



**N.C. 107 Improvements**  
 North Carolina Department of  
 Transportation NCDOT Highway Division 14  
 Attn: Jonathan Woodard, PE  
 253 Webster Road  
 Sylva, N.C. 27127

Address Label

## N.C. 107 Improvements

NCDOT proposes to improve N.C. 107 in Sylva, Jackson County. The improvements are included in the NCDOT 2018-2027 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) as Project No. R-5600. For more information about this project, please visit <https://www.ncdot.gov/news/public-meetings/Pages/default.aspx> or contact:

Jonathan Woodard, PE  
 Project Engineer  
 Division of Highways-Division 14  
 253 Webster Road  
 Sylva, N.C. 27127  
 (828) 586-2141  
[jwoodard@ncdot.gov](mailto:jwoodard@ncdot.gov)

NCDOT will provide interpretive services upon request for persons who do not speak English, or have a limited ability to read, speak or understand English. Kindly request it by calling 1-800-481-6494.

Aquellas personas que hablan español y no hablan inglés, o tienen limitaciones para leer, hablar o entender inglés, podrían recibir servicios de interpretación si los solicitan llamando al 1-800-481-6494.



September 2018

## N.C. 107 Improvements From N.C. 116 to U.S. 23 Business Sylva, Jackson County

State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project No. R-5600

### Project Description

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes to improve N.C. 107 and U.S. 23 Business in Sylva. Improvements to N.C. 107 begin south of N.C. 116 and extend to U.S. 23 Business.

Improvements to U.S. 23 Business begin west of Municipal Drive and extend to Skyland Drive. This proposed project is included in the 2018–2027 NCDOT State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) as Project No. R-5600.

The purpose of the project is to improve safety, relieve congestion, and improve traffic operations along this heavily traveled route. N.C. 107 serves traffic to Sylva, Webster, Cullowhee, Tuckasee, Glenville, and Cashiers.

### Background & Public Meeting

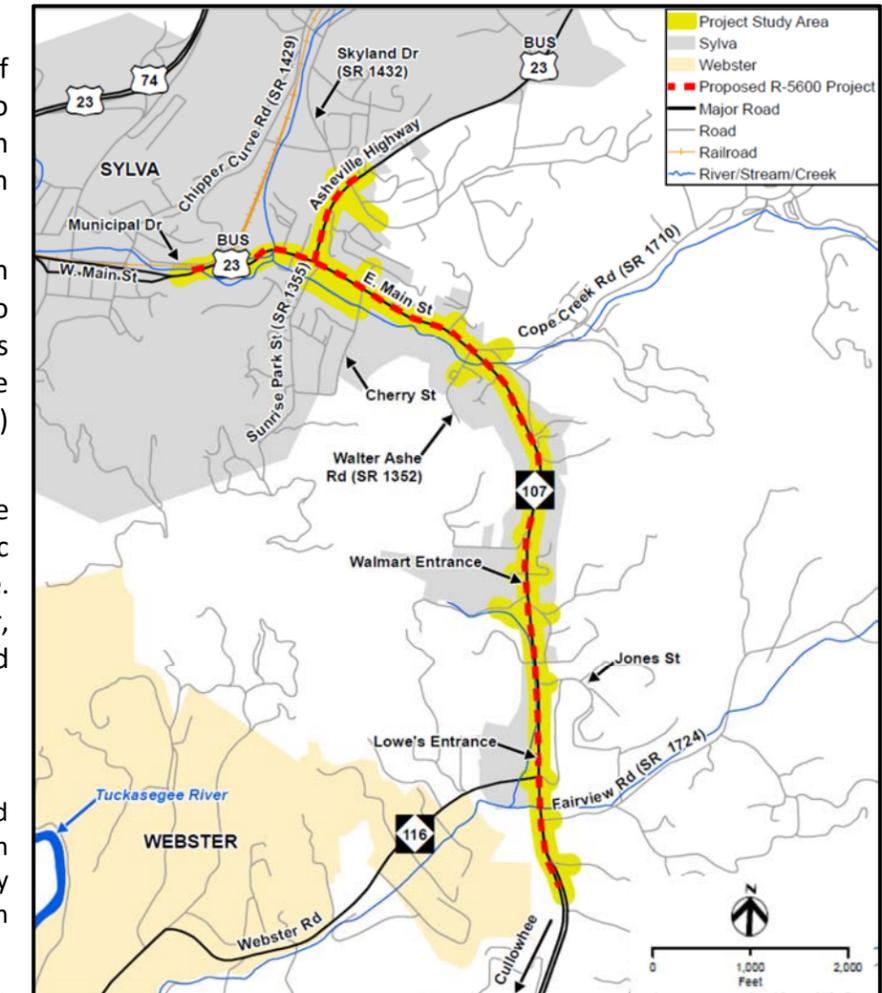
A Local Officials Informational Meeting and Public Meeting for this project were held on February 23, 2017 at Southwestern Community College in Sylva. Four alternatives were on display:

- Alternatives 1A and 1B called for a four-lane superstreet design with directional crossovers and median U-turns.
- Alternatives 2A and 2B called for a four-lane design with conventional intersections that allow all traffic movements to occur at major intersections.

