THE RAIL YARD

This $2.6 million addition to the Mary Black Rail Trail has been funded by more than 40 public and private partners, showcasing a unique level of engagement and investment in boosting Spartanburg’s quality of place. Key to attracting and retaining a talented workforce, enhancing quality of place throughout the community is one of eight objectives outlined in the OneSpartanburg community and economic development strategy. OneSpartanburg is proud to be one of the partners funding this work.

At 11 a.m. on July 25, Partners for Active Living will unveil The Rail Yard’s newest addition: a Carolina Panthers-themed NFL Play 60 park. The first-of-its-kind in the Carolinas, the new Play 60 park gives Spartanburg another unique asset for residents to take pride in.

Laura Rinego, PFA’s executive director, shared with us her thoughts on how the park achieves the goals of OneSpartanburg.

Q: WHAT INFLUENCES CAN THE RAIL YARD HAVE ON COMMUNITY PRIDE AND QUALITY OF PLACE IN SPARTANBURG?

A: “I think as a community, it’s important to have great places to recreate, great places to gather, places that bring our community together. I expect that this will absolutely do that. One of the really neat things about the Rail Trail is it’s one of the most connected destinations in town. You, consistently all ages, all races, all job levels, there are people with mobility challenges and there are marathon runners. It’s really a great place where all of Spartanburg seems to gather and we hope the Rail Yard is an extension of that.”

Q: HOW DOES THE RAIL YARD COMPLEMENT SPARTANBURG’S PARKS AND TRAILS SYSTEM?

A: “The Rail Yard started a couple of years ago when we interviewed Rail Trail users and we heard what’s great about the Rail Trail. We’re trying to build the Rail Trail as the spine of an urban trail system. We’re really trying to build it as an urban destination so no matter where you get on the system, the Rail Trail is one of the places you want to get to. With the Spartanburg YMCA, the Steak Park, the Bicycles, the dog park and this, the connection to Duncan Park and the many other connections coming, hopefully, it will serve as a major point of destination.”

Q: WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO INCLUDE SPARTANBURG’S LONG-STANDING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PANTHERS INTO THE PARK?

A: “I think it is a perfect addition to Spartanburg. We’ve got a great relationship as a community with the Panthers. This setup is really geared toward older youth and we don’t have a lot of that geared toward older youth. We have younger children, and we have great grounds for young children, but we didn’t have a lot of space for older youth.”

Q: WHY ARE THESE TYPES OF DEVELOPMENTS IMPORTANT FOR THE FUTURE OF SPARTANBURG?

A: “I think it’s important for Spartanburg to be a desirable community, a place where you can work, play and live, and having great play spaces is important. It’s also important for the health of the community, having places where people can get outside, enjoy being active and not feel like they’re exercising. We hope this encourages all of that.”

There’s also a great tie between park and trail development and economic development. If you look at a lot of what’s happening in Atlanta, what’s happening in Charlotte, what’s happening in Greenville, when they’re building these great recreational facilities, businesses want to locate near them because people want to be there. They want to then build their business near that and build off that. There’s significant economic impact that we hope will come.

A ribbon cutting for the Panthers Play 60 park at the Rail Yard is set for 11 a.m. on July 25, the day before the Panthers kick off training camp at Wofford College. The celebration will include team mascot Sir Purr, the Purr-suasion band and Top Cats cheerleaders.

Laura Rinego
Executive Director
Partners for Active Living

JOIN US ON JULY 25 AT 11 AM TO CELEBRATE THE GRAND OPENING OF THE NFL PANTHERS PLAY 60 PARK