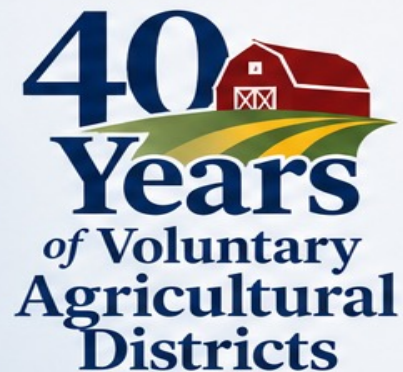




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North Carolina Department of
Agriculture and Consumer Services

COMMUNITY MAPPING & OTHER LAND USE PLANNING TOOLS

- Teresa Furr, Director, Wake SWCD
- Loren Hendrickson, Farmland Preservation Coordinator, Wake SWCD
- Noah Ranells, Director, NC Farmlink/NC State Cooperative Extension

N★C
FOREVER
FARMS



Community Mapping and Land Use Planning

July 22, 2026

Wake Soil and Water Conservation District

Teresa Furr, Director

Loren Hendrickson, Farmland Preservation Coordinator



@wakegov    

wake.gov

Presentation Overview

-  Why Working Lands Matter
-  Building Relationships
-  Using Data to Tell the Story
-  Integrating Working Lands into Land Use Plans
-  Connecting Working Lands to Strategic Plans
-  Lessons Learned & Keys to Success
-  Answer Your Questions

Incorporating working lands into land use plans

- **Build Relationships First**
 - Meet with planning staff early and often.
 - Learn their priorities, terminology, and planning process.
 - Position yourself as a resource, not an advocate for a single program.
- **Align Agriculture with Existing County Priorities**
 - Managing growth
 - Protecting water quality
 - Increasing community resilience
 - Supporting economic development
 - Preserving rural character
 - Improving quality of life



Incorporating working lands into land use plans

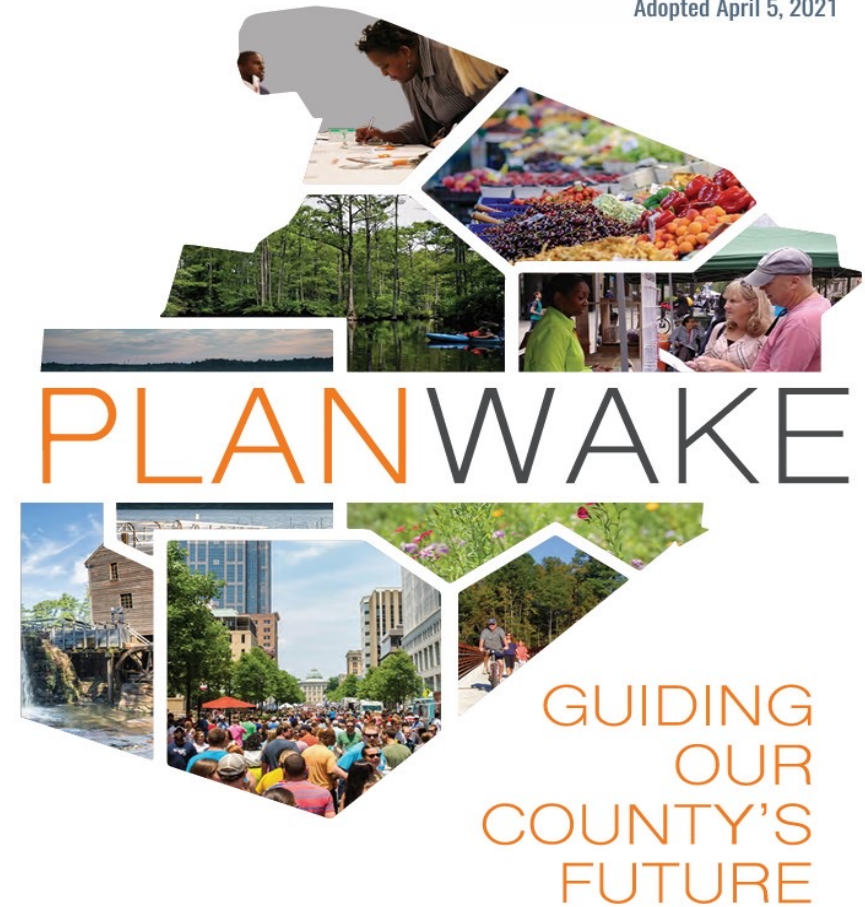
- **Bring Data, Not Opinions**

- Farmland loss trends
- Prime farmland mapping
- VAD's, EVAD's and CE's
- Economic impact of agriculture
- Cost of Community Services
- Conservation and ecosystem service benefits

- **Participate in the Planning Process**

- Attend planning board meetings.
- Review draft policies.
- Provide constructive feedback.

Adopted April 5, 2021



Integrating Working Lands into Land Use Plans

RURAL

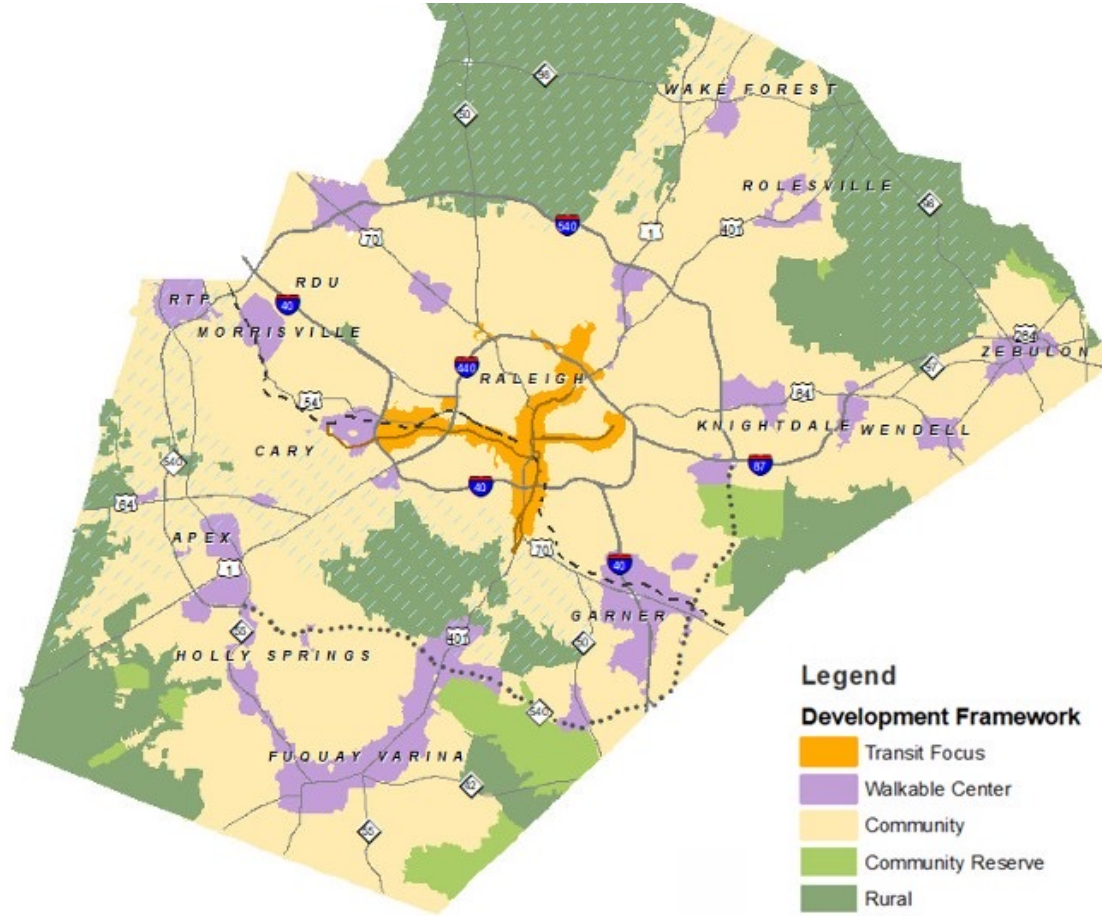
The Rural areas are the least developed and lowest-density residential and natural lands in Wake County. These areas are marked by extensive forest coverage and agricultural activity, and include surrounding lands of Harris Lake, Swift Creek, Little River and Falls Lake. Much of the land in the Rural area has significant ecological value as green infrastructure and provides important ecosystem services for Wake County. These lands also offer important open space and recreational opportunities for Wake County residents. The Rural area provides an important functional and aesthetic counterpoint to the more intensively developed urban areas in the county. Development should be generally limited within these areas to retain the rural amenities, character, water quality and ecosystem benefits that they currently exhibit.

- » Approximately 29% of entire Wake County.
- » Located predominantly within Wake County jurisdiction (outside municipalities).



