

Great Smoky Mountains National Park Proposed Wears Valley Mountain Bike Trail System Environmental Assessment

Welcome!

We will get started shortly

- Participants are muted.
- Have questions? Please type them in the “question and answer” box at anytime.
 - Questions will be read aloud after presentation.
 - All questions will remain anonymous.
- Please submit formal public comments at www.parkplanning.nps.gov/WearsValleyBikeTrails or by mail.

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Great Smoky Mountains National Park Proposed Wears Valley Mountain Bike Trail System Environmental Assessment (EA)

Public Scoping
Virtual Meetings
July 28 and July 30, 2020



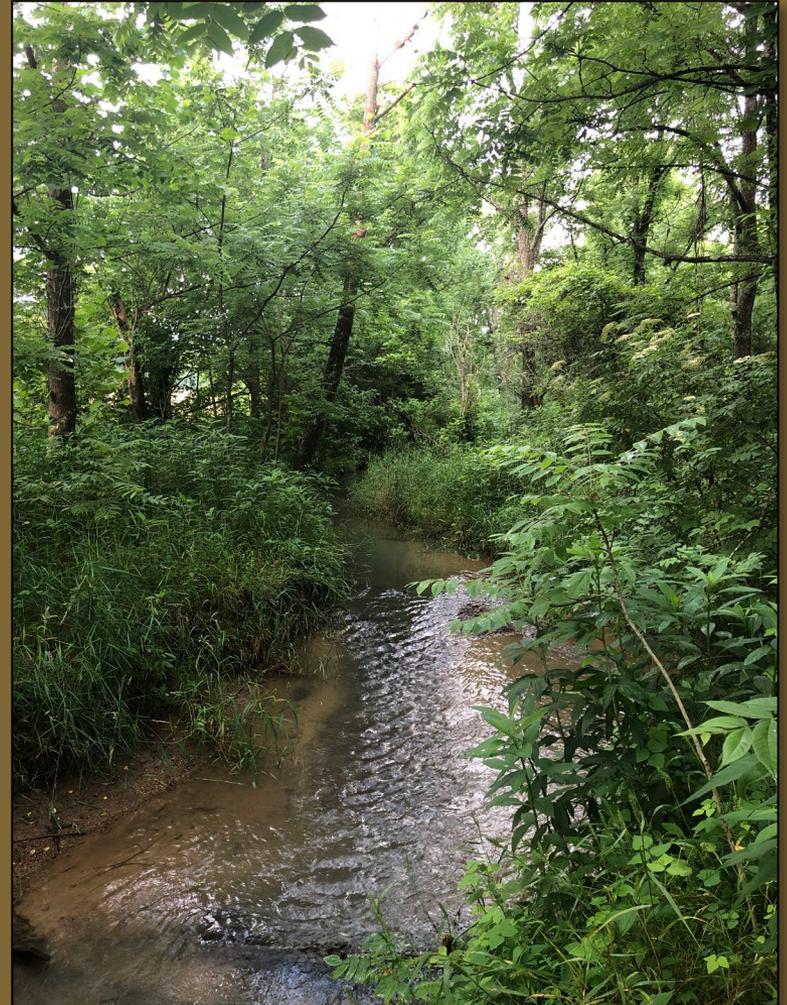
Agenda

- Welcome & Introductions
- Background & Overview
- Purpose & Need
- Existing Conditions
- Planning Process
- Alternatives
- Civic Engagement
- Environmental Surveys
- Schedule



Background and Overview

- Foothills Parkway authorized by Congress in 1944
- Section 8D undeveloped from U.S. Highway 321 in Wears Valley to Gatlinburg Spur
- The Conservation Fund engaged NPS and community stakeholders to identify recreational opportunities



