



# Wake County

301 South McDowell Street  
Raleigh, NC

## Meeting Minutes Board of Commissioners

---

Monday, March 10, 2025

2:00 PM

Wake County Justice Center

---

### Work Session

#### Meeting Called to Order: Chair Susan Evans

Chair Evans called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m.

**Commissioners Present:** Chair Susan Evans, Vice-Chair Don Mial, Commissioner Vickie Adamson, Commissioner Shinica Thomas, Commissioner Cheryl Stallings, Commissioner Tara Waters and Commissioner Safiyah Jackson.

**Staff Present:** David Ellis, County Manager; Emily Lucas, Deputy County Manager; Duane Holder, Deputy County Manager; Ashley Jacobs, Deputy County Manager; Jose Cabanas, Chief Medial Officer, Deputy County Manager; Roger Askew, Senior Deputy Attorney; Michael James, Assistant County Manager; Dara Demi, Chief Communications Officer; Ellen Meder, Communications Consultant; Stephanie Mintz, Communications Consultant; Ben Canada; Chief of Staff; Toni Womack, Deputy Clerk to the Board; Jason Horton, Strategic Initiatives Director; Frank Cope, Community Services Director; Matt Roylance, Community Services Deputy Director; Mark Forestieri, Facilities, Design and Constructions Director; Tammy Baggett, Library Director; Katrina Vernon, Library Assistant Director; Michelle Venditto, Budget and Management Services Director; David Rutherford, Facilities Design and Construction Deputy Director, Eileen Rosa, Lead Agency Director and Tanika Cooper, Senior Executive Assistant.

**Others Present:** Natalie Ray, Arts Space; Erick Mitchko, NC Opera; Luke Vandergriff, Unites Arts; Lyman Collins, United Arts Board of Directors; Hema Pandey, Hum Sub; Anand Narayanan Hum Sub; Emily Quieeey, United Arts; Nazer Edmond, United Arts; Linda Flynn, Cultural Planning Group (CPG); Martin Cohen, CPG; Jen McEwen, President and CEO United Arts; Sean Gargan, United Arts Board of Directors; and Susanne Murley, Cary Ballet Company.

Mr. Duane Holder, Deputy County Manager, introduced the Continuum of Care Lead Agency Director, Eileen Rosa.

Ms. Rosa shared her work background and experience. She shared the current projects that she will be working on while achieving goals in reducing homelessness in Wake County.

1. Agenda

Attachments: [03.10.2025 Work Session Agenda.docx](#)

2. Community Survey Results

Attachments: [2024 Community Survey Findings, BOC Work Session \(2025.03.10\).pdf](#)  
[2024 Wake County Community Survey - FINAL REPORT.pdf](#)

Mr. Jason Horton, Strategic Initiatives Director shared What is the Community Survey.

- A public opinion poll that:
  - Identifies respondents' most important issues
  - Inform policies and decision-making, and
  - Tracks progress and measures our strategic plan.
- Supplements other feedback engagements such as:
  - Customer satisfaction surveys
  - Partner-led surveys (e.g., GoTriangle)
  - Community Health Needs Assessment

He explained the difference between a satisfaction survey and a perception survey.

- Satisfaction Surveys

- Opinions shaped by direct use and individual experiences

- Perception Surveys

- Opinions based on observation
- May include direct use-but also:
  - Personal beliefs and feelings
  - Experiences by others (family, friends, co-workers, social networks)
  - Awareness and attitudes
  - Political beliefs
  - National and regional politics
  - Media and messaging

He shared Partnering with ETC Institute:

- Selected through a competitive process.
- Strong experience and a national reputation for local government survey implementation.

- Recent local surveys for:
  - City of Raleigh
  - Town of Holly Springs
  - City and County of Durham
  - Mecklenburg County

He shared Wake County Insights:

- 1,006 Respondents
- +/- 3.1% Margin of Error

He shared Diversity and Accessibility:

Representative of Wake County:

- Gender
- Age
- Race
- Ethnicity
- Income
- Education level
- Geography
- Own or rent home
- Active Military / Veteran Status

Languages:

- English
- Spanish
- Other prevalent languages upon request

He shared Wake Insights - Community Survey - ETC Institute

- Final report is available.
- Robust results and opportunities for future analysis and findings.
- This presentation touches on key highlights.

He shared the vendor is able to provide the geography. They were able to collect the location of individual respondents.