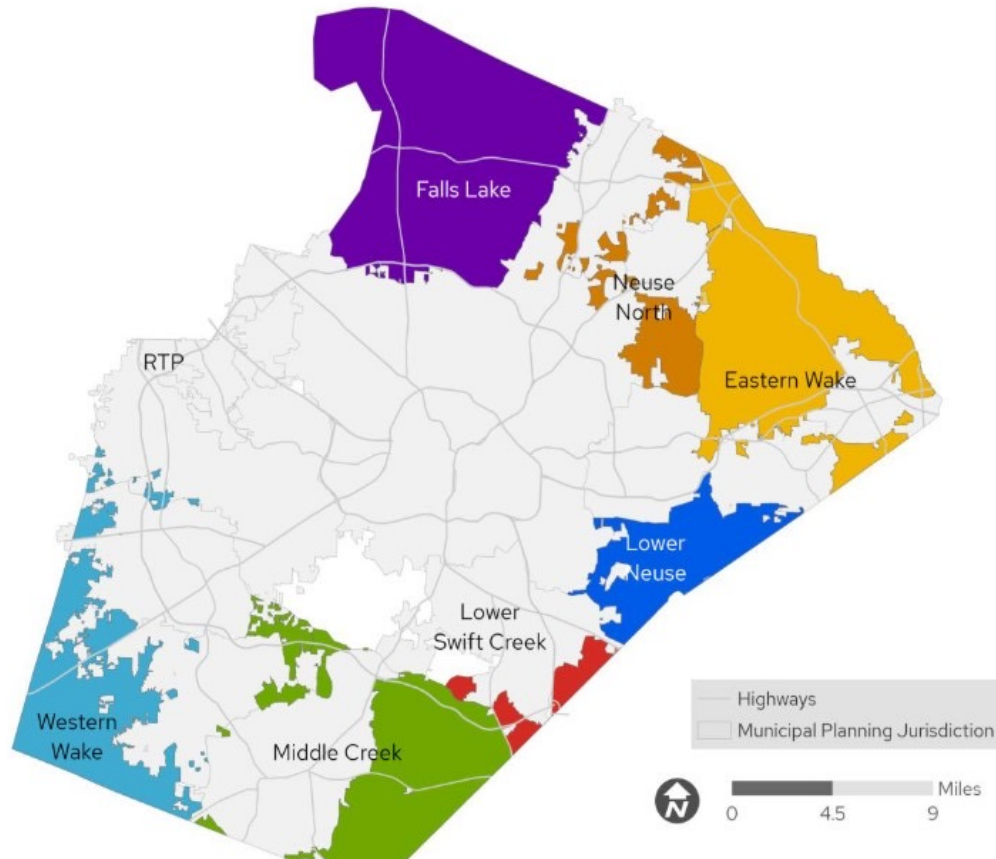
- Participated in planning meetings and reviewed draft policies.
- Shared agricultural data, mapping, and technical expertise.
- Integrated Agriculture into County Planning
- Recognized farms and forests as essential working lands that support the economy, natural resources, and community resilience.

Integrating Working Lands into Land Use Plans



- Ensured agricultural considerations were included alongside transportation, water quality, parks, housing, and economic development.
- Created a Rural Lands Classification
- Directed higher-density growth toward existing municipalities and growth areas

Integrating Working Lands into Land Use Plans



- Participated in the planning process by reviewing draft maps, policies, and future land use recommendations.
- Identified present-use value parcels, VAD's, EVAD's, conservation easements, and existing agricultural operations.
- Identified areas where agriculture and forestry should remain viable long-term land uses.
- Considered existing agricultural operations and conservation investments when developing future land use recommendations.
- Area plans reflected countywide farmland preservation goals.



LOWER NEUSE AREA PLAN



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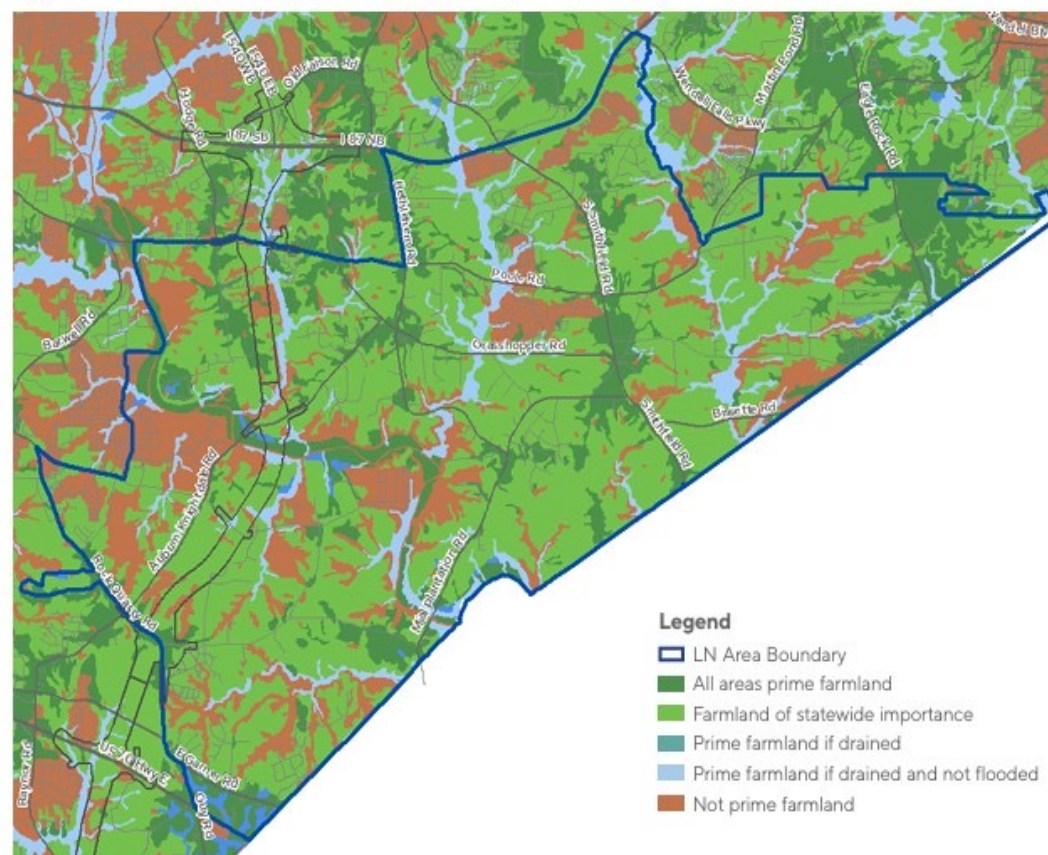
Farm Operations and Agricultural Suitability

According to Wake County property records, in 2024 there were over 190 farming, forestry and horticulture properties, totaling around 6,300 acres, in the LN study area. Of these, 25, totaling approximately 1,500 acres, were designated as **Voluntary Agricultural Districts (VADs)**. The VAD program gives property owners the ability to make a high-level commitment to long-term farming. **Wake County's Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)** is working with property owners to expand the use of tools that go beyond the VAD to allow more defined and formal long-term commitments

to farming operations including those operated by generations of Black or African American farmers.

Along with the high number of farms overall and the historic importance of farming and farmlands in the LN area, as addressed as one of the justifications for the Marks Creek Rural Land Initiative, the Wake County Soils classifications notes that many of these farms are also located on land that is naturally suitable for agricultural operations. **Figure LN2.9** shows the classifications of soils in the LN area.

Figure LN2.9 – Wake County Soil Classification Map and Suitability for Agriculture in LN Area





Agriculture and Farmland Preservation

According to the Wake Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) in 2022, there are more than 77,000 acres of farmland and 691 farms in Wake County.

The SWCD utilizes soil and water conservation districts — enabled by NC General Statute 139 — that are organized as governmental subdivisions as part of a larger comprehensive conservation program. These districts have assisted private landowners for more

than 75 years to address the issues of soil erosion, flood damage and water quality programs.

Furthermore, PLANWake has a goal to preserve what we can in these rural areas by easing the development pressures that they face. This is inherent in its policies to direct more dense development to the municipalities as opposed to the sprawl that takes up more land, which contributes to a loss of natural resources and increases roadway congestion.

Voluntary Agricultural District Program

The county also utilizes the Voluntary Agricultural District (VAD) Program to preserve these rural areas. This program, adopted in 2002 by the Board of Commissioners, allows owners of farmland to voluntarily agree to keep their land in agricultural use for 10 years. Participating farms or groups of farms would be called “agricultural districts.” Farmers will be free to withdraw from such districts at any time; however, under the new Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural District (EVAD) program, farmers would be committed to the full 10 years without being able to withdraw. Benefits that can be provided to agricultural districts under state statute include waivers from water and sewer utility assessments, additional notification provided to buyers of property in the area regarding the presence of farm

operations (provides additional protection from nuisance suits associated with chemical spraying, animal waste odors, etc.), and requires hearings for public projects proposed in agricultural districts.

Participation in the VAD program has a number of benefits:

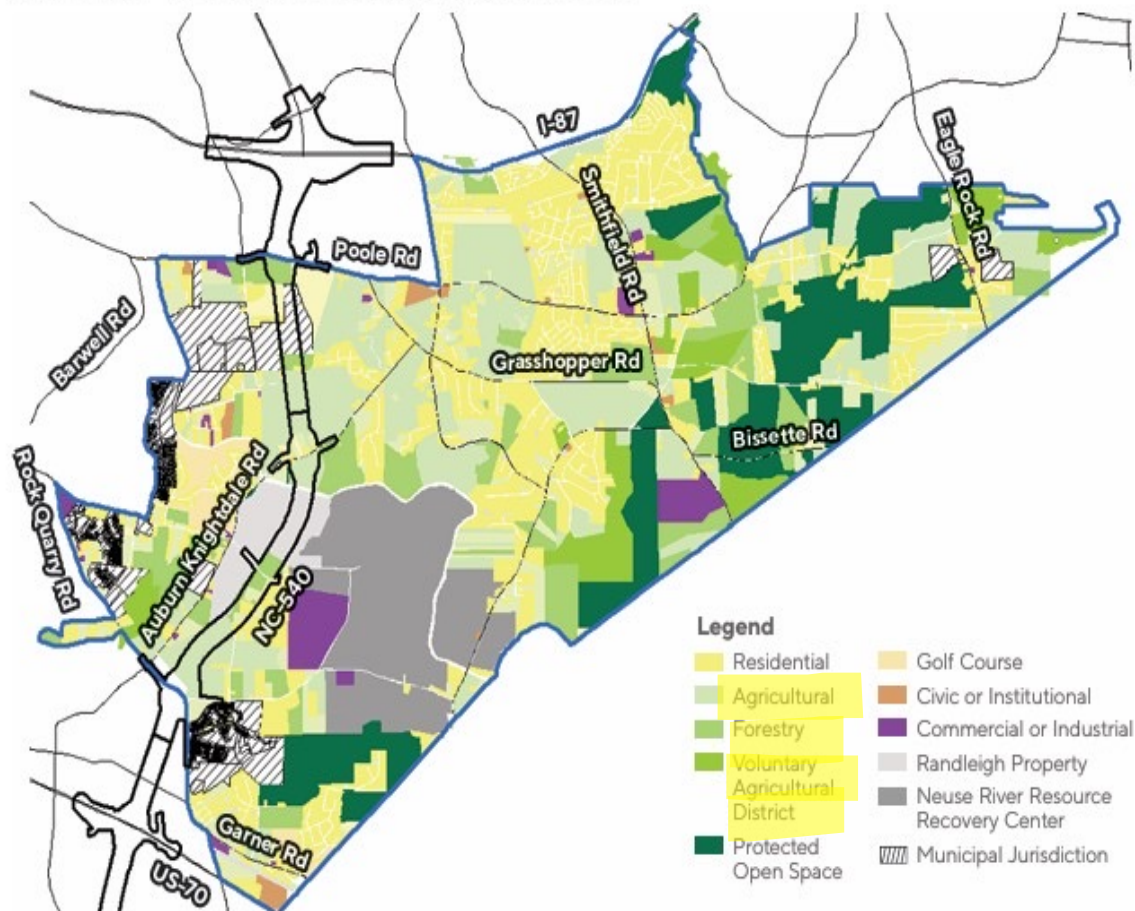
- Helps promote traditional farming within the community by increasing the visibility of farms around the county.
- Gives farmers a louder voice to affect local government decisions about their land.
- Reduces potential conflicts between farm and non-farm land users.