Purpose

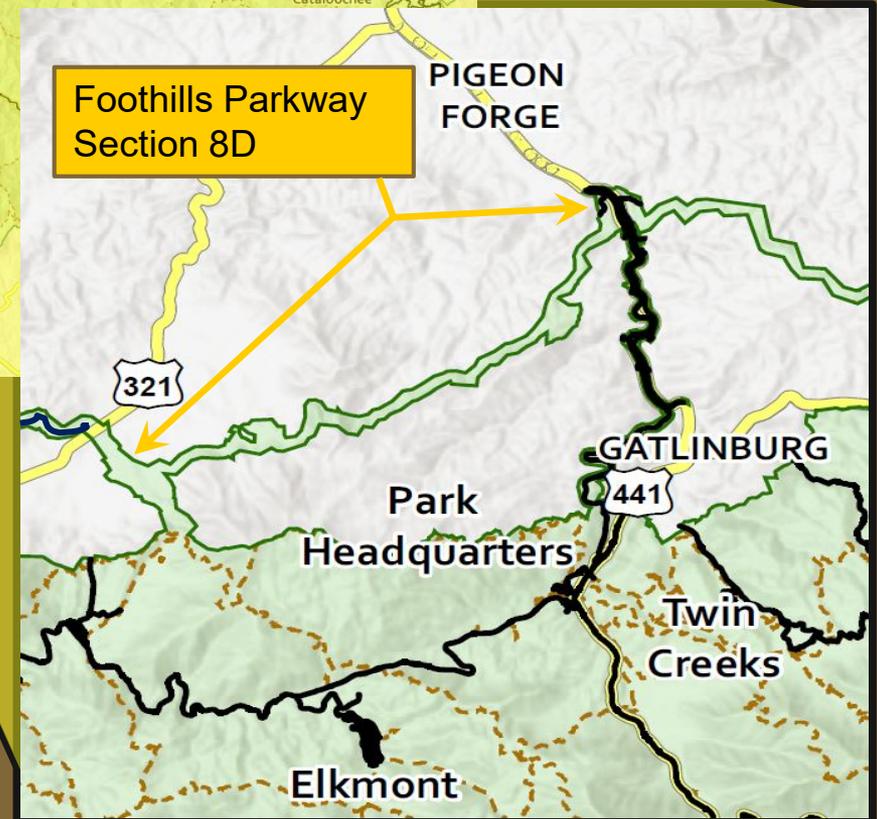
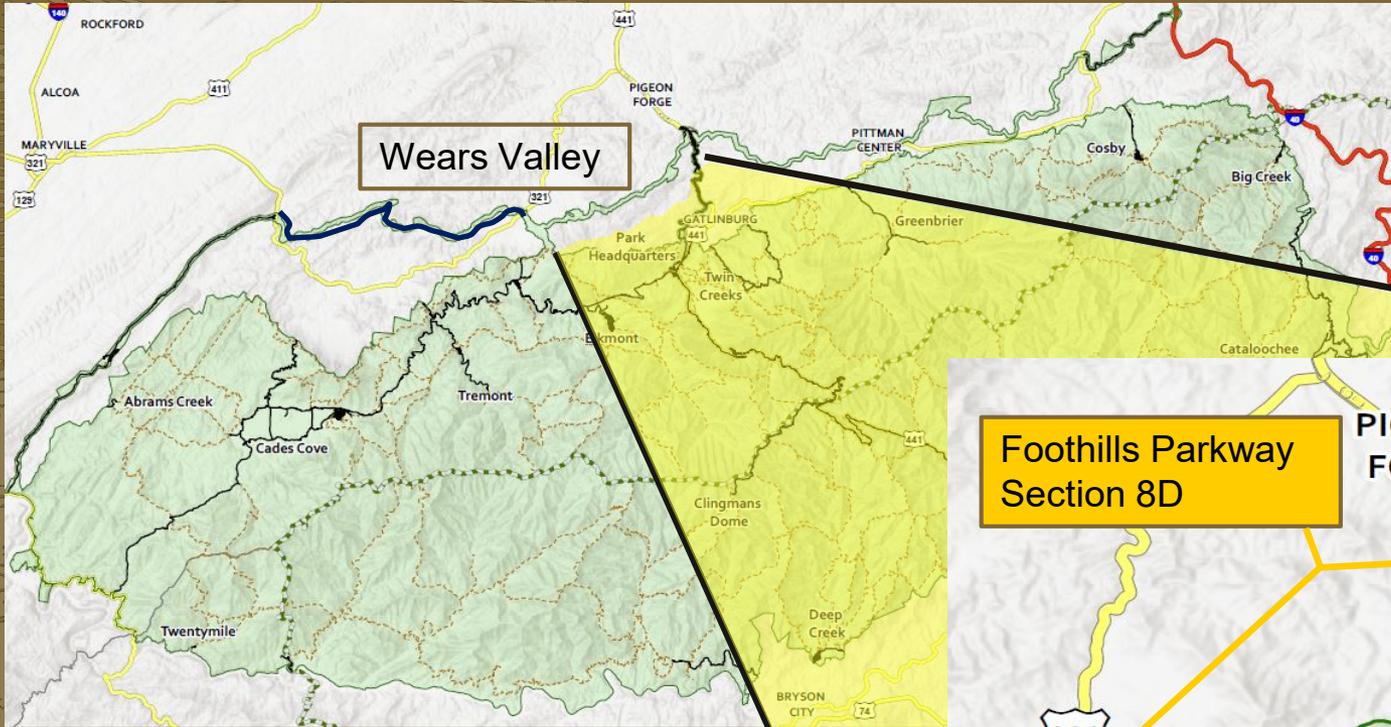
Enhance the visitor experience by providing a mountain bike trail system within the transportation corridor of the Foothills Parkway Section 8D.

