

The Enquirer-Journal

Union County's Largest Community Newspaper Network

Network of greenways proposed

By: Tiffany Jothen

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MONROE -- Where do you run? Bike? Walk or ride horses?

The Carolina Thread Trail wants to give you room for all of the above.

The Thread Trail, a nonprofit organization, is planning a regional network of greenways that will eventually reach more than 2 million people and 15 counties across North and South Carolina.

Twelve of 14 Union County municipalities are on board to support it. All anticipate a group of community meetings set for July, hoping their residents can offer some direction.

Leadership members aren't the ones who will draw trail lines, community coordinator Travis Morehead said; locals are.

"The door is wide open," he said. "We believe very strongly in community self-determination. ... The map will totally reflect what Union County folks have said they wanted in regard to trails."

Trails might not reach every town, he said, but each town does have a steering committee — made of elected officials, town staff and residents — to head the process.

Katie Reeves, senior planner for Indian Trail, hopes to offer "a sense of regional connectivity" and alternate ways to travel.

"The trails are not determined, ... but there will likely be some thread trails running through Indian Trail," she said.

Lisa Stiwinter, director of planning for Monroe, wants to provide a space for runners, walkers, bikers and horseback riders of all ages while offering multiple economic and health benefits.

Trails promote recreational use, economic development and cleaner air, she said.

The county also received grant funding from Carolina Thread Trail to hire a consultant and draw maps.

Thread Trail efforts are led by the Catawba Lands Conservancy and The Trust for Public Land.

Community meetings are scheduled for July 19-22 across the county. Union County will also conduct phone surveys.

For more information, visit www.carolinathreadtrail.org.

MEETING SCHEDULE

July 19: 6 p.m. - 8 p.m., Weddington United Methodist Church (this date is pending)

July 20: 6 p.m. - 8 p.m., Museum of the Waxhaws

July 21: 5 p.m. - 7 p.m., Union West Regional Library, Indian Trail

July 22: 6 p.m. - 8 p.m., Union County Cooperative Extension

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