



**HORRY COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA  
CITY OF MYRTLE BEACH, SOUTH CAROLINA**

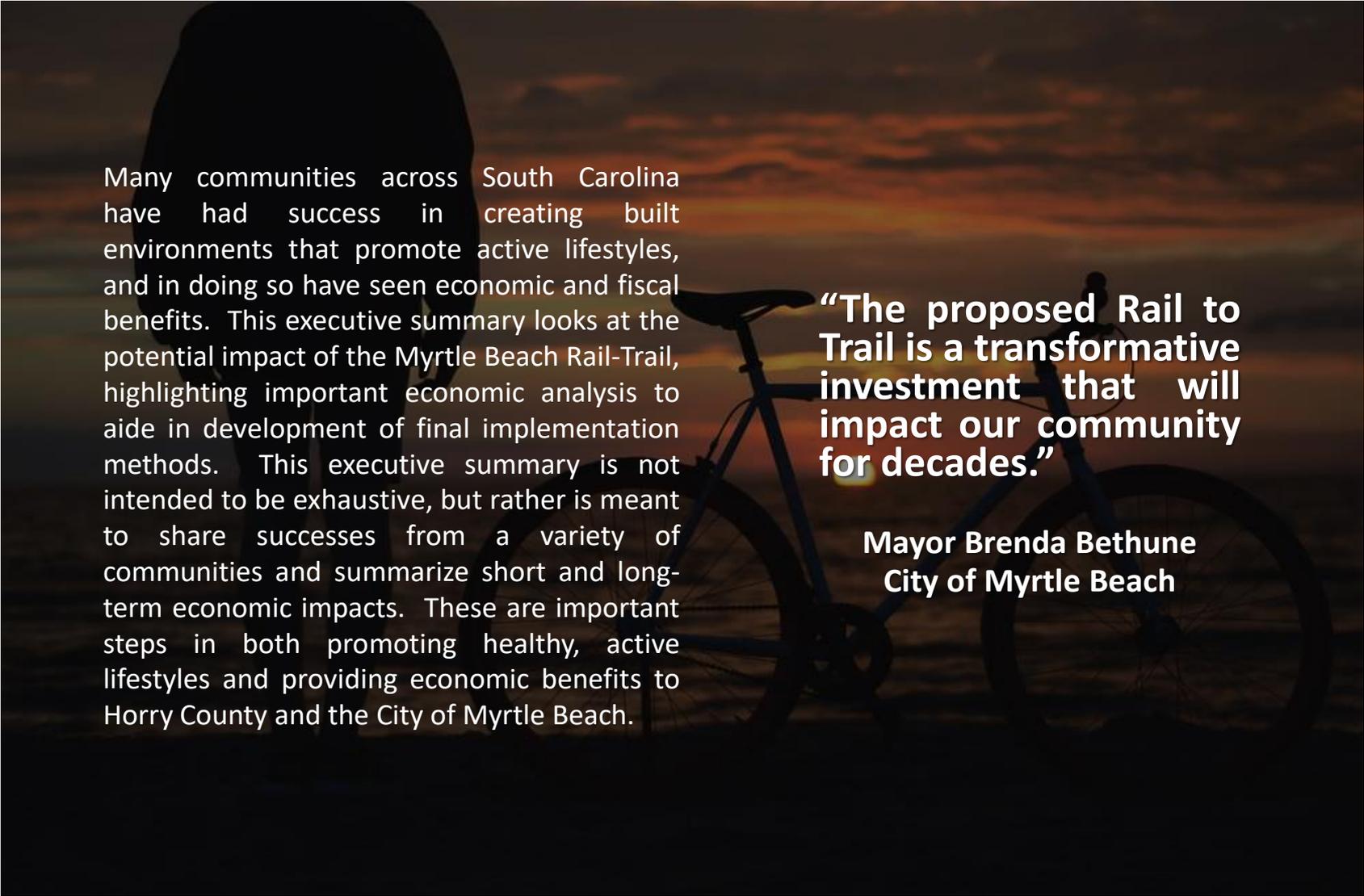


# RAILS TO TRAILS

*Update – October 12, 2021*

Horry County, Infrastructure & Regulation Committee





Many communities across South Carolina have had success in creating built environments that promote active lifestyles, and in doing so have seen economic and fiscal benefits. This executive summary looks at the potential impact of the Myrtle Beach Rail-Trail, highlighting important economic analysis to aide in development of final implementation methods. This executive summary is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather is meant to share successes from a variety of communities and summarize short and long-term economic impacts. These are important steps in both promoting healthy, active lifestyles and providing economic benefits to Horry County and the City of Myrtle Beach.

