

Farmland Preservation Plan

Balancing Growth and Agriculture

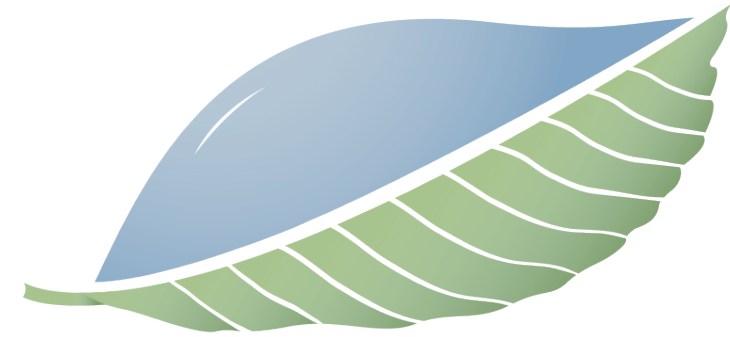
Teresa Furr

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@wakegov    

wake.gov



EQUINOX

balance through proper planning

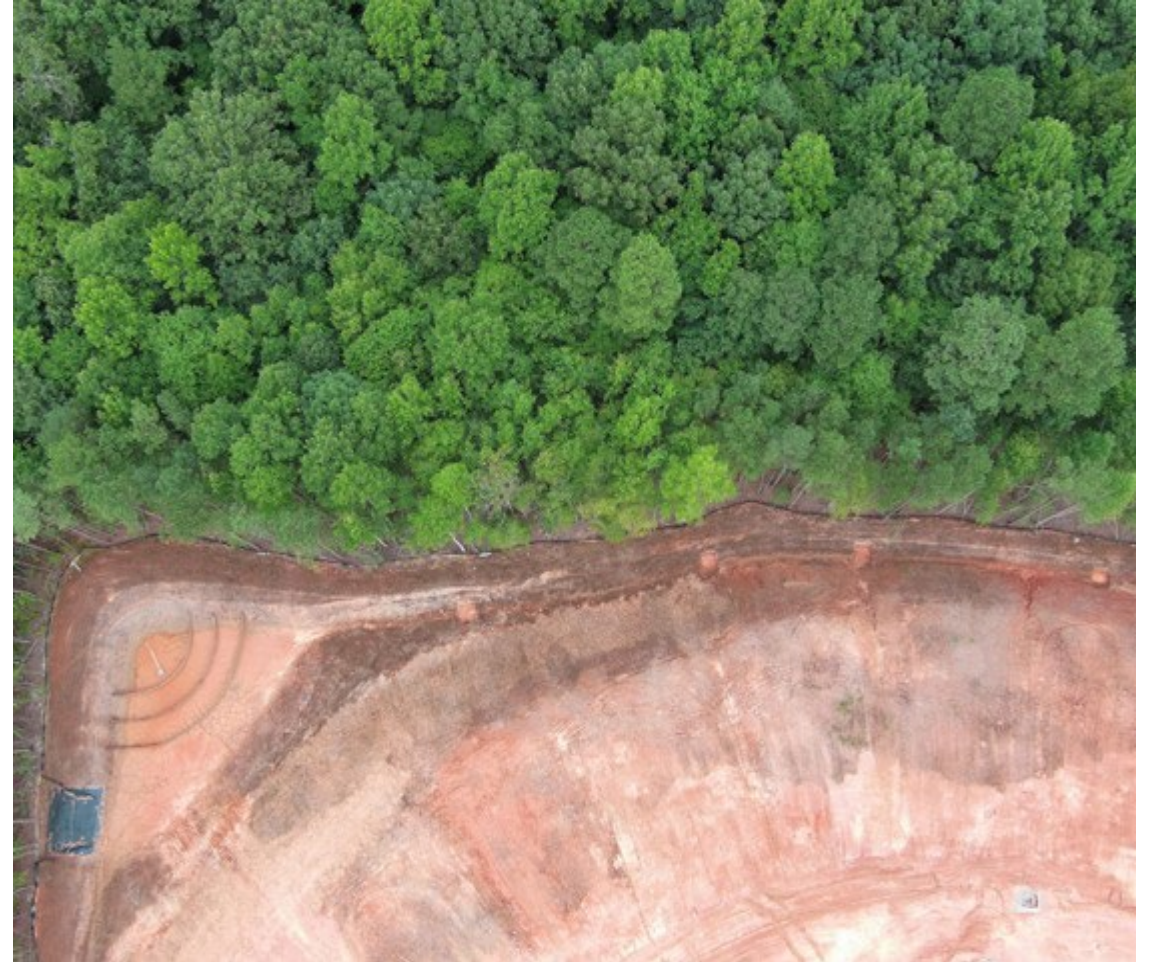
Why do we need a plan?

