



August 25, 2020

Dear Friends of the Eno River Association,

The Orange County Board of County Commissioners are poised to vote on several critical issues in September. Their decisions will result in either a strong, positive impact for both the Eno River and our community, or in a negative, lasting scar on both.

The first decision is about critical funding to continue natural and cultural preservation across Orange County. The Orange County Board of Commissioners will be considering funding proposals for next year and the year after for the Lands Legacy Fund. Here are some key benefits that the Lands Legacy Fund has delivered:

- Since 2000 over \$8 million in other funding--from grants and landowner donations--has been raised for land protection due to the Lands Legacy Program and Conservation Easement Program.
- Nearly 4,000 acres within Orange County have been protected through these programs; creating parks for underserved populations within our community, improving water quality for over 500,000 citizens, ensuring viable farmland into the future, ensuring climate change resiliency, and improving the overall health and well-being of Orange County residents.
- Investments in land protection today provide lasting, positive impacts on our community into the future. Proximity to parks and open space enhances the value of residential properties and produces increased tax revenues for communities. Open spaces capture precipitation, reduce stormwater management costs, and by protecting underground water sources, open space reduces the cost of drinking water up to ten-fold.
- Improving access to public open space can increase levels of physical activity, provide mental health benefits, and reduce healthcare costs.
- Without the financial commitment of the County, land trusts will no longer be able to leverage grant funds to support land acquisition. In most cases, funding partners require matching resources, especially from municipal and county governments.

This past June, Orange County Commissioners responded positively to our request for Lands Legacy funding for this coming year. **Next week, on September 1, it is critical that they fully fund the Lands Legacy program in the County's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for years 2 and 3 of their budget. Please write to your Commissioner in support of this vote.**

The second issue, which could result in an enormous negative impact on the Eno River and our community, is the proposed Research Triangle Logistics Park (RTLTP). This proposed 161-acre warehouse complex could be built on the headwaters of a tributary to the Eno River, near the intersection of Old 86 and Davis Road in Hillsborough. The current site plan does not go far

enough to protect neighbors from impacts, nor protect the water quality and quantity within Cates Creek and the Eno.

The site contains nearly 6 acres of Natural Heritage Natural Area, which the design proposes to entirely cover over. The site also encompasses 2,500 feet of Cates Creek, a nutrient sensitive waterway. This area of the Eno supports several rare freshwater mussels and fish, including the state endangered Atlantic Pigtoe and Yellow Lampmussel, as well as the state threatened Eastern Lampmussel, Notched Rainbow, Creeper, and Triangle Floater. We must protect this critical conservation corridor, as it connects habitat in the Eno watershed to habitat in the New Hope watershed: [the Eno-New Hope Wildlife Habitat Connectivity corridor](#).

**We need the County Commissioners to vote ‘NO’ on this proposal.** Further, we believe the developer needs to address these concerns by ensuring better buffers between the warehouses and existing structures, preserving critical habitat and the wildlife corridor, and managing the stormwater from the site as a resource. They could do this by way of a green roof to reduce heating and cooling costs while still providing bird, bee, and wildlife habitat; and installing permeable pavement that allows water to soak into the ground and slowly be released into the streams.

While development is important to our region and our communities, it must be done in a way that fits with existing uses and preserves our natural assets. Please let the Orange County Board of County Commissioners know you want to hear them vote “NO” on September 15<sup>th</sup> to this RTLP proposal as it doesn’t yet offer the appropriate protections for the natural community and Orange County neighbors. **More information, a petition, and a direct link to email your commissioners is included in this website:** <https://www.savehillsborough.com/>

Thank you for being a champion for the Eno!

Signed,  
The Board of Directors and Staff  
Eno River Association

