

Wake County Comprehensive PROS Master Plan

BOC Work Session Update

August 11, 2025



Prepared by:

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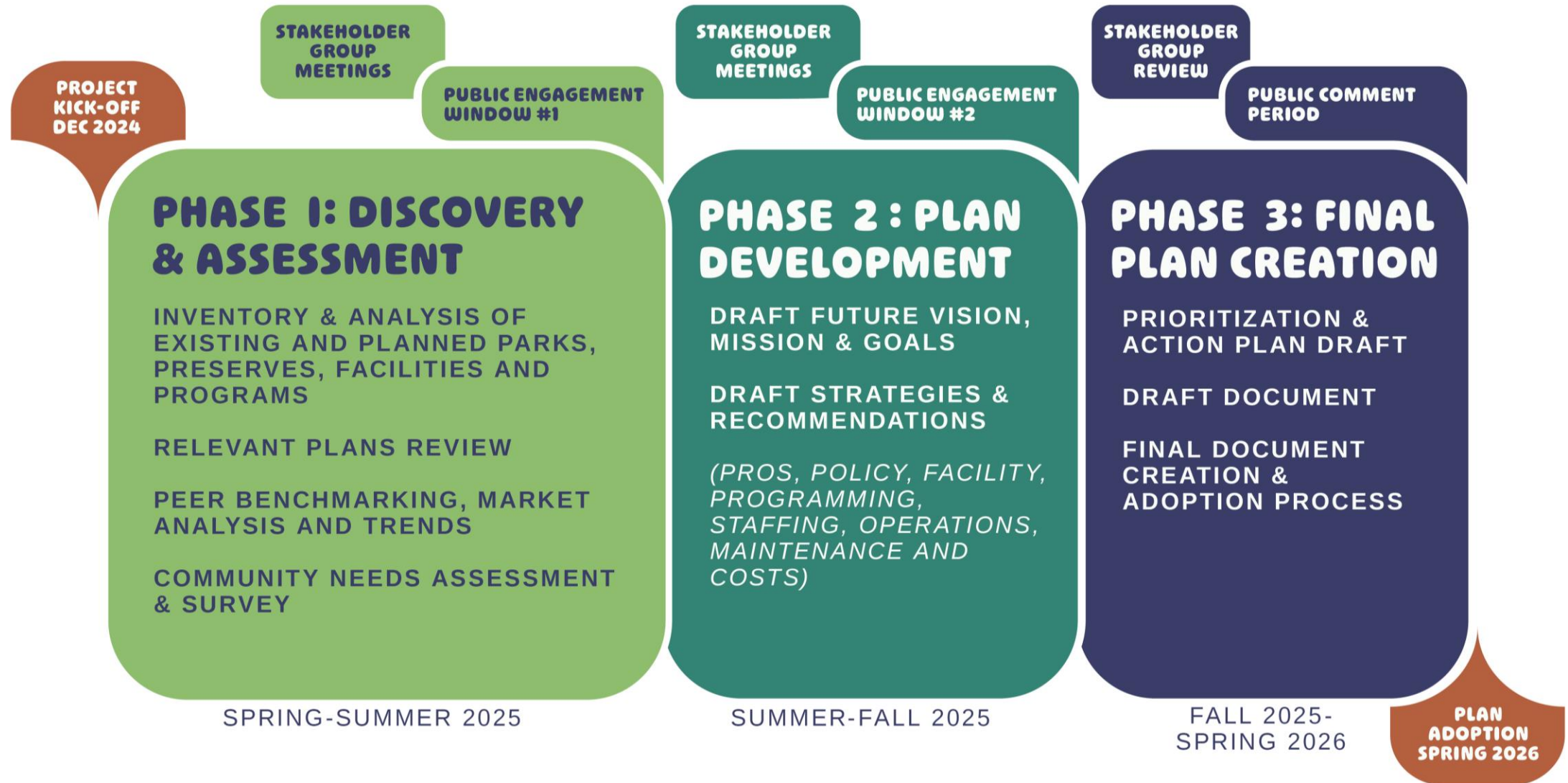
Meeting Agenda

- Process Overview
- Community & Stakeholder Engagement
- Inventory & Analysis
- Next Steps
- Questions & Answers

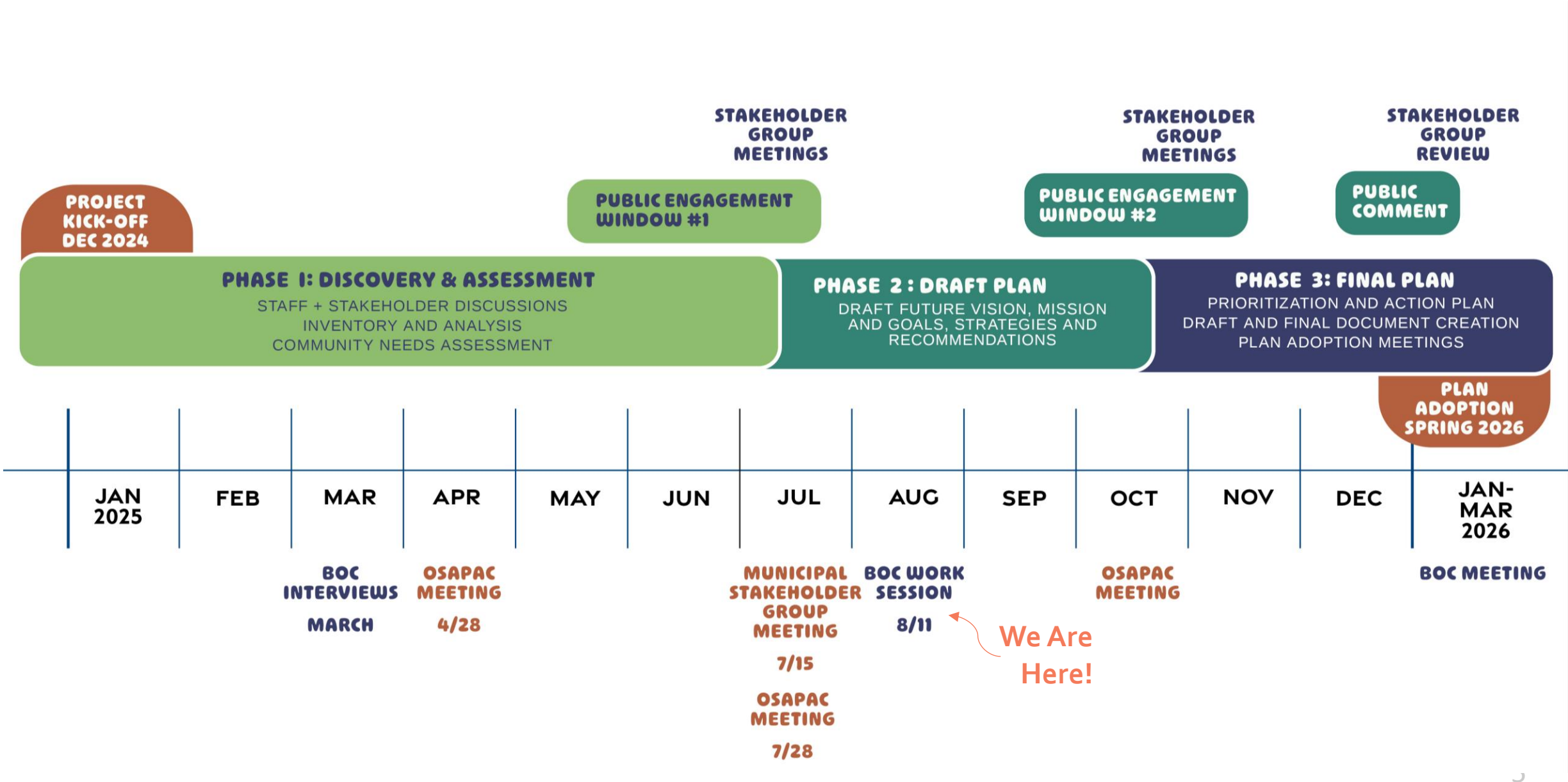


Process Overview

Process



Anticipated Schedule



Key Project Goals and Outcomes



Equity & Accessibility



**Efficient and Effective
Operations & Maintenance**



**Environmental & Cultural
Preservation**



**Strategic Prioritization &
Implementation**



**Community-Driven
Process**



**High-Quality Services &
Programming**

Commissioner Interview Takeaways

- **Inclusive Access & Programming:**
Ensure parks and programs are accessible to all, including people with disabilities, seniors, and underserved communities.
- **Growth & Land Preservation:**
Balance urban development with the preservation of open spaces, farmland, and natural areas. Prioritize farmland preservation for both recreational and food system benefits.
- **Environmental Stewardship:**
Focus on sustainability by integrating green infrastructure, expanding tree planting, promoting environmental education, and preserving biodiversity.
- **Community Engagement:**
Engage residents through diverse outreach methods, including pop-up events, surveys, and partnerships with faith communities, schools, and local organizations.
- **Youth & Family Focus:**
Expand recreational spaces for families, young children, and youth, ensuring inclusive, safe environments for development.
- **Partnerships for Growth & Sustainability:** Strengthen collaborations with municipalities, nonprofits, and schools to secure funding, enhance programming, and improve park accessibility.

