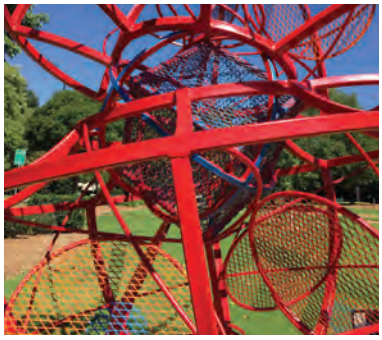
THE CARY 2040 COMMUNITY PLAN

THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE TOWN OF CARY

Adopted on January 24, 2017



CARY ACKNOWLEDGES...

The Cary Community Plan was made possible through the efforts of the individuals and groups listed below, as well as additional staff, community members, and citizens whose participation and insight was an essential component of this process.

Cary Town Council

Harold Weinbrecht, Mayor
Ed Yerha, Mayor Pro Tem, At-Large Representative
Lori Bush, At-Large Representative
Don Frantz, District B Representative
Ken George, District D Representative
Jennifer Robinson, District A Representative
Jack Smith, District C Representative
Gale Adcock, Mayor Pro-Tem, District D Representative (through Dec. 2014)

Advisory Boards & Committees

Economic Development Committee
Environmental Advisory Board
Historic Preservation Commission
Information Services Advisory Board
Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources Advisory Board
Planning & Zoning Board
Public Art Advisory Board

Committee for the Future

Louis Eldridge, Co-chair
Ronald Runyan, Co-chair
Carol Cutler-White
Dani Devinney
Richard Domann
Judson Drennan
Jo Ann Hines Duncan
Ana Echeverri
Kyle Greer
Dorothy Henderson – Bell
Jeanne Holmes
Leta Huntsinger
Andrew Jarvis
Pooja Joshi
Robert Keely
Toby Kennedy
Bae-Won Koh
Mary Lechene
Howard Manning
Karen Moldt
Andrew Moriarty
Sheila Ogle
Gilbert Pagan
Susan Pruskin
Dhanya Purushothaman/Sandeep
Keith Ramsey
Julia Rudy
Chuck Smith
Kay Struffolino
John Werner
Danna Widmar
Alok Sharma, In Memoriam

Transportation Advisory Group

Robert Bush
Clymer Cease
Teresa Gresham
Leta Huntsinger
Steven Levine
Len Nieman
Susan Russ
Chuck Smith
David Wasserman
Danna Widmar

Cary Chamber of Commerce

Kyle Greer
Howard Johnson

Consultants

Leigh Anne King, Project Manager, Clarion Associates
VHB
Planning NEXT
Randall Gross / Development Economics
Alta Planning + Design
Nelson\Nygaard

Core Staff Project Team

Juliet Andes
Mary Beerman
Ray Boylston
Tyler Bray
Lori Cove
John Donachie
Meredith Gruber
Will Hartye
Adam Howell
Jerry Jensen
Bill Moore
Justin Oliver
Scott Ramage
Anna Readling
Philip Smith
Jeff Ulma

Town of Cary Interdepartmental Team

Development Services
- Scot Berry
- Wes Everett
- Dan Matthys

Finance
- Michelle Brooks
- Karen Mills

Fire
- Allan Cain
- Mike Cooper
- A. J. Leighton

Human Resources
- Renee Poole

Inspections and Permits
- Ken Hawley

Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources
- Dwayne Jones
- Doug McRainey

Planning
- Wayne Nicholas

Police
- Tony Godwin

Public Works
- Scott Hecht
- Bob Holden

Technology Services
- Leith Britt
- Nicole Raimundo

Town Manager
- Mike Bajorek
- Emily Barrett
- Lisa Glover
- Deanna Hawkes
- Allison Hutchins
- Lana Hygh
- Kathy Lleras
- Susan Moran
- Russ Overton
- Sean Stegall

