



TOWN OF BLACK MOUNTAIN

160 Midland Avenue ♦ Black Mountain ♦ N.C. ♦ 28711

Phone: (828) 419-9300 ♦ Fax: (828) 669-2030

MEMORANDUM

To: Town of Black Mountain Planning Board
From: Jennifer Tipton, Planning Board Clerk
Re: Agenda Packet for July 27, 2020
Date: July 20, 2020

The **Town of Black Mountain Planning Board** will meet on **Monday, July 27, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.** virtually via Zoom.

Please find the following items for your information and use at the meeting:

1. The proposed agenda;
2. Draft minutes from June 29, 2020;
3. Blue Ridge Road Small Area Plan Final Report – Drew Draper; and
4. Introduction of Jake Hair, Planner 1.

Please let Jennifer Tipton know if you are **unable** to attend this meeting.
jennifer.tipton@townofblackmountain.org or (828) 419-9373.

The Town of Black Mountain is committed to providing accessible facilities, programs and services for all people in compliance with the American with Disabilities Act. Should you need assistance or a particular accommodation for this meeting, please inform Jennifer Tipton at (828) 419-9373 or by email at jennifer.tipton@townofblackmountain.org.

CC: Jessica Trotman, Planning Director
Ron Sneed, Town Attorney
Jake Hair, Planner 1
Josh Harrold, Town Manager



PUBLIC NOTICE

BLACK MOUNTAIN PLANNING BOARD

In order to maintain the safety of Town residents, staff, and the Planning Board, the Planning Board regular meeting scheduled for **Monday, July 27, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. will be conducted electronically using Zoom software** in lieu of its in-person meeting. The Town of Black Mountain Town Hall will not be open for this meeting.

There are three ways the public can participate in the meeting:

1. **Join the meeting through Zoom on your computer or smart device.** **Citizen video feeds will not be enabled. There is no password.*

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85786664612>

Meeting ID: 857 8666 4612

If you have not used Zoom before on a computer or smart device, you are encouraged to download the application from their website at [Zoom.us/download](https://zoom.us/download) and try it out prior to the meeting. There is no cost associated with the software or attending the meeting and there are toll free number options to dial in to listen live only.

2. **Join the meeting by telephone (listen only).**

Simply call US Toll-free 1-877-853-5247 or US Toll-free 1-888-788-0099

Meeting ID: 857 8666 4612 followed by the Pound sign (#)

3. **Email or call in your comments or questions prior to the meeting.**

Call in comments prior to the meeting: Planning Board Clerk at 828-419-9371

Email comments to: jennifer.tipton@townofblackmountain.org


Jennifer Tipton
Planning Board Clerk

The Town of Black Mountain is committed to providing accessible facilities, programs and services for all people in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Should you need assistance or a particular accommodation for this meeting please contact, Jennifer Tipton at (828) 419-9371 or by email at jennifer.tipton@townofblackmountain.org

Posted to the Town Bulletin Board 07/10/2020

www.townofblackmountain.org



**Planning Board Regular Meeting
July 27, 2020**

PROPOSED AGENDA

I. CALL TO ORDER

- **Welcome**
- **Determination of Quorum**

II. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

- **Motion:** To adopt the agenda as presented [or as amended]

III. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

- **Motion:** To adopt the minutes of June 29, 2020 as written [or as amended]

IV. OLD BUSINESS

- Blue Ridge Road Small Area Plan Final Report – Drew Draper

V. NEW BUSINESS

- Introduction of Jake Hair, Planner 1

VI. COMMUNICATION FROM PLANNING BOARD

VII. COMMUNICATION FROM STAFF

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

**TOWN OF BLACK MOUNTAIN
PLANNING BOARD**

The Black Mountain Planning Board held its regular meeting on Monday, June 29, 2020, at 6:00 p.m. electronically via Zoom.

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order with the following members present:

Jesse Gardner, Chair
Pam Norton, Vice Chair
Chris Collins
Michael Raines
Scott Reed

Absent:

Lauronda Teeple

Staff:

Jennifer Tipton, Zoning Administrator
Jessica Trotman, Planning Director

The meeting was called to order at 6:06 p.m. and duly constituted and opened for business with a quorum of four (4) regular members. Member Scott Reed joined later.

II. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Michael Raines made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. The motion was approved by consensus with a vote of 4-0.

III. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Michael Raines made a motion to adopt the minutes of February 24, 2020 and May 26, 2020 as written. The motion was seconded by Chris Collins and approved by a vote of 4-0.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

None.

V. NEW BUSINESS

1. Major Subdivision Preliminary Plat Review – Flat Creek Commons, LLC

Jesse Gardner recused himself from the Planning Board to present the major subdivision preliminary plat. Vice Chair Pam Norton presided over the meeting at this point.

Jesse Gardner presented the preliminary plat to the board explaining that is a fairly straightforward subdivision with seven lots total. Mr. Gardner said that they have built the road with an approved turnaround and are providing a nice trail system through the entire development that will run along the creek. The subdivision currently has one duplex that is finished and on the market and two more that are under construction.

Carl Hankins, 5 Llama Vista Court, asked what would be done with the existing house and said that he felt that the road was too small.

Mr. Gardner said that they would probably sell the existing house and that road does meet Town standards.

Planning Board Regular Meeting
June 29, 2020

Jennifer Tipton went through the staff report. The property is zoned TR-4. Based on the size of the parcel the allowable density is fourteen lots but the proposed density seven lots coming in at a density of two units an acre. All requirements for the sketch plan have been met. Open space is required with a minimum of five percent which would be .175 acres. The development is providing 1.83 acres of open space, well above the five percent minimum. The development is providing a five foot trail system to accommodate pedestrian circulation. All lots meet the minimum lot size of ¼ acre (.25) and all setbacks have been met. The turnaround is in compliance with the NC Fire Code and Appendix D and has been approved by the Fire Inspector. The duplexes are being constructed to the 2018 NC Residential Code and are being inspected. Each duplex unit has a minimum of two parking spaces. The new road, Magnolia Creek Lane, has a thirty-two foot right-of-way and eighteen feet of paved travel surface, meeting the road requirements. The development was given a twenty percent variance from the Public Works Director to reduce the right-of-way from forty feet to thirty-two feet and this still allows Public Works to access water and sewer lines. The subdivision will be connected to Metropolitan Sewerage District (MSD) lines for sewer and has a two inch water line that connects to an existing ten inch water line along Blue Ridge Road. Both MSD and Public Works have confirmed that there is capacity for water and sewer for the seven proposed lots. Common space will be under a homeowner's association and will not be dedicated to the Town.

Ms. Tipton then spoke about concerns from Ron Collins who had sent in comments. Mr. Collins' concerns are with stormwater and drainage and being too close to the river. Ms. Tipton did say that Dan Cordell, Building Inspector, had been out and confirmed that the homes were not close to or encroaching into the floodway or the stream bank buffer.

Michael Raines said that he felt that the development would help with the drainage issues and would help provide protection by keeping the floodwaters at the creek.

Mr. Gardner said that they had removed lots of old storm debris from the river, have elevated the structures and revised the flood maps to help mitigate flood issues. Mr. Gardner said that with the revision of the flood maps, flood insurance would not be required but could be purchased if desired.

Michael Raines made a motion to approve the preliminary plat as submitted. The motion was seconded by Scott Reed and approved by a vote of 4-0.

VI. COMMUNICATION FROM PLANNING BOARD

Jesse Gardner thanked Michael Raines for his years of service to the Planning Board and said that he hoped that Mike would rejoin the Planning Board in the future.

VII. COMMUNICATION FROM STAFF

Jessica Trotman said that the Comprehensive Plan Update is still continuing but in a modified capacity and will have more activities online. Ms. Trotman said she will bring an outline to the board when it is ready.

Jessica Trotman said that staff is busy making required updates to the ordinance that are mandated by 160D and will come to the board when those updates are finished.

Jessica Trotman said that we will have a new Planner starting on July 2nd. His name is Jake Hair and he is coming to us from Currituck County. He is a graduate of Appalachian State University.

Planning Board Regular Meeting
June 29, 2020

Jennifer Tipton said that she will now be serving the board in more of a clerk capacity and that Jake will be doing the presenting to the board.

Jennifer Tipton and Jessica Trotman thanked Michael Raines for his years of service and contribution to the Planning Board.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Michael Raines made a motion to adjourn at 6:48 p.m. The motion was seconded by Scott Reed and approved by a vote of 5-0.

Prepared by:

Jesse Gardner, Chair

Jennifer Tipton, Zoning Administrator



Town of Black Mountain, North Carolina

Blue Ridge Road Small Area Plan

Acknowledgements

Note: A special tanks to the residents of the Blue Ridge Road Small Area Plan study area and adjacent neighborhoods who participated in the planning process and provided their valuable input.

Board of Alderman

Mayor Don Collins
Mayor

Maggie Tuttle
Vice-Mayor

Larry B. Harris
Alderman

Ryan Stone
Alderman

Jennifer Willet
Alderman

Tim Raines
Alderman

Town Staff

Josh Harrold
Town Manager

Jessica Trotman
Planning Director

Jennifer Tipton
Zoning Administrator

Angela Reece
Town Clerk

Town Planning Board

Christopher Collins
Pam Norton
Lauronda Teeple
Jesse Gardner
Mike Raines
Scott Reed

Report Prepared July 2020
Plan Adopted: TBD



Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	1
2. Study Process	3
3. Condition Assessment.....	4
4. Public Input Session #1.....	6
Dot Voting for Visioning	7
Dot Voting for Transportation	7
Comment Sheet Summary.....	8
5. Land Use Recommendations	9
Mixed-Use Areas	10
Medium and Low Density Residential Areas	10
Land Use/Growth Management Strategies	11
6. Transportation Recommendations	12
Alternatives Development	13
7. Public Input Session #2	15
8. Blue Ridge Road Area Plan Conclusions.....	17
9. Next Steps and Implementation.....	18
Transportation Realization	18
Land Use Realization.....	20
Land Use Priority Items.....	21
10. Other Relevant Projects.....	22



1

Introduction

Growth and development patterns changed dramatically in 1979 with the opening of I-40, which increased the flow of visitors to the region and refocused commercial development to downtown Black Mountain and around the existing interchange at NC 9. The resulting increased flow of visitors through downtown Black Mountain triggered the rehabilitation of the Town's historic downtown area. Today, the new interchange with I-40 and Blue Ridge Road (NCDOT STIP No. I-4409 with an anticipated construction date in mid-2020) will provide all traffic, particularly truck traffic, with alternative access to the interstate that does not involve having to negotiate busy, narrow downtown streets that are often filled with pedestrians. This improved access to I-40 will encourage more commercial and industrial activity in the western portions of Black Mountain. NCDOT will also be constructing a roundabout at the intersection at NC 9 to create a safer transition from NC 9 to Blue Ridge Road.

The Black Mountain Commerce Park is an over 100-acre economic development site located along Blue Ridge Road in two tracts north and south of I-40. Planned uses focus on medical research, light manufacturing and distribution facilities, corporate and government offices, multi-modal transportation, a hotel and conference center, restaurants, and other commercial-service components within a

campus like business park or corporate center. Anticipated growth activity at the Commerce Park and the construction of this new I-40 interchange at Blue Ridge Road will increase the attractiveness to prospective developers, businesses, and future residents alike.

