



High Country Rural Planning Organization (RPO)

Municipalities and Counties of
Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Mitchell, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yancey

*“Serving North Carolina’s High Country with Continuing, Cooperative, and
Comprehensive Transportation Planning”*



Woodie Young, RTAC Chair

David Graham, Transportation Planner

David Jackson, RTCC Chair

RURAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (RTAC)

Agenda

November 17, 2021

2:00 PM

1. Ethics Statement and Call to Order (Woodie Young, RTAC Chair)

Action Items

2. Approval of August 18, 2021 Minutes (RTAC Chair)
3. Selection of RTAC Chair and Vice Chair (David Graham)

Informational Items

4. RTAC Membership Terms Update (David Graham)
5. State Transportation Improvement Program & Prioritization Update (Hannah Cook PE, NCDOT)
6. Comprehensive Transportation Planning Process Presentation (Pam Cook PE, NCDOT)
7. Project Development Update (David Graham)
8. Division Engineers’ Report (NCDOT Division 11 and Division 13 Representatives)
9. Transportation Planning Division Update (Pam Cook PE, NCDOT)

Other Items

10. Committee Member Comments/Other Business
11. Public Comment
12. Adjournment

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the RTAC is February 16, 2022 at 2:00 PM.

This information is available in Spanish or any other language upon request. Please contact High Country RPO Transportation Planner at (828) 265-5434 ext. 135 or at 468 New Market Blvd. Boone, NC 28607 for accommodations for this request.

Esta información está disponible en español o en cualquier otro idioma bajo petición. Por favor, póngase en contacto con High Country RPO Transportación Planner al (828) 265-5434 ext. 135 o en 468 New Market Blvd. Boone, NC 28607 de alojamiento para esta solicitud.

High Country RPO
Rural Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC)
August 18, 2021
Minutes

The Rural Transportation Advisory Committee held their quarterly meeting, August 18, 2021, at 2:00 p.m. in the High Country Council of Governments Board Room. The following members were present:

Rennie Brantz- Town of Boone	Woodie Young - Avery County
Cullie Tarleton- NCDOT BOT	Rocky Buchanan- Town of Spruce Pine
John Brady- Town of Sparta	Jim Blevins- Town of Lansing
David Harwood- Town of Blowing Rock	Denise Collier- Town of Burnsville (called-in)

Others present: Pam Cook- NCDOT TPD, Hannah Cook-NCDOT Division 13, Stephen Sparks-NCDOT Division 13, Sean Sizemore-NCDOT Division 11 (called-in)

Guests present: Dean Harris, Kerry Morrow

The following staff members were present from High Country Council of Governments: David Graham- Transportation Planner, Phil Trew- Planning & Development Director, Julie Wiggins- Executive Director, Victoria Potter-Communications Manager.

Call to Order

Chairman Woodie Young read the Ethics Statement and called the meeting to order.

Approval of May 19, 2021 Minutes

Woodie Young asked for a motion for approval of the May 19, 2021 minutes. Motion was made by Rennie Brantz and seconded by Cullie Tarleton. Motion carried and approved.

Public Hearing for Endorsement of Yancey County Comprehensive Transportation Plan

Chairman Woodie Young entertained a motion to open the Public Hearing. Cullie Tarleton made a motion to open the public hearing for the Endorsement of Yancey County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) and John Brady seconded the motion. Motion carried and Public Hearing for the Endorsement of Yancey CTP was opened. David Graham presented and explained the Yancey County CTP Update which is a long-range multimodal transportation plan with a 25–30-year planning period that had a very involved process including a local stakeholder steering committee. Mr. Graham noted that the plan had been adopted by the Town of Burnsville and Yancey County. Mr. Graham also noted that the RTCC recommended approval of endorsing this plan. As there were no public comments, Rennie Brantz made a motion to close the public hearing for the Endorsement of Yancey County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) and John Brady seconded the motion. Motion carried and approved. John Brady made the motion to endorse the Yancey County CTP, motion seconded by Cullie Tarleton. Motion carried and endorsement approved.

