

APPENDIX: CRIME, PROPERTY VALUES, TRAIL OPPOSITION & LIABILITY ISSUES



Retirement Community built in 2005 right on VA Creeper Trail



- ❖ Elderspirit Community wanted to build right on the trail.
- ❖ They advertised that they were right on the trail.
- ❖ Emphasized how safe the area was for residents.



Many Law Enforcement Officials support Rail-Trails

“...The trail has not caused any increase in the amount of crimes reported...We have found that the trail brings in so many people that it has actually led to a decrease in problems we formally encountered such as underage drinking...”

Chief Charles Tennant on Youghiogheny River Trail in PA

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Chainlink security fence removed after residences realized it was not needed

Town Agrees To Remove Bike Trail Fence

By STEPHANIE REITZ

From the Hartford Courant

AVON, Connecticut- The town council has agreed to remove 11,700 feet of chain-link fencing along the Rails-to-Trails path in town. Residents whose homes abut the path had requested the move. The fencing, which was installed years ago to ease the security and privacy concerns of some homeowners, is not needed after all and is unattractive, other neighbors told the town council recently.

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Property Values

- ❖ Many adjacent landowners assume property values will go down if a rail trail is built
- ❖ In fact, the exact opposite is true

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Home Sales near Two Massachusetts Rail-Trails

- ❖ Study of sales in 2005 showed that homes near trails sold at 99.3% of list price and homes away from trails sold at 98.1% of list price
- ❖ Study showed that homes near trails sold in 29.3 days while homes away from trails sold in 50.4 days


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Study of Property Values near Trails in Boulder, CO

- ❖ Study showed that home prices declined \$4.20 for each one foot away from a trail.
- ❖ Avg value of property adjacent to trails was 32% higher than those 3,200' away

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Omaha NE Survey of Residents Living Within 1 block of Trails

- ❖ 65% felt trail would make it easier to sell their home, while only 2% felt it would be harder
- ❖ 42% felt trail would increase value of their home, while only 2% felt trail would decrease value



Realtors Often Advertise that a House is Near a Trail

Realtor advertisement in Massachusetts:

Craig Della Penna, Realtor
<http://www.craigdp.com>
Specializing in historic/antique homes and homes near to rail-trails and other linear parks

