



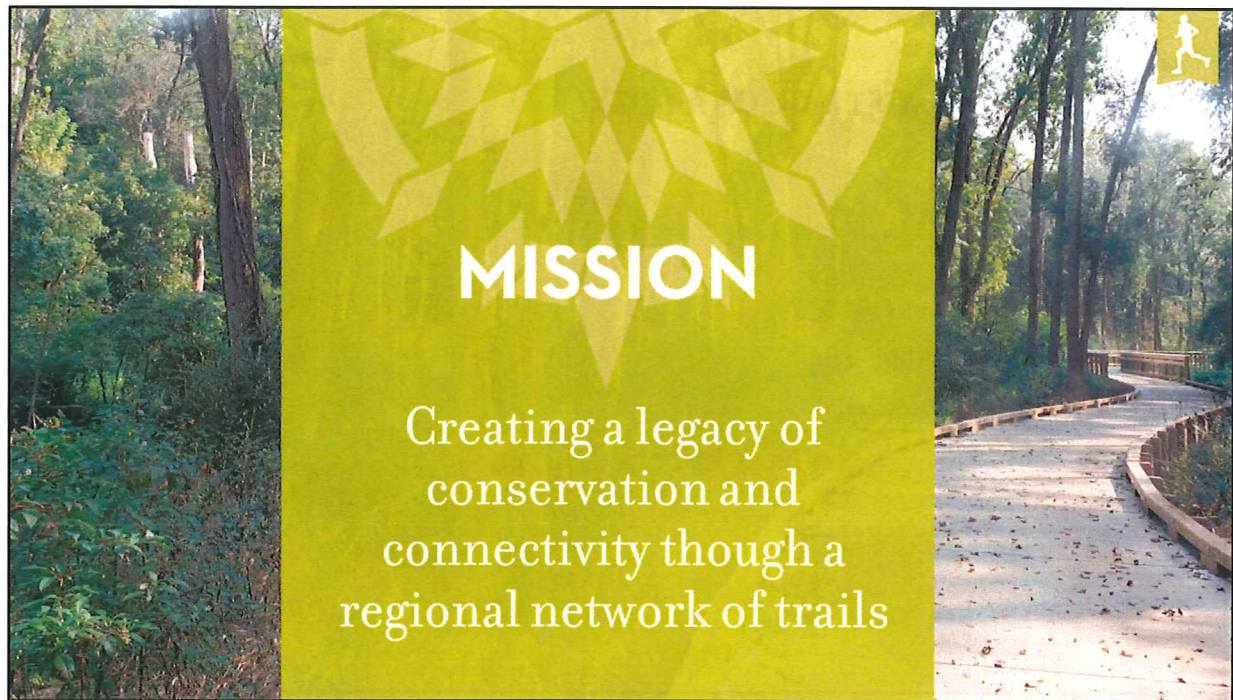
Hello, I am Bart Landess, Executive Director of the Catawba Lands Conservancy and Carolina Thread Trail.

Board member CT Anderson and I are going to tag team a presentation about the need for greenways.

For the last 12 years, the Carolina Thread Trail has been helping the community adopt and execute a plan to weave together 15 counties and 2 million people through 1600 miles of connected trails.

