



# Carolina Thread Trail Forum

December 5, 2023



Integrated Mobility Division  
N.C. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



MCADAMS





# 2022 Report Overview

# PROJECT BACKGROUND

**2000-2020:** Progress across the state for long-distance trails and local/regional trail networks.



East Coast



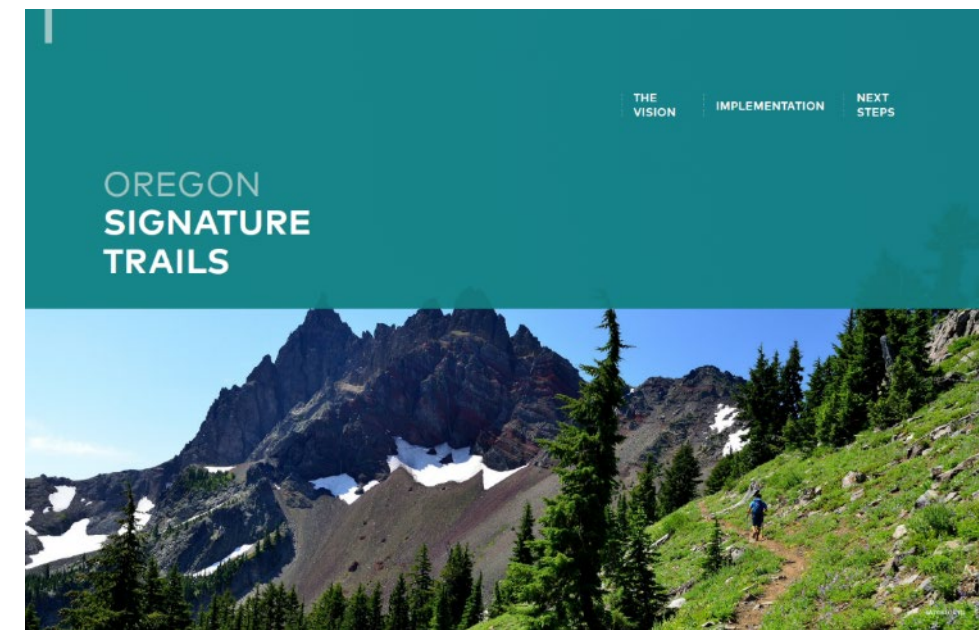
Greenway





## 2019-2020:

- Other states, like Florida, New York, Oregon, and Ohio announce and release plans for statewide trail networks.
- North Carolina launches this project to build on past successes to develop the Great Trails State plan.







***One Network of Trails.  
One Hundred Counties.***

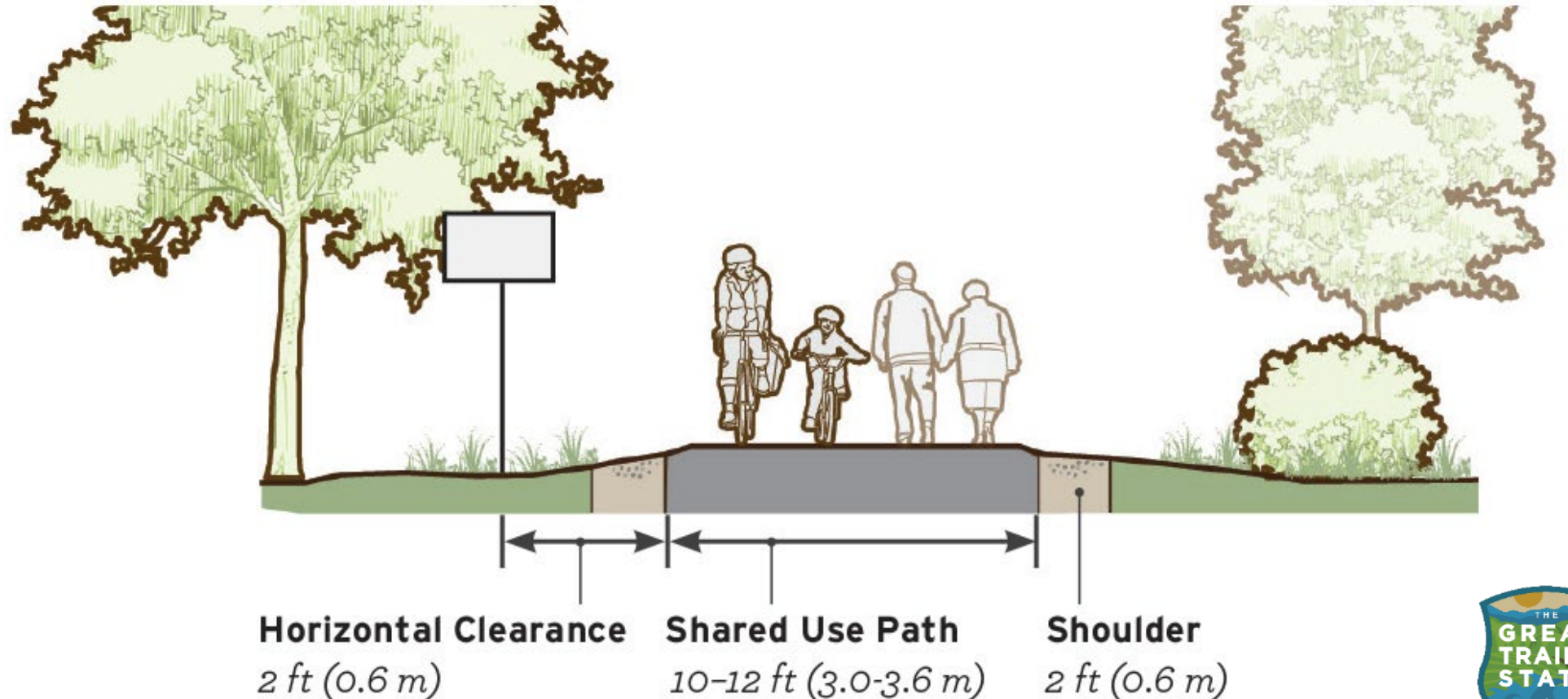
Connect communities to the great outdoors, while creating opportunities for transportation, conservation, recreation, education, physical health, environmental health, tourism, and economic prosperity.

# The Great Trails State

For this project, “trails” refers to **shared-use paths**, also known as greenways, greenway trails, multi-use trails, side paths (along roadways), and rail-trails (along rail corridors).

They could be paved or unpaved, but should support bicycling (as opposed to hiking-only trails).

Limited on-road connections will be necessary for connectivity



# The Great Trails State: Project Process

## 40 COMMITTEE MEMBERS



provided direction, representing NCDOT's 14 Divisions, 7 RPOs and MPOs, and relevant statewide departments and organizations.

## 600+ STAKEHOLDERS



reviewed the proposed corridors, including town and county managers, planners, parks directors, land trusts, advocacy organizations, and many others.

## 11,000+ NC RESIDENTS



expressed support and shared ideas in public surveys, online input maps and plan review, including 850,000 of impressions on social media that generated awareness of the plan and process.







# KICK-OFF MEETING





# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## Outreach Plan



Partnership with NCDOT Communications to develop outreach plan in light of COVID-19:

- Social Media Campaign:
  - Traditional social media on NCDOT accounts.
  - Geo-target areas needing more input.
  - Developed Toolkit for social media graphics and messaging to groups sharing survey on local and regional accounts.
- Traditional Media Campaign:
  - Project Web Page
  - Newsletters & Press Releases
  - Posters w/ Survey QR Codes at State Parks





# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## Outreach Plan

### Community Outreach with Groups across NC:

- 600 Division Stakeholders (local and regional governments)
- Regional, Statewide, Local Trail Organizations
- NC PTA
- DPI Superintendents and Principals
- AARP NC
- NC Wildlife Commission
- Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina
- HBCU's
- UNC system
- NC Community College system
- N.C. Council of Churches
- NC Association of County Commissioners
- AAA Carolinas
- NC Conservation Council
- YMCA
- Boy Scouts of NC / Girl Scouts
- NC League of Municipalities
- NC Tourism
- Outdoor Suppliers



#### Where should new trails go?

Use the buttons below to drop comments on the map.

My favorite trails in NC

Destinations that I would like to access by trail

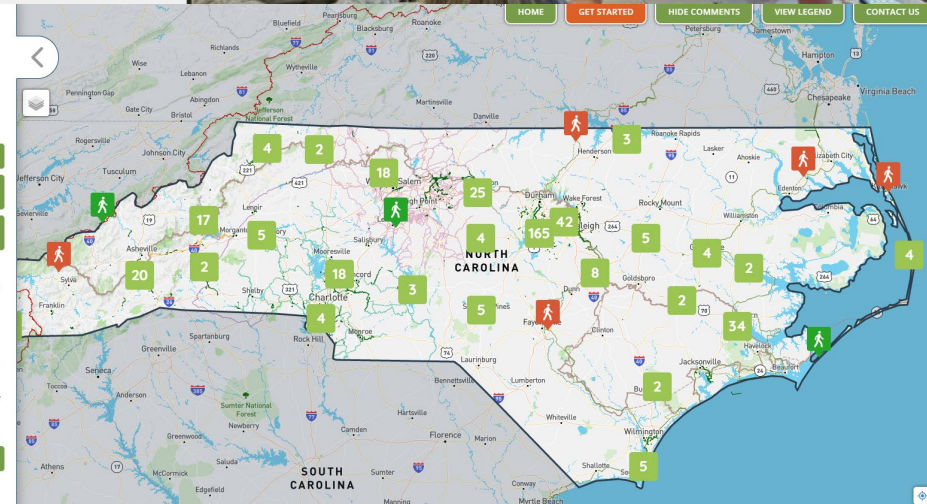
Places where I would like to see new trails

If someone has placed a point that you agree with, click the "Like" button when you click on the point.

You can switch to satellite view and add or remove layers of data by clicking the button in the upper left corner of the map.

If you notice an issue with the data in the map, such as incomplete or incorrect routes, report that with the button below.

Report a map data correction





# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## Survey Results

Over 86% of respondents who completed the survey indicated that the Great Trails State Project was extremely or very important to them.

