Enka Heritage Trail Update

Presented by

Allison Dains, Parks & Recreation Director

8.4.26

Enka Heritage Trail Update

•The Enka Heritage Trail (EHT) is part of the Enka Recreation Destination project which has been in progress since 2019.

•To date, the Parks & Recreation Department has conducted feasibility studies and completed a 25% design of the EHT.

•The project was paused in 2024 because the County was unable to secure agreement from the landowner regarding the easements necessary for the Enka Heritage Trail (EHT).

•As a result, staff is looking into the discontinuation of this trail segment and redirecting efforts toward connectivity improvements within the Buncombe County Sports Park and to neighboring Sand Hill School.

Project Goals

- The **Enka Heritage Trail** is a part of the **Enka Recreation Destination** whose goal is to establish a dynamic, recreation, sports, and greenway destination.

- Key Elements of the Enka Recreation Destination include:
  - Turfed and lighted sports fields
  - Improved facilities and amenities (e.g., accessible playground, dog park, shelter, and disc golf course)
  - Extended greenway network and connectivity to neighboring locations



Stakeholder Engagement

- **Parks & Recreation Advisory Board**
  - Report out at bi-monthly meetings
  - Provide presentations on Greenways bi-annually
- **Connect Enka And Connect Buncombe**
  - Report out to committees and at meetings typically on a quarterly basis
  - Communications with Board Presidents to inform of accomplishments and constraints
  - Attend Annual meetings
- **Enka Youth Sports Organization (EYSO)**
  - Set up meetings to discuss alignment on a regular basis
  - Email communications

EHT Timeline

- **2014 –** Buncombe County and Enka Youth Sports Organization (EYSO) agree to collaborate on the Enka Recreation Destination which includes the BCSP, EHT, and Bob Lewis Ballfields
- **March 2019 –** Buncombe County and EYSO entered into an agreement for the Enka Heritage Trail
  - County made $1.3 million available to EYSO for the purchase of lighting at the Bob Lewis Ballfield
  - County commits to pay for field lighting for at least 5 years (lighting is approximately $11,000/year)
  - EYSO agreed to convey easements of identified parcels for the completion of the greenway
- **July 2023 –** Meeting with EYSO to update progress on EHT and discuss alignment
- **January 2024 –** Meeting with EYSO to discuss termini change due to feasibility issues and confirm proposed alignment as we work toward 25% design
- **April 2024 –** Supplemental Agreement (2)to change the termini
- **July 2024 –** EYSO confirms they will not move forward with property transfer until funds secured to pave the parking lots at Bob Lewis Sports Park
  - EYSO seeks funding through the TDA

EHT Timeline (continued)

