

Summary of Public Comments from Bolin Creek Greenway Survey

The following are themes and summaries of generalized comments, as well as comments about trail alignments and additional connections, from the Bolin Creek Greenway community engagement survey, which concluded on Oct. 3, 2023. This summary reflects the general themes and responses from Carrboro residents only who took the survey.

Summary of Sense of Urgency and Preferred Alignments

Sense of Urgency

- Very Important: 828 responses (65%)
- Somewhat Important: 367 responses (29%)
- Not Important: 71 responses (6%)

The majority of respondents consider the trail development to be “Very Important,” followed by those who find it “Somewhat Important.” Only a small number regard it as “Not Important.”

Preferred Alignments

- Creekside Trail Alignment: 830 responses (66%)
- Upland Forest Alignment: 177 responses (14%)
- Bolin Connector Alignment: 115 responses (9%)
- Something else (please specify): 130 responses (10%)

The most preferred alignment is the “Creekside Trail Alignment.”

Summary of “Something Else” Responses for Trail Alignment

The “Something Else” responses reflect a range of opinions, including:

1. **Connectivity Concerns:** Some respondents feel that the Creekside alignment needs additional connectors for better reach.
2. **Erosion and Paving:** There are concerns about erosion in the Creekside Trail and a strong sentiment against paving it. The environmental impact of paving is also cited.
3. **Alignment Preferences:** Some people find it hard to decide on a specific alignment, questioning the overall goals of the trail project.

4. **Alternative Routes:** Suggestions for alternative routes like Seawell School Road and greenways along Estes and Sewell are mentioned.
5. **Environmental Impact:** Concerns about cutting down trees and damaging the riparian zone are raised, along with calls for alternative routes that are less environmentally impactful.
6. **Do Nothing:** A few responses suggest not taking any action, implying that the current state is sufficient or that the project might not be necessary.
7. **Funding and Scope:** Some comments bring up the source of funding, questioning the use of federal money for the project.

Themes of Survey Comments

1. **Paving and Maintenance Concerns**
 - Several comments question the wisdom of paving the Bolin Creek trail, especially in flood-prone areas.
2. **Preservation of Green Spaces**
 - Multiple respondents strongly support preserving green spaces and safe trails.
3. **Public Engagement and Decision-making**
 - A few comments critique the public engagement process.
4. **Environmental and Financial Assessments**
 - Some respondents are dissatisfied with the lack of comprehensive environmental and financial assessments.
5. **Environmental Impact and Project Goals**
 - Comments question the project's goals, particularly concerning water quality.
6. **Alternate Routes and Safety**
 - Several comments propose alternative routes that are perceived as safer and more environmentally friendly.

Community Engagement and Environmental Considerations for Trail Development

1. **Urgency for Development**
 - Some comments express urgency for the development of the greenway. One comment mentions that Chapel Hill is extending its greenway but it stops at Carrboro, and calls for action to give kids and people in wheelchairs a place to walk.

2. Biased Survey Concerns

- One respondent believes the survey appears to be biased towards the Creekside Alignment, stating that the survey lists limitations for other options but not for the Creekside Alignment.

3. Flooding and Environmental Issues

- Several comments question the environmental feasibility of the project, asking if there are ways to address potential flooding along the trail.

4. Public Opinion and Core Values

- One respondent, a member of the Carrboro Connects Task Force, has found public response to be overwhelmingly positive and enthusiastic when canvassing. The comment links the greenway to Carrboro's core values of equity, accessibility, and climate sustainability.

5. Longstanding Plans

- Another comment notes that the Creekside Alignment has been the best plan for almost 15 years, arguing that it makes sense for environmental reasons, improves access for diverse populations, and minimizes the need to remove greenery.

6. Safety Concerns

- Safety is mentioned as a priority, with a call for a safe walking path on the east side of Estes Drive to connect to the Creekside alignment. The comment indicates that some family members might not feel safe with the current status.

Infrastructure, Environmental Impact, and Community Priorities

1. Parking and Traffic Concerns

- Several comments highlight concerns about parking and traffic around trail access points. One respondent specifically mentions that parking in neighborhoods adjacent to the creek is not a viable option.

2. Quality of Street Trails

- A comment points out that trails along streets tend to be poorly marked and difficult to follow, suggesting room for improvement in trail design.

3. Opposition to Paved or Concrete Trails

- Multiple comments express opposition to a paved or concrete transportation route along Bolin Creek. They emphasize the need to protect the forest and provide a natural habitat for a diverse ecosystem.

4. Transit and Connectivity

- Some respondents call for more trails and better transit connectivity. One comment indicates that trails that connect to destinations are essential for those who rely on biking or walking for commuting.

5. Community Priorities

- One comment questions the allocation of resources to trail development in light of other community issues like homelessness and food insecurity.

6. Alternative Alignments

- A few comments suggest that the Carrboro town council should consider alternative alignments for the trails, such as a protected off-road side path along Seawell School Road.

7. Natural Trails for Walkers

- Another comment expresses a desire for certain trails, like the Bolin Creek Trail, to remain natural for walkers, arguing that paving them for cyclists would alter the experience of being in nature.