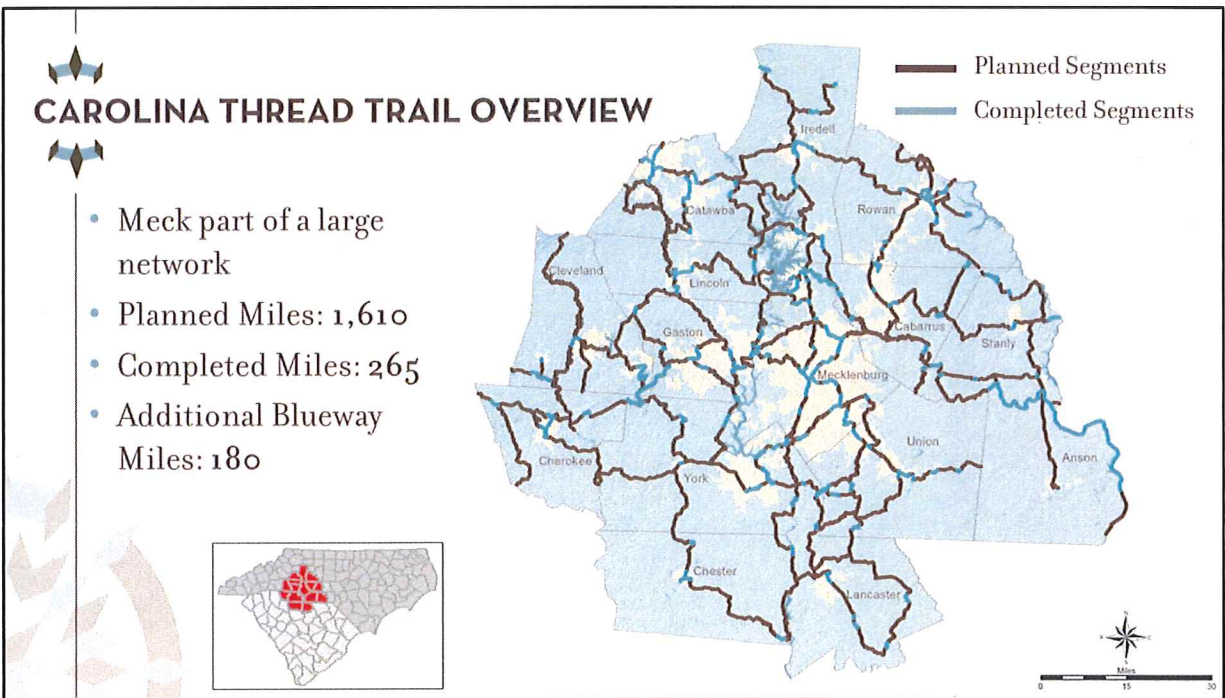


Our goal is saving land and connecting lives to nature.



Our mission is to create a legacy of conservation and connectivity through a regional network of trails.

The regional network provides opportunities for conservation of green space, but also many other benefits, which we'll discuss briefly.



Mecklenburg County was an early adopter of the Thread Trail concept map, which provides 1600 miles of interconnected trails.

Little Sugar Creek Greenway is the best known and most heavily used, but there are others and they are also great amenities for the communities they serve.

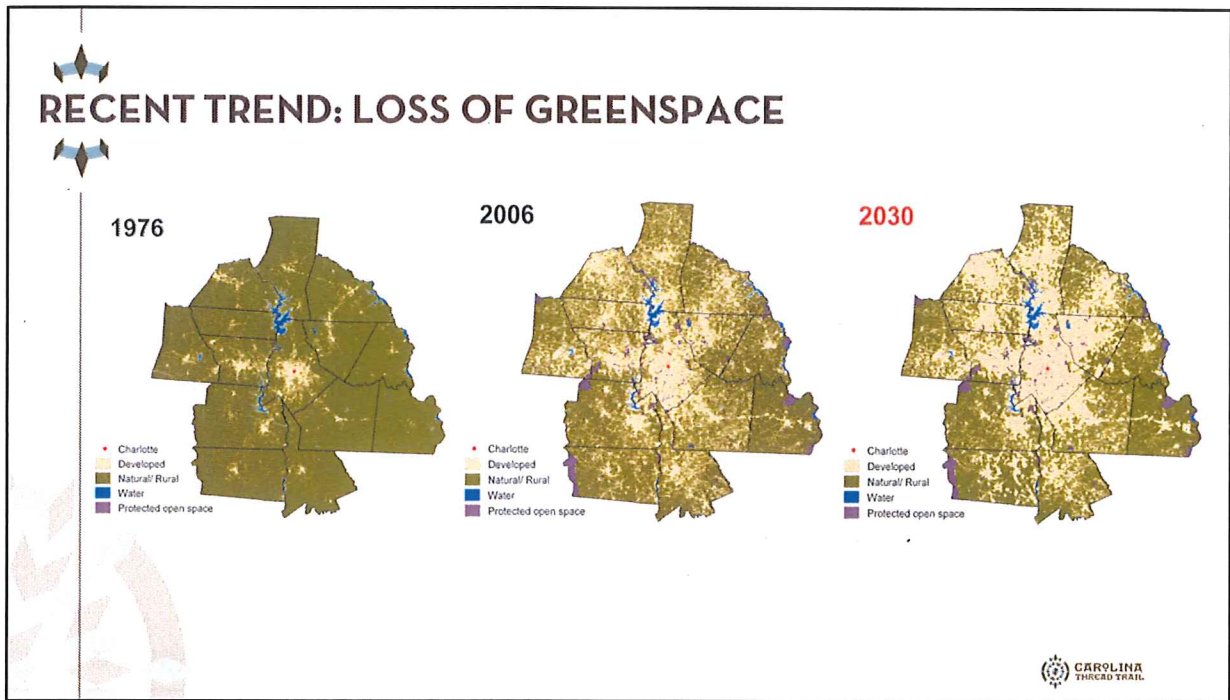
Today's issue is that most of those trails do not connect to one another, so we lack the opportunity to travel more than a few miles on any trail segment.

