



## Planning, Development & Inspections

A Division of Community Services  
P.O. Box 550 • Raleigh, NC 27602  
[www.wake.gov](http://www.wake.gov)

### **MINUTES OF REGULAR PLANNING BOARD - November 5, 2025**

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

#### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

1. Ms. Brenna Booker-Williams (Chair)
2. Mr. Ted Van Dyk (Vice Chair)
3. Mr. Amos Clark
4. Mr. Asa Fleming
5. Mr. Bill Jenkins
6. Ms. Suzanne Prince
7. Mr. Thomas Wells

#### **MEMBERS ABSENT:**

1. Mr. David Adams
2. Dr. Kamal Kolappa
3. Ms. Sally Rice

#### **COUNTY STAFF:**

1. Mr. Darrell Alford
2. Mr. Emerson Barker
3. Mr. Steven Finn
4. Mr. Tim Gardiner
5. Mr. Mark Hamlett
6. Mr. Timothy Maloney
7. Mr. Josh McClellan
8. Ms. Terry Nolan
9. Mr. David Parks
10. Ms. Beth Simmons

#### **COUNTY ATTORNEY:**

- Mr. Kenneth Murphy, Deputy County Attorney

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**1. Meeting Called to Order:** Ms. Booker-Williams called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

**3. Petitions and Amendments:** Mr. Maloney requested that the Board add an additional agenda item regarding Data Centers. Ms. Prince made a motion to amend the agenda, with a second from Mr. Fleming.

4. **Approval of October 1, 2025, Minutes:** Mr. Clark made a motion to approve the October 1, 2025, minutes as submitted. Mr. Wells seconded the motion, and the Board adopted the minutes unanimously.
5. **Proposed Zoning Map Amendment – PLG-RZ-006139-2025**  
Request to rezone two parcels totaling 13.96 acres from Residential-80 District (R-80) to Industrial District (I-2). This site is the location of the Wake County Fire Services Training Center.

**Presentation by staff: David Parks, Planner II**

Mr. Parks began by explaining that this is a request to rezone two parcels totaling 13.96 acres from Residential-80 (R-80) to Industrial-2 (I-2) located on the east side of Shooting Lane, a small road off Shearon Harris Road near Harris Lake. The site is owned by Duke Energy and is the location of the Wake County Fire Services Training Center. In 1973, general Wake County zoning was first applied to the area the site is located in, and it is currently zoned Residential-80 (1 residential unit per two acres). The adjacent area housing the nuclear plant is designated I-2. The subject site is designated as Rural on PLANWake Comprehensive Plan's Development Framework Map. Predominant land uses for the Rural designation include working farms, timberlands, forest, residential and conservation areas.

The site is also subject to the Western Wake Area Plan, adopted in 2025. This established future land use for this area of the County, and the designation for the proposed rezoning site is defined as "Utility/Conservation". Planning staff sent letters to property owners adjacent to the subject property and posted a meeting notification on Shooting Lane.

The subject property is currently developed with an individual on-site septic system and an individual on-site well. There does not appear to be any flood hazard soils on the two parcels proposed with this rezoning. There is an existing stormwater detention pond on site to treat the existing runoff. Any future expansion or improvements of the site would be required to meet all applicable environmental standards along with any necessary permit reviews from Environmental Services. The subject site has frontage on Shooting Lane and Fire Training Lane which includes a paved easement located off Shearon Harris Road. There are no proposed improvements to Shooting Lane with this rezoning request. Any future development on this site, as well as any roadway improvements, will be required to comply with the Wake County UDO. Any roadway improvements and/or driveway permits will have to be coordinated with, and approved by, NCDOT.

Mr. Parks noted that NC General Statute and the UDO require that the Planning Board provide the Commissioners with a statement of whether the request is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, reasonable, and otherwise advances the public health, safety, and general welfare. The Commissioners must adopt a statement describing whether its action is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, or explaining why their decision is reasonable and in the public interest.

Staff finds that 1) the proposed Industrial-2 (I-2) zoning district is consistent with the policies of the Western Wake Area Plan as contained within the Comprehensive Plan, 2) the Future Land Use Map contained as a part of the Western Wake Area Plan designates this site as Utility/Conservation, 3) the continued use of this site as the Wake County Fire Services Training Center is compatible with the Utility/Conservation use and therefore, the proposed I-2 zoning district would be more in line with the intent of the Utility/Conservation classification than the existing R-80 zoning district, 4) the petitioner has state in their application that the existing use of this facility directly benefits the residents of Wake County as Fire Department staff will continue to utilize this facility to increase the efficiency

and effectiveness, and 5) the zoning change to I-2 will allow additional fire training structures and infrastructure to be constructed on site.

