

REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION

**HENDERSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

MEETING DATE: November 2, 2015

SUBJECT: Oklawaha Greenway Proposed Extension Presentation

PRESENTER: Joe Sanders, President Blue Ridge Bicycle Club

ATTACHMENTS: Yes

1. PowerPoint Presentation
2. Hendersonville Greenway Count
3. Heritage Areas

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

Joe Sanders, President of the Blue Ridge Bicycle Club, will present information to the Board on a proposal to extend the Oklawaha Greenway.

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:

No specific Board Action requested.

Suggested Motion(s):

No motion suggested.

Oklawaha Greenway

A PROPOSED EXTENSION

Joe Sanders
President, Blue Ridge Bicycle Club

Study Participants

- Jan Partin – Village of Flat Rock
- Rebekah Robinson – Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy
- Katie Breckheimer – served on ECO's Green Infrastructure Committee
- Tim Sexton – Hendersonville Water and Sewer Department
- Joe Sanders – Blue Ridge Bicycle Club

Agenda

- Oklawaha Greenway
- Why extend the greenway?
 - Transportation issues
 - Economic issues
 - Health issue
- High level overview of the proposed route
- County-wide Connectivity
- Conclusions and recommendations

Oklawaha Greenway

- Part of the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area (National Park Service)
- 1598 users at Patton Park terminus between June 23 – June 30, 2015.
- Currently 1.9 miles in length.
- Phase 3 extends the Greenway 1.7 miles to Berkeley Mills Park.

Transportation Issues

- Commute Times of less than 15 minutes :
 - Hendersonville – 47.1% of the population
 - Henderson County – 29.5% of the population (Source: US Census and the 2008 - 2012 American Community Survey)
- Typical length of car trips:
 - 33% are less than 1 mile.
 - 44% of all trips are less than 3 miles.

Transportation Issues

- Top unmet needs in Henderson County, 2011
(United Way 2-1-1)
 - #4 – Transportation Expense
 - #5 – Auto Repair
 - #9 – Auto Insurance
 - #10 – Automobiles
- Transportation issues are the #1 reason for student attrition at Blue Ridge Community College.

Economic Issues

- Percent of the population living below the poverty level:
 - Hendersonville – 24%
 - Henderson County - 13.9%

(Source: 2008 – 2012 American Community Survey)

Economic Issues

- The average annual cost to own and operate a vehicle = \$8,698.
 - Based upon 15,000 miles driven annually.
 - Examines the cost of fuel, maintenance, tires, insurance, license and registration fees, taxes, depreciation and finance charges.
 - In the United States: 58 cents/mile, ~\$725/month.

(Source: AAA's 2015 "Your Driving Costs" study)

Health Issues

- Henderson County Community Health Assessment – 2012
 - Obesity is the #1 health issue in Henderson County.
 - “Activity/Recreation Options” was cited as one of the Top Three Neighborhood/Community Issues.
 - Most Need of Improvement – “Regular physical activity”
 - Physical activity improves health and quality of life for all ages.

Section 1: Jackson Park to New Hope Road

- Length: ~1970 feet
- Terrain: Flat, easily accessible by all.
- Further Study:
 - Estimated that 300 - 500 feet appear to be perpetually wet and impassable.
 - Stream crossing at 900 feet from the entry point.
- Trail Ready:
 - Estimated that 1400 - 1700 are usable with minimal grading and a suitable surface.



Wet area near entry point below Mtn. Community School



Stream crossing ~900 feet from entry point.



View from New Hope Rd toward Jackson Park; 1400 – 1700 feet.

Section 2 – New Hope Road to Airport Road

- Length: ~3450 feet
- Terrain: Flat, easily accessible by all.
- Further Study:
 - Parallel to and ~280 feet from the the airport runway. Currently no provisions to restrict pedestrian, bicycle, or vehicular traffic from this area.
- Trail Ready:
 - Entire section is usable with minimal grading and a suitable surface.
 - Not on NCDOT Aviation Division system; no regulations on proximity to the airport.



