



**CONSERVATION & PRESERVATION
LAND ACQUISITION FRAMEWORK**



AGENDA

- Historical Overview
- Guiding Statement
- Recommendations by Type
- Change in Use Modifications

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW: TIMELINE

- 2002: Approval to pursue designation of County nature preserves as dedicated state nature preserves.
- 2004: Environmental Leadership Policy was adopted.
- 2021: Policy was amended/updated and endorsement of Environmental Leadership Action Plan (ELAP).
- FY22-FY24: Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) appropriated \$118.63m for acquiring land for park and recreation purposes.





HISTORICAL OVERVIEW:
LAND ACQUISITIONS

Fiscal Year	Acreage	Expenditure
FY22	295.49	\$19.17m
FY23	499.04	\$51.73m
FY24	551.60	\$47.73m
Totals	1346.13	\$118.63m

CONSERVATION & PRESERVATION LAND ACQUISITION FRAMEWORK GUIDING STATEMENT

Protecting the environment for the benefit of future generations is a high priority of the Mecklenburg County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). This includes ensuring that land acquired aligned to the Environmental Leadership Action Plan (FY22 and beyond) is preserved for its intended use.

This Framework outlines the practices and procedures to effectively achieve this vision, for years to come; and was developed in partnership with County Park and Recreation, County Real Estate Management and Executive Leadership.





CONSERVATION & PRESERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS BY TYPE

- Parks
- Preserves
- Greenways



PARKS

- Recommend deed restrictions for park and recreation use only, as intended in the current Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation master plan. If there are proposed changes, the Change in Use Modification process outlined below will apply.
- Park development will continue to adhere to the 50/50 development guideline (50% developed, 50% undeveloped).

PRESERVES

- For all Preserves post-acquisition, continue seeking state dedicated conservation easement per the 2002 Board Action.
- If state-dedicated easement is not applicable/eligible, then pursue obtaining a local land trust-issued conservation easement.
- If local land trust-issued conservation easement is unobtainable then recommend deed restrictions for habitat preservation and passive recreation only.
- Preserve development will continue to adhere to the 90/10 guideline (90% undeveloped, 10% developed).





GREENWAYS

- No action needed on greenway properties where SWIM buffers or other local, state and/or federal restrictions exist.
- On properties where there are no SWIM buffer(s), recommend deed restrictions where implementation is applicable. Greenway sections comprised of easements may not be eligible for deed restrictions.

CHANGE IN USE MODIFICATIONS

- If modifications to intended parcel use or swapping/selling a park/preserve is proposed, the modifications must go through the process outlined below.
- These modifications do not apply to ancillary transactions that do not change the permanent primary function of the park, preserve or greenway. Ancillary transactions are approved by the County Manager or designee.
- A Change in Use modification request will be presented at a minimum of three (3) BOCC meetings with the following actions taken respectively at the meetings. The Board will:
 - a) Receive the Change in Use modification request,
 - b) Hold a public hearing, and
 - c) Approve or deny request.



