

## **Draft plan looks at next 30 years for county greenways**

**By Staff Reports**

Posted Oct 20, 2018 at 3:08 PM

Updated Oct 20, 2018 at 3:08 PM

A master plan for county greenways over the next 30 years, with a vision to establish a countywide greenway network, has been released for public review.

The 16-member Henderson County Greenway Master Plan Advisory Committee has created a draft Greenway Master Plan and will hold two public meetings this month to gather feedback.

Public input sessions will be held from 10 a.m. to noon Tuesday at the King Street meeting room and 4-6 p.m. Thursday in the Kaplan Auditorium at the main branch of the Henderson County Public Library in Hendersonville.

Residents, business and property owners and other stakeholders are encouraged to review the draft plan at [www.hcgreenways.org](http://www.hcgreenways.org) prior to the public input sessions.

An online survey is also available for interested persons unable to attend the public input sessions. Visit [www.hcgreenways.org](http://www.hcgreenways.org) to take the survey.

“Greenways allow multiple objectives to be met at once. They create open space recreation that promotes healthy living, conserves habitats and biodiversity, aids in tourism and economic development, and preserves cultural and community assets,” the plan summary states.

For more information about the Greenway Planning Process, contact the Planning Department at 828-697-4819 or email [planning@hendersoncountync.org](mailto:planning@hendersoncountync.org). Comments via this email address or mailed to Planning Department, 100 N. King St., Hendersonville, NC 28792 will also be accepted.

### **The plan**

The master plan identifies three types of greenways:

--Priority Greenways

--Destination Greenways

-- Connection Greenways.

The three Priority Greenways are the Oklawaha Greenway, Ecusta Trail and French Broad River Greenway. The trails would eventually join a proposed regional trail network, The Hellbender Regional Trail, via adjacent counties.

The plan's Destination Greenways are: community of Edneyville, Mills River Valley Trail, town of Fletcher Greenways, Green River Game Land Greenway and the village of Flat Rock's Carl Sandburg Home Greenway.

These potential routes link the different greenways together, expanding the reach of each greenway for the user.

Connection Greenways are yet to be defined and will evolve over time. They are meant to be direct routes, extensions of Priority or Destination Greenways, that can be utilized for commuting as well as recreation.

Implementation will be a long-term process.

"As time passes, the county will adapt to growth and change — public objectives, local situations and funding opportunities will evolve," the summary states.

"The Henderson County Greenway Master Plan should be viewed as a working document that will still be relevant 30 years from now. The county should update the entire document, as well as re-evaluate the recommendations and implementation method, approximately every five to ten years to ensure the continued improvement and enhancement of the area's greenway efforts."

**The committee's policy recommendations:**

--Greenways should be recognized in county policies as a tool to build communities, promote health benefits, provide outdoor education opportunities, encourage a sense of safety and awareness of the surrounding neighborhoods and properties, provide transportation connectivity, and provide a safe place for our future generations to walk, bike, and explore our natural environment.

- The county should determine a policy to incorporate the use of existing and future utility easements for public use greenways.
- The county should adopt a similar policy as the Mountain to Sea Trail to explore alternative options to work around uninterested property owners such as the use of NCDOT roads, bike lanes, sidewalks, etc.
- The county should request that NCDOT reconsider its policy on bike/ped projects related to required local match requirements. Many local governments cannot provide the required funding match.
- The county should consider adopting a Greenway Overlay District in the Land Development Code that would primarily apply to the identified Priority Greenways.
- The county should strive to connect greenways to existing public transportation facilities.
- The Transportation Advisory Committee should support the greenway network by seeking the advancement of projects and funding in the State Transportation Improvement Program when local matching funds are available.
- Economic development opportunities should be supported and encouraged along identified greenway corridors.
- The county should work with non-profits, the Partnership for Health, the Council on Aging, and other partners to educate the public and property owners about the benefits of greenways as a health and wellness goal.
- The county should work with the N.C. Office of Outdoor Recreation Industry to further develop outdoor recreation in Henderson County and the region with a focus on the Greenway Network.
- When appropriate, the county should work with the Henderson County Board of Public Education and local school representatives to connect schools with greenway opportunities.

## **Background**

In March 2017, Henderson County commissioners directed county staff to pursue funding from the French Broad River MPO for a greenways study.

On Nov. 6, commissioners accepted a \$40,000 grant for a southern extension feasibility study was to look at extending the greenway from Jackson Park in Hendersonville to Blue Ridge Community College in Flat Rock, with an option to expand further to The Park at Flat Rock.

The county was awarded another \$56,000 for a north feasibility study to extend the greenway from Berkeley Mills Park in Hendersonville to Westfeldt Park near the French Broad River in Fletcher.

A 20 percent local match by the county is required to receive the funding, and the board Nov. 6 appropriated \$24,000 from fund balance for that match.

Henderson County first planned for countywide greenway connections in 1999. Since then, almost eight miles of greenways have been constructed.