



Executive Summary

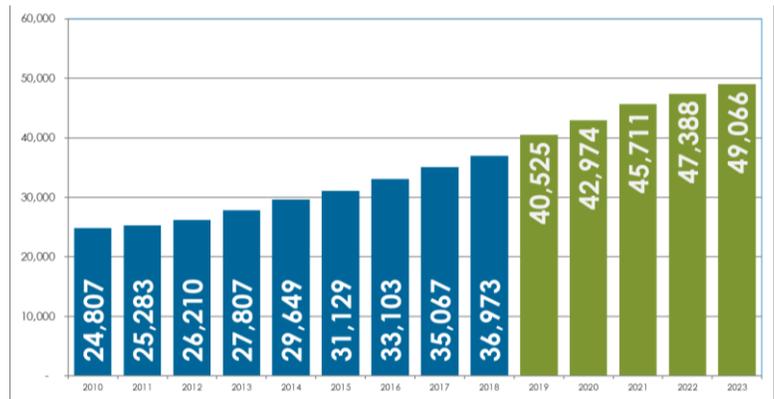
Holly Springs Yesterday and Today

Town history describes Holly Springs as a community that attracted visitors in Colonial times with its offering of fresh water springs surrounded by holly trees. Most of these springs and trees have disappeared but a Town that is flourishing as never before remains; a Town that has adopted the holly branch as its symbol of identity and memory.

The Town of Holly Springs has traditionally experienced waves of prosperity and decline; economic recessions have typically been initiated by war. The Civil War devastated the tiny Town, which was rebuilt again in the late 1800's and ultimately, incorporated in 1876. The arrival of a railroad in the early 1900's facilitated the quick growth of a lively business and industrial community enhanced by churches and schools. Families moved from other areas just to take advantage of these educational opportunities.

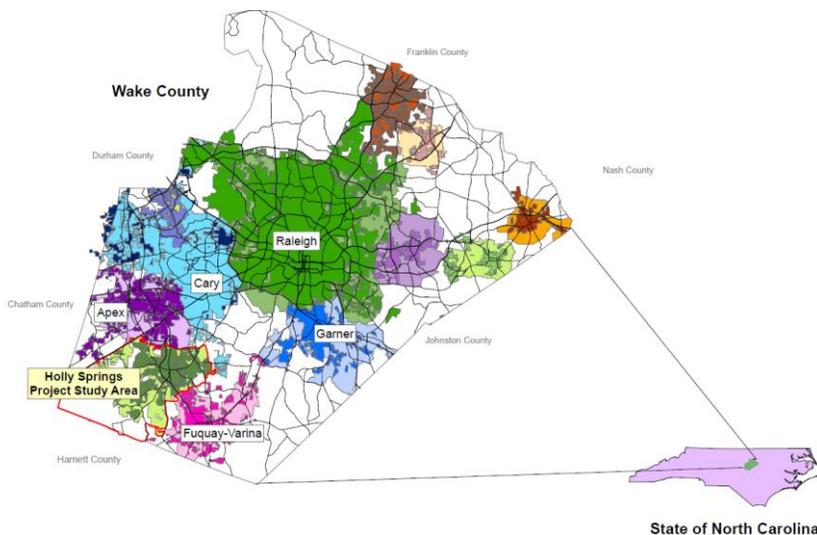
World War I affected the Town again as soldiers and young people alike left the area to serve their country and seek greater opportunity in more populated urban areas. The Depression, followed by World War II, continued to take a toll on growth and development. Holly Springs remained a primarily agricultural community of only 500 to 600 people until infrastructure developments began to attract people and business in 1985. The Town acquired grants, allowing the Town to develop full utility offerings that could accommodate its first major residential development - Sunset Ridge.

A visitor to the Town of Holly Springs less than 30 short years ago might barely recognize Holly Springs today. A population base of 908 residents in 1990 has exploded into a current estimated population of nearly 37,000 as of July 1, 2018 and is anticipated to continue to grow at a consistent pace.



Holly Springs' growth is due, in large part, to its strategic location near North Carolina's famed Research Triangle. Located less than 30 minutes from Research Triangle Park, the Cities of Raleigh and Durham, and the Raleigh-Durham International Airport, Holly Springs has begun to fulfill a role that neighboring communities Apex and Cary have already embraced: a land of residential and commercial opportunity for North Carolina's rapidly expanding population. Holly Springs' rural character, appealing historic nature, and rolling topography have attracted housing developers and, more recently, significant new commercial and biotech business.

Current Conditions



The Town has several levels of planning jurisdictions within the study area. First and foremost is the Town Limits. The Town limits as of July 1, 2018 were 17.5 square miles. The ETJ (Extraterritorial Jurisdiction) was approximately 14.4 square miles. Also, within the study area the Town has Short Range and Long Range Urban Service Areas (SRUSA and LRUSA). This

area has been designated by the Town and Wake County as areas of anticipated growth. The SRUSA is an area that can be easily served with Town services within 5 or fewer years. The LRUSA is an area that could be served with Town services sometime in the future, most likely more than five years out. Each year the urban service areas are evaluated and may be adjusted by Wake County based on the Town's ability to possibly serve areas with Town services.

