

Chaula Jain

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening mecklenburg county commissioners
I am Chaula Jain, along with I am an adjunct faculty at WCC

Thank you for this opportunity to address the issues about greenways and reserves in our county. Although our city, the towns and our airport have grown substantially over the last decade, the expansion of greenways and nature reserves have not kept up.

the mental and physical health benefits these *bounties* nature ~~bounties~~ offer cannot be over emphasized.

I represent a walking/hiking group called "Forest Bathing", this name is translated from the Japanese word, "Shinrin Yoku". Shinrin Yoku is not just a walk in the woods. It's a therapeutic practice that originated in Japan, emphasizing the healing power of nature on our well-being. Our group has not only adopted this practice but has become a testament to the transformative impact of green spaces on our mental and physical health. We have an open group of 70 members, anyone can join this group. For the past six plus years, we have explored different greenways and reserves in and around the county. Our group which began with only two now draws around 20 each weekend. We can say *and walked more than 100 miles* that the network of greenways and trails has enabled all our members to walk more than five miles at a stretch each Saturday.

These green spaces provide not only recreational opportunities but serve as a vital means of connecting neighborhoods. As Mecklenburg County expands, it's crucial that we prioritize connecting existing greenways. This fosters a sustainable and healthy mode of transportation, reducing our reliance on cars. Actually this weekend I met two Emergency room doctors, couple, who bike to work along the greenway and this emphasizes the connector needs.

I advocate wholeheartedly the recommendations from our Park & Recreation staff. They possess unparalleled insights into the community's needs and understand the potential of projects.

In conclusion, let's work together to ensure that our parks and greenways not only keep pace with our county's growth but thrive as vibrant, interconnected spaces that enhance the mental and physical well-being of every resident.

Thank you.