

MORGAN CREEK TRAIL STUDY

PUBLIC INPUT SUMMARY

Information collected at the

15 June 2009

Public Meeting



Coulter | Jewell | Thames, PA

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DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA 27701
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Planning for the Future



Town of Carrboro, NC

PUBLIC WORKSHOP

for the Morgan Creek Greenway



JUNE 15TH, 2009

4:30 to 7:00 pm

Drop in & help shape the future of Carrboro



Workshop Location: Frank Porter Graham Elementary School

Media Center

101 Smith Level Road, Carrboro NC

☀ The workshop is open to the public to meet and discuss with your neighbors, greenway commission members, town staff and project consultants about the proposed Morgan Creek Greenway project.

☀ The public is invited to provide input and learn about the proposed Morgan Creek Greenway. The study area extends from University Lake Park to Smith Level Road.

☀ Getting there: Frank Porter Graham Elementary School is off of Smith Level Road immediately south of NC 54. Parking is available at the end of the driveway.



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Coulter Jewell Thames, PA

SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP

The first public workshop for this future trail layout was held 15 June 2009 at the Frank Porter Graham Elementary School. The purpose of the workshop was to make research and information collected to date available to the public. It was intended to give an initial look at what routes are under consideration by the Town of Carrboro, and to give an opportunity for public review and feedback.

The meeting was held at the elementary school media center as it is a familiar venue for local residents, there is plenty of parking, and also the site overlooks the study area. The meeting was staffed by representatives from the consultant team Coulter Jewell Thames and also by representatives from the Town of Carrboro and from the Greenways Commission. Staff from Orange County and the Town of Chapel Hill also briefly attended.

Various materials were available and displayed including photos from the corridor, mapped information boards as were presented to the Greenways Commission in March 2009, alternate routes where options presented themselves within the corridor, and educational information about various trail surfacing options.

The attendees were given a variety of methods for feedback including discussion, drawing on the maps, comment sheets, and a survey. Eleven citizens attended the workshop and the results of their feedback are included in this report.



TRAIL OPTIONS

Based on research and field information collected, and discussions and a workshop with the Greenways Commission, there are some parts of the corridor where there is one logical place for a trail.

At the western end of the trail there is a 1000 linear foot portion of trail already constructed within the Rose Walk townhome development. Although the trail is a gravel surface, it could be paved. Much of the gravel trail is in a corridor that has been deeded as a greenway easement to the Town of Carrboro.

The Chapel Hill Tennis Club is located just east of Rose Walk and there is an approximately 100' wide 1875' long greenway easement already dedicated to the Town alongside Morgan Creek. Much of the opposite creekside area is steeply sloped and some of it is owned by the Triangle Land Conservancy. After initial field and deed investigation it appears there is no reason to try to locate the trail outside of this established easement.

North of the Berryhill community lies approximately 20.7 acres of land already owned by the Town of Carrboro. This is vacant forested flat land that would be ideal for trail installation. Given that the north side of Morgan Creek is extremely steep and rocky in this area, the logical place for trail alignment is on the Town-owned property.