Avery County Airport Presentation

Dean Harris presented a slideshow on recent updates at the Avery County Airport including an Apron expansion, Partial Parallel Taxiway, and completed Fuel Farm. Mr. Harris also discussed future plans and funding needed to complete those plans. Mr. Harris noted that this airport would increase economic impact in the region by creating new jobs, tenants, tourism and potential residents. Avery County has submitted this project in the current round of Prioritization.

NCDOT COVID-19 Traffic Data Presentation

Kelly Morrow with the NCDOT Traffic Survey Group presented a slideshow on traffic volume data from 2020 and how COVID-19 affected the data and collection. The travel trends show less driving which means less revenue for the NCDOT. The point of lowest travel was down 45% from typical travel in that month. 2020 Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) data will be published later this month or in early September.

State Ethics Commission Presentation

David Graham presented a slideshow about State Ethics Commission standards, requirements and provisions. TAC members are subject to certain ethics standards and provisions. Mr. Graham reviewed penalties and fines associated with late, incomplete or non-filing SEI and RED. Mr. Graham noted that new or current members must file no later than April 15th each year.

Prioritization 6.0 Update

David Graham went over updates including that the P6.0 schedule has been put on hold due to significant increases in cost estimates for projects. This doesn't mean projects will stop, it just means they are slowing down for the time being.

Project Development Update

David Graham went over regional project updates and added that even committed projects are subject to change due to funding challenges.

Division Engineers' Report

Sean Sizemore gave updates for Division 11 and Hannah Cook gave updates for Division 13.

Transportation Planning Division Update

Pam Cook went over the NCDOT TPD Newsletter which covered Traffic Forecasts, important links, and upcoming information and dates. Mrs. Cook also discussed new NC maps and provided one for everyone in attendance.

Committee Member Comments/Other Business

Chairman Woodie Young thanked David Graham for his hard and extra work during the pandemic.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Adjournment

Woodie Young adjourned the meeting with there being no other business.

Woodie Young, Chair

David Graham, Secretary

NOVEMBER 2021 PROJECT UPDATE

(NCBOT Amended 2020-2029 STIP – October 2021)

HIGHWAY PROJECTS

US 221 (R-2915): US 421 to US 221 Business/NC 88 – Ashe County

Description: *US 221, US 421 in Watauga County to US 221 Business/ NC 88 in Jefferson. Widen to four lanes divided.*

Section A: Complete
Section B: Complete
Section C: Under Construction
Section D: Complete
Section E: Under Construction

NC 88, NC 88 to NC 194 (R-5832) – Ashe County

Description: *Upgrade roadway.*

Right-of-Way 2022
Construction 2024

US 19E, East of Spruce Pine to Mullin Hill Road (R-2520-A) – Avery/Mitchell Counties

Description: *Widen to multi-lanes.*

Right-of-Way 2029
Construction Future Years – Committed Project

NC 194/US 19E Intersection (R-5911) – Avery County

Description: *Construct right turn lane from US 19E northbound to NC 194 eastbound.*

Right-of-Way 2022
Construction 2022

NC 105 (R-2566B): NC 105, Clarks Creek Road to NC 105 Bypass (Boone) – Avery/Watauga Counties

Description: *NC 105, Old Shulls Mill (SR 1568) to SR NC 105 Bypass (SR1107) in Boone. Widen to multi-lanes (includes R-2566BA - Bridge over Watauga River at Broadstone Road).*

Section B:	Right-of-Way	2022
	Construction	2024
Section BA:	Right-of-Way	In progress
	Construction	2022

US 421/US 321 (R-2615): US 321/US421 Junction Near Vilas to 105 Bypass – Watauga County

Description: *Widen to Multi-Lanes*

Right-of-Way	2024
Construction	2027

US 421 & Poplar Grove Connector Intersection (R-5872) – Watauga County

Description: *Construct Roundabout*

Right-of-Way	2028
Construction	Future Years – Committed Project

SR 1522 (Deerfield Road), State Farm Road to SR 1523 (Wilson Ridge Road) (R-5830) – Watauga County

