

Unified Development Ordinance Amendment OA-03-25

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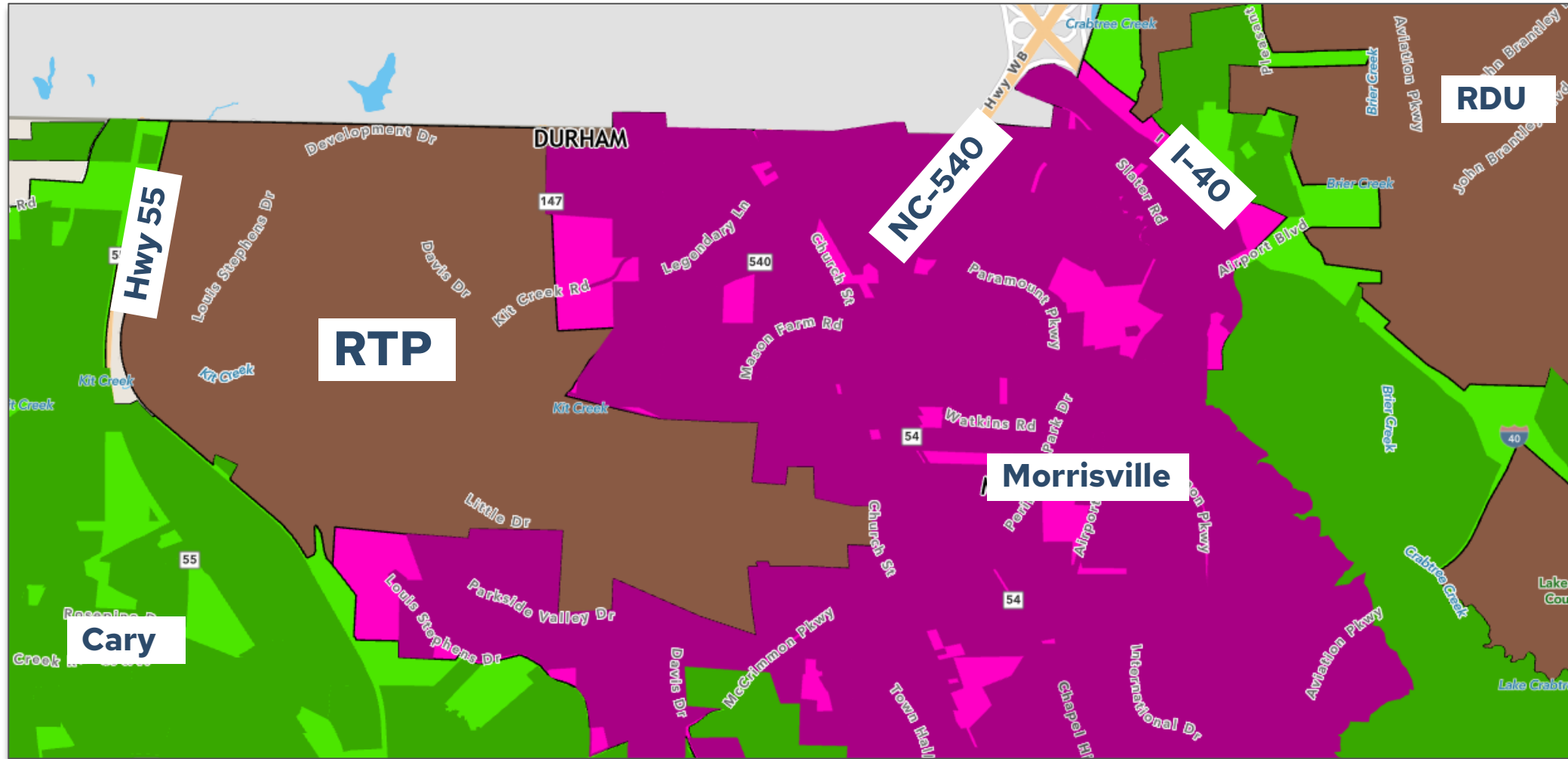


Proposed Amendment to RTP's Zoning District

Purpose

1. To accommodate a new pattern of growth and development consistent with RTPs latest vision, RTP 3.0.
2. To promote dense mixed-use development that creates a live, work, play environment in the center of the Triangle region while making RTP more attractive to the next generation of workers.
3. To remain in-step with industry peers nationally and globally.

