

# Chapter 1 – Introduction

## Cary's Vision

*Safe. Livable. Vibrant. Diverse. Progressive.*

Cary envisions a future rooted in the qualities that have made the Town a nationally recognized great place to live, work, and play. Cary continues to steadily grow without losing sight of what makes it unique—the balance of small-town charm and large-city amenities. When the Town amended its Land Use Plan in 2003, several goals based on extensive public input were cited:

- Maintain and enhance a strong sense of community
- Preserve and maintain Cary's attractive visual appearance
- Preserve Cary's environmental resources
- Manage growth and development to maintain and enhance Cary's high quality of life
- Provide adequate, high quality, and well-maintained public services, amenities, and facilities
- Provide a comprehensive multimodal transportation system for Cary
- Support balanced, appropriate economic development
- Promote and sustain a progressive and positive planning process for Cary
- Proactively address Cary's housing issues

Many of these goals require a focused transportation planning effort that recognizes the inherent relationships between land use and transportation. The 2007 Comprehensive Transportation Plan Update embraces these goals as the Town seeks a balanced transportation system that offers true choice to users. Implementation of the Plan will lead the Town closer to a human-scaled community serviced by a safe, efficient, and multimodal transportation system.

## Purpose of Comprehensive Transportation Plan

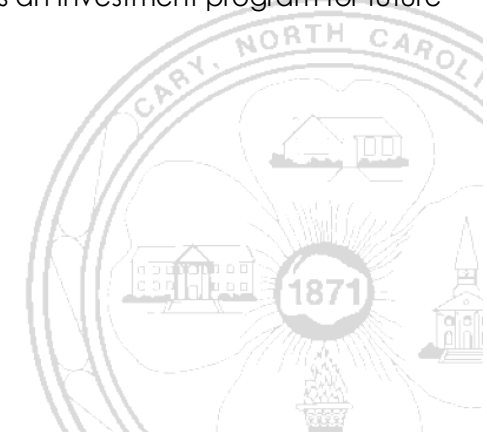
The CTP Update serves as a guide for the future of transportation in Cary. Not only does it allow the Town to check its bearings by reassessing transportation needs and reprioritizing projects and programs, but it also serves to set the direction—to provide a heading—for Town Council and staff to use as a guide over the next five to ten years. At that point, another update will be in order to ensure the Town is “on-track” in the opinion of Cary citizens.

North Carolina requires each municipality to develop a Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) in cooperation with NCDOT. Cary adopted its first CTP in 2001 to meet several objectives: 1) consolidate policies, 2) set vision, and 3) seek more implementation. The 2001 plan provided for the safe and effective use of the transportation system given population growth, economic initiatives, and land development patterns.

The 2007 update reviews and revises the Town's 2001 Comprehensive Transportation Plan. This update takes into consideration several events that have occurred since the 2001 plan, including:

- Increased growth and development
- Adoption of the State Transportation Plan and Comprehensive Transportation Planning Package (CTPP)
- Adoption of area plans and activity center plans in Cary, including the Southwest Area Plan, the Northwest Area Plan, the Alston Activity Center, Town Center Area Plan and Streetscape Master Plan, and the Southeast Gateway Area Plan
- Increased emphasis on multimodal transportation service provisions as evidenced by financial investment, new local fixed-route bus service, continued bicycle network development, and incorporation of the Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan (an update to the 2001 pedestrian element)

The 2001 Comprehensive Transportation Plan recommended Town investments in multimodal transportation. This update reviews progress toward this goal and expands the vision for transportation in Cary. The result is a clear, concise document that reflects the Town's current plans, programs, and policies; explores new policy and program initiatives; and establishes an investment program for future transportation funds.



## Transportation Plan Overview

The Plan begins in Chapter 1 with a discussion of vision and goals. Chapter 2 gives a progress report, which describes the achievements and continued needs as well as changes of direction for 2008. The outcome of public involvement activities during the update process, are detailed in Chapter 2, as well as throughout the document.

