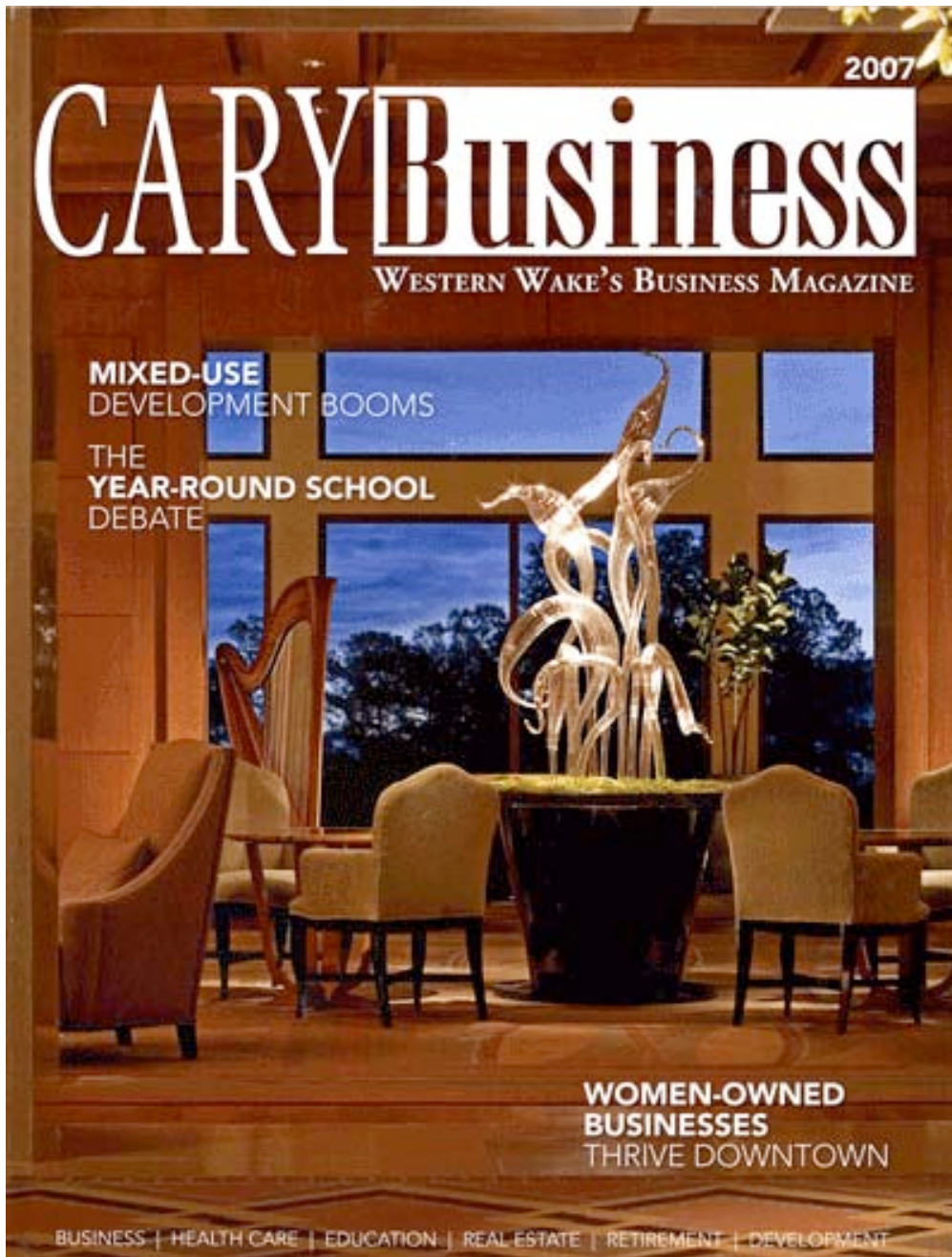




Big Changes in Store for Downtown Cary
Cary Business, NC 2007



BIG CHANGES

Written By Kati Knowland
Renderings Courtesy
of Town of Cary

in Store for Downtown Cary

Downtown Cary is currently a nice enough spot, with small boutiques, an old-fashioned drug store and the typical downtown feel. But it's about to get a \$33 million facelift that is designed to help create a unique identity for downtown.

In 2001, the Cary Town Council adopted the Town Center Area Plan "to provide a long-range master plan for downtown Cary and its neighborhoods. The plan provides recommendations for the long-term pattern of land uses, development and redevelopment, transportation, housing, and parks and greenways."

One part of that plan is the Downtown Cary Streetscape project, according to Kyle Hubert, the streetscape project manager.

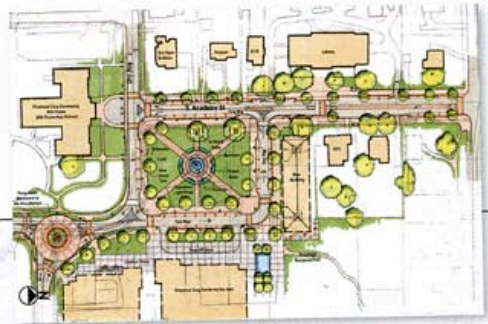
"The streetscape project is just the beginning of a bigger plan to make downtown Cary more of a unique, pedestrian-friendly location," said Hubert.

