

NORTH CAROLINA Department of Transportation

NCDOT's Integrated Mobility Division (IMD)

Multimodal Updates

August 24, 2023

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



Agenda

- Ecusta Rail Trail A Story of Perseverance and Success Matt Hayes, Vice President, Alta Planning + Design
- IMD Updates
 - Grants awarded multimodal planning grants, microtransit feasibility studies, zero emission vehicle transition plans
 - Studies S-Line TOD planning study and mobility hubs, locally coordinated plan, IMD strategic plan, micromobility strategic plan, Freeway, Arterial, Street and Tactical (FAST) transit study
- Evaluating the effectiveness of microtransit software deployments at rural transit agencies in North Carolina Matthew Wigginton Bhagat-Conway, PhD, Assistant Professor, UNC-Chapel Hill
- IMD Updates (continued)
 - o CASSI deployment at the Town of Cary Bond Park and UNC-Charlotte
 - o RFI Automated bus technologies
 - North Carolina Non-Motorized Volume Data Program (NC NMVDP)
- NCDOT Pedestrian Bicycle Infrastructure Network (PBIN) Updates Lauren Blackburn, Senior Project Planner, VHB

Partnering with locals to seek discretionary grants can be an effective way to advance vision and goals.

Since 2020, NCDOT IMD has assisted over twenty communities with over \$107M in winning grant applications.

Grant Name	Project Name/Description	Year Applied	Award Amount
Mobility for All	Technology & Transportation Partnership to Improve Rural Service for Underserved Populations Pilot	FY 2020	\$280,000
Accelerating Innovative Mobility (AIM) Project	Transforming Public Transit in Wilson with Rural On-Demand Microtransit	FY 2020	\$250,000
FY 2020 Helping Obtain Prosperity for Everyone (HOPE)	Mountains to Sea: Electrifying North Carolina's Transit Fleets	FY 2020	\$122,048
FY 2020 FTA Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Planning	Connecting Rural and Urban Triangle Communities Through Equitable Transit Oriented Development	FY 2020	\$900,000
RAISE	High Point on the RISE	FY 2021	\$19,800,000
RAISE	PARTNERS (Rutherfordton and Spindale)	FY 2022	\$20,040,000
RAISE	S-Line Mobility Hub Planning (7 communities)	FY 2022	\$3,400,000
Rural Surface Transportation	Mobility for Everyone, Everywhere in North Carolina (11 communities)	FY 2022	\$10,400,000
RAISE	Ecusta Trail	FY 2023	\$24,600,000
NSFLTP	Ecusta Trail	FY 2023	\$21,421,000
5339 Low-No/Bus and Bus Facilities	Facilities and buses for three communities	FY 2023	\$5,815,000
			\$107,028,048

Ecusta Rail Trail – A Story of Perseverance and Success

IMD Webinar – 8/24/23













A History of the Rail Corridor





A History of the Rail Corridor





HENDERSON COUNTY, N.C. (WLOS) — The \$7.8 million purchase of the 19-mile long Ecusta Trail is now complete. But Monday's official ribbon-cutting is far from the final step, though.

Rail-to-Trail Progress

Brevard – FLAP grant for \$1 million for design of Transylvania County

Henderson County – STBG-DA funds through MPO - \$5.1 million for 3 phases; \$10.4 million for remaining 2 phases; **Design for 3 phases** complete

Friends of the Ecusta Trail – \$7.5 million from State of North Carolina

THE ECUSTA TRAIL

An **ENGINE** for Reimagining Rural Mobility + Economic Recovery

Submitted by: In partnership with:





fy2022 NSFLTP GRANT APPLICATION

A Multimodal Gateway to Pisgah National Forest + The Blue Ridge Parkway

PROJECT NAME	THE ECUSTA TRAIL
Total Project Cost	\$53,530,111
NSFLTP Program Grant Request Amount	\$21,412,044
Federal (DOT) Funding including Program Funds	\$36,954,498
Total Non-Federal Funding	\$16,575,613
A REAL PROPERTY AND	

Project is within, adjacent to, or accessing Federal and/or Tribal Yes land?