Town Clerk
- Virginia Johnson

Transportation and Facilities
- Sandi Bailey

Utilties
- Jamie Revels
- Penny Rosser

Water Resources
- Jeff Adkins
- Steve Brown

Contents

1. FOUNDATIONS 1

Introducing Cary's Community Plan *1*

Cary: Yesterday and Today 2

Imagining Cary's Future 3

Our Vision for Cary 3

Trends & Influences 6

Using the Plan 9

Community-Based Planning Effort 10

What is new in the 2040 Cary Community Plan? 12

Relationship of Plan to Town's Land Development Ordinance 13

Town's Authority to Adopt a Comprehensive Plan 13

2. LIVE 15

Fostering Strong Neighborhoods *15*

Challenges and Opportunities 16

Policy Direction 22

How We Will Achieve our Vision 26

Creating Compatible residential Development Using Context Sensitive Designs 28

Related Policy Direction in Other Chapters 31

3. WORK 33

Assuring Continued Prosperity *33*

Challenges and Opportunities 34

Policy Direction 37

How We Will Achieve our Vision 41

Related Policy Direction in Other Chapters 43

4. SHOP 45

Creating Vibrant Destinations *45*

Challenges and Opportunities 46

Future Growth Framework 49

Policy Direction 50

How We Will Achieve our Vision 51

Design Concepts for Transitions Between Centers and Neighborhoods 53

Related Policy Direction in Other Chapters 59

Contents

5. ENGAGE 61

Experiencing the Cary Community *61*

Adopted Plans 62

Challenges and Opportunities 64

How We Will Achieve our Vision 78

Related Policy Direction in Other Chapters 80

6. SHAPE 81

Guiding Community Growth *81*

Challenges and Opportunities 82

Designing Development in Cary 84

Policy Direction 86

How We Will Achieve our Vision 91

Future Growth Framework 92

Related Policy Direction in Other Chapters 115

Special Planning Areas 116

Eastern Cary Gateway Special Planning Area 117

Downtown Cary Special Planning Area 137

Historic Carpenter Special Planning Area 179

Green Level Special Planning Area 195

Chatham County - Town of Cary SPA 209

7. MOVE 211

Providing Transportation Choices *211*

Challenges and Opportunities 212

Policy Direction 218

Streets Element 220

Pedestrian Element 231

Bike Element 233

Transit Element 239

How We Will Achieve our Vision 243

Related Policy Direction in Other Chapters 244

8. SERVE 245

Meeting Community Needs *245*

Challenges and Opportunities 246

Policy Direction 250

How We Will Achieve our Vision 254

Related Policy Direction in Other Chapters 256

9. ACT 257

Moving from Vision to Reality *257*

Applying Plan Policies 258

Plan Monitoring 258

Amending the Plan 259

Summary of Recommended Policy Initiatives and Major Actions 259

Cary Community Plan 260

Policy Initiatives and Recommended Major Actions 260

10. APPENDIX 269

Accessing Facts and Figures *269*

HUD 5-Year Consolidated Plan 270

Chatham County Joint Land Use Plan 271

Historic Preservation Master Plan 272

Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Plan 273

Technical Report for Chapter 7: Move 274

Public Art Master Plan 275

Glossary 276

1. FOUNDATIONS

Introducing Cary's Community Plan

IN THIS CHAPTER:

Cary: Yesterday and Today

Imagining Cary's Future

Our Vision for Cary

Trends and Influences

Using the Plan

Community-Based Planning Effort

What is New in the 2040 Cary Community Plan?

Relationship of Plan to Town's Land Development Ordinance

Town's Authority to Adopt a Comprehensive Plan

1. FOUNDATIONS

Cary is...

3rd Safest City in the Nation *(2014)* – wallstreet.com

Top Town for Families *(2014)* – Forbes and @bizjournals

Sound Investment for Good Living *(2014)* – Nerdwallet, CNN Money, Forbes

Best Mid-Size City for Relocation *(2013)* – Movato

Best City for Early Retirement – Kiplinger

Top City for Tech – Forbes

Cary: Yesterday and Today

Starting as a small, rural crossroads community with a rich agricultural heritage, Cary has evolved into a nationally recognized community of distinction. The arrival of the North Carolina Railroad in 1854 and the development of the Research Triangle Park in 1959 were both game changers for the region and for Cary. Over the last thirty years, the Town has attracted Fortune 500 companies, a series of high quality attractive residential developments, commercial growth, and community amenities that put it on the map as the place "where better living begins." The Town's population grew from approximately 8,000 residents in 1970 to more than 152,000 in 2015. Today, Cary is known as one of the best mid-sized communities in the nation to live and work, to find a home or start a business, and to raise a family or retire.

Imagining Cary's Future

The purpose of the 2040 Cary Community Plan is to articulate the Town's vision and values and set a course for achieving Cary's desired future. Cary's vision statement below describes the aspirations to continue to be a premier community that will offer new opportunities to live, work, play, shop, and dine in the town we call home.

Our Vision for Cary

The Town of Cary will continue to be the model of a highly-regarded and well-managed community. The interests of residents and businesses will be at the forefront of policies and public investment that foster sustained prosperity.

Since the community is mostly developed, the existing suburban pattern of high quality residential, office, and shopping areas will remain dominant. In strategic and appropriate locations, emerging new development patterns—greater intensity in a walkable, mixed use form—will be encouraged to provide existing and future residents additional choices for living, connecting, working, playing, and shopping.

