

**Henderson County
RAIL-TRAIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Monthly Meeting
Wednesday, May 14, 2025**

The RTAC held a regularly called meeting on May 14, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. in the King Street Meeting Room and via Microsoft Teams. Voting members present online are denoted with the letter “O”.

Voting Member	Present	Not in Attendance
Chris Burns, Chair	X	
Selena Einwechter, Vice Chair		X
Douglas Moon, at-large	X	
Patrick Kennedy, at-large	X	
Bart Salvaggio, at-large	X	
Ken Shelton, at-large	X	
Brent Detwiler, City of Hendersonville		X
Nancy McKinley, Town of Laurel Park	X	
Mike Egan, Conserving Carolina	O	

Also present: Autumn Radcliff, Planning Director; Janna Bianculli, Senior Planner; Chris Todd, Assistant County Manager; Bruce Gilliam, Parks and Recreation Director; and Jason Kilgore, Parks and Recreation Assistant Director.

Call to Order

Chairman Chris Burns called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Public Comment

None.

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Doug Moon made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Ken Shelton seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Meeting Summary Approval

Mr. Ken Shelton made a motion to approve the meeting summary as presented. Mr. Doug Moon seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Updates

Friends of Ecusta Trail (FOET)

Mr. Mark Tooley stated that FOET has a contract with Watermark Landscape Architects (WLA) for trail signage that will carry over the entire length of the trail. He also stated that FOET is in the final stages of completing an interactive trail map.

City of Brevard

Mayor Copelof stated that the city was finishing the design and engineering work. Mr. Paul Ray stated that 70% of the design has been completed and NCDOT is in the process of reviewing.

Henderson County

Mr. Chris Todd stated that construction on the first six miles is on schedule and with the exception of a few small sections, the pavement is complete. Other construction items should be completed in June, but the contractor will still have some punch list items that will not be completed for few months. Mr. Ken Shelton asked what will prevent vehicles from entering the trail. Mr. Todd stated that there will be signs and other indicators. He said that the bollards can be added later if needed. These can sometimes be a hazard to trail users and many trails had removed them because of this, so the county did not want to install them unless it became necessary.

Ribbon Cutting Event for the First 6 Miles

Mr. Chris Todd said that the Ecusta Trail vision really took root in 2009, and almost 20 years later the first six miles are ready to open. A ribbon cutting is being planned tentatively for July 18th, and a press release with the details will occur on June 2nd. It will most likely be located at TDA which serves as the trail head and the details are being finalized.

Amenities Update (100% Design)

Hunter Marks and Sarah Schafer with WLA presented the 100% design for the amenities. Staff noted that although the amenities for the first six miles is complete, there is no funding currently to install the amenities. The county hopes to install amenities during the 2nd phase of the trail's construction. The design work was necessary to get cost estimates and to seek funding. Mr. Marks provided an overview of the amenity design and locations. Mr. Bart Salvaggio asked what a station looks like that were noted on the design plans. It was noted that the two proposed stations were 8'x24' with benches and resembled the original train stations. A question was asked if a power outlet would be available to recharge wheelchairs. The county could look at that option and even if solar powered outlets could be used. Mr. Salvaggio asked about plans for restrooms in the long-term plans. The county noted that it was working with the trail partners in the short term, but dedicated restrooms could be constructed later once we identify where the need on the trail will be. Mr. Ken Shelton asked if the county could partner with the local fire department to install public bathrooms. Mr. Todd said that the county is looking at all options and this could be considered. Mr. Paul Ray asked why wooden benches were desired. Mr. Marks stated that the type of benches can be discussed, but timber benches were identified to give the Ecusta Trail its own identity instead of metal benches.

Continued Discussion of Trail Events

Ms. Autumn Radcliff stated staff has been working with the Parks and Recreation Department on an application and process for events on the Ecusta Trail. Staff is working on check list and maps that identify intersections, locations for water stations and portable toilets that will assist event directors. Staff is also working on predetermined routes for races so that events run smoothly without any interruptions to trail users. It was discussed what fees might be charged for events and the thresholds for the event sizes related to those fees. An event that is advertised for participants to attend, those that require reregistration, or those expecting 50 or more participants would be required to make an application and pay a fee. There would also be other ranges included for events with attendees or participants of 250, 500, or more than 1,000. The RTAC asked staff to continue working on the item and bring back information at the June meeting. It was noted that no events are being allowed for the 2025 calendar year, but the application period will open later this summer/fall.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Mr. Chris Todd stated that the MOU is almost complete. He said that the City of Hendersonville had some items that were being considered to finalize the MOU which included events within their jurisdiction, length of agreement, and termination. He stated that the staff had met with the Laurel Park Manger about the MOU as well. Laurel Park wanted some additional language addressing amenities in their jurisdiction. The county does not see any hold ups with the MOU at this point and will bring back a final draft in June to the RTAC. The Board of Commissioners could adopt the MOU after that.

Greenway Master Plan Update

Ms. Autumn Radcliff and Ms. Janna Bianculli stated one of the recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan was to update the Greenway Master Plan. This will allow for items that have taken place since the adoption of the master plan to be included, such as the Ecusta Trail purchase and development. It will also provide an updated plan to help with securing grant funding for trail expansions within the county. The RTAC received an overview about the plan goals and recommendations. The Recreation Advisory Board will be the Board that will make the final recommendation on the updates to the Board of Commissioners. The RTAC and the TAC (Transportation Advisory Board) will provide input. The process is expected to take 6-8 months to complete.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

This meeting was recorded, and the MP4 file can be made available upon request. Please contact County staff.