



Cabarrus expected to earn Thread Trail grant soon

Tourism officials unanimously support regional greenway network

By Josh McCann
jmccann@independenttribune.com
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KANNAPOLIS - Within months, Cabarrus County could qualify for a planning grant from organizers of the Carolina Thread Trail regional greenway network, organizers said.

The Cabarrus County Tourism Authority unanimously approved a resolution of support for the project on Wednesday, joining the cities of Concord and Kannapolis, which have already passed similar resolutions.

The project is still in development, and exact routes have not been determined, but plans call for a network of trails spanning 15 counties throughout the Charlotte region and both Carolinas.

Cabarrus is one of three counties within the project's footprint to have its own greenway master plan.

Organizers are in the process of forming a local steering committee, and Cabarrus leaders should be awarded a planning grant by the end of the year, project coordinator Colleen Frenzel said.

"They are certainly getting close," Frenzel said. "When they're ready, we want to be ready, and I think that will be soon."

In December, the project awarded its first planning grants of \$50,000 each to Gaston County in North Carolina and York County in South Carolina.

According to the trail's conceptual map, the Cabarrus portion of the project may include three spokes, leading from roughly the center of the county to the North Carolina Research Campus in Kannapolis, Reed Gold Mine in Midland and the Exit 49 corridor off Interstate 85 in Concord.

Possible destinations in other counties include Morrow Mountain, Catawba College's ecological preserve, the National Whitewater Center, Bank of America Stadium, Crowder's Mountain and Carowinds theme park.

The entire project is estimated to cost between \$100 million and \$150 million, with \$40 million to come from private sources and the rest from expected government grants.

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