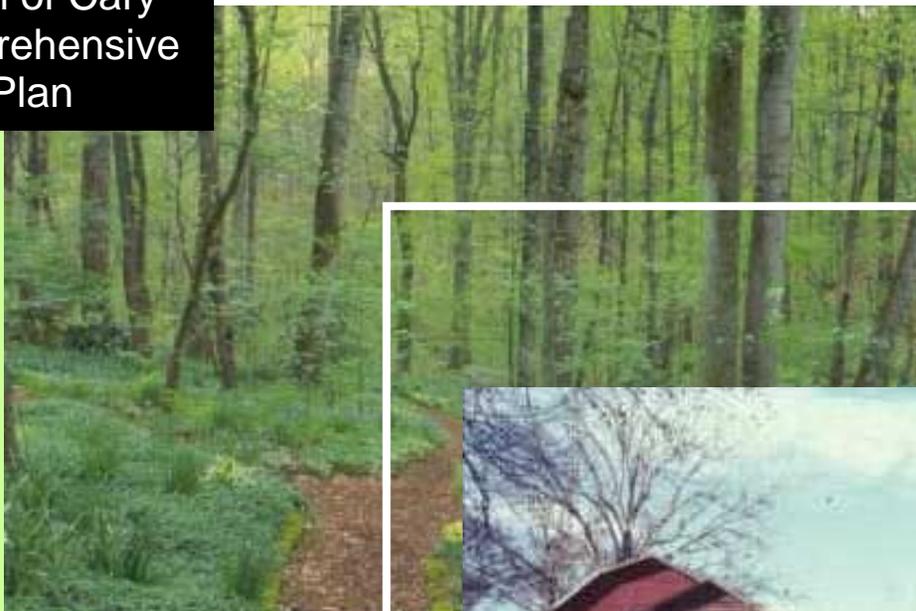
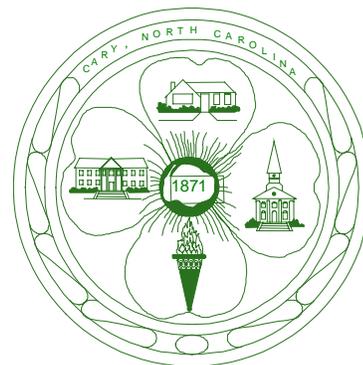


Town of Cary

Open Space and Historic Resources Plan

Volume VII
of the
Town of Cary
Comprehensive
Plan

Adopted August 23, 2001
produced by the Town of Cary Planning Department



Credits

Town of Cary Open Space and Historic Resources Plan

Adopted by Town Council August 23, 2001

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1. Executive Summary

The Open Space and Historic Resources Plan (OSHRP) is Volume #7 of the Town of Cary Comprehensive Plan. It sets forth a plan of action to identify and protect the Town's natural resources, historic areas, and other special environmental and cultural features. Proposed goals for the OSHRP were presented to the Cary Town Council in March 2001.

The purpose of the Plan is to identify, evaluate, and prioritize resources, establish preservation goals, and guide the implementation of an open space program. The Plan identifies parcels with significant resource value and open space potential, and ranks them according to the quality and quantity of resources present, threat of loss, and other factors. A 'preservation toolbox' helps to determine the appropriate acquisition and financing strategy for each priority parcel.

Implementation of the OSHRP will achieve previously recommended preservation goals set forth in the Town's Land Use Plan and Growth Management Plan. Together with the Town's Parks, Greenways, and Bikeways Master Plan, the OSHRP provides a framework for the eventual development of a 'green infrastructure' for Cary.

'Open Space' is defined generally as natural and human-influenced landscapes that remain relatively undisturbed. Open space may consist of several land categories, ranging from pristine preserves of high ecological significance to active recreational trails associated with Town greenway corridors. The benefits of preserving open space are well known. By preserving resources within the framework of parks, greenways, and other preserved land, an interconnected system of open space can be established.

The Town contracted with an ecological assessment firm to develop an inventory and database of significant natural and historic resources. A NC State University research team was hired to conduct viewshed mapping of rural landscapes associated with two National Register historic districts, and to create visual simulations of conservation design scenarios. The latter will be an important tool for informing landowners on development techniques that can preserve open space resources. Town of Cary staff conducted a threat analysis to determine the most vulnerable open space parcels in the study area. This analysis will help determine preservation priorities.

The Plan was developed with comments from an *ad hoc* technical advisory group of land conservation and environmental professionals, and from a citizen-input process. Community information meetings were held in four locations throughout the study area. Workshops were held with the Planning and Zoning Board, the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Advisory Board, and the Town Council.

The Open Space System map illustrates the open space network. Within the System are approximately 4,800 acres of vacant, undeveloped, or slightly developed land that could provide one or more open space functions. Preservation priorities are based upon the findings of the resource assessments, threat analysis, and public input.

