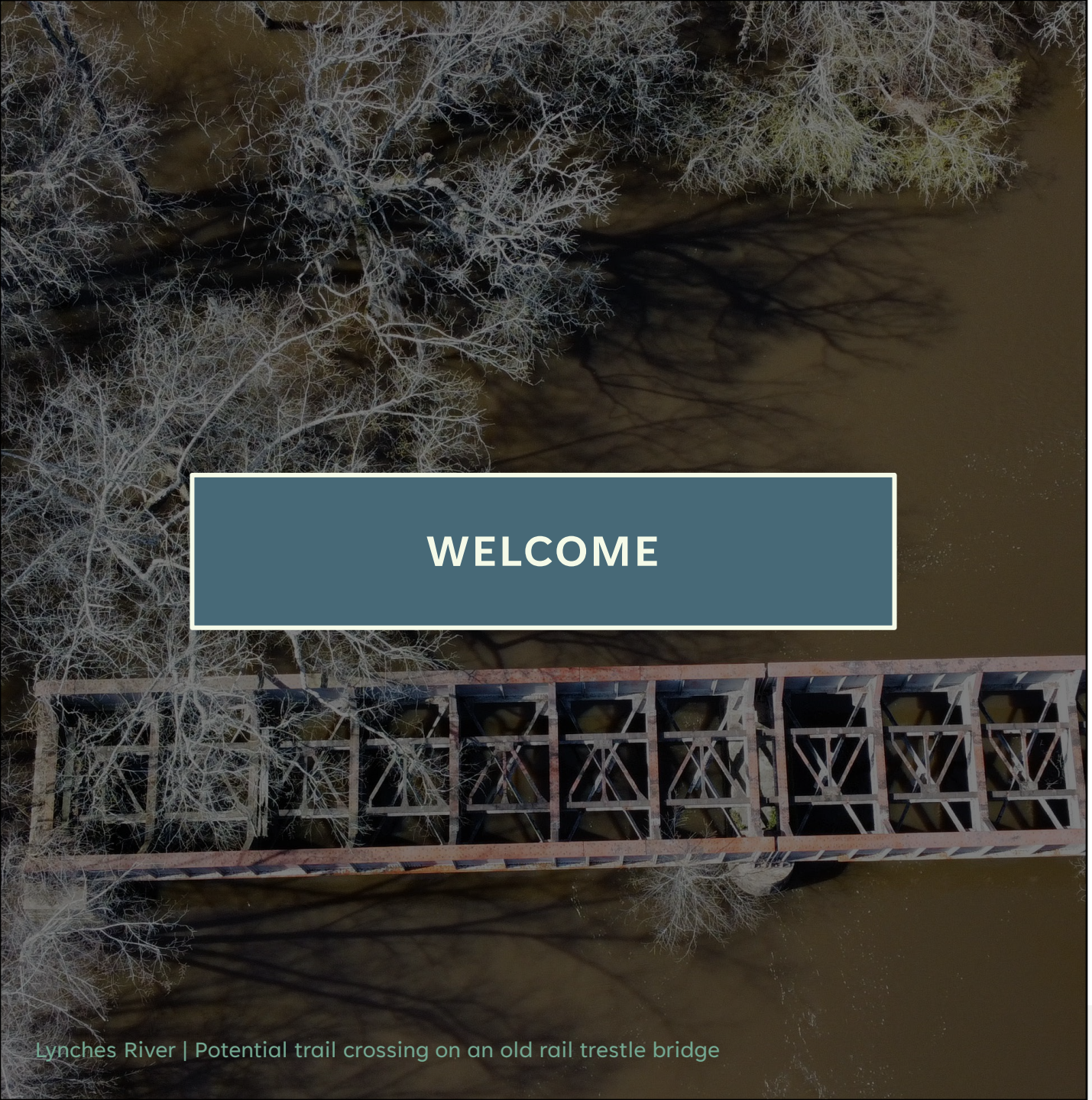
SUMTER-FLORENCE RAIL TRAIL

SWFT
SWAMP FOX TRAILS

FLORENCE COUNTY
SOUTH CAROLINA
1888

BOLTON & MENK



WELCOME

Lynches River | Potential trail crossing on an old rail trestle bridge

- Introductions
- Project Background
- Existing Conditions & Analysis
- Trail Design
- Implementation, Benefits, & Impact
- Next Steps
- Q&A

