

Brush Mountain Properties

A photograph of a forest path. The path is covered in dry leaves and patches of green moss. On the left side, there are several bushes with bright pink flowers. The background is filled with thin tree trunks and green foliage, suggesting a dense forest.

December 5, 2019

Community Meeting

Community Meeting Agenda:

- JO 5* ● Background and History of Brush Mountain properties
- CD 5* ● Stakeholder Team process to-date
 - Membership of Stakeholder Team
 - Development of Vision, Mission, Values & Decision-Making
 - Project Groups
 - Factors weighed/balanced >> draft Concept Plan
 - Anticipated next steps; longer term timeline
- BL 5* ● Overview of draft Concept Plan
 - Elements & Key Highlights of the Concept Plan
 - Maps and proposed trail alignments
- ALL 60* ● Questions, Discussion, Feedback, Poster Session

Community Meeting Agenda:

JO 5 ● **Background and History of Brush Mountain properties** ←

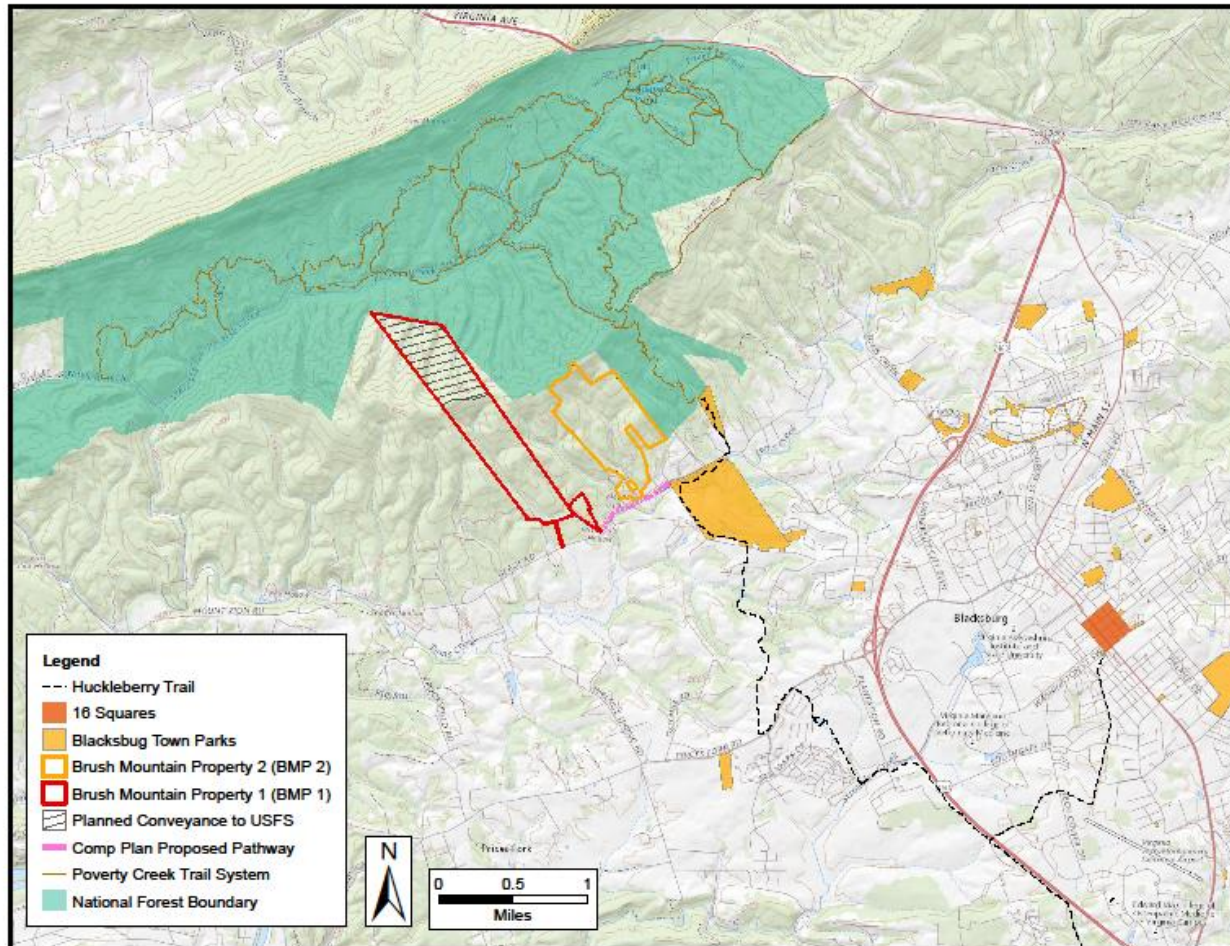
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Background/History: Brush Mountain Properties

MAP #1: BRUSH MOUNTAIN PROPERTIES AND SURROUNDING AREA



- Scenic Value/Preservation of Forest Lands
- Proximity to Heritage Park, Huckleberry Trail Extension, Gateway Park, and Mountain Bike Skills Park
- Convenient to VT Campus and Town
- Shared borders with National Forest
- Opportunities to connect Town parks and National Forest

Background/History: NRLT acquisition of properties



- Intact forest with ecological and scenic value
- Outdoor recreation and nature-based education opportunities
- Adjacency to existing public lands and trails
- Collaborative opportunities
- Forest Core Fund, \$1.2 million grant
 - Brush Mountain Property #1 (BMP1) ~ 334 acres
 - Brush Mountain Property #2 (BMP2) ~ 217 acres

Background/History: NRLT Collaborative Approach



Blackburg TOWN OF
VIRGINIA

- Poverty Creek Trails Coalition
 - Mapping and trail design expertise
 - Volunteers to build and maintain trail network
- U.S. Forest Service
 - Connection to existing trail network
 - Formalize trails on north side of mountain
- Town of Blacksburg
 - Receive and manage properties park
 - Connections trail network and parks
 - Support for trail/park infrastructure

Background/History: NRLT Collaborative Approach



Community Support

- NRVBA
- Blacksburg Striders
- Blue Ridge Off-Road Cyclists
- Individual donors
- Other Funding
 - CORE Purchase grant
 - Private Foundation
 - Business Community
 - Town of Blacksburg

