City of Cottonwood

"Inspiring a Vibrant Community"

AGENDA

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

MEETING LOCATION:

COUNCIL CHAMBERS-RIVERFRONT
1083 E. RIVERFRONT ROAD
COTTONWOOD, AZ 86326

Wednesday, February 25, 2026 | 6:00 PM | cottonwoodaz.gov

I. **CALL TO ORDER**

II. **ROLL CALL**

III. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

1. Approval of minutes regular meeting of November 19. 2025

IV. **ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICECHAIR**

V. **INFORMATIONAL REPORTS AND UPDATES:**
A brief summary of current events by the Chairpersons, Commissioners, and/or the Community Development Director (or their designee). The public body does not propose, discuss, deliberate, or take legal actions on any matter brought up during this summary unless the matter is properly noticed for legal action.

VI. **CALL TO THE PUBLIC:**
This is the time fore the public to comment on any matter that does not appear on the agenda. Commission members may not discuss items identified on the agenda. Pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.01(H), action taken as a result of public comment will be limited to directing staff to study the matter, responding to criticism, or scheduling the matter for consideration at a later date. Comments are limited to three minutes for each person.

VII. **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

1. COTTONWOOD HISTORIC PROPERTY TOUR 2026

2. NATIONAL PRESERVATION MONTH

VIII. **COMMISSIONER REQUEST FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEM(S)**

IX. **ADJOURNMENT**

Information on the above agenda items may be obtained in person from the Community Development Department, 111 N. Main Street in Cottonwood, or by calling (928) 634-5505.

A verbal comment period will be provided during each hearing item. The Chair may impose a time limit on each speaker. The Commission will not consider written materials submitted less than three working days before the meeting.

Pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.02(B) the Commission may vote to go into executive session on any agenda item pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.03(A)(3) and (4) for discussion and consultation for legal advice with the City Attorney.

The Riverfront Council Chambers are accessible to the handicapped in accordance with Federal “504” and “ADA” laws. Those with needs for special typeface print or hearing devices may request these from the Community Development Admin at 634-5505 (TDD 634-5526). All requests must be made at least 24 hours before the meeting.

Members of the Historic Preservation Commission will attend either in person or remotely.

City of Cottonwood, Arizona
Agenda Communication

Meeting Date:	February 25, 2026
Subject:	
Department:	City Clerk
From:	Evette Skerrett
Strategic Pillar:	

ATTACHMENTS
11-19-25 DRAFT.pdf

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF COTTONWOOD, ARIZONA, HELD NOVEMBER 19, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M., AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS–RIVERFRONT LOCATED AT 1083 E. RIVERFRONT ROAD, COTTONWOOD, ARIZONA.

Chairwoman Detjen called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Roll call was taken as follows:

I. COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT

Kristina Detjen, Chairwoman
Patricia Monell, Vice Chairwoman
David Chana, Commissioner
David Collins, Commissioner (Via Zoom)
Josh Edwards, Commissioner

II. STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

Eva Cutro, Interim Department Head
Mike Goodman, City Attorney
Evette Skerrett, Deputy Clerk
Kristina Hayden, Senior Planner

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

APPROVAL OF MINUTES—REGULAR MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 24, 2025

Motion: Chairwoman Detjen moved to approve minutes of September 24, 2025.
Motion unanimously carried.

IV. INFORMATIONAL REPORTS AND UPDATES

Interim Department Head Cutro provided the following updates:

• A text amendment to Municipal Code Chapter 2.11.10 regarding the Historic Preservation Commission became effective on October 16, 2025.
– Commission size is now set at 5 members.
– Quorum requirement is 3 members.

• The December meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 17, 2025.

• Planning and Zoning currently has one vacant seat, and City Council has three open seats. Applications are being accepted.

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V. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

None

VI. NEW BUSINESS

CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF THE CULTURAL SENSITIVITY MAP

Senior Planner Hayden reported that consultant Lynn Neil experienced unforeseen personal matters that affected the project timeline. As a result, the final deliverables intended for this meeting were not completed.

