

LET'S FUND AND BUILD THE TINY MISSING LINK TO GAIN WEST TO EAST CONNECTIVITY AROUND MERRITT'S PASTURE

Connecting KMMC Neighborhood to Southern Community Park and Southern Village through Merritt's Pasture and Beyond Requires JUST A Short 560 Foot Segment of Bike/Pedestrian Trail

Overview

Morgan Creek and US Highway 15-501-54 (Fordham Boulevard) effectively isolate the Kings Mill-Morgan Creek neighborhood (KMMC), comprising 175 homes on all four sides. **A missing link in the planned trail prevents connectivity in all directions other than by automobile.** KMMC homeownership has changed in the past ten years, and now most residents have children, and connectivity is more critical than ever. It is frustrating and surprising that KMMC neighbors have never had access to the abiding Merritt's Pasture.

Furthermore, those riding or walking from Southern Village or the parking lot on Highway 54 can not go further East than Merritt's Pasture.

There are three options to gain the badly needed East of Merritt's Pasture and West of Merritt's Pasture connectivity.

Option 1: Implement the original plan as designed from Oteys Road to Morgan Creek Greenway. See **Figure 1.**

Option 2: Implement the plan from Morgan Creek Road to Morgan Creek Greenway. See **Figure 2.**

Option 3: Build 560' of the 10'-wide trail from Morgan Creek Road to Winter Drive. See **Figure 3.**

Issues

The current "missing trail segment" issues facing 175 KMMC residents prevent:

- School-age children from riding their bikes to four different schools: Culbreth Middle School, Frank Porter Graham, Carrboro High School, and Scroggs Elementary School
- Bicycle or pedestrian travel to the Morgan Creek and Fan Branch Trail leading to Southern Village and the Southern Community Park. Kids and adults want to ride to the basketball courts, in-line hockey rink, soccer fields, UNC Disc Golf Course, and dog park.
- Neighbors from enjoying the spectacular Morgan Creek and Fan Branch trails
- Future bike and pedestrian connectivity to Carrboro and Chapel Hill

Another equally significant loss is:

- Southern Village residents and other Morgan Creek and Fan Branch trail users do not have access to the NC Botanical Garden and Meadowmont trails and other points east of the Pasture.

Note that this connectivity is an essential part of completing the Southern Circuit. See **Figures 6 and 7**.

There is no alternative to car transportation because **bus service is not available on Fordham between Columbia and Manning**. Isolation contributes to traffic delays.

Currently, the only rule-abiding way to get to the Pasture and beyond is to ride or walk along an exceedingly dangerous section of 15-501 against the traffic. Traffic is partly coming from a merge lane where drivers frequently compete for a lane at high speed. See **Figure 5**. Watch a video here.

<https://vimeo.com/669874469>

Option #1: Oteys Road to Morgan Creek Greenway

In 2015, the town of Chapel Hill created the Morgan Creek Greenway Plan to make a 10'-wide connection from Oteys Road to Merritt Pasture. This plan provides access from a proposed bridge spanning 15-501-54 at Oteys Road to Merritt's Pasture. See **Figure 1**.

Option #2: Morgan Creek Road to Morgan Creek Greenway

Is this plan already approved and is funding the only remaining issue? What is the likely time-frame for start and completion? See **Figure 2**.

Option #3: Morgan Creek Road to Winter Drive

Implement just 560 feet of the plan to make a 10-foot wide path from Morgan Creek Road to Winter Drive—not all the way from Oteys Drive to Winter Drive. See **Figure 3**. This distance is just the length of two neighboring residential properties.

This option includes about 560 feet of the complete plan (Option 1), or about 15% of the whole link distance shown in the Stewart plans. Based on the 2019 estimate of \$300,000, this small section might cost \$45,000 in 2019 dollars. [confirm values]

This approach is decidedly a cost-saving solution—not the preferred option! It would still require getting NCDOT approval and some grading on property owned by the town in Merritt's Pasture leading on to the Pasture and around the Pasture.