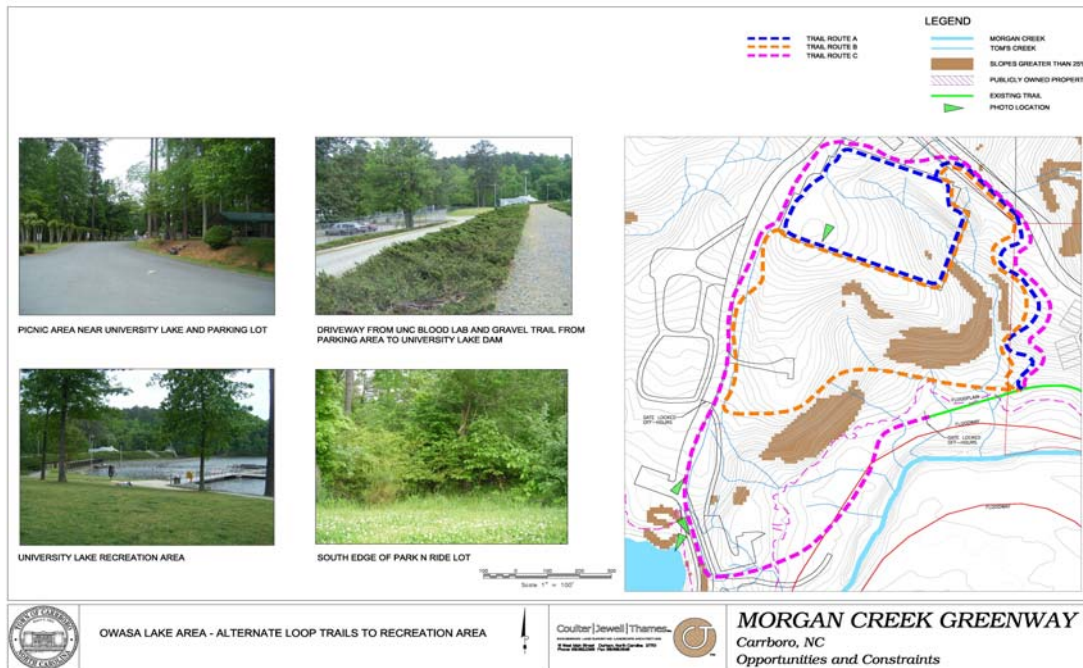
Similarly, east of this Town-owned site is a separate property approximately 10.4 acres already owned by the Town and currently used to house the Town Operations Center. There is opportunity on this property to place a trail near the creek but away from the streambanks. There is also an opportunity on this property to provide a small trailhead with public parking accessible from Smith Level Rd.

The three areas where there are trail options are the west end between Rosewalk and a trailhead or loop through the University Lake property, a Morgan Creek stream crossing between the Weatherhill Point and Berryhill communities, and the Smith Level crossing or connection between the Morgan Creek trail and the east side of Smith Level Road. In addition, the proposed Town of Chapel Hill Morgan Creek trail is also currently planned for the north side of the creek and will terminate on the east side of Smith Level Road.

The following three pages describe the options as presented at the Public Meeting.



UNIVERSITY LAKE / WESTERN TRAILHEAD OPTIONS



In looking at the options at the west end of the trail corridor the intent is to provide parking in a trailhead lot and hopefully to also provide a loop at the end of the trail. This is currently the end of the planned trail system.

Trail Route A - blue

This route allows trail users to get from the existing Rose Walk trail up to the UNC park and ride lot on Berryhill Rd.

Trail Route B – orange

This route provides a loop from the existing Rose Walk trail up to the UNC park and ride lot, south down the University Lake access road and through the woods back to the trail. This route would peel away from the recreation area just before the gate and would therefore require no coordination with OWASA regarding hours of operation and access through the lockable gates.