Lower Neuse Land Area and Land Uses

The LN study area includes about 32 square miles, or 20,500 acres. Of the total about 1,400 acres of the study area were incorporated as part of one of the four surrounding municipalities. **Figure LN2.1** shows the 2024 existing land uses in the study area based

on Wake County parcel data. **Figure LN2.2** details the major land holdings in the LN study area. **Figure LN2.3** details how much of the LN study area was in each land use in 2024.

Figure LN2.1 – 2024 Lower Neuse Area Existing Land Uses



Integrating Working Lands into Municipal Plans

- Participated in stakeholder engagement meetings with municipal planners and the planning consultant.
- Discussed how farmland preservation supports local community goals and long-term growth strategies.
- Identified areas where municipal priorities and farmland preservation objectives align.
- Explored opportunities to incorporate working lands into future comprehensive plan policies and recommendations.

Vision Holly Springs Comprehensive Plan



SECTION 6: NATURAL RESOURCES

Integrating Working Lands into Municipal Plans

- Holly Springs plans to update ordinances to strengthen farmland preservation
- Highlighted Sugg Farm as an example under conservation easement
- Incubator for new farmers

Holly Springs Comprehensive Plan Stakeholder Meeting Summary

The Holly Springs Comprehensive Plan Stakeholder Meeting brought together Wake County staff and community representatives to align on waste management, farmland preservation, and recreation priorities. The landfill remains a critical part of county infrastructure with significant remaining capacity, no current expansion plans, and recent improvements such as transfer station upgrades, a mattress shredder addition, roadway expansions, and ongoing reconstruction of the gas energy facility following a fire. These efforts are aimed at improving efficiency, safety, and environmental stewardship without the need for new capital investments in expansion.

Farmland and conservation were another major focus. Wake County, with consultant Equinox, is developing a Farmland Preservation Plan to guide both short- and long-term strategies. Priority areas have already been identified within the Holly Springs extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ), and efforts are underway to secure conservation easements and promote Voluntary Agricultural Districts (VADs). Stakeholders encouraged stronger municipal involvement in these initiatives and recommended that Holly Springs update its Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to include farmland protections within town limits, similar to neighboring Cary. Sugg Farm was highlighted as a successful model of conservation and innovation, operating under a private conservation easement and offering incubator opportunities for new farmers. Expanding cooperative agreements with the County could help leverage the farm as both a community asset and a source of local food access through the Holly Springs Farmers Market.

Recreation and open space also featured prominently. Stakeholders emphasized the need for more greenways, improved connectivity to county parks, and stronger open space regulations to ensure that new development contributes to the community's recreational fabric. Wake County's ongoing Harris Lake master plan update and potential Crowder County Park expansion present opportunities for further coordination. The growing popularity of mountain biking, driven in part by closures at Lake Crabtree, has placed additional demand on Holly Springs facilities, underscoring the need for more trail development. Similarly, the rising use of parks by schools for athletic events points to the need for clearer scheduling and shared-use strategies. Preserving additional land for greenways and park facilities was seen as critical to maintaining quality of life as the town grows.

In terms of next steps, stakeholders agreed on four key priorities:

1. Formalizing municipal-county coordination on landfill, conservation, and recreation issues.
2. Updating ordinances to strengthen farmland preservation and open space protections.
3. Expanding recreational resources with an emphasis on connectivity and sustainability.
4. Engaging local farmers, schools, and residents to ensure development reflects community values.

Overall, the meeting highlighted the importance of collaborative planning and forward-thinking policies. By balancing growth with conservation and recreation, Holly Springs is positioned to honor its agricultural heritage while creating a

Integrating Working Lands into County Strategic Initiatives

Build internal partnerships

- Engage other county departments
- Identify where each department's goals overlap with working lands (agriculture and forestry).

Educate the value of working lands to the county

Align with existing county priorities and goals

Serve on focus groups

Show how working lands support multiple county goals and priorities

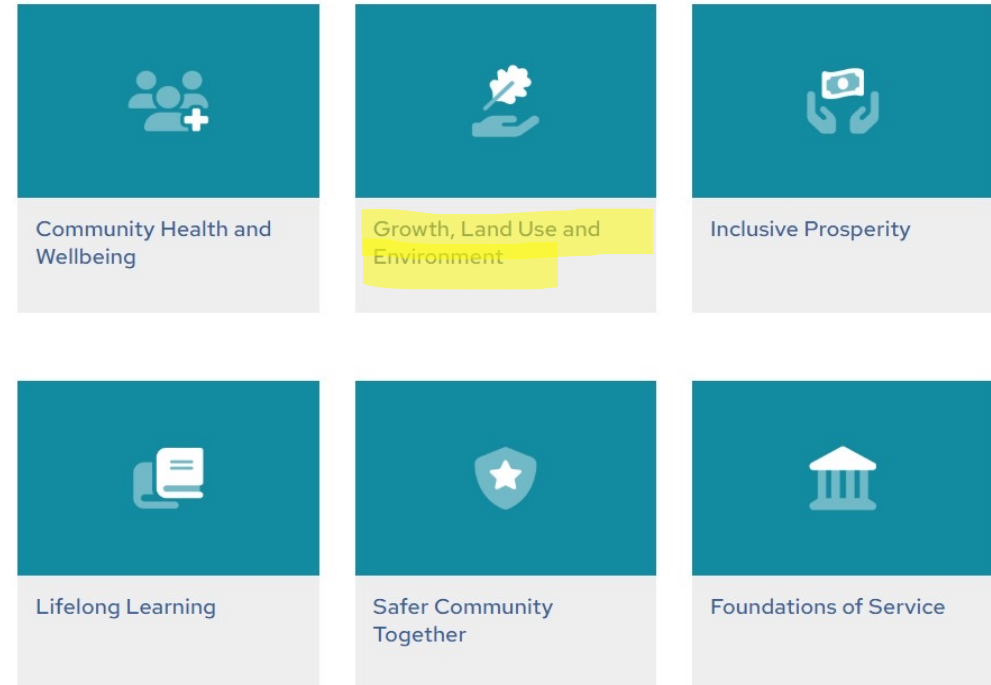


Six Focus Areas in County Strategic Plan

- Strategic Plan created from community survey
- Identified top priorities through 2029
- 6 Focus Areas
- 24 Goals

Strategic Plan

Wake County adopted its first organization-wide strategic planning process in April 2024 to identify our top priorities through 2029. The plan outlines our vision for a thriving, resilient community and reflects our commitment to community collaboration and forward-thinking solutions. We invite you to explore the plan's six focus areas and 24 goals, or click here to view a summary of the County's vision, mission, and goals: [Wake County Strategic Plan Summary](#).



Six Focus Areas in County Strategic Plan

Aligned working lands with existing County priorities—not as a separate agricultural initiative.

Connected farmland preservation to Goal 3 (protecting green space, including farmland and forests)

Goal 4 (ensuring access to clean water through watershed protection and natural resource conservation).

Worked collaboratively to incorporate working lands into the County's long-term vision and strategic goals.

Growth, Land Use and Environment

Wake County's Growth, Land Use and Environment focus area seeks to balance the needs of a growing community with sustainability. We emphasize thoughtful planning and development, enhancing public transit, and preserving vital green spaces. We are also committed to ensuring access to clean water and advancing clean energy solutions.

The county identified five strategic goals in the Growth, Land Use and Environment focus area. We encourage you to explore each goal to understand our rationale, view community and key performance indicators, and find links to other comprehensive plans and resources.

Goal 1: Between 2024 and 2029, 97% of growth and development will be directed toward cities and towns that provide municipal services, transportation, and utilities. ▼

Goal 2: By 2029, increase public transit ridership by 10%. ▼

Goal 3: Protect 1,000 acres of green space, including open space, parks, greenways, farmland, and forests by 2029. ▼

Goal 4: By 2029, 95% of residents asked will have easy access to clean water. ▼

Goal 5: Wake County Government will progress toward achieving 80% clean energy by 2035. ▼

Summary

- ✓ Build relationships with planners and decision makers early.
- ✓ Align working lands with community priorities such as growth management, water quality, conservation, and resilience.
- ✓ Use data and maps to demonstrate the value of working lands.
- ✓ Participate throughout the planning process—don't wait until plans are nearly complete.
- ✓ Position working lands as a community asset that supports economic vitality, natural resources, and quality of life.



Working lands don't become part of local plans by chance—they become part of the conversation.



WAKE.GOV

GIS Tools for Farmland Preservation Prioritization

Loren Hendrickson

Farmland Preservation Coordinator

July 22, 2026



@wakegov    

wake.gov

How do we Decide what Land to Preserve?



