

NCDOT TPD NEWS



NCDOT TPD Newsletter

October 2020

TPD Statewide Initiatives

Below is a list of current initiatives being undertaken by the Transportation Planning Division.

Becky Mountain Road in Transylvania County

Relief is coming to drivers who regularly use Becky Mountain Road in Transylvania County but find it blocked by big rigs. An NCDOT crew will install a set of “No Thru Trucks” signs on the road which features a curvy section where trucks are unable to proceed. The signs will be posted near both intersections with U.S. 276. Navigation systems often direct vehicles here as a shortcut for U.S. 276.

A new ordinance states that Becky Mountain Road is a narrow, winding two-lane roadway with poor horizontal and vertical alignment, and that trucks are caught in the low-speed horizontal curves creating safety and capacity issues for themselves, other motorists and the local community.

NCDOT Logistics + Freight Bulletin

To sign up for the Logistics + Freight bulletin you can send an email to Dana Magliola at damagliola@ncdot.gov. Here are some highlights from the latest newsletter.

The Top 10 freight bottlenecks on the NCPHFN. Bottlenecks as defined by the FHWA includes “any highway segment identified by a State DOT to have constraints that significantly affect freight mobility and reliability.”

For many consumers, exposure to **Supply Chain Disruption** means a scarcity common items, but for companies, in both services and manufacturing, the impact of disruption to the network creates major issues. With delay, manufacturers may have to stop production, a very costly exercise. For hospitals, restaurants, and other service-related sectors, weekly or even daily deliveries keep them supplied and operating.

NCDOT Rail secures \$47.5M CRISI Grant which will be used to purchase right-of-way rail corridor between Raleigh and Ridgeway, NC just south of the Virginia line as part of the Southeast High-Speed Rail Corridor

The Port of Wilmington welcomed its **largest vessel** in May of this year with the inaugural call of the *MV Hyundai Hope*, a 14,000 TEU vessel.

“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

Safety News

Deadliest Month on NC Roadways

October is statistically the deadliest month on North Carolina’s roads. Since safety is the department’s top priority, we will be providing tips all month long.

Nationally:

The fourth quarter of 2019 represented the eleventh consecutive quarter with year-to-year decreases in fatality rate since the second quarter of 2017.

The fatality rate shows an increased trend from March to June 2020 primarily due to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic. Deaths / VMT are up 30% YoY for second quarter 2020.

“Never look at the trombones, it only encourages them.”

-Richard Wagner

Safety Efforts

Significant repairs to guardrail on a section of U.S. 64 from Franklin to Highlands require closing the highway during daytime hours for three straight days starting Sept. 29. A marked detour will direct traffic to Buck Creek Road for about 11 miles instead of remaining on U.S. 64 for about 10 miles. Local residents and visitors should include this detour into travel plans.

Traffic Forecasts

TPD has a vision for developing regional Travel Demand Models (TDM) in a way to have 100 % regional model coverage in NC. To facilitate this, TPD recently developed a series of 18 TDM regions. The Land of Sky RPO and French Broad River MPO (FBRMPO) are defined as Region 2 and already share a TDM. This is the same as the status quo. The FBRMPO adopted their new MTP on Sept 25. A TDM reflecting these changes will be released shortly. TDMs are one of the strongest tools used in the development of Traffic Forecasts.

NCDOT Overall News

Great Trails State Plan

Many of us are spending more time outdoors these days, exploring North Carolina's trails and greenways by walking or biking. Imagine one statewide trail network that connects all 100 counties. The N.C. Department of Transportation wants to hear from the public about North Carolina's trails and how to make them better. NCDOT recently collected over 11,000 responses to a public survey. The next step is to hold meetings to consider the feedback and workshops to garner more input. To sign up, visit: <https://www.ncdot.gov/divisions/bike-ped/great-trails-state/Pages/get-involved.aspx>

NCDOT Awarded First-Ever Waiver for Drone Bridge Inspections

The Federal Aviation Administration on October 2 approved a waiver that allows NCDOT to operate Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) beyond visual line of sight while conducting bridge inspections. This approval is part of North Carolina's participation in the FAA UAS Integration Pilot Program, which is focused on testing and enabling new innovative uses of drone technology. The announcement makes NCDOT the first state transportation agency to have been awarded such a waiver.

By enabling the drones to move beyond the pilot's line of sight, the inspections will be able to collect more high-resolution images in difficult to see places so inspectors can better analyze the bridge's integrity and identify possible problems. "Inspectors will collect images using the drone instead of a snoop truck or having to suspend the inspector from the bridge," Says Ben Spain NCDOT UAS program manager. "They'll be able to do these inspections quickly with minimal impacts to the traveling public, like not having to close lanes of traffic for as long."

Fall Litter Sweep Canceled

NCDOT needs your help after ongoing impacts from COVID-19 have canceled the department's Fall Litter Sweep. Traditionally scheduled for the last two weeks of April and September, the Litter Sweep is NCDOT's statewide roadside litter removal initiative. Due to the second cancellation of the year, we need North Carolinians to step up more than ever. Help us keep North Carolina beautiful. Dispose of your litter properly!

Roadway Death Rates Drop Across North Carolina

North Carolina's traffic deaths decreased by 4.4 percent in 2019 vs 2018, according to data released by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. This decrease is nearly twice the national rate.

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