



Parks & Recreation

Capital and Maintenance Project Update

April 2016

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The Chapel Hill Parks and Recreation Department is working to make real and lasting improvements to the Town of Chapel Hill. We believe that the citizens of Chapel Hill expect a diverse choice of recreational amenities that promote health, enjoyment, community values, and environmental sustainability.



Work on the Bolin Creek Trail is progressing. Umstead Drive is closed and should reopen in mid-April. See pages 4-7.

HIGHLIGHTS

Bonds Passed by Voters: Voters approved all bonds placed in the ballot including \$8,000,000 in Parks bonds and \$5,000,000 for greenways projects. See page 2.

Tanyard Branch Trail - Hike and Public Information Meeting: Hike the proposed Tanyard Branch Trail and participate in a Public Information Meeting. Meet December 1, 4:00-7:00 p.m., at the Northside Gym (Hargraves Park) – (pages 7-8)

Inclusive Playground: The Parks, Greenways, and Recreation Commission will review options for siting a proposed All Children playground. The meeting will be held November 18, 7:00 p.m., Room C at the Chapel Hill Library – (page 9)

Volunteer Needed: We are looking for a volunteer(s) to help us manage the pedestrian/bicycle counters on the Town’s greenway system. – (page 3)

Board Members Needed: The non-profit Friends of Chapel Hill Parks, Greenways, and Recreation has openings on the Board. Contact Bill Webster at 919 968-2819 if you are interested.

If you do not wish to receive this update (about once every 60-90 days) please let me know. You can reply to the e-mail or call me at (919) 968-2819. Also, if you desire additional information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Communications: We are adding interested people to our e-mail distribution list for these projects. If you know anyone who would like to be kept informed please have them contact me. To reach me with questions or comments please e-mail, call, or write at:

Bill Webster, Planning & Development Manager
 200 Plant Road
 Chapel Hill, NC 27514
 (919) 968-2819
bwebster@townofchapelhill.org

Review of Plans: Plans for some projects can be reviewed in my office. To review plans, please make an appointment.

You have received this communication because your e-mail address is on one of the Chapel Hill Parks and Recreation Department’s distribution lists for various capital and planning projects.



The Friends of Chapel Hill Parks, Recreation & Greenways, a registered 501(C)3 organization, supports the activities, programs, and facilities of the Chapel Hill Parks and Recreation Department. Our fundraising efforts have helped to improve park facilities and greenways in Chapel Hill. We would appreciate your support. For further information and to donate, please visit our website at friendschparksrec.org.

1. PARKS & TRAILS NEWS

Most of the articles in this newsletter concern larger planning and construction efforts. This section gives us an opportunity to report on policy issues and smaller but important construction projects that serve the community.

VOTERS APPROVE BONDS

On November 3 Chapel Hill voters approved all five bond orders including Parks, Greenways, Streets and Sidewalks, Solid Waste Facility, and Stormwater.

The \$8,000,000 Parks bond is intended to be used for the following purposes:

- New administrative headquarters for the Parks and Recreation Department
- New programming space (may share the same building with administration)
- \$1,000,000 for capital level improvements and renovations of aging parks.

The \$5,000,000 Greenways Bond is intended to be used for two projects:

- Bolin Creek Trail/Tanyard Branch Trail – Extend the Bolin Creek Trail from Pritchard Avenue Extension to Umstead Park. Complete the Tanyard Branch Trail from Umstead Park to near Jay Street.
- Morgan Creek Trail – Complete the trail by extending east to Morgan Creek Road and extending west to Carrboro at Smith Level Road.

These are the intended uses of the bond funds. There are several items to note.

- We currently do not have a schedule for sale of bonds. This will have to be approved by the Council in context of all capital needs and debt service.
- It is possible that specific projects may change if conditions change. This can occur as long as the funds are used to pay for the general purposes approved by the voters.

The Eagle designation is the pinnacle of scouting and can only be earned through many years of hard work and community service. The final step is to undertake a significant project that will benefit the community. The Chapel Hill Parks and Recreation Department has long supported the young men of our community by finding suitable Eagle projects. The number of Eagle projects we help with each year varies tremendously. Sometimes we have many going on at the same time, sometimes there are none. If you are an Eagle candidate feel free to contact me at 919 968-2819 or email at bwebster@townofchapelhill.org. Right now we have Eagle candidates considering projects such as building bat houses to footbridges.