### Most popular destinations for people currently walking and bicycling

#1



Local &  
Regional  
Parks

#2



State  
Parks

#3



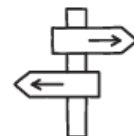
Small towns &  
rural communities

#4



River, lake, &  
beach access  
points

#5



Hiking &  
Mountain Biking  
Trailheads

### Highest-priority benefits for trails

#1



Recreation

#2



Physical Health

#3



Conservation

#4



Environmental  
Health

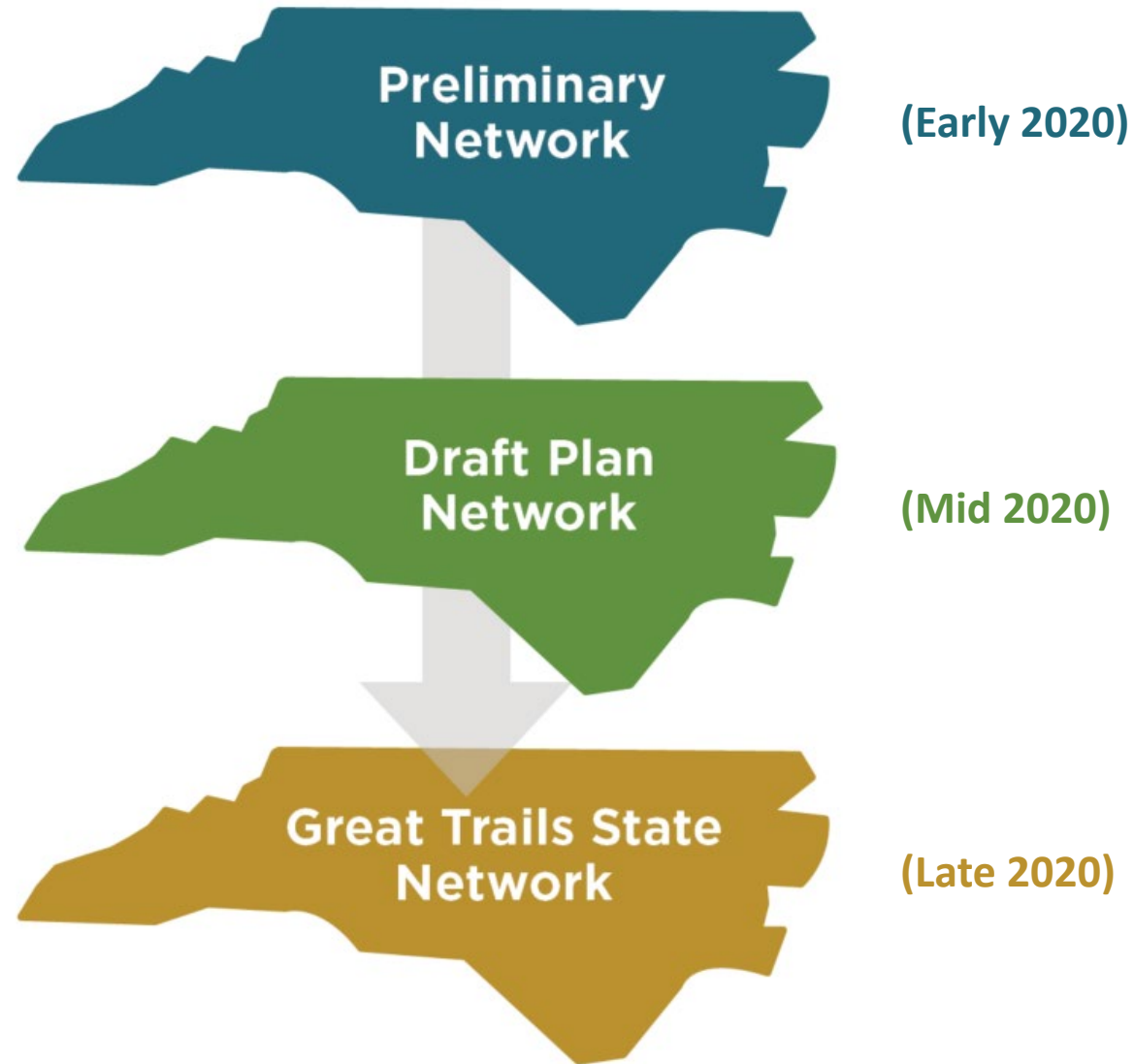
#5



Tourism



# Developing the Draft Network



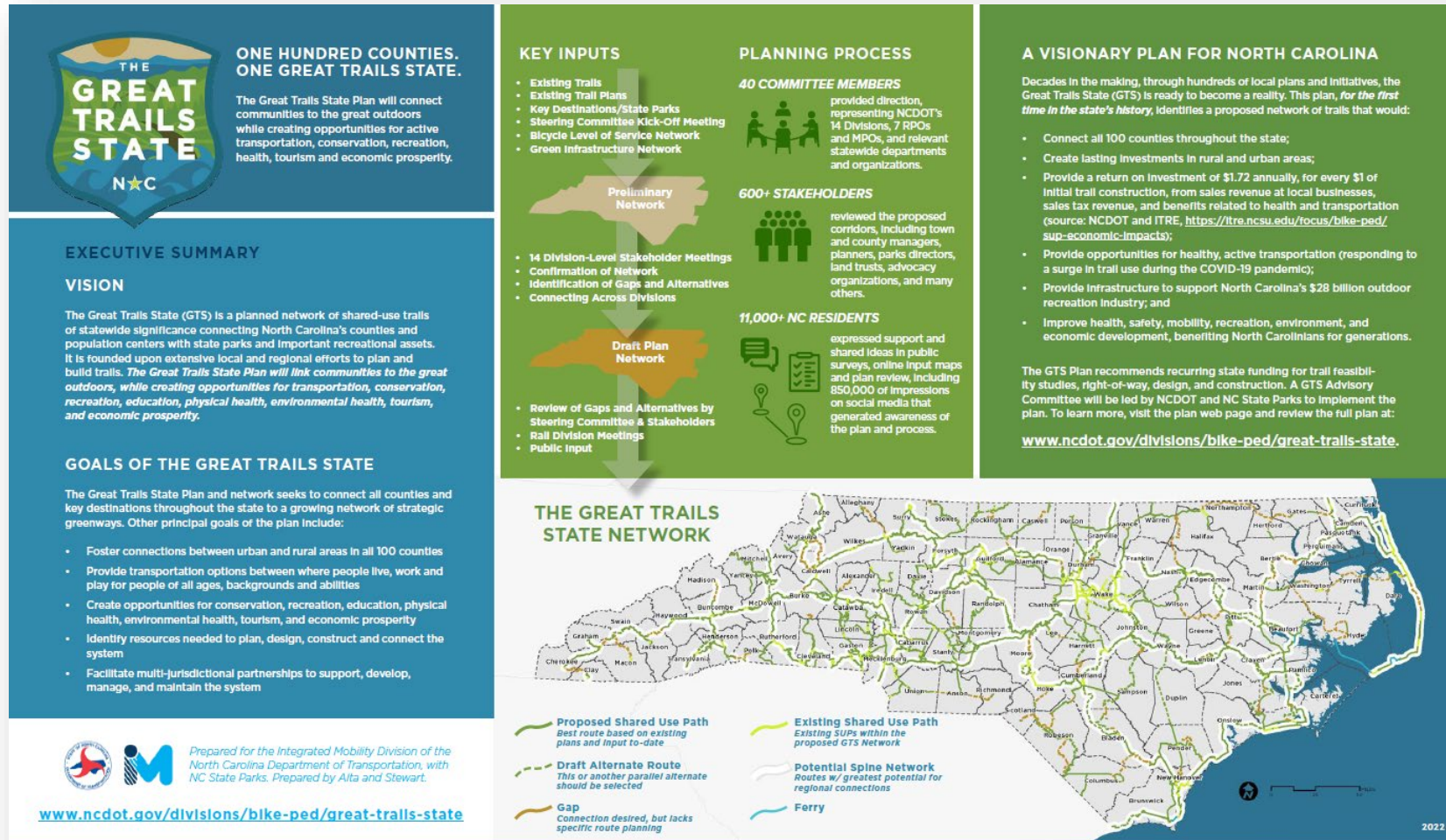
# Draft Great Trails State Network





# GTS Division Maps

## Front Side: Executive Summary



Back Sides:

14  
Division  
Maps

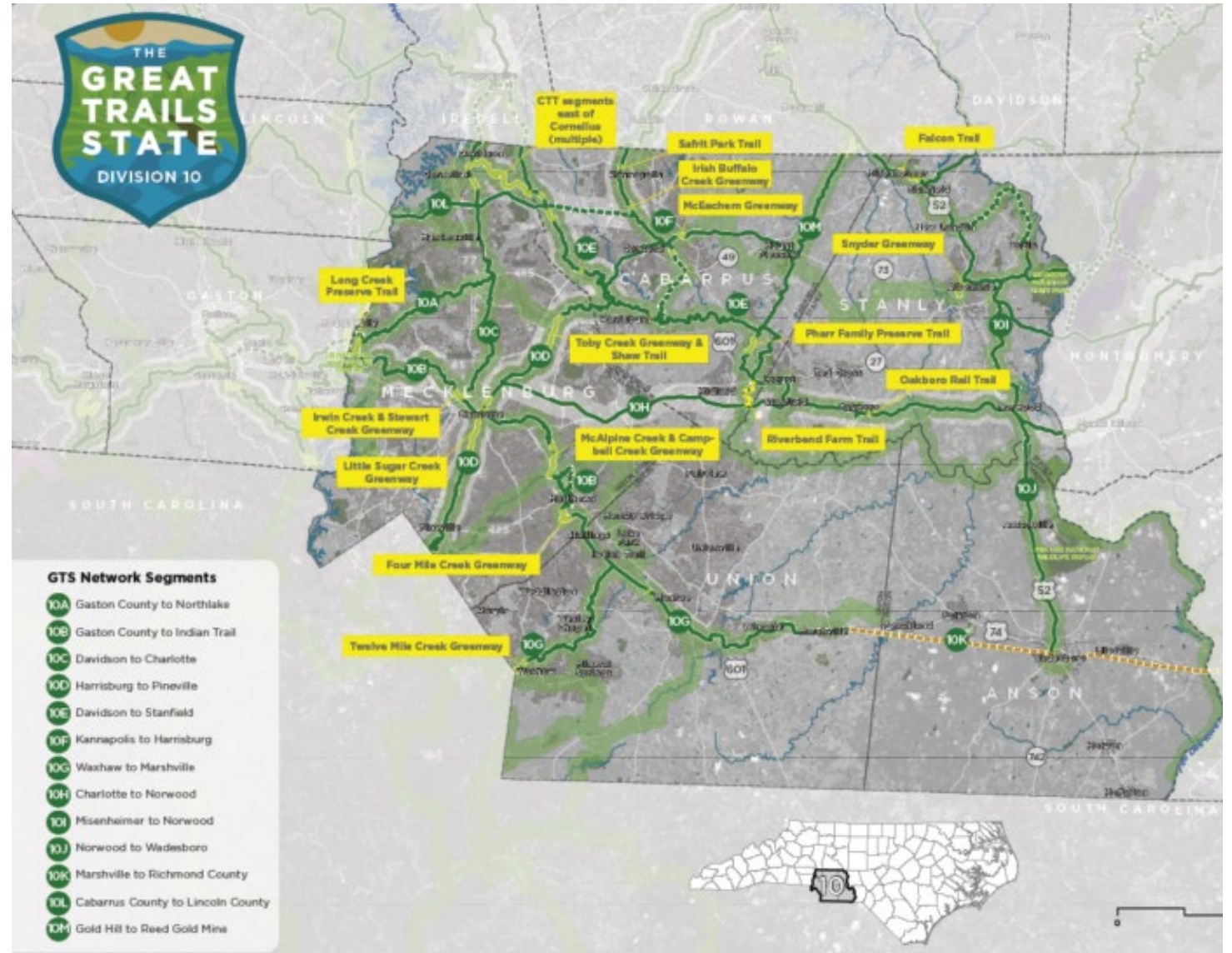
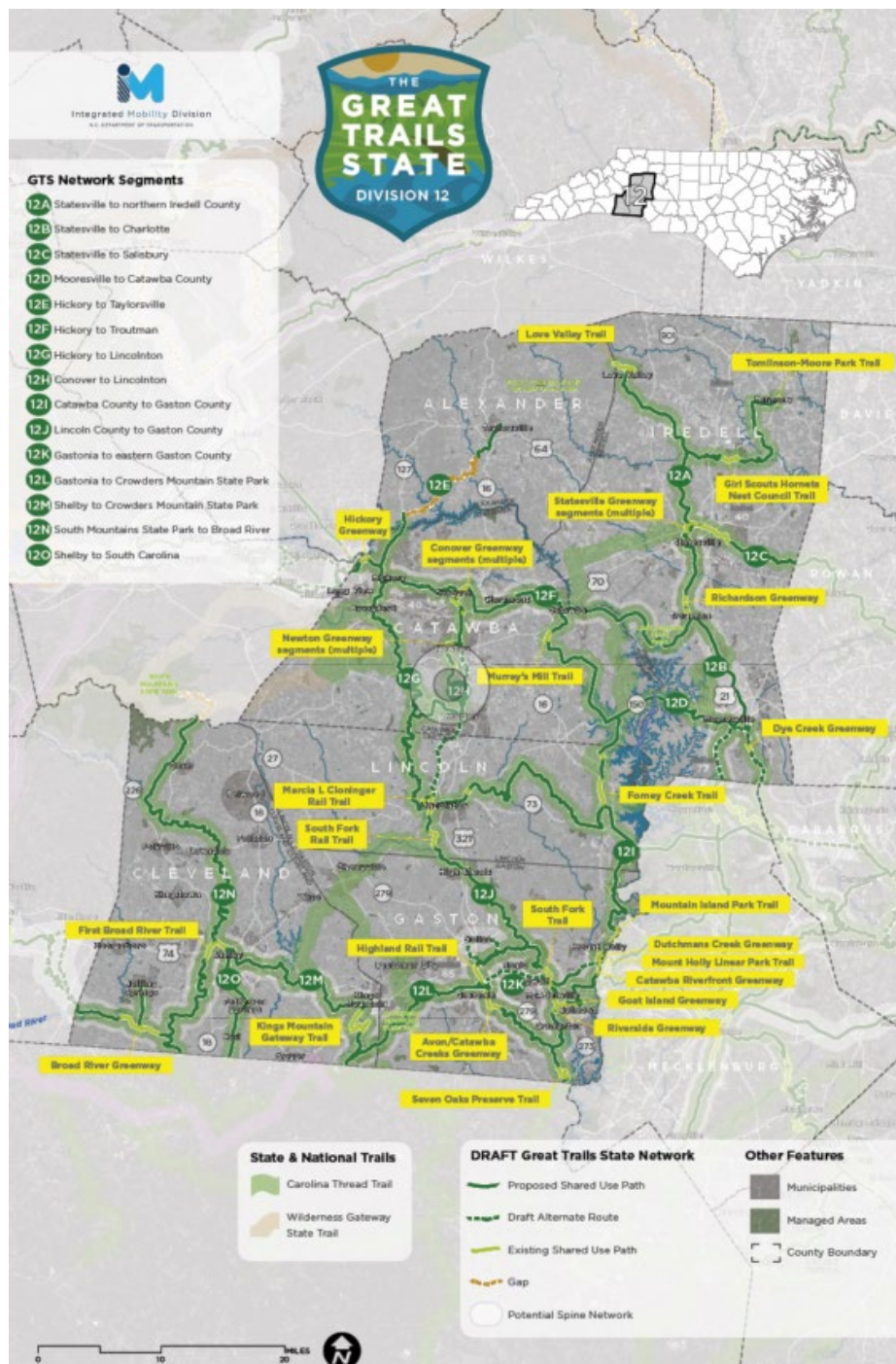








# Example Division Maps





# A Visionary Plan for North Carolina



- Decades in the making, through hundreds of local plans and initiatives, the Great Trails State is ready to become a reality.
- For the first time in the state's history, this plan identifies a proposed network of trails that would connect all 100 counties throughout the state, creating lasting investments in rural and urban areas alike.

