



Riverwalk Planning & Funding

Mountains to the Sea Trail
Trail Town conference
September 4, 2014

Where did we begin?

- Early 1990s
 - New statewide watershed protection requirements
 - Clean Water Management Trust Fund & Upper Neuse River Basin Association
 - Funding & support for land conservation at high level
- First Master Parks and Recreation Plan – 1993
 - Focus was on River Park
 - Idea for greenway grew from connecting the dots



Connect the dots

- Three points of interest – Occoneechee Mountain, planned Gold Park, planned River Park
- No simple road connection existed between 3 potentially important recreation resources, but they were all on the river
- A greenway could connect them

How does an idea become a plan?

- West Fork Reservoir permits needed mitigation –this got us started without meaning to
 - Grant from Clean Water Management Trust Fund to acquire buffers met with resistance and was ultimately unsuccessful
 - Program allowed us to use the funds to create Trail Feasibility Study – 2001
 - Public component of that process raised awareness and public support
 - Long-term residents reminded everyone that this path was historically used, which added to support and viability
- Knew we needed additional funding to go further and began researching options

What can it grow into?



Phase 3

- Mountains to Sea -2006
 - Statewide route designation and increased visibility increased local interest
- By 2009, the local support was overwhelming
- Significant interest in pushing farther east to connect to Classical American Homes system
 - Poets Walk
 - Speedway Trail - 2003
- Property owners east of downtown interested in selling
- Town initially borrowed ample funds for Phase 2
- Through careful construction methods, able to save enough on Phase 2 to fund Phase 3.

Where is the money?

- Parks and Recreation Trust Fund
 - Gold Park design & construction (2006 & 2007)
 - Easy start as we owned the property
 - Scored well as first major park facility
 - Land Acquisition Phase 2 (2009)
 - Had willing owners but needed funding
 - Construction Phase 2 (2012)
 - At this point the project had so much support, it couldn't be stopped
- Recreational Trail Program
 - Low boardwalk portion
 - Filled critical gap we couldn't get under contract by PARTF deadline

Other sources of money

- Upper Neuse Clean Water Initiative – used to help acquire property
- SunTrust Foundation – used to help fund informational signs
- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality – used to build short greenway section and connecting sidewalks
- Other NCDOT sources – bike and pedestrian funding, direct attributable funds provided to the MPO
- Local partners – trusts, preservation or tourism organizations

Lessons Learned

- Research funding sources and programs
 - Understand funding priorities
 - Learn how to score well with program criteria
- Easements versus ownership
 - Difficult to add public access to existing easements
 - Property owners are leery of remaining liability with easements
- Quality takes time – Slower is Faster
 - A quality project builds public support and saves money in the long run

Local decisions that helped

- General commitment to the project over any specific route or component part
 - Path changed dramatically during planning years
- Specific choice to negotiate with owners rather than pursue eminent domain
 - Definitely impacted overall cost, but positively impacted public support
- Identified list of benefits and tailored the message to different groups

Be flexible

- The route changed three times from the Feasibility Study to final design
- “Path of least resistance” – minimizing owners & maximizing use of town property – would have actually been difficult and costly
- A major property owner changed their mind & brought another owner along
- Thought we’d save money by removing a bridge, but we put it back in because it just made sense

Strokes of Luck

- Increasing sophistication of elected board members
 - Could see the benefits of the trail beyond happy constituents
- Support of management
 - New manager's arrival in 1997 consistently supported the project
- Significant grant funding available
- Significant public support and willing sellers
 - Real activity started around 2001 which was coincident with renaissance of downtown and increased arts activity
 - Significant overlap between populations interested in downtowns and greenways

Who will you be working with?

- Public Utilities

- Electric companies do not allow parallel trails under overhead lines
- Vegetation maintenance
- COMMUNICATE

- Town departments – water, sewer, streets

- Using sewer easements can lower construction costs and ease permitting
- Do not assume adding public access to existing easements is easy
- Recognize they have different missions and may not welcome your presence
- COMMUNICATE

- State Environmental Agencies

- NCDENR- Land Quality/ Water Quality
- FEMA
- Interests can be different and in conflict – COMMUNICATE!

And maybe with...

- Railroad

- Do not attempt parallel trails or at grade crossings
- Allow LOTS of time
- Avoid operating corridor if at all possible
- COMMUNICATE

- NCDOT

- Be mindful of program guidelines that are still evolving
- Transportation focus – bridges for vehicles & 10' wide pavement
- Don't skip this funding source, but research the strings
- CMAQ program becoming more flexible & attractive
- COMMUNICATE

Don't forget the amenities

- Wayfinding
 - Finding trailheads
 - Orienting to where they are on the trail & in the world
- User comfort
 - Benches, trash cans, pet waste
- Safety
 - Patrol, involve your police department
- Accessibility isn't just for the handicapped
 - Strollers, learning to bike, skating
- Information & education
 - Don't miss an opportunity



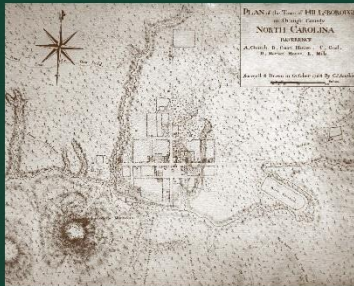
THE RIVER AND THE RACETRACK



People enjoyed areas like this swimming hole as a place to cool off during the hot summer months.



Dark Walk, located on the south side of the Eno River, was a popular trail for Sunday afternoon family outings in the 1800s.



The Sauthier map from 1768 shows Hillsborough as it was laid out by William Chertin in 1754 and includes Oconeechee Mountain and the Race Ground. This one-half-mile race track was developed for horse racing, a common colonial pastime.

