

The Enquirer-Journal

Union County's Largest Community Newspaper Network

Planning to make a Greenway

By: JASON deBRUYN

INDIAN TRAIL

Residents can give their input on parks and greenways throughout town.

Indian Trail volunteers and consulting firm HNTB formed a steering committee and developed a Parks and Greenway Master Plan that lays out ideal locations for trails and open areas within town limits. Committee members will present the plan to the Indian Trail town council Tuesday; area residents may address the council to give their thoughts on the plan in specific or parks in general.

Mayor John Quinn fully supports the plan.

"We strongly believed that, in addition to providing recreational and event opportunities for residents, the plan would also be used to promote wildlife appreciation and environmental education," Quinn said.

According to the executive summary of the plan, the burgeoning growth of Charlotte and the surrounding areas "has put tremendous pressure on the town's ability to provide park and recreational services for its current and future residents."

This plan should lay the foundation for those developments going forward and presents possibilities for the town to work with area schools.

"I am particularly pleased with the committee's work to ensure that wording, which places an emphasis on educational possibilities for our local students, was embedded in the plan," Quinn said.

Katie Reeves from the planning department took point on the project.

She recognized that, while the plan looks 10 years into the future, the town will not accomplish all the goals listed in the plan.

"The plan is a 10 year plan. This doesn't necessarily mean that the entire plan will be implemented within 10 years," she said. "Instead, the town should set a work program based on the recommendations of the plan and then reevaluate the implementation on a yearly basis."

The steering committee already held four community meetings and Reeves said those meetings factored heavily into shaping the plan.

Councilwoman Darlene Luther did not speak about the plan specifically, but said she wanted to see more green space within town limits.

"It will be great when we can finally acquire some land and do something with it," she said.

The council will meet 6 p.m. today with the public hearing as one of the first items on the agenda.

For more information contact Reeves at: ker@planning.indiantrail.org. The draft plan will be available at the meeting or on the town's Web site: indiantrail.org.

About the plan:

The plan identifies four types of parks each varying in size, amenities, and purposes. The plan specifies that there should be a variety of park types and greenways scattered evenly throughout the town limits. The greenway locations were designed to provide adequate and convenient access for pedestrians and bicyclist to travel. Special care was given to the greenway locations to ensure that they will eventually link up with greenways in adjacent jurisdictions.

Vision statement from the plan:

Indian Trail will promote a well planned park and recreation system that encourages an appreciation of nature, conservation, and a healthy and safe quality of life for all ages. The Town's park and recreation system will be designed through partnerships to connect our heritage with our future.

Katie Reeves' take on the plan:

1. The purpose of the Plan is to establish a parks and greenway network in the town. Currently there are no town owned parks within the city limits. The existing parks are all privately owned by different private organizations.
2. The Parks Plan contains a map (figure 6.4) which indicates the ideal areas for future parks and greenway locations. The parks sizes and locations shown on the map are all based on existing and forecasted population centers. The planning process took into account future greenway connections to adjacent municipalities. The connections to the Monroe and Stallings greenway plans are shown on the map as well as connections to the future Carolina Thread Trail.
3. The Parks, Tree and Greenway committee will serve as the implementation committee and will produce annual reports to the Council on the status of the plan. Once the plan is adopted they will be tasked with producing periodic recommendations to the council on the implementation. They will also make recommendations to update the plan if necessary every few years. It is important that the plan reflect the existing status of the community. The council will use the plan to decide on future park and greenway locations.

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