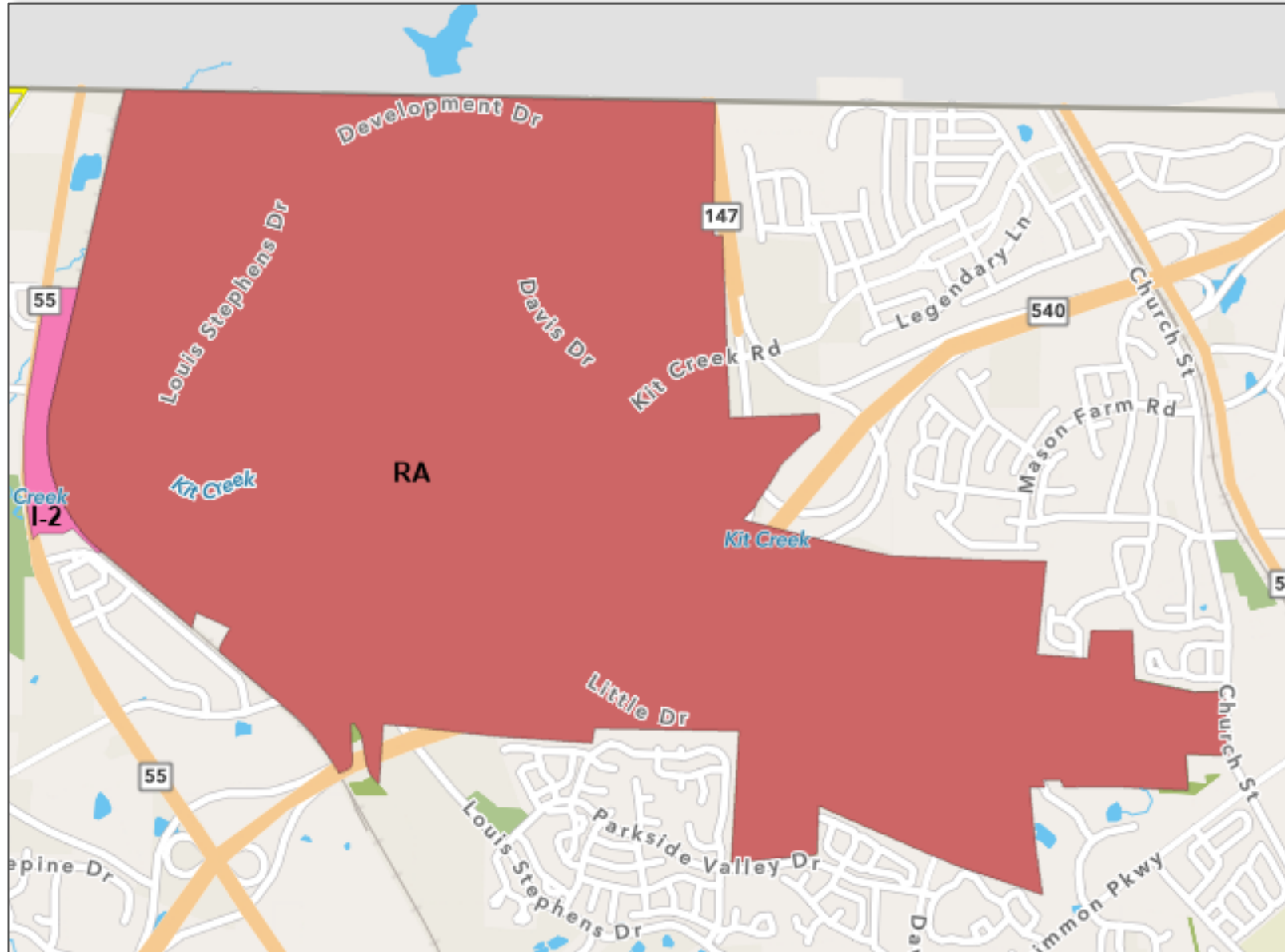
Research Triangle Park



Background

- Created in 1959, RTP has been a critical driver of economic growth in North Carolina's Research Triangle region over the past 65 years.
- RTP straddles Wake and Durham counties (Approx. 27% is in Wake County)
- RTP is the only area within Wake County's planning jurisdiction where the Research Applications (RA) zoning district is applied.
- RA Zoning was created years ago with the sole intent to regulate and guide site development within RTP.
- The zoning district has experienced only minor amendments over the years.

