

Good evening. I am Jennifer Hastings and I want to give the council my perspective of the Greene Tract as a mom and as a resident. I have two young boys who love to be outdoors. We venture out to the Greene Tract 1 or 2 times a week. Our hikes on the Greene Tract offer my kids a sense of adventure of being in the woods. I particularly love our time on Greene Tract because it is technology-free and provides them with a hands-on, real encounters with nature. Occasionally we see deer, and we always hear the birds who make the Greene Tract their home. What a gem this forest is, not just for my family, but people in my neighborhood, and friends in the greater community of Chapel Hill.

The Greene Tract is not just a piece of land, it is a forest that has become a public park to many. While it is hard to access due to lack of parking, people manage. Bikers, runners, hikers; individuals, families; old, young – no matter, this a park in our community that people use now. The majority of maps that are presented at meetings by the town show trails. That's because that is what the Greene Tract is. It is a forest with trails for all to enjoy. The over 650 signors of the petition agree.

Imagine if we connected the Greene Tract Forest to other green spaces in Chapel Hill and surrounding areas. The people in Chapel Hill and surrounding areas could enjoy a park system like few others—comparable to Boston's Emerald Necklace, which is a 1,100-acre chain of nine parks that are all connected. The Greene Tract is in a prime geographic location to allow for future greenways, trails, and other connections between Homestead park and pool, the Johnson Mill Nature Preserve, Orange County's future Twin Creeks park, Brumley Forest, and the Rogers Rd community. Eventually connections could be made to central Durham, Wilson Park, central Chapel Hill, Johnson Mill Nature Preserve, Brumley Forest, and more.

I am asking the Town Council to plan today for tomorrow. A town with the appropriate amount of green space is a town people want to live in and raise their kids in. With 80% preservation of the Greene Tract, we will ensure the town will be livable, green town for our children and grandchildren. We cannot just think about today.