OSAPAC Meeting Key Takeaways

- **Preserve Land & Natural Resources:**
Protect open space, tree canopy, and waterways from development.
- **Enhance Greenway & Regional Connections:**
Connect the County through a system of parks and trails
- **Expand Access & Equity:**
Improve access and ensure parks meet needs of all ages and abilities
- **Environmental Stewardship & Education:**
Signage, programs and interpretation to teach about nature and the site history.
- **Innovate with Land Use:**
Vacant land or shared facilities for new park opportunities.
- **Diverse Engagement:**
Prioritize hard-to reach populations to ensure all voices are heard.
- **Strengthen Partnerships:**
Collaborate with organizations to reach more people and share resources

Municipalities Meeting Key Takeaways

- **Land acquisition** is difficult due to development pressures & cost
- **Keeping up with demand** for parks and programming is a challenge
- **Greenways** are the top regional priority for connectivity and access
- Emphasis on **inclusive design** and reaching **underserved areas**
- **Partnerships and layered funding successes** (local, county, state, federal and nonprofit support)
- **Joint-use models** (e.g. Cary Library and park) are working well
- **Mountain biking** is a consistent demand
- Strong need for **aquatics, indoor recreation, and multipurpose community meeting spaces**

How Municipalities See Wake PROS' Role

- **Connectivity**
 - Helping to fill service gaps between municipalities
 - Providing connectivity of municipal greenways / coordinating multi-jurisdictional greenways
- **Conservation**
 - Lead land acquisition and landbanking at a countywide scale
 - Identify and map priority areas for open space and parks countywide
 - Protection of unique sites and landscapes
 - Large tracts of open space
 - Working with municipalities and developers to acquire and conserve land
- **Passive Recreation**
 - Provide passive recreation space while local municipalities focuses on active recreation
 - Complement local parks offerings
- **Partnerships**
 - Promote and support joint-use models (e.g. parks & schools or libraries)
 - Convene partners for collaboration
 - Advocate regionally for local needs and funding

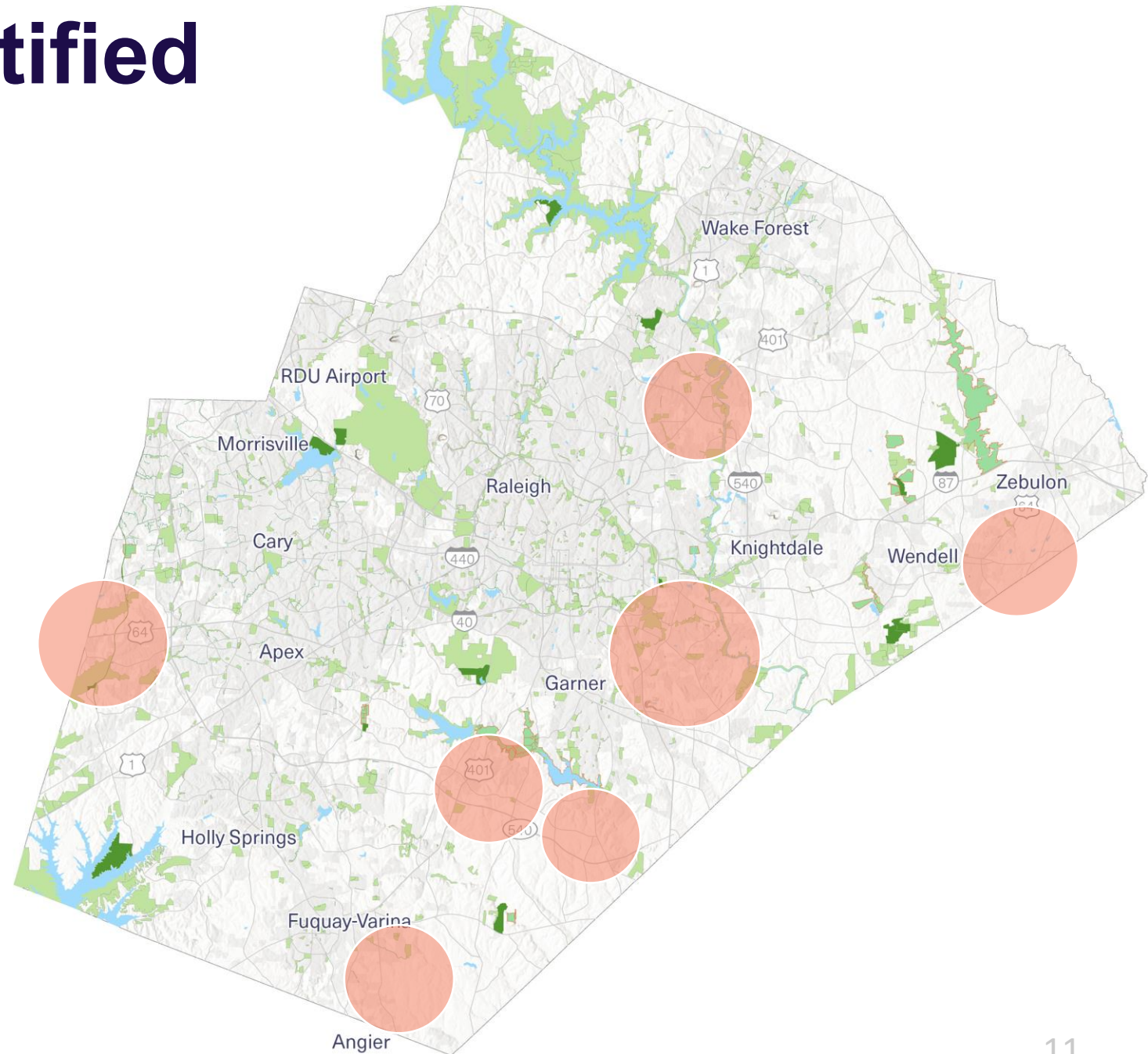
Municipalities Identified Growth Areas

- Far northeast and southeast Raleigh
- Apex West
- Eastern Wendell
- New 540 alignments
- 401 corridor and Ten-Ten/Old Stage Rd
- Chatham County edge, with historic farmland and large undeveloped parcels
- Environmentally sensitive creek corridors and land near Jordan Lake

LEGEND



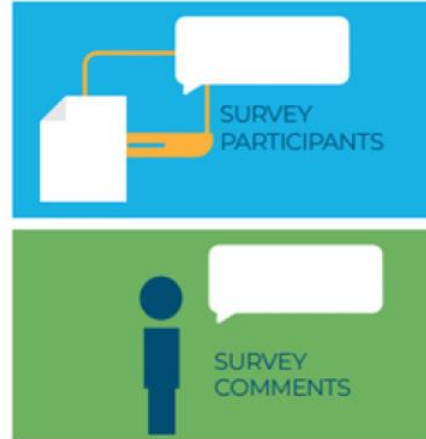
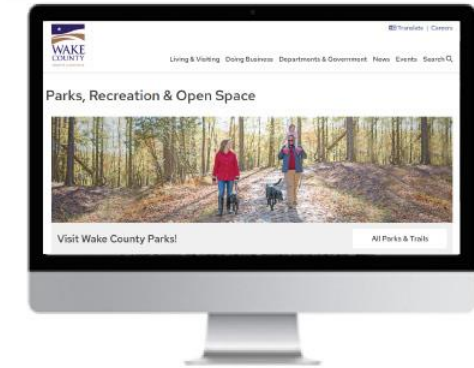
SOURCES: CONANP, Esri, HERE, Gamin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, MST, USDA, US Census, NCDOT, Wake County



A stylized, light blue map of Wake County is centered in the background of the slide. The map shows the county's irregular shape with various internal boundaries.

Community & Stakeholder Engagement

Engagement & Outreach



Project Website

- Single location for project information
- Provides links and information to engagement opportunities

Surveys/Polling

- Broad community feedback
- Open countywide survey

Focus Groups/ Stakeholder Interviews

- Information gathering from key stakeholders and groups

Pop-up Events

- Meets people where they are
- Sharing, survey promotion, gathering community feedback

Workshops

- Invites community members to participate in a centralized meeting location
- Interactive exercises and questions

Engagement Window 1: Snapshot

5

Open House
Workshop
Locations

8

Pop-up Events
Tabled

~400

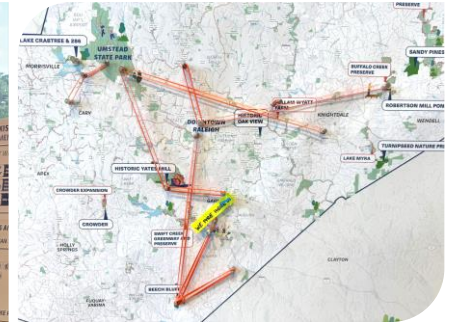
Comments/
Responses from
~68 participants at
Open Houses

436+

Pop-up event
attendees

1,010

Online Survey
Participants



Engagement Window 1: Survey Snapshot

Top 5 Amenities Requests

- Walking/Hiking Trails
- Nature Preserves/Wildlife Habitats
- Bicycling/Mountain Biking
- Restrooms
- Nature Interpretive Trails

PROS Mission & Core Services

80%

Ranked “Preserving Open Space” as
Very Important



>86.2%

Rated Wake parks and preserves
quality as good or excellent and
safe or very safe



