

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Q: Why is the Town studying a *Land Use Plan* amendment for this area?

A: In May 2003, the Town rezoned about 25 acres at the northeast corner of NW Maynard and Chapel Hill roads for a Lowe's Home Improvement Center and a restaurant. As part of their motion in approving that rezoning case, the Town Council directed the town staff to update the recommendations of the Land Use Plan for how the other quadrants of this intersection should develop over time.

Q: Are there any constraints on the types of amendments that can be considered?

A: There are three key constraints (the first two of which have been explicitly set by Town Council):

- (1) The area should develop as a *neighborhood activity center (NAC)*, as currently recommended in the *Land Use Plan*. An **activity center** is a concentrated "node" of development that contains a mix of uses, including shopping, office and institutional uses, and high and/or medium-density housing. The overall activity center should be designed and laid out in a compact and pedestrian-friendly manner. A **neighborhood activity center (NAC)** should provide the commercial and institutional uses necessary to support the common day-to-day demands of the surrounding neighborhood for goods, services, and facilities.
- (2) The overall level of traffic associated with future development in this area should not exceed the level that might normally be expected for a *neighborhood activity center* at this location.
- (3) For legal reasons, the proposed plan amendment should avoid recommendations that could lead to a downzoning of any property.

Q: What is the Town's Land Use Plan? How is it used?

A: The Land Use Plan is an official policy document expressing the Town's official long-range vision for future development. The Plan is used by the Town to help guide municipal infrastructure planning (roads, water, sewer, parks, etc.) and to help guide development of other official Town plans (Transportation Plan, Parks Plan, etc.). Town staff and officials also use the Plan as part of their evaluation of private development and zoning proposals submitted to the Town, to determine the degree to which such proposals do or do not match the Town's official vision for the area. Lastly, private businesses and citizens use the Plan to help guide their own investment decisions.

Q: Will official adoption of the final Northwest Cary Area Plan change my zoning?

A: The plan amendment will not change the base zoning that currently exists for properties within the study area. For example, if a property is already zoned commercial, it will remain zoned commercial.

However, effective July 1, 2003, the entire study area was placed within an *Activity Center Overlay Zoning District*. Parcels within the overlay district have the option of developing either according to their existing base zoning, or with any mix of commercial, office, institutional, or high or medium density housing provided that (a) the proposal conforms with the recommendations of the Land Use Plan for that activity center, and (b) that the development applicant submits an *Activity Center Concept Plan (ACCP)* that details the mix of proposed uses for at least an entire quadrant of the intersection. Town Council must review and approve the ACCP, and citizens have the opportunity to speak publicly on the ACCP proposal, similar to a

rezoning case. Thus, amending the Land Use Plan for this area will affect the types of Activity Center Concept Plans that can be approved.

Q: What are the next steps in the process?

A: There will be an official public hearing before the Town Council on **Tuesday, September 23, 2003** at 6:30 p.m. at the Cary Town Hall, located at 316 N. Academy St. in Cary. The Planning and Zoning Board will also hold a public hearing on the proposed amendment on **Monday, October 20, 2003** at 7:30 p.m. at the same location. The public hearings allow those in favor of or opposed to the proposed Land Use Plan amendment to explain their viewpoint and to suggest changes to the Town Council and Planning Board.

After the first public hearing on September 23rd, the proposed Plan amendment will be referred to the Planning and Zoning Board for consideration at their meeting on October 20th. The Planning and Zoning Board will make a recommendation to the Town Council following their public hearing, and will forward the proposed amendment to the Cary Town Council for an official vote. (The Town Council could consider the amendment as early as their **November 13, 2003**, meeting.) The Town Council will consider public comments from the public hearings and the recommendation of the Planning and Zoning Board, and make a final decision on the proposed Land Use Plan amendment. Please note that there may be changes in the proposed amendment during the process.

Q: How can I learn more about this project?

A: For more information contact the project manager, Scott Ramage, at 469-4087, or via e-mail at scott.ramage@townofcary.org, or in writing to:

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