



# Parks & Recreation

## Capital and Maintenance Project Update

MAY 2015

### Inside this Issue

- 1 PARKS & TRAIL NEWS
- 2 2020 CHAPEL HILL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
- 3 BOLIN CREEK TRAIL – PHASE 3
- 4 ACCESSIBLE PLAYGROUND
- 5 COMMUNITY CENTER RENOVATIONS
- 6 DOG PARK - SOUTHERN COMMUNITY PARK
- 7 PLAYGROUND DESIGN PROJECT
- 8 TANYARD BRANCH GREENWAY TRAIL

You have received this communication because your e-mail address is on one of the Chapel Hill Parks and Recreation Department’s distribution lists for various capital and planning projects.

If you do not wish to receive this update (about once every 30 days) please let me know. You can reply to the e-mail or call me at (919) 968-2819. Also, if you desire additional information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Communications: We are adding interested people to our e-mail distribution list for these projects. 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](mailto:bwebster@townofchapelhill.org)

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](http://friendschparksrec.org).



*The section of the Tanyard Branch Trail that connects McMaster and Jay Streets is now complete. We have started on design of the final phase that will continue the trail to Umstead Park.*

Terms often used in these reports:

- CIP – Capital Improvement Program: Larger construction and renovation projects are budgeted through separate fund mechanisms. The CIP is distinct from the operating Town’s operating budget.
- SUP – Special Use Permit: Required permit that must be issued prior to most major construction projects. Involves many public forums and concludes with a public hearing. Usually takes about 12-14 months.
- ZCP- Zoning Compliance Permit: An important permit that is issued after the SUP and prior to construction. This permit usually takes about 3-4 months to acquire and does not involve public comment.



# 1. PARKS & TRAILS NEWS

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 will also have impacts that serve the community.

## Eagle Scouts.....

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. Projects underway right now are:

**Ryan Day's** Eagle project was installation of a new boardwalk in Southern Community Park. This facility is a tremendous asset to hikers and those using the Community Disk Golf Course. The well-used trail crosses a low area that often stays wet for days after a rain. In addition to keeping hikers feet dry the new boardwalk reduces erosion. This is the latest of a series of Eagle projects in Southern Community Park that have greatly improved the trail system. Many thanks to all of you!



*Eagle Scout Ryan Day on the completed boardwalk.*

## and other Volunteer Projects

We want to thank super volunteer **Andrew George** for the tremendous amount of work he has done to improve the Towns' disk golf course in Southern Community Park. He has personally undertaken an enormous amount of work and has coordinated the work of many other volunteers. He has installed benches, concrete tee-pads, new targets, and helped inform us when we have tree issues in the mostly wooded course. Thank you Andrew!



*Eagle candidates are responsible for assembling teams to complete the work.*

**Lawton Ives** expects to begin another boardwalk project on one of the trails in Meadowmont Park adjacent to Rashkis School. This is another area that stays wet after rain. The project will help the many walkers who use the trails in this park.



*Volunteers worked hard installing tee pads and benches for the Town's Community Disk Golf Course in Southern Community Park.*

**NORTH FOREST HILLS PARKS – BEE INVASION!**

Currently the playground structure at North Forest Hills Park is closed to allow a large swarm of beneficial Solitary Bees to complete mating and nesting. Margarita Lopez-Uribe has provided the following information about the bees. Follow this link to see a short video of the bee infestation: <https://vimeo.com/127184843>

*The park at 121 Collums Road, Chapel Hill has a large nest aggregation of the ground nesting bee Colletes thoracicus. The life cycle of this ground nesting bee starts when males emerge from the ground about a month after spring begins. These males form swarms of bees over the area of emergence as they are waiting for virgin females to emerge from the ground to mate with them. Male bees do not have stingers, thus these clouds of bees are harmless to people. About a week after they become active, females start to emerge from the ground. Males usually copulate with them shortly after their emergence. Because these bees are solitary, each female starts foraging for pollen and building her own nest right after emergence. When females start nesting, you will be able to see small mountains of dirt on the ground indicating the entrance of the nest. Males usually die 2-3 weeks after emergence, while females are active for 6 to 8 weeks. Females are not aggressive and do not sting even if people come very close to their nest.*

*Also note that I found dead bodies of females of the genus Andrena. These bees have a similar life cycle but they become active earlier in the spring. Most likely you have both species in the playground.*

**BOLIN CREEK TRAIL PEDSTRIAN AND BICYCLE COUNTER**

We have installed a counter along the Bolin Creek Trail. For many years when people asked how many people use the trails we could only say “many”. We have had the counter in place since the beginning of 2015 and now have some good data. We will expand the counter program this year to include all of our paved trails. As we process more data we can better learn where our limited resources should be directed. In addition, we will be able to see the effects of expansion of existing trails on use.

