

About the Cover:

Lineberger Park Renovation and Revitalization

Lineberger Park has been a community landmark for the citizens of Gastonia and Gaston County since the late 1920's, providing both passive and active recreation opportunities for several generations. As Gastonia's first park, Lineberger Park was the beginning of public recreation in the area.

Located just seven blocks from downtown Gastonia, Lineberger Park consists of approximately eighteen beautiful acres that began with a generous land gift from the Lineberger family and was matched by an equal property acquisition by the City. Signifying its importance to the community, Lineberger Park was designated as the trailhead of the Avon/Catawba Greenway in 2001. This two and one-half mile segment of greenway provides walking access to the park for an additional fifteen thousand residents. In early 2002, a stream restoration project was completed on the section of Avon Creek that runs through the center of the park. The restoration project made significant improvements to the creek's water quality, eased downstream flood potentials and created several areas for biological and ecological learning opportunities.

Recognizing the significance of Lineberger Park as a great community asset, City leaders, City staff, and the Recreation Advisory Commission began efforts to develop a Master Plan for the revitalization of the park in July 2002. Site Solutions, a professional park planning firm, was engaged to successfully develop a Master Plan that would: preserve the park, define its role in providing recreation opportunities for our residents for years to come, continue sensitivity to the past, safeguard as much of the park's passive character as possible, identify and locate appropriate recreation uses and, most importantly, provide a plan for facility and infrastructure layout that would maximize opportunities while minimizing use impacts on the site.

The development of a city-wide long-range plan for parks, recreation, and open space began in early 2004. A recreation planning committee was formed and included several City Council members, Recreation Advisory Commission members, approximately fifty local citizens and business leaders, City Planning Department staff, and City Recreation Department staff. The entitled, ***Gastonia: Vision for a Healthy Community—A Plan for Parks, Recreation, and Open Spaces***, was adopted by City Council on November 15, 2005. The Lineberger Park Revitalization Project was consistently favored as the top priority in implementing the plan.

The first phase of the Lineberger Park Revitalization Project will provide a variety of recreation opportunities that include a premier lighted basketball court with spectator seating, zero-depth sprayground, large playground, three picnic shelters, and approximately one mile of paved walking trails with nature overlooks. Ecologically and aesthetically configured parking will be added as well as site development for a future carousel in close proximity to the newly added miniature train.

The total cost of the Lineberger Park Revitalization Project is estimated to be over \$1.25 million with funding coming a North Carolina Parks & Recreation Trust Fund Grant and the City. Construction on the project is tentatively scheduled to begin in 2007 and take from 9 to 18 months to complete.