Prioritization Subcommittee

Meeting Agenda

March 1, 2023

9:30 AM

Meeting to be held at Land of Sky Regional Council or via Zoom: https://zoom.us/j/91373453789

Voting Members on the Committee: Jessica Morris (City of Asheville, Vice-Chair), William High (Buncombe County), Autumn Radcliff (Henderson County), Anthony Sutton (Town of Waynesville), Elizabeth Teague (Town of Waynesville, Chair), Jerry Vehaun (Town of Woodfin), Archie Pertiller (Town of Black Mountain)

1.	**Welcome and Introductions**	Elizabeth Teague
2.	**Public Comment**	Elizabeth Teague
3.	**Approval of February, 2023 Meeting Minutes**	Elizabeth Teague
4.	**Business**	
A.	Prioritization Survey Results	Logan DiGiacomo, MPO Staff
B.	Draft 2024-2033 TIP Project Swaps	Tristan Winkler, MPO Staff
C.	Passenger Rail- Corridor ID Program	Tristan Winkler, MPO Staff
5.	**News, Events, Updates**	Elizabeth Teague
6.	**Public Comment**	Elizabeth Teague
7.	**Adjournment**	Elizabeth Teague

Item 4A

Prioritization Survey Results

MPO staff developed an online survey for prioritization considerations, in coordination with NCDOT and the Citizens Advisory Committee. The full report is below.

2023

2024-2033 Draft TIP Survey Data

FRENCH BROAD RIVER MPO

February 2023

SURVEY BACKGROUND

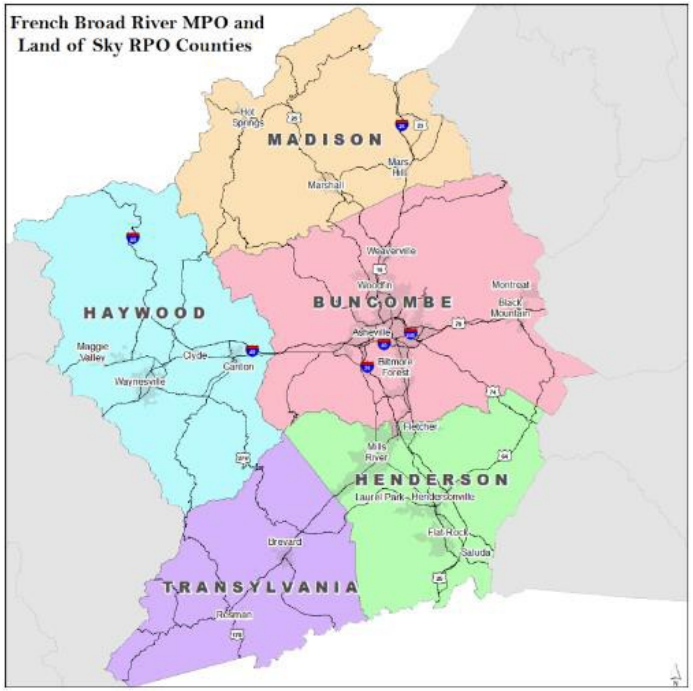
The State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) identifies transportation projects that will receive funding within a 10-year window. NCDOT's Draft 2024-2033 STIP was released on August 4th, 2022.

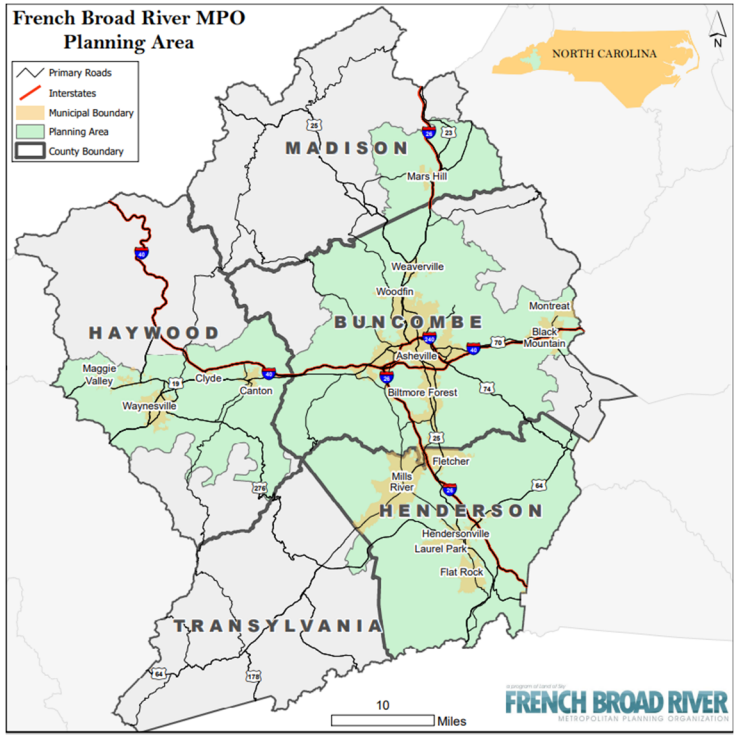
The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a subsection of the STIP. It covers the transportation projects that fall under the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization's (FBRMPO) planning area in Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania Counties.

Unlike the release of previous draft TIPs, there are no new projects to be discussed but, instead, several projects have been proposed to be **"Subject to Reprioritization"** in order to right-size NCDOT's budget. This means that a significant number of projects will be **removed from the 10-year TIP** and will be required to be re-prioritized in future years with new projects. At this time, no projects in Madison or Transylvania Counties subject to reprioritization.

The French Broad River MPO opened a public survey to help gauge public opinion on which projects are a priority and which ones aren't. The survey, developed using Survey Monkey, was broken into 12 sections: an introductory section, 10 sections focused on projects in the region divided by county, and a concluding section. Each project section gave users the option to choose if a project was a priority to them or not, as well as leave a comment to further explain their response, if desired.

The survey received 356 responses across the region. The results in this packet are preliminary and may be updated for the MPO TCC and Board at a later date, but the results still aim to be indicative of the public's perceived need for the projects being considered.

