NCDOT Rail Division **The Rail Report**

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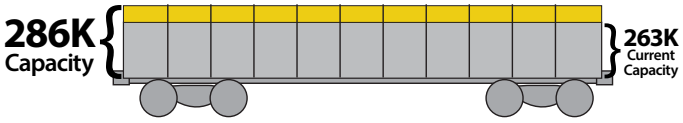
NCDOT officials were joined at the groundbreaking by U.S. Rep. G.K. Butterfield, along with officials from NCVA, Genesee & Wyoming and Nucor Corporation.

North Carolina & Virginia Railroad Improvements to Begin in 2017

The N.C. Department of Transportation hosted a groundbreaking ceremony on Monday, December 12 to kick off construction of significant railway and railroad crossing improvements on the North Carolina & Virginia Railroad (NCVA). The NCVA serves multiple customers and is located in Northampton, Bertie and Hertford counties, as well as Southampton County, Virginia. It interchanges with CSX Transportation Inc. at Boykins, Virginia, and runs 52 miles to its largest customer, the Nucor Steel plate mill at Cofield, NC.

The ceremony, held at Nucor Steel in Hertford County, highlighted how the improvements support industries in the region as well as opening the door to new economic opportunities for the region. Currently, the railroad is operating at 10 mph over much of its line and is only able to load cars to 263,000 pounds gross weight. This project will allow NCVA to ship rail cars loaded to 286,000 pounds gross weight and at faster speeds. Increasing freight rail capacity will help reduce the amount of goods that need to be shipped by truck on U.S. 158 and other area roadways.

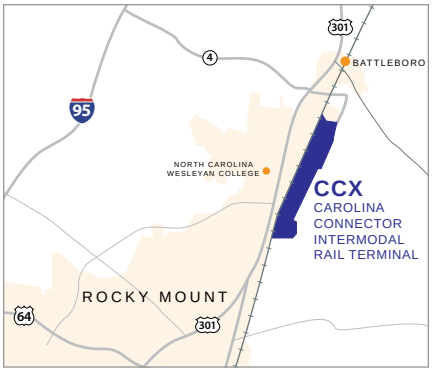
The $11.6 million project is scheduled to be complete by the end of 2019. The NCDOT secured half of the funding through a federal grant from the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) program. The balance of the cost is covered by an investment of $3 million from NCVA and $2.8 million in state funds.



Track improvements allow for rail cars to be loaded to 286,000 pounds rather than the current 263,000 pounds.

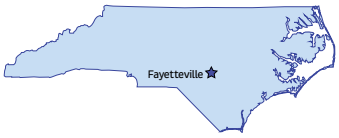
Work on CCX Regional Freight Master Plan Underway

The NC Department of Transportation and the Carolinas Gateway Partnership are currently preparing a Carolina Connector Regional Freight Master Plan to help identify transportation needs and guide economic development decisions in areas immediately surrounding the proposed CCX Intermodal Facility in Edgecombe and Nash counties and in areas that can be connected by highway or rail to the facility. CCX provides an opportunity for North Carolina to connect directly with national and international suppliers and markets. As NCDOT evaluated the positive benefits of CSX's decision to construct CCX, it became apparent that economic impacts for North Carolina can be maximized through comprehensive planning. Based on the anticipated number of lifts with at least an origin or destination in the state, CCX could generate 8,000 to 20,000 jobs through attracted economic development. The study will build from the ongoing Statewide Freight Plan and will help to identify transportation projects for scoring in the next round of prioritization under the Strategic Transportation Investments law. The study will also help to identify other infrastructure and policy issues that need to be addressed to take advantage of the logistics benefits and maximize economic development.



A consultant team consisting of Simpson Engineers and Associates, Dewberry, Cambridge Systematics, Strategic Development Group and TransDevelopment will lead the study. Representatives from the NCDOT Rail Division and Carolinas Gateway Partnership will be supported by an Advisory Group that will include, but not be limited to, CSX, North Carolina Ports, the N.C. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina, NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, metropolitan and regional planning organizations, and industry representatives from retail, distribution, trucking, and manufacturing interests. The project team is currently preparing invitations to the Advisory Group so an initial meeting can be convened in late January. The study will be completed in July 2017. If you have any questions or need additional input, you may call Eddie McFalls, PE, at (919) 707-4727 or email him at ebmcfalls@ncdot.gov.

