

## **REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION**

### **HENDERSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**MEETING DATE:** June 3, 2024

**SUBJECT:** Broadband Taskforce

**PRESENTER:** Chris Todd, Business & Community Development Director, and Lee Stevens, Planner III

**ATTACHMENTS:** PowerPoint Presentation

#### **SUMMARY OF REQUEST:**

The Broadband Taskforce has reviewed the program guidance for the North Carolina Department of Information Technology (NCDIT) broadband funding program, Completing Access to Broadband (CAB) to understand next steps for Henderson County's participation. NCDIT has prepared a draft Scope of Work for the County, and needs confirmation of a desire to identify Priority Areas, and to map where those priority areas shall be. The Broadband Taskforce has considered need and impact of the investment to make a recommendation for where Priority Areas should be. Datasets considered in the decision include 2022 ACS data for household income, density of school age children, and density of older adults, as well as emergency services data such as drive time to EMS stations and cell service coverage. The Taskforce determined that as every resident in our County deserves access to reliable internet, every eligible Broadband Serviceable Location (BSLs) – of which there are over 5,200— should be included in the Priority Areas. The Taskforce recommends splitting the county in two, approximately along Hwy 25. The east side of the county is recommended to be the first priority given its higher concentration of low-income households and school-age children, with the west side recommended as the second priority.

The next steps are for the Staff to submit priority area identification materials to NCDIT to complete the Scope of Work. Once the draft has been approved by both the County and NCDIT, the Scope of Work may be posted for responses from pre-approved internet service providers.

#### **BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:**

The Board is requested to direct staff to use the Broadband Taskforce's recommended Priority Areas to complete the Scope of Work with NCDIT.

#### **Suggested Motion:**

*I move to direct staff to use the Broadband Taskforce's recommended Priority Areas to complete the Scope of Work with NCDIT.*

# CAB Scope of Work

Priority Areas Recommendations  
from the Broadband Taskforce

# Participating in CAB

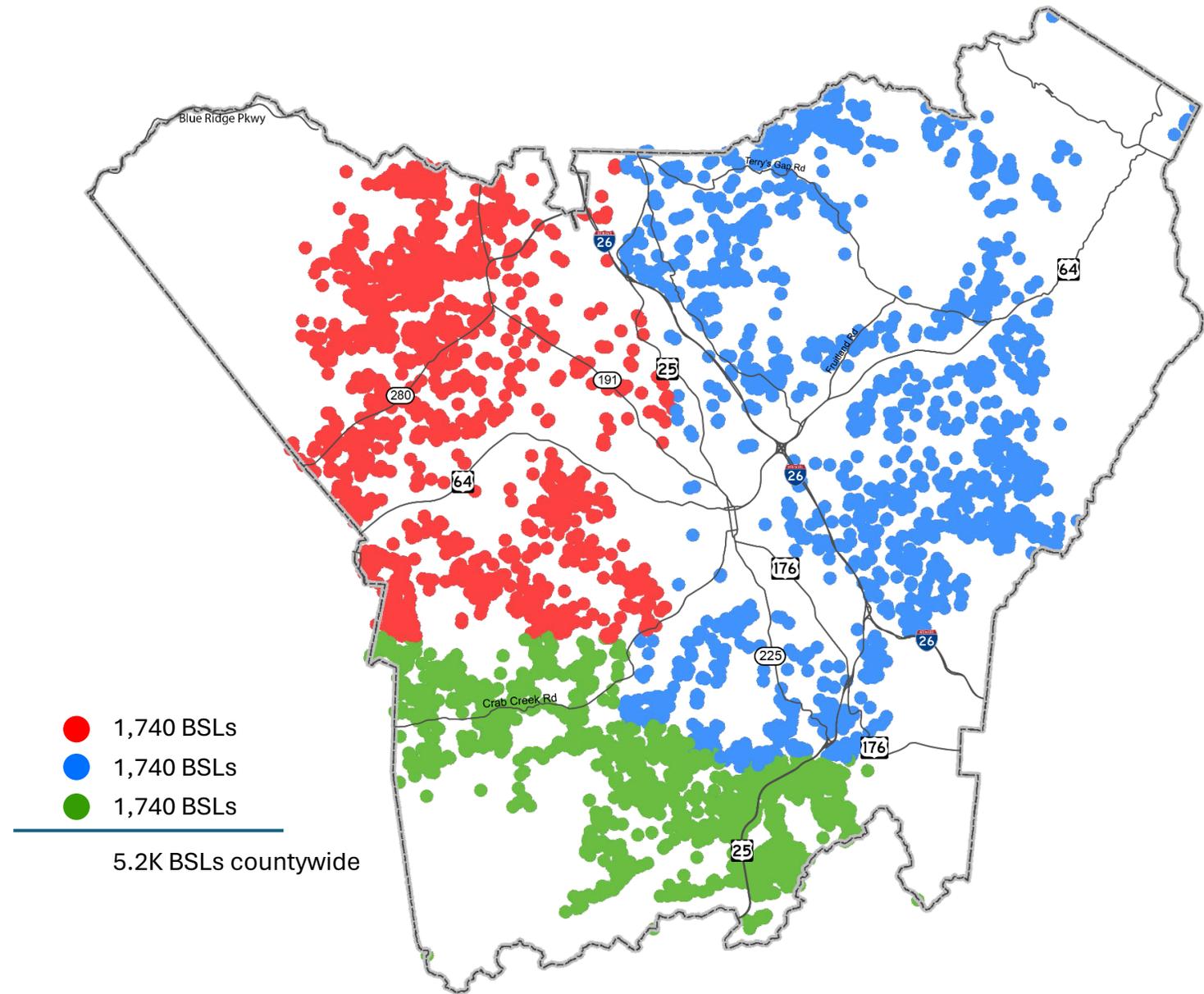
1.  Submit a County Commitment Form
  - BOC voted to commit \$2.5 Million in ARPA funds
  - Total Project Amount is **\$7,142,857**
2.  Develop a Scope of Work with NCDIT
  - Determine Priority Areas
  - Affirm NCDIT draft document
3.  Post Scope of Work to get Proposals from Pre-Approved Providers
4.  Create Agreement