Staff recommends that the Planning Board 1) recommend that the Board of Commissioners adopt the statement of consistency for rezoning petition PLG-RZ-006139-2025, and by separate motion, 2) recommend that the Board of Commissioners adopt rezoning petition PLG-RZ-006139-2025 as presented.

Mr. Van Dyk asked if the purpose of the rezoning request was to bring the site into alignment with the current use, and Mr. Parks responded that the training center has operated since 1984 and for any future expansion, the proposed I-2 zoning would be more consistent with the existing use. Mr. Maloney added that it would allow the site to expand in ways the existing zoning would not permit. Mr. Van Dyk asked if the site would be affected by any future expansion of the lake, and Mr. Maloney responded that raising the lake levels to accommodate future nuclear capacity would not impact the training center to their knowledge. Mr. Van Dyk asked if there were any conditional limitations placed on this rezoning, and Mr. Parks responded it was a general rezoning request with no conditions.

Mr. Jenkins asked if any live fire training took place at the site, and would there be concerns about potential environmental contaminants. Mr. Parks indicated that staff from General Services Administration (GSA) and Fire and Emergency Management could address this. Mark Hamlett introduced himself as the Deputy Director of Wake County GSA and stated that the property is not adjacent to the water, but it was possible to feel impacts from raising the level of the lake. He explained that they would review the contours to better determine potential impacts if Duke Energy moves forward with this plan. Darrell Alford, the Director of Fire Services & Emergency Management, explained that Duke Energy partners with the County in the Shearon Harris area and that they share the training facility. Mr. Alford noted that they conduct live fire training on site and use Wood Combustive materials to generate burn rooms. All runoffs are captured in a retention pond and is used in a loop fire system for reusing the water and controlling all runoff.

Mr. Clark asked if staff received any feedback from the public, and Mr. Parks responded that they had not, adding that all the adjacent property is owned by Duke Energy.

### **Public Hearing**

Ms. Booker-Williams opened the floor for public comment and, hearing none, closed the floor at 1:43 p.m.

### **Board Motion for Consistency on PLG-RZ-006139-2025**

Mr. Wells made a motion that the Planning Board offers to the Wake County Board of Commissioners the following recommended statement of consistency, reasonableness, and public interest:

- 1) The Board finds that the requested rezoning to Industrial-2 is consistent with the Land Use Plan.
- 2) The permissible range of uses are reasonable for the surrounding area. The site will continue to be utilized for the purposes for Fire Department training.
- 3) The petitioner has indicated compliance with the Wake County Land Use Plan regarding the future land use map designation of the site as Utility/Conservation.
- 4) The request is reasonable, and in the public interest because various provisions in the Wake County Unified Development Ordinance will ensure that there are no significant adverse impacts on the public health, safety and general welfare. The subsequent development will comply with county requirements regarding buffering, stormwater, and erosion control, and protection of environmentally sensitive areas.

Ms. Prince seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

**Board Motion for Approval on PLG-RZ-006139-2025**

Mr. Clark made a motion that in the matter of PLG-RZ-006139-2025, the Board finds that the adoption of the rezoning is consistent with the Wake County Comprehensive Plan and Wake County Unified Development Ordinance and is reasonable and in the public interest and hereby makes a motion to recommend approval of the proposed rezoning to the Wake County Board of Commissioners.

Mr. Fleming seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

**6. Review of Open Space Subdivision Option, Steven Finn, Land Use Planning Administrator**

Mr. Finn began his presentation by noting that in preliminary subdivision reviews, approximately 80% of applicants were utilizing the Open Space option created by a 2023 Ordinance Amendment. After receiving a request from the Board to elaborate on the Open Space Subdivision, Mr. Finn and Mr. Parks collaborated to provide an example of a subdivision that is currently under preliminary review. The Open Space development allows staff to review difficult sites to develop within environmental constraints. The general intention is to encourage the preservation of open space, where possible, with an incentive to reduce the minimum lot size.

Open Space subdivision design allows more compact and less costly networks of roads and utilities. They also reduce stormwater run-off and non-point source pollutant loading rates and may help to preserve an area's rural character. Open Space subdivisions are intended to encourage the provision of needed open space and recreational amenities for residents, while also helping to preserve natural, environmentally sensitive, agricultural, and historic resources. The minimum required land area is 10 acres. The Open Space requirements allows for a 10% reduction of the lot area if the subdivision is located outside of a water supply watershed, and 25% if it is located within.

