVEY

A community survey was conducted for the *Mars Hill Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan* between May 2 and July 5, 2024, via PublicInput.com. The survey attracted 536 participants who shared 408 total comments. The project team distributed the community survey to accomplish the following goals:

- ▶ Introduce the project and gauge public support.
- ▶ Solicit and compile public comment on destinations, opportunities and challenges, user preferences, and route preferences.
- ▶ Fulfill requests for information.

The survey contained two sections: project-specific questions with interactive mapping questions and optional demographic questions. Public feedback is summarized on the following pages by question. Key takeaways from the community survey include the following:

- ▶ A lack of dedicated facilities, or even shoulders on narrow mountain roads, is a key factor discouraging people from walking in Mars Hill, and a lack of bike racks at destinations deters some respondents from bicycling.
- ▶ Respondents are concerned with roadway safety in Mars Hill, citing persistent speeding problems on streets such as N. Main St and S. Main St and distracted pedestrians within the campus of MHU.
- ▶ Respondents would like to see expanded greenway facilities in Mars Hill, especially to connect to Bailey Mountain Park and Preserve and create a walking loop around the northern side of town.
- ▶ While there is a desire to improve bikeability in Mars Hill, some respondents are opposed to bicycle lanes on the roadway.
- ▶ Respondents expressed support for regional bicycle and pedestrian connections to Weaverville, Marshall, and other locations.



536 survey participants

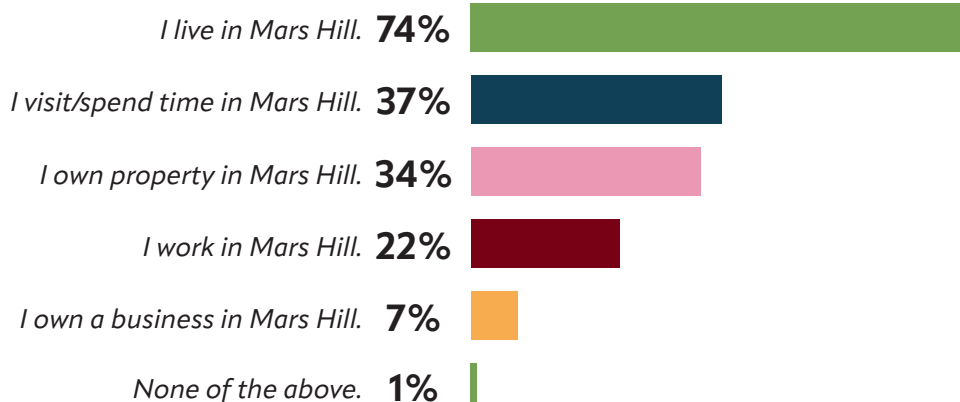


408 survey comments

WHAT IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO MARS HILL?

Select all that apply.

Approximately three-quarters (74 percent) of survey respondents reported being residents of Mars Hill, while over thirty percent visit and spend time (37 percent) or own property in Mars Hill (34 percent). 22 percent work in Mars Hill and 7 percent own a business in Mars Hill.



HOW DO YOU RATE LEVELS OF COMFORT FOR THOSE CURRENTLY WALKING AND BIKING IN MARS HILL?

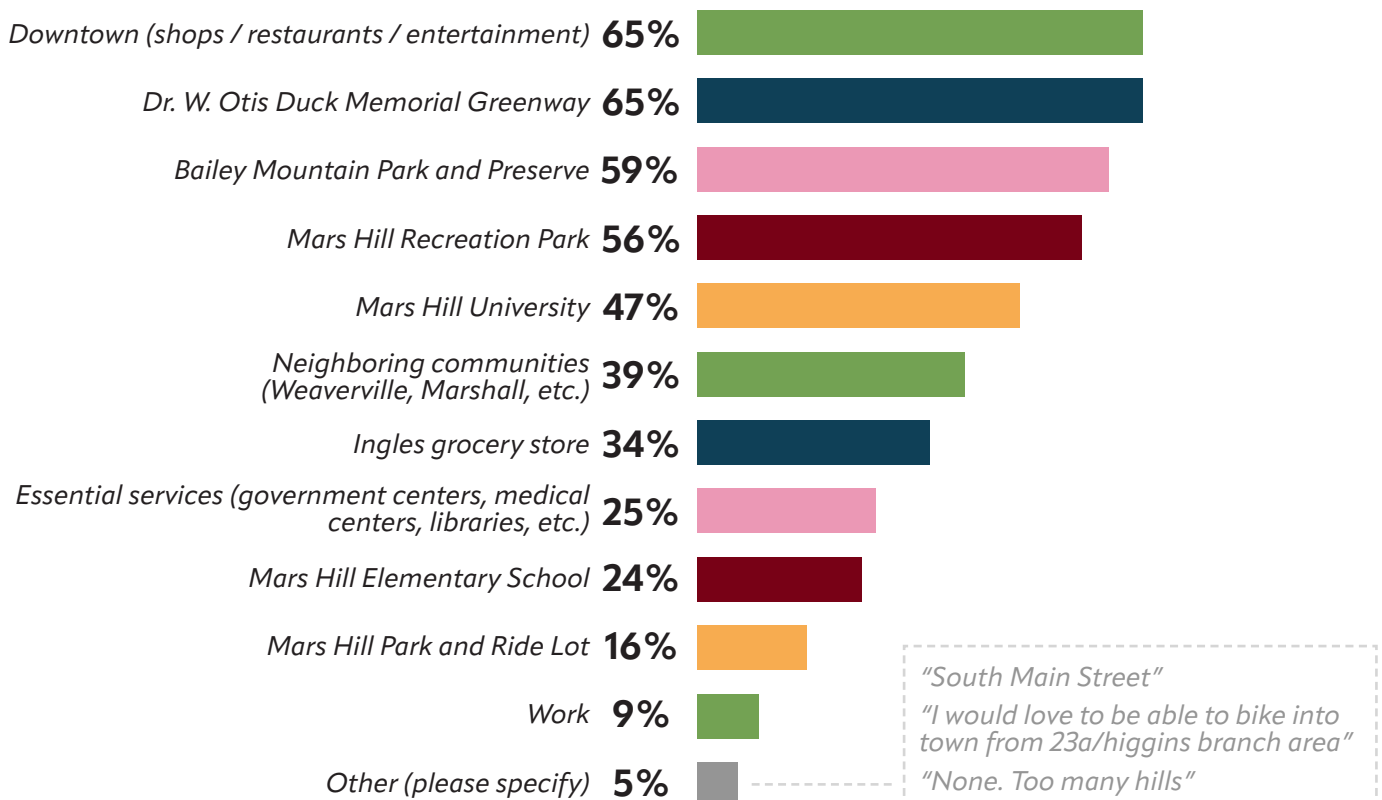
The majority of survey respondents (55 percent) rated current conditions in Mars Hill as moderately comfortable for walking and bicycling. 28 percent classified walking and biking conditions in Mars Hill as unsafe, while a smaller number (17 percent) said conditions are comfortable for pedestrians and bicyclists of all ages and abilities.



WHICH DESTINATIONS WOULD YOU LIKE TO WALK OR BIKE TO IN MARS HILL IF BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES WERE IMPROVED?

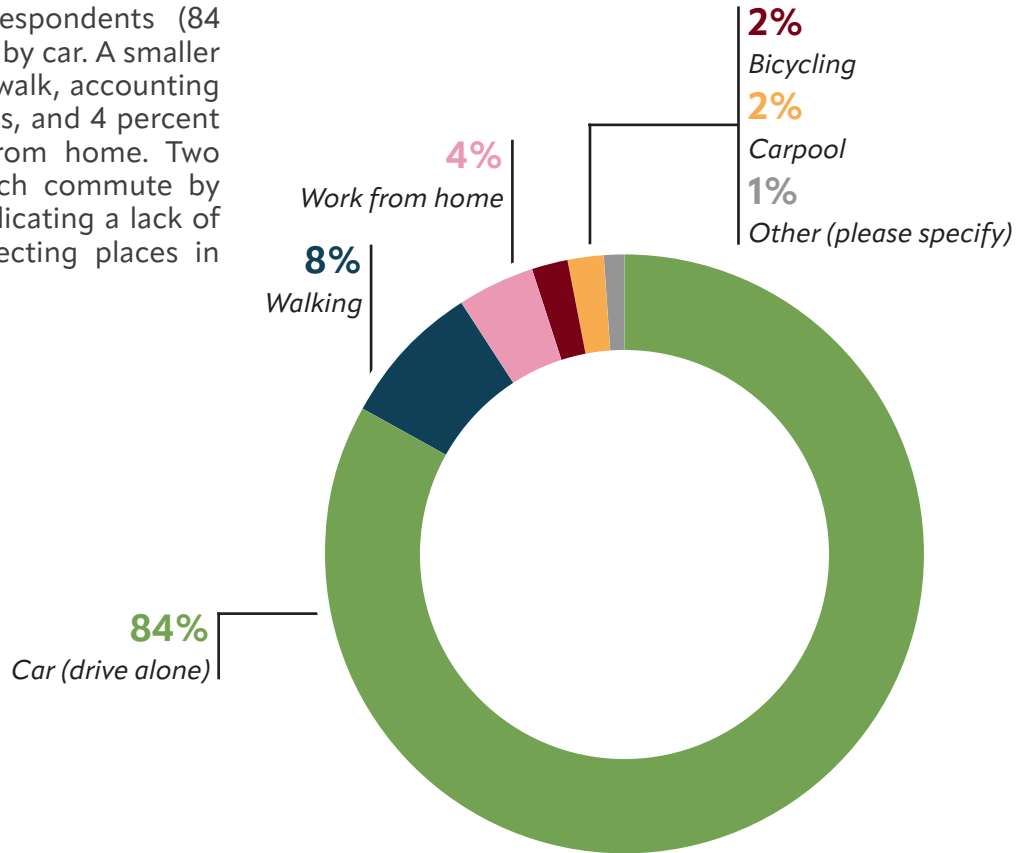
Select all that apply.

The most-selected desired walking and biking destinations among survey respondents are primarily recreational and include the Otis Duck Greenway (65 percent), Bailey Mountain Park and Preserve (59 percent), and Mars Hill Recreation Park (56 percent). Many respondents (65 percent) also identified downtown Mars Hill as a preferred destination, and another 39 percent said they would like to connect to neighboring communities.



WHAT IS YOUR PRIMARY MODE OF TRANSPORTATION?

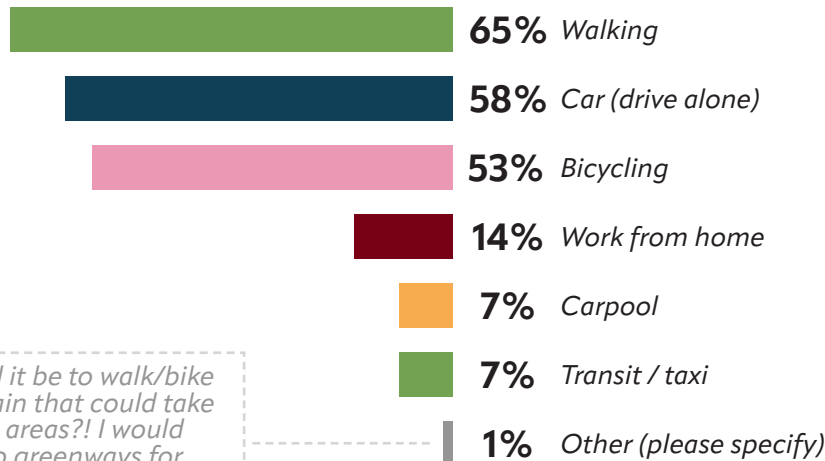
A large majority of survey respondents (84 percent) commute primarily by car. A smaller amount reported that they walk, accounting for 8 percent of respondents, and 4 percent reported that they work from home. Two percent of respondents each commute by bicycle or by carpooling, indicating a lack of safe bicycle facilities connecting places in Mars Hill.



NOW CONSIDER YOUR DESIRED MODES OF TRANSPORTATION IN THE FUTURE. WHICH MODES WOULD YOU LIKE TO USE?

Select all that apply.

When asked to choose how they would like to travel in the future, many respondents identified walking and bicycling, selected by 65 percent and 53 percent of respondents, respectively. This represents a substantial increase from current rates of walking and bicycling among survey respondents, indicating a strong demand for active transportation options. 58 percent of respondents would like to drive, a decrease from 84 percent who currently do.



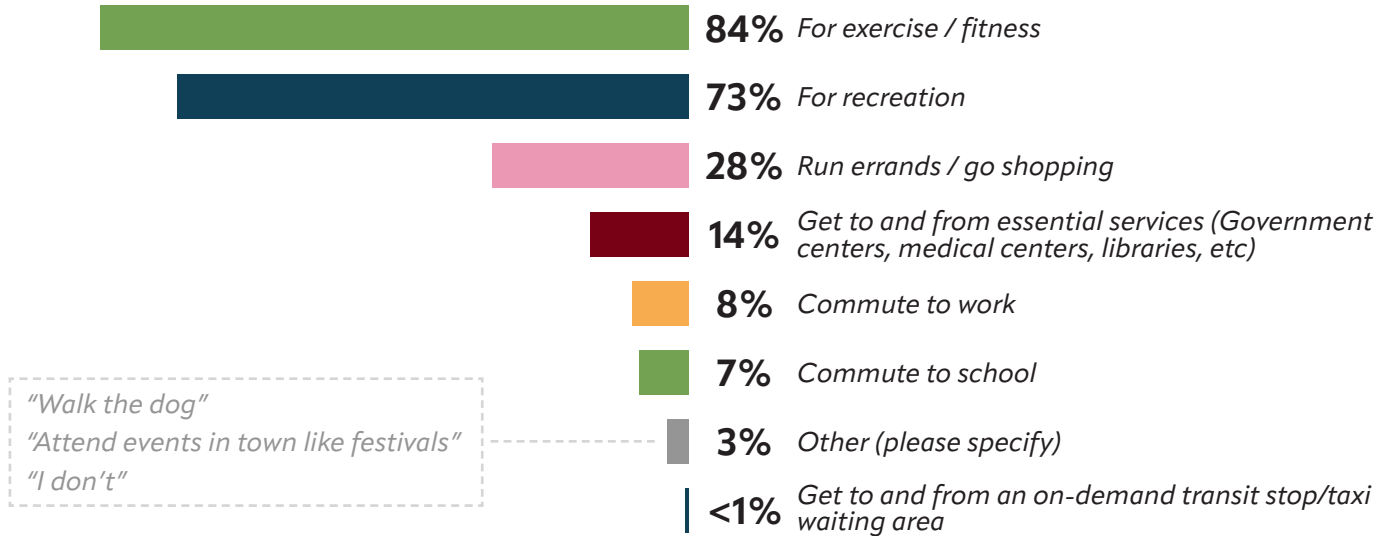
"How great would it be to walk/bike to a public bus/train that could take us to neighboring areas?! I would also love access to greenways for biking to neighboring areas"



WHAT ARE THE PRIMARY REASONS THAT YOU OR MEMBERS OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD WALK OR BIKE IN MARS HILL?

Select all that apply.

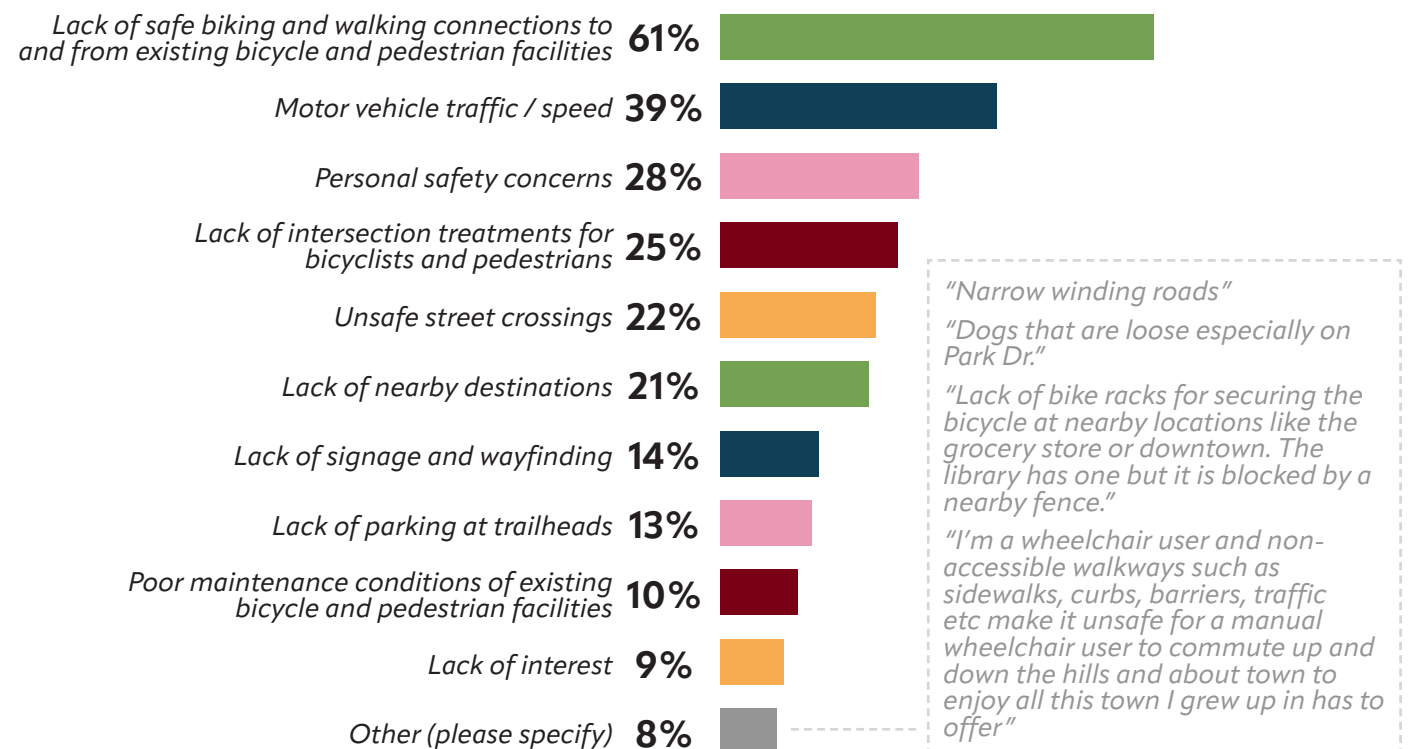
The majority of survey respondents reported that they walk or bike for exercise or fitness (84 percent of respondents) and for recreation (73 percent). Fewer respondents walk and bike to run errands (28 percent), access services (14 percent), or commute to work and school (7 percent and 8 percent, respectively).



WHAT FACTORS DISCOURAGE YOU FROM BIKING AND WALKING IN MARS HILL?

Select all that apply.

Survey respondents identified several safety concerns that negatively impact walking and biking in Mars Hill. A lack of safe walking and biking connections between facilities was found as the top discouraging factor, selected by 61 percent of respondents, followed by considerations including traffic, roadway speed, and street crossings. Other key factors discouraging walking and biking relate to a lack of nearby destinations (21 percent), a lack of signage and wayfinding (14 percent), and poor maintenance conditions (10 percent).



PLEASE PROVIDE ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS / FEEDBACK ON THE MARS HILL BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN NETWORK.

Selected comments are lightly edited for spelling and clarity. Additional comments are in Appendix C.

"A sidewalk is needed to be extended on Bailey Street and added to Bruce Rd to make 'the loop' more accessible and safer. A greenway would be nice from the existing greenway to the Bailey Mountain Preserve."

"The lack of a sidewalk between Cemetery St and the library, as well as upper North Main St are concerns. A sidewalk on Bruce to the greenway would also be nice, and a crosswalk at Anderson/Bruce and North Main as well. Also, can we get a four way stop at the Anderson and Mountain View intersection?"

"It would be nice to have pet waste receptacles along the greenway and in public walking areas."

"Where Bailey Street and greenway meet there needs to be safer passage for both pedestrians and cyclists as well as cars. Maybe a tunnel could be built or the bushes cut back at the greenway crosswalk? Drivers cannot see pedestrians at all coming from the greenway toward the college until they are almost in the road."

"I would like there to be sidewalk installed from MHU Field House, down 213 all the way to Stone Cottage Road. That would allow 3 additional communities walking access into Mars Hill."

"Bicycle and pedestrian networks are essential for us avoiding the cost and negative environmental impact of single person automobiles while improving the health and camaraderie of our citizens in small communities like ours. How can we be a university town and not have more bike paths and bike racks around? Do you really want all those students should each have their own individual car to get their groceries each week?"

"We don't need bicyclists on our roads. They're too narrow and the cyclists take up too much space. Please don't make Mars Hill like north Asheville and Main Street/213 like Merrimon Avenue. It's already difficult to drive through Mars Hill with all the college student crossings in place on 213. Most people don't want to have to deal with persons on bicycles when we are driving home or to work."

"Very thankful to live in Mars Hill with well taken care of sidewalks but the frustration is when the people choose not to use it and walk on the opposite side of the road."

"Bicycle traffic should only be allowed in places where the speed limit is 25 MPH or lower."

"I love living and working in Mars Hill and raising my children here! We would all love to bike and walk more."

"I honestly believe that adding a bicycle lane down Athletic street in Mars Hill would be so dangerous unless the road is widened. I commute down this road multiple times daily, and the road is far too skinny as it is. Passing any vehicle is very difficult on this road, I can't imagine the additional worry of a bike lane unless the road is heavily widened, and parallel parking spaces are removed."

"At minimum, I would love for the neighborhoods in mars hill to all have sidewalks. People fly down our road, and traffic bumps don't seem to help."

"The area where the Ingles/CVS/Car Wash is located needs a traffic light or roundabout."

"Mars Hill does a good job of requiring dogs to be on leash. Unfortunately, a small percentage of the population still allows their dogs to run free on the greenway and at the nature preserve. Please continue to be diligent about enforcing the leash law. We hike the Madison County shelter dogs on leash and when we encounter dogs off leash that is a very unsafe situation for everybody."

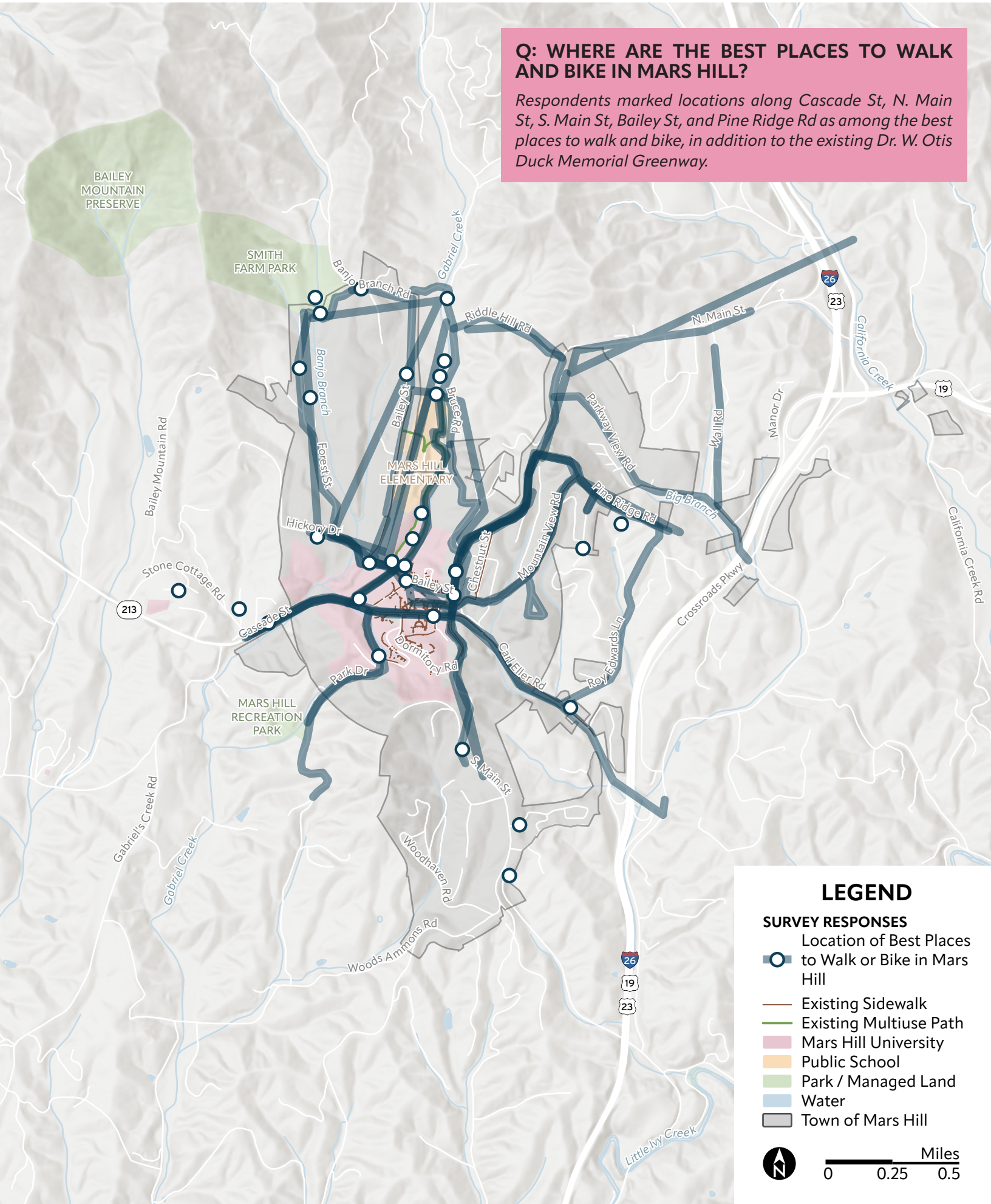
"In general, I think Mars Hill is a pretty bikeable community, but there are sections of N. Main and S. Main (or whatever it turns into as it makes the big curve to head down toward the interstate) where limited sight distances, steep grades, and the speed of auto traffic (often above the posted speed limits) make for a precarious ride. Pedestrian-wise, it would be nice to have walk/don't walk signaling at the College/Main and Bailey/Main intersections, and possibly activated alert flashers along Main and 213 crosswalks (similar to those along Lyman St. in Asheville)."

"Bailey Street through the college is most concerning with students popping out to cross without looking - additional crosswalks or lights would be helpful."

"I did a lot of walking between Bailey Mountain and the Greenway during the pandemic. It definitely didn't feel safe (safe from cars). Tried it once with a dog. That was even worse. More sidewalks would be great, though I greatly appreciate the walking venues that we already have. Just please remove all the invasive plants along the Otis Duck Greenway and plant a few shade trees!"









Q: WHERE ARE THE BEST PLACES TO WALK AND BIKE IN MARS HILL?

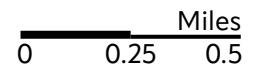
Respondents marked locations along Cascade St, N. Main St, S. Main St, Bailey St, and Pine Ridge Rd as among the best places to walk and bike, in addition to the existing Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway.



LEGEND

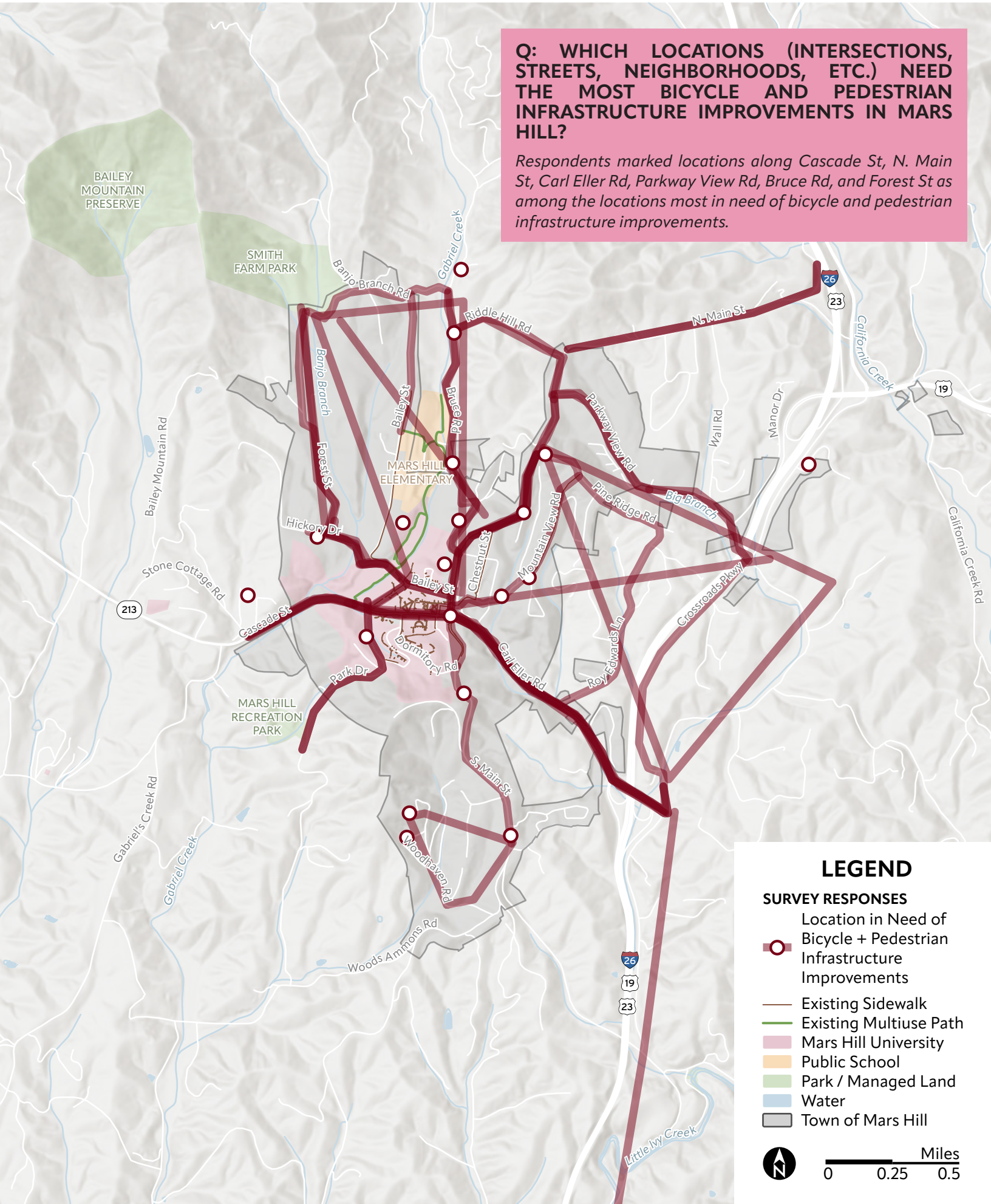
SURVEY RESPONSES

-  Location of Best Places to Walk or Bike in Mars Hill
-  Existing Sidewalk
-  Existing Multiuse Path
-  Mars Hill University
-  Public School
-  Park / Managed Land
-  Water
-  Town of Mars Hill



Q: WHICH LOCATIONS (INTERSECTIONS, STREETS, NEIGHBORHOODS, ETC.) NEED THE MOST BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS IN MARS HILL?

Respondents marked locations along Cascade St, N. Main St, Carl Eller Rd, Parkway View Rd, Bruce Rd, and Forest St as among the locations most in need of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements.



LEGEND

SURVEY RESPONSES

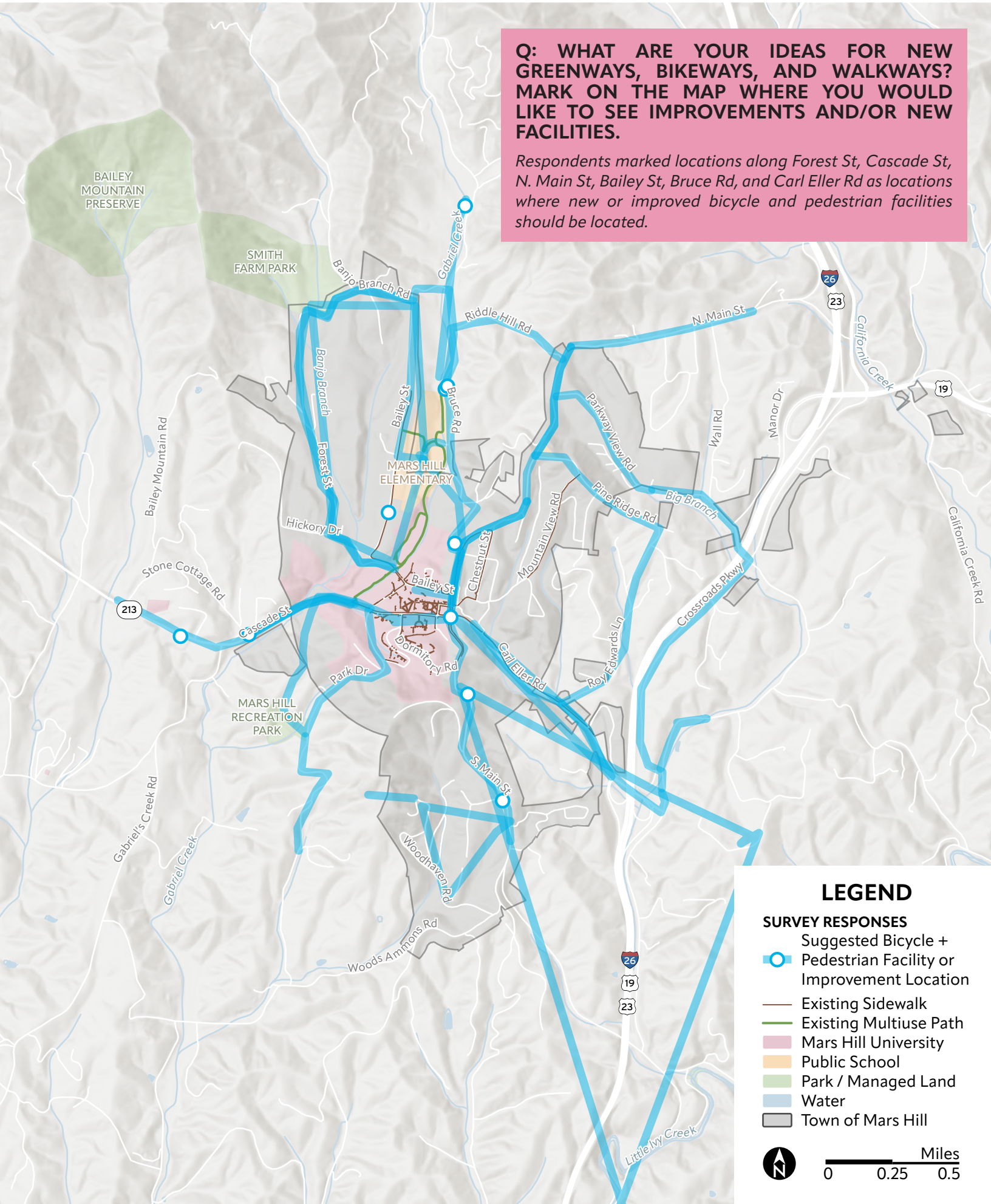
- Location in Need of Bicycle + Pedestrian Infrastructure Improvements
- Existing Sidewalk
- Existing Multiuse Path
- Mars Hill University
- Public School
- Park / Managed Land
- Water
- Town of Mars Hill



Miles
 0 0.25 0.5









Q: WHAT ARE YOUR IDEAS FOR NEW GREENWAYS, BIKEWAYS, AND WALKWAYS? MARK ON THE MAP WHERE YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE IMPROVEMENTS AND/OR NEW FACILITIES.

Respondents marked locations along Forest St, Cascade St, N. Main St, Bailey St, Bruce Rd, and Carl Eller Rd as locations where new or improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities should be located.



LEGEND

SURVEY RESPONSES

-  Suggested Bicycle + Pedestrian Facility or Improvement Location
-  Existing Sidewalk
-  Existing Multiuse Path
-  Mars Hill University
-  Public School
-  Park / Managed Land
-  Water
-  Town of Mars Hill



Miles
 0 0.25 0.5

POP-UP EVENT

The project team setup a booth and table at the Mars Hill First Friday event on August 2, 2024 to share and gather feedback on the draft bicycle and pedestrian network recommendations. Approximately 50 people stopped by the booth and left 108 total votes representing the three projects they felt are most important to implement. Projects related to expanding the existing Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway proved popular with community members, who ranked the corridor along Banjo Branch and Forest St the highest. Community members highlighted safety concerns for pedestrians who currently walk along roads, and suggested the creation of additional loops connecting Park Dr to Woodhaven Rd and to Cascade St.

Top-scoring draft projects include:

- ▶ Banjo Branch/Forest St Greenway to Bailey Mountain Park and Preserve (25.5 votes)
- ▶ Bruce Rd Sidewalk (11 votes)
- ▶ NC-213 Sidewalk to Stone Cottage Rd/Beth-Hanan Community (10 votes)
- ▶ Extension of Otis Duck Greenway (10 votes)
- ▶ Park Dr Sidepath (8 votes)





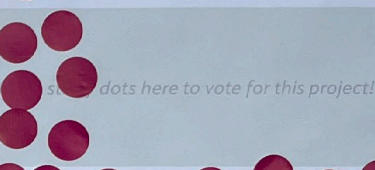

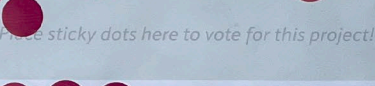

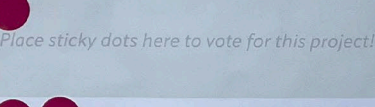
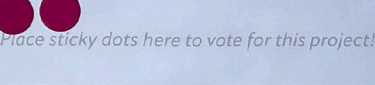







The project team set up a table at the First Friday event in downtown Mars Hill to gather public input.



Community members providing feedback at the First Friday pop-up event.

DRAFT BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN NETWORK RECOMMENDATIONS

The projects listed below are draft recommendations for future bicycle and pedestrian projects in Mars Hill. Use sticky dots to "vote" for the projects that you feel are important to implement, and leave a comment to provide feedback or suggest additional projects.

PROJECT ID	PROJECT NAME + DESCRIPTION	VOTE FOR THIS PROJECT!
1	<p>Park Dr Sidepath Create a 10 foot sidepath connection along the west side of Park Drive between Cascade Street and the Mars Hill Recreation Park. Sections constrained by topography or other design factors may be reduced width.</p>	<p>Place sticky dots here to vote for this project!</p> 
2	<p>Main St Pedestrian Crossing Improvements Addition or enhancement of pedestrian crossings on Main St between Cascade St and Bailey St in Downtown Mars Hill. Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bailey St and N. Main St <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Construct curb extension along N. Main St to reduce pedestrian crossing distances, improve sight distance, and reduce the turning radius for vehicles, providing traffic calming ○ Create curb ramps on the east side of N. Main St and add new crosswalk striping • College St/Mountain View Rd and N. Main Street. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Add a fourth striped crosswalk ○ Add pedestrian signals head on all four approaches ○ This may require minor curb extensions on the Mountain View Rd/ Ivey St approach to create enough space for proper curb ramps and pedestrian signal head placement • Cascade St and Main Street <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Add pedestrian signal heads on all four approaches 	<p>Place sticky dots here to vote for this project!</p> 
3	<p>Otis Duck Greenway Realignment Realign the greenway connector in open space within school property to improve user safety and provide a more gradual grade to accommodate riders of all ages and abilities. The existing connector from the Otis Duck Greenway to Bailey St uses portions of School House Ln which has very steep grades, and only provides about 5 ft of space directly adjacent to cars accessing the school.</p>	<p>Place sticky dots here to vote for this project!</p> 
4	<p>Banjo Branch/Forest St Greenway to Smith Farm Park Provide a greenway connection to Smith Farm Park/Bailey Mountain Preserve from Mars Hill University and Downtown Mars Hill. A feasibility study is underway to evaluate alignment alternatives for this corridor, including a sidepath along Forest St or a greenway along Banjo Branch.</p>	<p>Place sticky dots here to vote for this project!</p> 
5	<p>Athletic St Sidewalk Add sidewalk on one side of the street from Cascade St to Bailey St. Potentially reallocating space from on-street parking or removing retaining wall for sidewalk.</p>	<p>Place sticky dots here to vote for this project!</p> 
6	<p>NC-213 Sidewalk to Stone Cottage Rd/Beth-Hanan Community Add sidewalk on one side of the street.</p>	<p>Place sticky dots here to vote for this project!</p> 
7	<p>Carl Eller Rd Sidewalk Add a new at-grade pedestrian connection between the Park and Ride Lot and existing sidewalk on NC-213/Carl Eller Road. Project includes reallocating space on the I-26 bridge, grading work on the west side of the bridge, and constructing approximately 1,200 feet of new sidewalk.</p>	<p>Place sticky dots here to vote for this project!</p> 
8	<p>Cascade St Traffic Calming and Streetscape Reduce the travel lane widths from 18 ft to 12 ft, adding 6 ft of space to widen sidewalks, plant street trees, or implement other streetscape enhancements. Project limits are from S. Main St to Athletic St.</p>	<p>Place sticky dots here to vote for this project!</p> 
9	<p>Mountain View Rd Sidewalk Add sidewalk on one side of the road from Main St to Cemetery Dr, with crosswalk improvements at Anderson St.</p>	<p>Place sticky dots here to vote for this project!</p> 
10	<p>Bailey St Sidepath Extend sidepath on Bailey St north to Banjo Branch Rd and continue sidepath west along Banjo Branch Rd and Forest St to Smith Farm Park/Bailey Mountain Preserve. A feasibility study is underway that includes this corridor as a potential alignment for a greenway extension.</p>	<p>Place sticky dots here to vote for this project!</p> 
11	<p>N. Main St Sidewalk Extension Extend sidewalk on N. Main St from Chestnut St to municipal boundary.</p>	<p>Place sticky dots here to vote for this project!</p> 
12	<p>Bruce Rd Sidewalk New sidewalk on Bruce Rd starting at N. Main St just north of downtown and extending all the way to Bailey St to connect to the Bailey St Sidewalk Loop. A feasibility study is underway that includes this corridor.</p>	<p>Place sticky dots here to vote for this project!</p> 
13	<p>Extension of Otis Duck Greenway Extend Otis Duck Greenway north along Gabriel Creek or Bruce Rd to Bailey St/Banjo Branch Rd. A feasibility study is underway to study this.</p>	<p>Place sticky dots here to vote for this project!</p> 
14	<p>S. Main St Sidepath Build sidepath on S. Main St from existing sidewalk to municipal boundary.</p>	<p>Place sticky dots here to vote for this project!</p> 
15	<p>Various Sidewalk and Greenway Projects Build greenway or sidewalk on one side of streets in and around Mars Hill.</p>	<p>Place sticky dots here to vote for this project!</p> 



04

NETWORK RECOMMENDATIONS

OVERVIEW

This chapter covers design standards for the recommended network projects in the plan, with detailed descriptions and visuals of typical cross sections for specific facility types. It introduces the proposed bicycle and pedestrian network, highlighting essential elements for safe and efficient multimodal travel, improving overall transportation accessibility. Finally, it documents the prioritization methodology, findings, and project cut sheets, offering detailed insights into individual priority projects in the Town.

The following sections are covered in this chapter:

- ▶ Design Guidance
- ▶ Comprehensive Bicycle + Pedestrian Network
- ▶ Prioritization
- ▶ Priority Projects (Cut Sheets)



DESIGN GUIDANCE

A safe, comprehensive, and accessible bicycle and pedestrian network connecting people and places to parks, schools, downtown, and other community destinations requires a set of standards and recommendations grounded in industry best practices. This section outlines design standards and typical sections for sidewalks, multiuse paths, and on-street bicycle facilities to guide the implementation of the proposed bicycle and pedestrian network.

FACILITY TYPES

Identifying suitable multimodal facilities for a community's active transportation network involves a context-sensitive approach, considering factors such as roadway design, network connectivity, land use, and expected bicycle and pedestrian user volumes. Bicycle and pedestrian facility selection is influenced by roadway speeds and traffic volumes. As vehicle speed and volume increase, the need for physical separation grows to ensure comfortable walking and bicycling.

Network recommendations prioritize interconnected bicycle and pedestrian facilities, enabling people of all ages and abilities to reach their destination safely and conveniently. Recommendations are informed by land use, among other factors, as an area's density determines the feasibility of supporting multimodal facilities. High-density areas can accommodate various bicycle and pedestrian facilities, while low-density areas may require options that facilitate longer-distance travel between destinations or provide greater physical separation from high-speed traffic.

The recommended project types in this plan include greenways and multiuse paths, sidepaths, sidewalks, natural surface trails, rural bicycle routes, and streetscapes. These primary project types are outlined on the following pages with considerations for design and materials.

For further insights into facility design, please refer to [Appendix B: Design Resources](#).



Roadway width is a factor in the selection of bicycle and pedestrian facilities and crossing treatments.

