

## County wants input on where to put trail

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After hearing ideas from planners and area representatives, Carolina Thread Trail leaders want public input on where to put York County's leg of the trail and how to use it.

A concept map has the county's leg going from the Catawba Cultural Center east of Rock Hill to near Kings Mountain State Park, with another leg north into Mecklenburg County past Anne Springs Close Greenway, said Tobe Holmes, long-term planner for the county.

But that's just an idea, he said. In four public meetings this week, to be held around the county Monday through Wednesday, trail organizers want ideas and input on how to design the county's path.

One restriction while placing this leg of trail is that it has to connect to other counties to fit with the Thread Trail vision of connecting 15 counties with a proposed 7,300-square-mile network in the Carolinas. This "green interstate" will use public and private money to link existing trails and attractions with paths and green space.

York and Gaston counties are the first to blaze the Thread Trail, each receiving \$50,000 grants to start the process. The Catawba Lands Conservancy, Foundation for the Carolinas and Trust For Public Land have been working with private companies to fund the trail. These funds will be leveraged with state and federal grants to build trails. The fundraising efforts have reached almost half of the \$40 million goal since the plan was unveiled this fall.

"It's taken a lot of hard work to make this vision a reality," project director Ann Browning said.

Legs of the greenway, or undeveloped land preserved for environmental protection, should grow together, she said. Key connections between them could unfold during the next few years and be completed during the next 10 to 20 years.

Kelley Hart, with the Trust for Public Land, said they would like to see the county's main stretch of trail started in September.

Area developers, chambers of commerce and representatives from Rock Hill, Fort Mill, Tega Cay, Lake Wylie and York County gave input earlier this month on where York County should put its leg of the trail.

The Thread Trail could connect to trails and greenways already planned in the communities and encourage more, Browning said.

Here are some of the ideas county leaders have had for a new trail:

Have trails on both sides of the Catawba River with some connectivity between them.

Connect points of interest in the county, including museums and historical markers.

Tie in Duke Energy's recreational areas and green space allocated to the county by developers.

Be a way for people to ride bikes to work or area businesses.

Support multiple uses. Some uses could include bikes, horses and possibly even a way for canoes to be carried around dams.

Be recreationally used for long-distance hikes with camping areas.

Trail organizers and local officials are looking for feedback on placing the trail, amenities along it such as restrooms, playgrounds and camping areas, and what it should be used for.

"We're left to our own devices to plan this," Holmes said. "We kind of in the forefront of what guidelines will be out there in the future. Other counties will base what they do on our actions -- good or bad."

**Public meetings on Carolina Thread Trail**

Monday, 6 to 8 p.m., The Spratt Building, 215 W. Main St., Fort Mill.

Tuesday, 6 to 8 p.m., The Larne Building, 103 N. Main St., Clover

Wednesday, 6 to 8 p.m., Manchester Meadows, 337 Mount Gallant Road, Rock Hill

Wednesday, 6 to 8 p.m., The McCelvey Center, 212 E. Jefferson St., York

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