**BOLIN CREEK TRAIL**

**January 2015**

Pedestrians going east	5,984
Pedestrians going west	5,800
Bikes going east	896
Bikes going west	900
Total	13,580

**February 2015**

Pedestrians going east	3,942
Pedestrians going west	3,871
Bikes going east	474
Bikes going west	493
Total	8,800

**March 2015**

Pedestrians going east	7,414
Pedestrians going west	7,162
Bikes going east	1,158
Bikes going west	1,196
Total	16,930

**April 2015**

Pedestrians going east	7,861
Pedestrians going west	7,560
Bikes going east	1,354
Bikes going west	1,348
Total	18,123

## 2. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PARKS MASTER PLAN & GREENWAYS MASTER PLAN

Both master plans are now posted online:

[Comprehensive Parks Plan](#)  
[Greenways Master 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.

## 3. BOLIN CREEK TRAIL – PHASE 3A

**Location:** Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd to Umstead Park  
**Current Status:** Executing contract  
**Design Firm:** Surface 678  
**Contractor:** S&C Construction LLC  
**Anticipated Construction Cost:** \$2,113,572  
**Anticipated Start:** June 2015  
**Anticipated Completion:** Summer/Fall 2016

Phase 3A will continue the existing Bolin Creek Trail under Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. and extend it westward to Pritchard Avenue Extension.

The Council accepted the low bid for the project on April 13, 2015. We expect to begin construction in June 2015 and complete the project sometime in late summer or early fall 2016. The schedule will greatly depend on the amount and timing of rainfall throughout the project’s life. If conditions are rainy and wet over the prime construction season the project will take longer.

**GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY – JUNE 6**

Please join us for a Groundbreaking ceremony at 10:00 am at Umstead Park. The ceremony will celebrate the start of this exciting project and National Trails Day. After the groundbreaking Town staff will lead a hike of the Bolin Creek Trail corridor and the corridor for the proposed extension of the Tanyard Branch Trail. Umstead Park is located at 399 Umstead Drive. Call 919 968-2819 for more information.

This will be the most challenging greenway construction project undertaken by the Town to date. The trail corridor is located immediately adjacent to Bolin Creek, has steep slopes, will require many retaining walls, includes two bridges, and will involve work in the stream in order to divert normal stream flows.



*The project will take advantage of the existing culvert that takes Bolin Creek under Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.*

The new trail will pass under Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. using the existing culvert. Currently the normal summer flow of the creek moves along the north side of the culvert; right where the new trail will be located. Part of the work will involve removing old debris left-over from the construction of Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. and rerouting the stream to the south side of the culvert.

The project will include a cross walk of Umstead Drive, a pedestrian activated warning signal, sidewalks along Umstead Drive, and two bridges.