DESIGN STANDARDS + MATERIALS SELECTION

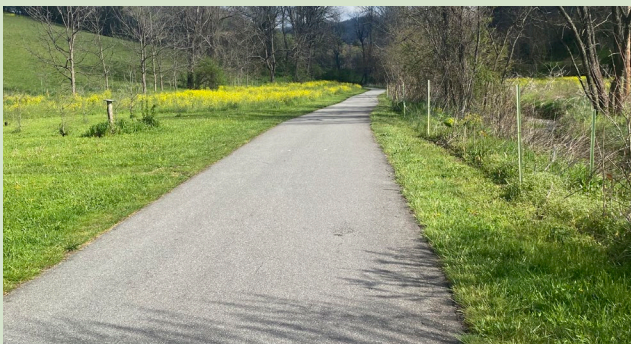
The standards and materials used in the design of bicycle and pedestrian facilities significantly influence the safety, comfort, and experience of the diverse users who depend on these spaces for recreational, health, and transportation purposes. This section outlines key elements of facility design to provide guidance for the Town of Mars Hill and its partners in planning, designing, constructing, and maintaining bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

MATERIALS SELECTION

Considerations for greenway and trail surface material selection encompass factors such as the intended facility type (recreational or commuter), anticipated user activities (e.g., walking, bicycling, running, rollerblading), the age and ability of trail users, environmental conditions and constraints, construction costs, maintenance burdens and expenses, and funding source requirements, among others. Below are descriptions and illustrations of various materials, providing an overview for informed decision-making.

PAVED SURFACE

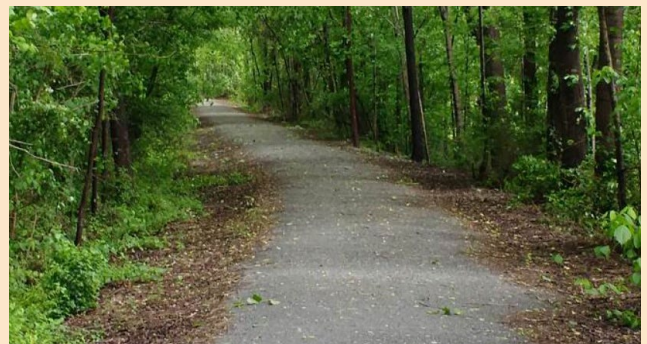
Paved trail surfaces, like asphalt or concrete, enhance accessibility for users of all ages and abilities. Asphalt is often the preferred and cost-effective choice for paved trails due to its popularity. While concrete offers greater durability, it comes at a higher cost than asphalt. Consequently, concrete trails are commonly found in urban settings, where projected user volumes are high or the trail may be subject to frequent vehicular loading. They are also preferred in areas prone to heavy flooding forces that could potentially damage the trail. While paved trail surfaces cost more upfront, they tend to require less long-term maintenance.



Asphalt trail surface in Mars Hill (top); concrete trail surface in Chapel Hill (bottom)

NATURAL SURFACE

Natural surfaces such as compacted aggregates and compacted native soil are budget-friendly alternatives implemented in trail systems across North Carolina and beyond. Compacted aggregates, particularly granite fines, are durable, cost-effective, and easily obtainable for constructing natural trail surfaces. Their compaction capabilities create a level and accessible surface for most users. Compacted native soil is easily constructed but relies heavily on material compaction and proper drainage. Annual maintenance is required to ensure proper drainage of natural surface trails and prevent the formation of water rills and grooves.



Compacted aggregate trail surface in Marion (top); compacted soil trail surface in Cary (bottom)

TYPICAL CROSS-SECTIONS

On the following pages are design guidance for facility and project types recommended in this Plan.

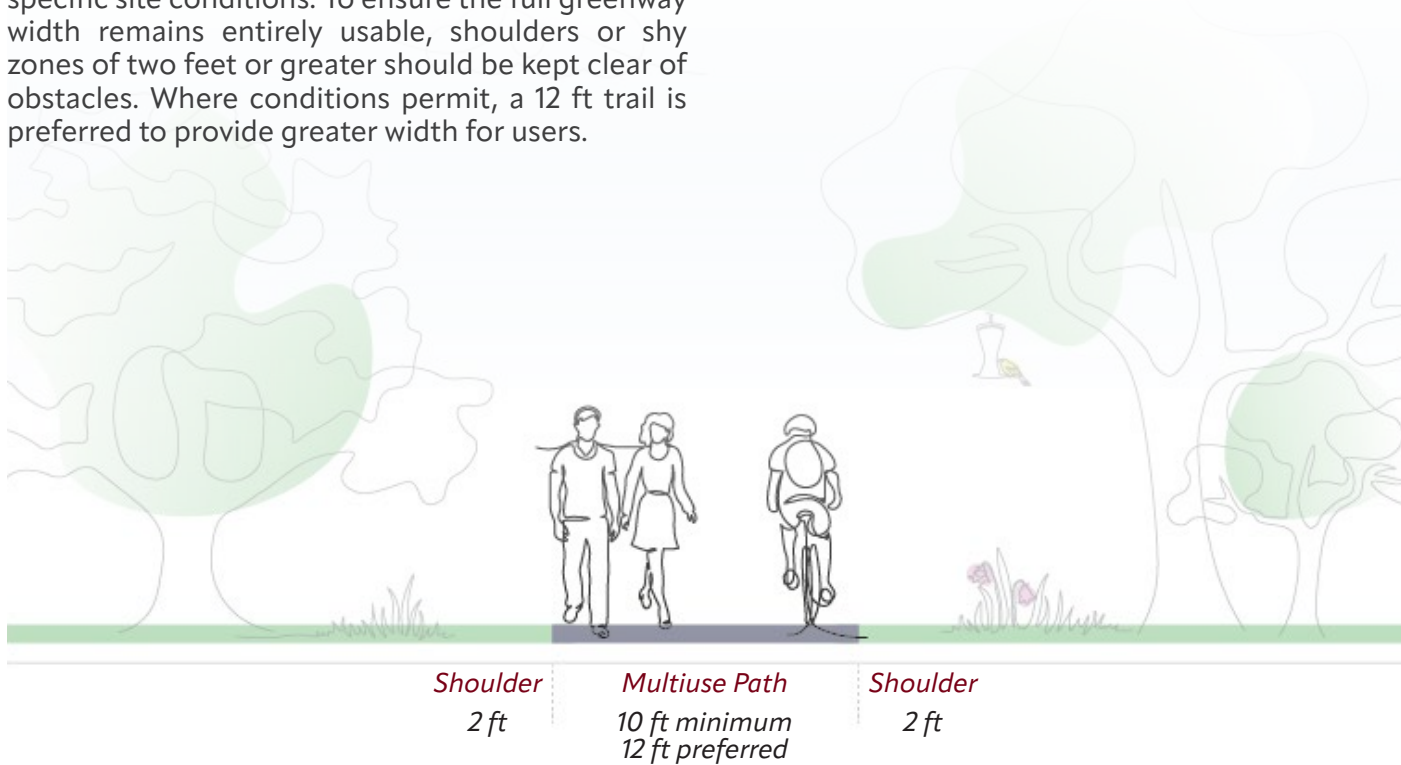
GREENWAY

Greenways are a dedicated facility for pedestrians and bicyclists that maintain complete separation from traffic. Greenways can serve as alternative network connections to arterial and collector roadways, making them suitable for both low-density and high-density areas as corridor connections. Greenways can serve both a transportation purpose as well as a recreational purpose, often connecting urban areas to parks and providing natural scenery.

A minimum 10 ft wide paved trail is recommended, striking a balance between minimal long-term maintenance and meeting eligibility requirements for a wide variety of funding sources. Given the specific site conditions within the Town of Mars Hill, expected greenway usage, and cost considerations, asphalt pavement is the preferred choice, having already been employed on existing segments of the Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway. However, there may be instances where limited sections of concrete pavement are necessary to address specific site conditions. To ensure the full greenway width remains entirely usable, shoulders or shy zones of two feet or greater should be kept clear of obstacles. Where conditions permit, a 12 ft trail is preferred to provide greater width for users.



The Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway has an asphalt paved surface with a 10 ft width in most locations.



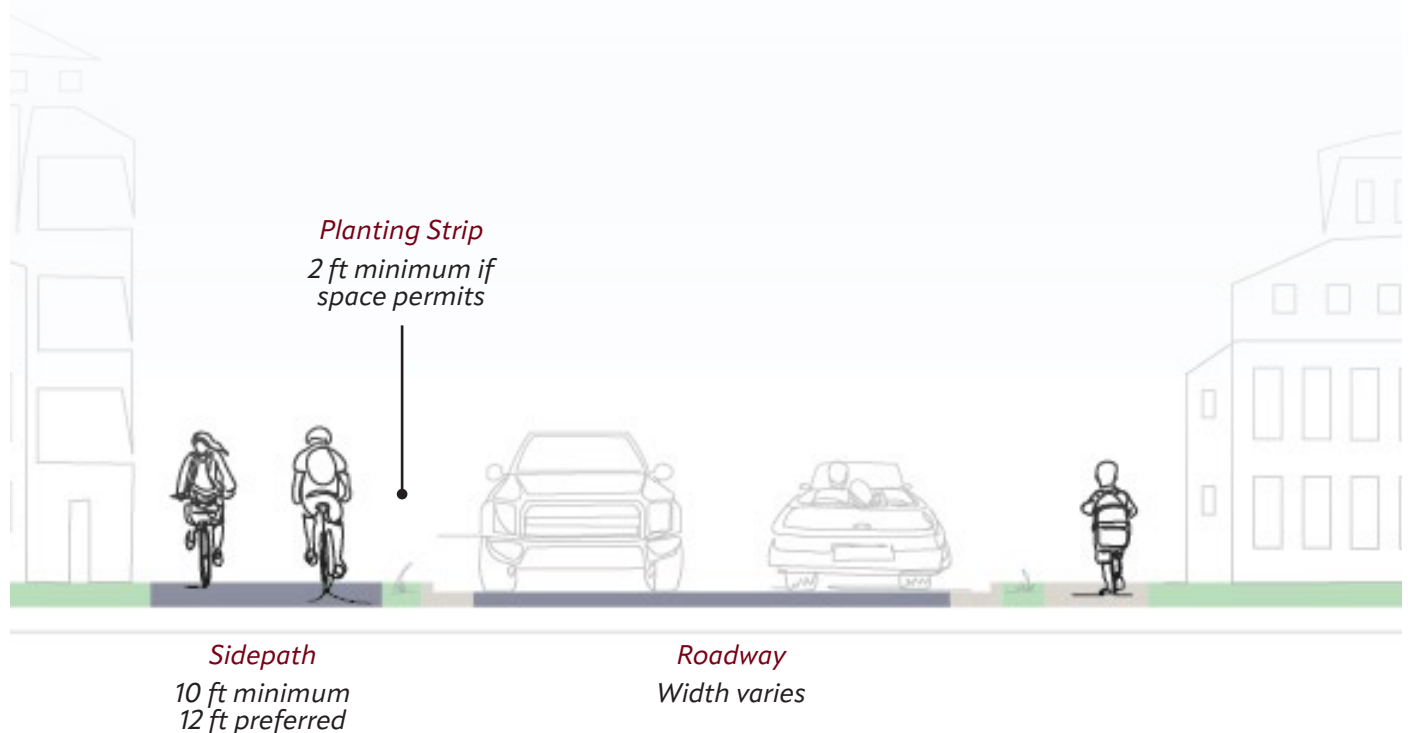
SIDEPATH

A sidepath is a bidirectional multiuse path that runs parallel to and alongside a roadway. These paths provide a physically-separated and low-stress environment for both cyclists and pedestrians, particularly in areas with heavy traffic and high-speed conditions. Typically implemented on roads with daily traffic volumes exceeding 6,000 vehicles per day and speed limits of 35 MPH or higher, sidepaths are commonly located on arterial and collector roadways. They are especially recommended for installation in high-density areas or corridors with higher expected volumes of bicyclists and pedestrians. Sidepaths are often paved with either concrete or asphalt.

In Mars Hill, it is recommended to have a minimum 10 ft paved sidepath. Where space permits, a 12 ft path is preferred. Due to the topography and ROW constraints that characterize much of the community, a planting strip between the roadway and sidewalk may not be feasible in all locations. Where it is provided, a minimum 2 ft buffer between the facility and the roadway should be considered.



A concrete sidepath turns to asphalt at the border between Cary, NC and Apex, NC on Laura Duncan Rd.



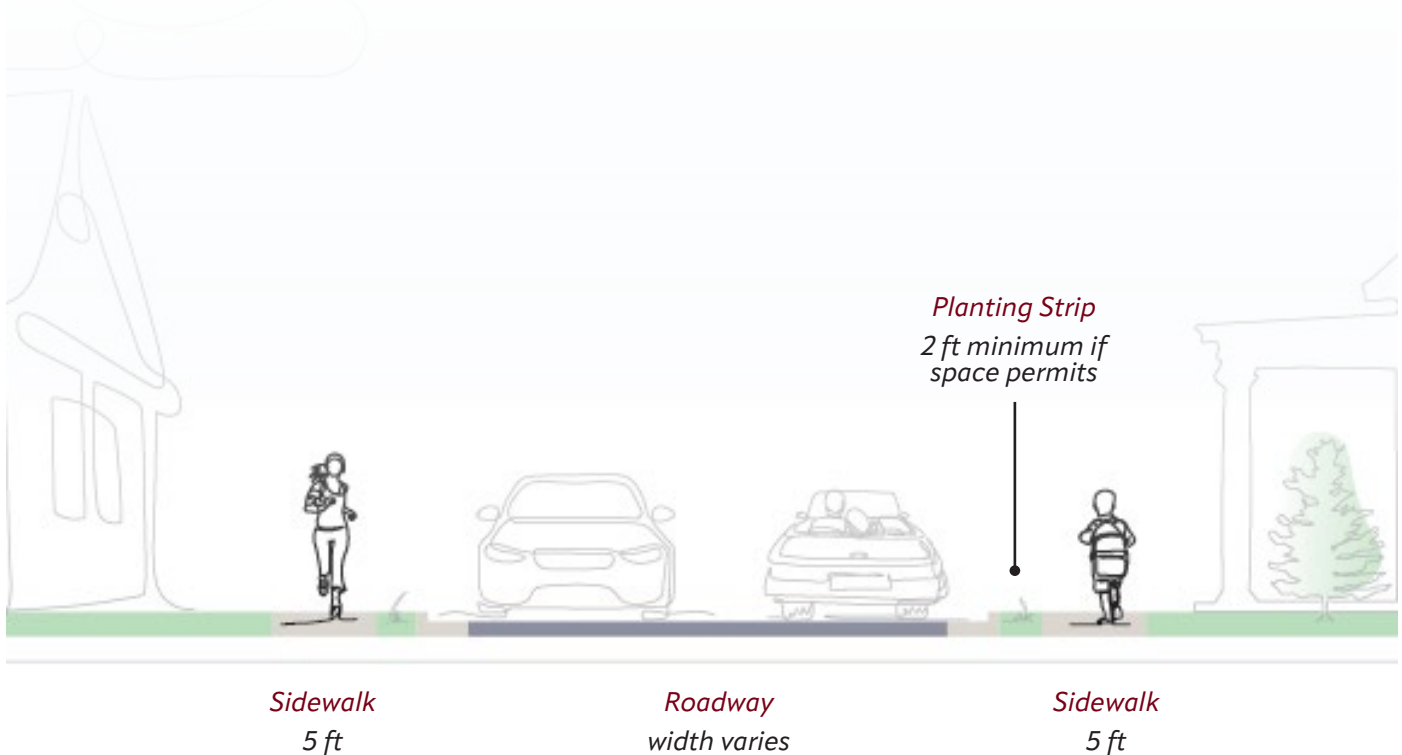
SIDEWALK

A sidewalk is a bidirectional paved concrete path offering a dedicated travel area for pedestrians. Physically separated from the roadway by either a curb or an unpaved buffer space, sidewalks are a recommended feature for roadway corridors with traffic volumes exceeding 2,000 vehicles per day and speed limits higher than 10 MPH. Additionally, sidewalks are recommended for all types of roadways where pedestrian activity is anticipated. Sidewalks are especially appropriate in areas characterized by diverse land uses, and are beneficial for short-distance travel along roadways featuring pedestrian-generating developments, such as neighborhoods, schools, and employment centers.

Within Mars Hill, five foot sidewalks should be considered. Due to the topography and ROW constraints that characterize much of the community, a planting strip between the roadway and sidewalk may not be feasible in all locations. Where it is provided, a minimum two foot buffer between the facility and the roadway should be considered. In extreme cases, the sidewalk may be provided as an on-street pedestrian walkway marked with pavement striping and a physical barrier such as flexible posts.

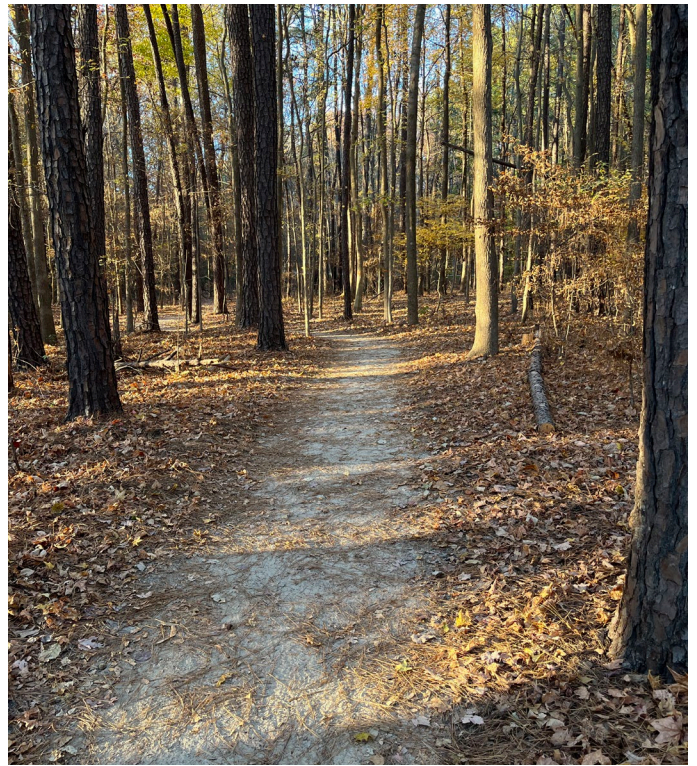


Sidewalk on 7th Ave in Garner, NC features a planting strip buffer



NATURAL SURFACE TRAIL

Natural surface trails are a low-impact method of trail development to provide useful connections or paths intended primarily for recreation and viewing nature. They may feature a compacted soil or aggregate base that supports adequate drainage and a variety of trail user types, and typically have lower construction costs than paved trails. Natural surface trails are appropriate for locations away from roadways such as woodlands or fields. Their width and surface material type may vary depending on usage patterns and needs.



Natural surface trails at Lake Crabtree County Park in Raleigh, NC



Natural Surface Trail

Width varies

RURAL BIKE ROUTE

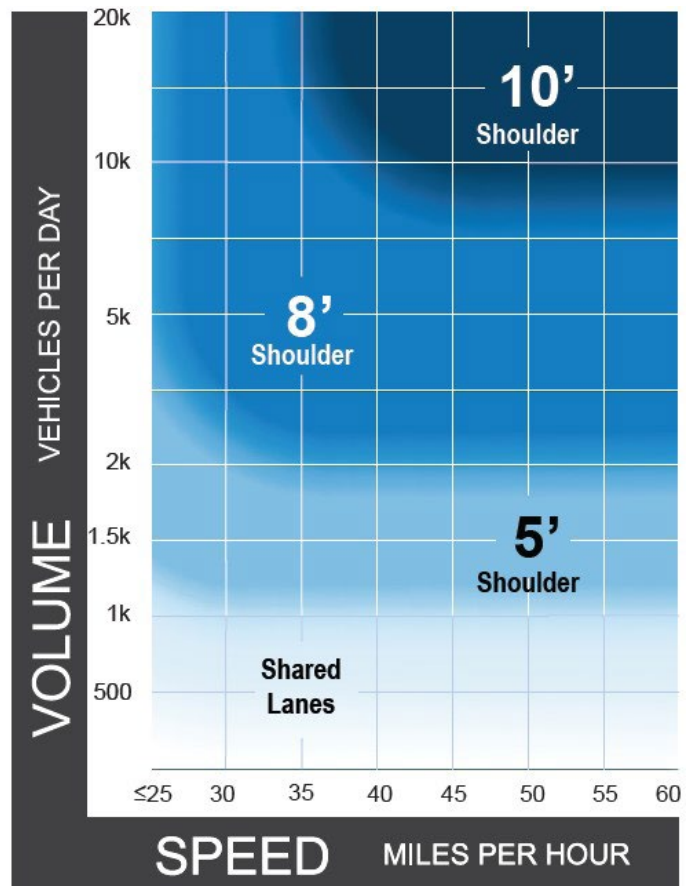
Outside of the core of the community, much of Mars Hill is rural, with low population density. Roadways may have high posted speed limits but low traffic volumes, making them suitable for on-road biking in a rural context. In locations such as these where improved facilities are desired but the surrounding land use and population density do not support separated bike facilities, a rural bike route may be used to establish the corridor as a space for multiple modes of travel.

A rural bike route designation may include a variety of pavement treatments and markings or signage. For roads with fewer than 1,000 vehicles per day, the Bikeway Selection Guide developed by FHWA recommends the use of shared lanes. A wide shoulder may be provided for roads with higher traffic volumes to provide additional space on the roadway for bicyclists and vehicles to coexist.

Additional elements that may be used to designate a rural bike route include signage and pavement markings. Shared lane markings may be placed on the pavement to establish the road as one where bicycles are welcome, but should not be used on roadways with a speed limit greater than 40 MPH. Signage is commonly used where bicycles may be present to mark the corridor as a bicycle route. MUTCD sign R9-20, Bicycles Allowed Use of Full Lane may be used where the travel lane is too narrow for bicyclists and vehicles to occupy the lane at the same time. This signage may be used in addition to, or instead of, shared-lane markings on the roadway. Additional bicycle wayfinding signage may be installed to provide navigation for those bicycling the corridor, providing information about distances and directions to nearby destinations.



Signage may be employed to mark low-traffic roads as bike routes, accompanied by pavement markings and wide shoulders where warranted. Photo credit: Brandon Whyte (Marion, IA)



This chart from the FHWA's Bikeway Selection Guide (2019) recommends shared lanes for roads with low traffic volumes, and increasing shoulder widths for roads with higher traffic volumes.

STREETSCAPE

In many cases, the design of existing roadway corridors does not adequately support the needs of non-motorized travelers, and may lead to safety concerns such as speeding or unsafe pedestrian crossings. The goal of streetscape projects is often to create a safer, more attractive public realm for corridors with multiple modes of travel.

Streetscape projects may contain many different elements depending on the problems identified on the corridor, the amount of ROW available, traffic volumes, and modes of travel present. Some common elements of streetscape projects are providing more sidewalk and amenity space for pedestrians, providing more closely-spaced crosswalks or reducing the crossing distance of existing crosswalks, installing bike lanes or street parking by repurposing excess pavement width, and adding landscaping elements such as street trees or planted medians.

Below are examples of streetscape improvements recently installed on Hillsborough St in Raleigh, NC. While the context is within a community much larger and more urbanized than Mars Hill, this example is located on the edge of a university campus and sees high pedestrian activity.



Hillsborough St in Raleigh, NC, includes streetscape elements along a high activity segment at the edge of the North Carolina State University campus.

INTERSECTION + CROSSING RECOMMENDATIONS

Conflicts between different types of roadway users most often arise at intersections. Historically, roadway design choices have prioritized the comfort and utility of automobiles over other roadway users, leading to heightened exposure and risk for bicyclists and pedestrians and diminishing the safety and comfort of the overall bicycle and pedestrian network. Survey respondents identified a lack of safe crossings or treatments at intersections as among the greatest barriers to walking and biking in Mars Hill, highlighting a need for targeted intersection and crossing improvements at existing locations in addition to incorporating safe crossings into new bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS

In some locations, intersection and crossing improvements beyond crosswalks are needed to support safe walking. These improvements may be made as part of a crossing project, or on their own as individual elements. Several common intersection improvements are listed below.

Pedestrian Signal Heads

Pedestrian signal heads are located at either end of a crossing and, if located at a signalized intersection, are linked to the traffic control phasing. Pedestrian signal heads indicate when pedestrians may cross, when the crossing phase is ending, and when pedestrians may not cross. Often pedestrian signals are actuated by a push button on the post supporting the signal head, but in some urban areas no button is provided and a pedestrian crossing phase is automatically provided.



A push button is often provided to request a pedestrian crossing phase at an intersection. Credit: City of Raleigh

ADA Accessible Curb Ramps

Accessibility is a key factor in a safe and functional transportation network. Facilities in the public ROW are required to meet accessibility standards established by the ADA. For curb ramps, this includes a landing at the top of the ramp to facilitate wheelchair movement and tactile strips at the bottom to alert pedestrians with vision challenges.

Some pedestrian facilities in Mars Hill do not meet current accessibility standards, including sidewalks and curb ramps in downtown Mars Hill.



A curb ramp should provide tactile warning strips and a slope that supports users with vision and mobility impairments.

CROSSWALK

A crosswalk is a designated place for pedestrians and trail users to cross a road at an intersection or midblock crossing. At a minimum, standard transverse crosswalk markings are recommended to alert motorists of pedestrian crossing points across roadways. Inlay or thermoplastic tape is also recommended for highly reflective crosswalk markings. Crosswalks may be accompanied by MUTCD pedestrian warning and advance yield signs W11-2, W16-7P, and R1-6 to alert motorists of a crosswalk.

Standard Crosswalk Marking

Standard crosswalk markings typically consist of two parallel striped lines to indicate the path of the crosswalk, but without perpendicular bars characteristic of continental or ladder markings.

High Visibility Crosswalk Marking

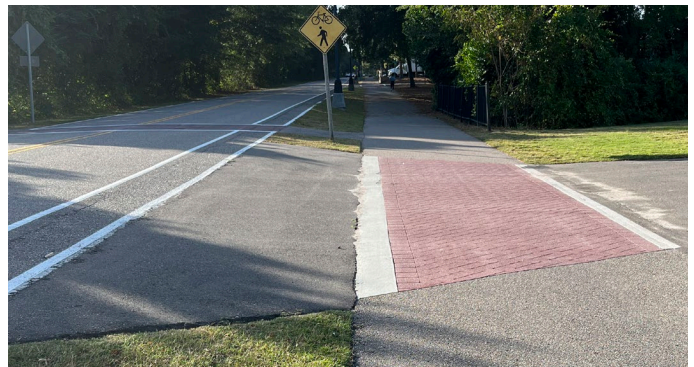
High visibility crosswalk markings are often used at intersections with a higher pedestrian volume or a need to increase pedestrian visibility and include markings such as continental or ladder striping.



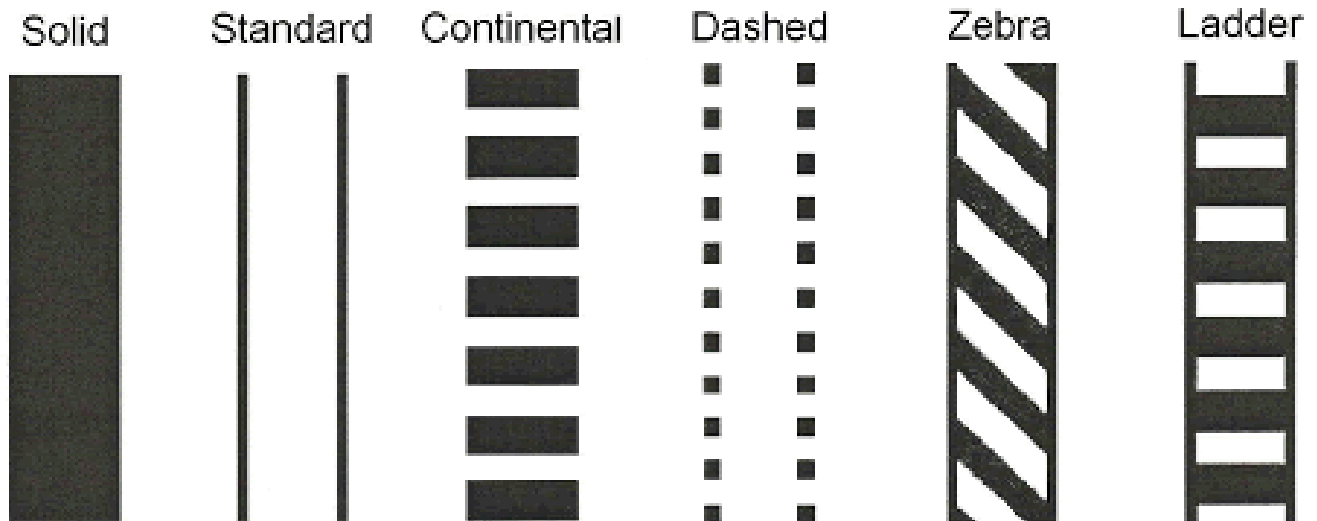
High visibility crosswalk marking - Spring Dr (Garner, NC)

Decorative Crosswalk Marking

As an alternative to traditional high-visibility markings, custom decorative markings may be employed in locations where pedestrian traffic is high, such as downtown and campus locations, or where branding is desired to support a placemaking vision. Decorative crosswalks may be created using stamped pavement, pavers, paint, or other materials.



Decorative stamped pavement crosswalk marking - Gary Shell Cross City Trail (Wilmington, NC)



A variety of crosswalk marking standards are available and being used in communities nationwide. Credit: FHWA

MIDBLOCK CROSSING

A midblock crosswalk is a designated place for pedestrians and greenway users to cross a road between intersections. Mid-block crosswalks are often placed in locations that allow people to cross at locations such as schools, universities, parks, and business districts, or at uncontrolled intersections. At these locations, high-visibility crosswalk markings are recommended. Inlay or thermoplastic tape is also recommended for highly reflective crosswalk markings. High-visibility mid-block crosswalks should be accompanied by MUTCD pedestrian warning and advance yield signs W11-2, W16-7P, and R1-6 to alert motorists of a crossing.

Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB)

A Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon (RRFB) is a pedestrian-activated signal used in combination with pedestrian or trail crossing warning signage to improve safety at uncontrolled, marked crosswalks. The device includes two rectangular-shaped yellow indicators, each with an light-emitting diode (LED) array-based light source, that flash with high frequency when activated. RRFBs should be accompanied by MUTCD pedestrian warning and advance yield signs W11-2 and W16-7P to alert motorists of a crosswalk.

RRFBs are placed on both ends of a crosswalk. If the crosswalk contains a pedestrian refuge island or other type of median, an RRFB should be placed to the right of the crosswalk and on the median (instead of the left side of the crosswalk). RRFBs typically draw power from standalone solar panel units but may also be wired to a traditional power source.



Midblock crossings, such as this on Laura Duncan Rd in Cary, NC, should feature high visibility crosswalk markings in addition to signage. A pedestrian refuge island may be provided if the roadway is wide.



At either end of the midblock crossing, a signal should be installed that allows pedestrians to activate the flashing beacon.

BICYCLE STORAGE + MAINTENANCE FACILITIES

While planning for and implementing bicycle facilities like greenways and bike lanes can greatly support increased bicycling in a community, the infrastructure environment is not complete without places to securely store bicycles at the user's destination. Bicycle racks should be provided regularly throughout the community at locations including parks, schools, university campuses, downtown areas, and shopping centers. A lack of convenient bike parking in Mars Hill was noted in the community survey.

A wide variety of bicycle parking solutions are available, including short-term and long-term parking. Most publicly-available bicycle parking is considered short-term, provided through bike racks. Many styles of bike racks may be purchased and installed, but a good bike rack should provide two points of contact with each bike, ideally with the frame and a wheel, to allow a U-style lock to secure the bicycle. Bike racks typically require little space and can be located within the public ROW, such as on a wide sidewalk or plaza. While security is an important factor to bike rack siting, the location of a bike rack should be visible to potential users and not difficult to find. Bike racks should not be installed in a location that impedes the pedestrian walkway or places the bicycle less than three feet from a street.

Bike racks can even be used to support placemaking efforts or as public art through the use of custom designs or branding.

Another element of bicycle support infrastructure is bicycle tool stations. These facilities require little space and contain a wide variety of tools and features, including an air pump and wrenches, needed to perform maintenance to a bicycle or fill its tires. Tool stations are commonly located at greenway trailheads or in locations where heavy bicycle use is expected.



Bike racks should be provided near destinations, such as this at the MHU Book Store, to support bicycling and provide safe and convenient bike storage.



Bicycle tool stations enable trail users to perform quick maintenance to their bikes, such as pumping tires.



A good bike rack provides two points of contact between the rack and the bicycle, as seen at this bike rack in Charlotte, NC.

COMPREHENSIVE BICYCLE + PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

The table on the following pages provides a comprehensive list of recommended bicycle and pedestrian projects in Mars Hill, as well as additional information detailing accompanying intersection and crossing treatments or considerations for the feasibility of projects. Numbers assigned to each project correspond to the map on the facing page.

Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure projects recommended for Mars Hill include:

- ▶ Intersection/Crossing Improvements
- ▶ Sidewalk
- ▶ Multiuse Path (Sidepath or Greenway)
- ▶ Streetscape
- ▶ Natural Surface Trail
- ▶ Rural Bike Route

Together, these projects will create a comprehensive active transportation and recreation network for Mars Hill that connects all areas of the community, improves bicyclist and pedestrian safety, incorporates the needs and desires of the community, and establishes a foundation for regional connectivity.

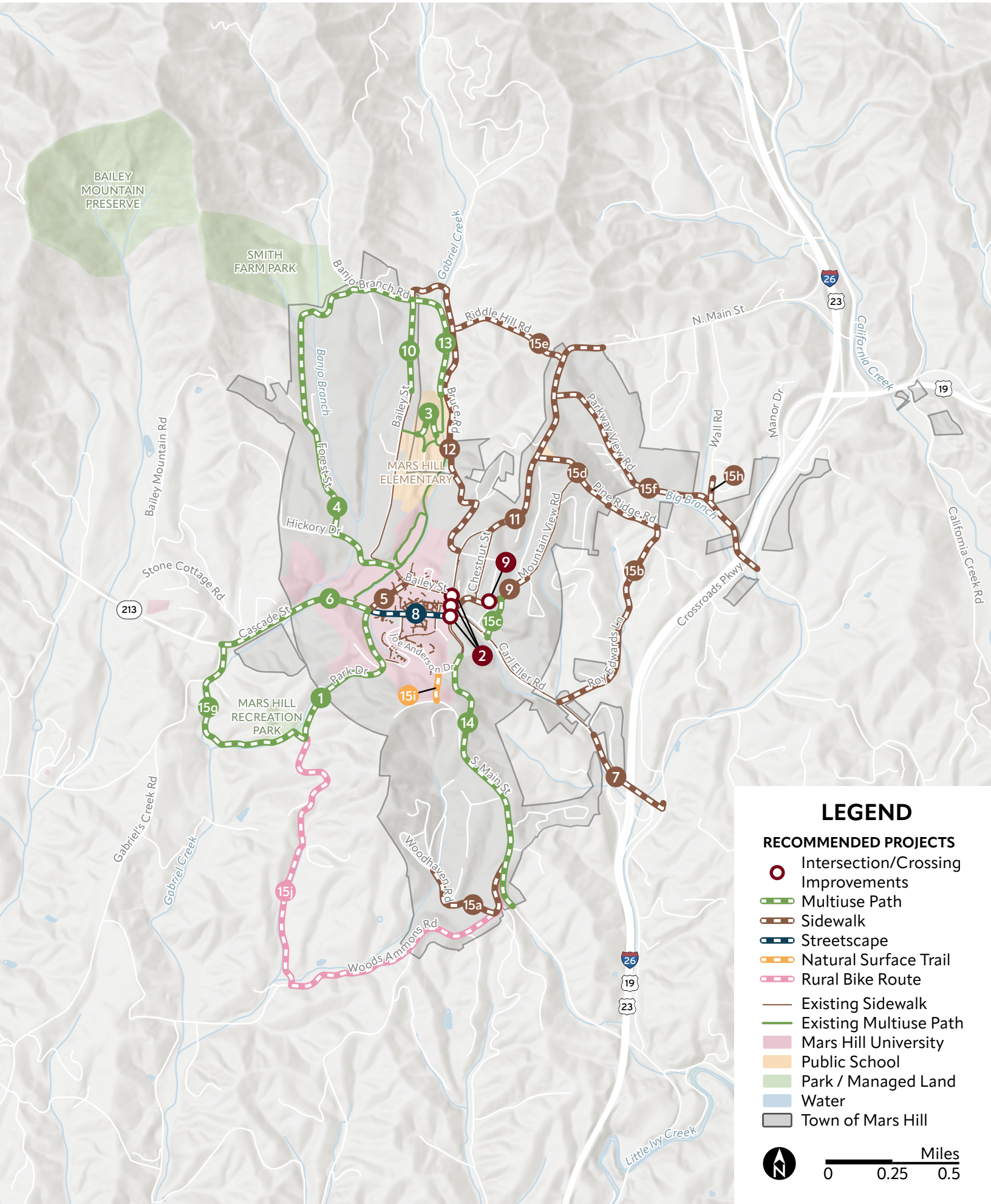


Project recommendations were shaped by the feedback of community members.

TOWN OF MARS HILL

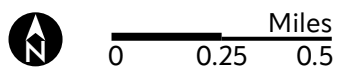
Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan

Bicycle and Pedestrian Network Recommendations



LEGEND

- RECOMMENDED PROJECTS**
- Intersection/Crossing Improvements
 - Multiuse Path
 - Sidewalk
 - Streetscape
 - Natural Surface Trail
 - Rural Bike Route
 - Existing Sidewalk
 - Existing Multiuse Path
 - Mars Hill University
 - Public School
 - Park / Managed Land
 - Water
 - Town of Mars Hill



MAP ID	CORRIDOR/LOCATION	FROM	TO
1	Park Dr	Cascade St	Mars Hill Recreation Park
2	Bailey St/N. Main St intersection	-	-
2	College St/Mountain View Rd/N. Main St intersection	-	-
2	Cascade St/Main St intersection	-	-
3	Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway	Schoolhouse Ln	Bailey St
4	Banjo Branch/Forest St	Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway	Bailey Mountain Park and Preserve
5	Athletic St	Cascade St	Bailey St
6	Cascade St/NC-213	Athletic St	Stone Cottage Rd/Beth-Hanan/Gabriel's Creek Rd
7	Carl Eller Rd/NC-213	Existing sidewalk	Park and Ride lot
8	Cascade St/NC-213	Athletic St	Main St
9	Mountain View Rd	N. Main St	Cemetery Dr
10	Bailey St	Existing sidewalk	Bailey Mountain Park and Preserve
11	N. Main St	Existing sidewalk	Municipal boundary

PROJECT RECOMMENDATION	NOTES
Multiuse Path	Create a 10 ft sidepath connection along the west side of Park Dr between Cascade St/NC-213 and the Mars Hill Recreation Park. Sections constrained by topography or other design factors may be reduced width.
Intersection Improvements	Construct curb extension along N. Main St to reduce pedestrian crossing distances, improve sight distance, and reduce the turning radius for vehicles, providing traffic calming. Create curb ramps on the east side of N. Main St and add new crosswalk striping.
Intersection Improvements	Add a fourth striped crosswalk and add pedestrian signals head on all four approaches. Topographic and built environment constraints may limit design options with an inability to fully meet Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG) / ADA standards for curb ramp design. Accessibility must be provided to the maximum extent feasible and the technical infeasibility decision documented by state and local government agencies.
Intersection Improvements	Add pedestrian signal heads on all four approaches.
Multiuse Path	Realign the greenway connector in open space within school property to improve user safety and provide a more gradual grade to accommodate riders of all ages and abilities. The existing connector from the Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway to Bailey St uses portions of School House Ln which has very steep grades, and only provides about 5 ft of space directly adjacent to cars accessing the school. This connector is being improved by NCDOT as part of a resurfacing project on School House Ln.
Multiuse Path	Provide a greenway connection to Bailey Mountain Park and Preserve from MHU and downtown Mars Hill. A feasibility study for the extension of Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway evaluates alignment alternatives for this corridor, including a sidepath along Forest St or a greenway along Banjo Branch.
Sidewalk	Add sidewalk on one side of the street from Cascade St/NC-213 to Bailey St, potentially reallocate space from on-street parking or removing retaining wall for sidewalk.
Multiuse Path	Add sidepath on one side of the street.
Sidewalk	Add a new at-grade pedestrian connection between the Park and Ride Lot and existing sidewalk on NC-213/Carl Eller Road. Project includes reallocating space on the I-26 bridge, grading work on the west side of the bridge, and constructing approximately 1,200 feet of new sidewalk.
Streetscape/Traffic Calming	Reduce the travel lane widths from 18 ft to 12 ft, adding 6 ft of space to widen sidewalks, plant street trees, or implement other streetscape enhancements. Project limits are from S. Main St to Athletic St.
Sidewalk	Add sidewalk on the north side of the road from Chestnut St to Anderson St and on the south side from Anderson St to Cemetery Dr, with intersection improvements to reduce pedestrian crossing distances at Anderson St.
Sidepath	Extend sidepath on Bailey St north to Banjo Branch Rd and continue sidepath west along Banjo Branch Rd and Forest St to Bailey Mountain Park and Preserve. A feasibility study for an extension of the Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway includes this corridor as a potential alignment for a greenway extension, but the recommended route may shift away from the roadway.
Sidewalk	Extend sidewalk on N. Main St from Chestnut St to municipal boundary.

MAP ID	CORRIDOR/LOCATION	FROM	TO
12	Bruce Rd	N. Main St	Bailey St
13	Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway Extension	Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway	Bailey St/Banjo Branch Rd
14	S. Main St	Existing sidewalk	Municipal boundary
15a	Woodhaven Rd/Woods Ammons Rd	Quail Ridge Rd	S. Main St
15b	Roy Edwards Rd	Carl Eller Rd/NC-213	Pine Ridge Rd
15c	Anderson St	Mountain View Rd	Carl Eller Rd/NC-213
15d	Pine Ridge Rd	N. Main St	Roy Edwards Rd
15e	Riddle Hill Rd	Bruce Rd	N. Main St
15f	Parkway View Rd	N. Main St	Ridgeview Ln
15g	Gabriel Creek connection	Cascade St	Park Dr
15h	Wall Rd	Parkway View Rd	Ivey Ridge Apartments Dr
15i	Duck Dr connection	Joe Anderson Rd	Duck Dr
15j	Park Dr/Woods Ammons Rd	Mars Hill Recreation Park	S. Main St

PROJECT RECOMMENDATION	NOTES
Sidewalk	Project HD134511 in the 2045 FBRMPO MTP recommended sidewalk and a bicycle lane on Bruce Rd from N. Main St to Bailey St. A feasibility study for the Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway includes this corridor as a potential multiuse path facility to provide accommodations for both bicyclists and pedestrians as envisioned in the MTP.
Multiuse Path	Extend Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway north along Gabriel Creek or Bruce Rd to Bailey St/Banjo Branch Rd. A feasibility study for an extension of the Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway includes this corridor.
Multiuse Path	Build sidepath on S. Main St from existing sidewalk to municipal boundary.
Sidewalk	Construct sidewalk on north side of the roadway.
Sidewalk	Construct sidewalk on west side of the roadway.
Multiuse Path	Construct greenway parallel to Anderson St along stream corridor.
Sidewalk	Construct sidewalk on south side of the roadway.
Sidewalk	Construct sidewalk on south side of the roadway.
Sidewalk	Construct sidewalk on south side of the roadway.
Multiuse Path	Due to constraints with topography, stream conditions, and private property, a more feasible route may be identified following additional analysis in the future.
Sidewalk	Construct sidewalk on the east side of the roadway to connect to existing sidewalk at Ivey Ridge Apartments.
Natural Surface Trail	Improves informal trails in this area, connecting Duck Dr to MHU campus.
Rural Bike Route	Install signage designating this corridor as a rural bicycle route.

PRIORITIZATION

The project team reviewed each proposed project and scored them according to a set of eight criteria. Evaluation criteria were identified based on three prioritization themes: Connectivity + Community Access, Safety, and Project Opportunities.

Prioritization themes and criteria were identified based upon survey results as well as feedback and priorities from Town staff and the Steering Committee. Descriptions, ranking categories, and associated measurements and point scales are detailed in the following table. The criteria were assigned varying point scales to reflect the relative importance placed upon each by the community during engagement activities, and yield a maximum of 100 points for projects that score high on each criterion.

High-scoring projects reflect those which effectively meet the connectivity and safety criteria identified for the Mars Hill bicycle and pedestrian network, as well as received support from the Steering Committee, community stakeholders, and the public.