The Town's Comprehensive Plan calls for the Town to reduce downtown traffic and promote economic development by working with the French Broad Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and NCDOT to make the I-40 Interchange project at Blue Ridge Road a priority in the Long-Range Transportation Plan. Now that this interchange is coming to fruition, the creation of this major interstate node will have a tremendous impact on this area of town. With pending development occurring at the Commerce Park and the I-40 interchange, the Town requested assistance with creating a Small Area Plan (Plan) for Blue Ridge Road in order to accommodate transitional land use patterns in relation to changing conditions.

Furthermore, the Town will soon be updating their Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map. These policy documents are critical to managing existing and future growth and infrastructure needs. Area plans help to inform that process, though lack enforceable policy. The following section summarizes what area plans are, what they are not, and what they hope to achieve.



Study Area

The Plan's study area (solid red line) encompasses approximately a 210-acre area south of I-40 from the new interchange project (yellow hatched area on west end), 1.2 miles along Blue Ridge Road (SR 2500), to the NC 9 Roundabout Project (yellow hatched area on east end). Figure 1 identifies the study area.

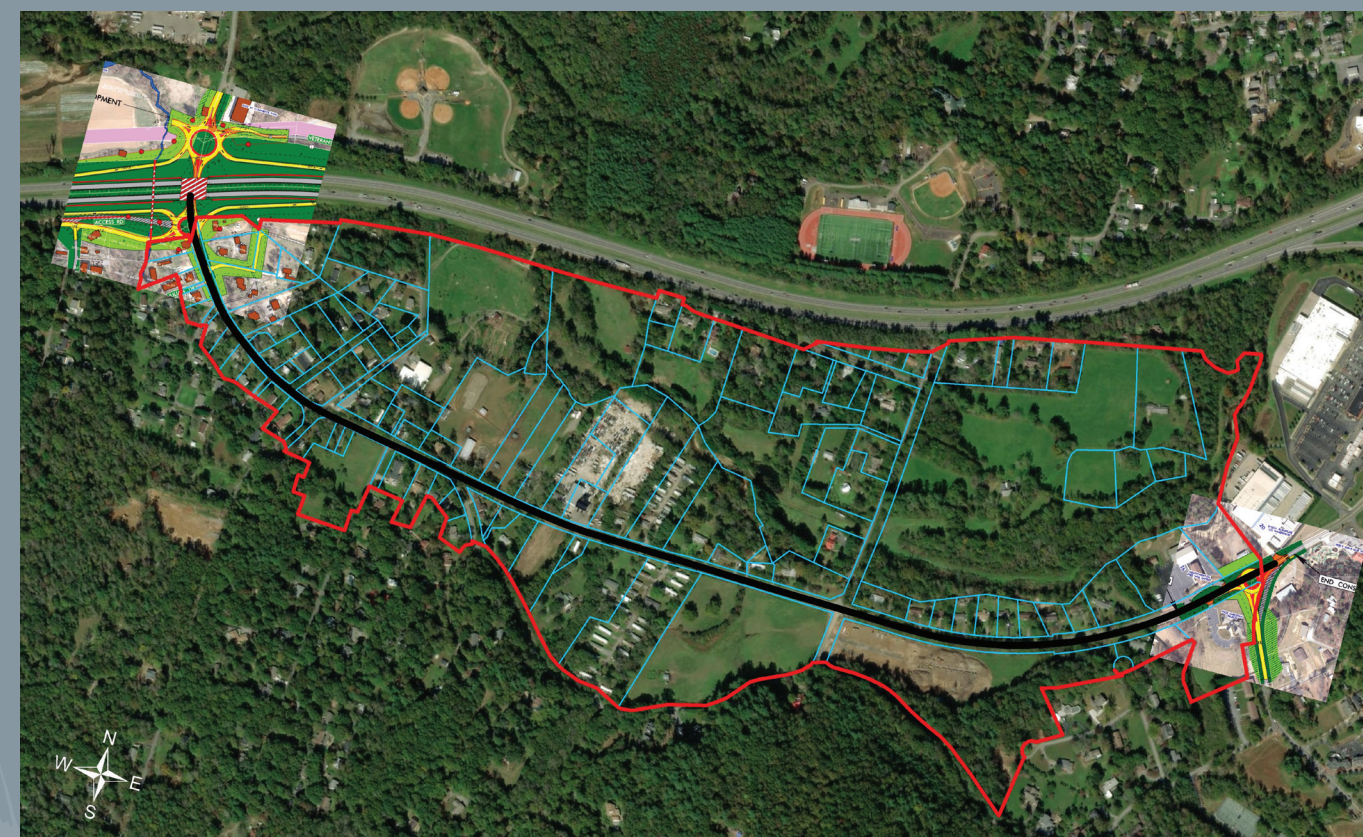
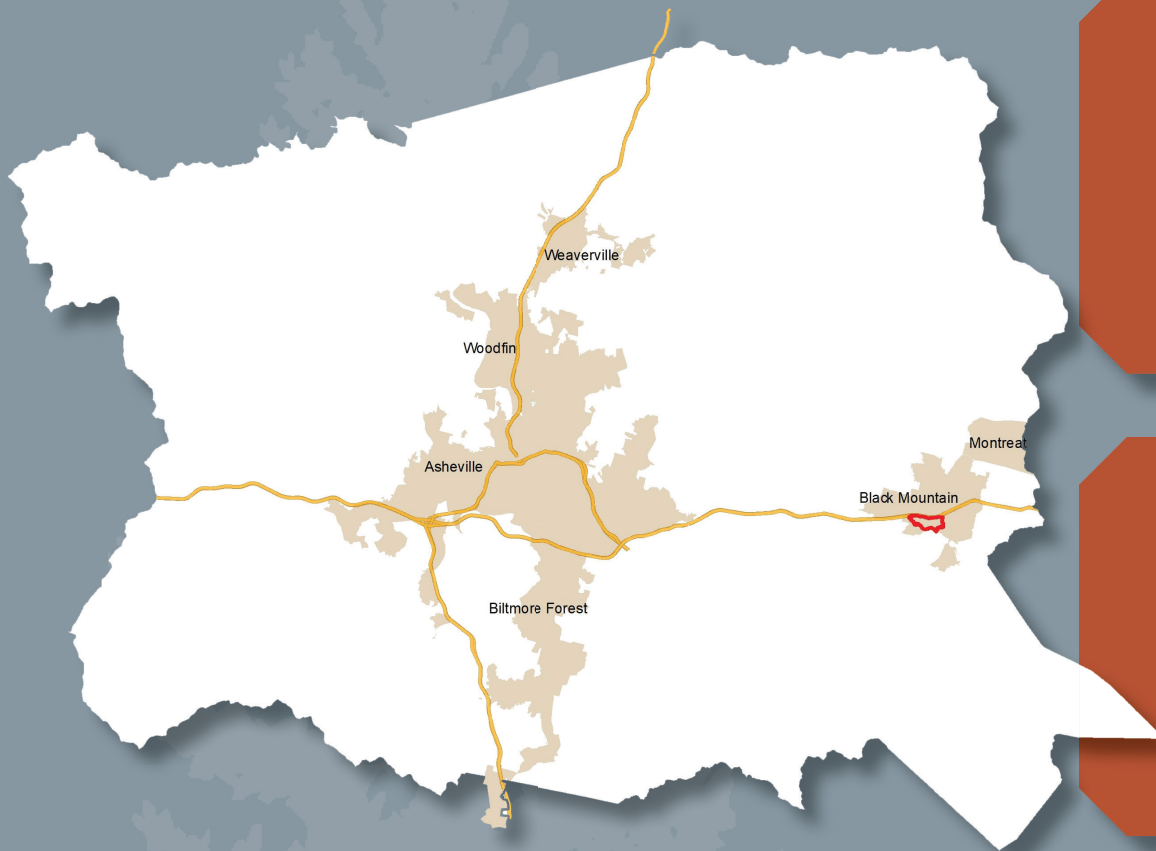


Figure 1: Project Study Area of the Blue Ridge Road Small Area Plan



Project Area in Relation to Buncombe County

What is a Small Area Plan?

A small area plan is a detailed, long-range land-use and transportation plan that is focused on a particular size limited area. Small area plans guide future transportation and land-use expectations **and decisions** by providing a collaborative process for citizens to create a shared, community-owned vision. Local planners and boards rely on this information to then shape land use policy and decisions responsive to community needs and desires.

What isn't a Small Area Plan?

This Plan is not a "canned" study and will be uniquely customized through feedback from the Town. Furthermore, it is not formally part of the new I-40 interchange project; therefore, it provides an independent and fresh look at reshaping Blue Ridge Road. Finally, this Plan is **not a traditional rezoning** effort but will offer **guidance and suggestions** as changes occur along Blue Ridge Road over time. It provides a tool to staff and elected officials to evaluate requests made by property owners for who may wish to be rezoned in the future, or inform a town initiated rezoning process in respond to changing conditions.

Why is it Important?

In the absence of a plan, undesirable development may occur. A small area plan will provide **community visioning and guidance** for how Blue Ridge Road and the surrounding area should change and grow in the future. It will identify land use, transportation, and development strategies responsive to changes in conditions associated with the new interchange

How will the Plan's Vision be Achieved?

The overall Plan will be informational and detailed enough to provide a **blueprint** the Town can follow and implement. The Plan will clearly define land use and transportation "drivers" and lay out steps to follow in order to achieve the vision, building on the current regulatory land use and zoning framework. The Plan will outline options including mixed use zoning strategies, transportation funding opportunities, and growth management practices, among others, aligned to the vision.

Note

Desired land use patterns formed through public input will not preclude other uses from being considered through traditional rezoning applications or in response to an unanticipated change in conditions. This Plan will inform future policy initiatives such as the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map as they take shape.

2 Study Process

To achieve this overall Plan and give the Town a blueprint for growth management, this study implemented a three-phased approach with key tasks to accomplish during each phase of the study. **Figure 2** illustrates the study process by phase and key task.

