

March 2020

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The Chapel Hill Parks and Recreation Department believes that the citizens of Chapel Hill deserve a diverse choice of recreational amenities that promote health, enjoyment, community values, and environmental sustainability.

Department Mission Statement:

To enliven our community by providing exceptional service, creating opportunities for inclusive recreational and cultural experiences and nurturing beautiful, sustainable spaces.

HIGHLIGHTS

Bolin Creek Trail, Phase 3: See page 6 for a new schedule and updates.

Fordham Boulevard Sidepath: See page 11. On March 4, 2020 the Council directed to staff to proceed with the project using the option to build within NCDOT's Fordham Boulevard right-of-way.

Communications: We encourage all interested people to subscribe to our e-mail distribution list. 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

If you do not wish to receive updates please let me know. You can reply to the e-mail or call me at (919) 968-2819.



Bolin Creek Trail construction - See page 6

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

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

This section gives us an opportunity to report on policy, communication, and other issues related to provision of recreation and parks to the citizens of Chapel Hill.

VOTER APPROVED BONDS

On November 3, 2015 Chapel Hill voters approved five bond orders including Parks, Greenways, Streets and Sidewalks, Solid Waste Facility, and Stormwater.

PARKS BONDS

So far the \$8,000,000 Parks bond has been programmed for the following purposes:

- New administrative headquarters for the Parks and Recreation Department
- Pay for a portion of the American Legion Property Acquisition
- Capital level improvements and renovations of aging parks. (See below)
- \$50,000 Contribution toward a purchase of property by the NC Botanical Garden Foundation

Capital Improvements: So far the following improvements and renovations projects have been identified.

Southern Community Park Playground and Park Drainage
Complete

Homestead Park Synthetic Turf Conversion Project
Complete

Cedar Falls Park Tennis Courts Rebuild
Design Phase

Cedar Falls Park Inclusive Playground
Design Phase

Morgan Creek Land Purchase
Land acquired. Working on performance agreement with Botanical Garden Foundation.

GREENWAYS BONDS

The \$5,000,000 Greenways Bond is intended to be used for the Bolin Creek Trail, Morgan Creek Trail, and Tanyard Branch Trail. The following projects have been selected for use of bond funds.

Bolin Creek Trail Phase 3 construction
(Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. to Umstead Park)
Complete except for area affected by coal ash.
See page 6.

Tanyard Branch Trail Phase 3 construction
(Umstead Park to existing Tanyard Branch Trail)
Complete

Morgan Creek Trail design/permitting
(Three separate projects. See page 12)
Currently under design

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.



Greenway bonds were used to complete the Bolin Creek Trail west of Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

ORANGE COUNTY PARK AND TRAIL LOCATORS

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/>

You can also use the newly released [trail locator](#) at: <https://gis.orangecountync.gov/TrailsAndParks/default.html>

COMPREHENSIVE PARKS MASTER PLAN GREENWAYS MASTER PLAN MOBILITY AND CONNECTIVITY 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](#)

MOBILITY PLAN: The Town’s integrated Mobility Plan combines information and planning for multiple modals of travel including sidewalks, greenways, bike facilities, and transit. For more information please visit:

[Mobility and Connectivity Plan](#)

ADOPT A TRAIL PROGRAM

The Parks and Recreation Department has started an adopt a park/trail program. Individuals and groups may participate in the program that will assist the Department. Information can be found at the [Adopt a Park/Greenway Webpage](#).

