

# Supporting Recreational Infrastructure

MST TRAIL TOWN CONFERENCE

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NC Department of Commerce

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T H R I V E  
*in* **NORTH CAROLINA™**

# The Economic Importance of Recreational Infrastructure

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North Carolina is participating in an ever increasingly competitive global economy.

The state's economic success is linked:

- ✓ To our ability to create and maintain thriving, engaged, and well-designed communities, that are attractive to businesses, tourists, and other visitors.
- ✓ To our ability to produce the best educated, most highly skilled, and healthiest workforce.

# Healthy, Vibrant Communities are Places...

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That business and industry want to come.

That entrepreneurs want to start their business ventures.

That people want to live and to visit.

# The Role of Comprehensive Community Design

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Community design that incorporates community assets can play an important role in making our communities attractive places to live, work, and play.

- ✓ By developing and marketing the use of nearby trails and greenways, and
- ✓ By inter-connecting safe streets, sidewalks and recreational pathways that encourage biking, walking, and hiking – to and from..
  - ❖ parks, trails, and greenways
  - ❖ main street, cultural, and historic venues
  - ❖ home, work, school

# Investing in Community Planning

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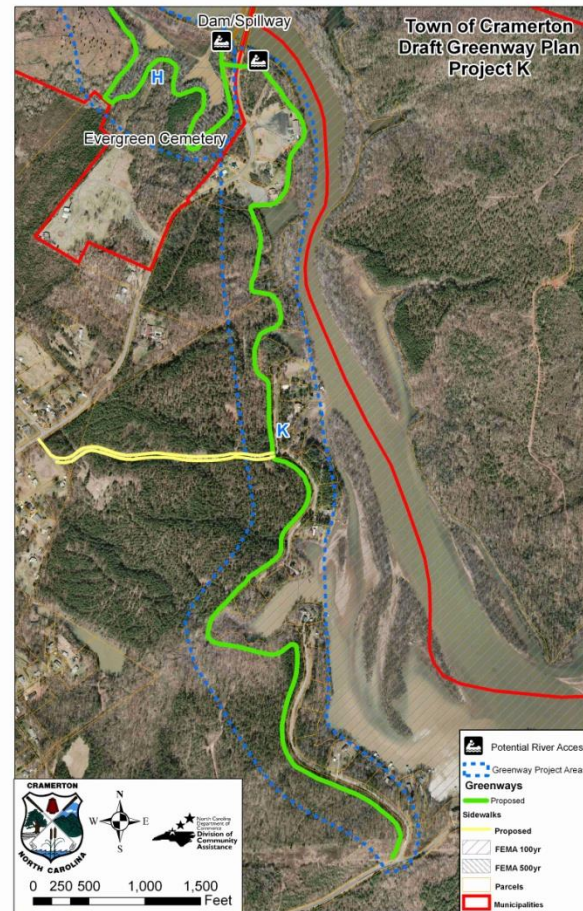
The NC Department of Commerce, Office of Community Planning is helping communities reach their community development goals by providing a number of services, including:

- land use planning
- strategic planning
- training
- meeting facilitation
- economic development studies

# Example

## Planning Design: A Municipal Greenway

With assistance from the Western NC Planning Office, the Town of Cramerton drafted a greenway plan for their community.



