



**GUILFORD COUNTY
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
PLANNING BOARD**

Special Meeting Agenda

Old County Courthouse – Commissioners' Meeting Room
301 W. Market Street, Greensboro, NC 27401

April 23, 2025

6:00 PM

- I. Roll Call**
- II. Agenda Amendments**
- III. Approval of Minutes:** None
- IV. Rules and Procedures**
- V. Continuance Requests**
- VI. Old Business**

A. ADOPT ORDERS FOR SPECIAL USE PERMIT CASE #24-05-PLBD-00084: DUKE ENERGY SUBSTATION, 1872 ANDRES FARM ROAD

The Planning Board will consider adopting three orders regarding decisions on Special Use Permit (SUP) Case #24-05-PLBD-00084 following the Evidentiary Hearing at the Planning Board Special Meeting held on October 2, 2024.

- 1. ORDER ADDRESSING RES JUDICATA ON SUP CASE #24-05-PLBD-00084 FOR DUKE ENERGY SUBSTATION ON 1872 ANDREWS FARM ROAD**
- 2. ORDER ADDRESSING STANDING OF SA ASSOCIATES LIMITED PARTNERSHIP ON SUP CASE #24-05-PLBD-00084**
- 3. ORDER TO APPROVE SUP CASE #25-05-PLBD-00084 FOR THE DUKE ENERGY SUBSTATION ON 1872 ANDREWS FARM ROAD**

Information on **ORDERS FOR SPECIAL USE PERMIT CASE #25-05-PLBD-00084** can be viewed at the link below.

<https://bit.ly/energy-substation>

VII. New Business

A. Presentation: Guiding Guilford – Move Forward Together Comprehensive Plan (Design Workshop)

1. Draft Plan

- GUILFORD COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
<https://designworkshop.box.com/s/qry63rwu9dqw17fs2o167st1hqp5lo4z>
- GUILFORD PLANNING THEMES SUMMARY (ENCLOSED)
<https://designworkshop.box.com/s/3mfgvwwwjb7sbivu2ivvfocncgsj44g0>
- PLANNING BOARD UPDATE PRESENTATION
<https://designworkshop.box.com/s/sqrt0ip0niyzzm8ra9mzdV0nf0eq6jma>

2. Public Comment

VIII. Other Business

None

IX. Adjourn

Information may be obtained for any of the aforementioned cases by contacting the Guilford County Planning and Development Department at 336.641.3334 or visiting the Guilford County Planning and Development Department at 400 West Market Street, Greensboro, NC 27401.

(Insert Color Paper)



**GUILFORD COUNTY
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
400 W. Market St.
P. O. Box 3427
Greensboro, NC 27402
(336) 641-3334**

**ORDER ADDRESSING *RES JUDICATA*
(24-05-PLBD-00084)**

On October 2, 2024, the Guilford County Planning Board met and held an Evidentiary Hearing to consider the following application ("Application" or "current Application"):

Case Number: 24-05-PLBD-00084

Property Owner/Applicant: Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC ("Applicant")
Randy Veltri, Director of PGO Siting, Permitting, & Environmental Oversight

Request: This request was to consider granting a Special Use Permit (SUP) for a Major Utility (Energy Substation) subject to the submitted Site Plan. The request included development conditions proposed by the Applicant.

Property Location: Located at 1872 Andrews Farm Road (Guilford County Tax Parcel #229086 in Jefferson Township) at the northwest intersection of McConnell Road and comprises approximately 12.53 acres ("the Property"). The subject parcel is zoned AG, Agricultural.

Tax Parcel Number(s): 229086

At the hearing, the Board raised and considered, *sua sponte*, whether its denial of Applicant's previous application for a Special Use Permit for an electrical substation on the same property barred it from granting Applicant's current Application.

Having considered the evidence and arguments presented on the issue of whether its denial of Applicant's previous Application for a Special Use Permit for an electrical substation on the same property barred it from granting Applicant's current Application, the Board makes the following Findings of Fact:

BACKGROUND

1. The Board provided proponents, including Applicant, and opponents the opportunity to provide evidence and argument on this issue.
2. On April 12, 2023, the Board denied an application for a Special Use Permit submitted on March 7, 2023, by Deborah G. Jones (the then owner of the Property) and Duke Energy's representative (Jacobs) to build an electrical substation on the Property ("the prior Application").
3. The Board denied the prior Application on the following grounds, as set out in its April 12, 2023 Order:

Finding 4: That the location and character of the use, if developed according to the plan submitted, will not be in harmony with the area in which it is to be located and is not in general conformity with the plan of development of the Jurisdiction and its environs. This is based on sworn testimony and evidence submitted during the Evidentiary Hearing which shows the following:

For this particular power substation, it is not able to function without the connection to the larger network through distribution lines, which based on the sworn testimony heard during the hearing, are not in harmony with the area in which the substation will be located and no evidence presented that those two can be separated.

Finding 5: The Board cannot find that the use will not substantially injure the value of adjoining or abutting property, and/or the use is not a public necessity. This is based on sworn testimony and evidence submitted during the Evidentiary Hearing which shows the following:

The applicant failed to demonstrate evidence to evaluate whether either the value of adjoining properties would not be harmed, or that it was a public necessity in this location as it was described.

The Board's April 12, 2023 Order found the remaining special use permit requirements had been met. The Board takes judicial notice of the prior Application and the Board's April 12, 2023 Order.

4. Thereafter, on May 30, 2024, Applicant submitted the current Application for a Special Use Permit to build an electrical substation on the Property.
5. At the hearing, Applicant added the following condition to its Application with the Board's approval:
Any trees damaged or diseased in the buffer area will be replaced by the Applicant.ⁱ
6. Mount Ulla Historical Preservation Soc., Inc. v. Rowan County provides the legal standard that governs whether the denial of a special use permit bars a subsequent special use permit on *res judicata* grounds:

A material change which precludes the use of the defense of *res judicata* occurs when the specific facts or circumstances which led to the prior quasi-judicial land use decision have changed to the extent that they "vitiates ... the reasons which produced and supported" the prior decision such that the application "can no longer be characterized as the same claim."

232 N.C.App. 436, 441, 754 S.E.2d 237, 242 (2014)(quoting St. Patrick's Church Corp. v. Daniels, 113 Conn. 132, 154 A. 343, 345 (1931).

7. Thus, to avoid being barred by *res judicata*, Applicant's current Application must have materially changed, in comparison to the prior Application, in such a way as to vitiate the concerns that led to the denial of its prior Application.
8. Whether the current Application reflects such "material change(s)" as defined by Mount Ulla is an issue of fact. See id., 232 N.C.App. at 442, 754 S.E.2d at 242.
9. The burden of proof on *res judicata* is on those who would oppose the Application.

Having heard and considered the evidence and arguments on this issue, the Board makes the following further

FINDINGS OF FACT

10. The current Application differs from the prior Application in at least the following respects:
 - a) A 160' vegetated area along the frontage with McConnell Rd. has been added, greatly buffering the substation from street view from McConnell Rd.
 - b) The setback from McConnell Rd. has increased from 200' to 295'. The setback from Andrews Farm Rd. decreased from 256' to 223'. The setback from the rear property line decreased from 268' to 133'. The setback from the interior side property line decreased from 184' to 166'.
 - c) The two straight driveways accessing the substation from McConnell Rd. have been replaced by a single, bent driveway which is offset from the substation until it reaches the southwest corner of the substation.
 - d) The current Application adds a condition that any trees damaged or diseased in the buffer area will be replaced by the Applicant.
 - e) Applicant provided affirmative evidence that the use will not substantially injure the value of adjoining or abutting property.
 - f) Applicant provided affirmative evidence that the use is a public necessity.
11. While there was evidence presented and arguments made on both sides of the issue of whether the changes reflected by the current Application were material under the standard set out in Mount Ulla, the bar of *res judicata* was not supported by a preponderance of substantial, material, and competent evidence.
12. To wit: Following the Evidentiary Hearing, Chairman Donnelly moved, seconded by Vice-Chairman Gullick, to find that the current Application did not represent a material change from the prior Application and that it was therefore barred by *res judicata*. The motion failed 5-2 (5 "no" votes to 2 "yes" votes).