The attractive physical setting—including both the natural and built environment—strengthens community pride and encourages private investment. This is also true with the consistent delivery of high quality community infrastructure, services and facilities.

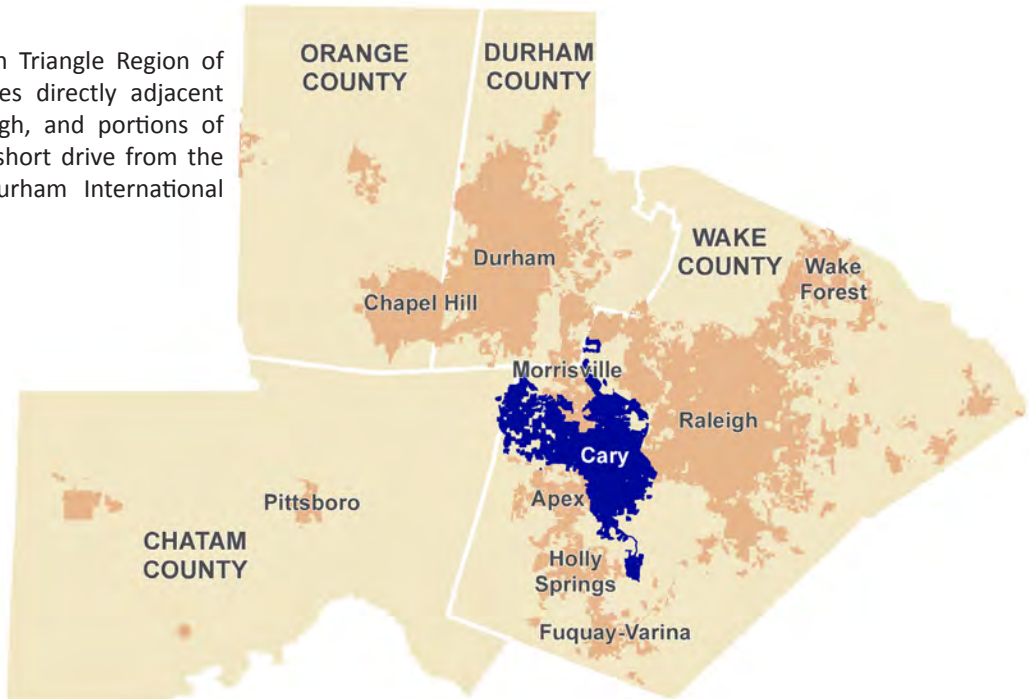
The community also continues to prosper through attention to quality and a commitment to a sense of community, culture, and history, revealing the authentic and special Cary.

We Value...

- Leveraging the Town's Regional Context
- Managing Future Land Use
- Encouraging Redevelopment and Infill Efforts
- Fostering Strong and Sustainable Neighborhoods
- Creating a Vibrant Arts and Cultural Environment
- Fostering a Prosperous Economy and Fiscal Health
- Protecting Nature and the Environment
- Providing Comprehensive and Top Quality Facilities and Infrastructure
- Preserving Historic Resources
- Providing Extensive and High Quality Parks and Recreation
- Providing High Quality Public Services
- Providing an Efficient and Well-Designed Transportation System

CARY IN CONTEXT

Cary is located in heart of the Research Triangle Region of North Carolina. Neighboring communities directly adjacent to Cary include Apex, Morrisville, Raleigh, and portions of unincorporated Wake County. Cary is a short drive from the Research Triangle Park and Raleigh Durham International Airport.



Research Triangle Region

CARY'S PLANNING AREA

This plan focuses not just on the Town of Cary, but more appropriately on Cary's entire land planning area. This area is a boundary that outlines the outermost extent of where the Town of Cary may grow in the future. According to agreements with neighboring jurisdictions, Cary cannot extend beyond this boundary. The land planning area consists of four distinct geographies:

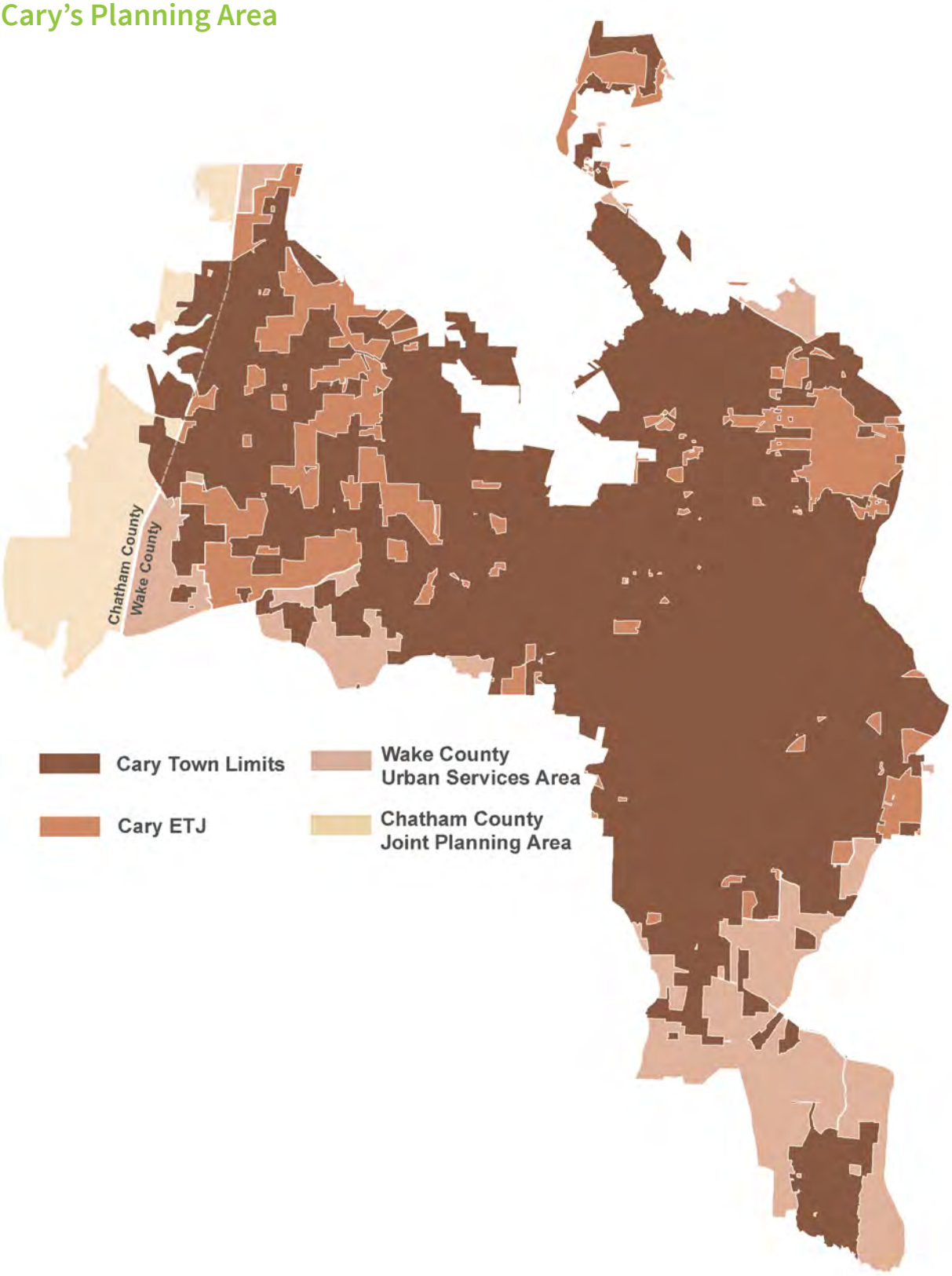
Town of Cary Corporate Limits
This is the formal area known as the Town of Cary. The Town provides utility services within this area and plans and zones for all land within the Town limits. Residents living in Cary pay Town taxes and can vote for Town Council members.

Town of Cary Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ)
These are special planning areas granted jointly by the Town and Wake County as permitted by the State of North Carolina. ETJ areas lie outside of the Town's corporate limits. The purpose of ETJ in North Carolina is to allow for municipalities to plan for areas that may become part of the community's corporate limits in the foreseeable future and that may require public utility services, such as potable water and sanitary sewer. Properties in the ETJ are planned and zoned for by the Town of Cary; however, residents living in the ETJ are not Cary citizens and they do not pay Town taxes, nor can they vote for Town Council members. The ETJ does have representation on the Town of Cary's Planning and Zoning Board.

Town of Cary Urban Services Boundary
These are special planning areas designated by Wake County for the Town of Cary and the other 11 municipalities in the County. Cary's Urban Services Boundary is a geographic area contiguous to the Town's corporate limits and ETJ in which Wake County has determined that the Town may someday provide public utilities.

Chatham County – Town of Cary Joint Planning Area
Chatham County does not define formal Urban Services Areas for its municipalities. However, the Chatham-Cary Joint Land Use Plan, adopted June 2012, effectively identifies the portion of Chatham County that might someday be served by, or is eligible to be served by the Town of Cary for public utility services. This area is included within the Cary land planning area.

