Walnut Street Park
Cary, North Carolina
Master Plan Report

Town of Cary
Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources
www.townofcary.org
(919) 469-4061

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Acknowledgements

Town Council Members

Ernie McAlister, "Mayor"
Marla Dorrel, District "D" Representative
Michael Joyce, "At-Large" Representative
Julie Aberg Robison, "At-Large" Representative
Jennifer Robinson, "District "A" Representative
Nels Roseland, District "B" Representative
Jack Smith, Mayor Pro Tem, District "C" Representative

Town Of Cary Parks, Recreation, And Cultural Resources

Mary Henderson, Director
Doug McRainey, Parks Planning Manager
Paul Kuhn, Parks Planner

Town of Cary Staff Advisory Committee

Steve Boles, Public Works
Elizabeth Lewis, Planning
Jane Strickland, Engineering

Citizens Advisory Committee

Tom Hemrick
Tullie Johnson
David Angevine
Cindy Bogan
Lori Skinner Campbell
Jim & Jane Dienes
Rob Evans
Terry Grube
Laura Johnson
Michael & Linda Madigan
Julie Ridenour
Wayne & Violet Rogers
Mary Katherine Smith
Moultrie & Sabra Watts
Duane & Flo Westin
Introduction

In 2002, the Town of Cary purchased 11 acres of land located on the northwest corner of Walnut Street and Lawrence Drive. The purchase and development of this parcel into a park is part of a broader effort by the Town of Cary to improve the Walnut Street corridor, from the US 1/64 - Walnut Street interchange as well as Crossroads shopping area, as proposed in the Southeast Gateway Area Plan.

The actual planning process for the park began in March 2005. This plan is largely the result of a community based planning and design process involving a Citizens Advisory Committee, and the general public. The master planning process involved several committee meetings, public hearings, and coordination with town staff. As such, the master plan responds to the expressed needs of the community as well as the recommendations found in the Town’s Park, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Facilities Master Plan.

Throughout the design process, the public expressed the need for active and passive recreational opportunities, as well as providing activities for all ages. There were many comments regarding the need to protect existing vegetation and wildlife on the site, while providing natural open space in the park. The plan reflects a balance between passive and active recreation facilities and a focus on preserving the natural environment.
The master plan for Walnut Street Park is based on various objectives identified during public, staff, and advisory committee meetings. One of the overarching objectives for the plan was to develop a park that protected as well as exhibited environmental awareness of the park's natural features. This is evident in the plan's overall layout, ideas for construction implementation, and the selection of materials for park elements. The following is a brief description of several objectives.

**Gateway**

Due to the park's prominent location along Walnut Street, which is a very busy thoroughfare and one of several gateways into the Town center, an important objective was to make the park visually appealing from the street.

**Preservation of Natural Site Features**

The site contains large mature pines and hardwoods which have been integrated into the design as a feature. The original intent of the plan was to protect the hardwoods by creating open space clearings but configured in such a way as to still maintain the large existing hardwoods. Secondly, a gravel lot is located at the southern edge of the park site, which it was agreed initially would provide an opportunity to locate parking. Again, locating parking at this clearing would limit the impact to the park's natural resources.

**Passive Recreation**

Because a majority of the site was to be preserved, a major guiding principle was that the primary use of the park would be set aside for passive recreational opportunities. Thus, a variety of trails and open spaces make up most of the site's features.

**Active Recreation**

Because Walnut Street Park is a neighborhood park, there would still be a need to provide active recreation opportunities.

**Accessibility**

Town staff also wanted to make pedestrian access into the park a priority. This was supported by local residents at the public meetings. Effort was made in the planning of the park to provide sufficient access throughout the park. Secondly, the park will be designed to accommodate disabled users. All major facilities, restrooms, shelters, pathways, playgrounds, etc. will be accessible as defined by the current American Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.

**Safety**

Since operation of the park will be from dawn to dusk, all structures, where possible are proposed to be visible from the road. Lighting will be provided for the parking lot only. Parking will be located and designed to be convenient and is a safe distance away from the intersection of Walnut Street and Lawrence Road.