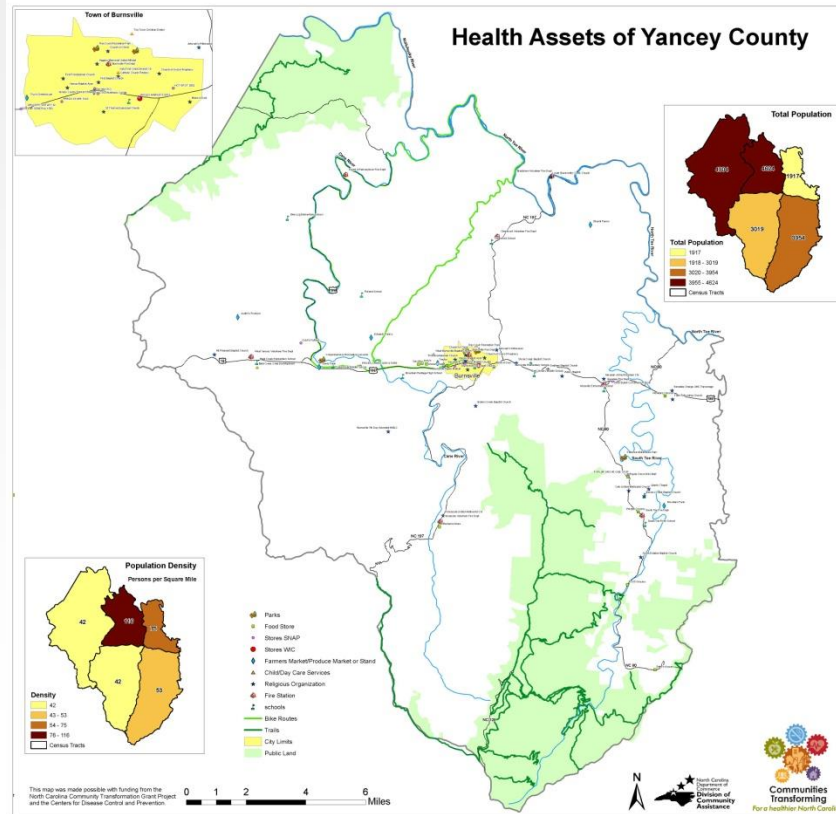
# Example

## Planning Design: A County Asset Map

County Health Assets Maps include trails and bike routes.

Eleven counties have been mapped:

Avery  
Buncombe  
Burke  
Caldwell  
Henderson  
McDowell  
Madison  
Mitchell  
Polk  
Rutherford  
Yancey



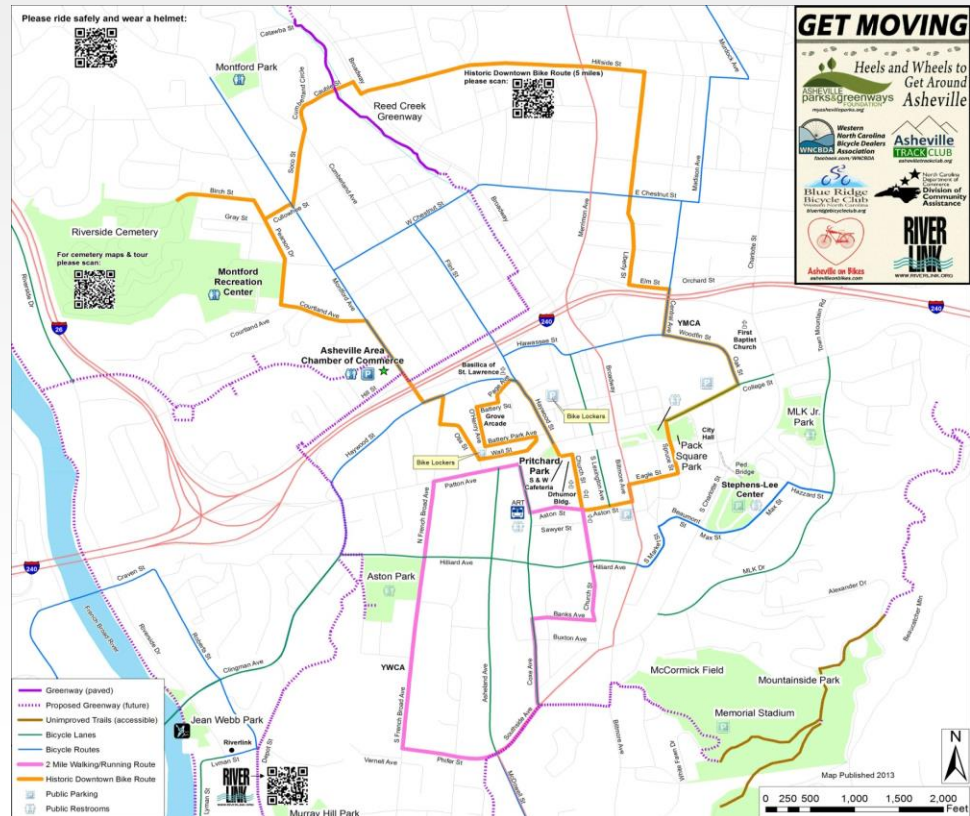


# Example

## Planning Design: A Connectivity Map

**Connectivity:** The *Get Moving Map* connects Asheville's residents and visitors to our diverse and developing system of parks, recreation centers, greenways, trails and on-street bike facilities.

