

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

When is the application due?

The application is due July 26, 2019.

Explanation for the project description.

The projects being considered for this evaluation include those which are proposed for converting rails to trails with limited to no ground disturbance beyond the removal of rails, ties, minor regrading of ballast, and placement of a riding surface.

What is required for the project to proceed to ROW?

ROW authorization will be required.

- This authorization will require the project to have a completed project agreement and NEPA document.
- The NEPA documentation should identify the project description as a long-term lease of the rail corridor and the construction of a trail along that corridor.
- As part of the NEPA process, the applicant will be required to comply with other related laws and regulations to the maximum extent possible.
- If other related laws and regulations are not satisfied at the time the NEPA document is ready for approval, activities associated with these laws and regulations will be included as green sheet commitments within the CE, and Section G of the CE will include information on why no significant effect on resources related to these laws and regulations will result from this action based on available information.

What is required for the project to proceed to Construction?

Construction authorization will be required.

- This authorization will require the applicant to have satisfied other related environmental laws and regulations and consulted with NCDOT and FHWA to establish whether the approved CE determination remains valid for the requested Administrative action.
- If, at that time, the additional information and surveys identify that the initial CE designation is no longer valid for the requested administrative action, the appropriate action will need to be taken prior to project authorization to proceed to construction.
- *It is important to note that the project will need to advance to construction within 10 years (from the time of the ROW authorization) in order to avoid repayment of federal reimbursements under FHWA Order 5020.1A.*

What must be included in the agreement?

Statements from the Section 106 expert for appendix G in agreement (description of outstanding work):

- Assumes little to no direct, cumulative or indirect effects. Reasonable assurance should be provided for the NEPA class of action (CE).
- Recognition of outstanding surveys related to Section 106 and Endangered Species Act.
- Recognition that prior to construction authorization, NCDOT and Federal Highway consultation and agreements related to impacts will be completed. Agree to work through 106 consultation process to determine any documentation and mitigation requirements.
- If the consultation process identifies significant impacts, the CE will be elevated to an appropriate NEPA document.
- If unable to reach an agreement with SHPO on mitigation, the project will not proceed to construction. FHWA will be paid back.

How is the funding awarded?

Up to \$15 million of Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funds will be allocated from 2019 to 2021 for this program. Projects will be selected through a competitive, data driven process.

How long will the municipality have to complete the project?

Municipalities will have four years to complete their project, starting when the agreement is executed.

What are the selection criteria?

State law requires data driven evaluation criteria for project selection. Criteria include:

- Connectivity
 - points of interest, connections to other bike/ped infrastructure; designated routes
- Safety Benefit
 - crashes of the alternative on-road route
- Economic Distress of the county or counties
- Corridor preservation benefit

What type of assistance is available to local staff preparing a proposal?

Staff from the NCDOT Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation (DBPT) will be available to answer questions and provide guidance. Contact LaToya Caldwell at lcaldwell7@ncdot.gov , 919-707-2609

Can the funds be used for the planning phase?

These funds are made available only for right of way.

Is there a “live person” available who can answer my questions?

Yes, you can contact:

LaToya Caldwell (919) 707-2609 / lcaldwell7@ncdot.gov
Andy Miller (919) 707-2607 / samiller@ncdot.gov