# Major Recommendations

- Refine and Design Connections
- Trail Designation, Branding and Wayfinding
- Trail-Friendly Policies
- Coordinate with Implementation Partners
- Create Accountability
- Tourism and Engagement
- Evaluate and Update the GTS Plan

The Trail Development Process



*These are the steps typically involved in trail development. Certain funding sources may have additional requirements, and some steps may occur simultaneously.*

# How to Implement the GTSP

- Great Trails State Implementation Report
- NCDOT Complete Streets Policy and Program
  - All STIP projects must go through a multi-phase Complete Streets review to check for demand and past planning efforts
- Discretionary Federal Grants and Federally-Funded Programs
- Paved Trails and Sidewalks Feasibility Study Program

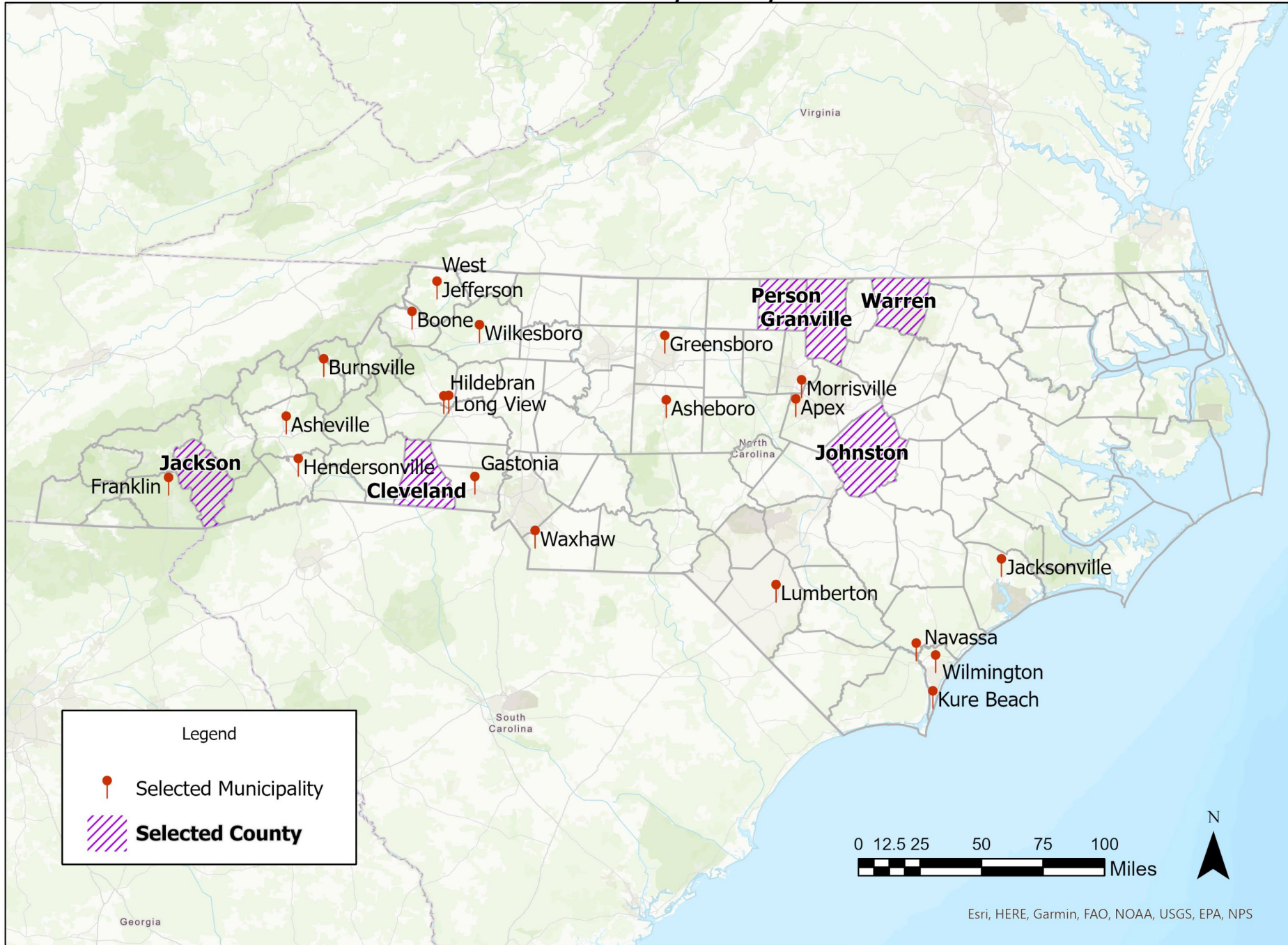




# Paved Trails and Sidewalk Feasibility Study Program

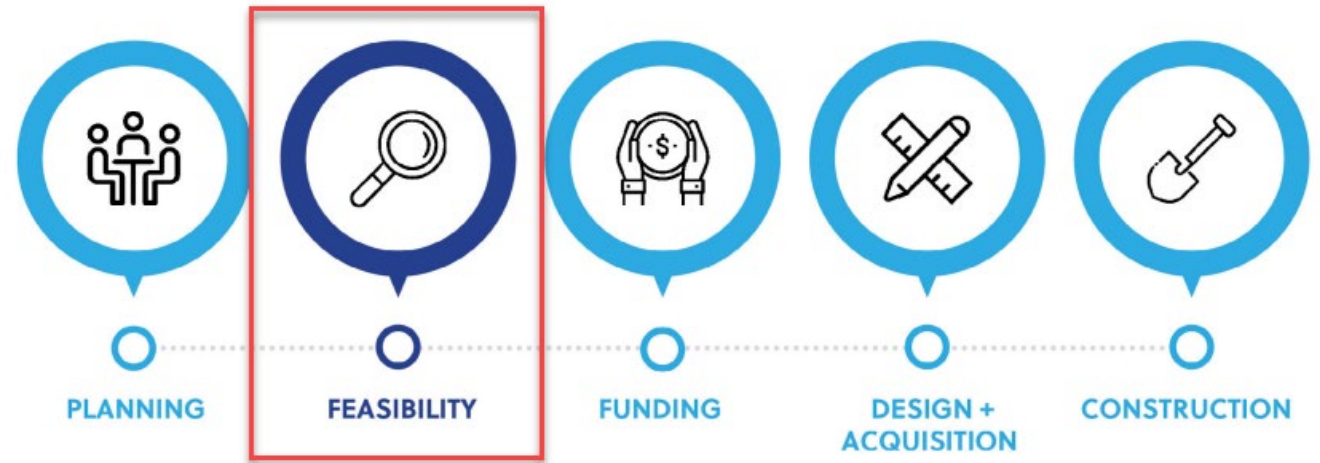
- NCDOT IMD was awarded \$2,000,000 in one-time funds by NC General Assembly to create the program
  - Additional \$500,000 in FHWA State Planning and Research (SP&R) funds were used for this program
- 59 Applicants and 25 awarded
- Approximately 135 miles of trails and sidewalks currently in study

# NCDOT IMD Feasibility Study Selections



# Why a Feasibility Study Program?

- Improve pipeline of bicycle and pedestrian projects accessing state and federal funding
- Feasibility Studies remove major hurdle to funding and construction- bridge gap from conceptual planning to programming of projects





# Selection Process



Past Planning Efforts



Equity Benefits



Statewide representation and emphasis on communities with fewer resources



Corridor opportunities and constraints



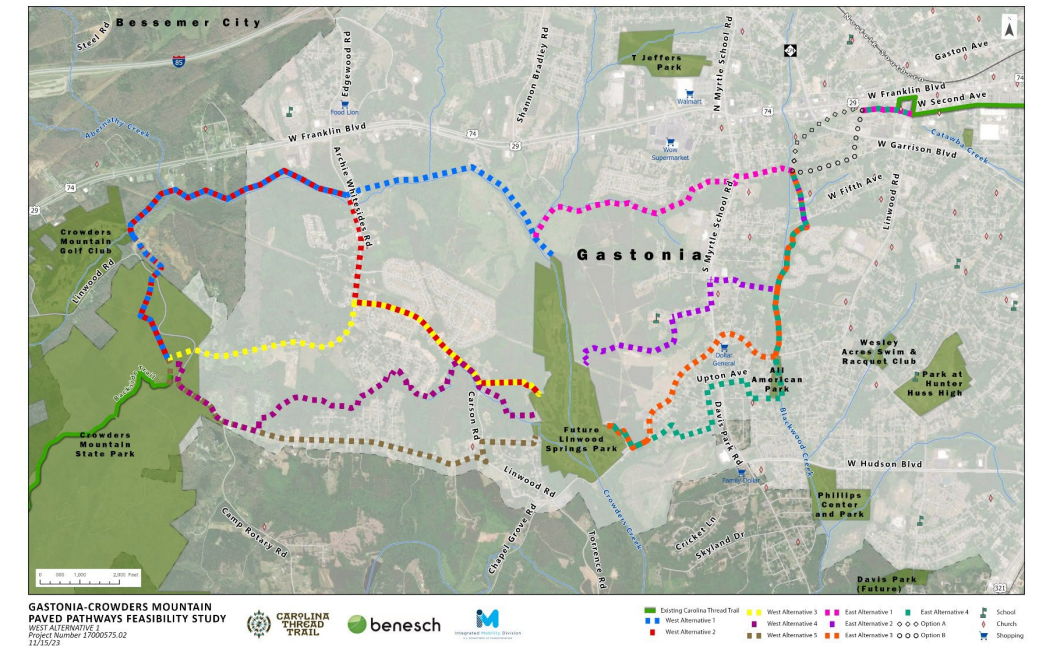
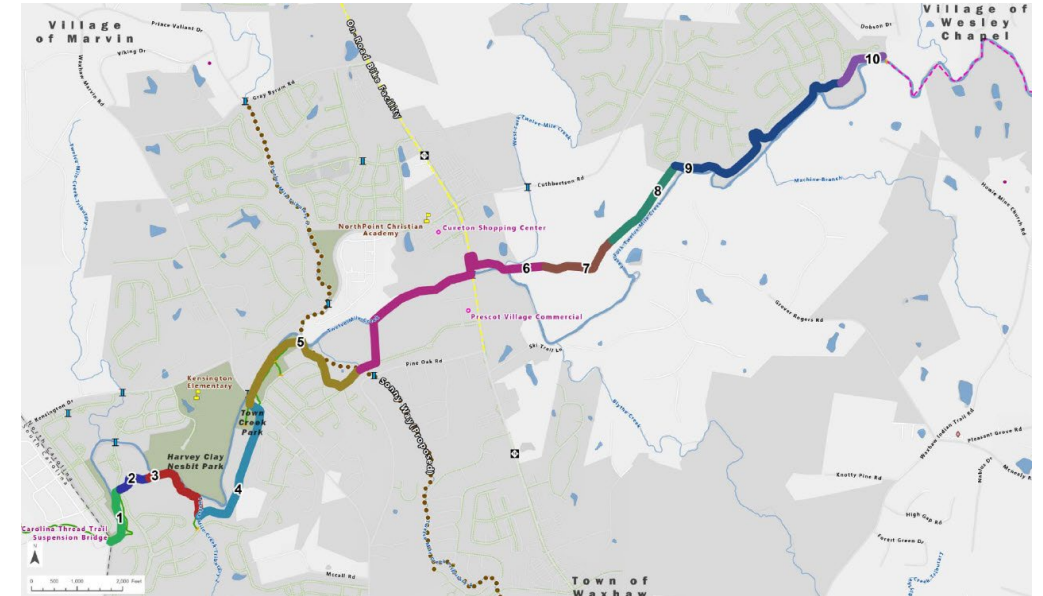
Community Support/Resolutions/ Letters of Support



