

Strategic Vision for a Rail Trail

**Parks & Open Space Board,
Horry County Planning Department**

Tom Russo, Grand Strand Bicycle Club

July 12, 2022

- ▶ **A Vision**
- ▶ **Rail line History**
- ▶ **The Rail line Today**
- ▶ **Four Phases**
- ▶ **Constraints**
- ▶ **Funding**
- ▶ **Imagine 2040 with a Rail Trail**

TOPICS

THE VISION

Build a 34-mile, non-motorized rail-with-trail,
from Loris, SC to the Myrtle Beach train Depot
for use by commuters and recreational
enthusiasts.

- ▶ 1880s – Atlantic Coast Rail Line Railroad (ACL)
- ▶ 1896 – B&C builds the Conway Coast RR to Pine Island
- ▶ 1900s – Seaboard Air Line Railroad
- ▶ 1967 – Seaboard Coast Line Railroad
 - ▶ merger of Seaboard & Coast Line
- ▶ 1985 – Waccamaw Coast Line
- ▶ 2013 – R.J. Corman Railroad Group

RAIL LINE HISTORY



- ▶ Owner of rail line and public right-of-way
 - ▶ Horry County
- ▶ Rail road operator
 - ▶ R.J. Corman
 - ▶ Operates in 23 states
 - ▶ History of rail trail cooperation

RAIL ROAD TODAY

The Review of Reviews—Advertising Section

STRAIGHT AS A PLUMB LINE

to the Winter Resorts of the
CAROLINAS AND FLORIDA



Just Right

The Climate in the Carolinas,
Georgia and Florida.

The service and schedule
of the
Seaboard Florida Limited

Q This Magnificent all Pullman electric lighted train commencing January 7th.

Lev. New York, daily, 12:25 noon

Ar. Camden " 6:15 a. m.

Ar. Columbia " 7:09 a. m.

Ar. Savannah " 9:15 a. m.

Ar. Jacksonville " 1:00 p. m.

Ar. St. Augustine " 2:30 p. m.

Q The quickest train service via the shortest route. Two other daily high class trains.

Q Excursion tickets allowing stopovers on sale until April 30th. Return limit May 31st.

Q For resort booklet or information apply Northern offices:

Boston, 201 Washington St.
New York, 100 Broadway
Philadelphia, 1423 Chestnut St.
Baltimore, Continental Trust Bldg.
Washington, 1421 Pennsylvania Ave.