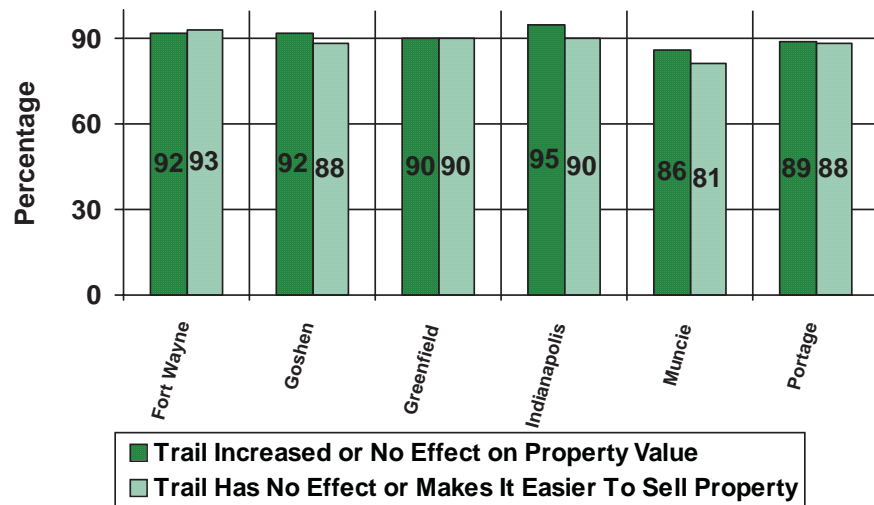
APPENDIX: CRIME, PROPERTY VALUES, TRAIL OPPOSITION & LIABILITY ISSUES

Indiana Trails Study - 2000

Survey of Trail Neighbors along six trails in Indiana

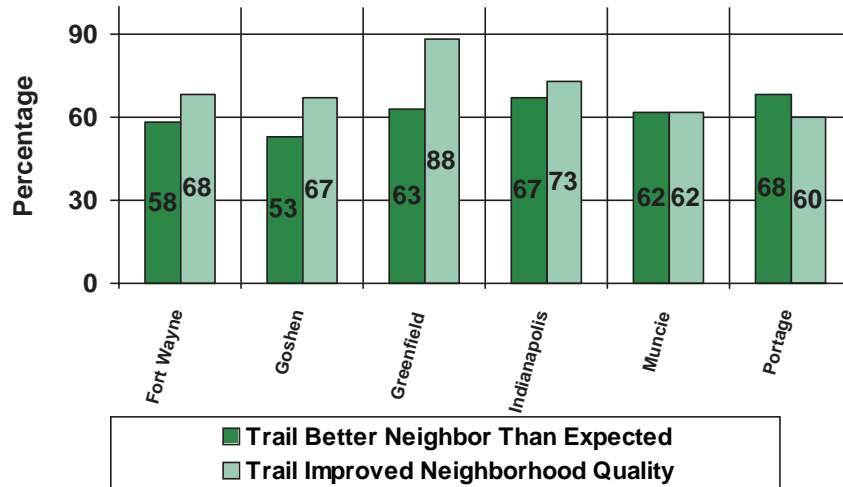


Chart 16: Percentage of Trail Neighbors Viewing Trail As Having Increased or Positive Effect on Property



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Chart 17: Percentage of Trail Neighbors Viewing Trail As Improving Neighborhood or As Better Neighbor



Other Summary Findings on Indiana Trail Neighbors

- Trail neighbors are residential uses
- Trail neighbors are either satisfied or neutral in their level of satisfaction with the trail
- Trail neighbors found the trail had no negative effect on purchase & property appeal
- Trail neighbors purchasing property after trail opened are largely supportive of the trail


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Opposition

- ❖ Nearly every proposed Rail-Trail encounters intense opposition from adjacent landowners
- ❖ In most cases, landowners see the value of rail-trails after they are established
- ❖ You must educate landowners on the benefits of rail-trails

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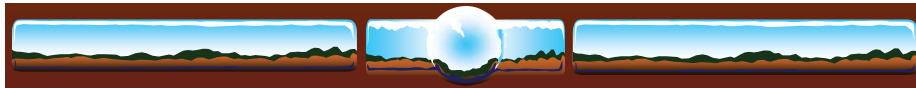


Recent Article about Proposed Rail-Trail in SW VA

Plans for Washington, Smyth trail finds foes
Dan Kegley/ Media General News Service
Smyth County, VA News
Thursday, January 19, 2006

“The speakers Tuesday were all concerned about the proximity of the proposed trail to homes. They agreed that proximity would compromise privacy at best and security at worst, leaving homeowners' activities in view of passing walkers, property susceptible to theft, and children in danger of kidnapping or worse. One suggested the trail would depress property values.”

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News Article about Proposed Rail-Trail in SW VA

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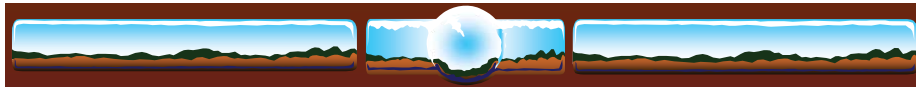
Dan Kegley/ Media General News Service

Smyth County News

Thursday, January 19, 2006

"Who's going to be responsible for treating snake bites?" he asked. "I kill three or four copperheads every year." Pafford said widows living along the spur do not want the trail and cited murders and rapes on the popular Virginia Creeper Trail that follows an old railroad bed from Abingdon to Whitetop. "I'm going to fight this tooth and nail," Pafford said. "If I have to sell everything I've got, I'll keep this tied up in court. I'm a Vietnam vet, and I can get mean when I have to."

