

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

ITEM NO. B(1)

AGENDA ITEM ABSTRACT

MEETING DATE: January 12, 2010

SUBJECT: Sidewalk Program Update – follow up to November 10, 2009 Meeting

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| DEPARTMENT: PUBLIC WORKS DEPT. | PUBLIC HEARING: NO |
| ATTACHMENTS: A. Resolution B. Table showing updated cost estimates and funding sources C. Aerial showing potential bike/ped connection at end of Pleasant Dr. to Estes Park Apartments D. Aerial showing potential bike/ped connection for Hillcrest Ct. to Estes Park Apartments. E. Aerial showing potential bike/ped connection thru Crest St. to Estes Park Apartments. | FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: George Seiz 918-7427 Jeff Brubaker 918-7329 Patricia McGuire 918-7327 |

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this agenda item is to provide additional information about the sidewalk program as requested by the Board of Aldermen (BOA) at their November 10, 2009 meeting.

INFORMATION:

General -

The BOA received a sidewalk/greenway program update at the November 10, 2009 study session in conjunction with a presentation on the Capital Improvement Program for 10/11. Information discussed included updated cost estimates and funding sources identified for various remaining Phase I projects, the Wilson Park Multi-use Path, Rogers Rd. sidewalk and Smith Level Rd. sidewalk. Estimated project costs now exceed bond funding by about \$453,800 and staff recommended that Estes Dr. not be funded in light of the future TIP road project along this corridor which would include sidewalks, bike lanes and necessitate the removal of any sidewalk improvements made by the Town. Board members expressed interest in checking other options and specifically asked the staff to look at:

- 1) Building the Estes sidewalk, but only from N. Greensboro to Hillcrest Ave.
- 2) Feasibility of formalizing the bike/ped connection from the end of Pleasant Dr. to the Estes Park Apartments. Staff should also check feasibility of other options for bike/ped connection.

Attachment B includes a table showing updated cost estimates and funding sources for remaining sidewalk projects and the Wilson Park multi-use path. A similar table was shown at the November 10, 2009 BOA. The updated table shows a revised cost estimate for sidewalk along the entire length of Estes Dr. There was an error in the earlier estimate and the revised number is quite a bit lower, however, the estimated cost for the various projects still exceeds bond funding by \$453,800 (shown in column under Estes).

Cost Estimate for building the Estes sidewalk but only from N. Greensboro to Hillcrest -

The length of this section would be approximately 1,100 feet and consist of a 5 foot wide concrete sidewalk, curb & gutter and necessary storm water piping. In order to get a proper transition from the edge of the existing asphalt (which is worn and uneven) to the edge of the new concrete gutter, it will be necessary to widen the pavement from an 11 ft. lane to a 12 ft. lane. This will also provide a greater and safer distance from the edge of the sidewalk especially in light of the fact that the speed limit is 35 miles per hour and there is no planting strip between the back of curb and sidewalk (typically 18 inches). Much of the existing right-of-way is only about 5 feet back from the current edge of pavement. It will be necessary to obtain right-of-way from about 5 properties (about 7 ft. wide) for a total length of about 710 ft. and construction easements along all of the properties to facilitate the construction. Several trees will be impacted (on the order of 10 to 12) and necessitate the removal of many of them.

The estimated cost to construct this roughly 1,100 ft. long section is approximately \$395,000 which includes right-of-way and easement acquisition, design, and construction. Utilizing this number for Estes in the table on attachment B would yield a shortage of bond funding of about \$161,000 ($\$395,000 - \$234,200 = \$160,800$)

Potential pedestrian and bicycle connections near Estes Dr. :

Staff analyzed the feasibility of several pedestrian and bicycle facility alternatives that would improve non-motorized travel access between Estes Dr. (north of Hillcrest St.) and N. Greensboro St. Table 1 below includes a description, cost estimate range, and potential benefits and drawbacks of each alternative.

Options

1. Continue moving forward with the Wilson Park Multi-use Path (Option 1A)

On Dec. 8, 2009, as part of its resolution on the Bolin Creek Greenway Conceptual Master Plan, the Board directed staff to proceed with implementing the Wilson Park Multi-use Path. The next step is for staff to work with the NCDOT Local Programs Management Office to begin the Municipal Agreement process that will authorize federal STP-DA funding for the project. In addition to federal and local bond funding, staff are considering two other funding sources: a Fit Community grant from the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund and a federal Recreational Trails Program grant.