Implementation ability after study

# Carolina Thread Trail Feasibility Studies

- Waxhaw
  - Establish an east-west trail spine along Twelve Mile Creek in Waxhaw
  - Cost and segment prioritization
  - Hydraulic Analysis and bridge crossing
  - Public input derived from past planning efforts
- Gastonia
  - Connect Crowders Mountain State Park to Downtown Gastonia
  - Route alternative development
  - Criteria for alternative selection
  - Public Input and Stakeholder engagement



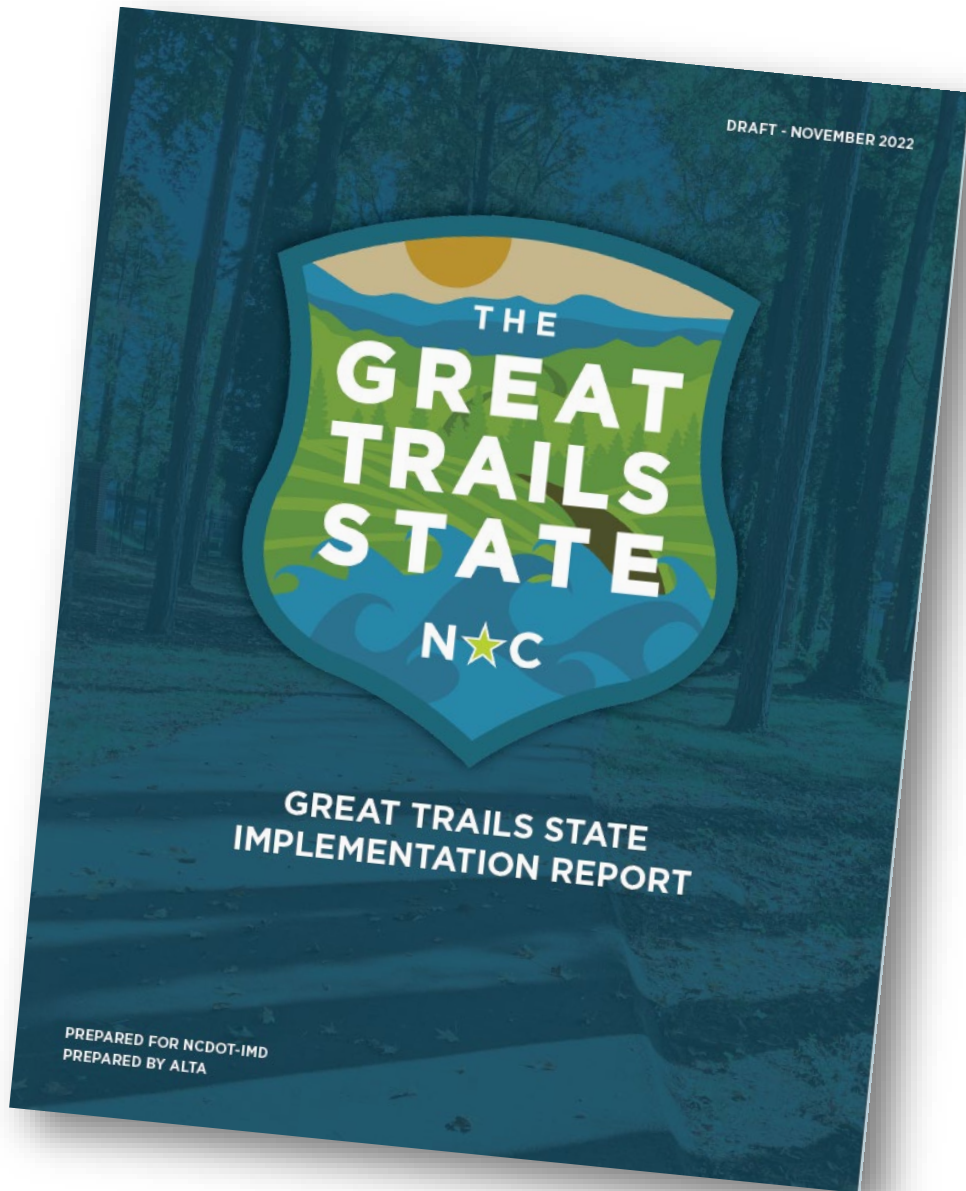


# Program Next Steps

- Advocating for more funding from General Assembly
  - GA did not support additional recurring funds in FY 2024 for the program
  - Another request for funding for FY 2025?
- Identifying other recurring funding sources
- Securing more Federal \$'s like SP&R Funds
  - \$150,000 funding for FY 2024
  - More funding may be requested for FY 2025

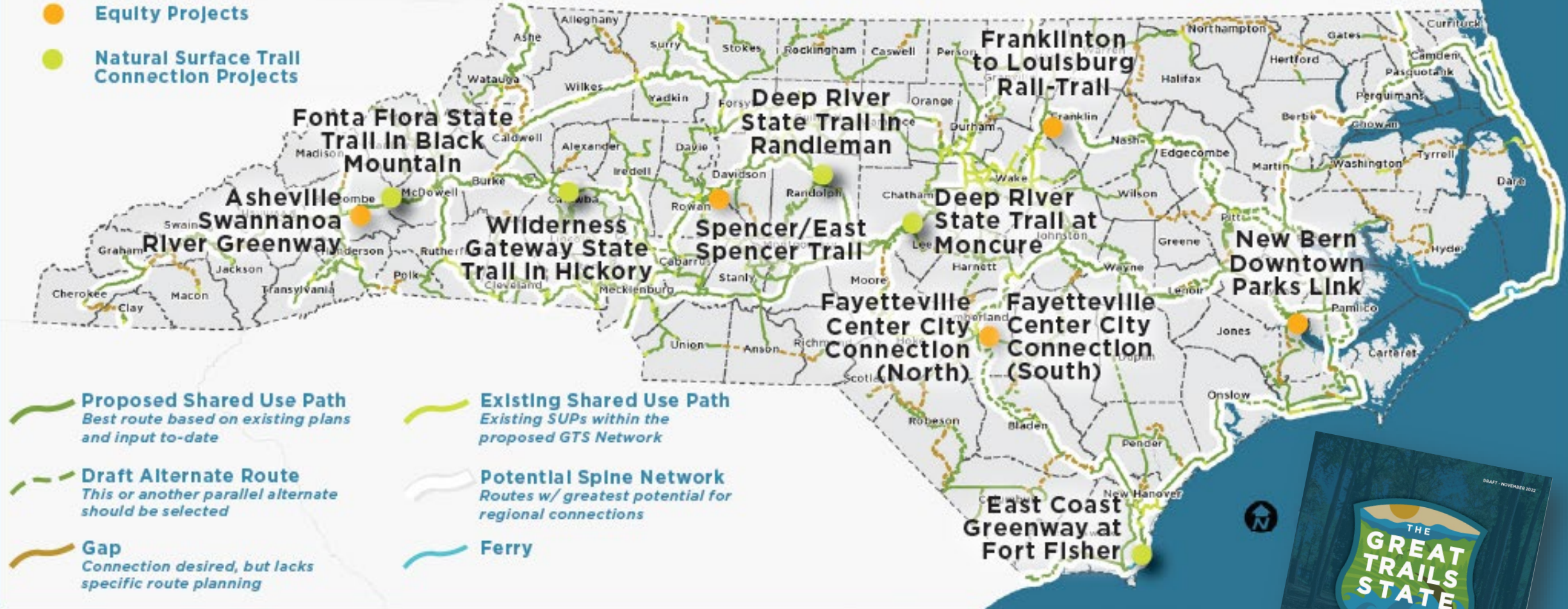
# The Implementation Report:

## 11 Top Projects Throughout the State





# The Top 11 Projects Highlighted in This Report







## ASHEVILLE

### PLANNED PROJECT

Previous studies identified two options for a trail along this corridor: 1) convert one travel lane of Thompson Street into a greenway facility, and 2) coordinate with NCDOT project U-5832, which will shift Swannanoa River Road north and add a greenway between the road and the north side of the river.

### I-240 CROSSING

Several options for crossing under I-240 at existing underpass.

### PROPOSED TRAILHEAD

Western NC Nature Center

## BEVERLY HILLS

Asheville Municipal Golf Course

Asheville Recreation Park

## BILTMORE VILLAGE

City of Asheville currently has design and funds to build this section of the greenway, which could connect into greenway proposed on north side

Frequent river flooding west of I-240; greenway placement further north (along with Swannanoa Road realignment) could mitigate flooding and create a more resilient greenway facility.

### PLANNED PROJECT

NCDOT project U-6046 will shift Swannanoa River Road north and provide a sidepath on south side; opportunity to create a trail that highlights the natural character of the river by locating the trail alongside the river rather than roadway.



## BUNCOMBE COUNTY

### LEGEND

#### TRAIL FACILITIES

- Existing Trail or Shared Use Path
- Bike/Ped Project in Development
- Proposed Trail Route
- Proposed Alternate Route
- Future Trail Connections
- Proposed Trailhead
- Proposed Trail Crossing (see notes)
- Proposed Trail Bridge
- Location of Artist's Rendering

#### OTHER FEATURES

- 100-Year Floodplain
- Municipal Boundary
- Park
- Public Land (Federal/State/Muni.)
- Conservation Easement
- School
- Grocery Store
- Park/Recreation Destination

# Swannanoa River Greenway Connection

LENGTH  
6.19 miles

FROM  
Biltmore Ave  
TO  
US 70 and City/County line



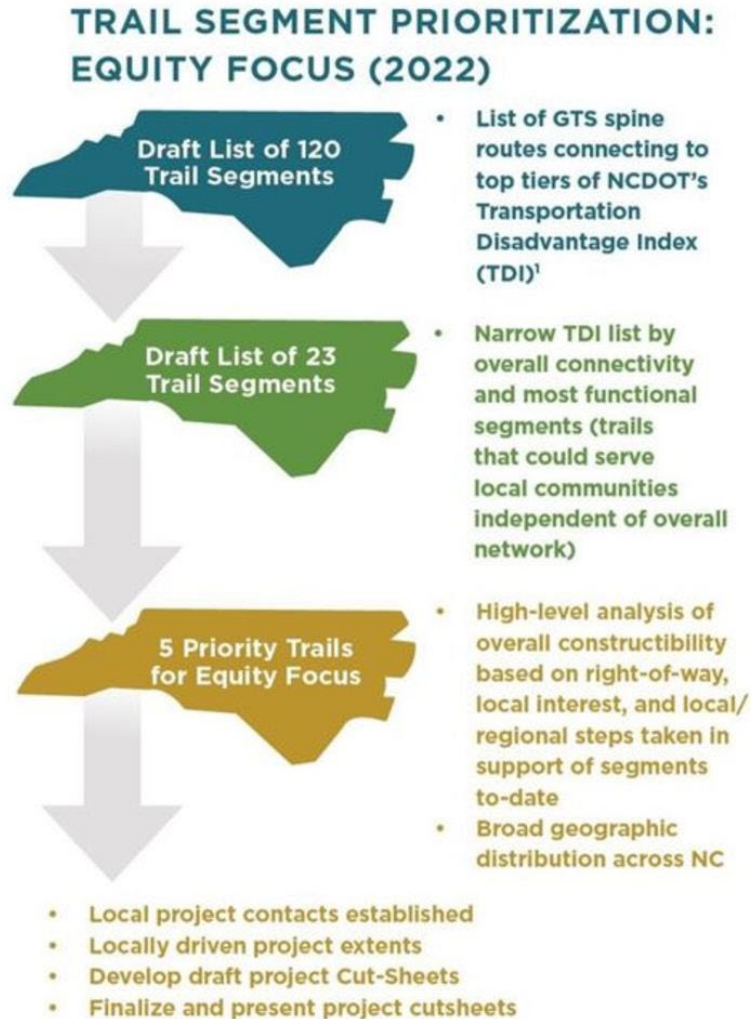
Rendering of  
proposed project  
(view from Swannanoa  
River Road underneath I-240)



Current conditions



# Equity



# Natural Surface

- Proposed trail segment should either connect to or overlap with the designated State Trail System
- Preference for smaller communities <40,000
- Preference for trail segments that connect to other trail systems, public land, and recreation hubs
- Priority for trails that have multiple project partners and/or multiple plans that envision the project



# Great Trails Implementation Report Survey

- Outreach to the 9 communities identified in Report
- Survey looks for general support and other comments about the study area
- Live until the end of January
- Need help getting the word out to these communities



The Great Trails State Plan (GTSP) envisions a network of trails that connect major destinations throughout North Carolina and can be used for transportation and recreation. A copy of the Plan and the interactive map of the network can be found [here](#). While the GTSP shows proposed connections in all 100 counties of the State, this Implementation Report highlights 11 projects that have either equity benefits or connectivity to designated state trails.

