Incorporating public participation was central to the process for producing this plan. The community was actively engaged through meetings with stakeholders, Town staff, and the general public. Two evening open house type meetings were held to gather community input and display working maps of the community. The feedback received from the groups mentioned above were combined to craft the Wake Forest Open Space and Greenways Master Plan recommendations. Also incorporated into the process was field research and Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis.

As a result of community meetings, staff and stakeholder comments it is recommended that the Town of Wake Forest supplement its existing park system with the following parks and open space acquisitions. These acquisition recommendations are broadly defined within this plan to cover geographical areas of the community that were agreed upon throughout the participatory planning process. It is envisioned that these future parks will serve multiple purposes including: active and passive recreation, protection of water quality, flood plain management, and environmental education.

- a “central park” between the downtown area and the new bypass.
- a community park in the east-central area of the community, and there is a possibility that this park could be developed in partnership with Rolesville.
- a future community park in the northwestern quadrant of the community.
- a future park along the Neuse River at the intersection with Capital Boulevard.

Proposed greenways include:
- Smith Creek Greenway
- Richland Creek Greenway
- Horse Creek Greenway
- Sanford Creek Greenway
- Tom’s Creek Greenway
- Wait Avenue Greenway
- Purnell Road Greenway
- Jenkins Road Greenway

Additionally, the Open Space and Greenway Plan advocates the protection and conservation of the primary streams of Wake Forest:
- Horse Creek
- Richland Creek
- Smith Creek
- Sanford Creek.

Finally, it is important to conserve and protect the small town character of Wake Forest by enhancing the main community thoroughfares (US 1/ Capital Boulevard, Durham Road/Wait Avenue, and the new 98-bypass).
The towns of Wendell and Zebulon formed a partnership in the Open Space and Greenway Study. The study area boundary was determined from the combination of each town's Extra Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) boundary. From this combined land area, it was apparent that a much larger area would need to be included because of the close proximity to and rapid growth occurring in Johnston, Nash, and Franklin Counties. A five-mile radius was determined to cover a wide enough area to focus on the regional growth.

The planning process included public involvement, community meetings, and field evaluations. The public meetings were held August 2001, October 2001, December 2001 and featured displays, an informative video, questionnaire and interactive maps. These community meetings were meant to gather public input, share ideas, update on progress and process and disperse public opinion surveys. Field evaluations entailed in-house research, field visits, GIS analysis, visual field inspection and review of web-based and published materials.

The Zebulon study area focused on two of the four watersheds in the joint Wendell and Zebulon Plan, Little River Moccasin Creek watersheds. The Wendell study area focused on the other two watersheds: Marks Creek and Buffalo Creek. Several parks were located through staff recommendations, public feedback and GIS mapping.

- Central Park - Develop a “central park” adjacent to the proposed Little River Reservoir in conjunction with Wake County and the two towns.

- Little River Corridor Park - Develop an open space park along the Little River, in partnership with Wake County and the two towns.

- Northeast Park site - Develop an open space park along Moccasin Creek; consider partnership with Wake, Nash, and Franklin Counties. (Zebulon)

- Southeast Park Site - Develop a community park in the eastern area of the Study area, possibly in partnership with Wake County, Franklin County, and Johnston County. (Zebulon)

- Southwest Park Site - Work with Knightdale to acquire land for a community park near Lake Myra and along Buffalo Creek in the western quadrant of the Study area. (Wendell)

- Northwest Park Site - Develop an open space park along Hominy Creek; consider partnership with Rolesville and Wake County. (Wendell)
The following stream corridors and greenways will be protected for water quality, wildlife habitat and passive recreation in Zebulon:

- Moccasin Creek
- Little River
- Beaverdam Creek

The following stream corridors will be protected in Wendell:

- Buffalo Creek
- Little River
- Hominy Creek.

A Model Stream Buffer Ordinance is recommended to establish a stream buffer program that is based on Watershed Classification System defined by base line water quality measurements developed by Wake County Water Quality Study and State Standards. The suggested standards are:

- 100 foot minimum buffers from stream bank both sides of stream on all lands that drain more than one square mile
- Includes all FEMA identified streams in Wake County
- First 70 feet undisturbed (w/utilities), remaining 30 feet minor disturbance

A Model Conservation Subdivision Ordinance is proposed for Wendell and Zebulon. The general guidelines for this ordinance are:

- Replace the current Cluster Ordinance with a new Conservation Subdivision Ordinance
- Goal of 40% (min. 30%) contiguous open space set aside
- Flexible program that offers a better arrangement of land development
- Protect land for future open space during the land development process
- Land development “Yield” remains unchanged
- Greenspace protected via conservation easement
- Open space is shared by all homeowners
- Can be accomplished in rural landscapes w/out water and sewer