PROGRAMMING & PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

vision statement

Promoting community by establishing an exemplary Greenway along Little Sugar Creek connecting people and neighborhoods through culture, history, education, the environment, and recreation.

goals

Environmental

Prepare a greenway master plan that protects floodplain lands and encourages the restoration of the natural hydrologic section and biodiversity of the creek to promote improved water quality.

Recreational

Provide a continuous trail system with multiple destinations including multi-modal and regional connections that provide a safe and attractive experience, and create opportunities for social interaction.

Neighborhoods and Community Building

Where possible and desirable, provide connections from the greenway for adjoining neighborhoods and civic areas such as schools, churches, and other community facilities. Reinforce the identity of neighborhoods through greenway design by incorporating public art, recognizing local history, and creating landmark open spaces.

Economical

Encourage the greenway edge as a setting for investment. Existing and newly developing land uses- residential, commercial, and civic should benefit from adjacency to the greenway's aesthetic, recreational, and cultural benefits.

Educational

Promote the long-term involvement and participation of citizens in the planning, design, implementation, and management of the greenway. Encourage the understanding of natural systems related to the creek, the history, and cultural resources.

Implementation

Implement the greenway master plan within ten years by encouraging public / private partnerships and community participation.

Photographs taken of the public meetings during the planning process for the Little Sugar Creek Master Plan.

COMMUNITY DIRECTION

In order to determine how the greenway could best serve the needs of the residents of Mecklenburg County, project direction exercises were incorporated into several public workshops during the planning process. A list of community preferences was drawn up and ranked in order of importance. This list was used as a guiding factor in determining the particular components for each reach (See page 25 for the results).

public concerns

Greenway Safety

Concern was expressed over the possibility of increased crime along the greenway. In fact, statistics show that greenways do not bring increased crime. Members of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department attended each public meeting and explained how citizens can participate in ensuring safety along the greenway. They discussed precautions such as neighborhood watches and similar 'eyes on the greenway' programs, daylight operating hours for parks, and a lack of lighting along the greenway to discourage nighttime use except in high use and urban areas to benefit greenway users and nearby residents.

Multiple Use Trail – Trail Sharing

The greenway will be shared by walkers, wheelchair users, runners, bicyclists, and inline skaters, but will not be available for use by those on motorized vehicles or horseback. The key concern expressed by the public was the issue of safety, both with trail sharing between bicyclists and pedestrians, and with conflicts between greenway users and vehicular traffic. Suggestions to decrease multi-use conflicts included separate trails for bicycles and pedestrians, striping the path to separate users, and promoting good greenway trail etiquette.

Experience from precedent greenways shows that some of the most effective ways to increase multi-use trail safety are providing adequate mileage to make users feel less crowded, providing adequate width on multi-use trails, and publicizing proper trail etiquette.

The greenway will be approximately 15 miles long, with secondary trails and informal trails adding to the length and greenway options; and finally, proper trail etiquette will be promoted via signage. An ideal width for a multi-use trail is 14 feet. In urban areas where the use will be higher, the greenway will be 15 feet wide.

Separating and striping the trail were decided against for several reasons. Separate trails will create a larger negative impact on sensitive areas because they require more clearing and more impervious area in the floodplain; striping is visually unattractive for both an urban trail and a nature greenway.

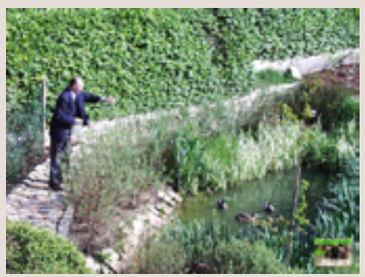
Trail Etiquette should address users passing each other, user expectations and preparedness, and reckless and irresponsible behavior. Signage will convey these rules for behavior.

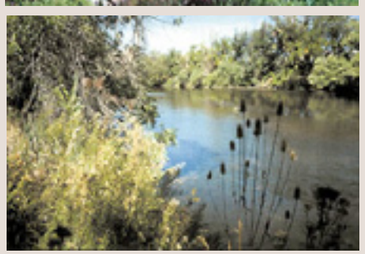
COMMUNITY BENEFITS

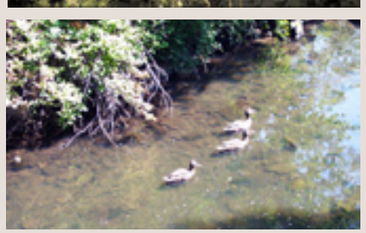
examples of how the Little Sugar Creek greenway will benefit the community were developed based on the goals for the greenway