**“The proposed Rail to Trail is a transformative investment that will impact our community for decades.”**

**Mayor Brenda Bethune  
City of Myrtle Beach**



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# WHAT ARE RAILS TO TRAILS

Rail-trails are multipurpose public paths created from former railroad corridors. These paths are built for all walks of life, generally flat or gently sloping, making them easily accessible and a great way to enjoy the outdoors and connect people to points of interest and significance.

# BENEFITS OF TRAILS IN OUR COMMUNITY

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## HEALTH

Trails help people of all ages incorporate exercise into their daily routines by connecting them with places they want or need to go. Communities that encourage physical activity by making use of the linear corridors can see a significant effect on public health and wellness.



## TRANSPORTATION & LIVABILITY

Many areas of the country rely upon trail facilities to "feed" people in to and out of transit stations in a safe and efficient manner. The ability to avoid congested streets and highways, and travel through natural areas on foot or by non-motorized means, is a large factor in a community's "livability."



## ENVIRONMENT & PUBLIC SAFETY

Law enforcement agencies report that railtrails do not encourage crime; rather, cite heavy trail usage as a crime-deterrent in areas of former isolation. One agency responded to the RTC that litter (as a minor crime) was virtually nonexistent on a section of converted rail, but was overwhelming on portions which had not been converted to trail.



## ECONOMY & REVITALIZATION

Countless communities across America have experienced an economic revitalization due in whole or in part to trails and greenways. Effects of trails and greenways are sometimes subtle, like when a company decides to move to a particular community because of amenities like trails.



## HISTORIC PRESERVATION & COMMUNITY IDENTITY

Trails have become sources of community identity and pride. These effects are magnified when communities use trails and greenways to highlight and provide access to historic and cultural resources.

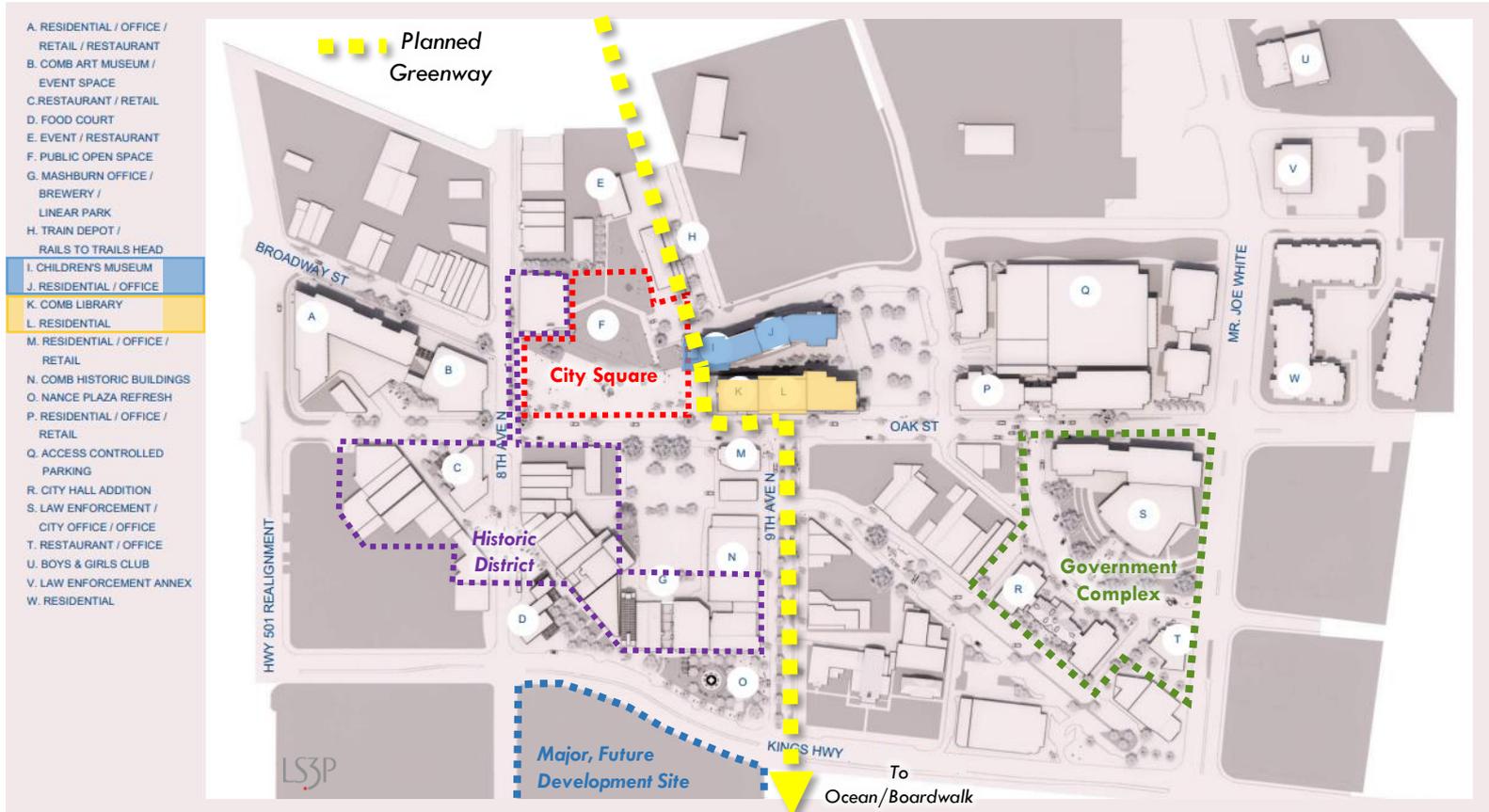
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# DOWNTOWN MYRTLE BEACH

