

FOREST HILLS, TENNESSEE

Green Community Framework Report

August 2008



Prepared by:



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is a report to the Open Space Plan Steering Committee on the development of a Green Community Framework strategy for Forest Hills. The city initiated this planning effort in the fall of 2007 to develop strategies for protecting community character and preserving important open spaces in the community. The planning process was designed to provide a structured community dialogue for deciding the most appropriate strategies for preserving the city's unique natural character and touches upon a broad array of open space protection and land development issues. The open space protection approaches and tools offered in the Framework section of this report were developed as a result of this community input.

This report includes four sections: Vision, Framework, Foundation, and Prioritization.

Vision

Several residents of Forest Hills have participated in developing the Green Community Framework Strategy. Through public discussions and written comments, the community has demonstrated their commitment to protecting the special character that makes Forest Hills unique. Their vision for the future of Forest Hills and their ideas for how to achieve that vision are discussed in the Vision section of this report. Their input throughout this planning process led to the development of seven *Guiding Principles* that can guide development of the city's Green Community Framework. These principles include:

1. Preserve the current quality of life and community character that is so valued by residents. Consider any changes to the current policies and regulations carefully so as not to detract from the successful practices of the past;
2. Maintain the low-density, wooded character of the community, including protecting forestlands, hillsides, and scenic vistas;
3. Protect existing property values;
4. Consider options for development / subdivision of larger properties that would strengthen the quality and character of the community;
5. Ensure that the subdivision of smaller properties, siting of new homes, and redevelopment of existing lots enhance the city and neighborhood character;
6. Minimize negative impacts of new development, particularly drainage, tree removal, and visual impacts, as much as is feasible; and
7. Encourage the development of linked parks, community open spaces, trails, and greenways within and adjacent to the city.

These principles guided development of the Green Community Framework.

Framework

The Green Community Framework serves as a guide for developing open space and community character preservation strategies for Forest Hills. It offers a four-tiered approach that addresses land protection strategies at the regional, local, and site level scales. Each approach includes a menu of tools from which the city can select one or all options to be included in the final Green Community Framework strategy. They are summarized here.

I. Open Space Preservation Initiatives

The city has an opportunity to provide leadership in protecting critical open space lands in and around Forest Hills by coordinating regional, local, and site level open space protection efforts. Davidson County has identified a regional network of open spaces that includes a “southern arc” that passes through Forest Hills. Local conservation organizations have laid the groundwork and identified key corridors and lands that are critical to maintaining the natural functions of the region, many of which run through the city along Otter Creek. In addition, many local landowners have expressed interest in pursuing land protection measures for their properties.

Warner Parks and Radnor Lake State Park are critical components to Forest Hills’ open space framework. The parks serve not only as public recreational spaces for Forest Hills’ citizens, but also as natural “bookends” that connect the city into a larger regional network of connected open spaces. Although the parks lie outside of the city’s corporate limits, the city has historically provided support to these parks. Providing support to expand and enhance these parklands would result in additional open space benefits to the community.

The city is in a position to provide the framework for linking regional open space protection goals with local land protection efforts. This can be done through two types of initiatives: developing a conservation easement program and developing a program to acquire public open space lands. A conservation easement program could educate landowners on the benefits of conservation easements and link local landowners interested in preserving their properties with an entity that could manage the easements for the long-term. The Land Trust for Tennessee, a locally operating land trust, provides a collaborative vehicle for entering into conservation easement agreements with landowners. A public land conservation program offers an opportunity to permanently protect key properties that are of great value to the community. Both programs will require local leadership to direct and coordinate land protection efforts.

2. Large Parcel Protection

There is strong interest among community members to develop an alternative option to the traditional subdivision model. Alternatives should provide opportunities to permanently protect open space lands as part of the fabric of new development while maintaining the overall low-density development pattern of the community. Two models for protecting open space as part of the subdivision process include voluntary open space subdivision and voluntary open space set-aside provisions.

The open space subdivision option is a voluntary model that allows developers to reduce individual lot sizes (to no smaller than one acre in size) in exchange for setting aside permanent open space as part of the development without increasing the overall gross

zoning density. The voluntary open space set-aside model is a tool the city can use to encourage developers to permanently protect open space. This option does not allow for the reduction in lot sizes and trades a reduction in the number of lots for a projected increase in the value of individual lots.

Each option has advantages and disadvantages; and many communities choose to adopt both options. The city will need to carefully review these options and determine if one or both models are appropriate for Forest Hills.

3. Improved Standards for Smaller Parcels

During the course of this planning process, many residents raised the issue of new development that is out of character with the city and its existing neighborhoods. There are examples in Forest Hills of developments changing the natural character of already developed lots. In some cases, homes were built that are out of scale with the lot or surrounding neighborhood. In other cases, the landowner cut down a number of trees during the development process and did not replace them.

Because the majority of lands in Forest Hills are subdivided and developed, it can be expected that redevelopment will continue to occur over time. Ensuring that infill and redevelopment fits the character of the city and its existing neighborhoods is supported by the community. Three tools are offered to ensure new development is appropriately scaled to existing lots: lot coverage standards, floor area ratio, and a building width to lot width ratio.

These tools are offered in addition to the existing bulk standards that are applied to new development in Forest Hills. Each of these tools regulates the development of structures in a particular way and these tools can be used collectively to ensure that new development is appropriate within a given context. The city will need to determine if there is enough interest in protecting the character of existing neighborhoods to place additional development regulations on existing lots of record.

4. Improved Natural Resource Standards

Forest Hills has been working to protect environmentally significant lands in the city through its natural resource protection standards for over a decade. While these standards are often successful in directing development to areas on lots that are more appropriate for development, these standards do not permanently protect natural features, nor do they always protect these features from being developed.

The community is very supportive of strengthening standards to protect natural resources in Forest Hills; and have identified two approaches to further protect these important lands. The city could choose to amend the existing natural resource protection standards and strengthen its provisions, and the city could choose to establish resource specific standards that further protect these features and additional natural resources. This type of natural resource protection model is becoming more and more common in communities around the nation because the standards are tailored to the protection needs of the resource. These two models have practical implications that should be closely considered by the city. Namely the effort needed to implement these options and the capacity of staff to enforce them.

Foundation

The Foundation section describes the analysis that was conducted during this planning process. Analyses included an evaluation of existing conditions, development opportunities, policies and regulatory frameworks for protecting open space, and an evaluation of tools used in Forest Hills in comparison with other similarly situated communities. These analyses, along with public input, provided the foundation for development of the Green Community Framework. This analysis shows that:

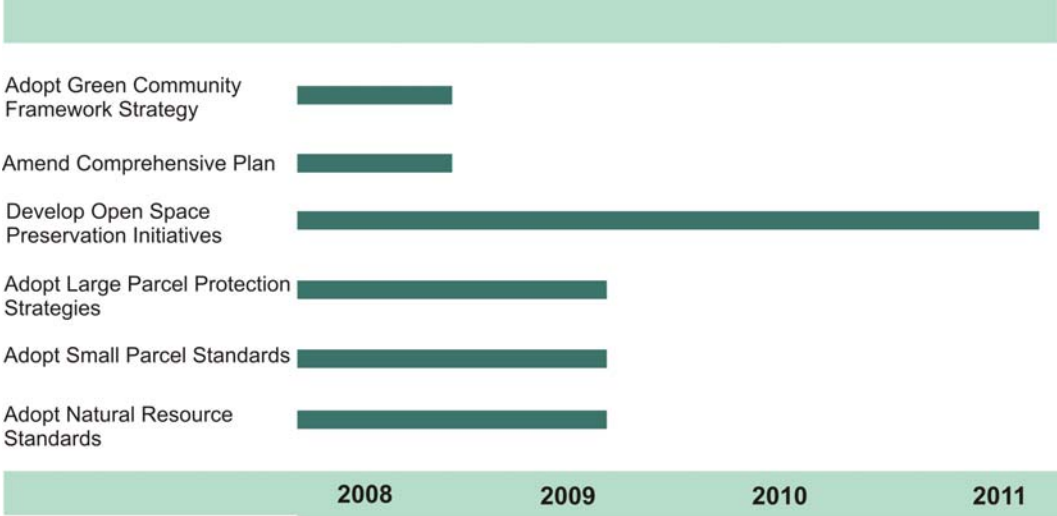
- The open and natural character of Forest Hills is due in large part to the low-density development patterns of the city;
- Critical lands exist in Forest Hills that function as an ecological bridge connecting regional parks located on either side of the city;
- Open space lands in the city are not permanently protected and are included as part of private lots;
- There are over 900 acres of existing land in Forest Hills that could be further subdivided into approximately 200-250 additional residential lots. In addition, there are 165 smaller parcels that have the potential for further subdivision;
- There is one model for developing subdivisions in Forest Hills and this model does not provide a direct opportunity for permanently protecting open space;
- The city's development regulations do set aside critical natural resources during the development review process, but these lands are not permanently protected;
- Many residents are concerned about the type and character of redevelopment that is taking place in existing neighborhoods. These new homes are often out of character for the area or too large for the lot; and
- There is strong community interest to further protect open spaces and community character in Forest Hills.

Prioritization

The next step in the planning process is for the city to review the options detailed in this report and determine the approaches and tools that should be included in the Forest Hills Green Community Framework and begin working to enact the strategy. A list of prioritized actions and an annual timeline are offered here as a starting point for discussing these next steps.

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Figure 1: Potential Prioritization of Green Community Framework Strategies.



INTRODUCTION

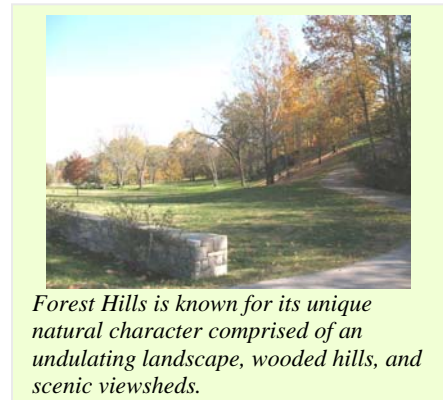
Background

Forest Hills is a premier community in the Nashville metropolitan area. The city is well known for its rolling hillsides, scenic vistas, and high quality neighborhoods. Families cherish living in this community because it offers both a small town, pastoral atmosphere, and close proximity to Nashville. It provides a unique respite from big city living while still providing the benefits of a metropolitan lifestyle.

Forest Hills' community character is a result of its natural features, open spaces, and its historical development patterns. Large-lot, single-family residential development has created a "suburban estate" character within the community. Past community planning efforts focused on maintaining the natural character of the community. These efforts prohibited smaller lot development and discouraged encroachment upon important natural features.

Development has occurred over the last several decades, and now only 16% of the land within the city remains unsubdivided. Much of this land is constrained by environmental features, such as floodplains and steep slopes areas.

The manner in which these last remaining lands may be developed is of particular interest to the community. This city has an opportunity to provide additional options for future residential subdivision and development that can set-aside community open space and maintain community character. In addition, there is also an interest to strengthen provisions to preserve environmental features. Current regulations could be improved to ensure environmentally sensitive areas are not developed. Another concern is infill or redevelopment of lots in existing neighborhoods. The community would like to ensure that these new homes enhance the city and existing neighborhoods, and do not negatively impact adjoining properties.



Green Community Framework Initiative

In response to these interests, the City of Forest Hills initiated a planning effort to develop strategies for protecting community character and preserving important open spaces in the fall of 2007. The Green Community Framework planning effort is charged with creating a consensus based strategy for protecting open space in the community. This effort examined current development and open space preservation practices, engaged the community in a dialogue regarding development and open space protection efforts, and now offers a set of tools that can be used to further protect the city's community character.

The planning effort provided a structured community dialogue for deciding on the most appropriate manner to preserve open space in the city. A steering committee comprised

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of members of the board of commissioners, board of zoning appeals, and the city planning commission is overseeing this effort. McBrideDale Clarion and The Walker Collaborative – the “planning team” – were hired to facilitate this process. The initiative involves four planning phases:

1. Project Initiation and Reconnaissance,
2. Inventory and Diagnosis of Existing Development and Open Space Policies and Regulations,
3. Open Space Plan Recommendations, and
4. Adoption Process.