#	CRITERION	DESCRIPTION
1a	Connects to Activity Center	Project provides a bicycle or pedestrian facility which creates or improves a connection to downtown Mars Hill or MHU
1b	Connects to a Public Recreation Resource	Project provides a connection to a park or other public recreation resource
1c	Closes a Gap in the Current Bicycle and Pedestrian Network	Project provides high utility by closing a gap or extending the existing bicycle and pedestrian network
2a	Improves Area with Crash History	Project improves safety in an area with a documented crash history
2b	Reduces Bicycle and Pedestrian Exposure	Project provides an alternative to sharing roadway space with motor vehicles
3a	Addresses Public Input	Project addresses community desires for bicycle and pedestrian improvements
3b	Advances a Regional Connection	Project advances a regionally adopted bicycle or pedestrian connection
3c	Leverages Community Investments	Previous community investments have been made to advance project

- ▶ Connectivity + Community Access
 - ▷ Connects to Activity Center
 - ▷ Connects to a Public Recreation Resource
 - ▷ Closes a Gap in the Current Bicycle and Pedestrian Network
- ▶ Safety
 - ▷ Improves Area with Crash History
 - ▷ Reduces Bicycle and Pedestrian Exposure
- ▶ Project Opportunities
 - ▷ Addresses Public Input
 - ▷ Advances a Regional Connection
 - ▷ Leverages Community Investments

RANK	MEASUREMENT	POINTS	FINAL SCORE
High	Direct connection	20	
Medium	Connection via existing network	10	20 (maximum)
Low	No connection	0	
High	Direct connection	20	
Medium	Connection via existing network	10	20 (maximum)
Low	No connection	0	
High	Closes a gap in the existing network (both sides connect to existing network)	20	
Medium	Extends the existing network (one side connects to existing network)	10	20 (maximum)
Low	No existing network connection	0	
High	Bicycle or pedestrian crash history present	10	
Medium	Any crash history present	5	10 (maximum)
Low	No documented crash history	0	
High	AADT over 8,000	5	
Medium	AADT between 3,000 and 8,000	2.5	5 (maximum)
Low	AADT under 8,000	0	
High	High public and steering committee interest	10	
Medium	Medium public and steering committee interest	5	10 (maximum)
Low	Low public and steering committee interest	0	
High	Overlaps with regional plan	10	
Low	No overlap with regional plan	0	10 (maximum)
High	Community investments made	5	
Low	No community investments made	0	5 (maximum)

PROJECT PRIORITIZATION SCORES

Each recommended project was scored using the criteria on the previous page and assigned a total project score between 0 and 100. To put the recommendations into context for prioritization, they are divided into three priority tiers based on their score and relative priority, and an expected timeline for implementation.

TIER 1 PROJECTS (SHORT- TO MEDIUM-TERM)

RANK	MAP ID	CORRIDOR/LOCATION	FROM	TO	PROJECT TYPE	SCORE
1	1	Park Dr	Cascade St	Mars Hill Recreation Park	Multiuse Path	80
2	3	Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway	Schoolhouse Ln	Bailey St	Multiuse Path	75
3	4	Banjo Branch/Forest St	Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway	Bailey Mountain Park and Preserve	Multiuse Path	75
4	6	Cascade St/NC-213	Athletic St	Stone Cottage Rd/ Beth-Hanan/ Gabriel's Creek Rd	Multiuse Path	75
5	2	N. Main St Intersection Improvements	Cascade St/ NC-213	Bailey St	Intersection Improvements	72.5
6	8	Cascade St	Athletic St	Main St	Streetscape/Traffic Calming	70
7	9	Mountain View Rd	N. Main St	Cemetery Dr	Sidewalk and Intersection Improvements	70
8	10	Bailey St	Existing sidewalk	Bailey Mountain Park and Preserve	Sidewalk	70
9	5	Athletic St	Cascade St	Bailey St	Sidewalk	65

TIER 2 PROJECTS (MEDIUM- TO LONG-TERM)

RANK	MAP ID	CORRIDOR/LOCATION	FROM	TO	PROJECT TYPE	SCORE
10	12	Bruce Rd	N. Main St	Bailey St	Sidewalk	60
11	14	S. Main St	Existing sidewalk	Municipal boundary	Multiuse Path	60
12	7	Carl Eller Rd/NC-213	Existing sidewalk	Park and Ride lot	Sidewalk	55
13	13	Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway	Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway	Bailey St/Banjo Branch Rd	Multiuse Path	55

TIER 3 PROJECTS (LONG-TERM)

RANK	MAP ID	CORRIDOR/LOCATION	FROM	TO	PROJECT TYPE	SCORE
14	11	N. Main St	Chestnut St	Municipal boundary	Sidewalk	47.5
15	15c	Anderson St	Mountain View Rd	Carl Eller Rd/ NC-213	Multiuse Path	40
16	15b	Roy Edwards Rd	Carl Eller Rd/ NC-213	Pine Ridge Rd	Sidewalk	35
17	15i	Duck Dr Connection	Duck Dr	Joe Anderson Rd	Natural Surface Trail	35
18	15j	Park Dr/Woods Ammons Rd	Mars Hill Recreation Park	S. Main St	Rural Bike Route	35
19	15g	Gabriel Creek Connection	Cascade St/ NC-213	Park Dr	Multiuse Path	25
20	15d	Pine Ridge Rd	N. Main St	Roy Edwards Rd	Sidewalk	15
21	15a	Woodhaven Rd/Woods Ammons Rd	Existing sidewalk	Municipal boundary	Sidewalk	5
22	15e	Riddle Hill Rd	N. Main St	Bruce St	Sidewalk	5
23	15f	Parkway View Rd	N. Main St	Ridgeview Ln	Sidewalk	5
24	15h	Wall Rd	Parkway View Rd	Ivey Ridge Apartments Dr	Sidewalk	5

PRIORITY PROJECTS

The nine highest-scoring projects were selected by Town staff for detailed study within this plan. The project team developed cut sheets reviewing existing conditions, the proposed facility, and opportunities and constraints that may be associated with future implementation for each priority project. A project map, planning level cost estimate, and rendering is provided with each project. The projects selected for cut sheets represent each of the nine Tier 1 (short- to medium-term implementation) projects identified in the prioritization scoring process.

- ▶ **Priority Project 1:** Park Dr Sidepath
- ▶ **Priority Project 2:** Otis Duck Greenway Realignment
- ▶ **Priority Project 3:** Banjo Branch Rd/Forest St Greenway
- ▶ **Priority Project 4:** Cascade St/NC-213 Sidepath
- ▶ **Priority Project 5:** N. Main St Intersection Improvements
- ▶ **Priority Project 6:** Cascade St/NC-213 Streetscape
- ▶ **Priority Project 7:** Mountain View Rd Sidewalk and Intersection Improvements
- ▶ **Priority Project 8:** Bailey St Sidepath
- ▶ **Priority Project 9:** Athletic St Sidewalk

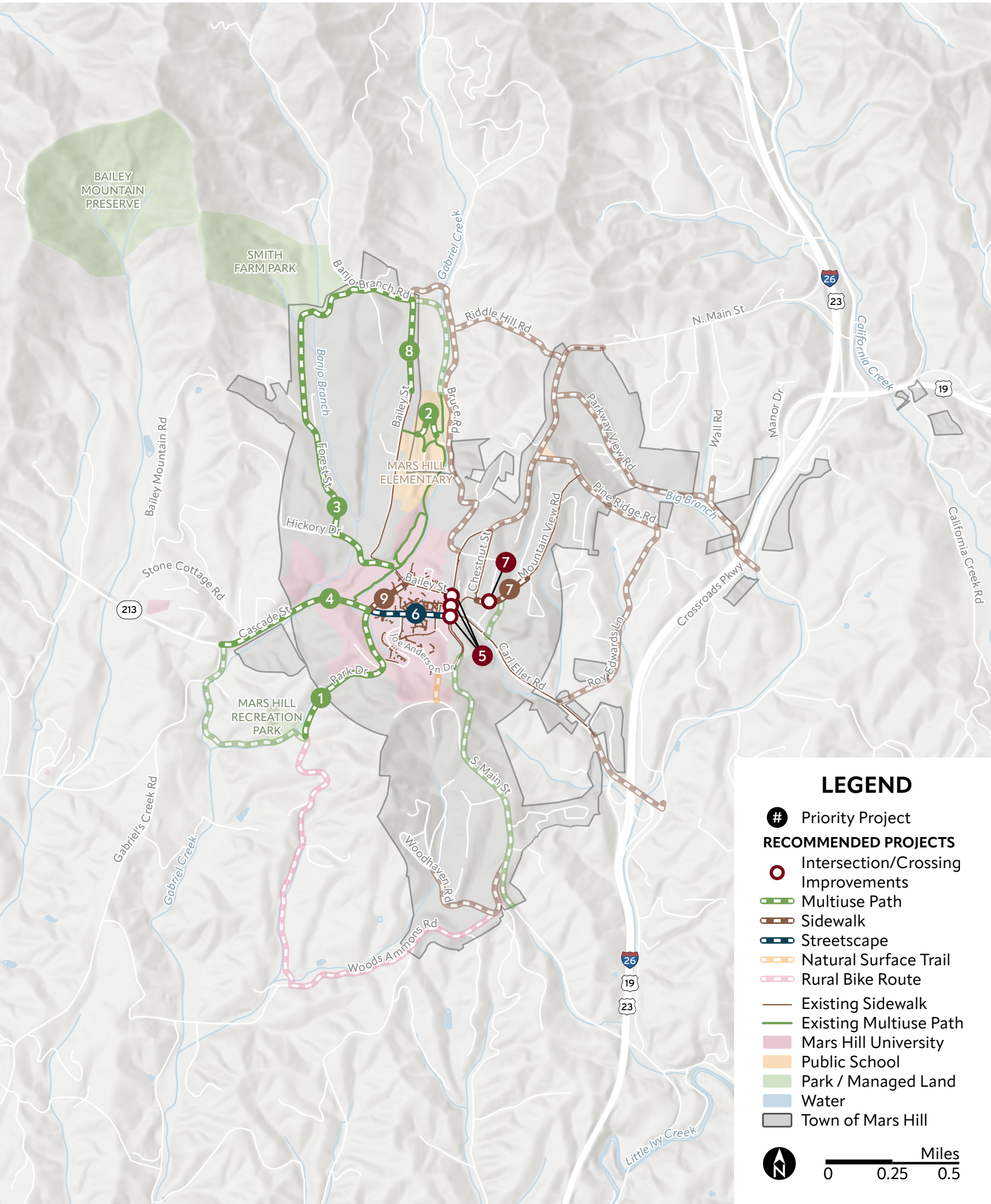
CUT SHEET CONSIDERATIONS:

DESIGN + COST ESTIMATES

- ▶ Accessible curb ramps are required by the ADA at all crosswalks.
- ▶ Each rendering of the proposed facility is for illustrative and planning purposes only and does not reflect a final design based on an engineering analysis.
- ▶ Planning level cost estimates were developed using the NCDOT Bicycle & Pedestrian Cost Estimation Tool, which determines facility cost estimates based on the following factors: project type, project length, facility width, construction market region, and existing roadway characteristics. The estimates are provided in 2023 dollars.

TYPICAL SECTIONS

Due to space constraints, some widths within the typical sections have been omitted. For additional information, please refer to the [Design Guidance](#) section for specific widths and details pertaining to each typical section.



LEGEND

- # Priority Project
- RECOMMENDED PROJECTS**
- Intersection/Crossing Improvements
- ▬ Multiuse Path
- ▬ Sidewalk
- ▬ Streetscape
- ▬ Natural Surface Trail
- ▬ Rural Bike Route
- ▬ Existing Sidewalk
- ▬ Existing Multiuse Path
- Mars Hill University
- Public School
- Park / Managed Land
- Water
- Town of Mars Hill



Miles
0 0.25 0.5

PRIORITY PROJECT #1: PARK DR SIDEPATH

This project will create a 10 foot wide sidepath along the west side of Park Dr between Cascade St/NC-213 and the Mars Hill Recreation Park. The path will connect to existing sidewalk at the campus of MHU, proposed sidepath on Cascade St, and a proposed multiuse path along Gabriel Creek. The width of the path may be reduced in sections constrained by topography, ROW, or other design factors.

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

Location:

West side of Park Dr between Cascade St/NC-213 and Mars Hill Recreation Park

Total Length:

3,500 ft, 0.66 miles

Facility Type:

Sidepath (typical width 10 ft, may be reduced as needed)

Intersection Treatments:

New crosswalk markings at Thomason Dr and Physical Plant Rd

Implementation Partners:

NCDOT (maintains roadway), Town of Mars Hill, MHU

Planning Level Cost Estimate:

\$1,681,000

PRIORITIZATION FACTORS

Connects to Activity Center: 20/20

Connects to a Public Recreation Resource: 20/20

Closes a Gap in the Current Bicycle and Pedestrian Network: 10/20

Improves Area with Crash History: 10/10

Reduces Bicycle and Pedestrian Exposure: 0/5

Addresses Public Input: 10/10

Advances a Regional Connection: 10/10

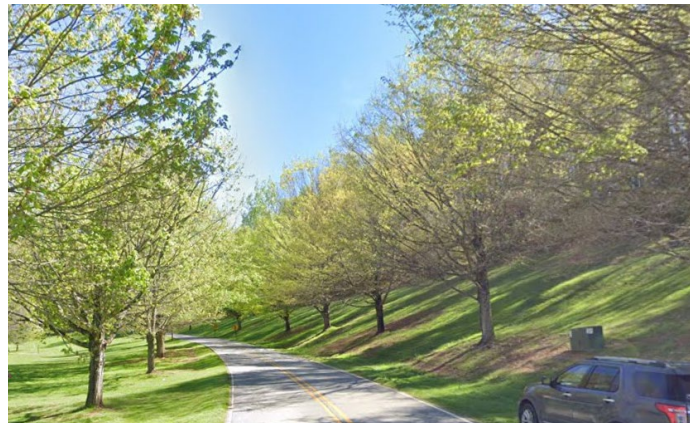
Leverages Community Investments: 0/5

Total: 80/100

EXISTING CONDITIONS

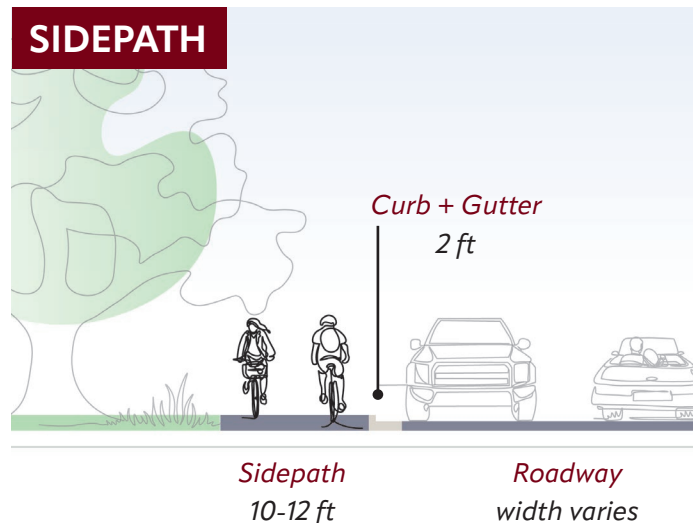


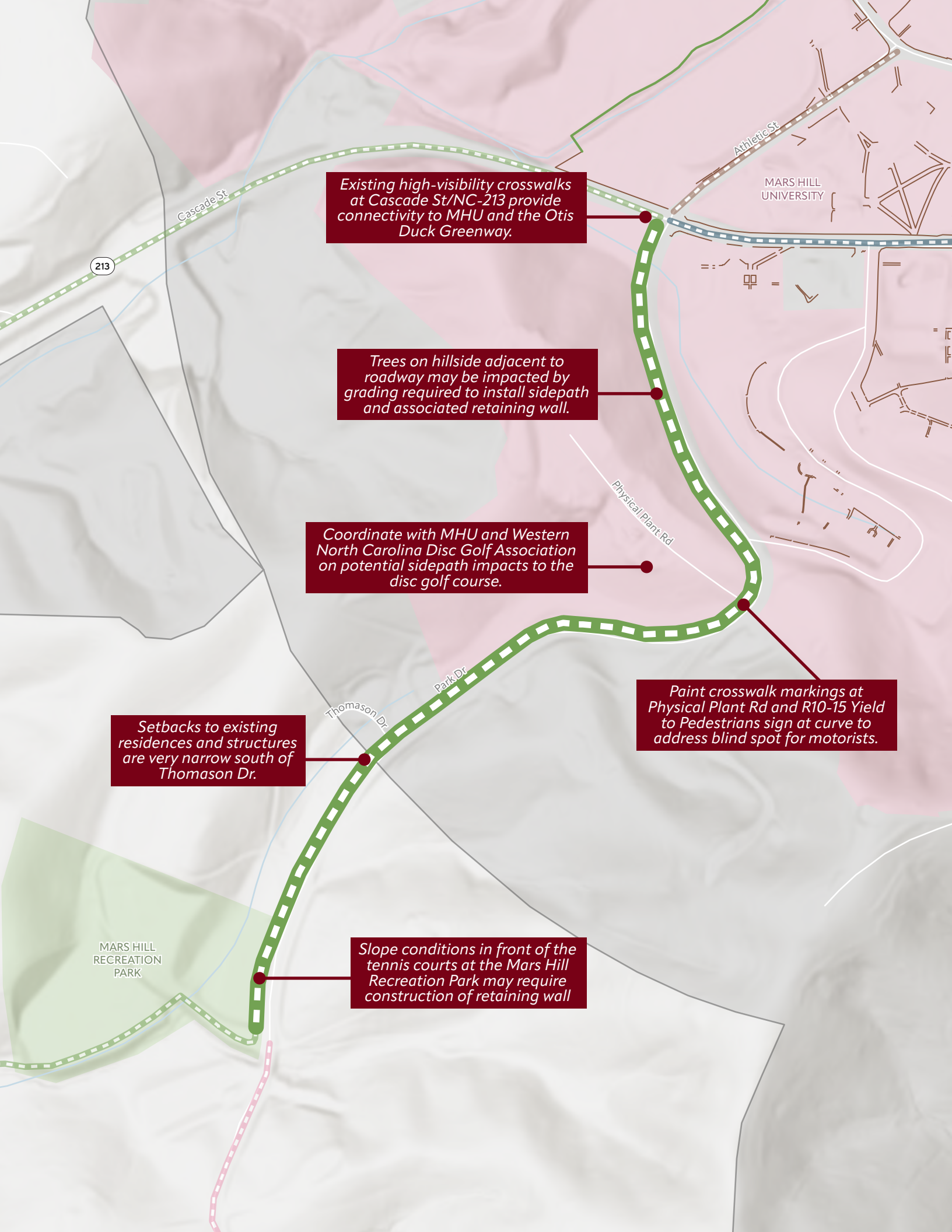
Steep slopes on the shoulder of Park Dr at Mars Hill Recreation Park



At the MHU campus, the road is lined with trees and has slopes that may pose a challenge.

TYPICAL CROSS SECTION





Existing high-visibility crosswalks at Cascade St/NC-213 provide connectivity to MHU and the Otis Duck Greenway.

Trees on hillside adjacent to roadway may be impacted by grading required to install sidepath and associated retaining wall.

Coordinate with MHU and Western North Carolina Disc Golf Association on potential sidepath impacts to the disc golf course.

Setbacks to existing residences and structures are very narrow south of Thomason Dr.

Paint crosswalk markings at Physical Plant Rd and R10-15 Yield to Pedestrians sign at curve to address blind spot for motorists.

Slope conditions in front of the tennis courts at the Mars Hill Recreation Park may require construction of retaining wall

PRIORITY PROJECT #2: OTIS DUCK GREENWAY REALIGNMENT

This project will realign the greenway connector using school property to improve user safety and provide a more gradual grade to accommodate riders of all ages and abilities. The existing connector from the Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway to Bailey St was realigned in 2024 through a NCDOT resurfacing project of School House Ln away from the roadway, but the new trail has a very steep grade.

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

Location:

Between School House Ln and Bailey St

Total Length:

Approximately 1,570 ft / 0.3 miles (length subject to change during design)

Facility Type:

Greenway

Intersection Treatments:

None

Implementation Partners:

Town of Mars Hill, NCDOT, Madison County Schools

Planning Level Cost Estimate:

\$766,000

PRIORITIZATION FACTORS

Connects to Activity Center: 10/20

Connects to a Public Recreation Resource: 20/20

Closes a Gap in the Current Bicycle and Pedestrian Network: 20/20

Improves Area with Crash History: 0/10

Reduces Bicycle and Pedestrian Exposure: 0/5

Addresses Public Input: 10/10

Advances a Regional Connection: 10/10

Leverages Community Investments: 5/5

Total: 75/100

EXISTING CONDITIONS



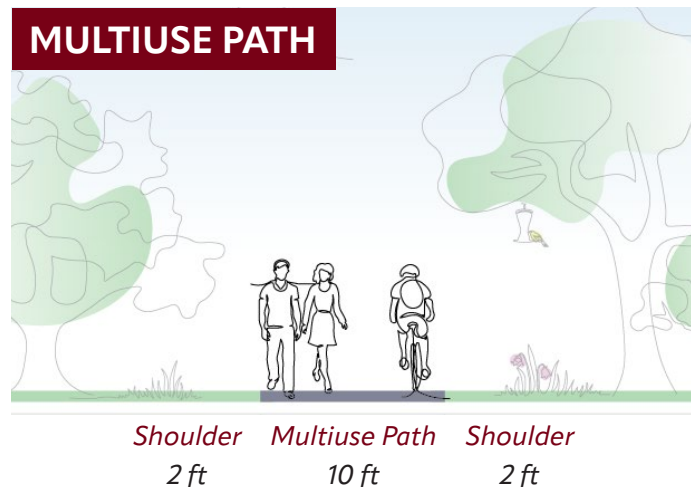
Prior to being realigned as part of an NCDOT resurfacing project in 2024, the greenway connector was on the shoulder of School House Ln with a sharp curve. While no longer on the roadway, the existing connector travels straight uphill at a steep grade.

PROPOSED CONDITIONS



A realignment of the greenway connection would create a more gradual slope on undeveloped school property.

TYPICAL CROSS SECTION



Bailey St

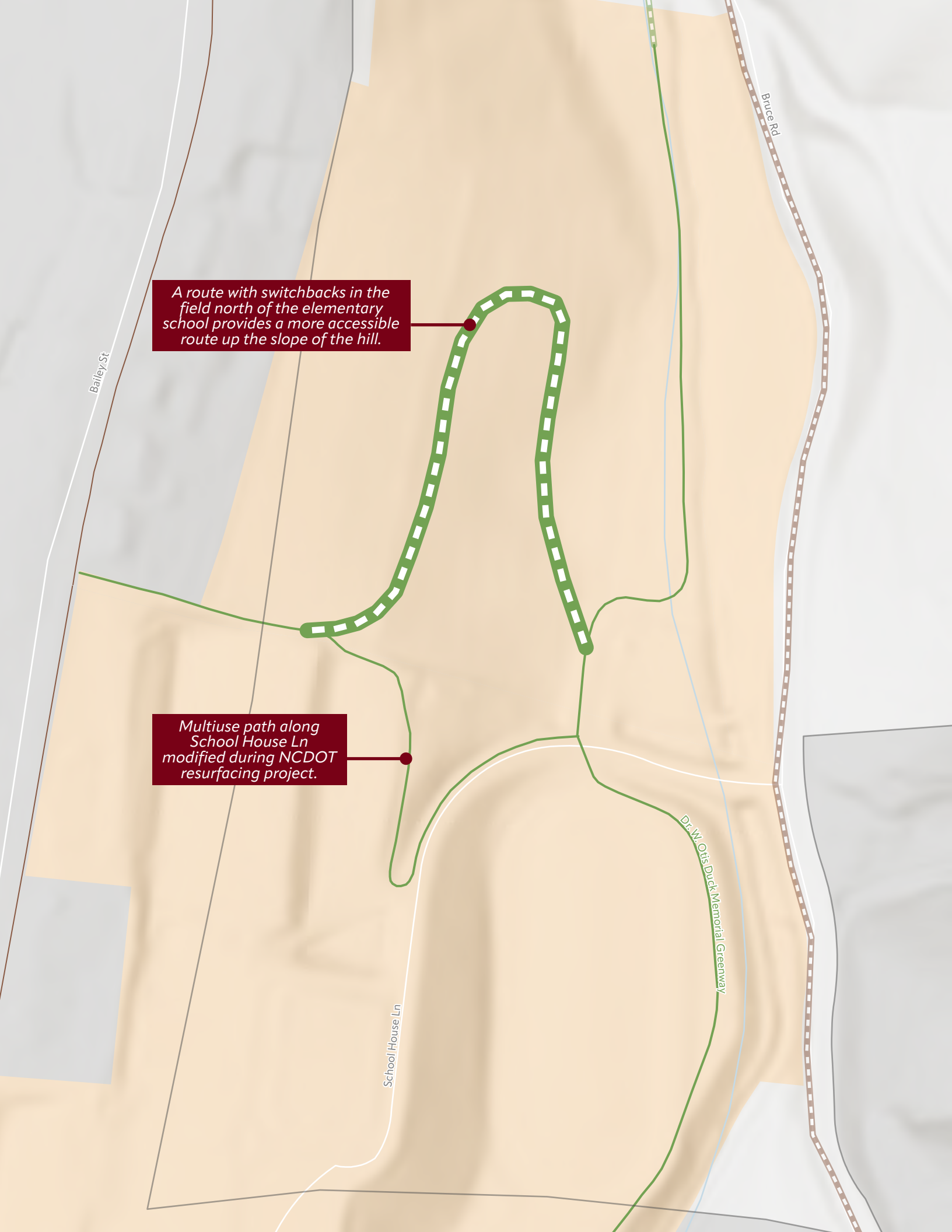
Bruce Rd

A route with switchbacks in the field north of the elementary school provides a more accessible route up the slope of the hill.

Multiuse path along School House Ln modified during NCDOT resurfacing project.

School House Ln

Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway



PRIORITY PROJECT #3: BANJO BRANCH/FOREST ST GREENWAY

This project will provide a greenway connection to Bailey Mountain Park and Preserve from MHU and downtown Mars Hill along Hickory Dr, Forest St, and Banjo Branch. A feasibility study concurrent to this plan evaluates alignment alternatives for this corridor, including a sidepath along Forest St or a greenway along Banjo Branch.

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

Location:

Hickory Dr, Forest St, and Banjo Branch between the existing Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway and Bailey Mountain Park and Preserve

Total Length:

Approximately 7,000 ft / 1.33 miles (length subject to change during design)

Facility Type:

Multiuse path (sidepath or greenway)

Intersection Treatments:

None

Implementation Partners:

Town of Mars Hill (maintains roadways), NCDOT

Planning Level Cost Estimate:

There are multiple alternatives for streetside and off-street trail alignments to achieve this connection. Cost estimates for the corridor between Hickory Dr and Bailey Mountain Park and Preserve range from \$3,220,000 to \$5,029,000, while the corridor along Hickory Dr is estimated at \$896,000. Additional detail is included in the feasibility study.

PRIORITIZATION FACTORS

Connects to Activity Center: 10/20

Connects to a Public Recreation Resource: 20/20

Closes a Gap in the Current Bicycle and Pedestrian Network: 20/20

Improves Area with Crash History: 0/10

Reduces Bicycle and Pedestrian Exposure: 0/5

Addresses Public Input: 10/10

Advances a Regional Connection: 10/10

Leverages Community Investments: 5/5

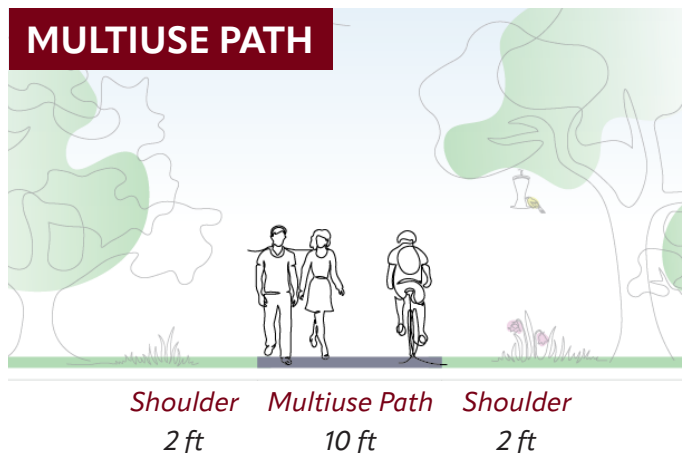
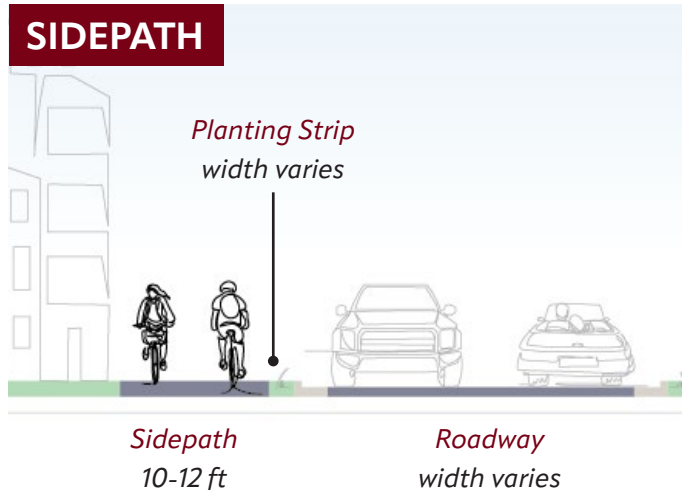
Total: 75/100

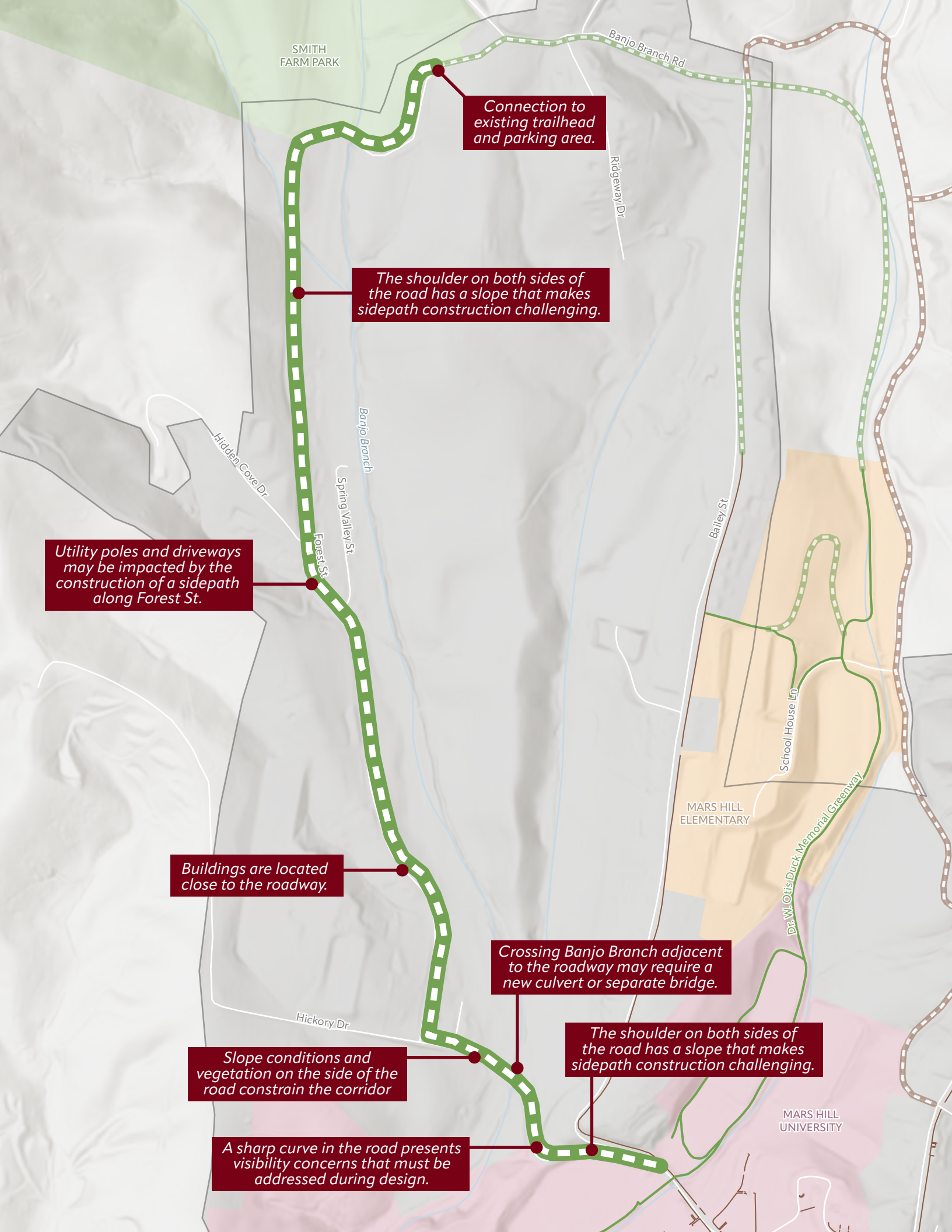
EXISTING CONDITIONS



An alignment along Banjo Branch would create an off-road trail connecting Mars Hill to Bailey Mountain Park and Preserve.

TYPICAL CROSS SECTIONS





SMITH FARM PARK

Banjo Branch Rd

Connection to existing trailhead and parking area.

Ridgeway Dr

The shoulder on both sides of the road has a slope that makes sidepath construction challenging.

Hidden Cove Dr

Banjo Branch

Spring Valley St

Forest St

Utility poles and driveways may be impacted by the construction of a sidepath along Forest St.

Bailey St

School House Ln

MARS HILL ELEMENTARY

Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway

Buildings are located close to the roadway.

Crossing Banjo Branch adjacent to the roadway may require a new culvert or separate bridge.

Hickory Dr

Slope conditions and vegetation on the side of the road constrain the corridor

The shoulder on both sides of the road has a slope that makes sidepath construction challenging.

MARS HILL UNIVERSITY

A sharp curve in the road presents visibility concerns that must be addressed during design.

PRIORITY PROJECT #4: CASCADE ST/NC-213 SIDEPATH

This project will install a sidepath on the north side of Cascade St/NC-213 between Athletic St and Gabriel’s Creek Rd, providing connectivity to the Beth-Hanan community and Stone Cottage Rd. On the east side the project connects to existing sidewalk on Cascade St and the campus of MHU, and indirectly connects to the southern terminus of the Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway. This project has been submitted by the FBRMPO to compete for prioritization in NCDOT’s SPOT 7.0 process, but has not yet been funded.

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

Location:

North side of Cascade St/NC-213 between Athletic St and Gabriel’s Creek Rd

Total Length:

3,200 ft / 0.61 miles

Facility Type:

Sidepath

Intersection Treatments:

Crosswalk markings at Brook St, high-visibility crosswalk markings at Stone Cottage Rd and at Gabriel’s Creek Rd, mid-block crossing at Bethany Dr

Implementation Partners:

NCDOT (maintains roadway), Town of Mars Hill, FBRMPO

Planning Level Cost Estimate:

\$1,255,000

PRIORITIZATION FACTORS

Connects to Activity Center: 20/20

Connects to a Public Recreation Resource: 10/20

Closes a Gap in the Current Bicycle and Pedestrian Network: 10/20

Improves Area with Crash History: 10/10

Reduces Bicycle and Pedestrian Exposure: 5/5

Addresses Public Input: 10/10

Advances a Regional Connection: 10/10

Leverages Community Investments: 0/5

Total: 75/100

EXISTING CONDITIONS

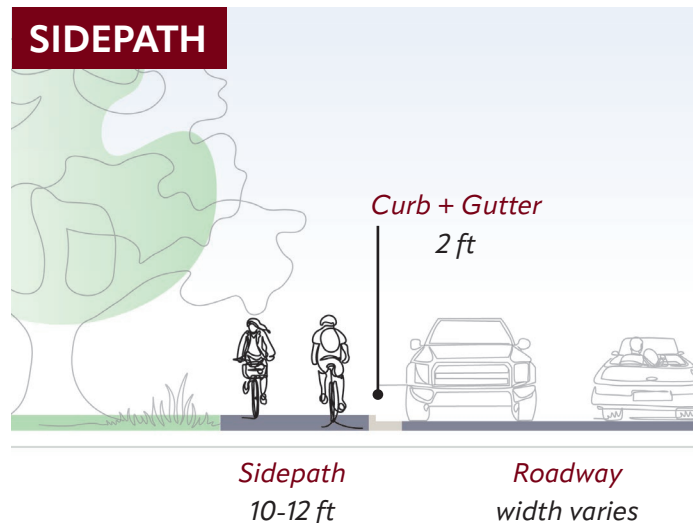


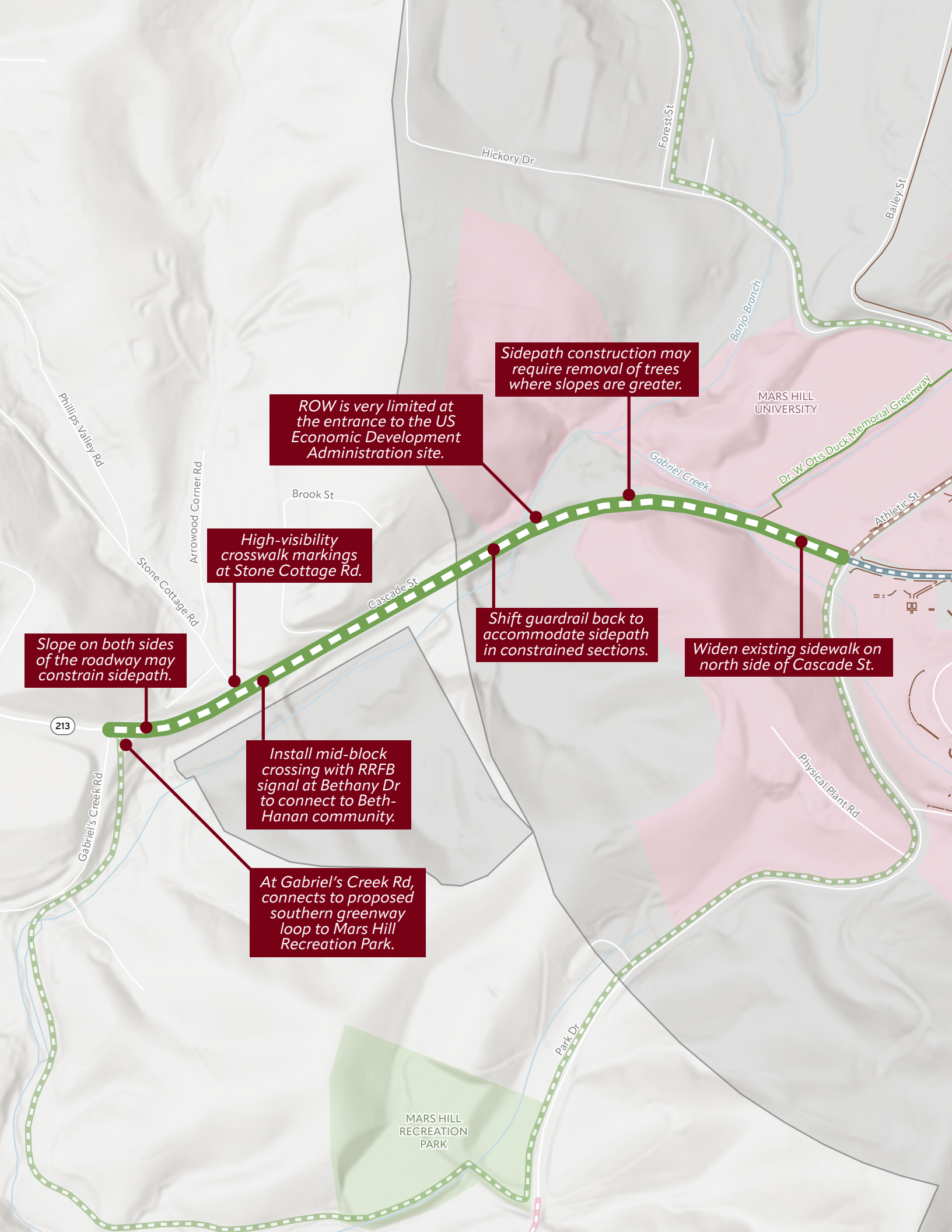
Existing sidewalk connecting to Athletic St would be widened to create a sidepath.



Existing trees may need to be removed and retaining wall installed where shoulder slopes down to Gabriel Creek.

TYPICAL CROSS SECTION





Slope on both sides of the roadway may constrain sidepath.

High-visibility crosswalk markings at Stone Cottage Rd.

Install mid-block crossing with RRFB signal at Bethany Dr to connect to Beth-Hanan community.

At Gabriel's Creek Rd, connects to proposed southern greenway loop to Mars Hill Recreation Park.

ROW is very limited at the entrance to the US Economic Development Administration site.

Shift guardrail back to accommodate sidepath in constrained sections.

Sidepath construction may require removal of trees where slopes are greater.

Widen existing sidewalk on north side of Cascade St.

PRIORITY PROJECT #5: N. MAIN ST INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS

A series of improvements are proposed at three intersections along N. Main St. At Bailey St, the project will install new curb ramps, crosswalks, and curb extensions to reduce pedestrian crossing distance and provide traffic calming. At College St/Mountain View Rd a fourth crosswalk is proposed in addition to pedestrian signal heads at all crosswalks and curb extensions at Mountain View Rd. At NC-213, the project will install pedestrian signal heads at all crosswalks.

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

Location:

N. Main St at Bailey St, N. Main St at College St/Mountain View Rd, and Main St at NC-213

Total Length:

Three intersections across 475 ft of N. Main St.

Intersection Treatments:

- ▶ Bailey St:
 - ▷ Curb extension along N. Main St, curb ramps on the east side of N. Main St and new crosswalks across N. Main St. Consider converting to three-way stop intersection
- ▶ College St/Mountain View Rd:
 - ▷ Crosswalk on north side of intersection, pedestrian signal heads at all crosswalks, and curb extensions at Mountain View Rd
- ▶ NC-213:
 - ▷ Pedestrian signal heads at all crosswalks

Implementation Partners:

NCDOT (maintains roadway), Town of Mars Hill

Planning Level Cost Estimate:

\$322,000

PRIORITIZATION FACTORS

Connects to Activity Center: 20/20

Connects to a Public Recreation Resource: 10/20

Closes a Gap in the Current Bicycle and Pedestrian Network: 20/20

Improves Area with Crash History: 5/10

Reduces Bicycle and Pedestrian Exposure: 2.5/5

Addresses Public Input: 5/10

Advances a Regional Connection: 10/10

Leverages Community Investments: 0/5

Total: 72.5/100

EXISTING CONDITIONS



The intersection with Bailey St lacks a marked crosswalk and features a wide turning radius. Additionally, curb ramps at Mountain View Rd are very constrained and do not meet ADA accessibility standards. Pedestrian signal heads are not in place along the corridor.

Extend curb to reduce turning radius and pedestrian crossing distance.

Install new crosswalk markings and ADA curb ramps.

Install stop signs and stop bars to convert to three-way stop intersection.

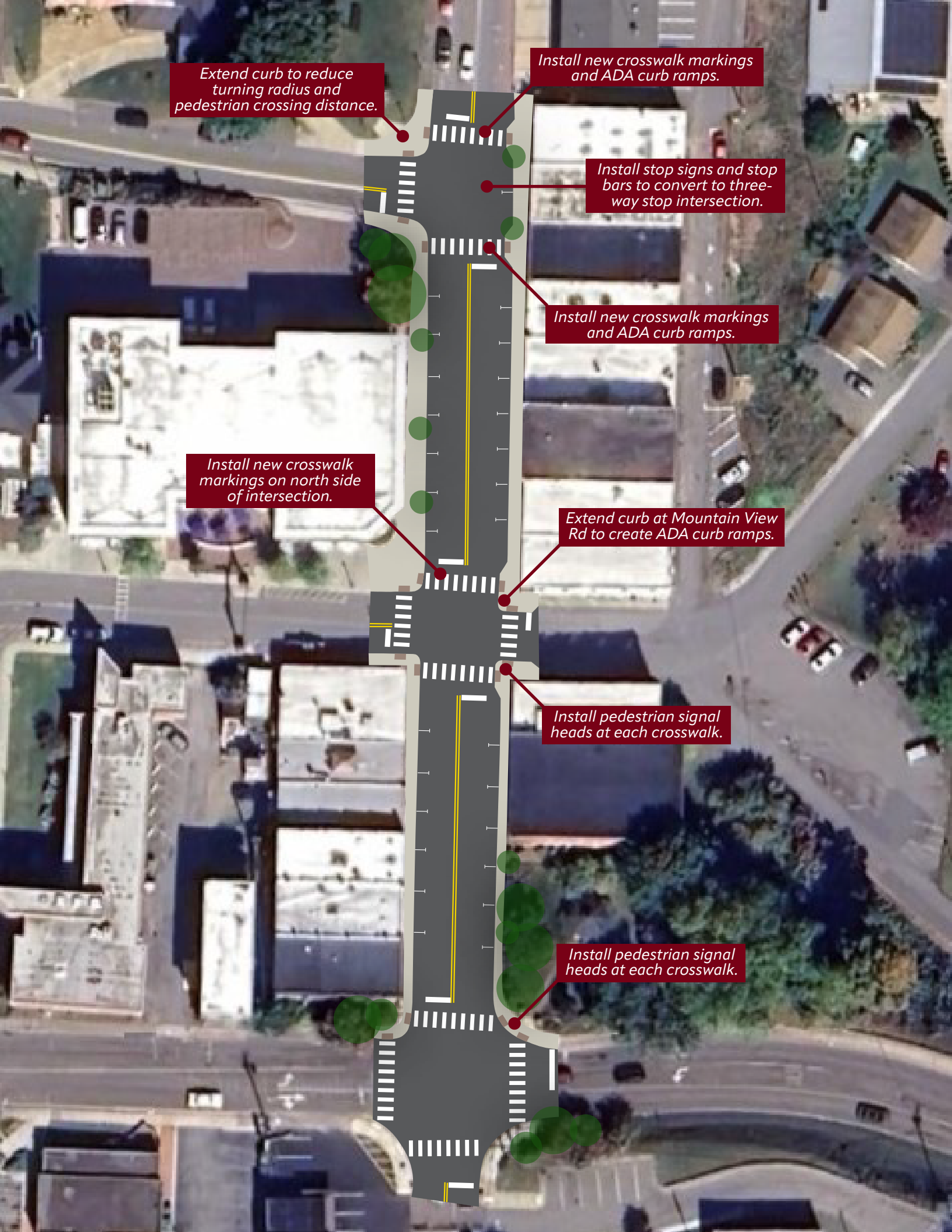
Install new crosswalk markings and ADA curb ramps.