The proposed Rail-Trail links Horry County residents and visitors to destinations like Downtown Myrtle Beach, the Boardwalk, and the Arts & Innovation District.

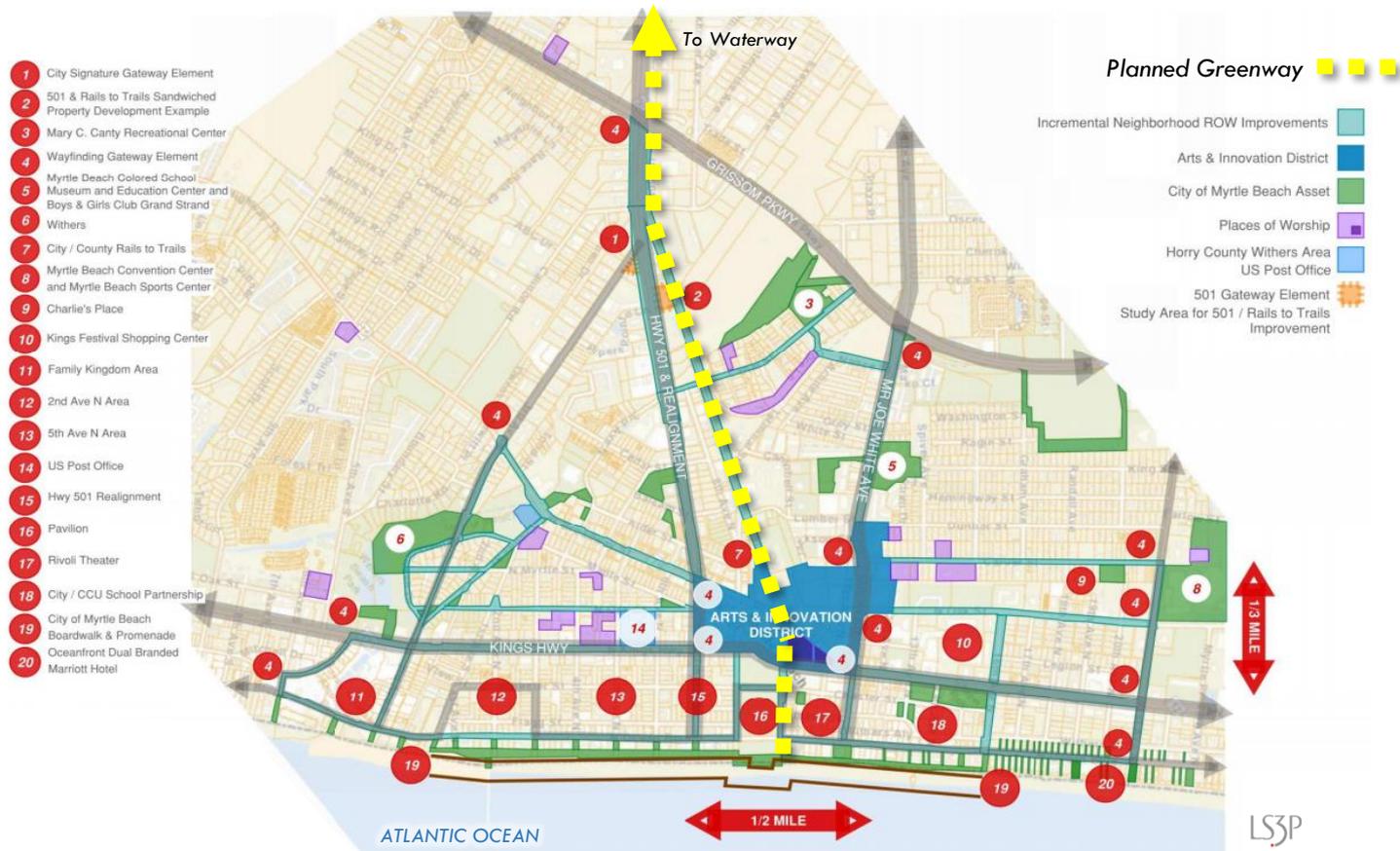
# CITY OF MYRTLE BEACH ARTS & INNOVATION DISTRICT

