WAKE COUNTY NORTH CAROLINA

Planning, Development & Inspections

A Division of Community Services
P.O. Box 550 • Raleigh, NC 27602
www.wake.gov

MINUTES OF REGULAR PLANNING BOARD - October 1, 2025

LOCATION: Wake County Justice Center, 301 S. Salisbury St., Room 2700, Raleigh, NC

MEMBERS PRESENT:

1. Mr. Ted Van Dyk (Vice Chair)
2. Mr. David Adams
3. Mr. Amos Clark
4. Mr. Bill Jenkins
5. Dr. Kamal Kolappa
6. Ms. Suzanne Prince
7. Ms. Sally Rice
8. Mr. Thomas Wells

MEMBERS ABSENT:

1. Ms. Brenna Booker-Williams (Chair)
2. Mr. Asa Fleming

COUNTY STAFF:

1. Mr. Steven Finn
2. Mr. Tim Gardiner
3. Mr. Timothy Maloney
4. Mr. Josh McClellan
5. Mr. Akul Nishawala
6. Mr. Mark Perlman
7. Ms. Beth Simmons

COUNTY ATTORNEY:

- Mr. Kenneth Murphy, Deputy County Attorney

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1. **Meeting Called to Order:** Mr. Van Dyk called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

2. **Pledge of Allegiance**

3. **Petitions and Amendments:** None.

4. **Approval of September 3, 2025, Minutes:** Ms. Prince made a motion to approve the September 3, 2025, minutes as submitted. Dr. Kolappa seconded the motion, and the Board adopted it unanimously.

5. Wake County Affordable Housing & Community Revitalization Update – Mark Perlman, Deputy Director

Mr. Perlman introduced himself as the Deputy Director of the County's Affordable Housing & Community Revitalization office and noted that they work regularly with the Planning staff and that he welcomes collaboration with the Board. Mr. Perlman explained that Housing Affordability is described as "paying no more than 30% of your income on housing expenses," and includes rental or ownership of safe and decent housing constructed and maintained to high-quality standards. These homes may be single family, duplex, multi-family, cottage courts, quadraplex, or others.

Households that pay more than 30% are considered housing cost burdened, and greater than 50% significantly burdened, with renters typically falling into the significantly burdened category. The Affordable Housing office works to create housing stock that serves low to moderate income households and is indistinguishable from unrestricted market rate housing. Mr. Perlman indicated that there is a stigma attached to affordable housing in that it is often associated with public housing and Section 8 living spaces. The economic reality is that there are people working full-time that cannot afford to live in the community they serve, so Mr. Perlman explained that affordable housing is workforce housing. Wake County is currently growing by 66 people each day, and is the most populous county in the state, as well as one of the five fastest growing counties in the United States.

This has significantly impacted the housing market – Mr. Perlman provided a slide of the income distribution shift between 2013 and 2023, noting that costs of rent and home sale prices continue to rise, with rent up 62% and median home sale prices in 2025 reaching nearly $500,000. Low to moderate income buyers, along with first time homebuyers are effectively priced out of the market.

From 2012 to 2022, Wake County lost 72% of its stock rental units priced below $750 a month and 58% of units priced below $1,000. Mr. Perlman clarified that these units are not gone – they still exist – but the rents have increased to the point that lower income residents cannot afford to live there. The Affordable Housing Department provides financing to fill in gaps in affordable housing capital and to achieve deeper affordability where possible. The majority of gap financing projects are Low Income Housing Tax Credit developments, but Wake County also supports non-tax credit developments, including homeownership development. County-owned parcels are evaluated for affordable housing use before disposition, and qualifying sites go through a competitive request for proposals (RFP) process. They partner with qualified developers to build housing on the site, as well as partner with municipalities to encourage them to facilitate affordable housing development.

Mr. Maloney asked if that included school system property when it is disposed of, and Mr. Perlman responded that discussions with the Wake County Public School System have been ongoing. Affordable Housing hopes to collaborate and potentially gain access to unused land owned by WCPSS. Additionally, they have made efforts to preserve affordable housing, and in 2022 launched the Wake Affordable Housing Preservation Fund. This is a public-private partnership fund administered by Self Help Ventures Fund, which leveraged over $10 million of Wake County investment to create a nearly $62 million fund for the acquisition and preservation of existing affordable rental housing in Wake County. To date, $15.8 million have been deployed to preserve 225 units of affordable housing. Since 2019, over 5,000 units have been created and preserved, nearly meeting the department's goal of 500 per year. Raleigh accounts for 60% of Affordable Housing Disposition Program (AHDP) units in Wake County, due to a combination of Raleigh's robust gap financing program and its size relative to other municipalities. Mr. Perlman noted that Cary and Apex offer affordable development, but do not provide assistance in the gap financing, which creates a financing burden. Affordable Housing uses their template for public-private partnerships to encourage the municipalities to pursue their own construction projects. Affordable housing staff also meet with the County's Planning, Development & Inspections team to identify goals and opportunities for collaboration. Mr. Perlman noted that they are also interested in funding consultant engagements to help create and adopt affordable housing plans. Examining the UDO through an affordability lens and engaging in long range planning would also help municipal collaboration.