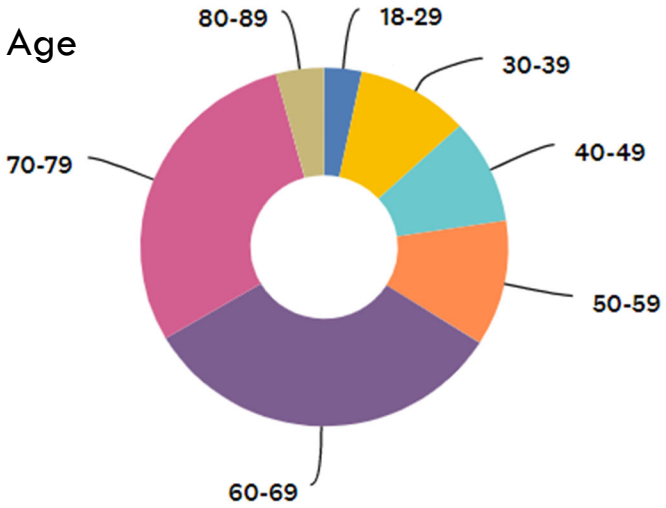


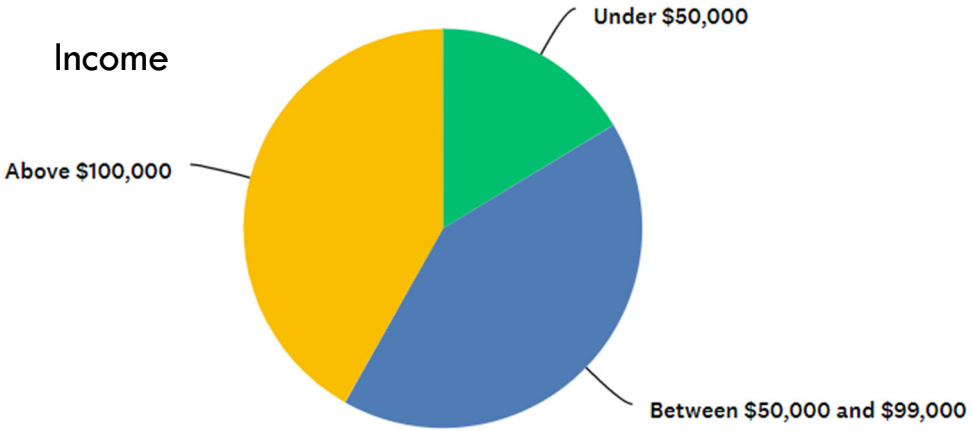


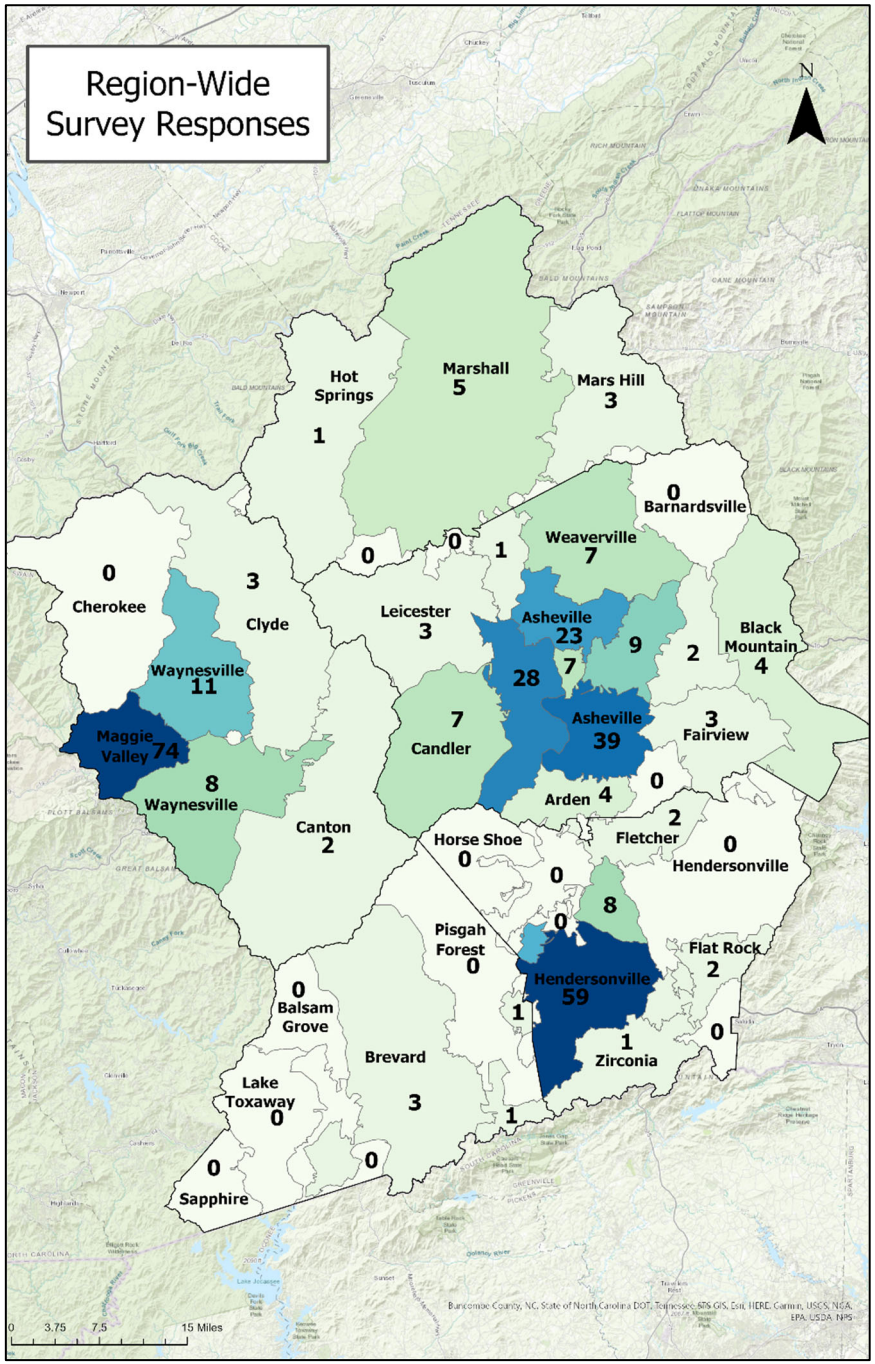
Survey Responses

356 Total Responses:

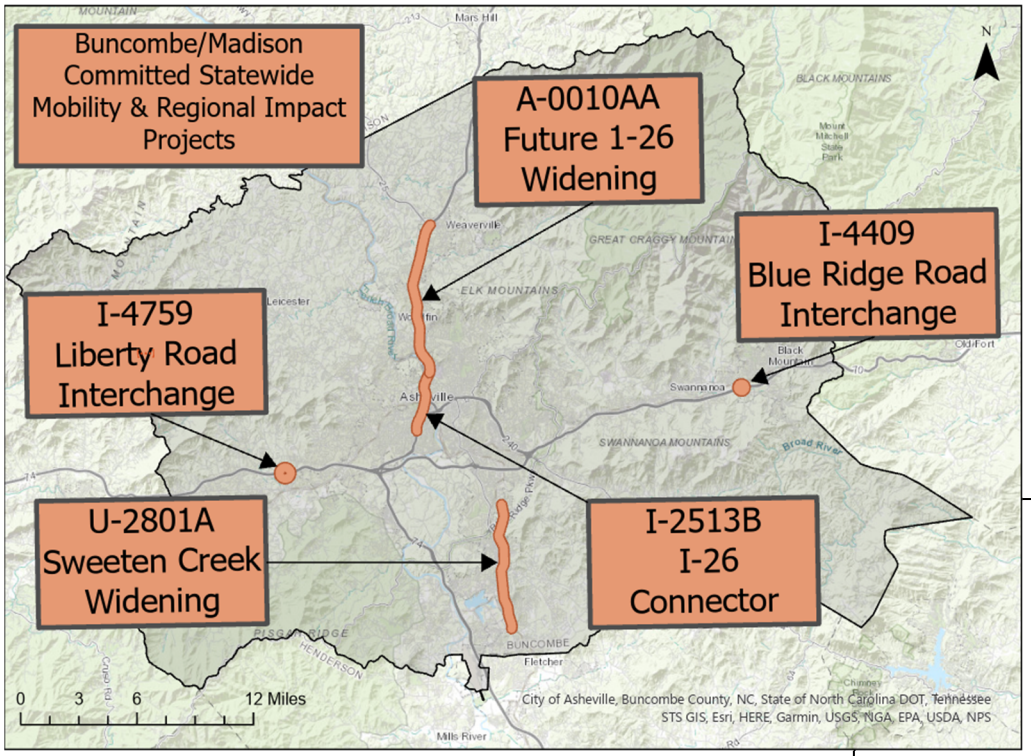
- 137 Buncombe County
- 98 Haywood County
- 90 Henderson County
- 9 Madison County
- 5 Transylvania County
- 17 Other







Buncombe County

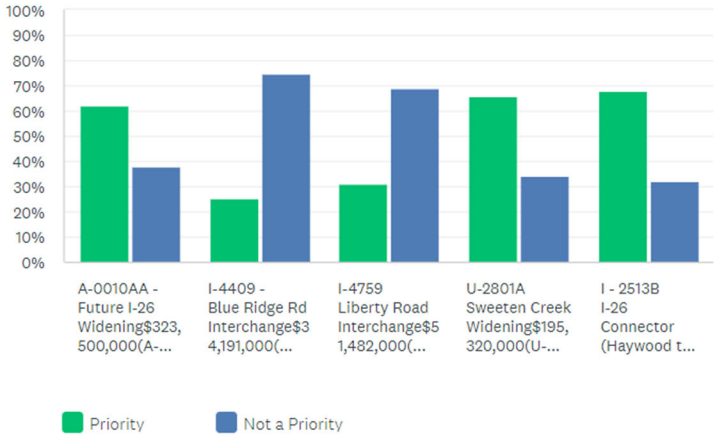


Priority:

- A-0010AA – Future I-26 Widening **(61.9% Support)**
- U 2801A – Sweeten Creek Widening **(65.65% Support)**
- I-2513B – I-26 Connector Project **(67.72% Support)**

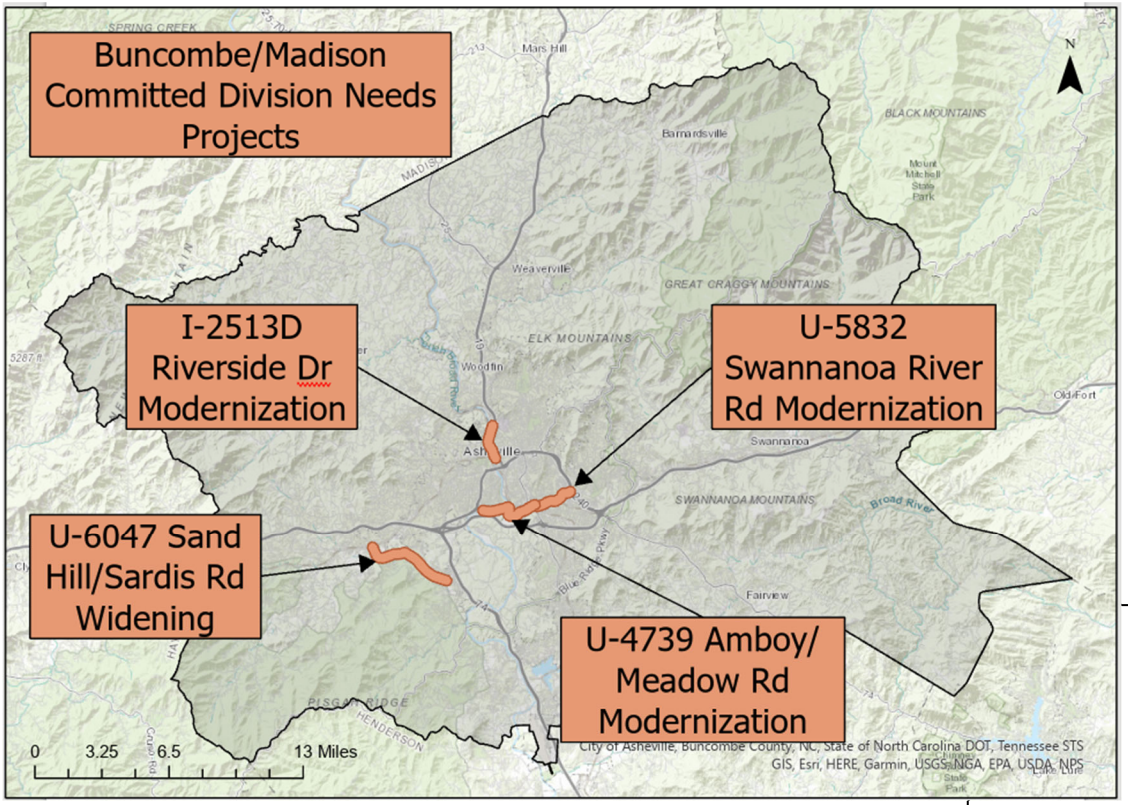
Not a Priority:

