

## HATS OFF TO DURHAM

Durham was not the first city in the Triangle region to plan for and begin implementation of a greenway system. Nevertheless, they have quietly set about a consistent and determined process to catch up. There are now increasing indications that they may succeed surprisingly soon.

Durham's formula is complex in its number of moving parts, but it is simple in concept. They work with all like-minded agencies and organizations to leverage opportunities and resources. The growing list of collaborative efforts and passive support, in addition to local government initiatives, are beginning to become impressive.

- The Association for Preservation of the Eno River Valley was the original advocate for the Eno River State Park. First there was opposition to the City's plans for a new water supply reservoir. Now in cooperation with the State and local governments, this 13 mile long riparian greenway corridor is approaching completion, within the State Park of 7000 future acres.
- West Point on the Eno Park is well known as the site of the Eno River Festival each 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Less known is the fact that Durham has assembled a virtually continuous 5 mile long corridor along the river from the State Park to Falls Lake.
- The Triangle Rails Trails Conservancy was the original advocate for creation of the American Tobacco Trail from downtown Durham into Chatham and Wake Counties. The City, with assistance from the NCDOT, has built 8 miles of paved trail, with a bridge across I-40 at South Pointe Mall coming soon. The Triangle Greenways Council accepted the donation of 2.5 acres that is being developed as a trail access point at Chancellors Ridge.
- Durham's Central Park is a proposed downtown green space that will extend the ATT northward across the City. Continuing toward Person County is the Timberlake Railbed, another 18 miles of abandoned railroad right-of-way that runs through Treyburn, Historic Stagville, and NCSU's Hill Forrest. It then crosses the Flat River which is a TGC focus project for conservation under the Falls Lake Initiative. There is growing optimism that the Timberlake corridor will become the City's next active rail to trails project.
- The New Hope Creek Project proposes conservation of a corridor through Duke Forest and downstream to Jordan Lake. It was initiated by the Triangle Land Conservancy and several local governments. More recently the Little River Regional Park was established by the TLC and several local governments.
- The East Coast Greenway is a corridor being assembled by volunteers, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies between Maine and Florida. Durham has aggressively pursued its routing through their community.
- The State's Mountains to Sea Trail will traverse from Great Smoky Mountains National Park to Manteo. It will cross through Durham along the Eno River corridor and Falls Lake.
- The Ellerbee Creek Watershed Association has several parcels and is committed to conservation of more lands that will contribute to a corridor from central

Durham to the Eno River. The corridor could also interconnect with the potential northern Durham rail to trails project.

The City's strategy is working. Not only are important corridors being conserved, but most are wide enough to protect and maintain ecological functions within the urban area. The City has already built in excess of 10 miles of paved non-rail trails, and another 8 miles of the American Tobacco Trail. Likewise the City is positioned to generate long stretches of public trail in short order, with at least 4 additional miles starting construction this year. Their focus on parochial greenway corridors is expected, but those have been leveraged to guarantee the City is a crossroads for statewide and national tourist facilities. The TGC's hat is raised high in a salute to Durham and its increasingly successful efforts to emerge as a great greenway community, and the TGC looks forward to lending a hand in the continuing effort.