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## Work on trail system beginning

By Kristin Malone / Special to The N&R

The Carolina Thread Trail Committee is in the initial planning phase in developing a trail route for Chester County, Councilman and head of the Chester County committee Brad Jordan said.

"The planning phase consists of hiring consultants, obtaining grants for the trail, getting advice from other Carolina Thread Trail committees and planning meetings so the community can be involved," he said.

Appointees have been named within the six voting districts of Chester County. Gloria Kellerhals, District 5 appointee, said community meetings are essential in the planning phase.

"During the citizen meetings, we can share our education with people of the community and they can share their knowledge of the land with us," she said. "This makes it easier to plan potential trail routes."

While nothing is set in stone, one potential trail route will connect the old CSX rail bed at the old depot in Great Falls to areas in York County. Committee appointees are also looking into possibly incorporating the Broad River and having a trail link Brattonsville to Chester County, but these plans are simply proposals, Kellerhals said.

"Connecting the 15 counties involved is one goal, but we also need to make sure the proposed plans are feasible," Jordan said.

Carolina Thread Trails will cover 7,300 square miles and link more than 40 destinations in 15 counties. Each county must approve a \$50,000 grant for the master plan for greenways and trails across the county. This grant also requires a \$5,000 match by the county. The Carolina Thread Trail grant was approved by the Chester County Council in January.

Jordan and Kellerhals are both familiar with other trails similar to the Carolina Thread Trail in the United States.

Jordan, an avid mountain biker, has trailed the Virginia Creeper, a 34-mile trail that sits on a former railroad. He said many people travel to trail destinations to get in touch with nature. This also brings tourism dollars to the community.

"Industries will come about in the county as a result of having a trail," Jordan said. "When people use the trail, they will get hungry and come to town for a bite to eat or they will stay overnight at a hotel, all of which will bring tourism money to our community."

Not only will the community benefit from tourism, but the trails will also provide recreation space for citizens.

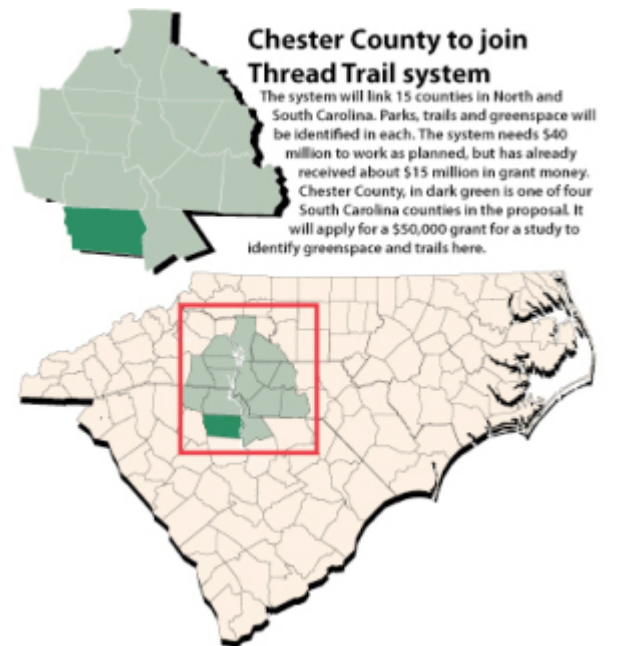


Photo by Stephen Guilfoyle [editor@onlinechester.com](mailto:editor@onlinechester.com)  
The Carolina Thread Trail is planned for these 15 counties in the two-state area.

Kellerhals remembers a trail similar to the proposed Carolina Thread Trail in Colorado. She recalls seeing people use the trails to practice for marathons or simply take a nature walk.

"The trails in Colorado opened my eyes to what trails can do for a community and I want that in Chester," she said.

The Carolina Thread Trail Committee will hold public meetings in order to help find out what are the community concerns, provide feedback and answer questions.

Kellerhals is currently looking into abandon railroad deeds and publicly owned land so the committee can develop a few trail proposals to present to the community.

York County is closer to the end of its planning stages of developing potential trail routes that will link York, Chester and Lancaster counties.

"Being linked to other counties is good for all of our communities involved in the thread trail, not only for economic reasons, but also for social reasons," Kellerhals said.

Tobe Holmes is the Long Range Planner for the Planning and Development Service Department in York County. His committee has developed four scenarios ranging from 110 miles to 80 miles of greenspace in York County.

Holmes has broken down the public opinion into two categories, primary and secondary.

"We hold community meetings and people voice their opinions about which scenarios they like and which scenarios they don't like," he said. "If a particular area is mentioned by two or more people, we classify that as a primary area whereas if only one person mentions one landmark, that landmark is marked as secondary." Holmes said the committee will try their best to link primary and secondary areas.

"The trails will provide health and economic benefits, a sense of place for residents, educational benefits, environmental health benefits and eco-tourism," Holmes said. "Citizens will be able to vacation in their own town."

Back in Chester County, Fort Lawn and Lowry's have already had their public hearings; however, there are two more public hearings. The first will be July 2 in Richburg. The second is July 21 in Great Falls. There is also a meeting that will be held in York County. On July 16, there will be an open house at Manchester Meadows.

"I am excited about the opportunity and hopeful that we will be able to bring trails to Chester County," Jordan said.

He's not the only one saying he's excited about the project.

Kellerhals used it as well. She told her husband "this project is an issue I can work on until I die," she said. It's "good for economic, spiritual, educational and every other aspect of life in Chester County."

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