- I-4409 – Blue Ridge Rd Interchange **(74.56% Oppose)**
- I-4759 Liberty Road Interchange **(68.75% Oppose)**



	PRIORITY	NOT A PRIORITY	TOTAL
A-0010AA - Future I-26 Widening$323,500,000(A-0010AA)**Please note that many of the improvements that were originally in the project U-5973 have been incorporated into this project	61.90% 78	38.10% 48	126
I-4409 - Blue Ridge Rd Interchange$34,191,000(I-4409)	25.44% 29	74.56% 85	114
I-4759 Liberty Road Interchange$51,482,000(I-4759)	31.25% 35	68.75% 77	112
U-2801A Sweeten Creek Widening$195,320,000(U-2801A)	65.65% 86	34.35% 45	131
I - 2513B I-26 Connector (Haywood to Broadway)$884,301,000(I-2513B)	67.72% 86	32.28% 41	127

Buncombe County

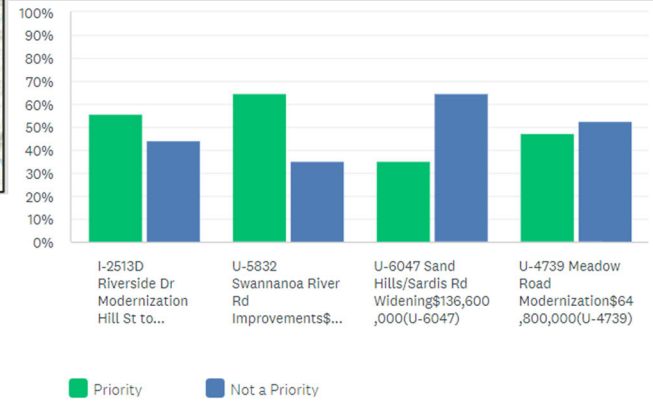


Priority:

- I-2513D – Riverside Dr Modernization **(55.75% Support)**
- U-5832 - Swannanoa River Rd Modernization **(64.66% Support)**

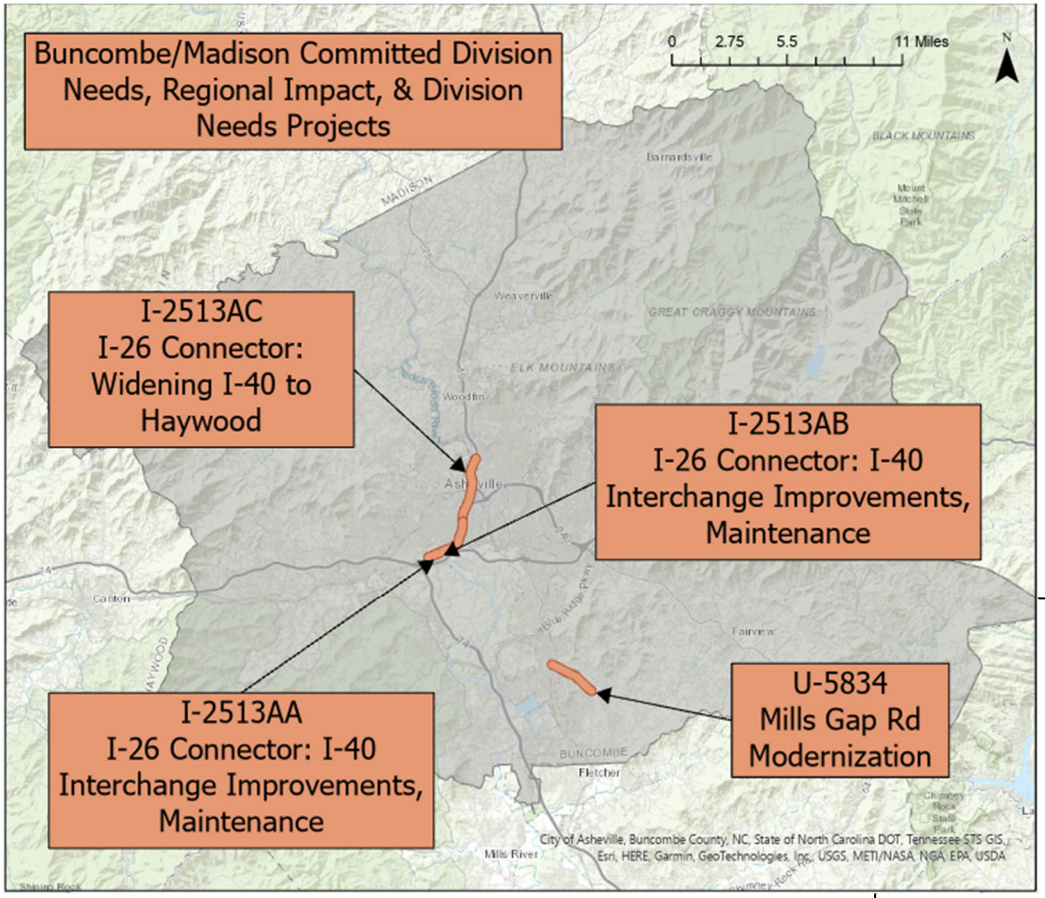
Not a Priority:

- U-6047 – Sand Hill/Sardis Rd Widening **(64.60% Oppose)**
- U-4739 Amboy/Meadow Rd Modernization **(52.73% Oppose)**



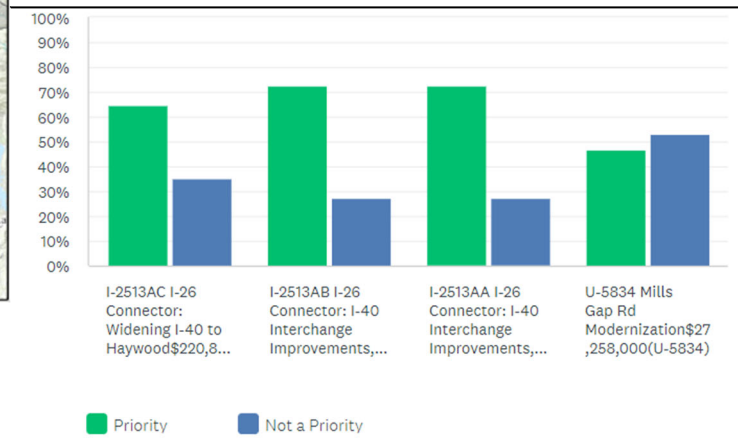
	PRIORITY	NOT A PRIORITY	TOTAL
I-2513D Riverside Dr Modernization Hill St to Broadway$42,100,000(I-2513D)	55.75% 63	44.25% 50	113
U-5832 Swannanoa River Rd Improvements$48,001,000(U-5832)	64.66% 75	35.34% 41	116
U-6047 Sand Hills/Sardis Rd Widening$136,600,000(U-6047)	35.40% 40	64.60% 73	113
U-4739 Meadow Road Modernization$64,800,000(U-4739)	47.27% 52	52.73% 58	110

Buncombe County



Priority:

- I-2513AC – I-26 Connector: Widening I-40 to Haywood (**64.96% Support)**
- I-2513AB – I-26 Connector: I-40 Interchange Improvements (**72.41% Support)**
- I2513AA – I-26 Connector: I-40 Interchange Improvements (**72.50% Support)**