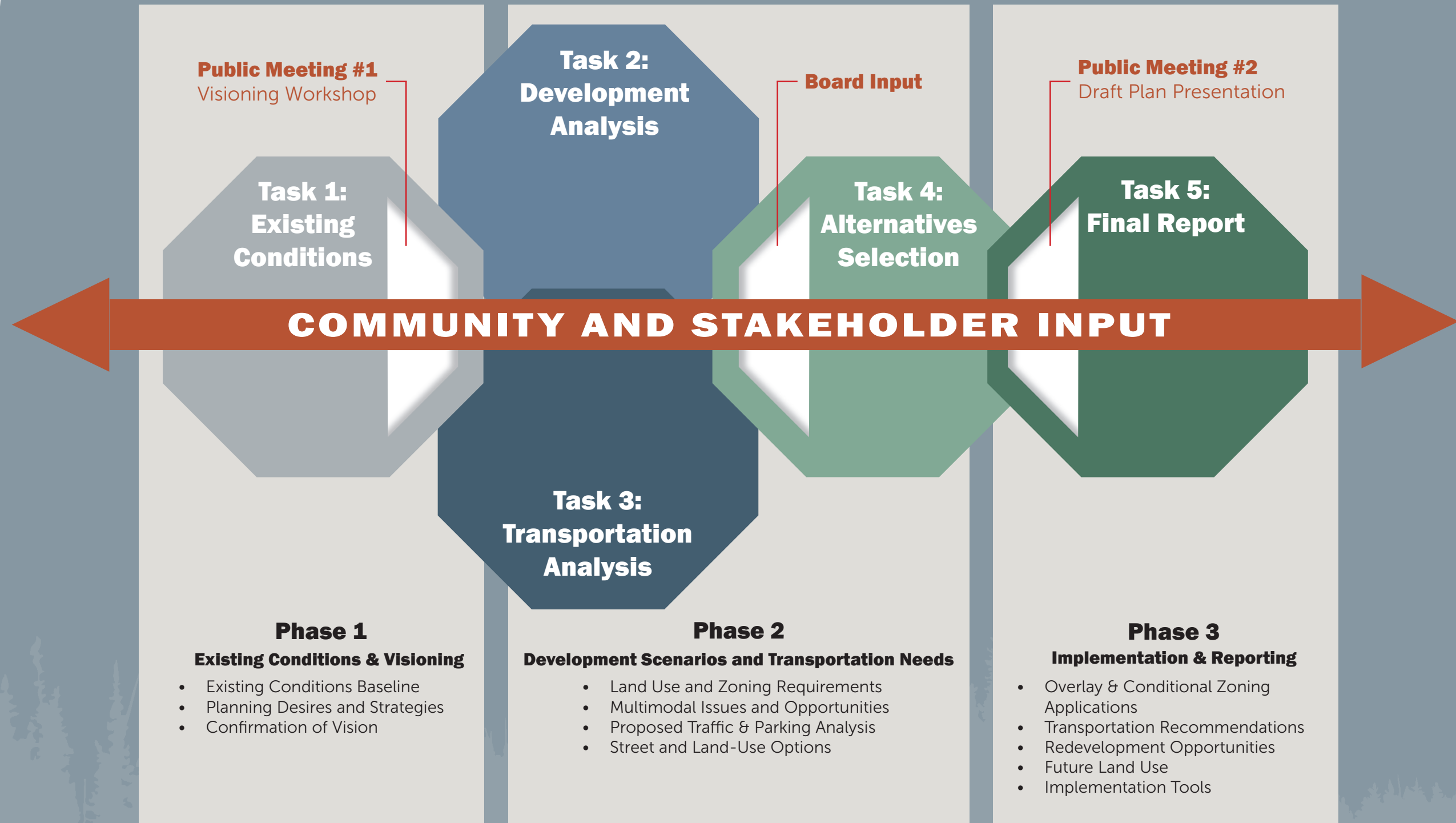


Figure 2: Study Process Overview

3 Condition Assessment

The Town of Black Mountain has been growing and developing since the opening of I-40. The increased flow of visitors to the region and refocused commercial development along US 70 has led to congestion and cut-through traffic conditions. As recognized in the Comprehensive Plan, opportunities to develop new mixed-use centers of activity will be created with the construction of the I-40 interchange at Blue Ridge Road in addition to relieving congestion downtown.

The existing land uses along Blue Ridge Road include residential, recreational, institutional, and even some commercial. While there is a mix of land uses, the land area is relatively undeveloped when compared to other areas within the Town. In fact, the building “floor area” makes up less than 4 percent of the total footprint in the study area. For this reason, the opening of the interchange will usher in opportunities that if unchecked, may result in undesirable land use outcomes that do not align with the interest and vision of the community. **Figures 3 and 4** illustrate existing land use and zoning in the study area.

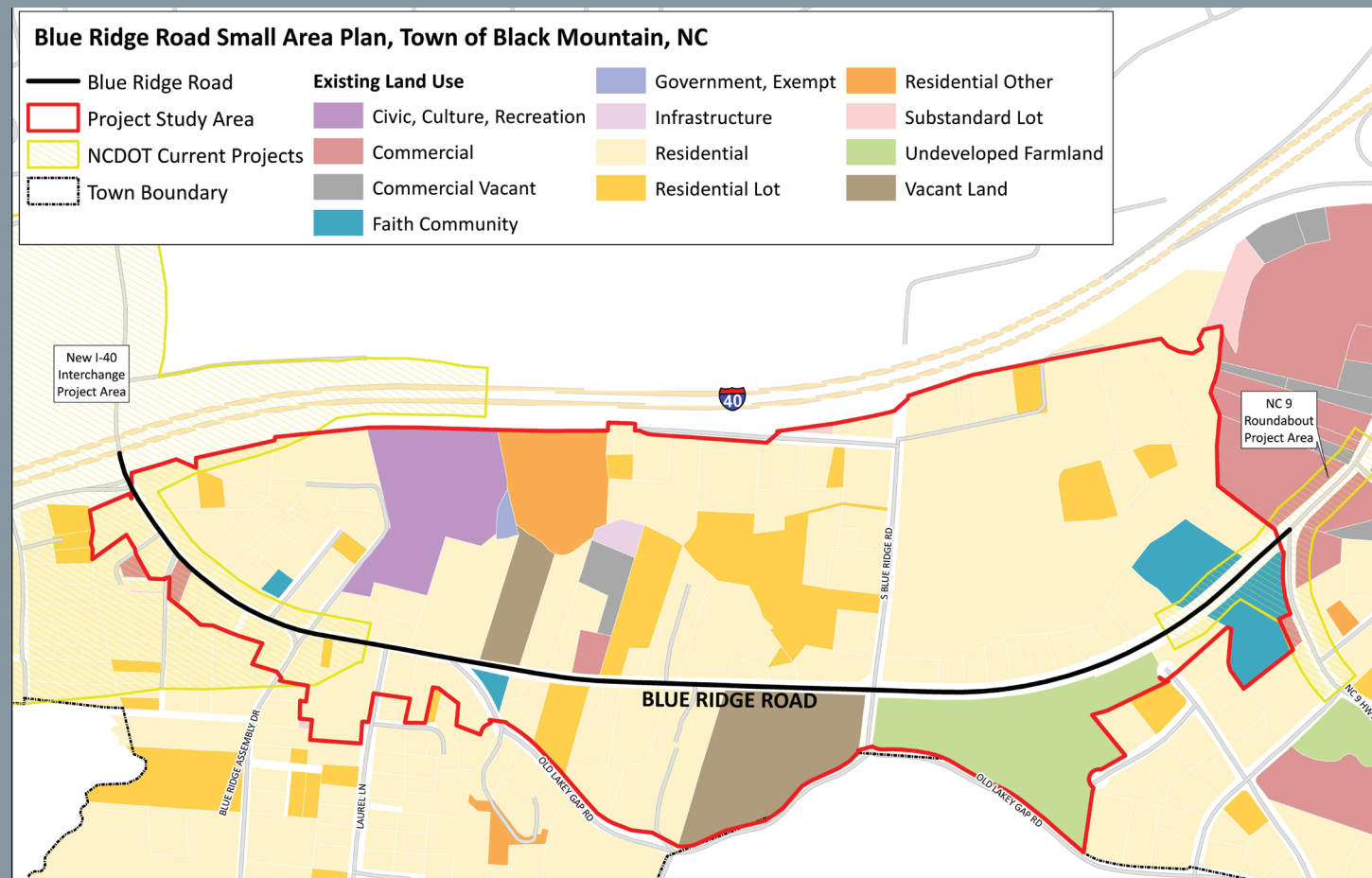


Figure 3: Existing Land Use

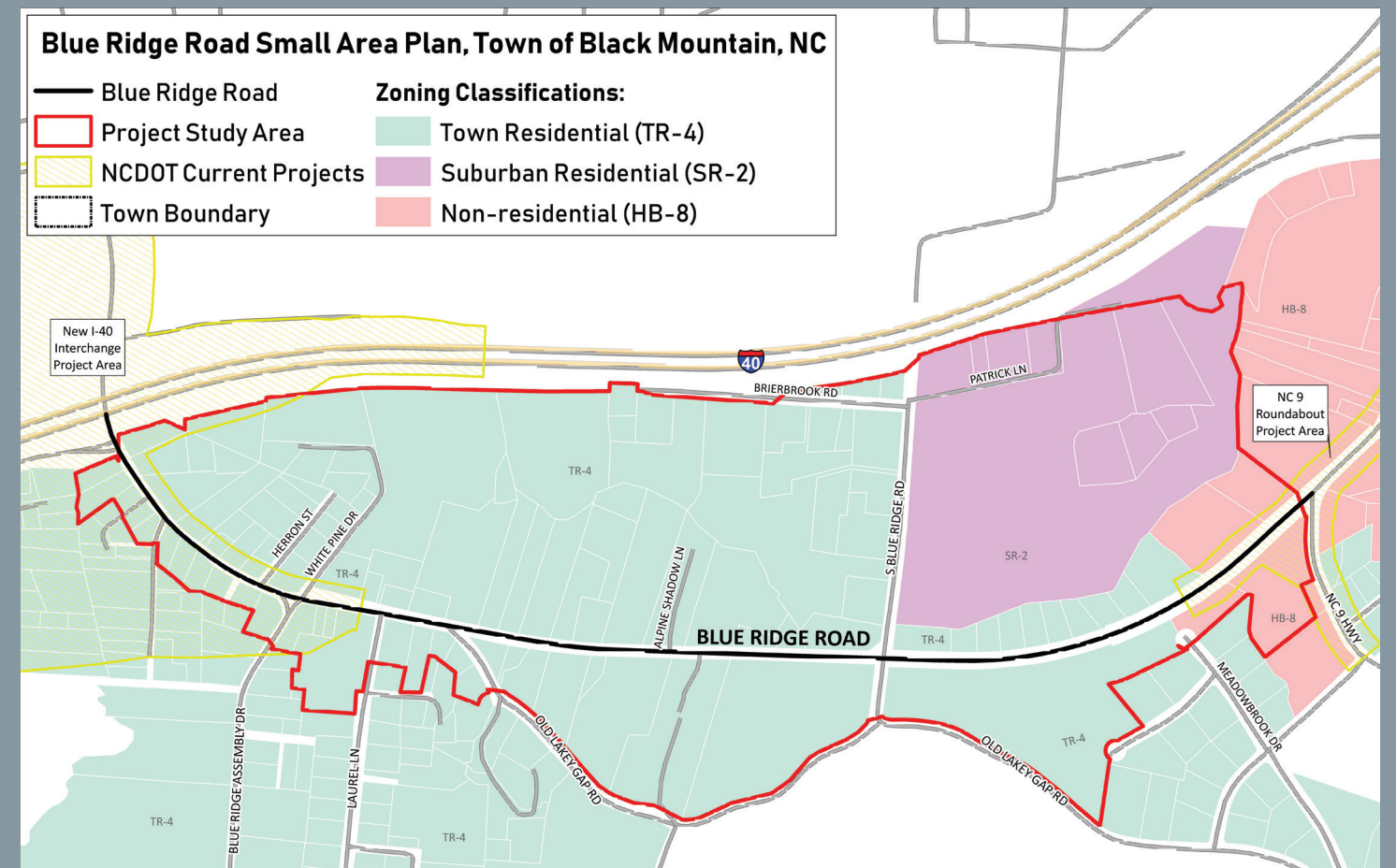


Figure 4: Existing Zoning

4

Public Input Session #1

Civic engagement is a necessary tool to promote and encourage community understanding and buy-in. The first of two public input sessions was held on March 14, 2019, at the Meadowbrook Freewill Baptist Church located on Blue Ridge Road.

