

**Item Title:** Public Hearing to Consider Text Amendment OA-02-18 to the Wake County Unified Development Ordinance regarding use of Native Plants in Required Landscaping

**Specific Action Requested:**  
**That the Board of Commissioners:**

- 1. Finds that Text Amendment OA-02-18 is consistent with the Wake County Land Use Plan and the Wake County Unified Development Ordinance and is reasonable and in the public interest; and adopts the attached resolution;**  
  
***and by a separate motion;***
- 2. Adopts the attached resolution to approve the proposed amendment to the Wake County Unified Development Ordinance as presented in Text Amendment OA-02-18.**

**Item Summary:**

**Purpose:** State Statute requires the Board of Commissioners approve amendments to the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO).

**Background:** This initiative was first introduced by the Wake County Open Space and Parks Advisory Committee (OSAPAC). OSAPAC recommended moving the initiative through the Growth, Land Use and Environment (GLUE) committee. The Board of Commissioners expressed their support at the October 8, 2018 work session and on October 15, 2018 they adopted a resolution stating Wake County will review and revise the Wake County Unified Development Ordinance and the Wake County Design Guidelines and Standards ensuring that Wake County projects utilize native plants to the greatest extent possible. To implement this standard, Planning staff recommends that the Board of Commissioners approve Text Amendment OA-02-18. The Planning Board recommended by unanimous vote that the Board of Commissioners approve Text Amendment OA-02-18.

**Board Goal:** This action reflects routine County operations.

**Fiscal Impact:** This action has no financial impact.

**Additional Information:**

The proposed UDO amendment replaces the outdated list of invasive species with resources that are regularly updated, and requires native plants be used when landscaping is required per the UDO. General standards for landscape requirements are described in Article 16-10-3(B)(3) and are applied to sections of Article 16 and 18 related to commercial development and signs. Landscaping requirements in the UDO are limited to the following development situations:

1. Off-Street Parking Areas (16-10-1) that contain 10 or more parking spaces or an area of 3,000 square feet or more. Parking lot perimeter landscaping requirements do not apply to places of worship.
2. Bufferyards (16-10-2) are required with the development of new nonresidential construction, high-density residential, change in land use to a more intensive class of use, or expansion of use.
3. Fences, Walls, and Berms (16-10-3 (C)) must be screened. This does not apply to residential homeowners.
4. Trash Storage Areas (16-11) must be screened with vines or other landscaping.
5. Permanent, Freestanding Signs (18-10), in both residential and nonresidential districts, if it is within 100 feet of road rights-of-way must have landscaping around the base. The amount of landscaping required is based on the size of the sign.

In discussions with landscape architects, nurseries, and contractors, it was the consensus that area nurseries have sufficient stock of native plants to meet the proposed amendments to the UDO. The impact of the proposed change is considered minor because the county has very limited requirements for landscaping that will not impose a hardship on developers. It should be noted that the UDO bufferyard requirement in Article 16 currently does not allow non-native or invasive plants; this provision of the code has been in effect since 2006.

### **Staff Findings**

The proposed amendments:

- 1) Support the Board of Commissioners' goal to promote sustainability efforts throughout the county.
- 2) Fulfills the direction provided by the Board of Commissioners, as stated in their October 15, 2018 resolution supporting increased use of native plants.
- 3) Replace references to non-native invasive species with resources that are regularly updated.

### **Recommendations**

PLANNING STAFF: Recommends that the Board of Commissioners approve text amendment OA-02-18 as presented and adopt the Statement finding the proposed text amendment consistent with the Wake County Land Use Plan.

PLANNING BOARD: Recommended at the November 7, 2018 meeting, by a unanimous vote, that the Board of Commissioners approve text amendment OA-02-18.

### **Attachments:**

1. Presentation
2. Staff Report
3. Statement of Consistency Resolution
4. Ordinance Amendment Resolution