This report is part of phase 3 – Open Space Plan Recommendations. The report is organized into four sections:

1. **Vision** articulates the community’s aspirations for the future. It provides guiding principles, derived from community input, for strengthening existing community character and natural resource protection in Forest Hills.
2. **Framework** provides four thematic approaches for improving open space protection in Forest Hills, including tools that can be used to implement each approach. The Green Community Framework provides a comprehensive strategy for improving open space protection within Forest Hills including regional open space preservation initiatives, protecting open spaces within new developments, improving natural resource protection standards, and enhancing development standards within established neighborhoods.
3. **Foundation** summarizes the analysis of existing conditions in Forest Hills, its current policy and regulatory structure for protecting open space, and a comparison of the city’s policies against other similarly situated communities. This information was presented to the community at a public forum in February 2008. After reviewing the information, participants expressed support and interest in adding certain open space protection measures to the city’s development regulations. This community feedback has served as the basis for developing the Green Community Framework options provided in this report.
4. **Prioritization** provides a guideline for establishing the green community framework, including a suggested timeline for implementing each of the four strategies.

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VISION

The residents of Forest Hills are proud of their community. Its picturesque and pastoral landscape are highly regarded and commonly cited as the reason why people choose to live in Forest Hills. Residents support the protection of this unique community character as a critical community goal. Throughout the planning process, residents have been engaged in a structured community dialogue focused on defining open space protection goals and strategies for the city. They have given voice to their hopes and goals for the community. The following vision statement embodies the community aspirations heard from Forest Hills' citizenry.

Green Community Vision for the Future

The City of Forest Hills will maintain its unique community character and low-density pattern over time. Scenic vistas, environmental features, and unique landscapes will be permanently protected in their natural state. The community will be linked to regional parklands through preserved natural corridors. New residential neighborhoods will be built in a context sensitive manner that takes into account the natural qualities of the community. New neighborhoods will include natural open space areas that enhance community character. New homes will be sited and designed to protect important natural features and scenic qualities of lots. Existing neighborhoods will be enhanced by redevelopment that reflects the character of the city, and is consistent with existing homes in the neighborhood. Additional recreational opportunities will be provided in the form of greenways, trails, and new parklands.

Improving Open Space Protection

People representing various stakeholder groups, including residents, large parcel landowners, developers, and elected officials were interviewed early in the process to determine specific concerns for open space protection. Additionally, a public forum was held in February 2008. Residents were given an opportunity to voice their concerns about open space preservation in Forest Hills at the forum and provided feedback on feedback forms (shown to the right and provided full-size in the appendix) regarding their key concerns and their willingness to expand policies and regulations to incorporate new open space protection strategies. Several issues were raised in these discussions, including:

- The community is generally very satisfied with the character of the city. Residents would like careful consideration of any proposed changes to the way the city regulates new development and open space protection;
- There is a need for additional options to subdivide the few remaining large parcels in Forest Hills. Any new options should not reduce value (development potential) and provide opportunities to permanently protect open space lands;

Thank you for your input!

This feedback form was provided at the Forest Hills Green Community Framework public workshop held on January 22, 2008. The form is an opportunity for residents of Forest Hills to provide comment on the menu of open space and community character preservation approaches presented at the public workshop.

Please denote on the form below your interest in pursuing each general public policy approach and each policy tool using the following key:

1 = Definitely Want to Pursue 2 = May Want to Pursue 3 = Do Not Want to Pursue

| PUBLIC POLICY APPROACHES AND TOOLS | Circle (1, 2, 3) | | |
|--|------------------|---|---|
| Large Parcel Protection | | | |
| Are you interested in pursuing alternatives to subdivide large parcels? | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Open Space Subdivision Design | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Maintain Open Space Set-Asides | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Payment-in-Lieu of Open Space Dedication | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Planned Unit Development (PUD) | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Improved Standards for Smaller Parcels | | | |
| Are you interested in pursuing standards for infill development on smaller parcels? | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Lot Coverage | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Floor Area Ratio (FAR) | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Lot Width to Building Width Ratio | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Improved Protection of Natural Resources Through Development Standards | | | |
| Are you interested in pursuing development standards for natural resources? | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Vegetation Regulations | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Tree Protection Regulations | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Stream Banks / Riparian Regulations | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Wetland and Surface Water Protection Regulations | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Landmarks Regulations | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Special Zones - Public Conservation District / Watershed Protection | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Alternative Regulatory Tools and Approaches | | | |
| Are you interested in pursuing non-regulatory approaches to open space preservation? | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Conservation Easements | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Public Open Space Acquisition (purchase / donation) | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Other Comments or Ideas: | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
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- There is strong support for maintaining the low-density character of the community. Residents are concerned about increasing densities. A general consensus was reached that one unit per acre should be the highest density allowed. The community is adamantly against multi-family housing;
- Residents want to protect the character of existing neighborhoods. Several citizens expressed concerns regarding recent redevelopment that is out of character for the area. The homes are either too large for the respective lot, not well sited, or required that too many trees be cleared during development, removing the natural buffer between the street and adjacent lots;
- Residents want to protect environmentally sensitive lands such as floodplains, steep slopes, and hilltops. Current standards go far in setting critical environmental lands aside during the development process, but these features are not permanently protected. In some cases, areas with environmental features have been developed; and
- There is a desire for additional recreational opportunities within Forest Hills. Many citizens suggested that passive recreational opportunities like greenways and trails would further enhance the character of the community.

Guiding Principles

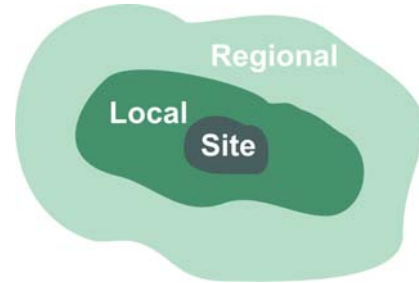
The four approaches and the specific tools that can be used to implement the Green Community Framework are outlined in the next section. These approaches and tools were developed in response to actual community experiences, concerns, and feedback. Citizens have generously provided their input throughout this process to help identify the true nature and interest for more open space protection in the community. The following guiding principles for development of new open space preservation approaches were created from this community input. All formally adopted approaches should follow these principles.

1. Preserve the current quality of life and community character that is so valued by residents. Consider any changes to the current policies and regulations carefully so as not to detract from the successful practices of the past;
2. Maintain the low-density, wooded character of the community, including protecting forestlands, hillsides, and scenic vistas;
3. Protect existing property values;
4. Consider options for development / subdivision of larger properties that would strengthen the quality and character of the community;
5. Ensure that the subdivision of smaller properties, siting of new homes, and redevelopment of existing lots enhance the city and character of neighborhoods;

6. Minimize negative impacts of new development, particularly drainage, tree removal, and visual impacts, as much as is feasible; and
7. Encourage the development of linked parks, community open spaces, trails, and greenways within and adjacent to the city.

FRAMEWORK

Landscapes do not stop at jurisdictional boundaries and lot lines. History has shown that the most successful open space protection efforts require regional, local, and site level approaches that are combined into one strategic framework.



The success of such initiatives is dependent upon the degree that open space protection efforts are linked and coordinated across these three spatial scales. Four general approaches that address these three spatial scales were presented and discussed at the February 2008 public forum. The community expressed interest in further pursuing these four approaches, as well as several tools to implement the approaches. (The Public Forum Summary Report provided in the appendix provides more detail on community feedback on each of the approaches and tools.) These interests are reflected here as a menu of approaches and tools for protecting open space and community character in Forest Hills. They provide the basis for developing a Green Community Framework for the city.

The four general approaches include:

1. City led open space protection initiatives (regional/local);
2. Amendments to the city's land development regulations to provide additional options for large lot development and open space protection (local);
3. Amendments to the city's land development regulations that protect existing neighborhoods and ensure that future development is compatible with the city's character (local/site); and
4. Amendments to the city's land development regulations to increase protection of environmental features found on private property (site).

Because the comprehensive plan is the guiding document for land planning and regulation in the city, we suggest the city amend the plan to reflect initiatives and amendments that will be implemented as part of the Green Community Framework effort.

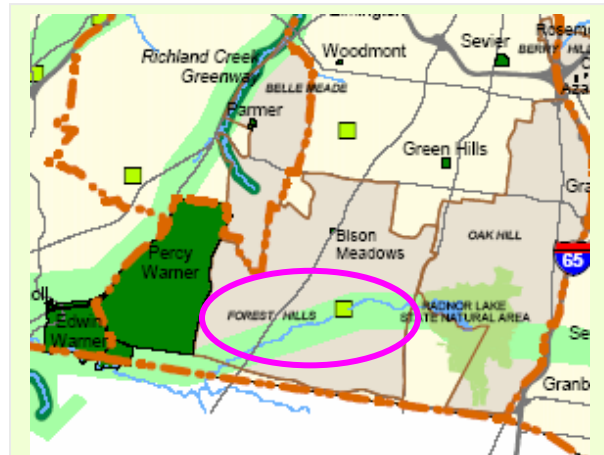
I. Open Space Preservation Initiatives

Successful open space preservation efforts are strategic and comprehensive. These efforts must educate stakeholders on preservation options, coordinate the efforts of many landowners that often have different interests, and maintain a “big picture” perspective when setting long-term, strategic goals. The City of Forest Hills has an opportunity to educate, guide, and assist with open space preservation efforts in the city. There is interest within the community for the city to represent community interests by engaging in regional open space initiatives and establishing local open space protection initiatives that permanently protect important lands. Fostering the dedication of conservation easements on private lands and developing a public land acquisition program are two non-regulatory methods the city could use to permanently protect open space in Forest Hills.

Public Open Space Acquisition

Many communities in Tennessee have used public dollars to support protection of important natural and cultural resource lands. The City of Franklin, Tennessee, partnered with a local philanthropist and a non-profit organization to purchase and protect the 125-acre property Franklin Battlefield Park. Murfreesboro, Tennessee, used public funding to develop the 4.5 mile Stones River Greenway, a greenway that links an old family farm site with historic civil war sites and provides a natural buffer along the Stones River.

The Nashville and Davidson County Metropolitan Parks and Greenways Master Plan has identified an open space corridor, “the southern arc,” in southern Davidson County that provides a natural linkage that extends from Warner Parks west of Forest Hills all the way to the southeastern most point of the county. This corridor flows through Forest Hills along Otter Creek. The county is in the process of updating the master plan and will likely be focusing more attention on protection of lands within the southern arc corridor.



The Nashville and Davidson County Parks and Greenways Plan identifies a potential greenway location along Otter Creek in Forest Hills, linking Warner Parks and Radnor Lake State Park – the city’s natural “bookends”.

Given the fact that the majority of land in Forest Hills is privately owned and developed, open space acquisition options are limited. However, there are some key parcels of land that are located in the southern arc that could be permanently protected through land acquisition, tying into regional land conservation efforts. Lands along Otter Creek, along TVA utility right-of-ways, and the small parcel adjacent to the convenience store at Granny White Pike are examples of lands that could be acquired and protected.

Percy Warner Park, Edwin Warner Park, and Radnor Lake State Park are critical components of Forest Hills’ open space framework. While these parklands lie outside of

the city's corporate limits, they effectively serve as city parks and provide highly valued recreational amenities to the city's citizens, as well as natural open space benefits. Any public acquisition efforts should include opportunities to expand existing open space features that lie outside of the city, specifically including these parks that serve as the city's natural "bookends". Acquisition of property to be added to these parks offers an efficient means of acquiring open space lands that can benefit the city. Two organizations—the Friends of Warner Parks and the Friends of Radnor Lake—are dedicated to improving and expanding these parks and have established fundraising efforts in the region. Public funding for acquisition to expand these parks could be leveraged by these organizations to provide even greater enhancements to the parks.

The city is limited in terms of local funding options available to support public land acquisition efforts. One option is for the city to request a real estate transfer tax to raise public dollars for open space protection. This would require state legislative action. Another option is to apply for grants from federal or state agencies, or private foundations. One such source of funding is the American Greenways Program that provides small seed grants for greenway development. Other funding programs exist that provide grants for local land acquisition efforts. Land trusts often offer funding through revolving loan funds that provide bridge financing until other loan funds can be secured. Land trusts can also provide long-term management of protected open space sites.

Public land acquisition is one of the most successful methods for protecting open spaces over the long-term. The city should consider pursuing a local land acquisition program in partnership with the county and local conservation groups, like the West Meade Conservancy, that could leverage funding and administrative capacity and tie local conservation efforts into the regional open space framework.

