

# Wake County Comprehensive PROS Master Plan

Wake County Planning Board

June 6, 2025



Prepared by:

**DESIGNWORKSHOP**

@wakegov    

**wake.gov**

# Meeting Agenda

- Project Overview
- Process
- Schedule



# Project Overview

# Where We are Today

**10,736**  
ACRES OF PARKS, PRESERVES AND  
OPEN SPACE



BLUE JAY POINT

**5**  
PLANNED PARKS AND PRESERVES



BEECH BLUFF



GREEN HILLS



SANDY PINES PRESERVE



LAKE CRABTREE



ROBERTSON MILL POND



AM. TOBACCO TRAIL



TURNIPSEED PRESERVE



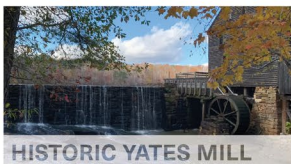
CROWDER



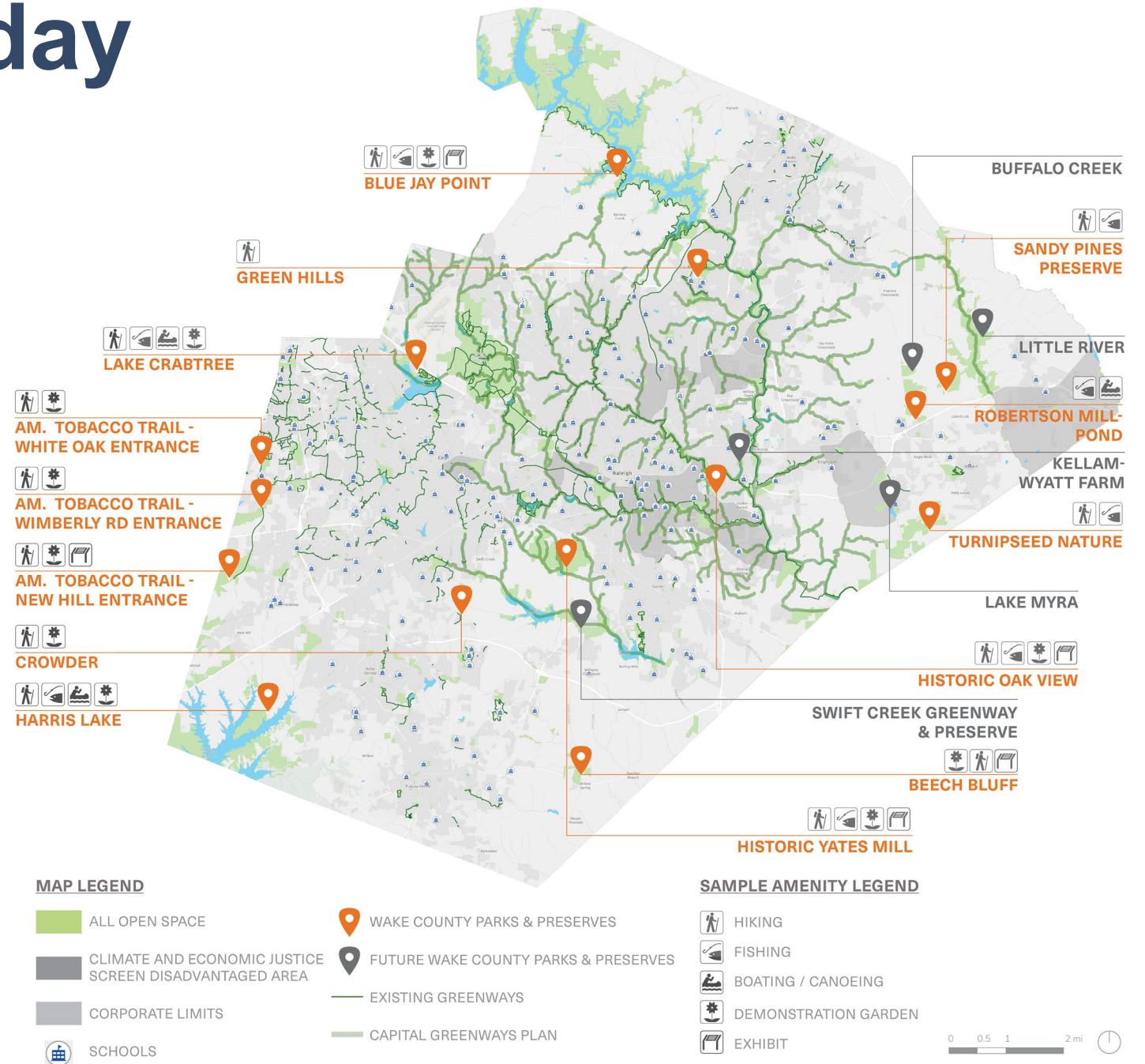
HISTORIC OAK VIEW



HARRIS LAKE



HISTORIC YATES MILL



# Plan Purpose

## *What it is:*

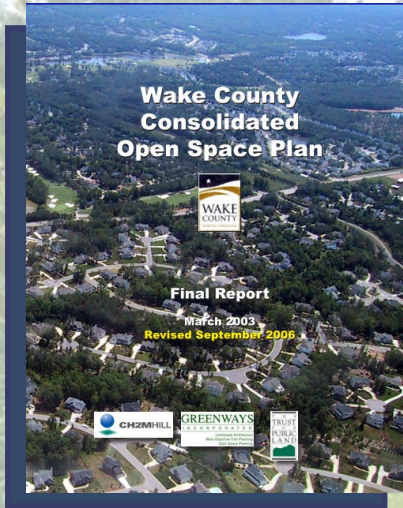
- ✓ A **long-range** planning tool.
- ✓ A visionary document that sets **values and goals**.
- ✓ An opportunity for the **community to share** their values and needs.
- ✓ A document that provides **data and excites** the community about a fresh direction and big ideas.
- ✓ Recommendations for implementation, operations, and prioritization.
- ✓ Opportunity to communicate the value of Wake County PROS to the Wake County Community

## *What it is NOT:*

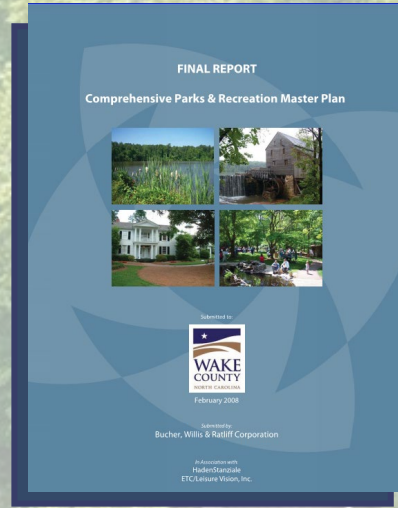
- ✗ A detailed design proposal for a specific park, greenway, or neighborhood or facility.
- ✗ A method to approve funding for new projects or programs.