82%

Also use Municipal parks for
outdoor recreation



~20min

Average time willing to
bike/drive to a park / preserve

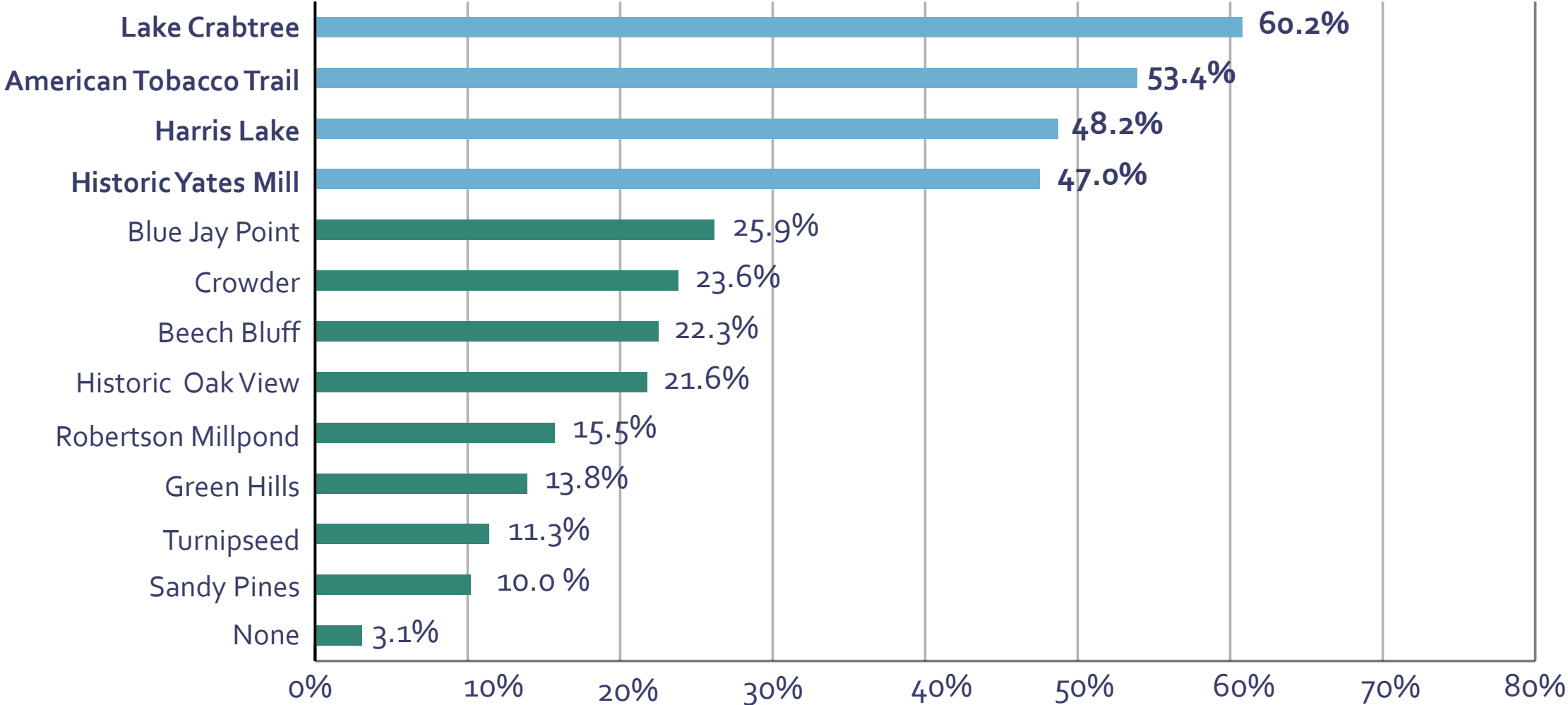


~15min

Average time willing to walk to
a park / preserve

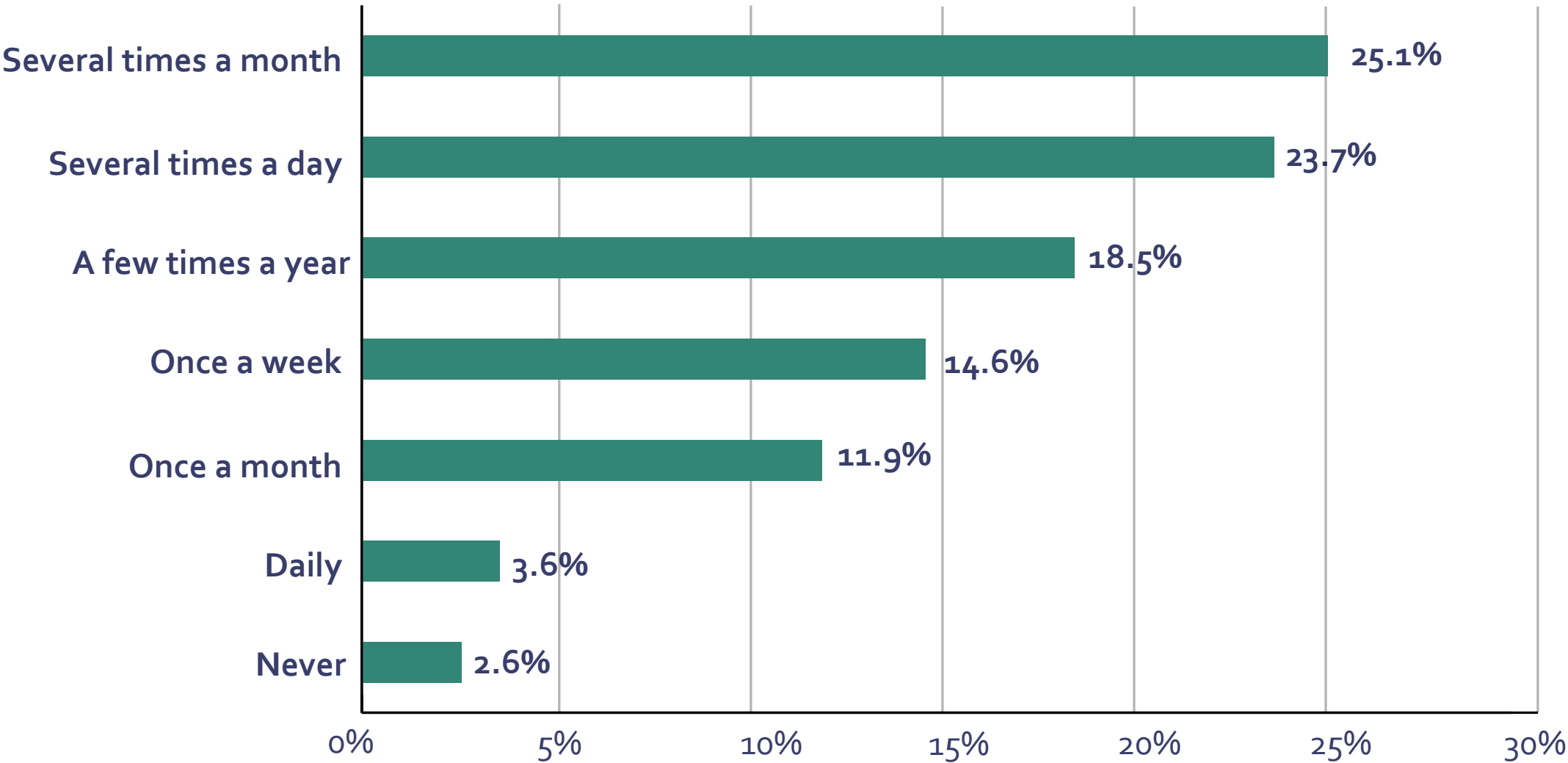
Survey Responses

Which Wake County parks, preserves, or trails have you or a member of your household visited in the last 12 months?



Survey Responses

How often do you visit Wake County Parks, preserves and trails?



Top Five Reasons for Visiting

1. Proximity to Home
2. Walking, Running, and Hiking Trails
3. Mountain Biking
4. Nature, Wildlife, and Peacefulness
5. Family-Friendly Amenities

Others:

- Educational/Youth Programming
- Water Access (Lakes, Kayaking, Fishing)
- Accessibility for mobility-impaired users
- Disc Golf

"It's close to where I live."

"We walk daily."

"The trails are peaceful and well-maintained"

"These parks are my escape."

"We birdwatch, photograph, and relax."

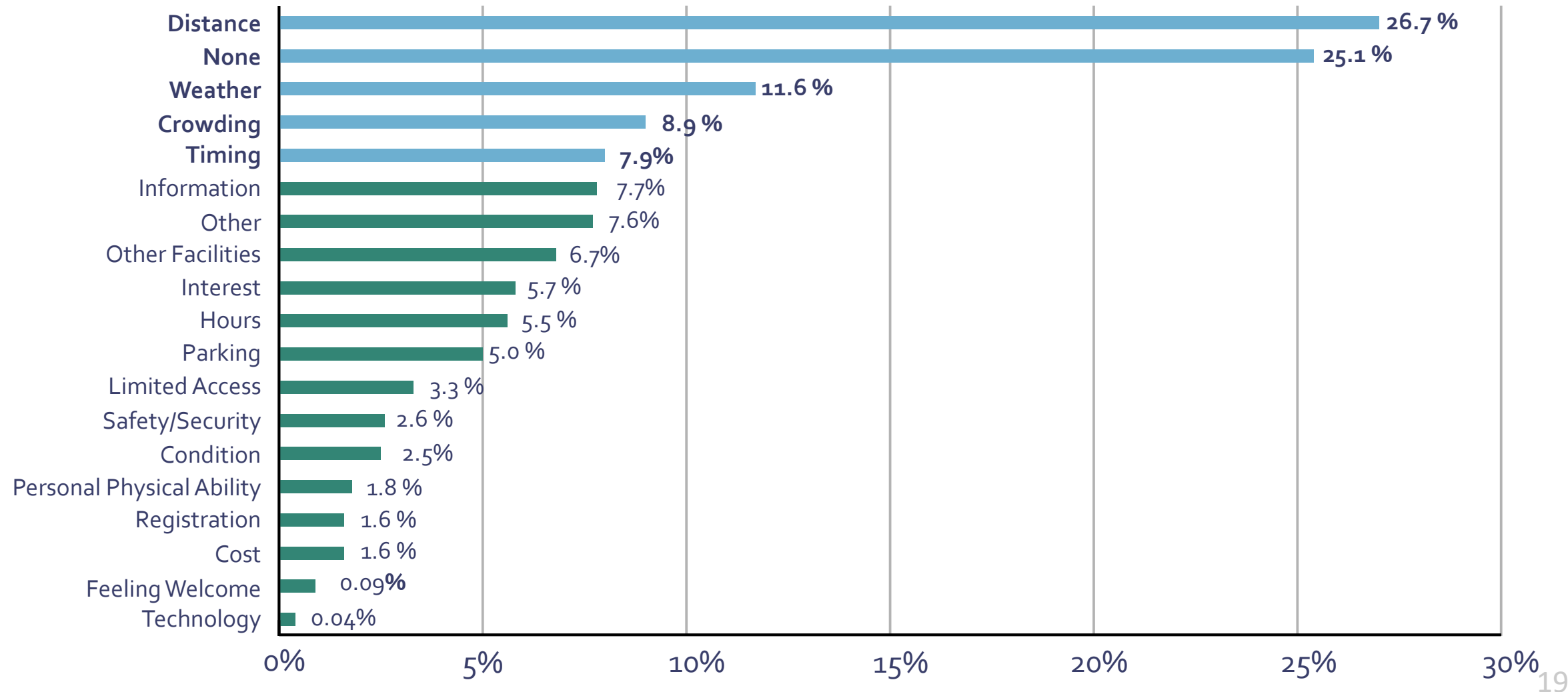
"The kids love the playground."

"We picnic, play, and meet with friends."

"We stop by after school—it's convenient"

Barriers to Visiting

What, if anything, prevents you or others in your household from using Wake County parks, preserves or trails more often?



