



REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION

ITEM NO. 12.

DATE OF REQUEST: July 12, 2010

REQUESTED BY: Benjamin Andrea, Planner I, Department of Planning and Community Development

SHORT TITLE: Resolution Supporting Application for National Parks Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program for Technical Planning Assistance for the West Pender Rail-Trail Project

BACKGROUND: The Board unanimously passed a similar request from Planning Staff on June 22, 2009, however Staff's application for NPS assistance was denied due to travel constraints and staff availability. NPS Staff encouraged Planning Staff to reapply during this year's grant cycle.

The West Pender Rail-Trail is a long-term project to create a multi-purpose recreational trail in the western portion of the County utilizing the abandon Seaboard Coast Line rail corridor where feasible. The trail segment within Pender County would create approximately 22 miles of a potential 85-mile trail from Wilmington to Fayetteville, North Carolina. The trail would offer the citizens of the County a variety of social, health, economic, and environmental benefits, as well as a viable transportation alternative linking together present and future communities, attractions, schools, and neighborhoods.

Because property ownership of the rail corridor has reverted to adjacent landowners under North Carolina General Statutes, the right to utilize the corridor must be negotiated with property owners before trail construction may commence. Rail-trail projects identical to the West Pender Rail-Trail have been undertaken all over the country, and many projects have been faced with similar legitimate concerns. Through community outreach, education, and involvement, as well as thorough project planning, such concerns have been addressed and overcome to provide many communities with a invaluable recreational asset.

The National Parks Service (NPS) provides technical planning assistance to communities through their Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program for locally-led outdoor recreational projects through a selective application process. Should the West Pender Rail-Trail be selected for program assistance, NPS staff would assist County staff in community education and outreach, property usage negotiation, project funding options, and general project planning for a maximum duration of two years per project. Planning staff has discussed the project concept with NPS staff, who has indicated the rail-trail project is a viable candidate for program assistance.

SPECIFIC ACTION REQUESTED: To approve a resolution authorizing staff to pursue technical assistance from the National Parks Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program.

COUNTY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

Respectfully recommend approval.

RB
Initial

RESOLUTION

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Pender County Board of Commissioners that:

the Planning and Community Development staff is authorized to move forward with pursuing technical planning assistance from the National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program. The County Manager is authorized to execute any/all documents necessary to implement this resolution.

AMENDMENTS:

MOVED _____ SECONDED _____

APPROVED _____ DENIED _____ UNANIMOUS

YEA VOTES: Tate ___ Brown ___ Blanchard ___ Rivenbark ___ Williams ___

Jimmy T. Tate, Chairman Date

ATTEST Date