2. SMALL PROJECTS

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

EAGLE SCOUT PROJECTS

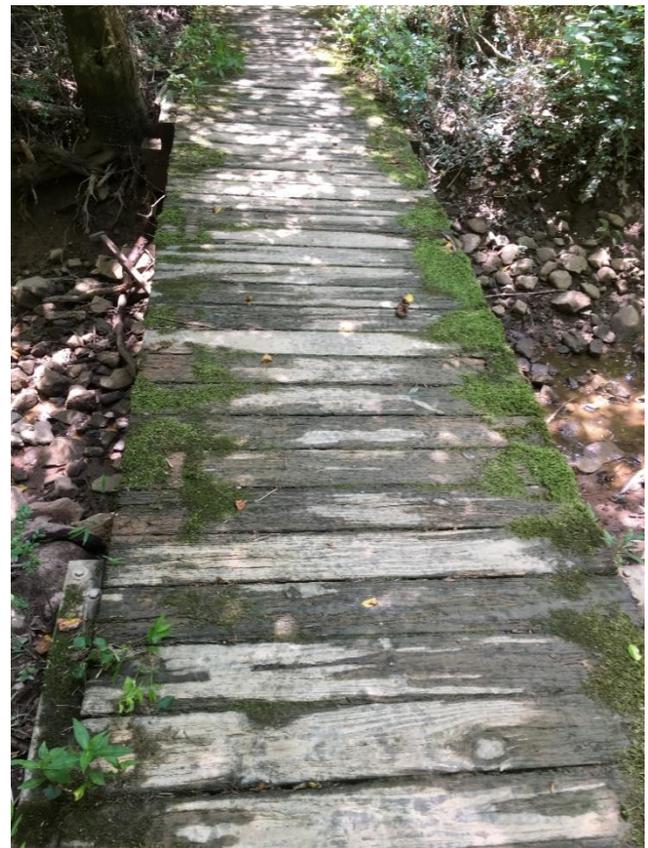
The Eagle designation is the pinnacle of scouting and can only be earned through many years of hard work and community service. The final step is to undertake a significant project that will benefit the community. The Chapel Hill Parks and Recreation Department has long supported the young men of our 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.

Upcoming Eagle Projects

We are currently working with Eagle Scout candidates to develop two projects.

Umstead Park Natural Surface Trails: Umstead Park had a number of natural surface trails prior to the construction of the paved Bolin Creek and Tanyard Branch trails. These trails were mostly in poor condition. It was our intent to relook at the natural surface trail system once the construction of the two larger paved trails were complete. We have started conversations with Eagle Scout candidates to start the work. Trails will be rebuilt and/or relocated.

Little Creek Trail (Meadowmont Park): The Town assumed ownership of a large wetland area adjacent to Little Creek as part of the Meadowmont development approval. This area is known as Meadowmont Park. An old farm road serves as the basis for the Little Creek Trail, which connects Lancaster Drive to Meadowmont Park and Rashkis School. We have started conversations with Eagle Scout candidates to make improvements to this trail.



Replacement of this boardwalk is one potential Eagle Scout project.

Join Orange County's bicycle community for:

OC CYCLEFEST

May is National Bike Month... let's celebrate!

EVENTS

- 4/11 20th Anniversary Block Party**
SAT The ReCYCLERY, 12pm - 5pm
- 4/19 Carrboro Open Streets**
SUN W Weaver St., 12pm - 4pm
- 4/24 Gearing Up for Bike Month**
FRI The Pit at UNC, 11am - 1pm
- 4/26 Women's On-Road Bike Skills Class**
SUN McDougle Middle School track, 3:30pm - 5pm
- 5/2 Sock-In Cycle Track**
SAT Cameron Ave. at UNC, 11am - 4pm
- 5/5 Bicycle Coffee on the Corner**
TUE Corner of Church and Rosemary St., 8am - 10am
- 5/5 Bike MechanicArt**
TUE The ReCYCLERY, 6pm
- 5/9 Bike on Bus Workshop**
SAT Carrboro Farmers Market, 9am - 12pm
- 5/12 Bike Breakfast**
TUE Libba Cotten Trail, 7am - 10am
- 5/15 Bike from Work Day**
FRI Beer Study, 6pm - 9pm
- 5/15 Bike-in Movie Night**
FRI The ReCYCLERY, 9pm
- 5/16 Bike on Bus Workshop**
SAT University Place, 9am - 12pm
- 5/20 Cycle the Riverwalk**
WED Nash and Kollock St., Hillsborough, 11am - 1pm