Install new crosswalk markings on north side of intersection.

Extend curb at Mountain View Rd to create ADA curb ramps.

Install pedestrian signal heads at each crosswalk.

Install pedestrian signal heads at each crosswalk.



PRIORITY PROJECT #6: CASCADE ST/NC-213 STREETScape

This project will implement changes to the roadway between Main St and Athletic St to improve safety and beautify the corridor through the MHU campus. Specific improvements recommended include reducing the travel lane widths from 18 ft to 12 ft and adding 6 ft of space to widen the sidewalks and plant street trees, or implement other streetscape enhancements. A key goal of this project is to reduce the speed of traffic on Cascade St/NC-213 in a campus environment with high pedestrian activity.

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

Location:

Cascade St/NC-213 between Main St and Athletic St

Total Length:

1,600 ft / 0.3 miles

Facility Type:

Streetscape improvements including but not limited to lane width reduction, sidewalk expansion, installation of street trees, and other elements

Intersection Treatments:

High-visibility crosswalk markings at Joe Anderson Dr

Implementation Partners:

NCDOT (maintains roadway), Town of Mars Hill, MHU

Planning Level Cost Estimate:

\$702,000

PRIORITIZATION FACTORS

Connects to Activity Center: 20/20

Connects to a Public Recreation Resource: 10/20

Closes a Gap in the Current Bicycle and Pedestrian Network: 10/20

Improves Area with Crash History: 10/10

Reduces Bicycle and Pedestrian Exposure: 5/5

Addresses Public Input: 5/10

Advances a Regional Connection: 10/10

Leverages Community Investments: 0/5

Total: 70/100

EXISTING CONDITIONS



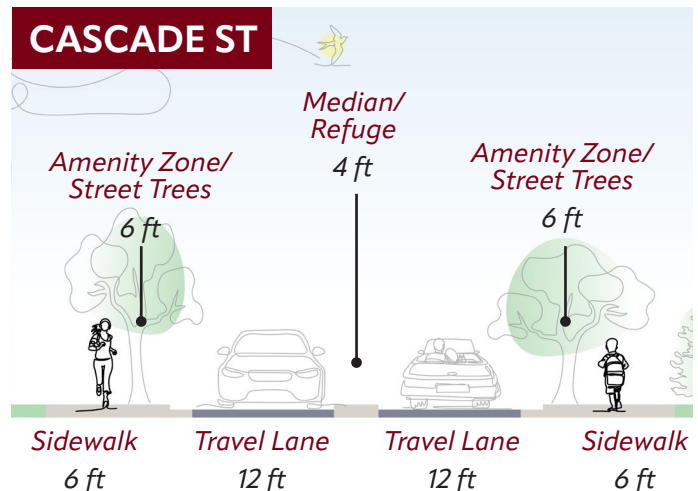
Narrow sidewalks and wide roadway lanes increase the crossing distance for pedestrians on this busy corridor.

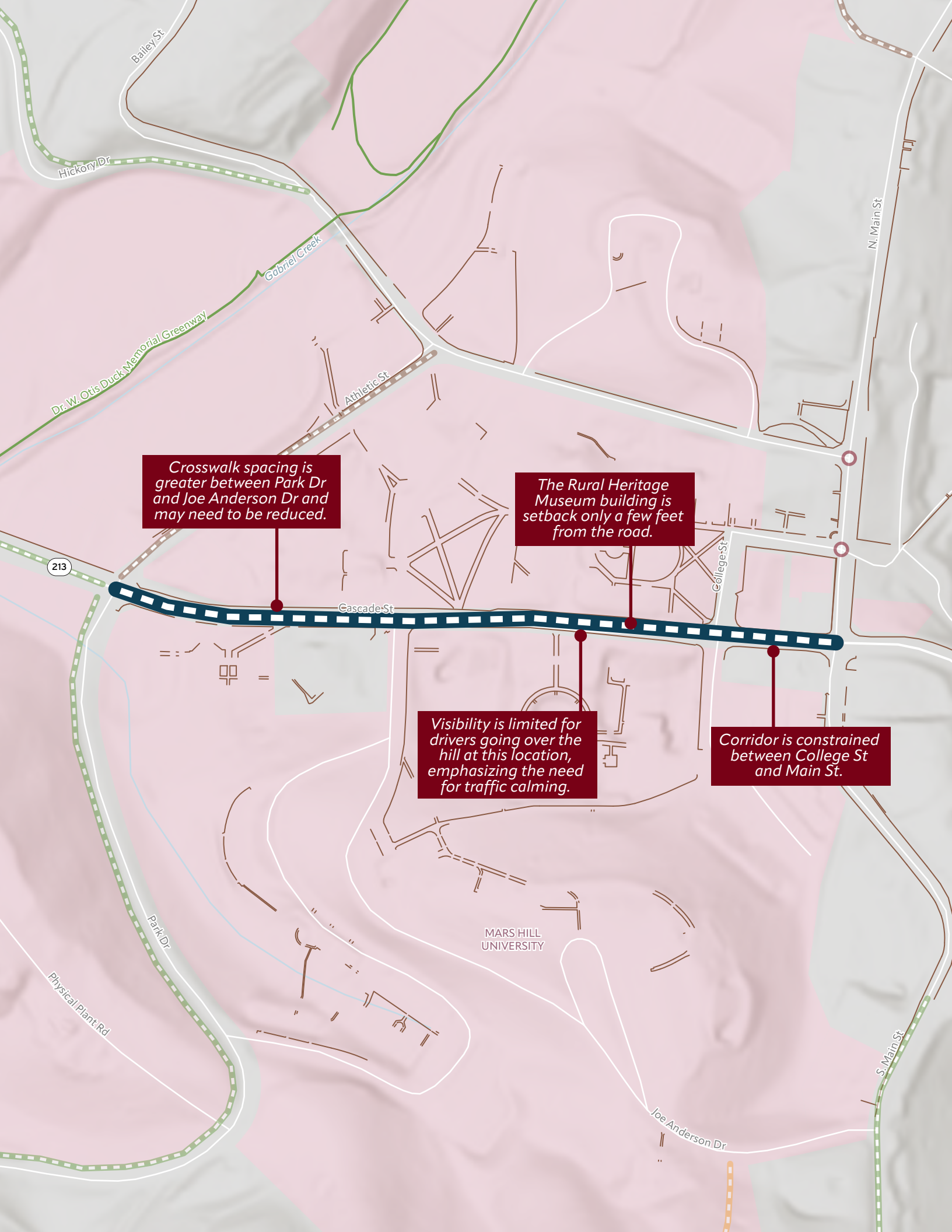
PROPOSED CONDITIONS



Narrow sidewalks and wide roadway lanes increase the crossing distance for pedestrians on this busy corridor.

TYPICAL CROSS SECTION





Crosswalk spacing is greater between Park Dr and Joe Anderson Dr and may need to be reduced.

The Rural Heritage Museum building is setback only a few feet from the road.

Visibility is limited for drivers going over the hill at this location, emphasizing the need for traffic calming.

Corridor is constrained between College St and Main St.

PRIORITY PROJECT #7: MOUNTAIN VIEW RD SIDEWALK AND INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS

This project will add a sidewalk to fill a gap between Chestnut St and Cemetery Dr. From Chestnut St to Anderson St, the sidewalk is proposed to be on the north side of Mountain View Rd, and on the south side from Anderson St to Cemetery Dr. Additionally, the project will install crosswalks at Anderson St and modify the intersection to improve pedestrian safety by removing the existing slip lane.

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

Location:

North side of Mountain View Rd from Chestnut St to Anderson St, and south side of Mountain View Rd from Anderson St to Cemetery Dr

Total Length:

1,200 ft / 0.23 miles

Facility Type:

Description

Intersection Treatments:

Crosswalk markings at Chestnut St and Cemetery Dr.

Implementation Partners:

Town of Mars Hill (maintains roadways)

Planning Level Cost Estimate:

\$669,000

PRIORITIZATION FACTORS

Connects to Activity Center: 20/20

Connects to a Public Recreation Resource: 10/20

Closes a Gap in the Current Bicycle and Pedestrian Network: 10/20

Improves Area with Crash History: 10/10

Reduces Bicycle and Pedestrian Exposure: 5/5

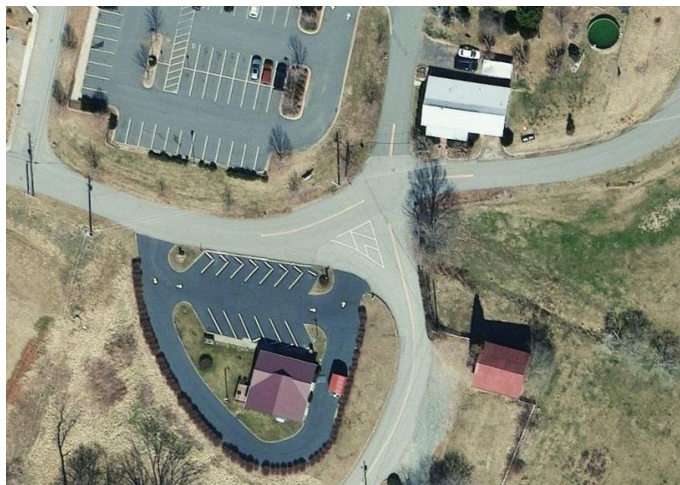
Addresses Public Input: 5/10

Advances a Regional Connection: 10/10

Leverages Community Investments: 0/5

Total: 70/100

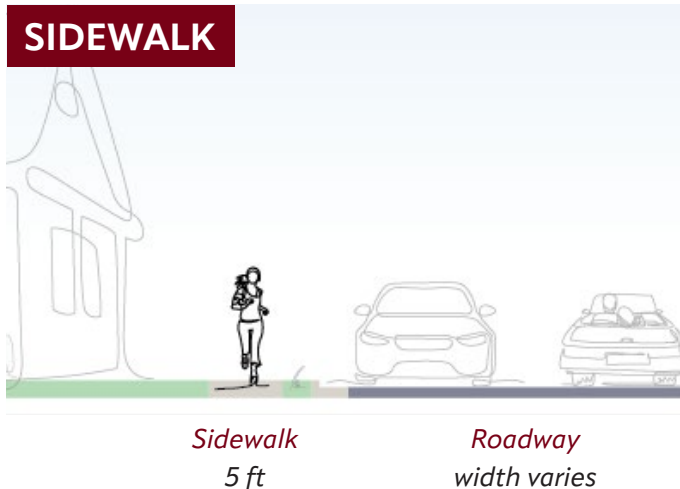
EXISTING CONDITIONS

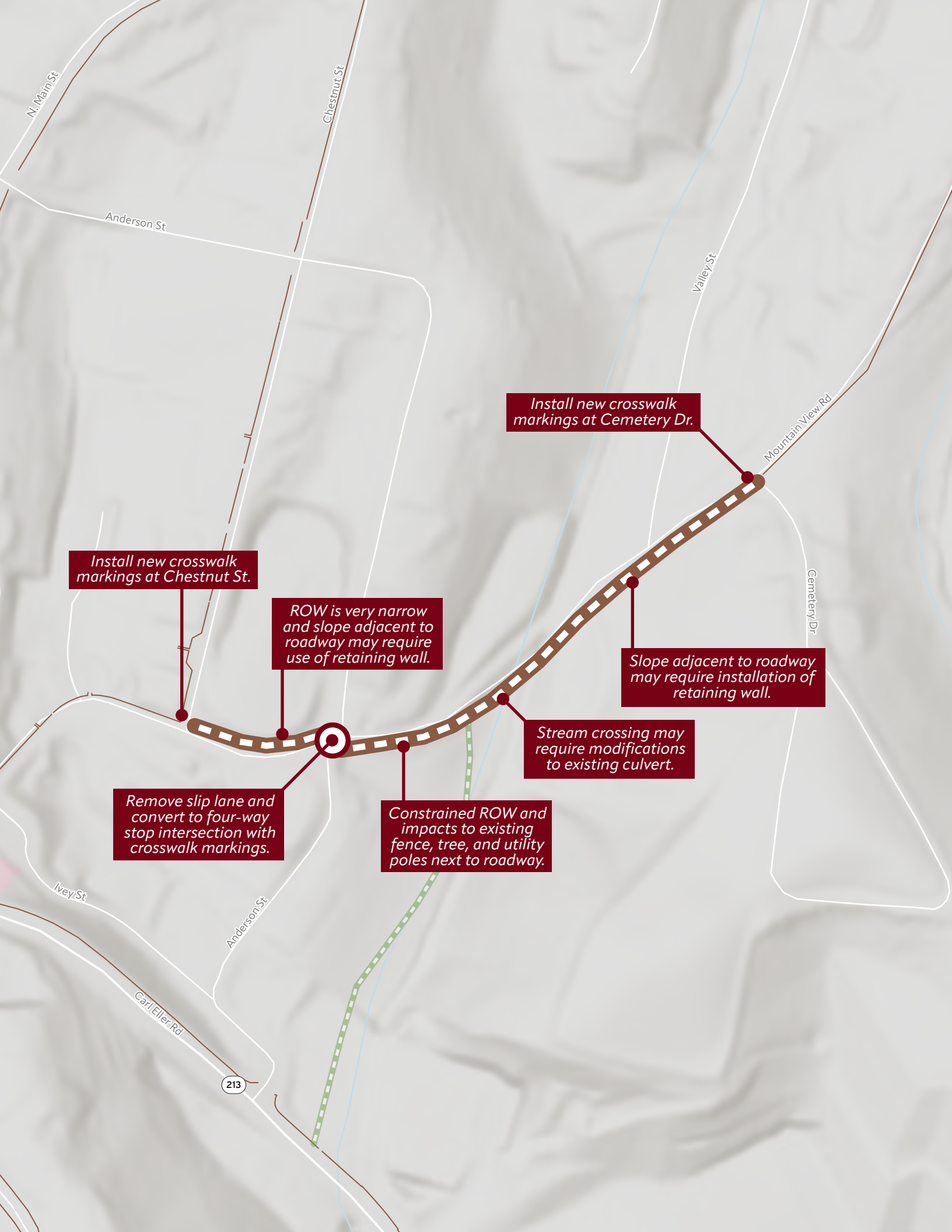


PROPOSED CONDITIONS



TYPICAL CROSS SECTION





N. Main St

Chestnut St

Anderson St

Valley St

Mountain View Rd

Cemetery Dr

Ivey St

Anderson St

Carl Eller Rd

213

Install new crosswalk markings at Chestnut St.

ROW is very narrow and slope adjacent to roadway may require use of retaining wall.

Install new crosswalk markings at Cemetery Dr.

Slope adjacent to roadway may require installation of retaining wall.

Remove slip lane and convert to four-way stop intersection with crosswalk markings.

Stream crossing may require modifications to existing culvert.

Constrained ROW and impacts to existing fence, tree, and utility poles next to roadway.

PRIORITY PROJECT #8: BAILEY ST SIDEPATH

This project will install a sidepath on Bailey St north from the existing sidewalk on the east side of the road to Banjo Branch Rd, where it crosses and continues west along Banjo Branch Rd and Forest St to Bailey Mountain Park and Preserve. A concurrent feasibility study includes additional analysis of this corridor, including off-street alignment options for a greenway extension.

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

Location:

East side of Bailey St from existing sidewalk to Banjo Branch Rd, south side of Banjo Branch Rd from Bailey St to Forest St, south side of Forest St from Banjo Branch Rd to Bailey Mountain Park and Preserve

Total Length:

3,400 ft / 0.64 miles

Facility Type:

Sidepath

Intersection Treatments:

High-visibility crosswalk markings at Banjo Branch Rd and Bailey St

Implementation Partners:

NCDOT (maintains roadways), Town of Mars Hill

Planning Level Cost Estimate:

\$1,727,000

There are multiple alternatives for streetside and off-street trail alignments to achieve this connection. Cost estimates for the corridor range from \$1,484,000 to \$2,707,000. Additional detail is included in the feasibility study.

PRIORITIZATION FACTORS

Connects to Activity Center: 10/20

Connects to a Public Recreation Resource: 20/20

Closes a Gap in the Current Bicycle and Pedestrian Network: 20/20

Improves Area with Crash History: 0/10

Reduces Bicycle and Pedestrian Exposure: 0/5

Addresses Public Input: 5/10

Advances a Regional Connection: 10/10

Leverages Community Investments: 5/5

Total: 70/100

EXISTING CONDITIONS

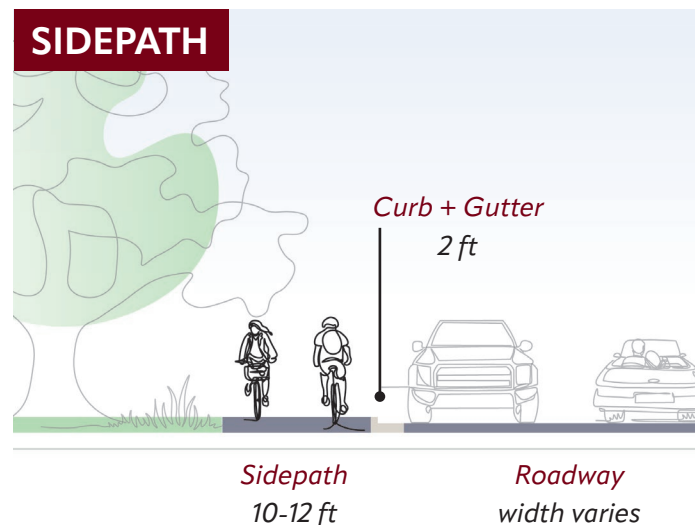


ROW is very constrained north of the existing sidewalk, requiring potential impacts to fencing and landscaping.



Limited visibility on Forest St, as well as vegetation and slope may require acquisition of additional ROW.

TYPICAL CROSS SECTION



SMITH
FARM PARK

Laurel Wood Dr

Banjo Branch Rd

Forest St

Ridgeway Dr

Bailey St

Constrained ROW on Forest St may require acquisition of additional ROW.

Potential sidepath impacts to landscaping along roadway

Install new high-visibility crosswalk markings at intersection.

Removal of trees and vegetation immediately adjacent to roadway.

ROW is very constrained and may include fences constructed by property owners. Some buildings have narrow setbacks from the roadway.

PRIORITY PROJECT #9: ATHLETIC ST SIDEWALK

This project will add a sidewalk on one side of Athletic St from Cascade St to Bailey St where only a striped walking lane currently exists on a small segment of the corridor. Due to limited ROW available, options for implementing this project include reallocating space from on-street parking to extend the walking lane or removing the existing retaining wall to construct a sidewalk.

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

Location:

Athletic St from Cascade St to Bailey St

Total Length:

860 ft / 0.16 miles

Facility Type:

On-street pedestrian walkway

Intersection Treatments:

Re-stripe mid-block crosswalk at north end of football stadium

Implementation Partners:

Town of Mars Hill, MHU, NCDOT

Planning Level Cost Estimate:

\$266,000

PRIORITIZATION FACTORS

Connects to Activity Center: 20/20

Connects to a Public Recreation Resource: 10/20

Closes a Gap in the Current Bicycle and Pedestrian Network: 20/20

Improves Area with Crash History: 10/10

Reduces Bicycle and Pedestrian Exposure: 0/5

Addresses Public Input: 5/10

Advances a Regional Connection: 0/10

Leverages Community Investments: 0/5

Total: 65/100

EXISTING CONDITIONS

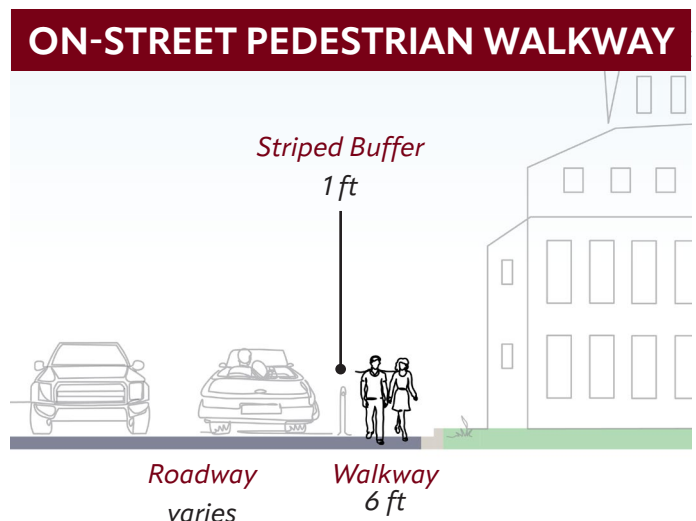


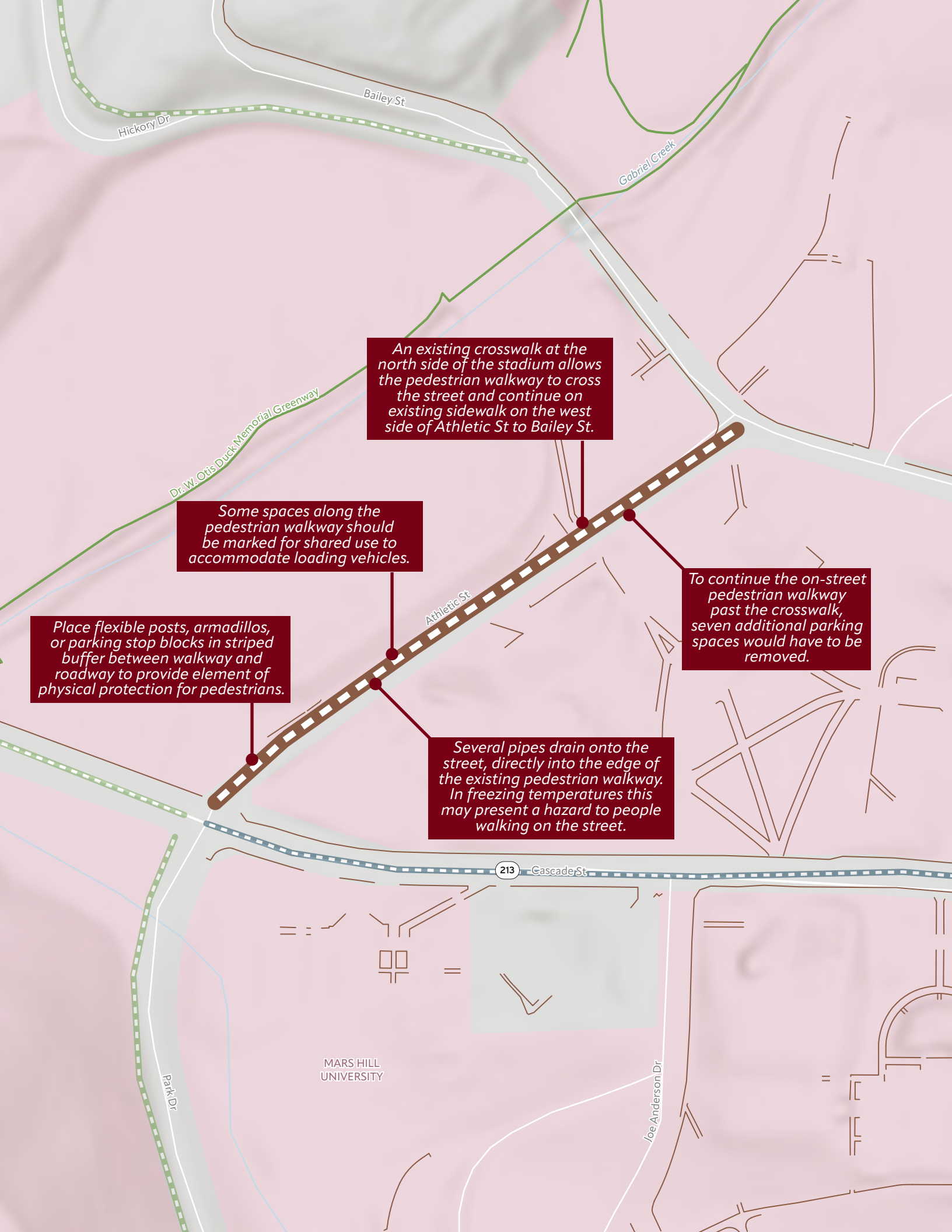
A pedestrian walkway was recently striped on the southern portion of the east side of Athletic St.



Pavement markings identify this area as a walking lane for pedestrians in the absence of a sidewalk. Physical protection should be provided with vertical separation in the striped buffer space.

TYPICAL CROSS SECTION





An existing crosswalk at the north side of the stadium allows the pedestrian walkway to cross the street and continue on existing sidewalk on the west side of Athletic St to Bailey St.

Some spaces along the pedestrian walkway should be marked for shared use to accommodate loading vehicles.

Place flexible posts, armadillos, or parking stop blocks in striped buffer between walkway and roadway to provide element of physical protection for pedestrians.

Several pipes drain onto the street, directly into the edge of the existing pedestrian walkway. In freezing temperatures this may present a hazard to people walking on the street.

To continue the on-street pedestrian walkway past the crosswalk, seven additional parking spaces would have to be removed.

Hickory Dr

Bailey St

Gabriel Creek

Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway

Athletic St

213 Cascade St

Park Dr

MARS HILL UNIVERSITY

Joe Anderson Dr

05

POLICY + PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

OVERVIEW

Beyond infrastructure and amenity improvements, the bicycle and pedestrian experience is shaped by policies, regulations, and programs. The project team reviewed successfully implemented policies and programs from communities throughout the state and country to develop the recommendations outlined in this chapter of the plan. If adopted, these recommendations will help guide the development of safe, accessible, and attractive bicycle and pedestrian facilities recommended in Chapter 4: Network Recommendations, and to create a community culture that embraces and supports walking and bicycling as modes of transportation and recreation.

The following sections are covered in this chapter:

- ▶ Recommended Policies
- ▶ Recommended Programs



RECOMMENDED POLICIES

By implementing multimodal-friendly policies alongside program and infrastructure recommendations, the Town of Mars Hill can significantly enhance both bicyclist and pedestrian safety. These policies will not only improve safety but also ensure that multimodal needs are well-integrated into Town ordinances and codes and can be addressed proactively as the community grows. Below is a summary of recommended policies for the Town of Mars Hill.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION	DESCRIPTION
<p>Update Town Zoning Ordinance road standards to include the addition of sidewalks and other facilities recommended in this plan with development frontage upgrades and internal streets.</p>	<p>The Town should consider updating its zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations to require developer-built shared use paths and sidewalks where shown in officially adopted plans, as well as bicycle parking. Recognizing the vital role of private developers in the development of active transportation facilities, this step will promote the creation of pedestrian-friendly pathways and enhance active transportation options throughout the Town. A municipality may ask developers to construct planned sidewalks and shared use paths as a requirement to development in municipal limits. Planning staff should coordinate with developers to provide guidance on ordinance requirements and processes. In addition, they may also include specifications for multimodal design standards. Developers should be prepared to include active transportation facilities in future developments that provide connections to Mars Hill’s overall multimodal network.</p>
<p>Establish dedicated funding in the Town Capital Improvement Plan for advancing priority projects from this plan</p>	<p>The Town of Mars Hill should consider a modest, dedicated local funding allocation for bicycle and pedestrian improvement programs and facilities in the Town’s budget to implement recommendations in this plan and to leverage other state and federal funding for these facilities.</p>
<p>Designate (or create) a Citizen Advisory Board to champion implementation of this plan</p>	<p>The Town of Mars Hill should consider establishing a Citizen Advisory Committee focused on multimodal transportation or parks and recreation to guide the implementation of recommended multimodal infrastructure, programs, and policies outlined in this plan.</p>
<p>Establish pedestrian/bicycle wayfinding standards</p>	<p>The Town of Mars Hill should consider establishing community-wide multimodal wayfinding standards to define consistent placement, use, and design of wayfinding signage (including route confirmation, directional, and kiosk signage). Wayfinding standards should incorporate and enhance the existing Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway signage to create a comprehensive multi-modal wayfinding system. Such a system will facilitate ease of navigation, enhance accessibility, and contribute to a more organized and user-friendly community.</p>
<p>Adopt a Complete Streets ordinance</p>	<p>The Town of Mars Hill should consider adopting a municipal Complete Streets Policy, similar to NCDOT’s statewide policy, to guide multimodal improvements for the local street network. NCDOT adopted its Complete Streets policy in 2019, which requires consideration of all modes of transportation in roadway improvement projects.</p>
<p>Create standard design guidelines for active transportation facilities</p>	<p>The Town of Mars Hill should consider creating a standard set of design standards for sidewalk, multi-use path, and bicycle facilities to ensure consistent design within the community as new development occurs and the active transportation network expands. At a minimum, facility design standards should include typical facility sections, materials selection, minimum and preferred widths of facilities, intersection treatments, and connectivity requirements. These design guidelines should be aligned with local, state, and Federal best practices and standards to ensure safety and utility, as well as funding eligibility.</p>

POLICY RECOMMENDATION	DESCRIPTION
<p>Adopt a sidewalk maintenance policy</p>	<p>The Town of Mars Hill should develop and adopt a comprehensive sidewalk maintenance policy to ensure well-maintained sidewalks throughout the community. This policy should begin with the creation of a regularly updated sidewalk inventory, clearly defining the party responsible for maintenance and monitoring changes in its condition. To ensure systematic upkeep, the policy should outline inspection frequency, track maintenance history, and establish measurable criteria for identifying necessary repairs or monitoring facilities.</p> <p>The criteria for determining maintenance needs may encompass various aspects such as identifying raised or sunken sections, cracks or openings, and vertical separations between sidewalk sections. Additionally, landscaping issues, such as overgrowth and obstructions hindering pedestrian movement, should also be addressed in the policy.</p> <p>To prioritize improvements effectively, the policy may establish a priority system based on factors such as usage rates and destinations served by the sidewalk facility. By adopting such a comprehensive sidewalk maintenance policy, the Town of Mars Hill can improve accessibility and cultivate a safe and pedestrian-friendly environment that benefits all residents and visitors.</p> <p>More information on this subject can be found in FHWA's A Guide for Maintaining Pedestrian Facilities for Enhanced Safety: https://highways.dot.gov/safety/pedestrian-bicyclist/guide-maintaining-pedestrian-facilities-enhanced-safety</p>
<p>Conduct an accessibility study/ ADA Transition Plan of existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities</p>	<p>The Town of Mars Hill should develop an ADA Transition Plan to ensure full accessibility and compliance with the ADA requirements. Title II of the ADA mandates that public services and transportation, including sidewalks and multi-use paths, must be accessible to individuals with disabilities. While compliance is required for new constructions and alterations, the ADA also emphasizes the significance of accessibility in maintenance of existing infrastructure.</p> <p>The Transition Plan should comprehensively identify the accessibility improvements necessary to bring all public services and transportation facilities in line with ADA standards. It should not only focus on new constructions but also address the existing infrastructure, ensuring that everyone, including individuals with disabilities, can access the Town's amenities and services.</p> <p>Furthermore, the plan should explore various funding options available for implementing these accessibility improvements. It should provide a clear and feasible timeline for the execution of the proposed changes, ensuring that the Town progresses towards full ADA compliance in a timely manner.</p> <p>By conducting an ADA Transition Plan, the Town of Mars Hill can prioritize inclusivity, promote equal access for all residents and visitors, and work towards creating a welcoming and accommodating environment for everyone within the community.</p>

RECOMMENDED PROGRAMS

Bicycle- and pedestrian-specific programs encourage the use of multimodal facilities within a community and strengthen the local active transportation and recreation culture. Investments in these programs, when coupled with infrastructure improvements, frequently lead to an increase in biking and walking among residents and visitors. Administering a series of programs supporting these investments to the community can help serve as an orientation to active transportation and recreation. A summary of multimodal programs and initiatives in North Carolina are provided below and are organized into the following program classifications that can help the Town select programs that are tailored to the needs of the community:

- ▶ Educational Programs
- ▶ Encouragement Programs
- ▶ Project Based Programs
- ▶ Evaluation Programs

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

These programs are aimed at strengthening education surrounding walking and bicycling, for both those who walk and bike as well as those in vehicles. The goal of these programs are to empower people to walk and bike more often and create a safer transportation system, reducing crashes and injuries.

NC FRIENDLY DRIVER PROGRAM

The NC Friendly Driver Program is a training workshop administered by BikeWalk NC, a statewide advocacy group, with the support of the North Carolina Governor's Highway Safety Program. The program is targeted at drivers and teaches drivers how to safely share the road with bicyclists and other vulnerable road users. Participants learn about active transportation infrastructure and Complete Streets concepts, and common riding practices of people on bicycles to better equip them to be responsible roadway users.

<https://www.bikewalknc.org/safety-education/education-resources-for-motorists/>

WATCH FOR ME NC

Watch for Me NC is a comprehensive statewide safety and awareness campaign administered by NCDOT geared toward bicycle and pedestrian safety, education, and enforcement. Combining multimedia with public engagement, Watch for Me NC promotes safety messages at local events, followed by targeted enforcement in areas with heightened risk of crashes involving bicyclists and pedestrians. A key component of the program includes training law enforcement officers on existing laws and how to enforce them.

<https://www.watchformenc.org/>

LET'S GO NC

Let's Go NC! A Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Skills Program for Healthy, Active Children is an NCDOT sponsored, all-in-one package of lesson plans, materials, activities, and instructional videos for instructors to teach and encourage children to practice and develop safe pedestrian and bicycle behaviors while promoting healthy transportation choices and active lifestyles that can be carried into adulthood.

<https://connect.ncdot.gov/projects/BikePed/Pages/LetsGoNC.aspx>

LEARN TO RIDE EVENTS

Learn to ride events are held to teach community members, including both children and adults, how to ride a bicycle. These classes are often held by local community and bicycle advocacy groups, schools, or municipalities, and can cover several subjects related to safely bicycling, including proper bicycle and helmet fitting, stopping and starting, and how to navigate biking in a variety of environments.

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

Through the NC Safe Routes to School program, NCDOT works to make walking and riding a bicycle to school safe for all children. The program facilitates the planning, development, and implementation of programs and activities to improve safety near schools and increase walking and biking rates to school. The program includes initiatives such as Let's Go NC and the Safe Routes to School Non-Infrastructure Transportation Alternatives Program.

<https://connect.ncdot.gov/projects/BikePed/Pages/Non-Infrastructure-Alternatives-Program.aspx>

ENCOURAGEMENT PROGRAMS

Encouragement programs provide resources and opportunities that support increased walking and bicycling. The goal of many of these programs is to increase visibility of walking and bicycling, in addition to providing education.

WALKING/BICYCLING MAPS

Walking and bicycling network maps are developed to guide pedestrians or bicyclists along preferred routes with existing sidewalks, sidepaths, greenways, and bike routes. Maps are also helpful resources that assist new residents and visitors to safely navigate the transportation network.

WALK/BIKE TO SCHOOL DAY

Walk/Bike to School Days are energizing events that remind adults and students alike of the health and environmental benefits of walking or bicycling to school. In numerous communities, such events result in increased walking or bicycling throughout the school year. This is often due to the event raising awareness about safety issues that require attention, or because it inspires children and families to adopt walking or biking as their preferred mode of school commute. National Walk & Roll to School Day occurs every October and Bike & Roll to School occurs every March.

<https://www.walkbiketoschool.org/>

WALK/BIKE TO WORK DAY EVENTS

Walk/Bike to Work Days are annual events that promote walking and bicycling as an option for commuting to work. Walk to Work Day is usually held every April. Walk to Work Day events typically include pit stops along popular walking routes to provide commuters with free breakfast, prizes, or education materials on active transportation. Bike to Work Day takes place in May every year. This day both encourages people to bike to work and raises awareness of cyclists as they commute to and from work each day. For many communities, these events lead to an increase in walking for transportation and recreation.

WALK-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY DESIGNATION

Walk Friendly Communities have shown a commitment to improving and sustaining walkability and pedestrian safety through comprehensive programs, plans, and policies. Communities apply to this program, operated by the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center, to receive recognition in the form of a Bronze, Silver, Gold, or Platinum designation. Before applying, the Town can take a self-assessment using the online assessment tool to collect all the Town's pedestrian-related data in one location which can help guide the discussion about areas for improvement. This data can also be used to apply for future grants. The designation as a Walk Friendly Community sets the Town up as an example among peer cities and raises local awareness about the value of supporting a walkable environment.

<https://www.walkfriendly.org/>

BICYCLE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY DESIGNATION

The Bicycle Friendly Community (BFC) program provides a roadmap to improving conditions for bicycling and guidance to help make a community's vision for a better, bikeable community a reality. The BFC program is sponsored by the League of American Bicyclists. In addition to the BFC, the League maintains a Bicycle Friendly University program which certifies institutions of higher education that promote bicycling on campus and provide a bicycle-friendly campus for students, staff, and visitors. The League also maintains Bicycle Friendly Business and Bicycle Friendly State programs. Applications for the BFC program are accepted in June, while the University program deadline is in August and the Business program is in March. Awards are based on the "5 Es" the League defines as essential elements of a great bicycling community:

- ▶ Equity & Accessibility
- ▶ Engineering
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Encouragement
- ▶ Evaluation & Planning

<https://bikeleague.org/bfa/>

PROJECT-BASED PROGRAMS

Project-based programs turn opportunities to support safer walking and bicycling into community events and placemaking projects. They may also provide an opportunity for education about walking and bicycling.

PAINT THE PAVEMENT

Paint the Pavement programs allow mural painting on public streets to encourage community building and public art as a means to transform roadway public space into neighborhood assets. Street murals implemented as part of the program also serve as an important traffic calming solutions in residential neighborhoods. Paint the Pavement programs are sponsored by governmental agencies, but mural design and painting are often led by volunteers.

OPEN STREETS

Open Streets events open local streets to people by temporarily closing them to car traffic. This program provides resources and guidance to communities on opening their streets while also advocating for people-friendly and walkable cities. Communities that implement Open Streets programs can create a place for people of all ages and abilities to gather and enhance their health and mobility. Open Streets events take place at different times of the year in many communities.

<https://openstreetsproject.org/>

EVALUATION PROGRAMS

Evaluation programs emphasize the use of data and regular monitoring of facilities to ensure a safe walking and bicycling community. They may also help establish performance measures and make a case to support future investments in active transportation and recreation infrastructure.

FACILITY INVENTORY AND MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

Facility inventory and maintenance programs are tools for communities to maintain up-to-date lists and maps of active transportation facilities such as sidewalks, sidepaths, bike lanes, and greenways. This can serve as a guide for residents and visitors seeking to walk or bike in the community. A facility inventory can also help staff identify and prioritize segments of pedestrian or bicycle infrastructure in need of maintenance and rehabilitation.

BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN COUNT PROGRAM

Pedestrian or bicycle count programs provide nonmotorized travel information for sidewalks and shared use paths. Count programs assist municipalities to understand existing active transportation traffic and plan for future non-motorized infrastructure needs. Agencies who show clear evidence of use are more likely to receive funding for projects. NCDOT sponsors the North Carolina Non-Motorized Volume Data Program, which is managed by NC State University.

<https://itre.ncsu.edu/focus/bike-ped/nc-nmvd/>



A trail counter device on the Black Creek Greenway in Cary, NC collects data about greenway usage.



06

IMPLEMENTATION

OVERVIEW

This plan proposes significant investments in active transportation and recreation that will impact the way in which residents, employees, and visitors experience Mars Hill. Successful implementation of this Plan will require a coordinated and consistent effort with a wide range of community partners.

This chapter outlines partner roles and action steps to guide the funding, design, and construction of bicycle and pedestrian network recommendations as well as the implementation of recommended policies and programs. Action steps prioritize implementation strategies over a 10-year horizon.

The following sections are covered in this chapter:

- ▶ Key Partners in Implementation
- ▶ Action Plan
- ▶ Performance Measures
- ▶ Funding Resources

ROBERT LEE MOORE

79



KEY PARTNERS IN IMPLEMENTATION

Planning for, funding, and implementing bicycle and pedestrian facilities and programs in Mars Hill depends on collaboration with community partners and stakeholders at the state, regional, and local levels. Successful implementation is contingent on maintaining and developing partnerships with all project stakeholders to leverage additional resources, capacity, and expertise. Key partners and their respective implementation roles are outlined in the following section.

TOWN OF MARS HILL

The Town of Mars Hill is the primary agency tasked with planning for, developing, and implementing the projects and programs recommended in this plan. Within the Town organizational structure, the responsibility falls on staff and elected leaders on the Town Council, in addition to community advocates.

Anticipated Roles

- ▶ Mars Hill Town Council should adopt the *Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan*.
- ▶ Town staff should coordinate with NCDOT and FBRMPO on future STIP projects to ensure facilities recommended in this plan are incorporated into roadway projects.
- ▶ The Town should conduct feasibility studies, including community and landowner engagement, to advance projects recommended in this plan.
- ▶ The Town should ensure land use and development ordinances support the provision of active transportation and recreation facilities recommended in this plan.
- ▶ Town staff should work to identify and pursue funding sources from state, Federal, nonprofit, and private sources to support the planning, design, and construction of bicycle and pedestrian projects.

MADISON COUNTY

Madison County is responsible for land use and land development ordinances in its boundaries. The County will be responsible for supporting the Town of Mars Hill's efforts to develop the regional trail network and leveraging associated economic development opportunities.

Anticipated Roles

- ▶ Madison County should coordinate with the Town of Mars Hill, FBRMPO, and NCDOT on projects that expand the regional trail network beyond municipal boundaries.

FRENCH BROAD RIVER METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

FBRMPO works with municipalities, counties, and NCDOT to develop plans and projects for transportation in the greater Asheville region. FBRMPO also ranks and prioritizes projects submitted to the SPOT, which is the methodology NCDOT uses to develop the STIP.

Anticipated Roles

- ▶ The French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization should work with the Town of Mars Hill, Madison County, and NCDOT to submit bicycle and pedestrian projects recommended in this plan for STIP funding through the SPOT process.

NCDOT

NCDOT allocates federal and state funding and establishes policies for transportation improvements in communities across North Carolina. Every two years, NCDOT develops the STIP, which identifies projects that will receive funding during a 10-year period. NCDOT policies, such as Complete Streets provide guidance and oversight for permitting and implementing active transportation projects. The Complete Streets Policy (adopted in 2009, updated in 2019) requires NCDOT to consider and incorporate multimodal facilities in the design and improvement of the state's transportation projects. According to the Complete Streets Policy, if an active transportation facility is included in an adopted local plan, the municipalities will not be held responsible for the cost. NCDOT maintains some roadways in Mars Hill and should be engaged during the design of projects within their ROW.

Anticipated Roles

- ▶ NCDOT should provide technical assistance to Mars Hill and its partners on the Complete Streets Policy, SPOT prioritization process, STIP projects, and other state funding opportunities.

MARS HILL UNIVERSITY

MHU is a major landowner and employment center within the community, and plays a role in facilitating active transportation for its students, faculty, and staff. Sections of the existing Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway traverse MHU property.

Anticipated Roles

- ▶ MHU should partner with the Town to implement additional greenway, sidewalk, and streetscape projects recommended in this plan to support active mobility and recreation on its campus.

FRIENDS OF BAILEY MOUNTAIN

Friends of Bailey Mountain supports conservation and recreation at Bailey Mountain Preserve, including access for trails.

Anticipated Roles

- ▶ Friends of Bailey Mountain should work with the Town of Mars Hill and other partners on projects that advance bicycle and pedestrian connections between the Town and Bailey Mountain Park and Preserve, and should continue to promote recreation in the community.