Background/History: Huckleberry Trail Extension



Background/History: Mountain Bike Skills Park



Background/History: Existing Road Bed



Background/History: Existing Road Bed



Background/History: Existing Road Bed/Foot Trails



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Brush Mountain Properties Stakeholder Team

Chris Betz
Chris Lawrence
Dan McKeague
Dean Crane
Erik Taylor
Ingrid Burbey
Jess Thornton
John Eustis
Lucas Weaver
Marge Lewter
Mike Nelson
Mike Rosenzweig
Scott Owens
Tommy Oravetz
Travis Coad

EXPERTISE
EXPERIENCE
PERSPECTIVES

Cycling Advocacy
Environmental Stewardship
U.S. Forest Service
Gravity/Downhill Riding
Horseback Riding
Land Conservation
Mountain Biking
Nature-Based Education
Parks & Recreation
Town Administration
Trail Building & Maintenance
Trail Running

Vision Statement

BIG PICTURE - PREFERRED LONG-TERM OUTCOMES:

The Brush Mountain Trails Stakeholder Team will work to expand the range of recreational and nature-based education opportunities in the Town of Blacksburg. The stakeholder team seeks to create an urban forest preserve and trail system that will serve to connect the Huckleberry Trail, Heritage and Gateway Parks and the George Washington and Jefferson National Forest.

Vision Statement

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The Brush Mountain Trails Stakeholder Team will work to expand the range of recreational and nature-based education opportunities in the Town of Blacksburg. The stakeholder team seeks to create an urban forest preserve and trail system that will serve to connect the Huckleberry Trail, Heritage and Gateway Parks and the George Washington and Jefferson National Forest. Future park management and land acquisitions will be coordinated through strong partnerships between the Town, non-profit organizations, civic and volunteer groups, and community members. This forest preserve and trail system will be a unique and extraordinary natural, recreational, educational, civic, and economic asset for Blacksburg and the wider region.

Mission Statement

HOW WE WILL WORK TO ACHIEVE THE VISION:

The partners on the Brush Mountain Trails Stakeholder Team will work collaboratively to develop and implement a plan for the Brush Mountain properties, drawing upon the unique and varied interests, expertise, and capacities of the team and other community partners.

Core Values:

PRINCIPLES THAT WILL GUIDE THE WORK:

- Engage partners and the public meaningfully and transparently to foster collaboration around common goals.
- Work to develop a range of recreational and nature-based opportunities for a diverse and active user community.

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- Seek ways to minimize user conflicts through design elements and community-building efforts across user groups.

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- Be responsive to the priorities of various user groups and skill-advancement opportunities within those user groups.
- Seek ways to minimize user conflicts through design elements and community-building efforts across user groups.
- **Prioritize options during design and plan development that can be sustained long-term both in terms of anticipated funding and human effort required.**
- **Seek to complement recreational opportunities in the region.**
- **Consider other community and regional assets and work to connect and create a continuum of structured recreational spaces with increasingly less structured recreational spaces.**

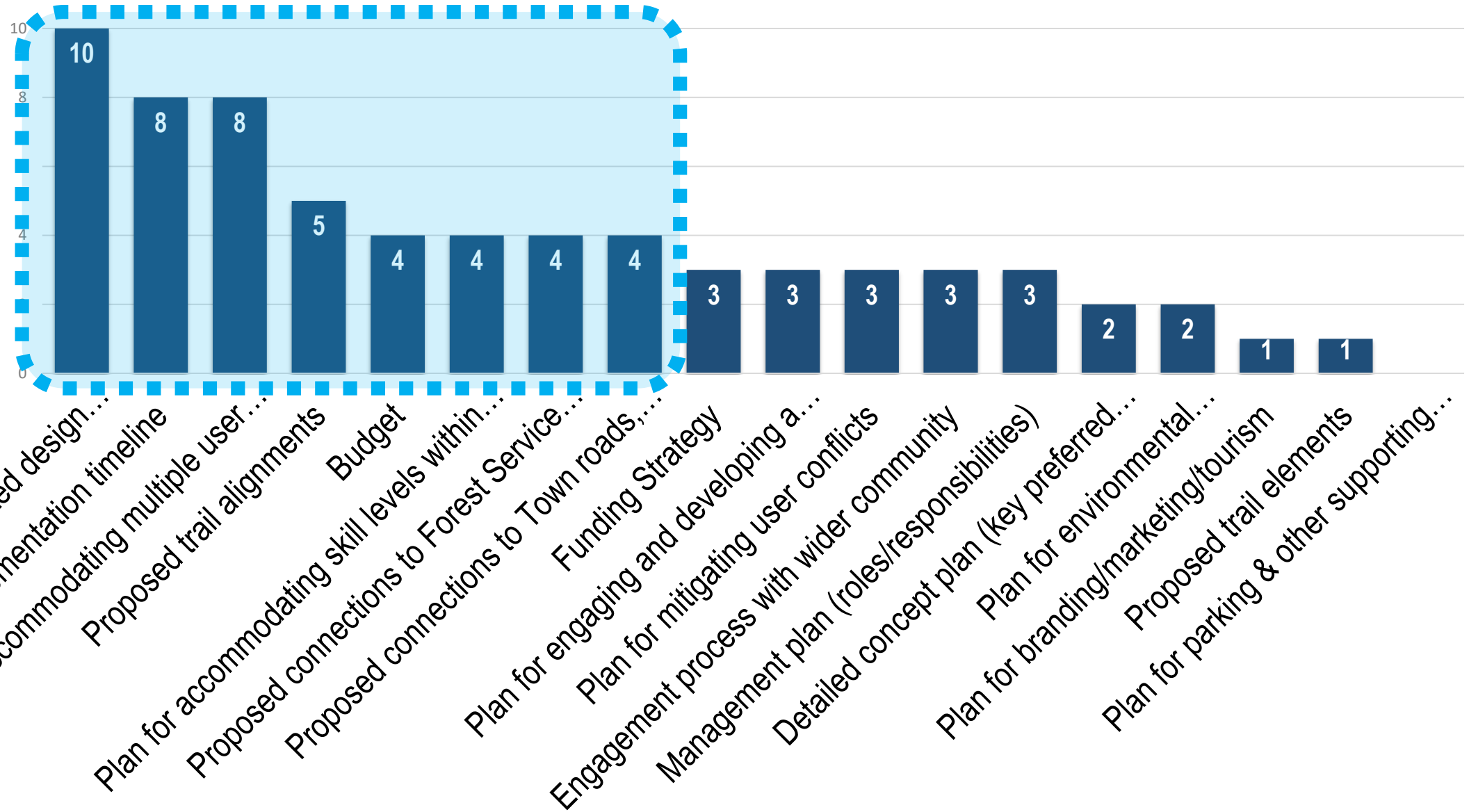
Decision-Making Process:

