

Chapter 6: Programs

All kinds of people can use a greenway for a variety of reasons, whether to recreate, walk a dog, bird watch or simply meditate in a nature setting. While greenways should be designed appropriately for several uses, it is imperative that programs be developed or encouraged to promote use of the greenways for many users. Programming a variety of events and activities for greenways is also essential to increase usage of greenways.

A variety of policy changes and programs should also be implemented to cultivate and support a greenway-oriented mindset among residents and local partners. A greenway-oriented culture has several different characteristics, including the behavior of people when they are walking or biking, the attitude of the community towards greenway users, and the role of government agencies and law enforcement in promoting safety. To address all of these elements, programs are often created to fit within the “three E’s” of greenway, pedestrian and bicycle programming: Education, Encouragement, and Enforcement.

Education programs teach others about safe greenway behaviors, the benefits of walking and bicycling, and can assist people in feeling more comfortable when using greenways. Education programs can also be used to teach bicyclists and pedestrians how to interact safely with one another.

Encouragement programs, like education programs, can also teach about the benefits of walking and bicycling, and serve to promote walking and bicycle-friendly behavior through various activities and incentives.

Finally, enforcement programs provide the “teeth” of a safe and legal greenway environment. When law enforcement officers and other officials protect

greenways and encourage use of them, this sends a clear message to users about safe activity. Other types of enforcement are covered in Chapter 7: Promoting Greenway Safety.

Such programs can help achieve the following:

- ◆ Educate the public as to the existence of a greenway and plans for future greenways;
- ◆ Increase tourism to Buncombe County which will enhance revenues.
- ◆ Encourage local residents to use the greenways for transportation rather than driving;
- ◆ Promote environmental education and stewardship of the natural environment;
- ◆ Promote physical fitness and mental health among all age groups and abilities;
- ◆ Provide recreational and cultural opportunities and new experiences;
- ◆ Help build a strong sense of community and neighborhood identity;
- ◆ Increase safety of the greenways by teaching people how to use the greenways as well as increase the number of users; and

Buncombe County is already blessed with a diverse set of programs that encourage use of existing greenways or could be utilized to promote use of future greenways. The concentration of non-profit groups, land conservancies, bicycle clubs, colleges and universities, sustainability-based organizations, and public agencies all contribute to utilization of greenways as well as the parks and any streams that are adjacent to them.

Programming Enhancements

Since greenways are relatively new in Buncombe County, there are some emerging opportunities in organized activities for certain user groups or areas of interest, including the following:

Buncombe County Greenways & Trails Master Plan



Buncombe County’s Parks, Greenways & Recreation Services Department already conducts and participates in numerous programs, such as the Senior Games, that utilize existing facilities and are perfect for staging at or near greenway corridors.

Photo Credit: Buncombe County



Buncombe County's Fishing Derby for Kids is an example of a recreational program where groups already engaged in other programs, such as Trout Unlimited, are well-suited to provide resources to support such events at little or no cost to government agencies.

Photo Credit: Buncombe County

- ◆ Health care facilities and retirement communities are major potential users for therapeutic reasons, which is an opportunity for new programs for elderly and disabled groups;
- ◆ Art along the greenways, including physical art as well as the performing arts, can be increased;
- ◆ Safety programs and signage for greenways educating people about greenway etiquette and rules is needed; and
- ◆ New programs and activities for youth.

General Recommendations for Greenway Programming

These recommendations are based on feedback from the stakeholder groups and surveys, as well as research from other communities. General recommendations for programming include:

- ◆ Balance the need for the greenways to protect the environment as well as provide recreation and cultural opportunities;
- ◆ Be inclusive and provide specific age-related activities and activities for multiple generations as well as for other user groups, such as people with health issues;
- ◆ Tie in greenway programs with nearby facilities such as parks, schools, health care services, retirement homes, commercial areas, and other nodes by incorporating amenities and informational signage;
- ◆ Assist organizations who wish to sponsor events by providing information, calendar listings, and technical assistance;
- ◆ Develop a website for the greenways showing trails, activities, safety information, Trail Watch

information, and links to other greenway-related information;

- ◆ Provide brochures and maps for the greenways showing walking, bicycling, horseback riding and canoe/kayak opportunities. Develop a reference map that shows a system of secondary trails that reflects important neighborhood-level connections. These maps and brochures can be available at trailheads, as well as local libraries, community centers, schools, retirement centers, and other gathering places;
- ◆ Consider food vendors, from vendor carts, or trucks to “sit-down” businesses along the greenway to sell drinks, snacks, sunscreen, and other items; and
- ◆ Develop a program of continuing education for elected officials, agency staff, developers and designers/engineers to learn strategies for managing the greenways and any streams along greenways.

Specific Greenway Program Recommendations

Exhibit 6-1 on the following pages contain specific greenway programming recommendations that correspond to the categories of the existing programs profiled in this Chapter. The recommendations are intended to build upon existing programs and fill programming gaps.