GROUP RIDES

- 4/8 Full Moon Rainbow Ride**
WED The ReCYCLERY, 8pm *monthly
- 4/11 Spring Roll Cruiser Ride**
SAT The ReCYCLERY, 11:30am - 12:30pm
- 4/16 3rd Thursday Ride**
THU Back Alley Bikes, 7:30pm *monthly
- 4/29 Carrboro Mayor's Ride**
WED Carrboro Town Hall, 9am - 12pm
- 5/7 Full Moon Rainbow Ride**
THU The ReCYCLERY, 8pm *monthly
- 5/21 3rd Thursday Ride**
THU Back Alley Bikes, 7:30pm *monthly

WED 5/6 National Bike to School Day
FRI 5/15 National Bike to Work Day

WORKSHOPS

- Weekends Earn a Bike**
BI-WEEKLY The ReCYCLERY, 10am - 2pm
- Tuesdays WTF Wrench Night**
WEEKLY The ReCYCLERY, 7pm

Find event details at: GoChapelHill.org



More events: gotriangle.org/bikemonth

3. BOLIN CREEK TRAIL, PHASE 3

Location: Martin L. King Jr. Blvd. to Bolinwood Drive

Design Firm: Surface 678

Contractor: S&C Construction

Status: Work Underway

The Bolin Creek Trail project is complete except for one 500 linear feet section east of Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Construction of the Bolin Creek Trail was halted due to the discovery of coal ash on the Town's Police Department property and damage from Hurricane Florence.

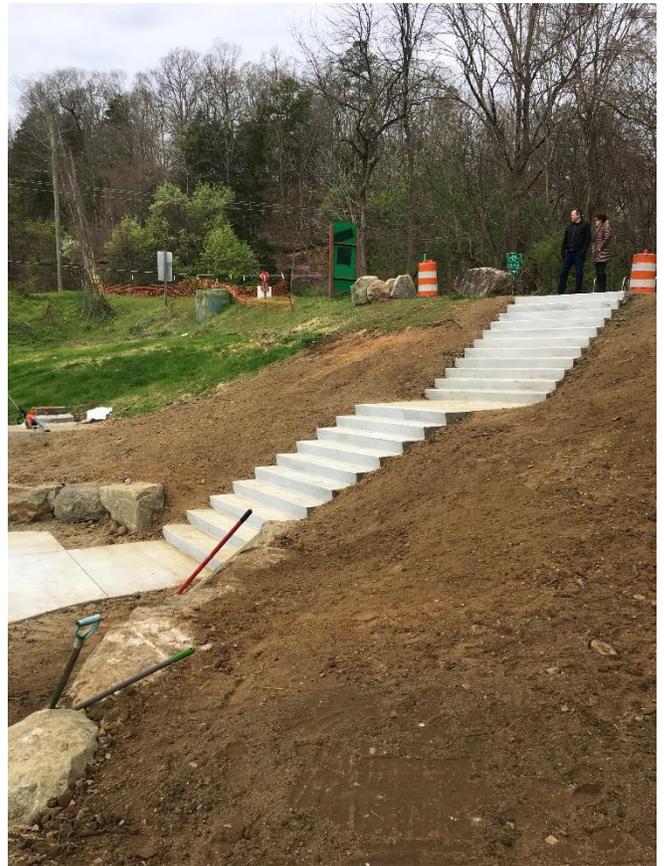
The Town worked with consultants and regulators to determine the best way to resolve the coal ash situation. Although the coal ash deposit is not under the trail location, it is close enough that Town leaders decided to stop construction until a plan of action could be determined. We now have a plan to build the trail. A different plan will be necessary to deal with the main coal ash deposit under the Police Station tract. For information about the coal ash situation please visit the Town's [Coal Ash Web Page](#).

