

MEADOWMONT/HIGHWAY 54 TRAIL SYSTEM

The Meadowmont Trail alignment does not follow a specific natural feature of the land, but was planned as a man-made corridor. The alignment of the corridor is shaped by the urban pattern of roads and lots created within the Meadowmont subdivision. It provides an important transportation and recreational link within Chapel Hill's largest mixed-use business and residential development. The Meadowmont Trail and NC 54 trails were constructed by the developer of the project. The NC 54 trail on the west side of NC 54 were further extended by other developers.

Resource Protection

The Chapel Hill Town Council approved a greenway corridor as part of the master land use plan for Meadowmont. In addition, the developer dedicated a 69-acre park that is primarily stream bottom and open space with some natural surface trails and a 22 acre school site that is home to the Rashkis Elementary School and two athletic fields operated by the Town. The Town-owned park allows for the protection of extensive wetlands and steep slopes.

Potential for Trail Development

The main paved trail has been completed. It extends from the Town park site near Little Creek; through the Rashkis school site, southward through the nearly 425-acre planned community and crosses under NC 54 to access the remainder of the development. The trail crossing at NC 54 is accomplished via a tunnel. Connections to the Little Creek Trail were also provided.

The developer also built bicycle paths along NC 54. These could eventually be part of a connection with future Durham trails, including possible links to the New Hope Corridor and the American Tobacco Trail as well as a segment of an eventual bicycle connection to UNC campus and the Chapel Hill downtown.

Summary of Constraints for Potential Trail Development

- Pre-existing development would make extensions difficult in some areas east of Meadowmont.
- The Highway 15-501/NC 54 intersection is busy with numerous turning movements by vehicles, often at high speeds. This situation lessens the viability of the corridor as a bicycle/pedestrian corridor to the UNC campus and the downtown area.

Summary of Factors Favorable for Potential Trail Development

- Eastward expansion to Durham's jurisdiction would be relatively easy to accomplish.

Recommendations

- As opportunities arise the Town should pursue extensions of the bicycle paths paralleling both sides of NC 54. These extensions should be encouraged to the east toward the American Tobacco Trail and to the west toward UNC campus.
- When appropriate, the Town and NCDOT should perform a study of the NC 54 corridor to determine if changes can be made to increase safety and bicycle/pedestrian access to the UNC campus and the downtown.
- The greenway recommendations of the NC 54/I-40 Corridor study should be implemented as road improvements are made in cooperation with the City of Durham. These include an off-road multi-use path along the north side of NC 54 from E. Barbee Chapel Rd. to Farrington Rd., a multi-use path from the intersection of Hamilton Rd. and Brandon Rd. to South Estes Dr., and a multi-use path along NC 54 from Hamilton Road to Burning Tree Dr.

THE MORGAN CREEK/FAN BRANCH TRAIL SYSTEM

The Morgan Creek, Fan Branch, and Wilson Creek Trails will eventually serve the area south of Fordham Boulevard in both Chapel Hill and Carrboro. Currently, the Fan Branch Trail extends for 1.6 miles from Dogwood Acres Drive in Southern Community Park to Culbreth Road. Phase I of the Morgan Creek Trail, which was completed in 2010, is located for about .85 miles along the north side of Morgan Creek with one bridge to allow access from the south. A planned connection to the Fan Branch Trail should be under construction by 2013. The main trail could eventually be extended westward to Carrboro. The Town of Carrboro is currently planning a trail along its portion of Morgan Creek.

MORGAN CREEK TRAIL

Morgan Creek begins in central Orange County and flows southeast until it becomes a large stream. Near the Carrboro town limits, the creek enters University Lake, an important water source for southern Orange County. From its outflow at the base of the University Lake dam, Morgan Creek flows east through Carrboro's jurisdiction until it flows under Smith Level Road. Once the creek passes under Smith Level Road, it enters Chapel Hill's jurisdiction. Once inside Chapel Hill's Town limits, the creek flows for over 4.5 miles and undergoes several dramatic transformations. From Smith Level Road to its outflow into Jordan Lake, the creek passes through three distinct sections.

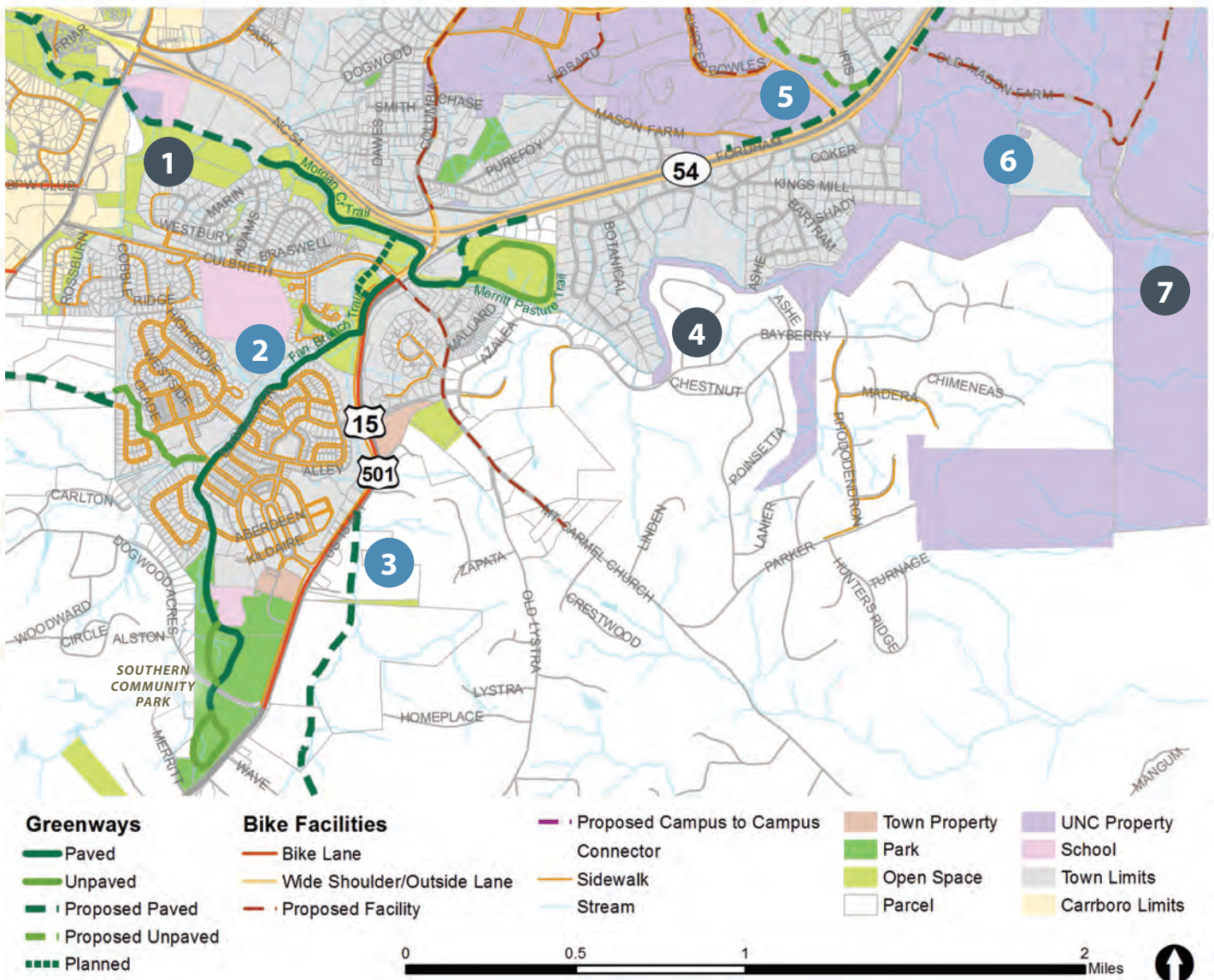
The watershed is the most isolated of the major streams in Chapel Hill. Natural connections from Morgan Creek to the Town's trails north of Fordham Boulevard are blocked by high ridges and major roads.

A class 6 trail has been built from a location midway between Smith Level Road and US 15/501 South to Merritt's Pasture, as well as along Fan Branch and a short section of Wilson Creek.

MORGAN CREEK CONCEPTUAL PLAN STUDY

The Council adopted the "Report of the Morgan Creek Trail Conceptual Plan Committee" in 2006, which describes a plan of action for development of the Morgan Creek Trail.

- 1 Smith Level Road to Merritt's Pasture**
As Morgan Creek enters the Chapel Hill Urban Services District on the eastern side of Smith Level Road, the stream flows through a broad flood plain, with its greatest relief being on the southern bank. The greenway corridor contains an elementary school, a large apartment complex, a large single-family



residential area, an extensive series of power line rights-of-way, and several undeveloped tracts of land.

Resource Protection

The Town has acquired several tracts of land along both banks of Morgan Creek, including significant acreage south of Frank Porter Graham School. Although the environmental and aesthetic integrity of much of the property near Highway 15-501 has been compromised by extensive power line construction, there remain significant tracts of relatively untouched land.

Potential for Trail Development

This portion of the trail is partially completed, extending from a trailhead parking lot off of Fordham Boulevard (northeast of Marin Place) to Merritt's Pasture. The paved, Class 6 trail is 0.85 miles long and follows the northern bank of the creek as it passes under Highway 15/501 northeast of Culbreth Road. Pedestrian access is provided from the northern side of the Highway near the underpass, and it connects to the Fan Branch Trail by sidewalk.

At the time this report was prepared plans were nearing completion to extend the Fan Branch Trail to connect with the Morgan Creek Trail.

Once fully built, the Morgan Creek Trail would interconnect much of the area south of Fordham Boulevard in both Chapel Hill and Carrboro. Citizens would be provided with safe access to the many schools south of Highway 54, including Frank Porter Graham Elementary School along this section.

Summary of Constraints for Potential Trail Development

- An additional bridge over Morgan Creek would be required.
- An underpass of Smith Level Road would be necessary to link the trail with Carrboro's future Morgan Creek Trail.
- Access to the trail by persons living north of Fordham Boulevard may be difficult.
- Land or easement acquisition would be necessary.
- Future widening of Highway 15-501 might impact the trail corridor in ways not yet apparent.
- Conflicts with pre-existing development including Kingswood Apartments and a UNC facility.

Summary of Factors Favorable for Potential Trail Development

- A major portion of the trail, including a parking lot has already been built.
- The bridge has been permitted.