She explained that the consultant is preparing a cultural sensitivity heat map, modeled after examples from other jurisdictions. The map will illustrate the likelihood of archaeological and paleontological findings on vacant City, State, or County-owned properties:

- Areas of high potential
- Areas of moderate potential
- Areas of lower potential

No final materials were available for review or approval at this time. She recommended tabling the item until the December meeting.

Motion: Chairwoman Detjen moved to table consideration and approval of the cultural sensitivity map for December 17, 2025

Motion unanimously carried.

PUBLIC HEARING AND CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL FOR CA-25-005 CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS REQUEST TO MODIFY A CONTRIBUTING PROPERTY-IRON HORSE INN.

Senior Planner Hayden presented the request for consideration and approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for installing new sign panels on the existing rooftop sign located at the Iron Horse Inn in Old Town. This rooftop sign is a prominent feature at the entrance to Old Town.

She requested that the Commission consider the applicant's submittal, the staff report, the criteria and context analysis, and the recommended stipulations. He noted the following:

- The property is a contributing property within the Cottonwood Commercial Historic District.
- Per the Zoning Ordinance, any changes must reflect the architectural style and characteristics of the existing structure and its context with surrounding properties.
- The locator map identifies the historic district boundaries, with the subject property located at Yavapai and Cactus.

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The applicant's site plan and rendering were reviewed. The applicant proposes repainting the arrow on the sign, using colors consistent with the existing sign but more enhanced. No changes to the sign's form are proposed. Current site photos show noticeable degradation, and the property owner is proactively addressing it.

She summarized the contextual analysis included in the staff report:

- The proposed work is reversible for future restoration efforts.
- The level of disturbance to the existing sign is minimal.
- The sign retains its original form.
- The oldest confirmed date of the sign is November 1985. The district's period of significance is 1961 and prior.
- No alterations to notable building features identified in the 1985 or 1999 inventory forms are proposed.
- Surrounding sign content and color palettes vary throughout the district, so content cannot be used as a basis for denial.

If approved, staff recommended the following stipulations:

1. Development must be in accordance with the plans reviewed by the Commission.
2. All work must adhere to the Zoning Ordinance.
3. Approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness does not constitute approval of a sign permit; a separate sign permit application will be required.

she concluded by noting that the applicant's packet will be added to the public record and that he would circulate the provided material sample for the Commission's review.

Chairwoman Detjen commented that the only confirmed date available for the sign is 1985, noting that the lack of earlier photographs is unfortunate. She shared information from a library resource on Route 66–era motor courts, explaining that buildings of this type were commonly constructed from the late 1920s through the late 1950s for travelers visiting local landmarks such as Montezuma Castle and Tuzigoot.

She stated that the architectural style and neon signage shown in the book closely resemble the Iron Horse Inn, suggesting the building likely predates 1961 and should qualify as historic. She emphasized that very few signs of this type remain in Old Town—possibly only three—and referenced successful restorations of similar signs such as Ledbetter and Cactus Kate's.

Chairwoman Detjen added that repainting and restoring the sign, potentially including bulb replacement, would enhance its historic character and could attract visitors due to its nostalgic appeal.

Senior Planner Hayden stated she did not fully understand the question initially.

Chairwoman Detjen clarified that although the earliest documented date for the sign is 1985, she questioned whether the Commission could consider the architectural and historical context presented in the Route 66 reference book. She asked whether the earliest possible

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date could be inferred from that source, given its documentation of similar buildings nationwide.

Senior Planner Hayden responded that she would defer that question to Legal. She explained that, based on the information and documentation currently available, 1985 is the only date she can state with confidence. She added that she would not be comfortable asserting an earlier installation date without supporting evidence and asked Legal whether they had any insight regarding conjecture.

City Attorney Goodman stated that the historical information provided helps establish the period when signs of this type were common. However, he noted that the Commission cannot definitively conclude that this specific sign dates from that era. He emphasized that Senior Planner Hayden verified the only documented date available, and the City must rely on the information it can substantiate.

He added that if the Commission has additional historical context that informs its discretion regarding architectural style or the desired preservation outcome, that context may still guide the Commission's decision. He explained that while the date cannot be formally reassigned without evidence, the broader historical information may support the Commission's judgment on whether the sign aligns with the architectural character of the property and district.