Chapters 4 through 7 comprise the multimodal elements of the CTP Plan. Each chapter covers the background, issues, and recommendations for the pertinent mode, detailed in a discussion in the following organization:

- Vision
- Goals
- Issues (Existing Conditions, Existing Plans, Programs and Policies, etc.)
- Needs Assessment
- Recommendations and Updates

The **Pedestrian Element** (Chapter 4) is a Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan developed by the Town, in conjunction with an NCDOT grant, during a separate process in 2006. It includes a detailed inventory of the existing pedestrian system and contains recommendations for project, program, and policy changes to make Cary more pedestrian-friendly. The plan was developed with extensive public input.

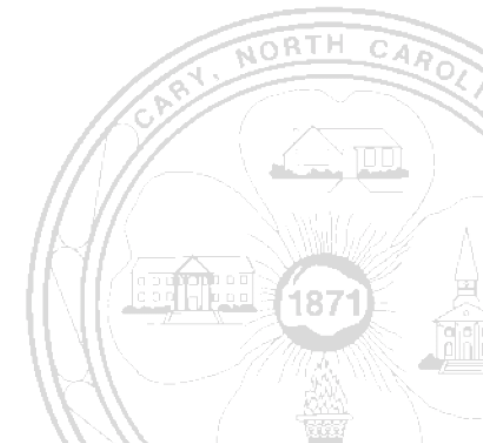
The **Bicycle Element** (Chapter 5) goes beyond the first E of Bicycle Planning—engineering—with recommended updates to the current network of on- and off-street facilities to provide a safe and efficient environment for bicyclists. This chapter also focuses on the remaining E's of Bicycle Planning—education, encouragement and enforcement. The Plan seeks to guide Cary as it develops facilities, strategies, and policies to make cycling a reliable form of transportation, a feasible commuting alternative, and an everyday source of recreation for the citizens of Cary. Cost estimates for priority bicycle improvements are included in Chapter 5.

The **Transit Element** (Chapter 6) reviews existing transit services, plans, and resources, and assesses the transit needs of Cary's citizens. Considering these aspects and acknowledging the necessary coordination of transit and land use decision-making, the Plan presents strategies to provide transit service in a cost-effective and efficient manner and provides recommendations to enhance transit interaction with existing and new development. It also seeks to strengthen regional transit connections

to other transit systems serving the Triangle area. Maps illustrate transit-supportive corridors and recommendations for future service expansion.

The **Streets Element** (Chapter 6) illustrates how differently sized streets serving different functions can improve traffic flow and help meet future travel demand. The Plan identifies current and future deficiencies; updates and refines alignment maps for the thoroughfare and collector street plans; identifies high-crash locations; updates the Town's corridor profiles; and evaluates the neighborhood traffic calming program. This information, coupled with a review of existing plans and policies, helps shape the recommendations and updates. The street network presented in the maps herein show general location of facilities, but more detailed, functional designs will be created as development takes place or as projects move into the Capital Improvement Program for design and construction.

An effective transportation plan acknowledges the financial and political environment that dictates its implementation. This report concludes with guidance and coordination with other plans and with detailed implementation strategies (Chapter 7). With a focus on implementation, the citizens, business owners, and visitors of Cary can look forward to a safer, more efficient, and more interconnected multimodal transportation system.



## Goals & Objectives

At the start of the update process, project staff conducted a work session with the Town Council to identify the vision and direction of the CTP. The Cary Town Council endorsed maintaining the CTP goals set forth in the previous plan as initially developed by the Comprehensive Transportation Plan Steering Committee in 2001.

Discussions from the work session aided in the development of a set of objectives to better define and establish the criteria for fulfilling the CTP goals. These goals and objectives illustrate the vision and purpose of the plan, as well as its implementation.

- **Create a safe, convenient, and efficient multimodal transportation system.**

Objectives:

- Design a thoroughfare system that comprehensively incorporates a variety of transportation modes for adequate access, flow, connectivity, safety, and mobility.
- Improve thoroughfares to keep pace with new growth and development.
- Proactively plan, in conjunction with other agencies, for public transportation both within Cary and between Cary and other Triangle locations.
- Emphasize pedestrian-oriented development to achieve a comprehensive system of bicycle lanes, greenways, and sidewalks that connect to neighborhoods, parks, schools, offices, commercial areas, and other public spaces.
- Increase share of non-single occupancy vehicle (SOV) trips by providing and promoting opportunities for travel by transit, cycling, and walking.
- Reduce rates of injuries and fatalities for each mode and ensure that transit riders, pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists feel safe and comfortable at all times when waiting for and riding transit, walking, bicycling, or driving.
- Facilitate regional intermodal travel by air and rail by providing transit connections to services at Raleigh-Durham International Airport and by providing transit, private for-hire, and parking options at the Downtown Cary Rail Depot.