Need

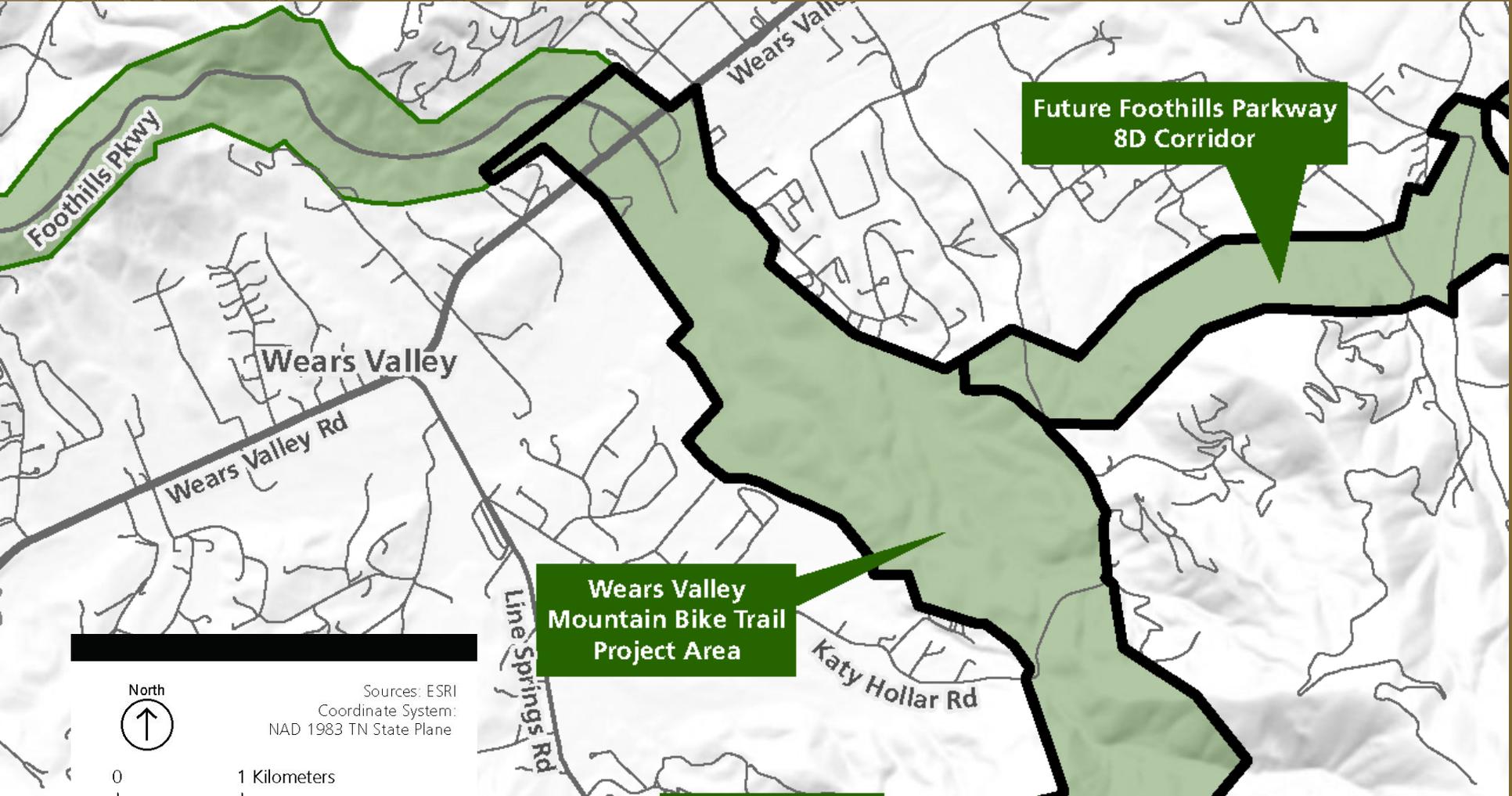
- Limited recreational opportunity
- Parkway Master Plan vision
- New compatible opportunity
- Community interest