SEABOARD AIR LINE RAILWAY

Please mention the Review of Reviews when writing to advertisers

48

RJ Corman Railroad Company / Carolina Line Overview



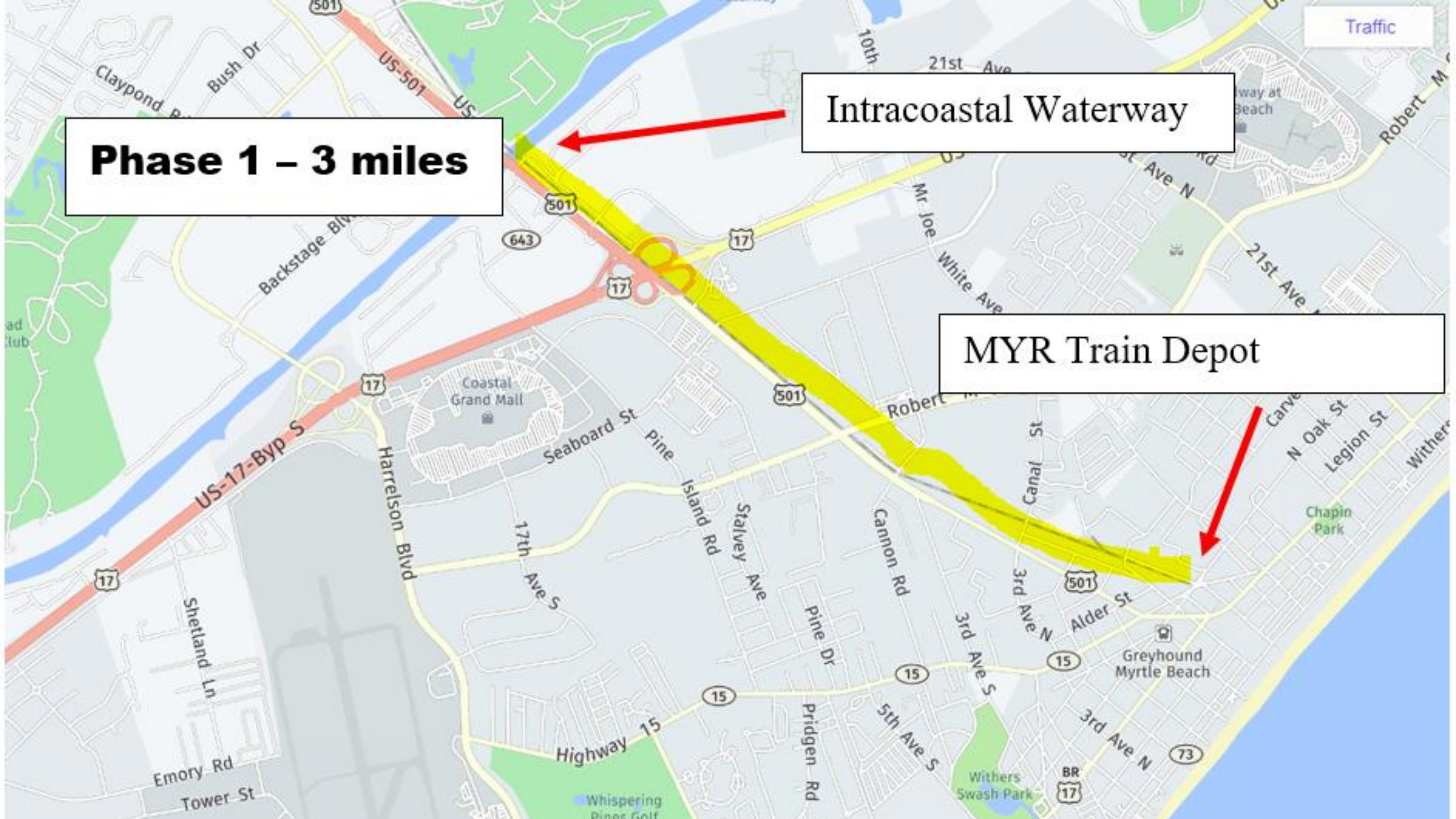
1. **Myrtle Beach Train Depot to Waterway – 3 miles**
2. **Waterway to CCU campus – 8 miles**
3. **ACLRD (Conway Train Depot) to CCU – 3 miles**
4. **ACLRD (Conway Train Depot) to Loris, SC – 20 miles**

