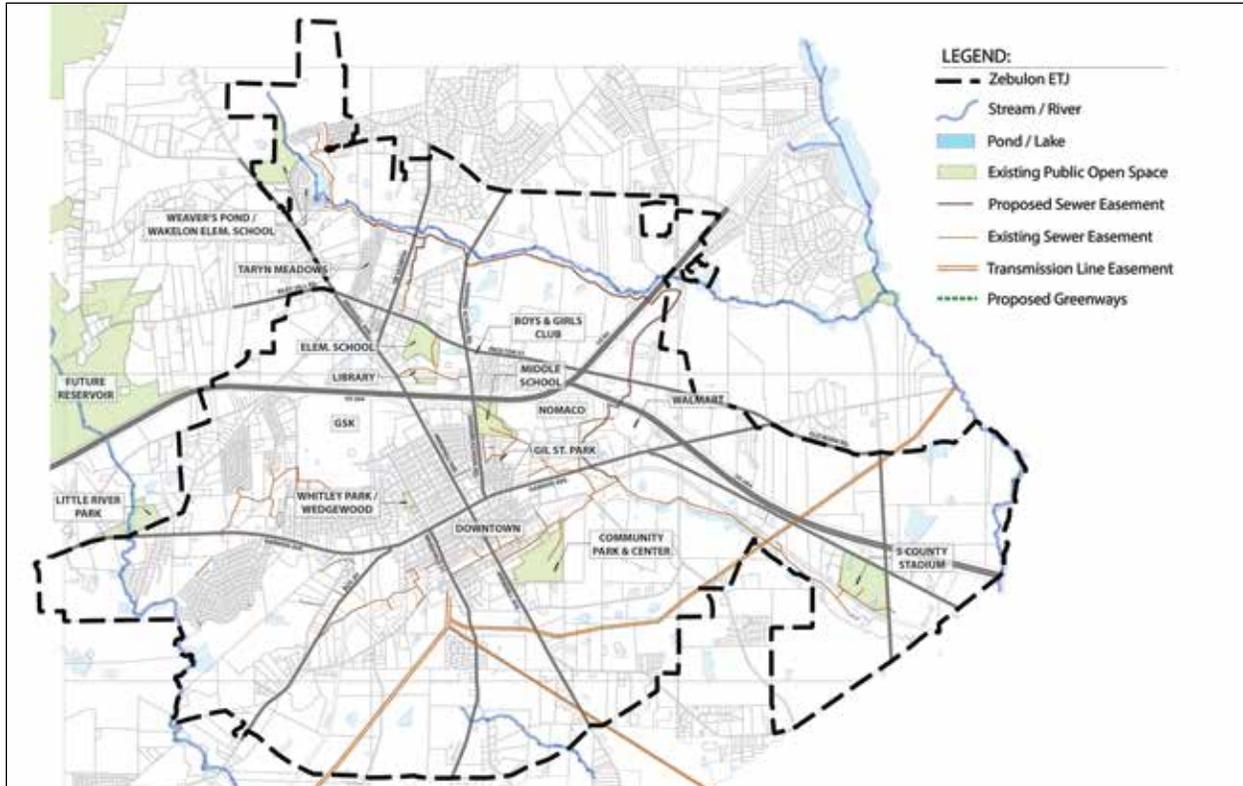


# 2 Introduction



*Regional Map of the Town of Zebulon*

The Zebulon Greenway Master Plan was prepared as a guide for the Town of Zebulon in the future development of a town greenway system as well as other bicycle and pedestrian improvements. The master plan illustrates how the system will interact with existing and proposed infrastructure, contribute to environmental quality and economic growth and most importantly improve the quality of life for citizens and visitors, by providing alternate and safe means of transportation creating a healthier community.

Communities all over the United States and North Carolina are investing in greenway systems. This is particularly true in the Triangle and Piedmont areas of North Carolina where communities are developing greenway systems and connecting them to together to form a regional system. A well-integrated system can influence growth patterns, preserve open space, create value and generate economic activity, offer a different means of transportation, connect neighborhoods to destinations, improve healthy living, mitigate flooding and erosion, enhance community identity, offer aesthetic value and contribute to the character and identity of the Town.

## What is a Greenway?

Greenways are protected areas of linear open space offering a variety of benefits to the local community. They may or may not contain a trail. Greenways were first established to control flooding along waterways. Greenways containing trails are best known for providing recreational opportunities as well as an alternate means of transportation. Typically, these multi-use trails are developed along streams and rivers, railroad corridors, utility easements and / or along existing roads. Greenways have well-documented environmental and economic benefits and they can help promote a community's identity, history and character.



Upper Neuse Greenway - Raleigh, NC

## Recreation

Greenways provide opportunities for safe walking, jogging, and biking as well as a way for residents to access natural areas for bird watching, photography and educational activities. Providing these recreational opportunities and access to nature can have a significant positive impact on the overall mental and physical health of residents.

## Transportation

Trails within greenway systems provide an alternate means of getting from one place to another within a community, such as neighborhoods, parks, libraries, retail centers and schools. This reduces carbon emissions within a community and addresses the needs of those who do not have a vehicle.

## Environmental

Greenways protect water quality, fragile ecosystems and wildlife habitat and corridors. By providing a natural buffer between development and waterways, greenways help filter pollutants and reduce sedimentation that affects water quality.