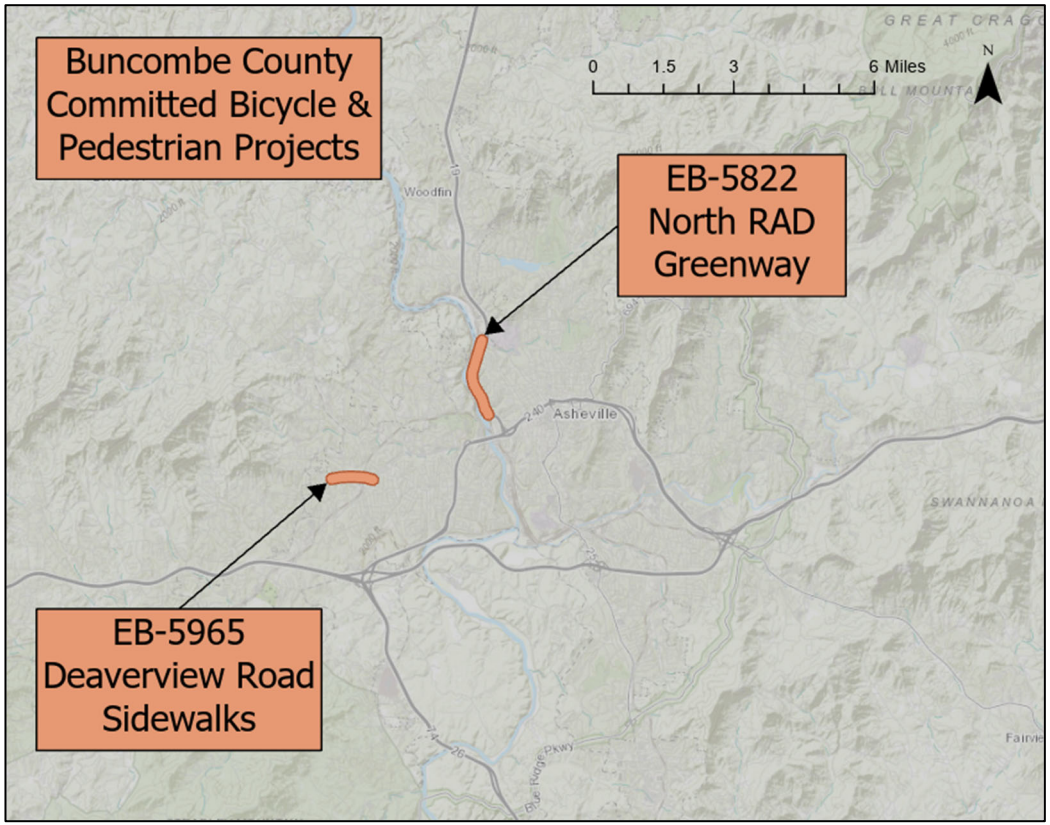


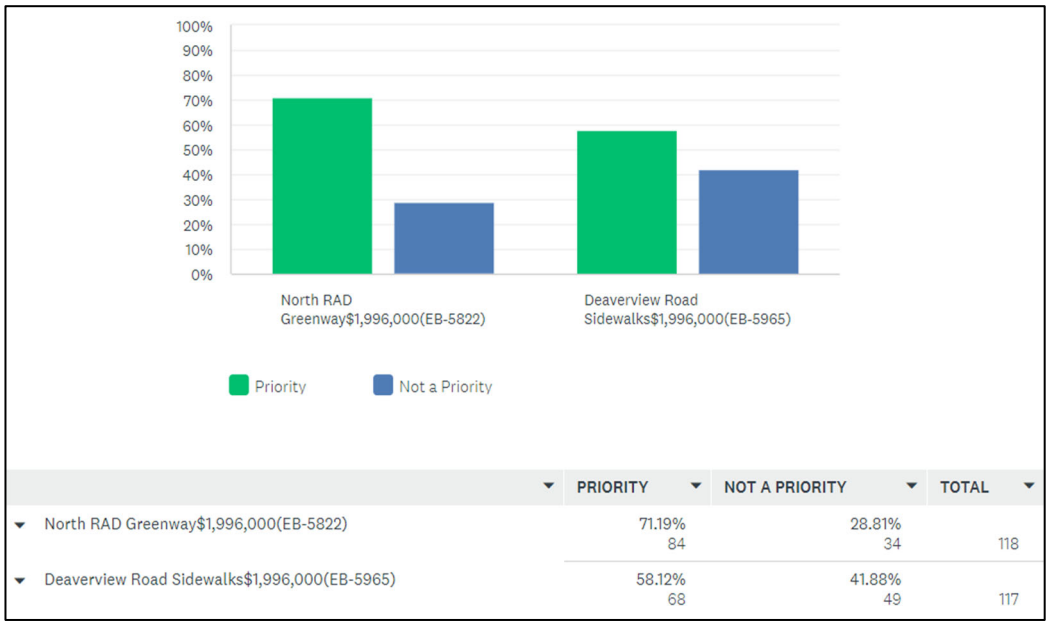
Not a Priority:

- U-5834 – Mills Gap Rd Modernization (**52.99% Oppose)**

	PRIORITY	NOT A PRIORITY	TOTAL
I-2513AC I-26 Connector: Widening I-40 to Haywood$220,820,000(I-2513AC)	64.96% 76	35.04% 41	117
I-2513AB I-26 Connector: I-40 Interchange Improvements, Maintenance $23,600,000(I-2513AB)	72.41% 84	27.59% 32	116
I-2513AA I-26 Connector: I-40 Interchange Improvements, Maintenance $31,700,000(I-2513AA)	72.50% 87	27.50% 33	120
U-5834 Mills Gap Rd Modernization$27,258,000(U-5834)	47.01% 55	52.99% 62	117

Buncombe County



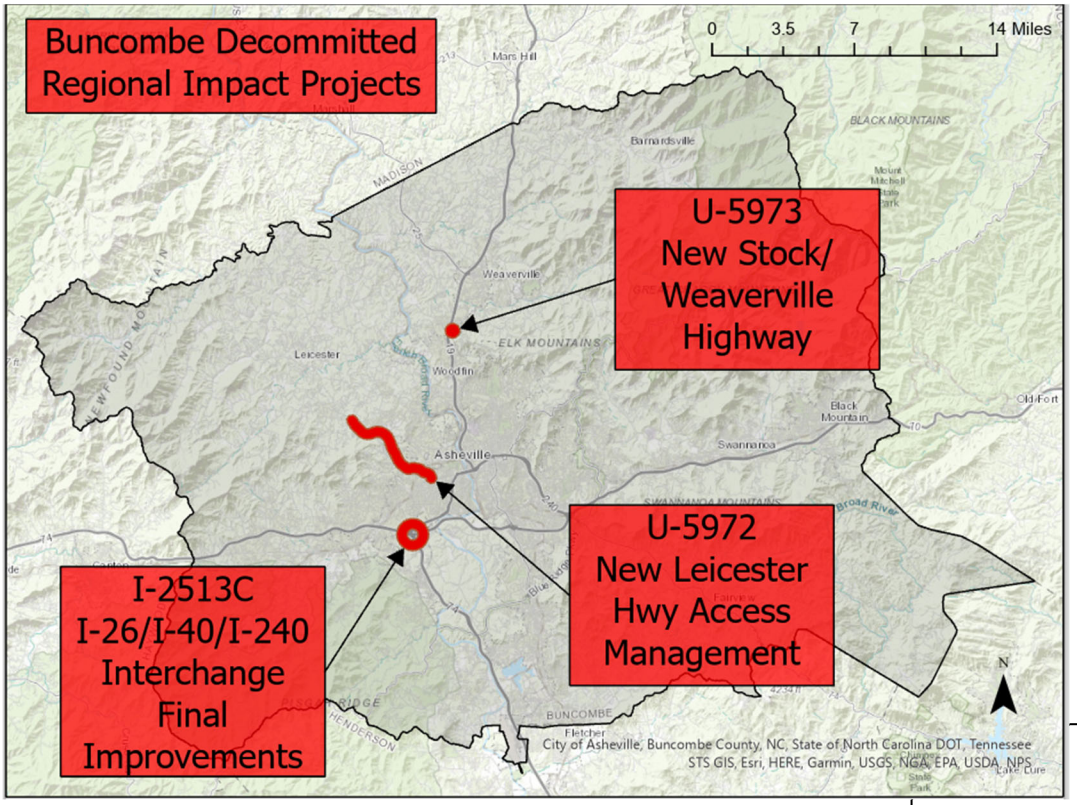


	PRIORITY	NOT A PRIORITY	TOTAL
North RAD Greenway$1,996,000(EB-5822)	71.19% 84	28.81% 34	118
Deaverview Road Sidewalks$1,996,000(EB-5965)	58.12% 68	41.88% 49	117

Priority:

- EB-5822 – North RAD Greenway **(71.19% Support)**
- EB-5965 – Deaverview Rd Sidewalks **(58.12% Support)**