ACTION PLAN

The table below outlines strategies to implement prioritized bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, policies, and programs in Mars Hill based on a 10-year implementation plan. The Town should apply the following steps to implement recommendations identified in this plan. Estimated timeframe durations for the steps are categorized into short-term, medium-term, long-term, and ongoing or perpetual steps. These categories are described below.

STATUS DESCRIPTION	EXPLANATION
Short-Term	The action item could be initiated in the near future within 0-3 years.
Medium-Term	The action item could be initiated within the next 4-7 years.
Long-Term	The action item could be initiated within the next 8+ years.
Ongoing/Perpetual	The action item does not have an end date. It may be currently under progress and will continue to be implemented in perpetuity of this plan.

ACTION	DESCRIPTION	LEAD	SUPPORT	TIMELINE
Adopt the <i>Town of Mars Hill Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan</i>	Establish the <i>Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan</i> as the guiding planning document for bicycle and pedestrian transportation in Mars Hill	Town of Mars Hill	Town Staff	Short-Term
Coordinate with NCDOT on updates to the Madison County Comprehensive Transportation Plan to include recommendations from the <i>Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan</i>	The NCDOT Complete Streets Policy requires recommendations from locally adopted plans to be incorporated into the regional CTP for bicycle and pedestrian facilities to be evaluated as part of NCDOT roadway projects.	NCDOT	FBRMPO, Madison County, Town Staff	Short-Term
Coordinate with the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization on updates to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) to include recommendations from the <i>Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan</i>	To receive state funding through the STIP, projects must be submitted by a regional transportation planning organization for prioritization in NCDOT's Strategic Prioritization (SPOT) process. Including projects in the region's MTP establishes them as a priority and positions them for future funding.	FBRMPO	NCDOT Transportation Planning Division, NCDOT IMD, Madison County, Town Staff	Short-Term
Establish an advisory committee to guide plan implementation and advocate for walking and bicycling in Mars Hill	Establish a citizen advisory committee focused on multimodal transportation or parks and recreation to guide the implementation of recommended multimodal infrastructure, programs, and policies outlined in this plan.	Town of Mars Hill	Town Staff	Short-Term

ACTION	DESCRIPTION	LEAD	SUPPORT	TIMELINE
Adopt a municipal Complete Streets ordinance.	Adopt a municipal Complete Streets Policy based on NCDOT's statewide policy to guide multimodal improvements for the local street network.	Town of Mars Hill	Town Staff	Short-Term
Define standards and develop design guidance for active transportation facilities.	Establish a standard set of design standards for sidewalk, multiuse path, and bicycle facilities to ensure consistent design within the community that conforms to best practices where possible.	Town of Mars Hill	Town Staff	Short-Term
Adopt a maintenance policy for sidewalks and multiuse paths.	Adopt a bicycle and pedestrian facility maintenance policy to define maintenance tasks and frequencies, responsibilities, budget, and staff resources required to maintain facilities.	Town Staff	n/a	Short-Term
Ensure that bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure recommendations are incorporated into new developments by requiring developer-built multiuse paths and sidewalks where shown in officially adopted plans.	The Town should continue to coordinate closely with developers during the development review process on the inclusion of multimodal facilities in new developments where required.	Town of Mars Hill	Town Staff	Short-Term, Ongoing/ Perpetual
Develop funding strategies for bicycle and pedestrian facility implementation.	Review funding resources provided and coordinate with Town staff, FBRMPO, Madison County, and NCDOT IMD to determine funding strategies for plan recommendations. Consider prioritizing dedicated funding for multimodal facilities in the Town budget.	Town Staff	FBRMPO, NCDOT, Madison County	Short-Term, Ongoing/ Perpetual
Establish wayfinding standards for bicycle and pedestrian facilities.	Establish townwide standards for consistent placement, use, and design of wayfinding signage to create a comprehensive multimodal wayfinding system in Mars Hill.	Town of Mars Hill	Town Staff, NCDOT	Short- to Medium-Term

ACTION	DESCRIPTION	LEAD	SUPPORT	TIMELINE
Coordinate with NCDOT IMD to participate in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Count Program.	Coordinate with NCDOT to be involved in the NC State ITRE Non-Motorized Volume Data Program to collect bicycle and pedestrian counts along multimodal facilities.	Town Staff	NCDOT IMD	Short- to Medium-Term
Coordinate with Madison County Public Schools on local Safe Routes to School programming.	Coordinate with Madison County Public Schools staff to create a Safe Routes to School program at Mars Hill Elementary School.	Town Staff	Madison County Public Schools	Short- to Medium-Term
Adopt a policy outlining requirements for the provision of bicycle parking and storage in new development	Amend the Zoning Ordinance to require bicycle parking in new commercial development, with standards for placement and design.	Town of Mars Hill	Town Staff	Short- to Medium-Term
Conduct an accessibility study/ ADA Transition Plan of existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities.	Develop an ADA Transition Plan to identify areas of noncompliance and targeted strategies to ensure full accessibility and compliance with the requirements of the ADA.	Town Staff	n/a	Medium-Term
Develop a program to install new bicycle racks at existing locations	Develop a program to purchase bicycle racks and work with interested property owners to install at key locations in Mars Hill.	Town of Mars Hill	Town Staff, FBRMPO	Medium- to Long-Term
Coordinate with implementation partners on the development of priority projects.	Coordinate with NCDOT, MHU, community groups, and regional partners on the development of priority projects. Consider conducting feasibility studies for projects that need further study.	Town Staff	NCDOT, FBRMPO, MHU, Madison County	Ongoing/ Perpetual
Coordinate with NCDOT Division 13 on planned STIP projects to include bicycle and pedestrian facilities.	Coordinate with NCDOT Division 13 and IMD on future STIP projects to incorporate bicycle and pedestrian facilities and crossing treatments in roadway enhancements (i.e., Signal detection for bicyclists at signalized intersections, crosswalks, new multiuse facilities).	Town Staff, NCDOT Division 13	NCDOT IMD, FBRMPO	Ongoing/ Perpetual

ACTION	DESCRIPTION	LEAD	SUPPORT	TIMELINE
Coordinate with NCDOT Division 13 on their roadway resurfacing schedule to implement improvements.	Coordinate with NCDOT Division 13 on proposed HMIP projects to incorporate intersection improvements such as high visibility crosswalks in resurfacing projects.	Town Staff, NCDOT Division 13	NCDOT IMD, FBRMPO	Ongoing/ Perpetual
Prioritize funding for feasibility studies for the priority projects highlighted in this plan.	Secure funding for priority projects recommended in this plan, and conduct feasibility studies to advance projects toward design and construction.	Town of Mars Hill, Town Staff	NCDOT, FBRMPO	Ongoing/ Perpetual

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Achieving success in the implementation of projects, programs, and policies recommended in this plan is an important outcome of each recommendation, and can be tracked and measured in numerous ways. Measuring implementation success and identifying specific metrics is key to showing meaningful progress toward established goals, maintaining support from the community and elected leaders, and securing additional funding to build upon previous achievements.

Performance measures should be tailored to the specific context of Mars Hill to ensure expectations and achievements are realistic for a small community with limited resources. FHWA recommends aligning performance measures toward one or more of the following seven goals:

- ▶ **Connectivity**
 - ▷ Performance measures may evaluate changes in accessibility to community destinations such as schools, libraries, and jobs in addition to closing gaps in the network, reducing travel times and distances, and creating more opportunities for people to walk and bike.
- ▶ **Economic**
 - ▷ Performance measures may consider the creation of new jobs and businesses, increases in the tax base, and changes in visitor spending.
- ▶ **Environment**
 - ▷ Performance measures may evaluate changes in travel mode split that result in increased walking and biking, the installation of street trees and other landscaping elements, and changes in land use toward more sustainable development models.
- ▶ **Equity**
 - ▷ Performance measures may evaluate the provision of ADA-accessible and well-maintained infrastructure to support users of all ages and abilities, the geographic distribution of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and socioeconomic metrics associated with transportation disadvantage criteria tools such as the Transportation Disadvantage Index developed by NCDOT.
- ▶ **Health**
 - ▷ Performance measures may consider changes in travel mode split toward active transportation modes, reductions in crashes, and the perception of safety among bicyclists and pedestrians.
- ▶ **Livability**
 - ▷ Performance measures may evaluate the ability of people to travel to their destinations without having to drive, the length and connectivity of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, roadways with low traffic volumes and speeds, the maintenance condition of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and the number and type of destinations within the community.
- ▶ **Safety**
 - ▷ Performance measures may evaluate changes in crash trends, as well as user safety perceptions.

In Mars Hill, projects were scored and prioritized for implementation based on a set of prioritization criteria with specific measures that support the goals established at the outset of the planning process, as well as meeting community needs and priorities. This exercise established recommendations that lend themselves to meeting measurable outcomes.

FUNDING RESOURCES

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) authorized \$1.2 trillion for transportation and infrastructure spending, with \$550 billion of that figure going toward new investments and programs, while the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) provides \$700 billion in incentives, grants, and loans to support new infrastructure investments in the areas of clean energy, transportation, and the environment. These historic investments in infrastructure provide new and expanded opportunities for the planning, design, and construction of recommendations within the *Mars Hill Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan*. There are several Federal, state, and private funding programs that have been instrumental in the successful development of bicycle and pedestrian networks in North Carolina communities and can be leveraged to provide the necessary funding to implement the recommendations from the *Mars Hill Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan*.

FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The Federal government provides significant funding for active transportation which it distributes through Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) as well as through discretionary grant programs.

Federal funding opportunities that the Town of Mars Hill can pursue for the planning, design, and construction of the recommended bicycle and pedestrian improvements include Transportation Alternatives (TA), Surface Transportation Block Grant-Direct Attributable (STBG-DA), Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE), Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, Cost-Saving Transportation (PROTECT), Safe Streets for All (SS4A), Recreational Trails Program (RTP), Carbon Reduction Program (CRP), the Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program (ATIIP), North Carolina Land and Water Fund, and the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).

FEDERAL FUNDING PRIORITIES

To compete for discretionary grant programs, it is important to align with the priorities and goals of the awarding agency. This project involves various elements that enhance its competitiveness for discretionary funding and align with the merit and evaluation criteria for funding programs outlined in this memorandum.

Equity

USDOT discretionary grant programs under the current administration aim to reduce transportation-related disparities and adverse community and health impacts. The Justice40 initiative embodies this commitment to equity. Justice40 mandates that 40 percent of the overall benefits of certain Federal investments, including clean transportation, flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized, underserved, or overburdened by pollution. Several funding programs have less stringent or no match requirements for projects located in disadvantaged communities. The Town of Mars Hill falls outside of disadvantaged areas by the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST), so it will be important to understand locally relevant disparities within the population to best align with programs that feature Equity or Justice40 criteria.

Safety

One of USDOT's strategic goals for FY 22 to FY 26 is to make the transportation system safer for all people and advance a future without transportation-related serious injuries and fatalities. The National Roadway Safety Strategy (NRSS) outlines a comprehensive approach that communities can take to significantly reduce injuries and deaths on roadways, using a Safe System Approach that supports safer roads, safer speeds, safer people, safer vehicles, and post-crash care. As the FBRMPO and Land of Sky Rural Planning Organization (LOSRPO) develop their SS4A Action Plan, the Town of Mars Hill should ensure recommendations from the *Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan* are reflected in the SS4A Action Plan.

Sustainability and Resiliency

Climate change presents a significant and growing risk to transportation infrastructure. In the wake of Hurricane Helene, resiliency measures in transportation projects are even more imperative. USDOT is working to tackle the climate crisis by ensuring that transportation plays a significant role in the solution. This includes substantially reducing greenhouse gas emissions and transportation-related pollution and building more resilient and sustainable transportation systems to benefit and protect communities from the impacts of climate change. The implementation of the *Mars Hill Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan* aligns with this priority by reducing greenhouse gas emissions through increased bicycle and pedestrian travel and providing opportunities to improve stormwater management through the design process within the existing floodways.

Economic Competitiveness and Opportunity

This priority aims to grow an inclusive and sustainable economy, invest in the transportation system to provide American workers and businesses reliable and efficient access to resources, markets, and good-paying jobs. Several Federal discretionary grant programs aim to promote greater public and private investments in land-use productivity, including rural main street revitalization or locally driven density decisions that support equitable commercial and mixed-income residential development. The implementation of the recommendations in the *Mars Hill Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan* align with this priority by providing safe, multimodal connections to key recreational, educational, and cultural destinations within and throughout the Town limits.

Mobility and Accessibility

This priority aims to improve mobility and community connectivity and address gaps in the existing network, remove physical barriers for individuals by reconnecting communities to direct, affordable transportation options; and include transportation features that increase accessibility for non-motorized travelers. Projects that improve mobility are viewed favorably for several transportation grant programs. The *Mars Hill Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan* aligns with this priority by improving bicycle and pedestrian connectivity to the Mars Hill Recreation Park, MHU, Bailey Mountain Park and Preserve, the Park and Ride Lot, and downtown Mars Hill.

Innovation and Transformation

USDOT is investing in purpose-driven research and innovation to meet the challenges of the present and modernize a transportation system of the future that serves everyone today and in the decades to come. There are opportunities to incorporate innovative stormwater infrastructure such as green stormwater infrastructure and to use innovative construction methods such as top-down construction in environmentally sensitive areas.

STATE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

There are several state programs to support the development and construction of park facilities and greenways. NCDOT and the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (NCDNCR) North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation are the primary state agencies that fund planning, infrastructure, and programs for parks and greenways. The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ), North Carolina Department of Commerce (NCDOC), and the North Carolina Department of Agriculture administer discretionary grant programs focusing on public health and community development, when funding is available.

State funding opportunities that the Town of Mars Hill can pursue to implement recommendations in the *Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan* include the Great Trails State Program, Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF), and the Accessible Parks Grant.

LOCAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

While Federal and state funding can support the costs for parks and trails planning and construction activities, local funding is often ideal for supporting the delivery of specific components of projects or as a match for Federal and state funding programs. Municipalities often plan for funding of bicycle and pedestrian facilities through their budgetary process. Local funding is often necessary to supplement Federal and state funding.

There are a few local funding opportunities that the Town of Mars Hill can pursue, including developer- or in-lieu fees, developer agreements, impact fees, zoning requirements, bonds, and private grants for the Town. Developing Public/Private Partnerships (P3s) with employers and other private entities or establishing a corporate sponsorship program could also help advance the project.

POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS

One critical step in obtaining funding for the implementation of the *Mars Hill Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan* is building consensus and developing partnerships. Strong partnerships and broad support are a cornerstone of successful grant applications and are often invaluable to project teams for the provision of data and information that supports grant applications, sources of match funding, demonstration of broad-based community support to agencies awarding funding, and the provision of technical assistance during project development. Potential partners and supporters for the implementation of the plan may include, but are not limited to:

- ▶ State agencies including NCDOT, NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, NC Department of Commerce, NC Wildlife Resources Commission, NC Department of Environmental Quality, and NC Department of Health and Human Services
- ▶ French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization
- ▶ Land of Sky Regional Council
- ▶ Madison County
- ▶ Madison County Chamber of Commerce
- ▶ Tourism Development Authority of Madison County
- ▶ Madison County Economic Development
- ▶ Madison County Transportation Authority
- ▶ Blue Ridge Bicycle Club
- ▶ Great Trails State Coalition
- ▶ BikeWalk NC
- ▶ Mars Hill University
- ▶ Duke Energy
- ▶ Developers for new developments along the corridor

Please see [Appendix A](#) for a comprehensive list of funding opportunities.



AP

APPENDICES

OVERVIEW

The following appendices include additional materials key to the planning, development, and funding of the recommendations included within this plan:

- ▶ Appendix A: Funding Resources
- ▶ Appendix B: Community Engagement
- ▶ Appendix C: Cost Estimates



APPENDIX A: FUNDING RESOURCES

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) authorized \$1.2 trillion for transportation and infrastructure spending, with \$550 billion of that figure going toward new investments and programs. Additionally, the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) provides \$700 billion in incentives, grants, and loans to support new infrastructure investments in the areas of clean energy, transportation, and the environment. The following Federal, state, local and private funding programs have been instrumental in the successful development of bicycle and pedestrian networks in North Carolina communities. This section includes information on funding programs known at the time of publication; funding amounts, cycles, and programs may change over time. All discretionary grant programs are reimbursement-based unless otherwise stated.

FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

North Carolina communities have partnered with Federal agencies to obtain funding for the design and construction of multi-use paths, greenways, sidewalks, bike lanes, and improved crossings. The Federal government provides significant funding for active transportation which it distributes through Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) as well as through discretionary grant programs. The Town of Mars Hill falls within the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (FBRMPO) boundaries.

The BIL authorizes transportation funding for highway, transit, rail, bicycle and pedestrian, and safety programs and infrastructure through fiscal year (FY) 2026. Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) administers BIL funding for surface transportation projects, which it distributes to the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) and directly to Local Government Agencies (LGAs) through the Locally Administered Projects Program (LAPP). Communities wishing to access Federal funding must submit their candidate projects to their MPO, which then enter them into the NCDOT's Strategic Transportation Investment (STI) Mobility Formula. This formula ranks projects and identifies those for funding in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). These funds require a 20 percent match from the LGA. Federal transportation funds for bicycle and pedestrian projects are primarily distributed through four programs: Transportation Alternatives (TA), Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Direct Attributable (DA), Recreational Trails Program (RTP), and Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP).

Additional federal funding sources for bicycle and pedestrian projects are administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) with the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, and several discretionary grant programs administered by the US Department of Transportation (USDOT), National Park Service (NPS), and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

STATE + REGIONALLY ADMINISTERED FEDERAL FUNDING

Transportation funding, apportioned by Congress, using enabling legislation such as the former FAST Act and current BIL, goes from USDOT and its departments to State DOTs and both rural and metropolitan planning organizations. Federal funding often follows a formula, which provides USDOT with a blueprint for distribution of funding amongst the states. States and MPOs must distribute allocated funds.

Transportation Alternatives (TA)

Transportation Alternatives (TA) provides Federal funds for community-based projects that expand travel choices and enhance the transportation experience by integrating modes and improving the cultural, historic, and environmental aspects of our transportation infrastructure. In North Carolina, NCDOT administers TA funds and allocates funding to Program-eligible projects through STI. NCDOT has created a bicycle and pedestrian scoping guidance document for local governments that have received TA funding. The Bike/ Ped Project Scoping Guidance for Local Governments ([link below](#)) provides an overview of the four scoping tools used for locally managed, Federally-funded transportation projects in North Carolina. The document provides guidance on the project delivery process, scoping, identifying project risks, and project cost estimation.

▶ Total Funding: \$7.2 billion (FY22-26)

- ▶ Application Deadline/Cycle: Varies based on Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)/Rural Planning Organization (RPO) administering funding
- ▶ Project Awards: minimum \$100,000
- ▶ Match Requirements: 20 percent
- ▶ Eligible Applicants: MPOs, RPOs, local governments, nonprofits, tribal governments, regional transportation authorities, transit agencies
- ▶ Eligible Projects: Construction/planning/design of on-road or off-road trails for bicyclists and pedestrians; infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility; community improvement activities; refurbishment of historic transportation facilities such as the conversion and use of abandoned railroad corridors for trails; recreational trails program; environmental mitigation; streetscape improvements; safe routes to school projects.

https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation_alternatives/

<https://connect.ncdot.gov/projects/BikePed/Documents/BikePed%20Project%20Scoping%20Guidance%20for%20Local%20Governments.pdf>

Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG)

The Surface Transportation Block Grant program (STBG) provides flexible funding that may be used by States and localities for projects to preserve and improve the conditions and performance on any Federal-aid highway, bridge and tunnel projects on any public road, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and transit capital projects, including intercity bus terminals. STBG-Direct Attributable (DA) funding is one of the most flexible funding sources for highway programs and provides immense financial support to local agencies.

- ▶ Total Funding: \$30 million (FY24)
- ▶ Application Deadline/Cycle: February - Biennial
- ▶ Project Awards: minimum \$100,000
- ▶ Match Requirements: 20 percent non-Federal
- ▶ Eligible Applicants: MPOs, RPOs, local governments, nonprofits, tribal governments, regional transportation authorities, transit agencies
- ▶ Eligible Projects: Maintenance/restoration of existing recreational trails; Planning/construction of projects that facilitate intermodal connections; Protective features to enhance transportation facility resiliency; Projects that enhance travel and tourism; Bicycle and pedestrian projects.

As a Transportation Management Area (TMA), the FBRMPO has the authority to program available STBG-DA funding for transportation planning, bicycle, greenway, sidewalk, street and highway, transit, and other projects. STBG-DA funding could support the implementation of recommendations in the *Mars Hill Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan*.

<https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/stbg.cfm>

Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

The BIL reauthorized the RTP in FYs 22-26 as a set aside from the Transportation-Alternatives Program under the Surface Transportation Block Grant. The program funds state agencies to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both non-motorized and motorized recreational trail uses. The allocation of the total RTP budget to each state is based on a formula, mandated by law, which apportions half of the total funds equally among all states with the other half distributed in proportion to the estimated amount of non-highway recreational fuel use in each state. In North Carolina, NCDENR's Division of Parks and Recreation and State Trails Program manages these funds with a goal of helping citizens, organizations, and agencies plan, develop and manage all types of trails ranging from greenways and trails for hiking, biking, and horseback riding to river trails and off-highway vehicle trails.

- ▶ Total Annual Funding: \$1.49 million (FY23)

- ▶ Application Deadline/Cycle: Annual – Spring
- ▶ Project Awards: \$10,000 to \$100,000
- ▶ Match Requirement: 25 percent
- ▶ Eligible Applicants: Local Governments, government agencies, nonprofit agencies
- ▶ Eligible Projects: New trail/greenway construction or renovation; trailhead or trail markers; purchase of tools to construct/renovate greenway; land acquisition for trails; planning, legal, environmental, and permitting costs (up to 10 percent of grant amount)

Due to the high cost of construction relative to the available project awards through RTP, this funding could support land acquisition or the addition of trail markers for recommended greenways.

<https://trails.nc.gov/trail-grants/apply-grant>

Highway Safety Improvement Program

The purpose of the North Carolina Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) is to provide a continuous and systematic procedure that identifies and reviews specific traffic safety concerns throughout the state. The goal of the HSIP process is to reduce the number of traffic crashes, injuries, and fatalities by reducing the potential for these incidents on public roadways. USDOT provides this core Federal aid program through annual allocations, which vary from year to year. States must spend at least 15 percent of HSIP funds on biking and walking safety when bicyclist and pedestrian fatalities are 15 percent or more of traffic fatalities. NCDOT uses a set of criteria called safety warrants to identify locations that need improvements. NCDOT then evaluates these locations, designated as potentially hazardous locations, using crash analyses, field investigations, and other tools to develop safety recommendations and implement countermeasures.

<https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/hsip/reports/pdf/2020/nc.pdf>

<https://connect.ncdot.gov/resources/safety/Pages/NC-Highway-Safety-Program-and-Projects.aspx>

https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.gov/files/2023-10/NC_FY24HSP-tag.pdf

Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund

Congress established the Land and Water Conservation Fund in 1964 to create parks and open space; protect wilderness, wetlands, and refuges; preserve habitat; and enhance outdoor recreational opportunities. In 2020, the Great American Outdoors Act included a provision to permanently fund the LWCF using royalties from offshore oil and natural gas. Sixty percent of LWCF funding is allocated to the National Park Service, and the remaining forty percent of the funds are allocated to states and local governments according to a national formula for outdoor recreation development and land acquisition by local governments and state agencies. In North Carolina, the program is administered by the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. A project must be located on a single site.

- ▶ Total Funding: \$900 million (FY24)
- ▶ Application Deadline/Cycle: Annual
- ▶ Project Awards: up to \$500,000
- ▶ Match Requirements: 50 percent
- ▶ Eligible Applicants: North Carolina counties and incorporated municipalities, Federally recognized Native American tribes
- ▶ Eligible Projects: LWCF grants can be used to acquire land for a public park; to develop outdoor recreation and support facilities; or a combination of both.

North Carolina Land & Water Fund (NCLWF)

Created by the General Assembly in 1996, the NCLWF, formerly known as Clean Water Management Trust Fund, aims to conserve North Carolina's streams, rivers, and open space. This funding, distributed through the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (NCDENR), improves water quality,

sustains ecological diversity, and protects open space and cultural resources by funding projects to acquire lands, construct trails, preserve open space, restore the habitat for fish, wildlife, and other species, and enhance the filtering of stormwater runoff to reduce pollutants from entering water supplies. The NCLWF also funds mini grants of up to \$50,000 for transaction, property management, and stewardship costs associated with the donation of property or a permanent conservation agreement; applications for mini-grants are reviewed three times a year. All NCLWF funded projects must sign a permanent conservation agreement.

- ▶ Application Deadline/Cycle: April, August, January - Annual
- ▶ Project Awards: up to \$500,000
- ▶ Match Requirements: Not required, but encouraged for scoring
- ▶ Eligible Applicants: North Carolina counties and incorporated municipalities
- ▶ Eligible Projects: restoration of degraded lands and waterbodies, land acquisition, innovative stormwater, and planning projects

<https://nclwf.nc.gov/apply>

Carbon Reduction Program

The BIL establishes the Carbon Reduction Program (CRP), which provides funds for projects designed to reduce transportation emissions, defined as carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from on-road highway sources. Federal funds for the Carbon Reduction Program flow to NCDOT then through the MPOs/RPOs through a competitive call for projects. A state may transfer up to 50 percent of CRP funds to any other apportionment of the state including National Highway Performance, Program, Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program, Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program, National Highway Freight Program, and Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation (PROTECT) Formula Program. Title 23 of US code requires each state to apportion 65 percent of CRP funds based on population and can choose how to obligate the remaining 35 percent.

- ▶ Total Funding: \$6.4 billion (FY22-26)
- ▶ Application Deadline/Cycle: March – Annual
- ▶ Project Awards: minimum \$100,000
- ▶ Match Requirements: 20 percent
- ▶ Eligible Applicants: Municipalities, county governments, and public transit agencies
- ▶ Eligible Projects: projects that reduce transportation emissions, including transportation alternatives such as the planning, design, and construction of on-road and off-road trail facilities

The FBRMPO distributes funding from STBG, TA, and CRP funds through the Locally Administered Projects Program (LAPP). The FBRMPO holds a Locally Administered Projects Program (LAPP) call for projects eligible for STBG and TA funds.

https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/crp_fact_sheet.cfm

North Carolina's apportionment for CRP funds is \$170,984,555 for FY22-26, or over \$33 million per year.

<https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/2024-04/NCDOT%20Carbon%20Reduction%20Strategy%20Report.pdf>

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

The Community Development Block Grant Program provides annual grants on a formula basis to states, cities, and counties to develop viable urban communities by providing decent housing, living environments, and expanding economic opportunities for low- and moderate-income persons. The program is authorized under Title 1 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974. CDBG funds are allocated at the

federal level by HUD and at the state level by the NC Department of Commerce. All municipalities are eligible to receive State CDBG funds except for entitlement communities, which receive funds directly from HUD. Mars Hill is not an entitlement community and can receive State CDBG Public Infrastructure and/or Disaster Recovery funding to support the development of the Town's bicycle and pedestrian network.

- ▶ Total Funding: \$46,272,979 (FY24)
- ▶ Application Deadline/Cycle:
- ▶ Project Awards: minimum \$100,000
- ▶ Match Requirements: 20 percent
- ▶ Eligible Applicants: Municipalities, county governments, and public transit agencies
- ▶ Eligible Projects: Acquisition of real property; relocation and demolition; rehabilitation of residential and non-residential structures; construction of public facilities and improvements (including but not limited to streets, sidewalks, parks); public services within certain limits; activities relating to energy conservation and renewable energy resources.

<https://www.commerce.nc.gov/about-us/divisions-programs/rural-economic-development-division/community-development-block-grants-cdbg>

<https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/cdbg/cdbg-ta-products/#all-products>

https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning/communitydevelopment

\$46,272,979 represents the total CDBG funding allocated to North Carolina in FY24. Of that, entitlement communities receive \$31,228,039, leaving \$15,044,940 available to non-entitlement communities.

DISCRETIONARY GRANTS

The competitive, discretionary grant programs outlined in this section can provide millions of dollars toward the implementation of the *Mars Hill Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan*. These programs are competitive and occasionally require applicants to submit forms, project narratives, and benefit-cost analyses (BCAs) for construction projects; and encourage the submittal of supplemental materials and letters of support. The completion of a BCA involves the quantification and comparison of a project's expected costs and benefits according to USDOT-determined method. The result is a Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR). A project is considered cost-effective when the BCR is 1.0 or greater. Transparency in the assumptions and data used to complete the analysis, and documentation of a data sources in the BCA is essential to receiving construction funding from discretionary programs. Federal discretionary grant applications should emphasize how the project aligns with a program's merit criteria as well as following USDOT priorities and strategic goals.

- ▶ Equity: USDOT aims to reduce inequities across transportation systems and the communities they affect, and to support and engage people and communities to promote safe, affordable, accessible, and multimodal access to opportunities and services while reducing transportation-related disparities, adverse community impacts, and health effects. Justice40 embodies this commitment to equity. Justice40 mandates that 40 percent of the overall benefits of certain Federal investments, including climate change and clean transportation, flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized, underserved, or overburdened by pollution.
- ▶ Safety: One of USDOT's strategic goals for FY 22 to FY 26 is to make the transportation system safer for all people and advance a future without transportation-related serious injuries and fatalities. The National Roadway Safety Strategy (NRSS) outlines a comprehensive approach that communities can take to significantly reduce injuries and deaths on roadways, using a Safe System Approach that supports safer roads, safer speeds, safer people, safer vehicles, and post-crash care.
- ▶ Climate and Sustainability: Climate change presents a significant and growing risk to transportation infrastructure, as evidenced by the unprecedented destruction brought by Hurricane Helene in September 2024. USDOT is working to tackle the climate crisis by ensuring that transportation plays

a significant role in the solution. This includes substantially reducing greenhouse gas emissions and transportation-related pollution and building more resilient and sustainable transportation systems to benefit and protect communities.

- ▶ **Innovation and Transformation:** USDOT is investing in purpose-driven research and innovation to meet the challenges of the present and modernize a transportation system of the future that serves everyone today and in the decades to come.
- ▶ **Economic Strength and Global Competitiveness:** This priority aims to grow an inclusive and sustainable economy, invest in the transportation system to provide American workers and businesses reliable and efficient access to resources, markets, and good-paying jobs. One of the priorities of the Federal government is the promotion of diversity and inclusion in the workforce. Executive Order 14035 on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) in the Federal Workforce provided agencies with information, resources, and a methodology to assess the state of DEIA and give a framework to promote DEIA practices.
- ▶ **Rural Opportunities to Use Transportation for Economic Success (ROUTES):** This initiative prioritizes the needs of rural America by supporting rural transportation policy and equitable access for communities that face challenges related to safety, mobility, and economic development, addressing disparities in rural transportation infrastructure by developing user-friendly tools and information, aggregating DOT resources, and providing direct technical assistance to better connect rural communities with funding, financing, and outreach resources available.

Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE)

This program, formerly known as TIGER and BUILD, and now as Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grants, awards funding to invest in road, rail, transit, and port projects that promise to achieve national objectives and have a significant local or regional impact. Since the eligibility requirements of RAISE allow project sponsors at the State and local levels to obtain funding for multi-modal, multi-jurisdictional projects that are more difficult to support through traditional DOT programs. Historically, annual appropriations largely funded this program, however the BIL included \$7.5 billion in supplemental funding between FY 22 and 26. Since the program's inception, USDOT has awarded over \$14 billion to projects in all 50 states and several US territories.

- ▶ **Total Funding:** \$1.5 billion (FY24)
- ▶ **Application Deadline/Cycle:** February - Annual
- ▶ **Project Awards:**
 - ▷ **Planning Projects:** No minimum
 - ▷ **Capital Projects:** Minimum \$1 million (rural); minimum \$5 million (urban)
- ▶ **Match Requirement:** 20 percent– Federal share may increase in rural areas, Areas of Persistent Poverty, and Historically Disadvantaged Communities
- ▶ **Eligible Applicants:** State/local governments; multijurisdictional entity or group of entities; tribal government; transit agency.
- ▶ **Eligible Projects:** Capital projects (highway, intermodal, surface transportation, infrastructure, culvert replacement or stormwater runoff) and Planning (preparation for eligible surface transportation capital projects)

<https://www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants/about>

Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation Program (PROTECT)

The BIL established the Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation (PROTECT) Grant program to plan for and strengthen surface transportation to be more resilient to natural hazards, including climate change, sea level rise, flooding, extreme weather events, and other natural disasters to address the climate crisis through both formula and discretionary grant programs. USDOT seeks to fund projects through the discretionary program that: are grounded in the best available

scientific understanding of climate change risks, impacts, and vulnerabilities ;support the continued operation or rapid recovery of crucial local, regional, or national surface transportation facilities; utilize innovative and collaborative approaches to risk reduction, including the use nature-based solutions such as conservation, restoration, or construction of riparian and streambed treatments, marshes, wetlands, native vegetation, stormwater bioswales, breakwaters, reefs, dunes, parks, urban forests, and shade trees. The PROTECT discretionary program offers two types of awards: Planning Grants and Competitive Resilience Improvement Grants.

- ▶ Total Funding: \$1.46 billion (FY 24)
- ▶ Application Deadline/Cycle: August - Annual
- ▶ Project Awards: minimum of \$500,000
- ▶ Match Requirement: 20 percent– Federal share may increase in rural areas, Areas of Persistent Poverty, and Historically Disadvantaged Communities
- ▶ Eligible Applicants: State/local governments; Federally recognized tribes and affiliated groups; Planning and project organizations; US territories.
- ▶ Eligible Projects: highway projects, transportation facilities under chapter 53 of title 49 U.S.C; Planning activities; Resilience improvements; Community resilience and evacuation route activities.

<https://www.transportation.gov/rural/grant-toolkit/promoting-resilient-operations-transformative-efficient-and-cost-saving>

Bridge Investment Program (BIP)

This funding source, established through BIL, awards funds to projects that improve bridge and culvert condition, safety, efficiency, and reliability. The program is focused on existing bridges to reduce overall number of bridges in poor condition. The goals of the program are to 1) improve the safety, efficiency, and reliability of the movement of people and freight over bridges; 2) improve the condition of bridges in the United States; and 3) provide financial assistance that leverages and encourages non-Federal contributions from sponsors and stakeholders involved in the planning, design, and construction of eligible projects. There are three types of BIP grants—Large Bridge Projects, Planning Grants, and Bridge Projects.

- ▶ Total Funding: \$9.62 billion (FY23-26)
- ▶ Application Deadline/Cycle: Varies by Type – Annual
 - ▷ Large Bridge Project: August 1, 2025
 - ▷ Planning: October 1, 2025
 - ▷ Bridge Project: November 1, 2025
- ▶ Project Awards:
 - ▷ Large Bridge Project: \$50 million minimum \$100 million
 - ▷ Planning: no minimum/maximum
 - ▷ Bridge Project: \$2.5 million to \$100 million
- ▶ Match Requirements: 20 percent
- ▶ Eligible Applicants: State; Metropolitan Planning Organization; local government; political subdivision of a state; special purpose district or public authority with a transportation function; Federal Land Management Area (FMLA); tribal government; a multistate or multijurisdictional group of entities.
- ▶ Eligible Projects: Projects to replace, rehabilitate, or protect bridges in the National Bridge Inventory.

This funding source would be appropriate for implementation of Recommendation #7 – Carl Eller Road improvements to at grade pedestrian connection, which involves reallocating space on the I-26 bridge, grading work on the west side of the bridge, and constructing approximately 1,200 feet of new sidewalk.

<https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bridge/bip/>

Safe Streets For All (SS4A) Implementation Grant

The BIL established this program, which funds regional, local, and tribal initiatives to prevent roadway deaths and serious injuries. The program supports the development of a comprehensive safety action plan (Action Plan) that identifies the most significant roadway safety concerns in a community and the implementation of projects and strategies to address roadway safety issues. Action Plans are the foundation of the SS4A grant program. SS4A requires an eligible Action Plan be in place before applying to implement projects and strategies. Applicants can either receive Planning or Demonstration Grants (to complete a safety action plan) or Implementation Grants (to implement projects/strategies identified in an Action Plan).

- ▶ Total Funding: \$5 billion (FY22-26)
- ▶ Application Deadline/Cycle: Annual – Fall
- ▶ Project Awards: \$2.5 million to \$25 million
- ▶ Match Requirements: 20 percent
- ▶ Eligible Applicants: Local governments, transit agencies, MPOs, tribal governments
- ▶ Eligible Projects: Fund projects and strategies identified in an Action Plan; planning, design, and development activities for projects and strategies identified in Action Plan; must have an existing Action Plan to receive Implementation Grant funding.

In 2022, the French Broad River MPO and Land of Sky RPO won an Action Plan SS4A award. The Action Plan is currently being developed. There should be direct coordination with the FBRMPO to ensure SS4A recommendations reflect recommendations in the *Mars Hill Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan*.

<https://www.transportation.gov/grants/SS4A>

Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program (ATIIP)

Among the new discretionary grants created through the BIL is the Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program (ATIIP), which was authorized for \$200 million annually. This program will award \$45 million, as allocated by the FY23 Omnibus Appropriations Act, to communities for projects that plan, design, or construct safe, affordable, and accessible active transportation networks (facilities that connect destinations within a community) and transportation spines (facilities that connect communities). ATIIP takes a holistic, network-level approach to walking, biking, and rolling by addressing gaps in active transportation routes that push people to other modes of travel.

- ▶ Total Funding: \$45 million (FY23)
 - ▷ Construction Grants: up to \$41,550,000 – of that, at least 30 percent (\$12,465,000) will be set aside for construction of active transportation networks and at least 30 percent (\$12,465,000) will be set aside for construction of active transportation spines
 - ▷ Planning & Design Grants: at least \$3,000,000 and up to \$19,620,000 will be awarded
- ▶ Application Deadline/Cycle: June 17, 2024 – Contingent on future year allocations
- ▶ Project Awards:
 - ▷ Construction Grants: Recommended minimum of \$7.5 million and recommended maximum of \$12 million (general applicants) and \$15 million (qualified disadvantaged communities)
 - ▷ Planning & Design Grants: Recommended minimum of \$100,000 and recommended maximum of \$2 million
- ▶ Match Requirements: 20 percent or more (qualified disadvantaged census tracts are those with 40 percent or higher of the population falling below poverty level and do not require any match)
- ▶ Eligible Applicants: Local/regional governments; MPOs and regional planning councils; Multicounty special districts; States; Tribes; Multistate group of governments
- ▶ Eligible Projects: Projects that support active transportation networks connecting destinations.
- ▶ Merit Criteria: Mobility and Community Connectivity; Community Support; Commitment to Increasing Walking and Biking; Financial Completeness; Equitable Development; Other DOT Goals and Priorities

(safety, accessibility to jobs, economic competitiveness, environmental protection, quality of life)

Mars Hill is a strong candidate for this funding and can use the *Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan* as a blueprint for identifying competitive projects. It is important to note that Mars Hill does not have any census tracts that are qualified disadvantaged per ATIIIP guidance and that the portion of the Town that is considered disadvantaged by the Climate and Environmental Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) is the very small segments to the east of I-26. As such, it will be crucial to clearly describe the ways that a selected project aligns with the ATIIIP merit criteria.

<https://www.railstotrails.org/policy/funding/active-transportation-infrastructure-investment-program/>

The future of ATIIIP is contingent on congressional appropriations to fund future fiscal years, beyond FY2023.

National Endowment for the Arts Our Town Program

Our Town is the National Endowment for the Arts' creative placemaking grants program. Through project-based funding, the NEA supports projects that integrate arts, culture, and design activities into efforts that strengthen communities by advancing local economic, physical, and/or social outcomes. These projects require a partnership between a local government entity and nonprofit organization, one of which must be a cultural organization; and should engage in partnership with other sectors (such as agriculture and food, economic development, education and youth, environment and energy, health, housing, public safety, transportation, and workforce development). Cost share/matching grants range from \$25,000 to \$150,000, with a minimum cost share/match equal to the grant amount.

<https://www.arts.gov/grants/our-town>

STATE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

North Carolina communities have partnered with state agencies to build multi-use paths, greenways, sidewalks, bike lanes and improve crossings. NCDOT, North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (NCDNCR), and North Carolina Department of Commerce (NCDOC) are the primary state agencies that fund bicycle and pedestrian planning, infrastructure, and programs. The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ), and the North Carolina Department of Agriculture administer discretionary grant programs focusing on public health and community development, when funding is available.

Discretionary state grants promote alignment with both statewide goals and initiatives. While these are similar to Federal priorities and strategies, they are distinct to North Carolina and include the following:

- ▶ North Carolina Executive Order 80: North Carolina's Commitment to Address Climate Change and Transition to a Clean Energy Economy: <https://governor.nc.gov/documents/files/executive-order-no-80-north-carolinas-commitment-address-climate-change-and-transition-clean-energy/open>
- ▶ North Carolina Executive Order 246: North Carolina's Transformation to a Clean, Equitable Economy: <https://governor.nc.gov/executive-order-no-246/open>
- ▶ NC Moves 2050 Plan: <https://www.ncdot.gov/initiatives-policies/Transportation/nc-2050-plan/ncmoves2050/Pages/default.aspx>
- ▶ Great Trails State Plan: <https://www.ncdot.gov/divisions/integrated-mobility/multimodal-planning/great-trails-state/Pages/default.aspx>
- ▶ Statewide Transportation Improvements Program (STIP): <https://connect.ncdot.gov/projects/planning/pages/state-transportation-improvement-program.aspx>
- ▶ Strategic Highway Safety Plan (FY 24-FY 26): <https://www.nhtsa.gov/document/north-carolina-fy2024-2026-highway-safety-plan>
- ▶ NC Clean Transportation Plan: <https://www.ncdot.gov/initiatives-policies/environmental/climate-change/Pages/ncctp-executive-summary-final-report.aspx>

Great Trails State Program Fund

The North Carolina General Assembly's 2023-2025 budget passed in October 2023 invests \$54.9 million to advance trail and greenway infrastructure in North Carolina. This funding investment comes during the 2023's North Carolina Year of the Trail celebration, the largest celebration of outdoor recreation in North Carolina history. The budget creates a new, non-recurring \$25 million trail and greenway funding program over two fiscal years called the Great Trails State Program. The program provides funding for the new trail development and extension of existing trails with the goal of accelerating the completion of significant trails statewide. This includes paved trails or greenways, natural surface trails, biking trails, equestrian trails, and any other type of trail recognized by the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.

- ▶ Total Funding: \$25 million per year (FY23-25)
- ▶ Application Deadline/Cycle: Fall 2025 – Annual
- ▶ Project Awards: \$100,000 (minimum for planning/design/acquisition minimum), \$250,000 (minimum for maintenance of paved trails, and \$300,000 (minimum for construction) and up to \$500,000
- ▶ Match Requirements:
 - ▷ Tier 1 County: one non-State dollar (\$1.00) for every four dollars (\$4.00) of State funds
 - ▷ Tier 2 County: one non-State dollar (\$1.00) for every two dollars (\$2.00) of State funds
 - ▷ Tier 3 County: one non-State (\$1.00) for every one dollar (\$1.00) of State funds
- ▶ Eligible Applicants: Municipalities/counties, regional governments, public authorities, nonprofit organizations
- ▶ Eligible Projects: Planning; design; environmental assessment or permitting and review; land or easement acquisition; trail construction; trail structures (bridges); trail amenities like trailhead parking, and signage; maintenance; matching funds for other Federal or non-state grants

<https://www.ncparks.gov/about-us/grants/great-trails-state-program>

<https://greattrailsstatecoalition.org/latest/#:~:text=The%20North%20Carolina%20General%20Assembly's,outdoor%20recreation%20in%20American%20history>

County tier designations are established by the NCDOC. In 2025, Madison County is a Tier 2 County.

Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF)

Since 1994, the North Carolina parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) awards matching grants to local governments for parks, public beach access, and improvements to state parks. The program helps local governments reach their park and public access goals and improve the quality of life in their communities. Funding for PARTF is allocated annually, and the Parks and Recreation Authority, a citizen board appointed by the Governor, President Pro Tempore of NC Senate, and Speaker of the NC House of Representatives select grant recipients and allocate the funding. The projects must be located on a single site, and the applicant must own or have at least a 25-year signed lease or easement for the property where the PARTF facility will be located.

- ▶ Total Funding: \$8.5 million (FY24)
- ▶ Application Deadline: Annual – May
- ▶ Project Awards: up to \$500,000
- ▶ Match Requirements: 50 percent
- ▶ Eligible Applicants: North Carolina counties and incorporated municipalities. Public authorities, as defined by GS 159-7, are also eligible if they are authorized by N.C. general statutes to acquire land and develop recreation facilities for public use.
- ▶ Eligible projects: Land acquisition; construction or renovation of facilities for a linear or non-linear public park; must be located on a single site and applicant must own or have at least a 25-year signed lease/easement for the property.

