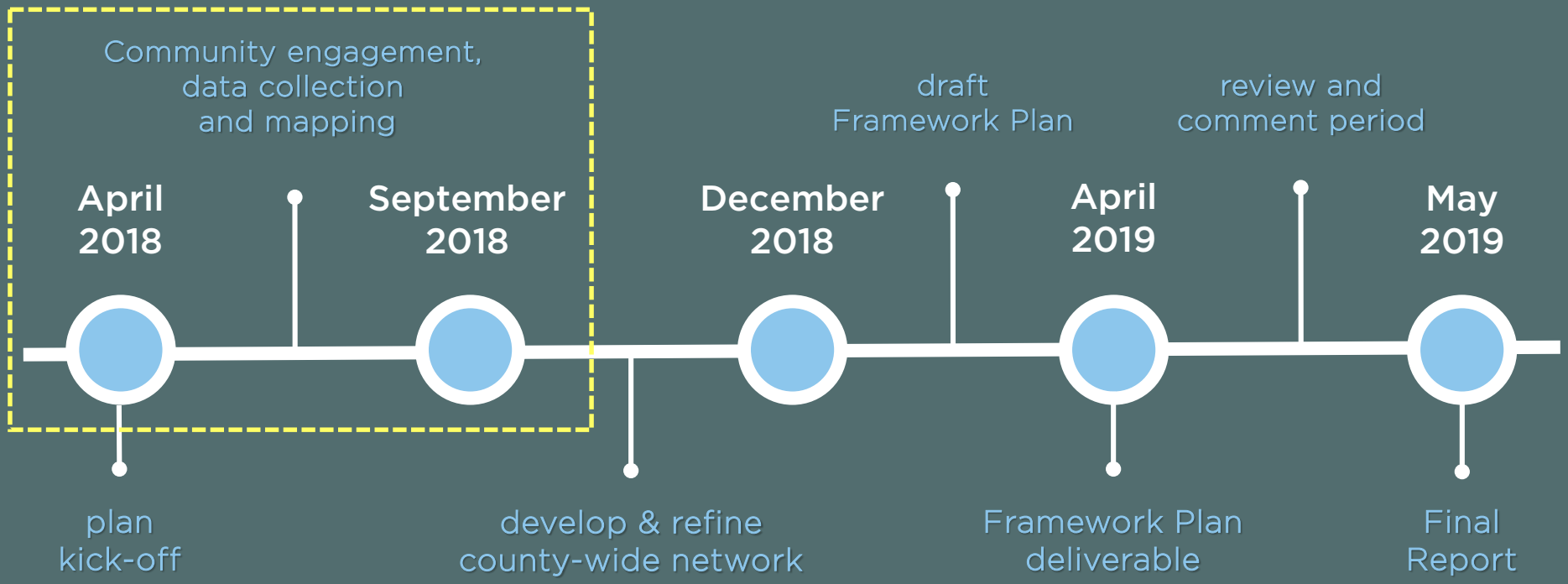
CONNECTING VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

PUBLIC MEETING # 1 – November 29, 2018

Agenda

- Status Update
  - Community Engagement
  - Technical Assessment
  - Initial Findings & Assessment
- Next Steps & Milestones
- Questions
- Interactive Review of Work Products

Combined Work Plan & Timeline



Community Engagement Activities

- Group Discussions
  - Focus Groups – 3 meetings
  - Community "Pop-up" events – 10 events
  - ESL Class Group Discussions – 2 events
  - Senior Center Discussion Group – 2 events
  - Somerset Co. Youth Leadership – 1 event

Crowdsourcing, Social Media, Etc.

- Online survey – close to 1,000 responses
- WikiMapping – more than 470 comments
- Project website – live since July http://bit.ly/WalkBikeHikeSC
- Press releases, E-mail blasts, Facebook ad
- More than 40 e-mail comments & suggestions

Survey Overview

- Open early July through September 1st
- **958** responses
- **95%** of respondents live in Somerset County
- **47%** work in Somerset County
- **6%** go to school in Somerset County
- Most respondents interested in dedicated facilities for walking and biking
- Traffic stress a common concern and deterrent

Travel Mode & Barriers

- Health and recreation are the most common reasons for walking and bicycling
- The most common barriers to walking are distance to destination (61%), lack of sidewalks (53%), and fear of vehicle collision (25%)
- Among those who have school age children who do not walk or bike to school, distance is the biggest factor **(59%)**, followed by lack of safe walking routes **(44%)** and safe bicycling routes **(40%)**
- The most common barriers to biking are lack of bike lanes (69%) and fear of collision with a vehicle (60%)

Trail Use

- 76% of respondents have used public trails in Somerset County during the past year.
- 17% use Somerset County trails or paths more than once a week
- An additional 41% use trails/paths a few times per month
- The most popular trails are Duke Farms (62%), D&R Canal (57%), Duke Island Park (55%), Colonial Park (44%), Natirar Park (33%), and Sourland Mountain Preserve (33%)
- 59% of respondents use trails for walking and 22% use them for bicycling

Desired Amenities & Improvements

Improvements for Walking and Bicycling

- Sidewalks connecting to their destinations
- More bike lanes
- More off-road bike paths and trails
- Better connections between bike lanes/paths/trails
- Shorter intersection crossings distances and pedestrian refuges

Improvements for Trails

- Better trail information and wayfinding
- More trails in general
- Improved connections between trails
- More vehicle parking at trailheads