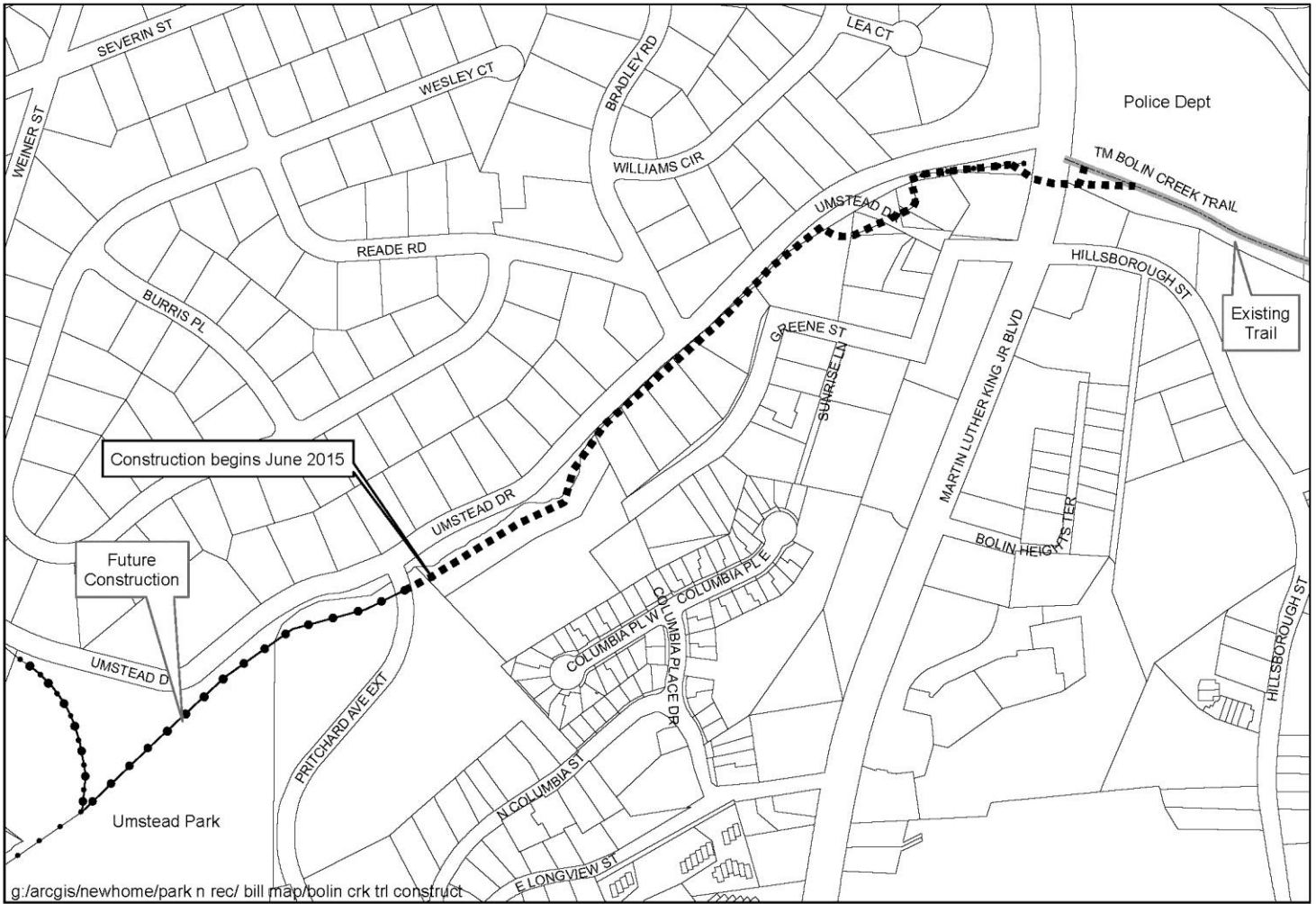
**WON'T THE TRAIL FLOOD?**

Anyone familiar with flood events in this area is well aware that the trail will be under water on occasion. How often is difficult to say. Some years it will be more often than others. But it is safe to say that at least several days per year sections of the trail will be under water. During those times pedestrians and bicyclists will have to find an alternate travel route.

We anticipate that with larger flood events there may be the need for a cleanup and repair that may keep the trail closed even after the flood waters subside.

The alternative solution would have been a very long and expensive new tunnel under Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

We had originally hoped that the trail would be extended all the way to Umstead Park. However the budget was inadequate. We hope that we will be able to complete the trail to the park the next time we have funding for greenways projects. We believe that we could combine construction of the Bolin Creek Trail segment to the park



# Bolin Creek Trail Phase 3 Construction

with construction of the final section of the Tanyard Branch Trail. See the description of the Tanyard Branch Trail design later in this newsletter.

This will be a challenging project that will have many difficult construction elements. However, once complete the project will provide a vital link that will allow the eventual connection of the trail to many other destinations throughout town.