Location: Foothills Parkway Section 8D



Project Area

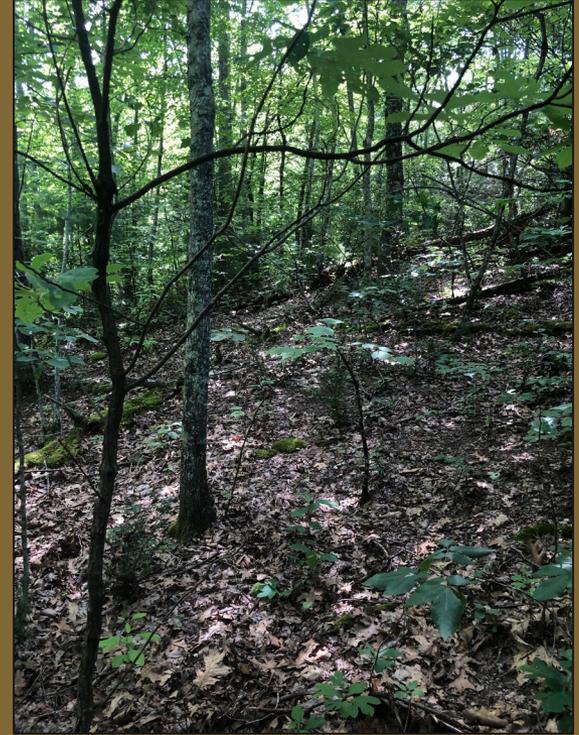


North
↑

Sources: ESRI
Coordinate System:
NAD 1983 TN State Plane

0 1 Kilometers
0 1 Miles

Existing Conditions



Planning Process to Date

- Feasibility Study Kickoff (December 2019)
- Stakeholder Engagement (February-March 2020)
- Civic Engagement (April-May 2020)
- Alternatives Development and Refinement (January-Present)
- Supporting Environmental Surveys (April – August 2020)



Alternatives Development

- Range of experiences and mileage
- Consider maximum slopes
- User conflict
- Phased approach



What might the trails look like?



