



TOWN OF CARRBORO • NC
PLANNING, ZONING & INSPECTIONS

STAFF MEMO

DATE: February 10, 2023
TO: Richard White, Town Manager and Town Council
FROM: Trish McGuire, Planning Director
RE: Bolin Creek Greenway Phases 3 & 4 Worksession

Background. Bolin Creek Greenway, Phases 3 and 4, are two of five greenway segments identified in the *Town of Carrboro, NC Bolin Creek Greenway Conceptual Master Plan* (CMP, 2009; [Greenways | Carrboro, NC - Official Website \(townofcarrboro.org\)](https://www.townofcarrboro.org/greenways)). Federal Transportation funds for the plan were provided through the NCDOT transportation improvements and prioritization processes. The Town solicited qualifications from firms to complete the conceptual plan in 2008. The Greenways Commission assisted with the review and recommended contracting with a consulting firm, Greenways, Inc. A general timeline of the major actions from the present to 2009 are included as Attachment 1.

Purpose of the Plan

The planning effort was “initiated for the purposes of alternative transportation, recreation, and environmental protection and restoration through the Bolin and Jones Creek Corridors.”

Adoption Action

After receiving a presentation of the final draft plan and public comment, the Board of Aldermen adopted a resolution to:

- 1) Receive this update and support the continued pursuit of greenway development.
- 2) Adopt the recommendation for Phase 1A and 1B (1B would not extend any further south than Jolly Branch), and Phase 2.
- 3) That all three options for Phases 3 and 4 be included in the concept plan.
- 4) That staff be directed to establish a process for public input on Phases 3 and 4
- 5) Direct staff to pursue a municipal agreement with NCDOT to release an RFP and contract with (a) firm(s) to develop the foregoing resolution having been submitted to a vote received the following vote and was duly adopted this 8th day of December 2009:

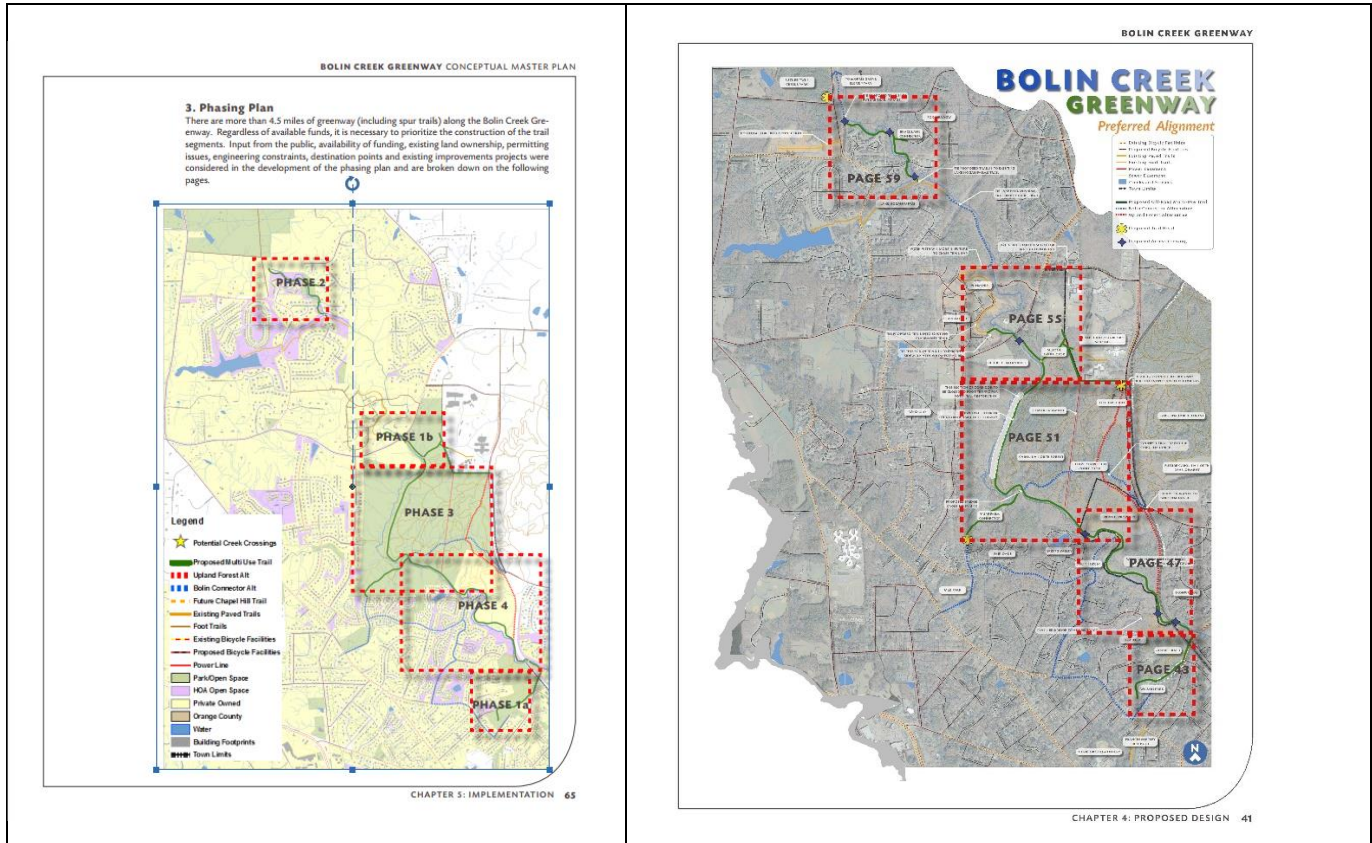
The vote recorded was Ayes: Dan Coleman, Sammy Slade, Lydia Lavelle, Mark Chilton, Joal Hall Broun, Jacquelyn Gist, Randee Haven-O'Donnell Noes: None Absent or Excused: None.