<https://www.ncparks.gov/about-us/grants/parks-and-recreation-trust-fund>

Accessible Parks Grant

The Accessible Parks Grant Program is administered through the Division of Parks and Recreation and the North Carolina PARTF. It provides \$12.5 million in matching grants for parks and recreation to benefit people living with disabilities in North Carolina. Grants can be used for the construction of special facilities, or adaptation of existing facilities that meet the unique needs of persons living with disabilities or enable them to participate in recreational and sporting activities, regardless of their abilities. Facilities built or renovated with an Accessible Parks grant must be available for public recreational use for at least 25 years.

- ▶ Total Annual Funding: \$12.5 million (FY25)
- ▶ Application Deadline/Cycle: March 3, 2025
- ▶ Project Awards: up to \$500,000
- ▶ Match Requirements: 20 percent match (The value of in-kind services, such as volunteer work, cannot be used as part of the match.)
- ▶ Eligible Applicants: North Carolina counties and incorporated municipalities, including public authorities authorized to develop recreational facilities for the general public
- ▶ Eligible Projects: Construction of special facilities and adaptation of existing facilities. Applicants cannot request Accessible Parks Grant funding for and active PARTF site or land acquisition.

<https://www.ncparks.gov/about-us/grants/accessible-parks-grant>

Strategic Transportation Investments (STI)

The Strategic Transportation Investments law, passed in 2013, establishes the Strategic Mobility Formula, which allocates available funding based on data-driven scoring and local input. NCDOT, working collaboratively with MPOs and RPOs, uses the Strategic Mobility Formula to develop the STIP, which identifies projects that will receive funding during a 10-year period. The STIP is state and federally mandated and updated by NCDOT every two years. The Strategic Mobility Formula groups projects in three categories: Division Needs, Regional Impact, and Statewide Mobility.

FUNDING CATEGORY	FUNDING DISTRIBUTION	OVERVIEW
Division Needs	30%	NCDOT’s 14 transportation divisions share funding in this category equally. Project scores are based 50 percent on data and 50 percent on rankings by MPOs and RPOs and the NCDOT Divisions.
Regional Impact	30%	Projects on this level compete within regions made up of two NCDOT Divisions with funding based on population. Project scores are based 70 percent on data and 30 percent on rankings by MPOs and RPOs and the NCDOT Divisions.
Statewide Mobility	40%	Projects in this category are of statewide significance and are based 100 percent on data.

NCDOT programs independent bicycle and pedestrian projects in the Division Needs category. Eligible bicycle and pedestrian projects submitted for prioritization must be included in a locally adopted plan and have a minimum project cost of \$100,000. Eligible activities include right-of-way (ROW) acquisition, design, and construction. Additionally, the Statewide Transportation Investments (STI) law prohibits the use of state funding for bicycle and pedestrian projects, requiring municipalities to provide the 20 percent match for Federally-funded projects.

Bicycle and Pedestrian STI Prioritization: Qualitative Scoring

Local input points represent 50 percent of the scoring for bicycle and pedestrian projects. MPOs and RPOs assign 25 percent of local input points, which are determined by municipal and county project priorities and public comment. NCDOT Division Engineers assign the remaining 50 percent of the local input points.

Bicycle and Pedestrian STI Prioritization: Quantitative Scoring

CRITERIA	MEASURE	DIVISION NEEDS (50%)
Safety	(Number of crashes x 40%) + (Crash severity x 20%) + (Safety risk x 20%) + (Safety benefit x 20%)	20%
Accessibility / Connectivity	Points of Interest pts + Connection pts + Route pts	15%
Demand / Density	# of households and employees per square mile near project	10%
Cost Effectiveness	(Safety + Accessibility / Connectivity + Demand / Density) / Cost to NCDOT	5%

It is highly recommended to submit the Town of Mars Hill submit projects identified in the *Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan* to NCDOT’s prioritization 8.0 (P8.0) through the FBRMPO. The schedule for the next round of prioritization (P8.0) has not yet been announced. Depending on project scoring, this will open up State funding. It is important to note that since the plan recommendations only falls within the boundaries of the FBRMPO, funding through the STIP will be more competitive. The most competitive funding source that the FBRMPO is eligible for will be Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funding, of which 55 percent of a State’s apportionment (after the set-aside for Transportation Alternatives) is allocated in proportion of the relative shares of the population to various categories of areas, including urban areas with a population of at least 5,000 but no more than 49,999.

Project Bundling

Project sponsors can bundle multiple bicycle and pedestrian projects to better compete with other projects submitted in the Division Needs category. NCDOT allows bundled projects across various geographies and project types. Projects do not have to be contiguous or related, and projects can fall within a single municipality or across multiple jurisdictions. Bundled projects must have one project manager, a TAP eligible entity. It will be important to consider projects to bundle together in a P8.0 submission.

Statewide Projects Funds

- ▶ Small Construction Funds: These funds were established in 1985 to fund small projects in and around cities and towns that could not be funded in the STIP. Funds are allocated equally to each of 14 Transportation Divisions. Funds can be used on a variety of transportation projects for municipalities, counties, businesses, schools, and industries throughout the State. Funds projects up to \$250,000 per fiscal year, unless otherwise approved by the Secretary of Transportation. ROW and utility relocations should be provided and accomplished at no cost to NCDOT. Funding requests should be submitted to the Division Engineer providing technical information such as location, improvements being requested, and project timeline.
- ▶ Statewide Contingency Funds: These funds were created for statewide rural or small urban highway improvements and related transportation enhancements to public roads/public facilities, industrial access roads, and spot safety projects. The President Pro Tempore of the Senate, the Speaker of the House, and the Secretary of Transportation sponsor project requests from this fund. \$12 million in funds are administered by the Secretary of Transportation. Requests can be submitted from municipalities, counties, businesses, schools, citizens, legislative members, and NCDOT staff. Request should include a clear description and justification of the project.
- ▶ Economic Development Funds: These funds were created to expedite transportation projects that

promote commercial growth as well as either job creation or job retention. \$2500 per job (new & retained) allowed unless waived by the Secretary of Transportation. Funds projects up to \$400,000 per fiscal year, unless otherwise approved by the Secretary of Transportation. New access roads must be approved by NCDOT and serve multiple property owners or government owned property; roads will become part of the State Highway System or serve as public roads maintained by a government agency.

- ▶ **High Impact / Low-Cost Funds:** This program provides funds complete low-cost projects with high impacts to the transportation system including intersection improvement projects, minor widening projects, and operational improvement projects. Funds are allocated equally to each of 14 Transportation Divisions. Each Division is responsible for selecting their own scoring criteria for determining projects funded in this program. At a minimum, Divisions must consider all of the following in developing scoring formulas: (1) The AADT of a roadway and whether the proposed project will generate additional traffic. (2) Any restrictions on a roadway. (3) Any safety issues with a roadway. (4) The condition of the lanes, shoulders, and pavement on a roadway. (5) The site distance and radius of any intersection on a roadway. Funds projects up to \$1.5 million per fiscal year, unless otherwise approved by the Secretary. Projects are expected to be under contract within 12 months of funding approval by the Board of Transportation.

<https://connect.ncdot.gov/projects/planning/Economic%20Development/Small%20Project%20Fund%20Request.docx>

LOCAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

While Federal funding can support high-cost projects, local funding is often ideal for supporting the delivery of specific components of greenway projects or as a match for Federal funding programs. Municipalities often plan for funding of bicycle and pedestrian facilities through their Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Local funding is often necessary to supplement Federal and state funding and can come in various forms.

Developer Built Trails/In-Lieu Fees

North Carolina communities can require developers to dedicate land for greenways and recreational areas, open space, streets, and sidewalks through local land use and development ordinances. In-lieu fees are one-time fees that developers pay to municipalities instead of dedicating land for these purposes. These fees can then be used to fund larger capital and operational improvements. For example, the Town of Cary built its first greenway 40 years ago, now has over 80 miles of greenway trails, and requires developers to set aside important open space providing trail connectivity, wildlife habitat corridors, and water quality protection. Cary requires developers to dedicate land or make payment in-lieu of public park and/or greenway development to serve the recreational needs of residents.

The recommendations in the *Mars Hill Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan* that intersect with private development could obtain in-lieu fees that could be used as match/leverage funding for Federal grant opportunities.

Developer Constructed/Development Agreements

Development agreements are legislative land use tools that allows local governments to negotiate binding contractual agreements with private property owners that vest developers' rights while allowing for a jurisdiction to obtain community benefits. Development agreements can secure enhanced public amenities in exchange for expanded land use entitlements beyond those that could otherwise be secured through conditional rezoning or regulatory tools like site plans and subdivision approvals. In 2005, the North Carolina General Assembly enacted Part 3D of North Carolina General Statute (NCGS) 160A, Article 9 that authorized municipalities and counties to enter into these agreements to facilitate larger scale development projects that include the implementation of public infrastructure projects. NCGS 16D Article 10, enacted in 2019, expanded options for development agreements to allow them to be used for smaller projects, and allowing provisions to be incorporated into zoning conditions.

Capital Improvement Plan

A Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is one element in a municipality's long-term planning process. It is a bridge between the municipality's Comprehensive Plan and short-term planning for infrastructure and operations. A Capital Improvement Program analyzes major facility and equipment needs, establishes priorities, estimates fiscal resources, and schedules the development of funded projects. For example, the City of Raleigh funds parks, greenways, and active transportation facilities through the city's Capital Improvement Program. The Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department's CIP primary sources of funding come from Parks and Recreation Bonds, Facility Fees, General Fund (Tax Base), grants, and donations.

Zoning Requirements

Conditional zoning is a popular development regulation tool. The standards in conventional zoning districts must be uniformly applied throughout a city or county. The same permitted uses and dimensional standards apply to all property placed in the same zoning district. However, conditional zoning districts can include individualized development conditions. For some developments, the location, construction standards, and financing of roads, utilities, parks, and greenways are important for both the developer and local government. G.S. 160D-1006(d) allows a development agreement to include mutually acceptable provisions for financing public facilities, provided any measures offered by the developer beyond those that could be required by the local government are expressly set out in the agreement. These additional measures can include donation of land and construction of public facilities but cannot include a tax or impact fee not otherwise authorized.

Impact Fees

Impact fees represent financial payments made to a local government by a developer to fund certain off-site capital improvements needed to accommodate future growth. In North Carolina, local governments can impose impact fees on developers to offset the budgetary impact a new development places on public roads, schools, parks, recreational facilities, and water and sewerage. Many North Carolina communities impose impact fees for transportation, parks and recreation, and open space facility needs. For example, the City of Durham imposes transportation impact fees to fund for a portion of the costs for new streets and sidewalks, paving, grading, resurfacing, and widening of existing streets, traffic control signals and markings, lighting, and crosswalks. Durham also uses development fees for open space and parks and recreation for the acquisition of park land and the provision of facilities, including athletic fields, parks, playgrounds, courts, recreation centers, shelters, stadiums, arenas, swimming pools, lighting, trail construction, and bike paths.

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PRIVATE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Private grant opportunities offer more limited information on the number of applications received per cycle, so determining the competitiveness of the funding sources listed in this section is nebulous. With few exceptions, private grant awards are often smaller.

Public/Private Partnerships

Public private partnerships (P3s) are long-term contractual agreements between a public agency and a private entity to design, build, finance, operate and/or maintain infrastructure projects. This allows for greater private participation in the delivery of projects and allows private partners to share in the risks for design, construction, finance, and long-term operation of facilities. P3s give public entities access to private capital, technology and expertise; and can accelerate project delivery, encourage innovation, and allow partners to manage projects more efficiently. However, they require substantial up-front administrative costs and procurement may involve complicated financial and legal issues. P3s and may not deliver the best value as compared to traditional or other alternative delivery methods.

Partnerships engender a spirit of cooperation, civic pride, and community participation. The key to the involvement of private partners is to make a compelling argument for their participation. For example, specific segments of a greenway may make critical connections to employment centers or potential partners' place of business, which would incentivize private participation in its design and construction. Furthermore, signage at trail heads or interpretive signage along greenway systems can incentivize private participation through name recognition for corporate partners. Mars Hill could employ a P3 strategy to leverage private funds by working with foundations and private donors, thus furthering implementation of the recommendations in the *Mars Hill Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan*.

Corporate Sponsorships

Corporate sponsorships create a pathway for corporations or nonprofits to develop long term partnerships fitting with their priorities. By offering opportunities for corporations to sponsor construction or signage, they can market their company while also contributing to the development of a trail. Furthermore, a trail or greenway can offer various levels of corporate sponsorship to accelerate the development of projects. For example, Buncombe County established a corporate sponsorship program for their Connect Buncombe effort.

<https://connectbuncombe.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Corp-Sponsor-flyer-electronic-5822.pdf>

AARP Community Challenge

The AARP Community Challenge provides small grants to fund quick-action projects that can help communities become more livable for people of all ages. AARP accepts applications for projects that improve public spaces, housing, transportation, civic engagement, coronavirus recovery, diversity, and inclusion, and more. Project types include those that provide permanent physical improvements in the community, temporary demonstrations that lead to long-term change, and innovative programming or services. The program is open to 501(C)(3), 501(C)(4) and 501(c)(6) nonprofits and government entities. Grants can range from several hundred dollars for smaller, short-term activities to several thousand or tens of thousands of dollars for larger projects.

- ▶ Total Funding: \$3.8 million
- ▶ Grant Deadline/Cycle: March – Annual
- ▶ Project Awards: \$500 to \$50,000
- ▶ Match Requirements: N/A
- ▶ Eligible Applicants: Governments and nonprofit organizations
- ▶ Eligible Projects: Projects that improve public spaces, transportation, and inclusion that provide permanent physical improvements in the community and innovative programming or services.

Additionally, AARP has introduced a Capacity Building Microgrant program, which provides \$2,500 to either conduct a walk audit to enhance pedestrian safety and walkability or to start/grow a community garden. The Capacity Building Microgrant is better suited to fund amenities after the construction of the greenway.

<https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/community-challenge/>

Golden LEAF Foundation

The Golden LEAF Foundation is a nonprofit organization established in 1999 to receive a portion of North Carolina's funding received from the 1998 Master Settlement Agreement with cigarette manufacturers. Golden LEAF works to increase economic opportunity in North Carolina's rural and tobacco-dependent communities through leadership in grantmaking, collaboration, innovation, and stewardship as an independent and perpetual foundation. Golden LEAF's grantmaking focuses on the following priorities: Job creation and economic investment; workforce preparedness; agriculture; and community competitiveness, capacity, and vitality. Golden LEAF has two standard programs open to eligible entities seeking grants: Open Grants Program and Economic Catalyst Program. These programs complement other ongoing initiatives of the Foundation, such as the Community-Based Grants Initiative.

- ▶ **Open Grants Program:** The Open Grants Program process is open to all governmental entities and 501(c)(3) organizations that propose projects in Golden LEAF's priority areas. This program is for economic development projects aligned with the Golden LEAF priority areas. Most awards in the Open Grants Program will be for \$200,000 or less.
- ▶ **Economic Catalyst Program:** The Economic Catalyst process is open to governmental entities and 501(c)(3) organizations with projects that will create jobs at risk without Golden LEAF funding. Grants include funds for public infrastructure, job training, upfit for buildings owned by governmental or nonprofit entities, or equipment acquisition where the building or equipment will be leased or sold at fair-market value to a company creating jobs. Grants are available only for projects that include a specific company's commitment to create full-time jobs in NC.
- ▶ **Community-Based Grants Initiative:** Each year, the Golden LEAF Foundation invites organizations from counties from a different Prosperity Zone to participate in the Community-Based Grant Initiative (CBGI). The process is competitive, but organizations from all counties within the Prosperity Zone will have an opportunity to apply. The CBGI identifies projects with the potential to have a significant impact. It is a focused process with grants targeted toward investments in the building blocks of economic growth. Projects must address economic development, agriculture, workforce preparedness, infrastructure, and capital costs necessary to create health care jobs. County managers serve a key role in the process. Each county manager will submit a slate of up to four projects for consideration. Applicants must be 501(c)(3) organizations or governmental entities, such as county and municipal governments, community colleges, or universities. Golden Leaf limits awards to no more than three projects per county and will total no more than \$1.5 million per county.
- ▶ **Flood Mitigation Program:** Each year, Golden LEAF funds local governments that aim to construct new or improve existing stormwater infrastructure, including natural drainage and flood control equipment, repair existing stormwater infrastructure, support engineering expenses related to planning and development of flood mitigation solutions. The deadline for this funding is in March, annually, and applicants can request up to \$2 million per project.

<https://goldenleaf.org/programs/>

People for Bikes Community Grant Program

The People For Bikes Community Grant Program supports bicycle infrastructure projects and targeted advocacy initiatives that make it easier and safer for people of all ages and abilities to ride. People For Bikes accepts grant applications from non-profit organizations with a focus on bicycling, active transportation, or community development; city or county agencies or departments, and state or Federal agencies working locally. People For Bikes focuses most grant funds on bicycle infrastructure projects, such as bike paths, lanes, trails and bridges, mountain bike facilities, bike parks and pump tracks, BMX facilities, and end-of-trip facilities such as bike racks, bike parking, bike repair stations and bike storage. Advocacy projects funded through the program include open street events and campaigns to increase investment in bicycle infrastructure. People For Bikes accepts requests for funding up to \$10,000. People For Bikes does not require a specific percentage match, but they will not consider requests in which the grant funding would amount to 50 percent or more of the project budget.

<https://www.peopleforbikes.org/grant-guidelines>

National Association of Realtors Placemaking Grants

The National Association of Realtors (NAR) funds placemaking and smart growth grants to make communities better places to live by transforming unused or underutilized sites into welcoming destinations accessible to everyone in a community.

- ▶ Smart Growth Grants: Smart Growth grants can fund visioning sessions, community workshops, and placemaking visioning for meaningful transportation projects and issues.
- ▶ Placemaking Grants: Placemaking Grants fund the creation of new, outdoor public spaces and destinations in a community. This program funds amenities such as street furniture, paint, signage, materials, landscaping, murals, site preparation, and artist fees. A state or local REALTOR® association must submit applications, and grants provide up to \$5,000 per award.

<https://realtorparty.realtor/community-outreach/>

Two for the Trails (Athletic Brewing Company)

Athletic Brewing Company provides funding to protect and restore trails, waterways, beaches, parks, and urban areas in need of maintenance.

- ▶ Total Funding: \$2 million annually
- ▶ Grant Deadline/Cycle: Summer – Annual
- ▶ Project Awards: up to \$50,000
- ▶ Match Requirements: 20%
- ▶ Eligible Applicants: Any registered LLC with an environmental cleanup project.
- ▶ Eligible Projects: Projects that restore trails and outdoor recreation facilities.

<https://athleticbrewing.com/pages/two-for-the-trails-application>

Rails to Trails Trail Grants

Rails to Trails Conservancy sponsors this grant program to invest in the necessary infrastructure and programming to create more access to trail. These grants help organizations and government agencies accelerate their trail network plans, while supporting community-based organizations working to connect more people to these spaces in neighborhoods across the country. Since 2008, almost \$3 million has been awarded to more than 225 organizations.

<https://www.railstotrails.org/our-work/grants/>

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

The following Technical Assistance Programs can be leveraged to provide additional design and technical expertise to assist with obtaining funding and providing additional resources during the design and construction process.

Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA)

The National Parks Service (NPS) Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program supports community-led natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation projects across the nation. Although RTCA is not a traditional funding program, NPS staff provide planning, design and technical expertise for trails and outdoor recreation projects. Depending on the scale of the project, RTCA can invest up to four years of planning and project development assistance. Eligible entities include community groups, nonprofit organizations, tribes, and government agencies. Technical assistance services include:

- ▶ Define project vision and goals.
- ▶ Set priorities and build consensus.

- ▶ Inventory and map community resources.
- ▶ Identify funding strategies.
- ▶ Identify and analyze key issues and opportunities.
- ▶ Design community outreach, participation, and partnerships plans.
- ▶ Create project management and strategic action plans.
- ▶ Develop concept plans for trails, parks, and natural areas.

<https://www.nps.gov/orgs/rtca/index.htm>



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APPENDIX B: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The following section contains materials summarizing community engagement, or shared at public events.

Included in this section are the following items:

- ▶ Steering Committee Meeting #1 Notes
- ▶ Steering Committee Meeting #2 Notes
- ▶ Steering Committee Meeting #3 Notes
- ▶ Steering Committee Meeting #4 Notes
- ▶ Pop-Up Event Boards
- ▶ Media Coverage
- ▶ Public Survey Results



STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #1 NOTES



KICK-OFF MEETING > TOWN OF MARS HILL BICYCLE + PEDESTRIAN PLAN

PROJECT	DATE + TIME	LOCATION	CONSULTANT TEAM
Town of Mars Hill Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan	April 24, 2024, 10:00am-12:00am	Microsoft Teams	ATTENDEES Allison Anolik, McAdams Andrew Hickling, McAdams Will Washam, McAdams Christopher Normie, McAdams

MARS HILL BICYCLE + PEDESTRIAN PLAN KICKOFF MEETING AGENDA

AGENDA

- > Introductions of steering committee attendees
 - o Nathan Bennett—Town Manager for Mars Hill
 - o Alexius Farris—North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Integrated Mobility Division (IMD) Regional Planner
 - o Larry Burda—Chair of Hot Springs Health Program
 - o Kevin Barnette—active cyclist and member of the school board
 - o Ryan Bell—works at Mars Hill University (MHU), serves on Parks & Rec Board and chairs the Friends of Bailey Mountain
 - o Grainger Caudle—teaches at MHU, wants to encourage students to walk and bike more
 - o Larry Davis—Town Alderman, interested in improving connectivity
 - o Meredith Doster—lives downtown and walks her dog every day. Very eager to walk and bike around town as she used to live in Europe.
 - o Bill Downey—Madison County Chamber, active runner
 - o Sebastian Dunn—cyclist and member of Blue Ridge Bike Club
 - o Brad Guth—Madison County Economic Development Director and Mars Hill resident
 - o Augusta Jenkins-Gladding—Planning and Zoning Board
 - o Daniel Metcalf—Public Transit director of Madison County
 - o Lucy Pearson—lives on N. Main St and is a daily walker with her golden retriever. Is sometimes intimidated by the lack of bicycle facilities but would like to bike more.
 - o Sherry Perry—was involved in a crash while walking/biking and is interested in promoting walking and biking.
 - o Daniel Sellers—NCDOT Transportation Planning Division and FBR Coordinator. Believes in good planning that doesn't sit on a shelf.
 - o Hannah Smith—Planning Engineer for NCDOT District 13
 - o Deana Stephens—Madison County Health Department
 - o Nathan Waldrup—Mars Hill Fire Chief
 - o Chad Wilson—Mars Hill Chief of Police
 - o Tristan Winkler—French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (FBRMPO) Director

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1



KICK-OFF MEETING > TOWN OF MARS HILL BICYCLE + PEDESTRIAN PLAN

- > What is your favorite thing about Mars Hill?
 - o Stackhouse (x2)
 - o Bailey Mountain (x2)
 - o Small town vibe
 - o Small town feel
 - o Everything!
 - o Greenway
 - o Natural beauty. Welcoming community
 - o Small community with lots of amenities
 - o The presence of agriculture/farms in our community
 - o Papa Nicks
 - o University
 - o First Fridays
 - o Camdens
 - o Seeing people out walking
 - o Recreation Park (x2)
 - o Walking across the community—on sidewalks and on the street
 - o No time like the present to get it right
 - o People should be able to visit town and walk or bike while spending money here
 - o No impediments to moving around town on foot or on bike
 - o Identifying project for funding (x2)
 - o Coffee shop
 - o Downtown, Greenway, Campus
 - o University, Post Office, Library, Restaurants, Shops, Greenway
 - o Campus
 - o Downtown
 - o Library
 - o Ingles
 - o Bailey Mountain Park/Recreation Park
 - o Coffee shop (x2)
 - o Marshall
 - o To Asheville
 - o Asheville
- > Plan Purpose
 - o Allison noted that this plan is intended to be implementation-ready, with guidance on how to develop the projects proposed.
- > Scope Review
 - o Allison reviewed the scope of the project.
- > Project Schedule

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2 of 8



KICK-OFF MEETING > TOWN OF MARS HILL BICYCLE + PEDESTRIAN PLAN

- o Allison reviewed the schedule of the project, noting that many demographics and existing conditions have already been documented.
- > Mentimeter Question: Why is it important to complete this planning effort now?
 - o The town is growing—let's build walking and cycling opportunities into strategic planning.
 - o Increase ped/cyclist safety
 - o Safety! It is not always easy to find safe places to walk
 - o Growing popularity of the region
 - o Safety
 - o University is under construction
 - o Growth/safety
 - o Growth of population, including it seems more children
 - o Solid guidance to policymakers
 - o Opportunities to support educational opportunities for k-12 as well
 - o Happier walkers and bikers
 - o Greenway, Ingles, medical center
- > Mentimeter Question: What does success look like for the Mars Hill Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan?
 - o Routes and opportunities are connected
 - o Connecting in town neighborhoods to greenways
 - o Inviting walkways and bikeways
 - o Connection (x2)
 - o Sidewalks in all neighborhoods
 - o Connectivity
 - o More people take advantage of active routes
 - o Connection of the greenway to Smith Farm Park
 - o Extending greenway to Bailey Mountain
 - o Walking and biking for health and to get from one place to another. Satisfies both
 - o Down 213 towards I-26 after the sidewalk ends.
 - o Bruce rd b/c of relative visibility
 - o Barnardsville
- > Community Engagement
 - o Allison reviewed the stakeholder and public engagement plan.
 - o Steering Committee
 - Four (4) virtual meetings will be held.
 - The Steering Committee will provide support, guidance, and oversight of the plan.
- > Facility Types
 - o Will reviewed types of facilities and crossings that the plan may propose, their uses, and examples of where each may be appropriate.
 - o Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility Types:
 - Greenway

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3 of 8



KICK-OFF MEETING > TOWN OF MARS HILL BICYCLE + PEDESTRIAN PLAN

- Sidewalk
- Sidewalk
- Separated bicycle lane
- Buffered bicycle lane
- Bicycle lane
- Bicycle boulevard / shared lane marking
- o Crossing types:
 - Crosswalk
 - Raised crosswalk
 - Center refuge island / Rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB)
 - Curb extension with crosswalk
 - High intensity activated crosswalk (HAWK) / Pedestrian hybrid beacon
 - Tunnel
 - Beacon
- o Will reviewed previous plans that were documented, including plans from the Town of Mars Hill, Madison County, French Broad River MPD, and NCDOT.
- o Will reviewed existing conditions maps.
 - Existing Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities
 - Existing and Planned Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities
 - Sebastian asked how projects previously planned will impact this planning effort. Will said that these proposals have been included on adopted plans and this project will pull many of those proposals into a comprehensive network with guidance for prioritization and implementation. Allison noted that this plan builds on previous planning efforts such as the Blue Ridge Bike Plan while accounting for growth and change that has occurred since the adoption of those plans.
 - Bicycle and Pedestrian Crashes
 - Fatal and Serious Injury Crashes
 - Intersection Crash Frequency
 - Traffic Volumes (AADT)
 - Speed Limits
 - Right-of-Way (ROW)
 - Sebastian asked how ROW is measured. Will said it varies by roadway but generally extends beyond the pavement width to include utility poles and other features.
 - NCDOT State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Projects
 - NCDOT Highway Maintenance Improvement Program (HMIP) Projects
 - Sebastian asked if Park Dr is to be rerouted as shown on the map. Will said it is likely a data error, that the roadway resurfacing was completed and this type of project would not be part of the HMIP. Hannah agreed unless it is part of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), and Tristan confirmed that it is not in the MTP.

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4 of 8

- Flooding and Wetlands
 - Voluntary Agricultural Districts
 - Topography
 - Employment Density
 - NCDOT Transportation Disadvantage Index (TDI)
 - Mars Hill Zoning
 - Utilities and Easements
 - Will noted that Nathan provided some additional data for water and sewer lines that will be incorporated into the planning process.
- > Site Visit
- o Will reviewed routes and destinations visited on the project site visit, and shared photos of places including Banjo Branch Creek, Smith Farm, the Dr. Otis T. Duck Greenway, N. Main St, Cascade St.
- > Mentimeter Question: What are destinations you currently walk to in Mars Hill?
- o Bailey Mountain (x2)
 - o Campus (x2)
 - o Downtown (x2)
 - o Greenway (x2)
 - o Main Street (x2)
 - o Bailey Mountain loop
 - o Bailey Street
 - o Banjo Branch
 - o Beech Glen Community Cent
 - o Beech Glenn
 - o Bruce Road and Bailey St
 - o Cemetery
 - o Church
 - o Downtown businesses
 - o Farmers market
 - o Forest St
 - o Forest Street
 - o Library
 - o Neighborhood
 - o North Main
 - o Park Drive
 - o Rec Park and Pool
 - o Recreation Park
 - o Restaurants downtown
 - o School
 - o South Main

- > Mentimeter Question: What are destinations you would like to walk to but cannot currently?
- o Bailey Mountain Park
 - o Beech Glenn community center
 - Meredith said she tries to walk when it is less busy and works around shift changes, school schedules, and other factors that determine traffic volumes on roadways.
 - o Coffee Shop
 - o Mountain View to Main St
 - o North Main
 - o Park Drive
 - o Rec Park and pool
 - o Recreation Park and pool
 - o South Main
- > Mentimeter Question: Where are the best places to ride your bike currently in Mars Hill?
- o Greenway (x5)
 - o Beech Glenn
 - Sebastian said he wishes that people could come to Mars Hill from nearby and go downtown and to Bailey Mountain Park on their bikes. He said the Blue Ridge Bike Club has over 1,000 members who are mostly concentrated south of Asheville, but they ride often in the Mars Hill area because the roads are nice. However, he thinks that traffic patterns keep people from riding in places like Mars Hill.
 - o Bull Creek
 - Bull Creek is a road that provides a good bike route.
 - o Cemetery
 - o Long Ridge
- > What destinations would you like to ride your bike to safely in the future?
- o Coffee shop (x2)
 - o 213
 - o From Mars Hill to Marshall
 - o Marshall
 - o Weaverville
 - Tristan said that during the development of the Hellbender Trail Plan a connection between Weaverville and Mars Hill was proposed, but only a very preliminary route was developed. The Buncombe County Greenway Plan includes some recommendations on Riverside Dr but there is very little room for a facility there.
- > Mapping Exercise
- o Allison and Will introduced the Conceptboard and encouraged members to draw and leave notes on the map.

- o Will noted the connection between Bailey St and Smith Farm Park as a key connection. Nathan and Tristan noted that it has been submitted for prioritization several times and don't know yet if there is enough funding for it.
 - o Connecting from Pine Ridge to N. Main St.
 - o Meredith said she loves the loop along Bruce Rd, Bailey St, and Forest St.
 - o Not enough room for pedestrians on greenway connector through school
 - o Bill said he lives near Stone Cottage and had previously seen an idea for a greenway loop on Gabriel's Creek Rd, and that these roads are fairly quiet and could be good walking and biking routes.
 - o Sebastian said he lives between Cascade St and the Recreation Park and sees many children walking to the park, especially in the summer.
 - o Meredith said she does not go the Recreation Park because she cannot walk to it.
 - o Bill said he sometimes runs on Park St but the sharp curve can be dangerous in seasons when leaves are on the trees.
 - o Will noted many cars were parked at the park and ride lot at 213/26. Sebastian said he has seen people ask for a ride from the auto repair shop across the street who do not feel comfortable walking across the interstate to downtown.
 - o Will asked if people would like to see a crosswalk at Bailey St and N. Main St where people currently cross. Several people said they would. Ryan said a student was hit crossing to the coffee shop there.
 - o Meredith said there is a gap in the sidewalk on Mountain View between Chestnut and Cemetery.
 - o Will asked about people's experiences crossing 213 near downtown with the existing signals. Meredith said traffic is fast, especially during rush hour. Will noted that the existing road lanes are about 18 feet wide and could potentially be modified.
 - o Sebastian said he does not have concerns crossing 213 except at N. Main St, where there is no pedestrian crossing signal and pedestrians must be mindful of turning traffic who have a green light.
 - o Meredith said the speed on Bailey St through town toward the athletic fields can be excessive and is not conducive to safe walking.
 - o Ryan noted that traffic on 213 is faster between semesters and weekends and slows down a bit when students are on campus and walking between classes.
- > Next Steps
- o Allison said the Conceptboard will remain open if members have additional comments.
 - o The community survey will launch in the next week and will be hosted on Publicinput.com.
 - o A doodle poll will be sent out soon to schedule the second steering committee meeting.
 - o The team will work to determine a date, time, and location for the public meeting, likely to be held around August.

Mentimeter link:
<https://www.menti.com/33628201>

Conceptboard link:
<https://app.conceptboard.com/board/60fz-gr01-vea3-qhpk-od73>

- Comments from Conceptboard:
- Scenic mountain view in Mars Hill (Riddle Hill Rd)
 - Not enough room for peds on greenway connector through school (School House Ln)
 - Connecting from pine ridge into town via main st (Pine Ridge Rd)
 - High ped demand, gateway to downtown. Placemaking opportunity student hit crossing to coffee shop here (Bailey St at N. Main St)
 - Sidewalk Gap (Mountain View Rd)
 - There currently is no walk light to cross the main st / NC 213 intersection (Main St at NC-213)
 - Cars traveling fast especially during rush hour (Cascade St)
 - Existing pedestrian traffic on Park Dr walking to rec park (Park Dr)
 - A lot of kids currently walk along Park Drive headed for Rec Park (Park Dr)

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #2 NOTES



STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #2 >
TOWN OF MARS HILL BICYCLE + PEDESTRIAN PLAN

PROJECT	DATE + TIME	LOCATION	CONSULTANT TEAM
Town of Mars Hill Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan	August 7, 2024, 2:00pm-4:00pm	Microsoft Teams	ATTENDEES Allison Anolik, McAdams Will Washam, McAdams Christopher Normile, McAdams

MARS HILL BICYCLE + PEDESTRIAN PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #2 MEETING NOTES

MEETING ATTENDEES

- > Allison Anolik
- > Will Washam
- > Christopher Normile
- > Nathan Bennett
- > Ryan Bell
- > Deana Stephens
- > Kaitland Finkle
- > Lucy Pearson
- > Sebastian Dunn
- > Daniel Sellers
- > Tristan Winkler
- > Brad Guth
- > Hannah Smith
- > Bill Downey

MEETING AGENDA

- > Introductions/Project Update
 - o Allison opened the meeting and provided a review of the agenda.
 - o Mentimeter exercise: What is your favorite place to bike or walk in Mars Hill?
 - Greenway (x2)
 - Mars Hill University
 - Coffee Shop
 - Public Pool
 - Top of Bailey Mountain
 - Bailey Mountain



STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #2 >
TOWN OF MARS HILL BICYCLE + PEDESTRIAN PLAN

- o Allison reviewed the project schedule and planned activities throughout the remainder of the project.
- > Review Survey Results
 - o Allison reviewed results from the community survey.
 - Notably, 8% of survey respondents listed walking as their primary mode of transportation, and 65% would like to be able to walk to work or school.
- > Draft Vision + Goals
 - o Allison shared the draft vision statement and goals.
 - Vision Statement:
 - "The Town of Mars Hill is a livable community with an accessible and connected network of sidewalks, trails, and bicycle facilities where residents and visitors of all ages and abilities can safely and conveniently walk and bike to their destinations while enjoying mountain landscapes and small-town charm."
 - Goals
 - Safety
 - Connectivity
 - Accessibility + Equity
 - Community
 - Growth
- > Opportunities + Constraints
 - o Will reviewed general opportunities, including connecting to newer residential developments, leveraging low-traffic volume streets, and utilizing the strong partnerships already within the community.
 - o Will reviewed general constraints, focused primarily on topography and slope constraints and limited local funding resources.
 - o Will reviewed specific opportunities and constraints, including the Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway, N. Main St and Bailey St pedestrian crossings. He noted that the lack of a crosswalk or curb ramp at N. Main St and Bailey St presents an opportunity to provide a better crossing where pedestrians already cross.
 - > Otis Duck Greenway to Bailey Mountain Preserve Feasibility Study
 - o Will introduced a feasibility study that McAdams is working on in partnership with the Town of Mars Hill thanks to a \$30,000 grant from Made by Mountains, a nonprofit. The feasibility study will evaluate corridors to connect the Duck Greenway to Smith Farm Park and Bailey Mountain Preserve. He noted that the study is approximately halfway completed and will include landowner coordination, and is primarily a technical exercise to determine feasibility.



STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #2 >
TOWN OF MARS HILL BICYCLE + PEDESTRIAN PLAN

- > Draft Network Recommendations
 - o Will noted that all the recommendations presented are in draft form and are subject to change following Steering Committee feedback and technical feasibility. He provided an overview of the draft network and what will be provided in the final plan, and how it will be used in the prioritization exercise.
 - o 1. Park Dr Sidewalk
 - o 2. Main St Pedestrian Crossing Improvements
 - o 3. Otis Duck Greenway Realignment
 - o 4. Banjo Banch/Forest St Greenway to Smith Farm Park
 - o 5. Athletic St Sidewalk
 - o 6. NC-213 Sidewalk
 - Christopher noted that a project submitted for prioritization by the Town and the French Broad River MPO would make access management improvements between Athletic St and Gabriel's Creek Rd, and could instead include a sidepath as part of the project.
 - o 7. Carl Eller Rd Sidewalk
 - o 8. Cascade St Traffic Calming and Streetscape
 - o 9. Mountain View Rd Sidewalk
 - o 10. Bailey St Sidepath
 - o 11. N. Main St Sidewalk Extension
 - o 12. Bruce Rd Sidewalk
 - o 13. Extension of Otis Duck Greenway
 - o 14. S. Main St Sidepath
 - Will noted this corridor is included in the NCDOT Great Trails State Plan.
 - Tristan clarified that what was included in the Great Trails State Plan was also included in the Hellbender regional trails plan which was adopted about 6 months earlier.
 - o 15. Various Sidewalk and Greenway Projects
- > Review Pop-up Event results
 - o Christopher reviewed results and comments heard at the pop-up event at First Friday.
- > Prioritization Criteria Review
 - o Allison provided an overview of how the prioritization process will evaluate projects proposed for the network and shared the team's proposed prioritization strategy.
 - o Three categories of prioritization are proposed:
 - Connectivity + Community Access
 - Projects that provide connections to downtown or Mars Hill University, to public recreation resources, or close a gap in the current network.



STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #2 >
TOWN OF MARS HILL BICYCLE + PEDESTRIAN PLAN

- Safety
 - Projects along a corridor with documented bicycle or pedestrian crashes or implement proven safety measures.
- Project Opportunity
 - Projects that leverage additional public or community investment, are highly rated in community and stakeholder engagement, or take advantage of partnership opportunities.
- Sebastian said he likes how the criteria are categorized and that he wished funding was more available for projects.
- Tristan said the crash map shows only a few crashes in Mars Hill, primarily along NC-213, and asked how projects can be evaluated for safety where there is not a crash history.
 - Allison said consideration for providing proven countermeasures is intended to help address this, but there will likely be some coordination with NCDOT needed.
 - Sebastian said he bikes often on NC-213 and that there is a wide shoulder in most places that helps him feel safe, but that where the shoulder or any bike lanes are not kept clean and free of debris cyclists feel unsafe.
- o Mentimeter exercise: Ranking criteria categories
 - 1st: Connectivity and Community Access
 - 2nd: Project Opportunities
 - 3rd: Safety
 - Bill said he prioritized Connectivity and Community Access because Safety will be improved as a result of making connections, such as by making a safer place to walk by constructing a sidewalk to fill a gap.
- o Mentimeter exercise: Weighting prioritization criteria
 - 28%: Connection to a public recreation resource
 - 21%: Closing a gap within the current bicycle/pedestrian network
 - 12%: Connection to Downtown Mars Hill/Mars Hill University
 - 12%: Leverage additional public/community investment
 - 10%: Implementing proven safety countermeasures
 - 9%: Highly rated in public meetings, survey, and steering committee
 - 6%: Partnership opportunities
 - 3%: Along a corridor with documented bicycle/pedestrian crashes
 - Sebastian asked what the difference between leveraging additional community/public investment and partnership opportunities is.

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #3 NOTES



STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #3 >
TOWN OF MARS HILL BICYCLE + PEDESTRIAN PLAN

PROJECT	DATE + TIME	LOCATION	CONSULTANT TEAM ATTENDEES
Town of Mars Hill Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan	September 25, 2024, 9:00am-11:00am	Microsoft Teams	Allison Anolik, McAdams Will Washam, McAdams Christopher Normile, McAdams

MARS HILL BICYCLE + PEDESTRIAN PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #3 MEETING NOTES

MEETING ATTENDEES

- > Allison Anolik
- > Will Washam
- > Christopher Normile
- > Nathan Bennett
- > Ryan Bell
- > Lucy Pearson
- > Sebastian Dunn
- > Daniel Sellers
- > Tristan Winkler
- > Brad Guth
- > Hannah Smith
- > Bill Downey
- > Phillip Wilson
- > Meredith Doster
- > Walter Gladding
- > Augusta Gladding
- > Grainger Caudle
- > Larry Davis

MEETING AGENDA

- > Introductions/Project Update
 - o Allison opened the meeting and provided a review of the agenda.
 - o Will provided an overview of the project schedule.
- > Otis Duck Greenway Feasibility Study Update



STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #3 >
TOWN OF MARS HILL BICYCLE + PEDESTRIAN PLAN

- o Will provided an update on the Otis Duck Greenway Feasibility Study. He said the project is wrapping up this fall and will be incorporated into the recommendations of the bicycle and pedestrian plan. He said there will be some property owner engagement to evaluate alternatives for each corridor.
- o Each of the five corridors will have its own implementation guidance that includes cost estimates and cut sheet.
- > Prioritization Criteria
 - o Christopher reviewed the approach for prioritization based on the previous steering committee meeting and how the final prioritization criteria were developed. He provided an overview of each criterion and how projects can be scored within each.
- > Project Scoring Components
 - o Allison, Will, and Christopher reviewed the project scores for each project in the recommended network.
 - Sebastian asked for the difference between a sidewalk and a sidepath. Will said a sidepath is essentially a greenway along the roadway and is intended for both bicycle and pedestrian use.
 - Meredith asked for clarification on the traffic calming project. Allison and Will said it is project 8 along Cascade St where there is opportunity to provide additional streetscape improvements to improve safety for students and visitors.
 - Ryan asked if project 3, a realignment of Otis Duck Greenway, is already completed. Will said NCDOT has been working on Schoolhouse Ln where the previous path connection was located. That connection has been removed and a new trail constructed. Steering Committee members said it is an improvement but the grade of the new facility is steeper than preferred and could still be improved in the future.
 - Meredith said the recent work on Schoolhouse Ln disrupted a pollinator meadow. She would like to see this reestablished.
 - Sebastian said he wonders if a sidepath is necessary on Park Dr as the corridor is very tight and there is limited right-of-way with adjacent houses. He said most of the cyclists he sees on the corridor are moving very fast and does not see many families or children biking along the corridor. He said pedestrian safety for those walking to the park is the highest priority.
 - Will said the planning team envisioned this project as part of a southern greenway loop to complement the northern greenway loop. He recommended keeping the sidepath recommendation in the plan, but said that as the project moves into design the cross-section could be changed to



STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #3 >
TOWN OF MARS HILL BICYCLE + PEDESTRIAN PLAN

reduce the width and accommodate users while not impacting private properties.

- o Sebastian said he agrees with this approach.
- Ryan asked if there is any informal trail along the 15g corridor already. Will said he is not aware of one but that bicycle and pedestrian plans can help the town work with developers to include these facilities in the future.
- Meredith asked if a traffic calming project similar to what is proposed on Cascade St could be added to Bailey St as well as there are concerns with speeding. Will said there is not as much room within the existing roadway to work with and that moving the curb in to reduce the roadway space would have a lower cost-benefit ratio than along Cascade St. He added that there could be pedestrian crossing improvements that help calm traffic.
- Ryan asked how the Town's impending purchase of the West property impacts the Otis Duck Greenway Feasibility Study. Will said it has a major bearing on the project and recommended alignment and that it will likely be included in the recommended alignment. He said it will be an expensive corridor and includes some constructability challenges due to the grade change but could be a signature greenway project for Western North Carolina.
- > Project Ranking Exercise
 - o Allison shared a Mentimeter exercise and asked Steering Committee members to rank the top 9 projects to help identify projects for cutsheets.
 - Results:
 1. North Main St Intersection Improvements (project 2)
 2. Park Dr Sidepath (project 1)
 3. Bailey St Sidewalk (project 10)
 4. Banjo Branch Rd/Forest St (project 4)
 5. Mountain View Rd Sidewalk and Intersection Improvements (project 9)
 6. Cascade St Streetscape (project 8)
 7. Cascade St Sidepath (project 6)
 8. Athletic St Sidewalk (project 5)
 9. Otis Duck Greenway Realignment (project 3)
- > Next Steps
 - o Allison reviewed next steps for the project, including the remaining Steering Committee meeting and cutsheet development. The team will focus on completing the final plan and cutsheets for review at the next meeting.



STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #3 >
TOWN OF MARS HILL BICYCLE + PEDESTRIAN PLAN

Mentimeter link:
<https://www.menti.com/alliws5d4uq>

Conceptboard link:
<https://app.conceptboard.com/board/3r1s-smgy-fn0p-zo0h-y4s4>

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #4 NOTES



STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #4 >
TOWN OF MARS HILL BICYCLE + PEDESTRIAN PLAN

PROJECT	DATE + TIME	LOCATION	CONSULTANT TEAM ATTENDEES
Town of Mars Hill Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan	January 08, 2025, 1:00pm-2:00pm	Microsoft Teams	Allison Anolik, McAdams Will Washam, McAdams Christopher Normie, McAdams

MARS HILL BICYCLE + PEDESTRIAN PLAN
STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #4 MEETING NOTES

MEETING ATTENDEES

- > Nathan Bennett
- > Ryan Bell
- > Lucy Pearson
- > Sebastian Dunn
- > Daniel Sellers
- > Tristan Winkler
- > Brad Guth
- > Hannah Smith
- > Bill Downey
- > Philip Wilson
- > Meredith Doster
- > Grainger Caudle
- > Deanna Stephens
- > Bryan Lopez
- > Sandy Broadwill

MEETING AGENDA

- > Introductions/Project Update
 - o Allison opened the meeting and thanked the Steering Committee members for their participation and support of the plan. She reviewed the agenda and schedule.
- > Draft Plan Review
 - o Allison and Christopher reviewed the draft plan.
- > Next Steps
 - o The project team will make some edits to the plan this afternoon before sending it out for review to the Steering Committee.
 - o The draft plan is currently being reviewed by the Town and NCDOT.
 - o The plan is set to go up for adoption on February 3.



STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #4 >
TOWN OF MARS HILL BICYCLE + PEDESTRIAN PLAN

- > Otis Duck Greenway Feasibility Study Update
 - o Will shared an update on the Otis Duck Greenway to Bailey Mountain Preserve Feasibility Study.
 - Five corridors were studied, with 15 individual segments developed. Of these, two were removed for constructability concerns.
 - For the three corridors included for continued study, a recommended alignment was created from segment alignments.
 - The study includes recommended typical sections as well as cost estimates escalated to a probable build year.
 - Cutsheets are included in the study with additional detail on each corridor and phasing recommendations.
- > Nathan thanked the team and the Steering Committee for their work on the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and feasibility study.

POP-UP EVENT MATERIALS

Materials created for the pop-up event on August 2, 2024 are provided below, including poster boards and flyers advertising the event.

TOWN OF MARS HILL Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan



PROJECT OVERVIEW
In 2023 the Town of Mars Hill received a Multimodal Planning Grant from the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to develop a comprehensive, implementation focused plan for bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

VISION + GOALS
DRAFT VISION STATEMENT
"The Town of Mars Hill is a livable community with an accessible and connected network of sidewalks, trails, and bicycle facilities where residents and visitors of all ages and abilities can safely and conveniently walk and bike to their destinations while enjoying mountain landscapes and small-town charm."

GOALS
SAFETY | CONNECTIVITY | ACCESSIBILITY + EQUITY | COMMUNITY | GROWTH

PROCESS + SCHEDULE
Input from the public is key to the Plan's success. By obtaining input throughout the planning process, the Town will incorporate diverse perspectives and needs into the plan's recommendations.

PLAN VISION	EXISTING CONDITIONS	PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS	IMPLEMENTATION + FINAL STUDY
FEB - MAR 2024	MAR - JUNE 2024	JUNE - AUG 2024	AUG - NOV 2024
KICK-OFF MEETING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN DATA GATHERING PLAN + POLICY REVIEW	SITE VISIT + FIELD WORK DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS MAPPING ANALYSIS STEERING COMMITTEE MTG. COMMUNITY SURVEY	MULTIMODAL NETWORK TYPICAL CROSS SECTIONS INTERSECTION TREATMENTS POLICIES + PROGRAMS STEERING COMMITTEE MTG. PUBLIC MEETING	PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECT PRIORITIZATION IMPLEMENTATION + FUNDING STEERING COMMITTEE MTGS. DRAFT PLAN + ADOPTION

WHY PLAN?
Planning for bicycle and pedestrian facilities helps create a focused vision for the community's transportation network, identify priority projects, and develop strategies for implementation. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities provide numerous benefits to the community:

- MOBILITY + CONNECTIVITY
- SAFETY
- HEALTH + WELLBEING
- ENVIRONMENT
- ECONOMY
- ACCESSIBILITY + EQUITY



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement is key to the planning process to ensure the plan reflects the priorities and mobility needs of the community.

PUBLIC SURVEY
A public survey was held to collect feedback about the existing bicycle and pedestrian network in Mars Hill and to establish ideas for the future. The survey was hosted on Publicinput.com and open from May 2 through July 5, 2024.

536 survey participants | 408 survey comments

SELECTED QUOTES

- "The lack of a sidewalk between Cemetery St and the library, as well as upper North Main St are concerns. A sidewalk on Bruce to the greenway would also be nice, and a crosswalk at Anderson/ Bruce and North Main as well. Also, can we get a four way stop at the Anderson and Mountain View intersection?"
- "Where Bailey Street and greenway meet there needs to be safer passage for both pedestrians and cyclists as well as cars. Maybe a tunnel could be built or the bushes cut back at the greenway crosswalk? Drivers cannot see pedestrians at all coming from the greenway toward the college until they are almost in the road."
- "I love living and working in Mars Hill and raising my children here! We would all love to bike and walk more."

WHAT ARE THE PRIMARY REASONS THAT YOU OR MEMBERS OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD WALK OR BIKE IN MARS HILL?
Select all that apply.

84%	For exercise / fitness
73%	For recreation
28%	Run errands / go shopping
14%	Get to and from essential services (Government centers, medical centers, libraries, etc)
8%	Commute to work
7%	Commute to school
3%	Other (please specify)
<1%	Get to and from an on-demand transit stop/taxi waiting area

HOW DO YOU RATE LEVELS OF COMFORT FOR THOSE CURRENTLY WALKING AND BIKING IN MARS HILL?

28%	Unsafely for most pedestrians and bicyclists
55%	Moderately comfortable for pedestrians and bicyclists
17%	Comfortable for pedestrians and bicyclists of all ages and abilities

WHICH DESTINATIONS WOULD YOU LIKE TO WALK OR BIKE TO IN MARS HILL IF BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES WERE IMPROVED?
Select all that apply.

65%	Downtown (shops / restaurants / entertainment)
65%	Dr. W. Otis Duck Memorial Greenway
59%	Smith Farm Park / Bailey Mountain Preserve
56%	Mars Hill Recreation Park
47%	Mars Hill University
39%	Neighboring communities (Weberville, Marshall, etc)
34%	Ingles grocery store
25%	Essential services (government centers, medical centers, libraries, etc)
24%	Mars Hill Elementary School
16%	Mars Hill Park and Ride Lot
9%	Work
5%	Other (please specify)

WHICH FACTORS DISCOURAGE YOU FROM WALKING OR BIKING IN MARS HILL?
Select all that apply.

61%	Lack of safe biking and walking connections to and from existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities
39%	Motor vehicle traffic / speed
28%	Personal safety concerns
25%	Lack of intersection treatments for bicyclists and pedestrians
22%	Unsafe street crossings
21%	Lack of nearby destinations
14%	Lack of signage and wayfinding
13%	Lack of parking at trailheads
10%	Poor maintenance conditions of existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities
9%	Lack of interest
8%	Other (please specify)

WHAT IS YOUR PRIMARY MODE OF TRANSPORTATION?

84%	Car (drive alone)
8%	Walking
4%	Work from home
2%	Bicycling
2%	Carpool
1%	Other (please specify)

NOW CONSIDER YOUR DESIRED MODES OF TRANSPORTATION IN THE FUTURE. WHICH MODES WOULD YOU LIKE TO USE?
Select all that apply.

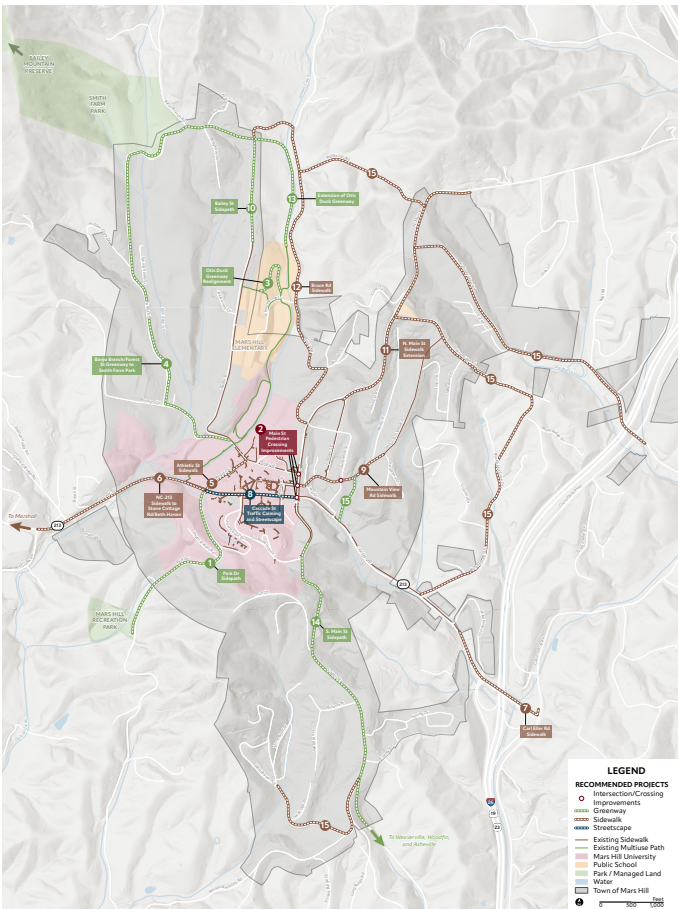
65%	Walking
58%	Car (drive alone)
53%	Bicycling
14%	Work from home
7%	Carpool
7%	Transit / taxi
1%	Other (please specify)

SELECTED QUOTES

- "Walk the dog" "Would events in town like festivals" "I don't"
- "Narrow winding roads" "Dogs that are loose especially on Park Dr" "Lack of bike racks for securing the bicycle at nearby locations like the grocery store or downtown. The library has one but it is blocked by a nearby fence." "It's a wheelchair user and non-accessible walkways such as sidewalks, curbs, barriers, traffic etc make it unsafe for a manual wheelchair user to commute up and down the hills and about town to enjoy all this town! I grew up in Mars to offer"
- "South Main Street" "I would like to be able to bike into town from 230-highway" "Bunch of steep hills" "None. Too many hills"
- "Where West would it be to walk like to a public bus? from there could take us to neighboring areas? I would also love access to greenways for biking to neighboring areas"

TOWN OF MARS HILL
Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan

Draft Bicycle and Pedestrian Network Recommendations



DRAFT BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN NETWORK RECOMMENDATIONS

The projects listed below are draft recommendations for future bicycle and pedestrian projects in Mars Hill. Use sticky dots to "vote" for the projects that you feel are important to implement, and leave a comment to provide feedback or suggest additional projects.

PROJECT ID	PROJECT NAME + DESCRIPTION	VOTE FOR THIS PROJECT!
1	Park Dr Sidepath Create a 10 foot sidepath connection along the west side of Park Drive between Cascade Street and the Mars Hill Recreation Park. Sections constrained by topography or other design factors may be reduced width.	Place sticky dots here to vote for this project!
2	Main St Pedestrian Crossing Improvements Addition or enhancement of pedestrian crossings on Main St between Cascade St and Bailey St in Downtown Mars Hill. Specifically: • Bailey St and N. Main St o Construct curb extension along N. Main St to reduce pedestrian crossing distances, improve sight distance, and reduce the turning radius for vehicles, providing traffic calming o Create curb ramps on the east side of N. Main St and add new crosswalk striping • College St Mountain View Rd and N. Main Street. o Add a fourth striped crosswalk o Add pedestrian signals head on all four approaches o This may require minor curb extensions on the Mountain View Rd/ Ivy St approach to create enough space for proper curb ramps and pedestrian signal head placement • Cascade St and Main Street o Add pedestrian signal heads on all four approaches	Place sticky dots here to vote for this project!
3	Otis Duck Greenway Realignment Realign the greenway connector in open space within school property to improve user safety and provide a more gradual grade to accommodate riders of all ages and abilities. The existing connector from the Otis Duck Greenway to Bailey St uses portions of School House Ln which has very steep grades, and only provides about 5 ft of space directly adjacent to cars accessing the school.	Place sticky dots here to vote for this project!
4	Banjo Branch/Forest St Greenway to Smith Farm Park Provide a greenway connection to Smith Farm Park/Bailey Mountain Preserve from Mars Hill University and Downtown Mars Hill. A feasibility study is underway to evaluate alignment alternatives for this corridor, including a sidepath along Forest St or a greenway along Banjo Branch.	Place sticky dots here to vote for this project!
5	Athletic St Sidewalk Add sidewalk on one side of the street from Cascade St to Bailey St. Potentially reallocating space from on-street parking or removing retaining wall for sidewalk.	Place sticky dots here to vote for this project!
6	NC-213 Sidewalk to Stone Cottage Rd/Beth-Hanan Community Add sidewalk on one side of the street.	Place sticky dots here to vote for this project!
7	Carl Eller Rd Sidewalk Add a new at-grade pedestrian connection between the Park and Ride Lot and existing sidewalk on NC-213/Carl Eller Road. Project includes reallocating space on the I-26 bridge, grading work on the west side of the bridge, and constructing approximately 1,200 feet of new sidewalk.	Place sticky dots here to vote for this project!
8	Cascade St Traffic Calming and Streetscape Reduce the travel lane widths from 18 ft to 12 ft, adding 6 ft of space to widen sidewalks, plant street trees, or implement other streetscape enhancements. Project limits are from S. Main St to Athletic St.	Place sticky dots here to vote for this project!
9	Mountain View Rd Sidewalk Add sidewalk on one side of the road from Main St to Cemetery Dr, with crosswalk improvements at Anderson St.	Place sticky dots here to vote for this project!
10	Bailey St Sidepath Extend sidepath on Bailey St north to Banjo Branch Rd and continue sidepath west along Banjo Branch Rd and Forest St to Smith Farm Park/Bailey Mountain Preserve. A feasibility study is underway that includes this corridor as a potential alignment for a greenway extension.	Place sticky dots here to vote for this project!
11	N. Main St Sidewalk Extension Extend sidewalk on N. Main St from Chestnut St to municipal boundary.	Place sticky dots here to vote for this project!
12	Bruce Rd Sidewalk New sidewalk on Bruce Rd starting at N. Main St just north of downtown and extending all the way to Bailey St to connect to the Bailey St Sidewalk Loop. A feasibility study is underway that includes this corridor.	Place sticky dots here to vote for this project!
13	Extension of Otis Duck Greenway Extend Otis Duck Greenway north along Gabriel Creek or Bruce Rd to Bailey St/Banjo Branch Rd. A feasibility study is underway to study this.	Place sticky dots here to vote for this project!
14	S. Main St Sidepath Build sidepath on S. Main St from existing sidewalk to municipal boundary.	Place sticky dots here to vote for this project!
15	Various Sidewalk and Greenway Projects Build greenway or sidewalk on one side of streets in and around Mars Hill.	Place sticky dots on locations identified on the map to vote for these projects!

 **POP-UP EVENT** TOWN OF MARS HILL Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan

<p>PROJECT OVERVIEW</p> <p>In 2023 the Town of Mars Hill received a Multimodal Planning Grant from the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to develop a comprehensive plan for bicycle and pedestrian facilities across the community.</p> <p>The Town of Mars Hill Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan will recommend a bicycle and pedestrian network that reflects the community's priorities and strengthens the Town's transportation and recreation systems, making it safer and more convenient to access key destinations without a vehicle.</p> <p>The project is led by the Town of Mars Hill with the support of NCDOT and the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization.</p> <p>Scan the QR code to the right to learn more about the project!</p>	<p>PROJECT WEBPAGE</p> <p>Scan to View the Project Webpage </p> <p>CONTACT US</p> <p>You may submit comments or ask us questions by email or phone:</p> <p> Allison Anolik, Project Manager  marshallbikedplan@publicinput.com  919.361.5000</p>
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 **POP-UP EVENT** TOWN OF MARS HILL Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan

<p>PROJECT OVERVIEW</p> <p>In 2023 the Town of Mars Hill received a Multimodal Planning Grant from the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to develop a comprehensive plan for bicycle and pedestrian facilities across the community.</p> <p>The Town of Mars Hill Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan will recommend a bicycle and pedestrian network that reflects the community's priorities and strengthens the Town's transportation and recreation systems, making it safer and more convenient to access key destinations without a vehicle.</p> <p>The project is led by the Town of Mars Hill with the support of NCDOT and the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization.</p> <p>Scan the QR code to the right to learn more about the project!</p>	<p>PROJECT WEBPAGE</p> <p>Scan to View the Project Webpage </p> <p>CONTACT US</p> <p>You may submit comments or ask us questions by email or phone:</p> <p> Allison Anolik, Project Manager  marshallbikedplan@publicinput.com  919.361.5000</p>
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Join us at *First Friday* to provide input on the *Mars Hill Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan!*



DATE: Friday, Aug. 2, 2024
TIME: 5:00 pm-8:00 pm
LOCATION: Downtown Mars Hill

**MARS HILL
BICYCLE + PEDESTRIAN
PLAN**

Scan the QR code to learn more!

MEDIA COVERAGE

The News-Record

MARS HILL NC 28754-0368

AUGUST 28, 2024

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PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

BIKE, PEDESTRIAN PATHWAY PROJECT



The town of Mars Hill is currently receiving recommendations from residents on its bike and pedestrian pathway project, which it aims to have finalized by January 2025. One of the most popular recommendations is to augment the Otis Duck Greenway. JOHNNY CASEY/THE NEWS-RECORD & SENTINEL

Mars Hill hears from 536 residents on recent proposal

Johnny Casey
Asheville Citizen Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

MARS HILL - With the town of Mars Hill experiencing the most residential growth of any Madison County township, the town has taken efforts to ensure residents' safety, as it is currently working on a bike and pedestrian pathway project.

On Aug. 2, Land of Sky Regional

Council hosted a pop-up meeting with the public during First Fridays in Mars Hill to gather feedback from local residents about the project.

According to Mars Hill Town Manager Nathan Bennett, roughly 65 residents dropped in at the booth operated by Land of Sky Aug. 2.

Residents reviewed the number of draft recommendations to offer their opinions on them.

The bike and pedestrian plan, of which French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization is also a partner, is being coordinated by the McAdams Group, a full-service civil engineering, land planning, landscape architecture, transportation and geomatics firm headquartered in Raleigh.

According to Bennett, there are roughly 15 draft recommendations being considered. Those recommendations include:

- Enhanced crosswalks.
- Potential bike corridors being added to existing facilities where existing right of way and shoulders would allow.
- Expanded sidewalk networks.
- Extending the Otis Duck Greenway.

Those four recommendations were the most popular brought by residents, according to Bennett.

"That's probably the most popular thing that we've come out of this study

See PATHWAY, Page 3

Madison in talks for \$327K flooring project

County's main landfill station is in need of a big floor upgrade

Johnny Casey
Asheville Citizen Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

MARSHALL - Madison County's main landfill station is in need of a big floor upgrade, as the county heard updates on proposed major renovations to the flooring.

Solid Waste Director Sam Lunsford appeared before the Madison County Board of Commissioners to discuss the project Aug. 13, adding that the project will cost roughly \$327,000.

According to Lunsford, the bid from Osborn Contract Services is for \$314,000, plus an additional \$13,000 for new asphalt out front of the station to be paid to French Broad Paving.

Lunsford said the transfer station's concrete slab floor at the main landfill, located along Rudisill Road in Marshall, would need to be repaired.

"What's needing to be done to the repair for the floor is not something that's not all of a sudden came up," Lunsford said, adding that the county noticed the floor's wear and tear began appearing roughly in 2011.

"The county got a bid 13 years ago to repair the floor," Lunsford said. "So, this is something that the landfill has had on its radar, that's going to have to be done at some point."

According to Lunsford, roughly a year ago, the right-hand side of the landfill station typically sees more wear and tear because it is where the push wall operates.

"That wear is getting down to where the original concrete was poured, and the rebar," Lunsford said. "When we noticed

See FLOORING, Page 6

Pathway

Continued from Page 1

with, is that desire to see the town's greenway enlarged, expanded, made with different various loops and tie-ins," Bennett said.

Other recommendations include:

- Sidewalk or side path along N.C. 213/Carl Eller Road toward Gabriels Creek.

- Sidewalk or side path along North Main Street.

"Side paths are cheaper to construct, and a little easier on what's required from property," Bennett said.

Additionally, another recommendation is to fill in any missing sidewalk infrastructure.

"You might come down one street that has a sidewalk and then it ends, and then it goes a long way before it picks back up again, like Mountain View Drive is notorious for that," Bennett said. "Most of that street has sidewalk until you get to Cemetery Drive, and then from Cemetery Drive down to Anderson Street at the medical center, there's no sidewalk.

"So, that's what we're looking to do, is fill in the gaps. A lot of our stuff will re-



The town of Mars Hill is currently receiving recommendations from residents on its bike and pedestrian pathway project. JOHNNY CASEY/THE NEWS-RECORD & SENTINEL

volve around that aspect of the plan."

Of the 15 draft recommendation items, the team will revise the recommendations down to roughly six to sev-

en that will get more detail, and will explore engineering work to be done, as well as financial resources that could be used for those repairs/additions.

According to the Mars Hill town manager, roughly all of the recommendations deal with pedestrian enhancements.

"Most of the bike enhancements are going to go on the existing roadways within existing shoulders," Bennett said.

Bennett said he has been very pleased with the number of residents who have voiced their opinions, as a survey made available to residents for roughly two months resulted in more than 535 responses.

"There are a lot of comments and a lot of good data from those respondents in the survey — who's walking, who's driving, who works from home and where they're going when they walk and bike," Bennett said. "So there's good information out there."

Bennett anticipates the final document being formalized in December or January.

Johnny Casey has covered Madison County for The Citizen Times and The News-Record & Sentinel for three years. He earned a first-place award in beat news reporting in the 2023 North Carolina Press Association awards. He can be reached at 828-210-6074 or jcasey@citizentimes.com. May 24, 2024.

PUBLIC SURVEY

The full results of the public survey conducted for the Mars Hill Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan are provided below, including all unedited comments received.

Town of Mars Hill Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan Survey

Edit

Project Engagement

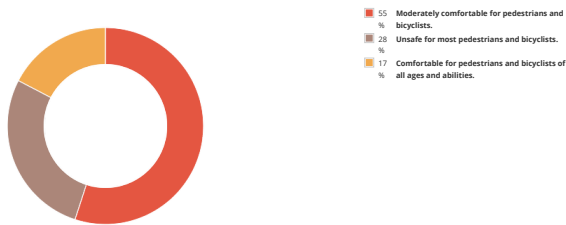
VIEWS	PARTICIPANTS	RESPONSES	COMMENTS
1,432	536	9,461	408

What is your relationship to Mars Hill? Select all that apply.

74%	I live in Mars Hill.	379 ✓
37%	I visit/spend time in Mars Hill.	189 ✓
34%	I own property in Mars Hill.	176 ✓
22%	I work in Mars Hill.	113 ✓
7%	I own a business in Mars Hill.	37 ✓
1%	None of the above.	3 ✓

512 Respondents

How do you rate levels of comfort for those currently walking and biking in Mars Hill?



517 respondents

What are the primary reasons that you or members of your household walk or bike in Mars Hill? Select all that apply.

84%	For exercise / fitness	411 ✓
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73%	For recreation	357 ✓
28%	Run errands / go shopping	137 ✓
14%	Get to and from essential services (Government centers, medical centers, libraries, etc)	70 ✓
8%	Commute to work	37 ✓
7%	Commute to school	35 ✓
3%	Other (please specify)	17 ✓
0%	Get to and from an on-demand transit stop/taxi waiting area	1 ✓

490 Respondents

Poll Questions 'Other' Responses:

- Events
20 days ago
- We don't
20 days ago
- Walk
24 days ago
- for fun
one month ago
- I don't
one month ago
- Walk the dog
one month ago
- Attend events in town like festivals
2 months ago
- Community
2 months ago
- Closest greenway for my kids to bike
2 months ago
- Walk shelter dogs as a group
2 months ago

Dog walking	2 months ago
Dog walking	2 months ago
Which destinations would you like to walk or bike to in Mars Hill if bicycle and pedestrian facilities were improved? Select all that apply.	
65%	Otis T. Duck Greenway 306 ✓
65%	Downtown (shops / restaurants / entertainment) 306 ✓
59%	Smith Farm Park / Bailey Mountain Preserve 281 ✓
56%	Mars Hill Recreation Park 264 ✓
47%	Mars Hill University 220 ✓
39%	Neighboring communities (Weaverville, Marshall, etc) 183 ✓
34%	Ingles Grocery Store 161 ✓
25%	Essential services (government centers, medical centers, libraries, etc) 120 ✓
24%	Mars Hill Elementary School 112 ✓
16%	Mars Hill Park and Ride Lot 76 ✓
9%	Work 42 ✓
5%	Other (please specify) 26 ✓
473 Respondents	

Poll Questions 'Other' Responses:

Safety for cyclists on the surrounding roads leading into downtown	20 days ago
I would love to be able to bike into town from 23a/higgins branch area	20 days ago
Weaverville	20 days ago
498 respondents	

Poll Questions 'Other' Responses:

Wheelchair	2 months ago
Car (2 passengers)	2 months ago
Retired	2 months ago
Now consider your desired modes of transportation in the future. Which modes would you like to use? Select all that apply.	
65%	Walking 311 ✓
58%	Car (drive alone) 277 ✓
53%	Bicycling 255 ✓
14%	Work from home 68 ✓
7%	Carpool 35 ✓
7%	Transit / taxi 33 ✓
1%	Other (please specify) 4 ✓
481 Respondents	

Poll Questions 'Other' Responses:

None	one month ago
None. Too many hills	one month ago
Sidewalk extend South Main through Steen Field curve AND sidewalk Hickory drive from Bailey street around baseball field curve	one month ago
Pedestrian extend South Main sidewalk through Steen Field curve	one month ago
none you can already walk and bike everywhere	2 months ago
none theres a road been walking on it and riding a bike on it and driving on if for decades you see/hear a car you yield to the car a new "accessibility" project would be pointless not to mention theres not room without encroaching on existing land/road way	2 months ago
none theres a road been using it for decades	2 months ago
Stone Cottage Rd	2 months ago
Dog park, please	2 months ago
Church	2 months ago
Ponder creek road	2 months ago
I wouldn't walk to any of these places.	2 months ago
South Main Street	2 months ago

What is your primary mode of transportation?



efficient public transit, train/tram, etc	20 days ago
How great would it be to walk/bike to a public bus/train that could take us to neighboring areas?!! I would also love access to Greenways for biking to neighboring areas	2 months ago

What factors discourage you from biking and walking in Mars Hill?

61%	Lack of safe biking and walking connections to and from existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities	281 ✓
39%	Motor vehicle traffic / speed	180 ✓
28%	Personal safety concerns	128 ✓
25%	Lack of intersection treatments for bicyclists and pedestrians	116 ✓
22%	Unsafe street crossings	100 ✓
21%	Lack of nearby destinations	96 ✓
14%	Lack of signage and wayfinding	63 ✓
13%	Lack of parking at trailheads	62 ✓
10%	Poor maintenance conditions of existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities	48 ✓
9%	Lack of interest	43 ✓
8%	Other (please specify)	35 ✓
460 Respondents		

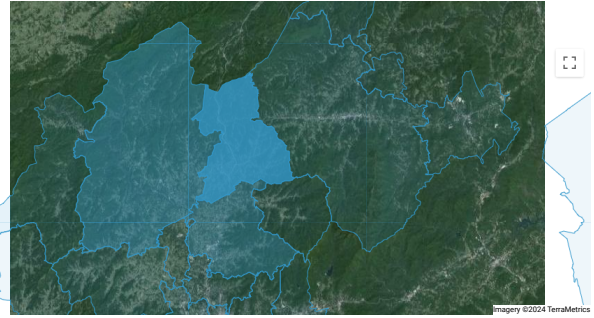
Poll Questions 'Other' Responses:

I worry about stray dogs on the back roads	20 days ago
Streets are too narrow for bicyclist.	20 days ago
None	20 days ago
Handicap/disabled	20 days ago

- too much construction on campus
one month ago
- I live in Jupiter, I would 100% bike to mars hill with my family if there was a wooded bike path that connected eyes to the one in town!!!!
That would be amazing! We are off exit 13
one month ago
- Need more sidewalks but doing well. Dont wast too much time and money in bicycle efforts- much less bang for buck than trails and sidewalks for pedestrians
one month ago
- Need more sidew
one month ago
- Not enough flat area
one month ago
- Rain
one month ago
- Lack of safe shoulders on roads
one month ago
- Hilly trails
one month ago
- Narrow winding roads
one month ago
- Dogs that are loose especially on Park Dr.
2 months ago
- I would like to see more mileage surrounding the Otis Duck Greenway
2 months ago
- All the Hills
2 months ago
- Lack of bike racks for securing the bicycle at nearby locations like the grocery store or downtown. The library has one but it is blocked by a nearby fence.
2 months ago
- Lack of bike racks for securing bicycles at places like the grocery store. The library has one but it's blocked by a nearby fence.
2 months ago
- Again I'm a wheelchair user and non accessible walkways such as sidewalks, curbs, barriers, traffic etc make it non safe for a manual wheelchair user to commute up n down the hills and about town to enjoy all this town I grew up in has to offer.
2 months ago
- An easy trail at bailey mountain would be nice. Especially with shade. Or a walk from the park and ride to downtown.
2 days ago
- Thank you for trying to improve the pedestrian and bike infrastructure of Mars Hill—we love our town and would love to have better access to its amenities. I also see a number of people walking on Bruce road to the greenway and to the downtown shops even though it's really not safe. A sidewalk there would be helpful as well as to the park and Bailey Mtn. And the main 213 intersection needs more pedestrian assistance—I worry when my children are with me. Thank you!
3 days ago
- None
4 days ago
- Walking on South Main Street is hazardous beyond the end of the sidewalk
4 days ago
- Many people use the Greenway now; it's wonderful! We'd love to have more walking trails. Thankst
8 days ago
- I would love to have access to outdoor fitness equipment for strength training
10 days ago
- I hope that bike lanes do not create the same mess that had appended on Merrimon Ave. In Asheville. Also I am against anything that would make anything in Mars Hill more like Asheville, just look at what is happening in Weaverville as an example.
14 days ago
- Major improvements need to be made in deterring speeding on residential roads (specifically Bailey St). Most of the dangerous drivers seem to be college students, as the incidents go down in the summer.
15 days ago
- I feel that with the current greenway in place, people should not be allowed to walk on Bruce Road. This creates an extremely dangerous situation for both pedestrians and those driving. There are many blind curves and lots of traffic, that has increased considerably, on Bruce Road. Also, I think that the greenway should be expanded by creating a sidewalk/greenway up Park Drive to the Mars Hill Recreation Park.
16 days ago
- We would love to see south Main included in this project.
17 days ago
- A sidewalk is needed to be extended on Bailey Street and added to Bruce Rd to make "the loop" more accessible and safer. A greenway would be nice from the existing greenway to the Bailey Mountain Preserve.
18 days ago
- There needs to be more sidewalks and areas for people to walk safely to downtown and the university.
18 days ago
- Crosswalks are needed for students but that is a university project ! There isn't enough constant bicycle traffic to spend funds on a road access.
Mars Hill needs to take better care of the pool & Rec. Park!
19 days ago

- Need connection to public transit to Asheville
2 months ago
- None
2 months ago
- It's not my sport or activity.
2 months ago
- The conditions of the asphalt on town streets. Not to be confused with the state maintained roads that come through town.
2 months ago
- I'm fat
2 months ago
- N/A
2 months ago

Participant Zip Code Map



Please provide any additional comments / feedback on Mars Hill bicycle and pedestrian network.

- We need the city or university to provide dog poop bags along the Duck greenway. Lots of poop along the walkway that's not being picked up.
yesterday
- Please add more trash cans along the greenway. Dog stool cans would be great?
2 days ago
- Please do not narrow 213/Carl Eller Road through Mars Hill to integrate a bike lane.
19 days ago
- As a Mars Hill resident I do not feel a bike one up Bailey street would be good for those of us who live and drive this road daily. No bike lane!
19 days ago
- More parking for cars would help with less congestion.
19 days ago
- I honestly believed that adding a bicycle lane down Athletic street in Mars Hill (as pictured) would be so dangerous unless the road is widened. I commute down this road multiple times daily, and the road is far too skinny as it is. Passing any vehicle is very difficult on this road, I can't imagine the additional worry of a bike lane unless the road is heavily widened, and parallel parking spaces are removed.
19 days ago
- thank you!
19 days ago
- I currently live on Bailey street with my family that includes 2 young kids both under 10. Speed bumps and better regulations to hold unsafe drivers accountable. People go faster than the 25 mph on one end and much faster than the 35mph on the other end. Someone will get hurt if something's not done. Constant conversation between neighbors young and old.
20 days ago
- Please, no bikes at the Smith Farm!
20 days ago
- Glad you are getting public input. More bike and pedestrian lanes are needed. Look to Portland OR for a shining example of a "bike" friendly city. They are one of the leaders in bike-ability.
20 days ago
- Please don't build new infrastructure. There's already too much changing in our town
20 days ago
- The lack of a sidewalk between cemetery st and the library, as well as upper north main st are concerns. A sidewalk on Bruce to the greenway would also be nice, and a crosswalk at Anderson/bruce and North main as well. Also, can we get a four way stop at the Anderson and Mountain View intersection?
20 days ago
- Worried about not safe for children on Bailey Street due to speeding, wonderful why \$\$ is not spent on additional resources instead of a bike way
20 days ago
- Definitely not, on the main streets. They are too narrow as it is.
20 days ago
- Please don't make the existing roads more narrow with a bike lane. Please don't take existing parking in downtown Mars Hill for a bike lane. Come up with creative solutions that add to the charm of the town. Have the trail off the roadway like Rutherford County!
20 days ago

Athletic street is too narrow as it is, I suggest taking out that rock wall or pushing it back 5 feet, widen the whole road right there by the football field and more vehicle lane space as well as space for that pedestrian and bike lane while taking out that parallel parking row which kinda leaves the university in a bind with unloading buses for games which they should just get rid of that short 20 foot sidewalk right there by the pool maintenance door and create them and little parallel parking area for buses on them game days, but either way the key is to also not blow the county budget on something like that unless you plan on making money back off of it by creating events and charging entry fees in return cause me as a taxpayer what i currently see looks like a waste of my money unless you take what i've said into consideration and that's just judging by the photo on the Facebook post

28 days ago

Parking is a problem in mars hill, there isn't enough parking space for the business in mars hill, so we surely don't need a bike lane or more pedestrian lanes to take up any more room

20 days ago

I don't think any cyclists should be able to bike in busy areas on curvy roads

20 days ago

The speed on residential streets, such as Bailey Street and Bruce Road, are not followed and are dangerous - even for people walking on the sidewalks.

20 days ago

It would be great if there were better walking and bicycling options from south Main Street. It seems like sidewalks have been in place for the sole purpose of students commuting but it would be helpful for the community to expand the walking and biking options.

20 days ago

Both North Main and Bruce Rd. are death traps for pedestrians and bicyclists of any type.

20 days ago

At minimum, I would love for the neighborhoods in mars hill to all have sidewalks. People fly down our road, and traffic bumps dont seem to help.

20 days ago

For me, walking in Mars Hill is safe. I do not bike. I drive and walk.

20 days ago

What about an organic community food garden?

20 days ago

I do not want this to take any of my land. I live on north main st.

20 days ago

Most of your city street already have sidewalks. I don't see a huge need for bike lanes. Living here all my life I don't see enough cyclist to justify that. Several of the roads that don't have sidewalks but lots of foot traffic ie: Bruce Road are state roads. The city can't make modifications to those roads without the state. Bruce road is very dangerous and should not be encouraged as a pedestrian or bike route. School traffic and a narrow road do not go well with this.

20 days ago

I do not wish to see all this construction take place in our town to have more people in the town.

20 days ago

Bruce Road is a necessary link to town and to the greenway and college - and it is very unsafe.

one month ago

My main concern is Bruce rd. and the amount of foot traffic on this road and lack of walking area of which one has to walk in road. This is not safe for pedestrians, traffic can get speedy at times and there's also school traffic of which can be ridiculous at times. A sidewalk along Bruce rd. could/would work wonders from n main street intersection to mars hill elementary entrance

one month ago

Traffic speeding is still a huge problem on Main Street!!

one month ago

I walk my dog everyday on the greenway or on campus. I never ride bike. A dog park would be nice.

one month ago

Sidewalks to neighboring areas

one month ago

I think we should go all in on bikes and walkability

one month ago

I use the walking trail around the football practice fields and softball fields. It is easier on the joints. I hope the gravel trail will remain in place. Thank you.

one month ago

Bailey Street through the college is most concerning with students popping out to cross without looking - additional crosswalks or lights would be helpful

one month ago

I do not think it's a great idea, it has made traffic conditions way worse in surrounding counties as well.

one month ago

I would love to bike from weaverville downtown to mars hill downtown

one month ago

I would like to see a bike trail thats paved, The Greenway isn't suitable for riding, I'm not interested in riding the roads. I travel to towns that have Rails to Trails b/c it's do fun to ride.

one month ago

Sidewalks needed from town limits to downtown area. Currently, foot traffic unsafe on N and S Main to downtown

one month ago

Extending sidewalks and adding bike lanes between things within ~2 miles of downtown would go a long way.

one month ago

We love the greenway. We would like to see additional paths for walking/riding a bike for leisure.

one month ago

Too manyhills here.

one month ago

I only wish the greenway went further; I have no issue with parking, crossing safety, etc. I drive about 10 min to park at the trailhead by field house and can easily walk up the hill to town 1) a sidewalk on Athletic St is needed but it's so dang narrow there already 2) a path all the way to rec park would be phenomenal as my family spends quite a bit of time there at pool, playground, pickleball, etc. I'm thrilled the town is even considering an expansion like this! more greenway is a phenomenal contribution to communal quality of life, thx

28 days ago

Would love to have nice bike trails to ride with my wife. We recently went to Hilton Head Island and you can ride bikes the while time once you arrive and never have to use your car. It would be a nice addition here to have bike paths and sidewalks everywhere.

28 days ago

Thank you for your efforts to improve this situation and for getting the publics input.

one month ago

Bruce Road desperately needs a sidewalk! So does 213 past the football field.

one month ago

My cycling commute into downtown Mars hill is about 8 minutes on bike. Commute is fairly easy. However, roads are pretty narrow down Bruce road. During after school traffic it could get really dangerous for motorists, pedestrians and cyclists. I don't notice many "bike friendly" signage. Bike lanes would be really helpful to keep motorists aware of the cycling community. The bike lanes can also increase a sense of comfort to the community. It could be good to grow mars hill bike community.

Thank you!

one month ago

Thank you for continuing to improve the biking/walking options for families in Mars Hill. We use the greenway almost every day and would love to be able to walk/bike to the Mars Hill Park and Smith Farm, too.

one month ago

The speed limit should be decreased to 20 - instead of 25. 25 is too fast for our neighbourhoods. All other great neighbourhoods like Weaverville and Asheville have speed limits set to 20 so why doesn't mars hill do the same? People are speeding because of the many hills that facilitate acceleration. There are next to no side walks in the main neighbourhoods and that is unsafe for walkers due to the ppl speeding. I tried to go for a run on main street and almost got hit by a car because they were speeding, going around a corner and there was no sidewalk. I've seen a cat get mangled and a dog run over. So overall the quality of life in Mars Hill isn't where it should be.

one month ago

The speed in neighborhoods and the surrounding areas is entirely too fast and feels dangerous when cars speed by both on a bike and walking. Also, many people park on current sidewalks in neighborhoods making it necessary to have to walk on the road to pass by. I would love to see more connectors to greenways - and more greenways where bikes and pedestrians are the majority, as well as bike lanes for use commuting and for exercise.

one month ago

Continue the greenway all the way down Bruce road

one month ago

The map process of drawing lines is very confusing plus hard to be accurate. I tried to add Bruce Rd that I use regularly, the survey showed it was out of the boundaries, but there isn't a map showing the boundaries that I could find

one month ago

There is a lot of activity on Bailey St on the elementary entrance side. Walkers, bikers, runners. There are no paths, sidewalks, or even a shoulder for these activities. This is dangerous, especially as parents are taking or picking up students from school. I recently purchased a neon harness to try to make myself more visible. I frequently have to get over in the weeds to move from cars. While I'm fairly mobile, at age 68 this is a safety concern.

one month ago

I'm very happy to hear that you're planning to improve Mars Hill in this way. I would love to ride my bike more here. Thanks!

one month ago

Need more sidewalks

one month ago

I dont think they should have bicycle lanes and keep bicycle off the road unless they have a tag

one month ago

Turf the mars hill elementary field. Mars Hill is a great place to walk and a little more sidewalk will help, Bailey Mountain/Duck connection when possible. Thanks!

one month ago

I think there is a lot of potential for a really nice bike/walk path where it could be much flatter and even include a parking area. I will map out the location I've been thinking of and email it

one month ago

Stop bikers from going on the back roads of Madison/Mars Hill. It's too dangerous and they are crazy on there bikes

one month ago

We would love to be able to ride our bikes safely in Mars Hill and surrounding areas.

one month ago

Bruce Rd has way too many people walking on it. The road is currently used by school buses and school drop-offs as well. This is not speculation as I live on Bruce Rd and know what I am talking about. Pedestrians should be written citations for no obeying North Carolina law, § 20-174. Crossing at other than crosswalks; walking along highway. (d) Where sidewalks are provided, it shall be unlawful for any pedestrian to walk along and upon an adjacent roadway. Where sidewalks are not provided, any pedestrian walking along and upon a highway shall, when practicable, walk only on the extreme left of the roadway or its shoulder facing traffic which may approach from the opposite direction. Such pedestrian shall yield the right-of-way to approaching traffic. Pedestrians walking on Bruce act like they own the road and the majority do not yield to traffic. Mars Hill Police Department needs to do a better job of enforcing the law on Bruce Rd. I have almost been involved in a few accidents on Bruce Rd because of pedestrian traffic. Bruce Rd is not a greenway and should not be used as one. Mars Hill should have purchased the old driving range on Parkway View Rd for another greenway and park instead of allowing it to be turned into an eyesore of a gloried trailer park. You are more than welcome to publish my comment. I really hope you do publish it.

one month ago

I would say yes, but I would like to see the town assessing the accessibility of the infrastructure for wheelchair users as well, as a wheelchair user myself there are no accessible areas locally to enjoy a "stROLL" as many different obstacles limit disabled people in social activities. A lot of challenges we face while out and about are the narrowing in sidewalks caused by the existence of urban furniture and trees, inadequate paving, lack of recess in the crossings, and elements limiting the free height of step etc. Which leave many of us wheelchair users or the blind experiencing accidents while commuting in urban environments, therefore I would love to see the infrastructure to perhaps have a two lane paved or concrete walkway with designated lanes for each and wide enough for a cyclist and a wheelchair user, which would allow passing of the wheelchair user or a walker by the cyclist or vice-versa while both are enjoying time outdoors, along with accessible access to and from the entrance of said walkway. Just my thoughts 🙏🙏🙏 Town of Mars Hill, NC

one month ago

I would love to see the walking and biking trails expanded and developed and especially on Forest Street and Bruce Road. I would love to see them all connected by trails and or sidewalks.

one month ago

I know sidewalks are expensive to build, but we need more of them!

one month ago

Where trails are dual use (walking/ bicycling) shouldn't walkers be in lane facing oncoming cyclists like on roadways?

one month ago

It would be nice to have pet waste receptacles along the greenway and in public walking areas.

one month ago

Speeds in neighborhood are too high

one month ago

Consider creating a 0.5 mile, 1 mile, or even 2 mile measured LOOP (w/signage), which tends to have more appeal and use than an out-and-back route.