ORANGE COUNTY PARK LOCATOR

We urge everyone to use the park locator for Orange County. It is a great tool for finding the perfect park for any outing. You can search for parks that meet your needs. For example, if you need a park with a dog park, playground, and basketball the Park Locator can help. To use it go to: <http://server2.co.orange.nc.us/parklocator/>

BRIDGE AND TUNNEL INSPECTIONS

We recently completed an engineering inspection program for all of our pedestrian/bicycle bridges. E will use the information in the report to set up a regular inspection program and improve our maintenance. Four of our bridges were found to have some deficiencies:

Lower Booker Creek Trail: The bridge near Tadley Road was recently repaired. This work has been completed.



The bridge was installed in 1991. Decking was removed to allow the bridge to be lifted off its piers. Wood decking was flipped in order to give the wood a longer life.

EAGLE SCOUTS



Voids caused by repeated flood events over the past 25 years were filled and the bridge piers were better armored in order to prevent future scouring.

Meadowmont Park: The bridge that crosses Little Creek is next in line for short term repairs. Work will likely take place in April or May. This bridge will be replaced; most likely in 2018.



This bridge in Meadowmont Park provides a key link between Rashkis School and Lancaster Drive. The structure is very old. We believe it was used as a farm access bridge prior to the development of Meadowmont. Our inspection report indicates the need for short term repairs and the need to start planning for eventual replacement.

Fordham Boulevard Sidepath: The bridge over Bolin Creek near the intersection of Estes Drive and Fordham Boulevard will require new decking and a new rail system. We expect work to take place later this summer.



This bridge, which is located on the Fordham Boulevard Sidepath between Estes Drive and Cleland Drive, is one of the oldest bridges in our inventory. The inventory and inspection program let us know that the bridge is structurally sound, but that it does require new decking and a new railing system.

Battle Branch Trail: This very old bridge old experienced scour around the piers. A temporary fix has already been applied. We expect to use a long term solution in late summer.



PEDSTRIAN AND BICYCLE COUNTERS

For many years when people asked how many people use the trails we could only say “many”. In order to give us an idea of how many people use the trails we have installed a total of six bicycle and pedestrian counters along the following trails:

- Bolin Creek
- Fan Branch
- Lower Booker Creek
- Meadowmont
- Morgan Creek
- NC 54 Sidepath

The Bolin Creek Trail counter has been in place for over a year. In 2015 the counter recorded 182,734 pedestrians and bicyclists. (We can assume most of these were out and back users, counted twice). The first month’s data for the other five will be available in April.

As we process more data we can better learn where our limited resources should be directed. In addition, we will be able to see the effects of expansion of existing trails on use.

We are also working on a system for sharing the raw data with the public. As soon as that work is complete we will share how to access it.

COMPREHENSIVE PARKS MASTER PLAN & GREENWAYS MASTER PLAN

These Master Plans are components of the Town’s Comprehensive Plan and as such will guide our decisions for the next 5 to 10 years.

[Comprehensive Parks Plan](#)
[Greenways Master Plan](#)



This new section of the Bolin Creek Trail lies just east of Pritchard Avenue.

2. BOLIN CREEK TRAIL – PHASE 3A

Location: Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd to Umstead Park
Current Status: Under Construction
Design Firm: Surface 678
Contractor: S&C Construction LLC
Anticipated Construction Cost: \$2,113,572
Project Start: June 2015
Anticipated Completion: Summer/Fall 2016



The old wood bridge in Umstead Park was replaced as part of this project. Wood from the old bridge is being repurposed for an Eagle Scout project in Southern Community Park.

We have developed a “[Story Map](#)” for the Bolin Creek Trail. The map is occasionally updated with pictures and text designed to allow the public to follow the project without accessing a dangerous construction site.

Phase 3A will continue the existing Bolin Creek Trail under Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. and extend it westward to Pritchard Avenue Extension.

The Council accepted the low bid for the project on April 13, 2015. Construction started in June 2015 and should be complete sometime in late summer or early fall 2016. The schedule will greatly depend on the amount and timing of rainfall throughout the project’s life. If conditions are rainy and wet over the prime construction season the project will take longer.