Conservation Easements

A conservation easement is a transfer of usage rights which creates a legally enforceable land preservation agreement between a landowner and a municipality or a qualified land protection organization (often called a "land trust"), for the purposes of conservation. It restricts real estate development and certain other activities on a property to a mutually agreed upon level. These easements could generally protect lands for perpetuity, or they could provide public access for greenways and trails.

Landowners that protect lands using conservation easements are eligible for certain income tax benefits. The value of the foregone development rights can be deducted from a landowner's annual taxes. The tax laws allow the owner to deduct up to 30 percent of their income for up to six years or until the value of the



The West Meade Land Conservancy has identified a natural corridor through Forest Hills that links forests in west Nashville to Warner Parks and Radnor Lake State Park.

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property has been deducted. In May 2008, Congress adopted conservation easement incentives that will be in effect for the next two years. Incentives include increasing the charitable deduction limit and extending the period that the deduction can be carried over. The specific statute that sets out these tax benefits can be found at <http://www.cclt.org/downloads/1.170A-14.pdf> .

The Land Trust for Tennessee is the local non-profit land trust that has helped place 29,000 acres of land in Tennessee under protective conservation easements. Historically, the Trust has focused on protecting large acreages of lands outside urban areas. More recently, the Trust has begun to focus on preservation opportunities within developed areas. Some landowners in Forest Hills are considering placing conservation easements on their properties and have consulted with the land trust. In addition, the West Meade Land Conservancy, another land conservation organization operating in the metro region, has identified a natural corridor through Forest Hills that links Warner Parks and Radnor Lake State Park and may have some resources available to assist the city in permanently protecting lands within the corridor.

Conservation easements can be placed on a portion or all of a lot, providing opportunities to both protect environmentally sensitive areas and still maintain development rights on the lot. For example, an easement could be placed on the portion of a lot located on a hillside that contains areas of steep slopes, while still allowing development to occur on areas that are more appropriate for development. The city could be the short-term administrator of these small area easements with the long-term goal of transferring control of the easements to a land trust that would manage them for perpetuity.

The city should consider partnering with the Land Trust for Tennessee and the West Meade Land Conservancy to educate local landowners on the benefits of conservation easements, to develop a long-term strategy for securing and managing small and large conservation easements, and to assist with placement of easements on private lands.

2. Large Parcel Protection

Over 900 acres of land in Forest Hills exist as large parcels that have not been subdivided. Although there are no known plans to develop these parcels into residential subdivisions at this time, it is possible that this will occur at some point in the future. Currently, landowners have one option for subdividing their lands. The traditional subdivision model divides the entire parcel into multiple private lots, and does not provide any permanent protection of open space lands. Critical environmental features, like steep slopes and floodplains, are often divided between lots, making it even more difficult to protect these areas in the future. Under the current model, landowners must be willing to reduce the lot yield on their property to permanently set-aside open space.

Public forum participants were interested in further exploring alternatives to the traditional subdivision model. This section provides two such tools: the open space subdivision model and the open space set-aside model. Both tools involve permanently protecting part of the land area being subdivided as permanent open space on a voluntary basis.

Open Space Subdivision

An open space subdivision option is a voluntary alternative to traditional subdivision development. It is designed to permit single-family residential development that allows variations in lot area and setback standards when a large portion of the development site is set-aside as open space.

Generally, an open space subdivision has three primary characteristics: smaller building lots than allowed under base zoning, more open space, and the protection of natural features. Within this framework the rules for site development emphasize setting aside and conserving the most sensitive areas of a site, with the development of building lots on the remaining, less sensitive areas. Open space areas are permanently protected as open space lots, as land dedicated to the city, or are placed under a conservation easement. This is a voluntary option available to developers interested in protecting common open spaces that does not reduce development potential.

Table 1 lists potential open space subdivision standards for Forest Hills, including:

- the minimum parcel size for open space subdivision eligibility;
- eligible zoning districts for this option;
- the percent of open space that must be set-aside;



Open space subdivisions (above) provide an alternative to traditional subdivisions (below) by preserving contiguous open space areas and using alternative site designs. These examples show two developments with the same number of units.



Source of Images: Randall Arendt

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- the number of units that can be developed; and
- the smallest lot size that can be developed under this option.

These potential standards were developed based on feedback from the community. There was general consensus within the community that lots developed from an open space subdivision option should be no smaller than one acre. Limiting the minimum parcel size to 15 acres and reducing the eligibility for this option to lands zoned for 1 unit per 2 acres or a lower density will help to ensure that lots will be a minimum of 1 acre without reducing the lot yield permitted under the base zoning district. As this is a voluntary option, the city will want to encourage its use by making it a viable alternative to the traditional subdivision model. Ensuring that lot yield is the same as permitted under the base zoning district makes this a more feasible alternative.

Table 1: Potential Open Space Subdivision Standards for Forest Hills

| Minimum Parcel Size (prior to subdivision) | Zoning Eligibility | % Open Space Set-Aside | Subdivision Lot Yield | Smallest Lot Size |
|--|--|------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 15-acres | Must be zoned at 1 unit per 2 acres or lower density (e.g., 1 unit per 6 acres). | 30% | Same as permitted under base zoning. | 1-acre |

There are advantages and disadvantages when adopting the standards for open space subdivisions. The city could choose to adopt a higher set-aside requirement, resulting in more protected open space, or reduce the set-aside requirement to encourage development of larger lot sizes. If the community decides to implement this tool, it will need to balance these trade-offs when deciding on the appropriate variables to include in an open space subdivision program. Other standards will also need to be determined, including lot coverage, setbacks, and other bulk standards.

Open Space Set-Aside

Many communities throughout the nation require that all new residential developments set-aside a certain percentage of land as permanently protected open-space through an open space set-aside provision. This differs from the open space subdivision option in that the open space set-aside program requires protection of open space but does not allow for a reduction in lot sizes and can result in a decrease in lot yield.

Although the city does not currently support a mandatory open space set-aside program, there is interest in a voluntary program that encourages developers to set-aside a portion of their land as permanently protected open space. This is particularly encouraged on properties that have natural features such as steep slopes, floodplains, and wetlands, or lands that are culturally or historically important.

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Application of this tool may reduce the lot yield allowed under current zoning. However, the presence of natural resources on a lot may already reduce the allowable density under the city's current provisions. Developers may choose to use this option as studies have shown that individual lots in developments that include community open space are valued higher than lots in subdivisions without open space amenities. Golf courses are one example of this trend. The intent is that the lot yield is reduced to gain an increase in individual lot values, and to permanently protect lands that are inappropriate for development.



Typically, set-asides are applied to all land developments of a certain size. Most suburban communities require 15-30% of a development be set-aside as open space. However, these communities usually allow for higher densities. Given the low-density zoning in Forest Hills, it is recommended that, if adopted, the voluntary set-aside option should be in the 10-20% range.

Just like the open space subdivision option, a voluntary open space set-aside provision should include specific standards. Table 2, below, outlines potential standards for a voluntary open space set-aside provision.

Table 2: Potential Open Space Set-Aside Standards

| Minimum Parcel Size (prior to subdivision) | % Open Space Set-Aside | Minimum Lot Size |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 10-acres | 10-20% | Same as permitted under base zoning. |

Similar to the open space subdivision scenarios, there are trade-offs when adopting standards for a voluntary open space set-aside provision. Increasing the required amount of open space set-aside will protect more land in the city, but will also reduce development potential for the landowner. It is important to balance these standards to ensure that open spaces are being protected, while not diminishing the development potential of the landowner.

Both tools provide an alternative to the current subdivision model. The open space subdivision option is more flexible, voluntary alternative to the traditional subdivision model. The voluntary open space set-aside is a tool for the community to use to encourage developers to permanently protect open spaces through the development process, particularly for those properties that include significant natural resource areas.

Criteria for Both Open Space Options

Should Forest Hills choose to adopt either the voluntary open space subdivision and/or the voluntary open space set-aside program, standards and criteria for the programs should be established, including:

1. The minimum acreage required to trigger the open space option;
2. The zoning districts eligible for the option (applies to the open space subdivision option only);
3. The amount of land to be dedicated as open space as a percent of the gross development area;
4. A set of priorities for determining the lands that should be designated as open space. This could include slippage soils (dellrose), steep slopes, floodplains, wetlands, forests, drainage areas, cultural or historic structures, lands along roadways, hillsides, hilltops, areas adjacent to existing greenways and trails, wildlife corridors, and others;
5. The linkage between natural resource protection standards and open space set-asides. Specifically, any lands that are set-aside to comply with natural resource protection standards should be credited as part of the open space requirement;
6. The location and pattern of open space areas. Most communities require that a open space lands within in a development are contiguous and form a communal open space “lot” that is bordered by individual private lots;
7. The type of activities that can occur on open space lands. Options include prohibiting any use of open space lands, allowing low impact (i.e., walking trails and benches) park uses, or permitting active park uses (i.e., playgrounds, fields, park equipment, etc.) This will depend upon the site and the community’s interest in providing recreational opportunities; and
8. Minimum ownership and maintenance standards for open spaces maintained by homeowners associations or other entities.

3. Improved Standards for Smaller Parcels

Large, open lots are the foundation of Forest Hills' natural character. Low-density development patterns have maintained this character over time. Recently, building trends in the community have been changing. As seen in other communities across the nation, there has been an increase in the redevelopment of older homes in Forest Hills. Often this redevelopment involves expanding homes and results in an increase in the size of building footprints. In some instances, this redevelopment has been deemed out of character by neighbors, either because the home is too large for the lot or because the house is more visually prominent because trees and vegetation were removed from yards during the development process. Because there is a limited amount of land left to develop in Forest Hills, it is likely that redevelopment of existing lots will continue to occur. In addition, there are existing lots in older neighborhoods that have not yet been developed.

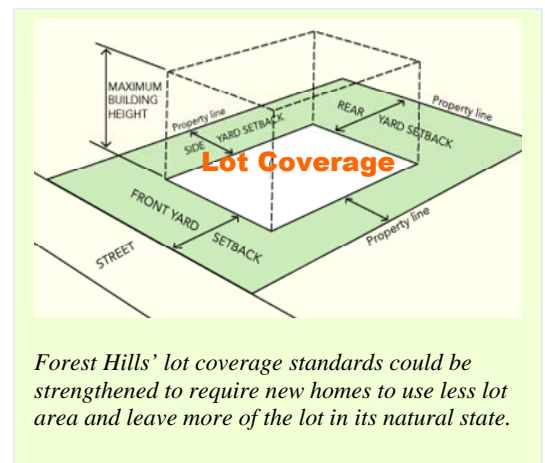
During this planning process, members of the community expressed their interest in ensuring that all future development is low-density in character. Furthermore, they would like to ensure that the design of new and redeveloped homes fit the context of the city and its neighborhoods. Residents have shown that there is community support to strengthen existing development regulations applied to individual lots to ensure that future development and redevelopment maintains the large, natural lot character found in Forest Hills. They expressed support to explore the potential for implementing three tools:

- Maximum lot coverage standards;
- Floor area ratio standards; and
- Maximum building width to lot width ratio standards.

These three options are described below. The specific numerical standards are not offered here because they require additional site level analysis to determine the appropriate threshold for each standard. This typically involves an analysis of existing developments within a given zoning district to determine the average size lot, side yard setbacks, and other bulk standards that are typical for that area. We suggest that the city undertake this type of analysis should it choose to implement any or all of these options.

Lot Coverage

One way to ensure that new homes or expansions of existing homes are appropriately scaled to their lot is to apply a lot coverage standard. This standard limits the building footprint of a dwelling unit in relationship to the lot size. Forest Hills currently applies such a regulation within all residentially zoned districts. For example, under current regulations, lots zoned EB (one dwelling unit per two acres) have a cap on lot coverage of 0.08, or eight percent (8%) of the lot size. This means that the building footprint of a house built on a two-acre lot (87,120 square feet) will be no larger than eight percent (8%) of the lot size, approximately 6,969 square feet. The



maximum height for all homes in Forest Hills is 35 feet. Assuming that 35 feet equals 2 stories, this means that there is the potential to develop a 13,938 square foot home (6,969 base area times 2 floors) on a lot zoned EB under the current regulations.