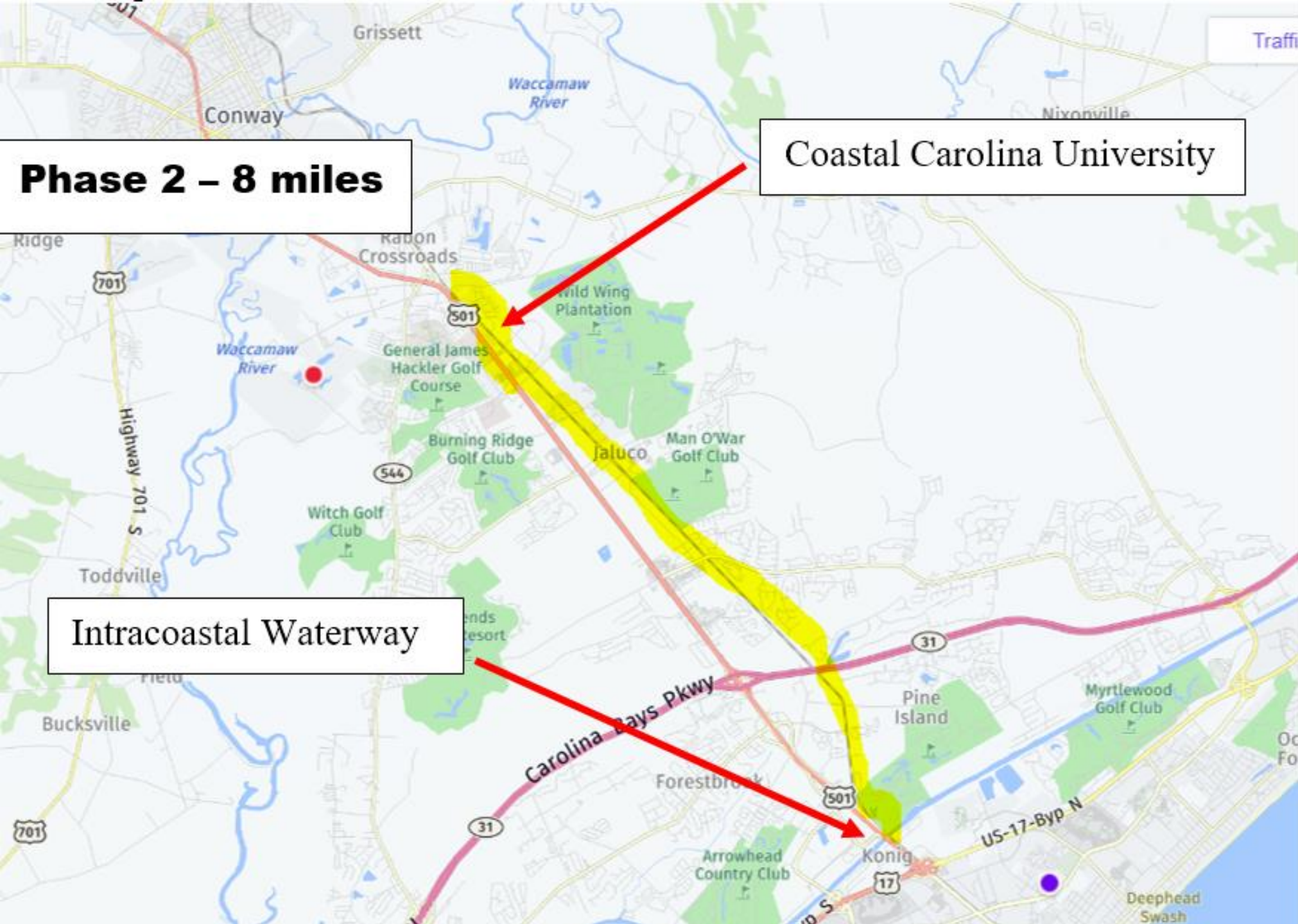
FOUR PHASES

Phase 1 – 3 miles

Intracoastal Waterway

MYR Train Depot

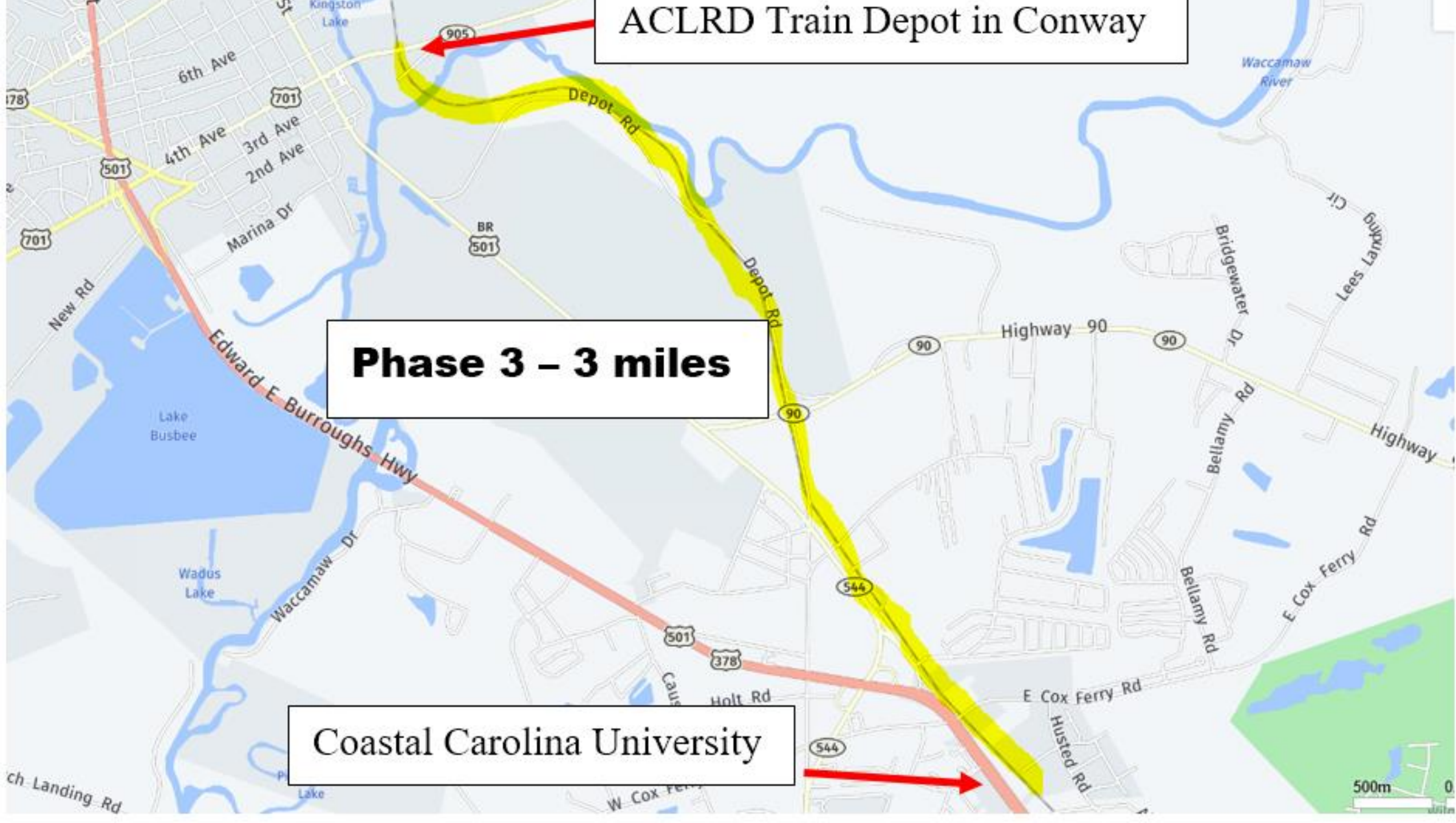




ACLRD Train Depot in Conway

Phase 3 – 3 miles

Coastal Carolina University



City of Loris

Phase 4 – 20 miles

Conway Train Depot

- ▶ Advocacy
- ▶ Support – *Friends of the Trail*
- ▶ Public Safety
- ▶ Trail Impact on Property Values
- ▶ Funding - \$2,000,000 a mile

CONSTRAINTS

1. **Myrtle Beach Train Depot to Waterway – 3 years**
2. **Waterway to CCU campus – ?**
3. **CCU to Atlantic Coast Line Railroad Depot (ACLRD) – ?**
4. **ACLRD (Conway Train Depot) to Loris, SC – 20 years**