Buncombe County

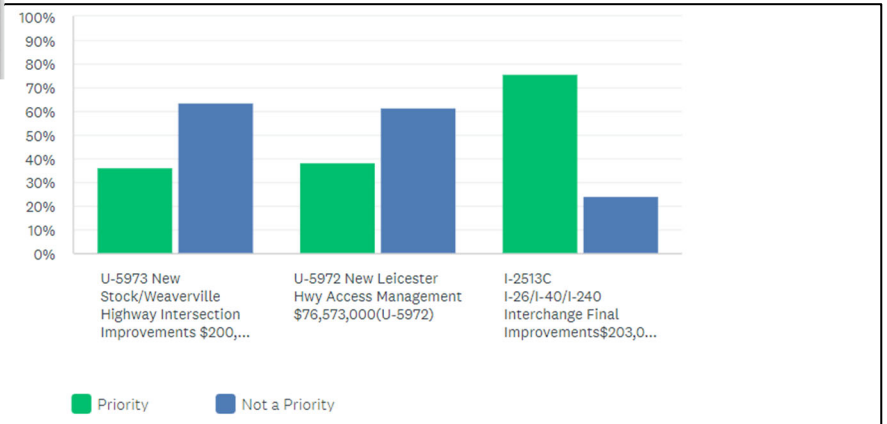


Priority:

- I-2513C – I-26/I-40/I-240 Interchange Final Improvements **(75.65% Support)**

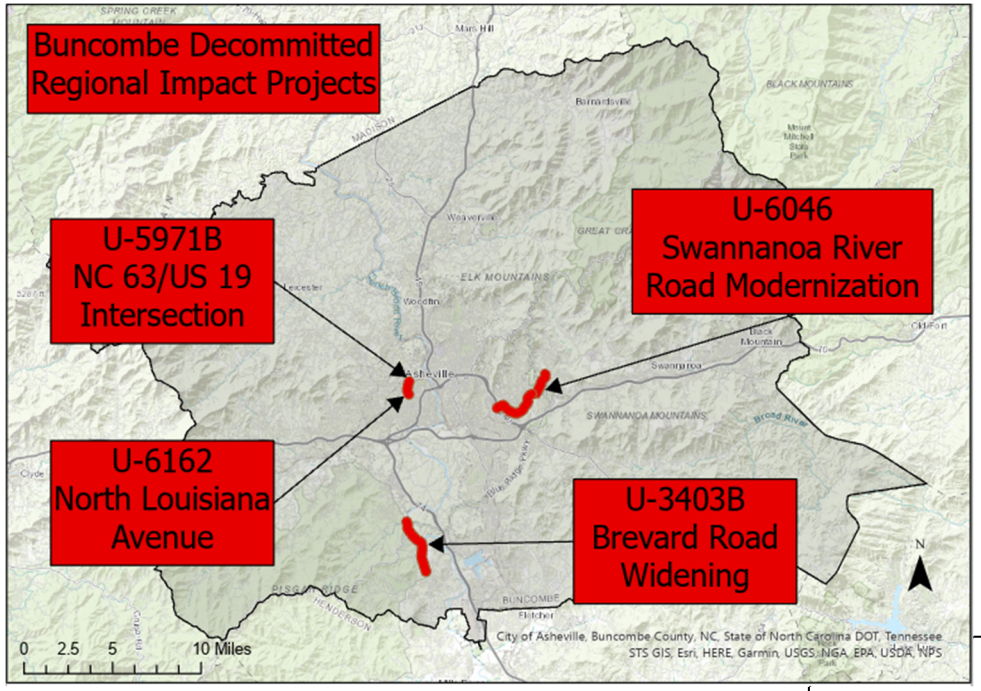
Not a Priority:

- U-5972 - New Leicester Hwy Access Management **(61.76% Oppose)**
- U-5973 – New Stock/Weaverville Highway Intersection Improvements **(63.46% Oppose)**



	PRIORITY	NOT A PRIORITY	TOTAL
U-5973 New Stock/Weaverville Highway Intersection Improvements $200,000 (U-5973) **Please note that many of the improvements that were originally in this project have been incorporated into project A-0010AA	36.54% 38	63.46% 66	104
U-5972 New Leicester Hwy Access Management $76,573,000(U-5972)	38.24% 39	61.76% 63	102
I-2513C I-26/I-40/I-240 Interchange Final Improvements$203,000,000(I-2513C)	75.65% 87	24.35% 28	115

Buncombe County

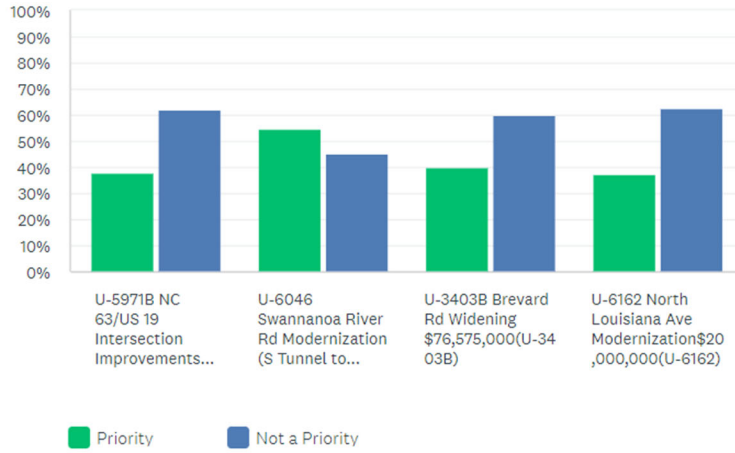


Priority:

- U-6046 Swannanoa River Rd Modernization **(54.81% Support)**

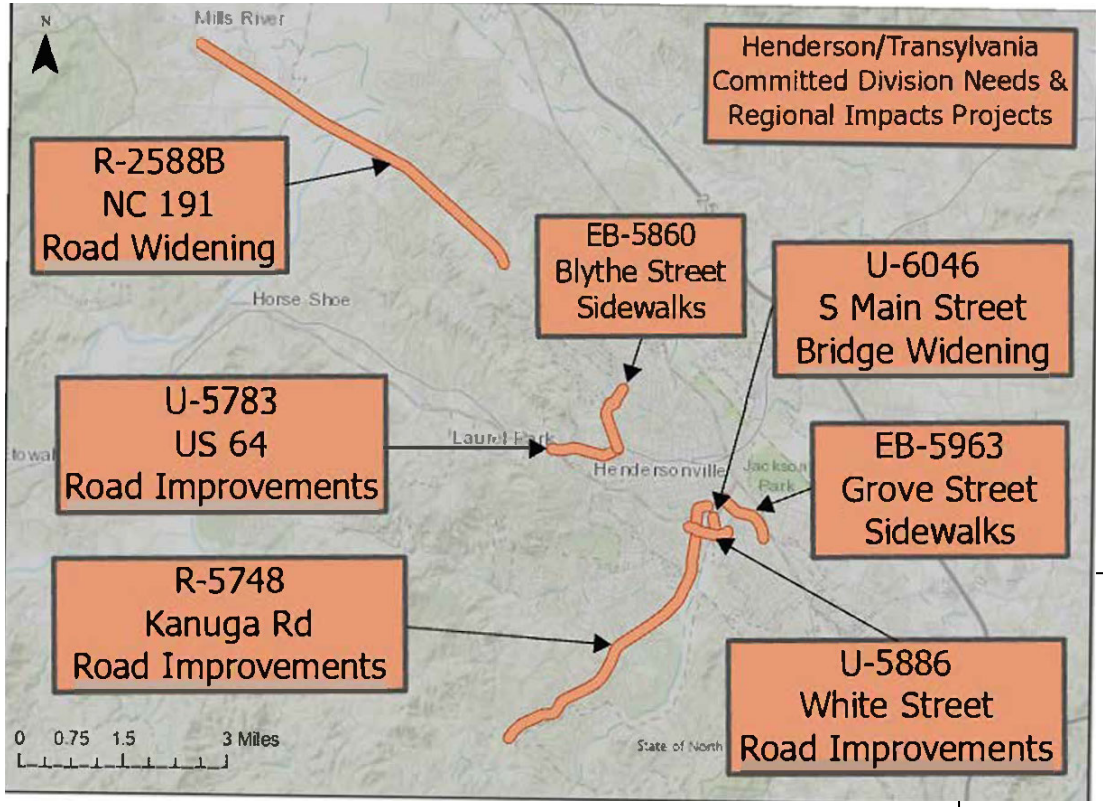
Not a Priority:

- U-5971B – NC 63/US 19 Intersection Improvements **(61.86% Oppose)**
- U-3043B - Brevard Rd Widening **(59.81% Oppose)**
- U-6162 – North Louisiana Ave Modernization **(62.63% Oppose)**



	PRIORITY	NOT A PRIORITY	TOTAL
U-5971B NC 63/US 19 Intersection Improvements $2,700,000(U-5971B)	38.14% 37	61.86% 60	97
U-6046 Swannanoa River Rd Modernization (S Tunnel to Tunnel)43,100,000(U-6046)	54.81% 57	45.19% 47	104
U-3403B Brevard Rd Widening $76,575,000(U-3403B)	40.19% 43	59.81% 64	107
U-6162 North Louisiana Ave Modernization$20,000,000(U-6162)	37.37% 37	62.63% 62	99