Survey Key Takeaway

Wake County parks are essential community assets — loved for their **convenience, trails, nature access, and family-friendly amenities**. Public sentiment is deeply tied to **preservation, access, and the integrity of natural spaces**.

Engagement Window 1: Open House Snapshot

Top "Need More of" Amenities

- Boating (rental + personal use)
 - Outdoor Swimming / Splash Pads
 - Walking / Hiking Trails
 - Bicycling / Mountain Bike Trails & Skill Courses
 - Community Gardens / Fruit Orchards
 - Overnight Lodging / Camping
- Strong Support for Nature and Open Space Preservation
 - Desire for Expanded and Connected Greenways
 - Equity and Access are Priorities
 - Demand for More Active/Water-Based Recreation
 - Need for Comfort Amenities (Restrooms, Shaded Picnic Areas, etc.)

Engagement Window 1: Open House Snapshot

**We want the love of nature,
the tradition of outdoor
activities to be embraced and
loved by the next generation**

— Eastern Regional Center

**Save more open
space please! -**

Garner Workshop

**...Ideally, land is
acquired/preserved
now while still
available... - Beech Bluff**

Workshop

**People need 'third
spaces' where they
can reconnect with
nature and gather
with community -**

Beech Bluff Workshop

**Everyone should be
able to get outside and
explore the world, no
matter their resources
or identities. - Northeast**

Regional Workshop

**Not all communities have
equal access to green
areas...outdoor recreation
shouldn't be a privilege."**

Garner Workshop



Inventory & Analysis

PROS Benefits | Ecosystem Services



41 New School Parks

supported by Wake County Parks in partnership with WCPSS and municipalities.



45 New Miles of Greenway

supported by Wake County Parks in partnership with municipalities.



\$17+ Million Direct Value

from the use of Wake County Parks and Preserves by residents.



\$83+ Million in Home Value Increases

within 500 feet of Wake County Parks and Preserves.



9,500+ Acres of Permanent Open Space

acquired for protection by Wake County since 2003



1.76 Million Visitors

to Wake County Parks and Preserves in 2024



74% Tree Canopy Cover

at Wake County Parks and Preserves



\$6.3+ Million Additional Tax Revenue

per year created by Wake County Parks and Preserves.



4.2+ Kilotons of Carbon Captured

at Wake County Parks and Preserves



120+ Tons of Pollutants Removed

yearly from the air by Wake County Parks and Preserves supported by Wake County Parks in partnership with WCPSS and municipalities.



2.8+ Million Gallons

of water treated and retained by Wake County Parks and Preserves



2 to 9 degrees F Air Temperature Reduction

from tree canopies on average

Inventory & Analysis

Statewide Top Recreation Facility Needs

(SCORP 2020-2025)

- Unpaved Trails
- Picnic Shelters
- Wildlife Observation Sites
- Multi-use Fields
- Canoe and Kayak Launches
- Mountain Bike Trails
- Nature Centers
- Playgrounds

Statewide Relevant Recreation Trends

- New Opportunities
- Protect & conserve natural and cultural landscapes
- Renovate, replace and revitalize infrastructure
- Broaden access through outreach to underserved communities

Inventory & Analysis

Wake County Recreation Trends

(MPI, Percent of Adult Participation, ESRI Business Analyst, 2024)

Top Activities by Participants

- Walking for Exercise
- Hiking
- Weight Lifting
- Swimming
- Jogging or Running
- Road Bicycling
- Yoga
- Fresh Water Fishing

Top Activities by MPI

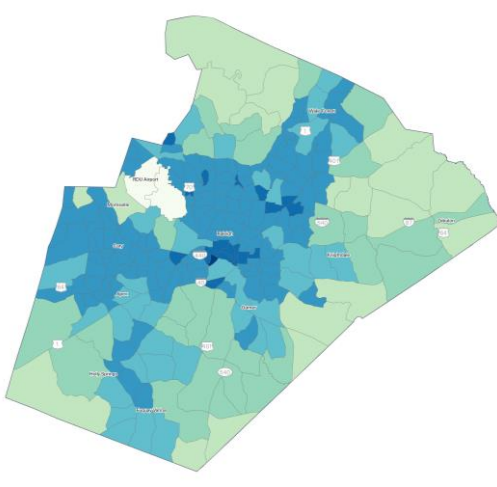
(Higher demand than National Average)

- Jogging or Running
- Ping Pong
- Basketball
- Pilates
- Yoga
- Soccer
- Tennis
- Rock Climbing
- Mountain Bicycling

