

## **New trail open to public**

**Residents now can jog, walk, rollerblade or ride bikes on a new trail along the Catawba.**

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Completion of the entire Riverwalk project at the site of the Celanese Celriver plant could take 15 years or more. But residents already can take advantage of one of the best aspects of that project, the new Riverfront Trail along the Catawba River.

Riverwalk is the name of a massive redevelopment project that will transform the Celanese site off Cherry Road into an outdoor shopping village, a business park and hundreds of homes. Also planned are a velodrome and BMX Supercross track as part of the Cycling and Outdoor Center of the Carolinas.

Riverwalk also could feature a YMCA branch, ball fields, a climbing wall and other outdoor recreational facilities. All in all, it is the largest development project in Rock Hill's history.

Ultimately, the project could wind up generating enough jobs and commerce to account for 12 percent of tax and utility revenues in the city's general fund, with a total investment of \$600 million. Riverwalk literally will transform the city in many ways.

But that will take years. Residents won't have to wait, however, to take advantage of the new Riverwalk Trail, which opened to the public July 1.

The new trail is 2.25 miles long and can be used free of charge for running, biking, rollerblading and picnics at sites along the trail. Pets also are welcome, and there is an access point for canoes and kayaks.

The trail is open 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., April through September. From October through March, the trails close at 6 p.m.

This stretch of the Catawba has been locked away from the general public for half a century, sequestered behind barbed wire fences that surrounded the Celanese plant. Until construction began on the trail, the area had not seen much human traffic since the days when Catawba Indians fished and hunted there.

The trail winds past landmarks such as an Indian trading path called Nation Ford, a Civil War-era gun battery and the stone remnants of a summer house built in the 1900s by textile magnate Hamilton Carhartt.

But perhaps the most impressive feature is the river itself, with all the natural splendors it has to offer. City Manager Carey Smith has likened the river to "our ocean," a magnificent natural resource that now can be enjoyed by thousands more people.

This stretch of trail also hooks up with the Carolina Thread Trail, a regional network of trails spanning 15 counties from North Carolina to the Piedmont. This series of trails, when completed, is likely to be one of the premier hiking and biking trails on the East Coast.

It is exciting that Rock Hill will be such a vital link in the trail. We salute city leaders and local environmental groups for ensuring that Rock Hill would be a part of this ambitious project.

For those who want to see the new Riverwalk Trail for themselves, access is easy. From Cherry Road heading toward Fort Mill, turn right on Dunkin's Ferry Road just before the U.S. 21 bridge. Follow the road to a 30-spot parking lot near the trail head.

Happy hiking.

<http://www.heraldonline.com/2010/07/11/2301422/new-trail-open-to-public.html#ixzz0tTe1vbss>