Construction resumed in December 2019 and is now scheduled for completion in the spring of 2020. Critical in-stream work to repair damage from Hurricane Florence has been completed and we now have approved protocols for handling incidental coal ash residue in the construction zone.

Work is underway just east of the Martin Luther King Jr. culvert over Bolin Creek. The following work is needed to complete the project:

- Installation of stair railings.
- Mitigation of several incidental coal ash areas (not the main deposit).
- Extension of the trail to Bolinwood Drive. This involves replacement of some of the old asphalt trail further from the creek.
- New wood decking on both Bolin Creek Trail bridges.
- Relocation of art benches.
- Lighting in the Martin Luther King Jr. culvert
- Grand opening Friday June 5. We'll have more information later on grand opening specifics.





4. INCLUSIVE PLAYGROUND PROJECT

Location: Cedar Falls Park, Weaver Dairy Road

Current Status: Detailed design work underway

Design Firm: WithersRavenel, Inc.

[Inclusive Playground Project Webpage](#)

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.

We are designing this playground using the [Seven Principles of Universal Design](#) in order to provide a facility that is open and fun for everyone.

If you are interested in what an Inclusive Playground might look like you can visit the Kids Together Park in Cary. Here is a link that provides some information:

<http://www.kidstogethercary.org/>





FUNDRAISING FOR THE INCLUSIVE PLAYGROUND

The Friends of the Chapel Hill Parks and Recreation Department has started fund raising for the Inclusive Playground.

You can donate by writing a check to:

Friends of Chapel Hill Parks & Recreation
200 Plant Road
Chapel Hill, NC 27514 (or)

Via PayPal at [Donate for Inclusive Playground](#)

The Friends organization is seeking a motivated volunteer to run a campaign to raise funds that would supplement any funds provided by the Town.

The playground is expected to be significantly more expensive than a standard play area because of the larger amount of land needed and the specialized equipment anticipated to be installed.

We expect the playground will be built in phases. Any fund raising will help us complete the project sooner.

If you think you can help please email me at bwebster@townofchapelhill.org

Portions of the Cedar Falls Park **Inclusive Playground** and **Tennis Courts** projects are being designed at the same time. Both projects will share the same parking, utilities, and accessible access path.

5. CEDAR FALLS PARK TENNIS COURTS REPLACEMENT

Location: Cedar Falls Park, Weaver Dairy Road
Current Status: Detailed design work underway
Design Firm: WithersRavenel, Inc.

The Cedar Falls Tennis Courts were built in the 1970s. The courts have sub-surface water and soils issues that make resurfacing impractical. This project will result in the complete demolition and replacement of the 6 existing tennis courts, lights, access path, and fence.

We are working with our design firm and the United States Tennis Association (USTA) to reconfigure the existing footprint to allow more room per court.

Preliminary plans have been developed. Plans and other information can be found on the [Cedar Falls Tennis Court project webpage](#).

Note: Current funding is not adequate to begin this project. We are exploring different means of funding the renovation.



The tennis courts at Cedar Falls Park are in poor condition. The courts are over 40 years. Poor sub-surface conditions result in wet and stained surfaces with reoccurring cracks. The project will result in totally rebuilt courts with an emphasis on proper sub-surface drainage.