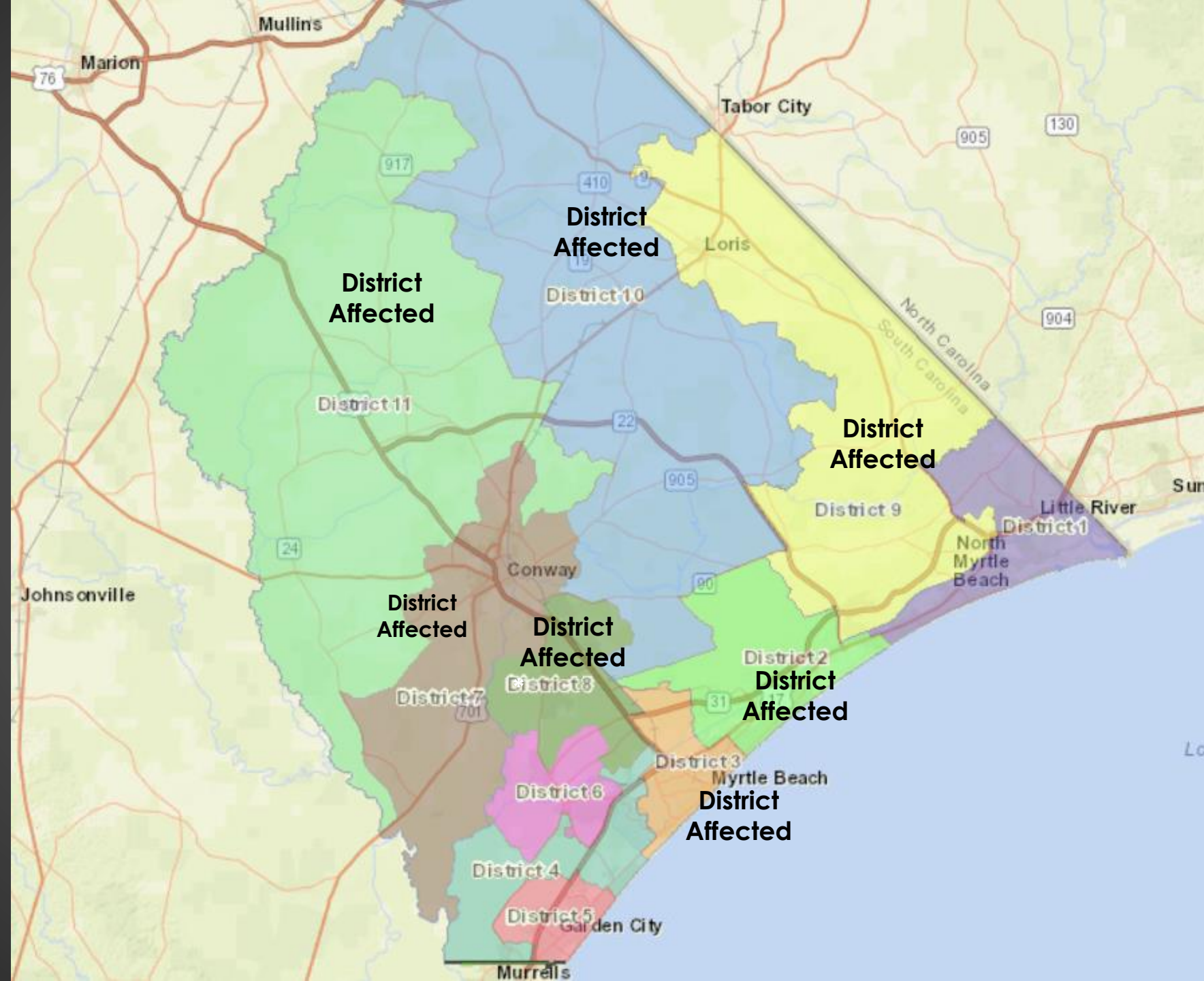
TIMELINE – 20 YEARS

- ▶ **2022-23 –Feasibility study – (All Phases)**
 - ▶ Build Advocacy among stakeholders
 - ▶ Get to shovel ready
- ▶ **2024 – Secure RIDE 4 Funds (Phases 2 & 3)**
 - ▶ Or, seek Federal Infrastructure Matching funds
 - ▶ Right-of-Way Acquisition
- ▶ **2024-25 – Environmental, Engineering and Design**
- ▶ **2026-30 – Construction (Phase 2 & 3)**

TIMELINE: PHASE 2 & 3

- ▶ 1. Harold Worley
- ▶ 2. Bill Howard
- ▶ 3. Dennis DiSabato
- ▶ 4. Gary Loftus*
- ▶ 5. Tyler Servant
- ▶ 6. Cam Crawford
- ▶ 7. Orton Bellamy
- ▶ 8. Johnny Vaught
- ▶ 9. Mark Causey
- ▶ 10. Danny Hardee
- ▶ 11. Al Allen

ADVOCACY



- ▶ AARP
- ▶ RJ Corman Railroad Group, KY
- ▶ Beach Bike Shop
- ▶ Carolina Forest Civic Association
- ▶ Coastal Carolina University, Conway
- ▶ City of Conway, Conway, SC
- ▶ City of Loris, Loris, SC
- ▶ City of Myrtle Beach, Myrtle Beach, SC
- ▶ Horry Telephone Cooperative, Inc.
- ▶ Horry County, Conway, SC
- ▶ Palmetto Cycling Coalition, Columbia, SC
- ▶ Pee Dee Bicycle Shop
- ▶ Area Chambers of Commerce
- ▶ Waccamaw Wildlife Refuge Association
- ▶ Grand Strand Bicycle Club
- ▶ Grand Strand Area Transportation Study
- ▶ Grand Strand Running Association
- ▶ Rails-to-Trail Conservancy
- ▶ South Carolina Trails, SC PRT

STAKEHOLDERS

PUBLIC SAFETY ALONG AN ACTIVE RAIL LINE

A SURVEY IN 2013 REVEALED THAT TRAILS ALONG ACTIVE RAIL LINES ARE SAFE, COMMON AND INCREASING IN NUMBER.