Chairwoman Detjen stated that the concern is related to timing. She noted that the packet was received only a few days before the meeting and acknowledged the internal process staff must follow. She explained that the Commission met yesterday to discuss the item and that additional information was located afterward. Had the materials been available earlier, the Commission would have had sufficient time to review the documents as part of due process. She clarified that this timing issue is the only reason for raising the concern.

City Attorney Goodman asked whether the request before the Commission would change if the neon sign were confirmed to predate 1961, noting that the applicant's intention appears to be covering and refurbishing the sign rather than removing it.

Commissioner Chana stated that his understanding was that the sign is simply being redone as a recreation of what is already there.

Senior Planner Hayden explained that she is not aware whether the current sign is the original or a recreation. She noted that recent code changes have not been approved within the last ten years and that the sign's design is antiquated, making it possible that it existed before 1985. However, she has found no evidence confirming its presence during the district's period of significance.

Commissioner Chana observed that while the building dates to the 1930s, there is uncertainty regarding when the sign was installed.

Commissioner Collins added that the property originally operated as Eden's Motor Court before becoming the Iron Horse Inn, indicating that signage existed prior to the current name.

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Senior Planner Hayden confirmed that the property was later known as the Sundial Motel and that the sign at one point reflected that name.

Commissioner Collins asked whether, similar to last month's Bay Folding review, staff contacted the State Historic Preservation Office to determine if the state's records provided any information that could impact the evaluation of this sign or the historic integrity of the original property.

Senior Planner Hayden stated that she did not contact SHPO for this review. She explained that she typically consults SHPO when architectural features are in question because they have a historic architect on staff. In this case, she felt confident in her analysis and did not believe additional SHPO feedback was necessary.

Commissioner Edwards asked when the Iron Horse Inn originated.

Vice Chairwoman Monell stated that the Iron Horse Inn dates to the 1970s and that the sign was modified during that period.

Senior Planner Hayden reported that the 1985 inventory form lists the building as constructed in 1935, though with limited details. The 1999 inventory form indicates the following progression: Eden's Auto Court through at least 1952, Eden Rock Motel in 1970, and later the Sundial Motel. She noted that the property transitioned into a hotel sometime after 1952.

Commissioner Collins added that the original motor court garages were later enclosed and converted into additional hotel rooms. He noted that guests once parked beneath the upstairs rooms, and these modifications likely occurred before the 1985 inventory forms were completed.

Commissioner Edwards stated that it appears reasonable to conclude the current sign—while possibly following an earlier outline—was updated to read "Iron Horse Inn" sometime after 1970, placing it outside the district's period of significance.

Commissioner Collins agreed that this seems a safe assumption given the lack of earlier documentation.

Commissioner Edwards noted that the nomination form clearly identifies the property as Eden Rock Motel until around 1970, confirming that the Iron Horse Inn name came later. he asked whether the property owner was present.

Senior Planner Hayden responded that the owner was not present, but the representative responsible for the sign work was in attendance.

Commissioner Edwards asked why the sign wasn't being redone in the same style and why the new panels were being affixed in front of the existing structure rather than simply restoring the original.

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Senior Planner Hayden stated that the applicant would be better suited to answer that question.

Mr. Alvey, representing Alvey Signs of Cottonwood, stated that he has worked in the sign industry in the Verde Valley for 50 years and has operated his sign shop since 1985. He addressed several questions raised by the Commission.

He noted that during the 1970s, several illuminated cantilevered signs existed in Old Town, including Shep's Liquors, A. James Modern Court, Lillian's Sweet Shop, the pool hall, and Cactus Kate's (formerly the Buckaroo). He stated that the Cactus Kate's sign was similar in style to the Iron Horse sign, including a flashing arrow.

Mr. Alvey recalled that prior to the Iron Horse Inn, the property operated as the Sundial Motel and that the sign may have illuminated during that period. He explained that the sign's internal structure could reveal its history: if the current face were removed, existing neon mounting penetrations might indicate whether it once read "Sundial" or possibly "Eden," referencing Eden's Auto Court.

