

County adopts Thread Trail plan

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By Adam Bell

Union County has joined the Carolina Thread Trail, a regional network of existing and proposed trails that will link 15 counties in the Carolinas.

County commissioners voted unanimously to adopt the county's Thread Trail master plan at a meeting last month.

The plan offers a long-term blueprint for integrating existing and proposed trails with additional greenway segments and is the result of a yearlong review that involved the community in developing the project.

The plan does not commit the county to any funding or timetable to implement it, however, and land for the trail will not be taken through eminent domain. No immediate action is expected by county commissioners, County Manager Cindy Coto said.

"It's up to you, at your discretion" to implement the plan, Thread Trail community coordinator Travis Morehead told commissioners. "All decisions remain local."

A local steering committee involved with the trail plan recommended a minimum of 1.5 miles of greenways be developed each year for the next decade, then a minimum of three miles of greenways be developed in subsequent years.

County Planning Director Richard Black said he expects to meet with county Parks and Recreation officials about the plan and discuss its impact on the approval process for developments around potential trails.

The trail's projected 100-mile route would run through unincorporated parts of the county as well as through Stallings, Indian Trail, Monroe, Wingate, Waxhaw, Marshville, Mineral Springs and Wesley Chapel.

The route includes about two miles of existing trails and 38 miles of trails already proposed by local governments. The remaining trail routes would be new to the county and its municipalities.

Segments likely will appear one by one and be developed through multiple funding partners, donors and volunteers, according to the trail master plan.

The trail would be part of a regional network of current and proposed trails linking 2.3 million people in the Carolinas that preserves natural areas and promotes quality of life.

Adam Bell: 704-358-5696

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