INTRODUCTIONS

Timmonsville Rail-Trail | Timmonsville, SC

INTRODUCTIONS

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PROJECT BACKGROUND

Timmonsville Rail-Trail | Timmonsville, SC

PROJECT PARTNERS

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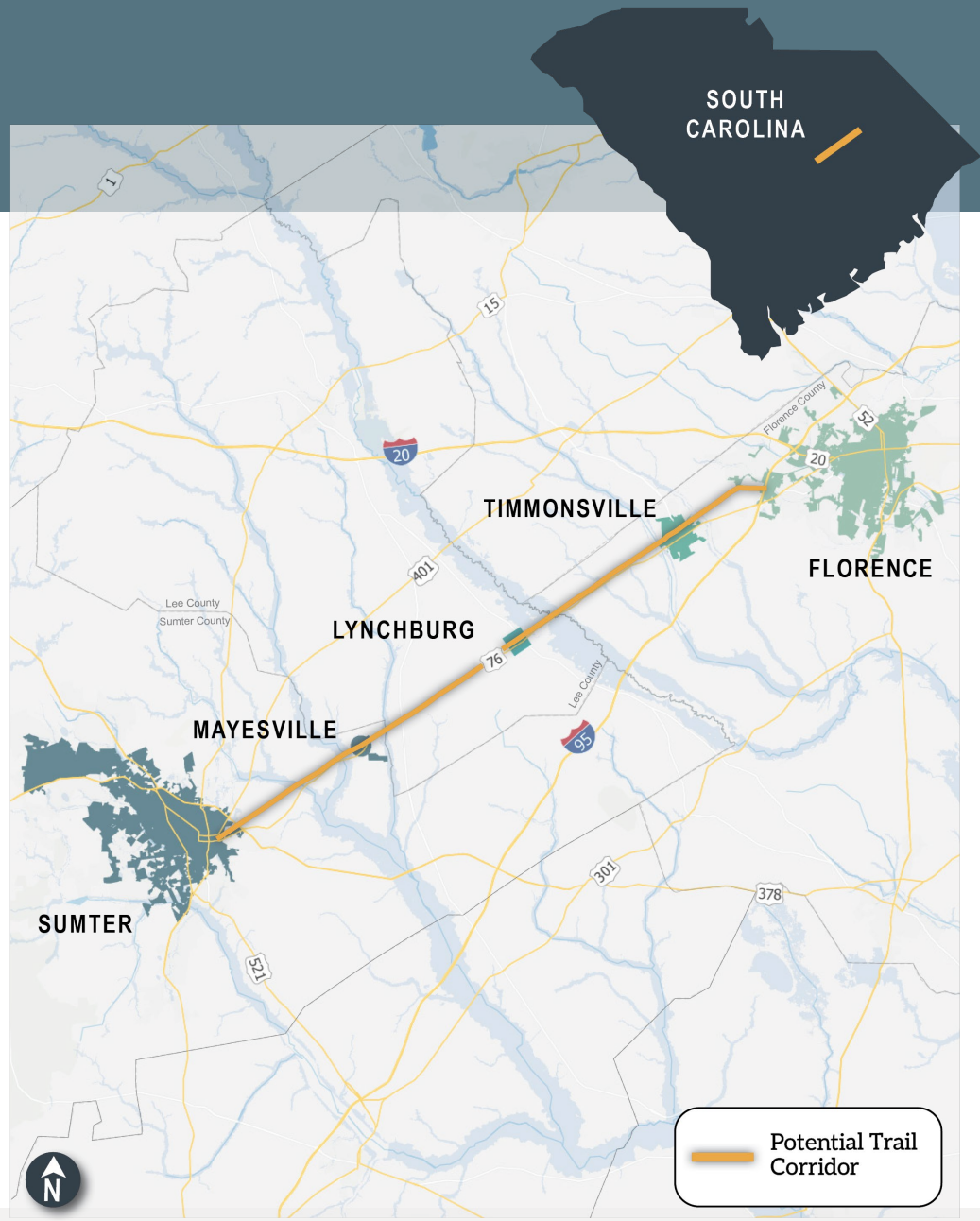
Jason Stoddard, City of Sumter

Kyle Kelly, Sumter City-County Planning Department & SUATS MPO

WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

STUDY AREA

- A **Preliminary Feasibility Report** evaluated the potential to convert a disused segment of the **former CSX railroad**—once part of the historic **Atlantic Coast Line built in the 1800s**—into a dedicated bike and pedestrian path
- This proposed **32.1-mile greenway** would follow **U.S. Route 76** from **Sumter to Florence**, connecting to the existing **2-mile Florence Rail Trail**
- It spans **Sumter, Lee, and Florence counties**, including **Sumter, Mayesville, Lynchburg, Timmonsville**, and **Florence**, and the route crosses the **Black and Lynches Rivers**
- This transformation aims to enhance **connectivity**, boost **tourism**, and stimulate **economic growth** throughout the region.



PROJECT GOALS

Inventory & Analysis

- Conduct a comprehensive inventory and assessment of the corridor, consulting stakeholders to establish a clear vision and goals for the trail project

Stakeholder Feedback

- Collaborate with stakeholders to explore trail route options and design alternatives, ensuring alignment with potential trail users' needs and preferences.

Feasibility

- Identify the preferred trail route, alternative routes, opportunities for enhancement, and constraints to implementation, providing stakeholders with an understanding of the project's preliminary feasibility.

PROJECT PLANNING PROCESS

Task 1: General Project Management & Reporting
- Strategic Kickoff Meeting
- Existing Data Review

Task 2: Data Collection & Analysis
- Base Map Development
- Reviewing Existing Plan Documents
- Site Visit

Task 3: Coordination & Meetings
- Monthly Check-In Meetings
- Draft Document Format for Review

Task 4: Preliminary Alignment & Design Phase
- Alternative Routing of Trails
- Trail Sections & Crossings

Task 5: Implementation Plan & Strategies
- Implementation Plan
- Draft Study Document
- Final Study Document

Task 6: Preliminary Opinion of Probable Cost
- Opinion of Probable Cost
- Funding Opportunities
- Case Studies

PROJECT ENGAGEMENT

- A **strategic kickoff meeting** set project goals and objectives.
- An **on-site visit** on **March 11, 2024**, with the Swamp Fox Trails team and local staff from **Sumter and Florence** documented corridor conditions using **ArcGIS Field Maps**, linking photos and notes to locations.
- **Extensive fieldwork** and **stakeholder input** informed alignment and design options.
- **Monthly check-ins** maintained coordination and addressed emerging issues throughout the process.