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Survey of landowners located along the Mohawk-Hudson Trail in Upstate NY 1997

- ❖ 86.3% of landowners use the trail
- ❖ 87.8% felt indifferent or expressed satisfaction with having trail as a neighbor

APPENDIX C: PROMOTING GREENWAY SAFETY



Draft Plan for Public Review—August 2012

Chapter 7: Promoting Greenway Safety

People who are unfamiliar with greenways often fear they will attract crime and lower adjacent property values. Numerous studies have refuted this; in fact, greenways are generally safer than the communities surrounding them. There are many efforts communities can undertake to ensure greenways are safe.

Careful attention to the site planning and design of particular areas such as parking lots, trailheads, and restrooms is critical in reducing safety concerns, real or perceived. There is a balance between retaining or creating a natural setting that is safe while also preserving the naturalness of an area. Design strategies include allowing clear visual access, having appropriate lighting in key areas, providing multiple access and egress points, and organizing activities to increase the number of users and “eyes on the path”.

Encouraging ownership of the greenway by involving the public in the planning process and educating them on the benefits of greenways, as well as presenting data illustrating the lack of crime and other problems is essential in gaining public support. Such public processes can often lead to an effective neighborhood watch program to monitor the greenway.

Buncombe County is establishing a non-profit entity—Connect Buncombe, which is part of the Buncombe County Service Foundation—to perform volunteer services related to promoting safe use of greenways.

Greenway Safety Studies from Other Communities

A survey done in Cary, NC, in 1995 of residents living near three greenways gauged their satisfaction with the greenways and about any problems. There was a 75% response rate and most residents felt satisfied

with the greenways and stated that problems were minimal. Studies in Mecklenburg County, NC; Denver; Seattle; Tampa; and other cities reported similar results showing less crime on greenways than the communities as a whole.

Two studies of crime statistics in Mecklenburg County show greenways have lower crime rates than the surrounding community. They found that most greenways provide a safer alternative than roads and attract local residents using the trails frequently. The first study was done in 1997 along the Mallard Creek Greenway comparing the incidence of crime with the surrounding police district and the city as a whole. The incidence of crime along the Mallard Creek Greenway and adjacent properties was nearly half that of the surrounding police district and only 12.7% of the countywide crime rate. Later, an extended study explored recent crime rates along all 14 greenways within Mecklenburg County between 2001 and 2003. The data suggest that greenway-adjacent properties do not incur greater risk of crime than other properties within the same neighborhood statistical area. On the contrary greenway-adjacent properties had lower crime rates 75% of the time.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) was authored in 1971 by C. Ray Jeffery, a criminologist at Florida State University, as he studied the relationship between the physical environment and the incidence of crime. His work was based on previous research studying how the built environment influences the rate of crime, including Jane Jacobs seminal [The Death and Life of Great American Cities](#) in 1961 and Oscar Newman's [Defensible](#)



For the safety of users, greenways that are constructed in constrained areas may necessitate the diversion of some users to connecting roadways or other trails, such as the connection to Carrier Park in West Asheville.

Photo Credit: Don Kostelec

APPENDIX: PROMOTING GREENWAY SAFETY



Space in 1973.

Designing greenways using CPTED principles has the potential to reduce crime by focusing on three interrelated principles that comprise CPTED concepts and strategies: Natural Surveillance; Natural Access Control; and Territoriality (Exhibit 4-1).



Planned greenway corridors are oftentimes overgrown with weeds, trees and other foliage and need to be cleared not only for trail establishment but to promote safety and visibility along a route.

Photo Credit: Friends of Hominy Creek Greenway

Implementing CPTED

It is recommended that a systematic review of CPTED principles occur during the design and review of any greenway project. In *Safety by Design: Creating a Safer Environment in Virginia*, the Virginia Crime Prevention Association grouped questions in the following categories:

- ◆ **Designation:** What is the intended use of the area? What behavior is allowed?
- ◆ **Definition:** Are there physical limitations to the area or site? Are borders between the area and public spaces defined? Is it clear which activities are allowed where?
- ◆ **Design:** Does the physical environment safety and efficiently support the intended use? The City of Tampa, Florida Greenways and Trails Master Plan recommends that each greenway and trail section, whether it is being newly built or enhanced, receive a CPTED review from Police Department staff trained in the principles of CPTED. The CPTED Review consists of the following five steps:

1. **Crime Analysis Review:** This information assists the police department in determining the type of crimes that are occurring on and around the trail.
2. **Demographics:** This information describes the nature of the population around the future trail.
3. **Land Use:** City planning departments, zoning boards, traffic engineers, and local neighborhood groups have information that describes and depicts the physical allocation and use of land in and around existing or proposed trail.
4. **Observations:** Officers conduct an actual review of the physical space that has been designated as a trail segment.
5. **Resident or User Interviews:** Officers conduct interviews with persons living near the proposed trail to determine their perspective on safety.

Activity Support & Maintenance

Activity support encourages increased greenway use by programming activities for users of all ages and interests. This encourages legitimate uses of the park, and is especially effective when planned for time periods of lower usage. The more people there are on a trail, the safer it will be. Chapter 6: Programs provides more details on these options.

Consistent maintenance, just like with any park setting, will help keep the greenway safer by eliminating potential hiding places through the use of regular landscape clearing and pruning. Good maintenance of the trails and facilities demonstrates that the community cares about the space and will not easily tolerate criminal behavior. See Chapter 8 on Maintenance for further information.

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Exhibit 7-1: CPTED Concepts & Strategies

Natural Surveillance	Natural Access Control	Territoriality
<p>Placement of physical features, activities, and people in a way that maximizes visibility and minimizes hidden and isolated areas. This allows users of a space to have views of their surroundings and of potential threats to their safety, making it more difficult for someone to perform a criminal act.</p> <p>Natural Surveillance design strategies include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locate parking lots, picnic areas, trailheads, play areas, and restroom facilities near streets and other activity centers so they are easily observable; • When possible, locate trails near areas of park activity or at places where parks meet commercial or residential uses, or align them with active streets to make users more observable by others; • Cluster compatible activities to avoid conflict and to increase social observation; • Parking areas are more prone to crime. Incorporate lighting and do not erect solid fences which block visibility and hamper escape. Limit lighting only to parking areas and trailheads rather than along the entire trail unless greenway use at night is encouraged; • Provide an emergency telephone system at parking areas and along the trails such as those near UNC Asheville on the Reed Creek Greenway; • Position benches in areas where users have good views of surrounding areas; and • Maintain landscaping at least 5-feet from the edge of trail with a mowed strip or groundcover bordering the trail. Keep trees limbed up to 10-foot high and avoid using large and dense shrub masses. 	<p>Methods to decrease the opportunity for criminal activity by creating a perception of risk for potential offenders and controlling access into and throughout a space. People can be physically guided through a space by strategic placement of entrances and exits, signage, fencing and other barriers, landscaping and lighting.</p> <p>Natural Access Control design strategies include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrict access to parking areas with gates when parks are closed; • Provide clearly visible and lighted entries to park buildings such as restrooms and locate them in areas close to other activity areas. Clearly define paths between parking lots and other facilities. • Maintain at least 10-feet between greenways and wooded areas to offer long sight lines and distance from potential attacks; • Establish a clear separation between regional public trails and adjacent private property with landscaping, fencing or other screening treatments; • Throughout a trail system, and especially in isolated areas, provide clearly marked paths or exits that gives users egress options; • Through clearly marked and placed signage and gates, note the hours that the greenway is open to the public. 	<p>Use of physical features that express ownership and neighborhood context. People who feel a sense of ownership tend to use the trails more and monitor them for inappropriate behavior and maintenance problems. Potential offenders are discouraged when they feel inappropriate actions would be viewed and reported.</p> <p>Territoriality design strategies include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporating certain facilities into a greenway provides cues about appropriate uses. For example, providing children's play areas encourages family use. • Clearly delineate between public and private property along the trail with the use of fencing, landscaping, paving, and other design features. • Reflect environmental and cultural context with elements such as gateways, signage, seating, art, paving patterns, and other features. • Provide clear directional and informational signage to orient users to the greenway layout as well as facilities along the greenway. Signs should clearly identify trail names, especially at intersections, as well as trail length and distances to facilities, location of emergency phones, and the characteristics of trails, such as wide paved trails or smaller isolated walking trails. Mile markers should be installed as well as indications of the trails intended use. • Post park rules at all access or gathering points in the park. Rules should clearly convey the acceptable uses and discourage unacceptable uses of the park.

