



OPEN SPACE BOND: CONSERVATION EASEMENT CRITERIA AND PROCESS

Presented by

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Open Space Bond Overview

Internal Review Process

- Affordable Housing and Open Space evaluation
- Growth, Equity and Conservation map evaluation



The Project Review Process

Complete

- ✓ All Advisory Boards Convened
- ✓ Oversight Committee Orientations

**All evaluation
criteria expected to
be complete by
end of Summer
2023**



BOC Comments & Revisions on AAB Bond Ranking

1. Evaluate leveraged funding from other sources
2. Evaluate charitable landowner donations
3. Remove development pressure from the ranking system to avoid competing with affordable housing



AAB Project Evaluation Ranking System

A. Land Evaluation (40%)

1. Farmland Soils Assessment (20 pts)

- Prime Soils
- Unique Soils
- Local and Statewide Important Soils

2. Forestland Soils Assessment (20 pts)

- High Index Soils
- Medium Index Soils
- Low Index Soils

B. Site Assessment (60%)

1. Clustering Potential (35 pts)

- Tract Size
- Contiguous Land Preservation
- Proximity to ag preservation district

2. Farmland Potential (20 pts)

- Priority ranking score
- % of tract in ag
- Land stewardship
- Historic/scenic/env qualities
- Century family farm

3. Funding and Donation Leveraged (5 pts)

- Landowner Donation
- Funding Leveraged

Ranking points total is a weighted sum



AAB Bond Easement Purchase Requirement

Must meet at least 2 of the following conditions:

- Is this in one of our designated farmland priority regions?
- Is this property in proximity to other protected lands?
- Does this property have prime, unique, local, or statewide important agricultural soils?
- Is this a project with a significant environmental, or scenic importance ?
- Is this an active working farm or century farm?
- Is the size of the property significant?
- Is this a time sensitive project? (Elderly landowner, Financial hardship, Forced sale)

If at least 2 conditions are met then:

- **The Bond can fund up to 50% of the easement value after other funding sources have been explored.**
- **Landowners are required to donate 25% - 50% of their easement value in a Bond-funded project.**



LCAB Bond Easement Purchase Requirement

Must meet at least 2 of the following conditions:

- Is this in an LCAB priority region?
- Is this a project with significant environmental and/or scenic importance
- Are there significant recreational opportunities, water quality or open space benefits of the project?
- Is this a time sensitive project? (Elderly landowner, Financial hardship, Forced sale).

If at least 2 conditions are met then:

- **The Bond can fund up to 50% of the easement value after other funding sources have been explored.**
- **Landowners are required to donate 25% - 50% of their easement value in a Bond funded project.**



Advisory Board Recommendations

04/18/2023 - Agricultural Advisory Board

- Voted to recommend the proposed Conservation Easement criteria for the bond funds.

04/21/2023 - Environmental & Energy Stewardship Subcommittee

- Voted to recommend the proposed Conservation Easement criteria for the bond funds.





Next Step

Request adoption
of conservation
easement criteria



Appendix:



LCAB Project Evaluation Ranking System

A. Land Trust Partner Evaluation – (meets criteria or does not)

- Applicants Organization track record
- Long-term protection of county's investment
- Evidence of collaboration among conservation organizations
- Previous project completion
- Value of project
- Integrity of easement

