

APPENDIX D: CASE STUDIES

Charlotte Mecklenburg Greenway System

Background

There are currently 23 miles of developed trails and 185 miles of planned greenways to be completed in the next 20 years in Mecklenburg County (MC). 16 miles will be built within the next 4 years.

Most greenways will be located along 22 creeks within the County. The two main goals in building greenways are to protect the floodplains and to provide public transportation.

The development of future greenways are funded by public, private and foundation support. Getting the first greenway on the ground has helped people understand what greenways are and has helped to educate them on their benefits. MC has found that once the public has experienced them first hand they want more of them.



Greenway Infrastructure

Trails cross sections within the various greenway corridors range from 8-10 foot-wide paved and/or limestone surface trails. All existing and future greenway infrastructure development occurring within floodplains are specifically designed to reduce flooding damage from anticipated rain events.

Program Objectives

As stated above the main objective of the Mecklenburg County Greenway Program is to protect the floodplains and to provide alternative transportation routes for bikes and pedestrians. The 1999 Mecklenburg Greenway Master Plan identifies three major objectives based on their overall vision statement "The preservation, protection, and appropriate recreational use of floodplains in Charlotte-Mecklenburg through a greenway and greenway trail program will create a more livable and sustainable community for all residents and businesses."

1. "Preserve and reclaim natural floodplains for the purposes of improving water quality protection, protecting wildlife habitat and open space, and providing recreational, educational, and alternative transportation opportunities."
2. "Create a primary infrastructure of multi-use trails along suitable floodplain corridors that are connected to adjacent parks and nature preserves and provide a system of contiguous and substantial trail mileage for rigorous pedestrian and bicycle use."
3. "Include partnerships between civic, corporate, and governmental entities to ensure that overland linkage beyond the County's floodplain greenway trail system is provided to offer access to destinations such as schools, neighborhoods, businesses, and shopping."

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Interagency Partnerships

Storm Water Services

MC Park and Recreation and Storm Water Services often partner in land acquisition and development projects. MC Storm Water Services is working aggressively to tackle water quality problems in its 22 creeks and their tributaries through stream and wetland restoration and flood mitigation projects. Through a flood buyout program, residential and commercial parcels subject to flooding have and continue to be acquired. The use of this land is turned over to floodplain restoration coupled with greenways – a much more suitable use for the floodplains than the previous. MC Storm Water Services is also very involved in stream restoration projects. Often the stream restoration construction is coupled with trail construction, in order to save on construction cost and limit land disturbance. These two county departments have learned that you can stretch your dollars when doubling up.

Charlotte Mecklenburg Utilities

Partnering with the Charlotte Mecklenburg Utility Department (CMU) has also brought benefits to the greenway system. Park and Recreation is a County department and CMU is a City department so consequently they are different land owners. Although crossing easements to locate their services in each others properties works well, when one department pays for an easement on private property, the other department has to pay the private property owner again to use the same easement.

Planning- Subdivision Ordinance Reservation Clause

Within the subdivision ordinance, MC, has the right to reserve land if the development is happening within or near a public entity, such as a planned greenway corridor. This means they reserve the right to buy that property. Of course, they would prefer if this clause required a dedication of land, rather than just the reservation.



General Organization Structure

According to Mecklenburg County Greenway Master Plan, a new organization strategy was proposed in the 1999 plan to improve the process of greenway development. The following section highlights the organizational structure cited from the adopted 1999 master plan.

Mecklenburg County is the lead agent, owner, developer, and manager of the primary greenway system throughout the County. The County has partnered with local municipalities throughout the County to build and maintain various segments of the greenway system. Listed below are the key agencies and organizations that play a role in greenway implementation.

The **Park and Recreation Department** acquires necessary land and prepares detailed corridor master plans and construction documents for each greenway segment. The Park and Recreation Department is the primary steward for greenway lands and facilities.



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The **Mecklenburg County Commission** is called upon to adopt and implement the recommendations of the adopted Master Plan. The County Commission is viewed as the ultimate “Champion” of this master plan and will need to exhibit appropriate leadership of the overall system goals and objectives.