Parallel and close to the airport runway.



Close proximity to hangars.

Section 3 – Airport Road to Blue Ridge Comm. College

- Length: ~2750 feet
- Terrain: Flat, easily accessible by all.
- Further Study:
 - Part of this section appears to be continually wet.
 - Stream crossing 450 feet from College Drive.
- Trail Ready:
 - First 600 feet are usable with minimal grading and a suitable surface.
 - Two ponds that offer excellent destination points.



Wet section along power line ROW.



600 feet of trail ready section.



~1 acre pond.

County-wide Connectivity

- Flat Rock and Laurel Park applying for NCDOT Bike/Ped grant.
- Casual requests for assistance for Mills River and Fletcher for 2016 NCDOT Bike/Ped grant cycle.
- Hendersonville received a \$50,000 NCDOT grant to develop a comprehensive bicycle plan.
 - Connect neighborhoods to the Greenway.
 - Connect Bruce Drysdale, Hendersonville High, Middle and Elementary Schools to the Greenway via bike lanes/Blvd.

County-wide Connectivity



Recommendations

- Proceed with the project and utilize community [crowd] funding as much as possible.
- Consider future phases of extending the greenway;
 - 2716 feet along existing sewer easements to East Henderson High School could provide an alternate transportation method for students to pursue early college credits at Blue Ridge Community College.
 - Link the greenway to the Flat Rock Park and eventually to the Carl Sandburg Home and Flat Rock Playhouse.

Funding

- French Broad River MPO – Bike/Ped Projects, 2016 – 2025 Horizon:
 - Project: Oklawaha Greenway Extension to BRCC
 - Description: Construct greenway along existing sewer easement from terminus of existing Oklawaha Greenway in Jackson Park to Blue Ridge Community College.
 - Amount Programmed: \$1,895,000

Conclusions

- Greenways and Trails such as the Swamp Rabbit and the Virginia Creeper Trails have proven to be of an economic and health benefit to their respective communities.
- Trails are naturally inviting to citizens and can provide fun ways to become more physically active.
- Physical activity can lower County healthcare costs and offer a better quality of life for its citizens.
- A well connected bike/ped network can reduce or eliminate the need for a car.



Hendersonville Greenway Count

Time Period: Tuesday, June 23, 2015 12:00 A.M. – Tuesday, June 30, 2015 12:00 A.M.

Location: Oklawaha Greenway, in Patton Park, approximately 30 feet from the intersection with North Main Street.



(Image: Google Maps)

Equipment: EcoCounter Pyro Counter

The Pyro Counter is able to count bicyclists, pedestrians, skateboarders, rollerbladers, or anyone who passes within approximately 16.5 feet of the equipment. However, the device is unable to differentiate between the different users and simply counts them as general users.