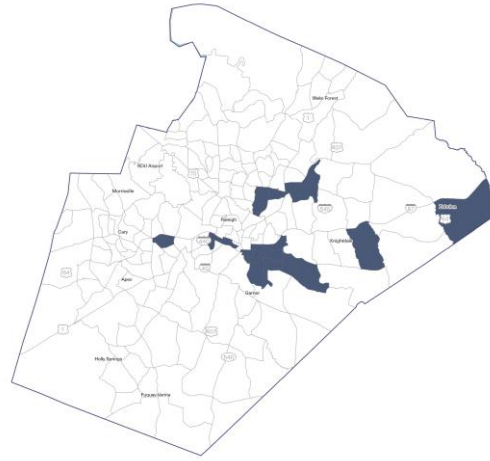
Inventory & Analysis

Mapping and Plan Development Considerations

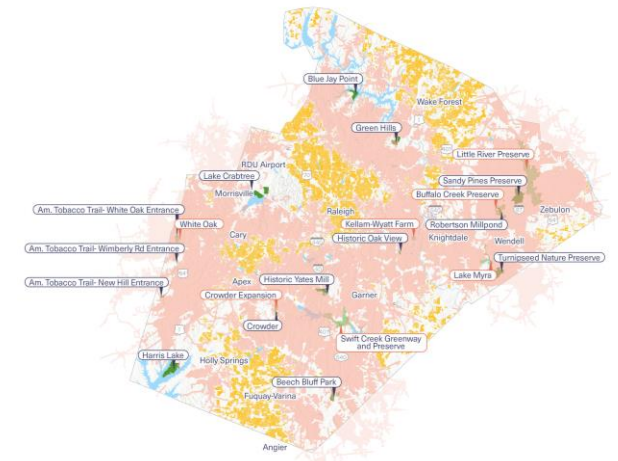
Population Density



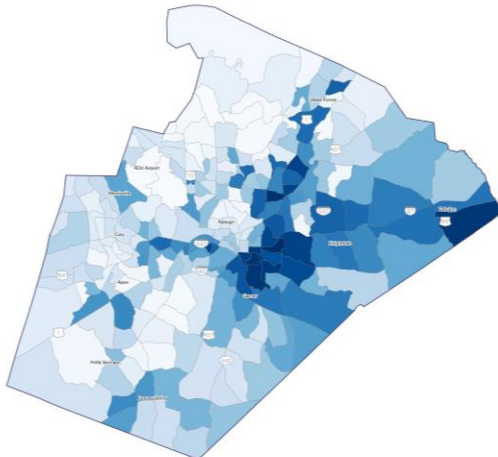
Environmental Justice



Service Areas & Gaps



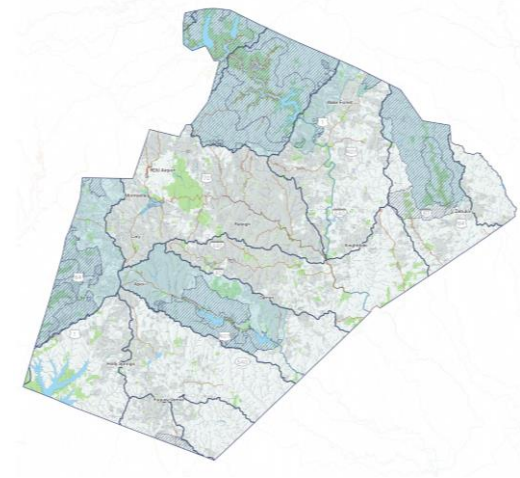
Social Vulnerability



Tree Canopy



Critical Watersheds



Inventory & Analysis

Wake County Population Density

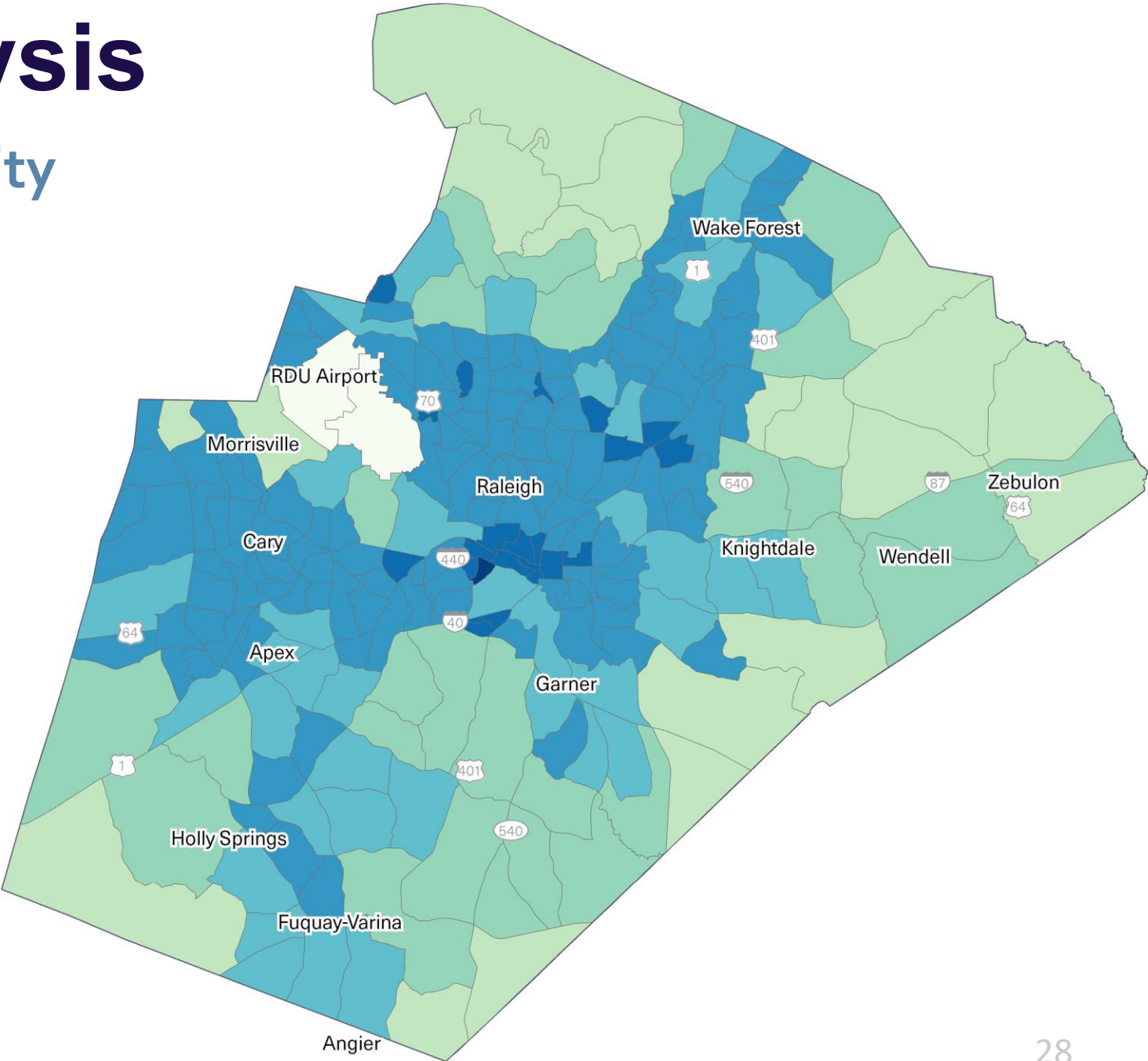
LEGEND

- Wake County
- Census Block

Population Per Sq. Mile

- 10,000 or More
- 5,000 - 9,999
- 2,000 - 4,999
- 1,000 - 1,999
- 500 - 999
- 100 - 499
- 50 - 99
- Less than 50

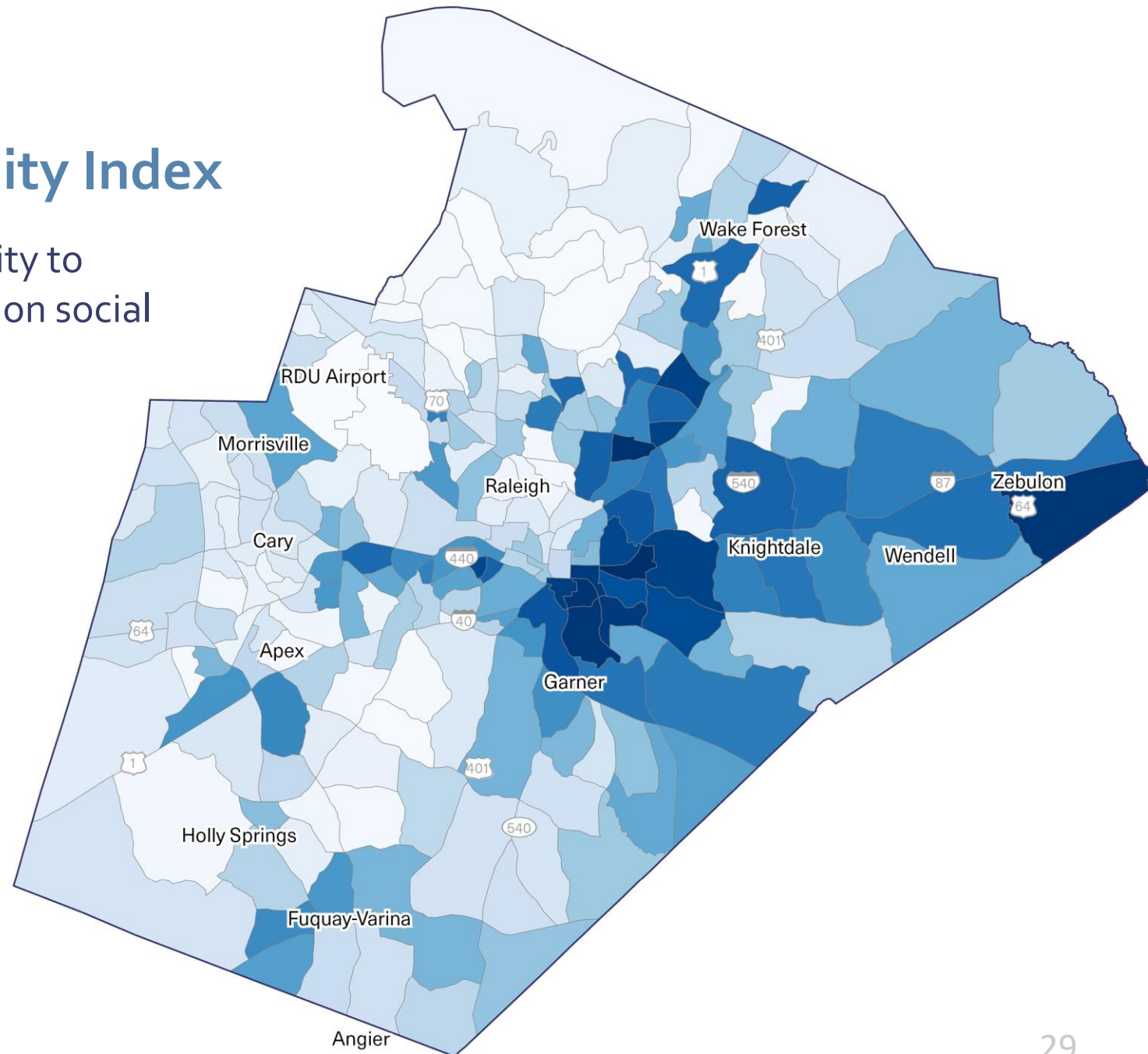
SOURCES: U.S. Census Bureau, Esri, NASA, NGA, USG, Duke University, City of Raleigh, Wake County, State of North Carolina DOT, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, USDA, USFWS



Inventory & Analysis

Wake County Social Vulnerability Index

Social Vulnerability is a community's capacity to withstand and recover from disasters based on social and economic factors.



LEGEND

- Wake County
- Census Block

Social Vulnerability



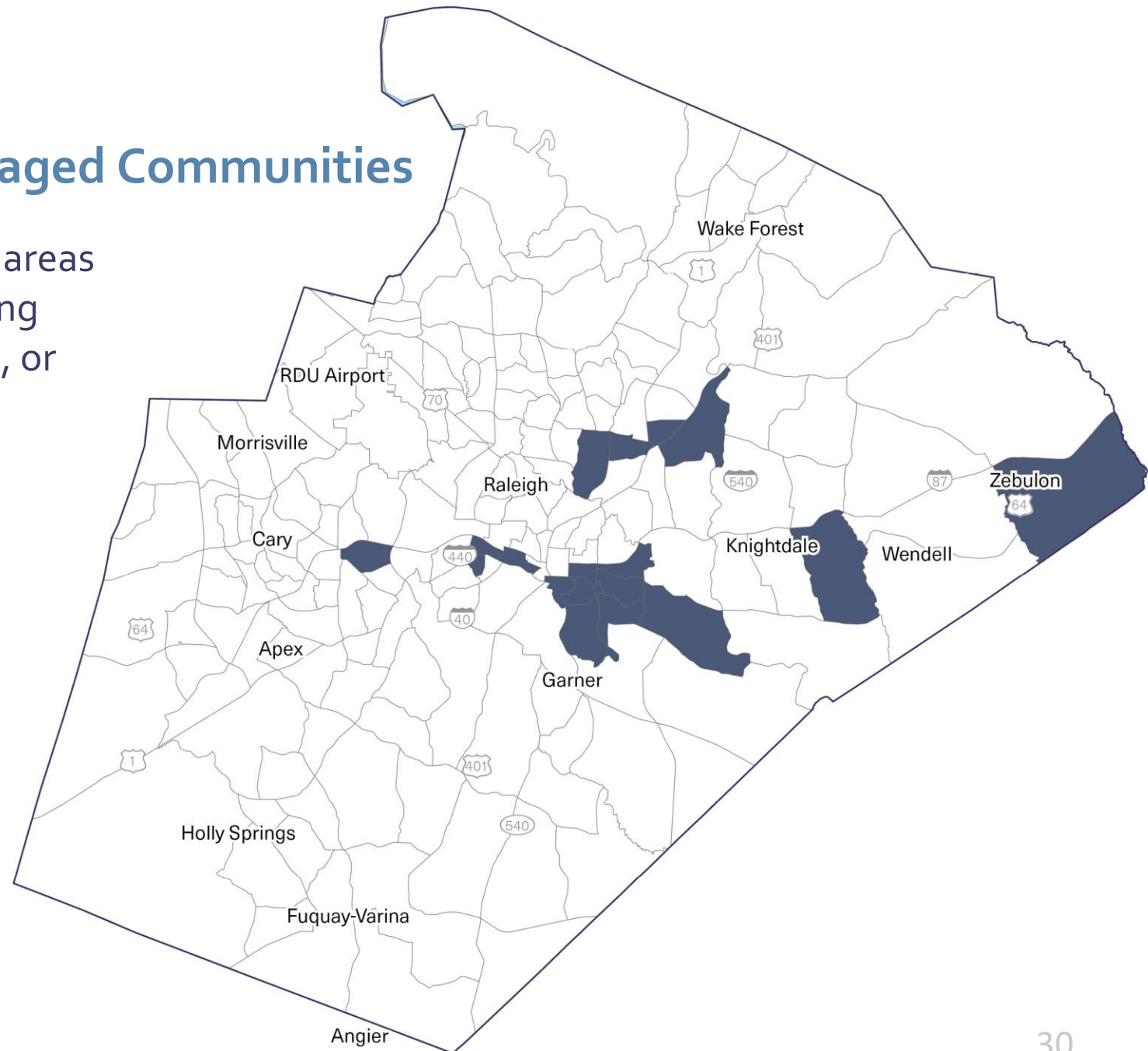
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Inventory & Analysis