**Collaboration:** Working with Asheville's Parks & Greenways Foundation and other local agencies and organizations – to develop the *Get Moving Map*, which is the most current resource for navigating central Asheville – on foot and bike.





# Economic Development Studies: Example The Mount Airy Study

## The Ararat River & Emily B. Taylor Greenways

The Piedmont Office,  
In collaboration with the  
UNC–Greensboro Bryan  
School of Business and  
Economics, conducted  
A two-year Greenway  
User Preference and  
Economic Impact  
Analysis for the Town  
of Mount Airy.



# Purpose of the Study

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To determine who uses the Greenways and how they utilize the Greenways. To gather opinions on how the Greenways function now and in the future, and how the Greenways impact the local economy.



# Greenways Survey Focus

- Where people are from.
- Socio-economic information.
- Opinions about the Greenways.
- How the Greenways are utilized.
- What types of businesses are being visited.
- Other recreational activities.
- Whether the Greenways impacts downtown activity.



# Greenways User Profile

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- Average age 38 years old (range 18 – 68).
- 50% female and 49.2% male.
- Average group size: 2 adults and 2 children.
- Use Greenway: 3 times per week.
- Live within 7 miles of greenways.
- Average income between \$50,000 and \$75,000 (non-local users had higher income than local users).
- 30% of greenway users were non-local.



# Greenways User Opinions

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More than **90%** of those who responded agreed with these statements...