Henderson County

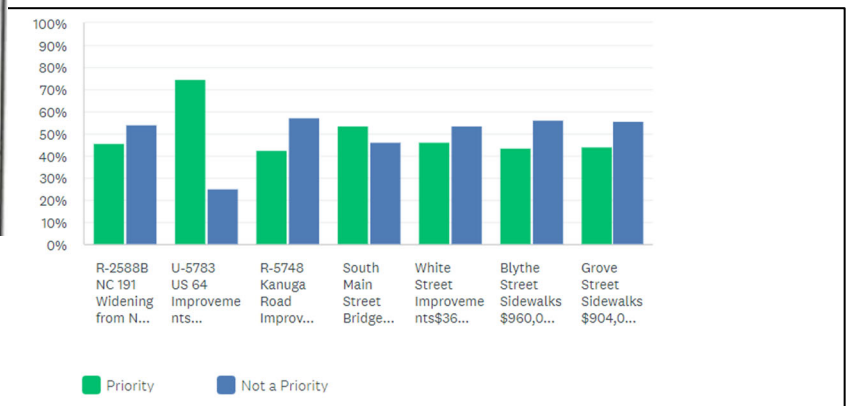


Priority:

- U-5973 - US 64 Improvements **(74.70% Support)**
- U-6046 - S Main St Bridge Widening **(53.49% Support)**

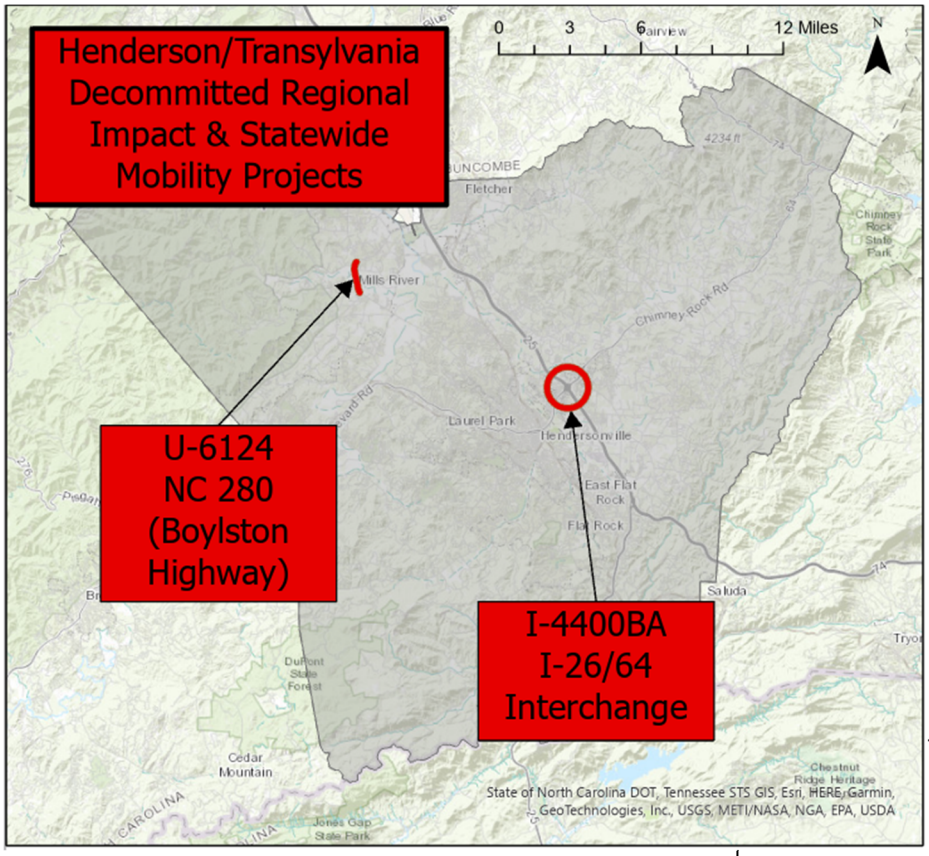
Not a Priority

- R-2588B - NC 191 Widening **(54.22% Oppose)**
- R-5748 - Kanuga Rd Improvements **(57.5% Oppose)**
- U-5886 - White St Improvements **(53.75% Oppose)**
- EB_5860 - Blythe St Sidewalks **(56.52% Oppose)**
- EB-5963 - Grove St Sidewalks **(55.84% Oppose)**

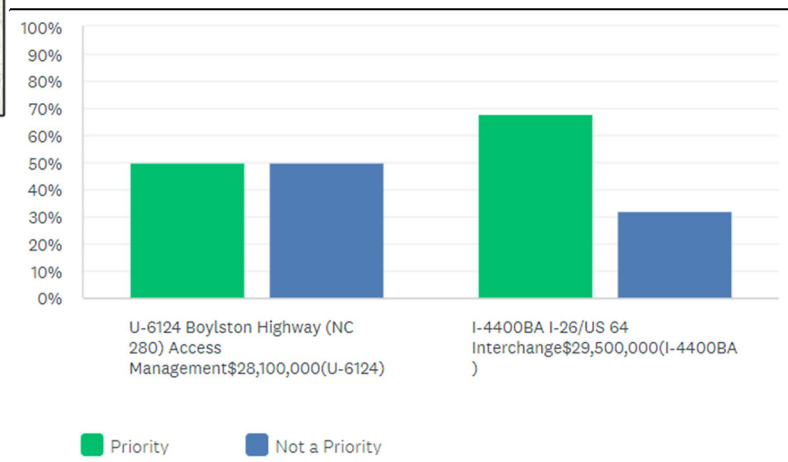


	PRIORITY	NOT A PRIORITY	TOTAL
R-2588B NC 191 Widening from NC 280 to Mountain Road$80,500,000(R-2588B)	45.78% 38	54.22% 45	83
U-5783 US 64 Improvements Laurel Park$41,500,000(U-5783)	74.70% 62	25.30% 21	83
R-5748 Kanuga Road Improvements$52,200,000(R-5748)	42.50% 34	57.50% 46	80
South Main Street Bridge Widening Hendersonville$7,800,000(U-6049)	53.49% 46	46.51% 40	86
White Street Improvements$36,500,000(U-5886)	46.25% 37	53.75% 43	80
Blythe Street Sidewalks$960,000(EB-5860)	43.75% 35	56.25% 45	80
Grove Street Sidewalks$904,000(EB-5963)	44.16% 34	55.84% 43	77

Henderson County

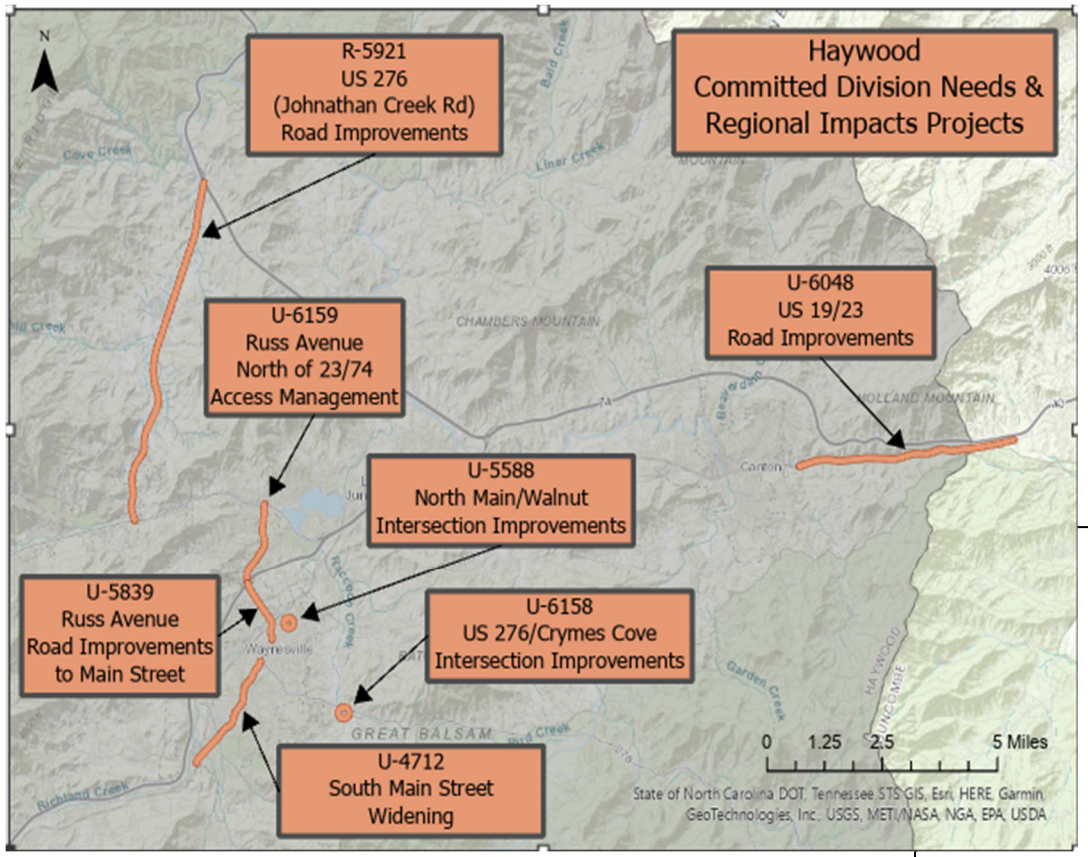


- Priority:
  - I-4400BA - I-26/64 Interchange **(67.95% Support)**
- Tied:
  - U-6124 - NC 280 Access Management