The meeting consisted of table-top maps, interactive “dot” voting boards, and two (2) presentations followed by a question and answer session. Each presentation covered the same content and accommodated participants that arrived later. There were 40 walk-in participants that included Planning Board and Board of Alderman members, Town staff, and consultant support.

In general, there was consensus and acceptance that changes will be coming to the Blue Ridge Road area. Participants seemed to accept that the new interchange with the accompanying roundabouts as well as the proposed roundabout at NC 9 would usher in change to the area. They responded positively to the Town’s proactive response to anticipated impacts of the interchange and the accompanying new road design. Participants engaged in significant conversation one on one with town staff and the consulting team.

Meeting Purpose

1. Introduce the study
2. Share land use and transportation options being considered
3. Gather feedback on issues and opportunities important to the community
4. Inform the Plan’s vision



Photo Credit: Black Mountain News



Photo Credit: Black Mountain News

Dot Voting for Visioning

Participants were provided the opportunity to vote on a suitable, context-sensitive vision statement. Vision statements are important because they instill a hopeful and a positive outlook into the future. They succinctly describe an **inspirational, long-term** plan for what should be accomplished, who will benefit, and how the area will be perceived. The vision statement gives everyone a description of what they are working towards.

The selection of Vision statements A and D would suggest the community desires maintaining its heritage and small town feel for residents and businesses alike while planning for changes that will be ushered in by the new interchange. It also suggests the community is interested in expanding multimodal connections and ensuring safety is improved. Ultimately, Vision statement A was the most preferred and carries many of the elements included in Vision statement D.

Dot Voting for Transportation

Participants were provided the opportunity to vote on multimodal roadway features most important to them. Participants were interested in biking but understood that multi-use paths also accommodate bikes

and may eventually connect to the existing and future multi-use paths. The results of the Complete Streets dot voting further align with Vision statements A and D.

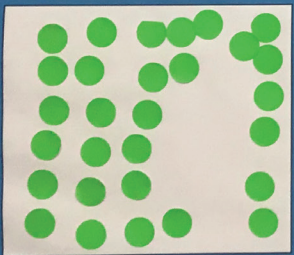
“The Blue Ridge Road Small Area Plan will empower and assist residents in planning for growth while maintaining a vibrant, safe, attractive, and well-connected community that embraces the mountain setting, heritage, and culture.”

Future Vision Options of the Blue Ridge Road Small Area Plan

Vision A

This plan will empower and assist residents in planning for growth while maintaining a vibrant and well-connected community that embraces the mountain setting, heritage, and culture.

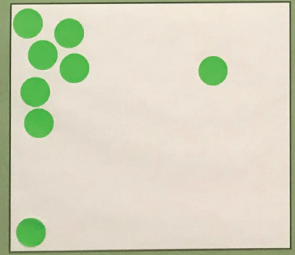
Place sticker to vote for Vision A.



Vision B

This plan provides a blueprint for managing growth and envisions the Blue Ridge Road area as a vibrant and well-connected community where individuals and families choose to live and play.

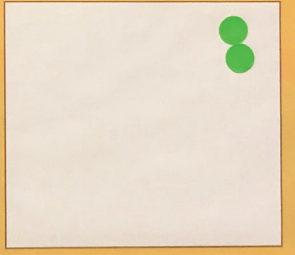
Place sticker to vote for Vision B.



Vision C

The Blue Ridge Road area will be an alliance of individuals, neighborhoods, and community organizations with access to goods and services necessary for living and playing.

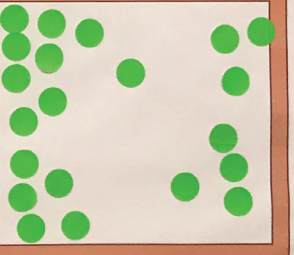
Place sticker to vote for Vision C.



Vision D

The Blue Ridge Road Area will be a vibrant, safe, and attractive community where residents and businesses alike feel connected and have access to desired goods, services, and recreational activities.

Place sticker to vote for Vision D.



Visioning dot voting results

Defining Complete Streets

The principle for complete streets is to create roadways and related infrastructure that provide safe travel for all users, customized to the characteristics of the area the street services.

Sidewalks



Multi-use Paths



Safe & Accessible Transit Stops



Bicycle Lanes



Traffic Calming



Safe Crossings



Transportation dot voting results

Comment Sheet Summary

Numerous comments sheets were submitted both during the meeting and over the course of the two-week comment period. In general, land use considerations include a mix of uses, though limited, on either end of the corridor near the new interchange and the NC 9 roundabout. Maintain affordable residential along central portions of the study area. There were differing views on whether commercial / business / industrial uses should be allowed – but a common theme was aesthetics and preserving the Town’s heritage; therefore, avoid specific uses such as gas stations and convenience stores. Boutique uses such as coffee and bagel shops were also desired along the corridor but avoid possible competition with downtown.

Safety was a top issue for the community, and there was shared concern over the intersection of Blue Ridge Road / White Pine Drive / Assembly Drive and the interaction of heavy turning movements, future day care traffic, and the EMS station. As for multimodal opportunities, responses confirmed that sidewalks and multi-use trails are the preferred option for pedestrian and bicycle accommodations though dedicated bike lanes were also desired. Most land use comments included a recommendation for improved multimodal accessibility.

Participant responses were overall proactive and positive.



Blue Ridge Road Small Area Plan Public Meeting Outcome

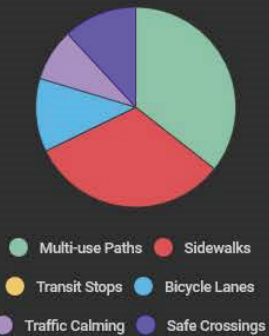
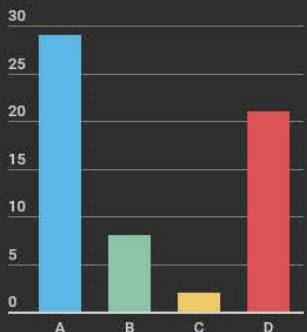


March 14, 2019
Meadowbrook Freewill Baptist Church



Study Area Location

Town of Black Mountain,
Buncombe County,
North Carolina



Vision Option Votes

With four Plan options, the town residents at the meeting voted most for the plan to “empower and assist residents in planning for growth while maintaining a vibrant and well-connected community that embraces the mountain setting, heritage, and culture.”

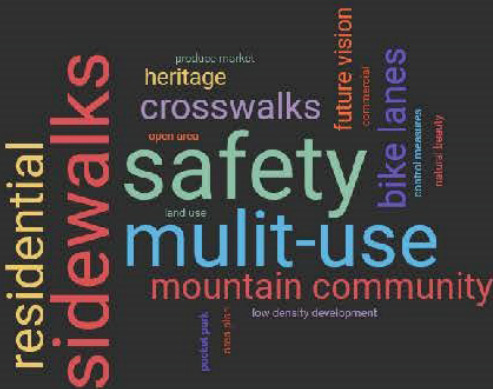
Street Feature Votes

Out of a total of six street features to incorporate as part of the Plan, the Town voted overwhelming for sidewalks and multi-use paths.



Safety First

Safety was a main concern of the community. Adding sidewalks and multi-use paths were the top most suggested features to assure a safer Blue Ridge Road. Improving the Blue Ridge Assembly Drive / White Pine Drive intersection was also a common topic.



Summary

In general, there was an overall positive response to the idea of proactive planning taking place to prepare for the anticipated impacts of the interchange and the accompanying new road designs. Future conditions may consist of a mix of uses but limit certain commercial and industrial uses such as gas stations and convenience stores. Maintain residential, preserve open space, and ensure new development fits the mountain setting context. As for multimodal opportunities, sidewalks and multi-use paths are the most preferred options to consider.

5

Land Use Recommendations

The construction of the new I-40 interchange with Blue Ridge Road will provide additional accessibility to the community and an opportunity for the community to guide future growth resulting from this additional gateway. It is important to set realistic goals for this area and map out a method in which to achieve these goals. In order to accommodate transitional land use patterns desired by the community in relationship to changing conditions, proactive measures should be implemented. See **Figure 7** for an illustration of the land use recommendations.

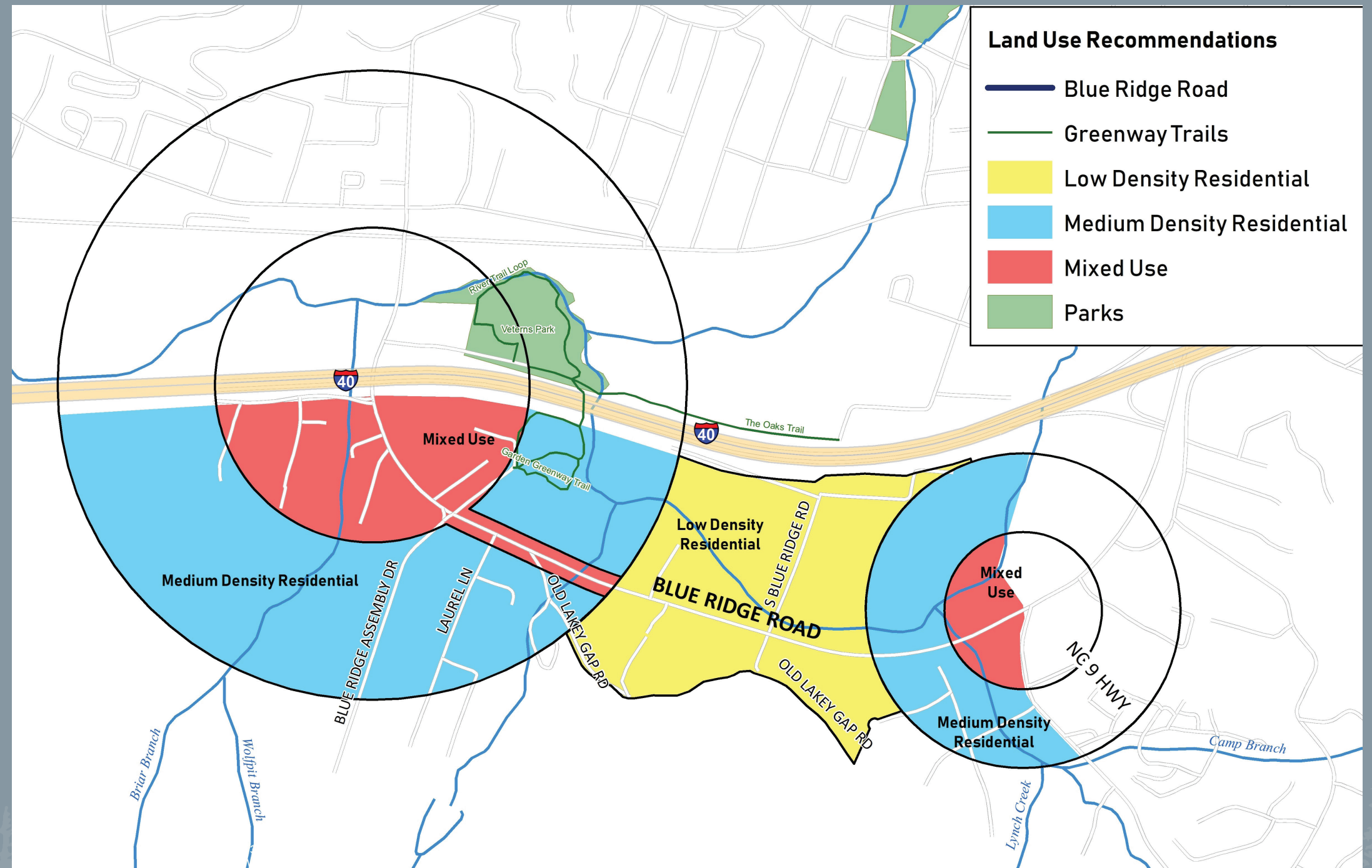


Figure 7: Land Use Recommendations

Mixed-Use Areas

As identified through the public input process for this project, it is envisioned for the areas surrounding the new interstate interchange and the area around the proposed roundabout at the intersection of Blue Ridge Road and NC 9 to allow for a desired mix of uses compatible with existing development. Mixed-use projects include a combination of various types of land uses and are typically characterized as development that blends residential and non-residential uses. This type of development brings stores, services, and workplaces within walking and biking distance of residents. The town currently identifies areas of this nature as NMU-8, noting the permitted uses of this transition district and the allowable density of eight units per acre.