# Building on Previous Plans



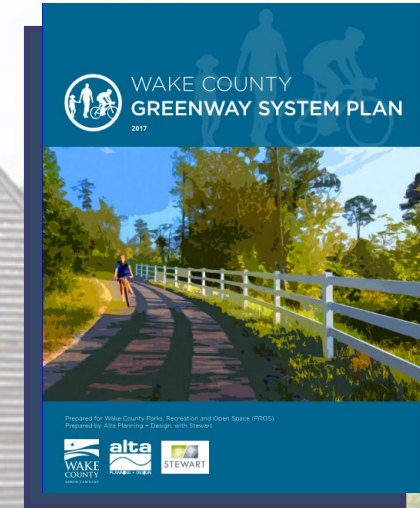
Wake County Consolidated  
Open Space Plan



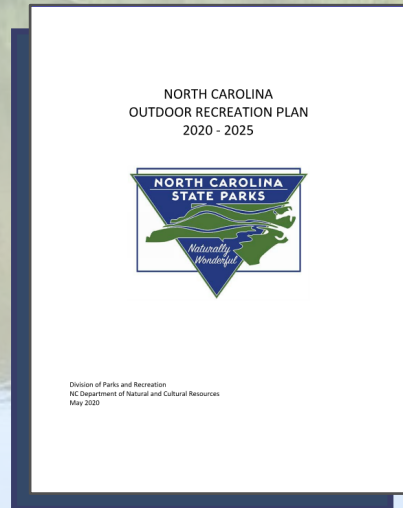
Comprehensive Parks &  
Recreation Master Plan



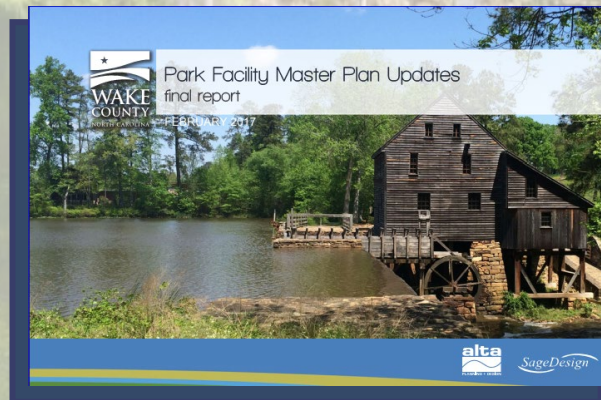
PLANWake



Wake County Greenway  
System Plan



NC Outdoor Recreation Plan



Wake County Park Facility  
Master Plan



# Key Project Goals and Outcomes



## Equity & Accessibility

*Focus on ensuring fair distribution of parks and recreational resources throughout the county, using data-driven equity mapping to identify underserved areas and prioritize development in communities with the greatest social, economic, and health needs.*



## Community-Driven Process

*Emphasize the importance of inclusive public engagement, gathering input from diverse stakeholders to shape programs and services that reflect community needs and demographic trends, while building upon successful existing initiatives.*



## Strategic Prioritization & Implementation

*Establish clear service standards and implementation timelines, using data-driven analysis to guide facility and program recommendations, while ensuring alignment with existing policies and providing fresh direction for future parks, recreation, and open space growth.*



## Environmental & Cultural Preservation

*Focus on strengthening environmental resilience by protecting natural areas, cultural sites, and agricultural lands while incorporating strategies ensuring these valuable resources are preserved for future generations.*



## Efficient and Effective Operations & Maintenance

*Focus on optimizing the organizational structure through careful evaluation of staffing, maintenance standards, and operational efficiency.*



## High-Quality Services

*Provide high-quality and effective parks, recreation and open space programming and services for current and future public needs.*

# How We Measure Success



## Meet Future Needs

*Provide a model, innovative plan that meets the needs of the future Wake County community and continues to create a high-quality of life for residents.*



## Implementable Action Plan

*Create a realistic, accessible and usable product for the County and public, with clear consideration of different audience needs.*



## Staff Involvement

*Provide a framework for active participation of current PROS staff to support public engagement efforts, share their institutional knowledge, and inform and connect with the final plan.*



## Stakeholder Support

*Build on Wake PROS's existing partnerships including municipal parks and recreation departments and evaluate how to integrate these relationships into the plan.*



## Comprehensive Community Engagement

*Ensure the entire community's voices are heard and represented in the plan, including those that may not currently use parks and open spaces in Wake County.*



## Strategic Prioritization

*Develop a transparent and data-driven criterion for decision-making and phasing, including identification of short-term actions.*



# Alignment with Commissioners' Goals

## **Growth, Land Use, and Environment**

*Opportunity to identify and prioritize future open space, farmland, forests and parkland acquisition.*

## **Foundations for Service**

*Opportunity to define what high-quality, fair and equitable services means for parks, recreation and open space.*

## **Community Health and Wellbeing**

*Opportunity to consider PROS system as part of a larger network to reduce barriers to community health and wellbeing.*

## **Inclusive Prosperity**

*Opportunity to assess what new or improved experiences the PROS system can offer residents to support a high quality of life.*

## **Safer Community Together**

*Opportunity to consider the PROS system as vital community infrastructure to support recovery and emergency response networks.*

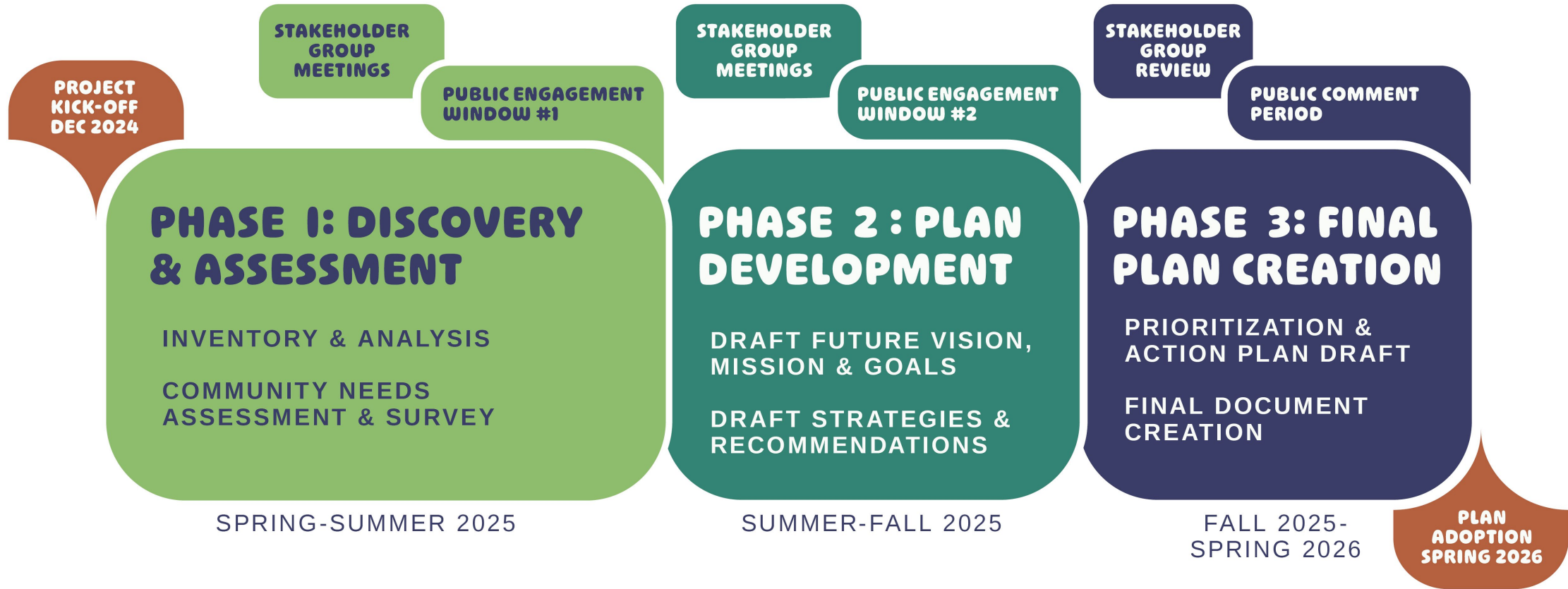
## **Lifelong Learning**

*Opportunity to align PROS educational programming and consider as part of County-wide service goals.*

