

THE TRUST *for* PUBLIC LAND

CONSERVING LAND FOR PEOPLE



CAROLINA THREAD TRAIL: *Greenway Planning*

In 2008, The Trust for Public Land, in partnership with the Carolina Thread Trail (CTT) organization and local governments, began developing master greenway plans to identify promising regional trails in the Carolinas. The Thread is a regional network of greenways, trails, and conserved lands that will serve approximately 2.3 million citizens in North Carolina and South Carolina. It will link people with cities, towns, and attractions across more than 500 miles. The Thread will help preserve natural areas, providing places for young and old to explore nature, culture, science, and history.

TPL's role

York County, the South Carolina state government, and Gaston Together—a local nonprofit of Gaston, North Carolina—served as the conveners for their communities' greenway planning. After developing the model process and products with the two pilot counties, TPL was

subsequently selected by steering committees to lead the planning processes in Chester County, South Carolina, and Union County, North Carolina. These counties are among 14 that will host the Thread.

Project highlights

In each county, TPL developed and executed a planning process for meaningful public participation, local buy-in, and realistic recommendations for rapid implementation. TPL worked closely with the conveners, the CTT group, and a steering committee of representatives from municipal and county governments as well as interested organizations, businesses, and individuals. This planning process incorporates state-of-the-art mapping, extensive document and data research related to existing plans, and a flexible structure and tools that respond to local needs and culture. Through a consensus process facilitated by TPL, the steering committees identified and prioritized

stretches of greenway for initial implementation based on location, land ownership, and readiness of local governments.

Results

At the conclusion of the ten-month public process, TPL produced greenway master plans for each community as well as county- and municipality-specific recommendations for how existing plans could be amended to incorporate greenway master plan maps. The reports include specific routes for inclusion in the Thread (between 80 and 100 miles in each county) and other trails to further tie people and places together.

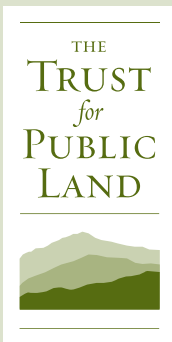
These master plans were well received, as all four counties and every affected jurisdiction (on average, about eight municipalities in each county) adopted the plans. Several miles of trails in these counties are completed or currently under construction.

“TPL played a critical role in helping Gaston County communities understand the Carolina Thread Trail and determine how we want to be a part of this tremendous project. Through mapping and facilitation, TPL helped us develop our own vision and provided us a roadmap for making it a reality.”

—David Fogarty, Gaston County director,
North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service

“With expert leadership, TPL staff has been able to accomplish something that has been talked about for 20 years: a truly regional vision.”

—Susan Britt, former director,
York County Planning and Development Services



The Trust for Public Land conserves land for people to enjoy as parks, gardens, and other natural places, ensuring livable communities for generations to come.

tpl.org

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