Trail Route C - pink

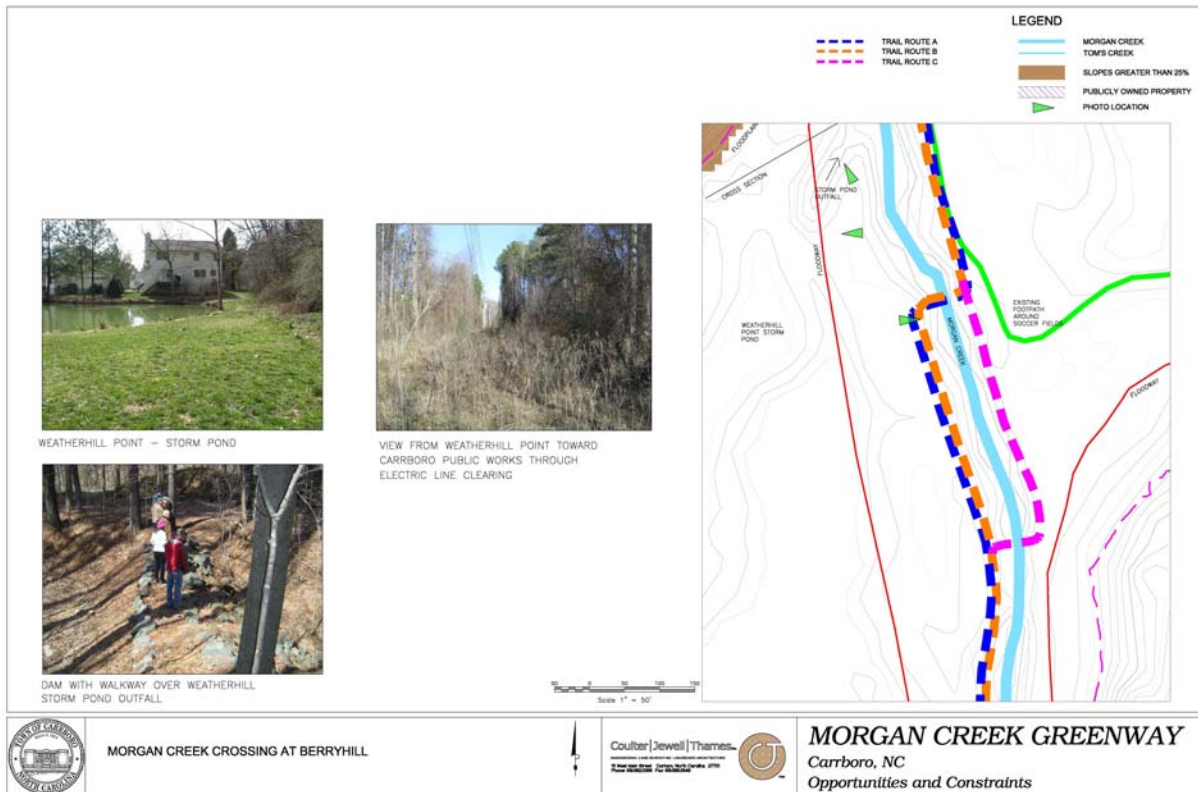
This route provides a loop from the existing Rose Walk trail up to the UNC park and ride lot, south down the University Lake access road, alongside the lake recreation facilities and loops back to the Rose Walk property via the Owens Blood Lab parking lot and the OWASA easement, a route that is already cleared. This route would be partially inside the OWASA fenced area.

FEEDBACK

Meeting attendees were all interested in access to the University Lake property. There was one negative response in regards to the odor and noise from the Owens Blood Lab facility.



WEATHERHILL POINT / BERRYHILL CROSSING



Trail Route A – blue / Trail Route B - orange

This route has the trail crossing Morgan Creek north of the homes in Berryhill. Trail users would have easy access to the Weatherhill Point stormwater pond which is on private property but may be perceived as part of the trail recreation facility.

Trail Route C - pink

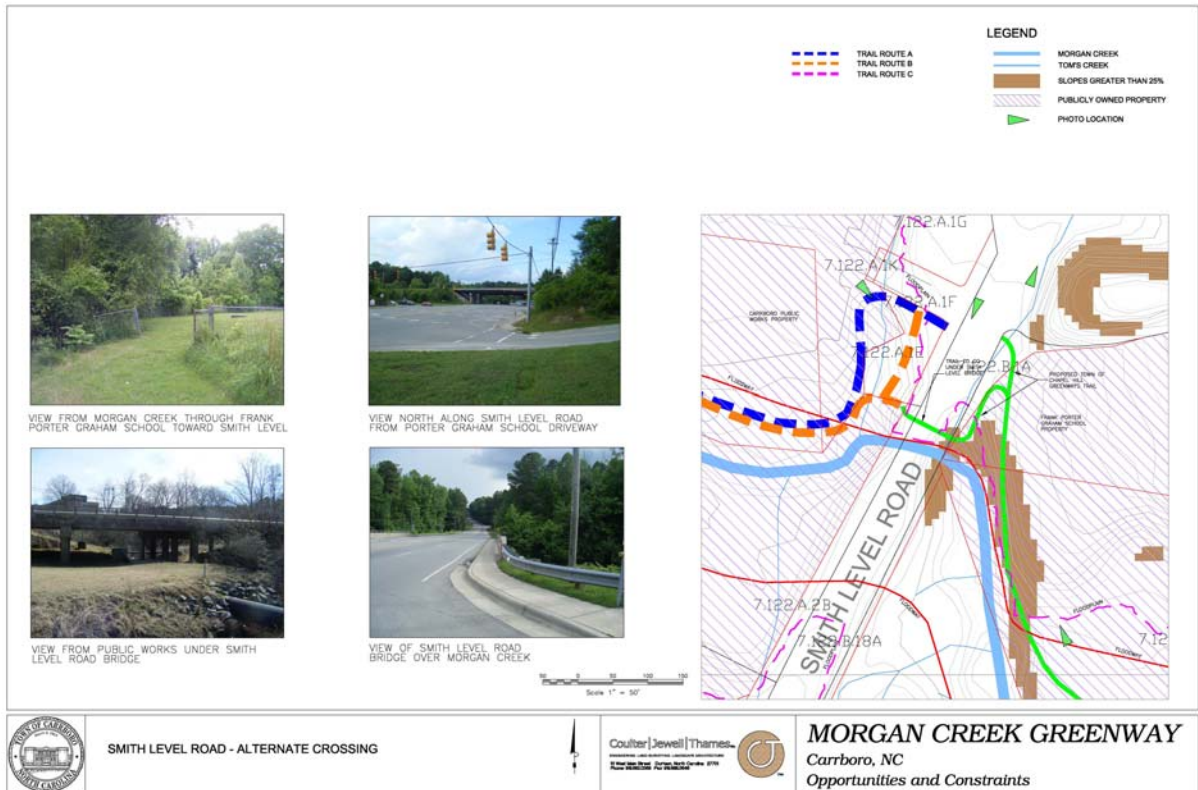
This route crosses Morgan Creek at a point in the creek with stable slopes and a narrow streambed. And the land adjacent to the creek is owned by the Town of Carrboro. The existing residents backing onto this portion of the creek do use the land between their properties and the creek edge, and in field visits the proximity of a creek crossing here to the residential properties may feel like an intrusion of privacy.

