THE SINGING RIVER TRAIL: PLANNING FOR A REGIONAL GREENWAY

AL/MS APA CONFERENCE
OCTOBER 2019
Singing River Trail Presentation Outline

1. What is the Singing River Trail?
2. Benefits of Regional Trails
3. The Master Plan – How did we get here?
4. What’s next?
2 Benefits of Regional Trails
“...probably the single most important thing that’s happened to the city of Travelers Rest in years.”

Mayor Wayne McCall
Swamp Rabbit Trail

Swamp Rabbit Trail, Greenville, SC
Evaluating the **ECONOMIC IMPACT** of **SHARED USE PATHS** in North Carolina

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Shared use paths, also known as **GREENWAYS**, provide a shared space for bicycle and pedestrian travel outside of the roadway. This project’s objective was to design and test an approach for measuring the economic contributions of greenways in North Carolina.

The four greenways featured in this study, with estimated annual trips and study years:

- **BREVARD GREENWAY**
  - **Annual Trips**: 76K
  - **Years**: 2015, 2016, & 2017

- **LITTLE SUGAR CREEK GREENWAY**
  - **Annual Trips**: 383K
  - **Year**: 2016

- **AMERICAN TOBACCO TRAIL**
  - **Annual Trips**: 481K
  - **Years**: 2015, 2016, & 2017

- **DUCK TRAIL**
  - **Annual Trips**: 146K
  - **Year**: 2016
COMBINED STUDY RESULTS
A one-time $26.7M capital investment in the four greenways supports:

- **$19.4M** Estimated annual sales revenue at local businesses along the four greenways.
- **$684K** Estimated annual local and state sales tax revenue from businesses along the greenways.
- **$25.7M** Estimated annual savings due to more physical activity, less pollution and congestion, and fewer traffic injuries from use of the greenways.
- **$48.7M** Estimated business revenue from greenway construction.
- **790 JOBS** Are supported annually through greenway construction.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT: Every $1.00 of trail construction supports **$1.72 annually** from local business revenue, sales tax revenue, and benefits related to health and transportation.
13% increase in minority use

501,236 trail users

20% increase in overall use

- Increases in sales/revenue ranging from 10% to as high as 85%.
- 25% of users from out of town.
- 12% using for transportation.

Most popular temperature for trail use: 61-70 degrees

25% of trail users are tourists, boosting our economy by: $6.7 million

Average time users spend on the trail: 1.5 hours
Singing River Trail Master Plan – How did we get here?
How This All Started

Huntsville 100 Committee of 100

Launch 2035

Land Use Subcommittee

Singing River Trail
A Native American Heritage Trail
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nancy Robertson</td>
<td>TARCOG</td>
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<td>Joe Campbell</td>
<td>Huntsville Hospital System</td>
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<td>Marie Bostick</td>
<td>Land Trust of North Alabama</td>
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<td>Mary Beth Broeren</td>
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<td>Connie Graham</td>
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<td>Dennis Madsen</td>
<td>City of Huntsville / Huntsville MPO</td>
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<td>Carol Rhea</td>
<td>Orion Planning &amp; Design</td>
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<td>Les Tillery</td>
<td>Planning Commission Member, City of Huntsville</td>
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<td>Lauren Vandiver</td>
<td>TVA</td>
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<td>Dewayne Hellums</td>
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<td>Brandi Quick</td>
<td>Ditto Landing</td>
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<td>Sandra Buroughs</td>
<td>Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association</td>
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<td>Joe Valley</td>
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<td>Tom Cunningham</td>
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The Singing River Trail (SRT) is a world-class resource that connects the region, celebrates Native American heritage, provides educational opportunities, contributes to economic development, and enhances the quality of life for residents and visitors throughout North Alabama.
Logo Development
WHO WILL USE THE SINGING RIVER TRAIL?

THE SINGING RIVER TRAIL WILL CONNECT...?

THE SINGING RIVER TRAIL WILL BE...?
“The planned Singing River Trail is a key resource for the future of North Alabama, and will help us attract not only new customers visiting the area for the first time to enjoy it from a new perspective, but even more importantly, the active people we need to keep our creative enterprise running and growing. We fully support the development of this beautiful public resource.”

Bruce Weddendorf, Straight to Ale Brewery

“The Singing River Trail will provide a quality of life enhancement for the citizens of Limestone, Madison and Morgan Counties and, as a consequence, foster future increased growth for years to come.”

Alabama State Senator Arthur Orr

“The Singing River Trail helps accomplish the community’s desire for improved connectivity in a manner that is fun, equitable, safe and beautiful. This landmark project also hits many of the goals outlined in Huntsville’s BIG Picture Master plan to create a vibrant, sustainable and healthy community that is pedestrian and bike friendly.”

Mayor Tommy Battle, City of Huntsville

“The Singing River Trail is a wonderful way to connect our communities and explore our beautiful and diverse areas. We are excited to have the trail come through Mooresville and connect people to our neighbor-Wheeler Wildlife Refuge. This trail will be such an asset to North Alabama.”