The **Mecklenburg County Manager** is vested with management responsibilities for the community's public resources. The County Manager is called upon to determine a coordinated capital improvements program that enables various County departments to share resources in support of greenway development.

The **Greenway and Trails Advisory Council** mission is to “promote and support implementation efforts of the Mecklenburg County Greenway System through public education, coordination, identification of future greenways, facilitating regional cooperation

The **Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission** supports the Greenway Master Plan and helps with implementation by showing potential greenways in District Plans, notifying Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department of proposed developments in a greenway area, utilizing the rezoning process to encourage dedication of lands, such as sidewalks and bicycle facilities, for the greenway system, and planning transportation improvements in coordination with greenways.

The **Mecklenburg County Storm Water Services Department** assists the Park and Recreation Department with the development of specific greenway segments via use of funds obtained from federal and state grants and through a coordinated capital improvement approach to project implementation.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities Department plays an important role in the implementation strategy for county-wide greenways. CMUD's system of sanitary sewers offers enormous potential for shared use with greenway development objectives.

The **Mecklenburg County Engineering and Building Standards Department** assists the Park and Recreation Department with the preparation of detailed corridor master plans for each of the greenway segments defined by the comprehensive master plan.

Mecklenburg County Department of Environmental Protection (MCDEP) assists the Park and Recreation Department with the implementation of this master plan. MCDEP maintains an advisory role, assisting with scientific, technical, and policy issues that impact water quality.

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Major Implementation Strategies

Mecklenburg County has put together the following implementation plan to guide for each greenway corridor:

Step One - Land Acquisition: Before detailed master planning of an individual corridor occurs, it is necessary for the County to have an ownership interest in the land that is included in this greenway system. A variety of land acquisition techniques are included in this master plan to guide both public and private interests. It is essential that an interest in land ownership take place prior to beginning a detailed master plan for an individual greenway corridor.



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Step Two - Corridor Master Planning: Site specific master planning for individual greenway corridors will determine the feasibility and the appropriate level of use for a segment of corridor and, where appropriate, trail routing. Each master plan for a greenway corridor or segment of a corridor should involve residents from surrounding neighborhoods, as well as adjacent property owners and businesses.

Step Three - Design Development, Construction Documents, and Engineering:

After master planning has been completed and a specific corridor plan has been defined, detailed construction documents will then be produced for the project as well as a detailed cost estimation and assignment of responsibilities and costs.

Step Four - Construction and Facility Development: Depending on the level of use that is appropriate for a greenway corridor, actual construction of the greenway facilities, such as trails, habitat restoration, and stream-bank restoration will take place. Construction and development operations can be phased as necessary to meet budget and time constraints.

Step Five - Maintenance and Management: Once the greenway facilities have been completed, maintenance and management should begin immediately. The Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department and its divisions shall be the lead management agency and should work in partnership with other county agencies, the City of Charlotte, and municipalities throughout the County, as well as private sector groups, to effectively manage the greenways.

Successful Funding

In 1999 the residents of Mecklenburg County approved a bond package with \$7,235,000- for greenway development.

Again in 2004 the residents approved a bond package for \$25,000,000 specifically for greenway development. The 2004 bonds have to be spent by 2009. The combined 32 million dollar bond packages are for greenway development not land acquisition

In 1999 the public also supported land banking bonds for land acquisition for all open space for approximately \$220 million dollars.



The 2004 bond referendum had a very high approval rate of 63%. The referendum had a lot of support through Partners for Parks and other public awareness efforts. Park and Recreation as a public department, could not advertise their own support for the issue, the advocacy came from outside the Department. In addition to the bond issues, the Department also receives various amounts of money from standard government grants efforts.

Greenway Staff

In 2005 the operating budget for Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation's Greenway was \$304,361.88 which includes staff salaries and operational expenses.

The current staff includes: 6 construction/maintenance team members, 4 planners (including the Branch Manager).