The new trail will pass under Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. using the existing culvert. Currently the normal summer flow of the creek moves along the north side of the culvert; right where the new trail will be located. Part of the work will involve removing old debris left-over from the construction of Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. and rerouting the stream to the south side of the culvert.

The project will include a cross walk of Umstead Drive, a pedestrian activated warning signal, sidewalks along Umstead Drive, and two bridges.

We had originally hoped that the trail would be extended all the way to Umstead Park. However the budget was inadequate. We hope that we will be able to complete the trail to the park relatively soon. We believe that we could combine construction of the Bolin Creek Trail segment to the park with construction of the final section of the Tanyard Branch Trail. See the description of the Tanyard Branch Trail design later in this newsletter.

This will be a challenging project that will have many difficult construction elements. However, once complete the project will provide a vital link that will allow the eventual connection of the trail to many other destinations throughout town.

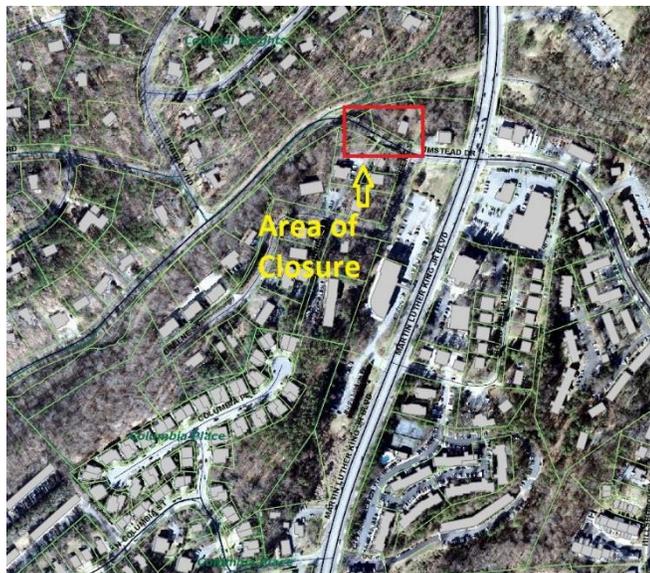


SPECIAL NOTICE

A portion of Umstead Drive near the bridge over Bolin Creek is closed until mid-April. See the map below. During the closure residents living on Greene Street will not be able to drive west on Umstead Drive. Residents living west of the closure will not have direct access to Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. We will maintain some pedestrian access through the construction site although at times it may result in a longer walk than usual.