EXISTING CONDITIONS & ANALYSIS

Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune Nature Trail | Mayesville, SC

CORRIDOR CLASSIFICATION

- The corridor's current condition is classified into four categories to aid planning and implementation:
  - **Publicly owned and maintained** areas with existing trails or grassy area
  - **Privately owned and maintained** sections with mowed grass or private drives
  - **Unmaintained** sections with overgrowth and missing grades
  - Segments crossing **waterways** like wetlands, swamps, or rivers requiring significant improvements or new systems

The current condition of the 32.1 mile corridor has been categorized into one of four classifications, with the proportions for each category as follows:

10% PUBLICLY OWNED AND MAINTAINED

33% PRIVATELY OWNED AND MAINTAINED

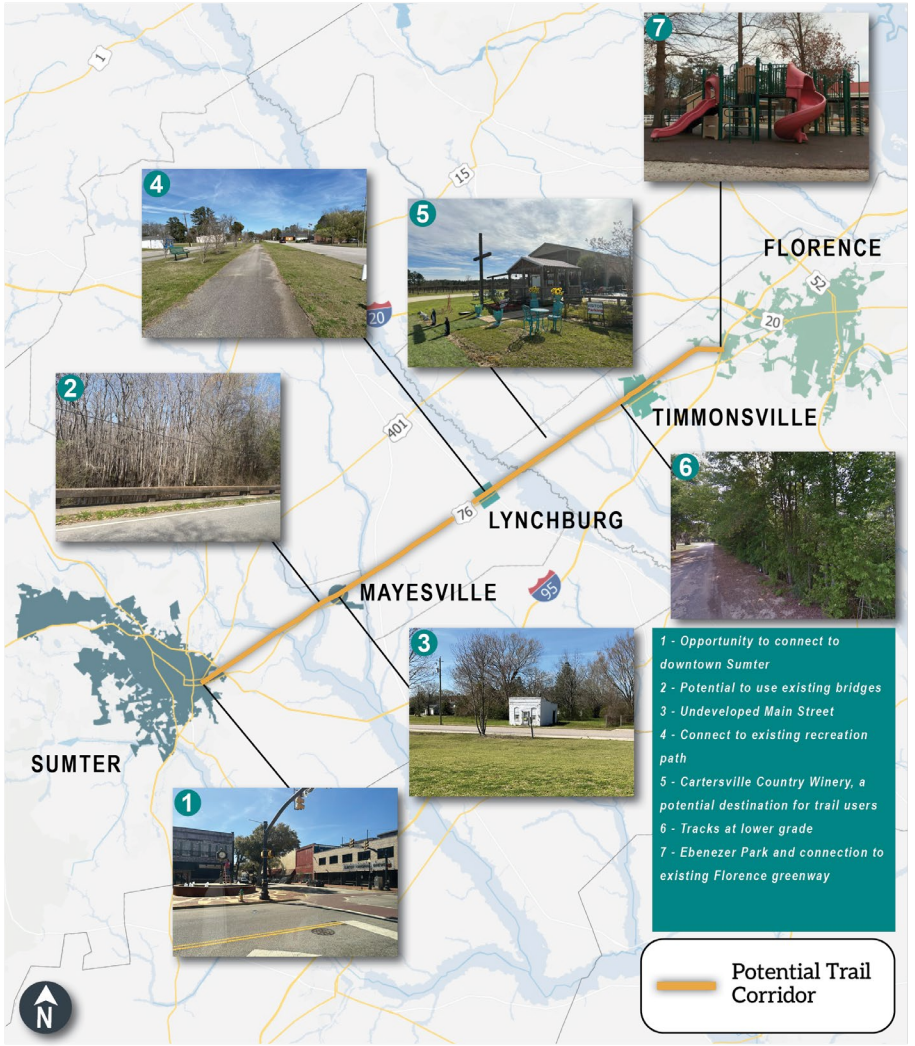
46% CORRIDOR NOT MAINTAINED

11% TRAVERSES WATERWAYS

ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

Identified key challenges and strengths through maps and site surveys:

1. Opportunity to connect to downtown Sumter
2. Potential to use existing bridges
3. Undeveloped Main Street in Mayesville
4. Connect to existing recreation path in Lynchburg
5. Cartersville Country Winery as a potential destination for trail users
6. Tracks at lower grade south of Timmonsville
7. Ebenezer Park and connection to existing Florence greenway

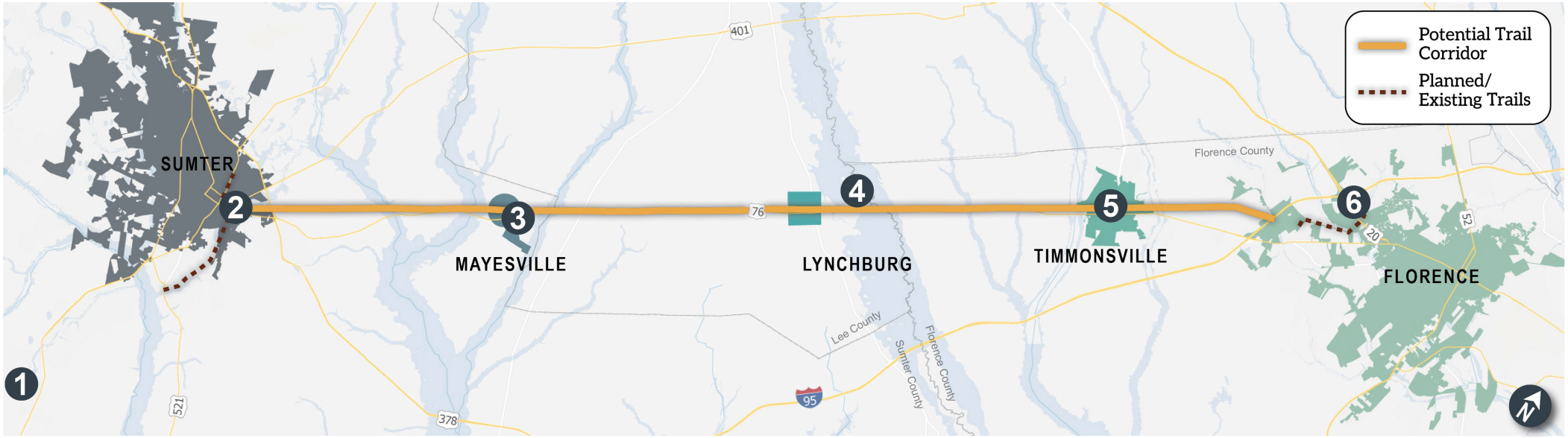


ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

The study evaluates environmental impacts, focusing on preserving natural habitats, ensuring minimal disruption to local ecosystems, and enhancing existing green spaces.