Wake County Justice40 Disadvantaged Communities

Justice40 disadvantaged communities are areas identified by the federal government as facing significant environmental, health, economic, or social burdens



LEGEND

- Wake County
- Justice40 Disadvantaged Communities
- Not Disadvantaged

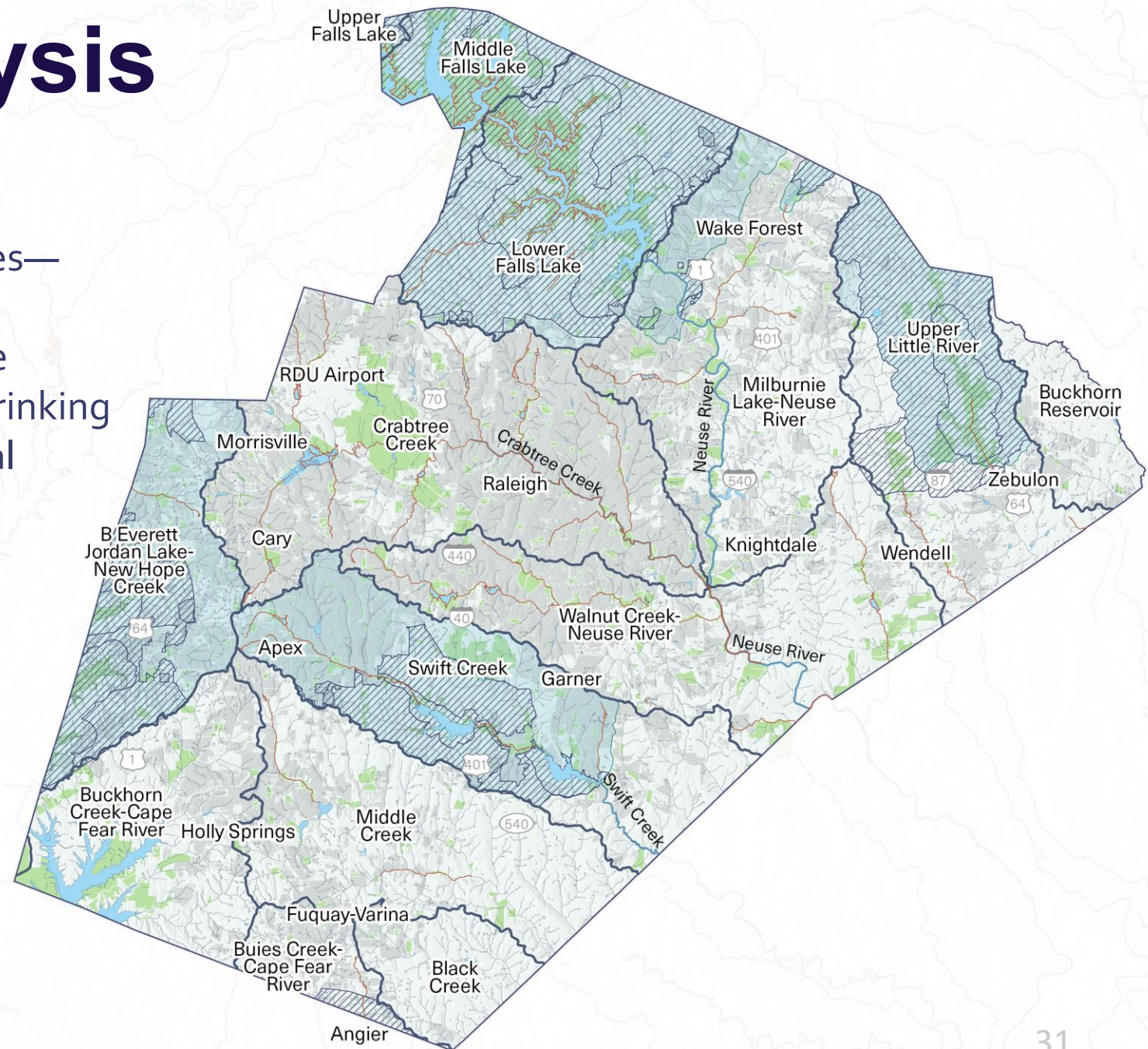
SOURCES: Justice40 Initiative (Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool - CEJST) Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, Duke University, City of Raleigh, Wake County, State of North Carolina DOT, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/ NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, USDA, USFWS



Inventory & Analysis

Wake County Water Quality

This map highlights sensitive water resources—**such as water supply watersheds, critical watersheds, and impaired streams**—where protecting open space can help safeguard drinking water, reduce pollution, and preserve natural wildlife habitat.



LEGEND

- Wake County
- Municipalities
- Open Space
- Waterbody
- Bluelines
- NHD Area
- Impaired Streams
- Watersheds
- Critical Watershed
- Water Supply Watershed

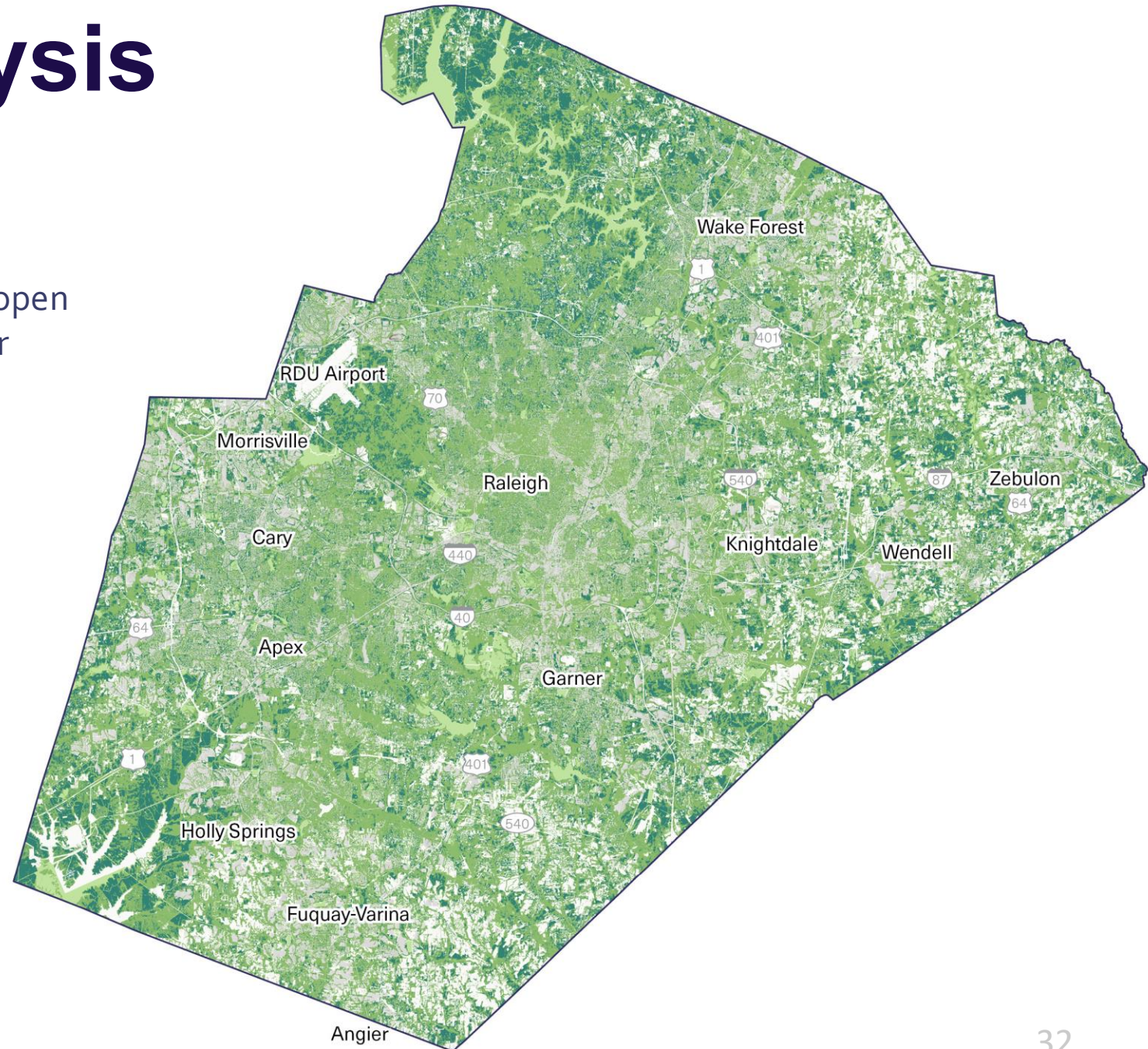
SOURCES: Esri, CGIAR, USGS, Wake County, NC DEQ



Inventory & Analysis

Wake County Tree Canopy

The **2022 Tree Canopy Assessment** helps inform where preserving tree cover or adding trees and open space could enhance shade, air quality, and water protection.



