

# Farmland Preservation Program Ordinance

June 21, 2022

Teresa Furr, Director  
Wake Soil and Water Conservation



@wakegov    

wakegov.com

# Purpose and Goals of Ordinance

- I. Repeal and replace the “Wake County Voluntary Agricultural District Ordinance” to expand the County’s farmland preservation program and comply with SB 605.
- II. Promote agricultural values and the general welfare of Wake County.
- III. Promote agriculture as an integral part of the County’s economy.
- IV. Increase the identity and pride in the agricultural community.
- V. Encourage the economic and financial health of agriculture, horticulture, and forestry.
- VI. Decrease the likelihood of legal disputes, such as nuisance actions between farm owners and their neighbors.



# Board Goals & Fiscal Impact

- This action supports Objective ES 3.3 – strengthen County services and policies that support agribusinesses. Potential efforts include farmland preservation, next generation farming, and promoting local food systems and agritourism.
- The Wake County Farmland Preservation Program Ordinance was created by receiving feedback and input from multiple internal departments and external stakeholders.
- A recurring commitment of \$4,000 beginning in FY 2024.
  - Wake County Agricultural Advisory Board per diem
  - Signage for Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural Districts
  - Deed recording fees

# Farmland Preservation Ordinance

## NEW Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural District Program (EVAD)

- Requires a 10-year irrevocable agreement.
- Must be recorded on deed.
- May renew for 3 years after initial period unless notice is given by landowner.
- May provide assessments for utilities provided by city or county be held in abeyance, with or without interest.

### **Additional benefits to landowners include:**

- May receive up to 25% of its gross sales from the sale on non-farm products and still qualify as a bona fide farm that is exempt from zoning regulations under G.S. 153A-340(b).
- Eligible to receive higher percentage of cost share funds (90%) under the Wake Soil and Water Conservation District's Agricultural Cost Share Program.

# Farmland Preservation Ordinance

## NEW Agricultural Conservation Easement Program

- The Agricultural Advisory Board and Farmland Preservation Coordinator position will administer the new program as another voluntary option for landowners within the overall farmland preservation program.
- Staff will make recommendations to the Agricultural Advisory Board on selection of properties for donation of agricultural conservation easements or to seek state and federal grant funding for the purchase of agricultural conservation easements.
- The Soil and Water Conservation District in partnership with the Triangle Land Conservancy, may acquire agricultural conservation easements consistent with the new Farmland Preservation Ordinance.

# Summary

The Wake County Voluntary Agricultural District Ordinance will be repealed and replaced with the Wake County Farmland Preservation Program Ordinance.

The new ordinance will:

- Meet the requirements of Senate Bill 605 adopted in July 2021.
- Add additional farmland protection programs:
  - Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural Districts (EVAD)
  - Agricultural Conservation Easement Program
- Support PLANWake goals of open space and farmland protection.
- Support BOC goal for economic strength through farmland protection, next generation farming, promoting local food systems and agritourism.

# Questions?



@wakegov



wakegov.com