Cary's Planning Area



Trends & Influences

The high quality of life enjoyed in Cary has propelled its growth up until now. However, national, regional, and local trends suggest a changing context for the Town, and have spurred community conversations about the future of Cary. Early on in the Imagine Cary planning effort, several key trends and influences were identified that will likely impact Cary's future.

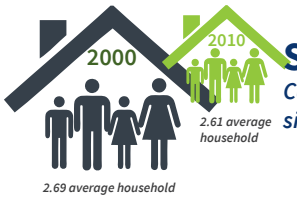
AGING AND DIVERSIFYING POPULATION

As is the case in many communities across the country, Cary's population is aging and diversifying. We see retiring baby boomers, professional workers choosing to wait longer to start a family or not have a family at all, an increasing number of single person households, and growth in racial and ethnic diversity.

Cary has, over the years, developed a family-friendly reputation based on a suburban community model. But national trends show that the demographic changes being experienced here and elsewhere are increasingly accompanied by changes in household preferences that impact housing, transportation, and other lifestyle choices. This Community Plan offers an opportunity to identify ways that Cary can maintain its high quality suburban community experience, while also accommodating the lifestyle preferences of this changing population.

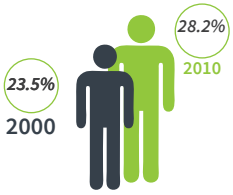
More Seniors

Cary residents over the age of 55 increased from 12% to 18% between 2000 and 2010.



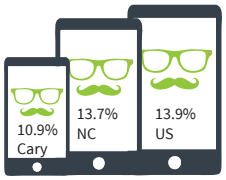
Smaller Households

Cary's average household size and family size decreased between 2000 and 2010



More Singles

Unmarried singles in Cary increased from 23.5% in 2000 to 28.2% in 2010



Fewer Millenials

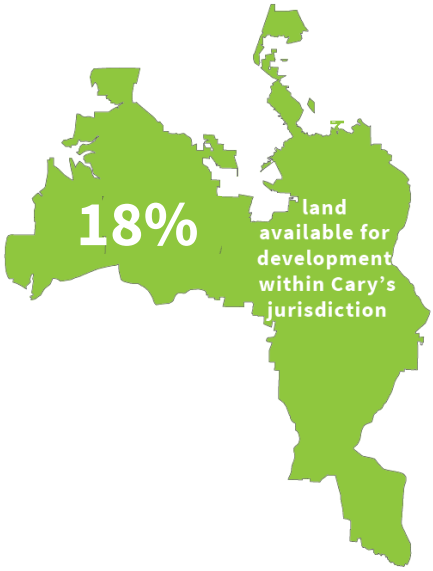
The % of the Millennial aged population in Cary is lower than in NC and the US.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

LIMITED LAND FOR DEVELOPMENT

Land available for new development in Cary's planning jurisdiction is limited by formal agreements with neighboring communities. These agreements delineate the boundary within which Cary can provide utility services in the future and ultimately the areas Cary can annex into the Town. Today, only 18% of land in the Town's planning jurisdiction is available for development.

In the past, Cary has been a model for high quality new developments built on vacant or agricultural land. Now, with both limited land for development and the presence of aging commercial and residential developments, the Town faces a changing paradigm where new projects will increasingly come in the form of infill development and redevelopment of existing properties. With this shift comes the need to redefine development opportunities and the regulations and design standards that will shape evolving areas of Town, while continuing to protect Cary's natural resources.

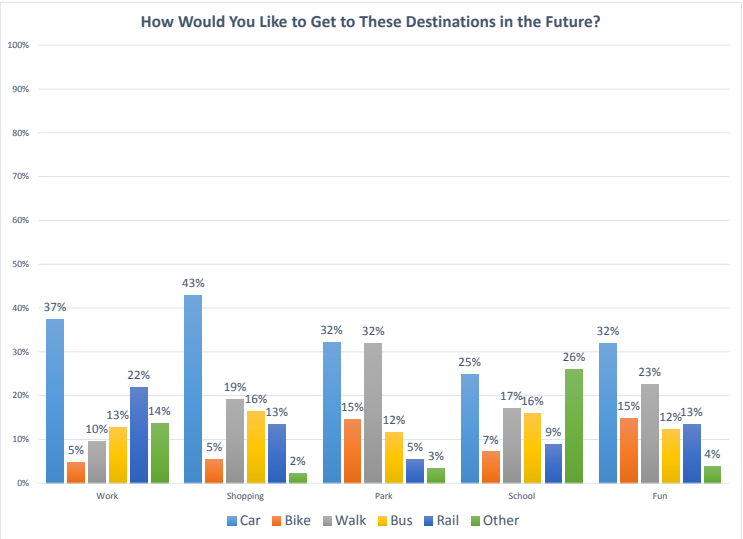


Because only 18% of Cary's planning and zoning area is undeveloped, future development will come more and more in the form of infill development and redevelopment of existing developed sites.

