

# Part 5

*The Greenways Program projects an eventual trail network of over 28 miles of both unpaved and paved trails to be used for recreation and transportation purposes.*



# Prioritization



## CRITERIA FOR LAND ACQUISITION AND TRAIL CONSTRUCTION

The total acreage of easements and land needed to complete the greenway system is significant. This plan projects an eventual trail program that will require construction of over 28 miles of both unpaved and paved trails to be used for recreation and transportation. The needs outlined in this Plan will require a sustained land acquisition and trail construction effort to spread the costs over many years.

The Town should look at the need to acquire open space and trails in both the developed portions of Town and in the areas anticipated to be developed in the future. There are few remaining opportunities for acquisition of large tracts of land. However, at the time of this report some opportunities remain; especially in the rural buffer and in areas within Orange County but outside the Town's jurisdiction.

## LAND ACQUISITION PRIORITIES

At the time that this report was prepared the Town had no dedicated funding for land acquisition. Recommended considerations for future land acquisition are listed from highest priority to lowest priority:

1. Critical tracts in danger of immediate development.
2. Land needed to construct trails currently in the planning process.
3. Opportunities to take advantage of low prices or willing sellers.
4. Land that is developable but not in immediate danger.
5. Land in no foreseeable danger of development, but needed for the greenway system.

## TRAIL CONSTRUCTION PRIORITIES

### SHORT-TERM

Although the Town has acquired significant amounts of property, recreation area dedications, and easement dedications along identified greenway corridors these acquisitions have been spread out over the entire proposed greenways system. Only a few identified projects have enough land under Town control that they can be considered for potential development in the near future, without major land acquisition efforts.

In addition, only a select number of projects have any identified funding. Projects with funding are identified in Table 6.1.

Projects that have significant amounts of land under Town control and some identified sources of funding include:

### **Bolin Creek, Phase III (Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. to Umstead Park)**

- Planning started in 2004
- Council adopted the Concept Plan in 2006

The Town controls much of the land from Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. to Umstead Park, although one small gap in property ownership does exist.

This project would likely be the single most difficult greenway section undertaken by the Town due to the significant physical constraints along this section of Bolin Creek. However, it is a vital link if the Town is to merge its trail system with the future trail systems of Carrboro and Orange County. In addition, this section is a vital link to Carolina North and the Town's own proposed Horace Williams and Old Field Trail. The combined Horace Williams Trail, Old Field Trail,

and Bolin Creek Trail system could eventually provide safe, efficient, bicycle and pedestrian transportation from the Town's northwest area to neighborhoods in southeast Chapel Hill. Eventually, major destinations would include a number of Town facilities and parks, UNC's Carolina North campus, and several commercial areas.

#### **Bolin Creek Trail Renovation and Stairs**

If the Friends of Chapel Hill Parks, Recreation, and Greenways continues to provide funding, this project would result in a major renovation of the existing trail. In addition, a flight of stairs would be built to allow access from the trail directly to the north side of Franklin Street.

#### **Fan Branch Trail Extension (Morgan Creek Trail Phase 2)**

Although actually an extension of the Fan Branch Trail, this section has been referred to as Phase 2 of the Morgan Creek Trail throughout its conception and planning. From here forward it will be called the Fan Branch Trail extension. This project would close the 1,100 ft. gap between the existing Fan Branch Trail and existing Morgan Creek Trail. It would involve the installation of two major bridges and an underpass of Culbreth Road. It would immediately provide direct trail access for a large population center to Merritt's Pasture. Eventually the trail would provide access to an interconnected trail system throughout southern Chapel Hill and Carrboro.

