

Action Options – Homestead Chapel Hill High School Multi-use Path

The May 17 Resolution related to this project included four actions, copied below and annotated regarding status, cost and scheduling considerations.

1. **Town Staff is directed to issue a notice to proceed with the contract for the Project so that work on the Project can commence.** While meeting with the construction contractor on May 26, it was made clear that an updated schedule for the project would be needed before the notice to proceed could be issued and work on the project could commence. The Town's decision to consider the alternative alignment had a direct effect on project costs, construction sequencing and scheduling; it was determined necessary for the Board of Aldermen to decide whether to continue investigating the alternative alignment before a construction schedule could be finalized. At this point, due to the delay in the initiation of construction, project costs are estimated to have increased by at least \$50,000. A specific estimate of the delay cost is not possible until a start date has been determined as the costs related to adjustments to subcontractors' rates, as well as the construction and construction inspection contractors, are not fully known. If a decision to move forward with the project as designed and approved currently was made on June 14th, it is anticipated that construction could begin by July 1. The project is estimated to take 210 days to complete; depending on weather conditions, a temporary delay or time extension of construction activity could be needed from early December to mid-March.
2. **Town Staff is directed to investigate the technical feasibility and financial feasibility of modifying the specifications for the material used for the surface of a portion of the Path which runs parallel to and/or intersects with the Chapel Hill High School cross country course. The purpose of this review is to determine the feasibility of substituting a softer surface (such as crushed stone or a rubberized surface) instead of asphalt on the portion of the Path that would be used by the cross country team as part of its course.** Staff have consulted with the construction contractor and design engineers on the use of an alternative surface, with the focus on a rubberized material. A final answer/indication of approvability has not been obtained; information on the alternative surface has been submitted to NCDOT Pedestrian and Bicycle Program staff. Some feedback has indicated that the rubberized surface may be unsuitable in shaded areas and may present additional maintenance requirements. UNC Chapel Hill representatives have preliminarily and generally indicated that the University, as the entity that will maintain the path, is seeking the lowest maintenance requirements and a surface that is ADA-accessible. If it is determined that the alternative surface is a feasible feature to include in the existing approved project, a cost increase of \$15,000 has been estimated. Addition of this alternative surface is not expected to affect the project schedule as described above in item #1.
3. **Town Staff may also investigate the technical feasibility and financial feasibility of modifying the alignment of the Path so that it proceeds to connect to the School Property on the west side of the Smith Middle School tennis courts (as presently designed, the Path connects to the School Property on the east side of the tennis courts).** Exploration of this alternative has assumed that the existing project is separated into two 'phases.' The first phase would include the path from the Claremont subdivision to approximately the mid-point of the easement within the large cross country course loop. The second phase would head north and east towards and around the west corner of the tennis courts to connect with the paved path on the north side of the tennis courts. Construction of the first phase would be scheduled to begin as soon as possible, but adjustments to the original construction access route would be needed. As currently designed, the project anticipates entering the project from the Chapel Hill High

campus and completing clearing and grubbing from that point through to the creek. Clearing would begin with the trees and vegetation along the portion of the project path that lies parallel to the cross country course. Fred Smith construction representatives have identified that clearing of the area would be counter to the interest of limiting clearing along the cross country course if the alternative alignment was to be approved. An alternative route and schedule for construction activities would be needed to avoid this area until plans for second phase were finalized. Approaching from Homestead Road requires that temporary construction bridge is added to the project and may lead to other unanticipated issues and expenses. Staff is exploring whether the existing construction easement for the project provides sufficient room for this addition.

