

DEPARTMENT OF
PLANNING & ZONING



PLANNING COMMISSION
BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS

To: Chair and Members, Nelson County Planning Commission

From: Tim Padalino | Director | Department of Planning & Zoning

Date: April 16, 2014

Subject: Revisions to the Proposed (Draft) Transportation Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan

Please find enclosed an excerpt from the (draft) Transportation Chapter that is proposed for inclusion in the Nelson County Comprehensive Plan. This excerpt – page 14 – reflects my attempt to address the Commission’s request, made at the Public Hearing held on November 20, 2013.

Specifically, Commissioner Russell suggested that the description of Route 6 be modified for clarity, regarding the term “much lower” in the 8th bullet point. The attached excerpt reflects language that should be clearer and more accurate. (Please draw your attention to the red text that is highlighted in yellow.)

This suggestion was the only specific request made by the Planning Commission in conjunction with your review of this (draft) chapter at the November 20th Public Hearing. My notes from this meeting indicate that the Commission requested to only be provided with the materials that have been revised, in order to save paper. However, if you need any additional copies or other information regarding the remainder of the (draft) Transportation Chapter, please let Stormy or I know immediately.

In summary, if this proposed revision on page 14 is sufficient, I recommend that you forward this (draft) chapter – inclusive of the proposed and requested revisions, as presented – to the Board of Supervisors for their review and to conduct their own Public Hearing. Please recall that the adoption of this Transportation Chapter is something that is driven by State Code requirements, and should be resolved as expeditiously as possible.

Thank you for your attention to this matter; and please contact me if you have any questions about this ongoing Comprehensive Plan effort, or if I may be of assistance in any other way.

Route 6:

As Route 6 crosses Nelson County, its name changes several times. In the northwest corner of the County, it begins as Afton Mountain Road, then Rockfish Valley Highway, River Road and finally Irish Road as it heads into Albemarle County. Over this stretch in Nelson County, the road accounts for approximately 13 miles as it roughly follows the Rockfish River. The Future Land Use plan shows Route 6 as an important road that accesses rural residential uses, between the areas of Avon and Greenfield. While this is a major road, its design and capacity are not suited for higher volumes of traffic.

The following are additional facts and data on Route 6:

- The road segments located northwest of Route 29 are designated as a Rural Minor Arterial.
- The segments that are southeast of Route 29 are designated as a Rural Major Collector.
- The State also designates Route 6 as a Virginia Scenic Byway.
- This is a two-lane road, with 10-foot travel lanes.
- There are limited shoulders, ranging from 1 to 2 feet, enough to provide a small buffer between traveling vehicles and the roadside ditches.
- There is an average of 770 to 3,700 daily trips, depending on the road segment.
- The highest traffic counts for Route 6 are between Route 29 and 151.
- The In most places, the speed limit varies between 45 mph and is 55 mph. As it overlaps with Route 29, the speed limit increases to 60 mph, and some portions of Afton Mountain Road have a much lower speed limit due to the mountainous terrain and very sharp curves.
- On the southeastern segments of Route 6, the Level of Service indicates that the road is nearing capacity.

Route 48:

Also known as the Blue Ridge Parkway, Route 48 has regional, ~~and~~ national, and international significance. For example, the Parkway is the most visited unit in the entire National Park System. In Nelson County, the Blue Ridge Parkway runs parallel to the western border with Augusta and Rockbridge Counties, along the mountains. Approximately 14 miles of the road are actually within Nelson County. There are challenges to maintaining the Parkway, due mostly to the mountainous terrain and weather. The roadway is not open in the winter, and sections which pass over especially high elevations and through tunnels are often impassable and closed from late fall through early spring. Weather is extremely variable in the mountains, so conditions and closures change rapidly.