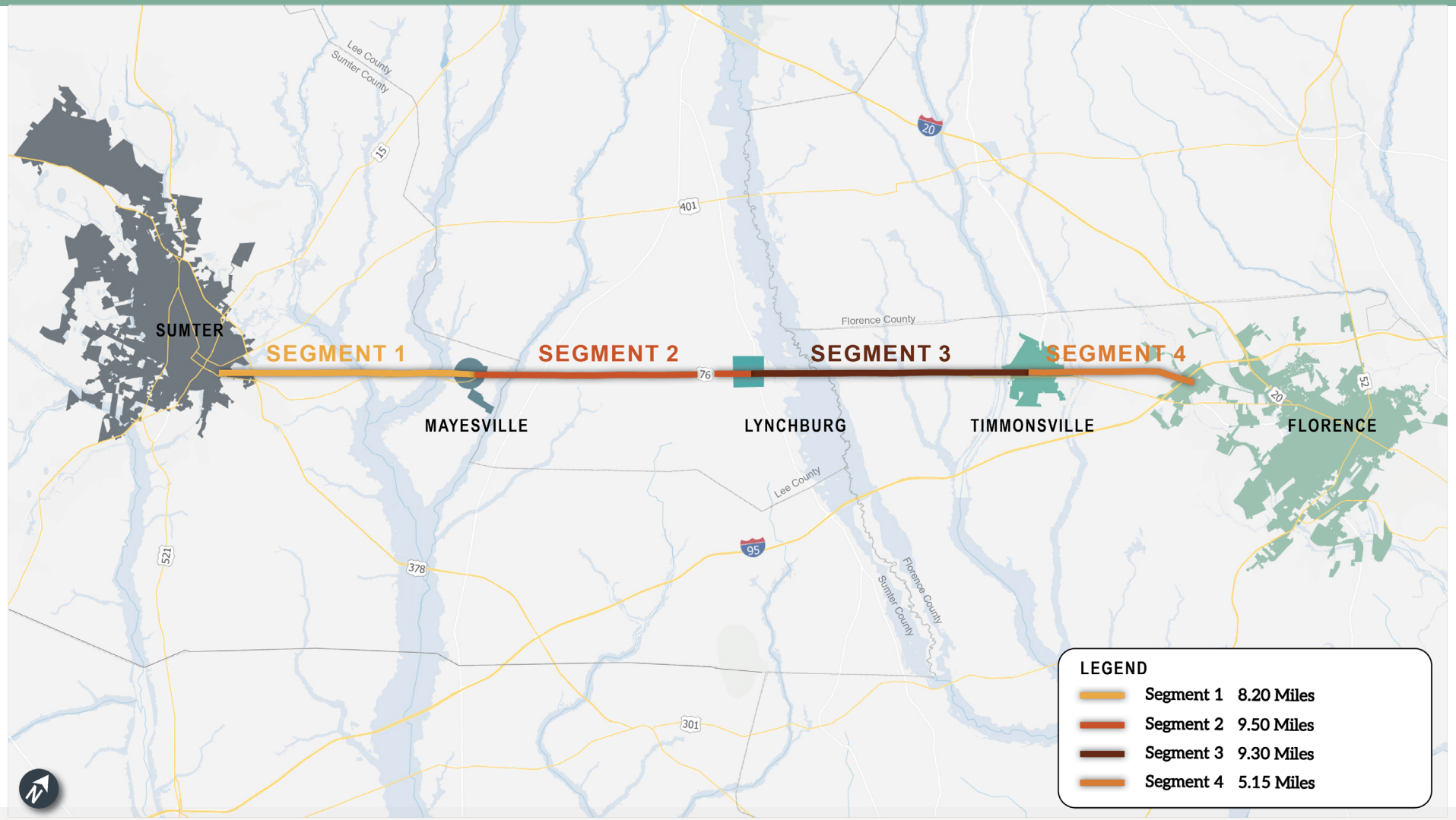
EXISTING & PLANNED TRAIL PROJECTS

- There are **four existing trails** including the Wateree Passage of Palmetto Trail, 11.4 mi, **one planned trail** (Turkey Creek Greenway), and **one blue trail** (Lynches Scenic River Blue Trail)
- The Potential Trail Corridor would include **connections to the existing Florence Rail Trail** (5 mi), Dr. Mary McLeod **Bethune Nature Trail** (1.5 mi), and **Timmonsville Rail-Trail** (.5 mi)



1 Wateree Passage of the Palmetto Trail
2 Turkey Creek Greenway
3 Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune Nature Trail
4 Lynches Scenic River Blue Trail
5 Timmonsville Rail-Trail
6 Florence Rail Trail