Staff have consulted with project partners and contractors regarding the process for determining the feasibility of the alternative alignment. Four local attorneys, Tom Cors, Dick Ludington, Dickson Phillips, and Nick Torrey, have volunteered to assist with the final step, working with UNC's Property Office, the Council of State, and the Governor's office to obtain approval of the easement for the alternative alignment. An estimate of 60-90 days has been noted as the likely time frame for that type of approval to be obtained. In advance of the easement acquisition process, the construction plans, easement plats and easement document for the alternative alignment must be completed. The separate activities include surveying, engineering, stakeholder (Town, UNC, CHCCS, and NCDOT) review, permitting, project approval, and plat and easement preparation. Costs associated with design, permitting, and alternative easement acquisition have been estimated to total between \$180,000 and \$205,000, depending on the date the Town is able to obtain right of way certification for the alternative easement and the length of time work on the project is suspended. Design, approval and permitting activities are expected to require 120 days to complete, as shown in the summary table below. If started by June 20, 2016, construction plan approval and plat preparation could begin in early October. An easement package could be ready to submit for Orange County and Chapel Hill Carrboro City School Board approval by mid-October. If easement releases were completed by December 1st, easement approval from the Council of State and the Office of the Governor might be anticipated by early February or early March. NCDOT review for right of way certification would follow. Staff of the MPO have indicated that delay of the project schedule to explore the alternative could risk the availability of \$212,000 currently scheduled for this project.

4. **Town Staff should consult and coordinate with NCDOT representatives, UNC Property Office representatives, School District representatives, the Town's design professionals and the contractor for the Project as soon as possible to explore the feasibility of the alternative designs identified in the preceding paragraphs and to report back to the Town Manager regarding alternatives considered so that timely action can be taken to modify the contract for the Project if necessary.** This report seeks to provide the Board of Aldermen with information on the consultation and initial exploration of the alternatives. Scheduling comments are provided above. In summary, with regard to cost implications, if the project can begin July 1 under options 1 or 2, the new costs appear to be, at a minimum, either \$50,000 or \$65,000. If the project begins July 1, with a portion held off to allow design and approval of the alternative (the third option), new costs are expected to range from \$180,000 to \$205,000 and revenue may drop by \$212,000.

Town staff is also exploring more minor modifications to the project to modify the interface between the multi-use path and the existing cross country course. For example, the small cross

country course loop could be flipped to the south, reducing the number of crossings to one, rather than three. Additionally, the path may be shifted north within the easement area where the two trails run parallel to maximize the separation and opportunity for vegetation in between.

Tentative schedule for design and approval of alternative alignment

| Item | Date | Duration (days) | |
|----------------------------------------------|------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| Begin Surveying | 6/20/2016 | 25 | Monday, June 20, 2016 |
| Receive Surveys | 7/15/2016 | | Friday, July 15, 2016 |
| Begin Engineering | 7/15/2016 | 14 | Friday, July 15, 2016 |
| Complete Engineering | 7/29/2016 | | Friday, July 29, 2016 |
| Submit for Stakeholders | 7/29/2016 | 7 | Friday, July 29, 2016 |
| Receive Feedback from Stakeholders | 8/5/2016 | 5 | Friday, August 05, 2016 |
| Meeting with Town | 8/10/2016 | | Wednesday, August 10, 2016 |
| Begin Engineering Revisions | 8/10/2016 | 14 | Wednesday, August 10, 2016 |
| Complete Engineering Revisions | 8/24/2016 | | Wednesday, August 24, 2016 |
| Revision to Town | 8/24/2016 | 5 | Wednesday, August 24, 2016 |
| Town Approval | 8/29/2016 | | Monday, August 29, 2016 |
| Submit to Agencies (DENR, NCDOT, UNC, CHCCS) | 8/29/2016 | 32 | Monday, August 29, 2016 |
| Receive Agencies approval | 9/30/2016 | 3 | Friday, September 30, 2016 |
| Begin Plats | 10/3/2016 | 11 | Monday, October 03, 2016 |
| Submit Plats to Town | 10/14/2016 | 3 | Friday, October 14, 2016 |
| Begin ROW Acquisition | 10/17/2016 | 121 | Monday, October 17, 2016 |
| Complete Acquisition Process | 2/15/2017 | 2 | Wednesday, February 15, 2017 |
| Submit for R/W Certification from NCDOT | 2/17/2017 | 31 | Friday, February 17, 2017 |
| Receive R/W Concurrence | 3/20/2017 | - | Monday, March 20, 2017 |

Red durations are subject to outside agency