- **Coordinate transportation and land use planning.**

Objectives:

- Plan and support transportation improvements that help fulfill the goals and objectives of Cary's Land Use Plan.

- Plan and support transportation improvements that enhance developments and neighborhoods that are providing alternative transportation choices.
  - Effectively manage long-term growth through a comprehensive and proactive planning process.
  - Encourage transportation improvements that increase access to jobs, services, and affordable housing and reduce reliance on SOV travel.
  - Support "mixed-use" development to encourage connectivity, pedestrians, and biking through context-sensitive roadway design.
  - Encourage alternatives to commercial strip-type development along arterials to maintain corridor and regional mobility.
- **Plan, design, and construct transportation facilities that contribute to Cary's attractive visual appearance.**

Objectives:

    - Encourage and maintain landscaping of public spaces such as major thoroughfares, gateways, and entryways into Cary.
    - Encourage attractive "boulevard" medians and street landscaping.
    - Provide appropriate buffers as transitions between transportation facilities and adjacent land uses.
    - Encourage streetscape and "built-in" traffic calming in roadway designs for residential streets.
  - **Provide safe and convenient facilities and service for people who choose not to use an automobile.**

Objectives:

    - Ensure all streets are "complete streets"—safe and comfortable for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, motorists, and other users.
    - Develop a greenway system to serve recreational and commuting purposes for Cary's growing population.
    - Provide safe and convenient pedestrian access on all streets.
    - Promote a pedestrian-friendly environment by filling in gaps and improving interconnection in the sidewalk system.
  - **Ensure serviceable operation of existing facilities and services.**

Objectives:

    - Ensure all sidewalks and crossings meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines.

- Establish and achieve multimodal quality of service goals that focus on minimizing person delay across modes, rather than just vehicle delay.
  - Create a system of interconnected streets to improve mobility and to distribute traffic efficiently and appropriately by purpose and function.
  - Provide travel information via local media outlets and variable message boards to guide transportation decisions during congestion, emergency, and construction situations.
  - Work with NCDOT to establish clear access management guidelines to balance efficient traffic operations with adequate access to side streets, commercial businesses, and private property.
- **Enhance transportation’s contribution to the economic vitality of Cary.**  
Objectives:
    - Recognize the link between a street's functional classification and its design elements to adjacent land uses, and the benefits to traffic operations as well as local businesses and/or residential communities.
    - Establish a designated network of truck routes for Cary to provide crucial access to businesses while minimizing impacts to residential areas.
    - Develop guidelines to encourage delivery methods and loading zones that minimize disruption to both local traffic and business operations in downtown Cary.
  - **Proactively plan, in conjunction with other agencies, to improve transportation linkages to other parts of the Triangle region.**  
Objectives:
    - Integrate local transportation facilities and transit services with those of neighboring jurisdictions to enhance regional connections.
    - Actively participate in regional transportation planning efforts.
    - Coordinate transportation planning efforts with neighboring jurisdictions when improvements are located near municipal boundaries or affect regional commuting patterns.
  - **Identify sufficient, timely, and equitable financing mechanisms for transportation services and improvements.**  
Objectives:
    - Disperse costs equally for the expansion and maintenance of Cary’s transportation system between the public and private sectors.
    - Maintain transportation facilities in a manner that minimizes the life-cycle cost of the facility.

- Pursue innovative funding mechanisms to expedite priority transportation improvements that increase safety and reduce congestion for the traveling public in Cary.
- **Improve environmental quality.**
  - Objectives:
  - Mitigate the adverse impacts of noise and air pollution.
  - Reduce the negative environmental impacts transportation improvements have on forest, stream, watershed, and agricultural resources to the most reasonable and feasible extent.