He shared Wake County's Strength:

- Fire departments service quality (92%)
- Access to clean water (89%)
- Wake Technical Community College
  - Buildings and Campuses (82%)
  - Access to education programs (75%)
- Feeling safe in the community and at home (70 - 86%)
- Natural disaster and severe weather response (71%)

Finding jobs near where they live (79%)

Wake County Public Libraries

- Quality facilities (77%)
- Access to programs (70 - 74%)
- Parks and Recreation Resources
  - Parks and greenways are well-maintained (74%)
  - Access to recreation (76%)
- Quality of Life, quality and variety of:
  - Arts and cultural events (71%)
  - Music and concert venues (69%)
  - Local food and dining options (69%)

He shared (Question 1), Q1: In your opinion, what are the most important issues facing Wake County today:

1. Affordable Housing & Homelessness
2. Growth Management & Infrastructure
3. Transportation & Traffic (moved up from #4)
4. Public Education & School Funding (moved down from #3)
5. Crime & Public Safety
6. Property Taxes & Cost of Living
7. Mental Health & Health care Access (moved up from #8)
8. Environmental Concerns & Green Space Preservation (moved up from #9)
9. Workforce & Economic Development (moved down from #8)
10. Equity & Social Services (moved down from #9)

He shared the change in public education support may be affected due to the change in the aging population of Wake County. He shared #6 was noted as concerns of inflation in the previous the survey. Property taxes have replaced inflation. He shared Equity and Social Services include poverty, food insecurity, child care and etc.

Commissioner Waters shared she has concerns about surveys. She shared she wanted to confirm that the more vulnerable community members and those that might be experiencing crisis had the opportunity to participate. She asked for elaboration on any additional outreach that was done.

Mr. Horton shared Commissioner Waters had previously voiced concerns regarding individuals that were unhoused and if the survey was based upon a specific address. He shared taking that into consideration, the survey was distributed in areas such as the South Wilmington Street Shelter and Healing Transitions. He shared the survey was provided on paper and online. He shared they made sure the more vulnerable community was included.

Commissioner Waters asked if the number of respondents are fully

reflective of the diversity of the community. She asked for clarity on ensuring the survey is capturing the true needs of a large and diverse county.

Mr. Horton shared the Board needed to be sure to look at the County as a whole. He shared once one starts to look at specific demographics, the margin of error balloons. He shared based upon sampling statistics, to view the county as a whole, they needed a sample of at least 600. Staff received 1006 responses. He shared the top six priorities remained the same even when the number of respondents increased. He shared if staff viewed a subset of the population, then would need a sample of 600 of the subset.

Commissioner Waters asked are there other ways to collect data, such as focus groups.

Mr. Horton shared it might be too early to determine. He shared the intent of the community wide survey is to identify potential areas of concern and then determine other ways to engage the community.

Chair Evans shared her concerns about receiving 1000 responses and if that is proper representation of a county that has 1 billion residents.

Mr. Horton confirmed they received a little over 2000 responses to last year's survey and the margin of error was 2.1.

Commissioner Stallings clarified that property taxes replaced inflation. She asked if the same top 10 priorities were listed in last year's survey.

Mr. Horton shared that the top six priorities were the focus last year and they did not change. The order of the top six priorities changed. He cannot recall if the priorities for 7 - 10 were the same.

Commissioner Jackson asked for the lowest numbers.

Mr. Horton confirmed that will be discussed in the next few slides.

Mr. Horton shared Wake County Services and Values:

- Q12. Please rate your satisfaction with Wake County Government in the areas below (*excluding "don't know"*).

- Answers based on Satisfied, Neutral, Dissatisfied

- Customer Services provided by Wake County Employees
  - 53% Satisfied, 35.3% Neutral, 11.5% Dissatisfied
- Availability of information about Wake County Government services and programs

- 47.4% Satisfied, 33.9% Neutral, 18.8% Dissatisfied
  - The value of services I receive in return for the amount of taxes I pay
    - 37.8% Satisfied, 31.4% Neutral, 30.8% Dissatisfied
  - Opportunities for resident engagement and participation in decision making
    - 34.5% Satisfied, 36.8% Neutral, 28.8% Dissatisfied
- Q13: Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements (*excluding "don't know"*).
- Answers based on Agree, Neutral, Disagree
- Wake County provides high quality services
    - 58.2% Agree, 34.5% Neutral, 7.4% Disagree
  - Wake County provides services fairly and equitably to all residents
    - 51.1% Agree, 28.2% Neutral, 20.7% Disagree
  - I trust Wake County Government when it comes to handling local issues
    - 46.9% Agree, 35.2% Neutral, 17.9% Disagree
  - Open and transparent with information about county issues, services and performance
    - 43.1 % Agree, 35.5% Neutral, 21.4% Disagree

He shared when comparing Wake County with benchmarks, Wake County's scores exceeds US Benchmarks and comparable counties. He shared a bar graph that depicted the comparison.

