

THERE'S ONLY ONE. SPARTANBURG.



THE RAIL YARD

This 7-acre addition to the Mary Black Rail Trail has been funded by more than 40 public and private partners, showing 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 in the state, this course gives Spartanburg another unique asset for residents to take pride in.

Laura Ringo, PAL's executive director, shared with us her thoughts on how the park achieves the goals of #OneSpartanburg.



Q - WHAT INFLUENCE 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. We expect that this will absolutely do that. One of the really neat things about the Rail Trail is it's one of the most consistently-diverse places in town. You consistently see all ages, all races, all ability levels – there are people with mobility challenges and there are marathon runners. It really is 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 State Park, the B-Cycles, the dog park and this, the connection to Duncan Park and the many other connections coming, hopefully it'll serve as a major point of destination.

If you look at the way the park is laid out, the part next to Forest Avenue, there's a trolley that used to be housed on that piece of property and went from Glendale up to Downtown. The idea was, let's have a passive, comfortable hangout spot. Then you've got a passive spot with a little more going on at the amphitheater. Then you've got the lawn where people can be passive or active. Then the Play 60 is going to be very active and the next two sections are going to be the exercise equipment and the bike park, and that's really active. The idea was let's make this a park for anyone that's using the Rail Trail, all different ages, all different skill sets. The exercise equipment, the bike park and the Play 60 were all totally different.

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. I 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, worship and having great play spaces is important. It's also important for the health of the community, have 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 Percussion band and Top Cats cheerleaders.

Laura Ringo
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