Mr. Finn presented an aerial slide of a proposed Open Space Development in the Swift Creek area off of Center Farm Road. He noted that the aerial view appeared straightforward, but the topography map introduced several mitigating factors that makes this area an ideal choice for the open space option. A proposed subdivision layout demonstrates how the lots are laid out, including two cul-de-sacs and foray into the existing subdivision surrounding the area. Mr. Finn stressed the importance of soil quality in preliminary discussions – good soil quality determines the availability of well and septic systems and the overall lot yield in subdivisions. They also meet with the applicant to discuss the topography of the area relative to the number of lots and entrances to and from the subdivision. In particular, the lot presented to the Board took advantage of the open space option to develop around environmentally sensitive areas.

Mr. Wells asked the total size of the proposed subdivision, and Mr. Parks responded it was 31.54 acres. Mr. Van Dyk asked about connectivity, particularly with respect to roads on the site plan that did not appear to be attached to adjacent parcels. Mr. Finn responded that, in this case, staff found environmental constraints that limited their ability to connect, even after discussions with NCDOT. Mr. Van Dyk asked if the UDO included requirements to the number of connections, and Mr. Finn responded that there are policies and expectations for stubs, with limitations in an infill subdivision (like the one being discussed). Infill subdivisions typically have a lower Lot yield, which limits the number of available stubs you would find in larger subdivisions. Mr. Jenkins asked if preliminary studies are taken to ensure that smaller lot size will accommodate septic systems, and Mr. Finn

responded that when it takes place, it is typically a soil test by the applicant prior to the pre-submittal meeting. Staff does prioritize stormwater runoff studies, based on topography, when driveway runoff might be a factor.

Mr. Fleming asked whether staff encourages recreational amenities in open space areas during pre-submittal, and Mr. Finn noted that PLANWake encourages protection and preservation of open space, whether it be active or passive. When reviewing opportunities during pre-submittal, staff will look for links to active recreation, like trails or parks, to open space areas unsuitable for active recreation. These opportunities are discussed during pre-submittal meetings rather than during a technical review. Ms. Prince asked about the average proposed lot size in this example, and Mr. Finn noted that some open space developments can bring a lot size down to 20,000 square feet, depending on the approved building permits. Mr. Wells asked if this subdivision had been approved, and Mr. Parks responded it had not been recorded yet.

Mr. Van Dyk noted that he had recently been in Brevard and noticed throughfares between lots that created connectivity between cul-de-sacs within communities. Mr. Finn noted that he was not aware of this feature but would be interested in that possibility as staff assessed options moving forward. Connectivity to trails in the Parks and Recreation plan are a component of the Open Space Development option.

## **7. Data Centers Update – Terry Nolan, Planner III**

Ms. Nolan explained that the County approached the Board of Commissioners on Monday to gauge their comfort level with staff coordinating with regional partners to develop guidance around data centers. While not all the same, the most recent data centers being developed are related to or driven by AI. There is currently a request at the Town of Apex for rezoning and annexation for a data center, and the Apex Planning Director has advised the County and other communities to have a policy that states the environmental concerns about data centers. Data centers pose several concerns, primarily energy and water consumption (Apex has stipulated that the proposed center cannot use potable water, only reused, and could use up to a million gallons of water a day for cooling). They frequently use diesel generators for backup, which affects air quality. Economic impacts will be felt from resources being overused and questions remain about whether these centers will help stimulate employment or hamper it. Other concerns include nuisance issues with lighting and noise.

Data centers consume 300-400 megawatts of power, nearly half of what nearby Shearon Harris produces (928mw). For reference, Ms. Nolan explained that 1mw of power is enough for 600 homes. With that in mind, Wake County led a discussion at the September meeting with municipal planning directors and other stakeholders to discuss impending interest in data centers. Apex has received an annexation and rezoning request, and other communities have been approached. Municipalities have expressed interest in the County organizing regional discussion and coordination of initial strategies.

Wake County considers itself to be a neutral party because, from a development perspective, a data center will not be developed in the unincorporated jurisdiction because the County does not provide the needed public utilities. While the County is not competing for this industry, we will be impacted by it along with other parts of the region. Wake County can also make recommendations as we look to our One Water Plan and PLANWake to consider best practices. The County can be a source of information regarding what we do to manage these impacts, what we know about data centers and what we don't know. The decisions will ultimately remain with the municipalities, but the County can offer support and guidance along the way. This may help the municipalities create a coordinated toolkit for consistent policies so that developers understand what is expected of them and can act accordingly.