Recommendations

- The Class 6 trail should be continued from the current trailhead to Smith Level Road.

2

Fan Branch Trail

Fan Branch is a small stream with two major forks, totaling nearly 1.9 miles in length. One fork begins near Smith Level Road and the other near Dogwood Acres Drive. The forks merge south of Culbreth Road and flow north until they merge with Wilson Creek just south of Culbreth Road. Wilson Creek then runs under Culbreth Road and flows into Morgan Creek just west of Highway 15-501.

Resource Protection

The majority of the Fan Branch watershed lies within the Dogwood Acres and Southern Village communities. These communities were developed to a relatively high density. However, a trail was built from Culbreth Road to the Southern Community Park.

Potential for Trail Development

Most of the Fan Branch Trail has already been built. The current trail begins at Dogwood Acres Drive in Southern Community Park and continues for 1.6 miles, through the Southern Village development, to Culbreth Road. At the time this report was prepared plans were nearing completion to extend the Fan Branch Trail another 1,100 feet to connect with the Morgan Creek Trail. Construction could occur as soon as 2013.

Summary of Constraints for Potential Trail Development

- The trail extension to the north will require a new bridge over Wilson Creek, a bridge over Morgan Creek, and an underpass of Culbreth Road.

Summary of Factors Favorable for Potential Trail Development

- Funding has been secured.
- Permits are in hand. Plans are finished.

Recommendations

- Extend the Fan Branch Trail northward from Culbreth Road to a connection with the Morgan Creek Trail

- Extend the Fan Branch Trail south to the southern tip of the Southern Community Park.
- A goal of the previous Greenways Master Plan was a trail connection from the edge of Southern Village to serve Carrboro High School, located west of Smith Level Road. New development has made this concept more difficult to achieve. However, opportunities should be pursued as they arise.
- Highway 15-501 is a major impediment to pedestrian and bicycle interconnectivity in the southern area. Solutions to overcome this barrier should be explored at every opportunity, but especially as part of any large scale development on the east side of Highway 15-501.

3 Wilson Creek

This creek begins in northern Chatham County and flows north until its confluence with Morgan Creek just west of the Highway 15/501 bridge. It flows over 2.8 miles within the Town limits, mostly through forested land.

Resource Protection

The Town controls an insignificant portion of the Wilson Creek corridor, except those portions that fall under the protection of the RCD ordinance.

Potential for Trail Development

Sections of the creek would be suitable for trail development.

Summary of Constraints for Potential Trail Development

- The portion of the creek east of Hwy. 15/501 is low and prone to flooding.
- Portions of the corridor contain steep slopes.
- Water quality on Wilson Creek east of Highway 15-501 has been found through benthic macro-invertebrate sampling to be of “Excellent” quality. Trail design in this area would require extreme care in order to protect the stream.”

Summary of Factors Favorable for Potential Trail Development

- Much of the corridor is undeveloped.

Recommendations

- If the area is developed at a fairly low density, a Class 3 trail is recommended from the vicinity of the southern fire station southward to Wave Road.
- If development density is increased, portions of the proposed trail could be increased to Class 6.

4 Merritt’s Pasture to Ashe Place

After Morgan Creek passes under the Highway 15/501 bridge, it enters an area of Chapel Hill with abundant residential development. Specific tracts have been identified as environmentally sensitive; they are listed in the 1988 “Inventory of the Natural Areas and Wildlife Habitats of Orange County, North Carolina”, a study prepared by the Triangle Land Conservancy. As the stream flows east, it passes into a small valley with a high ridge along the southern bank. Occasionally this ridge plunges directly into the creek, forming steep and rocky banks. Residential development on the southern bank is generally located on the ridge, well above the creek. However, in several locations, homes have been constructed near the stream. The northern bank of the creek is generally lower and has more residential development near the stream bank. Little undeveloped land remains along this section of Morgan Creek.

Resource Protection

The 31 acre Merritt’s Pasture includes 1,500 feet of Town-owned property along this segment of Morgan Creek. The Town has acquired very little land beyond this pasture. The NC Botanical Garden Foundation has worked with neighbors to acquire conservation easements along much of this section. Conservation easements restrict the allowable uses of the land in order to preserve its environmental integrity. Conservation easements do not provide for public access.

Potential for Trail Development

Local residents have created an informal “social trail” along the north and south side of Morgan Creek, which has been used for many years. Public access to this corridor is not condoned by the Town because the property is privately owned by adjacent homeowners. Several property owners have posted no trespassing signage and taken steps to physically prevent public access. Large neighborhoods east of Merritt’s Pasture are geographically restricted from accessing the Fan Branch and Morgan Creek Trails without access to this corridor, and trail alternatives should be further explored to make a connection to the neighborhoods. Because of this network gap, many trail users have contacted the Town seeking public access into

the Morgan Creek corridor and Merritt's Pasture. This report recommends that the Town work with residents to explore any opportunity to extend access from adjacent neighborhoods to Merritt's Pasture if landowner concerns can be addressed.

Summary of Constraints for Potential Trail Development

- There is no legal public access along this corridor. The Town will not pursue the acquisition of a public right-of-way from landowners along this corridor unless landowners express a desire to negotiate such a transaction.
- At least one bridge, and potentially more would be required.
- Trail construction would be very difficult due to the sensitive nature of the vegetation and soils.
- Steep slopes predominate in this portion of the corridor.

Recommendations

- No improvements are recommended within Merritt's Pasture.
- The Town should continue to work with the NC Botanical Garden and the residents along this section of Morgan Creek to ensure that the sensitive environment of the creek corridor is preserved. Assistance should be given when negotiating with applicants of future developments as well as with current landowners.
- Unless a trail plan can be agreed upon by residents of the valley, this corridor should be preserved as a private, unimproved Class 2 corridor.
- The Town should explore options for pedestrian and bicycle access to the Morgan Creek/Fan Branch trail system along Mt. Carmel Church Rd.

5 Meeting of the Waters Creek

This creek flows almost entirely on University lands for over 1.1 miles. It begins in a ravine paralleling Manning Drive, then passes under Fordham Boulevard. On the southern side of the bypass, the creek passes through the NC Botanical Gardens and empties into Morgan Creek near the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Resource Protection

The land along Meeting of the Waters Creek is owned by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and lies almost entirely within areas currently protected for research purposes.

Potential for Trail Development

Class 3 trails open to the public exist within the NC Botanical Garden; which are limited to pedestrian traffic only. Also, Class 2 trails exist on the northern side of Meeting of the Waters Creek, extending northward through the Coker Pinetum to Ridge Drive.

Summary of Constraints for Potential Trail Development

- Currently, the university wishes to preserve this area for education and research.

Summary of Factors Favorable for Potential Trail Development

- Should the university increase land available for trail development, most of the necessary land acquisition would already be in place.

Recommendations

- The Town should continue to collaborate with the university for open space preservation in this area.

6 Chapel Creek

Chapel Creek, flows for 1.1 miles from north of St. Thomas More School until it passes under Fordham Boulevard. On the southern side of the bypass, the creek passes through University property and empties into Morgan Creek near the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Resource Protection

The land along Chapel Creek is owned by the University and lies almost entirely within areas currently protected for research purposes or in sites already developed.

Potential for Trail Development

The Carolina Adventure Outdoor Education Center is located in this area, providing physical education.

Summary of Constraints for Potential Trail Development

- Currently the university wishes to preserve this area for education and campus recreation.

Summary of Factors Favorable for Potential Trail Development

- Should the university become interested in trail development, most of the necessary land acquisition would already be in place.

Recommendations

- The Town should maintain ongoing communication with the university to facilitate cooperative greenway planning or trail development in the future.

7 Ashe Place to Jordan Lake

Residential development exists along the northern bank of Morgan Creek. Beyond Bartram Drive, the creek is completely within University property. It flows through a broad, wooded flood plain paralleled by an Orange Water and Sewer Authority (OWASA) sewer line. The creek flows into the Finley Golf Course toward the Town limits then through lands controlled by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and empties into Jordan Lake.

Resource Protection

The land along both banks of Morgan Creek is owned by the University.

Potential for Trail Development

An informal Class 2 trail currently exists along the creek, particularly on the Orange Water and Sewer Authority (OWASA) sewer easement, between Ashe Place and Finley Golf Course.

Summary of Constraints for Potential Trail Development

- Currently the University wishes to preserve the area for education and research.
- Access is controlled through the NC Botanical Garden.

Summary of Factors Favorable for Potential Trail Development

- Should the University increase land available for trail development, most of the necessary land acquisition would already be in place.
- The existing OWASA sewer easement would provide a good foundation for trail construction.

Recommendations

- The Town should continue to collaborate with the University for open space preservation in this area.
- This greenway segment should be preserved as an unimproved Class 2 corridor.

THE NORTH/ DRY CREEK TRAIL SYSTEM

This trail system would serve the north-central and northeast portion of Town. The North Trail would begin on Perkins Drive in Chapel Hill North and extend eastward to Erwin Road. The other major component of this system centers on existing and planned trails within Cedar Falls Park and along Dry

Creek. These trails could potentially link much of the Town that lies east of Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd and north of Weaver Dairy Road. In addition, this area has the best potential for a significant connection to Durham's trail system, as described in the New Hope Corridor Master Plan.

NORTH TRAIL

A major greenway could be developed roughly parallel to I-40 from Perkins Drive to Erwin Road. The portion from Perkins Drive to Sunrise Road could be developed as a class 6 paved trail, while the portion east of Sunrise Road would be more appropriate as a natural surface trail.

1 Perkins Drive to Sunrise Road

This section would begin at Perkins Drive in the Chapel Hill North development near the intersection of NC 86 and I-40. The goal would be to plan the trail around future developments so that it eventually extends northward to existing easements on the north side of Carol Woods.

Resource Protection

The western most segment from Perkins Drive to Old University Station Road was completed in 2011. The future trail location has been provided for at only one other location at this time. A major easement lies on property owned by the Carol Woods Retirement Community and begins at Sunrise Road. It stretches approximately 2,500 feet to the west along the I-40 corridor.

Potential for Trail Development

This section of the trail corridor would present no unusual trail building difficulties.

Summary of Constraints for Potential Trail Development

- Additional land acquisition would be required.
- The trail intersection with Sunrise Road is at a very steep fill slope where Sunrise Road crosses over the Interstate. ADA compliance may be difficult.

