

Part 2

During the planning process, the Greenways Commission has sought to solicit and assimilate views and input from a variety of public perspectives.

The Planning Process



ASSUMPTIONS FOR THE PROCESS

Outlined below are the working assumptions for the process of revising the Greenway Master Plan. These assumptions will frame the general direction, focus of the study, and clarify what is to be accomplished through this planning effort. The manner in which the Plan will be developed and presented will reflect the basic assumptions underlying the study.

- **The Greenways Master Planning process is part of a continuing, multi-faceted effort to establish a long-range planning strategy and development policy for the future growth of the Town.** The Greenway Master Plan will focus on the physical planning, implementation goals, and operational policies of the greenway system. The Plan's recommendations are to be supportive and consistent with the goals, objectives and policies established within the Town's Comprehensive Plan.
- **The Greenway Master Planning process is an opportunity for the Greenways Commission to fulfill its specific charge of establishing a Town-wide system of greenway open spaces and greenway trails.** The Greenway Master Plan will exhibit the Town's commitment to continually upgrade and expand the greenway system. The Plan will provide a broad-based framework within which appropriate decisions can be made about the future growth of the greenway system, and it will encourage positive coordination with other Town programs, such as parks and recreation development, sidewalk and bicycle plans, and open space preservation.
- **The process is an opportunity to strengthen important relationships and community**

perceptions. The Master Plan will foster public input, awareness, and participation in the planning process. The planning process will assimilate concerns and ideas from a variety of diverse constituencies, interests, municipalities, and other institutions.

GOALS OF THE MASTER PLAN

The findings and recommendations set forth in this document are to reflect and remain consistent with this statement of goals. The Goals of the Master Plan revision process will serve as criteria against which the progress and direction of the study may be tested at key points in the planning process.

- **Create a Plan that will provide a comprehensive direction for the physical development of the greenway system that is both strategic and action based.**
Create a guide for a continuing program of land acquisition, trail development and improvement, and open space preservation. Provide a framework within which future projects can be conceived and remain responsive to changing needs. Prepare a planning foundation from which more detailed analysis and design of individual greenways and trails may be generated. Provide recommendations for immediate and near-term physical improvements that may be realized within realistic and prudent financial parameters.
- **Create a Plan that balances a sense of stewardship for the Town's natural resources and scenic qualities with the needs for public use, recreation, and alternative transportation.**
Provide policy and planning guidelines which will protect ecological functions of natural areas, maintain open space systems and natural areas, and

expand their potential use and aesthetic quality.

- **Provide for the needs of current and potential greenway trail users.**
Create a guide for greenway trail implementation and greenway corridor preservation that appeals to a broad range of passive recreational pursuits and offers a variety of experiences. Determine standards for greenways development, trails functions, and amenities.
- **Establish strong operational policies.**
Provide security policies to help create a safe, enjoyable system for the public that is also respectful of the privacy of adjacent property owners. Outline a maintenance policy to assure the protection of the Town's investment in greenways and to assure the upgrade of the facilities over time.
- **Create a Plan that may serve as a vehicle for acquiring grants and other funding opportunities.**
A sound master plan is often required to be eligible to receive certain grants.
- **Create a Plan that may serve as a promotional tool.**
Provide a document that will raise awareness of greenway and open space issues and encourage broad community-based support for greenways.

PLANNING METHODOLOGY FOR THE 2013 UPDATE

In early 2011, the Town of Chapel Hill selected a team of qualified consultants, Greenways Incorporated (now Alta/Greenways) and Site Solutions to complete a Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update. Part of this update included an update to the 2006 Comprehensive Greenway Master Plan. In 2011, the Town of Chapel Hill commissioned a community survey to assess citizen satisfaction with the quality of services within the Town. When asked which parks and recreation service should receive the most emphasis from the Town over the next two years, 40% of those surveyed responded that the number of walking/biking trails should have emphasis. More details about this survey can be found in Appendix A of this document.

The Greenways Commission was actively involved in the oversight of the Greenway Master Plan Update. Parks and Recreation staff met with the Greenways Commission throughout the process, focusing on project vision and goals, existing conditions, the draft plan, and the final plan.

Existing Conditions Assessment

After collecting baseline information about the town's existing and proposed trail corridors in March 2011, project consultants began assessing existing conditions. Consultants used aerial photography and geographic information systems (GIS) data, to identify and update trail features and corridors. These preliminary findings were then tested for applicability and appropriateness through on-the-ground field research. Field research also included an intersection inventory and a photographic inventory.

Public Involvement

A project website was developed with input and guidance from Town staff. The website was publicly launched in spring 2011. An online public comment form was developed for the project and released on the project website. The public comment form yielded more than 100 responses.

In May 2012, project Consultants and the Town of Chapel Hill hosted a public open house in downtown Chapel Hill. People were invited to learn about the Parks and Recreation Master Plan goals and objectives, as well as background on the Greenway Update. A public input map, newsletters, and posters were provided for review, and project Consultants answered questions and took comments. Interested members of the community stopped by to learn about the plan and provided critical input. The general feedback was highly positive, with many people interested in being involved in the planning process.

BATTLE P



MOUNTAIN
HOWEVER W



• DO NOT USE T

• YIEL

A second public input session took place on June 12 in Town Council Chambers. Project Consultants for both the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and this Greenway Update presented their final plans and took questions along with Town Staff. Many interested citizens attended and provided feedback on the plans.

Plan Development

During the summer of 2011, the Draft Plan was developed through input gathered during the steps described above. The Draft Plan was posted online for public review in June 2012. Comments from the Greenways Commission, town staff, and the public were collected, and the plan was then revised into the final version, which was presented to the Council in a Public Hearing on February 18, 2013. Possible Council action was scheduled for May 29, 2013.