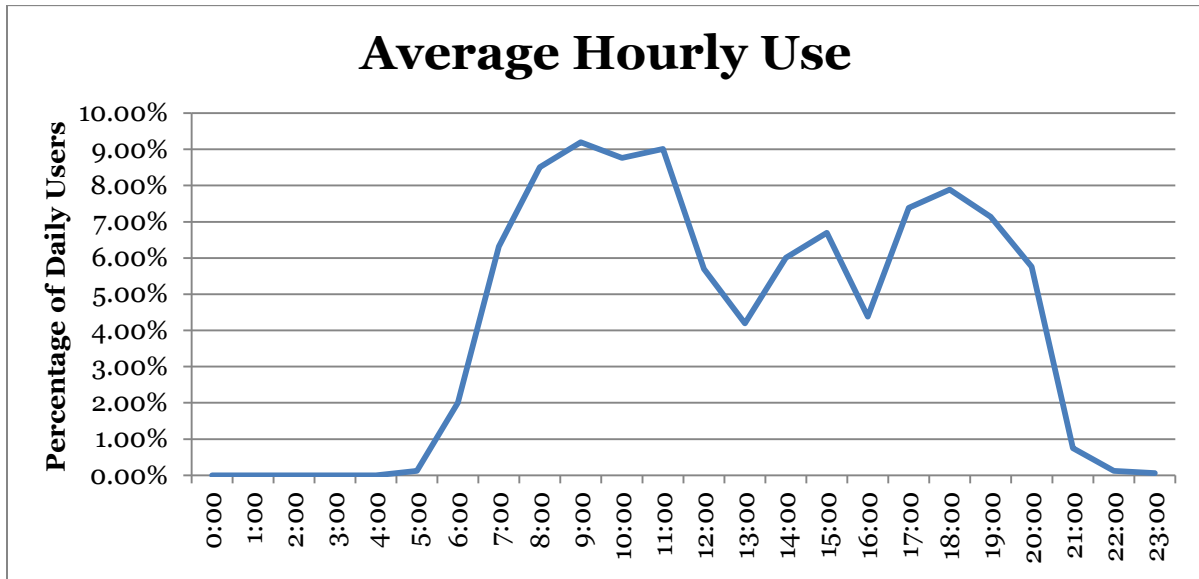
Possible sources of error include facility-users walking side-by-side or very close to each other; this is likely to include people walking or running side-by-side, children being held by a parent or walking along side of them, or dense groups of users. It is unclear how many users are likely to have been missed due to these circumstances and there has been no effort to make up for this likely discrepancy.

Results

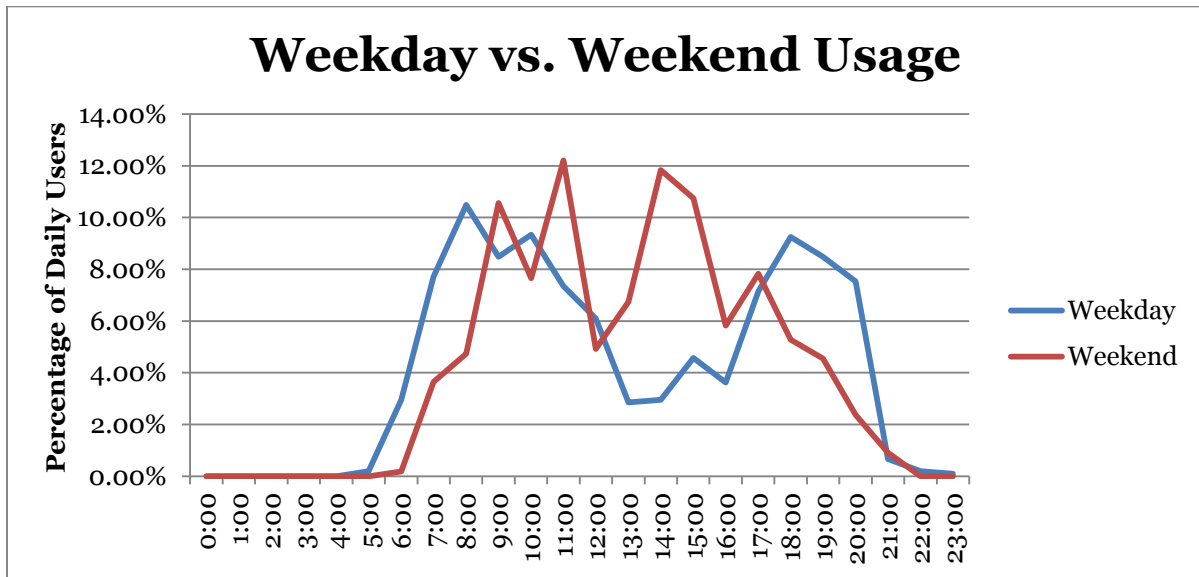
Total Users	1,598
Users/Hour	9.5
Peak 24-Hour Usage	398
Peak Day	Sunday, June 28th
Peak 2-Hour Period	104
Peak 2-Hour Day & Time	2:00 – 4:00 P.M. Sunday, June 28th