Three Preliminary Alternatives

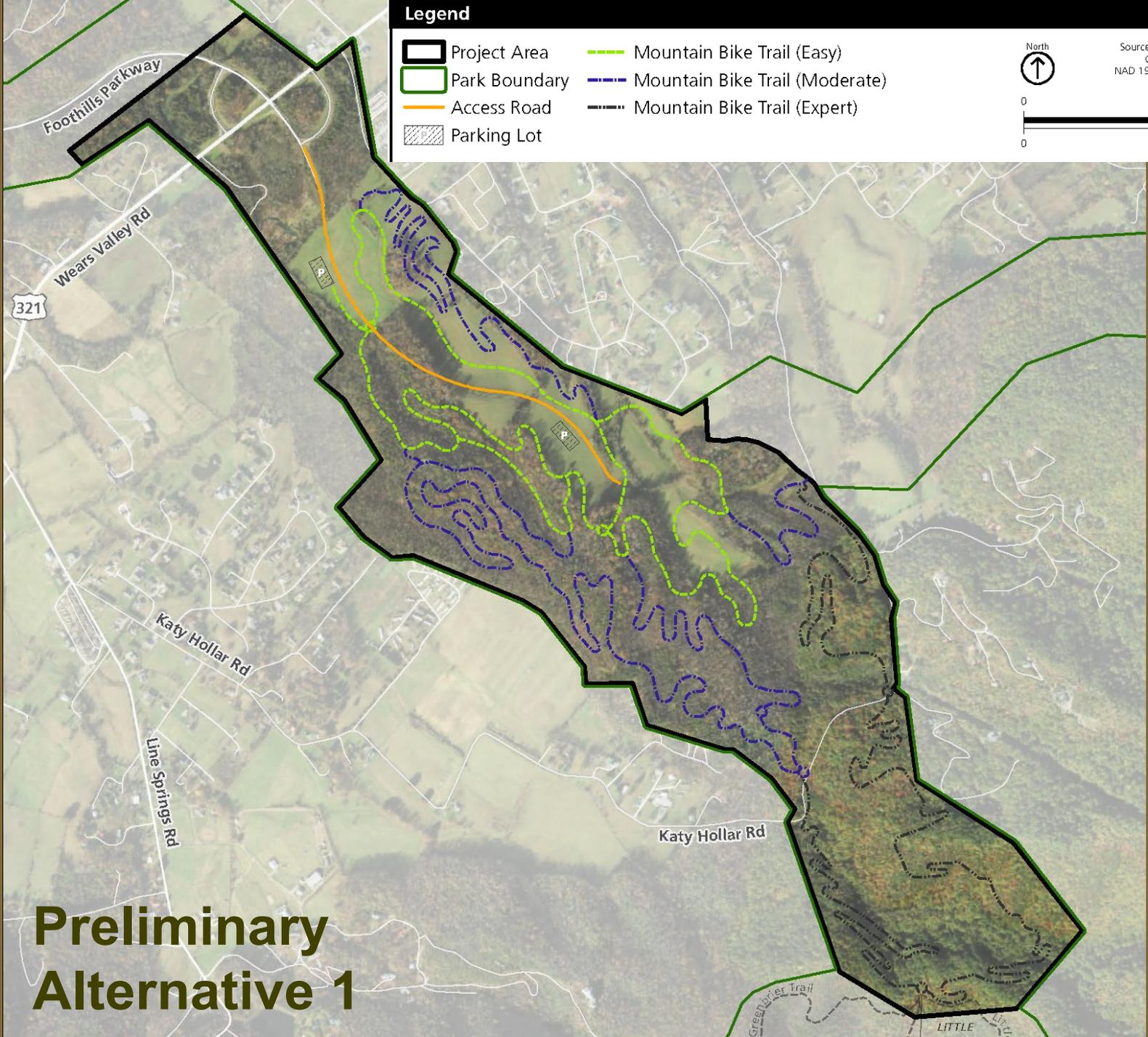
Common to all 3:

- “Stacked loops” design for all ability levels
- 1-2 parking lots
- Comfort station
- Possible bike rental facility
- Information kiosk
- Water filling station
- Bike repair/wash station
- Shade/picnic shelters



Conceptual bike repair station and info kiosk.