# How Far Could \$7Million go?

Staff **estimate** that the committed funds could reach a potential **1,600 – 1,750** locations.

That's approximately  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the unserved locations in the County.

This map shows **all** CAB-eligible locations split into equal thirds to illustrate how those locations are distributed, and the impact the project could make.

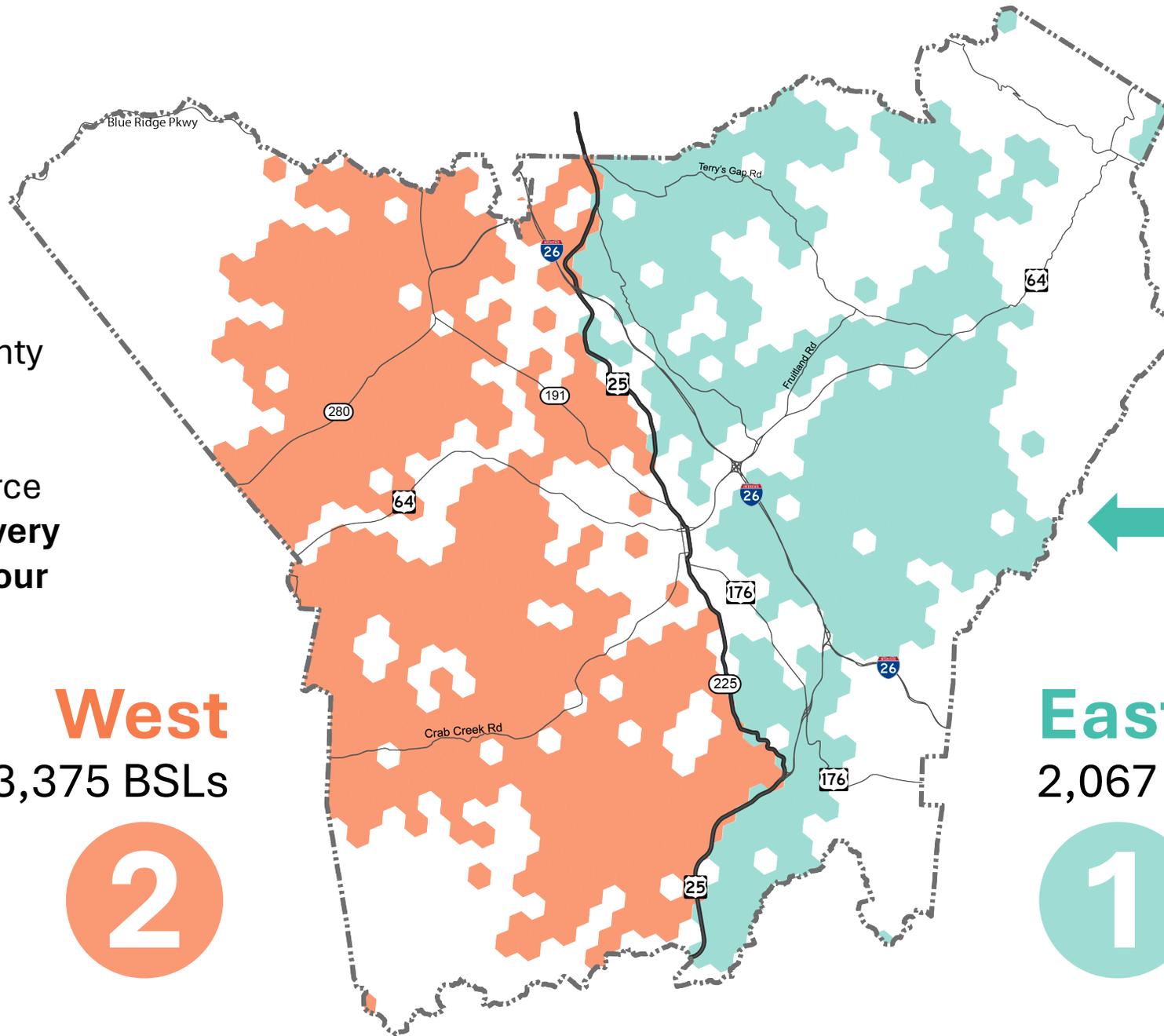


Everyone in our County deserves access to reliable internet, therefore the Taskforce recommends that **every BSL be included in our Scope of Work**

**West**  
3,375 BSLs

**2**

 Areas with unserved broadband locations  
 broadband locations



East of Hwy 25: higher concentration of school age kids and low-income Census blocks without internet, making it Priority 1 in the SOW