He shared the six focus areas:

1. Community Health and Wellbeing
2. Growth, Land Use and Environment
3. Inclusive Prosperity
4. Lifelong Learning
5. Safer Community Together
6. Foundations of Service

He shared Community and Health and Wellbeing;

- Q4. Housing, Growth, and Environment. Please rate each statement about the built community using a scale of 1 to 5 ... (*excluding "don't know"*)
- Q8. Medical Health Care. Please rate each statement about medical health care resources in Wake County using a scale of 1 to 5 ... (*excluding "don't know"*).

Community Health and Wellbeing.

Most Common Barriers to Service:

Medical Health Care:

- Long wait times for appointments
- Cost of health care

- Cost of prescriptions
- Not enough doctors or clinics

Behavioral Health:

- Waiting too long to get an appointment
- Not enough counselors or behavioral health providers nearby
- Cost of behavioral health care

Benefits and Assistance:

- Long wait times or delays in getting approved
- Not sure which benefits I can get
- Hard to talk with or get help from caseworkers
- Application too confusing or hard to fill out
- Hard to get the papers needed to apply

He shared Growth, Land Use and Environment:

- Q4. Housing, Growth, and Environment. Please rate each statement about the built community using a scale of 1 to 5 ... *(excluding "don't know")*.
- Q5. Quality of Life and Infrastructure. Thinking about your lived experiences in our community, please rate each statement ... *(excluding "don't know")*.
- Q5(9). Access to recreational spaces (e.g., parks, greenways, playgrounds, athletic fields) *(excluding "don't know")*.
- Q4(10). Parks and greenways in my community are well-maintained *(excluding "don't know")*.

He shared more detailed information regarding Q5 that reference transit, recreational spaces, and parks and greenways.

He shared more detailed information regarding Q4 that reference water.

He shared Inclusive Prosperity:

- Q2. Wake County Job Market. Please rate each statement about the current job landscape using a scale of 1 to 5, ... *(excluding "don't know")*.
- Q3. Are you having trouble finding a job near where you live?
  - Most Common Barriers for Finding a Good Job
    - Jobs don't pay enough
    - Discrimination (e.g. because of age, race, gender, etc)
- Q5. Quality of Life and Infrastructure. Thinking about your lived experiences in our community, please rate each statement ... *(excluding "don't know")*.

He shared Lifelong Learning:

Q6. Education. Please rate each statement about education resources in

our community using a scale of 1 to 5, ... *(excluding "don't know")*.

He shared Safer Community Together:

Q7. Safety and Emergency Services. Please rate each statement about public safety using a scale of 1 to 5, ... *(excluding "don't know")*.

He shared Wake County Strategic Plan:

Adopted 15, 2024

- County's first organization-wide strategic plan.
- 24 goals in six focus areas.
- See [wake.gov/strategic-plan](http://www.wake.gov/strategic-plan): <http://www.wake.gov/strategic-plan> for additional information.

He shared it is anticipated that the survey will be done every two years.

He shared Next Steps:

- Results establish the baseline for some Strategic Plan goals
- Continue to build on the analysis results, specific to:
  - Demographic comparisons
  - Geography
  - Share and communicate the findings
  - Potential committee meetings discussions
  - Employees
  - Public

Vice-Chair Mial shared he thinks the numbers prove Wake County is going in the right direction and thanked Mr. Horton for the presentation.

Commissioner Waters asked for clarity regarding the question on Inclusive Prosperity that reference finding a job.

Mr. Horton shared if an individual indicated they had a problem with finding a job, the survey was prompted to provide 10 potential reasons. The most common national complaints were age and gender.

Commissioner Thomas asked for clarity on infrastructure.

Mr. Horton shared infrastructure includes government provided of facilities such as road, public transit, libraries, etc.

Commissioner Thomas shared she wanted to know how the respondents could differentiate between transit, water quality, environmental concerns.

Mr. Horton shared there would be overlap on some of the themes. He shared the challenge exists in interpreting responses with open ended



questions.

Commissioner Thomas shared what she considers infrastructure.

Commissioner Stallings asked for clarity regarding access to public schools and charter schools.