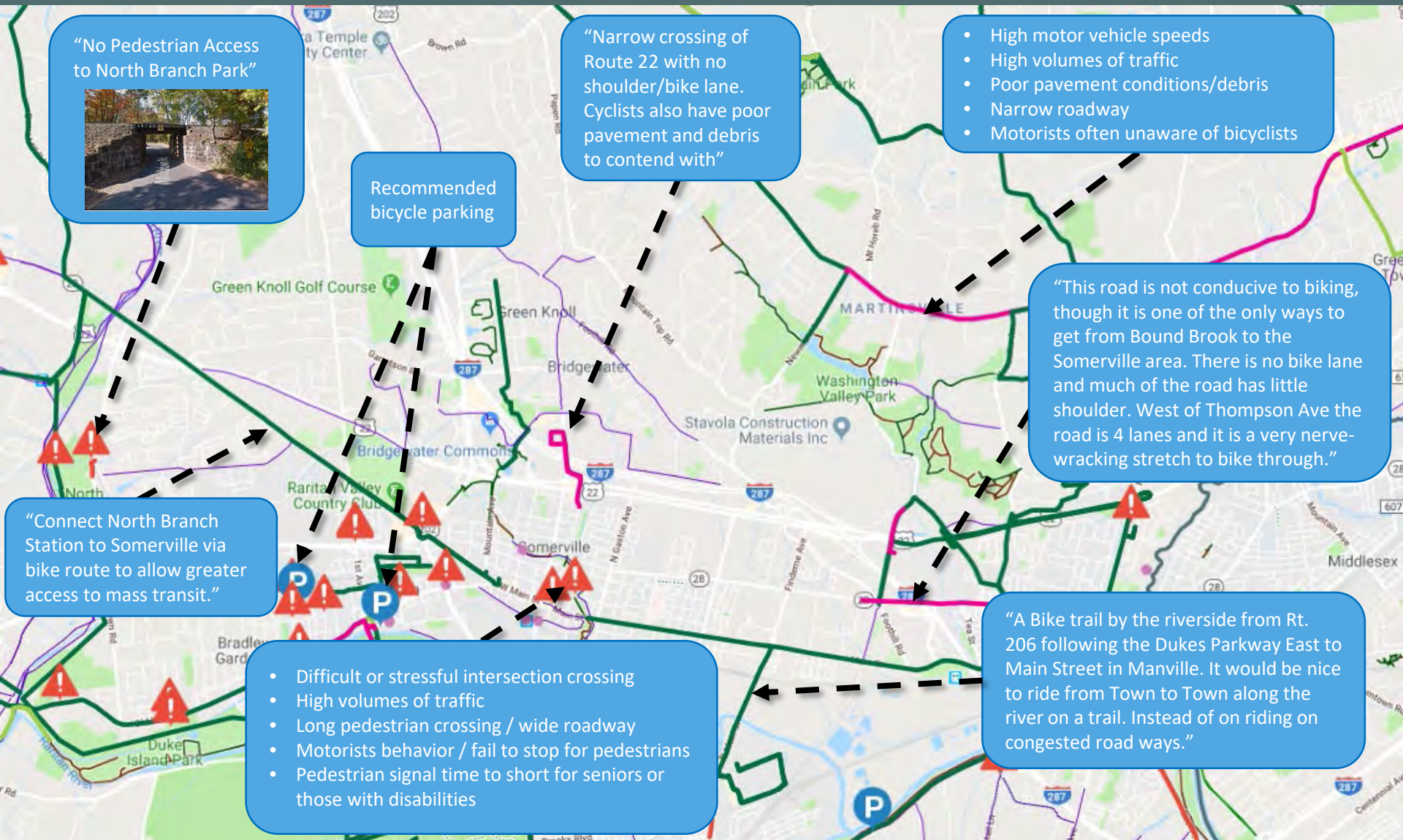
Interactive "WikiMapping" Tool

- Problem areas
  - Challenging and "stressful" intersections
  - Barriers, gaps, and missing links
  - Busy street crossings
- Comments and Suggestions
  - Desired routes and destinations
  - New trails or on-street facilities
  - Bicycle parking and amenities
  - Favorite trails and locations

WikiMap: Problem Areas

- Problem Corridor - Bike
- Problem Corridor - Ped
- Problem Intersection or Crossing

Sample "WikiMapping" Comments



WikiMap: Desired Routes

— Desired Routes

Technical Assessment

- Previous Studies and Recommendations
- Crash Data
- Cycling Level of Traffic Stress
- Island Effect

Previous Studies & Recommendations

- Reviewed 65+ studies & plans
- More than 400 multimodal recommendations
  - Pedestrian improvements
  - Bicycle facilities & trails
  - Enhanced crosswalk treatments
  - Traffic calming
  - Bicycle racks
- These will be integrated into the draft network plan