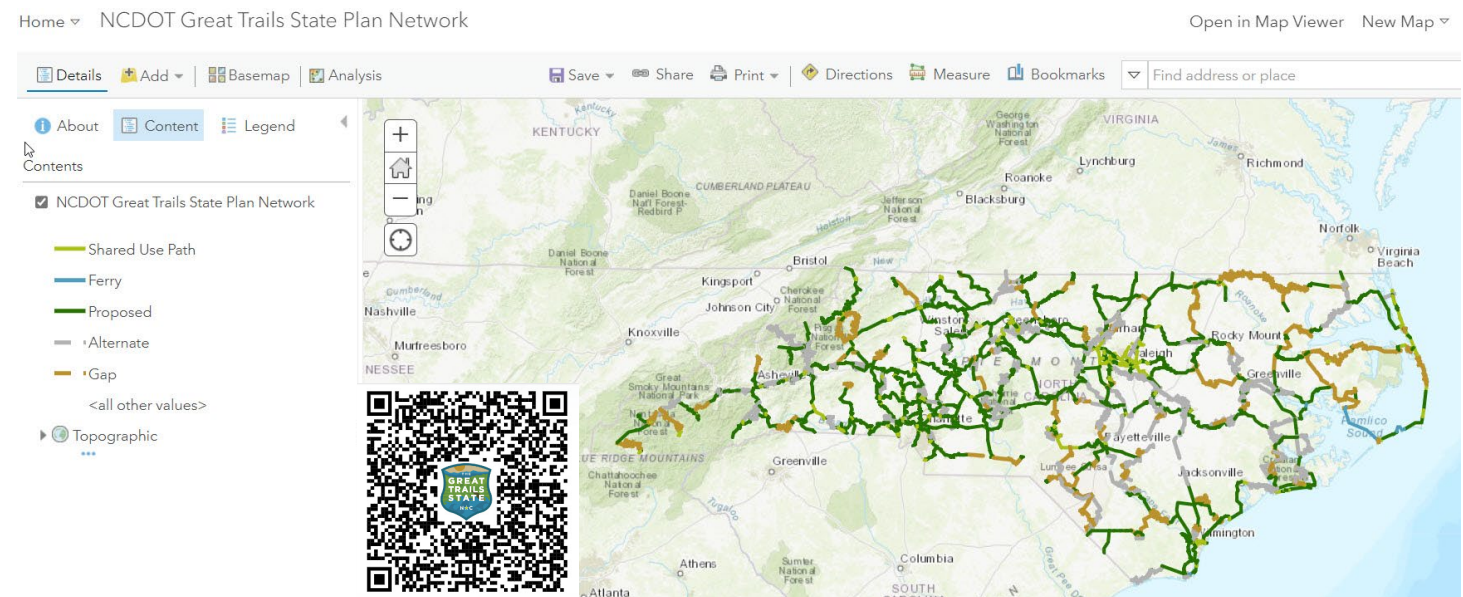
## 1. Equity Benefits

These projects address areas of greatest transportation disadvantage, defined by the [NC Department of Transportation's Transportation](#)

<https://publicinput.com/great-trails-2023>

# Great Trails State Plan: A Living Document

- Creating process to update the network on a yearly basis
  - Solicitation from planning organizations, municipalities, and non-profit groups- anticipated January/February 2024
- Next plan will measure the rate of implementation and # of new miles of trail constructed
- Interactive Map







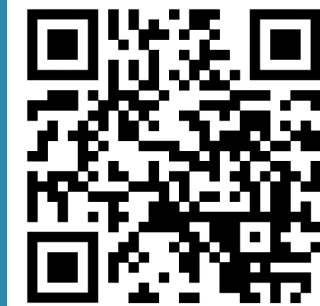
# GREAT-NC

Growing Rural Equity and  
Access to Transportation in  
North Carolina



FY 2023

Reconnecting Communities +  
Neighborhoods (RCN) Program  
Regional Partnerships Challenge



# RCN Program Overview

## Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Program

- The BIL established the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Grant Program to provide funds for:
  - Restoring community connectivity through the removal, retrofit, mitigation or replacement of highways, roadways, or other infrastructure facilities that create barriers to mobility, access or economic development
- A total of **\$1 billion** in grant funding is available through the RCP Program for FY 2022-26 for planning, construction and technical assistance.
- The primary goal of the RCP Program is to advance and support reconnection of communities divided by transportation infrastructure – with a priority on helping disadvantaged communities improve access to daily needs (jobs, schools, healthcare, grocery stores, and recreation).

## Neighborhood Access & Equity (NAE) Program

- The IRA established the Neighborhood Access and Equity Grant Program to provide funds for:
  - Context-sensitive projects that improve walkability, safety, and affordable access;
  - Planning and capacity building activities in disadvantaged or undeserved communities;
  - Mitigating or remediating negative impacts on the human or **natural environment** in disadvantaged communities from a surface transportation facility
- A total of **\$3.16 billion** in grant funding is available through the NAE Program for FY 2022-26 for planning, construction and technical assistance.
- The primary goal of the NAE Program is to assist economically disadvantaged or undeserved communities for planning and construction activities.



# NAE Overview

- 40% set-aside for disadvantaged/underserved communities
- 80% Federal share, economically disadvantaged communities eligible for 100%
- Obligation deadline: September 2026
- Construction funding available for “building or improving complete streets, multiuse trails, regional greenways, or active transportation networks and spines”
- To be eligible, projects must remove, retrofit, or mitigate an existing eligible **burdening or dividing facility**,
- Regional Partnership Challenge: encourage regional collaboration and innovation to address **persistent regional equitable access and mobility challenges** \$450 million available, 3-5 projects anticipated for award



# The Need in NC is GREAT

*"Transportation should never divide communities – its purpose is to connect people to jobs, schools, housing, groceries, family, places of worship, and more. That's what the Reconnecting Communities program and the Neighborhood Access and Equity program are designed to ensure."*

- Secretary Buttigieg



# Regional Challenges + Solutions

NC's rural, disadvantaged communities have limited capacity and resources to deliver Federally-funded projects.

NC's rural road system often lacks biking and walking facilities resulting in unsafe conditions and a disproportionate (44%) risk of fatalities and serious injuries for vulnerable road users

NC General Statute prohibits state expenditures on independent bicycle and pedestrian facilities

The average percentage of households in the Program's study area that lack access to vehicles exceeds the state's average, limiting connectivity to daily destinations for disadvantaged populations

**GREAT-NC is a pilot for future NCDOT-delivered multimodal projects and builds capacity through workforce development and GTS Coalition-led activities, to create a network of educated and well-prepared rural communities.**

**GREAT-NC utilizes a robust safety toolbox to design protected facilities and crossings that reduce risk and protect vulnerable road users.**

**GREAT-NC overcomes funding barriers to advance NC's pipeline of active transportation projects and transform rural corridors into accessible and connected facilities in the communities with the greatest need.**

**GREAT-NC reconnects communities and provides safe, non-motorized, and equitable access to healthcare, schools, and employment to create opportunities for all.**

# Rural Funding Disparities

## TAP Funding Totals: 2018 - 2023

| FUND                             |      | FY - 2018 - 2023<br>APPORTIONMENT | OBLIGATIONS*<br>FY - 2018 - 2023 | UNOBLIGATED<br>BALANCE (\$) | UNOBLIGATED<br>BALANCE (%) |
|----------------------------------|------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| TAP - AREAS POP 5K AND UNDER     | M303 | \$0                               | \$47,998                         | -\$47,998                   |                            |
| TAP-AREA 5K AND UND MAP-21 EXT   | M3E3 | \$0                               | \$2,599,485                      | -\$2,599,485                |                            |
| TRANS ALT 5K AND UNDR FAST EXT   | Z3E3 | \$3,994,711                       | \$2,104,253                      | \$1,890,458                 |                            |
| TRANS ALTERN 5K AND UNDER FAST   | Z303 | \$11,984,133                      | \$6,033,517                      | \$5,950,616                 |                            |
| TRANS ALTERN UNDER 5K IIJA       | Y308 | \$15,932,105                      | \$4,992,616                      | \$10,939,489                |                            |
| < 5K Population Totals:          |      | \$31,910,949                      | \$15,777,869                     | \$16,133,080                | 50.6%                      |
| TAP - AREAS POP 5K-200K          | M302 | \$2,115,037                       | \$2,482,940                      | -\$367,903                  |                            |
| TAP -AREAS 5K-200K MAP-21 EXT    | M3E2 | \$0                               | \$2,141,193                      | -\$2,141,193                |                            |
| TRANS ALTERN 5-200K FAST EXT     | Z3E2 | \$2,174,624                       | \$2,174,624                      | \$0                         |                            |
| TRANS ALTERNATIVES 5-200K FAST   | Z302 | \$4,230,074                       | \$7,973,329                      | -\$3,743,255                |                            |
| 5K - <200K Population Totals:    |      | \$8,519,735                       | \$14,772,086                     | -\$6,252,351                | -73.4%                     |
| TRANS ALTER 5K - 49,999 POP IIJA | Y307 | \$4,350,359                       | \$4,163,646                      | \$186,713                   |                            |
| 5K - 49,999 Population Total:    |      | \$4,350,359                       | \$4,163,646                      | \$186,713                   | 4.3%                       |
| TRANS ALTERN 50K- <200K POP IIJA | Y306 | \$4,025,668                       | \$3,970,647                      | \$55,021                    |                            |
| 50K - <200K Population Total:    |      | \$4,025,668                       | \$3,970,647                      | \$55,021                    | 1.4%                       |
| 5K - <200K Population Totals:    |      | \$16,895,762                      | \$22,906,379                     | -\$6,010,617                | -35.6%                     |
| <200K Population Grand Total:    |      | \$48,806,711                      | \$38,684,248                     | \$10,122,463                | 20.7%                      |

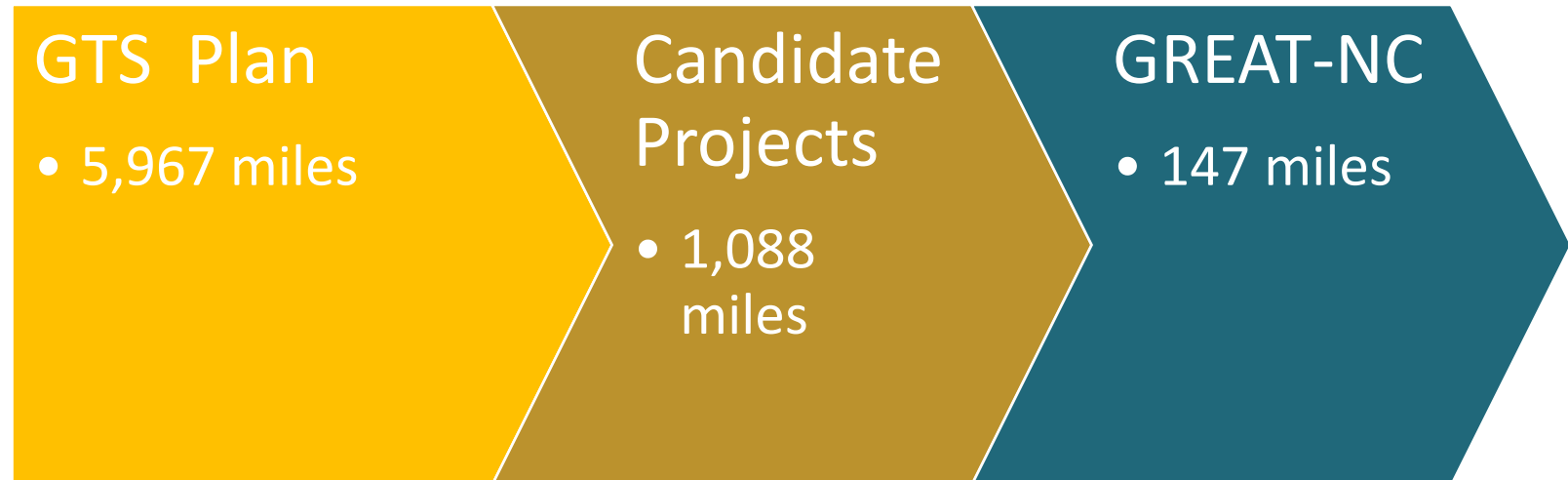
8 STIP Projects

71 STIP Projects



# Project Selection

- Rural area (population < 50,000)
- Feasibility studies in-progress or completed
- Facility parallels NCDOT owned road with logical termini
- Economically disadvantaged communities
- Access to daily destinations
- Consideration for State Trails
- Geographic Diversity
- Complete Streets



# GREAT-NC Project Overview

Growing Rural Equity and Access to Transportation in North Carolina (**GREAT-NC**) will create a construction-ready pipeline of active transportation facilities and build local capacity for project delivery to address the persistent regional mobility challenge of safe and equitable bicycle and pedestrian access to daily destinations for economically disadvantaged populations in rural North Carolina.