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Upon completion of the review, officers recommend CPTED and security procedures that will minimize potential criminal activity on the trail and in the surrounding neighborhoods. These recommendations cover issues such as lighting, location of benches and rest stops, access to trails from roadways, and landscaping. These recommendations are incorporated into the final design of each segment. Buncombe County staff could follow a similar process in the review of greenways.

Law Enforcement & Patrols

In addition to the above CPTED principles, it is essential that either law enforcement or designated enforcement volunteers patrol greenway parking lots and trails. Bicycle patrols are particularly effective because they have more flexibility to monitor the entire greenway systems and their presence is a good crime deterrent.

Community Watch Programs

Many cities with a greenways system have groups and individuals who volunteer to patrol the trail and do special projects such as litter cleanups and tree plantings. In Boulder, Colorado, there are Greenways Walkers who frequent the greenways and are encouraged to pick up trash and report maintenance problems to the Street and Bikeway Maintenance hotline. The Midtown Greenway Coalition in Minneapolis has an organized Trail Watch with riders scheduled for two-hour evening shifts to ride the greenways to provide a friendly presence and report any incidents. Incentives are offered by local bicycle shops and restaurants to encourage people to volunteer. They also have an "Adopt a Greenway" Program with over fifty groups volunteering to help with litter cleanups and landscape planting and maintenance. Buncombe County could advocate and provide support for the formation of community watch

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groups that will monitor the greenways. In some communities, social media is becoming an effective tool as a grassroots community relations vehicle for fighting crime. This was recently demonstrated in West Asheville where a string of home invasions inspired local residents to organize the West Asheville Watch using social media to communicate information on crimes that have occurred and how to stay safe. Having an online forum for greenway users to post safety information as well as to advertise events would be beneficial.

Safe Routes to Schools

Healthy Buncombe and the County's Parks, Greenways and Recreation Services are managing programs to create safer ways for children to walk or ride to school to minimize risk, combat obesity, and decrease traffic congestion and pollution. The first Safe Routes to Schools program in the United States was adopted in the Bronx, NY in 1997 and has since spread throughout the country. A Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program is a school-based effort that involves young students, teachers, law enforcement officers and parents in the development of school safety and encouragement initiatives such as Walk to School Day, Walking Wednesdays, pedestrian safety assemblies, and bicycle rodeos.

While these programs can help engage children in safe walking behaviors and encourage more walking and healthier lifestyles, parents may have non-infrastructure concerns over the safety of their children particularly along greenway corridors where there may not be as many "eyes on the street". Therefore, the principles of CPTED should be considered as SRTS programs are implemented and greenways constructed adjacent to school properties.



Bicycle patrols provide flexibility in monitoring greenway activities. They can also be conducted through volunteer groups as a method of passive enforcement whereby volunteers are instructed to contact local authorities when they observe or think there is potential for criminal activity.

Photo Credit: Minnesota Public Radio

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Black Mountain is one of six communities in North Carolina selected to complete a SRTS action plan. The action plan team is conducting analysis of existing conditions and prioritizing engineering solutions surrounding the study schools. The plan will guide the community and school system in the development of facilities and programs to encourage more children to walk or bike to school in a safer environment. This model should be expanded in Buncombe County so all schools can be studied and improved through the SRTS methodology and funding. Any schools near planned greenways should be prioritized for SRTS funding and coordinated with local SRTS action plans, with consideration of CPTED principles.

Sharing the Greenway

Physical safety of users is also a concern on greenways and trails due to a wide variety of user types, persons traveling at different rates of speed, and inexperienced users. Many users will perceive riding on designated bicycle paths as a safer alternative to riding on unmarked streets and roads; however, their skills in operating a bicycle and how other users respond to them can create safety concerns.