To accommodate bicyclists, Alternatives 1A and 2A included five-foot bicycle lanes, and Alternatives 1B and 2B included 14-foot wide outside lanes. All four alternatives called for a five-foot sidewalk on both sides of the roadway.

During this meeting, NCDOT representatives met with the public, answered citizens' questions, and received public input on the four alternatives. Approximately 152 individuals and local business owners attended the Public Meeting. Participants submitted comment forms at the meeting and by mail or email subsequent to the meeting.

Commenters requested left-turning movements be allowed out of Walmart, aesthetic improvements be made to the bridges, median plantings, and the ability to make turning movements at Cope Creek Road. The majority of the comments were in support of bicycle lanes and sidewalks.



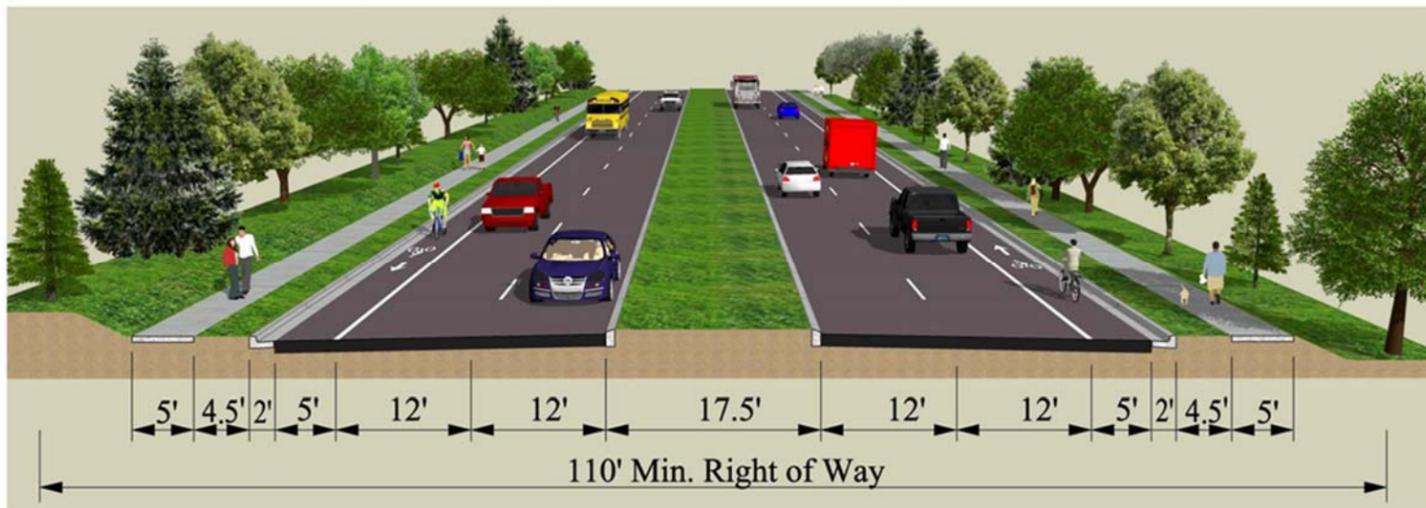
## Project Update

Since the Public Meeting, NCDOT considered a request by the Town of Sylva to extend the project limits west of Municipal Drive to complete a pedestrian connection to downtown and include replacing the first bridge over Scotts Creek within the project if the bridge was scheduled for replacement in the near future. This bridge was built in the 1930's and warrants consideration for replacement. Sidewalks are currently missing in this area. The project limits have been extended west to accommodate the Town's request.

## Project Typical Section

The NCDOT Project Team thoroughly reviewed public input provided during and after the Public Meeting with the Town of Sylva and Jackson County, and determined to proceed with designing Alternative 2A. The proposed typical section of NC 107 is shown below. This alternative will maintain existing full movement, signalized intersections and include a signalized intersection at Cherry Street/ Hall Heights. Other aspects of this refined alternative will include:

- Replacement of structurally deficient bridge between Municipal Drive and Sunrise Park.
- Replacement or rehabilitation of functionally obsolete bridge west of Municipal Drive.
- Consideration of bridge aesthetics, plantings, additional bus, pedestrian, and bicycle accommodations.\*
- Preferred U-turn/bulb out locations.\*



\* The inclusion of these elements will be determined subsequent to coordination with local officials. Additional improvements may be subject to cost-sharing agreements with the Town of Sylva and/or Jackson County.