Legend

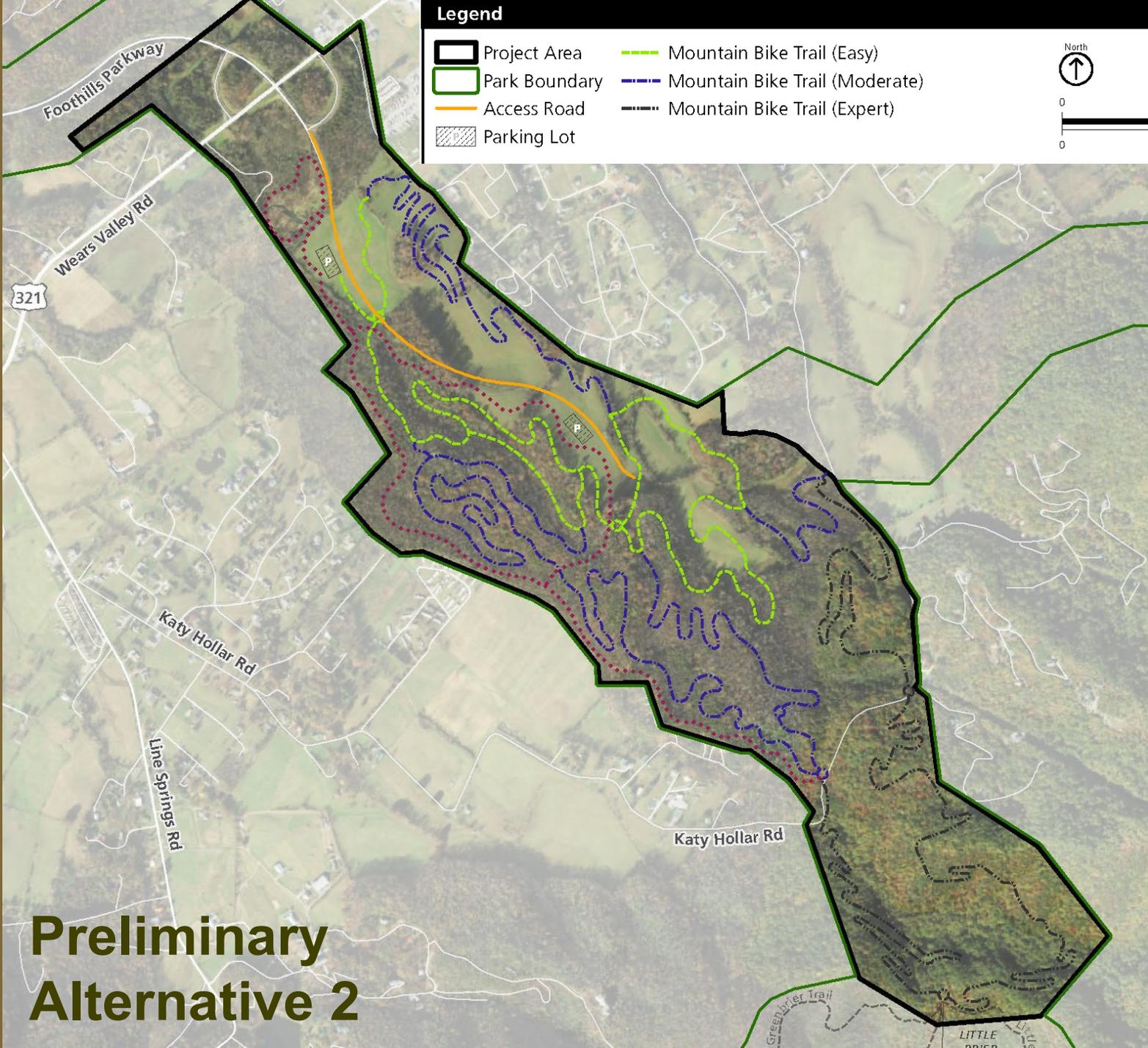
- Project Area
- Park Boundary
- Access Road
- Parking Lot
- Mountain Bike Trail (Easy)
- Mountain Bike Trail (Moderate)
- Mountain Bike Trail (Expert)