AS OF 2013, 161 TRAILS EXISTED ALONG ACTIVE RAIL LINES IN 41 STATES. THESE TRAIL SYSTEMS HAVE ESTABLISHED STRONG SAFETY RECORDS OF TRAILS GIVEN PROPER PLANNING WHILE PROVIDING COMMUNITIES THE DUAL BENEFITS OF THOSE TRAIL SYSTEMS.

NOT ONLY ARE TRAILS USED FOR RECREATION, BUT NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION TRAIL OFFERS ALTERNATIVE MODES OF TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS FOR CITIZENS WHO COMMUTE VIA BICYCLE OR AS A PEDESTRIAN.

- ▶ **Values drop initially, but once...built rise**
 - ▶ **Minuteman Bikeway**
 - ▶ **Lexington, MA**
- ▶ **Initial reservations decrease with conversion**
 - ▶ **81 percent believe trail users cause few or no problems**
 - ▶ **Root River Trail (Kansas) & Luce Line Trail (MN)**

PROPERTY VALUE IMPACT

TRAIL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

- ▶ **Private Foundations: RTC – Doppelt Family Trail Development Fund**
- ▶ **Federal Funding Sources**
- ▶ **Transportation**
 - ▶ H.R. 5696 establishes funding for active transportation networks - \$500 million
 - ▶ ISTEA/Transportation Enhancement Program – 10 percent set aside for trails
- ▶ **Related Federal Agencies with stakeholder interest:**
 - ▶ National Park Service, Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance (RTCA)
 - ▶ Waccamaw River Blue Trail (Waccamaw RiverKeepers)
- ▶ **Local Sources:**
 - ▶ Road Improvement Development Effort (future RIDE programs)

Reauthorization Framework

1. Investing in Active Transportation Connectivity

Connecting America's Active Transportation System Act (H.R. 5696)

2. Growing Transportation Alternatives

Transportation Alternatives Enhancements Act (H.R. 5231)

3. Tripling Funding for the Recreational Trails Program

RTP Full Funding Act of 2020 (H.R. 5797)

4. Funding Active Transportation Projects on Public Lands

Active Transportation for Public Lands Act (H.R. 5642)



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. You can determine your routing by visiting <http://map.greenway.org/> or download the smartphone app for your [Android](#) or [iPhone](#).

Bike & Run Park



150 Frontage Rd B-2, Myrtle Beach 29579

The Bike & Run Park, also known as 'The Hulk,' is located along the Intracoastal Waterway near River Oaks Drive in Carolina Forest. It includes 7 miles of mountain biking and hiking trails on 70 acres of land. The park was developed through the vision and labor of volunteers and provides drastic changes in elevation that cannot be found in other parts of the county. In addition to providing a venue for a variety of races, its parking area serves as the first official East Coast Greenway trailhead in the State of South Carolina.