#### **LONG-TERM**

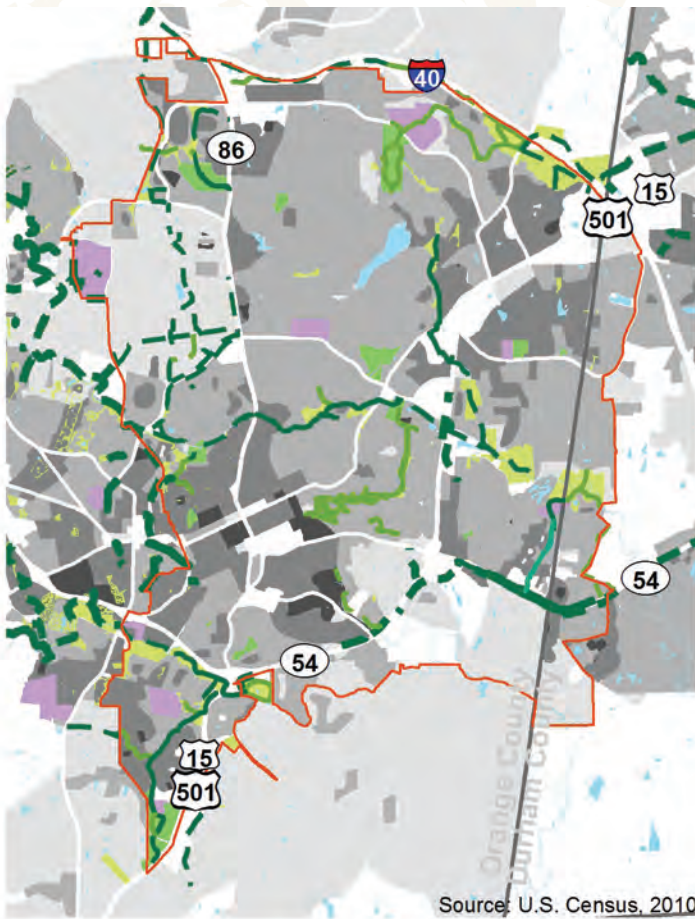
In order to develop the greenway system outlined in this plan in a manner that best serves Town residents, the entire network requires further evaluation and prioritization. While the availability of funding and ease of development help to define short term projects, a comprehensive approach considering land use and potential trail utilization should be used to develop a long term phasing plan. The following criteria can guide that process. These criteria are derived from the goals of the greenway system, and they should therefore be refined as those goals evolve.

- **Connection to existing trails and parks** – Segments that connect to existing trails or open spaces provide a means to generate a greenway network rather than a piecemeal collection of trails. This matches the first goal of this plan, which seeks a “system of linear open spaces that will help protect the environment”. The environmental benefits of greenways and open spaces are increased when a connected system is established.

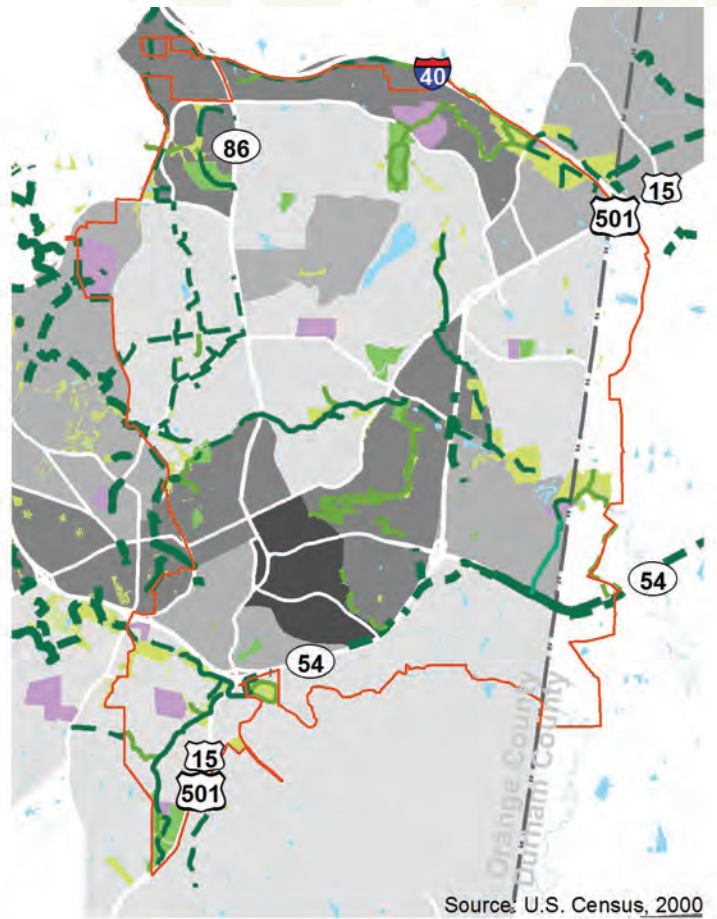
- **Transportation Functionality** - Segments that provide a link between destinations – such as residences, places of work, shopping centers, or cultural sights – can achieve the third goal of this plan, which aims to develop trails that “offer alternatives to automobile transportation”
- **Population Proximity** – Segments located near residences play a special role as potential recreation resources, even when they do not connect to other destinations in town. Proximity to population should therefore be considered a high priority given the plan's goal to provide recreational benefits to residents.
- **School Proximity** – Growing state and local efforts to increase the proportion of children who walk and bike to school will be supported by trails that connect neighborhoods to schools. As a bonus, funding options like the state's Safe Routes to School grant program are available for these trails.
- **Connection to Low-Income Areas with Low Car Ownership Rates** – Chapel Hill's free bus system makes life in town possible without an automobile. Trails provide a second option for those residents who choose, or are forced through finances, to forego an automobile. Segments that connect to neighborhoods with particularly low automobile ownership or low median household income are more likely to be used for transportation.
- **Regional Connections** – Chapel Hill is committed to developing a regional trail network through cooperation with neighboring municipalities. Segments that provide a link to existing or planned trails in Carrboro or Durham should be prioritized to meet this goal.