Striking a Balance: Maintaining Character, Balancing the Tax Base

Continued growth, without proper planning, could erode the rural character that has attracted so many residents and businesses to make Holly Springs their home. At the same time, the Town must make vital land use decisions now to ensure a constant stream of tax revenue that is not overly committed to maintaining the needs of a residential population.

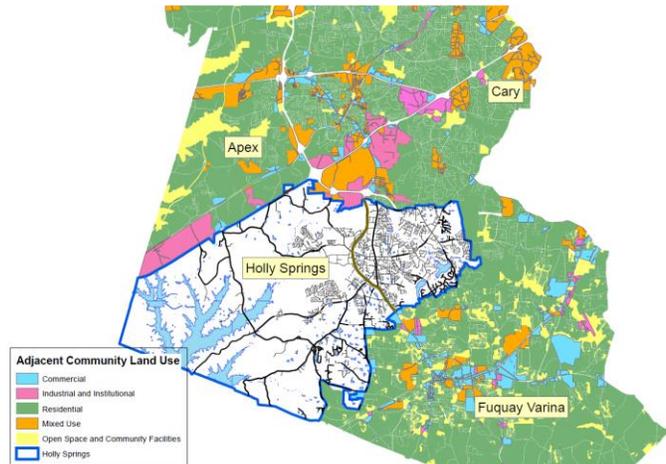


This Comprehensive Plan will enable the Town to proactively lay the framework for future growth and development while retaining and enhancing its unique character. Rather than a sprawling “City” of 50,000+ residents, Holly Springs can evolve into a “Village” that includes a Downtown Village District, a series of walkable neighborhoods, and preserved and interconnected open space. And, no less important, land can be strategically set aside for commercial and light industrial development to “balance” the existing tax base. Development of commercial and light industrial land will demand less intensive use of tax dollars for road improvements, public utilities and community services while providing a sustainable stream of revenue.

Planning in Context with Our Neighbors

Making informed land use decisions that are also consistent with those of neighboring municipalities is of paramount importance. The communities of Apex, Fuquay-Varina, and Cary border Holly Springs. These communities are experiencing increased levels of residential and commercial development and have grown considerably over the past two decades as well as the unincorporated areas covered by Wake County.

The graphic to the right, compiled using 2018 land use data, illustrates the proposed land uses for the lands bordering Holly Springs. In both communities, the primary bordering land use is Low Density Residential. Future land uses proposed in the Comprehensive Plan Update must be sensitive to these surrounding land uses and ensure that their character can be preserved.



In 2008-9, The Town of Holly Springs Town Council participated in the Wake County Growth Issues Task Force (GITF) that was made up of elected officials from each Wake County municipality, the Wake County School Board, and the Wake County Board of Commissioners. This GITF was charged with identifying three action areas critical to the sustainable and quality growth of our area. As a result of the GITF, the following three Growth Priorities were identified and a Memorandum

of Understanding was endorsed regarding these Growth Priorities and their supporting actions.

1. That a High Quality Educational System is the foundation for long term economic growth and prosperity in today's rapidly changing global economy.
2. That Increased Mass Transit Opportunities offer the best hope of addressing and solving our long term transportation needs with Wake County, and the Triangle Region as a whole.
3. That Local Government Joint Planning and Cooperation, particularly focused on the coordination of land use and infrastructure, is necessary to establish a sustainable pattern of quality growth and development.

Vision Holly Springs addresses each of these regional items as well as the Town's plans to ensure that Holly Springs is and continues to plan in context with our neighbors to ensure that the growth of our area is top- quality and sustainable.

Using the Plan to Implement the Town's Vision

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to provide Town Staff and Town Council with a framework to respond to the rapidly changing needs of Holly Springs and to help implement the "Vision" of the future as it emerged during consultations with the Steering Committee, through the public input process, and during Focus Group sessions.

A combination of Project Goals, Policy Statements, Implementation Items, and a Future Land Use Plan prepared as a part of the Comprehensive Planning process can help the Town of Holly Springs achieve the following Vision:

- To establish and enhance a Town-wide identity
- To strategically encourage business park, light industrial and commercial development in appropriate locations and balance the overall tax base
- To enhance the existing Downtown by encouraging additional commercial use, providing a variety of cultural attractions, and focusing on the development of a pedestrian-friendly streetscape
- To guide the development of regional commercial areas (such as "big-box" stores) so they are contained, and their access is managed, to protect the character of the remainder of the community
- To enable all residents with the ability to live within walking distance of a neighborhood commercial center and central civic space
- To establish a community-wide "green infrastructure" that provides all residents with convenient access to trails and open space



- To physically unite the Town by connecting existing trails, sidewalks and open spaces
- To accommodate a variety housing types that includes single family, executive housing, townhouses, condominiums and apartments
- To prioritize future Town land acquisitions and ensure the continuity of civic space
- To preserve and protect, where appropriate, agricultural land, green space, woodland and the natural environment
- To prevent sprawl and ensure that community services and infrastructure are used strategically and conservatively

The following chapters will document the above referenced Vision in both written and graphic context.