Summary of Factors Favorable for Potential Trail Development

- Few physical limitations to trail construction exist within the corridor.
- Exact locations of the future trail can be planned along with future development west of Carol Woods.

Recommendations

- Easements and land should be acquired as opportunities arise.
- Explore potential acquisition of land or easements beyond the 100 ft. corridor on either side of Sunrise Road in order to negotiate the fill slope.
- Once the land rights are acquired, the Town should build a Class 6 trail.

2 Sunrise Road to Erwin Road

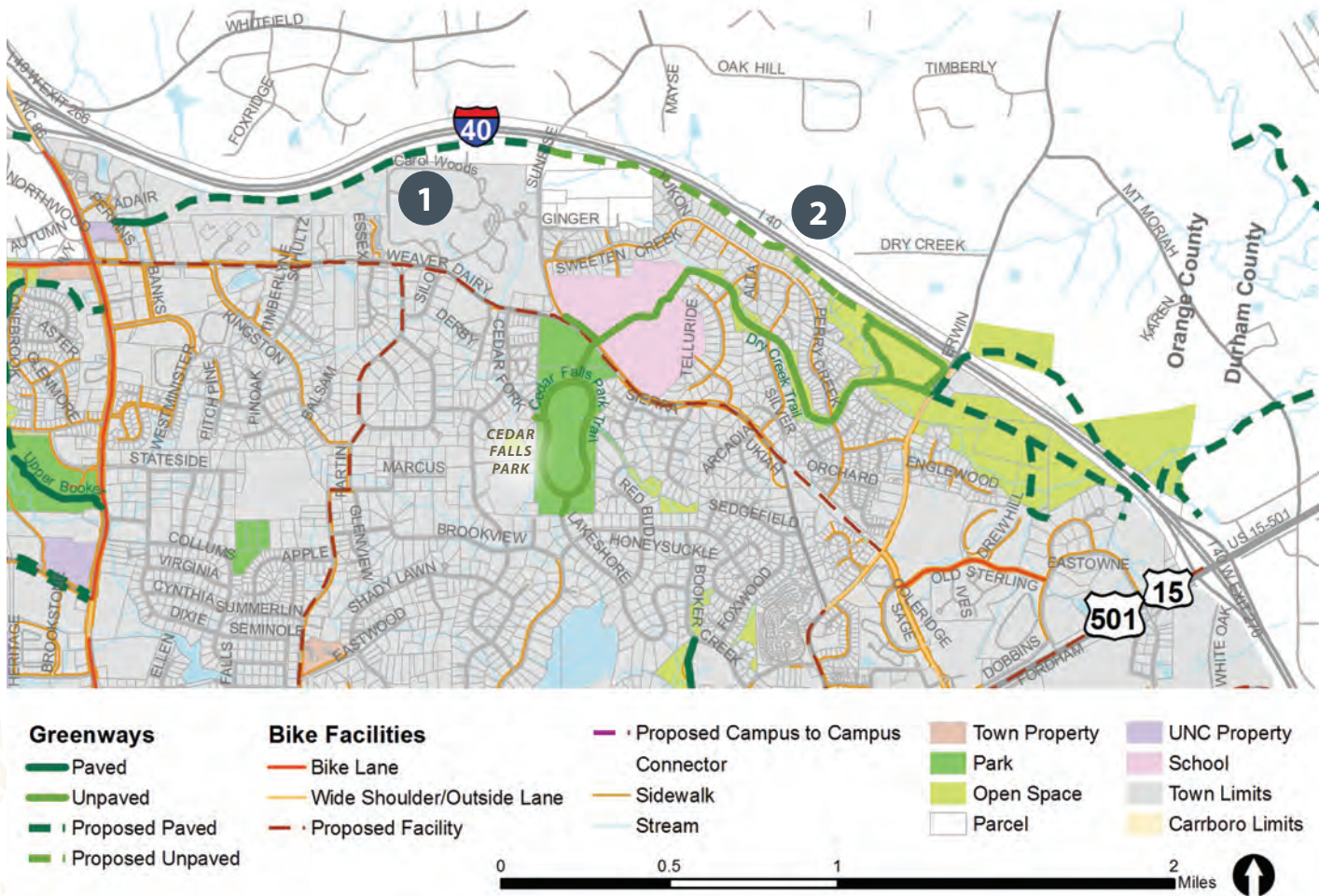
The proposed corridor and trail would continue in much the same fashion as those sections further west, except that the trail would be built to a Class 3 standard. From Sunrise Road, the trail would continue over easy ground to Erwin Road. The section has few topographic problems; however one major development has already been built within the 100 foot greenway corridor along I-40. The trail would allow current and future residents and businesses the opportunity to access Cedar Falls Park and the proposed regional, Circle-the-Triangle Trail.

Resource Protection

The Town currently controls only the eastern end of the corridor. The Town’s greatest opportunity for addition land and easement acquisition will come as the corridor is developed. It may be possible that North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) would allow the trail to occupy the Interstate right-of-way in areas where land could not be obtained.

Potential for Trail Development

No unusual trail-building difficulties for trails up to Class 3, exist within the 100 ft. corridor, although this segment is characterized by a long, rather uniform slope. The Chandler’s Green subdivision has built units within the 100 ft. corridor. In order to bypass Chandler’s Green, it may be necessary to build the trail within NCDOT’s I-40 right-of-way. The trail could connect into several other trails including a proposed trail along Dry Creek, Durham’s proposed trail along Dry Creek on the north side of Interstate 40, and the Circle-the-Triangle Trail.



MAP 4.9 - NORTH TRAIL

Summary of Constraints for Potential Trail Development

- Over 5,000 feet of land acquisition would be required.
- It may be difficult to secure a public access along the section controlled by Chandler's Green.
- The long sustained slope may make ADA compliance difficult.
- The trail intersection with Sunrise Road is at a very steep fill slope where Sunrise Road crosses over the Interstate. ADA compliance at this crossing may be difficult.

Summary of Factors Favorable for Potential Trail Development

- There are few physical constraints to trail construction if the proposed trail is constructed at a Class 3 level.

Recommendations

- Easements and land should be acquired as opportunities arise.
- The Town should work with North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to acquire rights to develop within the Interstate right-of-way.
- Explore potential acquisition of land or easements beyond the 100 ft. corridor on either side of Sunrise Road in order to negotiate fill slope.
- Once the land rights are acquired, the Town should build a Class 3 trail.

DRY CREEK

Dry Creek is a major tributary of New Hope Creek. The creek has several branches that drain much of the area north of Weaver Dairy Road and south of Interstate 40. The creek flows past Erwin Road then under Interstate 40 where it quickly enters Durham County. The name Dry Creek is misleading since the majority of the creek corridor tends to be very wet and swampy even during dry periods. The potential trail, over two and one half miles in length, could serve as a wonderful complement to the proposed North Trail.

Portions of the Dry Creek corridor have been identified as environmentally sensitive, and are listed in the "Inventory of the Natural Areas and Wildlife Habitats of Orange County, North Carolina", a study prepared in 1988 by the Triangle Land Conservancy. This area was recommended for trail development in

the 1991 "New Hope Corridor Open Space Plan."

The Conceptual Plan for the Dry Creek Greenway was completed by the Dry Creek Greenway Advisory Committee and adopted by Council in June 2007. Because of land acquisitions that occurred after the adoption of the Plan, the Master Plan contains significant revisions of the report's recommendations for trail locations.

A natural surface trail has been completed along two miles of the corridor from East Chapel Hill High School to Erwin Road.

1 Cedar Falls Park to Silver Creek Trail

The initial segment of the Dry Creek Greenway begins at Cedar Falls Park. It crosses Weaver Dairy Road and enters the East Chapel Hill High School property where it then continues 2,300 feet eastward along the southern branch of Dry Creek. This portion of the greenway is essentially of a woodland character, predominantly hardwoods, and offers a variety of rock outcroppings, waterfalls and picturesque forest experiences.

Resource Protection

The Town owns all of the necessary land (with the exception of school property) to implement this segment of the Dry Creek Greenway.

Potential for Trail Development

The trail has been completed. Erosion control work on the school site was completed in 2005, and signage was completed in 2006.

Recommendations

- The Town should coordinate with school officials to determine if signage on East Chapel Hill High School property would be appropriate. Wayfinding signage should also be installed at Cedar Falls Park to make its connection to the Dry Creek Trail clear.
- The trail crossing of Weaver Dairy Road should be improved with pedestrian crossing facilities.

2 Silver Creek Trail to Perry Creek Drive

The second segment of the Dry Creek Greenway corridor changes in physical and visual character. The quality of tree cover is diminished from the initial trail segment, being a mix of fewer hardwoods, modest small pines and other new growth species. The initial 100 feet of the trail corridor is relatively steep due to the

existing fill slope at Silver Creek Trail. The remaining portions of this segment are relatively low-lying, flat, and subject to flooding and seasonal ponding. The wet soils here sustain the very thick stand of young pines. This section of the trail has been completed.

3 Perry Creek Drive to Erwin Road
 This 2,100-foot portion of greenway is primarily located on a 32-acre parcel of Town-owned open space property acquired in 2000. The land is located north of Dry Creek and south of I-40.

Resource Protection

The Town has acquired the necessary land and easements to implement this segment of the Dry Creek Greenway.

Potential for Trail Upgrade

It would be possible to upgrade the trail to a Class 6 facility. This would allow a direct bicycle/pedestrian connection from the Springerest neighborhood to Erwin Road and beyond to Eastowne.

Summary of Constraints for Potential Trail Development

- The initial 500 ft. from Perry Creek Road to Dry

Creek would require some landscaping to preserve privacy for nearby homes.

- Poorly drained soils will dictate location of paved sections of trail in some locations.

Summary of Factors Favorable for Potential Trail Development

- The Town owns all the land required for trail development.
- Existing utility easements provide land already cleared for trail use.
- The required bridge is already in place.