But you can see that the opportunity is to provide connectivity throughout the County and throughout the region. The key is how rapidly it will happen.

We have a fifth of the network built, but the community has a strong desire for more.

The Little Sugar Creek Greenway gets 385,000 visits a year. Greenways was the #1 most popular amenity in the Parks & Rec Department survey of interests.

And real estate developers tell us that it is the #1 request of their homebuyers.



We are rapidly losing green space as we add residents.

An added benefit of trails is the conservation value they bring.

It's becoming harder and harder for our residents to be in a natural environment.

Trails are linear parks that provide a way for our residents to use paths through nature to get to shopping, to get to their jobs, or just to bask in the comfort and beauty of trees, grass, creeks, birds and other parts of the natural world.

Additionally, because most trails follow creeks, they help improve water quality by filtering storm water and providing a natural buffer to impervious surfaces.



CATALYTIC FUNDING

- Adds to public funding
- Promote a regional vision of connectivity
- Facilitate communities working together
- Provide technical education and support to community partners
- Provide grants to plan, acquire land and build trails
- Seek local, regional, state and national funds

Over \$5 million awarded



CTT has provided catalytic funding for design and implementation of trails.

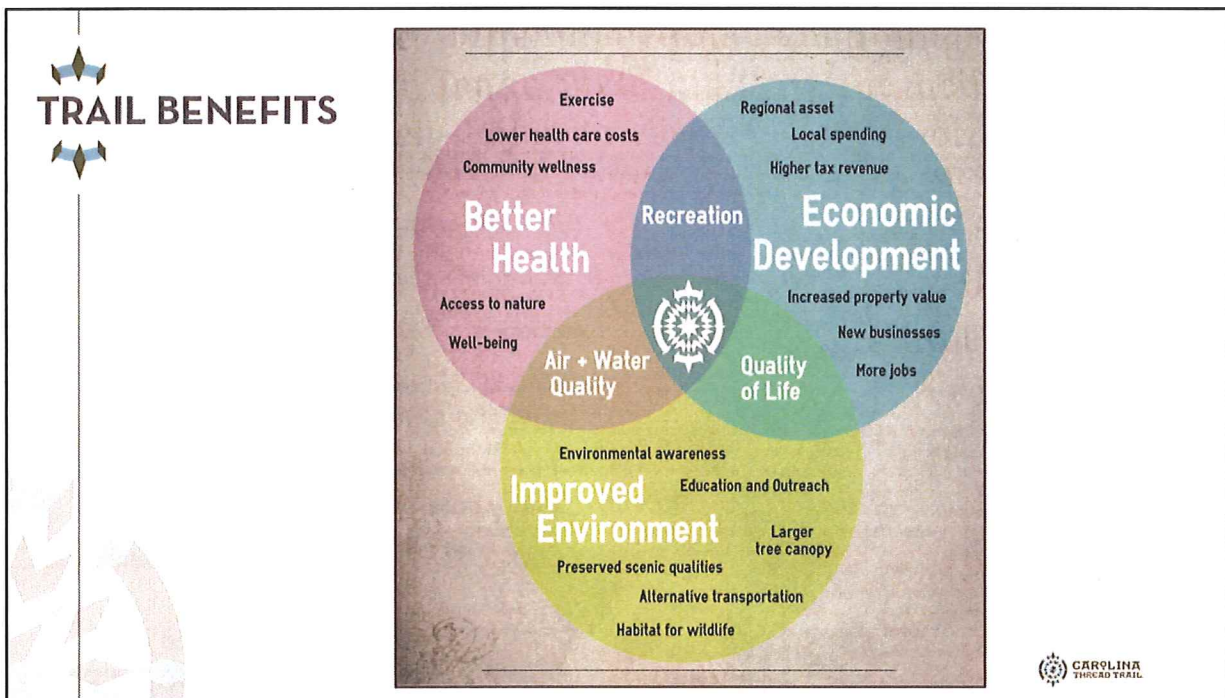
The ROI for trail funding is 3:1 generally, though it is a minimum of \$1.72 of return and as high as 10:1, depending on the trail and the community and the timing.