*Old construction debris will be removed and stream flow will be diverted. The trail will be built adjacent to the culvert where the graffiti is shown.*



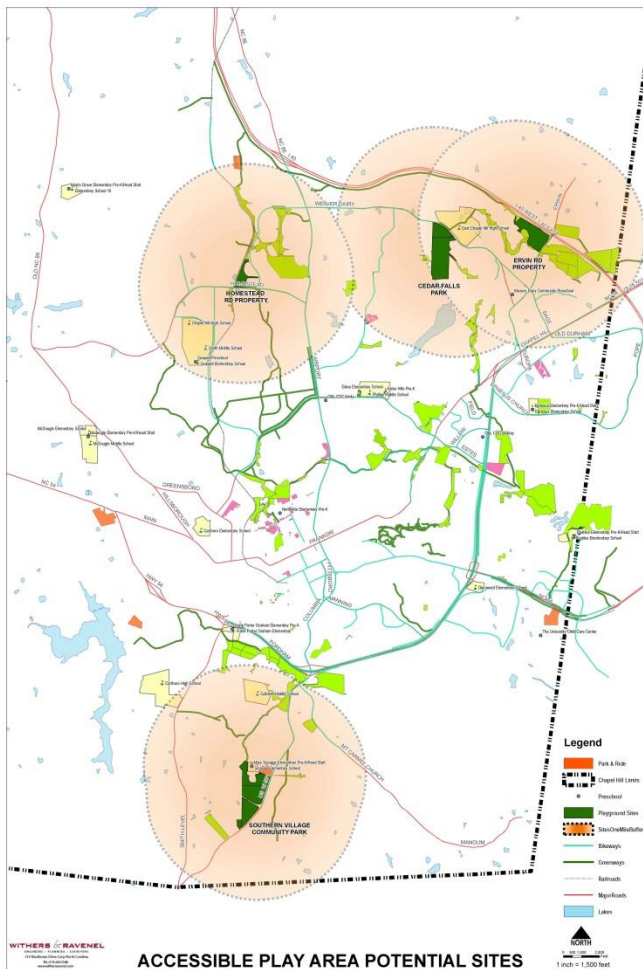
### 3. ACCESSIBLE PLAYGROUND PROJECT

**Location:** To be determined  
**Current Status:** Site selection  
**Design Firm:** Withers - Ravenel

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.

The first step is to determine where to build it. We are currently studying the following properties as potential sites:

- 2200 Homestead Road
- Cedar Falls Park
- Erwin Road (just south of I-40)
- Southern Community Park



We will invite you to attend a Public Forum sometime in May or June. The purpose of the Forum will be to introduce the project to the public and to receive thoughts and ideas about an accessible playground. A primary goal of the initial forum will be to hear your thoughts concerning the best location. As soon as we have a firm date we will share it with the public.

The consultant’s analysis of potential sites and public input will be presented to the Council in the fall of 2015. Once the Council has selected a site we will begin design of the play area.

### 4. COMMUNITY CENTER RENOVATIONS

**Location:** 120 S. Estes Drive, Community Center Park  
**Current Status:** Underway

Each year we close the Community Center for routine repairs and renovation work. It allows us the time to perform all of those many tasks that are difficult in a building that is open before dawn and closes late at night. Most of the routine work is handled by Town staff with some sub-contracting work. This year we added several larger projects. About every 10-15 years the pool tank requires a new plaster shell. The climbing wall has also received a facelift. It was last painted about 20 years ago.

In addition, we programmed a significant portion of our fiscal year 2014- 2015 CIP renovation funds for the park area outside the building.

A list of all work already completed this year includes:

- Replastered the pool shell
- Repainted the climbing wall
- Replaced a declining tree in the play area
- New surfacing for the outdoor basketball court
- New basketball goals for the outdoor court
- Painted the playground structure

Work still remaining:

- Address drainage issues in the playground
- Repair of the rubberized play surface

## 5. SMALL DOG PARK – SOUTHERN COMMUNITY PARK

**Location:** Dog Park, Southern Community Park, 1000 Dogwood Acres Drive  
**Current Status:** Fund Raising  
**Budget:** \$8,000  
**Anticipated Completion:** 2015

Our dog parks are split into two portions. One for dogs of any size and one for small dogs only. The Southern Community Park small dog park is heavily used, but lacks one thing that the larger park has – a shelter for hot sunny days. The patrons of the small dog park have banded together to raise the funds needed to build the shelter. They would appreciate any help toward meeting their goal. The Friends of Chapel Hill Parks, Recreation, and Greenways is working with the group to make this dream a reality before the summer of 2015. Tax-deductible donations can be sent to: <http://friendschparksrec.org/support/>

It is our intention to install the new shelter in the second half of 2015 using a combination of Town and donated funds.