Advanced Planning and Architecture



# CITY OF MYRTLE BEACH ARTS & INNOVATION DISTRICT

## Connections and Relationships



# MYRTLE BEACH DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT



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# RAIL-TRAIL CORRIDOR

The primary 2.5 mile railroad ROW extends through the heart of Myrtle Beach between the Intracoastal Waterway and downtown's Historic Train Depot. The corridor includes two spur tracks that connect to single-family residential, parks and recreation conversation areas, and a warehouse/manufacturing district.

# RAIL – TRAIL CORRIDOR

## Points of Interest



# RAIL – TRAIL CORRIDOR

Desirable Outcomes – New Private Investment



# RAIL – TRAIL CORRIDOR

Desirable Outcomes – New Public Spaces



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# ECONOMIC ACTIVITY & IMPACT

Myrtle Beach's Rail-to-Trail conversion will have a significant impact on the health, quality of life, and economy of the residents of Horry County.



Winding from Myrtle Beach’s coastline to the Intracoastal, the City of Myrtle Beach’s proposed rail-trail offers scenic views and forest habitats. The planned route links residents and visitors to destinations like Downtown Myrtle Beach, the Boardwalk, and the Arts and Innovation District. Short linkages connect proposed blueways access points at Waterway Anchor Park, residents, employment centers, and commercial nodes.

The trail will not only serve as a signature amenity for City of Myrtle Beach and Horry County residents, but will also provide a critical linkage to the East Coast Greenway’s 2,900 mile connection from Maine to Florida.



## WHY INVEST IN TRAILS

### Health & Recreation Economic Impact

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Myrtle Beach's Rail-to-Trail conversion will have a significant impact on the health, quality of life, and economy in Horry County / Myrtle Beach and the entire region. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) determined that by creating and improving places in our communities to be physically active – such as a Rail-Trail project, there could be a 25 percent increase in the percentage of people who exercise at least three times a week. For people who are inactive, even small increases in physical activity can bring measurable health benefits, which leads to measurable healthcare cost savings.

We also know that according to the Outdoor Industry Association, outdoor recreation generates nationally more annual consumer spending than motor vehicles and parts, pharmaceuticals, and household utilities, and creates more jobs than the construction industry.