INCREASING TRANSPORTATION DEMANDS

Today, Cary's transportation network provides an excellent system of streets, award-winning greenways, miles of sidewalks, and bicycle facilities. Combined, these transportation facilities support a commuting local workforce, recreational enthusiasts, and regional travelers. But with the expected regional population growth, projected future travel demand on roadways over the next 20 years increasingly will exceed existing roadway capacities. As Cary's roadway network becomes built out and as Federal and State transportation funding sources continue to diminish, there will likely be a shift in focus from building new infrastructure to maintaining the existing system. Compounding these challenges is the increasing cost of infrastructure improvements resulting in the need to use existing infrastructure more efficiently.

Cary's residents have demonstrated their support for transportation choices that will allow residents and workers to drive, walk, bike, take the bus, or even possibly ride regional rail to destinations. Expanding alternative travel options while maintaining vehicular mobility will require changes in development patterns as well as improvements to the transportation network. The challenge facing Cary is to provide future residents with a complete range of choices that are operationally and fiscally efficient.



When Cary residents were asked how they would like to get around in the future, they expressed a desire for a variety of transportation choices regardless of the final destination.

DEMAND FOR 21ST CENTURY DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS

Cary is known for its high-quality suburban neighborhoods, commercial centers, and business parks. These developments have helped make Cary the community of distinction that it is today. However, preferences for these places may be changing. As evidenced by input from Cary's citizens and business leaders, there is demand for new 21st century developments that reflect evolving lifestyles and workplace environments. National trends show that people want to be more connected, and they want to live and work in an active and vibrant environment that makes it easier to be connected to friends and neighbors, to community services and activities, and to easily access destinations. Many polls show that retirees and young professionals both desire the same type of living environment: one that is walkable, connected, affordable, and vibrant.

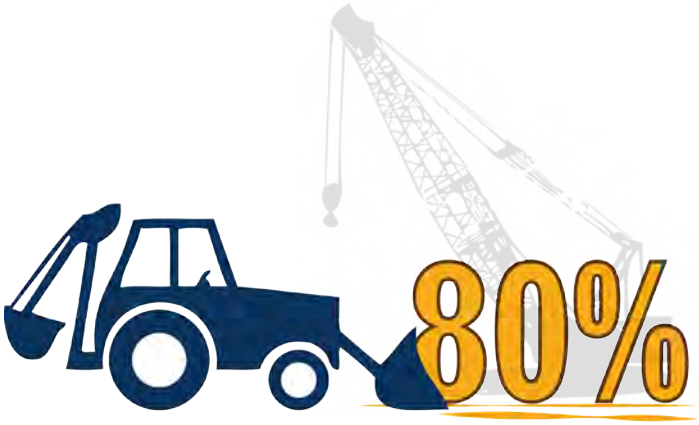
It will be important for Cary to accommodate the housing needs of its aging and diversifying residential population and growing local workforce. Likewise, the Town will need to consider the locational needs of target industries to make sure employment centers offer the type of workplace environment that modern businesses desire.

Making a great place doesn't happen by accident. There are many key attributes and design features needed to create successful places.

FUTURE FISCAL CHALLENGES

Cary is fortunate to have a strong fiscal base to support the delivery of community amenities and services ranging from police and fire protection to the Town's wonderful parks and event spaces. Town government in Cary has proven to be an effective and conservative guardian of the Town's assets and resources, enabling the Town to gain a strong fiscal position and maintain one of the lowest tax rates in Wake County. Cary has experienced significant levels of growth and development for several decades under sound fiscal management. During this period of growth, the Town's revenues increased along with property valuations, covering the expenses of delivering additional services and maintaining existing infrastructure. An estimated 80% of that revenue growth, on average, has been generated by the addition of new tax base to the Town. In fact, the Town has seen a direct correlation between population growth and tax revenue growth.

As Cary runs out of land for development and enters a new phase of slower growth in the next 10 to 20 years, the Town could experience a declining rate of revenue growth. Meanwhile, the cost of providing services and maintaining infrastructure like parks and recreation and water and sewer service is expected to rise and the annual increase in costs could eventually surpass the increase in revenues at current tax rates. Added to the challenge is demand for increasing services and new community amenities, and an aging infrastructure that will require future maintenance investments. Cary's challenge will be to identify fiscally sustainable revenue generation models supported by the community that can continue to provide high quality services and facilities to existing and future residents.