Mr. Perlman identified the Municipal Impact Fund (MIF) as a program to provide technical assistance and capital assistance to Wake County municipalities. The Affordable Homeownership Program (AHP) provides home purchase assistance loans up to $40,000 for first time homebuyers earning up to 80% of the AMI for purchasing a home in Wake County outside of Raleigh or Cary. They will also engage in rehabilitation programs, offering grants up to $20,000 for elderly & disabled home rehab, $5,000 for emergency home rehab, and up to $90,000 for major repairs to multi-system homes.

Ms. Prince asked about efforts to spread awareness of the need for affordable housing, and Mr. Perlman responded that their department markets information about funding, groundbreakings, and ribbon cuttings to many news outlets and partner with developers to ensure responsible marketing of affordable housing. Staff is also working to leverage data on affordable housing opportunities and share it with the community. Responding to a question presented by Mr. Jenkins, Mr. Perlman clarified that developers with which they partner deal primarily with affordable housing, but that they have partnered on one mixed-income development, because the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency makes it difficult to use tax credits for mixed-income developments. Mr. Jenkins was curious if requirements could be added for developments of a certain size, and Mr. Perlman clarified that mandatory inclusionary zoning was prohibited by NC statutory law.

Mr. Van Dyk asked if a technical review had taken place to determine opportunities for affordable housing, and Mr. Perlman responded that their GIS staff member would welcome the opportunity to undertake that research. Mr. Adams asked what tools are most helpful in collaborating with municipalities, and Mr. Perlman noted that any research and land regulation tools provide them with the means of educating the municipalities on land regulation. Mr. Wells asked what the top areas the Board could focus on to assist Affordable Housing, and Mr. Perlman suggested education, advocacy, and partnerships with stakeholders would be the most helpful. He welcomed the Board to reach out to him directly or through Mr. Maloney as they encounter opportunities to provide assistance.

Mr. Maloney added that one of the priorities Planning staff had focused on with Affordable Housing was the preservation of manufactured home units during ETJ requests. He noted that the Planning Board's feedback was valuable to the Board of Commissioners and could shape decisions made throughout the County.

6. Comprehensive Plan Amendment #01-25 Eastern Wake Area Plan, Akul Nishawala, Planner III

Mr. Nishawala introduced the Comprehensive Plan Amendment for the Eastern Wake Area Plan, which after extensive review and discussion was ready to present in hopes of advancing to the Board of Commissioners. The Eastern Wake Area includes the Little River watershed and borders Franklin, Nash, and Johnston Counties. The Area Plan is designed to replace the East Raleigh / Knightdale Land Use Plan, the Northeast Land Use Plan, and the Southeast Wake Area Land Use Plan, which was last updated in 2010. The area encompasses 72 square miles, or 46,132 acres, with a population of approximately 15,827 residents. The land is divided between 278 subdivisions, 59 voluntary agricultural districts (VADs), 8 multi-use districts, 167 historic properties and 6 landmarks.

Mr. Nishawala explained that the Eastern Wake area is unique from many of the other land use plans presented before the Board in that it did not reflect a significant increase in population or housing. From 2014 to 2024, the total occupied units increased only 17%, and the population estimate grew by 11%. Land use is primarily agricultural (47%) and residential (27.89%), but also features a significant vacant land component (11.24%). Almost a quarter of all agricultural land is located in the Eastern Wake Area. Much of the consistency in population and land use can be attributed to the Little River watershed and the restrictions imposed on the area surrounding it. Mr. Nishawala added that this unique feature impacted both the County's vision for the area and also the feedback they received from the community.

Community Engagement included an Eastern Wake Area Plan website, social media presence, an ArcGIS StoryMap, interactive maps for comments and draft land uses, online surveys, road signs, email listservs, and three meetings – one virtual on March 6th, and two in-person meetings at the Eastern Regional Center in Zebulon. Staff also met with stakeholders and municipal representatives to gather their feedback. Mr. Nishawala added the in-person meetings were helpful to connect members of the community to the County's Soil and Water Conservation District and promote continued farming through the VAD and EVAD programs. It also provided staff with an educational opportunity to explain the plans for the Little River watershed reservoir to residents near the I-87 corridor.