The Eno River has long been a destination for recreational activities, including swimming, fishing, walking and paddling. Swimming holes were popular places to swim and cool off from earliest times to around 1950. In the 1920s and 1930s, local children on summer vacation would sit on the banks and wait for the dye from the textile mills to wash downstream before getting in the water. Pollution of the river by local industry hampered recreational use of the waterway for a time, but efforts to improve water quality have restored this resource for public use and recreation.

Many hiking paths exist along the Eno in the Hillsborough area and Eno River State Park. Although the Eno River is not known as a navigable river, people still canoe and kayak, which often involves carrying boats over rocks, shoals and beaver dams.

Hillsborough's Riverwalk is the primary corridor of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail through Orange County. The Mountains-to-Sea Trail, an effort to link Clingman's Dome in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park to Jockey's Ridge State

RECREATION



Couple enjoying a canoe ride on the Eno, 1917.

Park on the Outer Banks, is the flagship project of the North Carolina State Trails Program. Partners across North Carolina are helping to plan and build the trail to link communities together and to serve as the backbone of a growing system of trails. When completed, the route will pass through 37 counties containing about 40 percent of the state's population.

FAIRGROUND

Orange County's first agricultural 'fair' was established in 1854. The first official fairground was located about a quarter mile southwest of here in 1856. The North Carolina Railroad Company offered free transportation of livestock in support of the fair exhibition.



Kayaker floating down the Eno near Gold Park Bridge.

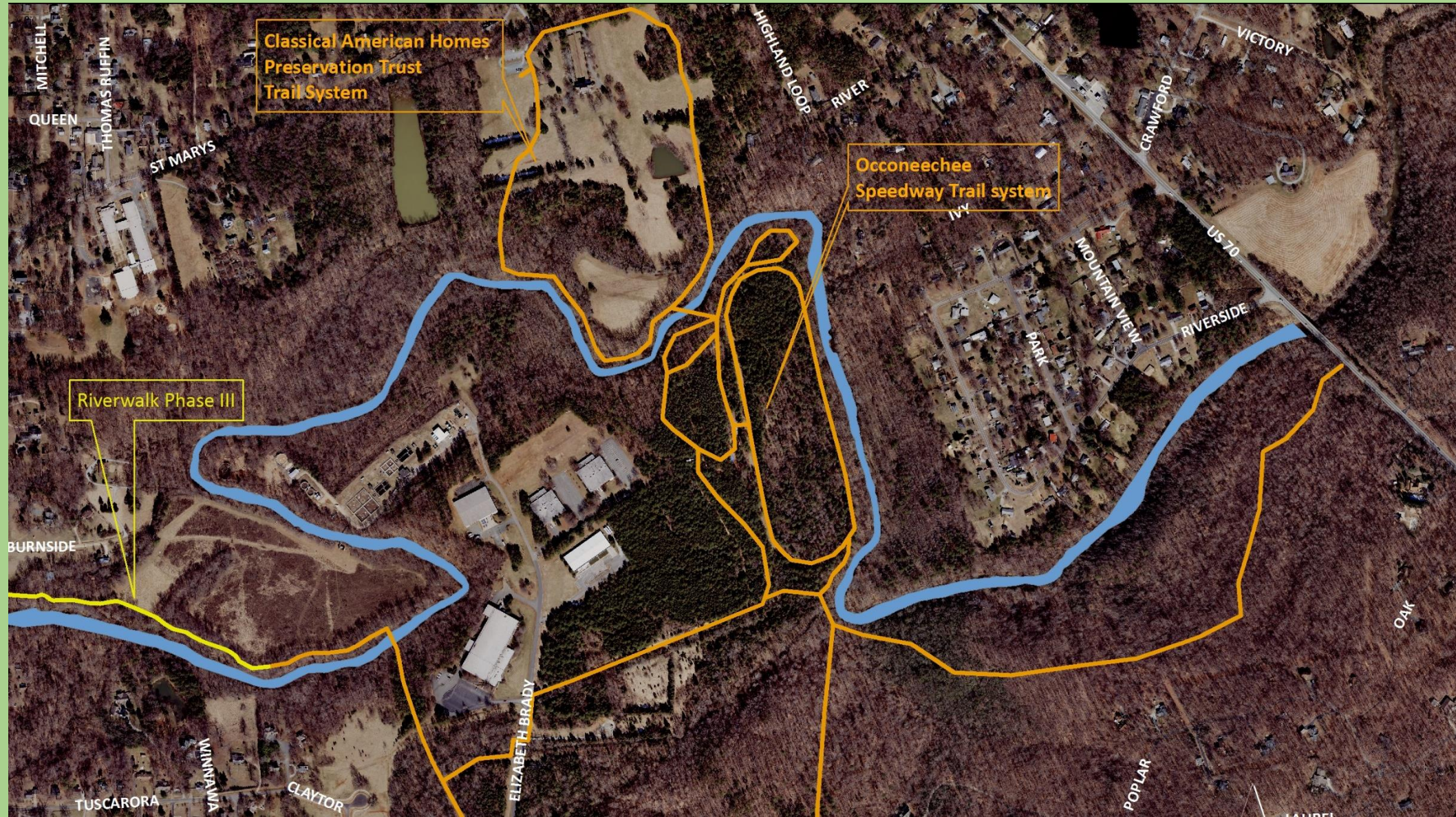


Faribault Landing was used by community children for fishing and swimming. In the mid-1950s, minnows caught from the Eno River were sold for 6 cents a dozen.

Did you
know in cold
winters the Eno River
froze and people
could ice skate
across the river?

RIVERWALK

Where will we go from here?



Let's get out there!