Offering instruction on how to safely bicycle on the greenway is important for people to learn proper riding techniques, greenway etiquette, safety awareness, and how to avoid collisions, especially at street or other trail intersections. Learning to navigate to the greenway along streets is important to help people feel confident and encouraged to use the greenways. Bicycle rodeos can be held to teach children how to safely ride a bicycle and learn the rules of the road. Campaigns advocating the use of helmets for all users should be a critical part of any bicycle safety program.

Buncombe County and its partners have been in-

involved in various bicycle training courses, particularly through the League of American Bicyclists. The focus on road-riding skills within the training modules leaves a gap in the community in teaching proper skills and etiquette of bicycle riders and other users along greenway trails. It is recommended that the county work with its partners to develop a greenway-specific training module for users to be deployed through schools, scheduled training sessions and public awareness campaigns.

The interface of greenways with the street and highway system can also generate safety concerns among users if not designed properly. Even at the most well-designed locations, high volumes of vehicular traffic can become a deterrent for young users. It is important to consider how signage and markings help encourage safe use of all users, particularly at locations where greenways intersect with other greenways, trails or streets.

Community groups can be encouraged to help as crossing guards at the greenways. In the Brightmoor neighborhood of Detroit, citizens have effectively organized to act as crossing guards at busy intersections. As greenways develop in Buncombe County, neighborhood volunteers could be recruited to volunteer as crossing guards. At intersections deemed to be “busy” or potentially problematic for pedestrians or bicyclists, there is already a precedence for this as many schools place crossing guards at busy intersections.

Buncombe County and its partners should work to develop greenways-specific training modules to promote safe usage and consideration of other users.

Organize a Training Program

Buncombe County and its partners could develop a training program for new volunteers, design and

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develop a standardized greenway curriculum to present background information to new volunteers, homeowners adjacent to new or proposed greenways, schoolchildren, designers and contractors, and other interested partners. Such a curriculum would include the definition and benefits of greenways and the vision for the Buncombe County Greenways Master Plan. Specific workshops related to construction, maintenance, and safety could be offered periodically. Buncombe County could develop an information clearinghouse that relates specifically to local greenway management topics. An assessment checklist could be developed for volunteers and others for ongoing greenway evaluation and maintenance.

An example of a greenways training program is the Georgia Trails and Greenways Program which focuses on unpaved trails. The Georgia Trails and Greenways office coordinates trainings on trail construction, trail maintenance and trail education.

Safe Routes for Seniors

As Safe Routes for Schools has been very successful in creating a safer pedestrian environment for children, another group that is more susceptible to pedestrian-related conflicts with cars is senior citizens. They tend to have more mobility difficulties and sensory changes as they age. By constructing greenways and connecting them to neighborhoods, we can provide increased opportunities for senior citizens to safely and comfortably experience the health benefits of walking and bicycling. The idea for Safe Routes for Seniors originated in New York City where they found senior pedestrians were killed at a disproportionate rate to other age groups.

They developed a Safe Routes for Seniors program which has dramatically reduced the number of deaths and injuries among senior pedestrians.

planning professionals, contractors, and other partners who wish to design and construct trail facilities, work on maintaining trails, and conduct programs along the greenways. This promotes consistent design and management skills; ensures volunteers, designers and contractors are up to date on the latest rules, regulations and design standards; and promotes discussion of new design, maintenance and program ideas. The training program would provide educational opportunities and resources to educate people about greenways and make sure trails are constructed and maintained to a high standard of safety and accessibility. Since there is an increased reliance on volunteers, such a training program would help keep the volunteers safe as well as improve safety for trail users.

A model for a comprehensive program is the National Trails Training Program (NTP) which is a forum of diverse trail organizations and federal agencies whose mission is to improve opportunities for training for the nationwide trails community. They provide an internet-based clearinghouse of information and resources and offer an array of courses ranging from trail construction to safety practices, and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Within NTP's website, there are specific forums addressing safety and accessibility. The Safe Trails Forum helps promote safety for users by offering education on improving the user experience through improved trail design and maintenance, understanding legal concerns and reducing liability, decreasing shared-use path conflicts, and reporting crime and accidents.

