



Resilient infrastructure a focus of Pete Buttigieg, Roy Cooper's visit to WNC

BPR News | By [Laura Hackett](#)

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Gerard Albert III

Governor Roy Cooper and Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg survey damage in the River Arts District.

Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg visited Western North Carolina on Thursday to survey the severe infrastructural damage caused by Hurricane Helene.

WUNC
Morning Edition

He was joined by Governor Roy Cooper, Asheville Mayor Esther Manheimer and Canton Mayor Zeb Smathers, along with a handful of NCDOT officials.

Ahead of Buttigieg's visit, BPR's Laura Hackett spoke with him about the great infrastructure needs of the area in the aftermath of the storm.

One big point of discussion was how to build back roads for a more climate-resilient future.

"Many locations that were not considered to be a flood zone, just a few years ago, are now clearly vulnerable," Buttigieg said.

"And so it doesn't make sense to continue to expect designs and technologies and strategies that worked 50 years ago or 100 years ago to make sense in the 21st century."

Slope stabilization, an increase in evacuation routes and heightened roads were some of the ideas Buttigieg suggested to help ward the region off from future infrastructural disaster.

The transportation department has so far pledged \$100 million in emergency funding to help with road repairs.



Laura Hackett

Laura Hackett joined Blue Ridge Public Radio in June 2023. Originally from Florida, she moved to Asheville more than six years ago and in that time has worked as a writer, journalist, and content creator for organizations like AVLtoday, Mountain Xpress, and the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce. She has a degree in creative writing from Florida Southern College, and in 2023, she completed the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism at CUNY's Product Immersion for Small Newsrooms program. In her free time, she loves exploring the city by bike, testing out new restaurants, and hanging out with her dog Iroh at French Broad River Park.

[See stories by Laura Hackett](#)