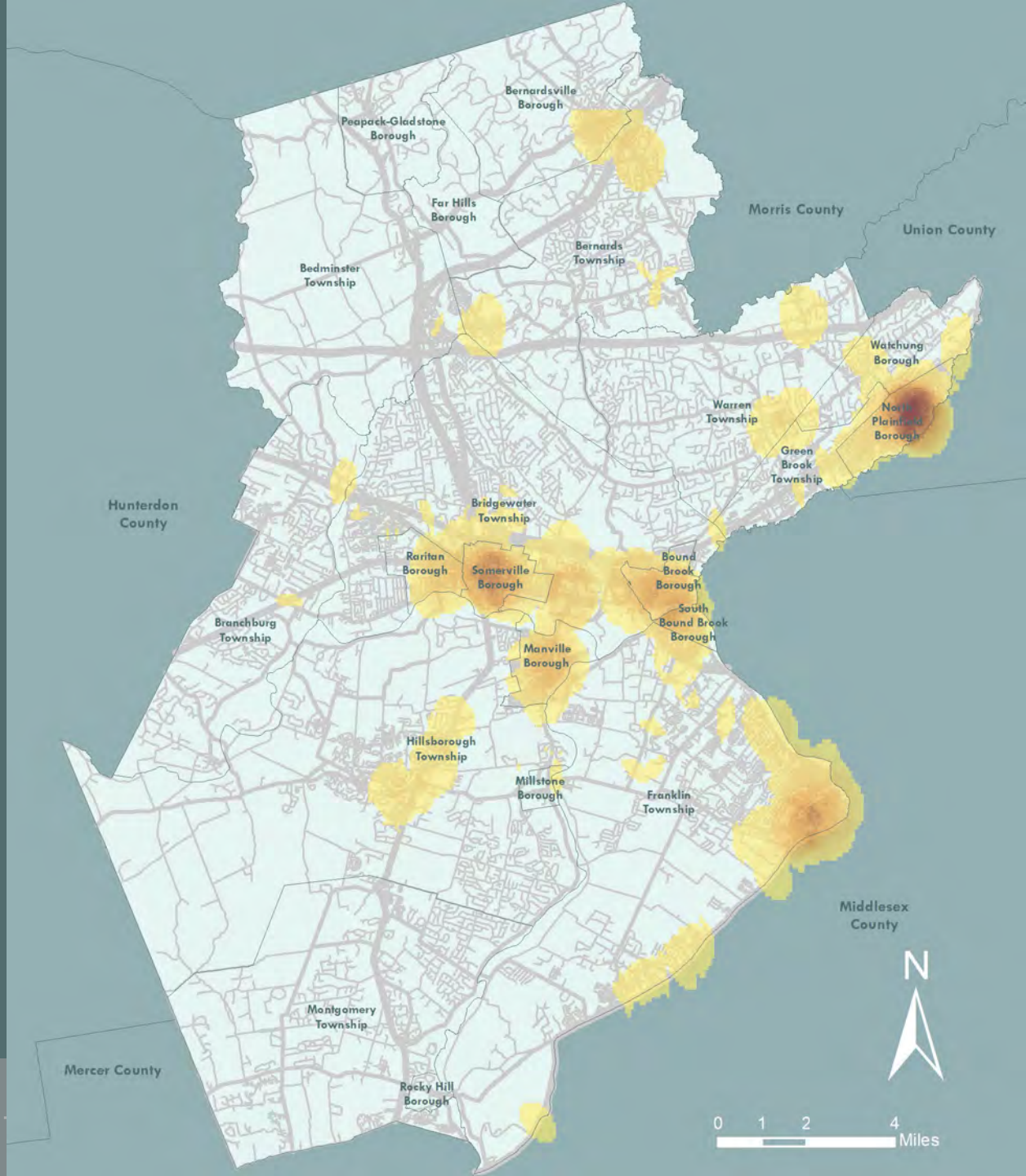
Crash Data Assessment

- Total of 437 crashes in 3-yr period (2014-2016)
  - 275 pedestrian crashes
  - 164 bicycle crashes
  - Total increased each year
- Few deviations from statewide patterns
  - Ped crash rate per capita about ½ statewide avg.
  - More frequent on high speed/volume roads
  - Severity higher than statewide averages
- Most deviations related to suburban/rural nature of County, more activity on busy roads