Recommendations

- The Town should construct a Class 6 trail, from the east side of Perry Creek Drive for some 2,100 feet to Erwin Road.
- A small parking area (8-10 cars) should be built near Erwin Road.
- Once the I-40 bridge is widened or modified to allow pedestrian use, a sidewalk should be built to



Greenways

- Paved
- Unpaved
- Proposed Paved
- Proposed Unpaved

Bike Facilities

- Bike Lane
- Wide Shoulder/Outside Lane
- Proposed Facility

Sidewalk

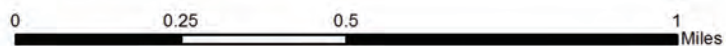
- Sidewalk
- Stream
- Parcel
- School

Town Property

- Park
- Open Space

UNC Property

- Town Limits
- Carrboro Limits



MAP 4.10 - DRY CREEK TRAIL

the north side of Interstate 40. This would allow a connection between the Dry Creek Trail and the Durham greenways system.

4 Erwin Road to Providence Road

The Dry Creek basin east of Erwin Road is one of the most extensive wetland areas in Orange County. As described by the Triangle Land Conservancy, it is one of the most significant areas of biological diversity in the southern part of the county. The primary goal for this portion of Dry Creek should be to remain as a nature preserve, supporting activities such as bird and wildlife observation.

Resource Protection

The Town has acquired significant amounts of property along this section of Dry Creek.

Potential for Trail Development

The greenway corridor extends 3,300 feet through this segment of Dry Creek. The Town has acquired most of the property adjacent to the creek including a large amount of property between the creek and I-40 that would allow trail development. The major obstacle would be a required crossing of Dry Creek. A major safety issue relates to a trail crossing of Erwin Road. This plan recommends the addition of a pedestrian crossing and pedestrian refuge.

See the list of NCDOT critical intersections on page 74.

Summary of Constraints for Potential Trail Development

- Wet soils and possible wetlands dominate portions of this segment.
- A large, often wet area surrounding Dry Creek would make a bridge crossing difficult from a permitting and construction standpoint.
- Erwin Road in its current state would present safety concerns for persons crossing the road. Improvements such as a pedestrian crossing and pedestrian refuge would be needed.

Summary of Factors Favorable for Potential Trail Development

- Tree cover is uniform, relatively mature, with an open understory presenting few constraints to trail alignment.
- The Town owns most of the potential trail corridor including most of the higher and drier ground.

Recommendations

- The corridor should be developed as a Class 6 greenway with boardwalk sections if needed.

- The trail should be sensitively placed to avoid fragmenting the wildlife corridor.
- The Town should continue to explore options for trail connections to the New Hope Corridor and Durham greenway system.

5 Erwin Road to Durham County Line

This segment of the Dry Creek Greenway would be a joint project with the Durham Open Space and Trails Commission (DOST). The portion of the corridor within Chapel Hill's jurisdiction would be approximately 4,600 feet in length. Depending upon location, Durham would extend the trail an additional 1,000 to 2,000 feet to Mt. Moriah Church Road. Durham's long-range plans show a trail extending downstream along Dry Creek to the New Hope Creek Trail. The trail surfacing is yet to be determined.

Resource Protection

The Town now owns all but one property needed to develop a trail along this section of Dry Creek.

Potential for Trail Development

The corridor is generally gently sloping with well-drained soils. A mixed hardwood tree cover exists with trees of varying age.

Summary of Constraints for Potential Trail Development

- One parcel is still in private ownership.
- Some pockets of potential wetlands exist.
- The existing Erwin Road Bridge over I-40 is not suitable for pedestrian traffic.

Summary of Factors Favorable for Potential Trail Development

- Few topographic, vegetative or soil restrictions are present.

Recommendations

- The Town should continue to pursue a joint development effort with Durham in constructing a coordinated trail and open space corridor.
- A bike lane and sidewalk could continue to north of I-40 along Erwin Road to Hollow Rock Park.
- To the north of I-40 and Erwin Road, a greenway connection would turn east and follow the north side of the Interstate northeast of Dry Creek. The trail would then continue to New Hope Commons shopping center and to New Hope Creek.

- The Town should work with NCDOT to assure that any expansion and/or replacement of the Erwin Road Bridge over I-40 include sidewalks and bicycle lanes.
- The Town should explore the option of building a pedestrian tunnel under I-40.

PARK TRAILS

Previous greenway related documents did not deal directly with the importance or existence of trails within parks. Park trails provide important resources for neighborhood connectivity and recreation. Following is a list of current and planned trails within parks.



CEDAR FALLS PARK

Completed, Class 3 natural surface trails located within the 51-acre Cedar Falls Park. The main trail totals approximately 1.2 miles and provides important neighborhood connections to the park's recreational facilities as well as passive recreation opportunities.

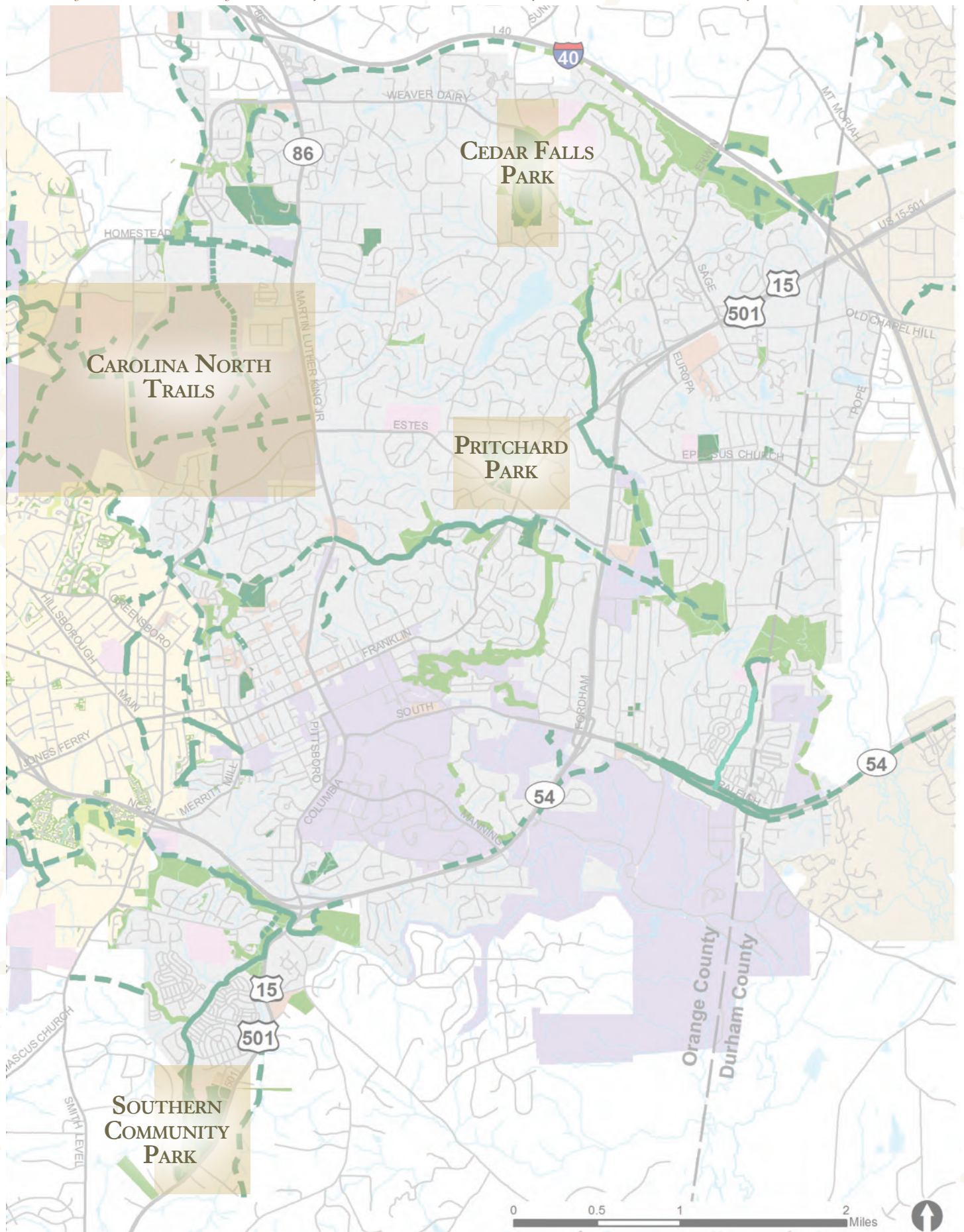
The main loop trail has some steep slopes and rocky areas and a boardwalk section over a creek tributary. It merges with the park's internal network of unpaved paths and paved access ways. One of these paths is the .6 mile long Jo Peeler Nature Trail. The nature trail was dedicated in 1980 and is jointly maintained by the Town and the Lake Forest Garden Club.

Trail spurs to the main Cedar Falls Trail loop connect the Lake Forest neighborhood at Lakeshore Lane and Cedar Falls neighborhood at Roundtree Road, Cedar Fork Trail and Village Lane. The trail and park offer an open space link northward to the campus of East Chapel Hill High School.

Recommendations

- Cedar Falls is crisscrossed with numerous informal, unmarked trails. The large number of these trails coupled with the generally poor soils has produced erosion in several areas and an unattractive look. The Town should close redundant trails.
- Erosion and drainage problems should be addressed.
- Install wayfinding signage to the Dry Creek Trail.
- Install a pedestrian crossing on Weaver Dairy Road at the entrance to Cedar Falls Park.

MAP 4.11 - CEDAR FALLS PARK





- Wide Shoulder/Outside Lane — Sidewalk □ Parcel ■ Water
- Funded Bike Facility — Stream ■ Park — 2' Contour

MAP 4.13 - PRITCHARD PARK

PRITCHARD PARK
 Completed. A one mile long Class 3 natural surface trail circles the Library. The long range plan envisions the trail system to be part of a passive park. The plan also envisions a significant public art component to be included throughout the park including the trail system.

- Recommendations**
- Realign the trail upon completion of the Chapel Hill Library expansion.
 - Install art as soon as possible.

SOUTHERN COMMUNITY PARK

Completed. Currently a short Class 3 natural surface trail completes a loop on the property with the paved Fan Branch Greenway extending to Dogwood Acres Drive. Hikers can also use .5 miles of trail on the south side of Dogwood Acres Drive. This loop was located to serve the park's disc golf course.