That is, for every dollar invested, the community gets a \$3 return, and often more.

That includes lower transportation costs and better transportation options, better health for members of the community, a higher property tax base, more economic activity in the area of the trail and higher sales tax receipts as a result.

But public funding is by far the larger component.

Which is why tonight's discussion is so important.



There are many benefits to greenways.

They fall under three main headings – Health, Economic Development and Environment.

Together they make our community a much better place to live.

TRAIL BENEFITS

NATURAL SELLING POINTS.

HEALTH SAVINGS

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT



INCREASED PROPERTY VALUE

1% increase in vicinity of trail, resulting in increased property tax revenue of \$1.2 million



JOB CREATION

Trail construction over 15 years results in 2,700 new jobs during that period



INCREASED TAX REVENUE

ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION



TRAIL USER AND TOURIST SPENDING

\$1.2 to \$8.6 million of increased spending, resulting in \$3 to \$6 million in incremental state and local tax revenue



Other benefits include alternate transportation, tourism, job creation and higher tax revenues.



Trails connect people to nature.

Recent scholarship in the medical world says that's an important and useful thing in and of itself.

It reduces stress, lowers blood pressure and provides other health benefits.

A NY Times article from last week noted that doctors prescribe 120 minutes a week to reap full health benefits.

But we also get the benefit of better air quality, better water quality, more wildlife habitat, the enjoyment of our natural heritage, an alternate means of commuting or shopping and the educational value to our children.

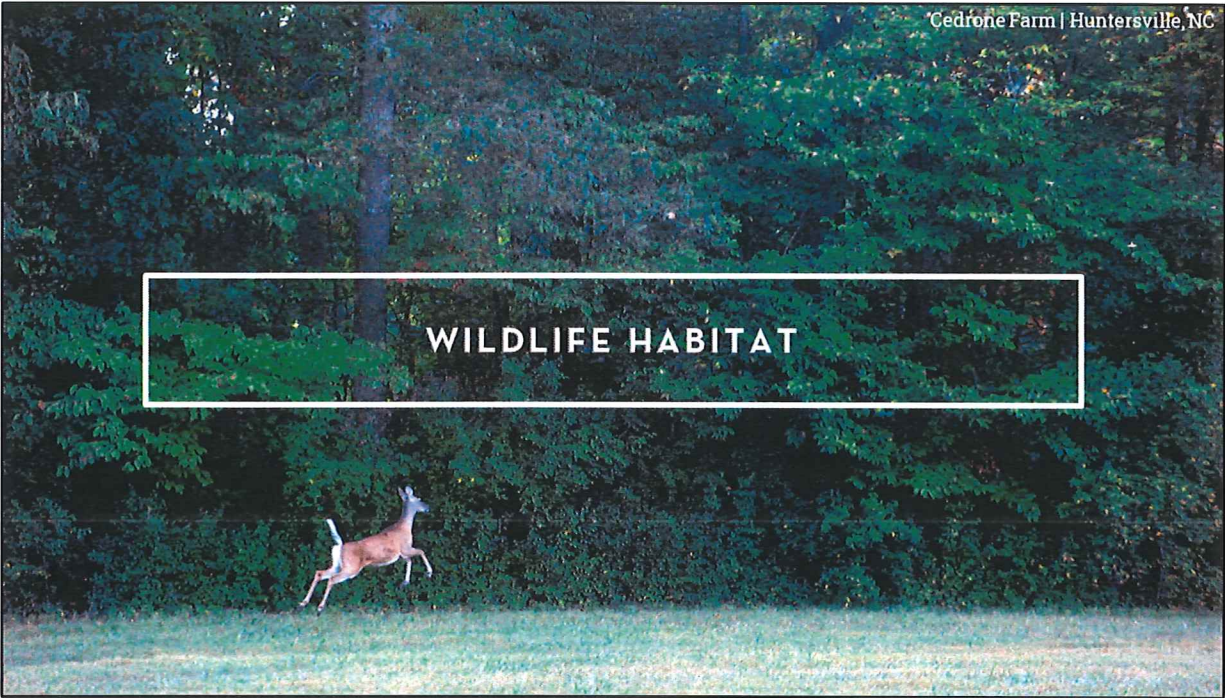
Many children in our community don't know where their water comes from, their food comes from, how to identify a tree or an animal or the joy of wading in a creek and making mud pies.