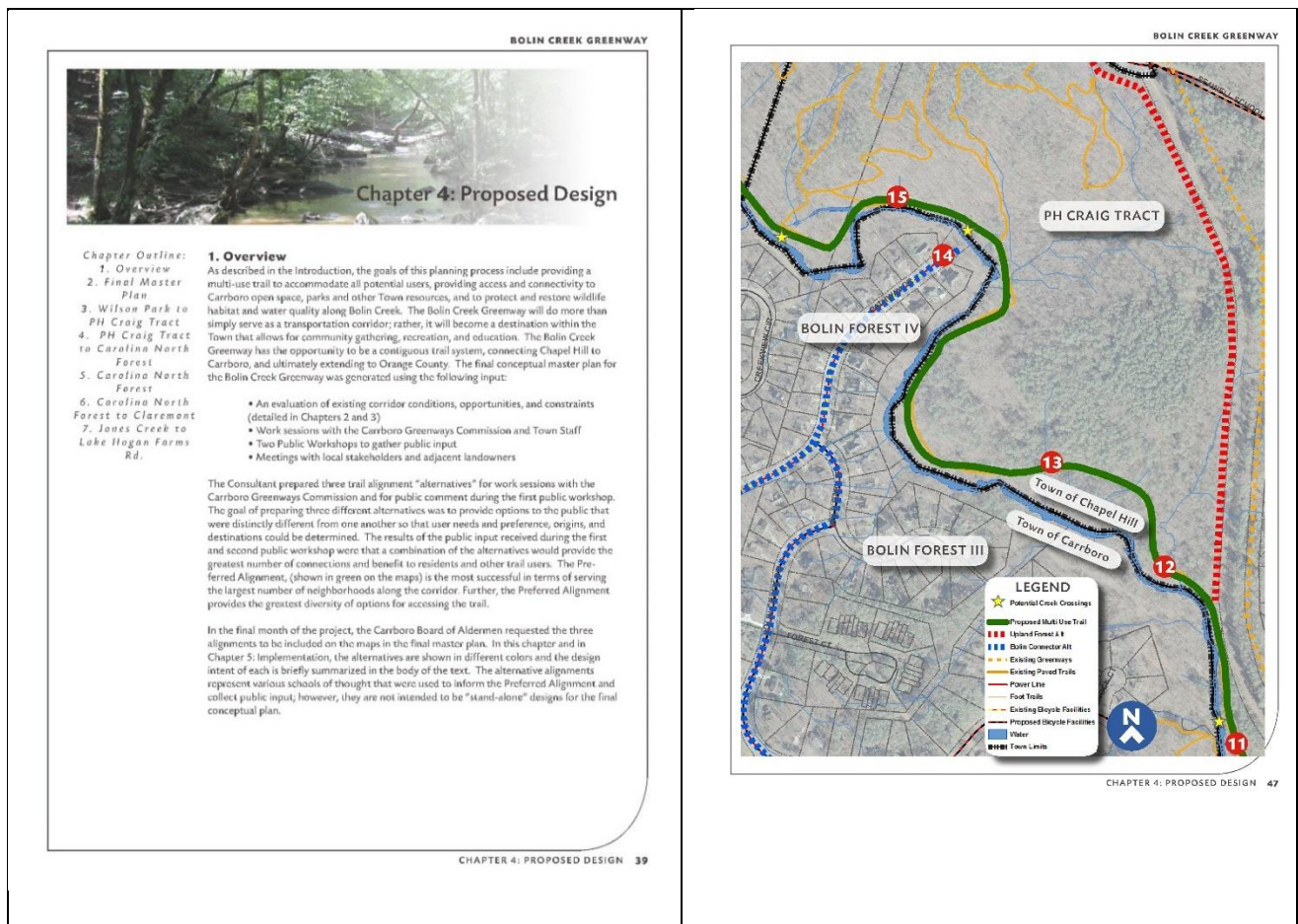
Following adoption of the resolution that evening, a MOTION WAS MADE BY JOAL HALL BROUN AND SECONDED BY RANDEE HAVEN-O'DONNELL TO ADOPT THE CONCEPT PLAN WITH THE SPECIFIED CHANGES. VOTE: AFFIRMATIVE SIX, ABSENT ONE (COLEMAN).