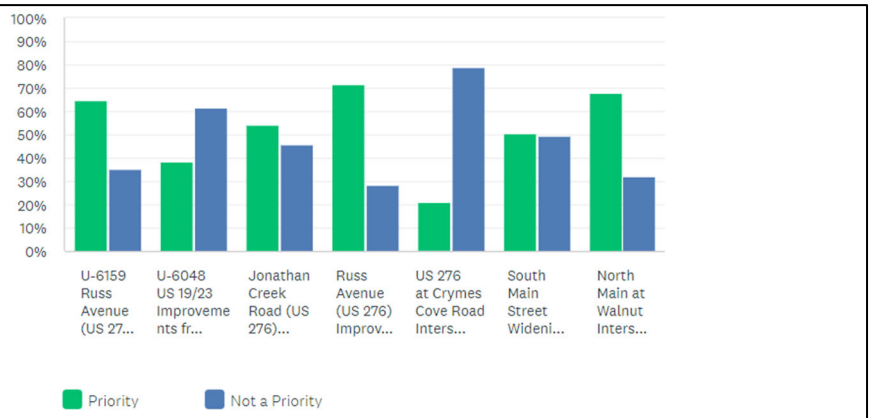


	PRIORITY	NOT A PRIORITY	TOTAL
U-6124 Boylston Highway (NC 280) Access Management$28,100,000(U-6124)	50.00% 35	50.00% 35	70
I-4400BA I-26/US 64 Interchange$29,500,000(I-4400BA)	67.95% 53	32.05% 25	78

Haywood County



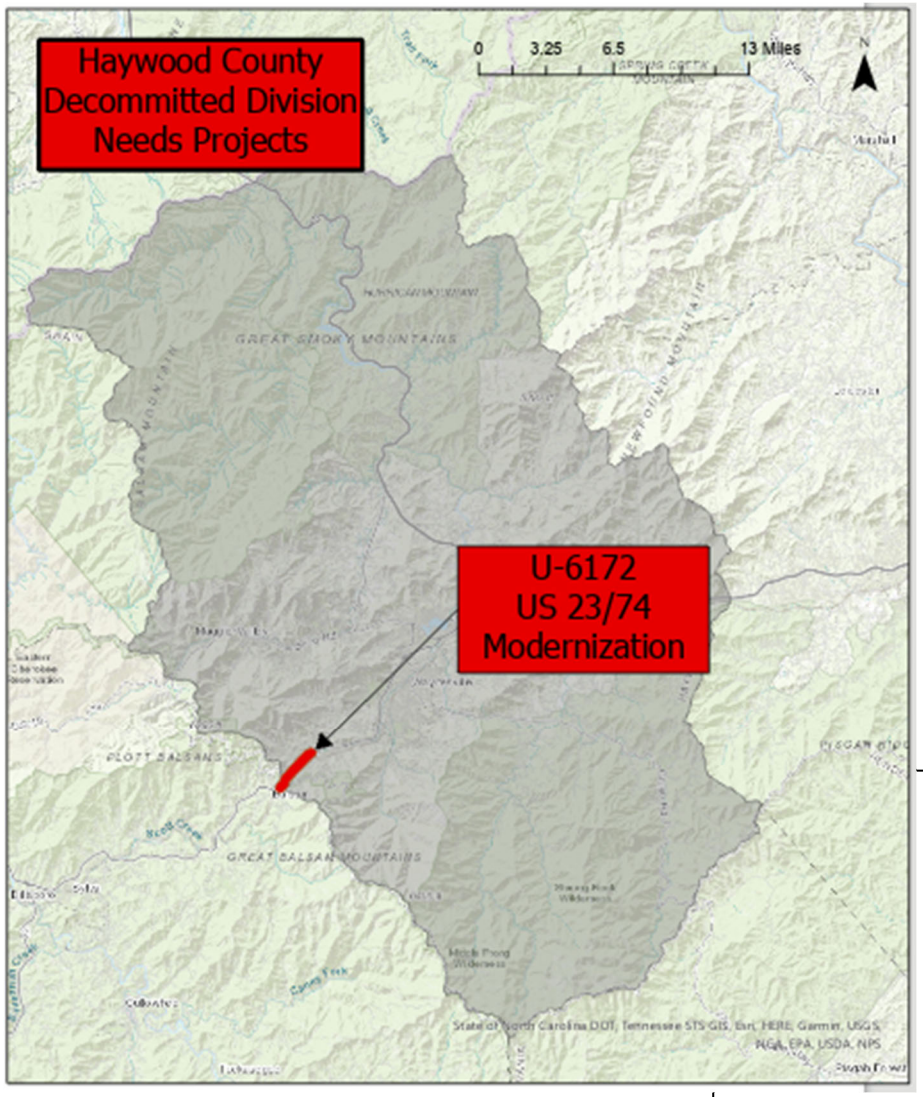
- Priority:
  - U-6159 - Russ Ave Access Management **(64.86% Support)**
  - R-5921 - US 276 Improvements **(54.17% Support)**
  - U-5839 - Russ Ave Improvements **(71.62% Support)**
  - U-4712 - S Main St Widening **(50.77% Support)**
  - U-5588 - N Main St/Walnut Intersection Improvements **(67.65% Support)**



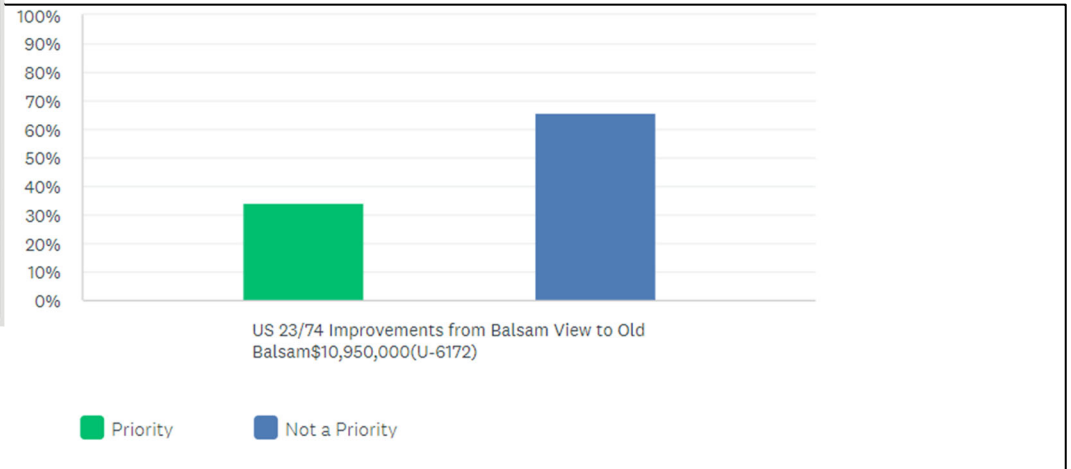
- Not a Priority:
  - U-6048 - US 19/23 Improvements **(61.54% Oppose)**
  - U-6158 - US 276/Crymes Cove Intersection Improvements **(79.03% Oppose)**

	PRIORITY	NOT A PRIORITY	TOTAL
U-6159 Russ Avenue (US 276) Access Management from US 23/74 to Dellwood Road (US 19)$30,201,000(U-6159)	64.86% 48	35.14% 26	74
U-6048 US 19/23 Improvements from Chestnut Mountain to Wiggins Road$29,200,000(U-6048)	38.46% 25	61.54% 40	65
Jonathan Creek Road (US 276) Improvements$36,400,000(R-5921)	54.17% 39	45.83% 33	72
Russ Avenue (US 276) Improvements Main Street to US 23/74$6,800,000(U-5839)	71.62% 53	28.38% 21	74
US 276 at Crymes Cove Road Intersection Improvements (U-6158)	20.97% 13	79.03% 49	62
South Main Street Widening from Hyatt Creek to US 276 (Pigeon St)$49,000,000(U-4712)	50.77% 33	49.23% 32	65
North Main at Walnut Intersection Improvements$6,800,000(U-5888)	67.65% 46	32.35% 22	68

Haywood County



- Not a Priority:
  - U-6172 - US 23/74 Modernization **(65.57% Oppose)**



	PRIORITY	NOT A PRIORITY	TOTAL
US 23/74 Improvements from Balsam View to Old Balsam$10,950,000(U-6172)	34.43% 21	65.57% 40	61

Buncombe County Comments (Summarized)

- 14 Comments Regarding Sweeten Creek Rd:
  - Support Widening
  - Concern About Congestion
  - Want to See Complete Streets, Especially Bicycle Infrastructure
- Desire for Public Transit
  - Commuter Focused Park & Ride
  - Better Bus Infrastructure
  - Light Rail Connectivity
- Desire for Widening of Swannanoa River Road
- Strong Desire to See Bike Lanes Included in All Projects
  - Some Desire to See Bikes Take a Back Seat to Cars
  - Some Desire to Allocate More Funding to Bike/Ped
- 5 Comments Supporting Mills Gap Rd Project
  - Some Concerns About Bike Lanes in Plans
    - Desire for Them to be Separated/Design a Multi-Use Path
- Desire to See Entire I-26 Project Committed
- Desire to See an Emphasis on Bike/Ped in New Leicester Project
- Concern About Traffic Load on Brevard Road

Henderson County Comments (Summarized)

- Emphasis on Pedestrian Connections in NC 191 Project
  - 2 Comments About Crosswalks and School Connections
- Concern Regarding Traffic Load on White St
- Concern About State of Bridges in Henderson County
- 5 Comments Concerned About Traffic Load and Speed on NC 280

Haywood County Comments (Summarized)

- Desire For All Projects to Include Bike Lanes
- Emphasis on Main St Projects to Help Spur Economic Development
- Desire for Better Traffic Flow

Item 4B:

Draft 2024-2033 TIP Project Swaps

Background

The Draft 2024-2033 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) was developed in reaction to rising construction costs for transportation projects. Instead of programming new projects through P 6.0 (the usual process), the Board of Transportation and Prioritization Workgroup stopped the P 6.0 process in 2021 and worked to develop a process to determine what projects would remain on the STIP for the 2024-2033 iteration and which projects would be removed and required to recompete in future rounds of prioritization.