The city's current lot coverage standards allow for greater lot coverage in higher density zoning districts. The maximum building coverage for lots in NC1 and NC2 districts (1 unit per 1 acre) is 12% of the lot size. This means that the lot coverage standard limits development on a one acre lot to a 5,200 square foot building footprint. The maximum building coverage for lots in RA (1 unit per 1.25 acres) is 10% of the lot size and limits development to a 5,445 square foot building footprint.

These standards could be increased to reduce the permitted building footprint size in districts where homes appear out of scale with lots in two ways:

- The lot coverage standard could be reduced to further limit the amount of coverage on a lot. This is recommended for areas that appear to have homes that are out of scale with the lot.
- Another option is to expand the term "lot coverage" to include all impervious surfaces on a lot, including driveways, outbuildings, porches, pools, etc. Expanding the definition of lot coverage to include these other impervious features would further reduce development of natural lands. It is recommended that if the city decides to move forward with the expansion of this standard, an analysis should be conducted to determine the appropriate lot coverage standards for each zoning district.

Floor Area Ratio

Floor Area Ratios (FAR) are another form of bulk development standards that limit the amount of development on a lot. It is similar to the lot coverage standard in that it determines the square footage of a dwelling unit based on the size of the lot. However, floor area ratios determine the maximum square footage for the entire unit, not just the building footprint, and provide flexibility in how that area is designed. The floor area ratio regulates the size of the home's total mass, whereas the lot coverage standard only limits the building footprint. Together these two standards can work to limit the footprint and mass of a home relative to the lot size.

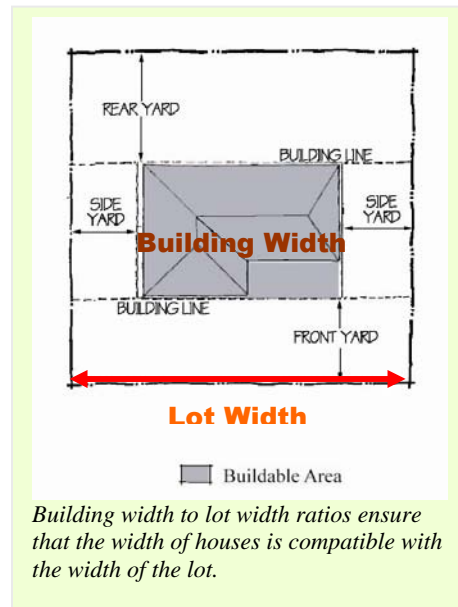
Using the previous example and a floor area ratio standard of 0.12 (12%), the largest home that could be developed on a two-acre lot (87,120 square feet) is 10,454 square feet, as opposed to the 13,938 square foot home that could be built under current regulations. That is because the FAR addresses the total area contained within all floors of a home, not just the building footprint.

Building Width to Lot Width Ratio

The building width to lot width ratio is yet another bulk standard that could be applied in Forest Hills. This standard is intended to ensure that the width of buildings is compatible with the width of lots and that side yards provide adequate separation between adjacent lots. This standard does not limit the footprint or the size of the home,

but it limits the width of the home and the distance of the home from the side lot lines. It is appropriate to apply this standard in districts where houses appear to be built too close to lot lines.

For example, a lot zoned EA is required to have a minimum lot width of 250 feet. Applying a 50% building width to lot width ratio would limit the width of the building to 125 feet. The side yard setbacks could be the greater of either 20% of the lot width or the existing setback applied under the lot's zoning regulations. If adopted, such standards would ensure that the width of homes and the side yards are appropriate given the context of the lot.



Applicability of Small Parcel Standards

Most bulk standards are specific to one aspect of building design. It is common for communities to adopt multiple tools to address several aspects of development. Forest Hills currently has multiple bulk standards that define the space within which a home can be built. These tools offered here also are not mutually exclusive and could be implemented as a package to further define the appropriate building envelope within a zoning district. Tools for preserving trees and requiring landscaping on private residential lots can also help to improve redevelopment in existing neighborhoods. These tools are discussed in the next section (4. Improved Natural Resource Standards).

Because there was interest in applying these options to lots within existing neighborhoods, we do not suggest providing an exemption for existing lots of record. If standards are adopted, they should apply to all residential properties, including any new lots of record. These standards should be specific to each zoning district and applied in areas where there have been concerns regarding existing development standards.

However, should the city choose to adopt an open space subdivision alternative or an open space set-aside requirement for new subdivisions, it may be more equitable to apply the existing bulk standards to developments setting aside open space. Applying new bulk standards to developments setting aside open space may prove too onerous for developers, and could reduce the interest in using open space options.

4. Improved Natural Resource Standards

The most effective tool that Forest Hills currently uses to protect open space is the set of natural resource protection standards found in the city's zoning ordinance. These standards identify specific natural features that are to be protected during the development process. They set open space requirements that specify how much of each natural feature must be protected. However, a clause in the ordinance (footnote #1 in *Section 501: Natural Resource Protection Standards*) that was intended to provide relief to owners of lots that contain a significant amount of natural resources allows natural features on lots of record to be developed as long as specific engineering practices (i.e., mitigation) are used to reduce the negative impacts of the development. This clause provides a significant loophole for existing lots of record, allowing them to develop on important natural features, such as floodplains, slippage soils, wetlands, forested areas, and steep slopes.

There is strong community support for improving natural resource protection in the community. In addition to the features that are currently addressed in the existing standards, residents are also interested in protecting hilltops and surface waters, and expressed some interest in landscaping requirements for private residential lots. The city could strengthen natural resource protection by:

1. Improving existing natural resource protection standards; and
2. Implementing natural resource protection strategies in addition to the city's natural resource performance standards that are more specific to each resource.

Improve Existing Protection Standards

The city's current natural resource protection standards could be improved. Below are some ideas for improving these standards:

- Consider changing the zoning ordinance to specify that development is completely prohibited on designated natural resource areas by either 1) amending the clause in footnote #1 of Section 501 to limit mitigation options to extreme situations where development potential on lots is completely prohibited by the requirement to protect natural features, or 2) offer the variance process as an alternative form of regulatory relief for landowners that could otherwise not develop on their land and delete footnote #1 from the ordinance;
- Consider adding a requirement that if designated natural resource lands are to be developed upon, a conservation easement will be placed on natural resource lands that will not be developed on the lot, forever prohibiting development on these lands. This clause is currently included in the Forests and Tree Replacement mitigation section, but is not being enforced;
- Clarify the language in the Forests and Tree Replacement (Section 506 of the city's zoning ordinance) to more clearly state the calculation to determine the tree density factor applied to future subdivisions and nonresidential developments that qualify as "Forests."

Establish New Resource Specific Protection Standards

The city should also consider adopting additional standards that are more specific to each resource. This is an approach that is commonly used by other successful communities.¹ These standards could be applied to new development or redevelopment on existing lots. If adopted, we recommend that a grandfather provision be implemented. This provision would not require existing lots of record to comply with the new regulations and would allow existing development to be built back to its original footprint should something happen to the structure. However, these same lots of record should not be allowed to expand such that they would not comply with the new standards. These specific natural resource protection options are outlined below.

Floodplain Protection

Forest Hills implemented a floodplain protection ordinance to protect floodplain and floodway areas from development and to ensure that local landowners would have the right to purchase floodplain insurance. This ordinance does allow for development on these areas if certain engineering practices are used. The city's current floodplain protection ordinance could be altered to outright prohibit development within floodplain and floodway areas. If this standard would completely prohibit development of a principal building on a lot of record, then development could be allowed within the floodplain area as long as new mitigation standards were met. Such mitigation standards could include payment of a mitigation fee to off-set the impact of developing in the floodplain or placing a conservation easement on other natural resource lands located on the lot of record. Mitigation fees could be used to purchase other critical natural resource lands in the city.

Trees and Landscaping

The city currently applies tree protection standards to new subdivisions and nonresidential development. The ordinance also applies landscaping and buffering standards to nonresidential developments. Currently, these ordinances do not apply to individual residential lots of record. The example photograph to the right illustrates that individual residential lots in Forest Hills can be clear-cut under current regulations. Concerns over clear-cutting trees on individual lots were raised by citizens. These concerns could be addressed by establishing tree protection and landscaping requirements on residential properties.



Clear cutting trees can significantly alter the character of lots and neighborhoods.

One idea is to require street trees and foundation plantings on private residential lots. Street trees can provide needed buffering of lots from public viewing areas, such as

¹ The Foundation section of this report provides a comparison of Forest Hills with other similar communities that are successfully protecting open spaces. See this discussion for more details on the other communities using resource specific protection standards.

roadways and adjacent lots. They can also help to maintain the forested character of the neighborhood. The current tree protection approval process could be the trigger for permitting any tree removal or tree replacement activities on private residential lots. For example, if a landowner was developing a new lot or needed a permit to expand an existing house, the tree permit process could be triggered requiring the landowner to provide a site plan showing the locations of street trees and identify the type of trees to be placed in these locations.

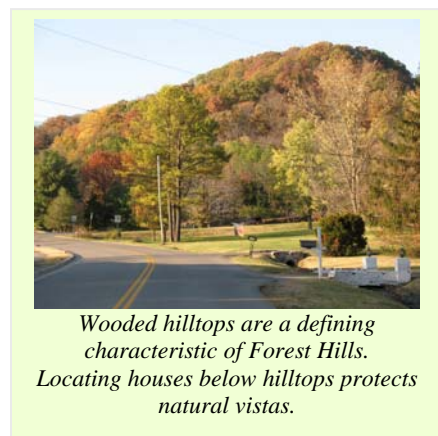
Foundation plantings increase the visual character of the lot and reduce the prominence of built structures. The city could adopt regulations requiring a certain amount and type of landscaping materials to be provided along home foundations. The requirement for foundation plantings could be triggered at the site planning stage for new development and the building permit stage for redevelopment of existing lots. Landowners could be required to provide a plan for landscaping along the foundation lines of their own and specify the type of materials to be planted.

Forest Hills is plagued with rapidly spreading invasive species, such as bush honeysuckle, privet, eunonymous, and others. The city should consider strongly discouraging the use of such invasive species. If the city chooses to adopt residential landscaping standards, it is encouraged that a list of appropriate landscaping materials be prepared and provided to landowners that must comply with new standards.

The city's current tree ordinance and landscaping standards in the zoning ordinance could be amended to include these new standards. If the city decides against implementing tree and landscaping standards for single-family lots, there are voluntary options for encouraging tree protection. The city could provide recommended covenant language to developers that addresses tree protection and landscaping on private lots. These covenants could be placed on the lots when they are subdivided, and could require certain types of trees and landscaping to be planted and maintained on specific areas of private lots.

Steep Slopes and Hilltops

Residents voiced interest in further protecting areas of steep slopes, and adding standards to protect hilltops. To this end, the city could prohibit development on areas of 20% slope or greater. If prohibiting development on slopes of 20% or greater would completely prohibit development on a lot of record, the mitigation requirements for development on slopes of 20% or greater currently used by the city could be triggered. For lots with slopes between 15%-20%, development could be allowed, but could be further restricted by increasing the bulk standards and grading requirements within these areas. (The map on page 31 identifies these areas of steep slopes.)



To address hilltops, the city could adopt specific development and design standards to lessen the negative aesthetic impacts hilltop development can have on community character. The city could choose to outright prohibit development above certain

elevations, permanently protecting the highest hilltops in the city. Standards could also include more rigorous building setbacks from the hilltop or ridgeline, a shorter building height, a maximum for the amount of woodland clearing permitted, and a standard for the extent of grading and benching permitted for principal and accessory structures as well as private access roads. Some communities also adopt architectural standards that limit rooflines and building mass relative to the site to reduce visual impacts of the structure.

Surface Waters and Wetlands

Residents of Forest Hills were very interested in protecting wetlands and surface waters (i.e., ponds, streams, creeks) from development impacts. Protection of wetland areas is currently included within the city's natural resource protection standards, but these lands can be developed under certain circumstances, and riparian buffers are currently not a requirement. Many communities have adopted resource protection standards that prohibit development within a specific distance of wetlands and surface waters and require the protection of riparian buffers along these natural features. A 50-foot buffer is a common riparian buffer requirement.

The city could adopt new provisions to permanently protect wetlands and riparian buffer areas through the development review process. The standards could require permanently protected buffers around wetlands and surface waters and prohibit development of wetlands completely. These lands could be set-aside as open space for passive recreation, such as a greenway along Otter Creek, or as natural lands. Another alternative is to encourage landowners to place conservation easements on riparian buffer areas and wetlands. The community could also choose to purchase these lands and protect them as public open space.