He described the arrow's mechanical system, explaining that it uses a rotating dial inside a service box to create a sequential flashing pattern. Although the arrow contains original porcelain bulb blocks that have detached internally over time, his neon contractor confirmed these components could still be rewired and made operable. However, the arrow lacks an access panel, making restoration difficult.

Mr. Alvey stated that the owner does not intend to restore the sign to its historic illuminated condition or return it to a former name. The owner's objective is to maintain the existing structure and mount new sign faces over it to advertise the Iron Horse Inn.

He explained that attaching new panels to the existing sign would involve drilling mounting holes approximately every two feet, using material consistent with the original metal. If the sign were ever restored in the future, these holes could be welded and finished without compromising the original structure. He referenced similar examples in Old Town—such as the Shep's which is now the Welcome to Old Town sign and the Ledbetter sign—where historic signs were retrofitted or restored by removing multiple generations of sign faces. He noted that such retrofits are common and consistent with the area's signage history. Regarding cost, he stated that restoring the sign using neon would cost approximately $7,000–$8,000 for the main sign and an additional $3,000 to restore the arrow, totaling roughly $10,000–$11,000. The owner's current plan is to install new non-illuminated panels over the existing sign while possibly restoring illumination to the arrow in the future.

Vice Chairwoman Monell stated that the material sample presented by Senior Planner Hayden represents the original size and material of the historic sign. She asked for confirmation that the current "Iron Horse Inn" sign face was installed on top of the original sign panel, consistent with the pattern of successive motor court owners placing new signage over the existing structure.

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Mr. Alvey stated that some of the original neon penetrations remain visible on the sign where they were not covered. He noted that the Sundial Motel signage was likely painted or applied directly over the original surface, similar to the Verde Furniture sign, where penetrations were simply painted over. He added that while he cannot confirm whether multiple additional sign faces were attached over the years, the existing screw holes indicate where previous signage was mounted.

Vice Chairwoman Monell asked whether the new sign face being proposed would use the same screw locations and match the existing Iron Horse Inn sign area, or whether it would cover the full extent of the original sign panel.

Mr. Alvey stated that the overall size of the sign structure, excluding the arrow, is approximately 118 inches tall and about 60 inches wide. He noted that the current Iron Horse Inn sign was installed by first painting the back of the panel black and then attaching a 4x8 sheet over it. For the proposed update, his plan is to match the full original shape of the sign—top, bottom, left, and right—including the slight angled edge on the east side. He explained that this approach would allow the new face to cover the entire area and avoid appearing like an afterthought.

Vice Chairwoman Monell commented that, although the original sign has not been located or documented to date, restoring it to its original appearance would require significant cost and effort, similar to what was done for the James Court sign restoration. She noted that restoration of older signs can involve heavy chemical stripping to reveal original lettering. However, she emphasized that this is not the owner's intent; the owner wants the Iron Horse Inn sign to remain. She added that the original sign is still physically present beneath the current face, but likely cannot be fully viewed without extensive restoration work.

Mr. Alvey stated that, on a personal level, he would love to see the sign fully restored to its original form, illuminated with neon, and preserved as a historic feature. However, he emphasized that the owner's priority is to maintain the Iron Horse Inn branding, and the proposed work reflects the owner's desired layout and budget.

He noted that the original components inside the sign—including the ceramic bulb blocks and the timer mechanism—are still present. If the sign were ever restored in the future, these elements could be inspected, repaired, or reused. He added that if an internal component such as the original timer were removed, it could potentially be donated to the Verde Historical Society or Clemenceau Museum. He reiterated that the structure remains intact, but the neon, transformers, and lighting elements are no longer operational.

Chairwoman Detjen asked whether illuminating only the arrow—at an estimated cost of $3,000–$4,000—could be an option. She suggested alternative cost-saving ideas such as repainting the arrow and adding faux-neon or perimeter lighting.

Mr. Alvey replied that an outline-style neon tube could be explored and estimated that such an option might reduce the cost by a few thousand dollars. He stated that producing two new sign faces would cost approximately $1,800, which is significantly less expensive than full neon restoration.