The Implementation Recommendations table describes specific actions the Town of Cary should take to protect its natural and historic resources. The table lists tasks and responsibilities by department and priority time frame.

2.

Introduction

The Open Space and Historic Resources Plan: an element of the Cary Comprehensive Plan

The Open Space and Historic Resources Plan is Volume #7 of the Town of Cary Comprehensive Plan – the policy document that describes Cary’s official vision of the physical form and appearance desired for the Town as it grows in the future.

The OSHRP sets forth a plan of action to identify and protect the Town’s natural resources, historic areas, and other special environmental and cultural features that are important to the citizens of Cary. The purpose of the Plan is to identify, evaluate, and prioritize important resources, establish goals for their preservation, and to recommend acquisition and implementation strategies for the Town of Cary to successfully carry out a resource preservation program.

Relationship to the Land Use Plan, Growth Management Plan, Parks and Greenways Master Plan

The Town of Cary [Land Use Plan](#), adopted in 1996, is Volume #2 of the Comprehensive Plan. It addresses the Town’s long range vision for the geographical arrangement and intensity of various land uses, such as commercial, office, industrial, institutional, and residential uses. The Land Use Plan contains numerous references that pertain to resource preservation. Goal #3 of the Land Use Plan is “Preserve Cary’s environmental resources”, with accompanying objectives of protecting forests and natural open spaces during development, and protecting wildlife habitat and water quality by preserving natural stream corridors and watersheds. Chapter 2 of the Land Use Plan, entitled *Natural Resources: Opportunities and Constraints*, calls for development of a “natural resources plan” to guide the preservation of significant natural areas and historic sites.

Open space and historic resource preservation is also a key recommendation of the [Growth Management Plan](#) (GMP), adopted in January 2000. Task L.2.1.A of the GMP states “Prepare the natural resources element of the comprehensive plan to identify and prioritize areas containing sensitive and/or unique natural areas and open space.”

Stewardship of natural resources and the availability of open space are part of the overall goals of the [Cary Parks, Greenways, & Bikeways Master Plan](#). With an emphasis on connectivity and the system’s multiple objectives of providing public recreational facilities, pedestrian/bicycle transportation corridors, wildlife habitats, and water quality improvement facilities, the Cary parks and greenways system offers a framework for an interconnected system of open space: a “green infrastructure” for the Town.

Green Infrastructure can be defined as a “natural support system...a strategically planned and managed network of natural areas, parks, greenways, conservation easements, and farmlands with conservation value that supports native species, maintains natural ecological processes, sustains air and water resources, and contributes to the health and quality of life of the community.”¹ Cary’s green infrastructure also creates a framework for shaping future urban development, limiting sprawl, and managing growth.

¹ Definition compiled by the Green Infrastructure Working Group, August 1999, www.greeninfrastructure.net

3.

Purpose

Cary is now North Carolina’s seventh largest city with over 97,785 people¹. Cary’s attractiveness as a place to live and do business continues to bring new residents and jobs to the community. As the Town continues to develop, valuable open space resources will be lost, affecting our quality of life. The Cary Town Council’s initial commitment to spend \$12.5 million for open space presents a unique opportunity to preserve at least some of these resources for future generations. Additionally, the success of recent bond referenda nationwide attests to the strong public support for open space preservation. The timing is opportune to establish a plan for preserving open space and historic resources. (See Land Trust Alliance report: “Voters Invest in Open Space: 1999 Referenda Results, http://www.lta.org/publicpolicy/1999voters_inv.pdf.)

The purpose of the Open Space and Historic Resources Plan is to identify, evaluate, and prioritize important natural and historic resources and to establish goals for their preservation. The Plan identifies parcels with significant resource value and open space potential, such as connectivity to a park, greenway, or other preserved open space. These parcels are ranked according to the quantity of resources present, the threat of loss of the open space or resource to development, and other factors. The [Preservation Toolbox](#) (see Technical Appendices) is used to help determine the appropriate acquisition and financing strategy for each priority parcel. The Plan serves as a guide to the Town Council and staff for implementing the preservation of open space and historic resources – detailing how open space will be funded, acquired, and managed (see Implementation Recommendations in the Technical Appendices).

The Open Space and Historic Resources Plan also serves as a resource for citizens – especially landowners interested in preservation possibilities for their own property.

¹ Ranking from 2000 US Census. Population figure from Planning Department estimate, January 2001.

4. What is Open Space?

Generally speaking, Open Space is forests, meadows, fields, wetlands, floodplains, stream corridors, historic landscapes, farmland, parks, greenways, and other areas that remain relatively undisturbed.

Open Space may consist of several *land class categories*.¹ Each category of open space has different acquisition, preservation, and management considerations. Land in all categories may be publicly or privately owned.