FEEDBACK

Berryhill residents are concerned that trail users will migrate onto the footpaths on Town owned property that lead to the private recreation facilities on the Berryhill property.



SMITH LEVEL ROAD CROSSING



Trail Route A – blue

This route has the trail meeting Smith Level Road at the north end of the existing bridge. There is already a crosswalk at this point and would allow users to cross Smith Level at the existing crosswalk. There is an existing sidewalk on the east side of Smith Level in front of Frank Porter Graham School.

Trail Route B - orange

This route provides a connection to the Smith Level Road sidewalk and crosswalk to Frank Porter Graham School. It also includes a spur that would allow access underneath the Smith Level Rd bridge and would connect to the designed but as yet unbuilt Chapel Hill portion of the Morgan Creek Trail. The connector under Smith Level Road would require a bridge to cross a small drainage channel draining into Morgan Creek.

FEEDBACK

Nearby residents are eager for some safe accessibility to the elementary school. They would like sidewalk connections from the Berryhill neighborhood to the school property. This issue was raised multiple times even though no such option was shown on the plans.



SUMMARY OF TRAIL OPTION COMMENTS

These are the comments exactly as written by meeting attendees.

OVERALL TRAIL

- I look forward to the Morgan Creek trail in Carrboro connecting to the Chapel Hill Greenway along the Morgan.

UNIVERSITY LAKE / WESTERN TRAILHEAD OPTIONS

- Route C is by far the most suitable for biking because of the topography. If the gates could be coordinated for the University Lake entrance and the entrance along the creek it would give people some idea if the lake was open ie: picnic tables, canoes, etc.
- The Owens Blood Lab precludes building the segment along the creek to University Lake. The odor from the lab is horrific and it is surrounded by chain-linked fence which limits space for greenway.

WEATHERHILL POINT / BERRYHILL CROSSING

- Please choose the northern-most crossing to separate trail from Berryhill properties.
- Please include evergreens/landscape barriers and signage to separate greenway users from Berryhill soccer field and playground – “private property”, etc.
- Need treatments to separate trail from Berryhill neighborhood’s playground and soccer field.

SMITH LEVEL ROAD CROSSING

- Crossing under the bridge would be the safest. This would require a bridge over the stream that runs into Morgan Creek.
- Safest route would be under Smith Level Rd. Access to FPG from the east side of Smith Level Road.
- It is very important to connect the Berryhill neighborhood to the trail and FPG School safely by adding a short stretch of sidewalk between Willow Oak Lane and the Smith Level Rd / Morgan Creek bridge – on the west side of Smith Level Rd. Residents and our children are at risk everyday due to the merging lanes (2 to 1) and speeding traffic as they head south on Smith Level Road from the FPG traffic light. PLEASE find a way to add this sidewalk extension into the greenway project – especially now that the widening of Smith Level Road project has been shelved or indefinitely postponed.
- Need sidewalk along Smith Level Rd from Willow Oak Lane to Morgan Creek bridge.



SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESULTS

There were only 7 surveys completed at the public meeting and there have been no additional surveys submitted since June 15.

Answers are preceded by the number of responses corresponding to each answer.

1. How important to you is the goal of creating more trails in Carrboro? (select one)

- 7 very important
- 0 somewhat important
- 0 not important

2. How often do you use trails in Carrboro? (select one)

- 0 never
- 0 few times per year
- 3 few times per month
- 4 few times per week

3. Do you or have you used the Rose Walk trail?

- 4 yes
- 3 no

4. What are the most significant factors that present obstacles for your ability to use trails in Carrboro? Rank top 3.

Most significant:

- 6 Lack of connectivity / nearby destinations
- 1 Want longer trails

Second most significant

- 3 Accessibility concerns
- 2 Located on private property
- 1 Unsafe street crossings

Third most significant

- 2 Unsafe street crossings
- 1 Personal safety concerns
- 1 Lack of time

5. Would you use trails more often if you could easily bike to, walk to, or park at the trailhead?

- 6 yes
- 0 no
- 1 I can already access trails



6. For what purposes would you use the Morgan Creek trail in the future? (Rank top 3)

First Choice	Second Choice	Third Choice	
5	1	0	Fitness or recreation 6- walking/jogging 6-biking 1-rollerblading
0	2	1	Getting to and from destination in Carrboro/Chapel Hill
0	1	2	Socializing
0	0	1	Walking the dog
0	1	1	Environmental education
1	0	0	Other what? Nature photography

7. What modes of activity would you use on the Morgan Creek trail? Select all that apply.

- 6 Bicycling
- 7 Walking
- 5 Running/Jogging
- 0 Using a stroller
- 0 Using a wheelchair
- 1 Roller blading
- 0 Other Please specify: _____

8. What destinations would you most like to get to by trail? (Rank top 3)

First Choice	Second Choice	Third Choice	Yes	
0	0	1	0	Anderson Park
1	0	0	2	Other Carrboro parks
1	0	1	1	Frank Porter Graham school
1	0	0	1	Carrboro High School
0	0	0	0	other Carrboro/Chapel Hill schools
1	1	1	1	Downtown Carrboro
0	0	0	0	UNC
0	0	0	0	Downtown Chapel Hill
0	3	0	2	University Lake
0	0	0	0	Home
0	0	0	1	Chapel Hill tennis Club

9. How would you rate the current environmental conditions along the Morgan Creek corridor?

- 0 good
- 3 fair
- 1 poor
- 2 do not know



10. What is your interest in improving environmental conditions along Morgan Creek (ex. Water quality, wildlife habitat, native plants)?

- 5 very important
- 1 somewhat important
- 0 not important

11. Do you have any other comments?
none

12. How did you hear about this project? Select all that apply.

- 1 Newspaper ad
- 0 Web blog / forum
- 0 Public television / radio
- 2 Word of mouth
- 1 Town website
- 1 Listserve announcement
- 0 Flyer
- 1 Berryhill Home Owners Association
- 2 Greenways Commission
- 1 Planning Department

13. What is your zipcode?

- 4 27510
- 3 27516

14. Where do you live?

- 6 Carrboro
- 0 Downtown Carrboro
- 0 Chapel Hill
- 1 Orange County
- 0 Hillsborough
- 0 Other (please specify) _____



CONCLUSION

All respondents and people attending the public meeting want more trails in Carrboro and are regular trail users. There were no attendees who spoke against the trail system or who were against a trail in the Morgan Creek corridor.

Public perception of problems with current trails, and the three most cited aspects of the current trail system that need to be remedied are:

- Lack of connectivity with nearby destinations and other trails
- Accessibility concerns
- Unsafe street crossings.

Main uses of the trail would be walking, jogging, biking and rollerblading, reinforcing the need for some hard surface paving treatment.

The most desired destinations for trail users are University Lake, downtown Carrboro, and Frank Porter Graham School.

The results of the limited responses to the survey and comments made by the meeting attendees reinforce the need for some kind of trail connection to the University lake property and to Frank Porter Graham School, and for a safe way to cross Smith Level Road.