- Plan adoption allows for lower match requirements for State conservation easement funds (30% to 15%)
- Documents rates of loss and sets baselines



Why do we need a plan?

- Identifies land under greatest threat of development
- Facilitates serious discussion about planning for the future



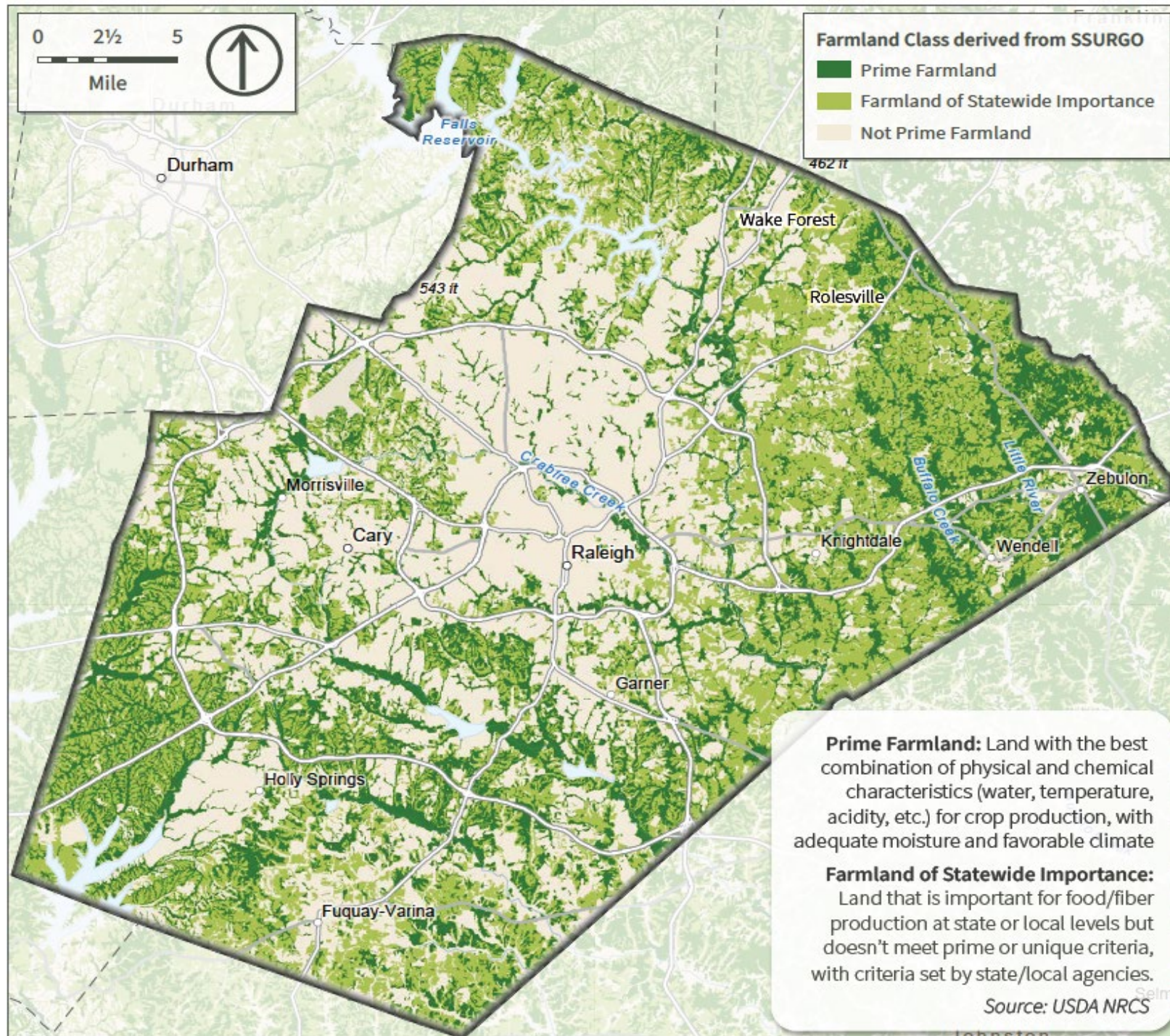
Why do we need a plan?

