

REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION

HENDERSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

MEETING DATE: Wednesday, November 20, 2019

SUBJECT: Presentation of Oklawaha Greenway Expansion Feasibility Studies

PRESENTER: David Tuch, President, Equinox

ATTACHMENTS: 1. PowerPoint Handout

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

In October of 2017, the County received a total of \$96,000 via Surface Transportation Block Grant-Directly Attributable (STBG-DA) funds for the creation of two studies to determine the feasibility of extending the Oklawaha Greenway south to Blue Ridge Community College, with an option to expand further to Flat Rock Park, and north to Westfeldt Park. The Board voted to accept the winning proposal from Equinox, a local planning firm in February of 2018.

Since that time, Equinox conducted the studies by evaluating the land's topography and environmental features, conducting extensive property owner outreach and stakeholder meetings, and identifying various opportunities and constraints. Equinox will present to the Board an overview of the study. Staff will use the document to determine a final route by working with willing landowners.

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:

This presentation is for informational purposes only.

SUGGESTED MOTION:

None.



PLAN DEVELOPED FOR:



The Oklawaha Greenway

NORTHERN & SOUTHERN EXTENSION
OF THE OKLAWAHA GREENWAY

PLAN DEVELOPED BY:



HENDERSON COUNTY, NC | 2019 |

Overview

- Funding: Surface Transportation Block Grant-Directly Attributable (STBG-DA) funds
- Southern Extension: Blue Ridge Community College & Flat Rock Park
- Northern Extension: Westfeldt & Kuntz Park
- +/- 14.65 miles of proposed greenway



The Feasibility Study

- Vision & Goals
- Summary of Past Plans
- Existing Conditions Assessment
- Property Owner Outreach
- Steering/Stakeholder Engagement
- Opportunities & Constraints
- Potential Routes & Alternatives
- Action & Maintenance Plan
- Phasing, Cost Summary & Funding Sources



Vision & Goals of the Greenway

The Vision

The Oklawaha Greenway extensions will create **connectivity** between parks, municipalities, and destinations through an accessible, continuous greenway that serves as a **walking and biking spine** for future greenway growth and connections within Henderson County. **The greenway will build community through shared recreation and ease of transportation.**

Goals of the Greenway

Accessibility: To provide access to local assets (both natural and cultural) by providing an opportunity for and promoting active transportation and recreation that is accessible to all abilities.

Community engagement: To build excitement and support for the greenway project through engagement and focus on community improvements, and respect for property owners.

Constructibility: To provide a cost-effective greenway by exploring alignment options, phasing, and funding sources.

Stimulates Economic Development: Greenways are proven to stimulate economic development and attract business, and are an economic development strategy for the County.

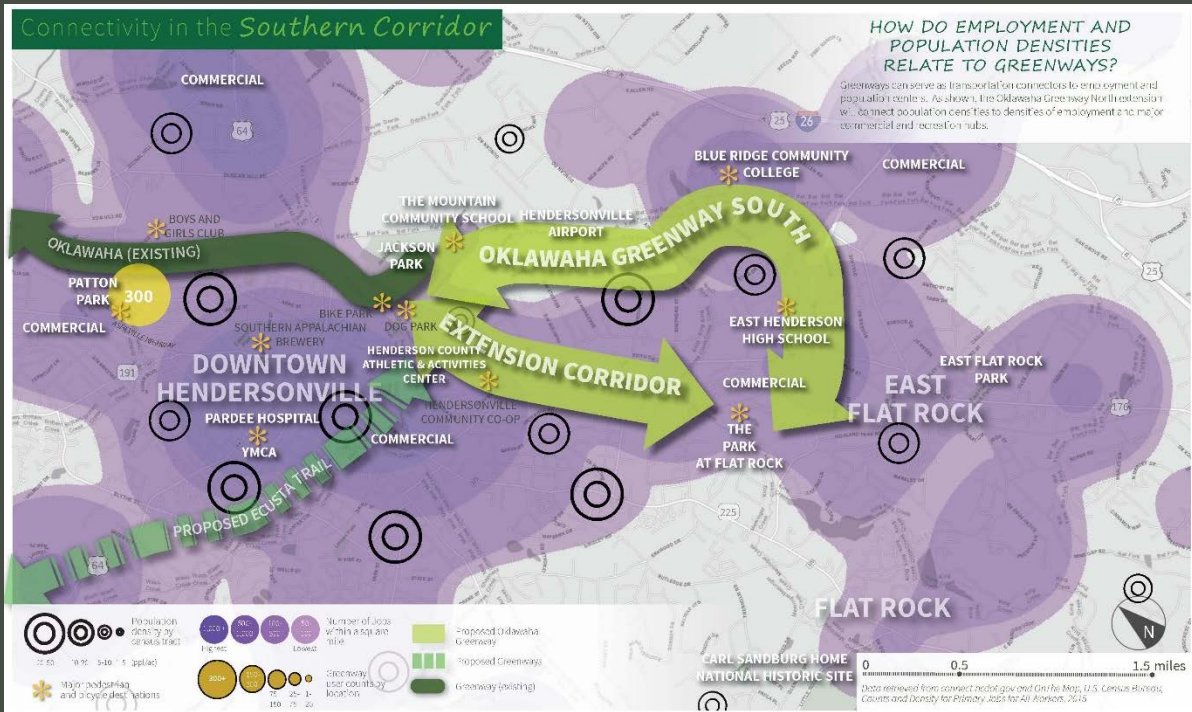
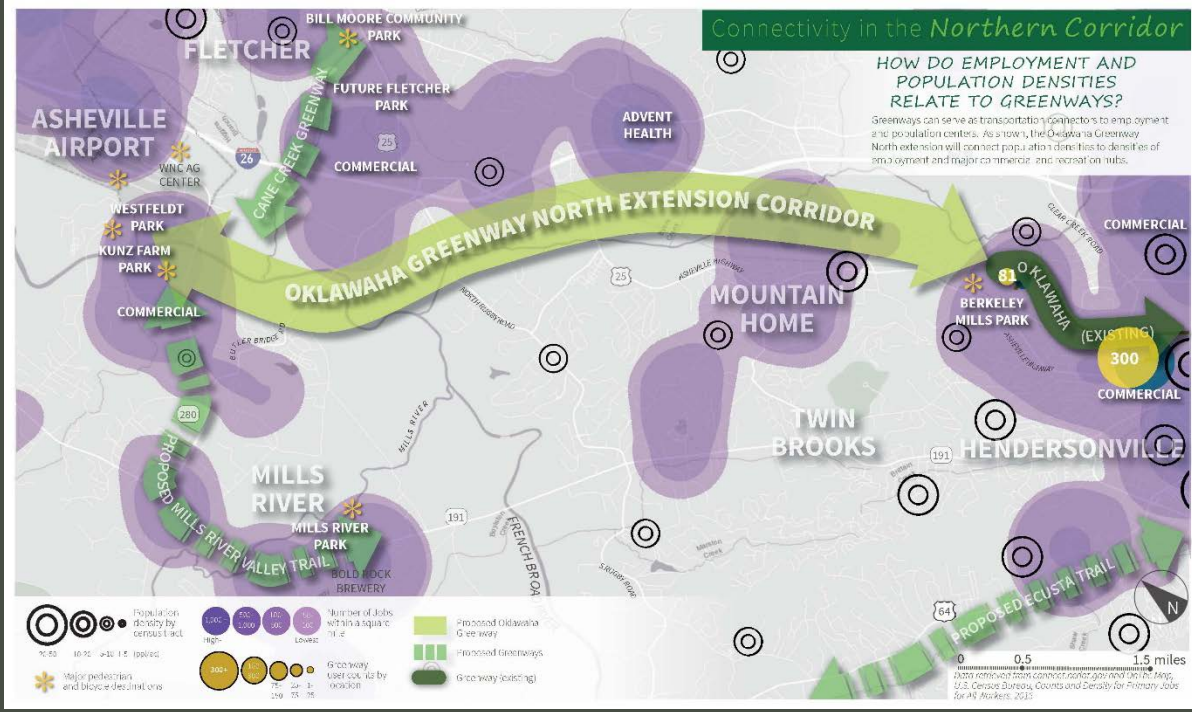
Adds to Henderson County's Sense of Place & Citizen's Quality of Life:
The greenway contributes to the larger sense of place and quality of life.