Mr. Horton shared they did not parse out charter schools when considering access to public schools.

Commissioner Jackson asked for clarity of the number of responses needed for the survey to be statistically viable. She asked if any demographic had at least 600 respondents.

Mr. Horton shared he would have to review the results to determine the numbers based upon demographics.

Commissioner Jackson asked if it was possible to map out the responses.

Mr. Horton shared the ability to map the responses would have to deal with privacy. He shared the vendor collects the information. Wake County would then advise if they need the information aggregated.

Commissioner Jackson asked if there will be more analysis on questions 11, 13 and 14.

Mr. Horton shared additional information would be provided.

Chair Evans shared she did not see a lot of surprises. She shared comments regarding results from the survey.

Mr. Ellis, County Manager, shared one of the good things about having seamless services with municipalities is that they appear seamless. One of the bad things might be the residents may not be aware who is actually responsible for certain services.

Commissioner Stallings shared how can they continue to engage the population and communicate with the community.

### 3. United Arts: Wake County Cultural Plan Findings and Framework

**Attachments:** [United Arts Cultural Plan Findings and Framework .pdf](#)

Mr. Michael James, Assistant County Manager, shared the background regarding the county wide arts plan. He shared the actions that have taken place.

Ms. Linda Flynn, Cultural Planning Group (CPG), shared her appreciation of working with the cultural plan advisory task force.

She shared Background: Planning Goals and Research:

- Shared countywide vision
- Reflects residents' priorities
- Policy level goals
- Aspirational and achievable
- Role of the County
- Roadmap for United Arts
- Creative sector as economic driver

She shared Wake We Accomplished:

Interviews/Discussions/Events/Survey:

- County Leadership
- Municipality Leadership
- Economic Development Leadership
- Arts Organizations Leaders
- Community Artists
- Tourism Discussions
- School District/Arts Education
- Business/Corporate Leaders
- United Arts Board
- Advisory Taskforce Meetings

She shared they had a presence at community events. The survey had 1,787 respondents.

She shared Wake County is creative and engaged.

People VALUE the arts and want to support the artistic community:

- 87% view arts/creative learning as essential for families
- 70% rate current offerings as excellent or good
- Priorities are for creative spaces for residents and affordable spaces for artists

People PARTICIPATE in Wake County:

- 87% attend events within Wake County
- The most popular personal creative activities are centered around music (46%), visual arts (41%) and performing arts (34%)
- Awareness of opportunities is a challenge

She shared Performing Arts and Music festivals/events and arts/music events at non-traditional places were the primary draws within the last six

months.

She shared significant support for dedicated arts funding:

- 86% support government funding for arts and culture
- Support is strong across all municipalities (ranging from 51-77% strong support)
- Of those respondents that participate in arts and cultural activities less than 6 times a year 60% support government funding

She shared Strong support across all municipalities.

She shared Creative experiences across the County are a priority of residents:

- 60% Providing dedicated funding for the arts
- 56% Developing a “go to” for information on creative events, activities and arts and culture offerings
- 54% Development more creative activities and creative spaces in the County
- 54% Increasing affordable spaces for artists, creatives and organizations.
- 48% Supporting local artist to live and work in Wake County.

She shared ratings are high for activities, although there is room to provide more access for the arts throughout the County.

She shared Accessibility is reflected as a continuing priority:

- 66% indicate they want more accessible arts and creative events
- Desire for broader representation of communities
- Importance of arts accessible to all residents across county

She shared spaces and venues at the top of the list for artists and arts organization:

- Creating more spaces for performances and exhibitions
- Developing multi-purpose arts facilities
- Access to affordable and shared spaces to create and work

She shared Cross sector partnership can be effective and impactful:

- Arts seen as crucial for talent attraction/retention
- Align arts initiatives with county priorities such as affordable housing and education
- Integrate arts into public health and human services programs
- Integrate arts programming MORE with parks across county

Mr. Martin Cohen, CPG, shared a chart that depicted how Wake County

compares to other counties. He shared they focused on funding and how much each county dedicated to funding art programs.

He shared Plan Framework: Goals and Strategies. He explained the goals agreed upon by the Board for the Arts Plan.

He shared Plan Vision:

- A county where all residents can access arts and cultural experiences in their community, where artists can afford to live and work, and where all engage with arts as part of their daily lives.

- Through County and United Arts leadership, each community celebrates its distinct creative character while contributing to the County's emergence as a vibrant cultural center.