Preserves are lands kept undisturbed in order to preserve the underlying resource. They are not used for public recreation, and access is restricted to scientific purposes.

Natural Areas are kept undisturbed for species habitat. Public access is confined to restricted areas, where low-intensity, passive recreational activities, such as birding and hiking, may be allowed on a seasonal basis. These areas may include limited facilities for public access, such as parking areas, picnic shelters, benches, and the like.

Scenic Areas protect the visual aspect to a resource. This may include a scenic view from a roadway, such as field and forest edge, or other undeveloped, open land. Scenic areas may also include farmland, forests, and open areas that preserve the setting of a historic site, such as the entranceways to the Carpenter and Green Level Historic Districts. Public access is generally not provided to scenic areas. Access depends on other attributes of the land involved, such as a linkage to a park, greenway, or other publicly accessible open space.

Parks and Other Recreational Lands are managed for high-intensity, active recreational uses. They include 'hard' park facilities, such tennis courts, playgrounds, and ball fields, but also the less-developed areas within parks, such as meadows and woodlands. Golf courses are also included in this category. These lands may also include undeveloped or undisturbed "connector" areas that link Town parks, private parks, and other resource open spaces to the Cary Greenway system.

Greenway Corridors are areas delineated on the Cary Parks and Greenways Master Plan for use as active recreational trails.

¹ Adapted from Jefferson County, CO Open Space Master Plan, 1998

5.

Benefits

Benefits of Resource Preservation¹

The benefits of preserving open space are well known. Open space protects our water supply, reduces flood hazards, promotes diversity of plants and wildlife, and provides places for the enjoyment of nature and scenic beauty. By preserving open space within the framework of parks, greenways, and other preserved land, an interconnected system of natural and cultural resources can be established. There are several ways in which open space can benefit the Town of Cary :

Wildlife and native plant habitat. Open spaces provide habitat for native plants and animals that cannot live in urban and suburban environments. Large wooded tracts are particularly important to native species, including bobcats, pileated woodpeckers, and many salamanders. Large grassy areas are also needed to support many native birds, including bobwhite quail, eastern meadowlarks, and grasshopper sparrows.

Water quality protection and flood prevention. Wetlands and vegetated stream buffers retain flood waters, reduce the amount of pollutants entering streams, and help remove the pollutants that do get into the water. They can also provide valuable wildlife habitat, if protected in appropriate amounts and configurations. Groundwater supplies are replenished in places where water soaks into the soil and reenters aquifers.

Agriculture and forestry. Agriculture and forestry cannot remain financially viable without large open spaces in which they can be practiced. These landscapes are also an important part of the region's cultural heritage.

Recreation. Hiking, biking, horseback riding, hunting, fishing, camping, and bird watching are recreational activities that require extensive open spaces and natural areas.

Sense of place. Many of the things that help define the Triangle's character are associated with open space, including agriculture, historic structures, and scenic vistas. Open spaces also provide a respite from the urban milieu by simply offering the aesthetic relief of areas devoid of human construction.

Education. We need functional open spaces so that we can learn about the ecological connections among people, wildlife, and the land.

Air quality improvement. Vegetation in open spaces absorbs carbon dioxide and pollutants from the atmosphere and provides shade, reducing air pollution levels and cooling the air.

¹ Excerpted from "State of Open Space 2000", by [Triangle Land Conservancy](#)

Goals of the Open Space and Historic Resources Plan:**Create an interconnected system of preserved open spaces**

- Conserve a contiguous network of open, natural areas – a green infrastructure
- Create trail corridors and greenways between open space areas
- Create efficiency of scale for land management
- Provide recreational and educational benefits to citizens

Protect environmentally significant areas

- Conserve contiguous forests
- Protect wildlife corridors
- Protect habitat and species diversity
- Protect significant natural features
- Preserve wetlands and stream buffers

Protect cultural resources

- Preserve historic landscapes that reflect our rural heritage
- Protect working farms
- Preserve viewsheds and scenic vistas that provide relief from the built environment

Inform resource landowners about the values, benefits, and opportunities of preservation

- Encourage resource landowners to do long-range planning for their land
- Provide technical assistance and preservation incentives to resource landowners
- Keep landowners informed of preservation programs and opportunities

7. Resource Evaluation

[Ecological Assessment Phase: Technical Report](#) from EcoScience Corporation

EcoScience Corporation of Raleigh, NC was contracted by the Town of Cary to assess, through objective screening, significant natural and cultural resources within the Cary planning area. The assessment included an analysis of natural and cultural resources using available information sources and limited field reconnaissance. The project involved the following tasks: 1) defining the study area; 2) collecting natural and cultural data from Town of Cary and other public and private sources; 3) developing an objective ranking system to quantify and rank significant resources; 4) using Geographical Information System (GIS) technology to prioritize resource areas for further field evaluation; 5) field-evaluating 60 targeted resource areas to verify mapping and conclusions; and 6) developing digital and photographic databases to summarize the methodologies and findings.