## Economic

In addition to protecting properties from flooding, greenways make a community more appealing and improve property values. Trails and open space consistently are cited as critical amenities that attract home builders and home buyers. Trails are also consistently credited with inspiring downtown investment and revitalizing downtown areas.

A study was completed on the 1-40 pedestrian bridge in Durham, NC in 2013 that demonstrated the benefit of greenways. The results of this study showed that there was a 133% increase in use on the trail section that was studied as well as a 163% increase in calories burned by users. There was also a \$3.7 million increase in spending related to trips on the trail. These results are according to “Behavioral Effects of Completing a Critical Link in the American Tobacco Trail,” a study released in December of 2014 by the Institute for Transportation Research and Education (ITRE) at N.C. State University.

“The proposed Carolina Thread Trail is projected to raise housing values by 4 percent along the trail’s route, for an average of \$3,380 per home. Total dollar gain in the affected area running through 15 counties is projected to be \$1.7 billion”

– *The Potential Economic Impacts of the Proposed Carolina Thread Trail, Econsult Corporation & Greenways Inc. report to Catawba Land Conservancy / 2007*

## Community Identity

Greenways contribute to preserving and providing access to a community’s important cultural and historic resources in addition to preserving a community’s overall aesthetic character.

## Guiding Principals

Throughout the master planning process we have measured various ideas and proposals according to five guiding principles to provide the framework for this plan. These principles helped to shape the goals and objectives of the master plan. The guiding principles are:

- Connectivity and accessibility
- Equitable distribution
- Collaboration and coordination
- Communication and engagement of the community
- Developing a plan specific to the needs and desires of the community



Zebulon Greenway Advisory Committee Meeting

## Connectivity and Accessibility

In keeping with the objectives of the grant, connectivity and accessibility were key in the selection of proposed greenway trail locations and pedestrian / bicycle improvements. Identifying destinations including retail, commercial, civic and institutional and connecting them to where people live was primary to the process. Within this principle it is envisioned that all trails, walks and other amenities will be accessible for users of all abilities.

## Equitable Distribution

By examining the entire area within the ETJ the master plan identifies potential routes and improvements without consideration of the socio – economic status of various areas within the community. This plan will provide residents throughout the town with opportunities to enhance their quality of life and well-being. As Zebulon continues to grow, the system will grow with it and continue to provide connections throughout the Town.



*Zebulon Public Open House*

## Collaboration and Coordination

Working closely with town staff, the Project Advisory Committee, town commissions, business leaders and various organizations the project team reached out to and received valuable input throughout the process. The following is a sample of organizations that collaborated and contributed to the recommendations of the master plan:

- Zebulon Chamber of Commerce
- Zebulon Youth Council
- Zebulon Parks and Recreation Department Advisory Board

Coordination of the project also involved a review and coordination with other town planning documents including the town's transportation plan and development ordinance

## Communication and Engagement of the Community

Critical to the success of the master plan is the engagement of the local community. This was a key component to the planning process and every effort was made to engage a large and varied group of community members and stakeholders.

The community was made aware of and informed of the process in various and creative ways. These included:

- Announcements in the town newsletter
- Notifications included in utility bills
- Participation by local businesses distributing flyers

The community at large was kept informed and engaged during the planning process and provided various opportunities for comment and input. These opportunities included:

- Two open house meetings
- Surveys
- A website
- Presentations at Town Board of Commissioners meetings

## Developing a Plan Specific to the Needs and Desires of the Community

Adhering to this principle requires compliance with the other four principles and is the direct result of a community based process which capitalizes on the local knowledge of the community. Involvement of the community, town staff and others provided specific information on the needs and desires of the community.

This master plan is very specific to the needs and desires of the local Town of Zebulon community. Thorough analysis and community outreach have led to a plan that is rooted in the desires and needs of the Town of Zebulon.



*Zebulon Public Open House*

## Goals of the Master Plan

The goals and objectives of the Master Plan were developed based on input from community groups, town staff, and an advisory committee. The goals identified for the project were as follows:

- Provide opportunities for public involvement in the planning process
- Provide thorough site analysis
- Identify and establish connections between destinations
- Produce a final plan that can guide implementation

## Provide Opportunities for Public Involvement in the Planning Process

By conducting a community based process and providing multiple opportunities for community engagement and input the master plan reflects the needs and desires expressed by the community.

## Provide a Thorough Site Analysis

Through the documentation of land uses, environmental features, existing destinations and existing infrastructure, opportunities and constraints for the system development were identified. Documentation was accomplished through GIS mapping of features and existing infrastructure as well as on site observations.

## Identify and Establish Connections Between Destinations

Building on the site analysis and reinforced through on site investigations and coordination with town staff, potential connections were identified by the project team

## Produce a Final Plan That Can Guide Implementation

The final master plan recommendations were conceived based on typical and accepted approaches and standards for greenway trail implementation and the construction of bicycle and pedestrian improvements. It was important that the system be rooted in standards common to greenway development and while some recommendations require significant investment, the majority of the system is based on proven construction standards and realistic expectations.



*Field Investigations - Taryn Meadows to Weavers Pond*



*Farmers Market Luncheon*



*Little River Park*