Destinations

- Fletcher, Mills River, Hendersonville and Flat Rock
- French Broad River, Mud Creek, & Bat Creek
- Parks, greenways, Blue Ridge Community College
- Natural Areas

Opportunities

- Existing sewer easements, Duke power line easements & Blue Ridge Southern Railroad
- New development to accommodate greenways
- Partnerships such as Conserving Carolina



Public & Stakeholder Engagement



EARLY & MID-PROCESS STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



PUBLIC INPUT IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE COUNTY MASTER PLAN

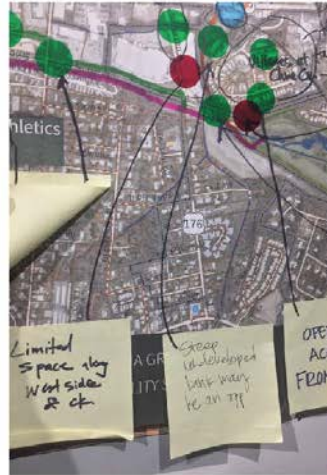


LANDOWNER INPUT VIA A WORKSHOP AND OTHER CORRESPONDENCE



Stakeholders

- Henderson County Greenway Master Plan Advisory Committee, Recreation Advisory Board & Transportation Advisory Board
- Blue Ridge Community College
- Friends of Oklawaha Greenway
- Henderson County Planning, Engineering, and the Parks & Rec. Departments
- Healthy People-Healthy Carolinas
- City of Hendersonville
- Conserving Carolina
- Henderson County Cooperative Extension
- The Town of Mills River
- Blue Ridge Bicycle Club
- Henderson County Public Schools
- Village of Flat Rock
- Hendersonville Airport



FEEDBACK FROM STAKEHOLDERS

EXPERIENCE IS IMPORTANT:

Locate the greenway along streams and creeks, even if the alignment could more easily be located along a road.

CONNECT DESTINATIONS:

Connect schools, affordable housing, and commercial areas.

THIS CORRIDOR FLOODS:

Much of the study area routinely floods, so design for the greenway should ensure it drains quickly and isn't an impediment to connectivity.

WE ARE READY TO HELP:

Henderson County and the surrounding municipalities are blessed with many non-profits and other organizations

willing to help with reaching out to landowners, advocacy, helping to get funding, etc.

WE NEED TO CONSIDER, AS A COMMUNITY, THE LARGER DESTINATIONS WITH WHICH WE WANT TO CONNECT:

for example, area hospitals and Buncombe County.



Super Sod (most of the field) and Conserving Carolina property (bottom right).



Conserving Carolina Property
West of Riverstone Development



Wetlands South of North Rugby Road



Existing Sewer Easement
(off North Rugby Road)



Blue Ridge Southern Railroad



Rail with Trail

Next Steps

- Potential alignments have been studied to test feasibility from a physical constraints perspective but specific greenway alignments would be determined based on conversations with property owners.
- Work with other non-profit groups such as Conserving Carolina to secure greenway easements.
- Design, engineering & construction