#### **How much money does South Carolina's outdoor recreation generate?**

- **\$18 billion in consumer spending**
- **201,000 in direct South Carolina jobs**
- **\$4.7 billion in wages and salaries**
- **\$1.0 billion in state and local tax revenue**



# WHY INVEST IN TRAILS

## Who Lives Near The Rail-Trail?



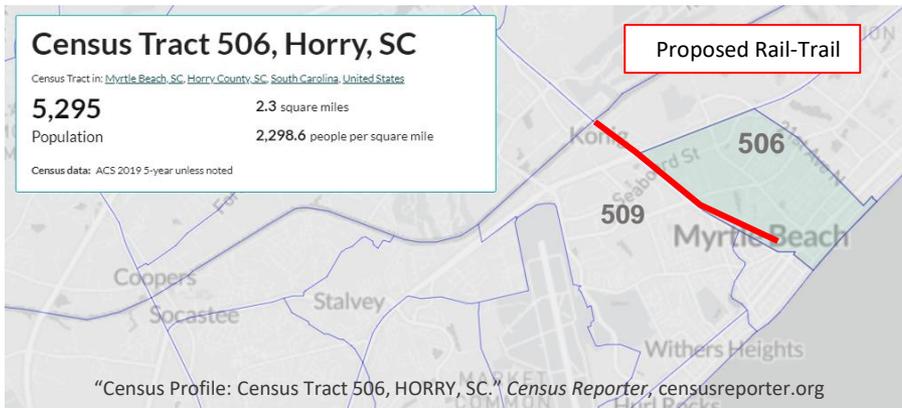
**13,813**

Population within a 20 minute walk of the Rail-Trail

**16%**

Average Percentage of households without access to a vehicle

While construction of the Myrtle Beach Rail Trail will benefit all residents and visitors to the Grand Strand region, those living within one mile of the trail (about a 20 minute walk) will have the most convenient access to the Rail-Trail. These neighbors will gain the most from its construction.



### Age

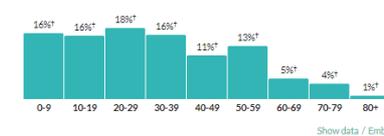
**29.9**

Median age

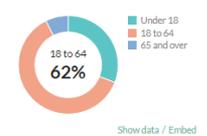
about two-thirds of the figure in Myrtle Beach: 45.2