The complete Technical Report, as well as a [summary of the ecological assessment methodology](#), is provided in the Technical Appendices.

[Historic Landscape Assessment Phase: Historic District Visioning Initiative](#) by Design Research Laboratory, College of Design, NC State University

As development in the Triangle region continues, so does the impact to the rural landscape. Two areas of specific concern are the Historic Districts of Green Level and Carpenter. Both of these communities are listed on the National Register of Historic Places and have significant historic architectural resources and scenic rural landscapes. The goals of the Visioning Initiative were twofold. The first goal was to identify the visual extent of the landscapes associated with the historic architectural resources. This viewshed analysis produced a set of visual sensitivity maps that identify the land visible from roads within the historic districts. These maps also show the varying degrees of visual sensitivity, or potential visual impact. The second goal was to develop a series of photo-realistic simulations that demonstrate conservation design techniques. These images provide a powerful educational tool for describing preservation and development issues.

The complete report is provided in the Technical Appendices.

8. Threat of Loss Analysis

The **Threat of Loss Analysis (TOLA)** analyzes the probability of development & loss of open space based on location of current municipal limits, water/sewer infrastructure, and developable soils. TOLA examines parcels that are vacant, undeveloped or slightly developed (e.g. one single family house on a lot of 10 acres or greater) that face increased development activity and potential loss of open space or historic resources on-site. TOLA analyzes growth trends and development potential of land within the OSHRP study area, and identifies those parcels facing the most immediate threat and greatest vulnerability from anticipated urbanization. [The complete TOLA Report](#) is available in the Technical Appendices section.

Summary of Methodology.

Baseline Parcels - Those vacant, undeveloped or slightly developed (e.g. one single-family house on 10+ acre) parcels that could face increased development activity and potential loss of open space or historic resources on-site. These parcels form the baseline for this analysis.

1st Order Threat - The most vulnerable land in the planning area was determined to be specific baseline parcels located in one of the following three "priority growth areas" -

- a) *Incorporated Parcels inside the Cary Parkway Loop*
- b) *Select Incorporated Parcels inside the RTP Regional Activity Center*
- c) *Select Parcels under Threat by Holly Springs*

2nd Order Threat - The second most vulnerable land in the planning area was identified using similar logic as what was used for the 1st Order parcels, but with the following differences -

- a) *Unincorporated Parcels inside the Cary Parkway Loop*
- b) *Select Unincorporated Parcels inside the RTP Regional Activity Center*
- c) *All Remaining Incorporated and Select Unincorporated Parcels in Remaining OSHRP Area*

3rd Order Threat - All remaining unincorporated Baseline parcels within the OSHRP Planning Area were classified as 3rd Order Threat. If the parcel met the definition of a Baseline parcel but was not selected for 1st or 2nd Order Threat, based on the above descriptions, then these parcels were included in the 3rd Order classification.

TOLA Categories and Locations

Location \ Jurisdiction	Cary	Unincorporated
Priority Growth Areas -		
• Inside Parkway Loop	1 st Order	2 nd Order
• Inside RTP Activity Center	1 st Order (all)	2 nd Order (select parcels)
• Holly Springs Annexation Focus Area	-----	1 st Order (select parcels)
Remaining Growth Areas -		
• Remaining incorporated areas	2 nd Order	-----
• Select unincorporated areas	-----	2 nd Order
• Remaining unincorporated areas	-----	3 rd Order

9. Implementation Issues

Implementation Issues: Acquiring, Managing, and Funding Open Space

During Fall 2000, an interdepartmental staff team reviewed each section of the Preservation Toolbox. Team members were asked to evaluate the Toolbox in terms of (1) *effectiveness*: how effective a particular technique or strategy would be in protecting a resource or preserving open space; (2) *feasibility*: could Town staff actually carry out a particular tool, technique, method, or strategy, or would it require consultants, interagency agreements, enabling legislation, or other assistance; and (3) *impact*: how implementation of a particular tool, technique, method, or strategy would impact a Town department's workplan, budget, and staff; i.e., gauging the 'administrative complexity' of each tool. For example, would implementation require new positions or new annual funding appropriations? To learn from examples, Town of Cary Planning Staff [surveyed open space programs from five other communities](#). Summaries of these programs can be found in the Technical Appendices.

The interdepartmental team was divided into three staff workgroups: Acquisition, Management, and Funding.

Acquisition. Town of Cary routinely acquires land and easements for roads, utilities, and other infrastructure, along with parkland and greenways. However, if an aggressive program of open space land acquisition is pursued, current staffing and [procedures for land acquisition](#) will need to be re-evaluated (See Technical Appendices: Town of Cary Standard Procedure No. 118).

