



DURHAM COUNTY NEWS

‘Crime, noise, pollution’: Durham residents oppose plan to turn old railway into trail

by: [Ben Bokun](#)
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DURHAM, N.C. (WNCN) — A rail line in Durham that hasn’t been used in over four decades could become a trail for pedestrians and cyclists, but community members are pushing back against the idea.

The [Durham-to-Roxboro Rail Trail plan](#) would transform 18 miles of inactive rail lines within Durham County and establish a 26-mile trail from downtown Durham to Roxboro.

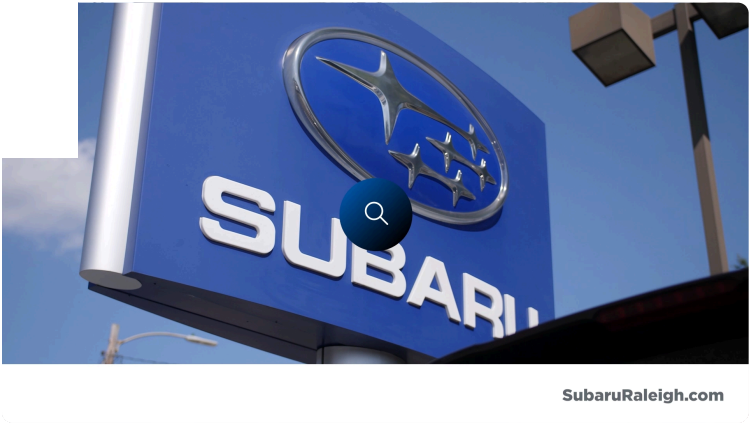


Durham residents, some of who live within 20 yards of the tracks, reached out after CBS 17 [reported about the plan earlier this week](#).

Neighbors in one development right on the edge of Durham County said they moved there for the peace, quiet and nature, but that could go

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Dottie Dudley and her husband Todd, who once lived on a trail in Indianapolis, are among those near the former rail line who oppose the plan, citing several potential factors they’re worried about.

“[The trail is] completely different when it is in your own backyard,” Dottie Dudley said. “It’s only a matter of feet from our back step. It’s just too close for us.”

Said Todd Dudley, “I love walking and biking trails, but there are drawbacks: crime, noise, pollution, and medical emergencies.

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The Triangle West Transportation Planning Organization responded to many of these concerns.

“If there are neighbors [who] want to make sure that the trail doesn’t impact them, we can design in a manner that helps make sure their homes, businesses, and land still have privacy,” Executive Director Doug Plachcinski said.

“Statistically, research studies have shown that public trail facilities do not increase crime as opposed to any other sorts of parks and recreation or other community-prominent facilities do,” he continued. “There are ways to incorporate design and management to actively deter bad actors in those spaces.”

The neighbors opposed to the plan still want more public engagement.

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“For us in this area, it would drastically alter our quality of life,” Todd Dudley said.

Trains started running on the line in the 1890s, but it hasn’t been used since 1983. Project leaders are currently in the public engagement phase while also conducting a feasibility study.

The final plan is expected to be completed in October with detailed recommendations and cost estimates.