Crash Hotspots

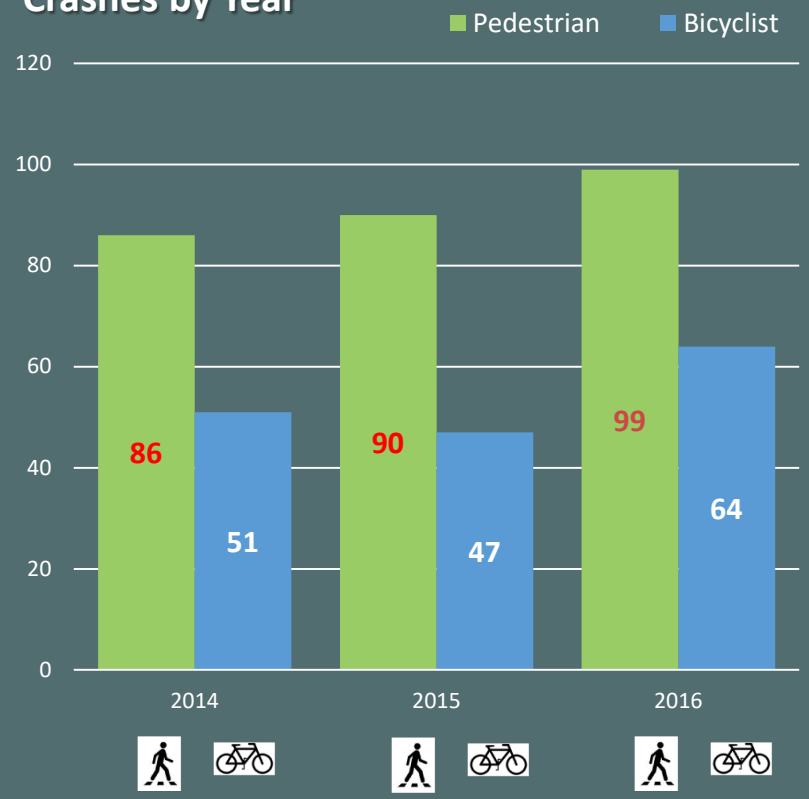
Low

High

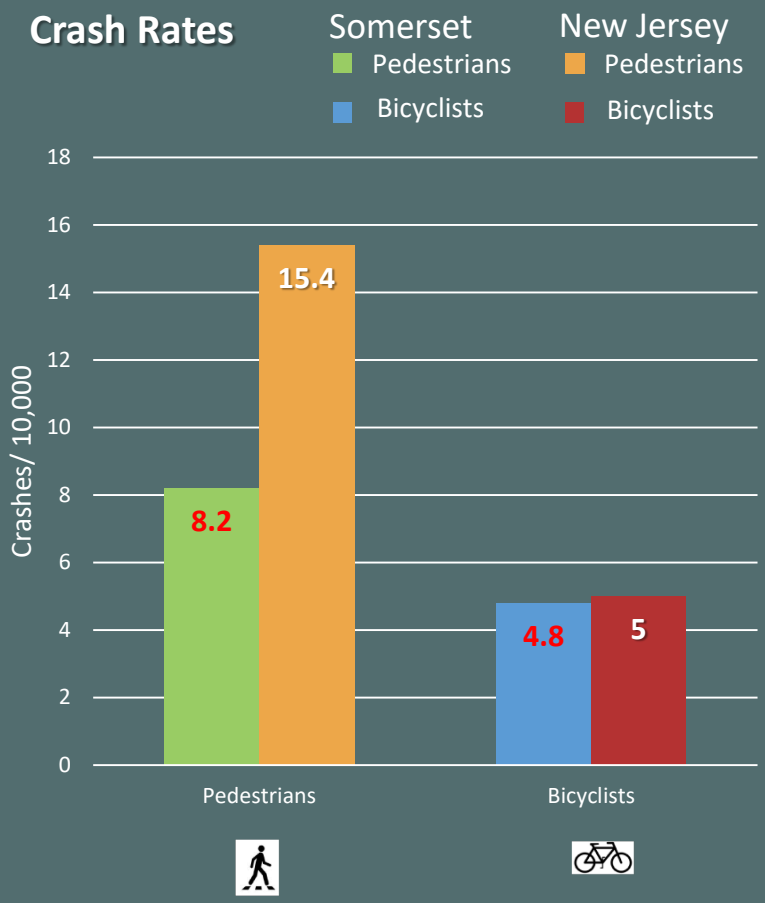


Crash Data Summary

Crashes by Year



Crash Rates



Cycling Level of Traffic Stress

- Evaluates comfort level of the cyclist
- Based on roadway conditions and context
- Identifies barriers to access and mobility
- Traffic Stress
  - Caused by proximity to traffic volumes, speed
  - Reduced by lower speeds & greater separation
- Goal is a “low stress – all ages” network

Four Levels of Traffic Stress (LTS)

Low Stress

High Stress

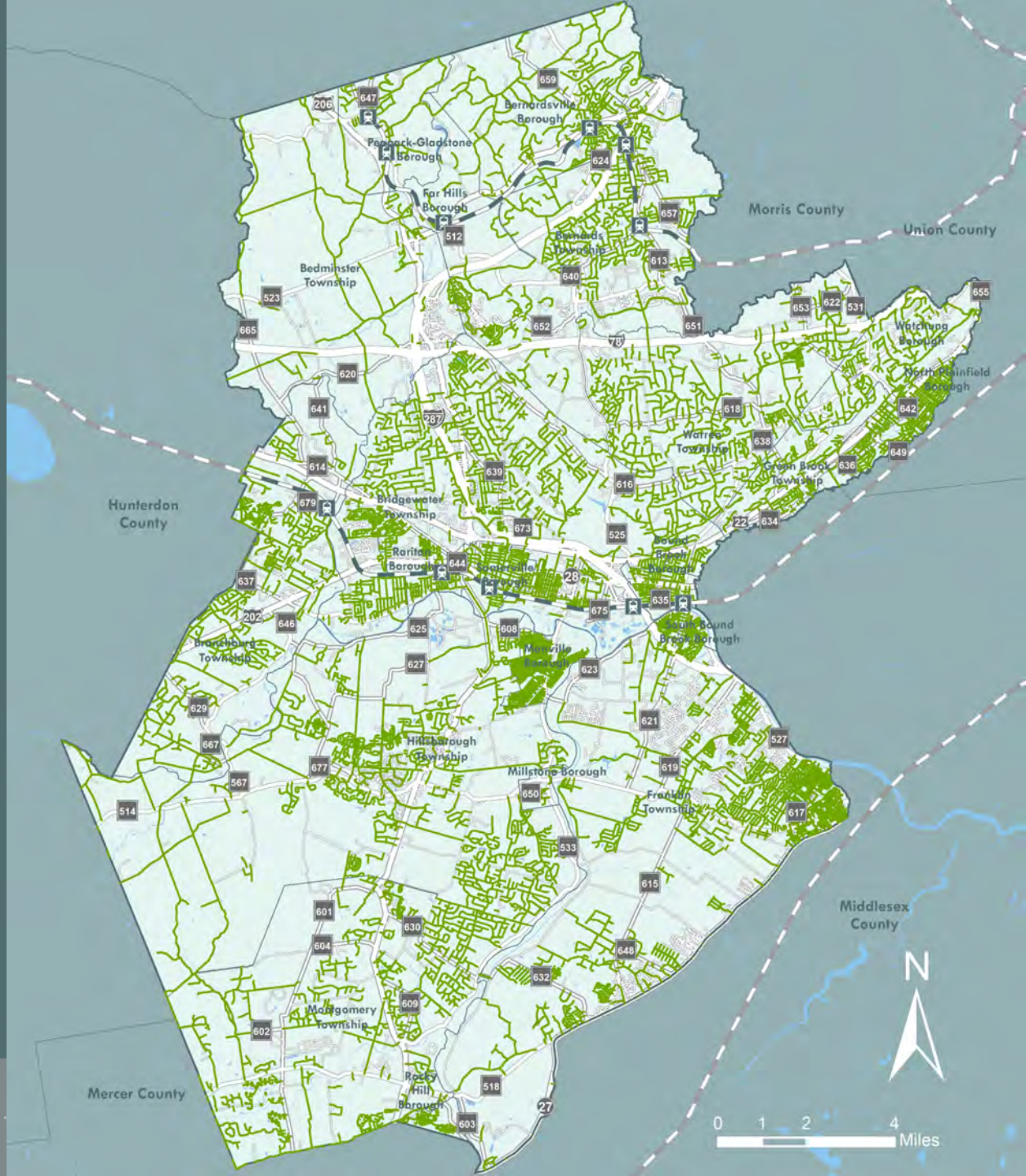
LTS 1	LTS 2	LTS 3	LTS 4
All Ages 8-80	Most Adults	Skilled	Most Experienced