The overall phasing plan as presented in the CMP includes five segments, identified in relation to specific fund allocations, and resources and an expectation of how projects would be timed and managed. Of note, the cost estimates made in 2003 as part of the Town's bond referendum for sidewalks and greenways were significantly lower

than those resulting from the conceptual planning processes underway in 2009. Construction funds for only a portion of the planned segments was available, and the matching funds had not yet been identified.

Per the Board's resolution, the adopted version of the CMP included changes to Chapters 4 and 5 to describe and illustrate the alternative alignments (excerpted pages below).





Implementation Status

The Town has advanced plan implementation as follows:

Phase 1a – Complete, audited, closed-out.

Phase 1b – Complete, two punch list items following mediated settlement to close out the construction contract.

Phase 2 – Planning funds shifted to other projects as Town was not ready to initiate this project and funds were needed for other projects to advance. Included in long-range transportation plans. Not currently programmed for funding or local match. No funding identified.

Phase 3 and Phase 4 – Per Board of Aldermen action, alternative alignments were included in adopted plan.

Development of possible public engagement options beginning in 2014. Some improvements in Carolina North as part of forest management plan include gravel on Bolin Connector Alt from the Tripp Farm extension bridge to Seawell School Road. Alignments for Phases 3 and 4 are not currently included in long-range transportation plans or programming (Town CIP or regional/state) for funding.

Jones Creek Greenway – Orange County portion (Twin Creeks Park to Morris Grove Elementary) completed, audited, closed out. The Town's portion of the LHF-Twin Creeks connection in design and easement acquisition. Capital project ordinance/funds available.

Current Context and Potential Need for Updated Information

The plan information and public engagement occurred 14 years ago. Some updating of plan information should be undertaken prior to initiating public engagement.

- 1) Three alternatives were explored in the conceptual planning process. The final plan presents more detailed information about the recommended alignment which blended some portions of the other alignments. Updated feasibility should be expected in relation to verifying current and expected use of the rail corridor, current and expected future use of the sewer easement, among other considerations.
- 2) Engagement with and permission for a greenway from property owners (i.e., UNC Chapel Hill and PH Craig) has not been ongoing or obtained. Re-engaging with these partners in advance of initiating a public process is advised.
- 3) Stream, stormwater management, and water quality regulations have been revised and permitting considerations should be checked to determine if any options/portions of the alignments would not be feasible. The Town should consider studying the feasibility of crossings along the entire corridor to determine if crossing options/neighborhood connections are feasible.
- 4) Transportation planning prioritization processes have changed. Phases 3 and 4 are not included in the Town's priorities and regional long-range transportation plans, via which non-local funding is made available. The State's transportation project prioritization, the first in approximately five years, would be the next opportunity to include the project in the regional and state processes for funding and scheduling. Funding opportunities will be determined in large part based on the purpose of the trail and how it will be constructed and maintained.

Summary of the 2009 Public Engagement Process

The Board of Aldermen authorized the Town Manager to execute a contract with Greenways, Inc. on November 18, 2008, and work on the plan began soon after. Greenways, Inc. worked closely with the Greenways Commission in reviewing information about the corridors, preparing alternatives for the public input sessions and reporting to the Board of Aldermen. Public input sessions were held on May 20th and September 21st. Project updates were provided to the Board of Aldermen in April and September. Forty-one individuals attended the May workshop and 31 attended the September workshop. Residents and Greenways Commission members explored concerns related to Phases 3 and 4 following the September workshop.

Public input was gathered in a variety of ways. The input was quantified, where applicable, or summarized in the CMP. The input mechanisms included:

Public Comment Cards - filled out by workshop participants with feedback on each proposed trail alignment. Each participant was given one card for each of the three alignments. Eighty-three responses were received and summarized in the CMP.