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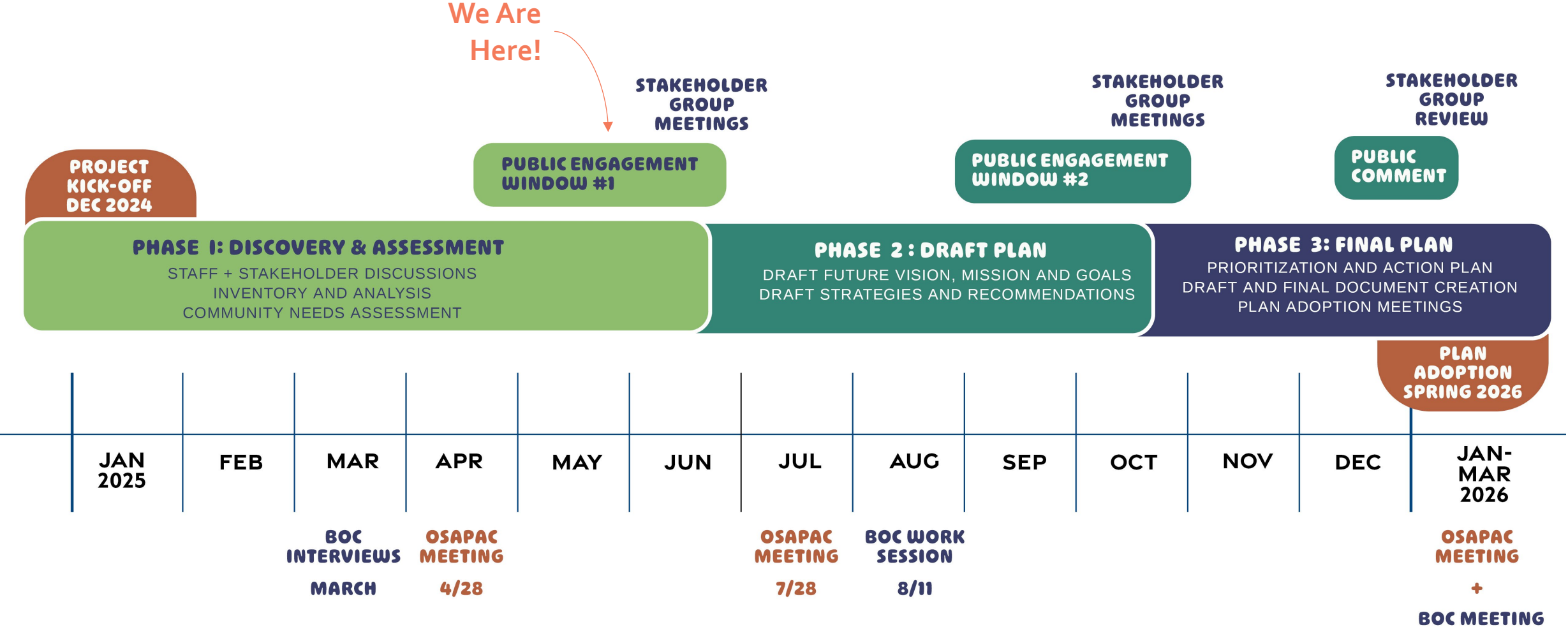
# Process & Schedule

# Process





# Anticipated Schedule



# Inventory & Assessment Underway

## Trends and Benchmarking: Learning from Peers

### Benchmark Community Criteria

- County population size and growth trend
- County size (square miles)
- Strong university presence
- Strong governmental presence (or being a 'capital' county)
- Park system with strong natural resource and outdoor recreation focus
- Key demographic, social and economic indicators

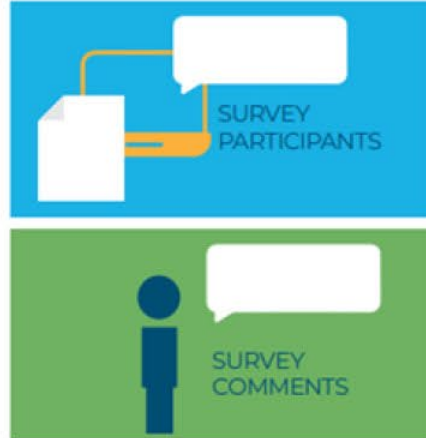
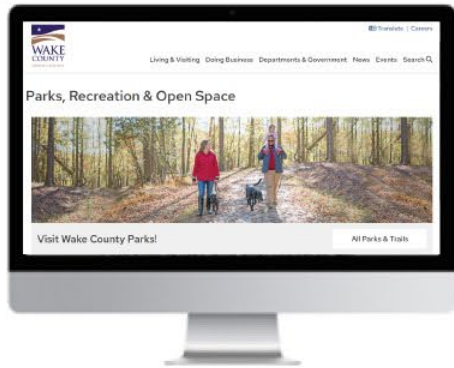
### Selected Deep-Dive Peer Counties

- Hennepin County, MN
- Mecklenburg County, NC
- Travis County, TX

### Additional Peer Counties

- Davidson County, TN
- Erie County, NY
- Dane County, WI

# Engagement & Outreach



## Project Website

- Single location for project information
- Provides links and information to engagement opportunities
- Virtual meeting recordings and uploads

## Surveys / Pollings

- Broad community feedback
- Open Countywide Survey

## Focus Groups / Stakeholder Interviews

- Information gathering from key stakeholders and groups

## Pop-up Events

- Meets people where they are
- Can be used for information sharing, survey promotion and/or gathering community feedback

## Workshops

- Invites community members to participate in a centralized meeting location
- Opportunity to provide interactive exercises and questions



# Engagement Window 1 – Key Milestones

- **BOC Interviews**
  - Completed
- **Survey Window**
  - April 22nd– July 6<sup>th</sup>
- **Community Open House Workshops and Pop-Up Events**
  - Open House Workshops: May 14<sup>th</sup> – June 11<sup>th</sup>
  - Pop-up Events: Tentative April 25<sup>th</sup> – July 4<sup>th</sup> (through end of survey window)
- **Stakeholder Group Meetings**
  - Tentatively beginning month of June
    - ✓ OSAPAC

# Commissioner Interview Takeaways

- **Inclusive Access & Programming:**  
Ensure parks and programs are accessible to all, including people with disabilities, seniors, and underserved communities.
- **Growth & Land Preservation:**  
Balance urban development with the preservation of open spaces, farmland, and natural areas. Prioritize farmland preservation for both recreational and food system benefits.
- **Environmental Stewardship:**  
Focus on sustainability by integrating green infrastructure, expanding tree planting, promoting environmental education, and preserving biodiversity.
- **Community Engagement:**  
Engage residents through diverse outreach methods, including pop-up events, surveys, and partnerships with faith communities, schools, and local organizations.
- **Youth & Family Focus:**  
Expand recreational spaces for families, young children, and youth, ensuring inclusive, safe environments for development.
- **Partnerships for Growth & Sustainability:** Strengthen collaborations with municipalities, nonprofits, and schools to secure funding, enhance programming, and improve park accessibility.