Recommendations

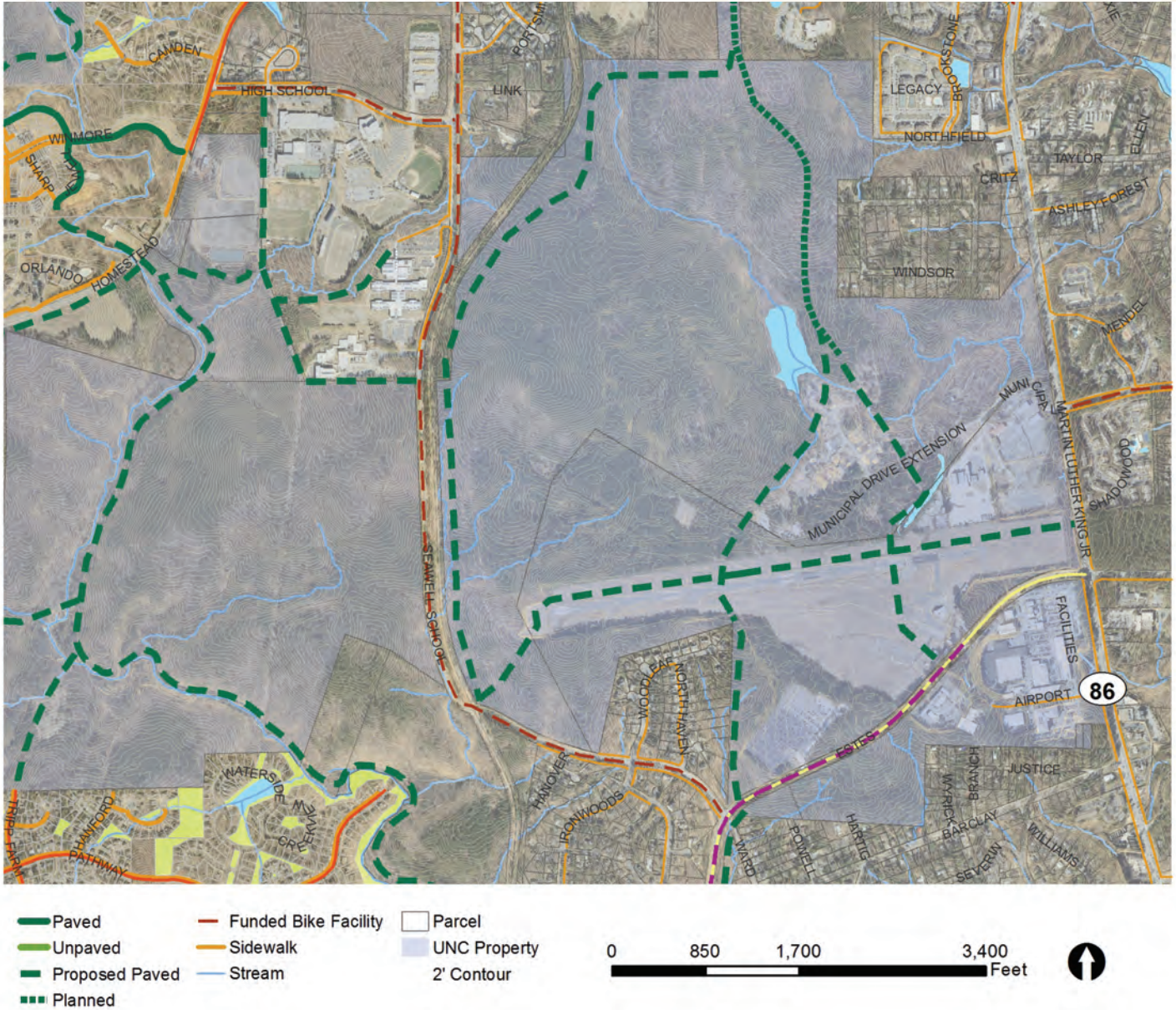
- Improve the Class 3 trail to eliminate erosion and drainage problems.
- Study options for a safer crossing of 15-501.
- Pursue a connection with the proposed Wilson Creek Trail once the trail is constructed.
- Add foot bridges over drainage features.



MAP 4.14 - SOUTHERN COMMUNITY PARK

CAROLINA NORTH TRAILS

The Carolina North campus is owned and operated by the University of North Carolina. However, an extensive public process informed its development plan, and it will function as a recreation destination in the community. The campus contains significant trails and open space. Upon development, most of these trails and open space areas will remain, including a portion of the Horace Williams Trail. As one of the few expansive open spaces in the town today, it is currently used by many walkers, runners, and mountain bikers in the community.



MAP 4.15 - CAROLINA NORTH TRAILS

REGIONAL AND LOCAL COORDINATION

By its nature, the greenways concept cannot be easily contained within the jurisdiction of any single local government. Greenways tend to follow natural or man-made features such as waterways, ridges, or rail lines, which often continue undistinguished by the political jurisdiction they occupy. One of the major goals of the Chapel Hill Greenway Program, therefore, is the integration of the Town's greenway network into those of neighboring jurisdictions. Carrboro, Orange County, and Durham all have similar goals for their respective trail systems. Regional and local trail connections will provide many benefits to the residents of Chapel Hill. They will allow residents to access nearby communities by foot or bike, draw in others from those communities who then help to support local businesses, and generate the regional economic growth that comes with improved quality of life. Since a regional network will cross jurisdictional boundaries, cooperation and joint planning is required. This greenway plan therefore seeks to relate proposed connections to the plans of Chapel Hill's neighbors.

The following sections describe potential connections grouped by jurisdiction. Since the University of Chapel Hill owns a significant portion of land in town, local connections from the rest of Chapel Hill to the main campus of the University and the adjacent downtown are included. These connections will have similar economic benefits to those listed above regarding regional links. Specific connections are provided in detail for the University and downtown, Carrboro and Orange County, and Durham. A brief description of potential connections to Chatham County and the history of the New Hope Corridor are also included.

CONNECTIONS TO DOWNTOWN AND UNC

It has been repeatedly noted that in an ideal situation the greenway system would resemble a wagon wheel with spokes leading out from a central hub. In this case the central hub would be the downtown area of Chapel Hill and the UNC campus. If this could be accomplished the role of the greenways system as a non-motorized transportation facility would be greatly enhanced. Unfortunately a number of factors are in place that limit the development of greenways toward the dense central hub of the downtown/campus area. These include:

- The neighborhoods near the campus and downtown are the oldest in Town. These neighborhoods have been built in such a manner

as to make extensions of the greenway system impractical in the majority of cases.

- The topography of the downtown and campus area makes access difficult. These areas are located on a hill that has relatively steep slopes. These grades make bicycle access more difficult.
- Portions of the street system that leads to the downtown and campus are not wide enough to allow greenway extensions.

However, some linkage is possible. The following locations allow some degree of access to the central areas of Town. Map 4-17 illustrates various options for connectivity from the greenway system to the downtown and campus areas.

1 Battle Branch Trail Access

- 1 The existing Battle Branch Trail currently provides some access from the eastern portion of Chapel Hill directly to the UNC campus.

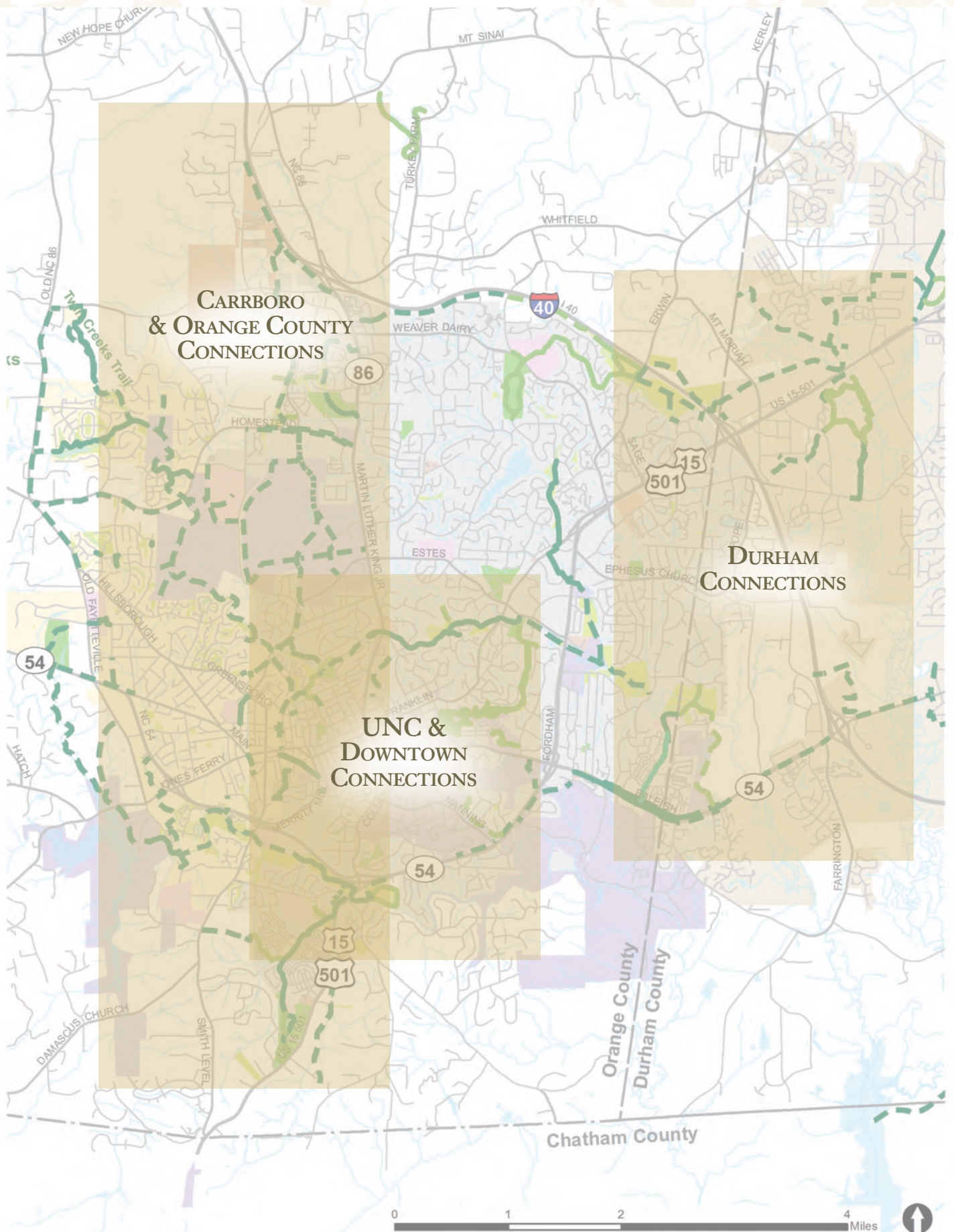
This is the only direct greenway link to the campus from a major residential and business area of Town. About 50% of the trail is owned by the Town. The other half is owned by the University of North Carolina. The trail is natural surface with some bridges and boardwalks. The Town portion is open to bicycle use. The University has recently upgraded its portion of the trail. The University allows bicycle use on trails that share OWASA easements.