Based upon the forgoing Background and Findings of Fact, the Board makes the following

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

13. To the extent that anything in the forgoing Background and/or Findings of Fact constitute or include Conclusions of Law, they are incorporated herein by reference.

14. The current Application is not barred by *res judicata*.

NOW, THEREFORE, based on the forgoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, it is ORDERED that:

THE CURRENT APPLICATION IS NOT BARRED BY *RES JUDICATA*.

ORDER APPROVED AS TO FORM BY THE GUILFORD COUNTY PLANNING BOARD on this ____ day of April, 2025 as follows (N.C. Gen. Stat. 160D-406(i)):

James Donnelly, Chairman	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Not Approved	_____ Signature
David Craft, Vice Chair	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Not Approved	_____ Signature
Ryan Alston, Member	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Not Approved	_____ Signature
Guy Gullick, Member	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Not Approved	_____ Signature
Sam Stalder, Member	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Not Approved	_____ Signature
Cara Buchanan, Member	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Not Approved	_____ Signature
Dr. Nho Thi Bui, Member	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Not Approved	_____ Signature
Rev. Gregory Drumwright, Member	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Not Approved	_____ Signature
Jason Little, Member	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Not Approved	_____ Signature

SO ORDERED, this ____ day of April, 2025.

James Donnelly, Chair
Guilford County Planning Board

Witness

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF FORSYTH

I certify that Oliver Bass personally appeared before me this day and certified to me under oath or by affirmation that he is not a grantee or beneficiary of the transaction, and that Oliver Bass witnessed/recognizes the signatures of James Donnelly, Guy Gullick, Ryan Alston, David Craft, Sam Stalder, Cara Buchanan, Dr. Nho Thi Bui, Rev. Gregory Drumwright, and Jason Little and that the signatures are genuine.

Date: _____

Jessie H Baptist, Notary Public

My commission expires: _____

Official Seal

ⁱ Subsequent to the Board's vote on the *res judicata* issue, Applicant added as a second condition that any trees damaged or diseased in the buffer area will be replaced by the Applicant. That condition was added subsequent to the Board's decision on the *res judicata* issue. That condition does not alter the findings, conclusions, and decision contained in this Order.

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**GUILFORD COUNTY
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
400 W. Market St.
P. O. Box 3427
Greensboro, NC 27402
(336) 641-3334**

**ORDER ADDRESSING STANDING OF SA ASSOCIATES LIMITED PARTNERSHIP
(24-05-PLBD-00084)**

On October 2, 2024, the Guilford County Planning Board met and held an Evidentiary Hearing to consider the following application:

Case Number: 24-05-PLBD-00084

Property Owner/Applicant: Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC ("Applicant")
Randy Veltri, Director of PGO Siting, Permitting, & Environmental Oversight

Request: This request was to consider granting a Special Use Permit (SUP) for a Major Utility (Energy Substation) subject to the submitted Site Plan. The request included development conditions proposed by the Applicant.

Property Location: Located at 1872 Andrews Farm Road (Guilford County Tax Parcel #229086 in Jefferson Township) at the northwest intersection of McConnell Road and comprises approximately 12.53 acres. The subject parcel is zoned AG, Agricultural.

Tax Parcel Number(s): 229086

At the hearing, SA Associates Limited Partnership ("SAALP"), through its counsel, S. Leigh Rodenbough, asserted legal standing to participate as a party, to which Applicant objected, through its counsel, Anthony Fox.

Having considered the evidence and arguments presented on the issue of SAALP's standing, the Board makes the following Findings of Fact:

BACKGROUND

1. The Board provided SAALP the opportunity to provide evidence and argument to demonstrate standing. SAALP claimed standing on the grounds that it would suffer special damages if the substation were to be built in accordance with the Special Use Permit sought. It based this claim on its contentions that the location of its property relative to the proposed substation – immediately to the north of and adjoining the parcel proposed for the substation – would lead to negative health impacts on, and to a diminution in value of, SAALP's property.
2. SAALP owns Guilford County Tax Parcel #228920, which adjoins the north property line of the Applicant's property proposed for an electrical substation.
3. In support of its contentions, SAALP offered testimony and documents through its preferred expert witness, John Goodman, an electrical engineer and North Carolina licensed (inactive) real estate broker.
4. Duke Energy, through counsel, cross-examined Mr. Goodman, and SAALP and Duke Energy each made legal arguments, through counsel, in support of their respective positions.

Having heard and considered that evidence and those arguments, the Board makes the following further

FINDINGS OF FACT RELATED TO HEALTH IMPACTS OF ELECTROMAGNETIC FIELDS ("EMF") ON THE SAALP PROPERTY

5. Mr. Goodman obtained an undergraduate degree in electrical engineering from North Carolina State University in 1972. Thereafter, following two years of military service, he worked as a principal engineer for DuPont from 1974 to 2002, then as a controls engineer and safety engineer for Konica Minolta, and subsequently as a safety engineer for the City of Greensboro, where he became an authorized OSHA trainer, retiring in 2019.
6. Mr. Goodman theorized that EMF produced by the substation might have a health impact on persons on the SAALP property.
7. As Mr. Goodman acknowledged, electrical engineers are not experts in EMF without additional training, which he does not believe that North Carolina State University offers. He has never taken any epidemiology courses regarding the effects of EMF on humans. When asked if he had had any continuing education regarding EMF, he answered "[n]ot a lot recently" (and identified none that he had taken at any time). Additionally, Mr. Goodman received training as an amateur radio operator, some of which included "EMF and things like that."
8. Mr. Goodman's method for investigating the relationship between the proposed substation and potential health effects on persons on the SAALP property consisted of internet research ("I spent quite a bit of time on the internet looking around").
9. In support of his opinions, he referred the Board to two articles that he had found on the internet, which were provided to the Board.
10. With respect to the first article, "Childhood cancer in relation to distance from high voltage power lines in England and Wales: a case-control study," published in "BMJ" in 2005, no evidence was

presented from which to assess the reliability of the journal, the article, its authors, its underlying research, or its conclusions. However, even if fully credited, the article found only a statistical “association” between childhood leukemia and “proximity of home address at birth to high voltage power lines.” The article emphasized the difference between association and causation.

11. With respect to the second article, “Power Lines, Electrical Devices, and Extremely Low Frequency Radiation,” published by the American Cancer Society, last revised October 28, 2022, no evidence was presented from which to assess the reliability of the journal, the article, its authors, its underlying research, or its conclusions.
12. No evidence was offered of the strength of any EMF that would likely be associated with the proposed substation, either at the substation itself or at any particular distance from it. Relatedly, no evidence was offered of the strength of any EMF that would likely be associated with the substation at any point on the SAALP property.
13. Mr. Goodman did not contend that EMF *is* harmful to health, only that it is *possible* that EMF is carcinogenic.
14. No evidence was presented that the proposed substation would cause an increased risk of adverse health impacts on the SAALP property.