# Draft Stakeholders

## Municipal / County Departments

- Wake County Departments
- Local municipalities within Wake County
- Neighboring Counties/Municipalities

## Operators & Partners

- Libraries
- Wake County Public Schools
- YMCA
- Other non-profits

## Land Conservation & Open Space

- Wake - Soil and Water
- Triangle Land Conservancy
- Conservation Trust for NC
- NC Wildlife Resources Commission
- NC Farm Bureau
- NC State Parks
- Wake County Open Space Manager
- Wake County Libraries
- Leased land and lease holders





# Summary / Next Steps

# Spread the word!

## Upcoming Community Meetings

### Wednesday, May 14

- New Hill Community Center

### Thursday, May 22

- Garner Recreation Center

### Wednesday, May 28

- Northeast Regional Library

### Tuesday, June 3

- Beech Bluff County Park

### Wednesday, June 11

- Eastern Regional Center



**Open House Style**  
**Drop-in from 4:30-6:30pm!**

# Survey is Live!

## Scan Code or Visit:

<http://www.wake.gov/parks/masterplan>





# Eastern Wake Area Plan

## Wake County Planning Board

**Akul Nishawala, AICP**

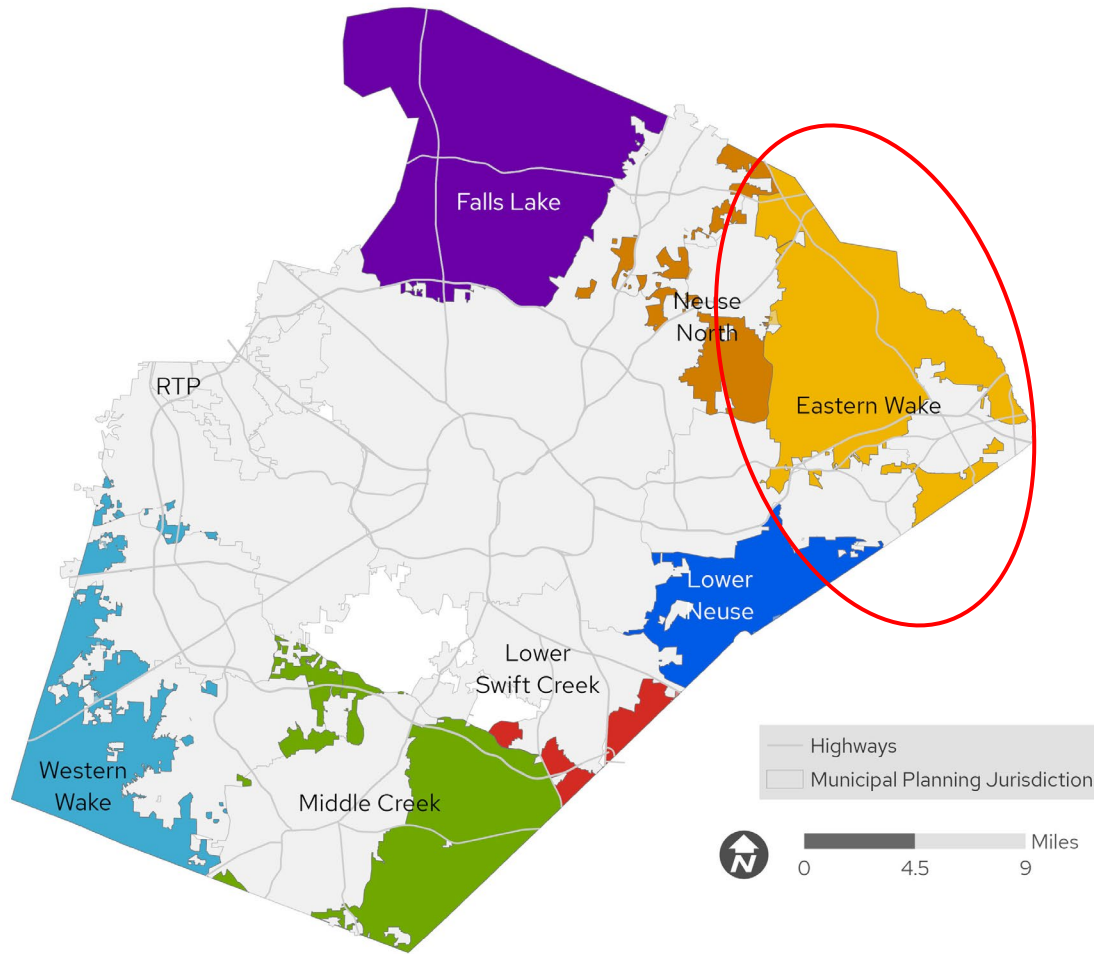
June 4, 2025



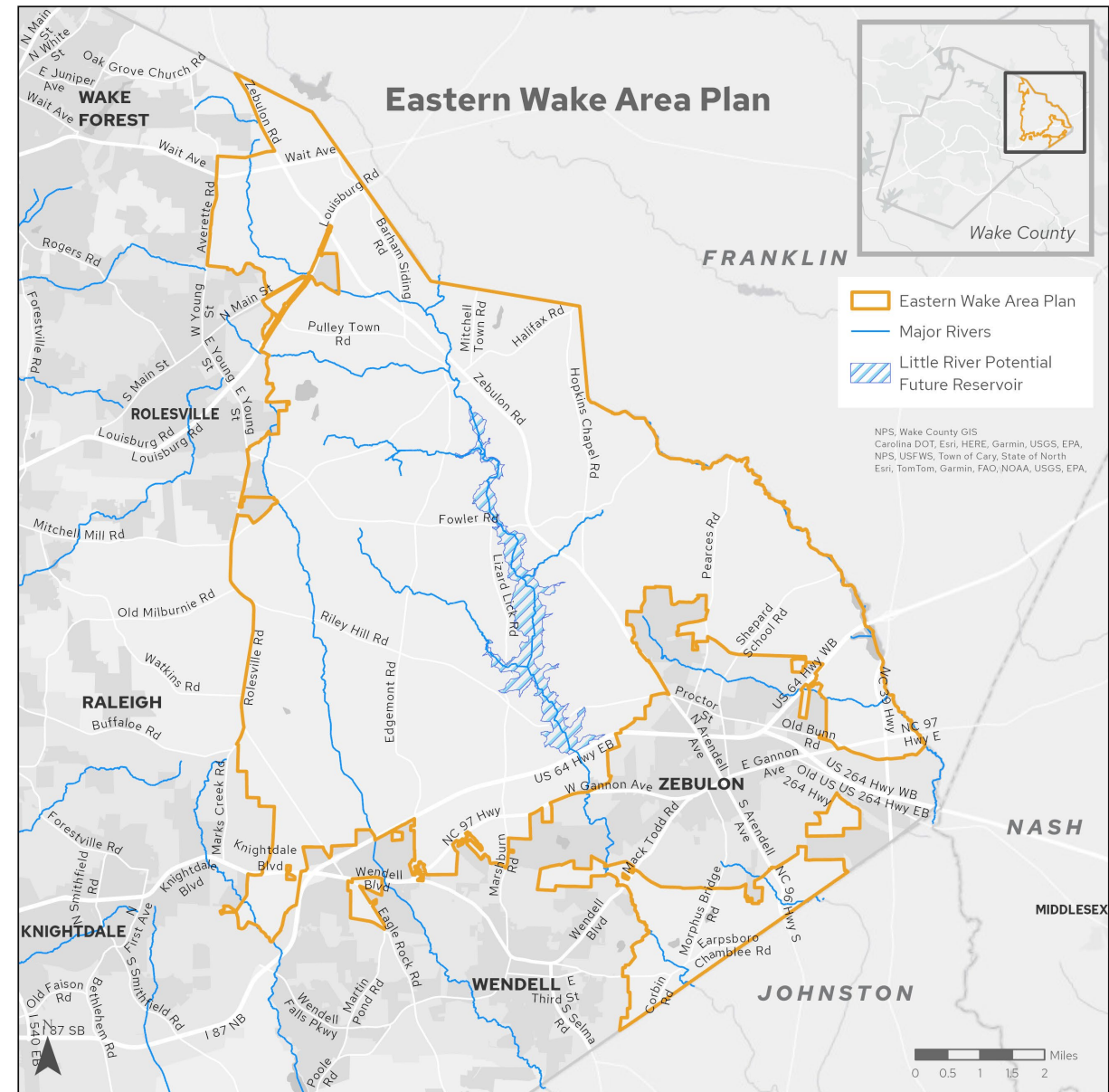
@wakegov    

wake.gov

# Location



72 sq. mi. (46,132 acres)