The process developed for the Draft 2024-2033 STIP included the following steps:

1) Prioritize projects by which round of prioritization a project was funded in (i.e., prioritize projects that have been funded in the STIP for longer) as well as the points received until available funding is exhausted.
2) Enable projects to be swapped in and out so long as the following rules are followed:
    a. MPO/RPO and Division must agree to any swaps by March 17, 2023
    b. A project(s) being swapped in must not exceed 110% of the cost of the project(s) being swapped out
    c. Projects changing funding tier must follow the typical prioritization rules for cascading projects:

		PROJECT OUT		
		Statewide Mobility	**Regional Impact**	**Division Needs**
PROJECT IN	**Statewide Mobility**	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible
	Regional Impact	X	Eligible	Eligible
	Division Needs	X	X	Eligible

The initial Draft 2024-2033 STIP was released in April, 2022. Since that time, the NC General Assembly approved a bill, later signed by the Governor, that allowed for the transfer of Sales Tax revenues into the Highway Trust Fund and Highway Fund, adding additional funding and enabling more projects to be added back to the STIP. The revised Draft 2024-2033 STIP was released in August, 2022.

Project Status in the French Broad River MPO:

Statewide Mobility

Projects In		Projects Out	
TIP ID	**Project**	**Project**	**TIP ID**
I-2513B	I-26 Connector (Haywood to Broadway)	I-26 Connector (I-26/I-40/I-240 Interchange Final Improvements)	I-2513C
I-4759	Liberty Road (New Interchange on I-40)	I-26/US 64 Interchange	I-4400BA
I-2513AA	I-26 Connector (I-40 Improvements & Maintenance)		

Regional Impact

Projects In		Projects Out	
TIP ID	**Project**	**Project**	**TIP ID**
I-2513AB	I-26 Connector (Partial I-26/I-40/I-240 Interchange Improvements)	NC 191 (Brevard Road) Widening	U-3403B
I-2513AC	I-26 Connector (Widening from I-40 to Haywood)	NC 63 (New Leicester Highway) Access Management	U-5972
U-5783	US 64 Improvements (Laurel Park)	NC 63 (New Leicester Highway) and US 19 (Patton Avenue) Intersection Improvements	U-5971B
U-6049	South Main Street Bridge Widening (Hendersonville)	NC 280 (Boylston Highway) Access Management	U-6124
U-2801A	US 25A (Sweeten Creek Road) Widening	US 25 (Weaverville Highway) and New Stock Road Intersection Improvements	U-5973
A-0010AA	Future I-26 Widening		

Division Needs (Division 13)

Projects In		Projects Out	
TIP ID	**Project**	**Project**	**TIP ID**
I-4409	I-40/Blue Ridge Road New Interchange	N Louisiana Avenue Improvements (Patton to Emma)	U-6162
I-2513D	NC 251 (Riverside Drive) Improvements (Hill Street to Broadway)	Riceville Road Improvements	U-5837
U-5834	Mills Gap Road Widening	NC 81 (Swannanoa River Road) Improvements (S Tunnel to Tunnel)	U-6046
U-6163	Mills Gap Road @ Cane Creek Road Intersection Improvements		
U-4739	Amboy/Meadow Road Improvements		
U-6047	Sand Hill/Sardis Road Widening		
EB-5919	McDowell/Choctaw Pedestrian Improvements		
EB-5822	North RAD Greenway		
EB-5965	Deaverview Road Sidewalks		
U-5832	NC 81 (Swannanoa River Road) Improvements (Biltmore to S Tunnel)		

Division Needs (Division 14)

Projects In			Projects Out	
TIP ID	**Project**		**Project**	**TIP ID**
R-2588B	NC 191 Widening (NC 280 to Mountain Road)		US 23/74 Improvements (Balsam View to Old Balsam)	U-6172
U-5839	US 276 (Russ Avenue) Improvements (Main Street to US 23/74)			
U-5888	N Main @ Walnut Intersection Improvements			
U-5886	White Street Improvements			
R-5921	US 276 (Jonathan Creek Road) Improvements			
R-5748	Kanuga Road Improvements			
EB-5860	Blythe Street Sidewalks			
EB-5963	Grove Street Sidewalks			
U-4712	South Main Street Widening (Hyatt Creek to US 276 (Pigeon St))			
U-6158	US 276 @ Crymes Cove Road Intersection Improvements			
U-6159	US 276 (Russ Avenue) Access Management (US 23/74 to US 19 (Dellwood Road))			
U-6048	US 19/23 Improvements (Chestnut Mountain to Wiggins Road)			

MPO Process Since the Release of the Draft TIP

MPO staff has convened meetings with County and Municipal groups to discuss potential project swaps. These meetings included staff of Buncombe County & Municipalities, Haywood County & Municipalities, and the Henderson Transportation Advisory Committee.

Proposed Swaps

Only one swap has been officially proposed, coming from Henderson County and approved by their Transportation Advisory Committee:

<u>Project to Swap In:</u>

TIP ID: I-4400BA

Description: Improvements to the I-26/US 64 Interchange

Current Funding Tier: Statewide Mobility

Cost: $29,500,000

Project to Swap Out:

TIP ID: R-5748

Description: Modernization of Kanuga Road from Church Street to Little River Road

Current Funding Tier: Division Needs (14)

Cost: $52,200,000

U-2801A (Sweeten Creek Road Widening)

In a recent meeting with NCDOT Division 13, Buncombe County, and Buncombe Municipalities, staff was informed that the cost of U-2801A has increased from $195 million to more than $250 million. NCDOT also informed staff that a cost increase of that magnitude would require U-2801A to potentially be (once again) defunded in the STIP.

A follow-up meeting with NCDOT, Buncombe County, and City of Asheville staff determined that the best course of action would be to develop costs for a reduced cross-section that would be for three-lanes, intersection improvements, and complete streets improvements instead of the four-lane divided typical that was previously used. The updated costs were delivered on February 28th with no significant decrease in cost between the four-lane and the three-lane.

Options Moving Forward:

1) **Take No Action**

Results: U-2801A would be decommitted in the STIP and would be required to go through future rounds of prioritization to get funded again.

2) **Segment the Project at Mills Gap Road, Keep the Northern Section (Mills Gap Road to Rock Hill Road) on the STIP**

Results: The southern section would be decommitted in the STIP and would be required to go through future rounds of prioritization to get funded again, the northern section would move forward with project development.

-Maintaining the four-lane divided cross-section would be recommended for the Northern section; a three-lane cross-section would not likely meet project Purpose & Need.

-At this time it is not guaranteed this would keep the Northern Section “committed” in the STIP

3) Segment the Project at Mills Gap Road, Keep the Southern Section (Mills Gap Road to Rock Hill Road) on the STIP

Results: The northern section would be decommitted in the STIP and would be required to go through future rounds of prioritization to get funded again, the southern section would move forward with project development.

-A three-lane or four-lane divided cross-section could be considered (it is currently being developed as a four-lane divided.) A three-lane would need to go through the merger team due to likely issues with project Purpose & Need.

-At this time it is not guaranteed this would keep the Southern Section “committed” in the STIP

4) Other

The deadline for swaps is March 17th so there is limited time to gather additional information.

Action Required: Provide a Recommendation to the TCC & Board on the proposed project swap in Henderson County and preferred path forward for U-2801A.

Item 4C:

Passenger Rail- Corridor ID Program

MPO Board Chair, Anthony Sutton, and MPO Director, Tristan Winkler, attended a meeting in Raleigh on plans and opportunities to expand passenger rail. NCDOT is planning to submit a number of corridors to the Corridor ID program, including the Asheville-to-Salisbury corridor. Letters of support have been requested to be submitted by March 1st. MPO staff will provide materials at the meeting.