MODIFIED CONSENSUS:

Items up for consideration will be discussed and deliberated with an **intention to reach consensus** (agreement from all stakeholders), but the stakeholder group reserves the right to put items “to a vote” in the case of seemingly intractable differences of opinion.

75% support of the active stakeholder group will be required for a vote to pass.

Development of Workplan: Prioritizing Short Term Goals



Brush Mountain Properties Stakeholder Team

CURRENT PROJECT GROUPS:

1. Trail Design & Alignment

Users groups, skills levels, terrain & other features, sustainability, draft concept plan

2. Connections & Access

USFS, TOB Parks/Trails, navigating around adjacent private properties

3. Implementation Resources

Budget, funding, organizational capacities, volunteers/volunteer management

Brush Mountain Trails Stakeholder Team:

ELEMENTS EXPLORED & TRADEOFFS CONSIDERED:

1. Terrain and property constraints

size, width, slope, adjacency, hydrology, existing features/disturbance, sustainability

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walkers/runners, mountain bikers, horseback riders (+ skill progression for each)

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3. User experience and (mitigating) user conflict

skill and speed differentials, multi-user design features and targeted design features

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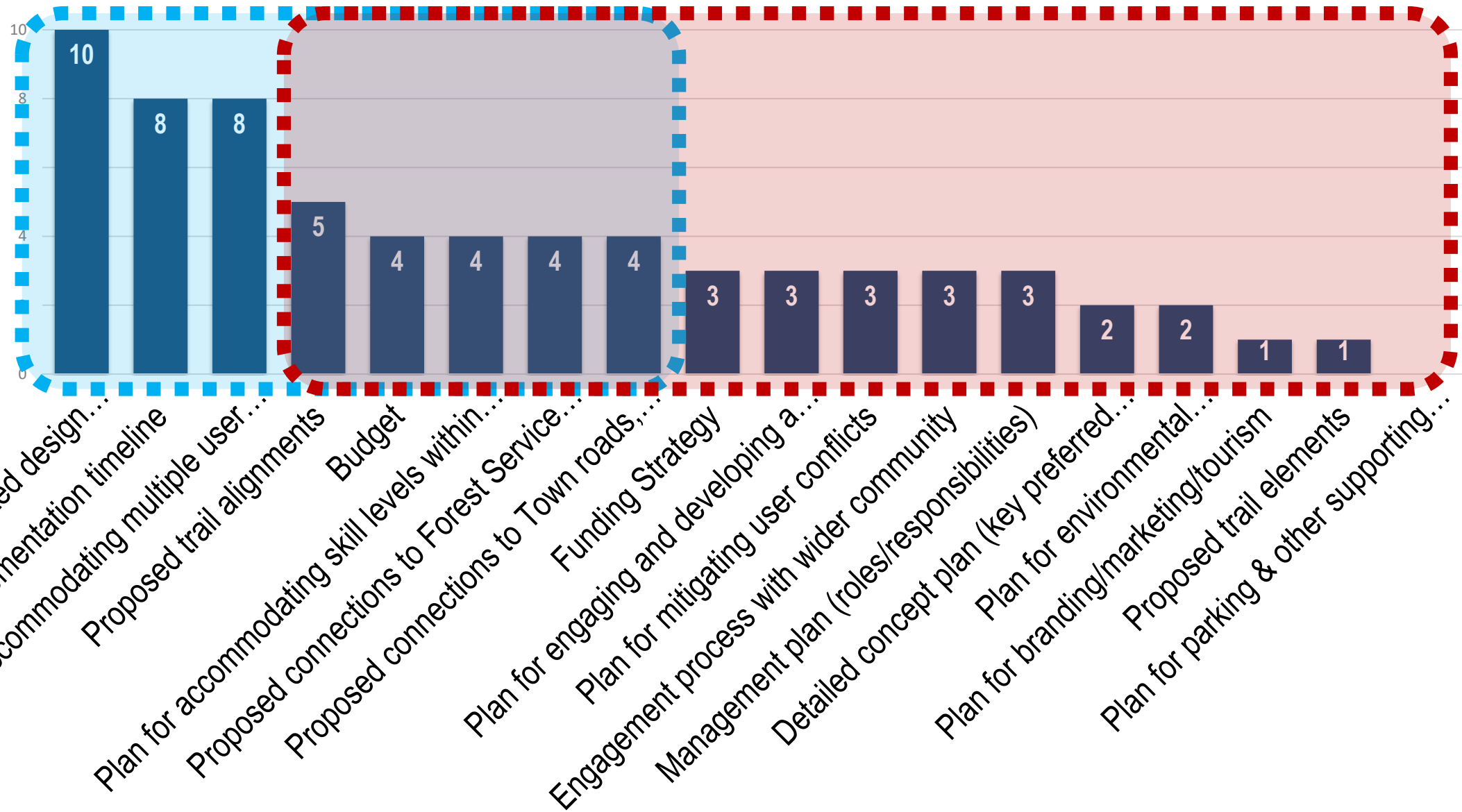
3. User experience and (mitigating) user conflict

skill and speed differentials, multi-user design features and targeted design features