Questions

1. Which option will the town fund and implement? Which option will get approval and funding the fastest?

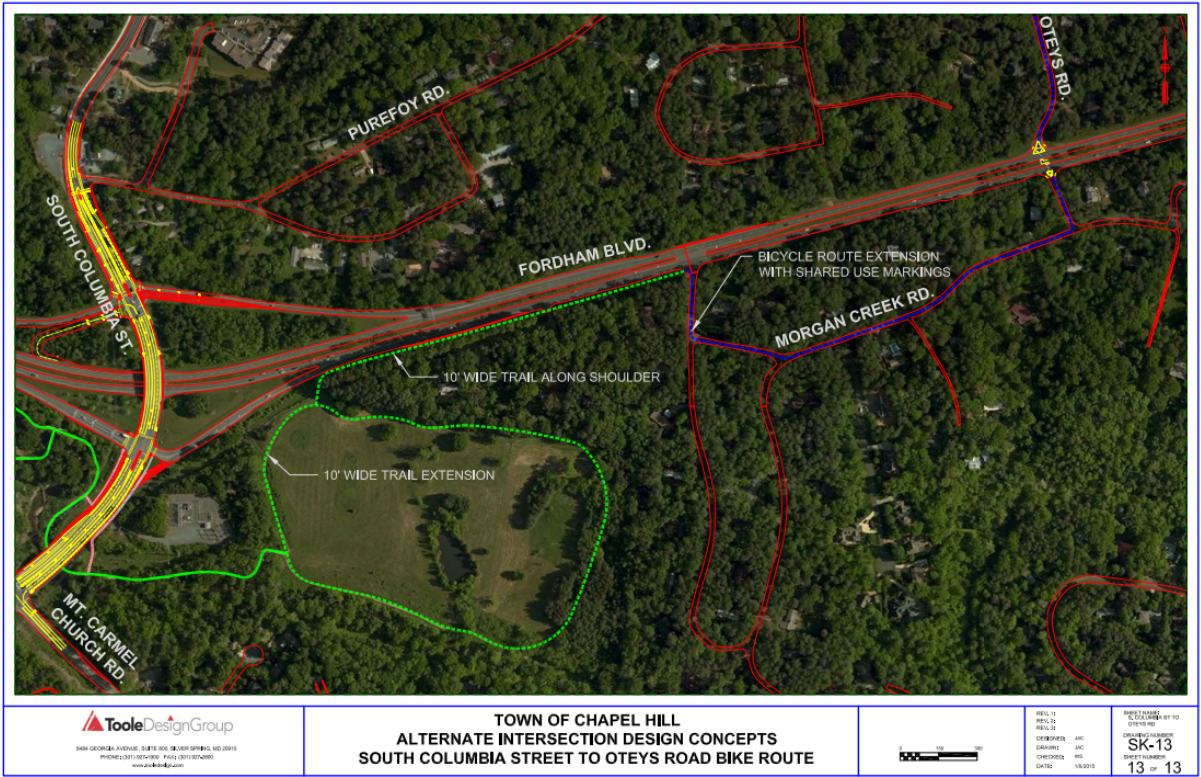


Figure 2.