RAISE and NSFLTP Grants

Partnership

- City of Brevard
- Henderson County
- NCDOT IMD
- French Broad River MPO
- Land of Sky RPO
- Friends of the Ecusta Trail
- Conserving Carolina





ECUSTA TRAIL

A Multimodal Gateway to Pisgah National Forest + The Blue Ridge Parkway



ect is within, adjacent to, or ssing Federal and/or Tribal Yes







Next Steps

- Continued partnership
- Determining path forward with both grants awarded
- Grant agreements in place
- Fully built Ecusta Trail within five years is possible!



Division Updates

S-Line TOD Planning Study

- Preparing communities for passenger rail
- FTA Grant Award (\$900,000)
- Plan the "place" around transit
- Proactively plan context-driven TOD
- Corridor-wide Conversation
 - Vision & Goals
 - Funding / financing
 - Transit operations
- Local Implementation
 - Land use plans & zoning
 - Regulatory Policies
 - Infrastructure investments
 - Catalytic sites





Final Report Released July 2023

Community Playbooks

- Policy, Funding, and Infrastructure Priority Recommendations
- Built Form and Development Recommendations
- 7 communities, 13 unique study areas
 - Sanford to Norlina

• For more information:

https://www.ncdot.gov/divisions/integratedmobility/innovation/s-line-study/Pages/default.aspx



Next Steps – Mobility Hub Plan

FY 2022 RAISE Grant Awarded North Carolina Regional S-Line Mobility Hub Plan

Plan will focus on defining the scope, physical location and potential hub layout. Whether built for intercity and/or commuter rail service, future stations will be ready for last-mile solutions

Mobility Hub Location	Task	Cost	Total
Sanford*	Feasibility/Site Assessment NEPA Preliminary Engineering	\$150K \$300K \$500K	\$950K
Apex	Feasibility/Site Assessment	\$150K	\$150K
Wake Forest	Feasibility/Site Assessment NEPA Preliminary Engineering	\$150K \$300K \$500K	\$950K
Youngsville	Feasibility/Site Assessment	\$150K	\$150K
Franklinton*	Feasibility/Site Assessment	\$150K	\$150K
Henderson*	Feasibility/Site Assessment NEPA Preliminary Engineering	\$150K \$300K \$500K	\$950K
Norlina*	Feasibility/Site Assessment NEPA Preliminary Engineering	\$150K \$300K \$500K	\$950K
	Total	\$4.25M	\$4.25





*Rural area pursuant to the NOFO definition.

23

Microtransit Feasibility Studies

Offering planning and analysis for transit agencies to explore microtransit options

Six transit agencies will commence planning this fall

- Wilson County Transportation
- Davidson County Transportation
- Onslow United Transit System
- Hoke County / Hoke Area Transit Service
- Robeson County / South East Area Transit System (SEATS)
- City of Greensboro / Greensboro Transit Agency (GTA)

Next Steps

- Firm assignments and draft scopes August 2023
- NTP / Kickoff September 2023







Davidson County Transportation System







Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Transition Plans

Purpose

- Inform and prepare transit agencies to transition fleet
- Requirements for Low to No Emissions Grant

Partner Transit Agencies

- Buncombe County
- Wilson County
- Johnston County
- Duplin County
- *Wake County to be determined

Timeline

• August 2023 – April 2024





2023 Multimodal Planning Grant Recipients



Legend



Triangle Region Freeway, Arterial, Street & Tactical (FAST) Transit Priority Infrastructure Study

- Original study completed in 2021
- Partnership with local governments, the regional business community, regional planning bodies, and regional transit providers
- FAST 2.0 will look to:
 - Formulate a regional vision, goals and brand for transit and mobility
 - Have a primary focus on freeways/regional corridors
 - Evaluate potential BRT corridors & connections to RDU Airport
 - o Advance SMART freeway corridors



FAST 2.0 Potential Focus Strategies



Statewide Locally Coordinated Plan (LCP) Update

FTA 5310 and Rural Operating Assistance Program (ROAP)

- o Virtual Public Meetings
 - o September 7th, 4 pm Sign up here!
 - o September 13th, 10 am Sign up here!
 - o September 13th, 6 pm Sign up here!

