



N.C. 143 Improvements

North Carolina Department of Transportation
Project Development and Environmental Analysis Unit
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N.C. 143 Improvements

Transportation Improvement Program Project No. R-2822 B

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How Do I Get Involved?

Citizens are encouraged to review the information in this newsletter, attend the workshop, and provide input regarding the proposed project.

Citizens' Informational Workshop To Be Held November 29 for N.C. 143 Improvements Project

Project Description

The N.C. Department of Transportation proposes to improve a 4.5 mile section of N.C. 143 from West Buffalo Creek to N.C. 143 Business west of Robbinsville in Graham County. This project will improve this segment of N.C. 143 to provide 11-foot lanes and 6-foot grassed shoulders. Curves may also be improved.



N.C. 143

The purpose of this project is to improve safety along N.C. 143 using context sensitive solutions. Context sensitive solutions are improvements that address the transportation need, are assets to the community, and are compatible with the natural and human environments.

NCDOT will provide auxiliary aids and services under the Americans with Disabilities Act for anyone who wants to participate in this workshop. Anyone requiring special services should contact NCDOT Project Planning Engineer Wilson Stroud (see contact information on back page) as early as possible so that arrangements can be made.

Project Need

Currently, N.C. 143 is a narrow, winding two-lane road passing through mountainous terrain. It provides access to the Cherochala Skyway from Robbinsville. It also provides access to residences, businesses, and services in the Snowbird Community. This section of N.C. 143 has 9-foot lanes and does not meet typical N.C. route design standards for curves, pavement width, or shoulder width. The crash rate on this section of N.C. 143 is more than four times greater than the state's average for rural two-lane "N.C." routes. Fifty-nine crashes were reported from June 2009 through May 2012.

Citizens' Informational Workshop

**Thursday,
Nov 29, 2012**
6 p.m. to 8 p.m.
(drop in anytime)

Graham County
Community Center
196 Knight Street
Robbinsville, NC

Persons who speak Spanish and do not speak English, or have a limited ability to read, speak or understand English, may receive interpretive services upon request prior to the meeting by calling 1-800-481-6494.

Contact Us

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You can view the project website at: www.ncdot.gov/projects/nc143. Maps are available for public review at the Graham County Manager's Office, the Graham County GIS Office, and the Snowbird Community Center.

If you have transportation questions about other projects, call the NCDOT Customer Service Office at 1-877-DOT-4YOU or visit the NCDOT website at www.ncdot.gov.

Project Schedule

- November 29, 2012** - Citizens' Informational Workshop
- January 2014** - Environmental Assessment
- Summer 2014** - Public hearing
- April 2015** - Finding of No Significant Impact
- 2017*** - Right-of-way acquisition
- 2019*** - Construction

*Dates are subject to change.

What's Next?

After the environmental studies are completed and citizen and agency comments have been reviewed, a recommended alternative will be selected. NCDOT and the Federal Highway Administration will continue to work closely with local, state, and federal agencies, including the Tribal Historic Preservation Office, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, and the U.S. Forest Service in selecting the recommended alternative.

What Is Happening Now?

Since the 2008 public meetings, NCDOT has begun environmental surveys to identify potential impacts to the human and natural environments. NCDOT has coordinated with the Tribal Historic Preservation

Office, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, the U.S. Forest Service, and other federal and state agencies to ensure environmental impacts are avoided or minimized.

What Are the Alternatives?

In the 2008 public meetings, four alternatives were presented. Alternatives 1 and 4 would generally stay on the existing alignment, and Alternatives 2 and 3 would be built partially on new location.

Alternative 1 is 4.3 miles in length. It would widen N.C. 143 and improve curves in close proximity to the existing road from West Buffalo Creek to just north of N.C. 143 Business. It would realign the intersection of N.C. 143 at N.C. 143 Business.

