



Mount Holly planning to connect Catawba River to Main Street

[Diane Turbyfill](#)

MOUNT HOLLY - Connecting Main Street with the Catawba River will be a beneficial, yet costly, project.

City Council wants to tackle the task through a linear park, a plan that will bring improvements to foot traffic along N.C. 27, Central Avenue and Catawba and Highland streets.

"It's really going to be an enhanced greenway," said Eric Davis, city manager.

The proposed linear park was included in a June 2003 bond referendum. The \$1.4 million set aside for the project must be used by June 2010.

The original draft did not follow a logical path for walkers and needed some improvements, said Davis.

City staff unveiled an updated version of the park at the annual council retreat, Jan. 15-17. The new plan carries a price tag of \$4.6 million, though the cost could drop with final touches still being made.

The proposed park could offer passive recreation, Davis said. Improvements would be made to sidewalks and trails, landscapes, intersections, crosswalks and overpasses on Highland Street and N.C. 27.

City Council offered some opinions about the design during its retreat. A fine-tuned version of the plan will be presented at February's meeting.

If council approves the park plan, Davis will begin applying for permits from CSX Corp. to include walkways and landscaping in its right of way. Next, he'll look at funding. By including roadside elements, some of the city's street maintenance funds might be available, Davis said.

The park would run roughly 3,000 feet and be constructed in phases, said Davis.

The linear park design also would connect the southern and northern legs of the proposed Carolina Thread Trail, a regional network of greenways and trails still in the adoption phase that could span 15 counties.

Mount Holly City Council has been eyeing connectivity between downtown and the Catawba River since adopting its strategic plan May 12, 2008.

The linear park is a tool in accomplishing that connectivity and making Mount Holly's Main Street stand out.

"That's something that will make us unique," Davis said.

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http://www.gastongazette.com/news/park_30043_article.html/davis_city.html