In Cary, new development drives the growth of public revenues that have supported the Town's ability to provide high quality community amenities and services. On average, 80% of new revenue growth comes from new tax base to the Town. As growth slows due to limited land for development, new revenue generation models will be needed to maintain the level of service residents have come to expect.

Using the Plan

Plan Organization

The Cary Community Plan is organized into ten chapters: this Foundations chapter (plan introduction and background), seven thematic chapters (Live, Work, Shop, Shape, Engage, Move, Serve), the Act chapter (sets a course for strategically implementing the plan), and the Appendix (includes supporting documents developed during the course of Imagine Cary).

The seven thematic chapters set out a policy context and policy framework, with each chapter including sections that address three main topics: challenges and opportunities, goals and policies, and strategic actions. In addition, these chapters conclude with cross-references to related policy direction in other chapters.

FOUNDATIONS	introduction about the plan
LIVE	neighborhoods housing
WORK	economy workplaces
SHOP	places to shop and dine
ENGAGE	historic places parks and culture
SHAPE	land planning character of growth
MOVE	transportation choices
SERVE	public services fiscal health
ACT	action plan to achieve vision
APPENDICES	technical information

Purpose of Plan

The plan should serve multiple purposes:

- as a guide for public decision-making related to development proposals;
- for coordinating planning efforts between the Town and adjacent jurisdictions;
- for planning for future service and facility needs;
- for qualifying for state and federal grant programs;
- as a marketing tool used to showcase the key initiatives that will continue to maintain Cary's competitive edge as a premier community to live, work, play, learn, and raise a family; and
- as a guide for establishing annual work plans for Town departments.

Policy Guidance

The plan's policy guidance is set out in a four part structure:

(1) An overarching **vision statement** that articulates the future aspirations for Cary. This statement is provided at the beginning of each chapter.

(2) **Value statements** that set out the critical values the community holds that drove development of this plan. The value statements are presented on the cover page for each chapter.

(3) Specific **policies** that aid in day-to-day decision-making to achieve the community's vision, including policy intent statements that provide guidance about implementation of policies. The policy statements are provided within the body of each chapter.

(4) Specific **actions** that the Town may take to make the vision a reality. (Note: The stated actions provide general direction, but may vary in response to changing circumstances.) The actions are described towards the end of each chapter, and brought together in Chapter 9, ACT.

Vision ›

Value Statements ›

Policies ›

Actions

Community-Based Planning Effort

DEVELOPING THE PLAN

Cary has had a long, successful history of creating plans that guide growth and investment in the community. Starting with the Town's first comprehensive plan in 1991, **"Cary . . . Growing With a Vision"**, Cary has maintained a commitment to its comprehensive plan and uses it to guide decisions related to capital investments, desired development patterns, and design of new developments. That plan was followed in 1996 with a new land use plan, and a series of individual plans for affordable housing, parks, growth management, and other topics, and multiple small area plans. By 2012 the Town had 20 planning documents and 12 volumes in its comprehensive plan.

In late 2010, the Town of Cary began considering the need to update several of the Town's existing plans for a few geographic areas. It became clear that a more pressing need was to undertake a comprehensive update to the entire policy context rather than updating individual component parts. As a result, in 2011, the Cary Town Council directed Town staff to conduct a complete review of all plans and create a new and more consolidated comprehensive Community Plan -- a consensus vision document to guide decisions and achieve a desired future. This process included an update to all volumes of the current comprehensive plan, including the Town's Comprehensive Transportation Plan to better integrate it with the Town's growth framework that guides development decisions.

PART 1: THE CHARTER FOR CREATING THE CARY COMMUNITY PLAN (2012)

Due to the complexity of the undertaking, the Town decided to approach this initiative in two parts. In 2012, the project team worked with Town Council and Town departments to develop the Charter for Creating a Cary Community Plan – the plan for effectively creating "the plan." The Charter provided detailed guidance for development of the plan and the public engagement process.

PART 2: THE IMAGINE CARY PLANNING EFFORT (2013-2016)

Building on its commitment to planning, transparency and citizen involvement, the Town of Cary undertook an ambitious four-year planning effort to update Cary's comprehensive plan. Imagine Cary was a first-of-its-kind effort by the Town to update and connect its many specific topic plans into a single, integrated and comprehensive policy guide for the future. It also marked the first time in the Town's planning history to simultaneously generate a coordinated and integrated economic, land use, and transportation vision for the Town.

imagine CARY
Your Voice • Our Future

Through the guidance of the Charter, the Imagine Cary process was designed to be inclusive, focused, inspirational, and sustainable. The plan was generated through the integration of technical analysis and community aspirations set out in four distinct phases of plan development:

1. Values and Vision
2. Community Choices
3. Plan Framework
4. Plan Adoption

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The 2040 Cary Community Plan was developed using the most robust public engagement process in the Town's history. The planning process actively sought public input using a variety of traditional and innovative web-based methods to educate and engage the community.