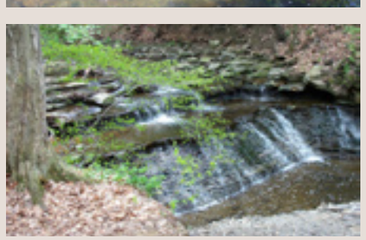
Environmental

- protection for environmentally important areas
- improved water quality
- improved wildlife and aquatic habitat
- increased plant biodiversity
- connections and resting places for migrating wildlife, reducing conflicts with humans
- natural flood control
- opportunities for environmental education
- greenways promote cooler temperatures



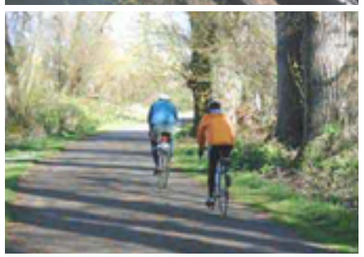


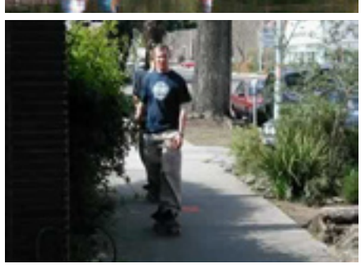




Recreation

- a variety of recreation opportunities close to home
- open spaces for field sports
- paved paths for wheel chairs, walking, running, roller blading, biking, hiking and dog walking
- nature paths for study and observation
- in turn, decreased rates obesity, diabetes, heart attacks, strokes, and cancer by increasing physical activity levels of residents (Voices & Choices)
- improvements in mental health through recreational opportunities in and along the trail network (Voices & Choices)





Community Building

Other than increased opportunities for family activities, creating connectivity between neighborhoods and attractions, the greenway will:

- create an overall community image of Charlotte as healthy and environmentally conscious
- connect 12 parks & 5 recreation centers
- connect 9 elementary schools, 2 middle schools, 1 high school, and 4 college or university campuses
- connect over 20 neighborhoods
- there are over 13,000 households and businesses within ½ mile of Little Sugar Creek
- connect Carolinas Medical Center, CPC Cedar Spring Hospital, Mercy Hospital, Central Piedmont Community College, the Nature Museum, the James K. Polk Museum and several other amenities
- connect retail and commercial areas such as Midtown, Kings Drive, Park Road Shopping Center, Carolina Pavilion, and Carolina Place Mall.

Economic

- increased livability of Charlotte
- potential to create jobs
- increased property values
- opportunity to expand and promote local businesses
- attractiveness to new or relocating businesses
- encouragement of capital gain to area
- increased local tax revenues
- opportunities for grants
- promotion of tourism
- decrease in local government expenditures
- promotion of local community
- cost recovery in three years

Estimated amount a three-mile greenbelt near the center of Oakland, California, adds to the value of surrounding properties: $41 million

Estimated value of economic activity supported by open space in New Hampshire: $8 billion

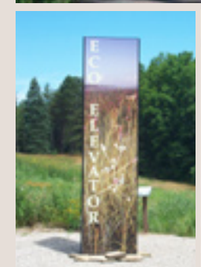
Annual reduction in water treatment costs after the city of Gastonia, North Carolina, relocated its drinking water intake to a lake without surrounding development: $250,000

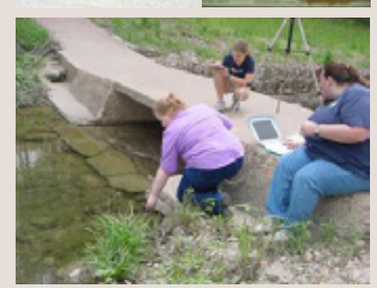
Estimated annual value of urban trees to improving the air quality of Atlanta, Georgia: $15 million

Amount generated for California's economy by people watching wildlife in 1996, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: $1.5 billion

Educational

- community involvement in research and monitoring
- demonstration and experimental displays
- interpretive and educational opportunities (ecological, historical and cultural)
- awareness of physical fitness
- increased awareness of natural processes





Access & Circulation

- transportation routes for non-motorized vehicles between work, home, school, recreation opportunities, cultural attractions, and shops
- creation of neighborhood identities while allowing linkages that promote connectivity
- alternatives to vehicle based transportation

COMMUNITY PREFERENCES

summary from first public workshop

Preferred Uses & Activities

At the first Little Sugar Creek Master Plan Public Workshop, held August 19th & 20th, 2002, attendees were given a set of images that depicted activities and elements that could be found along greenways. They helped determine the programming along the greenway by placing stickers representing various activities or elements at locations where they thought each activity would be appropriate. The public's desired uses and activities are summarized here by reach. The number of stickers placed on each reach is also listed, indicating the amount of interest the public has for that particular area.