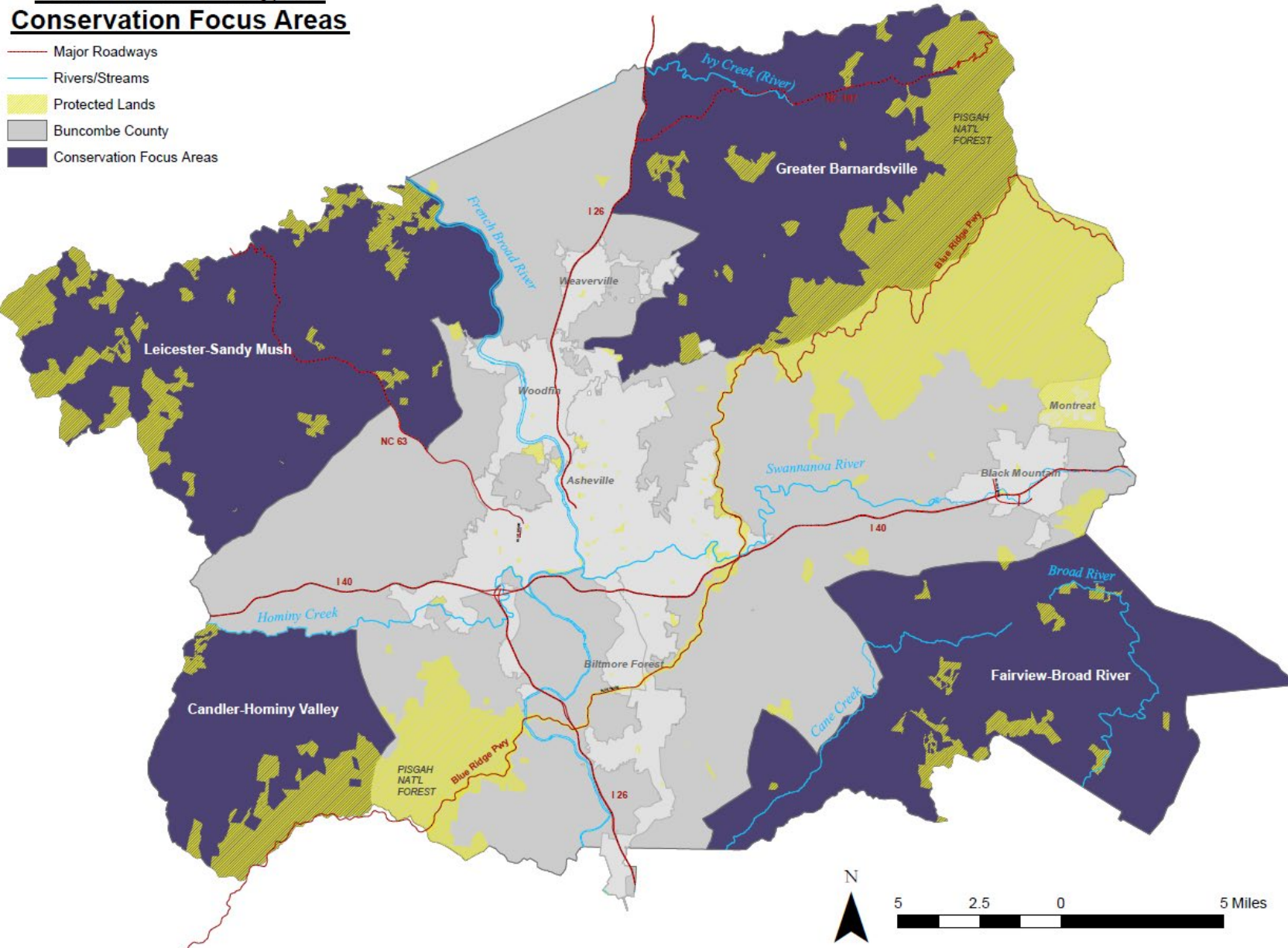
B. Conservation Value of the Project – 100 points

- Scenic viewshed protection - 10 pts
- Natural Areas Protection/biological values – 10 pts
- Water Quality Protection/Restoration – 10 pts
- Farmland Preservation – 10 pts
- Working Forest Protection – 10 pts
- Public Benefit – 10 pts
- Historic/Cultural Resource Protection – 10 pts
- Leveraged Funding – 15 pts
- Value added to the project – 15 pts



Buncombe County, NC
Conservation Focus Areas

- Major Roadways
- Rivers/Streams
- Protected Lands
- Buncombe County
- Conservation Focus Areas



Conservation Focus Areas Align with the Comprehensive Plan