# Updates

- **Virtual Community Meeting**
  - March 6, 2025
- **In-Person Community Meeting**
  - April 16, 2025 @ Eastern Regional Center
- **Draft Land Uses**
- **Meeting with other municipalities/stakeholders/partners**
- **Second In-Person Community Meeting**
  - June 25, 2025 @ Eastern Regional Center
  - 4:30 to 6:30 PM



Community Meeting at Eastern Regional Center

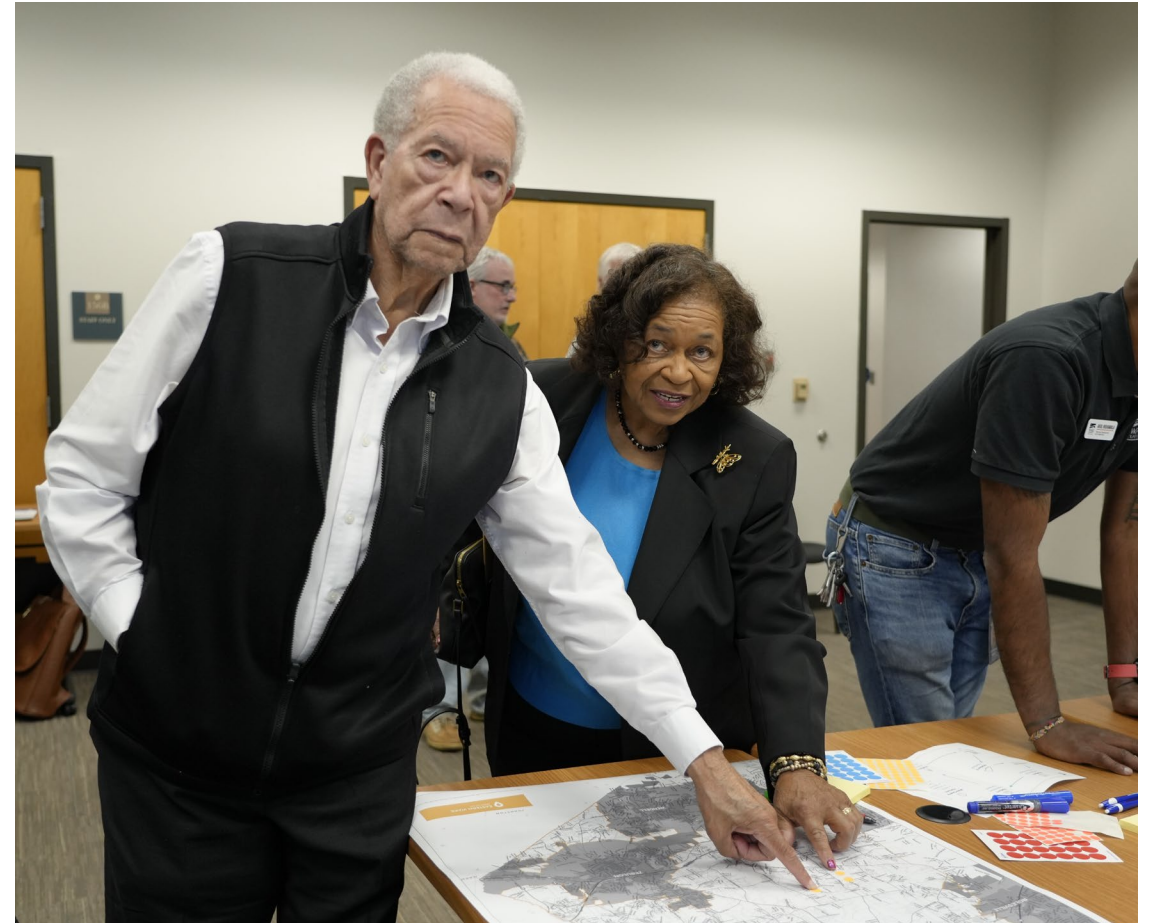


# ERC Community Meeting





# ERC Community Meeting

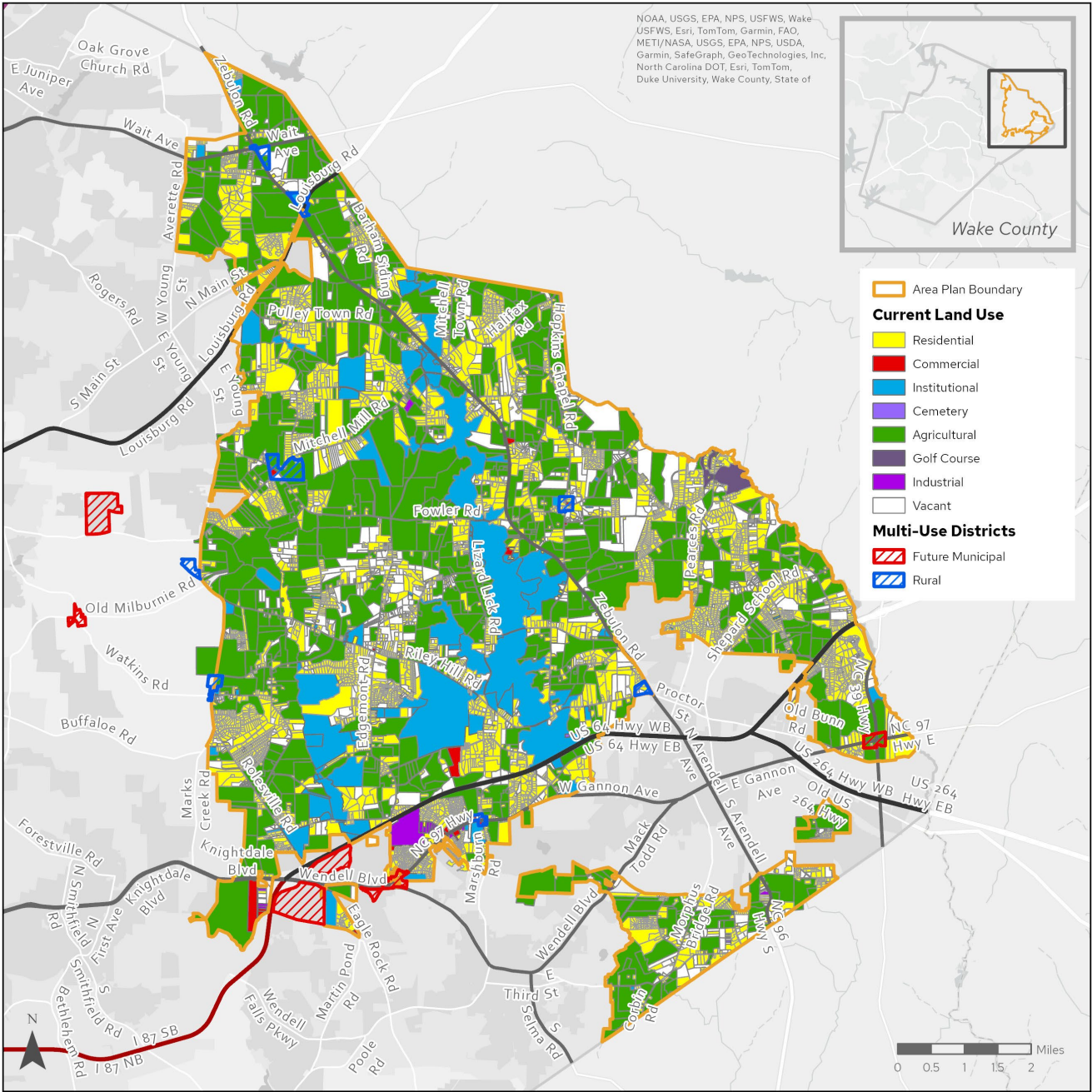


# Current Land Uses

## Overview

Land Class	Parcels	Acres
Agriculture	654	20,522
Residential	5,423	11,916
Institutional*	109	5,172
Vacant	1,232	4,836