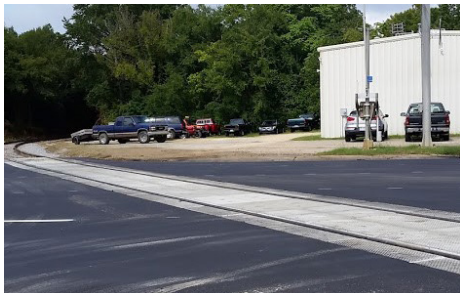
Grade Crossing Improvements Completed in Fayetteville



The NCDOT Rail and Highway Divisions, along with Aberdeen & Rockfish Railroad (AR), recently partnered to improve two at-grade railroad crossings on AR's tracks in Fayetteville, NC. The two crossings on Gillespie Street and Cliffdale Road both had old rubber panels that had begun to deteriorate causing a rough ride and were in great need of repair due to the high volume of traffic traveling across the crossings.

Cliffdale Road before (above) and after (below)

Gillespie Road before (above) and after (below)



The project replaced the existing rubber surfaces with a modular concrete "tub" crossing. This particular type of crossing is a precast, reinforced concrete surface that eliminates the need for ballast, ties and railroad fasteners, therefore reducing future maintenance costs for the Railroad and creating a smoother ride for the traveling public.

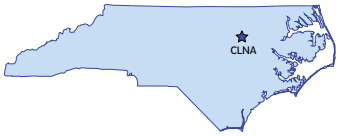
AR contributed labor for the installations while the NCDOT's Division Six provided asphalt for approaches and traffic control during the crossing installations. Rail Division Freight Rail and Rail Crossing Safety Improvement Funding provided $175,000 for the crossing materials.

Grade Crossing Improvements completed on the Carolina Coastal Railway

The NCDOT Rail and Highway Divisions, along with Carolina Coastal Railway (CLNA), previously partnered to improve three at-grade crossings on CLNA's tracks in Stantonsburg, Middlesex and Zebulon, NC. In Stantonsburg, the crossing on Carrie Road (Crossing Number 465580D) scored high on the list for needing improvements. The humped crossing's timbers were essentially rotted out, exposing bolts and making it dangerous to the motoring public. In Zebulon, Barbee Street (Crossing Number 465652E) experienced similar deterioration as Carrie Road (Crossing Number 465643F) with the timbers and bolts failing dramatically, as did Stokes Road in Middlesex.

The project replaced the timbers and bolts with rubber rail seal. This crossing material is ideal for the type and volume of traffic on these roads.

CLNA was responsible for the actual installations while NCDOT Divisions Four and Five provided asphalt approaches and any necessary traffic control while the crossing was being repaired. Rail Division Freight Rail and Rail Crossing Safety Improvement Funding provided $44,400 for the crossing materials.



Carrie Road, Stantonsburg, before (above) and after (below)

Barbee Street, Zebulon, before (above) and after (below)

Stokes Road, Middlesex, before (above) and after (below)

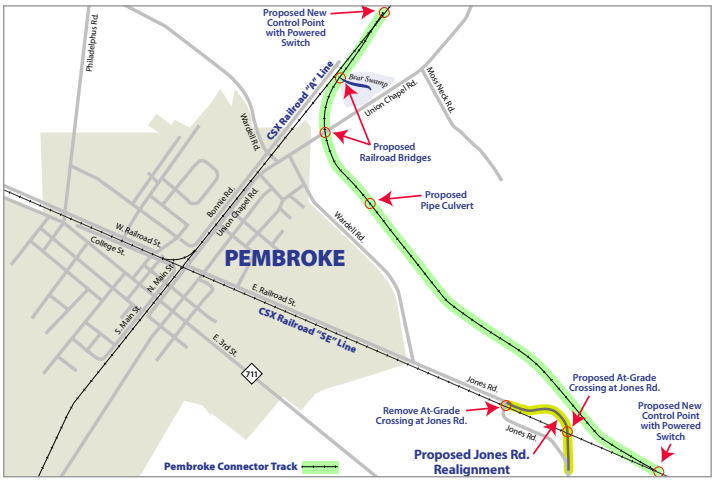
Blue Ridge Southern Railroad Invests in Appalachia

Last December, members of the NCDOT Rail Planning Unit met with representatives of the Blue Ridge Southern Railroad (BLU) to review a recently completed track infrastructure improvement project. Watco Transportation Services purchased the three branch lines comprising BLU from Norfolk Southern in 2014. Totaling 92 track miles, BLU provides a reliable freight connection to industries west of Asheville. In 2015, the NCDOT Rail Division invested more than $350,000 in matching Freight Rail and Rail Crossing Improvement (FRRCSI) funds to improve four grade-crossing surfaces, replace cross ties and switch ties, and resurface portions of the railroad with ballast. In 2016, NCDOT continued to invest in BLU with more than $50,000 in matching FRRCSI funds allocated towards improving six bridges, while BLU will invest their own capital in 14 more in the coming years. BLU carries more than 20,000 carloads of freight per year including paper products, chemicals and aggregates.