Exhibit 6-1: Programming Recommendations


Environmental Education & Stewardship	Recreation/Health & Wellness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserve wild areas adjacent to the greenways for passive recreation and nature enjoyment and do ecological stewardship projects including stream cleanups, invasive plant removal, and tree plantings; • Provide outdoor classrooms with educational programs about the flora, fauna, geology, hydrology, water quality, and cultural resources. Tie programs in with North Carolina’s education curriculum. Develop partnerships with schools and colleges, particularly those with environmental studies classes and programs, to assist with water quality sampling, stream monitoring, and other activities; • Develop interpretive trails with signage to facilitate discussion on ecological and environmental issues, put identification tags on plants, and provide guided nature tours; • Develop smartphone apps and QR codes for greenways to supplement signage including information about the environmental history and issues; • Allocate space for community gardens and support efforts to create new ones such as at the Buncombe County Sports Park and along the Hominy Creek Greenway; • Hold Earth Day and other environmental events on the greenways; • Educate adjacent property owners concerning the effects of exotic invasive plants on the native plant habitat value and encourage removal of exotic plantings. <p><i>Greenway clean-up days can engage youth and other groups in environmental stewardship activities that draw attention to the importance of trails in a natural setting.</i></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host or support other organization’s efforts to promote walks, running, bicycle or recumbent trike rides , canoe and kayak trips, in-line skating, segway trips, equestrian rides, and skateboarding. Tailor recreation programs to different ages and ability groups; • Encourage support groups such as cancer, diabetes, rehabilitation groups, and others to do activities on the greenway; • Hold public health programs, promotions, and incentives, such as Lighten Up for Life and Bike-to-Work and Walk-to-Work Days; • Coordinate with the Healthy Living Opportunities Map with Buncombe County. Create a link to the map on the Parks and Greenways Department website. • Host walks/runs for charity or awareness such as March of Dimes Walk, Crop Walk, Relay for Life, National Trails Day; • Allocate space and encourage studios to hold yoga and tai chi classes; • Promote blueways and picnic and camping areas accessible only by boat. Provide boat access to the river with parking and put-in areas; • Sponsor fishing programs clinics and provide accessible piers; • Provide natural play opportunities for children and adults along greenways with “loose parts” (sand, stones, play parts); consider sitting areas for parents; • Support activities that will connect new groups of users, especially low- and moderate income residents, with the greenways and rivers. Provide information and programming that encourages novices to try out new activities, at little or no cost and in settings that feel comfortable and safe; • Provide residents access to equipment such as bikes, in-line skates, canoes, and kayaks through rentals, bike share programs, or donations of new or recycled equipment; • Support bicycling by providing bicycle parking/storage, bike racks on buses, and bicycle maintenance clinics; • Organize dog-related activities and create dog parks near the greenways; • Construct a mini terrain park for young or inexperienced riders to learn how to ride mountain bikes and BMX bikes. • Promote nature walks, stroller days and play dates for children younger than school age.

Exhibit 6-1 cont'd: Programming Recommendations

Cultural Resources	Safety & Maintenance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host cultural events such as story-telling , music, drama, dance, movie nights, and other performing arts. For example, the Food Lion Skate park hosted Dancers in the Bowl with laser light. Encourage groups such as Easel Rides (mobile art lab) and Art Attack to use the greenways for art performances and projects; • Create spaces such as pocket parks for organized events with a reservation system for usage; • Hold special events on the greenway such as Fourth of July or Christmas parades and organize a “greenway days” to celebrate the outdoors/local traditions; • Consider parking needs, including bus parking for larger areas as well as restroom facilities; • Develop a coherent system of wayfinding signage and identity for each community; • Have a consistent logo throughout the greenway system which reflects the geography and history of an area. Consider joint logos in overlapping jurisdictions. Involve children by having a contest for naming the greenways and creating themes and logos; • Interpret the local history and enhance community identity through sequential art and stories conveyed through sculpture, signage, murals, site furniture, paving patterns, and other design elements. Preserve and interpret historic artifacts such as the chimney along Reed’s Creek greenway to reflect history; • Create smartphone apps and QR codes for greenways to supplement signage, including indigenous music, cultural and environmental history; • Encourage painting and other art classes to be held on the greenways. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage and support the creation of Community Watch groups to monitor the greenways; • Promote programs to teach people bicycle safety, safe navigation to the greenways, and proper riding etiquette on the greenways. Set up a permanent bicycle safety course for groups and individuals to use; • Support Safe Routes to School programs and expand into more school districts. Organize Walking School Bus or Bicycle Trains in which adults supervise children as they walk or ride their bikes to school. Promote “Walk- n- Wave” days to slow traffic and let drivers know that they share the streets with pedestrians. Children are given large foam hands for waving to drivers; • Enforce ‘pick-up-after-your dog’ by signage and kiosks with bags; • Set up Adopt-a-Trail, Adopt-A-Reach, and Greenway Clean-up Days for litter cleanups, weeding, and other maintenance along a specified trail segment and report any problems to the Greenways Program; • Establish and maintain a list of projects for potential community volunteers. Create a list of single special projects that groups or individuals (such as Eagle Scouts) may be interested in doing, rather than on-going monitoring and maintenance responsibilities. Encourage school age and high school students as well as civic groups to do community service on the greenway, including planting, maintenance, and light construction. <div data-bbox="1108 1114 1583 1468" data-label="Image"> </div> <div data-bbox="1598 1125 1976 1377" data-label="Caption"> <p><i>Foliage along greenways can quickly become overgrown and obstruct safety features intended to inform users of obstacles. Adopt-a-Trail programs and Friends groups can provide trimming and other maintenance duties that don't require heavy equipment.</i></p> </div>