

Henderson County
RAIL-TRAIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Monthly Meeting
Wednesday, September 10, 2025

The RTAC held a regularly scheduled meeting on September 10, 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	O	
Bart Salvaggio, at-large	X	
Ken Shelton, at-large	X	
Brent Detwiler, City of Hendersonville	O	
Nancy McKinley, Town of Laurel Park	X	
Mike Egan, Conserving Carolina	O	

Also present: Autumn Radcliff, Planning Director; Janna Bianculli, Assistant Planning Director; Chris Todd, Assistant County Manager; and Bruce Gilliam, Parks and Recreation Director; and Austin Parks, Planner II. Joining remotely was City of Brevard staff and Mayor, Maureen Copelof.

Call to Order

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

Public Comment

The committee heard from two members of the public related to speed and safety on Church Street and Kanuga Road crossings.

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Ken Shelton moved to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Bart Salvaggio seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Meeting Summary Approval

Mr. Ken Shelton made one correction to the minutes that the bid for construction year is 2026. Ms. Selena Einwechter made a motion to approve the meeting summary with the change. Mr. Doug Moon seconded motion. All voted in favor.

Updates

City of Brevard

City of Brevard Mayor stated that they are working to complete the 100% engineering design and expect that to be finished next summer.

Henderson County

Mr. Chris Todd stated that the county updates will be part of the discussion items. He did note that there were a lot of people using the trail. Mr. Ken Shelton stated that Mike McKay working in Parks and Rec has been a great representative on the trail.

Friends of Ecusta Trail Update

Mr. Mark Tooley with FOET introduced their new Executive Director, Laura Rice. This is her second week on the job. Laura stated that she was getting updated on the volunteer program and hopes to help with educating users on trail etiquette and growing programs to better support the trail.

Ecusta Trail Baseline Data

Mr. Austin Parks presented baseline data that staff have been collecting for the trail. He stated that the purpose of the data was to achieve an understanding of what types of businesses are along the trail, current perceptions of the trail, identify challenges and opportunities, and inform future planning decisions. The data also looked at how hurricane Helene had impacted business, and the data will capture if these elements change over time. The county conducted a business survey which was completed by 18 businesses, and five businesses responded to the Hurricane Helene damage survey. Staff also presented an overview of all the survey results. Other data resources showed that there are approximately 42 short term rentals within the trail study area, and trail counters show that there were 561 users in 2022 and 6,280 users currently in 2025. Staff plans to do another round of surveys later on, including future trail counter surveys, and will continue to analysis the data over time.

Trail Crossing Rules

Staff presented the topic that was discussed by the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) members at their last meeting. The City of Hendersonville police and NCDOT also weighed in on the TAC's discussion. The TAC had requested that the RTAC discuss the issue of trail crossing safety and best management practices. Mr. Chris burns stated that the trail crossings need to continue to be monitored after the trail construction is fully complete and then the RTAC can evaluate any further action needed. He stated that the county should work to set up a spreadsheet to track issues and comments for the RTAC to monitor. Mr. Chris Todd stated that signs still needed to be installed, and there needed to be more trail etiquette education as well.

EBike Discussion

Mr. Ken Shelton brought up the item of ebikes for discussion. There were some noted complaints. It was discussed that we need to work to develop proper trail culture with an ambassador program and not have an ordinance to regulate ebikes.

Continued Amenities Discussion

Mr. Chris Todd stated that he had met with FOET and requested assistance with trail amenities as discussed by the RTAC last month. Laura Rice stated that their mission and role was to support amenities, and the item had been shared with the FOET Board. There was some discussion about adding items to the list and the priorities of which amenities could be installed first. It was noted that these amenities were needed sooner than later. FOET wanted to phase the amenities. It was stated by the RTAC that it would like FOET to approve the amenities funding amount to the county so the county could proceed with an amenities contract. Mr. Chris Todd said that the county would complete the amenities contract work and would request reimbursement from FOET based on the agreed amount. FOET will provide formal agreement on this issue but have given verbal approval.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

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