Pembroke Connector Track Update

A new 2.4-mile railroad connection is being constructed between CSX's main north-south line and the line serving Wilmington industries and the port. The new connection provides direct moves for trains between the north and east and will reduce transit times for shipments to and from Wilmington, including intermodal train moves to and from the new Carolina Connector (CCX) terminal in Rocky Mount.

NCDOT Rail Division is administering the grading contract and overseeing the overall railroad construction. A $10.2 million contract was awarded in late 2015 to C.M. Lindsay and Sons to perform the roadbed grading and structures. The grading project is on schedule and approximately 65 percent complete. The railroad bridge over Union Chapel Road is well underway with both end abutments and interior bents under construction. The last major work component will be the railroad bridge over Bear Swamp Creek, which will begin construction in March following completion of settlement times for the north and south roadbed approaches.



Railroad Bridge over Union Chapel Road under construction.

CSX will administer the railroad track and signal construction, which is expected to begin in mid-2017. The new connection track is anticipated to be complete and in service by early 2018.

As part of the project, Jones Road is being relocated as depicted on the map to reduce crossing blockages by trains, and improve roadway safety and railroad crossing geometry. This project element is being administered by NCDOT Division 6. The contract was awarded to BMCO and is anticipated to be complete in 2017.

NCDOT

BeRailSafe

Respect the Crossing
Respect the Track

2016 was a busy year for BeRailSafe, NCDOT's rail safety program. The program touched the lives of many North Carolinians through training sessions taught to law enforcement, fire, rescue, EMS and 911 personnel on safety issues during train collisions. The program also reached members of the public through safety fairs, festivals, crossing blitzes, special meetings and other events across the state.

What's Ahead for BeRailSafe in 2017?

BeRailSafe produced a rail safety video that will be viewed by more than 25,000 N.C. law enforcement officers as part of continuing education requirements. The training focuses on three key messages: using the emergency notification sign, enforcing trespassing laws and staying safe when working/responding on or near railroad environments. BeRailSafe also recently completed redesign of the BeRailSafe website which promises to bring new media innovations and a friendlier user interface. Work has already begun with the N.C. Justice Academy to incorporate BeRailSafe rail safety messages within basic law enforcement training and with the Office of State Fire Marshall for basic firefighter education curriculums in North Carolina. BeRailSafe continues to work with N.C. Operation Lifesaver to partner on projects and share information and opportunities.

BeRailSafe 2016 Activity Summary

Reaching the public:

- Delivered safety message to motorists through Crossing Blitzes, including ILCAD (International Level Crossing Awareness Day) event - **3,171**
- Conducted First Responder Training Sessions – **755**
- Spoke at Community Presentations – **357**
- Conducted NCDOT and Right of Entry training workshops - **152**
- Participated in local community fairs and festivals, including NC State Fair's "Safety City" – **30,195**
- Participated and attended conferences

Mr. Moon of the Asheville Tourists signs the BeRailSafe pledge.

Conferences Attended:

- N.C. Fire Chiefs Association
- N.C. School Resource Officers Association
- Governor's Highway Safety Program Highway Safety Symposium
- Smart Rail Congress
- Association of Police Communications Officials/National Emergency Number Association
- N.C. District Attorneys Association

State employees Now Receive 15 Percent discount on Train Tickets

Riding the train is a great way to save gas and, with free Wi-Fi service, you can be productive while traveling between Raleigh and Charlotte.

Paul Worley, director of the Rail Division, encourages state employees to utilize the state's passenger rail system, NC By Train. It provides six daily passenger trains that serve nine cities in the Piedmont I-85/40 corridor between Raleigh and Charlotte.

State employees should click here to obtain a 15% fare discount when making reservations and purchasing tickets. Train tickets for business travel can be turned in on your expense voucher.

For information about routes, schedules and fares, visit NCBYTRAIN.org, or call 1-800-BY-TRAIN.

Ridership & Revenue on NC's Amtrak Service – *Nov. 2016 vs. 2015

	RIDERSHIP			REVENUE		
	2016	2015	% +/-	2016	2015	% +/-
Piedmont	14,307	15,111	-7%	$310,293	$329,304	-6%
Carolinian	21,984	24,066	-9%	$1,416,078	$1,542,557	-8%

