

Laura Richards, Founder & Chair
Friends of Carrollton Greenbelt, LLC

January 23, 2017

League of American Bicyclists

Re: Bike Friendly Community Application from the City of Carrollton, GA

Dear Members of the League of American Bicyclists,

Thank you for considering our application to become a Bicycle Friendly Community. This opportunity is a culmination of efforts our team here in Carrollton, Georgia, has implemented since 2011 when we created the Friends of Carrollton GreenBelt LLC.

The reason I founded the Friends group is because I had just moved back to my hometown of Carrollton in 2009, and after seeing the start of the *pedestrianization* of Exhibition Road in London, United Kingdom, I realized that there was local demand here for safe walking and bicycling in our town, especially with kids. Our kids were 2, 5, and 7 years old at the time.

I had seen bicycle and pedestrian trails work elsewhere in my job as a tour guide for Vermont Bicycle Touring from 1997 to 2000, in Europe (Holland, France, and Italy) and also around the U.S. I had been to Chattanooga to see their Riverwalk. I had been on the Greenville, South Carolina, Swamp Rabbit and the Atlanta Beltline. I knew that it could be done, even in a small city. I learned of the existence of a GreenBelt plan through the Carrollton Superintendent of Parks and Recreation, Kent Johnston. His department is a nationally accredited Parks & Recreation Department (one of only 5 in Georgia.)

Kent and his team have done a fabulous job of maintaining what is now their GreenBelt, since upon completion, the trail belongs to the City. Becoming a Bicycle Friendly Community essentially expands the GreenBelt's success beyond the trail corridor into all of Carrollton.

The Carrollton GreenBelt is a true community effort and we hope to continue making the partnerships we started work for other pedestrian and bicycle friendly initiatives. The City adopted and follows the Complete Streets Policy: The Parks and Recreation Department included connectivity of their facilities in their newest Master Plan. Tanner Medical Center uses their Community Transformation Grant, the only one awarded to a hospital in the Southeast, to promote healthy habits and sponsors, among other programs, Safe Routes to School. Local business - including the Southwire Company, donate to the trail fund and sponsor community events. The University of West Georgia replaced on-street-parking with buffered bike lanes. Carrollton City Schools changed the school ordinance to allow biking and walking to school and added a bike-ped lane that connects the elementary school with the GreenBelt. The



Friends of Carrollton GreenBelt, LLC

is a member-driven, grassroots organization striving to create an environmentally sensitive trail system in Carrollton while promoting health, fitness, and livability by integrating transportation with recreation.

Community Foundation of West Georgia partners with the Friends of Carrollton GreenBelt, LLC, to accept and process monetary gifts on our behalf.

Most importantly, we see the trail being used daily by more and more people. Some use the trail for exercise, some for socializing, some to relax. A survey on the GreenBelt's use, conducted by Dr. Lisa Gezon of the University of West Georgia, is changing the outlook on socializing as a basis, and not only a side-effect, of exercising.

We hosted the 2016 Georgia Trail Summit, the 2015 Bicycle Ride Across Georgia (BRAG), and, between 2013 and 2016, four regional Get Healthy Live Well Health Summits. During the 2015 summit, the city and county officials met with nationally renowned alternative transportation advocate – Mark Fenton, who praised Carrollton's bicycle and pedestrian friendly projects. Cities like Milledgeville and Columbus, Georgia, that already are Bicycle Friendly Communities, are interested in replicating our GreenBelt. Some of our neighbors – the cities of Newnan and LaGrange, Georgia, toured our trail and are following Carrollton's success with planning trails of their own.

I am looking forward to hearing from you should you have questions. Please see attached our latest article, and visit anytime to learn how far we have come and to see that now is our time to become a bicycle friendly community!

Sincerely,

Laura Richards - *Founder & Chair, Friends of Carrollton Greenbelt, LLC*

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