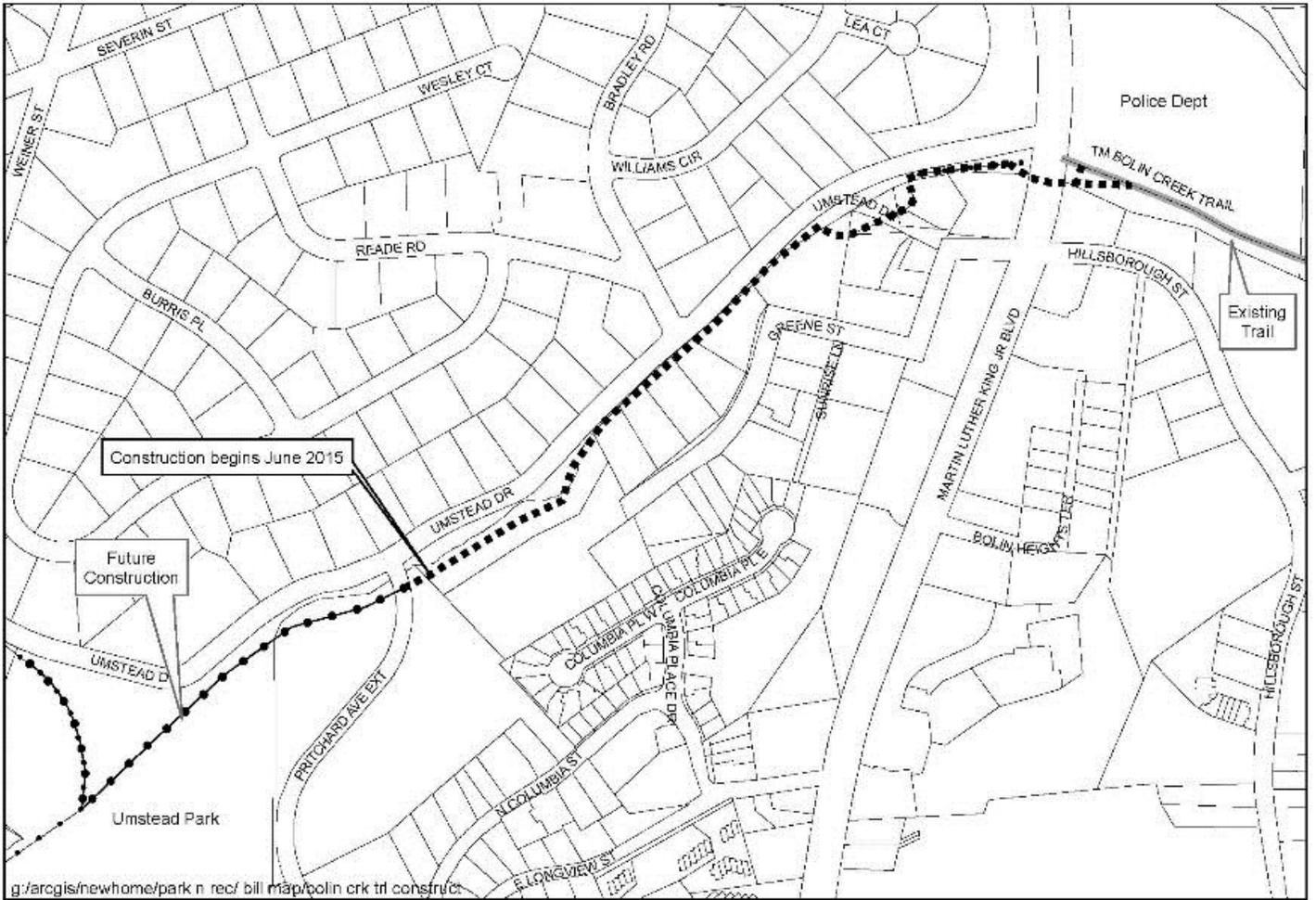
Crews are working on the pedestrian crossing of Umstead Drive. The road should reopen in mid-April.



WON'T THE TRAIL FLOOD?

Anyone familiar with flood events in this area is well aware that portions of the trail will be under water on occasion. How often is difficult to say. Some years it will be more often than others. But it is safe to say that at least several days per year sections of the trail will be under water. During those times pedestrians and bicyclists will have to find an alternate travel route. We anticipate that with larger flood events there may be the need for a cleanup and repair that may keep the trail closed even after the flood waters subside. See the photos below from the early October flood event that overtopped the construction site.





Bolin Creek Trail Phase 3 Construction



3. TANYARD BRANCH TRAIL (PHASE 3) – DESIGN ONLY

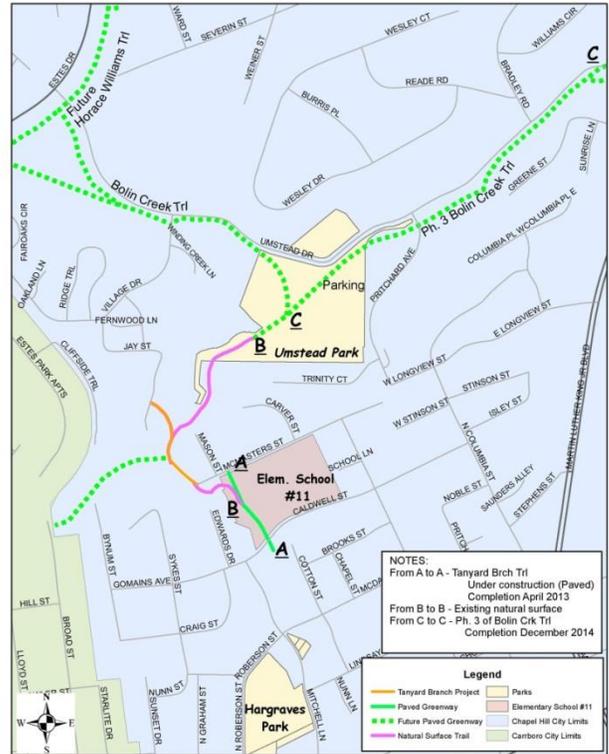
Location: Jay Street to Umstead Park
Current Status: draft 75% drawings
Design Firm: Stewart Engineering
Anticipated Completion: Summer 2016

This trail will eventually allow pedestrians and bicyclists to travel from the Northside neighborhood to Umstead Park and the future extension of the Bolin Creek Trail. Once complete this trail system will allow off road pedestrian/ bicycle transportation over a large portion of central Chapel Hill. Tanyard Branch will provide access the downtown area at the least possible grade.