Keeping lands near surface waters in their natural state protects water quality and maintains natural hydrological patterns.

Natural Resource Protection Improvements

The City of Forest Hills could strengthen natural resource protection standards by: 1) improving the city's existing natural resource protection standards, and 2) establishing a new set of standards that protect additional natural resources and include standards that are more specific to each natural resource. The city should consider implementing these two strategies.

GREEN COMMUNITY FRAMEWORK REPORT

Summary of Approaches and Tools

In summary, there are four general approaches and several tools provided here that could be adopted as part of the city’s Green Community Framework. These are provided as a menu of tools from which the city can select.

Table 3: Green Community Framework Options: Approaches and Tools

| Approaches | Tools |
|---|--|
| 1. Open Space Preservation Initiatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ City-led Conservation Easement Program ✓ City-led Open Space Acquisition Program |
| 2. Large Parcel Protection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Open Space Subdivision Option (voluntary) ✓ Open-Space Set-Aside Option (voluntary) |
| 3. Improved Standards for Smaller Parcels | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Increasing Existing Maximum Lot Coverage Standard ✓ Floor Area Ratio Standard ✓ Building Width to Lot Width Standard |
| 4. Improved Natural Resource Standards | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Improve Existing Natural Resource Protection Standards ✓ Establish New Resource Specific Protection Standards (floodplains, trees, landscaping, steep slopes, hilltops, surface waters, wetlands) |

Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan

Forest Hill’s 1991 Comprehensive Plan set out to implement new standards to protect open space and community character. The city accomplished this goal and now wishes to further refine and strengthen open space and community character policies to address current planning issues. Options for updating the comprehensive plan to reflect these new community goals are offered here.

Natural Resources Chapter

Natural Resource Protection:

The city’s zoning and subdivision ordinances should be amended to include improved standards for the protection of natural resources.

Open Space Protection:

The city should establish and spearhead program(s) to protect valuable open spaces within the city. The program(s) should include: 1) a formal initiative to educate landowners on the benefits of conservation easements, 2) assistance to landowners in placing easements on their property, and 3) a public land acquisition program for permanently protecting prime open spaces.

Land Use and Community Character Chapter

Large Parcel Protection:

The city will foster the permanent protection of open spaces within the community by adopting an open space alternative to the current subdivision process that allows landowners to set-aside permanently protected open space.

Improved Development Standards for Small Parcels:

The city will protect the character of existing neighborhoods by improving development standards for infill development and re-development of existing lots.

Improved Landscaping and Tree Protection Standards for Small Parcels:

To maintain the existing natural character of Forest Hills and its existing neighborhoods, the city should implement tree protection and landscaping development standards for private residential lots. Use of invasive species should be discouraged.

FOUNDATION

Existing conditions, both physical and regulatory, within the city were inventoried and diagnosed in phase 2 of the planning process. This information was used to develop the Framework section of this report that outlines the approaches and tools that the city can choose from to further protect open space and community character in Forest Hills. A summary of this analysis is provided here.

Development Potential

Forest Hills can be defined as nearing “build out.” This means that most of the land within the city’s boundaries has been subdivided and is developed. Some key statistics about the remaining large parcels of undeveloped land are offered here.

- There are 19 parcels of land in Forest Hills that are 15 acres or greater and could be further subdivided.
- These lands total 926 acres -- 16% of the city’s total land area.
- These lands are all in private ownership.
- Most of these parcels have one single-family home on the property. One of the parcels is the Richland Country Club. No plans for redevelopment of the country club property have been announced.
- Under current zoning, approximately 200-250 new residential lots and homes could be developed on these lands.²

In addition to the 19 remaining large parcels, there are 165 smaller parcels (i.e., less than 15 acres in size) that could be further subdivided under current zoning regulations. Many of these properties are included within existing neighborhoods and have a single-family home on the property. Map 1, shown on the next page, denotes the locations of the 19 remaining large parcels (shown in red) and the 165 smaller parcels (shown in blue) that could be further subdivided. The map also denotes the existing land uses for all lots in Forest Hills.

² This calculation of estimated maximum dwelling unit potential under current zoning regulations for the 19 large parcels does not include the Richland Country Club. This property is zoned for CC (Country Club) which does not include residential uses as a permitted use type.

DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

FOREST HILLS GREEN COMMUNITY FRAMEWORK

Legend

-  City of Forest Hills
 -  Parcels >15 Acres
 -  Parcels <15 Acres with Potential for Subdivision
 -  Roads and Driveways
- Existing Land Use
-  Vacant Land
 -  City Park
 -  Cemetary or Golf Course
 -  Subdivided Vacant Land
 -  Single-Family
 -  Duplex or Condominium
 -  Retail
 -  Institutional / Quasi-Public

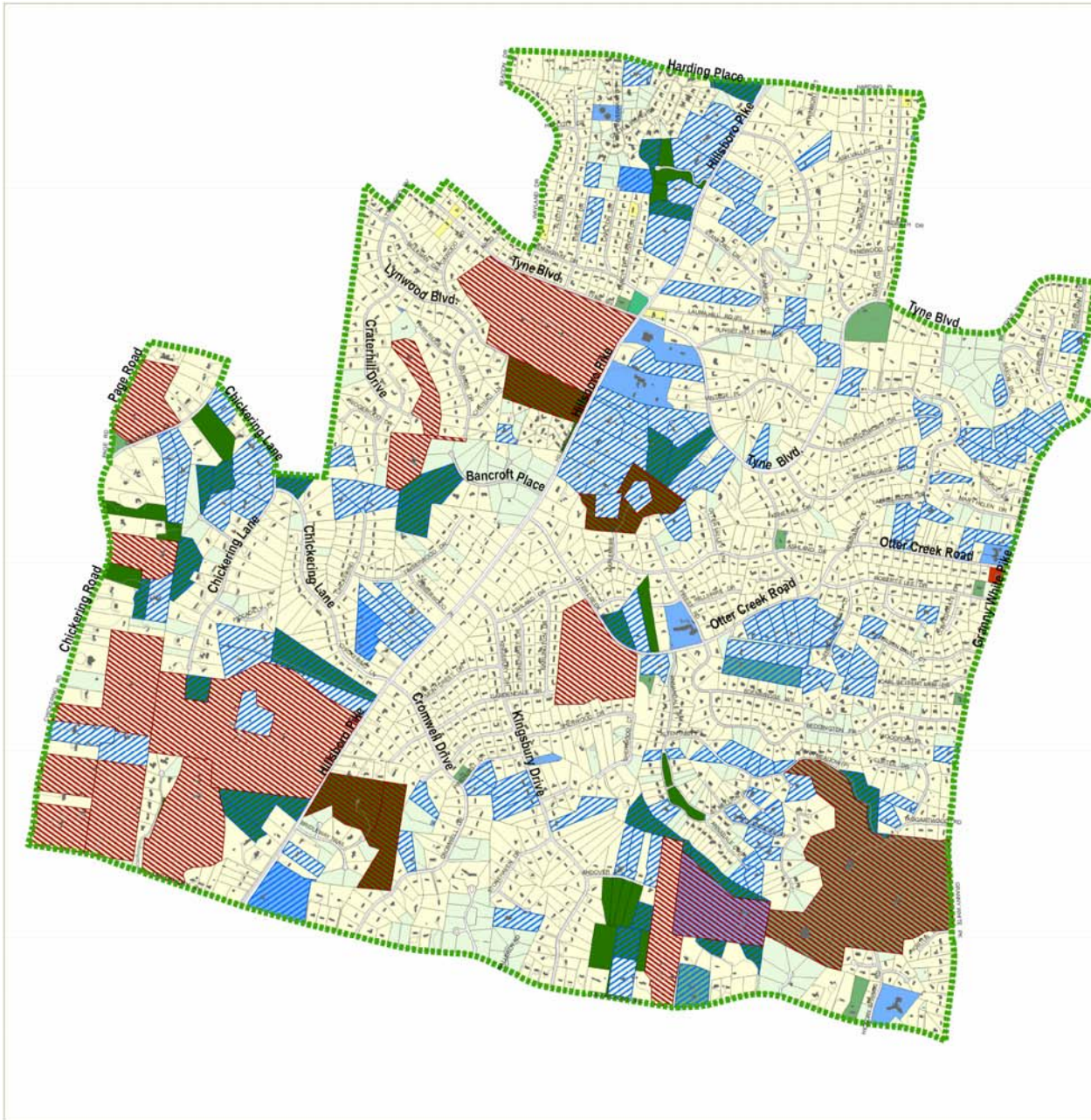
Parcels less than 15 acres (<15 Acres) with Potential for Subdivision includes those parcels that could be subdivided further under current zoning regulations and appear to show some suitability for further subdivision. This analysis did not look at landowner interest in subdivision, nor did it include a site level analysis to determine feasibility of subdivision. This analysis does provide a snapshot of parcels that could possibly be further subdivided.



This map is provided for reference only. The City and its mapping contractors are not responsible for any errors or omissions contained herein.



Prepared: January 7, 2008






Environmental Features

The presence of environmental features, such as wetlands, forested areas, floodplains, steep slopes, and dellrose soils, impact the ability to develop properties in Forest Hills. Protection of these environmental features is a goal of the community and development on lands with these features is limited by city development regulations. Many of the last remaining parcels available for development lie within areas that contain environmental constraints. Map 2, shown on the next page, denotes these environmental features. The parcels that could be further subdivided are overlaid on the environmental features to show where these lands are constrained.

ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

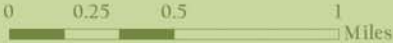
FOREST HILLS GREEN COMMUNITY FRAMEWORK

Legend

-  City of Forest Hills
-  Parcels >15 Acres
-  Parcels <15 acres with Potential for Subdivision

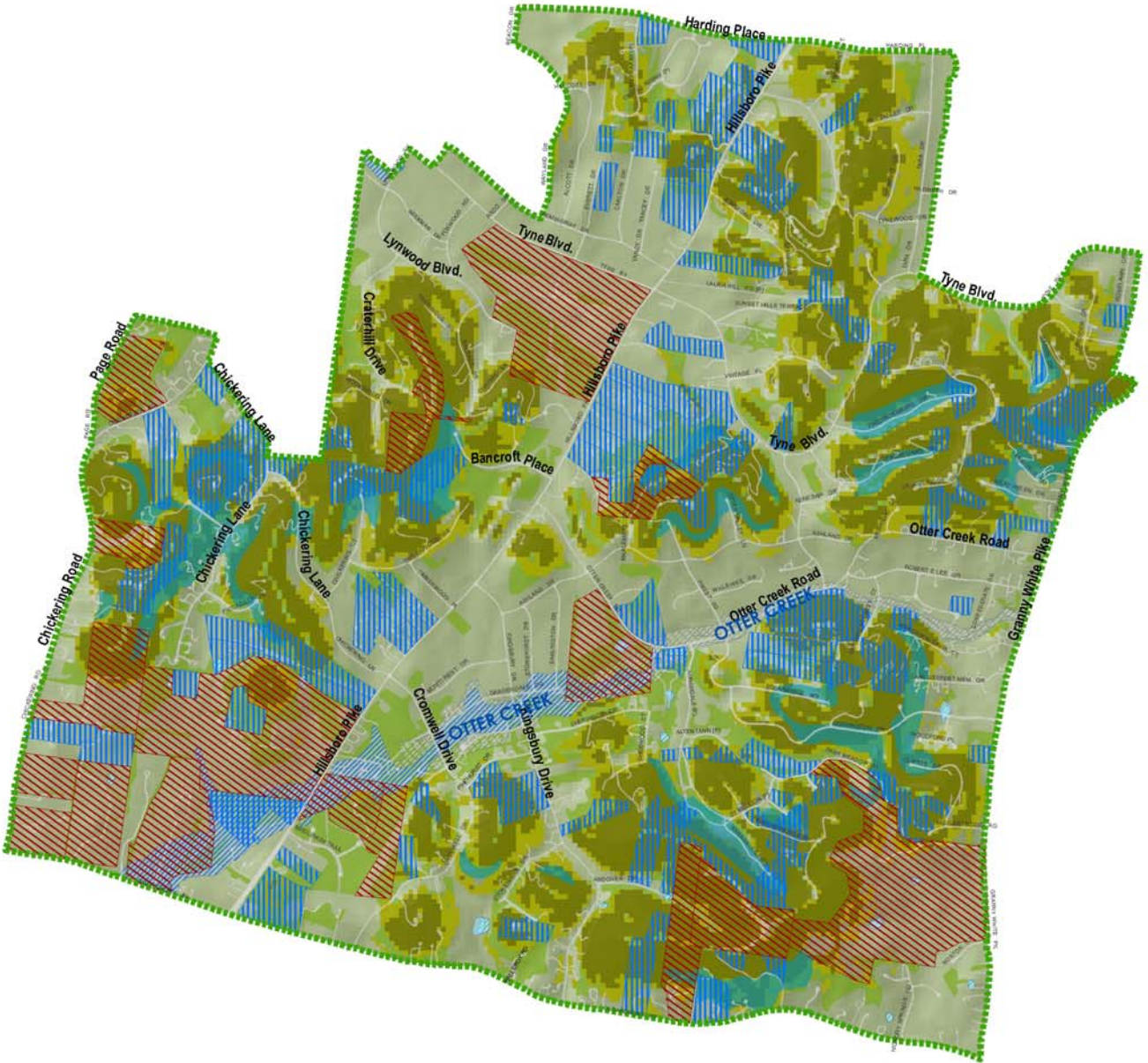
Environmental Features

-  Dellrose Soil
-  15-20% Slope
-  20-75% Slope
-  Wetlands
-  FEMA Floodplain
-  Local Foodplain
-  Vegetation



This map is provided for reference only. The City and its mapping contractors are not responsible for any errors or omissions contained herein.

