

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

ITEM NO. D(6)

AGENDA ITEM ABSTRACT

MEETING DATE: October 16, 2012

TITLE: Update on the Morgan Creek Greenway

DEPARTMENT: Planning	PUBLIC HEARING: YES ___ NO <u>X</u> ___
ATTACHMENTS: A. Resolution B. Staff memo	FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: Patricia McGuire – 918-7327 Jeff Brubaker – 918-7329 Randy Dodd – 918-7326 Racquel Benedict – 918-7308

PURPOSE

The purpose of this agenda item is to seek Board direction on a decision point relating to the alignment of the Morgan Creek Greenway. There is some urgency with this decision; delays at this point in the preliminary engineering may risk the loss of some or all of the remaining funds allocated to this project, and thereby jeopardize the ability to complete the first part of the greenway in the short-term.

INFORMATION

At its March 16, 2010 meeting, the Board of Aldermen approved the Morgan Creek Greenway Conceptual Master Plan (“Concept Plan”). A link to the meeting and related agenda materials may be found at: (http://www.townofcarrboro.org/BoA/Agendas/2010/03_16_2010_D3.pdf.) Subsequently, the Board approved a Municipal Agreement with NCDOT and a contract with Coulter Jewell Thames (CJT) for preliminary engineering, work which is currently underway.

The approved concept plan included two potential alignments for Phase 1: 1) a preferred alignment which would extend along the north side of Morgan Creek from Smith Level Road, through the Public Works site and OWASA sewer easement (including a spur to the Abbey Ln. cul-de-sac behind Canterbury Townhomes) and continue across a bridge over Morgan Creek to open space along the edge of the Berryhill neighborhood; and 2) an alternate alignment which would extend from Smith Level Road along the south side of Morgan Creek through a Duke Power easement to roughly the same location along the edge of the Berryhill neighborhood. On February 15, 2012, during its review of the project design, the Greenways Commission (Commission) requested that the concept plan include the following language, *“If the Phase 1 alternate alignment is selected, this decision should be presented to the Greenways Commission and Board of Aldermen for review before implementation.”*

At its September 10, 2012 meeting, the Commission reviewed preliminary findings from CJT and sub-consultant Becky Ward. The consultants reported that building a bridge in Phase 1 of the project, between the Canterbury and Berryhill neighborhoods, would not be permitted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) because it would cause a rise to insurable structures upstream. The Commission discussed these findings and provided guidance to staff to pursue Alternate Phase 1, which shows the greenway on the south side of Morgan Creek. Subsequently, a meeting was held between the Chair of the Commission, the Board of Aldermen

liaisons on the Commission, and Town staff, directing that further review of the alignment, as well as other design questions, be considered by the Board of Aldermen, after review from the Greenways Commission. The staff memo in *Attachment B* provides a more thorough description of the status of preliminary engineering for the Morgan Creek Greenway, and outlines specific decision points.

FISCAL AND STAFF IMPACT

Revenues allocated for the Morgan Creek Greenway include \$480,000 in federal Surface Transportation Program (STP-DA) funding and \$120,000 in local Sidewalks and Greenways Bond funding. Based on both the local bond funding timeline and the milestone date in the Municipal Agreement with NCDOT to administer the STP-DA funding, the project should be completed by November 30, 2013. Some costs have already been incurred by preliminary engineering activities to date. Any delays at this point to the preliminary engineering incur a risk of the loss of some or all of the remaining funds, and may lead to higher costs in the future, particularly for construction.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommend that the Board of Aldermen adopt the resolution in *Attachment A* selecting one of the two alignment options for Phase 1 of the Morgan Creek Greenway and providing direction on the specific points raised in the staff memo.