6. FORDHAM BOULEVARD MULTI-PURPOSE PATH

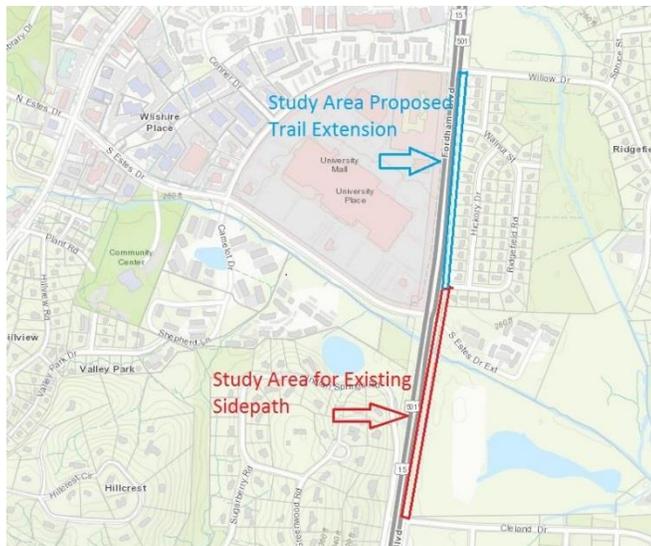
Location: Cleland Drive to Willow Drive
Current Status: Design
Design Firm: Kimley Horn and Assoc., Inc.
Design Contract: \$145,000
[Fordham Blvd Sidepath Project Webpage](#)

COUNCIL ACTION: On March 4, 2020 the Town Council reviewed the various options and directed the staff to design the project as a sidepath within NCDOT’s right-of-way. The design must result in high levels of safety for trail users, retention of as much landscape buffer as possible, new landscaping to replace some that is lost, and fencing for adjacent neighbors. We expect design efforts to restart in spring 2020.

The Town’s Mobility and Connectivity plan shows a future sidepath along Fordham Boulevard that will one day connect many residential and commercial properties throughout northeastern Chapel Hill. This project will explore the options available to the Town to:

- 1) Upgrade the existing sidepath that currently links Cleland Drive with Ridgefield Road.
- 2) Extend the sidepath or some other facility to Willow Drive.

Other sections of the system have recently been added at Eastgate Shopping Center and Rams Plaza. Other sections are currently in the planning and construction phase.



7. MORGAN CREEK TRAIL - WEST

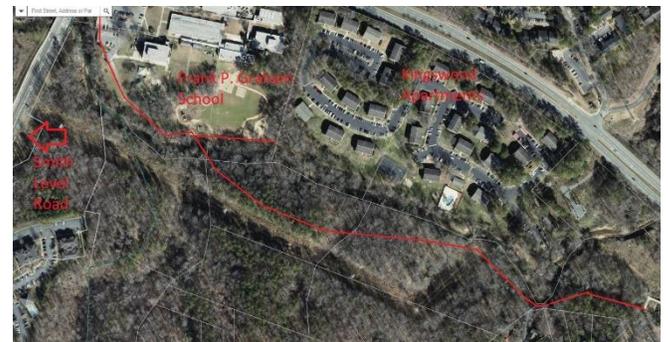
Location: Existing Morgan Creek Trail Parking Lot to Smith Level Road
Current Status: Design, easement acquisition
Design Firm: Stewart Engineering

The existing Morgan Creek/Fan Branch Trail 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.

The western end of the existing trail ends at a parking lot south of Fordham Boulevard. The design team is looking 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.

The Town purchased two key easements and is working with UNC and the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools to explore the possibility of obtaining needed additional easements on their properties.

We expect to pursue this project in two phases based on budget. We will know more about available budget in the summer of 2020 upon completion of the Bolin Creek Trail project.



For the first phase we anticipate building a mostly unpaved trail with the following conditions and amenities:

- End phase one at Kingswood Apartments
- Build a small section at Smith Level Road to accommodate a connection under Smith Level Road to Carrboro’s section of the trail. (Assuming Carrboro is ready to construct its section)
- Install a major bridge over Morgan Creek
- Construct major features such as a boardwalk and retaining walls

The second phase would finish the trail including paving any unpaved sections from the first phase.