about two-thirds of the figure in Horry County: 45.9

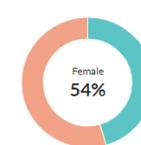
### Population by age range



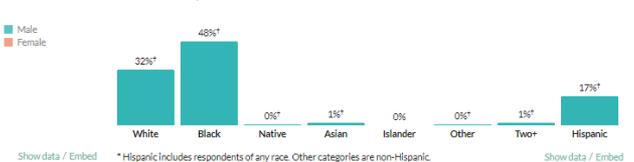
### Population by age category



### Sex



### Race & Ethnicity



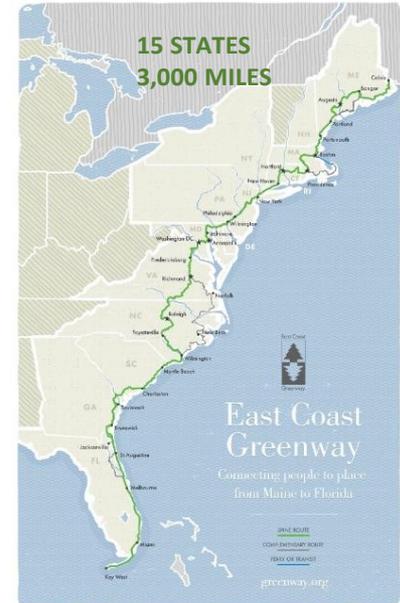
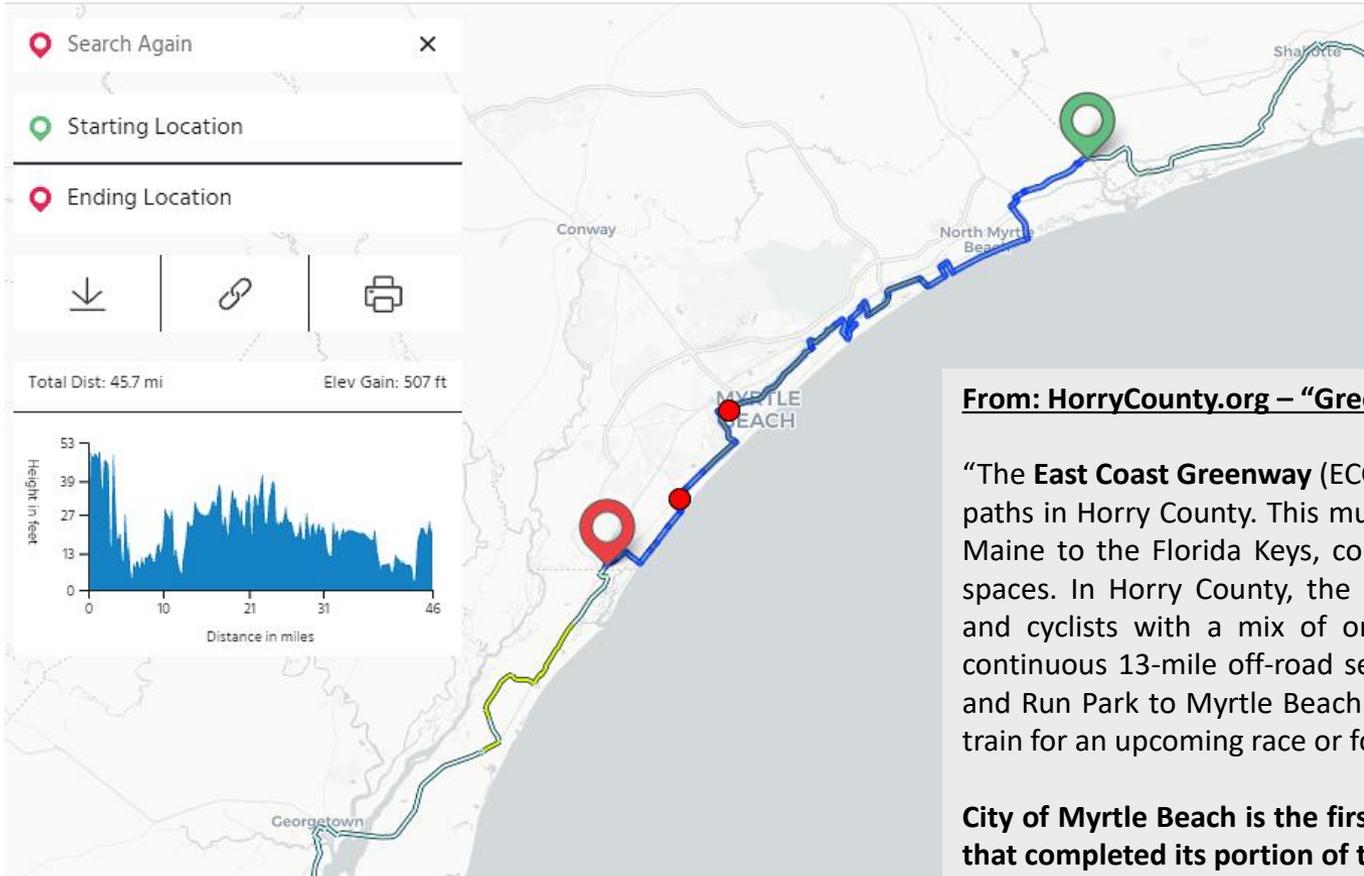
**“Trails consistently remain the number one community amenity sought by prospective homeowners.”**

- National Association of Homebuilders (2008) in "Evidence of many varieties of economic benefits linked to trails "(2011)



# EAST COAST GREENWAY

Horry County



## From: HorryCounty.org – “Greenways”

“The **East Coast Greenway** (ECG) is one of the most well-known paths in Horry County. This multi-use trail system extends from Maine to the Florida Keys, connecting urban areas with open spaces. In Horry County, the ECG is designed for pedestrians and cyclists with a mix of on-road and off-road sections. A continuous 13-mile off-road section is complete from the Bike and Run Park to Myrtle Beach State Park and is a great way to train for an upcoming race or for your leisurely bike ride.”