- Allows local leaders to set priorities and goals for farmland preservation
- Aligns with Strategic Plan



What is the Farmland Preservation Plan?

- Review of Existing Data
- Identification of rates of farmland loss
- Survey assessments from public and landowners
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Interviews with farm and forest landowners
- Identifies prime soils and other important ecosystems
- Establishes criteria for prioritizing land for preservation
- Makes recommendations for local policies and programs that support farmland preservation



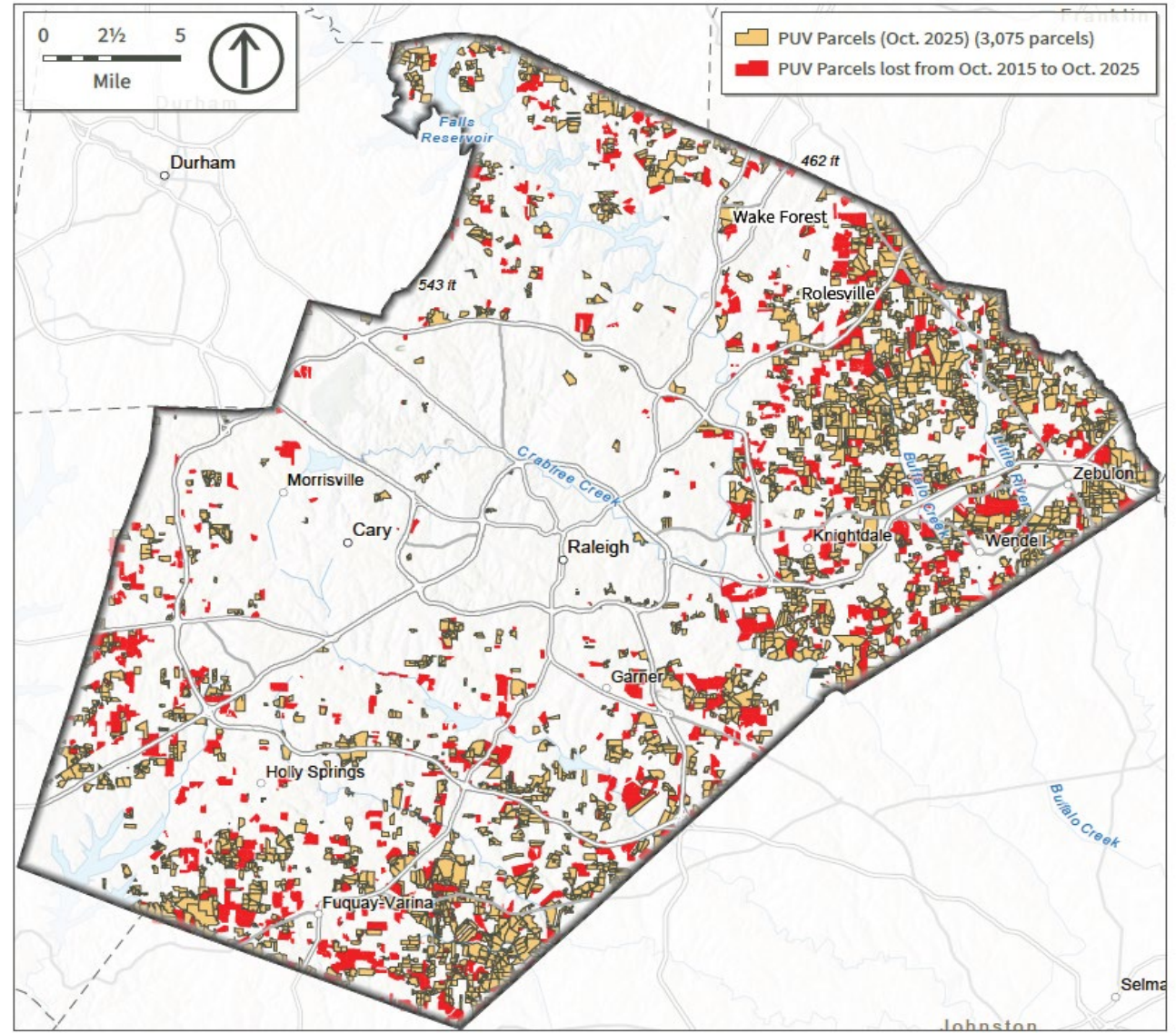
The Farmland Preservation Plan uses soil data to identify priority areas for protection and to ensure limited County, state, and federal funds are invested where they deliver the highest agricultural return.