\*Religious or government-owned property (state, county, town)

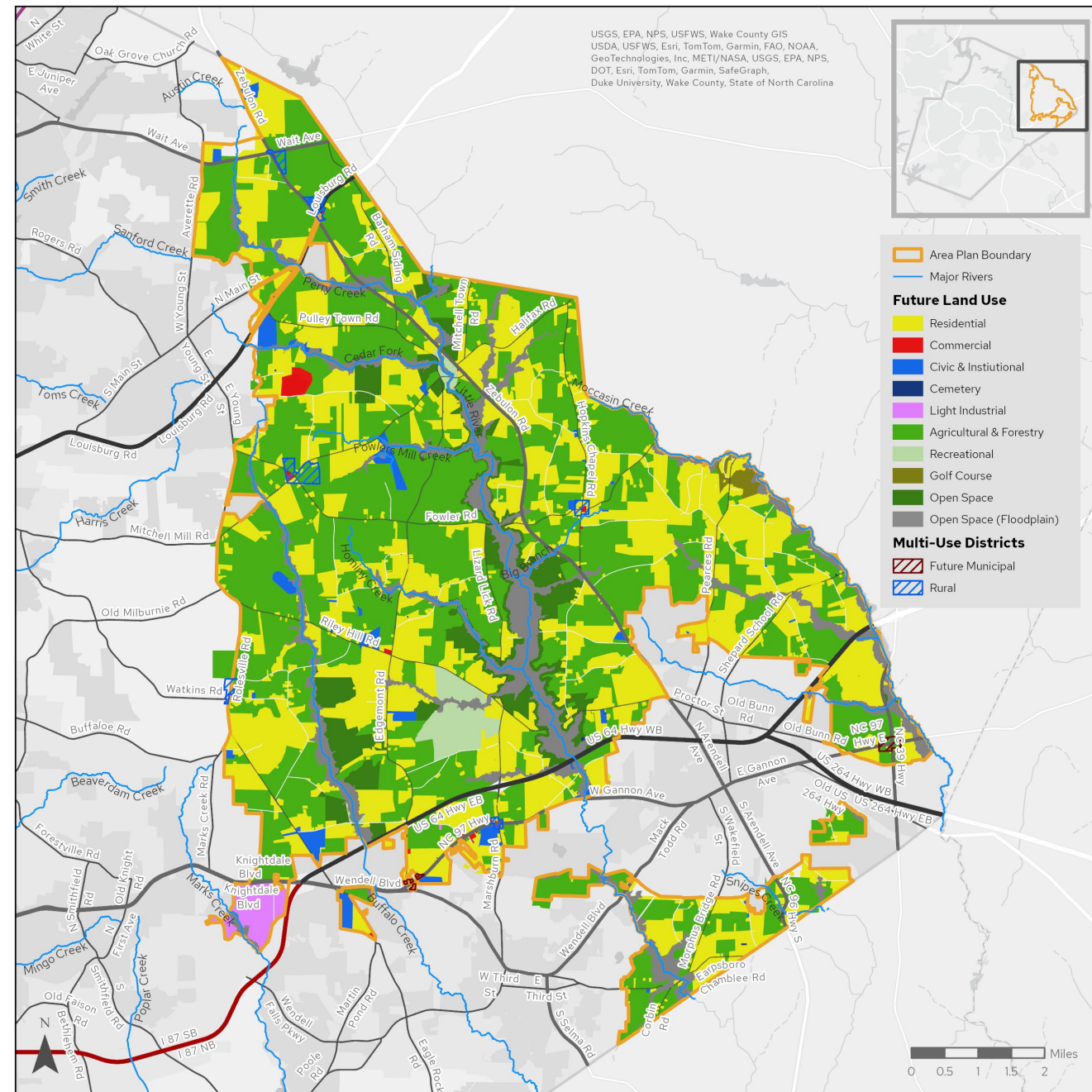




# Draft Land Uses

## Overview

- Agricultural & Forestry
  - Intent to continue farming
- Light Industrial
  - Airport (former landfill)
- Eight MUDs
  - Municipal growth
  - Removed three and reduced another
  - 94, 14.8, and 227 acres