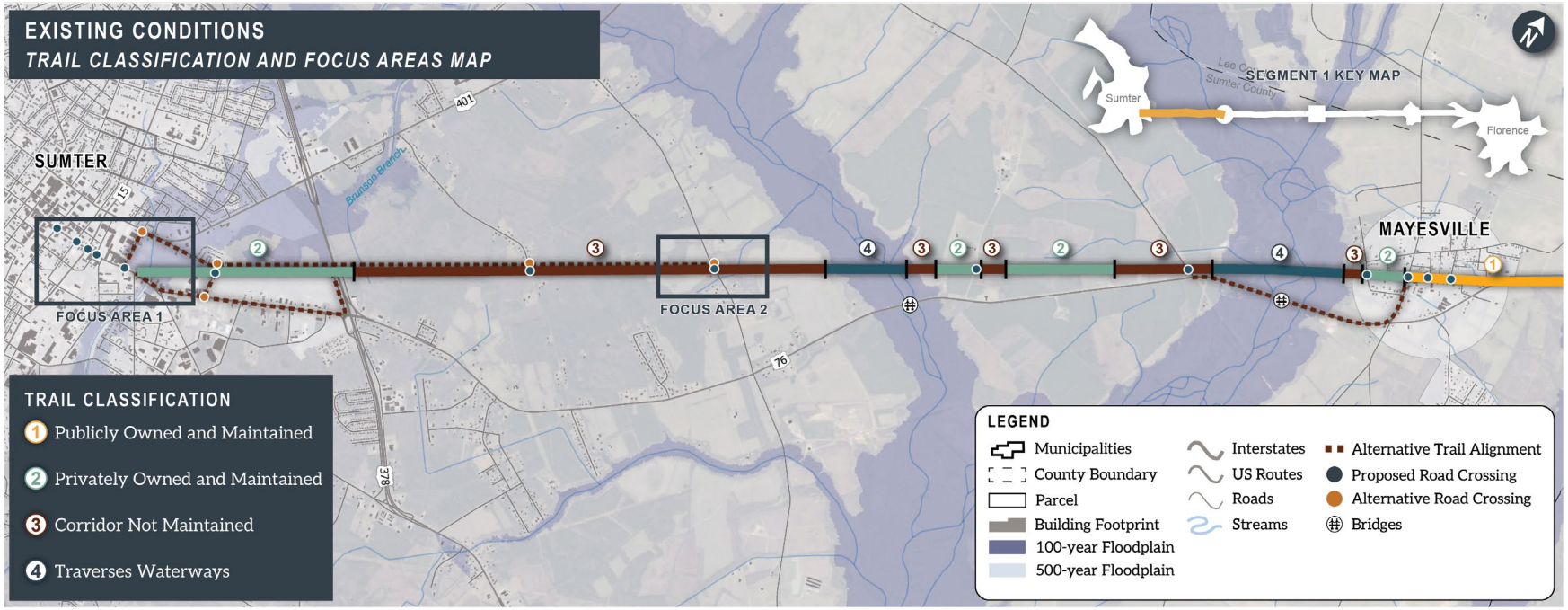
TRAIL SEGMENTATION



- The trail is **divided into 4 segments**, each with unique characteristics & constraints
- Segment 2 is the longest and Segment 4 is the shortest out of the four

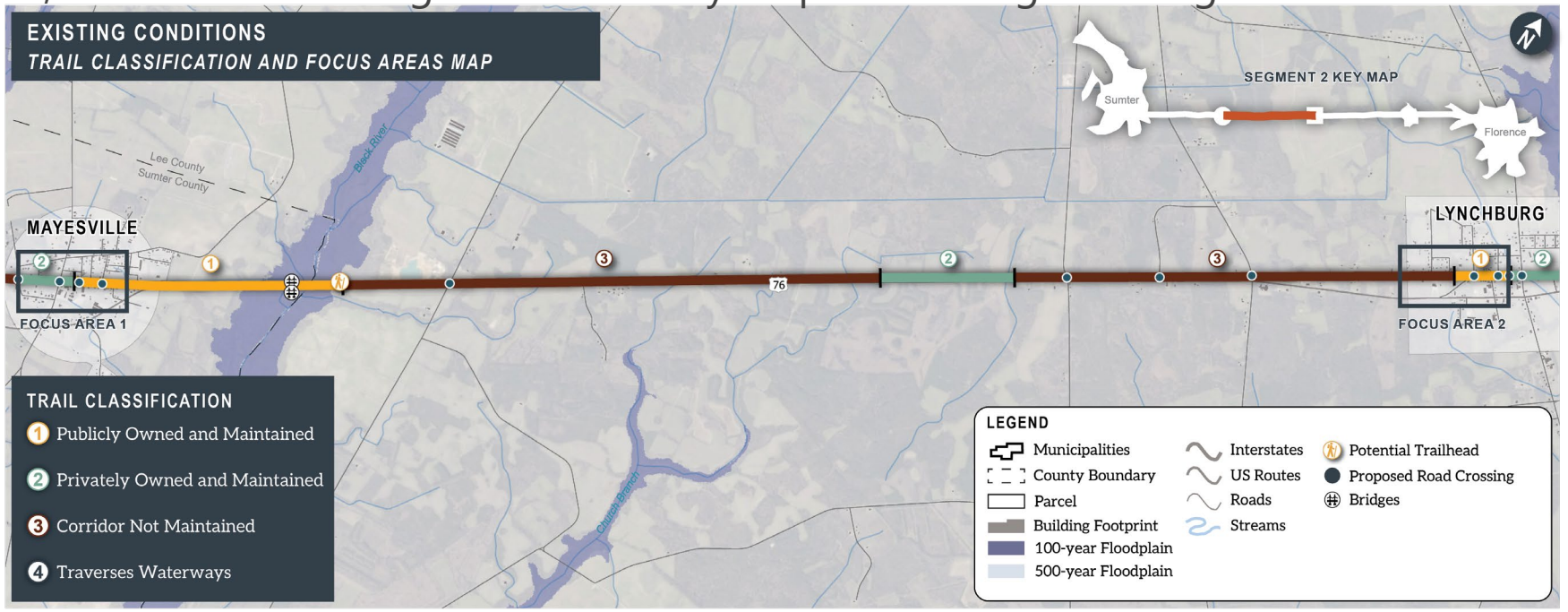
SEGMENT ONE: SUMTER TO MAYESVILLE

- **Segment 1** spans **8.2 miles from Sumter**, a city with nearly 92,000 residents, **to Mayesville**
- The corridor features poorly maintained sections, overgrown water crossings, missing railroad bedding, and steep slopes.
- The infrequently used CSX tracks terminate northeast of the city. Sumter aims to extend the trail to downtown, ending at Liberty St and Main St



