



Jackson County Department of Public Health

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Safe Routes to School—Sylva Walk Audit

On September 28, 2021 a walk audit was held by NCDOT, Safe Routes to School and Community Partners to look at future connectivity for schools and other potential safety features for the Hwy 107 R-5600 project to allow students from SMHS and Fairview School to safely cross highway 107. Currently there are approximately 28 SMHS students that cross Highway 107 daily and at least 3 that ride bikes to and from Fairview School.

Jeanette White, PE NCDOT Senior Project Engineer, pointed out that construction is estimated to start mid fall-2024, currently they are acquiring property. Construction is expected to take 3-4 years. Currently plans are approximately 75% complete. However, the current plans do not yet reflect the crosswalks and signal design intent. These plans will be available with upcoming design progression of the project. The Walk Audit was an opportunity to look at the plan and address safety issues for students and parents crossing highway 107 as the plans are developed. Michal Poston Jackson County Planner pointed out that the newly adopted Jackson County Pedestrian Plan supports connectivity to schools.

The walk audit looked at Crosswalks at the following locations:

- a) Jones Street and NC 107 (the alternate bus entrance at the QP gas station)
- b) The intersection of NC 107 and NC 116 at the main high school entrance.
- c) The intersection of 107 and Fairview Road

The walk audit was sponsored by AARP and supports the SRTS grant with this walk audit because it aims to make our streets safer. Rebecca Chaplin Associate State Director, AARP Mountain Region stated “complete Streets are those designed and operated for safe, comfortable and convenient travel by pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. The focus of complete streets initiatives has been on changing transportation agency policies and procedures so that these multimodal accommodations become routine at the project-development stage. Well-designed roads help to extend many older adults’ safe driving years and at the same time they make it possible to travel by foot, bicycle or public transit safely in the community. Ultimately, a complete street can mean the difference between life and death. Older road users, because of their increased frailty, are overrepresented in both vehicle and pedestrian crash fatalities.”

Participants included the following: Jake Scott Town of Sylva Public Works, Michael Poston Jackson County Planner, Eddie Wells Department on Aging Director, Trevor Brown Jackson



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County Parks and Recreation, John Thomas Assistant Chief of Police Town of Sylva, Leigh Ann Young Town of Webster, Jeanette White NCDOT Senior Project Engineer, Steve Buchanan NCDOT Division Traffic Engineer, Eric Lovedahl, NCDOT Deputy Traffic Engineer, Chris Lee NCDOT District Engineer, Wes Jamison NCDOT Project Manager and Jackson County School Board, Jackie Moore Safe Routes to School Coordinator. Pre-walk audit on 9/20 included Jake Buchanan, Assistant Superintendent JCPH, Sara Stahlman Community member, Michael Poston JC planner and Jackie Moore SRTS coordinator.

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