

**Henderson County**  
**RAIL-TRAIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**Wednesday, November 9, 2022**

The RTAC held a regularly scheduled meeting on November 9, 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 McKinley, Town of Laurel Park		√
Mike Egan, Conserving Carolina	√	

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

**Call to Order**

Chair Chuck McGrady called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

**Public Comment**

None.

**Approval September Meeting Summary**

The committee approved the September meeting summary by majority. There was no meeting in October.

**Updates**

**Conserving Carolina**

Kieran Roe with Conserving Carolina stated that CC is continuing to seek grant funding, particularly for the Transylvania portion of the trail. The NSFLTP grant is an optimistic option for funding the trail.

**Friends of Ecusta Trail (FOET)**

Mark Tooley reported that the FOET are continuing to fundraise and seek major donors. He stated that with the help of Conserving Carolina, they have received a grant to remove the trestles at Davidson River Road. This will be bid out later this month and work will begin in January. A question was raised about a \$500K grant the FOET received for the trail. FOET is in communication with the Henderson County to spend the grant as part of Phase I as the money must be spent before June of 2023 otherwise the State will rescind the funds.

**HC Staff**

Chris Todd stated that the County updates will be addressed during the discussion items.

**Discussion**

**30% Storymap:**

Janna Bianculli provided an overview of the online storymap and how to find it on the County [website](#). She stated that the storymap has been updated to include the 30% designs and will continue to be updated throughout the process. The storymap was created by TPD, a subconsultant with Vaughn and Melton, with assistance from County staff. On the site, there are renderings of potential construction, such as bridge designs, and links to other NCDOT projects that intersect with the trail. Other items addressed are trail widths, high level signage concepts, associated costs and construction estimates, and includes an interactive map. There is also a

comment section where citizens can submit questions or comments. These comments are checked regularly and staff will always respond to any questions.

Autumn Radcliff stated that there was a recent article in The Lightning announcing the completion of the 30% design and letters were mailed to adjacent property owners along this portion of the trail as part of the environmental review requirements. The Chair recommended that the two non-profits provide a link to the storymap to direct public questions and comments. Dr. Ken Shelton requested that the County staff identify any opportunities for fundraising such as naming opportunities, landscaping features, etc. Marcus Jones suggested waiting until the 90% design is complete and then staff could work with FOET to identify these opportunities. The RTAC had no issues with the storymap and were pleased with the information. The Chair requested that the information related to other NCDOT projects continue to stay updated. He also mentioned that several folks had asked about the surface of the trail and if we could consider a trail surface similar to what is used in Europe and on the Virginia Creeper Trail. He suggested that the RTAC discuss and consider various trail surfaces. He also stated that the discussion include the costs and the rural and urban areas of the trail to make a better, informed decision.

#### NSFLTP Grant Update:

Autumn Radcliff provided an update on the NFSLTP grant. She stated that the grant application was submitted in October and as Kieran stated, everyone is optimistic about a potential award for this project. She stated that over 20 letters of support were submitted including a letter from the US Forest Service and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI). She stated that NCDOT was the lead applicant for the grant and had hired Alta to put together the application packet. Ms. Radcliff commented on the great job Alta did coordinating meetings and information with all the local governments and agencies. She stated that the STBG funding that Henderson County had received was leveraged as funding match for this grant application. The RTAC reviewed the grant application page available on NCDOT's website. Staff stated they will email the application website link to the RTAC. The Chair commented that NCDOT has been engaged in this grant application.

#### Project Update and Timeline:

Marcus Jones provided the project update. He stated that the construction bids are still planned for next spring. The 90% design submittal from Vaughn and Melton is expected in December/January. The next steps would include reviewing construction documents and preparing for a bid request to start construction. He stated that the engineer is working on finalizing the drainage design and will use the hydraulic information to address streambank issues like those at Shaw Creek. He stated that some of the issues with streambanks are due to poor, existing design and a lack of maintenance. Mr. Jones commented on NCDOT's assistance in reviewing documents and helping the County through this process. Dr. Ken Shelton asked about an estimate on when construction will start and end. Chris Todd stated that the construction portion will be bid in the spring. When the contractor responds with a timeline, we will have a better estimate. The County is anticipating this phase of the trail construction to take approximately 6-8 months. A groundbreaking could occur this summer with construction possibly completed by the end of 2023. The County will be able to better determine this once a contractor is selected.

#### Additional Comments/Updates:

The Chair stated that the RTAC meeting for December may be canceled due to travel around the holidays. Dr. Ken Shelton stated that fundraising is still needed and asked for others to consider donating. Marcus Jones made the RTAC aware of trail encroachments and that the County is continuing to work with property owners and to identify encroachments and impacts to the trail and future construction. He did state that there have been 4 new utility encroachments approved.

#### Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:10 a.m.