1 cordelia park to 10th street
(15 stickers)

2 10th street to morehead street
(40 stickers)

3 morehead street to princeton avenue
(41 stickers)

4 princeton avenue to archdale drive
(67 stickers)

5 archdale drive to interstate 485
(54 stickers)

6 interstate 485 to polk street
(11 stickers)

7 polk street to NC/SC state line
(36 stickers)

PRECEDENTS

Brush Creek
Kansas City, Missouri

Brush Creek is an example of an urban greenway that addresses flooding issues, recreation, and economic development.

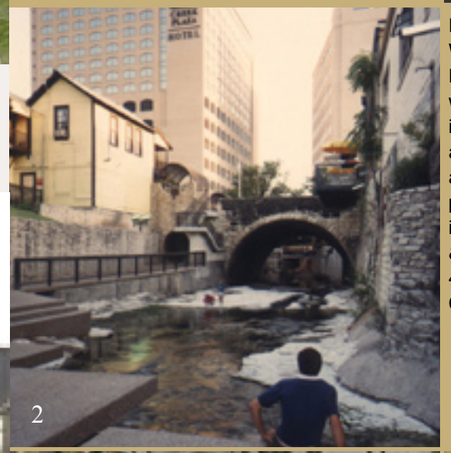
- Similar to Little Sugar Creek, Brush Creek is normally a low flow (3 cfs) creek, draining a 29-square mile watershed through an urbanized area.
- Heavy floods in 1977 stimulated plans for the greenway.
- Goals to address flooding, recreational needs, and economic development
- Plans include walks lining the banks of the creek, pools and fountains, and landscaping to soften the edges and provide erosion control.
- Improvements extend through diverse areas including the modest Troost neighborhoods as well as the fashionable Plaza shopping district.
- A key to the success of the project is the partnership of agencies, organizations, individuals, and neighborhoods.

Like Little Sugar Creek, Brush Creek experiences huge fluctuations in flow during storm events.Photos: 1,3 and 4- Aids Walk Kansas City; 2 and 5- Brush Creek Community Partners; 6- By M.J. Harden Associates, Inc.

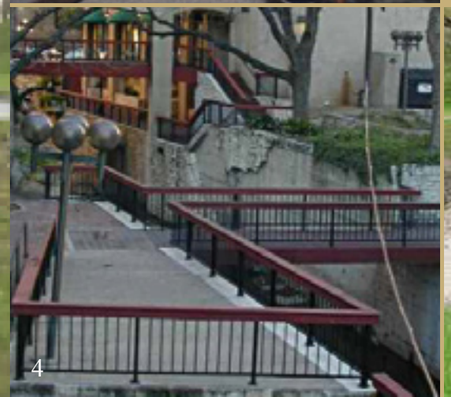
Waller & Shoal Creek
Austin, Texas

Waller and Shoal Creek are examples of an urban and suburban greenway. Both exhibit similar characteristics to Little Sugar Creek. These similarities include

- Constant state of flooding
- Erosion of creek banks
- Division along demographic and economic lines
- Creeks are set in urban/suburban environment
- Greenway connects downtown Austin with schools, recreational centers, churches, and parks
- Greenway goal is to restore life to downtown Austin and promote economic growth in the city and surrounding areas
- Creek width is 25-30 feet across at widest point
- Creeks have been channelized but both are undergoing bioengineering and other flood control methods
- Water quality is moderate due to urban setting



Photos: 1 and 2- Waller Creek Urban Development Plan was an effort to increase recreation and pedestrian access to stimulate private development in Austin, Shefelman & Nix Architects; 3, 4 and 5- Austin City Connection.



Cherry Creek

Denver, Colorado

Cherry Creek Greenway is an example of a built greenway passing through suburban and urban areas along a creek with rural qualities. The greenway master plan addresses the problems of creek degradation, pollution, recreation, and economic development.

- Cherry Creek was dumped in, neglected, and cut off from Denver until 1974 when a major clean up effort began.
- Active stewardship partnership to promote long-term improvement of water quality in the Cherry Creek basin through land conservation, innovative stream restoration, and streamside enhancement.
- Natural resource improvements along this greenway go hand-in-hand with economic development.

1

6

2

7

3

Photos: 1 -8. Various photos taken of the greenway along Cherry Creek illustrating the greenway's character in urban, suburban and rural environments.

4

5

8