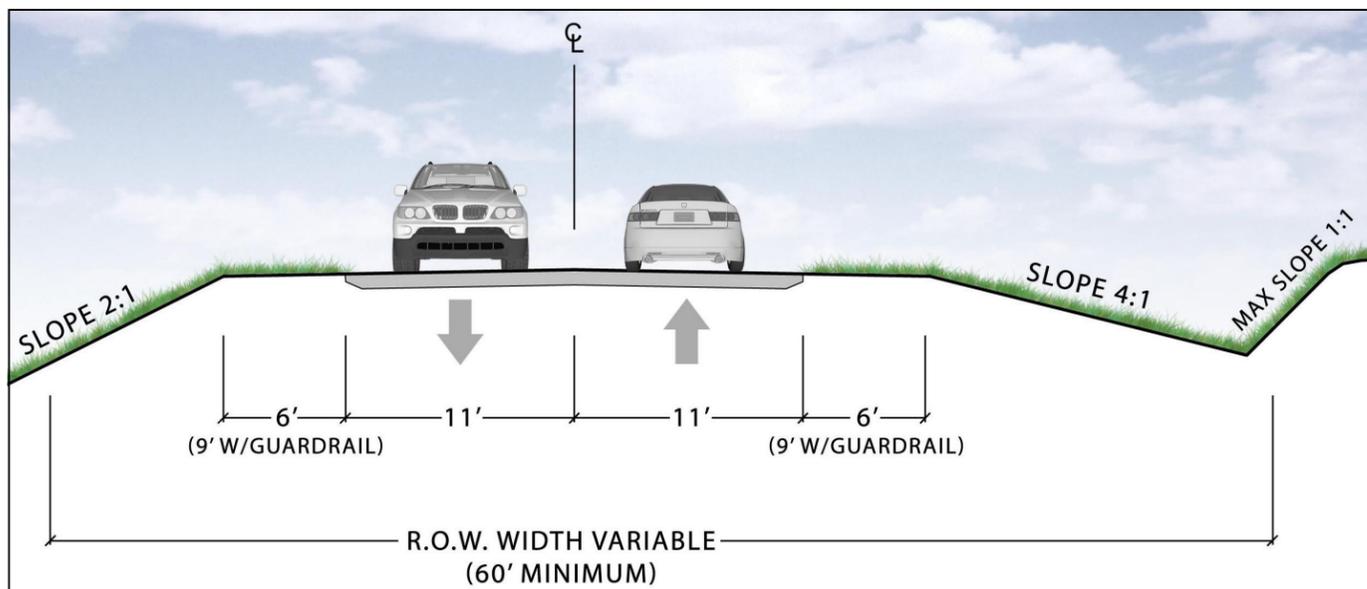
In December 2010, NCDOT met with federal and state agencies and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians to review the alternatives. Alternative 2 was revised to closely follow existing N.C. 143 between Long Hungry Road and Buchanan Branch Road to reduce impacts to streams, other natural resources, cultural resources, and Nantahala National Forest. Alternative 3 was eliminated from further consideration because of adverse impacts to the Nantahala National Forest and Santeetlah Lake.

Alternative 2 is 3.1 miles in length. It would widen N.C. 143 and improve curves in close proximity to the existing road from West Buffalo Creek to just north of Buchanan Branch Road. A new road would be constructed along the north side of Buchanan Branch Road with a new crossing of Snowbird Creek. N.C. 143 would then be widened and curves would be improved in close proximity to the existing road to just north of N.C. 143 Business, including realignment of the intersection of N.C. 143 at N.C. 143 Business.

To the right are descriptions of the three alternatives currently under consideration. These alternatives are shown on the map to the far right. Under each alternative, N.C. 143 would continue to be a two-lane road, possibly with turn lanes at some intersections. A sketch of what the road might look like is shown below.

Alternative 4 is 4.5 miles in length. It would widen N.C. 143 from West Buffalo Creek to N.C. 143 Business without curve improvements or realignment of the intersection of N.C. 143 at N.C. 143 Business.

Proposed Typical Section



How Will This Affect Me and My Community?

The proposed improvements to N.C. 143 will improve safety and are expected to enhance Graham County's tourism industry. Below is a list of the potential effects of the project. As project development progresses, NCDOT will continue to refine the design to avoid and minimize project impacts.

- Right-of-way acquisition
- Impacts to residences and businesses
- Change to environmental context
- Impacts to streams, wetlands, and forested areas
- Impacts to the national forest, tribal lands, and cultural resources
- Noise impacts during construction

Estimated Funding in State Transportation Improvement Program

Type	Cost (millions)
Right of way acquisition	\$2.2
Utility relocations	\$0.6
Construction	\$14.9
Total	\$17.7

Current Project Alternatives