## Schedule:

Design Start: Q3 2024

Construction Start: Q4 2026



## Funding Amount Requested:

\$67.7 million



**Phases:** Capacity Building (\$1.38M), Design (\$44.61M), Public Engagement (\$480K), Data Collection/Reporting (\$200K), Construction (\$21.03M)

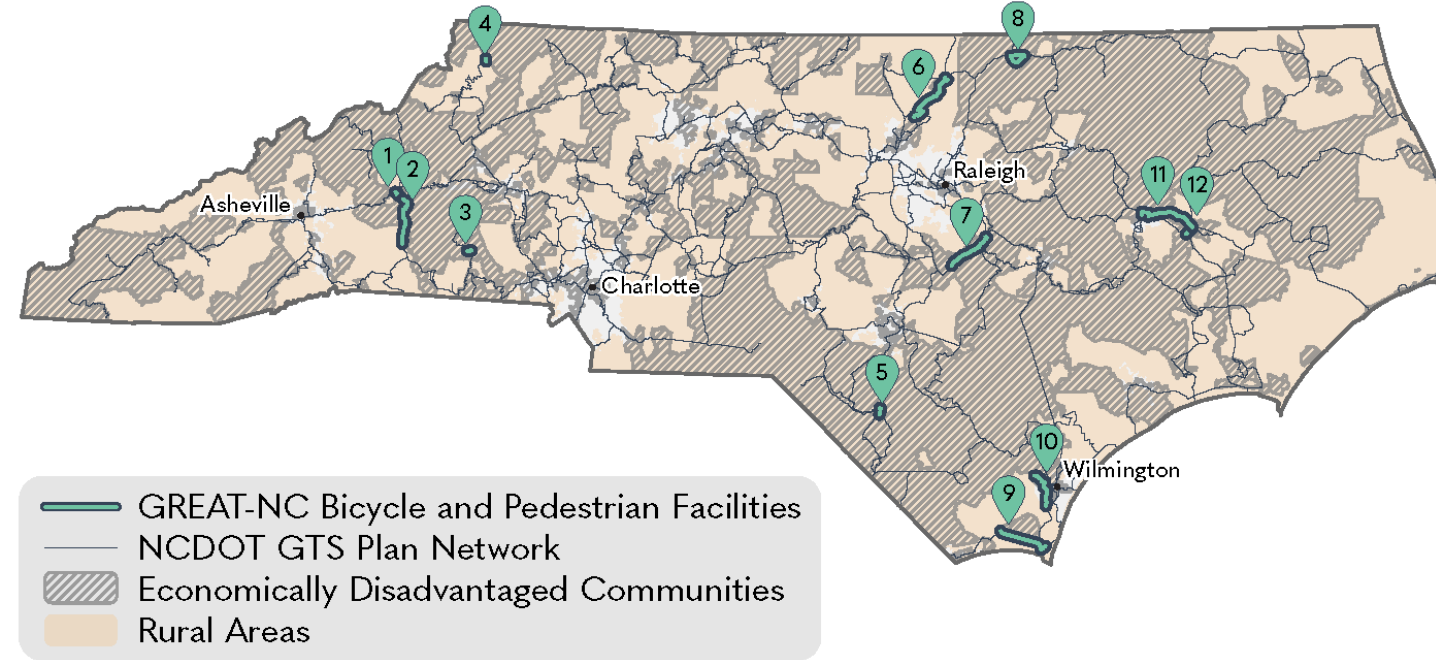


**Miles:** Design: 147 miles; Construction: Up to 7.5 miles

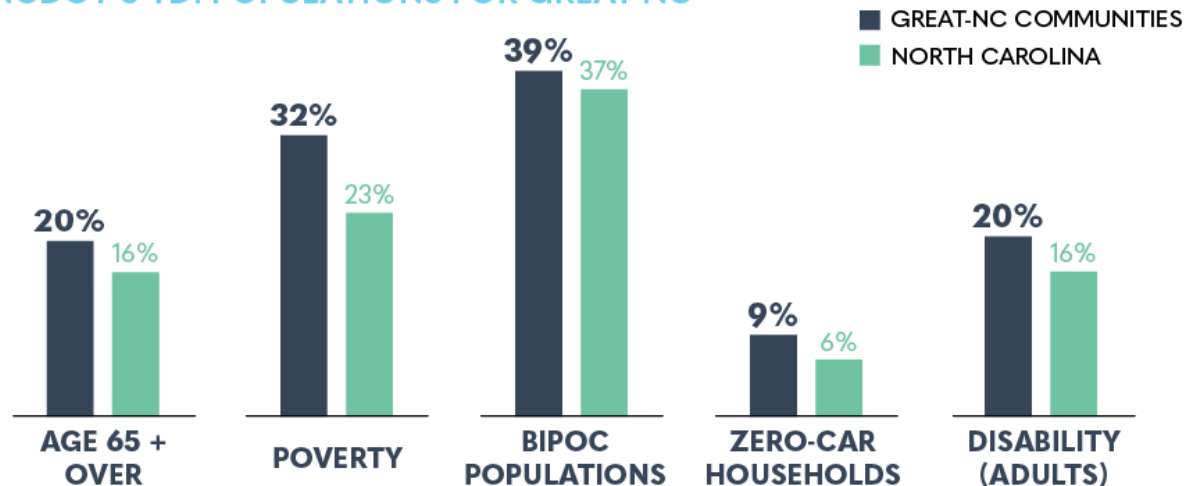




# GREAT-NC Project Overview



NCDOT'S TDI POPULATIONS FOR GREAT-NC



- 1 Marion to Main St Sidepath (13D)
- 2 Peavine to Thermal Belt Rail Trail (13I)
- 3 Lawndale Greenway
- 4 West Jefferson Sidewalk Connector (11J)
- 5 Lumberton Loop
- 6 Oxford to Butner ECG (5B)
- 7 Johnston County ECG (4G)
- 8 Warrenton County Loop (5D)
- 9 NC-211 ECG (3F)
- 10 Gullah Geechee Heritage Corridor (3E)
- 11 Washingtonn Greenville Greenway (2F)
- 12 Chocowinity -Washington Connector (2E)

**147** Miles of Dividing +  
Burdening Facilities

**50** Economically  
Disadvantaged  
Areas Served

# GREAT-NC's Capacity Building Activities

Statewide activities to support rural, disadvantaged communities over 5 years



## The Great Trail State Coalition:

- Cities, Towns & Counties for Trails Coordinator
- Trail Resource Research, Development & Distribution
- Great Trails State Annual Conference



## NCDOT Office of Civil Rights (OCR):

- Expand and enhance OCR's current highway-focused programs to provide supportive services, technical assistance, and job training for multimodal projects
- Encompasses Business Opportunity and Workforce Development (BOWD), On-the-Job Training (OJT), and Highway Construction Trade Activities (HCTA)



# Safety Toolbox

- Enhanced safety improvements for roads > 6,000 ADT
- Consider the relationship between land use and activity generators for distance between crossing locations
- Context Sensitive Solutions

| COUNTERMEASURE                                  | APPLICATION  |  |
|---|--|--|
|   | <i>Signalized Crossing</i>   | <i>Unsignalized Crossing</i>           |
| High-Visibility Crosswalk                       | All  | All                                    |
| Warning Signs                                   | All  | All                                    |
| ADA Compliant                                   | All  | All                                    |
| Adequate Lighting                               | All  | All                                    |
| Perpendicular to Roadway                        | All  | All                                    |
| Grade Separation                                | High Vehicle + Trail Activity  | Speeds 35+MPH; Multilane; High Volume  |
| Refuge Island                                   | Speeds 35+MPH; Multilane; High Volumes                                     | Speeds 35+MPH; 2+ lanes; High Volumes  |
| Rectangular Rapid-Flashing Beacons (RRFB)       | N/A  | Low Volume, Multilane                  |
| Signalization of Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon (PHB) | N/A  | Speeds 35+MPH; Multilane; High Volumes |
| Enhanced Visibility                             | Poor Visibility; Vegetation; Low Yield Rates                               | Poor Visibility; Vegetation            |
| Protected Left Turn Phase                       | Speeds 35+MPH, Multilane; High Volumes; Dual Left Turns                    | N/A                                    |
| Leading Pedestrian Interval (LPI)               | Heavy Right Turn Volume; Turning Movement Conflict; Long Crossing Distance | N/A                                    |
| Right Turn on Red Restriction                   | Low Yield Rates; Poor Visibility   | N/A                                    |
| Reduced Corner Radii                            | Heavy Right Turn Volume; Turning Movement Conflict; Long Crossing Distance | N/A                                    |
| Pedestrian Recall                               | High Pedestrian Activity Levels  | N/A                                    |
| Bicyclist Signal                                | High Bicyclist Activity Levels   | N/A                                    |

# PROJECT BENEFITS



**Equity + Environmental Justice:** Addresses systemic negative impacts of historic NC highway design policies, which favored vehicle speed over safe, multimodal connections.



**Access:** Creates safe, context-sensitive, and affordable mobility options to improve non-motorized access to daily destinations.



**Facility Suitability:** Removes barriers to access, mobility, and economic development and addresses vulnerabilities to reconnect the places residents live, work, and play in rural, disadvantaged communities.



**Community Engagement + Community-based Stewardship, Management + Partnerships:** Partners with the GTS Coalition to implement a community-centered approach that engages diverse populations.



**Equitable Development:** Incorporates creative placemaking that honors local culture and history and integrates natural elements that reflect the local context of each project.



**Climate + Environment:** Reduces greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through new active transportation facilities and improves resilience to address disproportionate negative environmental impacts of transportation on disadvantaged communities.



**Workforce Development + Economic Opportunity:** Engages Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs) in the Program's design and construction activities, and provides training and supportive services to youth and adult workers in GREAT-NC communities.

<https://connect.ncdot.gov/resources/RCN2023-IMD/Pages/default.aspx>



A white silhouette of the state of North Carolina is centered on a dark blue background. Inside the silhouette, on the right side, is a white silhouette of a hiker with a backpack, walking towards the right. Overlaid on the white state silhouette is the text "Building the GREAT TRAILS STATE" in a green, sans-serif font.

# Building the GREAT TRAILS STATE



**GREAT  
TRAILS  
STATE**  
COALITION

# North Carolina IS The Great Trails State





# THE GREAT TRAILS STATE VISION

- A **robust network** of trails across North Carolina
  - Connect residents and visitors with nature,
  - Provide safe transportation alternatives,
  - Drive economic development, and
  - Protect our natural resources.
- Statewide **collaborative advocacy** to transform North Carolina trail funding and policies
  - **SUSTAINED STATE FUNDING FOR TRAILS**
  - Historic levels of federal investment
  - **Rectify North Carolina's rural gap in investment** and removing obstacles to accessing federal investment through collaborative action.