Phase 1: Vision & Values Input
14 events
Online testing
4,000 unique ideas generated
1,191 participants

Phase 2: Community Choices
4 events
Online testing
866 participants

What is new in the 2040 Cary Community Plan?

Building upon the sound plans already in place, the 2040 Cary Community Plan sets out a new policy framework that incorporates many relevant policies developed under previous planning efforts, as well as many new policy objectives. New topics include:

Economic Policies and Strategies

The plan establishes economic policies and strategies to guide the Town's economic development efforts.

Integration of Land Use and Transportation Plans

The plan integrates land use and transportation plans using a new approach (the Future Growth Framework) that tested the impacts of future development ideas on the Town's transportation network, and that provides design guidance for transportation improvements to align with the vision for future land use.

Focus on Downtown Cary

The plan emphasizes downtown as the heart and soul of Cary, and a priority for redevelopment and community investment.

Neighborhood Protection and Housing Choices

The plan sets out policies and strategies to provide greater housing choices, including housing for a variety of incomes, lifestyles, and stages of life, while also protecting and stabilizing Cary's established neighborhoods.

New Infill and Redevelopment Opportunities

The plan encourages and guides future infill and redevelopment efforts in targeted locations, and encourages development of new tools to guide design of redevelopment and infill projects.

Destination Centers

The plan fosters development of strategically located and vertically integrated mixed use developments to serve as key destination centers for regional attraction.

Transit-Oriented Development

The plan sets the stage for future regional transit improvements that will likely be developed during the planning horizon (2040), and the associated transit-oriented development that will support transit ridership in the future.

Relationship of Plan to Town's Land Development Ordinance

The Cary Community Plan is a long-range policy document that provides guidance to the Town's current and future decision-makers regarding land development, capital improvements, and public programs. In contrast, the Town's Land Development Ordinance is the set of Town laws that govern land development. The regulations in the Land Development Ordinance set out the specific uses permitted on individual properties, the density and intensity of development that can occur, and how developments are designed. These regulations also provide property owners in Cary with certain rights to development.

The Town of Cary's Land Development Ordinance consists of a zoning map and a written ordinance that divides the Town into zoning districts, including various mixed use, residential, commercial, and industrial districts. The land development regulations describe what type of land use and specific activities are permitted in each district, and also regulate how buildings, signs, parking, and other construction may be placed on a lot. These regulations also provide procedures for re-zonings and other planning activities.

While the 2040 Cary Community Plan and in particular, the Future Growth Framework Map found in Chapter 6, provides guidance to decision-makers regarding the future development or use of property, capital investments, or community programs; the Land Development Ordinance defines the actual laws that apply to each property in the Town's planning jurisdiction. Implementation of this plan may in some instances require amendments to the Land Development Ordinance. Any proposed amendment to the Land Development Ordinance will require a separate public hearing and review process, with a final decision made by Town Council.

Town's Authority to Adopt a Comprehensive Plan

Cary's ability to adopt and implement a comprehensive plan is drawn from its state-authorized general police power to "define, regulate, prohibit, or abate acts, omissions, or conditions detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of its citizens" per North Carolina General Statute § 160A-174.

In North Carolina, municipal zoning enabling statutes have long required that zoning regulations be made "in accordance with a comprehensive plan." However, neither the North Carolina statutes nor case law mandate preparation of comprehensive plans, define their elements, or set a mandatory procedure for their adoption. Local governments can choose to develop or not to develop a plan.

In 2005, the state zoning statutes were amended to strengthen the role of adopted plans where they do exist. This law requires that boards reviewing proposed zoning amendments include a written recommendation that addresses the consistency of the proposed amendment with the comprehensive plan and any other relevant plans (such as a small area plan, a corridor plan, or a transportation plan) that have been adopted by Town Council. The Town Council is also required to adopt a statement on plan consistency when adopting or rejecting any zoning amendment. While this statement is required, it does not limit the Town Council's discretionary power to adopt or not adopt zoning amendments.

Services and Facilities Provided by Cary

- **Community facilities and greenways**
- **Emergency management service (EMS)**
- **Maintenance of town-owned streets**
- **Parks, recreation, and cultural resources**
- **Police and fire protection**
- **Regulating development**
- **Solid waste and recycling**
- **Water and wastewater services**

Provided by Other Jurisdictions

- **Libraries**
- **Public schools**
- **Social services**
- **Streets not owned and managed by Cary**