4. Implementation timeline and phasing

permitting, funding, organizational capacities, volunteers/volunteer management

Development of Workplan: Prioritizing Short Term Goals



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Draft Concept Plan

7 CONTENT SECTIONS WITH SUBSECTIONS

- Introduction
- Concept Plan Elements
- Project Area & Existing Conditions
- Trail System Design
- Project Implementation
- General Recommendations
- References

The draft Concept Plan and supporting documents can be viewed here:

<https://www.blacksburg.gov/community/town-government/in-the-works/brush-mountain-properties>

Draft Concept Plan: Highlights & Key Points

SECTION 1 & 2: INTRODUCTION/CONCEPT PLAN ELEMENTS

- Project background and goals
- How plan was developed; plan philosophy and core values
- Plan goals, objectives, priorities, and assumptions

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- Design for environmental sustainability and fiscal responsibility
- Minimize impacts to adjacent property owners and residents
- Avoiding challenges of existing trail systems (congestion, user conflict, erosion)

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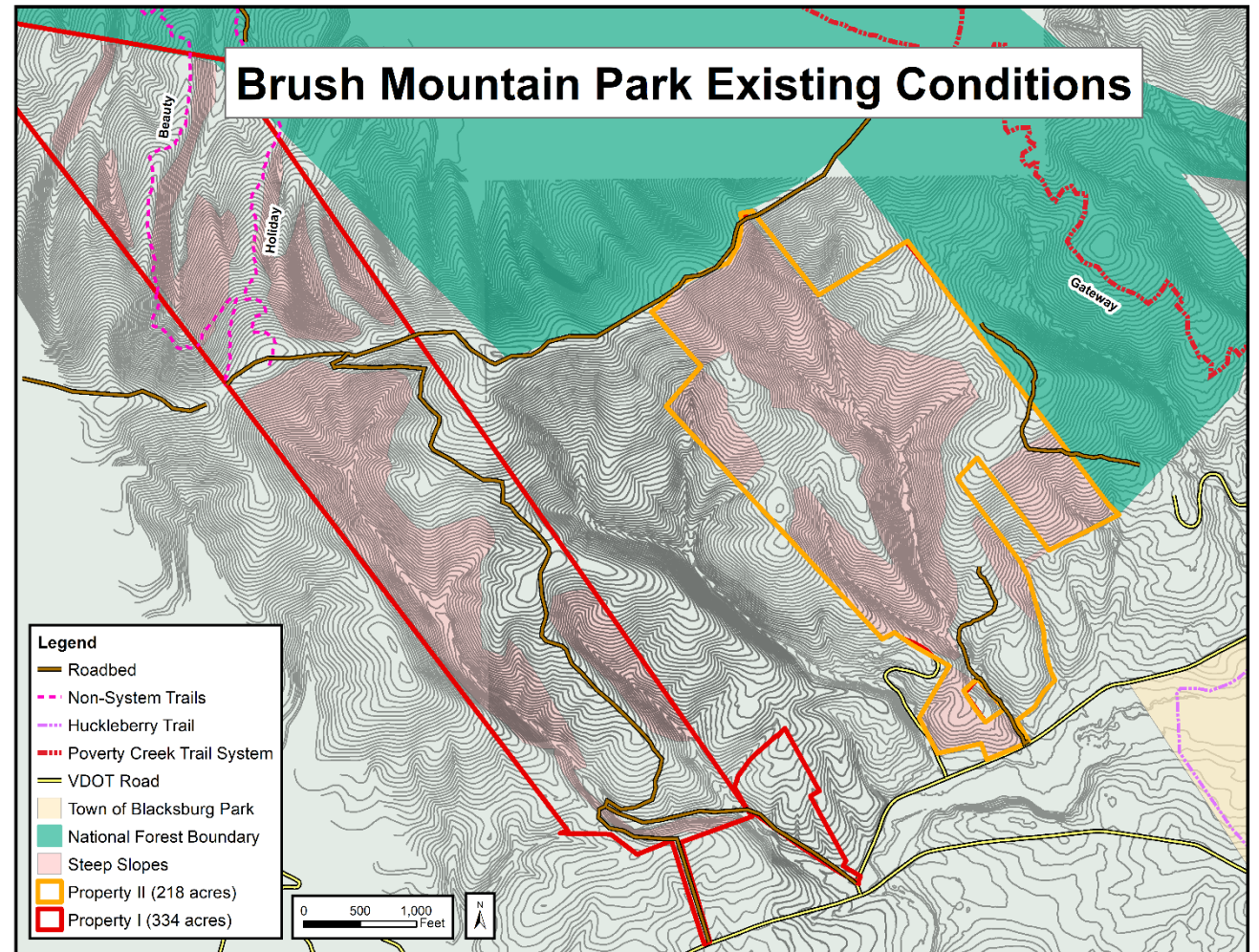
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- Avoiding challenges of existing trail systems (congestion, user conflict, erosion)
- Design for preferred recreational experiences by multiple user groups
- Good design >> user conflict mitigation >> quality user experiences
- Exploring inherent tensions and tradeoffs; physical constraints of properties
- Description of how plan for Property 1 & Property 2 differ (and why)

Draft Concept Plan: Highlights & Key Points

SECTION 3: PROJECT AREA & EXISTING CONDITIONS

- Steep, forested landscape
- Steep drainages
- Average 16% grades
- Existing roadbeds, disturbed areas, and footpaths/user-built trails
- Some existing trails encroach onto private property