8. MORGAN CREEK TRAIL - EAST

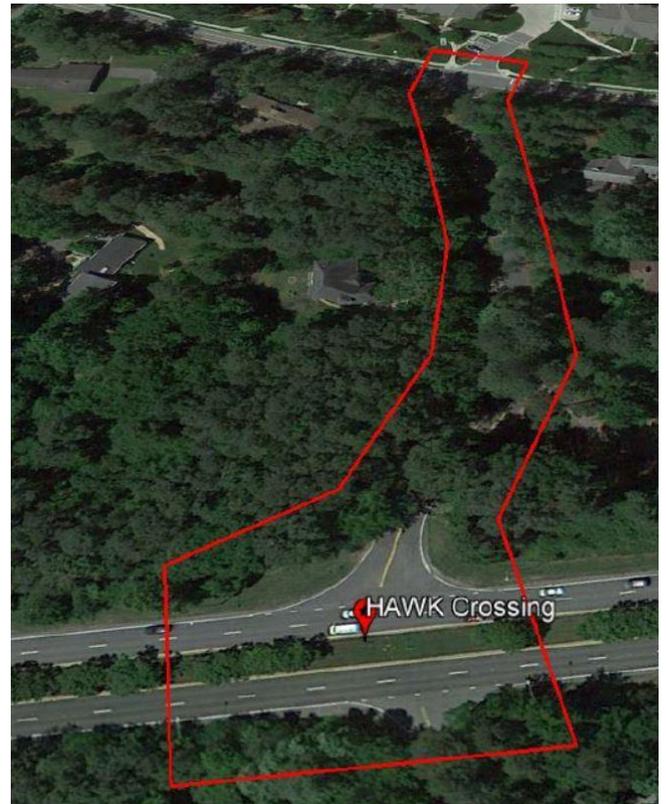
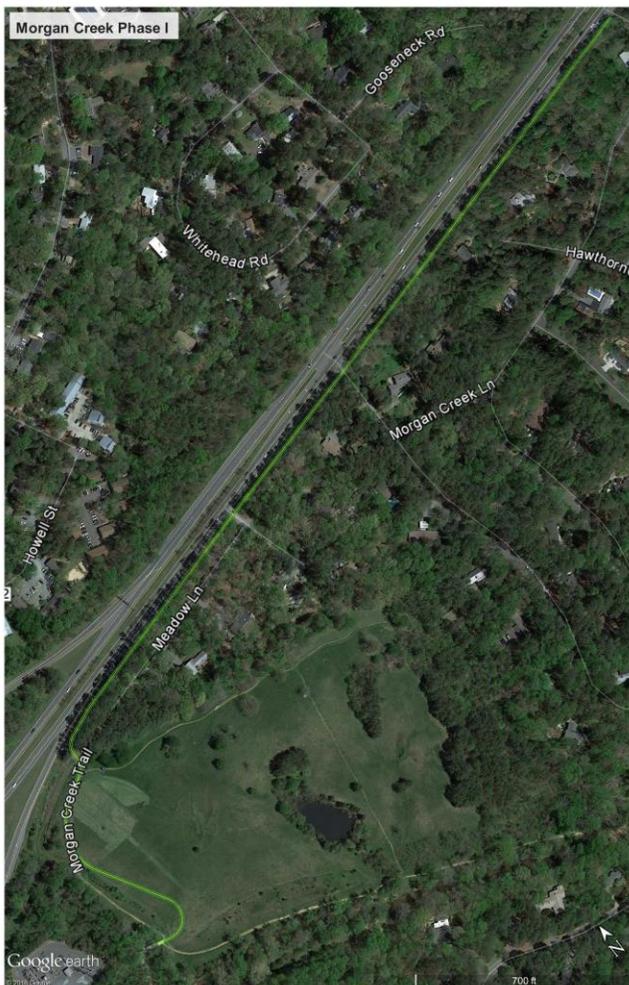
Location: Merritt's Pasture to Smith Level Road
Current Status: Design, easement acquisition
Design Firm: Stewart Engineering

The existing Morgan Creek Trail terminates at the edge of Merritt's Pasture. The pasture is one of the Town's finest properties with a lovely loop trail and expansive views.

Unfortunately there is no legal access to the pasture from the east. This project would design an extension of the trail across a corner of the pasture then continue as a sidepath along Fordham Boulevard as far as Otey's Road. This approach would allow bicycle and pedestrian traffic to access the sidepath from the internal street system at two locations. Once on the sidepath, users could access the Merritt's Pasture, Morgan Creek Trail, and Fan Branch Trail.

