

## Just imagine what that railroad corridor still can do for the community

Railroad lines once brought our communities to life. They brought commerce to town, enriched community culture and provided easy access to travel far and wide.

These monumental infrastructure investments have existed a century or more. Today it is a nearly 50-50 chance that any one corridor has fallen into disuse and already may have disappeared through neglect and lack of vision.

Practically no public thought is given to preserving or utilizing these valuable assets.

Surviving rail corridors beg your attention. Let yourself imagine how they again can serve us for another 100 years.

## Greenbelts

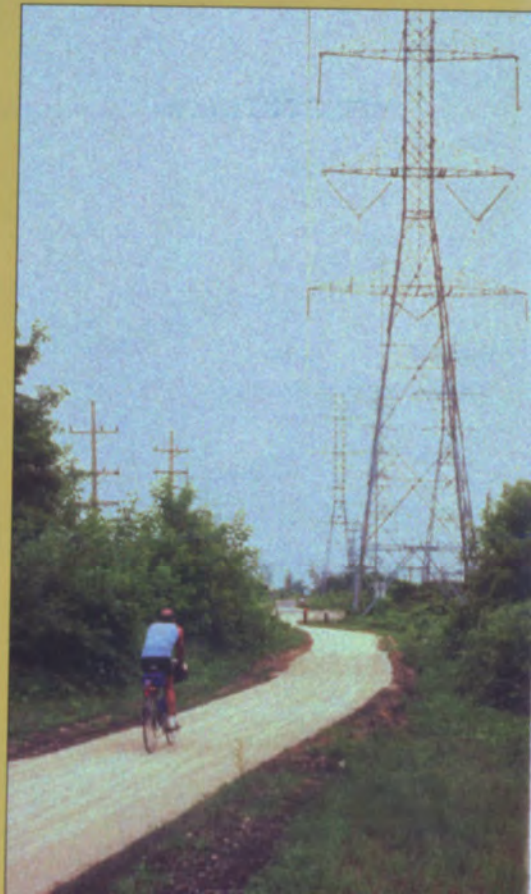
**R**ailroad corridors are long-established buffers between commercial, industrial and residential properties. Allowing a corridor to be broken up and disappear wastes a valuable community asset. Consider the consequences and the lost options.

Greenways protect these buffers while enhancing their community value. Foot paths, bikeways, historic preservation, nature study and beautification are integrated with many corridor preservation plans.



**O**ur cities and towns grew up around railroads. A rail corridor is an integral part of most communities. At a minimum, the corridor is an important surface drainage feature.

Looking ahead, rail corridors provide valuable utility lanes for water, sewers, power, gas and communications. Obtaining new rights-of-way for these services outweigh the cost of corridor preservation. Utility leases generate significant public income in some locations.



# Transportation



**W**ill your community or region ever need rail service again? It is an important option that only can be exercised through corridor preservation.

And for the present, pedestrian paths and bikeways can reduce traffic congestion, help conserve energy and contribute to community livability. Utilizing corridors for alternate transportation options is wise community planning.



# Preservation

**T**ake a walk along your rail corridors. See how most of the community's historically significant structures are in sight? Can you save the old depot for community activities? Are those old houses and commercial buildings worth protection?

Rail corridor preservation often launches adjacent projects that reverse blight, improve property values and enhance community pride. Putting history on display can be used for economic advantage.



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## Recreation



Old rail corridors make wonderful linear parks. They are the most cost-effective way to provide safe, off-road hiking, bicycling, skating and saddle riding facilities for a community or region.

Rail-trails provide high-use, low-maintenance facilities that are popular with all ages and suited to all physical capabilities. These linear parks are popular community amenities that often enhance neighboring property values.



## Conservation



Rail corridors have been in place and relatively undisturbed for more than a century. They provide scarce natural habitat and often nurture endangered plant and wildlife species, even in urban settings. A linear park can be a living lab for nature study and education.

# Corridors: worth

### State laws and policy ignore public interest

Building the North Carolina rail system took 100 years. Its creation was a state matter of highest priority. Construction of the 5,200-mile system required both public and private resources. And it brought public transportation to nearly every city, town and village.

*Surplus rail corridors are still a public matter. The state's power of imminent domain was granted to create most railroads. Yet, under present state law and policy, adjacent property owners can claim a majority of inactive rail properties, denying preservation and further public use.*

North Carolina's present rail system of 3,400 miles continues to shrink every year. The 1989 General Assembly empowered NC DOT to preserve rail corridors, but without funding or comprehensive purpose. With limited focus and resources, the Rail Division has preserved less than 150 miles.

*The rational transportation goal should be no more strategic corridor losses, supported by a plan and funding to retain and retrieve corridors.*

Moreover, a comprehensive state policy is needed to reassert public interest in all corridors for transportation and many other public purposes.

North Carolina  
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# resources saving

## NCRT works to recycle neglected linear assets

North Carolina Rail-Trails invites questions on rail corridor preservation.

NCRT monitors the state's rail system. It researches corridor legislation and issues; actively pursues corridor preservation and retrieval, and encourages corridor conversion to trails or other public purposes.

NCRT also provides coordination between local, state and federal agencies, and allied state and national organizations. It is an information source for rail corridor statutes, acquisitions, development, promotion and funding. A quarterly newsletter is circulated to members and corridor preservation influences.

The state organization fosters local leadership and acts in support of local rail-trail initiatives throughout North Carolina.

NCRT is a volunteer, non-profit corporation that welcomes new members and needs your tax-deductible donations for corridor preservation programs.

### As an aware citizen, you have a vital role in corridor preservation

- Communicate to state legislators that rail corridors are a matter of public interest and priority.
- Express the need for a comprehensive state corridor preservation policy.
- Talk to local elected officials, planning agencies and others about alternative corridor uses.
- Monitor rail service in your community. Be alert to potential abandonments.
- Be prepared to form a local rail corridor preservation initiative.
- Become active in North Carolina Rail-Trails.

## Tourism



**A** regional rail-trail can bring tourism to your town. Off-road hiking, bicycling and saddle touring are growth industries that are limited only by available open spaces. Corridor trails satisfy the urge to get out and roam while engaging in healthful recreation.

Cross-country trails provide opportunities for food service, lodging, rental and other businesses to remote towns and villages. Established trails are now generating hundreds of millions in economic activity.



# What's it to you?