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There are two "Community Liaison" positions for Little Sugar Creek Greenway. Their positions are funded by grants from the Knight Foundation and the Foundation for the Carolinas. They are primarily engaged in public relations, community outreach and grant writing. They also act as a support system for the four greenway planners through educating the public and keeping the community engaged in the greenway system.

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Sources:

Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department
1999 Mecklenburg County Greenway Master Plan

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Case Study Indianapolis Greenway System

Background

The Indianapolis Greenways System, when fully constructed as planned in 2002, will span 175 miles including 150 miles of 8-12 foot-wide paved or limestone trails. They will link more than 125 destinations. The current plan follows 1 river, 12 streams, 3 historic rail corridors, and the Central Canal. Currently, an estimated two million users access the Indianapolis greenway trails annually.



All photos courtesy of www.Indianatrails.com

Greenway Infrastructure

At present a total of sixty-five miles of interconnected greenway trails exist within Indianapolis/Marion County, and an additional forty-five miles of greenway trails are either being constructed or planned within the near future. Trails cross sections within the various greenway corridors range from 8-12 foot-wide paved and limestone surface trails. The current greenway infrastructure inventory also includes over 56 miles of greenway green conservation corridors that do not include any trail infrastructure components.

Program Objectives

The Indianapolis Greenways Plan describes the community's vision for a regional network of linear open space that connects neighborhoods and promotes recreation, fitness, and alternative transportation and conservation. This network, known as the Indianapolis Greenways System, will benefit not only Marion County, but will also help connect the entire central region of Indiana."

General Organization Structure

The organization structure for Indianapolis Greenways contains three main components: The City of Indianapolis, Marion County and The Greenways Foundation, Inc.

According to the 2004 Indianapolis Marion County Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan, the Indianapolis Department of Parks and Recreation is the primary regional park agency for the more than 860,000 residents of both the City of Indianapolis and Marion County, Indiana. The Department's roots are within the pre-1969 boundaries of the City of Indianapolis. Since that time, the Department's jurisdiction has grown to the boundaries of the County.

The Greenways Foundation, Inc. is a charitable trust working to promote the growth, enhancement and use of Indiana trails and greenways. The Greenways Foundation, Inc. is not affiliated with Indy Parks, other than to provide the Indy Greenways web site at no cost to the City of Indianapolis and to provide amenities and services for the various Indy Greenways trails.

Established in 1991, the Greenway Foundation, Inc. (formerly known as the White River Greenways Foundation, Inc.) was created specifically to facilitate contributions, of all forms, to central Indiana greenway projects. After receiving cash and in-kind donations, the Greenway Foundation can hold them until they are needed for greenway development, enhancement or operation. As a private, permanent and on-going entity, the Greenway Foundation

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doesn't have the bureaucratic burdens of annual re-appropriation, or the cumbersome and inflexible procurement regulations, which must be followed by city-county government. Non-partisan and non-political, the Greenway Foundation can focus exclusively on the needs of greenway projects on a regional basis for cross county coordination.

Major Implementation Strategies

Indy Parks actively pursues acquisition of open spaces and natural areas wherever possible and works to create partnerships that promote stewardship, program and facility development and maintenance of those areas. Indy Parks implements strategies that provide the necessary resources to establish programs to acquire land for Greenway connections and parks using land trust or other strategies to preserve corridor open space for resource conservation. Land acquisitions shall be targeted through criteria based on established policies used to prioritize locations. Additional effort will be made to increase environmental education program opportunities on the Greenways by developing partnerships with local schools and environmental groups.



Indy Parks continues to develop plans for "Living Links", which identify various ways of accessing parks and community facilities.

According to the 2004 Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan, One of the outcomes of this plan was the establishment a new greenway development standard of .15 miles of greenways per 1,000 people. The growth of Indianapolis has outpaced the number of actual miles added to the greenways in recent years. While there are long-term plans for many more miles and connections within the county, the current state of built greenways falls short of our created standard. Currently, there are approximately .03 miles per 1,000 people. In order to increase this number the following implementation strategies have been identified.