Acquiring land or easements for other open space purposes may require outside assistance from an agency such as [Trust for Public Land](#) (TPL) or [Triangle Land Conservancy](#). The Town is currently contracting with TPL for acquisition services in conjunction with the White Oak Creek Conservation Project.

Educating property owners on the range of acquisition strategies (including donations and bargain sales of resource property) is also a component of successful preservation programs. The Town should sponsor periodic conservation workshops for landowners. These services could be contracted or existing staff could be trained.

There are many strategies and techniques that can be employed to acquire land and all should be explored. Some methods such as the purchase of development rights (PDR) will be frequently used. However, successful preservation programs continually find creative methods of acquisition tailored to the individual goals of the landowner, the agency, and the nature of the resource.

Management. Traditionally, the Town's emphasis on open space has been the acquisition and management of land for its parks and greenway system. Acquiring and maintaining land solely for open space preservation, which could range from entire subwatersheds to farms to small woodlots, will present a formidable management challenge. Other considerations:

- Management costs of open space are largely a function of their accessibility and intended use. The higher the level of public access and active use, generally the higher maintenance and liability costs incurred.
- Town of Cary's maintenance of Hemlock Bluffs Nature Preserve can serve as a template for managing preserved open space for public access and natural resource protection.
- The Town has an effective program for managing its parks, greenways, and trails. Examination of the current maintenance program can provide insight into the management of generalized open space vegetation. (See [Open Space Vegetation Management: Preliminary Considerations](#) in the Technical Appendices.)
- Future open space acquisitions that involve timbering or farming activities will require new management approaches and techniques.

Funding. The Town of Cary has the advantage of a healthy financial standing and a supportive Town Council that allocated \$12.5 million for open space acquisition in the FY2001 budget. While this fund can be used to acquire immediate open space priority areas, it should also be used to leverage additional funds from county, state, and federal sources. Providing financial incentives for resource landowners should also be part of the preservation balance sheet. The most critical issue, however, is determining the best ways to finance an ongoing land acquisition and management program.

The exact methods of financing an ongoing land preservation program will be based on direction from Town Council, based on the adopted goals of the Open Space and Historic Resources Plan.

Potential acquisitions must be evaluated for their impact on Town of Cary staff and capital expenditures. Managing preserved open space in Cary may require the involvement of outside agencies at the Federal, State, and County level, as well cooperative arrangements with non-profit conservation organizations, such as land trusts. For example, the Town may enter into an agreement with Wake County Soil and Water Conservation District for oversight of land held under an agricultural conservation easement. Developing a strategy for managing open space lands will be a key implementation recommendation.

Criteria have been developed to assist Town of Cary staff in the evaluation of proposed land acquisitions. (See [Evaluation Criteria for Land Acquisitions](#) in the Technical Appendices.)

10. Citizen Input Process

Town of Cary Planning Staff held a series of four Community Information Meetings during the months of April and May 2001 to gather public input on the proposed OSHRP.

The attendance at the community meetings and volume of responses received were less than anticipated. However, judging from the comments received, citizens have responded favorably to the proposed plan. Many of the attendees at the Community Information Meetings came out of curiosity about the Plan, and to see how the proposed open space system might affect their property.

The Citizen Input Process for the OSHRP is part of a continuing effort by the Town to promote open space and environmental stewardship. The OSHRP will be presented to groups of landowners and citizen associations on an ongoing basis. A [report on the citizen input phase](#) is provided in the Technical Appendices.

Town of Cary
Open Space and Historic Resources Plan
Community Information Meeting

HOW WILL WE PRESERVE

OPEN SPACE

IN THE CARY AREA?

What? Community Information Meeting on Town of Cary's Proposed Open Space and Historic Resources Plan