Potential for Trail Development

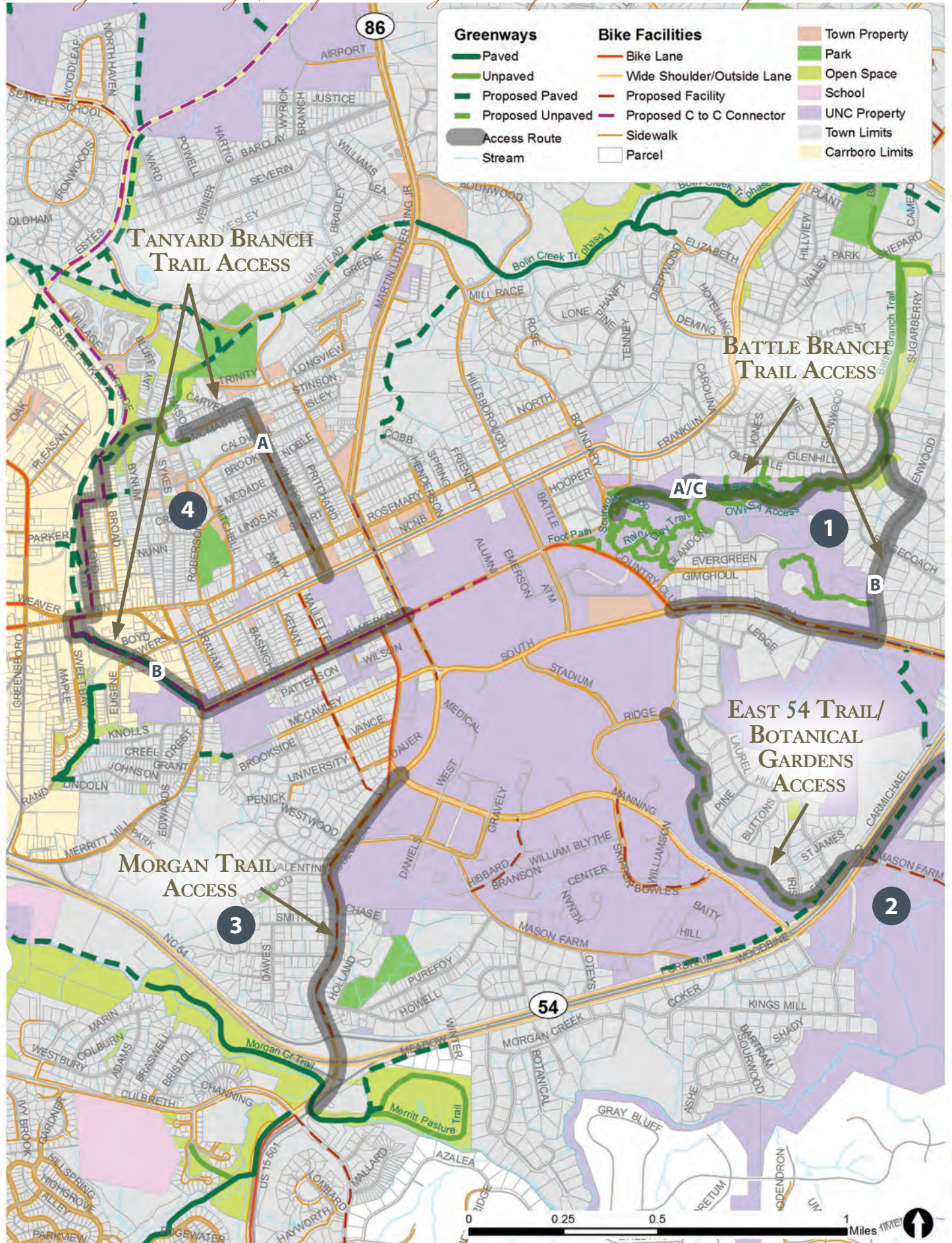
Any suggested improvements to the Battle Branch Trail have brought various viewpoints to the surface because of two conflicting issues.

Greendale Park and Battle Park have long enjoyed special status in Chapel Hill as quiet preserves. These places are in the heart of Town yet have little noise pollution or signs of the nearby streets and residential areas. Most public meetings that include discussions of these places have resulted in much discussion of the Battle Branch corridor as a place to preserve.

However, the land along Battle Branch is probably the single best location for an improved greenway trail that could result in significant numbers of people using the trail for transportation instead of purely recreation. It is unlikely that significant numbers would use the trail for transportation purposes unless it were paved or improved to such a degree that bicycle use could be contemplated by most users.



MAP 4.16 - REGIONAL AND LOCAL CONNECTIONS



Trail development could occur in one of three ways:

- A. Improvement could be made to the existing grades and structure. These improvements could take place over time and could result in a natural surface facility that is easier to ride on a bicycle.
- B. Improvements could be made to the Town portion of the trail that would allow relatively easy access from Community Center Park to Greenwood Road. Bicyclists could then continue to Raleigh Road. Access could then be made to the campus using rules-of-the-road, and/or tie into any westward extension of the existing trails running parallel to East 54.
- C. The existing trail could be paved from the Bolin Creek Trail to the area near Forest Theater.

Recommendations

- As repairs are needed the Town should make such improvement as necessary to eliminate barriers to bicycle users on its property. Bridges, boardwalks, erosion structures should all be designed to allow continuous bicycle use without the need to dismount. Steeper slopes should be eliminated where possible.
- Easements should be obtained over two private properties. These properties lie across some of the flattest sections of land near Greendale Park.
- The University should be encouraged to improve its section of trail on OWASA easements to allow easy use of bicycles designed for natural surface conditions.

2 East 54 Trail/Botanical Gardens Access

Pedestrian and bicycle access to downtown and campus from areas east of town is currently blocked by Highway 15/501. Connections across this highway represent an important link between the extensive residential neighborhoods in this area, the growing trail network extending from Meadowmont, and desired regional connections to Durham and the American Tobacco Trail. An access point at Raleigh Road would complement the proposed access point along Little Creek to provide a direct link to the UNC campus. Extensions of the current greenways along a portion of the Raleigh Road/Highway 54 have already been recommended in the 2010 NC 54/I-40 Corridor Study.

Potential for Trail Development

The intersection of Raleigh Road and Highway

15/501 presents a challenging obstacle to continuation of the East 54 trail. Heavy commuting traffic and ramps would require several crosswalks in a row. On the northwest side of Highway 15/501, the road becomes steep on the way into campus. To avoid these obstacles, an alternative route could turn off of Raleigh Road before its intersection with 15/501, connect to the UNC botanical gardens, and access the campus further south. This option would still require a crossing of Highway 15/501, however, and is limited by UNC's desire to retain the existing trail in this location as a class 2 trail.

Trail development could occur in one of two ways:

- The East 54 trail could be extended all the way to campus.
- The trail could be routed through the botanical gardens and an extension into campus found through cooperation with UNC.

Recommendations

- Any improvements to this section of Raleigh Road should incorporate improved pedestrian and bicycle facilities.
- The Town should work with the NCDOT to identify the preferred pedestrian and bicycle crossing location of Highway 15/501 along its southeast portion.

3 Morgan Creek Trail Access

The existing and proposed sections of the Morgan Creek Trail will link the southern portions of Chapel Hill and Carrboro. However, connections with the downtown and campus are difficult because of the double bridges of Highway 15-501, limited right-of-way along South Columbia Street, lack of alternative access points, and steep slopes from the south.

Potential for Trail Development

The opportune time to connect from the south would occur during an upgrade and widening of South Columbia Street. This project could provide bicycle lanes and sidewalks. A connection to the Morgan Creek Trail would remain challenging, however, because of the obstacles created by Highway 54 and Morgan Creek.

Recommendations

- The Town should work to incorporate as many bicycle and pedestrian facilities into the design of South Columbia Street as possible.
- Bicycle and pedestrian improvements should be

made to the existing section of Highway 15-501 to Culbreth Road as opportunities arise in the future

4 Tanyard Branch Trail Access

The existing Tanyard Branch Trail provides access from Umstead Park to the Northside neighborhood at Caldwell Street near Hargraves Park. The Town is currently studying the possibility of paving a portion of the Tanyard Branch Trail as an extension of the future Bolin Creek Trail Phase III.

Potential for Trail Development

The valley of Tanyard Branch is probably the second best location for a connection to the downtown area (after the Battle Branch neighborhood). Although the connection would not be direct it could provide access to the Northside neighborhood, which is a short bicycle ride from both the Chapel Hill and Carrboro downtown areas.

Trail development could occur in one of two ways:

- A. The town could improve a portion of the Tanyard Branch Trail to allow bicycle access and install facilities and/or signage along McMasters St. and Church St. to prioritize bicycle and pedestrian traffic on those roadways.
- B. The town could improve a shorter portion of the Tanyard Branch Trail to tie into the proposed campus to campus connector running between Carolina North and the main UNC campus.

Recommendations

The Town should continue to study options for improving a portion of the Tanyard Branch Trail to allow access from the Bolin Creek Trail to the Northside neighborhood and downtown.

REGIONAL TRAIL CONNECTIONS

The proposed Chapel Hill trail network can be extended beyond the borders of the Town by connecting into regional and statewide trail systems being planned by other agencies and organizations. The major trails being planned and their potential for integration into Chapel Hill's system are described below by locality.

TOWN OF CARRBORO AND ORANGE COUNTY CONNECTIONS

The Town of Carrboro, in its 1994 Recreation and Parks Comprehensive Master Plan, 2006 update to that plan, and subsequent active projects along Bolin Creek and Morgan Creek, has identified several potential greenway linkages with the Chapel Hill system. Many

of the stream corridors identified in this plan for trail development have similar recommendations in the Carrboro Plan once they pass over into its jurisdiction.