Level of Traffic Stress Analysis

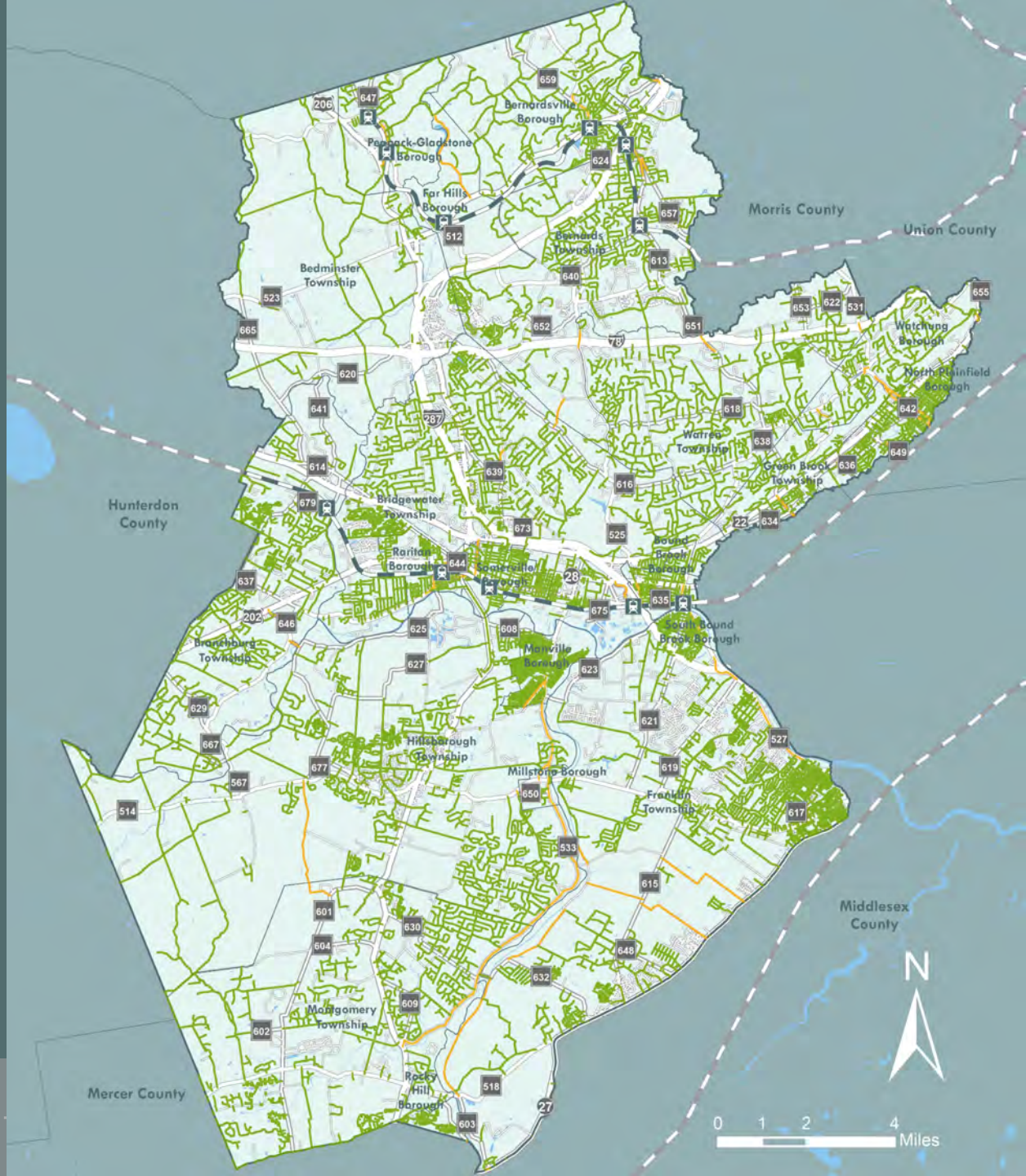
Level of Traffic Stress

1	74%	of all Roadways

*excluding Interstates and Ramps



Level of Traffic Stress Analysis



Level of Traffic Stress

1	74%	of all Roadways
2	3%	

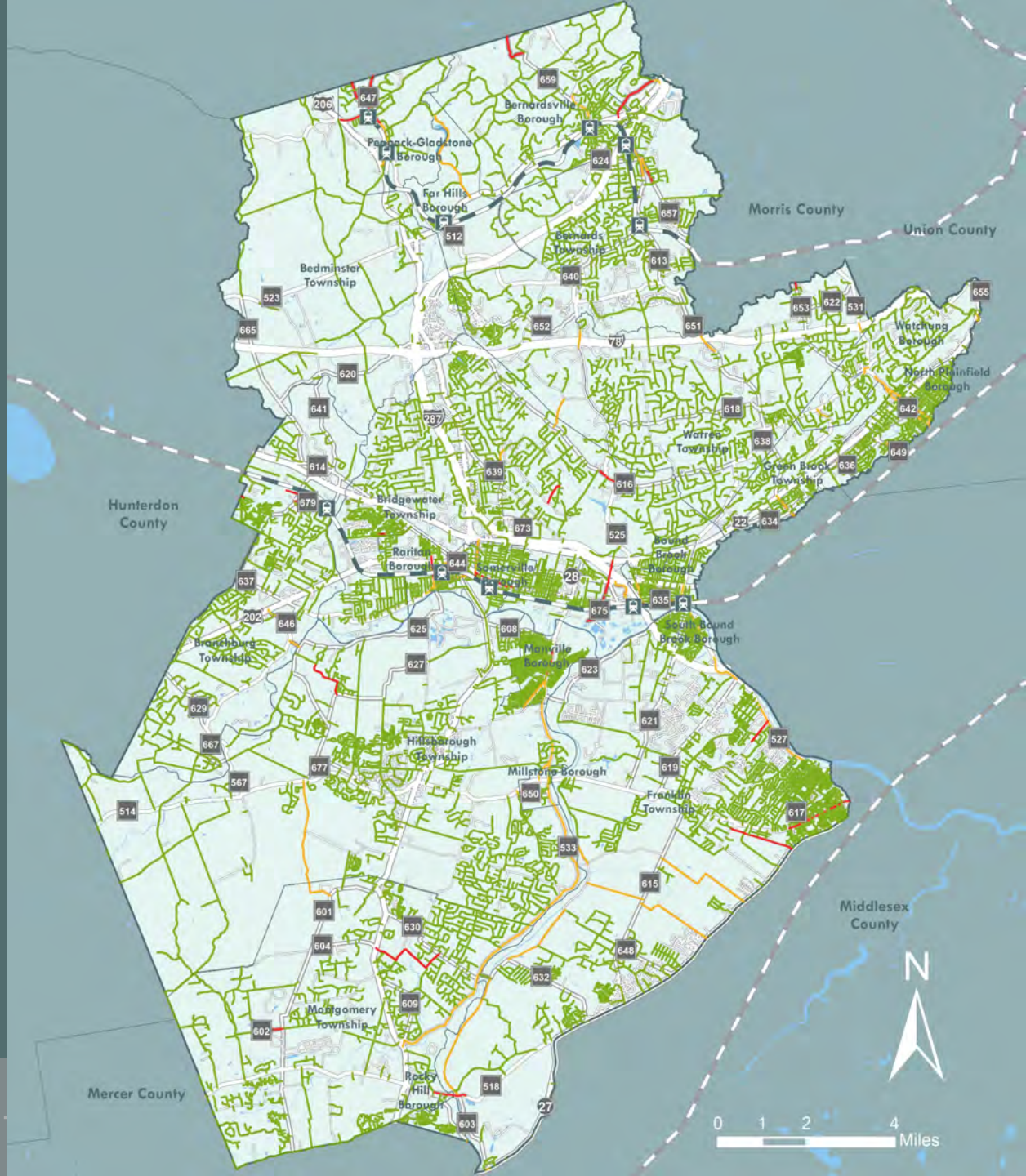
*excluding Interstates and Ramps

Level of Traffic Stress Analysis

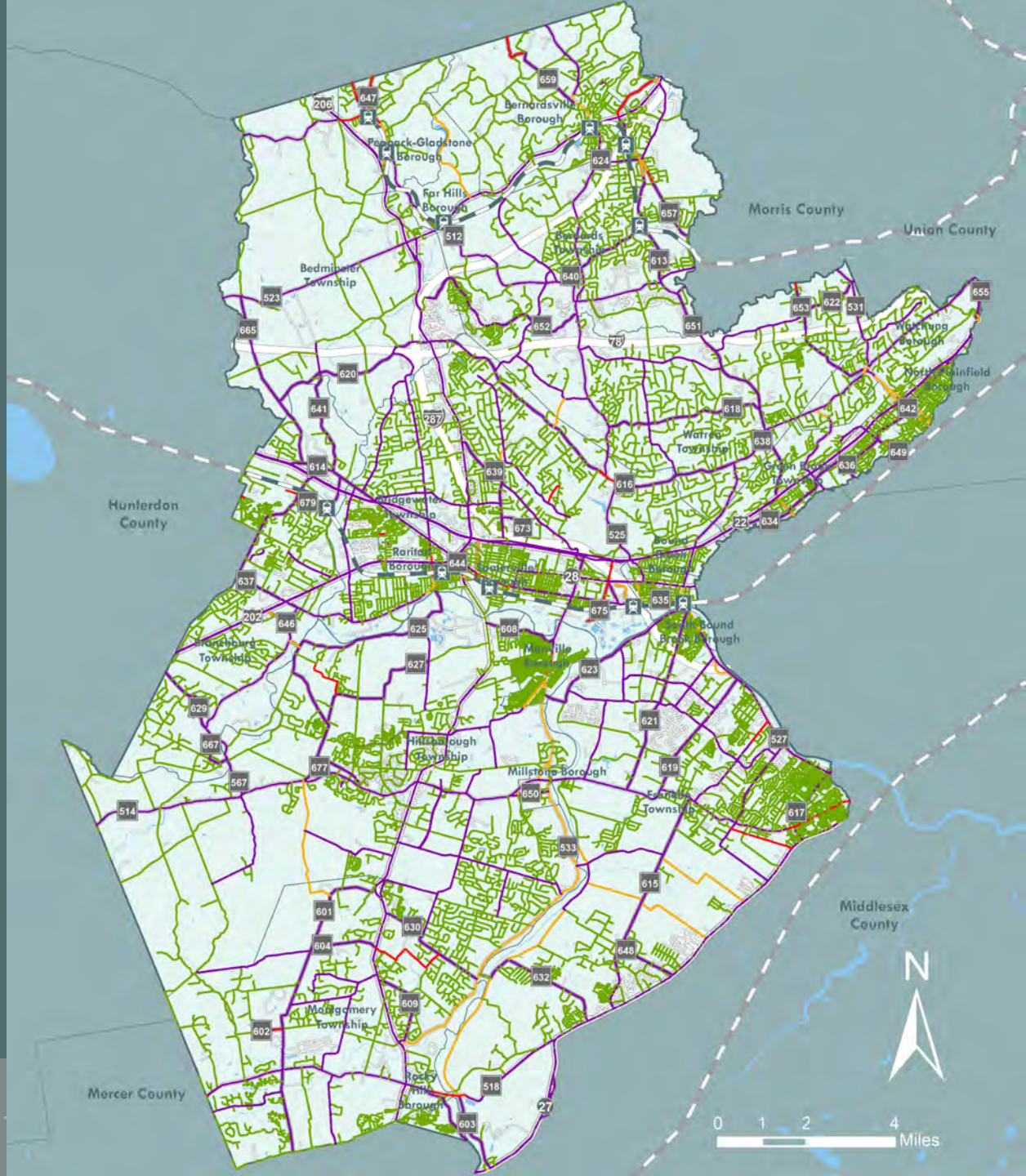
Level of Traffic Stress

1	74%		
2	3%	of all	Roadways
3	1%		

*excluding Interstates and Ramps