When? Tuesday, April 24, 2001, 6:30 PM

Where? Good Hope Baptist Church
6628 Good Hope Church Road

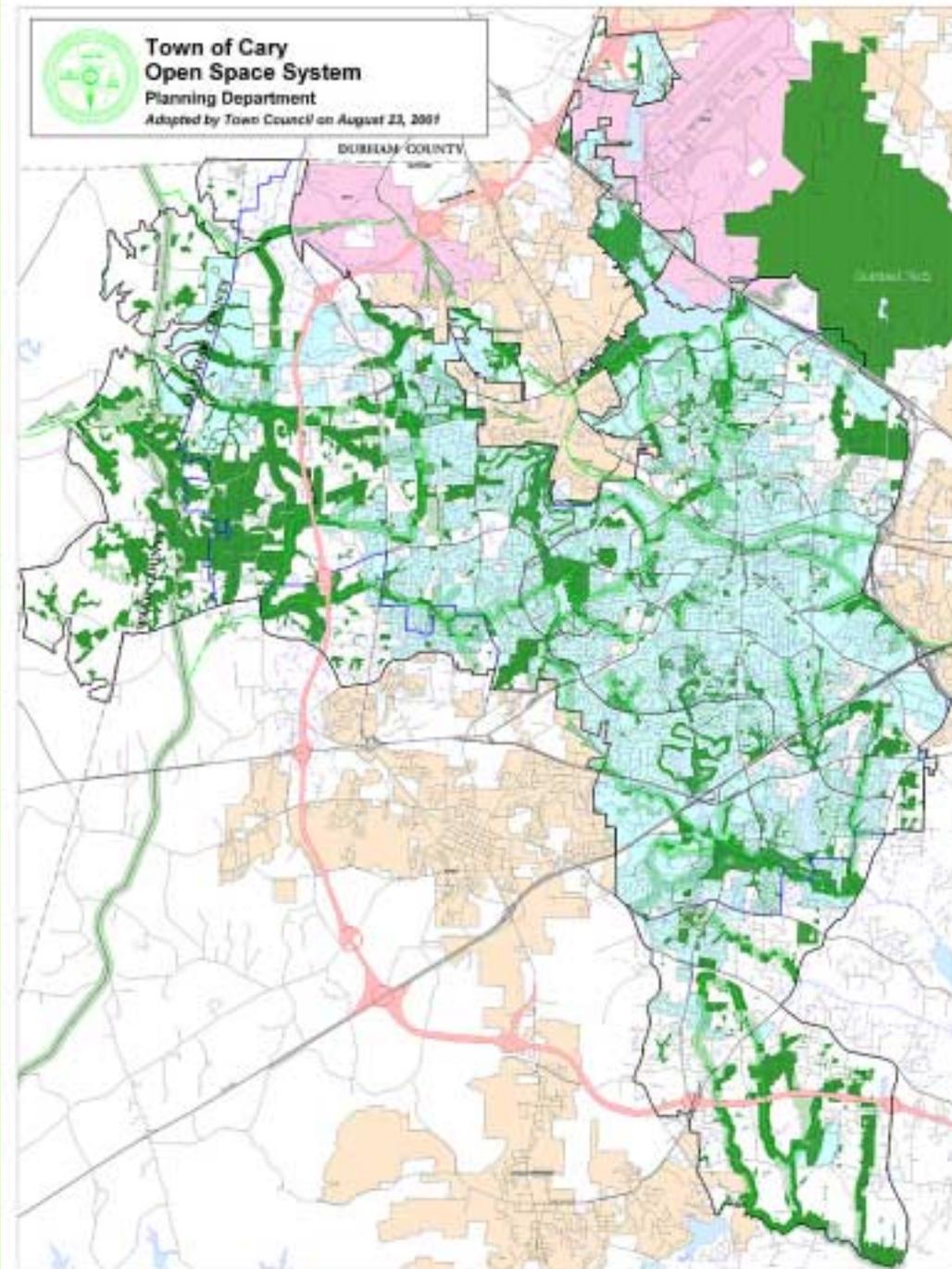
The Town of Cary invites you to come and share your thoughts about the special places in and around the Town that you feel should be preserved and protected. Find out more about the proposed Open Space and Historic Resources Plan. Maps and other information will be on display, and Planning Department staff members will be on hand to answer questions. For more details, contact Donald Bink, Cary Planning Department, at 469-4084 or e-mail dbink@ci.cary.nc.us.

Check out the Open Space and Historic Resources Plan Web Site:
<http://www.townofcary.org> →What's New →Open Space and Historic Resources Plan

11.

Plan Map

The [Open Space System map](#) illustrates the Town of Cary's green infrastructure: significant resource areas and potential open space interconnected with existing, preserved open space, parks, and greenways. Existing and proposed greenways are shown as 800' corridors to identify linkages and additional open space opportunities. The following enclosure contains a presentation-size map.



12. What the Plan Accomplishes

As an element of the Comprehensive Plan, the OSHRP guides the Town of Cary's policies and programs for preserving natural and cultural resources. More importantly, it is used as the basis for reviewing other Town plans and policies. As the Comprehensive Plan is implemented in the context of preserving a green infrastructure, it will guide the Town's vision of the urban form it desires for the future, with resource preservation as the foundation. For example, by limiting the expansion of water and sewer infrastructure, the Town can impede the loss of open space, particularly in western and southern areas of Cary, where large areas of resources exist. This policy, in turn, could affect the need for new roads as recommended in the Transportation Plan.

The OSHRP also guides planning and land development policies and procedures, by providing the standard of reference for evaluating the configuration of open space in new site/subdivision plans and Planned Unit Developments.