SEGMENT TWO: MAYESVILLE TO LYNCHBURG

- **Segment 2** spans **9.5 miles from Mayesville**, a town of 543 people known for its nineteenth-century cultural and architectural heritage, **to Lynchburg**, a transitional community in Lee County with 300 residents
- The corridor experiences minimal maintenance until nearing urban cores. Mayesville has a 1.5-mile walking trail, and several bridges are already in place along this segment

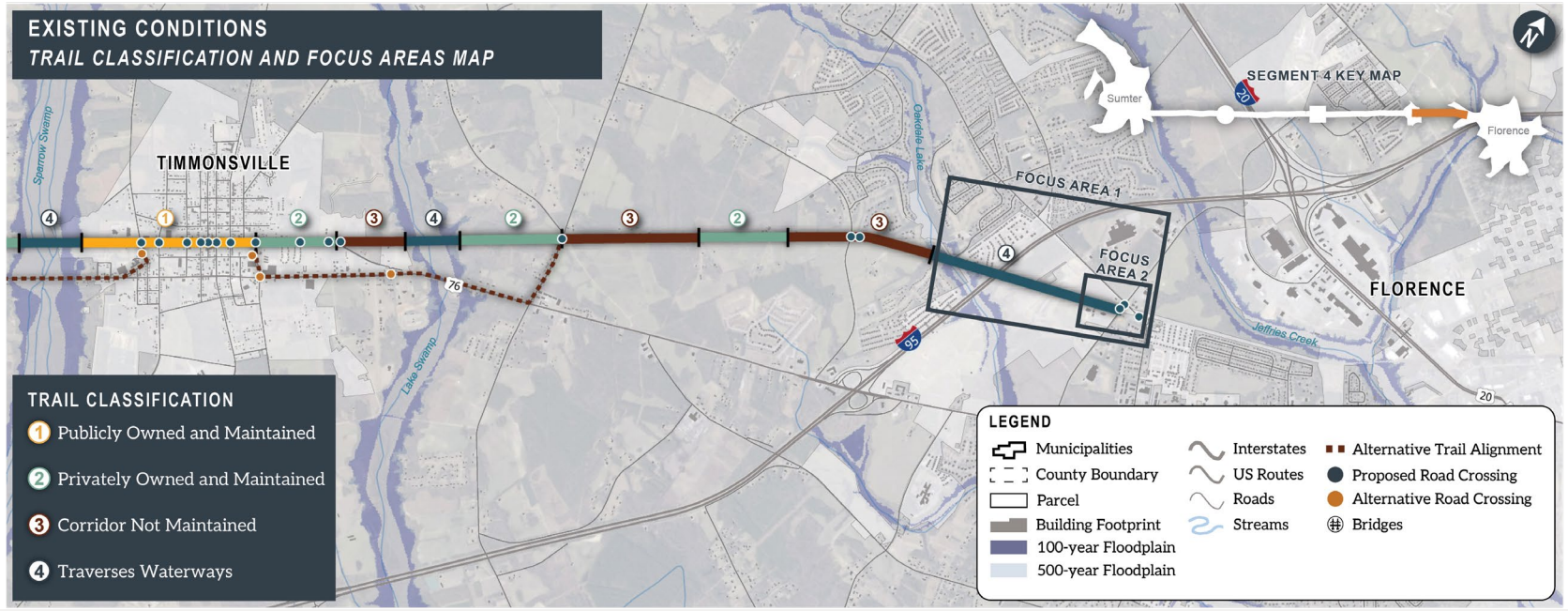


SEGMENT THREE: LYNCHBURG TO TIMMONSVILLE

- **Segment 3** extends **9.3 miles from Lynchburg to Timmonsville**, having about 3,000 residents
- The corridor is maintained by both public and private efforts, with numerous bridges along its length. Near the Lee and Florence County border, one bridge has decent support.
- In downtown Timmonsville, the track elevation is lower, and a well-maintained 0.5-mile bike path exists

SEGMENT FOUR: TIMMONSVILLE TO FLORENCE

- **Segment 4** covers **5.15 miles from Timmonsville to Florence**, a city with around 40,000 residents at the crossroads of Interstates 20 and 95
- This segment faces significant challenges, including poorly maintained sections, water bodies, wooded areas, and steep slopes
- The alignment diverges from US Route 76, with potential links to soccer fields and Ebenezer Park