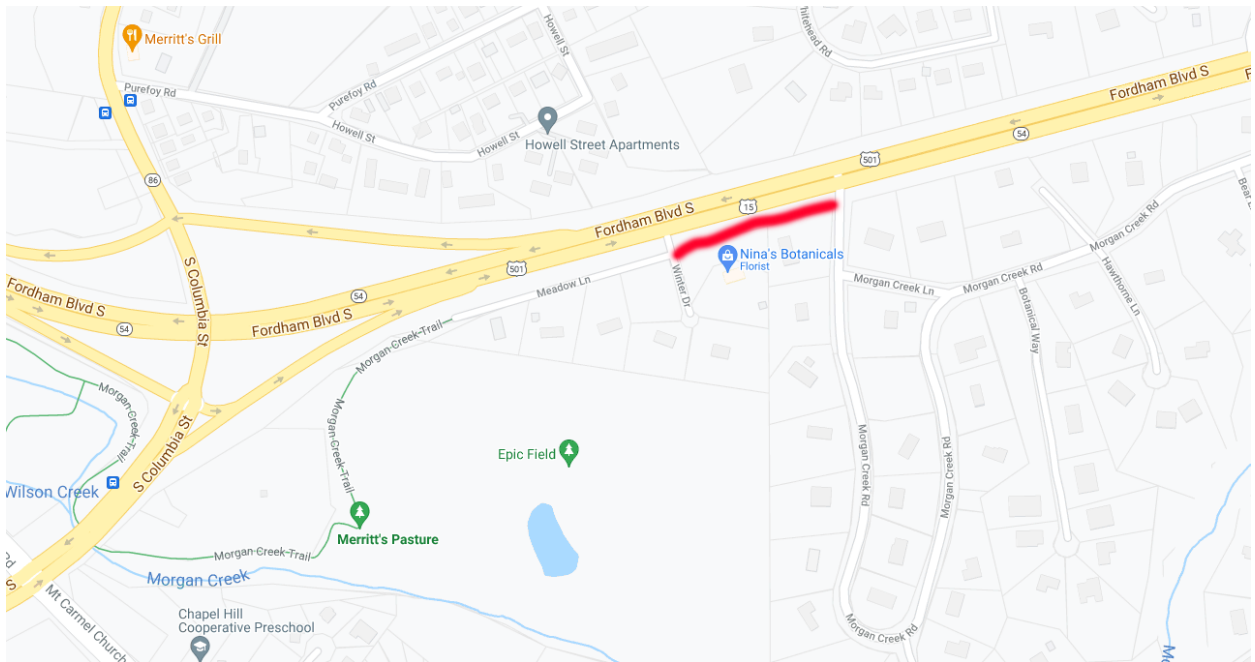


Figure 3.

