

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

ITEM NO.: C(5)

AGENDA ITEM ABSTRACT

MEETING DATE: APRIL 6, 2010

TITLE: Resolution of Support for North Carolina Mountains to Sea Trail Alternative Route Links in Orange County

DEPARTMENT: PLANNING	PUBLIC HEARING: YES ____ No __X__
ATTACHMENTS: A. Resolution B. IPWG Proposal re: Alternate Route and Trail Links	FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: RANDY DODD, 918-7326 BRENDAN MOORE, 918-7392 JEFF BRUBAKER, 918-7329

PURPOSE: The Intergovernmental Parks Work Group has concluded its review of the North Carolina Mountains to Sea Trail route through Orange County and recommends three trail links be shown along with the Principal and Alternate routes on shown on future maps of the NC Mountains-to-Sea Trail corridors through Orange County. Staff from Chapel Hill and Carrboro have been asked to obtain letters of agreement from their respective boards, so they may be presented to the Orange County Board of Commissioners when they formally adopt the Mountains-to-Sea Trail route through Orange County. A resolution in support of the IPWG recommendation is provided for the Board's use.

INFORMATION: The Intergovernmental Parks Work Group (IPWG) was created in 2000 to build on the efforts of citizens, municipalities, the county, and public and quasi-public agencies that had led to development of the Joint Master Recreation and Parks Work Group. The 27-member group has continued the process of gathering, exchanging and sharing information on parks planning and development in Orange County. One of the group's activities has been reviewing the Orange county route for the North Carolina Mountains to Sea Trail (MST).

Project history, plans, maps, and other information about the MST may be found on the trail's official website at <http://www.ncmst.org/>. In summary, the MST of North Carolina was inspired by the General Assembly's enactment of the North Carolina Trails System Act in 1973 (http://ftp.ncleg.net/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/HTML/ByArticle/Chapter_113A/Article_6.html). That law envisioned a "State system of scenic and recreation trails, coordinated with and complemented by existing and future local trail segments or systems, and by prescribing the methods by which, and standards according to which, components may be added to the State trails system." The MST is planned as a complete foot trail that will reach across the state, from Clingman's Dome in Great Smoky Mountains National Park to Jockey's Ridge State Park just inland of the Atlantic Ocean. The trail's proposed alignment currently consists of over 935 miles of footpaths, roads, and state bike routes and traverses 37 of the state's 100 counties, numerous towns and cities, national parks and forests. Alternate sections, ferry boat connections, spur trails, and connections to scenic overlooks, campsites, and other destinations bring the total mileage to nearly 1,000 miles (Figure 1. NC map showing 'complete' and 'primary planned route' of MST).

