

THE VISION OF A HERTFORD PEDESTRIAN TRAIL

The Perquimans County Trailblazers along with the Town of Hertford and Perquimans County elected officials hope one day to make the vision of a pedestrian trail from downtown Hertford to the Newbold-White House a reality. The multi-use trail, for walkers, joggers, bicyclists, etc., has been discussed and dreamed of for some time. The Trailblazer volunteers, working on the Perquimans County Blueway/Greenway Project for both water and land trails, have recently taken on a more visible effort to promote and push the Hertford/Perquimans County pedestrian trail into existence.

The need to hasten our planning efforts for the multi-use trail has been prompted by three specific events, which will impact if and where a trail can be established. One, the development of the property between Raccoon Creek and US 17 by Tugboat Properties will include residential housing and possibly a marina. The second event is the development by The East Group of the property between the Perquimans Commerce Park and privately owned property that fronts the east side of US 17. This development, Riverbanks, will include numerous residential properties along with separate commercial property fronting Harvey Point Road. The third event is that Perquimans County is promoting the Perquimans Commerce Park as an ideal location for boat builders and associated marine industries. All three developments impact the feasibility of a pedestrian trail.

The vision for the multi-use trail is to wind along the banks of the beautiful Perquimans River from Raccoon Creek to US 17. At US 17 there would either be a boardwalk along and under the Perquimans River bridge near the shore, a tunnel under US 17 some distance from the Perquimans River, or a pedestrian overpass at the intersection of US 17 and Church Street. Unfortunately, these options are quite expensive. Further discussions with the Department of Transportation may yield some insight as to which option we should pursue. From the Perquimans River bridge going east, there would be a boardwalk through privately owned wetlands, possibly along the Perquimans River, then through the Riverbanks subdivision via pathways, paved streets or sidewalks, to the Perquimans County Commerce Park. At the Commerce Park there is already progress toward developing a running trail to the Perquimans County Community Center. The pedestrian trail would follow the running trail to the center. Once at the community center, the trail would go through private property to the Newbold-White House, possibly along the Perquimans River or through farmlands.

Several positives have resulted from the Trailblazers discussing the trail with the developers, the Hertford Planning and Zoning Board, and the county planner. Both developers, The East Group and Tugboat Properties have agreed to plan for pathways or to allow access for a trail through their properties. The Hertford town planner and the county planner are working cooperatively with the Trailblazers and the developments to ensure the multi-use trail has a smooth transition between the various projects. It is an exciting project to work on!

The huge obstacle in our path is going over, around or through US 17 and/or the Perquimans River bridge. A small group of the Trailblazers recently traveled to Columbia, NC and talked to the town manager concerning their efforts that brought about the waterfront trail in their town. The talks gave us much information and resources to consider. Obviously, the Trailblazers will need to focus on these possible resources including the NC Department of Transportation if the trail is to become a reality.



Part of the waterfront trail in Columbia