Trails and greenways, because they maintain a green buffer, help maintain clean water.



Sedimentation from runoff storm water is our #1 pollutant, and trails can help mitigate that.



The green space around trails also provides wildlife habitat.

PLANTS, ANIMALS, AND INSECTS



Not just large animals like deer, but also plants that harbor smaller animals like ground nesting birds, amphibians and butterflies.



Greenways are a major driver of economic development.

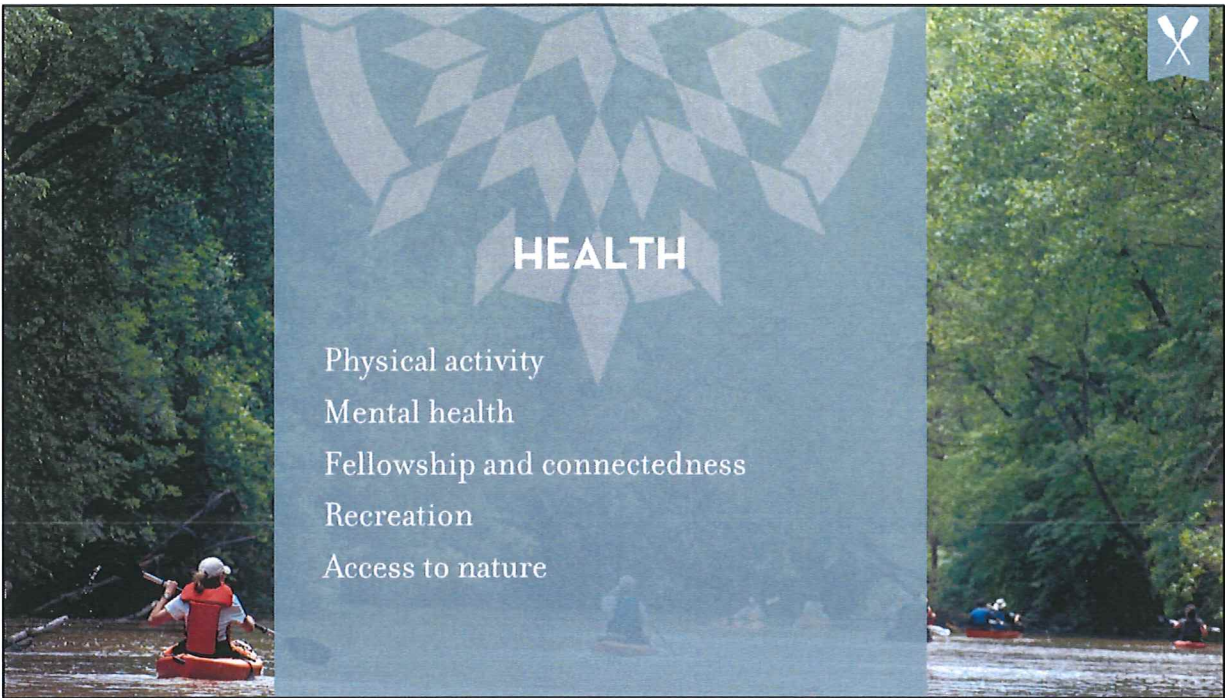
A recent study noted that the Little Sugar Creek Greenway has returned \$3 for every \$1 invested.

And we have other examples of the dramatic impact of the Atlanta Beltline, which so far has delivered an 8:1 ROI.

Developers tell us that their most requested amenity is trails, and the Parks and Rec survey uncovered the same.

And relocation companies know that outdoor recreation and walkable, bikeable communities are a huge draw, especially for young adults.

All that translates into higher revenues from property and sales taxes and more opportunities for businesses.