- Develop and implement a methodology to coordinate use/management and acquisition of non-park open space.
- Advocate, develop and implement an aggressive policy for land acquisition, land transfers, sale of surplus property and acquisition of more critical lands in expansion areas. Indy Parks should be a leader in conservation of open spaces.
- Implement strategies to provide necessary resources to establish programs to acquire land for Greenway connections and parks, using land trust strategies to preserve corridor open space for resource conservation.
- Review and update criteria for land acquisition by Indy Parks. Criteria based on land stewardship policies, demographic needs, and developed baseline standards for recreation services, compelling need and that fit Indy Park's overall land policies.



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- Develop and maintain a prioritized list of potential property acquisitions within Marion County that fulfill the criteria developed above.
- Acquire property using the prioritized list of available areas.

Successful Funding Mechanisms

According to the 2002 Indianapolis Greenway Master Plan, local greenway efforts have brought in nearly \$18 million dollars of funding for greenway projects above and beyond the local tax dollars. The most important funding source for Indy Parks Greenway projects since 1993 has been federal transportation enhancement funds, available under the ISTEA statute and its successor the TEA-21 (Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century). Transportation enhancement funds are administered through the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT), and total approximately \$16 million annually for all Indiana projects. In addition to TE, other sections of TEA-21 may also be used to fund pedestrian and bikeway expenditures, including CMAQ (Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Program) STP (Surface Transportation Program) and others.”

“Although local tax monies have never been the major source of funding to develop the Indy Parks Greenway System, they have played a key role. Many of the external grants previously mentioned require 20% to 50% “matching” funds which have primarily come from local tax revenue. Given that Indy’s greenways are on properties under mixed jurisdiction, using municipal staff and budgets to coordinate greenway maintenance and capital improvements have proven to be the most efficient course. Local budgets also provide for the small professional staff to manage Indy Parks Greenways.”

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Marion County
Greenway Foundation, Inc.
2004 Indianapolis Marion County Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan
2002 Indianapolis Greenway Master Plan

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Case Study City of Knoxville, TN Greenway System

Background

The City of Knoxville is home to over 39 miles of paved greenways which is also part of a larger regional greenway system. Knoxville's greenways have been built from the "bottom up" claims Greenway director Donna Young. During our case study research, we spoke with Donna and she explained to us how Knoxville's system was built by integrating greenway projects and various transportation capital improvement efforts together. As road improvements started to incorporate trails in their design, the network began to grow over time and has continued to gain momentum every year. New greenways are built every year in Knoxville and the system is evolving further into neighborhoods, connecting thousands of citizens to recreation and transportation opportunities.

Third Creek Park River Greenway



Greenway Infrastructure

The Great Smokey Regional Greenway Board helps to guide regional greenways efforts throughout the Knoxville area. Approximately 90 miles of greenways have been built in the area including: 44 miles in Knox County, encompassing the City of Knoxville, 30 miles in Anderson County, 15 miles in Blount County, 6 miles in Sevier County and less than 2 miles in each Cocke, Jefferson, and Loudon Counties. (source: <http://www.knoxtrans.org>)

Program Objectives

The primary objective for the City of Knoxville's greenways system is connecting neighborhoods. Neighborhood connections for recreation and transportation have driven local greenway development over the past 12 years. Additional objectives have arisen lately, which include strong support for increased greenway based tourism development and water quality management efforts.

"Our goal is to have a greenway system that connects throughout the entire city and we're well on our way to making this happen" – Mayor Haslam

General Organization Structure

Currently, the organization structure, in theory, is similar to the Roanoke Valley. A Greenway Commission has been appointed and has similar roles as Roanoke's Greenway Commission. A grass roots organization called Knoxville Greenway Coalition has been activated and has similar objectives to the Pathfinders for Greenways. A full time Greenway Coordinator position was established by the City and a Greenway Sidewalk Coordinator with the Transportation Planning Organization has also been a key working partner.

