

Town endorses trail plan

Carolina Thread Trail will cover 12.6 miles in Mooresville.

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MOORESVILLE Town commissioners support a plan by the Charlotte-based Catawba Lands Conservancy to create a 116-mile network of trails and greenways in Iredell County over many years.

The network is part of the conservancy-led Carolina Thread Trail plan for connected trails, greenways and conserved lands in 15 Carolinas counties with a total population of about 2million people.

The network includes planned trails for walking and running, lanes to ride bicycles and stretches of Lake Norman and the Catawba River for canoes and other nonmotorized craft.

The Mooresville Board of Commissioners voted 6-0 last week to support the proposed network through Iredell County, including nearly 13 miles of trails and greenways in Mooresville and nearly 12 miles in Statesville.

Adopting the plan does not commit Mooresville to pay for developing the network, said Randi Gates, community coordinator for the Carolina Thread Trail. The conservancy will continue to seek federal and private funding, she said.

Mooresville-based Lowe's Companies Inc., for instance, has awarded a \$250,000 grant to help develop the network in Iredell County.

Before the board's vote, commissioner Chris Carney requested a provision that only public right-of-ways be used and that no private land be taken by the government

Gates said using only public land has been the conservancy's plan all along and that it wouldn't support private land being taken.

Some features of the proposed Carolina Thread Trail routes through Mooresville:

One would follow N.C. 115 north from Mecklenburg County to the Lowe's Companies Inc. national headquarters in Mount Mourne and then to downtown Mooresville.

It would include bicycle lanes paid for with a federal Congestion Mitigation Air Quality grant. A multi-use trail also would eventually be built.

One would follow Rocky River and Dye Creek to downtown Mooresville from near where Iredell, Cabarrus and Mecklenburg counties meet.

The route would connect several schools and neighborhoods and use the existing trail network at Bellingham Park.

At its April 29 pre-agenda meeting, the Mooresville Board of Commissioners voted 3-0 to apply for a \$20,000 grant through the Carolina Thread Trail to design that corridor. No local match is

required. Commissioners Thurman Houston, Miles Atkins and Chris Carney were absent from the meeting.

One would begin in downtown Mooresville and head west on Lowrance and Wilson avenues, Brawley School Road, Morrison Plantation Parkway and Plantation Ridge Drive. The route assumes a connection between the ends of Plantation Ridge Drive and Doolie Road, which the town's Planning Department is studying.

West of Doolie Road, the route would use N.C. 150 to cross Lake Norman and connect with Catawba County. The route would mostly use bicycle lanes.

One would begin on Brawley School Road and follow Rolling Hills Road to Regency Center Drive and Bluefield Road.

Before the board's vote last week, the plan gained a key endorsement from Jonathan Hartsell, who is on the public policy committee of the Mooresville-South Iredell Chamber of Commerce.

"The chamber does strongly support the adoption of the trail," Hartsell told the board, adding that it will enhance economic development and the area's quality of life.

Read more: <http://www.charlotteobserver.com/2011/05/08/2275275/town-endorses-trail-plan.html>