Patterns of Use

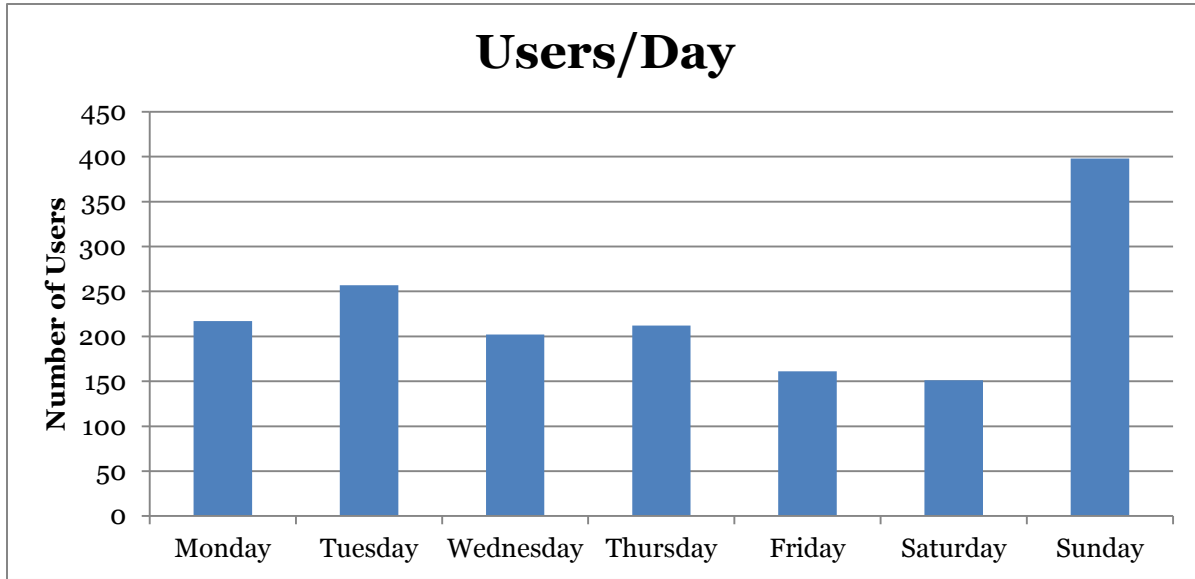
The following chart illustrates the average use of the sidewalk at the count location. This includes both weekday and weekend data and has greater weekday representation.



The second chart illustrates the different pattern of usage between the weekday and weekend.



The third chart shows users/day.