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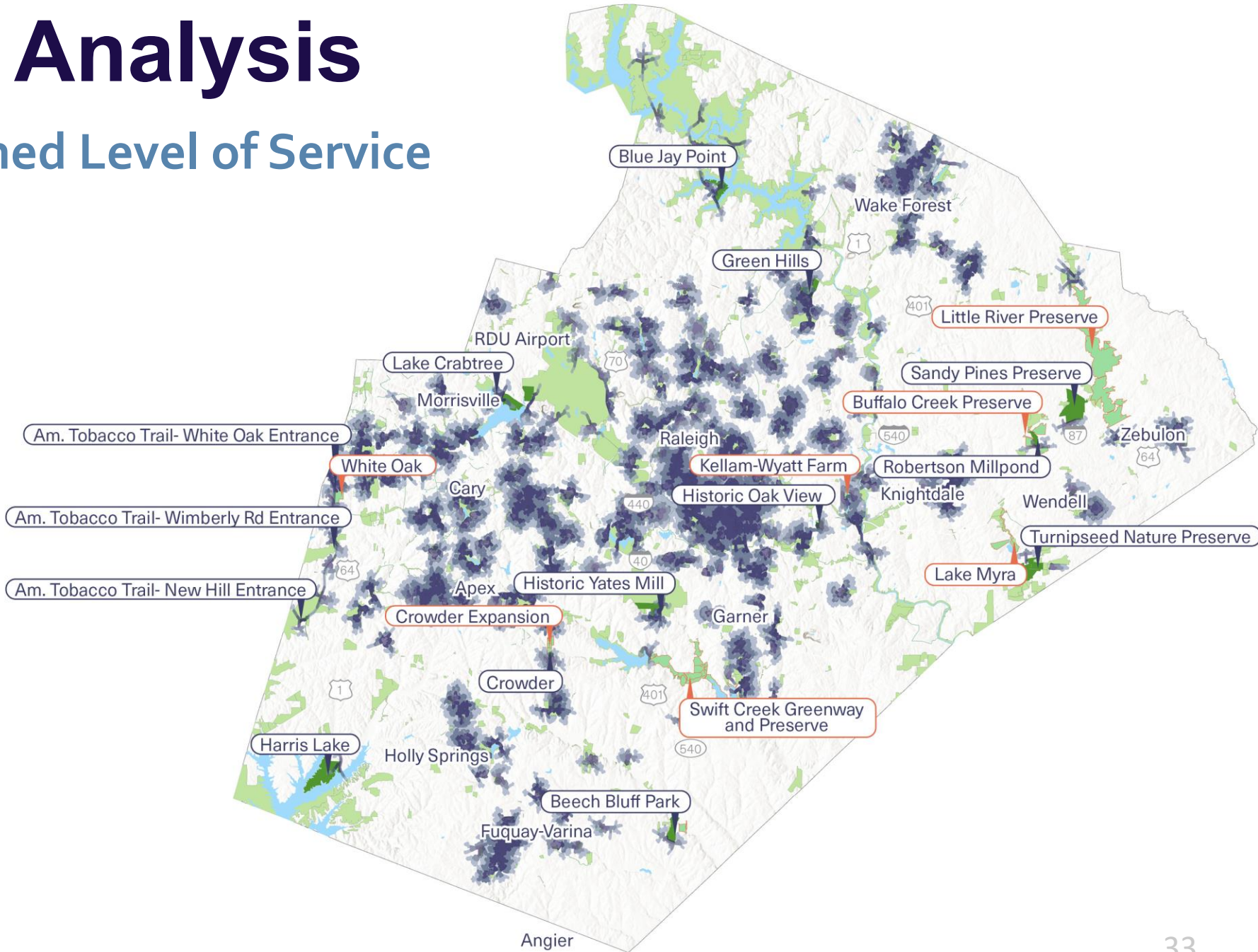
- Wake County
- Deciduous Canopy
- Coniferous Canopy

SOURCES: Wake County Tree Canopy Assessment, Esri, Nasa, NGA, USGS



Inventory & Analysis

Wake County Walkshed Level of Service



SOURCES: CONANP, Esri, HERE, Gamin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, MST, USDA, US Census, NCDOT, Wake County



Inventory & Analysis

Wake County Driveshed Level of Service

10-Minute Driveshed from All Parks

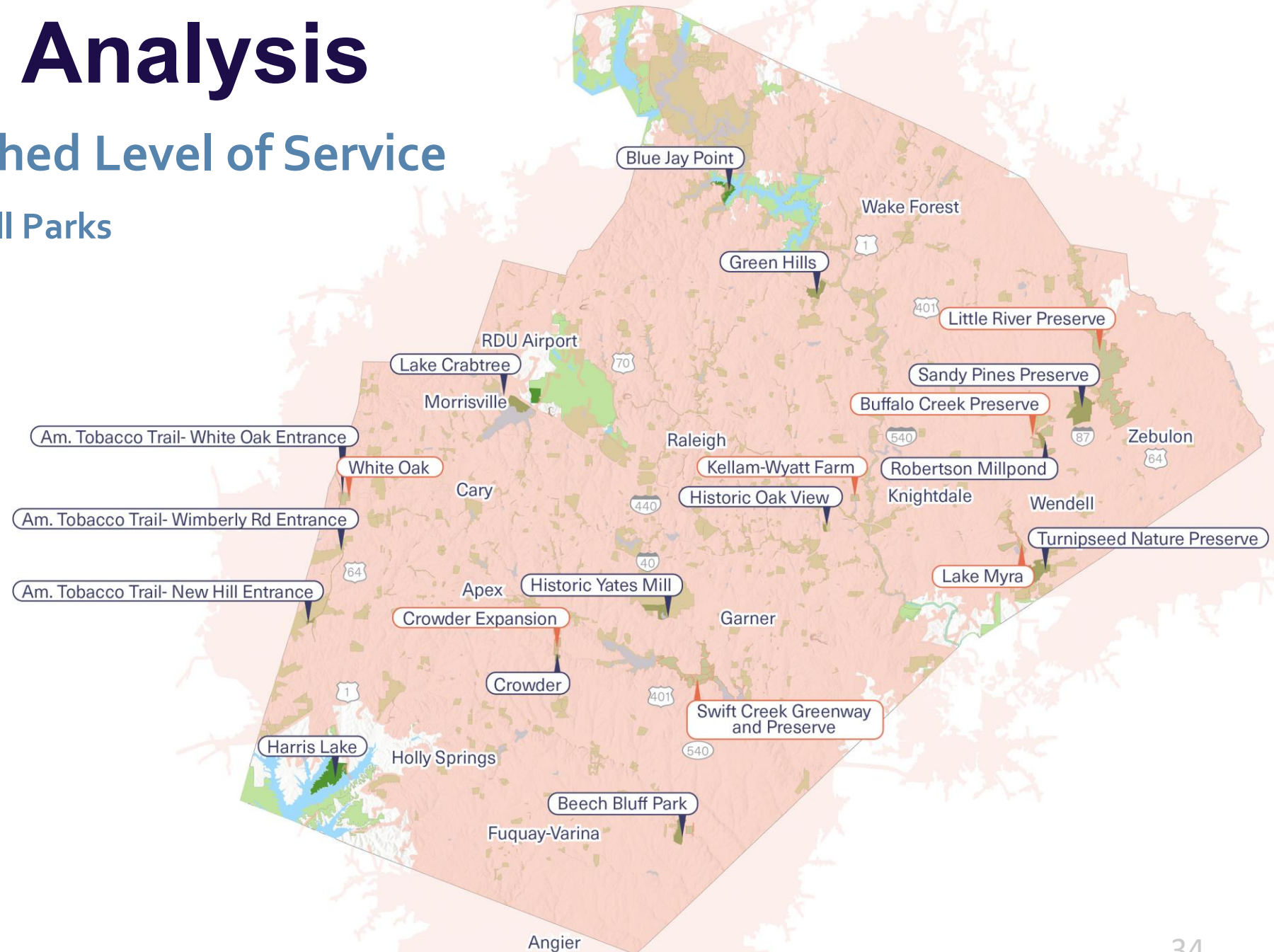
LEGEND

- Wake County Parks
- Planned Wake County Parks
- Non-Wake County Parks
- Waterbody
- Greenways

Level of Service

- 10 Minute Driveshed

SOURCES: CONANP, Esri, HERE, Gamin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, MST, USDA, US Census, NCDOT, Wake County



Inventory & Analysis

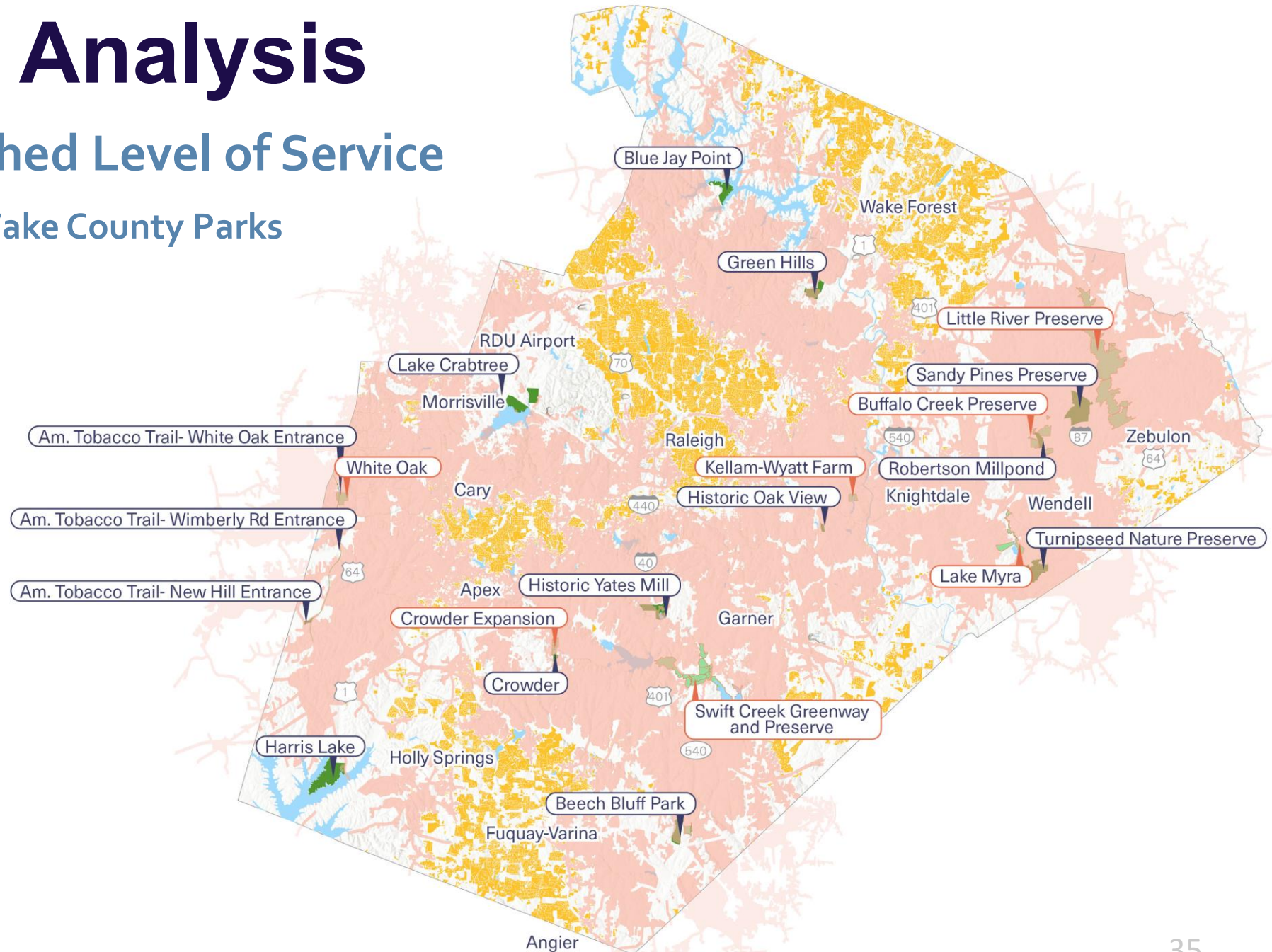
Wake County Driveshed Level of Service

10-Minute Driveshed from Wake County Parks

LEGEND

- Wake County Parks
- Planned Wake County Parks
- Waterbody
- Greenways
- Level of Service
 - 10 Minute Driveshed
 - Residents Outside 10 Minute Driveshed