He shared United Arts is the connector:

- United Arts is the central hub for arts in Wake County.
- Can be a strong partner to municipalities for arts programming support, public art and more.
- Can build more awareness of County program, value of the arts, and available programming.

He shared Three Goals:

1. Enhance Municipal Infrastructure and Capacity
2. Support a Sustainable Arts Sector and Creative Economy
3. Build Access and Awareness

He shared Goal 1 Strategies - Municipal infrastructure:

1.1 Build Capacity: Support and enhance the development of individual municipalities in their arts, culture and creative economy functions.

1.2 Public Art Program: Strengthen the capacity of municipal public art programs.

1.3 Embed Artists in County and Municipal Functions: Artists in municipal and county functions.

He shared Goal 2 Strategies - Support a Sustainable Arts and Creative Sector:

Nonprofit Priorities:

2.1 Investment: Explore resources and/or mechanisms to expand and diversify public and private funding to build greater sustainability in the nonprofit arts sector.

2.2 Collaboration: Partner with United to increase resources through public-private funding collaborations.

2.3 Capacity building: Develop initiatives to strengthen organizational

capacity and sustainability in operations and programming for the nonprofit cultural sector.

Creative Economy Priorities:

2.4 Spaces: Initiate a facilities development program to support creative spaces and cultural facilities that are affordable and accessible.

2.5 Creative Economy: Establish a program to strengthen, expand the creative economy in Wake County.

2.6 Economic Development: Create an arts and culture districts program to encourage recognized hubs for arts, culture and creative economy.

He shared Goal 3 Strategies - Access and Awareness:

3.1 Brand and Image: Enhance the brand image of Wake County as a cultural destination and vibrant hub of arts, culture and creative opportunities.

3.2 Marketing: Develop arts and culture marketing and communication initiatives in partnership with United Arts.

3.3 Access: Develop initiatives to increase access, equity and inclusion to arts and culture programming for all county residents.

Commissioner Jackson shared each part of the strategic plan can be made better by intersecting with the arts. She shared Wake County's ratings noted in the survey are not high enough. She noted that the fund comparison was embarrassing when looking at the funding for other counties.

Commissioner Waters shared her appreciation of the time that was invested in allowing the community to be part of the process. She shared comments regarding the accessibility of arts and how it can be beneficial to the community, i.e. assisting in mental health and certain situations in law enforcement. She also shared comments regarding how much funding is provided towards arts programs.

County Manager Ellis asked for clarity of which municipalities in Wake County are contributing to the funding for arts.

Mr. Cohen shared that there are two municipalities (Raleigh and Cary) that have robust art programs. He shared they are looking to assist other municipalities reach that point.

Ms. Jen McWen, United Arts CEO and President, shared Wake Forest and Fuquay-Varina are making significant investments in their art infrastructure, yet they are at capacity. They are not able to meet the needs of their citizens.

Ms. Flynn shared the municipalities want more public art in their communities and do not have the resources to increase public art. She shared a resource is having public art tool kits.

County Manager Ellis shared this is a great opportunity to have conversations with municipalities as to how they can support United Arts.

Commissioner Adamson shared they have never had strategic arts plan. She shared her experience of witnessing arts in school and the benefits of art programs. Commissioner Adamson asked for clarity on the funding of United Arts and how funding is provided in Mecklenburg County.

Mr. Cohen shared Mecklenburg works with the Arts and Science Council.

Ms. McEwen shared the current state of funding for United Arts.

Mr. Cohen shared each county has different funding profiles.

Commissioner Thomas shared an update on the arts developments in Wake Forest. She asked for clarity on the public/private partnerships.

Mr. Cohen shared there are opportunities in the partnerships. This could include matching funding or providing incentives.

Commissioner Thomas shared in the economic development work, public art is often discussed.

Commissioner Stallings asked for clarity if the business community has been a part of providing funding.

Mr. Cohen shared it is idiosyncratic. He shared it is sometimes related to local leadership and if they make it a priority.

Ms. Flynn shared Ms. McEwen has brought in some of the corporate leaders that have invested in seeing that the plan is successful.

There was continued discussion regarding the strategic plan.

Vice-Chair Mial shared his experiences while living in Wake County and affirming that the County is going in the right direction.

Commissioner Jackson had questions regarding next steps and if the next version of the plan will have the milestones.

Mr. Cohen shared they will provide the tactics and priorities.

Commissioner Thomas asked for clarity if the plan is geared more towards a master plan to address growth and what is needed throughout the County.