The Open Space and Historic Resources Plan entails three phases of research: an assessment of ecologically significant areas, a historic landscape evaluation, and an analysis of open space vulnerability, or threat of loss. Combined, these studies enable the Town of Cary to identify, locate, and rank parcels containing significant resources, and identify potential corridors of linkage to create an interconnecting system of open space – a green infrastructure.

The OSHRP identifies over 6,800 acres of “baseline” open space –vacant, undeveloped, or slightly developed land that could potentially provide one or more open space functions. The existing and proposed Cary Parks and Greenways system is used as a framework to expand and connect potential open space and Significant Resource Areas. When this connecting framework is applied (represented as 800' corridors), an Open Space System (containing 9,854 acres) is created. (See Technical Appendices for a further explanation of the [areal extent of the Open Space System](#).)

The evaluation matrix developed during the ecological assessment phase will enable Town of Cary staff to individually rank all parcels that lie within the Open Space System on the basis of their [Parcel Resource Value](#). The Parcel Resource Value is determined from the cumulative score of the point values for each occurrence of resources on the property. (See Technical Appendices.) The Threat of Loss Analysis (TOLA) provides a method to further define acquisition priorities by classifying the parcels with highest resource value by threat category.

The preservation of open space priority parcels will be accomplished through a combination of acquisition (fee simple purchase, negotiation of conservation easements, etc.), regulatory measures, other cooperative agreements with government agencies or non-profit land conservation organizations, and voluntary landowner initiative. In FY2002, funding from the \$12.5 million Utility Fund appropriation will be used to preserve as much open space as possible. Town of Cary staff will focus its efforts on several 'signature' parcels that have high resource value, are threatened with loss in the short-term, and have been identified by Cary residents during the citizen input phase. It is estimated that current funds could protect 300-500 acres. Preservation costs will depend upon land values, the specific preservation technique used, and other factors.

The long-term costs of preserving an Open Space System of nearly 10,000 acres are more difficult to estimate. Outright acquisition of all parcels within the Open Space System would cost hundreds of millions of dollars. However, Town of Cary staff has evaluated several scenarios for protecting TOLA Category 1 and 2 parcels (approximately 5,100 acres) by using different preservation measures. In one scenario, roughly 3,400 to 4,250 acres could be preserved at an estimated cost range of \$30 million to \$81.25 million. This open space would be protected using a range of techniques as described in the *Preservation Toolbox*. For example, the Town of Cary would acquire some land outright, while another percentage would be preserved by the purchase of development rights (conservation easements). Some open space would be protected through conservation design techniques. Stream buffer regulations would also protect part of this open space, and donations of land and other cooperative agreements would also account for a portion. Funds would come from multiple sources, including federal, state, and county grant programs, as well as Town of Cary funds.

In addition to describing financial strategies, the Preservation Toolbox section of the OSHRP details a variety of regulatory mechanisms that can be employed for protecting open space. Current Town regulations, including the Riparian Buffer Rules and the Reservoir Watershed Overlay District, help protect open space and water resources. The Town of Cary should establish Conservation Overlay Districts in areas where ecologically and historically significant open space resources are concentrated. A conservation overlay zone would establish stricter development standards to protect historic landscape features, scenic views, wildlife habitat, agricultural areas, or watersheds. An 'overlay' would keep existing zoning in place, but additional requirements would be applied for resource protection. An example of such a requirement would be the use of cluster, or [conservation subdivision design](#), for new residential developments in the overlay district. Conservation Overlay Districts can be considered during the rewrite of the Unified Development Ordinance. For additional information on Conservation Subdivision Design, see Technical Appendices.

Voluntary landowner initiative will be another key element in the success of the Open Space and Historic Resources Plan. The Plan provides an array of information sources for citizens and landowners interested in preservation. The Town of Cary should use the OSHRP as an educational tool to inform citizens of the potential financial benefits of land conservation. The Town should also sponsor periodic workshops on land preservation.

In these forums, resource landowners can learn of the opportunities and benefits of land preservation. Through advance planning, they can achieve significant financial benefits through the use of conservation easements for significant resources, while employing conservation design techniques for developing less-sensitive areas of the land.

By encouraging landowners within the Open Space System to create a long-range plan for their property, the Town will achieve a significant share of its preservation objectives at little or no cost to the public, while enabling resource property owners to protect their land and land values.

Cary is poised at a special moment in its history. The Town Council's commitment to protect open space presents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to preserve significant resource areas for future generations. The time to plan for the preservation of open space is now, and the Open Space and Historic Resources Plan provides the basis for creating a green infrastructure for Cary.

13. Recommendations

The Implementation Recommendations table describes specific actions the Town of Cary should take to protect its natural and historic resources. The table lists tasks and responsibilities by department and priority time frame.