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Chairwoman Detjen expressed concern about the proposed yellow coloring, stating that it clashes with the peach tones of the building and surrounding cobblestones and is not historically reflective of similar motor court signage. She noted that the new sign would also incorporate yellow.

Vice Chairwoman Monell pointed out that the existing sign already uses yellow.

Commissioner Collins stated that many aspects of sign color and design fall under the City's sign ordinance rather than the Commission's purview. He emphasized the importance of determining whether any historic elements were present when the district designation occurred. If the Iron Horse Inn signage was installed in the 1980s, he cautioned against requiring restoration to a condition that may not have existed during the period of significance.

Vice Chairwoman Monell noted that these elements long predate the current Commission.

Chairwoman Detjen asked whether oral history from long-time local historians (e.g., Glendon Farley, Dave Peterson) could qualify as documentation.

City Attorney Goodman responded that oral tradition is not included in the list of acceptable documentation for determining a Certificate of Appropriateness. While such sources may provide context, they are not recognized as formal design guidelines unless adopted by the City Council.

Chairwoman Detjen asked Commissioner Edwards for his perspective based on his experience with similar buildings.

Commissioner Edwards stated that because the sign was modified after the period of significance, much of the discussion about historic accuracy may not be relevant. He noted that the owner's intent is simply to update the motel's branding. He further cited recently adopted code language identifying minor impacts to include the repair or replacement of signs within existing sign panels. He stated that changing the sign would not negatively affect the building's historic integrity and indicated his support for approving the certificate.

Commissioner Chana expressed support for the design and stated that commissioners appear generally interested in a more historic aesthetic. He suggested that illumination—possibly via an LED alternative, if compliant with dark-sky requirements—could add appeal, though he acknowledged this may be outside the owner's budget.

Commissioner Collins agreed with the prior comments. He appreciated that the proposal covers the entire sign panel, improving upon the previous approach where only new lettering was added. He noted the Commission is not responsible for regulating sign content or color and referenced a newly installed candy-store sign on the same building. He stated that matching the original sign size, improving appearance, and supporting economic vitality in Old Town are all positive outcomes. He expressed support for approving the request.

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Motion: Chairwoman Detjen moved to approve CA25-005 to allow a proposed modification to the existing sign subject to stipulations indicated in the staff report.
Second: Commissioner Chana

Motion unanimously carried

VII. DISCUSSION ITEMS

DISCUSSION-2025 PROPERTY TOUR RECAP

Senior Planner Hayden reported on the November 8, 2025 property tour. Tours were conducted from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Attendance was slow early in the day, but participation increased after lunchtime. She thanked Council Member Joy Mosley for assisting at the booth.

She noted that offering small, easily mailed raffle items allowed winners to participate without being present, which significantly boosted raffle ticket sales. She recommended continuing this approach for future tours.

Approximately $450 was added to the small grant fund. Hayden stated that the amount is tentative pending confirmation of any credit-card processing fees. A final update will be provided once finance confirms the exact figure.

She provided a preliminary financial breakdown:

- Beginning balance for event operations (loaned funds): $2,000
- Estimated expenditures (fans, T-shirts, small items): $550
- Sponsorships: $750
- Cash sales during the tour: $255
- Total income: $1,005
- Net gain added to the grant fund (income minus expenses): approx. $450
- Estimated grant fund balance after the tour: approximately $7,400

She recognized the event sponsors:
- Taylor & Sons Hauling – $500
- Wired Up – $250
- Blazin' M Ranch – donated raffle tickets
- Verde Adventures – donated a $300 voucher

She stated that sponsor contributions helped increase raffle sales and the resulting deposit into the grant fund. She added that next year she will return with a request for one Commission member to serve as the lead volunteer for the Property Tour Committee, noting that staff will work to recruit additional citizen volunteers as well.

Chairwoman Detjen thanked Tina and Pat for their hard work on the property tour, noting that it was a successful event. She stated that attendees enjoyed themselves and learned a great

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deal about local history. She added that offering both a live guided tour and a self-guided brochure option was well received, with both formats proving popular.

Vice Chairwoman Monell suggested extending the tour hours next year, possibly until 3:00 p.m. or 4:00 p.m., noting that many participants arrived after noon.