Although only .4 mile in length the trail corridor has many issues that will require creative solutions to address steep slopes, proximity to Tanyard Branch, and the need to avoid large trees.

At this time we have completed 75% drawings. We are proceeding to final drawings suitable for review by NCDOT.

The Town’s recently passed bond referendum includes \$5 million for expansion of the Town’s greenway system. The bonds are anticipated to fund construction of this project and a portion of the Bolin Creek Trail -- from Pritchard Avenue Extension to Jay Street. Bond funds also would construct new sections of the Morgan Creek Trail.



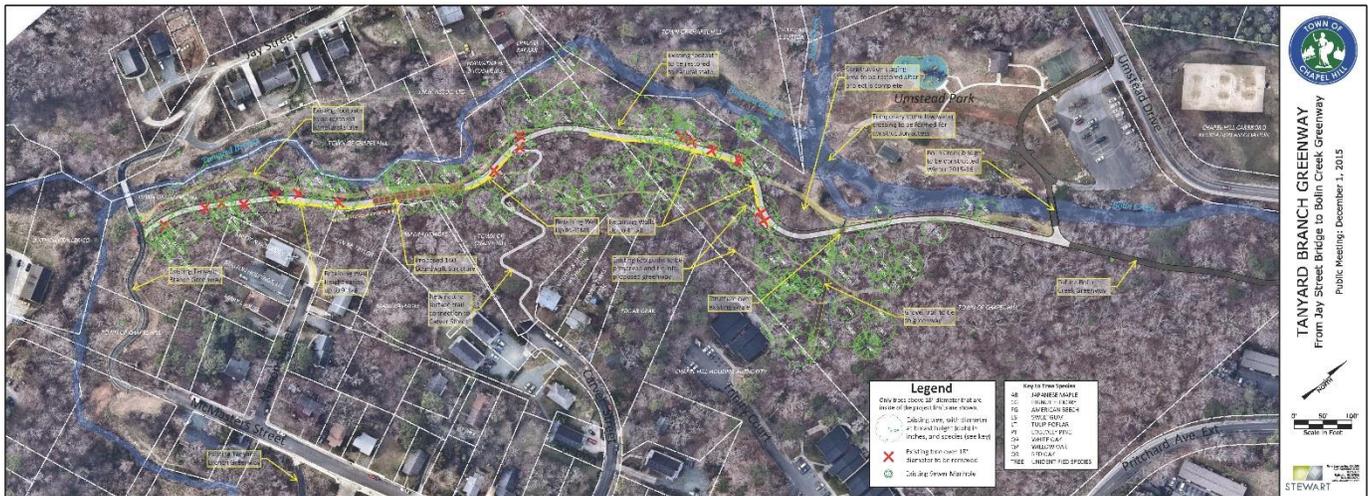
Project Specific Map - Tanyard Branch

The purple line leading into Umstead Park shows the approximate location of the project.



Phase 2 of the Tanyard Branch Trail was completed in early 2015. The new trail will enter the woods about where the truck is parked in this photo.

LINKING THE BOLIN CREEK AND TANYARD BRANCH TRAILS – You very rightly may be wondering how Phase 3A of the Bolin Creek Trail and Phase 3 of the Tanyard Branch Trail will be linked. See the maps on page 6 and below. Due to lack of funds we were not able to build the section of the Bolin Creek Trail from Pritchard Avenue Extension into Umstead Park as part of the current Bolin Creek construction. However the section is designed and permitted. It is our intent to bid both Phase 3 of the Tanyard Branch Trail and Phase 3B of the Bolin Creek Trail as a single construction project. Now that the Trails General Obligation Bond has passed we will start work on a bid package once the Tanyard Branch plans are done and the Council authorizes bond funds.



If you would like a PDF of the above map please send me an email at bwebster@townofchapelhill.org.