As noted before, being outdoors by itself makes people healthier.

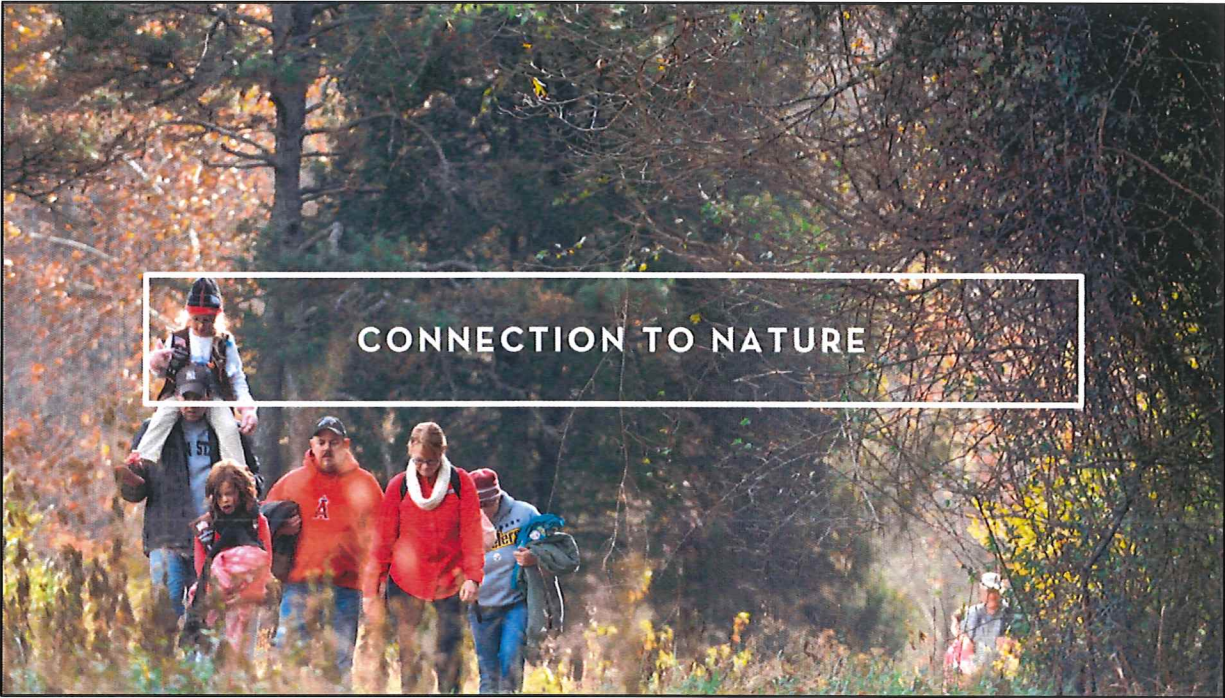
But the greenways do even more.

They allow for all kinds of physical activity.

Equally important, they provide opportunities for people to do things together.