FINDINGS OF FACT RELATED TO DIMINUTION OF VALUE

15. Mr. Goodman obtained a North Carolina real estate broker’s license in 1981 and, though it is inactive, has had it since then.
16. He has never done any appraisal work.
17. He has not looked at comparable valuations in the Greensboro area.
18. He has sold no properties in the Greensboro area within the last 5 years.
19. He is an inactive broker; all he could do is bring sales to active brokers.
20. There was no evidence presented that Mr. Goodman has ever actually been a broker for any actual sale.
21. There was no evidence presented that Mr. Goodman has ever attempted to assess or appraise the value of any property (for purposes of sale or otherwise).
22. Mr. Goodman’s method for investigating the impact of the proposed substation on the value of the SAALP property, so far as his testimony disclosed, consisted of finding an article on the internet entitled “The Pricing of Power Lines: A Geospatial Approach to Measuring Residential Property Values,” published in “JRER” in 2018. No evidence was presented from which to assess the reliability of the journal, the article, its authors, its underlying research, or its conclusions.
23. As Mr. Goodman acknowledged, the article addressed power lines, not substations.
24. SAALP offered no other evidence to attempt to show that the proposed substation would cause a diminution in the value of its property.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

25. To the extent that any of the forgoing Findings of Fact constitute or include Conclusions of Law, they are incorporated herein by reference.
26. To have standing in this proceeding, a party must demonstrate that it will sustain special damages distinct from the rest of the community. See Cherry v. Wiesner, 245 N.C.App. 339, 347, 781 S.E.2d 871, 877 (2016).
27. The burden of proving each element of standing is on the party claiming standing. See Cherry Community Organization v. City of Charlotte, 257 N.C.App. 579, 582-83, 809 S.E.2d 397, 400 (2018).
28. In accordance with N.C.G.S. 160D-1402(j), "competent evidence" for purposes of this proceeding "shall, regardless of the lack of a timely objection, not be deemed to include the opinion testimony of lay witnesses to any of the following:
 - a. The use of property in a particular way affects the value of other property.
 - b. The increase in vehicular traffic resulting from a proposed development poses a danger to the public safety.
 - c. Matters about which only expert testimony would generally be admissible under the rules of evidence."
29. Under Rule 702 of the Rules of Evidence, expert testimony must meet each of the following requirements:
 - (1) The testimony is based upon sufficient facts or data.
 - (2) The testimony is the product of reliable principles and methods.
 - (3) The witness has applied the principles and methods reliably to the facts of the case.
30. The bases for standing asserted by SAALP – a negative health impact on, and a diminution in value of, its property resulting from the proposed substation – both require competent expert opinion evidence.
31. SAALP failed to show that Mr. Goodman was qualified as an expert on the issue of the likelihood that the proposed substation would cause an increased risk of adverse health impacts on the SAALP property.
32. Even assuming that Mr. Goodman were otherwise qualified as an expert on that issue, SAALP failed to show that his testimony on this issue:
 - (1) Was based upon sufficient facts or data;
 - (2) Was the product of reliable principles and methods; and that
 - (3) He had applied the principles and methods reliably to the facts of the case.
33. Rather, it was clear that his method consisted only of an internet search without any assurance of sufficiency of facts or data, reliable principles or methodology, or reliable application of the principles and methods to the facts of the case.

34. SAALP similarly failed to show that Mr. Goodman was qualified as an expert on the issue of any diminution in value of the SAALP property that would result from the proposed substation.

35. Mr. Goodman's sole qualification on this issue is an inactive real estate broker's license. The possession of an inactive real estate broker's license, without more, is insufficient to qualify Mr. Goodman as an expert in property valuation.

36. Even assuming that Mr. Goodman were otherwise qualified as an expert on that issue, like the adverse health impact issue, SAALP failed to show that his testimony on the diminution of value issue:

- (1) Was based upon sufficient facts or data;
- (2) Was the product of reliable principles and methods; and that
- (3) He had applied the principles and methods reliably to the facts of the case.

37. Accordingly, SAALP failed to meet its burden of proving special damages, and thus standing, by a preponderance of substantial, competent, and material evidence.

38. To wit: Following the Evidentiary Hearing, Mr. Craft moved, seconded by Vice-Chairman Gullick, to find that the SAALP failed to establish standing due to its failure to prove special damages. The motion passed 7-0 (7 "yes" votes to 0 "no" votes).

NOW, THEREFORE, based on the forgoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, it is ORDERED that:

SA Associates Limited Partnership does not have standing to participate as a party in this proceeding and its request to do so is **DENIED**.

ORDER APPROVED AS TO FORM BY THE GUILFORD COUNTY PLANNING BOARD on this _____ day of April, 2025 as follows (N.C. Gen. Stat. 160D-406(i)):

James Donnelly, Chairman ☐ Approved ☐ Not Approved

Signature

David Craft, Vice Chair ☐ Approved ☐ Not Approved

Signature

Ryan Alston, Member ☐ Approved ☐ Not Approved

Signature

Guy Gullick, Member ☐ Approved ☐ Not Approved

Signature

Sam Stalder, Member ☐ Approved ☐ Not Approved

Signature

Cara Buchanan, Member ☐ Approved ☐ Not Approved

Signature

Dr. Nho Thi Bui, Member ☐ Approved ☐ Not Approved

Signature

Rev. Gregory Drumwright, Member ☐ Approved ☐ Not Approved

Signature

Jason Little, Member ☐ Approved ☐ Not Approved

Signature

SO ORDERED, this _____ day of April 2025.

James Donnelly, Chair
Guilford County Planning Board

Witness

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF FORSYTH

I certify that Oliver Bass personally appeared before me this day and certified to me under oath or by affirmation that he is not a grantee or beneficiary of the transaction, and that Oliver Bass witnessed/recognizes the signatures of James Donnelly, Guy Gullick, Ryan Alston, David Craft, Sam Stalder, Cara Buchanan, Dr. Nho Thi Bui, Rev. Gregory Drumwright, and Jason Little and that the signatures are genuine.

Date: _____

Jessie H Baptist, Notary Public

My commission expires: _____

Official Seal



**GUILFORD COUNTY
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
400 W. Market St.
P. O. Box 3427
Greensboro, NC 27402
(336) 641-3334**

ORDER APPROVING A SPECIAL USE PERMIT

On October 2, 2024, the Guilford County Planning Board met and held an Evidentiary Hearing to consider the following application:

BACKGROUND

Based on the evidence presented, the Board finds the following background facts by the greater weight of substantial, material, and competent evidence:

Case Number: 24-05-PLBD-00084

Property Owner/Applicant: Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC ("Applicant")
Randy Veltri, Director of PGO Siting, Permitting, & Environmental Oversight

Request: This request was to consider granting a Special Use Permit (SUP) for a Major Utility (Energy Substation) subject to the submitted Site Plan. The request included development conditions accepted by the applicant and approved by the Planning Board.

Property Location: Located at 1872 Andrews Farm Road (Guilford County Tax Parcel #229086 in Jefferson Township) at the northwest intersection of McConnell Road and comprises approximately 12.53 acres. The subject parcel is zoned AG, Agricultural.

Tax Parcel Number(s): 229086

Zoning District: Agricultural (AG) - The AG, Agricultural district is intended to provide locations for agricultural operations, farm residences, and farm tenant housing on large tracts of land. This district is further intended to reduce conflicts between residential and agricultural uses and preserve the viability of agricultural operations. Commercial agricultural product sales - "agritourism" - may be permitted. The minimum lot size of this district is 40,000 square feet.

Surrounding Uses:

- North: Undeveloped
South: Single-family dwellings on subdivided lots of 1 or more acres
East: A single-family subdivision comprised mostly of 1 acre or less lots across Andrews Farm Road.
West: Undeveloped land, single-family dwelling on more than 10 acres, and a 95-acre undeveloped tract that is part of an approved SUP (Case #21-05-GCPL-04192) for a solar farm on approximately 470 acres.

The applicant is requesting consideration to grant a Special Use Permit (SUP) for a Major Utility (Energy Substation). Energy substations are allowed as a Major Utility in the AG district pursuant to the Guilford County Unified Development Ordinance.

The requested action is consistent with the recommendation of the Rock Creek Area Plan. The AG Rural Residential Land Use Classification is intended to accommodate agricultural uses, large-lot residential developments, and low-density residential subdivisions not connected to public water and sewer with densities generally up to two (2) dwelling units per acre. Anticipated land uses are those permitted in the Agricultural (AG) zoning district, including but not limited to, institutional and recreational uses, as determined by the Guilford County Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). Energy Substations, as a Major Utility, are permitted in the AG zoning district with a Special Use Permit.