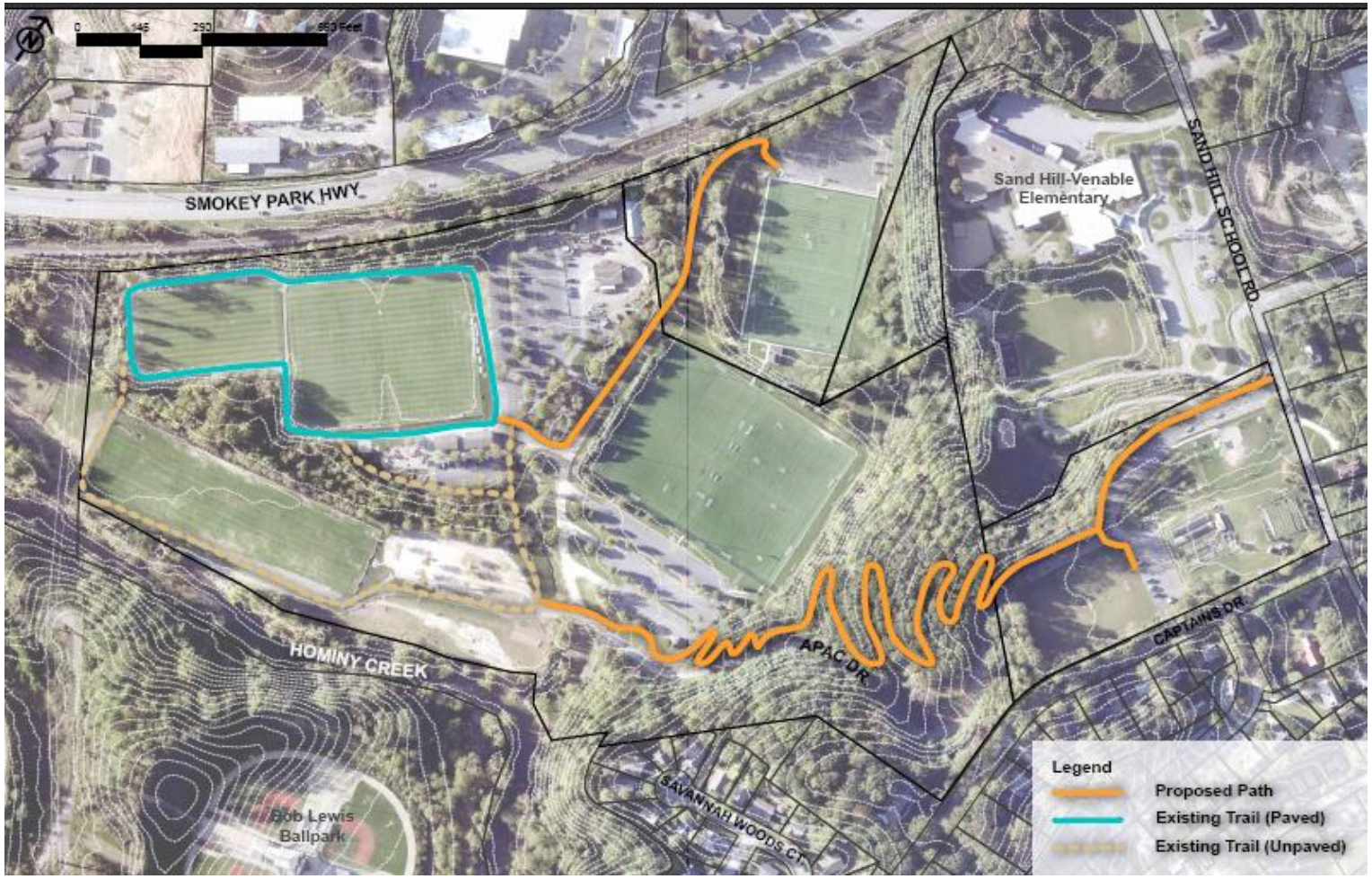
- **October 2024 to January 2025 -** NCDOT places non-emergency Division 13 projects put on hold due to Helene.
- **Spring/Summer 2025**
  - Projects approved to continue, consultants evaluate damage and additional work required
  - Estimate generated, but unable to be submitted to NCDOT due to continued owner negotiations on alignment.
- **October 2025 –** EYSO receives TDA funding for improvements and paving project at Bob Lewis Ballfields
  - County continues to engage for easement
- **November 2025 –** EYSO requests compensation for property where EHT is aligned
- **December 2025 -** Ongoing
  - EYSO specifies compensation for 51 acres of property where the EHT alignment is proposed before moving forward with project.
  - An Appraisal Report submitted to the County to support the request
- **August 2024 -** 25% design plans completed; landowner would not agree to alignment, halting submission of 25% design to the NCDOT for approval.

Current Status

- **Design**: 25% Complete
  - Under contract with JMT since 2019
- **ROW**: no landowner agreement due to request for compensation
- **Compensation Requested for 51 acres**
  - Landowner appraisal: $1.6 million
  - Internal valuation: $635,000
  - Considerations
    - Flood Plain
    - Brownfield
    - Size, Shape and Accessibility of properties
- **Project Funding**
  - NCDOT funding is released on reimbursable basis and has not been reallocated to other projects
  - NCDOT funding that has been spent, was submitted for approval and reimbursed at the 80% rate
- **Staff pursuing alternatives for connectivity**



Proposed Connectivity



- Creates connectivity throughout the sports park and neighboring Sand Hill School
- Enhances circulation
- Contributes to a family friendly environment focused on safety and diverse activities and opportunities for recreation

