

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

ITEM NO. E(3)

AGENDA ITEM ABSTRACT MEETING DATE: September 19, 2006

TITLE: Comments on the Morgan Creek Trail Conceptual Plan

DEPARTMENT: Planning	PUBLIC HEARING: YES ____ NO <u>x</u>
ATTACHMENTS: A. Resolution B. Report of the Morgan Creek Trail Conceptual Plan Committee	FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: Dale McKeel, Transportation Planner, 918-7329

PURPOSE

On August 15, Bill Webster of the Chapel Hill Parks and Recreation Department made a presentation to the Board of Aldermen on the report of the Morgan Creek Trail Conceptual Plan Committee. Following the presentation, the Board of Aldermen requested that Town staff prepare comments on the plan to be forwarded to the Chapel Hill Town Council.

INFORMATION

As discussed on August 15, a short section of the proposed trail is in the Town of Carrboro. The conceptual plan envisions the trail passing under the Smith Level Road bridge (on the north side of Morgan Creek) and then looping up to the existing sidewalk on Smith Level Road. It should be noted that an easement from a private property owner may be needed in order to complete this section of the trail, and the Town of Carrboro will most likely be responsible for acquiring this easement. Once this section of trail is completed, it will be maintained by the Town of Carrboro.

The report also suggests that the Town of Carrboro build a 1200-foot section of sidewalk on the west side of Smith Level Road to connect the Berryhill neighborhood to the existing sidewalk on the Morgan Creek bridge. This sidewalk would provide access for residents of Berryhill to the trail and Frank Porter Graham Elementary School. It has long been anticipated that this sidewalk would be built by NCDOT as part of the Smith Level Road TIP project (with a local match from the Town of Carrboro). However, due to delays in the TIP project, the Town may need to explore other alternatives for the construction of this sidewalk to ensure that the sidewalk segment is completed concurrently with the trail.

Town staff has the following comments on the concept plan:

1. The Town of Carrboro appreciates the work of the Morgan Creek Trail Conceptual Plan Committee and supports the Concept Plan.
2. If the project moves into the detailed design stage, the Town of Carrboro welcomes the opportunity to participate in the design for the trail section near Smith Level Road.
3. In the design, consideration should be given to security and safety measures for the section of the trail that passes under Smith Level Road (such as lighting and visibility).

4. In the design, consideration should be given to providing appropriate warning to trail users on sections that may be subject to flooding.
5. The Towns of Carrboro and Chapel Hill should develop a cooperative strategy for trail maintenance and management to promote consistency and establish expectations.

FISCAL IMPACT

As discussed above, the construction of the Morgan Creek Trail may have a fiscal impact for easement acquisition, sidewalk construction, and trail maintenance. These costs will become better defined as the project moves into the detailed design stage.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Board of Aldermen adopt the resolution receiving providing comments to the Chapel Hill Town Council (Attachment A).