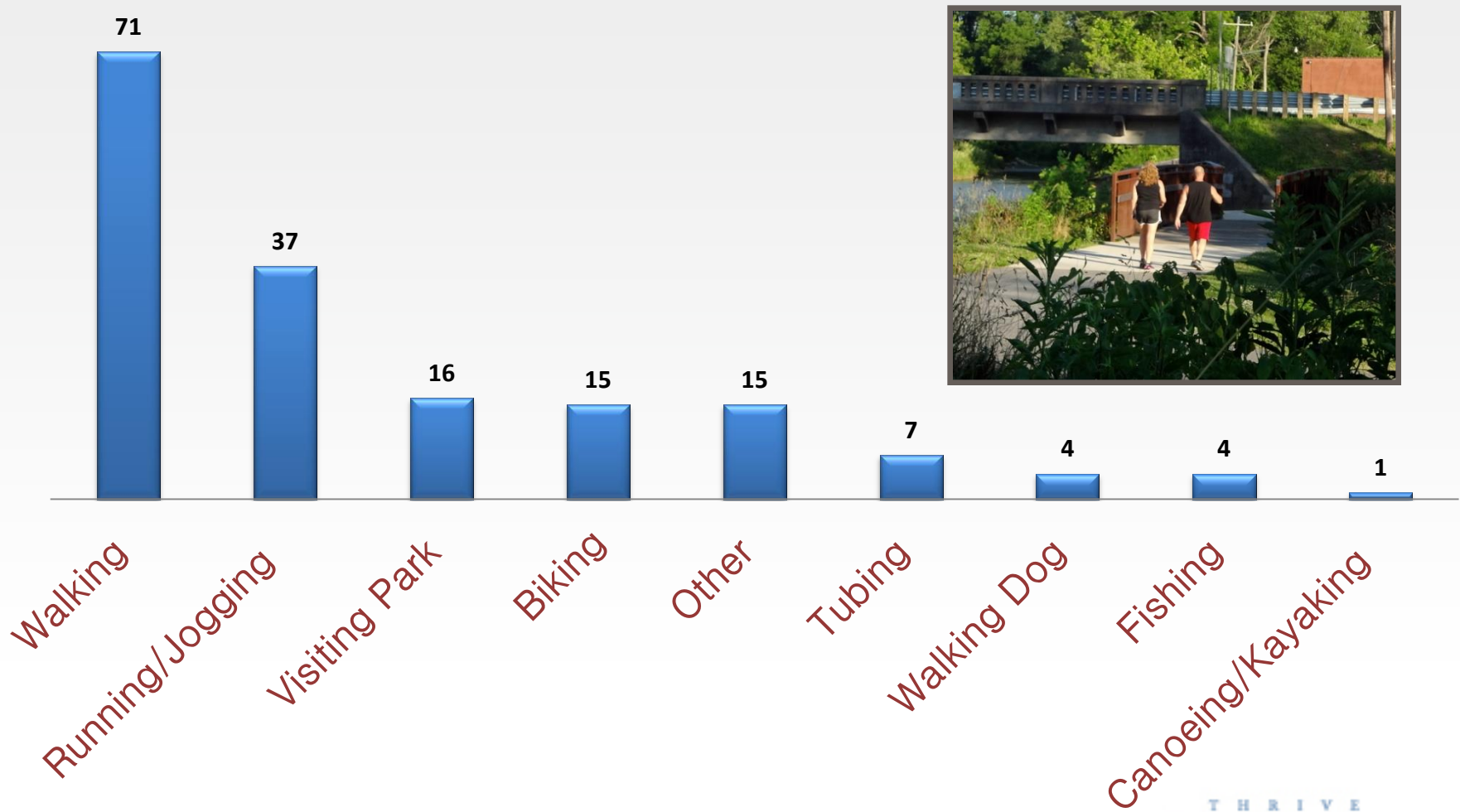
*“The Greenway is important to me”*

*“The Greenway is easy to find”*

*“The Greenway improves our Quality of Life”*



# How the Greenways are Being Utilized



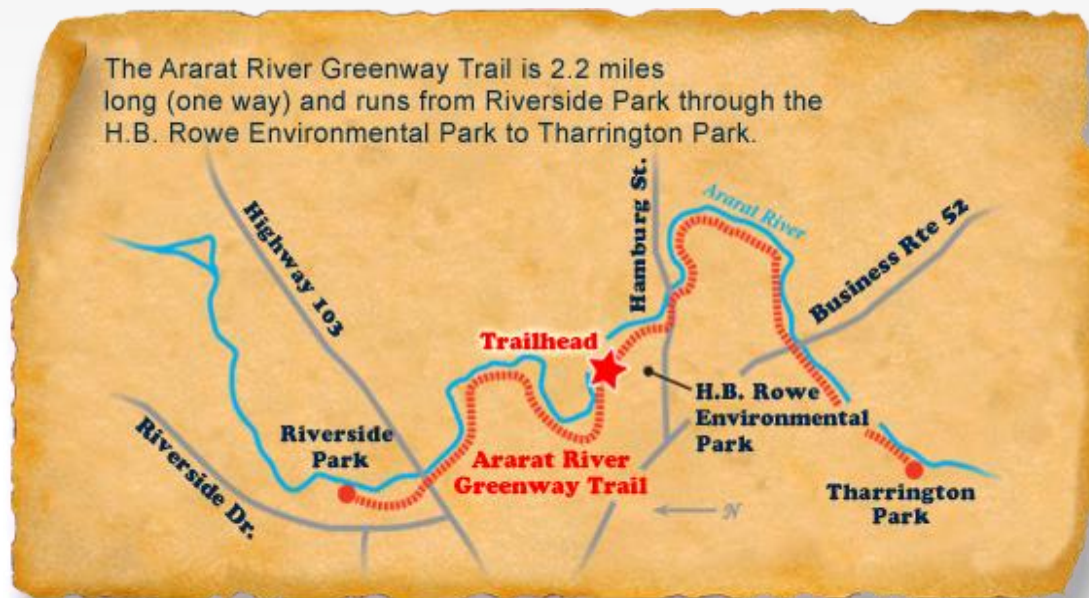
# Greenway Attributes

When asked “should the Greenway be longer?”

64% agreed

When asked “should the City’s Greenways be connected?”

89% agreed





**KEY FINDINGS:** 76.8% surveyed stated that the Greenways influenced their decision to visit downtown businesses, that same day.

<b>Business Type</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>	<b>% of residents</b>	<b>% of visitors</b>
Restaurant	59%	54%	69%
Gas Stations	37%	38%	33%
Convenience Store	34%	38%	26%
Specialty Shops	27%	25%	33%
Banking	22%	26%	12%
Outfitters	19%	12%	33%
Winery	17%	17%	19%

# Key Economic Impact Findings

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- Approximately 7,274 travel parties uses the greenway system annually
- The average travel party of 3.25 people (non-Surry residents) spends \$111.88
- Resulting in an estimated economic impact of \$578,585.09

# Strategic Planning: Example The Town of Lillington

Local stakeholder interviews and a community survey was conducted to get public input on key community issues.

Based on the results, greenways emerged as one of the most important issues.