SECTION 1 – FINDINGS: Having heard all the evidence and arguments presented at its special meeting on October 2, 2024, the Planning Board determines that subject to the conditions imposed below, the following further findings are made by the greater weight of substantial, material, and competent evidence:

1. A written application was submitted and **is** complete in all material respects.
2. That the use **will not** materially endanger the public health or safety if located where proposed and developed according to the plan submitted. This conclusion is based on sworn testimony and evidence submitted during the Evidentiary Hearing which shows the following:

The proposed use has been designed with the latest safety and operational protocols; the proposed use has an 8-foot-tall perimeter fence; the proposed use will reduce power outages experienced by Duke Energy customers; the proposed use will not produce any air emissions; no environmental features are present within the proposed location that could be adversely affected.

3. The use, Major Utility (Energy Substation), subject to the submitted Site Plan and conditions for which the Special Use Permit is sought, **is** in conformance with all special requirements applicable to this use. The use meets all required conditions and specifications. This is based on sworn testimony and evidence submitted during the Evidentiary Hearing which shows the following:

The proposed use has been designed to follow the most up to date safety and operational protocols while also preventing environmental contamination, is designed to follow County setback and tree preservation requirements, is necessary for the County to maintain a reliable electric supply, and will have adequate visual screening and noise dampening so as not to injure the value of adjoining or abutting property.

4. That the location and character of the use, if developed according to the plan submitted, **will** be in harmony with the area in which it is to be located and **is** in general conformity with the

plan of development of the Jurisdiction and its environs. This is based on sworn testimony and evidence submitted during the Evidentiary Hearing which shows the following:

The proposed use is necessary to support development in the area and to provide a reliable electric supply to the County. The proposed use is compatible with nearby uses, such as the recently approved West River Solar 470-acre solar farm. All County setback and tree preservation requirements have been implemented into the use's design, and remaining forest cover at the proposed site will help "blend" the proposed use into its environs.

5. That the use **will not** substantially injure the value of adjoining or abutting property, or that the use is a public necessity. This is based on sworn testimony and evidence submitted during the Evidentiary Hearing which shows the following:

The proposed use will not injure the value of adjoining or abutting property. It has been designed to follow County setback and tree preservation requirements; the proposed use has also been designed to provide adequate screening and noise dampening. The proposed use is necessary for the County to maintain a reliable electric supply and promote development.

SECTION 2 – CONCLUSIONS: Based upon the forgoing Findings, the Planning Board concludes:

1. To the extent that any of the forgoing Background or Findings constitute or contain conclusions of law, they are incorporated herein by reference.
2. The Applicant met its burden of proving, by the greater weight of competent, material, and substantial evidence, its entitlement to the requested Special Use Permit under the requirements of the UDO, specifically including UDO Section 3.5.Q.

Following the Evidentiary Hearing, upon motion duly made and seconded, the Planning Board approved the Application by a 5-2 vote of all members present (Ayes: Donnelly; Alston; Gullick; Craft and Stalder; Nays: Dr. Bui and Rev. Drumwright).

THEREFORE, on the basis of all the foregoing, it is ORDERED that the Application for a SPECIAL USE PERMIT for an Energy Substation (Major Utility) is **GRANTED**, subject to the following:

1. The development of the parcel shall comply with all regulations as specified in the Guilford County UDO.
2. The development shall proceed in conformity with all amended plans and design features submitted as part of the Special Use Permit Application and kept on file by the Guilford County Planning and Development Department.
3. The development shall proceed upon approval of plan and design features by the TRC illustrating conditions related to the request and applicable development standards.
4. The following two (2) conditions apply:
 - Duke Energy will maintain the vegetated buffer shown on the Site Plan (including the replacement of any damaged or diseased trees within the buffer), except in the access drive and under power lines; and
 - Transmission lines associated with this substation will not cross residential properties on McConnell Road or Andrew Farms Road.

5. If the specified conditions addressed in this Special Use Permit are violated, the permit shall be revoked, and the use will no longer be allowed. Only by reapplying to the Planning Board for another Special Use Permit and receiving its approval can the use again be permitted.

ORDER APPROVED AS TO FORM BY THE GUILFORD COUNTY PLANNING BOARD on this the _____ day of April, 2025 as follows (N.C. Gen. Stat. 160D-406(i)):

James Donnelly, Chairman ☐ Approved ☐ Not Approved

Signature

David Craft, Vice Chair ☐ Approved ☐ Not Approved

Signature

Ryan Alston, Member ☐ Approved ☐ Not Approved

Signature

Guy Gullick, Member ☐ Approved ☐ Not Approved

Signature

Sam Stalder, Member ☐ Approved ☐ Not Approved

Signature

Cara Buchanan, Member ☐ Approved ☐ Not Approved

Signature

Dr. Nho Thi Bui, Member ☐ Approved ☐ Not Approved

Signature

Rev. Gregory Drumwright, Member ☐ Approved ☐ Not Approved

Signature

Jason Little, Member ☐ Approved ☐ Not Approved

Signature

SO ORDERED, this _____ day of April, 2025.

James Donnelly, Chair
Guilford County Planning Board

Witness

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF FORSYTH

I certify that Oliver Bass personally appeared before me this day and certified to me under oath or by affirmation that he is not a grantee or beneficiary of the transaction, and that Oliver Bass witnessed/recognizes the signatures of James Donnelly, Guy Gullick, Ryan Alston, David Craft, Sam Stalder, Cara Buchanan, Dr. Nho Thi Bui, Rev. Gregory Drumwright, and Jason Little, and that the signatures are genuine.

Date: _____

Jessie H Baptist, Notary Public

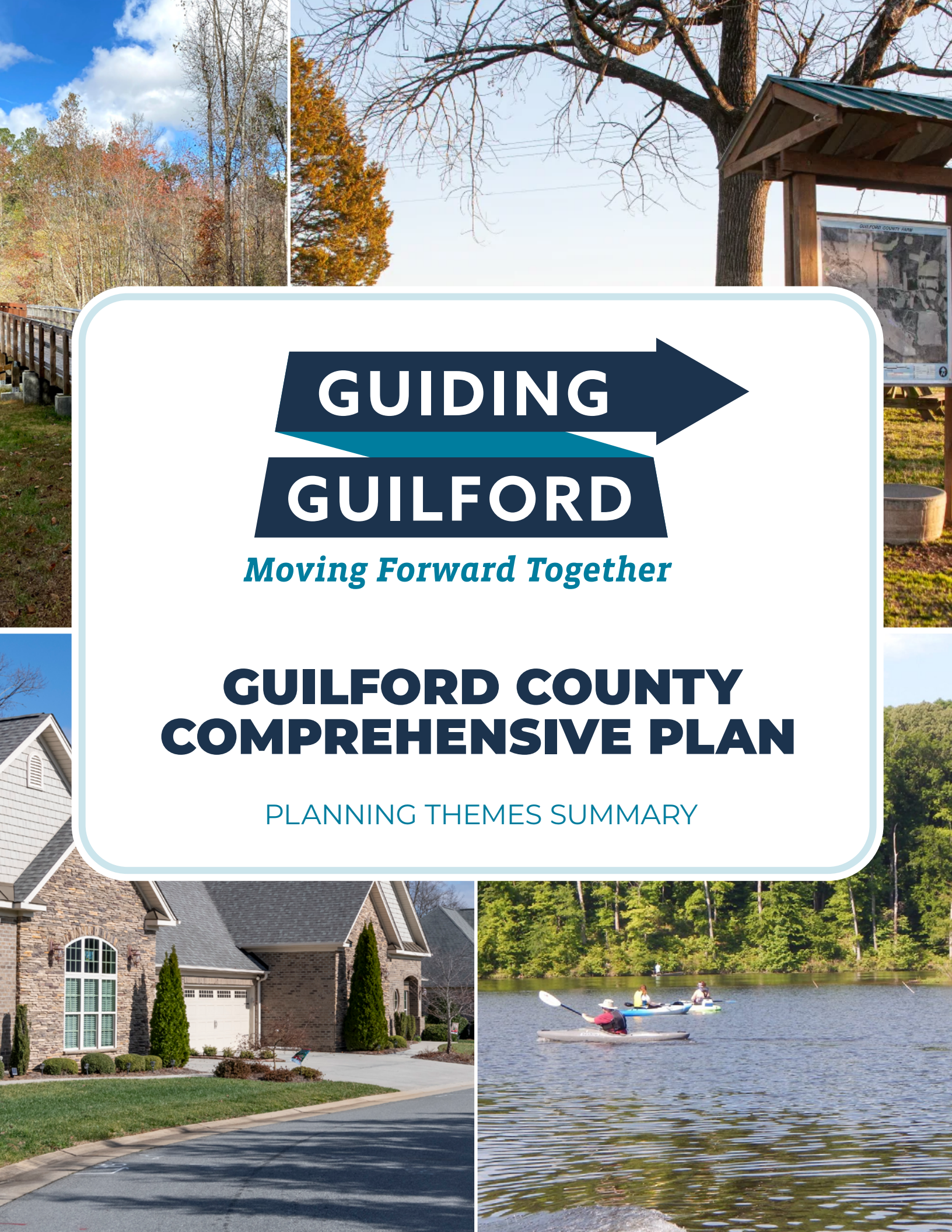
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GUIDING