## 6. PLAYGROUND IMPROVEMENTS

**Location:** Most Town Playgrounds  
**Current Status:** Selection of design firm

The Town will soon begin work to prepare design solutions for most play areas throughout Town. It is our goal to upgrade fall surface and playground borders in order to maximize safety and aesthetics. In addition, the work will address some drainage and other select issues on a case-by-case basis. Once complete the Town will have plans and specifications that could be bid at any time funds are available.

These will not be plans for specific play equipment, but they will provide for many safety and infrastructure needs throughout our park system.



*Eventually we intend to replace all wood fiber fall surfaces with poured-in-place, or similar surfaces to increase handicap accessibility, safety, and ease of maintenance. Playground borders, such as are seen here at Homestead Park, would also be upgraded or replaced.*

## 7. TANYARD BRANCH TRAIL (PHASE 3) – DESIGN ONLY

**Location:** Jay Street to Umstead Park  
**Current Status:** Selecting design firm  
**Anticipated Completion:** Winter 2014-15

This trail will eventually allow pedestrians and bicyclists to travel from the Northside neighborhood to Umstead Park and the future extension of the Bolin Creek Trail. Once complete. This trail system will allow off road pedestrian/bicycle transportation over a large portion of central Chapel Hill. Tanyard Branch will provide access at the least possible grade.

Surveying has started. Once survey data is in hand we will start to develop options for trail locations. This will be a challenging design problem. Although only .3 mile in length the trail corridor has many issues that will require creative solutions to address steep slopes, proximity to Tanyard Branch, and the need to avoid large trees.

Once we have developed options we will schedule a Public Forum to share results and gather comments from the public.

## 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

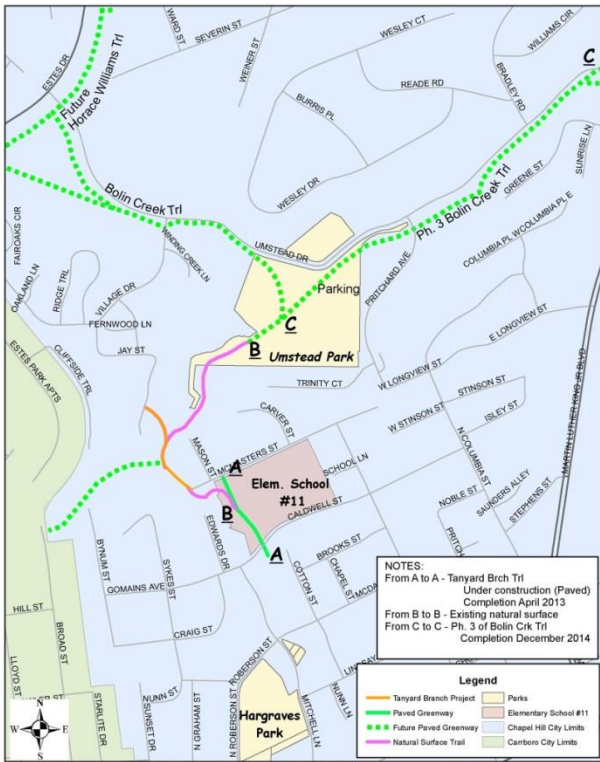
- Athletic Light Replacement
- Bolin Creek Trail Mural Art Renovation Project
- Bolin Creek Trail Pavement Repairs
- Cedar Falls Cell Tower Removal
- Community Center Retaining Wall/Public Art Project
- Fan Branch Trail Bridge Decking Replacement
- Southern Community Park

### 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



Project Specific Map - Tanyard Branch

The purple line leading into Umstead Park shows the approximate location of the project.



Phase 2 of the Tanyard Branch Trail was recently completed.



Southern Community Park (Signs, benches, bridges)  
Oakwood Park Play Area Renovation  
Battle Branch Bridge Replacement (Glendale Dr)  
Hargraves Park Scoreboard Installation

## 2012

Battle Branch Bridge Structural Repairs (downstream of  
Glendale Dr)  
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