Through public engagement, the need was recognized to extend this mixed-use area further along Blue Ridge Road, from the western side of the project area at the new interchange toward NC 9 along Blue Ridge Road (but not the entire length). The concept is to capture boutique uses fronting the road with residential in the back. This more compact and efficient pattern of growth creates activity centers that support local businesses, reduce dependency on automobiles, preserve open space, and improve the quality of life for residents. This pattern will not restrict further mixed-use development along Blue Ridge Road and will be compatible with existing land uses. The proposed land use pattern reflects consistent feedback received through the public engagement process and desire to blend residential with non-residential uses.



Medium and Low Density Residential Areas

The next spheres of the concentric circle areas of this Plan call for medium-density residential uses, followed by low-density residential use in the area remaining along the midsection of Blue Ridge Road. As per the Town's ordinance and for the Plan purposes, Medium-Density Residential is defined as [Town Residential-4](#), allowing four dwelling units per acre and [Suburban Residential-2](#) Low-Density Residential is defined as two dwelling units per acre. As with mixed use areas, this pattern will not restrict other types of development or even a mix of medium and low density residential. The proposed land use pattern reflects community feedback and desire to maintain some medium and low-density residential uses along Blue Ridge Road. Modest opportunities for increased densities exist in the zoning ordinance in both TR-4 and SR-2.

Land Use/Growth Management Strategies

The following points represent land use and growth management strategies for the study area that are necessary to assist the Town in realizing the vision set forth in the planning process:

Encourage only mixed-use development near the new interchange and NC 9 portions of Blue Ridge Road.

Maintain the Black Mountain identity and recognize the importance of the downtown area to the residents and visitors of the Town such that a “new downtown” does not result on Blue Ridge Road, but identify uses that are permitted in this plan area that do not necessarily fit or compete with downtown but are still desired by the community.

Non-residential growth should occur primarily at the two “ends” of Blue Ridge Road study area.

In order to create a sense of place, the Town needs to adopt a policy that avoids typical, straight rezoning requests.

Identify uses that will complement the Commerce Park and future Avadim expansion in the western portion of the study area. These uses should also serve as transitioning or buffering type uses for the transition into the larger residential areas.

Encourage safe road crossing features by including ordinance requirements for any new development to provide pedestrian accessibility to the most feasible crossing locations.

Pursue the development of an overall tourism marketing strategy/plan that builds upon existing wayfinding signage and incorporates gateway signage.

Explore options for increasing incentives, such as density / intensity bonuses, for the use of LEED standards or Low Impact Design techniques for new development in this area.

Identify opportunities for the consolidation of commercial driveways and the development of shared access arrangements.

Promote an interconnected street network by avoiding the use of cul-de-sacs where topography would allow for a through connection.

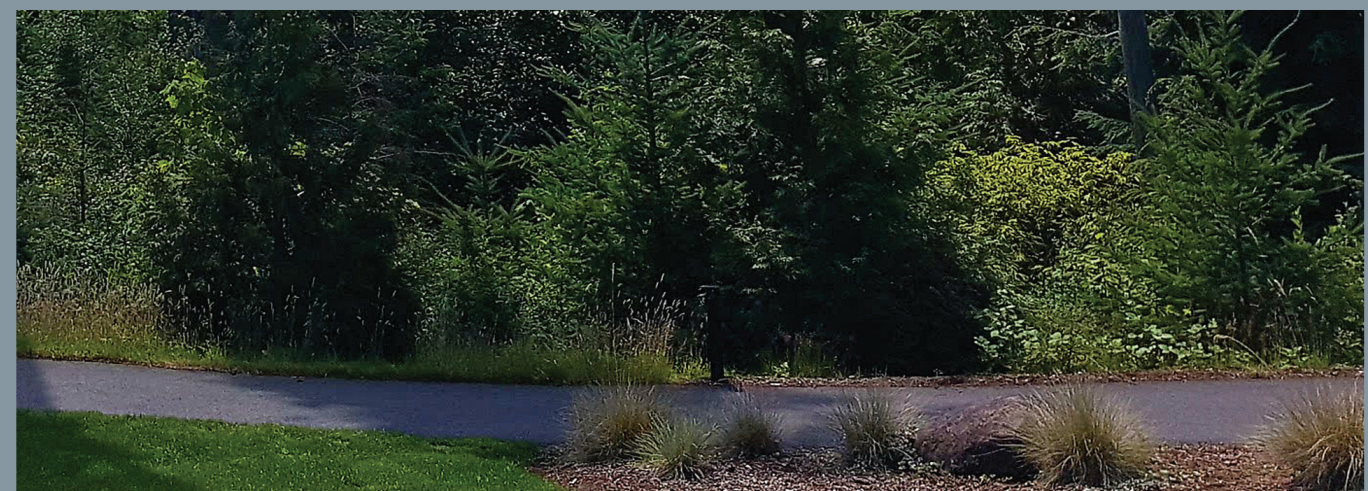
Encourage the use of the Conditional Zoning process to address situations where rezoning to an existing base zoning district would not be compatible with surrounding development in the absence of conditions tailored to the particular nature of the proposed use or development.

As rezoning proposals are reviewed and considered for this area, ensure that such proposals are approved only in those cases where the resultant division of districts does not leave isolated dissimilarly zoned properties of lower intensity adjacent to areas zoned for higher intensity uses.

Maintain policies that prohibit the construction of buildings that are wholly out of scale with the character of the Town in terms of their height, bulk, or area.

Encourage a mix of housing types within the community to accommodate residents in different stages of life.

Establish open space requirements for new residential developments, placing emphasis on primary and secondary conservation areas, and allow conservation development as an option to cluster residential units in order to encourage the preservation of open space.



6

Transportation Recommendations

Historically speaking, development near the Town of Black Mountain has been constrained to the river valleys. Due to such topographical constraints, as well as the increasing population in the area, the region is experiencing congestion issues, and more such challenges are expected in the future. The MPO has developed a Congestion Management Process (CMP) to identify locations that are experiencing congestion or may expect congestion in the future and to understand the causes of congestion. The CMP leads to the identification of strategies to effectively mitigate the congestion.

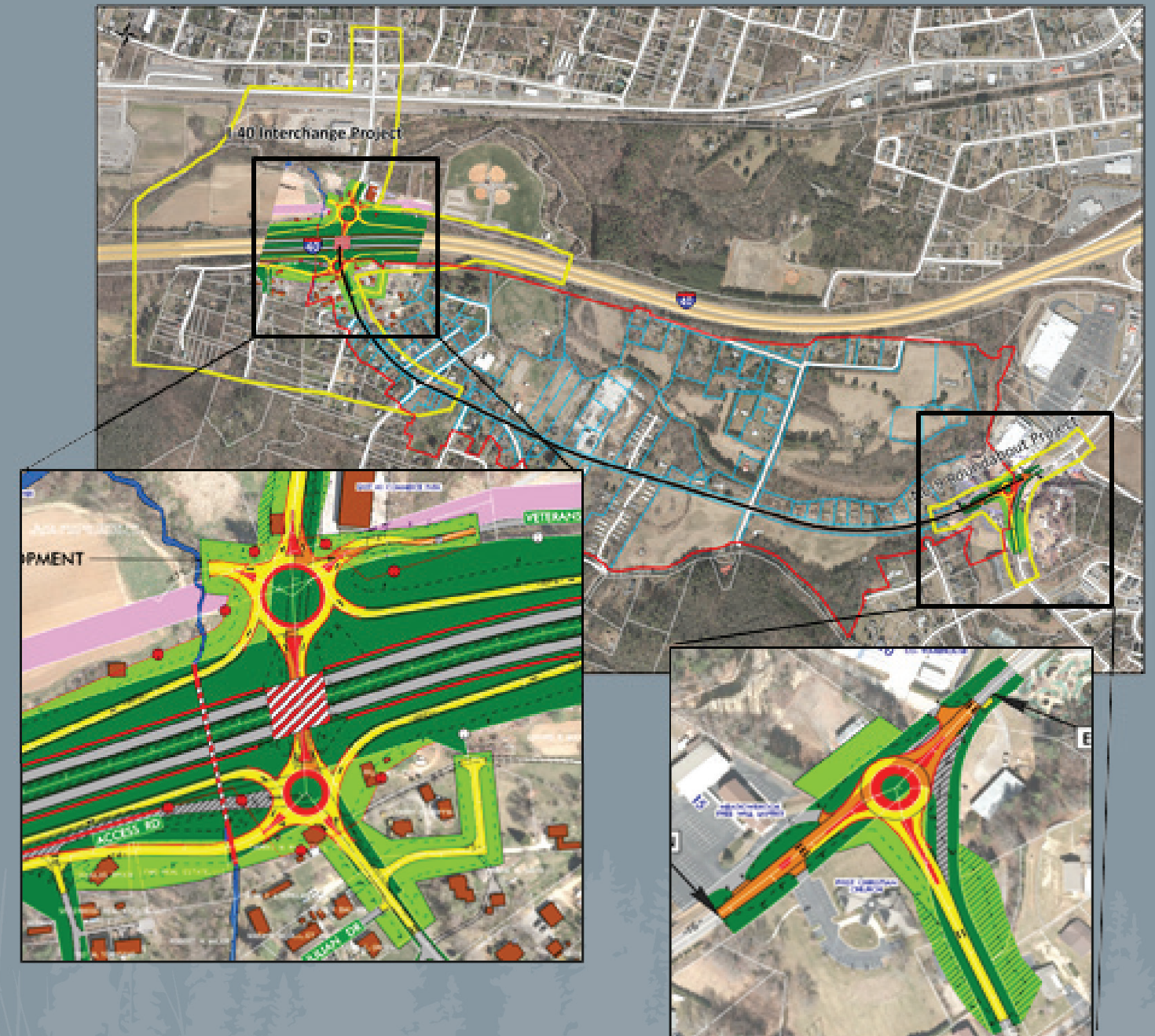
One of the future goals mentioned in the CMP is to address congestion and bottlenecks by improving travel time reliability. The new I-40 interchange will usher in significant changes along Blue Ridge Road, and NCDOT is identifying alternatives to address these changes in conditions. The new I-40 interchange, coupled with the

proposed NC 9 roundabout on Blue Ridge Road, will provide all traffic, including truck traffic, with alternative access to the Interstate and encourage more development activity along Blue Ridge Road. According to traffic projections developed for NCDOT as part of the new interchange project, demand along Blue Ridge Road will increase from approximately 4,500 vpd to over 13,000 vpd by 2040. While future projections do not indicate the need to widen Blue Ridge Road to four lanes, this added demand will only increase pressure on the roadway and further deteriorate conditions.