GUILFORD

Moving Forward Together

GUILFORD COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

PLANNING THEMES SUMMARY

VISION

The community's vision for Guilford County was defined through extensive community engagement throughout 2023, when residents, workers and visitors were asked what their priorities were for the future of the county. This vision serves as a guiding statement for the Plan, and it is supported by the Planning Themes, Guiding Principles, and Future Land Use Framework found within.

Rooted in rich history, Guilford County is a welcoming and increasingly diverse community featuring rural landscapes, working farms, thriving businesses, and healthy neighborhoods. The County will foster a resilient and vibrant future by promoting sustainable and responsible development patterns, supporting innovative businesses, facilitating a variety of housing types, and protecting a unique culture so that it can be enjoyed and appreciated by all.



Company Mill Preserve, Guilford County. Photo credit: Design Workshop

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

GOAL STATEMENT

Celebrate Guilford County's unique sense of place by balancing agricultural preservation with desired development patterns, context-sensitive site design and inclusive placemaking.



COMMUNITY DIRECTIVE

In the Northeast and Southeast portions of the County, preservation and protection of agricultural land uses were among the top priorities indicated for the future.



POLICY 1: Continue to document historic resources and increase the visibility of historic preservation program.

POLICY 2: Celebrate cultural resources and continue to invest in the arts.

POLICY 3: Prioritize high-quality design and distinctive character in new development and redevelopment, recognizing variations across Guilford County.



COMMUNITY CHARACTER

NEAR-TERM ACTIONS

Actions are the specific implementation items that the County can take to realize the planning theme goal and policies. The actions below are the actions recommended within 1-3 years or that are ongoing. The Action Playbook chapter of the Guilford County Comprehensive Plan describes the full list of actions recommended.

POLICY 1: Continue to document historic resources and increase the visibility of historic preservation program.

- ✓ **ACTION C 1.1** Continue to designate historic resources that are eligible for the National Register, including architectural, archaeological, and cultural resources.
- ✓ **ACTION C 1.2** Evaluate means to strengthen the County's landmark designation process and consider adopting a Preservation of Demolition by Neglect Ordinance outlining standards and best practices to prevent demolition of historic resources by neglect.
- ✓ **ACTION C 1.3** Explore additional financial and development incentives that will provide assistance for private property owners to preserve or rehabilitate historic structures and spaces.
- ✓ **ACTION C 1.4** Incentivize restoration, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse of designated local landmark and National Register properties through expedited permit review, or through regulatory reliefs for site planning such as parking reductions or reduced setbacks. Encourage evaluations of Certificates of Appropriateness and conducting site visits for building permits to ensure compliance.
- ✓ **ACTION C 1.5** Continue to use outreach campaigns, websites, publications, and educational forums to increase public awareness and appreciation of Guilford County's rich historic and cultural traditions.
- ✓ **ACTION C 1.6** Fund an updated historic architectural resources survey.

POLICY 2: Celebrate cultural resources and continue to invest in the arts.

- ✓ **ACTION C 2.1** Support the installation of public art on County-owned properties.
- ✓ **ACTION C 2.2** Continue to support community cultural festivals, performances, and events to celebrate diversity within Guilford County.
- ✓ **ACTION C 2.3** Encourage collaborations among businesses, artists, educators, and the technology sector to promote cross-sector innovation.
- ✓ **ACTION C 2.4** Work with stakeholders and community members to incorporate policies for diverse and inclusive public art and cultural expression throughout Guilford County.

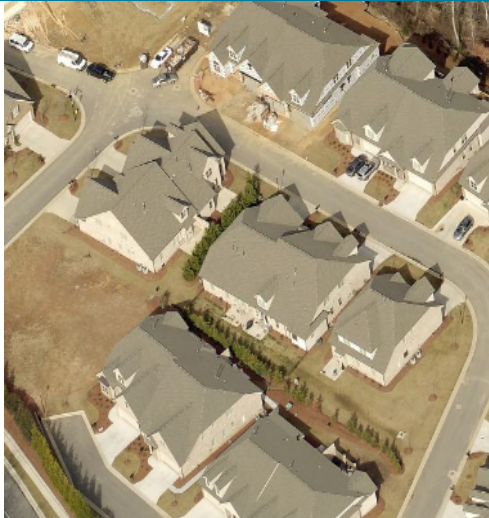
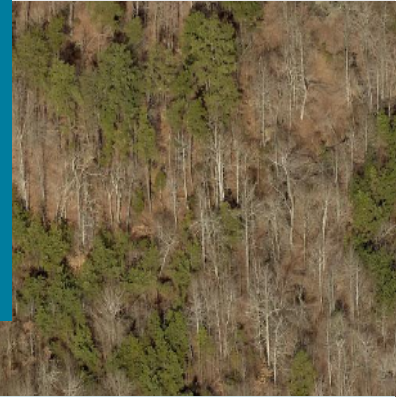
POLICY 3: Prioritize high-quality design and distinctive character in new development and redevelopment, recognizing variations across Guilford County.

- ✓ **ACTION C 3.1** Explore the use of character-based pattern books, design guidelines and manuals, or a hybrid approach to establish intended character and design elements for different Place Types as identified on the FLUM.
- ✓ **ACTION C 3.2** Focus on creating active, walkable, and universally accessible public realms in all new Activity Centers. Incentivize existing Activity Centers and private developments to retrofit accessibility features.
- ✓ **ACTION C 3.3** Encourage the design of new development that is compatible with historic structures and landscapes to both maintain a sense of place and highlight historic integrity.
- ✓ **ACTION C 3.4** Support existing and implement new policies that prioritize preservation of farmland, as further outlined in Resilient Economy Policy 4.
- ✓ **ACTION C 3.5** Update the Liberty Road/ Woody Mill Small Area Plan.

ATTAINABLE HOUSING

GOAL STATEMENT

Focus on supporting the creation and retention of a diverse range of housing types to accommodate all residents while emphasizing safety and high-quality, sustainable design.



COMMUNITY DIRECTIVE

Housing affordability was the #1 response when asked “What would you most like to improve about Guilford County to promote a higher quality of life”



POLICY 1: Enable the creation of new housing units that will provide a diverse mix of housing types that meet the needs of residents.

POLICY 2: Enable housing creation and preservation throughout Guilford County that is attainable and accessible for all income levels.

POLICY 3: Update policies to maintain housing affordability in existing units throughout Guilford County.

POLICY 4: Encourage the preservation, maintenance, and development of high-quality and safe housing.



BEFORE




AFTER

ATTAINABLE HOUSING



NEAR-TERM ACTIONS

Actions are the specific implementation items that the County can take to realize the planning theme goal and policies. The actions below are the actions recommended within 1-3 years or that are ongoing. The Action Playbook chapter of the Guilford County Comprehensive Plan describes the full list of actions recommended.



POLICY 1: Enable the creation of new housing units that will provide a diverse mix of housing types that meet the needs of residents.