Blue Ridge National Heritage Area PRIORITY INITIATIVE WORKSHEET

Initiative Title:	Greenway System to Connect Henderson, Buncombe, and Transylvania Counties
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Project Narrative:	<p>The heritage of our region is strongly tied to the outdoors and the natural landscape of the mountains. Farming, hunting, fishing, logging, hiking, wildcrafting, gardening, boating, and many more elements of the local lifestyle are dependent on the natural environment. Because of this area's natural amenities, which draw tourists, businesses, and residents to the area, a greenway connecting our parks, schools and natural amenities is needed.</p> <p>Apple Country Greenway Commission</p> <p>About five years ago the Apple Country Greenway Commission held public meetings and created a conceptual plan for more than 100 miles of possible trails in the county. The first phase of the Oklawaha Greenway officially opened in 2004, offering cyclists and runners a paved trail between Jackson Park and Seventh Avenue.</p> <p>The master plan, which included the recently completed Oklawaha Trail, located in Jackson Park. This 12-foot-wide, three-fourths of a mile long trail cost about \$250,000, with about \$174,000 coming from state and federal grants, the rest from the City of Hendersonville.</p> <p>The commission hopes to add another two phases to the Greenway. Phase two would extend the Greenway from Seventh Avenue to Patton Park, and the third phase would complete the Greenway with a section from Main Street to Jackson Park. The Apple Country Greenway Commission is currently seeking funding for the remaining two phases of the Oklawaha Greenway</p> <p>The Henderson County Strategic Plan, approved February, 2005, contained a strategic goal to "Form a community and regional greenway network." This initiative is the logical next step in fulfilling this strategy.</p> <p>Greenway to Connect DuPont State Forest to Henderson, Buncombe, and Transylvania Counties</p> <p>The centerpiece for this initiative -- DuPont State Forest, a 10,000-acre forest on the Henderson/Transylvania County line -- has miles of trails for equestrian, mountain biking, and hiking enthusiasts. It is the most visited forest in the state, with 106,000 visitors in 2004. Its waterfalls, lakes, woodlands, clear streams, abundant flora and fauna, wetlands, and natural wonders attract visitors from around the country, the region, and the local area. Near to DuPont are Pisgah National Forest, Bent Creek</p>
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	<p>Experimental Forest, Holmes State Educational Forest, the NC Arboretum, Biltmore Estate, and the river park in downtown Asheville.</p> <p>A greenway connecting these and the tourist destinations of Hendersonville, Brevard, and Asheville will prove a boon to the economies of all communities and enhance the quality of life for residents. The greenway will connect communities, cities, towns, and countryside and provide opportunities for bicycling, hiking/walking, jogging, and a chance to visit cultural amenities, educational sites, and scenes of beauty along the way. It highlights the variety of natural amenities, farms, and villages in the area, and encourages healthful activity in the region. Future possibilities for new attractions, businesses, and events (such as bicycle tours, marathons, triathlons, and other sport and outdoor opportunities) abound. Greenways and parks already exist along the proposed route and can be used as connectors.</p>
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Goal:	To construct a greenway system through three counties -- Henderson, Transylvania, and Buncombe Counties -- to highlight the region's natural amenities, increase tourism, enhance quality of life for residents, and improve the economy,
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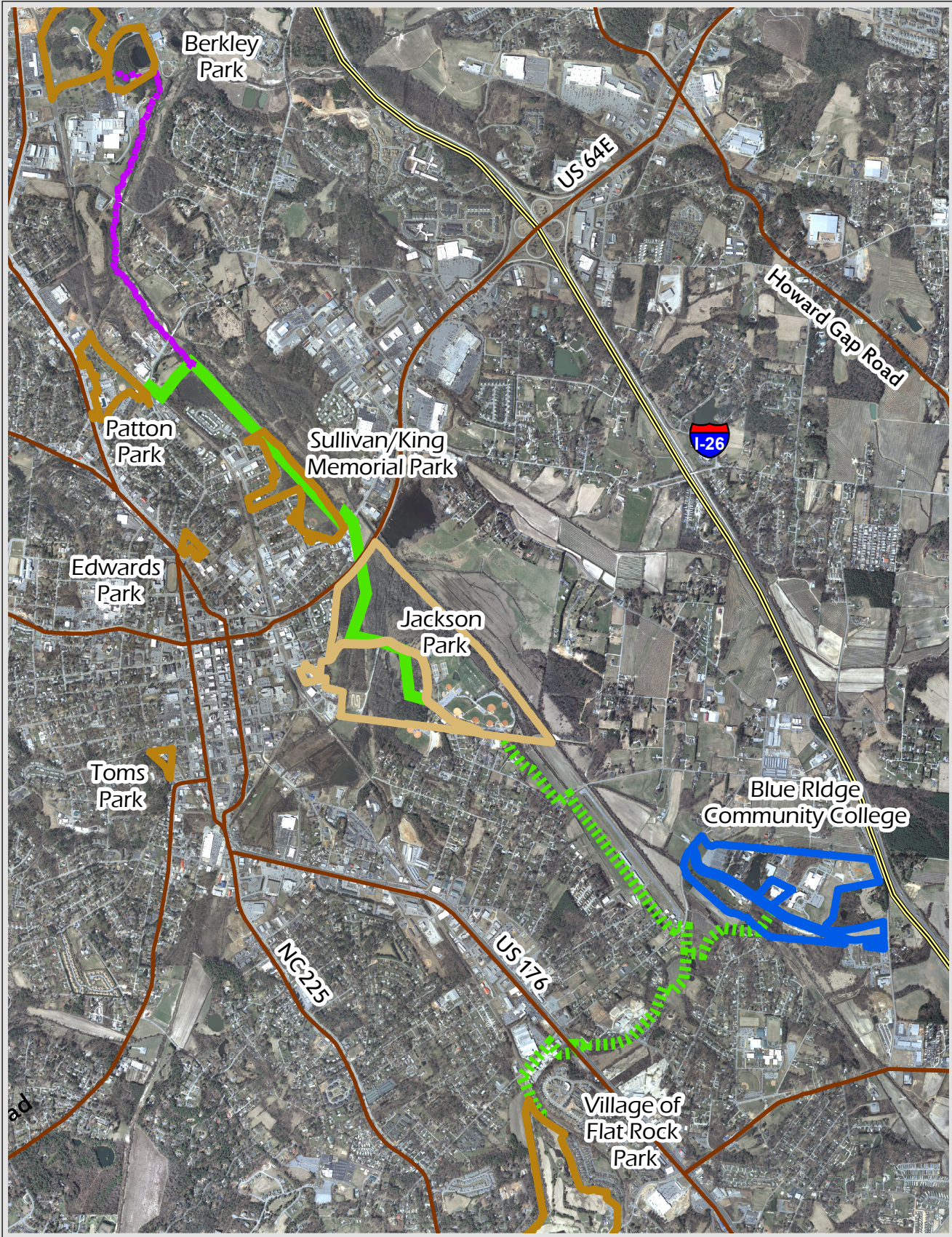
Person/Organization Responsible:	Cost to Implement:	Estimated Time to Complete:
Henderson County Greenway Commission; Transylvania County Greenway Commission; Riverlink	<p>Est. \$20,219,760 to construct a 45 mile-long asphalt greenway that is 12' wide. This includes est. cost for drainage, signage, bridges, and possible land acquisition</p> <p>Cost Breakdown by County</p> <p>Henderson County - \$4,942,608 Transylvania County - \$6,919,651 Buncombe County - \$8,357,500</p>	2015