General Wilson Park Multi-use Path Timeline

January 2010 – Staff submission of Project Information Data (PID) form to NCDOT
February 2010 – NCDOT returns draft Municipal Agreement to Town; revisions to draft Municipal Agreement, if necessary
March 2010 – Board of Aldermen approval of Municipal Agreement
April 2010 – Municipal Agreement execution; FHWA PE funding authorization; Notice to Proceed
May-July 2010 – Design consultant selection; NCDOT approval of design contract; staff submission of Encroachment Agreement application to NCDOT for Estes Dr. ROW
August 2009-January 2011 – Design; Encroachment Agreement execution
February 2010-March 2011 – Bid document approval by NCDOT; FHWA Construction funding authorization; Construction bid; NCDOT bid concurrence; Bid award
April 2011-August 2011 – Construction/administration

2. Gauge interest in constructing a multi-use path formally connecting Estes Park Apartments with Pleasant Dr. (Option 2)

The Board directed staff to gauge interest in the construction of a multi-use path connecting Estes Park Apts. with Pleasant Dr. Stakeholders include, but are not limited to, Estes Park Apts. tenants and management, Carrboro Elementary School, CHCCS and OWASA.

There is already a well-used dirt path along this route. However, formalizing the route would have a policy impact since Estes Park Apts. would then be eligible for the Carrboro Elementary walk zone as determined by CHCCS. CHCCS Board of Education Policy 6322 states that “[a]ny student assigned to a school which is one and a half miles or more from his or her residence is eligible for transportation services to and from school”. Generally, CHCCS students residing within the 1.5-mile radius must walk, bike, or be driven to school, given there is a formal pedestrian network and no necessary crossings of railroads or four-lane arterials. Formalizing the path between Estes Park Apts. and Pleasant Dr. would create a route using entirely sidewalks and multi-use paths – via the new Pleasant Dr. path, Pleasant Dr., N. Greensboro St., the Francis Shetley path, and Shelton St. This route is about 0.8 miles.

It should be noted that construction of a sidewalk from Estes Park Apts. driveway to N. Greensboro St. would also likely make the apartments walk-zone eligible.

For the 2005-06 school year, there were 60 elementary students in the Estes Park Apartments segment. If buses no longer served the apartments, safety considerations for children walking to school would have to be taken into account. According to Policy 6322, transportation services may be provided within the walk zone “when factors are present which may endanger the safety of students walking to the school”. Transportation services must also be provided to all special needs students. Safety concerns could be partially addressed within

the Safe Routes to School Action Plan process and the Walk to School Day events the Town is currently planning. However, it is ultimately a decision of the CHCCS Board of Education whether or not to continue to provide bus services to Estes Park Apts. should it become walk-zone eligible. According to a staff conversation with CHCCS staff, it is not common for bus service to be provided within a walk zone.

Other considerations for this option include grade and a water line. Figure 1 below depicts the elevation changes of the Pleasant St. multi-use path alignment assuming no grading. Presence of steep grades along segments of the alignment will require some grading.

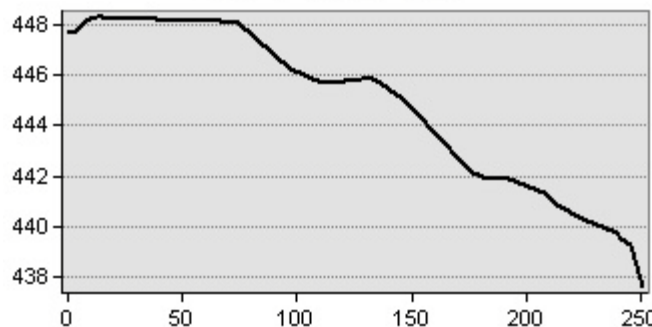


Figure 1. Elevation profile graph for the Pleasant St. Multi-use Path alignment (as is: not including grading).