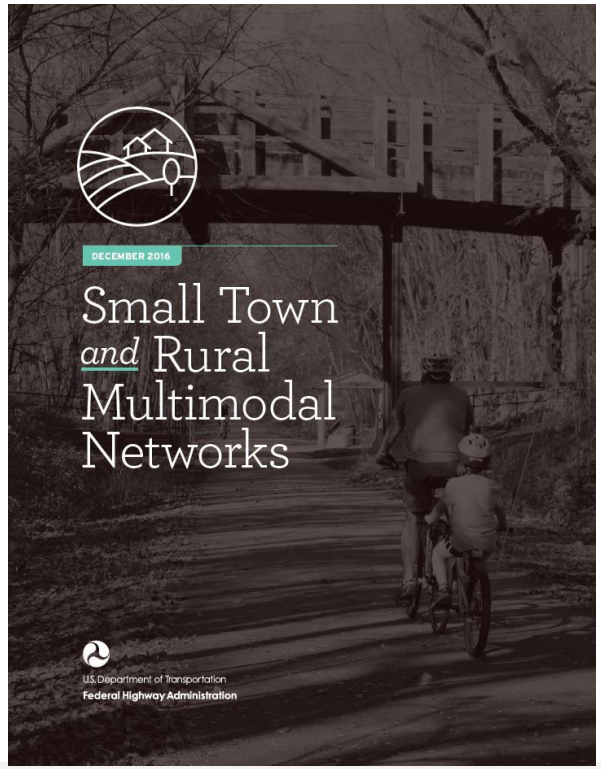


TRAIL ALIGNMENT CONSIDERATIONS

GENERAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

- Considering the regional and multi-jurisdictional scope of the Sumter-Florence Rail Trail, it's important to **apply consistent design standards** throughout the entire project. Using uniform corridor widths and materials ensures a seamless and intuitive experience for users, with the aim of providing a safe and convenient pathway for people of all ages and abilities.

- Design follows the Federal Highway Administration's **Small Town & Rural Multimodal Networks Guide**, offering practical, cost-effective solutions tailored to small towns and rural communities
- Key features within the guide include design solutions, case studies, planning strategies, safety enhancements, and community engagement



TRAIL ALIGNMENT ELEMENTS

Shared-Use Paths

- **12-14 ft recommended** for heavy use
- **8 ft minimum** for low traffic
- **Wider paths** accommodate maintenance vehicles, passing on steep grades, and curves
- Use **markings, signage, and crosswalks** to keep pedestrians and bicyclists safe

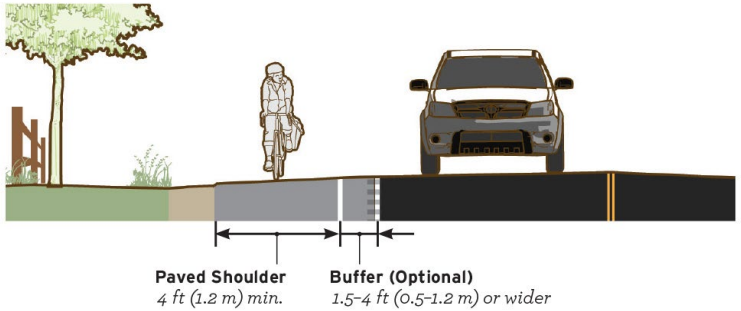
Other Important Design Elements

- Recommendations include trailheads, wayfinding, public art, lighting, restrooms, and seating

DESIGN ELEMENTS

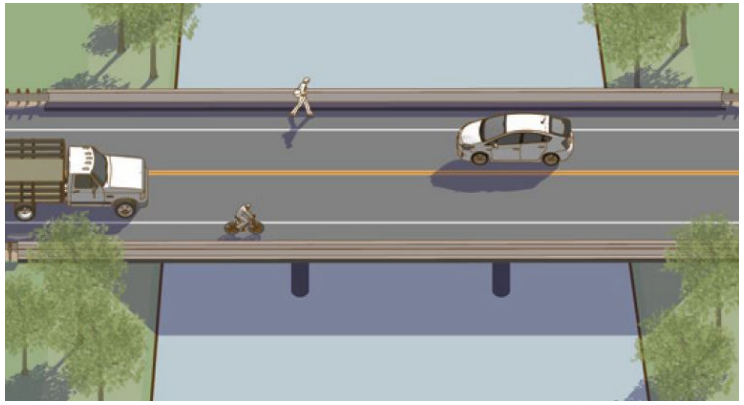
Sidepaths

- **Minimum pathway width: 10 ft**
- Preferred road separation width: 6.5 ft; minimum distance: 5 ft
- Maintain 3 ft horizontal clearance between trees and pathway to prevent pavement damage



Bridges

- Reconfigure by **widening shoulders or sidewalks**, create a shared use path on one side of the bridge deck with a barrier if possible, or create safe **advisory or paved shoulders**
- **New bridge decks** should have sidewalks at least 6 ft wide for pedestrians and 5 ft wide shoulders for bicyclists



IMPLEMENTATION, BENEFITS, & IMPACT

OPINION OF PROBABLE COST

- Opinion of probable cost with contingency is **$61 million** (2024 estimate)
- Total Cost Table is **divided into 4 phases** corresponding to trail segments

FIGURE 1 - SEGMENT 1 SUMTER TO MAYESVILLE

SEGMENT 1 SUMTER TO MAYESVILLE	LINEAR FEET/ MILES	COST PER LF	TOTAL COST
Publicly Owned & Maintained	0 LF	$221	$0
Privately Owned & Maintained	13,150 LF	$221	$2,906,150
Corridor Not Maintained	23,350 LF	$309	$7,215,150
Traverses Waterways*	6,750 LF	$364	$2,457,000
TOTAL	8.19 miles		**$12,576,300**

FIGURE 2 - SEGMENT 2 MAYESVILLE TO LYNCHBURG

SEGMENT 2 MAYESVILLE TO LYNCHBURG	LINEAR FEET/ MILES	COST PER LF	TOTAL COST
Publicly Owned & Maintained	11,800 LF	$221	$2,607,800
Privately Owned & Maintained	4,600 LF	$221	$1,016,600
Corridor Not Maintained	33,400 LF	$309	$10,320,600
Traverses Waterways*	0 LF	$364	$0
TOTAL	9.43 miles		**$13,945,000**

