

Henderson County
RAIL-TRAIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Monthly Meeting
Wednesday, February 11, 2026

The RTAC held a regularly scheduled meeting on February 11, 2026, 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	O	
Douglas Moon, at-large	X	
Patrick Kennedy, at-large	X	
Bart Salvaggio, at-large	X	
Ken Shelton, Friends of Ecusta Trail	X	
Brent Detwiler, City of Hendersonville	X	
Nancy McKinley, Town of Laurel Park	O	
Mike Egan, Conserving Carolina	X	

Also present: Autumn Radcliff, Planning Director; Janna Bianculli, Assistant Planning Director; Jason Kilgore, Parks and Recreation Assistant Director; Chris Todd, Assistant County Manager; and Laura Rice, FOET Executive Director. Joining remotely: Andrew Griffin, Director of Facility Services; Paul Ray, City of Brevard; Arron Bland, City of Brevard; and Maureen Copelof, City of Brevard Mayor.

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 moved to approve the agenda. Mr. Ken Shelton seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Meeting Summary Approval

Mr. Ken Shelton asked for a clarification on the speed signs on the trail. Mr. Bart Salvaggio made a motion to approve the meeting summary. Mr. Ken Shelton seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Updates

City of Brevard

Mayor Copelof stated that the city anticipates that the 50% design will be completed and the 90% design will be completed in November. According to NCDOT, they plan to let the project for construction in December of 2027, but the mayor hopes to push NCDOT to let the project in May of 2027. The construction is scheduled to be completed by May of 2029. The first cost estimates for construction are expected later this summer.

Henderson County

Mr. Chris Todd stated Henderson County’s phase two of the project switched to a design build project through NCDOT to obligate grant funds. The county does not know the final price associated with this phase and it will be later in March before the selected bidders submit their proposals. Mr. Todd thanked Parks and Recreation staff for their work during the past storm clearing the snow and ice. There was a question about the construction completion date for Phase Two in Henderson County. Mr. Todd stated that completion is scheduled for late 2028. There was also a question on the purpose of law enforcement on the trail. Mr. Todd stated that the sheriff

and police for City of Henderson and Laurel Park patrol the trail and can enforce their jurisdiction laws but cannot enforce trail rules.

Friends of Ecusta Trail Update

Ms. Laura Rice, FOET Executive Director, stated they have approximately twenty trail ambassadors that are completing training. The ambassador program has been limited during the winter but anticipates it will grow and include programmed shifts during the spring/summer months. Ambassadors will be wearing green vests and will engage and share information with trail users but not enforce trail rules. They are encouraging people to utilize the issue tracker for reporting items. It was also noted that FOET supplied temporary etiquette signs to Parks and Recreation to be placed on the trail.

Continued Discussion on Draft Ecusta Encroachment Policy Amendments

Ms. Janna Bianculli stated there was some discussion at the last meeting about landscaping. She noted that the policy suggests landscaping plantings, but an applicant can propose other plantings that would be reviewed through the application process. It was stated that some edits were made since last meeting and include allowing fences under six feet in height, applications will be submitted through the county's smartgov software, no invasive species would be permitted, and a memorial section was added per Parks and Recreation's current policy. There was some discussion about existing encroachments within the right-of-way. It was noted that property owners were contacted about existing encroachments and the county is tracking those. The RTAC requested that a new letter be sent to property owners adjacent to Phase Two so they are aware of when construction begins and that vegetation will be removed along with unpermitted encroachments if required for the trail construction. After some additional discussion, Mr. Mike Egan made a motion to send the Board of Commissioners a recommendation to adopt the Ecusta Encroachment Policy Amendments. Mr. Doug Moon seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ecusta Calls/Issue February Report

Staff provided a handout on the issues reported by type. Mr. Jason Kilgore stated that there was an issue with a homeless camp on the trail and that traffic cones had been added in areas where there were issues with vehicles turning onto the trail. He also stated that Parks and Recreation are responding and monitoring any safety issues and debris on the trail. The RTAC commented that it liked the report tracking to stay ahead of issues and requested that we share the information with the City of Brevard if they were interested.

Saluda Grade Trail

Ms. Kristin Cozza with Conserving Carolina provided the RTAC with an overview of the Saluda Grade Trail project including acquisition, funding, feasibility studies that are anticipated, and the status of the trail in NC and SC. She stated that two separate organizations are overseeing the trail within each state, but coordination efforts are in place. The NC portion of the trail is under Conserving Carolina who has formed some steering committees with local jurisdictions that the trail runs through, in addition to a NC/SC advisory committee since the trail runs through two states, four counties, and five communities. The is approximately 31 miles total, with 5.5 miles in Henderson County. The goal is that the trail would eventually connect to the Ecusta Trail. A brochure was distributed to the RTAC, and more information can be accessed at saludagradetrail.org.

Other Announcements

Mr. Brent Detwiler stated that the City of Hendersonville is applying again for a Build Grant for the Above the Mud project. To be more competitive and due to cost, the scope of the project was scaled back to 7th Avenue and S. Main roads. He also stated that the city is seeking a bond for transportation improvements that would include ADA improvements, bike lanes, sidewalks, and sidewalk gaps to Ecusta Trail.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:08 a.m.