# Pre-GTSC State of NC Trails



**No Statewide  
Investment in  
Trails**



**Stakeholders  
Working in  
Isolation**



**Falling Behind  
Other States and  
NC Needs**



# States Going BIG on Trails



**\$200M**



**\$100M**



**\$200M**

**State Funding Yields 5x in Federal Investment**

# Our Brand is All



## All STAKEHOLDERS



Non-Profits



Municipal



Agencies



Industry



## All SURFACES



Natural



Water



Paved

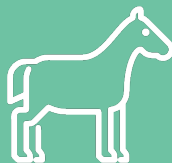
## All USES



Foot



Wheel

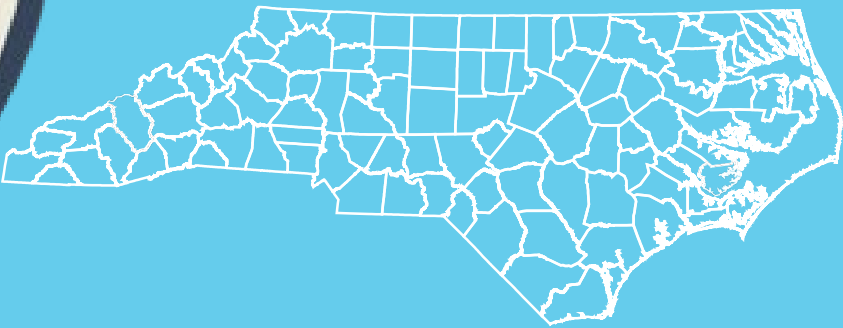


Hoof



Paddle

## All 100 COUNTIES



# ALL PEOPLE



# Core Strategies to Achieve Vision



**Speak with ONE  
Voice**



**Make the Case with  
Data**



**Professionalize Lobbying**



**Celebrate NC Trails**

# Speak with ONE Voice



**Gather Partners**  
**Expand Coalition**  
**Launch a Compelling Brand**





# Gather Partners



**NON-PROFITS**



**INDUSTRY**



**LOCAL GOVERNMENT**



**AGENCY PARTNERS**

**87 Members and Growing**



# Gather Partners



NON-PROFITS



**Lesson Learned:** Building trust takes time and commitment.



# Gather Partners



INDUSTRY



**Lesson Learned:** Opened access to previously unknown resources, tap into influential networks





Gather Partners



CITIES  
TOWNS  
COUNTIES

FOR TRAILS



*A Great Trails State  
Coalition Working Group*



# Gather Partners



## LOCAL GOVERNMENT



**Cities, Towns & Counties for Trails Working Group is a first ever peer group for communities on trails.**



## Gather Partners



- NC State Parks
- NCDOT

AGENCY PARTNERS

**Lesson Learned:** Collaboration critical to create a new competitive grant program.



# greattrailsstatecoalition.org

[About](#) ▾[Investment Ready Projects](#)[News](#)[Members](#)[Year of the Trail](#) ▾[Get Involved](#)[Join](#)

A broad-based group of diverse organizations, agencies, and supporters advocating for increased state investment in all types of trails in North Carolina – hiking, paddle, mountain bike, equestrian, paved.

# Make the Case with Data



**Economic Impact**  
**Investment Ready Projects**



# Make the Case with Data



## Outdoor Recreation = North Carolina

Outdoor Recreation is a **\$14.6 Billion Industry** in North Carolina.

Our greenways and blueways are the infrastructure that supports that industry. Trails are great for the health of our residents and the health of our economy.

**56%** of North Carolinians participate in outdoor recreation activities.





## TRAILS HAVE A SIGNIFICANT RETURN ON INVESTMENT:

Every \$1.00 spent on trail construction generates \$1.72 ANNUALLY from local business revenue, sales tax revenue, & benefits related to health and transportation.

An [NC DOT study](#) of a one-time \$26.7 million investment in four NC shared-use paths created the following economic impacts:



**\$19.4 MILLION**

Estimated ANNUAL sales revenue at local businesses along the four greenways



**\$25.7 MILLION**

Estimated ANNUAL savings due to more physical activity, less pollution and congestions, and fewer traffic injuries from greenway use



**\$48.7 MILLION**

Estimated business revenue from greenway construction



**790**

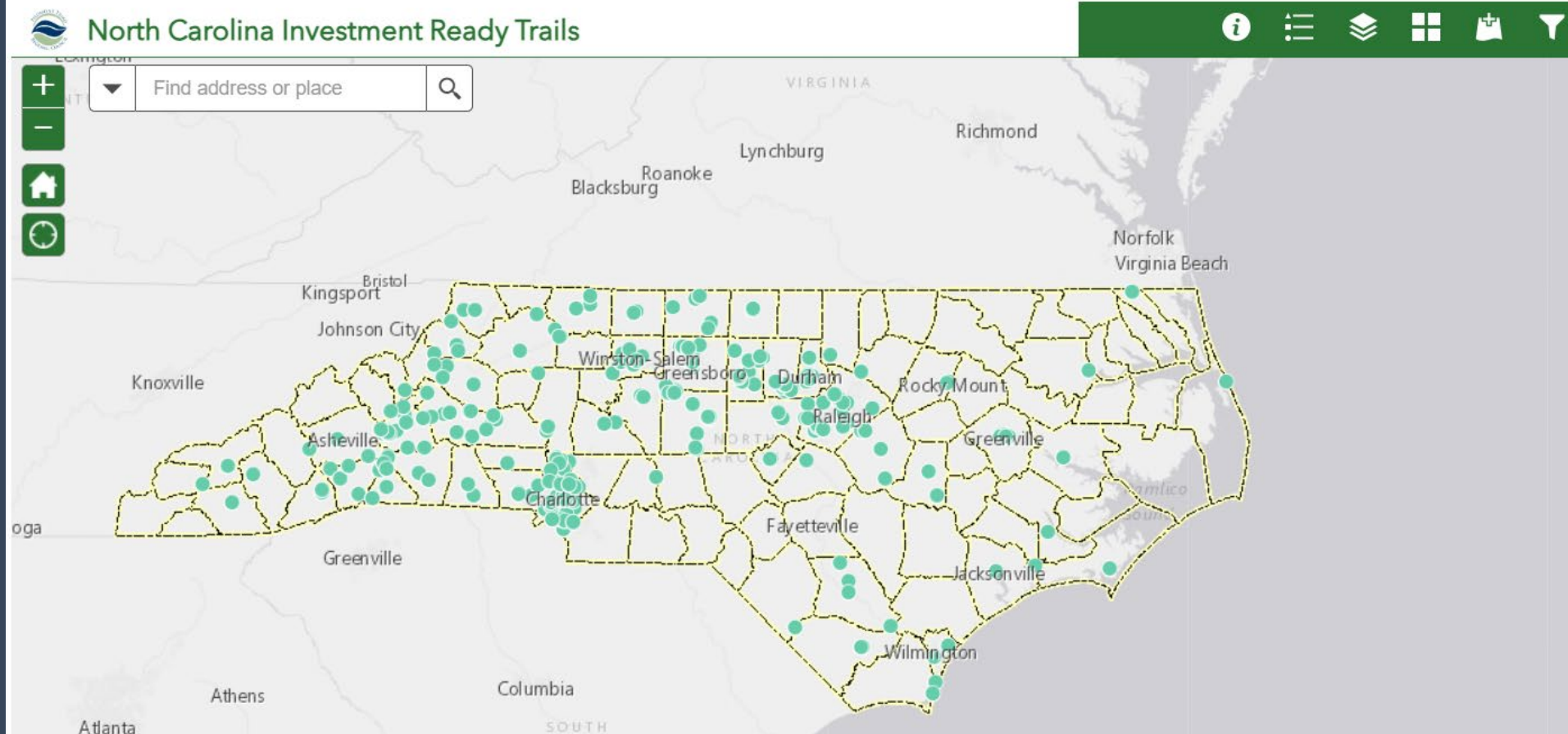
Jobs are supported ANNUALLY through greenway construction



# Investment Ready Projects



There are 263 projects in 52 counties, representing an estimated \$511 million of construction costs. NC DOT's Great Trails State Plan identifies future projects in all 100 counties. Check them out below.



# **Professionalize Lobbying**



**Identify Champions**

**Adequately Fund Lobbying**

**Articulate the Ask**



# Legislative Champions



**Rep. Dean Arp, Union County**





## **2021 LONG SESSION SUCCESS**

- **2023 Year of the Trail Designation**
- **Budget funding – first time ever specifically for authorized State Trails**
  - **\$29.15 M for the Complete the Trails Fund**
  - **Non-State Trails not eligible for funding**
- **\$2 M to NC DOT for Feasibility Studies**





## 2023-2025 Budget \$54.9M for Trails and Greenways!

- **\$25M Great Trails State Program**
  - Competitive grant program
  - All trail types
  - One time money – prove trails are a GREAT investment
- **\$5M Complete the Trails Fund**
- **\$24.9M in earmarks**





# Celebrate North Carolina Trails



2023

YEAR OF THE TRAIL

# Year of the Trail Campaign Goals



- **Inspire people** of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds to try trails
- **Boost outdoor recreation tourism** across the state with events in all 100 counties
- **Advance diversity & inclusion** on trails.
- **Demonstrate the importance of trails** to elected officials
- **Promote safe and responsible** use of trails, aligning with Outdoor NC Leave No Trace principles.

# Key Campaign Strategies: REACH



- **Robust website**
- **Social media engagement through stories**
- **Digital toolkit to enable partners to celebrate trails**
  - open source all assets
- **Different content themes each month**
- **Event promotion**
- **Strategic advertising**
  - Radio, billboards, digital
- **Newsletter subscriptions**
- **Engaging videos**



greattrailsnc.com



HOME

ABOUT

EVENTS

BLOG

TOOLKIT

FIND A TRAIL

STORE

**THESE ARE OUR  
TRAILS. THIS IS  
OUR YEAR.**





## 2023 YEAR OF THE TRAIL PROCLAMATION

### TEMPLATE FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES

WHEREAS, [NAME OF COMMUNITY]'s natural beauty is critical to its residents' quality of life, health, and economic wellbeing; and

WHEREAS, the trails that span across our community are an integral part of the recreational and transportation possibilities of our area and promote an enjoyment of scenic beauty by our residents and our visitors; and

WHEREAS, the parks, greenways, trails and natural areas in our community are welcoming to all and provide a common ground for people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds to access our rich and diverse natural, cultural, and historic resources; and

WHEREAS, [NAME OF COMMUNITY]'s natural assets and resources are integral to disaster recovery and resiliency to climate change for future generations; and

WHEREAS, [NAME OF COMMUNITY]'s nature trails vary from [DESCRIBE LOCAL TRAILS]  
[EXAMPLE IN THE DRAFT STATE PROCLAMATION: *less than a mile in length to the Mountains-to-Sea Trail that stretches more than 1,000 miles from the mountains to the coast; range from rugged footpaths on mountain ridges to bikeways along abandoned railway corridors, from canoe trails down our state's rivers to bridle trails in the rolling Piedmont, from trails through state parks to footpaths and greenways through local neighborhoods*]; and

WHEREAS, trails offer quality-of-life benefits to all as expressions of local community character and pride, as outdoor workshops for science education, as tools for economic revitalization, as free resources for healthy recreation, as accessible alternative transportation, and as sites for social and cultural events; and

WHEREAS, [SPEAK HERE ABOUT ANY SPECIAL LOCAL PROGRAMS YOU HAVE THAT IMPACT TRAILS]; and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina General Assembly designated 2023 as the Year of the Trail in North Carolina to promote and celebrate the state's extensive network of trails that showcase our state's beauty, vibrancy and culture; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina is known as the "Great Trails State;"

NOW, THEREFORE, I, [NAME], [TITLE], do hereby proclaim 2023 as "THE YEAR OF THE TRAIL" in [NAME OF COMMUNITY], and commend its observance to all people.