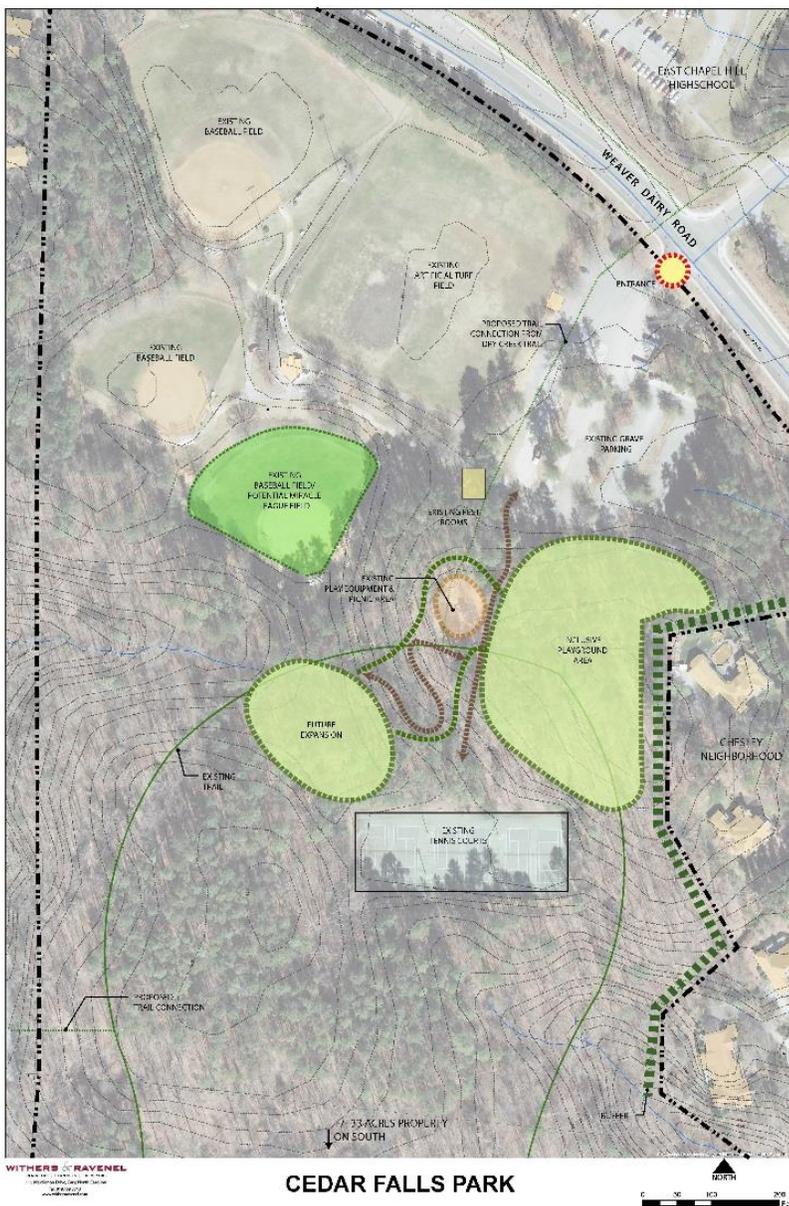
4. INCLUSIVE PLAYGROUND PROJECT

Location: Cedar Falls Park
Current Status: Contracting with design firm
Design Firm: WithersRavenel, Inc.

The Town has ten playgrounds in public parks. All of them have some degree of accessibility for children with mental and/or physical disabilities. However, we do not have a single play area that can be considered all or mostly accessible. This project will result in a destination playground that will be used by all of Chapel Hill’s children.

The first step in the process determined where to build it. We studied four potential sites and determined that Cedar Falls Park had the best combination of cost, space, and potential for creative design.

We expect to soon start design. Once we have enough information we will start a public process to gather ideas for development of this important facility.



5. SMALL DOG PARK – SOUTHERN COMMUNITY PARK

Location: Dog Park, Southern Community Park, 1000 Dogwood Acres Drive

Current Status: Complete

Budget: \$8,000

Our dog parks are split into two portions. One for dogs of any size and one for small dogs only (less than 25 lbs.). The Southern Community Park small dog park is heavily used, but lacks one thing that the larger park has – a shelter for hot sunny days.