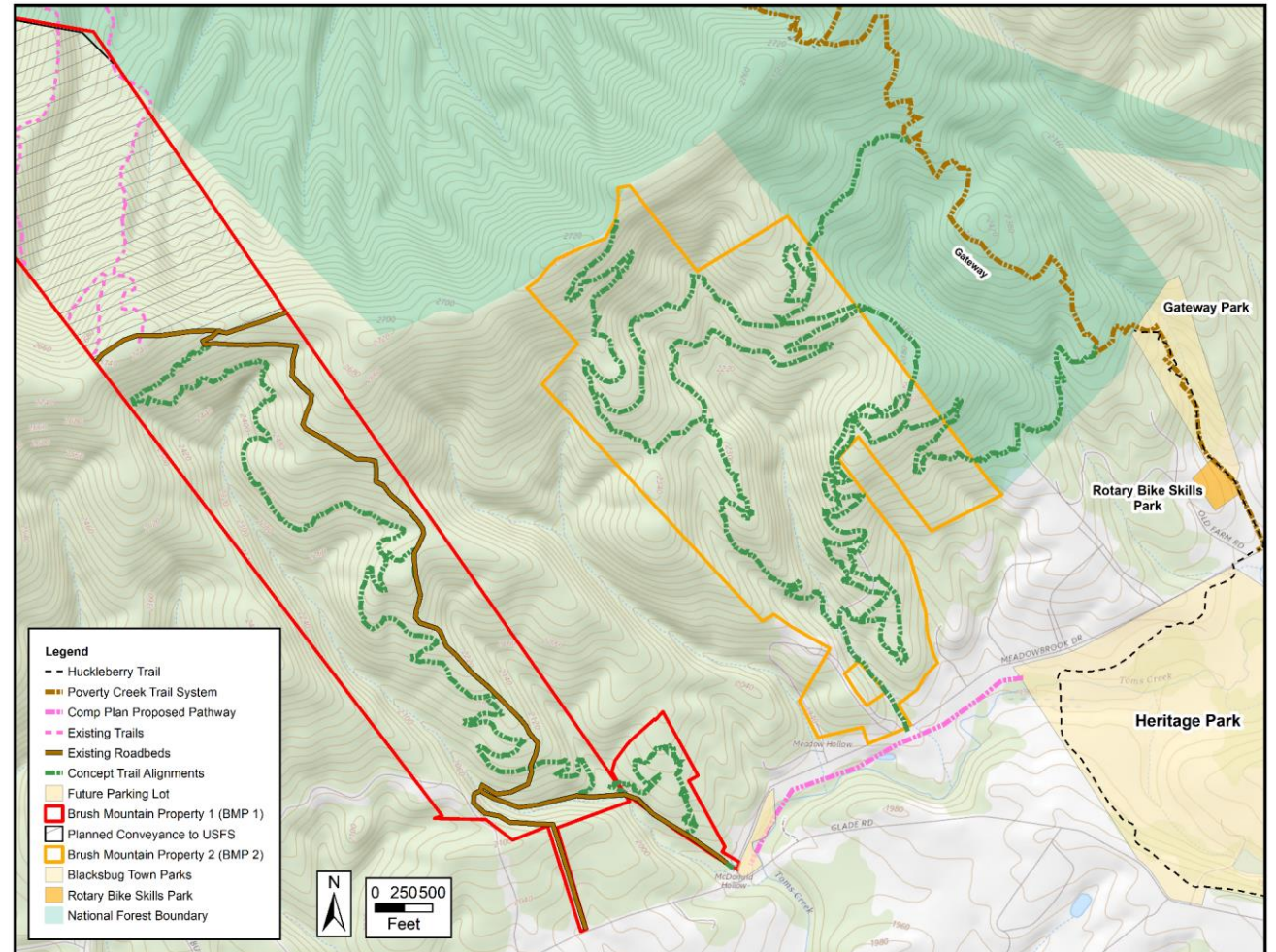




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SECTION 4: TRAIL SYSTEM DESIGN (OVERALL CONCEPT)

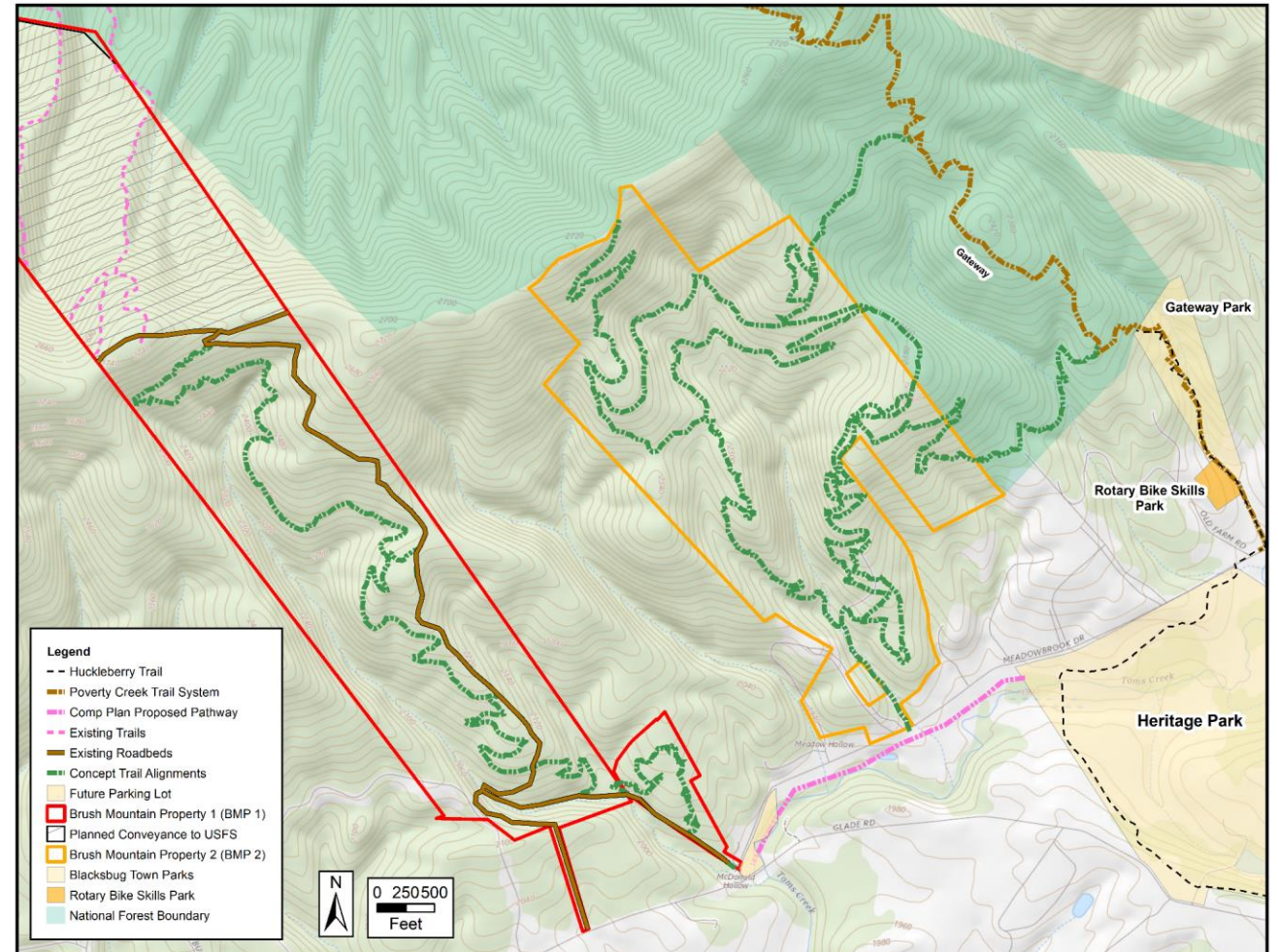
- Design for natural surface trails that are erosion resistant.
- International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) essential elements of sustainable trail design:



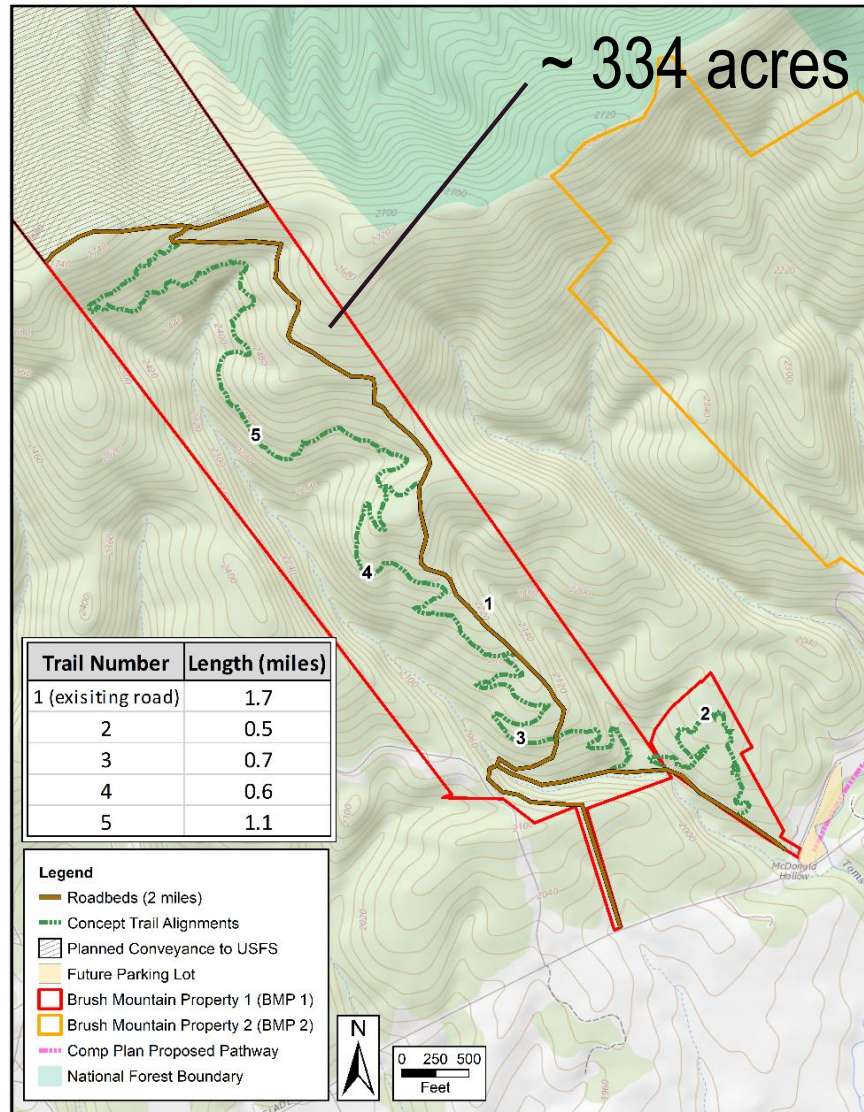
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SECTION 4: TRAIL SYSTEM DESIGN (OVERALL CONCEPT)

- Design for natural surface trails that are erosion resistant.
- International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) essential elements of sustainable trail design:
 - The “half rule” (grade should not exceed half the grade of the hillside it traverses)
 - Promote drainage off of trails
 - Average grade 10% or less
 - Steeper sections (more than 10%) should incorporate enhanced drainage features