Preservation and Acquisition/Management Recommendations	Lead Department: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources (PRCR)
Strategy/Task	Priority Time Frame¹
Develop acquisition plan based on OSHRP priority areas and PRCR's current Capital Improvements Budget for acquiring land for parks and greenways.	Medium-Term
Finalize the protection of 200 – 250 acres along the White Oak Creek corridor to establish Open Space program visibility and experience.	Short-Term
Partner with the Wake County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) to establish an agricultural conservation easement pilot project in the Jordan Lake watershed ² .	Short-Term
Develop and recommend a multi-year, dedicated funding source to support Open Space acquisition and stewardship.	Short-Term
Establish open space management strategy to determine staff and management resources required for long-term stewardship of conservation land.	Medium-Term
Pursue grant funds for open space preservation from available County, State, and Federal sources. Examples: Wake County Open Space Fund, Clean Water Management Trust Fund, Land and Water Conservation Fund, TEA-21 Enhancement Funds, etc.	Medium-Term
Establish partnerships with regional non-profit organizations that can move quickly to procure open space to preserve natural and historic resources.	Medium-Term
Regulatory, Policy, and Research Recommendations	Lead Department: Planning
Create Conservation Overlay Districts for Open Space Priority Areas. Ordinance would require conservation subdivision design to protect Significant Resource Areas identified in the OSHRP. Incorporate into current rewrite of Unified Development Ordinance.	Medium-Term
Explore cooperative agreements and preservation objectives with regional government agencies. Determine 'common ground' where Town of Cary and agency conservation goals coincide.	Medium-Term
Use the OSHRP as a basis for reviewing and updating other Town plans, such as the Land Use Plan, Growth Management Plan, Parks, Greenways, and Bikeways Master Plan, and Transportation Plan.	Ongoing
Review current Water and Sewer Plan.	Medium-Term
Complete ecological assessments in Jordan Lake watershed for areas designated in Land Use Plan as Very Low Density Residential (VLDR).	Medium-Term

¹ Short-term: Initiate within next 12 months; Medium-Term: 1-3 years; Long-Term: 3 years and beyond.

² Estimated cost: \$500,000; fifty percent (\$250,000) pledged by Town Council for farmland preservation pilot program; matching funds from Wake Co. Open Space Partnership; other possible funds from Clean Water Management Trust Fund, etc.

Regulatory, Policy, and Research Recommendations (cont'd)	Lead Department: Planning
Strategy/Task	Priority Time Frame
Evaluate the need for a historic preservation program that is responsive to the needs of the Town of Cary and its citizens.	Medium-Term
Determine the resource significance, connectivity potential, acreage, and estimated cost of urban "infill" open space parcels within the Cary Parkway loop.	Medium-Term
Prepare annual report describing the progress of OSHRP implementation.	Medium-Term
Conduct assessment of Cary farmland. Determine viability of remaining farmland and explore strategies to preserve agricultural activity.	Long-Term
Devise a Transfer of Development Rights scenario for West Cary Open Space and RTP Regional Activity Center	Long-Term
Community Outreach and Public Information Recommendations	Lead Department: Planning
Develop a strategy to publicize the OSHRP.	Short-Term
Present informational forum "Conservation Options for Landowners" to inform property owners of benefits and opportunities of land preservation.	Medium-Term

14. Technical Appendices

Following is the list of Technical Appendices referenced in the Open Space and Historic Resources Plan.

Technical Appendices

- 1) [Cary – a Geographical Sketch](#)
- 2) [Historical Analysis of the Loss of Open Space](#)
- 3) Preservation and Acquisition Priorities Report (*development of report in process*)
- 4) [Areal Extent of Open Space System](#)
- 5) [Citizen Input Phase Report](#)
- 6) [Ecological Assessment Phase: Technical Report](#) from EcoScience Corporation
- 7) [Summary of Ecological Assessment Methodology](#)
- 8) [Historic Landscape Assessment Phase: Historic District Visioning Initiative](#)
- 9) [Threat of Loss Analysis \(TOLA\)](#)
- 10) [Open Space Program Summaries](#) (*Survey of open space programs from other communities*)
- 11) [Procedures for Land Acquisition: Town of Cary Standard Procedure No. 118](#)
- 12) [Open Space Vegetation Management: Preliminary Considerations](#)
- 13) [Proposed Evaluation Criteria for Land Acquisitions](#)
- 14) [Calculating Parcel Resource Values](#): (*How parcel ranking scores are determined*)
- 15) [The Preservation Toolbox](#): Tools and Techniques for Preserving Open Space

Supplementary Reports

- 16) [Report of the 9-11-2000 meeting of the OSHRP ad hoc Technical Advisory Group](#)
- 17) [Status Report: Open Space and Historic Resources Plan, Year-End 2000](#)
- 18) [Conservation Subdivision Design](#)
- 19) [The Transfer of Development Rights \(TDR\) Concept](#)

Maps

- 20) [Open Space System](#)
- 21) [Threat of Loss Analysis](#)