Research Applications (RA) Zoning District



Analysis

- RTP is served by municipal water and sewer utilities (Town of Cary).
- RTP is positioning itself through this amendment to accommodate new development trends and foster a wider range of uses.
- County and RTP planners worked in partnership to determine what new development standards need to be codified in the UDO, and those that should be embedded in RTP's restrictive covenants.
- The more standards embedded in RTP restrictive covenants, the more control RTP would retain in guiding site design and development now and in the future.

Proposed Amendments

1. Introduce three new alternate development options in the RA zoning district.
2. Amend the permitted use table to identify a wider range of uses allowed within the RA zoning district.
3. Amend the lot and building standards section to reflect the new alternate development options in the RA zoning district.
4. Amend the sign section to reflect the prohibition of electronic changeable message signs within the RA zoning district.

Development Options (UDO Section 3-51)

Traditional Development (*Existing*)

- Standards remain unchanged and will still be offered as a development option.
- Accommodates the form and function that has been the staple of RTP for many years and reflects most of what is in place today.

Mixed-Use Node (*New*)

- Accommodates high density/intensity development that embodies key elements of walkable/bikeable urbanism, well-connected to the regional transportation network.
- Accommodates mixed-uses: research and development, offices, retail, entertainment, public and quasi-public uses, and moderate and higher density residential uses.

Development Options (UDO Section 3-51)

Residential Neighborhood (New)

- Accommodates traditional neighborhood development in compact form with a neighborhood center.
- Includes primarily residential development with a range of housing options and a mix of non-residential neighborhood uses.

Enhanced Corporate Campus (New)

- Accommodates the expansion and redevelopment of the existing corporate campuses in the RTP, or the development of new corporate campuses.
- Accommodates a mix of uses and greater densities/intensities than is allowed under the Traditional development option.
- Requires improved pedestrian and street connections between existing and new buildings, enhanced walkability and pedestrian-friendliness.

Permitted Uses (UDO Section 4-11)

- Amend the Use Table to permit a wider range of uses within the RA zoning district.
- The range of new permitted uses includes residential and commercial such as eating and drinking establishments, entertainment/recreation, and other daily service needs for those who work and live in the district.

Permitted Use Table

USE GROUP	Zoning Districts													Use Standards	
Use Category Specific Use Type	Residential					Highway	Commercial			Industrial		Sp. Purpose			
	R-80W	R-40W	R-80-R-10	R-5	RMH	HD	O&I	GB	HC	I-1	I-2	AD-1	AD-2		RA ⁽¹⁾
P=Permitted use (as-of-right) S=Special use approval req'd (19-23) S*=Special use approval req'd (in MUD and 19-23) - =Prohibited ⁽¹⁾RA Zoning District permitted uses are subject to the approval procedures in Section 3-51-4(D)															
RESIDENTIAL USE GROUP															
Household Living															
Attached house (e.g., townhouse)	P	P	P	P	-	P	P	S	-	-	-	-	-	-P	§5-14
Condominium or apartment	-	-	-	P	-	P	S	S	-	-	-	-	-	-P	
Detached house (i.e., single-family detached dwelling)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	S	-	-	-	-	-	-P	
Duplex, triplex, 4-plex	P	P	P	P	-	P	P	S	-	-	-	-	-	-P	§4-36
Lot line house	P	P	P	P	-	P	P	S	-	-	-	-	-	-P	§5-13
Mobile home	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	S	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Mobile home subdivision/park	-	-	-	-	S	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Upper-story residence	-	-	-	-	-	P	P	P	P	-	-	-	-	-P	§4-31
Group Living															
Family care home	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	-	-	-	-	-	-	-P	§4-38
Group care facility	S	S	S	S	-	S	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-P	§4-42
Group home	S	S	S	S	-	S	P	P	-	-	-	-	-	-P	§4-43
Health/personal care facility	-	-	S	S	-	S	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-P	
All other group living (except as noted above)	-	-	S	S	-	S	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-P	

Lot & Building Standards (UDO Section 5-20)

- Amend the table of lot and building standards to reflect the standards for the new development options in the RA zoning district.
- The standards include but are not limited to: maximum building height, minimum lot width, and maximum lot coverage area.