We hope to finish design of the trail in 2021. However, there is no identified source of construction funding at this time.

One exciting possibility related to this project would include a pedestrian crossing of Fordham Boulevard near Otey's Road. This proposal would require approval from NCDOT and solutions to numerous constraints. However, if the proposal were to work we could develop a safe pedestrian crossing of Fordham Boulevard, which currently acts as a major barrier to north/south pedestrian and bicycle access.



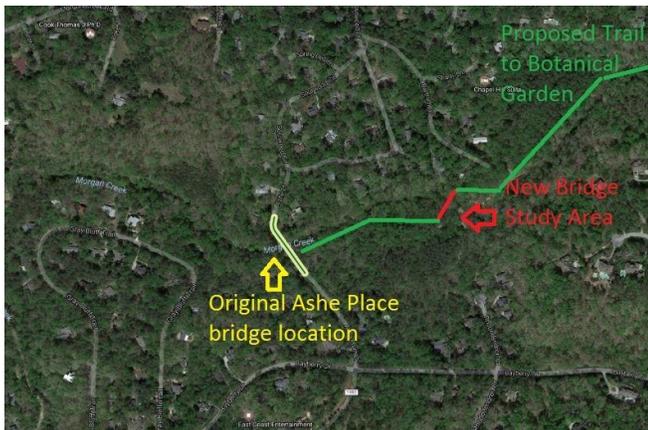
The Town is exploring the possibility of installing an at-grade crossing of Fordham Boulevard at Otey's Road. HAWK signals (High-intensity Activated crossWALK, also known as Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons, are signal beacons designed to help pedestrians safely cross busy streets.

9. MORGAN CREEK BRIDGE AT BARTRAM DRIVE

Location: South of Bartram Drive
Current Status: Negotiating design contract
Design Firm: Stewart Engineering

The Town is exploring 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.

The Town previously started design work for a bridge over Morgan Creek that was intended to connect Ashe Place and Arboretum Drive. During that design effort we discovered that any reasonably sized bridge in that location would create an unacceptable rise in flood waters from Morgan Creek.



We hope to complete contract negotiations with our design firm sometime in spring 2020. Once design is complete the following steps would be necessary prior to any construction:

- Confirm that the bridge is feasible through flood modeling
- Present proposed design plans to the public
- Negotiate easements and agreements with UNC

We anticipate that in a best case scenario construction could not take place until late 2021 or early 2022.

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

Temporary repair of Lower Booker Creek Trail Bridge
 Temporary repair of Meadowmont Park Bridge
 Southern Community Park – Small Dog Park Gazebo
 Addition of Pickleball Courts at Ephesus Park
 Westwood Park Improvements
 Pine Knolls Playground Poured in Place Surfacing
 Installation of five bicycle/pedestrian trail counters
 Bridge and Retaining Wall Inspection Program Started

2017

Bolin Creek Trail Phase 3 (except coal ash area)
 Southern Community Park Playground Renovation
 Southern Community Park Exercise Equipment Installation
 Community Center Park Drainage Improvements
 Meadowmont Dam Replacement (Design only)

2018

Community Center Park Playground Safety Surface
 Joe Herzenberg Memorial Bench on Bolin Creek
 Tanyard Branch Trail Phase 3
 Umstead Park Sand Volleyball Courts, Phase 2

2019

Homestead Park Synthetic Turf Soccer Fields
 Umstead and Oakwood Park Tennis Court Light Removal
 Umstead Park Playground Repairs (Hurricane Florence)
 Cedar Falls Park, New Poured in Place Fall Surface
 Memorial Cemetery Columbarium and Walkway
 Southern Community Park Drainage Improvements
 Ephesus Park Pickleball, ADA, and Parking Lot Improvements
 Merritt Family Memorial Bench (Merritt's Pasture)