The patrons of the small dog park banded together to raise a portion of the funds needed to build the shelter. The non-profit Friends of Chapel Hill Parks, Recreation, and Greenways worked with the group to make this dream a reality.



6A. PLAYGROUND IMPROVEMENTS (DESIGN)

Location: Most Town Playgrounds

Current Status: Design ongoing for Community Center and Southern Community Park

Design Firm: CLH Design, PA

Design Contract: \$51,900

The Town is currently working to prepare design solutions for most play areas throughout Town. It is our goal to upgrade fall surface and playground borders in order to maximize safety and aesthetics. In addition, the work will address some drainage and other select issues on a case-by-case basis. Once complete the Town will have plans and specifications that could be bid at any time funds are available.



PINE KNOLLS COMMUNITY CENTER

Location: Pine Knolls Community Center (Johnson Street)

Current Status: Evaluating bids

Design Firm: CLH Design

Anticipated Construction Cost: \$50,000-55,000

Project Start: May/June 2016

The playground at the Pine Knolls Community Center on Johnson Street is used by the community and the Boys and Girls Club. The Town will replace the wood fiber fall surface with a rubberized poured-in-place surface.

7. PICKEBALL

Location: Ephesus Park Tennis Courts

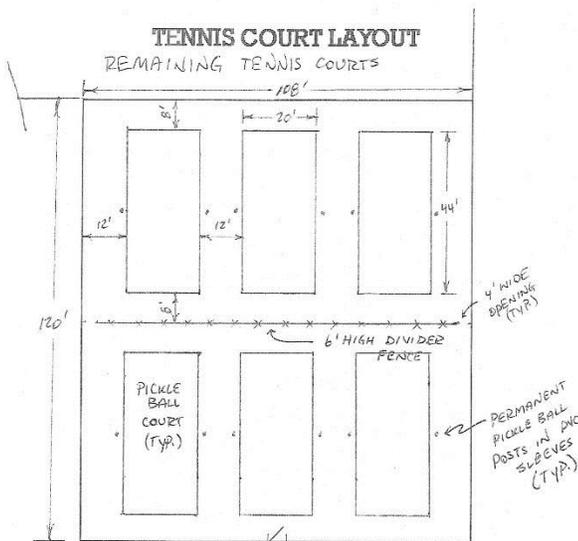
Current Status: Under Construction

Contractor: Court One

Anticipated Construction Cost: \$16,270

Anticipated Completion: mid-April

Pickleball is one of the fastest growing sports in the country. We currently have indoor session in the Chapel Hill Community Center. This project will convert 2 tennis courts into 6 Pickleball Courts.



COURT ONE	
PROJECT:	EPHESUS PARK - CHAPEL HILL, NC
NOTES:	
-	CONVERT 2 TENNIS COURTS TO 6 PERMANENT PICKLE BALL COURTS
-	NOT TO SCALE
	G. Wright 12/22/15



Pickleball Court

8. MORGAN CREEK TRAIL EXPANSION

Location: Three locations along Morgan Creek

Current Status: Selection of Design Firm

The existing Morgan Creek/Fan Branch Trails system is the longest paved trail system in Orange County. The current system links Southern Community Park, Southern Village, Scroggs School, and Merritt's Pasture. Parking is provided at a parking lot on the western end of the trail and within Southern Community Park and Southern Village.

We will be looking at two specific areas for expansion of the current trail and a stand-alone bridge that would serve residents of the area.

WILL THE PUBLIC BE INVITED TO COMMENT?
 As we do with all large projects of this nature we will hold public meetings for all three of the projects described below. For each project, at a minimum, we will mail notices to landowners living within 1,000 of the project areas. There will be at least two opportunities for public review and comments. If needed we will hold additional meetings. We are truly interested in hearing ideas and concerns that will make these projects useful to the Town as a whole and especially to the neighbors that live closest to them.

Morgan Creek Trail East: The current trail ends at the edge of Merritt's Pasture. The design team will help us understand how we might be able to continue the trail to the east, and with NCDOT's approval, continue at least to Morgan Creek Road. This will give residents living east of Merritt's Pasture legal access to the Pasture and the trails. Currently there is no legal access from the east except for those few residents who have properties that adjoin the Pasture.