Virtual Room: Project information, Materials



Locally Coordinated Plan The Statewide Locally Coordinated Plan (LCP) serves as a strategic framework to expand mobility options to as a subject transform to expand thostiny options as seniors and individuals with disabilities, particularly in small urban and rural communities of North Carolina. Visit the virtual room and take the survey to help us



Public Survey: <u>https://arcg.is/feiXK</u>

Take the Survey!



Visit the Virtual Room!



Webpage - https://connect.ncdot.gov/business/Transit/Pages/LCP-Update.aspx

Statewide Locally Coordinated Plan (LCP) Update

We Need YOUR Help!!

- Promote the Upcoming public meetings
- Share the Virtual Room link, Public Survey, and Flyer
- Share to listservs, social media and any other outlets
 - Public Meeting Flyer, Plan Factsheet, print surveys and other project information can be downloaded here:
- Collect printed surveys and scan in for those who cannot access the online survey
- For questions or to send print surveys, contact Hart Evans <u>Jhevansl@ncdot.gov</u>

Statewide Locally Coordinated Plan (LCP) Update

2

3

4

5

Stakeholder Survey Results

Top 5 Challenges to Meet Mobility Needs

Limited Funding Affordable 2

Transportation

Accessibility



3

5

Service Spans

Strategies to Improve the Effectiveness of §5310 funding

Top 5

Increased funding for expansion of transit services

Simplify funding process

Increased funding for administrative support

Increased ability to provide a range of services

Increased funding for reliable and accessible fleets within FTA useful life

Bottom 5

Contracting out transportation



2

3

4

5

- services
- Expand service through private partnerships
- Increased support for accessible infrastructure including benches and other amenities
- Development of one-stop information and coordination centers for clients/customers

Procuring scheduling software



Micromobility Strategy

- Study kicked off at the end of 2022
- Draft Final Report in review
- Draft Infographic Handout in review
- Anticipated completion Fall 2023
- Next Steps:

 NCDOT's role in micromobility more refined
 NCDOT statewide technical resource for micromobility planning and implementation
 Incorporation of recommendations into IMD's strategic plan



Source: Link

IMD Strategic Plan

- Strategic Plan Scoping August/September 2023
- Kick-Off October 2023
- 18-Month Process
- Proposed Phases of the Strategic Plan:

 Existing needs for multimodal transportation
 Input from partner agencies and IMD staff
 IMD programs evaluation
 Goals and objectives
 IMD organizational structure
 Implementation / action-oriented plan



Evaluating the effectiveness of microtransit software in North Carolina

Matt Bhagat-Conway and Luke Pullo Department of City and Regional Planning University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill



Background

- Demand response transit is common in rural and small urban areas
- Agencies provide curb-to-curb service
- Generally scheduled 1-3 days in advance



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Automated scheduling software

- Most agencies use some form of computer assisted scheduling
 - Most do not create schedules automatically
- Automated scheduling algorithms for demand response have been around a while
- Some new software promises automated scheduling for microtransit, adjusting schedules in real time



The project

- Evaluate the software used for scheduling demand-response and microtransit service
- Examine why agencies are or are not using automated scheduling
- Mixed methods
 - Observation
 - Interviews
 - Trip data analysis



Observation and interviews

- Visited two agencies, ICPTA and YVEDDI
- YVEDDI uses CTS TripMaster
- ICPTA uses Via
 - Microtransit-specific software
- 1.5 days of observation and debriefing with managers





ICPTA

- Northeastern NC
- Based in Elizabeth City
- Many trips go to Norfolk
- Semi-structured schedules
- Formerly provided microtransit service, now mostly demand response
- Median trip: 4.3 mi
 - In service area: 4.3 mi
 - 99% of trips stay in service area

YVEDDI

- Central NC
- Four offices that handle scheduling
- Many trips go to Winston-Salem
- Provides microtransit in several cities
- Median trip: 5.6 mi
 - In service area: 4.2 mi
 - 84% of trips stay in service area