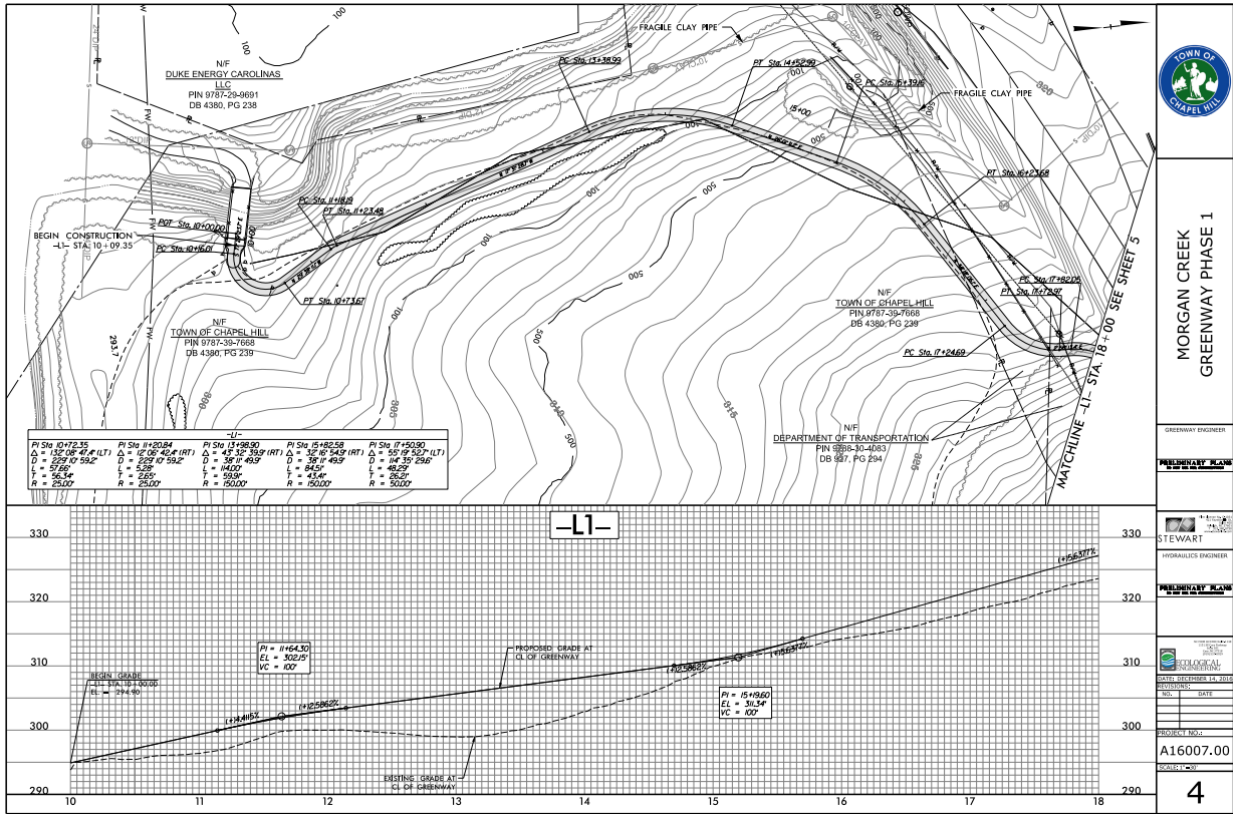


Figure 4.



Figure 5.