Prepared: January 7, 2008



Open Spaces and Trails

The natural character of Forest Hills is due in large part to the lot sizes found in the city. The city's development regulations have required that new development result in spacious private lots. In some cases, the regulations limit development from occurring on protected natural features. Under this approach, the majority of open spaces found in the community are comprised of the front, side, and rear yards of private properties.

The City of Forest Hills does own one 2.5 acre lot at the corner of Hillsboro Pike and Tyne Boulevard. Bison Park serves as a low impact park that includes landscaping, benches, and community art. This park is shown on the map to the right.



Bison Park is a small landscaped park that serves as a gateway feature in northern Forest Hills.



Trails and greenways are appropriate floodplain uses that allow natural stormwater flows. The John C. Lovell Bikeway in Forest Hills is located in the Otter Creek floodplain.

Trails and greenways are a recent addition to the community. The John C. Lovell Bikeway was recently developed and runs along the Otter Creek floodplain, linking the neighborhoods north of Otter Creek Road to the Percy Priest Elementary School. Other informal trails exist within neighborhoods. Members of the Otterwood Subdivision have received permission from the Tennessee Valley Authority to use the utility right-of-way that runs through the neighborhood as a low impact park space used for walking and hiking.

Regional Parks and Ecosystems

Although there are few public spaces within Forest Hills, the city is adjacent to three prominent metro Nashville parks. The Percy Warner and Edwin Warner Parks are directly west of the city, and the Radnor Lake State Park is east of the city in Oak Hill. These parks serve as the natural “bookends” to the city. A link between these parks is Otter Creek that runs east to west through Forest Hills. The *Nashville and Davidson County Parks and Greenways Plan* identified this corridor as a potential location for a future greenway, providing a natural linkage between the two park systems. There are currently no formal plans for development of a greenway along Otter Creek.

The West Meade Land Conservancy works to protect lands in Davidson County west of Warner Parks. Their focus area consists of an 800-acre contiguous mature forest with spring fed creeks and a diverse community of plants and animals. The conservancy has

identified that the forested lands in Forest Hills “likely function as the ecological bridge that connects Warner Parks and Radnor Lake to the surrounding forest communities.” While their efforts focus on potential developments in West Meade, they do recognize the critical importance of the natural corridor through Forest Hills that links these parklands and ecosystems.

Friends of Warner Park recently acquired 130 acres on the north side of Highway 100 and are currently working to acquire an additional 322 acres which would extend Warner Parks to Highway 70. These efforts could go a long way to providing the “ecological bridge” connecting the West Meade Conservancy area with Warner Parks.

Evaluation of Open Space Policies and Regulations

The planning team evaluated current open space policies and regulations to compare the state of open space protection in Forest Hills with identified “best practices” used in other communities. The following documents were reviewed and analyzed:

1. The comprehensive plan for the City of Forest Hills, Tennessee;
2. The City of Forest Hills Zoning Ordinance, particularly Article V: Natural Resource Performance Standards and Mitigation Provisions;
3. Forest Hills Tree Ordinance 93-134;
4. Forest Hills Municipal Floodplain District 07-174;
5. Analysis for Potential Open Space Plan Amendment (2004) Report prepared by the Hawkins Partners; and
6. City of Forest Hills Cultural and Natural Resource Master Plan prepared by Hodgson & Douglas, LLC.

Comprehensive Plan

The city’s comprehensive plan, adopted in 1991, sets out several goals and policies relevant to open space and community character protection:

Natural Resources Goal #1: Protect and Preserve Natural Resources.

Natural Resources Goal #2: Where resources cannot be totally protected, require mitigation to ensure that adverse impacts are minimized and that impacts are contained on the property being developed.

Natural Resources Policy: The zoning ordinance will establish protection policies and standards set forth to protect open space and provide mitigation for situations where standards would severely restrict a landowner’s ability to develop their land.

GREEN COMMUNITY FRAMEWORK REPORT

Land Use and Community Character Goal #1: Preserve the suburban estate and countryside residential character of the city.

Land Use and Community Character Policy #1: Zoning should not be changed to permit more dense development.

Land Use and Community Character Policy #2: Regulations that better protect natural resources should be adopted.

Land Use and Community Character Policy #3: Regulations for landscaping along roads and protection of wooded areas should be adopted.

These goals and policies have been implemented since adoption of the plan. This report's evaluation identified five means of open space and community character protection in Forest Hills that implement the comprehensive plan's policy framework:

1. **Low-Density Zoning and Development Standards.** Residential lots in the city are zoned for low-density development that ranges from one unit per acre to one unit per six-acres. The development standards that apply to these lands further restrict the amount of development that can occur on a parcel by limiting lot coverage and requiring yard setbacks. Because the majority of lands within the city are residentially zoned, this low-density zoning has been the primary means for maintaining the natural, open space character of Forest Hills.
2. **Natural Resource Performance Standards.** The city's zoning ordinance includes standards for the protection of certain environmental features. These features include floodplains, steep slopes, dellrose soils (slippage soils), wetlands, forests, and drainageways. The standards limit development potential on these natural resource lands by reducing site development capacity and requiring that natural resource lands be developed only when applicable engineering best practices are used. These standards do protect environmental features to a degree, but they do not prohibit development from occurring on environmentally constrained lands.
3. **Tree Ordinance.** The city's tree ordinance protects certain "protected" trees on city streets and public lands, on nonresidential properties, and within new subdivisions through the requirement of a tree removal permit process. This ordinance also regulates the planting of replacement trees as required by the Natural Resource Performance Standards in the city zoning ordinance.³ Public rights-of-way and single-family residential properties are exempt from the ordinance standards.
4. **Floodplain Ordinance.** The city adopted a floodplain ordinance to protect floodplain areas and secure national floodplain insurance eligibility for

³ The city's zoning ordinance requires protection and replacement of trees in Section 506: *Forests and Tree Replacement*. This section uses a Tree Density Factor to determine the amount of trees to be protected or replaced on a given property for which development approvals are being sought.

landowners with properties in the floodplain. The ordinance includes standard language provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency that requires structures to be built one foot above the base flood elevation and prohibits encroachment within floodway areas. The ordinance does not prohibit development from occurring within the floodplain.

5. **Landscaping Standards.** The city's zoning ordinance requires that nonresidential properties screen and buffer certain parts of the property with specified landscaping materials. A plan showing the location, dimensions and arrangements of all open spaces, yards, buffers, and landscaping materials is a requirement of development approval. Given the fact that there are few properties zoned for nonresidential use, this tool has played a small, but significant role in maintaining community character in Forest Hills.

The evaluation of current open space preservation practices in Forest Hills reveals the following:

1. **Lot size, lot coverage, and natural resource protection regulations in place protect low-density character in Forest Hills.** Visually, low-density development and protected open space lands may appear to be the same. From a legal standpoint, however, they are not. Lands on large private lots are not permanently protected unless landowners place protective covenants or easements on the property. Without these protections, there are no guarantees that land will remain in its natural state for the long-term.
2. **Development and natural resource standards do not fully address residential site design and do not permanently protect natural resources.** The city's development standards determine how much land can be developed on a given property. If properties include environmental features, an additional set of natural resource protection standards are applied. These natural resource standards were intended to protect the integrity of environmental features on private lots, however, the standards are written such that it is possible to develop on environmental features. The natural resource protection standards include a "safety valve" that ensures that property owners can develop on individual private lots, regardless of the natural features found on the property. In some circumstances, this means that development will occur on forested areas, wetlands, steep slopes, or floodplains as long as applicable site engineering practices are used. While this safety valve ensures that landowners maintain development rights on the property, the regulations do not provide specific guidance regarding the areas that should not be developed due to the presence of natural features. Furthermore, the standards do not provide any guidance on the site design of properties. Good site design can achieve both site development and protection of environmental features.
3. **There are limited subdivision / development options available to developers interested in setting aside open space within a residential subdivision while still achieving the lot yield limited by zoning.** Large lot owners that are interested in subdividing their property are limited by

the conventional subdivision requirements that determine the allowed density on the property. Combined zoning and natural resource standards determine how many new lots can be created. There are currently no available options for landowners interested in subdividing and setting aside part of a property as permanently protected open space that would allow them to maintain the same lot yield as the conventional subdivision approach.

4. Tree ordinance regulations apply only to nonresidential properties and subdivisions; individual residential lots are not protected. The city's tree ordinance does include tree protection and tree replacement requirements when land is subdivided into individual lots. However, these tree protection standards do not apply to individual residential lots after subdivision. Clear-cutting of trees on residential lots by landowners is permitted.
5. There is limited capacity to implement existing regulations. Given the fiscally efficient manner in which city planning and zoning services are provided, there are limited opportunities to fully implement existing regulations. This will be an important factor to consider should the city wish to adopt new regulations.

Open Space “Best Practices” Comparison

Following evaluation of the city's current open space policies and regulations, the planning team delivered a public presentation on two topics: 1) a comparison of Forest Hill's open space preservation efforts in comparison with other similarly situated communities, and 2) a menu of possible best practice tools that could be implemented to strengthen open space and community character preservation efforts in Forest Hills. The presentation was delivered at a public forum on February 22, 2008. The forum was interactive and provided an opportunity for the community to respond and provide feedback. A summary report on this forum is provided as an appendix to this report.

The planning team presented five comparable communities that had several characteristics similar to Forest Hills. Each community was small and had similar development and demographic characteristics to Forest Hills. The five comparable communities are:

1. Indian Hill, Ohio
2. Mountain Brook, Alabama
3. Pinehurst, North Carolina
4. Signal Mountain, Tennessee
5. Anchorage, Kentucky

All five of these communities have made it a goal to protect community character and open spaces, and have implemented tools to that end. The public policy tools used in these communities fall under four approaches: 1) large parcel protection, 2) standards for smaller parcels, 3) natural resource standards, and 4) nonregulatory open space

GREEN COMMUNITY FRAMEWORK REPORT

Open Space Best Practices Case Study Communities

| PUBLIC POLICY TOOLS USED BY COMPARABLE COMMUNITIES AND FOREST HILLS | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| PUBLIC POLICY TOOL | Indian Hill OH | Mountain Brook AL | Pinehurst NC | Signal Mountain TN | Anchorage KY* | Forest Hills TN |
| Large Parcel Protection | | | | | | |
| Open Space Subdivision Design | | | | | | |
| Mandatory Open Space Set-Aside | | | | | | |
| Payment-In-Lieu of Open Space Dedication | | | | | | |
| Planned Unit Development (PUD) | | | | | | |
| Improved Standards for Smaller Parcels | | | | | | |
| Lot Coverage | | | | | | |
| Floor Area Ratio (FAR) | | | | | | |
| Lot Width to Building Width Ratio | | | | | | |
| Improved Protection for Natural Resources Through Development Standards | | | | | | |
| Floodplains | | | | | | |
| Trees / Forest | | | | | | |
| Steep Slopes and Hillside | | | | | | |
| Surface Waters and Wetlands | | | | | | |
| Landscaping | | | | | | |
| Special Zones - Public Conservation / Watershed Protection District | | | | | | |
| Non-Regulatory Tools and Approaches | | | | | | |
| Conservation Easements | | | | | | |
| Public Open Space Acquisition (purchase / donations) | | | | | | |
| Graphic Key: Relative Strength of Tool | | | | | | |
| | Strong | Moderate | Weak | Lacking | | |
| <small>* Identical to Jefferson County's codes except where specified otherwise</small> | | | | | | |

approaches. The following matrix provides a visual comparison of the open space tools used in these communities and the tools used in Forest Hills.