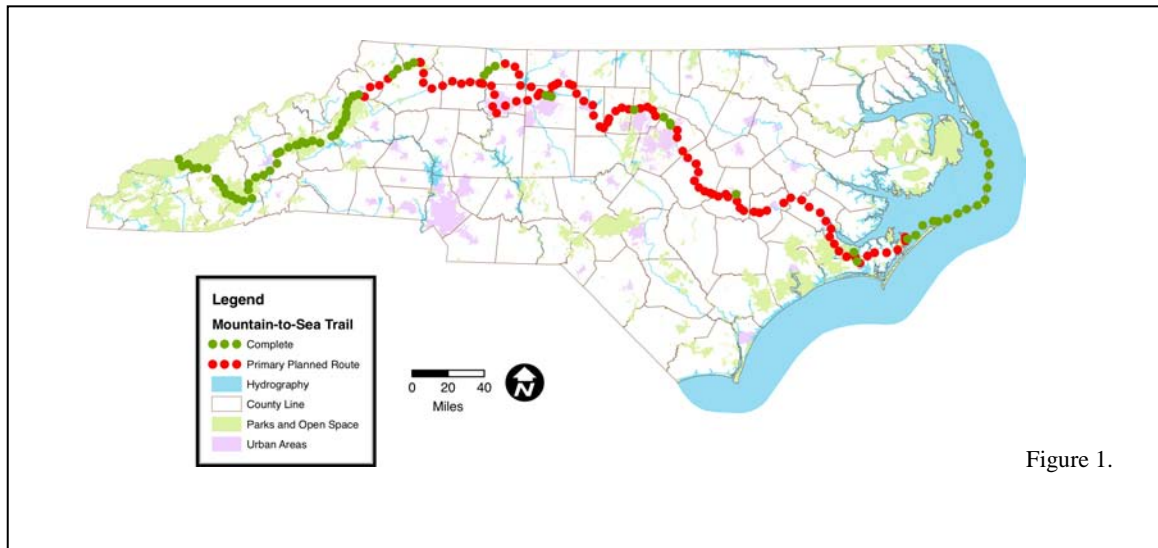
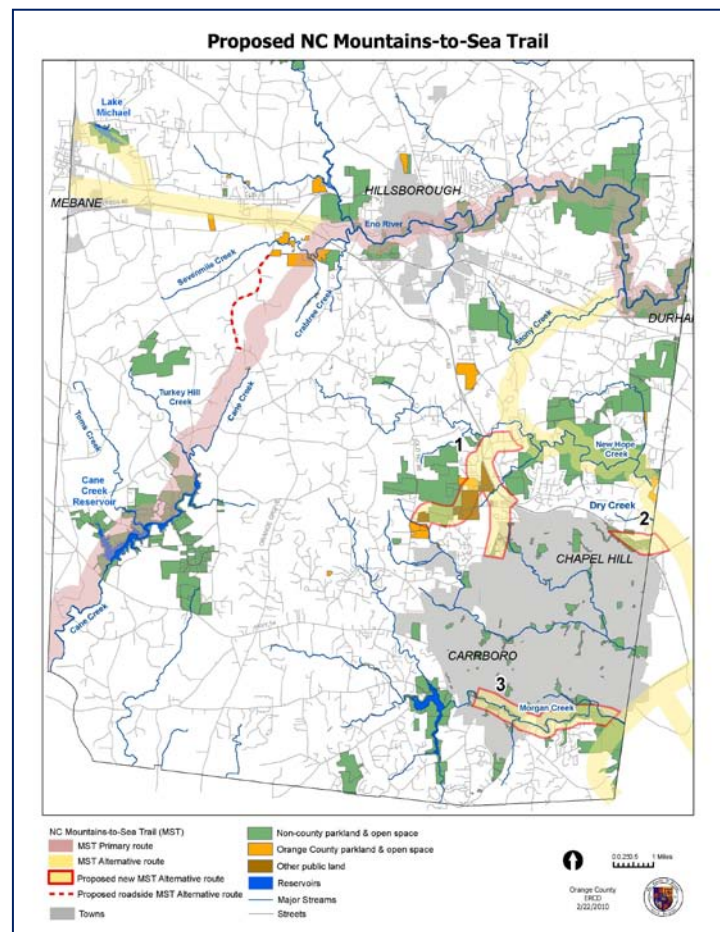


Figure 1.

The IPWG has been discussing the proposed alignment of the MST and how it could connect with locally planned trails and greenways off and on since 2005. At its meeting on February 10th, the IPWG made a recommendation that, in addition to the primary route running from the Cane Creek basin northeast to Crabtree Creek in Hillsborough and on the east along the Eno River, the Orange County portion of the route include a link from Eno River State Park to Jordan Lake via existing trails along New Hope Creek in Duke Forest and links along I-85/40 to Mebane and Lake Michael. In addition, three trail links to planned and existing town greenways in Carrboro and Chapel Hill are recommended as shown in Figure 2 (Proposed NC MST Trail) and described in Attachment B.



FISCAL AND STAFF IMPACT: There is no fiscal or staff impact.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends that the BOA consider adoption of the attached resolution (*Attachment A*).