703

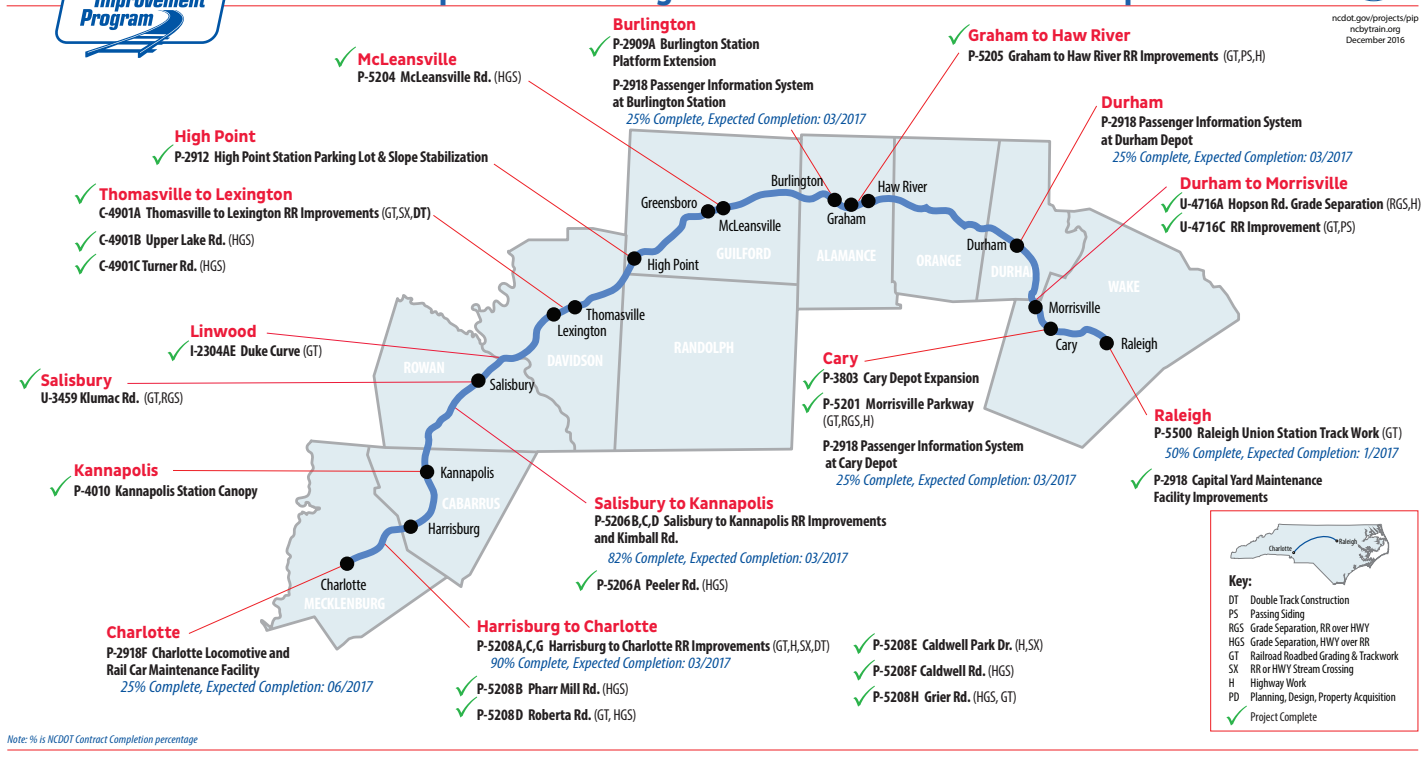
Train Host Association NC

Hours Volunteered by N.C. Train Hosts in November, supporting NC By Train onboard and at events

November 2016 service modifications and annulments impacted eight *Piedmont* trains and eight *Carolinian* trains. On November 7 and 14, Trains 73 and 76 were canceled, and Trains 74 and 75 operated between Raleigh and Greensboro only due to PIP track work. Also, on November 14, Trains 79 and 80 were canceled due to PIP track work and CSX construction. On November 15, 18 and 19, Trains 79 and 80 operated only between Raleigh and Charlotte due to CSX track work and signal suspension. Additional disruptions for PIP project work will continue to occur as necessary through completion of the project. Average gasoline prices remained low in November 2016.

Piedmont Improvement Program – December 2016 Status Report

ncdot.gov/projects/pip
ncbytrain.org
December 2016



Piedmont Improvement Program Milestones

Raleigh – CSX installed the second half of the crossovers at CP Boylan on December 7 and 8. Track construction on the west leg of the wye has also begun in preparation for the cut-in of the new CSX S-line alignment in March.

Spent to Date of $520M *(effective 11/30/2016)*

Component	Expenditure
PD&A/ROW	$55,474,944
Equipment Procurement & Rebuild	$31,400,114
Stations & Facilities	$50,985,211
Track & Structures	$318,037,782
CRISP	$2,180,376
Program Totals	**$458,078,427**

Three new contracts totaling $50,505 were awarded in December.

Piedmont Improvement Program – Project Photos – December 2016

P-5500 Raleigh Union Station track construction

P-5500 Raleigh Union Station track construction

P-5206 Reid to North Kannapolis, track construction

P-5206 Reid to North Kannapolis, track construction

P-5208 Haydock to Junker, track construction

P-5208 Haydock to Junker, track construction