The Buncombe County greenways training could incorporate elements of the NTP program and provide a link to their website on the Connect Buncombe and Buncombe County websites. Buncombe County could

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Safe Routes for Seniors recognizes that older adults have physical and cognitive challenges when trying to walk or ride a bike. Greenways provide opportunities for physical activity and a place to conduct training programs to make seniors comfortable in using trails.
Photo Credit: Streetfilms.org

Chapter References

Lauren A. Tedder, *Effects of Three Cary Greenways on Adjacent Residents (1995)*, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Spring 2000

Walter Martin, Tom Ludden, Owen Furusetz, and Shane Nixon, *Preliminary Assessment of Crime Risk along Greenways in Charlotte, North Carolina*, Department of Geography and Earth Sciences University of North Carolina at Charlotte, 1994-2004

Virginia Crime Prevention Association, *Safety by Design: Creating a Safer Environment in Virginia*, 2005

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Midtown Greenway Coalition website, Minneapolis, MN

APPENDIX D: GREENWAY MAKES A GOOD NEIGHBOR

Greenway makes a good neighbor - Roanoke.com

<http://www.roanoke.com/news/roanoke/wb/249793>

Thursday, June 10, 2010

Greenway makes a good neighbor

Construction of the Mountain View and Norwich parts of the greenway begins soon. Most residents in other areas say the route was a welcome addition.

By Mason Adams | 981-3253

A mixture of hope, concern and curiosity usually greets the arrival of an outsider into a tightly knit neighborhood.

The impending expansion of the Roanoke River Greenway into the city's Mountain View and Norwich communities over the next two years is no exception. With the construction of bridges and more than two miles of new trail set for completion by the end of 2012, residents there aren't sure what to expect.

They're hoping that an influx of bicyclists, runners and walkers will bring new blood and revitalization, but at the same time they harbor concerns about providing a new route for outsiders into the community.

"We see some new development coming in there, but we don't know when," said James "Ronnie" Stanley of the Norwich Neighborhood Alliance. "You can see the handwriting on the wall, but you don't know what it's going to be."

The long-term effects remain to be seen, but based on interviews with those who live along the extended area of the greenway in Southeast Roanoke, there already have been positive changes. The stretch of greenway from Ninth Street to the east bears some similarities to the proposed route through Norwich, as it generally runs along industrial areas while occasionally bearing near houses.

The greenway's stretch through the center of the city at Wasena Park, Smith Park and the River's Edge Sports Complex remains its heart and most popular piece, but with a recent influx of federal money, city officials are working to expand the paved path at both ends. To the east, a mixture of stimulus money and other government funding will help pay for a bridge and path around the wastewater treatment plant to connect the Tinker Creek Greenway with the Roanoke River Greenway where it currently ends at 13th Street.

To the west, construction already is under way on a bridge to link Wasena Park with the newly opened Vic Thomas Park (the former Hannah Court trailer park), and officials received bids this week to extend the greenway west to Bridge Street.

And even though the bridge to Vic Thomas Park won't be complete until later this summer, Gregg Ervin, president of the Mountain View Neighborhood Association, said he's noticed some changes.

"We've already seen an increase in bike riders in this neighborhood," Ervin said. "It is drawing new people into the neighborhood."

Certainly, that's what city officials would like to see. They've spun the emerging greenway system not only as a source of recreation and alternative transportation, but also as an asset that can assist long-stagnant neighborhoods with revitalization.

Roanokers appear to have embraced the concept: Greenway construction is one of the few capital projects that most seem to agree is worth the cost, and an ever-increasing number of users make a habit of visiting them regularly.

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Greenway makes a good neighbor - Roanoke.com

<http://www.roanoke.com/news/roanoke/wb/249793>

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Ron McCorkle and Mark Petersen are both Southeast Roanoke activists who bought houses near the new extended stretch of the greenway. Cycling enthusiast McCorkle said he noticed a significant increase in people on bicycles even before the stretch of greenway along Bennington Street opened in early 2007. He said that he expects the greenway to slowly change attitudes about Southeast Roanoke.