Software comparison

Via

- Focus on microtransit and sameday service
- Automated scheduling not optional
- Manual scheduling possible but secondary

CTS TripMaster

- No specific same-day focus
- Scheduling can be fully manual
- Can automate entire schedule
- or a single trip



Software should meet identified agency need

- The YVEDDI office we visited did not use automated scheduling extensively
- Schedulers know the county well and didn't see it as necessary
- They felt generally positive about the quality of automated scheduling



Software should support agency service patterns

- ICPTA has a semi-structured service pattern
- Vehicles leave outlying counties at set times each day
- Via can constrain vehicles in space, but not time



Human schedulers should have control

- Software often contains many business rules for scheduling
- Human schedulers are the experts on their region
- There will always be human factors the software does not account for
- Warnings for unexpected situations are helpful, but
- human schedulers should always be able to override software decisions



Dispatching should allow for day-of-travel changes

- Most scheduling software also supports dispatching
- Operations rarely exactly follow the schedule
- Software should not assume they will



Software should not rely on power/Internet connectivity on vehicles

- Both CTS and Via have in-vehicle tablet interfaces
- Drivers were generally happy with these interfaces
- But technology and network connectivity are not always reliable, especially in rural areas



Invoicing and billing are important

- Scheduling and dispatching are the top-line features
- But invoicing is just as important
- Invoicing for demand response transit can be complex



Smaller-scale automated scheduling

- Many software tools try to optimize the entire schedule
- CTS has an "auto-seat ride" feature that automatically schedules a single ride
 - Via has something similar
- There are many opportunities for automated scheduling to work on small portions of the schedule



Acknowledgements

- Staff at the agencies we visited
- Sarah Searcy and NCDOT IMD
- Kai Monast and ITRE at NCSU
- Paul Mihas, Rocky Riviella, Katrina Marks at the Odum Institute



Division Updates (continued)

CASSI Advances Shared Autonomous Mobility Technologies in NC

NCDOT's **Connected Autonomous Shuttle Supporting Innovation (CASSI)** is a program (not a product) that **demonstrates the capability of shared autonomous vehicles** to prepare for the future of mobility and enhance public transportation services.



CASSI in Cary's Bond Park

NCDOT partnered with the Town of Cary to bring a novel-design, low-speed autonomous shuttle to Fred G. Bond Metro Park.

- 13-week pilot from March 6-June 2, 2023
- Free and open to the public on weekdays, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- 1.6-mile route with four stops







CASSI in Cary's Bond Park

Special features of the project included:

- Shared stop with GoCary Routes 4 and 8 at the Cary Senior Center
- Temporary traffic signal that demonstrated the shuttle's vehicle-to-infrastructure communication capabilities









CASSI at UNC Charlotte

July 12 through December 22, 2023

Compared to previous pilots under the CASSI program:

- Most signals (four total)
- Longest route (2.2 miles)
- Longest duration (6 months)
- Most complicated mixed traffic environment
 - Includes bicyclist, scooter, pedestrian, motor vehicle, and transit interactions and shared stops with the existing campus bus fleet













Say Hello to CASSI at UNC Charlotte!





More Opportunities to Partner with NCDOT

NCDOT is interested in **partnering with agencies to pilot automated transit technologies** through applications to the **USDOT Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) discretionary grant program.**

"The <u>SMART Grants Program</u> funds purpose-driven innovation to build data and technology capacity and expertise for State, local, and Tribal governments. Communities should target their real-world challenges where the use of new technologies and approaches can create benefits."

NCDOT is interested in the following two use cases:

Equity and Access – Automated Wheelchair Securement Systems in Transit, Paratransit, or Local Mobility Vehicles

Safety and Reliability – Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) and Automated Driving Systems (ADS) for Transit Vehicles

NCDOT will complete a **Request for Information (RFI) on automated bus technologies** including automated wheelchair securement systems.