Blue Ridge Road is currently referenced in the SPOT 5.0 Regional Project Map developed by NCDOT while taking into consideration the inputs from the MPO. The project, per SPOT 5.0, would modernize Blue Ridge Road by upgrading the intersections, modernize the roadway, and include Complete Street accommodations.

Feedback from the first public input session confirmed the desire to:

- 1. increase safety and slow speeds,**
- 2. Provide multimodal improvements including sidewalks and crosswalks, and**
- 3. improve operational efficiency by adding turn lanes at key intersections.**



Alternatives Development

The following roadway alternatives were developed based on feedback from the first public input session, Town staff, the MPO, and NCDOT:



Option 1

2-lane roadway, curb and gutter, sidewalk and multiuse path



Option 2A

2-lane roadway, paved shoulder with ditch, sidewalk and multiuse path

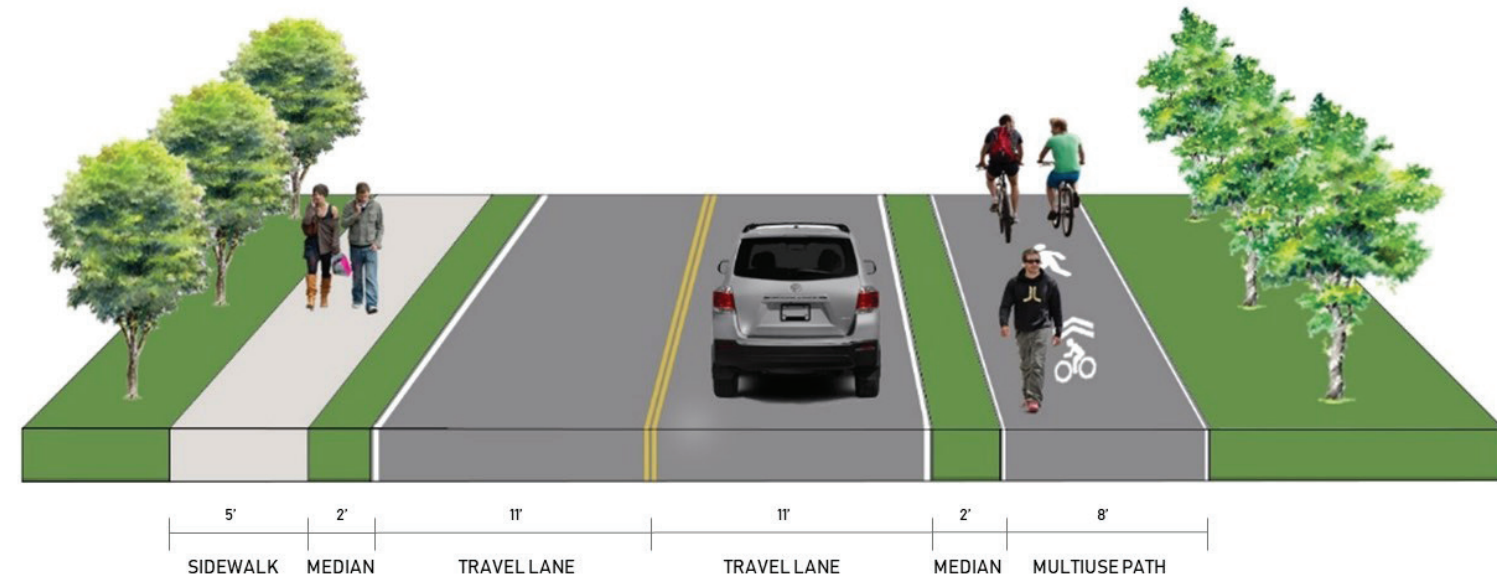


Option 2B

2-lane roadway, paved shoulder with ditch, no sidewalk or multiuse path (low impact option)

OPTION 1:

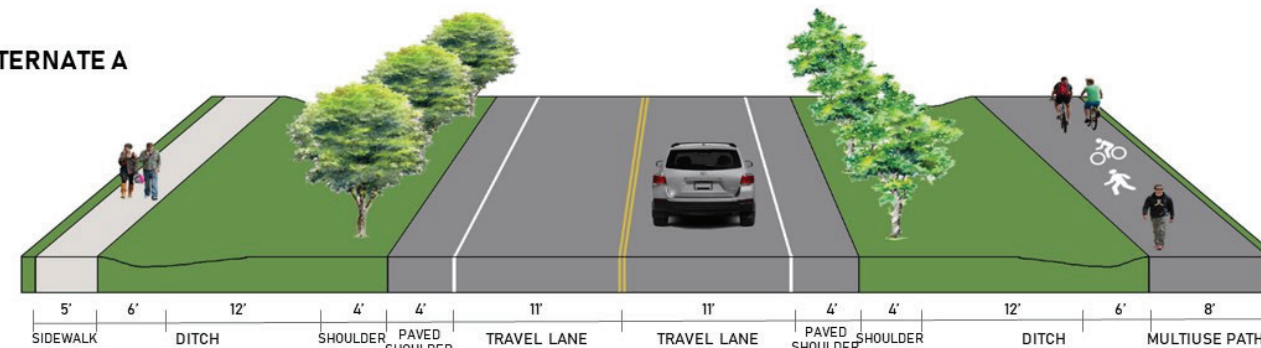
2-LANE TRAVEL WITH SIDEWALK & MULTIUSE PATH



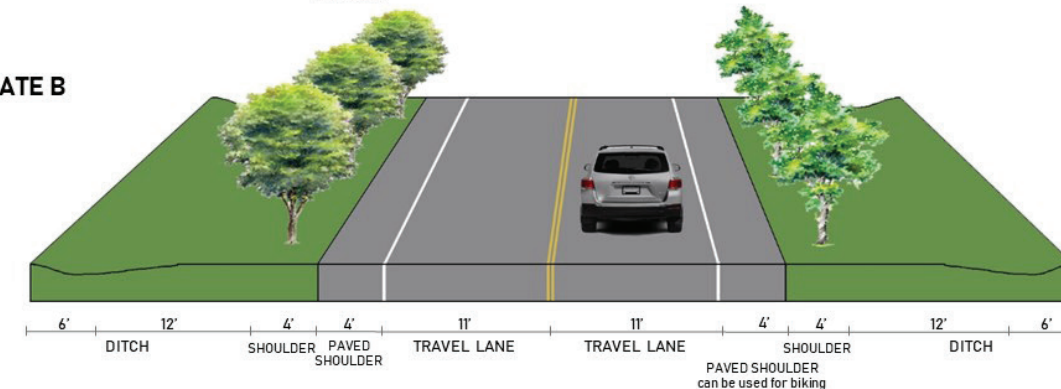
OPTION 2:

TWO-LANE TRAVEL WITH PAVED SHOULDER/DITCH AND SIDEWALK & MULTIUSE PATH

ALTERNATE A



ALTERNATE B



In addition to the roadway improvements, intersection recommendations were also developed for Assembly Drive and S. Blue Ridge Road. Recommendations included the addition of turn lanes, maintaining side street stop controls, or installing roundabouts. **Figures 8 and 9** illustrate the corridor wide transportation recommendations.

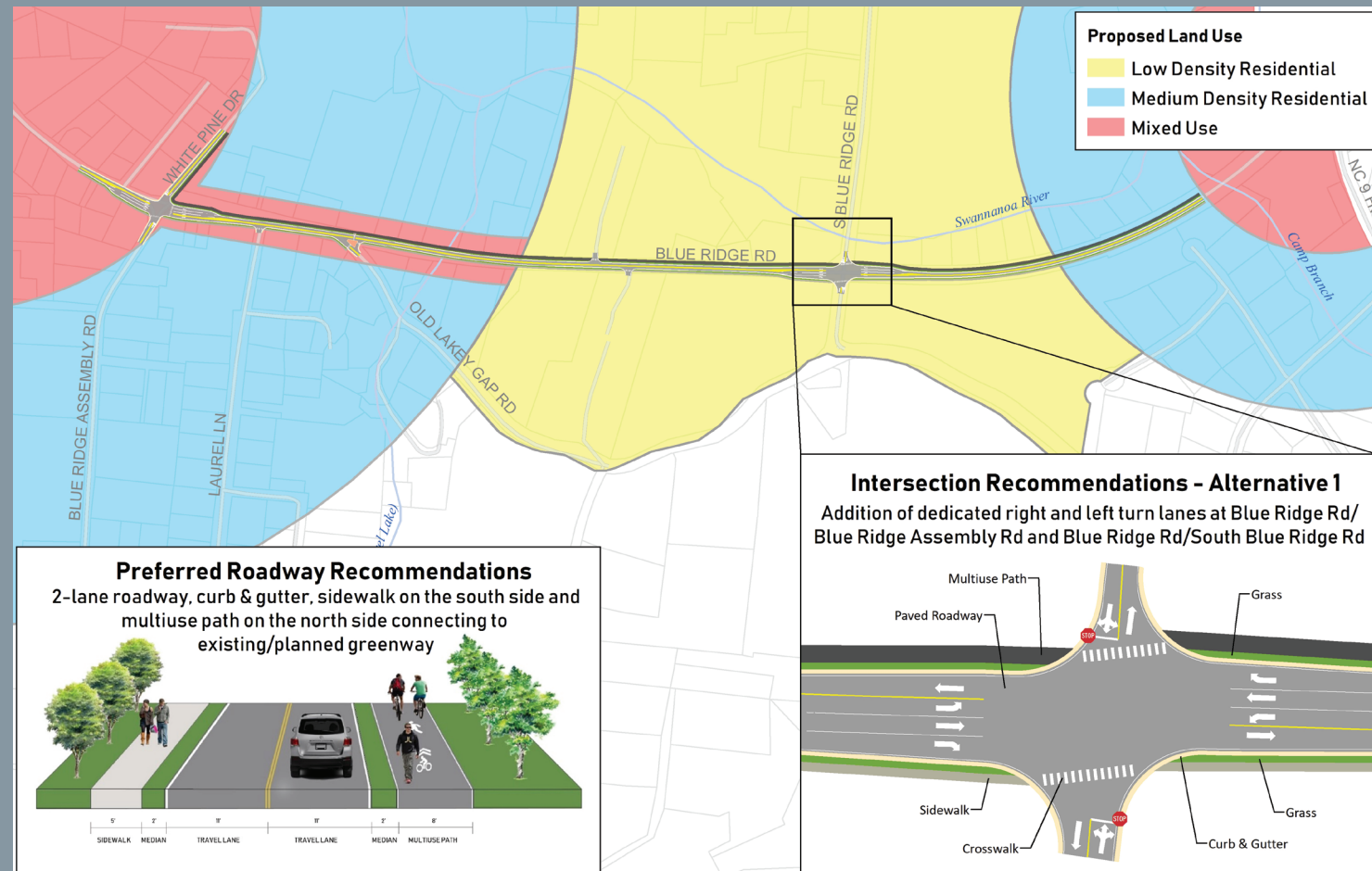


Figure 8: Transportation Recommendations (turn lane improvements)