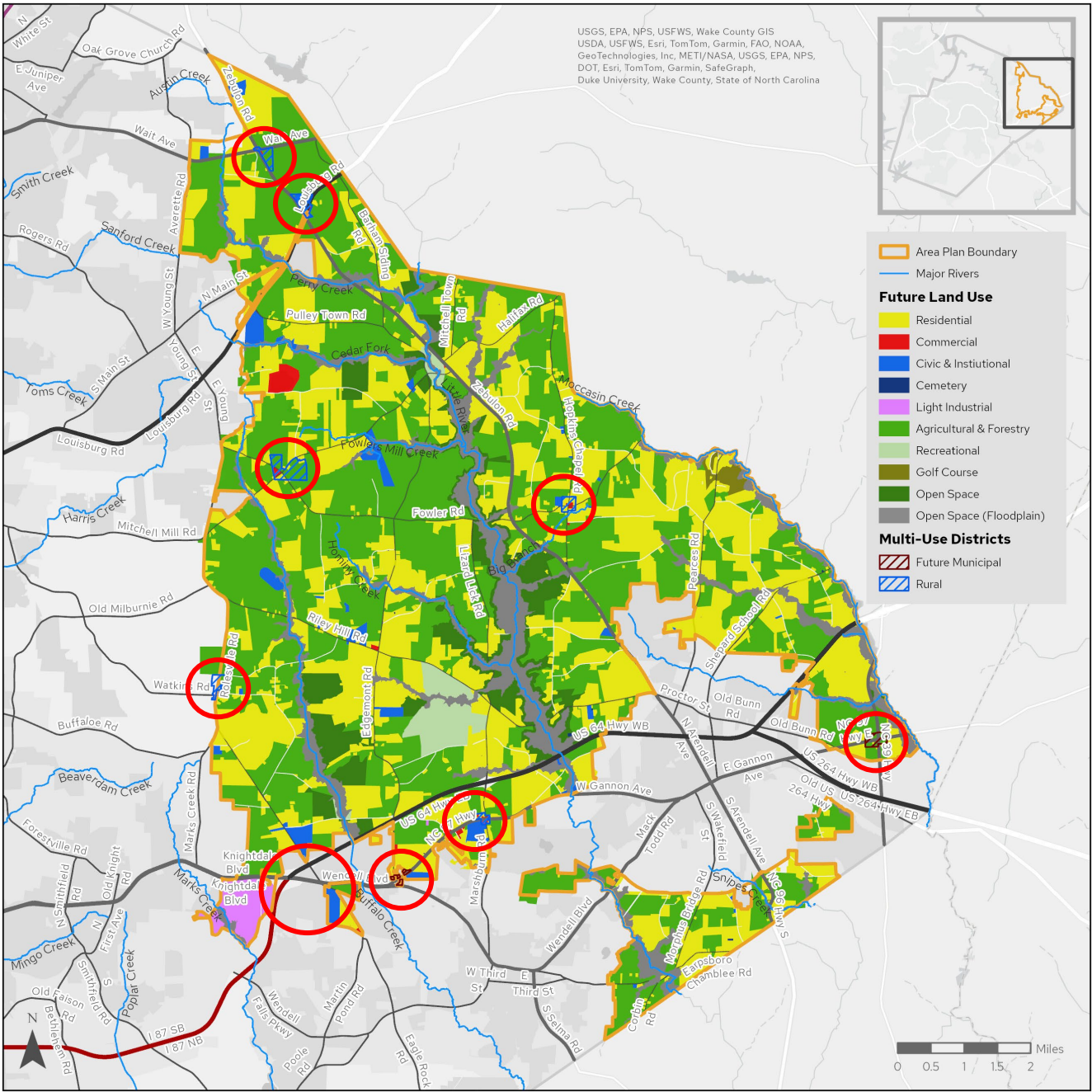


# Multi-Use Districts

Location	Acres	Existing Uses
Wait Ave (98) & Zebulon Rd (96)	30	Agricultural, Commercial, Residential, Vacant
Louisburg Rd (401) & Zebulon Rd (96)	40	Church, Agricultural, Commercial, Residential
Mitchell Mill Rd & Fowler Rd	97.5	Commercial, Residential, Vacant, Agricultural
Hopkins Chapel Rd & Fowler Rd	28.6	Residential, Commercial, Vacant
Davistown Rd & Rolesville Rd	12.8*	Agricultural, Residential
Riley Hill Rd & Zebulon Rd (96)	21	Residential, Vacant
Lizard Lick Rd & NC 97	18.3	Residential, Commercial, Vacant
Edgemont Rd & NC 97	5.7**	Residential, Vacant

\* Half of MUD outside of plan boundary. Total area is 29.7 acres

\*\* Proposed reduction from 38.6 acres due to annexations



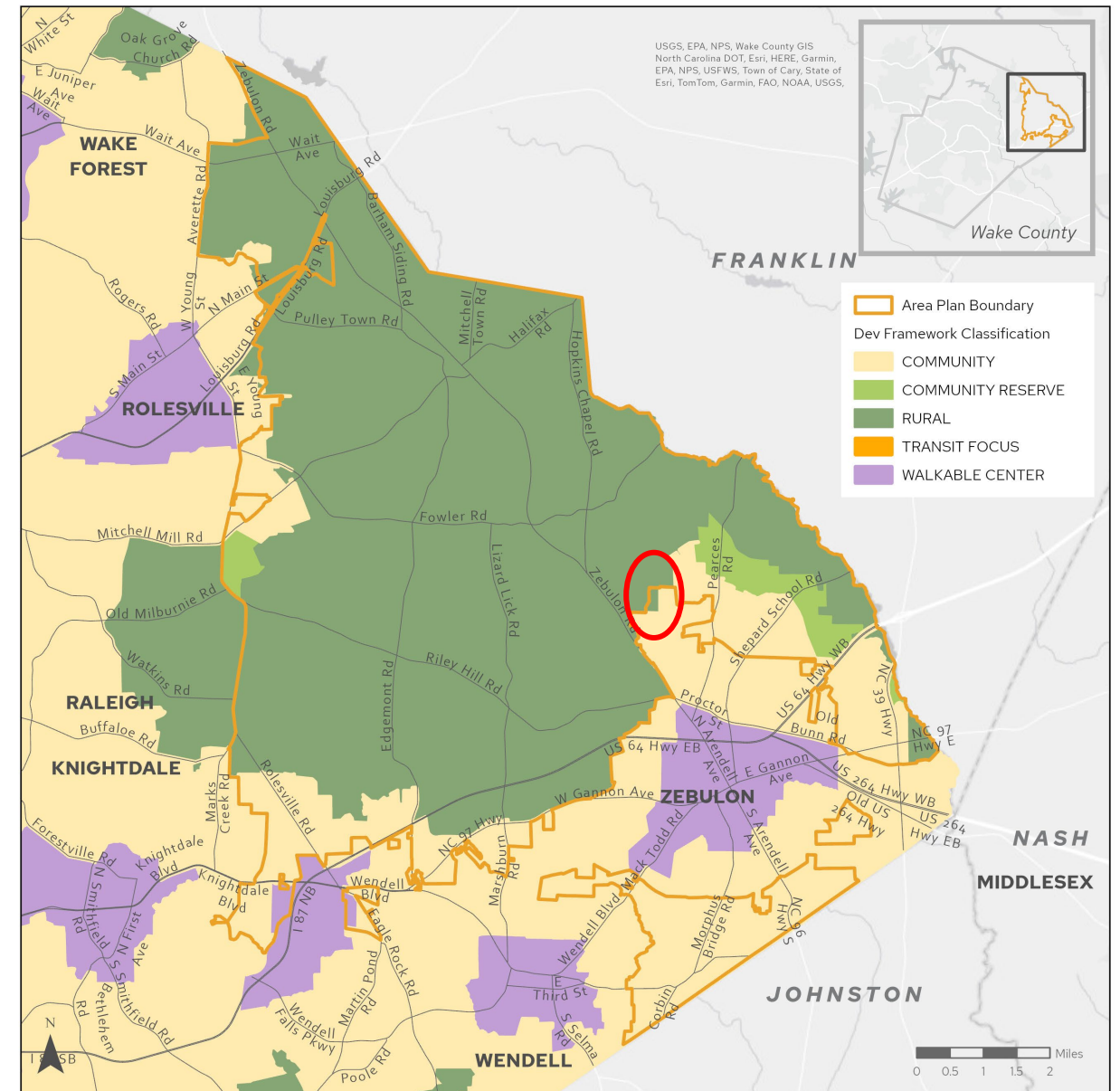


# Development Framework

## Classifications

- **Rural**
  - Least developed; lowest density
  - Ag, forestry, natural state
  - To remain for foreseeable future
- **Community Reserve**
  - Partially developed; low density
  - 10-20-year timeframe
- **Community**
  - New developments should be served by municipal water/sewer
- **Walkable Center**
  - Pedestrian oriented and transit ready
  - Higher density development

