



NEWS RELEASE

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WAKE COMMISSIONERS APPROVE INTERLOCAL AGREEMENTS FOR ADDITIONS TO GREENWAY SYSTEM

During its regular meeting tonight, the Wake County Board of Commissioners approved interlocal agreements with the Towns of Wake Forest and Apex, to purchase additional land to add to the County's Greenway infrastructure.

The board appropriated \$941,000 of Open Space General Obligation Bonds for the Southern segment of the Smith Creek Greenway in Wake Forest. Additionally, the board appropriated \$300,000 for the acquisition of Beaver Creek and Middle Creek Greenways in Apex.

Smith Creek Greenway, Wake Forest

The southern segment of this greenway project will add 2.9 miles of a paved trail along Smith Creek, filling a gap between two segments of existing Town greenway trail and connecting the Town, and its neighbor Rolesville, to the City of Raleigh's Neuse River Trail. The total project cost is projected at \$2,785,035.

Beaver Creek Greenway, Apex

This project will add approximately 0.8 miles of a paved trail connecting the town's Kelly Road Park to the recently opened Apex Nature Park. The connector will promote health, wellness and provide residents and opportunity to experience both parks without the use of an automobile.

This is the only remaining undeveloped section of the Beaver Creek Greenway connection Downtown Apex to the Apex Nature Park and Seymour Athletic Fields. The completion of this section will allow town officials to begin plans for the future connection of the Apex Nature Park and Seymour Athletic Fields to the American Tobacco Trail (ATT), providing Apex's first connection to the ATT. The total project cost is \$400,000.

Middle Creek Greenway, Apex

The Middle Creek Greenway project will add about a half-mile, paved trail in southern Apex and connect the Town's greenway system to Holly Springs' greenway. While there are plans to make a north/south pedestrian connection, which currently provides limited access to trails because of US 1 Highway bisecting the Town, this project provides an opportunity to provide regional connectivity from southern Apex to existing trails in Holly Springs. The total project cost is \$400,000.

On the eight-year cycle, a significant difference develops, particularly in the later years, between market values and assessed values. A four-year reappraisal cycle would narrow the gap between market values and assessed values, and allow property values to more accurately reflect the current market values.

State law requires counties to conduct a general reappraisal of real property at least once every eight years. Thirty-nine of North Carolina's 100 counties currently conduct a four-year reappraisal cycle. Wake County last conducted a general reappraisal for 2016.

Unless there are any outstanding issues, the board is expected to take action on this item at the March 21 meeting. If the resolution is adopted, the county's next reappraisal would occur in 2020.

Wake County Greenway System

Wake County's Division of Parks, Recreation & Open Space (PROS) began its open space acquisition program in 2000 to protect and conserve County land and water for current residents and future generations. The County's 2006 Consolidated Open Space Plan outlines specific benefits of open space, including:

- Preservation of natural resources and habitat;
- Protection of forest and farm land;
- Provision of outdoor recreation;
- Preservation of historical and cultural properties;
- Protection of scenic landscapes;
- Protection of riparian corridors and water quality.

Wake County features almost 300 miles of existing greenway trails, including over 100 miles in the City of Raleigh and over 70 miles in the Town of Cary alone. The East Coast Greenway spine traverses the Triangle region, coming through Durham as the American Tobacco Trail, and extending through Cary and Raleigh, to the Neuse River Greenway. Only a couple short sections are remaining to complete the East Coast Greenway through this region. At 33 miles, the Neuse River Greenway is the longest continuous trail in the state of North Carolina, connecting Wake County to Johnston County. Dozens of miles of trail can also be found in Umstead State Park and Falls Lake.

Wake County Vision

In anticipating continued population growth and increased use of greenways and trails in the Triangle area, Wake County has joined a coalition of community leaders, municipalities, private agencies and citizens to draft a plan that will create a connected and comprehensive system of greenways that enhances quality of life throughout Wake County. There is no other single type of investment that can be made on a local and regional scale that provides such a wide range of positive impacts. Greenways improve quality of life by providing opportunities for transportation, recreation, public health, economic development, and environmental stewardship. Officials hope to unveil a final draft of the plan in late Spring of this year.

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