FIGURE 3 - SEGMENT 3 LYNCHBURG TO TIMMONSVILLE

SEGMENT 3 LYNCHBURG TO TIMMONSVILLE	LINEAR FEET/ MILES	COST PER LF	TOTAL COST
Publicly Owned & Maintained	5,900 LF	$221	$1,303,900
Privately Owned & Maintained	28,100 LF	$221	$6,210,100
Corridor Not Maintained	8,300 LF	$309	$2,564,700
Traverses Waterways*	6,800 LF	$364	$2,475,200
TOTAL	9.30 miles		**$12,553,900**

FIGURE 4 - SEGMENT 4 TIMMONSVILLE TO FLORENCE

SEGMENT 4 TIMMONSVILLE TO FLORENCE	LINEAR FEET/ MILES	COST PER LF	TOTAL COST
Publicly Owned & Maintained	0 LF	$221	$0
Privately Owned & Maintained	9,250 LF	$221	$2,044,250
Corridor Not Maintained	12,350 LF	$309	$3,816,150
Traverses Waterways*	5,550 LF	$364	$2,020,200
TOTAL	5.14 miles		**$7,880,600**

FIGURE 5 - OPINION OF PROBABLE COST BY PHASE

PHASE	OPINION OF PROBABLE COST	WITH 30% CONTINGENCY
PHASE 1 Sumter to Mayesville	$12,576,300	$16,349,190
PHASE 2 Mayesville to Lynchburg	$13,945,000	$18,128,500
PHASE 3 Lynchburg to Timmonsville	$12,553,900	$16,320,070
PHASE 4 Timmonsville to Florence	$7,880,600	$10,244,780
TOTAL	**$46,955,800**	**$61,042,540**

Assumptions / Exclusions

1. Estimated construction cost shown above does not include possible pre-engineered bridges or boardwalks for areas of the existing railroad corridor that may be missing and extend through existing wetlands and lowland areas, or over water bodies and rivers.
2. Determination of alternative routes to avoid the need for new pedestrian bridges or boardwalks and their related costs to be determined in next phase of the project.
3. Property acquisition costs are not included in these figures. Determination of actual property ownership will be required in the next phase of this project to determine these costs.

IDENTIFIED FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES & CASE STUDIES

Funding Opportunities include:

- ATIIP Grant (Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program)
- BUILD Grant (Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development Program)
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
- Undiscovered SC Grant Program
- Recreational Trails Program (RTP)
- Metropolitan Planning Organization Funding (MPO)

Case Studies:

- **Ecusta Trail** between Brevard & Hendersonville, NC (18.9 mi)
- **Virginia Capital Trail** between Richmond & Williamsburg, VA (52 mi)
- **Swamp Rabbit Trail** between Travelers Rest & Greenville, SC (28 mi)

IS THE TRAIL FEASIBLE?

Following the completion of the Preliminary Feasibility Study, the project aims to accomplish the following goals:

- **Foster collaboration** among public agencies, nonprofits, and community groups
- **Increase tourism**, boost local business revenue, and support job creation
- **Promote physical activity** and enhance community well-being
- **Support habitat conservation** and encourage low-emission transportation
- **Improve connectivity** between towns, schools, parks, and historic sites

Key Finding

- The trail is feasible and offers benefits across multiple dimensions

Immediate Actions

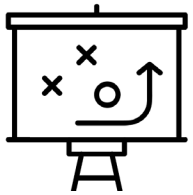
- Secure funding, finalize design plans, and engage with communities

Long-Term Vision

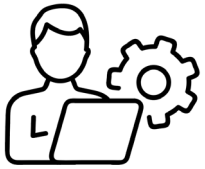
- Create a connected, accessible regional trail network


WHAT'S NEXT?

NEXT STEPS



To move forward with this rail-to-trail project, **a comprehensive feasibility study and detailed analysis are recommended**, as this will help determine the project's overall viability, identify potential challenges



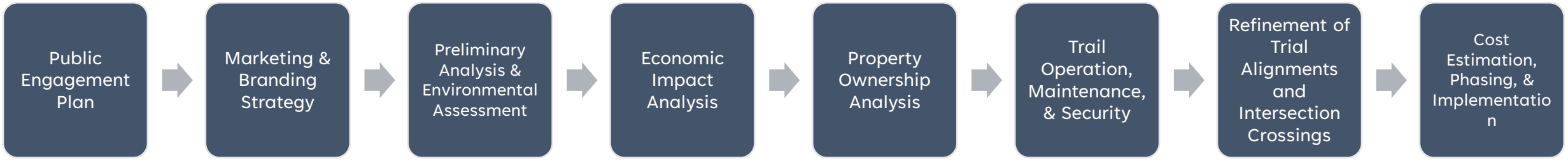
This next phase will involve **researching property ownership** and **available right-of-way**, determining if CSX still owns portions of the right-of-way, and understanding their future intentions for these sections

Additionally, a **detailed site visit of the entire corridor** will be conducted to assess the current **conditions of the former rail bed, wetland crossings, trestle supports, bridge crossings, and abutments** to decide if the **suggested alternative routing is preferable**.

Finally, a **detailed implementation strategy** for developing trail segments will be prepared, including **identifying potential public-private partnerships** and **exploring potential funding mechanisms** to ensure realistic development phasing and long-term project success

FEASIBILITY STUDY & MASTER PLAN

- The **Swamp Fox Rail Trail Feasibility Study/Master Plan** project will build on the findings of the initial feasibility study, providing a clear, actionable plan to guide the development of the Swamp Fox Rail Trail, including technical, financial, and community engagement aspects.
- **The scope of services for this next phase will include:**



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THANK YOU!