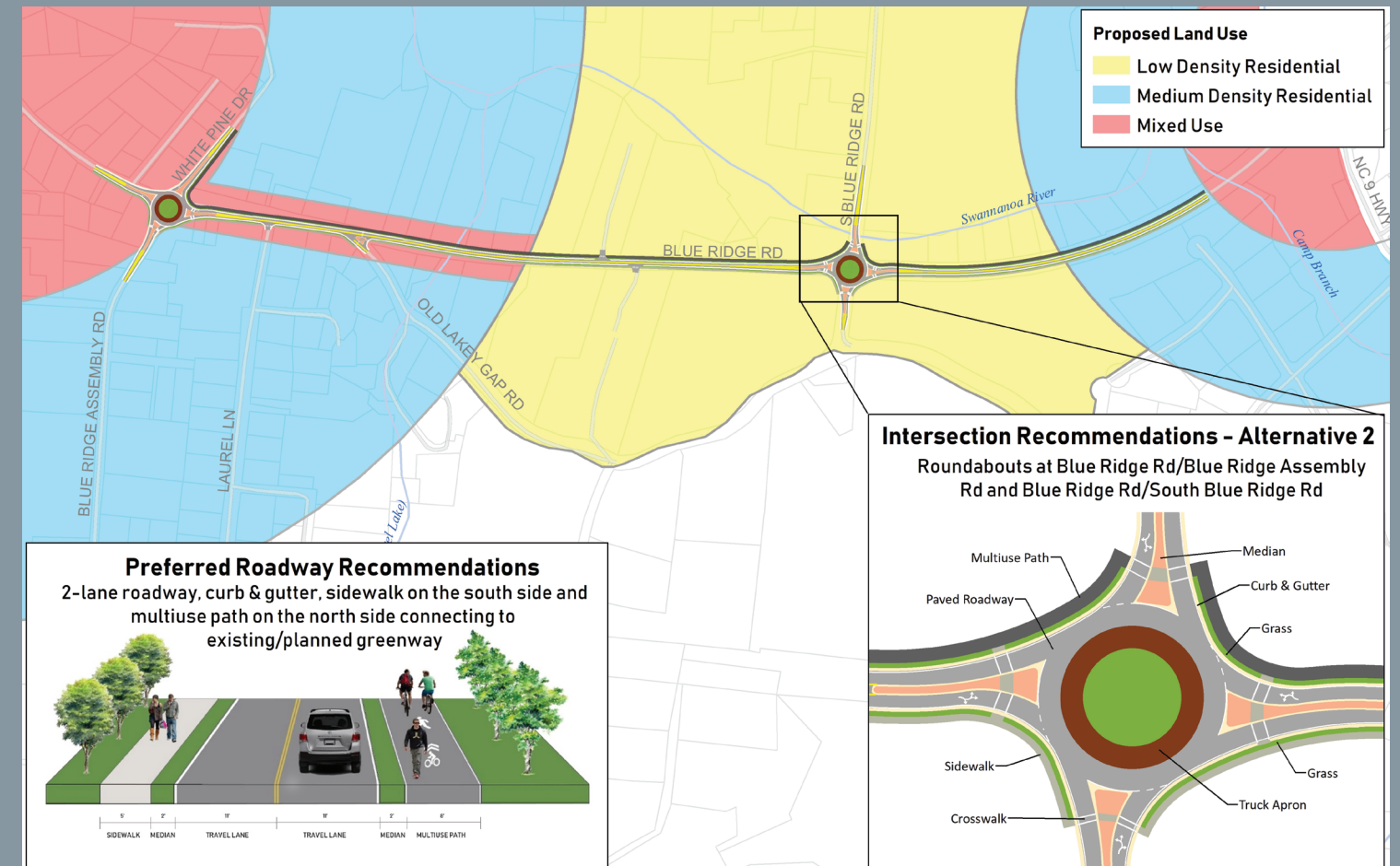


Figure 9: Transportation Recommendations

7

Public Input Session #2

The second public input session was held on June 11, 2019, at Town Hall.

The meeting was an open-house session and consisted of table-top maps that illustrated background materials, land use, and transportation recommendations. Comment sheets were also available for participants to either return that evening or take home and submit during the two-week comment period. Consultants and Town Staff were available throughout the meeting to answer any questions.

As with the first public input session held in March, there was consensus and acceptance that changes will be coming to the Blue Ridge Road area and that the new interchange with the accompanying roundabouts as well as the proposed roundabout at NC 9 will usher in change to the area. Participants were eager to hear more about the timing of upcoming changes, and it was conveyed that while the interchange and NC 9 improvements are just a few years out, the Area Plan will be implemented over a longer period of time. It was further shared that NCDOT has already initiated a feasibility study along Blue Ridge Road between NC 9 and the new interchange that incorporates the transportation recommendations set forth in the Area Plan.

Meeting Purpose

1. Share transportation and land use recommendations developed from the conditions assessment
2. Share feedback from the first public input session



Response to Recommendations

Overall, participants were interested in the two transportation options but favored the roundabouts over more traditional turn lane improvements, understanding that roundabouts provide speed control in addition to improving how intersections operate. Furthermore, while participants were interested in biking and use of bike lanes, they are aware that multi-use paths also accommodate bikes and may eventually connect to the existing and future multi-use paths. However, there were participants that questioned the need for both a multi-use trail and a sidewalk. No participants were interested in improving Blue Ridge Road without multimodal accommodations.

The land use recommendations were non-controversial and widely understood and accepted. Boutique shops and cafes were highly desired while chain establishments, gas stations, and convenience stores were not. There were comments related to how the land use concentric zones were determined, and it was explained that the pattern of residential land use along the midsection of Blue Ridge Road that increases in density and mix of use approaching the new interchange and NC 9 **reflects feedback received at the first public input session.**

It was further communicated that the Town will soon be updating their Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map. These policy documents are critical to managing existing and future growth and infrastructure needs. Area plans help to inform that process, though lack enforceable policy. Furthermore, the concentric zones do not preclude other uses from being considered. They simply reflect overall community desires established through the public engagement process.

Following public meeting #2 and preparation of the Draft Report, the Town decided to provide the public with a 30-day review period of project documents. Therefore, a notice was sent to residents in the study area notifying them where documents could be reviewed and comments submitted. All materials to date were uploaded to the project website and hard copies available for review at Town Hall. In summary, three (3) comment submittals were received during the review period. While one submittal was not directly relevant to the project, the other two indicated support for option 1 and intersection improvements (both traditional and roundabouts). **They also urged the Town to address the Land Use Priority Items (discussed on page 21) as key, immediate action items to increase development standards and improve non-residential design guidelines.**



8

Blue Ridge Road Area Plan Conclusions

With pending development occurring at the Commerce Park and the I-40 interchange, the Town requested assistance with creating a Small Area Plan for Blue Ridge Road in order to accommodate transitional land use patterns in relation to changing conditions and provide recommendations to modernize the roadway and include pedestrian and bicycle accommodations.

It is important to set realistic goals for this area and map out a method in which to achieve these goals. Therefore, in order to accommodate transitional land use patterns in relationship to changing conditions, the following proactive land use measures identified through the planning process should be implemented:

Mixed-Use Areas

It is envisioned for the areas surrounding the new interstate interchange and the area around the proposed roundabout at the intersection of Blue Ridge Road and NC 9 to be designated for mixed-use development, by maintain the existing Highway Business-8 zoning designation, and potentially expanding a transition zone of NMU-8. This will allow for a combination of the various types of land uses and ideally results from an overall master plan for proposed development, and avoid creating non-conforming uses in the existing HB-8 district. This type of development brings stores, services, and workplaces within walking and biking distance of residents. This more compact and efficient pattern of growth creates activity centers that support local businesses, reduce dependency on automobiles, preserve open space, and improve the quality of life for residents



Medium and Low Density Residential Areas

The next spheres of the concentric circle areas of this Plan call for TR-4, or medium-density residential uses on the peripheral of each mixed-use circle area, followed by SR-2 or low- density residential in the remaining midsection of Blue Ridge Road.

In order to address increases in traffic demand associated with changing conditions and enhance the land use/ transportation interface, the following alternatives should be advanced in coordination with the MPO and NCDOT:

Alternative 1

**2-lane roadway, curb and gutter, sidewalk and multiuse path
– Turn lane intersection alternatives**

Alternative 2

**2-lane roadway, curb and gutter, sidewalk and multiuse path
– Roundabout intersection alternatives**

Alternative 3

**2-lane roadway, combination of Alternative 1 and Alternative 2
(roundabout and turn lane intersection alternatives, sidewalk and multiuse path)**

“The Plan will empower and assist residents in planning for growth while maintaining a vibrant, safe, attractive, and well-connected community that embraces the mountain setting, heritage, and culture.”

9

Next Steps and Implementation

The second public input session reaffirmed the transportation and land use recommendations developed as part of this planning process. The Plan has further defined land use and transportation “drivers” and developed detailed recommendations that align to community needs and desires. The next and final stage will be to lay out steps to follow to achieve the vision, building on the current regulatory land use and zoning framework.