Description: *Upgrade Roadway.*

Right-of-Way	2024
Construction	2025

Bamboo Road (SR 1514); Wilson Ridge Road (SR 1523), US 421/US221 to Deerfield Road (SR 1522) (U-5810) – Watauga County

Description: *Widen Roadway to 12 foot lanes with 4 foot paved shoulders.*

Right-of-Way	2022
Construction	2024

NC 115, From US 421 to 2nd Street (R-5759) – Wilkes County

Description: *Widen Existing Roadway.*

Right-of-Way	2022
Construction	2024

NC 268 (R-2603): NC 18 to Airport Road – Wilkes County

Description: *NC 268, Multi-lanes east of NC 18 to SR 1966. Widen to multi-lanes.*

Under Construction

SR 1001 (Oakwoods Road), From US 421 to NC268 (East Main St.) (R-5772) – Wilkes County

Description: *Upgrade Existing Roadway.*

Right-of-Way	2026
Construction	2028 – Committed Project

Wilkesboro-North Wilkesboro Bypass, NC 18 to US 421 (R-0616) – Wilkes County

Description: *Construct multi-lane facility, part on new location.*

Right-of-Way	2026
Construction	2029 – Committed Project

US 421 (U-5312): Yadkin River Bridge to Westgate Drive – Wilkes County

Description: *US 421, NC 16 to US 421 Business. Convert existing roadway to superstreet and add service roads.*

Right-of-Way	In Progress
Construction	2023

NC 226, From Blue Ridge Parkway to Summit Avenue (R-5804) – Mitchell County

Description: *Widen Roadway to 3 Lanes.*

Right-of-Way	2029
Construction	Future Years – Committed Project

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

Yancey County Transit Facility (TA-6723)

Description: Construct office, training, maintenance facility.

Construction 2023 (BOT Item N)

BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN PROJECTS

US 221 Sidewalk from Moses H. Cone Memorial Park to Main Street Blowing Rock (EB-5798)

Description: Construct sidewalk along US 221

Under Construction

Middle Fork Greenway Section I From Blowing Rock along US 321 to the Blue Ridge Parkway (EB-5924)

Description: Construct Greenway along US 321

Right-of-Way 2022 (BOT Item N)

Construction 2022

US 421 Multi-Use Path from Grove Street to Brookshire Road (EB-5983)

Description: Construct multi-use path.

Right-of-Way 2024

Construction 2025

AVIATION PROJECTS

Ashe County Airport (AV-5848)

Description: *Construct apron expansions*

Construction 2021

Wilkes County Airport (AV-5894)

Description: *Extend runway to 7,000 feet*

Right-of-Way 2022

Construction 2024

NCDOT TPD NEWS



NCDOT TPD HCRPO Newsletter

November 2021

Traffic Forecasts (TF)

Project Level Traffic Forecasting is an essential part of the planning process. The traffic forecast informs the design of STIP projects. There are currently no traffic forecasts under development in the HCRPO area.

NCDOT Integrated Project Delivery (IPD)

The goal of IPD is to improve the way NCDOT delivers projects through the implementation of transparent, repeatable, and accountable processes that are effective and efficient: <https://connect.ncdot.gov/projects/Integrated-Project-Delivery/Pages/default.aspx>

NCDOT Transportation Planning Division (TPD) staff are involved in the focus groups to examine NCDOT's Planning and Programming processes and initiatives to identify categories of actions and/or deliverables that advance the IPD goal. These focus groups are 1) CTP-MTP/Land Use/Local Coordination; 2) Travel Demand Modelling; 3) Traffic Forecasts/Counts; 4) Statewide Initiatives; 5) Multimodal; and 6) Programming.

Public Input Needed on NCDOT Services

The N.C. Department of Transportation is again [asking the public for feedback](https://ncsu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_72jt56gMQpj3fN4) (https://ncsu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_72jt56gMQpj3fN4) on how the agency is performing and ways it can improve its customer service.

Now in its sixth year, NCDOT's survey takes about 15 minutes to complete, and the link is mobile-friendly.

Participation can help the department identify ways to make North Carolina transportation services safer, more efficient and customer focused.