Public Comment Forms – filled out by workshop participants to obtain information from community about trails in Carrboro and responses were summarized. Thirty-one responses from the first workshop and 19 from the second.

Public Map Comments – provided by workshop participants on map provided at the workshops. Images and summaries are included in the CMP.

Public Engagement Options.

Public engagement follows from a goal statement (such as “What information is the Town Council seeking to learn from the public engagement process?”) and the Town’s commitment to the public regarding their roles. Both should be clearly and explicitly communicated so that there are common expectations among all participated.

Any concerted effort that would lead to engaging the public on this topic should be expected to begin with informing the community of the history, question/goal, and plan and roles for their participation. A variety of methods consistent with the Inclusive Carrboro public engagement plan would be used.

Possible steps for engagement can include:

- 1) Establish a survey method to gain an understanding of what community members know now and what they need to know to provide their perspectives on moving forward
- 2) Once information exists on the community understanding and need, establish a task force or assign lead role to the Greenways Commission, with additional stakeholder, at-large, and representative participation to serve in this capacity to formulate an engagement strategy that responds to Town Council direction
- 3) Engage accordingly. In-person and digital participation would occur. If a consensus model is selected, process would expect requirements for task force/steering committee members to fully participate in activities designed to gather and gain shared understanding and to work to reach a consensus and develop an action plan.
- 4) Repeat 2008 methods with open house/workshops and use of comment cards and forms.

ATTACHMENT 1

General timeline on Conceptual Master Plan**From most recent to the plan's adoption on December 8, 2009**

1. On June 25, 2019, the Board of Aldermen (BOA) approved a motion to schedule a work session to discuss staff-developed options for a public input process on Bolin Creek Greenway Phases 3 and 4.
2. On March 21, 2019, the Board of Aldermen held a retreat, the focus of which was >>>
3. On June 12, 2018, the BOA discussed how a public process will proceed for consideration of the Bolin Creek Greenway Phases 3 and 4. According to the meeting minutes, the BOA voted "to continue discussion and to explore best practices of resolving community conflict in an environmental context during the 2019 board retreat." [[Town of Carrboro - File #: 17-535 \(legistar.com\)](#)]
4. On June 14, 2016, the Board of Aldermen (Town of Carrboro - File #: 16-184 (legistar.com)) discussed how to proceed with a public process for consideration of Phases 3 and 4. The Town Manager requested whether the Town Council wanted to continue to limit advisory board's discussion of this topic and all agreed (see pages 9-10 at [Minutes \(19\).pdf](#)).
5. From 2013-2016, various discussions, inquiries, and preparation of options for public engagement on Phases 3 and 4.
6. On June 21, 2010, the Greenways Commission accepted comments from the public on the conceptual master plan ([Carrboro Greenways Commission \(townofcarrboro.org\)](#)).
7. On June 15, 2010, the Board of Aldermen accepted a staff update on Bolin Creek Greenway Planning and requested that information be posted on the Town's website on the proposed design and phases, including a short description, and specifying that no funding is currently available for Phases 3 and 4
8. On April 19, 2010, the Greenways commission reviewed the conceptual master plan ([Microsoft Word - Draft GC Meeting Minutes April 19 2010 \(townofcarrboro.org\)](#)).
9. On March 15, 2010, the Greenways Commission reviewed the conceptual master plan ([Carrboro Greenways Commission \(townofcarrboro.org\)](#))
10. On January 12, 2010, the Board of Aldermen referred the Conceptual Master Plan to the Greenways Commission.
11. On December 8, 2009, the BOA adopted A Resolution Receiving an Update on the Town's Greenway Planning Activities (Resolution No. 69/2009-10.) with the following provisions:
 - 1) Receive this update and support the continued pursuit of greenway development
 - 2) Adopt the recommendation for Phase 1A and 1B (1B would not extend any further south than Jolly Branch), and Phase 2.
 - 3) That all three options for Phases 3 and 4 be included in the concept plan.
 - 4) That staff be directed to establish a process for public input on Phases 3 and 4.
 - 5) Direct staff to pursue a municipal agreement with NCDOT to release an RFP and contract with (a) firm(s) to develop construction documents and initiate environmental permitting for Phases 1 and 2 of the greenway trail
12. Subsequent to the adoption of the resolution, MOTION WAS MADE BY JOAL HALL BROUN AND SECONDED BY RANDEE HAVEN-O'DONNELL TO ADOPT THE CONCEPT PLAN WITH THE SPECIFIED CHANGES. VOTE: AFFIRMATIVE SIX, ABSENT ONE (COLEMAN)
(http://www01.townofcarrboro.org/BoA/Minutes/2009/12_08_2009.pdf)