The prioritization criteria were applied to the trail segments identified in Part 4 through an analysis of Town conditions. Figures 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3, which were generated from the 2000 and 2010 U.S. Censuses, show population density, car ownership levels, and income variation in town. These maps, along with knowledge of key destinations, allowed a segment by segment evaluation of the trail system. Table 6.1 presents the results of this evaluation. This table allows a comparison of each trail segment's effectiveness in meeting the Town's goals for the greenway system. Those segments that achieve several different goals should be prioritized over segments that achieve only one or two.

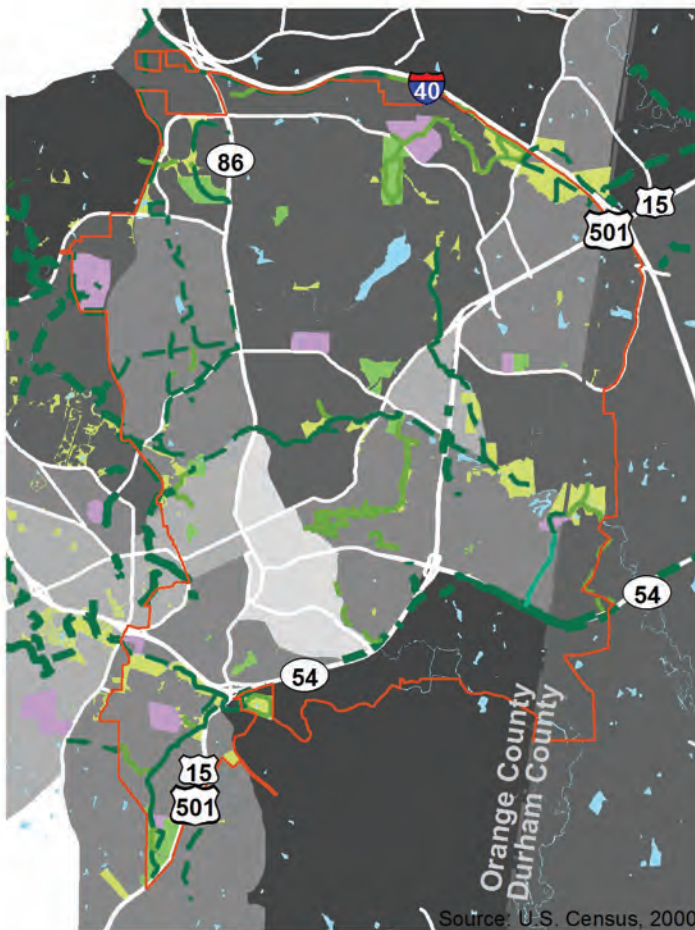




MAP 5.1 - POPULATION DENSITY



MAP 5.2 - HOUSEHOLDS WITHOUT A VEHICLE



MAP 5.3 - MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME



**TABLE 5.1:  
PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA  
FOR PLANNED TRAIL SEGMENTS**

<b>Proposed Trail Segments</b>	<b>Connection to existing or funded trails &amp; parks</b>	<b>Transportation Functionality</b>	<b>Residential Population Proximity</b>	<b>School Proximity</b>	<b>Connection to Low Income Areas/Low Car Ownership Rates</b>	<b>Facilitates Regional Connections</b>
<b>Bolin Creek</b>						
Estes Drive Extension to Village Drive		X	X		X	X
Village Drive to Umstead Park	X	X	X		X	X
Umstead Park to MLK Jr. Blvd.	X	X	X		X	X
Community Center to Fordham Blvd.	X	X	X		X	X
Fordham Blvd. to Booker Creek			X		X	X
<b>Booker Creek</b>						
Weaver Dairy Rd. to Homestead Park	X	X	X			
Greene Tract to Upper Booker Creek Trail	X		X			
Fordham Blvd. to Little Creek	X	X	X		X	X
<b>Little Creek</b>						
Confluence to Pinehurst. Dr.		X	X			X
Pinehurst Dr. to Jurisdictional Limits	X		X	X		X
American Tobacco Trail Connection	X					X
<b>Morgan Creek</b>						
Smith Level Road to Existing Trail	X	X	X	X		X
Wilson Creek	X	X	X			
<b>Dry Creek</b>						
Perry Creek Rd. to Erwin Rd. (Upgrade)	X	X	X			X
Erwin Rd. to Providence Road	X	X	X			X
Erwin Rd. to Durham County Line	X	X				X
<b>Highway 54 Trail Extension</b>						
Westward	X	X	X	X		
Eastward	X	X	X			X
<b>North Trail</b>						
Millhouse Rd. to NC 86	X	X				
Dawson Rd. to Sunrise Rd.		X	X			
Sunrise Rd. to Erwin Rd.	X		X			
Erwin Rd. to Hwy 15/501	X		X			
<b>Horace Williams Trail</b>						
Estes Dr. to Homestead Rd.	X	X		X		X
Homestead Rd. to Eubanks Rd.		X	X	X		X
Eubanks Rd. to Millhouse Rd.	X	X	X			X



## CRITICAL NCDOT AND TOWN ROAD BARRIERS

The following table lists the critical intersections identified through the planning process along the corridors examined. Solutions to address each intersection are provided, and prioritized based on the status of the trail driving the need for the intersection improvement. Intersections along existing trails are prioritized over those along proposed trails.