Administered by North Carolina State University's Institute for Transportation Research and Education, the survey is grouped into eight core transportation services: motor vehicle transportation (highway), bicycle, pedestrian, transit (local bus), passenger rail, ferry, general aviation and the Division of Motor Vehicles.

The N.C. General Assembly requires the survey and results be used to measure NCDOT's customer service performance across the department.

Survey responses must be received by **the end of November**. The results will be available to the public on the agency's website, www.ncdot.gov, by March 2021.

"Connecting people, products and places safely and efficiently with customer focus, accountability and environmental sensitivity to enhance the economy and vitality of North Carolina..."

- NCDOT Mission Statement

FHWA News

Recently, the *Federal Highway Administration* published a [report on a pedestrian count model used to predict pedestrian volumes at locations without existing counts](#). Researchers integrated geospatial data from the [Highway Safety Information System](#) to analyze pedestrian crash severity and probability. Charlotte was used for the case study. The findings highlight several factors that increased probabilities of a pedestrian crash resulting in a fatality or serious injury, including higher speeds, higher traffic volumes, larger vehicles striking the pedestrian, pedestrian impairment, and older age.



NCDOT Wins National Safety Award

The FHWA and the Roadway Safety Foundation honored NCDOT with a 2021 National Roadway Safety Award. The award recognized NCDOT for its pilot program to install thermoplastic lane markings, which are more durable and better at reflecting headlights. More than 400 miles of rural, two-lane roads in NC received the high-visibility markings between 2014 and 2017. The department saw a 13% reduction in lane-departure crashes after the long-life markings were used.

Contact Us

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Upcoming	Date
Draft PWP for FY23 due	January 28, 2022
2nd Quarter 5303 Claim (Cot. 1-Dec. 31, 2021) due	January 28, 2022
2nd Quarter invoice and work summary due	February 11, 2022
Last day to submit adopted FY23 PWP with resolution and 5-year planning calendar	March 15, 2022
Last day to submit revisions to TPD for FY22 PWP with signatures	April 19, 2022

NCDOT Statewide Plans:

To learn more, click on the following links:

- [NC Moves 2050 Plan](#) (or go to ncdot.gov/ncmoves)
- [NCDOT Strategic Transportation Corridors](#) (or go to ncdot.gov and search: Strategic Transportation Corridors)
- [NCDOT Comprehensive State Rail Plan \(25-Year Vision\)](#) (or go to ncdot.gov and search: rail plan)
- [NC Statewide Multimodal Freight Plan \(2015-2040\)](#) (or go to ncdot.gov and search: public transportation plan)
- [Great Trails State Plan](#) (or go to ncdot.gov and search: Great Trails)
- [Connecting North Carolinians to Opportunities \(Public Transportation strategic Plan—2018\)](#) (or go to ncdot.gov and search: public transportation plan)
- [NCDOT Resilience Strategy Report \(2021\)](#) (or go to ncdot.gov and search: resilience strategy report)
- [Statewide Pedestrian & Bicycle Plan \(2013\)](#) (or go to ncdot.gov/biceped/walkbikenc)

Other Plans:

- [N.C. Climate Risk Assessment and Resilience Plan by Department of Environmental Quality](#) (or search: 2020-Climate-Risk-Assessment-and-Resilience-Plan.pdf)
- [NC FIRST Commission](#) (or go to ncdot.gov and search: First Commission)

Helpful Links:

Click on links below to learn more:

- NCDOT home page—ncdot.gov
- Real-Time Traffic—DriveNC.gov | [North Carolina Traffic & Travel Information](#)
- Report a pothole—[NCDOT Contact Us Form](#)
- NCDOT: State Transportation Improvement Program - ncdot.gov/sti
- Interactive Bicycle Routes Map—<https://www.ncdot.gov/bikeped/ncbikeways/default.aspx>—
- Links to all traffic count data information - [Traffic Survey Group \(ncdot.gov\)](#)
- NCDOT Interactive Traffic Volume Map—[Traffic Volume Maps \(ncdot.gov\)](#) —**The Greater Hickory MPO urban area is counted during odd years.**
- Traffic Safety Data & Engineering—[NCDOT: Traffic Safety Data & Engineering](#)