Chairwoman Detjen recommended adjusting the tour route next year for safety reasons. She observed that the area between the Belfry and the church experiences heavy vehicle traffic when large groups gather there, and suggested avoiding that location to reduce safety risks.

Senior Planner Hayden we definitely want to have safety in mind when we are talking about the tour stops we do want to vary it from what we gave last year we will take that safety consideration into mind.

VIII. COMMISSIONER REQUEST FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEM(S)

Chairwoman Detjen briefly mentioned future topics, including landmarking, the Pat Stein report on Cactus Street, and the placement of historic signs downtown.

Commissioner Edwards requested that, regarding the archaeological brochure, staff ask Laura to contact him and prepare a prototype so he can review and suggest edits before it is presented to the Commission.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The regular meeting adjourned at 7:03 p.m.

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City of Cottonwood, Arizona
Agenda Communication

Meeting Date:	February 25, 2026
Subject:	Cottonwood Historic Property Tour 2026 Discussion
Department:	Community Development
From:	Kristina Hayden
Strategic Pillar:	

REQUESTED ACTION
Discussion regarding progress update for the 2026 Historic Property Tour.

SUGGESTED MOTION
N/A - Discussion Item Only

BACKGROUND
Selection of the Committee lead for the 2026 property tour.

JUSTIFICATION/BENEFITS/ISSUES
N/A

COST/FUNDING SOURCE
N/A

City of Cottonwood, Arizona
Agenda Communication

Meeting Date:	February 25, 2026
Subject:	National Preservation Month
Department:	Community Development
From:	Kristina Hayden
Strategic Pillar:	

REQUESTED ACTION
Discussion of opportunities to promote May 2026 as National Preservation Month.

SUGGESTED MOTION
N/A - Discussion Item Only

BACKGROUND
The National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) established the month of May as National Preservation Month in 1973. Every year the NTHP creates a marketing tool kit to help historic preservation advocates raise awareness and this year's theme is 'Harnessing the Power of Place". The marketing tool kit provides graphics and sample social media posts.

Additionally, some of the activities identified that can be implemented to raise awareness are as follows:

- Proclamation by Council (May 5th Council meeting)
- Public service announcement
- Architectural/historic scavenger hunt (see attachment "Example Cary History Hunt 2024")
- Social media posts with historic fun facts

JUSTIFICATION/BENEFITS/ISSUES
These activities will raise awareness for National Preservation Month 2026.

COST/FUNDING SOURCE
There is no cost associated to the city.

ATTACHMENTS
Example_Cary History Hunt 2024.pdf

HPC

CARY HISTORY HUNT

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW THE HISTORICAL PLACES OF CARY?

The images on the reverse side of this card are details of historic properties that define the Cary we know and love. We challenge you to find them, record the building name or address, then turn in this card for a chance to win great prizes!

#CARYHISTORYHUNT

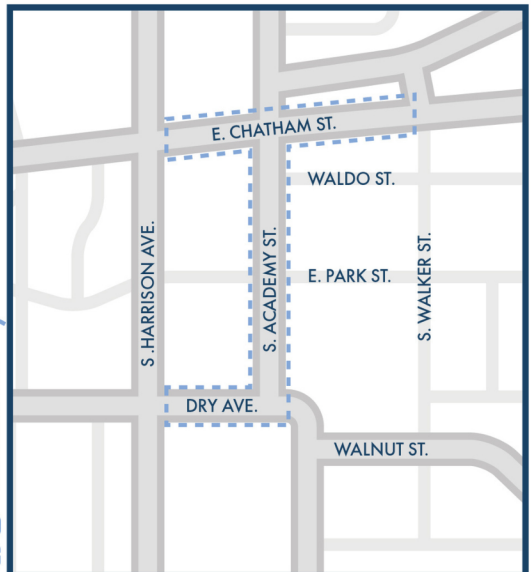
Submit your completed card to:

Cary Town Hall | 316 N. Academy St.
or email a photo of the back to
gillian.white@carync.gov

Your Name: _____

Phone/Email: _____

HUNT BOUNDARIES



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