"Most of the people who use it live in another part of the city. They have an opinion of Southeast, but now they're getting to ride through and see it's a really great neighborhood," McCorkle said. "What happens is that people will see it's a great neighborhood with great value and houses that are affordable. And they'll start to move in. I've already seen it start to happen."

Others said the neighborhood hasn't changed substantially, but blamed that largely on the slumping housing market. Some said it's still too early to expect large-scale results.

"I think we would look for those improvements to stabilize neighborhoods first," said Assistant City Manager Brian Townsend. "Then over time, once that stabilization happens, you see investment and improvement."

What folks do agree upon is that more people than ever are out using the greenway, and many of them live nearby.

On Wednesday evening last week, Doug and Kathy King, who live a short drive from the 13th Street trail head in Southeast, said they've made walking the greenway a near-daily routine since Kathy was diagnosed with diabetes several weeks ago. Others from nearby Garden City and Vinton rode bikes along the paved path.

"As far as neighborhood use, we have a lot of kids who are going down and using the greenway," Petersen said. "I've seen pedestrian traffic on the greenway pick up just in the last six months. Every Saturday afternoon, if it's a nice day, you can't find parking on the 13th Street trail head."

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Those crowds have brought activity and a new atmosphere -- and they've created some inconveniences for the greenway's neighbors, too, some say.

Richard Artutis owns 3 acres of land that sit along the greenway by Deaton Road, which serves as an access point for some users. The problem is there's no place to park, which has at times led to conflicts between greenway users and tenants in Artutis' houses.

"I've had to fight the traffic of people wanting to get here," Artutis said. "I've had people park in my yard, drive through at a high rate of speed."

Artutis said he considers the greenway a city resource "for all the different walks of life to get out and say hello to each other." But he said he's also heard groups of "wanna-be thugs" passing by at 2 a.m. or later.

"Too much havoc could happen on that greenway," Artutis said. "It would make an excellent getaway for a thug. I guess it just depends on how your mind works."

Artutis said he wondered, too, if the city's homeless population might be using the greenway as an open-air shelter, but Petersen said he hasn't seen it.

"The biggest thing we anticipated when they opened the greenway was the loitering of homeless people under the bridges, but that's not happened," Petersen said.

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Greenway makes a good neighbor - Roanoke.com

<http://www.roanoke.com/news/roanoke/wb/249793>

In fact, most of those interviewed along the greenway in Southeast said they hadn't noticed an uptick in loitering or crime in general. Aside from some burglaries here and there, crime appears to have gone down since the greenway opened.

"Having more people use public space increases security," Townsend said. "Show me an area that's got a lot of activity, I'll show you a safe area. Show me an area that doesn't have a lot of activity -- that's where bad things are going to happen."

Still, it's not entirely clear that it's all because of the greenway.

David Ten-Eyck, who lives in a house just across the street from an exposed stretch of greenway, said he's noticed a drop in suspicious-looking people passing by. He attributes that not to the greenway, however, but to the increasingly sporadic hours of a nearby convenience store. The store's owner and an employee were both killed in unrelated incidents less than a month apart in 2005, and managers since then haven't kept regular hours, Ten-Eyck said.

For all of its benefits, the greenway has also brought some disappointments, too.

Ten-Eyck noted that it was built as part of the Army Corps of Engineers flood reduction project, and city officials have crowed after recent flood events that the project is working. But Ten-Eyck complained that he still pays flood insurance.

Petersen said he is disappointed that the city hasn't maintained the greenway's trees and landscaping since 2007. Many of those trees have died but have not been replaced.

Artutis grumbled that the concrete at the end of Deaton Road had crumbled since the greenway was put in.

Still, Artutis said he has enjoyed the greenway since it was opened, and he is hoping to see some financial benefit. He is trying to sell his 3 acres -- which sit next to an electrical substation at a point with easy access to both the greenway and the Mill Mountain Star Trail -- for \$2.5 million.

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