



Questions & Answers About Jordan Lake, the Environment, and Water/Sewer Utilities

- Q. What is meant by the ½ mile “critical area” around Jordan Lake? What is meant by the lake’s “protected area”?**
- A.** The area located within ½ mile of the “normal pool elevation” of the lake is called the “critical area” by the NC Division of Water Quality. Beyond the critical area is the watershed “protected area,” which in the plan study area is defined as land within five miles of and draining to the normal pool elevation of Jordan Lake.
- Q. What sorts of development does the State of North Carolina allow next to and around Jordan Lake?**
- A.** The N.C. Division of Water Quality classifies Jordan Lake Reservoir as being in a “Water Supply IV Watershed.” Within the critical area and protected area the State has established minimum rules that apply to the use and development of land, although local counties and municipalities may have more stringent requirements, as is the case for Chatham County and the Town or Cary. Both the county and Cary have stormwater regulations that apply to new developments. For more information about the state’s rules, see the NC Division of Water Quality web site at: <http://h2o.enr.state.nc.us/wswp/>
- Q. What is the significance of the ½-mile critical area around Jordan Lake as it relates to housing density?**
- A.** The NC Division of Water Quality has established certain rules for development within the critical area. In particular, the State’s rules allow up to two dwellings per acre within the ½ mile critical area without engineered stormwater control devices or higher densities with on-site controls. However, the proposed Joint Plan recommends residential densities of one dwelling *per five acres* within this area – that’s only 1/10 of the density allowed by the state. Current Chatham County zoning and watershed ordinances allow one dwelling per 40,000 sq. ft. (about 0.92 acre) within this area.
- Q. What are engineered stormwater controls or best management practices (BMPs)?**
- A.** These are man-made structures designed and constructed to reduce the impact of stormwater runoff on nearby rivers and streams. This is done by reducing the volume, discharge rate, velocity, and pollutant loading in stormwater. Pollutants of primary concern for Jordan Lake are nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorous.
- Q. Who can withdraw drinking water from Jordan Lake?**
- A.** The Jordan Lake Reservoir is a federal facility, owned and operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as a regional reservoir. Water allocations from the reservoir are granted by the North Carolina Division of Water Resources (NC DWR). The NC DWR weighs and considers reservoir water allocation requests from numerous local governments, including applications from Chatham County, Cary and Apex, as well as from local governments far removed from the Triangle. At present, water allocations from Jordan Lake have been granted to Chatham County, Apex, Morrisville, Durham, and Cary (and also serving RDU Airport and Research Triangle Park).

Q: Will property owners within the study area be forced to obtain water and sewer from Cary or have to pay if it is made available but they do not use these services?

A: No. The Chatham-Cary Joint Land Use Plan is an effort to map out the long-range direction for future development within the study area, regardless of whether such growth happens under Chatham's or Cary's jurisdictions. As a side note, while the Town of Cary typically requires new subdivisions being constructed within its corporate limits to connect to municipal utilities, the Town has no policy requiring *existing* subdivisions to connect, whether inside or outside of Cary.

Q: What does the "Rural Buffer Boundary Line" on the Plan Map mean, in terms of utilities?

A: Public water and sewer would not be provided west of the Boundary Line (either by Chatham or Cary). There are approximately 7,300 acres west of the Boundary Line, and about 4,200 acres east of the Line.

Q: Who pays for water and sewer utility extensions?

A: In the case of Cary utilities, the cost of service extensions from existing service lines to a property wishing to be served is borne fully by the developer or landowner. It is up to each individual landowner to decide whether or not Town utility service extensions to their property makes financial sense for them. (If a landowner requests and is willing to pay for a Town of Cary utility service extension to their property, the Town must still approve the extension.)

To Learn More...

1. Visit the Web page for the Plan at: www.chathamnc.org/jointchathamcaryplan

2. You can contact project staff:

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3. Send your questions in writing to:

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