North

 0 400 Meters
 0 1,200 Feet

Sources: ESRI, NAIP 2018
 Coordinate System:
 NAD 1983 TN State Plane

**Preliminary
 Alternative 1**



Legend

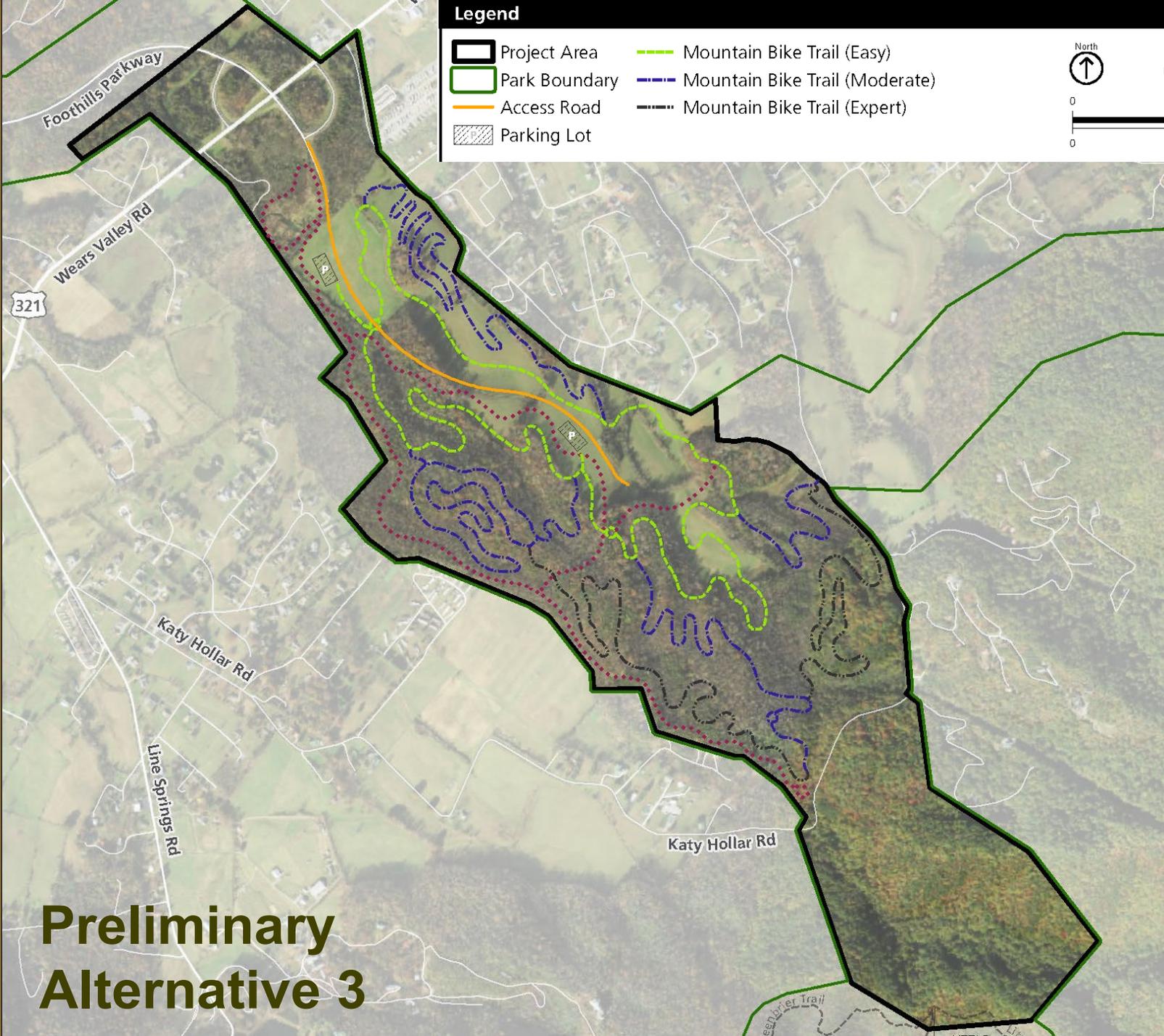
- Project Area
- Mountain Bike Trail (Easy)
- Mountain Bike Trail (Moderate)
- Access Road
- Mountain Bike Trail (Expert)
- Parking Lot