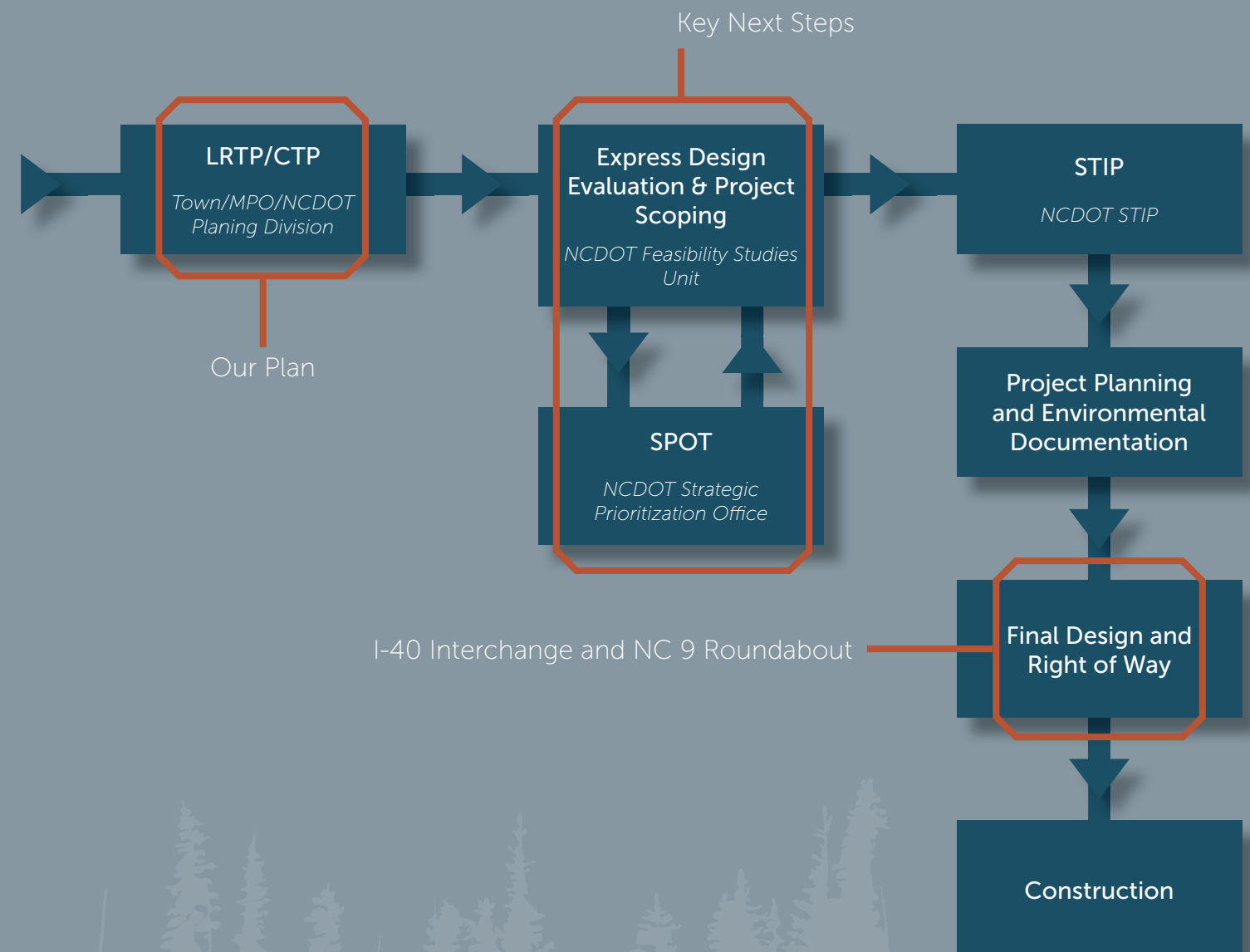
The following transportation and land use options include mixed use zoning strategies, transportation funding opportunities, and growth management practices, among others. These steps will provide the Town with a blueprint to follow that will assist with implementing the recommendations set forth in the Blue Ridge Road Small Area Plan.

Transportation Realization

Ridge Road (SR 2500) is a state-owned and maintained facility; therefore, NCDOT will be involved with implementation and funding of all roadway projects. Sidewalk and multiuse trail projects have a shared funding structure where local municipalities pay 20 percent of costs matched with the remaining 80 percent from NCDOT. The following graphic illustrates where this Plan falls within the planning process from concept to construction.

The next stage in the planning process will be to conduct a feasibility study. A feasibility study is a preliminary assessment that is the initial step in the planning and design process for a candidate State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) project and not the product of exhaustive environmental or design investigations. The purpose of this type of study is to describe the proposed project, develop alternatives or investigate proposed options, provide preliminary cost estimates, and identify potential issues/problems that may require consideration in the planning and design phases. Blue Ridge Road is currently referenced in the SPOT 5.0 Regional Project Map developed by NCDOT while taking into consideration the inputs from the MPO.

Passed in 2013, the Strategic Transportation Investments (STI) law allows NCDOT to use its funding more efficiently and effectively to enhance North Carolina’s infrastructure while supporting economic growth, job creation, and a higher quality of life. This process encourages thinking from a statewide and regional perspective while also providing flexibility to address local needs. The STI law also establishes the Strategic Mobility Formula, which allocates available revenues based on data-driven scoring and local input. It is used to develop NCDOT’s STIP (as noted above), which identifies the transportation projects that will receive funding during a 10-year period.



For Blue Ridge Road, a feasibility study would investigate the preferred options developed as part of this Plan:

Alternative 1
2-lane roadway, curb and gutter, sidewalk and multiuse path
– Turn lane intersection alternatives

Alternative 2
2-lane roadway, curb and gutter, sidewalk and multiuse path
– Roundabout intersection alternatives

Alternative 3
2-lane roadway, combination of Alternative 1 and Alternative 2
(roundabout and turn lane intersection alternatives, sidewalk and multiuse path)

If a feasibility study is completed and a candidate project is identified for funding in the STIP, it will then be followed by a rigorous planning and design process that meets the appropriate requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and/or State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA).

Other funding options could include zoning and development ordinance requirements, US DOT Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) discretionary grant program, or Highway Safety Improvement Program funding.



Land Use Realization

Implement overlay zoning for increased design standards and to avoid “franchise” type architecture from developing along the corridor. Along with conditional zoning, the overlay tool allows the Town to ensure increased design standards and desirable growth patterns.

Adopt provisions to encourage and give priority to master-planned and concerted effort development projects to create a sense of place.

Amend the Land Use Code to provide for the use of the legislative Conditional Zoning Process.

Implement a sidewalk or bicycle/pedestrian access plan for the area, and adopt requirements for providing this space as part of any future development projects. Ideally, the primary route along the study area of Blue Ridge Road would be located on the northern side of the road. This will encourage further connectivity with the Town’s greenway system, provide a safer area of accessibility, and ultimately tie the Blue Ridge Road area to downtown and other amenity areas, establishing a more closely networked community.

Adopt provisions that accommodate a variety of land uses in a concentrated and well-planned project area.

Avoid high density residential development, including multi-family, by using low-and medium-density zoning and implementing conditional zoning measures.

Develop zoning and subdivision ordinance amendments to encourage development to include landscaping and buffers compatible with the surrounding areas and to soften the overall visual impact on the area.

Develop zoning and subdivision ordinance amendments that require the reservation of right-of-way for greenway extension and connection to pedestrian pathways.

Develop a multi-use side path or greenway facility from downtown to Blue Ridge Road.

Review and revise zoning regulations to establish design guidelines for the east and west ends of the Blue Ridge Road (mixed-use zones).

Identify areas of transition between high intensity and low intensity development, and proactively amend the Zoning Map to implement sound transitional land use regulations.

Review the Land Use Code to ensure that wholly incompatible uses are not allowed within the same zoning district, and amend the code if such conflicts are identified.

Review the Land Use Code to ensure that adequate regulations exist to address the ongoing impacts of nonresidential uses that are located in close proximity to residential uses.

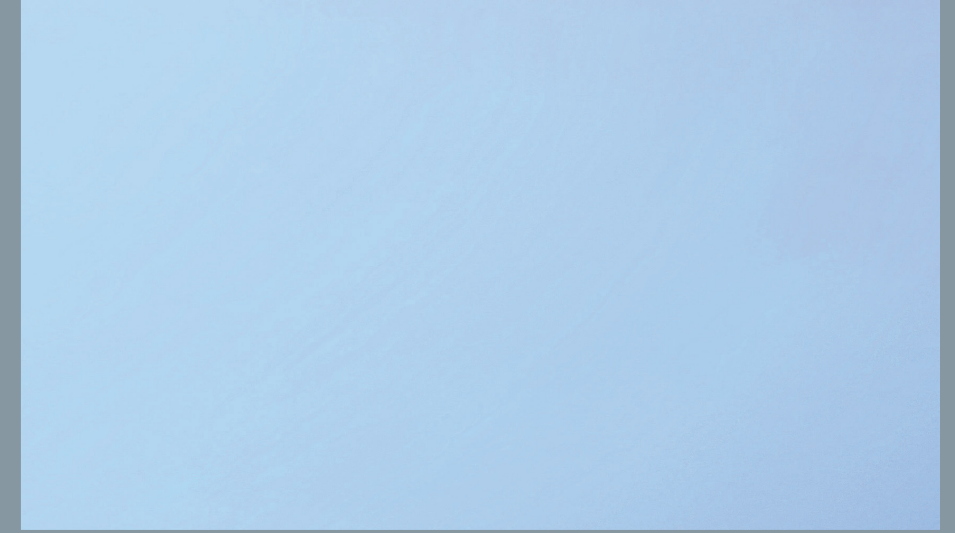
Develop enhanced standards for commercial driveway connections with the goal of ensuring safety while preserving adequate access.

Require the stubbing of streets to adjacent properties when new rights-of-way are established.

Amend the Land Use Code to include one or more specialized conditional zoning district(s) for use in the development of larger scale mixed use projects.

Examine the Official Zoning Map annually to identify underutilized properties in growth areas that are zoned in a manner that would discourage appropriately-located infill development or redevelopment. As appropriate, and in cooperation with property owners, initiate amendment to the Official Zoning Map to zone any identified properties in a manner that is more conducive to their development or redevelopment.

Develop and implement an incentive-based approach by which residential density can be increased above the allowed maximum in exchange for preserving a certain percentage of the developed units at price points that are proportionate to the financial capacity of working families.



Land Use Priority Items



Update the Land Use Plan to more specifically reflect the arrangement of uses proposed in this plan.



Allow flexibility in development phasing provided it follows the Small Area Plan. Though a mixture of uses in future development is desired, the phasing of development should allow for single uses to develop in response to current market demands, so long as future phases introduce other uses that complement first-phase development and create the mixture intended.

Adopt Conditional Zoning

Implement an Overlay for the Blue Ridge Road area with increased development standards and non-residential design guidelines to achieve desired outcomes, enhanced development patterns.

Adopt design standards to ensure a greater quality, atypical development product

10 Other Relevant Projects

The following on-going planning and policy development projects are consistent with action items identified in the Blue Ridge Road Area Plan:



Development Master Planning was recently conducted for the Black Mountain Commerce Park. The Black Mountain Commerce Park is an over 100-acre economic development site located along Blue Ridge Road in two tracts north and south of Interstate 40. Planned uses focus on medical research, light manufacturing and distribution facilities, corporate and government offices, multimodal transportation, a hotel and conference center, restaurants, and other commercial-service components within a campus like business park or corporate center. The final Master Plan reduces the risks associated with development by establishing detailed information about the sites, including price and availability, utilities, access, environmental concerns, and potential development costs.



The Black Mountain Commerce Park Access Road (U-6053/ SR 2870) is being constructed in order to accommodate the planned Avadim Technologies corporate headquarters and new manufacturing facility near Black Mountain. This access road is located immediately south of the pending new interchange on Interstate 40 on the west side Blue Ridge Road. The roadway improvements include a widening and overlay of the existing road entering the Commerce Park and new one-quarter mile extension into the Commerce Park site. The project was funded by an Appalachian Regional Commission and NCDOT improvement grant through a regional funding award in response to a projected \$25 million investment and 550 new jobs.



A Parks Declaration of Development Standards, Covenants and Restrictions document has been completed, which was approved, executed, and recorded by the Commerce Park Planning Committee. The document establishes protective development and construction specifications, restricted and prohibited uses, and general aesthetic and landscaping standards within the Commerce Park.



Top: Commerce Park Northside Rendering
Bottom: Commerce Park Southside Rendering