Comparing Forest Hills community character and open space protection standards with these five communities reveals the following:

1. Only one community (Pinehurst) had special zoning for open space protection.
2. The existence of regulations for a particular issue does not mean the regulations are strong (e.g., tree ordinances).
3. Not all potential tools are relevant to all communities. For example, steep slope regulations are not necessary in Anchorage and Pinehurst.
4. Forest Hills uses fewer tools in comparison with these other communities.

Forum participants were asked to provide feedback on their interest in pursuing these public policy tools in Forest Hills. The feedback served as the basis for development of the Framework section of this report and can be summarized as follows:

1. There are clear interests in exploring the four approaches.
2. All approaches are supported, and there is no “favorite” approach among the options.

GREEN COMMUNITY FRAMEWORK REPORT

3. The three most supported tools are standards for steep slopes/hillsides, tree protection, and wetland and surface water protection, showing a strong interest in improving natural resource standards.
4. The least supported tools are payment-in-lieu of open space set-aside and Planned Unit Development (PUD). These tools are not offered in the Framework section of this report because the community did not strongly support them.

PRIORITIZATION

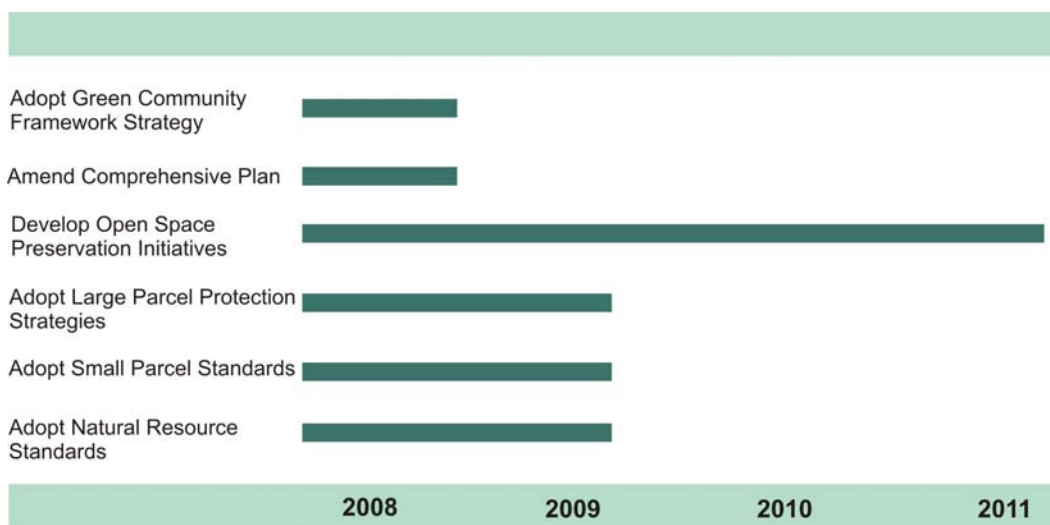
This report provides options for developing a Green Community Framework strategy for Forest Hills. The various approaches and optional tools provided in this report are intended as a toolbox from which the city can select.

The next step is for the city to determine the approaches and tools that will be implemented as part of the city's overall Green Community Framework Strategy and move forward with implementing the strategy.

These priorities suggest that next steps should include:

1. Adopting a Green Community Framework Strategy that identifies the specific tools the city will use to increase open space preservation in Forest Hills by end of year 2008;
2. Amending the comprehensive plan to reflect the new tools that will be adopted by end of year 2008;
3. Implementing an open space preservation initiative with local partners to encourage and assist with local land conservation efforts beginning immediately with the intent to fully implement by 2011; and
4. Revising the city's zoning ordinance to include new tools to protect large parcels, improve small parcel standards, and improve natural resource protection by end of year 2009.

Figure 2: Potential Prioritization of Green Community Framework Strategies.



Appendix

February 22, 2008 -- Forest Hills Public Forum Feedback Report



FOREST HILLS, TENNESSEE GREEN COMMUNITY FRAMEWORK

January 22, 2008 Public Workshop

Feedback Report

February 11, 2008

PREPARED BY:

McBride **DALE**
CLARION

 THE WALKER
COLLABORATIVE

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BACKGROUND

In the fall of 2007, the City of Forest Hills initiated a process to explore the need and interest in development of an Open Space Plan for the city. The planning effort, called the *Green Community Framework*, is designed to:

- Identify ways to protect Forest Hill's unique community character;
- Assess the potential for new development in the community;
- Evaluate environmental features;
- Assess current open space preservation and development practices and regulations;
- Consider options for additional open space protection measures;
- Engage the community in a discussion of these issues and ideas; and
- Summarize the community consensus.

McBride Dale Clarion and The Walker Collaborative — the planning team — were hired to help facilitate this process, and explore these issues with the community. Since initiation of the project, the planning team has completed the following activities:

- Reviewed the city's existing policies and ordinances related to open space protection and development approval;
- Met with community stakeholder groups to discuss their concerns;
- Evaluated the environmental conditions and development potential within the community; and
- Prepared a menu of options that the city may choose from to further protect open space and preserve community character, and presented these options at a public forum.

The Green Community Framework Public Forum was held on January 22, 2008 at the Hillsboro Church of Christ. Approximately 70 people attended the meeting. Participants were presented with five general approaches for addressing open space preservation concerns:

1. Alternatives to subdividing large parcels that would protect additional open space;
2. Pursuing additional standards for infill development on smaller lots;
3. Increasing the protection of natural resources through additional or improved standards;
4. Non-regulatory approaches, such as conservation easements or public acquisition of open space lands; and
5. Maintaining the current system of open space protection and development approval, and making no changes to it.

The participants engaged in a good discussion of each of these general approaches, as well as specific tools that could be used under each approach. At the meeting, each participant was given a *Feedback Form* to fill out and return. This feedback form provided an opportunity to rank each of the general approaches and individual tools using a simple scoring system. This report provides a summary of these responses.

Though this exercise could not be classified as a scientific survey, the feedback results are useful in showing a general interest or disinterest in approaches and tools. This feedback can inform future decisions regarding the direction that the city would like to take to further protect open spaces and community character in Forest Hills.

FEEDBACK ANALYSIS

The *Feedback Form*, shown below, was filled out by Public Forum participants and turned in at that meeting or mailed in to the planning team. (See the report appendix for a full size version of the *Feedback Form*.) A total of 47 forms were received, 6 by mail and 41 provided at the meeting.

Thank you for your input!

This feedback form was provided at the Forest Hills Green Community Framework public workshop held on January 22, 2008. The form is an opportunity for residents of Forest Hills to provide comment on the menu of open space and community character preservation approaches presented at the public workshop.

Please denote on the form below your interest in pursuing each general public policy approach and each policy tool using the following key.

1 - Definitely Want to Pursue 2 - May Want to Pursue 3 - Do Not Want to Pursue

| PUBLIC POLICY APPROACHES AND TOOLS | Circle (1, 2, 3) |
|--|------------------|
| Large Parcel Protection | |
| Are you interested in pursuing alternatives to subdivide large parcels? | 1 2 3 |
| Open Space Subdivision Design | 1 2 3 |
| Mandatory Open Space Set-Aside | 1 2 3 |
| Payment-in-Lieu of Open Space Dedication | 1 2 3 |
| Planned Unit Development (PUD) | 1 2 3 |
| Improved Standards for Smaller Parcels | |
| Are you interested in pursuing standards for infill development on smaller parcels? | 1 2 3 |
| Lot Coverage | 1 2 3 |
| Floor Area Ratio (FAR) | 1 2 3 |
| Lot Width to Building Width Ratio | 1 2 3 |
| Improved Protection of Natural Resources Through Development Standards | |
| Are you interested in pursuing development standards for natural resources? | 1 2 3 |
| Floodplain Regulations | 1 2 3 |
| Tree Protection Regulations | 1 2 3 |
| Steep Slope / Hillside Regulations | 1 2 3 |
| Wetland and Surface Water Protection Regulations | 1 2 3 |
| Landscaping Regulations | 1 2 3 |
| Special Zones - Public Conservation District / Watershed Protection | 1 2 3 |
| Non-Regulatory Tools and Approaches | |
| Are you interested in pursuing non-regulatory approaches to open space preservation? | 1 2 3 |
| Conservation Easements | 1 2 3 |
| Public Open Space Acquisition (purchase / donations) | 1 2 3 |

Other Comments or Ideas:

Respondents were asked to rank their preference for 19 questions using the scoring system listed below.

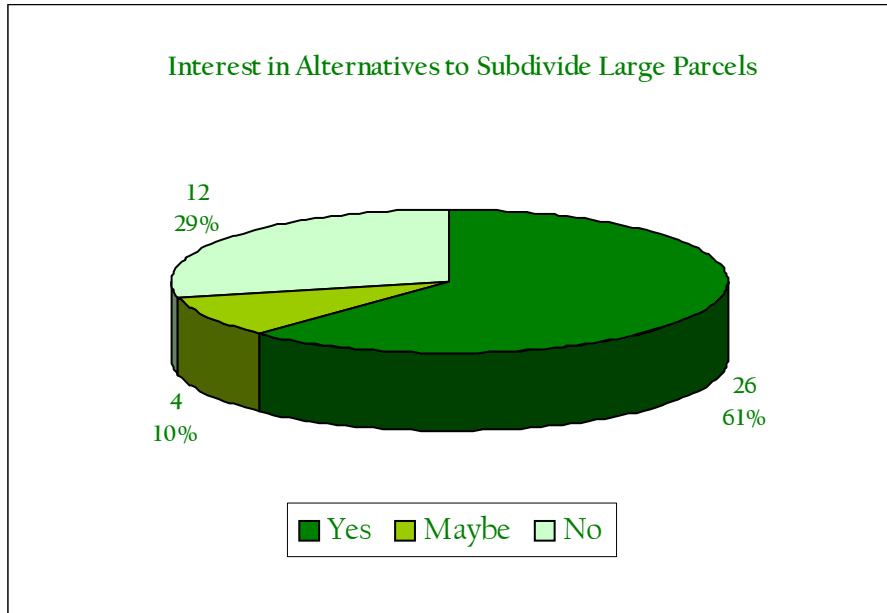
| Scoring | |
|---------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | = Definitely Want to Pursue |
| 2 | = May Want to Pursue |
| 3 | = Do Not Want to Pursue |

The responses were collected and tallied. Average scores for each question and the percent distribution for each of the three possible scores were calculated to show the general interest in further exploring each approach and tool. As stated previously, this is not a scientific survey, and the results of this survey have not been tested for statistical significance. The response data provide general results that are useful for gauging community interest in the public policy approaches and tools presented at the public forum.

The following several pages illustrate these results. Pages 3 and 4 show the results from the four “general approach” questions. Page 5 includes a summary table that shows the results from the general approach questions, and the specific tools that could be used under each approach. Conclusions are provided on page 6. Open-ended comments and the full feedback form are provided in the appendix to this report.