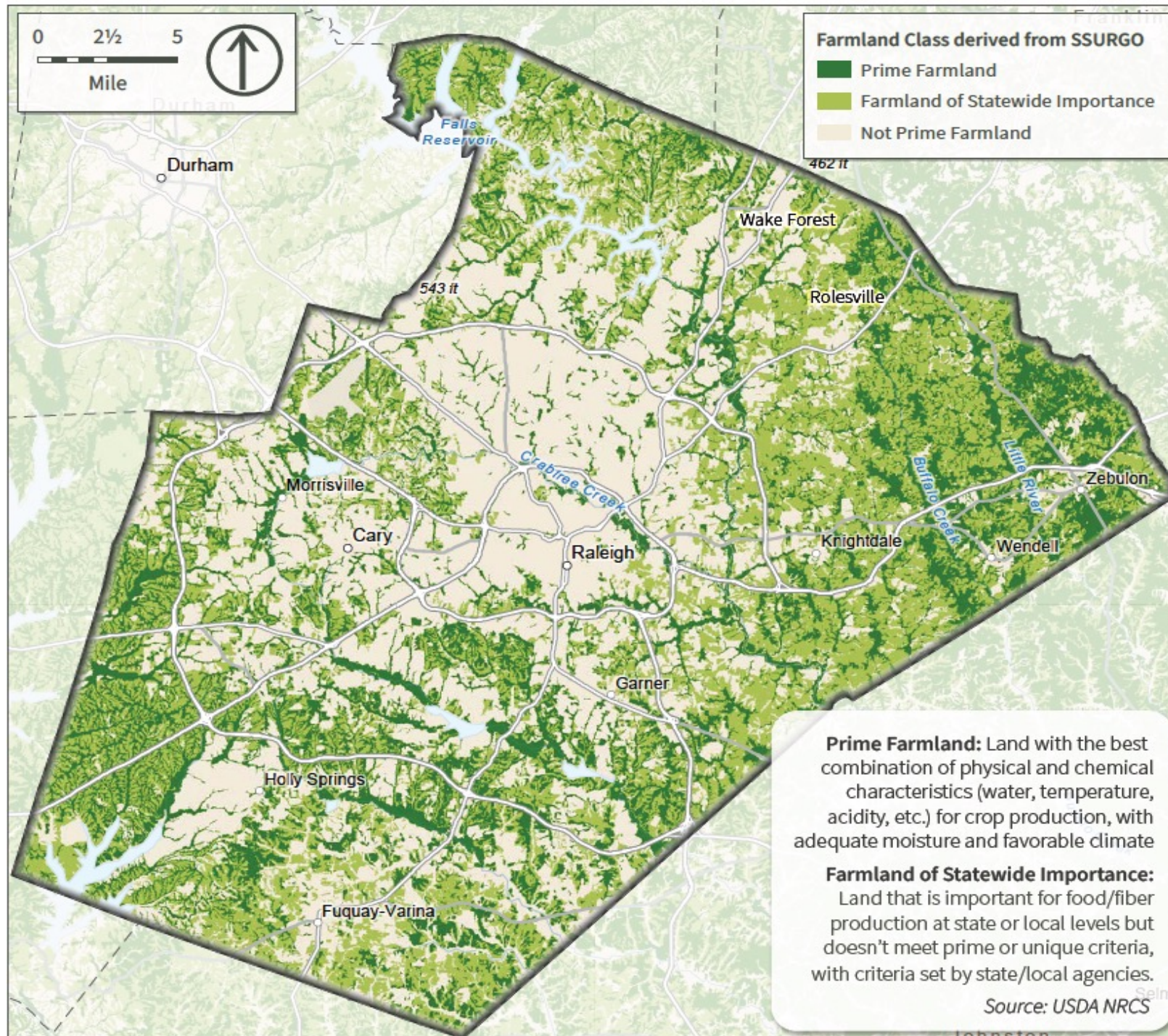






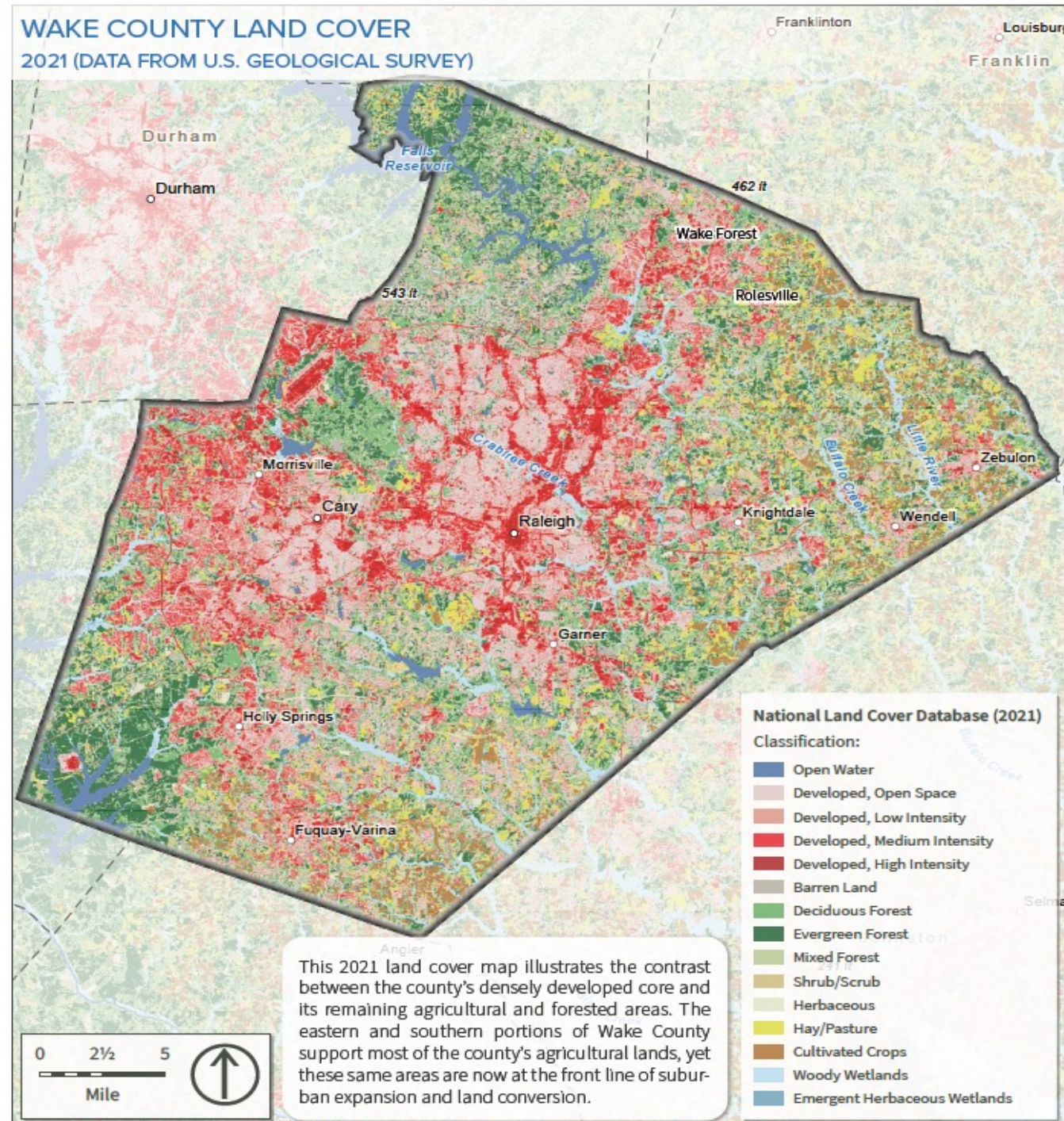


Traditional Prioritization Analysis

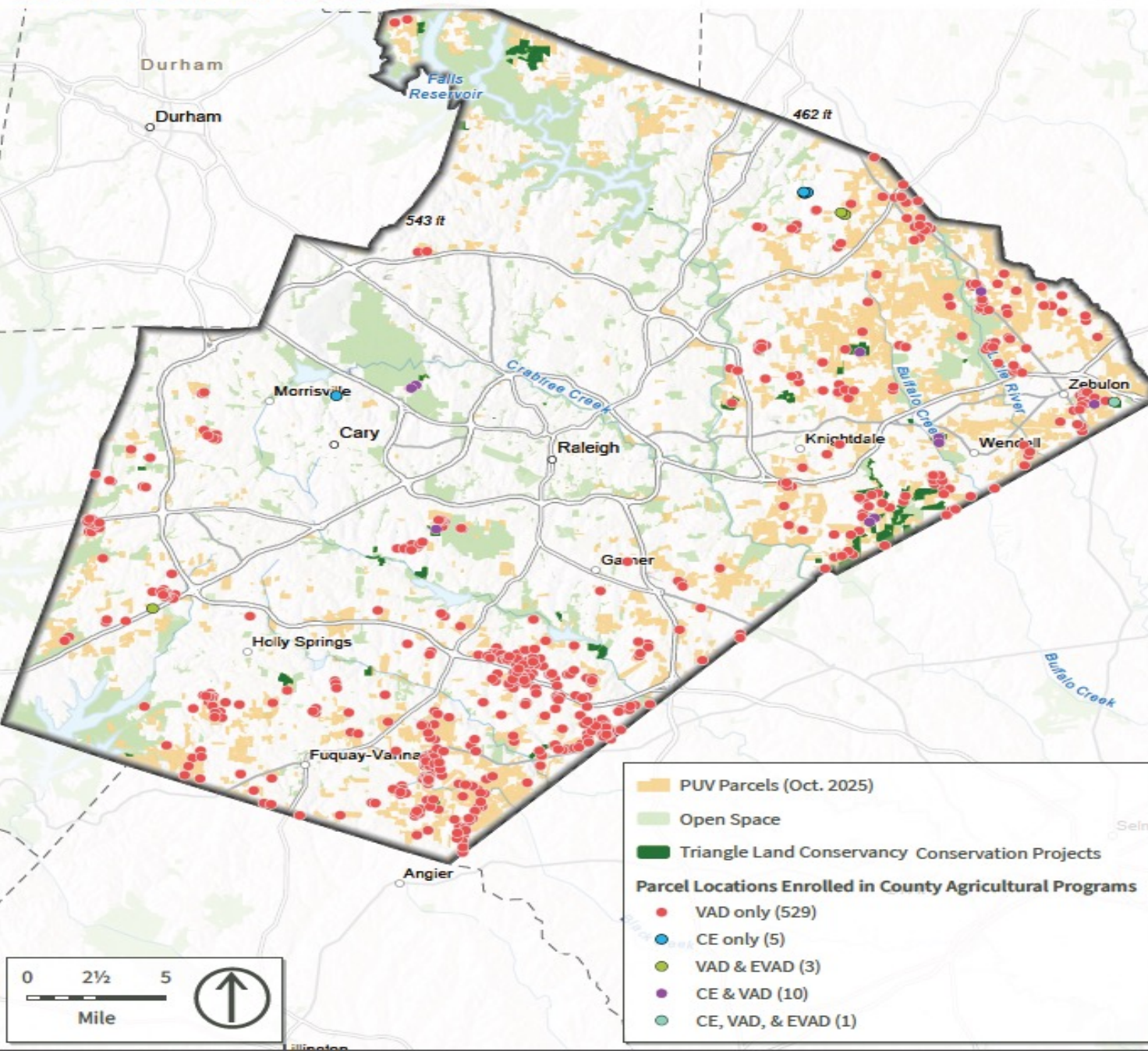


Prime Farmland Soils

Land Cover



WAKE COUNTY LAND ENROLLED IN COUNTY AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS BY PROGRAM TYPE OCTOBER 2025

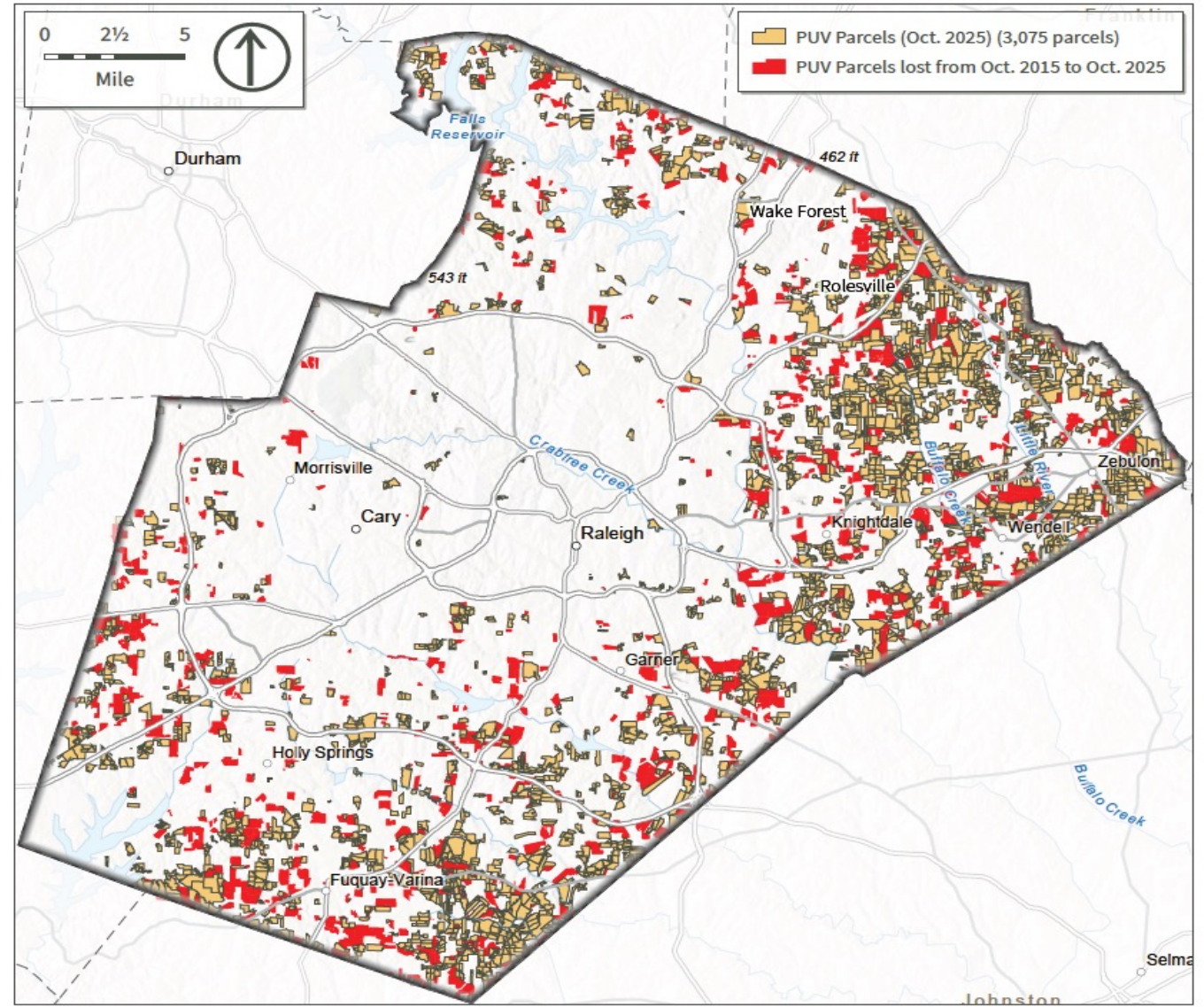


VAD Enrollment

FARMLAND CONVERSION TRENDS 2015-2025

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

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



FARMLAND CONVERSION TRENDS, 2015-2025

What tools exist for prioritization?

- Land cover, Prime soils maps
- Local agricultural zoning, agricultural districts
- Watersheds
- Farm size
- Proximity to municipalities/development
- Conservation easement ranking forms
 - ADFP, NRCS, county-specific

Pick your Ranking Form...

Evaluation & Scoring

All conservation easement projects are evaluated using the scoring sheet included in this section. Projects are ranked based upon the annual deferred evaluation of each conservation easement project.

Question	Scoring Item
What percentage of the proposed easement acreage of land is Prime, Unique, or soils of statewide importance?	Select primary county of proposed conservation easement: Length of proposed conservation easement: Applicant organization county: What percentage of the proposed conservation easement acreage is Prime, Unique, or soils of statewide importance? Does Triangle Land Conservancy have an economic interest as a producer in the agricultural production as defined in the NC Statute 160D-903 on the proposed conservation easement acreage? [Producer defined as an individual or entity that produces an Agricultural Commodity through participating in day-to-day labor, management, and field operations; or that has the right to harvest an Agricultural Commodity.] Is Triangle Land Conservancy pledging to keep the proposed conservation easement acres available for future production of agricultural commodities defined by NC Statute 160D-903? Specify if there are any other private entities with an economic interest in the agricultural production as defined in NC Statute 160D-903? Are any of the producers using the proposed agricultural conservation easement identified as one of the following? Check all that apply.- a resource farmer or rancher (as defined by the US Department of Agriculture) a beginning farmer or rancher (as defined by the US Department of Agriculture) a socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher (as defined by the US Department of Agriculture) Are the proposed agricultural conservation easement acres currently enrolled in Voluntary Conservation Easement Program?
