



# MEDIA RELEASE

OFFICE OF COUNTY MAYOR TIM BURCHETT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Halls park-to-school greenway project in jeopardy**

*Knoxville, Tenn.* — A long-awaited greenway project in the Halls community is being slowed by state bureaucracy and a complaint by the Tennessee Clean Water Network.

Knox County was prepared to take ownership of property currently owned by TTC Halls, LLC in order to construct a portion of the Halls Park-to-School Link greenway and to protect an important wetland area. Unfortunately, wetland mitigation work on the property required by TDEC has not been completed and TCWN has filed a letter of noncompliance with the TDEC Division of Water Resources. That move effectively stops the greenway project, just as an important state grant deadline looms on Sept. 30.

“If Knox County accepts the property from TTC Halls, we will also have to accept responsibility for the wetland mitigation project and its related problems, costs and required monitoring over the next several years,” said Knox County Parks and Recreation Director Doug Bataille. “While we hate to not move this project forward, we also feel that it would not be in the best interests of the taxpayers to assume the responsibility for the mitigation project and any potential problems that may arise from it.”

The cost to fix the issues outlined in the TCWN letter is estimated to range from \$20,000 to \$75,000, but ultimately the final price tag cannot be known at this time.

Although the portion of the greenway that would cross over the TTC Halls property is just over 14 percent of the entire planned greenway, by state regulation no portion of the Halls Park-to-School link can move forward until the issue between TCWN, TDEC and TTC Halls is resolved.

“This greenway is an important and worthwhile project, and it’s unfortunate that the 85 percent of the greenway that isn’t mired in bureaucratic red tape can’t move forward because of these issues,” said Knox County Mayor Tim Burchett. “I hope this problem can be resolved, and Knox County can continue to move forward with the planned greenway in a timely manner. In the meantime, I’ve asked Knox County Parks and Recreation to focus on completing Clayton Park, which will be a great addition to our parks system and should be open by the end of the year.”

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