Level of Traffic Stress Analysis



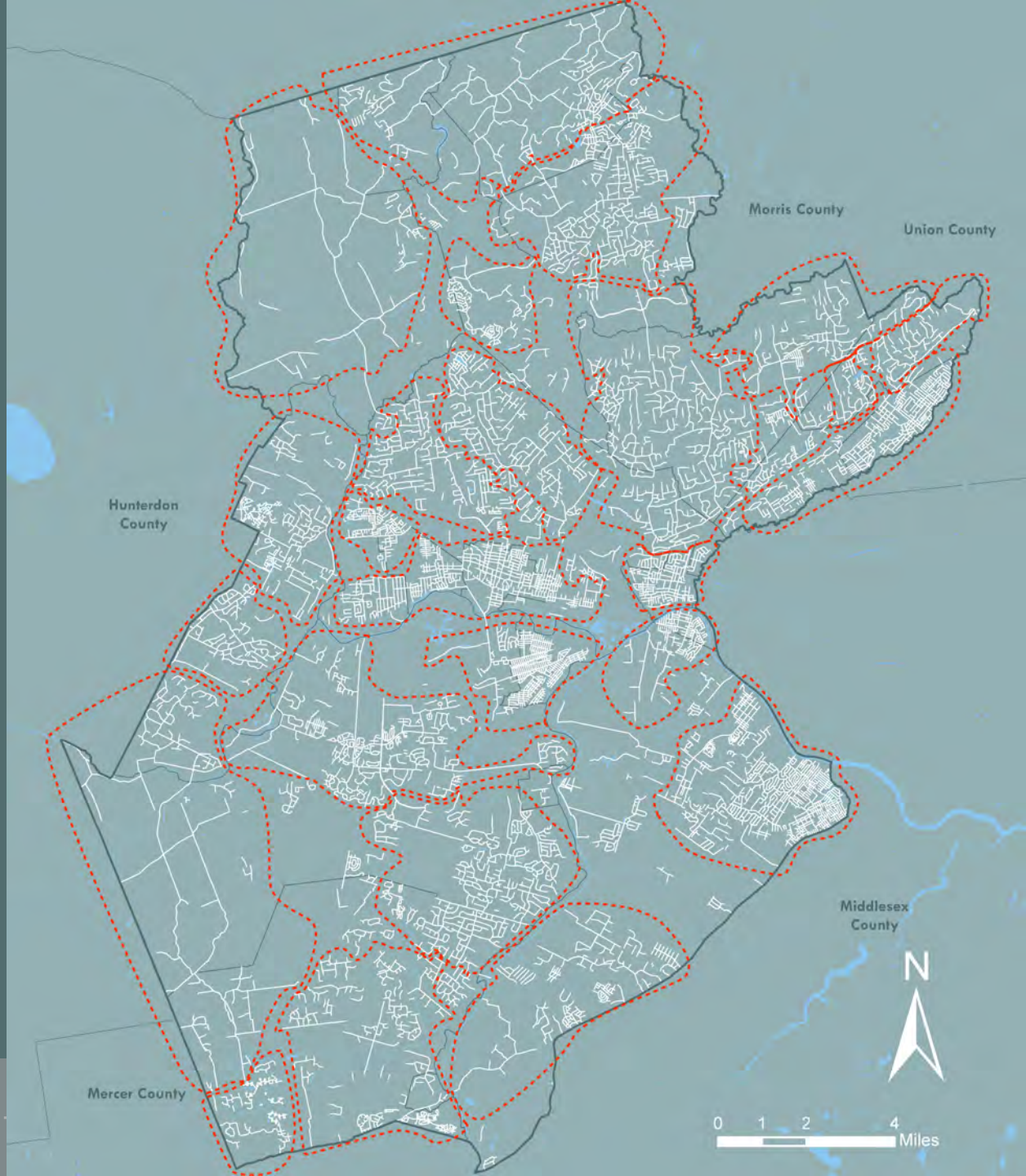
Level of Traffic Stress

1	74%	
2	3%	of all Roadways
3	1%	
4	23%	

*excluding Interstates and Ramps

“Island Effect”

Composite Low-stress network (LTS =1)



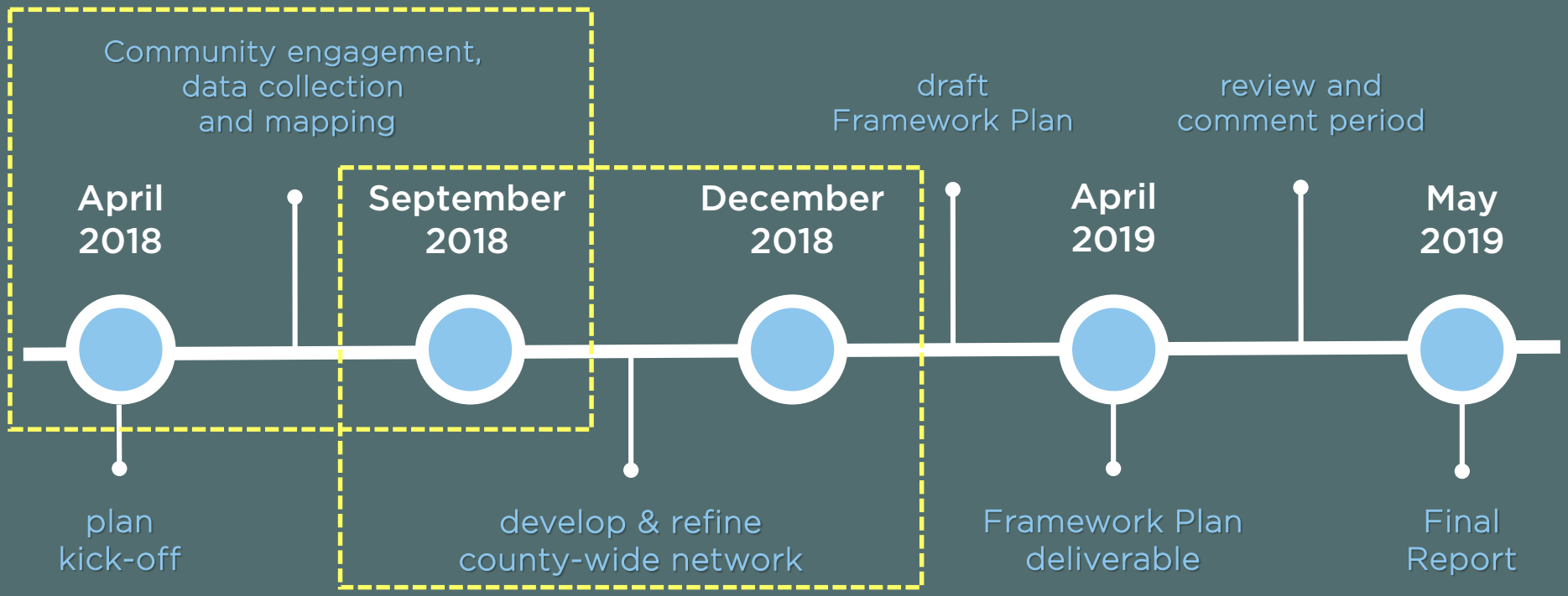
Initial Assessment – Engagement

- Widespread support and interest
- Traffic stress a common concern and deterrent
- Many prefer dedicated facilities
- Leverage partnerships for implementation
- Integrate with county and municipal planning and engineering responsibilities
- Goal is a “low stress – all ages” network
- Emphasis on both mobility and destinations

Initial Assessment – Technical Elements

- 400+ recommendations from previous studies
- Most crashes on state and county roadways
  - Speeds, volumes, lack of facilities limit viability
- Significant barriers exist in on-street network
  - Highways, arterials, natural barriers, and terrain severely constrain multimodal access and mobility
  - Limited on-street opportunities
- Off-street system essential to developing a viable low-stress network
- Reconnect Somerset County's many "islands"

Work Plan & Timeline – Next Steps



Next Up: Develop County-wide Network

- Walk-Bike-Hike "Low stress – all ages"
- Connect people with destinations
- Emphasis on both mobility and destinations
- Comprehensive, Interconnected Network
- Reconnect the "Islands"
- Includes on-street, trails, crossings, amenities

Your Questions and Comments

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