-  ACTION H 1.1 Support residential development in and near Activity Centers, consistent with the Future Land Use Map.
-  ACTION H 1.2 Update the UDO to provide an administrative review path for attainable housing development located in Activity Centers.
-  ACTION H 1.3 Encourage housing opportunities that support existing and new agricultural operations. This could include use of the USDA Farm Labor Housing Loan and Grant opportunities, or the addition of housing facilities for farm workers.




POLICY 2: Enable housing creation and preservation throughout Guilford County that is attainable for all income levels.

-  ACTION H 2.1 Work with municipalities, homebuilders and developers to support a range of housing development types that meet the needs of different socioeconomic groups.
-  ACTION H 2.2 Continue to work with non-profit and private-sector housing partners to identify funding, through sources like the HOME program, that can assist low- and moderate-income households with the rent and/or purchase of a home and find innovative solutions for expanding housing choices and availability county-wide.

POLICY 3: Update policies to maintain housing affordability in existing units throughout Guilford County.

-  ACTION H 3.1 Continue to allow the creation of accessory dwelling units and live/work units in areas that are currently developed and have access to reliable sources of water and sanitation facilities.
-  ACTION H 3.2 Continue to use HOME allocation funds for down payment assistance.

POLICY 4: Update policies to maintain housing affordability in existing units throughout Guilford County.

-  ACTION H 4.1 Work with partners to complete training for home builders on the land development and building permit processes, including education on how to integrate materials that are durable and long-lasting into new developments.
-  ACTION H 4.2 Create updated forms and informational handouts to explain applicable review processes and opportunities for financial incentives or support, and to encourage the private sector to create and preserve high-quality housing units.
-  ACTION H 4.3 Continue to use funding sources such as the Home Investment Partnership Program (HOME) and the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to maintain and rehabilitate substandard housing and create new attainable housing.

RESILIENT ECONOMY

GOAL STATEMENT

Promote a healthy, sustainable economy that fosters partnerships, supports small business, incentivizes retention of farmland, and creates an economic climate that will attract and retain both job-generating businesses and their employees.



COMMUNITY DIRECTIVE

Focus group participants suggested to address lack of workforce retention and leveraging aerospace, life sciences, food processing/production and furniture design and textile industries as well as supply chain industry opportunities from the Megasite.



POLICY 1: Align economic development efforts with the future land use map and NC Carolina Core.

POLICY 2: Support existing businesses and industries, while seeking to increase high-wage jobs and employment opportunities throughout the county.

POLICY 3: Cultivate and support workforce training programs to support residents in gaining the skills needed for emerging job opportunities, fostering a dynamic and adaptable workforce.

POLICY 4: Prioritize the preservation of agricultural uses and working farms as a strategic economic development initiative.

RESILIENT ECONOMY

NEAR-TERM ACTIONS

Actions are the specific implementation items that the County can take to realize the planning theme goal and policies. The actions below are the actions recommended within 1-3 years or that are ongoing. The Action Playbook chapter of the Guilford County Comprehensive Plan describes the full list of actions recommended.

POLICY 1: Align economic development efforts with the Future Land Use Map and NC Carolina Core.

- ✓ **ACTION E 1.1** Ensure areas best suited for economic development, such as the US 421 Corridor, are secured for such use, while balancing the needs for housing, recreational amenities, agricultural, and commercial uses.
- ✓ **ACTION E 1.2** Evaluate economic development opportunities through their potential impacts on equity in the community.
- ✓ **ACTION E 1.3** Support development of Neighborhood Centers as identified on the Future Land Use Map to support rural commercial uses that are appropriately scaled, and which fit with the rural character of Guilford County.
- ✓ **ACTION E 1.4** Locate jobs near municipalities where housing is most concentrated, as well as in close proximity to employment centers outside of environmentally sensitive areas, to reduce impacts on those sensitive areas, as well as carbon footprint, traffic and commuting times.

POLICY 2: Support existing businesses and industries, while seeking to increase high-wage jobs and employment opportunities throughout the county.

- ✓ **ACTION E 2.1** Ensure that investments of public funds support targeted business sectors and promote the growth of new businesses.
- ✓ **ACTION E 2.2** Seek to prioritize Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) funding to reinvest in areas with economic disparities.
- ✓ **ACTION E 2.3** Explore the use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) / Project Development Financing to support the creation of high-impact business development, including new employment sectors or development that will create high-wage jobs and increase tax revenue for Guilford County.
- ✓ **ACTION E 2.4** Ensure building permit processes are streamlined for small businesses.
- ✓ **ACTION E 2.5** Offer economic incentives and assistance for small businesses.

POLICY 3: Cultivate and support workforce training programs to support residents in gaining the skills needed for emerging job opportunities, fostering a dynamic and adaptable workforce.







- ✓ **ACTION E 3.1** Continue to support funding and identify sites to support the needs of workforce development partners, such as NCWorks, GuilfordWorks, and others.
- ✓ **ACTION E 3.2** Collaborate with local business incubators to understand and support growth opportunities for business start-ups.
- ✓ **ACTION E 3.3** Provide support, such as grants, expedited permit reviews, and education opportunities, for small businesses to expand in Guilford County.
- ✓ **ACTION E 3.4** Continue to work with educational and training partners to tailor educational programs that support green industry.
- ✓ **ACTION E 3.5** Explore opportunities to support statewide efforts to increase the number of students seeking post-secondary education through the myFutureNC program and continue to prioritize partnerships with higher education institutions.

RESILIENT ECONOMY

NEAR-TERM ACTIONS

Actions are the specific implementation items that the County can take to realize the planning theme goal and policies. The actions below are the actions recommended within 1-3 years or that are ongoing. The Action Playbook chapter of the Guilford County Comprehensive Plan describes the full list of actions recommended.

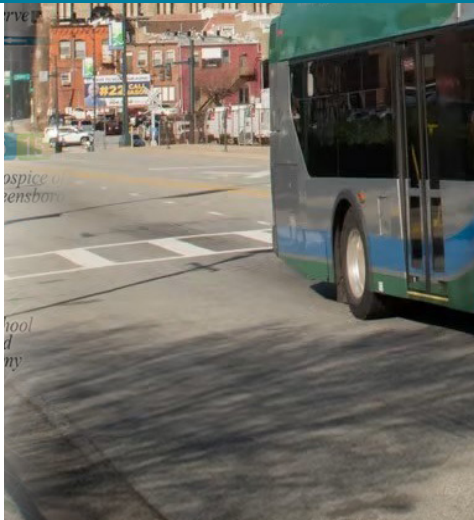
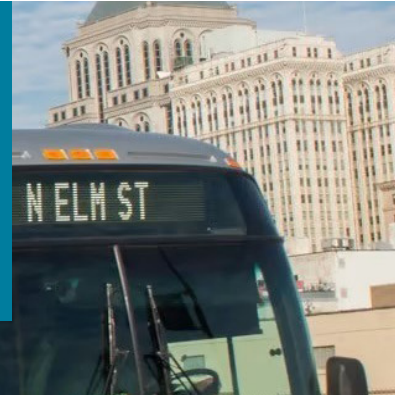
POLICY 4: Prioritize the preservation of agricultural uses and working farms as a strategic economic development initiative.

-  **ACTION E 4.1** Support and expand existing programs to support Guilford County's agricultural industry and farmland preservation.
-  **ACTION E 4.2** Explore economic development opportunities specifically tied to rural and agricultural land uses in Guilford County.
-  **ACTION E 4.3** Continue to promote the County's Voluntary Agricultural District and Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural District Ordinance as a way to preserve working farmlands in Guilford County.
-  **ACTION E 4.4** Provide additional incentives for agricultural properties to become an Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural District (EVAD).
-  **ACTION E 4.5** Establish a Farmland Preservation initiative or program in the Guilford Soil and Water District Office or Cooperative Extension Office to establish a more robust farmland preservation program.
-  **ACTION E 4.6** Consider funding for local public service announcements to create more awareness of and to promote Guilford County farm producers and operators.