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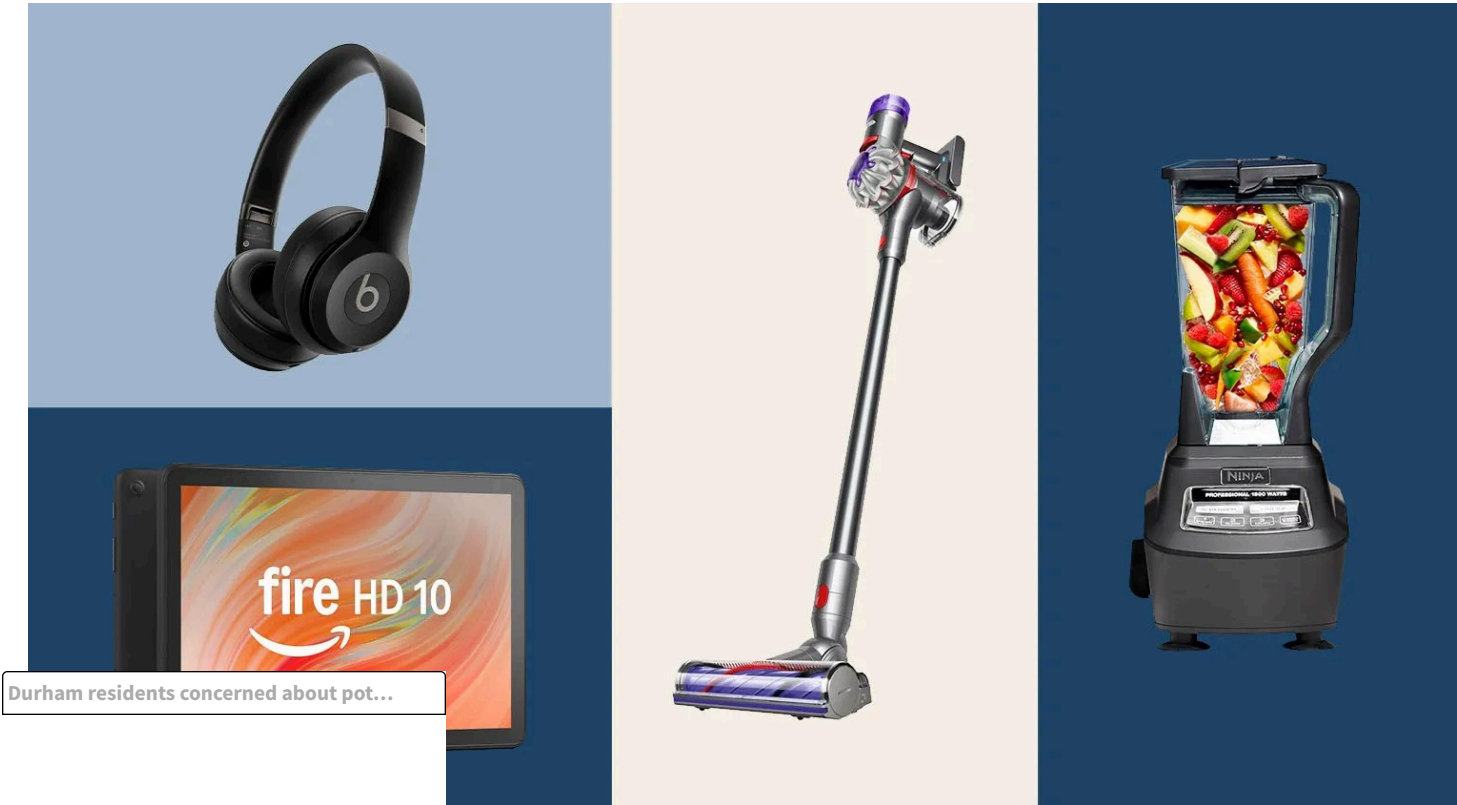
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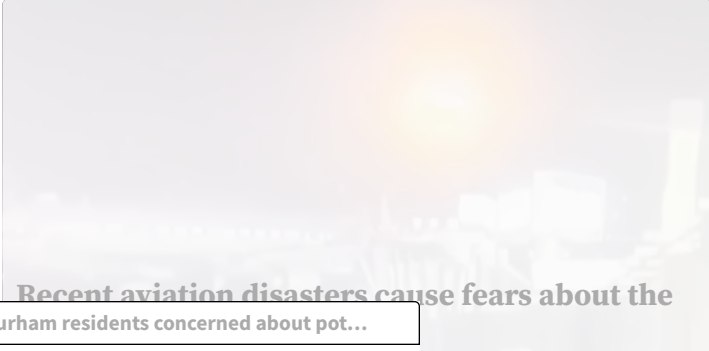
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