**City of Myrtle Beach is the first Municipality in South Carolina that completed its portion of the East Coast Greenway.**



## EAST COAST GREENWAY

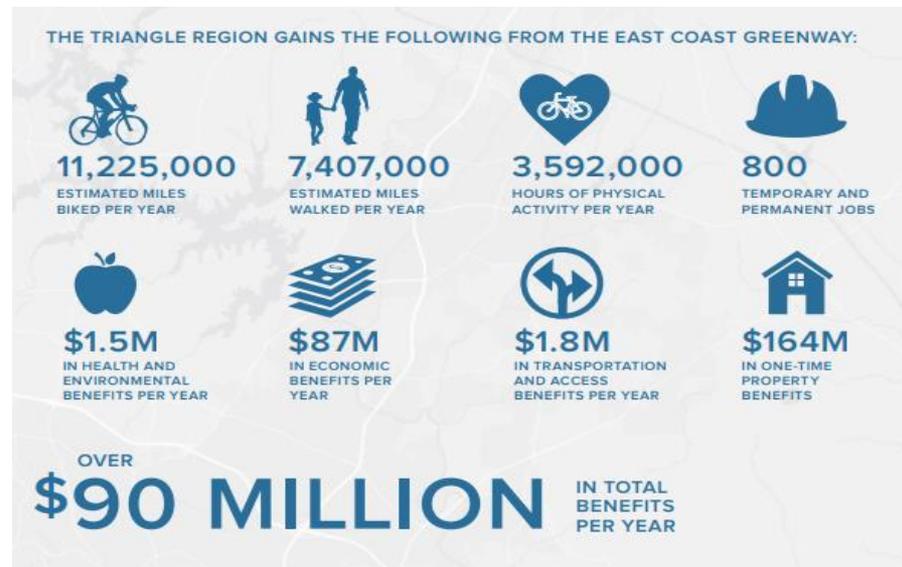
Regional Economic Impact Studies

**“A 2018 STUDY IN NORTH CAROLINA FOUND THAT EVERY \$1.00 INVESTED IN ONE-TIME TRAIL CONSTRUCTION GENERATES \$1.72 ANNUALLY FROM LOCAL BUSINESS REVENUE, SALES TAX REVENUE, AND BENEFITS RELATED TO HEALTH AND TRANSPORTATION.”**

Institute for Transportation Research and Education, North Carolina State University

**“Every 300 miles of new greenway infrastructure in North Carolina results in “economic stimulus from upfront construction of \$174 M supporting 1,600 jobs” and increased tourism activity of \$128 M supporting 1,600 jobs.”**

- WalkBikeNC: North Carolina Statewide Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan (2013)



The 70-mile section of East Coast Greenway generates \$90 million in total benefits annually for the Triangle region, from gains in health and the environment to transportation and access benefits, economic gains, and increased property values.



## WHY INVEST IN TRAILS

New Horry County Tax Revenue When Trail is Complete

### 2020 HORRY COUNTY TAX LEVIES

DEBT SERVICE	4.7
GENERAL FUND	41.6
HORRY-GEORGETOWN TECHNICAL EDUCATION COLLEGE	1.7
HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION	0.7
SENIOR CITIZENS FUND	0.4
COUNTY RECREATION	1.6
<b>TOTAL LEVY FOR COUNTY PURPOSES</b>	<b>50.7</b>
BOARD OF EDUCATION DEBT SERVICE FUND	10
SCHOOL OPERATION FUND	118.1
<b>TOTAL LEVY FOR SCHOOL PUPOSES</b>	<b>128.1</b>
<b>TOTAL COUNTY AND SCHOOL PUPOSES</b>	<b>178.8</b>

## \$10 MILLION

### New Tax Revenue

\$30,420 = Horry County  
\$76,860 = Horry County Schools

## \$25 MILLION

### New Tax Revenue

\$76,050 = Horry County  
\$152,100 = Horry County Schools

## \$50 MILLION

### New Tax Revenue

**\$192,150** = Horry County  
**\$384,300** = Horry County Schools

\*Real estate tax income values are calculated assuming all new investment is assessed at 6% commercial property



# WHEN THE MYRTLE BEACH RAIL-TRAIL IS COMPLETE

The Grand Strand Region Will Gain

**“We view trail networks and green spaces as part of our business strategy. The environment in which we build our buildings and the amenities we offer outside our buildings are key attractors for tenants.”**

*Jerry Sweeney, CEO, President, and Trustee  
Brandywine Realty Trust President  
Chairman of the Board  
Schuylkill River Development Corporation*

## ESTIMATED VISITORS PER YEAR



## MORE JOBS



## ONE-TIME CONSTRUCTION ECONOMIC IMPACT



## POTENTIAL ECONOMIC IMPACT ALONG RAIL-TRAIL



## ANNUAL REVENUE DIRECTLY RELATED TO RAIL-TRAIL





END