Commerce Community Planners are working with the Town's Steering Committee to identify strategies that will address the key issues, including developing a regional greenway system, as part of the town's long range plan.

# Stakeholder Interview Findings

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## PLACE MAKING

- Need local gathering space – “public areas, a town common, concerts”.
- “Need a place to bring people together”.
- Need “outdoor public places create a sense of community.”

With...

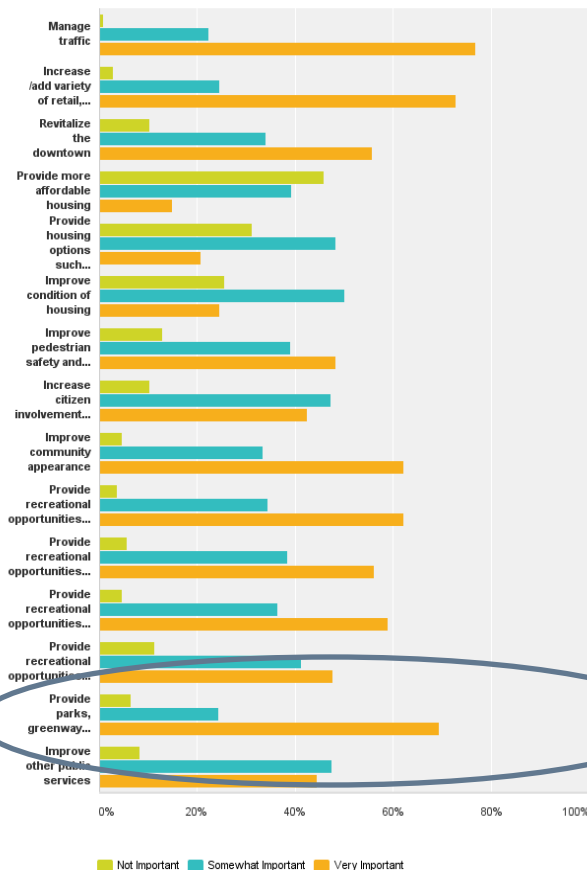
- ✓ Green spaces and parks
- ✓ River walk
- ✓ Public park on the riverfront with water features – a riverfront trail
- ✓ Greenway to connect downtown to the river via 10th Street
- ✓ Connect Raven Rock State Park to downtown, with a rail trail



# Town of Lillington: Community Survey

Q7 How important are the following actions to improving the future of Lillington?

Answered: 108 Skipped: 1



✓ Improving their communities appearance and having recreational areas like parks and greenways, ranked as very important.

✓ Providing recreational opportunities for their:

- Children & Families
- General Population & Adults
- Teens & Youth
- Senior Citizens

# Connecting to Main Street

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The Office Urban Development serves as the state's leading resource in downtown revitalization – promoting downtown revitalization within the context of historic preservation.

N.C. Main Street

Small Town Main Street

Main Street Solutions Fund

# Main Street Office: Technical Assistance

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Organization: Helping communities build partnerships to create a consistent revitalization program and develop effective downtown management and leadership.

Promotion: Helping communities reestablish downtown as a compelling place for shoppers, investors and visitors. This means not only improving sales, but also rekindling community excitement and involvement.

Design: Helping communities enhance the visual quality of their downtown.

Economic Restructuring: Helping communities strengthen their existing economic assets of the business district, while diversifying their economic base.



# Creative MainStreet Streetscapes

Our Main Street Communities are finding creative ways to encourage walking and promote downtown foot traffic.



Concord's Iguana Walking Trail Markers

Lexington's *Start Your Heart Trail*



# Downtown: Connecting to Greenways & Trails

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Concord's Downtown Connector was designated by the Carolina Thread Trail as a Thread Trail segment – connecting it's Main Street to the community's greenway.



# Healthy Community Design...

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*"Greenway, pedestrian paths, bicycle lanes, and sidewalks are identified as priority assets within the Livable Community Master Plan. All of these projects enhance the quality of life in the downtown area, provide an avenue for healthy living, and with the addition of the open space, provide wildlife a sanctuary. Also in this project are exercise stations geared toward the active senior population"*

Mark Kincaid, Concord Parks and Recreation

**Success:** When we have created and maintained thriving, engaged, and well-designed communities that are attractive to everyone!



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in NORTH CAROLINA™

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For more info:

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