"The more people who work on greenways the better they get. Having an inclusive quality of working on greenways is extremely important. It hurts your greenways when your territorial"- Donna Young

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Major Implementation Strategies

The major implementation strategy for greenway development in the Knoxville area is teaming up with the Tennessee Department of Transportation to include greenway and trail projects on all upcoming capital improvement projects. An increased awareness from the State has brought on many new projects to the Knoxville area which grew from the earlier success of the City's first greenway efforts.

An additional implementation strategy is integrating greenway projects with school programs designed to stop the current child obesity epidemic. This approach enables the City of Knoxville to work with the local schools to help design access to safe greenway trails that connect to the local neighborhoods.



The final major implementation strategy for the City is to find and acquire as much green space as possible, along every creek, riverbank on all state roads. This initiative of acquisition has helped Knoxville to position itself in creating a larger future network of greenway trails and connections.

Successful Funding Mechanisms

The City of Knoxville has never paid for a greenway/trail easement. Donations have enabled the project thus far even without a formal donation process. Local coordination with land owners and a supportive council have led to major victories in the easement donation department. But it's anticipated that a formal process will need to be identified over the next few years as major alignments may require easement purchases.

All of the greenway projects over the last 12 years have been built with grant money and matching funds. The City has only spent 3.4 million dollars and relies on earmarks from the State with more and more funding expected to be available in the near future. With both the Tennessee Department of Transportation (T-DOT) and the Governor of Tennessee in favor of greenway development substantial strides are expected over the next few years.

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Sources:

www.cityofknoxville.org
www.knoxtrans.org
Donna Young –phone interview – April 2006
Photos – courtesy of cityofknoxville.org

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Case Study:

Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority - W&OD Regional Railroad Trail

Background:

W&OD railroad Regional Park is a linear park 100 feet wide and 45 miles long, built on the old roadbed and named for the former trains which ran along the right of way from 1859 to 1968, extending from Arlington to Purcellville in western Loudoun County, Virginia. According to www.savethetrail.com, "the first phase of the W&OD Trail's construction was a mile-and-a-half in length and was an experiment. In 1974, the NVRPA, in partnership with the City of Falls Church and Virginia Electric and Power Company (now Dominion Virginia Power (DVP)), sought to gauge public reaction to the conversion of a railway line into a long and narrow park. This type of park is now widely known as a rail-trail. Reaction was overwhelmingly positive and this prompted the NVRPA to purchase the W&OD Railroad line from DVP in 1978. A decade later the entire 45-mile stretch of the trail had been built. It is described by the Park Authority as, "the most popular rail-trail in the U.S."



All photos courtesy of: www.savethetrail.com

In 1987, the W&OD was designated a National Recreation Trail by the U.S. Department of the Interior and completed in 1988. Since its completion, the W&OD has become a nationally known trail exhibiting historically high levels of inter-jurisdictional cooperation tremendous local support. The trail currently travels through variety of jurisdictions including:

- Loudoun County, VA
- Fairfax County, VA
- Purcellville, VA
- Leesburg, VA
- Herndon, VA
- Reston, VA
- Falls Church, VA
- Arlington, VA
- Ashburn, VA
- Sterling, VA

According to a recent economic study conducted by the Virginia Department of Conservation, an estimated 1.7 million users spent in total about \$12 million annually related to their use recreational use of the trail. Of this amount, about \$7 million was spent directly in the northern Virginia economy by locals and non-locals using the trail. The estimated 1.6 million local visits accounted for about \$5.3 million of spending directly related to the use of the W&OD.

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Greenway Infrastructure

The W&OD regional trail corridor is an 100 foot wide corridor area that includes specific infrastructure components such as a 45 mile paved asphalt trail ranging from 8-12 feet in width along with a parallel 31 mile 10' wide gravel horse trail. The gravel horse trail is being used more and more by walkers and runners seeking a softer trail surface for their recreation endeavor as well as providing an alternative to trail overcrowding. The trail also has a variety of designated access points and parking areas scattered strategically throughout the corridor. The W&OD trail provides opportunities for a wide variety of trail uses by promoting activities such as, walking, hiking, running, biking, blading and horseback riding. Due to the over 2 million people per year visiting the regional trail, a continuous program of trail infrastructure maintenance has been implemented throughout the corridor to keep up with daily wear and tear.