North

 0 400 Meters
 0 1,200 Feet

Sources: ESRI, NAIP 2018
 Coordinate System:
 NAD 1983 TN State Plane

**Preliminary
 Alternative 2**



Legend

-  Project Area
-  Park Boundary
-  Access Road
-  Parking Lot
-  Mountain Bike Trail (Easy)
-  Mountain Bike Trail (Moderate)
-  Mountain Bike Trail (Expert)

North

 0 400 Meters
 0 1,200 Feet

Sources: ESRI, NAIP 2018
 Coordinate System:
 NAD 1983 TN State Plane

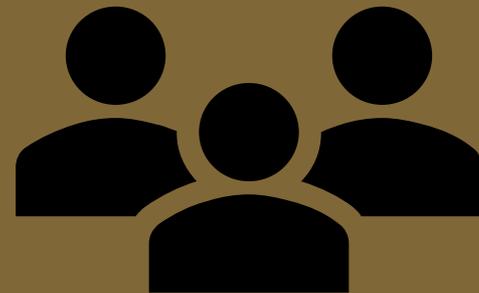
**Preliminary
 Alternative 3**

Preliminary Alternatives Summary

Preliminary Alternative	Miles of Trail				
	Easy	Moderate	Advanced	TOTAL (Mountain Bike Only)	Hiking/ Birding
1	3.5	5.8	3.6	12.9	0
2	4.3	4.5	3.6	12.4	2.5
3	3.0	4.9	2.1	10	3.4

Civic Engagement Summary

- 30-day comment period in May
 - More than 150 responses
 - Trail design and crowd management
 - Specific amenities
 - Concerns about resource impacts
 - Traffic
 - Wetlands
 - Soils
 - Wildlife



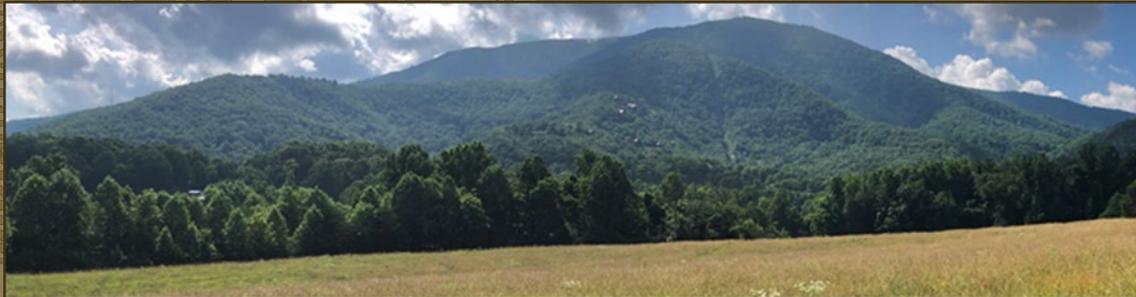
Resource Surveys

- Botany
- Archeological Survey
- Wetlands
- Birds
- Bats



Next Steps

- Review all public and agency scoping comments
- Finalize alternatives
- Agency consultation
- Draft EA and release for public review (anticipated October 2020)
- Public meeting for EA
- Analysis of public comments
- Decision (late December 2020)



Question and Answer Session



Please submit formal public comments at www.parkplanning.nps.gov/WearsValleyBikeTrails or by mail.