Q'Straint Quantum autonomous wheelchair securement system







Scotland's CAVForth autonomous bus pilot

NC NMVDP – Updates



"NCDOT NC NMVDP and Safety Program Support" Project

February 1, 2023-April 15, 2024

In partnership with NCDOT Transportation Mobility and Safety Division

This project supports the evolution of the statewide bicycle and pedestrian counting program to create strategies to meet the following long-term goals:

- Creating a data warehouse that can accommodate bicycle and pedestrian counts collected with different technologies, at different durations, and in different files and formats by other entities in the state (not only the counts currently included in the NC NMVDP), and
- 2. Establishing standardized business processes and procedures for collecting and using the bicycle and pedestrian count data from the program to support the development of improved exposure models and safety analyses for vulnerable roadway users, including a pedestrian-specific volume sampling strategy.

Has your agency ever collected non-motorized counts? Please take our survey!

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Non-Motorized Volume Data Collection Survey





NCDOT Pedestrian Bicycle Infrastructure Network Updates (PBIN)

Presented by Lauren Blackburn Michael Spear

August 2023

What is PBIN?

- Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure Network (PBIN)
 - Statewide Geographic Information System (GIS) inventory of pedestrian and bicycle facilities (both *existing* and *planned*)
 - GIS data = Data with both tabular and spatial attributes (ex. each table row corresponds to a physical, spatial feature that can be represented on a map)
- ESRI file geodatabase format
 - Requires ArcGIS desktop software to open and access the database
- Contains six separate layer classes
 - Pedestrian Facilities (polyline and point data)
 - Bicycle Facilities (polyline and point data)
 - Shared Use Path Facilities (polyline and point data)

PBIN Purpose(s)

Project ATLAS – Inventory for NCDOT project scoping and development

- How does the existing network tie into the project?
- What is the planned bicycle and pedestrian network to be considered for Complete Streets projects?

Future Network Planning and Analysis

- How many miles of [greenway, bike lanes, sidewalk....] are built and planned?
- What is the coverage of planned bicycle and pedestrian networks statewide?
- Where are the gaps in regional connectivity?

SPOT / Prioritization

- How will the proposed project improve connectivity and access?
- How many proposed projects relate to high-risk (crash) locations?

Safety Review

- Where does the existing network cross high-risk roads?
- Where do planned network (i.e., sidewalk and bikeway) projects connect with identified safety needs?

Others..

How to Access PBIN

- Available to the public
- For download at Connect NCDOT Website
 Download link available for the file geodatabase
- For viewing at NCDOT Go!NC Portal Website
 Via ArcGIS Online Web Map interface

Doing Bu	siness Bide	ding & Lett	ing <u>Projects</u>	Resources	Local Governm	ents	Search	
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Visual of PBIN Data

PBIN Bicycle_Point Bicycle_Linear Pedestrian_Point Ped_Linear SUP_Point SUP_Linear









Current Manual Digitization Process

- Existing features being digitized:
 - Sidewalks
 - Crosswalks
- General methods:
 - Use NCDOT on-system curb ramp inventory as leads to potential sidewalk and crosswalk locations
 - Search for GIS open data portals and ArcGIS Online pages for local agencies
 - o Will pilot object detection and feature classification using machine learning

Contribute to PBIN

- PBIN benefits from data submitted by local agencies
 - Improves coverage
 - Allows PBIN to stay current
 - Help answer questions for projects, plans and safety!
- Accepted Forms of Data
 - Shapefiles
 - File geodatabases containing GIS data layers
 - o Spreadsheets containing spatially locatable features (coordinates, routes & mileposts, etc.)
 - o Downloadable ESRI (ArcGIS) feature services and layers

Any data representing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, existing or planned, can be of potential value to PBIN



Proposed Methods for Local Agency Data Upload

- Option 1: Upload to ArcGIS Online (AGOL)
- Option 2: Share via OneDrive or SharePoint
- Option 3: Share via other third-party file sharing system (i.e., Dropbox, Google, etc.)

PBIN Contact Information

Michael Spear, VHB - <u>mspear@vhb.com</u>

Lauren Blackburn, VHB - <u>lblackburn@vhb.com</u>



Thank you!