Once these soils are developed, their agricultural value is permanently lost.

FARMLAND CONVERSION TRENDS 2015-2025

Year	Parcels	Acres
2015	3,870	118,688
2025	3,075	82,084
Change	-795	-36,604

30% of Present-Use Value (PUV) parcels have been **lost** in last 10 years (shown in red on map).



FARMLAND CONVERSION TRENDS, 2015-2025

Four Focus Areas

1. Farm-Friendly Land Use Policies

2. Farm Ownership Support

3. Agricultural Protection Funds

4. Environmental, Economic, & Social Benefits of Farmland



Conservation Easement

Farm-Friendly Land Use Examples

- Explore Agricultural Compatibility Buffers.
- Consider creating Agricultural Zoning Classification (Voluntary).



Farm Ownership Support Examples

- Provide resources on estate and farm-transition planning.
- Expand incubator and accelerator farm programs to support the next generation of farmers.



Keeping the Farm Workshop

Agricultural Protection Fund Examples

- Continue PUV Rollback Success.
- Consider Farmland Protection Bond (5-to-10-year timeframe).



Environmental, Economic, & Social Benefit Examples

- Promote the vital role that farm and forest land plays in ecosystem services.
- Produce an annual Wake County Farmland Report.



Conservation Easement

Strategic Plan Alignment

- Between 2024 and 2029, 97% of **growth and development will be directed toward cities and towns** that provide municipal services, transportation, and utilities.
- **Protect 1,000 acres** of green space, including open space, parks, greenways, farmland, and forests by 2029.
- By 2029, 95% of residents asked will have easy access to **clean water**.



Wake County Plan Alignment

- PLANWake
- Food Security Plan
- One Water Plan
- Parks Master Plan



Public Survey Results

Of the 679 respondents

96%

agreed that preserving farmland, forests, and agricultural operations in Wake County is **Very Important.**

Top 3 benefits of Agriculture in Wake County:

1.

Local Food Production

2.

Environmental Protection (i.e. clean water, clean air, wildlife habitat)

3.