DIVERSIFIED TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

GOAL STATEMENT

Coordinate with the NCDOT, transit and transportation planning organizations, and local jurisdictions to facilitate safe and efficient transportation infrastructure that serves strategic areas of Guilford County through access to multiple modes of travel.



COMMUNITY DIRECTIVE

Workshop participants expressed a desire to be able to walk and bike to parks, with a preference towards automobile and public transit for getting to work and activity centers.



POLICY 1: Provide ongoing support of the existing countywide transportation networks, focusing on universal access, safety, efficiency and climate-friendly options for residents and visitors.

POLICY 2: In order to identify opportunities for funding options and expansion into regional services, the county should maintain its active role in MPO's that serve the county, in addition to other regional transportation organizations, which provide regional connectivity and transit expansion opportunities that serve Guilford County residents.

POLICY 3: Actively plan for the impacts of climate change on the transportation system.

DIVERSIFIED TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

NEAR-TERM ACTIONS

Actions are the specific implementation items that the County can take to realize the planning theme goal and policies. The actions below are the actions recommended within 1-3 years or that are ongoing. The Action Playbook chapter of the Guilford County Comprehensive Plan describes the full list of actions recommended.

POLICY 1: Provide ongoing support of existing county wide transportation networks focusing on universal access, safety, efficiency, and climate-friendly options for residents and visitors.

- ✓ **ACTION T 1.1** Continue to support regional partners in creating efficient and functional future transportation and transit network components.
- ✓ **ACTION T 1.2** Identify major transportation projects from MTPs in any future updates to quadrant mapping or Area Plans to ensure ongoing transportation and land use coordination.
- ✓ **ACTION T 1.3** Coordinate with partners to ensure that the transportation system is equitable and that it addresses access to jobs, housing, healthcare, education, and other community services. The County should also advocate for the transportation system to close mobility gaps.
- ✓ **ACTION T 1.4** Provide support for and enhance mobility-based programs for seniors and those living with disabilities.
- ✓ **ACTION T 1.5** Leverage Guilford County's geographic accessibility to multiple major cities to advance policies and transportation projects that have both regional and local impacts. These efforts should focus on governance, accountability, and strategies to address county needs that are not presently being met.
- ✓ **ACTION T 1.6** Continue to engage in regional discussions about state and federal funding and investments in the area to ensure that Guilford County projects meet the goals and vision in the Plan.
- ✓ **ACTION T 1.7** Support the school district to provide equitable transportation to assist all students with getting to and from school both safely and efficiently. Consider updating the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Guilford County Public Schools to require consultation for potential school sites or expansion projects during the site identification phase of the planning process to ensure that transportation impacts to local areas are identified prior to site acquisition.

POLICY 2: The County should maintain its active role in MPOs in addition to other regional transportation organizations, which provide regional connectivity and transit expansion opportunities that serve Guilford County residents.

- ✓ **ACTION T 2.1** Actively participate in all regional transportation efforts and seek and maintain participation on all MPOs that serve Guilford County.
- ✓ **ACTION T 2.2** Continue to engage and participate in regional and state discussions and planning activities to ensure the need for movement of goods and freight throughout Guilford County is considered and supported.
- ✓ **ACTION T 2.3** Consider funding strategies that will improve mobility options throughout Guilford County.
- ✓ **ACTION T 2.4** Assist PART in continuing to identify key connections throughout Guilford County that are prime locations for remote parking sites.
- ✓ **ACTION T 2.5** Investigate opportunities to work with NCDOT to establish or modify context-sensitive roadway designs.

POLICY 3: Actively plan for the impacts of climate change on the transportation system.

- ✓ **ACTION T 3.1** Consider evaluating parking and land use development requirements to reflect the future land uses identified in the FLUM to respond to changing development patterns and mobility needs.
- ✓ **ACTION T 3.2** Amend the design standards in the UDO to ensure resilience.

EQUITABLE SERVICES

GOAL STATEMENT

Support land use decisions that create equitable distribution of and convenient access to health and emergency services, schools, and parks.



COMMUNITY DIRECTIVE

When asked what is most important in terms of managing future growth, access to services was in the top three responses. *In 2020 and 2022, Guilford county votes a total of \$2 Billion in school bond funds.*



POLICY 1: Work with Strategic Partners to increase equitable access to services that promote a high quality of life.

POLICY 2: Ensure adequate parks and recreation facilities and amenities are located in proximity to existing and planned neighborhoods.



EQUITABLE SERVICES

NEAR-TERM ACTIONS

Actions are the specific implementation items that the County can take to realize the planning theme goal and policies. The actions below are the actions recommended within 1-3 years or that are ongoing. The Action Playbook chapter of the Guilford County Comprehensive Plan describes the full list of actions recommended.

POLICY 1: Work with strategic partners to increase equitable access to services that promote a high quality of life.

- ✓ **ACTION S 1.1** Complete the 2023 Community Health Assessment to understand the social determinants of health. Include an analysis of the impacts from the built environment on health outcomes.
- ✓ **ACTION S 1.2** Hold annual conversations between the Board of Commissioners (BOCC) and the Guilford County School Board to discuss priorities and trends related to schools.
- ✓ **ACTION S 1.3** Coordinate directly with service providers to understand trends, land use needs, and anticipated growth to ensure equitable distribution of those services.
- ✓ **ACTION S 1.4** Work with the County Emergency Management Director or designee to help coordinate needs among Guilford County's different fire districts.
- ✓ **ACTION S 1.5** Support efforts to advance early childhood educational and childcare access through an analysis to determine gaps in service.

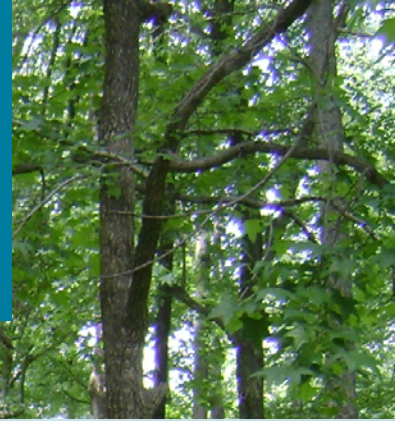
POLICY 2: Ensure adequate parks and recreation facilities and amenities are located in proximity to existing and planned neighborhoods.

- ✓ **ACTION S 2.1** Complete the Guilford County Parks Master Plan and prioritize funding to implement the Plan's priority initiatives.
- ✓ **ACTION S 2.2** Analyze parks and recreation service throughout Guilford County, identifying areas where there are existing service gaps, maintenance needs, and facility upgrades, and establish policies and funding to address these gaps.
- ✓ **ACTION S 2.3** Review the inventory of County-owned properties to determine if any of them could be used to address gaps in the parks and recreational infrastructure.
- ✓ **ACTION S 2.4** Analyze potential health disparities resulting from limited access to the outdoors and recreational services and programming for those residents living in the rural areas of Guilford County.
- ✓ **ACTION S 2.5** Expand overall accessibility and inclusiveness in all recreation facilities, including implementing ADA improvements.
- ✓ **ACTION S 2.6** Link transportation improvements with opportunities for providing walking and biking connections to recreational amenities.
- ✓ **ACTION S 2.7** Provide residents living in established communities with access to parks, trails, recreational facilities, or natural areas within a 15-minute drive.