Plus, such a loop could lead to the creation of family-oriented Fun Runs, charity walk/runs, or even bike time trial races.

one month ago

Better and cleaner restrooms

one month ago

Awesome backbone already in place. Well maintained and user friendly.

one month ago

If we are looking to make Mars Hill and the University safe for pedestrians and bikes in that area. I am suggesting to reroute traffic on hwy 213 so it does not go through the campus. I know this can be done and should be done

one month ago

I would love a longer greenway path where one could run or bike for miles.

one month ago

A high priority for the town should be enhancing road shoulders when economically feasible. Also, extending the Otis Duck Greenway in any way possible - it gets intense use by all. Bruce Road from Main Street to the Otis Duck parking lot is especially unsafe - no shoulder, lots of walkers, lots of traffic. Additional walkways would be greatly appreciated by an aging community wanting to exercise and stay healthy.

one month ago

It would be great to extend sidewalk past Chestnut Street on North Main Street

one month ago

Over the last 15 years I have split time between northwest arkansas, and WNC. What they have done with biking and walking paths is a great example of what can be done and how support snowballed after some initial investment. The trail systems are heavily used, and highly functional. Lots of dedicated, maintained pathways. Thank you for this opportunity to provide input.

one month ago

I did a lot of walking between Bailey Mtn and the Greenway during the pandemic. It definitely didn't feel safe (safe from cars). Tried it once with a dog. That was even worse. More sidewalks would be great, though I greatly appreciate the walking venues that we already have. Just please remove all the invasive plants along the Otis Duck Greenway and plant a few shade trees!!!!

one month ago

there's not a need if you worried about transportation safety fix the traffic problem on car eller with another street light or two and put a pedestrian bridge in at the college instead of 50 thousand cross walks. people are plenty capable to walk or bike on the road I've done it for decades no need for a useless project that only get half done and make traffic worse in the mean time.

2 months ago

Thank you for considering additional walking and biking areas

2 months ago

Walking and bicycling should be strongly encouraged, especially for younger generations who should not rely on vehicular traffic as it contributes to global warming.

2 months ago

This would be a great step forward for local public infrastructure! Especially if we have connections to neighboring towns. I would love a bike ride to Marshall to be an actual viable option!

2 months ago

Improving pedestrian and bicycle access is wonderful for our community! Thanks so much for starting this process!

2 months ago

I would love to have a sidewalk connecting the two sidewalks that are already in existence on Mountain View Road and crosswalks at the intersection of Mountain View and Anderson.

I am not sure how it would work, but it would be wonderful to have a sidewalk on North Main Street from the existing sidewalk up to the daycare on Mountain View Road.

2 months ago

A sidepath between Mars Hill and Marshall and to Hot Springs along the river would be the dream come true.

2 months ago

Rollerskating on level areas is also an important activity for us & our kids.

2 months ago

Would love to have a functional way to bike/run/walk to Marshall and to Weaverville

2 months ago

I feel this is especially important for Bruce Street from the elementary school to Main Street. I see people running there all the time and someone is going to get hit bc there is no room for cars and people. This is especially true when school lets out. Also, Bailey street needs speed bumps.

2 months ago

More Crosswalks needed on Main Street and Carl Eller rd. Proper sidewalk on Mountain View Road to library and medical center and down Anderson St.

2 months ago

N/A

2 months ago

I absolutely love the Mars Hill greenway! I live in Marshall and often go to Mars Hill to run and walk my dogs on the greenway since I cannot walk on the roads around my home. I would love to see more connections between the greenway and other parks/places in Mars Hill (like the Bailey mountain park). As a Madison County resident I appreciate our access to trails, but it is nice to have a protected, easily accessible place to walk/run/bike like the greenway. Thank you all for looking into expanding these spaces!

one month ago

Would love to see more parking areas when moving around town. Pedestrians and cyclists are major traffic impediments, especially on major roads like Main Street and Carl Eller road.

one month ago

Fabulous that this is being researched.

one month ago

I walk on the otis duck greenway multiple times a week and would love additional linking trails to make for a longer walk!

one month ago

The top priorities should 1) sidewalk from Mt View Rd south into town. 2) baily mt into town Greenway. 3) connecting Mars Hill Park to town via Greenway and 4) longer 10-15 mile bike lane loop.

one month ago

As a recreational cyclist I would feel more confident and safe having proper markings and designated infrastructure for cycling. This would be a massive improvement for the town of Mars Hill and benefit it's citizens.

one month ago

Traffic through the town of Mars Hill is too fast. Need to install speed bumps to control speed...something bad is going to happen if it doesn't get under control.

one month ago

Live just outside of Mars Hill and enjoy the Duck Greenway. Frustrated by multiple pedestrian crosswalks so close together through campus on 213. Students step into crosswalk without stopping to look for traffic without recognizing the right of way is for pedestrians IN the crosswalk, not those fooling with their phones and continuing into the crosswalk without looking first. Very dangerous!

one month ago

Would love a sidewalk on 213 to make it safer to get into Mars Hill from Phillips Valley Road, to Twin Willows, and the Greenway.

one month ago

Two points.

1) I like riding relatively long distances (10-50miles) and most local/county roads are very narrow & winding, without significant shoulders. Just an extra 2 feet of road width would make the Mars Hill area much safer and more enjoyable area to ride.

2) I find separate bike paths and sidewalks can sometimes increase the hazard to cyclists because cars do not generally look for bicycles that may be moving quickly before pulling across a bike path or sidewalk. They tend not to stop until they get to the edge of the "road". A "buffered lane" is usually safer in my experience.

In over 50 years of riding I've only been in 3 minor accidents with cars... ALL occurred with cars crossing a bike path or sidewalk without looking.

one month ago

We would love to see bike lanes on the busier roads, more real hiking trails), motor vehicles (electric bikes, etc.) disallowed on greenways, and as many greenway trails as possible!

one month ago

Can't wait to see Mars Hill improve and become the best outdoors town in Western NC!

2 months ago

I would love to see the core area of downtown be entirely a pedestrian zone, as well as SAFE and clearly marked bike lanes through the rest of town, so I can leave my car at home.

2 months ago

The area where the Ingles/CVS/Car Wash is located needs a traffic light or roundabout.

2 months ago

None3

2 months ago

Thank you for this survey!

2 months ago

Thank you for your survey!

2 months ago

Great that you are creating a plan. Thank you!

2 months ago

A separated bicycle lane or side path to Stone Cottage Rd, Mars Hill Park and Ride, Parkway View Rd, and Crossroads Pkwy would be majority beneficial. I would love to see pedestrian access to these areas improved as well.

On NC 213 heading towards Stone Cottage Rd, traffic calming measures, and a dedicated bicycle sidepath and pedestrian sidewalk would connect these areas greatly. Many people living off of Stone Cottage Rd and the new development on 213 would have access to the network. Otherwise, these areas are cut off from the network and Mars Hill without a car.

A dedicated throughfare for bicycles and pedestrians to the Mars Hill Park and Ride would be super beneficial. There is little room on Carl Eller Rd, so a buffered bicycle lane would be the best fit if possible. Please do not put unprotected bicycle lanes on this road. Motorists go fast and no one will use the new facilities if they feel unsafe. Car traffic must be able to move through this area due to the connection to I-26, so any changes to make it slower will not be met with open arms by people who take the road. Finding a way to incorporate cycle and pedestrian safety in this area is very important. Using bolstered sidewalks can help with the intersection with Roy Edwards Ln. Reconfiguring the lanes on the bridge over I-26 to have a sidewalk and dedicated bicycle path can easily be done. I know this is not the point of the survey, but purposing the park and ride and a bus station would greatly improve the connectivity of the area. Build dedicated seating or coverings. See the section about continuous flow in the Crossroads Pkwy paragraph.

Crossroads Pkwy had a new subdivision put in. There is ample room next to the road for a separated bicycle and pedestrian facility. I already see many people from the new community walking next to the road on the shoulder, so this pathway will definitely get use. It has to be connected to the rest of the network, this can be done easily if the facility to the park and ride is built. Make this section continuous flow, meaning a cyclist could easily continue past the park and ride if they want to go to Crossroads Pkwy or along Calvin Edney Rd..

Parkway View Rd has a new subdivision. This road could be connected to the bike network with a connection to Crossroads Pkwy. The bridge for I-26 could be an issue, it does not have much width to support a separated bike facility.

N and S Main St have difficulties with being too narrow and having properties too close to the road. Measures to ensure safety of cyclists and pedestrians through these areas would be greatly beneficial. N Main St is the road that I take most often in my car, and speeding through the area is hard not to do. Figuring a way to notify drivers of pedestrians or cyclists especially near Hilltop St would help a lot. N main St is a pretty major throughfare for traffic coming from U.S. 23. A bike facility going to U.S. 23 would be beneficial.

2 months ago

I'm sorry but I couldn't figure out how to use the mapping section of this survey.
2 months ago

Thank you for the survey and for attention to this topic. Bicycle and pedestrian networks are essential for us avoiding the cost and negative environmental impact of single person automobiles while improving the health of our citizens in small communities like ours. How can we be a university town and not have more bike paths and bike racks around? Do you really want all those students should each have their own individual car to get their groceries each week?
2 months ago

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2 months ago

Thanks for giving us a chance for input! We love Mars Hill.
2 months ago

I would love to see a concrete or paved two lane walkway which would allow accessible and safe passing of wheelchair users, blind, cyclists, and all walkers to enjoy. Which would also have accessible entrance to said walkway.
2 months ago

Id like to see the Otis Duck Greenway lengthened considerably.
2 months ago

Additional pedestrian and bicycle lanes would add to the value of Mars Hill
2 months ago

They will continue to walk, run and bike in the street as they do now even where sidewalks exist!!!
2 months ago

Would love a sidewalk on 213 from Phillips Valley Road to Mars Hill. Would also love bike lanes!
2 months ago

Erwin Tn has a great walking and bike trail that follows river its awesome with a park and bathroom consider something like this would be fantastic!
2 months ago

I would love biking off the highway for recreation.
2 months ago

Where Bailey Street and greenway meet there needs to be safer passage for both pedestrians and cyclists as well as cars. Maybe a tunnel could be built or the bushes cut back at the greenway crosswalk? Drivers cannot see pedestrians at all coming from the greenway toward the college until they are almost in the road.
2 months ago

Would love to see a bigger and more connected walking trails/sidewalk system in town up North and South Main Street
2 months ago

The Smith Farm/ Bailey Mountain Park should be for foot travel ONLY!!
2 months ago

Being an athlete and growing up in Mars Hill, I would love to see at least a pedestrian sidewalk around the loop of Mars Hill, Main St., Bruce Rd., to Bailey St. That is where most individuals would love to get their 3 miles in. It would provide a safe environment for our community to be healthier and active.
2 months ago

Thank you for creating this survey. I feel like if the sidewalk on North Main was able to be extended further to the edge of town, people would use it. In addition to creating a sidewalk or bike path on the road to Mars Hill Elementary (and the greenway). Cars drive too fast on those roads for it to feel safe to bike/walk even though it is a 25 speed limit. I hope people can see the benefit of making Mars Hill surrounding area safe for walking/biking.
2 months ago

More bike trails! Cycling is important and fun make bike trails!
2 months ago

I live right over the madison yancey county line. I bike in Mars Hill and run in Mars Hill usually from Beach Glen. To have a better place to run and ride would be great but I find beach glen & paint fork is very bike friendly. The greenway at the college is nice also.
2 months ago

I like the existing walking trails (Otis Duck); also like walking the loop through town and down by the University but would enjoy additional walking trails.
2 months ago

Mars Hill does a good job of requiring dogs to be on leash. Unfortunately, a small percentage of the population still allows their dogs to run free on the greenway and at the nature preserve. Please continue to be diligent about enforcing the leash law. We hike the Madison County shelter dogs on leash and when we encounter dogs off leash that is a very unsafe situation for everybody.
2 months ago

We need a connecting sidewalk from south Main Street to the town.
2 months ago

I have grew up and lived in mars hill for the first 23 years of my life and have enjoyed watching it grow but i wish everything didnt center around the University and had more of a community vibe instead.
2 months ago

Walking the loop is dangerous especially on Bruce Rd.
2 months ago

Walking the loop especially Bruce Rd can be dangerous.
2 months ago

The walking on Bruce Rd is dangerous. I live on Bruce Rd.
2 months ago

It's fine to have walkers and bicyclists in marked areas. Bicyclists should not be allowed on 213. They impede traffic too much as it is.
2 months ago

Would love an expanded family friendly bike trail! Great feature for a great small town!
2 months ago

I would love it if the sidewalk on Mountain View Rd didn't just stop at the bottom of the hill. Doesn't seem like it would be too hard to finish that small section there that doesn't currently have a sidewalk so that it would run along the entire street all the way to Main Street. Lived here almost 30 years, always heard that it was in the plans, but???? Traffic on 213/Carl Eller Rd has gotten crazy. We have to wait and wait and wait just to be able to pull a car out from a side street, can't imagine trying to cross it as a pedestrian or on a bike. Something needs to slow traffic down on that road or at least make it spread out a little. Maybe a new traffic light?
2 months ago

We really need a larger restroom on the walking trail.
2 months ago

I would love to be able to bike through Mars Hill, currently there are no bicycle facilities or priority areas. I would love to see bike lanes and better pedestrian access past the sewage treatment plant. Reconfiguring the road to calm traffic and allow fast bike traffic will allow people living on roads past the treatment plant to access Mars Hill without a car.

Finiding a way to connect north and south Main St to the bike and pedestrian network will allow these communities to travel car free as well.

Any projects to reduce car dependency will help make Mars Hill a sustainable and safe place to live and work in the future. Cars are not here forever!
2 months ago

More pedestrian/cyclist friendly = better and more attractive for MHU students
2 months ago

The road cyclists who invade our neighborhoods are a danger to themselves and to us residents who have to share the road with them. Especially the groups of cyclists. Especially when folks are commuting to school or work. Is road cycling legal? Yes. Is it an exercise in common sense. I think not. Take it to the Blue ridge Parkway or to an area that doesn't have so many blind curves.
2 months ago

I love living and working in Mars Hill and raising my children here! We would all love to bike and walk more.
2 months ago

As Mars Hill continues to grow, it would be great to have this infrastructure ready in place to reduce need for cars and increase access to outdoor recreation!!
2 months ago

My husband is an avid road cyclist cycling 200+ miles a week and my kids love cycling. We travel to Greenville SC to the swamp rabbit trail often since its fairly flat and smooth and my kids (now 5 and 6) can ride 22 miles. We stop in various locations and play at the playground (3 right off the trail from travelers rest to the zoo), get a coffee, pastry, beer or lunch breaking up a day allowing the kids to ride further. We don't have to get off the trail to go to any of these places. We used the Mars Hill Greenway a lot when the kids were on strider bikes and we could walk but for us to get all the bikes loaded and unloaded - the trail is really too short. Would love the trail to continue and go past some fun family places, playgrounds, coffee shops etc. We never ride the sidewalk portion of the trail- just more stressful with kids. When kids were little the steep hill caused me a ton of stress with the kids bike getting away from them and I found myself chasing them trying to stop them before they crash. Cycling is super important to our family time and we wish we had a place we felt safe riding (Asheville doesnt fit the bill) closer to our home.
2 months ago

We love the existing walking paths and use them frequently, but we would love to see expanded areas that are safe to walk and ride bikes!
2 months ago

Bicycle traffic should only be allowed in places where the speed limit is 25mph or lower
2 months ago

Main St. has such limited parking and no centralized features, like a Central Park or Common. I believe this hurts the businesses there, future growth and growing the community bond
2 months ago

For exercise they need to use the greenway, much safer
2 months ago

Would love to see the full "Sk loop" have a sidewalk instead of having to walk on the road for half!
2 months ago

None
2 months ago

Putting a red light at the end of Roy Edward's on Carl Eller would serve the e community better. How about enticing at steakhouse or fast food restaurants into town? There are plenty of other projects that would help more residents in MH than sidewalks and bike lanes, which BTW are not a problem to the majority of residents.
2 months ago

Vehicles traveling at unsafe speeds through existing neighborhoods is an issue
2 months ago

I would love the neighborhoods in Mars Hill to have sidewalks and walking access to downtown's existing sidewalks.
2 months ago

Pedestrian traffic in the streets is very concerning.
2 months ago

28754
2 months ago

Please build a sidewalk down south Main Street. People run there and there is no curb or shoulder for people to safely get out of the way.
2 months ago

Very thankful to live in mars hill with well taken care of sidewalks but the frustration is when the people chose not to I use it and walk on the opposite side of the road
2 months ago

Would love to have a gravel/cinder pathway from MHU to Bailey Mountain/Smith Farm
2 months ago

It would be great to have safe bike lanes if possible.
2 months ago

Handicap accessible activities would be beneficial for the town. Playground equipment for wheelchairs, pathways for wheelchairs, sensory gardens and activities for individuals with high sensory needs like autism.
2 months ago

We don't need bicyclists on our roads. They're too narrow and the cyclists take up too much space. Please don't make mars hill like north Asheville and Main Street/213 like Merrimon avenue. It's already difficult to drive thru mars hill with all the college student crossings in place on 213. Most people don't want to have to deal with persons on bicycles when we are driving home or to work. Not a good idea.
2 months ago

I love this!! Please follow through

2 months ago

More people are walking and running in Mars Hill, which is a great thing. But there are some hazards. Traffic needs to be slowed on Bailey Street, maybe with speed humps. The pedestrian cross walk to the Greenway at Ponder Field needs a mandatory signal, like we have on 213 to stop cars that speed downhill. There are a lot of students, families with children and dogs that cross the road at this point and drivers cannot always see people crossing until it is too late.

2 months ago

It's a dream of mine for the greenway to connect to the Bailey Mountain Preserve. I am a Mars Hill resident (Bailey Street) and an MHU employee who regularly takes students to the mountain. We would love to be able to walk over during our lab time. Thanks for your work on this project! If I can help with the committee and planning, I'm happy to do so. -Laura Boggess

2 months ago

In general, I think Mars Hill is a pretty bikeable community, but there are sections of N. Main and S. Main (or whatever it turns into as it makes the big curve to head down toward the interstate) where limited sight distances, steep grades, and the speed of auto traffic (often above the posted speed limits) make for a precarious ride. Pedestrian-wise, it would be nice to have walk/don't walk signaling at the College/Main and Bailey/Main intersections, and possibly activated alert flashers along Main and 213 crosswalks (similar to those along Lyman St. in Asheville).

Bike lanes (protected or not) are nice but I don't think they're essential, if future planning incorporates wider travel lanes to allow for sharing of the road. But I probably have a greater comfort level with riding alongside traffic than many who are not as seasoned at cycling on the road, so I certainly wouldn't want to discourage bike lanes.

(Edit: I misread the scope of the area in question, thinking it was the entirety of the town and not just the specific corridors, so my comments reference areas outside the survey target area.)

2 months ago

In general, I think Mars Hill is a pretty bikeable community, but there are sections of N. Main and S. Main (or whatever it turns into as it makes the big curve to head down toward the interstate) where limited sight distances, steep grades, and the speed of auto traffic (often above the posted speed limits) make for a precarious ride. Pedestrian-wise, it would be nice to have walk/don't walk signaling at the College/Main and Bailey/Main intersections, and possibly activated alert flashers along Main and 213 crosswalks (similar to those along Lyman St. in Asheville).

Bike lanes (protected or not) are nice but I don't think they're essential, if future planning incorporates wider travel lanes to allow for sharing of the road, so I certainly wouldn't want to discourage bike lanes.

2 months ago

Need a walking/bike path from Woods of Ammon along S Main to town - traffic is very fast.

2 months ago

A 3 to 4 mile loop would be wonderful—anything above that for biking would be a great start.. Something that could be added to over time —passing Rec Park or Bailey Mtn— Nice to have the Rec Park included in the loop..

2 months ago

My husband and I are retired and spend a LOT of time outside, mostly walking, but we have new e-bikes and would love safer options for riding. More public bike racks, too, please! We would like to go down to one car (hybrid) and use our bikes often for getting around town. We live near Bailey Park (Smith Farm). Thank you for working with the community to expand these healthful alternatives to cars.

2 months ago



I would like to be able to run this entire path. It is approximately 5K from one end to the other and back.

2 months ago

5 Agree

needs sidewalks or wider roadway

2 months ago

2 Agree

The greenway trail is nice for a shorter recreational /exercise walk

2 months ago

2 Agree

Very nice trail!

20 days ago

1 Agree

We have been hearing about a greenway connector from Otis Duck to Bailey Mountain /Smith Farm. That would be excellent for locals and a low-impact tourism draw.

2 months ago

1 Agree

Separated and dedicated bike and pedestrian facility through here, there is more than enough room to have a dedicated bike path with sidewalk. Will connect many more people to Mars hill and help development along this section to be more sustainable and less car oriented. Traffic calming on this stretch of 213 is needed, the speed limit is way too low.

2 months ago

1 Agree

good for bicycling

2 months ago

1 Agree

Don't forget South Main Street.

Walk along South Main to Woods Ammons, Down to Park Drive, over to Cascade Street and Back to South Main. Walk along Bailey Street, up Banjo Branch, along Forest Street, back to Bailey Street.

Walk along Woods Ammons to Turkey Branch, down to Ivy Creek, up Long Ridge and back to South Main. Woods Ammons to Gabriels Lane, Upper Gabriels Creek to the Ivy; up Lower Gabriels Creek, back to South main.

2 months ago

1 Agree

Library/art gallery/ice cream shop

2 months ago

1 Agree

Bailey Mountain has the best hiking

2 months ago

1 Agree

X

17 days ago

X

17 days ago

Hike Bailey Mtn. Trails

20 days ago

need side walks from post office at least as far dental office on South Main.

2 months ago

Walking up South Main from the Post Office is hazardous.

2 months ago

2 months ago

I only want to see pedestrian improvements. We do not need bicycle access in Mars Hill. The downtown corridor is too narrow already with sidewalks, parking, and main street and adding cyclist to that mix is not ideal, nor do I want to promote our town as a road bike destination for those fortunate enough to afford \$4000 hobbies. I see adding that as taking away from vehicle/pedestrian experience, so I am opposed to biking lanes or improvements.

2 months ago

Plan looks good. Mars Hill is a very safe and friendly town.

2 months ago

I would like there to be sidewalk installed from MHU Field House, down 213 all the way to Stone Cottage Road. That would allow 3 additional communities walking access into Mars Hill.

2 months ago

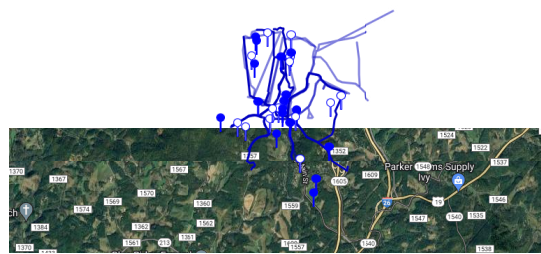
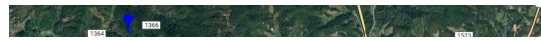
would like to see the town and the university work together to have the greenway connect to the city pool/park. the college could give the right away at the beginning of park drive, then the town could use eminent domain to put a sidewalk though the last few private pieces of property.

2 months ago

I've ran for 20 years in various small towns, cities all over the country. I've almost been hit by a car running in Mars Hill 3 times in past year. Aggressive drivers swerve at me, won't yield at cross walks.

2 months ago

Where are the best places to walk and bike in Mars Hill?



This would be a good loop

one month ago

Love the gravel walking trail.

one month ago

Forest Street, Bailey Street and Bruce Road

one month ago

It would be awesome to negotiate an extension of the Otis Duck Greenway to the north.

one month ago

South Main Street if fairly densely populated with houses. It should be walkable at least as far as Spring Drive.

2 months ago

A sidewalk on Park Drive, at least as far as the Rec Park, would help with safety.

2 months ago

It's great walking the Duck Greenway. But access to it on foot could be better.

2 months ago

Camden's is a great destination for walking & biking. It would be great if there were a bike rack nearby.

2 months ago

A dedicated bike path to other towns in the county, either via road or via a completely separate trail, would do wonders for local cyclists or walking pedestrians

2 months ago

Cars typically are slow in this area and willing to stop for pedestrians

2 months ago

Add bike throughfare and improve sidewalks. Please do not put bike lanes near Car traffic, they need to be buffered since the traffic goes so fast in this area. People will not use the new facilities if they feel unsafe. A sidewalk and dedicated, separated bike path across -26 would be beneficial. Please make everything separated from car traffic as much as possible, barriers please!

2 months ago

A sidewalk on Carl Eller would connect Beech Glen residents

2 months ago

Walking along Bailey St from many different locations

2 months ago

Cycle to town.

2 months ago

needs sidewalk or wider roadway

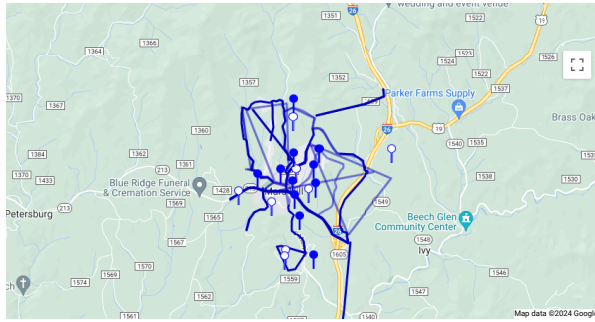
2 months ago

needs sidewalks

2 months ago

- I walk from Bailey Street to the Smith Farm Preserve.
2 months ago
- I walk from my house on Bailey Street to the Greenway near the old rock school.
2 months ago
- I walk from Bailey Street to campus almost every weekday.
2 months ago
- I would feel very unsafe riding here.
2 months ago

Which locations (streets, intersections, neighborhoods, etc.) need the most bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements in Mars Hill?

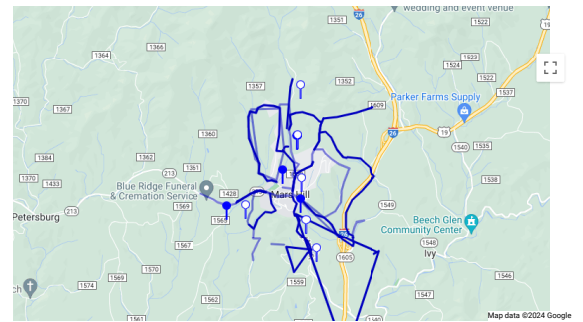


- dangerous for bicycling due to high traffic volumes and speed.
2 months ago 2 Agree
- We have a lot of interest in students at MHU going to Bailey Mountain, but they mostly drive there in cars now. If there was an easy way to get there on foot or by bike, I think more people would go that way instead.
2 months ago 2 Agree
- Sidewalk Hickory Drive/ baseball field curve would help
one month ago
- The downtown area is ok, but there aren't specific pedestrian intersections or signals
2 months ago 2 Agree

- The Main Street / rte 213 intersection is too dangerous for walkers.
one month ago
- People shouldn't have to drive to the rec park on Park drive. A sidewalk is sorely needed.
one month ago
- It would be great if people could walk from the Otis Duck Greenway to Bailey Mountain.
one month ago
- North Main Street is just wide enough to support a bike & pedestrian lane.
2 months ago
- This spot is super narrow and dangerous. There is not a lot of room for dedicated facilities. This road is a throughfare for people coming from U.S. 23, either changing that or working to warn drivers of pedestrians would help.
2 months ago
- Bike or pedestrian access up here would be beneficial
2 months ago
- Dedicated Bike path with sidewalk or multiuse path will help so much this way. It could connect these areas otherwise isolated from Mars Hill.
2 months ago
- Bike Lanes Please! separation from car traffic is important, if there is no separation and it's just a paved lane, don't do it.
2 months ago
- Separated bike lanes to park and ride. Sidewalk and bike path over I-26 bridge. Please add ample separation from car traffic along this stretch, lots of traffic and people will not use it if it's unsafe.
2 months ago
- Multiuse path going to Crossroads Pkwy and Parkway View Rd to connect new communities to network. I see people walking along Crossroads Pkwy all the time.
2 months ago
- Complete the sidewalk all the way down Mountain View Dr to Main Street. A sidewalk from the intersection of Mtn View and Anderson that runs to Carl Eller would be nice too. Sorry can't get your map to work to let me draw lines.
2 months ago
- Make the greenway longer to connect to the one coming to weaverville. Will bring lots of tourism
2 months ago
- needs sidewalk
2 months ago
- I would feel very unsafe riding along 213. For future planning it would be wise to include a bike/walking path.
2 months ago
- It is very unsafe to walk or bike along Bruce Street, but it could be a great way to get to the Greenway/Elementary School if improved.
2 months ago

What are your ideas for new greenways, bikeways, and walkways? Mark on the map where you would like to see improvements and/or new facilities.

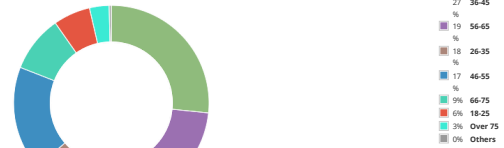
- Getting up and down the hill in town (to the park and ride, for example) on foot always feels unsafe
2 months ago 2 Agree
- If a sidewalk or side path was added here, it would allow 3 additional neighborhoods to walk/bike into town.
2 months ago 2 Agree
- North Main Street, just beyond Main Street
2 months ago 1 Agree
- needs sidewalk
2 months ago 1 Agree
- needs sidewalk or wider roadway. Very busy in early morning and afternoon of school days
2 months ago 1 Agree
- needs sidewalk
2 months ago 1 Agree
- South Main Street Please
2 months ago 1 Agree
- Sidewalk on South Main to this point.
4 days ago
- Gravel trail needs more chat.
one month ago
- Main/Carl Eller Intersection.
one month ago
- Bruce Road gets high pedestrian and vehicular traffic to the grade school and walkway, and it has no shoulders. It is an extremely unsafe situation even with a low speed limit. Pedestrians often walk unsafely, two abreast, with backs to traffic and pets. Adding safe shoulders to Bruce Road should be a high priority for the town.
one month ago
- Woodhaven neighborhood needs bike and walking methods
one month ago
- Sidewalk from Mt View back into town is essential.
one month ago
- Would be great if the Greenway would extend further down Bruce Rd, all the way to the end.
one month ago
- As a whole, Mars Hill shouldn't be so "choppy". It should be easy to walk or ride from anywhere to anywhere.
one month ago



- A loop between the greenway trail and Bailey Mountain
2 months ago 4 Agree
- A trail out to the recreation park
2 months ago 2 Agree
- A sidewalk or side path here would allow 3 additional neighborhoods to walk/bike into town.
2 months ago 2 Agree
- Although North Main Street is narrow, I think there is room for a walk / bike lane.
one month ago 1 Agree
- Connect with greenway and bring connectivity to N main and Parkway View?
2 months ago 1 Agree
- May be difficult to get any facilities through this area, but a sidewalk would be beneficial
2 months ago 1 Agree
- Multiuse path
2 months ago 1 Agree
- Extend the greenway along Gabriels creek north and even go to recreation park or travel south and connect to the new greenways that will be coming in weaverville which will go all the way to Asheville. Add parks along the way
2 months ago 1 Agree

- Connecting the greenway to Bailey Mountain Preserve is the biggest improvement I would like to see. 2 months ago 1 Agree
- Would be so much safer to have a sidewalk on Bruce road. Would make a nice loop around Bailey and Bruce one month ago
- Multi-use trail along NC 213 one month ago
- Wider sidewalks on Bailey one month ago
- Connecting woodhaven to new sidewalks on south main one month ago
- There are a lot of residences between the center of town and E View Drive. There are some patches of very poor visibility; a sidewalk would be very helpful! one month ago
- The intersection of Bailey Street and Main Street is dangerous. Drivers should have more visibility when turning, and a bike rack would be nice. one month ago
- The sidewalk up to the elementary school devolves into a road shoulder. There needs to be more separation between the car traffic and the kids who try to walk here. one month ago
- The intersection of rte 213 & Main Street could use a pedestrian walk light. one month ago
- Dangerous spot for bike and ped, need more warning or markings. cant add path through here unless it goes on the road 2 months ago
- Multiuse path so people can access town 2 months ago
- Sidepath and traffic calming on 213. Allow better development so there can be use along this stretch. 2 months ago
- Connect two new subdivisions with multiuse path 2 months ago
- SEPARATION FROM CAR TRAFFIC 2 months ago
- Connecting Old mars hill highway all the way down to exit 13 would open up Beech Glen and other communities to downtown. 2 months ago

What is your age?



278 respondents

What is your gender?



277 respondents

What is your race/ethnicity?

87%	White	210 ✓
10%	I prefer not to answer	24 ✓
2%	Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish	5 ✓
1%	Asian	3 ✓
0%	Black or African-American	1 ✓
0%	Other	1 ✓
0%	American Indian or Alaska Native	0 ✓

0% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander 0 ✓

242 Respondents

How many household vehicles do you have access to?



275 respondents

Do you have a disability?



274 respondents

What is the highest level of education you have completed?



275 respondents

What is your annual household income?



273 respondents

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APPENDIX C: COST ESTIMATES

For the nine priority projects highlighted in Chapter 4, planning-level cost estimates were created using the NCDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Cost Estimation Tool. Full estimates from that tool are included below.

SIT 2: Off-Road/Separated Linear Bicycle Facility Facility Type: Shared Use Path, Multi-Use Path, Rail-Trail, or Sidewalk

Project Name: Park St Sidewalk SPOT ID: 2

1 Project Length: 3,500 ft
 2 Proposed Facility Width (Default is 10 feet): 10 ft
 3 County: Madison
 4 City: Mars Hill
 5 Surrounding Development Type: Rural
 6 Registered Historic District: YES NO
 7 Impacts to Existing Curb & Gutter: YES NO
 8 Number of FEMA Stream Crossings Impacted: 0
 9 Percentage of ROW Area Needed: Large (25%-60%)
 10 Impact to Active Railroad Track or Railroad ROW: YES NO

11 Roadways Intersected: Interstate 0, Freeway 0, Major Arterial 0, Local Road 2, Arterial 1, Total 3
 12 Signalized Intersections Crossed: 0
 13 Level of Complexity for Signalized Intersections Crossed: N/A
 14 Number of Utility Poles Requiring Relocation: 0
 15 No Utilities Associated with This Project: No Utilities
 Submitted by: McKelams

Generate Cost Edit Clear

Cost Estimate Summary
 Total: \$ 1,683,000
 Design: \$ 235,000
 ROW: \$ 8,000
 Utilities: \$ 0
 Construction: \$ 1,438,000

Go to Calculation Tab Print PDF

Enter Any Desired Notes in the Box Below

All costs are based on 2023 prices and cost components are rounded up to the next \$1,000. This tool assumes established ecoregion typologies, construction market regions, and average land values specific to North Carolina. They are determined within the tool based on user inputs for project location. This location-based information is used in ROW, construction, and environmental mitigation calculations. This tool assumes a project impact area for ROW and environmental mitigation calculations based on chosen SIT, facility type, project length, and project facility width. This tool is limited in accuracy by user inputs and the complexity of questions presented for each project. If the inputs are incorrect, the tool's accuracy will be diminished. This tool does not estimate costs associated with the purchase or taking of buildings within its ROW estimate calculations. It is assumed that projects would require land acquisition only.

SIT 7: Protected Linear Pedestrian Facility Facility Type: Shared Use Path, Multi-Use Path, Rail-Trail, or Sidewalk

Project Name: Old St. Gatenaway Reassignment SPOT ID: 2

1 Project Length: 1,570 ft
 2 Proposed Facility Width (Default is 10 feet): 10 ft
 3 County: Madison
 4 City: Mars Hill
 5 Surrounding Development Type: Rural
 6 Registered Historic District: YES NO
 7 Impacts to Existing Curb & Gutter: YES NO
 8 Number of FEMA Stream Crossings Impacted: 0
 9 Percentage of ROW Area Needed: Home (0%)
 10 Impact to Active Railroad Track or Railroad ROW: YES NO

11 Roadways Intersected: Interstate 0, Freeway 0, Major Arterial 0, Local Road 2, Arterial 0, Total 2
 12 Signalized Intersections Crossed: 0
 13 Level of Complexity for Signalized Intersections Crossed: N/A
 14 Number of Utility Poles Requiring Relocation: 0
 15 No Utilities Associated with This Project: No Utilities
 Submitted by: McKelams

Generate Cost Edit Clear

Cost Estimate Summary
 Total: \$ 766,000
 Design: \$ 179,000
 ROW: \$ 0
 Utilities: \$ 0
 Construction: \$ 587,000

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Enter Any Desired Notes in the Box Below

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SIT 7: Protected Linear Pedestrian Facility Facility Type: Shared Use Path, Multi-Use Path, Rail-Trail, or Sidewalk

Project Name: Orange Branch/Protect St Greenway SPOT ID: 2

1 Project Length: 7,000 ft
 2 Proposed Facility Width (Default is 10 feet): 10 ft
 3 County: Madison
 4 City: Mars Hill
 5 Surrounding Development Type: Rural
 6 Registered Historic District: YES NO
 7 Impacts to Existing Curb & Gutter: YES NO
 8 Number of FEMA Stream Crossings Impacted: 1
 9 Percentage of ROW Area Needed: Large (25%-60%)
 10 Impact to Active Railroad Track or Railroad ROW: YES NO

11 Roadways Intersected: Interstate 0, Freeway 0, Major Arterial 0, Local Road 2, Arterial 1, Total 3
 12 Signalized Intersections Crossed: 0
 13 Level of Complexity for Signalized Intersections Crossed: N/A
 14 Number of Utility Poles Requiring Relocation: 4
 15 No Utilities Associated with This Project: No Utilities
 Submitted by: McKelams

Generate Cost Edit Clear

Cost Estimate Summary
 Total: \$ 3,159,000
 Design: \$ 341,000
 ROW: \$ 16,000
 Utilities: \$ 258,000
 Construction: \$ 2,744,000

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Enter Any Desired Notes in the Box Below

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SIT 7: Protected Linear Pedestrian Facility Facility Type: Shared Use Path, Multi-Use Path, Rail-Trail, or Sidewalk

Project Name: Cascade St/NC-213 Sidewalk SPOT ID: 8

1 Project Length: 3,000 ft
 2 Proposed Facility Width (Default is 10 feet): 10 ft
 3 County: Madison
 4 City: Mars Hill
 5 Surrounding Development Type: Rural
 6 Registered Historic District: YES NO
 7 Impacts to Existing Curb & Gutter: YES NO
 8 Number of FEMA Stream Crossings Impacted: 1
 9 Percentage of ROW Area Needed: Large (25%-60%)
 10 Impact to Active Railroad Track or Railroad ROW: YES NO

11 Roadways Intersected: Interstate 0, Freeway 0, Major Arterial 0, Local Road 2, Arterial 1, Total 3
 12 Signalized Intersections Crossed: 0
 13 Level of Complexity for Signalized Intersections Crossed: N/A
 14 Number of Utility Poles Requiring Relocation: 4
 15 No Utilities Associated with This Project: No Utilities
 Submitted by: McKelams

Generate Cost Edit Clear

Cost Estimate Summary
 Total: \$ 1,507,000
 Design: \$ 244,000
 ROW: \$ 8,000
 Utilities: \$ 0
 Construction: \$ 1,255,000

Go to Calculation Tab Print PDF

Enter Any Desired Notes in the Box Below

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SIT 9: Improved Pedestrian Facility Facility Type: Streetscape/Corridor Improvement

Project Name: Mountain View Intersection Improvements SPOT ID: 5

Total Number of Crossing Islands
 Total Number of Curb Extensions
 Total Number of Intersection Markings
 Total Amount of Lighting
 Total Number of Marked Crosswalks
 Total Number of Mid-Block Crossings

Submitted by: McAdams

Generate Cost Edit Clear

Cost Estimate Summary

Total	\$ 322,000
Design	\$ 38,000
ROW	\$ 10,000
Utilities	\$ 0
Construction	\$ 274,000

Go to Calculation Tab Print PDF

Enter Any Desired Notes in the Box Below

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SIT 9: Improved Pedestrian Facility Facility Type: Streetscape/Corridor Improvement

Project Name: Mountain View Intersection SPOT ID: 6

Total Number of Crossing Islands
 Total Number of Curb Extensions
 Total Number of Intersection Markings
 Total Amount of Lighting
 Total Number of Marked Crosswalks
 Total Number of Mid-Block Crossings

Submitted by:

Generate Cost Edit Clear

Cost Estimate Summary

Total	\$ 702,000
Design	\$ 83,000
ROW	\$ 21,000
Utilities	\$ 0
Construction	\$ 598,000

Go to Calculation Tab Print PDF

Enter Any Desired Notes in the Box Below

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This tool assumes a project impact area for ROW and environmental mitigation calculations based on chosen SIT, facility type, project length, and project facility width.

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SIT 9: Improved Pedestrian Facility Facility Type: Streetscape/Corridor Improvement

Project Name: Mountain View/Anderson Intersection SPOT ID: 7

Total Number of Crossing Islands
 Total Number of Curb Extensions
 Total Number of Intersection Markings
 Total Amount of Lighting
 Total Number of Marked Crosswalks
 Total Number of Mid-Block Crossings

Submitted by:

Generate Cost Edit Clear

Cost Estimate Summary

Total	\$ 144,000
Design	\$ 17,000
ROW	\$ 5,000
Utilities	\$ 0
Construction	\$ 122,000

Go to Calculation Tab Print PDF

Enter Any Desired Notes in the Box Below

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This tool assumes a project impact area for ROW and environmental mitigation calculations based on chosen SIT, facility type, project length, and project facility width.

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This tool does not estimate costs associated with the purchase or taking of buildings within its ROW estimate calculations. It is assumed that projects would require land acquisition only.

SIT 7: Protected Linear Pedestrian Facility Facility Type: Sidewalk

Project Name: Mountain View Rd Sidewalk SPOT ID: 7

Project Length
 Proposed Facility Width (Default is 5 feet)
 Madison County
 Mars Hill City
 Suburban Surrounding Development Type
 Registered Historic District
 Impacts to Existing Curb & Gutter
 Number of FEMA Stream Crossings Impacted
 Medium (15%-25%) Percentage of ROW Area Needed
 Impact to Active Railroad Track or Railroad ROW

Roadways Intersected: Interstate, Freeway, Major Arterial, Arterial
 Signalized Intersections Crossed
 Level of Complexity for Signalized Intersections Crossed
 Number of Utility Poles Requiring Relocation
 No Utilities Associated with This Project

Submitted by: McAdams

Generate Cost Edit Clear

Cost Estimate Summary

Total	\$ 525,000
Design	\$ 176,000
ROW	\$ 1,000
Utilities	\$ 132,000
Construction	\$ 216,000

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Enter Any Desired Notes in the Box Below

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This tool is limited in accuracy by user inputs and the complexity of questions presented for each project. If the inputs are incorrect, the tool's accuracy will be diminished.

This tool does not estimate costs associated with the purchase or taking of buildings within its ROW estimate calculations. It is assumed that projects would require land acquisition only.

SIT 7: Protected Linear Pedestrian Facility Facility Type: Shared-Use Path, Multi-Use Path, Rail-Trail, or Sidewalk

Project Name: Mountain View Sidewalk SPOT ID: 8

Project Length
 Proposed Facility Width (Default is 10 feet)
 Madison County
 Mars Hill City
 Rural Surrounding Development Type
 Registered Historic District
 Impacts to Existing Curb & Gutter
 Number of FEMA Stream Crossings Impacted
 Large (25%-40%) Percentage of ROW Area Needed
 Impact to Active Railroad Track or Railroad ROW

Roadways Intersected: Interstate, Freeway, Major Arterial, Arterial
 Signalized Intersections Crossed
 Level of Complexity for Signalized Intersections Crossed
 Number of Utility Poles Requiring Relocation
 No Utilities Associated with This Project

Submitted by:

Generate Cost Edit Clear

Cost Estimate Summary

Total	\$ 1,727,000
Design	\$ 225,000
ROW	\$ 8,000
Utilities	\$ 161,000
Construction	\$ 1,333,000

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Enter Any Desired Notes in the Box Below

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This tool is limited in accuracy by user inputs and the complexity of questions presented for each project. If the inputs are incorrect, the tool's accuracy will be diminished.

This tool does not estimate costs associated with the purchase or taking of buildings within its ROW estimate calculations. It is assumed that projects would require land acquisition only.

SIT 7: Protected Linear Pedestrian Facility Facility Type: Sidewalk

Project Name: Mountain View Sidewalk SPOT ID: 9

Project Length
 Proposed Facility Width (Default is 5 feet)
 Madison County
 Mars Hill City
 Downtown Surrounding Development Type
 Registered Historic District
 Impacts to Existing Curb & Gutter
 Number of FEMA Stream Crossings Impacted
 Medium (15%-25%) Percentage of ROW Area Needed
 Impact to Active Railroad Track or Railroad ROW

Roadways Intersected: Interstate, Freeway, Major Arterial, Arterial
 Signalized Intersections Crossed
 Level of Complexity for Signalized Intersections Crossed
 Number of Utility Poles Requiring Relocation
 No Utilities Associated with This Project

Submitted by:

Generate Cost Edit Clear

Cost Estimate Summary

Total	\$ 266,000
Design	\$ 110,000
ROW	\$ 1,000
Utilities	\$ 0
Construction	\$ 155,000

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Enter Any Desired Notes in the Box Below

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2025