**East**  
2,067 BSLs

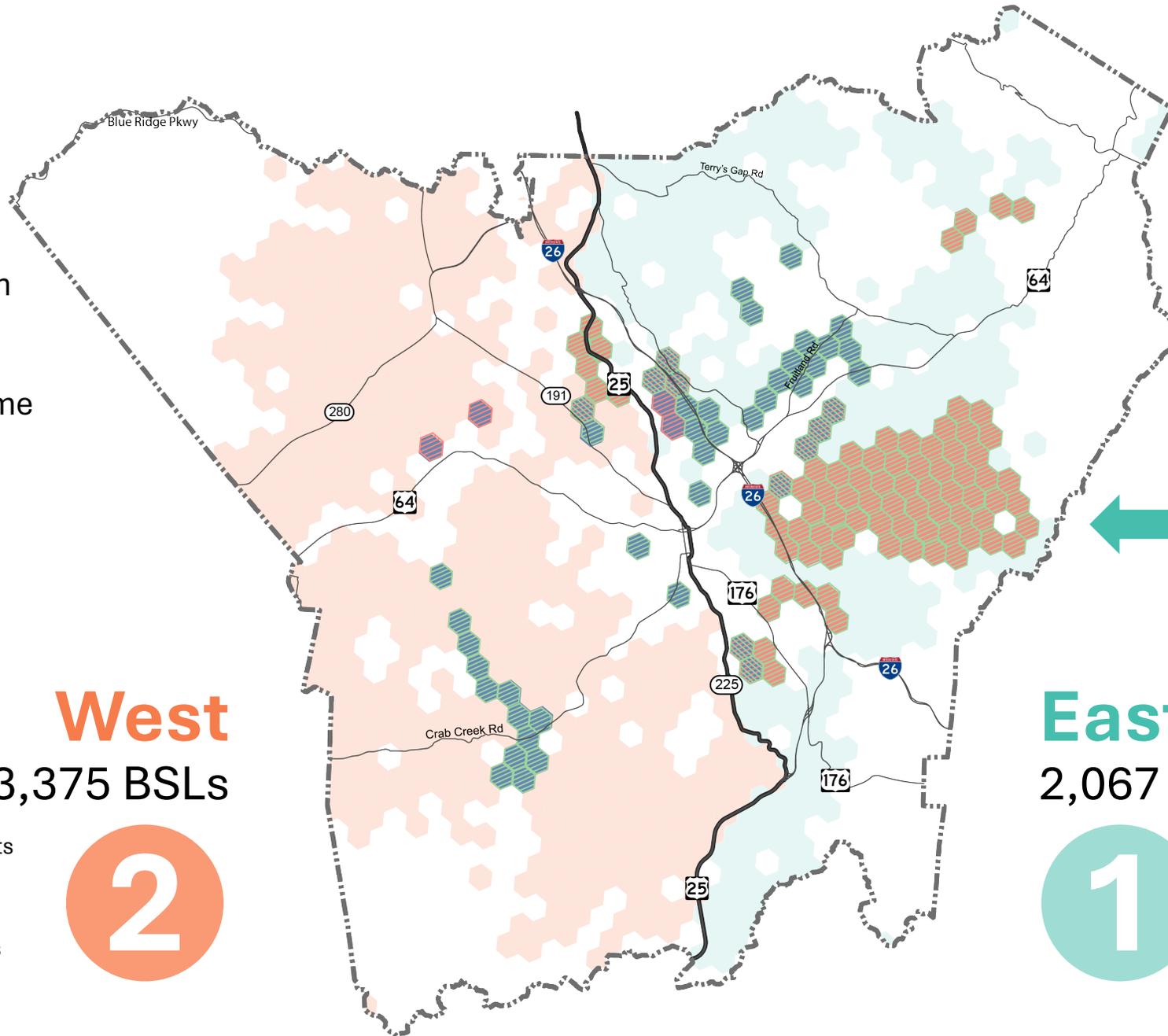
**1**

The Census Blocks with the highest number of school age kids, older adults, and lower income households were overlaid with *Broadband Need*- this map shows where they **overlap only**.

-  Overlap: High Density Older Adults, School Age Kids & Lower Income Households
-  Overlap: High Density Older Adults & Lower Income Households
