

Henderson County
RAIL-TRAIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
April 13, 2022

The RTAC held a regularly scheduled meeting on April 13, 2022, at 10:00 a.m. in the King Street Meeting Room.

Voting Member	Present	Not in Attendance
Chuck McGrady, Chair	√	
Chris Burns, Vice Chair	√	
Douglas Moon, at-large	√	
Selena Einwechter, at-large		√
David Adams, at-large	√	
Dr. Ken Shelton, at-large	√	
Brent Detwiler, City of Hendersonville	√	
Nancy McKinnley, Town of Laurel Park	√	
Mike Egan, Conserving Carolina	√	

Also present: Chris Todd, Business & Community Development Director; Janna Bianculli, Senior Planner; and Marcus Jones, County Engineer.

Chair McGrady called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

Welcome

Chair McGrady welcomed the committee and noted that Chris Burns was joining remotely.

Approval of Meeting Summary

No changes. Unanimous approval.

Updates

Conserving Carolina

Kieran Roe, Director, shared that the City of Brevard applied for a \$15 million RAISE grant for the 8 mile portion of the trail within Transylvania County. He also remarked that Transylvania County's portion of the trail is not open to public access. New signs were installed, and information was posted on various forums to convey this information. RTAC members should share this with the public as well.

Friends of the Ecusta Trail

Hunter Marks, President, reiterated that the Transylvania County side of the trail is not open to the public. Conserving Carolina only has a lease agreement with Henderson County for trail use, so until Transylvania or Brevard enters into an agreement, the trail will likely remain closed.

Discussion

Vaughn & Melton Presentation

Project Engineer Joel Setzer presented information to the RTAC regarding the kickoff meeting and the relevant progress. He and the V&M team asked the RTAC to consider the width of the trail in various rural/urban settings as well as to consider emergency access to the trail as they consider the engineering and design. The Chairman asked the committee members to consider the information presented and to decide at their meeting in May. Mr. Setzer's presentation can be accessed [here](#).

Potential Funding Update

Janna Bianculli, Senior Planner, noted that the County applied for over \$10 million in STBG and TAP grant funds through the French Broad River MPO for construction of the final phase of the Ecusta Trail in Henderson County from US 64 in Horseshoe to the county line. For this round of applications, the MPO has a little less than \$14 million available in grant funding. They received over \$29 million in application request. The County's project is the largest application with Buncombe County's Woodfin Greenway in a close second. The County's representatives on the MPO Board will need to champion for this project if it is deemed in the County's best interest. The funding awarded in this round will be made available in federal fiscal year 2027.

County staff is working with staff from the municipalities, Brevard, MPO, and RPO to potentially apply jointly for the Nationally Significant Federal Lands and Tribal Projects grant. This grant provides funding for the construction of nationally significant projects within, adjacent to, or accessing federal lands. The Pisgah National Forest could sponsor the application work as a partner to show how the Ecusta Trail could connect urban areas to the forest. More information regarding this grant can be found [here](#).

Trail Use Update

The trail is becoming widely used which comes with some expected issues. There is an immediate need for clear and consistent signage to remind trail users to respect private property, keep the trail clean, keep their animals leashed, etc. Chairman McGrady concurred and directed staff to continue this effort.

City of Hendersonville Trail Development

Brent Detwiler, City Engineer, stated that the city is committed to assisting the County in finishing the Ecusta Trail for the portion not covered under the current STBG grant scope from Kanuga Road to just past N. Main Street. The RTAC by consensus was in support of the both the City and County's efforts with getting this section completed.

Public Comment and Additional Comment

Lynn Huffman gave comment regarding the need for safe access to Main St and other desirable destinations from the Ecusta Trail.

George Banta commented that most trails are serviced via ATVs or other small vehicles for emergency response that can easily navigate the tight and crowded trail.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:25 a.m.