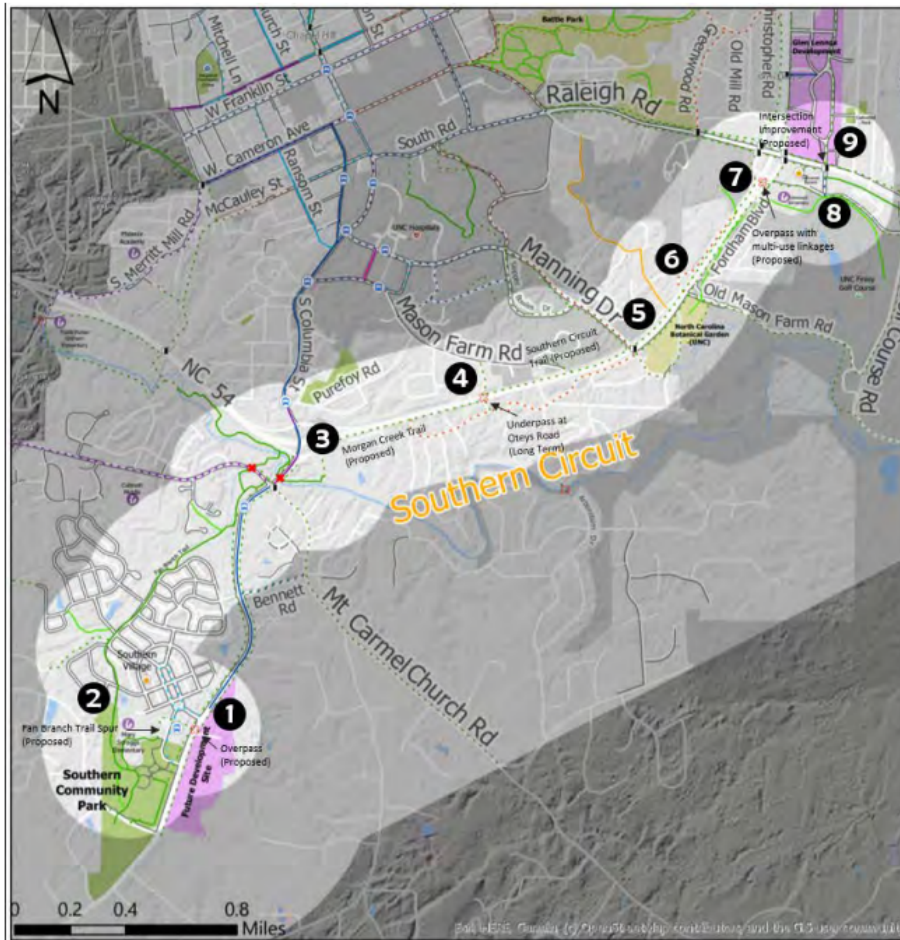
Southern Circuit



The Southern Circuit corridor begins at the Obey Creek Development on US 15-501 and terminates in the east at Hamilton Road. It links two proposed BRT stations with the Fan Branch Greenway and takes advantage of the lower elevations around Morgan Creek to pass under bridges and knit together key nodes and neighborhoods in the southern portion of Chapel Hill. In the short term, trail segments along US 15-501 with at-grade trail crossings are utilized to connect the Morgan Creek Trail to NC 54 along Raleigh Rd. In many cases the proposed multi-use paths connect with the existing trail system along NC 54, utilizing a future bike/ped bridge across US 15-501. Another bike/ped bridge will be built across US 15-501 with the Obey Creek Development to link to the Southern Community Park and the future BRT station at Southern Village Park and Ride.

| | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| <p>Improvement Type</p> <p>1 Overpass of US 15-501 - Multi-use connection between Obey Creek Development and Southern Village (Obey Creek Development Agreement)</p> | <p>0.03 mile</p> | <p>Improvement Type</p> <p>5 Southern Circuit Trail - Trail section along north side of US 15-501 from Oteys Rd to Christopher Rd</p> | <p>0.85 mile</p> |
| <p>2 Fan Branch Trail and Spur - Fan Branch Trail with spur to connect with BRT station area (89% Complete)</p> | <p>2.07 miles</p> | <p>6 On-Street Greenway Connector - Bicycle markings and wayfinding on Christopher Rd</p> | <p>0.50 mile</p> |
| <p>3 Morgan Creek Trail and Extension - Trail from Fan Branch to Merritt's Pasture, and planned trail extension between Merritt's Pasture and Oteys Rd (31% Complete)</p> | <p>1.02 miles</p> | <p>7 Trail Overpass and links - Trail overpass of US 15-501 with connections to Raleigh Rd, Christopher Rd, and Hamilton Rd</p> | <p>0.42 mile</p> |
| <p>4 US15-501 Underpass - Multi-use underpass at Oteys Rd</p> | <p>-</p> | <p>8 Bicycle Lanes - Hamilton Rd from Prestwick Rd to NC 54</p> | <p>0.10 mile</p> |
| <p></p> | <p>-</p> | <p>9 Crossing Improvements at NC 54 and Hamilton Rd connecting Glenwood Square to Glen Lennox Development Site</p> | <p>-</p> |
| <p>Total Length 44% Complete</p> | | | <p>4.99 miles</p> |

Figure 6.



| | EXISTING | PROPOSED |
|------------|------------------------------|----------|
| BICYCLE | Bike Lane | Proposed |
| | Buffered/Protected Bike Lane | Proposed |
| | Sharrows | Proposed |
| | Signed Bike Route | Proposed |
| | On-Street Greenway Connector | Proposed |
| MULTI-USE | Cycle Track | Proposed |
| | Bike Climbing Lane | Proposed |
| | Multi-Use Path/Greenway | Proposed |
| PEDESTRIAN | Unpaved Greenway | Proposed |
| | ADA Trail | Proposed |
| | Sidewalk | Proposed |

Priority Bicycle/Pedestrian Corridors
TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL

Mobility Plan
2020 Complete Streets Update

Figure 7.

Presented to Transportation and Connectivity Advisory Board Meeting (Virtual Meeting) on 01/25/2022 7:00 PM - 9:30 PM by Gregory Georges and Patrick Mortell.