-  Overlap: High Density School Age Kids & Lower Income Households
-  Areas with unserved broadband locations
-  Areas with unserved broadband locations

**West**  
3,375 BSLs

**2**



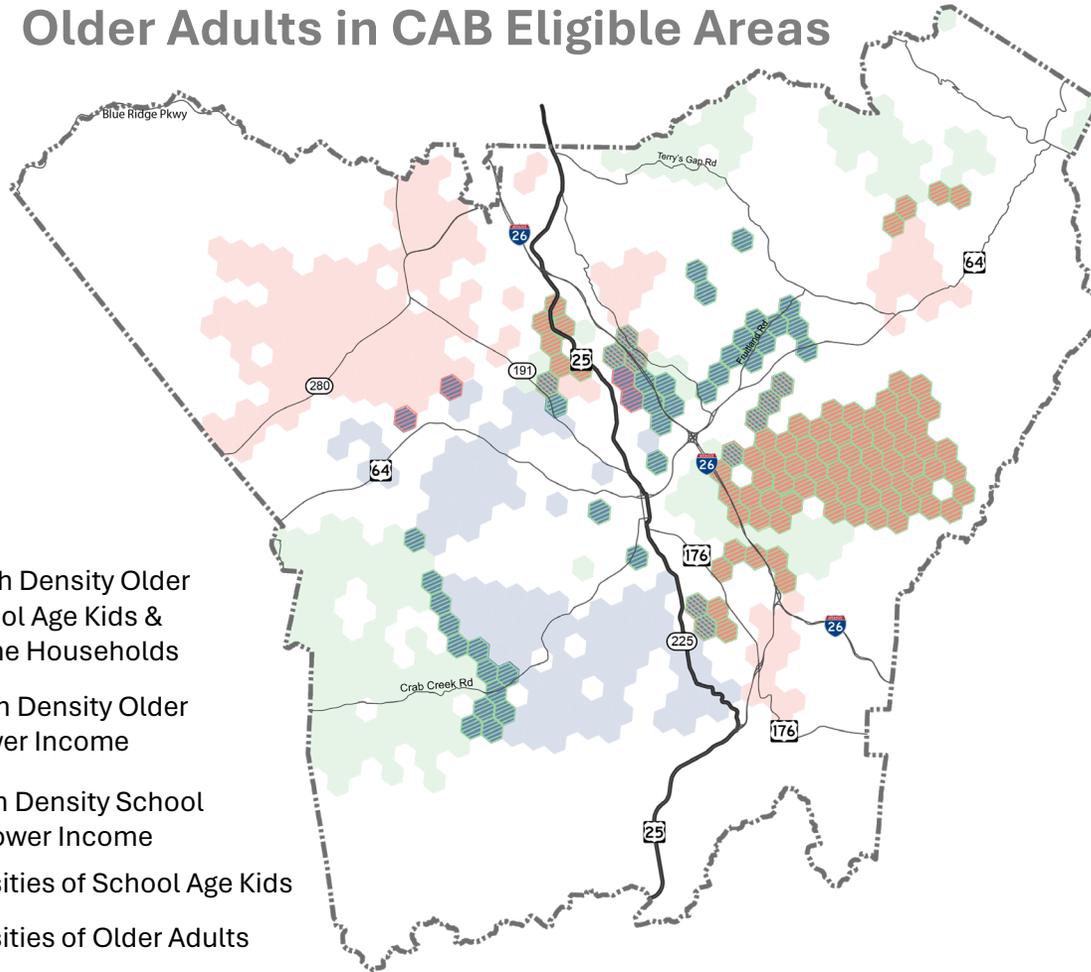
East of Hwy 25: higher concentration of school age kids, older adults, & low-income Census blocks without internet, making it Priority 1 in the SOW