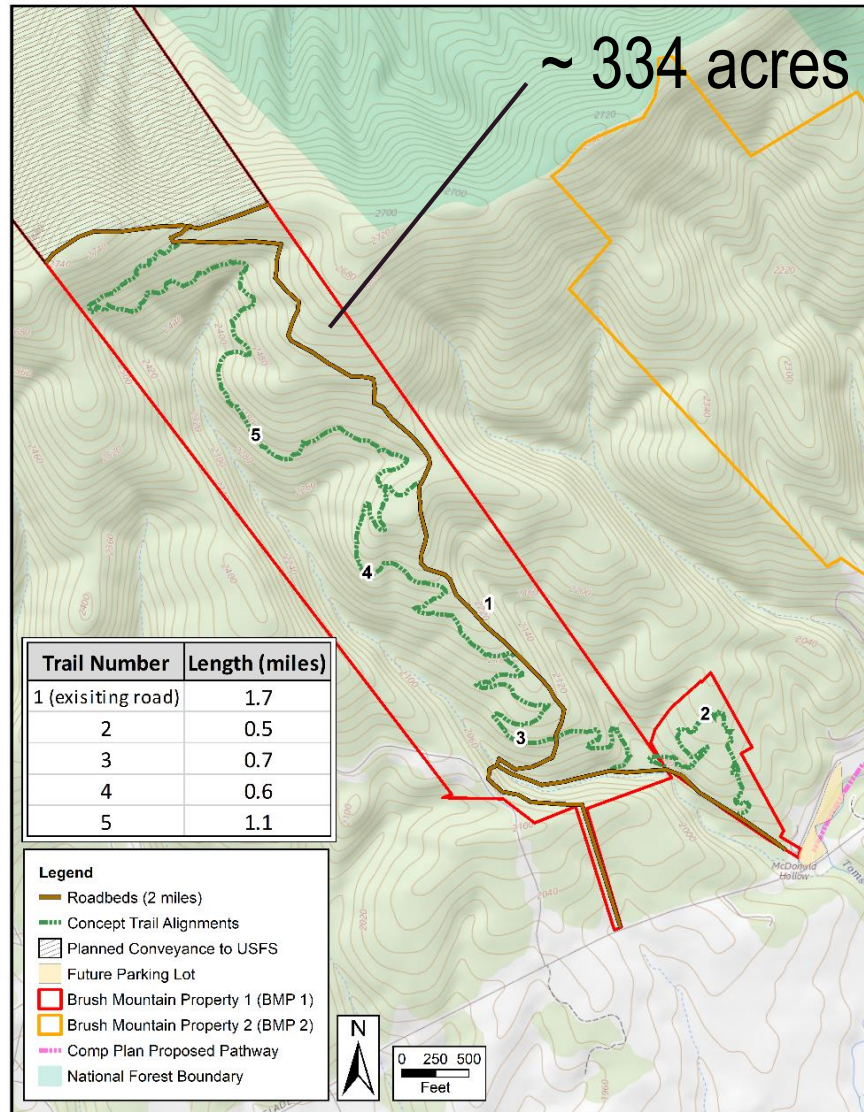
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SECTION 4: BRUSH MOUNTAIN PROPERTY #1

- Extensive existing roadbed ~ 1.7 miles
- Existing user-built trails “Holiday” & “Beauty”
 - Forest Service intends to formally bring these into Poverty Creek Trails System
 - Small section of Beauty will be rerouted away from private property

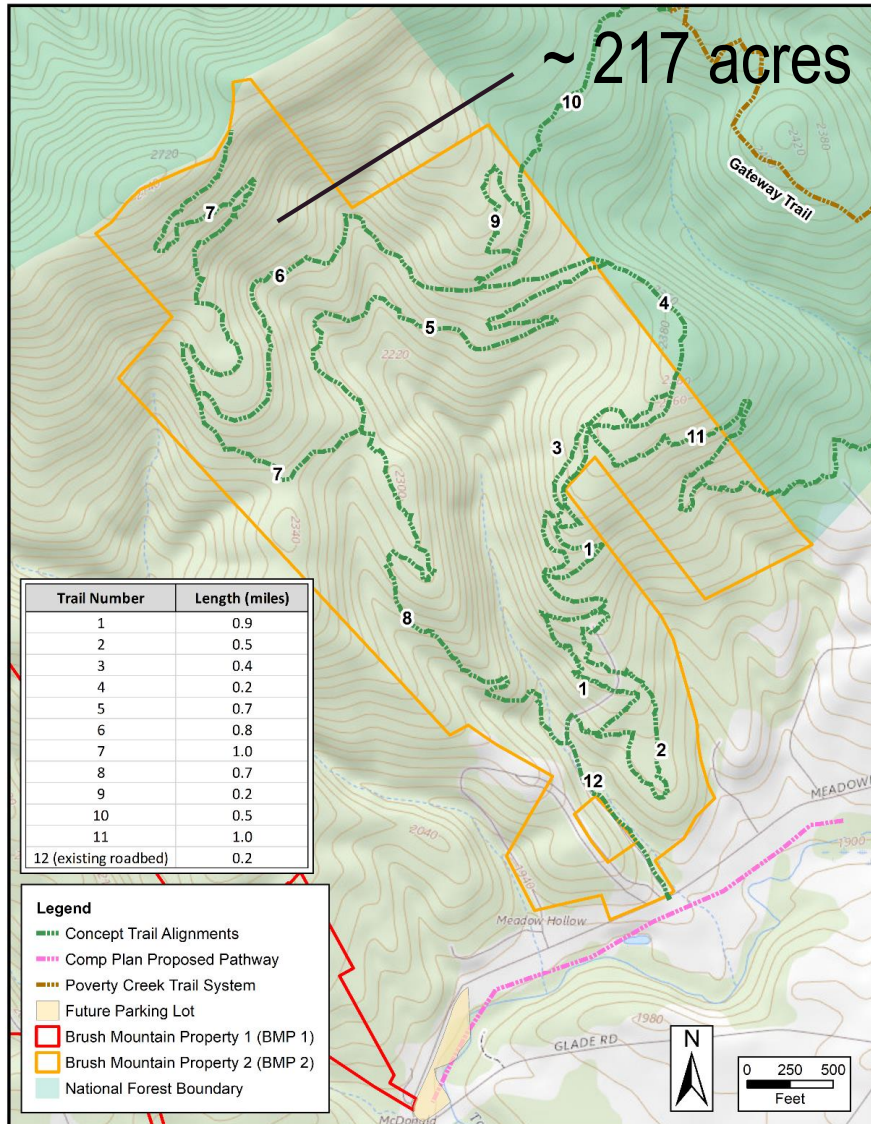
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 - Forest Service intends to formally bring these into Poverty Creek Trails System
 - Small section of Beauty will be rerouted away from private property
- 4 new loop trails proposed ~ 2.9 miles total
- Multiuser design intended for bi-directional travel
- New trail sections designed to prioritize foot/hoof travel
- Designed to appeal to widest range of users
- User experience will focus on setting and destination(s).