Action Items:	Resources Required:	Who's Responsible:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify route(s) of greenways - Fundraising - Prepare preliminary master plan - Plan annual events to build support 		Greenway Commissions, Riverlink, and local governments

Performance Measures:	Master plan approved by each government entity;
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	finances made available; greenways built in each county/community
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Status:	In planning stage
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Public Parks, Greenways and Potential Greenways

- Major Roads
- Greenway (under construction)
- Greenway
- City of Hendersonville Sewer Line ROW (potential greenway)
- Municipal Limits
- Blue Ridge Community College

Park Ownership

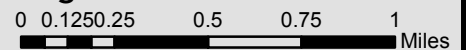
- U.S. Government
- State of North Carolina
- N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission
- Henderson County
- Municipal

DISTANCES (in miles)

2.9	- Village of Flat Rock Park to Jackson Park
0.4	- Spur off to Blue Ridge Community College
2.2	- Jackson Park to Patton Park
1.4	- Patton Park to Berkley Park



Henderson County Potential Greenway Between Patton Park, Jackson Park and Village of Flat Rock Park



This map is prepared for the inventory of real property found within this jurisdiction, and is compiled from recorded deeds, plats, and other public records and data. Users of this map are hereby notified that the aforementioned public primary information sources should be consulted for verification of the information contained on this map. The County and mapping company assume no legal responsibility for the information contained on this map.

This map was produced by Henderson County GIS, Assessor's, Land Records, Engineering & Planning Departments.