A site visit by staff discovered the presence of a water main in the area that may constrain the extent of grading. Staff has begun collaborating with OWASA to ensure that this issue is properly addressed. The existing water main is within the Pleasant St. right-of-way at the dead end and then extends within an OWASA easement that is on Estes Park Apartments property.

Other alternatives

Two other alternatives were considered. The construction of a multi-use trail or walkway from the end of Hillcrest Ave. to Estes Park Apts. parking lot (Option 3) would improve an already-cleared route that, in conjunction with the Pleasant Dr. path, would provide some improvement in Hillcrest St. access to downtown. It also would improve access to the bus shelter for the Chapel Hill Transit N route, but involves a relatively steep grade. This route is along a sewer line that is within an OWASA easement on private property,

There is also a potential route from Estes Park Apts. to the end of Crest St. (Option 4), along a 30-ft. sewer easement and through a Town-owned parcel. However, a steep slope leading up to Crest St. would require that a trail or walkway meander, adding to its length and cost. Planning this route would require coordination with OWASA and two property owners. It will also involve significant tree clearing.

| Alt. | Name | Description | Cost range | Funding | Notes |
|------|--|---|-----------------------|---|--|
| 1A | Wilson Park multi-use path | Build a multi-use path from the RR tracks at Estes Dr., through Adams Tract and Wilson Park, connecting with Williams St. (2088 linear ft.) | \$266,000 - \$288,000 | * STP-DA – Wilson Park MU path allocation (FY10) * Local match (bond funding) * Potential fed. and state grants | * Federal funding programmed for this year * Part of Phase 1A of Bolin Creek Conceptual Master Plan * Town-owned land * Includes pedestrian and bicycle route along ~400 ft. segment of Estes Dr. between RR tracks and across from Estes Park Apts. driveway * Need to work with NCDOT on encroachment agreement and coordination w/ future TIP project * Intersection safety improvement at Estes Park Apts. driveway |
| 2 | Pleasant Dr. path | Build a multi-use path from Estes Park Apts. parking lot to Pleasant Dr. (251 linear ft.) | \$30,000 - \$39,000 | None programmed (potential Fit Community grant or bond funding) | * More convenient surface for bicyclists and wheelchair users * Makes Estes Park Apts. eligible for Carrboro Elem. walk zone * Already existing dirt path, but some tree clearing may be necessary * Estes Park Apts. management indicated openness to this connection; staff will continue communication with management/tenants if project moves forward |
| 3 | Hillcrest to Estes Park Apts. connection | Build a multi-use path or walkway from the end of Hillcrest St. to Estes Park Apts. parking lot (188 linear ft.) | \$23,000 - \$29,000 | None programmed (potential bond funding if option is selected as alternative to Estes Dr. sidewalk) | * Cleared area already usable, but trail would improve surface * Connects to gravel road without sidewalks (Hillcrest) * Leads to Chapel Hill Transit N route bus shelter * Steep slope * Staff in contact with Estes Park Apts. management about this option; need to work with Estes Park Apts. ownership, management, tenants, and Hillcrest St. residents if project moves forward |
| 4 | Crest to Estes Park Apts. connection | Build a multi-use path from Crest St. to the Estes Park Apts. parking lot (773 linear ft.) | \$71,000 - \$92,000 | None programmed (potential bond funding if option is selected as alternative to Estes Dr. sidewalk) | * Steep slope leading down from Crest St. * Trail route through Town-owned parcel and sewer easement * Staff in contact with Estes Park Apts. management about this option; need to work with two apartment complexes' ownership, management, and tenants if project moves forward |

Table 1. Comparison of alternatives for improved bicycle and pedestrian access between locations near Estes Dr. and N. Greensboro

FISCAL AND STAFF IMPACT:

Fiscal impact is best determined by referring to the table on Attachment B. As noted earlier estimated project costs now exceed bond funding by approximately \$453,800 based on the projects and available funding shown in the table. There is still a shortage of bond funds (about \$161,000) even if the Estes sidewalk project is reduced to only the section from N. Greensboro to Hillcrest. If the Estes sidewalk were not constructed (as suggested during the November 10, 2009 CIP presentation) there would be roughly \$234,200 available to possibly fund some of the alternative paths presented in this report.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Board accept the report and provide further direction to staff.