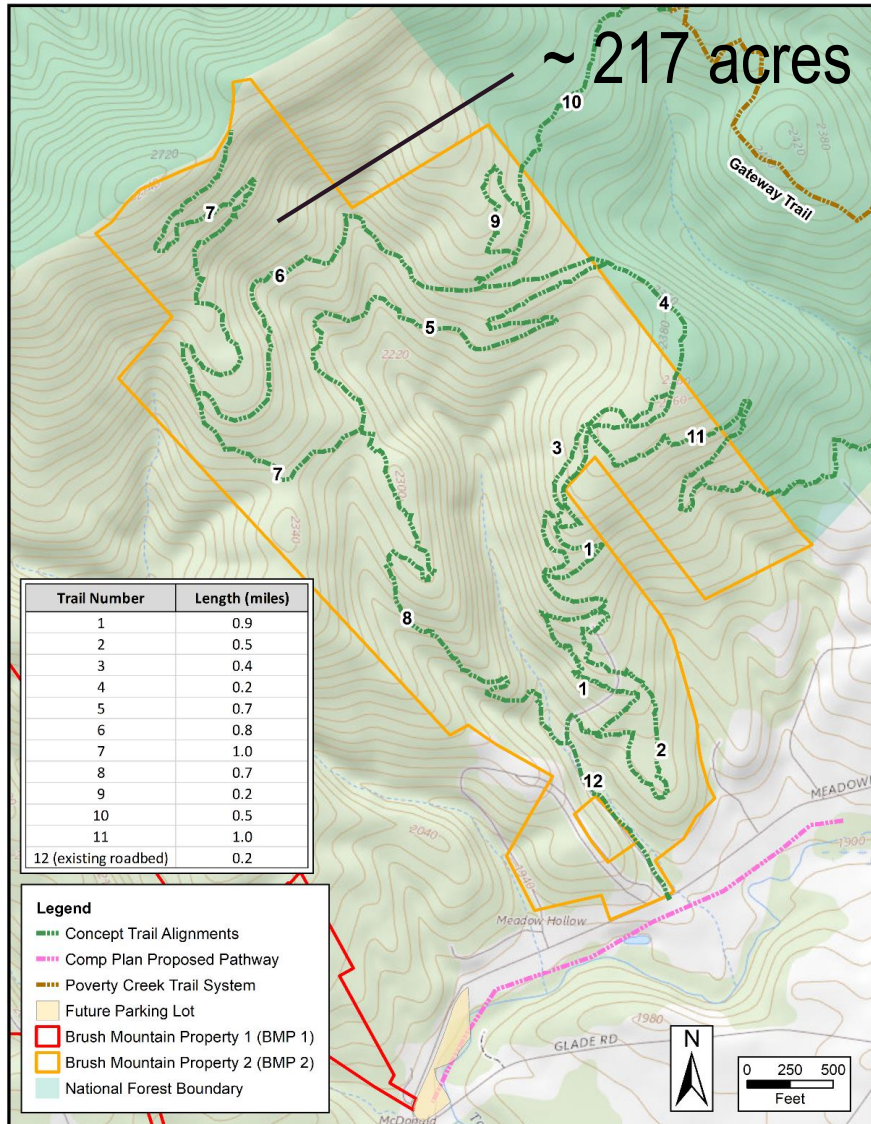
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SECTION 4: BRUSH MOUNTAIN PROPERTY #2

- Multi-use, single-track trails; varied tread construction.
- Intentional grade changes, features, challenges, and obstacles (e.g. rocks, boulders, logs, etc.)
- Trails could be limited to 24" or narrower and will be rough or technical in many sections.

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- Trails could be limited to 24" or narrower and will be rough or technical in many sections.
- Intent is to have playful and challenging features throughout.
- Trail sections designed to prioritize wheeled travel.
- Kiosks and signage to describe each trail and its intended usage.
- User experience will focus on the trail itself, rather than connectivity or setting.

Draft Concept Plan: Highlights & Key Points

SECTION 5: PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

- Property #1:
 - All trails that can be built in the next 5 years have been flagged on property #1
 - Construction can begin as soon as plan complete and permits secured.
 - Hurt & Proffitt are preparing site plans for land disturbance permits

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- Property #2:
 - This property is more challenging and may require additional planning and design before construction can begin.
- New River Land Trust and community partners are undertaking various fundraising efforts to begin constructing trails in early 2020.
- New River Land Trust and Town will continue to collaborate on fundraising and grant opportunities.

Draft Concept Plan: Highlights & Key Points

SECTION 6: GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Property 1: focus on family and beginner/intermediate experiences
- Property 2: opportunities for more challenging experiences & variable terrain

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- Community asset that merits significant community investment
- Work to garner broad support >> fundraising >> eligibility for grant funding
- Work with volunteer groups like Poverty Creek Trails Coalition >> trail building/maintenance
- Communicate a culture of sharing and cooperation among users.

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- Communicate a culture of sharing and cooperation among users.
- **Create safe and convenient connections, access, and parking.**
- **Identify long-term solutions for management and maintenance.**
- **Provide high-quality physical and digital signage & maps to enhance user experience.**

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- Create safe and convenient connections, access, and parking.
- Identify long-term solutions for management and maintenance.
- Provide high-quality physical and digital signage & maps to enhance user experience.
- **Phased implementation >> spread out cost, “lessons learned” along the way.**
- **Work toward connections with National Forest and surrounding trail systems.**
- **Address any issues with adjacent landowners.**

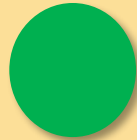
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SECTION 7: RESOURCES & REFERENCES

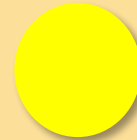
- Bureau of Land Management and the International Mountain Bike Association. *Guidelines for a Quality Trail Experience*. 2017.
- Great Outdoor Consultants. *Concept Plan for Blue Ridge Recreation Area (Prepared for Clear Creek County, Colorado)*. 2017.
- Town of Breckenridge. *Town of Breckenridge Trails Plan*. 2009.
- Appalachian Mountain Club. *The Pennsylvania Highlands Trail Network Trail Concept Plan*. 2015.
- IMBA – Trail Solutions Program. *Powers Bluff County Trails Concept Plan (Prepared for Wood County Parks and Forestry Department)*. 2018.
- National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program. *Mt. Baker Foothills Chain of Trails Concept Plan*. 2004.

Brush Mountain Properties: Questions, Discussion?

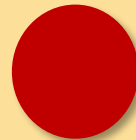
I really like this
element...



I have a question
about ...



I am concerned
about ...



Posters & Feedback

or send feedback by email through Dec 11

sustainability@blacksburg.gov

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