Open space and scenic landscapes/viewsheds

Public Survey Results

96%

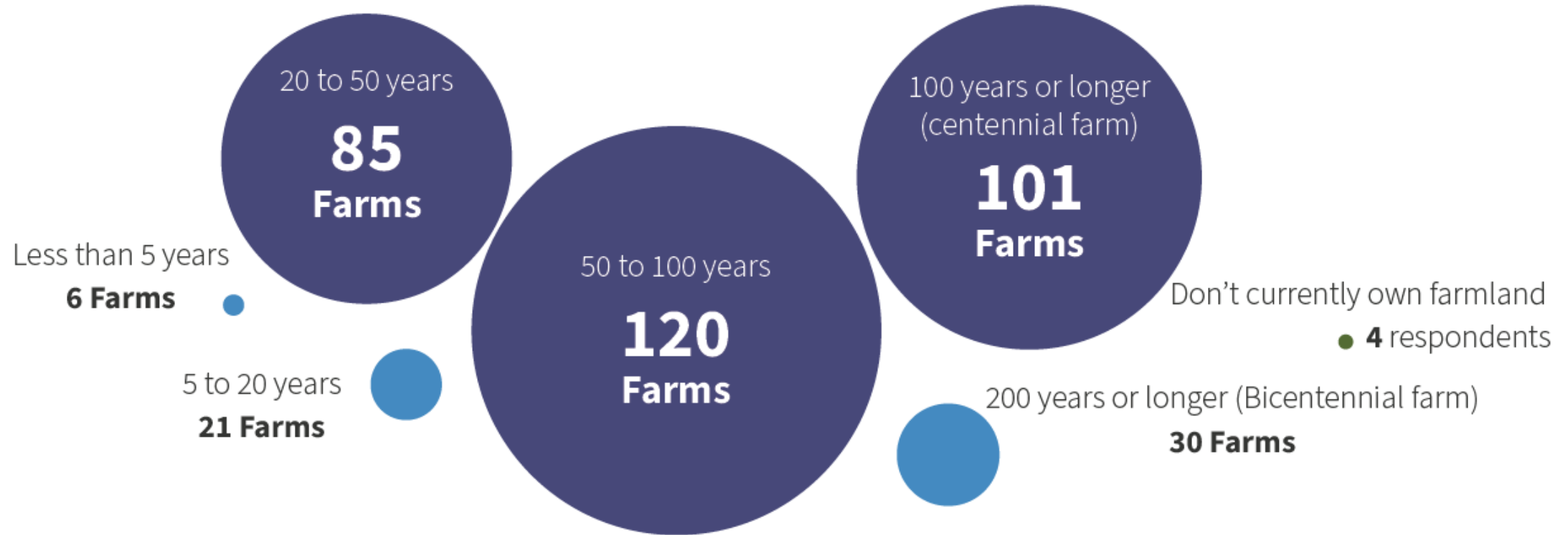
of respondents think Wake County is **losing too much farmland or forestland to development**

95%

of respondents **support policies and initiative to expand protections for farmland in Wake County**

Landowner Survey Results

HOW LONG HAS YOUR FARMLAND BEEN IN YOUR FAMILY?



By the Numbers

- **35** participants at Stakeholder Engagement Workshop in July 2025
- **679** responses to public survey
- **371** responses to landowner survey
- **8** farmer interviews



Farmland Preservation Plan Outreach

Engaged Stakeholder Groups

- Wake County Farm Bureau
- Triangle Land Conservancy
- Cooperative Extension
- NCDA
- USDA
- Good Hope Farm
- Town of Fuquay-Varina
- Raleigh-Wake County Home Builders Association
- And more!

Draft Plan Presentations

- Wake County Planning Board
- Wake County Managers Office
- Municipal Managers Meeting
- Municipal Planners Meeting
- Wake Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors
- Wake County Farm Bureau Board
- OSAPAC Board

Feedback Topics

- Stakeholder engagement needed before development and implementation of agricultural compatibility buffers
- Stakeholder engagement needed when creating new voluntary agricultural zoning district classification

Recommended Actions

Approve the Farmland Preservation Plan which provides a clear framework to guide growth, protect working lands, and leverage partnership funding—while also preserving the Board’s full discretion over when, and how recommendations are implemented.



Questions?



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