Are the proposed agricultural conservation easement acres currently enrolled in Voluntary Conservation Easement Program?	Are any of the producers members of Got to Be NC (previously known as Goodness Grows in NC)?

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE – NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE	
Clear Form	
Easement No.	Parcel No.
Landowner Name(s):	
Farm Name (if applicable):	
Signature from Authorized Entity Representative:	Date:
FY2026 NRCS ALE Ranking Form	
Part 1. National Ranking Factors (Maximum points = 200)	
	Score (Make Selection)
1. Percent of prime, unique, and important soils in the proposed easement area to be protected? (Maximum Points = 25)	
0 points for less than or equal to 50% 5 points for greater than 50% and less than or equal to 60% 10 points for greater than 60% and less than or equal to 70% 15 points for greater than 70% and less than or equal to 80% 20 points for greater than 80% and less than or equal to 90% 25 points for greater than 90%	
2. Percent of cropland, pastureland, grassland, and rangeland in the proposed easement area to be protected? (Maximum points = 25)	
0 points for less than or equal to 50% 5 points for greater than 50% and less than or equal to 60% 10 points for greater than 60% and less than or equal to 70% 15 points for greater than 70% and less than or equal to 80% 20 points for greater than 80% and less than or equal to 90% 25 points for greater than 90%	
3. Ratio of the total acres of land in the proposed easement area to be protected to average farm size in the county according to the most recent USDA Census of Agriculture (USDA - NASS - Census of Agriculture) (Maximum points = 15)	
Ratio = Total acres of land in the parcel / Average farm size in county (see table 2 ranking guidance)	
0 points for a ratio of less than or equal to 1.0	



Triangle Land Conservancy GIS Prioritization Tool



Wake County GIS Prioritization Tool



Questions?



WAKE.GOV

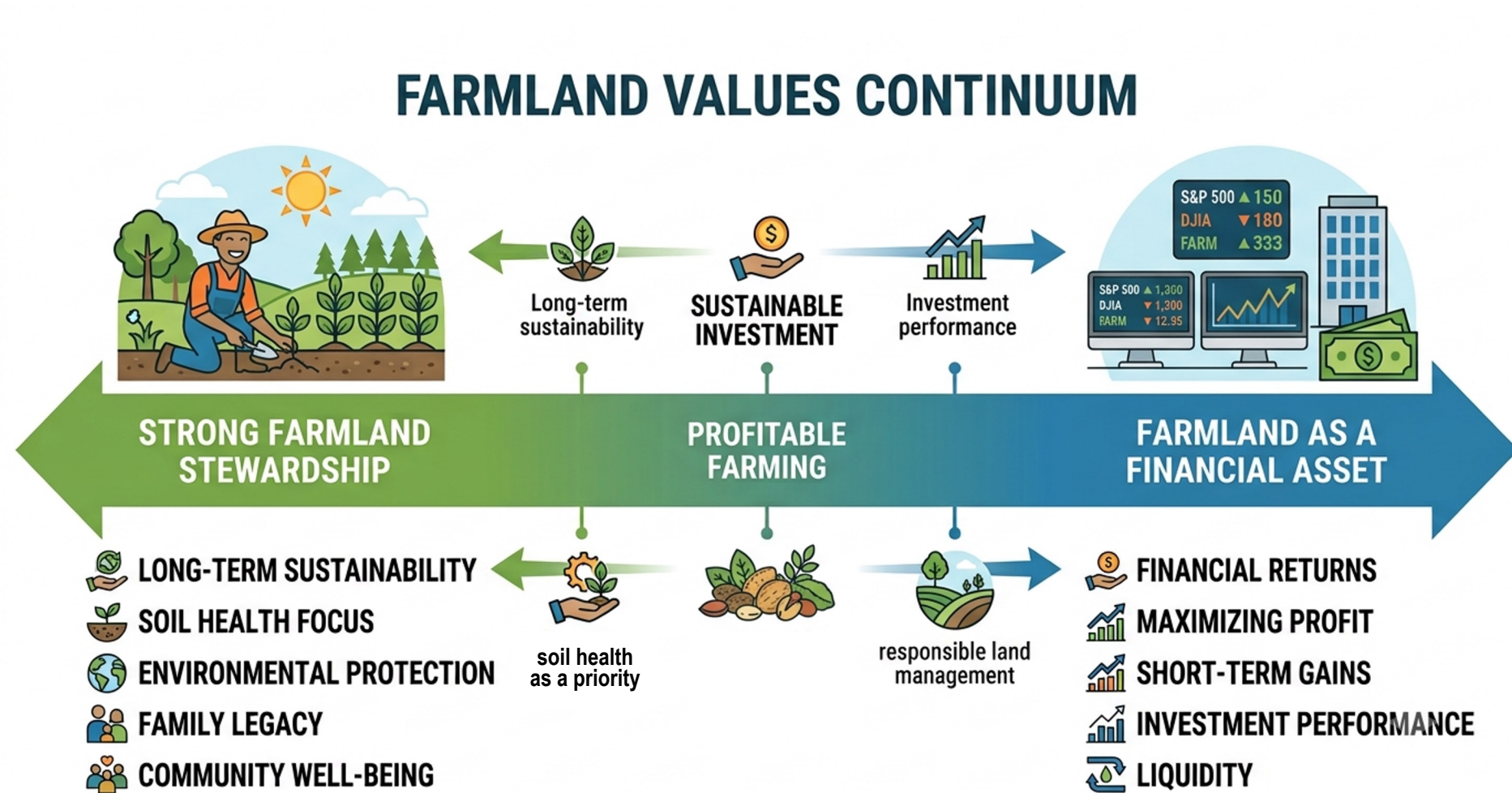
Farm Viability & Retention Programs at the County Level