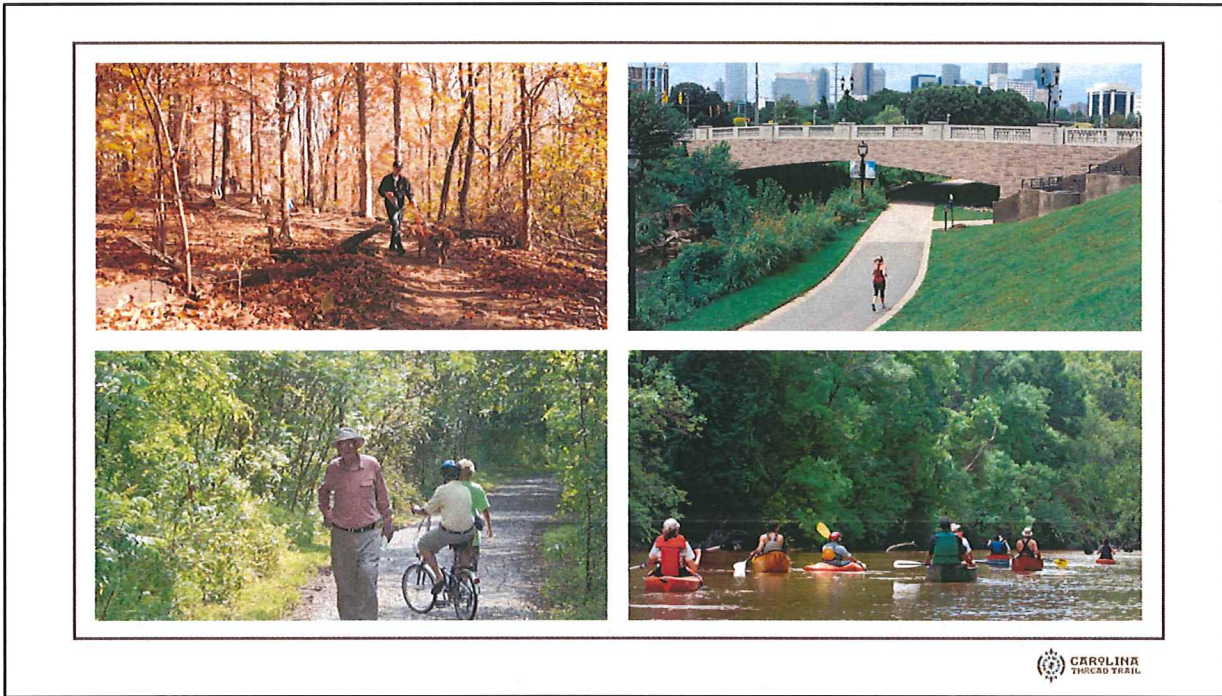
That feeling of fellowship and connection is another benefit and provides better mental health.

And lots of the recreation activities are just plain fun.



We are rapidly losing our connection to nature.

Our greenway system can help restore it.



Whether paved or unpaved, in town or out, river or trails, greenways put us into our natural environment.



The development patterns of the 20th century separated people and neighborhoods.

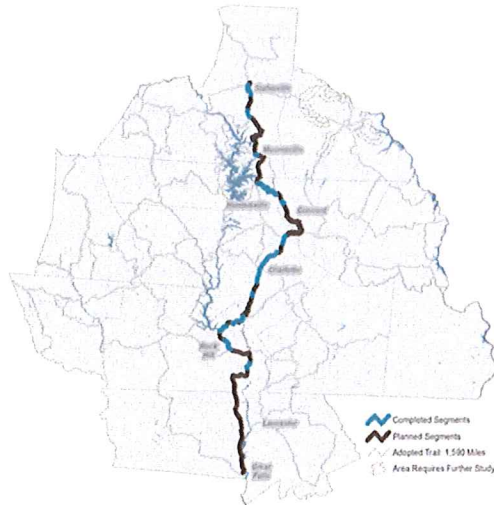
Railroads and highways, rather than connecting people, cut them off from each other.

And it was, and is, most pronounced in low income communities.

They bear the brunt of the proximity to major highways and railroads and suffer not only from the isolation of not being able to get across them, but also to noise, air and water pollution that comes from them.

Greenways re-connect people and neighborhoods and provide them new opportunities for employment and friendship and thereby provide better social capital and social mobility.

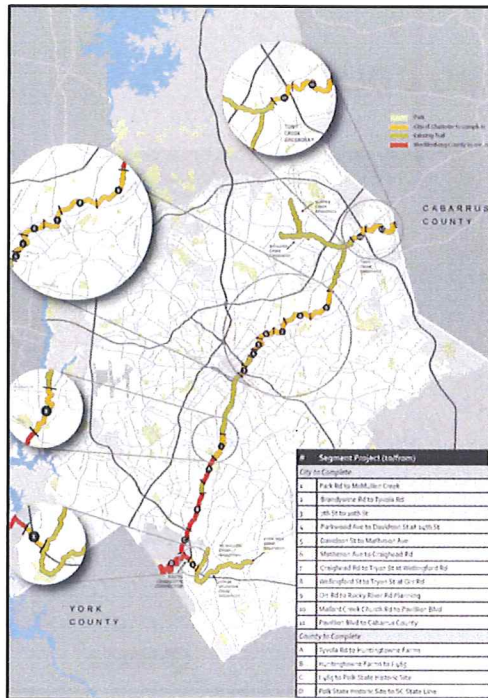
FOCUS: NORTH-SOUTH SPINE



- 140 miles
- Multi-county
- Cross-state
- Statesville, NC → Great Falls, SC



When complete, the Carolina Thread Trail network will provide connectivity from Great Falls, SC to Statesville.