Project Schedule & Funding*	
Event	Date
Complete the Final Environmental Document	Fall 2018
Right of Way Acquisition	Early 2020
Construction	Late 2021
Funding	Cost
Right of Way & Utilities	\$49.1 Million
Construction	\$21.5 Million

\* Schedule and funding are subject to change

## Frequently Asked Questions

During the public involvement process questions have been asked about the project. The questions and NCDOT's responses follow:

**Why not build a bypass?** When the NC 107 Connector was proposed and funded, there was strong opposition from the public. There were concerns about private property impacts, environmental impacts, and economic impacts to the business community in Sylva. There was a consensus at the time to prioritize improvements to the existing road before building a new road. Even if a bypass were already built today, NC 107 in its current configuration would be congested and unsafe. Travel demand modeling has shown that approximately 8,000 vehicles per day would use the connector, leaving over 30,000 vehicles per day using NC 107. Improving the safety and flow of traffic on NC 107 is needed with or without a connector.

**Why is the median 17.5 feet wide? Can a concrete median wall be used instead?** The purpose of the median is to restrict left turns except at signalized intersections and a few other strategic locations. This will reduce congestion along the corridor and prevent many of the "T-Bone" collisions that occur on N.C.107. The proposed 17.5 feet is the minimum width needed to provide left turn lanes at signalized intersections and U-turn locations but still restrict left turns in and out of adjacent driveways. At minimum, the same width would be required to accommodate turn lanes next to a median wall. Median walls can interfere with sight distance around curves.

**Why must the bridges be replaced?** Both bridges over Scotts Creek were built in the 1930's and are now functionally obsolete. The bridge at Jackson Paper no longer supports fully loaded trucks and is not wide enough to accommodate sidewalks and required lane widths. It must be replaced. The other bridge has sidewalks, adequate lane widths and still supports legal loads. It is being considered for rehabilitation instead of replacement. The project area would still improve the Chipper Curve intersection and provide pedestrian access into downtown.

**Why not replace bridges in their current locations?** It not feasible to detour traffic while the bridges are demolished and reconstructed. By shifting the location of the new bridges, traffic can be maintained during construction.

**Why not build roundabouts on Municipal Drive/ Chipper Curve Road and N.C. 107/ U.S. 23 Business?** N.C. 107/ U.S. 23 Business was evaluated in the feasibility study conducted for this project. The traffic analysis indicated that even a dual-lane roundabout would not be able to handle the traffic volume at this intersection unless a flyover bridge was included to accommodate the volume of traffic turning left from U.S. 23 Business to N.C. 107 toward Cullowhee. A roundabout would have substantially more property impacts than the proposed design. A roundabout at Municipal Drive and Chipper Curve Road was not proposed due to potential property impacts and design complications with the railroad crossing. In general, roundabouts require more right of way than conventional intersections. NCDOT considers adding roundabouts when the benefits justify the additional impacts to adjacent properties.

**Why do dump trucks from the quarry use North River Road instead of N.C. 107?** The existing bridge at Jackson Paper is no longer able to support the weight of loaded dump trucks. The bridge between Sylva and Dillsboro is the same way. The trucks from the quarry must use an alternate route because they cannot cross these bridges. The bridge at Jackson Paper will be replaced as part of this project. Plans to replace the bridge between Sylva and Dillsboro are under way.

**Why can't the railroad track be moved instead of relocating businesses?** The railroad track is owned by the Blue Ridge Southern Railway. Impacts to this freight business would result in increased project cost and not meet the town's needs to relieve congestion and improve traffic operations on this heavily traveled regional roadway.

**Why are bicycle lanes and sidewalks proposed on this project?** The N.C. Department of Transportation's "Complete Streets" policy directs the department to consider and incorporate several modes of transportation when building new projects or making improvements to existing infrastructure. The 2017 Jackson County Comprehensive Transportation Plan recommended bicycle and sidewalk accommodations for this project. The selected alternative design from the February 23, 2017 public meeting includes five-foot bicycle lanes on both sides on N.C. 107 and U.S. 23 Business west of N.C. 107 and five-foot sidewalks along both sides throughout the project. A dedicated bike lane is safer than a multi-use path. The benefits of this design make it easier for travelers to get where they need to go; encourage the use of alternative forms of transportation; and improve safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists on these heavily traveled roads.