Vereen Memorial Gardens

2250 Hwy 179, Little River 29566

843-249-4157

Monday-Saturday 8AM – 5PM

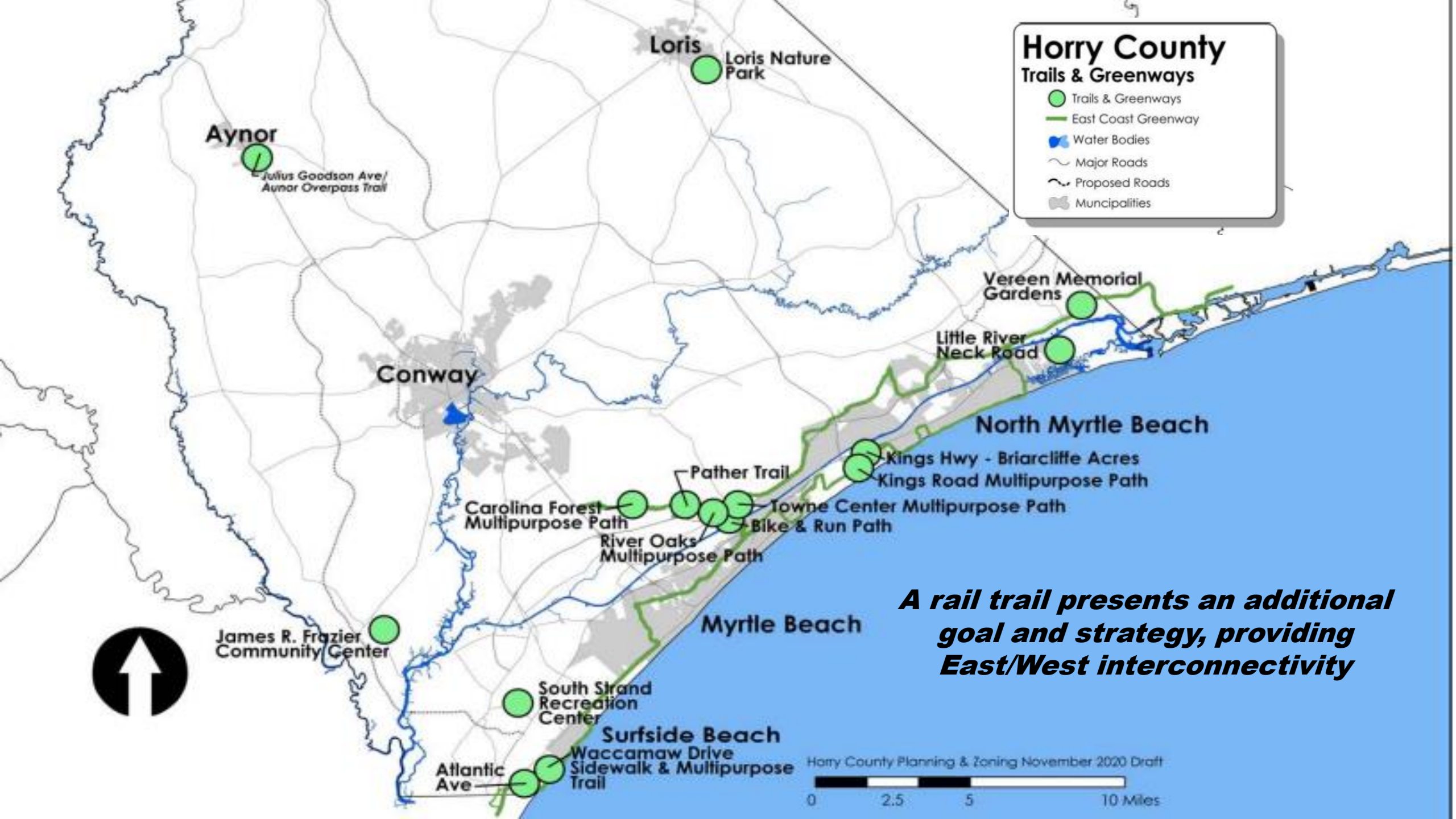
Located along the Intracoastal Waterway in Little River on more than 115 acres of forest and marshland, this facility includes approximately 3 miles of nature trails and boardwalks that meander through its botanical gardens and along its waterfront. A small segment of the original Kings Highway, a colonial route between Boston and Charleston, still remains on the property behind the CR Barry Community Center. The Center provides space for recreational programming and community events.



“RESIDENTS HAVE SHOWN INTEREST AND DEMAND FOR ADDITIONAL RECREATIONAL TRAILS, BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES”

Chapter 2.5

- ▶ **Carolina Forest Blvd Multi-purpose Path**
- ▶ **River Oaks Drive Multi-purpose Path**
- ▶ **Burgess Community Project**
- ▶ **Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan update scheduled in 2021**
- ▶ **ECG Master Plan for Horry and Georgetown**



Horry County Trails & Greenways

- Trails & Greenways
- East Coast Greenway
- Water Bodies
- Major Roads
- Proposed Roads
- Municipalities

A rail trail presents an additional goal and strategy, providing East/West interconnectivity

PROJECT WORKING TITLE

Seaboard Coast Line Trail

Seaboard Air Line
Railroad
and Connections



1. *Request a letter of support as GSBC (a 501 c3) seeks grant opportunities that will provide startup funds for an advocacy campaign*
2. *Consider an update to the Parks & Open Space Plan that incorporates a rail trail from Loris, SC to Myrtle Beach and captures the rail road history in Horry*
3. *A Parks & Open Space Board recommendation to County Council that a feasibility study of the railroad corridor be funded and conducted by 2024.*

SECURE THE HISTORY OF RAILROADS IN HORRY BEFORE TOURISM