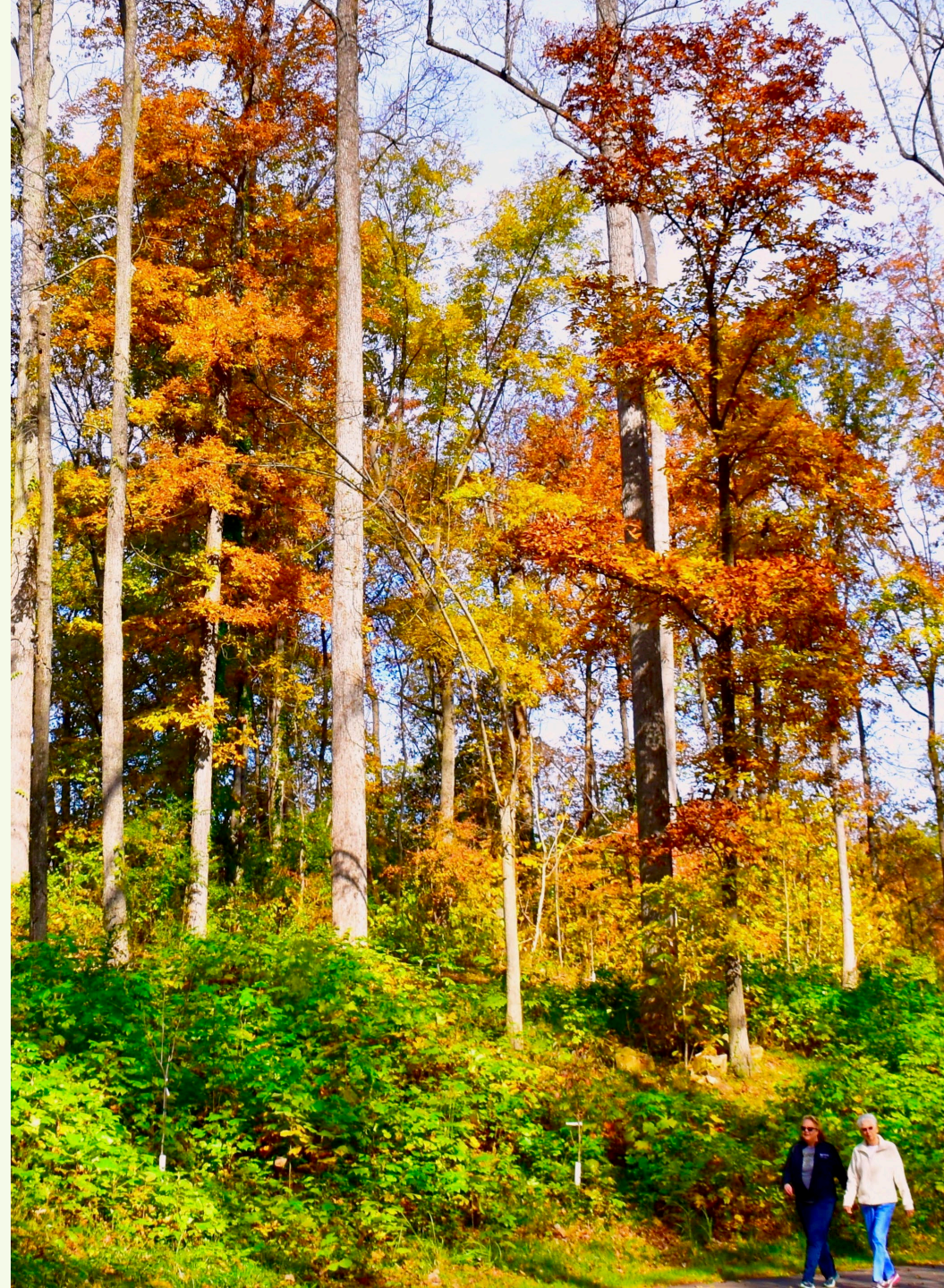


CHANGE IN USE MODIFICATION PROCESS

1. The change in use modification(s) must first come to the BOCC to present the proposed change in use and receive approval to conduct a public hearing regarding the change.
2. After the meeting during which the BOCC received the Change in Use modification request and approved conducting a public hearing, the responsible County staff will a) work with the Clerk's Office to advertise the community engagement session(s) as well as the public hearing and b) partner with department leadership to notify applicable County Advisory Boards.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & PUBLIC HEARING PROCESS

- All neighborhoods within 0.5 miles must be made aware of the proposed change in use modification as well as how to provide comments on the proposed modification within ten (10) days of the BOCC Public Hearing meeting. Boundaries for notification may be increased on a case-by-case basis, especially where nearby natural barriers exist that would impact the neighborhood notification area.
- Additional community input will be gathered from the residents most approximate to the parcel(s) in question at a time separate to the public hearing. The meeting should be held at a time and location that is easily accessible to those residents. Neighborhoods surrounding the parcel(s) in question must be made aware of the date and location of the community engagement sessions, with both in-person and virtual options for participation shared. County staff present at that engagement session will document and share a meeting summary with Commissioners prior to any decision-making on the proposed change in use.
- Applicable Mecklenburg County Advisory Boards will be made aware of the proposed change in use modification as well as how to provide comments on the proposed modification at least ten (10) days in advance of the public hearing meeting.





CHANGE IN USE MODIFICATION PROCESS

3. The Public Hearing will be held during a BOCC meeting. During the Public Hearing, residents and advisory board members will be able to give comments both in-person and virtually, if they choose. For residents that cannot make this meeting, they can submit their comments via email.
4. Voting on the change in use modification will occur at the subsequent meeting to the Public Hearing. During this final meeting, the BOCC will take action approving or denying the proposed change in use modification.



NEXT STEPS

- BOCC agenda item during October 15 meeting.
- If approved, staff will develop an implementation plan, including costs and estimated timeline for parkland required from FY22-FY24.
 - The process will require at least 2-3 staff for researching, reviewing and drafting required, legal documents
 - County staff anticipate taking roughly 24 hours per parcel to determine and put into place best conservation practice.
 - In total, we anticipate this taking over 5,000 hours of staff time.
 - In addition, there are possible additional costs associated with land trusts and/or third-party transactions.

Parcels	FY22	FY23	FY24	Totals
Parcels	38	87	88	213
Hours	912	2,088	2,112	5,112

THANK YOU

