

REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION

HENDERSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

MEETING DATE: March 7, 2011

SUBJECT: Letter of Support to NCDOT for Howard Gap Road Widening

PRESENTER: Anthony W. Starr, AICP, Planning Director

ATTACHMENTS: 1. Project Summary
2. Map of Project Area

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

NCDOT plans to improve Howard Gap Road from Jackson Road in Fletcher to US Highway 64 in Hendersonville. The project includes widening the two travel lanes, adding paved shoulders, improving the road geometry (sharp curves), replacing several bridges, and adding a roundabout at the intersection with Brookside Camp Road. See the attached project summary for more detailed information.

The primary purpose of the project is to improve safety. The project cost is estimated at \$23,000,000. Planning Staff requested NCDOT mark the planned 4 foot paved shoulders as dedicated bike lanes to increase safety for the project. After evaluation, the NCDOT wanted to also add “rumble strips” to the shoulders to enhance safety. To add the rumble strips and mark the paved shoulders as bike lanes, an additional one foot of paved shoulder is needed (from current plans) on each side of the road. NCDOT estimates the additional cost at \$220,490.00. The additional cost is less than 1% of the total project cost.

NCDOT requests the Board of Commissioners support for the project and the additional safety improvements (bike lanes and rumble strips). No County funds are requested or required.

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED: Authorize the Chairman to send a letter of support for the project and the additions of rumble strips and bike lanes.

Suggested Motion: I move that the Board authorize the Chairman to send a letter of support for the project with the additions of bike lanes and rumble strips.

**NCDOT Project: R-5207
Howard Gap Road Improvements**

Summary of Project: Improvements to Howard Gap Road from Jackson Road near Fletcher to US 64 in Hendersonville (approximately 7 miles). The road currently has a width of 20 feet with narrow shoulders. The project will widen the travel lanes to 12-foot wide travel lanes with 4 foot paved shoulders. The project will improve the road geometry (curves and vertical changes), replace 4 bridges, add turn lanes at several key intersections, and add a roundabout at Brookside Camp Road. Improved safety is the primary purpose of the project.