Orange County has developed an active program of open space acquisition and trail planning since the adoption of the Town's 1998 Greenways Master Plan. The Parks Element of the Orange County Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1988. Revisions to the plan were made in 1999 (Joint Master Recreation and Parks Work Group report) and 2001 (Lands Legacy Action Plan). These plans have identified a possible series of trails that would link to the Town's Horace Williams Trail in Chapel Hill's northwest area and into the Bolin Creek Trail that would serve the County, Carrboro, and Chapel Hill. An update to the Parks Element was completed again in 2008 as part of the 2030 Comprehensive Plan, which describes parks planned north and northwest of town at the ends of the Horace Williams and Bolin Creek Trails.

The following linkages have the potential to integrate Chapel Hill's trail system into the systems planned by Carrboro and Orange County along the Town's western border.

1 Old Field Trail

Chapel Hill's planned Old Field Trail should be tied into Orange county's planned park at Millhouse Road.

2 Horace Williams Trail – Eubanks Road

A connection between the Horace Williams Trail in Chapel Hill and planned bike facilities near Morris Grove Elementary School in Carrboro could be made along Eubanks Road.

3 Upper Booker Creek Trail

The spur connection from the Upper Booker Creek recommended in this plan should be integrated into the Rogers Road neighborhood with a connection across the Norfolk Southern Rail Line through the neighborhood and into Carrboro. A small area plan, which was completed for this area by the 2008 Rogers Road Task Force, includes 87 acres of open space on the Chapel Hill/Orange county jointly-owned Greene Tract just west of the rail line.

4 Horace Williams Trail – Homestead Road

There is an opportunity for a connection between planned bike facilities on Homestead Road in Carrboro and the intersection of the Horace Williams Trail and Homestead Road in Chapel Hill.

5 Carolina North Trails

The Carolina North development agreement

plans for a trail system throughout this UNC-owned tract with connections between the municipalities

6 Bolin Creek Trail

The Bolin Creek Greenway is planned to stretch approximately seven miles through Carrboro, connecting various future park sites. The trail could connect with the Town of Chapel Hill Bolin Creek Greenway at two locations at Estes Drive Extension, and potentially at Seawell Elementary depending on the future of the rail line.

It is possible to connect the Bolin Creek Trail system to Carrboro via Chapel Hill's Tanyard Branch Trail as well. Recently acquired Chapel Hill property would allow the Town to extend a portion of the Tanyard Branch Trail into Carrboro's portion of the Northside neighborhood.

7 Campus to Campus Connector

The preferred route selected for the connector between Carolina North and UNC's main campus runs through Chapel Hill and Carrboro via a proposed trail along Estes Drive that would also provide a second connection between the proposed Bolin Creek greenway and Carolina North. Additional information can be found at the following web address: <http://www.townofchapelhill.org/index.aspx?page=1356>

8 Morgan Creek Trail

Carrboro's proposed Morgan Creek Greenway is envisioned to extend approximately 3 miles along the banks of Morgan Creek. The Carrboro trail would connect with Chapel Hill's Morgan Creek Greenway at Smith Level Road and present an opportunity to link University Lake with Merritt's Pasture.

9 Fan Branch Trail

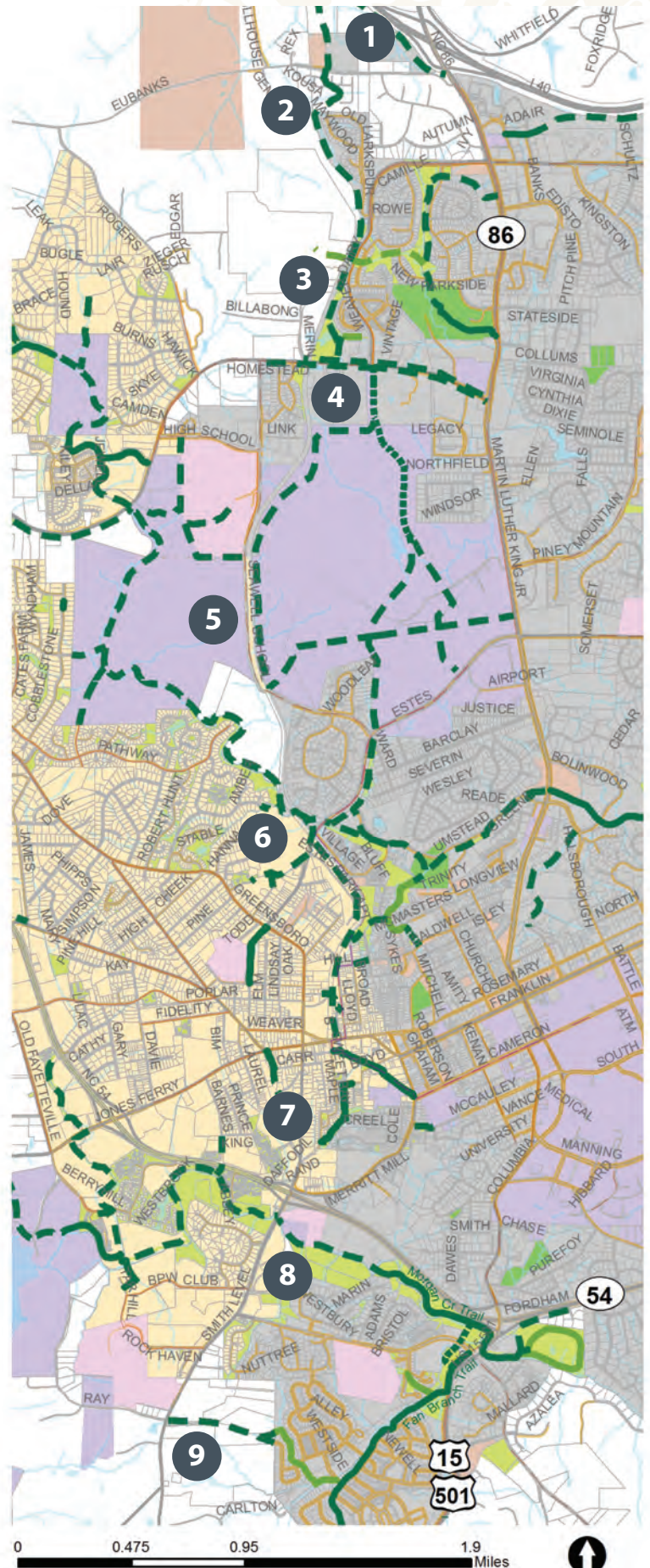
It might be possible to provide a link from the Fan Branch Trail in Southern Village in Chapel Hill to Carrboro High School via the proposed spur trail running west through the Village.

Greenways

- Paved
- Unpaved
- - - Proposed Paved
- - - Proposed Unpaved
- - - - - Planned

Bike Facilities

- Bike Lane
- Wide Shoulder/Outside Lane
- - - Proposed Facility
- - - - - Proposed C to C Connector



MAP 4.18 - CONNECTIONS TO CARRBORO AND ORANGE COUNTY

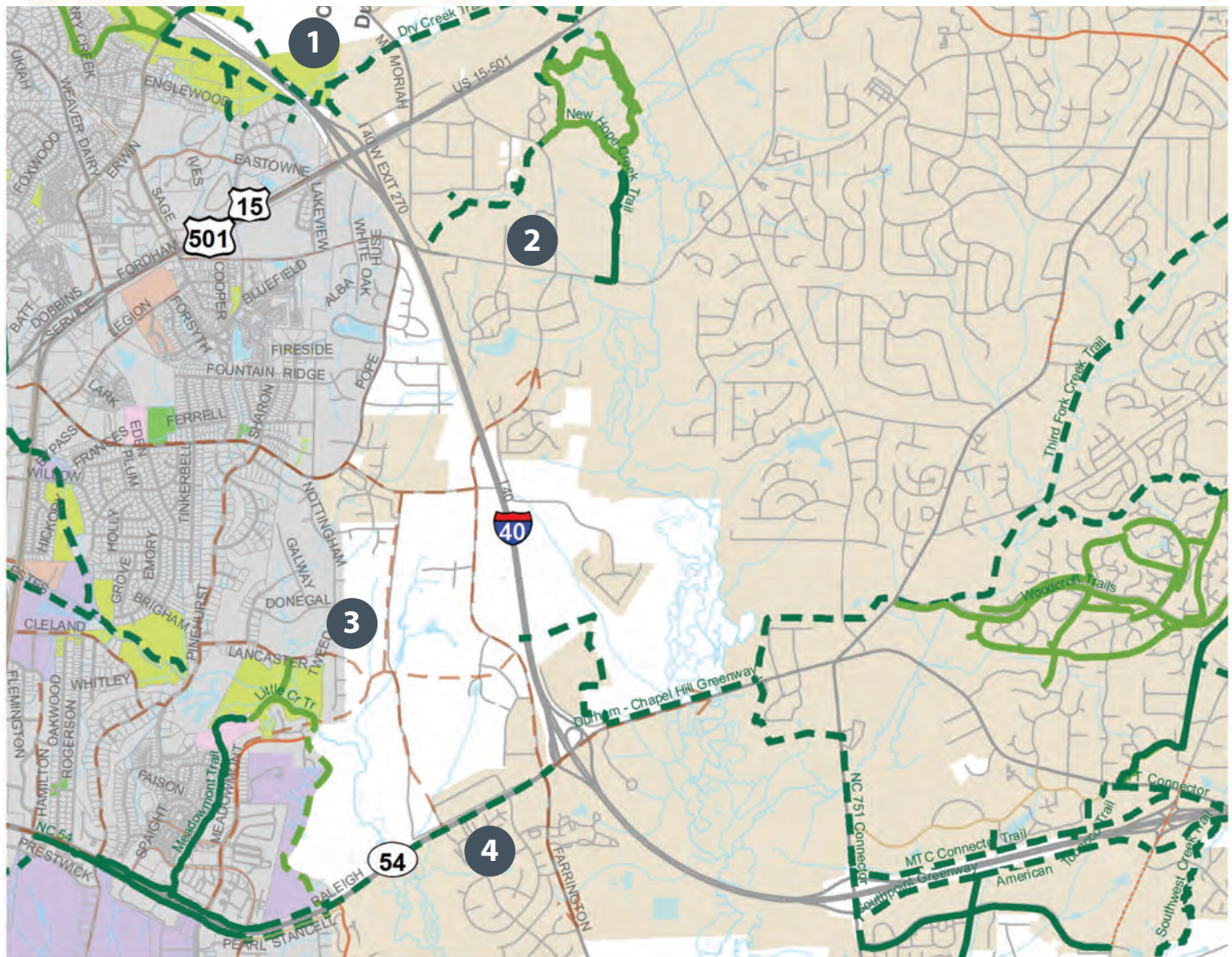
DURHAM CITY-COUNTY URBAN TRAILS AND GREENWAYS SYSTEM

Greenway connections linking Chapel Hill's system with the Durham City-County Urban Trails and Greenways System are possible in the following locations:

1 Dry Creek Connector
As described in the New Hope Corridor section above, it is possible to link Chapel Hill's trail system with Durham's via Dry Creek. If both jurisdictions make critical linkages it will be possible to access the New Hope Creek Trail from Chapel Hill, which leads toward the Koristan Division of Duke Forest and the

proposed Hollow Rock Park access area. The proposed Mud Creek Greenway would provide a connection with Duke Forest and the proposed Erwin-Cornwallis Regional Park. Sandy Creek Greenway would offer a potential connection with the Durham Division of Duke Forest. The goals of connectivity to Durham could be enhanced with a better method of crossing I-40, such as a tunnel or improvements to the Erwin Road Bridge. In addition, bicycle lanes and sidewalks could allow better access to Hollow Rock Park."