Ms. Flynn shared they review all of the County plans and future growth to ensure the strategies will align.

Commissioner Thomas shared she is thinking of future growth and ensuring the needs are met in areas in the county.

Chair Evans asked for clarity on what the County funds outside of the United Arts.

Commissioner Adamson shared the importance of the arts during stressful times.

Ms. Flynn shared information regarding the University of Florida and will provide it to Ms. McEwen.

There was continued discussion regarding arts and how it affects well being.

Mr. Cohen shared Next Steps:

- Integrate feedback
- Prepare full draft of plan
- Public review and updates
- Present final plan for adoption, June 2025

#### 4. Library Bond Project Updates

**Attachments:**     [Library Bond Projects Update - Final.pdf](#)

Mr. Matt Roylance, Community Services Deputy Director, shared Agenda:

- Background Info
- Options for To Be Determined -TBD Project
- Project Implementation

He shared Background Information.

He shared Library System - Map.

He shared Bond Projects:

- Voters approved \$142M
  - 5 new libraries
  - 1 library expansion

- 8 library renovations

He shared New Libraries:

- Goal: Increase the number of Wake County residents who have a public library within a 10-minute drive of their home:

- A new community library in Rolesville
- A new community library in the Friendship area of Apex
- Replacement of the Athens Drive Community Library
- Replacement of the Wendell Community Library
- A new facility, TBD

He shared Library System - Branch Types:

- Large Community Libraries
- Regional Libraries

He shared New Community Branch Prototype:

- Current large community branches are 8,000-10,000 sq. ft.
- New prototype of 12,000 sq. ft. provides:
  - An enclosed programming space for programs and services for all ages
  - A defined area for teens
  - Additional seating areas for study, work and reading
  - Interactive play area within children's section
  - Increased display areas
  - More public computers, as needed
  - Expanded staffing model to provide more programs and patron assistance

He shared Expansion:

- Goal: Meet the demands of population growth on library service:
  - Expansion of the Fuquay-Varina Community Library

He shared Renovations:

- Goal: Address aging facilities, building system upgrades (such as heating, ventilation, air conditioning and roof replacement), furniture and other enhancements:

- Express Library - Fayetteville Street
- Green Road Community Library
- Leesville Community Library
- Library Administration Building
- Northeast Regional Library
- Richard B. Harrison Community Library
- Southeast Regional Library
- Zebulon Community Library



He shared Renovation Projects:

- Infrastructure Upgrades:
  - System upgrades
  - Safety and security upgrades
  - Lighting replacements / LED conversions
  - Electrical and data outlet relocations
- Building Flow:
  - Shelving reorientations
  - Circulation desk style and placement
  - Public PC reorientation
- Aesthetics:
  - Carpet replacement and repainting
  - Furniture replacements
  - Shelving replacements
  - Book displays and signage

He shared Library System-With Bond Projects. He shared a map that depicts the future locations of libraries.

He shared State Library of North Carolina Standards:

- Essential 20 minutes drive time
- Enhanced 15 minutes drive time
- Exemplary 10 minutes drive time

He shared Wake County's goal is to reach the Exemplary standard. Approximately 85% of Wake County's population is currently at Exemplary. After the completed projects, Wake County will be close to 89% at the Exemplary standard.

He shared Municipal Partnerships - Existing:

- Public partnerships
  - 8 with municipalities
  - 1 with WCPSS
- Private partnership
  - Land donation for Eva Perry Regional Library
- No partnership
  - 10 county owned
  - 3 leased (Oberlin, Duraleigh, Southgate)

He shared Municipal Partnerships - Potential:

- Rolesville - offered land on their new municipal campus
- Wendell - offered land adjacent to park
- Athens Drive - discussions with Raleigh and WCPSS about

possible sites

- Apex Friendship - town has assisted with generating site options, too early to know which site we will pursue

County Manager Ellis asked how many libraries are in the County and how they are distributed by municipality.

Mr. Roylance shared the County has 23 libraries total. The City of Raleigh has 11 libraries. The Town of Cary has 2 libraries. The Town of Rolesville will have one library built and the remaining municipalities have one library each.

Ms. Tammy Baggett, Library Director, shared she will discuss the To Be Determined (TBD) project. She shared two focus points were discussed in 2024.