CROSS-CHARLOTTE TRAIL

- 30-mile paved greenway
- Approximately 140,000 residents and 130,000 jobs will be within walking distance of the proposed trail and the adjacent greenways that connect to it



The Cross Charlotte Trail is a great opportunity to connect much of the community and provide alternate transportation capacity.

THREAD TRAIL EXAMPLES IN MECKLENBURG COUNTY



Little Sugar Creek Greenway - Tyvola Rd to Huntingtowne Farms



West Branch Rocky River Greenway



Uptown Cycle Track



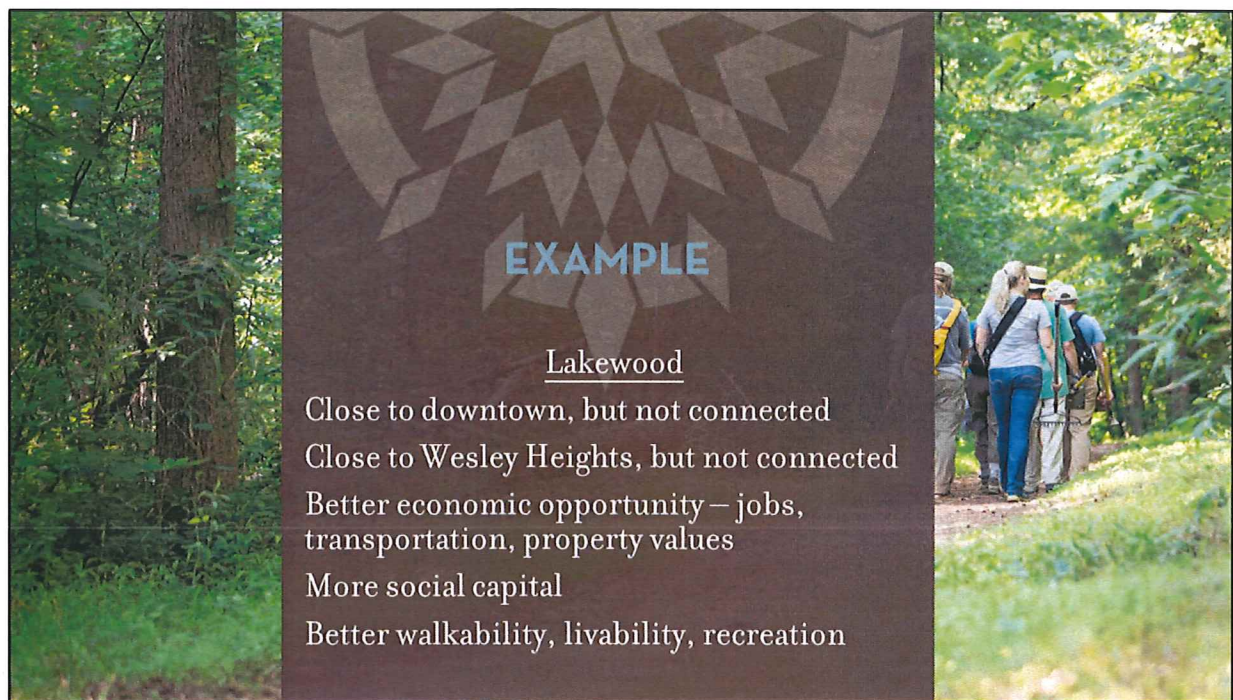
Toby Creek Greenway



Irwin/Stewart Creek Greenways



There are already great trails and greenways in Mecklenburg County, but there is an opportunity for much more.



We all want more trails and greenways, but especially communities without access to jobs and recreation.

A great example of a neighborhood that would benefit from greenway connections is the Lakewood neighborhood, just northwest of downtown.

Access is limited for the citizens of that neighborhood.

Despite their proximity to downtown, it is very difficult to get to the many jobs in the downtown area.

With a trail that would provide easy pedestrian or bicycle access, they would be much more a part of the downtown job market.

They also would have an opportunity to make friends and recreate with people from nearby neighborhoods, increasing their social capital and social mobility.



Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of greenways.

We hope you'll vote to fund the rapid build-out of the planned greenway network in Mecklenburg County.