Mr. Wells asked what factors contributed to the Apex proposal. Ms. Nolan responded that the proximity to Shearon Harris power plant's transmission line, the size of the property, and the fact that there is a sewage treatment plant nearby that would allow them to install the infrastructure to reuse Apex's grey water system were all factors. Mr. Jenkins added concerns from the Yadkin River Keeper Board regarding a natural gas pipeline expansion impacting their watershed, and that the increase in data centers might accelerate this desire for natural gas. Mr. Van Dyk added concerns about the diesel generators causing power disruptions at irregular intervals and the conflicting information regarding the economic benefits once the center is operational. Ms. Nolan noted that staff would be meeting with the County's economic development division soon, and that she and Mr. Maloney attended a meeting hosted by Central Pines Council of Government. There were a number of questions about the economic impact: tax revenue is generated when the centers are built, but the value depreciates after that. She indicated there were a number of data points staff would like to investigate further while developing guidance.

Ms. Nolan added that Commissioner Thomas visited several data centers in Virginia to better understand their operations, and they are invested in establishing a unified set of tools, resources, and documentation to guide decision making. The County is meeting with community stakeholders and will continue to hold discussions while continuing research. Staff intends to prepare progress reports and present them to the Commissioners early next year.

Mr. Van Dyk and Mr. Clark asked staff to consider researching the power demands, particularly if centers use part of the output of the Shearon Harris plant. Ms. Booker-Williams asked about security, and Ms. Nolan added that data centers are highly protected with armed guards, which posed concerns regarding access to the building in the event of a disaster. An additional issue included persistent reports of noise ordinance complaints, with or without the generators in operation. Mr. Wells asked what the status of Apex's request is, and Ms. Nolan responded that it is currently in their environmental committee, which was a contributing factor to their planning director requesting guidance from the County.

Mr. Maloney added that the companies interested in developing these centers are willing to meet any criteria imposed on them, so having these guidelines in place would be a benefit.

## **8. Committee Reports**

None.

## **9. Planning, Development, and Inspections Report**

Mr. Gardiner updated the Board that the Eastern Wake Area Plan was approved by the Board of Commissioners on Monday. With respect to transportation guidelines, the County has selected a consultant and are in contract negotiations. Part of the transportation guidelines will include anything related to roads, sidewalks and greenways in the UDO, so they will certainly consider connectivity during the process. Reviews of neighborhoods with no connectivity and existing easements would also be worth examination. He also added that the Neuse North area plan will be presented in an upcoming meeting – the area spans north Raleigh, Wake Forest, Rolesville, and some of Little River.

Mr. Finn reported that 55% of applications were commercial with 45% residential, returning to a proportionate balance of previous fiscal periods. Additionally, the most common type of commercial, non-residential reviews that staff are seeing is minor upgrades and up-fits for towers. Mr. Finn noted this to be a good indication that the tower ordinance was working, noting a decrease in requests for

new towers. Any tower request over 200 feet requires a Special Use Permit, but below that is only an administrative permit. Staff is also seeing a peak in subdivision monumentation signs, including retaining walls. Mr. Finn closed by noting that code enforcement remains active, remaining consistent over the past 18-month period.

Mr. Maloney informed the Board that today's rezoning case would be taken to the Board of Commissioners on December 1<sup>st</sup> and that either the Chair or Vice Chair would need to attend. He added that a December 3<sup>rd</sup> Planning Board meeting is likely, but agenda items are still in forthcoming. He indicated that the Board may see an increase in stormwater and soil & erosion ordinance amendments to come in the next year. Mr. Maloney closed by adding that on November 1<sup>st</sup>, the County implemented a reorganization that created a Planning and Development Services (PDS) division, combining Planning, Development & Inspections with Water Quality, for which he is now the Director.

#### **10. Chairman's Report**

Ms. Booker-Williams thanked Mr. Van Dyk for his work at October's meeting, and for representing the Planning Board at both Board of Commissioner meetings last month.

#### **11. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:35 p.m.

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REGULAR MEETING  
WAKE COUNTY PLANNING BOARD  
November 5, 2025

Chair Brenna Booker-Williams declared the regular meeting  
of the Wake County Planning Board for  
Wednesday, November 5, 2025, adjourned at 2:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Signed by:  
  
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Brenna Booker-Williams  
Wake County Planning Board

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