Lot & Building Standards

	O&I	GB	HC	I-1 and I-2	RA-MUN	RA-RND	RA-ECC
Minimum Lot Area (square feet)	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
Minimum Lot Width (feet)	None	None	None	None	60	25	100 150^[4]
Minimum Required Setbacks (feet)							
Front and Corner	40	50			None	None	None
Side	20	25; none when abutting railroad			None	None	None
Rear	25	25; none when abutting railroad; 50 from right-of-way			None	None	None
Maximum Impervious Coverage ^{[1][2][3]}	None						
Maximum Building Height (feet)	None				300	90	160

Signs (UDO Section 18-13)

- Amend the sign section to prohibit the use of electronic changeable message signs in the RA zoning district.

Electronic Changeable Message Signs

Zoning District	ECMS Maximum Area ^[1]	Minimum Hold Time ^[2]	Off Hours ^[3]
GB, HC, I-1, I-2 O&I, RA, AD1, AD2	32 sq. ft.	60 seconds	N/A*
R-80W—R-5, HD	16 sq. ft.	60 minutes	9 p.m. to 7 a.m.



Engagement, Staff Findings & Recommendation

Owners & Tenants Engagement

- The Research Triangle Foundation held over 120 meetings with RTP companies and additional stakeholders throughout the RTP 3.0 process.
- RTP Owners and Tenants Association appointed a working group of 15 companies to develop consensus on RTP 3.0.
- In December, RTP Owners and Tenants Association approved revised land covenants and authorized the Foundation to pursue zoning changes in RTP with a 96% majority vote.

Staff Findings

1. Introduces three new development options as an alternate from the traditional development approach in the RA zoning district.
2. Promotes more dense mixed-use development that creates a live, work, play environment in the center of the Triangle region while making RTP more attractive to the next generation of workers.
3. Allows RTP to retain development plan review and approval for consistency with their covenants and restrictions.
4. Furthers the latest vision of RTP while continuing their mission of business and scientific research and development, training, and production.
5. Is consistent with the Wake County Comprehensive Plan in that it delegates authority for area planning to the Research Triangle Foundation.

Effective Date of Amendments

- The Research Triangle Foundation is working concurrently with Durham County on the same amendments to their ordinance.
- Durham expects to adopt the changes later this year, although a date has yet to be determined.
- It is the Foundation's desire, if possible, for the amendments in both counties to become effective at the same time.
- The effective date of this amendment will be the earlier of: (1) the forthcoming date of Durham County's adoption of similar amendments; or (2) May 1, 2026.

Staff Recommendation

That the Board of Commissioners adopt OA-03-25 as presented.

Planning Board Recommendation

The Planning Board recommended, by a unanimous vote at their April 2, 2025, meeting that the Wake County Board of Commissioners adopt the text amendment as presented.



