

11/20/13

PUBLIC COMMENT SIGNUP SHEET

Pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. §153A-52.1, the Henderson County welcomes public comment at its meetings. Please note that each speaker is limited to three (3) minutes, unless a different time limit is announced. Also, the Board may adopt rules limiting the number of persons speaking taking the same position on a given issue, and other rules regarding the maintenance of good order.

Each speaker should be aware and by their signatures hereto they agree that their comments may be recorded (by audio-visual recordings, photography or other means), and may be (but are not required to be) broadcast by the County as a part of the broadcast of this meeting, or as a part of the County's programming on its local video channel(s). By their signature they further agree that Henderson County is and will be the sole owner of all rights in and to such programming. The undersigned hereby indemnifies Henderson County, its employees and agents, against any and all claims, damages, liabilities, costs and expenses arising out of the use of the undersigned's images and words in connection therewith.

1. Michele Eliashevsky Michele Eliashevsky
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258 Old Homestead Rd Greenways / Bike Routes
Hendersonville NC 28739 Topic
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2. EVA Ritchey EVA Ritchey
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4. _____ SIGNATURE

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I am a resident of Henderson County, and live off of the Hwy 64 corridor between Laurel Park and the Horse Shoe post office. I am here today to voice my support of connected greenways and safer bicycling routes in Henderson County. I am familiar with the proposed Ecusta Trail, and my home is situated just off the proposed corridor. My family is anxiously awaiting such an improvement because there are no safe alternative passageways to access the rest of the county from our area. Before the birth of my son, I used to brave bicycle travel on Hwy 64 to get into Horse Shoe to attend church. I would do so on my mountain bike so that if I had to dart off the roadside due to a car passing too closely I could do so without fear of a nasty wreck. My husband still braves the section weekly to get into Etowah (he has on many occasions stuffed the pockets of his jersey with fare from Ingles to bring home to me). Fortunately there is enough of a shoulder on the stretch between Horse Shoe and Etowah for an adult to ride, but I would never feel safe traveling with my son in tow.

The stretch from our home towards downtown is equally as treacherous. My husband used to commute up Rugby Road to work at the middle school. It wasn't the safest commute, but he made a point to do so because he believes in setting a good example for others. There is no safe alternative access to the schools off Hwy 191 either. There is a nice network of trails around the Kellogg Center that could perhaps be utilized in the future to make a connection to the schools from the Ecusta trail.

Now that my husband works downtown he has stopped commuting on his bike. There is no shoulder on Hwy 64 and the traffic is too heavy to be safe for bikes or pedestrians. One date night we decided to ride into Laurel Park for dinner. Even though we took every possible side road, we still had to traverse the highway half a dozen times. We also had to cut our date short for fear of being hit by a car in the fading light.

I have ventured out with my son to participate in some local "kid-friendly" rides, and yearn to ride more. When I lived in Tryon I would take trails through the woods to get from my home downtown to the local grocery store and pharmacy, and would often go "shopping" just because I felt like getting some fresh air. When we vacation in Bethany Beach DE each year, we ride every day – to get food, downtown to shop and stroll, and to the park. We have enjoyed other trails, such as the Schuylkill River Trail outside of Philadelphia, the Florence, SC rail trail system, the Estatoe trail in Brevard, and are looking forward to taking our son down the Swamp Rabbit and Virginia Creeper trails just as soon as his little legs grow big enough.

In summary, I would like to see the Ecusta trail project move forward, but I would also like Henderson County to consider how unsafe its roads are for bicycles and children and work to improve its infrastructure to include safe alternative corridors of travel.

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