**TABLE 5.2: CRITICAL ROAD AND HIGHWAY BARRIERS**

**Priority #1: Intersections within existing trail segments**

TRAIL	ROAD	RECOMMENDED SOLUTION
Dry Creek	Weaver Dairy Rd.	Provide a pedestrian/bicycle crossing at the entrance to Cedar Falls Park
Lower Booker Creek	Franklin Street	Underpass to link WCHL tower property with Eastgate Shopping Center

**Priority #2: Intersections at the end of existing trail segments**

TRAIL	ROAD	RECOMMENDED SOLUTION
Bolin Creek	Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.	Underpass- use existing culvert if possible.
Dry Creek	Erwin Road	Provide pedestrian crossing and pedestrian refuge at the point the Dry Creek Trail crosses Erwin Road.
Dry Creek	Erwin Road and I-40	Expand the Erwin Road Bridge over I-40 to include sidewalks and bicycle lanes.
Lower Booker Creek	Elliott Road and Fordham Boulevard	The best solution would be a rebuild that would eliminate the Elliott Road culvert and would provide a pedestrian underpass of Fordham Boulevard. A temporary solution for pedestrian crossing should include a pedestrian refuge.
NC 54 Bicycle Paths	Fordham Boulevard and NC 54	An engineering study should be performed to determine what improvements related to bicycle and pedestrian safety could be made to the intersection and the approaches to the intersection. This study could be accomplished as part of the development approval process for any redesign of the Glen Lennox property.
Morgan Creek Trail	NC 54	Identify and assess possibilities for north-south connectors across NC 54 from the Morgan Creek trail parking lot via surface crossing or underpass underneath NC 54.

**Priority #3: Intersections along proposed trails**

TRAIL	ROAD	RECOMMENDED SOLUTION
Bolin Creek	Fordham Boulevard	Underpass. If underpass is not technically feasible provide pedestrian refuge.
Bolin Creek	Estes Dr. Extension	New underpass if Carrboro agrees to extend trail.
Horace Williams	Estes Drive	Pedestrian/bicycle crossing and pedestrian refuge to connect the Horace Williams Trail to Carolina North.
Morgan Creek	Smith Level Road	Provide underpass.
Old Field Trail	NC 86 and Eubanks Road	An engineering study should be performed to determine what improvements could be made to allow safe pedestrian/bicycle crossings of NC 86. An at grade crossing utilizing pedestrian activated signals and a pedestrian refuge may be the most feasible method of crossing the road.
North Trail	Sunrise Road	Pedestrian/bicycle crossing with pedestrian refuge.
Horace Williams Trail	Homestead Road	Pedestrian/bicycle crossing with pedestrian refuge.
Horace Williams Trail	Eubanks Road	Pedestrian/bicycle crossing with pedestrian refuge.
Meeting of the Waters Creek	Fordham Boulevard	Pedestrian/bicycle crossing with pedestrian refuge at Old Mason Farm Rd.
Wilson Creek	15-501	Pedestrian/bicycle crossing with pedestrian refuge to connect Southern Village, the Morgan Creek Trail, and Southern Community Park with the Wilson Creek Trail.

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