She shared Background:

- During bond discussions in spring 2024, BOC allocated money for a To Be Determined (TBD) project
- BOC expressed interest in two concepts:
  - Digital Equity Center
  - Enhancing library services in Southeast Raleigh by replacing Southgate Community Library
- Bond funding based on new 12,000 SF community library branch prototype

She shared Comparing Potential Projects:

- Digital Equity Center:

- Dedicated space for digital literacy and inclusion
- Staff focused on tailoring offerings to digital equity needs and impact
- Targeted programming, services, and partnerships
- More advanced technology and skill-building offerings than typical library facilities may allow

Southgate Replacement:

- Larger, free-standing facility with dedicated parking and potential to expand
- Staffing model, increased patron support and programming
- Access to variety of library services/programs, broader audience
- Potential opportunity for more computers, space to work/study on the internet, tech help sessions, and digital literacy programs

Chair Evans asked for clarity on the digital grant. She asked how much

time is allowed for the grant.

Ms. Baggett shared it is a two year grant.

Commissioner Thomas asked who is providing the grant.

Ms. Baggett shared it is a Federal grant coming from the North Carolina Division of Information Technologies Office of Digital Equity and Literacy and it is a guaranteed grant.

Commissioner Thomas asked for clarity on digital equity and inclusion and what is now referred to as "digital skilling".

Ms. Baggett shared they are currently setting up a lot of technology needs across the library system. She shared if it is set up as a Digital Equity Center, it would limit where it would be located. She shared some of the technologies would included things such as a recording studio, maker spaces, coding and robotics. The focus is on all topics that fit under STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math). She shared hands on training will be provided on how to use the devices.

Commissioner Thomas asked is it feasible to provide these services throughout the County.

Ms. Baggett shared it is harder to provide the services when up fitting libraries. It is possible to provide pop-up libraries.

Commissioner Jackson asked for clarity why it is an either/or versus both. She asked what are the barriers.

Ms. Baggett shared it is related to funding from the bond. The bond dollars do not have enough capacity for both projects.

Mr. Roylance shared they completed cost estimates for all projects.

There was continued conversation regarding funding availability.

Commissioner Jackson asked would the new project advance the goal of meeting the drive time standards.

Mr. Roylance shared if the Southgate library was replaced, it would not significantly change the current drive time. If a free standing Digital Equity Center was built, it would depend on its location.

Commissioner Waters shared the current state of the Southgate library and its location. She shared the feedback from the community regarding the

need to improve the Southgate library.

Commissioner Adamson shared her concern on the time frame of providing a Digital Equity Center. She shared it could be at least 5 - 7 years to complete the building. She shared the digital equity study did not specify the need for a Digital Equity Center. She shared she is in support of a Southgate Library replacement. She asked when would the lease end for Southgate.

Ms. Baggett shared the lease will end June 2028.

Commissioner Jackson asked for clarity on the possible relocation of the Southgate Library.

Mr. Roylance shared they have not studied a scenario of relocating the Southgate Library in order to fill a drive time gap noted in southern Wake County.

Vice-Chair Mial shared there has always been push back regarding relocating the Southgate Library. He asked what will the Digital Equity Center offer if located in a certain area and are they preparing for the needs that might exist in five years.

Ms. Baggett shared the benefit would be the center is focused on digital access. However, it would be limited to those that can get to the library with in a reasonable amount of time.

Vice-Chair Mial shared it would be his preference to possibly combine both projects.

There was continued conversation regarding the options available in creating a Digital Equity Center and/or relocating Southgate library.

Chair Evans shared comments regarding the need for a more robust library in southeast Raleigh. She shared it would be her desire to have digital programs in specific areas in the County that do not have access to technology. She shared it is her preference to have an expanded library in the southeast Raleigh area.

Commissioner Waters shared there are opportunities for connection to technology and computers in current libraries. She shared she does not recall community feedback regarding the need for a Digital Equity Center. She asked for clarity on the technology that would be provided.

Ms. Baggett shared it would be the computers and the hands on training to use devices, and training on resume building, etc.

Commissioner Waters shared she is a proponent of decentralizing the technology services so that they are accessible across the county.

Commissioner Thomas asked how long the Southgate library has been at the current location.

Mr. Roylance shared it was built in the late 1980's.

Commissioner Thomas shared she wants to make sure there is space in libraries for technology. She shared she did not want a stand alone building for technology and digital access. The intention is make sure digital skilling is available through out the County.

There was continued discussion regarding the availability of technology and digital access in libraries.

Commissioner Stalling asked for clarity on the possibility of having more digital literacy opportunities at many of the libraries. She asked is it a space issue as well as a personnel issue.

Ms. Baggett shared it is a combination of the available space and personnel training.