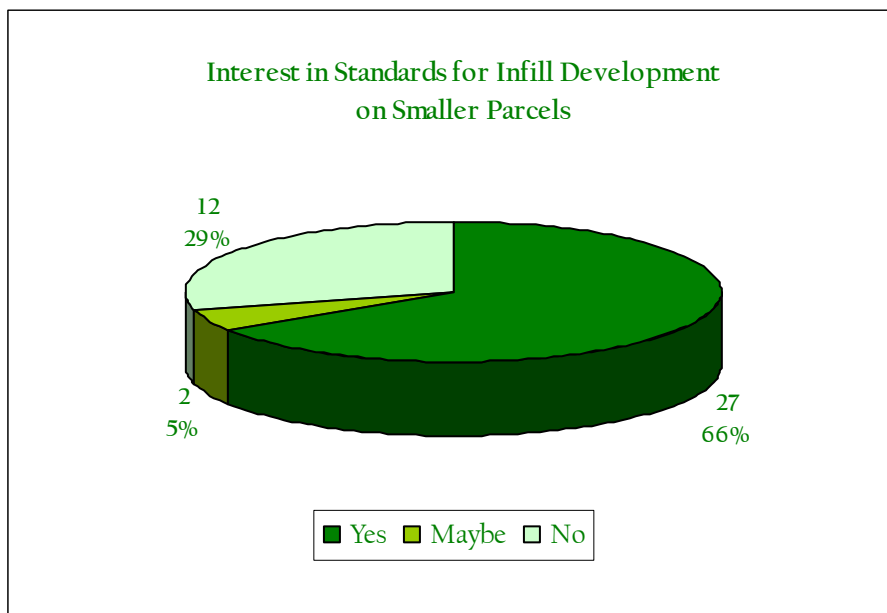
Approach #1: Are you interested in pursuing alternatives to subdivide large parcels?

61% of respondents were interested in pursuing alternatives to subdivide large parcels. 10% were possibly interested, and 29% were not interested in pursuing. Combined, 71% of the respondents were either interested or possibly interested in pursuing this approach.



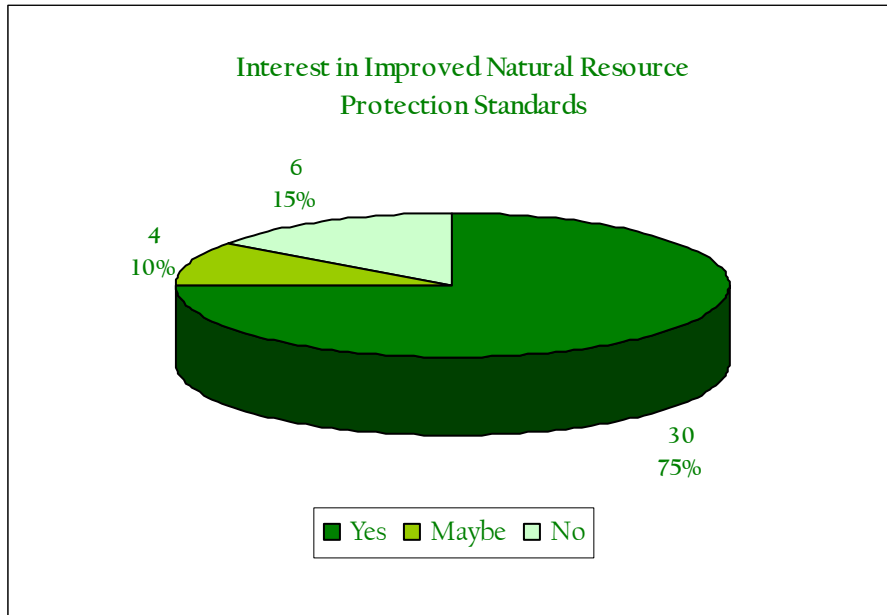
Approach #2: Are you interested in pursuing standards for infill development on smaller parcels?

66% of respondents were interested in pursuing standards for infill development on smaller parcels. 5% were possibly interested, and 29% were not interested. Combined, 71% of respondents were either interested or possibly interested in pursuing this approach.



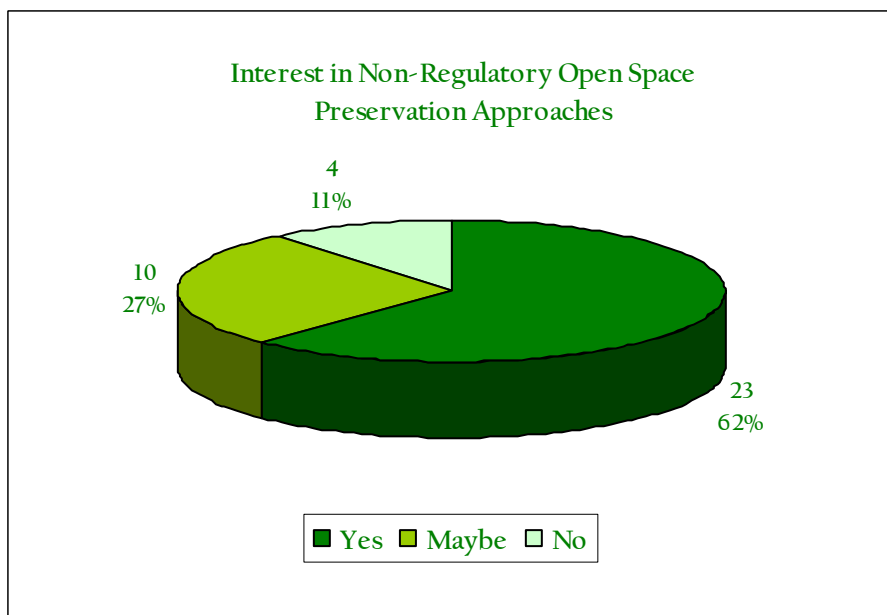
Approach #3: Are you interested in pursuing development standards for natural resources?

75% of respondents were interested in pursuing development standards for natural resources. 10% were possibly interested, and 15% were not interested in pursuing. Combined, 85% of the respondents were either interested or possibly interested in pursuing this approach.



Approach #4: Are you interested in non-regulatory approaches to open space preservation?

62% of respondents were interested in pursuing non-regulatory approaches to open space preservation. 27% were possibly interested, and 11% were not interested. Combined, 89% of respondents were either interested or possibly interested in pursuing this approach.



SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

| Public Policy Approaches & Tools | Average | Scores | | | | | | Total Responses |
|--|-------------|----------------|------------|--------------------|------------|-----------------------|------------|-----------------|
| | | 1 | % | 2 | % | 3 | % | |
| | | Want to Pursue | | May Want to Pursue | | Do Not Want to Pursue | | |
| Alternatives to Subdivide Large Parcels | 1.67 | 26 | 61% | 4 | 10% | 12 | 29% | 42 |
| Open Space Subdivision | 1.69 | 27 | 60% | 5 | 11% | 13 | 29% | 45 |
| Open Space Set-Aside | 1.88 | 17 | 40% | 14 | 32% | 12 | 28% | 43 |
| Payment-In-Lieu | 2.47 | 5 | 12% | 13 | 30% | 25 | 58% | 43 |
| PUD | 2.63 | 2 | 5% | 11 | 27% | 28 | 68% | 41 |
| Standards for Infill Development on Smaller Parcels | 1.63 | 27 | 66% | 2 | 5% | 12 | 29% | 41 |
| Increasing Lot Coverage | 1.76 | 23 | 55% | 6 | 14% | 13 | 31% | 42 |
| Floor Area Ratio (FAR) | 1.88 | 19 | 46% | 8 | 20% | 14 | 34% | 41 |
| Lot Width to Building Width Ratio | 1.55 | 30 | 68% | 4 | 9% | 10 | 23% | 44 |
| Improved Natural Resource Protection Standards | 1.40 | 30 | 75% | 4 | 10% | 6 | 15% | 40 |
| Floodplain Regulations | 1.55 | 26 | 62% | 9 | 21% | 7 | 17% | 42 |
| Tree Protection Regulations | 1.46 | 28 | 68% | 7 | 17% | 6 | 15% | 41 |
| Steep Slope/Hillside Regulations | 1.40 | 32 | 71% | 8 | 18% | 5 | 11% | 45 |
| Wetland and Surface Water Protection Regulations | 1.49 | 28 | 65% | 9 | 21% | 6 | 14% | 43 |
| Landscaping Regulations | 1.88 | 16 | 40% | 13 | 32% | 11 | 28% | 40 |
| Special Zones (Public Conservation / Watershed Protection) | 1.69 | 20 | 51% | 11 | 28% | 8 | 21% | 39 |
| Non-Regulatory Open Space Preservation | 1.49 | 23 | 62% | 10 | 27% | 4 | 11% | 37 |
| Conservation Easements | 1.50 | 25 | 63% | 10 | 25% | 5 | 12% | 40 |
| Public Open Space Acquisition | 1.57 | 24 | 57% | 12 | 29% | 6 | 14% | 42 |

CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

In general, the responses convey the following:

1. There are clear interests in exploring the four approaches.
2. All approaches are supported, and there is no “favorite” approach among the options.
3. The three most supported tools are standards for steep slopes/hillsides, tree protection, and wetland and surface water protection, showing a strong interest in improving natural resource standards.
4. The least supported tools are payment-in-lieu of open space set-aside and Planned Unit Development (PUD). Both of these tools fall under the “alternatives to subdivide large parcels” approach.

These results can inform the Steering Committee as we move into the third phasing of the planning effort: preparation of recommendations.

FEEDBACK COMMENTS AS WRITTEN

- 1 What about NES and development of landscaping?
- 2 Not interested in open land being available to the public. Not interested in any trails available to the public.
- 3 We want to preserve the character of the city and safeguard the environment. The open space subdivision design and improved natural resources through development standards are particularly important ways to do this. Conservation easements and public space acquisition are good ideas; however, I like the easements better because of lower costs and because the residents may not be able to agree on what open space to purchase.
- 4 Would love ability to cross Hillsboro Road and connect the two sections of community. Trails and bike paths - walking and biking opportunity for kids.
- 5 Design characteristics of a neighborhood.
- 6 More on linkage, trails including walking and biking trails. Making community safer for walking and biking. Park areas. Linkage to greenways in Nashville.
- 7 I would like to see mandatory approval of neighbors if current public open space is ever to be developed (i.e., Bison Meadow Park). I am concerned about placing too many rules and regulations into a community (such as landscaping approvals.) I want more accessible walking areas for neighborhoods - sidewalks - more neighborhood parks.
- 8 Open space - trails.
- 9 I'm supportive of maintaining regulations that would prohibit duplex or triplex development.
- 10 Yes, I am interested in "ratcheting up" the current regulations which were designed to limit development and preserve the character of the community.
- 11 Do not change set back requirements from the main streets
- 12 Ability to walk to Radnor Lake from within Forest Hills area particularly from current path on creekside; support dimensional standards; sidewalks determine maximum steep slope grade and hillside regulations; hilltop aesthetics where trees must be maintained; conservations areas needed; minimum future lots to be 2 acres; preserve woodlands for wildlife so magnificent in F. Hills; preserve open space that can never be developed; allow no fee in lieu; tree canopy protection; woods on street as opposed to all grassy lawns; buffer to protect surface waters; preserve wetlands
- 13 Protect ridgeline vistas--no new development on top of ridges/hills. Like the idea of a natural/public corridor between Radnor Lake and Warner Park
- 14 Need to develop instrument to assure tree protection and grading and landscaping is performed--surety. Very much in favor of connecting Radnor and Warner with trail--hard surface and mulch for bicycle, stroller and horses. Expansion of above point. Grade separation at Hillsboro Road - tunnel that would combine with creek. Many good examples of this design opportunities. Need to control slope and tree protections on a lot by lot basis in addition to a planned subdivision.
- 15 Extend our greenway from Warner Parks to Radnor. We are loving the tiny path! Thanks for using careful language tonight. Many of these people have come to protect their land for the future--many have come to protect their investment! Human nature!
- 16 Exceptions to protections should be harder to get. Would like the City to install protective regulations for hilltop preservation. Please put the power point presentation on the City's website--including the maps. Open space, and trees, and native wildflowers, etc. are our most precious resource. The city should act now to preserve these for prosperity.
- 17 Would not like any new divisions of parcels to allow less than 2 acres per home.
- 18 We need to leave all steep slopes and hillsides alone - too much change in water/rain drainage when you grade down on natural slope. Keep Radnor Lake undeveloped. Encourage extension of lake trail.
- 19 This is the same type of program presented at Percy Priest School and it was obvious that a conflict of interest existed between some members of the board that owned large parcels of land and wanted it rezoned so as to subdivide their land into smaller lots for the purpose of monetary gains. This is what the members of Forest Hills do not want, as most of the property have required two acres with no duplexes or cluster homes; or garages facing the frontage.
- 20 Like minimum lot size restrictions "as is".