SOURCES: CONANP, Esri, HERE, Gamin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, MST, USDA, US Census, NCDOT, Wake County



Inventory & Analysis

Wake County Driveshed Level of Service

5-Minute Driveshed from All Parks

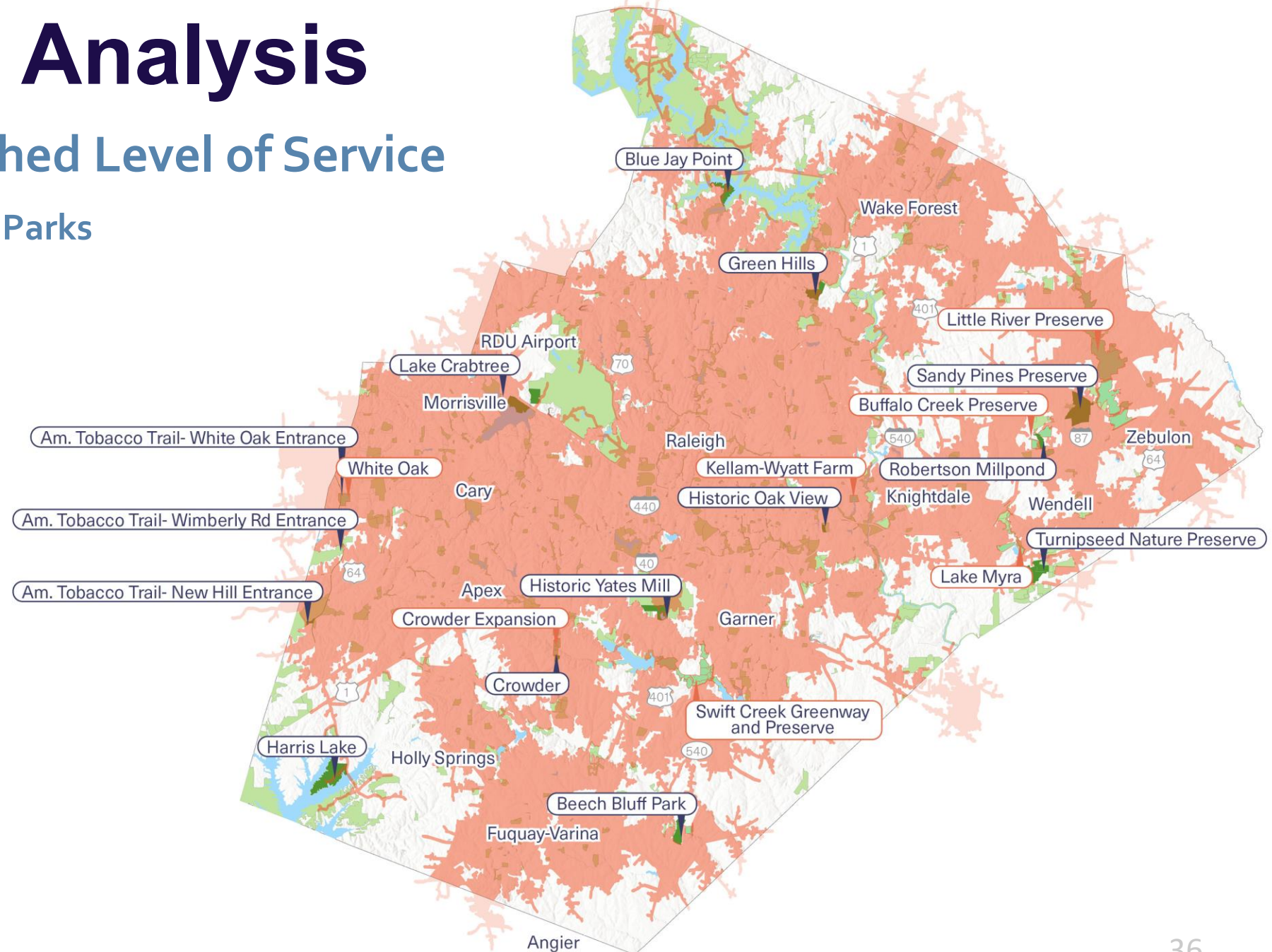
LEGEND

- Wake County Parks
- Planned Wake County Parks
- Non-Wake County Parks
- Waterbody
- Greenways

Level of Service

- 5 Minute Driveshed

SOURCES: CONANP, Esri, HERE, Gamin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, MST, USDA, US Census, NCDOT, Wake County



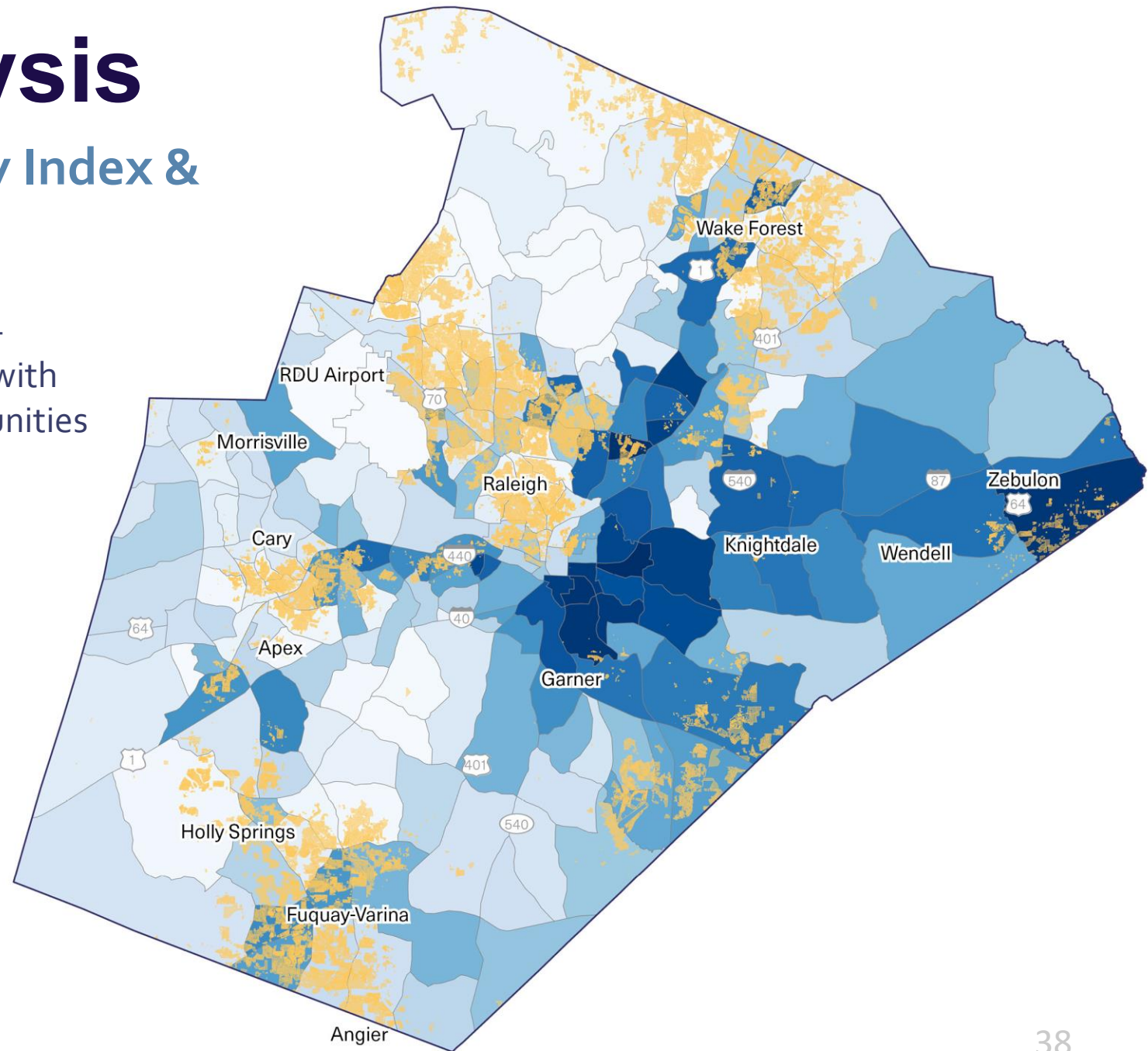
5-Minute Driveshed from Wake County Parks



Inventory & Analysis

Wake County Social Vulnerability Index & Residential Driveshed Gaps

This map shows residential areas more than a 10-minute drive from a Wake County park, overlaid with the Social Vulnerability Index to highlight communities that may face greater barriers to access.



LEGEND

- Wake County
- Census Block
- Residents Outside 10 Minute Driveshed

Social Vulnerability

- Low Vulnerability
- High Vulnerability

SOURCES: U.S. Census Bureau, Esri, NASA, NGA, USG, Duke University, City of Raleigh, Wake County, State of North Carolina DOT, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, USDA, USFWS



A faint, light blue map of Wake County is centered in the upper half of the slide. The text "Next Steps" is overlaid on this map in a large, white, sans-serif font.

Next Steps

Next Steps