Public Hearing

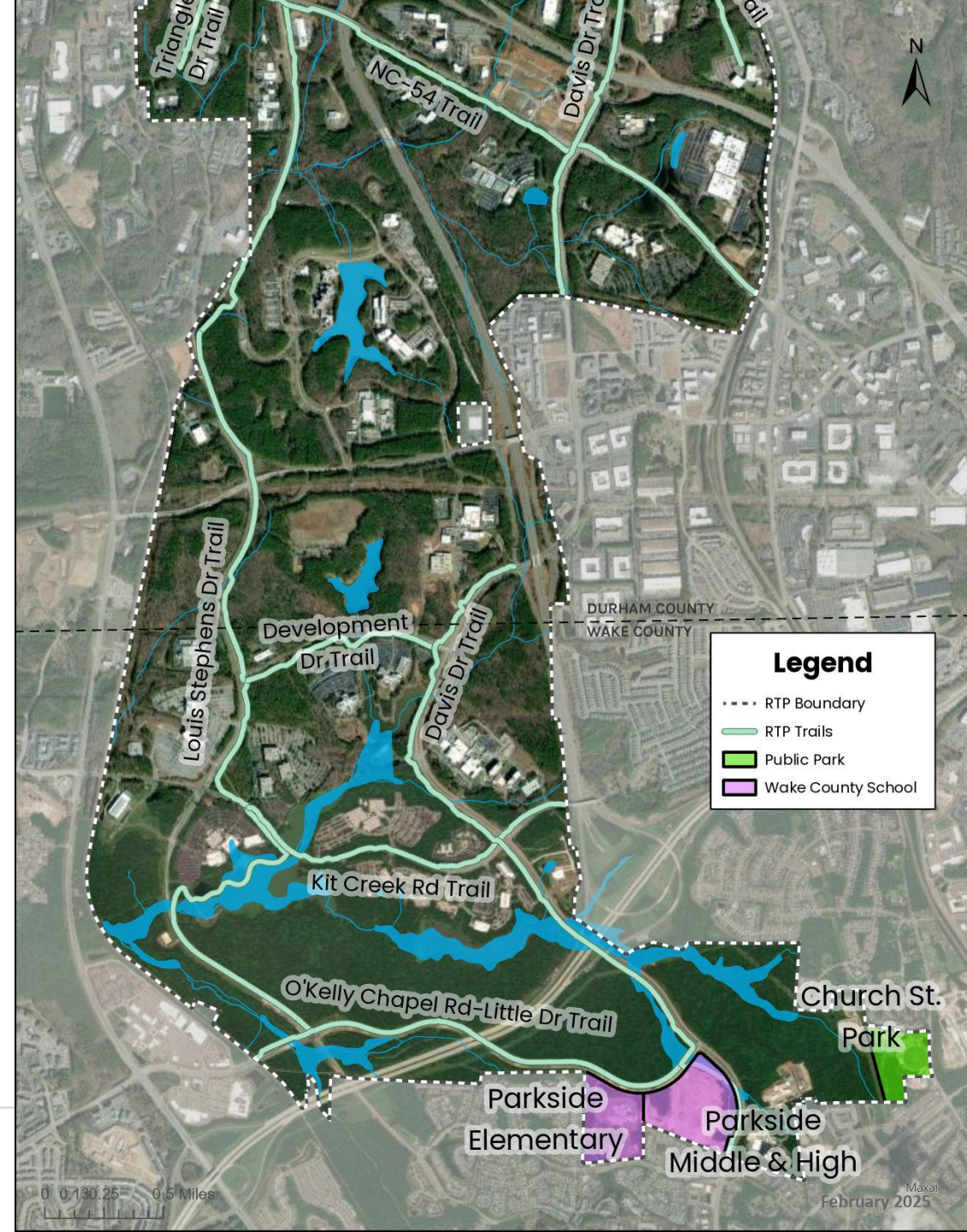


RTP

Additional Information

RTP Context Map

- 27% of RTP is in Wake County
- RTP maintains an existing sidepath/trail/greenway network
 - Connects to Morrisville
 - Connection to Cary to be complete by mid-2026
- Two school sites + 1 public park
- RTP mountain bike trails



RTP Today

Category	Acreage	Percentage
Impervious surface – buildings & parking	260	13.4%
NCDOT ROW*	250	12.9%
<i>Total impervious</i>	<i>510</i>	<i>26.3%</i>
Undeveloped land	1427	73.6%
<i>Total Wake Co. RTP</i>	<i>1937</i>	<i>—</i>

* Not all NCDOT ROW is currently impervious surface. Due to data limitations, we were not able to account for greenspace that currently exists along NCDOT roadways within the ROW.

- RTF owns ~400 acres designated as Natural Area Preserves that would not be developed



Regulatory & Policy Topics for RTP Enforcement*

1. Threshold requirements
2. Locational criteria for specific uses
3. Allowed uses by development type
4. Street standards
5. Streetscape design standards
6. Outdoor lighting standards
7. Fences
8. Signage
9. Transitional buffers
10. Architectural and form standards
11. Sustainability standards

* Not intended to be an exhaustive list of all prospective regulatory and policy areas that may be addressed under the mechanisms available under RTP's land covenants.