The plan covers two square miles in the heart of Cary and includes recommendations for streets, traffic patterns, landscaping, street lighting, outdoor furniture, sidewalks, bus shelters, roundabouts and more, said Hubert.

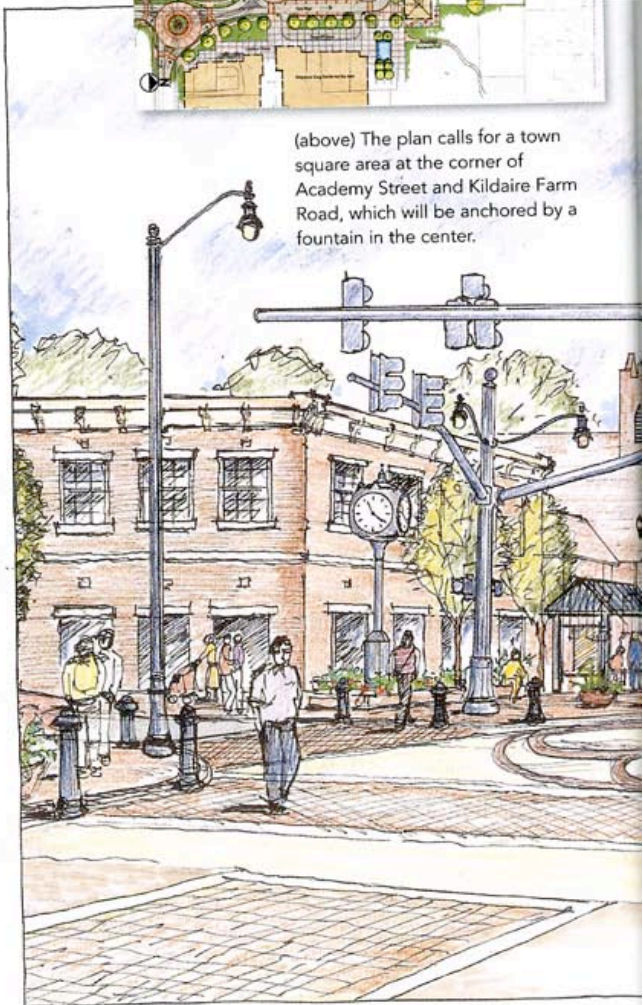
The cornerstone of the streetscape project will be the new town square, an open, park-like area proposed for the corner of Academy Street and Kildaire Farm Road. The current proposal for the town square includes a fountain, paths, trees and other landscaping features, and shows the square surrounded by one-way streets.

"Creating a town square provides a public destination where the community can gather and celebrate together," according to the town.

Surrounded by a new building to the north, the proposed Cary Center for the Arts and the proposed sculpture park to the east, and the old Cary Elementary School (the proposed site of the Cary Community Arts Center) to the south, the square will have the enclosed feel of a public outdoor room.



(above) The plan calls for a town square area at the corner of Academy Street and Kildaire Farm Road, which will be anchored by a fountain in the center.



"The town square is really a catalyst," said Hubert. "It's the first step; it lays the foundation for the proposed arts area in downtown Cary."

The streetscape plan also calls for the creation of two "gateways to downtown," located at the intersection of West Chatham Street and Old Apex Road and at the intersection of Chatham Street and East Durham Street, according to Hubert.

"These gateways will feature roundabouts with new landscaping, lighting, banners and public art," said Hubert.

"Distinctive pavement in the circle reinforces the image of an artistic and planned gateway to a special place," according to the town.

One of the most-traveled intersections in downtown Cary will also get a facelift — the intersection of Academy Street and Chatham Street. While decorative traffic light posts are already in place, the plan will also add pots

filled with greenery to help define the pedestrian area from the street, and elevated crosswalks will reinforce the pedestrian-friendly ideal and will help to slow traffic. At the center of the intersection, the Town of Cary logo will be created from colored pavement. According to the town, other decorative elements will "give people a fresh sense of natural beauty in the area."

The town has awarded the contract for design and construction administration for the project to Arcadis, a company with U.S. headquarters in Colorado.

When the contract was awarded, Bryan Mulqueen, senior vice president of Arcadis, commented, "We are thrilled to be selected for this highly visible and significant project for the town of Cary. Our proven experience internationally and our strong local resources will bring value to the community and help to create a foundation for future economic vitality for the town of Cary."

Hubert said that an artist is also a part of the design team. Elizabeth Conner, an artist based in Seattle, Wash., will be responsible for developing the public artwork to anchor many of the streetscape designs.

"Right now, she's learning about the history and culture of Cary and figuring out how to incorporate that into her artwork," said Hubert. Conner has visited Cary a number of times already and is working on designs with input from residents.

Hubert said that the design for the new downtown streetscape should be finalized by late 2007. Construction is expected to start late next year and last about 18 months, with completion scheduled for the summer of 2009.

"The whole purpose is to create a unique identity for downtown Cary," Hubert said.

For more information about the Downtown Cary Streetscape plan, visit www.carystreetscape.org.



The intersection of Academy Street and Chatham Street will get a facelift, with the Town of Cary's logo made from colored pavement.

