

**Henderson County**  
**RAIL-TRAIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**Monthly Meeting**  
**Wednesday, July 8, 2026**

The RTAC held a regularly scheduled meeting on July 8, 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”.

| <b>Voting Member</b>                   | <b>Present</b> | <b>Not in Attendance</b> |
|----------------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| 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, Friends of Ecusta Trail   | X              |                          |
| Brent Detwiler, City of Hendersonville | O              |                          |
| Nancy McKinley, Town of Laurel Park    | X              |                          |
| Mike Egan, Conserving Carolina         | X              |                          |

Also present: Autumn Radcliff, Planning Director; Bruce Gilliam, Parks and Recreation Director; and Laura Rice, FOET Executive Director. Joining remotely was Aaron Bland, City of Brevard Assistant Planning Director.

**Call to Order**

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

**Public Comment**

There were no public comments given.

**Approval of Agenda**

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

**Meeting Summary Approval**

Mr. Ken Shelton made a motion to approve the meeting summary. Mr. Bart Salvaggio seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

**Updates**

**City of Brevard**

Mr. Aaron Bland shared that the City of Brevard’s next trail advisory board meeting would be on the 29<sup>th</sup> of the month. At that meeting, they will receive an update on the ongoing design work for their section of the trail.

**Henderson County**

Ms. Autumn Radcliff stated that the county’s update would be covered by the remaining agenda items.

**Friends of Ecusta Trail**

Ms. Laura Rice shared that trail ambassadors continue to be busy, and FOET has added weekend shifts for these roles. FOET continues to work with the county to share information about the trail closures at White Pine and Daniel Drive. FOET has not had significant negative feedback thus far on the closure. Ms. Rice shared that they received an update on the traffic counters placed on the trail near Lennox Station, and the trail averaged over 6,600 users per week during the tracking period. Ms. Sandy Broadwill with the Land of Sky Regional Council has placed the traffic counter at the Horseshoe end of the trail, and Ms. Rice stated that she is interested in

seeing what the traffic in that region will look like, as the trail closures may impact the amount of through traffic that area of the trail sees.

Ms. Rice also stated that they have received additional questions/comments from the public about children and teenagers on e-bikes and e-motos. Additionally, FOET will host a gathering on July 18<sup>th</sup> at Blue Ridge Beer Garden to celebrate the one-year anniversary of the trail's opening.

Following a question from Mr. Ken Shelton, Ms. Rice shared that the First Congregational Church in Laurel Park has secured funds to build a connection to the trail from their parking lot and will work with the county on the encroachment agreement and required standards for the connection.

Following a question from Mr. Ken Shelton, Mr. Bruce Gilliam shared that there were minor issues during the recent "Kick It" running event on the trail relating to their starting and finishing lines blocking the trail. Mr. Corey Blackwell added that they have clarified event rules with organizers to ensure that running events can happen without preventing other users from using the trail.

Following a question from Mr. Ken Shelton, Mr. Brent Detweiler stated that there are water mains that cross under the trail, and that the city could tap them to install water fountains along the trail in the future. Following a question from Mr. Chris Burns, Mr. Detweiler added that the City of Hendersonville's water department would bill the county for water usage in that case, and that fountains would need to be shut down in the winter due to freezing risks, as the city does on the Oklawaha Greenway.

### **Ecusta Calls/Issue March Report**

Ms. Autumn Radcliff gave an update on issues reported in June, with a total of 38 issues reported during the month. Of these, 35 were resolved and 3 remained open. Since January 1, 139 issues have been reported, 112 of these issues have been resolved. The greatest number of issues reported in June were categorized as vehicles on the trail, though county staff clarified that only 2 cars were reported on the trail: most issues in this category relate to kids or teens on e-bikes or e-motos. Mr. Corey Blackwell shared additional information about the popularity of e-motos, and the frequency of complaints related to harassing behavior from e-moto users on the trail. Mr. Bruce Gilliam stated that he refers complaints of this type to the Sheriff's Department.

Following questions from the Committee, county staff suggested they could update the issue reporting system to distinguish reports of cars on the trail versus e-bikes (4 wheels versus 2 wheels), as well as to remove any reference to mile markers until the trail amenity signage is installed.

Mr. Bruce Gilliam stated that he recently visited the Swamp Rabbit Trail in Greenville, SC, and that while the county has learned a great deal from the Swamp Rabbit over the years, he believes many of the Ecusta Trail's intersections are better than the Swamp Rabbit's, particularly in rural areas. Following a question from Mr. Chris Burns, Mr. Corey Blackwell stated that the Swamp Rabbit has three dedicated police officers to monitor the trail.

### **US 64 Construction Closures**

Ms. Autumn Radcliff gave an update on the trail closures due to NCDOT construction on US 64. The trail was closed at White Pine Drive beginning on July 6<sup>th</sup>, and this closure is expected to last 30 days, weather permitting. The next closure will be at Daniel Drive, and it is expected to last for 45 days. Ms. Radcliff stated that NCDOT may re-open the trail briefly between these two closures, but this could change depending on the construction progress.

Mr. Chris Burns asked about communications from NCDOT, and if the county or FOET receives regular updates on the work. Both Ms. Radcliff and Ms. Rice stated that NCDOT is very responsive to questions but does provide progress updates for any changes. Ms. Radcliff stated that the construction on US 64 was originally intended to be completed before the trail was constructed, but other delays with NCDOT and funding prevented that. Mr. Chris Burns added that in general, things are working well between the County, City of

Hendersonville, FOET, and NCDOT, with all parties communicating well and working toward a shared goal of reopening the trail as soon as possible.

### **Discussion**

Mr. Bart Salvaggio shared that the trail was extremely busy over the 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend, and that his company has created maps showing routes from the Ecusta Trail to the Oklawaha Greenway for bike rental riders.

Following a question from Mr. Ken Shelton, Mr. Brent Detweiler shared that the City of Hendersonville did not receive the BUILD grant that they had applied for. Mr. Detweiler added that the city is continuing to explore opportunities to secure funding for the Above the Mud Greenway, and that their recent flood storage project on South Grove Street has been graded to ease future trail construction, but it would not be paved and a bridge over Mud Creek would still be required for the greenway. Mr. Detweiler added that the Above the Mud Greenway is included in regional transportation planning, but it has not been approved, and it would require a 20% match from the city. In this scenario, the greenway would most likely not be built until 2035.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

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