

Greenway Systems-Inside and Out

Hendersonville ranks at the top of my list of naturally beautiful places to live. The only problem is that not all of it is accessible to the public. So what do you do? The answer is a greenway system, a great (not new) idea that would improve Hendersonville's character from the very core.

What is a greenway? Greenways are areas of protected open space, usually tracing rivers, streams, abandoned railroad lines, or roads like Calendar lane. Most greenway systems are designed for alternative transportation or recreation like fishing and canoeing. Greenways can range from mulched footpaths to multiple use bikeways. Even though each and every greenway is unique, mostly all of them connect people, places, and the countryside.

Why could Hendersonville use a Greenway system? Obviously greenways can transform communities. They supply a safe way for kids to commute safely on bikes throughout the city and provide important open space resources. Greenways can also help the environment, by supplying migratory routes for larger animals. They can save families thousands of dollars in cash, because they create alternative transportation opportunities. Then families don't have to spend as much money on gas. But perhaps the most significant reason of all is the benefit of the economy. This includes increasing nearby property values and attracting more business. This happens because people have more spare change lying around that they don't have to spend on other things like gas.

There is much more history to greenways and trails than you may think. Way back before Tennessee was even a state, (in the fifteen hundreds) there were trails here. Greenways are not a new idea. They have been around since the eighteenth century, when Frederick Olmsted built and designed “Parkways”. The Civilian Conservation Corps was formed in nineteen thirty-three, building miles of trails and greenways. But the recent popularity in greenways results from the President’s Commission on Americans Outdoors, calling for the “establishment of a network of greenways across America.” To make this vision a reality, in nineteen ninety-six, Don Sundquist challenged communities in Tennessee, to create two hundred miles of new or expanded greenways.

There are many cities across the United States where greenways have been a great success. In Camden, New Jersey, in nineteen ninety-nine the city of Camden celebrated the opening of the Parkside Trail. It linked a high school and a grade school with two parks. The Connecticut River greenway scales the state along the Connecticut River connecting parks, open spaces, and archaeological and historic sites. Other success stories include the Northern Virginia Greenways project, Metro Richmond Greenways, and many more.

Successful greenway planning requires the hard work of many citizens and adjacent landowners. First, a local committee must be established with representatives of future potential users, ranging from hikers to businesses. Then funding for the greenway system must be carried out; without money there can’t be a greenway. Next, designing must take

place, taking into consideration what places must be linked. Once future maintenance responsibilities are in place, construction may begin.

My parents think that a greenway system in Hendersonville would be great (as long as it doesn't intrude upon citizens' private property). They would like one because it would allow us to ride our bikes together safely. My mom doesn't let me bike anywhere right now because of all the busy intersections; if there was a greenway system, I could stay off the main roads and be safe.

In conclusion, greenways would improve Hendersonville economically and socially, making it an even better place to live and grow up in.