***One proposed amendment currently***



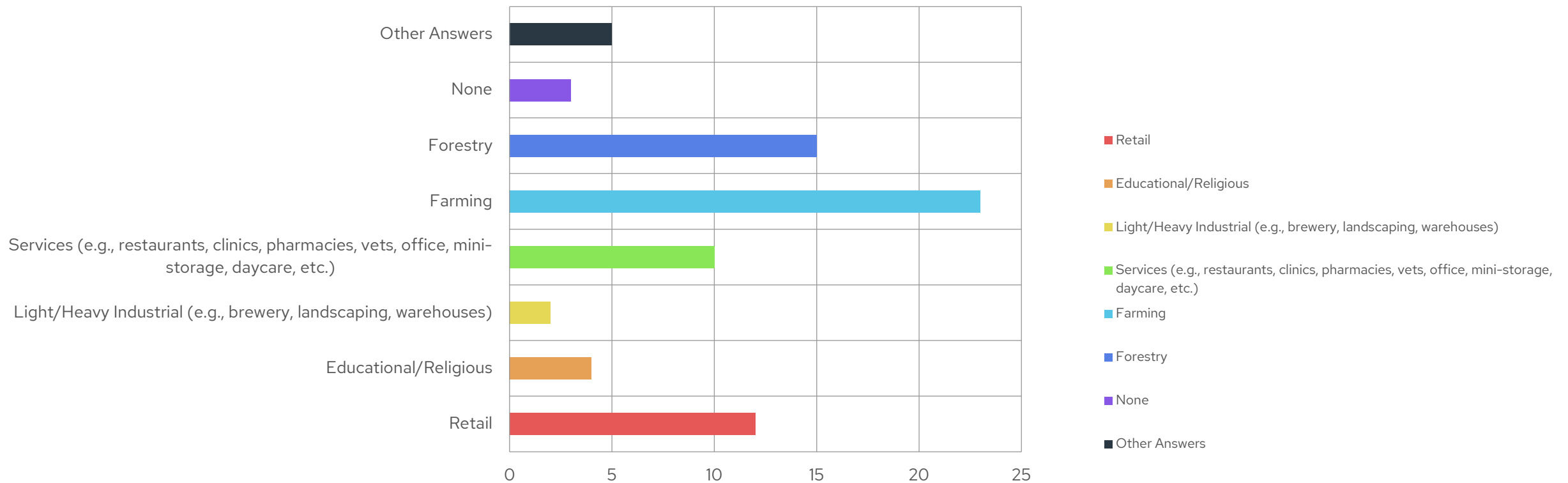


# Additional Considerations

- **Walkability/Greenway Network**
  - Connecting the open spaces
  - Existing and future greenway
- **Commercial Location Strategy**
- **Continuing conversations with municipalities**

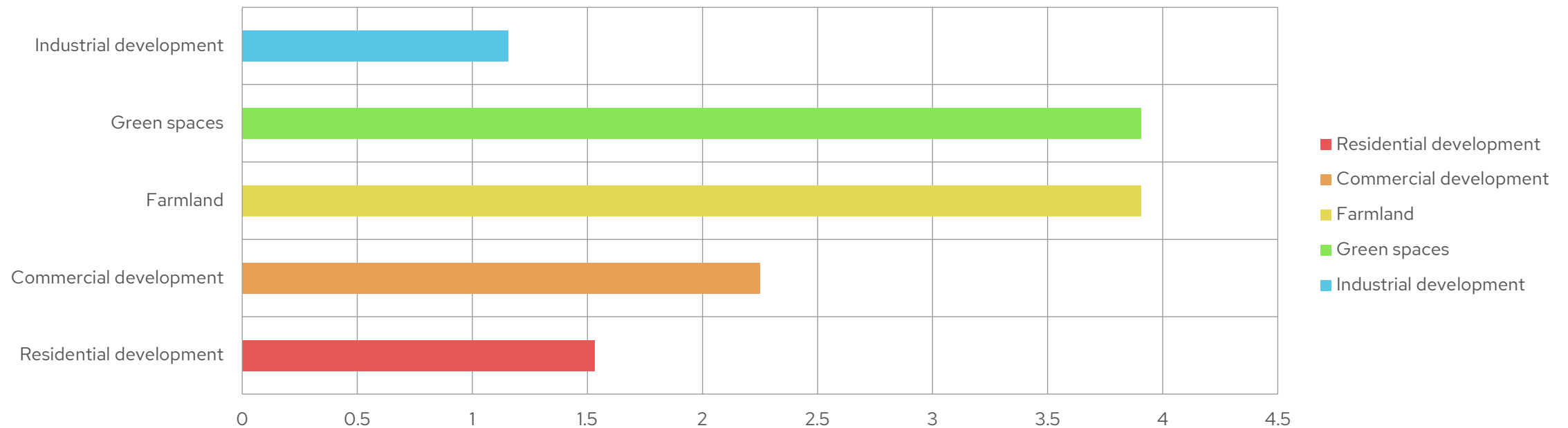
# Proximity & Access Survey

## What types of non-residential development would you like to see in your community



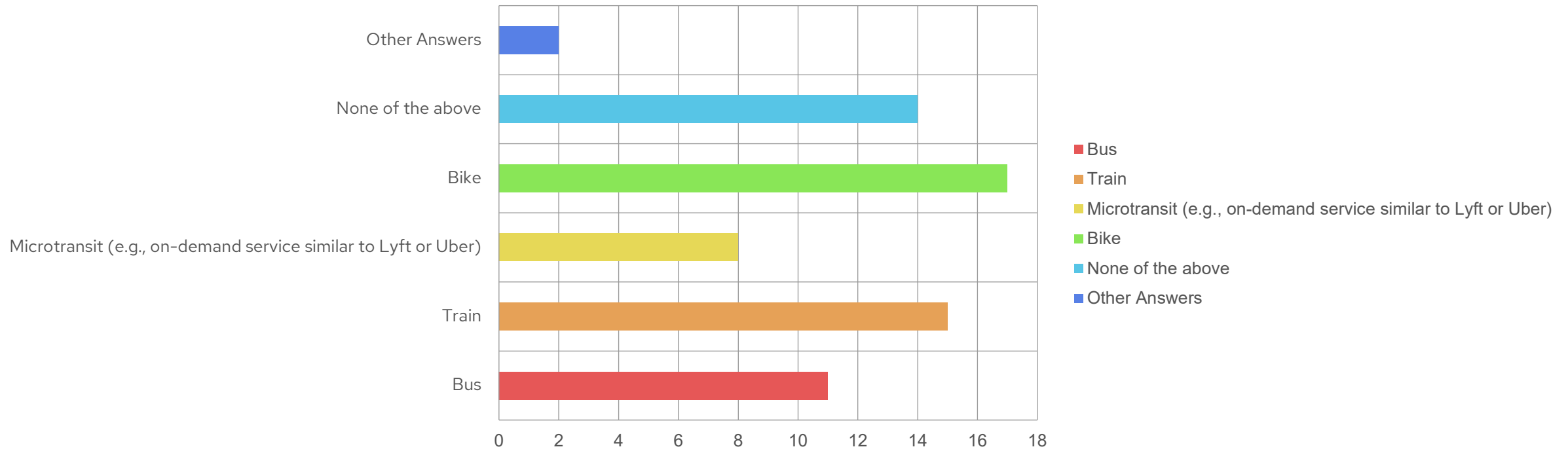
# Proximity & Access Survey

**Please rank the following in the order you would prioritize them, with the first priority at the top and the lowest priority at the bottom.**



# Proximity & Access Survey

**Which alternative transportation options would you consider if they were safe, convenient and accessible in your area?  
Select all that apply.**



# Proximity & Access Survey

## Response Overview

- Support for protecting agricultural land and promoting uses that maintain the area's rural heritage.
- Community members are cautious about additional housing unless it aligns with broader preservation goals.
- There's interest in safe, connected bike infrastructure, likely reflecting both recreation and transportation needs.
- Most respondents are in the 45–54 age range and are homeowners.



# Proximity & Access Survey

## Open-ended Responses Overview

- **Planning for Local Needs**
  - Residents want development that directly benefits their neighborhoods and reflects the identity of the area.
- **Balancing Growth with Preservation**
  - There is strong community concern about residential sprawl and its impact on forests, green space, and rural character.
- **Pushback on Unchecked Development**
  - Citing traffic and livability, some respondents called for a slowdown in development so that infrastructure can catch up.

# Public Engagement

## In-Person Meeting #2

- June 25, 2025
- 4:30 to 6:30 PM
- Eastern Regional Center  
1002 Dogwood Dr  
Zebulon, NC 27597



# Timeline





# Questions



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