Merritt's Pasture from the current eastern end of the Morgan Creek Trail.

Morgan Creek Trail West: The western end of the existing trail ends at a parking lot south of Fordham Boulevard. The design team will look at how best to extend the trail to Smith Level Road and Carrboro. The Town of Carrboro is currently looking at how best to extend the trail west within its jurisdiction.



Entrance for the Morgan Creek Trail just south of Fordham Boulevard.

Morgan Creek Bridge to Connect Ashe Place and Arboretum Drive: The design team will explore the possibility of installing a bridge over Morgan Creek to connect the large neighborhoods on both sides of the creek. This bridge would be designed to handle only bicycle and pedestrian traffic.

As this project progresses we will provide more information.

COMPLETED PROJECTS BY YEAR

2007

- Cedar Falls Play Area
- Community Center Renovations
- Hargraves Park Site Improvements
- Hargraves Park Playground Replacement
- Homestead Park Restrooms Renovation
- Homestead Park Skate Park Improvements
- Homestead Water Line Replacement
- Meadowmont Park Drainage Improvements
- Tanyard Branch Trail Renovations
- Umstead Park Restrooms Renovation

2008

- Athletic Light Assessment and Removal
- Community Center Park Walkways Replacement
- Dry Creek Greenway Trail Concept Plan
- Dry Creek Natural Surface Trail
- Hargraves Park – Playground Surface Replacement
- Homestead Park Aquatics Center
- Park and Facility Assessment
- Sport Art Gymnastics – Connection to OWASA water and renovation of septic field

2009

- Athletic Light Replacement
- Bolin Creek Trail Mural Art Renovation Project
- Bolin Creek Trail Pavement Repairs
- Cedar Falls Cell Tower Removal
- Community Center Retaining Wall/Public Art Project
- Fan Branch Trail Bridge Decking Replacement
- Southern Community Park

2010

- Battle Branch Trail Renovation Design and Permitting
- Battle Branch Trail Temporary Boardwalk Repairs
- Bolin Creek Trail Pipe Replacement at Sunrise Kitchen
- Bolin Creek Trail Renovation Assessment Study
- Booker Creek Trail Tree Removal Project
- Cedar Falls Scoreboard Replacement
- Chapel Hill Skate Park Renovations
- Greenway Percent for Art Project (Al Frega, artist)
- Homestead Park Batting Cage Renovations
- Meadowmont Trail Bridge Repair
- Oakwood Drive Open Space Shed Removal
- Old Chapel Hill Cemetery Fence Replacement Project

2011

- Bolin Creek Trail Bollards and drainage
- Recycling Containers Installed in all Parks
- Greenways and Bicycle Map

Battle Branch Trail Sign Replacement
Morgan Creek Trail, Phase 1
Southern Community Park (Signs, benches, bridges)
Oakwood Park Play Area Renovation
Battle Branch Bridge Replacement (Glendale Drive)
Hargraves Park Scoreboard Installation

2012

Battle Branch Bridge Structural Repairs (downstream of Glendale Drive)
Bolin Creek Trail (Entrance and direction signs)
Dry Creek Trail Bridge Replacement (near ECHHS)
Southern Community Park Disk Golf Course Tee Pads
Community Center Park Poured-in-Place Fall Surface
Cedar Falls Trail Entrance Signs/Kiosks
Homestead Park Playground Surface Renovation
Community Center Park Turf Renovation
Southern Community Park Turf Renovation
Hargraves Park Stormwater Improvements
Umstead Park Stormwater Improvements

2013

Ephesus and Phillips Tennis Courts Renovations
Southern Community Park Athletic Light Installation
Adoption of 2013 Greenways Master Plan
Adoption of 2013 Comprehensive Parks Plan
Umstead Park Sand Volleyball Courts
Homestead Park Bridges Repair
Battle Branch Trail Boardwalk, Stairs, and Bridge Repair
Cedar Falls Park Synthetic Turf Field with lights

2014

Umstead Park Playground Replacement
Oakwood Park Path Renovation
Cedar Falls Construction of Synthetic Field
Bolin Creek Trail Stairs

2015

Community Center/Homestead Park Play Equipment
Tanyard Branch Trail P2

2016

Repair of Lower Booker Creek Trail Bridge
Southern Community Park – Small Dog Park Gazebo