PROTECTED NATURAL ENVIRONMENT & GREENSPACE

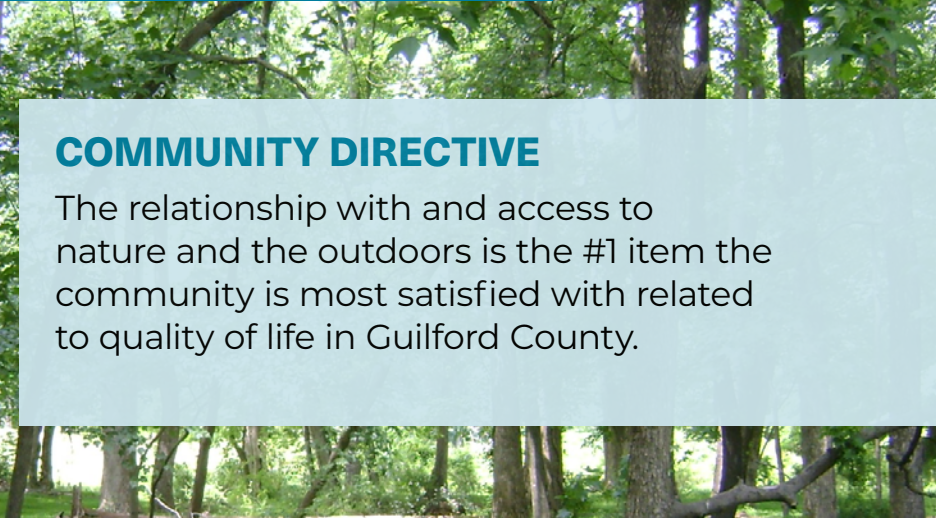
GOAL STATEMENT

Ensure the provision of abundant parks, as well as the protection of natural vistas and green space, through County-managed soil erosion, stormwater, and conservation programs so that diverse natural resources are valued and preserved.



COMMUNITY DIRECTIVE

The relationship with and access to nature and the outdoors is the #1 item the community is most satisfied with related to quality of life in Guilford County.



POLICY 1: Improve the quality of Guilford County's natural resources through regional partnerships and implementation of preservation and protection measures.

POLICY 2: Safeguard the environmental integrity of regional water sources and recreational water bodies.

POLICY 3: Protect natural features and sensitive areas (riparian areas, floodplains, vegetation and tree cover).

POLICY 4: Emphasize connectivity for parks, greenways, and broad open spaces and protect scenic and environmental corridors and buffer areas.



PROTECTED NATURAL ENVIRONMENT & GREENSPACE

NEAR-TERM ACTIONS

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POLICY 1: Improve the quality of Guilford County's natural resources through regional partnerships and implementation of preservation and protection measures.

- ✓ **ACTION N 1.1** Continue promoting the preservation of agricultural lands, which are a declining resource in Guilford County.
- ✓ **ACTION N 1.2** Focus on strategic partnerships with local and regional conservation organizations.
- ✓ **ACTION N 1.3** Evaluate opportunities for enhancements to the UDO to implement measures that align with the Future Land Use Map, including mixed-use activity centers, natural resource protections, and provisions for renewable energy measures.
- ✓ **ACTION N 1.4** Enhance opportunities for land preservation through housing development patterns that reduce emissions.
- ✓ **ACTION N 1.5** Incentivize environmental restoration when properties are redeveloped, such as expedited permit reviews or reduced fees.
- ✓ **ACTION N 1.6** Incentivize trail corridors in new development areas to protect water and air quality, benefit health and home values, and provide needed connectivity to larger trail systems.
- ✓ **ACTION N 1.7** Incentivize the retention of tree canopy across Guilford County, specifically on new development sites and planned communities.

POLICY 2: Safeguard the environmental integrity of regional water sources and recreational waterbodies.

- ✓ **ACTION N 2.1** Promote more compact development patterns closer to major 'nodes' in Guilford County to mitigate the impacts of development, such as emissions, development waste, and site runoff, on the county's environment and natural resources.
- ✓ **ACTION N 2.2** Evaluate and enhance measures, such as erosion and sediment control, steep slopes, and species habitats in the UDO, for sensitive environmental resources.
- ✓ **ACTION N 2.3** Expand on existing watershed management policies to set goals and priorities for protecting, restoring, and improving the country's environmental resources.
- ✓ **ACTION N 2.4** Develop options for improving, enforcing, and funding long-term inspection and maintenance of stormwater management facilities.
- ✓ **ACTION N 2.5** Continue to coordinate and cooperate with other local, regional, and state agencies and organizations, such as the NC Division of Water Quality, on joint watershed planning and management.

PROTECTED NATURAL ENVIRONMENT & GREENSPACE

NEAR-TERM ACTIONS

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POLICY 3: Protect natural features and sensitive areas.

- ✓ **ACTION N 3.1** Establish and achieve measurable goals for tree canopy, forest cover, and riparian forest buffers in all Guilford County watersheds.
- ✓ **ACTION N 3.2** Prioritize native tree plantings in communities that are economically vulnerable in order to mitigate heat island impacts.
- ✓ **ACTION N 3.3** Continue to update the County's GIS system with layers locating natural assets and amenities, protected lands, current and future parks, dedicated open spaces, and places designated through the Historic Inventory List.
- ✓ **ACTION N 3.4** Conduct a study and update the Guilford County Natural Heritage Inventory to identify the areas of most ecological significance and prioritize conservation efforts within the county.
- ✓ **ACTION N 3.5** Create incentives that reward innovation and green designs, and which respect, assimilate, and protect on-site and adjacent assets and amenities, as well as natural, cultural, historic and recreational uses.

POLICY 4: Emphasize connectivity for parks, greenways, and broad open spaces and protect scenic and environmental corridors and buffer areas.

- ✓ **ACTION N 4.1** Explore funding options to support the acquisition and expansion of open spaces with a focus on filling in existing service gaps and reaching underserved populations within the County.
- ✓ **ACTION N 4.2** Support retention of viable agricultural lands through the encouragement of both traditional and nontraditional farm uses, including agritourism, organic farming, and viticulture, and provide assistance in partnership with conservation organizations, state, and federal cost-share programs, and the North Carolina Cooperative Extension.
- ✓ **ACTION N 4.3** Create a Green Infrastructure Network Plan that provides strategic guidance on conservation and environmental initiatives and recreational planning to support the acquisition of large contiguous areas of natural spaces throughout the county. A formalized network will provide additional protections for habitats, migration corridors, and wildlife.
- ✓ **ACTION N 4.3** Identify locations within Guilford County where safe passage for wildlife at road crossings is needed, and work with NCDOT to fund and implement crossings as part of its TIP or STIP. County design standards for roads, bridges, and culverts to facilitate safe passage for wildlife at county road crossings within the Green Infrastructure Network.

QUALITY & CONTEXT SENSITIVE INFRASTRUCTURE

GOAL STATEMENT

Create a resilient, coordinated, and high-quality infrastructure system that adapts to the changing needs of the community.



COMMUNITY DIRECTIVE

Expanding sufficient and appropriate infrastructure is the community’s biggest concern when it comes to growth in Guilford County.



POLICY 1: Meet changing demands for infrastructure through regional partnerships and cooperation with service and utility providers.

POLICY 2: Plan for the true cost of Infrastructure.







QUALITY & CONTEXT SENSITIVE INFRASTRUCTURE





NEAR-TERM ACTIONS

Actions are the specific implementation items that the County can take to realize the planning theme goal and policies. The actions below are the actions recommended within 1-3 years or that are ongoing. The Action Playbook chapter of the Guilford County Comprehensive Plan describes the full list of actions recommended.

POLICY 1: Meet changing demands for infrastructure through regional partnerships and cooperation with service and utility providers.

-  ACTION I 1.1 Support digital connectivity throughout Guilford County by working with partners to provide reliable broadband and cellular services.
-  ACTION I 1.2 Advocate for and support the provision of water and sewer services by identifying where service provision is feasible and cost-effective and will support the growth goals in the Future Land Use Map, while also protecting areas identified for preservation.
-  ACTION I 1.3 Ensure that the design and location of infrastructure enhances Guilford County's sense of place.
-  ACTION I 1.4 Expand business opportunities in Guilford County that promote recycling and reuse of resources, or that repurpose solid waste.

POLICY 2: Plan for the true cost of infrastructure.

-  ACTION I 2.1 Evaluate long-term needs for waste management, processing facilities, recycling streams, and landfill needs in Guilford County.
-  ACTION I 2.2 Explore opportunities and funding mechanisms for the provision of services and utilities in the future.
-  ACTION I 2.3 Focus higher density and commercial development near areas that are served by existing services and infrastructure.
-  ACTION I 2.4 Prioritize investments to support infrastructure development near Regional Employment Centers.

GUIDING GUILFORD



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