Currently, there is not an overall greenway plan for the area. All of the planning efforts are done via general management plan updating.

Program Objectives

The major program objective of the W&OD trail is provide a continuous linear non motorized multi-use regional trail to be used for regional recreation purposes. Currently, the primary objective remains the same, but the added objective of alternative transportation has arisen from the tremendous growth impacts and vehicle congestion in the Northern Virginia Area.

General Organization Structure

The W&OD trail is owned by the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority. "Created In the late 1950's, the Northern Virginia Planning District Commission and a group of citizens from several local jurisdictions came together to protect Northern Virginia's rich heritage of woods, meadows, lakes and streams from the threat of suburban sprawl. These citizens, working with their local parks for all Northern Virginians to enjoy governments--Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City of Falls Church--organized under the Virginia Park Authorities Act in 1959 as the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NVRPA). (www.nvrpa.org) The Park Authority is a separate regional authority containing 6 member jurisdictions. Each jurisdiction appoints two members that make up the 12 member independent board.

The W&OD regional trail is also supported by a strong advocacy group. Similar to the Roanoke Valley's Pathfinders for Greenways, the Friends of the W&OD Trail is a non profit citizens group dedicated to preservation, enhancement and preservation of the W&OD Regional Trail established in 1991. The governing body of the Friends of the W&OD consists of 15 northern Virginia residents from a number of jurisdictions on or near the trail who have a variety of recreational interests in the W&OD trail. (www.wodfriends.org)

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Major Implementation Strategies

Various strategies have change since the trail was completed in 1998. The initial implementation strategy for the trail development stemmed from the Park Authority's charge to purchase the full 45 miles of linear trail for approximately 9 million dollars from the Dominion Valley Power Company. According savethetrail.org, the sale of the 45 mile stretch of property from Dominion Valley Power to the Park Authority also contained an easement clause on the acquired property. This easement has allowed the power company to place future towers carrying overhead transmission lines along and over the existing rail corridor. This clause, is currently the subject of highly controversial power line development proposal that seeks the compromise beautiful mature tree covering throughout the last 11 miles of the trail corridor.



Successful Funding Mechanisms

A major contributor to the start up of the regional trail was the award of a Rail to Trails grant for approximately 1.8 million dollars from the Department of the Interior. This grant helped to provide monies for acquisition, design and construction of the trail. As the trail developed over time, the Northern Regional Park Authority had to investigate other financial avenues to keep the trail going. Today, the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority generates approximately 80% of its operating funds through various enterprise revenues and only 20% of its revenue from government assistance programs. Most of the revenues fall into the category user fees, license agreements and rents and account for close to a million dollars of revenue each year collected from the W&OD Regional Trail.

Typically the Park Authority grants revocable permits and licenses for a specified time period for various utility agreements. They are set up as ongoing reoccurring annual payments every year for the length of the term of the license with an inflation factor built into the fee terms. Utility crossings, water and sewer permits are a one time fee, but cable, gas and phone utilities fall into the category of reoccurring fees. The base ranges for the permit fees are generated from real estate appraisals based on land values.

Private commercial purposes must pay if using trail land for utility easements. The telecom boom in 90's is one example on how the W&OD capitalized on the utility market. Fiber optic companies were willing to pay the fees in exchange for utility crossing along the trail. The Park Authority also inherited leases when they brought property the land where the W&OD stands today. They have wisely increased rents to adjacent properties which bring in additional funding for various trail projects.

Another way the Park Authority creates revenue from its regional trail is to charge administration fees for various projects. Staff time dedicated to any permit work is fully recoverable. They charge a three time multiplier of their hourly rate for any administration time accrued. The Park Authority also charges any out of pocket expenses for engineering and legal support that is needed to process various permits and requires a cash bond for utility construction work on park property.

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Sources:

Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority
U. S. Department of Transportation
Virginia Department of Conservation
Savethetrails.org
Wodfirends.org
Railserve.com
Railstotrails.org