Community Mapping & Other Land Use Planning Tools
VAD Conference
July 22, 2026

NC STATE EXTENSION

NC FarmLink

Farmland Values Continuum





Challenges to Planning for Ag

- Holding zone for future development
- Statutory limitation 10-acre max (NC)
- Balance property rights & ag/rural preservation
- Competition: housing on septic vs. prime farmland
- Increasing pressure from residential growth & for data centers
- Limited tools that provide mixed success
- Political will to preserve generated too late (for some properties)
- Lack of understanding of ecological benefits that ag land provides

NC Statutes Chapter 106, Article 61

Ag Development & Preservation of Farmland

§ 106-739. Agricultural advisory board authority

(1) Review and make recommendations or decisions concerning ag districts.

(2) Review and make recommendations concerning any ordinance or amendment adopted or proposed for adoption under this Article.

(3) Hold public hearings on public projects likely to have an impact on ag operations, particularly if such projects involve condemnation of all or part of any qualifying farm.

(4) Advise the governing board of the county or city on projects, programs, or ***issues affecting the ag economy or way of life.***

(5) Perform other tasks or duties assigned by the county or city.

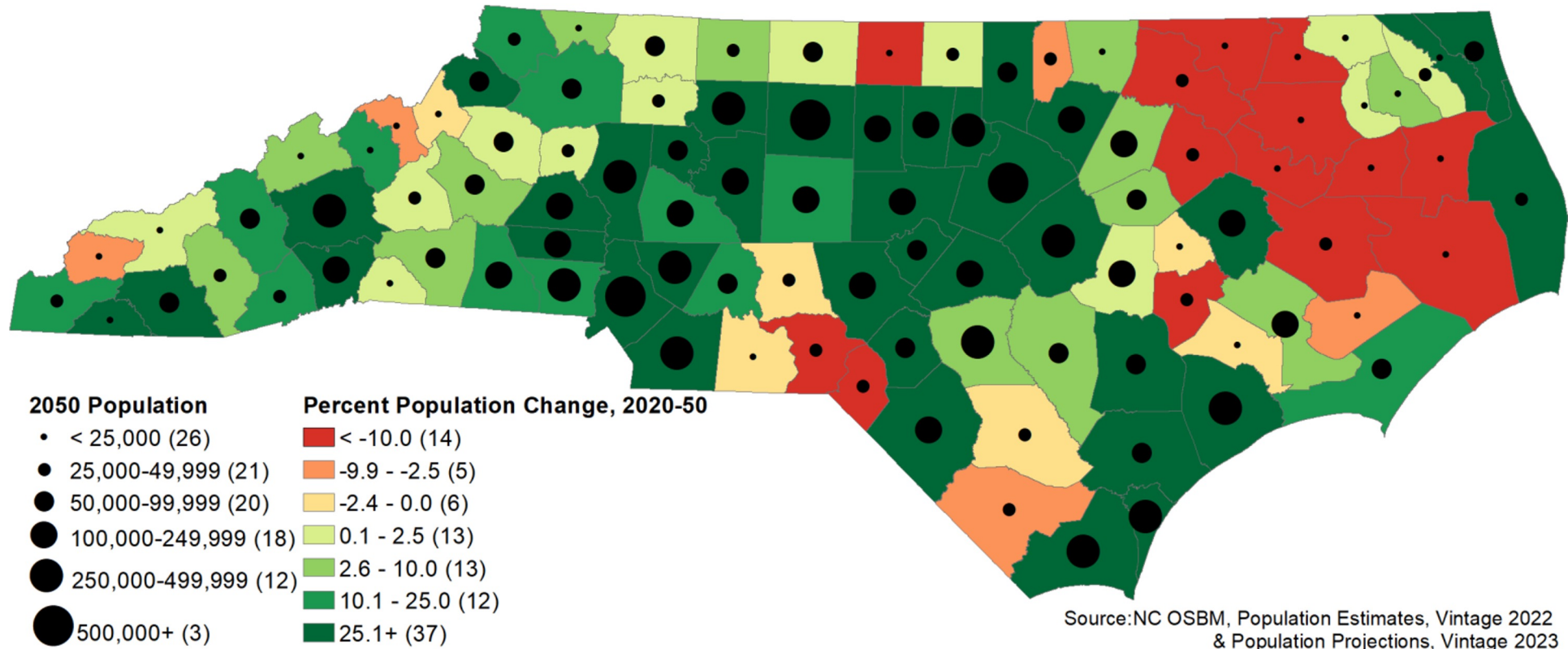
Development Pressure

- **Low Density Residential**
 - ‘a place in the country’
 - 10+ acre exempt lots (--> farmland fragmentation)
- **Mid-Life & Career Shift Purchases**
 - greater purchasing flexibility
 - enhanced financing options
- **Bonafide Farm + Present Use Value = ? Profitable Farm**
- **Financialization of Farmland**
 - swift and efficient transactions by investors

2024 Farm Credit Real Estate Value Report

REGION	10-25 ACRES	20-75 ACRES	75+ ACRES
Mountains	\$9,156	\$6,381	\$5,157*
Asheville Metro	\$16,320	\$13,048*	\$9,861*
Foothills	\$8,322	\$6,539	\$4,697
Charlotte Metro	\$16,675	\$10,849	\$8,662*
Piedmont	\$9,121	\$5,938	\$4,762
Triad Metro	\$12,347	\$10,828*	\$10,821*
Triangle Metro	\$22,331	\$15,741*	\$18,500*

NC STATE EXTENSION



PLANNING FOR AGRICULTURE



Where can agriculture fit within existing ordinances and plans?

Agricultural Zoning

Open Space

Natural Hazard
Mitigation

Natural
Resource
Conservation

Subdivision

PLANNING FOR AGRICULTURE



Consider food + agriculture within local planning representation.

- Boards of commissioners, planning commission
 - If not farmers, ag organizations (Farm Bureau, Extension, others) State agencies and organizations may support on as needed basis

PROMOTING + PROTECTING AGRICULTURE



- **Farm Visibility**
 - Local food campaigns, Farm City Weeks, Farm tours, agritourism
- **Land Access**
 - Incubator farms, local government owned land for lease, Voluntary Ag District (VAD), Present Use Value (PUV)
- **Land Protection**
 - Conservation Easements + PACE, VAD, PUV, Comprehensive Planning, + Rezoning
- **Farm Succession**
 - FarmLink, Succession planning

USDA AG CENSUS - 25 years

North Carolina 1997 to 2022

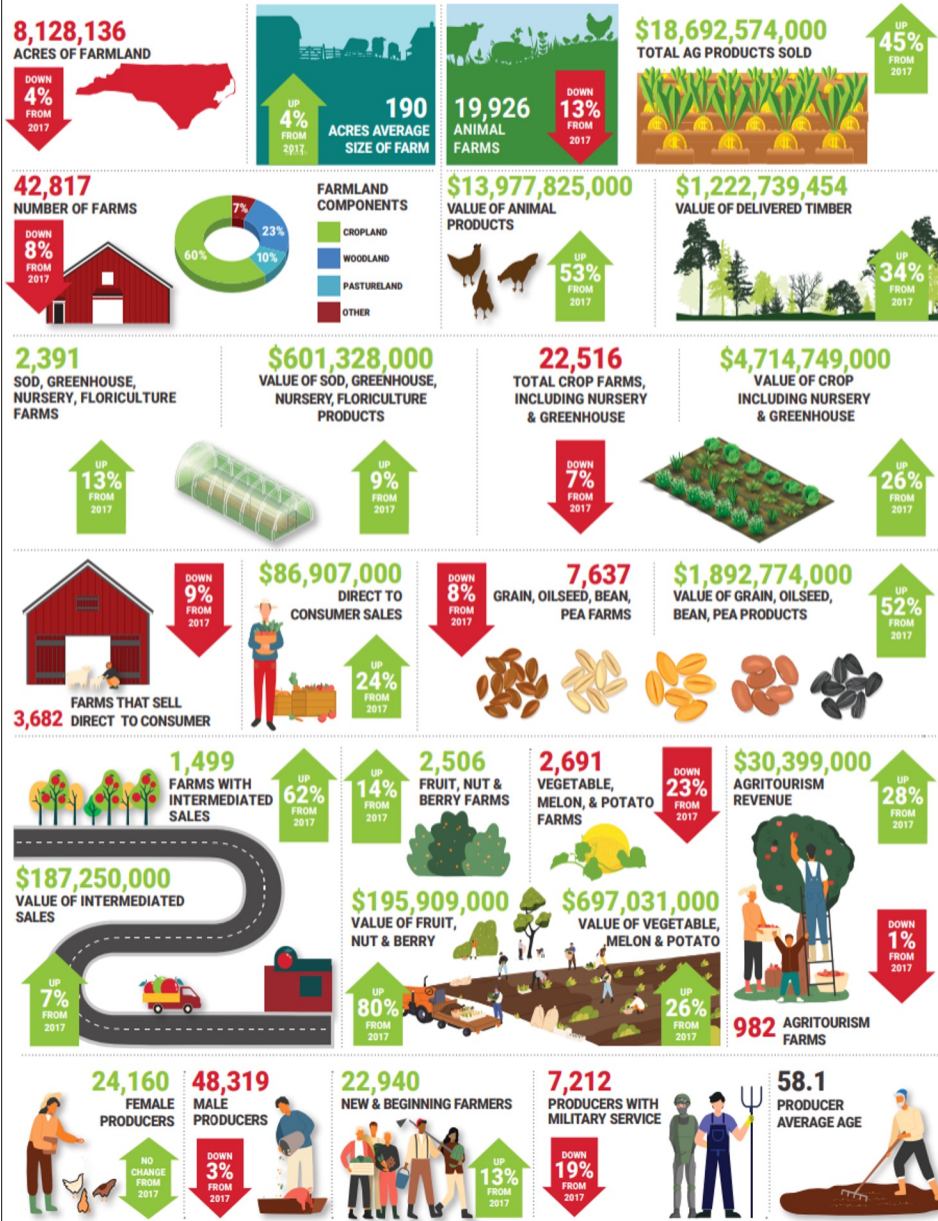
	1997	2022	Change
Farms	59,120	42,817	28% Decrease
Farm Acres	9,444,867	8,128,136	14% Decrease