Mayor Margaret Anne Crumlish, Town of Mooresville
"The Singing River Trail will be a great addition to the transportation system in the North Alabama Region by providing relief of traffic congestion, added health benefits and promoting tourism."

Dewayne Hellums, Director, Decatur Area MPO

"Connecting the proposed new Athens Recreation Center, the expanded Athens Sportsplex and the Swan Creek Greenway National Recreation Trail will be vital asset to assist in the growth and development of the Athens Area. The Singing River Trail will connect our downtown communities and neighborhoods to the south and east!"

Mayor William “Ronnie” Marks, City of Athens

"Once the Singing River Trails get underway, and then brought to completion, Limestone County will benefit in ways we don’t even yet understand. What we do know and understand is the increased recreational opportunities and healthy lifestyles for walkers and hikers and bicycle riders, young and old. Visitors will not only be impressed, they will come back and add dollars to our local economy, lots of them, I think. So, Limestone County will just become a more and more desirable place to live, work and play."

Rod Huffman, Athens Planning Commission
Economic and Health Impact

Estimated daily use:
- 3,000 walkers and runners
- 2,000 bicyclists

Transportation Benefits: $866,000
Health Benefits: $1,400,000
Economic Benefits: $10,890,000
Total Annual Direct Benefits: $13,156,000

410,000 non-local trail users (estimated) would use the proposed trail each year.
Off-Street Trail Navigational Elements

Pattern: Soft Curves
Materials: Stone, Wood, Painted Metal
Colour Palette Inspiration: Warm earth, blue skies, and river streams

Arrow medallions designed to be compatible with standard or custom pole mount, and for off- and on-street use, to create a continuous network for cyclists and pedestrians.

Map Kiosk
- Words of welcome printed (weather-resistant stained or charred wood effect) on side of post
- Kickstand panel to include directory and other local information

Siccles
- "I" Medallion affixed to sign face

Pedestrian Turn
- Destination One
- Destination Two
- Destination Three

Pedestrian Directional
- Destination One
- Destination Two
- Destination Three

Pedestrian Confirmation

Trail Marker (alt / small)
**Design Guidelines**

**Full Traffic Signal Crossings**

Signalled crossings provide the most protection for crossing path users through the use of a red-signal indication to stop conflicting motor vehicle traffic.

A full traffic signal installation treats the path crossing as a conventional 4-way intersection and provides standard red-yellow-green traffic signal heads for all legs of the intersection.

**Shared-Use Path at Roundabouts**

Single lane roundabouts can provide high intersection throughput and reduced delay while reducing points of conflict between people driving, walking, and riding bikes. Multilane roundabouts can offer similar benefits, but introduce more complexity to the intersection and require special design considerations. At roundabouts, it's important to provide clear right-of-way rules to all people traveling through and guidance through use of appropriately designed signage, pavement markings, and geometric design elements.

**TYPICAL APPLICATION**

Full traffic signal installations must meet MUTCD pedestrian school or modified warrants. Additional guidance for signalled crossings:

- Located more than 300 feet from an existing signalized intersection
- Roadway travel speeds of 40 MPH and above
- Roadway AADT exceeds 15,000 vehicles
Tennessee River - Decatur
4 What’s Next?

Action Steps upon Completion of Master Plan

1. **WIDE COMMUNICATION AND PRESENTATION OF MASTER PLAN**
   - to Local Governments, State government, organizations, business community, residents

2. **DESIGNATION OF LEAD AGENCY – LAUNCH 2035**

3. **OPERATIONAL FUNDING FOR 5-YEAR PERIOD TO SUPPORT FULL TIME SINGING RIVER TRAIL DIRECTOR**

4. **SEEK DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION FUNDING**

5. **HIRE EXPERT CONSULTANT TO MANAGE TRAIL PROGRAM; TEAM OF EXPERTS AND CONSULTANTS**

6. **ACQUISITION AND DESIGN (PHASE 1 PROJECT FIRST)**

Private partners – Lead gifts, Grants, Municipal/County governments, MPOs/RPOs, State/Federal government
Landowner Discussions
(Above Right) Patty Pryor escorted by Clyde Whitworth and being crowned Queen by David Breland.
Temporary Signage
Fundraising Campaign
Online Resources – singingrivertrail.com
SINGING RIVER TRAIL

Connecting the past, present, and future of North Alabama

START EXPLORING
Who’s Next in Alabama and Mississippi?
The Alabama Trail will be a 550-mile long wilderness footpath for hiking and backpacking that will stretch from Fort Morgan to the Alabama-Tennessee state line.

**Alabama Trail Map**

- Trail established
- Trail permission secured, undergoing surveying
- To be determined

**Locations**
- Little River State Forest
- Splinter Hill Bog
- Escambia County
- Conception
- Monroe County
- Baldwin County
- Mobile County
- Baldwin River Tract
- Perdido River Tract
- Lillian Swamp
- Fort Morgan Peninsula

**Sources**
- Alabama Hiking Trail Society
- Press-Register graphic
THANK YOU!

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