

# CATAWBA RIVER CORRIDOR PLAN:

## *introduction*

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### **1.0 The Catawba River Greenway Vision**

The Catawba River is a resource, carrying water from the Appalachian mountains, through the North Carolina Piedmont, southward into South Carolina and eventually the Atlantic Ocean. It provides drinking water, electricity, fish, recreation, and natural beauty. While much of the river has been impounded through a series of reservoirs and developed along its shorelines, sections of the Catawba River through Mount Holly remain relatively untouched. Protecting and utilizing this resource will benefit future generations. Connecting people to this beautiful resource will provide multiple benefits to the community and the river itself. A multi-functional greenway can serve as the connecting element.

A mixture of natural habitat, residential development, industrial development, and clean water management lands can be found along this 8-mile stretch of the Catawba River. Topography has governed land use and development and provided a variety of habitats including upland slope forests and bottomland wetlands. One can walk through large tracts of forest and find signs of wildlife at every turn. Residential development, mostly in the southern part of this study area, has brought people to the river's edge to enjoy its scenery. While some industrial development has impacted the natural environment, many pristine areas still remain throughout the corridor.

A greenway along the Catawba River will traverse the current land uses of today, connect people to

their past, provide recreational and alternative transportation options, and protect the remainder of relatively untouched places. A greenway will provide a safe haven for migratory birds, a scenic view for a young couple, economic value for the community, a long run for an athlete-in-training, a picnic site for a family, and a world-class trail for Mount Holly. It will evolve in its form along the entire length as a paved path near Downtown, as a natural path in the forested areas, and as a widened sidewalk in single family residential areas. Informational, directional, and educational signage will guide people along its course, leading them to the YMCA, Downtown businesses, historic sites, parks, water accesses, and the river woods. (graphic of enhanced sidewalk with visitors)

### **1.1 Project Goals**

Recognizing the Catawba River as a special resource and an opportunity, the Mount Holly Community Development Foundation and the City of Mount Holly hired Greenways Incorporated to develop a Greenway Master Plan for the Catawba River Corridor. During this same time period, Greenways Incorporated also developed the Mount Holly Greenprint Plan, which is mutually inclusive and beneficial to this planning effort. With goals of land protection, sustainability, economic development, and recreation, both Plans are guiding documents for the City of Mount Holly through the coming years.

Specific goals developed by the Mount Holly Community Development Foundation and FROGS (Mount Holly Friends of the Greenways) at the start of this process were:

- *Provide for a balanced multi-use trail to accommodate all potential users*
- *Provide for access nodes utilizing parks and other resources of Mount Holly*
- *Define benefits of the greenway to adjacent property owners*
- *Provide an analysis of the best surface material for use on the trail*
- *Provide a funding program for building and managing the trail*
- *Describe upgrades to parks that are needed to accommodate trail use*
- *Describe public-private partnerships that will make the trail successful*
- *Stimulate economic development for Mount Holly*

## 1.1 Scope

In order to accomplish these goals, Greenways Incorporated met with the Mount Holly Community Development Corporation and the City of Mount Holly to discuss these goals, the scope of work, planning process, and final products. The City provided Greenways Incorporated with all pertinent planning, environmental, and land use materials to analyze along with a comprehensive set of GIS data. Utilizing GIS and GPS mapping, significant fieldwork along the entire 8-mile corridor was conducted to determine best routing, access points, destination points, and trail surface material. Greenways Incorporated mapped both opportunities and constraints and



*The consultant team meets with City of Mount Holly staff to discuss issues of the greenway corridor.*

noted potential linkages into the community. Public meetings were held to ensure citizen participation and guidance throughout. A Draft Plan, containing the recommended greenway map, was reviewed by members of the Foundation and City Staff, with a Final Plan developed by Greenways Incorporated at the end of the process.

### 1.3 Outline

This document contains the following chapters:

**Chapter 1** - This Introduction that provides background project background, visions, goals, and scope of work.

**Chapter 2** - A summary of Existing Conditions, opportunities and constraints, and detailed mapping.

**Chapter 3** - The Proposed Design, with an overall **Vision Map** of the greenway, **three section** maps and descriptive text, showing the trail alignment and development opportunities along the greenway. It also shows linkages to the community and destination points.

**Chapter 4** - Implementation, that begins with action steps to implement the greenway, a phasing plan for greenway development, land acquisition recommendations, renovations to existing facilities, financing strategies, operations and management, and programming opportunities.

**Chapter 5** - Detailed Construction Cost Estimates of the nine greenway segments that provides corridor descriptions, right of way issues and other considerations in greenway development.

**Appendix A** - Summary of Public Input, which outlines public recommendations and response.

**Appendix B** - Benefits of Greenways, which focuses on the multiple greenway benefits with an in-depth look at economic improvements for adjacent property owners and the community as a whole.

**Appendix C** - A detailed Funding section, that provides the multiple federal, state, and local funding sources available for the development of the Greenway.

**Appendix D** - Detailed resources that describe securing land for greenway corridors and open space.

**Appendix E** - Design guidelines for greenway trail and facilities development.

*The consultant team meets with the Mount Holly Community Development Foundation.*



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