NC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION NC A&T RUTHERFORD

North Carolina

LOCAL FARMS AND FOOD PROFILE

DATA FROM 2017 & 2022 USDA CENSUS
FOR MORE INFO GO.NCSU.EDU/AGCENSUS



HIGHLIGHTS

FARM / FOREST MARKET VALUES

Up 50%

Livestock

Fruits, Nuts, & Berries

Grains & Oilseeds

Up 25%

Agritourism

Vegetables / Melons / Potatoes

Crop / Green Industries

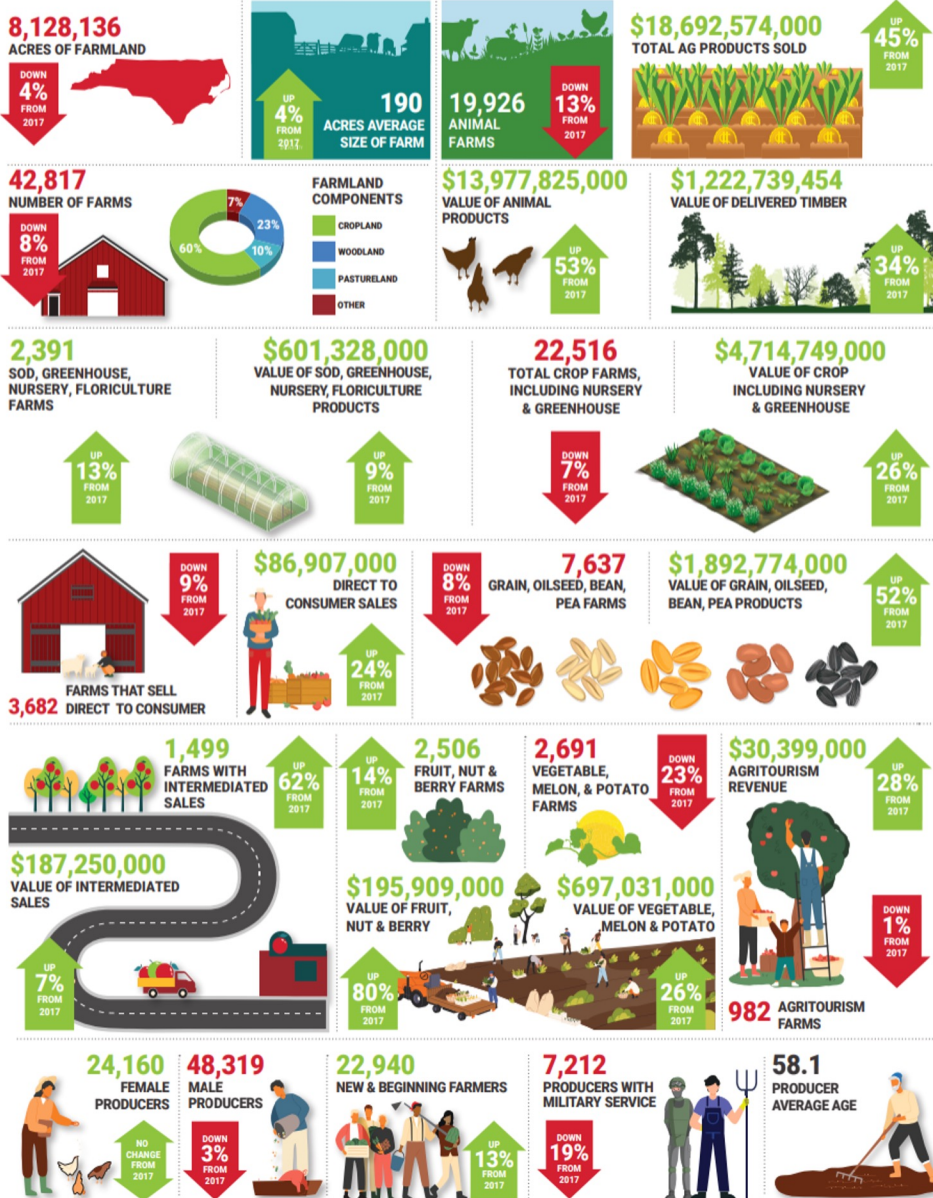
Delivered Timber

Up 5%+

Direct to Consumer

Intermediated Sales

Green Industries



HIGHLIGHTS FARMLAND / FARMS

Up 50%

Intermediated Sales Farms

Up 25%

Fruit, Nut, & Berry Farms
Green Industry Farms

Down 10%+

Animal Farms - Vegetable Farms

Down 5%+

Farms - Crop Farms
Direct to Consumer Farms

... and \$162,500,000 in Property Taxes Paid

Resources and Options for Landowners & Farm Seekers

The screenshot displays the NC FarmLink website interface. At the top, the navigation bar includes the NC STATE EXTENSION logo and links for About, Meet Our Staff, Events, County Centers, Topics, Paths to CALS, and Give Now. Below this, a dark header features a menu icon and the text "NC FarmLink". The main content area has a red background and contains two featured articles. The first article, "Sign Up for a Farm Succession Consultation", includes a photo of a man and a child in a field and was published on June 16, 2023. The second article, "Your Land, Your Legacy Meeting in Haywood County", includes a collage of farm-related images and was published on June 22, 2026. At the bottom, there are two red icons: a group of people for "Find a Farmer" and a plant for "Find a Farm". Both sections provide instructions on how to use the respective databases and include a right-pointing arrow.

ncfarmlink.ces.ncsu.edu

NC STATE EXTENSION

About Meet Our Staff Events County Centers Topics Paths to CALS Give Now

Menu NC FarmLink

Sign Up for a Farm Succession Consultation
Published - June 16, 2023
Read →

YOUR LEGACY
FREE EDUCATIONAL MEETING
August 13th
6 PM to 8 PM
589 Raccoon Rd,
Waynesville, NC 28786
Learn about common pitfalls
to avoid with farm estate
planning and learn about free
resources available to help
farm families and landowners
with farm transitions.
Meal provided by Farm
Bureau. Please RSVP by
Your Land, Your Legacy Meeting in Haywood County
Published - June 22, 2026
Read →

Find a Farmer
Looking for a Farmer? Check on the NC FarmLink
Farm Seeker Database
→

Find a Farm
Looking for Land to Farm? Check out the NC
FarmLink Farmland Opportunity Database
→

82°F
Mostly cloudy

10:55 AM
7/26/2026

ncfarmlink.ces.ncsu.edu

go.ncsu.edu/ncfarmland



NC Farm and Forestland Info Hub



NC Farm and Forest Land Info Hub Stakeholder Survey

Help us design a new online N.C. Cooperative Extension hub for information and resources on North Carolina's farm and forest land by sharing your needs and preferences.

[Complete the Survey →](#)



Retaining Farmland & Forest Land

Information about opportunities for landowners and the general public to help retain farmland in their communities and across the state

[Learn More →](#)



County-Level Data

Click here and use these resources to become a better advocate for agriculture and farming at the local level. Great info for local ag boards and agencies, elected officials and county staff, and of course, farmers and local residents.

[Explore Data →](#)



Farmland and Development

Our challenge is to continue to support farming and agriculture given the strong sense of heritage and impact it has in communities across the state, and develop timely policies and strategies that can still allow North Carolina to grow and develop. We hope these resources can help you become informed. Use the feedback option to share resources that you want



State-Level Data

Brush up on your knowledge of statewide statistics for agriculture and farming, and the \$102 billion economic impact to the state of North Carolina.

[Explore Data →](#)



Soil & Water

Explore soil data and discover tools for mapping realistic yield expectations for your address or county.