What Else Will the Comprehensive Plan Accomplish?

In addition to establishing a Future Land Use Strategy, the Comprehensive Plan will also serve as a vital tool to Town officials, Staff and local residents. Some of its additional functions include:

- Document local characteristics and trends regarding resident population composition, land use, the natural environment, economic development and service provision
- Establish a preferred Future Land Use Plan for the Town that will enable location-appropriate development and guide the evolution of the Unified Development Ordinance
- Provide a benchmark for evaluating the compatibility of individual development proposals with the Long-Range development objectives of the community
- Serve as a comprehensive source of current information that can be used by the Town in its efforts to secure state and federal funding and marketing the area to potential developers
- Promote open space conservation designed to preserve the rural heritage of the community and enhance the overall quality of life

Adopting and Implementing the Plan

Adopting the Comprehensive Plan illustrates the commitment on the part of Town Council to enhance the overall quality of life in Holly Springs. Town Council and



Planning Board members can measure the desirability of proposed developments by their conformity with the Plan, and adopt policies and ordinances that support Plan goals. Town Staff can use the Plan to make administrative decisions, enforce development-related codes and prioritize work efforts. Finally local residents can use the Plan as a reference when making residential location choices and evaluating the effectiveness of local government.

How was the Plan Formulated?

The Plan represents the collaborative efforts of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, Town officials, local residents and stakeholders that assisted in drafting of the original document in 2007. The Plan is a collection of inventory and objectives prepared to guide the Town over the next decade. This section outlines the tasks completed in preparation of the Plan and provides information on the multiple re-adoptions of the Plan since its original adoption in 2007.

Steering Committee Meetings

A series of progress meeting were held with the Steering Committee over the course of the writing of the Plan. The Committee was comprised of residents and business owners who have special interest in the Town. The Committee reviewed documentation and mapping, provided contacts and helped determine representatives to participate in a series of focus group sessions. There was a visioning session held with the Committee to develop initial goals and objectives and to help define the future of the Town.

Inventory

The information contained in the plan was supplemented by data from various governmental and private agencies, to help ensure the accuracy of the document. With the help of the various agencies, information was obtain regarding local laws and regulations, land use the environment, population, community services, housing, municipal services and economic development. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data was prepared to create maps and illustrate land uses, environmental conditions and the location of community services and transportation corridors.

Focus Group Sessions & Telephone Interviews

A series of telephone interviews were conducted to obtain additional information. Several officials, including the Town Historian, Town Staff, Elected Officials and



others, provided valuable information through telephone interviews in the preparation of the plan. There were a total of three focus groups held with representatives from business, economic development, schools, open space and recreational interest.

Community Survey

A random survey was distributed to both homeowners and renters in the study area. The survey was designed to determine the opinions of residents on a variety of topic, including community image, recreation, transportation, housing, and community services. Approximately 220 residents responded to the survey – more than 30% of total surveys mailed. This return was more than double the rate required to conduct a “scientifically accurate” survey.

Interactive Public Meetings

Several public meetings were conducted beginning in July of 2006. These sessions helped provide the consultant and elected officials with valuable input as to the direction the Comprehensive Plan should take and the Vision the Plan should strive to achieve.

2009 Update

An update to all sections of Vision Holly Springs was conducted during the Fall of 2009 with assistance from the following departments: Planning and Zoning, Engineering, Administration; Economic Development; Police and Fire. To begin the evaluation of the Plan, presentations were made to the Planning Board and Town Council to gauge any specific areas of concern on their behalf. The process for the update included a joint inter-departmental workshop to discuss major areas for evaluation as well as several working meetings to discuss specific areas of update to ensure that all related departments were in agreement. The plan update was presented to the Planning Board on October 27th and a Public Hearing and Town Council adoption of the update occurred on November 17th.

2018 Update

Following the adoption of the Holly Springs Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) in 2011 and multiple planning efforts and studies, several Sections of Vision Holly Springs became obsolete. This update made the following changes:

- Reformatted the various sections of the Plan for digital use

- 
- Eliminated the printed full-edition binder
 - Modified the following sections to reference other planning documents that have replaced the previous plan sections, as follows:
 - Sections 1 & 4 were combined to create Section 1: Future Land Use and Community Character Plan
 - Section 2: Transportation provides an overview and a link to the CTP
 - Section 3: Parks, Recreation and Open Space was significantly modified with the adoption of the CTP which incorporated the Town's greenway plan - Section 3 is now the previously adopted and modified Beyond the Green: A Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
 - Section 5: Previously eliminated