2 Patterson Place Greenway/New Hope Creek Trail
A second connection to the New Hope Creek Trail could be made through Durham's



Greenways	Bike Facilities	Stream	School
Paved	Bike Lane	Town Property	UNC Property
Unpaved	Wide Shoulder/Outside Lane	Park	Town Limits
Proposed Paved	Proposed Facility	Open Space	Carrboro Limits
Proposed Unpaved	Proposed C to C Connector	Parcel	City of Durham

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

proposed Patterson Place Greenway, which ends at Old Durham road just east of Highway 40. Options for connection this greenway into the Chapel Hill system should be explored.

3 Little Creek Trail

As discussed previously (See page 44), the Little Creek Trail could be continued along the creek corridor into Durham County. Potential extensions of this trail should be explored.

4 Highway 54 and the American Tobacco Trail

The American Tobacco Trail (ATT) is a partially completed off-road multi-use trail located on the abandoned Norfolk Southern railroad corridor. It will eventually run for approximately 30 miles in a north to south direction connecting downtown Durham (at the Durham Athletic Park) to its terminus at the Chatham County Line. The best way to tie Chapel Hill to the American Tobacco Trail is through off-road pedestrian/bicycle paths along Highway 54. The Town has provided the first phase of this facility as part of the Meadowmont development. A complete Durham-Chapel Hill Greenway was proposed in the 2006 Durham Bicycle Transportation Plan, with a connection into the proposed Third Fork Creek Trail running northward into downtown Durham. This connection would also link Chapel Hill to the ATT via the existing Woodcroft Trails.

CHATHAM COUNTY CONNECTIONS

Currently, Chatham County does not have an active greenways plan or program with the exception of the American Tobacco Trail. In the event that Chatham begins such a program, the Town should be in a position to discuss options. Wilson Creek presents one potential connection.

NEW HOPE CORRIDOR CONNECTION

In 1989, the Town of Chapel Hill agreed to share the costs of a study of the New Hope Creek corridor. The study investigated the entire New Hope Creek, Mud Creek and Dry Creek corridors, stretching from Duke Forest north of Chapel Hill and southward along Durham County's western boundary to Jordan Lake.

The study made recommendations to preserve certain key portions of the corridor as open space, including the historic Leigh Farm near the intersection of Interstate 40 and NC 54 as well as recommendations for trail development. Proposed is the acquisition of over 1,800 acres of land and the construction of

approximately 20 miles of recreational trails.

The only trail connection identified in the New Hope Open Space Master Plan that was directly relevant to Chapel Hill was along Dry Creek, from its juncture with New Hope Creek to its headwaters in Chapel Hill. A detailed description of the connection is available in the trail descriptions of the Dry Creek Trail and the North Trail. (See pages 53-55).

The Town has acquired all land needed to complete the Town's portion of the project except for one tract north of I-40. The Town has purchased or accepted donations of over 201 acres of land along Dry Creek, and has started to build trails in the corridor. The Dry Creek Trail is now complete from East Chapel Hill High School to Erwin Road.

MOUNTAINS TO SEA TRAIL

The North Carolina Mountains to Sea Trail is mostly completed in the western portion of the State due to the region's extensive National Forest and National Park properties. The trail location is in the planning stage in much of the Piedmont and Coastal Plain. The future main route of the Mountains to Sea Trail is currently shown to be in Orange County. However, the main route is shown to be west and north of Chapel Hill.

An alternative route is shown that would connect the main trail along the Eno River to Chapel Hill. Please see map. The alternative could tie into the Chapel Hill and Carrboro trail systems in several locations including: Bolin Creek (Carrboro), Horace Williams/Bolin Creek Trail System, Dry Creek, and Morgan Creek. Map, p. 70.

CURRENT CAPITAL RENOVATION NEEDS

The following existing trails have large enough maintenance needs that they exceed the ability of the Town to address the issues as part of routine maintenance. Rather the costs would be large enough to fall within the realm of capital expenditures. Most of these trails are natural surface, which tend to have greater maintenance needs than paved trails.

BATTLE BRANCH TRAIL

Two bridge and boardwalk sections on this trail are nearing the limit of their useful life span.

As structures are replaced and trail segments renovated, they should be made more bicycle accessible by eliminating stairs and reducing slopes.

BOLIN CREEK TRAIL

The trail suffers from damage related to several storms. Although not severe in any one place the repair of all erosion areas would constitute a capital renovation project if dealt with in one effort. A study paid for by the Friends of Chapel Hill Parks, Recreation, and Greenways developed a scope of work.

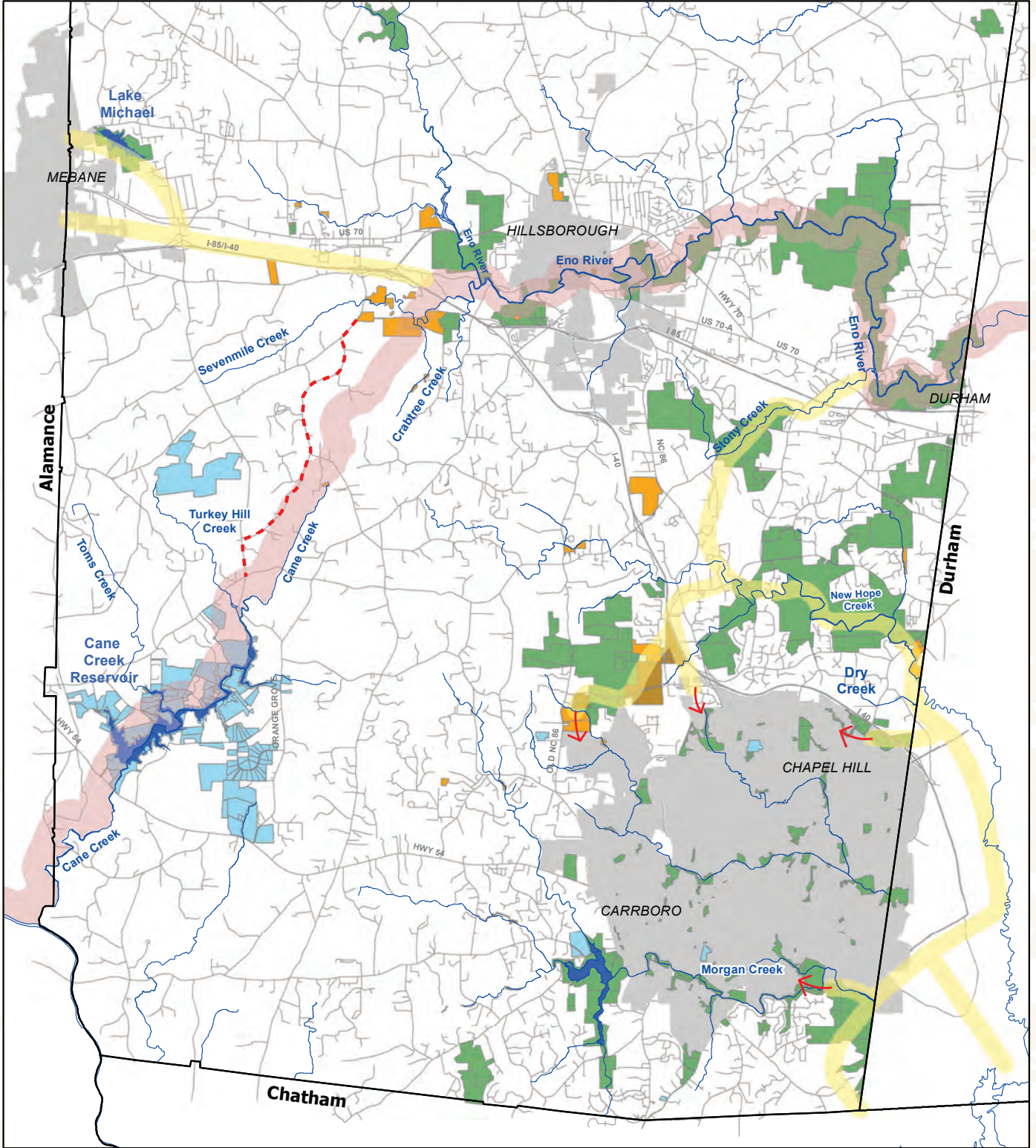
CEDAR FALLS PARK TRAIL

The park requires a complete trail renovation effort including a variety of solutions depending on location that include: relocation, closure, and renovation.

TANYARD BRANCH TRAIL

This trail contains several areas impacted by excessive erosion that could be controlled with proper drainage. The damage is severe in places and has resulted in the loss or near loss of steps.

MAP 4.20 - NC MOUNTAINS-TO-SEA TRAIL CORRIDOR - ORANGE COUNTY SECTION



NC Mountains-to-Sea Trail (MST)

- MST Primary route
- MST Alternative route
- Linkage to town greenway system
- Proposed roadside alternative route
- Towns
- Streets
- OWASA land
- Non-county parkland & open space
- Orange County parkland & open space
- Other public land
- Reservoirs
- Major Streams



0 0.5 1 2 Miles

Orange County
Dept. of Environment,
Agriculture, Parks and Recreation
M. Jones IT/GIS Division 6/20/12
OC220K O:\gis\home\gisproj\land_
resource\mntnsea_tr1.mxd

