

NCDOT TPD NEWS



NCDOT Transportation Planning Division (TPD) Newsletter

August 2022

TPD Statewide Initiatives

Below is a list of current initiatives being undertaken by NCDOT.

Asheville to Piedmont Passenger Rail Update

NCDOT is exploring the feasibility of extending passenger rail service to Asheville. This is an update to a study conducted in the 2000s that analyzed connecting Asheville to the Piedmont area via passenger railway.

This study was fueled by the proposal Amtrak released last year which included Asheville as a potential destination.

"This study is actually one of several we're doing across the state right now as communities show that they're very interested in passenger rail being a way that they can better connect urban and rural areas throughout our state," said Jason Orthner, NCDOT Rail Division director.

The study is looking at the type of service that might be offered, what times it would run, needed infrastructure as well as potential costs.

A draft of the study should be ready by the end of the year.

NEVI Survey Open

Established by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure, or NEVI, Program provides nearly \$5 billion from July 2022-June 2027 to help states create a network of 500,000 electric vehicle charging stations along designated alternative fuel corridors. USDOT followed by proposing minimum standards to help ensure the national EV charging network is user-friendly, reliable, and accessible. Alternative Fuel Corridor designations are now found in all 50 states.

North Carolina expects to receive up to \$109 million to build out EV infrastructure along its approved corridors. NCDOT has developed a survey to help inform the state's EV infrastructure deployment plan. Please take the following survey (closes August 1) to share your input!

<https://publicinput.com/NC-CleanTransPlan-Survey>

"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

Law enforcement throughout NC will be patrolling the roads July 18-24 to make sure motorists obey speed limits as part of the **"Speeding Wrecks Lives"** campaign, a national initiative in conjunction with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

"Speeding-related crashes are at all-time high levels across the country, including North Carolina," said Mark Ezzell, director of the Governor's Highway Safety Program. Speed was a contributing factor in nearly a quarter of all fatal crashes in 2021.

"The difficulty lies not so much in developing new ideas as in escaping from old ones."

- John Maynard Keynes

Traffic Forecasts

HL-0003; US 19/23 BUS (Haywood Road) Road Diet, In Review

I-2513; I-26 Connector, In Review

B-5898 & B-3186: Replace Bridges at I-40 and US 74, Haywood County, underway

HE-0001; new interchange on I-26, Updated 4/11/2022

HB-0005; Replace bridges on I-40 over Coleman Mtn Rd, delivered 10/27/2021

U-5832; NC 81 Swannanoa River Rd, delivered 1/17/2022

U-6158; intersection improvements at US 276 and Raccoon Rd, delivered 5/20/2021

Other studies: Black Mountain Road Diet, B-5982 (Bridge on US 74 over Southern Railroad), BR-0145 (Bridge on NC 208 over Laurel Shelton Creek), and BR-0157 (Bridge on US 19W over Cane River)

Contact Us

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Two Roads Get New Speed Limits To Improve Safety

NCDOT will soon be lowering the speed limit on 3.4 miles of U.S. 158 in Currituck County and 2.0 miles of Seaside Road in Brunswick County. The speed limit will be reduced from 55 mph to 45 mph. The speed limit reduction is another step aimed at improving safety on the stretch of busy highway. "Rumble strips and six-inch pavement markings have already been installed along this section of the highway," Bridgers said. "Lowering the posted speed limit is another step. In the long-term, more permanent measures are necessary."

NCDOT Overall News

Eastern NC Highway gets Interstate Designation

A highway that stretches through eastern North Carolina is now an interstate – so drivers will start to see more signs with "Interstate 587". Commuters will now be able to travel more efficiently through Wilson, Greene and Pitt counties thanks to the newly improved I-587. The first sign was unveiled during a ceremony in Greenville earlier this week. Contractors will switch signs throughout the 37 miles that was formerly U.S. 264.

Tail of the Dragon

North Carolina and Tennessee officials held a special campaign today focused on an 11-mile, curvy stretch of U.S. 129 along the state line that is a popular location for motorcyclists and car enthusiasts.

The N.C. Governor's Highway Safety Program (NCGHSP) and N.C. State Highway Patrol, along with the Swain County Sheriff's Office and local law enforcement agencies, partnered with the Tennessee Highway Safety Office and Tennessee Highway Patrol for the "Border to Border" campaign to promote safety for visitors of the "Tail of the Dragon."

"Tourists from all over are attracted to the exciting and unique curves the Tail of the Dragon offers, particularly in the warm summer months," said NCGHSP Director Mark Ezzell. "This joint campaign is an effort to display our common commitment across state lines to keeping motorcyclists, drivers, passengers and others safe in this popular area by encouraging everyone to slow down and buckle up."

NCDOT Cash Report

NCDOT Cash Watch Number Report for April 29, 2022, reached \$2,210,961,814 in Unreserved Cash roughly split 55/45 between the Highway Fund and the Highway Trust Fund.