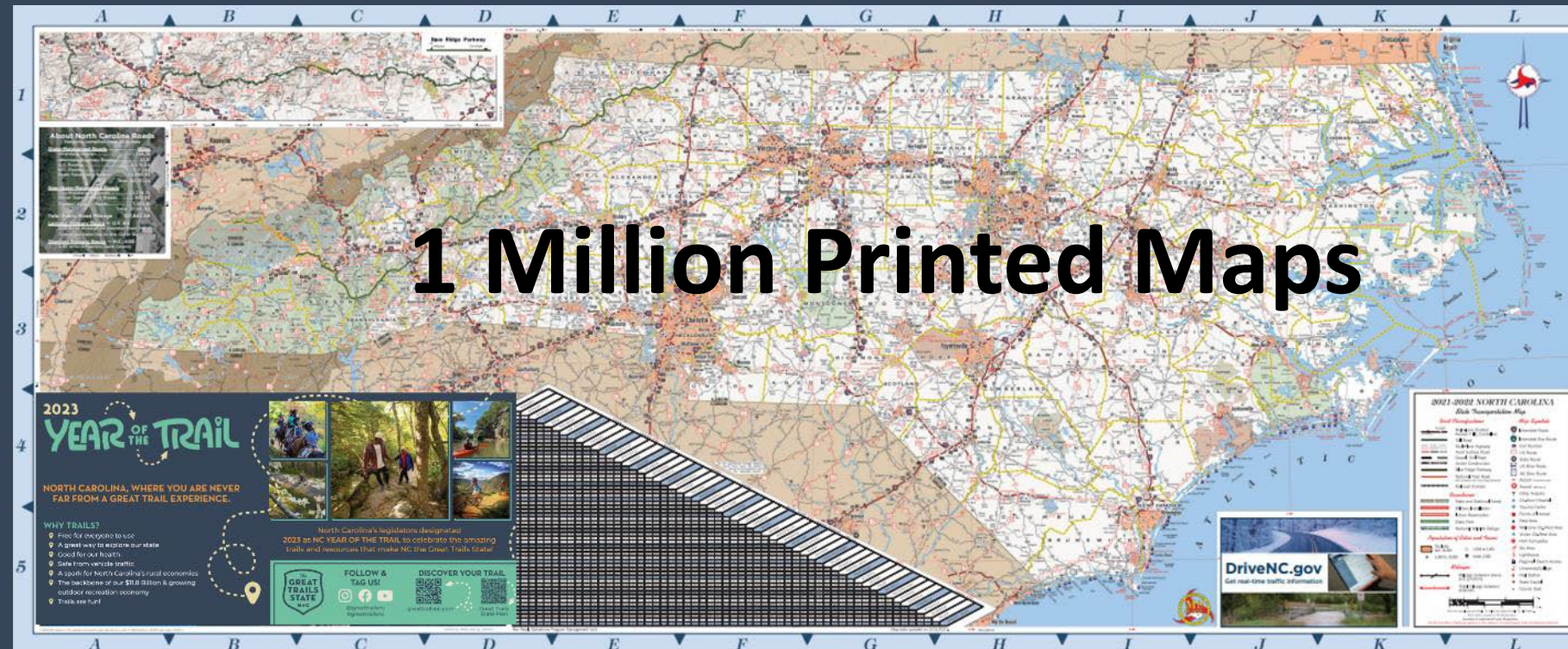
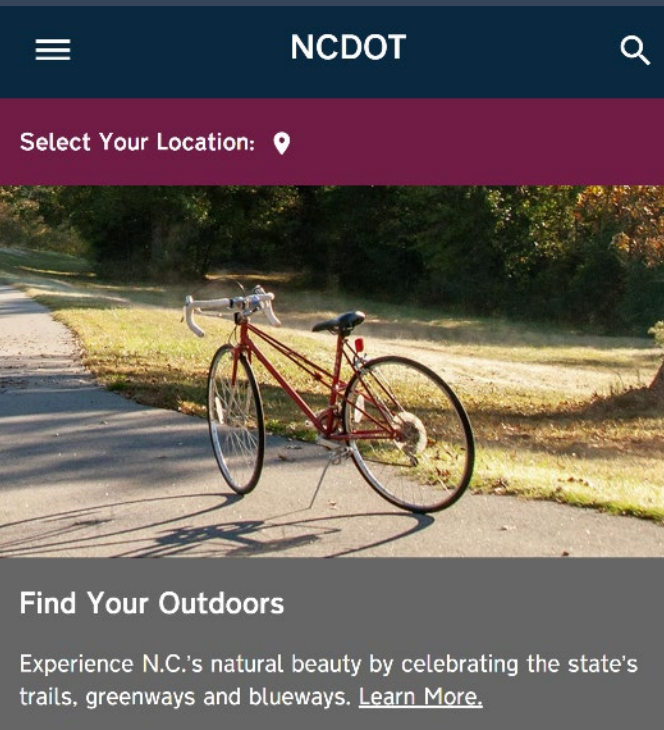


# Year of the Trail Proclamations:

# Dozens of communities participating

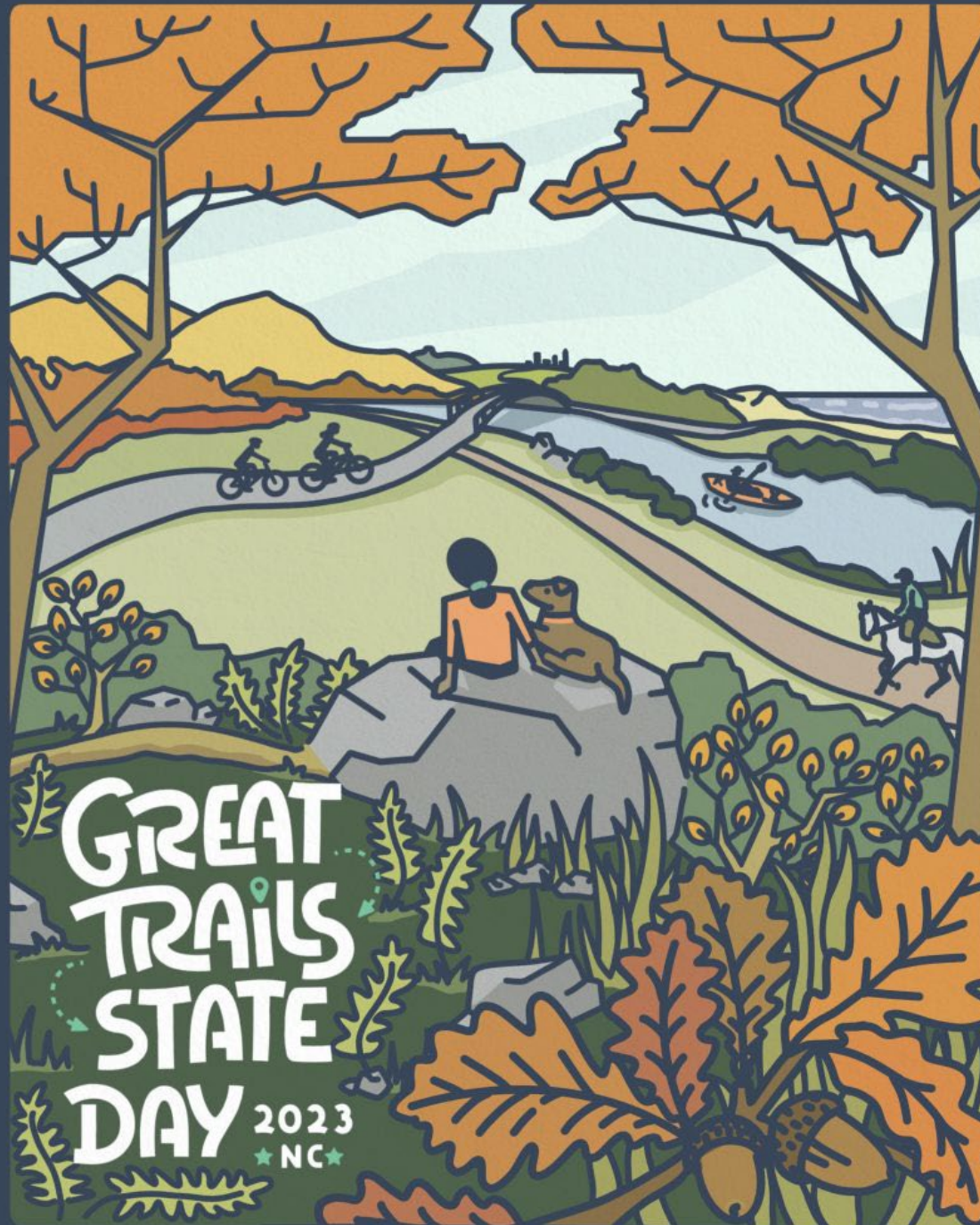


# Collaborations – State Agencies





- Launched Inaugural Great Trails State Day – third Saturday of October
- Will ask General Assembly to officially designate









# Campaign Reach

## Social Media Followers

- Facebook: >10,000 
- Instagram: >10,800 

## Digital Marketing

- Total impressions: 4,810,628

Blogs: 30

Videos: 7 original



Media Coverage: 400+ pieces of coverage; 150+ online stories

PBS NC: Ten To Try

# 2023 YEAR OF THE TRAIL

Launched January 1, 2023 - Impact So Far

15+  
MILLION  
People Reached



172,900+ website visits  
1,100+ toolkit downloads



1700+  
events/89 counties



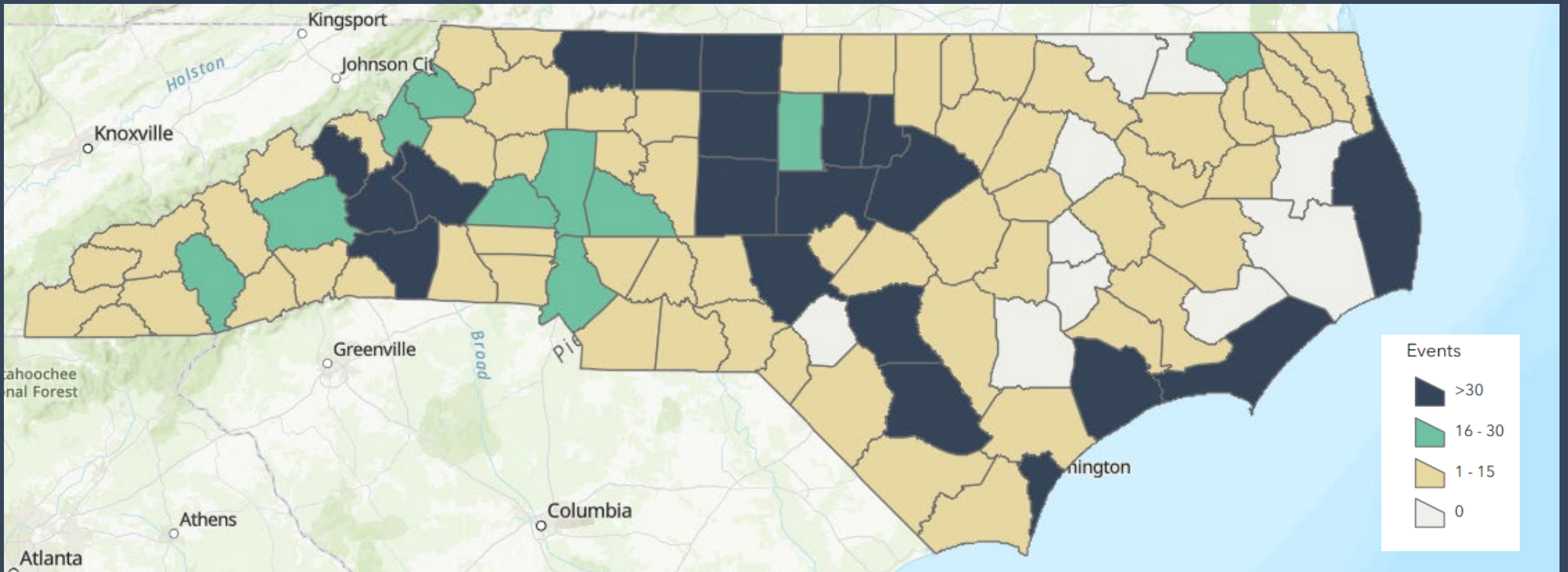
17,000+  
newsletter  
subscribers



# Campaign Reach



1700+ events in 90 counties!



# 2023 YEAR OF THE TRAIL

## SPONSORS



# SECU Foundation

PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE®



NC DEPARTMENT  
OF NATURAL AND  
CULTURAL RESOURCES



# ASHEVILLE

DESTINATION  
BY DESIGN

PLANNING | ENGINEERING | COMMUNICATIONS



**CIVIC**  
CREDIT UNION™



**MAST GENERAL STORE**  
SINCE 1883



# North Carolina IS the Great Trails State

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**This is our state. These are our trails.**



# Developing the Great Trails State Brand



## Outcomes:

- **A unifying and engaging Great Trails State Brand**
  - Revamped website [greattrailsnc.com](http://greattrailsnc.com)
  - Adapted open-sourced digital tools
- **Continue trail focus/momentum**
  - First Day Outdoors – January 1
  - Great Trails State Day – third Saturday in October
- **State level brand launch/marketing**
  - Launch event
  - Content development/management @GreatTrailsNC
  - Blogs, newsletters, videos
- **Promote NC Trails**
  - State agencies, local governments, nonprofits, DMOs





**SAVE THE DATE**

# **NORTH CAROLINA** **Great Trails State** **Conference**

Join us for sessions on innovative trails and  
greenway technology and meet your fellow  
North Carolina trail innovators.

**September 11-13, 2024**

Winston Salem, NC



**GREAT TRAILS**  
**STATE COALITION**





Thank you!!



Integrated Mobility Division  
N.C. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



MCADAMS

