

## MORGAN CREEK TRAIL DESIGN UPDATE

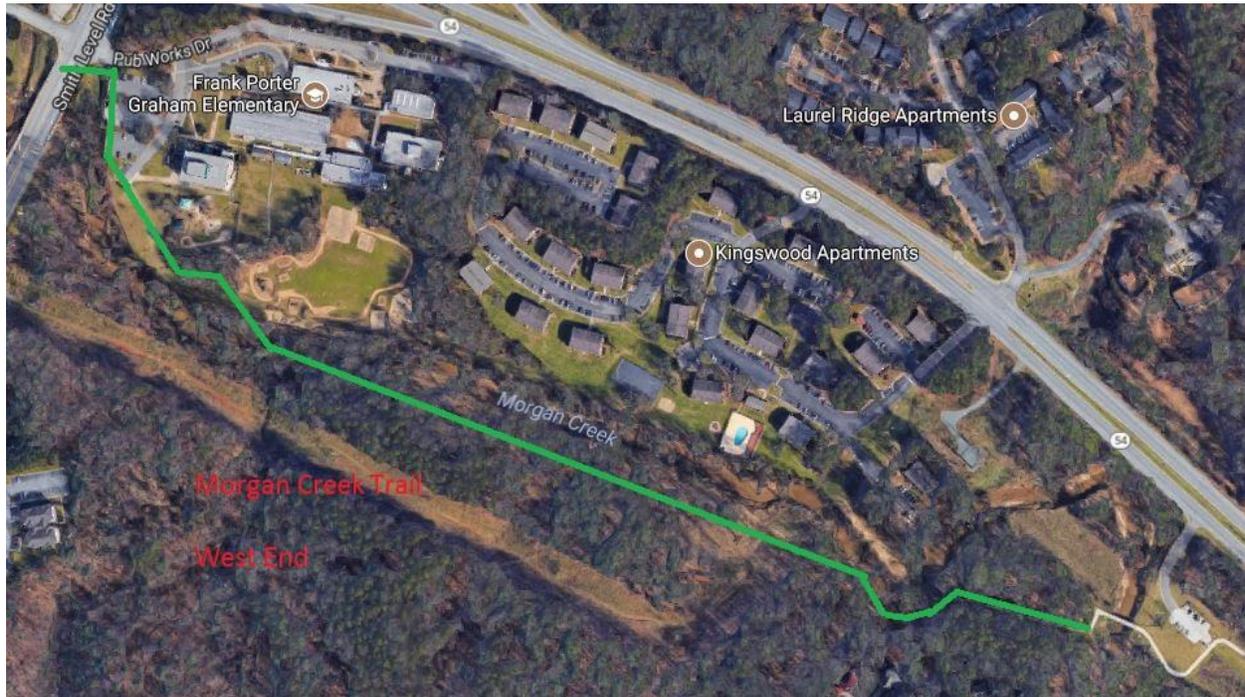
The Town of Chapel Hill is currently in the design phase of an expansion of the Morgan Creek Trail. The existing trail is part of the 2.7 mile long Morgan Creek/Fan Branch Trail system that links Southern Village, Southern Community Park, and Merritt's Pasture. The eastern end currently terminates at the edge of Merritt's Pasture. The western terminus is located near Fordham Boulevard, just east of Kingswood Apartments.

At this time we would like to let everyone know how things are going with the project and changes that have been made to the design focus.

**Eastern Extension** - The original plan was to end the design at Oteys Road. We have been in discussions with NCDOT and Town transportation staff and now believe that the design should be expanded to include a pedestrian crossing of Fordham Boulevard at Oteys Road and the inclusion of pedestrian and bicycle facilities along Oteys Road between Fordham Boulevard and Mason Farm Road. A safe pedestrian crossing of Fordham Boulevard has long been a goal of the Town and this seems like the right time to explore whether or not the idea is feasible. We now have the information needed to see if NCDOT's safety and traffic flow concerns can be addressed. We are currently negotiating a revised contract with our design firm and hope to begin that work soon.



**Western Extension** – Design work on the western portion is going well. The Council recently authorized the staff to purchase two critical easements needed to make the project work. In addition they have authorized the staff to acquire easements from the Chapel Hill/Carrboro City Schools and UNC once all landowners are satisfied with the plans. Once a few key issues are resolved we'll post the updated plans on our website.



**Ashe Place/Arboretum Drive Bridge** – We have run into significant problems with the design of the bridge. As we discussed at all of the public meetings held so far, we will not move a design forward unless it can be shown that the project will not increase the risk of flood damage. So far we have not been able to meet that test. All of our standard bridge solutions have a slight, but real increase in the flood that would theoretically impact one home. We have found ways to bridge the creek without raising the flood, but at a projected cost that is 4 to 5 times the cost of our standard bridge installation. At this time we are postponing design of the bridge in order to concentrate on design of the other elements of the trail. This does not mean that we have abandoned the idea of a bridge over Morgan Creek. We believe there may be a solution, but it will require a totally different design approach. It is our intent to try again at some date in the future, but for now we are going to concentrate on design of the eastern and western extensions of the Morgan Creek Trail.

Please feel free to contact me if you require any additional information. I can be reached at [bwebster@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:bwebster@townofchapelhill.org) or 919 968-2819.