[View Resources →](#)

ncfarmland.ces.ncsu.edu



American Farmland Trust

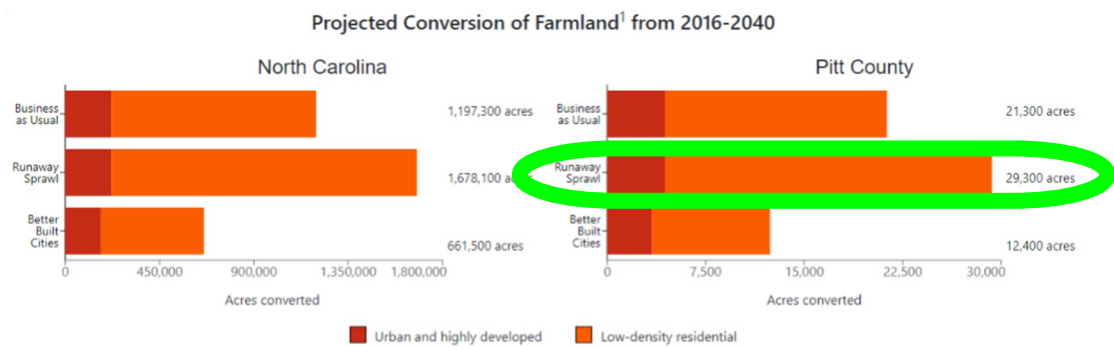
FARMS UNDER THREAT: THE STATE OF THE STATES

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NC STATE EXTENSION

County	Acres Converted to UHD + LDR to 2040 BAU	County	Percent Converted to UHD + LDR to 2040 BAU
Johnston	52,496	Dare	66.2
Union	51,470	Mecklenburg	48.4
Wake	46,587	New Hanover	40.9
Iredell	42,727	Transylvania	40.1
Harnett	37,397	Wake	36.6
Guilford	36,974	Clay	32.9
Davidson	32,215	Watauga	32.2
Mecklenburg	29,408	Macon	28.3
Lincoln	29,318	Guilford	24.7
Bowen	27,988	Union	24.2



Urban and highly developed (UHD) land use includes commercial, industrial, and moderate-to-high density residential areas.
Low-density residential (LDR) land use includes scattered subdivisions and large-lot housing, which fragment the agricultural land base and limit production.

¹Farmland includes cropland, pasture and woodland associated with farms.

Development threatens every state's best agricultural land: **54% of North Carolina's conversion and 56% of Pitt County's conversion** is projected to occur on the state's best land² in our *Business as Usual* scenario.

Acres of North Carolina's best agricultural land² projected to be converted, 2016-2040

Scenario	North Carolina	Pitt County
Business as Usual	642,800	11,800
Runaway Sprawl	909,400	16,300
Better Built Cities	345,500	6,800

²Lands with productivity, versatility, and resiliency (PVR) values above the state median. See the [PVR Fact Sheet](#).



Pitt County
North Carolina

Total and Per Farm Overview, 2022 and change since 2017

	2022	% change since 2017
Number of farms	367	-23
Land in farms (acres)	151,433	-19
Average size of farm (acres)	413	+6

Estimate Runaway Sprawl 2016 to 2040 29,300 acres in 24 years

USDA Ag Census 2017 to 2022 34,979 acres in 5 years

...Reported loss already greater in 5 years than 24 year estimate



Biggest Challenges to Farming

- Farmland Availability
- Farmland Affordability
- Weather Extremes
- Farm Labor
- Markets
- End of Life Health Care

But Can We Do Anything About Any of These?

(Farm Based Resiliency Planning)

Navigating Forward Step 1

Audience Specific Outreach Materials

Language

Trust

Partnership

Navigating Forward Step 2

Critical Planning Considerations

Open Space

Smart Growth

Climate Resilience

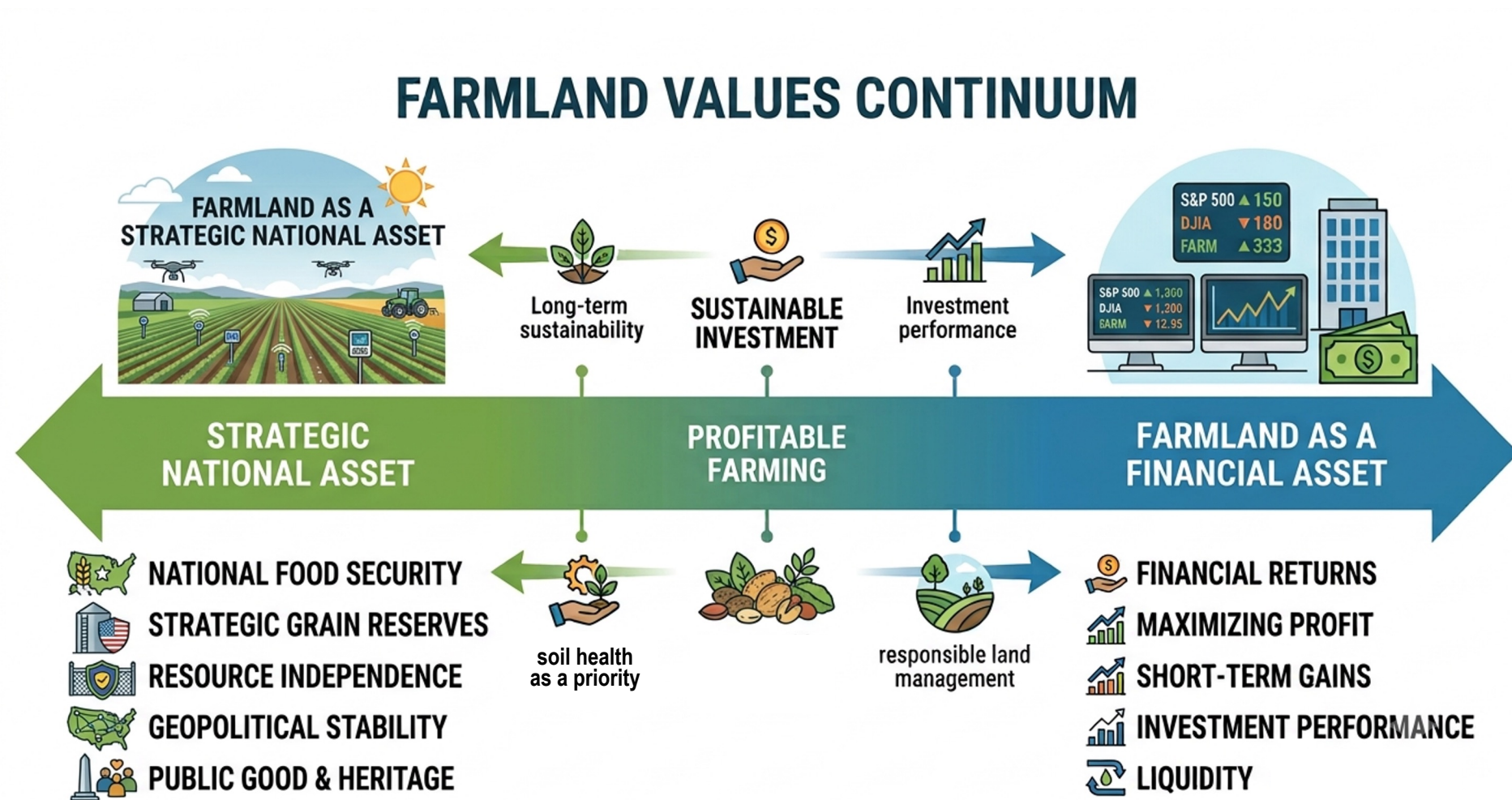
Affordable Housing

Nature Based Solutions

Regional Mitigation Plans

**** Food & Agricultural Security ****

Farmland as a Strategic National Asset



**** Food & Agricultural Security ****

**Farmland and Farming Activities are Strategic
Resources with Direct Implication to the
Economy of NC and the US**

Local & Regional Food Security

Healthy Community Asset
(Urban, Periurban, & Rural)

Navigating Forward Step 3

Integrating **** Food & Agricultural Security **** into Scoping Documents

160D Comprehensive & Land Use Plans
Universal Development Ordinances
Farmland Plans

State Programs & USDA Agencies

Navigating Forward Step 4

Integrating

**** Food & Agricultural Security ****
into Implementation Guidance

Public Lands for Agriculture

Prime Farmland Map Layer Use

Facilitated Farmer & Landowner Matching

(True) Agrivoltaic Developments (W/Bonding)

Mitigation for Farmland Conversion (CA, MS, VT)

Navigating Forward

Step 4 Con't

Integrating

**** Food & Agricultural Security ****
into Implementation Guidance

Incentivize Working Farms

Ag Conservation Easements

Farmland Protection Policy Act (US)

Uniform Partition of Heirs Property Act

Farm Transition Incentives (Tax Credits & Grants)

Navigating Forward

Step 4 Con't

Integrating

**** Food & Agricultural Security ****
into Implementation Guidance

Buy-Protect-Sell Programs

Debt Relief for Working Lands

Farm Business Property Tax Credit

Farm Management Support Programs



INNOVATIVE TOOLS TO WATCH FOR

- **Identifying prime farmland** & adopt protection standards similar to floodplains, wetlands, & steep slopes
- **Green infrastructure planning** (broader than stormwater alone) & prioritizing preservation of lands that meet multiple objectives
- **Ag land as public infrastructure** to address future food security needs
- **Land Access Policies & Incentives**
 - Tax Credits
 - Capital Gains
- **Land ownership options**
 - REITs
 - Land Funds
 - Self Directed IRAs
 - Buy Protect Sell
 - Land Trusts
 - Crowdfunding

Tax Credits & Loans for Beginning Farmers & Landowners

- Pennsylvania

- Owner agricultural assets eligible for tax credit equal to:
 - 5% of the lesser of the sale price or fair market value of the agricultural asset, up to a maximum of \$32,000; or
 - 10% of the gross rental income of the first, second, and third year of the rental agreement, up to a maximum of \$7,000 per year

- Minnesota

- Cash Leases, 10% of annual rental income, \$7k cap
- Share Rent Leases, 15% of annual rental income, \$10k cap
- Sales 8% (Beginning) or 12% (Limited Access) of sale price \$50k cap
- Farm Business Management tuition 3 yr @\$1.5k/yr

Capital Gains

Some states allow a subtraction or rate reduction of capital gains

- Iowa
 - <https://revenue.iowa.gov/taxes/tax-guidance/individual-income-tax/iowa-capital-gain-deduction>
- Montana
 - deduction of 100% of any income or capital gain realized, up to \$50,000, on the sale of 80 acres or more of Montana land to beginning farmers, when the sale is made pursuant to a long-term contract at 9% interest or less, which has been approved by the Montana agricultural loan authority.
- Oregon
 - [Capital gains reduced](#) to 5% from 9.9%
- Wisconsin
 - [60% reduction](#) of net long-term capital gain from farm assets held more than one year.

Government & Nonprofit Owned Farmland

- Boulder CO
 - County owns 26k acres, 122 parcels and leases to 56 leaseholders; 35% of all farmland in county!
- New England
 - Land for Good report
- Ann Arbor MI
 - Greenbelt Program



**AVAILABLE
AT NO COST**

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NC STATE EXTENSION

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