Future land uses include Agricultural and Forestry, Light Industrial in the form of an airport, and eight MUDs to foster municipal growth. Mr. Nishawala explained that four Multi-Use Districts (MUDs) would be removed, totaling 375 acres. The MUDs are no longer within the County's jurisdiction and will be considered in the municipality that controls them. The Eastern Wake Area Plan will also amend the Development Framework to shift 43 acres from Rural to Community to reflect growth from the municipalities.

Staff findings are that the Eastern Wake Area Plan is consistent with the goals and visions set forth in PLANWake. The Eastern Wake Area Plan received input from residents, municipal partners, and stakeholders. The Eastern Wake Area Plan provides an update to the existing area land plan policies, development framework map, and land use designations. Staff recommends that the Planning Board recommend that the Board of Commissioners adopt the Eastern Wake Area Plan as an amendment to the Wake County Comprehensive Plan, PLANWake, and amend the Development Framework Map.

Public Hearing

Mr. Van Dyk opened the floor for public comment at 2:32 p.m.

Mr. Jim Parker of 6317 Weathers Road, Wendell, approached the lectern and explained his concerns as a farmer regarding the potential annexation of land or reclassification from R-40 to R-80. As a generational farmer in the area, Mr. Parker was uneasy about the prospect of land being rezoned for high-density development. Mr. Nishawala clarified that under the Little River Inter-Local Agreement (ILA), any rezoning/annexation would need to be approved by five different parties: Wake County, Rolesville, Wake Forest, Wendell, and Zebulon. Mr. Maloney added that zoning would not change resulting from the Eastern Wake Area Plan. The agricultural areas on the slide presented to the Board are due to the policies of the Little River Watershed being in place.

Hearing no further comments, Mr. Van Dyk closed the floor at 2:42 p.m.

Board Motion for Comprehensive Plan Amendment #01-25

Dr. Kolappa made the motion that the Planning Board recommend that the Board of Commissioners adopt the Eastern Wake Area Plan as an amendment to the Wake County Comprehensive Plan, PLANWake, and amend the Development Framework Map.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Clark and was approved unanimously.

7. Committee Reports

Mr. Van Dyk noted that the Transportation Committee had expressed interest in hearing an update on the 540 expansions, along with any information from the landscape architect regarding plantings. Mr. Maloney replied that he would contact NCDOT to arrange an update.

8. Planning, Development, and Inspections Report

Mr. Gardiner updated the Board on the County's population estimate, which as of 2024 is 1,235,000, indicating strong growth. With the approval of the Eastern Wake Area Plan, staff will move to the Neuse North Area Plan, following a similar approach of using tools to identify applications of the Agricultural Land Use and updating Multi-Use Districts. Mr. Gardiner noted that the Neuse North Area Plan is the next to last Area Plan and, following that, staff will determine whether further updates are needed or where concerns (like affordable housing) can be addressed. He also added that staff is working on an RFP for a consultant to develop updated transportation guidelines in the UDO.

Mr. Jenkins asked if the completion of the Area Plan updates would cover the entire County, and Mr. Gardiner responded that other than the portion of RTP located in Wake County, it would cover non-watershed areas. Mr. Maloney added that the Swift Creek watershed is not included in the seven area plans – it is subject to the Swift Creek Land Management Plan under an inter-local agreement. Mr. Adams asked about the micro-transit program in eastern Wake County, and Mr. Gardiner responded that it was occurring in Morrisville, Wake Forest, Wendell, Zebulon, and Knightdale. There will likely be extensions to Holly Springs and Fuquay Varina. He noted that the cost per ride is higher than fixed route, but that they are seeing trips that would not have otherwise occurred.

Mr. Finn reported that in the first quarter of this Fiscal Year, 179 applications have been received versus 161 this time last year. Residential development applications are roughly 80% utilizing the Open Space subdivision layout, reflecting a trend of smaller lot sizes with greater open space and less density. Mr. Finn noted this provides flexibility for environmentally sensitive areas, which is a significant development for the County's land use plan. Mr. Van Dyk asked if Mr. Finn and staff would be able to provide a presentation or update sharing the details of an Open Space subdivision plan. Mr. Finn responded he would make a note to add it to the future Planning Board agenda.

Mr. Maloney informed the Board that the Ordinance Amendments from September would be heard by the Board of Commissioners on October 20th. Either Ms. Booker-Williams or Mr. Van Dyk would need to attend to present their recommendation. The Eastern Wake Area Plan will go before the Board of Commissioners on November 3rd. He indicated he would reach out to NCDOT for an update on the tree planting corridor, reforestation, and Highway 540 developments.

9. Chairman's Report
None.

10. Adjournment
The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

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REGULAR MEETING
WAKE COUNTY PLANNING BOARD
October 1, 2025

Vice Chair Ted Van Dyk declared the regular meeting of the Wake County Planning Board for Wednesday, October 1, 2025, adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Ted Van Dyk
Wake County Planning Board

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