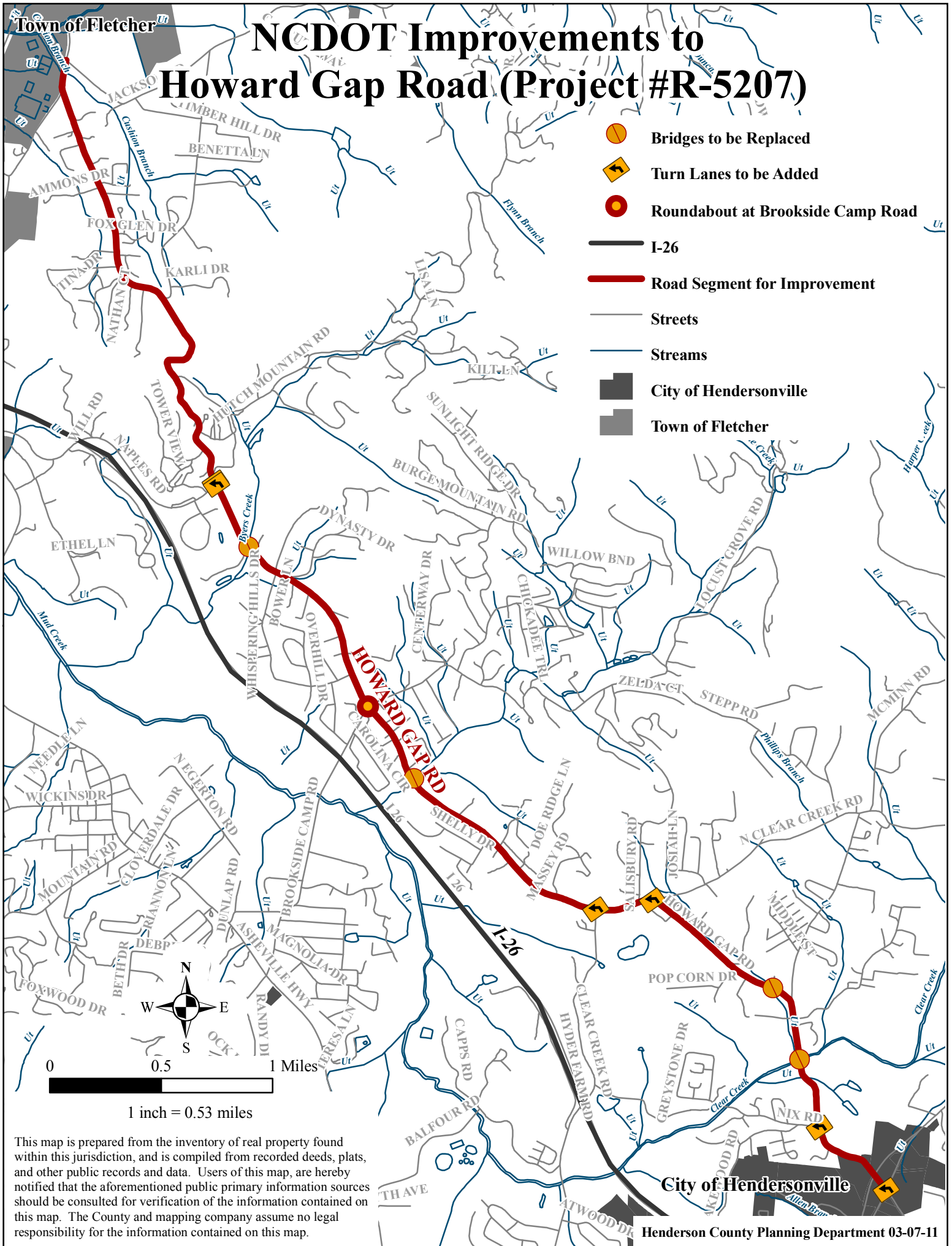
Estimated Project Cost: \$23,000,000










Issue: The project design included 4 foot wide paved shoulders. The road is one of a few north-south corridors in the county and has high traffic counts with significant truck traffic in some segments. Bicycles frequently also use this road and it is listed as an “unsigned route” on NCDOT Bicycle Maps.

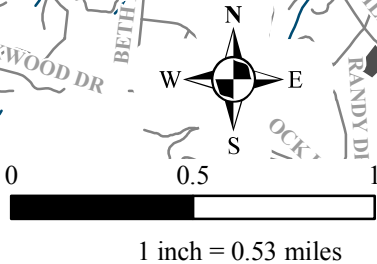
Key Points

- Planning staff asked NCDOT to consider marking the 4 foot wide paved shoulders as dedicated bike lanes to improve safety.
- NCDOT, upon review, is supportive of this request provided the County would support the inclusion of bike lanes.
- NCDOT’s Complete Streets Policy gives direction that bike lanes should be included in major road projects when possible.
- After review by NCDOT staff, they determined that they also want to include “rumble strips” on the shoulders to enhance safety.
- To include both the rumble strips and dedicated bike lanes an additional cost is estimated at \$220,490. This represents less than 1% of the total project cost.
- Bike lanes require a minimum of 4 feet per national engineering standards.
- Most of the additional cost reflects an additional 1 foot of paved shoulder for each side of the road to accommodate both a rumble strip and bike lane.
- NCDOT requests the Board of Commissioners support the added scope of the work.
- No County funds are requested or required to add the work or complete the project.

NCDOT Improvements to Howard Gap Road (Project #R-5207)



-  Bridges to be Replaced
-  Turn Lanes to be Added
-  Roundabout at Brookside Camp Road
-  I-26
-  Road Segment for Improvement
-  Streets
-  Streams
-  City of Hendersonville
-  Town of Fletcher



This map is prepared from the inventory of real property found within this jurisdiction, and is compiled from recorded deeds, plats, and other public records and data. Users of this map, are hereby notified that the aforementioned public primary information sources should be consulted for verification of the information contained on this map. The County and mapping company assume no legal responsibility for the information contained on this map.