Commissioner Waters shared there are opportunities to access partnerships with other organizations. She shared data does not show a need for a Digital Equity Center; however, the literacy disparities indicate a greater need in access to books.

Commissioner Jackson shared book access and book literacy is equally needed as digital literacy and digital access. She asked that the Board thinks about the 10 minute drive time and replacing the Southgate library that includes a dedication to digital literacy. She also supports decentralizing the technology access.

Chair Evans shared a summary of the comments shared by the Board. She shared there is a lot of synergy around the need for a new Southgate library and the need for improved digital literacy program. She shared they are discussing a capital project.

Commissioner Thomas shared it is capital to install fiber, build a makers space, and outfit a building to provide wifi.

County Manager Ellis shared the consensus of the Board wanting to replace the Southgate library and ensure it has enhanced digital services. He shared he wanted the Board to be aware of funding demands as well.

Commissioner Thomas shared she wanted to ensure that there are capital funds for additional infrastructure.

There was continued conversation regarding funding and capital projects.

Commissioner Waters shared information regarding programs offered at Wake Technical Community College and the ability to leverage partnerships with community programs.

County Manager Ellis shared the possibility to partner with Wake Tech for services.

Commissioner Jackson asked for clarity for the distinction or designation of the use of the word "replacement". She emphasized her desire to reach the goal drive time goal of 10 minutes.

There was discussion regarding having a library close to southeast Raleigh.

Ben Canada, Chief of Staff, shared the Board would receive a summary regarding what was discussed during the work session and they are encouraged to read the summary.

Mr. Roylance shared Capacity Constraints:

- As much as we would love to start all the projects immediately, that's not practical
- Better bid responses from contractors when the market isn't overloaded
- Limited staff capacity in FD&C and Libraries
  - Two major projects and two minor projects at the same time
  - Each project type is staggered - one project in design phase, one under construction

He shared Logic Behind Project Order:

- Renovations are done in age order, slotted in among the major projects as capacity permits
- New Construction:
  - Athens Drive - time constraints due to school construction
  - Rolesville - long-standing commitment, preliminary design work underway
  - Friendship - large area outside of 10-minute drive time
  - TBD - strong interest in this project
  - Wendell - they have an existing branch, but it's the smallest in our system; timing aligns with construction of other facilities

on their campus

- Fuquay Varina - they need an expansion, but library is still relatively new

He shared Construction Process:

- Typical library construction projects go through the following steps:
  - Site selection and acquisition\*
  - Schematic design\*
  - Construction drawings
  - Bidding
  - Contract award\*
  - Construction
  - Grand opening

\* BOC review and approval at this step

He shared Bond Projects - All. He shared Gantt charts to depict the time frame for all projects.

He shared Bond Projects - New Facilities.

He shared Bond Projects - Renovations.

He shared Bond Projects - Confirm Project Order.

Commissioner Thomas asked for clarity as to who does the site selection and acquisition.

Mr. Roylance shared it is a partnership between Community Services (Library staff) and Facilities, Design and Constructions.

Commissioner Waters asked for clarity regarding the relocation of the Athens Drive Library and what level of update would the community receive.

County Manager Ellis shared staff are reviewing every site within a certain radius. The Board would receive updates on the sites. The potential sites would not be released publicly to protect possible cost increase.

Commissioner Jackson asked for clarity on staff capacity during the years that there are many projects.

County Manager Ellis shared the projected time frames provided are in a "perfect" world scenario. Some projects might get moved around as the projects progress.

The Board provided an affirmative consensus on the projection of the projects.

Ms. Baggett shared Community Engagement Process:

- Goal: Public Engagement that balances Project Scope with Community Input, incorporating stakeholder expertise and interests. (Observe, Ask, Inform)

Observe:

- Library Users Experience Study (last survey completed in 2014)
- Customer survey data

Ask:

- Renovations & Expansions:
  - Feedback Tours\*
  - Targeted Feedback on Interior Design\*
  - "Space Priorities" Polls
  - Staff-Led Patron Feedback
- New Buildings:
  - Community Vision Workshops\*
  - Online Surveys
  - Open Houses\*
  - Youth and Family Focus Groups

\*Opportunities for Library Commission Involvement

Inform:

- Public-facing website with timeline and status of each bond project.
- Project updates and photos at stages of design and construction phases.

## Adjourn

Chair Evans adjourned meeting at 5:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Tanika D. Cooper  
Senior Executive Assistant  
Wake County Board of Commissioners