**East**  
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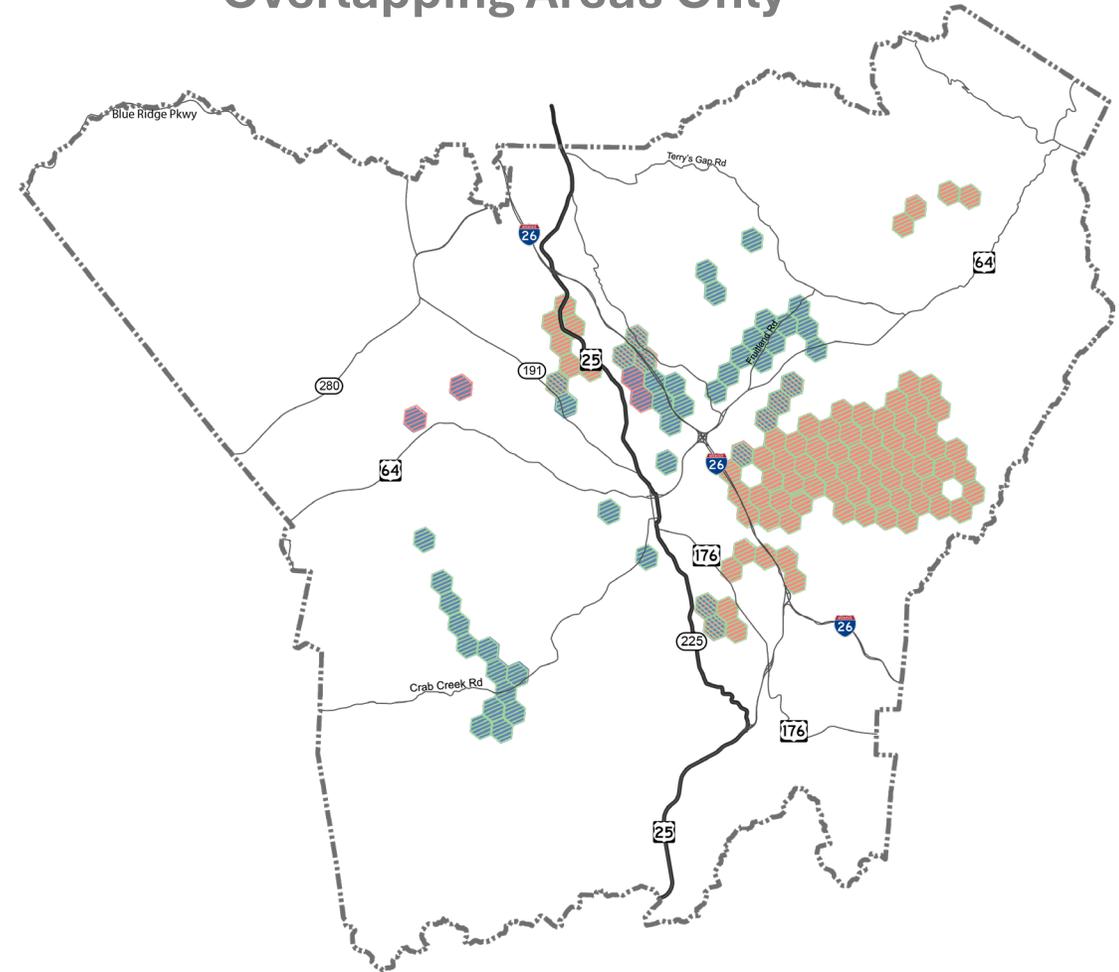
**1**

# Process of Prioritization

## Low Income, School Age Kids & Older Adults in CAB Eligible Areas



## Overlapping Areas Only



- Overlap: High Density Older Adults, School Age Kids & Lower Income Households
- Overlap: High Density Older Adults & Lower Income
- Overlap: High Density School Age Kids & Lower Income
- Highest densities of School Age Kids
- Highest densities of Older Adults
- Highest densities of Low-Income Households

# Evaluation Criteria

- 1 Ability of the Respondent to Perform
- 2 Technical Merits of the Project
- 3 Cost and Scope of the Project