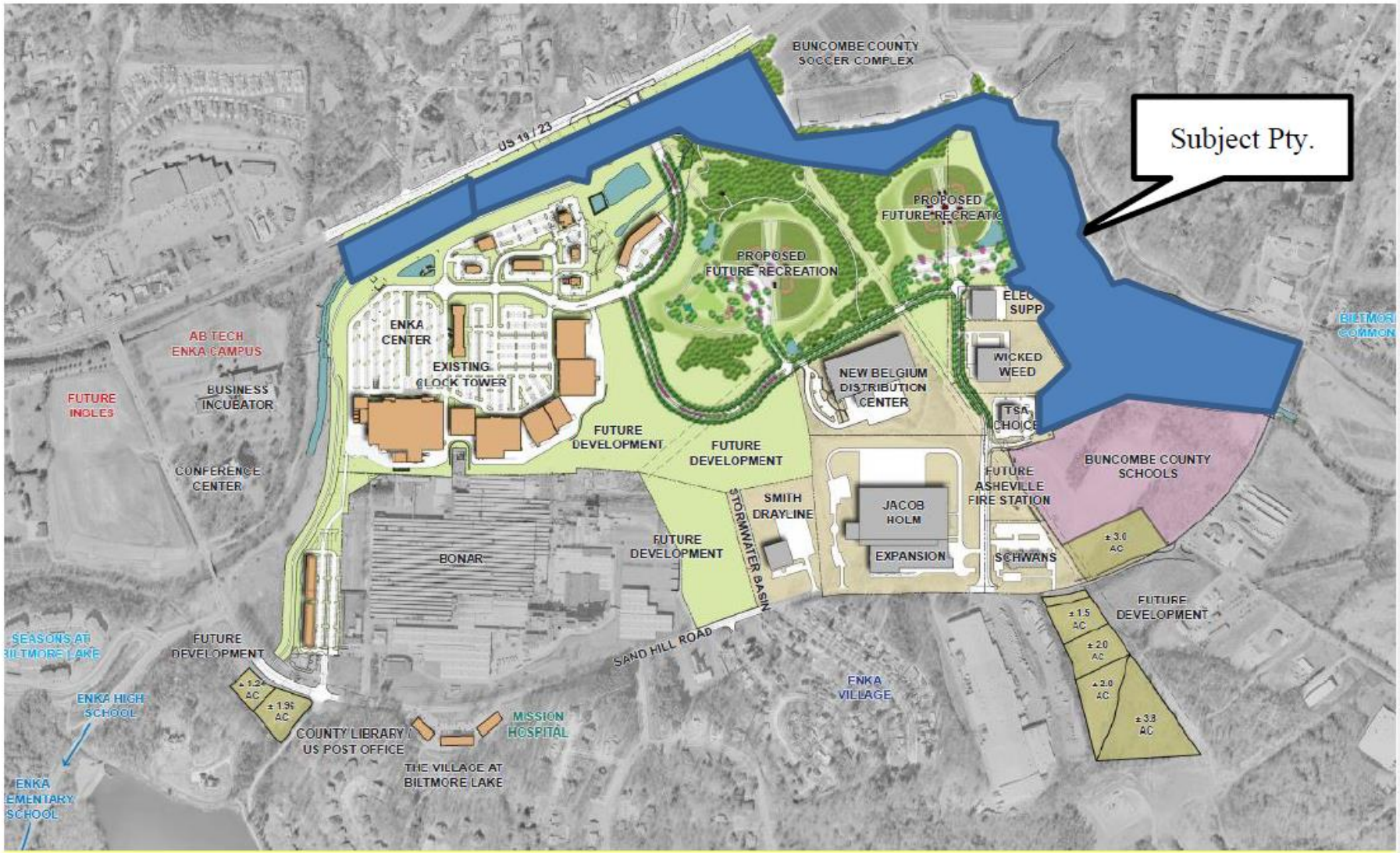
Next Steps

- Commissioner input on proposed connectivity plan
- NCDOT and County coordinate to address any project agreements or closeout requirements
- County coordinates with consultant to identify any contract provisions or obligations that may exist to close out the contract
- Collaboration with Buncombe County Schools to determine feasibility of connecting to Sand Hill School
- Improve circulation and connectivity at the Buncombe County Sports Park

Discussion

Appendix

Subject Consist of Tax Parcels #9617-44-7442-00000 & 9617-84-0644-00000



Provided by Fletcher Partners, Inc. (51.66 ac.)